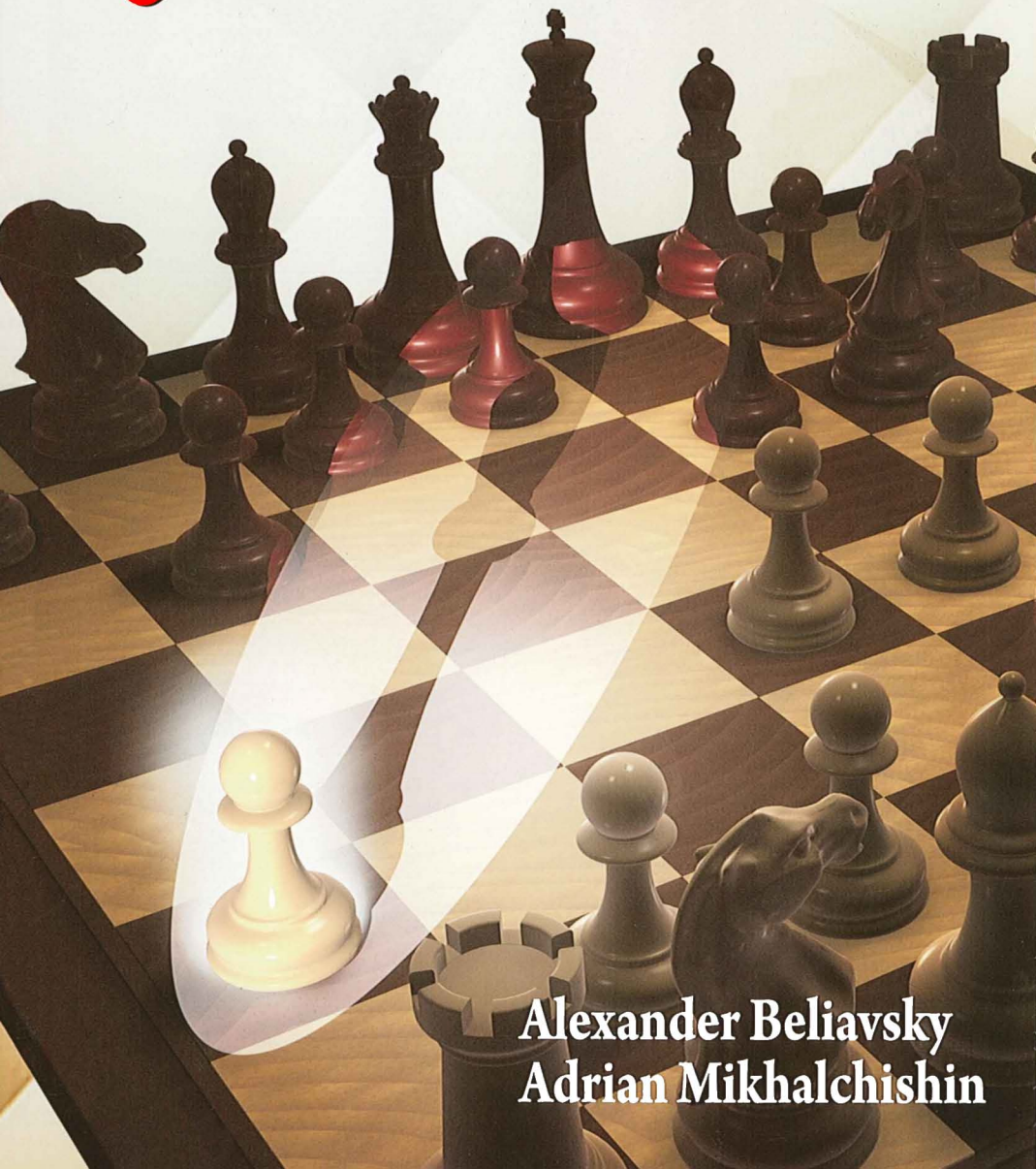


# The Petrosian System Against the QID



Alexander Beliavsky  
Adrian Mikhalchishin

# **The Petrosian System Against the QID**

Alexander Beliavsky  
Adrian Mikhalchishin

**Current Theory and Practice Series**

**The Petrosian System Against the QID**

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1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3

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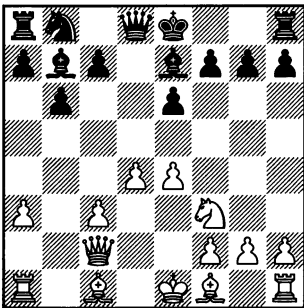
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- Databases  
The Week In Chess ([chesscenter.com](http://chesscenter.com))

## Introduction by the Editor

Ever since my first visits to the chess circle of Sofia Pioneer's Palace I have been taught to fight for the centre with every opening move. Thus I have never considered 3.♟f3 (after 1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 e6) as a worthy alternative to 3.♟c3 which directly threatens with e4. However, modern theory shows that in the Nimzowitsch after 3.♟c3 ♘b4 White's dream of pawn occupation of the centre never comes true. So the first players elaborated more sophisticated paths to the main strategic goal in the opening – 3.♟f3 b6 4.a3!?,

Look at one of the most popular lines in this system, namely 4...♞b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♟xd5 7.♞c2 ♞e7 8.e4 ♟xc3 9.bxc3



White's play is clear, simple and

very purposeful, isn't it! It is difficult to imagine a more harmonious setup. He follows up with ♞d3, 0-0 and h4 to build a powerful attack on the kingside. What is more important, White does not need tons of sharp variations to memorize. Whatever he plays, he cannot be too wrong with this pawn shield ahead. I believe that such an approach is much more natural than the modern fianchetto systems against the Queen's Indian Defence. Database statistics seem to confirm that, as White is scoring better with 4.a3 than with 4.g3.

In short, the new book of GMs Alexander Beliavsky and Adrian Mikhalchishin deals with a reliable and interesting system which has been played by most of the world's elite, starting with ex-world champion Tigran Petrosian. It is not a repertoire book though. Beliavsky and Mikhalchishin present an objective work which discusses the possibilities of both sides. The authors' own practical experience shows that they feel comfortably in the Petrosian system with any colour. They are especially effective with White

and have not allowed a single loss in 27 years.

I hope that the book will be interesting to a wide range of players who enter the QID positions as White or Black.

The structure of this book is similar to other recent Chess Stars publications. Every part starts with a “Main Ideas” section that explains the major plans and typical positions which are then analysed in the “Move by Move” chapters. Both sections complement each other so it is good to read first “Main Ideas” and proceed to “Move by Move” for details and check ups.

The authors are famous grandmasters and coaches. They hardly need any formal presentation so I will only mention a few of their achievements:

Alexander Beliavsky was four (!) times champion of the Soviet

Union, he won three times the Tilburg super tournament and played many Olympiads for USSR, Ukraine and Slovenia. He was a challenger for the world title where he lost to Kasparov. Nowadays Beliavsky coaches wunderkinds as Najdich, Caruana, Jobava, Gashimov; before he worked with Kasparov and Karpov. He now lives in Slovenia. His current rating is 2619.

Adrian Mikhalchishin was Soviet young masters champion, fourth in the Soviet Championship 1984, Slovenian champion in 2002. He played four Olympiads for Ukraine and Slovenia. Mikhalchishin coached Karpov, the Polgar sisters, ex-world champion Chiburdanidze, as well as the national teams of USSR, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Poland and Turkey. His current rating is 2522.

Beliavsky and Mikhalchishin have written many chess books.

*Semko Semkov  
November 2008*

## Foreword

The Queen's Indian Defence 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 was basically conceived as an antidote to other openings – White wanted to avoid the Nimzo-Indian, while Black was looking for alternatives to the Queen's Gambit. Time has not changed tastes much. The pin from b4 remains unpleasant to many first players, not to mention doubled pawns on the c-file!

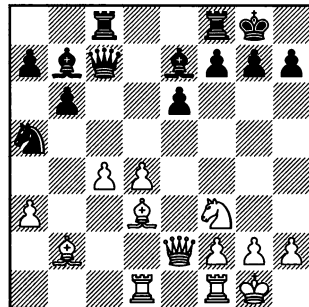
For a long time the QID had the reputation of a peaceful unambitious opening where White would struggle to obtain even a slight edge. The b7-bishop gave Black full control over the central squares, and especially e4. Besides, a possible exchange of light-squared bishops would reduce even further White's chances of developing a real initiative in the centre.

The concept of the great champion Tigran Petrosian that White should spend a tempo on a2-a3 to secure the c3-knight did not receive universal acclaim at first. Everyone thought it was just another sign of the notorious cautiousness of "Iron

Tigran". Meanwhile Petrosian kept playing his system, earning points and leaving the other players perplexed.

Only in the late 70ies and early 80ies the attitude began to change. Chess players appreciated the strong points of Petrosian's idea and started independent exploration. Thus the Dementiev system (with ♗d2) was born. However the real burst of popularity came with the successes of Garry Kasparov. He not only embraced the Petrosian system, but he charged it with energy. Kasparov crushed his opponents by direct kingside attacks, making it seem natural and easy, like his victory over Portisch:

Kasparov-Portisch, Niksic 1983



## Foreword

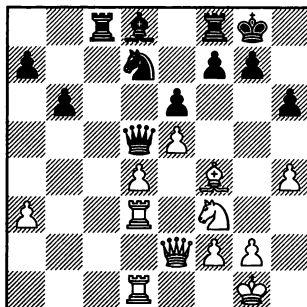
17.d5 exd5 18.cxd5 ♖xd5  
19.♙xh7+ ♗xh7 20.♞xd5 ♗g8  
21.♙xg7 ♗xg7 22.♜e5 ♞fd8 23.♞g4+  
♗f8 24.♞f5 f6 25.♜d7+ ♞xd7  
26.♞xd7 ♞c5 27.♞h7 ♞c7 28.♞h8+  
♗f7 29.♞d3 ♜c4 30.♞fd1 ♜e5  
31.♞h7+ ♗e6 32.♞g8+ ♗f5 33.g4+  
♗f4 34.♞d4+ ♗f3 35.♞b3+ 1-0

A lot of time had passed before Black reached to the conclusion that trading light-squared bishops would reduce the enemy's attacking potential and would make more room for manoeuvres. This treatment was even proclaimed as the safe equalizer against the Petrosian system, but as you will see from Part 9, Black still has plenty of problems to solve in that line:

Krasenkow-Cvitan  
Plovdiv 2003

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♜f3 b6 4.a3  
♙b7 5.♜c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♜xd5 7.♞c2  
♙e7 8.e4 ♜xc3 9.bxc3 0-0 10.♙d3 c5  
11.0-0 ♞c8 12.♞e2 ♙a6 13.♞d1 ♙xd3  
14.♞xd3 ♜d7 15.e5 cxd4 16.cxd4

♞c4 17.♙g5 ♙d8 18.♞ad1 ♞c8 19.h4  
h6 20.♙f4 ♞d5



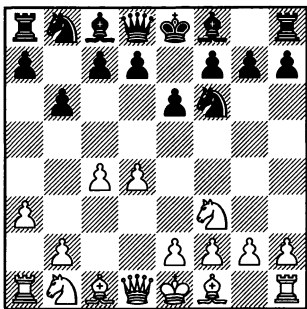
21.♜h2! f5 22.♙xh6!±.

Even without bishops White's initiative can be difficult to tame.

The Petrosian system is very rich in strategic ideas and different pawn structures. One can face isolators, hanging pawns, hedgehogs, Gruenfeld and Benoni setups, mobile pawn centres. This variety of options gives the better player fair chances to win. It will certainly continue to attract new fans to the Petrosian system.

*Alexander Beliauskyy  
Adrian Mikhalchishin  
November 2008*

## PART 1



This study had been conceived as a pure Petrosian system work. (1.d4 2.c4 e6 3.d3 b6 4.a3 b7 5.d3) It is not a repertoire book. We just wanted to propose a decent alternative to the too well analysed main line of the Queen's Indian Defence with 4.g3. However, the publisher was not too happy with such an academic approach. He said: "OK, fine, but **how do we reach the pure Petrosian system?**" In Part 1 we shall give a partial answer to this question.

We decided not to deal with third move alternatives such as the Bogoljubow. (3...b4+) It is a totally different (and rather passive!) system which deserves a separate study. Besides, we would have also had to think about 3...d5 and so many other options as well.

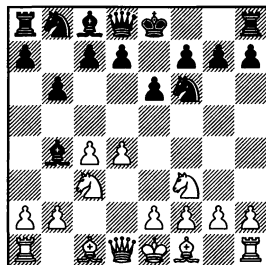
**The next problem was:** Should White choose 4.d3 intending to meet 4...b7 with 5.a3, or play 4.a3, allowing deviations as 4...c5 and 4...a6.

There is no definite answer. It is more a matter of taste and... statistics. In practice, 4.a3 is nearly four

1.d4 2.c4 e6 3.d3 b6 4.a3  
4...c5  
4...a6

### Main Ideas

times more popular than the move order via 4.d3 b7 5.a3. Apparently, players who avoid 3.d3, do not like it on the next turn either! After all, the whole idea of the Petrosian system is to prevent ...b4.



Of course, 4.d3 b4 leads to a peculiar sideline of the Nimzo where White achieves nearly 55% after 5.fg5 and a whole 60% after 5.b3. This move order has been favoured by Kasparov, Anand, Topalov and many others. If you have some Nimzowitsch experience, you should seriously consider it. We shall obey the statistics though and focus on 4.a3.

- A. 4...c5
- B. 4...a6

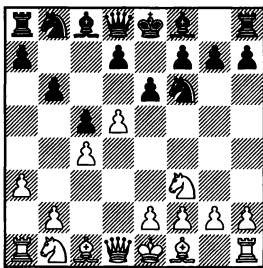
Part 1

From the other options we can note 4...d5 5.♘c3 ♙e7 6.cxd5 exd5. Thus Black avoids the unpleasant check from a4 which is examined in Part 5, line D, but White can favourably transpose to line A2 of Part 5 by 7.♙f4.

**A. 4...c5**

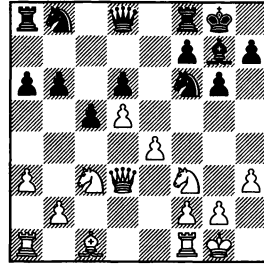
This is an attempt to alter the pawn structure in Benoni direction. We face here the old question: which one of the already made “unnecessary” moves – a2-a3 and b7-b6 – would turn to be more useful. In general, b6 might help Black to trade light-squared bishops through a6. Such an exchange should relieve the defence in a somewhat cramped position. Then it would be easier to prepare b6-b5. There is a tricky psychological factor though – players who choose the QID are not fans of the Modern Benoni!

**5.d5**



In this position Black either immediately enters Benoni structures, or tries to discoordinate the opponent’s pieces first by 5...♙a6. We should be well acquainted with three topical positions:

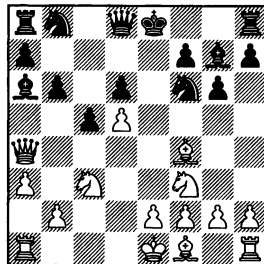
1. 5...exd5 6.cxd5 g6 7.♘c3 ♙g7 8.e4 0-0 9.♙d3! d6 10.h3 ♙a6 11.0-0 ♙xd3 12.♚xd3 a6



White has the better chances. His pieces will dominate in the centre and Black seems helpless against the imminent e4-e5. The game Vyzhmanavin-Savon, USSR 1987 went:

13.♙f4! b5 14.♚fel ♚a7 15.♙ad1 b4 16.axb4 cxb4 17.♘a4 ♙e8 18.e5! dxe5 19.♘xe5±.

2. 5...♙a6 6.♚c2 exd5 7.cxd5 d6 (It is troublesome to grab a pawn by 7...♙b7 8.e4 ♚e7 9.♙d3 ♘xd5 10.0-0 ♘c7 11.♙g5! f6 12.♙f4 with full compensation.) 8.♘c3 g6 9.g3 9.♙f4!? ♙g7 10.♚a4+



In this version of Benoni structure White cannot follow the model

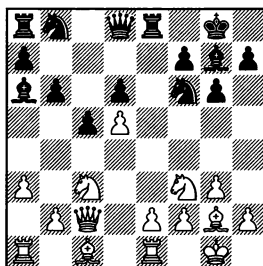
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3

of Position 1 with e2-e4, but he can underline the drawbacks of Black's setup with this check from a4. Practical experience indicates some advantage for him:

10...♙d7 11.♙xd6 ♚xa4 12.♘xa4 ♘xd5 13.0-0-0 ♘e7 14.e4 ♙xf1 15.♙hxf1 ♘bc6 16.♘c3 ♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♙d8 18.♙e5±, Dreev-Vallejo Pons, Biel 2002;

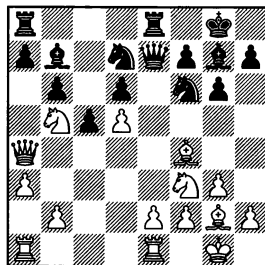
10...b5 11.♘xb5 0-0 12.♘c3 ♚b6 13.♙b1! ♘bd7 14.e4 ♙xf1 15.♘xf1 ♘h5 16.♙d2 ♘e5 17.♘xe5 ♙xe5 18.♘e2 (18.g3!?) ♙ab8 19.b4 cxb4 20.♙xb4±, Kizov-Parligras, Bijelo Polje 2005.

3. 5...♙a6 6.♚c2 exd5 7.cxd5 d6 8.♘c3 g6 9.g3 ♙g7 10.♙g2 0-0 11.0-0 ♙e8 12.♙e1



The most popular position of the Petrosian-Benoni variation. It only looks similar to Position 1. In fact, here White is unable to achieve the breakthrough e4-e5 and counts on piece play instead. His main resource is ♚a4 and eventually ♘b5, hitting d6. For his part, Black links his counterplay with ...b6-b5. He should not overestimate this move though, since the early a3 proves very handy in that case, enabling

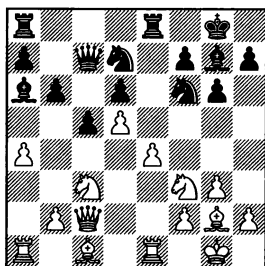
b2-b4. Standard development with 12...♘bd7 is probably not best. In Miton-Nisipeanu, Samba Cup 2005, White got the upper hand after 13.♙f4! ♚e7 14.♙a4 ♙b7 15.♘b5



15...♘e5 16.♘xe5 dxe5 17.d6! ♙d7 18.♙xb7 ♚xb7 19.♙g5 ♚c6 20.♙a6!±.

Black can try to anticipate the attack on d6 by:

12...♚c7 when White risks to lose the initiative if he insists on the thematic setup with ♙f4: 13.♙f4 ♘h5! (the reason behind 12...♚c7) 14.♙d2 ♘d7 15.♙a4 ♙b7 16.♚h4 a6 17.♙ac1 b5 18.b4, Kasparov-Fedorovicz, Graz 1994, when Black had 18...♘b6↑. In this example White failed to accommodate his dark-squared bishop. So we propose to make a room on e3 by 13.e4! ♘bd7 14.a4

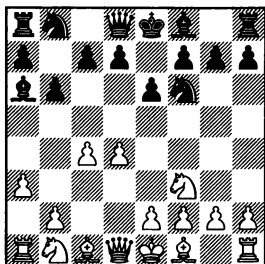


The breakthrough e4-e5 is

## Part 1

on White's agenda again. He can prepare it by h3, while Black's counterplay is unclear: 14...♖g4 15.♗b5 ♗xb5 16.axb5 ♗de5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.f4 ♗g4 19.e5±.

### B. 4...♗a6



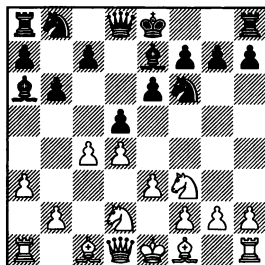
This is the main objection to the move order with 4.a3. Black aims first to shift White's queen from the d-file before counterattacking the centre with ...c5. Then White will have to accept hedgehog or Maróczy structures. The arising positions significantly differ from the classical treatment of the QID with a b7-bishop.

Now White has an enormous choice and it is difficult to single out one main line. His big problem is that he cannot just transpose to Benoni lines, because 5.♖c2 is met by 5...♗b7! when 6.♗c3 c5 7.d5? is not correct. After 7...exd5 8.cxd5 ♗xd5 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗b5 d6!? or 10...0-0 11.♗d6 ♗e3! Black is better. We shall consider two major approaches:

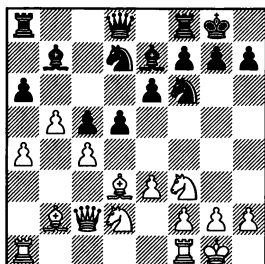
#### 4. 5.e3 d5 6.♗bd2 ♗e7

White will gain space on the

queenside by b2-b4. This plan leads to calm positional play.

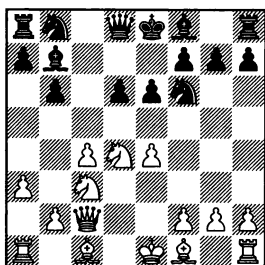


7.♖a4!? (to drag the black queen on a bad place) 7...♖d7 8.♖c2 0-0 9.b4 c5! when 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.b5 ♗b7 12.♗b2 a6 13.a4 ♖d8 14.♗d3 ♗bd7 15.0-0



White has more space and there is no obvious counterplay for Black.

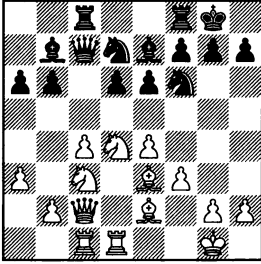
5. 5.♖c2 ♗b7 6.♗c3 c5 7.e4 cxd4 8.♗xd4 d6



1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3

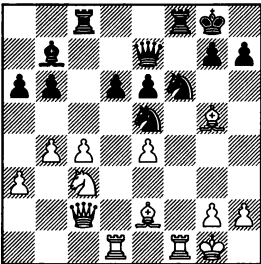
Black wants to play the hedgehog where the enemy queen is not properly placed on c2.

9.♗e2 ♗bd7 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♗e3 a6 12.f3 0-0 13.♞fd1 ♞c8 14.♞ac1 ♞c7



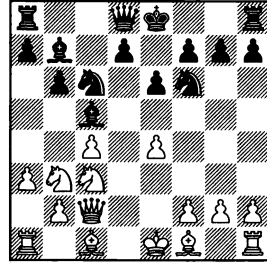
Practice does not confirm an advantage for White. It is more a matter of taste and playing style. There are whole books dedicated on the hedgehog structure, so we are not going to discuss it.

White can evade this scenario with the risky 9.♗g5?! ♗bd7 10.♞d1 a6 11.f4 ♗e7 12.f5 0-0 13.fxe6 ♗c5 14.♗f5 fxe6 15.♗xe7+ ♞xe7 16.b4 ♗cd7 17.♗e2 ♗e5 18.0-0 ♞ac8



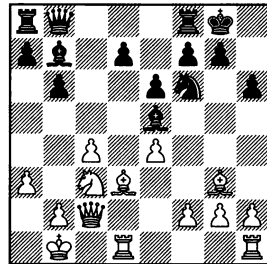
An interesting fight is ahead, A.Petrosian-A.Sokolov, Riga 1985.

6. 5.♞c2 ♗b7 6.♗c3 c5 7.e4 cxd4 8.♗xd4 ♗c5! 9.♗b3 ♗c6!



