

EVERYMAN CHESS

easy guide  
to the  
Najdorf

Tony Kosten



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to the  
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by Tony Kosten

**EVERYMAN CHESS**

Published by Everyman Publishers, London

First published in 1999 by Everyman Publishers plc, formerly Cadogan Books plc, Gloucester Mansions, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HD in association with Gambit Publications Ltd, 69 Masbro Road, London W14 0LS.

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 85744 529 5

Distributed in North America by The Globe Pequot Press, 6 Business Park Road, P.O. Box 833, Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-0833.  
Telephone 1-800 243 0495 (toll free)

All other sales enquiries should be directed to Everyman Chess,  
Gloucester Mansions, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HD  
tel: 0171 539 7600 fax: 0171 379 4060

**EVERYMAN CHESS SERIES (formerly Cadogan Chess)**

*Chief Advisor:* Garry Kasparov

*Series Editor:* Murray Chandler

Edited by Graham Burgess and typeset by Petra Nunn for  
Gambit Publications Ltd.

Printed in Great Britain by Redwood Books, Trowbridge, Wilts.

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# Symbols

+	check	Ct	candidates event
++	double check	IZ	interzonal event
#	checkmate	Z	zonal event
x	capture	OL	olympiad
!!	brilliant move	jr	junior event
!	good move	wom	women's event
!?	interesting move	mem	memorial event
?!	dubious move	rpd	rapidplay game
?	bad move	1-0	the game ends in a win for White
??	blunder	1/2-1/2	the game ends in a draw
Ch	championship	0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
Cht	team championship	( <i>n</i> )	<i>n</i> th match game
Wch	world championship	( <i>D</i> )	see next diagram

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## Books

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*Informator (1-74)* (Šahovski Informator, 1972-99)

*The Complete Najdorf: Modern Lines*, John Nunn and Joe Gallagher  
(Batsford 1998)

*The Complete Najdorf: 6 ♘g5*, John Nunn (Batsford 1996)

*Winning With the Najdorf*, Daniel King (Batsford 1993)

*The Najdorf Variation of the Sicilian Defence*, Yefim Geller, Svetozar Gligorić,  
Lubosh Kavalek and Boris Spassky (RHM Press 1976)

## Electronic

ChessBase 7, with the analysis modules Fritz 5 and Crafty 16, using games drawn mainly from *The Week in Chess* (edited by Mark Crowther)

# Preface

*The Easy Guide to the Najdorf?* Fine, but, the Najdorf is not an 'easy' opening to learn. It is complex, both strategically and tactically.

This book is part of the 'Easy Guide' series, which serve as introductions to popular openings. The aim of this series is to explain the opening in question and to provide concise theoretical coverage, generally with a repertoire slant. Every author has his own style and his own preference for the way a book should be written, and I am no exception to this rule. I personally feel that a book should try, as far as possible, to cover all the moves that a reader is likely to face. There is nothing worse than buying a new book, assiduously studying the author's recommendations, springing your knowledge on an unsuspecting opponent, only to be hit by some perfectly sound counter, which slipped the author's attention, and lose. However, this may mean that the book might appear a little 'dense', but it is the price to be paid, I'm afraid.

The Najdorf is also incredibly popular, and is therefore subject to a lot of theoretical interest. As a consequence, it changes almost daily, with new moves and improvements being played all the time. To get around this problem, I have tried to pick sound, established variations wherever suitable, knowing

that they have withstood the ravages of time, and are likely to continue to do so. I have also used my computer to check critical lines, wherever it seemed necessary, and have found many improvements myself.

I do not consider myself a Najdorf 'expert', whatever that is, although I have played it many times in the past. I took on this project with the goal of building a solid repertoire for myself, with Black, against 1 e4. As I like to win games with Black, as much as with White, I have attempted to pick variations that offer excellent winning chances to Black, with minimum risk.

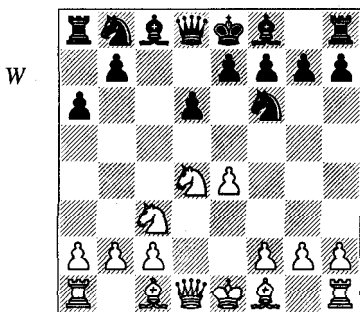
In short, studying all the variations in this book may prove hard work, but it should also prove very rewarding to the diligent reader.

And, almost finally, a little word concerning move-order. The traditional move-order, 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♖c3 a6, is used throughout the book, for reasons of conformity, even though many of the games started with the alternative move-order 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 cxd4 5 ♗xd4 a6, which is used by many players in order to avoid the line 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4.

Lastly, many thanks to Mickey Adams and John Nunn for their respective input.

# Introduction

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4  
♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 (D)



The Najdorf is an excellent way of meeting 1 e4. Often, if you know what you are doing, and your opponent does not, you can be successful with almost any opening. With the Najdorf, you can win with Black even if your opponent does know what he is doing. It is completely sound, even at the very highest levels. Kasparov's recent (at the time of writing) string of outstanding tournament successes was often due to his extraordinary score with Black, especially against 1 e4, using the Najdorf. Perhaps I can illustrate this further. Many years ago, I was at the late Lev Polugaevsky's Paris apartment, with him and another GM, Viktor Gavrikov. We were finalizing details for a new pedagogical magazine, which would bear the great Sicilian specialist's name. Gavrikov was to

deal with opening theory, but he was adamant that he was only interested in covering 'sound' openings. When pressed about this, he said that against 1 e4, that would be 1...e5 and the Najdorf Sicilian – nothing else!

## A Brief History

The 'Najdorf' was originally played by Karel Opočensky and other Czech masters, and was taken up by Moïse Mieczslaw (later Miguel) Najdorf in the late 1940s, and, because of his successes, the opening took his name. The idea of this little move 5...a6 is to control the b5-square, so that Black might be able to play ...e5, driving away the advanced white knight on d4 and gaining greater central influence, much as in the Boleslavsky Sicilian. The immediate 5...e5 is possible, but after 6 ♘b5+ ♗d7 7 ♘xd7+ ♖xd7 the move 8 ♗f5 is strong. Therefore, in the Najdorf, by avoiding the exchange of light-squared bishops, Black maintains control of his light squares, in particular f5 and d5.

Other strong players soon recognized the strength of this variation, and it quickly became one of Black's most fashionable defences. During the 1960s it was popularized by Fischer, and nowadays it is possibly the most fashionable 'defence' to 1 e4 at the highest level, being played by Gelfand,

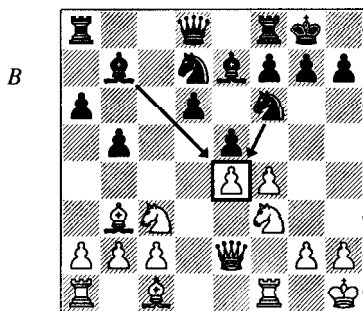
Anand, Shirov, Topalov, Ivanchuk, Svidler, amongst others, and, of course, espoused by the current World No. 1, Garry Kasparov.

## Strategic Ideas

Without going into great detail here, specific strategic ideas are often limited to a particular type of position, and in modern chess less is made of general rules and more of the concrete appraisal of each position's peculiarities. In other words, you will have to learn your theory! Nonetheless there are themes that run throughout the book.

### Pressure on the e-pawn

The Najdorf Variation is an attack on White's e-pawn. Already, after White's third move (the anti-positional swap of White's central pawn for Black's c-pawn), he can no longer defend e4 with his d-pawn, and later, should he play f4, the poor e-pawn will be on its own. Here is a position from Chapter 6:

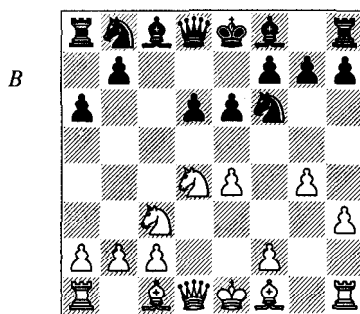


Black already presses on e4 with his f6-knight and b7-bishop, and is

ready to attack it further with ...♘c5 (one of the points of developing this piece on d7, instead of the more common Sicilian square, c6), and the f8-rook may be able to bear down on this same pawn along the e-file, from e8. If that were not enough, the b5-pawn can also join in the fun by advancing and dislodging the c3-knight, and the queen's rook can often go to c8, and then take on c3.

### Black's Extra Central Pawn

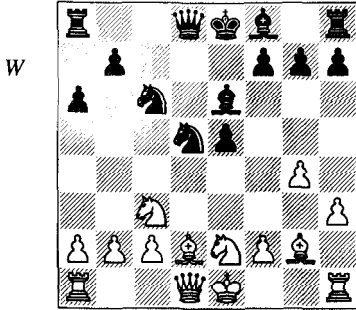
White's third move sometimes comes in for criticism because it willingly swaps an important central pawn for the black c-pawn. In the subsequent play Black will enjoy various advantages because of his extra central pawn and open c-file. In Chapter 7, for instance, the following position arises.



### Zso. Polgar – Browne San Francisco 1995

White has started advancing on the kingside, and the standard reaction to a wing attack, a counterattack in the centre, is made that much easier for Black because of his central preponderance.

7...d5! 8 exd5 ♖xd5 9 ♖d2 ♜c6 10  
 ♜de2 e5 11 ♖g2 ♖e6 (D)



Black has achieved a good position. He has plenty of space for his pieces and a useful central presence because of his e5-pawn, which controls two important squares in the white half of the board, d4 and f4.

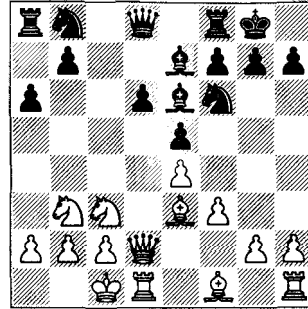
### The Minority Attack

As mentioned above, the advance of the black b-pawn constitutes an important part of Black's strategic arsenal. This minority attack can achieve various positional objectives, such as displacing the c3-knight, exposing the c2-pawn, etc. Moreover, it is often a useful weapon for attacking the white queenside in the endgame. It can also be a very effective battering-ram to expose the white king if he decides to shelter on the queenside.

In the following diagram, White has castled long, with the intention of hurling his g- and h-pawns up the board, but Black has free-moving pawns of his own.

10...b5 11 g4 b4 12 ♜d5 ♖xd5 13  
 exd5 a5 14 ♜b1 ♜c7 15 g5 ♜fd7 16  
 h4 ♜b6 17 h5 a4 18 ♜c1 ♜c4 19

B

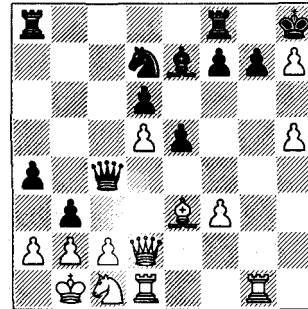


**Sax – Gallagher**  
 Mitropa Cup (Baden) 1999

♖xc4 ♜xc4 20 g6 ♜d7 21 gxf7+  
 ♜h8 22 ♜hg1 b3! (D)

White has made real headway on the kingside, and so Black cannot afford to hang around.

W

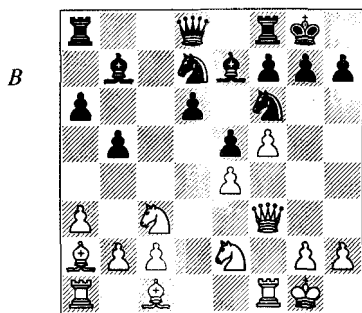


23 axb3? axb3 24 ♜xb3 ♜a4 25  
 ♜g2 ♖f6 26 ♖g5?! ♜c5! 27 ♖xf6  
 ♜a2+ 28 ♜c1 ♜xb3+ 29 cxb3 ♜fc8+

Black forces a quick mate.

As pointed out previously, the b-pawn also plays a useful role in the attack on the white e-pawn and the fight for control of the d5-square. Often, the b-pawn can be advanced at just the right moment to thwart White's plans.

Here, even the fact that White has played a3 does not stop Black's b-pawn.



**Suta – Stoica**  
*Bucharest 1972*

White is threatening either g4-g5 or ♗g5xf6, with every chance to establish a minor piece on d5, but, as they say, it is Black to move:

**13...a5!**

The pawn cannot be taken because of 14...♖b6+, but even if this tactic were not possible, the b-pawn would still be immune because capturing it would leave the e4-pawn with insufficient defence.

**14 g4?! b4**

Just in time to avoid conceding the d5-square.

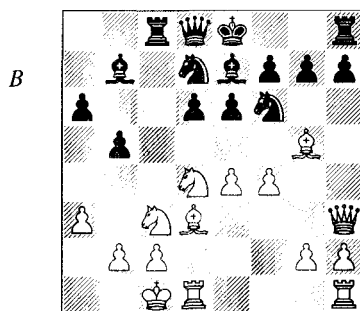
**15 ♘d5 ♜xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 17 exd5 ♗g5**

Stopping the white attack in its tracks. The weakness of White's kingside and the c2-pawn, fixed by the advance of Black's b-pawn, proved fatal.

White often plays an early a4 in the positional lines to restrain the black queenside, although even then, it often manages to advance!

### The Exchange Sacrifice

A common device for Black is the exchange sacrifice. By giving up the rook for the knight on c3, Black shatters the white queenside pawn-structure, and if he can then take the e4-pawn as well, this normally represents sufficient compensation. It is generally used by Black as a device to derail White's strategic plans. Of course, if White has castled queenside, it will be even stronger, and Black might not even need to win the e-pawn.



**Arencibia – Ivanchuk**  
*Lucerne Wcht 1997*

Black continued forcefully:

**12...♙xc3! 13 bxc3 ♞c5 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♜he1 ♖a5**

White is already lost, as he will soon be mated.

**16 e5 dxe5 17 fxe5 ♗g5+ 18 ♖b1 ♗d5 19 ♞b3 ♖xa3 20 ♗xb5+ axb5 21 ♙xd5 ♞a4 0-1**

### An Influential Game

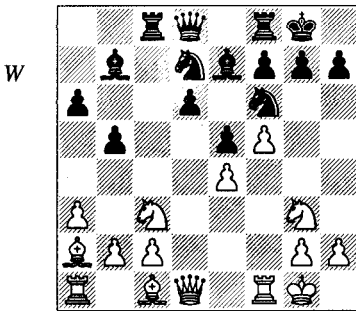
The first opening I can remember playing with Black is the Najdorf, for the simple reason that the then World

Champion, Bobby Fischer, was my first chess hero, and he played it all the time. His games still demonstrate a purity that few other players could ever match. The following game impressed me greatly the first time I saw it, for Black's so-called 'bad' bishop suddenly became the powerful possessor of the dark squares.

### Robatsch – Fischer

Havana 1965

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3  
 cxd4 5 ♘xd4 a6 6 ♗c4 e6 7 a3 ♗e7 8  
 ♗a2 0-0 9 0-0 b5 10 f4 ♗b7 11 f5 e5  
 12 ♘de2 ♘bd7 13 ♗g3 ♞c8 (D)



This black set-up is, in many ways, ideal, and occurs regularly throughout this book. The e4-pawn is under fire, and the black rook is on the half-open c-file. This impedes the movement of the white queen and c3-knight because of the c2-pawn, and also introduces the possibility of the famous exchange sacrifice on c3, either to win the e4-pawn, or to fight for control of d5.

14 ♗e3

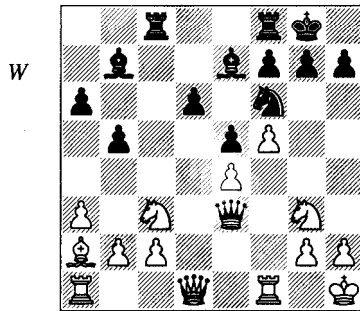
If 14 ♘h5 instead, to attempt to win control of d5 by exchanging one of its

guards, then 14...♘h5 15 ♗xh5 ♞xc3! 16 bxc3 ♘f6 is an example of the aforementioned exchange sacrifice. Black wrecks the white queenside and wins the e-pawn, which is generally more than enough in terms of compensation.

14...♘b6

The knight threatens to come to c4, where it blocks the a2-g8 diagonal and threatens the white queenside. White's reply is obligatory.

15 ♗xb6 ♗xb6+ 16 ♖h1 ♗e3! (D)



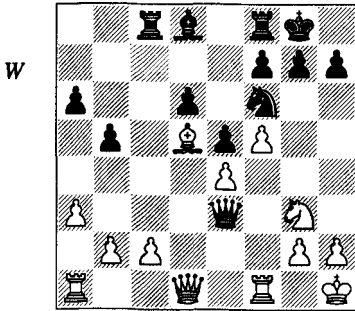
A marvellous move, centralizing the queen, and envisaging bringing it to the kingside. The absence of White's dark-squared bishop will have negative repercussions: he no longer controls his own dark squares.

17 ♘d5 ♗xd5! 18 ♗xd5 ♗d8!! (D)

Momentarily, the d6-pawn is not under attack, so Black takes the opportunity to activate his 'bad' bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal.

19 a4 ♗b6 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♞a6 b4

Both fixing the c2-pawn, and making sure that White can never play b4 himself.



22 ♖h5 ♜xd5 23 ♛g4 g6 24 exd5  
♜xc2

The c2-pawn has been left without defence, and is lost.

25 fxg6 hxg6 26 ♜f6+ ♔g7 27  
♜h5+ ♔h6

Black avoids the attempt at a perpetual check.

28 ♜f6 ♜f2!

White's back rank is weak, and the game will not last long.

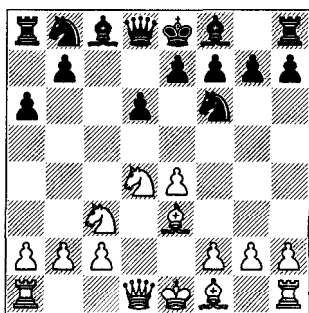
29 ♜aa1 ♜a8! 30 ♛xb4 ♔g7 31  
♛xd6 ♛e2 32 ♜e8+ ♜xe8 33 ♜f1  
♛g4 0-1

For the theory of this line, see Chapter 3, Line B.

# 1 6 ♖e3

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4  
 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 ♙e3 (D)

B



This move, preparing ♖d2 and 0-0-0, has been increasing in popularity over the last decade, to the point where Joe Gallagher now considers it to be the main line. Indeed, in recent copies of *Informator* there were more games in this variation than for all of White's other sixth moves put together!

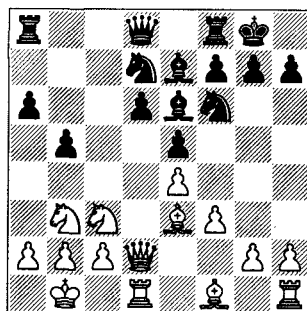
The disadvantage of many other lines, the early advance of the f-pawn to f4, and consequent undermining of e4, is not a problem here, as White can continue his plan while maintaining a sound pawn formation. He will soon play f3, which not only prepares to attack with g4, but also defends the e4-pawn.

Current World No. 1 Garry Kasparov plays this with White and Black, which has meant that the theory has developed in giant strides of late.

## White Attacks on the Kingside

I suppose that the main reason for the status of this line, at all levels, is that it gives White the opportunity to throw his g- and h-pawns up the board, lever open the black king's protection, and force a rapid mate. The following game is a case in point:

W



### Tolnai – Kuczynski

Stara Zagora Z 1990

12 g4 ♜b6 13 g5 ♜fd7 14 h4 ♚c7  
 15 h5 ♜fc8 16 g6

White has managed to strike first.

16...b4 17 ♜d5 ♜xd5 18 exd5 ♙f5  
 19 gxf7+ ♙h8 20 ♙d3 ♙xd3 21  
 ♚xd3 ♜f8 22 ♚g6! ♙f6 23 ♜dg1

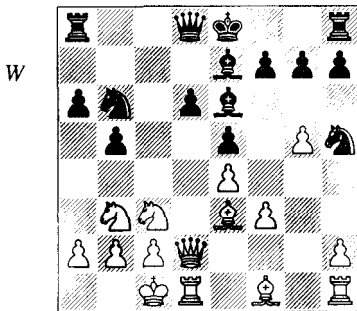
Black managed to avoid mate, by clever defence, but could not avoid defeat.

Actually, at higher levels, games of this type are surprisingly rare. Black's queenside counterplay can be at least

as quick, and often Black steers clear of premature kingside castling, so as to avoid giving White a target. Strangely, in a way, White is more often interested in playing on the queenside, even when his king is there.

### White Attacks on the Queenside

Apart from the 'standard plot', where White castles kingside and plays on the queenside with moves such as a4, there is one very effective plan that wins a lot of games for White, and which occurs even in positions where he has castled queenside and advanced his kingside pawns. In effect, he uses the fact that his queen, on d2, covers the a5-square, to support a knight there. This piece can then go to c6, provided that there is a white pawn on d5 to support it. Be careful to keep a look-out for this possibility, as once this piece successfully arrives on c6, things will look very grim for Black indeed.



**Kobaliya – Dvoiryts**  
*St Petersburg 1998*

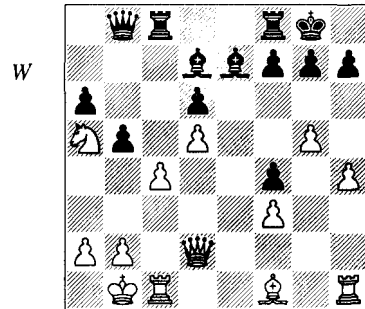
A fairly typical position, but one which we will certainly avoid in this

chapter! White first brings his e4-pawn to d5, to cover the c6-square.

13 ♖d5 ♜xd5 14 exd5 ♖d7 15 ♜a5

The queen on d2 is ideally placed, and controls the a5-square, so that the passively-placed b3-knight can hop to a5, where it eyes the c6-square. Now it simply remains for White to exchange light-squared bishops, and the outpost on c6 will belong to his knight.

15...0-0 16 ♖b1 ♚c7 17 c4 ♜ac8 18 ♜c1 ♜f4 19 h4 ♚b8 20 ♖xf4 exf4 (D)



21 ♖h3! ♖xh3 22 ♜xh3 bxc4 23 ♜c6

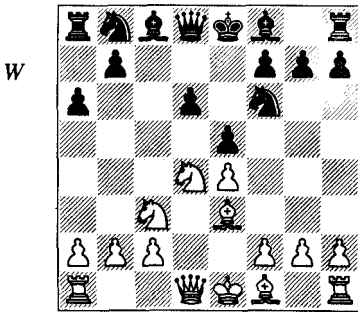
Now Black is positionally lost. He decides to give the exchange to liquidate the oppressive white knight, but it is quite insufficient.

23...♜xc6 24 dxc6 ♚c8 25 ♜h2 ♜xc6 26 ♚e2 ♚b7 27 ♜xc4 d5 28 ♜c1 ♖d8 29 ♚e5 ♖b6 30 ♚xf4 ♜e8 31 ♜hc2 g6 32 ♜c7 ♖xc7 33 ♜xc7 ♜e1+ 34 ♖c2 ♜e2+ 35 ♖d1 1-0

### The Theory of 6 ♖e3

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 ♖e3 e5 (D)

6...♘g4 is also very much at the cutting edge of theory at the moment. The continuation 7 ♖g5 h6 8 ♖h4 g5 9 ♖g3 ♖g7 leads to a very active position for Black, and I was tempted to recommend it, but there are two problems with this. Firstly, White can play 7 ♖c1 ♘f6 8 ♖e3 with a likely draw by repetition, if he is peaceably minded. Secondly, a lot of strong players (Morozevich for one) have turned to 6 f3 as a means of avoiding 6...♘g4, when, after 6...e5 7 ♘b3 we reach the main line considered in this chapter. It is true that by playing this way White no longer has the option of playing Line B, with 7 ♘f3, but as this is not very popular at the moment, and not particularly frightening for Black either, it seems simpler to consider only 6...e5.



At this point White has two main replies:

- A:** 7 ♘b3           14  
**B:** 7 ♘f3           26

There is also 7 ♘de2 (aiming for the f5-square, but too slow) 7...♖e7 8 h3 (8 ♗d2 0-0 9 f3 ♖e6 10 0-0 b5 leads to an inferior version of Line A,

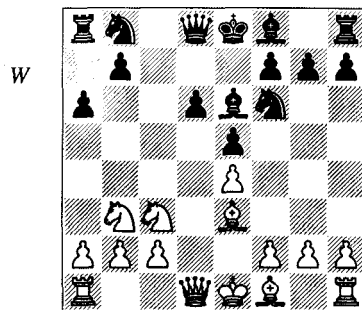
Miller-Rowson, Erevan OL 1996) 8...♖e6 9 ♘g3 g6 (leaving the knight on g3 misplaced) 10 ♖d3 ♘bd7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♗f3 ♘h8 13 ♖ad1 b5 14 ♗e2 ♗a5 15 a3 ♖ab8 16 ♖fe1 ♗c7 17 ♘f1 ♘b6, with good play for Black, Rosolimo-Fischer, USA Ch (New York) 1966/7.

**A)**

7 ♘b3

This is the best move. White intends to play f3, ♗d2 and 0-0-0, followed by the inevitable kingside pawn charge, g4-g5, h4-h5, etc. However, one of the attractions of this line is that White can also turn his attention to the queenside. Although he is unlikely ever to establish a piece on d5, as Black can keep this square well controlled, White can often reply to Black's ...b5 by playing ♘d5, recapture on d5 with his e-pawn, and then manoeuvre his b3-knight to c6 via a5, as it is supported by the queen on d2. Furthermore, if Black tries to attack on the queenside too soon, White will be able to change plans, and avoid castling long in favour of playing a4 and castling short.

7...♖e6 (D)



As White will probably castle long, Black will want to get his queenside play underway quickly, and therefore this seems the most accurate move. There is a second point in that the bishop also surveys d5 and the freeing move ...d5 might be possible if White plays inaccurately.

### 8 f3

Essential preparation for ♖d2 and 0-0-0, followed by g4, etc. White might be able to delay this move a little, but he will probably play it quite soon. This position is doubly important, as far as we are concerned, for if White plays 6 f3, then this exact position will be reached after 6...e5 7 ♘b3 ♙e6 8 ♙e3, but without allowing White to play any of the other 8th move alternatives. They are:

a) 8 ♖d2 ♘bd7 is likely to transpose back to the main line after 9 f3 (the most popular move by far in this position) 9...b5. White can also play 9 0-0-0?! b5 10 f3 – see the note to White's 10th move in Line A1. White does have one other possibility, viz. 9 f4 ♙c8 (although Black has plenty of good replies, I think that this is the most logical) 10 f5 (this is White's idea, trying to clamp down on the light squares, but the drawback is the time wasted) 10...♙xb3! 11 axb3 d5!, when Black has a strong initiative:

a1) 12 exd5 ♙b4 13 ♖d3 ♘c5 14 ♖c4 ♙xc3+ 15 ♖xc3 0-0 16 0-0-0 (16 ♙xc5 ♘xd5 17 ♖a5 b6 18 ♙xb6 ♘xb6 with the unpleasant threat of ...♖h4+) 16...♘xd5 17 ♖e1 ♘xb3+ 18 ♖b1 ♖c7 19 ♙xd5 ♖xc2+ 20 ♖a2 and now 20...♘c1+ 1/2-1/2 was E.Gonzales-Hmadi, Thessaloniki OL 1984; 21 ♙xc1 ♖a4+ 22 ♖b1 ♖c2+ is a

perpetual check. However, Black can, and should, be more ambitious, since 20...♖e4! seems very strong, e.g. 21 ♖xb3 ♖xd5+ 22 ♖a3 b5, when the white king appears somewhat awkwardly placed, and the white kingside is still undeveloped. I imagine that, by simply doubling rooks on the c-file, this is just winning for Black.

a2) 12 ♘xd5!? (it is difficult to believe that this is really playable) 12...♘e4 13 ♖e2 (13 ♖a5?! is a cop-out: 13...♖xa5+ 14 ♙xa5 ♘d6 15 ♙d2 ♘xf5 16 ♙d3 ♘d4 and White has little to show for his pawn, Paneque-Herrera, Bayamo 1990) 13...♖h4+!? (this wins material, but allows White some attack; other moves are no doubt possible, e.g. 13...♘df6 14 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 {this stops White castling long} 15 ♙d1 ♖c7 with a fine position) 14 g3 ♘xg3 15 hxg3 ♖xh1 16 0-0-0 ♖e4 17 ♙h3 ♘f6 18 ♘xf6+ gxf6 19 ♙g2 ♖b4 20 ♖d3 ♖e7 21 ♖e4 ♖c7 22 ♖b1 ♙c5 and, in Nikolenko-Odeev, USSR Cht (Naberezhnye Chelny) 1988, Black next played his king to e7, when White's compensation for the material sacrificed was insufficient.

b) 8 f4 (this is another attempt to embarrass the e6-bishop, but it loosens the white position, and, just as in Chapter 4 Line A1, Black has a simple method of equalizing) 8...exf4 9 ♙xf4 ♘c6 and now:

b1) 10 ♖d2 (this is the idea behind White's play; he intends 0-0-0, with great pressure on the d6-pawn) 10...d5 (unfortunately for White, the d6-pawn has moved! Once again, the standard equalizing move does what it is supposed to do!) 11 exd5 (11 0-0-0 ♘xe4 12 ♘xe4 dxe4 13 ♖e3 ♖f6! 14 ♖xe4

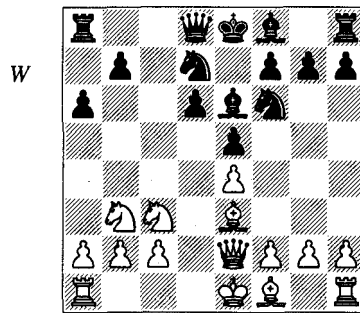
♙e7 15 ♙d3 ♙d5 16 ♖xd5 ♖xf4+ 17 ♗b1 1/2-1/2 Sax-Sadler, Pula Echt 1997) 11...♘xd5 12 ♘xd5 (12 0-0-0? ♙b4 13 ♖e1 ♙xc3 14 bxc3 ♖e7 is better for Black, Hellers-Malishauskas, Oslo 1992) 12...♖xd5 13 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 14 0-0-0 0-0-0 15 g3!? (15 ♙d3 g6 16 ♚d2 ♙d6 17 ♙xd6 ♚xd6 18 ♙e4 ♚hd8 19 ♚hd1 ♘b4 is totally equal, Szalanczy-Loginov, Kecskemet 1993, as is 15 ♙e2 g6 16 ♚hg1 ♙e7 17 g3 ♚he8 18 ♚gf1 f5 19 ♙f3 1/2-1/2 Yudasin-Gelfand, Biel IZ 1993) 15...♙d6 16 ♙h3+ ♗c7 17 ♚hf1 ♙xf4+ 18 ♚xf4 ♙xb3 19 axb3 ♚xd1+ 20 ♗xd1 ♚d8+ 21 ♗c1 ♘e5 is, if anything, a little better for Black because of his potential passed kingside pawn, Klován-Dvoirys, Budapest 1992.

b2) 10 ♖e2 (this is artificial; White stops Black playing ...d5, but on the other hand long castling is no longer possible without preparation, because of the reply ...♙g4) 10...♙e7 11 h3 (necessary if White wants to castle) 11...♘d7! 12 0-0-0 ♘ce5! (the knight hops in to the fine square e5, and at the same time masks the d6 weakness) 13 ♘d5 ♙xd5 14 ♚xd5 0-0 15 h4! ♚c8 and Black has plenty of possibilities, with open files for his rooks, and good squares for his minor pieces, Shirov-Gelfand, Khalkidhiki 1993.

c) 8 ♘d5 (White introduces a more positional approach: he wishes to create a mobile queenside majority) 8...♘bd7 (a typical Najdorf idea; Black 'ignores' the d5-knight, and, by covering the b6-square, forces White to protect his e-pawn; obviously, the pawn is not *en prise* immediately, because 8...♘xe4?? loses to 9 ♙b6 and 10 ♘c7+) 9 f3 ♘xd5 (now is the time to

capture) 10 exd5 ♙f5 11 ♖d2 (with the positional threat ♘a5, followed by c4, setting the queenside pawns in motion; 11 ♙d3 ♙xd3 12 ♖xd3 ♙e7 13 0-0 0-0 14 a4 ♚c8 15 a5 ♙g5 16 ♚fc1 f5 is easy for Black, Short-Chandler, Brighton Z 1984) 11...♚c8 12 c4 b6! (both stopping ♘a5 and preparing to set up a dark-square pawn barrier; 12...♙e7?! is the sort of move White is hoping for: 13 ♘a5 ♖c7 14 b4 with a large advantage, as the a5-knight can no longer be evicted, with ...b6 allowing ♘c6, Ehlvest-Szekely, Leningrad 1984) 13 ♙e2 ♙e7 14 0-0 ♙g6 15 f4 exf4 16 ♙xf4 ♘e5 17 ♘d4 0-0 18 b3 ♚e8 19 ♚ad1 ♙f6 and Black is active, Short-Marjanović, Thessaloniki OL 1984.

d) 8 ♖e2 (this move keeps the d-file open for the white rook, but blocks the f1-bishop) 8...♘bd7 (D) and now:



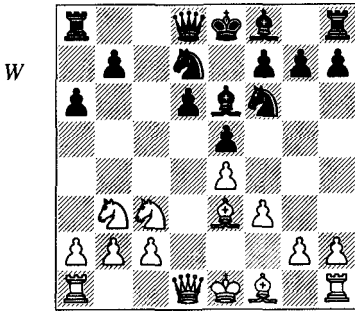
d1) Nevednichy proposes 9 0-0-0 ♚c8 10 f3 ♚xc3! 11 bxc3 d5 12 ♗b2! (trying to guard the dark squares around the king) 12...dxe4 13 ♙g5 and now, instead of his 13...exf3, I would play 13...♖c7! as then 14 fxe4? loses to 14...♙g4 and meanwhile both ...♘b6-a4 and ...♘d5 are on the cards.

Therefore we can conclude that White is struggling.

d2) 9 f4 exf4 10 ♖xf4 ♘e5 11 h3 ♖e7 12 0-0-0 (Nevednichy-Olafsson, Erevan OL 1996) and now 12...♗f7 transposes to the note 'b2'.

e) 8 ♖e2 ♖e7 transposes to note 'a' to White's 8th move in Chapter 4, Line A. Likewise ♖e2 on the next few moves will effect a similar transposition.

8...♗bd7 (D)



At the time of writing, there is no clear consensus about which line is Black's best here. Several different plans are possible, and each one has its defenders. I prefer the text-move, followed by a swift ...b5, for several reasons. Firstly, White is probably going to castle queenside, in which case Black should get his counterplay going in that sector. Secondly, I do not like to castle kingside too soon, as this invites the standard kingside pawn-storm; nor do I like lines with ...h6 (played to stop White's g5 move), as this weakens Black's kingside.

9 ♗d2

After this White is ready to castle queenside next move. This is probably

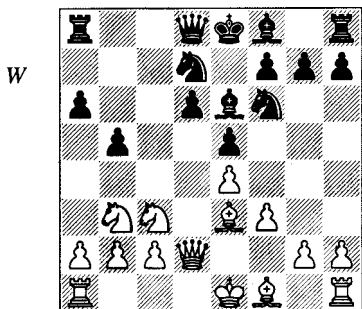
the most accurate, but White can also attempt to 'cross up' Black's development by 9 g4, the point being that 9...b5 can now be answered by 10 g5 (instead, 10 ♗d2 ♗b6 transposes to Line A1, and although 10 a4?! is possible, this looks worse than the similar Line A2 as White has loosened his kingside pawn-structure; for example, 10...b4 11 ♗d5 ♖xd5 12 exd5 ♗b6 13 ♖f2!? h6 14 f4 exf4 15 ♗e2+ ♖e7 16 0-0-0, but White's play looks fishy to me, Sakaev-Doroshkevich, Russia Cup 1997) and, unlike the main line, the square d7 is no longer available to the black king's knight. 10...b4! (a useful resource) and now:

a) 11 gxf6 bxc3 12 fxg7 ♖xg7 13 bxc3 (White has won a pawn, but his pawn-structure is a wreck) 13...♖h6 (Black immediately activates his dark-squared bishop) 14 ♖f2 (14 ♖xh6?! ♗h4+ 15 ♗d2 ♗xh6+ is even worse) 14...♗c7 gives Black a promising position.

b) 11 ♗e2!? (this might be more dangerous, as although Black no longer has to worry about the positional threat of ♗d5, he has driven White's queen's knight to the kingside, where it may well become useful) 11...♗h5 12 ♗d2 ♖e7 (12...a5!? is interesting, planning ...a4, driving the b3-knight to who knows where, and dissuading White from castling long; then both 13 ♗g3 ♗xg3 14 hxg3 a4 15 ♗c1 and 13 a4 ♗c8 14 ♗g3 ♗f4 seem to give improved versions of the game) 13 ♗g3 ♗f4 14 h4 h6 15 ♖xf4 exf4 16 ♗h5 ♖xb3 17 axb3 g6 18 ♗xf4 hxg5 19 ♗d5 does not look very clear here, but soon favoured White in Adams-Svidler, Dos Hermanas 1999.

c) 11 ♘d5 ♘xd5 12 exd5 ♙f5 (thus, not only does Black avoid having to move his king's knight offside, but he also finds a good square for his queen's bishop, as White can no longer control f5 with a pawn) 13 ♙d3 ♙xd3 14 ♖xd3 ♙e7 15 ♖g1 (15 h4 0-0 16 0-0-0 a5 17 ♘d2 f5 18 gxf6 ♘xf6 19 h5 is very similar, Shirov-Svidler, Wijk aan Zee 1999) 15...0-0 16 0-0-0 a5 17 ♘d2 f5 18 gxf6 ♘xf6 19 ♖b1 ♘h5 20 ♖g4 ♖d7 21 ♖c4 ♖f5 and Black exchanges queens, with comfortable equality, Leko-Kasparov, Linares 1999.

9...b5 (D)



Not only is Black fighting for the initiative on the queenside with this move, but also in the centre, as a later ...b4 can help to control the d5-square, by driving the c3-knight away. Now White has two separate plans:

**A1: 10 g4 (and 10 0-0-0) 18**

**A2: 10 a4 (and 10 ♘d5) 21**

The logic of this organization is that in Line A1 we consider variations where White attacks on the kingside, and in Line A2, those where he attacks on the queenside.

## A1)

### 10 g4

Not only does this move indicate an intention to storm the kingside pawns up the board, with g5, h4-h5 and then g6, but there are also positional implications associated with the move g5. For this threatens to sideline the f6-knight, and, more importantly, gain control of d5 for the c3-knight, itself menaced by Black's b-pawn.

The other kingside attack idea is 10 0-0-0?! but this is inferior, because Black can set his queenside play in motion without having to concern himself with White's g4-g5. Black continues 10...♘b6! (coming immediately to c4) and now:

a) 11 ♖b1 should be answered by 11...♘c4 12 ♙xc4 bxc4 13 ♘c1 ♖b8, rather than 11...b4 12 ♙xb6 ♖xb6 13 ♘d5 ♙xd5 14 exd5 g6 15 g4 ♙g7, as in Campora-Grunenwald, Mendrisio 1988, although even this is quite reasonable.

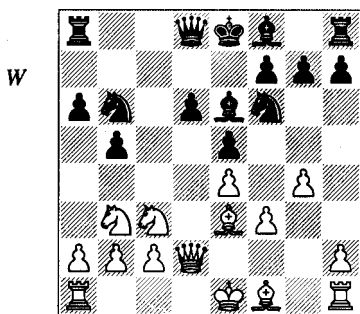
b) 11 ♙xb6 ♖xb6 12 g4 b4 13 ♘d5 ♙xd5 14 exd5 is similar, although in Kieran-Istrati, Mureck girls U-16 Ech 1998 Black sent her queenside pawns up the board: 14...♙e7 15 h4 a5 16 ♖d3 0-0 17 h5 ♘d7 18 ♖b1 a4 19 ♘d2 ♘c5 and the black attack was in full swing, while White's had not even started.

c) 11 g4 transposes to note 'c' to White's 11th move.

d) 11 ♖f2 ♘c4 12 ♙xc4 bxc4 (White's position looks suspicious to me, or, at least, I would not care to play it, as Black has a ready-made attack along the b-file) 13 ♘c5 ♖c7 14 ♘5a4 (14 ♘xe6 fxe6 strengthens the black centre) 14...♖b8 15 g4 ♖c6 (by

attacking the a4-knight, Black stops White occupying d5 with his other knight) 16 g5 ♘d7 17 f4 exf4 18 ♙xf4 ♜b4 19 b3 cxb3 20 axb3 ♜xa4!? (this is fun, but 20...♙b6! is simpler, and strong, e.g. 21 ♚g3 {21 ♘xb6? loses to 21...♚xc3} 21...♘xa4 22 bxa4 ♜c4, when the white king must be wondering what happened to its pawn cover) 21 ♘xa4 ♙xb3 22 ♙b2 (Tiviakov-Van Wely, Holland 1998) and now Van Wely suggests that 22...♘c5 is strongest, with an attack.

10...♙b6! (D)



This move is the palpable advantage of playing an early ...b5. Black further controls the d5-square, vacates a square on d7 for the f6-knight, and threatens action on the queenside with ...♘c4 or ...b4.

11 g5

Certainly this move is critical, for the other tries have not fared too well, although that has as much to do with the strength of the player of the black pieces in two of the games:

a) 11 ♙xb6?! ♚xb6 12 g5 ♘h5 13 0-0-0 ♙e7 14 h4 0-0 is very pleasant for Black, Arnold-Weis, 2nd Bundesliga 1990.

b) 11 ♘a5? (this is too artificial) 11...b4 12 ♘e2 d5 (Black is already better) 13 g5 ♘fd7 14 c3 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♙c5 16 ♙xc5 ♘xc5 17 ♚e3 ♚c7 18 ♘g3 0-0 and White's ragged structure is indefensible, Svidler-Kasparov, Blitz Match, ICC 1998.

c) 11 0-0-0 ♙e7 (this could arise from 10 0-0-0?!, and I suppose that Black could play 11...♘c4! here as well, e.g. 12 ♙xc4 bxc4, when the ugly move 13 ♘a1 is forced; however, in Svidler-Kasparov, Wijk aan Zee 1999, the World Champion played the text-move instead, but as this was a blitz game, it is difficult to read much into this decision) 12 ♚f2 ♘fd7 13 ♙b1 ♚c7 14 h4 0-0 15 g5 b4 16 ♘d5 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♙f5 18 ♙d3 ♙xd3 and now, instead of the bizarre move 19 cxd3?!, when White lost his lonely d5-pawn, 19 ♜xd3 seems equal.

11...♘fd7 12 ♘d5

Alternatives:

a) 12 ♘a5 and now:

a1) 12...♜c8 13 0-0-0 ♚c7 14 ♙b1 ♙e7 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 exd5 ♙xd5 17 ♚xd5 ♚xa5 18 c4 0-0 leads to complications, Lukianov-Kuporosov, USSR 1988.

a2) 12...b4!? is tempting, as in note 'b' to White's 11th move, e.g. 13 ♘d5 (13 ♘e2 d5) 13...♘xd5 14 ♘c6 (14 exd5 ♚xa5 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 ♙h3 ♚d5!?) 14...♘xe3 15 ♘xd8 ♘xf1 16 ♜xf1 ♜xd8 gives Black a lot of pieces for his queen.

b) 12 f4!? g6 (else White plays f5) 13 0-0-0 ♘c4 14 ♙xc4 bxc4 15 ♘d4!? (this leads to interesting play; 15 ♘a1, while legal, does not appear especially tempting) 15...exd4 16 ♙xd4 f6 17 gxf6 ♙h6 18 f7+ ♙xf7 19 ♙e3?! (19

♙xh8 ♖xh8 20 ♜xd6 ♜e5 is similar: Black's two bishops should have the edge over the rook and two pawns) 19...♙g4 20 ♜d5+ ♜g7 21 ♙d4+ ♚f6 22 ♜b7+ ♜d7 23 ♜xd7+ ♙xd7 24 ♚d5 ♜hf8 and after the exchange of the white bishop and knight for the black rook and knight, Black's bishop-pair proved the dominant factor in Leko-Shirov, Sarajevo 1999.

c) 12 0-0-0?! ♚c4 (once again White has allowed this move, although this time he really dare not capture the c4-knight) 13 ♜f2 ♙e7 14 ♜g1 ♜c7 (I prefer 14...♚xe3 15 ♜xe3 ♜b6! 16 ♜xb6 ♚xb6, which keeps control of d5; then Black has a promising endgame as he threatens to play ...h6, exposing the white kingside, and can happily leave his king in the centre) 15 ♚d5 ♙xd5 16 ♜xd5 ♚db6? (16...♚xe3 17 ♜xe3 ♚b6 18 ♜d1 0-0 stops White establishing a piece on d5) 17 ♙xc4 ♚xc4 18 ♚d2 0-0 19 ♚xc4 ♜xc4 and White has a clear advantage, Zayas-Herrera, Havana 1996.

d) 12 a4?! is too late as 12...♚c4 13 ♙xc4 bxc4 is better for Black, Hartston-Stean, Hastings 1972/3.

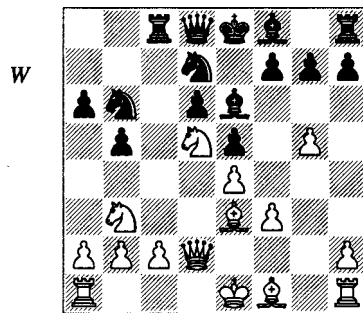
### 12...♜c8! (D)

This seems to be the most accurate. If 12...♚xd5 instead, then 13 exd5 ♙f5 14 ♚a5 is White's idea, planning to float in to c6. To be fair, this does not seem that frightening, as Black has the resource ...♚b8; for instance, 14...♜c7 15 ♚c6 ♚b8. However, the text-move is certainly simpler for Black.

### 13 0-0-0

Other moves:

a) 13 ♚a5!?! can now be met by 13...♚xd5 14 exd5 ♙xd5 15 ♜xd5



♜xa5+, winning a pawn, although after 16 c3 ♙e7 17 a4, White has some compensation: 17...0-0 (17...♜c3 appears strong, but after 18 ♙d2 ♜c5 19 ♜xc5 ♜xd2+ 20 ♚xd2 ♚xc5 White has the surprising resource 21 axb5!! ♚b3+ 22 ♚c3 ♚xa1 23 bxa6 as the a1-knight is trapped) 18 ♙d3 ♜d8 19 h4 ♚c5 20 ♙f5 ♚xa4!? 21 ♙xc8 ♜xc8, with plenty of compensation for the exchange, Diaz-Herrera, Cienfuegos 1996.

b) 13 h4 ♙xd5 14 exd5 ♚c4 15 ♙xc4 bxc4 16 ♚c1 c3?! 17 bxc3 ♚b6 18 ♙xb6 ♜xb6 19 ♚d3 h6 and Black is attacking White's weak pawns on both sides of the board, Kalod-Vaulin, Pardubice 1997.

c) 13 ♚xb6?! ♚xb6 14 ♚a5 ♙e7 15 a4?! (Reichenbach-Lapienis, Grieskirchen 1998) and now 15...♚xa4 is simplest: 16 c4 ♙d7 17 b3 ♚c5 with a pawn more.

### 13...♙xd5 14 exd5 ♚c4 15 ♜f2

This concession is forced, since if 15 ♙xc4? then 15...bxc4 forces the grovelling move 16 ♚a1, as 16 ♚a5?? loses on the spot to 16...c3.

### 15...♙e7 16 h4

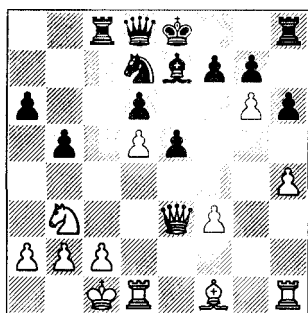
More accurate than 16 ♜g1, as Black can then force the queens off

by 16...♗xe3 17 ♖xe3 ♖b6!, 'skewering' the queen against the g1-rook.

16...♗xe3! 17 ♖xe3 h6 18 g6 (D)

Best, as 18 ♖h3?! hxg5 19 ♖xd7+ is met by 19...♗xd7, with advantage.

B



A critical position for this line.

18...f5

Black decides to keep his pawn-structure intact, but both 18...♖xh4!? 19 gxf7+ ♗xf7 20 f4! ♖f6 21 ♖h3 ♖e8 and 18...fxg6!? 19 ♖e4 0-0 seem viable attempts to win material, although White has some compensation in both instances.

19 f4 0-0 20 ♖h3 ♖xh4 21 ♗b1 ♗c7

21...♗f6!? is an interesting alternative.

22 c3 ♖ce8 23 ♗d3 e4 24 ♗c2

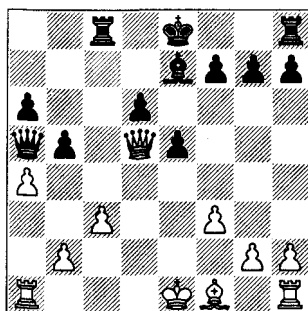
Now, instead of 24...♖f6? 25 ♖xf5 ♗c5?! 26 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 27 ♖e6+ ♗h8, when 28 ♖h3! is winning because of the threat of ♗h2 and ♖xh6+, Lastin-Vaulin, Russia Cup 1997, the immediate 24...♗c5 is good: 25 ♗d4 (if 25 ♗xc5? ♗xc5 26 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 27 ♖xh4 then 27...♗e3! is strong) 25...♖f6! 26 ♗xf5 ♗b6 intending ...b4, with or without ...♗d3, and a subsequent attack on b2.

