

SARHAN GULIEV

WINNING CHESS MANOEUVRES

Strategic Ideas
that Masters
Never Fail
to Find



NEW  IN CHESS

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Sarhan Guliev

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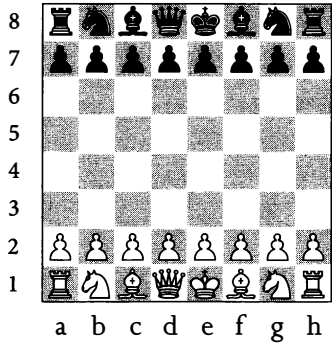
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Explanation of Symbols

The chessboard with its coordinates:



- White to move
- Black to move
- ♔ King
- ♚ Queen
- ♖ Rook
- ♗ Bishop
- ♘ Knight

- ± White stands slightly better
- ∓ Black stands slightly better
- ± White stands better
- ∓ Black stands better
- +− White has a decisive advantage
- −+ Black has a decisive advantage
- = balanced position
- ! good move
- !! excellent move
- ? bad move
- ?? blunder
- !?! interesting move
- ?! dubious move
- ∞ unclear
- # mate

Foreword

The reader could get the wrong impression about the aims of this book. He might think that the author is trying to show that people play chess wrongly, and that they are poorly informed about the game's classical heritage or inaccurately point out the original sources of ideas, etc.

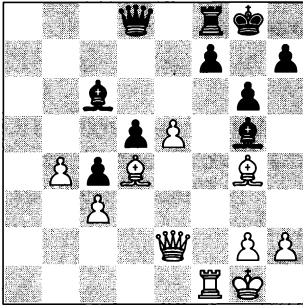
But that is not the case. The chess elite, with a few rare exceptions, consists of players with a high cultural erudition in the game. It could not be otherwise. Even if a self-taught player, by dint of sheer natural talent, achieves success in the early phase of his career, there will come a time when he will need to 'pore over his textbooks' to make further progress.

Contemporary players know a lot, read a lot, and work a lot on the game. At the board, they are not fumbling in the dark. Their borrowings, in the great majority of cases, are conscious, not accidental. And the fact that they cannot always state exactly who the original source of the idea was, well, so what – nobody can know everything.

And there is no need.

Viswanathan Anand Evgeny Bareev

Linares 1993



The threat is e5-e6.

Black decided on

28...h5

He drives the bishop from the key square e6, but further weakens his kingside.

One feels that the position should contain a combination. How to execute it?

The great Indian talent Viswanathan Anand does so faultlessly:

29. ♖xh5! gxh5 30. ♜xh5 ♔e8

Possibly Black calculated as far as this position and only considered 31. ♜f3. Then 31...f5, and the attack can be beaten off.

But there followed:

31. ♜f6!

With this blockading sacrifice of the rook, White fixes the f7-pawn in place and the black king faces one deadly threat after another.

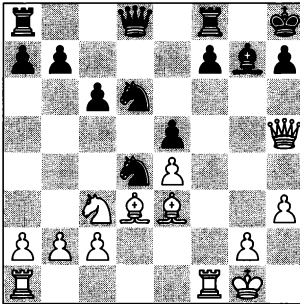
Not 31...♔xf6 32.exf6, whilst after 31...♔d2 White wins with 32.e6! with the threat of 33. ♜g6+! fxg6 34. ♜h8# mate.

So Black resigned.

In his book of best games, Anand writes that he was helped in finding 31. ♜f6! by knowledge of the following classic combination.

Robert Fischer
Pal Benko

New York 1963



Black to move. He should have played 17...♘e6, and the battle would all lie ahead. But he played:

17...♜e8 18.♙xd4 exd4

Intending the defence 19.e5 f5.

There followed, however,

19.♞f6!!

The same blockading sacrifice of the rook, fixing the f7-pawn, and on 19...♙xf6, the move 20.e5 decides.

19...♝g8 20.e5 h6 21.♘e2

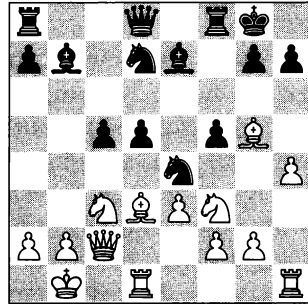
Black resigned.

I will ask you a question: how important was it for Anand to know the source game for this combination? How important was it to scour books and databases, to establish that Fischer was the first to use it?

The answer is obvious – it was not of the slightest importance or necessity. He demonstrated a high level of erudition and excellent sporting qualities. It is one thing to know that Fischer once played such a combination, but quite another to recall the details in the stressful conditions of a sporting contest. But the task of identifying the original source is a job for the historian, book author and journalist.

Akiba Rubinstein
Eugene Znosko-Borovsky

St Petersburg 1909



Black has played the opening poorly. The position has opened up, and the opposition of the rook on d1 and queen on d8 causes Black much disquiet. Another basis for a combination is the diagonal a2-g8; if the pawn is removed from d5, then after a queen check on b3, the bishop on b7 would be hanging. White needs to show good and accurate calculation. There are so many tempting options that one's eyes glaze over. Rubinstein played precisely:

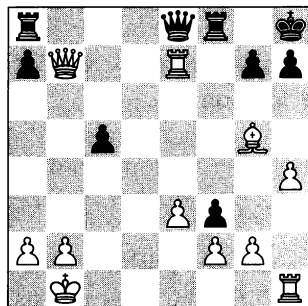
14.♙xe4!

Less good is 14.♙xe4 fxe4 15.♘xe4 ♜e8.

14...fxe4 15.♙xe4! dxe4 16.♜b3+ ♝h8 17.♜xb7! exf3 18.♞xd7 ♜e8

Or 18...fxg2 19.♞xd8 gxh1 ♜+ 20.♜xh1 ♞fxd8 21.♙xe7.

19.♙xe7



The forcing variation has ended. White has not only regained his material, but also has an extra piece.

Victory is quite close. However, White needs to preserve accuracy to the very end.

19... ♖g6+ 20. ♔a1

It is understandable that White wants to move his king as far away from ‘enemy eyes’ as possible. But 20. ♔c1 was actually more accurate, and if Black replies 20... ♖ab8 21. ♖d5 ♖bd8, then 22. h5! ♖a6 23. ♗f7!, suppressing any counterplay.

20... ♖ab8 21. ♖e4

Now 21. ♖d5 ♖bd8 22. h5 would be bad, because of 22... ♖xh5! 23. ♗xh5 ♗xd5.

21... ♖xe4

Bad is 21... fxc2 22. ♖xc2 ♖c2 due to 23. ♗f6!.

22. ♗xe4 fxc2 23. ♗g1 ♗xf2 24. ♗f4

Things have become more complicated and the extra piece does not guarantee the win. After 24... ♖xb2 25. ♗f8+ ♗xf8 26. ♔xb2 ♗f2+ 27. ♔b3 ♔g8, White still faces many technical difficulties.

24... ♗c2

Weakly played.

25. b3 h6 26. ♗e7 ♗e8 27. ♔b1 ♗e2

28. ♗xc5 ♗d8 29. ♗d4

The counterplay on the second rank has been choked off.

There followed:

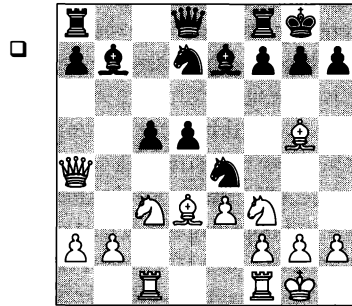
29... ♗c8 30. ♗g4

And Black resigned, since after 30... ♗cc2 there is 31. ♗xg7.

Razuvaev and Murakhveri, in their monograph about Rubinstein, rightly drew attention to the similarity of the above combination with the following, earlier example:

William Steinitz Adolf Anderssen

Vienna 1873



The trappy 13. ♗xe7 ♗xc3? 14. ♖h4! has to be rejected at such a top level, of course (13... ♖xe7). Also unconvincing is 13. ♗xe4 dxe4 14. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 15. ♗d2, in reply to which, as well as 15... ♗f6, Black can consider the counterattack 15... ♗e5! 16. ♗dxe4 ♗d3 17. b1 ♗ad8 18. ♖xa7 f5 19. ♗g3 f4 or 19. ♗d2 ♗f6. The number of minor pieces on the seventh rank suggests the correct idea:

13. ♗xe4 dxe4 14. ♗fd1!

Black's choice is wide and difficult. Going into the endgame does not offer anything good: 14... ♗b6 15. ♗xd8 ♗xa4 16. ♗xa8 ♗xa8 17. ♗xa4 f6 18. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 19. ♗d2 ♗d8 20. ♗c2, or (which is even stronger) 18. ♗h4 fxc5 19. ♗f5 ♗f8 20. ♗xc5 ♗c8 21. b4 ♔f7 22. ♗d4. Anderssen decides to retain the queens, but overlooks his opponent's 17th move:

14... ♗xc5 15. ♗xc5

The transformation of the position by means of 15. ♗xd7 ♖c8 16. ♗xb7 (16. ♗xc5 ♗c6) 16... ♗xe3 17. fxe3 ♖xb7 18. ♗xe4 ♖xb2 is certainly not in White's interests.

15... ♖xc5 16. ♗xd7 ♗fb8 17. ♖b3!

Now the similarity of ideas with the game Rubinstein-Znosko-Borovsky is complete.

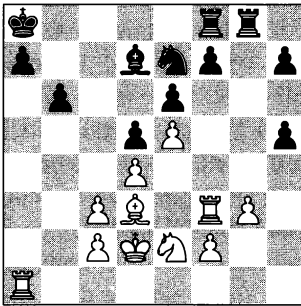
17...♙c6 18.♚xf7+ ♔h8 19.h4

And White won.

Repeating combinational schemes, motifs and even individual moves is a more obvious and simple case of copying in chess. It is more difficult to detect the connection when two players copy each other in using the same technical device. Unlike combinations, in such cases the copying is not of a specific move or scheme, but the actual heart or essence, which makes up the device.

Alexander Morozevich Smbat Lputian

Dagomys 2007



For the moment, Black has an extra pawn, but the doubled h-pawns will sooner or later fall. His choice is therefore logical:

24...h4

By giving back material, Black hopes to close the h-file and reduce the pressure on the kingside as a whole.

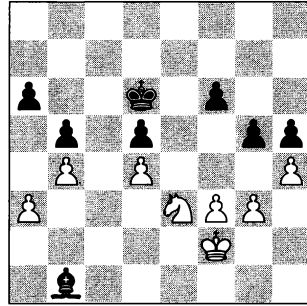
However, there followed:

25.♖h1!

Alexey Kuzmin's commentary is as follows:

«Wonderful play! Manoeuvring space is more important than pawns. For example, in the variation 25.gxh4 ♖g4 26.♖h1 h6 27.♘g3 ♘g8 28.♘h5 f5! 29.exf6 ♙e8 etc. One is reminded

of Karpov's famous manoeuvre against Kasparov (from their first match in Moscow 1984):



46...gxh4, and here, instead of the automatic recapture, there followed 47.♘g2! space was secured for manoeuvring, sufficient to achieve a decisive advantage.

Of course, different time, different place, different people, but all the same...»

Yes, 'all the same'... Everything looks different, but the essence is the same. By refraining from the obvious recapture, White increases his scope for attack.

We would add that in the game Morozevich-Lputian, after

25...hxg3 26.♘xg3 ♖h8 27.♘h5

(it is too early for 27.♖xh7 ♖xh7 28.♙xh7 ♙b5)

27...♘g8 28.♖g1

White continued a large-scale attack on the kingside, which was crowned with success.

As well as the purely chess element of copying, there is also a psychological factor, which can be expressed as 'standing on the shoulders of the classics'. The point is that, in considering a move which he understands to be risky, a player can draw unwitting support from the great players of the past. He can draw confidence from knowing that a great player once played something similar.

might be a mistake – forces the player to call on something extra, outside himself. Because the internal strength, even of so great a player as Kasparov, could at some moment prove insufficient. He found this extra something in the memory of the Tarrasch-Lasker example. ‘Look’, he says to himself, ‘Lasker put his rook in a similar spot, and it worked. Go for it!’

This is something worth thinking about.

A large separate topic is the copying of plans and pawn structures. As we will see in the final chapter of this book, each is inseparable from the other. In forming a plan, a player will in most cases think about changes in the pawn structure, and vice versa: a favourable change in the pawn structure does not occur of its own volition, but usually results from the successful implementation of the correct plan.

In comments on games by the winner, one often comes across phrases such as ‘a known position’, ‘this position was known to me’, etc. Even the printed word reveals the satisfaction which players get from such situations. It is a broad subject, which contains within itself several elements.

If a strong player finds himself in a familiar position, then he plays the next part of the game ‘with eyes wide open’. There are no secrets for him, in what happens on the board. He knows his plan and what plan to fear from the opponent. He knows whether to exchange a certain piece or not, which pawn structure changes he should go in for, etc.

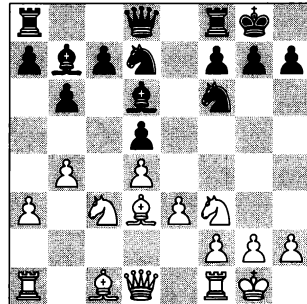
It is by no means necessary that such knowledge should come from a player’s own work or experience. Sometimes,

direct copying is all that is needed, providing it is from a trustworthy source.

Veselin Topalov Krishnan Sasikiran

Sofia 2007

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3
b6 5.♙d3 ♙b7 6.♗f3 0-0 7.0-0 d5
8.a3 ♙d6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.b4 ♗bd7**



It would be wrong to describe this position as critical – only 10 moves have been played on each side. But there is no doubt that this is the moment for choosing, especially choosing a plan.

It would be good for White to offload his unemployed dark-squared bishop and to fix the backward c7-pawn. This means that it is worth considering (in some order or other) b4-b5, a3-a4 and ♙c1-a3. Black can ignore this threat, and when White takes on d6, can take towards the centre with the c-pawn. The pawn structure would thus change. But in whose favour?

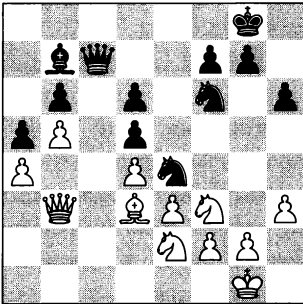
Commenting on this game, Topalov three times made an interesting admission. Before White’s 11th move was the first time:

«A well-known and playable position for both sides. I saw it quite recently and remembered a game I very much liked, in which Ivanchuk beat Piket. This game was played in the Amber Tournament 1999, in which I also played.»

11.b5 ♖e4 12.♙b2 ♜e8 13.a4 ♜e6
14.♖e2 a5

«Played after long thought. Black fixes the structure, and this is the exact structure which occurred in the Ivanchuk game, that I remembered!»

15.♙a3 ♜c8 16.♙xd6 cxd6
17.♜c1 ♗df6 18.h3 ♜e7 19.♝b3
h6 20.♜xc8 ♝xc8 21.♜c1 ♜c7
22.♜xc7 ♝xc7



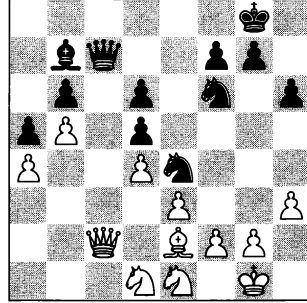
23. ♝c2!

«Again offering the exchange. This was not done out of necessity, and I could have played 23.♝b2. The point of my idea is that, after the exchange of queens, Black's position is very difficult. I can kick the knight out of e4, transfer the bishop to b3 and eventually organise piece pressure against the pawn on d5, at the same time advancing the kingside pawns.

Something similar happened in the Ivanchuk-Piket game.»

Let us look at this Ivanchuk-Piket game, which is referred to three (!) times by Topalov.

11.♙b2 (the first ten moves were as in Topalov-Sasikiran) 11...♜e8 12.♝c2 a6 13.b5 a5 14.a4 ♖e4 15.♙a3 ♜c8 16.♜fc1 ♗df6 17.♝b2 ♗g4 18.♖d1 h6 19.h3 ♗gf6 20.♜c2 ♝e7 21.♙e2 ♝e6 22.♜ac1 ♝e7 23.♙xd6 cxd6 24.♖e1 ♜xc2 25.♜xc2 ♜c8 26.♖d3 ♜c4 27.♝c1 ♝c7 28.♖e1 ♜xc2 29.♝xc2



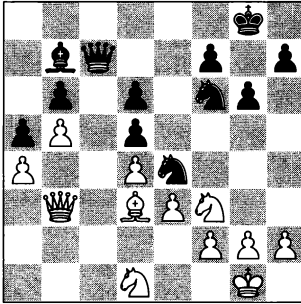
29...♝xc2 30.♖xc2 ♗g5 31.f3 ♗f8 32.♗f2 ♖e7 33.♖c3 ♖e6 34.♖e1 ♖d8 35.♙d1 ♗g8 36.♙b3 ♖e7 37.♖d3 ♖d7 38.h4 g5 39.hxg5 hxg5 40.g4 f6 41.♖c1 ♗g7 42.♖le2 f5 43.gxf5 ♖gxf5 44.♖g3 ♗g7 45.♗g2 ♖g5 46.♖xf5 ♖xf5 47.♗f2 ♖e6 48.♖e4! ♙c8 49.♖xg5+.

The rest of the game can be passed over. White won.

I particularly want to emphasise that the plan carried out by Ivanchuk is nothing out of the ordinary and its general outlines were known long ago. It had been played by well-known GMs and by less famous players. For example, in the game Knaak-Beliavsky (Novi Sad 1979), White preferred to attack the doubled pawns with the queens still on: 11.b5 ♖e4 12.♝b3 ♜e8 13.a4 ♗df6 14.♙a3 a5 15.♙xd6 cxd6 16.♖e2 h6 17.♜a2 ♝d7 18.♖e1 ♜e7 19.f3 ♗g5 20.♖g3 g6 21.♜e2 h5 22.h4 ♖e6 23.♝b1 ♖f8 24.♗f2 ♜ae8 25.♙c2 ♝d8 26.♖d3 ♖e6 27.♙b3 etc.

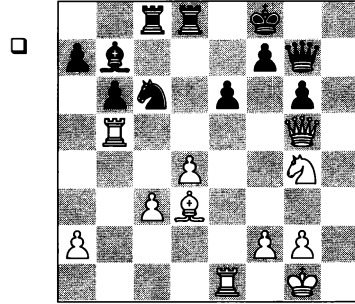
On the other hand, in the game Leverett-Bisguier (Chicago 1985), White convincingly adopted the 'Ivanchuk plan'... some 15 years before Ivanchuk himself: 11.b5 ♖e4 12.♝b3 ♜e8 13.a4 ♗df6 14.♙a3 a5 15.♙xd6 cxd6 16.♜ac1 ♜c8

17.♖c2 ♖e7 18.♖fc1 ♖ec7 19.♘d1 g6
20.♖xc7 ♖xc7 21.♖xc7 ♖xc7



**Mikhail Botvinnik
Viacheslav Ragozin**

Bolshevo 1947



22.♖c2! ♖xc2 23.♖xc2 ♖c8 24.♘e1
♘d2 25.f3 ♘c4 26.♗f2 ♗f8 27.♗e2
♗e7 28.♖b3 h5 29.e4 ♖b7 30.♖xc4
dxc4 31.d5 ♘d7 32.♗e3 ♘c5 33.♘c3
♘b3 34.♘c2 ♖c8 35.♘a3 ♗d7
36.♘xc4, and the rest of the moves can
be omitted.

So, there was no necessity for Topalov to follow Ivanchuk (or anyone else, of course). But he did so, and in his thrice-repeated commentary, he emphasises the fact. He saw the game Ivanchuk-Piket, with his own eyes, as he was at the tournament. And Topalov says to everyone: I believe him. I don't see any need to invent something new, nor do I consider it shameful, to follow in his footsteps. Because this idea works. Iron logic.

The Patriarch of Soviet chess, the sixth World Champion Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik, was a great practitioner of planned play. Many of his discoveries have entered chess theory. But even Mikhail Moiseevich was not above direct copying. Why not, if it leads to success?!

Kotov's commentary in *Think Like a Grandmaster*: «White's plan is simple: to attack the weak dark squares around the black king, and sacrifice the bishop on g6, after which the queen and rook will carry out the decisive attack.»

And Botvinnik adds: «It was not so difficult for White to find the correct plan, as he only had to copy Lasker's play in his game with Capablanca (Moscow 1935)».

27.♘f6

If White had been worried about the pin on the a6-f1 diagonal, he would have played first 27.♖e4, but he evidently considered that Black could not afford the move 27...♖a6 because of 28.♖e3! ♖xb5 29.♖xb5 followed by ♖e3-h3-h7.

27...♘e7 28.♖e3 ♘g8

An interesting moment, which is left totally vague in previous annotations. It seems that the threat to win the queen with ♖e3-h3-h7 takes precedence over everything else. In reality, the battle after 28...♖xc3 29.♖h3 ♖xd4 30.♖h7 is only beginning. Black has the resource 30...♖g4!. After 31.♖xg4 ♖xf6 or 31.♘xg4 ♖xh7 32.♘f6 ♖h8, White achieves nothing. He must go into the endgame: 31.♘d7+ ♗e8

32. ♖xg7 (after 32. ♘f6+ ♚xf6! 33. ♚xf6 ♖c1+ the game ends in mate: 34. ♘h2 ♖xg2+ 35. ♘h3 ♖h1# or 34. ♙f1 ♖xg2+ 35. ♘h1 ♖xf1#) 32... ♖xg5 33. ♖xg5 ♘xd7 34. ♙b5+ ♘d6 35. ♖xf7 ♖a3. White has an extra exchange, but Black has his chances, as for example in the variation 36. ♙c4 ♙d5 37. ♙xd5 ♘xd5 38. ♖xg6 ♖xa2 39. g4 b5. Instead of 36. ♙c4, White can try 36. ♖f8!? with the idea of winning a piece after 36... ♖xa2 37. ♖d8+ 38. ♖d7+ and 39. ♖xe7.

29. ♘xg8 ♘xg8 30. ♚e7 ♙c6

For the second time in a row, Black shows neither inventiveness nor tenacity. It is obvious that White plans to transfer the rook from b5 to the kingside. So why not try to hinder this?

After 30... ♙d5! the rook is cut off on b5. Grabbing pawns also doesn't lead to anything good: 31. ♚xa7 ♖xc3 32. ♚xb6 ♖c1+ 33. ♘h2 ♚h6+ 34. ♖h3 ♖h1+! 35. ♘xh1 (35. ♘g3 ♚g5#) 35... ♚xh3+ 36. ♘g1 ♚xg2#. Stronger is 33. ♙f1, but here too, after 33... ♖dc8 Black has fully adequate counterplay.

31. ♖be5

The rook passes the potential barrier on d5, but does not go to g5 at once, because then, after 31... ♖d7, the queen would be forced to leave the kingside.

31... ♖d7 32. ♚h4 ♚h8

Here too, 32... ♙d5 deserved consideration.

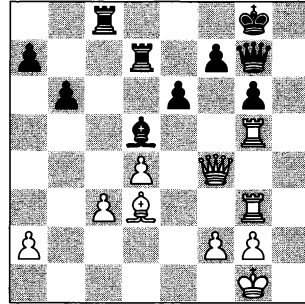
33. ♚f4 ♚g7 34. ♖g3

White has finally gathered all of his major pieces on the kingside. The similarity with Lasker-Capablanca (see below) is now total.

Incidentally, the combination could have been played here: 34. ♙xg6! fxe6 35. ♖xe6, and if 35... ♖f8, then 36. ♚g4, whilst if 36... ♖f7, then 36. ♚d6. But Botvinnik did not like to change his

original plan, even if the tactical complications were objectively in his favour.

34... ♙d5 35. ♖eg5



The preparatory work is completed and there is no defence against the blow on g6. Black's passivity in the previous stage of the game has helped White fulfil his task.

35... ♖xc3 36. ♙xg6! ♖xg3 37. ♙xf7+ ♘f8

Ragozin follows the path of least resistance, to the very end. After 37... ♖xf7 38. ♚xg3 ♙xa2 White would still face technical problems, but now it all ends immediately:

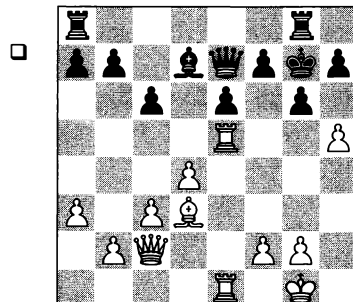
38. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 39. ♙xe6+

Black resigned, and we will now look at the source game.

Emanuel Lasker

José Raul Capablanca

Moscow 1935



In general terms, we already know the plan. White brings his major pieces to the kingside, masks his real target with threats on the dark squares, and at the appropriate moment, sacrifices his bishop on g6.

24. ♖c1!? ♜ad8 25. ♞1e3 ♙c8

More tenacious is 25...f6, although after 26. ♞a5 a6 27.hxg6 hxg6 28. ♞g3 White's pressure is more than noticeable.

26. ♞h3 ♚f8

Nothing essential is changed by 26...♞h8 27. ♞f4.

27. ♞h6+ ♞g7 28.hxg6 hxg6 29. ♙xg6!

The end. The sacrifice is illusory, incidentally: after 29...fxg6 30. ♞h8+ ♚f7 31. ♞f3+ Black loses at once.

Unlike Ragozin, Capablanca finds a way to prolong the game. The leitmotiv of the defence is the idea of sacrificing the queen, to establish a fortress.

29... ♞f6 30. ♞g5! ♚e7

The trappy 30...♞d5 (hoping for 31. ♞f3 ♞xf3! 32.gxf3 ♞xg5+ 33. ♞xg5 ♞xg6) is refuted by 31. ♞xd5! cxd5 32. ♞h8+ ♚e7 33. ♞xc8 ♞xg6 34. ♞c7+ (this preliminary check is necessary, so as not to have to calculate complicated variations after 34. ♞h8 ♞xg2+ 35. ♚xg2 ♞g5+) 34...♚f8 35. ♞b8+ ♚e7 36. ♞h8 ♞xg2+ 37. ♚xg2 ♞g5+ 38. ♞g3.

31. ♞f3 ♞xf3 32.gxf3 ♞dg8

Now the resolute 33. ♞h4! leads to the desired outcome. In the game, there followed:

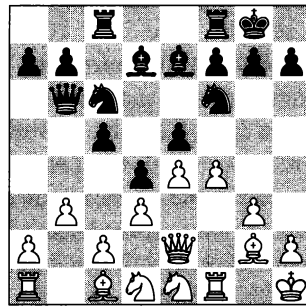
33. ♚f1 ♞xg6 34. ♞xg6 ♞xg6

And Black was indeed very close to establishing a fortress.

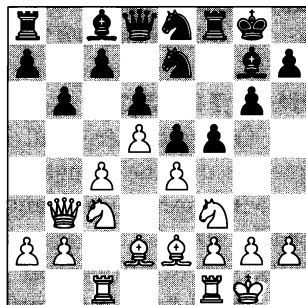
The further dramatic events are well-known, although treated differently in various books. Lasker, already very elderly at the time, did not undertake anything active and waited to adjourn

the game. Capablanca, for his own reasons, resigned before the adjournment.

To complete the discussion of copying plans and structures, I will remind the reader of the 'mirror effect', explained in Chapter 18. Many structures (and concrete opening variations), which seem completely original and independent, are in reality nothing but a mirror image of another opening or structure, with colours reversed.



A match game from 1895 between Chigorin and Schiffers. The first moves (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3) show that White was ready to play the Closed Sicilian. In reality, though, he is playing a King's Indian Attack (or King's Indian Defence with colours reversed). If you are not sure of this, look at the following diagram:

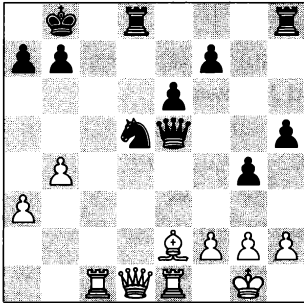


The position is almost identical, with reversed colours (Taimanov-Fischer, Vancouver 1971).

The following pair of twins look like some sort of joke. Different games, played with completely different openings, ended up reaching an identical position, and of a middlegame character at that.

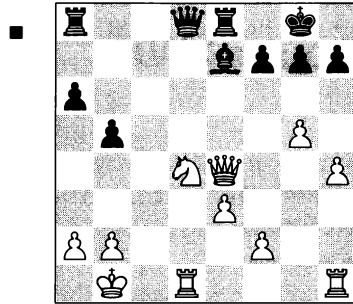
Fedor Duz-Khotimirsky
Akiba Rubinstein

Lodz 1907



Alexander Alekhine
Frederick Yates

Hamburg 1910



Only at this point did the games finally diverge. Duz-Khotimirsky happily played on a pawn down (but lost anyway), while Yates ran headlong into the prepared trap:

19... ♖xg5 20. ♔e6!

I sincerely hope you will enjoy this book!

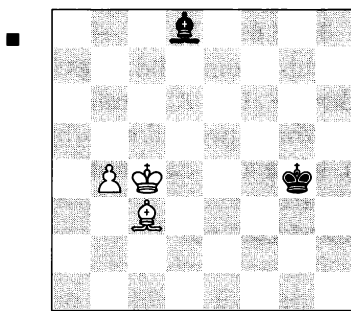
Sarhan Guliev
Baku, April 2015

Chapter 1

The Janowski Incident, or Grief out of Wit

Mark Taimanov
Robert Fischer

Buenos Aires 1960



Despite his young age (he was still not yet 17), the American player defended a difficult situation with great cold-bloodedness:

81...♟f4 82.b5 ♞e4 83.♞d4 ♟c7
84.♟c5 ♞d3!

Taking the king round the back is the key to the position.

85.♟c6 ♟c4! 86.♞b6 ♟f4 87.♞a7
♟c7!

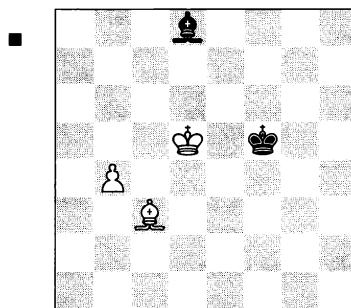
And the players agreed a draw.

Fischer's colossal talent is not in doubt, but the question remains: where did he learn this method of defence? Maybe he did not know it, and found it at the board? Or maybe someone had shown it to him?

I would like to believe that the young Fischer was familiar with this position:

José Raul Capablanca
David Janowski

New York 1916



A historic incident – in the diagram position, Black resigned! But the position is in fact a draw.

83...♟f4! 84.♞d4 ♟f3! 85.b5 ♞e2!

This and the following moves are strictly the only moves.

86.♟c6 ♞d3 87.♞b6 ♟g5
88.♟b7!?

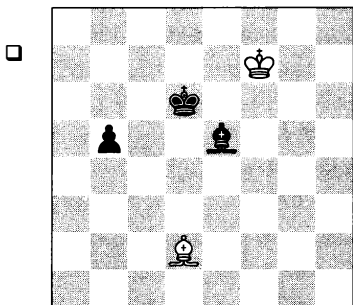
Or **88.♞c7 ♞e3 89.♞d6 ♟c4**, and the king manages to stop the bishop reaching c5.

88...♟c4 89.♟a6 ♟b3 90.♞f2 ♞d8
91.♞e1 ♟a4! 1-0

Once again, the king arrives in time.

**Ruslan Ponomariov
Levon Aronian**

Lausanne 2001



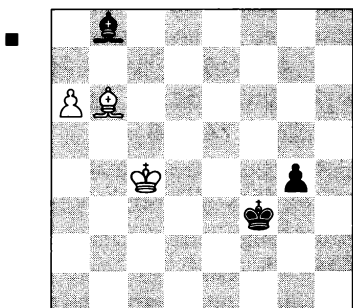
In our day, GMs use this technique of by-passing with the king without thinking.

67. ♖e8! ♙f6 68. ♜b4+ ♔d5 69. ♔d7 ♜c4 70. ♙f8

Draw agreed. If 70...♙d4, in the hope of blocking the a3-f8 diagonal with ♙d4-c5, then 71.♜c6!.

**Anatoly Karpov
Ljubomir Ljubojevic**

Monaco 1996



Chess is an area where there are as many exceptions as there are rules. In this example, Black confidently follows the classical method.

86... ♜e4 87. ♜c5 ♔d3 88. ♜c6 ♜c4 89. ♜b7 ♜b5

And he lost...

90. ♙f2

The direct method also works: 90.♙c7 ♙xc7 91.a7.

90... ♜a5 91. ♙h4 ♜b5 92. ♙e1!

Zugzwang. Black resigned. But he could have drawn with the primitive 86...g3 87.♜b5 g2 88.♜c6 ♙g3 89.a7 ♙f2 90.a8 ♜g1 ♜g1.

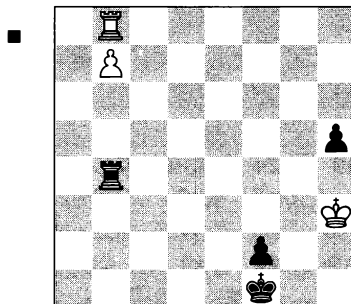
A case of grief from wit. The only excuse one can make for Ljubojevic is that it was a blindfold game.

Rook endings are the most complicated in chess. The great number of basic positions, the large number of rules which work in some positions, yet not in others that seem very similar, the huge number of rules, and even greater number of exceptions...

Nobody can ignore the most important principle of studying endgames: miracles do not happen – one must work. Work a great deal. Study theory, read good, intelligent books, study the classics, carefully dissect the commentaries of the strongest masters and analysts, and, naturally, enlarge your experience of playing such positions.

**Arnaud Hauchard
Ruslan Ponomariov**

Belfort 1998



Black to play. If you do not know the classical stem game, then you could easily lose your way. But if you know it, then the win is not so difficult:

69...♙g1 70.♖g8+ ♔h1! 71.♗f8 ♜b3+! 72.♙h4 ♙g2 73.♖g8+ ♔h2 74.♗f8 ♜b4+! 75.♙xh5 ♙g3

Also possible is 75...♙g2 with the same ideas.

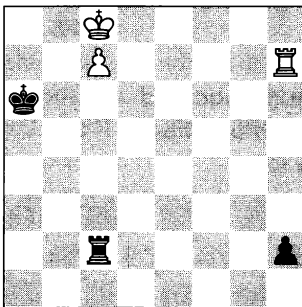
76.♖g8+ ♔h3 77.♗f8 ♜b5+! 78.♙h6 ♙g3 79.b8♖+

White does not wish to see the very end of the film. The main variation is as follows: 79.♖g8+ ♔h4 80.♗f8 ♜b6+ 81.♙h7 ♜xb7+ 82.♙h6 ♙g3 winning. On 79.♗f7, there follows 79...♜xb7.

79...♜xb8 80.♜xb8 f1♖

And Black won.

The method employed by Ponomariov is known in chess composition terminology as a 'systematic manoeuvre'. Interestingly, this particular example was first shown in an endgame study (in 1890) by a practical player, no less a player than the future World Champion Emanuel Lasker.



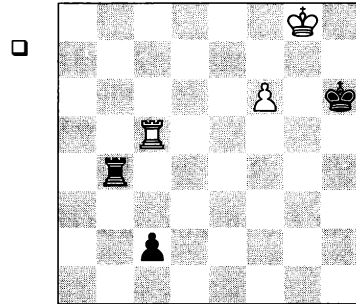
1.♙b8 ♜b2+ 2.♙a8! ♜c2 3.♜h6+ ♙a5 4.♙b7 ♜b2+ 5.♙a7 ♜c2 6.♜h5+ ♙a4 7.♙b7 ♜b2+ 8.♙a6 ♜c2 9.♜h4+ ♙a3 10.♙b6 ♜b2+ 11.♙a5 ♜c2 12.♜h3+ ♙a2 13.♜xh2! ♜xh2 14.c8♖

Winning.

To say such systematic manoeuvres occur often in practical play would be untrue, as they are relatively rare. But even so, not knowing such ideas would be shameful.

**Vlastimil Jansa
Efim Geller**

Budapest 1970



67.f7

After 67.♜xc2 ♜b8+ 68.♙f7 ♜b7+ we reach a theoretical draw.

67...♖g4+ 68.♙h8!

Again the correct choice. After 68.♙f8 ♖g2 69.♙e7 ♜e2+ White is already unable to return to the correct path.

68...♜f4 69.♜c6+! ♙h5 70.♙g7 ♖g4+ 71.♙h7 ♜f4 72.♜c5+ ♙h4 73.♙g7 ♖g4+ 74.♙f6

Blindly following the original example is wrong: 74.♙h6 ♜f4, and White has achieved nothing.

74...♜f4+ 75.♙e6!

All correct. Heading towards the enemy king immediately with 75.♙g6 ♖g4+ 76.♙h6 ♜f4 is pointless. First, he needs to make the black rook occupy the second rank.

Incidentally, this could have been achieved earlier: 71.♙f8 ♖g2 72.♙e7 ♜e2+ 73.♙f6 ♜f2+ 74.♙g7 ♖g2+ 75.♙h7! ♜f2 76.♜c5+, etc.

75...♖e4+ 76.♟f5 ♞e2 77.♟g6
 ♞g2+ 78.♟h6! ♞f2 79.♞c4+ ♟h3
 80.♟g6 ♞g2+ 81.♟h5 ♞f2 82.♞c3+
 ♟h2

The finish resembles that of the original study. The first two moves are a pre-
 amble, and then, after 69.♞c6+!, there
 follows the working out of the main
 theme. Now the final move is the point:

83.♞xc2!

Black resigned. «It is good when you know the
 classics!» – Jansa.

Incidentally, we can note the culture of
 the Soviet GM. When faced with enter-
 ing an ending with rook against queen,
 he resigns at once. Nowadays, players
 play on in such an endgame, and not
 always without success.

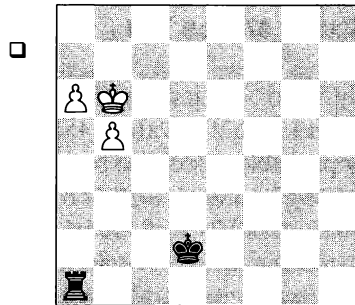
In former times, players studied the
 endgame all the time, for obvious rea-
 sons. If it reached an ending, a game
 would, as a rule, be adjourned. The play-
 ers would study reference books, and
 discuss the position with friends and
 colleagues. The analysis of adjourned
 positions could take a day, two, or even
 more. And on the day of resumption,
 after relaxing, the player would appear.
 His analysis would be tested against
 that of his opponent, and the work of
 his brigade of seconds against that of his
 opponent's. Whose analysis would turn
 out to be deeper and more accurate?
 But the game eventually ends, whereas
 the life of the endgame goes on. Those
 who were analysing the position again
 sit down at the board, this time to
 write articles about it. Everyone took an
 interest in such endgames, which were
 discussed just as much as openings.
 The culture of endgames was at its
 highest. But the march of time goes on
 and the conditions for chess change. The

adjournment of games has passed into
 history, never to return. Classical (that is,
 unhurried) time controls are becoming
 a rarer and rarer thing. By the time a
 position arises on the board, with only a
 few pieces left, the modern-day player has
 neither the time nor the strength to play it
 well. The player is morally and physically
 exhausted, and has just seconds on the
 clock; it is hardly surprising that instead
 of quality play, we start to get a sham-
 bles, and the press end up talking about a
 comedy of errors.

It is a rare case when we can present
 an endgame without pointing out mis-
 takes, even with the strongest players.
 Mistakes are the rule. But there are
 exceptions. The players of today operate
 in completely different conditions from
 those of the masters of the past. And
 rather than criticising the current tribe
 of players, it is better to concentrate on
 the ways in which they have enriched
 chess art.

Veselin Topalov
Alexander Beliavsky

Linares 1995

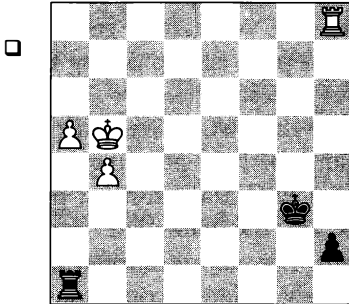


Having quickly calculated the variation
 73.a7 ♖c3 74.♟b7 ♖b4 75.b6 ♟b5,
 one could conclude that the diagram
 position is a draw. But in the game, only
 one more move was played:

73. ♖a7!

And Black resigned.

It is appropriate to recall the classical game Maroczy-Tarrasch (San Sebastian 1911), in which the Hungarian master (acknowledged as a great expert on the endgame, incidentally) was unable to win this position:



The game ended...

44. ♖c6 ♜c1+ 45. ♖b6 ♜c4!

Also sufficient for a draw was 45...h1 ♖ 46. ♜xh1 ♜xh1, but the text move is more decisive and does not give the opponent a choice.

46. ♜xh2

The threat was 46...♜h4, and Black even wins.

46... ♜xb4+ 47. ♖c5 ♜a4

Draw.

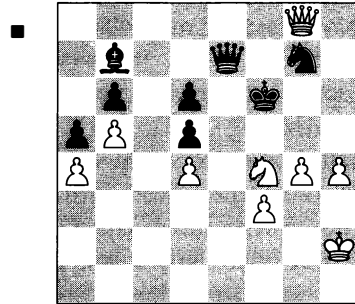
Yet only two moves were needed to win: 44. ♜xh2! ♖xh2 45. ♖a6!!.. Maroczy probably calculated something like 45.a6 ♖g3 46. ♖b6 ♖f4 47.b5 ♖e5 48.a7 ♖d5 49. ♖b7 ♖c5 50.b6 ♖b5. The non-routine king move, in front of his passed pawn, escaped his attention. But not Topalov's!

The endgame where a king and passed pawns fight against a rook is a frequent guest in tournament play. Less common is the ending with connected passed

pawns against a minor piece. Here is a classic example from the Bulgarian GM's career.

**Veselin Topalov
Krishnan Sasikiran**

Sofia 2007



To win the Sofia super-tournament, Topalov needed to win this last-round game. Veselin had played energetically and enterprisingly, sacrificing a piece in the middlegame, and at the moment shown in the diagram, had almost achieved his aim.

Black to move. And he has no moves. The bishop is immobile and the knight also (because of mate in one). Nor can he play 40...♖d7 because of 41. ♖f8+ ♖f7 42.g5+. That only leaves:

40... ♖f7 41. ♖d8+ ♖e7

And, not for the first time in the game, Topalov faced a choice...

Which piece should he keep and which exchange? It looks as though he should just eliminate queens and knights. Three pawns, which advance like a bulldozer, and the bishop is out of play. But it turns out that this is not so simple – the bishop has the dangerous counter-blow ...♗b7-c8-d7 and then taking on b5!

There is cause for worry. Not for nothing were the experts, watching

online, predicting that White would decide to keep as many pieces on the board as possible, especially as they could see nothing wrong with the move 42. ♖xb6. Nonetheless, there followed:

42. ♖g8 ♖f7 43. ♖d8+ ♖e7

And (to everyone's great surprise)

44. ♖xe7+!? ♖xe7 45. ♖g3 ♖e6

Now everyone was again convinced that Topalov would play 46. ♖e2, keeping a piece on the board, which can prevent the black pawns promoting. But he took:

46. ♖xe6!?

Combined with his 44th move, this creates a profound impression. Only a player with great belief in himself and his calculation could play in this way.

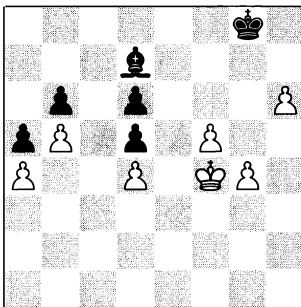
46... ♖xe6 47.f4 ♖c8 48.f5+ ♖f7

49.h5 ♖d7 50.h6 ♖g8!

It is too early to sacrifice: 50... ♖xb5 51.axb5 a4 52.g5 a3 53.g6+, and the white pawns promote first. But now it may look as though Black has tricked his opponent.

51. ♖f4

The culmination.



51... ♖e8

Topalov's calculation turns out to be precise after all. In reply to 51... ♖xb5 White wins with 52.g5! (of course, not 52.axb5 a4), and then: 52... ♖h7 (52... ♖xa4 53.g6 ♖e8 54. ♖g5 a4

55.h7+) 53.axb5 a4 54.f6 ♖g6 55.f7! ♖xf7 56. ♖f5 a3 57.g6+ ♖e7 58.h7 a2 59.h8 ♖ a1 ♖ 60. ♖h4+ ♖e8 61. ♖e6 or 60... ♖d7 61.g7 ♖f1+ 62. ♖f4 ♖g2 63. ♖g4.

52. ♖g5!

As they say in such cases, 'accurate to the end'. After the tempting 52.g5 ♖h7 53.f6 ♖g6, we have a fortress.

52... ♖f7

Nor can he save himself by 52... ♖h7 because of 53. ♖f6 ♖xh6 54. ♖e7.

53.h7 ♖g7 54.h8 ♖+ ♖xh8 55. ♖f6

♖xb5

Too late!

56. ♖e7 ♖d3 57.f6 ♖g6 58.f7 ♖xf7

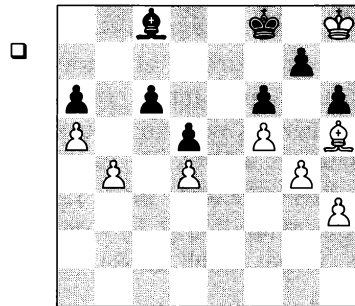
59. ♖xf7

Black resigned.

Yuri Averbakh

Semen Furman

Odessa 1960



A classic example on the same theme. White has strengthened the position of his pieces to the maximum, but for the moment Black is hanging on by his fingertips. The key to the position is the bishop sacrifice:

43. ♖e8!

After 43... ♖b7 44. ♖d7 we have zugzwang, so accepting the sacrifice is essential.

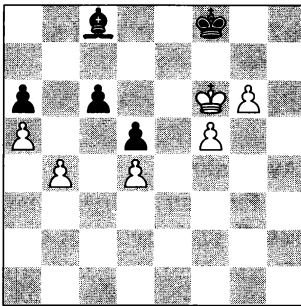
43... ♖xe8 44. ♖xg7

It looks as though the pawns will advance of their own accord, but this is not the case at all. For example, after 44...♔e7 the only winning line is 45.h4! ♙d7 46.g5! whereas after the tempting 45.♔xh6 White cannot make progress: 45...♔f7 46.h4 ♙d7 47.h5 ♙c8 etc.

44...h5 45.♔xf6

Slightly lengthening his task. Simpler is 45.gxh5 ♙xf5 46.♔xf6 ♙b1 47.♔g7 or 46...♙xh3 47.h6 ♔f8 48.h7. And if 45...♔e7, then 46.♔g6.

45...hxg4 46.hxg4 ♔f8 47.g5 ♔g8 48.g6 ♔f8



After his inaccuracy at move 45, White has significantly complicated his task. There is no win after 49.g7+ ♔g8 50.♔g6 ♙d7 51.f6 ♙e6! (but not 51...♙e8+ 52.♔f5 ♔f7 53.♔e5), whilst after 49.♔e5 ♔g7 50.♔d6 ♙xf5 51.♔xc6 ♙xg6! 52.b5 ♙e8+ he even risks losing.

49.♔g5!

One can compare this with the move 52.♔g5 in Topalov-Sasikiran, don't you think?

49... ♙d7 50.f6 ♙e8

Or 50...♔g8 51.♔f4 ♙e8, when even getting the opposition after 52.f7+ ♙xf7 53.gxf7+ ♔xf7 54.♔f5 ♔e7 55.♔e5 ♔d7 56.♔f6 ♔d6 does not guarantee the win. But it is easy to avoid this line of defence: 52.♔f5 ♙d7+ 53.♔e5 ♙e8, and only now 54.f7+.

51.♔f5 ♔g8 52.g7 ♙f7 53.♔e5 ♙g6 54.♔d6 ♙d3 55.♔xc6 ♔f7 56.♔d6

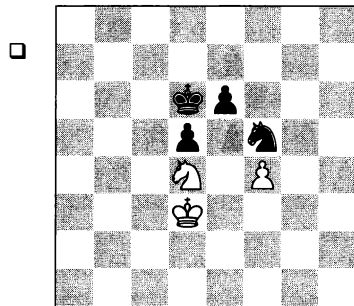
There are too many pawns, and too many passed pawns, too far apart. The king and bishop cannot cope. On 56...♙b5 White wins by 57.g8♙+ ♔xg8 58.♔e7, whilst after the game move **56... ♙f5** the reply **57.b5!** decides.

Returning to Topalov's play, we can note that relying on long and accurate pieces of calculation is a characteristic of his style. The Bulgarian plays the ending the same way he plays the middlegame. Playing 'on general considerations' is foreign to him. He does not like to manoeuvre around, dancing from one leg to the other, but prefers to force matters.

Sometimes such an approach leads him astray, but often it enables him to find the shortest way to win.

Veselin Topalov
Antonio Antunes

Candas 1992



The diagram position is like an old photo. Topalov was just 17 at the time, but his style was already fully formed. The last move was 60...♗g7-f5. White has a choice. It is possible to retreat the knight, when the endgame has a

drawish character, but Black can torture his opponent for a hundred moves. Or one can take on f5. If this is drawn, it is drawn straightaway, but if White's calculations contain the slightest error, then it will be impossible to do anything about it. That is the way with pawn endings – one needs to calculate them to the end, because there is no way back.

Topalov accepted the challenge:

61. ♖xf5+! exf5 62. ♔d4 ♕c6

62... ♕e6 63. ♕c5.

63. ♕e5 ♕c5 64. ♕xf5 d4 65. ♕g6!

This move had to be foreseen, before White exchanged knights. He loses

after both 65. ♕e4 ♕c4 66. f5 d3 67. f6 d2 68. f7 d1 ♖ ♖9. f8 ♖ ♖e1+, 70... ♖f1+ and 71... ♖xf8, and also 65. ♕e6 d3 66. f5 d2 67. f6 d1 ♖ 68. f7 ♖d6+.

65...d3 66.f5 d2 67.f6 d1 ♖ 68.f7

Strangely, in this position, the weaker side's king is better on the g-file than the e-file. For example, with the white king on e7, Black would win by means of 68... ♖d6+ 69. ♕e8 ♕c6! 71. f8 ♖ ♖d7#. One can find many examples on this theme in endgame studies with pawn endings.

68... ♖d8 69. ♕g7 ♖g5+ 70. ♕h8

♖f6+ 71. ♕g8 ♖g6+ 72. ♕h8! ♖xf7
Stalemate.

Chapter 2

Non-Routine Exchanges

Chess is a concrete game.

It is impossible to learn to play well, by relying solely on general principles and considerations. Nothing can replace the basic fundamental that chess is a game of calculation.

One can say 'a blockading knight is stronger than a bishop', but this is untrue, because it is too general and so inaccurate.

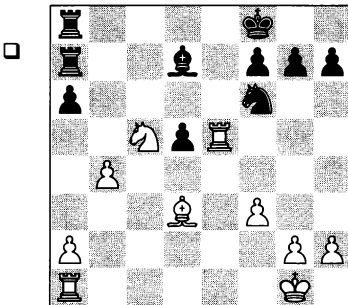
Or one can say that 'a blockading knight is usually stronger than a bishop', or 'a knight occupying an outpost is usually stronger than a bishop'. That is closer to the truth.

Or one could formulate it like this: usually, a blockading knight, or a knight occupying an outpost, is definitely stronger than a bishop. Exchanging such a knight for a bishop would be a positional mistake. But sometimes the position contains other, more important factors. And, after all, the player's task is not to hang onto the knight on its beautiful outpost, come what may, but simply to win the game. For the sake of this, one can sacrifice whole pieces, let alone exchange them off.

Every rule has its exceptions, and one must adopt a sceptical attitude to them all. Nothing should be accepted on faith, everything must be doubted – that is how great players have always behaved. And rightly so.

Robert Fischer
Tigran Petrosian

Buenos Aires 1971



22. ♖xd7+!?

«Highly characteristic of Fischer. He happily parts with his good knight, exchanging it for the bad bishop, and reaches a position of another type.

If White had played 22.a4 (so as to prevent 22...♗b5), Black would have replied 22...♗c6, preparing ...♟f6-d7». Polugaevsky.

Polugaevsky wrote his comments immediately after the game and all of the experts who have commented on the game since have been in agreement with Lev Abramovich. That is, they have said it is sad to part with the lovely knight on c5, but it is necessary. The arguments are all the same.

But it is not true. At least, not quite true. In the variation 22.a4 ♗c6 23.♞e2 ♟d7, White has a combination: 24.♟xa6! ♞xa6 25.♗xa6 ♞xa6, and now he plays the quiet move 26.♞c1!! with the unstoppable threat of b4-b5 (26...♗xa4 27.♞c8#). And if 23...g6 (stopping mate) 24.♞c1 ♟d7, then 25.a5, and it

is hard to see what Black's next move will be. On 25...♖g7, for example, there is the decisive 26.♘xa6 ♗xa6 27.♞b2! with good winning chances for White. So this means that the capture on d7 was not necessary. The reason for playing it is somewhat different. The point is to see the move ♘c5xd7 in the first place. That is, overcome one's natural reluctance to exchange off the lovely knight, include this exchange in one's list of candidate moves, give it due attention, and finally, decide to play it, after calculating concrete variations.

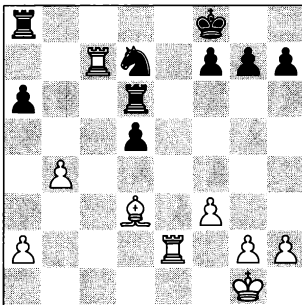
22...♞xd7 23.♞c1

In exchanging his knight for the 'bad' bishop, White did not give away his advantage, but simply transformed it, indeed, increased it considerably. The threat is to bring the rook to c6. The pawn weaknesses at a6 and d5 require defending. The bishop on d3 is stronger than the knight.

23...♞d6

In preventing the entry on the 6th rank, Black has to allow the enemy rook to the 7th instead.

24.♞c7 ♘d7 25.♞e2



25...g6

Polugaevsky points out that Black is in zugzwang. Not 25...♘b6 26.♞ee7, whilst after 25...a5 there is the «unpleasant» 26.bxa5 ♗xa5 27.♞c8#. Therefore Petrosian opens a bolthole for his king.

26.♖f2 h5

Now 26...a5 is bad because of 27.♙b5. Botvinnik, in a bid to ease the defence, recommended 26...♞b8 27.a3 a5 28.b5 a4. But it is not entirely clear what he had in mind after 28.bxa5. If 28...♞b3, then 29.♞d2 ♗xa3 30.a6 ♘b6 31.♞cc2! ♖e7 32.♞a2 ♗xa2 33.♞xa2, and Black's position remains difficult.

27.f4

Premature is 27.♖e3 ♘e5.

27...h4

Petrosian and his second Suetin indicate, as the last line of defence, 27...♘b6 28.♞ee7 ♗f6. How many analysts against one Fischer! But Black still has absolutely no moves.

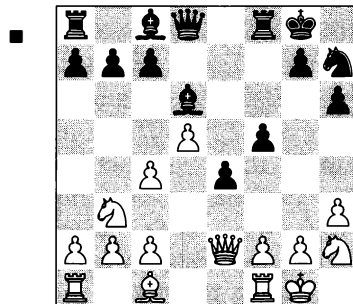
28.♖f3 f5 29.♖e3 d4+ 30.♖d2 ♘b6 31.♞ee7 ♘d5 32.♞f7+ ♖e8 33.♞b7 ♘xb4 34.♙c4

The immediate 34.♞h7 was also possible, but White has no cause to hurry. The threat of mate forced Petrosian to resign.

Almost 100 years earlier, Paul Morphy gave up a lovely-looking bishop for an unimpressive knight. There is little doubt that Fischer knew this game, since he greatly admired Morphy.

**Jules Arnous de Rivière
Paul Morphy**

Paris 1863

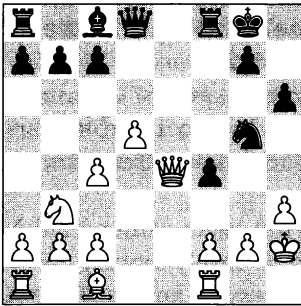


I have shown the diagram position to a number of grandmasters, but none guessed Black's next move. Even more than that – after seeing what was played, they all admitted that they did not even consider it.

14... ♖xh2+!?

With hindsight, one can usually work out the reasoning behind anything. Let us try to reconstruct the great master's thinking. Maybe Morphy was looking at ...f5-f4-f3. But after ...f5-f4, the likely reply is f2-f3, and the bishop on d6 is shut off, whilst the knight from h2 emerges via g4. Therefore Black decides on such an unsteretyped exchange.

15. ♖xh2 f4 16. ♜xe4 ♘g5



Morphy's idea is not unimpeachable. Let us look at the strongest defence: 17. ♜d3. For the present, White has a healthy extra pawn. The immediate blow on h3 is a bluff. Nor is Black achieving anything after 17...f3 18. ♖xg5 ♜xg5 19. ♖g1 ♜e5+ 20.g3 ♖xh3 because of 21. ♜d4! ♜h5 (21... ♜f5 22.g4) 22. ♜h4, forcing a favourable exchange of queens. The best chance is 17... ♜d6, and if 18.c5 ♜e5 19. ♜d4, then 19... ♘f3+! 20.gxf3 ♜h5. But a modicum of composure works here too: 18.f3 ♖xh3 (or 18... ♘h3 19.gxh3 ♜d7 20.♔g1 ♜xh3 21.♚f2 ♜g3+ 22.♚g2 ♜e1+ 23.♚f1, and it is all over) 19. ♘d4 (19.gxh3

♜d7) 19... ♖d7 20. ♖d2 ♜ae8 21. ♜ae1. White no longer has an extra pawn, but he retains the advantage, as is not hard to see.

17. ♜d4

Walking into a blow.

17... ♘f3+!

A blockading sacrifice. It is important to block the square f3, preventing the white pieces coming to the aid of their king.

It looks as though it is equally good to play 17... ♘xh3 18.gxh3 ♜h4 19. ♜d3 f3 or 18.f3 ♜h4. But White replies 18. ♘d2! ♜h4 19. ♘f3 ♜h5 20.♔h1, intending the defence ♘f3-h2 and retaining chances of saving himself: 20... ♘xf2+ 21.♔g1 ♘h3+ 22.♔h1 (stronger than 22.gxh3 ♖xh3 23.♚f2 ♚f6) 22... ♖g4 23. ♘h2 ♖e2 24. ♖d2 ♖xf1 25. ♚xf1.

Now, however, it is all over:

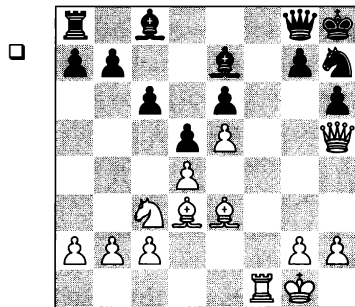
18.gxf3 ♜h4 19. ♚h1 ♖xh3 20. ♖d2 ♚f6 0-1

Unexpected exchanges are also seen in the games of present-day grandmasters.

Veselin Topalov

NN

Frankfurt (simultaneous) 1997



The knight on h7 is a feeble specimen, whereas the bishop on d3 is a lovely piece. But what can one do, if

exchanging one for the other is the shortest path to victory.

17. ♖xh7! ♜xh7

17... ♜xh7 18. ♜e8+ and 19. ♜xe7.

18. ♖xh6!

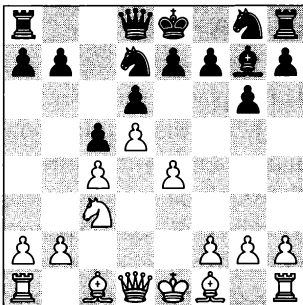
After 18...gxf6 there follows 19. ♜f7+. The game is over and Black resigned after a few more moves.

It is usual to consider that in open and semi-open positions, the bishop is stronger than the knight, and in closed positions, the other way round. But what about positions which are undefined? In positions which may become either open or closed, how does one evaluate the minor pieces? And how, correspondingly, does one evaluate the exchange of one for another?

That is a good question. It is perhaps most pressing in the opening stages of the game, and also in the transition between opening and middle-game. After a few initial moves, it can be hard to know whether the position will assume an open or closed character, but decisions regarding exchanges must nonetheless be made. Knowing the classics can help the decision-making process.

Veselin Topalov
Michael Adams

Dortmund 1996



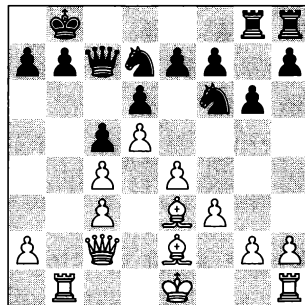
As we see, Black has already parted with one of his bishops. The position has King's Indian characteristics. It is not hard to guess White's plan: to prepare and carry out e4-e5, and maybe to attack on the kingside. Black's plan is harder to pin down. Maybe to play ...b7-b5 ? Without a light-squared bishop, this plan is unlikely to be realisable. The break ...e7-e6 ? Then the position opens, and the white bishop pair are likely to assume full strength.

Black would like the position to retain a closed character for as long as possible. But in that case, it is not clear what active plan he can carry out. And he does not want just to mark time... Adams shows something quite unexpected:

8... ♖xc3+!? 9.bxc3 ♜g6 10.f3

Black has parted with the pride of his position: the bishop on g7. For what? Some results are already visible. White can forget about the break b2-b4, and the break e4-e5 is more difficult. But that is only half of it. It is still hard to see an active plan for Black.

10... ♜a5 11. ♜b3 0-0-0 12. ♖e2 ♜dg8!? 13. ♜b1 ♜c7 14. ♖e3 ♜b8 15. ♜c2



15...g5!?

This, it turns out, was what Adams had in mind. Having closed the position on the queenside and in the centre,

he regrouped, intending the advance ...g6-g5-g4.

We should note that Topalov failed to divine his opponent's plan in time. In a later game Mchedlishvili-Gagunashvili (Tbilisi 2002), which went 12...♔b8 13.♚b1 ♚c7 14.♚c2 ♜dg8, White, having put off castling, was the first to become active on the kingside: 15.g4!?

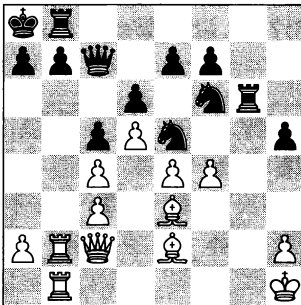
16.0-0 ♜g6 17.♚b2 ♔a8! 18.♚fb1 ♚b8 19.♔h1 h5 20.♚d2

A move which is hard to understand. So far, the advance of the g- and h-pawns has not led to the opening of lines, since after ...g5-g4 White always has the reply f3-f4. Now, however, White no longer has this reply, because the e4-pawn will be hanging.

Maybe Topalov, true to his style, was seeking to draw the fire onto himself, but in that case, both sides have similar intentions.

20...g4 21.♚c2 gxf3 22.gxf3 ♘e5 23.f4

The battle reaches its culmination.



23...♚c8!

This piece sacrifice is impossible to accept: 24.fxex5 ♚h3 25.♜gl ♜bg8 26.♚bb1 ♚xe3 27.♜xg6 ♜xg6 28.exf6 ♚f2. The square h3 must be defended, but then a new blow comes:

24.♙f1 ♘xc4!

An overloading combination. The bishop is split between two flanks.

25.♙xc4 ♚h3 26.♜f1

26.♚e2 ♘xe4.

26...♚xe3

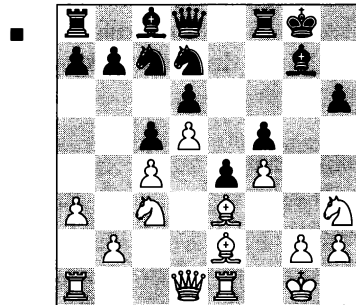
Chess is a funny game. Adams plays a move which anybody would have played in his place, giving back the extra piece, but retaining an extra pawn and the initiative. But this prolongs the win for a long time, as White resisted into a rook ending and only lost after 59 moves.

In the meantime, Black wins at once with 26...h4!. The threat of transferring the knight to g3 is unstoppable. For example: 27.f5 ♜g4 28.♙f4 ♘h5 29.♚d2 ♜bg8 etc.

Anyone acquainted with the classics can easily see where Adams' idea came from:

**David Bronstein
Tigran Petrosian**

Amsterdam/Leeuwarden 1956



Black has not played the opening stages convincingly. In the diagram position, White has a choice between several active plans: b2-b4 or g2-g4 (or both at once), whilst Black seems to have nothing in return. He is faced with total passivity.

Sensing the danger, Petrosian took the only correct decision. He constructed a fortress, and began by parting with his strongest piece:

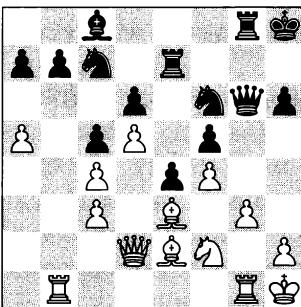
17... ♖xc3! 18.bxc3 ♜f6

What has Black achieved? White can forget about the plan b2-b4, for one thing. Secondly, the advance g2-g4 is now more difficult to achieve. Thirdly, the bishop on g7 does not now obstruct a black major piece on the g-file.

19.a4 ♜h8 20.♞f2 ♜g8 21.♜h1 ♜e8 22.♜g1 ♜g6 23.♜d2

So far, each side has fulfilled his minimum programme. But this move is a micro-inaccuracy. After 23.a5 ♖d7 24.♞b1, or immediately 23.♞b1, Black cannot develop his queenside without problems. He would be forced either to defend b7 with a rook, or else to decide on the committal ...b7-b6, which gives White a target for a4-a5, opening a second front. There is a chance of tying the black forces to defence on both flanks at once.

23... ♖d7 24.g3 ♜ae8 25.a5 ♜e7 26.♞ab1 ♖c8



This is the point. By his delay at move 23, White has allowed his opponent to deploy his forces in the most harmonious way possible. The bishop excellently defends the b7-pawn. The rook is not stuck on a8 or b8, but is on its way

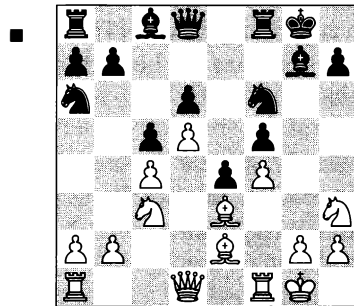
to g7, from where it takes part in the battle against the advance g2-g4.

27. ♜g2 ♜eg7 28. ♞bg1 ♜ce8 29.h3 h5 1/2-1/2

Incidentally, the resources are far from exhausted; the board is still full, of course. One idea is to try to swap round the bishop on e3 and knight on f2, put the rooks on g2 and h2, and play g3-g4. But in any event, Black is excellently prepared for this break. Bronstein evidently decided that half a point was better than none. Indeed, I suspect he reconciled himself to a draw from the moment Petrosian exchanged on c3.

**Boris Gelfand
Veselin Topalov**

Novgorod 1996



Not much time has elapsed since Topalov's bitter defeat against Adams (see above), but the Bulgarian GM demonstrated that he had already absorbed the lesson given him in that game.

16... ♜g4!? 17. ♖xg4 fxg4 18. ♞f2 ♖xc3! 19.bxc3 h5

The tactical justification lies in the variation 20.♞xe4 ♜e7.

20. ♜e2 ♖f5 21. ♖d2 ♜c7

The knight heads for g7 and from there to f5. Black has no difficulties at all.

«Anyone can win by utilising his friends' strengths. The real leader is the one who wins by utilising his enemy's strengths» – Napoleon.

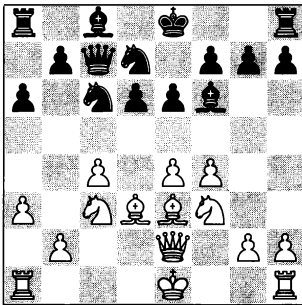
Incidentally, a word about lessons learned and not learned. One often hears young players saying things like 'Why should I study the King's Indian (Sicilian, Spanish...)? I don't play it!'. But the same, or similar, ideas and technical devices often crop up in completely different openings. Pawn structures are often close to identical, as are the problems faced by players. Consequently, one should never restrict one's attention solely to games in one's own narrow opening repertoire!

Many wise and sensible things were written on this subject by the great trainer Vladimir Zak, in his book *The Paths to Self-Improvement*, which I recommend to any young player. [Translator's Note: This book has not been translated into English.]

As an example of ideas from one opening being seen in another, let us examine the following game.

Jaan Ehivest
Garry Kasparov

Linares 1991



12... ♖xc3+!? 13.bxc3 e5

In the King's Indian, this idea has become a standard one, but it is rarer in the Sicilian Defence. However, the motifs are the same. By giving up his bishop, Black has spoiled his opponent's pawn structure. If he manages to keep the position solid, then the pawns on c4 and e4 could prove hopelessly weak, and the white bishops helpless behind their own pawns.

White, in his turn, needs to strive for open play and prevent the position being ossified. However, it is not entirely clear how he should do this.

14.f5 ♖cb8!?

A surprising move. An amateur, if he even saw the idea of moving the knight from c6, would surely play 14... ♖a5. White would reply 15. ♖b1, taking control of the square b3. In order to get the knight to c5, Black must play ...b7-b6, and then ...♖a5-b7. The pawn on b6 could become weak and an object of attack.

Kasparov intends a piece regrouping, but without any weakening pawn moves. He plays ...♖c6-b8, then ...♖d7-c5, ...♖b8-d7-f6 and ...♖c8-d7-c6. If he manages to carry this out, then the black minor pieces will occupy ideal positions.

15.0-0 ♖c5 16. ♖c2 ♖bd7 17. ♖fd1

Ivanchuk, analysing this game, pointed out the move 17. ♖f2. If 17...b6, then 18. ♖g3, whilst in reply to 18...♖f6 Black must reckon with 18. ♖xe5! and White achieves his desired aim of opening the position in the centre.

Alas, Ehivest missed this crucial opportunity. After playing outwardly sensible moves, but ones which lack a coherent plan, he gradually drifts into a difficult position.

17... ♖f6 18. ♖d2 ♖d7 19. ♖g5 ♖c6 20. ♖f3 0-0-0

The position has clarified. Black has completed his development, and retained all his advantages. Later, he carried out the plan we are familiar with from the game Topalov-Adams: ...♖d8-g8, ...h7-h6, ...g7-g5, developed his initiative and eventually won.

The ability to stick to one's guns is essential in any contest, including chess. This hardly requires much evidence. For example, insisting on a favourable exchange of an outwardly 'good' bishop for an apparently 'bad' one. This is clear enough.

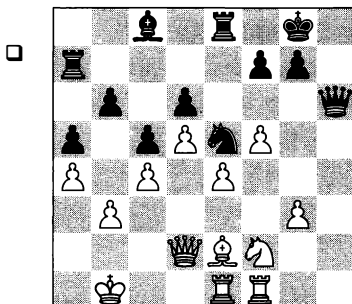
But let us look at a more subtle case. Imagine two duellists. Both are equally good shots, so the choice of weapons does not matter much. But one of them is short-sighted, so it is obvious that the main dispute will be over how many paces the duel will begin with.

The same applies to chess players. It happens sometimes that both players are prepared to make an exchange, but they disagree on the square on which that exchange should take place. Whoever wins this argument can win the game.

Vladimir Kramnik

Sergey Tiviakov

Sochi 1990



Black has just retreated his attacked queen from h4 to h6, offering the exchange. And White now faces a choice.

He could exchange: 30. ♖xh6 gxh6, but there is a high chance that Black will retain drawing chances, even if he loses a pawn. For example: 31. ♖h1 ♔g7 32. ♖h4 ♖h8 33. ♖eh1 ♖e7 34. ♘h3, then ♘h3-f4-h5-f6. It is not very nice, but with the beautiful knight on e5, Black has something to suffer for.

White can also avoid the exchange with 30. ♖c3, but then, firstly, the king moves away: 30... ♔f8 31. ♖h1 ♖f6, and, secondly, it is not clear what the queen is doing on c3. Kramnik finds a third possibility:

30. ♖f4!?

You want to exchange? Be my guest – but on my terms!

30...g5

Naturally, 30... ♖xf4 31.gxf4 cannot suit Black. The only pride of his position, the knight on e5, is forced away. But now, with the queens remaining on the board, Black's position is still not enviable. The queen on f4 is much stronger than on c3, as it takes a direct part in the attack.

31.fxg6 ♖xg6 32. ♖h1 ♔g7 33. ♖h5 f6 34. ♖eh1 ♘f7 35. ♖h4

35. ♖h7+ ♖xh7 36. ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 37. ♖g4! also wins.

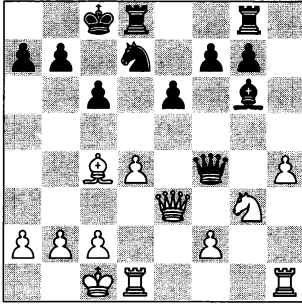
35... ♖e5 36. ♘d3 ♖g5 37. ♖h5 ♖xh5 38. ♖xh5 ♖e7 39. ♖h7+ ♔f8 40. ♖h4

Black resigned.

Perhaps the still quite young Kramnik was helped towards the correct decision by knowing this classic example:

Mihail Tal
Mikhail Botvinnik

Moscow 1960



The last move in the game was 20. ♔e2-e3. Should Black exchange?

There can be no question of playing 20... ♖xe3+ 21. fxex3. White moves the rook from d1 to f1, plays h4-h5, and then, if necessary, ♖h1-g1. The pressure on the g7 and f7-pawns would become serious.

Nor does Black want to play 20... ♗d6. In reply, there follows 21. h5 ♕h7 22. h6 and White easily gets rid of his weakness. Isn't there some way to stop this?

20... ♗h6!

This is the correct decision. After 21. ♖xh6 gxxh6, the f-file stays closed and the pawns on f4 and h4 remain weak.

It is interesting how this example is a kind of reverse of the previous one – here the queen retreats back down the same line, rather than advancing towards the enemy queen.

21. ♕d3 ♕xd3 22. ♖xd3 ♜b6
23. ♖xh6

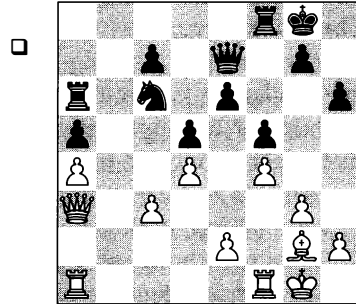
Conceding the opponent's wish.

23... gxxh6 24. ♖f3 f5 25. ♖e1 ♖d6
26. c3 ♖g4

It is clear that Black retains the initiative.

David Bronstein
Isaak Boleslavsky

Moscow 1950



David Bronstein often surprised his opponents with original and unsteretyped decisions, and this is one of many such examples. The position is closed, and there is only one open file; it seems that White can only choose between 22. ♖xe7 ♜xe7 23. ♖fb1 and the immediate 22. ♖fb1. But instead, there followed:

22. ♖c5!? ♖b8 23. ♖fb1 ♖xc5

Why does Black not fight for the open file with 23... ♖ab6, one may ask? Evidently, because of 24. ♖xb6 ♖xb6 25. c4!.

24. dxc5 ♜f8 25. ♖b5

Thus, although Black was the first to occupy the open file, it is White who ends up with it. And this is a direct result of the move 22. ♖c5.

Chapter 3

Connecting the Endgame with the Opening

In chess books, one often comes across discussions of the connection between the opening and the middlegame. Sometimes, the connection is described as 'close'. But what exactly does this mean?

It means that, when emerging from the opening, the player should have a very clear and well-worked out view of his prospects, rather than just a hazy notion. As well as calculating concrete variations (of the type 'I attack that, he defends it'), he should understand what middlegame plan he should follow, what pawn structure he should aim for, which pieces it is favourable to exchange and which not, etc.

When we wish to compliment a player on his positional understanding, we often describe him as 'thinking in terms of schemes', 'thinking in plans'. Such a player can not only calculate variations and see combinational blows, but also look into the far future and divine the contours of the resulting position.

Connecting the opening with the middlegame is a case of seeing into the future.

One of the great masters of planning was the sixth World Champion, Mikhail Botvinnik. In his best games, he clearly shows the connection of the opening with not only the middlegame, but even the endgame.

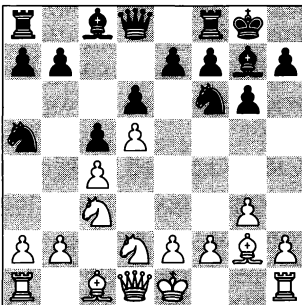
Here is a characteristic example:

Mikhail Botvinnik

Efim Geller

Moscow 1952

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2
0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.d5 ♘a5
8.♘d2 c5**



Black has played the Yugoslav Variation of the King's Indian Defence, in which

Black voluntarily puts his knight on a5, from where (after ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5) it can exert pressure on the c4-pawn and White's queenside more generally.

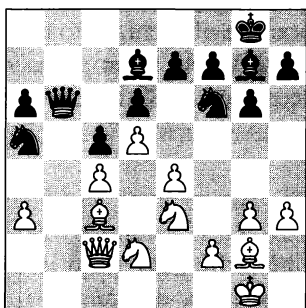
Even so, the knight stands badly on a5. It has no chances of returning to the main theatre of action. Where can the knight go to from a5? To b7? And then only to d8. All of these square, a5, b7 and d8, are ones from where it is ineffective. The knight is offside for the long-term, maybe for ever.

In 1952, the theory of this variation (and, indeed, the King's Indian as a whole) was only just coming into being. Later, it was shown that the variation is viable, but Black must play extremely energetically. He must attack the white centre from all sides, with: ...b7-b5, ...e7-e6, and if necessary, even ...f7-

f5; he must wriggle and writhe, and exploit the slightest chance of activity. Only in this way can he hope that the knight's being out of play will not play a significant role, and that this will be outweighed by other, more dynamic factors.

White's play is clear in terms of general characteristics: he should dry up the position with exchanges and head for the endgame. The middlegame passes under the general aim of restricting Black's activity. This, Botvinnik succeeds in doing admirably.

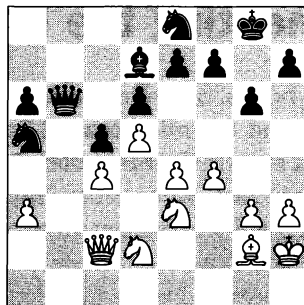
After 17 moves, the position looked like this:



The rooks have been exchanged and Black has no entry squares on the open b-file. The knight on a5 sticks out like a sore thumb. White has a clear plan: e4-e5. In the rest of the game, he is practically playing with an extra piece. Black's position is difficult.

But not hopeless. In the diagram position, Botvinnik recommended 23...e5!?. The move looks anti-positional: as well as one bad piece on a5, Black now has a bad bishop on g7. Even so, the move makes sense. If White does not react to it, Black has chances to barricade the centre and establish a fortress, whilst after 24.dxe6 ♗xe6, the stranded knight on a5 can return to the centre via c6.

23...♗e8 24.♗xg7 ♗xg7 25.♖h2
♗e8 26.f4



An important moment. The break e4-e5 is impossible to prevent, but it is possible to exploit its downside, by preparing to take twice on e5, and free the d6-square for the knight.

A sample variation might be 26... f6 27.♖c3 ♗b7 28.e5 fxe5 29.fxe5 dxe5!? 30.♖xe5, and now either 30...♖f6 31.♖b8 ♗d6 32.♖a7 ♖f2 33.♗df1 ♗f5 34.♖xe7 ♗e4 (or 33.♗ef1 ♗f6 34.♖xa6 ♗f5), or else (if Black is not in the mood to sacrifice anything) 30...♖d6 31.♖b2 ♖c7, although in this case, he must reckon with 32.d6!?.

Of course, White is not obliged to allow all this. Instead of the immediate 28.e5 he can retain pieces on the board for a long time, and choose the most convenient moment for the breakthrough. He can also include his king-side pawns in the attack, for example with 28.h4!?.

26...♗f6 27.e5 ♗e8 28.♖c3 f6

An extremely committal continuation. By allowing his opponent to establish a huge pawn on e6, Black himself creates the conditions for a white mating attack..

In Volume 2 of his *Analytical and Critical Works*, Botvinnik wrote that «... it was dan-

gerous to exploit the chance to play 28...♙a4 in view of 29.♘g4, and White's attack grows». Continuing this variation: 29...h5 30.♗h6+ ♖g7 31.e6+! f6 (31...♗xh6 32.♙h8#) 32.♗f7 ♗b3 33.f5! ♙a5 (33...♗xd2 34.♙xd2 g5 35.♙e2 with mate) 34.♗e4 gxf5 (34...♙xc3 35.♗xc3, and the bishop is lost) 35.♙e3! is enough to convince one that Botvinnik is right.