Black aims to build a checkers-type pawn formation c5-d6-e5-g5-h6. A model game is Vyzhmanavin-Salov, Irkutsk 1986: 10.♗xc5 bxc5 11.♗d3 d6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗h4 g5 15.♗g3 e5! 16.♞d1 a5=.

White's most testing plan is to castle queenside: 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 ♗d4 (11...g5 12.♗g3 e5 13.0-0-0! is rather unpleasant) 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 13.♗d3 ♞b8! 14.♗g3 ♗e5 15.0-0-0 0-0 16.♗b1



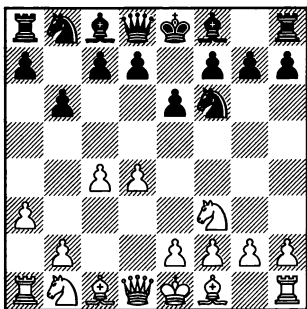
This is a critical position. Black obtains excellent counterplay by 16...a6! 17.♞he1 b5 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♗xb5 ♗c6 20.a4 ♞c8 21.♞c1 ♞b7!, Babula-Pavlovic, Warsaw 2005.

### **Conclusion**

*Transition to Benoni structures after 4.a3 c5 is possible, it offers rich enterprising play, but one has to feel them well. We would advise Black to put his bishop to a6, from where it puts pressure on e2 and dreams to be traded for its white counterpart. White can hope for some edge in the main line, but for that he should be ready for bold sharp action in the centre. Otherwise Black will organize counterplay on the queenside and take over the initiative.*

*4.a3 ♗a6 is a tough nut to crack. White should choose a line depending on his personal taste. 5.e3 leads to calm positional play while 5.♞c2 ♗b7 6.♘c3 c5 7.e4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 is double-edged. In many cases White can launch head-on attacks right in the opening by f4-f5 or even long castling. They may be theoretically not too dangerous, but practically they demand utmost precision. 8...♗c5 is currently most topical. Modern theory and practice does not show a clear path to an edge there. That is why we see lately White players turning toward the modest positional alternatives on the fifth move.*

## PART 1



1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3  
4...c5  
4...♙a6

### Move By Move

#### A. 4...c5 5.d5

A semi-automatic advance, but, of course, White has other normal developing moves:

a) 5.♗c3

Now Black can enter a hedgehog position where the move a2-a3 is obviously premature, but in no way bad.

5...cxd4 6.♗xd4 ♙b7 7.f3 d6

7...d5 8.cxd5 ♗xd5 9.♗xd5 ♖xd5 10.e4 ♗d8 11.♙b5+ is troublesome for Black. It is more interesting to try 7...♗c6 8.♙e3 ♙c5 9.♗d2 0-0 10.0-0 ♖e7 with sharp play.

8.e4 ♗bd7 9.♙e3 ♙e7 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0 a6. This typical pawn formation arises mainly in the English opening, for instance after 1.♗f3 c5 2.c4 b6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♙b7 5.♗c3 ♗f6 6.f3 d6 7.e4 e6 8.♙e2 ♙e7 9.0-0 0-0. It is outside of the scope of our book. Anyway, statistically and theoretically, White is better off in Benoni structures, than in hedgehog positions.

b) 5.e3 g6

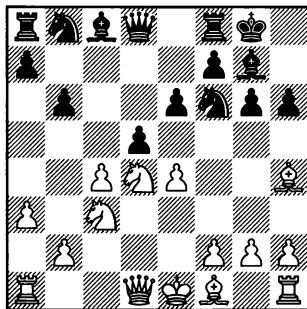
5...♙b7 6.♗c3 cxd4 7.exd4 d5 has also been tested successfully. After 8.cxd5 (Or 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.♙xf6

♙xf6 10.cxd5 ♙xd5 11.♗xd5 ♖xd5 12.♖a4+ ♙e7! 13.♗c1 ♗d8 and Black completes development) 8... ♗xd5 9.♗e5 (The isolator demands "fast" play. However, 9.♙b5+ ♙c6 10.♖a4 ♖d7 11.♗e5 does not work as 11...♗xc3 gives Black an excellent game.) 9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 a6! with complex play.

6.♗c3 ♙g7 7.e4

White cannot aspire to the advantage without this move, since the opponent will play simply ♙c8-b7, 0-0 and d7-d5 with an easy game.

7...cxd4 8.♗xd4 0-0 9.♙g5 h6 10.♙h4 d5!



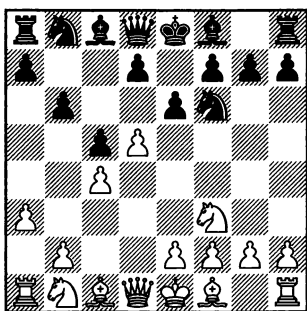
11.exd5

11.e5 g5! 12.♙g3 ♗e4 13.♗xe4

dxe4 offers Black fair chances, although the risky position after 14. ♖b5 begs for a practical test.

11...exd5 12. ♗e2 ♗b7 13. 0-0 dxc4 14. ♖db5 ♖bd7 15. ♗d6 ♗c6 16. ♗xc4 ♗e5, with a balanced game in Miles-Timman, Amsterdam 1994.

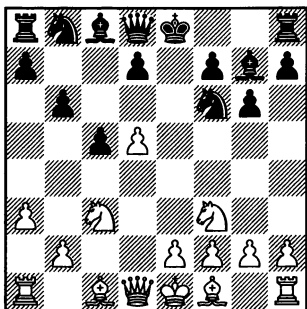
After 5.d5 Black has two major options: to switch immediately to Modern Benoni structures, or attempt to complicate White's task by putting the bishop to a6:



A1. 5...exd5

A2. 5...♗a6

A1. 5...exd5 6.cxd5 g6 7. ♗c3 ♗g7



### 8.e4

White also has other typical Benoni plans:

a) 8. ♗g5 0-0 9.e3 d6 10. ♗d2 h6 11. ♗h4 ♗a6 12. ♗e2 ♗c7 13.e4 b5! Petrosian-Larsen, Palma 1968 with sufficient counterplay in case of 14. ♖xb5 ♖xb5 15. ♗xb5 ♗b8 16.a4 a6.

b) 8.g3

The fianchetto is a rather harmless plan against the Benoni.

8...0-0 9. ♗g2 d6 10. 0-0 ♗e8 11. ♗d2 ♗a6!

The bishop belongs here, to impede a possible transfer of White's knight to c4.

12.a4 ♖bd7 13. ♗a2

White obtained strong counterplay after 13. ♖b5 ♗e5 14.f4 ♗eg4 15. ♗c4 ♗e4!, Cebalo-Sale, Osijek 1992. After the text Black enjoys a wide choice. Perhaps simplest is the thematic 13...g5!, securing the e5-knight.

### 8...0-0

Now White should define the place of his light-squared bishop, or delay its development, leading out the other one to g5:

A1a. 9. ♗e2; A1b. 9. ♗g5 A1c. 9. ♗d3!

A1a. 9. ♗e2 ♗e8 10. ♗d2 ♗a6 11. ♗xa6 ♖xa6 12. 0-0 d6 13.f3 ♗c7 14.a4 ♗d7 15. ♗c4 ♗e5 16. ♗e3

Black solved the opening problems, Ehlvest-Taimanov, Tallinn 1980.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

**A1b. 9.♗g5 d6 10.♘d2 ♖e8  
11.♗e2 a6 12.a4 ♘bd7**

White gets this position in the pure Modern Benoni with an extra tempo. Here he can hardly obtain any advantage.

**13.0-0 ♖c7 14.♙h1 h6 15.♗h4  
g5 16.♗g3 ♘e5 17.f4 gxf4 18.♗xf4  
♘fd7 19.♗g3 ♘f8!**

By shifting the knight to g6, Black retains a firm grip on the central dark squares, Olafsson-Andersson, Las Palmas 1975.

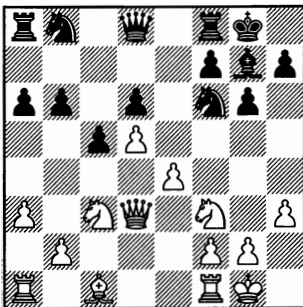
**A1c. 9.♗d3!**

Combining development with defence. This is the most popular setup against the “regular” Modern Benoni. Black has additional resources thanks to the move ...b6, but his practical results have been despairing.

**9...d6 10.h3!**

Banning the g4-square to Black’s pieces.

**10...♗a6 11.0-0 ♗xd3 12.♖xd3  
a6**



**13.♗f4!**

Central play is more important than prophylaxis: 13.a4 ♘bd7

14.♘d2 ♘e5 15.♖e2 g5! would give the opponent counterplay.

**13...b5 14.♖fe1 ♖a7 15.♗ad1  
b4 16.axb4 cxb4 17.♘a4 ♖e8  
18.e5! dxe5 19.♘xe5**

White has a clear edge in the centre, Vyzhmanavin-Savon, USSR 1987.

**A2. 5...♗a6 6.♖c2**

This is the most natural defence of the c4-pawn. Of course there always will be players that love to experiment so they will try various sidelines. However, they do not promise anything serious:

a) 6.♖b3 exd5 7.cxd5 d6 8.♘c3 ♘bd7 9.g3 ♗e7 10.♗g2 0-0 11.0-0 ♖e8 12.♖e1 ♗f8 13.♗f4 h6 14.♗ad1 ♘e4!. By trading a pair of knights, Black solves the opening problems, Dreev-Nisipeanu, France 2000;

b) 6.b3 exd5 7.cxd5 d6 8.♘c3 g6 9.♗b2 ♗g7 10.♖c2 0-0 11.e3 ♖e8 12.♖b1 ♗xf1 13.♙xf1 ♘a6 14.♖d3 ♘c7 15.e4 b5 16.b4 cxb4 17.axb4 a5! with excellent counterplay, Huss-Kortschnoj, Biel 1979;

c) 6.e3 exd5 7.cxd5 ♗xf1 8.♙xf1 g6 9.♘c3 ♗g7 10.e4 0-0 11.h3 d6 12.♗f4 ♖e8 13.♖c2 ♘a6 14.♘d2 ♖e7 15.g4 b5 16.♙g2 ♖ab8 17.♖he1 ♘d7 18.♗g3 c4. After this thematic move which enables the manoeuvre ♘a6-c5-d3, Black achieves a fine game, Cebalo-Rotstein, Cannes 1992;

d) 6.e4. A speculative pawn sacrifice “on general considerations”. It is considered in Part 12, line A.

e) 6.♘c3!? This fantastic gambit idea of Speelman is analyzed in de-

tail in Part 12, line A. It is very interesting and can cause Black a lot of trouble.

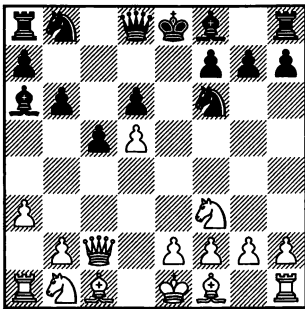
**6...exd5**

6...♞e7 has lost appeal after it became clear that White gets an overwhelming initiative by various ways:

7.♙g5 exd5 8.♙xf6 ♞xf6 9.cxd5 (9.♘c3! transposes to the next variation) 9...g6 10.e4 ♙f1 11.♙xf1 ♙g7 12.♘c3 0-0 13.e5 ♞e7 14.♙e1 d6 15.e6 ♘a6 16.h4 ♘c7 and here 17.h5 retains some pressure;

7.♘c3! ♙xc4 8.♙g5 exd5 9.e4! h6 10.♙xf6 ♞xf6 11.exd5 ♙xf1 12.♙xf1 d6 13.♙e1+ ♙e7 14.♞a4+ ♙f8 15.♞g4♞, Miles-Kudrin, London 1982.

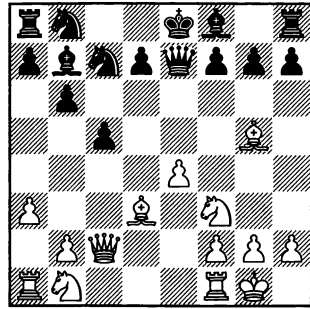
**7.cxd5 d6**



The Modern Benoni setup is Black's best option.

Occasionally Black ventures into grabbing a pawn by 7...♙b7 8.e4 ♞e7 9.♙d3 ♘xd5, but that is not commendable from a practical point of view – White is assured of a lasting initiative where Black's game is not easy:

10.0-0 ♘c7 11.♙g5!



Provoking weaknesses. 11.♘c3 is also playable, but the position is rather unclear after 11...♘e6 12.♙c4 ♘c6 13.♙e3 g6 14.b4 ♙g7.

11...f6 12.♙f4

The bishop is more useful on this diagonal. Karpov-Polugaevsky, Roguebrunne 1992 saw 12.♙h4 ♘c6 13.♘c3 0-0-0 14.♙g3 d6 15.b4! ♘e5 16.bxc5, when instead of 16...♘xf3+? 16...dxc5 would have been unclear.

12...d6 13.♘c3 ♘c6 14.♘d5♞.

Another possible move is 7...g6, which usually transposes to the main line. Only the Krasenkow's idea 8.♙f4 d6 9.e4! ♙f1 10.♙xf1 ♙g7 11.♘bd2 0-0 12.♘c4 is of independent significance. White's game looks preferable.

**8.♘c3 g6**

Putting the bishop to e7 is a sure sign of an ardent QID fan who hates Benoni structures! Of course, it is a passive setup which gives White the upper hand: 8...♙e7 9.g3 0-0 10.♙g2 ♙e8 11.0-0 ♙f8 12.♙e1 ♘bd7 13.h3 b5 14.b4! ♙b7 15.bxc5 ♘xc5 16.♘d4 ♞b6, Lputian-Robatsch, Yerevan 1982, when both 17.♙g5 as in he game, and 17.♘dxb5 ♘xd5 18.♙b1, favour White.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

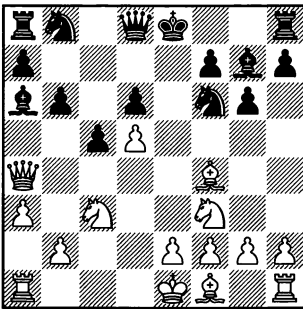
### 9.g3

The fianchetto is the most natural decision. Alternatives are:

a) 9.♖a4+ ♗d7 10.♖h4 ♙g7 11.♙g5 ♖e7 12.♖a4+ ♗d7 13.♖h4 ♖e7 led to a draw in Lein-Reshovsky, Beersheba 1982;

b) 9.e4. This is possible, but as a rule, exchanges favour Black who has less space in the centre. Besides, the king on f1 reminds of the Volga gambit, but here the pawns are equal! 9...♙xf1 10.♙xf1 ♙g7 11.g3 0-0 12.♙g2 ♖e8 13.♖e1 a6 14.a4 ♖a7. The rook is heading to e7 with roughly equal chances.

c) 9.♙f4!? ♙g7 10.♖a4+



A very interesting variation which could become White's weapon of choice against this setup. Now 10...♗d7 gives him some edge in the endgame after 11.♙xd6 ♖xa4 12.♘xa4 ♘xd5 13.0-0-0 ♘e7 14.e4 ♙xf1 15.♖hxfl ♘bc6 16.♘c3 ♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♖d8 18.♙e5±, Dreev-Vallejo Pons, Biel 2002, so Black prefers:

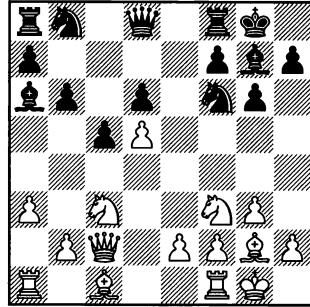
10...b5 11.♘xb5 0-0 12.♘c3 ♖b6

Practical experience has been disastrous for Black:

13.♖b1! ♘bd7 14.e4 ♙xf1 15.♙xf1 ♘h5 (15...c4 16.♖b4±, Dreev-

Bareev, Poikovsky 2006) 16.♙d2 ♘e5 17.♘xe5 ♙xe5 18.♘e2 (18.g3!?) ♖ab8 19.b4 cxb4 20.♖xb4±, Kizov-Parligras, Bijelo Polje 2005.

9...♙g7 10.♙g2 0-0 11.0-0



The main position of the Petrovian-Benoni variation.

11...♖e8

Some experts deem that 11...♘bd7 presents a more precise approach. They want to leave the king's rook on f8 and organize some flank play. However, White has been prevailing in such scenarios so far:

12.♙f4 ♖e7 13.♖fel b5 (Or 13...h6 14.♖ad1 b5 15.e4±) 14.h3 ♘b6 15.e4 ♘fd7 16.♙fl ♘c4 17.a4 and Black had to part with a pawn in Khismatullin-Miroshnichenko, Sochi 2007: 17...♘de5 18.♘xe5 ♘xe5 19.♖d1 (19.♙xe5!?) 19...b4 20.♙xa6 bxc3 21.bxc3±.

12.♖e1

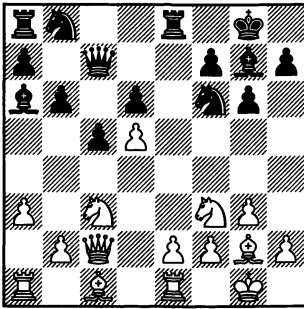
This looks consistent, but Radjabov also tested 12.♖d1 ♖e8 13.♖a4!? to win after 14.♙xe2 15.♖e1 ♙xf3 16.♘b5 ♖d8 17.♙xf3 ♘e5 18.♙xe5 ♖xe5 19.♖xe5 dxe5 20.d6 ♖b8? 21.♙c6±, Radjabov-Brodsky, rapid, Tallinn 2004. Correct was 20...e4

21. ♖xe4 ♜xe4 22. ♖xe4 ♖e8=.

**12... ♜bd7**

This is by far the most popular move, but we will soon see (in line A2b) that it allows White to seize the initiative by force. Perhaps he should test a more sophisticated move order, for instance:

12... ♖c7 (12... ♖e7 13. ♖f4 does not make any difference with the main line since 13... ♜h5 would be pointless due to 14. ♖g5 – with tempo!)



We suppose that Black does not like this move, because it might enhance the threat of ♜b5. However, the scarce tournament practice is not too encouraging to White:

13. ♖f4 ♜h5 14. ♖d2 ♜d7 15. ♖a4 ♖b7 16. ♖h4 a6 17. ♖a1 b5 18. b4, Kasparov-Fedorovicz, Graz 1994, when Black had 18... ♜b6↑. We see White's most dangerous plan (♖a4) not working here. If we go backwards, we can try 15. ♖a1, (hoping for 15... b5 16. b4) but 15... c4 16. ♖e3 ♜c5 17. ♜d2 could be countered with the exchange sacrifice 17... ♖xe3. In such type of positions White's winning chances are minimal. The same positional sac is possible in various

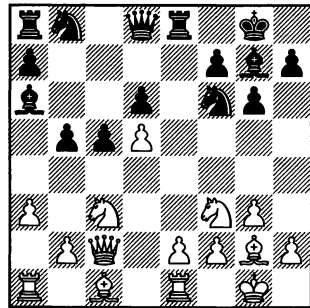
settings though.

The alternatives 15. a4 c4 16. ♜b5 ♖c5∞ or 15. e4 ♜e5= are not appealing either.

In these examples it strikes us that White's bishop is not too useful on d2. Therefore, in the diagram position we should think about another approach:

13. e4!? ♜bd7 14. a4 (14. ♖f4 ♜h5 15. ♖e3 is not efficient because Black has no problems after trading knights on e5: 15... ♜e5 16. ♜xe5 ♖e5 17. a4 ♖d7=.) Now 14... ♜g4 15. ♜b5 ♖xb5 16. axb5 ♜de5 17. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 18. f4 ♜g4 19. e5 would be in White's favour: 19... ♖d7 20. h3 ♜h6 21. e6 ♖xb5 22. g4± or 19... dxe5 20. h3 exf4 21. ♖xf4 ♜e5 22. d6 ♖xd6 23. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 24. ♖e4±.

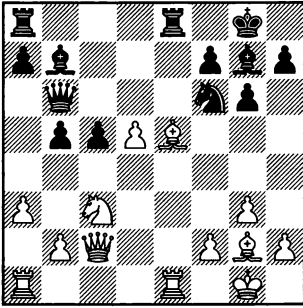
Another frequently played alternative to the main line is 12... b5, freeing room on b6 for the queen.



White succeeds in breaking in the centre with e4–e5 to gain the upper hand, for instance: 13. e4 ♜bd7 14. ♖f4 ♖b6 15. e5 dxe5 16. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 17. ♖xe5 ♖b7. The game Babula-Mastrovasilis, Warsaw 2005, went 18. ♖ad1 ♖ad8 19. d6 ♖xg2 20. ♜xg2 ♖c6+ 21. f3± c4 22. ♖d2

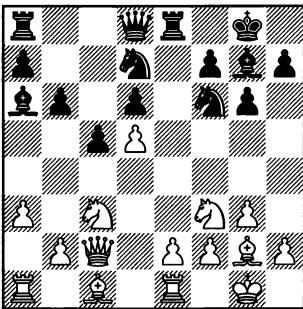
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

♘e4 23.♙xe4 ♙xe5 24.♚d5 with some pressure. White's play can be improved with:



18.a4! a6 19.a5 ♚d8 20.d6 ♙xg2 21.♙xg2 c4 22.♙ad1 ♚d7 and he has practically won a tempo compared to the previous example, Farago-Beliavsky, Murska Sobota 2006. At this point 23.♚d2± would have been rather unpleasant for Black.

After 12...♘bd7 White is at a juncture:



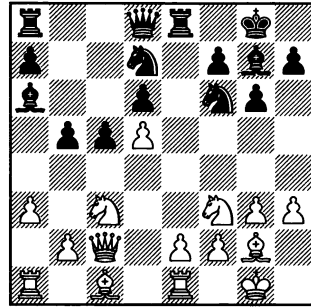
He can complete development or first restrict the opponent's options:

A2a. 13.h3 A2b. 13.♙f4!;

**A2b. 13.h3 b5!**

Black grasps the chance to launch

a pawn storm on the queenside.



**14.♙f4**

14.e4 has been practically refuted by the game Gelfand-Kasparov, Novgorod 1997 which went 14...♚c8! 15.♙f4?! b4 16.♘a4 b3! 17.♚xb3 ♘xe4 18.♚c2 ♘df6 and Black destroyed the enemy centre. Later White also tried without success 15.♙f1 b4 16.♘b5 ♚b8, Tihonov-Najer, Moscow 2006.

**14...♚b6**

Alternative is 14...♘b6. Then 15.e4 ♚d7 16.g4! ♙ac8 17.♙g3 ♙b7 (preparing a7-a5, b5-b4) 18.♚b3! a6 19.♙ad1 ♘c4, Gabriel-Marin, Sovata 1998, led to a complex position, where White should be better after 20.e5! dxe5 21.♘xe5 ♘xe5 22.♙xe5 h5 23.g5 ♘h7 24.♙xe8+ ♙xe8 25.♘e4.

**15.e4 ♙ac8 16.♙e3 ♚b7 17.♙f1 ♘b8!**

17...c4 18.♙g2! favours White. After the text however, Black achieves 18...b4 on the next turn and takes over the initiative.

**A2a. 13.♙f4! ♚e7 14.♚a4**

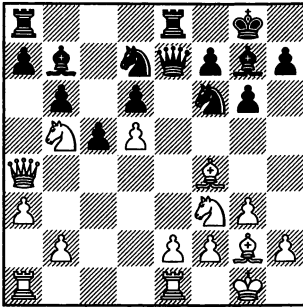
The modest 14.h3 allows Black

to trade a pair of knights: 14...♖e4! with an excellent game.