A2)

10 a4

White attempts to demonstrate that Black's previous move was premature, and rather than pursue his planned kingside attack, turns his attention to the queenside. The 'queenside' alternative is 10 ♗d5 (this is similar, and can often transpose) 10...♖xd5 11 exd5 ♗b6 12 ♖xb6 ♗xb6 13 ♗a5?! (13 a4! b4 14 a5 ♗b7 brings us to the main line) 13...♗xd5 14 ♗xd5 ♗xa5+ 15 c3 ♖c8 16 a4 ♖e7 (D) and now:

W



a) 17 ♖a2 (this is slightly inferior to putting the rook on a3) 17...♗b6 18 axb5 a5 19 ♖a4 0-0 (White is very strong on the light squares, and has a strong passed b-pawn, but unfortunately, he is unable to castle, and this is rather more important) 20 ♗d1 ♖c5 21 ♗d2 d5 22 ♖d3 f5 23 ♖e1 e4 and White is being pushed back, Peters-Browne, USA Ch 1980.

b) 17 ♖a3 provides a retreat-square on a2 for the white queen, if need be. 17...♗b6 18 axb5 a5 19 ♖e2 0-0 20 g3 ♖c5 21 ♗a2 (the point of 17 ♖a3 – the a5-pawn is now attacked) 21...e4!? (21...♖d8!?) 22 fxe4 ♖e5 23 ♖a4 d5 24 ♖d4 ♖c5 25 ♖xd5 ♖xe4 with an

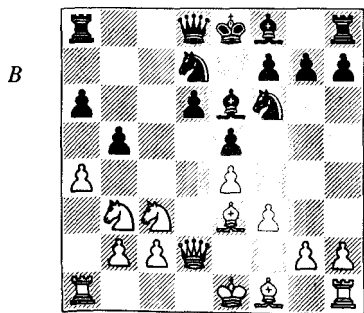
attack for Black, Gipslis-Kaiumov, USSR 1981.

c) 17 ♖b7!? (this might be best, and may lead to a draw, but it is a path strewn with obstacles) 17...♞xc3! and now:

c1) 18 bxc3 ♜xc3+ 19 ♔f2 ♜d4+ 20 ♔e2 ♜b2+ 21 ♔d3 ♕g5!? 22 ♜c8+ ♔e7 23 ♜c3 e4+ 24 fxe4 ♜xc3+ 25 ♔xc3 ♕f6+ and Black has a pawn more.

c2) 18 ♕xb5+ axb5 19 bxc3 ♜xc3+ 20 ♔e2 is also possible, but if nothing better, Black can always continue 20...♜c4+ 21 ♔d1 bxa4 22 ♜a8+ ♔d7 23 ♜xa4+ (23 ♜xh8?! ♜d3+ 24 ♔e1 ♕h4+ 25 g3 ♜e3+ 26 ♔f1 ♜xf3+ 27 ♔g1 ♕d8 keeps Black's attack going) 23...♜xa4+ 24 ♞xa4 ♞b8, with an edge for Black.

We return to the position after 10 a4 (D):



10...b4 11 ♔d5 ♕xd5 12 exd5 ♔b6 13 ♕xb6 ♜xb6

Thus far play is virtually forced. Opposite-coloured bishops are on the board, and this can either make the game drawish, or can favour attacking prospects. White's dark squares are especially weak, and these can prove

very enticing to Black's dark-squared bishop.

#### 14 a5

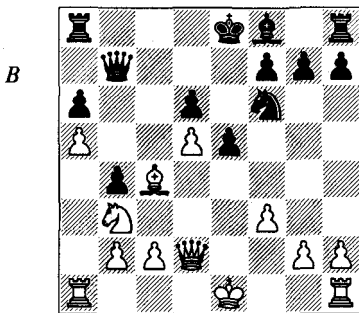
White continues his queenside action, cutting off Black's b4-pawn, and fixing the a6-pawn on a light square. Other moves seem less relevant:

a) 14 0-0-0?! g6! (as the d-file is no longer open, and the d6-pawn is completely immune from attack, it makes sense to develop the black dark-squared bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal, where it has a great future) 15 g4 ♕g7 16 ♕d3 0-0 17 a5 ♜b7 18 ♔b1 ♞fc8 19 h4?! e4! (a completely thematic move, opening up the key diagonal) 20 fxe4 ♔xg4 21 h5 ♜e7 22 ♔a2 ♜e5 gives Black what should be a decisive attack on the dark squares, Perenyi-T.Horvath, Hungary 1982.

b) 14 g4!? (of course, having seen the previous line, you should have no problem finding Black's next move) 14...g6! 15 h4 ♕g7 16 h5 0-0 (there is a rule pertaining to these kingside fianchetto positions, that states that Black rarely gets mated if he retains his g7-bishop; here White has no dark-squared bishop, and so he cannot exchange Black's defensive piece by ♕h6, and therefore Black can safely castle kingside) 17 h6?! (after this move, White will not even be able to open the h-file) 17...♕h8 18 0-0-0 e4! (again, it is more important to free the diagonal than to worry about the loss of a pawn) 19 a5 ♜c7 20 g5 ♔d7 21 fxe4 ♔c5 22 ♔xc5 ♜xc5 23 ♞h3 ♜xa5 and Black won comfortably, by combining threats along the long dark-square diagonal with the advance of his a- and b-pawns, in Hartmann-Georgadze, Hannover 1983.

## 14...♖b7 15 ♖c4 (D)

The other way to protect d5, 15 0-0-0, suffers from the same defects as in the previous note: 15...g6! 16 ♖b1 ♖g7 17 f4! (17 g4 0-0 18 ♖d3 transposes to note 'a' to White's 14th move) 17...e4 18 ♖c4? (this bishop is passively placed; 18 ♖d4 is better, but even here the complications favour Black after 18...♙c8 with both 19 ♖e2 ♙c5 and 19 ♖c6 ♖xd5 20 ♖xd5 ♖xc6) 18...0-0 19 ♖d4 ♖xd5 20 ♖b3 ♖e7 21 ♖xd6 ♖f5 22 ♖d2 ♖e7 23 ♖c1 ♖d6 24 ♖d5 ♙ac8 with a clear advantage to Black, Hazai-Nunn, Lugano 1983.



## 15...♖e7 16 ♙a4

The obvious move, 16 0-0?!, is too helpful for Black: 16...0-0 17 ♙a4 ♙b8 18 ♖h1 (after 18 ♖c1 ♖d8, 19 ♖a2? allows 19...♖xa5) 18...♖d7 19 f4 ♖f6 20 ♖d3 e4 21 ♖xe4 ♖xb2 and Black is on top, Agnos-Timoshenko, London Lloyds Bank 1990.

## 16...♙b8 17 ♖c1

The knight is coming to a2, to intensify the pressure on the b4-pawn. Others:

a) 17 ♖d3 and now Black can continue:

a1) 17...♙a8 18 ♖d2 ♙b8 19 ♖d3 (19 ♖c1 transposes back to 17 ♖c1 with two extra moves on the score-sheet, and so may be used by players trying to avoid time-trouble) is possibly a problem with this line from Black's point of view, as White can thereby try to force a draw by repetition of position.

If Black needs to win then he can try either:

a2) 17...♖a7!? (riskily gambiting the a-pawn, but confining the white king to the centre) 18 ♖xa6 0-0 19 ♖b5! (the most precise: the bishop is coming to c6 to help the a-pawn on its way; if 19 ♖c4 then 19...e4! 20 ♖d4 ♖d7 21 ♙a2 exf3 22 gxf3 ♖h3 23 ♖d2 ♖d7 with a dangerous initiative for Black, Khalafian-Gaprindashvili, USSR 1983) 19...e4 20 ♖d4 ♖c7 21 ♖c6 exf3 22 gxf3 (22 0-0 fxg2 23 ♖e1 is a better idea, but, for instance, after 23...h5!? 24 a6 ♖g4 25 a7 ♖f6 26 ♖d2 ♙a8 27 ♖xa8 ♙xa8 Black is not without chances) 22...♖d7 and now:

a21) 23 ♖d1? (a peculiar move) 23...♖e5 24 ♙g1 g6 25 ♙f1 ♖xc6 26 dxc6 d5 and Black is taking over control, Govedarica-Raičević, Belgrade 1984.

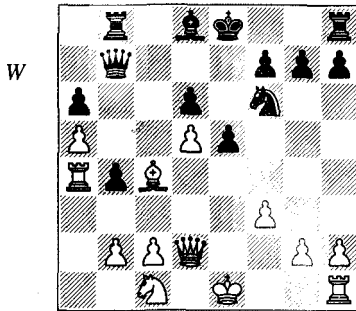
a22) 23 0-0 is better: 23...♖f6 24 ♖f2 ♖e5 25 ♖d4 ♖a7! and, with care, White might have a small edge, although the coming opposite-coloured bishops make a draw a likely result.

a23) 23 f4 ♖f6 24 ♖f2 ♖xb2 25 a6 ♖b6 should be OK for Black.

a3) 17...0-0 might be playable: 18 ♖xa6 (not 18 0-0?! ♙a8 19 ♖d2 ♙b8, avoiding the draw, and transposing to the note to White's 16th move, with the move-number greater by 2) 18...♖xd5



Now we return to the position after 17...♖d8 (D):



**18 b3!**

By protecting the c4-bishop and keeping open the option of ♖a2 or ♖d3, White sets Black the most problems. Other moves offer nothing:

a) 18 ♖a2 ♖d7 19 ♖d1 (19 0-0?! ♖xa5) 19...♗c8! 20 b3?! ♖c5 21 ♖xb4 ♖a8 22 f4 (Tseshkovsky-Georgadze, Erevan 1982) 22...0-0 23 fxe5 ♗g4+ wins for Black.

b) 18 ♖d1?! and now:

b1) 18...0-0?! allows 19 b3! with an advantage. Instead, 19 ♖a2?! was played in Georgadze-Grünfeld, Dortmund 1984, when Black could have played 19...♖xa5! 20 ♖xa5 ♗c7.

b2) 18...♖xa5 19 ♖xa5 ♗c7 20 ♖xa6 ♗xc4 21 ♖xd6 ♗c5 and ...♗xd6 is equal.

c) 18 ♖d3 ♖xa5! (once again we see why defending the white light-squared bishop is so important) 19 ♖xa5 ♗c7 20 ♖xa6 (or 20 ♖a4 ♗xc4 21 ♖xb4 0-0 22 b3 ♗b5 23 ♖c6, and now Yudasin suggests 23...♗xa4 24 bxa4 ♖b1+ 25 ♖f2 ♖xh1, but 23...♖be8 24 ♖a5 ♗b6 looks satisfactory, and less risky) 20...♗xc4 21 ♖xd6 0-0 22

0-0 ♖xd5 23 ♖c1 f6 24 ♖e4 ♗b5 with equality, Shirov-Gelfand, Vienna 1996.

d) 18 0-0?! (although it is easy to see why White would want to bring his king to safety, the tempo lost is too significant) 18...0-0 19 ♖h1 e4 20 ♖b3 exf3 21 gxf3 ♖d7 22 ♖d4 ♖c5 23 ♖a2 ♗e7! 24 ♖c6 ♗h4 25 ♖xb8 ♗xc4 26 ♖aa1 ♖f6 and Black's pieces are in perfect harmony, fully compensating for the exchange, Gufeld-Gap-rindashvili, USSR 1981.

**18...0-0 19 ♖a2**

Alternatives:

a) 19 0-0?! is a mistake: 19...♖xa5 20 ♖h1 ♖c7 21 ♖e2 g6 22 ♖fal (Korneev-Vaulin, Smolensk 1997) 22...a5 with a solid pawn advantage.

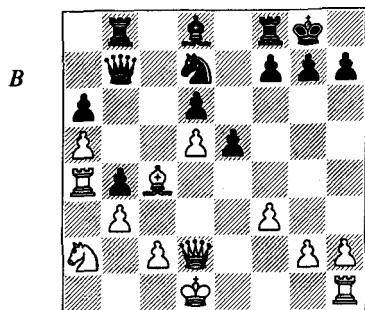
b) 19 ♖d1?! ♗a7 20 ♖a2 (20 ♖d3 ♗d4!) 20...♖b5! 21 ♖xb4 ♖xa5 22 ♖c6 ♖xa4 23 ♖xa7 ♖a1+ 24 ♗c1 ♖xc1+ 25 ♖xc1 ♖b6 26 ♖c6 ♖a8 27 ♖b2 and White should be a little better because of the weak a-pawn, but was ground down anyway in Sulipa-Nevevov, Donetsk Z 1998.

**19...♖d7**

This is not completely satisfactory, but neither is 19...e4 20 ♖d1 (20 ♖xb4 is also good) 20...♖e8 21 ♖xb4 ♗a7 22 ♖xb8 ♗xb8 23 ♖e1 ♖e5 24 f4 ♖h5 25 h3 ♗c7 26 ♖c3 ♗xa5 27 ♖xe4 ♗xd2+ 28 ♖xd2 ♖xe4+ 29 ♖xe4 ♖f8, although Black managed to draw in Blehm-Sadvakasov, Calicut jr Weh 1998.

**20 ♖d1! (D)**

This odd move again. The white king has to go to a light square to avoid the tactics involving ...♖xa5. Now, Black has no way to delay the loss of the b4-pawn, and must seek counter-play somewhere.



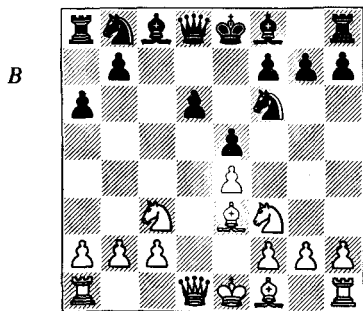
20...♖c8 21 ♜xb4 ♜c5 22 ♖a2  
♙g5! 23 ♜c6

23...♖xg5 ♜xb4 gives Black chances based on his dark-squared control.

23...♖xc6 24 dxc6 ♙xd2 25 ♜xd2  
♜fc8 26 ♙d5 ♜e6 27 ♖a4 ♜d8 28  
♜ha1 ♜xc6 29 ♖c4

White retains an edge because of the weakness of the a-pawn, Rötšagov-de Firmian, Stockholm 1998. If I had this line as Black, I would be sorely tempted to try 17...0-0.

B)  
7 ♜f3 (D)



White aims for piece play, as the only white pawn liable to take an active part in the proceedings is the

a-pawn. This is similar to the line 6 ♙e2 e5 7 ♜f3 (Chapter 4), except that here, White will lose a move by playing a later ♙g5, so Black does not have to worry so much about stopping this by playing ...h6. Indeed, it is better not to weaken the kingside light squares this way.

7...♙e7

The simplest move, getting on with development.

8 ♙c4

The most consistent, taking a firm grip on d5. White's subsequent play will involve attempting to exchange, or deflect, the defending pieces so as to gain outright control of this crucial square. However, the other side of the coin is that this bishop stands on an exposed square and Black will gain time attacking it.

8 a4 is sometimes played, but with the king's knight on f3, rather than on b3, the queenside attack has less force, and the a-pawn can often prove to be a weakness. White often loses because he has to spend time bringing his f3-knight over to help, and finds himself too far behind with his development. 8...0-0 (8...♙e6 is wrong because of 9 ♜g5) and now:

a) 9 a5 ♜c6 10 ♙b6 ♖e8 11 ♜d2  
♙e6 12 ♜c4 ♖d7 (White's manoeuvres have proved very time-consuming; Black is ready to expand in the centre with ...d5) 13 ♖d2 ♜ac8 14 ♜e3 ♙d8! (a typical scheme, exchanging Black's lesser bishop) 15 ♙xd8 ♖xd8 16 ♜ed5?! (White should instead acquiesce to the loss of his a-pawn; Black now wins brilliantly) 16...♜xe4! 17 ♜xe4 ♙xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♜b4 19 ♖d1 ♜xc2+ 20 ♜d2 ♜xa1 21 ♖xa1 d5 22

♟g3 ♖g5+ 23 ♜d1 ♜c7 24 ♖b1 ♜fc8 25 ♜e2 ♜c2 and the white position is quite hopeless, Arnason-Kengis, Reykjavik 1994.

b) 9 ♖c2 is safer, even though 9...h6 10 0-0 ♖e6 is pleasant for Black, K.Müller-Ostermeyer, Bundesliga 1988/9.

c) 9 ♖c4 (this attempt to return to the main line fares less well) 9...♖e6! 10 ♖b3 (trying to continue the fight for d5; 10 ♖xe6?! strengthens the black centre and opens the f-file for his f8-rook: 10...fxe6 11 a5 ♜c6 12 ♖b6 ♖e8 13 0-0 ♖g6 14 ♜d2 d5 15 ♜e1 d4 16 ♜e2 ♜g4 17 ♜f1 ♖h6 18 h3 ♜xf2! winning, Sindik-Gallagher, Isle of Man 1997) 10...♜c6 11 0-0 ♜a5 12 ♖xe6 (so White has to play this anyway; 12 ♖a2 ♜c8 and ...♜c4 would be fine for Black) 12...fxe6 13 ♖d3 ♜c8 14 ♜ad1 h6 15 ♖e2 ♖e8! (the same plan again; g6 is a useful square for the black queen) 16 ♜d2 d5 17 ♖b6 ♖b4 and Black is very active, Sebastianelli-Dorfman, Turin 1998.

### 8...0-0

This is the most accurate, for the immediate 8...♖e6 can be met by 9 ♖xe6 fxe6 10 ♜g5 followed by ♖f3-h3 and 0-0-0.

### 9 0-0 (D)

Alternatives are very rare:

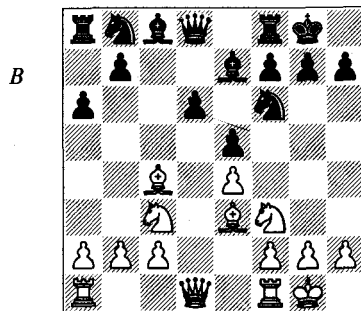
a) 9 ♖e2 is possible, protecting c4 and keeping the option of 0-0-0. Then, however, 9...b5 10 ♖d5 ♜xd5 11 ♜xd5 ♜d7 is fine for Black, as he will win back control of d5 after the moves ...♖b7 and ...♜f6. This must be better than the 9...♜c6 10 ♜d1 ♖g4 of Carlier-Fernandez Aguado, Benidorm 1989, which is quite irrelevant, and after 11 ♜d5 ♜xd5 12 ♖xd5 ♜c8 13

c3, White had confirmed his control of d5.

b) 9 ♖g5 ♜bd7 10 0-0 b5 11 ♖b3 ♖b7 12 ♜e1 ♜c8 13 ♜e2 b4 14 ♜d5 ♜xd5 15 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 16 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 17 ♖xd5 ♜f6 18 ♖d3 a5 and Black has solved all his problems, Korneev-Ehlvest, Linares 1994.

c) 9 h3 ♖e6 10 ♖b3 b5 11 0-0 h6 12 ♜h4 ♜c6 13 ♜f5 ♖xf5 14 exf5 ♜a5 15 ♜d5 ♜xb3 16 axb3 ♜xd5 17 ♖xd5 ♖c8, forking c2 and f5, with equality, Timman-Kengis, Pula Echt 1997. There are, no doubt, other satisfactory ways to play for Black.

d) 9 a4?! ♖e6 transposes to note 'c' to White's 8th move.



### 9...♖e6

Opposing White's control of the a2-g8 diagonal in the most direct manner.

### 10 ♖b3

This appears to be the most accurate move. Others:

a) 10 ♖d3 and 10 ♖e2 can both be met by 10...♖xc4 11 ♖xc4 b5. Zaitsev-Neveerov, Moscow 1989 continued 12 ♖d3 ♜bd7 13 ♜ad1 b4 14 ♜d5 ♜xd5 15 ♖xd5 ♖c7 16 ♜fe1?! ♜f6 17 ♖d3 ♜fc8 18 ♜d2 ♖a5, when White

was in big trouble as 19 ♖a1? allows 19...d5!.

b) 10 ♗xe6 fxe6 only helps the black position, and, from what we have seen so far, it is no great surprise that Black is better after ...♗c6, ...♖e8-g6, etc.

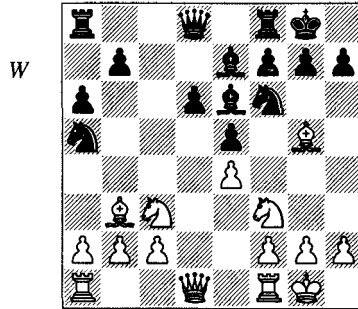
### 10...♗c6

Played with the intention of hopping to a5 and embarrassing the b3-bishop. Note that ...♗bd7 is often a mistake unless Black has played ...h6; thus 10...♗bd7? loses to 11 ♗xe6 fxe6 12 ♗g5, since the black queen can no longer defend e6.

### 11 ♗g5

This is all part of White's typical plan for domination of d5: the f6-knight, guardian of d5, will be exchanged. The alternative is 11 ♖e2 and after 11...♗a5 12 ♖fd1 ♗xb3 13 axb3 (13 cxb3 ♖b8 14 ♗g5 b5 15 ♗e1, Mainka-Skembris, Dortmund 1992, and now 15...♗g4!? is interesting, for if White plays 16 f3 then after 16...♗e6 he will have somewhat weakened his dark squares, and will be loathe to give up his dark-squared bishop by 17 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 18 ♗d5 due to 18...♗g5) 13...♖c7 (instead of this, I wonder if 13...♖b8 is not better here too, e.g. 14 ♗g5 b5 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♗d5 ♗d8, preparing to bring the dark-squared bishop to the g1-a7 diagonal, to lend ...f5 extra force) 14 ♗g5 ♖fc8 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♗e1 ♗e7 17 ♗d5 ♖d8 18 c3 with a pull, Isupov-Titlianov, Kemerovo 1991.

### 11...♗a5 (D)



### 12 ♗xf6

White continues with his plan. 12 ♖d3 ♖c8 13 ♖fd1 ♗xb3 14 axb3 ♖c6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♗d5 ♗xd5 17 ♖xd5 ♖xc2 1/2-1/2 Kotronias-Gelfand, Khalidhiki 1993.

12...♗xf6 13 ♗d5 ♗g5 14 ♖d3 ♖c8! 15 ♖fd1 ♖h8! 16 ♗c3

If 16 c3 then 17...♗xb3 17 axb3 ♗h6, intending ...f5, with good play for the two black bishops.

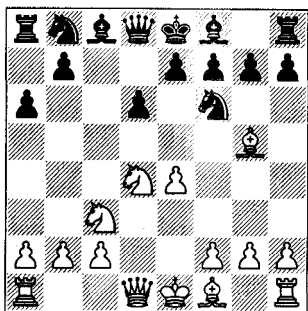
16...♗e7 17 ♗d5 ♗g5 18 ♖h1 ♗h6 19 ♗c3 ♗xb3 20 axb3 ♖b6 21 ♖g1 ♖c6 22 ♖e2 ♖c7 23 ♗e1 f5 24 ♗d3 fxe4 25 ♖xe4

Anand-Gelfand, Dos Hermanas 1996. Now Gelfand suggests 25...♗f5 26 ♖e2 ♖xc3!? 27 bxc3 ♖xc3, with good compensation for the exchange. At any rate, although the white knights have good squares, the two bishops are always liable to become powerful, and Black should always have good chances.

## 2 6 ♖g5

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4  
 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♖g5 (D)

B



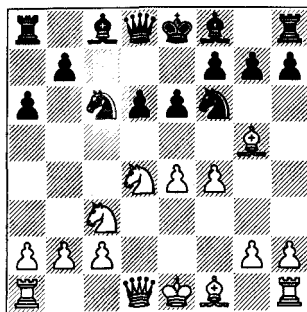
6 ♖g5 is one of White's most aggressive possibilities. He both gains the option of doubling the black pawns, and stops Black playing ...e5 (because he would thereby lose control over d5 due to the pin on the h4-d8 diagonal). This move seems to have lost its status as White's main line in the last few years but is still popular at the lower levels, where it remains dangerous.

### The Richter-Rauzer Move

I think that one of the best ways to counter 6 ♖g5 e6 7 f4 is the move 7...♘c6 (D).

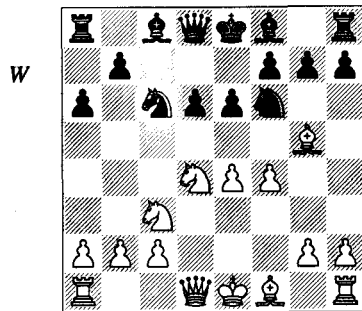
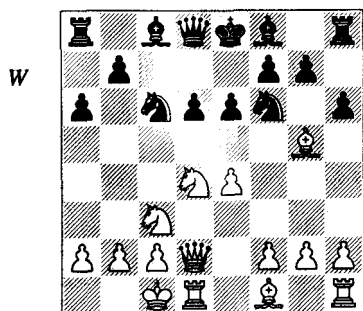
This is a very 'un-Najdorf-looking' move. The black queen's knight is normally developed to d7 in the Najdorf, where it assists its brother on f6, principally in the fight for control of d5, in lines where Black has played ...e5.

W



Also, on d7 it does not hinder the queen's bishop along the h1-a8 diagonal, and is ready to play to c5, and take its part in the attack on the white e4-pawn. Why, then, am I suggesting this move, which has only recently come into fashion? If you look at the diagram you will notice that White's last two moves have weakened his dark squares, and in particular the g1-a7 diagonal, on which his king's knight resides. In the meantime, his dark-squared defender, the queen's bishop, is locked outside his pawn-chain. If White needed to defend his d4-knight a second time, he would be hard-pressed to do so. We may compare this position with the one arising from the Main Line Richter-Rauzer after 5...♘c6 6 ♖g5 e6 7 ♗d2 a6 (to stop the possibility of ♘b5) 8 0-0-0 h6 (D):

White has three moves here: 9 ♖f4 hitting d6, which is quite dangerous for Black; 9 ♖e3, which is White's



strongest move, defending d4 and retaining the queen's bishop for use on both wings; and 9  $\text{♗h4}$ , which is not very good, and obliges White to embark on a dubious pawn sacrifice after 9... $\text{♞xe4}$ !

However, in the Najdorf, with the f-pawn on f4, the first two possibilities are impossible. I think the conclusion should be evident: in the Najdorf, after White has played  $\text{♗g5}$  and f4, unless there is a tactical drawback, 7... $\text{♞c6}$  must be good. If you look at the theory on the following pages you will observe that White tries his utmost to generate tactics, and that when these fail Black often finds himself with a serious advantage.

On top of all this, in my databases at least, Black actually scores over 53%, which is quite rare.

### The Radical 'Unpinning'

If White is to achieve anything at all, then he is obliged to try to exploit Black's 'insolent' refusal to break the pin on his f6-knight. He can do this in a number of ways, but each time Black has a very typical Najdorf manner of breaking the pin, and allowing his king's knight to move.

After 8  $\text{♞xc6}$  bxc6 9 e5, for instance, Black replies 9...h6 10  $\text{♗h4}$  g5 and following 11 fxg5  $\text{♞d5}$ ! it is suddenly the white g5-pawn that is pinned against the h4-bishop.

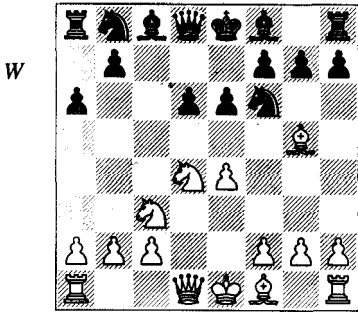
What exactly has Black gained from this tactical operation? Firstly, White will soon have no central pawns whatsoever, while Black often retains two or three, which will give him a strategic advantage, especially in any endgame. Secondly, White's dark squares are very sensitive. Black normally continues with a quick ... $\text{♞b6}$ , both attacking b2 and controlling the g1-a7 diagonal.

Actually, this ...g5 move proves useful in many positions to break White's hold on the central dark squares, and is often used by Black to gain absolute control of e5, for use by a knight.

However, a word of warning: as is often the case with 6  $\text{♗g5}$  lines, it is imperative that Black learn his theory, as the slightest *faux pas* is likely to prove costly.

### The Theory of 6 $\text{♗g5}$

1 e4 c5 2  $\text{♞f3}$  d6 3 d4 cxd4 4  $\text{♞xd4}$   $\text{♞f6}$  5  $\text{♞c3}$  a6 6  $\text{♗g5}$  e6 (D)



The almost invariable continuation, and the subject of much theoretical debate over the last few decades, is 7 f4, Line A. White does have some rarer alternatives, and these are covered later on in the chapter, in Line B.

**A: 7 f4** 31  
**B: Seventh Move Alternatives** 40

**A)**

**7 f4 ♖c6**

Now there are four moves, but only the two that attempt to exploit the pin along the h4-d8 diagonal by tactical means, Lines A1 and A2, are critical:

**A1: 8 ♖xc6** 31  
**A2: 8 e5** 37  
**A3: 8 ♖e2** 38  
**A4: 8 ♗d2?!** 39

**A1)**

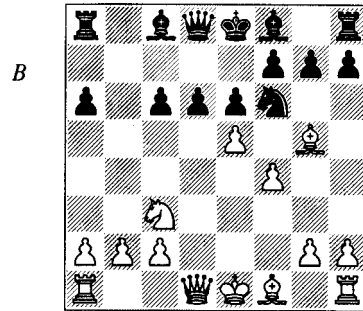
**8 ♖xc6**

Exchanging knights is White's most significant reply.

**8...bxc6 9 e5 (D)**

This is the key to White's play. Although other moves are possible, they certainly should not cause Black any problems. For example, 9 ♗f3 ♗b6 10 0-0-0 ♗b8 11 b3 and now, instead of 11...d5 12 ♖xf6 gxf6 13 exd5 cxd5

14 f5 d4 15 ♖e4, which is far from clear, Schaffarczyk-Fenner, Werther 1999, 11...♖d7 is interesting, intending to play ...♖c5 and ...a5 or ...♗b4. If the f8-bishop can get onto the a1-h8 diagonal, Black will probably win.



**9...h6 10 ♖h4**

The alternatives are in Black's favour:

a) 10 exf6? hxg5 11 fxg5 gxf6 12 ♗f3 d5 13 0-0-0 fxg5 14 ♖c4 (14 ♖e4 ♗h6) 14...g4! 15 ♗f2 ♖g7 16 ♖b3 ♗b8 17 h3 ♗b4 18 a3 ♗b6 19 ♗g3 ♗b8 and White is lost, Hector-Oll, Debrecen 1989.

b) 10 ♖xf6 gxf6 11 exd6 ♗xd6 12 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 13 g3 f5! (controlling e4 and fixing the f4-pawn on a dark square) 14 0-0-0 ♖d7! 15 ♖g2 ♖c7 16 ♗d3 ♖b7 17 ♗hd1 (1/2-1/2 Sax-Ruck, Perenyi mem, Gyula 1997) 17...♗ad8 18 ♖a4 h5 is fine for Black, with his two bishops; in Ruz-Martin del Campo, Merida 1997 he went on to win.

**10...g5**

Radically breaking the pin.

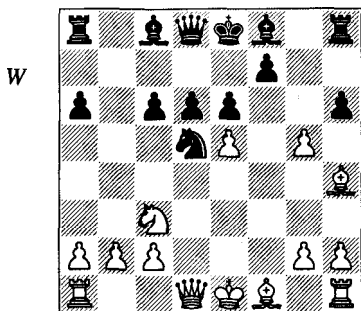
**11 fxg5**

Not 11 exf6? as 11...gxh4 is very good for Black, nor 11 ♖f2?! ♖d5 12

♘e4 gxf4 13 exd6 (Belozerov-Rabinovich, Tallinn 1997), when 13...♙xd6 seems the simplest to me, with a solid pawn more.

Alternatively, after 11 ♙g3?! ♘d5 12 ♘xd5, 12...exd5?! 13 ♖e2 ♙e6?! (13...dxe5 14 ♖xe5+ ♖e7 is simpler) 14 exd6 gxf4 15 ♙xf4 ♙xd6 16 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 17 0-0-0 gives White a small plus, as the black king is awkwardly placed, Zjukin-Shishkov, Tallinn 1998, but 12...cxd5 is superior, keeping the central pawns intact.

11...♘d5 (D)



Now there is a further division, in descending order of relevance:

A11: 12 ♘e4 32

A12: 12 ♘xd5 35

Or:

a) 12 exd6 hxg5 13 ♙f2 ♙xd6 14 ♖d4 f6! (threatening ...♙e5) 15 0-0-0? (allowing Black to obtain a winning endgame by force!) 15...♙f4+ 16 ♖b1 ♙e5 17 ♖d3 ♘xc3+ 18 bxc3 ♖b8+ 19 ♖c1 ♙f4+ 20 ♙e3 ♙xe3+ 21 ♖xe3 ♖b1+ 22 ♖xb1 ♖xd1+ 23 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 24 ♖xc1 ♙e7 and the doubled c-pawns mean that, in effect, Black is a pawn up, Meyers-Savchenko, Bern 1993.

b) 12 ♖d4 hxg5 13 ♙g3 dxe5 14 ♖xe5 ♖g8 15 ♘xd5 cxd5 16 ♖c3 ♙b7 17 0-0-0 ♙g7 18 ♖a3 ♖c8 19 ♙xa6?! ♙xb2+! 20 ♖xb2 ♙xa6 gives Black a clear advantage, despite the opposite-coloured bishops, Semprun-Am.Rodriguez, Linares open 1994.

### A11)

12 ♘e4

White keeps up the pressure on Black's dark squares.

12...♖b6

As in Line A12, the black queen quits the h4-d8 diagonal before something unpleasant happens, and finds a good post on b6.

13 ♙d3 (D)

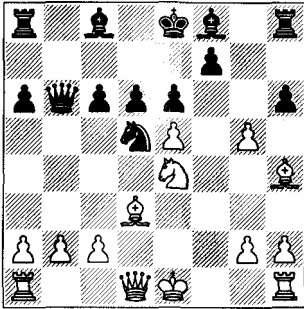
Developing a piece is always a good idea. Alternatively:

a) 13 c3!? dxe5 14 ♙g3 hxg5 15 ♙xe5 ♖h4 16 ♙d3 (16 ♖f3?! is forcefully countered by 16...f5! 17 ♘f6+ ♘xf6 18 ♙xf6 ♖xb2 19 ♖d1 ♖e4+ 20 ♙e2 g4, when White is all tied up) 16...f5! 17 ♘d2!? ♙c5 (this is OK, but, objectively speaking, 17...♖xb2!? is probably best, e.g. 18 0-0 ♖b6+ 19 ♖h1 ♘e3 20 ♖e2 ♘xf1 21 ♖xf1 ♙e7 22 ♘c4 ♖d8, and I expect a computer would win this position fairly easily) 18 ♖e2? ♖xb2 19 ♖b1 ♖xa2 20 g3 (Oll-Gelfand, Debrecen 1989) and now 20...♖h6 21 c4 ♘b4 is Black's surest route towards victory.

b) 13 c4?! (this move is dubious, as there is no real threat to capture on d5 – Black can always reply ...♖b4+, winning one of the white pieces on the fourth rank) 13...♖xb2 14 exd6 ♘e3 (this leads to a pleasant endgame, but 14...♖e5 would be my choice: 15 ♙d3 hxg5 16 ♙g3 ♘f4 17 0-0 f5 18 ♘f2

♖xd6, and I imagine that Black should win) 15 d7+! ♕xd7 16 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 17 gxf6 ♘xd1 18 ♖xd1 ♗g8 should be level, although in Enders-King, Bundesliga 1994/5 Black soon had the advantage.

B



### 13...hxg5 14 ♖f2

It is not clear which move represents White's best bet here, although this one does have the merit of allowing White to castle next move. Others possibilities:

a) 14 ♖xg5 ♗xb2! (14...♖xh2?? loses rather prettily to 15 ♖xh2 ♗g1+ 16 ♖f1 ♗xh2 17 ♗xd5! exd5 18 ♘f6+ ♗e7 19 ♘g4+, Castañeda-Browne, Philadelphia 1997) 15 0-0 (or 15 ♘f6+ ♘xf6 16 ♖xf6 ♗c3+ 17 ♗e2 ♗g8, and in Solomon-Leskiewicz, Brisbane 1995, White played the awful 18 ♖b1?, when Black should have continued 18...♖xg2+ 19 ♗f1 ♗d2 20 ♗e1 ♖xd3 21 cxd3 ♗xd3+ 22 ♗f2 dxe5, ripping the white king's pawn cover to shreds; however, even after the more sensible choice 18 g3, Black can play 18...♖e7 with an edge, for example 19 ♖xe7? ♗xe5+ 15...♗xe5! 16 h3 f5 17 ♗f3 and after 17...♖d7?? (this does not threaten to take on e4, because of the

mate on f7) 18 c4 Black is in trouble, Blazkova-Buldrova, Czech wom Ch (Klatovy) 1998. However, the obvious 17...♖e7, which does threaten the knight, and forces the reply 18 ♖xe7, would have kept a large plus for Black after 18...♘xe7.

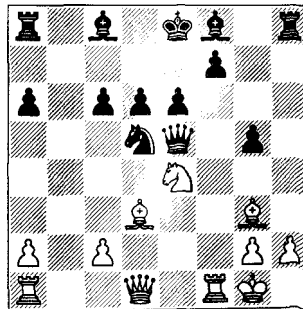
b) 14 ♖g3 (defending e5 has its points, and may be White's best bet) 14...dxe5 (I am not too keen on either 14...♗xb2 15 0-0, when 15...dxe5 16 ♖b1 ♗d4+ 17 ♖f2 ♗a4 18 ♗g4! is awkward and 15...♘e3? 16 ♗d2 ♘xf1? 17 ♘f6+ leads to mate, or 14...♗b4+ 15 c3 ♗xb2 16 0-0 ♘e3 17 ♗f3 ♘xf1 18 ♖xf1, when White has tons of compensation for the exchange; however, 14...♗e3+ is a perfectly playable alternative, as 15 ♗e2 ♗xe2+ 16 ♖xe2 dxe5 17 ♖xe5 ♖h4 18 ♘f6+ ♘xf6 19 ♖xf6 ♖e7 is close to equality) 15 ♖xe5 ♖h4 16 ♗f3 ♖e7 17 0-0-0, with an edge, Lendwai-Ermenkov, Miskolc 1990.

### 14...♗xb2 15 0-0

Black gains the advantage after both 15 ♘xd6+ ♖xd6 16 exd6 ♗e5+ and 15 exd6 f5.

### 15...♗xe5 16 ♖g3 (D)

B



### 16...♗d4+

This is the established main line, in which Black has no real problems. However, I consider it much more sensible to avoid moving the black queen too much and to play 16...♟f4!, as Black can afford to give back one pawn to stop any attack. Some variations:

a) 17 ♖xg5 ♜xg5 18 ♙xf4 (18 ♜xf4 d5 19 ♜f3 ♙c5+) and now Black has several reasonable moves, but 18...♜c5+ might be simplest, e.g. 19 ♟h1 e5!? 20 ♜e2 ♙h6 21 ♙xh6 ♜xh6 22 ♜ab1 ♙e6 23 ♜b7 ♜a7 24 ♜b8+ ♟d7 and Black is better.

b) 17 ♜f3 ♙e7! 18 ♖xg5? (18 ♟f6+ ♟f8! 19 ♜xc6 ♜c5+ 20 ♜xc5 dxc5 21 ♟e4 f5 is also winning for Black) 18...♙xg5 19 ♜xc6+ (the ending is hopeless for White after 19 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 20 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 21 ♜xf4 e5) 19...♟e7 20 ♜xa8 (20 ♟h1 ♜d5! 21 ♜c7+ ♟e8 22 ♙xf4 ♙b7 does not help White) 20...♟e2+ 21 ♙xe2 ♙e3+ 22 ♟h1 ♜xg3 wins. Worth a try!

### 17 ♟h1

If 17 ♙f2?! then Black can repeat, of course, with 17...♜e5, but 17...♜g7! is stronger, e.g. 18 c4 ♟f4 19 ♙c2 e5! with a huge black advantage. Note that the d6-pawn is immune here, as 20 ♟xd6+? ♙xd6 21 ♙xd6 allows a standard mating combination: 21...♟e2+ 22 ♟h1 ♜xh2+! 23 ♟xh2 ♜h8+, etc.

### 17...f5!

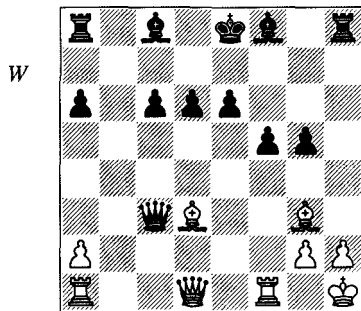
This is safer than 17...♟e3, when 18 ♜f3 ♟xf1 19 ♜xf1 f5 20 c3! allowed White a strong positional attack in two games by Vitolinš.

### 18 c3!

White's best chance, as both 18 ♟xd6+?? ♙xd6 19 ♙xd6 ♟e3 20 ♜e2 ♜xd6 (winning because of the mate

threat on h2), and 18 ♖xg5 ♙g7 19 ♜b1 (19 ♜f3 ♜e3) 19...♟e3 20 ♜f3 ♟xf1! 21 ♜xc6+ (21 ♜xf1 ♙d7 22 ♜e1 ♙e5) 21...♙d7 22 ♜xa8+ ♟e7 23 ♜f3 ♟xg3+ 24 ♜xg3 ♙e5 are quite hopeless for White.

### 18...♟xc3 19 ♟xc3 ♜xc3 (D)



### 20 ♜c1 ♜a5 21 ♜xc6!

Following 21 ♜e2!? ♙e7, instead of 22 ♙xf5?! exf5 23 ♙xd6 ♜d8! 24 ♜cd1 ♜h6! 25 ♙e5 ♜a5, Shabalov-Browne, USA Ch 1994, which should win for Black with care, 22 ♜xc6 could be played, as per the next note.

### 21...♙b7

21...♙e7 22 ♜e2 and now 22...♜h6 might be worth trying, although 23 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 24 ♜xd6 ♜c5 25 ♜d1!? ♜xh2+ 26 ♟xh2 ♜xd6+ 27 ♟h1 is a bit wild. Alternatively, 22...♟f7 23 ♜fc1 f4 24 ♜c7 ♜e5 25 ♜c2 fxg3 26 ♜f1+ ♟g8 27 ♙h7+ ♜xh7 28 ♜g6+ ♜g7 29 ♜e8+ ♟h7 30 ♜h5+ ♟g8 is a perpetual.

22 ♜b3! ♙xc6 23 ♜xe6+ ♟d8 24 ♜xf5!?

Interesting, but White risks little with 24 ♜f6+, e.g. 24...♙e7 25 ♜xh8+ ♟d7 26 ♜h5 f4 27 ♙xf4, as Black should take a draw with 27...♙xg2+.

**24...♖c3**

This led to a draw in Arencibia-Martin del Campo, Matanzas 1994. However, the suggested improvement 24...♖a3 is little better after the wonderful 'backwards' move 25 ♠e1!!, intending ♠a5+.

**25 ♠xf8+ ♠xf8 26 ♖xd6+**

After 26...♗e8 White should give perpetual check by 27 ♖e6+ ♔d8 28 ♖d6+, etc., as attempting to get more than a draw by 27 ♠g6+ leads nowhere: 27...♠f7 28 ♖e6+ ♔d8 29 ♠xf7 ♖c1+ 30 ♠e1 ♠b8!.

**A12)****12 ♘xd5**

This is a major alternative, refusing to waste time with the queen's knight, but it does have the defect of strengthening the black centre.

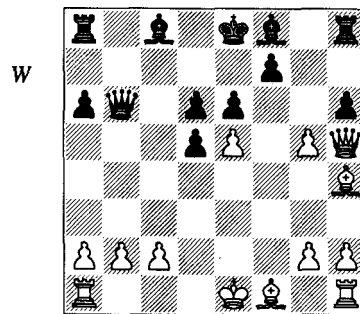
**12...cxd5**

'Capturing toward the centre' is Black's most ambitious choice, but for those who are not too keen on some of the following sharp variations, there is another possibility, which, while less explored, seems very sound: 12...exd5 13 ♖e2 (13 exd6 hxg5 14 ♖e2+ ♠e6 15 ♠g3 ♠xd6 16 ♠xd6 ♖xd6 17 g3, Howell-Saravanan, Calcutta 1996, and now 17...♖b4+ 18 c3 ♖e4 would give Black a promising ending; otherwise, Black can now answer 13 ♖h5 ♖b6 14 ♠e2 with 14...♠f5, controlling g6, with advantage) 13...hxg5 14 ♠g3 (14 exd6+ ♠e6 transposes to Howell-Saravanan earlier in this note) 14...♖a5+!? (14...♠h6! 15 0-0-0 ♠e6 appears to win a pawn) 15 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 16 ♔xd2 ♠e6! 17 ♠d3 ♔d7 18 ♠ae1 ♠g7 19 h3! dxex5 20 ♠xe5 ♠xe5 21 ♠xe5 ♠hg8 22 g3 ♔d6 with an ending that is

totally equal, Yermolinsky-Browne, USA Ch 1992.

**13 ♖h5**

Defending the h4-bishop and the g5-pawn, and thereby threatening to play g6, discovering an attack on the black queen. The only other move worth considering is 13 ♖g4!? (otherwise Black will capture the pawn on g5, and his strong centre will give him the advantage), but this seems inferior. Unfortunately, the only game I have with this move continued 13...dxe5?! (13...♠e7!? has been suggested, but I prefer the simple 13...hxg5!, which is not possible with the white queen on h5, e.g. 14 ♠xg5 ♠g8 15 ♠xd8 ♠xg4 16 ♠f6 dxe5 and I would favour the enormous black centre over the white wing pawns) 14 g6 f5 15 ♠xd8! fxg4 16 ♠f6 ♠g8 17 ♠xe5, Panaiotov-Sandler, Albena 1989, when Black could not take the g6-pawn because of 18 ♠d3, winning the exchange, and he was therefore worse.

**13...♖b6! (D)**

A key move. Black will avoid trying to win back material immediately, but will instead aim to gain various positional pluses, while nullifying any

white tactics. White now has two main continuations:

A121: 14 ♖e2 36

A122: 14 ♗d3 36

Or:

a) 14 0-0-0? (this is a mistake, as the white king will prove more vulnerable than the black, strangely) 14...♞b8 15 b3 ♜e3+ 16 ♖b1 ♜xe5 and Black has a clear advantage: the g5-pawn is pinned, and there is a powerful threat of 17...♗g7.

b) 14 g6 is more dangerous. Still, after 14...♜b4+ 15 ♖d1 ♜xb2 16 gxf7+ ♖d7 17 ♜c1 dxe5 18 c3 ♗a3 19 ♜c2 ♜b1+ 20 ♖d2 e4 Black has many reasons to be happy with his position. 21 ♗f2 seems almost forced, to avoid ...e3+ and to finish his kingside development. Then Black plays 21...♞f8, when he should be able to take the f7-pawn soon, whereupon his centre will give him the edge.

### A121)

14 ♗e2

The most popular move, stopping ...♜e3+.

14...♗g7 15 g6

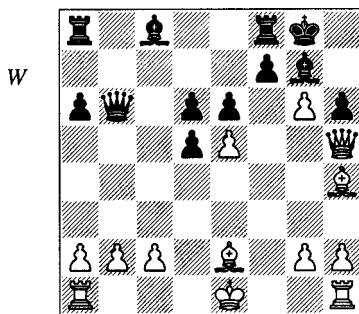
There are two other possibilities for White:

a) 15 ♞f1 ♞a7 16 ♗f2 (16 0-0-0? is an error because of 16...♗xe5, with designs on the b2-square, e.g. 17 c3 ♞b7 18 ♞d2 ♗xc3, winning) 16...d4 17 0-0-0 dxe5 18 g6 (White must play sharply, for after 18 ♖b1 ♞b7 19 b3 e4 the black central pawn-mass starts advancing) 18...f5 19 ♗c4 ♞b7 20 ♗b3 0-0!, and Black is winning, Sakharov-Odeev, USSR 1989. He threatens ...a5-a4, and if White replies with a4

himself, then ...d3 completes the demolition of the white queenside.

b) 15 c3?! (this is hardly relevant) 15...dxe5 16 ♗f2 ♜xb2 17 0-0 ♜b7 18 ♗c5 ♜c7 gives White insufficient compensation, Jönsson-Maksimenko, Odessa student Wch 1990.

15...0-0! (D)



The black king is quite safe here.

16 ♗f6 ♞a7!

Bringing the reserves to the king's aid. White's problem is that capturing on f7 only serves to open the f-file for Black's rooks.

17 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 18 gxf7 ♞axf7 19 ♜g4+

The immediate 19 0-0-0?! favours Black after 19...♜e3+ 20 ♖b1 ♞f5 21 ♞d3 ♜xe5 22 ♞g3+ ♜xg3!.

19...♖h8 20 0-0-0 ♜e3+ 21 ♖b1 dxe5

Black's pawn centre gives him the edge, Mackić-Maksimenko, Yugoslavia 1994.

### A122)

14 ♗d3

This is similar to 14 ♗e2, and appears more aggressive, but the possibility of a black check on e3 and the

lack of white control over g4 does give Black some extra options.

14...♖g5 15 ♖f1

Others:

a) 15 exd6 ♖e3+ 16 ♔d1 hxg5 17 ♖xg5 ♖xg5 18 ♖xg5 ♖xb2 19 ♖b1 ♖e5 gives Black a good ending.

b) 15 g6!? is interesting, as with the white king's bishop on d3 instead of e2 (compare Line A121), 15...0-0!? can be met by 16 ♖e7, picking up the exchange. Still, following 16...dxe5 17 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 18 gxf7 e4 19 ♖e2 ♖a7!?, Black has good compensation, because his dark-squared bishop is very strong.

c) 15 0-0-0? is much worse, as 15...hxg5 wins on the spot!