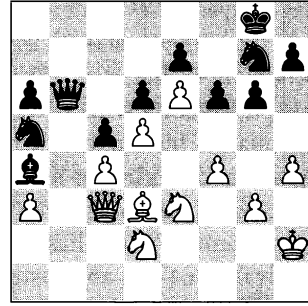
But it is hard to understand why Black refrained from the move 28...♗b7. After all, for the last ten moves, he has been marking time, so why choose this moment to change course? Maybe he was disturbed by the concrete variation 29.e6!? fxe6 (he cannot refuse to capture the pawn: 29...♙a4 30.exf7+ ♖xf7 31.♙h8 ♗f6 32.♗e4) 30.dxe6 ♙xe6 31.f5!? (after 31.♗d5 ♙d8, the attack comes to nothing) 31...gxf5 (hopeless is 31...♙xf5 32.♗xf5 gxf5 33.♙d5+ e6 34.♙xe6+ ♖f8 35.♙h8+ ♖e7 36.♙xf5) 32.♗d5 ♙d8 33.♗f4 ♙c8 34.♙d5+ e6 35.♗xe6 ♙xe6 36.♙xe6+ ♖f8 37.♙h8+ ♖e7 38.♙d5, and he has to acknowledge defeat. Stronger is 32...♙a5! White regains the sacrificed material: 33.♙e3 (33.♗xe7+ ♖f7) 33...♗g7 34.♗xe7+ ♖f8 35.♗xf5 ♙xf5 36.♙xb7, but it is still early to speak of his winning.

Again, I would point out that White is not obliged to force matters. Instead of 29.e6, he has a mass of other moves: 29.g4, 29.h4 etc. In all cases, Black's position remains passive, unpleasant and difficult to defend.

29.e6 ♙a4 30.♙e4 ♗g7

He loses a piece after 30...♗b3 31.♙b2! ♙a5 (31...♗c7 32.♙c2) 32.♗xb3 ♙e1 33.♙d2, but now he has not a single active piece remaining.

31.♙d3 ♗h5 32.♙e2 ♗g7 33.h4 ♗e8 34.♙d3 ♗g7



35.f5!

If we go back to the position of the first diagram (after 8 moves), we can see that White has realised absolutely all of his ideas. Everything he dreamed of has occurred on the board.

Of course, this is not just the result of magic, but of the powerful and carefully-planned work of the sixth World Champion.

35...♗b3

Agony.

36.♙b2 ♙a5 37.♗xb3 ♙e1 38.♗g2 ♙d1 39.♗c1 gxf5 40.♙e2 ♙d4 41.♙xd4

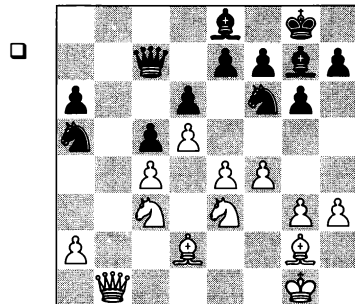
The time control is passed and Black resigned.

«This is the only game I managed to win against my ingenious opponent»— Botvinnik.

Alexander Baburin

Imad Hakki

Yerevan 1996



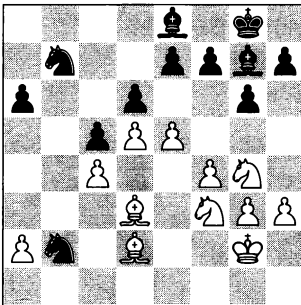
Black has played the same variation (and made the same mistakes) as in the game Botvinnik-Geller, but White has placed his pieces somewhat differently. His dark-squared bishop is not on the long diagonal and neither of his knights is in contact with the e5-square.

For the moment, White has to wait with the advance e4-e5, and instead we get a phase of manoeuvring.

- 22. ♖f1 ♘h5 23. ♙h2 ♚b7 24. ♛c2 ♛c7 25. ♗d3 ♘b7 26. ♘e2 ♘f6 27. ♘g1 ♘d7 28. ♘f3 ♚b6 29. ♘d1**

Psychologically, an understandable move (White is afraid of losing his advantage and covers the b2-square first of all), but not an obligatory one. If one were to copy Botvinnik's plan, one should begin with 29. ♗c3. It looks as though Black can create counterplay: 30... ♗xc3 30. ♚xc3 ♚b4 31. ♚c2 ♘b6, but let us continue this analysis: 32. e5 ♘a4 33. ♘d1 or 32... ♗a4 33. ♚e2 ♚c3 34. ♘g4. The counterplay comes to nothing, and White develops his attack in the classical fashion.

- 29... ♚c7 30. ♙g2 ♘b6 31. ♘e3 ♘a4 32. ♘g4 ♚b6 33. e5 ♚b2 34. ♚xb2 ♘xb2**



White has managed to get in the break e4-e5, but at a high cost: the queens have been exchanged. One can conclude that White's manoeuvres have not

been ideal. However, this has not been for nothing from a spectator's point of view, as we now get an interesting, highly instructive endgame. Black's problems have not disappeared – his knight remains out of play.

- 35. ♗e2 ♘a4 36. ♘f2 f6 37. e6 f5 38. ♘d1 ♘b6**

A fortress? Not quite. White certainly isn't going to break through on the queenside, but on the other flank, there remains one final break.

- 39. g4 ♗a4 40. ♘e3 ♗d4**

Not 40... fxc4 41. hxc4.

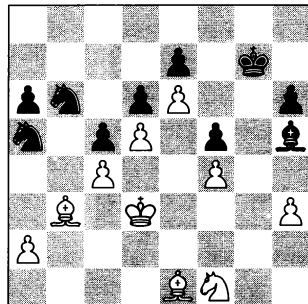
- 41. gxf5 ♗xe3 42. ♗xe3 gxf5 43. ♗d3**

The activation of the knight can be stopped with 43. ♗d2, but then 43... ♗c2.

- 43... ♘a5 44. ♘d2 ♗e8 45. ♗f2 ♗g6**

The position has undergone some changes. White's plan is clear: to take on f5, but in such a way that the opponent cannot take on c4. It seems the decision is elementary: transfer the king to c3, but then there is a check on a4. Consequently, longer and more complicated manoeuvres are required.

- 46. ♗e1 ♙f8 47. ♙f3 h6 48. ♙e3 ♙e8 49. ♗e2 ♙f8 50. ♙d3 ♗e8 51. ♙c3 ♘a4+ 52. ♙c2 ♘b6 53. ♗h4 ♗g6 54. ♙c3 ♘a4+ 55. ♙d3 ♘b6 56. ♗d1 ♗e8 57. ♗c2 ♗h5 58. ♗f2 ♗e8 59. ♗e1 ♙g7 60. ♗b3 ♗h5 61. ♘f1**



The key moment in the game.

With his last move, White set a trap: 61...♖axc4 62.♙xc4 ♘xc4 63.♘g3 ♖b6 64.♘h5+, winning a piece. Strangely enough, this is not the end of the battle, which, on the contrary, flares up with new strength. After 64...♙g6, White faces a crossroads. If he hangs on to his material with 65.♘g3 ♘xd5 66.♙d2 ♙f6, he may face insuperable difficulties in converting. A more interesting route is to return the piece: 65.♙h4!?. A likely development of events then is 65...♙xh5 (65...♘xd5 66.♘g3 ♘xf4+ 67.♙c4 ♘xh3 68.♙xe7 ♘f4 69.♙xd6 ♘xe6 70.♘e2) 66.♙xe7 ♘c8 (66...♘xd5 67.♙xd6) 67.♙f8 (the alternative is 67.♙d8 ♙g6 68.♙c4 ♙g7 69.♙b3 ♙f8, and now 70.♙a4 ♘e7 is useless) 67...♙g6 68.♙c3 (68.♙c4 ♖b6+) 68...h5 69.♙b3 ♙f6, and again the breakthrough fails: 70.♙a4 ♖b6+. Instead of 62.♙xc4, the immediate 62.♘g3 is more subtle, and then 62...♖b2+ 63.♙c2 ♙d1+ 64.♙xb2 ♙xb3 65.♙xb3 ♙g6 66.♘e2 ♘xd5 67.♙a4. White has real winning chances. The knight has most trouble coping with a rook's pawn. If we manage to take on a6, the rest will not matter.

Black, in his turn, can part with a piece in another way: 61...♘xb3 62.axb3 ♙f3 63.♘g3 (63.♘e3 ♙e4+) 63...♙g6 64.♙a5 ♘xd5! (the passive path 64...♘c8 leads to defeat: 65.♙d8 ♙f6 66.♙c3 ♙e4 67.♙b2 ♙g6 68.♙a3 ♙c2 69.♙a4 ♙f6 70.♘f1!) 65.cxd5 ♙xd5. Again, there is no guarantee that it will be possible to realise the extra piece.

61...♖b7

Capitulation.

62.♘e3 ♙g6 63.♙c2 ♙f8 64.♙c3 ♖a5 65.♙d3 ♙e8

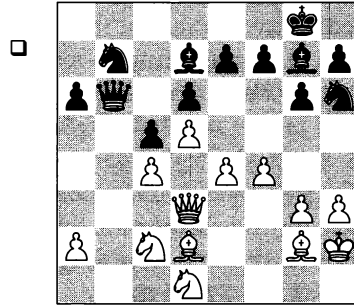
Or 65...♙g8 66.♙c2 ♖b7 67.♙b3, and the f5-pawn falls anyway.

66.♘xf5 ♙g6 67.♘e3 ♙e8 68.f5

After a few more moves, White won.

**Elmar Magerramov
Tony Molina**

Dubai 2007



As Grandmaster Elmar Magerramov pointed out, even in the most primitive variation 23.♙b3 ♙xb3 24.axb3 a5 25.♘c3 ♙xc3 26.♙xc3 a4 27.bxa4 ♙xa4 28.♘e3, White retains some chances, that's how badly both of Black's knights are placed.

23.♘e1!

But this is a good deal stronger. Firstly, White takes control of b1, preventing Black penetrating down the b-file, and secondly, the knight heads to f3, from where it will support the break e4-e5 and the attack in general.

23...a5 24.g4 f6

Black desperately wants to avoid this move, but he has no choice. The knight on h6 is completely unsuited for any sort of counterplay, so Black re-routes it to f7.

25.♘f3 ♘f7

Black is prepared for the break e4-e5. But White has a wide front for operations and the breakthrough can come anywhere.

26. ♖c2 ♙h6 27. ♘f2 a4 28. ♔g3 ♚a6 29. ♙f1

White is in no hurry. The queen has retreated to c2, freeing the square d3, but it is not yet clear for which white piece. Let the opponent suffer.

29...e5

And Black cannot stand the tension. Now the position opens up, and there is no need to say whom that favours.

In analysis, it is interesting to test 29...g5. White has two paths to choose from. He can play for the attack: 30.fxg5 ♘xg5 31. ♙xg5 ♙xg5 32. ♘xg5 fxg5 33.e5. Or he can forget about the kingside, play 30.f5, burying the bishop on h6, and transfer the battle to the opposing flank.

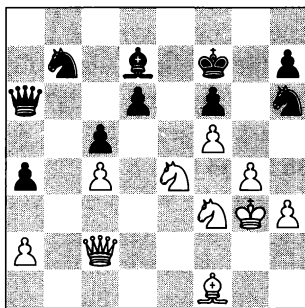
30.dxe6 ♙xe6 31.f5! gxf5

In such positions, winning variations pop up of their own accord. Here is one: 31...♙c8 32. ♙xh6 ♘xh6 33. ♚b2 ♘f7 34.g5 ♘g8 35.gxf6 ♘xf6 36. ♘g5+ ♘e7 37. ♘xh7!

32.exf5 ♙d7

Or 32...♙c8 33. ♙xh6 ♘xh6 34. ♘e4 d5 35.cxd5! ♚xf1 36. ♚xa4, with a decisive penetration – analysis by Magerramov.

33. ♙xh6 ♘xh6 34. ♘e4 ♘f7



35. ♚b2! ♘g8 36. ♚xb7!

Just as this knight ended up on the edge in the opening, and got under its player's feet in the middlegame, so it dies a hopeless death. Black resigned

in view of 36...♚xb7 37. ♘xd6+ and 38. ♘xb7.

In talking of the connection between the opening and the endgame, one should not forget that this is a two-way street, and the reverse direction can have at least as much influence, if not more, than the direct one.

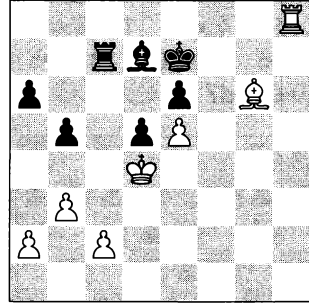
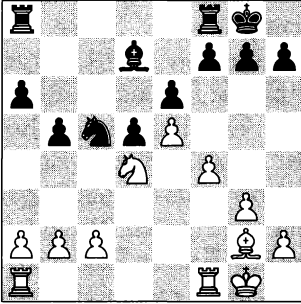
Let us assume that we have an opening variation, or a whole system, in which straight after the opening many pieces are exchanged and we go into an endgame, with the middlegame practically non-existent. Let us also assume that the resulting endgame is assessed as unquestionably better for one side or the other. What does this lead to? It leads to the variations of the opening being adjusted and adapted, in the light of the endgame. The side whom the ending favours will try to fool its opponent into exchanging pieces, whilst the other will refuse all such offers and will try to initiate complications favourable to himself, seeking chances in the middlegame, rather than heading into a cheerless endgame.

Thus we have a direct link – opening-middlegame-endgame. But suppose the endgame is re-assessed. What happens then? We get a corresponding reassessment of the middlegame and even the opening.

Siegbert Tarrasch Richard Teichmann

San Sebastian 1912

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. ♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6. ♙xe7 ♚xe7 7. ♚d2 0-0 8.f4 c5 9. ♘f3 ♘c6 10.g3 a6 11. ♙g2 b5 12.0-0 cxd4 13. ♘xd4 ♘xd4 14. ♚xd4 ♚c5 15. ♚xc5 ♘xc5 16. ♘e2 ♙d7 17. ♘d4



The famous French endgame: the blockading knight on d4 against a light-squared bishop, shut in behind a barrier of its own pawns. For many years, even whole generations, this endgame was assessed as unequivocally in White's favour. He would maintain the dark-square blockade and prepare a breakthrough on either the queenside or kingside. Black is condemned to passive defence.

The ending of the game Tarrasch-Teichmann was the cornerstone of such assessments. We do not need to spend a lot of time on it, as detailed analyses of the ending can be found in numerous textbooks.

During the course of the game, White exchanged one blockader for another (after the exchange of knights, his king came to d4), broke through on the kingside (with first h4-h5 and then g4-g5), increased his advantage and, not without some adventures, realised his advantage.

17...♖ac8 18.♔f2 ♜c7 19.♔e3
 ♞e8 20.♞f2 ♘b7 21.♙f1 ♚a5
 22.b3 h6 23.♙d3 ♘c6 24.♘xc6
 ♙xc6 25.♔d4 ♙d7 26.g4 ♙c8
 27.h4 g6 28.♞h1 ♔g7 29.h5 ♞h8
 30.♞fh2 ♙d7 31.g5 hxg5 32.fxg5
 ♞xh5 33.♞xh5 gxh5 34.♞xh5 ♔f8
 35.♞h8+ ♔e7 36.g6 fxg6 37.♙xg6

37...b4 38.♞h7+ ♔d8 39.♙d3 ♜c3
 40.a3 a5 41.♞h8+ 1-0

Under the influence of this and similar examples, theory started to develop in a predictable way. Many French variations, and even those of other openings, were developed so as to result in a similar endgame. White would exchange the pawns on d4 and c5, exchange dark-squared bishops and queens, transfer his knight via b1-c3-b5-d4 (or b1-c3-e2-d4) and bank on a quiet, risk-free realisation of his advantage. Black, as far as he could, would refrain from exchanges, often at great cost to his position.

Gradually, the assessment of such endgames became axiomatic, not requiring any proof. But in the mid-1980s, thanks to the efforts of various representatives of the Kharkov school of chess (especially Alexander Chernin and Mikhail Gurevich), this assessment of the endgame started to be questioned. The first game to start this process was the following.

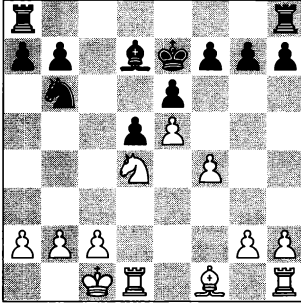
Jan Timman

Alexander Chernin

Montpellier 1985

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5
 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3

**cx d4 8. ♖xd4 ♙c5 9. ♗d2 ♙xd4
10. ♙xd4 ♖xd4 11. ♗xd4 ♗b6
12. ♗xb6 ♖xb6 13. ♖b5 ♙e7
14.0-0-0 ♙d7 15. ♖d4**



**15... ♖a4 16. ♙d3 ♖c5 17. ♗de1 h5
18.g3 ♗ag8!? 19. ♗hg1 g5!?**

Once the discovery is made, it all seems so clear and obvious. Certainly, what could be simpler than the break ...g7-g5 – after all, this idea works in many different variations of the French Defence. But for some reason, before the Kharkov boys came along, nobody thought of doing it in a position without queens.

20.f5 g4 21.f6+ ♖d8 22. ♗e3 h4

And in the end, it was only by a miracle that White saved himself.

And there is more. It turned out that, if Black failed to get in ...g7-g5, (e.g. if White shuts off this counterplay by means of h2-h4), the endgame is still not so bad. The term ‘passive defence’

became replaced by ‘quiet’ and ‘calm’. For example, the game Ehlvest-Gurevich (Linares 1991), instead of 14.0-0-0, went 14. ♖d2 ♙d7 15. ♖d4 ♖a4 16.b3 ♖c5 17. ♙d3 g6 (also interesting is 17...g5!? 18.fxg5 ♗ag8 19.h4 h6) 18.a4 a5 19. ♗af1 h5 20.g3 ♗ag8 21.h4, but already after 21...♗c8 22. ♗a1 ♗c7 23. ♗hb1 ♗a8 24. ♗a3 ♙e8, White abandoned any attempt to win and offered a draw.

This reassessment led to a process of reassessment in the reverse direction: endgame-middlegame-opening. Now it is Black who offers exchanges (the solidity of the endgame having been demonstrated many times) and White who avoids them, preferring a complicated middlegame. Opening variations previously assessed as ‘cheerless’ are now described as ‘solid’. Whole systems have been re-thought and their theory rewritten from scratch. And this has affected not only the French Defence. Thus, one of the variations of the Caro-Kann Defence, 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5!? 4.dxc5 e6, which Botvinnik years ago said was no good, because White could obtain the famous ‘French endgame’, has again become trendy. You want to play the white side of this ending with an extra tempo? Be my guest – Black does not object.

Chapter 4

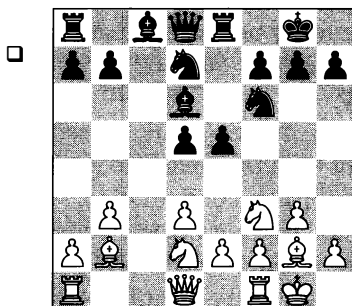
The Battle of the Major Pieces

The avantgardists, or, as they liked to call themselves, the ‘hypermoderns’, have left a large legacy in chess. Some of their ideas have not survived and now appear unrealistic, even raising a smile, but many others have survived and become a part of everyday chess culture. Yet at one time, these ideas caused a lot of arguments and even shocked an unprepared chess public!

We will now take a closer look at one typical hypermodern device, namely the queen and bishop battery on the long diagonal. The classical positional approach envisaged the queen working in the centre, with the bishop behind it (e.g. white queen on d4 and bishop on b2). But the hypermoderns put the queen in the corner, and, to people’s great surprise, such an arrangement brought results.

Richard Réti
Frederick Yates

New York 1924



By the benchmarks of the classical school, White has given his opponent a great present – he has allowed him to create an ideal pawn centre. In return, he has fianchettoed both bishops, making it clear that the centre will come under pressure in the near future. The opening is not yet over and White still has to complete his development.

So how does Réti intend to attack the d5- and e5-pawns? To do so, he intends a series of manoeuvres. The queen will head to a1. The rook, which currently

occupies this square, will come to c1 and c2. The other rook, by completing the doubling on the c-file, will free f1 for the knight, which will transfer via that square to e3.

These manoeuvres take quite a bit of time, it must be acknowledged. Furthermore, even after they have been carried out, the pressure against d5 and e5 will not be so enormous. As a result, Black can prepare to defend the pride of his position, his pawn centre. But the fact is that White’s plan was so novel and unconventional for its time that Réti’s opponent was bamboozled.

11. ♖c1

In such positions, the hypermoderns sometimes implemented their plan in an even more fanciful manner by a2-a3, ♖a1-a2 and ♗d1-a1. Strangely enough, even this plan worked sometimes, although only with pawns still on c4 and c6. With the c-file open, it makes much less sense to put the rook on a2.

11... ♜f8 12. ♖c2 ♗d7

Instead of this, Alekhine suggested 12... ♗f5 13. ♗a1 ♜8d7, but the move in the game is not a mistake.

13. ♖a1!? ♘g6 14. ♜fc1 ♙c6

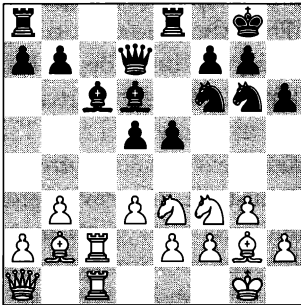
But this move is superfluous. The doubled rooks on the c-file do not yet pose any threat, since they have no entry squares. Black could have chosen between 14... ♖e7 15. ♘f1 ♜ac8 16. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 17. ♜xc8+ ♙xc8 18. d4 e4 19. ♘e5 ♖c7 and the sharper 14...b5 15. ♘f1 ♖b8!?

15. ♘f1 ♖d7

Against 15... ♖e7 is stronger.

16. ♘e3 h6

After two successive inaccuracies, Black commits a third, this time more serious. He has not divined what mischief his opponent has in mind.



17. d4! e4 18. ♘e5

Now it becomes clear that the pieces on c6 and d7 have set themselves up to be attacked. The knight cannot be tolerated on e5, but after its exchange, the ♖+♙ battery operates at full power.

18... ♙xe5 19. dxe5 ♘h7 20. f4!

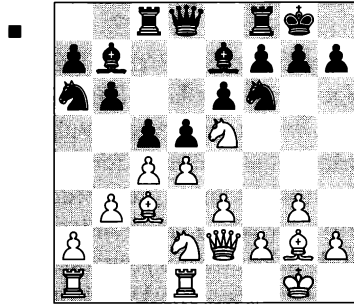
White has a serious advantage and soon won.

Returning to the position before 16...h6, one can advise that instead of this, Black should prefer 16...d4 (although then White is a little better after 17. ♘c4) or 16... ♘g4!?, hoping after the exchange of knights to cement the a1-h8 diagonal by means of ..f7-f6. The point e5 needs to be defended at all costs.

Florin Gheorghiu

Anatoly Karpov

Luzern 1982



The queen does not feel comfortable on d8, opposite the ♜d1. The pawns could be exchanged and the d-file opened at any moment, and there is no time to lose.

14... ♜c7!?

The queen heads to a8. This manoeuvre is not only no sort of shock, but even looks perfectly normal – what progress has been made in 60 years!

15.e4

A cunning move. White presents his opponent with the chance to determine the central pawn configuration.

This is not an easy choice. Thus, after 15... ♖a8 16. exd5 exd5 17. ♘g4, new factors appear in the position – after the exchange of knights, mate is threatened on g7. Karpov takes a key decision – he keeps the e-file closed, but opens the two neighbouring files.

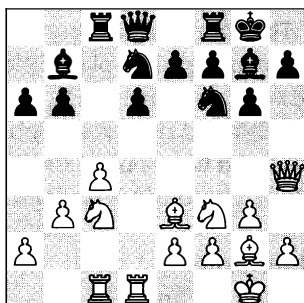
15... cxd4 16. ♙xd4 dxc4!?

17. ♘dxc4 ♖a8 18. f3 ♜fc8

The two sides each get on with their own thing. The ♖+♙ battery is faced with the rock-solid pawn barrier f3-e4 (exactly what Yates failed to do in the preceding example). On the other hand, White has not managed to take the initiative. One complicated position has led to another. The chances are mutual.

Veselin Topalov
Vladimir Kramnik

Wijk aan Zee 1999



13...♖c7 14.♗h6 ♚a8!? 15.♗xg7
♜xg7 16.♚d4 b5!?

A new note in a familiar tune. The queen on a8 exerts pressure not only along the long diagonal, but also on the a-file.

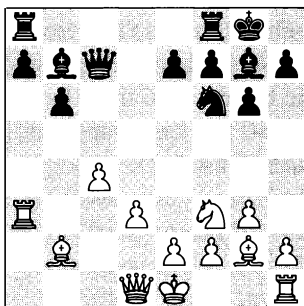
17.cxb5 axb5 18.♜xb5 ♜xc1
19.♜xc1 ♚xa2

Black obtained the advantage, on account of his superior structure.

Again we return to the source.

Richard Réti
Akiba Rubinstein

Karlsbad 1923



15.♚a1!

Maybe it is the corner, but it is still the best square for the queen, and

extremely unpleasant for the opponent. This is confirmed by the a7-pawn and the g7-bishop.

15...♗e8 16.♗xg7 ♜xg7 17.0-0 ♗e6
18.♜b1 ♗c6 19.d4 ♗e4 20.♜d1 a5
21.d5! ♜c5 22.♜d4 ♗xg2 23.♜xg2
♜fd8 24.♜c6

White has an indisputable advantage, which he subsequently converted to victory.

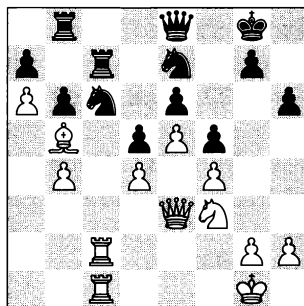
How should the major pieces be arranged on an open or half-open file? The rule is simple: the queen should stand behind the rooks.

Exceptions are rare. It is another matter, however, that one should never blindly follow the standard. For example, in positions where there are only two major pieces on the board, rather than three, the rule of 'queen behind the rooks' is less valid. But more about that later.

We start with a fully canonical example:

Alexander Alekhine
Aaron Nimzowitsch

San Remo 1930



The pin on the knight at c6 is deadly. White is close to victory and all that remains is to arrange the major pieces harmoniously.

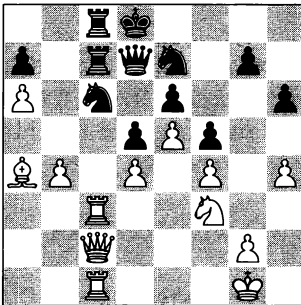
24.♜c3! ♚d7 25.♜1c2! ♜f8 26.♚c1!

It is done. Black could resign with a clear conscience already, but he evidently set himself the aim of not losing before move 30.

26... ♖bc8 27. ♙a4 b5 28. ♙xb5 ♘e8 29. ♙a4 ♘d8 30.h4!

A beautiful position. The board is full, yet the queen and rooks cannot move, the knights cannot move and the pawn moves will soon run out. After 30... ♘e8 there follows 31.b5. Yes, Black has made move 30. So he resigned.

We will remain with this final position a moment longer, and just change very slightly the formation of the white major pieces.



All I have done is swap round the c2-rook and the queen. A tiny detail, but:

30... ♗xb4! 31. ♙xd7

31. ♖b3 ♗xc3.

31... ♗xc2 32. ♙xc8 ♖xc3 33. ♙xe6 ♖c6!

It is too early for 33... ♗xd4 34. ♗xc3 ♗e2+ 35. ♗f2 ♗xc3 because of 36. ♗d4 g6 37.h5.

34. ♙f7 ♗xd4!

Now it is time.

35. ♖xc6 ♗dxc6 36. ♗f2 ♗b4

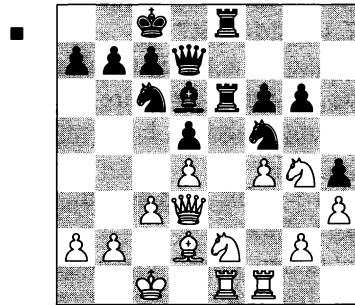
Black has good chances of holding the position, which not long ago looked totally hopeless.

The reader may object that, in this last example, the queen came under a direct

attack from the knight on b4. In any event, White should not put the queen on c2. That is correct. Even so, the rule (and the classical examples) needs to be known. The more he knows, the more easily and confidently a player plays. If you are in a strange place, you will probably find the right road sooner or later. But if you have a map, or a reliable guide? Well, obviously it is much easier.

**William Winter
Alexander Alekhine**

Nottingham 1936



White has manoeuvred his pieces exceptionally badly and chosen very strange squares for them. They cannot create a single threat. Black, in his turn, can do whatever he pleases, a rare luxury. The right plan is easy to find. We put the queen behind the rooks, create threats on the e-file, and at the right moment, bring the knight at c6 into the action; at the moment, it is not doing anything.

23... ♖8e7! 24. ♗d1

After 24. ♗g1 White loses a pawn: 24... ♙xf4 25. ♖xe6 ♙xd2+ 26. ♖xd2 ♖xe6 27. ♗f3, but maybe this was the least evil.

24... ♖e8

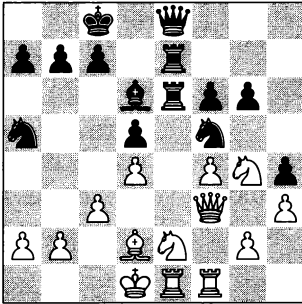
«The position of the queen behind the rooks promises the maximum force in the invasion» – Chebotarev.

Oleg Chebotarev, in his main speciality, was a military man, a major-general, so when it came to invasions, he spoke with full knowledge of what he was talking about.

25. ♖f3

Here too, 25. ♘g1 was worth considering, although after 25... ♘g3 26. ♖xe6 ♖xe6 27. ♖e1 ♘e4, White's position remains difficult.

25... ♘a5!



26.b3

Kotov, in the second volume of his *Alekhine's Chess Heritage*, gives this variation: 26. ♖xd5 ♖xe2 27. ♖xe2 ♖xe2 28. ♖xa5 ♘g3 29. ♖f3 ♖e4, «and Black's attack is irresistible». This variation can be extended, showing more vivid colours: 28. ♘xf6 ♖xd2+! 29. ♘xd2 ♖e3+ 30. ♘d1 ♖d3+ 31. ♘e1 ♖xf1+! 32. ♘xf1 ♘e3+ 33. ♘e2 ♘xd5 34. ♘xd5 c6 35. ♘f6 ♖xf4, but this is not the main point.

Winter, like Nimzowitsch, does not put up the slightest resistance: the moves 24. ♘d1, 25. ♖f3, and now the passive defence of c4, which in fact does not defend anything in reality. In our day, defensive technique is at a much higher level, and one does not win a game so easily. The opponent will find some way to change the nature of the position, set some problems.

It was necessary to play 26. ♖xd5 ♖xe2 27. ♖xa5 ♘g3 28. ♘e5!. The position has become much sharper. If, for example, 28... ♖xe1+ 29. ♖xe1 fxe5 30. fxe5 c6 (30... ♖e6 31. ♖xa7) 31. exd6 ♖xe1+, then 32. ♘c2! (of course, not 32. ♖xe1 ♖e2+) 32... ♖e4+ 33. ♘b3 ♖e6+ 34. d5! and it is not clear who has the advantage. Stronger is 28... ♖xg2, retaining the threats, but this move had to be found, which is not entirely simple.

Now, however, it is all over:

26... ♘c4! 27. ♖c1

Or 27. bxc4 ♖a4+ 28. ♘c1 ♖a3+ 29. ♘b1 ♖b6+ 30. ♘a1 ♖c2, mating.

27... ♘ce3+ 28. ♖xe3 ♘xe3+

29. ♘xe3 ♖xe3 30. ♖f2 ♖b5 31. ♘c1

The threat was 31... ♖d3+ 32. ♘c1 ♖a3#.

31... ♖xc3

White soon resigned.

In the press, thanks to these two games against Nimzowitsch and Winter, the formation of queen behind rooks is now known as 'Alekhine's Gun'.

In contemporary practice, such a formation occurs often. We can identify two typical positions:

1. The battle for a rook's file, which is currently closed, but may open at any moment

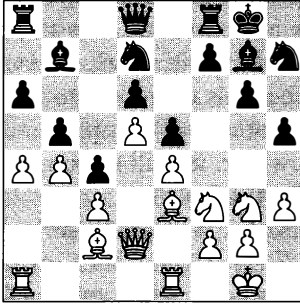
Imagine the following structure: White pawns f4, g5, h5. Black: f5, g6, h7. The battle rages over the h-file. White puts one rook on h3 or h4, then a second, and his queen on h1. Black cannot oppose with a similar set-up, as his major pieces simply do not have enough space on the h-file. He has to cede the file. At the right moment, White exchanges on g6, penetrates with his rook to h7 or h8, and brings his queen with decisive effect to h6, and the game ends.

The same thing can happen on the opposite flank:

Robert Fischer
Boris Spassky

Belgrade 1992

□



22. ♖a3!? ♜df6

Straight after the game, commentators recommended 22...h4 23.♜f1 f5, and then 24.exf5 gxf5 25.♜g5 ♜xg5 26.♙xg5 ♙f6 27.♙h6 ♙g7 28.♙xg7 ♜xg7 29.f4 e4 30.♜e3, with only an insignificant advantage to White. Even so, one cannot shake off the impression that White is better prepared for the opening of the centre and kingside, and so it should not be hard to improve this variation. For example, instead of 29.f4, there is the tempting 29.♜e3, and if 29...♗g5, then 30.axb5 axb5 31.♖xa8 ♖xa8 32.♙xf5! ♗xf5 33.♜xf5+ ♗xf5 34.♖a1, winning material: 34...♗f8 35.♗g5+ ♜f7 36.♖a7, or 34...♙b7 35.♖a7 ♙c8 36.♖c7 ♙a6 37.♗a2.

Spassky prefers waiting tactics:

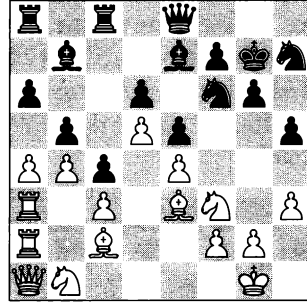
23. ♖ea1 ♗d7 24. ♖1a2 ♖fc8
25. ♗c1 ♙f8 26. ♗a1 ♗e8

White has set up the Alekhine Gun. But Black's defensive barriers are solid. Thus, after 27.axb5 axb5 28.♖a7 ♖xa7 29.♖xa7 ♖a8, White cannot get anything from the a-file. In order to break down the fortress, an additional idea is needed. And Fischer finds it.

27. ♜f1!

For the moment, it is not obvious where the knight is heading, so Spassky carries on waiting.

27... ♙e7 28. ♜1d2 ♜g7 29. ♜b1



The idea starts to reveal itself. If it were his move, White could immediately exchange all the major pieces: 30.axb5 axb5 31.♖xa8 ♖xa8 32.♖xa8 ♗xa8 33.♗xa8+ ♙xa8, after which he wins a pawn with 34.♜a3. The fortress collapses.

The long wait is over. In an attempt to deflect his opponent from his intention, Spassky goes in for a risky piece sacrifice:

29... ♜xe4!?

Of course, he could simply cede the a-file: 29...♖ab8 30.axb5 axb5 31.♖a7, but one concession would most likely soon be followed by others.

30. ♙xe4 f5

This move was criticised by the experts. Instead, they suggested 30...♜f6, and Black gets a second pawn for the piece, without weakening the second rank. Now, however, the black king turns out to be in big trouble:

31. ♙c2 ♙xd5 32.axb5 axb5
33. ♖a7! ♜f6 34. ♜bd2 ♖xa7
35. ♖xa7 ♖a8 36.g4!

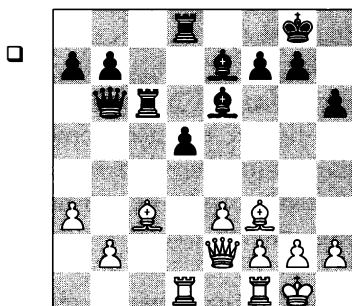
In such positions, the piece is stronger than the pawns. Spassky soon resigned.

2. The battle for and against a central isolated pawn

Suppose Black has an isolated pawn on d5. White sets up a formation with rooks on d4 (or d3) and d2, and queen on d1. In doing this, he has to be careful that his rooks do not come under attack from the enemy minor pieces. If this can be done, the pawn on d5 will be finished. Even if Black manages to set his own major pieces up in an analogous fashion, White can break with e3-e4 (or c3-c4) and win a pawn, thanks to the pin.

Anatoly Karpov
Boris Spassky

Montreal 1979



22. ♖d3! ♜cd6 23. ♜fd1 ♜6d7
24. ♜1d2 ♚b5 25. ♚d1

«Remembering Alekhine's advice, that in such positions, the queen should stand behind the rooks»
– Karpov.

25...b6 26.g3 ♕f8 27. ♕g2 ♕e7
28. ♚h5 a6

It seems both players convinced themselves that the pin along the 5th rank means that White was threatening e3-e4. In any event, commenting on the game in the tournament book, Karpov explains Black's last move as motivated by a desire to defend the queen on b5. However, in reality, the move e3-e4 is

not yet a threat. Black could have played a neutral move, and in response to 29.e4 set off favourable complications with 29...♕g5! After 30.♜d1 g6 31.♚f3 dxe4 or 31.♚e2 d4! he even wins. Stronger is 30.f4, but after 30...d4!? 31.♜xd4 (31.♕xd4 ♕c4) 31...♚c5 32.♚d1 ♕b3! (but not 32...♕f6 33.e5) 33.♚xb3 ♜xd4 34.♕xd4 ♜xd4 35.♜xd4 ♚xd4+ 36.♔h1 ♕e7 there is little doubt that Black will hold this endgame.

It is another matter to find a 'neutral move' for Black, and it may be that Spassky played 28...a6 (defending the queen in any event) because he could not find anything better.

29.h3

As Karpov admitted, seeing the weakening of b6, he spent some time wrestling with the temptation to change his plan. There was the idea of 29.♚d1!? then ♕c3-d4 and ♜d3-b3. Even so, after resisting temptation, the grandmaster decided not to depart from his main plan of laying siege to the isolated pawn at d5.

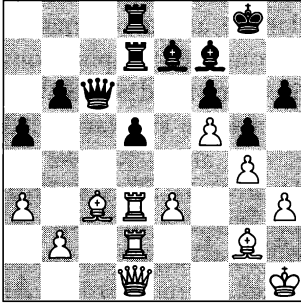
29...♚c6 30. ♔h2 ♚b5 31.f4 f6

The threat was 32.f5, winning the bishop. Black could have set a trap: 31...a5 32.f5 d4! but after 32.a4! he would be the one caught in the snare: 32...♚xa4 33.f5 or 32...♚c5 33.♕d4 ♚c6 34.f5.

32. ♚d1 ♚c6 33.g4 g5

As in the previous example, a long period of waiting is succeeded by a feverish search for counterplay. In Karpov's opinion, Black could have continued to show patience a little longer: 33...♕d6 34.♔h1 ♕c7. If White then continues as in the game, with 35.f5 ♕f7 36.e4, then after 36...♕f4 the 'counterplay' would fall into Black's hands of its own accord.

34. ♔h1 a5 35.f5 ♕f7



36.e4!

The fruit is ripe for picking.

36...♟g7 37.exd5 ♖c7 38.♞e2 b5

An oversight, although in any event, the position is already very difficult. Thus, after 38...♞d6, White will happily give up the exchange: 39.♞e6! ♞xe6 40.fxex6, developing in return an attack on the light squares, which is beyond doubt decisive: 40...♞e7 41.♞f3 ♞e5 42.♞f5 ♞xc3 43.♞e4! etc.

39.♞xe7! ♞xe7 40.d6 ♖c4 41.b3

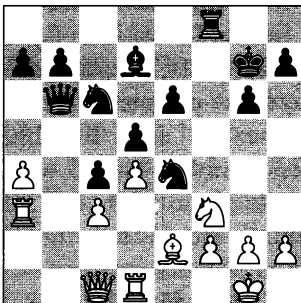
More precise than 41.♞d4 ♞e2. Black resigned.

One can find other examples of 'Alekhine's Gun' in any textbook. We will look here at a comparatively rare (although in its way typical) example:

**Veselin Topalov
Artur Jussupow**

Dortmund 1997

□



Black has played a typical French Defence exchange sacrifice. The assessment of the position depends to a considerable degree on whether he will manage to carry out the advance ...e6-e5, freeing his light-squared bishop and exerting maximum pressure against f2. Topalov played the obvious prophylactic move...

25.♞e1

The point is that he threatens to take on c4. It is worth seeing what happens if White is careless and allows Black to break into f2, in which case he gets mated, in several ways: 25...e5 26.dxe5? ♞xf2+ 27.♟h1 ♞h3! 28.gxh3 ♞xf3 29.♞xf3 ♞xf3+ 30.♟g1 ♟f2, or 26.♟xe5 ♟xe5 27.dxe5 ♟xf2 28.♞f3 ♟h3+ 29.♟h1 ♞g1+ 30.♞xg1 ♟f2#.

25...♟d6

After long thought, Black decides to go over to passive defence. Something disturbed him in the variation 25...e5 26.♞xc4 ♟xf2. Maybe he did not like one of the zwischenzugs 27.♞b3!? or 27.a5!?

Grandmaster Jussupow made a difficult choice. He retreats his pieces onto the last three ranks, as a sort of fortress. We will see how Topalov sets about breaking this down. His general plan is to put his major pieces on the e-file and attack the weak pawn on e6. And you already know precisely how we will arrange his rooks and queen.

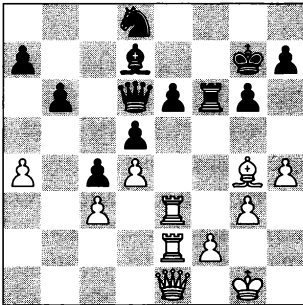
26.♟d1 ♞f6 27.♞a2 ♟f7 28.♞a3

Once a strong player has formed his general plan, he does not forget to pay attention to the fine details. Here is an example: Topalov could play 28.♞e3, but preferred to set up the positional threat a4-a5 and so deflect the enemy knight to a5.

28...♖a5 29.♗e5 ♗xe5 30.♞xe5
 ♜d8 31.♞e3 ♜f8 32.♜c1

White can always exchange queens, and the battle will be long and difficult. It is better to keep all the major pieces on the board. If Black holds, one can always return to the idea of a queen exchange later.

32...♗b3 33.♜b1 ♗a5 34.h3 b6
 35.♙g4 ♜d6 36.♜e1 ♗c6 37.h4
 ♗d8 38.g3 ♗f7 39.♞ae2 ♗d8



White has completed his plan and has all of his pieces pressing on the e6-pawn. But Black turns out to be prepared for this.

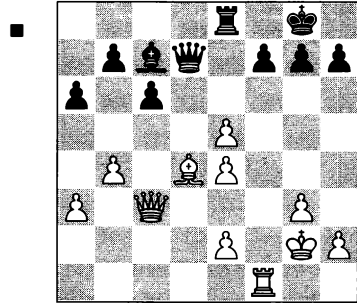
Now a new stage in the plan begins, which does not really have any direct connection to our theme. White will advance his pawn to h5, and take on g6, creating a new weakness. Then, after exchanging a pair of rooks, White will direct his remaining major pieces to the newly-opened h-file. Once the enemy forces have been tied up, the white queen can suddenly transfer to a3.

In the end, Black will not be able to maintain his defences on all fronts. He resigned on move 75.

Now we will look at several examples of a non-standard character.

**Mikhail Gurevich
 Alexei Shirov**

Sarajevo 2000



This is what we spoke about at the beginning of this chapter. One pair of rooks have already left the board and the ‘Alekhine’s Gun’ formation is not so obligatory.

On the other hand, White threatens to activate his battery on the long diagonal by means of e5-e6. Black needs to put something on e6, to blockade the pawn. 26...♜e6 27.♞f5 g6 is hardly the correct idea, because of 28.♞f6. That means:

26...♞e6!?

The future looks rosy. The next move will be ...♜d7-e8, then taking on e5. At some point, it will be the turn of the e4- and e2-pawns.

But White finds some clever threats, to distract Black from his plan.

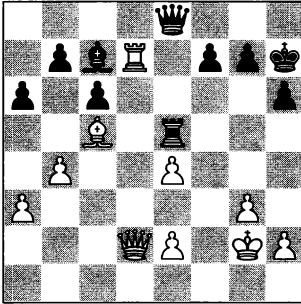
27.♞f3 ♜e8 28.♞d3!

Of course, not 28.♞f5 g6 29.♞f6, in reply to which, as well as 29...♞xf6 30.exf6 ♜xe4+, Black can go directly into a queen ending with an extra pawn: 29...♞xe5! 30.♙xe5 ♙xe5 31.♜f3 ♙xf6 32.♜xf6 ♜xe4+ etc. Now, however, after 28...♙xe5 29.♙xe5 ♞xe5, he loses at once: 30.♜xe5! So he must make luft:

28...h6 29.♜d2 ♗h7

Again it is too early for 29...♙xe5, this time because of 30.♙xe5 ♞xe5 31.♞d8.

30.♙c5 ♞xe5 31.♞d7



Looking at the last diagram, who would have thought that White would seize the d-file and invade the seventh rank? Evidently, here the plan of putting the queen behind the rook has not justified itself. Or maybe the initial position was just equal. Shirov did all he could, but White reacted accurately and managed to obtain counterplay.

What should Black do now? The cleanest reply is 31...b6, but after 32.♖xc7 bxc5 33.bxc5 ♜xe4 34.♚d3 the position is close to a draw. Shirov decides on something different. He changes the course of the game, and gives his opponent a chance to fight for an advantage. But in this case, Black will also get chances.

31... ♖d5!? 32.exd5 ♜xd7 33. ♚d3+ ♝g8

The moment of truth. For equality, 34.e4 is fully sufficient.

34.d6

As anticipated, Gurevich could not restrain his ambitions.

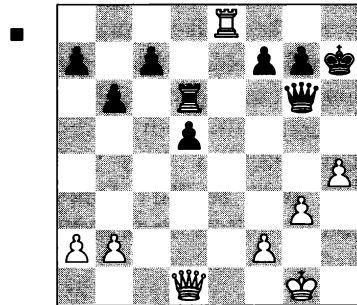
34... ♗d8 35.h3 ♜e6 36.e4 b6 37. ♗f2 ♝f8 38.g4 ♝e8

Then the king came to d7 and ten moves later, the d6-pawn was lost, and with it, the game.

In the following classical example, getting the queen behind the rook is even more difficult.

**José Raul Capablanca
Alexander Alekhine**

Buenos Aires 1927



The famous first game of the world championship match. The Cuban, who in those days lost barely once a year amidst great sensation, had made a serious oversight in an Exchange French and had had to surrender a pawn. It looked like a sensation was in the making, but then Capa started playing at his full strength. At the point reflected in the diagram, Black has problems converting his advantage.

Admittedly, at first glance, it is not obvious what the problem is. The advance ...d5-d4-d3 is tempting. The rook supports the passed pawn from behind, and the queen defends the king from checks. All the pieces are ideally placed, surely? This is what Alekhine wrote:

«Black could go into the variation 30...d4 31.h5 ♜f5 32.g4 ♜b5 33.♜c2+ d3 34.♜xc7 ♜d7 35.♜xd7 ♜xd7 36.♜e1 d2 37.♜d1 ♝h6 38.♝g2 (38.f4 f5!) 38...♝g5 39.♝g3 ♜d3+ 40.f3 f6 with a winning position. White, however, has the opportunity to reply to 30...d4 with 31.♜f3!.»

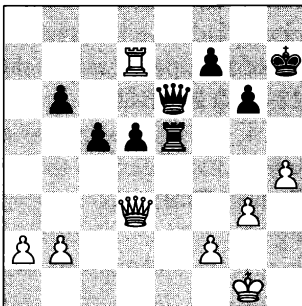
The great Russian methodologist Peter Romanovsky quite justifiably described queen and rook endgames as the ‘fourth stage of the game’. In terms of material on the board, we have an endgame,

but the character of the play is definitely more that of a middlegame. After 30...d4 31.♖f3 d3 32.h5, Black faces a complicated task. In several variations, White gets at the enemy king with the manoeuvre ♖f3-a8, and in others, he threatens a check on the b1-h7 diagonal. Also the pawn on f7 hangs.

At the time, a great debate arose about the assessment of the Capablanca-Alekhine endgame, first in magazines and then in books. The analyses replaced one another. Reproducing all the variations here would fill this book, and still with no guarantee of getting to the truth.

It is more important to get across to the reader Alekhine's viewpoint. He deliberately avoided the plan involving the quick push of the d-pawn, in favour of a plan based on consolidating the major pieces:

**30...♖e6!? 31.♞a8 ♞e5 32.♞xa7 c5
33.♞d7 ♖e6 34.♞d3+ g6**



If we compare this diagram with the previous one, we may get the impression that Black has dawdled. He has lost his extra pawn and has not advanced his passed pawn. All he has done over the past five moves is arrange his major pieces with the queen behind the rook. But it is precisely here that Alekhine, in his own opinion, had secured the win. And, indeed, the game did not last much longer:

35.♞d8 d4 36.a4 ♞e1+

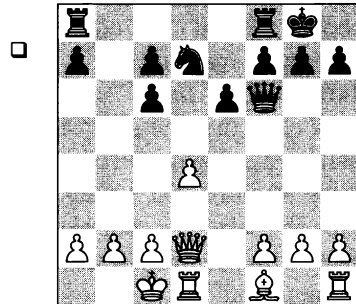
Black wins even more quickly after 36...♖e7 37.♞b8 ♖c7 38.♞a8 ♖c6.

**37.♞g2 ♖c6+ 38.f3 ♞e3 39.♞d1
♖e6 40.g4 ♞e2+ 41.♞h3 ♖e3
42.♞h1 ♖f4 43.h5 ♞f2 0-1**

In beginners' books, it is written that the best way to get a rook into play is to place it on a central file and then open that file. Most of the time, that is what happens. However, in other, not so rare cases, the rook comes into play not via the centre, but from the side. And the issue here is not whether this is attractive or not, but its effectiveness.

**Boris Spassky
Tigran Petrosian**

Moscow 1966



Two plans are tempting. The first is a pawn storm on the kingside with g2-g4, h2-h4 etc. The second is solid centralisation with ♙f1-d3 (or ♙f1-c4), ♞h1-e1, etc. The problem is that both plans are non-concrete and do not threaten Black, whereas he, on the other hand, has a definite plan: ...♞a8-b8, ...c6-c5, and then doubling rooks on the b-file.

13.h4!!

Believe me, this move is stronger than it looks.

13...♞ab8 14.♞h3! c5 15.♖g5!

The secret is revealed. In the position of the last diagram, it turns out that White's interest was not the enemy king on g8, but the weak black queenside pawns. That means that the move 13.h4 was not a signal to attack, but the preparation for a transition into the endgame. The rook is heading to h3, then to c3 or even a3, and the queens will come off. The position will become technical.

In this connection, the opinion has been expressed that, instead of 14...c5, Black should have defended with 14...♖b6 15.♗g5 ♜fb8. By attacking b2 he forces 16.b3 – then the rook's path to a3 is closed. Mind you, it is not entirely clear why, instead of 16.b3, White cannot play 16.♕c4!?, and if 16...♖xb2, then 17.♕b3.

15...cxd4

Alas, Black cannot keep the queens on the board: 15...♗xf2 16.♜f3 ♗g1 17.♕b5, winning material.

16.♗xf6 ♝xf6 17.♞xd4

It is already clear that the plan of 13.h4 and 14.♞h3 has proved fully justified. White was not just trying to be original for the sake of it, but played in accordance with the requirements of the position.

The battle after the opening seemed unclear, but now it is one-way traffic. Black must passively defend his pawn weaknesses:

17...♞b7 18.♞b3!

Another brilliant positional decision (like 15.♗g5!). White leaves on the board only those pieces which he needs to attack Black's weaknesses. The other pieces he exchanges without hesitation.

18...♞xb3 19.axb3 ♞a8 20.♞c4 ♝e8 21.♞a4 ♝d6 22.g3!

And that is that. The transfer of the bishop to the long diagonal ends the game.

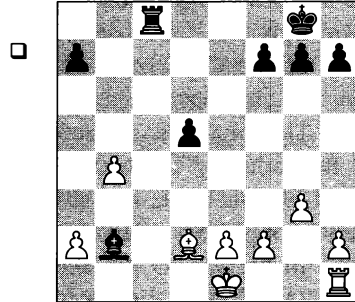
22...♝f8 23.♕g2 ♞c8 24.♞xa7

And White easily realised his material advantage.

Vladimir Kramnik

Jan Timman

Wijk aan Zee 1999



White has an extra pawn, Black active pieces. Likely variations are 21.0-0 ♞c2 22.♞d1 d4; 21.♝d1 ♕a3 and 22...♞c4; 21.e3 ♕a3 22.♞e2 ♞c2, in all cases with counterplay.

It seems that the game should end in a draw, but Vladimir Kramnik finds a way to cause his opponent problems:

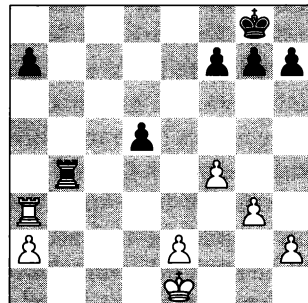
21.f4!? ♕a3 22.♞f1!

On 21...♞c4, the same move would follow, whilst 21...♞c2 fails to 22.♝d1.

22...♞c4 23.♞f3!

Returning the pawn, but bringing the rook into play, in a not quite traditional manner.

23...♕xb4 24.♕xb4 ♞xb4 25.♞a3



25...h5!?

Black does not want to defend passively with equal material: 25...♖b7 26.♙a5 ♗d7 27.♕d2, and White will win a pawn again, at the first opportunity.

26.♙xa7 ♖b2 27.a4 ♙a2

(in Kramnik's opinion, 27...g6 was stronger)

28.f5!

But now the endgame turned out to be unpleasant. White won at move 41.

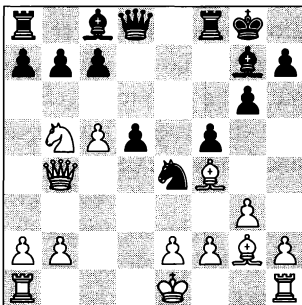
In general, this 'lateral' manoeuvre of a rook in the endgame is well-known – one only has to recall the classic games Capablanca-Kupchik (Havana 1913), Alekhine-Spielmann (New York 1927) and many others. Kramnik's version of it only strikes one's eye because it was a somewhat less obvious example.

Even so, such manoeuvres make rather more of an impression in the middle-game, or even during the phase between opening and middlegame. When the board is full of pieces, the lateral development of the rook is usually much more difficult to achieve, if not impossible.

But chess is so remarkable because there is always an exception to every rule.

**Mikhail Gurevich
Veselin Topalov**

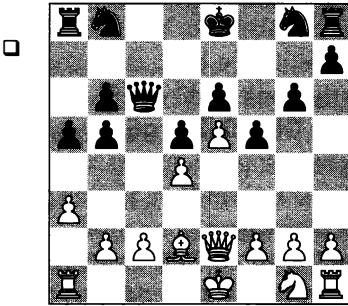
Sarajevo 2000



to avoid mate, White had to give up material, but this did not delay the end for long.

**Alexander Khalifman
Stellan Brynell**

Leningrad 1989



15.h4!

At first glance, the idea of this move seems clear. White is thinking of opening the h-file with h4-h5. Therefore, Black played

15...h6,

so as to meet 16.h5 with 16...g5. But there followed

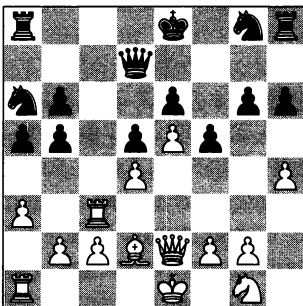
16.♖h3!

And it turns out that the advance of the h-pawn contained another idea – the development of the rook via h3, as in Spassky-Petrosian above.

16...♗a6

Weak is 16...♖xc2 17.♖c3.

17.♖c3 ♖d7



It seems that White has not achieved much. The rook stands on the open file, but it cannot create any threats, without assistance from his other major pieces. Now the manoeuvre ♗g1-h3-f4 is tempting, but White finds something rather stronger:

18.♖b3!? b4

Or 18...♗c7 19.a4 b4 20.c3, and the queenside gets opened up one way or another.

19.a4 ♗c7 20.c3! bxc3

Alas, Black proves not to be up to the task facing him. He could maintain the tension with 20...♗e7!? 21.cxb4 axb4, and if 22.♗xb4, then 22...♖xa4, whilst if 22.♖xb4, then 22...b5!

21.♖xc3 ♗e7 22.♖ac1

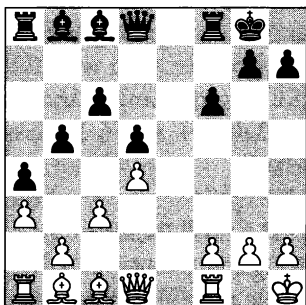
As a result of his unstereotyped play, White has seized the only open file. Black cannot extinguish the activity of the enemy rooks and his defence is difficult. All of this is the direct result of the manoeuvre h2-h4 and ♖h1-h3-c3-b3-c3!

«The third rank is the ideal route for transferring rooks from one flank to the other. In general, the rooks, like the minor pieces, should be brought into play as soon as possible.» These are the words of Anatoly Karpov; the 12th World Champion evidently got to the very heart of the problem. The criterion for the successful development of this or that piece is speed. If the rook can develop quickly via the central files, then this route should usually be preferred, but if the path to the central files is closed (a 'traffic jam'), then nothing remains but to adopt the side-street.

More rarely, it is the second rank, rather than the third, which is used for this lateral development.

Michael Adams Vladimir Kramnik

Linares 1999



Black to play. How should he develop? Actually, this is a trick question, because if you look at the position, you will see that the bishops are already developed! Yes, they stand on the eighth rank (and the bishop on c8 has not made a single move), but nonetheless, they are already in play: they work along the diagonals and control squares.

The major pieces are the ones which remain undeveloped. The plan is born of its own accord: double the rooks on the e-file and bring the queen to d6. Hence the first move:

19... ♖a7!? 20. ♜f3

A strong side of Adams' play is his patient defence in slightly worse positions. Now if the direct 20... ♖e7 21. ♙f4 ♙xf4 22. ♜xf4 ♜fe8, then after 23. ♙d3, the rooks on the open file do not have a single penetration square. Nor is 20... ♜d6 21.g3, followed by ♙c1-f4, any help.

20...g5!?

Preventing the opponent's plan of exchanging dark-squared bishops.

21. ♜h5 ♜e8!

We are watching some unspectacular, but high-quality play from both players. It would seem nothing can stop

the implementation of Black's plan: 21... ♖e7 22. ♙d3 ♜fe8 23. ♙d2 ♜d6. But there follows 24.f4! and it turns out that the main events take place not on the e-file, but on the neighbouring one. Then play turns in White's favour. Therefore Kramnik seeks his chances in the endgame.

22. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 23. ♙d3 ♙g4!

Continuing to seek entry squares. The threat is ... ♙g4-e2, and if 24.f3, then 24... ♙h5 25. ♙d2 ♜ae7 26. ♜ae1 ♜xe1 27. ♜xe1 ♜xe1+ 28. ♙xe1 ♙f4, and the queenside pawns are a great source of trouble.

24. ♙d2 ♙e2

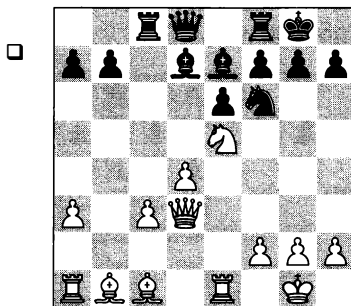
The alternative is 24... ♜ae7 25.f3 ♙h5, returning to the position given in the previous note. Maybe instead of 26. ♜ae1, a stronger move is 26. ♜fe1 ♜xe1+ 27. ♙xe1! ♙g6 28. ♙f1. Black stands freer, but there are no direct threats.

25. ♜fe1! ♜ae7 26. ♙f5

White is close to the desired draw.

Lajos Portisch Vladimir Bagirov

Beverwijk 1965



It is obvious that the bishops at b1 and c1 are already in play. But the rook on a1 is not. Therefore...

16. ♜a2!? ♜e8 17. ♜ae2 g6 18. ♙a2 ♜c7

Black also tries to manoeuvre his rooks, but rather less successfully than his opponent. One may reply that the last move frees c8 for the queen, from where she will defend e6 and attack c3. That may be so, but as for the square d5, where a breakthrough is likely, Black seems to have forgotten about that square entirely.

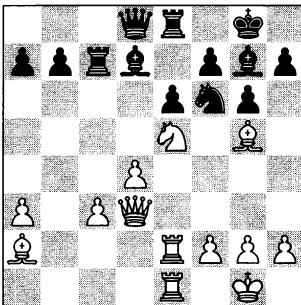
19. ♖h6

It is easy to see that the blows on f7 and e6 do not yet work. For example, 19. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 20. ♖xe6 ♜xe6 21. ♖xe6 ♜g7. Therefore the bishop goes to h6, taking away squares close to the black king.

19... ♜f8

Black rejected 19... ♖c8 not because of 20. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 21. ♖xe6 ♜xe6 22. ♜xe6+ ♖xe6 23. ♖xe6 ♜xe6, when he has enormous compensation for the queen (although even in this variation, there is the move 21.d5!? with complications which could well be in White's favour). It is more likely that Bagirov was put off by the move 20.c4! after which the battery of major pieces on the c-file will soon have to return to their former places of deployment.

20. ♜g5 ♜g7



21.d5!

Now the game will soon reach its finale. Not 21...exd5 because of 22. ♜xf6 ♜xf6

23. ♖xd7 ♖xe2 24. ♖xf6+ and 25. ♖xe2, winning a piece.

21... ♖c8 22. ♖f3

It is as if Portisch set himself the task of not sacrificing anything in this game. He could also have won with 22. ♖xf7! ♜xf7 (nothing is changed by 22... ♖xc3 23. ♖d2) 23.dxe6+ ♜xe6 24. ♖xe6.

22... ♖xd5

22... ♖xc3 23. ♖f4.

23. ♖xf7+ ♜h8 24. ♖xg6+!

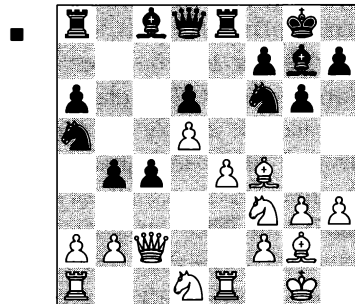
Not waiting for 24...hxg6 25. ♖e4, with an inevitable mate, Black resigned.

The manoeuvre ♖a1-a2-e2 (or ♖a8-a7-e7) is often seen in positions arising from the Indian defences.

Hector Rossetto

Mikhail Tal

Portoroz 1958



The same 'traffic jam' we spoke about earlier prevents the a8-rook from coming to the centre via the eighth rank. But the seventh rank is open, and allows the rook to reach its desired spot on the e-file. So there is no doubt what to play:

16... ♖a7!? 17. ♜e3 ♖ae7

The rook is developed and e4 attacked. But there remain problems with the queenside pawns.

18. ♖d2

Tactics come to Black's aid:

18...b3!? 19.axb3

White wrongly decides to trade blows. It was more sensible to retreat with 19.♖c1 bxa2 (else 20.♘c3) 20.♗xa2, and if 20...♘b3, then 21.♖xc4 ♘xd2 22.♙xd2.

19...♘b3

With tempo, so there is no time for the knight to retreat to c3.

20.♗a4

Or 20.♘b3 cxb3 21.♖xb3 ♘xe4.

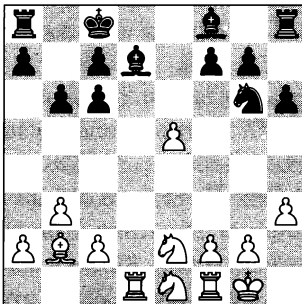
20...♘xd5! 21.exd5 ♙f5 22.♖xc4 ♘xd2 23.♖xa6 ♘e4

White has won a pawn, but in a rather less favourable fashion. Black has consolidated. His further plans involve the knight travelling via e4-c5-d3, plus pressure on the e-file and on the king-side. He has full compensation for the material.

As we have seen, in the golden era of chess, the players often used the lateral development of the rooks. And amongst contemporary players, Vladimir Kramnik often does so: his opening repertoire allows the use of this technical device.

**Garry Kasparov
Vladimir Kramnik**

London 2000



This was the first game of the World Championship match, in which, you

will recall, the 'Berlin Wall' became the main battleground for the players.

And what happens in this variation? The fact is that, after the early queen exchange, the black king loses castling rights and ends up blocking the eighth rank, interfering with the free movement of his rooks. As a result, the advance of the rooks' pawns is often the way to bring the rooks into action.

Lovers of statistics might like to work out how many times in this match Kramnik played the moves ...a7-a5 and ...h7-h5. And he did not once lose the game!

15...h5! 16.♘d3 c5 17.c4

Nowadays, White is usually less keen to play this move. With the blocked pawn structure on the queenside, Black's light-squared bishop assumes great importance. He can aim to remove all the rooks from the board (which often happens), and then put his bishop on f5, when the fixed white pawns will provide a tasty feast.

Kasparov presumably avoided 17.♗ef4 ♘xf4 18.♘xf4 because of the pawn sacrifice 18...c4!? although according to the authoritative analyst Igor Zaitsev it is not so easy to show compensation after 19.bxc4.

17...a5! 18.a4

Necessary to stop ...a5-a4.

18...h4!

Now after 19.♗ef4 ♘xf4 20.♘xf4 ♙f5 21.♗d2 ♖b7 22.♗e1 ♗e8 White's initiative is extinguished. Therefore, he deliberately keeps more pieces on the board, hoping later to break through with his e- and f-pawns.

19.♘c3 ♙e6

Weaker is 19...♙f5?! 20.♘d5 ♖b7 21.♘e3 ♙e4 22.f4, followed by f4-f5.

20.♘d5 ♖b7 21.♘e3 ♗h5!

Developing and blockading at once.

22. ♖c3 ♜e8 23. ♞d2 ♜c8 24. f4 ♜e7!

The pawn breakthrough is finally ruled out and White has no other ideas.

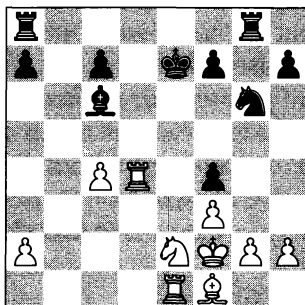
25. ♖f2 ♜f5

It is even a shame that such high-quality work should have been performed only so as to make a draw (from 'a position of weakness'. But, be that as it may, a draw it was.

The rook is a piece that feels most comfortable on an open file or behind a passed pawn. But there are some situations when the player rightly places his own rook in a dark corner. When? You are about to see one such example.

**José Raul Capablanca
Alexander Alekhine**

New York 1924



Black is in a bad way. His f4-pawn is attacked and already indefensible. There is no compensation at all for this material loss, and no counterplay. The game is close to being over.

At such a moment, the player needs an idea of some sort. Possibly artificial, possibly capable of being refuted by accurate play from the opponent. But an idea is essential, like some projecting rock on the edge of a cliff, which one

can grab hold of as one flies into the abyss.

29... ♜g8!

If Black is given eight moves in a row, he will promote his a7-pawn. It may not sound too convincing, but even such an idea is better than none.

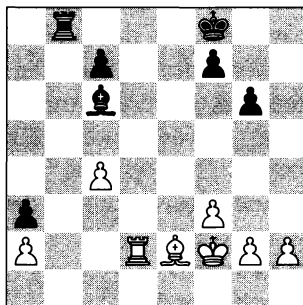
The rook on a8 is another story – how it feels right now one had better not ask.

30. ♜xf4+ ♜f8 31. ♜xg6+

White probably thought he could win how he pleased. If not, he would hardly have considered this move, uniting Black's two isolated pawns on f7 and h7.

31... hxg6 32. ♖d3

In his notes, Alekhine showed that White could allow his opponent's idea and still win: 32. ♞d2 a5 33. ♖d3 a4 34. ♞b1 ♜xb1 35. ♖xb1 ♜b8 36. ♖d3 a3 37. ♖e2



«with the threat of 38. ♞d3, to tie the enemy rooks to the need to defend the a3-pawn, after which the realisation of the advantage would not involve any difficulties.»

This variation needs to be extended, however: 37... ♖a4!? intending to meet the direct 38. ♞d3 with 38... ♞b2 39. ♞xa3 ♖d1 40. ♞e3 ♞xa2, and White makes no progress at all. Instead of 38. ♞d3, it is stronger to play 38. ♜e3, although here too, we can 'check White's papers': 38... ♞e8+ (38... ♜e7 39. ♞d3) 39. ♜d4 ♞b8 40. ♜c3 c5 or 40. ♞d3 ♞b2 41. ♞xa3 ♞xe2 42. ♞xa4 ♞xg2.

**32...♖b2+ 33.♜e2 ♖ab8 34.♙e4
♜xe2+ 35.♝xe2 ♙xe4 36.fxe4 ♝e7**

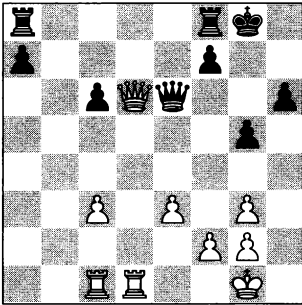
The position has changed beyond all recognition. Now we have a rook ending, where Black is only one pawn down. Seven moves ago, he could not even dream of this.

Black still has to overcome some obstacles to make a draw, but it all began with the seemingly strange move 29...♜gb8!

Mikhail Botvinnik

Salo Flohr

Leningrad 1933



A more complicated and, in its way, rather beautiful example. What is the threat and how should Black play?

To get to grips with the position, let us start with the tempting move 22...a5. The passed pawn gets moving. In reply, 23.♙xe6 fxe6 24.♜d6 a4 25.♞xe6 is weak, because of 25...a3 26.♞a1 ♜fb8 27.♜d6 a2 28.♞dd1 ♞b2. Despite his extra material, White risks losing.

The correct reaction is 23.♙a3!. The threat is 24.♜d6 – with queens on, White now really does threaten to take the pawns on the sixth rank, because the passed pawn is securely blockaded. The move 23...♜fd8 does not save Black from the enemy rook's depredations along the sixth rank, because of the simple 24.♜xd8+ ♜xd8 25.♙xa5.

So the threat is to retreat the queen and play ♜d1-d6!. Once we realise this, we can understand the next move.

22...♜fb8!

Now after 23.♙a3 there is 23...♜b3, and after 23.♙c7 ♝g7 24.♜d6, there is 24...♜c8! 25.♞xe6 ♜xc7. The initiative is neutralised.

Botvinnik claimed that 22...♜fb8 was the only move, but this is hard to believe. Even the direct 22...♙xd6 23.♜xd6 a5 retains chances. But there is no doubt that the rook manoeuvre in the text is the best move in the position.

23.♙xe6 fxe6 24.♜d4

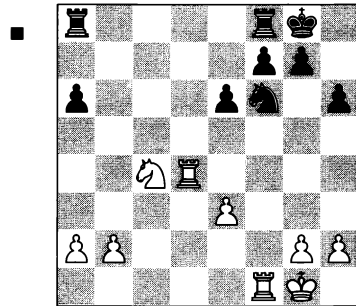
And White offered a draw, which was accepted. Playing for a win is dangerous: 24.♜d6 a5 25.♞xc6 a4 etc.

Now let us move to modern times.

Alexey Shirov

Viswanathan Anand

Moscow 2001



Objectively, the position is close to equality. But White's game is rather easier to play. He can play his next few moves 'by hand', as they say: ♜f1-d1, ♝g1-f2-f3, e3-e4. Having strengthened his position, White can turn his attention to the weaknesses on a6 and f7.

Black needs to come up with something. He does not stand worse, but he will do, if he relaxes and plays rou-

tinely. For example, 23...♖fd8 24.♗fd1 ♗d5 (counting on 25.e4 ♘xe4 26.♗xd5 exd5 27.♗xd5 ♗c8, although even here, White is slightly better) 25.♘b6 ♗xd4 26.♗xd4 ♗b8 27.♘c4. The exchange of rooks has clearly not been in Black's favour. Now it will be much harder to defend the pawn weaknesses.

23... ♖fb1!? 24. ♗fd1 a5 25. ♖f2 ♖h7!

Played with the same intention: retaining all four rooks on the board.

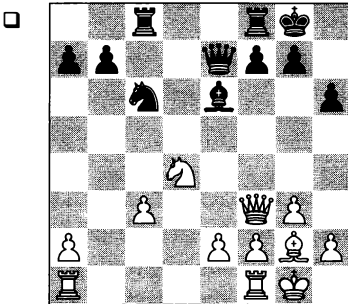
26. ♖1d2 a4 27. ♖f3 ♖a7

The regrouping is complete. One rook – the one on a7 – defends the pawn weaknesses, whilst the other exerts pressure on b2. The pawn on a4 hinders b2-b3. Black correctly felt the turning point and did not play routinely, but thought about things and found an original plan. As a result, he kept the position within the bounds of equality.

28.e4 ♖b4 29.♘d6 ♖b8 30.♘c4 ♖b4 31.♘d6 ♖b8 32.♖c4 ½-½

**Veselin Topalov
Mainhard Moroder**

Frankfurt 1997



In this position, White is not the one defending. He has a healthy extra pawn, and needs to think about how to increase his advantage, not how to equalise. Having said that, it is true that White has his weaknesses. After the straightforward 17.♘xe6 ♗xe6 18.♗fd1 ♖b6

Black transfers his knight to a5 or e5 and doubles rooks on the c-file. The pawn on c3 (and potentially that on a2) ties down White's forces and distracts his attention.

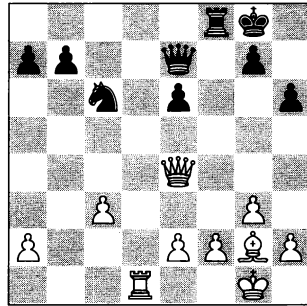
17. ♖fb1!? ♗fd8

Probably here too, Black should have preferred 17...♘a5, but he had not divined his opponent's idea.

18. ♘xe6!

Now it turns out that Black cannot recapture on e6 with the queen, because he loses the b7-pawn.

18... ♗xe6 19. ♗d1 ♗xd1+ 20. ♗xd1 ♖f8 21. ♗e4



The manoeuvre ♗f1-b1-d1 was in no sense a loss of tempo. Thanks to it, Black has obtained a real new weakness on e6. Now Black cannot, as he could before, surround the pawns on c3 and a2, since he is distracted by the need to defend his own weakness on e6. In the end, White won.

In his great book, Aaron Nimzowitsch, in explaining one technical device, employed the phrase 'a film in three parts'. We have been watching a film in four acts. Alekhine's desperate try, Flohr's brilliant defence, Anand's unsteretyped plan and Topalov's subtle manoeuvre. Classics, whose value will never diminish, and contemporary examples, which deserve never to be forgotten.

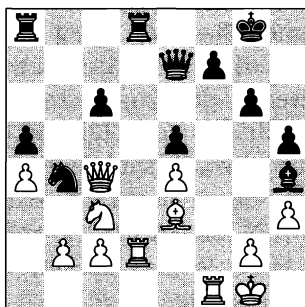
Chapter 5

Dances with the Knights

Anatoly Karpov
Boris Spassky

Leningrad 1974

□



A masterpiece by the positional genius Karpov. With low-key but very clever manoeuvres, he completely disorientsates the opposing army. The next manoeuvre especially stands out.

24. ♞b1!

The knight is heading for d2 and then c4 or f3. «The cunning of this move is that White succeeds in choosing the most appropriate moment to regroup this knight to an active position» – Karpov.

24... ♞b7 25. ♝h2!

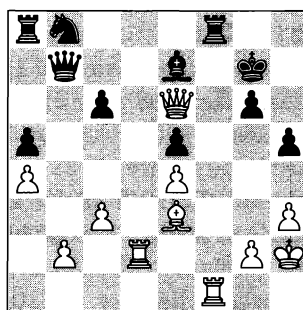
One wants to award every one of White's moves with an exclamation mark.

**25... ♝g7 26. c3 ♘a6 27. ♞e2 ♞f8
28. ♞d2 ♙d8 29. ♞f3 f6 30. ♞d2 ♙e7
31. ♞e6 ♞ad8**

In his notes to this game (written in the pre-computer era, of course), Karpov shows that the only way to prolong resistance was 31...♞b8.

Our contemporary, Vasily Lebedev, an amateur but a great master of

analysis, with the help of the computer, published some exceptionally beautiful variations on the internet. It turns out that 31...♞b8 loses by force to 32.♞xe5! fxe5 (or 32...♞c7 33.♙f4 g5 34.♞d7! ♞xd7 35.♞xe7+ ♝g8 36.♞xd7)



analysis diagram

33. ♞d8!! and then:

**33... ♞xf1 34. ♞g8+ ♝h7 35. ♞xg6#;
33... ♞xd8 34. ♞f7+ ♝h8 35. ♞xg6;
33... ♙xd8 34. ♞xf8 ♝xf8 35. ♙h6+
♞g7 36. ♞d6+ ♝f7 37. ♙xg7 ♙e7
38. ♞c7;
33... ♞a6 34. ♞xa8 ♞c5 35. ♞axf8! ♞xe6
36. ♞1f7# !**

32. ♞xd8 ♙xd8

Necessary, since after 32...♞xd8 there is the decisive 33.♞xe5! ♞c7 (33...fxe5 34.♞f7+) 34.♞f7+ and 35.♞xe7!.

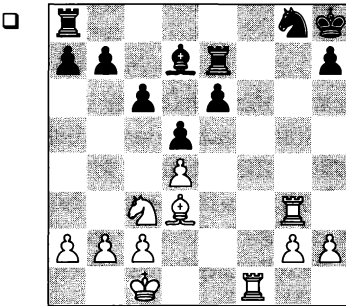
33. ♞d1 ♞b8 34. ♙c5 ♞h8 35. ♞xd8!

The final blow. After the recapture there follows 36.♙e7, so Black resigned.

Without exaggeration, an immortal game. But the actual manoeuvre ♞c3-b1-d2 had been seen before. A long, long time before.

Emanuel Lasker
Harry Nelson Pillsbury

Paris 1900



22. ♖b1!? ♜ae8

22...e5 is not possible, in view of 23.dxe5 ♜xe5 24.♞f7 ♜e7 and now 25.♞xg8+!. Therefore Black, before playing ...e6-e5, overprotects the square e7.

23. ♘d2 e5 24.dxe5 ♜xe5 25. ♖f3 ♜e3 26. ♘g5 ♞xg3 27.hxg3 h6

27...♜e7 28.♘xh7 ♜xh7 29.♙xh7 ♘xh7 is weak, because of 30.♞f7+, winning the exchange.

28. ♖f7+ ♗g7 29. ♘d6 ♜e7

29...♜b8 30.♞f7+ ♘h8 31.♞h7#.

30. ♘xb7

The long manoeuvre ♘c3-b1-d2-f3-g5-f7-d6xb7 has reached its conclusion and White has the advantage. Admittedly, he later loses part of his advantage:

30... ♖f6 31. ♘c5 ♙g4 32. ♞f4 ♙c8 33. ♞a4 ♘g4 34. ♙a6

It looks stronger to play 34.♘d2 ♘e3 35.♘b3! and if 35...♘xg2, then 36.♘d4 c5 37.♘c6, continuing the galloping of the restless steed. After

34... ♙f5 35. ♞f4 ♘e3 36.c3 ♗g6

the battle flared up with renewed vigour, although Lasker finally won at move 60.

Let us return to the position in the diagram. Unlike the Karpov-Spassky example, here the move ♘c3-b1 raises some questions. Even in the most primitive

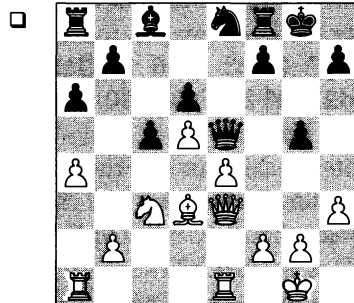
variation 22...♜ae8 23.♘d2 e5 24.dxe5 ♜xe5 25.♘f3 ♜e3 26.♘g5 ♞xg3 27.hxg3 ♜e7 28.♘xh7 ♗g7 (instead of 28...♞xh7??) it is unclear how great White's achievements are. The extra pawn is doubled and weak. Black also has his trumps: the advance of the c- and d-pawns and lively piece counterplay.