14.e4 ♖g4 15.♙g5 f6 16.♙f4 ♖ge5 17.♖xe5 ♖xe5 18.♙ad1 ♗d7 19.b3 ♙e7 20.♙c1 c4! 21.bxc4 ♙c8! was also fine for him in Kramnik-Timman, Linares 1993.

14.♙ad1 was tried in Lputian-Janssen, Corus 1999: 14...♖e4 15.♖xe4 ♗xe4 16.♗d2 ♖f6 17.♙xd6 ♙ad8 18.♖g5 ♗a4 19.♙c7 ♗d7 20.d6 h6 whereas 21.♖f3 would have been rather unclear.

14...♙b7 15.♖b5



15...♖e5

15...♖e4 is strongly met by 16.♖d2! ♖xd2 17.♖xd6±. Or 15...♖xd5 16.♖xd6 ♙xb2 17.♙ad1±.

16.♖xe5 dxe5 17.d6!

An important intermediate move. Following 17.♙g5 ♗d7 18.e4 h6 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6 20.♗c4 a6 21.♖c3 ♗d6 Black's position is unbreakable due to his control of the dark squares, Lautier-Istratescu, Ohrid 2001.

17...♗d7 18.♙xb7 ♗xb7 19.♙g5 ♗c6

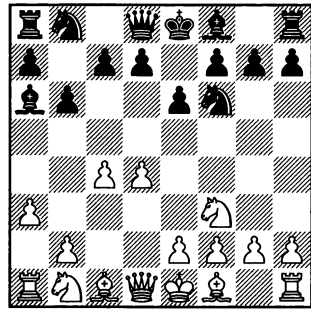
After 19...♙f8? 20.♙ad1 h6 21.♙xf6 ♙xf6 22.e4 a6 23.♖c7 ♙ab8 24.♖d5 the mighty d5-knight assures White of the edge, Cebalo-Mi-

kac, Bled 2001.

20.♗a6!

White has an obvious advantage. After 20...♙ad8 he can break through the queenside by 21.b4± or 21.a4 ♗d7 22.♙xf6 ♙xf6 23.a5 e4 24.♖xa7±, Miton-Nisipeanu, Samba Cup 2005.

B. 4...♙a6



This is the main move against White's fianchetto 4.g3. In that case the attack from a6 underlines the weakening of the f1-c4 diagonal. In our case the reason behind 4...♙a6 is different. Black aims first to shift White's queen from the d-file before counterattacking the centre with ...c5. Then White will either have to accept hedgehog structures, or try to enter Benoni setup, even with a pawn sacrifice.

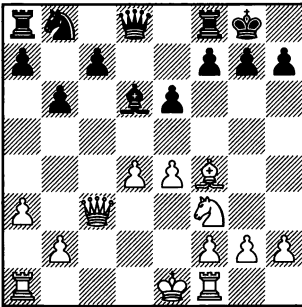
The arising positions significantly differ from the classical treatment of the QID with a b7-bishop.

5.♗c2

Let us consider the numerous White's alternatives:

a) 5.♗b3. White's queen does not belong here. It hampers its b-

pawn and does not support e2-e4. That could be underlined by the sneaky move 5...♙e7. Black is waiting for 6.♘c3 to play 6...d5 (In Riazantsev-Jakovenko, Moscow 2008, Black delayed this move: 6...♙b7 7.♙f4 0-0 8.♙d1 d5 9.cxd5 ♘xd5 10.♘xd5 exd5 11.e3 ♘d7 12.♙e2 c5=) 7.cxd5 ♘xd5. Then 8.e4 (or 8.g3 0-0 9.♙g2 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♘d7 11.♙a2 c5=, Rusev-Delchev, Plovdiv 2008) allows him to exchange on c3 with roughly equal chances: 8...♙xf1 9.♙xf1 (9.♙xf1 ♘xc3 10.♙xc3 0-0 11.g3 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♙g2 ♘d7 14.♙f4 ♙b6=) 9...♘xc3 10.♙xc3 0-0 11.♙f4 ♙d6



This position was tested twice in 2008:

Riazantsev-Kotsur, Chelyabinsk 2008: 12.♙e3 a5 13.♙e2 ♙d7 14.♙fd1 a4 15.♙ac1 ♙b5+ 16.♙e1 ♘a6 17.♙d2 c5 18.♙c4 ♙e8 19.e5 1/2-1/2;

Mchedlishvili-Moranda, Polonica Zdroj 2008: 12.♙g3 ♙d7 13.0-0-0 ♙xg3 14.hxg3 ♙c6?! 15.♙xc6 ♘xc6 16.♙d3 ♙fd8 17.♙fd1 ♙ac8±. Instead of the ridiculous manoeuvre ♙d8-d7-c6, we propose 12...c5!? 13.0-0-0 ♙xg3 14.hxg3 cxd4 15.♙xd4 ♙e7.

Let us note that other answers to

5.♙b3 leave White more chances to obtain an edge:

5...c6 6.♘c3 d5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.♙xf6! ♙xf6 10.e4 ♙xf1 11.♙xf1 dxe4 12.♘xe4 0-0 13.0-0-0±, Halkias-Kalesis, Chania 1997;

5...♘c6 6.♙c2 b5!? 7.cxb5 ♙xb5 8.♘c3 ♙a6 9.b4 ♙c4 10.e4 ♙xf1 11.♙xf1 ♙b8 12.g3 g6 13.♙g2 ♙g7, Kizov-Rajkovic, Baimok 2001, 14.♙d1! with a strong centre;

5...c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 g6 8.♙f4 d6 8.♘c3 ♙g7 10.♙a4±, transposing to line A2;

5...d5 6.cxd5 ♙xd5 7.♙c2 c5 8.♘c3 ♙d7 9.♙g5!? (9.dxc5 ♙xc5 10.♙g5±) 9...cxd4 10.♙xf6 gxf6 11.0-0-0± ♘c6 12.e3 ♙xf1 13.♙hxfl ♙c8 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.♙xd4 ♙c6 16.♙fd1.

**b) 5.♙a4 c5.** Thematic and not bad at all! Fair alternatives are 5...♙b7 with the same idea of 6...c5 and так же 5...c6 followed up by ...♙e7, 0-0, d5.

6.dxc5

6.e3 is not appealing since after 6...♙e7 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♙d3 d5 9.0-0 ♙e8! White has problems due to the pin along the f1-a6 diagonal.

6...bxc5

6...♙xc5 is playable, too, but why to give a tempo on b4?!

7.♘c3 ♙b7 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.e3 0-0 10.♙e2 h6 11.♙h4 d5! 12.♙d1 ♙c6 13.♙c2 ♘bd7 14.0-0 ♙b6 15.cxd5 exd5 16.♙d2 ♙ab8. Black's hanging pawns are difficult to attack, so the position is balanced, Krush-Koneru, Calicut 1998.

**c) 5.♘bd2**

This is not too aesthetic – the

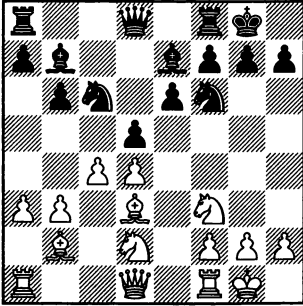
## Part 1

knight should control d5 after all.

5...♙b7

5...c5 6.e3 ♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.♖e2 cxd4 9.exd4 d5 is good for Black, but 6.e4! cxd4 7.e5 would be more testing.

6.e3 c5 7.♗d3 ♘c6 8.b3 ♗e7 9.♗b2 cxd4 10.exd4 d5 11.0-0 0-0



This typical position with hanging pawns usually arises from the Bogoljubow. It is supposed to be double-edged. Here are two recent games:

Eingorn-Spirin, Metz 2008:

12.♖e2 ♖c8 13.♗a1 dxc4 14.bxc4 ♗e8 15.♗f1 ♖d6 16.♘e4 ♗f4 17.♖e1 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗f6 19.♖e3 1/2-1/2;

Ivanchuk-Chuchelov, Warsaw 2005: 12.♖c1 ♖c8 13.c5 a5 14.♖c2 ♘d7↑.

**d) 5.e3**

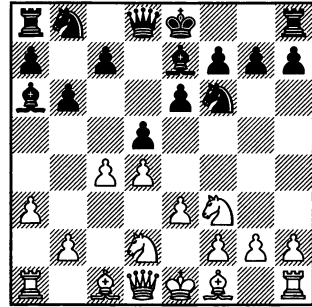
The favourite move of the ex-European champion Zdenko Kozul.

5...d5

5...c5 is an inferior option, since White will have a spatial advantage after 6.♘c3. Then 6...cxd4 7.exd4 d5? stumbles into 8.♗f4!± ♗xc4 9.♘b5 whereas 7...d6 8.♗d3 ♘bd7 is solid, but passive. That's why Black often chooses 6...♗e7, when Kramnik-Ljubojevic, Monte Car-

lo 2002 went on 7.d5 exd5 8.cxd5 ♗xf1 9.♗xf1 d6 10.g3 0-0 11.♗g2 ♘bd7 12.♗e1 a6 13.a4 ♘e8 14.e4 ♗f6 15.♗f4 ♘e5 16.♘xe5 dxe5 17.♗e3± while Portish and other top GMs prefer first 7.♗e2 0-0 8.d5±.

6.♘bd2 ♗e7



7.b4

The idea of seizing space on the queenside is quite attractive, although White must not forget about developing the kingside, too. It is very interesting to shape this idea differently:

7.♖a4+!? ♖d7 (In case of 7...c6 8.cxd5 ♗xf1 9.♘xf1 ♖xd5 10.♘g3 ♘bd7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗e1 c5 13.e4 ♖b7 14.d5 b5 15.♖c2 exd5 16.e5 ♘e8 17.♘f5 ♘b6 18.♗g5 White has fair compensation for the pawn, Muse-Kosashvili, Biel 1989.) 8.♖c2 0-0 9.b4 c5! when 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.b5 ♗b7 12.♗b2 a6 13.a4 ♖d8 14.♗d3 ♘bd7 15.0-0 should be in White's favour as he has more space and there is no obvious counterplay for Black.

7...0-0 8.♗b2

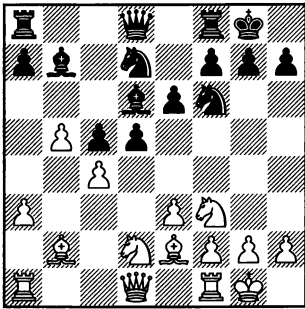
Black's choice here is between three distinct approaches: he can give up the centre, eliminate it, or bolster it:

d1) 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗xc4 10.♘xc4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

a5 (10...♙d5 is weaker: 11.♙c2 a5 12.bxa5 bxa5 13.0-0 ♘bd7 14.♙fd1 c5 15.♘ce5 ♘xe5 16.dxe5 ♙e4 17.♙a1 ♙xc2 18.♙xc2 ♘d5 19.♘d2! with an edge in the endgame, Lami-Hammer, Dresden 2007.) 11.bxa5 b5! Thus Black avoids splitting his queenside pawns. 12.♘ce5 ♙xa5 13.0-0 (Akopian-Tiviakov, San Marino 2006 saw 13.a4 bxa4 14.♙xa4 c5 15.0-0 ♙xa4 16.♙xa4 ♙b6=, but why not check 13...♙b4+!) 13...♙d5 14.♙c2. White has an initiative due to his pressure down the c-file and the better centre, for instance: 14...♙d6 15.♘g5!; 14...♙b7 or 14...♙a7 – 15.♙fc1.

d2) 8...c5 9.dxc5 bxc5 10.b5 ♙b7 11.♙e2 ♘bd7 12.0-0 ♙d6



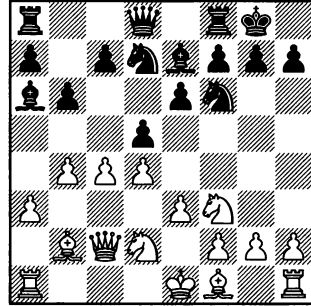
This is a typical structure, but at the same time it is not well explored. White will put his queen to c2 and then he will be pushing his a- and b-pawns. Black's only play is linked with an exchange on c4 in order to open up the main diagonal and get the d5-square. However, that would be a positional concession to White. The game Mascarinas-Romanishin, Lvov 1981 went on with:

13.a4 ♙c8 14.♙c2 ♙b8 15.♙fe1

♙e8 16.♙d3 g6 17.h3 ♙e7, when 18.a5 would have kept some edge. d3) 8...♘bd7

This developing move is not bad at all.

9.♙c2



Now simplest is 9...c5 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.b5 ♙b7 as in the game Kozul-Beliavsky, Portorose 1997, which leads to the position from the previous line d2. White should develop the bishop to e2 (not to d3) to be able to take on e4 if a black knight appears on that square.

In Jaracz-Ivanchuk, Warsaw 2005, Black preferred another version of line d1: 9...h6 10.♙e2 dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♙b7 12.0-0 a5 13.b5 c5 14.bxc6 ♙xc6 15.♙fc1 ♙b8 to win eventually, but White is certainly a little better in this position.

These variations are seldom seen in tournaments, although the above-mentioned examples show that Black's task is not trivial. It is difficult for him to obtain concrete play. In our opinion, he should aim for a quick c7-c5 without spending time to retreat the bishop to b7.

5...♙b7

The main move. This position

became very popular at the end of the 20th century. Black denies d4-d5 and intends to attack the centre by ...c5.

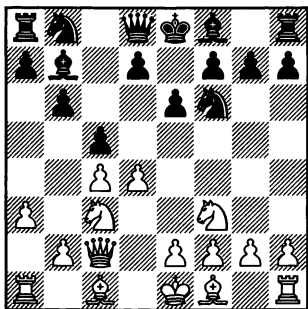
5...c5 6.d5 transposes to line A2. Besides, White has the extra option of 6.e4 cxd4 7.e5 ♖g8 8.♗d3, which is far from clear though – 8...♗b7 9.♗e4 ♖c6 10.0-0 f5.

5...d5 is hardly commendable. 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♖c3 leads to pawn structures, discussed in Part 5, but the bishop is misplaced on a6. White fianchettoes his own one on g2 and enjoys a better game.

### 6. ♖c3

6.♗g5 ♗e7 or 6.e3 c5 do not promise serious chances for an edge.

### 6...c5



### 7.e4

Alternatives are:

a) 7.d5?! exd5 8.cxd5 ♖xd5

A few years ago this sacrifice still looked interesting, but the game Rowson-Adams, Turin 2006 seems to have killed it effectively:

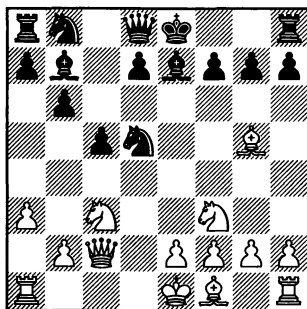
9.♗g5

9.♖xd5 is objectively the better try, but the position after 9...♗xd5 10.♗f4 ♗e7 11.♖d1 ♗e6 should not be appealing to White. The game Ko-

zul-Volokitin, Slovenija 2007, went 12.e3 a6?! (Producing a weakness. 12...♖c6 is more natural.) 13.♗c4 ♖c6 14.♗d5 ♖c8 15.0-0. White has some compensation for the pawn, but that is not enough to play for a win.

Turkish master Yakup Bayram stubbornly defended 9.♗d2. After 9...♖c7 10.e4 ♖c6 11.♖d5 Black has various good continuations. Simplest is 11...♖xd5 12.exd5 ♖d4 13.♖xd4 cxd4, but 11...♖e6 12.♗c3 ♗d6 is also in his favour.

9...♗e7



### 10. ♖b5

Black's defence is based on the variation 10.♞e4? ♖xc3 11.♞xb7 ♖c6 12.♗xe7 ♖xe7 13.bxc3 ♖b8 14.♞a6 b5! entrapping the queen.

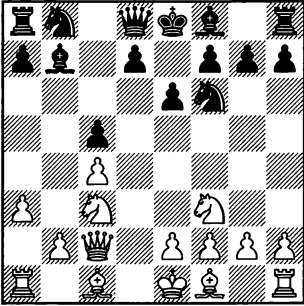
10...d6!? This is Adams' novelty. The older move 10...0-0 11.♖d6 ♖e3! (a fine idea of GM Chernin) 12.fx3 ♗xf3 13.exf3 ♗xg5 14.♗c4!, Jankovic-Roskar, Ljubljana 2005, leaves White some compensation for the pawn, although he has hardly sacrificed material to struggle for the draw following 14...♖c6 15.♞e4 ♞e7 16.♞xe7 ♗xe7 17.0-0-0.

11.♗xe7 ♖xe7 (11...♞xe7 looks

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

even stronger) 12.0-0-0 ♘c8 13.e3 a6 14.♘c3 b5 15.♘d3 ♖e7 16.♙e4 ♞a7. Here the opponents suddenly signed a draw, although White's king seems in a more precarious situation.

b) 7.dxc5 bxc5



White is ready to play against hanging pawns. His game is rather easy. Now he must define the placement of his dark-squared bishop:

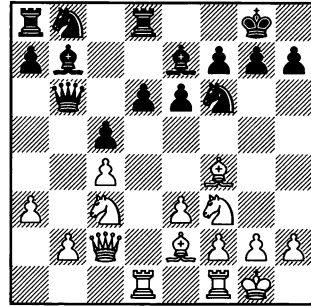
8.♙f4

8.♙g5 is similar, but the bishop on g5 only deprives White's knight from the possibility of ♘g5: 8...♙e7 9.e3 0-0 10.♙e2 d6=. (In Atalik-Beliavsky, Bled 2002, White obtained an advantage after 10...h6 11.♙h4 d5 12.♙d1 ♘bd7 13.0-0 ♖c7 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♙g3 ♗b6, when 16.♘e5! ♘xe5 17.♙xe5 ♖e6 18.♙xf6 ♙xf6 19.♙f3 would have increased the pressure on the hanging pawns.)

8...♙e7

The attempt to reduce tension with 8...♘h5 failed to 9.♙d2 ♙e7 10.e3 ♘c6 11.♙d3 ♘f6 12.0-0 0-0 13.♙fd1 ♖c7 14.♞ab1 h6 15.h3 ♞ab8 16.♘a2! followed by 18.b4±, Kuzubov-Tiviakov, Monarch 2005.

9.♙d1 0-0 10.e3 d6 11.♙e2 ♗b6 12.0-0 ♙d8



This typical position is passive, but very solid for Black. White doubles the rooks on the d-file and attempts to disturb the opponent on the wings. Here is an example:

13.♙d2 ♘bd7 14.♙fd1 ♘f8 15.b4!? (Harmless is 15.♘g5 ♙d7! 16.♙f3 ♙xf3 17.♘xf3 h6 18.h3 ♞ad8 19.e4 e5! with unclear play – Stohl) 15... cxb4 16.axb4 ♞ac8 17.♘d4 ♙a8 18.♘db5 e5 19.♙g5 a6 20.♙xf6 gxf6 21.♘a3 ♗xb4 22.♘ab1 ♞c5 23.♘e4! with compensation for the pawn due to the weak light squares, Lobron-Polugaevsky, Biel 1986.

7...cxd4 8.♘xd4



Black has three different approaches here:

- B1. 8...d6
- B2. 8...♘c6
- B3. 8...♙c5

**B1. 8...d6**

Entering the hedgehog without beating about the bush. The main distinction from the classical hedgehog is the queen on c2. After ... ♖a8-c8 it will feel rather uncomfortable on the c-file.

B1a. 9.♙g5; B1b. 9.♙e2

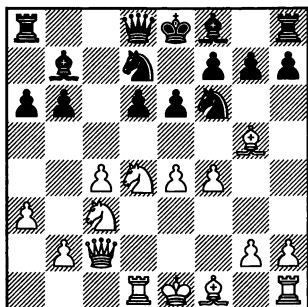
**B1a. 9.♙g5**

This is sharper than the normal setup, but it should not be a problem for Black.

9...♘bd7 10.♙d1

White's king would look weird on the queenside. The game Nestorovic-D.Rajkovic, Belgrade 2005 went 10.0-0-0 a6 11.f4 ♖c7 12.♙e2 ♙e7 13.♗he1 0-0 14.♙f3 ♖fc8! 15.e5 dxe5 16.fxe5, when tactic works in Black's favour after the amazing blow 16...♘xe5! 17.♙xb7 (17.♖xe5 ♖xe5 18.♙xf6 ♙xf6 19.♙xb7 ♖e3+♠) 17...♖xb7 18.♖xe5 ♘g4 19.♘d5 (19.♙f4 ♘xe5 20.♙xe5 ♖xc4♠) 19...♙d6.

10...a6 11.f4

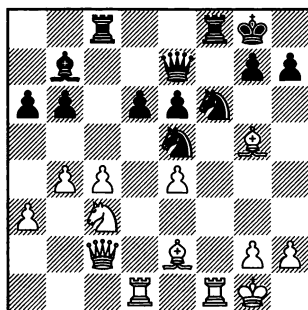


Or the whole idea is not worth the effort. Now White is aiming at the core of the hedgehog, intending to place e4-e5 or f4-f5.

11...♙e7

In A.Petrosian-Csom, Moscow 1989, White obtained some spatial advantage after 11...♖c7 12.f5 e5 13.♘f3 h6 14.♙h4 ♙e7 15.♙d3 ♘c5 16.♙xf6!? ♙xf6 17.♙e2 ♘d7 18.♖d2 ♙e7 19.♘d5 ♙xd5 20.cxd5 0-0 21.♖c1.

12.f5 0-0 13.fxe6 ♘c5 14.♘f5 fxe6 15.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 16.b4 ♘cd7 17.♙e2 ♘e5 18.0-0 ♖ac8.



A complex, interesting fight is ahead, A.Petrosian-A.Sokolov, Riga 1985. White has a pair of bishops, but also a pair of weaknesses on e4 and c3.

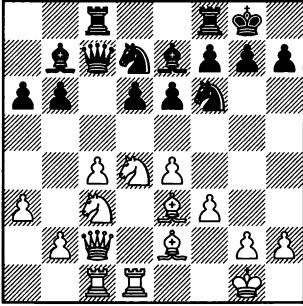
**B1b. 9.♙e2 ♘bd7**

The move order is irrelevant. Both sides are building the main "tabia"

10.0-0 ♙e7 11.♙e3 a6 12.f3 0-0 13.♖fd1 ♖c8 14.♖ac1 ♖c7

This is the basic hedgehog position. We assess it as dynamically balanced as practice does not confirm an advantage for White.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

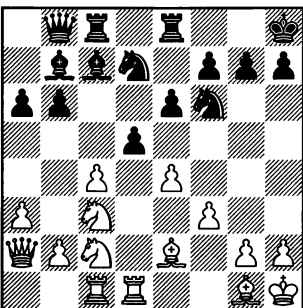


There are whole books on the hedgehog structures, so we are not going to examine it in detail. It is a matter of taste and playing style. We shall only mention that White's best plan is a queenside pawn storm with b2-b4, ♘c3-a4 and c7-c5 or b4-b5.

Black, for his part has, has two main approaches: the central break d6-d5 or a kingside offensive with ♘g8-h8, ♝f8-g8, g7-g5. Sometimes Black manoeuvres the dark-squared bishop from e7 to c7.