15...♖a7 16 ♖f2

Not 16 g6 0-0 17 exd6?! because 17...♖b4+! 18 ♖e2 e5 19 ♖f3 e4 wins for Black.

16...♖b4+

This works well when the white rook is on f1; otherwise White would reply c3, and then castle short.

17 ♖e2

17 c3!? ♖xb2 18 ♖xa7 ♖xa1+ 19 ♖f2 ♖xc3 20 ♖g1 ♖f8 21 gxh6 ♖xe5 ought to be good for Black.

17...♖c7

This should be OK, e.g. 18 g6 0-0 19 exd6 e5 20 h3 ♖xd6 21 gxf7+ ♖cxf7 and the white king turns out to be the more exposed.

## A2)

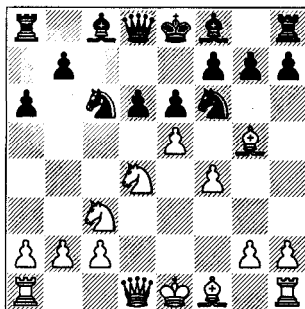
8 e5!? (D)

Another attempt to punish Black, but it is less effective than Line A1.

8...h6 9 ♖h4

9 ♖xc6 bxc6 10 ♖h4 might be best, as it transposes to Line A1.

B



9...♖xd4!

A suggestion of Behl, which simplifies matters for Black.

10 ♖xd4

Otherwise:

a) Unfortunately for White, after the logical sequence 10 exf6? ♖f5! 11 fxg7 he gets mated: 11...♖xh4+ 12 g3 ♖xg3 13 gxh8 ♖e4+ 14 ♖e2 ♖f2+ 15 ♖d3 ♖c5+ 16 ♖c4 b5+ 17 ♖xb5 (17 ♖b4 a5+ 18 ♖xb5 ♖b8+ 19 ♖xa5 ♖b3+ 20 cxb3 ♖a7+) 17...axb5+ 18 ♖c3 b4+ 19 ♖xb4 ♖a4+ and mate in 4.

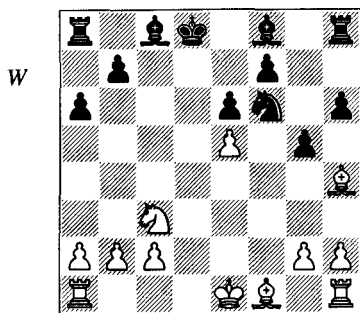
b) 10 ♖xf6? (this is also weak) 10...♖b6 11 ♖h4 ♖xb2 (or 11...dxe5, e.g. 12 fxe5?! ♖f5 13 ♖f2 ♖xb2) 12 ♖xd4 ♖xa1+ 13 ♖d2 ♖d7 14 exd6 ♖c8, preparing to give back the exchange on c3, if necessary, to achieve a winning ending.

10...dxe5 11 ♖xd8+

After the exchange of queens, Black should have no problems, as the powerful bishop-pair offers him a certain margin of security. For instance, if things go wrong, the exchange of his light-squared bishop for the white knight will bring about an opposite-coloured bishop ending. This is commonly known as 'the power of the exchange'.

However, avoiding the ending gives White nothing: 11 ♖xe5 ♙c7 (the alternative 11...♙d6 12 ♗d4 ♙c7 13 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 14 g3 ♙e7 15 ♙g2 ♗d8 is also tempting) 12 ♙d3 (if 12 ♗d1 then Black replies 12...♗b6) 12...♗d7 13 ♙xe7 ♗xe5 14 ♙xd8 ♗xd3+ 15 cxd3 ♗xd8, and White must take care.

11...♗xd8 12 fxe5 g5 (D)



In this odd position, White has three possible moves:

a) 13 ♙xg5 hxg5 14 exf6 ♙d7! 15 ♗e4 g4 16 ♗d1 ♗c7 17 h4 1/2-1/2 Sax-Adorjan, Szeged 1997. Black could certainly consider continuing; for example, 17...gxf3 18 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 19 gxf3 ♙c6 and now:

a1) 20 ♗g5 ♙d6! and then:

a11) 21 ♗f2?! demonstrates the dangers facing White in these end-games: 21...♙e5 22 ♗xf7 ♙xf6 23 ♙c4 ♙d7 24 ♗e3 ♗f8 25 ♗d6 ♙g5+ 26 ♗e2 ♙c6 (threatening ...♙f4) 27 ♗d4 ♙f6 28 ♗d3 ♙e5, and the hapless white knight is lost.

a12) 21 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 22 ♗xf7+ can only be good for Black, or equal at best, e.g. 22...♗d7 23 ♙d3 ♗f8 24 ♙g6 ♙e4 25 ♙xe4 ♗xf7 26 ♙xb7 a5 27 ♗e2 ♗xf6.

a13) 21 ♗xf7 ♙g3+ 22 ♗e2 ♗f8 23 ♗g5 ♗xf6 24 ♗d3 e5 25 ♙e2 ♙h4 26 ♗e4 ♗f4, with a strong initiative for Black.

a2) 20 ♙g2 ♙h6 21 ♗e2 ♗g8 22 ♙f3 ♙xe4 (or 22...♗g6) 23 ♙xe4 ♗g3 24 ♗d3 ♗xd3 25 ♗xd3 ♙g5 26 c3 ♙xf6 should be a draw, although Black's two protected passed pawns could make life difficult for White.

a3) 20 ♙d3 ♙h6 21 ♗e2 ♗g8 22 a3 ♗g6 (or 22...♙xe4) is likewise equal.

b) 13 0-0-0?! ♗d7 14 ♙g3 ♙g7 is a position reached by transposition in Ma.Tseitlin-Smirin, Israeli Ch 1992. Play continued 15 ♙c4 (or 15 h4 ♗e7 16 hxg5 hxg5 17 ♗xh8 ♙xh8 18 ♗e4 ♗xe5 19 ♗xg5 ♙d7 with a positional advantage to Black) 15...b5 16 ♙e2 ♗e7 17 ♙f3 ♗a7 18 ♗he1 ♙b7 19 ♗e4 ♙xe4 20 ♗xe4 ♗c7 (the e5-pawn is weak and will be lost) 21 ♙e2 ♗hc8 22 c3 ♗c5 23 ♗d6 a5 24 ♗a6 b4 25 ♙f2 ♗xe5 26 ♗xe5 ♙xe5, which should have been winning for Black.

c) 13 exf6 (this is similar to Line B1) 13...gxf4 14 0-0-0+ ♗c7 (far superior to 14...♙d7?!, when 15 ♗a4 ♗c8 16 ♗b6 ♗c7 17 ♙e2 ♙c5 18 ♗a8! is inconvenient) 15 ♗d4 ♙d7 16 ♙e2 (grabbing the pawn by 16 ♗xf4 ♙c6 17 ♗e4 {17 ♙e2 ♙xg2 18 ♗g1 ♙c6 19 ♙h5 ♗h7}) 17...♗g8 18 g3 ♗g6 19 ♙g2 ♙xe4 20 ♗xe4 ♗xf6 21 ♗c4+ ♗b6 leads to equality) 16...h3 17 gxf3 ♙c6 18 ♗hd1 ♙c5 19 ♗d3 h5 and White's extra pawn (on the h-file) is practically useless.

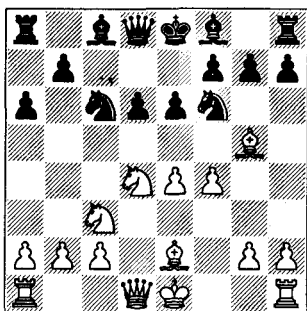
### A3)

8 ♙e2 (D)

This line is solid, but uninspiring.

8...♙e7

B



Black is threatening 9...h6 10 ♖h4 ♜xe4, as usual.

9 ♖d3

Others:

a) 9 ♖d2 h6 10 ♜xc6 bxc6 11 ♖h4 ♖b8 12 b3 ♖a5 13 0-0-0 d5 14 ♖d4 and now 14...0-0, Gild.Garcia-Groszpetter, Novi Sad OL 1990, is fine for Black, but instead 14...♖b4! 15 ♖e3 g5! 16 fxg5 ♜xe4 would have been overwhelming.

b) 9 ♖f3 ♖d7 10 ♜xc6 (just to highlight the point I made earlier about the weak g1-a7 diagonal, 10 0-0?? loses on the spot to 10...♖b6 11 ♜e2 e5) 10...♖xc6 11 ♖d4 0-0 12 0-0 ♖c7 13 ♜h1 ♖ad8 14 ♖e3?! h6 15 ♖h4 ♜g4 16 ♖xg4 ♖xh4, with an edge, Wittmann-Groszpetter, Mitropa Cup 1990.

9...♖b6 10 ♜b3 a5!? 11 a3 h6 12 ♖xf6

Of course, 12 ♖h4 allows 12...♜xe4 although this is not the end of the world here: 13 ♜xe4 (13 ♖xe7? ♖f2+ 14 ♜d1 ♜xc3+) 13...♖xh4+ 14 g3 ♖e7 15 ♜xd6+ ♖xd6 16 ♖xd6 a4 17 ♖c5 ♖a7 18 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 19 ♜d2 ♜e7 with equality.

12...♖xf6 13 0-0-0 0-0 14 ♜a4 ♖a7 15 ♖f3

15 ♖xd6 e5 16 fxe5 ♖xe5 gives Black good play for the pawn.

15...♖d8 16 ♖he1

Kamsky-Gelfand, Moscow Alekhine mem 1992. Now I like the look of 16...♖d7 with the point 17 ♖xd6 b5 18 ♜c3 ♖xc3 19 bxc3 b4 with an attack.

A4)

8 ♖d2?!

White tries to enter a Richter-Rauzer Attack.

8...h6!

From the preamble it should be clear that White is not well placed to counter this move, as he cannot play 9 ♖e3!

9 ♖xf6

9 ♖h4 is not to be recommended: 9...♜xe4! 10 ♜xe4 (10 ♖xd8 ♜xd2 11 ♖b6 ♜xf1) 10...♖xh4+ 11 g3 ♖d8 12 0-0-0 d5, when Black enjoys a solid pawn advantage, Hagarova-Dworakowska, Zagan girls U-20 Wch 1997.

9...♖xf6 10 ♜f3

Black has the two bishops, and every reason to feel happy with himself. White must play this move to keep an eye on g5, else he will lose all the kingside dark squares:

a) 10 ♜b3?! g5! 11 fxg5 ♖xg5 (heading for the ending, but 11...hxg5 is also good) 12 0-0-0 b5 13 ♜b1 ♖xd2 14 ♖xd2 ♜e7 15 ♜e2 ♖b7 16 ♜f4 ♜e5 17 ♖d3 ♖c8 18 ♜h5 ♖g8 19 ♖f1 ♖g5 and Black quickly achieved a winning advantage by manoeuvring his dark-squared bishop to e5 in de la Paz-Martin del Campo, Cienfuegos Capablanca mem 1997.

b) 10 ♜xc6 bxc6 11 0-0-0 ♖d8 12 ♖c4 ♖e7 13 ♖b3 a5 is fine for Black,

with his strong centre and bishops, Egger-Am.Rodriguez, Moscow OL 1994.

10...b5 11 0-0-0 ♖d8 12 ♙d3 ♙b7 13 f5 ♜a5 14 ♜b1 0-0-0 15 ♜e2 ♜xd2 16 ♜xd2 exf5 17 exf5 ♜e5 18 ♜ed4 ♙e7 19 ♜e2 ♙f6

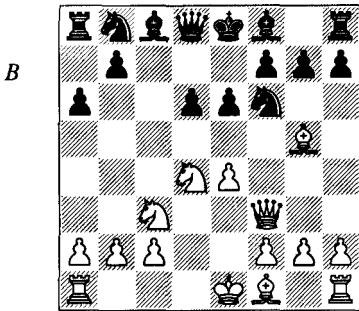
This position is pleasant for Black, Hartman-Olafsson, Katrineholm 1995.

### B) Seventh Move Alternatives

B1:	7 ♜f3	40
B2:	7 ♜d3	41
B3:	7 ♜e2	42
B4:	7 ♜d2?!	42
B5:	7 ♙e2	43

#### B1)

7 ♜f3 (D)



Before playing f4, White will place his queen on the g3-square, pressurizing g7 and d6, and in the meantime deterring ...b5. However, it allows Black an easy game.

7...h6!

This is the most accurate reply, discomforting the g5-bishop. Black may be able to unpin and gain control of the e5-square by a later ...g5.

8 ♙h4

Or:

a) Following 8 ♙xf6 Black can play 8...♜xf6 when, after 9 ♜xf6 gxf6 he achieves a position typical of certain Richter-Rauzer lines, except that queens have been exchanged, which is to Black's advantage, as he no longer has to worry so much about his king. For example, 10 0-0-0 (10 ♙e2 h5 {or else White plays ♙h5} 11 0-0-0 ♙d7 12 ♜b1 ♜d8!? 13 f4 ♜c6 14 ♜hf1 ♜c7 is equal, Bokuchava-Platonov, USSR 1971) 10...♙d7 11 f4 ♜c6 12 ♙e2 ♜xd4 13 ♜xd4 h5 14 ♜f1 0-0-0 15 ♜d3 ♙c6 16 f5 ♙h6+ 17 ♜b1 ♙g5 18 g3 h4 and Black has an advantage due to his two bishops and strong pawn centre, Bjerring-Magnusson, Gausdal 1990.

b) 8 ♙e3 is well met by 8...e5! 9 ♜b3 (9 ♜f5?! g6 forces the awkward 10 ♜h4 as 10 ♜g3? allows 10...♙g4) 9...♙e6 10 a4 ♜c6 11 ♙d3 ♜b4 12 ♜d2 ♙e7 13 0-0 0-0 14 a5 ♜xd3 15 cxd3 d5 which favours Black, Van Riemsdijk-Stean, São Paulo 1979.

8...♜bd7 9 0-0-0 ♜c7

A useful reflex, removing the queen from the d-file.

10 ♙e2

This is White's best bet. Neither 10 ♜h3 (to stop ...g5) 10...♙e7 11 f4 b5 12 ♙d3 b4 13 ♜a4 ♜c5 14 ♜xc5 dxc5, when Black is winning, Martorelli-Ortega, Saint Vincent 1999, nor 10 ♙d3 ♙e7 11 ♜e2 b5 12 f4 b4 13 ♜d5!? (13 ♜b1 ♙b7 14 ♜d2 ♜c5 is also good for Black, Kagan-Nunn, Hastings 1977/8) 13...exd5 14 ♜f5 ♜c5, when Black fends off the attack easily enough, Milov-Savon, Alushta 1992, is satisfactory.

10...♙e7

Black should be aware that the immediate 10...b5? loses to 11 e5! ♖b7 12 ♗xe6! ♜c8 (the reason Black could not play 12...fxe6 is that it is hit by the surprising tactic 13 ♜h5+ ♔d8 14 exf6, Cao-Lingnau, Budapest 1997) 13 ♗xg7+ ♕xg7 14 ♜g3 and Black is crushed, Rakowiecki-Kuligowski, Polish Ch 1981.

### 11 ♜he1

11 ♜e3 g5 12 ♖g3 ♗e5 13 h4 ♜g8 14 hxg5 hxg5 15 f3 (15 ♜d2 ♖d7 16 ♗f3 ♗f4 17 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 is too easy for Black, Liberzon-Portisch, Skara Echt 1980) 15...♖d7 16 ♖f2 b5 (the alternative 16...0-0-0 is also perfectly reasonable) 17 g3 b4 18 ♗b1 d5 19 exd5 ♗xd5 20 ♜b3 ♜a5 21 ♗d2 ♜c8 22 ♗c4 (Thorhallsson-Coleman, Copenhagen 1998) 22...♜xc4! 23 ♖xc4 ♖a4 wins the white queen.

### 11...g5!

Often in the Najdorf, Black has to sacrifice a pawn to get this move in, but here he wins the e5-square for his knight for free, and with gain of tempo.

12 ♖g3 ♗e5 13 ♜e3 b5 14 a3 ♜b8 15 f3 ♗fd7 16 f4 gxf4 17 ♖xf4 b4 18 axb4 ♜xb4 19 ♜f1 ♜b6 20 b3 ♗g6

Black, with his strong centre and active pieces, has the edge, Tal-Platonov, USSR 1969.

### B2)

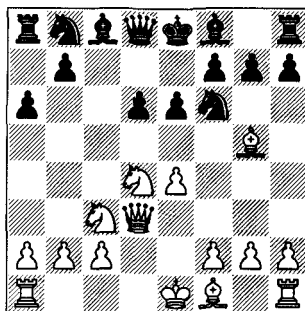
#### 7 ♜d3 (D)

With the same idea as in Line B1, namely, to play ♜g3 and a later f4, but the fact that the f2-pawn is no longer blocked may prove an advantage.

#### 7...b5!

However, the fact that ...b5 is not prevented may prove a disadvantage,

B



and one that Black should waste no time exploiting.

### 8 a3

This stops the annoying ...b4 move, but it is passive and weakens the queenside pawn formation. Alternatively, there is 8 0-0-0 b4 (chasing away the knight reduces White's attacking possibilities and weakens the e4-pawn) 9 ♗ce2 (9 e5?! bxc3 10 exf6 gxf6 11 ♜f3 fxg5 12 ♜xa8 ♜b6!, intending to trap the white queen, Neuronov-Zaichik, USSR 1979) 9...♖b7 10 f4 ♗bd7 (10...♖e7 11 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 12 g4 ♗d7 13 g5 ♗c5 14 ♜e3 ♖e7 15 ♖g2 ♜b6 16 h4 0-0-0 is also promising, Tisdall-Olafsson, Torshavn 1987) 11 ♗g3 ♜a5 12 ♗b1 ♗c5 13 ♜e3 ♗fxe4 and White is lost, Martin Gonzalez-Gual, Barcelona 1990.

### 8...♗bd7 9 f4

Similar play results from 9 0-0-0 ♖b7 10 ♜h3 ♖e7 11 ♖d3 ♜c8 12 ♜he1 ♜xc3! 13 bxc3 ♜a5 14 ♗b3 ♜xa3+ 15 ♗b1 0-0, with a winning attack for Black, Sareen-Howell, Calcutta 1996.

### 9...♖b7 10 ♜h3

10 ♖e2 ♖e7 11 ♖f3 ♜b6 12 0-0-0 h6 13 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 14 h4 0-0-0 15 ♗b1 is great for Black, Linskiy-Novikov,

Toronto 1998. In fact, he won quickly after 15...♘e5!.

10...♙e7 11 ♙d3 ♞c8 12 0-0-0?!

The white king does not prove to be comfortable here, but Black is on top anyway.

12...♞xc3! 13 bxc3 ♘c5 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15 ♞he1 ♜a5 16 e5 dxe5 17 fxe5 ♙g5+ 18 ♝b1 ♙d5 19 ♘b3 ♞xa3 20 ♙xb5+ axb5 21 ♞xd5 ♘a4

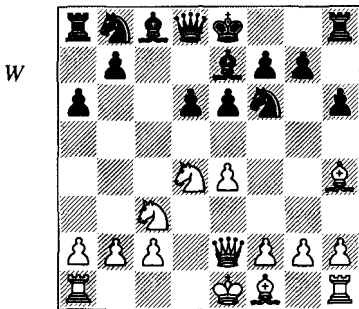
0-1 Arencibia-Ivanchuk, Lucerne Wcht 1997.

### B3)

7 ♞e2

This move has very few redeeming features, and it is no great surprise that it is very rarely tried.

7...h6 8 ♙h4 ♙e7 (D)



Threatening the typical ...♘e4, which normally equalizes, or more.

9 0-0-0

Or:

a) 9 f4 (similarly fine for Black) 9...♘e4! 10 ♙xe7 ♘xc3 11 ♞c4!? (11 ♙xd8 ♘xe2 12 ♙xe2 ♝xd8 13 ♞d1 ♝e7 leaves Black a good pawn up in the ending) 11...♝xe7 12 ♞xc3 ♞e8, followed by ...♝f8, affords White insufficient compensation.

b) 9 ♙g3 attempts to avoid the coming combination, but it just wastes too much time. Smyslov-Portisch, Tilburg 1979 continued 9...e5! 10 ♘b3 b5 11 f4 0-0 12 ♞d3 (12 fxe5 dxe5 13 ♙xe5 ♘c6 14 ♙g3 ♙b4 allows Black a dangerous initiative) 12...♘bd7 13 ♙e2 ♙b7 14 0-0 ♞c8 15 ♞ad1 ♞c7 with an ideal set-up for Black.

9...♘xe4! 10 ♙xe7

Or 10 ♘xe4 ♙xh4.

10...♞xc3 11 ♙xd8 ♘xe2+ 12 ♘xe2 ♝xd8 13 ♞xd6+ ♝e7

I suppose that this might be equal with best play, but Black's extra central pawn, which allows his king to remain well centralized, means that if anyone is better, it is he.

14 ♞d2 b5 15 ♘c3 ♙b7 16 ♙d3 b4 17 ♘e4 ♘d7 18 ♞e1 g6 19 ♙c4 ♘b6 20 ♙b3 ♞hd8

Wirschell-Van Wely, Antwerp 1996. Black gradually took control of the game, and won.

### B4)

7 ♞d2?!

This is the invariable move in the Richter-Rauzer, but with the pawn on a6, instead of a7, and the queen's knight on b8, instead of c6, it is a mistake. Still, that does not stop players from playing it with White, and often losing!

7...h6!

This is White's problem, for in the Richter-Rauzer this would now be met by 8 ♙xf6 ♞xf6? 9 ♘db5, winning the d-pawn. Thus we see the advantage of the 5...a6 move, controlling b5, once again!

8 ♙xf6

Or:

a) 8 ♖h4?! loses a pawn: 8... ♗xe4! 9 ♖f4 ♗f6 10 ♖f3 d5 11 0-0-0 ♗c6 12 ♗b3 ♖e7 13 h3 ♖d7 14 g4 ♖c8 15 ♖b1 0-0 gives Black a good extra pawn and a strong centre; he won convincingly in Gavrilov-Vaulin, Novgorod 1995.

b) 8 ♖e3 ♗g4 (this move also gains White's important dark-squared bishop) 9 0-0-0 (9 ♖e2 ♗xe3 10 ♖xe3 ♗c6 11 0-0-0 ♖b6 12 g4 ♖e7 13 h4 ♗xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 15 ♖xd4 ♖d7 16 f4 0-0-0, with the bishop-pair, Naimanye-Ki.Georgiev, Manila OL 1992) 9... ♖e7 10 ♖b1 ♗c6 11 f4 ♗xe3 12 ♖xe3 ♖d7 13 e5 d5 14 ♖g3 0-0 15 h4 f5 16 exf6 ♖xf6 17 ♗ce2 ♖b6 and Black's dark-squared bishop is very strong, Pinkas-Buturin, Frydek Mistek 1996.

### 8... ♖xf6 9 f4

9 0-0-0 ♗c6 10 ♗b3 ♖d8 11 f4 ♖e7 12 ♖e2 ♖d7 13 g4 ♖c7 14 h4 0-0-0 15 ♖b1 ♖b8 is equal, Gibbs-Kengis, Adelaide 1990.

### 9...g5!

A thematic strike, attacking White just where he is weakest, on the dark squares.

10 fxf6 hxg5 11 0-0-0 ♗c6 12 ♖e2 ♗xd4 13 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♖d7 15 h3 ♖c6 16 ♖f3 0-0-0 17 ♖d3 ♖g7 18 ♖hd1 ♖e5

Black's king's bishop dominates the board, Kummerow-Mi.Pavlović, Biel 1997.

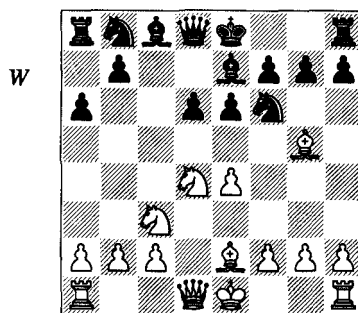
## B5)

### 7 ♖e2

This is not quite as insipid as it seems. White's idea is to play a 6 ♖e2-style position without permitting the reply ...e5. The obvious disadvantage

is that the bishop might be less well placed on g5 than on e3.

### 7... ♖e7 (D)



## 8 0-0

Other options:

a) 8 ♖d2 (keeping the possibility of 0-0-0 open) 8...b5! 9 a3 ♖b7 10 ♖f3 ♖b6 (not bad, but there is nothing wrong with the natural 10... ♗bd7, since 11 e5 ♖xf3 12 exf6 is met by 12...gxf6) 11 ♖e3 ♖c7 12 g4 ♗c6 13 g5 ♗d7 14 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 15 ♖g1 a5 16 ♖e2 ♖b7 17 f3 0-0 18 ♖d4 b4 19 ♗d1 e5! 20 ♖f2 d5 and White's position is a mess, Ničevski-Nemet, Yugoslav Ch 1975.

b) 8 ♖d3 is similar, but the exposed position of the white queen allows 8... ♗bd7 9 f4 h6 10 ♖h4 g5! (this typical Najdorf idea is very effective here) 11 fxf6 ♖e5 12 ♖d2 ♗fd7 13 0-0-0 hxg5 14 ♖g3 b5 15 a3 ♖b7 16 ♗f3 ♖c8 with a strong hold on e5, and possibilities on both wings for Black, Aginian-Wojtkiewicz, Erevan open 1996.

### 8... ♗bd7 9 ♖d3

Aiming for the g3-square. 9 a4 may seem more sensible, but, unfortunately for White, rather than the 9... ♖e7?! 10

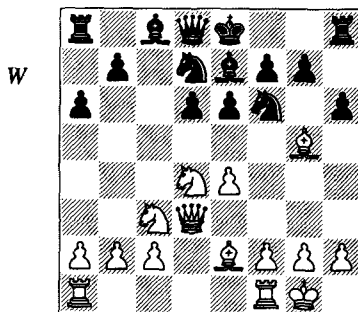
a5 b5 11 axb6 ♖xb6 12 ♔f3 ♔b7 of Yurtaev-Dvoiryys, Russia Cup 1997, when White played the strong move 13 ♔xf6! with advantage (as Black is unable to recapture with the bishop because of 14 ♖db5), simply 9...♗c5! is strong, as White has no reasonable way to defend his e-pawn, e.g. 10 f3?! ♖fxe4!, which shows up one of the potential disadvantages of having the white queen's bishop on g5.

9...h6 (D)

Good timing!

10 ♔xf6






After this White is worse, but what else? 10 ♔e3? loses the e4-pawn, and if 10 ♔h4 then 10...♗e5 11 ♖h3 ♗g6 12 ♔g3 ♖b6 is strong.



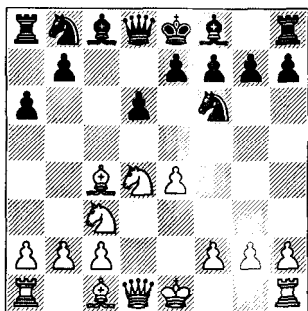
10...♔xf6 11 ♖ad1 0-0 12 ♗b3  
 ♔e7 13 a4 ♖c7 14 ♗h1 ♗e5 15 ♖g3  
 ♗c4 16 ♔xc4 ♖xc4 17 a5 ♔d7

In A.P.Smith-Short, British Ch (Torquay) 1998, Black quickly made his bishops count.


# 3 6 c4


1 e4 c5 2  f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4  xd4  
 f6 5  c3 a6 6  c4 (D)

B



This is an aggressive move, pointing the bishop along the diagonal leading to f7 and g8. The problem is that if White does not manage to weaken this diagonal, then the bishop may find itself 'biting on granite' (i.e. the e6-pawn) whereas its black counterpart can become the uncontested master of the h1-a8 diagonal, attacking e4 or even g2.

The 'all or nothing' nature of many of White's most forcing lines meant that as soon as the right defensive moves were found White was theoretically worse, and 6  c4 fell into disuse.

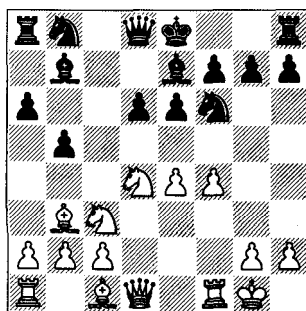
This has changed with the advent, and popularization, of the less committal 9  f3 variation (Line A11), where White aims for piece play, and keeps his f-pawn on f2 so that he can

always bolster the e-pawn by an appropriate f3.

## The Fight for the a2-g8 Diagonal

In order to increase the scope of his queen's bishop, White has to find a way to soften up the a2-g8 diagonal. The obvious method of achieving this goal is to advance the f-pawn to f5, attacking e6. In the following situation, which is a key position from Line A12, White can play:

W

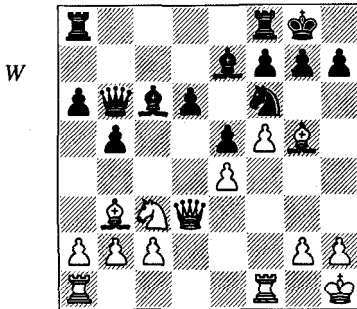


## 10 f5

This forces 10...e5, when White has attained his goal, as 10...b4? allows 11 fxe6! bxc3 12 exf7+ with an attack. The bishop now points directly to f7, and the d5-square is enfeebled. However, this is hardly the end of the story, as, with precise play, Black's resources are more than adequate; in fact he is probably better. This is why White now prefers other continuations.

### The Fight for d5

In the previous diagram we saw White obliging Black to forego pawn control of the crucial d5-square. He who wins the battle for command of this square may well be on the way to winning the game.



### Fischer – Gadia

Mar del Plata 1960

Black has misplayed the opening. In particular he has developed his queen's knight to c6 instead of d7, which allows White to gain control of d5 in the following, well-established manner.

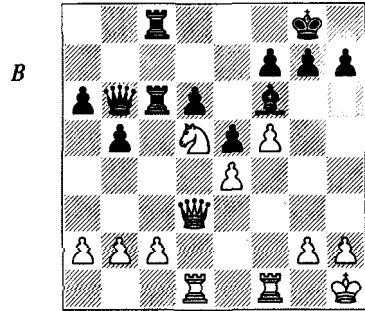
15 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♖d5

16 ♜d5?! ♗xd5 17 ♗xd5 is a little better for White, but the opposite-coloured bishops would make the position drawish. No, it is much, much better to establish the knight on d5.

16...♞ac8 17 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 18 ♞ad1 ♞fc8 19 ♜d5 (D)

The simple fact that the white knight is on d5 renders the position almost unplayable for Black despite his other active pieces.

19...♞d8 20 c3 ♗e7 21 ♞a1 f6 22 a4 ♞b8??



A blunder, losing the rook to a check on d5, but his position was pretty lousy anyway.

23 ♜xe7+ 1-0

This example may well be one of the exceptions rather than the rule, as Black's defensive resources, well established in the games of Fischer himself in particular, are now known to be more than sufficient. Black firstly plays his queen's knight to d7, so as to maintain control of d5 should White capture the f6-knight. He can use his b-pawn to dislodge the c3-knight at a judicious moment, and he can often sacrifice the exchange on c3. You will come across the specifics many times in this chapter.

### Explosion on e6

Another, more dramatic, method of freeing the white king's bishop is to sacrifice it!

The following diagram features a comparatively normal position. Black wishes to complete his development, of course, but how?

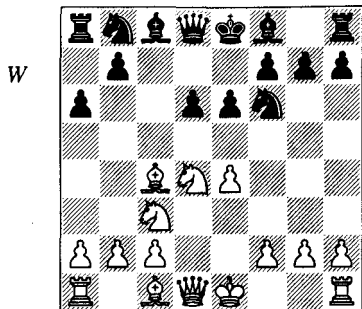
12...♞bd7?

Not like this! 12...0-0 is indicated, for after 13 ♗xe6 fxe6 14 ♜xe6 ♞b6 15 ♜xf8 ♗xf8 White has acquired a



## The Theory of 6 ♖c4

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4  
 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♖c4 e6 (D)



White has the following moves:

A: 7 ♖b3	48
B: 7 a3	66
C: 7 a4	69

Alternatively:

a) 7 0-0 b5 and now 8 ♖b3 transposes to Line A, while 8 ♖d3 looks rather pointless, playing a 6 ♖d3 line with a tempo less. 8...♖b7 9 a4 b4 10 ♗a2 ♗xe4 11 ♗xb4 ♗f6 12 c3 ♖e7 13 a5 0-0 should be fine for Black.

b) 7 ♖e3 b5 8 ♖b3 transposes to note 'b' to White's 8th move in Line A.

### A)

#### 7 ♖b3

The most common move, removing the bishop from the exposed c4-square.

#### 7...b5

With this active retort, Black starts operations against the white e-pawn, by moves such as ...♖b7 and ...b4, and also prepares the fight for d5 with these same two moves. Now White has a number of options:

A1: 8 0-0	48
A2: 8 f4	60
A3: 8 ♖e2	63
A4: 8 ♖f3	64
A5: 8 ♖g5	65

Of these, the first is by far the most common, and most important. The second is historically significant, and the next three are tricky lines that crop up occasionally. Others:

a) 8 a3?! (White has already placed his king's bishop on b3, so this appears to have less point than the line with 7 a3 {Line B}, when the bishop could go straight to the safer square a2) 8...♖e7 9 ♖e3 0-0 10 ♖e2 ♖b7 11 f3 ♗bd7 12 g4 ♗c5 13 ♖a2 ♖c8 14 0-0-0 ♖a5 15 g5 ♗fd7 16 h4 b4 17 axb4 ♖xb4 18 h5 ♖b8 and Black's attack strikes first, Rajna-Barczay, Hungary 1977.

b) 8 ♖e3 is a favourite of Velimirović's, and similar to his attack in the Sozin. It is most simply met by 8...b4 9 ♗a4 ♖b7 10 f4! (if 10 f3 then 10...♗bd7 11 g4 h6 planning 12...d5) 10...♖xe4 11 0-0 ♖e7, as in Forster-Gavrikov, Biel 1994, which transposes to Line A122, note 'a' to White's 11th move.

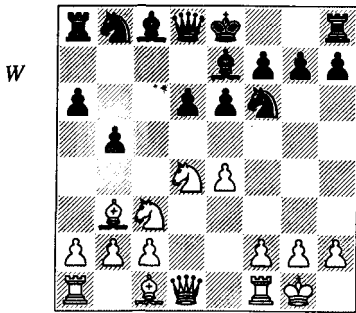
c) 8 f3 ♖e7 9 ♖e3 0-0 10 ♖d2 and now 10...♖d7!? deters White from castling queenside due to ...b4. 11 g4 b4 12 ♗ce2 a5 13 g5 ♗e8 14 ♖c4 a4 15 ♗g3 ♗c6 Ujtumen-Geller, Palma de Mallorca IZ 1970.

### A1)

#### 8 0-0 ♖e7 (D)

With another important crossroads:

A11: 9 ♖f3	50
A12: 9 f4	54



These are both important, popular moves. There are some lesser alternatives, but they cause Black little inconvenience, and, by straightforward development (...0-0, ...♖b7, ...♗bd7, etc.), Black is assured of a good game:

a) 9 ♗e2 (this and line 'b' are inferior to Lines A3 and note 'b' to White's 8th move in Line A respectively, because White has already castled short, and no longer has the possibility of putting his king on the other side and advancing his kingside pawns – although, as we shall see, even this is no problem for Black if he reacts well) 9...0-0 10 a3 ♖b7 11 ♜d1 ♗bd7 12 ♖g5 ♝c8 13 f3 ♗b6 14 ♖h1 ♗c5 15 ♖a2 ♝fe8 16 ♖e3 ♗c7 17 ♗f2 ♗cd7 18 ♗g3 ♖f8 19 ♜d2 ♗e5 20 ♜ad1 ♗b8 21 ♗de2 ♗c4 22 ♖xc4 ♝xc4 and, without having done anything earth-shattering, Black already enjoys a plus, Giustolisi-Petrosian, Lugano OL 1968.

b) 9 ♖e3 0-0 10 a4 (10 f4 transposes to Line A122, while the text-move is similar to variation 'c' but with some subtle differences) 10...b4 11 ♗a2 ♖b7 (simplest; 11...♗xe4? is countered by the stunning move 12 ♗xe6! ♖xe6 {12...fxe6 13 ♖d5!} 13

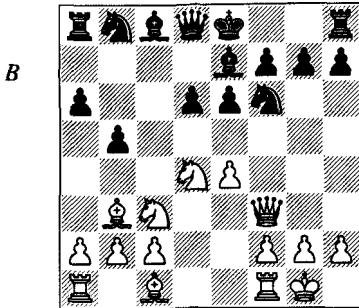
♖d5 ♖xd5 14 ♗xd5 ♗d7 15 ♗xe4, and White is better, Mi.Pavlović-Shipov, Greek Cht (Athens) 1996, while 11...♗b6?? is this time a clear blunder in view of 12 ♗xe6) 12 ♗xb4 a5 13 ♗d3 ♖xe4! 14 c3 ♗bd7 15 ♗b5 d5 (Black's light-squared bishop is on the right side of his pawn-chain, and, from g6, can both help Black's centre advance, and counter any attack on his king) 16 ♖c2 ♗b8 17 ♖f4 e5 18 ♖g3 ♖g6 19 ♖b3 ♜d8 20 ♝e1 ♖xd3 21 ♗xd3 ♗c5 22 ♗d1 ♗ce4 23 ♖h4 ♗b6 24 ♗e2 ♖c5 25 ♝f1 g5! 26 ♖g3 ♗xg3 27 hxg3 ♗e4 28 ♖xd5, Bosch-Ligterink, Wijk aan Zee 1997, and now 28...♖xf2+! 29 ♖xf2 ♗xf2 is strong.

c) 9 a4 (it seems odd that White should turn his attention to the queenside like this, now that his king's bishop is pointing in the other direction, and Black equalizes easily) 9...b4 10 ♗a2 ♗b6 11 ♖e3 (11 c3 bxc3 12 ♗xc3 0-0 13 a5 ♗b7 14 f4 ♗c6 15 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 is fine for Black, as White's centre and queenside are very loose, Sznapić-Pytel, Polish Ch 1972) 11...♗b7 12 f3 and now 12...♗bd7 13 ♗e1 ♗b8 14 ♗g3 g6 is not very clear, Zso.Polgar-Arnason, Reykjavik 1995, but 12...♖d7 13 ♗e1 a5 14 ♗g3 0-0 is also possible, intending ...♗c6, with a sound position.

d) 9 ♝e1 0-0 10 ♖g5 (10 ♗f3 has little point now, as, instead of playing 10...♗c7, transposing to Line A11, Black can simply continue 10...♖b7) 10...h6 11 ♖h4 ♖b7 12 a3 ♗c6 13 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 14 ♗d4 ♗c7 15 ♜ad1 ♝fd8 16 ♜d3 a5 17 ♝f3 ♗a7 18 ♗d2 b4 is better for Black, Vasiukov-Platonov, USSR 1971.

A11)

9 ♖f3 (D)



When Black's best defences were worked out, and it became clear that attempting to 'blow Black away', by means of f4 and then f5 or e5, was more than likely to backfire, White turned to this move, which was first played by Vasiukov, against Kavalek. White intends to attack with his pieces, while maintaining a solid pawn-structure. In particular, the e4-pawn is always solidly defended (f3 is still possible) which deadens the effect of Black's light-squared bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal, much as the black e6-f7 tandem constrain the b3-bishop. This continuation became responsible for the renaissance of 6 ♖c4.

9... ♖c7!

This move, Kasparov's choice in his PCA World Championship match against Short, is, I feel, the strongest. Black defuses the immediate threat of e5, forking a8-rook and f6-knight, and will continue with ... ♗c6, exchanging the annoying d4-knight, after which he will be able to castle and play ... ♖b7, completing his development with a sound position.

What about the other possibilities? The most obvious, 9... ♖b7?, is a mistake as 10 ♖xe6 fxe6 11 ♗xe6 and 12 ♗xg7+ is horrible for Black, so Black's choice is between the text-move and 9... ♖b6. The latter is the more popular alternative, but, apart from the fact that the attack on d4 is purely illusory (10 ♖g5!? being possible, for instance, as 10... ♖xd4!? allows 11 e5, when Black is living dangerously, e.g. 11... ♗e4 12 ♗xe4 d5 13 ♗d6+), there is also 10 ♖e3, which obliges the black queen to move again. After 10... ♖b7 11 ♖g3 ♗c6 (for example) 12 ♗xc6 ♖xc6, Black is a whole tempo down on the position arising after move 11 of the main line.

10 ♖g3 (D)

White attacks the undefended g-pawn, but he does have other, less aggressive, moves:

a) 10 e5? can be met by the standard reply 10... ♖b7, of course.

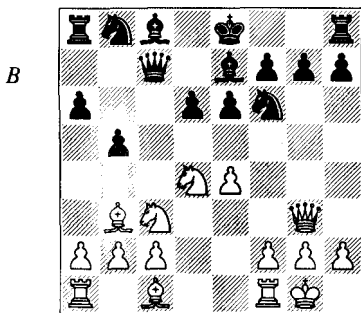
b) 10 a3 ♗c6 11 ♗xc6 (11 e5 ♗xd4 12 ♖xa8 dxe5 is even more promising for Black than after 10 ♖e1) 11... ♖xc6 12 ♖e1 ♖b7 13 ♖g3 transposes to the main line.

c) 10 ♖e1 is a good idea; bearing in mind that Black does not seem to worry about the defence of his g-pawn in the main line, then White might just as well keep the queen where it is! Now, rather than play 10... 0-0, when 11 ♖g3 ♗c6 12 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 13 ♖h6 ♗e8 14 ♗d5 is possible, why not play 10... ♗c6!? with the following two possibilities:

c1) 11 e5 is often given as the refutation of this, but if so, why has no one played it? After 11... ♗xd4 12 ♖xa8 dxe5 it seems that Black has good

compensation for the exchange, and following ...0-0 there is a powerful threat of ...♙b7, winning the trapped white queen. Therefore, play might continue 13 ♖g5! (13 ♘e2? 0-0 14 ♘xd4 ♙b7 should be good for Black) 13...0-0 14 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 (14...gxf6 15 ♗e4 ♙b7 16 ♗d3 ♗c6 17 ♘e4 ♖h8 18 f3 f5 19 ♘f2 ♖g8 is also worth consideration; then 20 ♗f1 seems forced) 15 ♗e4 ♙b7 16 ♗g4 b4 with good play.

c2) 11 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 12 ♖g5!? (a tricky move; 12 ♗g3 ♙b7 transposes to the main line) 12...♙a7! (12...0-0 is met by 13 ♘d5! exd5 14 ♖xd5 ♘xd5 15 exd5 ♗xc2 16 ♖xe7 with a clear advantage, Martens-Vanheste, Amsterdam 1988, and 12...♙b7 allows 13 ♖xf6, when 13...♖xf6? loses to 14 ♖d5) and Black is fine: the rook can go to d7, when Black can continue with ...0-0 and ...♙b7.



### 10...♘c6

Pressurizing, and thereby exchanging, the unguarded knight. The obvious alternative 10...0-0 allows 11 ♖h6, when 11...♘e8 is necessary. This is fine for Black, if a little passive, but the text-move is more ambitious. Black

is hoping that White will have to develop his queen's bishop (to e3, probably) so that Black can then castle, knowing that a subsequent ♙h6 will lose a key tempo.

### 11 ♘xc6

The other choices are rare:

a) 11 ♖e3 0-0 12 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 13 ♙h6 (reaching a known position with White having wasted a move, but 13 ♖d4 ♙b7 14 ♖ad1 b4 15 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16 ♖xd6 ♗c7, Ivanov-Zhidkov, USSR 1977, is already slightly better for Black) 13...♘e8 14 a4 ♙b7 (if 14...b4 then 15 ♘d5! with sharp play, J.Polgar-Olafsson, Egilsstadir 1988; this is White's typical idea, exploiting the fact that 15...exd5? 16 ♖xd5 skewers the black queen) 15 axb5 axb5 16 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 17 ♖e1 ♖f6 18 ♖g5 ♗c5 19 ♖e3 ♗h5 20 f3 b4 21 ♘a4 ♖c6 22 ♖al ♖e5 and, if anything, Black has the edge, Nikolenko-Yuferov, Moscow 1990.

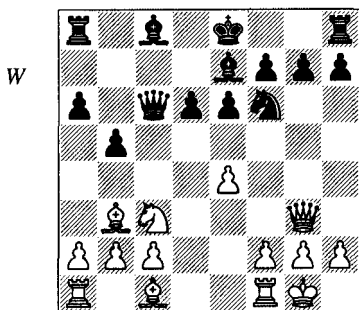
b) Retreating the knight from the centre by 11 ♘de2 is hardly critical. Following 11...0-0 12 ♙h6 ♘e8 13 ♖ad1 (Virostko-Jirovsky, Plzen 1998), 13...♘a5, with the intention of obtaining the bishop-pair, has much to be said for it.

c) 11 ♘f5?! (verging on the reckless) 11...exf5 12 ♗xg7 ♖f8 and now:

c1) 13 ♖g5 b4 14 ♘d5 ♘xd5 15 ♖xd5?! (the ending arising after 15 exd5 ♘e5 16 ♖xe7 ♗xc7 17 f4 f6 18 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 19 fxe5 fxe5 is favourable for Black due to his strong centre and better minor piece) 15...♖xg5 16 ♗xg5 f4 is better for Black, whose extra piece is worth more than the two pawns, Guseinov-Magerramov, Baku 1986.

c2) 13 exf5 ♖xf5 14 ♔g5 b4 15 ♖xf6 bxc3 16 ♜ae1 0-0-0 17 ♖xe7 ♝xe7 18 ♜e3 cxb2 19 ♜f6 ♖e6 20 ♜c3 ♝c6 affords White inadequate compensation, Mukhutdinov-Shneider, St Petersburg 1993.

11...♜xc6 (D)



12 ♜e1

Defending e4; others:

a) 12 f3 also protects e4, but is a little more passive. Black has no trouble after 12...♖b7 13 ♖e3, and now 13...♜g8 appears to be strong, intending ...g5, followed by ...♝h5-f4 or ...g4. Compare this with note 'a' to White's next move.

b) 12 ♜xg7 is a mistake, as after 12...♜g8 13 ♜h6 ♝xe4 14 ♝xe4 ♜xe4 15 f3 Black can play 15...♜e2 16 ♜f2 ♜e1+ with a likely draw, or go for more with 15...♜g6, as the ending after 16 ♜xg6 hxg6 is very satisfactory.

c) 12 ♖g5 (this resigns White to conceding the tempo that he tries so hard to avoid losing in the main variation) 12...♖b7 13 ♜ad1 0-0 (13...♜d8! is sounder) 14 ♜fe1 (14 ♖h6 ♝e8 15 ♜fe1 ♖h8 16 ♖g5 ♖xg5 17 ♜xg5 ♝f6 18 ♜d3 is equal, Moutousis-Cvetković, Vrnjačka Banja 1990) 14...♜fd8

15 f4?! (this weakens e4; 15 ♜d3?! is hardly better because of 15...b4 16 ♝d5 exd5 17 exd5, Strzalka-Kaczmarek, Wrocław 1987, and now 17...♜d7 holds out hopes of an advantage; 15 a3 and 15 f3 are possible, with typical play) 15...♜b6+ (both 15...b4 and 15...a5 are tempting, as White has undermined his e-pawn) 16 ♖h1 b4 17 ♝a4 ♜a5 18 c3 ♖c6 19 cxb4 ♜xb4 20 ♝c3 a5 21 ♖h6 ♖f8 22 ♖g5 ♖e7 23 ♖h6 ♖f8 24 ♖g5 ♖e7 1/2-1/2 Kuzmin-Polugaevsky, USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1977.

12...♖b7!

Black offers to gambit his g-pawn, as the alternative 12...0-0 allows 13 ♖h6 ♝e8 14 ♝d5 with interesting play for White. I always prefer to keep the 'interesting play' to myself!

13 a3

Essentially, this is a useful waiting move. ...b4 is never a threat so long as Black has not castled and White can reply to ...b4?? with ♖a4, pinning the queen against her king.

a) 13 f3 is another sensible waiting move. White hopes that he thereby improves his position, and anticipates that Black will castle before White is forced to develop his queen's bishop. However, rather than the 'normal' 13...0-0, when 14 ♖h6 ♝e8 15 ♜ad1 ♜d8 is fairly level, Black has a strong positional move: 13...♜g8! (Black intends ...g5, controlling the key central dark squares, f4 and e5, thereby killing any possibility of White playing in the centre) 14 ♝e2 (14 a4 b4 15 a5 can be met by 15...0-0-0 and ...g5, and even 15...♖f8 is reasonable, as the king should be quite safe here) 14...g5 15 ♝d4 ♜c5 16 ♖e3 ♜e5 17 ♖f2

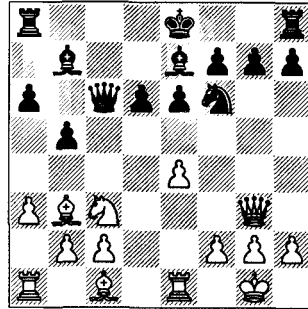
♘h5! 18 ♜xe5 dxe5 19 ♘e2 g4 20 ♜f1 ♜g6 and Black controls the endgame, R.Anderson-Browne, Los Angeles 1996.

b) 13 ♜xg7 (obviously the acid test of Black's play, but few players enjoy taking such pawns and being obliged to spend the next phase of the game defending against a strong kingside attack) 13...♜g8 14 ♜h6 0-0-0 15 ♜h3 (15 f3 ♜g6 16 ♜h4 ♜dg8 17 ♜e2 ♖d8 18 ♜e1 ♖b6+ 19 ♜h1, Krason-Schurade, Olomouc 1989, seems worse; then 19...h5, planning ...h4 followed by ...♘h5-g3, is good) 15...♜b8 16 a3 (16 f3 is similar: 16...♜g6 17 ♖e3 ♜dg8 18 ♜e2 and now, instead of 18...♘d7?! which met the reply 19 ♘d5! in Ivanchuk-Polugaevsky, Monaco blindfold 1993, 18...♖d8 or 18...h5, as in the main line of this note, is best) 16...♜g6 17 ♜e2 ♜dg8 18 f3 (this solid move is required sooner or later; the active 18 f4? was punished by 18...d5! in Drozdov-Shneider, USSR 1987, opening the h1-a8 diagonal towards the g2-square) 18...h5! (Black intends to play ...h4 and ...♘h5, but 18...♖d8 is also a good choice, activating another piece, e.g. 19 ♖e3 ♖b6 20 ♖xb6 ♜xb6+ 21 ♜f1? ♘g4! 22 fxg4 ♜f6+ winning) 19 ♜h1 ♜c7 20 ♘d1 h4 21 ♘e3 ♘h5 22 ♘g4 ♜d8! 23 ♖d2 ♖g5 (Black's plan is a complete success: he will exchange dark-squared bishops, and plant his knight on f4) 24 g3 f5 25 ♘e3 fxe4 26 f4 ♖xf4 winning, Ki.Georgiev-Ivanchuk, Tilburg rpd 1993.

c) 13 ♖g5 0-0 is likely to transpose, after White plays ♜ad1, to note 'c' to White's 12th move.