One gets the impression that with the move 22.♘b1, White was concerning himself with matters that are not of the first priority. The main thing is to prevent the freeing ...e6-e5, which could be achieved by the manoeuvre 22.♞g5!? ♜ae8 23.♞h5 h6 (not 23...e5 24.dxe5 ♜xe5?? because of mate in one) 24.♜e5. A sample development of events is 24...♗g7 25.♘e2 ♘f6 26.h3, and then ♘e2-f4. Here, White's advantage does not raise any doubts.

As for the manoeuvre ♘c3-b1-d2 itself, it has taken root as an established standard in positional play. It is often employed in positions arising from the Indian structure, when the opponent has a weak pawn on d6 and the knight, having developed initially to c3, strives in the course of the battle to reach c4.

Alexander Khalifman
Thomas Luther

Leningrad 1989



18. ♘b1!

The tactical justification for this lies in the variation 18...♖xb2 19.♖xg5+ ♔h8 20.e5! ♖xa1 21.♖h6 and mate is unavoidable.

18...♖b8 19.♘d2 f6

Black is unable to play 19...b5 because of 20.♘f3.

20.b4!

Khalifman conducts the game superbly. The tempting 20.♘c4 allows Black to breathe easier after 20...♖f4. Now, however, to his other problems he has another added: the need to defend the c5-pawn.

20...♖e7

Not 20...cxb4 21.♖a7, whilst after 20...b6 there is the very strong 21.♖ab1!

21.bxc5 dxc5 22.a5! ♘d7 23.♘b3 ♖c8 24.♖ac1

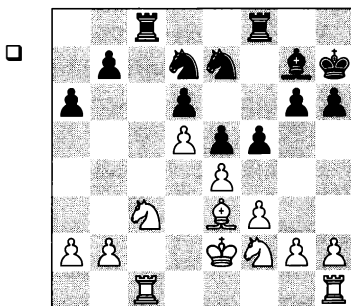
The pawn on c5 can no longer be defended. The pawn falls, and with it the game. Black soon resigned.

The threat of the knight transfer to c4 remained just a threat in this game. In the following example, the manoeuvre is carried to its logical completion.

Tigran Petrosian

Borislav Ivkov

Bugojno 1982



The queens have been exchanged and the typical kingside attack no longer

threatens White. He can get on with his direct concerns on the queenside.

19.♘b1! ♖xc1 20.♖xc1 ♖c8

Now not 21.♘d2 (the rook hangs), whilst 21.♖xc8 ♘xc8 22.♘d2 f4 is also bad. What should White do?

21.♘a3! ♖xc1 22.♘xc1

Petrosian shows subtlety in carrying out his plan. If now 22...b5, then 23.♘c2, and then 23...a5? 24.♘a3 b4 25.♘c4. The knight reaches its desired square after all.

22...h5 23.♘c4 ♘c8 24.♘d2!

Black wants to exchange bishops, which, if he can do it, would make it significantly easier to defend his queenside pawns. But Petrosian is alert: 24...♘h6 25.♘b4.

24...♘f6 25.♘a5 b6 26.♘c6

Demonstrating enviable technique, Petrosian won on move 49.

The manoeuvre by which the king's knight took the place of its queenside colleague, by means of g1-f3-d2-e4-c3, looks fanciful and artificial, but in reality, it contains a deep idea. Several opening variations, notably in the English Opening, involve White fighting for the square d5, by exchanging off his queen's knight and replacing it with the other. Let us examine a concrete example.

Tigran Petrosian

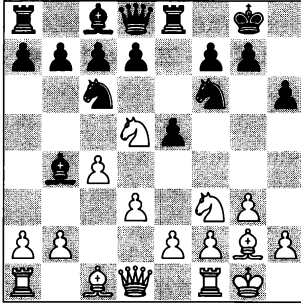
Florin Gheorghiu

Moscow 1967

This game is remarkable for the fact that White plays three very important moves. And each of them is ♘d5!

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.g3 ♘b4 5.♘g2 0-0 6.0-0 ♖e8 7.d3 h6 8.♘d5!?

Rubinstein's idea, which is usually a mark of quality.



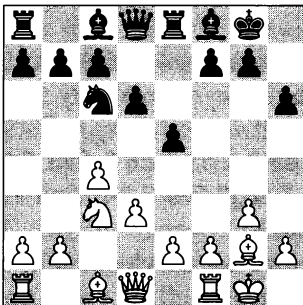
8... ♖f8 9. ♘xf6+

In the game Rubinstein-Duras (Carlsbad 1911), there followed 9.b3 d6 10.♖b2 ♘xd5 11.cxd5 ♘e7 12.e4 c5 13.dxc6 ♘xc6 14.d4 ♖g4 15.d5 ♘e7 16.♗d3, and Black had not equalised. Nonetheless, Petrosian's move is more precise and fits in better with the overall plan. White exchanges knights and then directs his remaining knight towards c3.

9... ♗xf6 10. ♘d2!?

White's advantage cannot be very great, but he knows what to do with it. The first priority is the manoeuvre ♘d2-e4-c3, taking firm control of the squares e4 and d5. Then, once the situation in the centre is under his control, he will advance the b-pawn, as is typical of English Opening positions. Once it reaches b5, it will drive off the knight on c6, thus increasing the scope of the bishop on g2.

10...d6 11. ♘e4 ♗d8 12. ♘c3



What should Black do? His usual plan of advancing the f-pawn does not work. Note how badly the ♖e8 and ♖f8 stand. The rook should be on f8 and the bishop somewhere on the a7-g1 diagonal. Then the two pieces would jointly pressurise f2. In this position, however, this is impossible, or, at the very least, will take an enormous amount of time.

White's plan may look slow. The knight on c3 is a real 'devourer of tempi', but looking at the position, one notes with surprise that this is not the case. White's forces are harmoniously placed and there is no impression that he has lost tempi. Meanwhile, the black pieces on e8 and f8 would like to exchange places.

12... ♖d7

Black sticks to the plan of exchanging light-squared bishops by means of ...♗d8-c8 and ...♖d7-h3. This is a well-known idea, but Petrosian reacts subtly and as a result, Black achieves little.

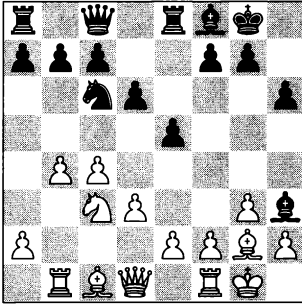
Practice shows that another plan was more promising: setting up a barrier with ...c7-c6 and ...d6-d5. For example, 12...♖e6 13.b4 a6 14.♖b1 ♗d7 15.a4 ♖ab8 16.b5 ♘e7!? 17.♗b3 axb5 18.axb5 ♖h3 19.e4 ♖xg2 20.♗xg2 ♘g6 21.♗d1 c6 (Kasimdzhanov-I. Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 1999) or even the immediate 12...♘e7!? 13.b4 c6 14.b5 d5!? (Grant-L.B.Hansen, Gausdal 1992).

We will continue the discussion of this plan below.

13.b4 ♗c8

Of course, not 13...♘xb4 14.♖b1, and the rook breaks through to the seventh rank.

14. ♖b1 ♖h3



15.e4!

These days, this is a standard reaction, but for Gheorghiu it must have come as an unpleasant surprise. Just as Black is ready to exchange light-squared bishops, White changes the pawn structure in the centre. The weakening of the square d4 does not play the slightest role; more than that, White tempts the black knight to this square, so as to exchange it for the bishop and leave only one pair of minor pieces on the board.

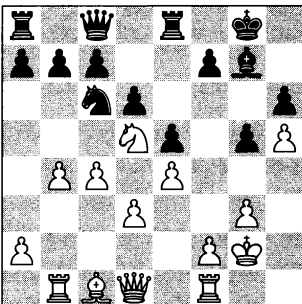
15...♗xg2

The experts criticised Black for this decision. But after 15...♗e6, White could open a second front: 16.♗e3 ♗e7 17.♖d2 and then f2-f4-f5. Evidently, the exchange of bishops struck Gheorghiu as the lesser evil.

16.♕xg2 g6 17.h4 ♗g7

This move is unquestionably bad. It was necessary to play 17...h5.

18.h5! g5 19.♗d5



A knight appears on d5 for the second time, but how the position has changed in the meantime. White has made great progress and Black faces a difficult defence.

19...♗d4

The alternative was 19...♗e7, but one can understand Gheorghiu – he wants to show some activity, even if it is with just a single piece.

20.♗e3

It is clear that in the long term, White wants to put his bishop on b2 (or e3) and take on d4. But there are nuances. For example, after 20...c6 21.♗b2 ♖e6, it is unfavourable to play 22.♗xd4 exd4 23.♗f5, because of 23...d5!?. The position opens up and the bishop on g7 may come to life again.

20...f5 21.♗b2

Now, however, things are very unfavourable for Black after 21...f4, because of 22.♗xd4 exd4 23.♗f5. The pawn structure remains closed, and in such a position, the knight is significantly stronger than the bishop.

21...fxe4 22.dxe4 ♖e6 23.♗c3 b5!?

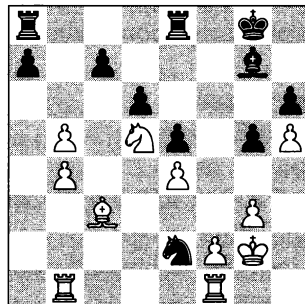
A logical attempt to break out, which, however, White warmly welcomes.

24.cxb5 ♖xa2

Or 24...♗xb5 25.♖d3 ♗xc3 26.♖xc3 ♖xa2 27.♖xc7.

25.♖d3 ♖e2 26.♖xe2 ♗xe2

27.♗d5



The knight lands on d5 for the third time, and this time with decisive effect.

27... ♖ab8 28. ♗fe1 ♘d4 29. ♙xd4 exd4

The exchange, which was planned some ten moves ago, is finally executed, in the most favourable circumstances possible for White. Highly characteristic of Petrosian's manner of play!

30. ♗bc1 ♗b7 31. ♚xc7

The curtain can be drawn down. Black survived to the end of his time-trouble and then resigned at move 41.

Theory moves forward, propelled by many factors, including shock. The game Petrosian-Gheorghiu made a great impression on those interested in the opening. It became obvious that quiet, passive play in this variation would not bring equality, and attempts were made to seek counterplay.

After 1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.g3 ♙b4 5.♙g2 0-0 6.0-0 ♖e8 7.d3 h6 8.♘d5!?, as Petrosian played, White retains the initiative for a long time. Therefore instead of 7...h6 Black players started playing 7...♙xc3 8.bxc3 e4!?. The Rubinstein-Petrosian plan could be played one move earlier: 7.♘d5!?, but Black can also accelerate his own plan with 6...e4!?.

The argument 'for' and 'against' continues to this day. But I want to look further at a plan I mentioned above.

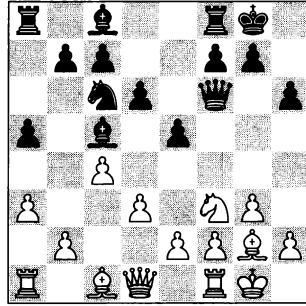
**Veselin Topalov
Vladimir Epishin**

Dos Hermanas 1994

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♙b4 5.♘d5!?

As we see, the Rubinstein idea even works at move 5.

5... ♙c5 6.d3 h6 7.a3 a5 8.♙g2 d6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘xf6+ ♗xf6



11. ♘d2!?

The position is very similar to what we have seen, but there is a small difference. The bishop is not buried on f8, but takes an active part in the central battle.

In addition, unlike Gheorghiu, Epishin is not prepared to surrender the centre without a fight.

11... ♗d8 12.e3 ♘e7!? 13. ♘e4 ♙a7 14. ♘c3 c6!

Black sets up a barrier to the bishop on g2. If White continues the usual English Opening plan with b2-b4-b5, there follows the reply ...d6-d5. This central strategy could prove more effective than the flank diversion.

Understanding this, Topalov reacts subtly. He is first to undertake operations in the centre:

15.d4 ♙e6

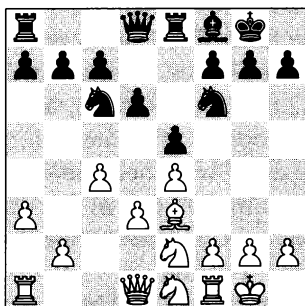
With this, a complicated position has been reached, with chances for both sides.

And who was the first to come up with the plan of ...♘c6-e7 and ...c7-c6 in the English?

It is hard to say, but as a possible stem game, we offer the following classical example:

Erich Eliskases Grigory Levenfish

Moscow 1936



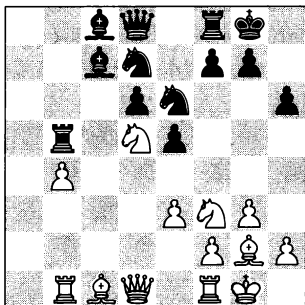
12...♘e7!? 13.♘g3 c6 14.d4 exd4
15.♗xd4 ♘g6 16.f3 d5!

And Black seized the initiative.

Let us return to the plan with the knight transferring from f3 to c3. In the opening, as they say, it looks a bit much, but in the middlegame, it is a different story. If the structure takes on a closed character, and the pawn masses cannot start advancing quickly, the loss of tempi is unlikely to be felt. In such cases, even the most long-winded manoeuvres may turn out to be justified.

Veselin Topalov Claus Henrici

Frankfurt 1997



The b4-pawn is passed and the d6-pawn backward. The essence of the position is whether White can relieve the blockade

of b5, whilst, in turn, maintaining his own blockade of d5.

20.♘d2! ♘f6 21.♘xf6+ ♜xf6
22.♗e4 ♜e7 23.♘c3 ♞b8 24.♘d5

The knight manoeuvre f3-d2-e4-c3 (and then to d5) is completed. Can we call it cumbersome? Can we accuse White of having wasted tempi? Not, not at all. The manoeuvre has fulfilled its task – it has broken the blockade of b5 and maintained the one on d5.

24...♜d7 25.♜d3 ♖b7

Black wants to exchange the blockading knight on d5 for his own bishop. This is a questionable decision, since now all the light squares fall into White's hands. Tempting is 25...♗d8, and then ...♘e6-c7. However, even in this case, things are not easy for Black. The pawn b4 advances sharply, whilst the d6-pawn is going nowhere.

26.♞d1 ♞fd8 27.♗d2 ♗xd5
28.♗xd5 ♜b5 29.♜b3 ♜e8
30.♞dc1 ♖b6 31.♞c6 ♘c7 32.♞bc1
♘xd5 33.♜xd5 ♜d7 34.b5 ♖c5

An oversight in a difficult position, typical for tournament play, or a simul, as here. It was possible to continue the game by means of 34...♜b7, and if 35.♖b4, only then 35...♗c5.

35.♖a5 ♞dc8 36.♞1xc5!

Black resigned.

Incidentally, this is not the only example of creative play by Veselin Topalov in simultaneous displays which you will find in this book. There is a general view that top players in simuls do not bother themselves with calculating long variations, or the search for unusual positional plans, but try to play more simply. Topalov seems to be an exception to this rule. He plays all games with exceptional concentration and energy, regardless of circumstances.

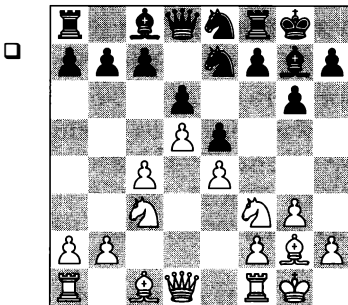
The manoeuvre ♖f3-g5-h3 (or ...f6-g4-h6) looks ridiculous at first sight. Why waste time transferring the knight to the edge of the board?

In reality, the explanation is simple. In many King's Indian-type positions, the knight needs to move, so as to free the f-pawn to advance. The key thing is often to create a pawn mass on e4 and f4, or e5/f5 for Black. And the knight just needs to get out of the way for the moment; his time will come.

There is also another idea. In some cases, the knight on f6 should move to f5 quickly. So quickly, that the loss of several tempi plays no great role. Then the square h6 is only a temporary one. As usual, we will examine several examples, classical and half-forgotten.

Robert Hübner
Miguel Cuellar

Leningrad 1973



A well-known variation of the King's Indian has been played. Nowadays, it is seen more and more rarely, as it has been shown that by 10.♖e1 f5 11.♖d3 ♖f6 12.♙g5!? White obtains the better game. For example, 12...h6 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 14.f4 (a paradox: having disposed of his dark-squared bishop, White opens the long diagonal) 14...exf4 15.♖xf4 ♙e5 16.exf5 ♙xf5 17.♗d2

c6 18.♗h1 ♗b6 19.♚ae1 ♚f7 20.♘e6 (Karpov-Gelfand, Dos Hermanas 1994).

10.♘g5!?

This idea is understandable. White prevents the immediate 10...f5 (in reply to which there is the unpleasant 11.♘e6 ♙xe6 12.dxe6 c6 13.♗b3), and forces ...h7-h6, hoping that later on, either the h6-pawn will become weak, or the weakening of the b1-h7 diagonal will have its say. These hopes are not unfounded, I would say.

10...h6 11.♖h3 f5 12.f4

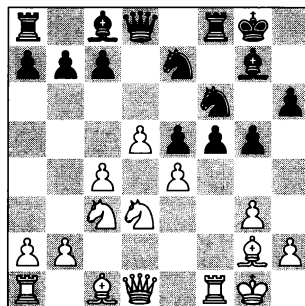
We have reached a standard situation for this opening variation. The two sides' pawn masses have clashed in the centre. Black must decide which change of structure to go in for. There are many possibilities. He can take an isolated pawn on e5, or on f5, he can take hanging pawns on e5 and f5. Or he can play some kind of neutral move, transferring to his opponent the right to take the decision.

The latter is in fact what Black did.

12...♖f6

I am tempted to suggest 12...fxe4 13.♘xe4 ♖f5, and if 14.fxe5, then 14...dxe5. Then the plan is as follows: one knight goes to d4, the second to f6, the bishop to f5. The queen can transfer via e8 and emerge on g6 (after ...g6-g5), or it can come to b6 (after ...c7-c6).

13.fxe5 dxe5 14.♖f2 g5 15.♖d3



Thus the knight has arrived at d3, although it took four moves instead of two.

The pawn on e5 is hanging. 15...♗g6 is bad because of 16.exf5. But it is possible to try to solve the problems tactically: 15...f4 16.♗xe5 fxc3 17.hxc3 ♖d6 or 15...c6!? 16.♗xe5 ♗xe4.

However, Black continued prosaically:

15...♗xe4 16.♗xe4 fxe4 17.♗xe4

Without bothering himself with such more subtle ideas as 17.♗f2 or the zwischenzug 17.♖xf8+, White just recaptures with the bishop on the blockading square e4.

17...♗f5

A committal and inappropriate move. A tempting alternative was 17...♗f5, with the idea of bringing the knight to d6 or d4. The bishop on c8 can always find itself something to do.

18.♖e2 ♗xe4 19.♖xe4 ♖xf1+ 20.♗xf1 ♖f8+

Missing perhaps his last chance to complicate the game: 20...♗c8!? 21.c5 (21.♗xe5 ♖e7) 21...♗e7.

21.♗g2 ♖f5 22.♗f2 ♖xe4+ 23.♗xe4 ♗f5 24.b3 ♗d6 25.♗xd6 cxd6 26.♗a3 ♖d8 27.♖f1

Black has done much to bring about this endgame, which is actually prospectless and difficult for him, as one would expect. Later, White created a passed pawn on the queenside and won easily.

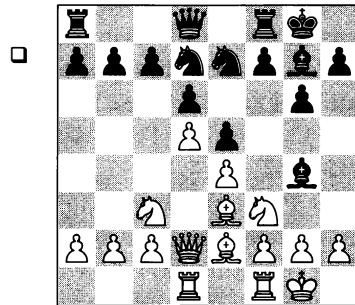
Summing up, we can say that in this structure, the idea of ♗f3-g5-h3 (and then ♗h3-f2-d3) is interesting, but no more than that. With this knight manoeuvre, White posed his opponent definite problems, which he was not able to solve. But it did involve a lot of tempi and with energetic, inventive play, Black could have obtained counterplay.

But that is not the main thing. The main point is that there is no real need for the manoeuvre ♗f3-g5-h3-f2-d3. Objectively, it is artificial, and if there is a chance to post the knight on d3 in two moves instead of four, then of course that is how one should play.

Boris Spassky

Bruno Parma

Havana 1966



We have a structure very similar to the preceding example. But there is a significant difference. The white pawn stands on c2, not c4 (the opening was a Pirc), which means that White needs to play in the centre and on the kingside, rather than the queenside, where he has deferred his pawn advance.

Secondly, the black bishop has come to g4. He wants to take on f3 and then advance ...f7-f5. It is better for White to retain his knight than his light-squared bishop. Therefore, the choice is between 11.♗e1 and 11.♗g5.

After 11.♗e1 ♗xe2 12.♖xe2 f5 13.f4, in the game Geller-Kuzmin (Lviv 1978), Black replied with the non-standard 13...exf4 14.♗xf4 ♗xc3!? 15.bxc3 fxe4 16.♖xe4 ♗c5 and obtained a very comfortable endgame: 17.♖c4 ♖d7 18.♗d3 ♖a4 19.♖xa4 ♗xa4 20.c4 ♖ae8 etc. Instead of 13.f4, it was necessary to look

at 13.f3 f4 14.♗f2. There are no light-squared bishops on the board, a factor which significantly hampers Black in advancing ...g6-g5-g4. On the other hand, according to the canons of the King's Indian, the f2-square should be occupied by a knight, not a bishop. In addition, it will not be easy to arrange the plan with the advance of the b- and c-pawns.

Perhaps the strongest reaction to 12...f5 is 13.exf5, and if 13...♗xf5, then 14.♗e4, or 13...gxf5 14.f4!. But the paradox is that in this structure, the knight stands better on h3 than on e1!

11.♗g5!? ♗xe2 12.♗xe2 h6

Not 12...f5 13.♗e6.

13.♗h3 ♖h7

Again, it is too early for 13...f5 – the h6-pawn is hanging. Now it is clear why White recaptured on e2 with the knight at move 12, and not the queen.

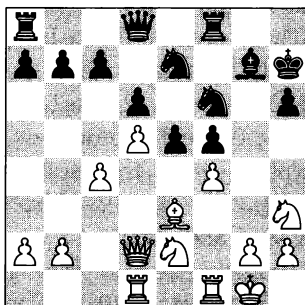
14.c4

In the game Timman-Seirawan (Las Palmas 1981) White calmly played 14.b3 and gradually outplayed his opponent: 14...f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 (15...gxf5 16.f4!) 16.f3 ♗f6 17.♗g3 ♗xe3 18.♖xe3 c6 19.c4 cxd5 20.cxd5 ♖a5 21.♖d2 ♖xd2 22.♗xd2 ♗ac8 23.♗f2 ♗f7 24.♗fe4.

14...f5 15.f3 ♗f6 16.exf5 gxf5

After 16...♗xf5, one can follow Timman's example and play 17.♗g3. Or 17.♗c3.

17.f4!



The position is starting to clarify.

Weak is 17...e4 18.♗d4. Black can maintain the tension with his pawns on e5 and f5 for at most 3-4 moves. White can organise his forces, keeping the pawns under attack, and trying to force ...e5-e4. White's advantage is certainly not great. But his plan is clear. Each piece knows its job. Black, in order to maintain equality, needs to play very accurately, and show some original ideas. This grandmaster Parma was unable to do:

**17...♗e4 18.♖c2 ♖e8 19.♗f2 ♗xf2
20.♗xf2 e4 21.♗d4!**

Black would have been happy with the position after 21.♗d4 ♗xd4 22.♗xd4 ♗g8. Spassky plays more subtly: by exchanging bishops, he creates the threat of ♗e2xd4-e6.

21...c5 22.dxc6 ♗xd4 23.♗xd4

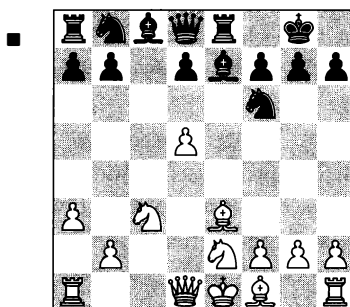
Now the position is finally clarified. The rooks will double on the d-file, and the queen come to b4 or a3. In this way, all three major pieces will attack the d6-pawn. And the knight will come to the blockading square e3.

**23...♗xc6 24.♖c3 ♖e7 25.♗c2!
♗ad8 26.♗fd2 ♖e6 27.♗e3**

White's advantage has grown to decisive proportions. Black played a few more moves and then resigned.

**Attila Groszpeter
Andras Adorjan**

Hungary 1983



When this game was played, the diagram position was already well-known to theory and was not regarded as containing any particularly lively ideas. Both sides would just complete their development, without any conflict, and the result would be a quiet position, with some advantage to White. For example, 10...d6 11.h3 ♖bd7 12.♗g3 ♗e5 13.♙e2 ♙f8 14.0-0 etc. (Keene-Kraidman, Gausdal 1983).

10...♗g4!?

This move is also not new, but Adorjan's interpretation of it is. Previously, the move had been part of a plan to bring the bishop to f6 as soon as possible: 11.♙d4 d6 12.♗g3 ♙f6+. But White's space advantage remains and becomes a permanent factor: 13.♙e2 ♗d7 14.0-0 ♙xd4 15.♖xd4 ♗gf6 16.♞fe1 ♗e5 17.♞ad1 (Kir. Georgiev-P.Littlewood, Plovdiv 1983).

11.♙d4 ♗h6!

But this is the real novelty. In a position where the pieces tended to move almost as if half-asleep, Adorjan finds a non-standard and very nice idea. The knight is heading for f5!

Of course, the idea was subjected to widespread tests. It was shown that both 12.d6 ♙f6 13.♗d5 ♖a5+ (Yrjölä-Hjartarson, Gausdal 1984) and 12.♗g3 ♙xa3+ 13.♙e2 ♙xb2 (Ree-Ligterink, Wijk aan Zee 1984) are insufficient. The best move is considered to be 12.♖d3! d6 (12...♗a6!?) 13.♗g3, with the idea of taking the square f5 from the knight, although even here, Black has simple, comfortable play: 13...♗d7 (not 13...♙f6+ 14.♙e2 ♙xd4 15.♖xd4 ♗f5 16.♖f4 ♗h4 17.0-0 ♗g6 18.♖b4, and the knight has wasted too much time, Kir. Georgiev-Qi Jingxuan, Thessaloniki 1984) 14.♙e2 ♗c5. Then White has tried:

A) 15.♖d1 ♗f5 16.♗xf5 ♙xf5 (Nenashev-Barsov, Tashkent 1988);

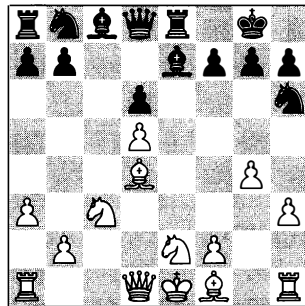
B) 15.♖c2 ♙f6 16.♙e3 ♗g4 17.♙d2 ♙d4 18.0-0 ♗xh2! 19.♗xh2 ♖h4+ 20.♗g1 ♖xg3 (Semkov-Dzindzichashvili, Saint John 1988);

C) 15.♙xc5 dxc5 16.0-0 a6 17.♙f3 ♙d6 18.♞fe1 f5! (Shulman-Nikolenko, Moscow 1995).

12.g4

This looks very principled, but is probably just weak; after 12...♗xg4 13.♞g1 d6, no compensation for the pawn is visible. Adorjan, however, is after mate, not material.

12...d6 13.h3



13...f5!

The author of the famous book *Black is OK!* demonstrates that his ideas are correct.

14.♖c2 ♗g5!

Preventing queenside castling. Weaker is 14...fxg4 15.hxg4 (but not 15.0-0-0 ♙g5+ 16.♗b1 ♙f5) 15...♙xg4 16.0-0-0 ♙g5+ 17.f4.

15.♗g2 ♗d7 16.gxf5 ♗f6!? **17.h4 ♙xf5 18.♖a4 ♙d7 19.♖b4 ♙f4**

Queenside castling is impossible, and kingside castling is suicide: 20.0-0 ♗h5 etc. Black is fully mobilised and ready for the storm.

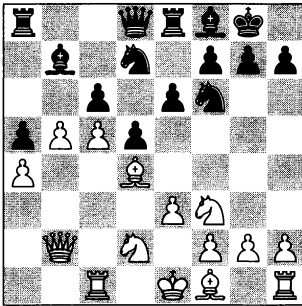
The outcome of the game is decided, but we will not deprive you of the pleasure of seeing the end:

20. ♖f1 ♗e5!? 21. ♗xe5 ♜xe5
 22. ♜xd6 ♝fg4 23. ♝g1 ♝f5 24. ♞b4
 ♞xh4 25. ♞g3 ♞f6 26. ♞ce4 ♞f3+
 27. ♗xf3 ♞xf3 28. ♞xb7 ♜f8
 29. ♞xd7 ♞xf2! 30. ♜h2 ♞xe4
 31. ♞xe4 ♜xe4 32. ♞d6 ♜g4+ 0-1

It did not take long to find a classical analogue.

Gyula Breyer
Siegbert Tarrasch

Gothenburg 1920



15... ♞g4!?

«A very subtle, deeply thought-out plan. Black will organise an attack by queen, bishop and both knights, on the c5-pawn, and then win it. For this purpose, the knight on f6 needs to come to e6. White can put up temporary resistance to this, but cannot prevent the plan eventually being implemented» – Knoch.

I will permit myself to express some cautious reservations about whether the move 15... ♞g4 was really the start of such a far-reaching and deep plan as suggested by Hans Knoch. In the old days, they liked very long-winded plans, but even so, the transfer of the knight to e6, on a board full of pieces, seems a bit too much.

Furthermore, why should Black be concerned with such deep plans? It is clear that a battle is going on for the advance ...e6-e5. The construct with ♗d4 and

a pawn on c5 is not solid. If Black can kick away the bishop, the c5-pawn will fall. So how can we do this? If 15... ♞b8, then 16. ♞e5. On 15... ♞e7, again there can follow 16. ♞e5, with the possible variation 16... ♞xe5 17. ♗xe5 ♞d7 18. ♗d6, and White is out of danger.

From the viewpoint of the battle for ...e6-e5, the move 15... ♞g4 is very good. The knight frees the square f6 for its pawn. And the knight itself is not without work – it can come via h6 to f7 or f5. What will happen after that remains unclear for the moment.

16.h3 ♞h6

We have reached the critical moment of the game. Black has shown his cards and White must now do the same.

A tempting move is 17. ♞e5, and if 17... ♞xe5 18. ♗xe5 f6 19. ♗h2 e5, then 20. ♗d3, followed by castling. Black's centre looks very nice, of course, but it is not mobile and his minor pieces are hardly dazzling, to put it mildly. White, after completing his mobilisation, can opt for e3-e4 (and at some point f2-f4), or can concentrate wholly on the queen-side, where he has a pawn majority. Maybe Breyer did not like the reply 17... ♞b8!?. But even in this case, after 18. bxc6 ♗xc6 19. ♞xc6 ♞xc6 20. ♗b5 ♞c7 21.0-0, White's position is, at a minimum, not worse.

**17. ♞b3 f6! 18. ♞a3 e5 19. ♗c3 ♞c7
 20. ♗b2 ♜ec8 21. ♞a2 ♞d8**

White's piece manoeuvres at this stage create a rather pitiful impression. Effectively, they are running on the spot. Black, sensing his opponent's uncertainty, set up his forces against the c5-pawn (he transferred his bishop to e7, the queen to f8 and the knight came round via h6-f7-d8-e6), took the pawn and then won the game in beautiful style.

Chapter 6

The Shuttle Manoeuvre

The shuttle manoeuvre is a frequent guest in chess problems and studies. It occurs much less often in practical play, but always creates quite an impression when it does.

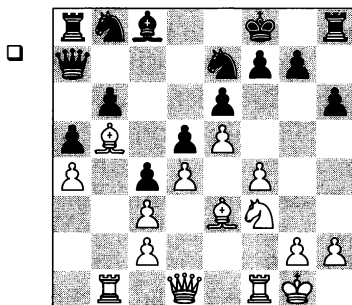
What does it involve?

Imagine that in the opening, a piece has been developed to some square or other. In the course of the subsequent play, it becomes clear that the piece is not active on that square and belongs on another. Then it returns to its original square, and then takes up a new position. In commentary, such a manoeuvre is often described as a 'shuttle manoeuvre'.

From the description, it is clear that the 'shuttler' is more often than not a piece that moves diagonally, i.e. a bishop or queen. Let us now familiarise ourselves with some examples.

Richard Réti
Vladimir Vukovic

Vienna 1922



How should we assess this position? All of Black's pieces are bad, especially his king. On the other hand, the position, as is characteristic of the French Defence, is closed, and this hides the weaknesses of the black position.

White's plan is clear: to break with f4-f5. But this is not possible at the moment, and 18.g4 fails to 18...h5. This means that the breakthrough requires some preparation.

18. ♖c1!

Standard for our day, but revolutionary at the time. Of course, the bishop belongs on the a3-f8 diagonal. There, it has no pawns in its way and no opposite number, and can develop its full strength.

**18...g6 19. ♖e1! ♔g7 20. ♖h4 ♘g8
21. ♙a3**

The preparations are complete and the break f4-f5 hangs over Black's head as a deadly threat.

21... ♙d7 22.g4

A good alternative was 22. ♖g3!?. It seems as though the break cannot be achieved without the aid of the g-pawn, but the concrete variations show the opposite:

22... ♘c6 23.f5! exf5 24.e6! fxe6 25. ♘h4 g5 26. ♙xc6 ♙xc6 27. ♖e5+ ♘f6 28. ♘xf5+! exf5 29. ♖xf5 and then ♖b1-f1 with a crush;

22... ♔h7 (so as to avoid the pin on the g-file, but now the break, surprisingly, is in place) 23.f5! exf5 (23...gxf5 24. ♙f8!) 24. ♙f8! (creating the threat of 25. ♘g5+! hxg5 26. ♖h3+ with mate) 24... ♘f6 25.exf6 ♖xf8 26. ♖d6 ♖e8

27. ♖fe1, and the black position is falling apart.

22...h5 23.f5! exf5

Not 23...hxg4 24.f6+, and this means the game is approaching its end.

24. ♕xd7

Mathematically, the most accurate (as well as the prettiest) win was 24. ♖d8! ♖h6 (the threat was 25. ♕f8+ ♖h7 26. ♖g5#) 25. ♖f6+ ♖g8 26. ♖g5 ♕xb5 27. ♕f8! ♖xf8 28. ♖e6+ ♖e8 29. ♖d8# or 28...♖g8 29. ♖g7#. But Réti, as an experienced practical player, prefers to win material:

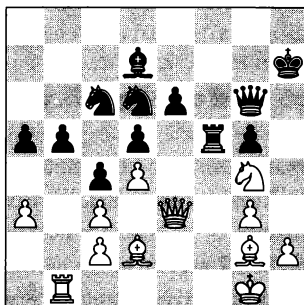
24...hxg4 25. ♕f8+ ♖xf8 26. ♖xh8

Black soon resigned.

Ruslan Ponomariov Vasily Ivanchuk

Linares 2002

□



A more complicated, and hard to assess example. If we forget the previous example, it is easy to think that the entire battle revolves around the four files from e to h. However, there is no decisive blow available in this area of the board:

30. ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 31. ♕xf1 ♖e4 or 31. ♖xf1 ♖f5+ 32. ♖f2 ♖f7, and the pawn on g5, having exchanged defenders, is still alive;

30. ♕h3, and if Black now goes in for an exchange of blows, then he probably

loses: 30... ♖h5 31. ♖f2 ♖xf2 32. ♖xf2 ♖e4 33. ♕g4! ♖xg4 34. ♖f7+ ♖h6 35. ♖f8+ ♖g6 36. ♖f1 etc. However, 30... ♖f7 31. ♖xg5 ♖xg5 32. ♕xg5 ♖e4 (attacking g5 and c3) keeps the game in an unstable balance.

30.a4!?

In Réti's footsteps. Interestingly, despite the result of the game, Ponomariov was later sceptical about the idea of a3-a4. This is what he wrote:

«During the game, this move seemed natural to me: in one go, White activates his rook and bishop. But the minuses of the move are also obvious: a pawn is given away, and Black gets a passed pawn, which could assume great power in the endgame.

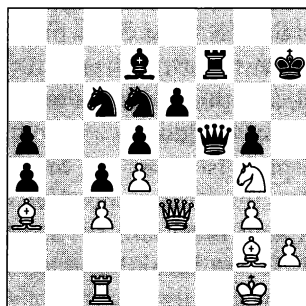
30.h3!? looks good, just improving the position a tiny bit.»

30...bxa4 31. ♕c1! ♖f7 32. ♕a3 ♖xc2?

Black wrongly forces matters. He should wait with 32... ♖f5. Note that even if White gets his rook to b7, it will not be so easy to make any further progress. The black pieces all defend one another. After 32... ♖f5, Ponomariov extends the variation a move and a half: 33. ♖e2 ♖g7 34. ♕c5, and writes that 'the whole battle lies ahead'.

33. ♖c1 ♖f5

Black's queen and knight are attacked, and this means that the text move, like those which follow, is necessary.



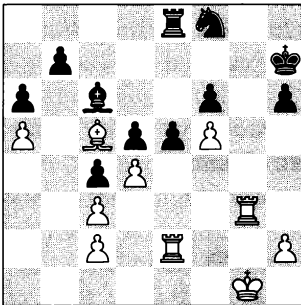
34. ♖h3! ♗e4

Or 34... ♗b5 35. ♗e5 ♖xh3 36. ♗xf7 ♗g6 37. ♖f1.

35. ♗e5 ♖f2+ 36. ♖xf2 ♖xf2 37. ♗xd7

White has won a piece and realised his advantage without any undue adventures.

Vasily Smyslov
Isaak Boleslavsky
 Leningrad/Moscow 1941



The end of a famous game. White has already won the exchange, but what is more important is that the black king is in trouble.

37. ♖g2 ♗d7 38. ♖g7+ ♗h8 39. ♖7g6 ♗h7 40. ♖a3!

In the two previous examples, the bishop went from the c1-h6 diagonal to the a3-f8 diagonal. This is a mirror image.

Interestingly, in his 'Best Games' book, Smyslov does not mention the dual 40. ♖2g3 exd4 41. ♖h3. The surprise is less, when one remembers that Vasily Vasilievich named his book *In Search of Harmony*.

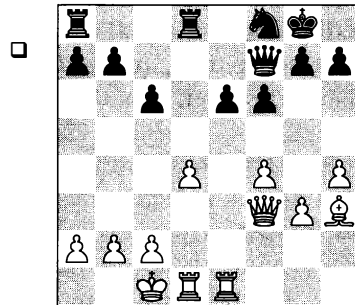
Harmony in chess means the best possible coordination of all the pieces on the board. Here, that means coordinating the out-of-play bishop on c5.

40...exd4 41. ♖c1

Mate in one is threatened, and the bishop cannot be taken: 41... ♖e1+ 42. ♗f2 ♖xc1 43. ♖g7+ ♗h8 44. ♖g8+ ♗h7 45. ♖2g7#. Therefore, Black resigned.

The next two examples are separated by roughly 100 years. The World Champions involved have the numbers 1 and 0 in their numerical order as champions, since Boris Spassky was the tenth World Champion and William Steinitz the first.

Boris Spassky
Jan Hein Donner
 Leiden 1970



Black's position looks perfectly tenable. He only has one weakness, on e6, but Black can defend this as many times as White can attack it.

But Spassky finds an extremely unpleasant plan. He returns the bishop to its starting position, so as to transfer it to the a2-g8 diagonal. Once that happens, White will be threatening the advance f4-f5.

21. ♖f1!

Black has exactly two tempi, in which to prevent a catastrophe. With hindsight, we can say that Donner coped very unfortunately with this task.

The move 21...a5!? deserved consideration. The move looks like a simple trap: after 22. ♖c4 b5 23. ♖b3 there follows

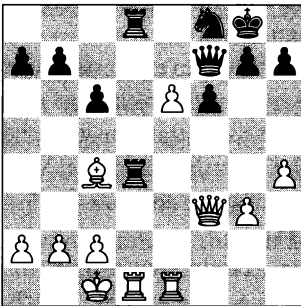
23...a4, and the bishop is trapped. White would probably have replied 22.a3, re-establishing the original threat, but as will become clear from the variations below, the inclusion of the moves ...a7-a5 and a2-a3 would very much suit Black...

21...♖d6 22.♙c4 ♜ad8

Good or bad, he had to play 22...f5, although it is a significant concession. Spassky would probably have first strengthened his central pawn with 23.c3, and then transferred his rooks to the e-file, combining pressure against e6 with a favourable change of pawn structure on the kingside, by means of h4-h5, g3-g4 etc. The realisation of the resulting large positional advantage would take some time, but would be highly likely. However, now everything ends rapidly.

I suspect that Donner, not only a grandmaster but also a world-famous journalist and master of paradoxical writing, when playing his last two moves, had seen a variation which promised to relieve him of all his problems. Alas, though, he has miscalculated.

23.f5 ♜xd4 24.fxe6



This is perhaps what Black had seen: 24...♖e7 25.♖a3! ♜xd1+ (but not 25...♙g6 26.♜xd4 ♜xd4 27.h5) 26.♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 27.♙xd1 ♙g6 28.h5 ♖xa3 29.e7+. It looks all over, but now there

follows a miraculous escape: 29...♔h8 30.e8♖+ ♖f8! and Black is close to a draw.

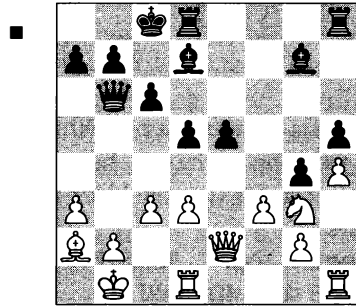
Unfortunately, this fantasy meets a cold shower. Instead of 28.h5, White wins by 28.♖xa7. But now imagine the moves ...a7-a5 and c2-c3 had been played – White is still better, but the resource ♖f3-a3 is no longer available.

24...♜xd1 + 25.♜xd1 ♜xd1 + 26.♖xd1

The attempt to improvise a solution fails, as one would expect. Now after 26...♙xe6, White wins with 27.♖d6, and on 26...♖e7 with 27.♖d8!. Therefore, Black resigned.

**Louis Paulsen
William Steinitz**

Baden-Baden 1870



Black has the so-called 'advantage of the two bishops'. Bishops need space, and by all the canons of positional play, Black needs to open the position. The first line which comes to mind is 23...gxf3 24.gxf3 e4 25.dxe4 ♙xc3. However, continuing the variation, 26.exd5 ♜he8 27.♙e4 ♙f5 28.dxc6, we can see that Black has not achieved anything. He is unable to get an advantage from the various pins and White is out of danger. Another idea is the opposite – to do nothing concrete, but just make a move that is useful on general grounds:

23...♖b8 (and then, perhaps, ...♖b8-a8 or ...a7-a6 and ...♖b8-a7). It is not so easy for White to find a reply which does not spoil something.

Steinitz decides differently. He finds a concrete plan which does not strike one's eye at first glance.

23...♗f8!?

The bishop returns to its original square, on its way to d6. There, he will not be under the feet of his rooks, which can quickly transfer to the open f- and g-files. The object of the attack will be the knight on g3 and the weak kingside pawns.

24.♖a1

Bad is 24.♞xe5 ♗xa3.

24...♗d6 25.♘f1 ♞df8 26.♘d2 ♞h6

The transfer of the bishop to d6 was very good. But his next move was already sub-optimal, and his last move out of place. The rook is loose on h6 and his king has not left the danger zone. These factors form the basis for counterplay.

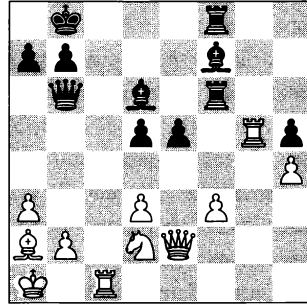
27.c4! ♗e6 28.♘b3

This indecisiveness is hard to understand. By means of 28.cxd5 cxd5 29.d4! White could have turned matters in his favour, for example 29...♞xd4 (29...exd4 30.♘b3) 30.♘e4 ♞b6 31.♞d2 ♞hh8 32.♗xd5 etc.

28...gxf3 29.gxf3 ♗c7

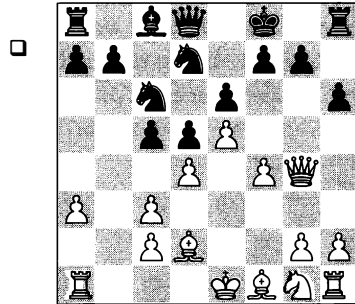
White has created the threat of c4-c5, so Steinitz moves the bishop away from the fork. But it seems that he could have fallen into the trap: 29...♞g6 30.c5 ♗xc5 31.♘xc5 ♞xc5 32.♞xe5 ♞f5 (not immediately 32...♞xf3 33.♞xh5) 33.♞e2 ♞f4, and if 34.♞e5 ♞d4 35.♞xh5, then 35...♞g7! and the white queen turns from the hunter to the hunted one.

30.♘d2 ♞hf6 31.♞c1 ♖b8 32.cxd5 cxd5 33.♞hg1 ♗d6 34.♞g5 ♗f7



Black has everything defended and has two bishops, a serious strength, and the white pawns are now very weak. White lost on time three moves later.

Let us return to the game Réti-Vukovic. The bishop was not the only piece to make a shuttle manoeuvre in this game.



«It is obvious that White's success depends on maintaining his wide pawn front. The move 11.♘f3 is tempting, but then there follows 11...♞b6 12.♗e3 ♞b2!, and White's centre is destroyed.»

11.♞d1!?

«A very subtle move, characteristic of Réti's fresh and far from routine play. By defending his centre once and for all, White lays down a solid foundation for his later attack» – Kmoch.

However, I wish to dispute the concrete variations offered by the Viennese master and journalist. After 11.♘f3 ♞b6, it is worth considering 12.♖f2!?. The pawn cannot be taken: 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘xd4 14.♗e3, whilst entering enemy territory is even worse: 12...♞b2 13.♗d3 c4 14.♞hb1.

So it seems that the shuttle manoeuvre by the white queen is not the only move.

On the other hand, there is no arguing with Kmochno's description of Réti's play (and that of other great players of the period) as 'fresh and far from routine'. Thanks to such games, the shuttle manoeuvre has become standard. It is hard to imagine many lines of the French Defence without it, as well as various other openings.

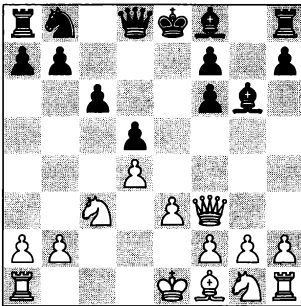
Thus, in the Queen's Gambit Declined, there is the well-known variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♙g5

and now not 5...♙e7, but Black allows the doubling of the pawns with:

5...c6 6.e3 ♙f5 7.♚f3 ♙g6 8.♙xf6 gxf6

The compensation is not clear. The bishop pair? Free development? Maybe, but Black still has to work to equalise. For his part, White has to decide how to continue his development. And here the main attention has gone to the shuttle manoeuvre with the queen:



9.♚d1!?

«The Moor has done his work, and can return home.» The queen's job on f3 was to force Black to double his pawns; she has nothing more to do on that square, and it is time to free the square for the knight, whilst the queen herself goes to pastures new and seeks fresh tasks.

In the game Petrosian-Barcza (Budapest 1955), after 9...♚b6 10.♚d2 ♘a6 11.♘f3 0-0-0 12.a3 White got nice play and eventually won. Theory gradually came to the conclusion that instead of 8...gxf6, the stronger recapture was 8...♚xf6, exchanging the white queen off.

There is an interesting psychological aspect here, which deserves discussion. For the typical amateur, the shuttle manoeuvre is associated with an admission of having made a mistake or, at the very least, the loss of a tempo. How could it be otherwise, since we are returning a developed piece to its original square? Master Réti played ♚d1-g4, and then ♚g4-d1 – does this mean he lost time? Not at all. With the move to g4, he attacked the weak pawn on g7, inducing Black to defend it with his king from f8. The black player had to lose a mass of tempi, to castle by hand. So it transpires that White did not lose time, he gained it! The manoeuvre ♚d1-f3-d1 in the QGD takes up two tempi, but in return, White gains a permanent advantage: the pawns on the black kingside are hopelessly damaged. Is this advantage worth two tempi? The manoeuvre ♙c1-e3-c1-a3 in the French Defence costs tempi, but it permits us first to fix a favourable pawn structure and then to direct the bishop to where its long-range power is the equivalent of at least a rook. Is this activity worth the tempi used?

One could multiply the examples, but they all show one thing. In chess, general considerations and specific variations form an elusive whole. The essence of the game is balancing the general and specific, and doing this shows the class of the player.

Chapter 7

Positional Sacrifices (Part One)

The pawn sacrifice is the smallest sacrifice possible in a chess game.

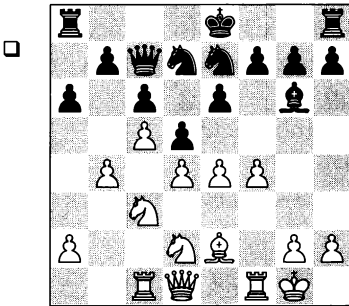
A minor piece (not to mention a rook or queen) we are only prepared to sacrifice for clear gain, but a pawn is another matter. Not for nothing does the lexicon of chess equate the word 'sacrifice' with 'discard'. 'I discarded this pawn', as if brushing off a speck of dust or throwing away an old pair of trousers.

For what do we sacrifice a pawn? For whatever we want. For an open line. To shut an enemy piece out of the game (maybe only temporarily). For the initiative, which in turn we may convert into something more real. For a favourable change in the pawn structure. To reach a draw ending quickly. Etc.

Of course, one should not underestimate the importance of material in chess, even a pawn. An incorrect pawn sacrifice can cost the game. But it is no coincidence that the number of pawns sacrificed is many times greater than the number of pieces. One does not throw away pawns left, right and centre, but nor does one stand on ceremony.

Vladimir Kramnik
Veselin Topalov

Dortmund 1999



16.f5!?

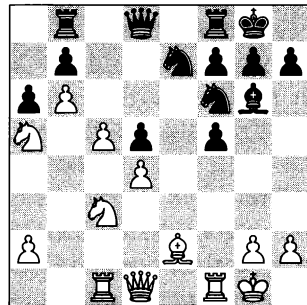
«A very risky and not obligatory decision, but I wanted to sharpen up the battle» – Kramnik.

16...exf5 17.exd5 cxd5

After 17...♞xd5 Kramnik gives 18.♞c4 ♞xc3 (or 18...0-0 19.♞xd5 cxd5 20.♞d6) 19.♞xc3 0-0 20.d5 «with a strong initiative». This variation can be continued: 20...cxd5 21.♞xd5 ♞f6 – and it looks as though the knight, once estab-

lished on e4, will cement the black position. But after 22.♞d6 ♞ac8 23.♞xc7 ♞xc7 24.♞d6 ♞e4 25.♞d3 one has to admit that the initiative remains with White.

18.b5 0-0 19.b6 ♞d8 20.♞b3 ♞f6
21.♞a5 ♞b8



Here we can draw preliminary conclusions about White's pawn sacrifice. The bishop on g6 is shut out of play, which is one thing. White has obtained a numerical superiority on the queenside, whilst Black's kingside majority is immobile and can hardly become a

threat in the near future – point two. And thirdly, White has a very dangerous plan: to sacrifice the knight on b7, take on a6 and then have his passed pawns sweep all before them.

For all this, the position remains unclear. Black does have an extra pawn, after all. If Black manages to ‘untangle’, White will have cause to regret his choice. Everything will depend on the next few moves.

22.a4 ♖e4

A very important moment. It is tempting to implement the plan at once: 23.♖xb7!? ♜xb7 24.a5. But at this very moment, Black unveils his own trumps – an attack on the king. For example: 24...♗c6 25.♚a4 ♗xc3 26.♜xc3 ♚f6 27.♙xa6 ♜e7 28.♞d1 (28.♞d3 f4) 28...♙h5 29.♞d2 ♜e4 (not at once 29...♜e1+ 30.♙f1) 30.♞cd3 ♜e1+ 31.♔f2 ♚h4+ with mate. Instead of 24...♗c6, Kramnik analyses 24...f4!? 25.♙xa6 ♞b8 26.♗xe4 dxe4 27.c6 ♗xc6 28.♞xc6 f3 and admits that the resulting position is not to his taste. White has too many pieces on the queenside, and too few defending his king.

The piece sacrifice should not be hurried, but requires further preparation. First of all, Kramnik transfers his knight from c3 to b4.

23.♗a2 f6

It was worth considering 23...f4!?. This is also a typical device, incidentally – returning the extra pawn to activate his pieces. It is important that after 24.♞xf4 ♗f5 25.♗xb7 ♜xb7 26.♙xa6, Black can solve his problems with 26...♜xb6! 27.cxb6 ♚xb6, with a probable draw.

On 23...f4 24.♞xf4 ♗f5, Kramnik had prepared the reply 25.♚d3 ♚g5 26.♞cf1 ♜fe8 27.♙d1, «and the position is hard to judge».

24.♗b4 ♙e8

Black has managed to solve one problem: he has brought his bishop into play. But his pawn mass on the kingside is still rooted to the spot and his position remains passive. It only needs 2-3 moves, before he can start moving the great colossus on the f- and g-files, so it follows that White has 2-3 tempi to continue manoeuvring, in preparation for the sacrifice on b7.

25.♚c2!

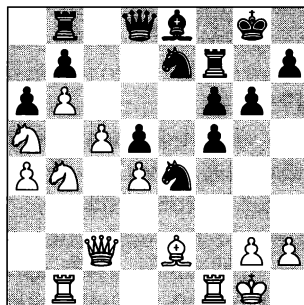
The logic of this move (which Kramnik himself described as ‘key’) is hard to understand without the grandmaster’s commentary. White rejected 25.♗xb7!? ♜xb7 26.♙xa6 because of the thematic 26...♜xb6! 27.cxb6 ♚xb6. More dangerous is 26.a5, but then 26...♗c6 27.♗xc6 ♙xc6 28.♙xa6 ♜e7. «It is very hard to eliminate the enemy bishop from c6», writes Kramnik, and himself suggests a method: put a rook on b1 and the bishop on b5. But after 29.♞b1 there follows 29...♗c3 with a fork. This is why White first puts his queen on c2.

25...g6

25...g5!? is more active.

26.♞b1 ♞f7

The preparations are complete. It is time to act.



27.♗xb7!

In a sense, this move is the continuation of the plan begun as far back as 16.f5!?

It is hard to believe, but this is so. By his pawn sacrifice at move 16, White obtained a pawn majority on the queen-side, and then the advance b4-b5-b6 created a potential passed pawn. And realising this pawn majority was only possible with the aid of the sacrifice of the knight on b7.

**27... ♖xb7 28.a5 ♘c6 29.♗xc6
♙xc6 30.♙xa6 ♖b8 31.♙b5!**

This is what White was aiming at, when he put his queen on c2 and his rook on b1.

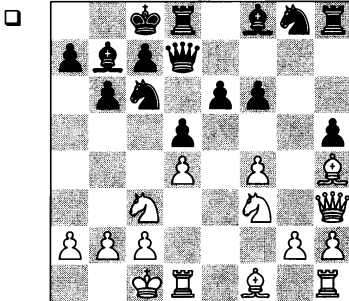
Black's blockade collapses. The passed pawns promote. After

31... ♚c8 32.♙xc6 ♚xc6 33.a6

the outcome of the game was decided. Topalov resigned at move 40.

**Vlastimil Jansa
Raymond Allen Weinstein**

Helsinki 1961



If it were Black's move, he would play ...♗c6-e7-f5, plugging the holes in his position.

13.f5!?

«The positional pawn sacrifice should be in the arsenal of every chess player!» – Jansa.

I would add that inserting the moves 13.♖e1 ♖e8 is in Black's favour, as he can then meet 14.f5 with 14...e5.

13...exf5 14.♙d3 ♗ce7 15.♗e2

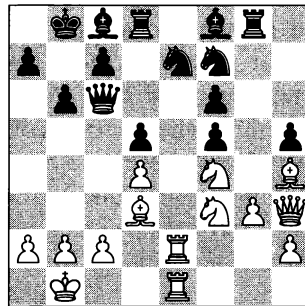
The changes in the structure have favoured White. Black's pawns are

broken and weak, whilst White's knights have a blockading square on f4 and the open e-file is available for his rooks.

It is hard to suggest a sensible plan for Black. The doubled pawns on the f-file make one think of using the outposts on e4 and g4, but how can we get the knights there? The e7-knight is defending f5 and the other knight defending f6. It seems they will be tied up for a long time.

But despite this, Black found and executed a plan to get his knights to the outpost. He transfers a knight via g8-h6-f7-g5-e4!

**15... ♖b8 16.♖b1 ♙c8 17.♗f4 ♚c6
18.g3 ♗h6 19.♖he1 ♗f7!? 20.♖e2
♙g8 21.♖de1**



White plays too academically. Perhaps he only noticed Black's aim too late. One more move (22.♚f1 ♗e4), and the position will be equalised.

Realising this, Jansa tries to sharpen the game, but this attempt should not have been crowned with success.

**21... ♗g5!? 22.♙xg5 fxg5 23.♗e6
g4 24.♗xd8**

By continuing now with 24...♚e8, Black could have emerged intact in all variations. On 25.♚f1 or 25.♚h4 there follows 25...gxf3, nor is anything changed by the intermediate 25.♖xe7 ♙xe7.

24... ♖d7

A nightmarish mistake. Perhaps Black simply mixed up the moves, by comparison with the variation 24. ♖xh5 gxf3 25. ♘xd8 ♖d7.

Raymond Allen Weinstein was a very talented, developing young player, who was one of the chess hopes of America. Doctors soon diagnosed a psychological imbalance and later he was arrested (among other things, for attacking a chess master, Johan Barendregt). The story ended with his incarceration in a mental hospital, from which he has never emerged.

25. ♘e5

White emerges with an extra exchange and Black soon resigned.

A special place in opening theory is occupied by variations which involve a positional pawn sacrifice. Here we are not talking about such lines as the King's Gambit (where sharp combinative possibilities supersede positional considerations) or the Queen's Gambit, where the sacrificed pawn is regained almost at once. No, here we are concerned with lines where the pawn sacrifice is real, but the compensation for the material consists of positional factors.

One example is the Benko Gambit (1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5!?) and the related Blumenfeld Gambit (1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 b5). It is not immediately obvious what Black gets for the pawn, but it is clear he will not regain it any time soon. Even so, theory considers the Benko to be sound, whilst the Blumenfeld is much more often declined than accepted!

The following game was an important one for the theory of the Blumen-

feld. This opened people's eyes, clearly demonstrating the plan, with the help of which Black shows the correctness of his pawn sacrifice.

**Siebert Tarrasch
Alexander Alekhine**

Bad Pistyan 1922

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.c4 c5 4.d5 b5!? 5.dxe6

Nowadays White almost exclusively plays 5. ♗g5.

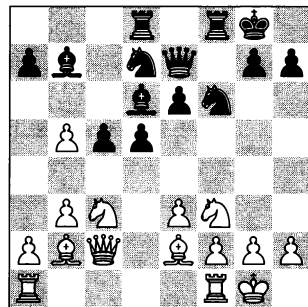
5...fxe6 6.cxb5 d5

«Black has a strong pawn centre, which will be supported by bishops from b7 and d6; in addition, the f-file is opened for his rooks. These positional advantages are sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn» – Kotov.

7.e3 ♗d6 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♗e2 ♗b7 10.b3 ♘bd7 11.♗b2 ♖e7 12.0-0

The king will also not be able to rest peacefully on the queenside. For example, 12. ♖c2 e5 13.0-0-0 d4 14.exd4 cxd4 15. ♗c4+ ♖h8 16.♘e2 ♗e4 17.♖d2 ♘b6 with a strong attack (Postojev-Harikrishna, Mainz 2006).

12... ♖ad8 13. ♖c2



Both sides have completed their development and united their rooks. It might appear that White has a healthy extra pawn.

13...e5! 14. ♖fe1 e4 15.♘d2 ♘e5 16.♘d1 ♘fg4

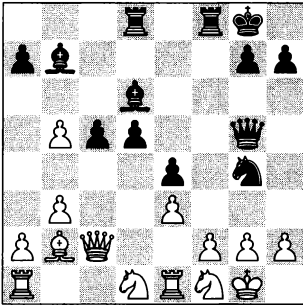
Subsequent generations of players have copied Alekhine's plan without hesitation. Here is a typical example: 14. ♖ae1 (instead of 14. ♖fe1) 14...e4 15. ♘d2 ♘e5 16.f4 exf3 17. ♘xf3 ♘fg4, and it is hard to know what to advise White (Sinadinovic-Sahovic, Nis 1981).

17. ♙xg4 ♘xg4 18. ♘f1

The knights, pinned to the back rank, defend the squares f2 and h2.

But what protects g2?

18... ♗g5!



The decisive strengthening of the attack. All that remains is to bring the knight round via g4-h6-f5-h4 and White will be in terrible trouble.

Speaking honestly, his position is hopeless. Black can quietly regroup, strengthen his position, and his opponent has nothing with which to oppose this. One rarely sees White, after fewer than 20 moves, fall into such a passive, hopeless position. Yet one cannot really criticise any one of his moves. Perhaps he really should not have taken the pawn on move 5?!

19.h3 ♘h6 20. ♙h1 ♘f5 21. ♘h2

With the intention after 21... ♘h4 of replying 22. ♖g1, covering the vulnerable point. But the position has long since come to resemble a leaky boat – you repair one leak and another springs up. White somehow manages to cover

his kingside, but now his centre collapses.

21...d4 22. ♙c1

After 22.exd4 Black wins with both 22...cxd4, and the more forcing 22...e3 23. ♖g1 (or 23. ♘xe3 ♘xe3 24.fxg3 ♗g3) 23... ♘g3+! 24.fxg3 ♗xg3 with mating threats. Not only is the h2-knight hanging, so is the pawn on h3.

22...d3 23. ♗c4+ ♙h8 24. ♙b2 ♘g3+!

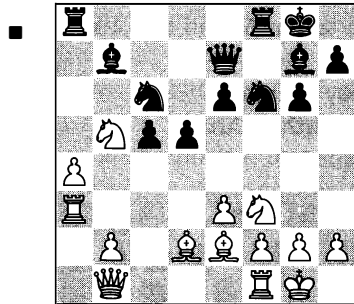
Not 25.fxg3 ♗xg3, attacking the knight and rook. And this means that it is time to draw the curtain. But Tarrasch played

25. ♙g1

allowing the knight into e2, and continued the hopeless resistance until move 40.

**Jeroen Piket
Veselin Topalov**

Madrid 1997



This game began with a Benko Gambit. In the course of the battle, the structure took on characteristics of the Blumenfeld. Probably Piket, a cultured player, knew of the famous predecessor game. But he could not do anything.

16...e5!

By comparison with the game Tarrasch-Alekhine, here we can identify several nuances, which are in White's favour.

In particular, he has a strong knight on b5, his rook can operate along the third rank and his a4-pawn is both extra and passed.

But even so, the game did not last long and was extremely one-sided. There is nothing to say. Black, with the appropriate amendments, carried out Alekhine's plan and White did nothing to place this classical plan in doubt.

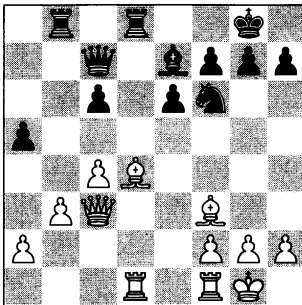
17.h3 ♖h8 18.♞c1 e4 19.♘h2
 d4 20.exd4 cxd4 21.♚a2 ♞ad8
 22.a5 d3 23.♙g4 ♘d5 24.a6 ♘cb4
 25.♜b3 ♘xa6 26.♞c7 ♘axc7
 27.♜xb7 ♞b8 0-1

Now let us look at some examples of pawn sacrifices to achieve a draw.

Viswanathan Anand is one of the great defenders of modern chess, maybe the greatest of all. Many young players could learn a lot from his games, and memorise many defensive devices, which they can use in their own games. But who taught Anand himself?

Alexey Shirov
Viswanathan Anand

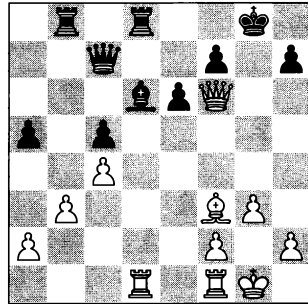
Linares 2002



Black's position is unpleasant, and not merely because of the threat of 21.♙e5 ♙d6 22.♞xd6! ♞xd6 23.c5. This tactical threat is not hard to meet.

The real issue is more concrete factors. White has two bishops, the better pawn structure (fewer 'islands'), and his opponent has no counterplay. Almost any exchange brings White closer to the endgame, in which all of the above factors will have greater significance. Almost any exchange; but not every one!

20...♙d6 21.g3 c5!? 22.♙xf6 gxf6
 23.♜xf6



The position has been transformed. Black has sacrificed a pawn, but White already no longer has the bishop pair. Furthermore, exchanges are no longer in his favour, because the remaining minor pieces on the board are opposite-coloured bishops, which means exchanges will increase the chances of a draw.

As far as the extra pawn is concerned, formally this is the pawn on b3. It is unlikely to become passed. Black has only one problem: his exposed king. This is where White's winning chances lie. His plan is clear: firstly, not to exchange queens, and secondly to try to get a rook to the g-file.

23...♙e7 24.♜h6

Or 24.♜c3 ♞xd1 25.♞xd1 ♞d8 26.♞e1 ♞d4, and Black holds the balance – analysis by Sakaev.

24...♜e5 25.♞de1 ♜f6 26.♜h5 ♙f6
 27.♞e4 ♞d4 28.♞xd4 ♜xd4 29.♞e1

Possibly greater chances were offered by 29.♖d1, and if 29...♗f6 30.♖d7 ♖d8, then 31.♗a7, eyeing up the pawns on a5 and f7.

29...♗f6 30.♗e4 ♖g7 31.♗f4 ♗e7

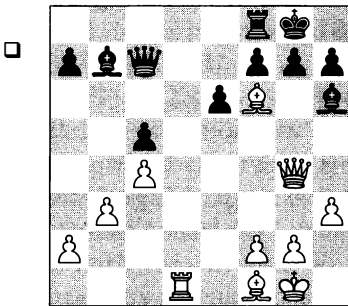
There is still a lot of play left, but in the end, Black held the draw.

A pawn sacrifice, forcing a position with opposite-coloured bishops, followed by putting the pawns on a5 and c5, supported by the dark-squared bishop, stopping White creating a passed pawn on the queenside – did Anand think this up himself at the board?

It is very possible that he did. He is a player of the very highest class. But let us examine the following position.

**Mikhail Botvinnik
Ilya Rabinovich**

Leningrad 1934



In an early edition of his best games collection, Botvinnik wrote: «...on

26.♖d3

Black replies 26...♖e4 27.♖xg7 ♖xg7 28.♗xe4 ♖d8 followed by ...a7-a5! and ensures the draw, despite White's extra pawn.»

In a purely chess sense, this note is not correct. White cannot play 27.♖xg7 because of 27...f5!. So it is no surprise that this note is not present in later editions of Botvinnik's notes. But that is not the main thing.

Compare the position after move 29 in the game Shirov-Anand. Isn't it remarkably similar?

Had Anand seen this note? Who knows? I am sure he would have seen the game Botvinnik-Rabinovich, and I would like to think that he saw the notes also, studied them, analysed them, found the mistakes, and remembered everything. At the necessary moment, his memory produced the recommendation and the Indian GM utilised it.

I remember one incident. In Baku, in the republic chess centre, a meeting was organised between young players and the leading Azeri player of those days, Elmar Magerramov, who had just become a GM. I hung on his every word. One piece of advice he gave, which I particularly remember, was 'When you study the games of great players, analyse not just the moves played, but also the variations and notes. Analyse them – and play them over on the board, without fail!'

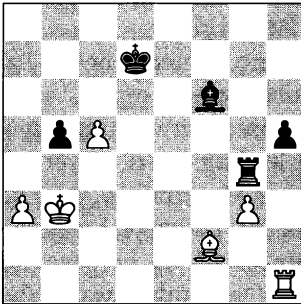
One can read something about this in relation to Nimzowitsch also. He advised that when studying annotated games, one should use two chess sets, one to play the main moves and the other for the notes. A very sensible proposal. If you do everything on one board, then, especially if the notes are very detailed, it is easy to get confused. With two sets, that will not happen.

But let us return to our subject: the pawn sacrifice to make a draw. It is rare, but sometimes one even sees this done where the sacrifice is already the second pawn. Why would one voluntarily go into a position two pawns down? It turns out to be possible. For example, certain rook endings (especially

where the defender's king and rook are active) have drawing tendencies. And why suffer in a position a pawn down, when one could give up a second pawn to force favourable exchanges and get to a known draw?

Viktor Kortchnoi
Anatoly Karpov

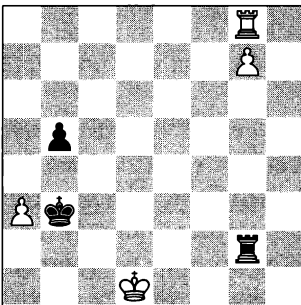
Moscow 1974



Black's position is unenviable. He is a pawn down, and a second pawn hangs. Karpov takes a difficult decision: he gives up the h5-pawn, but takes play into a rook ending.

63...♙c6!? 64.♜xh5 ♘d4! 65.♙xd4 ♜xd4 66.♞g5 ♞e4 67.g4 ♞a4

The assessment of the position depends largely on that arising after 68.♞g8 ♙xc5 69.g5 ♞g4 70.g6 ♞g3+ 71.♙c2 ♙c4 72.g7 ♞g2+ 73.♙d1 ♙b3.



analysis diagram

White can easily overcome the cutting-off of his king: 74.♙e1 and 75.♙f1, but then what? If he takes the king to f6, then Black checks on f1, driving the king away from the g7-pawn, and then returns the rook to g1. And there is no point in taking the king towards the b5-pawn, because Black defends it with his rook from g5. Let us try one tactical nuance: 74.a4!? ♞g1+ (it seems 74...b4 75.a5 ♞g6 76.a6 ♞d6+! 77.♙e2 ♞d7 78.♙e3 ♙a3 is also sufficient for a draw) 75.♙d2 ♞g2+ 76.♙d3 ♞g3+ 77.♙e4 bxa4 78.♞b8+ ♙c2 79.g8 ♙xg8 80.♞xg8 a3 – again a draw.

Kortchnoi plays differently, but also fails to achieve anything:

68.♙b2 ♞f4 69.♙c2 ♞f3 70.♙b2 ♞f2+ 71.♙c3 ♞f3+ 72.♙d4 ♞f4+ 73.♙e5 ♞a4 74.♞g8 ♞xa3 75.g5 ♙xc5 76.g6 ♞g3 77.♞c8+ ♙b4 78.♙f6 ♞f3+ 79.♙e6 ♞g3 80.♙f7 ♙a3 81.g7

Draw.

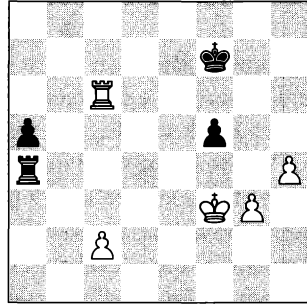
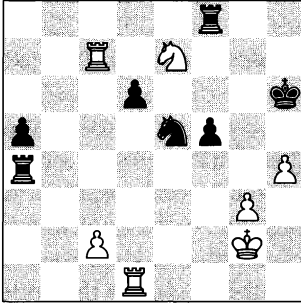
To be fair, we should say that another solution is possible in the diagram position: 63...h4! 64.gxh4 ♞g2. Now what can White do? His bishop cannot move, because of mate in one. After 65.♞f1 ♙c6 we reach a curious zugzwang (66. h5 ♞h2). That leaves only 65.♞d1+, but then 65...♙c7 (of course, not 65...♙c6?? 66.♞d6+ and 67.♞xf6) 66.♙d4 ♙xh4 67.♙b4 ♙c6, and Black is close to a draw.

These last variations do not devalue Karpov's achievement. His method of defence deserves every attention. And it brings to mind this classical example:

Carl Schlechter
Emanuel Lasker

Vienna 1910

50. ♖xg6 ♜xe7 51. ♜gc6 ♜xc7
52. ♜xc7+ ♔g6 53. ♜c6+ ♔f7
54. ♔f3



Material is currently equal, but Black has three weaknesses more. By trying to defend them, he almost certainly condemns himself to defeat: 47...♘c4 (threatening a knight fork), and then: 48.♔h3 ♜b4 49.♞d5 f4 50.g4 f3 51.♞h5+ ♔g7 52.♘d5+ ♔g8 53.♞hh7! or 48...f4 49.♘d5 f3 50.♘b6! f2 (50...♘xb6 51.♞xd6+ ♔h5 52.♞h7#) 51.♘xa4 ♘d2 52.♞d7.

47...♞f7! 48.♞xd6+ ♔h7 49.♞e6 ♘g6!

A well-known device: Black strives to reach a rook ending at all costs.

But even the rook ending looks difficult, if not lost, at first sight. He is a pawn down and his king is cut off on the 6th rank. The threat is c2-c4 followed by ♔f3-f4. What is to be done?

54...♞e4!! 55. ♜c5 ♔f6 56. ♜xa5 ♜c4

This is the basis for the classic rule of rook endings: 'activity is more important than material'. The white rook has to defend the c2-pawn and the king the g3-pawn. And Black just bides his time.

57. ♞a6+ ♔e5 58. ♞a5+ ♔f6 59. ♞a2 ♔e5 60. ♞b2 ♜c3+ 61. ♔g2 ♔f6

Soon, Schlechter accepted the inevitable. Draw!

Chapter 8

Positional Sacrifices (Part Two)

The exchange sacrifice on c3 in the Sicilian is so widespread that the reader can easily find dozens of examples.

Why does Black sacrifice the exchange? One reason is to start a mating attack, especially if White has castled queenside and his king is in the region of c1-b1. Then the sacrifice rips open the king's pawn cover and the attack becomes much simpler.

Another motivation is to sacrifice to go into the endgame. In the book *Konturi Endshpilya* [Translator's Note: By the well-known endgame specialist Mikhail Shereshevsky, and published in English in two volumes, under the title 'Mastering the Endgame'] this device has an entire chapter devoted to it, so common is it. The compensation is usually in the form of pawn weaknesses in the centre and on the queenside.

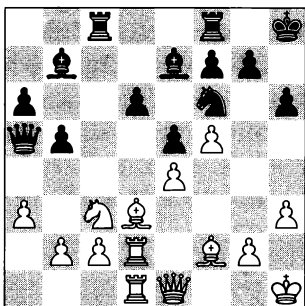
The third possibility is the most difficult to classify and the most interesting to analyse. It is when the sacrifice transforms one unclear position into another.

But if it is unclear, why sacrifice?

To confuse the opponent. And to change the course of the battle. The benefit seems quite intangible, but in a practical game, it can be considerable.

Robert Hübner
Viswanathan Anand

Dortmund 1996



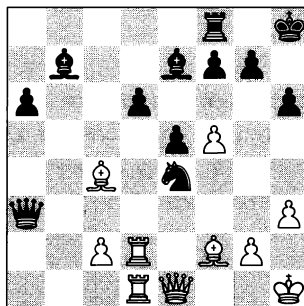
23...Bxc3! 24.bxc3 ♖xa3 25.c4

A mistake, hard to understand at first sight. It was not so hard to calculate 25.♞e2 ♞c8 26.c4! bxc4 27.♞a1 cxd3 (even worse is 27...♞b2 28.♞b1, and after the queen retreats, 29.♞xb7) 28.♞xa3 dxe2 29.♞xe2 ♞xe4 (29...♞xe4 30.♞e1) 30.♞a2. Black has

two bishops and two pawns for the queen. Maybe he will get a third pawn, if he manages to win f5 without losing a6, although even so, we are talking only about compensation for the material, not an advantage.

So why did White not play this? Evidently, he was shaken by the sudden change in the position and could not adjust in time to the new situation. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that mistakes follow one after another.

25...bxc4 26.♞xc4 ♞xe4



Now, after the fall of the central pawn, the most White can hope for is a draw. It was worth considering 27.♔d5!? and if 27...♙xd5 28.♖xd5 ♘c3, then 29.♗1d3 ♖c8 30.♙c5!. In the other variation, 27...♘xd2 28.♙xb7 ♘c4 29.♙d5, Black has two extra pawns, but the white pieces have developed considerable activity: 29...♗a4 (29...♖c8 30.♙xf7, whilst after 29...♘b2 30.♗a1 the queen does not have a single retreat square, on an open board) 30.♗a1 ♖b5 31.♗e4 ♘b6 32.♙c6 ♗b2 33.♖xa6 with chances of a satisfactory outcome.

27.♗d3 ♗a4 28.♖b3

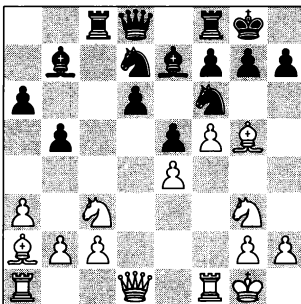
Continuing along the path of least resistance. The last chance was 28.♙b3 ♗d7 29.♙h4!, counting on 29...♙xh4 30.♗xh4 ♗xf5 31.♗e7 ♘f2+ 32.♔g1, and, strangely, Black cannot land a decisive blow.

28...♗xc4 29.♖xb7 ♗xc2 30.♙g1 ♙g5! 31.♗db1 ♙f4 32.♗1b3 d5

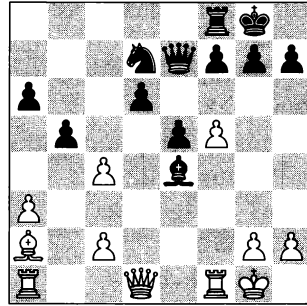
It is all over. Anand has three pawns for the exchange, dominates the centre and a mating attack is not far away. After a few moves, White resigned.

Evgenij Ermenkov
Lajos Portisch

Skara 1980



14...♖xc3!? 15.bxc3 ♘xe4 16.♘xe4 ♙xe4 17.♙xe7 ♗xe7 18.c4



The contours of the position are very similar to those faced by Anand in his game 16 years later, aren't they? Similar, but not identical.

In the counterplay developed by Anand, an enormous role was played by his two bishops. This is in general a very common form of compensation for the exchange sacrifice on c3: the two bishops (even better is two bishops plus a pawn, in which case the compensation can often be more than sufficient). But Portisch, as we see, does not have the two bishops. So the question, for what exactly he has given the exchange, remains in the air. For now, White undoubles his pawns, consolidates his position and settles down to realising his material advantage. Or does he?

18...♖c8!

The consolidation will have to wait a moment. After 19.cxb5 Black has prepared 19...♖xc2 20.♖f2 ♖xf2 21.♔xf2 ♗g5 22.♗f1 ♗d2+ 23.♔g1 (23.♗e2 ♗d4+) 23...axb5, and White's pieces are tied up on the back rank.

19.♗e2 ♘f6 20.♖ac1

The threat to take on c2 is taken care of, now what?

20...h5! 21.cxb5 axb5 22.♗xb5

As in the previous example, the side which has received the exchange sacrifice loses his head. The outcome of the game remains unclear and White could

still defend, but his head was obviously spinning. Nothing else can explain his taking an obviously poisoned pawn.

22... ♖a7+ 23. ♕h1

Black has many tempting paths. One excellent-looking line is 23... ♗g4 24. ♖e2 ♘e3 25. ♖g1 ♖xa3.

23...h4 24. ♖b3

The threat was 24...h3.

24... ♗g4

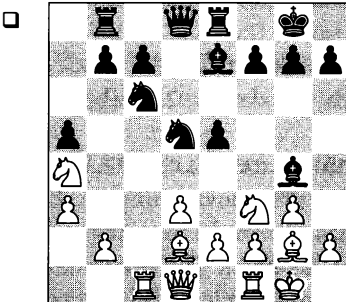
This line was also sufficient for victory. But the most decisive continuation was 23... ♖c3!. By seizing the third rank, Black combines the threat of ...h5-h4-h3 with those of ...♗f6-g4 and ...♖c3-h3!.

The mirror image of the sacrifice on c3 is the equally common sacrifice by White on c6, which usually arises in the English Opening, but with the pawn structure being that of a Sicilian, with colours reversed.