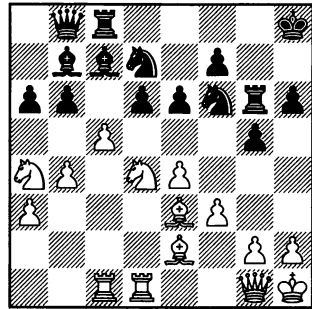
Let us look at several model games for illustration:

15.♞b3 ♞b8 16.♞a2 ♝fe8 17.♙f2 (17.♞h1 is more precise, in order to defend the h2-pawns by ♙g1) 17...♙d8! 18.♞h1 ♙c7 19.♙g1 ♞h8 20.♘c2 d5!?



21.exd5 exd5 22.♘b4! dxc4 23.♙xc4 ♘e5! 24.♘xa6 ♞a8 25.♘xc7 ♝xc7 26.♙f1 ♘xf3! with complex play and mutual chances, Mikhalchishin-Lerner, Kujbyshev 1986;

15.♙f1 ♞b8 16.♞f2 ♙d8 17.♞h1 ♝e8 (17...♞h8 and 18...♙g8 looks better) 18.♞g1 h6 19.b4 ♙c7 20.♙f2 ♞h8 21.♘a4 ♙g8 22.♙e3 g5 23.♙e2 ♙g6 24.c5!

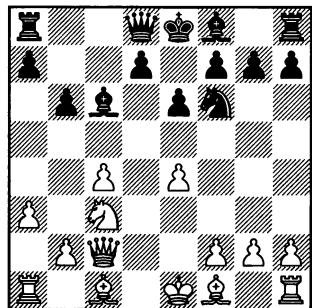


This breakthrough defines White's advantage, Stempin-Farago, Poland 1983.

## B2. 8...♘c6

A logical move which underlines the shaky state of the d4-knight, due to the placement of White's queen on c2.

## 9.♘xc6 ♙xc6



9...dxc6 is just ugly. White takes over all the important squares along the d-file by 10.♙f4 and 11.♞d1.

B2a. 10.♞e2?!; B2b. 10.♙e2; B2c. 10.♙f4

**B2a. 10.♞e2?!**

A hypermodern move, we would say. White not only shifts his queen again, but he puts it on the bishop's place. It has a sound positional reason behind – to prepare e4-e5, but practice shows that this idea does not work:

**10...♞c7!**

This is the most challenging answer. 10...d6 is a simpler approach. Black builds the hedgehog. That allows him to neutralize all immediate threats and complete development. 11.g3 ♙e7 12.♙g2 0-0 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.♙f4 ♞b8! A typical manoeuvre. Now 15.♘d5 is inefficient: 15...♙d8 16.♘b4 ♙b7 and White had not reap benefits from his knight raid, 17.♞fd1 ♘e5!? 18.♞ac1 ♙e7 19.♘d3 ♞c8! 20.♘xe5 dxe5 21.♞d7 exf4! 22.♞xe7 ♞c7=, Atalik-Chuchelov, Kallithea 2002.

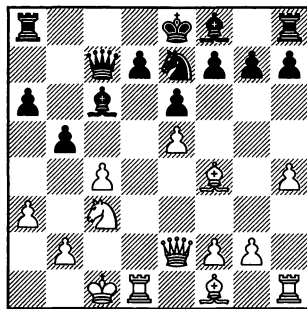
We'll note that 10...e5 11.g3 ♙c5 12.♙g2 a5 is not commendable as White enjoys a lasting space advantage after 13.♙e3 0-0 14.0-0 ♞e7 15.♞ac1 ♞fc8 16.♞fd1 ♞c7 17.♞d3 ♞ac8 18.a4 ♙xe3 19.♞xe3 ♞b4 20.b3, Wang Yue-Zhang Zhong, Tiayuan 2005.

**11.e5**

11.g3 allows 11...♘xe4 (11...♙d6 intending ...♙e5 is also playable)

12.♘xe4 f5 13.♙g2 ♙xe4 14.♙xe4 fxe4 15.♞xe4 ♞c8↑ so White cannot bail out.

**11...♘g8 12.♙f4 ♘e7 13.0-0 a6 14.h4 b5**



White's strategy is a failure. The opponent started first an attack, Atalik-Gelashvili, Greece 2003.

**B2b. 10.♙e2**

This modest-looking move keeps many options open as e4-e5 and ♙c1-f4. At the same time it prevents ♘f6-h5 which is possible to ♙c1-f4. At White's wish, play could quickly turn into a war action.

**10...♞c7**

Of course this is more natural than 10...♞b8. Some players prefer it "on general considerations" to avoid any possibility for ♘b5. However, 11.♙e3 leads then to the same position as in the main line, but in some variations the queen on b8 might cost Black a tempo.

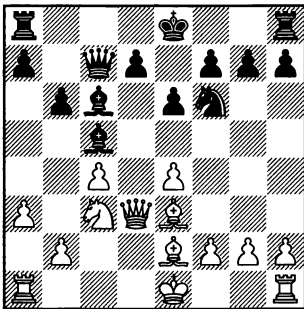
**11.♙e3**

The active attempt 11.f4 ♙c5 12.b4 ♙d4 13.e5 stumbles into 13...♘d5!! (Well, may be the two exclamations

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

are too much, since 13... ♗d8! is also appealing and could be even better, but we do like Chuchelov's idea. His game against Goldin in Cappele la Grande, 2001 went 14.♘e4, (14.cxd5 ♗a4!) but here he overstepped with 14... ♘xf4?! 15.♘d6+ ♗xd6! 16.exd6 ♘xg2+ with unclear consequences. Improvements for both sides are possible: instead of 15.♘d6+, 15.♗xf4± wins a piece; best is 14... ♘e7! 15.♗b2 ♗xb2 16.♘d6+ ♗xd6 17.exd6 ♗xa1 18.dxe7 ♗xg2 19.♖g1 ♗c6 with a nice compensation for the queen. All these tactics show that White must opt for a more restrained approach.

**11...♗c5 12.♗d3!**



This allows White to complete development, retaining his grip on the centre. Black should seek simplification:

**12...♗d6**

White was better in Zoler-Grooten, Graz 2002 following 12... a5 13.0-0 ♗e5 14.f4 ♗xe3+ 15.♗xc3 ♗c5 16.♗xc5 bxc5 17.♗f3 d6 18.♗ad1 0-0-0 19.e5±.

**13.♗xd6 ♗xd6 14.f3 ♗e5**

The game Volodin-Rakhmanov, Kemer 2007, saw further 15.♖c1

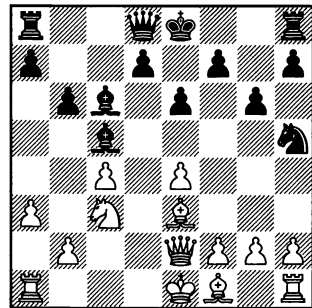
with roughly equal chances. 15.♗d1! would have been more testing, although Black has no weaknesses and should be able to hold on.

**B2c. 10.♗f4**

White demonstrates his intention to contest the dark squares.

**10...♗c5**

A popular alternative is 10... ♘h5 11.♗e3 ♗c5 (11... ♗b8 is too provocative. White should take up the gauntlet by 12.0-0-0! ♗d6 13.g3 ♗e5 14.♗d3 ♗b7 15.♗he1 ♘f6 16.f4! ♗xc3 17.♗xc3 ♖c8, Kramnik-Lutz, Dortmund 1993. Here 18.♗d4 ♘xe4 19.♗xe4 ♗xe4 20.♗xg7 ♖g8 21.♗f6± would have been the most testing. Black's problem is that he cannot connect his rooks: 21...d5 22.b3; 21...b5 22.c5; 21...♖g6 22.b3 b5 23.♗h4) 12.♗e2!? g6

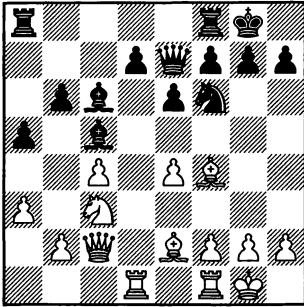


12...♘f6?! is hardly an improvement: 13.e5 ♘g8, Babula-Shengelia, Austria 2007. Here, instead of 14.b4 ♗xe3!, White had 14.♗xc5 bxc5 15.♗e3 with an obvious spatial advantage: 15... ♗b6 (White can meet 15...♗b8 not only by 16.♗b1, but also sac a pawn with 16.♗d3

♖xb2 17.0-0 ♘e7 18.♘b5) 16.♖b1 ♘h6 17.♙d3±.

13.g4!? ♘f6 14.♖g1 e5 15.0-0-0 ♗e7 16.♙h6. White is better, Krasenkov-Mchedlishvili, Amsterdam 2004.

**11.♙e2 0-0 12.♗d1 a5 13.0-0 ♗e7**



Black's positional threat is to take firm control over the dark squares by e6-e5, h7-h6, d7-d6.

**14.♙g5**

14.e5 is neutralized by 14...♘h5!

15.♙xh5 ♗h4=.

**14...h6 15.♙h4 e5 16.♙f3 a4 17.♗fe1 d6**

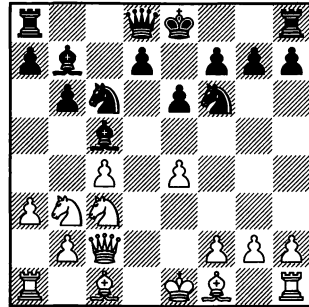
White maintains some pressure thanks to the d5-square. He can choose when to put his knight there to fix his space advantage. Drev-Tiviakov, Warsaw 2005 went 18.♗d3 ♗e6 19.♘d5 ♙xd5 20.cxd5 ♗e7 21.♗d2 (aimed against g7-g5) 21...♗fb8 22.♙g4±. White's game is more pleasant, although he must be constantly watching out for the counterplay b6-b5-b4.

**B3. 8...♙c5 9.♘b3**

9.♘f3 does not look natural, al-

though some strong players have employed it. The game Timman-Polugaevsky, Reykjavik 1987 went on with 9...♘c6 10.♙f4 ♘h5 11.♙d2 a6?! (11...♗f6!? is more in the spirit of the dark-square strategy) 12.b4 ♙d6 13.g3 ♘f6 14.♙e2 (why not going to d3?) 14...♗c8 15.0-0 ♘e5! 16.♘xe5 ♙xe5 17.♙d3 0-0 18.♗fe1 b5! with unclear play. In our opinion, White can improve in a number of ways, so this variation deserves further testing.

**9...♘c6!**



The coward does not play hockey! The retreat 9...♙e7 would mean to abandon the dark-squared strategy.

**10.♙g5**

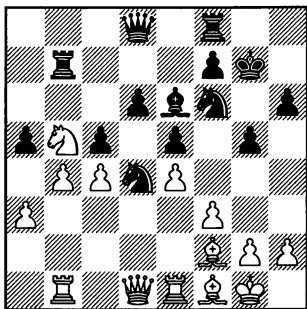
White can get dizzy from the abundant choice. He has at least four playable alternatives:

a) 10.♘xc5

It is always appealing to eat a bishop although this bolsters Black's control over the dark-squares after e6-e5 and ♘c6-d4. Of course, White will not trade that knight, but will try to play around it on both wings with b4 or f4. A model game is Vyzhmanavin-Salov, Irkutsk 1986:

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3

10...bxc5 11.♗d3 d6 12.0-0 0-0  
 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗h4 g5 15.♗g3 e5!  
 16.♞d1 a5 17.♞b1 ♞b8 18.♞e1 ♗g7  
 19.f3 ♗c8 20.♗f2 ♗e6 21.♗f1 ♞b7  
 22.♗b5 ♗d4 23.b4



Black can hold his own here.

Another example is Radjabov-Adams, Prague 2002:

11.♗d3 0-0 12.0-0 d6 13.f4 h6  
 14.♞d1 ♞b8 15.♗e3 ♞e8, when  
 16.e5!? would have opened play  
 which should be good for White's  
 bishop pair.

b) 10.♗d3 is a normal developing  
 continuation.

10...0-0 11.0-0 d6! This move  
 looks awkward, but it fits well in  
 Black's plan. It is possible to shape  
 the same idea differently: 11...h6  
 12.♗xc5 bxc5 13.♗e3 d6 14.f3!? ♞b8  
 15.♞fd1 ♞e7 16.♗f1 ♞fd8 17.♞ab1  
 ♗a8 18.♞a4! and White doubled  
 the rooks on the d-file for a lasting  
 pressure on the d6-pawn, Sakaev-  
 Miles, Sao Paulo 1991.

12.h3 h6 13.♗f4

Sakaev's plan with 13.♗xc5 is  
 better.

13...e5 14.♗d2 a5 15.♞ae1 ♞e8  
 16.♞d1 ♗d4. Black has equalized,  
 Psakhis-Salov, USSR 1987.

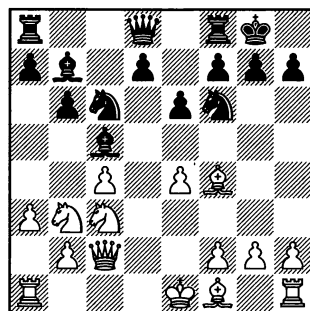
c) 10.♗f4

Provoking Black to fix the centre.  
 That would allow White to castle  
 long and attempt a kingside  
 pawn storm in the style of the Sicilian  
 English attack.

10...0-0!?

10...e5 11.♗g5 h6 12.♗h4 0-0 is  
 another decent option. 13.0-0-0  
 ♗e7 14.f3. In such positions the  
 cost of every move is very high. The  
 blitz game Notkin-Naiditsch, play-  
 chess.com 2004 went on with 14...  
 ♞c8 15.♗f2 d6 16.♗b1 ♗a6 17.g4  
 ♗d7 18.h4↑ and White's was faster.  
 Therefore, Black should create  
 concrete threats: 14...a5! 15.♗a4 d6  
 16.♗b1 ♗c8 17.♞d3 ♞a7 18.♗e2 ♗d7  
 with mutual chances.

Castling 10...0-0!? is not a real  
 pawn sacrifice:



Here after 11.♗xc5 bxc5 12.♗d6  
 ♗d4 13.♞d3 ♞e8 the c5-pawn is im-  
 mune, whereas 14.b4 e5! is even  
 more pleasant for Black. Instead of  
 taking on c5, White has also tried:

11.0-0-0 e5 12.♗g5 ♗d4↑ and

11.♞d1 e5 12.♗g5 h6! (12...♗d4=)

13.♗xf6=. (13.♗h4?! ♗d4 14.♗xd4  
 exd4 15.♗d5 g5 16.♗g3 ♗xe4 17.♗d3  
 ♗xd5 18.cxd5 ♗xg3 19.hxg3 ♞e8+

20.♠f1 ♚f6 Farago-Sakelsek, Austria 2006.)

**10...h6**

10...♗e7 is a timid answer which gives White a choice:

a) 11.0-0-0!? ♚b8 12.♗e2 0-0 13.♠b1 ♝c8 14.f4 d6∞, Cramling-Granda Zuniga, Las Palmas 1997. This plan is totally unexplored. Perhaps Black should prefer ...a5 as in the above-mentioned game.

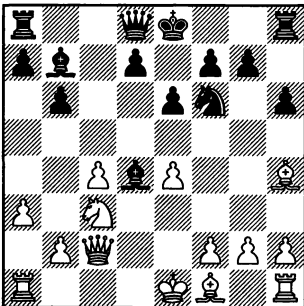
b) 11.♗e2 a6 12.♗f4 d6 13.0-0 ♝c8 14.♞ac1 0-0 15.♞fd1 ♚c7 16.♚b1 ♗e5 17.♗d2 ♚b8 18.b4!

We see a typical complex hedgehog position: 18...♗fd7 19.♗e3 g5 20.f3 ♗f6, M.Gurevich-Farago, Budapest 1987.

**11.♗h4 ♗d4**

Fundamentalists of dark-squared strategy might want to try 11...g5 12.♗g3 e5, but then 13.0-0-0! is rather unpleasant. The game Jakubovski-Pisulinski, Krynica 1997, went on with 13...d6 14.♗b5 ♚e7 15.♗xc5 dxc5, when the obvious 16.♗d6+ ♠f8 17.♗f5 ♚c7 18.h4 would have punished Black's reckless play.

**12.♗xd4 ♗xd4**



13.0-0-0 disappeared from tournaments after the game Krasenkow-Timman, Reykjavik 2004: 13...♗e5 (13...♗xc3? offers White a strong initiative – 14.♚xc3 ♗xe4 15.♞d4 ♗f5 16.g4 ♗h7 17.♗d3! ♗xd3 18.♚xd3 ♚c7 19.♞d1 Gomez Esteban-Almasi, Pamplona 1996.) 14.f3 0-0 15.♗e2 ♝c8 16.♠b1 ♚c7+, although things are not that clear. For instance, 15.♗g3 deserves attention.

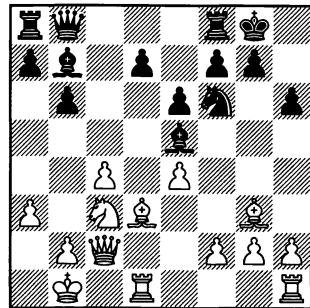
**13.♗d3 ♚b8!**

The fight for the dark squares is going on!

**14.♗g3 ♗e5 15.0-0-0**

15.♗xe5 is worse. Black stood solid in the centre after 15...♚xe5 16.g3 0-0 17.0-0-0 ♚c5! 18.h3 d6 19.♠b1 a6 20.♞he1 ♞ac8 21.f4 ♞fd8, preparing b6-b5, Wegener-Mikhalchishin, Hungary 1988.

**15...0-0 16.♠b1**



This is a critical position. Black obtains excellent counterplay by:

**16...a6!**

Alternatively:

a) 16...♝c8?! has similar ideas, but it gives White time to regroup:

17.♚e2 a6 18.♗a4!

Now neither 18...♝c6 19.f4! ♗xf4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3

20.e5 ♗xg3 21.hxg3 ♘h7 22.♖e3→, threatening to sacrifice on h6, Shirov-Leko, Monte Carlo 2004, nor 18...♗xg3 9.hxg3 ♗c6 20.♘c3 e5 21.g4! b5 22.g5 hxg5 23.♗h3 g4 24.♗h4→ could save Black from trouble.

b) 16...d6 offers White a better pawn structure:

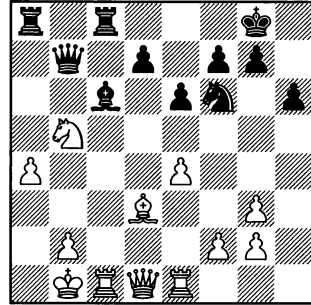
17.♗xe5 dxe5 18.♖e2

18.f3, intending to trade rooks on the d-file, also leaves White somewhat better.

18...♗d8 19.g4. This direct attack is awkward to Black.

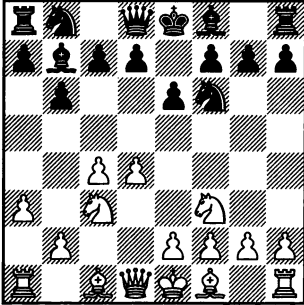
17.♗he1 b5 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♘xb5 ♗c6 20.a4 ♗c8 21.♗c1

♖b7! 22.♖d1 ♗xg3 23.hxg3, Babula-Pavlovic, Warsaw 2005.



Here 23...♖b6!, combining attack on both wings, would have given a nice, typical Sicilian, compensation.

**PART 2**



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3

Rare answers on move 5

**Main Ideas**

White's obvious aim is to occupy the centre by pushing d5, followed up by e4. Black should oppose it by 5...d5 or 5...g6. These are the most popular answers and we deal with them in the next parts of the book. We shall examine here Black's attempts to surprise the opponent.

c5 6.d5 d6 7.e4 e5, but he is cramped anyway. White will open the b-file with a lasting initiative.

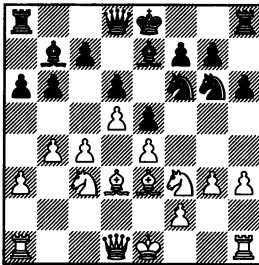
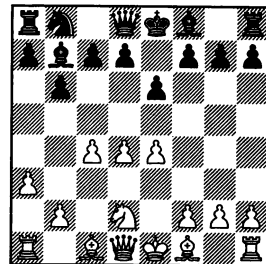
2. 5...♘e4 6. ♘xe4 ♗xe4

This is an improved version of line 1. Black reasonably thinks that the exchange of a pair of knights will give him more room for manoeuvring. White's plan remains the same:

7.♘d2 ♗b7 8.e4

1. The setup with ...e5 is a tough nut to crack, but it is very passive. White organizes a queenside attack:

5...d6 6.d5 e5 7.e4 ♘bd7 8.♗d3 ♗e7 9.h3 h6 10.♗e3 a6 11.b4 ♘f8 12.g3 ♘g6

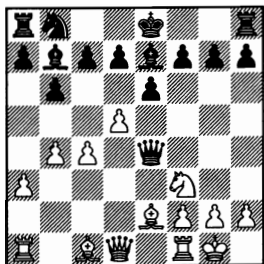


8...d6  
8...♗f6! 9.d5 ♗c5 10.♘f3 ♗g6!?  
is more challenging, but Black must be ready to defend a dangerous position or play without queen in the variation 11.b4! ♗xe4+ 12.♗e2 ♗e7 13.0-0

13.♘d2

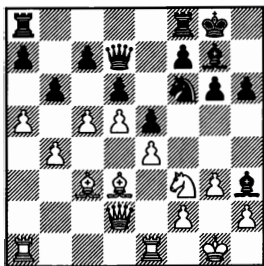
The thematic break c4-c5 is on the agenda. Black can achieve a similar position with his pawn on c5: 5...

4.a3 ♖b7 5.♗c3, 5...♗e4 and other rare moves



13...♖f6 14.h3!? ♖xa1 (14...♙g6 15.♗d3 ♗h5 16.♟b1♞) 15.♗d3 exd5 16.♗xe4 dxe4 17.♗f4 0-0! 18.♙xa1 exf3 19.gf3 d6 with fair chances to hold the position.

9.♗d3 ♗d7 10.0-0 g6 11.♗f3 ♗g7 12.♗g5! ♙c8 13.♙d2 h6 14.♗e3 ♗f6 15.d5 ♗g4 16.♗d4 e5 17.♗c3 0-0 18.b4 ♙d8 19.g3! ♗c8 20.a4 ♗f6 21.a5 ♗h3 22.♟f1 ♙d7 23.c5



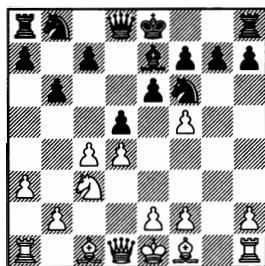
White's queenside initiative is way ahead of Black's counterplay on the opposite wing, Gelfand-Romanishin, Lviv 2000.

3. 5...♗xf3!? 6.gxf3

In these structures White often recaptures with the e-pawn in order

to open the centre: 6.exf3 d5 7.f4 g6 8.f5! gxf5 9.♗g5 with complex play. We however prefer to follow the spirit of the Petrosian system and increase the grip on the centre.

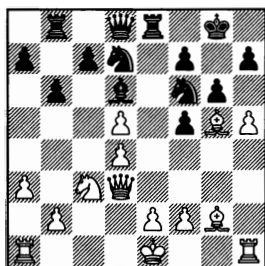
6...♗e7 7.f4 d5 (7...g6 8.♗g2 d5 9.e4!) 8.f5!



In the 5...♗xf3!? line the f-pawn is often used to shatter Black's flawless pawn formation. That is possible due to the strong bishop pair and the weakened main diagonal.