Returning to the position after 13 a3 (D):

B



**13...♜d8!**

Black manages to find another useful move before castling!

**14 f3**

Another delaying move and this time successful, as Black has run out of waiting moves himself. Still, he has managed to improve his position as much as possible. Alternatives:

a) 14 ♜xg7? (almost certainly losing) 14...♜g8 15 ♜h6 d5! (breaking open the diagonal that leads to the g2-square) 16 exd5 (16 f3 might hold out some chances) 16...♘xd5 17 ♘xd5 (17 ♖xd5 ♜xd5 18 ♘e4 ♜d1! 19 ♜xd1 ♜xe4 and Black wins) 17...♜xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♜xd5 19 ♜h3 ♜xg2+ looks good!

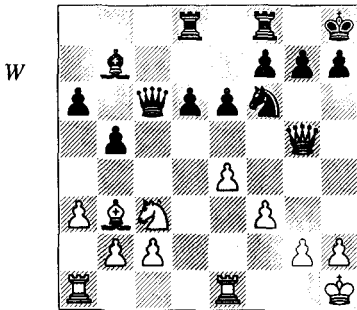
b) 14 ♘d5!? is an interesting possibility: 14...exd5 15 exd5 ♘xd5 16 ♜xg7 ♘d7 17 ♜g4+ (17 ♜xf7 ♜de8 18 ♖g5 only fails as, after 18...♘f6, mate on g2 is threatened; still, this point is certainly not to be neglected!) 17...♜c7!? (17...♜e8 draws) 18 ♖xd5 ♜xd5 19 ♜xe7+ ♜b8 (threatening ...♜g8, although this is far from clear) 20 ♜f3! ♜xf3 21 gxf3 ♜de8 22 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 23 ♖f4 ♜c7 24 ♜g2 ♜g8+ 1/2-1/2 Sion Castro-Gi.Hernandez, Seville 1994.

c) 14 ♖g5 0-0 (once again, Black can happily castle now that he has 'won' his tempo) 15 ♜ad1 ♜h5 16 ♜h4 ♖xg5 17 ♜xg5 ♜f6 18 ♜d3 h6 19 ♜h4 ♜c5 20 ♜f4 ♜d7 21 ♜ed1 ♜fd8 22 ♜e3 ♜f8 23 f3 ♜xe3+ 24 ♜xe3 ♜c8 25 ♜ed3 ♜e7 and Black enjoys comfortable equality, Kudrin-Browne, USA Ch (Modesto) 1995.

**14...0-0 15 ♖h6 ♜e8 16 ♜h1**

16 ♜e2?! ♜c5+ 17 ♜h1 ♖f6 18 c3 ♖e5 19 f4?! (exactly what White has been trying to avoid; 19 ♜g4 leaves the e-pawn solidly defended) 19...♖f6 20 ♜d4 ♜h8 21 ♖g5 h6 22 e5? (going from bad to worse; 22 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 23 ♖c2 is only slightly better for Black) 22...dxe5 23 ♖xf6 gxf6!, threatening ...♜g8, and winning, Shtyrenkov-Magerramov, Smolensk 1991.

**16...♜h8 17 ♖g5 ♖xg5 18 ♜xg5 ♜f6 (D)**



**19 ♜ad1 ♜d7 20 ♜d3 ♜f8**

The game is equal, although both sides can still play to win, of course.

**21 ♜ed1 ♜c5! 22 ♜e3 ♜g8 23 ♜g1**

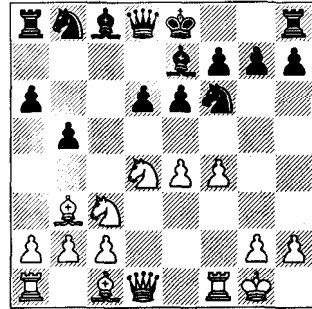
Short-Kasparov, London PCA Wch (16) 1993. Now, instead of 23...♜f8, the simplest plan was 23...♜xe3+ 24 ♜xe3 d5 (or 24...♜f8 intending ...♜e7)

25 exd5 ♜xd5 26 ♜ed3 ♜f6, with equality.

**A12)**

**9 f4 (D)**

B



**9...♖b7**

In established theory there are two main moves here. The alternative to 9...♖b7 is 9...0-0, which is also solid and good, but I cannot recommend it, as I am not sure that Black can force this position. The problem for someone who wishes to play the position that arises after 9...0-0 is that he must also know 9...♖b7, and it seems like a waste of time to learn the theory of both variations.

The predicament arises after 8 f4 ♖b7 (Line A2) if White should cannily play the obvious, and natural, 9 0-0. Amazingly enough, this does not seem to be mentioned by any of my sources! If Black now wants to play 9...♖e7 (as I recommend) then he will transpose to the above diagram. The only alternative is 9...b4!?, but what about the obvious reply 10 e5 (instead of 10 ♜a4?! ♖xe4, when Black manages to take the e-pawn with his bishop, which is much better than with

the knight, as, for one thing d5 is still well protected)? This certainly seems to throw a 'spanner in the works':

a) 10...bxc3 seems dangerous for Black: 11 exf6 ♖xf6 (11...♘d7? 12 f5 e5 13 ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 14 ♖h5+ winning, Dely-Szabo, Hungary 1962) 12 bxc3 ♘d7 13 f5 e5 14 ♘e6 fxe6 15 fxe6 ♖g6 16 exd7+.

b) 10...dxe5 11 fxe5 ♘fd7 (although 11...♖c5 seems similar to the position after move 11 of Line A121, there is an important difference: the a4-e8 diagonal is open and this gives White a significant resource, i.e. 12 ♖e3 bxc3 13 exf6 cxb2 14 ♖b1 gxf6 15 ♖xb2 ♘c6 16 ♖a4) 12 ♘a4 (even after the speculative 12 ♖xf7!? ♜xf7 13 ♘xe6 Black has problems, e.g. 13...♖b6+ 14 ♜h1 ♜e8 {14...♜e7 15 ♖g5+} 15 ♘d5 ♖xd5 16 ♖xd5) 12...♘c5 13 ♖e3 ♘xb3 14 axb3 and Black is in difficulty, Rosican-Tonteri, Brno 1998.

The upshot of this extended digression is that, for simplicity's sake, it is better to learn just 9...♖b7!

White has two main options:

**A121: 10 e5 55**

**A122: 10 ♖e3 58**

Others:

a) Obviously, with the g1-a7 diagonal now open, 10 ♖xe6? fxe6 11 ♘xe6 is countered by 11...♖b6+ giving Black time to escape from the fork, and defend his g-pawn.

b) 10 f5 e5 11 ♘de2 ♘bd7 transposes to the note to White's 11th move in Line A2.

c) 10 ♜h1?! has the same idea as 10 ♖e3 (that is, capturing on e6 with the bishop), but leaves White worse off after 10...b4 11 e5 bxc3 12 exf6

♖xf6 13 bxc3 0-0 14 ♖b1 ♖c7 15 ♖g4 ♘c6 16 f5 ♘xd4 17 cxd4 exf5! 18 ♖xf5 ♖xd4 19 ♖f4 ♖ae8 20 ♖a3 g6 21 ♖d3 ♖e5 22 ♖f2 ♖e7 23 ♖bf1 ♖h4 24 h3 ♖g3, winning material, Mrden-V.Gurevich, Pula 1994.

### A121)

#### 10 e5

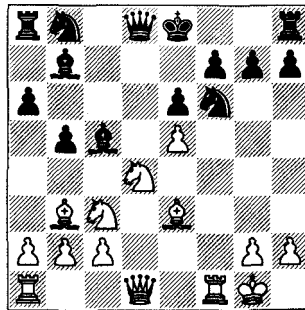
The sharpest possibility. White tries to crush Black before he has time to bring his king to safety.

#### 10...dxe5 11 fxe5 ♖c5

This is forced, but good. 11...♘fd7? loses after 12 ♖xf7! ♜xf7 13 ♘xe6 ♖b6+ 14 ♜h1; for example, 14...♘xe5 15 ♖h5+ ♘g6 16 ♘xg7+ and the poor black king is in big trouble.

#### 12 ♖e3 (D)

B



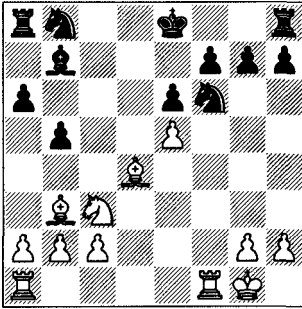
#### 12...♖xd4!

When I introduced this move nearly twenty years ago, it seemed to me to be an ideal way to avoid the sharp variation 12...♘c6 13 exf6 ♖xd4, which seemed far from clear all those years ago, and has not changed too much since! Besides, even if it is good for Black, why bother to learn all that theory unnecessarily?

#### 13 ♖xd4

This is invariably played, but 13 ♖xd4 might be superior: 13...♗xd4 14 ♙xd4 (D).

B



In this endgame, White has the bishop-pair, but Black can claim the better pawn-structure – the e5-pawn is particularly weak. With care, Black cannot be worse, and might well be better. There are two possibilities in this relatively unexplored position:

a) 14...♗c6 is the obvious move:

a1) 15 ♖ad1?! ♖d8 16 exf6 (16 ♙b6 ♖xd1 17 ♖xd1 ♗d7 18 ♗e4? ♗xb6 19 ♗d6+ ♗e7 20 ♗xb7 ♗xe5, Nunn, leaves Black a good pawn up) 16...♖xd4 17 a4 b4 18 fxg7 ♖g8 19 ♗a2 ♖xg7 is exactly the type of ending Black is looking for: his pieces dominate the board.

a2) 15 exf6?! ♗xd4 16 fxg7 ♖g8, likewise.

a3) 15 ♙c5! – White can jettison his e-pawn to keep the black king in the centre. Now:

a31) 15...♗xe5 16 a4 ♗fd7 (not 16...bxa4? 17 ♙xa4+ ♙c6 18 ♙xc6+ ♗xc6 19 ♗b5) 17 ♙d6 (17 ♙d4 bxa4 18 ♙xa4 0-0) 17...♗c4 18 ♙b4 ♗d2! 19 ♗xb5 axb5 20 ♙xd2 ♗c5 21 axb5 ♗xb3 22 cxb3 is probably only equal,

but there may well be improvements along the way.

a32) 15...♗d7! 16 ♗e4 (16 ♙d6 ♗dxe5 17 a4 ♗c4 18 ♙xc4 bxc4 19 ♖f4 ♖d8 20 ♖d1 ♗a5 21 ♙b4 ♖xd1+ 22 ♗xd1 e5 23 ♖g4 ♗c6 24 ♖xc4 ♗d7, followed by the plan ...♗e6, ...♖d8 and ...f5, etc.; if anyone is better, it is Black) 16...♗xc5 17 ♗xc5 ♗a5 and, with his better structure and centralized king (after ...♗e7), Black has an edge.

b) 14...♗fd7!? 15 ♖ad1 ♗e7 is also a possibility, refraining from capturing the e-pawn, but hoping to tie White to its defence. For example: 16 a4 b4 17 ♗a2 a5 18 c3 bxc3 (18...♗c6 19 ♙e3!? bxc3 20 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 21 ♖xd7+ ♗e7 22 ♙c5 ♖he8 23 ♗xc3 {23 ♖xb7? ♖ab8} 23...♙c6 24 ♖d6 ♙d5 25 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 26 ♖xd5 exd5 27 ♙xd5+ ♗g6 28 ♙xa8 ♖xa8 is at best equal for White) 19 ♙xc3 (19 ♗xc3 ♗c6 20 ♖fe1 ♖hc8 21 ♗b5 ♙a6 22 ♙c3 ♖ab8, with an edge to Black due to his queenside pressure) 19...♖d8 (played to allow Black to develop his b8-knight without permitting the combination 19...♗c6? 20 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 21 ♖xd7+ and 22 ♖xb7) 20 ♖f2 ♗c6 21 ♖e1 ♙a6 again with a good game.

### 13...♗c6 14 exf6

White acquiesces to an inferior position. Otherwise:

a) 14 ♗e2?! (too passive) 14...♗d7 (14...♗g4 15 ♖d2 ♗gxe5 16 ♖f4 ♖d6 amounts to the same thing) 15 ♖d2 ♗cxe5?! (15...♗dxe5! 16 ♖f4 ♖d6 seems good for Black) 16 ♖f4, Mamedov-Mihalik, Tallinn 1997, and Black is still better after 16...♖c7 or 16...♖f6 17 ♙xe5 ♗xe5 18 ♖xf6 gxf6 19 ♖xf6 ♖d8.

b) 14 ♖c5?! (presumably hoping to gain a tempo over note 'a3' to White's 13th move) 14...♗xe5! (14...♞xd1?! is rather cooperative: 15 ♜fxd1 ♗d7 16 ♖d6 h5!? {an imaginative plan, intending to attack g2 by transferring the rook to g6} 17 a4 b4 18 ♗a2 ♜h6 19 a5 ♗cxe5 20 ♖a4 0-0-0 21 ♜d4 ♜g6 22 ♖xd7+ ♜xd7 23 ♖xe5 ♜xg2+ 24 ♖f1 ♜xd4 25 ♖xd4, Voekler-Ruck, Vienna 1996, and now 25...♜xc2 is equal) 15 a4 (15 ♞e2? ♞c7 16 ♖d4? {16 ♖f2 ♗eg4 17 ♖g3 ♞c5+ with a clear advantage} 16...♗eg4 17 g3 ♞c6 and White must resign) 15...♞c7 (with threats against the white king and c5-bishop) 16 ♞d6 ♞xd6 17 ♖xd6 ♗c4 (by comparison with the note to move 13, Black's king's knight is on the more active square f6, instead of d7, and this offers him extra possibilities) 18 ♖b4 ♗e3 19 ♜f2 ♗ed5 with a solid pawn more.

c) 14 ♜f4 ♞c7! and now:

c1) 15 ♞f1 is tricky, intending to answer 15...♗xe5 with 16 ♜xf6 gxf6 17 ♞xf6, Savereide-Gallagher, Lewis-ham 1984, as 17...♗g6 18 ♜e1 gives White a strong attack, but 15...♗h5 is a better move, as after 16 ♜h4 ♗xd4 17 ♜xh5 the h5-rook is misplaced, and Black is better.

c2) 15 ♞e2 0-0-0 and now:

c21) In the seminal game Nunn-Kosten, London 1980, 16 ♖e3? ♞xe5 17 ♞f2 was played, when, as my opponent pointed out after the game, 17...h5 18 h3 ♜h6, intending ...♜g6, hitting g2, is crushing for Black.

c22) Alternatively there is 16 ♜d1, but after 16...♗xd4 17 ♜fxd4 ♗xd4 18 ♗xd4 ♞c5 19 ♞e3 ♗d7 20 ♗e4 ♖xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♞xe3+ 22 ♜xe3, Nunn gives

22...♖b7, followed by 23...♜c8 intending ...♜c5, attacking the e5-pawn, as favouring Black.

c23) 16 ♞f2 ♜xd4 17 ♜xd4 ♗xd4 18 exf6 ♗xb3 19 cxb3 gxf6 20 ♜c1 ♖b8 21 ♖c2 ♜g8 22 ♗xb5 ♞xc2 23 ♞xc2 ♖xg2+ 24 ♞xg2 ♖xg2 gives Black a winning ending, Westerinen-Arnason, Helsinki 1986.

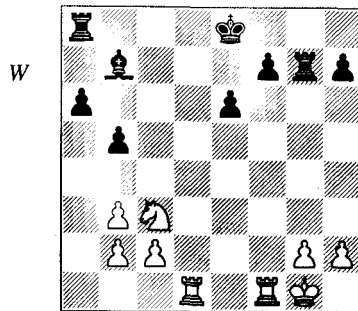
14...♞xd4+ 15 ♞xd4 ♗xd4

The point of Black's play: he transposes into an endgame that is well known to be in his favour. In fact Black has reached a position that could arise after 12...♗c6 13 exf6 ♖xd4 if White continued 14 ♖xd4? ♞xd4+, and White never does that!

16 fxf7

If 16 ♜ad1 then not 16...♜d8? 17 fxg7 ♜g8 18 ♖d5! ♗e2+ 19 ♗xe2 ♜xd5 20 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 21 ♗f4 ♖c6 22 ♗h5 ♖e7 23 g4, Szmigielska-Brustman, Polish Cht (Jachranka) 1987, when White has a clear advantage (23...f6 holds out some hope), but 16...♗xb3 17 fxg7 ♜g8 transposing to the main line.

16...♜g8 17 ♜ad1 ♗xb3 18 axb3 ♜xg7 (D)



19 g3 ♜d8

Black's bishop is the better minor piece, and he can advance his centre, supported by the king, Alonso-Ortega, Camaguey 1988.

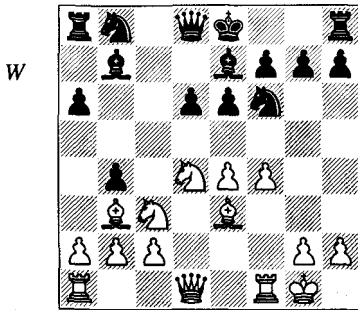
### A122)

#### 10 ♖e3

Now the g1-a7 diagonal is controlled and so ♗xe6 becomes a real threat.

#### 10...b4 (D)

Attempting to drive the knight away from the defence of e4. (Black must tread carefully; for instance, 10...0-0?! 11 e5 dxe5 12 fxe5 ♟fd7 13 ♖h5 g6 14 ♖h3 ♟c5? 15 ♜xf7! ♜xf7 16 ♟xe6 is winning for White, Lukin-Zagrebelny, Yalta 1995.)



#### 11 e5

White is obliged to look for complications. Neither of the following is sufficient:

a) 11 ♟d5? (speculative) 11...exd5 12 e5 dxe5? (unwisely opening the f-file; 12...♟e4! must be winning, e.g. 13 ♟f5 dxe5 14 fxe5 ♖f8 and White has little compensation for his piece) 13 fxe5 0-0 (the simplest; now if 13...♟e4 then 14 ♖a4+ is awkward, as the f-file is open and Black cannot

move his king to f8 because of ♟e6+) 14 ♟f5 (after 14 exf6 ♖xf6 White has little compensation for the pawn) 14...♟e8 15 ♖xd5 ♟c6 (de Firmian-Olafsson, New York 1987) and now 16 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 17 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 18 ♖c5 ♟c7 offers the best chances, although Black's two bishops should outgun White's rook and pawn.

b) The obvious 11 ♟a4 is met by 11...♖xe4!. Whereas taking on e4 with the king's knight is very dangerous, capturing with the bishop is often fine, as the two pieces still control the crucial d5-square, after White plays f5, for instance. Now, without the possibility of playing e5, a certain amount of dynamism has left the white position. Play may continue:

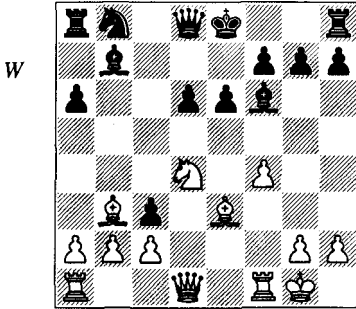
b1) 12 c3 d5 (the safest move: Black closes the a2-g8 diagonal) 13 f5 e5 14 ♟f3 ♟bd7 15 ♟g5 ♜c8? (an inaccuracy; first 15...0-0 16 ♟xe4 dxe4 is best) 16 ♟xe4 dxe4 17 ♖e2? (White misses his chance: 17 cxb4 is OK, as 17...♖xb4?! allows 18 ♖xf7+ ♟xf7 19 ♖b3+; now the game returns to its original plot) 17...bxc3 18 bxc3 ♖a5 19 c4 ♟c5 20 ♟xc5 ♖xc5 and, a pawn down with a bad bishop (on b3), White is lost, Willemze-Bosboom, Vlissingen 1997.

b2) 12 ♖xe6? fxe6 13 ♟xe6 ♖d7 14 ♟xg7+ ♟f7 15 ♟b6 ♖b5 16 ♟xa8 ♖xa8 and Black will capture the trapped g7-knight, obtaining three pieces for a rook, which is obviously winning.

b3) 12 f5 e5 13 ♟e6 (13 ♖xf7+ ♟xf7 14 ♟e6 ♖d7 15 ♟g5+ ♟f8 16 ♟xe4 ♟xe4 17 ♟b6 ♖c6 18 f6 ♟xf6 19 ♟xa8 ♖xa8 is equally disastrous for White, Rechlis-Pinter, Beersheba

1988) 13...fxe6 14 fxe6 0-0 15 ♖b6 ♘c6!? 16 ♘xa8 ♗xa8 with a winning position, Alaan-Arnason, Novi Sad OL 1990.

11...bxc3 12 exf6 ♖xf6 (D)



13 bxc3

The dust has cleared, and White's refusal to move his queen's knight has resulted in a position where he enjoys free play for his pieces but has a shabby pawn-structure, which may prove to be a long-term problem. Two important alternatives:

a) 13 ♖a4+?! ♘d7 14 f5 0-0! (this defuses White's attack, and is superior to 14...e5, when 15 ♘e6 would transpose into line 'b') 15 fxe6 ♘c5 16 ♘c6 ♗c7 17 ♗xf6 cxb2 18 ♖b1 ♘xa4 19 e7 ♗xc6 and White is completely lost, Borkowski-Wojtkiewicz, Poland 1989.

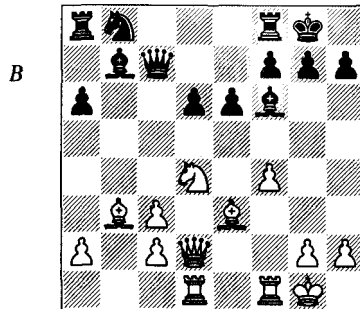
b) 13 f5 e5 14 ♖a4+ (14 ♘e2 cxb2 15 ♖b1 0-0 16 ♗xb2 ♗c7 17 ♖d5 ♖xd5 18 ♗xd5 ♘c6 19 ♖b6 ♗d7 and, with a solid pawn more, Black is winning, de Firmian-Pinter, Copenhagen 1985) 14...♗e7! (14...♘d7 15 ♘e6 fxe6 16 fxe6 0-0, A.Kuzmin-Shneider, USSR 1982, is less clear after 17 exd7) 15 ♘e2 cxb2 16 ♖b1 ♗c7 17 ♗xb2

♘d7 18 ♗d2 ♘c5 19 ♗fb1 ♖ab8 20 ♘c3 ♘xa4 21 ♘xa4 ♖c6 (21...♖e4! is good, e.g. 22 ♘c3 ♗xb2 23 ♗xb2 ♖c6 24 ♘d5+ ♖xd5 25 ♗xd5 ♖b8 exchanging rooks for a winning ending) 22 ♖b6 ♗d7 23 ♘c5 ♗c8 24 ♖d1 is becoming messy, Borkowski-P.David, Hradec Kralove 1988.

13...0-0 14 ♗d2

14 f5 e5 15 ♘e2 ♗c7 16 ♗d2 ♗c6 17 ♘g3 ♘d7 18 ♖ad1 ♖ac8 19 ♘h5 ♗fd8 20 ♗e2, A.Sokolov-Vaulin, Russia Cup 1997, and now 20...♗c7 is possibly best, when with care Black should be able to exploit his structural advantage.

14...♗c7 15 ♖ad1 (D)



15...d5!

So that f5 is no longer a threat, as the reply ...e5 offers Black control of the centre. 15...♘d7?! is a thematic mistake: 16 f5 e5 17 ♘e6! fxe6 18 fxe6 ♘c5 19 e7+ and White is better, Velimirović-Andersson, Moscow IZ 1982.

16 g4

This is daring, but otherwise what can White do about the threat of ...♖c8 or ...♘d7-c5?

16...♘d7

The late Lembit Oll's preference. Instead, in Ivanov-Oll, USSR 1985, he played 16...♙e7?! (this is overly cautious) 17 f5 e5 18 f6 ♙xf6? (18...exd4 19 fxe7 ♖xe7 is safer) 19 ♖f5, when White had an attack.

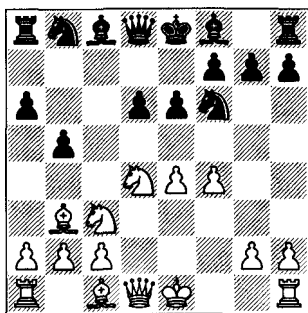
17 g5 ♙e7

Black is better, e.g. 18 c4 dxc4 19 ♖xe6 ♖c6.

A2)

8 f4 (D)

B



This was the original method of playing this variation, and caused Black a lot of problems. Eventually the best defences were worked out, with the aid of games by Fischer, and others, in the 1960s, much as many of the lines that worry Black nowadays are gradually being defused by Kasparov. Anyway, if White wants to adopt a plan based on f5, forcing the reply ...e5, and attempting to exploit the d5-square, this is the best way to play it.

8...♙b7

Long established as Black's best move. 8...b4 9 ♖a4 ♖xe4 is greedy, and very risky – Black often gets mated after taking this pawn prematurely,

and while 8...♙e7 9 e5 dxe5 10 fxe5 ♖fd7 11 ♙xe6 ♖xe5 12 ♙xc8 ♖xc8 may be playable for Black, there seems little point risking it.

9 f5

This should be played now. Alternatives:

a) 9 ♙xe6?! should not be good. 9...fxe6 10 ♖xe6 ♖c8 11 ♖d5 ♙xd5 12 exd5 and now:

a1) 12...♖c4 is greedy. After 13 b3 ♖e4+ 14 ♖f2 ♖d7 15 c4 bxc4 16 bxc4 ♖xc4 17 ♖b1 ♖xd5, White forced a beautiful perpetual check by 18 ♖b7+! ♖xe6 19 ♖e1+ ♖e4+ 20 ♖xe4+! ♖xe4 21 ♖b3+ d5 22 ♖h3+ ♖f6 23 ♖h4+ ♖e6 24 ♖g4+ ♖f6 25 ♖h4+ ♖e6 26 ♖h3+ 1/2-1/2 in Gross-Bönsch, Dečín 1976.

a2) I propose the boring move 12...♖f7, preparing to develop the kingside, as the g7-pawn is now defended. Black must be better.

b) 9 ♙e3 (a good idea of Velimirović's, deterring Black from playing 9...♙e7 because of the reply 10 ♙xe6) 9...b4! 10 ♖a4 ♙xe4 11 0-0 transposes to Line A122 if Black plays 11...♙e7, but 11...d5 is also a good possibility: 12 f5 (12 c3 bxc3 13 ♖xc3 ♙c5 14 ♖h1 is also better for Black, Couso-Åström, Stockholm Rilton Cup 1994/5) 12...e5 13 ♖f3 (13 ♖e6? fxe6 14 ♖b6 exf5! 15 ♖xa8 ♖bd7 is crushing for Black) 13...♖bd7 14 ♖g5 ♙e7 15 ♖xe4 dxe4 16 ♖f2 ♖c7 17 g4 h6 18 h4 ♖c5 19 ♖d2 ♖c6! 20 g5 hxg5 21 hxg5 ♖xa4! 22 gxf6 ♙c5! with complications favourable to Black, Velimirović-Ilinčić, Jagodina 1993.

9...e5

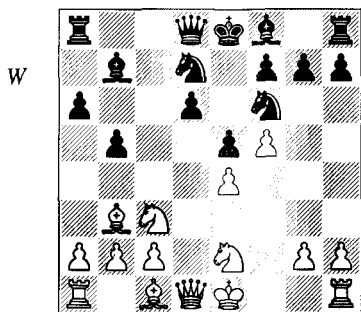
This weakening of d5 is obligatory, because 9...b4? allows 10 fxe6 bxc3

11 exf7+ ♖d7 12 ♖e6+ ♖c7 13 ♖f5 with a powerful attack for White.

### 10 ♜de2

An important part of White's plan: the knight is heading for g3, thence h5, exchanging the f6-knight. In this respect 10 ♜f3 seems wrong, as the f3-knight has no useful destination. After 10...♖e7 11 ♖e2 ♜bd7 12 a4 0-0 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 15 ♖xb5 ♜c5 16 ♖d5 ♖a1 17 0-0 ♖a6, Black wins the exchange for inadequate compensation, Tatai-Parma, Reggio Emilia 1965.

### 10...♜bd7 (D)



### 11 ♖g5

This is best. The natural alternative 11 0-0 brings White nothing but problems. 11...♖e7 and then:

a) 12 ♜g3 ♖c8 13 ♖g5 h5! (this is Fischer's move, both stopping the g3-knight from hopping to h5, now defended by the rook, and planning to drive it away from its post; this is much stronger than 13...0-0, although, even here, after 14 ♖xf6 ♜xf6, 15 ♜h5 is nothing for White, because of 15...♜xh5 16 ♖xh5 b4 17 ♜d5 ♖xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♖xc2, Ciocaltea-Minić, Bucharest 1966, and 15 a3 allowed Black

to adopt a surprising plan in Ljubovjević-Portisch, Wijk aan Zee 1972: 15...♖b6+ 16 ♖h1 ♖e3! 17 ♖f3 ♖g5 18 ♖d3 ♖h4 with good play) 14 ♖xf6 (if 14 h4, then 14...b4 15 ♖xf6 ♖xf6! 16 ♜d5 ♖xh4 17 ♜xh5 ♖g5 18 f6 g6! 19 ♜g7+ ♖d8 20 ♖f3 ♖g3 21 ♖d3 ♖h2+ 22 ♖f1 ♜c5 and White is routed, R.Byrne-Fischer, Sousse IZ 1967) 14...♜xf6 and now:

a1) 15 ♜d5 h4 16 ♜xf6+ gxf6 17 ♜e2 (17 ♜h1 is no better as after 17...♖xe4 18 ♖g4 d5 19 ♖ad1 ♖c5+ White's days are numbered, Thorsteinsson-Ghitescu, Reykjavik 1970) 17...♖xe4 18 ♖d5 ♖b6+ 19 ♖h1 ♖xd5 20 ♖xd5 ♖xc2 21 ♖d3 ♖c6 22 ♖ac1 h3 0-1 Ciocaltea-Gheorghiu, Bucharest 1967.

a2) 15 ♖f3 ♖xc3! 16 ♖xc3 h4 (brushing away the e-pawn's defenders, one by one) 17 ♜e2 ♖b6+ 18 ♖h1 ♜xe4 and White is lost, Bednarski-Lehmann, Palma de Mallorca 1967.

a3) 15 ♖d5 is the best chance, even if 15...h4 16 ♜ge2 b4 17 ♖xb7 ♖b6+ 18 ♖h1 ♖xb7 19 ♜d5 ♜xe4 is quite awful for White.

b) 12 ♖g5 ♖c8 and now:

b1) 13 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 14 ♜g3 (14 ♖d3 ♖c5 15 ♖ad1 0-0 16 h3 a5 was very pleasant for Black in Andersson-Ree, Wijk aan Zee 1971, but 16...♖a8 and 17...♖fc8, as in note 'b2', is also worth serious consideration) 14...h5! transposes to note 'a'.

b2) 13 ♖h1!? (interesting) 13...0-0 14 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 15 ♖d3 (note Black's next three moves, as they constitute a strong plan, controlling d5, doubling rooks on the open file, and pressing against e4) 15...♖c5! 16 ♖ad1 ♖a8 17 ♜g3 ♖fc8 18 ♖e2 a5 19 ♜h5 ♖xc3!?

(19...a4, intending ...a3, is also tempting) 20 bxc3 ♗xe4 21 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 22 ♗d2 ♜c5 23 ♗xd6? (Black is better anyway, but this smacks of desperation) 23...♗xg2+ 24 ♖g1, Mukhin-Zaichik, USSR 1974, and now the obvious 24...♗xf1 would have ended the game immediately.

b3) 13 ♖g3 transposes to line 'a'.

### 11...♗e7 12 ♖g3

All according to plan: the knight is heading for h5. White hopes to exchange the two black knights, and then play ♗d5, exchanging the b7-bishop, when the d5-square will be his. 12 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 13 ♗d3 (13 ♖g3 will simply transpose to the main line) is an alternative strategy: White intends to castle long and play ♖d5, but Black's queenside play is too fast: 13...♗b6! (just in case White wants to castle short) 14 h3 0-0 15 0-0-0 a5! (the b-pawn is untouchable because of the pressure on e4) 16 ♖d5 ♗xd5 17 ♗xd5 ♜ac8 18 ♖b1 ♜c5, preparing to double rooks on the c-file, when Black is better, not least because White is unable to maintain a piece on d5, Suetin-Platonov, USSR 1971.

### 12...♜c8

This is important for two reasons: firstly, if White continues his plan with ♖h5, and then ♗d5, ♖d5, etc., his c2-pawn may be left *en prise*, and secondly, Black always has the option of sacrificing the exchange on c3, winning the battle for d5 in the most radical of manners.

### 13 ♗xf6

13 ♖h5 (13 0-0?! transposes to note 'a' to White's 11th move) 13...♖hx5 14 ♗hx5 0-0 15 h4?! (15 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 16 ♗e2 is more sensible, keeping an

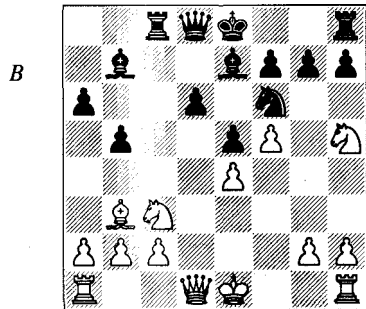
eye on e4 and c2, but even so, after 16...♖f6 17 0-0 b4 18 ♖d5 ♗xd5 19 ♗xd5 ♗a7+ 20 ♖h1 ♗d4, Black has a plus) 15...b4 16 ♖d5 ♗xd5 17 exd5 (17 ♗xd5? ♜xc2) 17...♖c5 18 0-0-0 a5 19 ♗g4 a4 20 ♗c4 b3 and Black's queenside attack hits home, R.Byrne-Bouaziz, Sousse IZ 1967.

### 13...♗xf6 14 ♖h5 (D)

Finally, it seems that White will achieve control of d5. Otherwise:

a) 14 0-0?!, while apparently desirable, once again allows the strong reply 14...h5! transposing to note 'a' to White's 11th move.

b) 14 ♗d3 (Tringov-Bukić, Skopje 1971) should again be met by 14...♗b6 15 0-0-0 0-0 16 h3 ♜c5, threatening ...a5-a4.



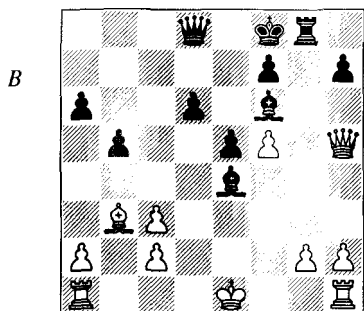
### 14...♜xc3!

In the fight for control of d5, Black spares no expense!

### 15 bxc3

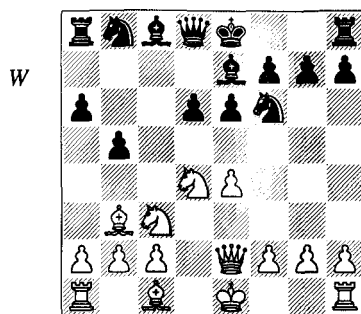
Or 15 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 16 bxc3 ♗h4+ 17 ♖f1 (after 17 g3 ♗xe4 18 0-0?! ♗b6+ 19 ♜f2 ♗g5, White's material advantage is no more) 17...♗b6 18 ♗xf7+ ♖e7, when Black is better: White's e-pawn is lost, and his king misplaced.

15...♙xe4 16 ♘xg7+ ♔f8 17 ♘h5  
♚g8 18 ♘xf6 ♙xf6 19 ♗h5 (D)



the possibility of playing ...♙d7  
and/or ...♘c6.

8...♙e7 (D)



Now the natural 19...♗c7?! 20 0-0-0  
♚g7 21 ♗e2 ♙xg2 22 ♚hg1 ♗c6 23  
♗d3 is not so clear; d6 is difficult to  
defend, and Black went on to lose in  
Cosulich-Minić, Bari 1970. Instead,  
19...d5 offers Black excellent compen-  
sation for the exchange – a strong cen-  
tre and the bishop-pair against White's  
shattered pawn formation. For exam-  
ple, 20 ♚g1 ♗c8 21 0-0-0 ♗xc3, with a  
strong attack, and if 22 ♔b1? then  
22...♙xc2+! 23 ♙xc2 e4 wins.

### A3)

8 ♗e2

This is one of various development possibilities for White, which he can combine with ♙g5 or ♙e3, played in any order. White may play 0-0-0 in each of these lines, and there are various transpositional possibilities. In general, Black's safest is to play ...♙e7, and then ...0-0, deciding upon his subsequent plan depending on White's further play. I prefer deferring the development of the queenside in these lines, firstly, to defend e6 against piece sacrifices, and secondly, to have

### 9 ♙e3

Aiming for a position akin to the Velimirović Attack, but Black's queenside counterplay seems to come too quickly. Alternatives:

a) 9 g4 0-0 10 g5 ♘fd7 should be followed by 11 h4, no doubt, as 11 ♙xe6?! fxe6 12 ♘xe6 ♗e8! 13 ♘c7 ♗g6 14 ♘xa8 ♘e5 15 f4 ♙g4 16 ♘d5? ♘bc6 17 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 18 ♗e3 ♘f3+ 19 ♔f2 ♘xg5 20 ♚g1 ♚xf4+ is a disaster for White, Cuesta-Vera, Cuban Ch 1985.

b) 9 ♙g5 (more dangerous, perhaps, intending a quick f4 and e5) 9...0-0 and now:

b1) 10 f4 h6 11 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 12 0-0-0 b4 13 ♘a4 ♗a5 14 ♗d2 ♙b7 15 a3 ♙xe4 16 axb4 ♗c7 17 ♚he1 d5 18 ♘c5 ♙xd4 19 ♘xe4 ♘c6 is clearly to Black's taste, Radulov-Jakobsen, Helsinki 1972.

b2) 10 0-0-0 ♘xe4! (10...♘fd7 is also possible: 11 ♙e3 b4 12 ♘a4, Eppinger-Chandler, Bundesliga 1986/7, when 12...♙b7 is unclear) 11 ♗xe4 ♙xg5+ 12 f4 d5 13 ♘xd5 exd5 14

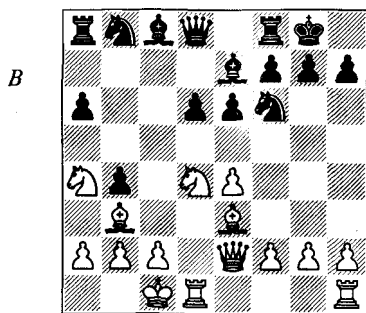
♙xd5 ♙xf4+ 15 ♚b1 ♜a7 16 ♞xf4  
 ♞xd5 17 ♞xb8 ♜d7 18 ♞g3 ♜fd8 19  
 ♜d3 (Radulov-Padevsky, Sofia 1970)  
 and after 19...♙b7 if anyone is better,  
 it is Black.

b3) 10 ♜d1 b4 11 ♝a4 ♞a5 12 ♙d2  
 ♙d7 13 a3 ♙xa4 14 ♙xb4 ♞g5 15 f4  
 ♞xf4 16 ♙xa4 ♝xe4 17 ♜f1 ♙h4+  
 (this certainly looks as though it should  
 be good for Black, who has a pawn  
 more, and the safer king, but 17...♞e5  
 18 ♝f3 ♞f4 19 ♝d4 may be safer,  
 with a likely draw by repetition) 18 g3  
 ♙xg3+ 19 hxg3 ♞xg3+ 20 ♜f2 ♝xf2  
 21 ♞xf2 ♞e5+ 22 ♚f1 and, in Aseev-  
 Ki.Georgiev, Paris rpd 1995, White  
 later managed to coordinate his pieces  
 and win.

### 9...0-0 10 0-0-0

10 f3 is slow. Then, instead of  
 10...♙b7, Bönsch-Tal, Halle 1974,  
 10...♙d7 is best, threatening to roll  
 forward the queenside pawns, e.g. 11  
 0-0-0?! b4 12 ♝a4 ♞a5.

### 10...b4 11 ♝a4 (D)



White has a serious problem, for he  
 has to stop the further advance of the  
 a-pawn, but does not really want his  
 knight offside, and short of squares,  
 like this.

### 11...♞a5

This move is certainly very embar-  
 rassing for White, but 11...♝xe4 also  
 seems strong: 12 ♝xe6 ♙xe6 13 ♙b6  
 ♞e8 14 ♞xe4 ♙xb3 15 ♞xa8 ♙xa4  
 with a material advantage, Rajcsanyi-  
 Zagrebely, Budapest 1992.

### 12 ♝f3

Threatening to put something on  
 b6. Otherwise:

a) 12 g4 ♙d7 13 ♝b6 ♞xb6 14 g5  
 ♝xe4 15 ♝xe6 ♞b5 16 ♙c4 ♙xe6!?  
 17 ♙xb5 axb5 with plenty of material  
 for the queen, and a strong attack for  
 Black, Sznapik-Adamski, Polanica  
 Zdroj 1972.

b) 12 c3 bxc3 13 ♝xc3 ♙b7 14 f3  
 ♝c6 15 ♚b1 ♜ab8 is also good for  
 Black, Bönsch-Adamski, Dečín 1976.  
 The only king in danger is White's.

12...♝bd7 13 ♝d2 ♙b7 14 f3 ♙c6  
 15 ♝c4 ♞c7 16 ♝ab6 ♜ab8 17 ♝xd7  
 ♙xd7 18 ♞d2

18 ♞f2 is no better: 18...♙b5 19  
 ♝b6 ♞c6! 20 ♚b1 ♙d8 catches the  
 unfortunate white knight, Ljubojević-  
 Polugaevsky, Amsterdam 1972.

18...a5! 19 e5 dxe5 20 ♝xe5 ♞xe5  
 21 ♙d4 ♞b5 22 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 23 ♞xd7  
 ♞e5

Black is winning easily, Perenyi-  
 Szekely, Hungary 1974.

### A4)

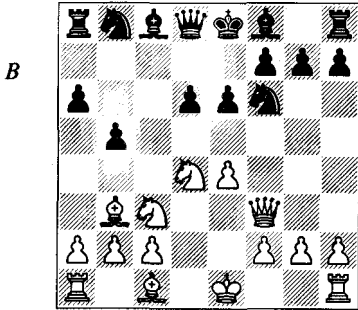
8 ♞f3 (D)

8...♙b7

For once this natural move is best.  
 Here g7 is defended and therefore  
 ♙xe6 tricks no longer work, which  
 suggests that this was the wrong mo-  
 ment for the ♞f3 manoeuvre.

### 9 0-0

Alternatives:



a) 9 a3 is passive. After 9...♘bd7, threatening ...♘c5, Black is doing well.

b) 9 ♖g5 ♘bd7 (not 9...♙e7? of course, due to 10 ♙xe6!) 10 0-0-b4 11 ♘a4 ♗a5 (once more this typical idea, discomforting the a4-knight, only this time the bishop on g5 is also attacked) 12 ♙xf6 ♘xf6 13 ♗e3 ♙e7 14 f3 0-0 15 g4? ♘xe4!, K.Grosar-Wilhelmi, Bled 1999, wins an important pawn as 16...♙g5. In fact this combination might even have been possible the move before. Black probably judged that White almost certainly had not noticed it, and so Black could safely wait a move, and remove his king from the centre!

### 9...♘c6!

The simplest move, exchanging the d4-knight and diminishing the pressure on e6 so that Black can complete his development with ...♙e7. Others are worse:

a) 9...b4?! (weakening the a4-e8 diagonal too soon) 10 ♘d5! exd5 11 ♙a4+! ♘bd7 12 exd5 ♙e7 13 ♘c6 with a strong attack.

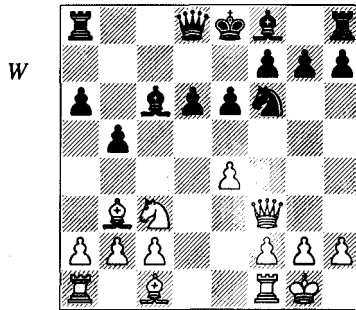
b) 9...♘bd7 10 ♙e1 ♘c5 11 ♙d5! exd5 12 exd5+ ♘d7 13 b4 ♘a4 14

♘xa4 bxa4 15 c4 ♗c8 16 ♙g5! and the black king is too awkwardly placed, Meister-Svirin, USSR 1987.

### 10 ♘xc6

10 e5? ♘xd4 11 ♗xb7 dxe5 is not worth White's consideration.

### 10...♙xc6 (D)



### 11 ♙e1

e4 needed defence.

### 11...♙e7 12 a3 0-0 13 ♙f4 ♗c7 14 ♙ad1 ♙fd8

Lanc-Savon, Trnava 1989. Black's development is complete, his pieces harmoniously placed, and he threatens queenside expansion by means of ...a5 and ...b4.

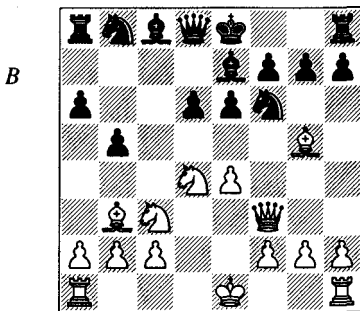
### A5)

### 8 ♙g5 ♙e7 9 ♗f3 (D)

9 ♗e2 transposes to note 'b' to White's 9th move in Line A3.

The text-move cuts across Black's natural development pattern by threatening 10 e5. This is very dangerous for Black, and before I reveal my preferred move, let us have a look at the normal options:

a) As Black has not yet castled, 9...♙b7? would lose to the thematic 10 ♙xe6 fxe6 11 ♘xe6 followed by 12



♖xg7+, ripping Black's king position to shreds.

b) Nor am I very keen on 9...♗b6, when both 10 0-0 and 10 0-0-0 are tricky for Black. If we continue the latter: 10...♗b7!? 11 ♖h1 b4? 12 ♕f5! exf5 13 ♕xf6! ♕xf6 14 exf5+, with a strong attack for White, Lazarev-Moisev, USSR 1989.

c) After 9...♗c7, apart from the normal move 10 0-0-0 there are also:

c1) 10 e5 and now, for example, 10...♕b7 11 exd6 ♕xd6 12 ♗e3 ♕c5 13 0-0-0 ♖bd7 14 ♕xe6 0-0 15 ♕b3 leaves White with an extra pawn, K.Müller-Wahls, German Ch (Gladenbach) 1997.

c2) 10 ♕xf6!? is a move that nobody has noticed, as far as I am aware. The point is 10...♕xf6 11 e5, when 11...♕b7 12 ♕d5 (or even 12 ♖d5) 12...dxe5 13 ♕xb7 exd4 14 ♕xa8 dxc3 15 b3 gives White a slight material advantage. 11...♕xe5! is certainly playable though, e.g. 12 ♗xa8 ♕xd4 13 ♗f3 ♕b7 with reasonable compensation for the exchange.

So, it looks pretty grim for Black; indeed Müller wins many quick games with this line. However, all is not lost. I suggest:

### 9...♗d7!?

Now, I have not been able to find any games from this position, but the idea is to prepare ...♕b7, while keeping e6 defended. Note also that the black queen appears less exposed here.

### 10 a4

Attempting to exploit the a4-e8 diagonal. Both 10 0-0-0 ♕b7 and 10 0-0 ♕b7, followed by ...♖c6, will lead to a position similar to Line A11.

### 10...b4 11 a5 ♗c7!?

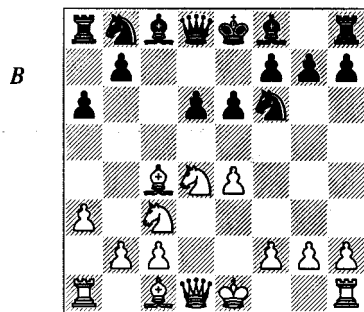
Not 11...bxc3?!, as 12 ♕a4 cxb2 13 ♕xd7+ ♖fxd7 14 ♖b1 ♕xg5 15 ♖xe6! fxe6 16 ♗h5+ g6 17 ♗xg5 probably favours White.

### 12 ♖ce2 ♕b7

Here, the attack on e4, which can be augmented by ...♗c5!?-e5, gives Black valuable breathing space.

### B)

### 7 a3 (D)



This move provides the c4-bishop with a useful retreat-square on a2, but at the cost of a tempo. However, it is not without its disciples, and has become reasonably popular over the last two years.