Everyone has seen or heard of classical examples on this theme. We will show an example which perhaps has not been published before. This is because the sacrifice was made by a player who is not famous, indeed is hardly known at all. But this makes it all the more interesting to follow his efforts.

**Detlef Heinbuch
Aloyzas Kveinys**

Bonn 1995



14. ♖xc6!? ♗xf3

14...bxc6 15. ♗xe5.

15. ♗xf3 bxc6 16. ♖c2

This is a modern game, but the compensation is of the classical sort: two bishops. Admittedly, it is not quite obvious why White refrains from taking on a5 on this move and the following. Perhaps he did not wish to be distracted by 'trifles'.

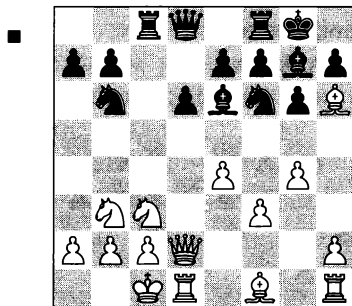
16... ♖d6 17. ♖c1 ♖b5 18.e4

But this is wrong. Heinbuch incorrectly avoids the forcing variation (was he intimidated by his opponent's GM reputation?): 18. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 19. ♖xc6 ♗b6 20. ♖xc7 ♗xa4 21. ♗c6 ♖c5 22. ♗xe8 ♖xc7 23. ♗xa4. He has already two pawns for the exchange, on two flanks (which means he has chances of creating a passed pawn), and has managed to retain the two bishops.

After missing this chance, White eventually struggled to make a draw.

**Vasily Panov
Vladimir Simagin**

Moscow 1943



By analogy with the previous example, one can suggest 12... ♖xc3!?. Or, so as not to give White additional options, 12... ♗xh6 13. ♖xh6 ♖xc3!? 14.bxc3 ♖c7. Black has compensation. But Simagin had a quite different idea.

Vladimir Pavlovich Simagin was a remarkable player, who always sought his own way and was full of ideas. In the position of the diagram he played a move which made everyone gasp:

12...♙h8!?

When seen for the first time, the move makes a colossal impression, of course. What is Black getting for the exchange? Nothing, except depriving the opponent of his dark-squared bishop, whilst retaining his own.

13.♙xf8

Under the impression created by Simagin's wonderfully conducted attack, many experts claimed that White should not have taken the rook. This is an exaggeration. The sacrifice is no more than a practical one, the subject of argument. There is no question of Black having a decisive advantage.

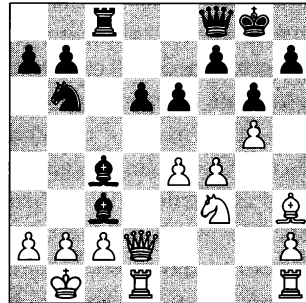
**13...♚xf8 14.♘d4 ♙c4 15.g5 ♘fd7
16.♙h3 e6 17.♙b1**

Standard prophylaxis, and at the same time either an oversight or carelessness. The most likely explanation is that White did not see his opponent's 18th move and the resulting combination. He should have started with 17.f4, keeping the black knight away and ensuring space for the white pieces to manoeuvre. In reply, Black cannot play 17...♙a6 because of 18.♘xe6! which only leaves 17...♘c5. But then 18.♙b1 ♙a6 19.f5 ♘c4 20.♚f2 and then, depending on circumstances, either taking on e6 or f5-f6, shutting out Black's strongest piece. One can also be more concrete: 18.f5!? ♙xa2 19.f6 (but not 19.♘xa2 ♙xd4 20.♚xd4 ♘b3+), and the counterplay for which Black sacrificed the exchange does not materialise. However, the text move does not yet spoil anything.

17...♘e5 18.f4 ♘f3! 19.♘xf3

The same experts who suggested not taking the exchange at move 13 now suggested returning it: 19.♚e3!? ♘xd4 20.♙xd4 ♙xd4 21.♚xd4. Incidentally, the final position here cannot in any way be assessed as better for Black, which shows that the sacrifice was experimental.

19...♙xc3



The key moment of this exciting game. After capturing on c3 White will have an extra rook. But as far back as Morphy, we have seen that it is not the abstract material advantage which matters, but the amount of material in the relevant area of the board. That is the case here also: Black has fewer pieces, but all of those he has are pointing at the enemy king, whilst his opponent does not have time to bring additional reserves over for the defence.

For example, 20.♚xc3 ♙xa2+ 21.♙xa2 ♚xc3 22.bxc3 ♚c8!? (stronger than 22...d5 23.exd5 ♘xd5 24.♙xd5! exd5 25.♘d4), and you can be sure that the queen and knight will finish the job, before White manages to transfer some more pieces to the queenside.

In the game, there followed:

20.bxc3 d5!

As the variations show, Black has full compensation for his enormous material deficit. Later, White failed to defend

in the best possible way, and then gave the game away in a single move.

The position of the last diagram illustrates the difference in thinking between players. Master Panov evidently thought he was obliged to 'pick up the gauntlet' and take all the material he was offered. The modern grandmaster would most likely start calculating the variations involving the capture on c3, but only so as to establish that there was no forced win, and a lot of risk. Having reached this conclusion, he would not waste any more time delving deeply into calculating all the lines after 20. ♖xc3 or 20. bxc3, but would turn his attention to 20. ♖xd6!

Now what does Black do? It is important that he does not have 20... ♖g7 because of 21. ♖d8+!. After 20... ♖e2 21. ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 22. ♖g2, Black can regain almost all of the material, but only to condemn himself to a cheerless endgame a pawn down. This means that the only way to retain queens is 20... ♖e8, but then after 21. bxc3, the white queen has turned from a spectator on d2 into the main defender of her king. The variations are not very complicated: 21... ♖a4 22. a3 ♖a2+ 23. ♗a1 ♖xc2 24. ♖d2 or 21... ♗a4 22. ♗a1 ♗xc3 23. ♖d7 ♗xd1 (23... ♖f8 24. ♗e5) 24. ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 25. ♗xd1 ♖e2 26. ♗d3 ♖xd3 27. cxd3, with winning chances.

The game Panov-Simagin gave rise to a lot of hype. In the Dragon Variation of the Sicilian Defence, and King's Indian positions, everyone started answering ♖h6 with ... ♖h8, giving up the exchange, but keeping the dark-squared bishop. Simagin attracted dozens, if not hundreds of followers, but not all were successful. Some managed to mate

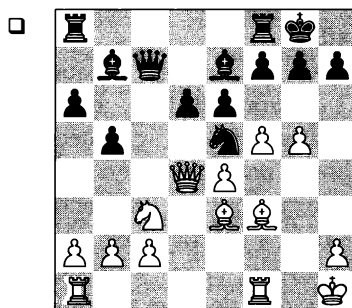
the enemy king, but others just found themselves an exchange down.

The following game gave a new impulse for the study of such a sacrifice. It showed that the sacrifice could be used not only for the sake of a mating attack, but also for positional counterplay.

Abram Khasin

Leonid Stein

Tallinn 1965



In the diagram position, it is White who is attacking. He has already played f4-f5, allowing a powerful knight into e5. There is no way back, and White presses on consistently:

16. f6!? gx f6 17. gx f6 ♖xf6 18. ♖h6

The clouds are gathering over the black king. Gufeld and Lazarev, the authors of a book of Stein's best games, offer the following variation: 18... ♗fe8 (even weaker is 18... ♗d7 19. ♗g1+ ♗h8 20. ♖g7+ with mate) 19. ♖h5! ♖e7 20. ♗xf6! ♖xf6 21. ♗g1+ ♗h8 22. ♖g5 ♖g7 23. ♖h4 ♖h6 24. ♖e3! ♖xe3 25. ♖f6#.

This variation with the sacrifice of rook and queen is all very glittering, but it is not clear that White has a decisive blow after 22... ♖f5. Probably, White does better not to be seduced by the beautiful and to play instead 20. ♗f2 or 20. ♗f4, bringing the second rook to the f-file. Then Black certainly is not to be envied.

Leonid Stein was a great master of the initiative, and there is no doubt that he had seen his next move some time in advance.

18...♖h8!

It is interesting that the computer, usually a keen hoarder of material, recommends as an alternative going into the endgame here: 18...♖c5!? 19.♖xc5 dxc5 20.♙xf8 ♖xf8, and assesses the final position as better for Black. We have already pointed out that the two bishops plus an extra pawn is often more than sufficient compensation for the exchange.

Stein's move is stronger, though. The queens are not exchanged and the c-file not closed, which means that, in addition to counterplay on the kingside, Black has the typical Sicilian motifs ...b5-b4 and ...♘e5-c4.

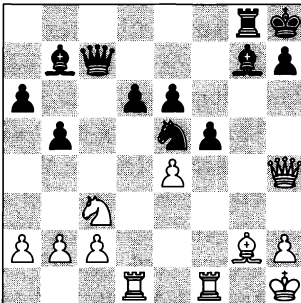
19.♙xf8 ♖xf8 20.♞ad1 ♞d8 21.♙g2 ♙g7 22.♖f2 ♖g8

The consolidation stage did not last long. Black is ready finally to take the initiative. He is stronger on both flanks.

23.♖h4

After 23.♞d2, there would probably have followed the same move as in the game: 23...f5, and not 24.exf5 ♙xg2+ 25.♖xg2 because of 25...♙h6 26.♖e2 ♙xd2 27.♖xd2 ♖c6+.

23...f5



An instructive moment, which again illustrates the difference in thinking between players of past generations and those of today. In their book, Gufeld and Lazarev award Black's 23rd move an exclamation mark. In all probability, Stein himself would have agreed with this judgement. And not without some justification – after all, he did win the game, albeit after considerable complications.

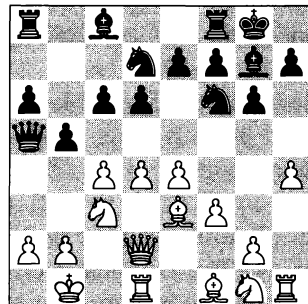
But in his book *My Great Predecessors*, Garry Kasparov gives the following comment: «Probably even better was 23...♘c4 24.♞d3 ♙e5.» So who is right?

Both are right. Stein was not afraid of complications and felt like a fish in water in such positions. He won, and the winner is always right. But the 13th World Champion shows that the risks could have been avoided, and he is also correct in his way. In his variation, instead of 24...♙e5, it is bad to play 24...♘xb2 25.♞h3 h6 26.♞f6! but after 24...♙e5 25.♞h3 ♖g7, it turns out that Black has retained all of his plusses (the attack on b2, ...b5-b4, ...f7-f5, etc.), and also strengthened his king. A modern-day grandmaster would probably play in exactly that way.

**Francisco Briffel
Alexander Khalifman**

Moscow 1985

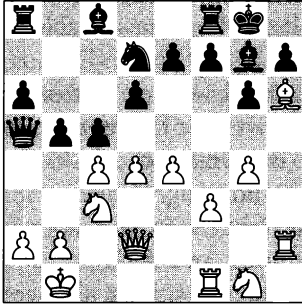
□



This example is not totally contemporary, but it is from a new era, when the exchange sacrifice had become a normal thing and no longer surprising to anyone.

White begins the standard attack:

**11.h5!? ♖xh5 12.g4 ♜g3 13.♞h2
♜xf1 14.♞xf1 c5 15.♙h6**



Against a beginner, such an attack would have every chance of success. For example, 15...♙xh6 16.♞xh6 ♜f6 17.g5 ♜h5 18.♞xh5! gxh5 19.♜d5 ♞e8 20.♜f6+! exf6 21.gxf6, and mate is not far away.

In 1985, Alexander Khalifman was not yet 20 years old. I don't think he spent long on his next move. By this time, he had already mastered the technical device of the positional exchange sacrifice.

15...♙xd4! 16.♙xf8 ♜xf8

For the exchange, Black has not one, but two full pawns, plus the bishop pair. There followed

**17.♜d5 ♞d8 18.♜e2 ♙g7 19.♞g5
♞a7**

White has run out of sensible attacking moves, and Black is quite happy to see the senseless ones.

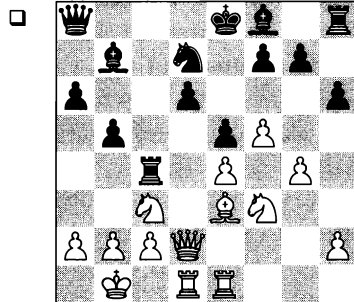
A special place is occupied by the sacrifice on e4. The compensation again consists of the two bishops plus a pawn.

The resulting positions are so complicated that even very deep analysis does not always answer the question of whose chances are preferable.

Here is a characteristic example:

**Oleg Korneev
Veselin Topalov**

Cala Galdana 1999



The pawn on e4 is attacked. White is to play and cannot be happy with 18.♜d5 (hoping for 18...♞xe4 19.♜c7+) because of 18...♙xd5 19.exd5 ♞xg4 or 19.♞xd5 ♞xd5 20.♞xd5 ♞xe4.

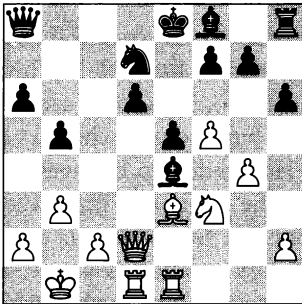
White's chances lie in an attack on the king. The central e- and d-files need to be opened and for this purpose, the e4-pawn can be sacrificed. Let us play a neutral move such as 18.h3, defending g4. Let us assume Black 'bites': 18...♙xe4 19.♜xe4. What should he retake with? If the queen, 19...♞xe4, then with 20.♜xe5! ♜xe5 21.♙b6 White regains all his material and enters an endgame with an extra pawn: 21...♞c6 22.♞xe5+! ♙e7 23.♞xd6 ♞xd6 24.♞xd6. Black must take with the rook: 19...♞xe4, but after 20.♞d3 ♞c4 21.♜d2 ♞c6 22.♜e4, White has achieved what he wanted. The central files are open and his pieces have the blockading squares e4 and d5. If Black manages to castle, White will advance his kingside pawns h3-h4, g4-g5 etc.

We can conclude that with the pawn sacrifice, White ensures himself a long-lasting initiative. But accepting the sacrifice is not obligatory; after 18.h3, Black would more likely reply 18...♙e7. And then what has White achieved? Nothing. He faces the same problems as one move earlier.

18.b3

Of course, Grandmaster Korneev saw the exchange sacrifice. Taking into account all that was said above, he evidently wanted to force events and give the game a concrete character. And he succeeded, but he did not manage to cope fully with the task of calculating the resulting variations.

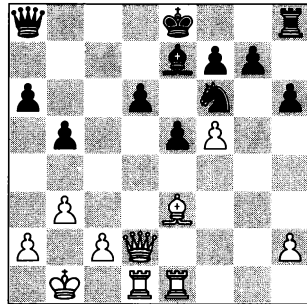
18...♖xe4! 19.♗xe4 ♙xe4



Material is not the main factor in this position. The assessment depends on whether Black will manage to get through to the enemy king. Tempting is 20.♙d4!? ♙xf3 21.♙xe5, and if 21...♙xd1, then 22.♙xd6+ ♖d8 23.♖a5+ mating. Stronger is 21...♗xe5! 22.♖xe5+ ♖d7. Black's king is bad, but White does not have any more minor pieces he can sacrifice, and without a sacrifice, he cannot get at the king. Another line is 20.♗d4!? exd4 21.♙xd4. A lovely position has arisen. Black has an extra piece, but no moves. The knight cannot move: 21...♗e5 22.♙xe5 dxe5 23.♖d7# or 21...♗f6 22.♙xf6

gxf6 23.♖d4 d5 24.♖xe4+. The bishop too: 21...♙e7 22.♙xg7 ♖g8 23.f6. That only leaves 21...♖d8, but then 22.♙xg7! ♙xg7 23.♖xd6 ♖c6 24.♖xe4 ♖xd6 25.♖xd6. White has a rook and two pawns for two minor pieces, and another pawn is attacked. Black's position is unenviable.

Sadly, though, Black is not obliged to take the knight on d4. He has at least two continuations which deserve consideration. Firstly, 20...♗f6 21.g5 hxg5 22.♙xg5 ♙e7 and the game was, and remains, extremely unclear. Secondly, 20...♙e7, allowing 21.f6!? ♗xf6 (weaker is 21...♙xf6 22.♗f5 ♙xf5 23.gxf5 ♙e7 24.♖g1) 22.♗f5 ♙xf5 23.gxf5.



analysis diagram

How should we assess this position? The g-file is now open and castling is not without danger after the capture on h6. But Black also has his chances. In the sample variation 23...♗e4 24.♖d3 d5!? 25.♙c1 (25.♖xd5 ♗c3+) 25...0-0 (he loses after 25...♙b4 26.♖xe4! dxe4 27.♖d7+ ♖f8 28.♖d8+, 29.♖xd8+, and 30.♖xh8) 26.♙b2 ♙h4 27.♖e2 ♗f2 28.♖xf2 ♙xf2 29.♙xe5 (worse is 29.♖xd5 ♖xd5 30.♖xd5 e4 31.♖e5 e3 32.♙d4 ♖d8 33.♙xe3 ♖d1+, and now not 34.♖b2 ♖e1, nor 34.♙c1 ♙h4!) 29...f6 30.♙d6 ♖e8 31.♖xd5+ ♖xd5 32.♖xd5 leads to an equal endgame.

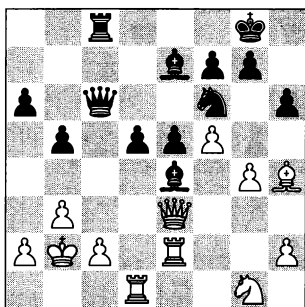
20. ♘g1

Tantamount to capitulation. Probably White calculated the variations outlined in the previous note and did not like any of them. But now Black has an easy game. He completes his development, aligns his pawns in the centre (... d6-d5) and then goes after the enemy king himself.

20... ♖e7 21. ♙f2 0-0 22. ♚e3

There is no sense in 22.h4 ♖c8 23. ♖c1 ♚c6 24.g5 because of the simple 24... hxg5 25.hxg5 ♙xf5. But standing still and awaiting the end is not the most sensible approach, either.

22... ♘f6 23. ♙h4 ♚c6 24. ♖e2 ♖c8 25. ♜b2 d5!



The white rooks cannot exploit any of the files, whilst the black bishops dominate the whole board. White's king is also weak. The game is decided.

26. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 27.c3 ♙g5 28. ♚g3 d4! 29.cxd4

Declining the dubious pleasure of being mated on the edge of the board: 29. ♚xe5 ♚xc3+ 30. ♙a3 b4+ 31. ♙a4 ♙c6+ 32. ♙a5 ♙d8+ 33. ♙xa6 ♖a8+.

29... exd4 30. ♖de1

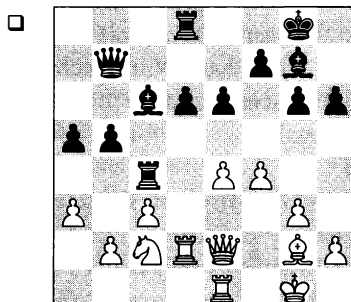
Not 30. ♖xd4 because of mate in one.

30... d3! 31. ♖xe4 ♙c1+ 0-1

By way not of a stem game, but a prototype, I offer the following classic example:

**Octavio Troianescu
Tigran Petrosian**

Bucharest 1953



Black has the two bishops and the better prospects. But White's position is quite solid, with everything defended. It is not obvious how Black can break through. A long battle lies ahead.

25. ♘e3

This move deserves some discussion.

In the previous example, White also provoked his opponent to sacrifice the exchange, but there he had a specific motive. He needed to change the quiet course of the battle and make the game more concrete. But what was the reason here? White's position is worse. He has no concrete variations to change this situation. By provoking the exchange sacrifice, White only increases his troubles. It was necessary to bide time, for example, with 25. ♜h1, waiting to see what plan Black will adopt to strengthen his position. Depending on what he does, White will then base his further plans. And if White wanted to play actively, then the only rational try was 25.f5!?

25... ♖xe4! 26. ♙xe4 ♙xe4

What Black has done can hardly be called a sacrifice. Formally, two bishops and a pawn is fully adequate compensation for the exchange. And all the changes in the position are in Black's favour.

White has clear problems on the long diagonal a8-h1. After the inevitable ...d6-d5 and ...g7-f8, he will also have trouble on the adjacent diagonal a7-g1. In addition, he needs to watch for the breaks ...b5-b4 and ...d5-d4. And all of this with a complete absence of counterplay!

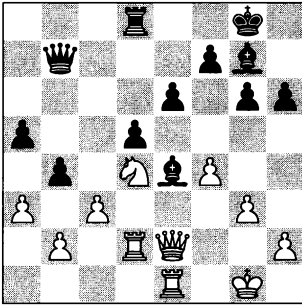
27. ♖c2

Perhaps he could have tried to jump out with 27. ♖c4!? but alas, after 27... ♗d5, the knight would have been forced back again. 28. ♖xa5 ♜b6+ and 29... ♜xa5.

27...d5 28. ♖d4

Since he has nothing real to do, he should have very slightly improved his king with 28.h3!? and 29. ♔h2.

28...b4



29.cxb4

One of several arguable moments in the game. It seems as though White loses after 29.axb4 axb4 30.c4 on account of 30...dxc4!? 31. ♜xe4 ♜b6 32. ♜ed1 c3 33.bxc3 bxc3 34. ♜d3 c2. However, if we extend this line: 35. ♜c1 ♗xd4+ 36. ♔g2 ♜b1 37. ♜xd4 (after 37. ♜e1 it all goes wrong: 37... ♜b7+ 38. ♔h3 ♜d5 39.g4 ♗b2 40. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 41. ♜xc2 ♜d3+) 37... ♜xd4 38. ♜xc2 ♜b7+ 39. ♔g1, some doubts arise. Black has an extra pawn and an attack on the king, but all the pawns are on one side, and there are not many pieces left on the board. Maybe White is suddenly making a draw?

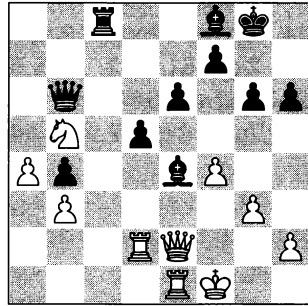
29...axb4 30.a4 ♜a7 31. ♜f2

Evidently, when considering his 29th move, Troianescu noticed a nice trap in this position: 31... ♜xa4 32. ♖xe6! fxe6 33. ♜xe4. But Petrosian, true to his style, does not hurry. He methodically improves the position of his pieces.

31... ♜c8 32.b3 ♗f8

All in the same manner. After 32... ♜c3 33. ♖b5 ♜xf2+ (stronger is 33... ♜b8!? 34. ♖xc3 bxc3 35. ♜de2 ♜xb3) 34. ♔xf2 ♜xb3 35.a5, White gets some hopes of counterplay.

33. ♖b5 ♜a6 34. ♜e2 ♜b6+ 35. ♔f1



The position is like a picture and deserves to be framed. All of Black's pieces stand ideally. But how can White be forced to resign?

A paradox: in the previous course of the game, Black several times refused the chance to win material, and now he sacrifices another exchange:

35... ♜c3! 36. ♖xc3 bxc3 37. ♜c2

In reply to 37. ♜d3, Petrosian gave the variation 37... ♗f5! (adding the threat of a check on h3) 38.g4 ♗xd3 39. ♜xd3 ♜xb3 40.f5 ♜xa4 41.fxe6 ♜f4+ 42. ♔g2 ♜xg4+ 43. ♔h1 fxe6. But just now, after 44. ♜xc3 ♗g7 45. ♜e3, White has real drawing chances: 45... ♔f7 46. ♜a7+; 45... ♔h7 46.h3 and 47. ♜xe6 (but not the immediate 46. ♜xe6 ♜f3+ 47. ♔g1 ♗d4+); 45...e5 46. ♜b3 ♜d4 47. ♜d1 ♜e4+ 48. ♔g1, and the d5-pawn cannot be defended.

I suspect that, at the board, the ninth World Champion would have found a more convincing way of realising his advantage than the one he gave in his notes. Today the computer indicates 39...♖c7! as stronger than 39...♖xb3.

37...♖xb3 38.♞ec1 ♘b4 39.g4 ♙xc2 40.♞xc2 ♖xa4 41.f5 exf5 42.gxf5 g5!

Black has managed to keep pawns on both flanks. Now there is no problem at all in realising the advantage.

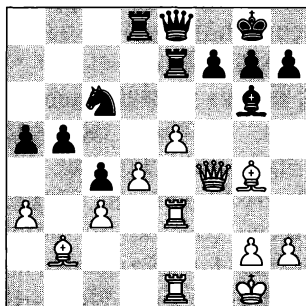
43.h4 ♙c5 44.hxg5 ♜f4+ 45.♚e1 ♜g3+ 46.♚d1 ♜g1+ 47.♜e1 ♜xe1+ 48.♚xe1 hxg5 49.♚e2 ♙d4 50.♞a2 ♚g7 51.♚d3 ♙e5 52.♞a5 ♚f6 53.♞xd5 ♚xf5 54.♚e3 f6 55.♞c5 ♚g4 56.♞c4+ ♚g3 57.♚e4 g4 0-1

Another motivation for an exchange sacrifice is to build a fortress. That is what one might call 'a draw from a position of weakness'. Quite often in such cases, a rook is given up for a bishop, which can alone attack squares of a certain colour. Then the blockade is established on those squares.

Of course, everyone remembers the following classic example.

Samuel Reshevsky Tigran Petrosian

Zürich 1953



Bronstein's commentary in his famous book on the tournament deserves to be reproduced in full:

«Black needs to blockade the white pawns and Petrosian sacrifices the exchange, so as to free the e7-square for this knight, which then comes to d5. Admittedly, Black obtains serious compensation: his knight on d5 and his unopposed bishop, are both unusually strong.»

25...♞e6!?

The difficulty of Black's position lies in the fact that his opponent is not obliged to accept the sacrifice at once. He has great freedom of action. Bronstein himself suggested the plan of attacking the king with 26.h4, and then 27.♞g3 and h4-h5. But Reshevsky decided first of all to break up the black queenside pawns.

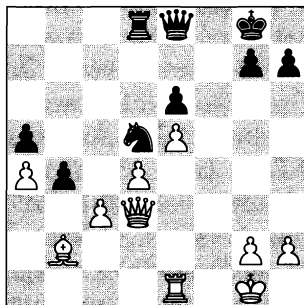
26.a4

Now if 26...b4, then after 27.d5! ♞xd5 28.♙xe6 fxe6 29.♖xc4, there is no trace of the blockade left.

26...♚e7! 27.♙xe6 fxe6 28.♜f1

An accurate move, keeping the c4-pawn under observation from the queen. After 28.♜f2 ♚d5 29.♞g3 b4 Black takes over the initiative.

28...♚d5 29.♞f3 ♙d3 30.♞xd3!?
cxd3 31.♖xd3 b4



An instructive moment. Black has played this section of the game outstandingly, but even so, he is still a long way from equality. White has returned the exchange and obtained in return an

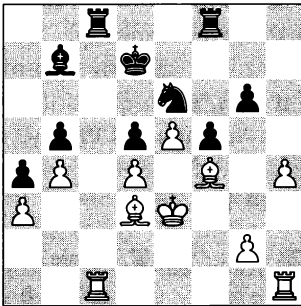
extra pawn. He continued the fight for an advantage.

The game ended in a draw anyway. But the reader should note that one device, no matter how beautiful and useful it was, does not necessarily guarantee a certain result. Two players play a game of chess. By doing a certain thing correctly, one enhances one's chances, but the opponent, in turn, can also act correctly and improve his chances. And so it goes on, until the end of the game.

Alexander Areshchenko

Jan Timman

Germany 2007



White is close to victory. He has an extra pawn, the two bishops and a possible breakthrough on the kingside. Black has only pawn weaknesses and depressing passivity.

The pawn on b5 is hanging. 34...♙c6 is no use, as White plays 35.♖c3, doubles rooks on the c-file and wins with a short tactic, by taking on c6 and b5. The preliminary exchange 34..♙xc1 35.♞xc1, and only then 35...♙c6, also fails to save the position: 36.♙e2 ♞h8 37.g3 ♞h7 38.♙g5 ♝xg5 (or 38...♞h8 39.♙f6 ♞h7 40.h5! gxh5 41.♙d3) 39.hxg5 ♞h3 40.♝f2 ♞h2+ 41.♝f3 (zugzwang) 41...♞h8 (41...♞h5 42.♝g2! ♞xg5 43.♝h3 and 44.♝h4) 42.♝g2 (the immediate 42.g4 is also possible)

42...♞h7 43.♞h1 ♞xh1 44.♝xh1, and then at the necessary moment, g3-g4.

So what do we do, resign? It is still early for that. Black has one good piece: the blockading knight on e6. In addition, all of his weaknesses are on light squares and can only be attacked (for the moment) by the bishop on b3. This means that the first priority must be to eliminate that bishop.

34...♞c4! 35.♙xc4 dxc4

Black only needs one move to establish the blockade: ...♙b7-d5. Then he can simply mark time, preparing to meet the break h4-h5 with the counter ...g6-g5. But White is up to the task:

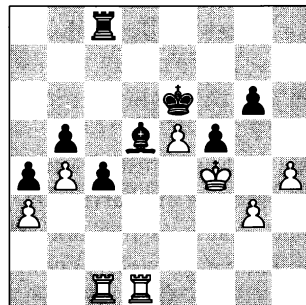
36.d5! ♙xd5 37.♞hd1 ♝xf4

Giving up his best blockading piece for the useless white bishop is the very last thing Black wants to do, but there is no choice: 37...♝c6 38.♞xd5! ♝xd5 39.♞d1+, 40.♞d6+ and 41.♞xe6.

38.♝xf4 ♝e6 39.g3 ♞c8

Black resists with all his strength. However, as in the previous example, he is still a long way from a draw. White has the tempting plan to double rooks on the d-file, tying down the black pieces, after which he can take his king to g5. Black will then have nothing with which to defend the weakness on g6. That means the only chance to resist is the desperate counterattack ...c4-c3 and ...♞c8-c4.

That is roughly what happens:



40. ♖c3 ♖c6 41. ♗d2 ♖c8 42. ♗e3 c3!?

Not waiting for White to double rooks.

43. ♖c2 ♖c4+ 44. ♖g5 ♗g4+ 45. ♖h6 ♗e4 46. ♖xc3 ♖xe5

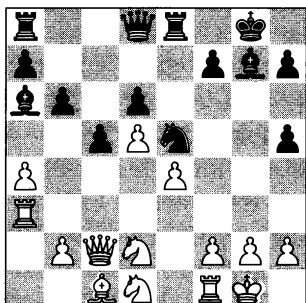
We can see how one difficult position leads to another. Even so, Black managed to save half a point. Drawn on move 68.

The sacrifice to take over squares of a certain colour can also be used in playing for a win. Such cases are less common, but one does come across them.

**Tigran Petrosian
Nukhim Rashkovsky**

Moscow 1976

□



The rook on f1 is under attack. After 16. ♖e1 c4 17. ♗e3 ♗d3 18. ♖f1 ♖c8 19. ♗f5, in the game Podgaets-Zaichik (USSR 1986), a complicated position was reached, with chances for both sides. Instead of 16...c4, it was worth considering 16...f5!?, when 17.exf5 ♗c4 18. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 19. ♗g3 is bad because of 19...♖e1+ 20. ♗f1 ♗a3.

Petrosian was in a fighting mood:

16. ♖h3!?

Later, this idea was tested a number of times in practice. In particular, it was established that it is not obligatory to take the exchange straightaway. After 16...h4!? 17. ♗e3 ♗d3 18. ♖d1 ♗xf1

19. ♗dxf1 ♗g6 (Korotylev-S.Novikov, Moscow 2007), Black banked the material in a more favourable form, thanks to the fact that the pawn on h4 restricts the white rook on h3 and slows up White's attack.

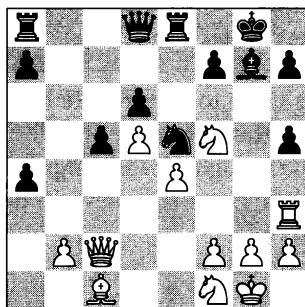
16... ♗xf1 17. ♗xf1 b5

Here too, 17...h4 was tempting, and then, if necessary, ...♗e5-g6 and ...♗g7-f6. But Rashkovsky had a different idea in mind. In search of counterplay, he wanted to sacrifice three pawns, one after another.

18. ♗de3

The idea is revealed in the variation 18.axb5 ♖b8 19. ♗c3 f5!? 20.exf5 ♗g4 21. ♖xh5 ♖e1. White has a mass of pawns for the exchange, but Black has lively piece activity. Admittedly, though, it is an open question whether this play is sufficient (after, say, 22. ♗g5 or 22. ♗d2 ♖a1 23. ♖e4).

18...bxa4 19. ♗f5



Here, we should pause for a moment. White has sacrificed the exchange, and the valuable bishop from a6, the main defender of the light squares, has been removed from the board. White's knight has a great square on f5 and overall, he has excellent attacking chances. This is the plus side.

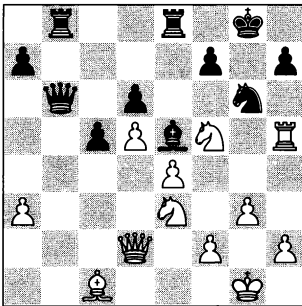
But an exchange is an exchange. Black's rooks have the excellent open b- and

e-files and his attack needs only 3-4 moves to become the main factor in the position. In a word, Black has time to present his case and develop counterplay. A tempting line is 19...♖b8 20.♗xh5 ♖b4 – from this square, the rook defends the pawn on a4 and attacks e4 and b2. But after 21.♗1e3, the next move is not obvious. Rashkovsky goes for a different regrouping: the knight on g6 and bishop on e5, but this also proves unfortunate. On e5, the knight currently prevents the white knight coming to g4, whereas soon the white attack will develop without hindrance.

**19...♗g6 20.♗xh5 ♗e5 21.g3 ♖b8
22.♗1e3 a3 23.bxa3 ♖b6**

The black king's position deteriorates quickly and Rashkovsky tries what is perhaps his last chance: he seeks to exchange queens. Even in the most primitive variation 24.♗c4 ♖b1 (or 24...♖b3 25.♖e2 ♖b1 26.♖e3) 25.♖d2 ♖xe4 White is probably winning: 26.♗cxd6 ♗xd6 27.♖h6! (of course, not 27.♗xd6 ♖e1+) 27...♖e1+ 28.♗g2 ♖e4+ 29.♗h3. But Petrosian, true to his style, finds a way to combine aggressive play with prophylactic measures.

24.♖d2



The concentration of pieces on the king-side is taking on a threatening character. The counterplay is too late. It seems that Black can play to pin the bishop at

c1: 24...♖b1 25.♗g4 ♖b2 26.♖h6 ♖c2, and there is nothing better than perpetual check: 27.♖xh7+ ♗f8 28.♖h6+ ♗g8. This variation can be extended: 29.♗g2 ♖xc1 30.♖h7+ ♗f8 31.♗xe5 (with the idea of 31...♖xe5 32.♖h8+! ♗xh8 33.♗xh8#), but after 31...♖xf2+! 32.♗xf2 ♖d2+, it is still perpetual check.

But White is winning all the same: 29.♗g2! ♖xc1 30.♗g5! The sacrifice of a second exchange cannot be prevented and the rest is simple: 30...♖b2 31.♗xg6+ fxg6 32.♖xg6+ ♗f8 33.♗fh6, and then, for example, 33...♗e7 34.♖e6+ ♗d8 35.♗f7+ ♗c7 36.♖xe8 c4 37.♗fxe5 dxe5 38.♖c6+ ♗b8 39.d6 ♖b6 40.♖e8+ ♗b7 41.d7, winning.

24...♖b3 25.♗g4 ♖b7 26.♗g2

Again the same motif. While planning a mating attack, Petrosian does not for a moment forget about prophylaxis. It may look as though this was the moment for the 'brilliant combination': 26.♗xh7 ♗xh7 27.♖h6+ ♗g8 28.♗xe5, mating. But Black replies 26...♖c3! forcing the exchange of queens. And he even wins further material. If 27.♖h6 ♖e1+ 28.♗g2 ♖xe4+, and then taking on f5, and White even loses.

Therefore Petrosian removes his king from the back rank. Now the blow on f7 is on the agenda.

26...♖c4 27.♗xe5 ♖xe4+

Any capture of the knight is met by 28.♗d6.

28.f3

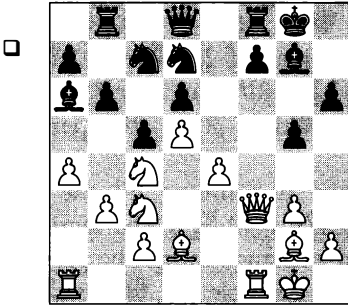
White also wins with 28.♗f3 ♖b3 29.♖h6 ♖xf3+ 30.♗h3, but Petrosian prefers a safer method.

**28...♖xe5 29.♗h6+ ♗f8 30.♗xe5
♗xe5 31.♗g4**

Rashkovsky did not want to continue the game without a queen. Black resigned.

**Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Elmir Guseinov**

Baku 2000



With the moves ...h7-h6 and ...g6-g5, Black has weakened the light squares around his king. But it is not clear how to exploit these. Not 20. ♖xd6 ♜e5. Black needs just two moves to complete his plan: the exchange on c4 and ...♜d7-e5.

What should White do?

20. ♜e3!?

An even cleaner example than the previous one. There, as well as a complex of light squares, another factor was Black's broken kingside pawn structure (f7, h7, h5). Here, however, White has no other compensation for the exchange, apart from his play on the light squares. The next few moves will show whether this compensation is sufficient.

20... ♙xf1 21. ♜xf1 ♚f6

One can understand Black's desire to get his queen to g6, before White's queen appears on h5. Even so, on g6, the black queen will be very badly placed. With the manoeuvre ♙g2-h3-f5, White can underline this fact.

Evidently, there was no alternative to 21... ♜e5 22. ♚h5 ♜e8 23. ♜f5 ♝h7 (the immediate 23... ♜f6 is bad because of 24. ♜xh6+ ♝h7 25. ♜xf6!). The threat is 24... ♜f6. This move follows after 24.h4.

It may appear that the white initiative has come to nothing.

But there is also the resource 24. ♜b5!?. If 24... ♜f6, then 25. ♚e2, and two pawns on a7 and d6 are attacked. After 24... a6 one must reckon with 25. ♜a7!? ♜f6 26. ♚e2, and now bad, for example, is 26... ♚d7 27. ♜c6 ♜xc6 28. dxc6 ♚xc6 because of 29. ♜xg7 ♝xg7 30. ♙c3 (or 30.e5 ♜d5 31.c4).

A very interesting game could result. After the text move, however, White's task is simplified.

22. ♚e2 ♚g6 23. ♙h3!

Mamedyarov was just 15 at the time of this game, but how maturely and impressively he plays the game! The knight is attacked and, indirectly, also the queen. Not 23... ♜f6 because of 24. ♙f5 ♚h5 25. g4 ♚h4 26. ♙e1 ♚h3 27. ♜f3, and the queen is lost. It can be saved only in one way:

23... ♙xc3

Now that White also has two long-range bishops, his advantage is beyond doubt.

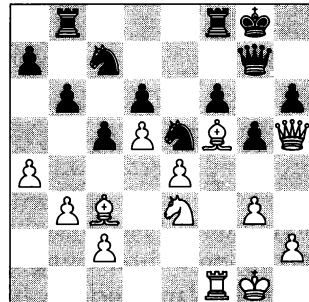
24. ♙xc3 ♜e5

Also bad is 24... ♚xe4 25. ♚d2! ♜e5 26. ♜f5 ♜f3+ 27. ♜xf3 ♚xf3 28. ♜e7+ ♝h7 29. ♙f5+.

25. ♙f5

Another way to win was 25. ♜c4!? ♜xc4 26. ♙f5 or 25...f6 26. ♜xd6.

25... ♚g7 26. ♚h5 f6



At a quick glance, it may appear that Black's last line of defence is holding, but alas, this is an illusion.

27. ♖xe5 dxe5 28. ♘g4

On 27...fxe5 the same move would have followed.

28... ♜f8 29. ♖g6!

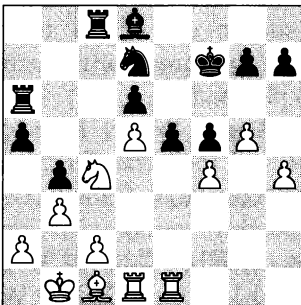
The final trick. The pawn on f6 is hanging and there is also a threat of 30. ♘xh6+ and 31. ♘f5. There is no defence. Black resigned.

Returning to our earlier theme of sacrificing the exchange to make a draw, we can note that an especially impressive case comes when a player gives up the exchange without any dire necessity. One great master of such sacrifices is Viswanathan Anand. Even many opening variations in his arsenal end with an exchange sacrifice, for a pawn, to establish (for example) a permanent knight on d5 and quietly wait for his opponent to offer a draw.

And here is another example on this theme.

**Ruslan Ponomariov
Viswanathan Anand**

Mainz 2002



White's position looks to be only a little better. He is attacking the e5-pawn, and is ready to increase the pressure on it

(♖c1-b2), but how serious is this press? It is hard to believe that it amounts to very much. Even so:

24... ♜xc4!?

This move is not an acknowledgement that Black stands badly. It shows only that he is happy with a draw and wants to achieve this in the simplest (as far as he understands it) way.

25.bxc4 e4 26. ♖b2 ♖b6!?

An interesting moment. The knight blockade seems tempting: 26...♘c5. But in that case, the bishop on d8 is out of play. So Black first tries to exchange the bishop for the one on b2, and only then puts his knight on c5.

27. ♜e2 ♖c5 28.h5 ♘f8!

Prophylaxis against a pawn break. Now after 29.h6 there follows 29...g6, whilst after 29.g6, correspondingly, there is 29...h6.

29. ♖d4

White effectively abandons the battle. His last chance to open the position was 29.c3. Probably, Ponomariov decided this was too risky: 29...♘b6 30.cxb4 axb4 etc.

29... ♖xd4 30. ♜xd4 ♖c5

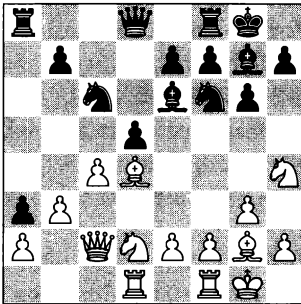
The blockade is established, and after a few more moves, the players agreed a draw.

The positional sacrifice of the queen is akin to the exchange sacrifice and usually has the same motives. For example, in a difficult position, the queen can be sacrificed, to head towards a drawish ending (such as building a fortress). In an unclear position, the sacrifice of the queen for a solid material equivalent can be used to shake the opponent out of his comfort zone, seize the initiative, etc. The queen sacrifice has an even greater psychological element than the sacrifice

of the exchange. Giving up one's strongest piece can seem a terrible thing! One would normally only do it in association with concrete variations. But the opposite situation is also possible. The opponent, when thinking about his move, is likely to devote less time to variations involving a queen sacrifice. And this can cost him.

**Lev Polugaevsky
Boris Gelfand**

Reggio Emilia 1992



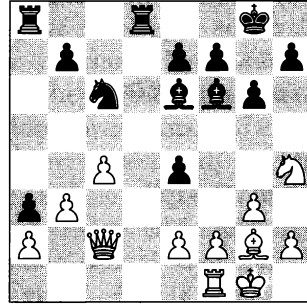
The battle has only just started in the centre and the bishop on d4 is attacked. In the game Adorjan-Horvath (Budapest 1992) there followed 17.♘df3 ♚a5 18.♙c3 ♚c5. Black has no problems. Polugaevsky played differently:

17. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 18. ♘e4

But he was seriously mistaken. What was the reason for his mistake? One can suggest that Lev Abramovich devoted all his time to calculating the variation 18...♙xh4 19.cxd5!? ♘b4 20.♚c4 ♘xd5 21.♘c5, in which White sacrifices a piece and obtains the better chances. The line with a queen sacrifice was treated as subsidiary and little attention was paid to it, on the assumption that Black would not dare do this.

But Gelfand did dare:

18... ♙xe4! 19. ♙xd8 ♙fxd8



Black has rook and minor piece for the queen. Formally, this is insufficient compensation. But if we look at the position, we see that Black has very rich counterplay, involving an attack on the a2-pawn. The knight comes to b4 and the rook to d2. If Black succeeds in taking on a2, then the passed pawn on a3 is itself a potential queen.

A rhetorical question arises: surely Polugaevsky (a superb calculator, incidentally) would not have played 17. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 18. ♘e4, if he had looked seriously at the queen sacrifice? Of course not.

20. ♙xe4

Also a very telling moment. We discussed the same point in the context of exchange sacrifices. The player who sacrifices does so consciously, in full knowledge of what is happening, but his opponent, on the contrary, is completely shaken out of his tracks. He often loses the thread of the game and starts to play badly.

Good or bad, White had to play 20. ♙xe4 and then transfer his bishop to b1 at all costs, to defend the a2-pawn. The following variation is possible: 20...♘b4 21. ♚b1 ♙d2 22. ♚e1 ♙c3 23. ♙b1 ♙h3 24. ♘g2 ♙ad8 – White is virtually stalemated, but Black still has to demonstrate that he has something more than a repetition of the position, after 25. ♚c1 ♙b2 26. ♚e1 ♙c3.

20...♞d2 21.f4 ♠xa2

After the loss of the a2-pawn, the game is over. White launches a desperate attack, which has no chance of success.

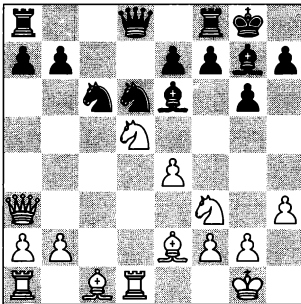
22.f5 gxf5 23.♟xf5 ♠a1 24.♞xe7+ ♞xe7 25.♠xa1 ♟xa1 26.♞xb7 ♟d4+ 27.e3 ♟xe3+ 28.♞f1 ♠a7 29.♞b8+ ♞c8

And Black won.

Miguel Najdorf

Viacheslav Ragozin

Saltsjöbaden 1948



An example which has become an absolute classic. The last move was 17.♞b3-a3. White intends to win a pawn, by taking on e7 and then d6. But the e4-pawn is undefended, is it not? But that does not matter, as the pawn cannot be taken, since the check on f6 wins the queen.

That is roughly how White's thoughts ran. However, there followed

17...♞xe4! 18.♟f6+ ♞xf6 19.♠xd8 ♠fxd8

This is what Grandmaster Viacheslav Ragozin said about the situation:

«This position was assessed by many people as lost for Black. Even among strong players, the word 'queen' seems to exert a magical effect. However, in this position, Black has the initiative, whilst over the next 25 moves, the queen stays where it is and plays only a passive role.»

I would add that the computer fully endorses the sacrifice. Indeed, is it really a sacrifice at all? Surely, it is more of a transformation of the position: going from one with identical material to one with a non-standard, but even so roughly equal material balance. Black gets rook, knight and pawn for the queen, plus an elastic structure, in which it is hard to find any weaknesses. Even such an enterprising player as Najdorf could not find a single point of attack or any active counterplay. The only thing White can do is wait, exchange pieces and hope that the queen will eventually get the chance to have her say.

20.♟d2

On 20.♟e3, White may not have liked 20...♞d5.

20...♞e4 21.♟e3 ♞d6

It seems as though Black is trying to get his knight to c4 or, via the transit square f5, to d4. But his idea is deeper. Having placed his pieces conveniently, he wants to employ the e-pawn as a battering-ram.

And one more thing. Note how calmly Ragozin plays. He never rushes things, and does not try immediately to show his opponent that there is sufficient compensation for the queen. Black has simple, convenient play and faces no dangers at all. So why force matters? Let the opponent suffer, trying to guess where the final blow will fall.

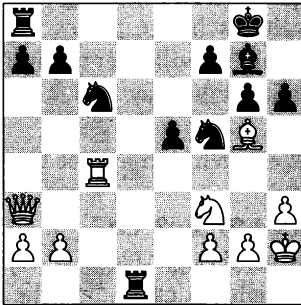
22.♠c1 ♞f5 23.♟f4 ♟d5 24.♟c4 ♟xc4 25.♠xc4 e5 26.♟g5

Botvinnik made the valuable recommendation to give up material and simplify the position: 26.♠xc6!? bxc6 27.♟xe5. Let us continue the variation: 27...♞h4 28.♟xg7 ♞xf3+ 29.♞xf3 ♟xg7 30.♞c3+ ♞g8 31.♞xc6 ♠ac8 32.♞a4 ♠c1+ 33.♞h2 ♠d2 34.♞xa7

♖xb2 35.a4. While the black rooks are doubled on the a-file, dealing with the passed pawn, the white queen will probably manage to give perpetual check on the squares b8, e5 and f4.

Possibly Najdorf and other commentators, hypnotised by the thought of 'the strongest piece', incorrectly assessed the position and did not sense that it is White, not Black, who should seek a draw here.

26...♞d1+ 27.♔h2 h6



28.♞c1

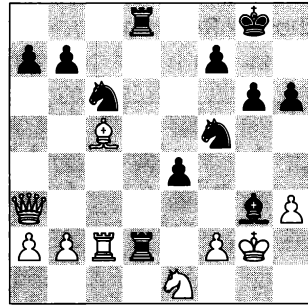
Finally losing control over the position. The transfer of the bishop to c3 is tempting, but after 28.♞d2 ♞d8 29.♞c3 there is the unpleasant 29...♟d6. In the long variation 29.♞b3 ♞1xd2 30.♟xd2 ♞xd2 31.♞xb7 ♟d8 (not 31...♟cd4 32.♞c8+ ♞f8 because of 33.♞xf8+! ♟xf8 34.♞b4+ and 35.♞xd2) 32.♞xa7 ♞xb2 33.♞c8 ♞f6 (33...♞d2 34.♞a5) 34.♞d7 ♟g7 35.♞xd8 ♞xd8 36.♞xd8 ♞xa2 the most likely outcome is a draw, though Black's play can be strengthened.

28...♞d7 29.♞e3 e4!

The first point in the plan is fulfilled. The knight is driven from the square f3, and now Black only needs to remove or exchange the bishop on e3, and then he will be able to invade on d2 with his rook.

White could probably have defended more tenaciously, but in the conditions of an over-the-board game, it is not easy to hold the position. Everything is hanging, the queen is just a spectator and, most importantly of all, White cannot create a single threat and is limited to passive, humiliating defence.

30.♟e1 ♞ad8 31.♞c5 ♞e5+ 32.g3 ♞d2! 33.♞c2 ♞xg3+ 34.♟g2



Now it is time to reap the harvest. Botvinnik recommends 34...♞xf2 35.♞xf2 e3 36.♞c3 exf2 37.♞xd2 fxe1♟+! (but not 37...fxe1♞ 38.♞xd8+ and 39.♞xe1) 38.♟f1 ♞xd2 39.♞xd2 ♟f3, «and with an unusual material balance of three knights and two pawns against the queen, Black should win». In fact, after 40.♞d7, one can have doubts about this prognosis, but the variation is easy to strengthen: 36...♞8d7, and then the e-pawn promotes almost like a draughts game.

The simplest solution of all is 34...e3! 35.♞xe3 ♟xe3+ 36.♞xe3 ♞xf2 37.♞xf2 ♞xf2+ 38.♟xf2 f5 or 37.♞xd2 ♞xd2 38.♞xd2 ♞xe1 39.♞d7 ♞a5 40.♞xb7 ♞b6, and the endgame is in any case hopeless for White. But Ragozin, true to his strategy of not rushing, played

34...♞e5

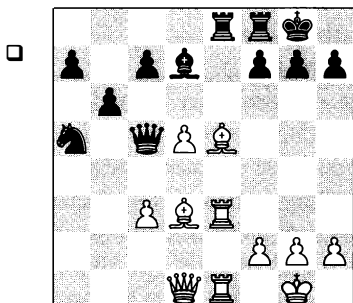
and also went on to win.

Chapter 9

Standing on the Shoulders of the Classics

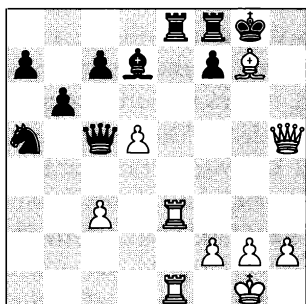
Judit Polgar
Anatoly Karpov

Hoogeveen 2003



25. ♖xh7+! ♜xh7 26. ♜h5+

Without waiting for 26...♙g8 27. ♖xg7!



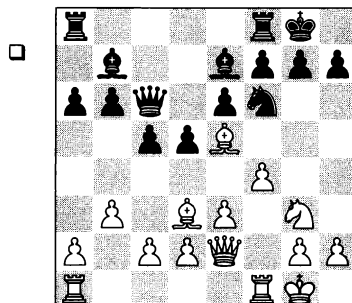
analysis diagram

(and then one of three choices to get mated: 27...♞xe3 28. ♜h8#; 27...♙xg7 28. ♞g3+ ♜f6 29. ♜g5#; 27...f6 28. ♖xf6! ♞xf6 29. ♞g3+ ♜f8 30. ♜h8+ ♜f7 31. ♞g7#), Black resigned.

It is easy and pleasant to sacrifice a piece, when you are standing on the shoulders of such authorities as Lasker, Tarrasch and Alekhine:

Emanuel Lasker
Johann Bauer

Amsterdam 1889



14. ♘h5!

Eliminating the knight on f6, the last defender of the black king. In Zak's book Lasker and Vainshtein's book *Myslitel*, the following variations are offered:

14...h6 15. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16. ♘xf6+ gxf6
17. ♜g4+ ♜h8 18. ♜h4 ♜g7 19. ♞f3;
14...d4 15. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16. ♜g4 ♜h8
(16...e5 17. ♖e4!) 17. ♞f3 ♞g8 18. ♖xh7!
14...♘e8 15. ♖xg7! ♘xg7 16. ♜g4 – in
each case with unavoidable mate.

The best defence was missed by both commentators. It is obvious that this must be to move the rook from f8, so as to give the king a flight square. Where should the rook go? If 14...♞fe8, then 15. ♘xg7! ♜xg7 16. ♜g4+ ♜f8 17. ♜g5, and the knight cannot move because of mate in one. The only correct move is 14...♞fd8, when the same combination now makes no sense: 15. ♘xg7 ♜xg7 16. ♜g4+ ♜f8 17. ♜g5 ♘e4 18. ♜g7+ ♜e8.

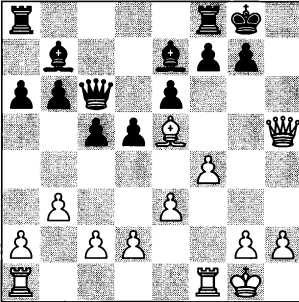
After 14...♞fd8, Black's position remains inferior, as in the variation 15. ♘xf6+

♙xf6 16. ♙xh7+ ♚f8! he loses a pawn, but at least it is not mate.

14... ♖xh5

Pay attention to the screen – the classic combination with the double bishop sacrifice will be seen for the first time:

15. ♙xh7+! ♚xh7 16. ♗xh5+ ♚g8



17. ♙xg7!! ♚xg7 18. ♗g4+

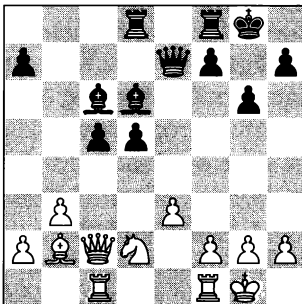
Chess is such a contrary game that care is required even in the most overwhelming positions. After 18. ♗f3 ♖h8 19. ♗g3+ ♙g5! White would have to start from the beginning again.

18... ♚h7 19. ♗f3 e5 20. ♗h3+ ♗h6 21. ♗xh6+ ♚xh6 22. ♗d7!

The final point – the double attack wins one of the bishops, making further resistance pointless. The fact that Black did not resign until move 38 testifies only to his stubbornness.

**Aaron Nimzowitsch
Siegbert Tarrasch**

St Petersburg 1914



18...d4!?

Nimzowitsch was a cultured and erudite player, who I am sure knew Lasker's combination. But here his attention lapsed for a moment.

19.exd4

There were many ways to defend against the threats to h2 and g2, including these three: 19. ♗fe1, 19.e4 and even 19.g3 dxe3 20. ♗c3. Instead, White remains blind to the danger.

19... ♙xh2+!?

«Here is a rare case where knowledge not only brings no benefit, but even turns out to be harmful. If Tarrasch had not known the classical heritage, he might, instead of 19... ♙xh2+, have found a less striking but more convincing way to win: 19... ♙xg2! 20. ♚xg2 (on 20.dxc5, there is the decisive 20... ♗g5) 20... ♗g5+ 21. ♚f3 (if 21. ♚h3, then 21... ♗h5+ 22. ♚g2 ♗g4+ 23. ♚h1 ♗f4) 21... ♗fe8! 22. ♗g1 ♗f4+ 23. ♚g2 ♗e2, and White would have had to resign earlier than in the game.»

There is in fact nothing to add to this extract from Neishtadt's book Siegbert Tarrasch. I would only suggest you don't show it to children, as the suggestion that knowledge can, paradoxically, sometimes be a bad thing is something they do better to learn only in adult life. But the spectators do not suffer here. Tarrasch's method may take longer, but it is beautiful and long ago joined the classics itself. One can recall, for example, the game Spassky-Tal (Montreal 1979), where Mikhail Nekhemyevich carried out the attack in the Tarrasch manner, as well as hundreds of other examples.

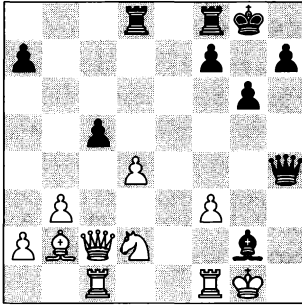
20. ♚xh2 ♗h4+ 21. ♚g1 ♙xg2!

Lasker would have been pleased.

22.f3

After 22. ♚xg2 ♗g4+ 23. ♚h2 ♗d5 24. ♗xc5 White does not get enough

for the queen, because Black has the zwischenzug 24...♖h5+! 25.♚hx5 ♚hx5+, 26...♚g5+ and 27...♚xd2.



22...♖fe8!

The only move, but sufficient. The attack runs out of steam after both 22...♚h1+ 23.♔f2, and 22...♚g3 23.♘e4.

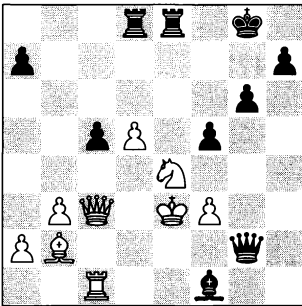
23.♘e4

23.♔xg2 ♖e2+.

23...♚h1+ 24.♔f2 ♖xf1 25.d5

The best defence is counterattack and White, following this principle, unleashes his queen + bishop battery on the long diagonal. It does not help, but other defences were no better: 25.♖f1 ♚h2+; 25.♘f6+ ♔f8 26.♘xe8 ♚g2+ 27.♔e3 ♖xe8+ 28.♔f4 g5+ 29.♔f5 ♚xf3+ 30.♔xg5 f6+ 31.♔h4 ♚h3#.

25...f5 26.♚c3 ♚g2+ 27.♔e3



27...♖xe4+! 28.fxe4 f4+

Cleaner is 28...♚g3+ 29.♔d2 ♚f2+ 30.♔d1 ♚e2#, but perfection is not really in place here. How often does one

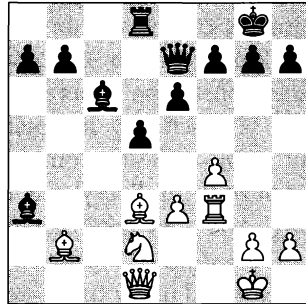
get the chance to mate the white king on d7? This may be the only chance in a lifetime!

29.♔xf4 ♖f8+ 30.♔e5 ♚h2+ 31.♔e6 ♖e8+ 32.♔d7 ♖b5#

Alexander Alekhine

John Drewitt

Portsmouth 1923



Black has sacrificed a piece for three pawns, the last of which he has just captured on a3. Alekhine's reply shows that he was not interested in playing for trifles:

20.♖xh7+! ♔xh7 21.♖h3+ ♔g8

21...♔g6 22.♚h5#.

22.♖xg7!?

If Neishtadt had written a book about Alekhine, he might have had the chance of another reference to the 'danger of too much knowledge'. With the simple 22.♚h5 f6 23.♖xa3 ♚xa3 24.♚h8+ ♔f7 25.♚xd8 ♚c1+ 26.♘f1 ♖b5 27.♖f3, White wins a rook, but instead, he prefers to go in for the Lasker combination. And Black, in reply... resigned! It seems Drewitt was the opposite of Bauer – the latter did not resign until the very last moment, whereas the former resigns with a board full of pieces. He cannot accept the sacrifice of the second bishop: 22...♔xg7 23.♚g4+ ♔f6 24.♚g5# or 23...♔f8 24.♖h8#.

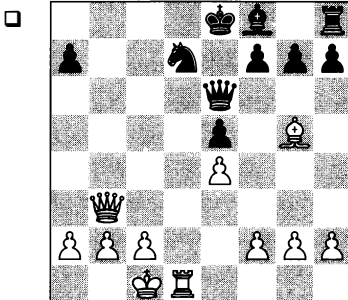
«After the strongest move 22...f6,» writes Kotov in his book *Shakmatnoe Nasledie Alekhina*, «White wins with 23.♙h6! ♖h7 24.♚h5! ♙f8 (24...♙e8 25.♗g3+ ♘h8 26.♙g7+ and 27.♙xf6+) 25.♚g4+ ♘h8 26.♙xf8». But what if 25...♙f7? White needs to find 26.♙xf8 ♗g6 27.♚xg6+ ♘xg6 28.♗h6+ ♙f7 (28...♙f5 29.♙e7) 29.♙c5 ♘g7 30.♗h3 with a gradual realisation of the advantage.

The cleanness of the combination in the game Polgar-Karpov is something of an exception to the general rule. In our day, it is practically impossible to carry out such a classic combination, in such a pure form. Everybody knows everything! And they take measures in advance. The extent of defensive resistance has increased many times over and the level of defence is incomparably greater than that demonstrated by the masters of the past.

Even if the outward contours of the combination are similar to those of the classic examples, the analysis often reveals internal differences. But why should this be a surprise? Life has become much more complicated in the 21st century and so has chess.

**Boris Gelfand
Vladimir Kramnik**

Munich 1994



In an article in the magazine *New In Chess*, Boris Gelfand gave what in his opinion was the strongest continuation as being 20.♚g4 g6 21.a3. One can also consider the more active plan 20.♚h5 f5 (20...g6 21.♚h6 f6 22.♙xg6!) 21.♙c4, freeing the square d3 for the rook, from where it is ready to transfer to g3 or h3.

But the desire to play the Lasker combination was too great:

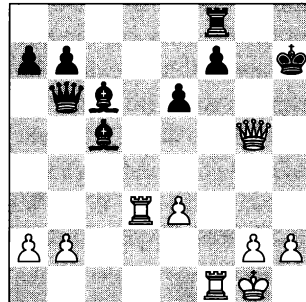
**20.♙xh7+!? ♘xh7 21.♚h5+ ♘g8
22.♙xg7 ♘xg7 23.♚g5+ ♘h7
24.♗d3**

The two bishops have happily given their lives and the linear mate is threatened, as in the classical examples. But this time Black finds a defence.

24...♗e3

The simplest, although after 24...♙e3 25.fxe3 f6 26.♚h5+ ♘g7 27.♗f3 f5, it is also hard to see any serious danger.

25.fxe3



25...♙e4??

A one-move blunder, when the position is objectively close to equality. After 25...♚xb2 White can give perpetual check, or can bring in the rook from f1, whereupon it is Black who starts checking. In addition, at the end of the variation 26.♗f6 ♚b1+ 27.♙f2 ♚xa2+ 28.♙f1 ♚xg2+! 29.♚xg2 ♙xg2+ 30.♙xg2 ♘g7 we reach an endgame which White is hardly in any danger of winning.

26.♚h4+

1-0

Chapter 10

Fancy some Solving?

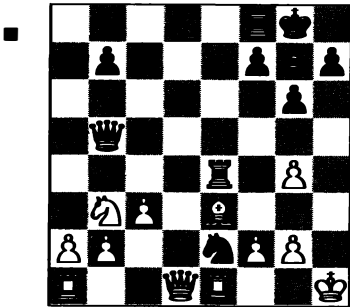
My book, alas, is not entertaining fiction like a detective or romantic novel. The reader may be getting bored or tired, so it may be a good idea to take a break and turn our attention to something else; to 'ventilate the brain', as they say.

I offer you 24 positions to solve. They are all, with only a few exceptions, very simple and are divided into pairs, so that the solution to one position will suggest the solution to the other. Later, we will return to our main theme.

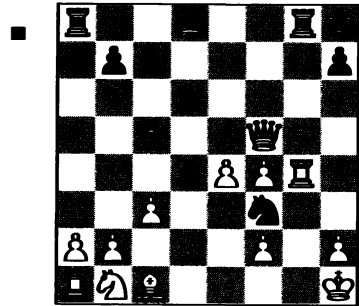
Good luck!

A path for the rook

No 1

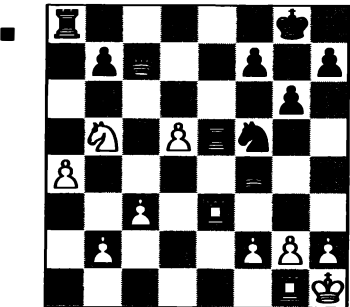


No 2

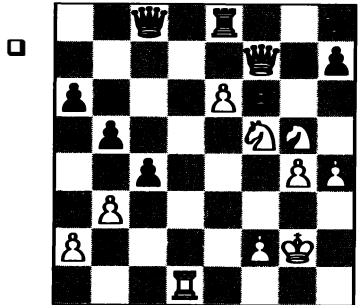


Smothered mate

No 3

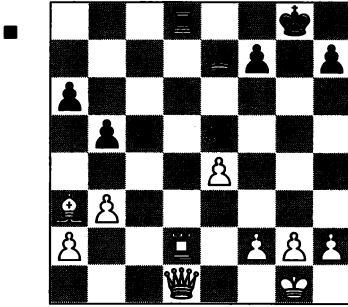


No 4

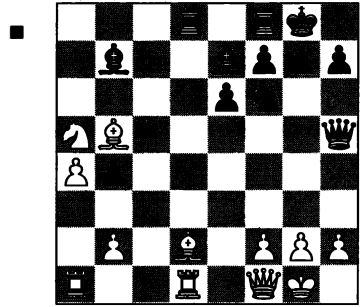


Multiple attacks

No 5

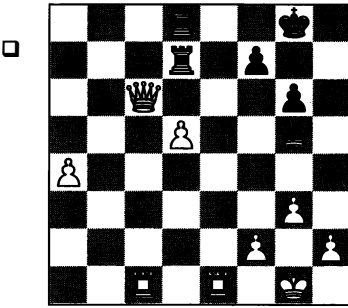


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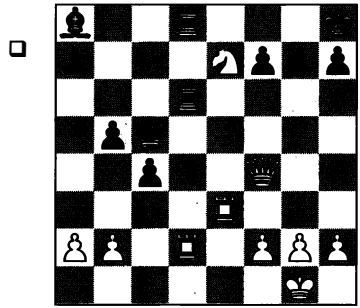


The back rank

No 7

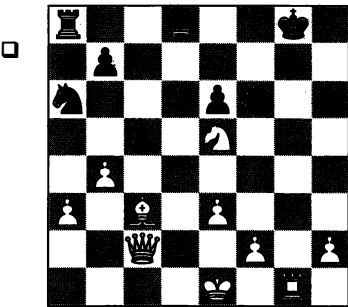


No 8

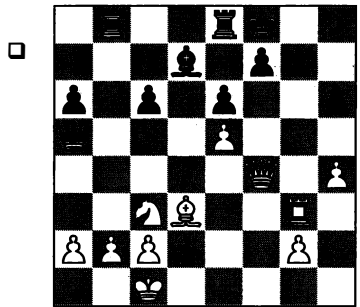


Don't be mean

No 9

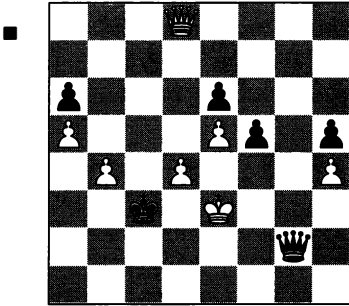


No 10

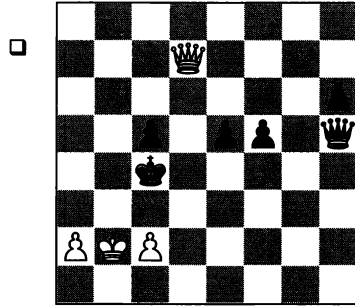


An empty board and no place to go

No 11

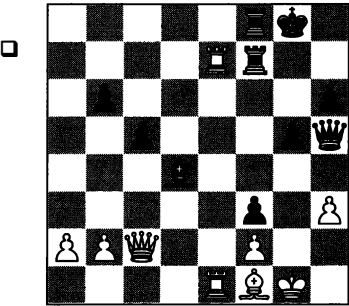


No 12

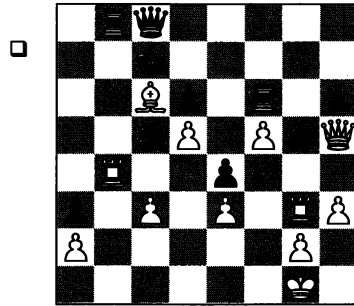


This cunning discovered check

No 13

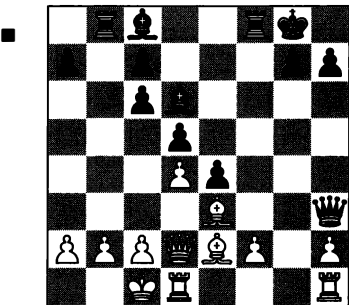


No 14

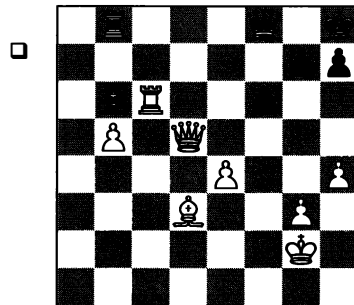


All that glitters is not gold

No 15

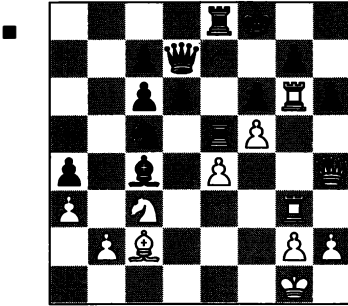


No 16

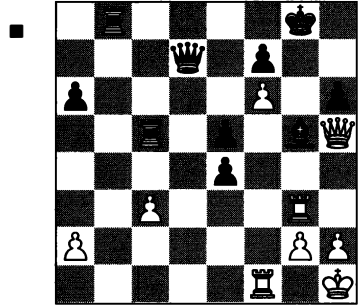


The weak back rank

No 17

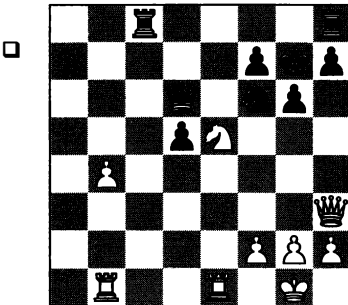


No 18

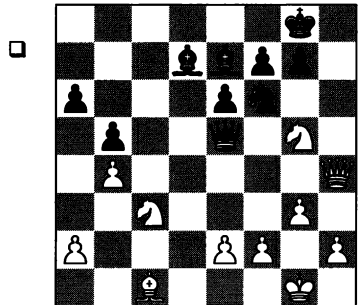


A sprat to catch a mackerel

No 19

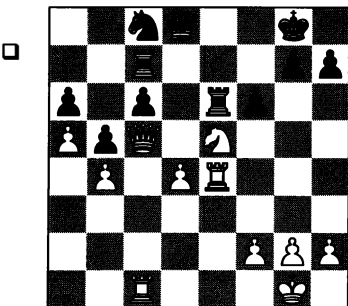


No 20

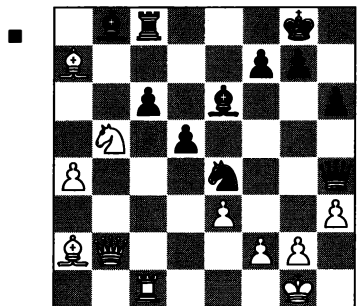


Dying for one's comrades

No 21



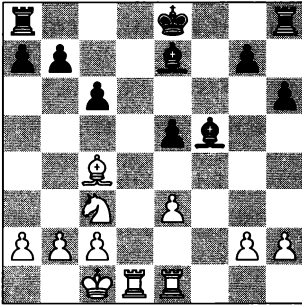
No 22



Living classics

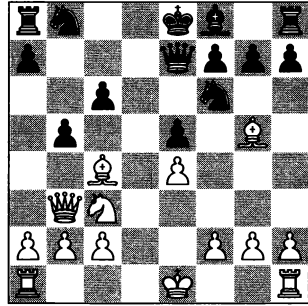
No 23

□



No 24

□



Solutions

No 1

17...♖h5+! 18.gxh5 ♜h4, and White resigned (Hammer-Carlsen, Halkidiki 2003).

No 2

16...♖h4! 17.♜g2 ♖xh2+! 18.♜xh2 ♜g1# (Reiner-Steinitz, Vienna 1860)

No 3

24...♖xe3!, and now 25.fxe3 ♘g3+! 26.hxg3 ♜h5# (Yudasin-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1994).

No 4

White wins prosaically after 37.♘d6 ♖c6+ 38.f3 ♜d8 39.e7. But he found another, more beautiful way of winning: 37.♘h6! Threatening 38.♖g8+! ♜xg8 39.♘gf7#. Neither 37...gxh6 38.♖xh7#, nor 37...♜e7 38.♖xe7! saves Black, so he resigned (Tal-Portisch, Biel 1976).

No 5

31...♘f3+! In view of 32.gxf3 ♖g5+ and 33...♜xd2, White resigned (Gil Capape-Anand, Gausdal 1986).

No 6

21...♙f3! 22.gxf3 ♜xd2! 23.♜xd2 ♖g5+ 24.♙h1 ♖xd2 Although he has no material advantage, Black does have the initiative and went on to win (Fridstein-Smyslov, Moscow 1945).

No 7

30.♖xd7! ♜xd7 31.♜e8+ But definitely not 31.♜c8+ ♜d8. 31...♙h7 32.♜cc8 ♜d8 33.♜exd8 Accuracy to the end: 33.♜cxd8 ♖c1+ 34.♙g2 g5, and Black can still fight on, whereas after the text, it is all over (Alekhine-Colle, Paris 1925).

No 8

30.♘g6+! hxg6 It is easy to see that other captures lose. 31.♖h4+ ♖h5 32.♖xd8+! On 31...♙g8, there would follow the same move. 32...♜xd8 33.♜xd8+ ♙h7 34.♜ee8. Black resigned (Mamedyarov-Timofeev, Moscow 2004).

No 9

21.♜xg7+! Mate is inevitable, Black resigned (Kramnik-P.Toth, Rio de Janeiro 1991).

No 10

21.♜xg7! ♙xg7 22.♖f6+ ♙f8 (or 22...♙g8 23.♖xh6 f5 24.exf6) 23.♙g6 Black resigned (Keres-Szabo, Budapest 1955).

No 11

61...f4+! Seeing **62.♔xf4 ♕d3!**, White preferred to resign (Topalov-Kasparov, Linares 1999).

No 12

48.♖d3+ ♕b4 49.♗a6! c4 The threat was mate in one. **50.♗b6+ ♕a4 51.♗c6+ ♕a5** Nor is Black saved after **51...♕b4 52.c3+ ♕a5 53.a4 ♗e2+ 54.♕a3. 52.a4!** Again threatening mate. **52...c3+ 53.♕a3 ♗e2** It looks as though Black is defending, but there followed **54.♗b7!** with the threat **55.♗a7+ ♗a6 56.♗c5+**. It is all over (Brodsky-Toradze, USSR 1981).

No 13

Can't we put the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal, pinning the rook? Yes, if we calculate the variations very well!

30.♙c4! On **30...♗xh3**, White had prepared **31.♙xf7+ ♕h8 32.♗h7+! ♕xh7 33.♙e6+** and **34.♙xh3**. But Black can play more strongly:

30...♗h4! Threatening **31...♗g3+**, mating. **31.♙xf7+ ♕h8** So who is tricking whom? **32.♞1e3!** White is tricking Black, after all. **32...♗xh3** Or **32...♙xe3 33.♞xe3 ♞xf7 34.♗g6 ♗f4 35.♗xh6+ ♕g8 36.♗xb6. 33.♗h7+! ♕xh7 34.♙e6+ ♕g6 35.♙xh3 ♙xe3 36.♞xe3** The realisation of the extra material did not involve any difficulties (Zviagintsev-Topalov, Pamplona 1995).

No 14

The start is easy: **40.♞xg5! hxg5 41.♗h7+ ♔d7**

But now what? After **42.♙xd7** Black does not have to take the piece, when he would lose at least the queen: **42...♗xd7 43.♞c4+** (more precise than **43.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 44.♞xb8**) **43...♕d8 44.♗h8+ ♕e7 45.♞xe4+ ♕f7 46.♗h7+ or 44...♗e8 45.♗xf6+ ♕d7 46.♗g7+ ♗e7 47.♞c7+!**. He can play more strongly: **42...♗g8!** and the attack comes to nothing, whilst White is material down...

42.♙xd7 Even so. **42...♗g8! 43.♞b7+!!** Blow meets blow! **43...♕xb7 43...♞xb7 44.♗xg8 ♕xd7 45.♗g7+. 44.♙c8+! ♕a8 45.♗xg8** After a few moves, Black acknowledged defeat (Mason-Winawer, Vienna 1882).

No 15

17...♞xf2!?! The explanation for the punctuation is given below. **18.♙xf2 ♗a3!!** Definitely not **18...♙a3 19.♗e3!**. **19.c3** Of course, the queen cannot be taken: **19.bxa3 ♙xa3#**. The attempt to free a flight on d2 for the king also ends badly: **19.♗c3 ♗xa2 20.♞dgl (20.♕d2 ♙b4) 20...♞xb2! 21.♗xb2 ♙f4+; 19.♗g5 ♞xb2 20.♗d8+ ♕f7 21.♙h5+ g6 22.♗xc8 ♞xa2+ 23.♕d2 ♗d3+! 24.♕e1 ♙b4+ 25.♞d2 ♙xd2+ 26.♕d1 ♞a1# or 22.♕d2 22...♙b4+ 23.♕e2 ♙a6+ 24.♞d3 ♗xd3#.**

19...♗xa2 The surreal **19...e3!?** **20.♙xe3 ♙f5** fails to the no less amazing **21.♗c2! ♗xa2 22.♙d3. 20.b4 ♗a1+ 21.♕c2 ♗a4+ 22.♕b2** The decisive mistake, but easy to explain. Black's attack has the force of a hurricane and White simply could not take the pressure.

He had to play 22.♔c1!, and then the capture on b4 does not come with check: 22...♙xb4 23.cxb4 ♖xb4, which means that White has a tempo to start his counterplay: 24.♖g5!. The king is ready to come via d2 and e1 to a safer square, whilst after 24...♗a2 there is 25.♗d8+ ♕f7 26.♗xc7+ ♕f8 27.♗xc8+ ♕f7 28.♗d7+ ♕g6 29.♗d6+ and 30.♗xb4. The chances of the two sides are unclear after 22...a5 23.♗c2 ♗a3+ 24.♗b2 axb4. In his book *My Great Predecessors*, Kasparov recommends going into the ending: 22...♙f5 23.♙e1 ♗a1+ 24.♔c2 e3+ 25.♔b3 exd2 26.♖xa1 ♖e8 27.♙a6 dxe1 28.♖hxel ♖xel 29.♖xel ♙xh2 30.♙b7 ♙e4 31.♙xc6 ♕f7, underlining, however, that Black has only a minimal advantage.

After going through these variations, it makes sense to go back to the diagram position. With the simple 17...♙g4 Morphy could secure a solid positional advantage. So, is that what he should have played? Probably, but then chess lovers would have been deprived of 'one of the most amazing and deep combinations', as Geza Maroczy said of this game.

22...♙xb4! 23.cxb4 ♖xb4+ 24.♗xb4 ♗xb4+ 25.♔c2 e3! White evidently missed this resource. The bishop enters the attack, with decisive effect. 26.♙xe3 ♙f5+ 27.♖d3 ♗c4+ On 27.♙d3, the same move would follow. 28.♔d2 ♗a2+ 29.♔d1 ♗b1+ White resigned (Bird-Morphy, London 1858).