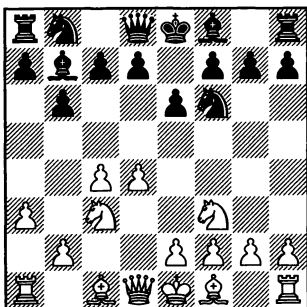
8...exf5 9.♗g2 0-0 10.cxd5 ♗d6 11.♙d3 g6 12.♗g5 ♟e8 13.h4!

13.0-0-0!? is also a good option. 13...♗bd7 14.h5 ♟b8



White's advantage is beyond doubt.

## PART 2



1.d4 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3  
 ♗b7 5.♗c3

Rare answers on move 5

Move By Move

- A. 5...♗e7
- B. 5...♗xf3!?
- C. 5...♗e4

thematic break c4-c5, underlines  
 Black's total lack of counterplay.

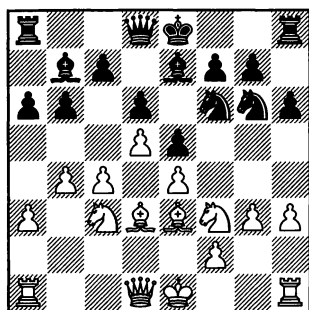
Other rare moves are:

a) 5...c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 d6  
 8.e4 g6 9.♗b5+ ♗bd7 10.e5 dxe5  
 11.♗xe5 ♗g7 12.♗g5 0-0 13.♗xd7 h6  
 14.♗c6±.

b) 5...d6 (5...h6 has similar  
 ideas) 6.d5

6.♣c2!? is also worth consider-  
 ation. White intends to play e4,  
 leaving the future of the d4-pawn  
 undefined.

6...e5 7.e4 ♗bd7 8.♗d3 ♗e7 9.h3  
 h6 10.♗e3 a6 11.b4 ♗f8 12.g3 ♗g6



Here 13.♗d2, preparing the

### A. 5...♗e7

An unfortunate choice, which  
 justifies the main idea of the Petro-  
 sian system. White seizes the centre  
 while the opponent is unable to  
 attack it by ...♗b4. Nowadays only  
 amateurs who do not understand  
 the aim of 5.a3 allow the cramped  
 position which arises after:

### 6.d5

The point of White's setup. 6.♣c2  
 is also possible, but then 6... c5 7.e4  
 cxd4 8.♗xd4 leads to a hedgehog  
 structure with an extra tempo for  
 Black, in comparison to the line  
 4.a3 ♗a6, where he loses time on  
 ♗c8-a6-b7.

### 6...0-0 7.e4

More restrained, but also good is  
 7.g3 ♗e8 8.♗g2 ♗f8 9.0-0 e5 10.e4  
 d6 11.♗e1! c6 12.♗d3 cxd5 13.cxd5  
 ♗bd7 14.b4 with a clear space ad-  
 vantage. Black has no counterplay,  
 Bolbochan-Mecking, Rio Hondo  
 1966.

### 7...exd5

The waiting game 7...d6 8.♗d3 ♗bd7 9.0-0 ♗e5 10.♗xe5 dxe5 11.f4! ♗d7 12.♣g4 ♗c5+ 13.♗h1 ♣e7 14.♣g3 ♗d4 15.♗b5! exd5 16.exd5 c6 17.d6 ♣d8 18.♗xd4 exd4 19.f5! gave White better prospects in An-toshin-Karpov, USSR 1967.

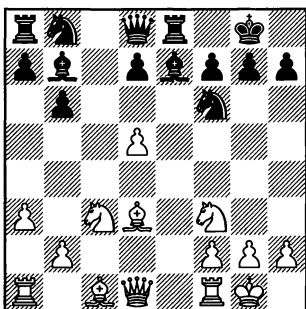
### 8.cxd5

8.exd5 ♗e8 9.♗e2 ♗f8 10.0-0 h6 11.b3 ♗a6 12.♗d4 ♗c5 13.♗f3 ♗c8 14.♣c2 was also in White's favour in Padevski-Ajanski, Plovdiv 1981.

### 8...♗e8 9.♗d3 c6

Moves like 9...d6 or 9...♗a6 do not help in undermining the centre.

### 10.0-0 cxd5 11.exd5



### 11...d6

11...♗a6 12.♗f4 ♗f8 13.♗c1 ♗c5 14.♗c2 ♗a6! 15.♗e1 ♗xe1+ 16.♗xe1 ♗b7! gave Black more chances to fight for equality in the game Ani-kaev-Beliavsky, Minsk 1983.

### 12.♗d4 ♗bd7

Or 12...♗xd5 13.♗xd5 ♗xd5 14.♗xh7+.

13.♗c6 ♗xc6 14.dxc6 ♗e5 15.♗a6!

White has a clear edge, Malich-Knaak, Leipzig 1973.

### B. 5...♗xf3

This exchange is pretty senseless although Spassky himself tried it against Petrosian in the world title match in 1966. Perhaps he wanted to avoid the typical central structures of the main lines.

### 6.gxf3

Or 6.exf3 d5 7.f4 g6 8.f5! gxf5 9.♗g5 with complex play.

### 6...♗e7 7.f4 d5

7...g6 8.♗g2 d5 is dangerous since 9.e4! would break the h1-a8 diagonal.

### 8.f5!

This thematic blow is not really a sacrifice, but rather an exchange.

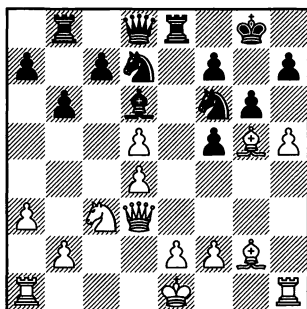
### 8...exf5 9.♗g2 0-0

The greedy 9...c6 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♣a4+ faces Black with difficult development problems.

10.cxd5 ♗d6 11.♣d3 g6 12.♗g5 ♗e8 13.h4!

13.0-0-0!? is also a good option.

13...♗bd7 14.h5 ♗b8



15.♣h3 ♣e7 16.♗f1 ♣f8 17.♗f3 b5 18.e3 ♣g7 19.♗e2

The knight is heading for the kingside, highlighting White's advantage.

**C. 5...♠e4**

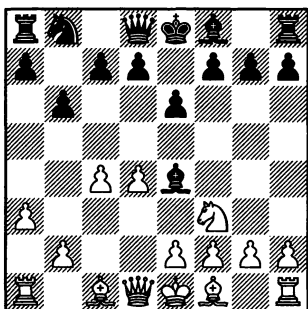
One of the simplest answers to the Petrosian system. By trading knights, Black ensures more room for the rest of his pieces. However, the bishop on e4 gives White extra tempi for development and some spatial advantage.

**6.♟xe4**

Bulgarian master Peev has introduced the interesting move 6.♟d2!? There is little practical evidence, but in the following game Black failed to equalize:

6...d5 7.e3 ♘d7 8.♟d3 ♟d6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.b4 0-0 11.♖c2 ♗e7 12.♘b5 ♜fc8 13.♘xd6 cxd6 14.♗b2 a6 15.b5! (or 15.a4!? b5 16.axb5 axb5 17.♟xb5 ♘b6) 15...axb5 16.♟xb5 ♗e6 17.0-0 ♟a6 18.a4±, Van Wely-Van der Wiel, The Netherlands 1994.

**6...♟xe4**



White is at a crucial juncture. He can steer the game into very different strategic tracks.

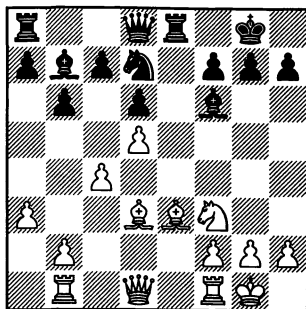
C1. 7.♟f4

C2. 7.e3

C3. 7.♘d2

Let us note that 7.♘g5? is a wrong way. The game Lenic-Dizdarevic,

Sibenik 2007 saw further 7...♟b7 8.d5 ♟e7 9.♘f3 ♟f6 10.e4 d6 11.♟d3 ♘d7 12.♗b1 0-0 13.0-0 ♜e8 14.♟e3 exd5 15.exd5



Here 15...c6 would have undermined White's centre.

**C1. 7.♟f4**

There is nothing wrong with this natural developing move, but White can hardly aspire to the advantage.

**7...♟e7**

The active 7...c5 leads to White's edge following 8.d5 exd5 9.cxd5 ♟e7 10.♗b3!, (enabling ♘d2) for instance: 10...0-0 11.♘d2 ♟g6 12.e3 d6 13.♟e2 a6 14.a4 ♘d7 15.0-0 ♘f6 16.h3±, Vaganian-Browne, Buenos Aires 1978. Now Black attempted to put off his opponent with 16...b5, but it only aggravated his situation: 17.axb5 axb5 18.♟xb5 ♗b8 19.♞a7.

Dreev-Sturua, Manila 1992 saw the quirky move 7...♟d6?!. It results in clumsy doubled pawns after 8.♟xd6 cxd6 9.d5! 0-0, when 10.e3 exd5 11.cxd5 ♗f6 12.♗d4! ♗xd4 13.♘xd4 ♜c8 14.♞d1 could have faced Black with difficult problems.

7...♟xf3 is more reasonable here

than on the fifth move, since the bishop on f4 denies plans with gxf3 and f3-f4. Still, White's game is easier due to his bishop pair and mobile centre. He only must complete development first, before undertaking action in the centre: 8.f3 ♖d6 9.♗e3 ♗f6 10.♗d2 ♗c6, Le Roux-Chernyshov, Cappelle la Grande, 2007, 11.♗e2±.

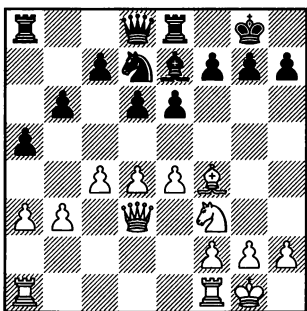
### 8.e3 d6

8...0-0 9.♖d3 ♗xd3 10.♗xd3 d6 can transpose to the main line.

### 9.♖d3 ♗xd3 10.♗xd3 a5

Depriving White of the cramping advance b2-b4.

11.b3 ♗d7 12.0-0 0-0 13.e4 ♖e8



Black has harmoniously developed his pieces, but his position is a little cramped. Naturally, he should seek exchanges.

14.♗fd1 ♗c8 15.e5 dxe5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♗xe5 ♖d6 18.♗e4, Gelfand-Portisch, Moscow 1990. White has only a tiny edge. Portisch successfully defended this position in several games.

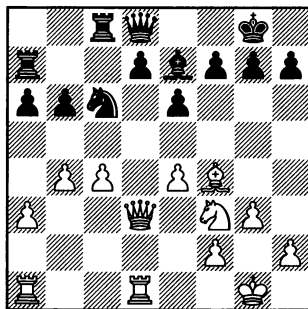
## C2. 7.e3

White aims to exchange quickly

the active e4-bishop.

### 7...♗e7

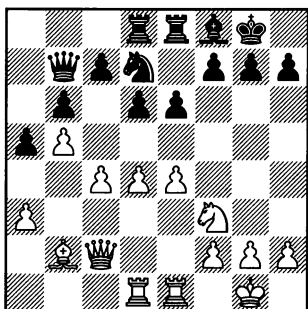
Black can try to get a Modern Benoni structure by 7...c5, but White is not forced to oblige. For example, 8.♖d3 ♗xd3 9.♗xd3 cxd4 10.♗xd4 ♗c6 11.♗d3 ♗e7 12.e4 ♗c7 13.0-0 0-0 14.b3 a6 15.♗d1 ♖a7 16.g3! ♖c8 17.♗f4 ♗d8 18.b4!



White has a significant spatial advantage, Gheorghiu-Andersson, London 1980.

### 8.♖d3 ♗xd3 9.♗xd3 d5

Black can also choose a timid development, trying simply to hold a somewhat cramped position: 9...d6 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.e4 0-0 12.b4 a5 13.♖b2 ♗c8 14.b5 ♗b7 15.♗fe1 ♗fe8 16.♗ad1 ♗ad8 17.♗c2 ♗f8, Vitiugov-Khairullin, St Petersburg 2006.



It is extremely difficult for White to make progress in this typical position. Perhaps he should use his superior centre to prepare a pawn storm on the kingside with the g- and h-pawns.

**10.e4 dxe4**

The other capture is worse: 10... dxc4 11. ♖xc4 c5 12. dxc5 ♙xc5 13. 0-0 0-0, Gheorghiu-Kudrin, USA 1979 when 14. b4 ♙e7 15. ♙f4 poses difficult problems.

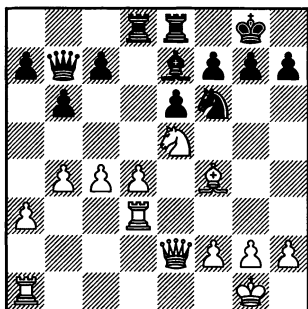
**11. ♖xe4 ♘d7 12. 0-0-0 13. ♙f4**

13. ♖c6 does not achieve any advantage due to 13... ♘f6 14. ♙f4 ♖d7! 15. ♖xd7 ♘xd7, Timman-Andersson, Wijk aan Zee 1981. The game went on with 16. ♙ad1 c6 17. ♗fe1 ♗fe8 18. d5! (trying to use the more active rooks) 18... cxd5 19. cxd5 exd5 20. ♙xd5 ♘f8 21. ♙f1 ♙f6 22. ♘d4 Now 22... ♙xd4! 23. ♙xd4 ♘e6 24. ♙de4 ♙ac8= would be the easiest way to equality.

**13... ♘f6**

Perhaps Black should try 13... ♙d6.

**14. ♖e2 ♙e8 15. ♗fd1 ♖c8 16. ♘e5 ♖b7 17. ♙d3!**



White has more active pieces. He is able to transfer them quickly to both wings. In Piket-Tiviakov,

Groningen 1995 Black replied 17... ♙ad8 18. b4 b5, but 19. cxb5! ♖xb5 20. a4! ♙d5 21. b5 ♙d6 22. ♙ad1 retained some edge due to the weak c6-square.

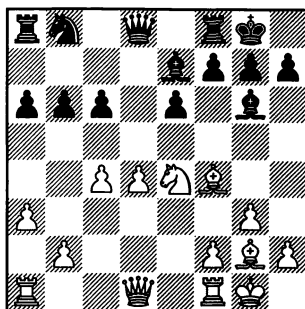
**C3. 7. ♘d2**

This is a consistent approach. White immediately tries to build a perfect pawn centre. Black has a choice – where to retreat the bishop to fight better the enemy's powerful construction.

**7... ♙b7**

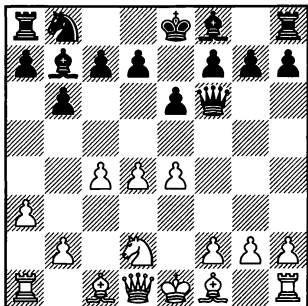
After 7... ♙g6 8. g3 ♙e7 9. ♙g2 (9. d5 c6 10. ♙g2 0-0 11. 0-0 exd5 12. cxd5 cxd5 13. ♙xd5 ♘c6 14. ♘e4 ♙e8 15. ♘c3 ♙f6 16. ♘b5 ♙e5 gives Black free piece play while the weakness on d7 is of no significance, Avrukh-Romanishin, Ohrid 2001) 9... d5 10. e4! the absence of Black's bishop from the main diagonal is tangible:

10... dxe4 11. ♘xe4 c6 12. 0-0 0-0 13. ♙f4 a6



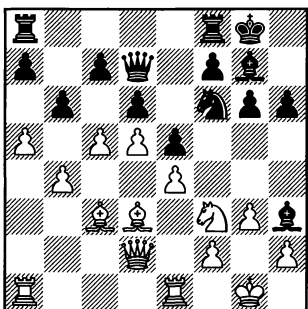
14. d5! exd5 15. cxd5 cxd5 16. ♘c3 ♙a7 17. ♘xd5 with considerable White's advantage in the centre, Stohl-Romanishin, Kaskady 2002.

**8. e4 ♖f6!**



Black must actively attack the centre. The passive continuation:

8...d6 9.♖d3 ♗d7 10.0-0 g6 11.♗f3 ♖g7 favours White: 12.♖g5! ♗c8 13.♗d2 h6 14.♖e3 ♗f6 15.d5 ♗g4 16.♖d4 e5 17.♖c3 0-0 18.b4 ♗d8 19.g3! ♖c8 (19...f5 is bad due to 20.♗h4) 20.a4 ♗f6 21.a5 ♖h3 22.♗fe1 ♗d7 23.c5



White's queenside initiative is way ahead of Black's counterplay on the opposite wing, Gelfand-Romanishin, Lviv 2000;

8...d5 directly opposes White's centre. Then 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e5 c5 11.♖d3 ♗d7 12.0-0 ♖a6 13.♖xa6 ♗xa6 14.♗f3 ♗c7 15.dxc5 ♖xc5 (15...bxc5 is bad, for 16.e6! ♗xe6 17.♗e5 puts Black's king into dan-

ger in view of the check from e4) 16.b4 ♖e7 17.♖b2 0-0 18.♗d4 a5 19.♗b3 axb4 20.axb4 ♗b5 was seen in the game Christiansen-Portisch, Linares 1985, when 21.♗ad1 would have been better for White.

### 9.d5

Polugaevsky tested 9.e5 ♗g6 10.♗f3 ♖e7 11.♖e2 0-0 12.0-f6 (12...d6 is also possible) 13.♖f4, when 13...d6 14.exf6 ♖xf6 15.♖d3 ♖e4 16.♖xe4 ♗xe4 17.♖g3 ♗c6 18.♗e1 ♗f5 would give Black counterplay.

### 9...♖c5

9...♗g6 is more testing as it hits g2, thus hindering White's normal development. However, in Pavlovic-Maksimenko, Vrnjacka Banja 1991, White braced himself for 10.♗f3! ♗e4 11.♖e3. Commenting the game, Schussler notes: "A suitable variation for masochists." Indeed, White's compensation is obvious. He has various ways to develop his initiative while every Black move could be a decisive mistake. Possible continuations are: 11...f6 12.♖d3 ♗g4 13.0-0 (or 13.h3 ♗h5 14.♖e4) 13...ed5 14.cd5 ♖d5 15.♖e2 ♖e4 16.g3; 11...ed5 12.♖d3 ♗e6 13.♗c2; 11...♗g6 12.h4!

Developing the knight to the edge of the board looks dubious: 9...♗a6?! 10.♖d3 ♗c5 11.♖c2 exd5 12.exd5 (After 12.cxd5 ♖a6 13.♗f3 0-0-0 14.e5 ♗e8 15.♖e3 ♗xe5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♗d4 Black can hardly claim sufficient compensation for the exchange.) 12...♗e5+ (It is essential to disturb somehow White's setup. In case of 12...c6 13.0-0 cxd5 14.♗e1+ ♗e6 15.cxd5 ♖xd5 16.♖e4 White has

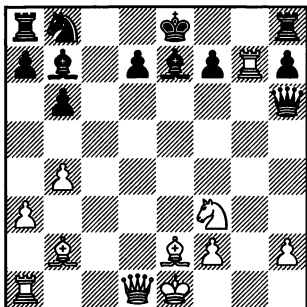
a nice compensation for the pawn.) 13.♔f1! (The endgame arising after 13.♖e2 ♗xe2+ 14.♔xe2 a5 15.♞e1 0-0-0 is satisfactory for Black) 13... ♕a6, Lobron-Kortschnoj, Wijk aan Zee 1985. White can continue here with 14.♔g1 0-0-0 15.♕f3 ♖e7. Kortschnoj claims equality, but his assessment is arguable. Following 16.b4 ♕e4 17.♗d4 f5 18.b5 ♕b7 19.♕b2 intending 20.♞e1, White's game is preferable.

**10.♕f3 ♖g6!?**

The alternatives are grim for Black:

10...a5 11.♕d3 h6 12.0-0 e5 13.b4! ab4 14.♕b2 or

10...exd5 11.cxd5 ♖g6 12.♕d3! ♗xg2 13.♞f1 c6 14.b4 cxd5! 15.exd5 ♕e7 (15...♕xd5 fails to 16.♕e2!) 16.♕b2 ♕xd5 17.♕e2 ♕b7 18.♞g1 ♗h3 19.♞xg7 ♗h6



This position arose in the game Glek-Krasenkov, USSR 1985. Here simplest is 20.♞g3 ♕f6 21.♕e5+-.

After 10...♖g6!? White should adopt an aggressive approach:

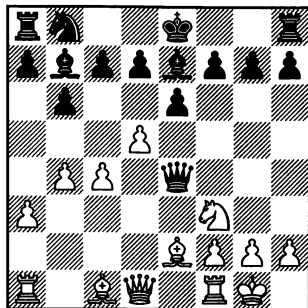
**11.b4! ♗xe4+ 12.♕e2**

Or 12.♔d2?! ♕e7 13.♕d3 ♖f4+.

**12...♕e7**

Alternatives: 12...♕d6 13.0-0 ♖g6 14.♕d3 ♗h5 15.♞e1± or 13...0-0 14.♕d3 ♖g4 15.♕h7 ♔h8 16.♕c2+.

**13.0-0**



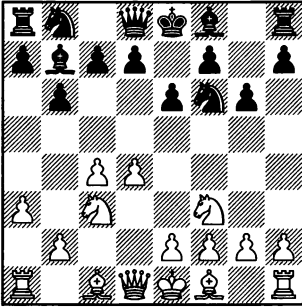
Undoubtedly, White's initiative compensates the pawn deficit after 13...exd5 14.♞e1.

13...0-0?! 14.♕d3 ♖g4 offers White a wide choice of attacking options. Perhaps simplest is 15.♕h7 ♔h8 16.♕c2↑, but 15.♞e1 ♕f6 16.♞e4! ♗h5 17.g4 exd5 18.gh5 is also appealing. In this line 18.♞d4!? ♕d4 19.gh5 may be even stronger: 19...♕a1 20.cxd5 with serious pressure.

Perhaps Black's best chance in the diagram position is to part with his queen:

**13...♕f6 14.h3!? ♕xa1** (14...♖g6 15.♕d3 ♗h5 16.♞b1) **15.♕d3 exd5 16.♕xe4 dxe4 17.♕f4 0-0! 18.♖xa1 exf3 19.gf3 d6** with an incomprehensible position. At the surface, White seems much better, but when his initiative slows down, he might find it difficult to pick a target in the enemy camp.

### PART 3



1.d4 2.c4 e6 3.dxf3 b6 4.a3  
5.c3 g6

### The Fianchetto System

#### Main Ideas

This is a calm, developing, and, overall, logical continuation. However, it does not help much in the battle for the centre, so we can assess it as somewhat passive. White's best plan is to occupy the centre by 6.♖c2 and 7.e4. Besides, he has a wide range of other possibilities which lead to the following main positions:

1. White develops the dark-squared bishop: 6.♗f4 or 6.♗g5. The arising structure resembles the Anti-KID system with ♗g5. Both sides develop comfortably their pieces and the game is totally balanced:

6.♗f4 ♗g7 7.e3 0-0 8.♗e2 d6 9.0-0 ♖bd7 10.♞c2

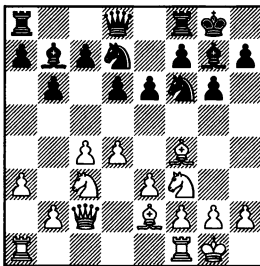
12.dxc5 ♖xc5 13.♖d2 ♗fc8 14.♗ac1 d5!