### 7...♕e7

This is the safest move, although 7...♗xe4 is almost certainly playable; it should be compared with Line C.

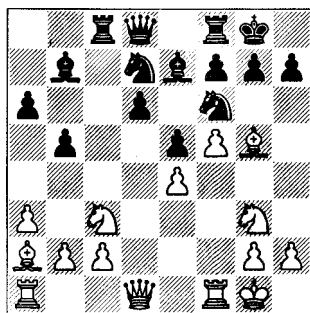
### 8 ♖a2

Or 8 0-0 b5 9 ♖a2 0-0 transposing. Be careful, for if 9...♗b7? instead, then White will not play the 10 f4?! ♗bd7 11 f5 e5 12 ♗de2 ♖c8 13 ♗g3 h5 14 ♗e2 h4 15 ♗h1 ♖xc3 16 bxc3 ♗xe4, with advantage to Black, of Sigurjons-son-Hansson, Reykjavik 1982, but rather 10 ♖xe6 fxe6 11 ♗xe6 ♗d7 12 ♗xg7+, with three pawns and a strong attack for the piece.

### 8...0-0 9 0-0

The most natural, but other moves are possible:

a) 9 f4 (this is most in keeping with White's basic aim of weakening the d5-square by means of f5) 9...b5 10 f5 e5 11 ♗de2 ♖b7 12 ♗g3 ♗bd7 13 ♖g5 ♖c8 14 0-0 (D).



The key position. White is finally ready to proceed with his plan (15 ♖xf6 and ♗h5), gaining control of d5. Also, after 14...a5 for instance, 15 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♗d5 ♖xd5 17 ♖xd5, as in Stanec-King, Vienna 1991, is an option, since 17...♗xd5 is answered by 18 exd5 intending ♗e4, when the

knight will dominate the black bishop, and the disruptive move f6 becomes a serious threat. However, it is Black to move, and all his pieces are ready for action, so: 14...♖xc3! (a powerful and thematic exchange sacrifice) 15 bxc3 ♗xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 17 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 18 c4 ♖c8 19 ♗e2 ♗f6 20 ♖ac1 h5! (providing a bolt-hole for the black king, and signalling Black's intention to play not only on the queenside, where White's pawns are obviously feeble, but also on the kingside) 21 cxb5 axb5 22 ♗xb5 ♗a7+ 23 ♗h1 h4 24 ♗b3 ♗g4 25 h3 ♗e3, with a quick mate in prospect, Ermenkov-Portisch, Skara Echt 1980.

b) 9 ♖e3 b5 10 g4 (10 0-0 transposes to note 'a' to White's 10th move) 10...♖b7 11 f3 ♗c6 12 ♖g1 ♗d7 13 g5 and now, instead of 13...♗de5?! 14 f4 ♗xd4 15 ♖xd4 ♗c6 16 ♖g3, when White's attack proceeds unhindered, Korchnoi-Bobotsov, Wijk aan Zee 1968, 13...♖c8 is better, intending to scotch the a2-bishop's diagonal by manoeuvring a knight to c4.

### 9...b5 10 f4

Once again, this is thematic. Otherwise:

a) 10 ♖e3 ♖b7 11 ♖xe6! (11 f3 ♗bd7 12 ♗e1 ♗e5 and now 13 ♗g3 offers White nothing, Minić-Ničevski, Skopje 1968; similarly, 13 ♖d1 ♖c8 14 ♖c1 ♗c7 15 ♗h1 ♗c4 gives Black no real problems, Saltaev-Istratescu, Peristeri 1994) 11...fxe6 12 ♗xe6 is a playable combination, no doubt, swapping two pieces for a rook and two pawns, but after 12...♗e8 13 f3 ♗bd7 14 ♗c7 ♗h5 15 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 16 a4 b4 17 ♗e2 d5 18 exd5 ♗xd5 19 ♖d4 ♗h6 20 ♗d3 ♖d6 21 ♗g3 ♗e5 the

black minor pieces have become incredibly active, and, in Medina-Ljubojević, Las Palmas 1974, White soon regretted his decision on move 11. The game finished 22 ♖b3 ♖h8 23 ♜f1 ♜xf3+! 24 gxf3 ♜f4 25 ♜ad1 ♜h3+ 0-1.

b) 10 ♖f3 seems similar to Line A11, but can now be answered by 10...♗b7 with a good game, e.g. 11 ♖g3 (11 ♗xe6 fxe6 12 ♜xe6 is possible, once again, but is likely to be more fun for Black than for White; the one idea Black should keep in mind is to avoid too many exchanges, as the rook and two pawns are likely to become more influential in an ending) 11...♜h5! 12 ♖h3 ♜f6 13 ♜e1 (13 ♖g3 could lead to a draw, of course) 13...♜bd7 14 ♗g5 ♜c8 15 ♜ad1 and now, instead of 15...♖h8?, allowing the shot 16 e5! ♜xe5 17 ♜xe6 fxe6 18 ♜xe5 with advantage, Korchnoi-Ribli, Reykjavik 1988, Korchnoi indicates that 15...♜e5! is good. Then after 16 f4 ♜c4 17 e5 dxe5 18 fxe5 ♜d5, 19 ♗xe7 leaves Black better due to his superior structure, while 19 ♜xe6?! can be met by 19...♖b6+ 20 ♖h1 ♖xe6 21 ♖xe6 fxe6 22 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 23 ♜d7 ♗a8 24 ♜xe7 ♜f2 25 ♜g1 ♜xc2, when the g1-rook is too passive.

### 10...♗b7 11 f5

Otherwise:

a) 11 ♖f3 ♜bd7 12 f5 can now be met by 12...e5 13 ♜de2 a5! (threatening ...b4, as 14 ♜xb5?? loses to 14...♖b6+) 14 g4?! (but White was worse anyway) 14...b4 15 ♜d5 ♜xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 17 exd5 ♗g5 18 axb4 ♖b6+ 19 ♜f2 ♗xc1 20 ♜xc1 axb4 21 ♜b1 ♜fc8 22 ♖g2 ♜c4 and White is lost, Suta-Stoica, Bucharest 1972.

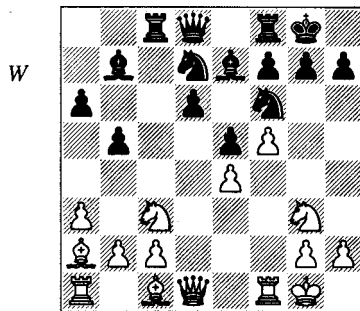
b) 11 ♖e2 (indicating White's intention to keep his options open, for, apart from f5, the move e5 will also be a possibility) 11...♜c6 (this seems the wisest choice, as 11...♜bd7 allows the dangerous thrust 12 e5, e.g. 12...dxe5 13 fxe5 ♗c5 14 ♗e3 ♜xe5? 15 ♜xe6 ♗xe3+ 16 ♖xe3 fxe6 17 ♖xe5 with a clear advantage for White, Kupreichik-Shipov, Gistrup 1997) 12 ♜f3 b4 13 axb4 ♜xb4 14 ♗b3 a5 15 ♜d1 ♗a6 16 ♖e1 ♖c7 17 ♖h1 ♜d7 18 ♗e3 ♜c5 and the black pieces are swarming over White's queenside, Seeman-Morović, Pärnu 1998.

c) 11 ♜e1 should, likewise, be met by 11...♜c6, rather than 11...♜bd7?!, which invites wild complications after 12 e5 dxe5 13 fxe5 ♜e8 14 ♜xe6 fxe6 15 ♗xe6+, Honfi-Schneider, Hungary 1976.

### 11...e5 12 ♜de2 ♜bd7

This knight needs to be able to cover d5 at any moment, either by recapturing on f6, should White play ♗g5xf6, or by going to b6.

### 13 ♜g3 ♜c8 (D)



### 14 ♗e3

The alternatives are equally prospectless for White:

a) 14 ♖g5 transposes to note 'a' to White's 9th move.

b) 14 ♖h5 is met in similar fashion: 14...♗xh5 15 ♖xh5 ♜xc3! 16 bxc3 ♗f6, followed by the capture on e4, with the usual wonderful compensation.

c) 14 ♖f3 a5 15 ♖e2 b4 16 axb4 axb4 17 ♗d5 ♗xd5 18 exd5 ♖c7 is very awkward for White, Nunn-Sowray, London 1979.

14...♗b6 15 ♖xb6 ♖xb6+ 16 ♖h1 ♖e3! 17 ♗d5 ♖xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♖d8!

A famous Najdorf move: the bishop comes to the g1-a7 diagonal, and is transformed from 'bad' into 'monster'!

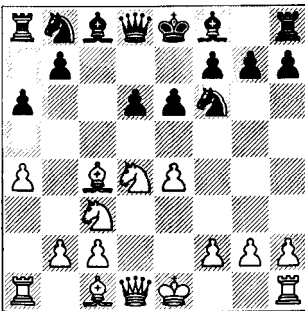
19 a4 ♖b6 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖a6 b4 22 ♗h5 ♗xd5 23 ♖g4 g6 24 exd5 ♜xc2

In Robatsch-Fischer, Havana 1965, White's attack petered out in a few moves, and Black won quickly by exploiting back-rank tactics.

C)

7 a4 (D)

B

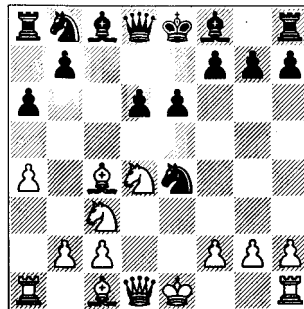


This move aims to put paid to Black's queenside expansion in the most radical of fashions, but weakens b4. Black can equalize easily by:

7...♗xe4 (D)

If Black desires a bit more fun, then 7...♗c6 is a perfectly reasonable alternative, especially since White can no longer contemplate the Velimirović Attack. This is a little outside the scope of this book, perhaps, but briefly: 8 0-0 ♖e7 9 ♖e3 (9 ♖a2 0-0 10 ♖h1 ♖b6!?) 11 ♗de2 ♜d8 12 ♖e3 ♖a5 13 ♖d2 ♖c7 14 f4 d5! 15 e5 ♗e4 16 ♗xe4 dxe4 grants Black good play, Saltaev-Dvoirys, Groningen 1992) 9...0-0 10 ♖h1 (10 ♖e2?! allows 10...d5! 11 ♜fd1 ♖d6 12 exd5 exd5 13 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♖xd5 ♖xh2+ 15 ♖xh2 ♖xd5, which was equal in Ivanović-Kasparov, Bugojno 1982) 10...♜e8! (this lends support to the e6-pawn and prepares a possible ...d5 break) 11 ♖a2 (for instance, 11 f4? walks into 11...d5! 12 exd5 exd5 with a potentially embarrassing 'vis à vis' between the e8-rook and the unguarded e3-bishop) 11...♗b4! (11...d5 12 exd5 exd5 is quite a respectable alternative) 12 ♖b3 e5 13 ♗de2 ♖e6 14 ♗d5! ♗bxd5 15 exd5 ♖f5 16 a5! ♗d7 17 ♖a4 ♜f8 18 b4 ♜c8 19 ♖b3 ♖g5! and Black exchanges his weaker bishop, with good play, Kudrin-Browne, USA Ch 1983.

W



8 ♖xe4

8 ♗xe6 is ludicrous; 8...♗xc3 9 ♗xf7+ ♕xf7 10 ♖h5+ g6 11 ♖f3+ ♖f6 12 ♖xc3 ♗g7 won comfortably for Black in A.Schneider-Rademacher, Dortmund 1987.

8...d5 9 ♗d3

Or:

a) 9 ♗f3 ♗c6 10 ♗ed2 dxc4 11 ♗xc4 ♖xd1+ is equal, V.Gurevich-Dvoiryys, Le Touquet 1997.

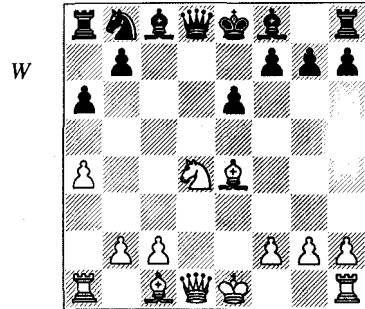
b) 9 ♗d2 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♖c7 (the alternative 10...♗c5 seems better, as 11 ♗e3 can be met by the awkward move 11...♖d5) 11 ♖e2 and Black's two bishops compensate for White's lead in development, Galdunts-Allwermann, Böblingen 1998.

c) 9 ♗g5 is the critical test, but after 9...♗e7 10 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 11 ♖g4 0-0 (despite White's unusual fourth-rank set-up, Black is doing very well; White's initiative has 'shot its bolt'

and his pieces will have to retreat) 12 ♗b3 dxe4 13 ♖xe4 ♗d7 14 0-0 ♗c5.

9...dxe4 10 ♗xe4 ♗d7 (D)

10...e5 is also perfectly legitimate, e.g. 11 ♗f3 ♖xd1+ 12 ♕xd1 ♗d6, etc.



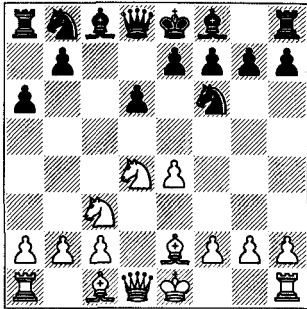
11 0-0 ♗e7 12 c3 ♗c5 13 ♗c2 e5  
14 ♗f5 ♖xd1 15 ♗xd1 ♗xf5 16 ♗xf5  
♗b3

Kavalek-Tarjan, USA Ch 1981.

# 4 6 ♖e2

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4  
 ♙f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♖e2 (D)

B

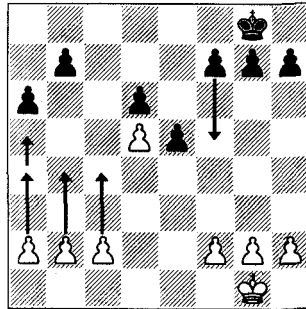


A solid developing move. White indicates his intention to complete his development before undertaking any active play. There are a number of sharp, tactical possibilities, but in general White will adopt a slower, positional plan, and try to exploit any weaknesses in the black pawn arrangement. This move was a favourite of Anatoly Karpov, who turned it into a formidable strategic weapon, literally strangling his opponents' positions.

## The Queenside Pawn-Majority

A common strategic theme, which runs throughout this book, is White's attempt to bring a piece to d5. If Black is controlling this square sufficiently, and can force White to recapture on d5 with a pawn, then it would seem that Black has won the first major battle, as

his d6-pawn is no longer backward, on an open file, and d5 has become inaccessible to the white pieces.

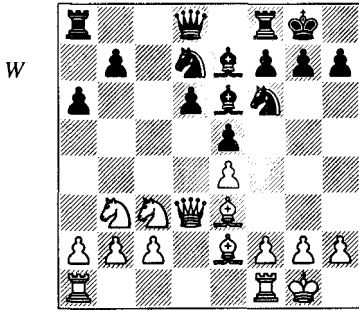


(This structure has arisen after White plays his c3-knight to d5, Black captures with an f6-knight, or occasionally an e6-bishop, and White recaptures with his e-pawn.)

However, as the technical exploitation of the d5-square often proves difficult, or impossible, White may actually prefer the above type of position, as his plan is much clearer: he advances his queenside majority, hoping to create a passed pawn.

At first, players such as Geller won many games this way, but Black's defensive plans have been considerably refined since. Nowadays, Black will not sit idly by; he will blockade the queenside, if he can, by moves such as ...b6 and ...a5 before advancing his own majority on the kingside.

Here is a typical example:



**Emelin – de Firmian**  
*Elista OL 1998*

First White creates the desired pawn-structure.

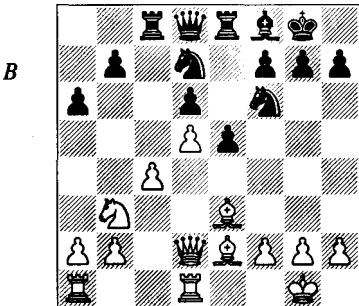
11  $\text{Qd5}$   $\text{Qxd5}$  12  $\text{exd5}$   $\text{Bc8}$

I prefer 12... $\text{Qc5}$  – see Line A2, note to White's 10th move.

13  $\text{c4}$

Ideally, White would have preferred to play his a-pawn to a5 first, to 'ham-string' the black queenside, but, because of Black's 12th move, 13 a4 is met by 13... $\text{Qb6}$  forcing 14  $\text{Qxb6}$   $\text{Qxb6}$ , when White has lost his important dark-squared bishop.

13... $\text{Qe8}$  14  $\text{Bfd1}$   $\text{Qf8}$  15  $\text{Qd2}$  (D)



White threatens a4-a5, followed by the preparation of b4, and then the breakthrough c5, which can be very effective, so Black hastens to stop this.

15...b6

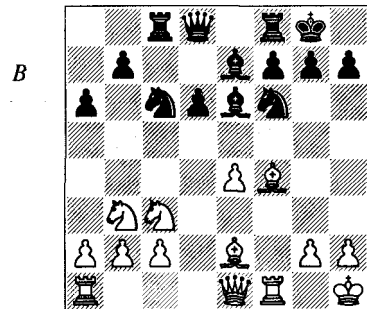
So as to meet 16 a4?! with 16...a5!, when the white queenside is blocked on the dark squares.

16  $\text{Qac1}$  g6 17  $\text{Qe1}$  h5 18  $\text{f3}$  a5

Having achieved his queenside aim, Black then turned his attention to the exploitation of his kingside majority, and won.

**The Portisch Plan**

This is a stratagem which solves many of Black's problems 'at a stroke' in positions where he has had to exchange his e5-pawn for White's f4-pawn. I am not certain that Portisch is the originator of this manoeuvre, but I first became aware of it when I saw the following game in a magazine, nearly two decades ago.



**Pritchett – Portisch**  
*Malta OL 1980*

This position is very similar to one that occurs quite often in this chapter. If you have a look at the black minor

pieces, you should notice that the least active one is the bishop on e7. In fact, this piece currently does not have any moves whatsoever!

Wouldn't it be desirable to have this piece outside the black pawn-chain, say on e5 instead? Sounds ridiculous, but Black can achieve just that:

13...♖e8!

This backwards move is necessary to defend the d6-pawn.

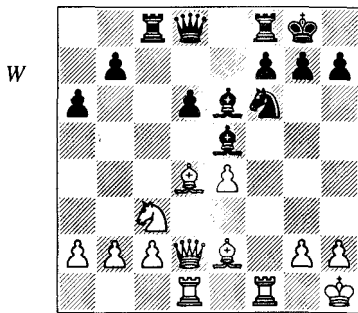
14 ♖d1 ♖h4

A little finesse, to drive the white queen to a worse square.

15 ♖d2 ♖f6

The passive dark-squared bishop finds itself on a powerful diagonal.

16 ♖e3 ♖e5 17 ♖d4 ♖xd4 18 ♖xd4 ♖f6 (D)



Amazingly, Black's king's bishop really has 'hopped' from e7 to e5! Black already has an edge, and quickly converted this to a win.

19 ♖xe5 dxex5 20 ♖g5 ♖d7

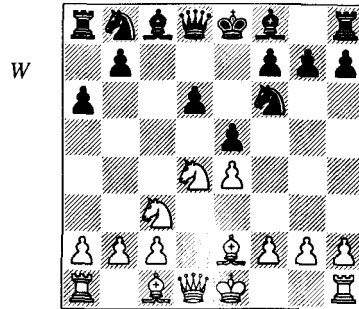
White has the worse structure and the worse bishop, so must avoid the inferior endgame.

21 ♖g3 ♖b6 22 ♖g4?! ♖xg4 23 ♖xg4 ♖f6 24 ♖g3 ♖xb2 25 ♖d3? 0-1

As 25...♖xc3 26 ♖xc3 ♖xe4 is devastating.

## The Theory of 6 ♖e2

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 a6 6 ♖e2 e5 (D)



Black strikes in the centre, and drives the dangerous white knight away from its central post. There are two main replies, although neither of them puts the knight on a particularly good square. In fact, in both cases, White will probably need to make several more moves with this piece, sooner or later.

A: 7 ♖b3 74

B: 7 ♖f3 91

The only other sensible possibility, 7 ♖f5?!, is simply met by 7...d5! 8 ♖g5 d4 9 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 10 ♖d5 ♖d8 11 c4 g6 (this forces the f5-knight to a poor square) 12 ♖g3 ♖g7 13 0-0 0-0 14 c5 (this move rebounds on White, but otherwise he has little compensation for the bishop-pair; 14 ♖b3 ♖c6 15 ♖b6 ♖b8 is also better for Black) 14...♖e6 15 ♖b6 ♖a7 16 ♖c1? ♖h6 17 ♖a1 ♖d7 18 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 19 b4 ♖c8

20 ♖d3 ♜c6 21 ♗e2 b6 and Black breaks open the c-file with a clear advantage, Zelčić-Bukić, Bled 1993.

A)

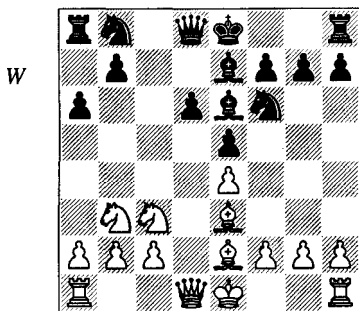
### 7 ♗b3

Although the knight has little scope here, this move does allow White to play a4-a5, fixing the black queenside, as the b3-knight defends a5, and also permits White to play on the kingside with f4.

### 7...♗e7 8 0-0

Certainly, this is the most logical move: White completes his kingside development. Other ideas:

a) 8 ♗e3 ♗e6 (it is probably prudent to wait for White to castle before Black commits his king, else White might be tempted to castle queenside, and launch his kingside pawns up the board) and now (D):



a1) 9 f4 (Dolmatov's line; White wishes to force Black to capture on f4, when he will continue ♜d2 and 0-0-0, combining pressure on d6 with a kingside attack) 9...exf4 10 ♗xf4 ♗c6 11 ♜d2 d5! (this is the problem for White: before he can castle long and control the d-file, Black plays his freeing ...d5

move, liquidating the central pawns and liberating his pieces) and now:

a11) 12 exd5 ♗xd5 13 ♗xd5 ♜xd5 14 0-0-0 ♗b4 (14...♜e4 15 ♗f3 ♜c4! 16 ♗xc6+ bxc6 17 ♜d4 0-0 18 ♜xc4 ♗xc4 19 ♗he1 ♗fe8 is also promising for Black, whose two bishops are very strong, R.Byrne-King, London 1991) 15 ♗f3?! (not very good, but if 15 a3 then 15...♗c8 with advantage, e.g. 16 ♜xd5 ♗xc2+ 17 ♗b1 ♗xd5 18 ♗d2 ♗f6 19 axb4 ♗xb2+ 20 ♗c1 0-0, with powerful threats against the loose white position) 15...♜c4 16 ♗e2 ♗xa2+ 17 ♗b1 ♜a4 18 ♜d4 ♗b4 19 ♜xg7 ♗f8 20 ♗c4 ♗c8 21 ♗d4 ♗xc4 22 ♗d6 ♗xb3 0-1 Oms Pallise-B.Lalić, Benasque 1996.

a12) 12 0-0-0?! dxe4 13 ♜e3 ♜c8 14 ♜g3 (14 ♗xe4? ♗xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♗f5 16 ♜e3 ♗b4 is rather awkward for White, to say the least) 14...0-0 15 ♗h6 ♗e8 16 ♗xe4? ♗xb3 wins for Black, G.Kuzmin-Zhelmin, Voroshilovgrad 1989, as 17 axb3 ♜e6 forks two pieces.

a13) 12 e5 ♗e4 13 ♗xe4 dxe4 14 0-0-0 ♜b6 seems very uncomfortable for White, whose king is likely to become quite exposed.

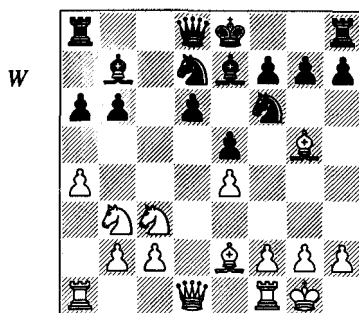
a2) 9 ♜d2 ♗bd7 10 f4 (10 0-0 transposes to Line A2) 10...b5 11 f5 (11 0-0-0!? might be a better choice, but Black's queenside play is already well-advanced; then 11...♗c8 12 ♗b1 0-0 13 h3 ♜c7 14 ♗he1 ♗b6 15 f5 ♗d7 16 g4 ♗c6 17 ♗xb6 ♜xb6 18 ♗f3 b4 19 ♗d5 ♗xd5 20 exd5 ♗d7 21 ♗e4 ♗h4 22 ♗f1 f6 23 ♜e2 a5 24 ♗d2 a4 is better for Black, Arizmendi-Andersson, Pamplona 1997/8) 11...♗c4 12 ♗f3?! b4 13 ♗d5 ♗xd5 14 exd5 a5 (the advance of the a-pawn

reveals the clumsiness of the b3-knight's placement; Black is already better) 15 a3 (15 ♖f2 ♟f6! 16 ♖b6 ♜d7 17 ♟xa5 ♙xd5 18 ♟c4 ♙xf3 19 ♜xf3 0-0 and the black central pawns are ready to roll, Zarnicki-Brunner, Buenos Aires 1992) 15...bxa3 16 ♜xa3 a4 17 ♟c1 ♟f6! 18 ♙e2 ♙xe2 19 ♟xe2 ♜b8! with an excellent game for Black, Dolmatov-Paunović, Yugoslavia 1992.

a3) 9 ♙f3 ♟bd7 10 g4 ♟b6 11 g5 ♟fd7 12 ♙g4 ♟c4 13 ♙c1 ♟f8 14 h4 ♜d7 15 ♙xe6 fxe6 16 ♜d3 ♜c6 17 ♟d2 ♜c8 18 ♖f3 b5 19 a3 ♟b6 20 ♟b3 ♟a4! is a typical Najdorf idea, winning a pawn, Diaz-Marjanović, Vrnjačka Banja 1976.

a4) 9 0-0 0-0 transposes to Line A2.

b) 8 ♙g5 (White continues in the style of the Sveshnikov Sicilian, planning to obtain the use of d5 for his pieces by exchanging its defender – the f6-knight) 8...♟bd7!? (8...♙e6 is the normal move, and after 9 ♙xf6 then 9...♙xf6, but I prefer to have the option of recapturing with the knight on f6, to keep control of d5; Black's queen's bishop will have a good square on b7, and does not need to come to e6) 9 a4 (9 ♜d2?! allows Black to expand on the queenside; after 9...b5 10 f3 ♙b7 11 ♟d1 0-0 12 0-0 ♜c8 Black has every reason to feel happy with his position, Dreier-Sonnleitner, Dortmund 1987) 9...b6 10 0-0 (10 ♙f3?! is a little passive; 10...♙b7 11 ♙xf6 ♟xf6 12 ♟d5 ♟xd5 13 exd5 0-0 14 c4 ♜c8 15 ♟d2 ♙g5 16 b3 f5 sets Black's kingside pawn-majority in motion, Dreier-Scholl, Dortmund 1987) 10...♙b7 (D) and now:



b1) 11 ♙c4!? is generally given as the reason that this line is not so popular for Black. For example, Matanović-Bronstein, Vršac 1979 continued 11...0-0?! 12 ♜d3 ♜c7 13 ♜ad1 ♜fc8 14 ♙xf6 ♟xf6 15 ♟d2, and White had consolidated his hold on the centre. However, nobody seems to have noticed that Black can play 11...♟xe4!, when 12 ♖f3 (12 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 13 ♟d5 ♜d8 14 ♜g4 ♟g5!) 12...0-0 13 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 14 ♟xe4 (14 ♟d5 ♙xd5 15 ♙xd5 ♟g5) 14...d5 leaves Black better in every case.

b2) 11 f3 0-0 12 ♜e1 d5 13 exd5 ♟xd5 14 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 15 ♟xd5 ♙xd5 with an edge to Black, Elarefi-Han, Elista OL 1998.

b3) 11 ♙xf6 ♟xf6 12 ♙c4 0-0 13 ♜d3 ♟xe4! 14 ♟xe4 d5 15 ♟ed2, Matanović-Kramer, Beverwijk 1956, and now the obvious 15...dxc4 16 ♟xc4 ♜c7 grants Black a clear advantage because of his bishops.

c) 8 f4 (this seems premature, as Black has not yet played ...♙e6, and there is no threat of f5 for Black to cope with) 8...0-0 9 g4?! (9 a4 could transpose into one of the lines examined later on, by 9...exf4 10 ♙xf4 ♟c6 11 0-0 ♙e6, etc., but as White has

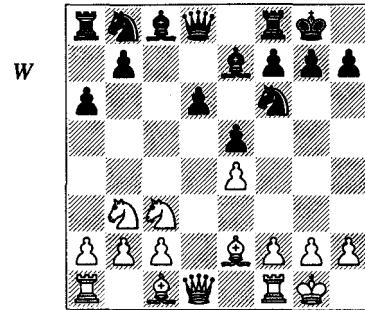
committed himself to the pawn advance f4, Black might be able to profitably change plans; 9 0-0 transposes to Line A4) 9...d5! (the natural central reaction to White's sharp pawn advances) 10 ♖xd5 (the only good move; 10 fxe5? ♗xe4 11 ♜xd5 ♙h4+ 12 ♚f1 ♗xc3 13 ♜xd8 ♗xd8 14 bxc3 ♗c6 wins the white e5-pawn, with a huge advantage, while 10 exd5 ♙b4 also leaves the white position in tatters) 10...♗xd5 11 exd5 (11 ♜xd5? is met by 11...♙b4+! 12 c3 ♜h4+ 13 ♚f1 ♗d8 with a strong attack) 11...♙h4+ 12 ♚f1 f5 13 ♚g2 ♗d7 (13...b5!? 14 fxe5 ♙b7 was also effective after 15 c4? bxc4 16 ♙xc4 ♗d7 17 e6 ♗b6 18 ♗c5 ♗xc4 19 ♗xb7 ♜b6, with a winning attack for Black, in Dudik-Donka, Debrecen 1998, but 15 ♗f1! is a better chance: 15...♙xd5+ 16 ♙f3 ♙xf3+ 17 ♜xf3 fxg4! 18 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 19 ♗xf8+ ♚xf8 is a little better for White) 14 ♗f1 b5 15 a4! ♙b7! 16 axb5 axb5 17 ♗xa8 ♜xa8 and now White must go walking with his king, by 18 ♚h3!, in order to hang on, Tiviakov-Poluliakhov, Kropotkin 1995.

d) 8 g4!? (another very committal move, planning to drive the f6-knight from its guard of d5) 8...h6 9 f4 (9 ♙e3 ♙e6 10 ♗d2 ♗bd7 11 f3, Liu-Al Jamiat, Jakarta 1997, is similar to the line we examine in Chapter 1, and Black can continue in the same vein: 11...b5 and ...♗b6-c4) 9...exf4 10 ♙xf4 ♗c6 11 h3 ♙e6 12 ♗d2 d5 13 0-0-0 dxe4 14 ♜e3 ♜c8 15 ♗xe4 (this is more logical than the alternative 15 ♙d6?! ♙xd6 16 ♗xd6 0-0 17 ♗c5 ♗b4 18 g5 ♗bd5 19 ♗xd5 ♗xd5, which favours Black, Rigo-Ribli, Budapest 1977) 15...♗xe4 16 ♜xe4 0-0

is unclear, Shirov-Van Wely, Tilburg 1997.

e) 8 a4 0-0 9 0-0 transposes to Line A1.

### 8...0-0 (D)



Black completes his kingside development, and he will plan his queenside development depending on White's future play. Here White has several alternative plans:

A1: 9 a4	77
A2: 9 ♙e3	81
A3: 9 ♚h1	85
A4: 9 f4	89
A5: 9 ♗e1	91

Or:

a) 9 ♙g5. This 'pin' invites Black to play 9...♗xe4!?, although I have been unable to find any examples of this. My analysis runs 10 ♙xe7 (10 ♗xe4?! ♙xg5 is too easy for Black) 10...♗xc3 11 ♙xd8 ♗xd1 12 ♙e7 ♗xb2 (12...♗e8?! 13 ♗axd1 ♗xe7 14 ♗xd6 leads to an edge for White) 13 ♙xf8 ♚xf8 14 ♙f3 ♗c6, and Black has a solid pawn-structure and two pawns for the exchange.

b) With 9 ♗d3 White intends to bring his queen to g3, and decide on

his pawn-play later. As is often the case when White chooses a non-critical set-up, Black can opt for a more ambitious piece placement than normally, with his queen's bishop developed on b7: 9...♖bd7 10 a4 b6 11 ♖g3 ♗h8 (else White may play ♗h6) 12 ♖e3 ♗b7 13 ♖d2 ♗c7! 14 ♖ad1 ♖c5 (applying maximum pressure to e4) 15 f3 d5 16 exd5 ♖xd5 17 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 18 b3 ♖e6, with an edge to Black, Thipsay-Howell, London Lloyds Bank 1985.

### A1)

#### 9 a4

Constraining the black queenside, and stopping any idea of Black playing ...b5. The option of playing either on the kingside, with f4, or on the queenside, is left open. The one disadvantage of this move is the weakening of the b4-square (a3 is no longer possible after this, of course), which allows Black the possibility of playing ...♖c6-b4 in several lines.

#### 9...♗e6

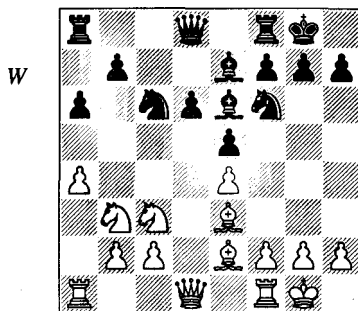
Black takes firm control of d5, and is ready to react with ...d5, if appropriate.

#### 10 f4

If, instead, White plays 10 ♗e3, then after 10...♖bd7, 11 ♗d2 transposes to Line A2. Beware though, that White can also play 11 a5, which takes us into a different line. Anyway, ...♖c6 is very logical now that the b4-square is weakened, and Black also stops a5. So 10...♖c6 (D):

a) 11 f4 (possible on this move as well, if rare) 11...exf4 and now:

al) 12 ♗xf4 leaves White a whole tempo down on the main line, and it is



no great surprise that Black can more than equalize after 12...♖c8 13 ♗h1. Normally it is White's go here; what can Black do with the extra tempo? 13...d5 is certainly good here, e.g. 14 e5 ♖d7 15 ♖xd5 ♖dx5 16 c4 ♗g5, and now 17 ♖c5 runs into 17...♗xd5 18 cxd5 ♗xf4 19 ♖xf4 ♖e7, as the c5-knight is hanging.

a2) 12 ♖xf4 ♖c8 13 ♗h1 ♖e8 14 ♖f1 ♗f6 15 ♗d2 ♗e5 16 ♗g5 ♖f6 17 ♗d3 h6 18 ♗f4 ♗e7 and Black has an almost perfect piece set-up, Thipsay-Howell, British Ch (Brighton) 1984.

b) 11 a5!? (White blunders a pawn, or is it a sacrifice?) 11...♗xb3! 12 cxb3 (12 ♗b6 ♗xc2 13 ♗xc2 ♗d7 is worse; Black intends to continue with ...♗d8, exchanging the dark-squared bishops) 12...♖xa5 13 ♖d5! (this is the only way White can obtain some compensation for his pawn) 13...♖c6 14 ♗b6 ♗d7 15 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 16 ♗g4 (the point behind White's play: he hopes to exploit his light-squared bishop, as Black's light squares are poorly controlled) 16...♗e7 17 ♗d5 g6! (Black must fight for the light squares) and now:

b1) 18 ♖ac1 (this may not be the best) 18...h5 19 ♗h3 a5! 20 ♖fd1 ♖a6

21 ♖e3 ♗g5 (Black solves his 'bad bishop' problem) 22 ♜c3 (or 22 ♗xg5 ♜xg5 23 ♗d7 {23 ♜xd6? loses to 23...♗d4} 23...♗d4 24 ♜xb7 ♜aa8 and Black's powerful knight on d4 will dominate the bishop) 22...♗xe3 23 fxe3 ♜b6 24 ♜d2 ♜b4 25 g3 h4 and Black has consolidated his extra pawn, Kodrić-Rashkovsky, Bled 1992.

b2) 18 ♜fd1! h5 19 ♗h3 (the plan with ...a5 and ...♜a6, which was so effective after 18 ♜ac1, is not possible now since the d6-pawn is threatened) 19...♗d4 20 ♖h1 ♖g7 21 ♜ac1 ♗b5 22 g3 ♗g5 23 ♜c2 h4 is not too clear, but White certainly has some compensation for his pawn.

b3) 18 ♜ad1 h5 19 ♗h3 ♗d4 is similar to 'b2'.

c) 11 ♗f3 (this type of restrictive move rarely achieves much; the f3-bishop may stop ...d5 – temporarily, at any rate – but is hardly very active) 11...♗b4! (this is the point behind Black's 10th move: the knight is untouchable here, and adds its weight to the liberating ...d5 thrust; there is also the attack on c2 to consider, which restricts White's options and allows various combinatory possibilities) and now:

c1) 12 ♗d5 is not as bad as it looks. 12...♗xd5 13 exd5 e4 is countered by the surprising 14 ♗xe4! ♗xe4 15 c3, regaining the piece, whereupon 15...♗f6 16 cxb4 ♗xb2 17 ♜b1 ♗e5 should be equal, so Black should prefer 12...♗fxd5 13 exd5 ♗f5 14 ♜c1 ♜c8 15 c3 ♗d3, with plenty of activity.

c2) 12 a5! ♜c8 (White's last move enables him to answer 12...d5?! by 13 ♗b6 ♜d7 14 ♗c5, with advantage,

but now Black threatens ...d5 anew) 13 ♗b6 ♜d7 14 ♜e1 (so that the e5-pawn would be hanging if Black continued ...d5) 14...♗d8 15 ♗e3 ♗g4 16 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 17 ♜d2 ♗e7 18 ♗c1 (White finally errs, but it is difficult to find anything much better; 18 ♜ec1 would keep c2 guarded, and after 18...♜c4 19 f3 ♗e6, 20 ♜d1 would at least prevent ...d5, but Black is doing well anyway) 18...d5! 19 exd5 ♗f5 20 ♗d3 ♗xd3 21 cxd3 ♗xd5 and the backward d3-pawn assures Black a certain advantage, Zapata-Milos, Mar del Plata 1996.

d) 11 ♜d2, or indeed any other move that does nothing to control d5, illustrates why White often needs to put pressure on e5 by playing f4, for Black can play his liberating central lunge:

d1) 11...d5 (this move equalizes immediately) 12 exd5 ♗xd5 13 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♜fd1 (14 c4 ♗e6 15 ♜fd1 ♜xd2 would tempt Black to play on) 14...♗xb3! 15 cxb3 ♜xd2 16 ♜xd2 ♜fd8 17 ♜ad1 ♜xd2 18 ♜xd2 ♜d8 19 ♜xd8+ ♗xd8 and Black's superior structure more than compensates for White's two bishops; a draw was agreed shortly in Hübner-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 1996.

d2) If Black wishes to play for more, there is also 11...♗b4 12 ♜fd1 ♜c8, and now:

d21) 13 a5?! d5 (this is what Black is aiming for, of course, but he has another option: 13...♗xe4! {I successfully played this very same combination against Hort once} 14 ♗xe4 ♗xc2 15 ♗b6 ♜e8 and White is in big trouble: 16 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 17 ♜xd6 ♗xb3 18 ♜ac1 ♜c6 19 ♜d3 ♗d4!, etc., with

advantage) 14 ♖b6 ♜e8 15 exd5 ♜bx d5 16 ♜xd5 ♖xd5 (16...♜xd5!?) 17 ♜ac1 ♜a4 (Black has completely freed his position) 18 ♜g5 (18 ♜e3?! ♜xc2! 19 ♜xc2 ♖xb3 20 ♜cd2, Barua-Rashkovsky, Frunze 1983, and now 20...♖b4 is best) 18...♜fe8 19 ♜e3 ♖f8 20 h3 ♜xc2! 21 ♜xc2 ♖xb3 22 ♜cc1 ♜d5 23 ♜xb3! (blow for blow!) 23...♜xb3 24 ♖c4 ♜xd1+ (Black decides that it is most circumspect to go for the equal ending) 25 ♜xd1 ♜f6, Klovans-de Firmian, Biel 1994.

d22) It is better to defend e4 and control d5 by playing 13 ♖f3, although 13...♜g4!? 14 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 15 f3 ♖e6 16 a5 ♜e8 17 ♜ac1 f5 18 ♜d5 ♜xd5 19 exd5 ♖d7 20 f4 ♖f6 is not unpleasant for Black, Stefansson-Renet, Reykjavik 1992.

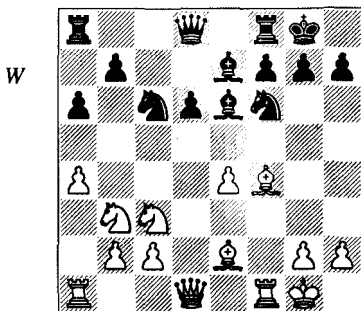
### 10...exf4

In my opinion this is the simplest line for Black. He temporarily concedes the centre, but obtains the e5-square and free play for his pieces.

### 11 ♖xf4

11 ♜xf4 ♜c6 12 ♖e3 transposes to note 'a2' to White's 10th move.

### 11...♜c6 (D)



### 12 ♖h1

This move is invariably played here to remove the white king from the g1-a7 diagonal. White often wants to bring his offside knight into the game by ♜d4-f5, and this is impossible with the king on g1. 12 ♜d4? meets 12...♜b6, of course. Otherwise, 12 ♜d5?! is far too ambitious: 12...♜xe4 13 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 14 ♖f3 d5 15 ♜d4 ♜g6 16 ♖xe4 dxe4 17 ♜xe6 fxe6 18 ♖e3 ♜xf1+ 19 ♜xf1 ♜d5 and Black should win, Olsson-Loginov, Budapest 1993. 12 ♖d3 was played by Botvinnik in a similar position once, but it looks wrong nowadays. 12...d5 would be simplest, e.g. 13 exd5 ♜xd5 with equality, but 12...♜e5 13 ♜d5 ♜xd5 14 exd5 ♖g4 is also good.

### 12...♜c8

The most interesting option. The 'equalizing' 12...d5 does not quite succeed: 13 e5 ♜d7 14 ♜xd5 ♜dxe5 15 c4 ♖g5 and now 16 ♜c5! should be played, with a plus.

In this position, there are the following choices:

- A11: 13 ♜d2 79  
 A12: 13 ♜e1 80  
 A13: 13 ♜d4 80

Instead, 13 ♖f3 just misplaces the bishop. After 13...♜e5 14 ♜d5 ♖xd5 15 exd5 ♜fd7 16 c3 ♖g5 17 ♖g4 ♖xf4 18 ♜xf4 ♜c4 19 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 the position is level, Hort-Ljubojević, Montreal 1979.

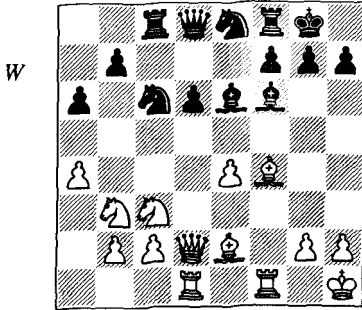
### A11)

### 13 ♜d2

Lengyel has been successful with this sensible move. White will play ♜ad1 before committing his minor pieces.

**13...♖e8**

Portisch's manoeuvre again.

**14 ♖ad1 ♗f6 (D)****15 ♖e3**

The pawn-grab 15 ♗xd6?! ♗xd6 16 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 17 ♗xd6 ♗e5 18 ♗d2 ♗b4 can only be good for Black.

**15...♖e7 16 ♗d2 ♗e5**

16...♖e5 is also interesting. 17 ♗d4 ♗g6 18 g3 and now, instead of 18...♗c7?? 19 ♗xe6 ♖xc6 20 ♗xd6, winning quickly, Lengyel-Zso.Polgar, Budapest 1993, 18...♗e5 is perfectly satisfactory.

17 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 18 ♗d4 g6 19 ♖h6 f6 20 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 21 ♗d5 ♗c7 22 ♗b6 ♗cd8 23 ♖h4 ♗g7 24 ♗fd1

White has some pressure, but Black has a solid position, and a fine knight on e5, Lengyel-Loginov, Budapest 1993.

**A12)****13 ♖e1**

This is perfectly reasonable. White intends to play ♗d1 and ♖g3 with a big assault on d6.

**13...♗e8!**

Black's (now) standard plan: the knight defends d6 so that the e7-bishop can come to the a1-h8 diagonal.

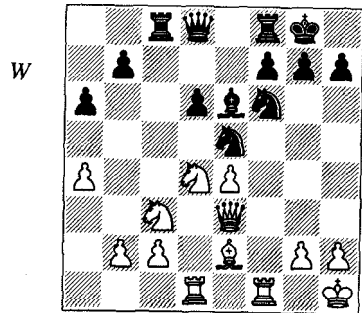
**14 ♗d1**

14 ♗d5 ♗xd5 15 exd5 ♗e5 16 ♗d4 ♗f6 17 ♖d2, Klován-Ubilava, USSR 1981, and now 17...♗c5 is level: 18 ♗f5 ♗c7.

14...♗h4 15 ♖d2 ♗f6 16 ♖e3 ♗e5 17 ♗xe5

Rather than 17 ♗c5 ♖e7 18 ♗xe6 fxe6 19 ♗xe5 ♗xf1+ 20 ♗xf1 ♗xe5, with just the type of position Black is hoping for, Zelčić-Vera, St Vincent 1998. The knight is established on e5, and the d5-square is controlled by the e6-pawn.

17...♗xe5 18 ♗d4 ♗f6 (D)



19 ♗f5 ♗xf5 20 ♗xf5 ♗e8 21 ♖g3 ♗e6! 22 ♗df1 ♗fd7

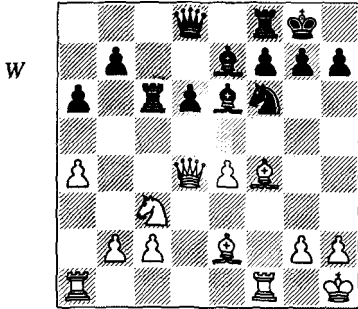
Black has an edge, Toth-Vaulin, Budapest 1998.

**A13)**

13 ♗d4 ♗xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗c6 (D)

There is nothing wrong with playing 14...♖e8 here as well, but 15 ♗ad1 ♗f6 16 e5 dxe5 17 ♖xd8 is a bit dull, Barua-Imanaliev, Frunze 1983.

With the text-move, Black defends his d6-pawn another way, hoping to play ...♗d7 and ...♗f6 instead, with a firm grip on e5.

**15 ♜fd1**

15 a5 ♖d7 16 ♜fd1 ♜c7 17 ♖d5 ♖xd5 18 exd5 ♖f6! 19 ♜e4 ♜c5 20 ♖d3 g6 21 b4?! (21 ♜a2 is more circumspect) 21...♖xa1 22 ♜xa1 ♜c3 23 ♜e1 (23 ♖d2 wins back the exchange, but after 23...♖e5 24 ♖xc3 ♜xc3 it turns out that the black knight is the dominant minor piece) 23...♖e5 and Black is better, Sznapiak-Spasov, Warsaw 1983.

**15...♖d7 16 ♜e3**

16 a5 transposes to the previous note.

**16...♜e8 17 a5 h6 18 ♖f3 ♜b8 19 ♜d2**

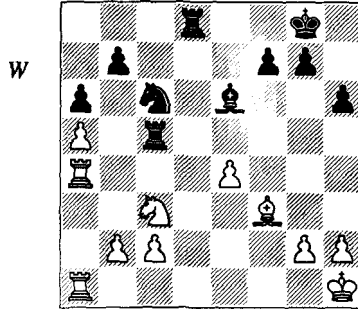
White is trying to tie Black to the d-pawn.

**19...♜c5!?**

Obviously, 19...♖e5 is perfectly satisfactory, but instead Black plays a clever positional pawn sacrifice, which White should probably not accept.

**20 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 21 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 22 ♜xd6 ♖e5 23 ♜d4 ♖c6 24 ♜da4 ♜d8 (D)**

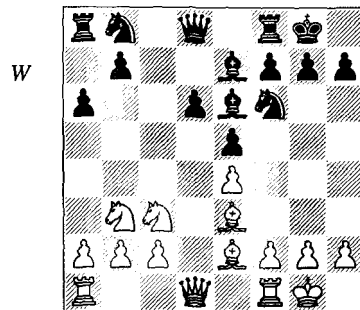
The point of Black's play: with the white rooks tied to the a-pawn, Black is free to infiltrate on the d-file.

**25 ♖e2 ♜d2 26 ♖d3 ♜g5 27 ♖e2 ♖e5 28 ♜e1 ♖xd3 29 cxd3 ♜xd3**

Black reaps the fruits of his idea, and holds the advantage, El Taher-Zagorskis, Erevan OL 1996.

**A2)****9 ♖e3**

This most natural developing move is one of the most difficult for Black to face. White will play on the queenside, first restraining Black, and then aiming to establish a piece on d5. It was built into a system by Karpov in the 1980s, and although good counters for Black have since been discovered, it remains popular with players like GM Jansa, who still scores well with it.