No 16

47.e5! fx e5 48.♗e4 ♗g8 49.♖h6! 'Extreme measures', as in the previous game, but this time they are effective, as well as striking. After 49...gxh6 50.♗xe5+ ♗g7 51.♗xb8+ ♗g8 52.♗xb6 ♗d5+ 53.♔h2 ♗xd3 54.♗f6+ ♕g8 55.♗b2 Black resigned (Larsen-Botvinnik, Leiden 1970).

No 17

If his pawn stood on h3, White would probably win. Black has no normal move. For example, after 26...♙g8 White wins with 27.♗g4 ♖8e7 28.♖xf6+ gxf6 29.♗xg8#, whilst after 26...d5 there is 27.♖xf6+ gxf6 28.♗xf6+ ♗f7 29.♗h8+ ♕e7 30.♗xe5+.

But the pawn is on h2, and this small detail decides the outcome of the game: 26...♗xf5! 27.♖xf6+ Relatively best; after accepting the sacrifice, White is mated. 27...♗xf6 28.♖f3 ♖8e6 Nothing remains of the attack. The two rooks are significantly stronger than the queen, and soon Black won (Knoch-Réti, Semmering 1926).

No 18

The end of a famous game. White had attacked inventively and sacrificed material, but Black found a defence.

32...♗f5! The threat was to capture on h6, whilst after 32...♕f8 33.♖xg5! Black could count only on a draw, at best: 33...♗d3 34.♖g1 ♖b1 35.♗xh6+ ♕e8 36.♖g8+ ♕d7 37.h3 ♖xg1+ 38.♕xg1 ♖xc3 39.♖f8 ♗e3+ 40.♗xe3 ♖xe3 41.♖xf7+ ♕e6 etc. 33.♕g1 The weakness of the first rank has its say. Not 33.♖xf5 ♖b1+, whilst after 33.♗e2 the simplest is 33...♗xf1+! 34.♗xf1 ♖cb5 and 35...♖b1. 33...♗g6 34.♗e2

♙c6. Now, even if White regains the piece with h2-h4, Black still has enough extra material to win, as indeed he did in the game Fischer-Smyslov, Bled 1959.

No 19

31.♙h6+! Both 31...♖xh6 32.♗xf7+ and 33.♗xd6, and 31...♖g8 32.b5 are equally hopeless for Black (Kramnik-Vescovi, Guarapuava 1991).

No 20

White has an extra pawn and could have won another with 26.♙h8+! ♖xh8 27.♗xf7+ and 28.♗xe5. But in the game, there followed **26.♙b2.** Black, in his turn, should have neutralised the threat with 26...♙f5 (and if 27.e4, then 27...♗xe4! 28.♗cxe4 f6 29.♗h3 e5). However, he gave his opponent another chance: **26...♙c6** And White did not take it: **27.a3** A comedy of errors (27.♙h8+!), and the most amazing thing is that such an example of poor play should be taken from one of the games of a world championship match (Alekhine-Euwe, Rotterdam 1937). This is what was written about it in the book devoted to the match, by the sixth World Champion [Translator's Note: i.e. Botvinnik]: On move 25, Euwe committed a serious mistake. By a queen sacrifice, Alekhine could have won a second pawn. However, he did not see this possibility. On the following move, Euwe repeated his mistake, but again Alekhine missed it. The public gasped: four mistakes in as many moves! The battle continued for another 28 moves, but the balance was not disturbed again. Thanks to opposite-coloured bishops, Euwe managed to draw.

No 21

31.♗f7! After 31...♖xf7 32.♙h5+ ♖e7 33.♜xe6+ ♖xe6 34.♞e1+ ♖d6 35.♙c5+ ♖d7 36.♙f5+ ♖d6 37.♙e6 White gives mate, and after 32...g6 33.♙xh7+ ♖f8 34.♙h8+ ♖e7 35.♜xe6+, he wins the queen. In the game, there followed **31...♙e8 32.♜xe6 ♙xe6 33.♗d8 ♙e4 34.♗xc6.** White has an extra pawn and an overwhelming position (Euwe-Alekhine, Zürich 1934).

No 22

27...♗xf2! 28.♙xf2 ♙h2+! It is too early for 28...♙xa4 29.♙xb8. **29.♖f1 ♙xa4** The bishop on h2 cannot be attacked (30.g3 ♙xh3+), the sacrificed piece will inevitably be regained, and Black's two extra pawns are a very good argument for resigning, as White indeed did (Ivanchuk-Topalov, Linares 1997).

No 23

The pawn weaknesses balance out and Black has the two bishops. It is not obvious how he can be worse. His king is a little vulnerable, but the queens are off, which means that mating attacks are impossible.

Or are they?

17.♞f1! The bishop has no retreats: 17...♙g4 18.♙f7+ and 19.♙e6+, whilst covering the f7-square is no better: 17...♙g6 18.♗b5! cxb5 19.♙xb5#. That only leaves **17...♞f8**, but then again there follows **18.♗b5! ♜c8 19.♞xf5! ♞xf5 20.♙e6 cxb5**

21. ♖xc8. White has extracted the maximum out of the position: he has won a pawn and subsequently realised it (Khalifman-Inkirov, Plovdiv 1986). Knowing Alexander Khalifman's great erudition, one can feel sure that he realised his combination here, knowing about the famous predecessor in the next example.

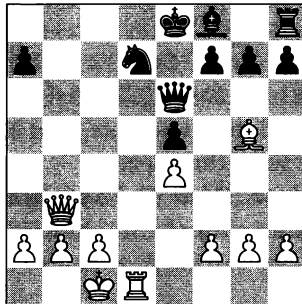
No 24

Chess historians know all about the events surrounding the following game. It was played in 1858 at the Paris Opera House, where Morphy had been invited by two titled noblemen: Count Karl Brunswick and Count Isouard. They especially wanted to play chess, whilst Morphy was more interested in listening to the music (we even know which opera was on: Vincenzo Bellini's 'Norma').

Evidently, in order not to be distracted any more than necessary from his enjoyment, Morphy decided to dispose of his titled adversaries as quickly as possible, and the latter helped him. The last move in the game was 9...b7-b5. There followed:

10. ♗xb5! cxb5 The lesser evil was to enter an endgame a pawn down: 10... ♖b4+ 11. ♖xb4 ♖xb4+ 12. c3 or 11. ♗c3. **11. ♖xb5+ ♗bd7** Or 11... ♗d8 12. 0-0-0+ ♗c7 13. ♗d3 with inevitable mate **12. 0-0-0 ♗d8** 12... 0-0-0 13. ♖a6+ ♗c7 14. ♖b7#. **13. ♗xd7! ♗xd7** 14. ♗d1 ♖e6 15. ♖xd7+ ♗xd7

Now the celebrated moment, when the Duke and Count went into history.



16. ♖b8+! ♗xb8 **17. ♗d8#**

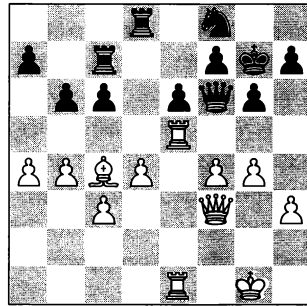
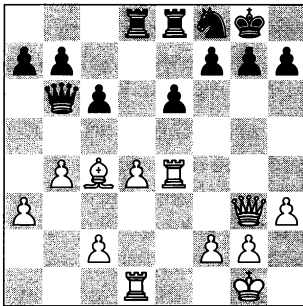
Chapter 11

The Pawn Prod

The pawn prod is something exceptionally widespread, but also very badly used. More often than not it is played when no other good move is visible, so we just attack a piece with a pawn, for want of another move. Often it occurs when in time-trouble – no time to think, no obvious move enters one’s head, so just push a pawn forward and what will be, will be.

A move for the sake of moving. But sometimes it is different. If there is an idea behind the move it is usually to loosen up the enemy position. And sometimes, this loosening can be the best way out of the position.

Mikhail Botvinnik
Alexander Konstantinopolsky
 Moscow 1952



29. ♖g3!

A very strong move: the queen x-rays the rook at c7. Combinational motifs hang over the board. The position deserves to be examined in detail.

Thus, after 29...♘d7, there is the tempting combination 30.g5 ♕e7 31.f5!? and if 31...♘xe5, then 32.f6+. But Black replies 31...♗d6! 32.fxe6 (32.f6+ ♔g8) 32...♘xe5 33.dxe5 ♕d2 34.exf7 ♖xf7! 35.♙xf7 ♘d3! (of course, not 35...♘xf7 36.e6+) 36.♗f2 ♕xf2+ 37.♙xf2 ♘xf7 with good drawing chances.

Instead of 31.f5, more convincing is 31.♖xe6! fxe6 32.f5! and then: 32...♖cc8 33.f6+ ♘xf6 34.♖xe6 ♕c7 35.gxf6+ ♔h8 36.♖e5 c5 37.♗h4 cxd4 38.♖e7 or 37...♖e8 38.f7; 32...e5 33.♖xe5! ♕f8 (33...♘xe5 34.f6+) 34.f6+ ♘xf6 35.gxf6+ ♕xf6

Black has a solid, but passive position. Konstantinopolsky decided to do nothing:

- 19...♖d7 20.c3 ♕c7 21.♗g5 ♕d8
- 22.♗h5 ♕f6 23.a4 b6 24.♖de1
- ♖ed8 25.f4 ♖b7 26.♗f3 ♖c7 27.g4
- g6 28.♖e5 ♔g7

While Black has been standing still, White has advanced almost all of his pawns to the fourth rank. If he manages to break through, then his approach will be crowned with success, but if not, then Black will reap the rewards of his cautious defence. Everything depends on concrete variations.

36. ♖e6 ♚f7 37. ♗e5+ ♔h6 38. ♖xc6!
with further material gains.

In the game, there followed

29...c5 30.bxc5 bxc5

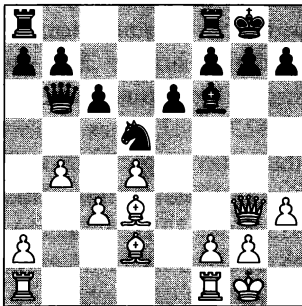
And here White missed the chance of a decisive breakthrough: 31.g5 ♗e7 32.d5 ♘d7 33.f5! ♗d6 (33...gxf5 34. ♖xe6!) 34.f6+ ♔g8 35.dxe6! ♘xe5 36.e7!.

But let us return to the position in the previous diagram. Few people drew attention to Botvinnik's commentary, but it actually deserves the closest attention: «Striving for counterplay, Black should have continued 19...a5, which would have resulted in the opening of the a-file.» Briefly stated, and without an exclamation mark being put against the move ...a7-a5. But it is this move which solves all the defence's problems.

Now let us go forward 42 years.

**Surya Shekhar Ganguly
Ruslan Ponomariov**

Szeged 1994



The pawn structure is similar to the previous example and Black's problems are also much the same. Should he wait, while White advances his pawns and prepares a breakthrough, or should he prod the opponent, to distract him from his plan?

16...a5! 17.a3 axb4 18.axb4 ♖a7!

This move also deserves to be noted. It turns out that Black has loosened his opponent's queenside pawn structure and hampered the advance c3-c4, and thus secured his knight a good post in the centre. So is that job done, time to relax? No. Now it is time to pursue the next avenue of counterplay, the newly-opened a-file.

19. ♖xa7 ♗xa7 20.c4 ♗a2! 21.cxd5 ♗xd2 22.dxe6 fxe6

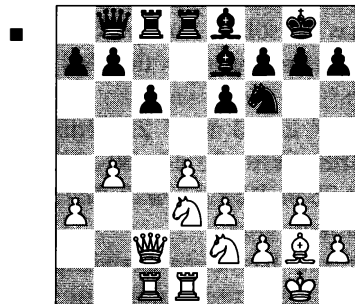
Black's position already deserves some preference.

At the moment of this game, Ruslan Ponomariov was all of eleven years old. Did he know the game Botvinnik-Konstantinopolsky and the former's recommendation of ...a7-a5!? I don't know, but there is no doubt that Ruslan was born with an exceptional talent for positional play.

Let us look at another modern example, to reinforce the idea.

**Hikaru Nakamura
Boris Gelfand**

Moscow 2010



White has just retreated the knight from c3 to e2, further defending the pawn on d4. He is clearly preparing the advance e3-e4-e5, seizing additional space.

21...a5!

As Gelfand explained after the game, the idea of this move is prophylaxis. If White allows the exchange on b4, Black need not only have no fear of the advance e4-e5, he can look forward to it, since his knight will then come to d5, attacking the b4-pawn, which will no longer be supported by the pawn from a3.

Therefore, White changed his plan:

22.bxa5

Now after the routine 22...♙xa3, his rooks quickly regroup to the open files: 23.♖a1 ♙d6 24.♜db1, with unpleasant pressure. But Black was up to the task:

22...♚a7! 23.♜b1 ♜c7 24.♜b3 c5!

A timely break. Now not 25.dxc5 because of 25...♙a4.

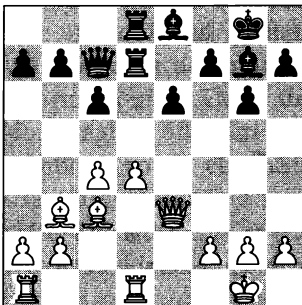
25.♜c3 ♚xa5 26.♜c1 b6

The position has opened up and Black's bishops have obtained some operating space. The defensive problems have been solved. And this all started with the pawn prod ...a7-a5 !

And now an interesting historical episode: the Viennese master Hans Kmoch lost two games within a year, to the exact same idea. Forgetfulness about his mistakes? Maybe. But what opponents he was up against!

**Hans Kmoch
Akiba Rubinstein**

Semmering 1926



19...b5!

This looks like a random pawn prod, but in reality, it is part of a deep strategic idea. True, there are no knights on the board, which after the exchange on c4 could occupy the d5 outpost. But even so, the exchange on c4 is useful to Black. In addition, he threatens ...b5-b4. One can say that the white centre starts to crumble.

The experts have been divided over the best response for White. Thus, the exchanging operation recommended by many, 20.cxb5 cxb5 21.d5 ♙xc3 22.bxc3 exd5 23.♜xd5 ♜xd5 24.♙xd5, is dubious. If we continue the variation: 24...♜xd5 25.♚xe8+ ♔g7 26.♚e3 a6 27.h3 ♚c4 – the queenside weaknesses could become an easy prey.

Yury Razuvaev, in his outstanding book on Rubinstein [Translator's Note: This too has never been translated into English] shows that in the event of 20.cxb5 cxb5 21.a3 ♚b6 «White loses the d4-pawn». That is true, but this may nonetheless have been the best chance: 22.d5!? ♚xe3 23.fxe3 exd5 24.♙xg7 ♔xg7 25.♜d4. Now if 25...f6 26.♜ad1 ♙f7 or 25...♜d6 26.♜ad1 ♙c6, then the pawn will be regained: 27.e4, whilst after 25...f5 26.♜c1! the piece activity offsets the small material deficit. Instead of 23...exd5, stronger is 23...♙xc3 24.bxc3 exd5, but here too, after 25.♜d3, and then 26.♜ad1, White can count on a draw.

20.♜d2

Unfortunately, White overlooks the main threat.

20...b4! 21.♙xb4 ♙xd4

Who would have thought the centre would be demolished by the march of the b-pawn? But that is what has happened. Black's advantage quickly increases.

Kmoch himself pointed out the variation 22.♔g3 ♕e5 23.♖xd7 ♗xd7 24.♗h3 ♕xb2 as completely hopeless for himself. One can recommend the exchange sacrifice 22.♖xd4!? ♗xd4 23.♕c3. But here Black does not retreat the rook – after 23...c5! he continues to dominate in the centre.

22.♗f3 c5 23.♕c3 ♖d6! 24.♖ad1 e5 25.♕c2 ♕c6 26.♗g3

Not 26.♕e4 ♕xe4 27.♗xe4 ♕xc3.

26...♗b7 27.♕xd4 exd4 28.♕d3 ♖e6 29.h4 ♖de8 30.h5 a5! 31.f4 ♗e7 32.♖f1 ♖e3 33.♗h2 f5!

The black position resembles a tank, crushing every living thing in its way. The white pieces are scurrying into the corners in horror.

34.hxg6 hxg6 35.♗h6 ♗f6 36.♔f2 ♖e6 37.♖h1

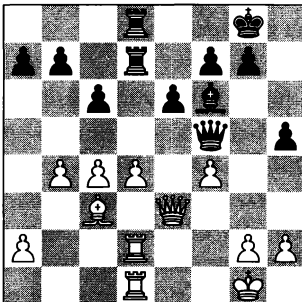
Mate was threatened by 37...♗xd3 38.♗xd3 ♗e2+ 39.♔g3 ♗xg2+ 40.♔h4 ♗g4#. In defending, White in his turn creates a threat on the open h-file. But he is too late:

37...♖f3+!

After seeing 38.gxf3 ♗e3+ with unavoidable mate, White resigned.

**Hans Kmoch
Alexander Alekhine**

Kecskemet 1927



The structure is practically identical with the previous example (which, I would remind, was played just one year earlier). The only differences are the pawn on f4 and the absence of a light-squared bishop, with which to cover the squares weakened by Black's pawn jab.

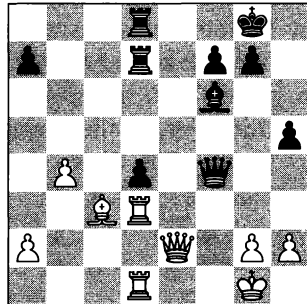
22...b5! 23.♗f3

It was possible to go over to deep defence by means of 23.c5. But the end would be the same. Kmoch preferred to lose quickly, but to have some fun.

23...bxc4 24.♗xc6 ♗xf4 25.♗xc4 e5

Winning a pawn. There were also other solid moves: 25...♕e5 26.g3 ♗g4, 25...h4 etc. In such positions, the main thing is not to panic in the face of the many tempting lines. One must just choose one, calculate it accurately and not be distracted by other options.

26.♗e2 exd4 27.♖d3



27...dxc3! 28.♖xd7 ♖xd7

In sacrificing the exchange, Alekhine has calculated the variation 29.♗e8+ ♔h7 30.♗xd7 ♗e4! and White cannot go into the endgame: 31.♗d3 ♗xd3 32.♖xd3 c2 or 31.♗d5 ♗xd5 32.♖xd5 c2 33.♖c5 ♕d4+, whilst after 31.♗xf7 c2 32.♗xh5+ ♔g8, the checks run out and the c2-pawn again queens.

Kmoch takes the line of least resistance and Black does not need to show his class.

29. ♖xd7 ♜d4+ 30. ♔h1

Missing a mate, but after 30. ♖xd4 ♜xd4+ 31. ♔f1 ♜f4+ 32. ♔e1 ♜xb4 everything ends very quickly.

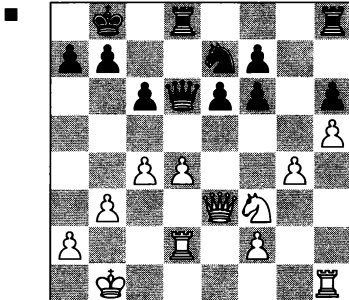
30... ♜c1+

White resigned.

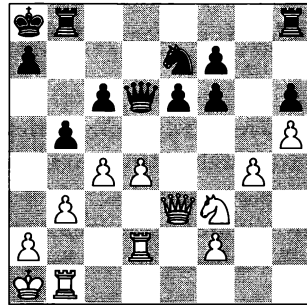
Players of later generations have taken this device into their arsenal. They have not just routinely copied it, by playing ...b7-b5 in the same structure, but have also enriched it with some new points and ideas.

**Anatoly Kremenietzky
Evgeny Vasiukov**

Moscow 1981



23... ♔a8!? 24. ♔a1 b5! 25. ♖b1 ♖b8



It seems as though Black is thinking about attacking the king, but in reality, this is only a bluff. His real idea is to play against the enemy pawn weaknesses, and his attacking feint successfully manages to camouflage his true intention.

White immediately blunders a pawn:

26. ♗e1

In fact, there was no cause for panic. He could play 26. ♖dd1 or even 26. ♖db2. Black also has his problems: for example, the rook on h8 is tied down and has to passively defend the h6-pawn. Now, however, it is all over:

**26... ♖xc4 27. ♖xc4 ♖xb1+ 28. ♔xb1
♜b4+ 29. ♖b2 ♜xc4**

with an easy win.

Chapter 12

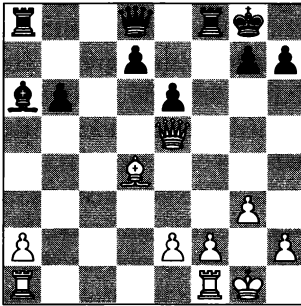
Doubled Pawns are Cool!

When a player accepts doubled pawns, he does his pawn structure serious and possibly irreparable damage. The doubled pawns can become weak and his overall pawn structure spoiled.

Usually, a player is forced into such a thing. But there are also occasions when he initiates the doubled pawns himself. For what?

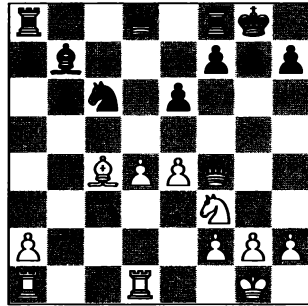
Garry Kasparov
Anatoly Karpov

Moscow 1985



Samuel Reshevsky
Reuben Fine

Hastings 1937



This was game 13 of the World Championship match. White is threatening mate directly.

18... ♖f6! 19. ♖e3 ♖h6! 20. ♖xh6 gxh6 21. ♜fe1 ♘c4 22. a3 b5

After just a couple more moves, the players agreed a draw.

After the game, all the experts hailed the manoeuvre ...♖d8-f6-h6, praising its strength and originality. Just think: to voluntarily shatter one's pawn structure, just to exchange queens. Very original!

But look at the next diagram. It transpires that almost fifty years before the Karpov-Kasparov match, people could already play chess very well.

14... ♖f6 15. ♖e3 ♜fd8 16. e5 ♖h6!?

The essence of the idea is the same: after 17. ♖xh6 gxh6 the weakness of the kingside pawns is offset by the activity of Black's pieces.

Reshevsky declined the present with **17. ♜ac1**

but after 17... ♖xe3 18. fxex3 ♜ac8 the battle did not last much longer. Draw.

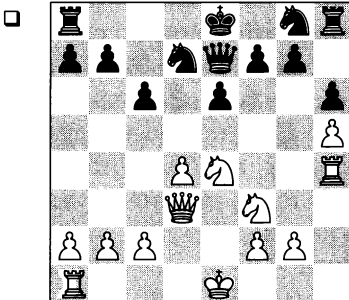
In reality, these two previous examples were not so complicated. The main difficulty lay in considering a move which leads to the doubling of the pawns, and including the move in one's list of candidate moves. With careful attention, the soundness of the manoeuvre ...♖d8-f6-h6 becomes so obvious that

the advantages outweigh the drawbacks. Karpov doubled his pawns? So what, if the game goes from a difficult middlegame into an ending with opposite-coloured bishops, well-known for their drawing tendencies? Fine did the same? Well, just try yourself to find a way to get at the doubled h-pawns, when all the play is taking place in the centre and on the queenside, where Black is, at a minimum, not worse.

But now some cases where a player takes on doubled pawns, not to escape with a draw, but in order to play for a win. How can this be? How can doubled pawns give an advantage? The next three examples will look at this.

Ruslan Ponomariov
Holger Gründ

Rimavska Sobota 1996



The position looks about equal. Black, as usual in this opening (a Caro-Kann), has no bad pieces, nor pawn weaknesses. He is just a bit behind in development, but it is far from obvious at first glance, how to exploit this.

15. ♖a3!? ♜xa3 16. bxa3

Thus, White has voluntarily accepted doubled pawns. Again, what for? On the surface there are two ideas. Firstly, he threatens a check on d6, followed by taking the b7-pawn. Secondly,

he opens the b-file for the white rooks. It is clear that the queen's rook will come to b1, whilst the king's rook also has a chance to use the b-file – after ♕e4-c5 and the exchange on c5, the rook can swing over to b4.

Even so, it is hard to believe that these threats will be sufficient compensation for the spoiled pawns, which makes it all the more interesting to follow the course of the game.

16... ♗g6

More natural is 16... ♗e7. True, after 17. ♕c5 ♗g6 (17... ♕xc5 18. dxc5, and the rook swings over to b4, as already explained) 18. ♕xb7 we have transposed into the game. There is also the possibility of 17. ♖b1 b6 18. ♕e5!? ♕xe5 19. dxe5 (Beliavsky-Pomar Salamanca, Las Palmas 1974). The lack of development of the black pieces is all the more noticeable, as are the weakness on g7, and the open d-file... Do you not get the impression that the endgame has turned in White's favour?

17. ♕d6+ ♗e7 18. ♕xb7 ♖ab8

Possibly more accurate is 18... ♖hc8 19. ♖b1 ♖c7 20. ♖b3 ♖ac8, as in the game Larsen-Addison, Palma de Mallorca 1970.

19. ♕a5 ♖hc8 20. ♕e5 ♕xe5 21. dxe5 ♕d7 22. ♖b4!?

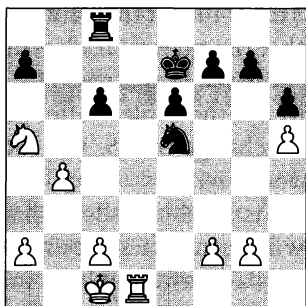
On 22. ♕c4, White may not have liked 22... ♖b5.

22... ♖xb4

The alternative is 22... ♕xe5, and if 23. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 24. f4, then 24... ♖b5. White would probably have continued 23. ♖ab1.

23. axb4 ♕xe5 24. 0-0-0

The position has finally clarified. Ponomariov has returned the extra material, in return for which he has undoubled his pawns.



How should we assess the endgame? The weaknesses on a7 and c6 require defence, and the king on e7 is cut off from the queenside. Even more importantly, it cannot be brought across: after 24...♖d8 White wins with both 25.♙xd8 ♔xd8 26.f4, and 25.♙e1 ♖d5 27.♙xe5!

White's clear advantage does not mean that he doesn't have his own problems (in particular, the h5-pawn needs defending). But White's position is rather more pleasant to play. He has pressure and it is unlikely he would have obtained such a pleasant position without the move 15.♙a3!?

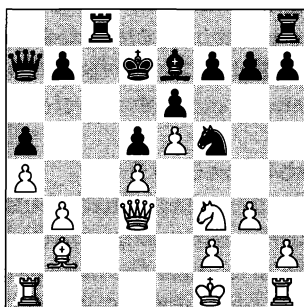
Such seemingly strange moves were part of the arsenal of players even in the 19th century.

Louis Paulsen

Siegbert Tarrasch

Nuremberg 1888

■



The pawn structure is symmetrical and cannot give either player the advantage. White is one or two tempi behind in development, but because the centre is closed, this is a factor that can hardly be exploited. That leaves the only other factor – the open c-file. However, there are no entry squares along it.

How can Black obtain the advantage?

19...♜a6!

This move contains not one, but two ideas. With the queen exchange, a defender of c2 leaves the board, and so the black rook threatens to enter on the seventh rank. And secondly, the b-file is also opened, and this means that the second rook also acquires work – it comes to b8 and will attack the b3-pawn.

The reader may rightly respond that the loss of the b3-pawn is unlikely to be fatal, since Black's extra pawn would be the doubled a-pawns, which are unlikely to produce a passed pawn. This is true. But it is also true that the difference in activity of the pieces (especially the rooks) after the queen exchange becomes great, and this difference in activity is more important than the doubled pawns.

20.♜xa6

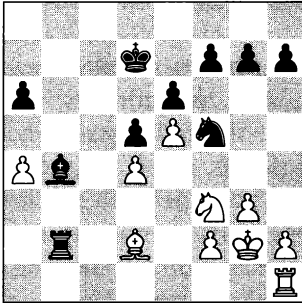
White goes along with fate, simply through a lack of alternatives. He loses after both 20.♞e2 ♜c2+, and 20.♞e1 ♜xd3+ 21.♞xd3 ♜c2 22.♞g2 ♜d2 23.♞hd1 ♞e3+.

20...bxa6 21.♞g2 ♜c2 22.♞c1 ♜b8 23.♞b1 ♜c3 24.♞d2 ♜xb3 25.♞xb3 ♞b3 26.♞xa5 ♞b2!

Avoiding a positional trap, which was not simple, by the way. In reply to 26...♞a3, Paulsen had prepared 27.♞c1 ♞d8 28.♞xd8 ♞xd8 29.♞b1! and the white rook is becoming active. Now,

however, Black is prepared to meet 27.♖c1 with 27...♗e3+ 28.♔g1 ♗c4!.

27.♗d2 ♗b4

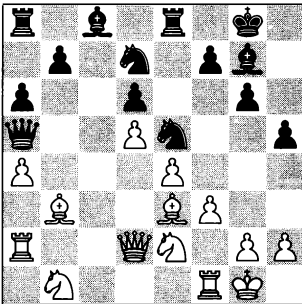


The position has clarified in Black's obvious favour. The pawns on a4 and d4 are hopelessly weak. The endgame is winning.

And here is a contemporary version of this classic.

José Campos
Veselin Topalov

Palma de Mallorca 1992



19...♗b6!?

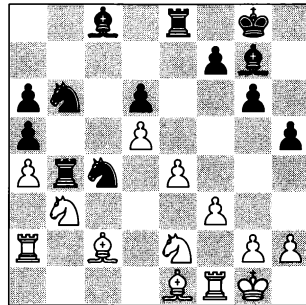
As in the previous example, it is not about passed pawns, but piece activity. After 19...♗xd2 20.♗xd2 Black would only be fighting for equality. White has a clear plan: press with a4-a5, transfer his rooks to the b- and c-files and create pressure with his minor pieces on the queenside.

20.♗xa5 bxa5

Now, however, it is all the other way round. It is the black rook which is the first to occupy the b-file and Black's minor pieces which, like a swarm of locusts, start devouring the opponent's territory. The piece activity is more than sufficient compensation for the doubled pawns.

For the sake of fairness we should point out that, unlike Paulsen, Campos' hand was not forced with the exchange. Both 20.♖c1 ♗c5 21.♗d1, and 20.♗a3 were stronger than White's choice in the game.

21.♗d2 ♖b8 22.♗c2 ♖b4 23.♗b3
♗c4 24.♗f2 ♗db6 25.♗e1



Evidently, White had only counted on 25...♖xa4 26.♖xa4 ♗xa4 27.♗xa5 etc. But a surprise awaits him.

25...♗xd5! 26.exd5?!

And he at once commits an oversight. It is clear 26.♗xb4 ♗xb4 is bad, but 26.♗xa5 ♗xa5 27.exd5 would have allowed him to hold the game.

26...♖xe2

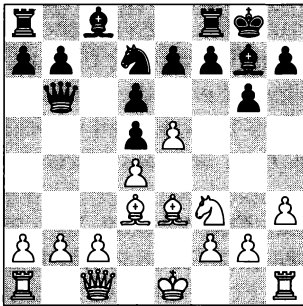
But now Black cannot be stopped. Topalov won in just ten more moves.

Another class of positions is where a player voluntarily accepts doubled pawns in the centre. As a rule, these examples are complicated and debatable. It is usually difficult to determine

at first whether the pawns will be weak or strong. Which they are depends on circumstances.

**Evgeny Alekseev
Ruslan Ponomariov**

Artek 1999



The game has not yet left the opening. The e5-pawn is hanging, so White played

11.exd6

In reply, there is the tempting 11...♔xd6 12.0-0 ♘f6, but after 13.♙f4 ♕b6 14.♖e1 White's position is the more pleasant. He has simple piece play, with the e-file for his major pieces and the e5-outpost for his minor pieces. There are also several prospects for attack. More principled is 12...e5!? 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♙xe5, but here too, there are questions remaining (say, after 15.♙h6). Playing with an isolated pawn is not to everybody's taste.

11...exd6!?

Now, strangely, there are significantly fewer open questions. There followed:

12.0-0 ♘f6 13.b3 ♙d7

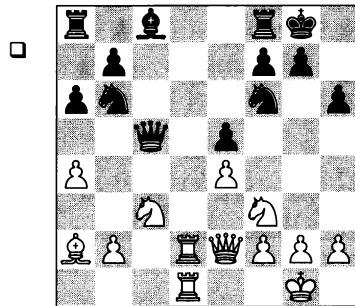
And the position from the opening is clarified. White has no e5-outpost, and it is more likely that Black will threaten to put his own knight on e4 (either at once, or after the exchange of light-squared bishops with ...♙d7-

b5). As far as open files for the rooks are concerned, now the e-file is a draw, whereas the newly-opened c-file will belong to Black.

The plusses of the doubled pawns are obvious. And the minuses? One can speak of the theoretical weakness of the doubled pawns, but it is quite unclear how they can actually be attacked. The pawn on d6 is completely safe, and only the d5-pawn can be got at, by placing the knight on e3 or f4, and the bishop on f3. However, how is this to be achieved in a practical game? These manoeuvres require quite a few tempi and the opponent is hardly likely just to wait, while White regroupes his pieces. In the subsequent play, the pawns on d5 and d6 never once came under attack, and Black won the game.

**Mikhail Botvinnik
Nikolay Sorokin**

Moscow 1931



20.♕e3!

In Botvinnik's words:

«This far from obvious move is the strongest. After the exchange of queens, which Black cannot avoid (20...♕c7 21.♘xe5), the defects in Black's position are more striking. The pressure on the d-file is difficult to meet, the e5-pawn becomes weak and the square f7 is also in need of defence.

In the time that I had been playing chess, this was the most subtle positional move I had managed to play.»

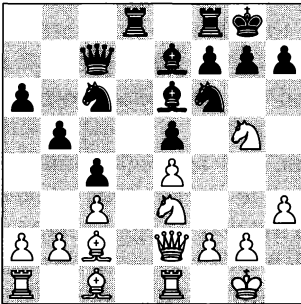
**20...♖xe3 21.fxe3 ♔g4 22.a5 ♘c8
23.♚c1! ♕xf3 24.gxf3**

The position has clarified in White's favour and after the first time control, he won.

The example quoted is the most well-known in the sixth World Champion's play. I recommend the reader himself study the other examples: Botvinnik-Chekhov (Leningrad 1938) and Botvinnik-Kan (Moscow 1939).

**Robert Fischer
Ratmir Kholmov**

Havana 1965



The last move was 17.♘f3-g5. White's idea is shown by the sample variation 17...♕c5 18.♘d5! ♕xd5 19.exd5 ♖xd5 20.♘xh7! ♘xh7 21.♕xh7+, and both 21...♕xh7 22.♖e4+ followed by 23.♖xd5, and 21...♕h8 22.♖h5 are bad.

17...h6! 18.♘xe6 fxe6

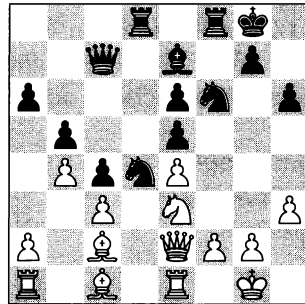
How should we assess the changes which have taken place in the position? Theoretically, the doubled pawns on e6 and e5 are weak. In a simplified endgame, they could be attacked (especially the e5-pawn), but the endgame is something White, as they say, still has to survive to.

For the moment, we have a sharp middlegame on the board, and in the middlegame, it is hard to overstate the advantages of the doubled pawns. By moving from f7 to e6, the f-pawn has covered the squares d5 and f5, opened the f-file and created the conditions for possible combinative play. One cannot ask more of a single move.

19.b4?

Fischer loses his head, a rare thing indeed! The great American GM had so lost control of the situation that he not only fails to prevent Black's combination, but actually does everything to ensure that it takes place in the most favourable possible circumstances.

19...♘d4!



After this, one can see Black's idea in all its glory.

Let us return to the diagram position. In the game Matulovic-Mecking (Sousse 1967), Black rushed things, playing the immediate 17...♘d4?! 18.cxd4 exd4. There followed the unforeseen 19.e5! d3 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.exf6! dxe2 22.fxe7 ♖xe7 23.♖xe2. The three minor pieces are certainly not weaker than the queen, and it is White who has the advantage.

In analysing this variation, we can appreciate how seriously Fischer erred.

20.cxd4 exd4

He already is unable to use Matulovic's idea 21.e5 d3 22.exf6 because of the simple 22...♙xf6. With the move b2-b4, Fischer opened the long diagonal, and now in this variation not only his queen is attacked, but also the rook on a1.

Therefore he was forced to play:

21.a3

But after

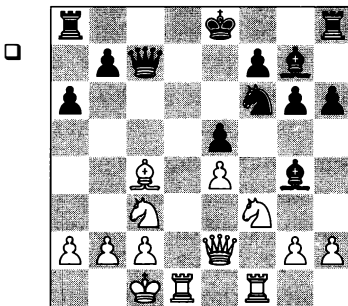
21...d3 22.♙xd3 ♖xd3

Black had a firm grip on the initiative. Kholmov won the game.

Many years later, Ratmir Dmitrievich told how he had broken his pre-game routine before this encounter and was reproaching himself for this, and how greatly Smyslov had come to his aid. According to Kholmov, the precious novelty 17...h6!? was shown to him by Vasily Vasilievich, together with the subsequent knight sacrifice on d4.

**Vladimir Bagirov
Boris Spassky**

Leningrad 1963



Glancing at the diagram, it is not hard to conclude that White is better. He has completed his development, his rooks are operating on the open files and the bishop on c4 is good. Black has a poor bishop on g7 and he is 2-3 moves behind in development.

In order to break the pin on the knight at f3, Bagirov played

15.h3

Now it is bad to play 15...♙xf3 16.♖xf3 0-0 17.♖df1 or even the simple 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.♙xd5. The difference in activity of the bishops is too noticeable. Probably, White was expecting 15...♙d7 or 15...♙c8, but then Black's shortage of development would be even greater.

Spassky decided instead to change the course of the game quite sharply:

15...♙e6!? 16.♙xe6 fxe6

White could now win a pawn with 17.♘h4 ♖f7 18.♖g4 g5 19.♖h5+ ♖g8 20.♖g6! ♖f7 (20...gxf4 21.♖xf6) 21.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 22.♘f3. It is hard to say why he refrained from this variation. Perhaps he thought he was selling himself too cheaply – with the fall of the e5-pawn, the bishop on g7 is activated and this gives Black some hope of counterplay.

Whatever the reason, White decided to retain the queens and bank on the attack. This was a logical decision, but one which failed to justify itself.

17.g4 0-0 18.♖b1

Or 18.g5 ♘h5 19.♖e3 ♘f4 – as often happens, the compensation for the doubled pawns involves an outpost on the newly-opened file.

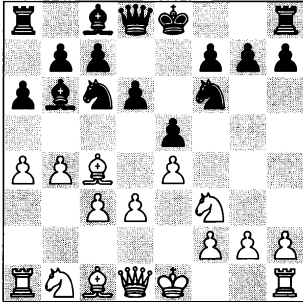
18...b5 19.♖e3 ♘d7 20.♘d2 ♖b6

The position is unrecognisable. White's initiative has come to nothing and Black is now developing counterplay. At the very least he is not worse, and he went on to win the game.

For Bagirov, the idea of Black's voluntarily accepting doubled pawns evidently came as a complete surprise. One can only imagine how shocked a player would have been by this idea, in a previous era.

**Alexander Meek
Paul Morphy**

New York 1857



«To this day, Morphy is the undisputed master of open positions. His significance is so great that there have been no major developments in this area since him. Every player, from beginner to master, should return again and again to the games of the American genius» – Botvinnik.

8... ♖e6!? 9. ♖xe6 fxe6 10.0-0 0-0

In this situation, there is no question of the doubled pawns representing any sort of weakness. On the contrary, the unit d6-e6-e5 forms a powerful pawn group in the centre. Even so, Morphy's opponent gets it into his head that he should punish Black for his 'incorrect' play.

11. ♘g5?! ♜e7 12. ♖h1 h6 13. ♘h3

As was to be expected, White's attack has resulted in nothing except lost tempi.

13...d5

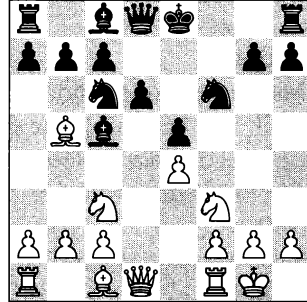
A modern GM would probably have gone in for the plan of 13...g5, and then ...♜e7-g7, ...♞f8-f7, ...♞a8-f8, keeping central play in reserve.

14. ♖a3 ♘d8 15.b5

Now the game departed somewhat from its original course, although in the end, Morphy won anyway.

How much chess players' understanding has changed in the last 150 years is shown by the following example.

□



A Schliemann/Jaenisch Gambit. Modern theory happily includes the move

8. ♖e3!?

with which White voluntarily invites ... doubled pawns. The main reply is 8...♖b6. If, however, Black agrees to go along with his opponent's idea

**8... ♖xe3 9.fxe3 0-0 10. ♖c4+ ♖h8
11. ♘g5 ♖g4 12. ♜e1!**

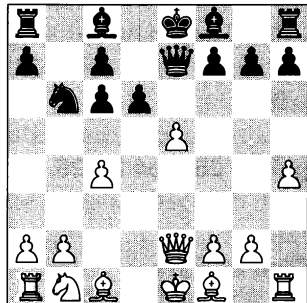
then in the opinion of grandmaster Khalif man, White has a strong attack.

Finally, a trio of examples in which the psychological aspect outweighed the chess aspect.

**Levon Aronian
Sarhan Guliev**

Istanbul 2003

□



10.exd6 ♜xe2+ 11. ♖xe2

Here, the theoretical reply (so as to avoid doubled pawns) is 11...cxd6. But this is just self-delusion! In this case,

the pawns on a7, c6 and d6 are clearly weak. But after

11... ♖xd6!

the weakness of the queenside pawns is not felt at all. The first thing one noticed instead is the active black pieces and his lead in development.

12. ♖d2 0-0

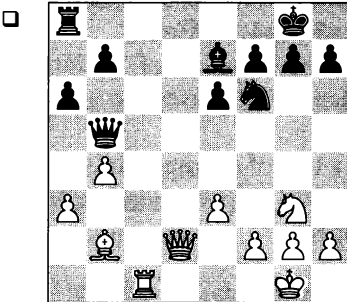
12... ♗e6 was worth considering.

13. ♖f3 ♗e8

(and here ...a7-a5-a4 looks like a worthy alternative) White felt obliged to agree a draw at once. Objectively, Black's position is even preferable.

**Oleg Chernikov
Anatoly Karpov**

Kuibyshev 1970



Having calculated the variation 24. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 25. ♖e4 ♗e7 26. ♖c7 ♖d8 – 26... ♗e5!? – 27. ♖c2 with the initiative, White decided to give up his long-range bishop:

24. ♗xf6

The reply came as a cold shower to him:

24... gxf6!? 25. ♖e4 f5! 26. ♖c3

Nothing is changed by 26. ♖c5 ♖d8 27. ♖c3 b6.

26... ♖c6 27. ♖b1

Or 27. ♖e2 ♖a4 28. ♖b2 ♖d8.

27... ♖e8 28. ♖c4 ♗f6 29. ♖c2 ♖d8

30. ♖f1 ♖b5

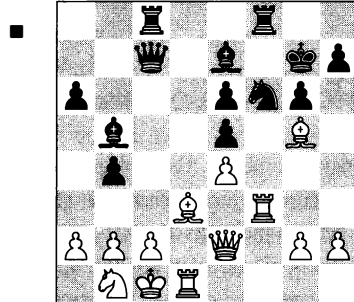
In a few moves, the position on the board has changed completely. After

passing the time control, Black conducted the game to victory.

One wonders whether Chernikov would have given up the bishop, had he considered the reply 24...gxf6!?

**Henrique Mecking
Vlastimil Hort**

San Antonio 1972



Hort writes that he had foreseen from some distance the variation

22... ♖h5 23. ♗xe7 ♖xf3 24. ♖xf3

24... ♖f4, apparently with decisive threats. But suddenly he saw the refutation: 25. ♗d6! ♖xd3+ 26. ♖xd3!!.

A lovely, unusual combination, which it would be no sin to overlook. But why did Black get involved in calculating such a complicated variation? Why not settle for the simple 24... ♖xe7 ?

Evidently, it was a matter of psychology. Black did not like the fact that after

24... ♖xe7 25. ♗xb5 axb5

he would have two pairs of 'weak' doubled pawns. Only after going through all of the complicated variations did he return to the simple line, and having done so, he realised that he could still live with the two doubled pawns.

26.g3 ♖f6 27. ♖d3 ♖c5 28. ♖d2 ♖c7

Now it became obvious that the worst was behind Black.

29. ♖b3 ♖f2 30. ♖d2 ♖xe4

And now he already had an extra pawn.

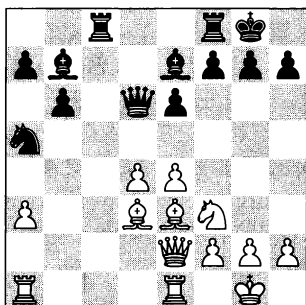
Chapter 13

Alekhine's Nail

Garry Kasparov

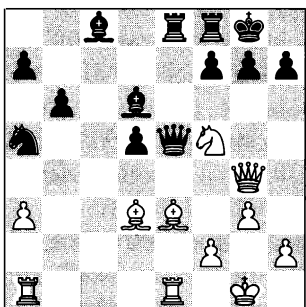
Miguel Najdorf

Bugojno 1982



17.d5!? exd5 18.e5! ♖e6 19.♘d4 ♜xe5 20.♙f5 ♙f6

Commendable fearlessness over the previous three moves gives way to an untimely burst of passivity. More interesting is 20...♙d6!? forcing his opponent to expend a tempo on 21.g3, and then 21...♞ce8 22.♞g4 ♙c8.



analysis diagram

White has the attack, Black two extra pawns. Who is better? It may be that we have before us a posi-

tion of dynamic equality: 23.♘h6+ ♔h8 24.♞h4 f5 (the square h7 is threatened and the diagonal must be closed, but not with 24...g6? on account of 25.♙d4) 25.♙d2 ♞f6 26.♞xe8 ♞xa1+ 27.♞g2! (stronger than 27.♞e1) 27...♞xe8 28.♙f7+ ♔g8 29.♙xd6. The forcing variation continues. Weak is 29...♞f8 30.♙xc8 ♞xc8 31.♙xf5 with a double attack on c8 and h7; after 29...♞e5 30.♙f4 further material losses are also unavoidable. That only leaves 29...♞xa3 30.♙xe8 ♞xd3 31.♞d8 ♞e4+, and White has a choice: agree to perpetual check with 32.♔h3 ♞g4+ 33.♞g2 ♞e4+ 34.♔f1 ♞b1+ 35.♞g2 (only not 35.♞e2?? ♙a6+) 35...♞e4+ or continue to play for a win by means of 32.f3 ♞e2+ 33.♔h3.

21.♞g4 ♞ce8 22.♙d2 ♞xa1?

The decisive mistake. After 22...♞b2 White would have to show that he has more than a repetition of moves, in the variation 23.♘h6+ ♔h8 24.♙xf7+ ♔g8 etc.

23.♞xa1 ♙xa1 24.♙xg7! ♙xg7 25.♙h6

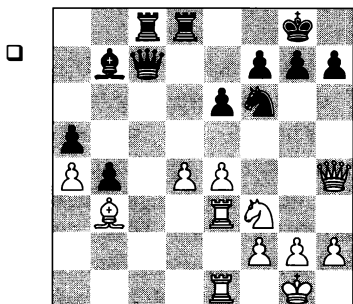
The check on e1 is not mate (26.♙f1), so Black resigned at once.

The break in the centre with d4-d5, and after the capture, the follow-up e4-e5!, looks so natural in such positions that it seems it has been around forever. But that is not so – every chess idea must have its source game.

Maybe in this case, it should be sought in the following game.

Paul Keres
Reuben Fine

Ostend 1937



21.d5! exd5

In reply to 21...e5, White had planned 22.♘g5, so as then to try to play f2-f4.

22.e5!

«By driving off the only black piece which defends the king, White obtains a strong attack, which can hardly be defended in a practical game» – Keres. This note shows how objective Paul Petrovich was in his judgement of the resulting position. White gives up a pawn and is ready to part with more material. He has a strong attack. In analysis, there is a defence for Black, but solving the problems at the board is very difficult. It is not surprising that even such a strong practical player as Fine (an acknowledged master of defence, incidentally) should be unable to cope with the problems and should make three mistakes in a row.

22...♘d7

The alternative is 22...♗e4, and then: 23.e6! fxe6 24.♖xe4! dxe4 25.♘g5. This is the key position. Instead of 25.♘g5, weaker is 25.♙xe6+ ♗h8 26.♘g5 h6 (26...g6 27.♙f7!, and the maximum White has is perpetual check after 27.♘f7+ ♗h7 28.♘g5+ ♗h8 (but not 28...♙g6 29.♙f7+ ♗f6 30.♘e6+) 29.♘f7+ ♗h7.

After 25.♘g5, Black has numerous candidate moves: 25...h6, 25...g6, 25...♙d5, and a number of others. Even in analysis, it is hard to achieve absolute clarity. Keres considered the strongest defence to be 25...♙c3!? getting the queen away in advance from a knight fork on e6 and setting up a double attack on b3 and e1. It seems he was correct. A possible development of events then is 26.♙xe6+ (White has nothing in the variation 26.♙xh7+ ♗f8 27.♘e6+ ♗e7 28.♙h4+ ♙f6) 26...♗f8 27.♖f1! (27.♙f4+ ♗e7 28.♙f7+ ♗d6) 27...♖c7 28.♘xh7+ ♗e8 29.♙h5+ ♗e7 30.♙g5+ ♗e8 (also interesting is 30...♗xe6 31.♙xd8 ♖c8 32.♙h4 e3!?) 31.♙g4, and we have gone from one unclear position to another.

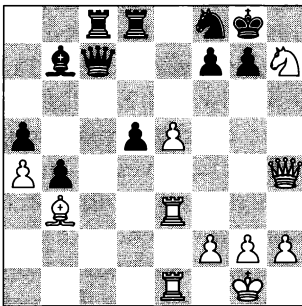
23.♘g5 ♘f8

More principled is 23...h6! after which there is no danger in 24.♘xf7 ♗xf7 25.e6+ ♗g8 26.exd7 ♖xd7. Probably, Fine did not like the possibility of 24.e6! hxg5 25.exf7+ ♗xf7 26.♖e7+. White's attack looks very dangerous. Thus, after 26...♙g6, he mates beautifully: 27.♙d4 ♙c3 28.♙c2+! ♗h5 (or 28...♙xc2 29.♖xg7+ ♗h5 30.g4+ ♗h4 31.♙e3! ♗xg4 32.♖xg5+ ♗f3 33.♖e3#) 29.♙d1+! (it is hard to believe, but in the variation 29.♙d1+ ♗g6 30.♖xg7+ ♗h6 31.♖e6+ ♘f6! White's major pieces cannot coordinate their strength) 29...♗h6 (29...g4 30.h3) 30.♖e3! ♙xc2 31.♖h3+ ♗g6 32.♙h5+ ♗f6 33.♙f7#.

However, another retreat of the king, 26...♙g8, appears to hold the position. White can force the win of the queen with 27.♙xg5 ♙c3 28.♙xd5+ ♙xd5 29.♙xd5+ ♗h8 30.♙h5+ ♗g8 31.♙f7+ ♗h8 32.♖e3, but after 32...♘f6! 33.♖h3+ ♘h7 34.♖xc3 bxc3

it is interesting to ask who is playing for a win. Therefore, instead of the capture on d5, Keres was prepared to play 28.h4, making luft for his king and at the same time preparing the manoeuvre ♖e1-e3-g3. It is still not at all clear: 28...♚d4 29.♜e3 (or 29.♜d1 ♚f6 30.♙xd5+ ♙xd5 31.♚xd5+ ♖h8 32.♜xd7 ♜xd7 33.♚xd7 ♜f8 34.f3 ♚xh4 with a draw) 29...♚a1+! 30.♖h2 (30.♜e1 ♚d4) 30...♚f6 31.♜g3 ♚xg5 32.♜xg5 ♙c6 33.♜xg7+ ♖h8, and the most likely outcome is again a draw.

24. ♖xh7!



24... ♖xh7?

This is perhaps the only move for which one can criticise Fine. By the method of elimination, he should have found 24...♖g6.

In the older books, the variation is extended a move and a half: 25.♚h5 ♖f4 26.♚f5. But it is not so simple: after 26...♖e6 (26...♖g6 27.e6!) 27.♖f6+ ♖f8! (of course, not 27...gx6 28.ex6 ♖f8 29.♚h7!) no decisive continuation of the attack is visible.

Now, however, it is all over:

25. ♜h3 ♚c1 26. ♚xh7+ ♖f8 27. ♜e3 d4 28. ♚h8+ ♖e7 29. ♚xg7!

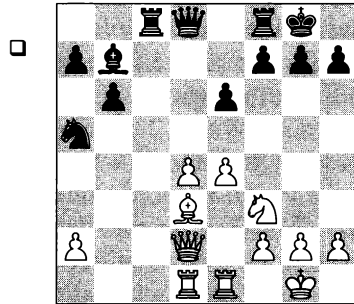
The rook cannot be taken because of mate in one, whilst after 29...♙d5 30.♚f6+, after any king retreat, 31.e6! decides. There followed:

29... ♜f8 30. ♚f6+ ♖e8 31.e6! 1-0

Lev Polugaevsky

Mikhail Tal

Moscow 1969



The most well-known and also the most difficult example of this theme.

16.d5! exd5 17.e5! ♖c4 18. ♚f4

Now the threat is the standard blow on h7, followed by ♖g5+, etc. Consequently, it is no surprise that our list of candidate moves should begin with 18...h6. Polugaevsky gives the variation 19.♚f5 g6 20.♚h3 ♖g7 21.e! fxe6 22.♖d4! «and Black's position collapses». This is true, but stronger is 21...♚f6! not allowing the knight into d4. Therefore, in the game Khuzman-Parligras (Turin 2006) White immediately played 19.e6, and after 19...♚f6 20.♚xf6 gx6 21.♙f5 ♜c7 22.♖d4 obtained a barely noticeable edge (despite the extra pawn) in the endgame. Another point in favour of 19.e6 is the fact that after 19...fxe6 20.♚g4 Black cannot now play 20...♚f6 because of 21.♜xe6 ♚f7 22.♜xh6.

The knight could also be deprived of g5 by means of 18...f6!? But then, Black must also reckon with 19.e6.

The next defence is 18...♜c6. Let us look at Polugaevsky's analysis: 19.♖g5 h6 20.♙h7+ ♖h8 21.♖xf7+, «and now a quick defeat follows both 21...♜xf7 22.♚xf7 ♖xh7 23.e6 ♖d6 24.♚d7, and 21...♖xh7

22.♘xd8 ♖xf4 23.e6». The passage of time has brought some corrections to this note. In the variation 21...♖xf7 22.♗xf7 ♔xh7 23.e6 ♘d6 24.♗d7, Black defends by means of 24...♖c8. However, the simple 23.♗xb7 is perfectly sufficient to win. On the other hand, after 21...♔xh7 22.♘xd8 ♖xf4 23.e6 there is in fact no win, if one extends the variation by just one more move: 23...♖f8. The attempt to repair the variation by replacing the move 23.e6 with some other move also fails: 23.♖xd5 ♖c7; 23.♘xc6 ♖xc6; 23.♘xb7 ♖e4 24.♖xe4 dxe4 25.♘d8 ♖c8 26.e6 ♘d6!.

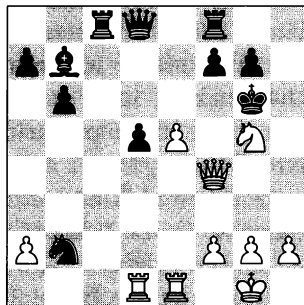
So, does that mean 18...♖c6 is the best move? Not quite. For some reason, Polugaevsky does not analyse the direct 19.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 20.♘g5+. If the idea of bringing the rook to c6 was at some moment to be able to close the 6th rank – 20...♔g8 21.♗h4 ♖h6 – then this does not work, as instead of 21.♗h4, White plays 21.e6! ♖xe6 (21...fxe6 22.♗h4) 22.♖xe6! (the knight is more needed than the rook in this situation) 22...fxe6 23.♗h4 ♖f6 24.♗h7+ ♔f8 25.♗h8+ ♔e7 26.♗xg7+ ♔e8 (26...♘d6 27.♘e4+!) 27.♗xb7 – and White should win.

18...♘b2

Black is playing with fire. Not only does he not prevent the sacrifice on h7, but on the contrary, he provokes his opponent into making the combination. Evidently, Tal was convinced he could beat off the attack somehow. He did not realise that Polugaevsky had prepared the whole game at home.

19.♖xh7+! ♔xh7 20.♘g5+ ♔g6

«The first impression is that nothing is left of the attack, but White has at his disposal a prepared move of fearful strength» – Polugaevsky.



21.h4!!

Let us try to understand what Black is threatened with. Assume he plays 21...♘d1. It turns out that there is a mate: 22.h5+! ♔xh5 (22...♔h6 23.♘e6+) 23.g4+ ♔g6 24.♗f5+ ♔h6 25.♗h7+ ♔xg5 26.♗h5+ ♔f4 27.♗f5#. It is surprising that, although it is a long time since Polugaevsky revealed his analysis, players are still trying to add corrections and improvements.

After 21...f5, Polugaevsky suggested 22.♖d4! and was perfectly correct. A sample variation is 22...♗e7 23.h5+ (23.♖e3!? probably wins as well) 23...♔h6 (23...♔xh5 24.♗h4+ ♔g6 25.♗h7+ ♔xg5 26.f4+ ♔g4 27.♗h3#) 24.♘f7+ ♔h7 25.♗xf5+ ♔g8 26.e6 ♗f6 27.♗xf6 gxf6 28.♘d6 ♘c4 29.♘xc8 ♖xc8 30.♖g4+ ♔h7 31.♖g6, winning.

Another futile attempt to defend is 21...♗d7 22.e6! fxe6 23.♗g4 ♖f6 24.♘xe6+ ♔h6 25.♖e5! g6 (25...♗f7 26.♖h5+! ♗xh5 27.♗xg7#, Dimov-Tsolov, Bulgaria cr 1990) 26.♗g5+ and 27.♗xf6 – analysis by Polugaevsky.

In the game Dreev-Jussupov (Mainz 2003), Black played 21...♗e7. It is clear in what way this is stronger than 21...♗d7. Thus, after 22.e6 fxe6 23.♗g4 ♖f6 24.♘xe6+ ♔h6 25.♖e5 g6 26.♗g5+ ♔h7 White cannot take the

rook on f6, as it is now defended. But he does not need to; 26.h5! ♖xd1 27.hxg6 is perfectly sufficient for victory.

Be that as it may, Dreev played more cautiously: 22.♖d2. There followed 22...♖c4 (on 22...♗c4, strong is 23.♖d3 and then 24.♖g3), and here he could have won with 23.h5+! ♖xh5 24.g4+ with a familiar mating construction: 24...♖h4 25.♗f3+ ♖h3 26.♖g3# or 24...♖g6 25.♖f5+ ♖h6 26.♖h7+ ♖xg5 27.♖h5+ ♖f4 28.♖f5#. And if 23...♖h6, then after 24.♗xf7+ ♖h7 25.♖f5+ ♖g8 26.e6! we reach a position from Polugaevsky-Tal, but in a more favourable version for White. The rook is on d2, not under attack, and one could hardly wish for any more.

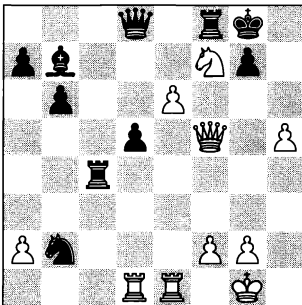
21...♖c4 22.h5+ ♖h6

The same mate arises for the final time after 22...♖xh5 23.g4+ ♖g6 24.♖f5+ ♖h6 25.♖h7+ ♖xg5 26.♖h5+ ♖f4 27.♖f5# and 23...♖h6 24.♖h2+ ♖xg5 25.♖h5+ ♖f4 26.♖f5#.

23.♗xf7+ ♖h7 24.♖f5+ ♖g8 25.e6!

«Looking at this position, I could hardly believe my eyes – it had been on the board in Polugaevsky's hotel room that very morning» – Geller.

There are few examples of such deep opening preparation, in the whole of chess history.



25...♖f6

Running to the endgame is the only chance. In reply to 25...♖e7 White

decides with 26.h6! ♖h4 (or else mate in one) 27.♖d4!

26.♖xf6 gx6 27.♖d2

Later, Polugaevsky wrote that this move «slows down the tempo of the attack», and that «27.♗d6 was more energetic». Lev Abramovich, as always, was merciless towards himself, but the variations do not in fact substantiate the strength of 27.♗d6: 27...♗xd1 28.e7 (28.♖xd1 ♖c7) 28...♖c1! (but not 28...♖d4 29.exf8♖+ ♖xf8 30.♖e8+ ♖g7 31.♗f5+ ♖f7 32.h6! ♖g6 33.♗xd4), and then:

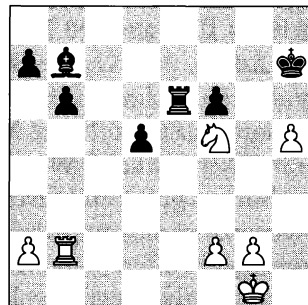
- A) 29.exf8♖+ ♖xf8 30.♗xb7 d4;
- B) 29.♗xb7 d4;
- C) 29.h6!? ♖b8 30.♗xb7 ♖e8 31.♗d6 ♖xe7 32.♖xe7 ♗e3+ 33.♖h2 ♗g4+ 34.♖g3 ♗xh6 35.♖xa7 with a slightly better position (Naumkin-Nevanlinna, Jyväskylä 1993), although one has the impression that Black's defence can be strengthened.

Polugaevsky's intuition did not let him down. At the board, he played the strongest move.

27...♖c6 28.♖xb2 ♖e8

More stubborn is 28...♗c8, although in this case, after 29.e7 ♖e8 30.♗d8 ♖c7 31.♖be2 (or the immediate 31.♖d2) 31...d4 32.♖d2 ♖cx7 33.♖xe7 ♖xe7 34.♖xd4 White has a healthy extra pawn and every chance of realising it.

29.♗h6+ ♖h7 30.♗f5 ♖xe6 31.♖xe6 ♖xe6



This ending, which still contains some play, White turns to his advantage with great ease.

32. ♖c2! ♖c6 33. ♗e2! ♙c8

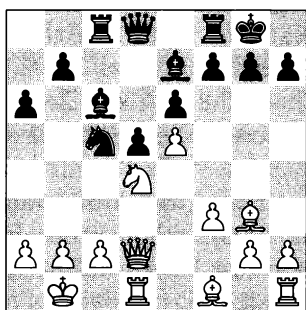
Or 33... ♖c7 34. ♗e6.

34. ♗e7+ ♗h8 35. ♘h4 f5 36. ♔g6+ ♗g8 37. ♗xa7

Black resigned. An epic win!

**Alexander Khalifman
Przemyslaw Gdanski**

Leningrad 1989



16.h4!

This is not mate, but only preparation for a mating attack. Passive defence does not help – Black must prepare the break ...f7-f6, or seek counterplay on the queenside. But Black just runs on the spot:

16... ♗b6 17.h5 ♗fe8

Tempting is 17... ♘a4 18. ♘b3 ♙b5.

18. ♙h4!?

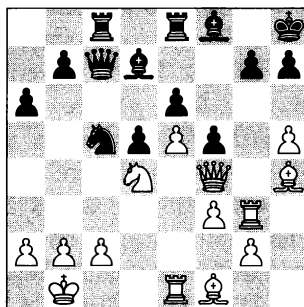
Black allows 18.h6, but White avoids it. Does anyone know why?

18... ♙f8 19. ♗h3 ♗h8 20. ♗g3 ♗c7 21. ♗e1 ♙d7

Probably the result of an oversight. But even the 'more tenacious' 21...h6 22. ♗f4 f5 is hardly likely to hold. White plays 23. ♗g6, advances g2-g4 and gives mate – not in a couple of moves, perhaps, but within twenty or so.

Black is totally without counterplay.

22. ♗f4 f5



23.h6! ♙c6

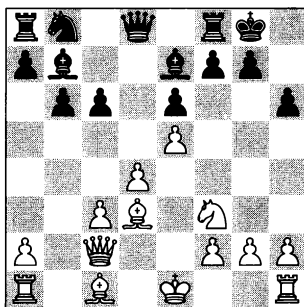
It is likely that, when he put his bishop on d7, Black miscalculated the variation 23...g6 24. ♙f6+ ♗g8 25. ♗xg6+! hxg6 26.h7+ ♗xh7 27. ♗h2+ ♙h6 28. ♙d3. The threat is 29. ♗h1, and then, as necessary, a few entries from the textbook of two-move mating combinations: 28... ♘xd3 29. ♗xh6+! ♗xh6 30. ♗h1#.

24.hxg7+ ♙xg7 25. ♗xg7! ♗xg7 26. ♙f6+ ♗g8 27.g4! fxg4 28. ♗g5+ ♗f8 29. ♗h6+ ♗g8 30. ♙e2 1-0

As for the main idea – attacking the king, using the 'nail' on e5, keeping the enemy knight from f6 – this idea is as old as the game itself.

**Alexander Alekhine
Imre König**

Vienna 1922



12.h4!?

«Creating two threats at once – 13. ♖h3 followed by ♖g3, and 13. ♘g5 followed by ♗d3-h7-g8!» – writes Kotov.

12...c5

Black liquidates one of the threats; now after 13. ♘g5 cxd4 14. ♗h7+ ♖h8 15. ♗g8 there follows 15...d3! Therefore Alekhine ‘settles for’ the second:

13. ♖h3

How should the position be assessed?

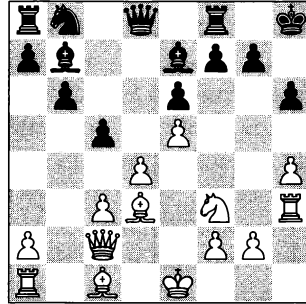
«Black is not saved by 13...f5 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15. ♘g5!» – writes Kotov. He is correct: 15...hxg5 (15...cxd4 16. ♗h7+ ♖h8 17. ♗g8! d3 18. ♖xd3 ♔e7 19. ♖d7!) 16.hxg5 ♗xg5 17. ♗h7+ ♖f7 18. ♔g6+ or 17...♖h8 18. ♗e4+ and 19. ♗xb7. But this is only the start of the discussion.

Instead of taking with the bishop, he should play 14...♖xf6!. This is stronger for two reasons. Firstly, the e6-pawn is defended, and secondly a path is freed along the eighth rank. The standard mating scheme now leads nowhere: 15. ♗h7+ ♖h8 16. ♘g5 ♗xg2, and on 17. ♗g8 there is simply 17...♔xg8. And if 16. ♗g5, then 16...♖xf3! 17.gxf3 cxd4 with unclear consequences.

In reply to 14...♖xf6, White must try 15. ♘g5, creating the threat of 16. ♗a6. Black can move his bishop out of the attack: 15...♗d5, or he can pretend that he has fallen into the trap: 15...♘d7!? 16. ♗a6 hxg5 17. ♗xb7 g4!. The consequences of the variation 18. ♖g3 ♖b8 19. ♗e4 cxd4 are again completely unclear.

13...♖h8

Simply an oversight. This is what so often happened in Alekhine’s games against significantly weaker opponents. Like a knockout-punching boxer, the fourth World Champion would flatten such opponents with one or two direct blows.



14. ♗xh6!

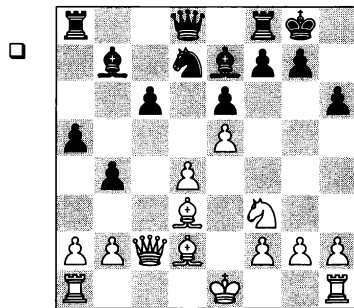
Since Black cannot play 14...gxh6 15. ♔d2, the interest of the game is over. And Alekhine had no peers when it came to finishing opponents off.

14...f5 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16. ♗g5 cxd4 17. ♘e5! ♘c6 18. ♔e2! g6 19. ♗xg6 ♖g7 20. ♗h6+ ♖g8 21. ♘xc6 ♗xc6 22. ♔xe6+ ♖h8 23. ♗xf8 ♔xf8 24. ♔xc6 1-0

Lajos Portisch

Svein Johannessen

Havana 1966



16.h4!? c5 17. ♖h3 ♗xf3

Now any recapture on f3 would slow down the tempo of the attack. For example, 18.gxf3 cxd4 19. ♗xh6 ♘xe5 20. ♖g3 ♗f6. But White (one assumes when considering his 16th move) had in view another, more energetic continuation:

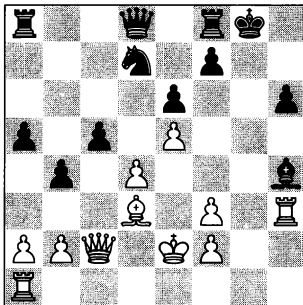
18. ♖xh6!

In Hajtun's book on Portisch's best games, this moment receives the briefest of comments: 'Alekhine-style!'. The author possibly did not realise just how right he was, at least in the sense that the method of attack – h2-h4, ♖h1-h3 and ♖c1(d2)xh6 – is definitely very similar to that employed in the game Alekhine-König. But the position here is still more unclear.

18... ♗xh4

The move 18... ♗g4 also deserves the most serious attention. It looks as though Black loses in beautiful fashion: 19. ♖g3 f5 20. ♖xg4 fxg4 21. ♗h7+ ♖h8 22. ♗xg7+! ♖xg7 23. ♖g6+ ♖h8 24. ♗g8! But one only needs to take a slightly closer look to find an improvement: 20... ♖f7! White has a rook and bishop hanging, whilst Black has defended all his vulnerable points. After 21. ♖g6 ♖f8 or 21. ♗c4 fxg4 22. ♗xe6 ♖a6, the attack threatens to come to nothing.

19.gxf3 gxh6 20. ♖e2



By comparison with the variations shown in the previous note, Black has a piece more, but in return, the white rooks have an extra open file. The attack has become simpler, e.g. 20... ♖e8 21. ♖g1+ ♖f8 22. ♖d2 ♗g5 23.f4 etc.

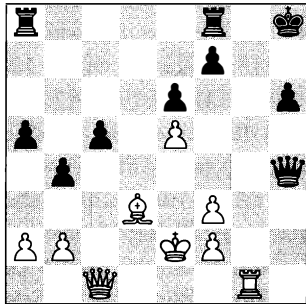
20... ♖xe5 21.dxe5

A sad oversight. He wins with 21. ♖g1+ ♗g5 (not 21... ♖h8 22. ♖c1 ♖f6 23.dxe5), and only now 22.dxe5. Maybe White thought the text was a simple transposition, but this is not the case.

21... ♖d4!

It turns out that after 22. ♖g1+ ♖h8, White has no time for 23. ♖c1 because of 23... ♖xf2+. He has to think again:

22. ♖xh4! ♖xh4 23. ♖g1+ ♖h8 24. ♖c1



The threat of ♖g1-h1 looks deadly. But it is Black's move, and for the moment, he does not need to stop the clocks, and the battle continues.

24...f6

But not like this. Black had probably calculated the variation 25. ♖h1 ♖g5 26. ♖xh6+ ♖g7 27. ♖g6+ ♖xg6 28. ♗xg6 ♖xg6, where the two rooks are more than sufficient compensation for the queen, and 27.exf6+ ♖xh6 28. ♖h1+ ♖h5 29. ♖c1+ ♖g5, where White has nothing better than perpetual check. But the refutation is quite simple.

25. ♖g6!

Incidentally, in the variation 25. ♖h1 ♖g5 26. ♖xh6+ ♖g7 Black also loses: 27. ♖h7+! ♖g8 28. ♖h1 ♖xe5+ 29. ♖f1 f5 30. ♖h5 ♖f6 31. ♖h6 ♖e5 (31... ♖g7 32. ♖g6) 32. ♖g6+ ♖f7 33. ♖h7+ ♖e8 34. ♗b5+ ♖d8 35. ♖d7#. Since the game was played in an Olympiad, Portisch preferred to win solidly, with

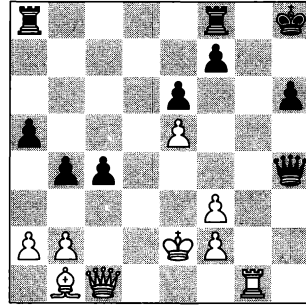
something in hand as it were, without alarming his teammates. After 25. ♖g6 Black resigned immediately.

Let us return to the position in the last diagram, which is highly interesting! It can be used separately, as an excellent exercise in the calculation of variations. But in the position of Svein Johannessen, I would have played the move 24...c4! without thinking at all, just, as it were, 'with the hand'. The move is obviously useful. It attacks the bishop, forcing the opponent to forget about the threat of ♖g1-h1, at least for a moment. And what will happen afterwards – we will see...

After 24...c4, the most likely outcome is a draw. However, White is risking as much as his opponent. Let us consider the capture 25. ♙xc4. Then 25... ♜fd8 26. ♜h1 ♜d2+!. Now it turns out that the Greek Gift cannot be declined – 27. ♖e3 ♜d4# – whilst accepting it also loses: 27. ♖xd2 ♜xf2+ 28. ♙e2 ♜d8+ (the same move would have followed after 28. ♖d3) 29. ♖c2 ♜c8+ and 30... ♜xc1. The second candidate move is to bring the bishop away with tempo: 25. ♙e4. In reply, Black cannot play 25... ♜fd8 26. ♜h1 ♜d2+ because of the simple 27. ♜xd2 ♜xh1 28. ♙xa8. But there is another idea: 25...c3!. Again, White cannot attack the queen: 26. ♜h1 cxb2. He has to spend a tempo on 26.bxc3, and then 26... ♜ac8. White has a draw, but probably nothing more: 27. ♜g4 (27. ♜h1 ♜xc3) 27... ♜h2 (not 27... ♜h5 28. ♜f4! f5 29.exf6, and the mating attack gets a second wind) 28. ♜g2! ♜xc3 29. ♜d2 ♜h1 30. ♜g1! (in this situation, 30. ♜f4 f5 31.exf6 ♜c1! and 31. ♜g6

♜c1! both fail) 30... ♜h2 31. ♜g2! ♜h4 32. ♜g4 with a perpetual attack on the queen.

The most subtle is to retreat backwards: 25. ♙b1!.



analysis diagram

To the threat of ♖g1-h1 White adds another: the queen and bishop battery with ♜c2. The line which saved Black in the previous variation, 25...c3 26. ♜h1 cxb2, here loses at once: 27. ♜c2!.

But Black is rescued by the rook sacrifice, with which we are already familiar: 25... ♜fd8 26. ♜h1 ♜d2+! The next few moves can be made on 'autopilot': 27. ♜xd2 (the king cannot take on d2 because of mate) 27... ♜xh1 28. ♜c2! ♖g7 29. ♜h7+ ♖f8 30. ♜h8+ ♖e7 31. ♜xf6+, and now both players must assess the risks. A draw can be agreed at any moment by means of perpetual check. Playing on is only dangerous for White: 31... ♖e8 (weak is 31... ♖d7 32. ♜xf7+, whilst after 31... ♖f8 White draws with both 32. ♜h8+, and 32. ♙g6) 32. ♙c2?! (overstepping the boundary of safety) 32...b3! 33.axb3 ♜d8 (33... ♜c1 34. ♙g6+!) 34.bxc4 (34. ♙g6+ ♜d1+ 35. ♖e3 ♜d2+ 36. ♖e4 ♜d4#) 34... ♜a1, and it is already Black that is refusing the draw.

Chapter 14

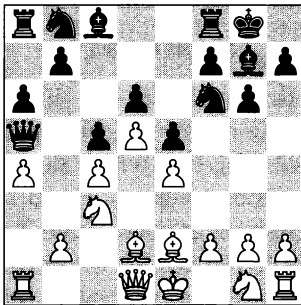
Attack and Counterattack with a Closed Centre

In such positions, is the early (even in the opening) advance g2-g4 not just feasible, but even the best approach? The classical answer to this question is found in the following game.

Yury Averbakh

Oscar Panno

Buenos Aires 1954



10.g4!

The first thing to which I wish to draw attention is that the centre is closed. A central counter is the strongest response to a flank blow, but with a blocked centre, Black is deprived of such a counter. Effectively, White has a free hand. He can behave like a bit of a hooligan, throwing his g-pawn forward at such an early stage, and know that he will come to no harm.

Secondly, White has not yet castled, nor even moved his knight from g1. This lends his plans a certain amount of obscurity. He might castle kingside, queenside, or leave his king in the centre, depending on circumstances. The knight, waiting until the pawn reaches g5, may come to f3 (either

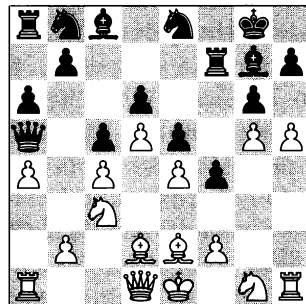
immediately or not), or to h3 and then f2, cementing his pawn chain with e4-f3-g4.

Finally, the third point. The move g2-g4, although safe for the pawn structure we have here, does give the game a somewhat less standard course. White must be prepared for this. As they say, he who sows the wind can reap the whirlwind. One cannot push the g-pawn as early as move 10, and then start playing in a standard fashion, as though one has taken on no obligations. No! White must continue to play without routine.

10...♖e8 11.h4

White played less strongly in the game Szabo-Barcza (Budapest 1958): 11.g5 f5 12.gxf6?! ♘xf6. The f-file is opened and the knight from e8 has returned to play. It is not obvious what White has achieved.

11...f5 12.h5 f4 13.g5! ♜f7



14.♗g4!

Averbakh demonstrates outstanding technique. The f-file is closed, the knight on e8 shut out of the game, the light-squared bishop cannot avoid exchange, whilst Black's dark-squared bishop is reduced to the role of a big pawn.

**14...♖d8 15.♙xc8 ♗xc8 16.♘f3
♙f8 17.♚e2!**

A device which was revolutionary at the time, but has since become commonplace. White commits his king to the centre, on a full board, not to make fun of his opponent, but because it is the best square. On the kingside, the king would get under the feet of his own pieces, and on the queenside, he could come under attack after ...b7-b5. But on e2, nothing threatens him.

Later, the game was decided by a direct attack along the open h-file. This outcome was logical, but not forced. White, having suppressed all counterplay, is better on both flanks. He could attack the enemy king or play to open the b-file, by a4-a5, then ♘c3-a4 (or ♖a1-b1) and b2-b4. Black is condemned to complete passivity.

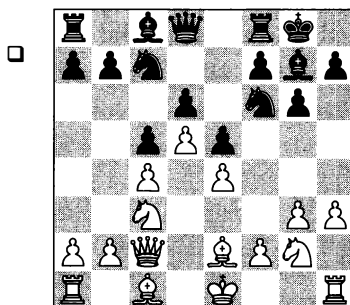
And one more thing. Two years later, there was a game Averbakh-Spassky (Leningrad 1956). The future World Champion, either through ignorance or for some other reason, repeated Panno's first twelve (and hardly optimal) moves. Then he varied with 13...♖d8, but after 14.♙g4! ♘c7 15.♙xc8 ♗xc8 16.♘f3 he realised that he was under the press.

The rest is well-known. After some thought, Spassky produced one of the most shocking moves in chess history: 16...♘c6!?. But that is another story...

Evgeny Bareev

Gennadi Zaichik

Kharkov 1985



In this position the knight is not on g1, but on g2 (evidently after travelling via g1-f3-h4-g2), but the rest of the position is practically as in the previous example. The main things are the closed centre and the uncastled white king, which means that he can choose his own fate.

14.g4!? a6 15.a4 a5

After 15...♖b8, Black may not have liked 16.a5. But the text move, closing the queenside as well as the centre, finally condemns Black to defence, since on the kingside he is clearly inferior.

16.♙g5 ♘a6 17.♖d2 ♘b4 18.0-0-0

Note that if White had played this before advancing g3-g4, the game is unlikely to have engaged our attention.

**18...♖d7 19.f3 ♘e8 20.♗d1 b6
21.h4 f5?!**

An extremely untimely shift from passive defence to active play. One can only assume that Black had missed White's 25th move and the subsequent manoeuvre.