Black reached a comfortable equality in the game Schandorff-Speelman, Copenhagen 1996.

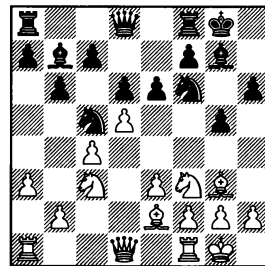
If White's bishop goes to g5, Black obtains counterplay with ...f5: 6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.e3 0-0 8.♗e2 d6 9.♞c2 ♖bd7 10.0-0 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♖h5 13.♗ad1 ♞e7 14.♖d2 ♖xg3 15.hxg3 c6 16.♗fel f5=, Prizant-Tomashevsky, Essentuki 2003

The only way to unbalance somehow the position is to push d5, but Black can simply ignore it:

6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.e3 d6 8.d5 0-0 9.♗e2 ♖bd7 10.0-0 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♖c5!

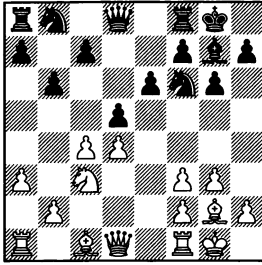


10...♞e7 11.h3 c5  
11...e5 is also good.



13.dxe6 fxe6 14.♖d4 ♞d7 15.f3  
e5 16.♖b3 ♖a4 17.♖a4 ♞a4=.

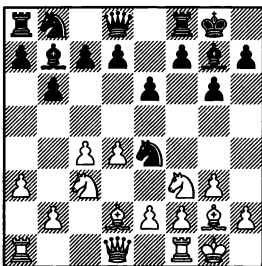
2. 6.g3 ♖xf3 7.exf3 ♗g7 8.♗g2 0-0 9.0-0 d5



White's only active plan is connected with c4xd5. If Black then achieves a setup with ♖c6-e7 and the pawn on c6, he will equalize. Therefore, White should wait for the knight to go to d7:

10.♗g5! c6 11.b3 h6 12.♗e3 ♖bd7 and now 13.cxd5 ♖xd5 14.♖xd5 cxd5 15.♖d2 ♖f6 16.♗ac1 ♗ac8 17.♖d3± with some advantage in view of the weak queenside light squares.

3. 6.g3 ♗g7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.0-0 ♖e4 9.♗d2

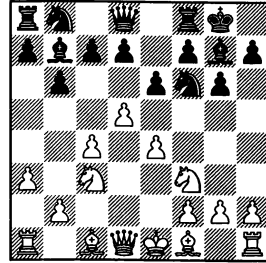


White aims to gain space by d4-d5, but first he must defend the c3-knight. Black should contest the centre by:

9...d5 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗c1 ♖d7 12.b4 ♗e8 13.♖b3 ♖xc3 14.♗xc3 c6 15.♗f1 b5!=

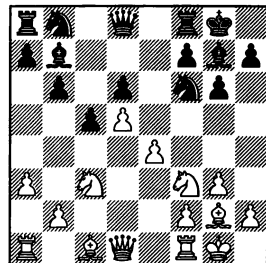
Black is threatening to manoeuvre the knight to c4 via b6, Lputian-Couso, Halkidiki 2002.

4. 6.d5 ♗g7 7.e4 0-0



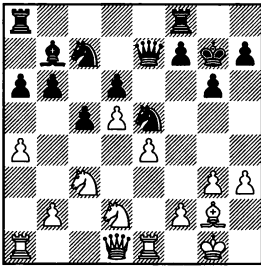
White realized his general idea, but it is not too efficient when Black's bishop is fianchettoed on g7. Black has an easy game, playing around the enemy central pawns. He can maintain the tension with 8.♗e2 (or 8.♗d3 d6 9.0-0 ♖e7 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗f4 c6!) 8...d6 9.0-0 ♖bd7 10.♖c2 ♖e7 11.♗e1 c6, or exchange first on d5: 8.♗e2 exd5 9.exd5 c6 10.0-0 ♖a6 11.♗g5 h6 12.♗e3 ♖c7 13.♖d2 ♖h7 14.d6 ♖e6 15.♖e5 c5 16.f3 ♖e4! 17.fxex4 ♗xe5 with an excellent game, Azmaiparashvili-Speelman, Pamplona 1998.

5. 6.d5 ♗g7 7.g3 0-0 8.♗g2 exd5 9.cxd5 c5 10.0-0 d6 11.e4



Transition to Benoni structures is most justified in the variation 4. a3 ♖a6 5. ♗c2 c5 6.d5. In the diagram position Black's bishop is misplaced on b7. White follows a natural developing scheme which ultimate objective is the breakthrough e4-e5:

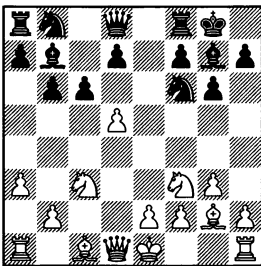
11...♟b7 12.♙f4 ♗e7 13.h3 ♟e8 14.♙g5 ♙f6 15.♙h6 ♙g7 16.♙xg7 ♟xg7 17.♙e1 a6 18.a4 ♟e5 19.♟d2 ♟c7



20.♙f1!

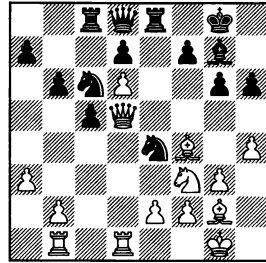
White will follow up with f2-f4 and all Black's pieces would be repelled to the back ranks.

6. 6.d5 ♙g7 7.g3 0-0 8.♙g2 exd5 9.cxd5 c6



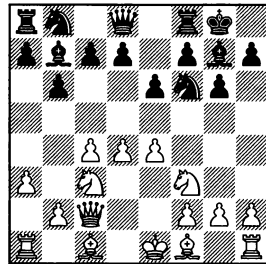
This is a critical position with mutual chances. We consider it in the "Move by Move" chapter, line D2b. White has a dangerous initiative after 10.d6! although Black should be able to hold after 10...c5

11.0-0 ♙e8 12.♙f4 ♟e4 13.♟d5 ♙xd5 14.♗xd5 ♟c6 15.♙ab1 h6 16.h4 ♙c8 17.♙fd1



17...c4! 18.♟e1 ♟f6 19.♗xc4 ♟h5!

7. 6.♗c2 ♙g7 7.e4 0-0

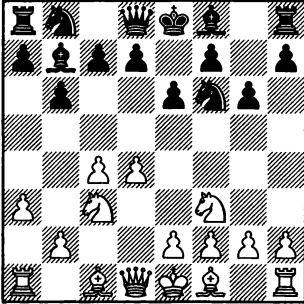


Perhaps this is the best setup against the fianchetto of Black's dark-squared bishop. White lines up his pawns in the centre and waits to see the opponent's plans. See "Move by Move" chapter, line E2b.

8.♙d3 (preventing 8...d5 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e5 ♟e4) 8...d6 9.0-0 ♟bd7

Black's only sensible counterplay in this position is connected with c7-c5. White will answer it with d5, when the manoeuvre ♟f6-g4-e5 would ensure the exchange of one knight. Thus 10.h3 looks best. White's game is easier, even though the enemy set-up is flexible and solid.

## PART 3



1.d4 2.c4 e6 3.♠f3 b6 4.a3  
♙b7 5.♠c3 g6

### The Fianchetto System

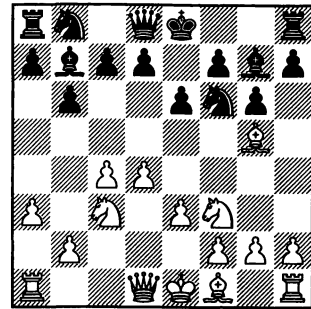
#### Move By Move

Black tries to play in Gruenfeld or Modern Benoni style. Thus he discourages the thematic advance d4-d5 and completes development, but his position remains passive. White has two major plans. He either fianchettoes his light-squared bishop, or he occupies the centre by e2-e4. Besides, he can also develop the dark-squared bishop first (6.♙f4, ♙g5), and only then decide how to proceed with the centre.

- A. 6.♙g5
- B. 6.♙f4
- C. 6.g3
- D. 6.d5
- E. 6.♞c2

Sometimes White also employs 6.♞d3, but the queen is not so well placed as on c2. The game is balanced after 6...d5 7.cd5 ed5 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.g3 0-0 10.♙g2 ♠e4=, Vorobiov-Tiviakov, Moscow 2008.

- A. 6.♙g5 ♙g7 7.e3**  
7.♞c2 transposes to line E.



#### 7...d6

Black often plays 7...h6 8.♙h4 d6 9.d5 0-0 10.♙e2 g5 11.♙g3 ♠h5, but it is better to avoid weakening the castling position before White has castled. Anyway he does not get any benefits in comparison with the main line.

#### 8.d5

White gains space in the centre and discourages c7-c5. We'll see that this advance cannot assure an advantage, but it is by all means consistent. Simple development as 8.♙e2 ♠bd7 9.0-0 0-0 (9...c5 10.♠b5) 10.♠d2 h6 11.♙h4 c5 should lead to a balanced game, e.g. 12.♠b5 ♞e7 13.♙f3 ♙f3 14.♞f3 a6.

**8...0-0 9.♗e2 ♗bd7 10.0-0 h6  
11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 ♗c5!**

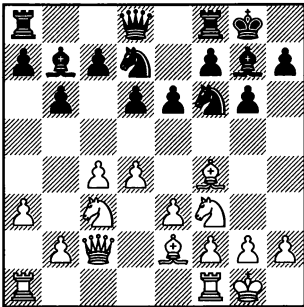
The game I. Sokolov-Lobron, Groningen 1993, saw instead 12...♗h5 13.♗d4 ♗xg3 14.hxg3 ♖e7, when 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.♗g4 ♖f6 17.f4 gives White some initiative. The f6-knight should remain in place in order to control the kingside light squares.

**13.de6 fe6 14.♗d4 ♖d7 15.f3  
e5 16.♗b3 ♗a4 17.♗a4 ♖a4=.**

**B. 6.♗f4 ♗g7 7.e3 0-0 8.♗e2**

8.h3 is too slow. Besides, the f4-bishop is biting on granite so we should not waste time on securing it on that diagonal. White cannot expect much after 8...d6 9.♗e2 ♗bd7 10.0-0 ♗e4 11.♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.♗h2 e5 13.♗d2 ♖b7 14.♗f3 ♖c8, Epishin-Romanishin, Reggio Emilia 1991.

**8...d6 9.0-0 ♗bd7 10.♖c2**



**10...♖e7**

10...♗h5 succeeds in trading a piece. Generally this may be a good idea in cramped positions, but here White gets an opportunity to start queenside play following 11.♗g5 ♗f6 12.♗h6 ♗g7 13.♗xg7 ♗xg7 14.♖fd1 ♖e7, M. Gurevich-Romanishin, Ger-

many 1991, and now 15.d5!, planning b4 and c4-c5. For example, 15...e5 16.b4 f5 17.♗d2. 15.♗d2 at once also retains more space, but White has to reckon with 15...c5 or 15...f5.

**11.h3 c5**

11...e5 is also good.

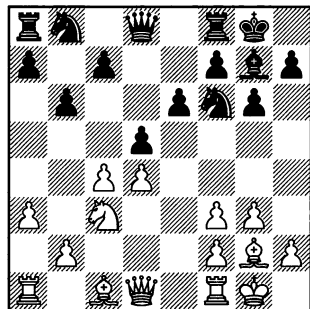
**12.dxc5 ♗xc5 13.♗d2 ♖fc8  
14.♖ac1 d5!**

Black reached comfortable equality in Schandorff-Spielman, Copenhagen 1996. The game went on:

**15.b4 ♗cd7 16.♖b3 h6!? 17.♗g3  
a5 18.♗b5 ♗e8 19.cxd5=.**

**C. 6.g3 ♗g7**

We already know from the previous part that capturing on f3 does not solve all opening problems. However it could be unpleasant to White, because his pawn structure becomes static: 6...♗xf3 7.exf3 ♗g7 8.♗g2 0-0 9.0-0 d5



White's only active plan is connected with cxd5. He cannot maintain the tension for long by 10.b3, since Black will regroup with 10...c6 11.♗e3 ♗bd7 12.♖d2 ♗e8! intending to put the knight to d6 and the rook to c8, with pressure on c4.

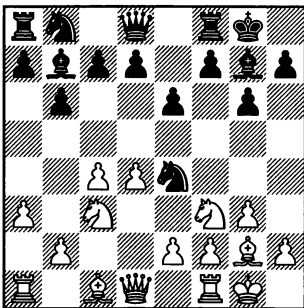
The fine point is to choose the best moment for the exchange in the centre. The immediate 10.cxd5 is premature as Black obtains the c6-square for his knight. In the game Weřle-Winants, Hoogveen 2007, he set up his pawns on light squares, a la Capablanca – against the enemy bishop, and easily held the position: 10...dxd5 11.dxd5 exd5 12.e3 dxc6 13.f4 dxe7 14.e1 e7 15.e3 d7 16.e3 c6 17.e2 a5 18.f1 b5 19.h4 h5 20.f1 f5! =. Therefore, White should wait for the knight to go to d7.

Most precise seems 10.e5! c6 (10...h6 fails to 11.f6 e6 12.cd5 ed5 13.d5+-, while 10...dc4 11.f4 c6 12.e1 a5 13.d4 b5 14.b3 or 12...e2 13.e2 d4 14.f1 e5 15.f6 e6 16.d4 e7 17.d6 e6 18.e4± also favours White.) 11.b3 h6 12.e3 d7 and now 13.cd5 d5 14.d5 cd5 15.e2 e6 16.e1 e8 17.e3± is pleasant for White in view of the weak light squares.

**7.e2 0-0**

It is quite logical to immediately exchange the knight with 7...dxe4 8.dxe4 e5 9.e5 e8 10.e2 h6 11.e3 d6 12.e1 d7 13.g4 e7, Miles-Tukmakov, Biel 1996.

**8.0-0 d4**



**9.e2**

This is the modern way of meeting dxf6-e4 not only in the Petrosian system, but also in the other lines of the Queen’s Indian Defence. White aims to gain space by d4-d5, but first he must defend the c3-knight.

9.dxe4 e4 10.e5 e8 11.e2 d2 d6 12.b4 e8! 13.e3 d5 14.cxd5 e5 15.e1 a5! gave Black good counterplay in Ubilava-Romanişin, Sochi 1984.

After the text move, 9...dxd2 10.e2 d6 11.b4 d7 12.e4 offers White a big spatial advantage, so Black should contest the centre by:

**9...d5**

9...dxc3 10.e3 d5 11.cxd5 exd5 12.e1 e8 13.b4 d7 14.a4 c6 is also very solid.

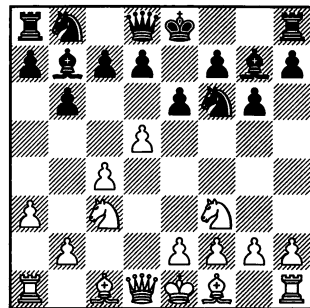
**10.cxd5 exd5 11.e1 d7 12.b4 e8 13.e3 dxc3 14.e3 c6**

After 14...e2 15.e3! the rook is trapped.

**15.f1 b5! =**

Black is threatening to manoeuvre the knight to c4 via b6, Lputian-Couso, Halkidiki 2002.

**D. 6.d5 e7**



Here both possible developments of the light-squared bishop are of equal worth:

- D1. 7.e4  
D2. 7.g3

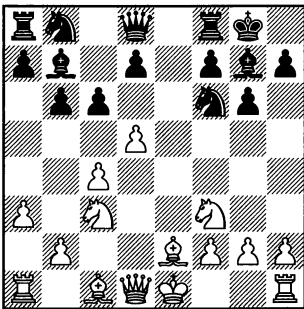
### D1. 7.e4 0-0 8.♙e2

After 8.♙d3 d6 9.0-0 ♖e7 10.♙g5 h6 11.♙f4 c6! 12.dxe6 ♖xe6 13.♗d2 ♖h7 14.♟d4 ♖e7 15.♟fe1 ♟bd7 16.♙ad1 ♟e5 the weakness of the d6-pawn is compensated by Black's activity, Hauchard-A. Sokolov, Clichy 1993.

### 8...exd5

Black often adopts a flexible waiting strategy: 8...d6 9.0-0 ♟bd7 10.♖c2 ♖e7 11.♞e1 c6 12.♙g5 ♞ac8 13.♙ad1 h6 14.♙xf6!? ♖xf6 15.e5! dxe5 16.♟e4 ♖e7 17.dxe6 ♖xe6 18.c5 ♖e7 19.♙c4 with very complicated play for the sacrificed pawn, Sherbakov-Kunte, India 2003.

### 9.exd5 c6



### 10.0-0

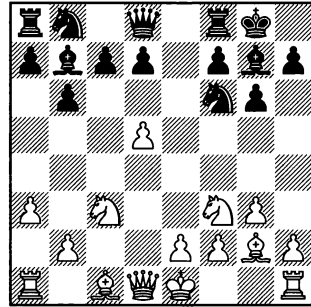
We'll see in the next line 10.d6 working better than here. Following 10...♞e8 11.0-0 c5 12.♟b5 ♟a6 Black is fine.

### 10...♟a6 11.♙g5 h6 12.♙e3 ♟c7

### 13.♖d2 ♖h7 14.d6 ♟e6 15.♟e5 c5 16.f3 ♟e4! 17.fxe4 ♙xe5

Black has an excellent game, Azmaiparashvili-Speelman, Pamplo-na 1996.

### D2. 7.g3 0-0 8.♙g2 exd5 9.cxd5



D2a. 9...c5; D2b. 9...c6

### D2a. 9...c5

Statistically, this move brings good results, but it is not logical. The b7-bishop is not seriously attacking the d5-pawn. Most importantly, Black's typical play in Benoni structures is linked with a queenside pawn storm with ...a6 and ...b5, or with manoeuvring the b8-knight to e5 and bolstering its position with g7-g5. Advancing the f7-pawn is also possible, but the weakness on e6 would require protection from a knight on c7.

Generally, transition to Benoni structures is more suitable in the variation 4. a3 ♙a6 5. ♖c2 c5 6.d5.

### 10.0-0 d6 11.e4

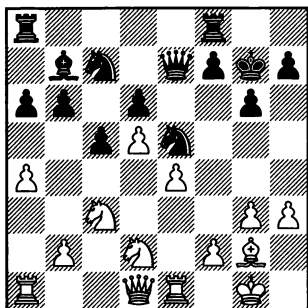
White bolsters up the d5-pawn and gains space in the centre.

Alternatives are meager, for instance: 11. ♖f4 ♜e8 12. ♜e1 ♖h5 13. ♖g5 ♜c7 14. ♖d2 h6 15. ♖e3, when in the game Gajewski-Kir.Georgiev, Warsaw 2005, Black decided himself on the enterprising exchange sacrifice: 15... ♜xe3!? 16. fxe3 ♜e7 17. e4 ♖d7 18. e3 ♖hf6 19. ♜c1 ♖e5 20. ♖f3 ♖fd7 and obtained a powerful outpost on e5 while White's material advantage was imperceptible due to his split pawn formation.

### 11... ♖bd7

11...b5 is over-aggressive and can be punished by 12.e5! dxe5 13. ♖xe5 b4 14. axb4 cxb4 15. ♜b3 ♖a6 16. ♜d1 bxc3 17. d6 with strong initiative. (Ftacnik)

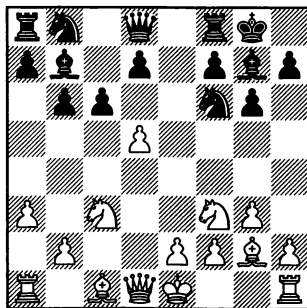
12. ♖f4 ♜c7 13. h3 ♖e8 14. ♖g5 ♖f6 15. ♖h6 ♖g7 16. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 17. ♜e1 a6 18. a4 ♖e5 19. ♖d2 ♖c7



Here, in the game Ogaard-Sahovic, Stockholm 1976, instead of the sharp 20.f4 ♖d3 21. ♜e3 ♖b4, White should have preferred 20. ♖f1!. He would follow up with f2-f4 and all Black's pieces would be repelled to the back ranks.

### D2b. 9...c6

A critical position. White has to make an important decision:



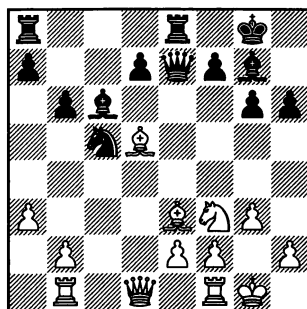
### 10.d6!

The most testing continuation which however involves the risk of losing this pawn along the way.

Alternatives:

a) 10. ♖g5 h6 11. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 12. 0-0 cxd5 13. ♖e1 ♖c6 14. ♖xd5 ♜e7 15. ♜c1 ♜fe8 16. e3 ♜ac8 17. ♖d3 ♖a6 18. ♜e1 ♖a5! with excellent counterplay on the queenside. The weakness of the d7-pawn does not count for much, Browne-Finegold, USA 1987;

b) 10. 0-0 cxd5 (10... ♖xd5?! is bad due to 11. ♖xd5 cxd5 12. ♖g5 ♜e8 13. ♜d2 ♖a6 14. ♖h6 ♖c5 15. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 16. b4 ♖e4 17. ♜b2+ f6 18. ♜fc1 with compensation) 11. ♖g5 ♖a6 12. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 13. ♖xd5 ♖c6 14. ♜b1 ♖c5 15. ♖f4 h6 16. ♖f3 ♜e8 17. ♖e3 ♜e7

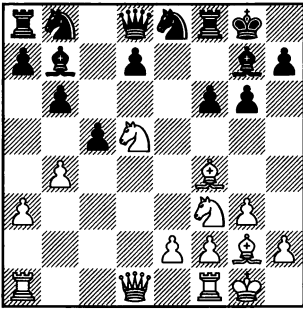


White is unable to improve his position, Kozul-Romanishin, Tbilisi 1988;

c) 10.♗d4 ♗xd5 11.♗xd5 cxd5 12.♗c2 ♗a6 13.♗xd5 ♗xd5 14.♖xd5 ♖e7 15.♗e3 ♖e6 16.0-0 ♗c5=, Mikhailchishin-Kengis, Moscow 1983.

### 10...c5 11.0-0 ♗e8

11...♗e4 is dubious due to 12.♗d5 ♗xd6 13.♗g5! f6 14.♗f4 ♗e8 (Or 14...♗f7 15.♗c7 ♗c6 16.♗xa8 ♗xa8 17.b4! undermining Black's stronghold – the c5-pawn.) 15.b4!



White has an overwhelming position for the pawn. The game Khalifman-Romanishin, Bad Worishofen 1996 went 15...cxb4 16.axb4 ♗c6 17.b5! ♗a5 18.h4! ♗h8 19.♖d3 ♗c8 20.♗ac1 ♗c5 21.♗xc5 bxc5 22.♗d1!. The black pieces look scattered all over the board.

### 12.♗f4

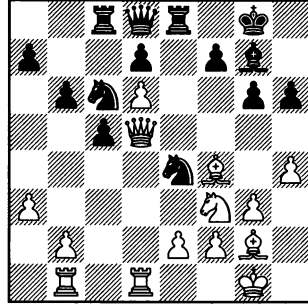
12.♗e1 is somewhat slow. Following 12...♗e4 13.♗d5 ♗xd5 14.♖xd5 ♗c6 15.♗h4 ♗f6 16.♖d1 ♗e6 17.♗h3 ♗e4! White has no advantage in development whereas the d6-pawn is weak as ever, Gelfand-Kasparov, Moscow 1996.