**9...♖e6 (D)****10 ♜d2**

Karpov was very successful with this move during the 1980s. White frees his back rank to connect his rooks. Otherwise, White has the following possibilities:

a) 10 ♖d5 is a move I used a lot with White many years ago, and then dropped it, but it has been coming back into fashion recently. White wants to create a mobile queenside majority after Black captures on d5 and White recaptures with the e-pawn. This can be very dangerous, but the other side of the coin is that Black gets a mobile kingside majority, and the white king is liable to find itself in the way of its advance! 10...♟bd7! (a clever finesse – Black is happy for White to take on e7, and by defending the b6-square obliges White to protect the e4-pawn; not 10...♟xe4? as 11 ♙b6 ♟d7 12 ♟c7 wins the exchange) 11 ♟d3 (11 ♟xe7+ ♟xe7 12 f3 d5 13 exd5 ♟xd5 is pleasant for Black, and 11 f3?! ♙xd5 12 exd5 b5 {threatening ...♟b6} 13 c4 bxc4 14 ♙xc4 ♟b6 leads to equality, Salem-Wong Zi Jing, Elista OL 1998) 11...♙xd5 12 exd5 and now 12...♟c5!, Browne's move, is best. Rather than get involved in a race on different wings, Black first tries to set up a dark-squared blockade on the queenside. White's queen is attacked, and he has two replies:

a1) 13 ♟xc5 dxc5 14 ♟fd1 14 ♟ad1 and now 14...♙d6 15 ♙g5 ♟e8 16 ♟f5 h6 17 ♙xf6 ♟xf6 18 ♟xf6 gxf6 was equal in Ivanchuk-Gelfand, Cap d'Agde 1998, but 14...e4 15 ♟d2 ♙d6 could just as easily have been played here, as well) 14...e4 15 ♟d2 (15 ♟b3!? is instructive: following 15...♟c7 16 ♙g5 ♟e8! 17 ♙xe7 ♟xe7

the e8-knight will come to the powerful blockading square d6, after which the white d-pawn will be blocked and Black will be free to advance his kingside majority) 15...♙d6 16 a4 ♟c7! 17 g3 ♟ae8 18 a5 ♟d7 19 ♙f4 ♟e5 20 c4 f5 and Black is ready for the decisive attack, King-Browne, Reykjavik 1990.

a2) 13 ♟d2 ♟fe4 14 ♟b4 a5! 15 ♟b5 ♟c7 16 ♟fd1 (16 ♟xc5 dxc5 brings about our favoured pawn-structure: 17 ♟c4 {to stop Black playing ...♟d6} 17...♟f6 18 ♟fd1 ♙d6 19 a3 ♟d7 20 ♟ab1 ♟ac8 21 g4 ♟d8 22 ♟h1 ♟h4 23 ♟g1 e4 24 ♟g2 ♟ce8 25 g5 ♟e5 26 ♟a4 ♟f3, winning material, Nikolenko-Voitsekhovskiy, Minsk 1998) 16...b6 17 ♟c4 f5 (getting the kingside pawn-roller going) 18 ♙d3 ♟d8 19 ♟xc5 ♟xc5 20 a3 ♟c8 21 ♟b5 e4 22 ♙f1 ♙f6 23 ♟ab1 ♟e5 and Black soon won by means of a direct attack in Svidler-J.Polgar, Dos Hermanas 1999.

b) 10 f4 exf4 and now White can try:

b1) 11 ♟xf4 ♟bd7 (with the rook on f4, instead of the bishop, this is possible, since the d6-pawn is not attacked by the white queen's bishop) 12 ♟d5 (12 ♟d4 ♟e5 13 ♟f5 ♙xf5 14 ♟xf5 ♟c8 15 ♙d4 ♟c7 16 ♟h1 ♟fe8 is also OK, Sarlamanov-Narandzić, Yugoslav Ch 1991) 12...♙xd5 13 exd5 ♟e5 14 c4 ♟fd7 15 ♟f1 ♟c8 16 ♟c1 h6! 17 ♟d4 ♙g5 18 ♙xg5 hxg5 19 ♟h1 g6 20 ♟c3 ♟g7 21 ♟c1 ♟h8 and, surprisingly in the Najdorf, Black is attacking down the h-file, Rubin-Browne, Los Angeles 1991.

b2) 11 ♙xf4 ♟c6 12 ♟h1 (this transposes into something similar to Line A1 except that White has lost a

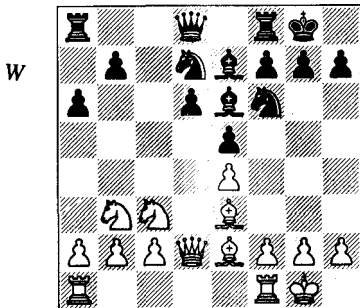
tempo on playing ♖e3-f4, which might make the positions slightly worse for him, but does not alter things much; anyway, these lines should be compared with Line A1) 12...♖c8 13 ♖d3 (if 13 ♘d4 ♘xd4 14 ♗xd4, Oldach-Scharmacher, Hamburg 1997, then 14...♖c6; 13 ♘d5?! ♘xe4 14 ♘xe7+ ♗xe7 15 ♖d3 ♖xb3 16 axb3 d5 17 c3 ♗cd8 18 ♗h5 f5 19 ♖ae1 ♘e5 with a clear advantage to Black, Levy-Reshevsky, USA 1971; 13 ♗e1 ♘e8 14 ♖d1 ♖h4 15 ♗d2 ♖f6 16 ♗e3, Unzicker-de Firmian, Baden-Baden 1981, and now 16...♗e7) 13...♘e5 14 ♘d5 ♘xd5 15 exd5 ♖g4 16 ♗d2 ♖f6 17 c3 ♖e8 and Black has managed to find good squares for all his pieces, Fejzullahu-Gallagher, Bern 1996.

c) 10 f3?! allows the simple 10...d5 11 exd5 ♘xd5 12 ♘xd5 ♖xd5 13 c4 ♖c6 14 ♗e1 (14 ♗xd8 is best met by 14...♖xd8, keeping the knight out of a5) 14...a5!, threatening to push the white knight off the board, Zagrebely-Nadyrkhanov, USSR 1985.

d) 10 a4 transposes to the note to White's 10th move in Line A1.

e) 10 ♗d3 ♘bd7 11 ♘d5 transposes to line 'a'.

10...♘bd7 (D)



The pure Najdorf move. Playing ...♘c6 makes less sense when White has not played a4, as the b4-square is not weakened, and the black knight is liable to be awkwardly placed if it has to stay on c6.

11 a4

This queenside restraint is an integral part of White's plan, but there are inferior alternatives:

a) 11 ♖fd1 is similar to, but less accurate than 11 a4 as now Black can play 11...♖c8 12 a4 ♘b6! 13 a5 ♘c4 14 ♖xc4 and recapture, favourably, with his rook: 14...♖xc4 15 f3 ♗c7 16 ♖ac1 ♖c8 17 ♘d5 ♖xd5 18 exd5? (18 ♖b6 is forced, but after 18...♗d7 19 exd5 Black has the edge anyway) 18...♖xc2 and Black won in a few moves in Åström-de Firmian, Stockholm 1997.

b) 11 ♖ad1?! is even worse, as after 11...b5 White can no longer play 12 a4? because of 12...bxa4. So, the game Proehl-Kaminski, Halle 1995 continued 12 f4 ♖c8 13 ♖h1 ♗c7 14 ♖d3 ♘b6 with a good position.

c) 11 f4 exf4 12 ♖xf4 ♘e5 13 ♘d4 ♖c8 14 ♘xe6 fxe6 15 ♖xe5 dxe5 16 ♗xd8 ♖fxd8 17 ♖fd1 ♖c5+ 18 ♖h1 ♖xd1+ 19 ♖xd1 ♖d4, winning a pawn, Budolina-Iwaniuk, Mureck girls U-18 Ech 1998.

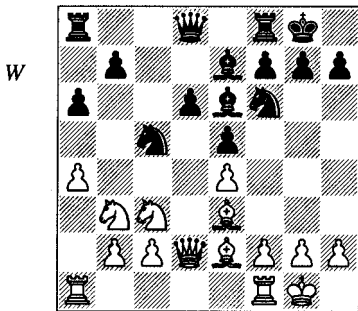
11...♘c5!? (D)

The normal main line is 11...♖c8 12 a5 ♗c7 13 ♖fd1, when a good move for Black is 13...♘c5! (pioneered by Joe Gallagher) 14 ♘xc5 dxc5 and now:

a) 15 f3 ♖fd8 16 ♗e1 ♖xd1 17 ♗xd1 c4! 18 ♘a4 ♖b4 19 ♖b6 ♗c6 20 c3 ♖e7 21 ♖h1 ♘d7 with equality, Brunner-Gallagher, Biel 1990.

b) 15 ♖f3 ♜fd8 16 ♛e1 ♜xd1 17 ♜xd1 c4! 18 ♖b6 ♛d6 19 ♛e1 ♜b4 is also level, Lautier-Gelfand, Tilburg 1996.

c) 15 ♛e1 c4! (it is imperative that Black play this move, which gains space on the queenside and allows the e7-bishop to become active, before White establishes control of c4 himself) 16 ♖f3 ♖b4 17 ♖b6 ♛c6 18 ♛e2 ♜fe8! 19 ♜a4 ♜d7 20 c3 ♖e7 21 h3! ♖d8 and Black solves all his problems, Thipsay-Gallagher, Kuala Lumpur 1992.



However, by playing ...♜c5 on move 11, Black effectively gains a tempo, for he manages to make do without the move ...♜c8.

12 ♜xc5 dxc5 13 ♜fd1 ♛c7!

This is stronger than 13...♛xd2 14 ♜xd2 ♜fd8 15 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 16 f3 with an edge to White, Yudasin-Kaiumov, USSR 1983. It is advantageous for Black to retain queens.

14 ♜d5

This move does not cause Black any problems, but neither do the following:

a) 14 f3 ♜fd8 15 ♛e1 c4, and if 16 a5, then 16...♖c5 is possible and good,

showing the advantage of the extra tempo.

b) 14 ♛e1 ♜fd8 15 a5 ♜xd1 16 ♜xd1 ♜d8 17 ♛f1 ♛c6 18 f3 c4.

c) 14 ♖f3 ♜fd8 15 ♛e2 c4 16 a5 ♜xd1+ 17 ♜xd1 ♜d8.

In each case, Black has a good position compared with the variations cited at move 11.

14...♖xd5 15 exd5

This pawn-structure is the same as that seen in note 'a' to White's 10th move, and is favourable to Black, as he will blockade the d5-pawn with a piece on d6, and then advance his kingside pawns.

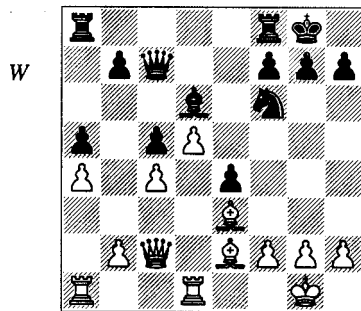
15...♖d6 16 c4

16 a5 e4 17 g3 is almost identical to the King-Browne game in note 'a1' to White's 10th move, and should be compared with it.

16...a5

Completely shutting the queenside, and relying on his extra kingside pawn. 16...e4 is also good: 17 g3 ♜ae8 18 a5 ♜d7 intending ...♜e5, ...f5, etc.

17 ♛c2 e4 (D)



18 g3 ♜ae8 19 ♜f1

Now, instead of 19...h5!? 20 ♜ae1 h4 21 ♖g2 ♜h7 22 f4, when White had

managed to defend himself in Pokojczyk-Kuczynski, Bytom 1986, 19...♖d7 20 ♖ae1 f5 with threats of ...f4 and ...♗e5 is more to the point.

**A3)**

9 ♖h1

This flexible move has become very popular recently. White will probably play f4, but waits to see how Black will react. For example, if Black continues 9...♗e6, White will play 10 f4, when, by saving a move on a4, White's kingside play is quicker than in Line A1.

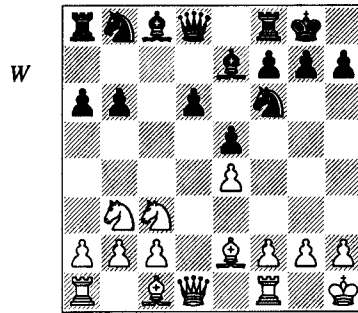
9...b6!? (D)

At first sight this appears to be an odd idea, for why play ...b6, when you can play ...b5 instead? The answer is that, by not playing f4, White is well-prepared to counter 9...b5 with 10 a4. Thus Black fianchettoes his queen's bishop, and yet avoids presenting White with an easy target. Ironically, Black can often play ...b5 later when he is ready, although this 'loses' a tempo. This line is a particular favourite of Gelfand.

An alternative for the reader is 9...♗bd7, as White invariably replies 10 a4 (White has nothing better, e.g. 10 f4?! b5 11 ♖f3 ♗b7 12 f5? b4 13 ♗d5 ♖xd5 14 exd5 e4 15 ♖e2 ♗b6 picking up White's d5-pawn, Bruned-Montabard, St Quentin 1999) 10...b6 11 ♖e3 ♗b7 12 f3 transposing to Line A31.

White has quite a number of options:

<b>A31:</b>	<b>10 a4</b>	86
<b>A32:</b>	<b>10 ♖g5</b>	87
<b>A33:</b>	<b>10 f4</b>	87
<b>A34:</b>	<b>10 ♖e3</b>	88



Or:

a) 10 f3 ♗b7 will transpose to Line A34 after 11 ♖e3, and to Line A31 after 11 a4.

b) 10 ♖f3 (this continuation seems unduly passive) 10...♗bd7 11 a4 ♗b7 12 g4!? (White goes from one extreme to the other!) 12...h6 13 g5 hxg5 14 ♖xg5 ♗h7 (solid, but 14...b5 is more active, and more in tune with this variation) 15 ♖e3 ♖e8 16 ♖g1 ♖g5 17 ♗d2 ♖xe3 18 ♗xe3 ♖e6 19 ♖g3 ♗df8 20 ♖ag1 ♖g6 21 ♗d2 ♖c8 and Black has successfully defended his kingside, G.Kuzmin-Berezin, Donetsk Z 1998.

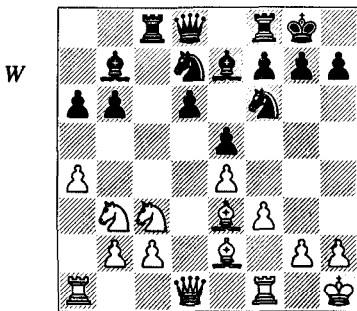
c) 10 ♗d5 ♗xd5 11 exd5 (11 ♗xd5 ♗c7 12 ♗d3 ♗b7 is not particularly worrying for Black) 11...♗d7 (there is little point playing 11...♗b7 here, as after 12 c4 the bishop would have no scope on the h1-a8 diagonal; it is likely to find a more useful spot elsewhere) 12 c4 ♗c5 (12...♖g5 might be more accurate) 13 ♖d2 ♖g5 14 ♗xc5 bxc5 15 b4?! ♖xd2 16 ♗xd2 cxb4 17 ♗xb4 a5 18 ♗c3 ♖a6 19 ♖ab1 ♖c8 20 ♖b2 ♖c5 and Black's pressure against the backward c-pawn gives him the edge, Sutovsky-Zagrebelny, Elista OL 1998.

**A31)****10 a4**

Looking at White's other moves, where Black often manages to play ...b5 at some point, a combination of a4 and f3 may well prove White's best line.

**10...♗b7 11 f3 ♖bd7**

Actually, 11...♖c6 is the move invariably played in this exact position, but after the 12 ♖g5 of Ivanchuk-Topalov, Monte Carlo 1998, White has an edge. In addition, there is a second good reason I am proposing 11...♖bd7 (which transposes into 9...♖bd7 lines), and it is that it permits Black to have two systems against 9 ♖h1, as mentioned above.

**12 ♖e3 ♜c8 (D)****13 ♜f2!**

A very strong move. White wants to keep Black's counterplay under control by playing ♜d2. 13 ♖d3 is less precise, and after 13...♜c7 14 ♖e2 ♖a8 Black has a harmonious development.

**13...♜c7!**

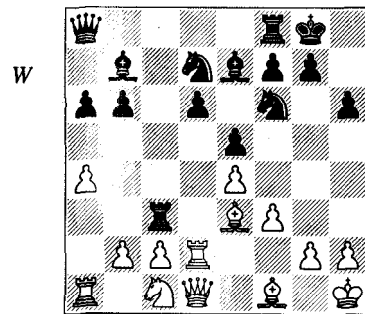
A good move, played in the style of Réti. Black's queen will go to a8 to defend the a6-pawn, and initiate play along the h1-a8 diagonal.

**14 ♖f1 ♖a8 15 ♜d2 h6!**

It is important to control g5, as ♖g5 can prove a useful resource for White in the subsequent play.

**16 ♖c1**

This is the key to White's 'Karpov-like' play: his worst piece is the b3-knight, and he now brings it to d5 via a2 and b4. Black's position is critical, for if he allows White to complete his plan he will be worse.

**16...♜xc3! (D)**

The Sicilian exchange sacrifice comes to Black's rescue!

**17 bxc3 d5 18 c4!?**

White exploits the 'pin' along the d-file. Otherwise, 18 exd5 ♖xd5 19 ♖f2 ♖g5! 20 ♜d3 ♖c5 21 ♖xc5 bxc5 (threatening ...c4) 22 c4 ♖e3 23 ♖e2 ♖xf1! 24 ♖xf1 e4 25 fxe4 ♖xe4 and Black has two powerful bishops on an open board.

**18...♖xe4**

This is the most fun. Black sacrifices further material to open up the b7-bishop's diagonal to the white king, but 18...d4 19 ♖f2 ♖b4 is also possible, with plenty of compensation.

**19 ♜xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♖xd7 exf3 21 ♖g1! fxg2 22 ♖e2**

Otherwise, 22 ♖d3 ♖c5 (22...♖f6!?) 23 ♖xc5 bxc5 24 ♘b3, and now, instead of 24...♖c6?, Ye Jiangchuan-Lin Weiguo, Beijing 1997, 24...♖f3! is strong, e.g. 25 ♗f5 e4 26 ♘d2 g6 with advantage.

**22...♖h4 23 ♗g4?**

23 ♘d3 is a better try, although it is clear that Black has plenty of play after, for instance, 23...♖f6.

**23...♗d8! 24 ♖xb6?! g5! 25 ♖f3 f5 26 ♖xg5 fxg4 27 ♖xd8 ♖xf3**

0-1 Rohl-Leitão, San Felipe 1998 (with some repetitions omitted).

### A32)

**10 ♖g5**

Not for the first time in this book, White prepares to swap his dark-squared bishop for the f6-knight and gain control of d5.

**10...♘bd7!**

Black would much prefer to recapture on f6 with a knight, thus maintaining knight control of d5 and pressure on e4.

**11 ♘d5**

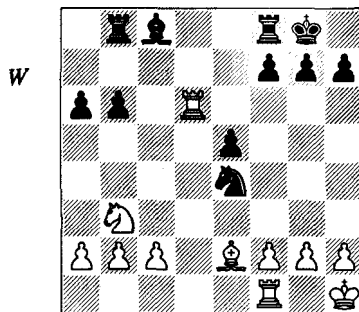
Or 11 a4 ♖b7 12 ♗d3 ♖c8 (an ideal set-up as far as Black is concerned: the positional sacrifice ...♗xc3 might soon become a possibility) 13 f3 (13 ♖ad1 ♗xc3!? 14 bxc3 ♖xe4 with plenty of compensation) 13...d5!? (13...♖c7!? 14 ♖fd1 ♗a8 is another way to play this position) 14 exd5 ♘xd5 15 ♖xe7 ♘xe7, which is level, Smirin-Khuzman, Tel-Aviv 1999.

**11...♘xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♖b8 13 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 14 ♖ad1 ♘f6 15 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 16 ♖xd6 ♘xe4 (D)**

**17 ♖d5**

So far this is all fairly forced.

**17...f6!**



Gelfand's innovation, and stronger than the previous move 17...♗e8, when 18 f3 ♘f6 19 ♖d6 ♖f5 20 c3 a5 21 ♖fd1 is a little uncomfortable, Wahls-Lutz, Gladenbach 1997.

**18 f3 ♘g5 19 ♖fd1 ♘f7**

Black controls all the entry squares.

**20 ♖5d2 ♖e6! 21 a3?!**

21 ♘c1 a5 22 ♖b5 is equal.

**21...a5 22 ♖b5 ♖fc8 23 ♖g1?**

A blunder. 23 ♘c1 ♖c5 24 a4 ♖f8 and ...♖e7 is only marginally better for Black.

**23...♖xc2! 24 ♖xc2 ♖xb3 25 ♖dc1 ♖xc2**

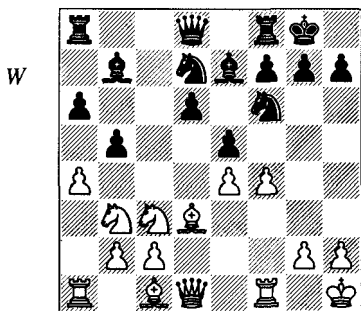
In Sutovsky-Gelfand, Tel-Aviv 1999, Black went on to make the extra pawn count in the endgame.

### A33)

**10 f4 ♖b7 11 ♖d3**

This is not the only way to defend e4. 11 ♖f3 also comes into consideration: 11...♘bd7 12 f5?! (12 a4 is sounder, but 12...exf4 13 ♖xf4 ♘e5 is fine for Black) 12...b5! 13 ♖e1 ♖e8 14 a3 ♗c7 15 ♗e2 ♖ac8 16 ♖d2 ♖f8 17 ♖ac1 and Black has the advantage, Coleman-Sammalvu, Copenhagen 1998. Even 17...d5!? is strong, e.g. 18 exd5 ♘b6.

11...♖bd7 12 a4 b5! (D)



Black's delayed ...b5 strikes, the point being that White's e4-pawn has been weakened by him playing f4.

13 axb5 axb5 14 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 15 ♗xb5 ♖xe4! 16 ♖xe4

Not 16 ♗xd7 ♖xc3 17 bxc3? as 17...♗xg2+ 18 ♖g1 ♗xf1 19 ♖xf1 (19 ♗xf1 ♗a7+ picks up the loose bishop on d7) 19...♗h1+ is winning.

16...♗xe4 17 ♗e2 ♗c6 18 ♗xc6 ♗xc6

Black enjoys comfortable equality, Shirov-Gelfand, Dos Hermanas 1997.

### A34)

10 ♗e3

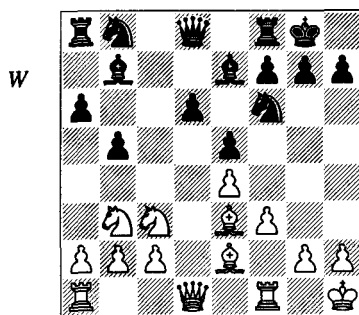
White continues his development.

10...♗b7 11 f3

The e4-pawn needs to be defended. 11 ♖d5 is inferior: 11...♖xd5 12 exd5 ♗g5! 13 ♗d2 ♗xe3 14 fxe3 ♗h4 15 ♗d3!? ♖d7 16 e4 a5 17 ♗e3 f5 18 exf5 ♗xd5 19 ♗ad1 ♗f6 20 ♖g1 ♗h6 and White has problems, J.Polgar-Gelfand, Dortmund 1997.

11...b5! (D)

This is the right moment; otherwise White will play a4. Now that Black controls d5 with two pieces, he is no



longer concerned about White being able to establish a piece on d5.

12 a4

The critical reply, although 12 ♗d2 was tried in Anand-Gelfand, Monte Carlo rpd 1999. The game continued 12...♖bd7 13 ♗fd1 ♗c7 14 a3 ♗fd8 15 ♗e1, when Black had a superior version of the Karpov line (9 ♗e3); even 15...d5! is then possible, e.g. 16 exd5 ♖f8 17 a4 ♖xd5 with Black for preference.

12...b4 13 ♖d5 ♖xd5 14 exd5

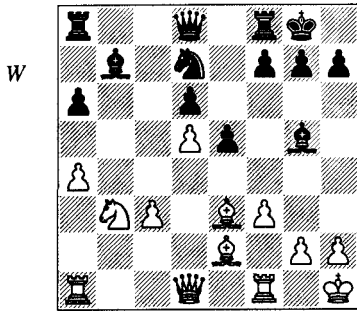
This is why Black is happy to waste two moves playing ...b5: White is forced to recapture with a pawn, and this offers three advantages to Black: firstly, his d6-pawn is no longer backward on an open file; secondly, White is no longer able to establish a knight on d5; and, thirdly, Black has a mobile kingside majority.

14...♖d7 15 c3

This is positionally undesirable, but necessary, as otherwise Black would soon play ...♖f6, winning the d5-pawn. 15 a5 changes nothing, because after 15...♗c7 (15...♖f6?! 16 ♗c4 ♗c7 17 ♗d3 is OK for White) White really is threatened with the loss of his d-pawn (by 16...♖f6), and so 16 c4 has to be

played anyway. Barua-Zagrebelny, Teheran 1998 continued 16...bxc3 17 ♖c1 ♗f6 18 ♜xc3 ♗d7 19 ♖c4 ♜fc8 20 ♗d3 ♖d8 with a level position.

15...bxc3 16 bxc3 ♖g5 (D)



17 ♖g1

With this pawn-structure, White would like to retain his dark-squared bishop. If 17 ♖xg5?! then 17...♗xg5 18 ♗a5 ♜fb8 19 ♜b1 ♖c8, and Black will play ...♗c5. 17 ♖f2 is the other possibility, when after 17...♗c7 18 c4 ♜ab8 19 a5 ♜fe8 20 ♜b1 g6 21 ♖d3 ♖a8 22 ♗c2 ♜b4 23 ♖e1 ♜bb8 24 ♖f2 the players decided to repeat the position in Onishchuk-de Firmian, Lucerne Wcht 1997.

17...♗c7 18 c4 a5 19 ♗d2

Now:

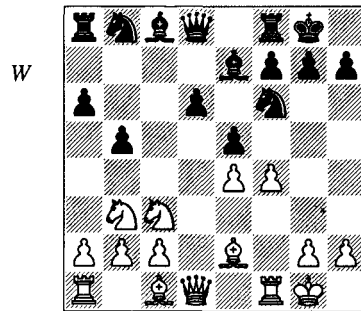
a) Anand-Gelfand, Dos Hermanas 1997 continued 19...f5 20 ♗b1 ♗c5 21 ♗c3, and the possibility of playing ♗b5 meant that if anyone was better, it was White.

b) Black should probably try to tie the white pieces to the c-pawn by 19...♖a6, and after 20 ♗e4 ♖h6 21 c5! (Gelfand's suggestion, sacrificing a pawn to create a passed d-pawn) 21...♗xc5 22 ♖xc5 dxc5 23 ♖xa6

♜xa6 24 ♗b3 c4 25 ♗b5 ♜b6 26 ♗xa5 f5 27 ♗c5 ♜c8 28 ♗e6 ♗d6 it appears that the passed black c-pawn is the more dangerous. The queening square is covered by the h6-bishop and so White will have to blockade it on c3, e.g. 29 ♜a2 c3 30 ♜c2 ♜b3, and White is struggling.

A4)

9 f4 b5 (D)



This move is justified now that White has signalled his intention to play on the kingside, and this is the reason White normally prefaces f4 with the move 9 a4.

10 ♖f3

Carefully protecting the e-pawn. Others:

a) 10 a3 (as usual, a little passive) 10...♖b7 11 ♖d3 (11 ♖f3 transposes to the main line) 11...♗bd7 12 ♗h1 ♜c8 13 fxe5 (if 13 ♗e2, then Black replies 13...♜e8!, with a subtle threat, viz. 14 ♖e3 d5! 15 exd5 ♜xc3! 16 bxc3 e4 picking up two pieces for a rook, Houtman-Shneider, Groningen 1994) 13...♗xe5 14 ♖f4, Klovan-Zaichik, USSR 1978, and now Black has various good moves, e.g. 14...♗c4 15

♙xc4 ♖xc4 16 ♜d2 ♚c5 with an advantage.

b) 10 fxe5 (a concession, swapping the f4-pawn for the d6-pawn) 10...dxe5 11 ♖xd8 (after 11 ♙g5?! ♜bd7 12 ♜h1 ♙b7 13 ♙f3 b4 14 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 15 ♜d5 ♙xd5 16 exd5 e4 Black won a pawn in the game Fejzullahu-Hoffmann, Lugano 1999) 11...♖xd8 12 ♙g5 ♙e6 (12...♜bd7 is more ambitious) 13 a4 b4 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15 ♜d5 ♙xd5 16 exd5 (Klovan-Gutman, USSR 1978) 16...e4! 17 ♚ad1 ♜d7 is equal.

c) 10 a4 (this is the critical response whenever Black plays ...b5 in this line) 10...♙b7 (a typical Najdorf resource: rather than acquiesce to White's intentions on the queenside, Black counters by hitting the e4-pawn; in general, central pawns have more importance than wing pawns) 11 axb5 (after White's 9th move, he can no longer contemplate the move f3 to protect e4 – the Laws of Chess do not permit it! 11 ♖d3 is no better: 11...b4 12 ♜d5 ♜bd7 13 a5 ♜xd5 14 exd5 ♖c7 15 ♙d2 ♚ac8 {picking out the backward c-pawn} 16 ♖fc1 ♜f6 17 ♙f3 exf4 and Black has an advantage, Prandstetter-S.Saeed, Taxco IZ 1985) 11...axb5 12 ♖xa8 ♙xa8 13 ♖d3 (13 ♙xb5?!, conceding the e-pawn, falls in with Black's designs: 13...♖b6+ 14 ♖f2 ♜xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♙xe4 16 ♙d3 ♙a8 17 ♖e2 ♙h4! 18 ♙xh7+ ♜h8 19 g3 ♜xh7 20 gxh4 ♖c6 and Black has a mating attack along the h1-a8 diagonal, Unzicker-Stangl, Bad Homburg 1996) 13...♜bd7 14 ♙f3 b4 15 ♜d5 ♜xd5 16 exd5 and Black is doing well, Prandstetter-Staniszewski, Warsaw Z 1987. Perhaps 16...♙f6 is then the best continuation.

### 10...♙b7 11 a3

Often, Black can be happy if White has to play this move, as his queenside is likely to remain immune from attack. However, doing without this move does not seem to help White much: 11 ♖e1 ♜bd7 12 ♜d5 (12 f5?! {this move often assists Black by reducing the pressure on e5} 12...♖c8 13 a3 ♜b6 14 ♜a5 ♙a8 15 ♙g5 ♜a4! with advantage, Rorvall-Pytel, Fredrikstad 1978) 12...♜xd5 13 exd5 ♖c8 14 c3 ♙f6 and Black has a congruous piece development, Feldmane-Iwanuk, Oropesa del Mar 1998.

### 11...♜bd7 12 ♜h1

This is useful prophylaxis, as a check along the g1-a7 diagonal often provides Black with an important resource. Otherwise:

a) 12 ♙e3 ♖c8 13 ♖e2 ♖c7 14 ♖f2 ♖fe8 gives Black no problems, Houben-Jacob, Hengelo U-20 1997.

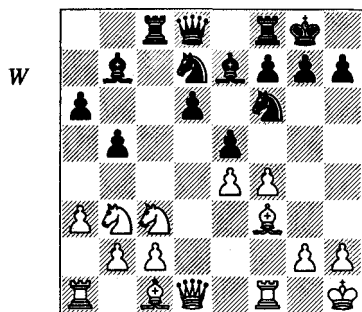
b) 12 ♖e1 ♖c8 13 g4?! (13 ♖g3 is superior, as in Grushevsky-Krogus, USSR 1975, when Black should reply 13...♜h8 to preclude any possibility of a later ♙h6) 13...♜b6 14 ♖g3 d5! (naturally) 15 exd5 e4 16 ♜xe4 ♖xc2 and White's position is falling apart, Van Wijk-Szekely, Soest 1996.

### 12...♖c8 (D)

Black's pieces find their optimum squares very easily. White has the following possibilities:

a) 13 ♖e1 (aiming for a kingside build-up) 13...♜h8 14 f5?! ♜b6 15 ♜a5 ♙a8 16 ♙g5 ♜a4! 17 ♜xa4 bxa4 18 ♖c1 ♖c5 and the a5-knight is proving the old adage about 'dim knights', J.Diaz-Byrne, Biel IZ 1976.

b) 13 f5?! ♖c7 14 g4 is countered by the thematic 14...d5! 15 exd5 e4,



exposing the white king, Zarnicki-Sadler, Buenos Aires 1992.

c) 13 ♖e3 ♖a8 14 ♞e1 ♘b6 15 ♞d1 ♞c7 16 ♖xb6 ♞xb6 17 ♞g3 ♞fe8 18 ♞d3 ♖f8 19 ♘d2 a5 20 ♖d1 b4 and Black has firmly grasped the initiative, de las Heras-Mendez, Buenos Aires 1998.

d) 13 ♞e2 ♞c7 14 ♖e3 ♞fe8 15 ♞f2 ♖f8 16 f5 d5! 17 exd5 e4 18 ♖e2 ♘d5 19 ♘d5 ♖xd5 20 ♘d4 ♖d6 and, once again, White's attempt at a kingside attack has come unstuck, Levchenkov-Malishauskas, Katowice 1993.

#### A5)

9 ♞e1

This introduces a plan similar to that employed in various lines: White defends his e-pawn, ready to create a queenside pawn-majority by playing ♘d5.

9...♖e6 10 ♖f1 ♘bd7 11 ♘d5

This is the key to White's strategy. If he tries to prepare this by 11 a4 then 11...♞c8! cuts across the plan: 12 ♘d5?! (12 a5, as in Gomez Baillor-Ricardi, Buenos Aires 1998, is better, but by 12...♘c5 13 ♘xc5 dxc5 Black obtains equal play) 12...♖xd5 13 exd5

♘b6 14 g4 (White is obliged to play this loosening move to avoid mislaying a pawn) 14...h6 15 ♖g2, with preference to Black, Rowson-Gallagher, London Lloyds Bank 1994. In fact, 15...♞d7!? is then an interesting possibility, for after 16 a5 Black can play 16...♘bxd5! 17 ♖xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♞xd5 ♞xg4+, garnering numerous pawns for the piece.

11...♘d5 12 exd5 ♖f5 13 a4

This pawn needs to be on a4 to control the black queenside. The immediate 13 c4?! allows 13...a5 (constructing a dark-squared blockade) 14 ♖e3 ♖g5.

13...♞c8

Now, of course, 13...a5? is a positional mistake, allowing 14 ♖b5.

14 c3

If 14 c4?! then again 14...a5!, as the f1-bishop no longer has access to b5.

14...♖g6 15 a5 f5!? 16 ♞a4 ♘f6 17 ♞b4 ♞d7 18 f3 ♖f7 19 c4 ♘h5 20 ♖e3 ♖h4 21 g3 f4! 22 gxf4 fxe3 23 ♞xe3 ♘f4

Black has good play against the white kingside, Geller-Lutz, Dortmund 1991.

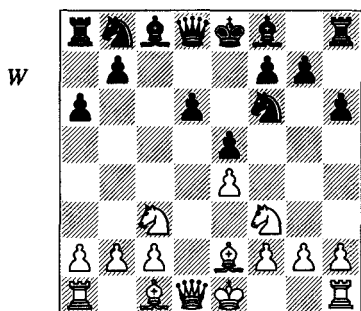
#### B)

7 ♘f3

This move heralds White's intention to play exclusively for control of d5, by the moves ♖g5(xf6) and ♖c4.

7...h6 (D)

An important move in the fight for control of the d5-square. The f6-knight is protected from the positional threat of ♖g5. This should be compared with the similar position arising after 6 ♖e3 (Chapter 1, Line B). In that case White will have to lose a move by ♖e3-g5 to complete his ideal



set-up; here he will need to lose a tempo by  $\text{e}2\text{-c}4$ .

### 8 0-0

More accurate than  $8 \text{ e}c4 \text{ e}e6$   $9 \text{ e}xe6 \text{ f}xe6$   $10 \text{ d}h4 \text{ d}c6$   $11 \text{ d}g6$  (if  $11 \text{ f}4$  then  $11... \text{w}b6!$   $12 \text{ d}g6 \text{ g}g8$   $13 \text{ d}xf8 \text{ e}xf8$   $14 \text{ w}xd6 \text{ e}f7$  gives Black active play for his pawn)  $11... \text{e}g8$   $12 \text{ 0-0 e}f7$   $13 \text{ d}xf8 \text{ e}xf8$   $14 \text{ f}4 \text{ e}g8$   $15 \text{ e}e3 \text{ e}xf4$   $16 \text{ e}xf4 \text{ w}c7$   $17 \text{ w}e2 \text{ d}e5$   $18 \text{ e}d4 \text{ e}f7$   $19 \text{ d}d1?$   $\text{e}af8$ , which is already better for Black, Van der Wiel-Portisch, Tilburg 1984.

### 8...e6

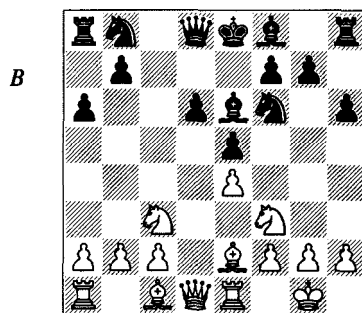
Further controlling  $d5$ , and putting paid to the possibility of White playing  $\text{e}c4$ .

### 9 e1 (D)

Smyslov's plan. White intends to defend his e-pawn by  $\text{e}f1$ , and then play an appropriate  $\text{d}d5$ . Following the inevitable exchange on  $d5$ , White will recapture with his e-pawn, and then push his queenside pawn-majority. At the same time White dissuades Black from the freeing move  $\text{...d}5$ , owing to the masked threat to the  $e5$ -pawn along the e-file. Other moves:

a)  $9 \text{ a}4 \text{ d}bd7$   $10 \text{ b}3 \text{ e}c8$   $11 \text{ e}b2$ , Ligerink-de Firmian, Lone Pine 1979, is simply met by  $11... \text{e}e7$  and  $\text{...0-0}$ .

b)  $9 \text{ h}3 \text{ e}e7$   $10 \text{ e}e3$  ( $10 \text{ e}e1$  is likely to transpose to the main line)  $10... \text{0-0}$   $11 \text{ d}h2 \text{ d}bd7$   $12 \text{ d}g4$  (this is an alternative method of trying to undermine Black's hold over  $d5$ , but it proves too time-consuming)  $12... \text{e}c8$   $13 \text{ d}xf6+$   $13 \text{ w}d2 \text{ e}e8$   $14 \text{ e}ad1 \text{ e}c6$   $15 \text{ d}xf6+$   $\text{d}xf6$   $16 \text{ f}4 \text{ w}c7$   $17 \text{ f}5 \text{ e}c4$   $18 \text{ e}c1 \text{ e}xe2$   $19 \text{ w}xe2 \text{ e}c8$  is also fine for Black, L. Smith-Martin del Campo, Elista OL 1998; Black went on to play a typical exchange sacrifice on  $c3$ )  $13... \text{d}xf6$   $14 \text{ f}4 \text{ e}xf4$   $15 \text{ e}xf4 \text{ d}d7$  (the  $e5$ -square beckons)  $16 \text{ e}f1 \text{ d}e5$   $17 \text{ e}h1 \text{ w}d7$   $18 \text{ d}d5 \text{ e}xd5$   $19 \text{ e}xd5 \text{ w}a4$  and Black is more active, Paulino-Ribeiro, Lisbon Cht 1998.



### 9...e7 10 e1 0-0 11 h3

In these lines, it is often a sound idea to defend against the possibility of Black playing  $\text{...e}g4$  or  $\text{...d}g4$  at some stage. An alternative plan was seen in Zapata-Olafsson, Belgrade 1988:  $11 \text{ b}3 \text{ d}bd7$   $12 \text{ a}4 \text{ b}6$   $13 \text{ e}b2 \text{ w}c7$   $14 \text{ h}3 \text{ e}fc8$   $15 \text{ w}d2 \text{ w}b7$   $16 \text{ e}ad1 \text{ e}f8$ , and Black has a pleasant position, and may threaten  $\text{...b}5$  soon.

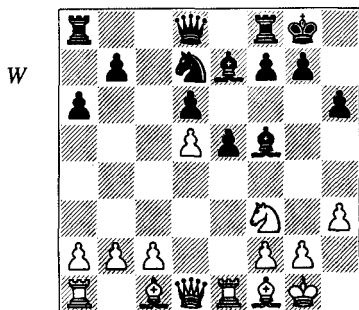
### 11...d7 12 d5

This is White's key idea. Actually, I do not think it is very good for White

as he thereby creates a mobile black kingside pawn-majority. Strangely, I also play a similar position for Black in the Boleslavsky Sicilian, with the black queen's knight on c6, instead of d7. In that position Black then plays the c6-knight to b8 and d7, losing two tempi on the Najdorf, and, despite this, I still prefer Black's chances!

Alternatively, White can continue his development and then play his knight to d5: 12 b3 ♖a5 13 ♖b2 ♜ac8 14 ♖d2 ♜fd8 15 a3 ♖f8 16 ♜ac1 b5 17 g3 ♜b6 18 ♖g2 ♜c5 19 ♜d5 ♜xd5 20 exd5 ♖f5 but Black's position is fine, Barua-Sanjivkumar, Calcutta 1994.

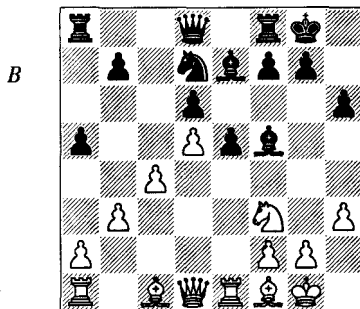
12...♜xd5 13 exd5 ♖f5 (D)



14 c4 a5

Instead, the 14...♜c8 15 b3 ♖h7 16 ♖b2 ♜e8 17 a3 ♖f6 of De Wit-Docx, Belgian Cht 1996 smacks of planlessness.

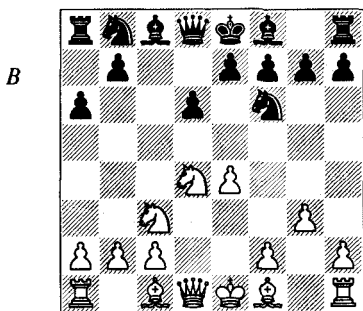
15 b3 (D)



This is Fleck-Ostermeyer, Porz 1988. Black is intending to set up a dark-squared barrier on the queenside. Now I like the plan 15...♖g6!, followed by ...f5, ...♖f6 and ...♖h5, pinning the f3-knight. The black e- and f-pawns are difficult to stop, and the e5-square will be freed for the d7-knight. Even if White does manage to advance his queenside majority, it will be too late to save his king.

# 5 6 g3

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4  
 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 g3 (D)



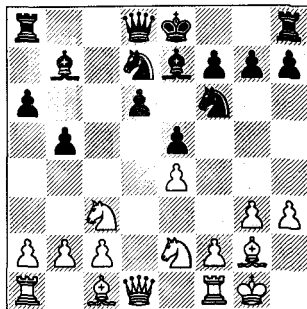
White prepares to fianchetto his king's bishop. This is one line where Black's 'Najdorf' move 6...e5 works rather well, as the white e4-pawn is thereby fixed on e4, and this will impede the scope of the white king's bishop on g2.

## White's Strategic Plan

White has a very clear and simple method to resolve the dilemma of having the two white knights defending each other. In Line A, he almost always plays his knight to g3, after preparation by h3 and g4. From here the knight can go to f5, to threaten the black kingside. In the diagram position, White has just played h3, and continues:

11 g4 b4 12 ♘d5 ♘xd5 13 exd5 a5  
 14 ♘g3

W



## Kamsky – Gelfand

Tilburg 1990

Plan achieved. This g3-knight is often usefully placed to defend the e4-pawn. Here, the e-pawn is now on d5, which frees a square for the knight on e4, to go with the one on f5.

14...g6?! 15 ♖h6

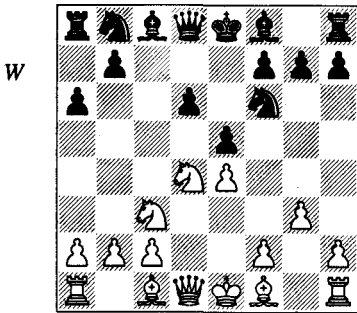
In trying to keep the knight away, Black has weakened his dark squares, which White exploits. Later on in this chapter, you will see that I propose playing ...g6, but with the king's bishop on f8, to guard these dark squares.

15...♗g5 16 ♘e4! ♗xh6?! 17  
 ♘xd6+ ♗f8 18 ♘xb7 ♖b6 19 d6 ♗f4  
 20 c4! ♗b8 21 ♖d5

White is winning.

## The Theory of 6 g3

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4  
 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 g3 e5 (D)



White must make a choice:

- A: 7 ♖de2 95  
 B: 7 ♖b3 99

The first is usual, intending kingside play, and the second is a more positional, queenside approach. 7 ♖f5?! is doubtful, however, and Black gains an appreciable advantage after 7...d5! 8 ♙g5 d4 9 ♙xf6 gxf6! 10 ♖e2 ♙xf5 11 exf5 ♜d5 12 ♜g1 ♖c6 13 ♙g2 e4 14 a3 0-0, Chistiakov-Stein, Odessa 1960.

**A)**  
 7 ♖de2

This knight does not seem to have great prospects at the moment, but often comes to the g3-square after White plays h3 and g4. This will give White a strong hold on the light squares, at the cost of his dark squares. White will be able to continue with kingside play, with a further ♖f5 or g5, or play on the queenside, or sometimes a combination of both.

7...♖bd7

Personally, I believe this to be the most flexible move. The knight is optimally placed on d7, for the moment. Black can add pressure to the e4-pawn

by a later ...♖c5, and then bring his knight to e6 to control important dark squares. Now comes a further division:

- A1: 8 a4 95  
 A2: 8 ♙g2 97

**A1)**

8 a4

This is probably the most accurate move, restraining Black's queenside expansion (with ...b5).

8...b6 9 ♙g2

Conceding the bishop-pair by 9 ♙g5 cannot promise White much. After 9...♙e7 10 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 11 ♙g2 ♙b7 12 0-0 ♜c8 13 ♜e1 Black continued in aggressive style in Christiansen-Van Wely, New York 1997: 13...h5!? 14 ♖f4 ♜c5 (14...exf4?! 15 e5 dxe5 16 ♙xb7 favours White) 15 ♖fd5 ♙xd5 16 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 17 exd5 ♜c8 18 c3 h4, but the opposite-coloured bishops make equality likely.

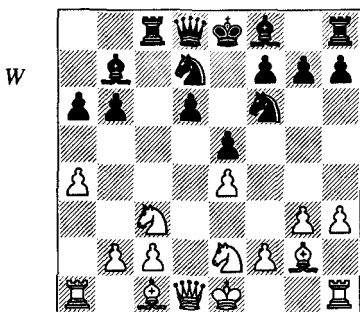
9...♙b7 10 h3

After 10 0-0 ♜c8, 11 h3 transposes to the note to White's 11th move, while after 11 ♖d5 ♖xd5 12 exd5, 12...g6 can safely be played, following up with ...♙g7, ...0-0 and ...f5.

10...♜c8! (D)

I like this move. 10...♙e7 and ...0-0 would be 'normal' here; later on Black will probably have to play ...g6 in order to keep the white king's knight out of f5. That being so, it seems to me that Black would be better off with his dark-squared bishop on g7 to defend his kingside dark squares. Therefore I recommend deferring kingside development until it becomes clear just what White is up to.

11 g4



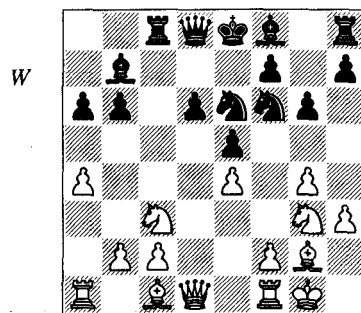
Black is ideally placed to counter this typical move. Alternatively, White can play the immediate 11 0-0, whereupon Black carries out his idea: 11...g6 12 ♖e3 (White decides to forego the g4 kingside advance, but he may encounter difficulties finding a good square for his e2-knight; 12 g4 ♘c5 13 ♘g3 transposes to the main line) 12...♗c7 (played to defend the d6-pawn, in readiness for ...♗g7, and also to pin the c3-knight against the c2-pawn, but 12...♘c5!, hitting the e4-pawn, is also a serious possibility; then 13 ♘d5 ♘xd5 14 exd5 ♗g7 is fine for Black) 13 f4 exf4! 14 ♘xf4 ♗g7 (this type of structure holds few terrors for Black as all his pieces will be active: the bishops have good diagonals, the rooks files, and the knights squares, particularly that on e5) 15 g4 h6 16 ♗d2 0-0 17 ♗d4 (if 17 ♗ad1 there is 17...♘e5!, defending the d-pawn by tactics: 18 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 19 ♗xd6 ♘c4, forking the rook and bishop) 17...♗fe8 and now:

a) 18 ♗f2?! (this mistake goes unpunished) 18...♗e7?! (the elementary 18...♗xe4! 19 ♘fd5 ♗xd5 20 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 21 ♗xd5 ♗e7 wins a healthy pawn, e.g. 22 ♗e3 ♘f6 23 ♗h1 ♘e4,

with advantage) 19 ♘fd5 ♗xd5 20 exd5 ♘e5 21 ♗af1? A.Ivanov-Kosten, Reykjavik tt 1990. Now 21...♘fxg4! 22 hxg4 ♘c4 should win, e.g. 23 ♗d3 (if 23 ♗f4 then 23...g5, winning material) 23...♘xb2 24 ♗d2 ♗xd4 25 ♗xd4 ♗xc3 with an enormous advantage. For the record, these missed chances proved costly, as this was the only game I ever lost for England.

b) 18 ♗ae1 is better, although after 18...♗c4! (planning various tactical operations against the d4-bishop) 19 b3 ♗b4, White's pieces are loose anyway.