**22.gxf5 gxf5 23.h5 ♚h8 24.♘h4 f4
25.♙f1!**

This move could easily be missed from afar. But one could also remember it, since, after all, White played the analo-

gous manoeuvre ♖e2-g4 in Averbakh's games against Panno and Spassky.

25...♖f7 26.♗h3! ♜xh3 27.♝xh3 ♗xh3 28.♞h2

The forced queen sacrifice did not bring Black any relief and White won on move 36.

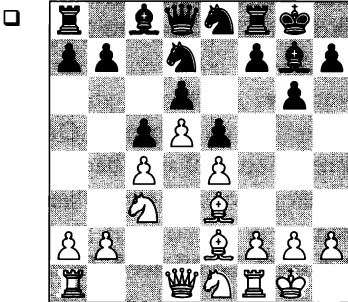
In modern chess, we are continually getting rid of fears, phobias and taboos, characteristic of classical chess. That which the textbooks of old said was bad, dangerous or unnecessary, is often now regarded as perfectly possible, or even good.

This has been partly the influence of the computer. Machine analysis (i.e. 'absolute accuracy') allows a player to feel solid ground under his feet. Previously, he was simply afraid to play this or that risky move or unusual idea. The computer analysis can be likened to a powerful searchlight beam, which illuminates the darkness and drives out irrational fears.

But this started even before the computer era.

Vladimir Kramnik
Rainer Knaak

Dortmund 1992



11.g4

«In this position? Why?!» – such was the first reaction. After all, the white king has

already castled kingside and after the inevitable ...f7-f5, he seems to be in as dangerous a position as his black colleague.

So why does White draw the fire upon himself?

11...f5

The analogy with the variation 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗f3 0-0 6.♗e2 e5 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.d5 ♗e7 9.♗e1 ♗e8 10.f3 f5 11.g4! (and then ♗e1-g2 and h2-h4, with a complete blockade of the kingside) is hardly appropriate here, since in this position, after 12.f3, there is the reply 12...♞h4.

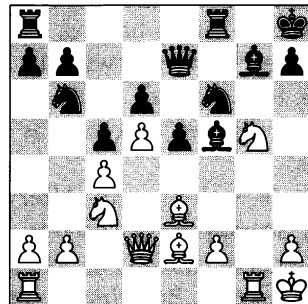
12.exf5 gxf5 13.gxf5

Now the idea starts to be revealed. By the double exchange on f5, Kramnik initiates a battle for the light squares, especially e4 and e6.

13...♗b6

A natural line is the gambit 13...♗df6 14.♗d3 e4!? However, as shown by later practice, this does not bring enough counterplay. For example, in the game Avrukh-Plakalovic (Plovdiv 2010), White won after 15.♗xe4 ♗xe4 16.♗xe4 ♞h4 17.♞c2 ♗xb2 18.♗f3 ♞h5 19.♞xb2 ♞g4+ 20.♖h1 ♞xe4 21.♞g1+ ♖f7 22.♞g3 ♞g8 23.♞xg8 ♖xg8 24.♞g1+ ♖f7 25.♞g3.

14.♗f3 ♗xf5 15.♗g5 ♞e7 16.♖h1 ♗f6 17.♞g1 ♖h8 18.♞d2



18...♔g6

In the King's Indian, one cannot play such 'normal' but at the same time unforced moves. Good or bad, it was essential to try 18...e4!?

19.♟af1

19.♘e6 is premature because of 19...♘e4, and not 20.♘xe4 ♔xe4+ 21.f3 ♜xf3!.

19...♘h5

After the game, Knaak suggested 19...♔h6 20.b3 ♔xg5 21.♔xg5 ♘bd7, solving the problem of the knight coming into e6, but stronger is 20.♘h7! and after the zwischenzug 20...♔xe3 White replies in kind with 21.♘xf8!.

20.♘e6 ♜f7 21.b3 ♘d7

Kramnik's recommendation was 21...♘f4 22.♔xf4 exf4 23.♔d3 ♔h5 24.f3 ♜h4 25.♘e4 ♔e5, «and Black holds». Alas, after 25.♘xg7 ♜xg7 26.♜xg7 ♘xg7 27.♘e4 this is not the case: 27...♜e7 28.♜xf4, or 27...♜d8 28.♜g1+ ♘f8 29.♜g2! ♔g6 30.♜b2 etc.

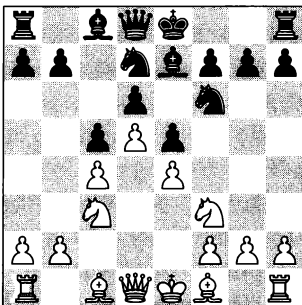
22.♔d3

With the exchange of light-squared bishops, the position resembles more closely the classical examples we saw above. White's advantage does not raise any doubts.

Vladimir Kramnik
Alberto Mascarenhas

Rio de Janeiro 1991

□



7.g4

This is not a sacrifice (on 7...♘g4 there follows 8.♜g1), but questions remain nonetheless. What is White planning to storm? After all, the black king is not yet on g8. On the other hand, if the move g2-g4 in this particular case is directed towards seizing space, then Black's remaining space is likely to suffice for developing counterplay.

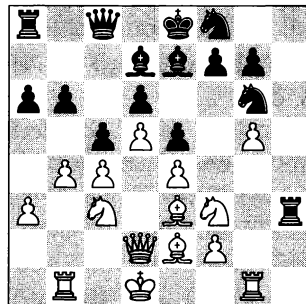
7...♘f8 8.g5 ♘d7 9.h4 ♘g6 10.♔e3 h6!?

Black actively fights back.

11.♜g1 hxg5 12.hxg5 a6 13.♜d2 ♘df8 14.♜b1!?

Another unorthodox decision. Tempting was 14.0-0-0, but White, having got nowhere on the kingside, decides to break on the queenside.

14...♔d7 15.b4! b6 16.a3 ♜c8 17.♔e2 ♜h3 18.♘d1



18...♘f4!?

One must give Kramnik's opponent his due. He seeks counterplay, not afraid to sacrifice a pawn in the process.

19.♔xf4 exf4 20.♜xf4 ♘g6

The game is unclear.

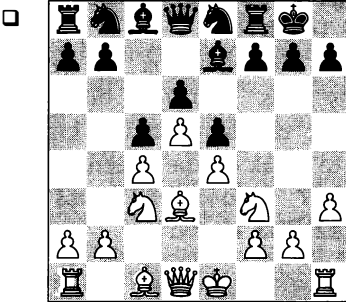
In general, it must be said that the move 7.g4 in the diagram position is clearly very experimental. It is no surprise that it has not been repeated, with others preferring the more cautious 7.♔e2, 7.♔d3 or 7.h3. In all cases, White tends

to wait for Black to castle kingside and only then to push the pawn to g4.

Amongst contemporary grandmasters who actively use this device, we will single out Veselin Topalov. He pushes his g-pawn especially often against players who are significantly weaker than himself.

Veselin Topalov
Francisco Jimenez Morales

Seville 1992



9.g4! g6 10.♖h6 ♜g7 11.♜d2 a6 12.a4 ♜a5

It is bad enough that Black decides to play a well-known theoretical position, a tempo down (instead of 1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.♜c3 d6 5.e4 ♖e7 6.♜f3 0-0 7.♖d3 ♜e8 he played 2...e6 3.♜f3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.♜c3 ♖e7 6.e4 e5 7.♖d3 0-0 8.h3 ♜e8, so the e-pawn reached e5 in two moves, rather than one), but now he sends his queen on a totally pointless errand. More in the spirit of the chosen variation was 12...♜d7 13.a5 ♜f6, and then ...♜g8-h8 and ...♜f6-g8, driving the bishop from h6 and preparing the break ...f7-f5.

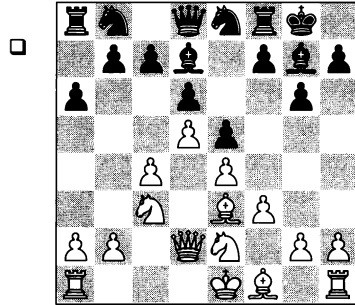
13.♞e2!? ♜d7 14.♜c2 f6 15.♖d2 ♜c7 16.a5

Again, White stands better on both flanks, and his king on e2 is no hindrance at all in this position.

Are you interested to see the first game where White put his king on e2 in a similar pawn structure? It may well have been the following game.

José Raul Capablanca
Vera Menchik

Moscow 1935



10.g4!? h6

A trap (the pawn on h6 cannot be taken because of the check on h4), but almost any other move would have been better.

11.h4 ♜h7 12.♜g3 c5?!

Completely wrong. Black closes the centre, without any reason, thereby depriving herself of counterplay.

13.♖d3 ♜a5

Once again this useless manoeuvre, which only encourages White to gain further space with a later b2-b4.

14.♜e2 ♜h8 15.a3 ♜d8 16.b4 b6 17.♜b2 ♖c8 18.♞e2!

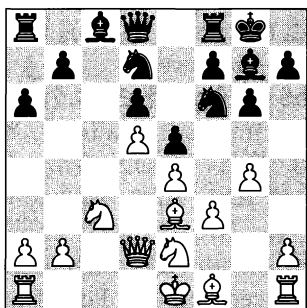
with an overwhelming advantage.

Black learnt in King's Indian positions to fight back against g2-g4 with the move ...h7-h5. This seems so obvious that it hardly needs discussing, were it not for a 'but'.

If White plays g2-g4 before Black has castled, then the reply ...h7-h5 is obviously tempting. But what if White delays his g-pawn advance, until after

Black has castled kingside? Then ...h7-h5 looks terrible. The textbooks all recommend that one not advance pawns in front of one's castled king, provoking the opponent to attack one's king, which he was thinking of anyway.

But there is an exception to every rule. In the King's Indian, Sämisch Variation, there is a set-up where for over half a century Black has confidently met g2-g4 with ...h7-h5, despite his king having castled.



11...h5!?

Who was the author of this idea? It is usually considered that there were two authors. The top Yugoslav player, Svetozar Gligoric, introduced the move ...h7-h5 in grandmaster practice, but Mikhail Tal used it in his 1960 World Championship match; furthermore, he also wrote about the ideas of the move in great detail, which made it part of the opening theory of the time. We will cite Tal's comments in full:

«The move 11...h5 is Gligoric's patent. Because the g4-pawn is attacked, White must do something. The following continuations have been seen: 12.g5, 12.h3 and 12.gxh5. The last move is relatively new and was played in the game Weber-Rätsch (Leipzig 1959), in which after 12...h5 13.g3 h4! 14.h4 (here, and in similar positions, it is unfavourable to accept the pawn sacrifice: 14.gxf4 exf4 15.♖xf4, since the activity of the bishop

on g7 fully compensates for the material deficit) White obtained a strong attack. But it seems to me that this continuation is not dangerous for Black – he can continue 14...h6, retaining an excellent position.

In my game against Gligoric at the 1959 Candidates' tournament I played 12.h3 and after 12...h7 (this is Black's idea; 13.gxh5 gives nothing because of 13...♖h4+, whilst after 13.0-0-0 he continues 13...h4 followed by ...g7-f6-g5. This is what Gligoric played against Sherwin at Portoroz 1959, and he got the better position from the opening) 13.h4. Gligoric did not find the best response to this novelty, and after 13...hxg4 14.fxg4 h6? 15.g3 h6 16.g5 White obtained the advantage. Instead of 14...h6, Black could have continued either 14...h6 with the threats of ...c8xg4 and ...b6-c4, which would force White to go in for very unclear play after 15.g3 g4 16.h5 with an attack for the pawn, or (which seems even stronger to me) 14...df6! 15.g5 g4 or 15...h5, strengthening his position on the kingside.

Finally, in several games from the XXVI USSR Championship, and also the game Szabo-Gligoric (Belgrade 1959), White played 12.g5 h7 13.h4. Gurgenzidze, as Black against Spassky, and also Petrosian against Polugaevsky, started play on the queenside, but here the inactive position of the knight on h7 had its say. Gligoric played more precisely against Szabo: 13...f6! 14.gxf6 ♖xf6 15.g1, but then he got distracted by complicated manoeuvres, as a result of which White succeeded in placing his pieces comfortably and gradually seized the initiative. However, considerable attention should be given to the exchange sacrifice 15...♖f4!? White must accept the gift (if, for example, he continues 16.0-0-0 ♖xh4 17.g5, hoping to take the exchange in more favourable circumstances, then there follows 17...h6! Black even wins), but then after 16.gxf4 exf4, Black's positional plusses are worth the exchange. Of course, there is no forced win, but the resulting position has attracted many supporters for Black.»

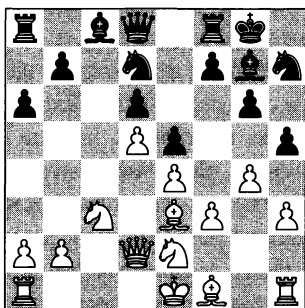
And here are Svetozar's words, taken from his book *I Play against Pieces*:

«The move 11...h5 was a completely unexpected idea at the end of the 1950s. When it came to kingside counterplay, Black thought exclusively in terms of ...f7-f5, which after g2-g4 only helps White's attack. However, the move ...h7-h5 is the only one which answers the logic of the situation. Black exploits the fact that the white kingside is insufficiently developed, and strikes back at the weaknesses created on the dark squares by the move g2-g4 (a major threat in the Sämisch Variation).» It is not by accident that we have quoted these long extracts. I wanted the reader to learn about the genesis of the move ...h7-h5 not second hand, but 'from the horse's mouth', as it were. I would add that the variations may look to some to be a little naïve, compared with the annotations of modern-day grandmasters, but when it comes to ideas, they are at a very high level.

The strongest players of those days understood chess brilliantly. Before them lay virgin lands and they lay the basis of contemporary chess. Of course, not all of their ideas passed the test of time. For example, in the game Timman-Kasparov (Amsterdam 1996), after

12.h3

and now 12...♘h7, White, by comparison with the game Sherwin-Gligoric, played more subtly:



13.♞g1!? h4 14.♘c1 ♘h8 15.♘b3 ♙f6. Sherwin, as we know, castled queen-side on move 13 and was unable to prevent Black's plan of activating his position on the dark squares with ...h5-h4 and ...♙g7-f6-g5. But Timman put his rook on g1 in anticipation, which three moves later gave him the resource 16.g5. After 16...♙e7 17.0-0 f6 18.gxf6 ♜xf6 19.♙e2 ♜f8 20.♚b1 it became clear that Black had not equalised.

Black has to dispense with the plan with ...h5-h4, and even 12...♘h7. In the game Ivanchuk-Kasparov (Dos Hermanas 1996), there followed:

12...b5 13.♙g5 ♜a5 14.♘d1 b4

Also very interesting was 14...♜xd2+ 15.♚xd2 ♘c5 16.♘f2 ♙d7 17.gxh5 ♘xh5! 18.♙e7 ♜fc8 19.♙xd6 ♘b7 20.♙e7 f6 21.♘d3 ♚f7 22.♙a3 a5 23.b4 ♘d6 with full compensation for the sacrificed pawn, Piket-Kasparov, Amsterdam 1996.

15.♙g3 ♘h7!? 16.gxh5 ♘xg5 17.♜xg5 ♙f6

And White had to hurry to end the game:

18.♜h6 ♙g7 19.♜g5 ♙f6 20.♜h6 ♙g7

Draw.

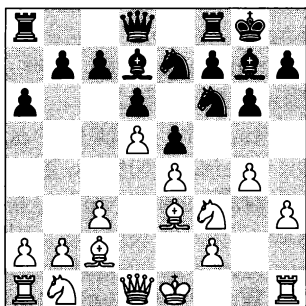
A game Kramnik-Nijboer (Groningen 1990) finished in a similar way, but even earlier: 14.♘g3 (instead of 14.♘d1) 14...♘h7 15.gxh5 ♘xg5 16.♜xg5 ♙f6 17.♜h6 ♙g7 18.♜g5 ♙f6 19.♜h6 ♙g7, with the same repetition of moves.

Thus, the plan of a regrouping on the dark squares with ...♘f6-h7, ...h5-h4 and ...♙g7-f6-g5, as in the game Sherwin-Gligoric, did not fully prove itself. But the basic idea ...h7-h5 lives! The fashion in the King's Indian Defence is still based on it to this day.

Even so, who was the first player to play ...h7-h5 in such a pawn structure? Tal pointed to Gligoric and the latter confirmed his own authorship. We have no reason to criticise these great players for dishonesty. Grandmasters are only human and cannot know everything.

Szymon Winawer
Rudolf Charousek

Budapest 1896



This game, which started out as a Spanish, has turned into a King's Indian structure (although paradoxically, the term 'King's Indian' did not exist at the end of the 19th century). White is noticeably behind in development. His last move was 11.g2-g4, which meets the needs of the position poorly. First he should have developed his queenside with c3-c4 and ♖b1-c3.

Any opening of the position should favour Black, because he is better prepared for hand-to-hand fighting than his opponent. Hence the decision:

11...h5! 12.♖h2

White either did not sense the danger or just panicked. However, even after the strongest line 12.g5 ♗e8, then ...♙d8-c8 and ...c7-c6, Black, by com-

binning threats on both flanks, should achieve success.

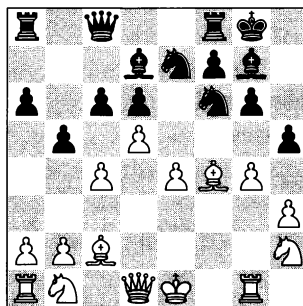
12...♙c8 13.♖g1

More tenacious is 13.f3.

13...c6 14.c4 b5!?

Extending the battle across the whole board, while White is still completely undeveloped. From this point of view, his next move is just suicide.

15.f4 exf4 16.♗xf4



16...bxc4

Good enough to win, but a more forcing path was as follows: 16...cxd5 17.cxd5 (17.♗xd6 ♖e8) 17...♙c5 18.♖g2 ♗xd5! 19.exd5 ♖ae8+ 20.♖e2 (20.♗f1 ♙c4+ and 21...♙xf4) 20...♗xe2+ 21.♗xe2 ♖e8+ 22.♗f3 ♗xd5 with irresistible threats.

17.♗g5 hxg4 18.hxg4 cxd5 19.♖f1 ♗xg4

A hurricane has overtaken the position and swept away all the white pawns! After 20.♗xe7 ♗xh2 the fight did not last long and Charousek soon received congratulations on victory.

«Gligoric's patent», wrote Tal about the move ...h7-h5 in the King's Indian pawn structure. «Charousek-Gligoric-Tal's patent», we would write, for the sake of historical accuracy.

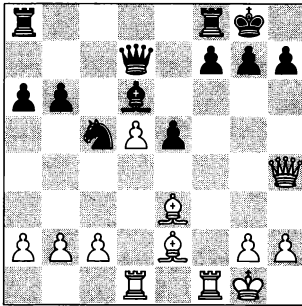
Chapter 15

g2-g4, and White wins

The battle for and against the advance ...f7-f5 is possible not only in the King's Indian, but in the Sicilian, and in other openings – in a word, anywhere where the pawn structure develops in such a way that Black is ready to advance his pawn to f5, whilst White tries to stop this by all possible means. And in this battle, he often cannot do without the move g2-g4!

Alexey Shirov
Veselin Topalov

Sarajevo 1999



White has a pawn majority on the queenside, Black on the kingside. It seems that the plans of the two sides are determined. White will start an advance with c2-c4, b2-b4 and finally, a4-a5. Black, after delaying his opponent with the blockade ...a6-a5, will shift the battle to the other flank: he will play ...f7-f5, supporting his pawn mass with his major pieces and trying to push his e- and f-pawns at least as far as the fourth rank, if not further.

The discussion of this is easily understandable and rather stereotyped. Shirov, well known for his unorthodox thinking, demonstrates the latter in all its glory:

25.g4!?

Not only prophylaxis against ...f7-f5, but, strangely enough, also the start of an attack on the kingside.

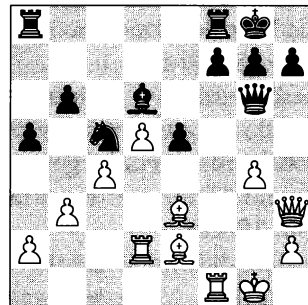
25...♖a4 26.c4 ♜c2

It is not clear why Black did not take the pawn offered with 26...♜xa2. The threat of 27.♞d2 and 28.b4 is really not serious, since in reply to b2-b4, the queen can retreat to b3 with tempo.

27.♞d2 ♜e4 28.♜h3 a5 29.b3 ♜g6
30.♝h1 ♜e4+ 31.♝g1 ♜g6

Having set up his queenside blockade, Topalov repeats moves. Draw?

Shirov does not agree. He has delved more deeply into the position that his opponent. Black's seemingly solid position collapses almost at a stroke, it seems.



32.g5!

The threat is 33.♞g4, and then 34.♞f5 trapping the queen. There is no sense in 32...♜e4 33.♞g4 g6 34.♞d1!, whilst

after 32...f5 the trouble comes from the other side: 33.♙h5. And if 32...♙e7, with the idea of freeing an escape for the queen along the sixth rank, then 33.♙h5 ♖d6 34.♙xf7+! ♜xf7 35.♜xf7 ♘xf7 36.♜xh7 ♜f8 37.♜f2+ ♙e8 38.♜xg7 ♜xf2 39.♙xf2, and the three passed pawns, as the analysis shows, are stronger than the minor piece.

32...♙e4 33.♙d3 ♖xg5

Leads to loss of the queen, but the endgame after 33...f5 34.♙xe4 fxe4 35.♜e6+ ♜xe6 36.dxe6 is no less difficult for Black.

34.♙xg5 e4

34...♜xg5+ 35.♜g2.

35.♜g2! exd3 36.♙f6

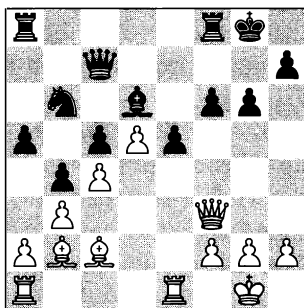
Material losses are inevitable. There is still a long struggle ahead and Black has real drawing chances, but after overcoming his opponent's resistance, Shirov won on move 78.

Vasily Byvshev

Konstantin Klaman

Riga 1954

□



The classic analogue on the same theme. Not knowing the previous example, one would hardly guess where the danger to Black will come from.

25.g4!

Turning the game through 180 degrees. It turns out that, rather than Black

attacking on the kingside with ..f6-f5 and ...e5-e4, White intends to push his g- and h-pawns.

25...♜ae8

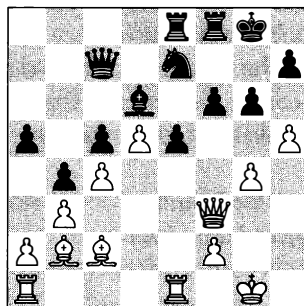
After the game, Georgy Lisitsin suggested 25...a4 here.

26.h4 ♖c8

Poorly played. The idea of the move is clear: the knight will go to e7, defending the weakness on g6, after the subsequent h4-h5. But the trouble is that the knight on e7 completely disrupts the harmony of the black pieces: it cuts the communications, prevents regrouping and obstructs almost any manoeuvre. From now on, the black pieces stumble around blindly, tripping over this knight.

A tempting move was 26...♜g7, with the idea of 27.h5 gxh5, and now not 28.♜e4 f5!. White could reply 27.♙f1, but then how does he transfer his rooks to the kingside?

27.h5! ♙e7



28.hxg6

Master Byvshev believes in the strength of his attack, otherwise he would have played 28.a3!? opening a second front.

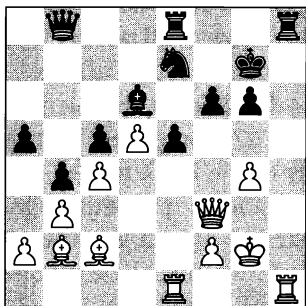
28...hxg6

The last chance was 28...♙xg6!?. Yes, his pawn structure would have been spoiled, but the knight would have obtained the square f4, and, the most important thing, the 7th rank would

have been unblocked, allowing one of his major pieces to come to g7, defending his king.

Now it is all easy. White achieves his aim with simple, natural moves.

29. ♖g2 ♜g7 30. ♜h1 ♜h8 31. ♜ae1 ♚b8



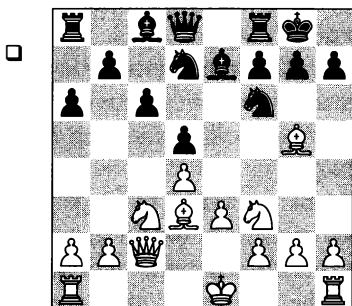
32.g5! f×g5 33. ♚g3 ♜xh1 34. ♜xh1 ♜h8 35. ♜xh8 ♜xh8 36. ♚xg5 ♜h7 37.f4!

Black resigned, in view of 37...exf4 38. ♚f6! ♚g8 39. ♚h4#.

In the following example, the move g2-g4 serves as a signal for an attack on the king. The only difference is that in this case, the attack is carried out with a stable centre, whereas in the previous ones, this was not quite the case.

**Mikhail Botvinnik
Vladimir Alatortsev**

Leningrad 1934



10.g4!?

«In those days, this move created a sensation, but nowadays it is almost a standard device» – Botvinnik.

I would add that if White wishes to advance his kingside pawns to attack the enemy king, then he needs to start with the move g2-g4. In the game Mamedyarov-Ponomariov (Moscow 2010), White started with 10.h4, and only after 10...♜e8 did he play 11.g4. After 11...♞f8 12. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13.g5 ♙e7, the pawn on h7 was defended. (There followed 14. ♜g1 ♙e6 15.h5 ♜c8 16.0-0-0 c5, with a complicated, doubled-edged game.) Now, however, as Botvinnik pointed out, after 10...♜e8 11. ♙xf6 ♞xf6 12.g5 White wins a pawn. This is quite correct, but the variation needs to be extended. After 12...♞e4! 13.♞xe4 dxe4 14. ♙xe4 ♚a5+ 15. ♖e2 (not 15. ♚d2 ♙b4) 15...♙xg5 16. ♙xh7+ ♜h8, Black obtains some compensation for the pawn. The position has opened up, he has two bishops, and the white king is far from ideally placed. If now 17.h4 ♙h6 18.♞g5, then after 18...♙g4+ 19.f3 ♙h5 the situation is getting out of control (Beilin-Polyak, Moscow 1949).

As well as 10...♜e8, another move deserving consideration is 10...g6 (but not 10...h6 11. ♙f4 and then g4-g5).

10...♞xg4

Black plays along with his opponent's idea.

11. ♙xh7+ ♜h8 12. ♙f4

Botvinnik himself explained the logic of this reply. He refrained from 12.h4 g6 13. ♙xg6 f×g6 14. ♚xg6 because of 14...♚e8!. Now, however, after 12...g6 13. ♙xg6 f×g6 14. ♚xg6 Black does not have the resource 14...♚e8, as White simply takes the knight.

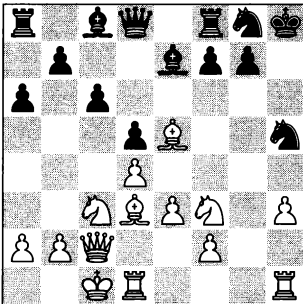
It is a pity that another lovely variation remained behind the curtain: 12...g6 13.♙xg6 fxg6 14.♖xg6 ♜xf4!? 15.exf4 ♘f8. It seems that Black has managed to beat off the attack. He has two pieces for a rook (and two wonderful bishops into the bargain), and the white pawn structure is in ruins. Who is playing for a win here? It turns out that it is White after all: 16.♗h5+ ♘h7 17.♙g1!, and if 17...♘g6, then 18.♘e5!!.

The queen cannot be taken because of mate in one, and 18...♙e6 19.♗f7! is also bad for Black.

12...♘df6 13.♙d3 ♘h5

These are not the means with which to put out the fire. The last chance was 13...♘e4!? 14.♘xe4 dxe4 15.♙xe4 ♗a5+. By creating some tension in the centre, Black diverts his opponent from the mating attack.

14.h3 ♘g6 15.♙e5 ♘g8 16.0-0-0



As Botvinnik explained, White's plan is to attack the g7-pawn, by the manoeuvre ♗c2-e2 and then moving the knight from f3, which will leave the enemy knight on h5 (the only defender of g7) attacked.

Only four more moves were needed for the realisation of this plan:

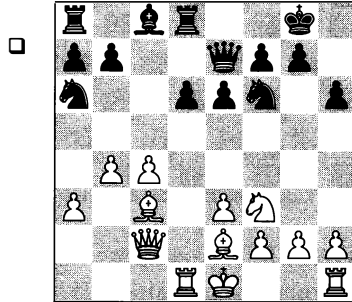
16...♘h6 17.♙dg1 ♙e6 18.♗e2 ♙f5 19.♙xf5 ♘xf5 20.♘h4!

Black resigned.

Vladimir Kramnik

Peter Toth

Rio de Janeiro 1991



14.g4! ♘xg4

The threat of g4-g5 leaves Black no choice.

15.♙g1 e5 16.c5!

An interesting nuance. Unlike Botvinnik, the young Kramnik carries out his flank attack in the presence of an unstable centre. Usually this circumstance is in the defender's favour, as he can meet the flank attack with a counterblow in the centre, but in this instance, it is the other way round: the attacker is able to strengthen his assault with a central blow.

But of course, geniuses are able to break the rules...

16...dxc5

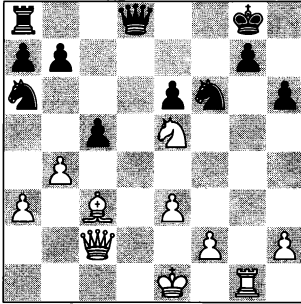
Weakly played. Black is defending effectively without his rook on a8. It was necessary to bring it into play as quickly as possible: 16...♙e6. Although after 17.cxd6 ♜xd6 18.♙xd6 ♗xd6 19.h3 ♘f6 20.♙xe5 ♗e7 21.♗b2 White retains enormous pressure, the battle is still going on.

Now, however, it all ends quickly:

17.♙xd8+ ♗xd8 18.♘xe5 ♘f6

Or 18...♘xe5 19.♙xe5 f6 20.♗g6 ♗f8 21.♙xf6.

19.♙c4 ♙e6 20.♙xe6 fxe6



21. ♖xg7+!

Black resigned, since after 21...♔xg7 22.♚g6+, he is mated.

Finally, I want to correct a couple of points in Botvinnik's notes, cited above. Certainly, in our day, the early raid with the g-pawn has become a standard device, which appears in many openings. There have been thousands of games in the Slav with the variation 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♗f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♗bd7 6.♚c2 ♖d6 7.g4!?. In various lines of the English Opening and

Nimzo-Indian Defence, White rushes to advance his g-pawn; for example, 1.c4 ♗f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 ♖b4 4.♚c2 0-0 5.g4!? or even the immediate 4.g4!?. Completely new set-ups have arisen in the Pirc-Modern, Philidor, and King's Indian Defences, involving the sacrifice g2-g4, without anyone demanding immediate compensation for this pawn. But Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (in his game against Andreikin, Dagomys 2008) amazed the chess world when, in a well-known position after 1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 d6 3.♘c3 ♗bd7 4.e4 e5 5.♘f3 ♖e7 6.♖e2 0-0, he played 7.g4!?. (previously White had always played 7.0-0 here, without even thinking) and obtained a very strong initiative: 7...exd4 8.♗xd4 ♗c5 9.f3 ♗e8 10.♖e3 ♖h4+ 11.♔d2 g6 12.♔c2 ♗g7 13.♚d2 ♖d7 14.♖hg1 ♗ce6 15.♗f5!?.

New times result in the borders of what is acceptable being gradually expanded. Do not be ashamed if you want to play g2-g4 !

Chapter 16

h2-h4, and White wins

The pawn push g2-g4 is a weapon of wide application. It can be used for combi-native purposes, as a signal for attack, or for positional ones: to seize space, or as prophylaxis against ...f7-f5.

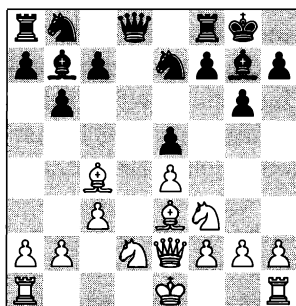
The advance h2-h4, by contrast, is much more direct and simple. Without camouflaging his intentions, White wants to open the h-file, break in down it with his major pieces and give mate.

As a source example, we offer one from the play of the first World Champion.

William Steinitz Augustus Mongrédien

London 1863

□



Black has played the opening poorly. He has castled early, but for some reason put his knight on e7 instead of f6. As for the centre, one cannot say that it is closed, but it is stable.

All the preconditions for a flank attack are present. Steinitz did not have to be asked twice:

10.h4! Qd7

The knight hurries to f6, but never gets there. There is no sense either in 10...h5 11.Qg5, followed by g2-g4, but perhaps he should have tried to ease the pressure with 10...Kc8, and if 11.h5, then 11...Qa6.

11.h5 c5

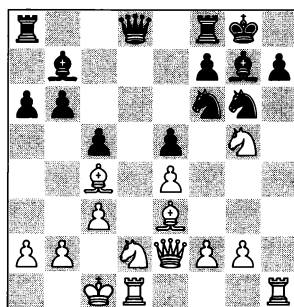
In many books and databases, the following move-order is given: 11...Qf6 12.hxg6 Qxg6 13.0-0-0 c5 14.Qg5 a6, but then Black's 13th and 14th moves lose all sense. The correct move-order is given by Neishtadt in his Russian book on the first World Champion. Yakov Isaevich quotes a reliable historical source: the contemporary reports on the London 1863 tournament, published in the magazines of the time.

12.hxg6 Qxg6 13.0-0-0 a6

Black's counterplay is too late, but his position is hopeless in any event.

14.Qg5 Qf6

After 14...h6 15.Qxf7 Rxf7, both 16.Kg4, and the direct 16.Qxf7+ Qxf7 17.Qc4 (with the threat of 18.Qd6+ and 18.Qxb6) win.



Augustus Mongrédien, thankfully, gives his opponent an opportunity to carry out

a combination, which will last for centuries. In our day, players play this combination like a pianist playing a scale, but they are using Steinitz's prototype.

15. ♖xh7! ♜xh7 16. ♖xh7!

There was also a win with 16. ♖h5 ♜f6 17. ♖xg6 ♖c8 18. ♖h7! ♜xh7 19. ♖h6, and the simple 18. ♖h4 (but not 18. ♖h6 ♖g4) followed by doubling rooks on the open file. But the tempo of the attack would be slowed, whereas now it proceeds in a single breath.

16... ♜xh7 17. ♖h5+ ♜g8 18. ♖h1 ♖e8 19. ♖xg6 ♖f6 20. ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 21. ♖h8+!

The final blow.

21... ♜xh8 22. ♖xf7

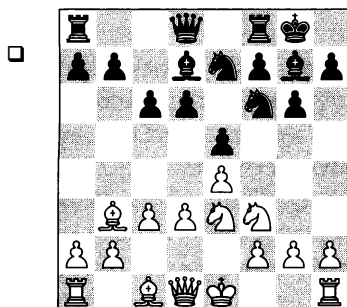
After all the fireworks hanging over the position, material is again equal, but Black cannot prevent White getting his knight into the game and so he preferred to resign at once.

Steinitz was a great champion and also a great experimenter. One only has to think of the variation of the King's Gambit named after him, in which White's king comes to e2, with a full board of pieces. If played by a beginner, we would call it eccentric, but when a World Champion plays such a thing, we have to ask ourselves: why?! And analysing such lines makes us reassess the norms, and reconsider long-established assumptions and beliefs.

Steinitz himself laid out the rules and himself broke them. Just as inventors sometimes go too far, so Steinitz, as the founder of the new positional school, often went beyond the realms of the theory he had created. As a person and as a player, he was beyond any dogmas. Even in a World Championship match, he was not afraid to take risks.

William Steinitz Emanuel Lasker

New York 1894



Black's position is almost entirely devoid of drawbacks, and anything one criticises sounds like nit-picking. You say Black is cramped? After the programmed ...d6-d5 this will be put right. His piece coordination lacks harmony? This will be corrected in time. The main thing, though, is that White lacks an active plan. He cannot impose his will.

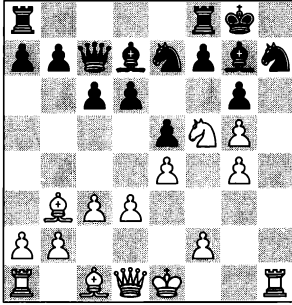
It looks as though we face a long battle, with lots of quiet manoeuvring. But Steinitz had a different opinion:

11. h4!? ♖c7 12. ♜g5

This looks like a wild, unjustified attempt to attack, which is destined to fail. But the calculation of concrete variations shows that things are not so simple.

In order to understand what White is threatening, let us give him the move. (The attack continues 13. h5!?, and after 13... ♜xh5 – 14. ♖xh5! gxh5 15. ♖xh5 with attacks on f7 and h7.) This is serious; it means that Black needs to stop coasting and take urgent measures.

Let us try the attack on the knight: 12... h6. In reply, Steinitz had prepared the double piece sacrifice 13. g4!? hxg5 14. hxg5 ♜h7 15. ♜f5!?.



analysis diagram

This combinational idea, in various forms, will hang over the position for a long time. After 15...gxf5 16.gxf5 ♖xf5! 17.♚h5 ♘h6 18.gxh6 ♙f6 19.♙g5! Black loses after both 19...♙xg5 20.♚g6+ ♖h8 21.♚g7#, and 19...♘xg5 20.♚g6+ ♖h8 21.♚xf6+ ♖g8 22.♚g7#. The only defence is 19...♚d8! 20.♙g1 ♖h8, but this hangs on a very slender thread. One can understand that Lasker was not keen to play along with his opponent, especially given that he has at his disposal the principled reply...

12...d5!?

«Answer a flank attack with a central counter!» Lasker plays like a true follower of the Steinitz school. Meanwhile, the founder of that school behaves as if he doubts the truthfulness of its postulates. All of these considerations are highly conditional. The position has become much sharper and concrete calculation predominates over general dogmas. Whoever has the greater fantasy, and can generate more ideas, and who can calculate variations better, will triumph. What should White do? After 13.h5 h6 14.hxg6 hxg5, no decisive continuation is to be seen (the fact that Black has closed the a2-g8 diagonal is important), and White is a piece down. Of course, it is possible to retreat with 14.♘f3,

but after 14...g5, the attack is visibly in decline.

Therefore, Steinitz prepares a second attack with f2-f3, g2-g4, and then, according to circumstances, h4-h5 or ♖e3-f5.

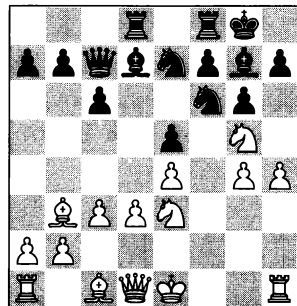
13.f3 ♘ad8

Lasker tries with all his might to show his opponent that the attack is just bluff. Otherwise, he might have chosen 13...h6!? and if 14.g4 hxg5 15.hxg5 ♘h7 16.♘f5, then 16...gxf5 17.gxf5 ♘xf5! The line d1-h5 is closed, and the queen cannot get to the h-file in one move. And without that, the attack has no chance of success.

14.g4!?

This move looks very simple and straightforward, but in fact, it conceals an idea which is very hard to see. White is freeing the second rank for his queen! Now if 14...h6, then 15.♚e2! hxg5 16.hxg5, and Black's position may well be indefensible: 16...♘h7 17.♘f5! gxf5 18.♚h2 or 16...♘e8 17.♚h2 f6 18.exd5 etc.

14...dxe4 15.fxe4



The culminating moment in the game. Lasker (somewhat late) played:

15...h6

And after

16.♚f3!

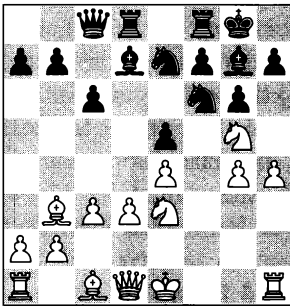
he realised that he cannot accept the

knight sacrifice: 16...hxg5 17.hxg5 ♘h7 18.♘f5! (this combination arises again and again) 18...gxf5 19.♖h3 ♖fe8 20.♗xh7+ ♘f8 21.g6! with mate in all variations: 21...fxg6 22.♙h6 ♙xh6 23.♗xh6# or 21...♘xg6 22.♙h6 ♙xh6 23.♗xf7#. In the meantime, the threat is 17.♘xf7 ♖xf7 18.♙xf7+ ♘xf7 19.g5. What should be done? Lasker nonetheless found a good defence:

16...♙e8!

The battle went on, and Steinitz eventually won.

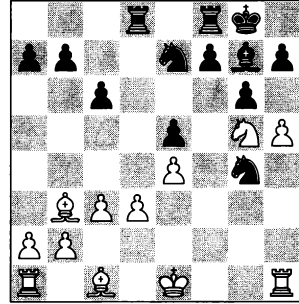
Many experts (possibly copying one another) suggested, in the position of the last diagram, 15...♗c8.



analysis diagram

Forcing 16.♖g1. And then 16...h6, and the combination shown above does not work, because the rook is not on the h-file.

15...♗c8 is Neishtadt's idea. Yakov Isaevich did an enormous amount of work, analysing this position. But in this particular case, I will permit myself to disagree with him. After 15...♗c8 Steinitz probably intended 16.h5! ♙xg4 (even worse is 16...♘xg4 17.♘xh7! ♘xh7 18.hxg6+ ♘xg6 19.♘xg4 ♙xg4 20.♗d2! with mating threats. For example, 20...f6 21.♖h6+ ♙xh6 22.♗xh6#) 17.♘xg4 ♗xg4 18.♗xg4 ♘xg4 19.hxg6 hxg6.



analysis diagram

And now simply 20.♙e2. A grand thought! White is a pawn down and the queens are off, yet even so, White retains the initiative and every chance of winning. His light-squared bishop is very strong, and his other pieces support it. With hindsight, the entire plan 11.h4!? looks very unified and there is no apparent refutation.

One would expect that, over the century and a half that separates us from the Steinitz-Mongrédien game, the advance of the h-pawn would have been investigated in all its subtleties and nuances, and many new aspects found. This has indeed happened. Even being the experimenter that he was, Steinitz would probably be surprised to see that nowadays, players push the h-pawn not just on the cusp of the opening-middlegame transition stage, say the tenth move, but even as early as move five and even earlier!

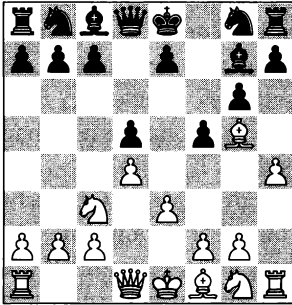
In our day, the opening idea h2-h4 is not fully classical and not entirely normal, but at the same time, not especially unusual either. As a concrete example, take the Dutch Defence, Leningrad Variation. The first moves:

1.d4 f5 2.♘c3 d5 3.♙g5 g6 4.e3 ♙g7

And suddenly:

5.h4!?

The game Khalifman-Lerner (Kuibyshev 1986) went as follows:



5...e6 6.f3

6.h5 h6 is too early.

6...c6 7.e4

Now that the bishop is no longer able to be hit with tempo, everything is ready for the further advance of the pawn.

7...f6 8.h5!? $\text{f} \times \text{h}5$ **9.♖xh5!?**
g×h5 10.g5 e6 11.♗xh5+ e7

White has sacrificed the exchange, obtaining in return simply active play. The next few moves are easy to understand: queenside castling, and then all the pieces are brought to the kingside. It will be a long time before the black king knows any peace. One should also mention the surprise factor: thanks to the march of the h-pawn, the opening phase has been effectively swallowed up. Black finds himself having to defend his king almost from the very first moves. This is extremely unpleasant from the psychological point of view. There followed:

12.e3 e6 13.g4 h6 14.f3 e7
15.♗h3 fxg4 16.♗xg4 d7
17.e6+ e8 18.0-0

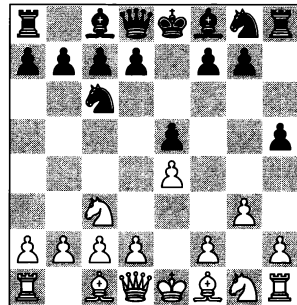
It is clear that White's attacking chances have increased, and it is no longer a question of compensation for the material, but of an actual advantage for White.

One year later, in a game Khalifman-Legky (played in Tashkent), the players repeated the variation. But already by then it was Black who enjoyed the surprise factor. He was well-prepared and was able to survive the opening stage: $8...d7!$ (instead of $8...f \times h5$) $9.h6$ (or $9.hxg6$ $hxg6$ $10.♖xh8+$ $e \times h8$ $11.f \times e5$ $e \times f7$ $12.e2$ $♗a5$ $13.♗d2$ $f \times e5$ $14.e \times e5$ $0-0-0$, and Black completes his development, Ionov-Malaniuk, Budapest 1989) $9...e8$ $10.♗d2$ $e \times f7$ $11.f \times e5$ $e6$ $12.f3$ $e \times e7$ $13.g4!$ $f \times e5$ $14.e \times e5$ $fxg4$ $15.fxg4$ $0-0$ $16.e2$. Here, in Khalifman's opinion, Black could have solved all his problems with $16...d7!$ $17.e3$ $e6$.

Alexander Khalifman played his most memorable game with this idea in 1984, at the USSR junior championship. His opponent was Alexey Dreev. Khalifman was Black, and his h-pawn rushed forward – as early as move 3!

This is what happened:

1.e4 e5 2.d3 c6 3.g3 h5!?



4.f3 h4!? **5.fxh4 ♖xh4! 6.gxh4**
♗xh4 7.g2

Grandmaster Kryakvin, in a lengthy article called 'Great masters of the flank attack' (Chesspro 2011) showed what he believes is the best defence: $7.♖g1!$ giving the following variations: $7...♗xh2$ $8.♖g2$ $♗h4$ $9.d3$; $7...e6$ $8.d3$

The path of the h-pawn is clear and there is no time to lose.

9.h4!

But not 9.♟xd5 ♞xe5 10.♟xe7+ ♜xe7 11.dxe5 ♞c6, nor 9.0-0 ♞c6.

9...♞b6

Black's decision in the game Adamski-Majer (Giessen 1992) can only be described as panic: 9...♞c6 10.h5 ♞xd4 11.♞xd4 ♞xe5. After 12.hxg6 fxg6 13.♙e2, he had no compensation for the piece.

Rogers' play is stronger. After 10.h5 he has prepared 10...♙g4!, and if White sticks to his guns, he comes up empty-handed: 11.hxg6 fxg6 12.♞xh7 ♙xf3!, but not 12...♞xh7 13.♞g5+ ♞g8 14.♜xg4. Jumping ahead, we can say that Black continued to defend pretty well, but sadly for him, White played brilliantly.

10.♞g5! h5

The first in a series of only moves, which, alas, do not help Black. After 10...f6 White wins with 11.♞xh7! ♞xh7 12.♜h5+ ♞g8 13.♙xg6, whilst after 10...h6, he decides matters with 11.h5! hxg5 12.hxg6 fxg6 (12...g4 13.♙h6 fxg6 14.♜c1) 13.♙xg6 ♙f5 (or 13...g4 14.♙h7+ ♞f7 15.♜c2 ♞e8 16.♜g6+ ♞f7 17.♙g8) 14.♜h5 ♙xg6 15.♜xg6 ♜e8 16.♜h7+ ♞f7 17.♞h6!.

11.e6 f5

Again, Black has no choice. The variations 11...♙xe6 12.♞xe6 fxe6 13.♙xg6 and 11...f6 12.♙xg6 fxg5 13.hxg5 ♙xe6 14.♜xh5 both lead to immediate defeat.

12.♞e2 ♜e8 13.♞h3!?

We can see the analogous device in the game Khalifman-Brynell on page 56.

13...♞c6 14.♙b5!

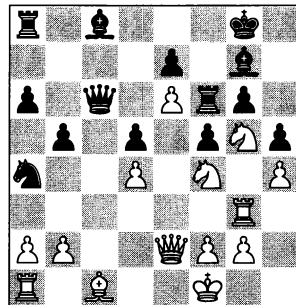
Exchanging off an unnecessary piece and at the same time freeing the e2-square for the knight.

14...♞f6 15.♞f4 a6 16.♙xc6 ♜xc6 17.♞c3 ♜d6 18.♜e2 ♞a4

Khalifman considered that Black's last chance to save himself was 18...♜b4, with the idea after 19.♙e3 to reply 19...♞a4 20.♞xd5 ♞xc3. He then gives 19.♞f1! ♜xd4 20.♙e3 ♜e5 21.♞d1, retaining the initiative.

In my opinion, the simple 19.a3 ♜xd4 20.♞c7 is also convincing enough.

19.♞g3 b5 20.♞f1! ♜c6



With great difficulty, Black has managed to set up some sort of pawn barrier. But it does not look at all reliable, and by a knight sacrifice, White breaks through to the enemy king.

21.♞xg6!! ♞xg6 22.♜xh5

Mating motifs hang over the position everywhere. For example, 22...♞f6 23.♜h7+ ♞f8 24.♜h8+! ♙xh8 25.♞h7+ ♞e8 26.♞g8+ ♞f8 27.♞xf8#; 22...♜e8 23.♜h7+ ♞f8 24.h5 ♞h6 25.♜xh6 ♙xh6 26.♞h7#; 22...♞h6 23.♜f7+ ♞h8 24.♞f3! ♞h7 25.♞e5 ♜xe6 26.♜e8+ ♜g8 27.♞f7#.

Black prefers the most aesthetic way of losing:

22...f4 23.♜h7+

1-0

Chapter 17

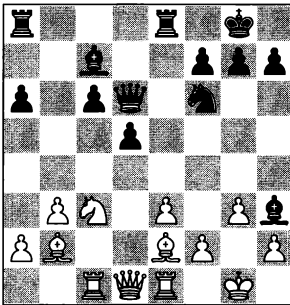
Overcoming the Blockade

Playing against the hanging pawn pair on c6 and d5 is a great art. The recipe has been well-known since ancient times: a blockade on the squares d4 and c5. But what should one do if the blockade does not materialise? Then, strangely enough, the correct strategy may consist in provoking Black into the advance ...c6-c5.

Boris Gelfand

Igor Khenkin

Riga 1987



It would be wrong to think that the position is completely safe for White. Thus, in the game Gavrikov-Zaichik (Riga 1980), after 16. ♖a4 ♘a5!? 17. ♙c3 ♙xc3 18. ♗xc3 ♗e5 19. ♗a4 ♗e4 20. ♚d4 ♗g5 21. f4? (21. ♙f1 was essential) 21... ♗xg3+! 22. hxg3 ♚g6 23. g4 ♙xg4, Black, after sacrificing a rook, developed a mating attack.

16. ♚d4!

A move which contains many plans. Firstly, it ties down the knight on f6, which cannot now come to e4 because of the mate threat along the long diagonal. Secondly, White begins to seize the blockade squares d4 and c5. On 16... ♘a5 17. ♗ed1 ♙b4 there follows 18. ♗a4 (and if 18... ♗e4, then 19. ♚b6), inching towards the desired objective.

The assessment of the move 16. ♚d4 depends on whether the advance ...c6-c5 is favourable for Black, or not. And how do we decide this? Only by one criterion: will Black manage to follow up with ...d5-d4 or, at the very least, manage seriously to threaten this?

All the while the pawns are on c6 and d5, they have little mobility, but they are also harder to attack – the d5-pawn is defended, and the c6-pawn is easy to defend, for example by a bishop from d7. But everything changes once the pawn advances to c5. Statics give way to dynamics. If Black manages to get in ...d5-d4, he will be all right, but if not, then the pawn pair will come under threat. Most likely, one of them will be lost.

16...c5

With hindsight, we can say that this is a mistake. White plays his next three moves with tempo. Black will just not have time to play ...d5-d4.

17. ♚h4 ♙f5

The d5-pawn could also have been defended by 17... ♙d7 18. ♗ed1 ♙c6. But this is still not saving Black: 19. ♗xd5! ♗xd5 20. ♙f3 ♚e6 (20... ♗ad8 21. e4) 21. ♚g5 ♙e5 22. ♙xd5 ♙xd5 23. ♙xe5 ♚xe5 24. ♗xd5, or 21... f6 22. ♚xd5!.

18. ♗ed1 ♗ad8 19. ♚g5!

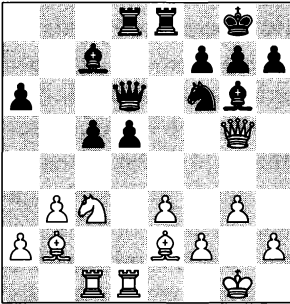
Gelfand chooses the strongest of the many tempting continuations. One

option is 19.♖a4 ♖e4 20.f3, but after 20...♗f6 the pawn on e3 starts to hang. And in the event of the immediate 19.♖xd5 ♖xd5 20.♙f3 ♖e6 21.♞xc5 ♖xe3 (more subtle is 20...♖c6!? 21.b4 ♖e6 22.♞xc5 ♖xe3!) the game takes on unnecessary complications.

19...♙g6

After 19...g6, White has many ways to achieve a material advantage. The most principled of these is 20.♖a4 ♖e4 21.♖h6 f6 22.♙a3.

By retreating the bishop to g6, Black allows his opponent to realise his main tactical idea.



**20.♖xd5! ♖xd5 21.♙f3 ♖e7
22.♞xd5 ♖xg5 23.♞xg5 ♞d2
24.♙c3 ♞xa2 25.♞xc5 ♙b6 26.♞e5
♞c8 27.♙b7 ♞b8 28.♙d5**

The forcing variations continue. White has long since won a pawn, but from inertia, Black keeps on playing active moves. Finally, the sequence ends, but almost immediately, Khenkin makes the decisive mistake.

28...h6 29.h4 ♞c8

He could have prolonged his resistance by tying the rook on e5 to the defence of the bishop: 29...♞d8. Now, however, it all ends very quickly:

30.h5! ♙xh5

30...♙d3 31.♞e7 ♞f8 32.♞b7 ♙c5 33.b4 or 32...♙d8 33.♙b4.

31.♞xh5 ♙a5 32.b4

Black resigned.

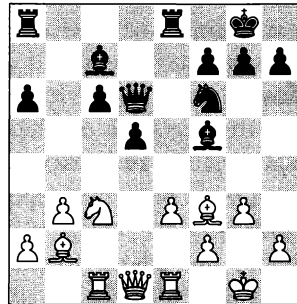
A strong game. When it was played, Gelfand was not yet 20. But even so, his best qualities: positional understanding, accurate calculation of variations and erudition, were already clear to see.

You may ask where this erudition comes from. The fact is that four years earlier, there had been a game Gavrikov-Mochalov.

**1.♖f3 c5 2.c4 ♖f6 3.♖c3 e6 4.e3
d5 5.d4 a6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♙e2 ♖c6
8.0-0 ♙d6 9.b3 0-0 10.♙b2 cxd4
11.♖xd4 ♞e8 12.♞c1 ♙c7 13.♞e1
♖d6 14.g3 ♙e6**

The move order in Gelfand-Khenkin was slightly different: 14...♙h3 15.♖xc6 bxc6.

15.♖xc6 bxc6 16.♙f3 ♙f5



Now there followed:

**17.♖d4! c5 18.♖f4! ♖d7 19.♖a4!
♖e6 20.♖xd5! ♖xd5 21.♞xc5
♞ed8 22.♖c4**

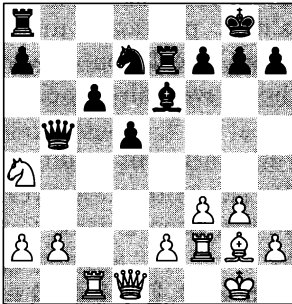
And Black resigned. As we see, completely the same concept.

And what if Black cannot or does not play ...c6-c5 ? How do we break down the defences then? The classic example on this theme is a game of Rubinstein's, incidentally Gelfand's favourite player.

Akiba Rubinstein

Georg Salwe

Lodz 1908



18. ♖d4!

Several moves earlier, White had played f2-f3 and ♖f1-f2, starting a deep regrouping. This will be crowned with success when White plays e2-e3, ♔g2-f1 and ♖f2-c2. But first, he must take control of the squares c5 and d4, otherwise, if the c6-d5-pawns start moving, the entire manoeuvre will be pointless.

18... ♖e8

From here to the end of the game, Black plays passively and Salwe does not really manage to pose his opponent a single problem.

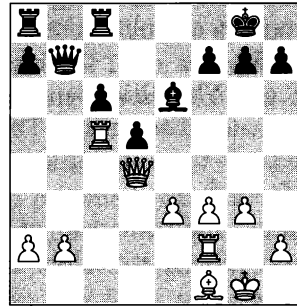
What should we advise instead? The pawn sacrifice 18... ♖ae8 19. ♖xa7 ♔f5 does not achieve very much. White gradually manages to defend everything: 20. ♔f1 ♘f8 21. ♖d4 ♘e6 22. ♖d1. The initiative dies off.

It was worth considering 18... ♔f6!?. If White then blindly follows his planned moves with 19. ♔f1 ♖b7 20. e3 ♖ae8 21. ♖fc2, then after 21... ♔f5! 22. ♖xc6 ♘e5 23. ♖xd5+ ♔e6, he risks losing material. Of course, this variation is not forced, and White can correct his original plan at any moment.

19. ♔f1! ♖ec8

Here too, a tempting alternative was 19... ♖b7 20. e3 ♔f5, taking control of the square c2 (but not immediately 19... ♔f5 20. e4).

20.e3! ♖b7 21. ♘c5 ♘xc5 22. ♖xc5



The white pieces have suddenly found harmony. Manoeuvres which seemed far-fetched, even artificial, have suddenly proved to be full of sense.

This is the usual thing, when one plays over Rubinstein's games. How he managed it is a mystery, but the fact is that White has significantly increased his advantage. However, the battle is not over yet. Here and on the next move, it was essential that Black play ...a7-a5, preventing the press with b2-b4.

22... ♖c7 23. ♖fc2 ♖b6 24. b4!

Now the blockade on the queenside acquires a permanent look. It is already too late to advise Black.

24... a6 25. ♖a5

White could already win a pawn with 25. ♖xd5. But he first strengthens the position of his pieces, realising that the material is not going anywhere. Such an approach would later become typical of Gelfand too.

25... ♖b8

A cheerless endgame awaits Black after 25... ♖xd4 26. exd4 ♖b7 (26... ♔c8 27. ♖xd5) 27. a3 (less convincing is 27. ♖xc6 ♖xb4 28. ♖cxa6 ♖xa6 29. ♖xa6

g5) 27...♖b6. But at least this would be an endgame with material equality.

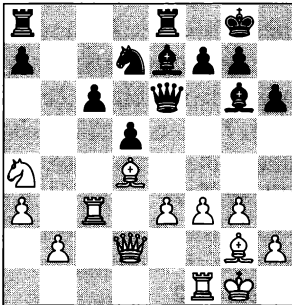
26.a3 ♖a7 27.♜xc6! ♜xc6 28.♞xa7

The realisation of the extra pawn did not pose White any difficulties. Black resigned at move 38.

A very important game for this structure, which has been deeply studied from both sides – for White, to understand Rubinstein’s plan, and for Black, to understand how to fight against it. As far as the latter is concerned, it is clear that passive play is not appropriate. Black must defend actively. And if it is hard to prevent the blockade on d4 and c5, then Black should at least be able to stop the stabilising move b2-b4. He should find the right moment to play ...a7-a5 and put one of his major pieces on the b-file, establishing control over the key square b4.

**Vasily Smyslov
Garry Kasparov**

Vilnius 1984



22...♞ab8!?

It was simpler to begin with 22...a5, but Kasparov changes the move-order, setting a trap along the way. If White grabs the pawn with 23.♙xa7, then after 23...♞a8 24.♘c5 (24.♞d4 ♙f6) 24...♞d6! 25.♘xd7 ♞xa7 26.♘c5

♙f6 27.♞cc1 ♞e5 he falls into an unpleasant position. He could buy his way out with the exchange 27.♞fc1 ♙xc3 28.♞xc3, but this is not everybody’s cup of tea.

23.♞e1

One can understand Smyslov’s reluctance to abandon the game as a draw (which would be practically inevitable after 23.♞fc1 c5 24.♘xc5 ♘xc5 25.♙xc5 ♙xc5 26.♞xc5 ♞xe3+ 27.♞xe3 ♞xe3). But it is more difficult to understand why he did not play 23.b4. Perhaps he was worried by the weakening on c4. For example, 23...♘b6 24.♘c5 ♞d6 and then ...♘b6-c4, or even 23...♘e5, and if 24.♙xe5 ♞xe5 25.♞xc6, then 25...d4!? and White has to part with material in any case: 26.exd4 ♞b5 or 26.♞xd4 ♞xd4 27.exd4 ♙d3.

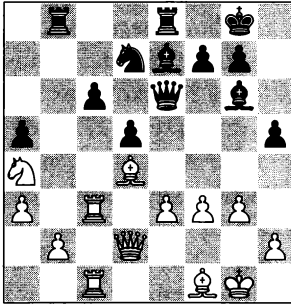
The game we are examining was played in the final Candidates’ match. Smyslov was much older than his opponent, and besides, Kasparov was known for his phenomenal calculation of variations. It is perhaps not surprising that Smyslov adopted restriction tactics. As far as possible, he followed the approach of drying the game up, avoiding direct conflict.

Of course, Smyslov knew the Rubinstein plan and followed it. In the diagram position, his pawn is already at f3, covering the squares e4 and g4, and thus taking over part of the light-squared bishop’s job. In accordance with the plan, the bishop belongs on f1 and the king’s rook on c1. But the immediate 23.♞fc1, as shown above, allows the break 23...c5. The move 23.b4 involves agreeing to sharp and concrete play, which Smyslov was not prepared to do. So he plays 23.♞e1, losing a tempo, but defending e3, and so stopping ...c6-c5.

23...a5! 24. ♖f1 h5!?

Having prevented b2-b4, Black does not rest on his laurels. He actively seeks counterplay in the centre and on the kingside.

25. ♖ec1



An important moment. It seems that if Black wants a draw, he can make it at once: 25...c5 26. ♘xc5 ♘xc5, and after all the exchanges, he takes on e3. But the position of the pawn on a5 makes the exchange sacrifice attractive: 27. ♖xc5! ♖xc5 28. ♖xc5 a4 29. ♖b5 etc. Stronger is 28...♖ec8, but the prospect of fighting two connected passed pawns, supported by the two bishops, obviously did not appeal to Black. Kasparov prefers not to force the game, but, on the contrary, to increase the tension:

25... ♘e5!

Immediately after the game, Grandmaster Evgeny Vasiukov suggested 26. ♔f2. I think Kasparov would have been very happy with the position after 26...h4!?. Smyslov now simplifies to a draw. The Rubinstein plan has not worked this time, but half a point is better than nothing.

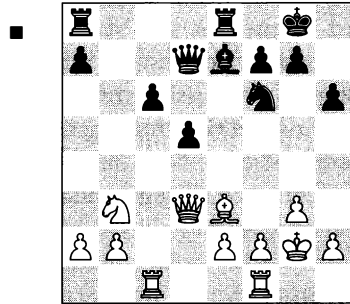
- 26. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 27. ♖xc6 ♖f6
- 28. ♖6c5 ♖xe3+ 29. ♖xe3 ♖xe3
- 30. ♖xd5 ♖xf3 31. ♖e2 ♖e3 32. ♖xh5 ♖xh5 33. ♖xh5 g5!

A draw was soon agreed.

Kasparov defended extremely well in this game. But one should not think that the combination of ...♖a8-b8 and ...a7-a5 in this structure is his exclusive know-how. Of course not. This active defence has been known for a long time and has even passed muster at the very highest level, in a match for the World Championship.

**Tigran Petrosian
Boris Spassky**

Moscow 1969



Having removed the light-squared bishop from the board is a definite achievement for Black. Even so, if White manages to get one of his minor pieces to c5 and then establish the blockade with b2-b4, he can probably hope for an advantage. Black must hurry.

18...a5! 19. ♖c2

Or 19. ♖c5 ♖d8 20. ♖c2 ♖b7 21. ♔g1 ♘d7 with rich counterplay.

19...a4 20. ♘d2

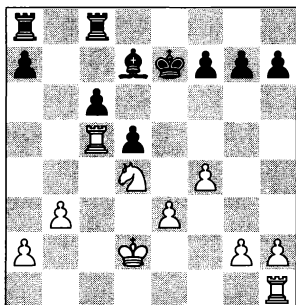
«It was necessary to play 20. ♘c5, although after 20...♖xc5 21. ♖xc5 White must think about equalising: the knight is stronger than the bishop, the pawn on c6 is easily defended and Black has good chances of developing an initiative on the kingside» – Boleslavsky.

- 20... ♖b7! 21. ♔g1 ♖ac8 22. ♖fc1 ♘d7 23. ♘f3 c5

Black's problems are obviously behind him.

Alexander Alekhine
José Raul Capablanca

Buenos Aires 1927



As you will recall, Rubinstein overcame his opponent in the endgame. To the weakness on c6 was added another on a7, whilst the white rooks dominated the a-file as surely as they did the c-file. This example is exactly the same in terms of structure. If it were his move, White would play b3-b4, and then transfer his king's rook to c1 and c3. Then, according to circumstances, either pressurise the c6-pawn (if necessary, also breaking with b4-b5), or transfer his heavy artillery to the a-file. Another variant is also possible, whereby one rook stays on the c-file and the other goes to a6, so as to attack both weaknesses at once.

In any event, Black will not survive. But it is his move, and this saves him.

21...a5! 22. ♖hc1 ♔d6 23. ♖1c3 ♖a6
24. ♗b5+ ♜e7 25. ♗d4 ♔d6

White's position is still better, but it is not clear how he can strengthen it further. Alekhine decides to change the structure, but this only leads to new exchanges.

26.e4!? dxe4 27. ♜e3 ♖b8!

27...a4 is too early, in view of 28.b4, but now the threat of ...a5-a4 forces White to hurry.

28. ♗f5+ ♗xf5 29. ♖xf5 f6 30. ♖c4 ♖b5 31. ♖d4+ ♜e6 32. ♖xb5 cxb5

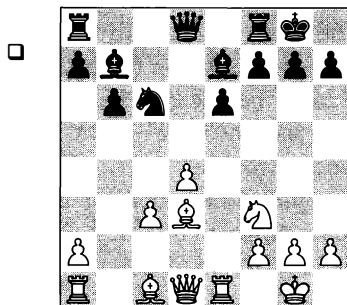
After a few more moves, a draw was agreed.

Other examples well worthy of attention are those in which the side with the pawn duo c6/d5 (or c3/d4) starts a determined kingside assault straight from the opening. As they say, the hunter and the hunted change places.

After all, the pawn pair c6/d5 (or c3/d4) is a strong pawn centre. With quiet play on the queenside, as we have seen, such a centre sooner or later becomes a weakness, but what if we use it for a determined attack on the kingside?

Yuri Razuvaev
Ivan Farago

Dubna 1979



13.h4!? ♗a5 14. ♗g5 h6 15. ♖h5 ♗d5 16. ♗h7! ♖e8 17. ♗xh6! gxh6 18. ♖xh6 f5 19. ♖e3 ♗xh4 20. ♖g3+! ♗xg3 21. ♖g6+ ♜h8 22. ♗f6!

Winning.

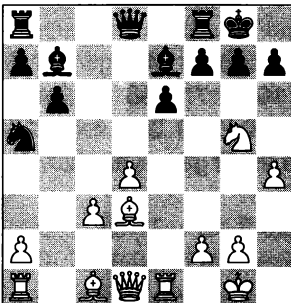
This game deservedly attracted a widespread press. Razuvaev's admission that he had done most of the work at home, and was only waiting for a chance to

use it in practice, only added fat to the fire. Everybody understood that it was not just a chance success.

What strikes one's eye? White played h2-h4 after he had castled kingside. This is unusual. And the point is not so much in the pawn sacrifice (few black players are going to be tempted by 13...♙xh4 14.♘xh4 ♖xh4 15.♞e3, followed by transferring the rook to g3 or h3), but in how successfully he camouflaged his intentions. Convention makes us think that 0-0 and h2-h4 are moves that do not go well together, but Razuvaev shows that this is not always the case.

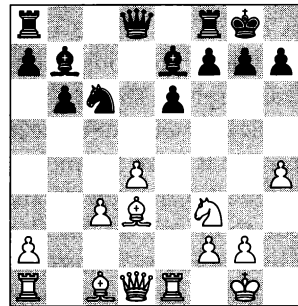
The second memorable aspect is how successfully the c3/d4-pawn duo fit into the overall landscape. An isolated pawn on d4 could be attacked, or the black knight could use the square b4 as a transit, to come via d5 to f6, to defend the kingside. But the pawn on c3 defends its colleague on d4 securely and deprives Black of these ideas. Meanwhile, the main black plan in such a position, the blockade on the squares c4 and d5, could not be realised, because Black never had the time – his king was in immediate trouble!

Time brought some amendments and refinements. In particular, it was found that after 13...♘a5 14.♘g5,



Black was not obliged to lose so tamely. Instead of 14...h6, he has the defence 14...♙xg5 15.hxg5 f5! 16.gxf6 (16.♖xe6 ♖d5) 16...♗xf6. The consequences of 15...♙xg5 ♖d5 16.♗g4 are also unclear. The game Poluliakhov-Balashov (St Petersburg 1998) went 16...f5 17.♗g3 ♖ac8 18.♞e5 ♖d7 19.♙b5 ♙c6 20.♙xc6 ♘xc6, and the players agreed a draw. More ambitious is 19.♞ae1 ♖xc3 20.♞xe6 (hoping for 20...♙e4 21.♞e7 ♗xd4 22.♙h6), but by exchanging queens with 20...♗xd4 21.♞d6 f4! 22.♞xd4 fxg3 23.fxg3 ♖c7, Black can still defend stoutly.

As well as the decentralising 13...♘a5, Black has also tried a mass of other moves:

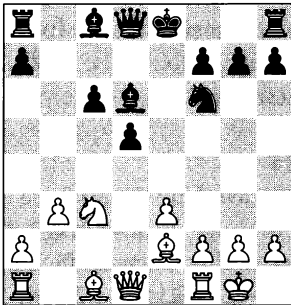


13...♗d5; 13...♖c8; 13...♙f6 etc. In his turn, White over the same period widened notably the range of his attacking tries. Black learned to meet the sacrifices on h7, f7 and e6, so White tried attacking in the centre. So, after 13...♙f6, two lovely miniatures were played: 14.♘g5 g6 15.♗g4 h5 16.♗g3 ♘e7 17.♙a3 ♖d7 18.♞ad1!, and now the choice is 18...♞ac8 19.d5!! (Timofeev-Eliet, Cappelle-la-Grande 2004) or 18...♞fe8 19.d5!! (Solomonovic-Zelic, Neum 2005).

The theory of this variation was discussed in detail in the book on the Caro-Kann, Panov Attack, by Karpov and Podgaets. But we will now look at some examples where Black, having the c6/d5-pawn duo, tried a similar attack. And it paid off.

**Alexey Aleksandrov
Jaan Ehivest**

Bled 2002



11...h5!?

First of all threatening 12...♙xh2+ (as Tal once observed, such a move barely deserves an exclamation mark) 13.♗xh2 ♘g4+ 14.♗g1 ♖h4 15.♙xg4 hxg4 or 14.♗g3 h4+! (more precise than 14...♖d6+ or 14...♗g5, after which there would follow 15.f4) 15.♗f3 (15.♗h3 ♘xf2+) 15...♗f6#.

White's reply is necessary:

12.h3

And now the most interesting moment. With his last move, Black set out on an unusual path for the game and he would like to continue it.

The first idea which deserves consideration is the Razuvaev-like 12...0-0!?, and if 13.♙xh5 ♘xh5 14.♖xh5, then 14...♞e8 followed by transferring the rook along the 6th rank to g6 or h6.

Then again, it also makes sense to look into 12...♘g4!?. The piece cannot

be taken: 13.hxg4 ♙h2+ 14.♗xh2 (nothing is changed by 14.♗h1 ♖h4) 14...♖h4+ 15.♗g1 hxg4 and mate. One can ignore the piece with 13.♙b2, but the position remains dangerous. There is one nice, though by no means obligatory variation, which runs: 13...♙c7 14.♖c1 ♖d6 15.f4 ♙b6 16.hxg4 (stronger is 16.♞f3) 16...hxg4 17.♘d1 ♖h6 (17...g3!?) 18.♙xg7 ♖xg7 19.♖xc6+ ♗e7 20.♖xa8 ♞h1+! 21.♗xh1 ♖h6+ 22.♗g1 g3 or 21.♗f2 g3+ 22.♗e1 ♙a5+, in both cases with mating threats.

There is no doubt that Ehivest saw these variations, but evidently did not calculate them clearly enough. He preferred not to burn his boats. He retained his initiative, but in a quieter position.

12...♗e7 13.♖c2

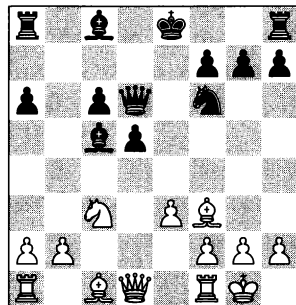
More natural is 13.♖d4, but White realised that 13...♗e5 is not a threat because of 14.f4, whilst on d4, the queen could be hit by ...c6-c5.

13...0-0 14.♙d2 ♞e8 15.♞fe1 g6 16.♞ad1 ♙f5 17.♙d3 ♙xd3 18.♖xd3 ♗e5 19.f4 ♗e6

Black stands slightly better, but it is not very much. Eventually, the game ended in a draw.

**Miron Sher
Elmar Magerramov**

Helsinki 1992



The situation is slightly different. Here it is the queen which is on d6, not the bishop. This means that the knight jump to g4 will involve mating threats. But for the moment, g4 is covered, hence:

12...h5! 13.e4

Just as we are taught – White meets a wing attack with a thrust in the centre. But the enemy central structure suddenly turns out to be unexpectedly solid...

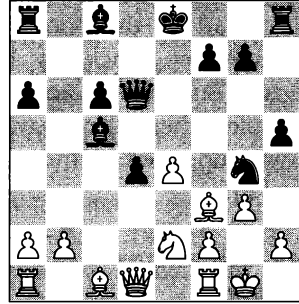
13.h3 does not solve the problems, because of 13...g4, although then after 14.g3, it is still too early to bury White: 14...xe3 15.Ke1 or 14...e5 15.g2 h4 16.g4, and if 16...xg4 17.hxg4 h3, then 18.f3, retaining cautious optimism.

13...g4 14.g3

By analogy with the game Razuvaev-Farago, one can recommend 14.xg4 xg4 15.Wd3 or 14...hxg4 15.e5! and Black is not mating, in any event.

14...d4 15.e2

A barely noticeable, but decisive mistake. White cuts the connections between his pieces. He should have played 15.a4.



15...e5!

There is no need to play for spectacular effects (15...hx2 16.xh2 h4 etc.), when there is a simple path to the objective.

16.f4

He is not saved by 16.g2 d3 17.f4 g4 18.We1 h4 19.e3 hxg3 20.hxg3 f3+ 21.xf3, and then Black has a choice: 21...xf3 22.g2 We6! 23.xc5 Wh3 or 21...Wh6!.

16...g4 17.xg4 hxg4 18.h4 d3 19.g2 Wd4 20.We1 g5! 0-1

A striking crush. It would be interesting to know if anybody, when looking through this game, had thoughts of the 'weakness' of the c6/d5-pawn couplet or the 'blockade' on d4/c5?!

Chapter 18

With the Mirror's Help

The theme of the 'mirror' is closely caught up with general chess culture, and the breadth of erudition of this or that chess player.

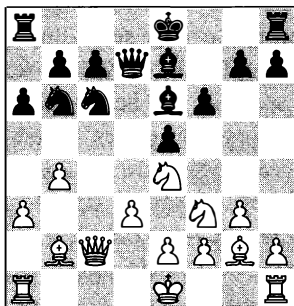
Let us assume that a player has a certain favourite variation in his opening repertoire. He studies all its subtleties, knows all the plans, and achieves good practical results with it. Naturally, he wants to add to his repertoire the same scheme, but with colours reversed. He is not even put off by the fact that, if he plays the set-up as Black, he will be a tempo down.

But it more often happens that a player, say a well-known GM, has a wide general chess culture, which allows him to orient himself in positions he only half-knows, or barely knows at all. And what do we mean by this 'orientation'? We mean play by analogy, employ means that are already known in other contexts.

Lajos Portisch
Anatoly Karpov

Linares 1981

**1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5
♘xd5 5.♙g2 ♘b6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.d3
♙e7 8.a3 ♙e6 9.b4 a6 10.♙b2
♚d7 11.♘e4 f6 12.♚c2**



The game has featured a variation of the English Opening. It is Black's move, and at first sight, he has a wide choice of plans. What should he play? Attack on the queenside or the kingside? Advance ...a6-a5 or ...f6-f5? Kingside castling or queenside? There is a mass of questions, to which it may seem there is no definite answer.

But let us repeat the opening moves, but with colours reversed: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♙g7 6.♘b3 ♘f6 7.♙e2 d6 8.♙e3 a6 9.♚d2 b5 10.a3 ♙b7 11.f3 0-0. This is a variation of the Dragon Sicilian – not a typical one; not a main line, but even so, one which leaves little doubt as to the choice of plan. The exchange of dark-squared bishops with ♙e3-h6, castling queenside, and the advance of the kingside pawns with g2-g4 and h2-h4-h5. The order could change, but all of these moves will be played.

Karpov was of the same opinion. He was not disturbed by the lack of a tempo, resulting from being Black. On the board, we have a Dragon Variation, which means that he must play as he would in the Dragon Variation.

**12...♙h3 13.0-0 ♙xg2 14.♗xg2
g5!? 15.d4**

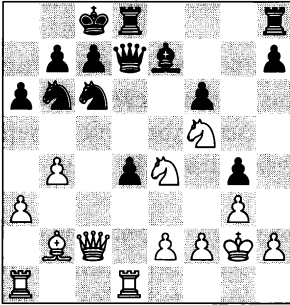
White reacts in the classical way: he meets a flank attack with a central counter. Even so, his last move involves a pawn sacrifice, and as later events show, this sacrifice does not prove justified.

Preferable was 15. ♖c5 ♙xc5 16. ♖xc5 or 16. bxc5.

15...g4 16. ♖h4 exd4 17. ♖f5 0-0-0

Of course, not 17... ♖xf5 18. ♖d6+.

18. ♖fd1



18...♖c4!

It is probably this move that White underestimated in his earlier calculations. It is hard to believe that Black will retain his material advantage in all the possible complications, but it is definitely the case: 19. ♖xd4 ♖xb2; 19. ♙xd4 ♖xf5 20. ♖d6+ ♖xd6; 19. ♖xc4 ♖xf5.

The game continuation is no better:

19. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 20. ♖c5

20. ♖xc4 ♖xe4+.

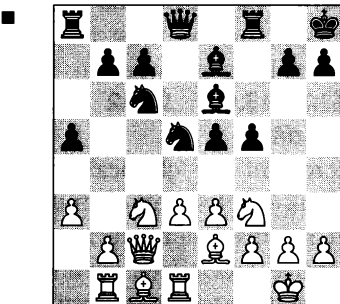
20...♖xb2 21. ♖xb2 h5

The position has stabilised, with Black having an extra pawn and the attack. Karpov won on move 37.

Vladimir Kramnik

Michael Adams

Las Vegas 1999



Another variation of the English Opening, and another mirror – this time of the Scheveningen Variation of the Sicilian.

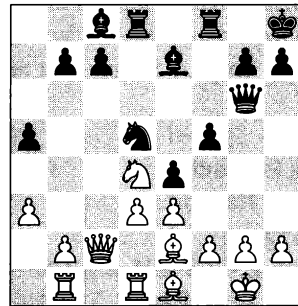
12...♖e8!? 13. ♙d2 ♖g6

This is how White plays in the Scheveningen. From here, the queen eyes the g2-square attentively, and also supports the break ...e5-e4.

14. ♙e1 ♖ad8 15. ♖b5 e4!?

The cautious 15... ♖d7 looks good, but Adams strives to seize the initiative.

16. ♖fd4 ♖xd4 17. ♖xd4 ♙c8



A culminating moment in the game. It seems as though White can take the pawn: 18. ♙xa5 b6 19. ♙e1 – no immediate threats are to be seen. But they can soon appear: 19... ♙b7 20. dxe4 ♖f4!?. As often happens in the Scheveningen, the square g7 (usually g2) is under threat. Possible variations are: 21. exf4 ♙xe4; 21. g3 ♙xe4 22. ♖xc7 ♖h3+ 23. ♖f1 ♙d6 24. ♖xb6 f4! 21. ♙f3 ♖xg2! (but not 21...fxe4 22. exf4 exf3 23. ♖xg6 hxg6 24. ♖e6) 22. exf5 (22. ♙xg2 ♙xe4) 22... ♖g5 23. ♖e6 ♖xe1+ 24. ♖xg5 ♖xc2, and it is in any event not Black who needs to worry about maintaining the balance.