### 12...♗e4 13.♗d5 ♗xd5

13...♗xb2? stumbles into 14.♗g5!!

♗xa1 15.♗xe4 ♗xe4 16.♗xe4 ♗g7 17.♗g5 with terrible initiative.

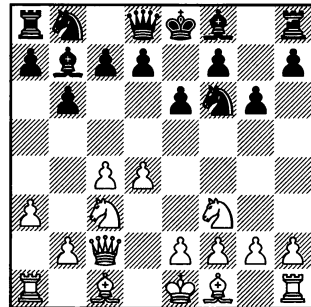
14.♖xd5 ♗c6 15.♗ab1 h6 16.h4 ♗c8 17.♗fd1



Here in the game Maksimenko-Komarov, Vienna 1996, Black could have obtained sufficient counterplay with 17...c4! 18.♗e1 ♗f6 19.♖xc4 ♗h5!

### E. 6.♖c2

Aiming to push e2-e4. This is a rather logical and principled approach.



E1. 6...♗xf3

E2. 6...♗g7

E1. 6...♗xf3

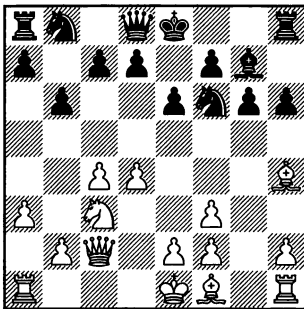
This capture looks more justified here as the d4-pawn is hanging. In fact, White can protect it by pushing it forward or castling long. Practical experience sees Black struggling after both possible recaptures:

E1a. 7.gxf3; E1b. 7.exf3

**E1a. 7.gxf3 ♙g7**

7...♗c6 allows White to gain space with tempo: 8.e3 ♙g7 9.d5!?. More restrained treatment of this position gives Black time to consolidate with 8.e3 ♙g7 9.f4 0-0 10.♙g2 ♗a5!? It is risky to grab now the exchange as 11.♙xa8 ♜xa8 12.0-0 ♗xc4 13.♞e2 ♗d6 14.♙d2 ♗f5 offers nice compensation, but 11.♗e2 d5 12.cxd5 exd5 13.0-0 ♞d7 14.♙d2 ♗c4 15.♙b4 ♜fc8 16.b3 ♗d6 17.♙xd6 ♞xd6 18.♙h3 ♞e8= is not too impressive either.

**8.♙g5 h6 9.♙h4**



**9...g5**

9...♗c6 is dubious: 10.0-0-0 ♗e7 11.d5 ed5 12.♗d5±. Perhaps it is more solid to build a wall on the light squares with 9...0-0 10.f4 d5 11.e3 c6 as in Dobrev-Miroshnichenko,

Istanbul 2006. Still, White's game is more pleasant since he has a wide choice of attractive plans.

The text has the drawback of weakening the kingside.

**10.♙g3 ♗h5 11.e3 d6 12.♙e2**

12.0-0-0 intending h2-h4 was even better.

**12...c5 13.d5**

A good alternative is 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.0-0-0 ♗xg3 15.hxg3 ♗c6 16.f4, harassing the enemy king.

**13...♗xg3 14.hxg3 ♙xc3+ 15.♞xc3 e5 16.f4 ♗d7 17.fxg3 ♗xe5 18.f4 ♗g6 19.♙d3 ♗d7 20.b4!**

Demonstrating to Black's king that he would not find a safe haven, Beliavsky-Christiansen, Groningen 1992.

**E1b. 7.exf3**

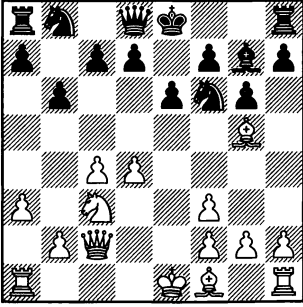
This is a more natural move as it helps development and opens up files in the centre.

**7...♙g7**

Black can try to disturb White's setup by 7...♗c6 8.♙e3 ♙g7 9.0-0-0 ♗e7, (Nothing can stop White's attack after 9...0-0 10.d5 ♗a5 11.h4 a6 12.g4.) but then 10.g4 d5 11.h4, Slobodjan-Speelman, Lippstadt 2000, would allow White to gain space on the kingside.

**8.♙g5!**

The modest continuation 8.♙e3 0-0 9.g4 d5 10.g5 ♗e8 11.cxd5 exd5 12.f4 ♗c6 13.♗e2 ♗e7 14.♗g3 c5! 15.dxc5 d4 16.♙d2 ♜c8 led to double-edged play in Kozul-Romani-shin, Erevan 1996.

**8...c5**

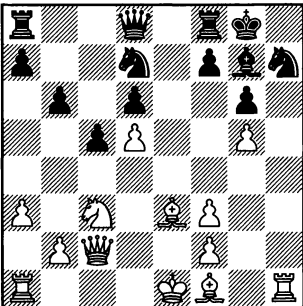
Later the most famous protagonist of this system, Romanishin, began to employ a more restrained tactic: 8...h6 9.♗e3 c6 10.0-0-0 d5 11.h4 ♖bd7 12.g4 dxc4 13.♗xc4 ♗d5 14.♗b1 ♗7f6 15.♗e4 ♗d7 16.♗c1 0-0-0, with a perfectly viable position, Mkrтчian-Romanishin, Solin 2006.

**9.d5 h6 10.♗e3 exd5 11.cxd5 0-0 12.g4**

White has an overwhelming advantage in the centre. He can prefer a less committing plan, anticipating Black's counterplay all over the board:

**12.♗d3 d6 13.h3 ♗bd7 14.f4 a6 15.a4.**

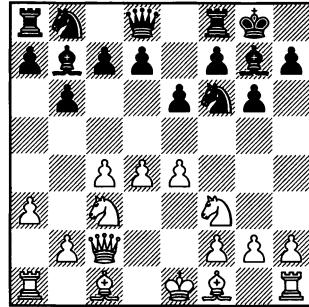
**12...d6 13.h4 ♗bd7 14.g5 hxg5 15.hxg5 ♗h7**



The open h-file makes Black's position critical.

**16.f4**

We have been following Khalifman-Romanishin, Luzern 1997. Here Black should have attempted to counterattack on the queenside with 16...a6 17.0-0-0 b5 18.♗e4 ♗e7 19.f5!? ♗fe8 20.♗g2 gxf5 21.♗g3, although it is little fun to defend such a position.

**E2. 6...♗g7 7.e4 0-0**

With this centre, White naturally has a wide choice. However, he should not neglect development, as 8.e5 ♗h5 9.♗e2 f5 10.exf6 ♗xf6 would offer Black counterplay.

8.♗g5 h6 9.♗e3 also gives Black tempi: 9...♗g4! (9...d6 10.h3 ♗bd7 11.♗e2 d5 12.cxd5 exd5 13.e5 ♗e4 14.♗d3! c5 15.♗xe4 cxd4! 16.♗xd4 dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♗c8 18.♗e2 ♗xe4 19.♗xe4 ♗c4 20.♗e2 and Black had not full compensation for the pawn in the game Dreev-Sorokin, St.Petersburg 1993) 10.♗d2 f5±.

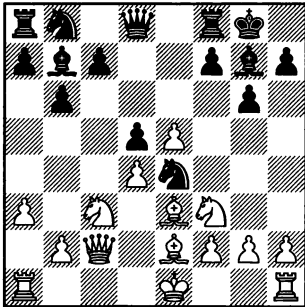
Therefore we shall focus on:

E2a. 8.♗e2 and E2b. 8.♗d3.

**E2a. 8. ♖e2 d5!**

Black can try to defend a cramped position after 8...d6 9.0-0 ♖bd7 10.♙e1 h6. He should staunchly wait for an opportunity to activate his pieces. Such an approach is possible, but not too popular. White has more room for manoeuvring, with the break-through c5-c5 in mind: 11.h3 ♖h7 12.♙f1 c6 13.♙e3 ♗c8 14.b4 a6 15.c5±, Kveinys-Polaczek, Crete 2007.

**9.cxd5 exd5 10.e5 ♖e4  
11.♙e3**



The game Dreev-Smirin, Riga 1987, saw 11.♙f4 c5 12.♗d1 cxd4 13.♖xe4 dxe4 14.♖xd4 ♗e7 and White had to sacrifice a pawn with a tangled position: 15.e6 ♙xd4 16.♗xd4 fxe6 17.♙e3 ♙d5 18.♙c4.

The modest 11.0-0 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♙f4 ♖d7 14.♗fd1 ♖xc3 15.♗xc3 d4 16.♗e1 ♗e8 leaves the e5-pawn hanging, Franco-Zvjagincev, Pamplona 1994.

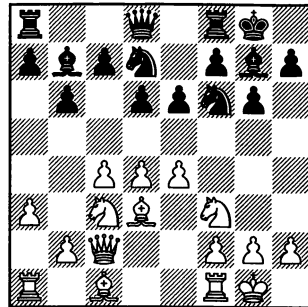
**11...♖d7**

This gives White time to consolidate his centre. 11...c5! 12.dxc5 ♖d7!? is much more challenging.

**12.♙d3 ♖xc3 13.bxc3 c5  
14.0-0 ♗c7 15.♗b1**

White was clearly on top in Komarov-Lepelletier, St.Raphael 1998. Perhaps Black should have tried here to trade light-squared bishops with a7-a5 followed up by ♙b7-a6, because after 15...♗fc8 16.h4 ♖f8 17.h5 White seized the initiative.

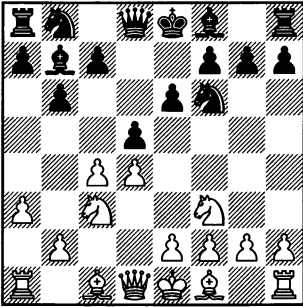
**E2b. 8. ♙d3 d6 9.0-0 ♖bd7**



Black's only real counterplay in this position is connected with c7-c5. White will answer it with d5, when the manoeuvre ♖f6-g4-e5 would ensure the exchange of one knight. Thus **10.h3** looks best. (White was slightly better after 10.♙g5 h6 11.♙d2 a6 12.h3 c5 13.d5 ed5 b5 15.b3, Malaniuk-Ovsejevitch, Koszalin 2007, but instead of 11...a6, 11...c5 would have been more consistent.)

The game Peskov-Eljanov, Evpatoria 2003 went on with 10...a6 11.♙e3 h6. Here White chose 12.b4, but this move only enhanced the effect of 12...c5, with counterplay. 12.♙e1 seems a more useful development. White's game is easier, even though the enemy setup is flexible and solid.

## PART 4

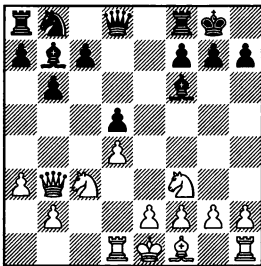


5...d5 is the most popular and principled answer. White's waste of time on prophylaxis should be exploited by active central play. Then main line is 6.cxd5, but White has also tested a number of other moves. 6.g5 leads to an innocuous version of the Tartakower variation in the Queen's Gambit Declined. 6.c2 hides more venom as it may transpose to specific positions of main lines which could be outside Black's preparation.

### A. 6.g5 e7

Main positions here are:

1. 7.f6 f6 8.cd5 ed5 9.b3 0-0 10.d1



White tries to restrict the ene-

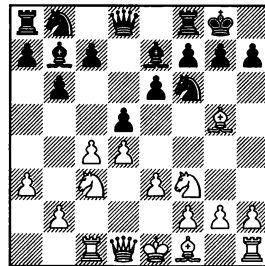
1.d4 f6 2.c4 e6 3.f3 b6 4.a3 b7 5.c3 d5

## Rare Sixth Moves of White

### Main Ideas

my counterplay by hitting d5, but it turned out though that ...c5 is possible, as recently proved by one of the authors: 10...c5!? Now 11.dxc5 a6 looks rather risky, so White chose 11.e3 c4 12.c2 d7 13.g3 a6 14.g2 b5 15.0-0 e8, Krasnokow-Beliavsky, Kallithea 22.10.2008 and Black went on to win.

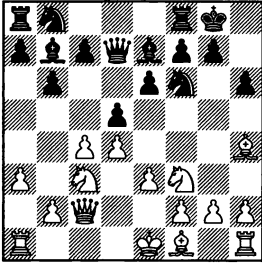
2. 7.e3 0-0 8.c1



Black has comfortable equality with any reasonable developing plan:

8...bd7 9.cxd5 exd5 10.b5 c6, or 8...c5 9.cxd5 dxd5 10.ex7 xe7 11.dxd5 xd5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.c4 c6 14.e2 d7 15.b5 xb5 16.xb5 ab8 17.e2 f6=, Gurevich-Aronian, Saint Vincent 2005.

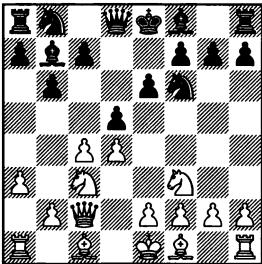
3. 7. ♖a4+ ♗d7 8. ♖c2 0-0 9. e3 h6 10. ♗h4



Now, in Van Wely-Karpov, Dubai 2002, Black eliminated the centre achieving a balanced game:

10... dxc4 11. ♗xc4 c5 12. ♗d1 cxd4 13. ♖xd4 ♖c8=.

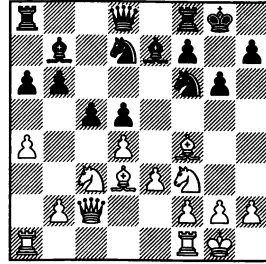
**B. 6. ♖c2**



A waiting game strategy. White does not threaten anything important. He wants to see Black's plans first, while preparing to put his rook on d1 to discourage c7-c5 ideas.

Now 6... ♗e7 7. cxd5 ♖xd5 would transpose to part 9. In that case White will sidestep variations with an early ...c5 which are the subject of parts 10-11. However, Black could also recapture on d5 by pawn, when the queen is not too well placed on

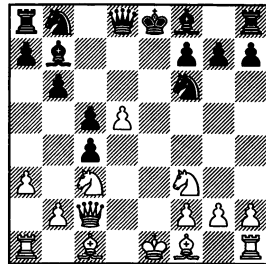
c2. We examine this structure in the next part, but White avoids playing ♖c2. Thus 6... ♗e7 7. cxd5 exd5 8. ♗f4 0-0 9. e3 ♖bd7 10. ♗d3 c5 11. 0-0 a6 12. a4 g6! leads to the following model position 4:



The game is balanced, but Black must be prepared to play with an isolator on d5:

13. ♗fd1 ♗c8 14. dc5 ♖c5=, Sakaev-Epishin, Elista 1995.

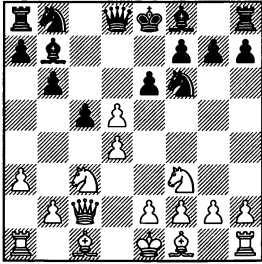
5. 6... dxc4 7. e4 c5 8. d5 exd5 9. exd5



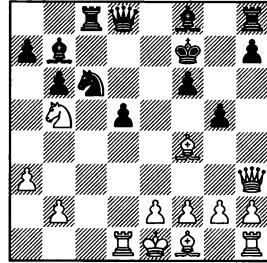
In this structure White can hope for an advantage if he has the more active pieces and especially if he controls d6. In our case Black is fine after 9... ♗d6 10. ♗xc4 0-0 11. 0-0 h6! 12. ♗e1 a6 13. a4 ♖bd7 14. b3 ♖c7, Lautier-Karpov, Groningen 1995.

4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 rare sixth moves

6. 6...c5!? 7.cxd5



8.♟xd4 ♟xd5 9.♟db5! ♟c6 10.♟xd5  
exd5 11.♟f4 ♞c8 12.♞c3! f6 13.♞h3  
♟f7 14.♞d1 g5?!



Now 7...♟xd5 8.e4 transposes to parts 10-11. Instead,

7...exd5 8.e4! ensures White some initiative.

7...cxd4 is also an inferior choice:

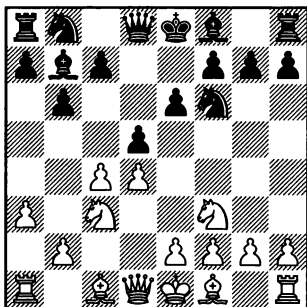
White has 15.♞h5! when 15...♟g7 meets 16.h4! while 15...♟g8 – 16.g3! with an advantage.

### Conclusion

*We do not see much sense in the move 6.♟g5. It is not in the spirit of the Petrosian system and does not even hide some traps or tricky strategic ideas.*

*The waiting 6.♞c2 is more consistent. It has a major drawback though – White commits too early the queen to c2. That could be exploited by capturing on d5 with pawn in the line 6...♟e7 7.cxd5 exd5. Then Black will open the c-file and the queen will be forced to waste a tempo on retreat.*

## PART 4



1.d4 2.c4 e6 3.d3 b6 4.a3  
b7 5.d3 d5

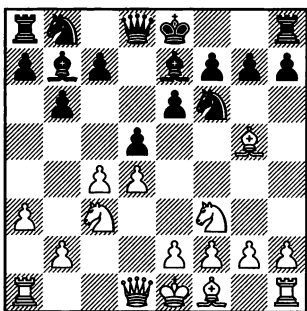
### Rare Sixth Moves of White

#### Move by Move

In this chapter we examine several interesting White deviations from the main line 6.cxd5:

- A. 6.g5
- B. 6.c2

#### A. 6.g5 e7



We see a position from the Queen's Gambit Declined, with a2-a3. This move might be helpful in some lines, it also enables b2-b4, but, as a whole, it is pretty useless. Of course Black could hardly expect to take over the initiative right from the opening.

#### A1. 7.e3

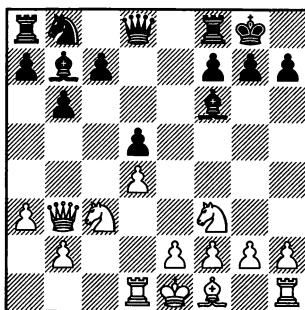
This move brings about posi-

tions, similar to the Tartakower variation.

Alternatives are:

a) 7.cxd5 is inconsistent. If White wanted to play this move, he should have done it on the previous turn, because now Black exchanges yet another piece: 7...dxd5 8.gxe7 xe7 9.dxd5 dxd5 10.c1. White's strategy would be justified if he succeeds in preventing the freeing c7-c5. 10...0-0 11.e3 c8 12.e2 b7 Last touch! Black prevented a6 and the break c7-c5 is unstoppable: 13.0-0 d7 14.b5 c6 15.a4 b5 16.c2 c5! 17.d3 g6=, Malakhatko-Smirnov, Alushta 2001.

b) 7.xf6 xf6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.b3 0-0 10.d1.

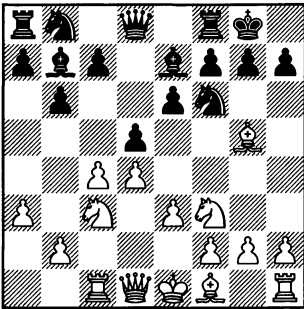


4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 rare sixth moves

The reason behind this setup is to restrict the enemy counterplay by hitting d5. It turned out though that ...c5 was possible, as recently proved by one of the authors: 10...c5!? Now 11.dxc5 ♟a6 looks rather risky, so White chose 11.e3 c4 12.♞c2 ♟d7 13.g3 a6 14.♙g2 b5 15.0-0 ♞e8 ♘, Kraskenow-Beliavsky, Kallithea 22.10.2008 and Black went on to win.

The game Shabalov-Macieja, Bermuda 2003, saw a similar idea: 10...♞e8 11.g3 c5!? 12.♙g2 ♟c6 13.dxc5 ♟a6! 14.e3 bxc5 15.♟xd5 ♞a5 16.♞d2 ♞ab8. Here White should have opted for an equal ending with 17.♟xf6 gxf6 18.♞c3 ♞xc3 19.bxc3=.

7...0-0 8.♞c1



8...♟bd7

Black can immediately attack the centre: 8...c5 9.cxd5 ♟xd5 10.♙xe7 ♞xe7 11.♟xd5 ♙xd5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♙c4 ♙c6 14.♞e2 ♟d7 15.♙b5 ♙xb5 16.♞xb5 ♞ab8 17.♞e2 ♞f6=, Gurevich-Aronian, Saint Vincent 2005.

9.cxd5 exd5 10.♙b5 c6

Black's aim is to push ...c5, but he can achieve it in different ways. For instance, there is nothing wrong with 10...a6 11.♙a4!? ♞c8 12.0-0 c5 13.♟e5!? b5 14.♟xd7 ♞xd7 15.♙c2

♟e4 16.♙xe7 ♞xe7 17.♟e2 c4! with complex play, Atalik-Macieja, Bled 2002. Closing the centre is a double-edged option, but often Black's queenside offensive is more straightforward and easier than White's attack in the centre and on the kingside.

11.♙a4

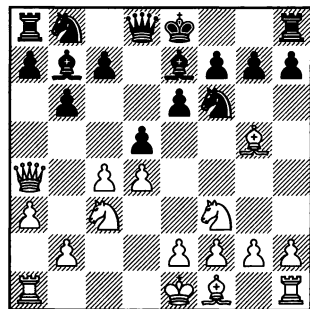
A tricky move, aimed at hindering the freeing break-through c6-c5. 11.♙d3 has no venom and after 11...c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.0-0 ♟e4 14.♙xe7 ♞xe7 15.♞e2 ♞ab8! 16.♞f1 ♟df6 17.h3 ♞fd8 the black hanging pawns are rather comfortable, Piket-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2002.

11...♟e4 12.♙xe7 ♞xe7 13.0-0 f5 14.♟e2.

Black has some prospects for attack in the future with g7-g5.

A2. 7.♞a4+

The reason behind this move is to disturb the coordination of the enemy pieces. Black has various answers which impart a different character to the game.



A2a. 7...♙c6; A2b. 7...♟fd7; A2c. 7...c5

**A2a. 7...♟c6 8.♞b3**

The aggressive 8.♞c2 is double-edged. Then 8...dxc4 9.e3 b5 deserves consideration. Then 10.♟xf6 ♟xf6 11.a4 a6 12.axb5 axb5 13.♞xa8 ♟xa8 14.♞xb5 c5 15.♞xc4 ♟xf3 16.gxf3 cxd4 17.♞xd4 0-0 18.♟d3 ♞b6 gives nice compensation for the pawn.

**8...dxc4 9.♞xc4 0-0 10.e3**

White can seize the centre at the cost of exchanging his bishop: 10.♟xf6 ♟xf6 11.e4 a6 12.♞d1 b5 13.♞a2 ♟b7 14.e5 ♟g5! 15.♟d3 ♟xf3 16.gxf3 c5, but Black has strong counterplay, Van Wely-Anand, Monaco 2001.

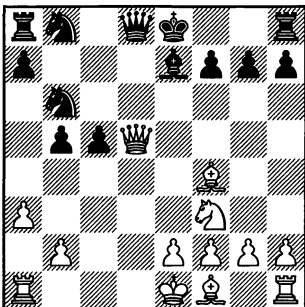
**10...♟b7 11.♟e2 ♞bd7 12.♞d1 h6 13.♟h4 ♞c8 14.0-0 c5 15.♞a2 a6 16.♞c1 ♞e8 17.♞fd1 ♞c8.**

The chances are level, Korotylev-Kasparov, Moscow 2004.