11...♘c5 12 ♘g3 g6 13 0-0 ♘e6 (D)



From here the knight surveys the important dark squares d4, f4 and g5.

14 ♘d5 ♗g7 15 ♗e3

Or 15 ♗e1 with almost identical play: 15...0-0 16 c3 ♘xd5 17 exd5 ♘f4 18 ♗xf4 exf4 19 ♘e2 ♗g5 (19...♗c4! is also possible, to tempt White into playing b3, as in the main line, and stopping the knight from transferring to c6) 20 ♘d4 ♗c5 with equality, Kholmov-Fedorov, USSR 1981.

15...♘xd5 16 exd5 ♘f4 17 c3 0-0 18 ♗d2

18 ♖xf4 exf4 19 ♘e2 might be better, hoping to bring the knight to c6, via d4, with equality, as in the previous note, but Sutovsky's idea 19...♗c4! would work here, as well.

**18...♗c4!**

An intelligent move. White must force this piece away, but he can only do this by weakening his queenside and the a1-h8 diagonal.

**19 b3 ♗c8 20 ♗ac1 b5**

Black fixes the c-pawn on a dark square.

**21 axb5 axb5 22 ♖xf4 exf4 23 ♗xf4**

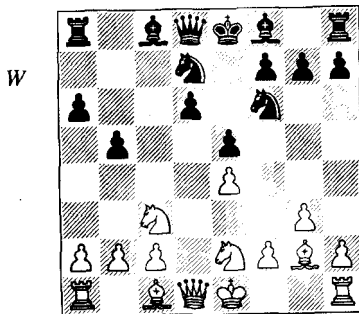
If White wants to eliminate this pawn, it is better to capture like this, since after 23 ♘e2 ♗e8, 24 ♘xf4? loses to 24...♗g5, but 24 ♘d4 is playable.

**23...♗xc3 24 ♗xc3 ♖xc3 25 ♘e4 ♖e5**

Black holds all the aces, Ginzburg-Sutovsky, Villa Martelli 1997. He has the bishop-pair and the possibility of opening the kingside by ...f5.

**A2)**

**8 ♖g2 b5 (D)**



**9 h3**

This is certainly the most forthright move, and also the most popular. White prepares to evacuate the g3-square for his e2-knight by playing g4. White can also try to play on the queenside:

a) 9 0-0 ♖b7 and now:

a1) 10 a4 b4 11 ♘d5 (after 11 ♘a2?! a5 12 c3 b3!? 13 ♗xb3 ♘c5 14 ♗d1 ♘cxe4 15 c4 ♗c8, Black has won White's central pawn, and controls the centre, Vasiukov-Khenkin, Leningrad 1991) 11...♘d5 12 exd5 ♗c8 13 c3 bxc3 14 ♘xc3 ♖e7 15 ♖e3 0-0 16 a5 f5 and Black has the better pawn-structure, Hernback-Ohlzon, Gotland 1997.

a2) 10 ♘d5 ♘d5 11 exd5 ♖e7 12 a4 0-0 13 ♖e3 ♘b6 14 axb5 ♘c4!? 15 bxa6 ♘xe3 16 axb7? (White enters into the complications, but never really gets any compensation for his material; 16 fxe3 is best, although after 16...♖xa6 17 ♗e1 ♗b6 18 ♗c1 ♗fb8, Black has a raging initiative) 16...♗xa1 17 ♗xa1 ♘xf1 18 ♖h3?! (18 ♖xf1 ♗c7 19 ♗a8 ♗b8 picks off the b7-pawn) 18...♘d2 19 ♖c8 ♗b6! 20 ♗a3 (20 ♗a8? ♘e4 and White is mated, extra queen or not) 20...♘e4 21 ♗e3 ♘c5 and Black's extra rook is decisive, Olsson-Hillarp Persson, Stockholm 1998.

a3) 10 h3 transposes to note 'a' to White's 10th move.

b) 9 a4 b4 10 ♘d5 ♘d5 11 exd5 (if 11 ♗xd5 then 11...♗c7! is good, preparing to expel the intruder, as after 12 a5 ♗b8 13 ♗d1 ♖b7 14 0-0 ♘c5 White is obliged to play the unattractive move 15 f3, when Black has a plus, Kholmov-Tseshkovsky, USSR 1978; note that 12 ♗xa8? ♘b6 traps the queen) 11...♖e7 12 0-0 0-0 13 a5

♖b8 14 ♙e3 ♜c7 15 ♜d2 ♘c5 16 ♘c1  
♜b5 with at least equality for Black,  
Hort-Zhu Chen, Roquebrune 1998.

c) 9 ♘d5 is similar, but worse, as  
Black has not been forced to loosen  
his queenside pawns. After 9...♘xd5  
10 ♜xd5 ♜c7! (again!) 11 ♘c3 ♙b7  
12 ♜d3 ♜c8 13 a3 ♙e7 14 0-0 0-0  
Black is fine, Kagan-Hamann, Lucerne  
1979.

### 9...♙b7

Incidentally, playing 9...b4 now  
might appear similar to all the previ-  
ous variations where White played a4  
and Black was forced to reply ...b4,  
but it is not so, for now, following 10  
♘d5 ♘xd5 11 exd5 a5 12 0-0 ♙a6,  
White's a-pawn is on a2, not a4, and  
he can attack Black's forward queen-  
side pawn by 13 a3, as in Svidler –  
Har-Zvi, Duisburg U-16 Wch 1992,  
with a slight plus to White. It is better  
for Black to keep the ...b4 move in re-  
serve until a time when it might do  
White some real harm.

### 10 g4

White continues his plan.

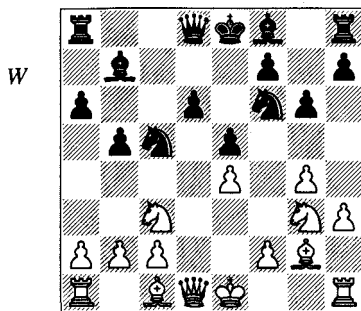
a) 10 0-0 is less accurate, since af-  
ter 10...♜c8, the move 11 g4 allows  
11...b4 12 ♘d5 ♘xd5 13 exd5 and  
now, instead of 13...♙e7 14 a3, Vasiu-  
kov-N.Littlewood, Hastings 1965/6,  
13...♜c7 14 c3 bxc3 solves all Black's  
problems.

b) 10 a3 has the merit of stopping  
...b4, but it is a little slow. 10...♜c8 11  
g4 ♘c5 12 ♘g3 g6 13 0-0 h5 gives  
similar play to that in the main line.

### 10...♘c5

With a dual purpose: providing a  
square (d7) for the f6-knight, in case  
White plays g5, and bringing the  
queen's knight to the e6-square.

### 11 ♘g3 g6! (D)



Controlling f5, and preparing ...h5  
to compromise the white kingside  
pawn-structure. Also, delaying the de-  
velopment of his king's bishop allows  
Black to consider the possibility of  
...♙g7 at some point.

### 12 a3

Preserving the c3-knight from at-  
tack by ...b4. After 12 0-0, 12...b4 13  
♘d5 ♘xd5 14 exd5 ♙g7 15 ♙e3 is  
OK for Black, Spangenberg-M.Röder,  
Buenos Aires 1998, but 12...h5!? is  
also very tempting, e.g. 13 g5 (13 gxh5  
♘xh5 14 ♘xh5 ♜xh5 with play down  
the h-file) 13...b4! 14 ♘d5 ♘xd5 15  
exd5 h4!? (15...♙g7!?) 16 ♘e4 ♘xe4  
17 ♙xe4 ♙e7!? with an attack on the  
g5-pawn, which can be augmented by  
...♜h5. 12...♘e6 is also possible, with  
similar play to the main line of Line  
A1.

12...h5!? 13 g5 ♘fd7 14 h4 ♜c7 15  
0-0 ♙g7 16 ♘ge2 ♘b6 17 b3 0-0

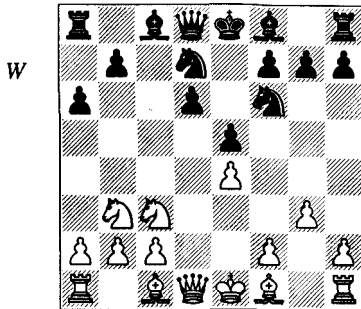
Black can look forward to the fu-  
ture with confidence, Molnar-Galla-  
gher, Lenk 1995. Black's pieces are  
very active and White's advanced  
kingside pawns are likely to prove too  
exposed.

B)

7 ♖b3

This is less worrying for Black, as White plays positionally, targeting the queenside, but rules out the lines involving kingside play. It is a speciality of Popović.

7...♗bd7 (D)



8 a4

White should certainly try to keep Black's queenside play under restraint. Both 8 ♗e3 b5 9 f3 ♗b7 10 a3 ♖c8 11 ♗h3 ♗e7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♗d2 ♗c7 14 ♖fd1 ♖fd8, Rizhkov-Ma.Tseitlin, USSR 1971, and 8 ♗g2 b5 9 0-0 ♗b7 10 a4 b4 11 ♗d5 ♗xd5 12 exd5 a5 13 f4 ♗e7 14 ♗e3 0-0, Am.Rodriguez-Tukmakov, Moscow 1985, are fine for Black. With the king's bishop on the closed h1-a8 diagonal, rather than on the f1-a6 diagonal as in 6 ♗e2 lines, White's control over the queenside is reduced. As a result, Black can expand on the queenside more confidently.

8...b6 9 ♗g2 ♗b7

Black continues his queenside development.

10 0-0

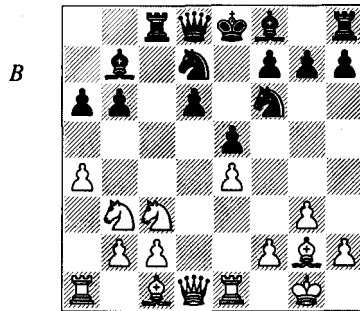
10 ♗d2!? ♖c8 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♖e1 transposes to the main line.

10...♖c8 11 ♖e1! (D)

Both defending e4 and freeing the f1-square for the knight manoeuvre ♗d2-f1-e3-d5. Other moves are too routine:

a) 11 ♗e2 ♗e7 12 ♖d1 0-0 13 ♗d2 ♖c7 14 ♗c1 ♗a8 15 ♗1a2 ♖fc8 and Black has the edge, T.Horvath-Wahls, Bundesliga 1995/6.

b) 11 ♗d5?! ♗xd5 12 exd5 and now Black can exploit that fact that he has delayed his kingside development by playing 12...g6 and ...♗g7, bringing this piece to a more active diagonal.



11...♗e7 12 ♗d2 ♖c5!

An important move. Black prepares to increase the pressure on e4 by ...♗a8, and this effectively cuts across White's plan. Black must be careful with his move-order though, as the 'obvious' 12...0-0?! is careless, and allows White to implement his plan: 13 ♗f1 ♗c5 14 ♗g5 ♗e6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♗e3 g6 17 ♗cd5 and White has piece control of d5, G.Kuzmin-Sakaev, Cappelle la Grande 1994.

13 ♗f1 ♗a8 14 ♗d3!

White has to defend, not only against the threats to the e4-pawn, but also

against possible exchange sacrifices, as we shall see if we examine the alternatives:

a) 14 ♖e3?! (continuing the plan, and hoping to obtain good compensation for the e-pawn) 14...♗xe4 15 ♗f5 ♗xc3 16 ♙xb7 ♗xb7 17 bxc3 g6 18 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 19 ♙a3 ♗hc8?! 20 ♙xc5 ♗xc5 21 ♗d2 ♗c6 and Black is better, Popović-King, Palma de Mallorca 1989. His position is very compact, and White's pawns are weak.

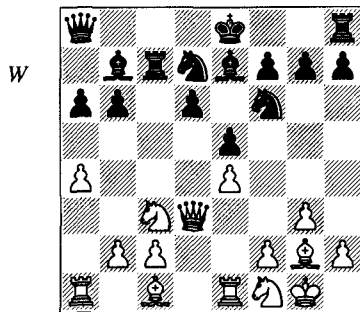
b) 14 g4!? ♗xc3! 15 bxc3 ♗xe4 16 ♗g3 ♗xg3 17 ♙xb7 ♗xb7 18 hxg3 0-0 19 ♙a3 ♗d8 gives Black good compensation for the exchange, Stoica-Stefanov, Romania 1988.

c) 14 ♙e3 is also met by 14...♗xc3! 15 bxc3 ♗xe4 16 c4 0-0 17 ♗d2 ♗xd2 18 ♙xb7 ♗xb7 19 ♗xd2 ♗c8, with similar ideas.

d) The other way of defending e4, 14 f3?!, is passive. Rather than the casual 14...0-0 15 ♗e3 g6 16 ♙h3 ♗d8 of Milosević-Chachere, Geneva 1992, which looks equal, the elementary 14...d5! is possible, e.g. 15 exd5 ♗xd5 16 ♗e4 ♗c7 and Black is better.

#### 14...♗c7 (D)

14...0-0?! allows White to complete his knight's journey: 15 ♗e3 g6 16 ♗c4 ♗b8 17 ♙e3 ♗cc8 18 ♗ad1 ♗c5 19 ♙xc5, and so to achieve an advantage, Popović-Stohl, Smokovec 1991. My suggestion is better, threatening ...♗c5, thus exploiting the white queen's advanced posting.



#### 15 b4!?

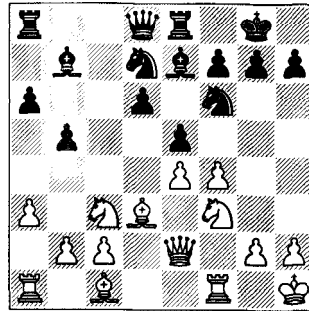
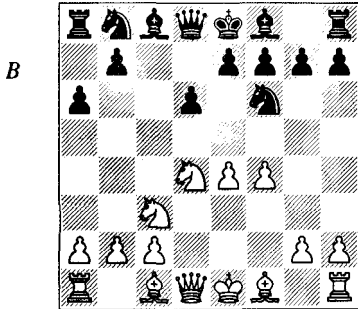
15 ♗e3 ♗c5 16 ♗c4 0-0 looks very uncomfortable for White.

#### 15...0-0 16 ♗e3 ♗fc8

Black has good prospects owing to the weakened white queenside.

# 6 6 f4

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4  
 ♜f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 f4 (D)



With this forceful move, White intends to attack on the kingside. He plays it immediately, so that if Black plays 6...e5, he will have a square for his d4-knight on the kingside without blocking the f-pawn.

However, the disadvantage of this system is the undermining of the dark squares (in particular the g1-a7 diagonal) and the weakening of the e-pawn, which can no longer be fortified by a fellow pawn, and will be fixed by Black's next move.

Black's ideal set-up would be something like that in the following diagram.

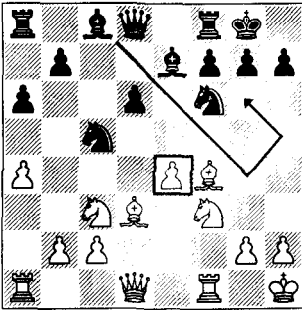
Black is ready to take on f4 to expose the e-pawn, and gain use of the e5-square, and prepared to play the ...d5 break should White become too exposed in the centre.

Much of this chapter is actually concerned with White's attempts to discourage this. First by playing 8 a4, to stop ...b5, and then by ruling out ...b6 and ...♗b7 as well, through the threat of bringing a knight to f5.

## The Queen's Bishop's Relocation

Assuming White has played his most accurate moves, Black is obliged to adopt a less aggressive posture, but that does not mean that he has to remain passive. He has several promising schemes, and the one that I will recommend, and I think is a very sound one, is the redeployment of the black queen's bishop to g6.

The key position is shown in the diagram overleaf (from Line A1). Here Black plays 12...♗g4, intending to go to g6 via g4 and h5. This pressurizes e4 (which is isolated, on an open file), and also helps defend the kingside (and control the f5-square). Another reason

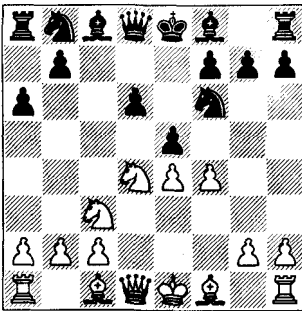


this move has become very popular is because of a common problem: not having enough room for all the pieces due to a lack of space. On h5 or g6, the bishop no longer impedes the other pieces in any way, for the queen's rook can go to c8, and the squares e6 and d7 are available for the knights, or even the queen.

### The Theory of 6 f4

1 e4 c5 2 f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 f4  
 5 f6 6 c3 a6 6 f4 e5 (D)

W



7 f3

The possibility of playing this move, attacking e5, is the point of playing such an early f4. Other tries:

a) 7 f5!? (this unusual move has been played by Losev) 7...d5 (it seems to me that this is a good reaction) 8 g3 (if 8 fxe5 then 8...xe4 9 xe4 xf5 10 g3 g6 11 c3 c6 12 f4 c5 is good for Black: e5 is weaker than d5, and White's kingside is compromised) 8...exf4 9 xf4 d4 10 e5!? (or else White is worse) 10...dxc3 11 xd8+ xd8 12 0-0-0+!? (well, I do not know what to say about this move; 'speculative' is perhaps the most apt description, but it is true that the alternative, 12 exf6 cxb2 13 b1 b4+, is slightly better for Black) 12...fd7 13 c4 e8 14 e6 fxe6 15 xe6 b4!? (of course, under practical conditions it is very difficult to choose the best defence from many different options, but 15...cxb2+ 16 xb2 c6 is also a natural line; for example, 17 he1 d8 18 d3 b6 19 d5 g5! should be good for Black) 16 f5 cxb2+ 17 xb2 g6 18 g7+ f8 (if 18...d8 then 19 b3 is also dangerous) 19 h6 and now after 19...e7?! 20 g5+ f6 21 hf1 f8 22 xc8 White has won back his piece with an advantage, Losev-Yuferov, Moscow 1990. 19...e7 looks better, not fearing the discovered check, e.g. 20 hf1+ f6+ 21 xf6+ xf6 22 f5+ e8 23 d6+ e7 24 xc8+ (or 24 xc8 bd7) 24...xe6 25 e1+! and White can possibly force a draw, e.g. 25...f5 26 d6+ g4 27 e3, but there are almost certainly better ways for Black to play this earlier on.

b) 7 b3 does not fit well with f4; White tends to find himself in an inferior version of 6 e2 lines. Black should simply develop his kingside, and then continue with ...b5 or ...b6 as

appropriate, followed by ...♙b7, eyeing the e4-pawn. Black should continue 7...♘bd7, and then:

b1) 8 a4 (if White wants to play on the kingside he should attempt to hold back Black's queenside counterplay) 8...♙e7 9 ♙e2 0-0 10 0-0 b6 (this aggressive plan is effective here, but difficult to execute when White's king's knight is on f3, as ♘h4-f5 will exploit the fact that Black's queen's bishop no longer exerts any influence over the critical f5-square) 11 ♙d3 (this concedes a tempo, but e4 needs defending; after 11 ♙f3 ♙b7 12 ♘h1 exf4 13 ♙xf4 ♘e5 14 ♘d4 g6 15 ♖e2 ♗e8 16 ♜ad1 ♘fd7 Black has a firm hold on e5 and pressure on e4, Hébert-Portisch, Rio de Janeiro IZ 1979) 11...♙b7 12 ♖e2 ♗e8 13 f5 (13 ♘h1 ♖c7 14 fxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♘d4 ♘xd3! 16 cxd3 d5! 17 ♘f5 dxe4 18 dxe4 ♙b4 gives Black a clear advantage, Korzubov-Novikov, USSR 1984) 13...d5! 14 ♘h1 dxe4 15 ♘xe4 ♖c7 16 ♙d2 ♙xe4 17 ♙xe4 ♘xe4 18 ♖xe4 ♘f6 19 ♖d3 e4 and Black has the initiative, Dolmatov-Ribli, Amsterdam 1980.

b2) 8 ♙d3 ♙e7 9 0-0 (9 ♖e2 0-0 10 ♙d2, Radulov-Sunye, Lucerne OL 1982, and now 10...b5 with similarly promising play) 9...b5 10 ♘h1 ♙b7 11 ♖e2 0-0 12 ♙d2 ♗e8 13 ♜ae1 exf4 14 ♙xf4 b4 15 ♘b1 ♘e5 leaves Black very active, Radulov-Sigurjonsson, Lucerne OL 1982.

b3) 8 ♙e3 and now 8...b5 9 a4 b4 10 ♘d5 ♙b7 11 ♙c4 ♜c8 12 ♖d3 ♘g4 13 ♙xa6 ♙xa6 14 ♖xa6 ♜xc2 was messy in Czebe-Vegh, Budapest 1998, but 8...♙e7, followed by ...0-0, is more straightforward.

7...♘bd7

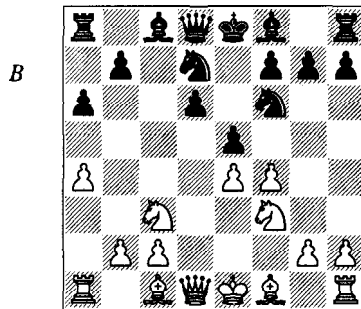
The simplest way to defend the e-pawn. Black will continue with ...♙e7 and ...0-0, tucking his king away, before deciding on his subsequent plan of action. Now White has:

A: 8 a4	103
B: 8 ♙c4	112
C: 8 ♙d3	113

Line A is the key variation; the older moves of B and C give Black an easy game.

A)

8 a4 (D)



White's most accurate move, clamping down on any black queenside expansion. This is almost invariably played nowadays.

8...♙e7

Now there are two important options:

A1: 9 ♙d3	103
A2: 9 ♙c4	109

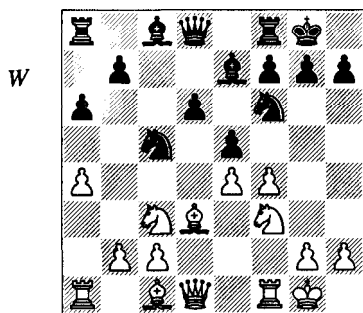
A1)

9 ♙d3

This move is the modern preference: less ambitious, certainly, but it allows White to finish his kingside

development while keeping his e-pawn well covered.

9...0-0 10 0-0 ♖c5 (D)



Black exploits a tactical nuance (as 11 fxe5?! dxe5 12 ♘xe5?? loses a piece immediately to 12...♗d4+) both to complete his minor-piece development, and to put the white light-squared bishop under surveillance.

11 ♖h1

The most logical, reapplying pressure on e5. Even when White does not play this move immediately, he will probably need to play it at some point soon, as otherwise the possibility of Black playing an unpleasant check on the g1-a7 diagonal will be a constant worry. Other, less common, moves:

a) 11 fxe5?! is a concession: White effectively swaps his f4-pawn for Black's d6-pawn and frees Black's game. As a general rule, this should only be played if it is associated with a clear plan. 11...dxe5 12 ♖h1 ♗d6! 13 ♗g5 ♗e6 14 ♗e2 ♠ac8 15 ♘h4 ♘xd3! 16 cxd3 ♠fd8 17 ♠ad1 and now, instead of 17...♗b3?!, when White initiated interesting complications by 18 ♘f5! ♗xd1 19 ♗xd1 ♗e6 20 ♘d5! in Gild.Garcia-Am.Rodriguez, Bogota

1992, the move 17...♗g4! maintains Black's advantage after 18 ♘f3 ♗e6.

b) 11 ♗e2?! exf4 12 ♗xf4 ♗g4 13 ♖h1 transposes to note 'a' to White's 13th move.

c) 11 ♗e1 exf4 12 ♗xf4 and now 12...♘xd3 13 cxd3 d5 14 e5 ♘e8 15 ♗g3 ♗f5 16 ♠ad1 ♘c7 17 ♗g5 ♗g6 18 ♗xe7 ♗xe7, Z.Almasi-Loginov, Kobanya 1991, is a straightforward method of equalizing, but 12...♗g4 is more ambitious, and will transpose to Line A11 after 13 ♖h1.

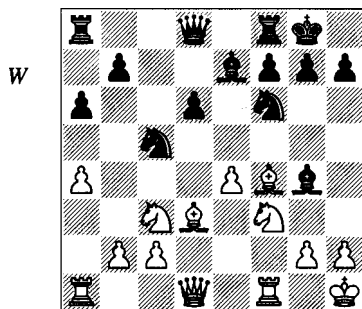
d) Should White attempt to squeeze Black on the kingside by 11 f5?! then Black is well placed for the thematic central reaction, 11...d5, which gives White problems.

e) 11 a5 suffers from not attacking e5, as the white king is still on the open g1-a7 diagonal. 11...b5 is a good reply, as 12 axb6 ♗xb6 13 ♖h1 exf4 is good for Black.

11...exf4

Black has to concede the centre but in return will enjoy active piece-play. The pawn-structure that has arisen (white e4-pawn vs black d6-pawn) is typical of various lines in the Sicilian, and also of the Ruy Lopez.

12 ♗xf4 ♗g4 (D)



An odd-looking move in the Najdorf, as this bishop normally finds itself on b7 or e6 (to cover d5). Here it intends to go to h5, and then g6, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Now White has a wide choice:

**A11:** 13 ♖e1 105

**A12:** 13 ♗e3 106

**A13:** 13 ♖d2 108

Or:

a) 13 ♖e2?! (not an especially good square for the queen) 13...♗e8 (after this there is no obviously good square for the white queen to go to, and the e-file is unlikely to prove a very happy resting place) 14 ♖d2 (losing a whole tempo on Line A13) 14...♗c8 15 ♗ae1 ♖b6!? (the most aggressive, but a standard move like 15...♗h5, intending ...♗g6, is clearly going to be fine too) 16 e5 ♗xd3?! (starting some wild complications involving this knight) 17 exf6 (17 cxd3 dxe5 18 ♗xe5 ♗e6 is slightly better for Black) 17...♗xe1 18 ♗d5 ♗xf3 19 gxf3 ♖c6 20 fxe7?! (it is difficult to believe that this is good; 20 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 21 fxe7 ♗xf3+ 22 ♖g1 may not be too bad, as although the white king is exposed, the e7-pawn may prove useful) 20...♗h5 and Black soon won in Koelle-Stangl, Bundesliga 1991/2.

b) 13 h3?! (chasing the g4-bishop to where it wants to go, and weakening the kingside to boot; not bad for one move!) 13...♗h5 14 ♖e1 ♗e8 15 ♗d4 ♗g6 16 ♗d1 1/2-1/2 Nunn-Portisch, Amsterdam 1990. This is obviously a position that is eminently playable for Black, for, amongst other things, 16...♗fxe4!, exploiting the queen's awkward placing on the e-file,

is tempting. Then 17 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♗h4 (or 18...♗f8) seems winning.

### A11)

#### 13 ♖e1 ♗c8

This is probably the most useful move here. 13...♗c8 is also OK, but is slightly less precise because after 14 ♖g3 ♗h5 15 ♗e3, Black has to play 15...♗xd3, for if 15...♗c8 then 16 ♗d4 and ♗f5 is annoying. Thus we see the advantage of playing the rook to c8 immediately: Black defends against any awkward switching of lines by White. Following the further 16 cxd3 ♗g6 17 ♗d4 White is a little better, Z.Almasi-Loginov, Budapest 1991. 13...♗h5 can be countered by the awkward move 14 ♗h4, threatening ♗f5, as the trick 14...♗fxe4? loses to 15 ♗f5 ♗xc3 16 ♗xe7+, because of the white queen's presence on the e-file.

#### 14 ♖g3

The most direct. Alternatives:

a) 14 ♗d4 was played in the game J.Polgar-Anand, Buenos Aires 1994, but 14...♖b6! was a searching reply, threatening to take on d3, winning the loose d4-knight. White tried 15 ♗e2!? (Anand indicates that 15 a5! is the best, when Black would be unwise to capture the b-pawn, so should play 15...♗xd3 16 axb6 ♗xe1 17 ♗axe1 ♗c4!?, which appears equal, e.g. 18 ♗f5 ♗xf5 19 exf5 ♗e8) 15...♗xe2 16 ♖xe2 ♗fe8! 17 ♗f5 ♖xb2 18 ♗d5 (18 ♖f3!? seems interesting, as after 18...♖xc2, 19 ♗ac1 is very strong, so Black has to try 18...♗cd7!, which brings a piece back to the defence of the king, with gain of tempo) 18...♗xd5

19 ♖g4! ♜f6!, and after further complications Black reached a superior endgame.

b) 14 ♖d1 (this sensible move certainly puts paid to any ideas Black may have had of playing ...d5; the main disadvantage is that the f3-knight is now genuinely pinned, and so Black does not have to concern himself with its possible hops to f5, as in other lines) and now 14...♜e8!? 15 a5 ♘a4 16 ♘xa4 ♜xa4 17 b3 ♜c6 was not too bad in Sukhorukov-Odeev, Moscow 1991, but 14...♘h5!? 15 ♙e3 ♙f6 is an interesting way of trying to exploit the tactics of the position. Alternatively, 14...♞e8 is also reasonable; if 15 ♖g3 then 15...♜d7, eyeing the a4-pawn and threatening ...♘h5, e.g. 16 h3 ♘h5!, and if 15 e5 then 15...♘h5 16 ♙e3 ♘d3 17 ♞xd3 ♜c7 seems good.

#### 14...♙h5

This is sensible, continuing the black plan, but I wonder why no one has tried 14...♜d7 as there is an immediate threat of 15...♘h5 (which wins a piece) for White to contend with. If 15 ♙e3 then 15...♞fe8 is reasonable, while the sharp 15...♘h5 16 ♜f2 ♘d3 17 cxd3 f5 is not without its points.

#### 15 ♙e3

15 ♞ae1 ♙g6 16 ♙g5 (else ...♘h5) 16...♞e8 17 ♜h3 (Lau-Hözl, Graz 1993) 17...h6 18 ♙f4 d5 19 e5 ♘fe4 should be good for Black.

#### 15...♙g6 16 ♙d4

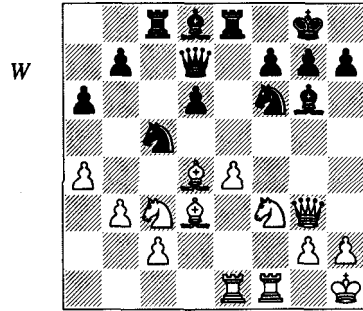
White had to defend the e-pawn.

#### 16...♞e8

Presumably 16...♘e6 17 ♙e3 ♘c5 would be a draw.

#### 17 ♞ae1 ♜d7 18 b3 ♙d8 (D)

#### 19 ♘h4 ♘h5 20 ♜f2 ♘d3



20...♙xh4 21 ♜xh4 ♘e6 might be safer.

#### 21 cxd3 ♘f6 22 h3?!

The simple 22 ♘xg6 hxg6 23 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 24 ♘d5 should favour White.

#### 22...♜e6!

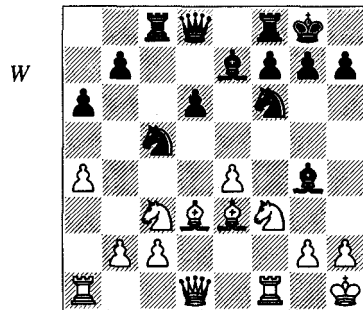
Now Black is fine, Sherzer-Wolff, New York 1994. If 23 ♘xg6 then Black continues 23...hxg6 24 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 25 ♜xf6 ♙xf6 26 ♘d5 ♙d4.

#### A12)

#### 13 ♙e3

Threatening 14 ♙xc5 and 15 e5, liberating the white position, and forcing Black's reply.

#### 13...♞c8 (D)



#### 14 ♜d2

Alternatives:

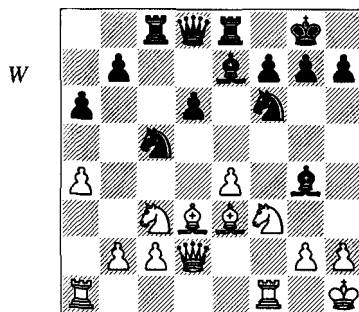
a) 14 ♖e1!? (this should be slightly weaker, and I would be tempted to play 14...♞e8 with similar play to 14 ♖d2 ♞e8, e.g. 15 ♖f2?!, transposing to note 'b' to White's 15th move, or 15 a5 ♟h5 16 ♟d4 ♟g4, but in practice it has not occurred) 14...♟h5 15 ♟d4 (15 ♖g3 transposes to Line A11) 15...♟g4!? 16 ♟d5 (this seems better than 16 ♟g1?! ♟h4 17 ♖d2 ♟g5 18 ♖e2 ♟f6 19 ♖f2 ♞e8 20 ♞ael ♟g4 21 ♖f3 ♟d2!, with a clear advantage, or 16 ♟f4?! ♟e6! 17 ♟f5 ♟xf4 18 ♟xe7+ {18 ♞xf4 ♟f6} 18...♖xe7 19 ♞xf4, when, instead of 19...♟e5? 20 ♟d5 ♖d8 21 ♖h4!, when Black is lost because of the double threat, Kindermann-Enders, Ptuj Z 1995, 19...♖e5 20 ♖g3 ♟f6 21 ♞af1 ♟g6 is very much to Black's liking) 16...♟h4 17 ♖d2 ♞e8 18 ♟f5 ♟xe3 19 ♖xe3 ♟g6 20 ♖d4 ♞e5 21 a5 ♟xf5 22 ♞xf5 ♞xf5 23 exf5 ♟xd3 24 ♖xd3 ♟f6 with equality, Kindermann-de Firmian, Biel 1995.

b) 14 a5 ♟h5 (the useful move 14...♞e8 is worth considering, either now or on the next move) 15 ♟d4 ♟e6 16 ♟b6 ♖d7 17 ♖d2 (Zso.Polgar-Kaspi, Tel-Aviv Czerniak mem 1996) 17...♟d8 18 ♟d5 ♟xd5 19 exd5 ♟c5 is equal.

14...♞e8 (D)

The most natural move, bringing the king's rook to its best square. 14...♟h5?! is less accurate, for after 15 ♟d4 ♟g6 (although, even here, after 15...♟g4 16 ♟f4, Dvoirys-Baginskaite, Berlin 1995, the line 16...♟g6 17 ♟f5 ♟xf5 18 exf5 ♟f6 should be playable for Black – compare with the main line) 16 ♟f5 ♟xf5 17 ♞xf5

White has a slight advantage, whereas after 14...♞e8, if White tries the same plan of ♟d4-f5, Black saves two tempi by capturing with his bishop from g4, instead of g6.



15 a5

a) 15 ♟d4 (this is a tacit draw offer) 15...♟e6 16 ♟e3 ♟c5 17 ♟d4 ♟e6 1/2-1/2 A.Sokolov-Palac, French Cht (Mulhouse) 1998.

b) 15 ♖f2?! (this is, perhaps, not the happiest square for the queen) 15...♟h5 (threatening ...♟g4; White cannot afford to do without his most effective bishop) 16 ♟d4 ♟g6 17 ♞ael ♟e6 (pestering the white queen's bishop again) 18 ♟b6 ♟g4! (this must have come as a surprise) 19 ♖g1 (awkward, but after 19 ♟xd8 ♟xf2+ 20 ♞xf2 ♟xd8, Black has a clear edge; the d8-bishop will dominate the dark squares) 19...♖d7 20 ♞d1 ♟f6 21 ♟d5 ♟xb2 22 ♞b1 ♟a3 23 h3 ♟e5 24 ♟e3 ♟c5 25 ♟b6 ♟xb6 26 ♞xb6 ♟xf3 27 gxf3 d5 28 a5 dxe4 29 fxe4 ♟c5!, discovering an attack on h3, and winning, De Vreugt-Neverov, Dieren 1998.

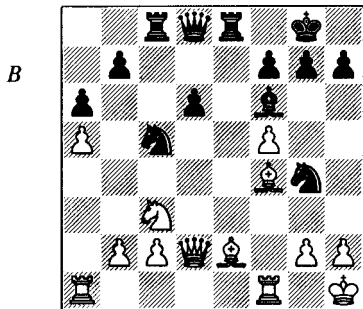
c) 15 ♟d4 ♖d7 16 ♞f4 ♟d8! (a nice move; the dark-squared bishop is

ready to operate on both sides of the board, as necessary) 17 a5 ♖h5 18 ♖ff1 ♜f6 19 ♖f4 ♜h5 (if Black desires to play on, and he has certainly every reason to, then he can consider a number of alternatives, e.g. 19...♜e6) 20 ♖ff1 ♜f6 1/2-1/2 A.Sokolov-Gallagher, Cannes 1998.

15...♙h5 16 ♜d4 ♜g4!

The immediate 16...♙g6 allows White to recapture on f5 with a piece, viz. 17 ♜f5 ♙xf5 18 ♖xf5. After the text-move, the f-file is blocked by the f4-bishop.

17 ♙f4 ♙g6 18 ♜f5 ♙xf5 19 exf5 ♙f6 20 ♙e2 (D)



This allows a neat combination, but finding a better move is not easy.

20...♙xc3! 21 bxc3 ♜e4 22 ♖d4 ♖h4 23 ♙xg4 ♖xg4 24 ♖ab1 ♜xc3 25 ♖xb7

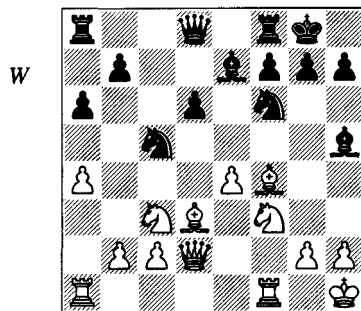
Now, rather than 25...♜e2?, which threw away the advantage in Arakhamia-de Firmian, Lucerne Wcht 1997, 25...♖e2 forces 26 ♖g1, and after 26...♜e4 White is completely dominated.

A13)

13 ♖d2

This is logical. White intends ♖ae1 and ♜d4 or e5.

13...♙h5 (D)



Now this move is the safest, as White's potential kingside initiative must be neutralized.

14 ♖ae1

Others:

a) 14 ♜d4 is not very effective, as after 14...♙g6 15 ♜f5 ♙xf5 White has to recapture on f5 with his e-pawn, when Black has a satisfactory isolated queen's pawn position. In particular he can use the e4-square for a knight as White's f-pawn can no longer control it: 16 exf5 d5 17 ♙e5 ♜cd7 18 ♙d4 ♙c5 19 ♙e2 (or 19 ♖f4 1/2-1/2 Milos-Brunner, Buenos Aires 1992) 19...♖c8 20 ♙xc5 ♜xc5 21 ♖d4 ♖e8 22 ♙f3 ♜ce4 and Black is better, Kogan-Grünfeld, Jerusalem 1996.

b) 14 ♙e3 appears to be critical. If Black plays 14...♖c8 to defend against ♙xc5 (which is the threat; for example, 14...♖e8?! 15 ♙xc5 dxc5 16 e5), White will reply 15 ♜d4, followed by ♜f5. Although this is far from disastrous, I suggest that Black should instead try 14...♜xd3 15 ♖xd3 (or 15 cxd3 d5 16 e5 ♜e8) 15...♙g6.

c) 14 b4 is similar to the main line: 14...♟xd3 15 cxd3 d5 16 e5 ♞e8 17 ♞e2 ♞c7 18 ♞g3 ♟g6 19 ♞d4 ♞d7 20 ♟g5 ♞fe8 21 ♟xe7 ♞xe7 22 ♞ae1 ♞ae8 23 ♞f4 ♞e6, with advantage to Black owing to White's weak queenside pawns, Kosashvili-Grünfeld, Haifa 1995.

#### 14...♟g6

It is important to hit the e4-pawn, as, unlike in Line A12, 14...♞e8 can be answered by 15 ♟c4! with an active set-up, Beliavsky-Nunn, Munich 1991.

#### 15 b4

The white pieces seem set, but Black was ready to play ...d5, e.g. 15 ♞d4 d5! 16 e5 (16 exd5 ♟xd3 17 cxd3 ♟xd5 18 ♟xd5 ♞xd5 is equal) 16...♞fe4 17 ♟xe4 ♞xe4 18 ♞xe4 ♟xe4 19 c4 ♟g6 20 cxd5 ♞xd5 21 ♞f5 ♞e6 22 ♞xe7+ ♞xe7 23 ♞d6 ♞e6 and Black has a nominal advantage, although a draw seems certain, A.Sokolov-Zagrebelny, Moscow 1996.

15 ♟g3?! is not a particularly useful move: 15...♞c8 16 b4 ♟xd3 17 cxd3 (17 ♞xd3? ♞xe4 18 ♞xe4 d5 wins) 17...d5! 18 ♟xd5 (18 e5? loses to 18...♟xb4) 18...♟xd5 19 exd5 ♟f6 20 ♟e5! (20 ♞e5 ♟xe5 21 ♞xe5 f6, followed by ...♞xd5, is advantageous for Black as White's pawn-structure is very loose) 20...♟xe5 21 ♞xe5 ♞xd5 22 h3 ♞fe8 23 ♞f4 ♞e6!? 24 ♞xg6 ♞xg6 and White should, with care, be able to draw, Kamsky-Ivanchuk, Lucerne Wcht 1993.

#### 15...♟xd3 16 cxd3

With the b-pawn on b4, and no longer supporting the c3-knight, 16 ♞xd3 is met by 16...♞c8 with pressure along the c-file.

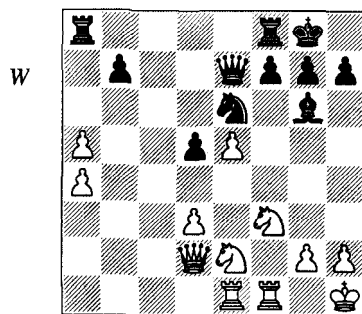
#### 16...d5 17 e5

17 ♟xd5 ♟xd5 18 exd5 ♟d6 is equal, as Black is sure to win the d5-pawn.

#### 17...♞e8!

Once again Black plays this key move. The knight is heading for the powerful blockading square e6, via c7.

18 ♟g5 ♞c7 19 ♟xe7 ♞xe7 20 ♞e2 a5! 21 bxa5 ♞e6 (D)



#### 22 ♞fd4 ♟xd4 23 ♟xd4 ♞a3!

Not for the first time, the white queenside pawns are very weak.

24 ♞f5 ♟xf5 25 ♞xf5 ♞xa4 26 ♞ef1 ♞xa5!

Z.Almasi-Oll, Erevan OL 1996. Black is better, and went on to win.

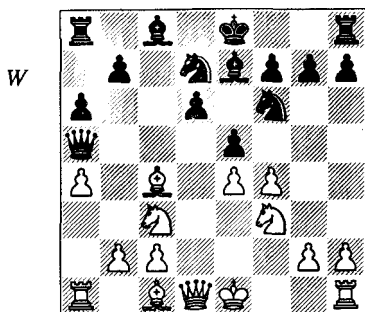
#### A2)

#### 9 ♟c4

This move is more aggressive, as the a2-g8 diagonal is clearly vulnerable, but the bishop is also more exposed, and more committed – it will soon be unable to defend the e4-pawn, for instance.

#### 9...♞a5 (D)

A tricky little move, pinning the c3-knight, and threatening to whip off the e4-pawn, but there is also the point



that the obvious 10 0-0?? loses a piece to 10...♖c5+; who knows? White has several replies:

**A21: 10 ♖e2** 110

**A22: 10 ♘a2?!** 111

**A23: 10 ♘d2** 111

Or:

a) 10 fxe5?! (this central surrender is simply met) 10...♗xe5 11 ♗xe5 dxe5 12 ♘d2?! ♖c5 13 ♘d3 ♘g4 14 ♖c1 ♘e6 15 ♘e3 ♖c6 16 h3 ♘b4 17 ♘d2 0-0 leaves Black better as the e4-pawn is going west, Short-Psakhis, Lvov 1984.

b) 10 ♘d5?! (the light-squared bishop is too important a piece to be conceded so easily) 10...♗xd5 11 ♖xd5 ♖c7 12 f5 (trying to keep a clamp on the light squares, as otherwise Black is better; for example, 12 0-0 ♗f6 13 ♖d3 ♘e6 14 b3 ♖c8 15 fxe5 dxe5 16 ♘b2 0-0 17 ♖ac1 ♖fd8, J.W.Nielsen-Wolski, Copenhagen 1996) 12...♗f6 13 ♖d3 h6 14 ♘e3 ♘d7 15 ♗d2 (the ending following 15 a5 ♖c8 16 ♘b6 ♖c4 is pleasant for Black because of his light-squared bishop and the frailty of e4, Yilmaz-Novikov, Forli 1991) 15...♖c8 16 a5 d5! 17 exd5 ♘b4 18 ♘b6 ♖d6 19 0-0 ♘xc3 20 bxc3 ♖xd5

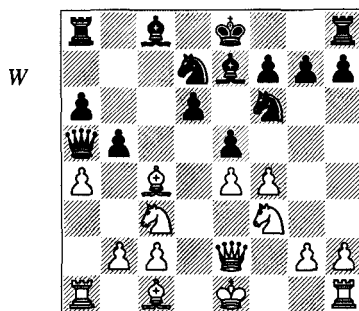
and Black enjoys the better structure, Dolmatov-Georgadze, Erevan 1982.

**A21)**

10 ♖e2

Best, defending both the e-pawn and the c4-bishop.

10...b5 (D)



An aggressive move, exploiting the various pins to gain space on the queenside.

**11 ♘a2**

Threatening to capture the b5-pawn. 11 ♘b3 is inferior, as the pin on the a4-pawn is unbroken and Black can simply continue 11...♘b7 and, having further controlled d5, 12...b4 becomes a very real threat.

**11...bxa4**

This move is played, not to win a pawn, as White can take it back at any moment, but to gain time. Sooner or later, White will need to recapture it, when one of his pieces will transfer to a temporarily offside position.

**12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖h1**

This move is always a useful precaution for White in this variation, but immediately recapturing the a4-pawn is also possible: 13 ♗xa4 ♘b7 14 ♗c3

(with a serious threat!) 14...♖c7 15 ♖h1 ♜ae8 and Black intends strong pressure on the e4-pawn, Mrva-Forster, Mitropa Cup (Montecatini Terme) 1997.

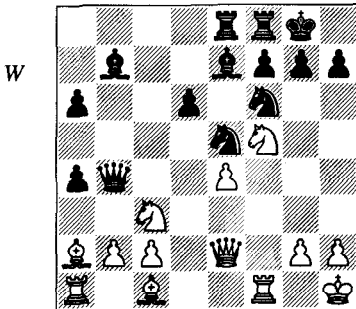
13...♙b7 14 ♘h4

Aiming for the sensitive f5-square. If White does not play this way he can easily be worse: 14 ♘d2?! ♘c5 15 ♘c4 ♖c7 16 fxe5 dxe5 17 ♜f5 ♜ae8! (revealing the threat of capturing the e5-pawn to be illusory; Black is ahead in development and is perfectly happy to see the e-file opened) 18 ♜xe5 ♙d6 19 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 20 ♘xd6 ♖xd6 21 ♙e3 ♘cxe4 22 ♖c4 (this move proves inadequate, but White is clearly worse in any case) 22...♘xc3! 23 bxc3 ♙xg2+! 24 ♖xg2 ♜xe3 25 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 26 ♜d1 ♖b8 and White is completely lost, Gild.Garcia-Van den Doel, Amsterdam 1996. His exposed king should soon be mated.

14...♜ae8

Once again, the weak white e4-pawn is Black's target.

15 ♘f5 ♖b4 16 fxe5 ♘xe5 (D)



17 ♙d2

Now, instead of the exchange sacrifice 17...♙d8? 18 ♘d5 ♖xe4 19 ♘xf6+

♙xf6 20 ♖xe4 ♙xe4 21 ♘xd6 ♙xc2 22 ♘xe8 ♜xe8 23 ♙c3, when White has a slight edge, Dolmatov-Ftačnik, Moscow 1985, Black should escape from the d2-bishop's attentions by 17...♖c5 with a good position, e.g. 18 ♘xa4 ♖b5! 19 ♘xe7+ ♜xe7 20 ♖xb5 axb5 21 ♘c3 ♘xe4 22 ♘xe4 ♙xe4, when White's bishop-pair provides insufficient compensation for the pawn.

### A22)

10 ♙a2?!

An overly ambitious pawn sacrifice.

10...♘xe4 11 ♖d5 ♖xd5 12 ♘xd5 ♙d8 13 0-0 ♘df6!?

Owing to the possible exchange sacrifice in the note to move 14, 13...♘ef6 might be better, firmly hanging on to the pawn, e.g. 14 ♘xf6+ ♙xf6.

14 ♜e1

After 14 fxe5 ♘xd5, 15 ♜e1 transposes, but 15 ♙xd5! ♙b6+ 16 ♖h1 ♘f2+ 17 ♜xf2 ♙xf2 18 exd6 offers interesting compensation for the sacrificed exchange, although 18...f6!? 19 ♙f4 g5 is promising for Black anyway.

14...♘xd5 15 fxe5 ♙b6+ 16 ♖f1 ♘b4

Picking up the bishop-pair with the 'desperado' knights.

17 ♜xe4 ♘xa2 18 exd6+ ♙e6 19 ♜xa2 0-0-0 20 ♜a3 ♜xd6

Black enjoys an edge, Lukin-Zaichik, USSR Ch 1982.

### A23)

10 ♙d2

Unpinning the c3-knight, with vague threats of discovering an attack on the black queen.

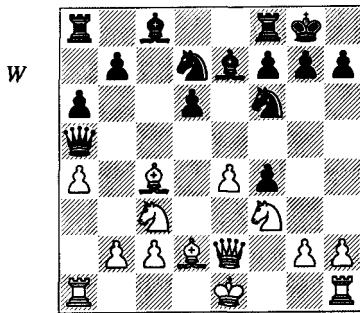
10...exf4!