18. b4 axb4 19. axb4 c6 20. ♙f1 ♙f6

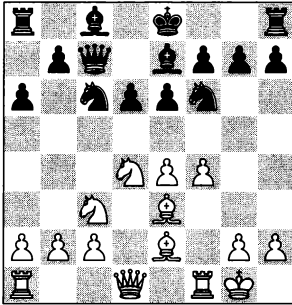
21. dxe4 fxe4

New lines have been opened for the attack – the f-file and the c8-h3 diagonal. Black went on to win.

Let us see how the plan of ♖d1-e1-g3 and e4-e5 works in a classical Scheveningen.

Ljubomir Ljubojevic
Ulf Andersson

Wijk aan Zee 1976



10. ♖e1!? 0-0 11. ♖g3 ♘d7 12. e5!?

A real pawn sacrifice.

«One's first thought on playing over the game is that, if everything is correct, then Black can no longer play the Sicilian Defence. But chess has yet to reach that point in its development» – Timman.

12... dxe5

Nobody has yet shown a mathematical win, if Black declines the sacrifice and plays 12... ♗e8.

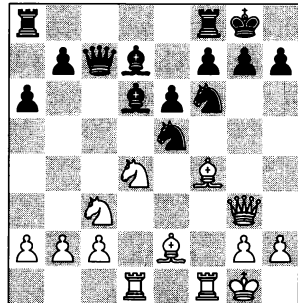
Thus, in Geller-Halme (Helsinki 1992) there followed: 13. ♚ad1 (13. ♗e4 deserves consideration) 13... ♗xd4 14. ♘xd4 ♘c6 (the correct reaction: now White cannot bring his knight quickly to the kingside) 15. f5 dxe5 16. ♘xe5 ♖b6+ 17. ♔h1. If Black retains a siege mentality, then after 17... exf5 18. ♚xf5 ♘d8 19. ♚df1 f6, he can successfully defend, for instance: 20. ♘c4+ ♔h8 21. ♚h5 fxe5 22. ♚hx7+ ♔hx7, and White has nothing better than perpetual check: 23. ♖h3+ ♔g6 24. ♖g4+ ♔h6 25. ♖h3+.

13. fxe5 ♗xe5 14. ♘f4 ♘d6 15. ♚ad1

For a very small material investment, Ljubojevic has developed a dangerous initiative. He threatens to move the knight from d4, with attacks on d6, e5 and f6. All the white pieces occupy their best positions, with the exception of his king, which should be on h1, depriving Black of a potential tempo along the g1-a7 diagonal.

Andersson defends in his own style, passively but very cleverly. He makes four retreating moves in a row, and each of these rather surprisingly relieves White of part of his initiative. After the fourth of these moves, the attack is completely extinguished, but then there follows an immediate oversight, letting White back into the game. Ljubojevic breathes again, the attack resumes with new force and White wins.

The game has been subjected to detailed analyses by Timman, Dvoretzky and other analysts. It was the centre of attention for many years. Timman called it 'the most interesting game of the last 20 years'. With the development of computer programs, we can now examine this highly interesting game anew, and the range of defensive resources for Black is significantly expanded. In general, the scope for further analysis is still immense.



For the time being, Black must find a way to deal with the retreat of the knight from d4. Weak is 15...♘d5? 16.♘f5!. The attempt to solve the problems by tactical means with 15...♘f3+? 16.♞xf3 e5 does not work because of 17.♙h6 ♘h5 18.♘d5! (on 17...♘g4, the same move would follow) winning in all variations. For example, 18...♘xg3 19.♞xg3 exd4 20.♘f6+ ♔h8 21.♙xg7#.

15...♞b8!?

The idea of this retreat is to free c7 for the bishop. It has been considered that this is the only defence, but this is not the case.

Even in the pre-computer age, the game Neurohr-Darga (Germany Bundesliga B 1994/95) was played, in which after 15...♞ad8!? 16.♘b3 ♘d5! 17.♘xd5 exd5 18.♞xd5 f6, Black had such a powerful outpost on e5 that he could look to the future with confidence. Instead of 16.♘b3, the line 16.♘f5 exf5 17.♞xd6 ♞xd6 18.♙xe5 does not work, because of 18...♞e6 19.♘d5 ♘g4. Of course, White can just play 16.♔h1, but this is a long story, and there is no question of a sudden attack.

In connection with the German GM Klaus Darga's idea, we should also consider 15...♞fd8!?

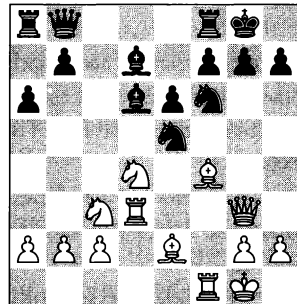
Furthermore, the then Moscow school-boy (now also a GM) Vasily Papin found a defence, beginning with the move 15...♞fe8!?. Now there is no sense in 16.♘f5 exf5. The rook on e8 also turns out to be useful in the variation 16.♘b3 ♘d5 17.♘xd5 exd5 18.♞xd5 ♙c6. Tactics also fail: 17.♞xd5 (instead of 17.♘xd5) 17...exd5 18.♘xd5 ♞xc2 19.♘f6+ ♔h8. Finally, in the variation 16.♘c6 (hoping for 16...♞xc6 17.♞xd6! ♞xd6 18.♙xe5 ♞b6+ 19.♔h1 ♔f8 20.♞xf6! gxf6 21.♙xf6, mating),

Black successfully defends by means of 16...♘f3+! (even stronger than 16...♙xc6 17.♞xd6 ♘g6) 17.♞xf3 ♙xf4 18.♞xf4 ♙xc6.

The move 15...♞ae8!? has also not been refuted, so, including Andersson's move, we have in total four plausible defences: 15...♞ad8, 15...♞fd8, 15...♞fe8 and 15...♞ae8. If you disagree, then refute them!

16.♞d3

Andersson's idea is revealed in the variation 16.♘b3 ♙c7!. In the game Arizmendi Martinez-Golod (Ubeda 2001) there followed 17.♘c5 ♞c8 (the deflection idea 17...♙b5!? 18.♙xb5 ♘h5! was also worth considering) 18.♘3e4 ♘xe4 19.♘xe4 ♘g6 20.♙xc7 ♞xc7. Black gradually neutralised his opponent's initiative and won.



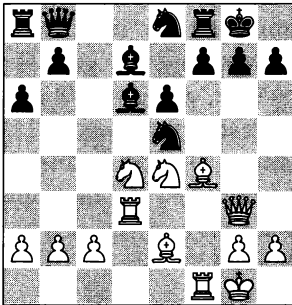
Ljubojevic's move sets new problems. The threat is 17.♞e3 winning a piece. The rook cannot be taken: 16...♘xd3 17.♙xd6 ♞a7 18.♞xd3 etc.

16...♘e8!?

This retreat was also declared by the analysts to be the only defence. On 17.♞e3 there now follows 17...♘g6, and the bishop on d6 is not hanging. Even so, Black had an alternative: 16...♞c8!? 17.♞e3 ♘c4. By means of 18.♙xd6 ♞xd6 19.♘xe6, White could regain the pawn, but after 19...♞xg3

20. ♖xg3 ♕xe6 21. ♕xc4 ♜xc4 22. ♜xf6 b5 23. a3 ♜d8, he is condemned to a long battle for a draw, in an inferior endgame. There is also little pleasure in 18. ♕xc4 ♕xf4 19. ♜xf4. Black is not obliged to go into the variation with perpetual check with 19... ♜xc4 20. ♖f5 ♖h5 21. ♖h6+ ♖h8 22. ♖xf7+ ♖g8 23. ♖h6+, as the immediate 19... ♖h5! is stronger.

17. ♖e4



17... ♕c7!?

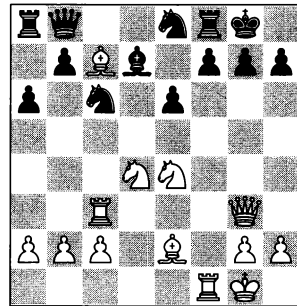
Continuing the established pattern of clever retreats. Taking the rook looks terrifying, although in analysis, there is no clear refutation. Sample variations run 17... ♖xd3 18. ♕xd6 (definitely not 18. ♖f6+ ♖xf6 19. ♕xd6 ♖e4, Pinkas-Liebert, Decin 1977) 18... ♜a7! (of course, not 18... ♖xd6 19. ♖f6+ and 20. ♖xd7) 19. c3 ♖xd6 (dangerous is 19... ♖xb2 20. ♕xf8 ♖xf8 21. ♖g5) 20. ♖f6+ ♖h8 21. ♖xd7 ♖c5 22. ♖xf8. White has an extra piece, but the knight on f8 is cut off, and Black only needs to find an accurate sequence of moves. After 22... ♖ce4 23. ♜h4 ♜xf8 24. ♕d3 e5 25. ♕xe4 ♖xe4 26. ♜xf7! White wins. Nor can Black be satisfied with 22... ♜b6 23. ♜e3 ♜xf8 24. ♖xe6! ♜e8 25. ♜xc5 ♜xc5+ 26. ♖xc5 ♜xe2 27. ♜d1 ♖e8 28. ♜d8. However, 22... ♜b6

23. ♜e3 ♜xb2! leaves the position balanced.

18. ♜c3 ♖c6!

Rather stronger than 18... f6 19. ♖c5 and 18... ♕c6 19. ♖xc6 (Timman gives many beautiful variations, in recommending 19. ♖g5!? h6 20. ♖gx6 fxe6 21. ♖xe6 ♜xf4 22. ♜xf4, but misses the strongest defence 22... ♕d6) 19... ♖xc6 20. ♕xc7 ♜xc7 21. ♖f6+ ♖h8 22. ♜xc7 ♖xc7 23. ♖d7 ♜fd8 (or 23... ♖d5 24. ♜g3 ♖d4 25. ♕d3, Delanoy-Lechtynsky, Kecskemet 1989) 24. ♖b6 ♜ab8 25. ♜xf7, with a large advantage in the ending. With the move 18... ♖c6, Andersson completes his colossal defensive work. Nothing remains of the white attack and he needs to concern himself with maintaining equality.

19. ♕c7



19... ♖xd4!

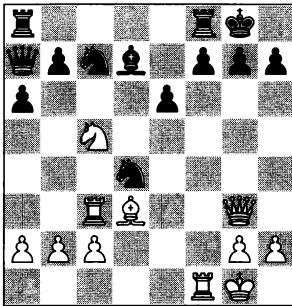
Avoiding the last trap: 19... ♖xc7 20. ♖f6+ ♖h8 21. ♜xg7+!, mating: 21... ♖xg7 22. ♜g3+ ♖h6 23. ♜f4 ♖xd4 24. ♜h4# or 22... ♖h8 23. ♜h3 h6 24. ♜xh6+ ♖g7 25. ♜h7+ ♖g6 26. ♕d3+ ♖g5 27. h4#. Also bad is 19... ♜xc7 20. ♖f6+ ♖h8 21. ♜xc7 ♖xc7 22. ♖xd7 ♖xd4 23. ♕d3 (probably sufficient for victory was 23. ♜xc7 ♖xe2+ 24. ♖f2, but naturally, White is very reluctant to allow the enemy rook onto the second rank: 23... ♜fc8 25. ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 26. ♖xe2

♖xc2+ etc.) 23...♖fc8 24.♗b6 or 23...♗cb5 24.♗xf8 ♗xc3 25.bxc3. However, the super-subtle 19...♗a7!? was possible, although Black has no need of such subtlety.

20.♗d3 ♗a7 21.♗c5

It was also possible to close the dangerous diagonal in a different way: 21.♗f2. If Black relaxes with 21...♗xc7, then he loses at once: 22.♗f6+! (this was the last trap) 22...gxf6 (22...♗h8 23.♗xd7) 23.♗xh7+! ♗xh7 24.♗h4+ ♗g7 25.♖g3#. However, any sensible reply, such as 21...♗c6, 21...♗b5 or 21...f5, leave an extra pawn and a defensible position.

Ljubojevic goes for clarity. He probably expected Andersson to take the bishop: 21...♗xc7.



analysis diagram

We don't know what Ljubojevic had planned here, but later it was found that White can force a beautiful draw: 22.♗xh7+! ♗xh7 23.♗xg7+! ♗xg7 24.♖g3+ with perpetual check. White has no choice at all: on 22.♗xc7 there is the unpleasant 22...♗b5!.

Andersson played

21...♗b5

and kept defending resourcefully. The game demanded enormous creativity from both players. At move 24 Ljubojevic committed an inaccuracy, after which Andersson even got the better of it. However, at move 30 the Swede missed a great chance in a still complicated position, and lost beautifully.

The game created a strong impression. Both the attack and the defence were rich with ideas.

In our day, the plan with an immediate 12.e5!? is rarely seen. When it is played, it is usually to exploit the beautiful drawing variation, shown in the last diagram. Alas, such is the level of knowledge nowadays. Once untrodden paths turn into main roads, and end in the gridlocked traffic of a draw. But the idea of mirror-like schemes continues to be pushed forward.

Chapter 19

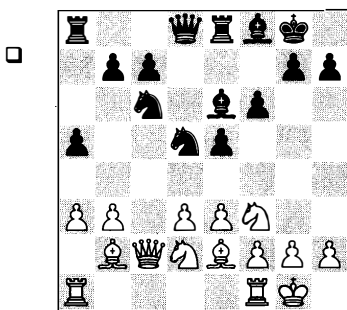
Fischer's Hedgehog and Morphy's Needles

An original plan in the Hedgehog structure is associated with Fischer's name. The outline of the plan is well known, but the pre-history is certainly not.

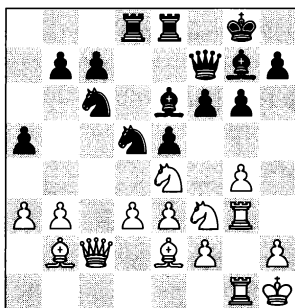
But we will not jump forward.

Robert Fischer
Ulf Andersson

Siegen 1970



13. ♖h1!? ♜d7 14. ♜g1!? ♜ad8
15. ♗e4 ♜f7 16. g4! g6 17. ♜g3 ♗g7
18. ♜ag1



The plan is in operation. Instead of just hopping from one foot to the other, as often happens in Hedgehog positions, White gathers his forces purposefully on the kingside. The way he does so does not at first strike one as obvious, and is a tribute to his ingenuity.

But for the time being, the black position is very solid. White needs to transfer his knight to f5 (sacrificing a piece in the process) to break down the defences.

18... ♗b6 19. ♗c5 ♗c8 20. ♗h4 ♗d7
21. ♗e4 ♗f8 22. ♗f5! ♗e6

Bad is 22... gxf5 23. gxf5.

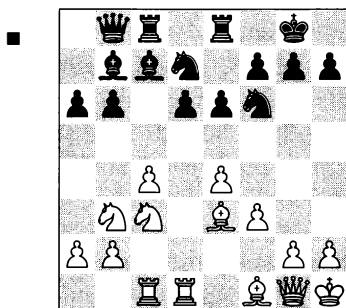
23. ♗c5 ♗e7 24. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 25. g5!

By exchanging the bishop on g7, White opens the long diagonal a1-h8 and creates irresistible threats along it.

In the press, this became known as the Fischer Plan. It is worth noting in passing that this is a mirror plan, in that it can be used by Black as well.

Mark Taimanov
Artur Jussupow

Moscow 1982



18... ♖h8!? 19. ♜c2 ♜g8!? 20. ♜cd2
g5! 21. ♗d4 ♜g6 22. ♗c1

According to Mark Dvoretsky, both sides exchange inaccuracies. White

should freeze the enemy assault with 22.g4, and Black in his turn misses the chance to play 21...h5.

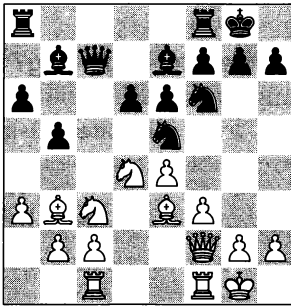
22...♖c8 23.♘d3 ♚f8 24.♗e1 g4!

Etc. «Is it easy to find a plan like ...♔g8-h8, ...♗e8-g8, ...g7-g5 at the board? No, of course not. But in this case, there was no need. Jussupow knew the game Fischer-Andersson very well, in which the plan was first played» – Dvoretsky. But no, it was not the first.

Julio Garcia Soruco

Robert Fischer

Havana 1966



14...♔h8!? 15.♘c2 ♗g8!?

An interesting picture: Black, as it were, is wearing blinkers, and refuses to be distracted by tempting side-roads. Instead of 14...♔h8, the move 14...♘c4 looks more natural, while after the knight has left c3, 15...d5 looks excellent. But Fischer pursues his idea!

16.♔h1 g5! 17.h3 ♗g6 18.♘g3 ♗ag8

The set-up is complete, but the battle is far from over. A sensible continuation for White is 19.♘de2 h5 20.♘c3, and if 20...g4, then 21.hxg4 hxg4 22.f4. Probably, Black should not rush things. He can set up a battery on the long diagonal: after 20...♗c6 21.♗d4 ♚b7, the whole battle is ahead.

Instead, White managed to find a way of losing in two moves. These things

happen, when players of a lower class find themselves faced with a situation that is on the edge of their understanding, with an unusual set-up or a plan they have not seen before. There comes a desire to clarify the situation and take play into forcing channels. And this often ends up involving an oversight.

19.♘xe6 fxe6 20.♗xe6

The combination is in itself dubious, but after Black's reply, it leads to immediate defeat.

20...♘xe4! 21.♘xe4 ♗xe6 0-1

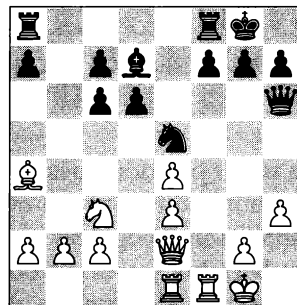
It seems the source game has been found. Can we consider our small historical escapade finished? Not quite.

In 2004, I worked as trainer of the Iranian team. I read lectures, including one on the Fischer Hedgehog. The lecture had been prepared some time ago, and went fine, with nobody expecting any surprises. Then suddenly, one of the listeners, Abulgasseem Nadjib (an international arbiter and children's trainer) cheerfully showed us an even earlier source. It turned out we needed to go back more than 150 years.

Louis Paulsen

Paul Morphy

New York 1857



15...♔h8!? 16.♘d1 g5! 17.♘f2 ♗g8 18.♘d3 g4!

The real thing, eh?...

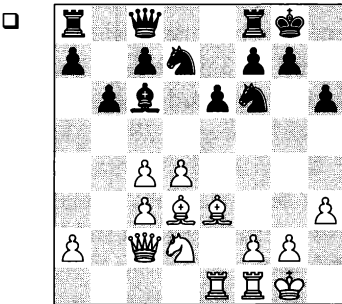
19. ♖xe5 dxe5 **20.** hxc4 ♖xc4 **21.** ♗f2
♜g6 **22.** ♗xf7 ♗e6 **23.** ♗xc7 ♜xc2+!
24. ♖xc2 ♗h3+ **25.** ♖f2 ♗h2+

Faced with mate in 3, White resigned.

«I played through several hundred Morphy games and was amazed at his inventiveness» – Fischer. The following example is even more surprising. In this, Morphy and his opponent appear as if in a mirror – The 'Fischer Plan' – yes, in the middle of the 19th century.

Paul Morphy
Adolf Anderssen

Paris 1858



16. ♖h2 ♖h8 **17.** ♜g1 ♜g8 **18.** g4 g5

Of course, Anderssen is not copying his opponent's moves just by way of a parody. He wants to set up a barrier to the pawn advance, but in vain.

19. f4 ♗f8 **20.** ♜g3 ♜d8

More tenacious is 20... ♗d6.

21. ♖f3 ♗xf3 **22.** ♜xf3 ♗d6 **23.** ♖g2

Black's position is difficult. He decides on a piece sacrifice, but the combination cannot bring success.

23... ♖h5

Counting on 24.gxh5 gxf4+, although here too, White has the advantage: 25. ♖h1 fxe3 26. ♜xf7 ♜g3 27. ♗f1 ♖f8 28. ♗e4.

24. fxc5 hxc5 **25.** gxh5 g4 **26.** hxc4

More precise is 26. ♜xf7 gxh3+ 27. ♖h1 ♜g2 28. ♗f4! and if 28... ♗c6, then 29. ♗e4, whilst if 28...e5, then 29. ♗e2!.

26... ♜xc4+ **27.** ♖f1 f5 **28.** ♗f2 ♖e5
29. dxe5

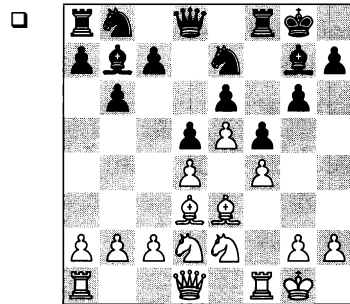
Morphy has played the game superbly up to this moment. But now he commits a lapse and has to begin the realisation of his advantage all over again:

29... ♗xd3+ **30.** ♗e2 ♗e4

etc. After 29. ♗f4 ♖xd3 30. ♗xd6 ♖xf2 31. ♗e5+ and 32. ♖xf2, the game would have ended at once.

Paul Morphy
Alexander Meek

New York 1857



In this structure, where the white pawn wedge d4/e5/f4 faces a black wedge d5/e6/f5, Morphy often conducted the attack with the aid of the break g2-g4. This game is proof of that.

10. h3! ♖d7 **11.** ♖h2 c5 **12.** c3 c4
13. ♗c2 a6 **14.** ♖f3 h6 **15.** g4 ♖h7
16. ♜g1 ♜g8 **17.** ♗e1

White has carried out the attack strictly in accordance with his plan and stands very threateningly. But his attacking arsenal is limited. Probably, one should expect a sacrifice on g6 or f5.

This makes Black's next move all the more surprising, as he voluntarily removes the main defender of the weak squares, with his own hand.

17...♘c6 18.♘h4

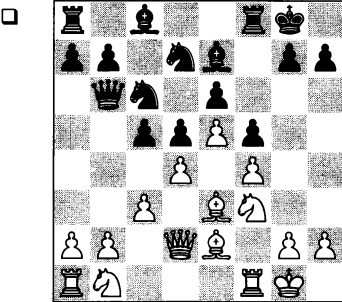
It is all over. On 18...♘e7, there is 19.♘xg6! ♘xg6 20.gxf5 exf5 21.♙xf5. On 18...♘f8, this combination is not so clear: 19.♘xg6 ♘xg6 20.gxf5 exf5 21.♙xf5 ♘e7 22.♙c2 ♙c8 23.♘g3 ♖f8, and Black has slowed up the advance f4-f5, at least for some time. But all questions are resolved by 19.gxf5 gxf5 20.♘xf5 exf5 21.♙xf5+ ♔h8 22.♙c2, followed by the advance of the f-pawn. The text move also fails to save Black:

18...♜f8 19.♘xg6! ♔xg6 20.gxf5+ ♔f7 21.fxe6+ ♔xe6 22.f5+

The rest is not worth seeing. Black soon resigned.

**Peter Leko
Wolfram von Alvensleben**

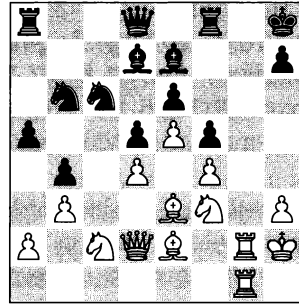
Budapest 1990



The structure is identical to that shown in the previous example. White has two possible breaks: c3-c4 or g2-g4. But on 12.c4, he must reckon with 12...cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♙c5 14.♖d1 g5!?, and the central pawn triangle d4-e5-f4 comes under attack from all sides.

Grandmaster Leko prefers to follow in Morphy's footsteps:

**12.h3! a6 13.♔h2 ♜d8 14.♖g1 ♔h8
15.g4 g6 16.♘a3 cxd4 17.cxd4 b5
18.♘c2 ♘b6 19.b3 ♙d7 20.♖g2 b4
21.♖ag1 a5 22.gxf5 gxf5**



White has achieved a great deal. He has opened the g-file, and doubled rooks on it. But he cannot succeed without getting his queen into the action. The strongest piece belongs on h4. That means that White's plan should involve the exchange of bishops.

23.♜e1! ♜e8 24.♙f2! ♘a7

Either very brave or just careless. Admittedly, 24...♜f7 25.♙h4 ♖g8 does not enable him to defend either: 26.♘g5 ♜f8 27.♘xh7! ♖xg2+ 28.♖xg2 ♔xh7 29.♙xe7 ♜xe7 30.♜g3, with mate in a few moves. But 24...♜h5 25.♘g5 ♜h6 still permits him to defend stubbornly.

25.♙h4 ♙b5

Here, a quicker way to the aim was 26.♖g7 ♖f7 27.♙f6. But even after

26.♜g3

White was able to conduct the game to victory without difficulty:

**26...♖f7 27.♙xe7 ♖xe7 28.♜h4
♜f7 29.♘g5 ♜f8 30.♙h5 ♘d7
31.♙g6 ♜g8 32.♘f7+ ♖xf7
33.♙xf7 ♜xf7 34.♜h6 1-0**

Eastern books have a rather rich style for Europeans, but I will allow myself to quote from one in conclusion: «The great sages give their lessons to posterity, from the depths of the grave. They themselves may have passed on, but their creations do not decay, and continue to assist teachers throughout the centuries to come.»

Chapter 20

March of the Tank Columns

«When you play against Botvinnik, it seems as though you have a tank facing you» – Keres once joked, gloomily, in giving his due to the sixth World Champion's positional mastery.

Botvinnik studied chess wholly. He had several favourite pawn structures, which he knew to perfection. He knew what to do in these structures in the opening, middlegame and endgame. He knew his own plans and those of his opponent. He played the entire game with his eyes open. There were no surprises or mysteries for him in the positions he knew. His opponents were less well prepared and they had to seek the truth (or, rather, suffer for it) at the board, while Mikhail Moiseevich quietly and calmly punished their mistakes.

One of his favourite pawn structures was the so-called Maroczy Bind, with pawns on c4 and e4 against a pawn on d6. The plan which Botvinnik worked out in such positions looked like this:

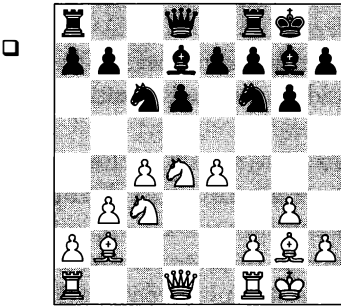
- freeze the central pawn structure, by preventing the breaks ...b7-b5 and ...d6-d5;
- put a knight on d5;
- by positional pressure, force Black to capture this knight;
- after the exchange, take with the e4-pawn, thereby opening the e-file for his major pieces;
- double his major pieces on the e-file, pressing on the backward e7-pawn;
- force new weaknesses in the enemy position and at the necessary moment, quickly shift the major pieces to the kingside or queenside, where they can decide the outcome of the game.

This plan brought Botvinnik unarguable success in many games. They are almost all well-known: Botvinnik-Lisitsin (Leningrad 1930), Kirillov-Botvinnik (Moscow 1931), Botvinnik-Lilienthal (Moscow 1936) and many others.

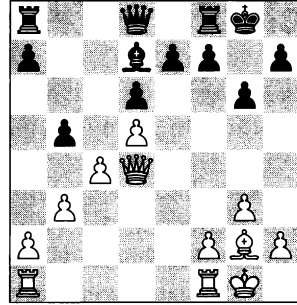
Dozens of articles have been written on this theme, and the above examples have appeared in many of them. There is no need to repeat them again here, and instead, we will show a game which is less well-known.

Mikhail Botvinnik
Khrisogon Kholodkevich

Moscow 1927



13.exd5 ♖xd4 14.♙xd4 b5
15.♙xg7 ♜xg7 16.♚d4+ ♜g8



In the opening, Black sent his knight on a long-winded march via b8-d7-e5-c6 and consequently reached a well-known theoretical position, two tempi down. He should by now have managed either to exchange on d4 and transfer his bishop to c6, or set up a pawn row on the sixth rank with ...a7-a6, ...e7-e6. But he has not managed either.

12.♗d5

Played without hesitation. From a more average player, one could expect the 'deeper' manoeuvre ♗d4-c2-e3-d5 or completion of development with 12.♚d2, ♜a1-d1 and ♜f1-e1.

12...♗xd5

One is amazed by the submissiveness of many of Botvinnik's opponents. As if under hypnosis, they follow out precisely the scenario which he had envisaged, and they only take active measures when it is already too late.

It was worth considering the pawn sacrifice 12...e6!? 13.♗xc6 ♙xc6 14.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 15.♙xf6 ♚xf6 16.♚xd6 ♜fd8. If 17.e5, then 17...♚f5, and the pawn will most likely be regained, whilst after 17.♚c5 ♚c3 or 17.♚b4 ♚b2, Black gets counterplay. In any case, the game would take on a very different course.

17.cxb5!

This is what we spoke about in the preamble to this game. White has three possibilities: take on b5, advance the pawn with 17.c5 or allow Black to take on c4 after 17.♜fe1 bxc4 18.bxc4. Which possibility should he prefer?

If one is faced with this problems at the board, one could fail to find the right answer. It is a lottery. The greatness of Botvinnik was that he always, or almost always, solved such problems in his home analysis, and in the game itself, just reproduced his prepared answer. He studied structures and thought in terms of schemes. His plans were worked out not for 2-3 moves, but for the whole game. In this respect, he was ahead of his time.

17...♙xb5 18.♜fe1 ♚d7 19.♜e3 f5

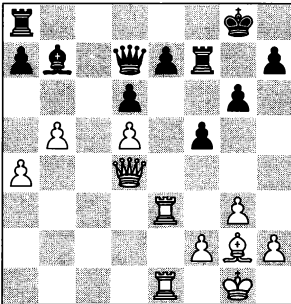
The following note is characteristic of the sixth World Champion:

«Black weakens his position, so as to defend the e7-pawn from f7, although he could have done this equally well from e8, and also by 19...a5 and from the square c7. Having missed the chance to play ...a7-a5, Black gets a passive position. White's queenside pawns start to advance, which gives him a decisive advantage.»

Not a single concrete variation! The whole discussion is just about favour-

able and unfavourable changes to the pawn structure. This is how he thought. And one more thing. The game against Kholodkevich, if one plays it through quickly on the board, looks entirely one-sided. Even so, Botvinnik did not miss the opportunity to draw some lessons from it and later to criticise himself for an inaccuracy. Instead of 19.♖e3, stronger was 19.a4 ♘a6 20.b4, first establishing the favourable queenside pawn structure, and only then turning his attention to doubling rooks on the e-file. Black, in his turn, could also have played more strongly: 18...a5! 19.♖e3 a4 20.b4 ♖c8 with some counterplay.

20.a4 ♘a6 21.♖ae1 ♖f7 22.b4 ♘b7 23.b5



White's plan has been fully realised and Black's position is close to being hopeless.

23...a6 24.b6 ♖c8 25.a5

This decision is also characteristic of the pragmatist Botvinnik. When playing positional chess, he practically never allowed himself to be distracted by tactical nuances, even when they were objectively in his favour.

I think few players would have been able to resist the chance to finish the game off with a beautiful combination: 25.♖h4 ♗f8 26.a5 ♖c5 27.♖e6! ♖xa5 28.♖xg6! hxg6 29.♖h8# or 27...♘xd5

28.♖d4! ♘xe6 29.♖h8#. But Botvinnik was thinking differently. He is not worried by the black rook coming to c5, because the exchange of this rook is part of his plans anyway:

25...♖c5 26.♖c3 ♖xc3

Not 26...♖xa5 27.♖c7, and nor is anything changed by 26...♖c8 27.♖ec1.

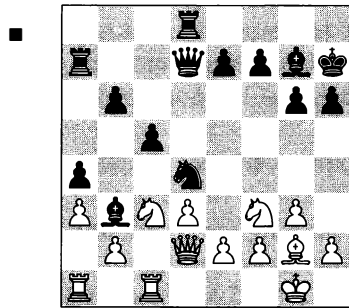
27.♖xc3 ♖f8 28.♖e3 ♖e8 29.♖c1 ♖c8 30.♖xc8+ ♘xc8 31.♖e6+! ♖xe6 32.dxe6 ♗g7 33.b7 ♘xb7 34.♘xb7

And after a few more moves, Black resigned.

But Botvinnik had his own teacher. To Mikhail Moiseevich's honour, he never tried to claim the credit for others' successes. Thus, in this instance, he openly admitted that he had learnt this plan from a game of Rubinstein.

**Nikolay Zubarev
Akiba Rubinstein**

Moscow 1925



26...e5!?

Not being distracted by the gain of a pawn: 26...♗xf3+ 27.♘xf3 c4, and probably intending his next move.

27.♗xd4 exd4!

Only thus. Rubinstein takes not with the queen or the c-pawn, but with the e-pawn.

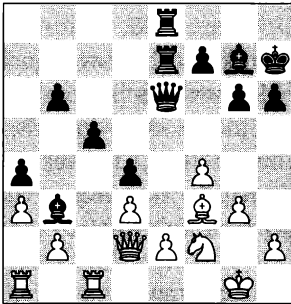
28.♘d1 ♖e8 29.f4

The same mistake as Kholodkevich repeated two years later. More tenacious was 29.e4, although, as Razuvaev points out, «White is not to be envied in this case either». After, for example, 29...dxe3 30.♘xe3 ♖d4 31.♖c3 ♜d8 (but not 31...♜d7 32.♙c6) or 30...f5!? there is definitely nothing to envy, indeed.

29...♜e6 30.♙f3 ♜ae7

And now we have the well-known doubling of rooks on the e-file.

31.♘f2



31...♙d5!

Rubinstein is not disturbed by the prospect of losing the advantage of the bishop pair. It is much more important to remove the main defender of the e2-pawn.

32.♙xd5 ♜xd5 33.♜e1 ♜h5 34.♜d1

There is nothing better: 34.♚f1 ♜xh2, or 34.♘e4 f5.

34...♜xe2 35.♜xe2 ♜xe2 36.♜xa4 ♜e6

In a deliberate attempt to show his whole plan to the end, Black overdoes it a bit. Simpler was 36...♜xb2 37.♜xe8 ♜xa1+.

37.♜b1 ♜f3 38.♜d1

Black's task would be complicated by 38.♜b3 (or 38.♜b5), blocking the breaks ...c5-c4 and ...d4-d3. Black would

probably have continued 38...♜e2 39.♜f1 f5 followed by the advance of the kingside pawns, which should lead to a win anyway.

38...♜e2 39.♜f1 c4! 40.b4

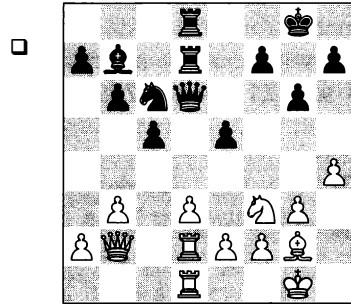
40.dxc4 d3.

40...cxd3 41.♜b3 ♜xf2!

White resigned without waiting for 42.♜xf2 ♜d1+ and 43...♜xb3.

**Esteban Canal
Akiba Rubinstein**

Carlsbad 1929



19.e3!?

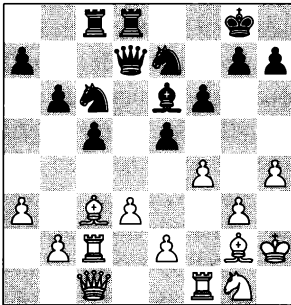
A highly interesting situation. White either knew, or maybe guessed, the threat posed by the Rubinstein-Botvinnik plan. He sensed that Black planned to post his knight on d4, take back with the e5-pawn and build up on the e-file, etc.

Decades later, theory has followed the path taken intuitively by Canal. A new opening scheme grew into being, known as the Hedgehog, where the pawns are arranged along the sixth (or here, the third) rank. Theory became deeper and wider, and it was shown that the threatening-looking Maroczy Bind could in reality be attacked and even completely broken down. The proponents of the Maroczy needed to find new plans.

More of that later. But for now, we can say that the theory of this pawn structure developed on the basis of the Rubinstein-Botvinnik plan. But they were not the first to come up with the plan. The first explorer here was someone else.

Jacques Mieses
Mikhail Chigorin

Barmen 1905



21...d4! 22. exd4

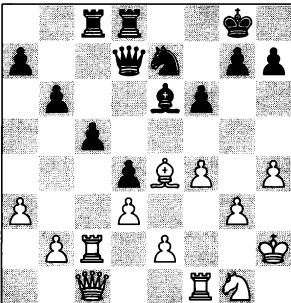
More cunning is 22.fxe5!? and if 22...xc2, then 23.xc2 fxe5 24.f3, with some counterplay for the sacrificed exchange.

22...exd4!

The moment of truth!

23. e4

Forced, in view of the threat ...e7-f5-e3.



But now Black could play 23...b3!, forcing the rook to occupy the square d2, from where it would have no other moves. Then Black goes 24...f5, forcing the exchange of bishop for knight, and then he can quietly double his major pieces on the e-file and prepare the breaks ...b6-b5 and ...c5-c4. However, Chigorin chose...

23...d5 24.f5 c6 25. f4 e8
26. f3 xe4 27.dxe4 e7 28. d2

The e-file is closed and the whole game has taken on a chaotic appearance.

Another favourite Botvinnik pawn structure was one which arises often in the Queen's Gambit, Ragozin and, especially, the Nimzo-Indian. It arises as follows: Black brings his bishop out to b4. After being hit by a2-a3, the bishop takes on c3, and thus the b2-pawn transfers to c3. Then there is an exchange of pawns on d5, so that White gets rid of his c4-pawn and Black of his e6-pawn. We reach a position where Black has central pawns on c5 and d5, and White on c3, d4 and e3. At first glance, it does not look attractive for White. His pawns do not look very mobile, as any advance (c3-c4 or e3-e4) leads only to further exchanges. The dark-squared bishop on c1 is shut in on all sides by its own pawns. But Botvinnik worked out a plan, to which his opponents could find no resistance.

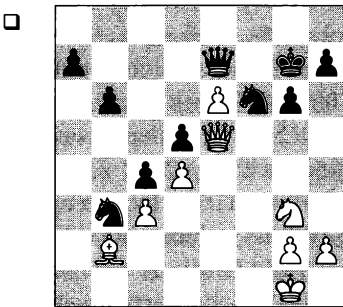
In the ideal scenario, by strength or cunning, White induces his opponent to play ...c5-c4. If this is not possible, the plan can still be carried out with tension between the pawns c5/d4. Thus, White first plays f2-f3, then regroups his pieces (knight to g3, queen and rooks to the e- and f-files), and plays e3-e4. If Black takes on e4,

White recaptures with the pawn from f3. The f-file is opened and White gets a powerful outpost on f5. If the exchange on e4 does not take place, then the pawn advances to e5 and is then joined by its neighbour: f3-f4-f5.

The slow and methodical advance of the e- and f-pawns can resemble a tank formation. Keres knew what he was talking about, especially after he lost to Botvinnik at the XX USSR Championship (Moscow 1952) in precisely this structure.

The most well-known example of this plan is the game Botvinnik-Capablanca, AVRO 1938. This is possibly one of the most oft-quoted games of all time and it is hard to imagine any chess lover who does not know the game.

I once worked as trainer to the Turkish national team. One summer, in the town of Ürgüp, a training session was organised for promising young players, to which the well-known grandmaster Mikhail Gurevich was invited. At the start of the session, Mikhail put the following position on the demonstration board:



The end of the 'game for all time' Botvinnik-Capablanca. White won by
30. ♖a3! ♜xa3 31. ♘h5+! gxh5
32. ♜g5+ ♔f8 33. ♜xf6+ ♔g8 34.e7
 and his king escapes the checks.

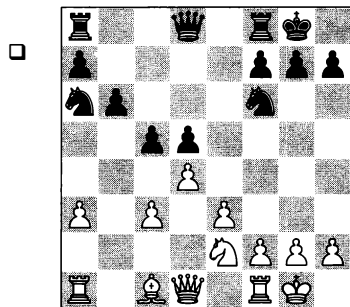
Why did GM Gurevich use this position? Probably to wake the audience up. It was to be a long and complicated lecture, so probably he thought this nice combination would be a suitable warm-up for people.

But suddenly, it became apparent that the youngsters were not familiar with this classic position. Gurevich was in shock. He could not continue the lecture and announced a break, before he went on. Later, over dinner, he voiced his astonishment to the President of the Turkish Chess Federation, Ali Nihat Yazici. Emotionally, he declared that all of the country's trainers needed to be brought together and warned to study the classics!

This would be a very appropriate time to show an example from Gurevich's own practice. It is interesting to see how he managed to implement the Botvinnik plan (jumping ahead, we can say that he did so faultlessly).

Mikhail Gurevich
C. Santos Pereira

Breda 1998



12.f3!? ♜e8 13. ♘g3 ♜d7 14. ♜d3
♜a4 15. ♖b2

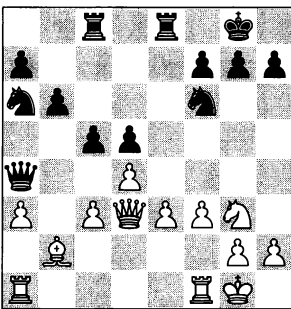
There is no need to hurry with the advance e3-e4. After 15.e4 cxd4

16.cxd4 dxe4 17.fxe4 ♖ad8, the centre could come under attack: 18.♟f5 ♜xe4, 18.♙b2 ♜c5. It is tempting to sacrifice the exchange with 18.♜xf6!? but as practice has shown, White's activity suffices for only a draw: 18...♜xd4! (stronger than 18...gxf6 19.♟f5) 19.♚e2 gxf6 20.♚g4+ ♖h8 (20...♖f8!? and White does not succeed in giving mate: 21.♟f5 ♚d1+) 21.♙b2 ♜g8 (of course, not 21...♜c5 22.♟f5 ♜g8 23.♚f3 with irresistible threats on the long diagonal) 22.♚f3 ♜g6 (P.Littlewood-Robatsch, Borovo 1980).

15...♜ac8

Routinely played. Black hopes after the exchange on d4 to come in on c2, but White can easily cover this entry square, while the rook does not find useful employment on the c-file.

Better is 15...♜ad8, trying to take play back into the variation given in the previous note: 16.e4 dxe4 17.fxe4 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♜c5 etc. White would probably have replied 16.♜ae1 ♚b3 17.♚d2, and the advance e3-e4 is again on the agenda.



16.♜f2!?

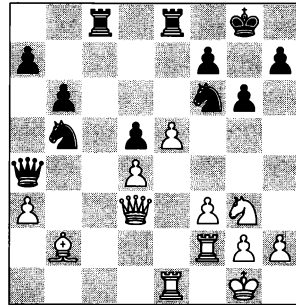
Grandmaster play. Black probably counted only on 16.♜ae1 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♚c2 (or 17...♚c4 18.♚d2 ♚c2) 18.♚xa6 ♚xb2 19.♜e2 (19.♚xa7 ♜c2) 19...♚c3 (but not 19...♚b3 20.e4)

20.♚xa7 ♜xe3 21.♚xb6 ♜xe2 22.♜xe2 ♚xa3, with a draw.

16...g6

White has not yet begun in earnest, yet Black already faces a crisis of ideas, which is the usual scenario in this structure. If 16...cxd4 17.cxd4 ♚c4, then 18.♚d2, and again it is not easy to suggest the next move.

17.♜e1 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♜c7 19.e4 ♜b5 20.e5



The Botvinnik plan in action. One tank has already reached e5, its tracks squashing all life around it. Soon, its example will be followed by another: f3-f4-f5. Not wishing to die a quiet death in his bed, Black initiates complications, but this only accelerates his demise.

20...♜c4 21.♟f1 ♜xd4 22.♜d2

22.♜d1 also wins.

22...♜c6 23.♜xc4 dxc4 24.♚d2!

The last subtlety. It is clear that White would like to set up a queen and bishop battery, but after 24.♚c3 ♜d5 the black pieces come alive. White finds another way to create threats on the long diagonal, without allowing any counterplay:

24...♜h5 25.e6! fxe6 26.♚d7

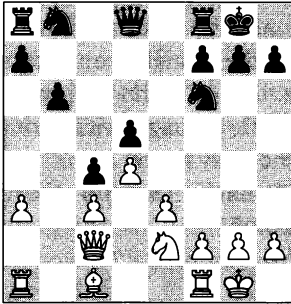
Black resigned in view of 26...♜e7 27.♚c8+ ♖f7 28.♚h8.

Now we jump from a modern game to another classic:

Svetozar Gligoric

Pal Benko

Budapest 1948



The situation here is slightly different from the previous example. Black has voluntarily played ...c5-c4, taking the pressure off the centre and depriving himself of counterplay on the c-file. In return, he gets the chance of the plan of a queenside pawn advance: ...d8-b8-c6, ...b6-b5, ...a7-a5, ...b5-b4 etc.

White's plan is clear in its general features: f2-f3, d2-e2-g3 and e3-e4. The intrigue lies in how White places his bishop. It can develop to d2 or b2, or it can stay where it is, keeping the second rank clear for the rook: a1-a2-e2.

14.f3!?

Interestingly, Gligoric himself was unsure of the accuracy of this move, despite his convincing victory in the game. He suggested instead 14.g3, then a1-e1 and only then f2-f3. The passivity of the bishop on b2 is only apparent: Black, if he wants any counterplay, will have to advance his b-pawn to b4, and then, after all the exchanges and the advance e3-e4, the bishop will play down the long diagonal.

We should add that in the same structure, Botvinnik often chose a3-a4 and c1-a3.

14...e8 15.g3 d6 16.f2

Necessary to defend the centre. The immediate 16.e4 fails to 16...dxe4 17.fxe4 dxd4!

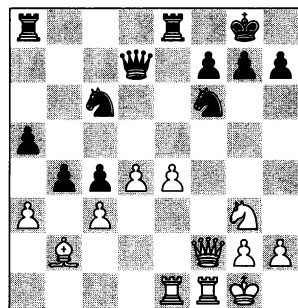
In his notes, Gligoric returns time and again to the problem of developing the bishop on c1, pointing out that he refrained from 16.gd2 because of the manoeuvre ...d6-a5-b3, and the bishop is exchanged. This is a questionable decision. In the game Szabo-Kottnauer (Groningen 1946), in reply to 16.gd2! there followed exactly this continuation: 16...a5 17.e4 d3 18.ae1 dxd2, but after 19.gxd2 e7 20.f5 e6 21.g5 g6 22.g4! Black had not equalised. Things are even worse for him after the thematic 18...b5 19.e5 d7 20.f4 a5 21.f5 (Sharyadzanov-Brumen, Pula 1999).

16...d7 17.g2

The alternative is 17.a2 b5 18.e2 a5 19.e4 dxe4 20.fxe4 b4, with mutual play.

17...e6

A critical variation for the overall assessment is 17...b5 18.ae1 a5 19.e4 dxe4 20.fxe4 b4.



analysis diagram

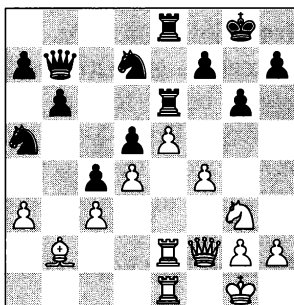
One would like to continue the attack: 21.axb4 axb4 22.cxb4 dxb4 23.f5 d3 24.g3, but I could not find a clear path to an advantage. Black has two defences: 24...g6 25.dh6+ g7

26. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 27. ♖f1+ ♜g7 28. ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 29. ♘xf7 ♘xb2 and 24... ♘h5 25. ♘h6+ (25. ♗g4!?) 25... ♜h8 (but not 25... ♜f8 26. ♗d6+!, mating) 26. ♘xf7+ ♗xf7 (also possible is 26... ♜g8, forcing White to give perpetual) 27. ♗xd3 cxd3 28. ♖xf7 ♘f6 29. d5 ♜g8 30. ♖b7 ♖xe4. There is the reserve line 21. cxb4 axb4 22. d5 ♘e5 23. ♙xe5 ♖xe5 24. axb4, keeping an extra pawn, but, frankly speaking, this is not quite what White was dreaming of.

18. ♖ae1 ♖ae8 19. ♖e2 g6

«Both here and on the next move, the plan with ...b6-b5, ...a7-a5, ...b5-b4 was an absolute necessity» – Gligoric.

20. ♖fe1 ♘a5 21. e4 ♗b7 22. e5 ♘d7 23. f4



The Botvinnik plan is almost complete. If White manages to play f4-f5, his position will be completely winning.

23...f5

The best chance. If now 24. exf6, then 24... ♖xe2 25. ♖xe2 ♖xe2 26. ♗xe2 ♘xf6 27. ♗e5 ♜f7 28. f5 ♗e7 and nothing remains of White's advantage. Therefore Gligoric accepts the fact that Black has managed to set up a blockade, and he prepares to break it down with the new break g2-g4!

24. ♘f1 b5

Astonishing carelessness. Black already has one inactive knight on a5, and now

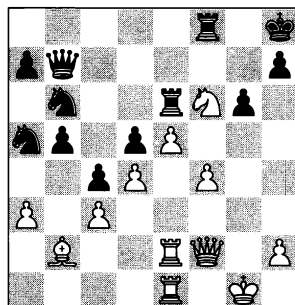
he prepares to put the other offside too. In fairness, though, we should say that bringing the errant steed back towards its colleague with 24... ♘c6 25. ♘e3 ♘e7 was also not such a great idea: 26. a4! b5 27. axb5 ♗xb5 28. ♙a3!. The square f5 cannot be supported by such primitive means. Even so, Black's pieces should be heading from the queenside to the kingside, not the other way round.

25. ♘e3 ♘b6 26. g4!

The position is clarified: White has a large advantage.

26...fxg4 27. ♘xg4 ♖f8 28. ♘f6+ ♜h8

The exchange sacrifice 28... ♖exf6 29. exf6 ♖xf6 does not ease his position, in view of 30. ♖e7.



29. ♗g2

Gligoric plays in the style of Botvinnik: the main thing is the plan, and it should not be disrupted in the search for prettiness. White is probably winning after 29. f5, since in the endgame after 29... gxf5 30. ♗xf5 ♗f7 31. ♙c1 ♗g6+ 32. ♗xg6 hxg6, White can create a mating attack: 33. ♙h6! ♖f7 34. ♖e3 ♘c6 35. ♖h3 etc.

In analysis, it is useful to study f4-f5 on move 27 as well. The plan is a great thing, of course, but concrete variations are also an important part of the battle in chess.

29...♟c6

More tenacious is 29...♟b3, preventing the bishop coming out via c1, but in his own time-trouble, Black sets a trap...

30.♞h3

White for some reason does not fall for it: 30.♟xd5 ♟xd4!

30...♟d8

30...♞f7 31.♟xh7!

31.♙c1 ♟c8 32.♝h1 ♞a6 33.f5

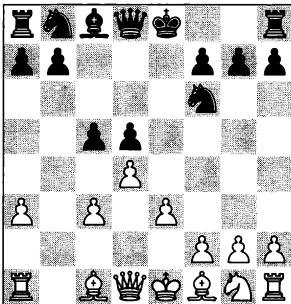
Finally! After

33...gxf5 34.♙h6

Black lost on time, but his position was already completely lost.

Garry Kasparov
Judit Polgar

Tilburg 1997



8.f3!?

For some reason, White refrains from the usual 8.♙d3. One cannot rule out the possibility that he hoped to provoke Black's next move.

8...c4

A concession. The bishop on f1 will find its way into the game somehow anyway, whilst the tension between the pawn duo c5/d4 would very much have suited Black.

9.♟e2 ♟c6 10.g4!?

Those who have studied Kasparov's play in this structure know that he loves to include this move in the general plan.

10...h6

Another concession. Black does not play concretely and quickly falls into a difficult position.

Black's play was stronger in the game Kortchnoi-O'Kelly de Galway (Bucharest 1954): 10...♟a5 11.♟g3 ♟b3 12.♞a2 h5!?. The correct strategy! It is essential to bother White on both flanks, and not allow him to carry out the classical plan in comfort. After 13.g5 ♟xc1 14.♞xc1 ♟g8 15.h4 ♟e7 16.e4 ♞c7, an unclear position arose, with mutual chances.

11.♟g2 ♟a5 12.0-0 ♟b3 13.♞a2 0-0

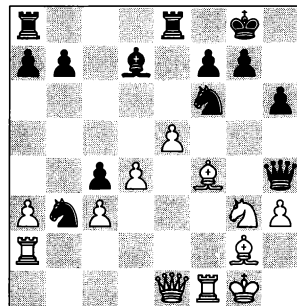
14.♟g3 ♟d7 15.♞e1 ♞e8 16.e4!?

Kasparov is in his element. Without being deflected by prophylaxis (16. h3), he immediately makes the central breakthrough, sacrificing material.

16...dxe4 17.fxe4 ♟xg4

Black is forced to go with the flow. It is in no way better to play 17...♟xc1 18.♞xc1 ♟xg4 19.♞af2 or 18...♟xg4 19.h3 ♞c7 20.e5. If the pawn were on c5, it would be a different matter altogether.

18.♙f4 ♞h4 19.h3 ♟f6 20.e5!

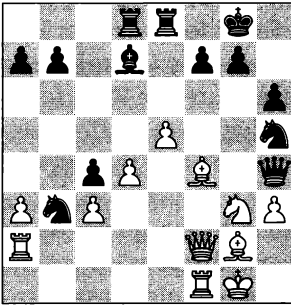


The critical moment in the game. It would appear that, by answering blow with blow, by means of 20...♙xh3 21.♙xh3 ♞xh3 22.♞h2 ♞g4 (22...♞e6 23.♙xh6! ♟g4 24.♙xg7! ♟xh2 25.♝xh2) 23.♙xh6! ♟xd4! (but not

23...♔d5 24.♙xg7! ♚xg7 25.♖h1!)
 24.cxd4 ♜xd4+ 25.♙e3 ♜xe5, Black
 can emerge intact. She has four pawns
 for the piece, the white king is not very
 secure, and not so many pieces remain
 on the board.

However, if we continue the variation,
 it turns out that Kasparov was right.
 White's attack assumes a mating char-
 acter: 26.♖f5 ♔g4 27.♜h3 ♜f6 (the
 threat was 28.♜h4) 28.♜b1! (one can
 see the 13th World Champion's love of
 chessboard geometry: much weaker
 is 28.♖h6+ ♜xh6! 29.♜xh6 ♜xe3)
 28...♖xe3 29.♖e7+! ♜xe7 30.♜h7+
 ♖f8 31.♜h8#.

20...♜ad8 21.♜f2 ♖h5



22.♙xh6!

Leaving two pieces and a pawn hanging
 simultaneously. There are many varia-
 tions, but they are simple: 22...♜xg3
 23.♜xf7+ ♖h8 24.♜xh5 g6 25.♜g5
 ♜xg5 26.♙xg5 or 23...♖h7 24.♜xh5
 g6 25.♜f7+ ♖g8 26.♜f6; 22...gxh6
 23.♜xf7+ ♖h8 24.♖xh5; 22...♖xg3
 23.♜xf7+ ♖h8 24.♜xg7#.

22...♜e7

Nor is there any help from 22...♙e6
 23.♖xh5 ♜xh5 24.♙xg7! ♖xg7
 25.♜f6+ ♖f8 26.♜f4.

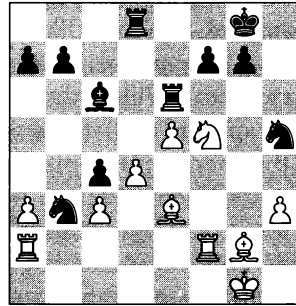
23.♖f5 ♜xf2+ 24.♜xf2

Black has managed to exchange queens,
 in itself a great achievement (no joke),
 but even so, the endgame is hopeless.
 The worst thing is that the attack con-
 tinues, even without the queens. And
 she no longer has any extra material
 with which to buy White off.

24...♜e6

The assessment is not changed by
 24...♙xf5 25.♜xf5 gxh6 26.♜xh5.

25.♙e3 ♙c6



26.♙f1!

Again the chessboard geometry. The
 c4-pawn hangs, and on 26...♙d5
 White decides things with 27.♙e2 g6
 28.♖h6+ and 29.♖xf7.

26...f6 27.♙xc4 ♙d5 28.♙e2

After a few more moves, Black resigned.

The Botvinnik plan has survived and
 stood the test of time. We offer several
 games for your own independent study:
 Kir.Georgiev-Mitkov (Poikovsky 2001),
 Zviagintsev-Alexandrov (Poikovsky
 2002), Ibragimov-Kacheishvili
 (Connecticut 2002) and S.Guliev-Al-
 Modiahki (Dubai 2007).

But, as my friend the well-known
 journalist and publicist Zamin Hadji
 says: «Don't go too far, as then you cannot
 return»

Chapter 21

The Dialectics of Weakness

In the Exchange Variation of the Spanish, White voluntarily gives up his bishop, at move 4, by exchanging it for the knight. In return, he devalues the enemy queenside pawns, specifically by doubling the c-pawns. Later, he plays d2-d4 and generates the exchange of the d4- and e5-pawns, after which his e-pawn becomes a candidate passed pawn.

But Black also has his plusses. He has a solid position, and if he can open the position, his two bishops can have their say. In addition, the e4-pawn, even if it becomes passed, will most likely be solidly blockaded on e6.

Therefore, in practice, White often adopts a different plan, one which can seem paradoxical. White advances not his e4-pawn, but his f-pawn. By pushing it to f5, he appears to give the opponent an outpost on e5, but he also seriously restricts the enemy minor pieces, especially the bishop on c8. Then his plan consists of two elements. He can try to get his knight to e6, using the f5-pawn as support, or he can shut off the e5-square by e4-e5 and force further favourable exchanges. With every exchange, the active black piece play is weakened, whilst the static weaknesses of the latter's pawn structure remain. The ideal for White is to reach a pawn ending, or some other ending with few pieces remaining. On an empty board, Black, effectively a pawn down, will not be able to stop the passed pawn.

This structure (and the plan with f4-f5) is studied in the textbooks with the games Fischer-Unzicker and Lasker-Capablanca. Other classical examples tend to be ignored. It is time to rectify this omission, but first, we should proceed in proper order.

So we start with the game from the eleventh World Champion:

Robert Fischer
Wolfgang Unzicker

Siegen 1970

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6
4.♗xc6

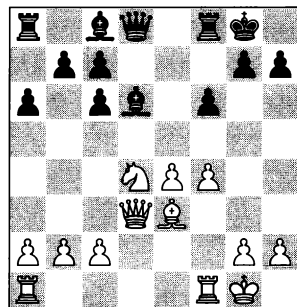
The first step in the plan.

4...dxc6 5.0-0 f6 6.d4

The second point.

6...exd4 7.♗xd4 ♗e7 8.♗e3 ♗g6
9.♗d2 ♗d6 10.♗c4 0-0 11.♚d3
♗e5 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.f4 ♗d6

The critical position.



14.f5!?

«Fischer is indebted to Lasker for this outstanding positional idea» – Gulko.

In this highly complex position, White is hardly likely to be able to put his

knight on e6. More likely, he intends to attack the square e5. His bishop will come to f4, his knight to f3 (after first putting the queen on g3), and his rook to e1. Then there will follow e4-e5.

The plan is clear. It is up to Black to do something about it...

14... ♖e7

But Unzicker, almost to the end of the game, decides not to change the pawn structure.

Tempting is ...c6-c5 and ...b7-b6. Since the bishop's diagonal c8-h3 has been closed, he seeks a new one. But the immediate 14...c5 leads to the loss of a pawn: 15. ♘b3 ♖e7 16. ♗d5+ and 17. ♙xc5.

Therefore ...c6-c5 needs to be prepared. Grandmaster Gulko suggests the prophylactic 14... ♔h8!?. The king moves out of the possible check, and concrete variations show that Black's position is fine.

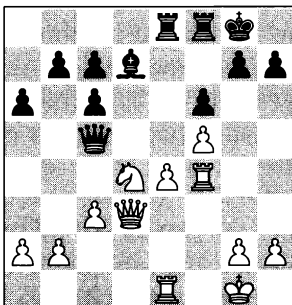
15. ♙f4 ♙xf4

After any other move, White can exchange on d6, undoubling the black pawns, as happened in the game Lasker-Capablanca. Evidently Unzicker knew the latter game and decided that such a transformation of the pawn structure was unfavourable for Black.

16. ♖xf4 ♙d7 17. ♞e1

17. ♗b3+ ♔h8 18. ♗xb7 is bad because of 18... ♗d6.

17... ♗c5 18.c3 ♞ae8



19.g4!

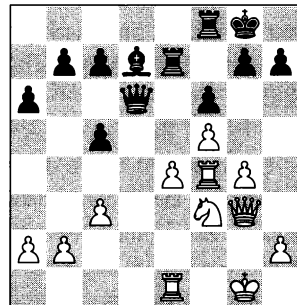
An excellent move. Before transferring his queen to g3, White defends the f5-pawn, creating a wedge.

The structure in the centre and on the kingside is favourable for White. The black light-squared bishop (as opposed to the white knight, which soon transfers to f3) cannot influence at all the coming break e4-e5. Black faces difficult times.

19... ♗d6 20. ♗g3 ♞e7

An obvious loss of time. Both 20...c5 and 20...g5! would have been stronger than the text.

21. ♘f3 c5



22.e5! fxe5 23. ♞fe4

One cannot but be amazed not only by Fischer's consistency, but also Black's sense of fatal determinism, with which he permits the realisation of the white plan.

Black has done nothing to make difficult the advance e4-e5 or otherwise complicate the game.

There followed the exchanges...

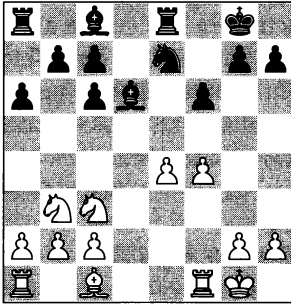
23... ♙c6 24. ♖xe5 ♞fe8 25. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 26. ♙e5

Then the remaining rooks and the queens disappeared from the board. In the endgame of knight vs bishop, the f-pawn proved decisive.

Black resigned on move 42.

Emanuel Lasker
José Raul Capablanca

St Petersburg 1914



12.f5!?

«White tries to restrict the activity of the enemy bishops. The weakness of e5 that is involved in this is not of great significance, since Black is not going to be able to exploit this with his pieces in the near future» – Zak.

Vainshtein, in the Russian book *Myslitel*, discussed the move in more detail:

«This ‘anti-positional’ move simultaneously breaks three of Steinitz’s rules. White is left with a backward pawn on e4, a hole on e5, where the black knight will aim, and it becomes extremely difficult to create a passed pawn, which is the only strategic advantage White has in this variation, namely his 4v3 pawn majority on the kingside.

But in reality Lasker had formed a grandiose plan: create an outpost on e6, enhance the scope of his remaining bishop and relieve Black of his bishop pair, leaving him with the light-squared bishop, which will be nothing but a problem child. Without doubt, this whole plan was thought up by Lasker in advance.»

12...b6

Tarrasch and Réti recommended 12...♙d7, and then ...♞a8-d8 and ...♞e7-c8. Capablanca chooses a different continuation. Evidently, he is preparing to develop his light-squared bishop on the long diagonal. But then the white knight will get the chance to come to e6.

That is why it is vital to combine this plan with prophylaxis against the manoeuvre ♜b3-d4-e6. At some moment, Black will need to play ...c6-c5.

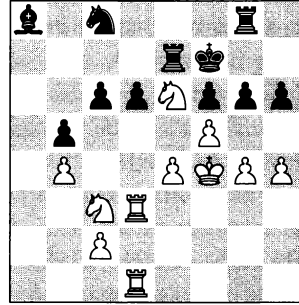
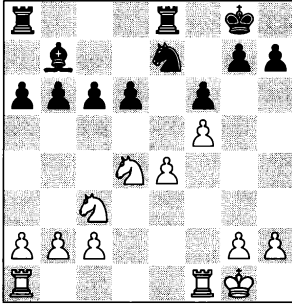
13.♙f4 ♙b7

Straight after the game, Capablanca pointed out what, in his opinion, was a safe path to the draw: 13...♙xf4! 14.♞xf4 c5! and then 15.♞d1 ♙b7 16.♞f2 (nothing is offered by 16.♞d7 ♞ac8 17.♞f2 ♙c6 or 17...♞c6, then 18...♞e5, and the rook is driven off the 7th rank) 16...♞ad8 17.♞xd8 ♞xd8 18.♞d2 ♞xd2 (also possible is 18...♞c8 – White’s position is in no way better) 19.♞xd2 ♞c6 20.♞d5 ♞d4 21.♞xc7 ♞xc2. Vainshtein suggests the improvement 17.♞fd2, with the aim of seizing the only open file. But after 17...♞xd2 18.♞xd2 ♙c6 (covering the vulnerable square d7), and then ...♞e7-c8-d6, Black has sufficient counterplay against the pawn on e4. The position is such that White already is the one needing to be careful, otherwise he risks ending up worse.

According to the testimony of eye-witnesses, the great Capa played the first part of the game very quickly, not doubting in the drawn outcome (the tournament position was such that a draw practically guaranteed him first prize). An endgame, the two bishops, so close to the desired goal... evidently, the Cuban lost his sense of danger and became careless, thinking the draw could be achieved however he wanted, and that there was no need to look for the most exact sequence of moves.

To be fair, one should add that White’s next move was not easy to foresee.

14.♞xd6! cxd6 15.♞d4



We have the very pawn structure that Unzicker was so afraid of in the previous example. The c-pawns have been undoubled and now White cannot create a passed pawn in the centre. Even so, he has a clear plan to strengthen his position. The knight comes into e6, covering the weakness on e4. The king comes to f4. The rooks will double on the d-file, tying Black down to his weakness on d6. Then the a-, b-, g- and h-pawns will advance, seizing space. The main thing is that it is extremely difficult for Black to do anything active, and in passivity lie the seeds of defeat.

15... ♖ad8

15... ♙c8!?

16. ♗e6 ♜d7 17. ♖ad1 ♘c8 18. ♞f2 b5

19. ♞fd2 ♞de7 20. b4 ♕f7 21. a3 ♙a8

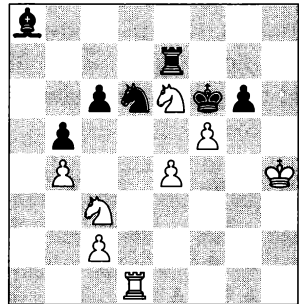
The well-known trainer and methodologist Alexander Konstantinopolsky suggested the radical decision of an exchange sacrifice: 21... ♞xe6!? 22. fxe6+ ♞xe6. Then the king occupies a role in defending the weakness on d6, and the knight, in his turn, comes via b6 and c4, to the square e5, cementing the position. Capablanca preferred to stand and wait. Things should not be so bad for him as to necessitate parting with material.

**22. ♕f2 ♞a7 23. g4 h6 24. ♞d3 a5
25. h4 axb4 26. axb4 ♞ae7 27. ♕f3
♞g8 28. ♕f4 g6**

29. ♞g3

An important moment. Capablanca puts a question mark against his next move, showing how he could have made a draw. Zak disagreed with him, and 'in any case', shows another way for White to win.

Instead of the unhurried 29. ♞g3, Zak analyses the immediate break 29. g5, and then: 29... hxcg5+ 30. hxcg5 ♞h8 31. gxf6 ♕xf6 32. ♞xd6! ♞h4+ (bad is 32... ♘xd6 33. e5+ ♕f7 34. exd6) 33. ♕g3 ♘xd6 34. ♕hx4.



analysis diagram

This position arises by force. At first glance, White should have no trouble realising his advantage. He has an extra pawn, and Black cannot take on f5, because his knight hangs. The bishop on c8 is also very bad, closed in by his own pawns.

Zak gives several variations, amongst which is an unnecessarily cooperative one, ending in mate: 34...gxf5 35.♖xd6 ♜xe6 36.♞d8 fxe4 (36...♙b7 37.♞f8+) 37.♞xa8 e3 38.♞a1 ♔e5 39.♘e2 ♔d5 40.♞d1+ ♔c4 41.♞d4#.

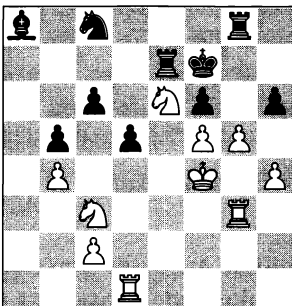
But in fact the position is unclear. After 34...♘c4! (weaker is 34...♘f7 35.♔g4 gxf5+ 36.exf5 ♘h6+ 37.♔f4 ♘xf5 38.♘c5! and the knight on f5 has no way to come to the rescue of its bishop) 35.♞d8 gxf5 36.exf5 ♔xf5 37.♘c5 ♙b7 38.♞b8 ♘d6, the black pieces form a united group, and coordinate well.

One can conclude that the move 29.g5 has its place and poses Black a difficult practical problem, but one cannot say that it wins.

29...g5+

It was this move for which Capablanca criticised himself, considering that 29...gxf5 promised a draw, although he did not give any variations.

But Vladimir Grigorievich Zak provided them in abundance. The main events, in his opinion, take place after 30.exf5 (of course, not 30.gxf5 ♞xg3 31.♔xg3 ♞e8, and the white pawns are stalled) 30...d5 31.g5



analysis diagram

31...hgx5+ 32.hgx5 ffg5+ 33.♘xg5+ ♔f8 34.f6 ♞a7 35.♔e5 with domination. But alas, the variation contains several inaccuracies. Instead of

33...♔f8, more tenacious is 33...♔e8, and if 34.f6, then 34...♞f8. In his turn, White can play more strongly: 33.♞xg5 (the extra pieces only slow down the advance of the passed pawn) 33...♞xg5 34.♘xg5+ ♔f6 35.♞h1 etc. But this is not the main thing.

Instead of 31...hgx5+, much stronger is 31...fxg5+ 32.hgx5 ♘d6! after which it is hard to see a move for White. The threat is to take on f5, and 33.g6+ is senseless because of 33...♔f6.

It seems his intuition did not deceive the great Cuban and he could really have saved the game.

30.♔f3

Necessary accuracy; after 30.hgx5 hgx5+ 31.♔f3 ♞h8, Black is first to seize the newly-opened file.

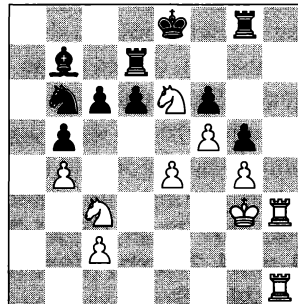
30...♘b6 31.hgx5 hgx5 32.♞h3

Ignoring the proffered trophy. After 32.♞xd6 ♘c4 33.♞d1 ♞h8, Black gets a breathing-space, at the cost of a pawn.

32...♞d7

32...♘c4 looks more natural, but Réti found a forced win in this case: 33.♞h7+ ♔e8 34.♞a1! ♙b7 (the rook cannot be taken, and the intermediate check on e5 cannot change anything) 35.♘c7+! ♘d7 36.♞xe7+ ♔xe7 37.♞a7, and material losses are unavoidable: 37...♞b8 38.♘a6, or 37...♙c8 38.♘7d5+ and 39.♘xf6.

33.♔g3 ♔e8 34.♞dh1 ♙b7



35.e5!

White also wins with 35.♖h6 ♜f7 36.♜g6, but the text is sharper. It shows the correctness of the white plan, begun as far back as move 12.

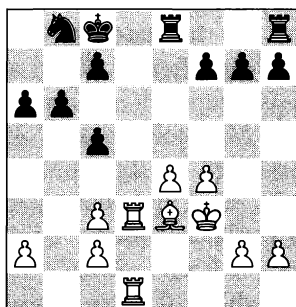
35...dxe5 36.♗e4 ♘d5 37.♗6c5 ♙c8 38.♗xd7 ♙xd7 39.♞h7 ♜f8 40.♞a1 ♘d8 41.♞a8+ ♙c8 42.♗c5

Black resigned.

Emanuel Lasker

David Janowski

Paris 1909



20.f5!?

Even after seeing the two previous examples (and the whole plan), this move looks unexpected. Just as it seemed the black knight had no prospects, suddenly it is given the central outpost e5. In addition, White appears needlessly to weaken his entire pawn structure, from the a-file to the h-.

However, looking further into the position, we can understand that Lasker's move is not bad. Effectively, the second World Champion is carrying out the same plan as against Capablanca, five years later. After waiting until his opponent plays ...f7-f6, White begins a pawn push: g2-g4-g5, h2-h4-h5-h6, trying to open lines on the kingside.

One cannot omit to point out the psychological aspect also. Lasker was a

great psychologist, the first to bring this element into chess. His opponent, David Janowski, was an inventive player, but easily discouraged and with an unstable character. Put yourself in his place. After just thinking a draw was the most he could hope for, suddenly he has the chance to play for more! The chances of his getting carried away and losing his objectivity, in striving for the win, were very great. And then White in turn will get chances.

20...♞e7 21.♙f4 ♗c6 22.g4 ♞he8 23.♞e3

The alternative was 23.♞e1, intending after 23...♗e5+ 24.♙xe5 ♞xe5 to reply 25.♘f4. The rook d3 is freed from defensive functions and can swing across the third rank to the kingside. However, the variation needs to be continued: 25...c4 26.♞h3 h6 27.g5 (or 27.♞h5 f6 28.h4 ♞h8 29.♘f3) 27...hxg5+ 28.♘xg5 ♞xe4 29.♞xe4 ♞xe4 30.♞h7 ♞e3 31.♞xg7 ♞xc3. Without further analysis, it is hard to say whose passed pawn is the more dangerous.

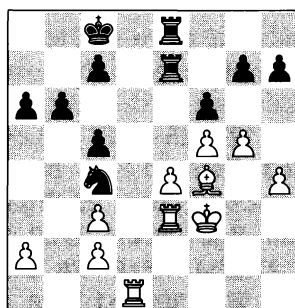
23...f6

Here it made more sense to exchange minor pieces: 23...♗e5+ 24.♙xe5 ♞xe5. But Janowski, as often happened with him, rushes on at full speed.

24.g5 ♗a5

Again refraining from 24...♗e5+.

25.h4 ♗c4



Black has achieved his aim. The knight stands very attractively on the blockading square c4, but what else? There is no obvious plan to strengthen the position. But White does have a plan: the advance of the kingside pawns.

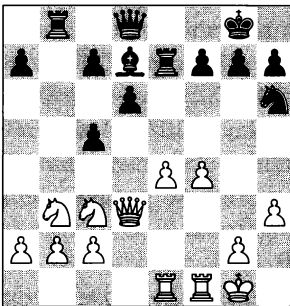
26. ♖e2 ♜f7 27. ♞g1 ♔d7 28. h5 ♘d6 29. h6!

The game is effectively over. There followed:

29...fxg5 30. ♞xg5 g6 31. fxg6 hxg6 32. ♞xg6 ♜ef8 33. ♞g7 ♞xg7 34. hxg7 ♞g8 35. ♞g2 ♚e8 36. ♖e5 ♜e6 37. ♜f4 1-0

Emanuel Lasker
Georg Salwe

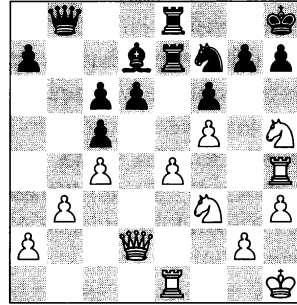
St Petersburg 1909



16.f5!?

The well-known, but always unexpected move. The black knight, currently stranded on the edge, gets the square e5. But here White's plan will be somewhat different. Lasker is not planning to advance g2-g4-g5. He leaves the two files on the edge of the board free, for a piece attack on the king.

16...f6 17. ♚d5 ♜e8 18. c4 ♚f7 19. ♖c3 ♜e5 20. ♚d2 c6 21. ♚f4 ♖b6 22. b3 ♜be8 23. ♖g3 ♜h8 24. ♚h5 ♞g8 25. ♞f4 ♖d8 26. ♚f3 ♜e7 27. ♞h4 ♖e8 28. ♖f2 ♞f8 29. ♖d2 ♖b8 30. ♜h1 ♞fe8



While Black runs on the spot, White flexes his muscles. In the diagram position, everything is set for the storm. The signal for the attack should be the move 31. ♖c3!. After 31... ♖b4, a queen sacrifice is prepared: 32. ♚xf6! ♖xc3 33. ♞xh7#. Mate follows after 32...gxf6 33. ♖xf6+ ♜g8 34. ♞g4+. More tenacious is 31... ♚e5, but then 32. ♚xe5 is winning in all variations:

32... ♞xe5 33. ♚xg7! ♜xg7 34. ♖g3+ ♜h8 35. ♞xh7+ (again, a cascade of sacrifices leads to the win) 35... ♜xh7 36. ♖g6+ ♜h8 37. ♖xf6+ ♜h7 38. ♞e3! ♞xe4 39. ♖g6+ ♜h8 40. ♖h6+ ♜g8 41. ♞g3+ ♜f7 42. ♞g7+ ♜f8 43. ♖f6#; 32...dxe5 33. ♖g3! (on 32...fxe5 the same move would follow) 33... ♖d6 34. ♖g6! h6 (34...hxg6 35. ♚xf6#) 35. ♚xf6! ♖xf6 36. ♞xh6+ ♜g8 37. ♖h7+ ♜f8 (37... ♜f7 38. ♞xf6+ ♜xf6 39. ♖g6#) 38. ♞xf6+ gxf6 39. ♖h6+ ♜f7 40. ♖g6+ ♜f8 41. ♖xf6+ etc.

However, White dallied with

31. ♞g4

Although he won 30 moves later, one can say that the game went off its logical course.

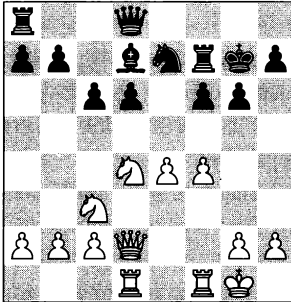
So, should Lasker be considered the founder of the plan with f4-f5 ? That is the generally-accepted opinion. But look at the following encounter.

Joseph Blackburne

William Steinitz

London 1883

□



18.f5! ♘c8 19.e5!?

From Lasker, remembering his game with Salwe, one could expect the unhurried bringing-up of the reserves, with something like 19.♖f3. Blackburne proceeds more energetically.

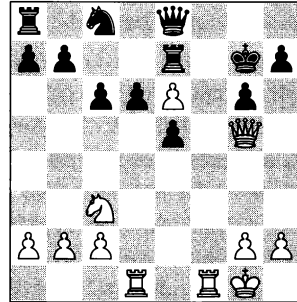
19...fxe5 20.♗e6+ ♕xe6 21.fxe6 ♜e7

More precise is 21...♞f6, preventing the queen raid on g5, because of 22...♞xf1+.

22.♞g5 ♞e8?

This natural move is the decisive mistake. Also weak is 22...♞b6+ 23.♔h1 ♞xe6, because of 24.♞g4 ♞e8 25.♗e4 ♞c7 26.♗g5. But after 22...♗b6,

nothing decisive is to be seen: 23.♞f6+ (23.♗e4 ♞xe6) 23...♔g8 24.♗e4 ♗d5 or 24.♞d3 ♞g7 25.♗e4 ♗d5.



23.♞d3!

There is no defence against the doubled major pieces on the h-file. Black played on to the bitter end:

23...♞xe6 24.♞h3 ♞e7 25.♞h6+ ♔g8 26.♞f8+! ♞xf8 27.♞xh7#

One is reminded that Lasker once compared Steinitz's heritage to a university department. Maybe the second World Champion had studied this game and learnt the idea – even though it was by Steinitz's opponent this time?!

The idea being that every weakness can be a source of strength.

Chapter 22

Structure and Plan

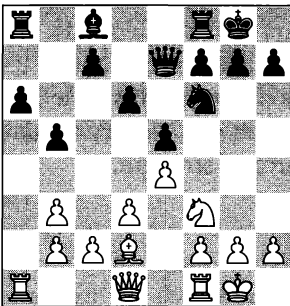
When a chess player thinks about a plan, he thinks, among other things, of changes in the pawn structure. The opposite is also true – after noting a favourable change in the pawn structure, the player forms his plan. These two components, structure and plan, are inter-connected, and should not be separated.

What role in the formation of a plan is filled by the classical heritage (knowledge of classical games, devices, typical pawn structures)? It serves as a support. It is always nice, and very useful, to know that somebody, sometime, carried out a similar plan, especially when this 'somebody' is a well-known, strong player and especially when the plan succeeded.