Nevertheless, the bishop cannot be in two places at once, and it turns out that 'the execution is weaker than the threat'!

11 ♖e2

The tactical operation 11 ♖xf7+? fails to 11...♗xf7 12 ♘d5 ♛c5! 13 ♔g5+ ♖e8 14 ♘e6 ♛c4 15 ♘dc7+ ♗f7 16 ♘xa8 ♛xe6.

11...0-0 (D)



12 ♘d5

The meek 12 0-0 is too accommodating: 12...♘e5 13 ♖b3 ♖e6 14 ♖xf4 ♘xf3+ 15 ♛xf3 ♖xb3 16 cxb3 ♖ae8 17 ♖h1 ♛b4, with good play, Smirin-Kengis, Moscow OL 1994.

12...♛d8 13 ♖xf4 ♘xd5 14 ♖xd5 ♘f6 15 ♖b3!?

15 0-0 may be more sensible. After 15...♘d5 16 exd5 ♖f6 17 c3 ♖e8 18 ♛f2 ♖f5 White has chances of equalizing, Stoica-L.Spasov, Albena 1983.

15...♛a5+ 16 ♖d2 ♛c5

Black takes time out to stop the white king fleeing to the kingside.

17 ♖c3 ♖d7 18 ♖d1 ♖c6 19 ♖d4 ♖ae8

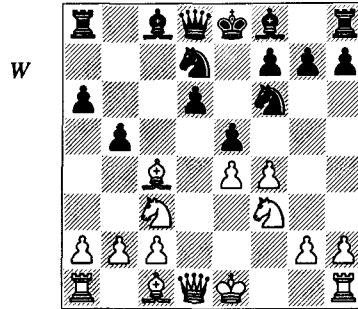
White is in trouble because of the threat to capture on e4, Lanc-Novikov, Poznan 1985.

B)

8 ♖c4

While appearing perfectly logical (Black's 7th move has weakened the a2-g8 diagonal), this is premature, and emphasizes the importance of 8 a4.

8...b5 (D)



9 ♖b3

9 ♖d5 fails in its objective of controlling d5. 9...♖b8! and now:

a) 10 ♔g5 ♘xd5 11 ♛xd5 ♛e7 12 0-0 (preventing ...b4 by 12 a3 does not stop the white pieces being driven back either: 12...♖b7 13 ♛d1 h6 14 ♘f3 ♘f6 15 0-0 ♛c7, followed by 16...♖e7, with a good position; the b7-bishop is particularly strong) 12...h6 13 ♘f3 b4 14 ♘e2 ♖b7 15 ♛d1 ♘f6 16 c3 ♖xe4 and White is struggling, Korchnoi-Hort, Zurich 1984.

b) 10 fxе5 dxe5 11 ♖g5 (11 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 12 ♘xe5+ ♖g8 13 ♘c6 ♛b6 is nothing for White) 11...♖b4 12 ♖xf6 ♖xc3+ 13 bxc3 ♛xf6 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♖h1 ♛e7 16 a4 ♘f6 and Black can have no complaints, Hort-Andersson, Wijk aan Zee 1979.

9...♖e7 10 0-0

The move 10 a4 is out of place here, because Black can play the standard

counter-offensive: 10...♙b7 11 ♖e2 (alternatively, 11 axb5 axb5 12 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 13 ♘d5 ♘xd5 14 ♙xd5 exf4 15 ♖d3 ♙xd5 16 exd5 ♖a5+, with an edge to Black, Djurić-Ortega, Cienfuegos 1989) 11...0-0 12 0-0 ♘c5 13 axb5 ♘xb3 14 cxb3 axb5 15 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 16 fxe5 dxe5 17 ♘xe5 b4 and White's position is falling apart, Durão-Li Ruofan, Beijing 1997.

### 10...0-0 11 ♖h1

White's customary prophylactic king move. 11 ♘d5 is too naïve: 11...♙b7 12 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 13 fxe5 dxe5 14 ♖xd8 ♖axd8 15 ♘xe5 ♙c5+ 16 ♖h1 ♘xe4! and White is in a bad way, Mokry-Schumi, Austria 1995; 11 fxe5 dxe5 12 ♘h4 can be met by 12...♘c5.

### 11...♙b7 12 ♖e2

A similar idea is 12 ♖e1 ♘c5 13 fxe5 dxe5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xb3 15 cxb3 b4 16 ♘a4 ♘xe4, but, once again, the black bishops dominate the board, Yilmaz-Savon, Simferopol 1992.

### 12...♘c5 13 fxe5 ♘fxe4

Perfectly adequate, but 13...dxe5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xb3 could also be played, as in the previous note.

### 14 ♘xe4 ♙xe4 15 exd6 ♖xd6

The game is equal, Zuidema-Donner, Wijk aan Zee 1973.

## C)

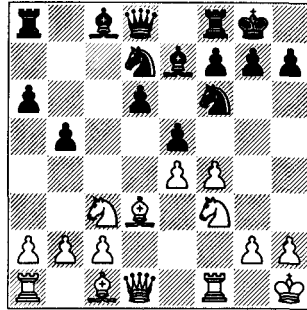
### 8 ♙d3 b5

As in Line B, the white set-up is geared towards a kingside attack. Therefore Black need not fear creating any queenside weaknesses, as White is less likely to be able to exploit them than in the 6 ♙e2 lines, for instance.

### 9 0-0 ♙e7 10 ♖h1 0-0 (D)

I believe Black's move-order here to be the most accurate: he first plays

W



...b5 (before White gets a chance to rectify his earlier omission, and play a4), and then finishes his kingside development. The queen's bishop is left on c8 until the black king is safe; it might be needed to control f5, for instance, if White plays a quick ♘h4.

### 11 a3

The best move, as otherwise ...b4 is a useful resource for Black. Instead, 11 ♖e2 ♙b7 12 a3 (Vujaković-Wolski, Bern 1990) will transpose to the main line after 12...♖e8.

11 ♖e1 is also common; 11...♙b7 and then:

a) 12 fxe5 ♘xe5! (an important move, proposing to exchange White's f3-knight before it can come to f5) 13 a3 (there's no time for 13 ♘d4 because of the annoying reply 13...b4) 13...♘xf3 14 gxf3 ♖e8 15 ♖g3 g6 16 ♖h3 d5! 17 e5 ♖d7 18 ♖g2 ♘h5 19 ♙h6 ♙c5 20 f4? (this loses, but White is worse anyway) 20...f5, and there is nothing to be done about the opening of the a8-h1 diagonal by ...d4, Dvoirys-Nevevov, Helsinki 1992.

b) 12 b4 (White attempts to fix the b5-pawn and then attack it with a4, but his position is very loose) 12...♖e8 13 a4 (13 ♙b2?! is also dubious in view

of 13...exf4 14 ♖d4 d5 15 exd5, Los-Sneider, Groningen 1992, 15...♙xb4 and Black should win; 13 ♖b1 is more solid: 13...exf4 14 ♙xf4 ♙f8 15 ♖h4 ♖c8 and White is close to equality, Dvoiryys-Ubilava, Kiev 1984) 13...exf4 14 axb5 d5 15 e5?! (15 bxa6 is preferable, but White is on the verge of a catastrophe after 15...dxe4) 15...♙xb4 16 ♙xf4 ♖e4 and the c3-knight is looking sick, Boll-Charushin, correspondence 1987.

11...♖e8!

A useful waiting move, planning pressure along the e-file.

12 ♖e2

Or:

a) 12 f5?! is answered by 12...♙b7, when the f5-square is no longer accessible to the white pieces. Black can continue with ...♖c5 and an eventual ...d5, with advantage.

b) 12 ♖h4 can now be answered safely by 12...♖c5, as f5 is covered by the c8-bishop. Then 13 fxe5 dxe5 14 ♖f5 ♙xf5 15 ♖xf5 ♖fxe4 16 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 (White is in trouble due to his weak back rank) 17 ♙e3 (if 17 ♖xf7 then 17...♖f6!) 17...♖c5 18 ♖xe5 ♖xd3 19 cxd3 ♙f6 gives Black a clear advantage.

c) 12 fxe5 is an important alternative. It is almost invariably answered by 12...dxe5, allowing White a later ♖h4-f5, but I cannot help thinking that 12...♖xe5! is correct. Firstly, for general reasons: the knight moves to a strong square, and, having less space, Black should not be averse to exchanges. Secondly, for more specific and tactical reasons: Black threatens to capture on f3 and then play ...♙b7, as the occupation of the f5-square is

no longer a problem. Then White can play:

c1) 13 ♖xe5 dxe5 14 ♙g5 ♙e6 gives Black an edge because of his superior pawn-structure.

c2) 13 ♖e1 ♖xf3 14 gxf3 ♙b7 transposes to note 'a' to White's 11th move.

c3) 13 ♖d4 g6 14 ♙f4 ♙b7. If we compare this position with that arising in the game Wahls-Ehlvest, Tilburg 1994, where 11...exf4 12 ♙xf4 ♙b7 13 ♖d4 g6 14 ♖d2 ♖e5 15 ♖ae1 ♖e8 was played, we will see that Black has gained two moves with our move-order – and Ehlvest's method of playing is highly-considered. So why does Black always capture on e5 with a pawn in this position? The only reason I can give is that the Najdorf player has a desire to avoid simplification.

12...♙b7

Black is now well developed, and threatens, by ...exf4, to exploit the opposition of his rook and the white queen along the e-file.

13 fxe5

13 ♖h4 is met by 13...d5.

13...♖xe5

Once again I recommend this, as opposed to the 'standard' 13...dxe5, when White can continue 14 ♖h4 g6 15 ♙g5 with a kingside attack. See the discussion in note 'c' to White's 12th move.

14 ♖xe5

Probably best, if White wishes to avoid the sort of play that occurred in note 'a' to White's 11th move, i.e. 14 ♖d4 g6, threatening ...d5.

14...dxe5 15 ♙g5 ♖d7 16 ♙xe7 ♖xe7

With a plus to Black.

# 7 Other 6th Moves

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4  
 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6

Several of these moves are specifically designed as anti-Najdorf lines, both avoiding main-line theory, and often countering Black's early ...e5. While these moves are not particularly dangerous for Black from a theoretical standpoint, they do contain their drop of poison for the unwary. Black can often obtain a good game by transposing into a Dragon type of position, by replying with an early ...g6, or into a Classical set-up by 6...♗c6. In both cases White's 6th move will have denied him the possibility of playing critical variations against these moves.

There is one move that almost invariably transposes into Chapter 1, one flexible positional move, one normal developing move, and two aggressive moves intending to support an early advance of the g-pawn:

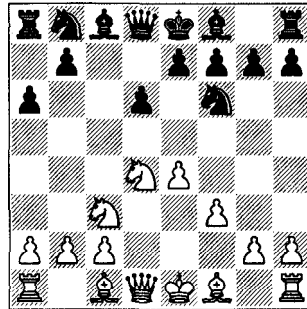
- A: 6 f3 115
- B: 6 a4 116
- C: 6 ♖d3 118
- D: 6 h3 119
- E: 6 ♖g1 121

A)

6 f3 (D)

This move, which had hitherto been ignored, has taken on a new importance recently because it transposes into 6 ♖e3 lines without allowing 6...♗g4 in reply.

B



6...e5 7 ♗b3 ♖e6 8 ♖g5

The overwhelmingly preferred move here is not this, in fact, but 8 ♖e3, which transposes directly into Chapter 1. The text-move, 8 ♖g5, is the only other move at this juncture, but it is much less logical. There are two main reasons: firstly, the dark-squared bishop is needed on the g1-a7 diagonal, weakened by White's 6th move; and secondly, the normal 'kingside onslaught' plan is now hampered by the fact that g4-g5 is impossible while the bishop occupies g5.

8...♗bd7 9 ♖d2 ♖e7

This is normal. Black both unpins the f6-knight, and threatens possible discovered attacks on the g5-bishop.

10 0-0-0 b5 11 h4

A vital precaution to protect the g5-bishop, as Black was intending ...b4, when the reply ♗d5? would lose after ...♗xd5. For example, 11 g4? b4 12 ♗d5? ♗xd5 13 ♖xe7 (13 exd5??

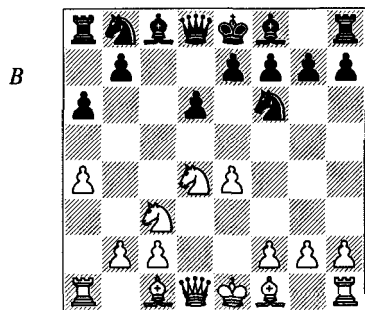
♙xg5) 13...♘xe7, winning a piece. 11 ♙e3?! (Perez-Iturri, Roque Saenz Pena U-26 Wcht 1997) is another possibility, but after 11...♘b6! we transpose into a good variation for Black (see Chapter 1), with a whole tempo more.

11...0-0 12 g4 b4 13 ♘e2 a5 14 ♖b1 a4

Black's attack has arrived first, Van Rijn-Pos, Dieren 1997.

B)

6 a4 (D)



As White often plays a4 to constrain Black's queenside later on in many of the positional lines, then why not play it immediately, and decide on the appropriate piece placement when Black has shown his hand? This is a very popular line for White, and occurs a lot in practice.

6...♘c6

I hope I am not labouring the point too much, but Dragon players would no doubt be content to play 6...g6 here, as White can no longer play the sharper lines involving queenside castling. The text-move, Kasparov's choice, leads to a position akin to the Classical Sicilian where White has played a4 too

early, thus weakening b4. Black often plays the move ...a5 in these lines, to force the reply a4, so this position is comparatively better, as the b5-square is still controlled.

On the other hand, I rather feel that 6...e5 plays into White's hands, as after 7 ♘f3 White will gain a tempo on Line B in Chapter 1, or Line B in Chapter 4.

7 ♙e2

The alternatives are numerous, but quickly dismissed:

a) 7 ♙c4 brings us to Chapter 3.

b) 7 ♙g5 is no longer a problem, as White would hardly want to play a Richter-Rauzer (which almost always involves queenside castling) with his a-pawn on a4.

c) 7 ♙e3 is just asking for 7...♘g4.

d) 7 f4 ♙g4!? 8 ♘f3 g6 9 h3 ♙xf3 10 ♗xf3 ♙g7 11 ♙d3 0-0 12 0-0 ♘d7 13 ♖h1 ♗c8 14 ♗b1 ♘b4 is similar to a variation of the Austrian Attack in the Pirc Defence, and very playable for Black, Ye Jiangchuan-Gelfand, Erevan OL 1996.

e) 7 ♘xc6 bxc6 8 ♙d3 a5 9 0-0 (Kholmov-Anastasian, Voskresensk 1992) 9...e5 10 f4 ♙e7 transposes to note 'a' to White's 10th move in Line C.

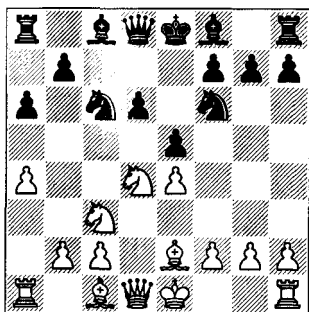
7...e5 (D)

8 ♘xc6

Danny King describes this move as 'anti-positional', which is true, I suppose, as it just helps improve Black's centre. Otherwise:

a) 8 ♘f3 (perfectly reasonable; White will play as in Chapter 4, Line B) 8...♙e7 (normally Black plays 8...h6, stopping ♙g5xf6, and this leads to a big main line, but the text-move is also

W



playable) 9  $\text{g5}$   $\text{e6}$  10 0-0 0-0 (the move ... $\text{b4}$ , guarding d5, is also good, either now or on the next few moves, e.g. 10... $\text{b4}$  11  $\text{Wd2}$  0-0 12  $\text{xf6}$   $\text{xf6}$  13  $\text{d1}$  a5 14 c3  $\text{a6}$  15  $\text{xa6}$   $\text{xa6}$  16  $\text{e3}$   $\text{g5}$  is equal, Kudrin-Browne, USA Ch 1986) 11  $\text{e1}$  (this is the customary move; 11  $\text{Wd2}$   $\text{c8}$  12  $\text{fd1}$   $\text{b4}$  13  $\text{e1}$   $\text{e8}$  14  $\text{xe7}$   $\text{xe7}$  is similar, and fine for Black, Kosteniuk-Kozlovskaya, Russian wom Ch (Elista) 1997, but 11  $\text{xf6}$  is supposed to be a problem for Black; nevertheless, after 11... $\text{xf6}$  12  $\text{d5}$   $\text{d4}$ ! 13  $\text{xf6+}$   $\text{xf6}$  14  $\text{xd4}$   $\text{exd4}$  15  $\text{d3}$   $\text{ac8}$  16 f4  $\text{c4}$  17 a5  $\text{c5}$  18  $\text{f2}$   $\text{fc8}$  Black enjoys strong pressure along the c-file, Salazar-de Firmian, Dubai OL 1986) 11... $\text{c8}$  12  $\text{f1}$   $\text{e8}$ ! (another way to fight for d5) 13  $\text{e3}$   $\text{f6}$  and now White is well advised to repeat moves by 14  $\text{g5}$ ; instead he succumbed in dramatic fashion in the game Hort-Kosten, Geneva 1987 following 14 h3 h6 15  $\text{d2?}$   $\text{b4}$  16  $\text{f3}$   $\text{xe4}$ ! 17  $\text{xe4}$   $\text{xc2}$ .

b) 8  $\text{b3}$  leads to Chapter 4, Line A1, after 8... $\text{e7}$  9 0-0 0-0 10 f4  $\text{exf4}$  11  $\text{xf4}$   $\text{e6}$ .

8... $\text{bxc6}$  9 f4 a5

Black does not fear the endgame, but is keen to stop White fixing his a6-pawn by playing a5.

10 0-0

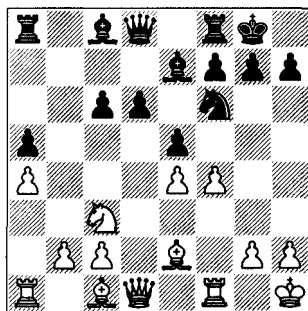
Others:

a) 10  $\text{e3}$  is best met by 10... $\text{d7}$  (or 10... $\text{exf4}$  11  $\text{xf4}$   $\text{e7}$  12 0-0 0-0 13  $\text{h1}$   $\text{e6}$ , when Black is a tempo up on a known line) 11 0-0  $\text{e7}$ , followed by ...0-0.

b) 10  $\text{fxe5}$   $\text{dxe5}$  11  $\text{Wxd8+}$   $\text{xd8}$  12  $\text{g5?}$ ! (12  $\text{c4}$   $\text{b4}$  13 0-0  $\text{e7}$  14  $\text{g5}$   $\text{xc3}$  15  $\text{bxc3}$   $\text{e6}$  leads to equality) 12... $\text{e6}$  13  $\text{d1}$   $\text{b8}$  14  $\text{e3}$   $\text{b4+}$ ! 15  $\text{f2}$   $\text{c5}$  16 b3  $\text{e7}$ , with advantage to Black because of the awkward pin along the g1-a7 diagonal, King-Rashkovsky, Cappelle la Grande 1990.

10... $\text{e7}$  11  $\text{h1}$  0-0 (D)

W



12  $\text{Wd1}$   $\text{a6!}$ ?

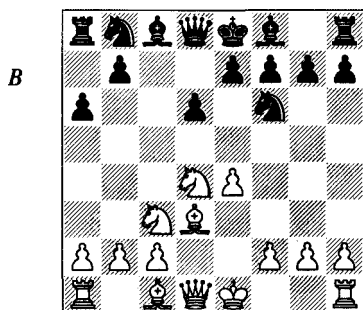
Swapping a pair of pieces, but 12... $\text{d7}$ , intending to establish this knight on e5, is a very logical alternative.

13  $\text{xa6}$   $\text{xa6}$  14  $\text{fxe5}$   $\text{dxe5}$  15  $\text{Wg3}$   $\text{Wd6}$  16  $\text{e3}$   $\text{We6}$ ! 17  $\text{Mad1}$   $\text{Aa8}$  18  $\text{g5}$   $\text{dfd8}$

Black has an edge, Si.Maus-King, 2nd Bundesliga 1990.

C)

6 ♖d3 (D)



This is another move that works well against 6...e5, as White can play his king's knight to g3, via e2, and he keeps e4 well defended. However, the d4-knight is no longer protected, and the d3-bishop is not immune from attack by a black knight.

6...♟c6

One of several moves that promise Black a reasonable game; 6...g6 and 6...e6 are two others. The choice often depends on the rest of a player's repertoire. Dragon players will be very happy to play the former, of course.

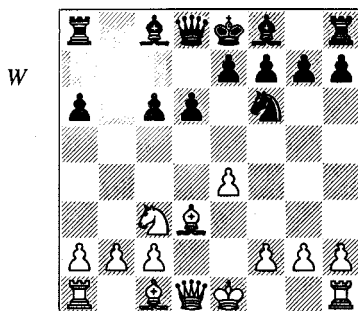
7 ♟xc6

Rather a concession, strengthening the black centre, but otherwise:

a) 7 ♟de2 e6 (or 7...g6 8 ♖g5 ♖g7 with an improved Dragon, Ziatdinov-Dvoiryis, Groningen 1994) 8 0-0 ♖e7 9 f4 0-0 10 ♖h1 b5 11 ♟g3 ♖b7 and Black can be very happy compared to typical Scheveningen positions, Saltaev-Rashkovsky, Tashkent 1987.

b) If 7 ♖e3 then 7...♟g4 (or even 7...♟xd4 8 ♖xd4 e5 9 ♖e3 ♖e6 with equality) 8 ♟xe6 bxc6 almost obliges White to play 9 ♖c1.

7...bxc6 (D)



8 0-0 e5

This is one variation where Black does not have to worry about d5 after pushing his e-pawn, as it is now covered by the c6-pawn.

9 f4

Having reinforced Black's centre, White goes about trying to weaken it. A different plan is 9 ♟a4 (9 b3 ♖e7 10 ♖b2 0-0 11 ♟a4 will transpose, after White's coming c4) 9...♖e7 10 c4 0-0 11 b3 ♖e6 12 ♖b2 ♟d7, with no particular difficulties for Black, Kagan-Grünfeld, Tel-Aviv 1989.

9...♖e7 10 fxe5

One of the problems for White in these positions is that Black can often capture on f4, and then place a piece on the empty e5-square. By capturing immediately, White tries to force Black to recapture with a pawn on e5 instead. Other attempts:

a) 10 a4 (aiming to fix the black a-pawn on a6) 10...a5 11 ♖h1 0-0 12 ♖e1 and now, instead of 12...♖b8?!, when by 13 ♖d2! ♖xb2 14 ♟d1 ♖b8 15 ♖xa5 White created a powerful passed a-pawn in Steinbacher-Nunn, Bundesliga 1986/7, 12...exf4 might be

simplest, e.g. 13 ♖xf4 ♜g4 14 ♜d1 ♖g5!, exchanging dark-squared bishops, in order to establish the knight on e5. This is a typical plan in these positions.

b) 10 ♖h1 ♖g4! (demonstrating a different plan, but 10...0-0 and ...exf4 is also good) 11 ♜e1 exf4 12 ♖xf4 ♜h5 13 ♜e2 (the idea behind Black's play is that 13 ♖d2 can be answered by 13...♖h4 14 g3 ♖f6 15 ♖e2 ♜d7, intending ...♖e5, and again underlining the importance of the e5-square) 13...♜xf4 14 ♜xf4 ♖d7 15 ♖c4 0-0 16 ♜d1 ♖f6! 17 ♜f2 ♖e6 18 ♖xe6 fxe6 19 b3 ♖e5 leaves Black better, Larsen-Kavalek, Reykjavik tt 1986. His dark-squared bishop has reached the key square e5, where it controls dark squares on both wings.

### 10...dxe5

Black can also try to keep the e5-square open for a piece by 10...♜g4!? although after 11 exd6 ♖xd6 White has the resource 12 g3! (on 12...♜xh2?! there is the tactical shot 13 e5!, which favours White) but anyway, 12...0-0 is possible, threatening 13...♜xh2. Then 13 ♜e2 ♜e5 gives Black solid positional compensation for the pawn.

### 11 h3 0-0

11...♜b8 might be more accurate, obliging White to defend the b-pawn before he can develop his c1-bishop.

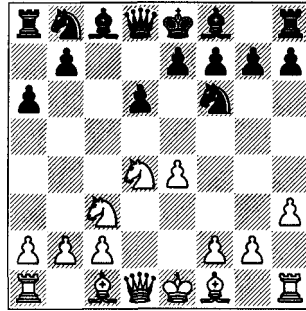
### 12 ♖e3

Wolff-Fedorowicz, New York 1987. White intends to exploit the c4- and c5-squares, and attack the a6-pawn. Black also has reasons, such as his free development, to be happy with his position. For instance, he could play 12...♖e6 13 ♜a4 ♜b8 14 b3 ♜c7 intending ...♜fd8, and/or ...c5-c4.

D)

### 6 h3 (D)

B



White prepares g4, which could turn into a slower version of the Keres Attack, or an improved version of the g3 system. For instance, 6...e5?! falls in with White's plans: 7 ♜de2 ♖e7 8 g4 0-0 9 ♜g3 and White has a great position, for not only has he managed to play g4 in one move (as opposed to two in the 6 g3 line), but he has also delayed the development of his king's bishop, Kupreichik-Dvoiryys, Leeuwarden 1993. However, Black has a variety of ways to exploit 6 h3, for instance by 6...g6, when the sharper lines of the Dragon are avoided. I think the best line is:

### 6...e6

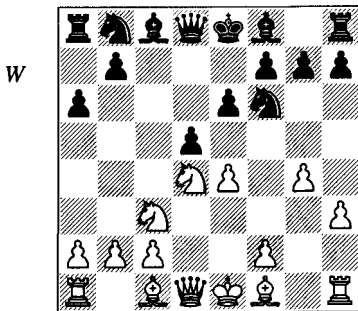
The simplest move, preparing the traditional 'central thrust to counter a wing attack'.

### 7 g4

This is the point of White's play; other moves tend to render the pawn on h3 irrelevant, and, at worst, Black can achieve a superior Scheveningen set-up. For example, 7 g3 b5 8 ♖g2 ♖b7 9 a3 ♖e7 10 0-0 ♜c7 11 g4 ♜c6 12 ♜de2, when Black has a pleasant

position, Masserey-Bucher, Geneva 1999. 7  $\text{\textcircled{d}}3$  is similar to 6  $\text{\textcircled{d}}3$ , and can be treated similarly, viz. 7... $\text{\textcircled{c}}6$  8  $\text{\textcircled{c}}6$  bxc6 9 0-0  $\text{\textcircled{e}}7$  10  $\text{\textcircled{w}}e2$  e5 and, with his strong centre, Black has a bright future, Kurajica-Minić, Yugoslavia 1966.

7... $\text{\textcircled{d}}5$  (D)



The point: Black neatly side-steps the threat of g5, displacing the f6-knight.

8  $\text{\textcircled{x}}d5$

This is the only decent reply. Others:

a) 8 e5? (a blunder) 8... $\text{\textcircled{f}}d7$  9  $\text{\textcircled{d}}f4$  (9 f4  $\text{\textcircled{w}}h4+$ ) 9... $\text{\textcircled{w}}c7$  10  $\text{\textcircled{w}}e2$ , and now the tactic 10... $\text{\textcircled{d}}a3!$  leaves White in all sorts of trouble.

b) 8  $\text{\textcircled{d}}g2$   $\text{\textcircled{c}}xe4$  9  $\text{\textcircled{c}}xe4$  dxe4 (satisfactorily liquidating the central tension) and now:

b1) 10 0-0 f5 11 c3 sacrifices a pawn. White intends to play  $\text{\textcircled{w}}b3$  with pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal, but it is difficult to believe that White has much after 11... $\text{\textcircled{c}}6$  12  $\text{\textcircled{e}}e3$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}d6$ , for instance.

b2) 10 c3!? may transpose to line 'b1' after 10...f5 11 0-0, but there is also 10...e5 11  $\text{\textcircled{c}}c2$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}xd1+$  12  $\text{\textcircled{c}}xd1$ ,

Popescu-Badea, Herculane 1993, and now Popescu suggests 12... $\text{\textcircled{c}}c6!$ ? 13  $\text{\textcircled{x}}xe4$   $\text{\textcircled{e}}e6$  14  $\text{\textcircled{c}}e3$  0-0-0+, which appears fine.

b3) Following 10  $\text{\textcircled{x}}xe4$ , 10... $\text{\textcircled{d}}d7$  is OK after 11  $\text{\textcircled{d}}g2$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}c7$  12  $\text{\textcircled{e}}e3$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}e5$  13 0-0  $\text{\textcircled{d}}d6$  14 f4  $\text{\textcircled{c}}c4$  15  $\text{\textcircled{c}}c1$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}d7$ , Kveinys-Zagorskis, Bad Godesburg 1996, but 10...e5 seems even more to the point, exchanging queens in a favourable manner: 11  $\text{\textcircled{f}}f3$  (11  $\text{\textcircled{f}}f5?! \text{\textcircled{w}}xd1+$  12  $\text{\textcircled{c}}xd1$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}d7$  13  $\text{\textcircled{d}}g3$   $\text{\textcircled{c}}c5$ ) 11... $\text{\textcircled{w}}xd1+$  12  $\text{\textcircled{c}}xd1$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}d6$  (12... $\text{\textcircled{d}}d7$  13  $\text{\textcircled{e}}e1$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}d6$  14  $\text{\textcircled{c}}xe5!$ ?) 13  $\text{\textcircled{c}}e2$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}d7$  14  $\text{\textcircled{d}}d1$   $\text{\textcircled{c}}c7$  and Black threatens to play ... $\text{\textcircled{c}}c5$  or ... $\text{\textcircled{f}}f6$ , as appropriate.

8... $\text{\textcircled{c}}xd5$

Now there is a divide:

D1: 9  $\text{\textcircled{d}}d2$  120  
D2: 9  $\text{\textcircled{c}}d2$  121

9  $\text{\textcircled{d}}g2?!$  allows Black to wreck the white structure: 9... $\text{\textcircled{c}}xc3$  10 bxc3  $\text{\textcircled{d}}d6$  11 0-0  $\text{\textcircled{w}}c7$  12  $\text{\textcircled{b}}b1$  0-0 13  $\text{\textcircled{w}}d3$   $\text{\textcircled{d}}d7$  14  $\text{\textcircled{d}}d1$   $\text{\textcircled{c}}c5$ , with a positional advantage to Black, Manik-Oral, Olomouc 1998.

D1)

9  $\text{\textcircled{d}}d2$   $\text{\textcircled{c}}c6$

'Knights before bishops'.

10  $\text{\textcircled{c}}xc6$

10  $\text{\textcircled{d}}de2$  is no better: 10...e5! 11  $\text{\textcircled{d}}g2$   $\text{\textcircled{e}}e6$  12  $\text{\textcircled{c}}e4$   $\text{\textcircled{e}}e7$  13 0-0 0-0 (by straightforward developing moves, Black has achieved a good position) 14 c4  $\text{\textcircled{f}}f6$  15  $\text{\textcircled{c}}xf6+$   $\text{\textcircled{x}}xf6$  16 b3 h5!? 17  $\text{\textcircled{d}}g3$  hxg4 18 hxg4  $\text{\textcircled{d}}g5$ , with advantage to Black, Zso.Polgar-Browne, San Francisco 1995.

10...bxc6 11  $\text{\textcircled{d}}g2$   $\text{\textcircled{e}}e7$  12  $\text{\textcircled{c}}c4$   $\text{\textcircled{w}}c7$

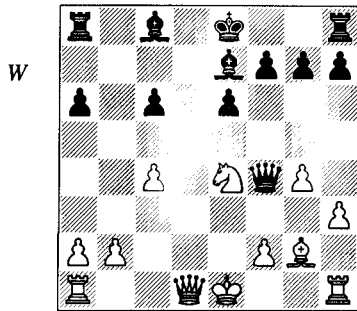
Black takes control of the f4-square, but 12...0-0 is also possible, with ideas

of an eventual ...f5. 13 c4 ♖b4 14 0-0 ♘d3 15 b3 ♗a7!?, intending ...♗d7, is one possibility.

**13 c4**

13 ♗f3 would only lend force to ...f5: 13...0-0 14 c4 f5! with advantage.

**13...♘f4 14 ♖xf4 ♗xf4 (D)**



**15 ♗d2!**

Looking for an equal endgame. 15 ♘d6+?! is very risky, because after 15...♖xd6! 16 ♖xc6+ ♗e7 17 ♖xa8 ♖d7 18 ♖g2 ♗xc4 19 a3 ♗c8, White has an exchange more but his king is trapped in the centre, and he is unable to coordinate his pieces.

**15...♗xd2+ 16 ♘xd2 ♖b7 17 0-0-0 0-0-0**

With the two bishops, if anything it is Black who holds the upper hand, Donchev-Ki.Georgiev, Bulgarian Ch (Sofia) 1989.

**D2)**

**9 ♘de2**

This move also defends the c3-knight.

**9...♖b4 10 ♖d2**

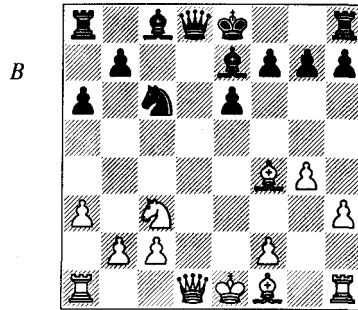
10 ♖g2 0-0 11 ♖d2 ♘xc3 12 ♘xc3 (Kurajica-Bukić, Yugoslav Ch 1972)

12...♘c6 13 a3 ♖e7 14 0-0 e5 is fine for Black.

**10...♘c6 11 a3 ♖e7**

The natural 11...♘xc3 12 ♘xc3 ♖e7 is also good, and similar to the previous note.

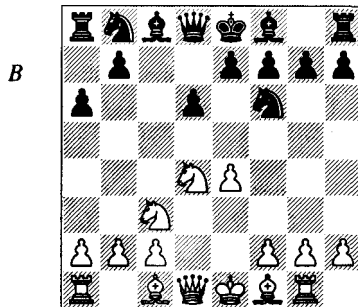
**12 ♘f4 ♘xf4 13 ♖xf4 (D)**



Now, instead of 13...♗b6!? 14 b4 ♘xb4!?, which is most unclear, Kupreichik-Gallagher, Lenk 1991, the simple continuation 13...0-0 is fine. For example, 14 ♖g2 e5!? 15 ♖xc6 (15 ♖e3 ♖e6 gives Black excellent development) 15...exf4 and Black has the advantage of the bishop-pair.

**E)**

**6 ♗g1 (D)**



No, do not adjust your TV set, this strange-looking move has been catching on quite a lot recently. The idea is to support the pawn push g4-g5 and, ideally, to transpose into a Keres Attack of some sort, by, for instance 6...e6 7 g4, etc.

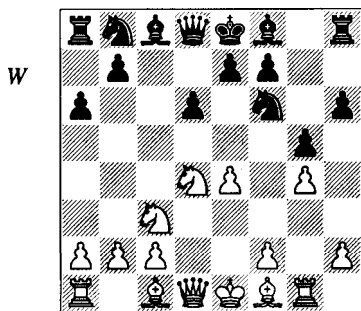
**6...h6!?**

A radical solution. Black prevents White playing g5 even before White he plays g4.

**7 g4**

Other moves are doubtless possible, but Black's move ...h6 will certainly prove more useful than White's move ♖g1, and White will never be able to castle kingside.

**7...g5 (D)**



The point: Black halts the white g-pawn in its tracks and prepares the e5-square for one of the black knights.

**8 ♖e3**

There is also the immediate attempt to break Black's dark-squared control by 8 h4!? gxh4!?. (8...♗g8 is also good, propping up the important g5-pawn,

and attempting similar play to the main line) 9 ♖e3 (Sadler mentions 9 f4 ♖c6 10 g5 hxg5 11 fxg5, but 11...♗b6! leads to a clear advantage for Black) 9...♖c6 10 ♖d5?! (10 f4) 10...♖xd5 11 exd5 ♗a5+ 12 c3 ♖xd4 13 ♗xd4 ♗g8 14 ♖c4 and now, instead of 14...♗a4, as in Conquest-Sadler, British Ch (Torquay) 1998, Sadler prefers 14...h5 15 g5 h3, with advantage to Black due to the extra passed h-pawn.

**8...e6 9 ♗d2 ♖bd7 10 f3 ♖e5 (D)**

The knight has reached its destination, and from this square it surveys White's side of the board, and restricts his central possibilities.

**11 0-0 b5 12 h4**

This will be necessary sooner or later, since if White allows Black time to complete his development, he will be positionally worse.

**12...gxh4 13 f4!?**

A logical follow-up to White's previous move, attempting to tear open the centre; 13 ♖f2 ♖g6 14 ♗h1 ♖b7 should not give Black any problems.

**13...♖exg4 14 e5 b4!**

The standard Sicilian retort to e5.

**15 ♖a4**

15 exf6 bxc3 16 ♗xc3 ♖xe3 17 ♗xe3 ♗xf6 is clearly better for Black, who can continue by ...♗b8 and ...♖g7, with pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal.

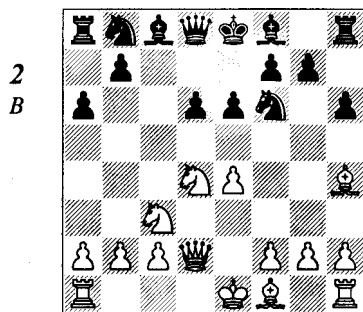
**15...dxe5 16 fxe5 ♖xe3 17 ♗xe3 ♖d5**

Black's material advantage proved decisive in Degraeve-Van Wely, French Cht 1998/9.

# 8 Najdorf Quiz

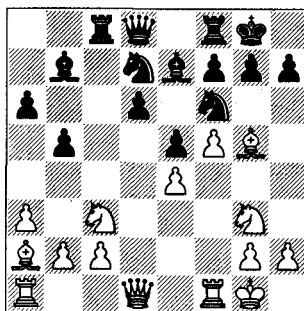
The real test to see whether you have done your homework properly (or that the author has done his) will be over a chessboard, the next time you have an opportunity to play the Najdorf as Black. In the meantime, here are a few questions to see how much you have taken in. The solutions are on page 126.

1 The typical Najdorf move, 6...e5, is recommended against which of the following white sixth moves? A) 6 a4; B) 6 ♖g5; C) 6 f4; and D) 6 ♕d3.



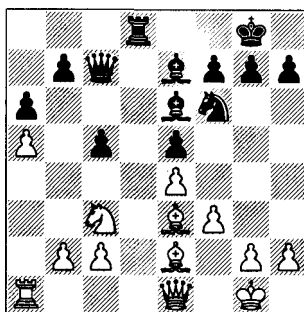
White has more space and is ahead in development, but can you see a good move for Black?

3  
B



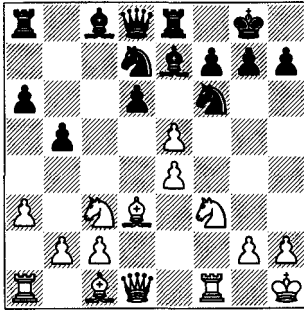
This is one of those positions where White hopes to establish a piece on d5 by means of ♕xf6, etc. How should Black react?

4  
B



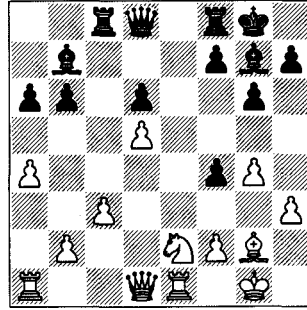
We have examined positions similar to this. Which move does Black have to play in order to avoid a positional bind?

5  
B



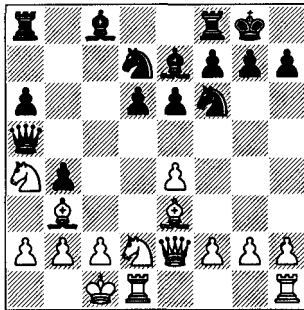
White has just captured on e5, hoping to bring his f3-knight to f5, via h4. How should Black recapture?

7  
B



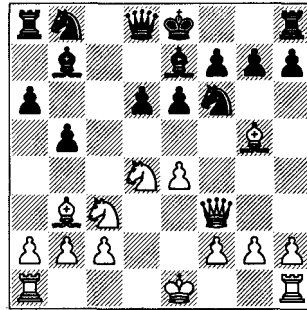
Black has a good position, with the bishop-pair and free play for his pieces. What is his most accurate move?

6  
B



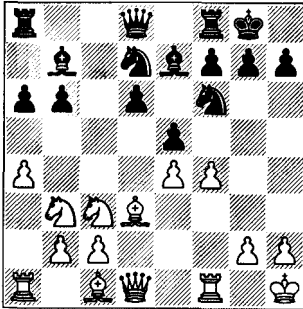
White has played one of the many lines where he castles queenside, perhaps intending a pawn-storm. However, as is often the case, Black has got in first. How should he continue?

8  
W



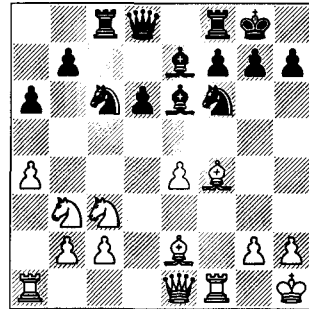
In reply to 9 ♖f3, threatening e5 (attacking both the f6-knight and the a8-rook), Black has played the obvious 9...♟b7. How would you be feeling if you were White?

9  
B



How can Black augment the pressure against e4?

10  
B



In this position from Chapter 4, White has just edged his queen to e1, planning to put pressure on d6 by ♖ad1 and ♕g3. How should Black react?

# Solutions

1) The answer is C, 6 f4. Although it is possible against both A and D, I do not advise it, and against B, 6 ♖g5, it is a downright error.

2) The position, which arises after 1 e4 c5 2 ♟f3 d6 3 d4 ♞f6 4 ♞c3 cxd4 5 ♞xd4 a6 6 ♖g5 e6 7 ♞d2?! h6 8 ♜h4?!, is virtually losing for White after 8...♞xe4!, winning a pawn, Gavrilov-Vaulin, Novgorod 1995.

3) Black cuts across White's plans with the energetic exchange sacrifice 14...♞xc3! 15 bxc3 ♞xe4 16 ♞xe4 ♜xe4 17 ♜xe7 ♞xe7. He went on to win a fine game in Ermenkov-Portisch, Skara Echt 1980. There is an alternative in 14...a5, intending ...b4, but I feel this is not quite as good.

4) Black should always play ...c4, as soon as practicable. Black can play 17...c4 immediately, as 18 ♜b6? is answered by 18...♜c5+, with an edge. Instead, in Jansa-Wachinger, Cattolica 1993, Black played 17...♞c6 18 ♞a4, and now he should have continued 18...c4. Instead, after 18...♞d7?! 19 c4! (threatening ♞c3-d5) it was too late. After 19...f5 20 ♞c3 fxe4 21 fxe4 ♞f6 22 ♞d5 ♜xd5 23 exd5 ♞c7 24 ♞g3 ♜d6 25 ♞h3 White had the advantage.

5) Many players recapture with the pawn here, but I recommend taking with the knight: 12...♞xe5!, in order

to get more space for the black pieces. See Chapter 6.

6) The knight is awkwardly placed on a4, and Black can best exploit this by 13...♜b7 (threatening the e-pawn) 14 f3 ♜c6, when the knight is in big trouble, Ljubojević-Polugaevsky, Amsterdam 1972.

7) The diagram is from the game Kholmov-Fedorov, USSR 1981, where Black continued 19...♞g5, with equality. However, he has better, for he can play 19...♞c4!. Not only does this piece defend f4, but it also stops the transfer of the white knight to c6 via d4. See Chapter 5.

8) Pretty excited, I should imagine, as Black has overlooked the standard trick 10 ♜xe6! fxe6 11 ♞xe6 ♞b6 12 ♞xg7+, demolishing his king position.

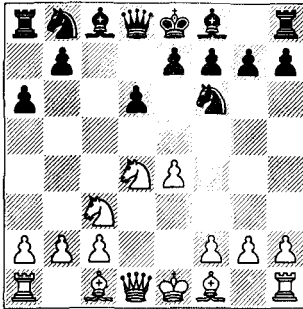
9) By the standard blow from the flank: 12...b5!, and after 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♞xa8 ♞xa8 15 ♜xb5 ♞xe4 16 ♞xe4 ♜xe4 the threat to g2 allowed Black to make the positionally desirable swap of a flank pawn for a central pawn in Shirov-Gelfand, Dos Hermanas 1997. See Chapter 4.

10) By the 'Portisch plan' of course! That is, 13...♞e8 14 ♞d1 ♜h4 15 ♞d2 ♜f6 16 ♞e3 ♜e5, bringing the black king's bishop to the desired e5-square, Toth-Vaulin, Budapest 1998.

# Index of Variations

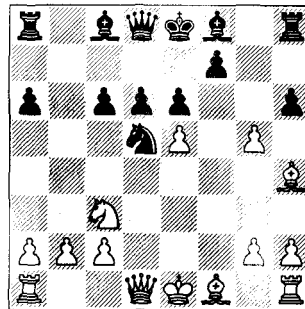
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4  
 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6

W



A1: 8 ♘xc6 3! 8...bxc6 9 e5 h6 10  
 ♙h4 g5 11 fxg5 ♘d5 32

W



6 ♙e3 – Chapter 1  
 6 ♙g5 – Chapter 2  
 6 ♙c4 – Chapter 3  
 6 ♙e2 – Chapter 4  
 6 g3 – Chapter 5  
 6 f4 – Chapter 6  
 Other 6th Moves – Chapter 7

## Chapter 1: 6 ♙e3

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4  
 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 ♙e3 13 6...e5 13  
 A: 7 ♘b3 14 7...♙e6 8 f3 ♘bd7 9  
 ♙d2 b5 18  
 A1: 10 g4 (and 10 0-0-0) 18  
 A2: 10 a4 (and 10 ♘d5) 21  
 B: 7 ♘f3 26

## Chapter 2: 6 ♙g5

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4  
 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 ♙g5 30 6...e6 30  
 A: 7 f4 31 7...♜c6 31

A11: 12 ♘e4 32  
 A12: 12 ♘xd5 35 12...cxd5 13 ♙h5  
 ♙b6! 35  
 A121: 14 ♙e2 36  
 A122: 14 ♙d3 36  
 A2: 8 e5 37  
 A3: 8 ♙e2 38  
 A4: 8 ♙d2?! 39

## B: Seventh Move Alternatives 40

B1: 7 ♙f3 40  
 B2: 7 ♙d3 41  
 B3: 7 ♙e2 42  
 B4: 7 ♙d2?! 42  
 B5: 7 ♙e2 43

## Chapter 3: 6 ♙c4

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4  
 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 ♙c4 48 6...e6 48  
 A: 7 ♙b3 48 7...b5 48  
 A1: 8 0-0 48 8...♙e7 48  
 A11: 9 ♙f3 50

A12: 9 f4 54 9...♙b7 54

A121: 10 e5 55

A122: 10 ♙e3 58

A2: 8 f4 60

A3: 8 ♖e2 63

A4: 8 ♖f3 64

A5: 8 ♙g5 65

B: 7 a3 66

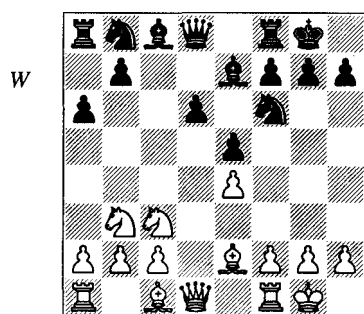
C: 7 a4 69

#### Chapter 4: 6 ♙e2

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4

♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♙e2 73 6...e5 73

A: 7 ♗b3 74 7...♙e7 8 0-0 0-0 76



A1: 9 a4 77 9...♙e6 10 f4 exf4 11

♙xf4 ♗c6 12 ♖h1 ♖c8 79

A11: 13 ♖d2 79

A12: 13 ♖e1 80

A13: 13 ♗d4 80

A2: 9 ♙e3 81

A3: 9 ♖h1 85 9...b6!? 85

A31: 10 a4 86

A32: 10 ♙g5 87

A33: 10 f4 87

A34: 10 ♙e3 88

A4: 9 f4 89

A5: 9 ♖e1 91

B: 7 ♗f3 91

#### Chapter 5: 6 g3

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4

♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 g3 94 6...e5 94

A: 7 ♗de2 95 7...♗bd7 95

A1: 8 a4 95

A2: 8 ♙g2 97

B: 7 ♗b3 99

#### Chapter 6: 6 f4

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4

♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 f4 102 6...e5 7 ♗f3

♗bd7 103

A: 8 a4 103 8...♙e7 103

A1: 9 ♙d3 103 9...0-0 10 0-0 ♗c5

11 ♖h1 exf4 12 ♙xf4 ♙g4 104

A11: 13 ♖e1 105

A12: 13 ♙e3 106

A13: 13 ♖d2 108

A2: 9 ♙c4 109 9...♖a5 109

A21: 10 ♖e2 110

A22: 10 ♙a2?! 111

A23: 10 ♙d2 111

B: 8 ♙c4 112

C: 8 ♙d3 113

#### Chapter 7: Other 6th Moves

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4

♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6

A: 6 f3 115

B: 6 a4 116

C: 6 ♙d3 118

D: 6 h3 119 6...e6 7 g4 d5 8 exd5

♗xd5 120

D1: 9 ♙d2 120

D2: 9 ♗de2 121

E: 6 ♖g1 121