Knowing this, it is like the player has firm ground under his feet. It develops confidence, and feels as though he has a helper sitting on his shoulder, an authoritative grandmaster, giving him advice on what is good and what not.

Boris Spassky Artur Jussupow

Linares 1990



Black to move. He has practically finished his development, and connected his rooks. This is the appropriate time to think about a plan. He has three ideas to choose from, all of them connected with a change in the pawn structure. He can prepare the central break ...d6-d5. But this is risky; after the opening of the e-file, the pawn on e5 can become a target.

He can play restrictively with ...c7-c5, preventing the advance d3-d4. This is the most solid plan. This is what happened in the game Spassky-Timman (Cannes 1990): 12...♟d7 13.♞e1 c5!? 14.b4 ♜b7 15.bxc5 dxc5 16.♙a5 ♞ac8 17.♝d2 ♞fe8 18.♞f1 ♚e6 19.♞e3 ♞b8!? (a truly grandmasterly move) 20.♙c3 ♞c6 21.b3 ♝d4. Black has comfortable play, although, admittedly, he was not able to win the game.

There is also one more plan, the most concrete. The lines of the bishop on b7 and rook on f8 connect at a single square, f3, currently occupied by a white knight. It is tempting to carry out the advance ...f7-f5, opening the f-file and so harry this knight.

White will also not sit still, with his arms folded. Once the enemy knight moves from f6, to free the path of the f-pawn, White will try to react in the centre with d3-d4. We are very likely to reach a situation with two pairs of pawns in tension: d4/e5 and e4/f5.

Here, general considerations will not help, and we need accurate calculation of variations.

No doubt Jussupow went through this same reasoning process. But he was also able to draw on knowledge, the experience of previous generations. As far back as 40 years earlier, grandmaster Lilienthal carried out a similar plan in much the same position. And, almost mating Taimanov, he won the game in brilliant style. There were also other games, in which the plan with ...f7-f5 justified itself.

12...♘d7!?

The move-order is also significant. If Black begins with 12...♘b7, White advances his bishop: 13.♙g5, and holds up the advance ...f7-f5. Such a development of events took place in the game Spassky-Short (Thessaloniki 1988). In addition, one must reckon with 13.♘h4.

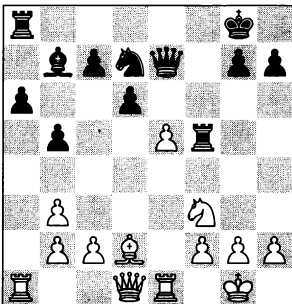
13.♞e1 ♘b7 14.d4 f5!?

Both players should have got this far in their preliminary calculations. The forcing variation continues:

15.exf5

In the game Lengyel-Lukacs (Budapest 1993), White was clearly disturbed by something he imagined, and he played 15.dxe5. After 15...fxe4 16.♘g5 ♗xe5, Black had a healthy extra pawn.

15...♞xf5 16.dxe5!



16...♞xf3!

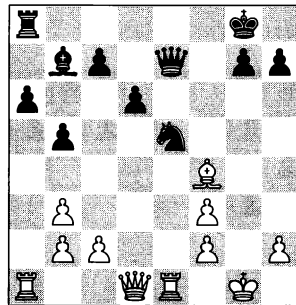
The key moment of the game. Clearly, Jussupow did not come this far to settle for a simple recapture (16...dxe5 or 16...♘xe5). Instead, he initiates great complications.

17.gxf3

It is important that White does not have the zwischenzug 17.exd6. After 17...♗f6 18.gxf3 ♙xf3 the bishop on d2 deprives its queen of vital operating space. We will return to this moment later.

17...♘xe5 18.♙f4

Black would have retained a strong attack after 18.♞e3 ♗g5+ 19.♘h1 ♗h5 or 19.♘f1 ♞f8.



18...♘xf3+

Commentating on this game, Jussupow criticised himself for hurrying to regain the material, giving his opponent a chance to make a draw in the endgame. In his opinion, it was stronger to play 18...♞f8, and if 19.♙xe5 dxe5 20.♗d4, then 20...♗g5+ 21.♗g4 ♗f6.

Jussupow's decision is a pragmatic one. Rather than an unclear middlegame, with the initiative but an exchange down, he prefers an endgame with a guaranteed extra pawn. Anyone willing to criticise him for this has never played serious chess themselves.

**19.♗xf3 ♗xe1+ 20.♞e1 ♘xf3
21.♞e7 ♞c8**

It is too early for 21...♖f8 22.♙d2 ♖f7, on account of 23.♜e8+ ♖f8 24.♜e7, repeating moves.

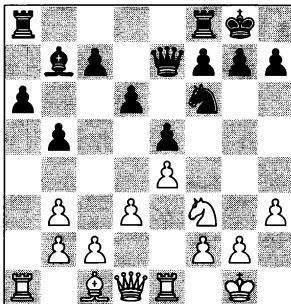
**22.b4 h6 23.h4 ♖f8 24.♙e3 ♖f7
25.♜xf7 ♝xf7**

Only now can we say that the plan begun on move 12 has ended. Play proceeds for two results. The opposite-coloured bishops in the ending give White enhanced drawing chances, but a pawn is a pawn. At the board, Spassky could not cope with the problems and lost.

And now a look at the source game.

**Mark Taimanov
Andor Lilienthal**

Moscow 1948



This example and the previous one are like Siamese twins. The small differences are insignificant. White has played h2-h3, and Black ...♙c8-b7. Instead of ♙c1-d2, White has played ♖f1-e1. That is all.

13...♘d7!?

In his notes, Lilienthal gives the variation 14.d4 f5! 15.exf5 ♜xf5 16.♘h2 ♜h4 17.♙e3 ♖af8 «with an irresistible attack».

However, the move 16.♘h2 is not the most principled. A more important variation occurred in the game Janosevic-Messing (Cateske Toplice 1968). In that

game, after 16.dxe5, Black essayed the thematic exchange sacrifice 16...♜xf3, but ran into the unpleasant zwischenzug 17.exd6. The problem is that after 17...♜f6 18.gxf3 ♙xf3, White, unlike in the game Spassky-Jussupow, has the resource 19.♜d2! and there is no mate: 19...♜g6+ 20.♜g5, or 19...♜h4 20.♜e3 ♜xh3 21.♜e6+. That said, Black retains promising play after 18...♘e5! 19.♜xe5 ♜xe5 20.dxc7 ♜xc7 or 20...♖f8.

Nevertheless, we can conclude that Jussupow carried out the classical plan in an even more favourable form.

14.♜d2

Taimanov, like Spassky, seeks salvation in the endgame.

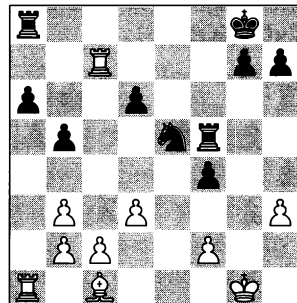
**14...f5! 15.♜g5 ♜f7 16.♜xf5 ♜xf5
17.exf5 ♙xf3 18.gxf3 ♖xf5**

One should not overstate Black's advantage. Yes, the white pawn structure is in ruins, but a bishop is a bishop. After 19.♙g2 ♘c5 20.b4 ♘e6 21.♙e3 it is not entirely clear how to free the rook from the defence of a6, and without the rook, it is even less clear how to develop the initiative.

19.f4 exf4! 20.♜e7 ♘e5

Black creates a mating net with minimal forces.

21.♜xc7



21...♜e8!?

Lilienthal gives this move an exclamation mark. Mate is certainly close, as

confirmed by the variation 22. ♖xa6 ♗g5+ 23. ♖f1 ♘f3. Even so, more accurate was the prosaic 21... ♗g5+ 22. ♖f1 ♘f3 23. ♖e2 ♘g1+ 24. ♖d1 ♘xh3.

Now, however, with the move

22.h4

Taimanov deprived the rook of the square g5, and somehow managed to hold together his defences. The battle was prolonged, but Black won at the first time control, move 40.

In the classical variation of the Spanish, the centre is often closed (pawns on e4/d5 against pawns on e5/d6). The weight of the battle shifts to the flanks.

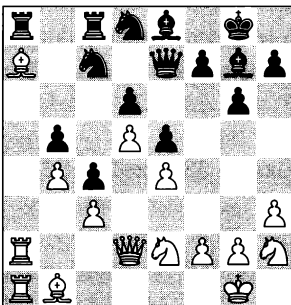
White often wins the battle for the a-file in such cases. But that is not the main thing. The black knight, driven on the route b8-c6-a5-b7, is dominated by the pawn on b4 and becomes a burden to Black. White has practically an extra piece. And if, having obtained a certain advantage on the queenside, he manages then to transfer the battle to the other flank (beginning an attack on the king), the extra piece in the attack can be a big factor.

The following game has long since become an absolute classic.

**Anatoly Karpov
Wolfgang Unzicker**

Nice 1974

□



The unfortunate knight is not on b7, but d8, which is slightly better, because it frees some communications within its own camp. The knight is heading for f7. White needs to act energetically, else his advantage will be reduced to nothing.

30.f4! f6

The break f2-f4 is not good, if after the capture on f4, Black can quickly get his knight to e5. In this situation, there is no question of this. The variation 30... exf4 31. ♘xf4 is described as 'cheerless' by Karpov, who adds that 31... ♗h6 is not then possible, because of 32. ♘xg6!.

31.f5 g5

Knowing what awaits Black, one wants to look for some sort of alternative, such as ... ♘d8-f7 (immediately or after capturing on f5).

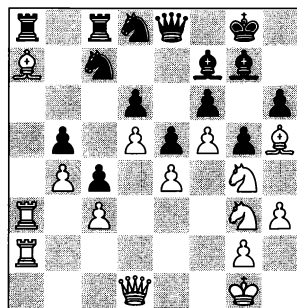
32. ♗c2!

The eventual aim is the square h5.

32... ♗f7 33. ♘g3 ♘b7

The last chance of activity was 33...h5!? 34. ♗d1 h4.

**34. ♗d1 h6 35. ♗h5 ♖e8 36. ♖d1
♘d8 37. ♖a3 ♖f8 38. ♖1a2 ♖g8
39. ♘g4**



One can only admire the positional mastery of the young Karpov. All of White's pieces are ideally placed! The bishop on a7 prevents Black fighting for the a-file. The rooks are on a3 and a2, so as to allow the queen, if

necessary, to go to a1. The other pieces are involved in the fight for the light squares on the kingside. And they have almost won that fight.

39...♟f8

Taking on h5 was not possible.

**40.♞e3 ♟g8 41.♞xf7+ ♞xf7
42.♞h5 ♞d8**

Karpov gives the amusing variation 42...♞h8 43.♞g4 ♞xh5 44.♞xh5 ♟f7 45.♞b6 ♞xa3 46.♞xa3 ♞a8 47.♞xa8 ♞xa8 48.♞d8 or 48.♞a5, and not one enemy piece can move.

43.♞g6! ♟f8 44.♞h5

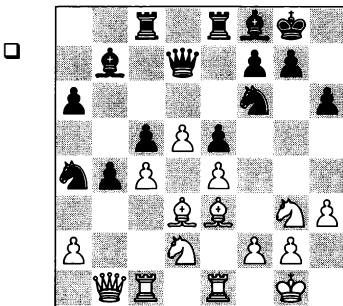
Black resigned.

In the first half of the 1970s, Karpov often reached Spanish positions, in which the advance f2-f4 was an important element of the plan. It got to the point where this device became known in the press as 'Karpovian'.

We will examine another example on this theme.

**Anatoly Karpov
Svetozar Gligoric**

San Antonio 1972



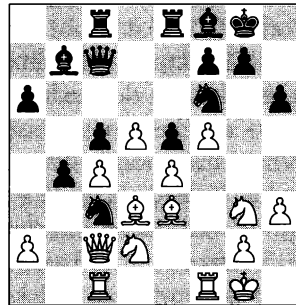
Unlike the previous example, Black does not have a terrible knight on b7. On the contrary – on a4, the knight is active, and threatens to land on c3 with tempo. Overall, the position is unclear.

The classical plan (♞g3-f5, ♟g1-h2, g2-g4, ♞e1-g1 etc.) looks a bit cumbersome here. White needs something more concrete.

28.♞f1!

Making it quite clear that the next move is going to be f2-f4. The counter-play with taking on f4 and putting the knight on e5 does not work: 28...♞d6 29.f4 exf4 30.♞xf4 ♞xf4 31.♞xf4 ♞d6 32.♞cf1. One can suggest the exchange of queens: 28...♞c3 29.♞c2 ♞a4, but Gligoric decides to meet the storm with a board full of pieces.

**28...♞c7 29.f4 ♞d7 30.♞c2 ♞c3
31.f5 ♞f6**



32.♞e2

Played in Botvinnik style. White carries out his general plan, refusing to be distracted by trifles, even if these are in his favour. This is what Karpov wrote about his 32nd move:

«It looks more solid to win a pawn with 32.♞f3 and 33.♞d2, but it seemed to me that Gligoric would then be able to hold up the kingside storm, by establishing a blockade on the dark squares (...♞f8-e7 and ...♞f6-h7). Therefore, I decided not to lose any time.»

32...♞xe2+ 33.♞xe2 ♞d6

Freeing a path for the king to the queenside. The alternative was the above-mentioned blockade on the dark squares: 33...♞h7 34.♞f3 ♞e7 35.♞d2

♔d8, and if 36.♘xe5, then 36...♘g5 37.♙f3 ♙f6 38.♘g4 ♘xe4. However, after 33...♘h7, one must reckon with 34.f6!? ♘xf6 35.♙xh6. White's attack is dangerous.

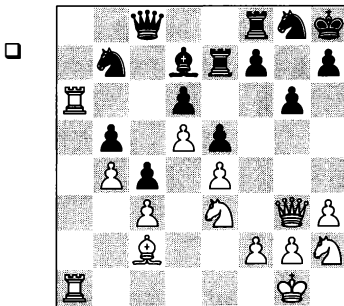
34.g4 ♖f8 35.h4 ♜e7 36.g5 hxg5 37.hxg5

Karpov has fulfilled his plan, and has managed to seize space. But the black king has fled in time. There is still a great deal of play ahead, and White finally broke his opponent's resistance only on move 52.

But even Karpov had people from whom to learn. Maybe it was from Leonid Stein, a brilliant player, three-time champion of the USSR, who died far too early.

**Leonid Stein
Aleksandar Matanovic**

Tel Aviv 1964



29.f4!

«The signal for the attack. Despite the material equality, Black's position is objectively lost, as his pieces are badly placed» – Stein.

29...exf4

An incorrect choice. It was necessary to play 29...f6 and, gritting one's teeth, to resist with all one's might.

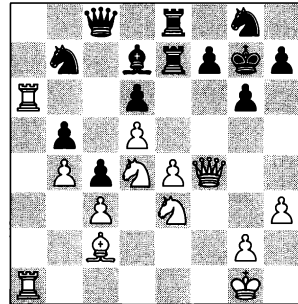
As we have already noted above, Black can only afford to take on f4 if he can

bring one of his knights to e5 quickly. Here, this is impossible, whilst the white knight on h2 obtains access to the ideal square d4.

30.♙xf4 ♜fe8 31.♘f3 ♜g7

The only choice is to rely on tactical tricks, based on the undefended knight on e3. But the immediate 31...f5 32.exf5 ♜xe3 is bad, because of 33.♙d4+ ♜3e5 34.♜xd6!

32.♘d4



32...f5

This loses, like everything else. The threat was 33.♜b6 ♙c7 34.♜aa6, winning the b5-pawn. Then the knight will come into c6 and Black's position is hopeless.

33.♜a8! ♙xa8 34.♜xa8 ♜xa8 35.exf5 ♜e5 36.♘g4 ♜ae8 37.f6+ ♜f7 38.♘h6+ ♘xh6 39.♙xh6 ♜xf6 40.♙xh7

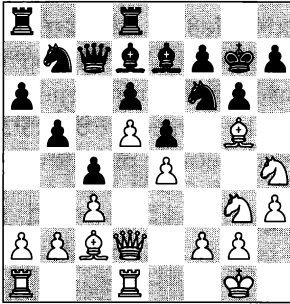
Black resigned.

«Stein's talent was fantastic!» – Karpov.

But Stein was not the first to play f2-f4 in this structure. In the 1920s and 30s, Akiba Rubinstein loved to defend such positions as Black. He even agreed to have the knight on b7. He would then transfer it to d8 and f7 and grind his opponents down in 100-move battles. Those opponents, in turn tried various plans, including f2-f4.

**George Thomas
Akiba Rubinstein**

Liege 1930



□ Tempting is 20. ♖hf5+!?. If 20... gxf5, then 21. ♙xf6+, mating: 21... ♙xf6 (21... ♗xf6 22. ♚h6#) 22. ♘h5+ ♗g6 23. exf5+! ♙xf5 (23... ♗xh5 24. g4+ ♗h4 25. ♚h6#) 24. ♙xf5+ ♗xf5 25. ♚h6 ♙h4 (25... ♚e7 26. ♘g3#) 26. ♘g7+ ♗e4 27. f3#. Stronger is 20... ♙xf5 21. exf5 ♘c5, and nothing decisive is obvious, although after 22. f4 or 22. b4, White does have the initiative.

In 1930, Sir George Alan Thomas was close to his 50th birthday. As befits an Englishman, he played in a solid style, not liking to throw his pieces around. In the diagram position, he thought up a different plan:

20. f4!?

The idea is that after 20... exf4 21. ♚xf4, White (for example, in reply to 21... ♘c5) would play 22. ♖f1, establishing unbearable pressure on the f-file. And 21... ♖f8 is not possible, because of 22. ♙h6+, whilst after 21... ♙e8 the sacrifice 22. ♘hf5+ gains many times in strength.

Rubinstein (as he often did in this structure) retreats behind his long-prepared barricades:

20... ♘g8 21. ♙xe7

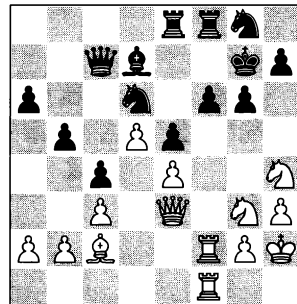
More promising is 21. f5, but this only became the fashion many years later, after the analysis of games like this. Although, it should be said, in this case too, Black's defensive resources are far from exhausted: 21... ♙xg5 22. ♚xg5 h6 (but not 22... f6 23. ♘h5+!) 23. ♘h5+ ♗h8 24. ♘xg6+ fxg6 25. ♚xg6 ♙e8. The attack comes to nothing.

White is not obliged to sacrifice the knight, although after 23. ♚e3, there is 23... ♚c5, forcing the exchange of queens, whilst after 23. ♚d2 ♖f8 24. ♖f1 ♚d8 25. ♘f3 ♘c5, Black holds everything.

**21... ♘xe7 22. ♗h2 ♘g8 23. ♖f1 f6
24. ♖f2 ♖f8 25. ♖af1 ♖ae8 26. fxe5 dxe5**

Bad is 26... fxe5 27. ♘h5+! gxh5 28. ♚g5+, winning the exchange.

27. ♚e3 ♘d6



The structure has again solidified. White has not achieved a great deal; he has more space, but that is all.

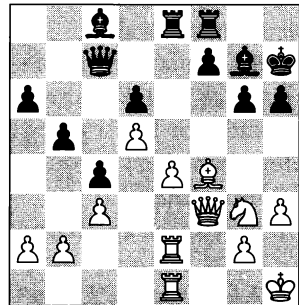
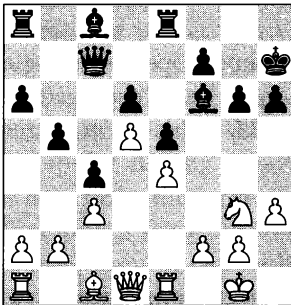
Alas, after a few more moves, Rubinstein lost on time. A few years later, he ended up in a psychiatric hospital, from which he never emerged until his death.

As for the tournament at Liège, it is remembered chiefly not for Rubinstein's failure (he was 9th), and not even for the result of the winner (Tartakower

took first prize confidently). It was in Liège that the incomprehensible Indian star Sultan Khan was first widely seen. Six wins in a row at the start, then four defeats in a row at the finish... but this is quite another story.

**Mario Monticelli
Akiba Rubinstein**

Budapest 1926



Black does not have a bad knight on b7 and in general, has no bad pieces at all. Having completed his development, and placed his pieces in the best possible way, he will probably prepare one of the breaks ...b5-b4 or ..f7-f5. If the game developed quietly, in manoeuvring style, Rubinstein was not inferior to

anyone. In slow, trench warfare, he was in his element.

Understanding this, White forces the pace:

21.f4!?

A rare case, where the break f2-f4 is used not to search for an advantage, but in order to maintain equality.

21...exf4 22.♙xf4 ♘d7 23.♚f3 ♙g7 24.♜ad1 ♜f8 25.♝h1 ♞ae8 26.♞e2 ♙c8 27.♞de1

By tying the enemy forces down to stopping e4-e5, White prevented them pursuing their own plan.

Rubinstein subsequently did not manage to find a way to untangle. He played ..f7-f5, but this only led to the exchange of rooks on the e-file and a draw.

Chapter 23

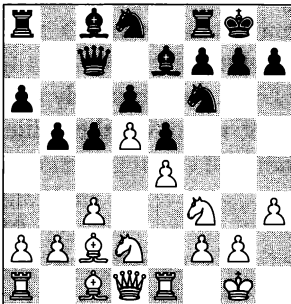
Torture to any Taste

In chess books, one can see many references to the ‘Spanish torture’. The analogy is as follows. In many variations of the Closed Spanish, Black emerges from the opening with a cramped and difficult position. And then, over the course of 20, 30 or even more moves, he fights for a draw, and has not the slightest chance to seize the initiative. This difficult, even despairing experience creates associations with mediaeval Spanish torture, such as the infamous ‘boot’, which crushed the toes of the foot. Even if by chance the victim was allowed to go free after this torture, he would be unable to walk.

Something similar occurs in certain lines of the Spanish Opening. Imagine that, after all his trials, Black manages to draw. He is likely to be so shattered after this desperate battle for half a point that he is unable to play at his normal strength in his next few games in the tournament. The ‘Spanish Boot’ leaves its marks.

We will now speak about one of these variations.

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4
 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♙b3 d6
 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘a5 10.♙c2 c5 11.d4
 ♞c7 12.♘bd2 ♘c6 13.d5 ♘d8**



The pawn structure gives White the advantage on both flanks. On the queenside, he can become active with a2-a4 and b2-b4; opening either file is to his advantage. On the kingside, his prospects are even brighter. He can choose between two attacking plans: the classical (g2-g4, ♘d2-f1-g3-f5, ♙g1-h2, ♞e1-g1 etc.) and the modern, Karpovian

plan, seen in the previous chapter. That plan assumes that the main route for the attack will be the f-file. The plan, as we have seen, has demonstrated its effectiveness.

So if Black’s prospects are so bad, why does he go in for this position? The answer to this question can only be given from a historical perspective. We need to make a small excursion into the past.

In the first third of the 20th century, the genius of Rubinstein dominated world chess. It was his play that gave rise to the concept of the ‘long-term plan’. It turned out that this grandmaster’s plans lasted not 2-3 moves, or even 5-6, but far more. Sometimes the plan would be one for the whole game, from opening to endgame.

Rubinstein played in a style shorn of unnecessary spectacle. He loved positions where the pieces could manoeuvre slowly, frequently changing places.

The contours of such positions would remain unchanged. But here is a strange thing: with each new exchange, the position of Rubinstein's pieces would somehow slightly improve, and that of his opponent, slightly deteriorate. Finally, there would be a collapse of the enemy position. When one analysed the game, it would appear that all of Rubinstein's moves, so apparently random at first sight, were united in one single, surprisingly deep, plan. The opponent, without realising it, had been bent to Rubinstein's will.

Rubinstein's contemporaries were unable to copy his style. Far from all were able to put up any opposition to him, either, only the very strongest. Akiba Kiwelowicz was somewhat ahead of his time. Only in the subsequent generations did players emerge, who could construct plans which matched Rubinstein's in depth and power. They learned from his games and took the best from them.

Let us return to the last diagram. Black's position is difficult, but he is not losing by force. Rubinstein worked out the following plan:

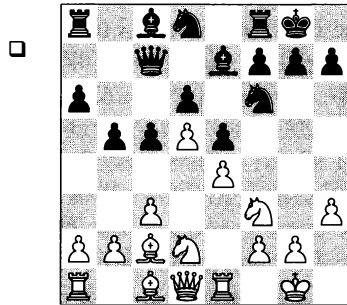
- connect the rooks. This is done by ...g7-g6, ...f6-e8-g7; ...f7-f6, ...d8-f7; ...c8-d7, clearing the back rank;
- secure himself against a mating attack. With this in mind, wait for the opening of the a-file and exchange all the rooks;
- once his own king is safe, go over to active operations. The queen, utilising the absence of enemy rooks, can threaten (or pretend to threaten) to penetrate along the open queenside file(s). On the kingside, exploiting the advance g2-g4 (which is almost bound to be played), prepare the counterblows ...h7-h5 and ...f6-f5;

- combine threats on both flanks to tie up the enemy forces, force favourable exchanges and seek chances in the end-game.

Such a plan is easier to describe than to implement. But let us see how Rubinstein did it.

**George Thomas
Akiba Rubinstein**

Baden-Baden 1925



For convenience sake, in this and the next few examples, we will pick up the notation from move 14. The first 13 moves are given above.

**14. ♖f1 ♗e8 15.a4 ♜b8 16.axb5
axb5 17.g4 g6 18.♟g3 ♟g7 19.♞h1
f6 20.♞g1 ♟f7 21.♞f1 ♟d7**

The first stage of the plan is completed.

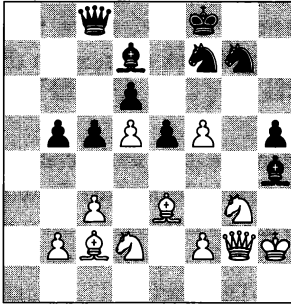
**22. ♟e3 ♜a8! 23.♞g2 ♜xa1
24.♜xa1 ♞b7 25.♞h2 ♜a8 26.♞f1
♜a6 27.♟d2 ♞a8 28.♜xa6 ♞xa6**

The second stage is also completed. (It sounds like the controllers of a space rocket programme, announcing the ejection of successive parts of a rocket!)

29.♟b3 ♟g5 30.♟g2 h5!

Black starts on stage three.

**31.h4 ♟f7 32.gxh5 gxh5 33.♞h2
♞c8 34.♞g2 ♟f8 35.♟d2 f5!?
36.exf5 ♟xh4**



37.f6

One of the few moments of the game, when the commentator rightly offers a concrete variation. By means of 37.♘xh5! ♘xh5 (37...♘xf5 38.♘f3!) 38.♙g6 ♘f6 (weaker is 38...♘f4 39.♙xf4 exf4 40.f6 ♙xf6 41.♙xf6) 39.♘f3 White could insure himself against the risk of defeat. The best Black can do is the position after 39...♙e7! 40.♘xh4 ♙h8 41.♙g3 ♘xd5 42.♙e4 ♘f6 43.f3, with a probable draw.

37...♙xf6 38.♙f3 ♙h4 39.♙g6

Not immediately 39.♘xh5 ♙g4.

39...♙xg3+ 40.fxg3

Here it is hard to understand why White refused 40.♙xg3 ♙f5 41.♙xh5. One gets the impression that he had lost the thread of the game. By taking with the pawn, he presents Black with the tempo move of the bishop to g4 in several variations.

40...♙f5 41.♙xf7

«White prefers to play for the attack, rather than regain material equality with 41.♙xh5 – perfectly correctly, since in the latter case, after the exchange of the bishop on h5, Black would obtain an attack with ...♙g4 and ...♙f5. In the end-game, however, the pawn on d5 will be a convenient object of attack and the e5-pawn a powerful weapon» – Lasker.

Let us try to put the second World Champion’s comments into notation.

Clearly, he is talking about the variation 41.♙xh5 ♘xh5 42.♙xh5 ♙g4 43.♙g6 ♙f5 44.♙xf5 ♙xf5. It is a pity that Lasker does not show concretely how Black can turn the d5-pawn into ‘a convenient object of attack’. Maybe by transferring the knight via f7-h8-g6-e7? This takes time, and White has prepared a drawing scheme: 45.♙g2, then ♙g2-f3, g3-g4 and ♘d2-e4.

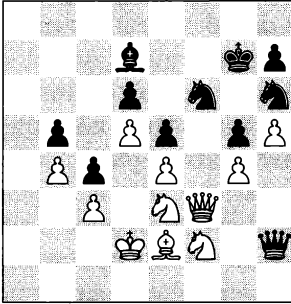
41...♙xf7

Thus, Black has emerged from the complications with an extra pawn, but there is still a long way to go to win the game. White only acknowledged defeat on move 63.

This game was played in round two, and already in round four, Thomas repeated the whole variation. Evidently, he could not believe that with such an advantage in space and numerous attacking plans, White was in any danger of not winning, let alone losing.

This time his opponent was the young Viennese player Ernst Grünfeld. The players repeated Thomas-Rubinstein up to move 18. Then White deviated with 19.♙h2 (instead of 19.♙h1). This ‘novelty’ made not the slightest impression on Grünfeld, who continued to play exactly as Rubinstein had done:

19...f6 20.♙g1 ♘f7 21.♙f1 ♙d7 22.♙e3 ♙a8! 23.♙g2 ♙h8 24.♘d2 ♙fb8 25.♙f3 ♙c8 26.♙e2 ♙xa1 27.♙xa1 ♙a8 28.♙xa8 ♙xa8. The first two stages of Black’s plan have been carried out. Then there begun a phase of manoeuvring, which lasted some 50(!) moves. Only on move 78 did Black decide to play ...f6-f5. The ‘Spanish Boot’ operated against White, as the exhausted Thomas soon missed a simple tactical blow and resigned:



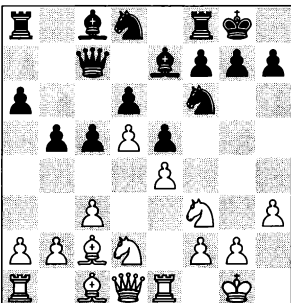
89... ♖xf2! 90. ♖xf2 ♘xe4+ 91. ♔e1
 ♘xf2 etc.

Meanwhile, the variation continued to develop and Rubinstein refined his plan. For theory, important games are his two against Bogoljubow (Breslau 1925 and Berlin 1926). At the same time, Akiba switched his attention to other variations of the Spanish (see the games against Thomas and Monticelli above). All this naturally led to the whole plan involving the knight marches to f7 and g7 to be regarded as authored by Rubinstein. But we should restore historical justice. Back at the beginning of the 20th century, a game was played, in which the ideas of the variation were demonstrated very clearly:

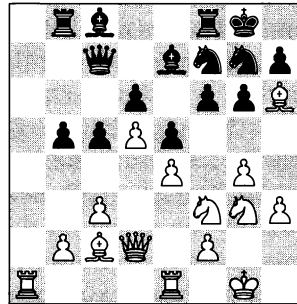
Curt von Bardeleben
Rudolf Spielmann

Düsseldorf 1908

□



14.a4 ♖b8 15.axb5 axb5 16.♗f1
 ♘e8 17.g4 g6 18.♙h6 ♘g7 19.♘g3
 f6 20.♗d2 ♘f7



21. ♖h2 ♘xh6 22. ♗xh6 ♖f7

Only here does Black step aside from the general plan of exchanging all the rooks on the a-file.

23. ♗d2 ♖h8 24. ♘g1 f5!? 25.f3
 ♙h4

Soon Rudolf Spielmann won.

The years passed. White players refined their move-orders, honing their plans. For example, the manoeuvre ♙e3-a7!? was found, so as not to permit Black to exchange all the rooks along the a-file. But the bishop can only come to a7 if it is developed to e3, rather than d2 or h6. Thus the original idea was replaced by an accurate move-order in one line.. Gradually, the Rubinstein system came to be regarded as difficult for Black. Maybe it really is, I will not argue. But the variation has its merits, the main one being that it is very good against players who are not well versed in positional manoeuvring. Such players usually lose their way in long-winded battles. They themselves do not have a clear plan and do not know which plan their opponent intends. In this respect, I will permit myself to draw attention to the game Hussein-S.

Guliev (Teheran 1992). The game can be found in any computer database and the reader can familiarise himself with it, if he wishes. Black played in the classical way. The game was long, lasting 62 moves, and was hard. But the strategic outline was simple enough: the manoeuvres ...g7-g6, ...♖f6-e8-g7; ..f7-f6, ...♘d8-f7; ...♙c8-d7; the exchange of all four rooks; new manoeuvres; the penetration by the queen on the open files; new exchanges; transition into an endgame with an extra pawn and finally, victory. All as in Thomas-Rubinstein.

To refuse such a variation is like killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. And if the reader is interested in the Rubinstein Variation and wishes to include it in his repertoire, then I will offer several pieces of advice.

Firstly, it is useful to study purposefully the games of top players who play the variation. For White, that means Karpov (games against Spassky, Moscow 1973, and Unzicker, Nice 1974) and for Black, Smyslov (games against Schmid, Havana 1967, and Geller, Palma de Mallorca 1970). By analysing these games, you will learn to see the positions and problems facing each player, through the eyes of world champions.

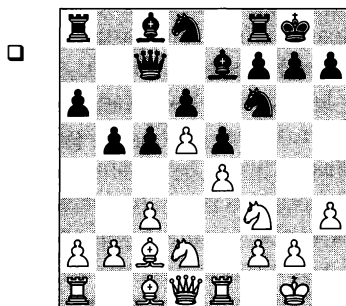
Secondly, it is also handy to examine games in which White achieves his aims by purely positional means. Thus, in the game Keres-Vidmar (Bad Nauheim 1936), White managed to break through his opponent's defences on the kingside, without the aid of sacrifices. And in the game Stein-Ivkov (Amsterdam 1964), White broke through on the queenside with enviable ease. In analysing these games, you should try to answer the

question of what Black did wrong, so that you do not repeat his mistakes in your own games.

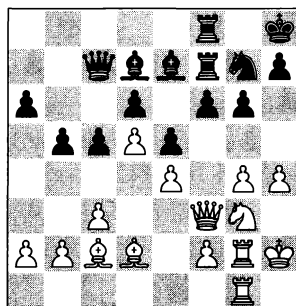
Finally, it is important to know typical combinations. And here it is quite unimportant whether the players' names are famous ones. All that is important is how typical the sacrifice is. If you plan to include the defence in your repertoire, then you need to know how the opponent plans to attack your king. The most typical sacrifice in this variation (indeed, in the whole classical Spanish) is the knight sacrifice on f5.

**Boris Vladimirov
Alexander Ryskin**

USSR 1974



14.♘f1 ♘e8 15.g4 g6 16.♘g3 ♘g7
17.♙h2 f6 18.♙g1 ♘f7 19.♙d2 ♙h8
20.♙e2 ♙d7 21.♙g2 ♘g5 22.♙ag1
♘xf3+ 23.♙xf3 ♙f7 24.h4 ♙af8



25. ♖f5!? gxf5 26.gxf5 ♖g8 27.h5

By sacrificing the knight, White opened the g-file for his major pieces. It is not mate, nor even a forced win, but his activity promises a lasting initiative.

White will most likely regain the piece. For example, after 27...♖ff8 28.♙h6 ♖f7 29.♖g3 ♖d8 30.♖g2 ♙f8 31.♙e3 and then h5-h6. Black shows his willingness to part with his extra material immediately:

27...♙f8 28.h6 ♙e8

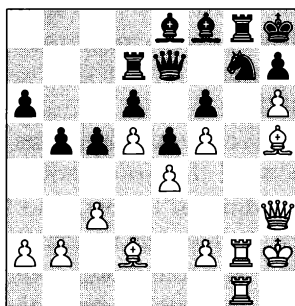
But White does not wish to take back the knight:

29. ♖h3

Such indifference to material is also typical of this variation. After 29.hxg7+ ♖xg7 White would have to exchange rooks and would have nothing left with which to attack.

29...♖d7 30.♙d1 ♖d8 31.♙h5

31.f4!? was worth considering, but White hopes to break the defence without opening additional diagonals.

31...♖e7**32. ♙xe8**

Evidently both players were in time-trouble at this moment (also typical for this variation – a complicated manoeuvring battle takes up a lot of thinking time) and from this results the inevitable mistakes.

A move earlier, Black had to exchange on h5. Now, however, White misses a

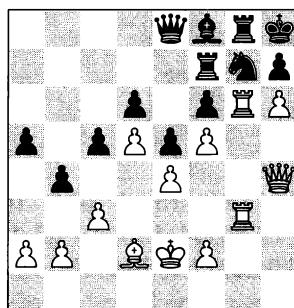
forced win: 32.hxg7+ ♙xg7 (32...♖xg7 33.♙h6 ♖xg2+ 34.♖xg2 with the threat of mate on g8 or g7) 33.♙xe8 ♖xe8 34.♖g4, threatening 35.♖xh7+! ♖xh7 36.♖h4+ ♙h6 37.♖xh6#, whilst after 34...♖f8, the move 35.♖h4 wins without any beauty.

32...♖xe8 33.♖g4 ♖f7 34.♖1g3 ♖e8 35.♖h1 ♖c7 36.♖g2 a5 37.♖h4 ♖d8 38.♖f3 b4 39.♖g6 ♖f7

The last few moves were obviously played just to get past the time control in one piece. We would point out that the rook cannot be taken: 39...hxg6 40.fxg6! (but not 40.hxg7+ ♖xg7 41.♖xg6+ ♖f7 42.♖h7+ ♖g7), and Black can only meet the threat of mate by returning all his extra material: 40...♖f5 41.exf5 ♖h7 (the threat was 42.g7+ ♖h7 43.♖h5) 42.gxh7 ♖xh7. In this position, White wins with 43.♖xg8 ♖xg8 44.♖h5 and 45.♖g6(+).

40. ♖e2 ♖e8

The time control is passed. White can quietly calculate variations and find the forced win.

**41.hxg7+**

It is striking that White finally decides to take back the knight only after 15 moves of manoeuvring battle.

41...♖xg7

On 41...♖fxg7, White mates by means of 42.♖xh7+ ♖xh7 43.♖xg8# or 42...♗xh7 43.♖h6#, and after 41...♗xg7, by means of 42.♖xh7+ ♗xh7 43.♖h3+ ♗h6 44.♖hxh6#. The text move also does not save the game:

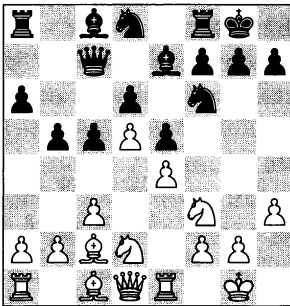
**42. ♗h6 bxc3 43. ♖xg7 ♗xg7
44. ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 45. ♖xf6**

Black resigned, since the pawn ending after 45...♖xf7 46.♖xg7+ ♖xg7 47.♖xg7 ♗xg7 48.bxc3 is completely hopeless for him.

It is also extremely useful to know how dangerous it can be for Black to play the freeing break ...f7-f5 (instead of ...f7-f6 «à la Rubinstein») prematurely. Although dangerous does not necessarily mean bad.

**John Nunn
Nigel Short**

Brussels 1986



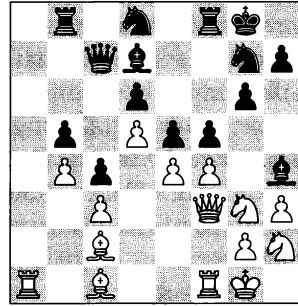
**14. ♖f1 ♗e8 15. a4 ♖b8 16. axb5
axb5 17. b4 c4 18. ♖g3 g6 19. ♖h2
♖g7 20. ♖f1!? ♗d7 21. f4**

For readers who have already seen the games Karpov-Unzicker, Karpov-Gligoric and Stein-Matanovic, this plan is not a novelty.

21... ♗h4 22. ♖f3 f5!?

More usual would be ...f7-f6, either at once or after the exchange on g3. How-

ever, let us not be too hasty in condemning Black's pawn thrust.



23. fxe5 dxe5

But this was definitely weakly played. One senses that, although the black player is a very strong, titled player, he is not entirely familiar with all the subtleties of this pawn structure.

There is no question that the only correct move is 23...f4!

White has four possibilities in reply: 24.exd6 ♖b6+ 25.♗h1 ♗xg3 26.e5; 24. ♗xf4 dxe5 25. ♗xe5 ♖b6+ 26. ♗d4; 24.e6, and finally, 24. ♖f5!?

The game could take on a rather irrational character, but in all cases, Black has his chances.

24. exf5!

The correct reaction. White tries to give his opponent the so-called 'hanging pawns'. Additional factors, also favouring White, include the insecurity of the black king and the possibility of the white rook penetrating down the a-file. All variations after 24...gxf5 25. ♖g4! ♗h8 (25...♖f7 26. ♖xf5) 26. ♗h6! are in White's favour. For example, 26...f4 27. ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 28. ♖e4 ♖h8 29. ♖h5+ ♗f8 30. ♖xe5 with a crush.

Also bad is 24...♖xf5 25. ♖xf5 gxf5 26. ♖h5.

Black tries, by means of an intermediate exchange, to depart from the road

down which White is leading him, but in vain:

24...♙xg3 25.♚xg3 ♘xf5

Now not either 25...gxf5 26.♙h6, or 25...♙xf5 26.♘g4! and if 26...♙xc2, then 27.♘h6+ ♔h8 28.♚xf8#.

26.♚f2!

A move with many plans. From here, the queen is looking at a7 and f8 at once.

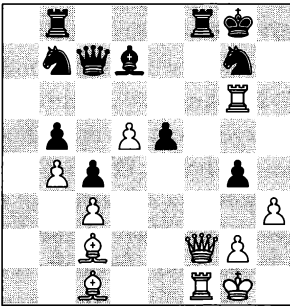
26...♘b7 27.♘g4 h5 28.♙a6!

The decisive breakthrough.

28...hxg4

The sixth rank cannot be closed: 28...♘bd6 29.♘xe5.

29.♙xg6+ ♘g7



30.♙xg7+!

Black resigned, without waiting for 30...♔xg7 31.♙h6+! mating in several ways: 31...♔xh6 32.♚h4+ ♔g7 33.♚h7# or 31...♔g8 32.♚xf8+ ♚xf8 33.♚xf8#.

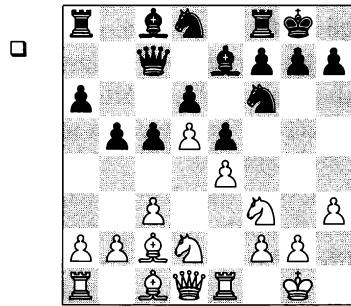
Finally (if you have seriously decided to include the Rubinstein Variation in your opening repertoire), it is extremely important to understand the degree of solidity in Black's kingside position. Quite often we get so-called 'fortress' positions. Black does not equalise, but sets up the barricades on the second and third ranks, and waits for the draw. White stands better, but cannot break through the fortress, unless Black inadvertently helps him.

Perhaps the most instructive example of this is a game played almost 90 years ago.

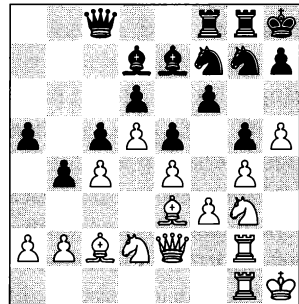
Frederick Yates

Lajos Asztalos

London 1927



14.♖f1 ♗e8 15.g4 g6 16.♘g3 ♘g7 17.♔h2 f6 18.♙e3 ♘f7 19.♙g1 ♙d7 20.♙g2 ♔h8 21.♚e2 ♙g8 22.♘d2 ♚c8 23.♙ag1 a5 24.f3 b4 25.c4 ♚b7 26.♔h1 ♙af8 27.h4 ♚c8 28.h5 g5



Black only needs to play ...a5-a4, and the fortress is ready. White can continue manoeuvring and prepare some sort of sacrifice, but with accurate defence, all these attempts should be in vain. The position is a draw.

29.h6!?

A good chance. Although after 29...♘xh6 30.♚h2 ♘f7 31.♔g2 h6

32. ♖gh1 ♘h7 nothing decisive is evident, why should Black give the white major pieces an open file? After all, Black's extra pawn is never in any danger of being realisable.

The only shame is that these considerations were discarded after a few moves.

**29... ♖e8 30. ♘f5 ♙d8 31. ♖h2 ♖g6
32. ♖g3 ♙xf5**

Black decides to grab a useless extra pawn after all. Why? After 32...a4 33. ♘f1 ♜a6, all he needs to show is patience and calmness.

Now, however, the battle flares up anew.

33. exf5 ♖xh6

He could decline the Greek Gift with 33... ♖gg8, but even so, the position after 34. ♙a4 ♘c7 35. ♘e4 is not what it was. The threat of a sacrifice on the squares c5 or d6 (after appropriate preparation) is a real one.

**34. ♖xh6 ♘xh6 35. ♜h2 ♘g8
36. ♖h3 ♖f7 37. ♙a4! ♙e7 38. ♘e4**

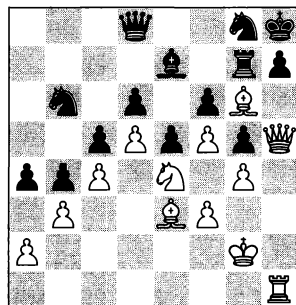
White's minor pieces are ideally placed. Now he has to find a way to break through.

A tempting idea is a2-a3. But, before starting on this plan, White tries another idea, which is almost a trap. He transfers the queen to h5, threatening in some variations to bring his bishop via c4 and e8, to the square g6!

Unexpectedly, this idea works, but only because Black manoeuvres his pieces extremely badly.

**38... ♜d8 39. ♘g1 ♘c7 40. ♜f2 ♘a8
41. ♖h1 ♘b6 42. ♙c6 ♙f8 43. b3 ♖g7
44. ♜h2 ♙e7 45. ♜h5 a4 46. ♘g2
♜b8 47. ♙e8 ♜d8 48. ♙g6!**

The black position is deteriorating quickly.



Maybe it was at this point that Black began to regret gorging himself on the obviously toxic h-pawn.

48... h6

The threat was 49. ♜xh7+!

49. ♙f7 ♙f8

The last chance of saving himself was 49... ♖h7. The analysis of the endgame after 50. ♙xg8 (weaker is 50. ♜g6 ♖g7 51. ♖xh6+ ♘xh6 52. ♜xh6+ ♖h7, and he has to agree to a repetition of moves) 50... ♜xg8 51. ♜g6 ♜f7 52. ♜xf7 ♖xf7 does not give a clear answer to the question of whether White has a forced win. Play could continue 53. ♙xc5!? dxc5 54. ♖xh6+ ♘g7 (not 54... ♘g8 55. d6 ♙f8 because of 56. ♘xf6+ ♘g7 57. ♖g6+ and 58. ♖g8#) 55. ♖g6+ ♘f8 56. d6 axb3 57. axb3 ♘d7 or 55... ♘h7 56. d6 ♙d8 57. ♘xc5 axb3 58. axb3 ♘d7 (58... ♘c8 59. ♘e6) 59. ♘xd7 (59. ♘e6 ♙b6) 59... ♖xd7 60. c5 ♖a7 61. c6 ♖a2+ 62. ♘g3 ♖c2 63. c7 ♙xc7 64. dxc7 ♖xc7 65. ♖xf6 ♖c3 66. ♖e6 ♖xb3 67. ♖xe5 ♘g7, and Black is still alive.

Now, however, it is all over:

**50. ♙xg8 ♖xg8 51. ♜f7 ♙g7
52. ♜g6 ♖f8 53. ♙xg5!**

Black resigned. He can only meet the mate threat after 53...fxg5 54. ♘xg5 by giving up the queen.

Chapter 24

Indirect Borrowings

Borrowing – it is a very subtle and delicate topic. Who first developed this or that idea? After whom should an opening be named? Chess historians argue themselves hoarse. Sometimes, such disputes become rather dramatic.

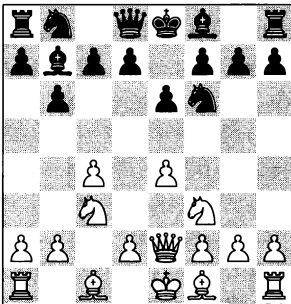
Borrowing is not always direct; sometimes it is more indirect. After all, players do not only analyse concrete variations. They also analyse pawn structures and piece set-ups. It sometimes happens that a set-up which works well in one pawn formation is transferred to another. Or a structure which has done well in one opening is transplanted to another.

Here is a typical example. In the English Opening, after the moves

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.e4 ♙b7

... back in the 1970s, the following idea became popular:

5.♚e2!?



One of the first games with this was Stein-Smyslov (Moscow 1972). In their book of Stein's best games, Gufeld and Lazarev give the following note to the diagram position:

«One is struck by the similarity between Stein's idea and Chigorin's famous invention against the French Defence: 1.e4 e6 2.♚e2!?. Stein's play often betrays the influence of the Russian school of chess, from Chigorin to Alekhine.»

Speaking honestly, there is not such an obvious similarity in the ideas of the above position and the Chigorin line. In

the French Defence, White has his task, and in the English, he has a different one. In this concrete position above, the e4-pawn is hanging at move 4. Boleslavsky long ago pointed out that 5.e5 is not good because of 5...♗e4. The move 5.d3 could easily be one that the white player would prefer not to play. Black replies 5...d6 (but not 5...d5 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e5 ♗fd7 8.d4), and sets up a Hedgehog with ...♙f8-e7, ...0-0, ...c7-c5. The advance of the pawn to d4 cannot really be dispensed with forever, in which case White will end up having lost a tempo.

Thus was the idea of 5.♚e2!? born. White defends the pawn on e4 and sets up the threat of e4-e5, since now the black knight does not have the square e4. Slightly later, Lev Polugaevsky and Oleg Romanishin, independently of each other, began developing a different idea: 5.♙d3!?. A new structure was born, where the pawns go to e4 and c4 immediately, and the d4-pawn only later, after the bishop has retreated to c2. The appeal to 'the influence of the Russian school' in the above quote is also questionable, if not downright out of place. When one faces a specific problem, there is no time to refer to tradi-

tions. On the other hand... maybe Stein, in coming up with 5. ♖e2, really did think of Chigorin's line, from almost a hundred years earlier and in a completely different opening. Who knows?! Let us leave this digression to the pundits and return to the game Stein-Smyslov. It developed in a very interesting way and it would be a shame to break off from it so soon.

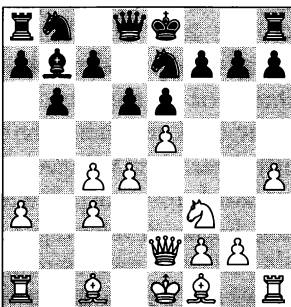
5... ♗b4

The alternative was 5...c5 6.e5 ♘g8 7.d4. In the 3rd game of the Kortchnoi-Petrosian match (Odessa 1974), there followed 7... ♗xf3! 8. ♖xf3 ♘c6 9.d5 ♘xe5 10. ♖g3 d6 11. ♗f4 ♘g6 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.0-0-0 ♘xf4 14. ♖xf4. White obtained substantial compensation for his small material deficit.

6.e5 ♘g8 7.d4 d6

In the Candidates' final match Karpov-Kortchnoi (Moscow 1974), Karpov twice played 7... ♘e7 with the idea of ...d7-d5, rather than ...d7-d6. In one game, there followed 8. ♖d3 d5, and in the other 8. ♗d2 0-0 9.0-0-0 d5.

8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♘e7 10.h4!?



If one wishes to talk about traditions and associations between the English Opening and the French Defence, then this is the time – one only has to think of the variation 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♗b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘e7

7.h4! and many other lines typical of the French Defence.

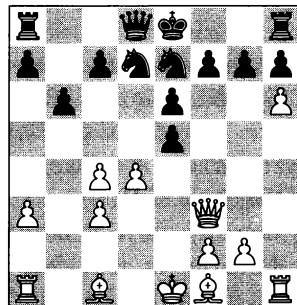
I am joking, of course. The real issue is not traditions, but the similarity of general ideas between one opening and another. If Black parts with his king's bishop at an early stage, and White has not yet castled, then the h2-h4-h5-h6 march becomes relevant. It aims to underline (after either ...gxh6 or ...g7-g6) the weakness of the dark squares on the black kingside and the fact that their main defender has been exchanged.

This is what White's play is directed at. This is his plan. For this, he does not mind spending tempi, nor (as a result) falling behind in development, or even a breakthrough in the centre. The play on the kingside dark squares will make up for all of these inconveniences.

10... ♘d7 11.h5 ♗xf3 12. ♖xf3 dxe5

Smyslov picks up the gauntlet. However, he did not have a great deal of choice. Sharp play with 12...h6 13. ♖g4 ♘f5 leads to an unpleasant transition into the endgame after 14. ♗d3 dxe5 15. ♗xf5 exf5 16. ♖xg7 (less is promised by 16. ♖xf5 0-0 17.0-0 ♖e8) 16... ♖f6 17. ♖xf6 ♘xf6 18.dxe5 ♘e4, in which White has an extra pawn, albeit a weak one. But he also has excellent prospects, with his bishop, which dominates the knight, and play on both flanks.

13.h6



White is close to his aim. After 13...g6 14.dxe5, both 14...♗xe5 15.♖f6, and 14...♘f5 15.g4 ♗xe5 16.♖e4 are bad. However, there is a third possibility: 14...c6!? 15.♗g5 ♖c7, although in this case too, it is hard to believe that White will not find some way to develop his initiative.

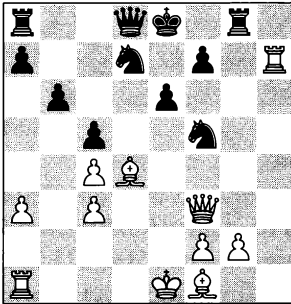
13...gxh6 14.♗xh6

14.d5!? deserves attention.

14...exd4

Allowing the bishop into g7. Black played more strongly in Ikonnikov-Meier (Hockenheim 2006): 14...♘f5. A tactical whirlwind ensued: 15.♗g5 f6 16.d5 fxg5 17.dxe6 0-0 18.♖d1 ♗d6 19.♖h5 ♗f6 20.♖xg5+ ♖h8 21.♖d3 ♖e7 22.♖xh7+ ♖xh7 23.♖h3 ♖xh3 24.gxh3 ♖ae8, from which White had certainly not emerged the winner; two rooks and a knight are more than sufficient compensation for the queen.

15.♗g7 ♖g8 16.♖xh7 ♗f5 17.♗xd4 c5



18.g4!?

Stein does not relax, but keeps on ratcheting up the tension. Soon, Black could not withstand the pressure, committed the decisive mistake and had to admit defeat.

Here is an example of indirect copying in the opening. The piece set-up with the queen on e2, temporarily shut-

ting in the bishop on f1, was tried by Chigorin against the French Defence. Stein took it (deliberately or not, we will let the historians dispute) and used it in the English Opening, successfully, as we have seen.

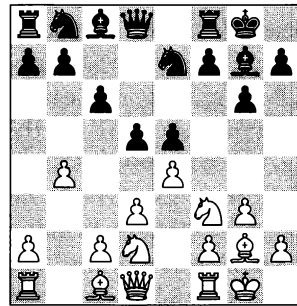
Now we will examine another example, also taken from the play of the three-time USSR Champion.

Leonid Stein

Ervin Haag

Tallinn 1969

1.e4 c6 2.d3 d5 3.♗d2 g6 4.g3 ♗g7 5.♗g2 e5 6.♗gf3 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.b4!?



Grandmaster Stein played in a style which can, with every justification, be called modern. He created problems from the first move, forcing his opponent to think for himself. He loved non-standard positions, in which the standard orientation points were missing. In such positions, there is perhaps less harmony, but in return, there is lively piece play.

He could accept pawn weaknesses in his own camp, or personally weaken his own pawn chain, if in return he got the initiative. Against the Caro-Kann and King's Indian Defences, Stein invented a system which was far removed from

the classical standards. This variation became one of his calling cards.

The idea of an early b2-b4 is not new. It has been used successfully in the King's Indian and Grünfeld Defences; in a word, in openings where the black bishop on g7 invites the white bishop to come to b2.

What is the advantage of b2-b4 compared with the usual b2-b3? If White follows up with a later pawn advance on the queenside, the move b2-b4 saves a tempo. In addition, in variation lines of the King's Indian structure, the pawn on b4 stops the advance ...c7-c5.

Now let us return to the diagram position. It is unlikely that Black plans an early ...c6-c5, or that White plans an early queenside pawn advance. So the advantages of an early b2-b4 are not to be seen. But the most unpleasant thing of all is that in reply to b2-b4, there can follow ...a7-a5, and now White does not have either the reply b4-b5, or a2-a3 (the rook on a1 hangs). It follows that the only possible reaction to ...a7-a5 is the exchange on a5. But this means that White voluntarily breaks up his pawn chain, agreeing to (and even initiating) the creation of an isolated pawn on a2. For what?!

We hope that this analysis of Stein's games will partly answer this question.

8...a5

Of course!

It is not principled to play 8...♟a6 9.a3 ♞c7. After 10.♞b2 d4 11.c3 ♞g4 12.♞c2 ♞e6 13.cxd4 ♞xf3 14.♞xf3 ♞xd4 15.♞xd4 exd4 16.f4 (Stein-Hartoch, Amsterdam 1969) White has a noticeable advantage.

9.bxa5 ♞xa5

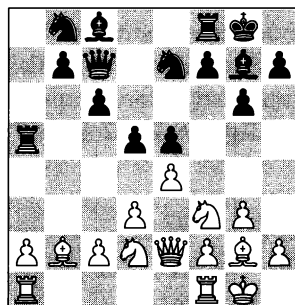
More natural is 9...♞xa5, although the position is almost the same. The queen's

place in this line is on c7, from where she defends the e5-pawn.

Possible variations: 10.♞b2 d4 11.a4 ♞c7 12.c3 dxc3 13.♞xc3 ♞d8 14.♞c4 (Stein-Hort, Los Angeles 1968) or 10...♞c7 11.♞e2 d4 12.c3 c5 13.cxd4 cxd4 14.a4 (Stein-Khodov, Kiev 1969). In both games, White had no complaints about the outcome of the opening.

10.♞b2 ♞c7 11.♞e2

The immediate 11.a4 has also been seen, and then: 11...h6 12.♞e1 d4 13.c3 c5 14.♞c1 dxc3 15.♞xc3 ♞a6 16.♞b3 ♞c6 17.a5. White had seized the initiative in Stein-Cobo Artega, Havana 1968, whilst the a2-pawn, which by all rights should be a weakness, had advanced to a5 and ties down the enemy forces.



11...d4

The threat was to take on d5, with an attack on e5. After 11...f6 the reply 12.d4 is unpleasant, whilst after 11...♞d7 there follows 12.♞fe1, and Black again has to decide how to defend the e5-pawn.

The simplest solution is to put paid to the threat by exchanging on e4 oneself, but after 11...dxe4 12.dxe4 White has lively piece play.

12.c3 dxc3

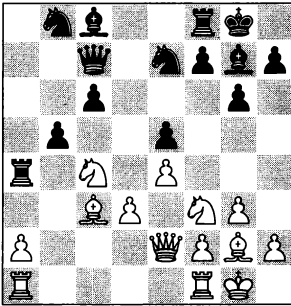
Conceding the centre. After 12...c5, as we have seen in the examples quoted above, White chooses between 13.♞fc1 and the immediate 13.cxd4 cxd4 14.a4.

13. ♖xc3 ♖a4 14. ♘c4

The plan is clear. By attacking the pawn at e5, White will sooner or later force the move ...f7-f6, after which he will advance d3-d4.

Stein has won the opening phase. Realising this, his opponent initiates tactical complications, so as to change the course of the game in his favour.

14...b5!?



Not 15. ♘ce5 because of 15...f6, and the knight is trapped in the middle of the board. But White finds a way to strengthen his position still further. This is not surprising – in a tactical battle, Stein always felt like a fish in water.

15. ♖c2!

The knight is defended and the threat to e5 renewed: 16. ♘ce5 f6 17. ♖b3+. Black should have maintained the tension with 15...♘d7, but he prefers to resolve matters:

15... ♖e6

There followed:

16. ♘ce5 f6 17. ♘c4 ♖xc4 18. dxc4 ♖xc4 19. ♘d2

White has emerged from the complications with the two bishops and a central preponderance. Black's pieces are rather scattered and his king position weakened. White won in just ten more moves. The most surprising thing of

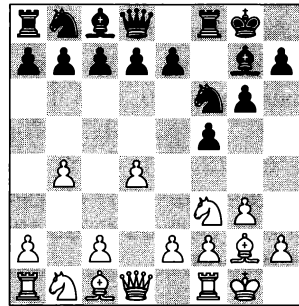
all is that he never once had to complain about the breaking up of his pawn structure, undertaken on move 8!

Let us see how the same idea works in the Leningrad Variation of the Dutch Defence.

**Evgeny Bareev
Vladimir Malaniuk**

Groningen 1997

1. d4 f5 2. g3 ♘f6 3. ♖g2 g6 4. ♘f3 ♖g7 5. 0-0 0-0 6. b4!?



Far from the most popular continuation (usually, White plays 6.c4 or 6.b3), but perfectly plausible.

Of course, this is not the Stein idea. It is really nameless, although someone must have played it first. Maybe historians will establish who. But does it really matter?

A practical player, during a game, is only interested in three things: the pawn structure, the piece set-up and the concrete variations. All other questions are academic, historical, and, above all, unnecessary.

White plays b2-b4 (and not b2-b3) because he wants to mount a queenside attack with his pawns. In some variations, he also insures himself against ...c7-c5, and after 6...a5, he has the reply 7.b5.

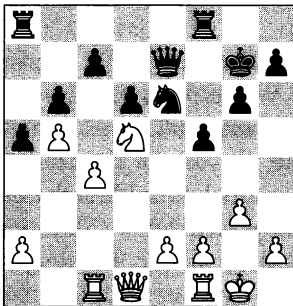
6...♖e4

It was worth considering 6...♖c6 7.a3 d5! changing the structure. In the game Anand-Nakamura (Wijk aan Zee 2010) there followed 8.♖b2 ♗e4 9.♗bd2 ♖e6 10.e3 a5 11.b5 ♗a7 12.♙e2 a4 13.♙fc1 c6 14.bxc6 bxc6 15.c4 ♗c8 16.♖c3 ♗cd6. Black managed to hold the balance.

7.c4 e6 8.♖b2 b6 9.♗c3 ♖b7 10.♙c1 a5

Grandmaster Malaniuk is one of the main specialists in the Leningrad Variation, but here he plays passively, following in the footsteps of others' plans and ideas. Instead of the move in the game, it was worth considering 10...♖c6 11.b5 ♗e7, then ...h7-h6, ...g6-g5 and ...♗e7-g6.

11.b5 d6 12.♗e1 ♗xc3 13.♖xc3 ♖xg2 14.♗xg2 ♗d7 15.♗f4 ♙e7 16.d5 ♗c5 17.dxe6 ♗xe6 18.♖xg7 ♗xg7 19.♗d5

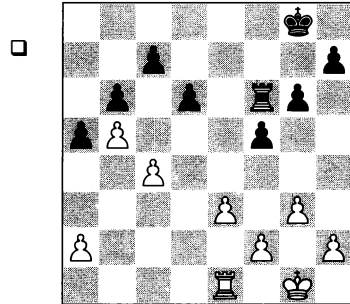


The position has clarified. White has an advantage that is not great, but is stable. He has the better structure, with his three queenside pawns holding the four black pawns. If he manages to advance e3-e4 and exchange the e- and f-pawns, White will practically have an extra pawn on the kingside, which could become passed.

The peculiarity of this structure is that, although White is the more active side,

he does not object to exchanges. Or, to put it another way, White uses his activity to induce his opponent to make exchanges. Then, as the board empties, the advantage in pawn structure looms more clearly.

The outcome of the game was decided deep in the endgame.



Thus far, White has not made any changes to the pawn structure, fearing piece counterplay, but now there are hardly any pieces left on the board. It is time!

29.f4!

Of course, not 29.e4 because of 29...f4!

29...♗f7

The pawn ending after 29...♙e6 30.e4 ♙xe4 31.♙xe4 fxe4 32.♗f2 ♗f7 33.♗e3 ♗e6 34.♗xe4 is hopeless for Black. More tenacious is 30...fxe4 31.♗f2 ♗f7 32.♗e3 ♗f6, but after 33.g4 ♙e8 34.♗d4 h5 35.h3 hxg4 36.hxg4 White also has winning chances.

30.♗f2 ♗e6 31.e4 ♗d7 32.♗e3 ♙f7 33.♗d4 fxe4 34.♙xe4 h5 35.a4 ♙f8 36.h3 ♙f7 37.g4 hxg4 38.hxg4 ♙h7

It is impossible to stop the advance of the f-pawn in any event. For example, 38...♙f8 39.♗d5 ♙f6 (39...♙f7 40.♙e6) 40.f5 gxf5 41.♙f4 etc.

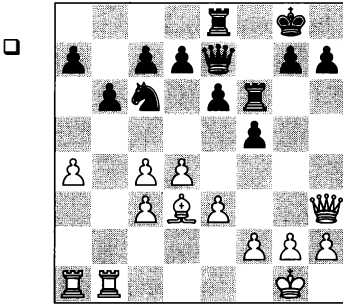
39.f5 gxf5 40.gxf5 ♙f7 41.♙f4 ♗e7 42.♗d5 ♗f6 43.♙f1 ♙e7 44.♗c6

The advantage has grown notably. In the end, after a series of manoeuvres (mostly undertaken to gain time before the time control), White sacrificed the passed f5-pawn, activated his rook and won the pawn on c7 and then the one on b6. Faced with the threat of a new queen appearing, Black resigned on move 61.

The blockading move f2-f4 (before playing e2-e4) brings to mind the following classic example.

José Raul Capablanca
Savielly Tartakower

New York 1924



In a closed or semi-closed position, the knight could prove stronger than the bishop. White needs to open the position. For this, he has two ideas: c4-c5 or e3-e4.

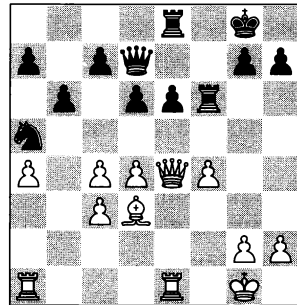
But on 16.c5 bxc5 17.♖b7 White must reckon with 17...c4!?, and if 18.♙e2, then 18...d5, whilst if 18.♙xc4, then

18...♘a5 19.♙xc7 ♕d8 20.♖c5 d6. Even three pawns could prove insufficient compensation for the piece. Meanwhile, if 16.e4, then Black has a pleasant choice between 16...f4 17.e5 ♗h6 18.♗f3 ♕g5 and 16...e5!? (which is probably even stronger) 17.d5 fxe4 18.♙xe4 ♗h6 19.♗e3 ♘a5.

16.f4!

Stopping both ...f5-f4 and ...e6-e5.

16...♘a5 17.♗f3 d6 18.♙e1 ♕d7 19.e4 fxe4 20.♗xe4



White has managed to open the position and thereby improve his chances.

Just as in any other sphere of human activity, the process of acquiring knowledge in chess is objective and individual. That which is invented by one person becomes the property of many. Ideas, refined through practice, lose the personality of their inventor. One should recognise this and kneel before all those who contribute to the development of chess art.

Afterword

From Ecclesiastes to Eliskases

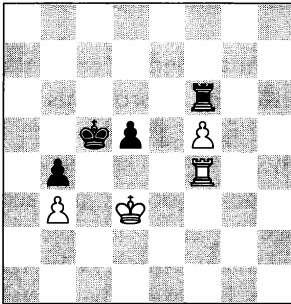
Finally, we will speak a little about the few, but nonetheless real practical examples of so-called, ‘knowing too much’.

Of course, one cannot say that knowledge is a bad thing. That would be absurd. But sometimes it has a negative psychological effect, as it sometimes interferes with one’s thinking. The eyes remain closed to a possibility, the brain seizes up. Knowing that in similar positions (especially in the endgame) such and such a great player lost, a player can say to himself, ‘Well, if even X could not save the game, then what chance do I have?’. But then it turns out that the position is very slightly different, and has its own nuances, and it is necessary to look not at the source game, but to think with one’s own head.

Here is a textbook example of this theme.

Emanuel Lasker Akiba Rubinstein

St Petersburg 1914



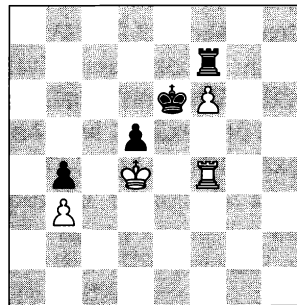
A rook ending, with equal material and so few pawns left, would in most cases be a draw. But in this concrete situation, other factors matter. Firstly, the position of the black rook is exceptionally unfortunate. Secondly, Black cannot go into a pawn ending, by exchanging the d- and f-pawns, as the resulting pawn ending is lost.

Unfortunately, he cannot cure the first factor by activating his rook: 60...♖c6 61.♔d4 ♜d6 62.♞f2 ♞h6!? 63.f6 ♞h4+

64.♚e3 (after 64.♚d3 ♞h3+ 65.♚d2 ♞h8! – but not 65...♞xb3 66.♞f1! – White still has to play 66.♚e3, returning to the main variation) 64...♞h3+ 65.♚f4, winning in all variations, as see:

65...♞xb3 66.♚g4 ♞c3 67.f7 ♞c8 68.f8♚+ ♞xf8 69.♞xf8 ♚c5 70.♚f3; 65...♞h8 66.♚g5 d4 67.f7 ♞f8 68.♚f6 ♚d5 69.♚g7 ♞a8 70.f8♚ ♞xf8 71.♞xf8 d3 72.♞b8;

60...♞f7 61.f6 ♚d6 62.♚d4 ♚e6



63.♞f2!

Preparing the transfer of the rook to a6; much weaker is 63.♔c5 ♖c7+ 64.♔xb4 ♕f7, and Black starts to have hopes.

63...♔d6

But now the second factor comes into play – the impossibility of going into a pawn ending. After 63...♖xf6 64.♖xf6+ ♕xf6 65.♔xd5 Black loses.

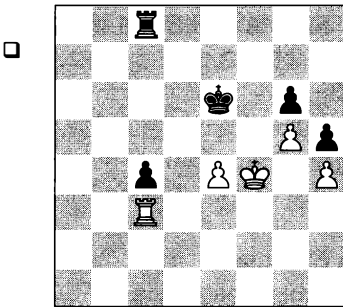
64.♖a2! ♖c7 65.♖a6+ ♔d7 66.♖b6

Black resigned.

The variation 66...♖c3 67.♖xb4 ♖f3 68.♔e5 ♔c6 69.♖f4 ♖e3+ 70.♔d4 shows that this decision was in no way premature.

**Mikhail Botvinnik
Max Euwe**

Groningen 1946



The position is very similar to the previous one, with colours reversed. But only similar. The addition of an extra pair of pawns on the h-file deprives the stronger side of the chance to manoeuvre his rook around the side (see 64.♖a2 and 65.♖a6+ in the above example), and on the other, renders the pawn ending drawn, after the exchange of c- and e-pawns.

It looks so simple. But listen to Botvinnik:

«In this position, I sealed a move. Of course, both my opponent and I knew that Lasker had won a

similar ending against Rubinstein. There, the only difference was the absence of h-pawns.

During the interval, I managed to establish that the absence of these pawns changed the assessment of the position. I did not find this at once – **I was hindered by knowing that Rubinstein himself had not been able to save the position.**

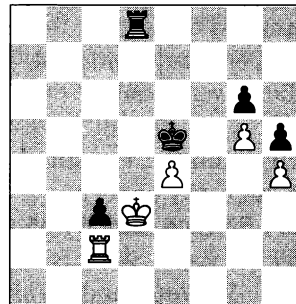
I was looking at the board in desperation, when the leader of our delegation came into the room. He knew that I stood badly, but with hope in his voice, he said:

– Mikhail Moiseevich, maybe you will find a way to save it after all?

Then I looked at the position again, without pre-conceived notions, and understood the secret of this endgame.»

**41.♔e3 ♔e5 42.♖c2! c3 43.♔d3
♖d8+**

The move 43...♖c7, analogous to Lasker's play, is doubly useless in this position. Firstly, because Black does not threaten the manoeuvre ...♖c7-h7-h3 (the pawns h5/h4 are in the way), and, secondly, because White can simply go into the pawn ending: 44.♖xc3! ♖xc3+ 45.♔xc3 ♔xe4 46.♔c4 ♔f4 47.♔d4 ♔g4 48.♔e5 ♔xh4 49.♔f6 ♔g4 50.♔xg6 h4 51.♔f6 with a draw.



44.♔e3!

Not 44.♔xc3 ♔xe4.

**44...♖d4 45.♖xc3 ♖xe4+ 46.♔f3
♖xh4 47.♖c6 ♖f4+**

Or 47...♔f5 48.♖c5+ ♔e6 49.♖c6+.

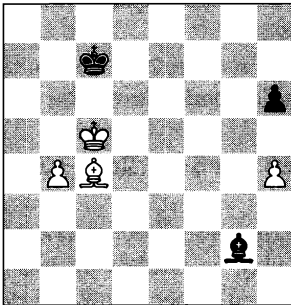
48. ♖e3 ♜e4+ 49. ♗f3 ♘f5 50. ♝f6+
 ♙xg5 51. ♝xg6+

Draw.

In the following example, lack of knowledge of the classics did the English GM good service.

Jonathan Speelman
Michael Trauth

Berlin 1980



The drawing tendencies of this ending are obvious. The square h8 is of 'the wrong colour', as chess players say, and so Black only needs to sacrifice his bishop for the b-pawn and get his king to h8, in order to draw. In fact, after taking the b-pawn, Black only needs to get his king to f7 or f8. Even so, Speelman won, and, at first glance, did so very easily.

52. ♙d5

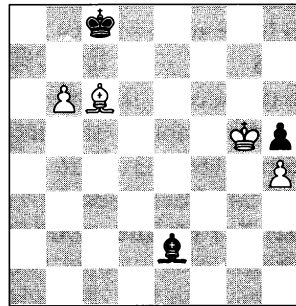
The pawn ending is lost for the time being, as can easily be seen.

52... ♙f1 53. ♙c6 ♙e2 54. b5 ♘d8

54... ♙xb5 55. ♙xb5 ♘d8 is hopeless, because of 56. ♘d6, and White can keep the enemy king from h8: 56... ♗c8 57. ♗e7 ♗c7 58. h5 ♗c8 (58... ♗b6 59. ♗f7!) 59. ♗f6 ♘d8 60. ♗g6 ♗e7 61. ♙c4!.

55. ♘d6 ♙c4 56. b6 ♙a6 57. ♗e6
 ♙e2 58. ♗f6 ♗c8 59. ♗g6 h5

60. ♗g5



60... ♗d8

In the variation 60... ♙d1 61. ♗f4 ♙e2 62. ♙f3 ♙xf3 63. ♗xf3 ♗b7 Black, as usually happens, is one tempo short of a draw: 64. ♗f4 ♗xb6 65. ♗g5 ♗c6 66. ♗xh5 ♗d7 67. ♗g6 ♗e7 68. ♗g7.

61. ♙e8! ♙a6 62. ♙xh5 ♗e7 63. ♙f3
 ♗f7 64. h5 ♙c8 65. h6 ♗g8 66. ♙e4
 ♙a6 67. ♗f6 ♙c8 68. ♗e7 ♙a6
 69. ♗d6 ♗f7 70. ♗c7 ♗f6 71. ♙d3!

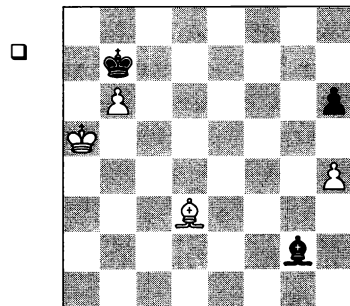
Black resigned.

Great was Speelman's surprise, when his colleague John Nunn pointed out the existence of a predecessor:

Erich Eliskases

José Raul Capablanca

Semmering 1937



61. ♙a6+ ♗c6

A natural move, but at the same time, the losing mistake. After 61... ♗b8! 62. ♗b4

(62.♔b5 ♕f1+) 62...♙b7! it is impossible for White to win. After 63.♔b5 h5! or 63.♙xb7 ♔xb7 64.♔c5 h5! the pawn ending turns out to be drawn, whilst after 63.♙e2 ♕g2 64.♔c5 ♔b7 there is no way to drive the king away from the b6-pawn, and the attempt to sacrifice the pawn also fails: 65.♔d6 ♔xb6 66.♔e6 ♔c6 67.♔f6 ♔d6 68.♔g7 ♔e7 69.♔xh6 ♔f8 etc.

62. ♕c8!

Now White is winning, although there are still difficulties lying ahead.

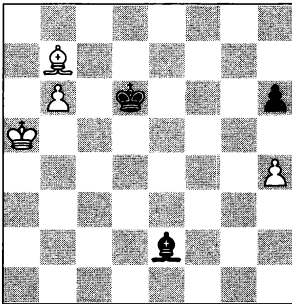
62... ♕f1

The threat was 63.♔a6.

63. ♕g4 ♕d3

Alas, Black is too late after 63...♔b7 64.♙f3+ ♔b8 65.♔b4 ♙a6 66.♔c5 ♙b7 on account of 67.♙xb7 ♔xb7 68.h5!

64. ♙f3+ ♔d6 65. ♙b7 ♙e2



66. ♙a6!

«The battle of the bishops for the diagonals is instructive. White drives the enemy bishop from the f1-h3 diagonal to the c6-a6 diagonal, but the latter has too few squares for it» – Averbakh.

66... ♙f3 67. ♕f1 ♕b7 68. ♙h3 ♔e7

Or 68...♔c5 69.♙g4 ♔c4 70.♙e2+ ♔c5 71.♙a6 ♙f3 72.♙c8 ♔c6 73.♔a6, winning.

69. ♔b5 ♔d6 70. ♙g4 ♔e7 71. ♔c5

♙g2 72. ♙c8 ♔d8 73. ♙a6 ♙f3

74. ♔d6 ♙g2 75. ♙c4 ♔c8 76. ♙d5

♕f1

Only now can White begin his march to the kingside.

79. ♔e6 ♙e2 78. ♔f6 ♔d7 79. ♔g6

h5 80. ♔g5 ♔d6 81. ♙f7 ♔c6

82. ♙xh5

Black resigned.

Isn't it the case that, after seeing this difficult ending, full of nuances, one wants to go back to the previous example and look at it afresh? How come Speelman won so easily? And could he have done so, had he been burdened with the knowledge that the endgame was so full of subtleties and needed such accurate handling, so as not to fall into one of the traps?

«For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.»

Ecclesiastes was right.

And so was Eliskases.

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BIOGRAPHY

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In 1989, 1991 and 1997 he became the chess champion of Azerbaijan. Before that, he also won the national junior title three times. In the 1990s, Guliev won many tournaments and he represented his country in international competitions. In 1995 he earned the Grandmaster title.

In 1992, Guliev graduated in engineering and economics. In 1996 he graduated as a sports instructor at the Russian State University of Physical Culture and Sport in Moscow. From 2000 onwards he has worked as a chess coach, for, among others, the national teams of Iran, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates. In 2011 he was awarded the title of FIDE Senior Coach, and in 2013 he received the title of Honoured Coach of Azerbaijan.

Guliev has written 11 chess books, of which *Tutorial Chess Endings* was translated in 8 languages. At this moment he is a teacher at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Culture and Sports.

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Strategic Ideas that Masters Never Fail to Find

When a chess master finds a winning strategic idea it is seldom by accident. An amateur is often fumbling in the dark, his head spinning with a multitude of general rules and vague notions. The master's approach is concrete. He knows how and where to look, because he has studied the games of other masters.

In this book, Sarhan Guliev presents a wide range of strategic manoeuvres that have been repeatedly employed by great chess players. He shows how masters generate ideas from the games of other masters:

- **positional sacrifices**
- **amazing counterplay concepts**
- **unorthodox exchanges**
- **winning with g2-g4 or h2-h4**
- **overcoming a blockade**
- **the advantages of double pawns**
- **the e5 pawn wedge**
- **the uses of the queen-bishop battery**
- **and much more**

After studying this book, ambitious chess players will find winning strategic manoeuvres quicker and more often. They will not find them by accident or by relying on general principles, but because they have built up a large stockpile of highly practical ideas.

International Grandmaster and FIDE Senior Coach **Sarhan Guliev** won the championship of Azerbaijan three times. He is a highly experienced chess teacher, coach and writer.

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