**A2b. 7...♞f7**

This thoroughly illogical continuation (the knight leaves the centre) was tested in the game Gelfand-Timman, Groningen 1996:

**8.♟f4 dxc4 9.♞xc4 c5 10.d5! exd5 11.♞xd5 b5 12.♞e4 ♟xd5 13.♞xd5 ♞b6**



**14.♞xd8+**

It was even better to keep on the queens: 14.♞e4! 0-0 15.e3 a6 16.♞d1 with an edge.

**14...♟xd8**

Here 15.g3! ♞c6 16.♟g2 ♟f6 17.0-0-0 assures White of the edge.

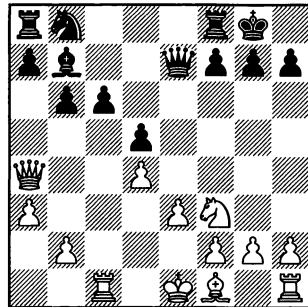
**A2c. 7...c6**

A timid answer. White possess several simple and effective ways of development:

**8.cxd5**

8.♟xf6!? ♟xf6 9.e4 is also interesting: 9...dxc4 10.♞xc4 0-0 11.♞d1 ♞d7 12.e5 ♟e7 13.♟d3 b5 14.♞b3 c5 15.♞c2 ♟xf3 16.gxf3 with an advantage, Azmaiparashvili-Stefansson, Antwerpen 1998.

**8...♟xd5 9.♟xe7 ♞xe7 10.♞xd5 exd5 11.e3 0-0 12.♞c1!**



**12...c5**

12...♞d7 13.♟a6! is grim for Black due to his very weak pawn on c6.

**13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♞h4!**

Hanging pawns are definitely a drawback in an endgame.

**14...f6 15.♟d3 g6 16.0-0 ♞d7 17.♞fe1!**

White is on top in view of the compromised castling position of Black, Karpov-Kortschnoj, Vienna 1996.

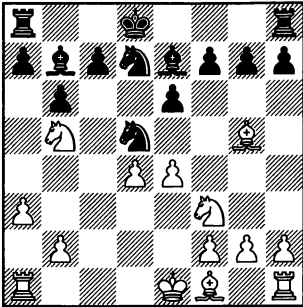
4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 rare sixth moves

### A2d. 7...♞d7

The favourite choice of Karpov. We also think this is the best reaction to White's check.

### 8.♞c2!

8.♞xd7+ ♟bx7 9.♟b5 ♔d8 10.cxd5 ♟xd5 11.e4 leads to this position:



It is satisfactory for Black as Karpov has shown:

11...h6

In the game Van Wely-Karpov, Groningen 1995, the ex-champion chose 11...♟5f6 and held the position after 12.♟f4 ♟e8 (12...♟xe4!?) 13.♟d3 h6 14.0-0-0 c6 15.♟c3 ♟d6! 16.♟e3 ♔e7. The text move is simpler:

12.♟xe7+ ♟xe7 13.♟c3 f5! 14.♟d3 fxe4 15.♟xe4 ♟xe4 16.♟xe4 ♟f6

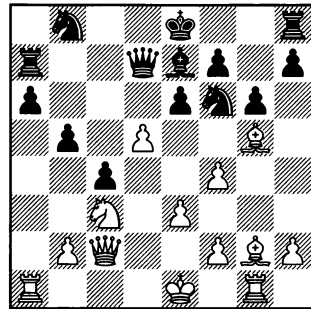
Black has a good game as the weakness on d4 balances the weakness on e6, Dreev-Karpov, Kazan 2001.

By retreating the queen, White hopes to use the bad placement of the d7-queen by tactical means.

### 8...0-0!

It is safer to control firmly the centre. 8...dxc4 9.e3 (This is more solid than 9.e4 b5 10.♞d1 a6 11.♟e2

♞c8! 12.a4 b4 13.♟xf6 ♟xf6 14.e5 ♟e7 15.♟e4 b3 16.♞b1 ♞d7! 17.0-0 ♟d5! 18.♞c1 ♞xa4 19.♟ed2 ♟c6 20.♟xc4 ♟b4 and White was struggling for the draw in I.Sokolov-van der Wiel, The Netherlands 2002.) 9...♟xf3 10.gxf3 b5 11.a4 c6 12.♞g1 (After 12.♟xf6 ♟xf6 13.axb5 cxb5 14.♞e4 0-0 15.f4 ♞c8 16.♟h3 ♟c6 17.♟xb5 ♞ab8 18.♟c3 ♞xb2 19.0-0 ♞b3! it is White again who should fight for the draw, Piket-Khalifman, Wijk aan Zee 2002.) 12...a6 13.f4 g6! 14.axb5 cxb5 15.♟g2 ♞a7 16.d5!



We are following the game I.Sokolov-Leko, Prague 2002. White has more than sufficient compensation:

16...♟xd5 17.0-0-0! gives White a strong initiative.

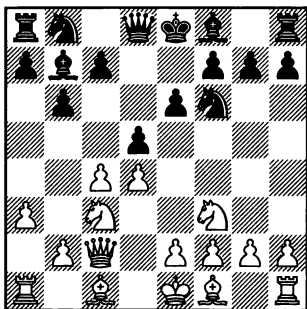
16...exd5 17.0-0-0 ♞f5 does not solve all problems either: 18.e4! (or 18.♞f5 gf5 19.♟d5±) 18...de4 19.♟e4 ♟e4 20.♟e4 ♞e6 (20...♞c5 21.♞c3) 21.♞ge1→.

### 9.e3 h6 10.♟h4

Now, in Van Wely-Karpov, Dubai 2002, Black eliminated the centre thus balancing the game:

10...dxc4 11.♟xc4 c5 12.♞d1 cd4 13.♟d4 ♞c8=.

## B. 6. ♖c2

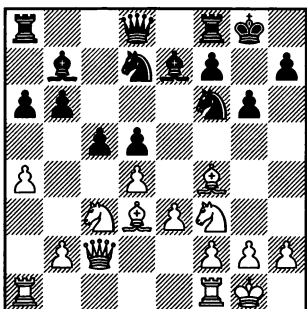


- B1. 6...♗e7  
 B2. 6...dxc4  
 B3. 6...c6  
 B4. 6...c5

## B1. 6...♗e7

This classical continuation aims to complete development, avoiding material gains at the cost of the centre.

7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗f4 0-0 9.e3  
 ♖bd7 10.♗d3 c5 11.0-0 a6 12.a4  
 g6!



Denying the f5-square to White's bishop.

13.♗fd1 ♖c8 14.dxc5

White got an edge in the game

Dreev-Rosentalis, Lyon 1994, after 14.♗e2 ♖e8 15.dxc5 bxc5?! 16.a5!, but Black should have recaptured on c5 by knight, of course.

14...♖c5 15.♗e5 ♖fd7 16.♗d4  
 ♗f6 17.♗ac1 ♖e7 18.♖e2=.

Here the game Sakaev-Epishin, Elista 1995 finished in a draw.

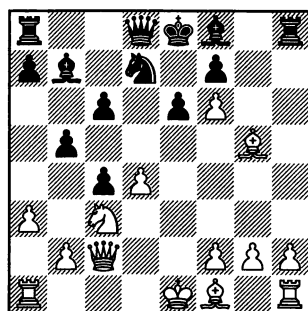
## B2. 6...dxc4 7.e4

The alternative 7.♗g5 is in the spirit of the Botvinnik system:

7...c6

Other answers are dangerous for Black: 7...a6 8.e4 b5 9.d5! ♗e7 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.♗d1 ♖c8 12.a4 ♖bd7 13.axb5 axb5 14.♖d4 b4 15.♗xc4! bxc3 16.♖xe6 with a strong attack in Tkachiev-Pelletier, France 2003; 7...♖c6 8.♗d1 ♗e7 9.e4 ♖a5 10.♖e5 ♖d7 11.♗xe7 ♖xe7 12.♖xc4 ♖xc4 13.♗xc4 0-0 14.0-0 c5 15.d5±,

Dreev-Almasi, Tilburg 1994.  
 8.e4b5 9.e5h6 10.♗h4g5 11.♖xg5  
 hxg5 12.♗xg5 ♖bd7 13.exf6

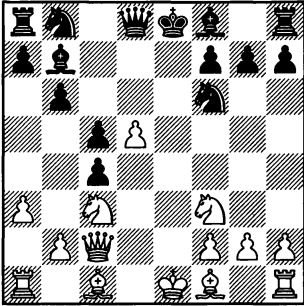
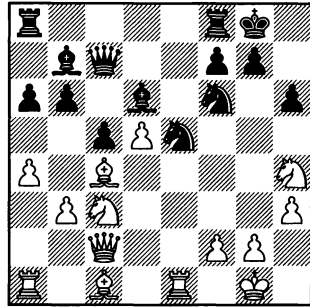


This position arose in the blitz-game Dreev-Grischuk, Moscow 2007. It went on 13...♖a5 when White should have played 14.h4, preserving his extra pawn, since

4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 rare sixth moves

14...c5 15.0-0-0 b4 would stumble into 16.d5!. Perhaps in the diagram position Black should eat the awkward pawn on f6 by 13...♟xf6 14.♞e4 ♙e7 15.♟c5 ♙c8 with strategically unbalanced game.

7.e4 is more natural though:  
**7...c5 8.d5 exd5 9.exd5**



**9...♙d6**

9...a6?! 10.♙c4 b5 has been played in many games, including by Anand, and White invariably answered 11.♙a2=. Instead, the simple 11.0-0! bc4 12.♞a4 ♜d7 13.♙e1 ♟d8 14.♞c4 would have offered him a terrific attack.

**10.♙xc4 0-0 11.0-0 h6!**

11...a6 is dubious again, 12.♙g5 ♟bd7 13.♙fel ♞c7, I.Sokolov-Su. Hansen, Torshavu 1997, when 14.a4! ♙fe8 15.♞f5! assures White of an edge.

**12.♙e1 a6 13.a4 ♟bd7 14.b3 ♞c7**

In this typical structure Black has no problems. 14...♙e8 15.♙b2 ♟e5 is not bad either.

**15.h3 ♟e5 16.♟h4**

The game is level. Lautier-Karpov, Groningen 1995 saw further:

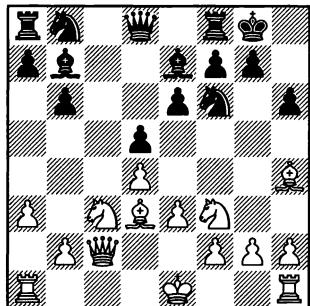
16...♙fe8 (16...♙ae8!?) 17.♙b2 ♞d7 18.♙e2 ♙ad8 19.♙ae1 ♟xc4 20.bxc4 ♙c8 21.♟d1 ♙xe2 22.♙xe2 ♟h5!=

**B3. 6...c6**

This modest move deserves serious consideration.

The most challenging answer to it is 7.♙g5 dc4 8.e4 b5 9.e5 h6 10.♙h4 g5, transposing to the game Dreev-Grischuk, Moscow 2007 which we know from the previous line. Another consistent continuation is 7.e4!? dxe4 8.♟xe4 c5 with unexplored position. Most solid, but not too promising, is:

**7.cxd5 cxd5 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.e3 0-0 10.♙d3 h6 11.♙h4**



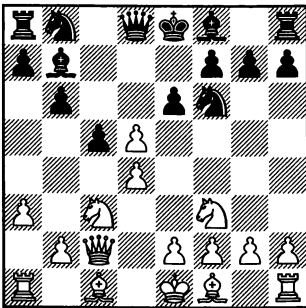
We see a typical Exchange Slav structure where Black gradually equalizes if he succeeds in neutralizing White's play on the queenside. That could be achieved with 11...♖c6! 12.♖c1 ♖c8 13.0-0 a6. The d3-bishop is allegedly better than its b7-counterpart, but practical evidence shows that White lacks an efficient plan. On the contrary, without light-squared bishops Black's defence might be more difficult, for instance, 11...♗a6?! (Dreev-Dautov, Germany 1996) 12.♗a6 ♘a6 13.♖c1! and Black is unable to contest the c-file because 13...♖c8 loses a pawn to 14.♗a4, while 13...♗c8 14.♗f6 ♗f6 15.♘b5 ♗b7 16.♗c6± is even worse.

**B4. 6...c5**

A challenging reaction which anticipates ♗d1.

**7.cxd5**

The mundane 7.♗g5 led to a draw after 7...cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♗e7 9.cxd5 0-0! 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♗d1 exd5 12.e3 ♗xd4 13.exd4, Dreev-Tkachiev, Biel 2002.



**7...cxd4?!**

7...exd5 8.e4! ensures White

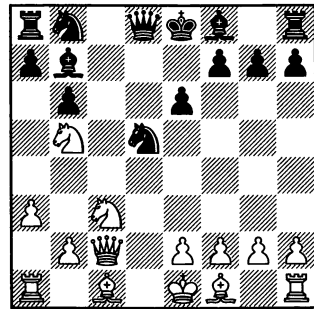
some initiative. In Kramnik-Polgar, France 2003, after 8...cxd4?! 9.♗b5+ ♘bd7 10.e5 dxc3 11.exf6 ♗c7 12.♗e2+ ♘d8 13.fxg7 ♗xg7 14.0-0 ♖e8 15.♗g5+ f6 16.♗e3 Black's king got stuck in the middle. More reasonable is 8...de4! 9.♗b5 ♘bd7! 10.♘e5 a6 11.♗b3 ♗e7, when White has only a tiny advantage following 12.♘d7 ♘d7 13.♘d5 ♗d5 14.♗d5 ♖a7 15.♗c6 ♗e6 16.♗e6 fe6 17.♗f4 ♘f7 18.dc5 ♗c5 19.♗e4 ♘f6 20.♗c2 ♗d8 21.♘e2.

7...♘xd5! 8.e4 transposes to the main lines of the next parts.

**8.♘xd4**

8.♗a4+ has drifted out of fashion since 8...♘bd7 9.dxe6 (9.♘d4 ♘d5 10.♘d5 ♗d5 11.e4 ♗b7 12.♗e3 a6 13.f3 b5 14.♗d1 is roughly equal, Dreev-Karpov, Cap d'Agde 2000) 9...dxc3 10.exd7+ ♗xd7 11.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 12.bxc3 ♗e7 13.♗e3 ♖c8 14.♗d4 0-0 15.e3 ♘c5 16.♘d2 ♘a4 17.c4 ♗c5! gives Black nice initiative for the pawn, Lputian-Dautov, Budapest 1996.

**8...♘d5 9.♘db5!**

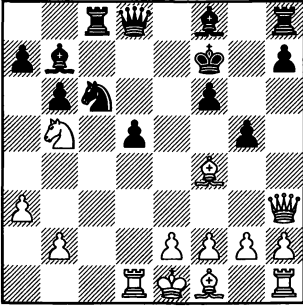


9.e4 allows further exchanges: 9...♘xc3 10.♗xc3 ♘d7 11.♗e3 ♖c8 12.♗d2 ♗e7 13.♗d1 a6 14.♗e2 ♘e5

4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 rare sixth moves

15.0-0 0-0 16.f3 ♟c4=, Piket-Dautov, BRD 1996.

9...♟c6 10.♟xd5 exd5 11.♖f4 ♟c8 12.♞c3! f6 13.♞h3 ♟f7 14.♟d1 g5?!



14...a6 15.♟c3 clearly favours White, so in the game Tkachiev-Sax, Medulin 2002, Black risked

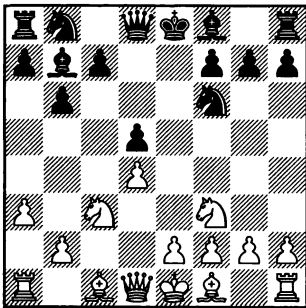
to weaken even more his kingside. Tkachiev sensed correctly that the position was ripe for a tactical solution and chose 15.e4?! to win after 15...♞e8? 16.♖e2 ♟g8 17.ed5 gf4 18.dc6 ♟c6 19.♟d7 ♖h6 20.0-0 ♖c8 21.♖g4 ♖g5 22.♟d6 1-0. However, Sax ought to play 15...♟b4! (protecting d5!) 16.ab4 gf4 17.♖e2 ♖b4 18.♟f1 ♞e7 19.ed5 ♞e5 20.♞d7 ♞e7=.

The killing move in the diagram position is:

15.♞h5! when 15...♟g7 meets 16.h4! while 15...♟g8 – 16.g3! with an advantage.

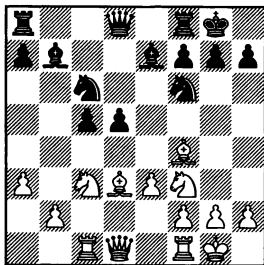
In this line Black should better transpose to well tested positions with 7...♟xd5.

## PART 5



Recapturing on d5 by pawn is typical for classical players that are familiar with the Tartakower and the Tarrasch systems. Black must be ready to defend positions with hanging pawns.

1. 7.♗f4 ♗e7 8.e3 0-0 9.♗d3 c5 10.0-0 ♖c6?! 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♞c1



White is better here due to the clumsy c6-knight – it does not attack anything, but only hampers the defence of the central pawns.

2. 7.♗f4 ♗e7 8.e3 0-0 9.♗d3 c5 10.0-0 ♖bd7 11.♞c2 ♞c8 12.♞ad1 g6 13.dxc5 bxc5

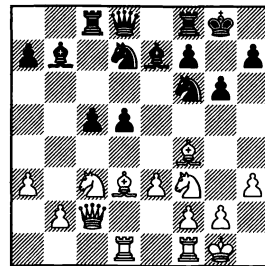
White is somewhat better. His typical plans are linked with ex-

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♖c3 d5 6.cxd5 exd5

## Tarrasch Structures

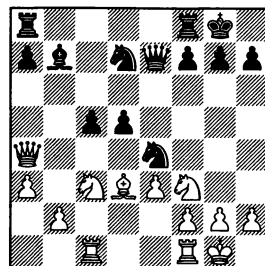
### Main Ideas

changes of minor pieces, or with the central break e3-e4.



The e7-bishop only hampers Black's play. It is better to trade it with 7.♗f4 ♗d6 and go for an IQP by capturing on c5 with knight.

3. 7.♗g5 ♗e7 8.e3 0-0 9.♗d3 ♖bd7 10.0-0 c5 11.♞c1 ♖e4 12.♗xe7 ♞xe7 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♞a4!



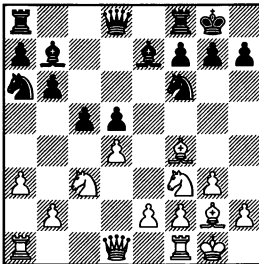
4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.cxd5 exd5

In this version of hanging pawns Black has managed to trade dark-squared bishops. Still, White's game is easier as he has clear targets.

The positional threat is 15.♙e4± (for instance, after 14...♞df6) so in Miton-Yudasin, New York, 2005 Black retreated the knight: 14...♞ef6, when both 15.♞a5 or 15.♞h4 h6 16.b4 are preferable for White.

White often fianchettoes his light-squared bishop:

4. 7.g3 ♙e7 8.♙g2 0-0 9.0-0 c5 10.♙f4 ♟a6!

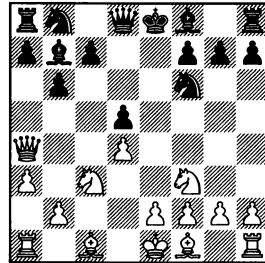


According to the research of the great master of positions with hanging pawns, Leonid Yudasin, the knight stands best on a6. It can then shift to c7 and e6, thus supporting both central pawns. The fine point is that White's most dangerous manoeuvre in these positions – 11.♞e5 ♟c7 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♞c4 – leads only to a draw after 13...♞b8!, Gheorghiu-Parma, Istanbul 1980.

Salov-Aseev, Lvov 1984 saw another setup: 11.♞c2 ♞c8! 12.♞ad1 ♞d8 13.♞fe1 ♞e4 with mutual chances.

Perhaps the most sophisticated approach of White is:

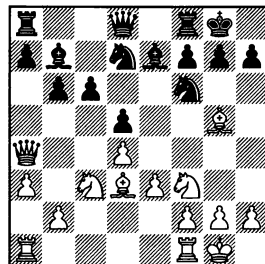
5. 7.♞a4+!?



This check aims to disturb the normal development of the opponent and reach a better version of the above-mentioned setups.

After 7...♞bd7 8.g3 a6 9.♙h3 the crossfire on the d7-knight offers White some initiative, so main line is:

6. 7...c6 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.e3 0-0 10.♙d3 ♞bd7 11.0-0



This position is closely related to examples 2 and 3, especially if we follow the game M.Gurevich-Spraggett, Andorra 2005 a few more moves: 11...♞e8 12.♞c2 g6 13.♞ad1 ♞c8 14.♞fe1. (planning e4)

White has a spatial advantage.

### **Conclusion**

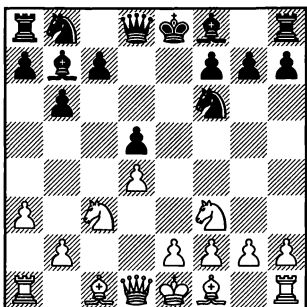
*Black should not experience serious problems in this system, but Queen's Indian fans may not like the Tartakower or Tarrasch structures. They require confident play in both isolator and hanging pawns positions, which are not to everyone's taste.*

*White usually obtains an easier game by leading out his dark-squared bishop to f4 or g5. In the latter case he must refrain from giving up the bishop for the f6-knight. The light-squared bishop stands well on d3, from where it controls e4. White would gladly trade it for a knight on that square in order to split the hanging pawns.*

*The most unpleasant for Black move order appears to be 7.♖a4+!?. It is examined in the "Move by Move" chapter as line D.*

*Black, for his part, should aim to exchange the enemy dark-squared bishop. Against the g2-fianchetto, he should develop the knight to a6 and defend the b7-bishop by ...♗c8.*

## PART 5



White has a wide choice here:

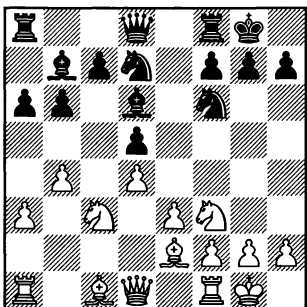
- A. 7. ♖f4
- B. 7. ♖g5
- C. 7. g3
- D. 7. ♖a4+!?

7.e3 is only a minor alternative because it is too passive. Black owns the e4-square for his knights, while White's queenside plan is ineffective without the support of the dark-squared bishop:

7... ♖bd7 8. ♖e2

8. ♖d3 as in Manolache-Rusev, Portugal 2007, is at least visually better.

8... ♖d6 9. b4 0-0 10. 0-0 a6



1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♖f3 b6 4.a3  
 ♖b7 5. ♖c3 d5 6.cxd5 exd5

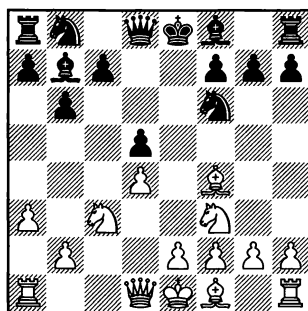
## Tarrasch Structures

### Move by Move

11. ♖b3 ♖e7 12. ♖b1 (intending a3-a4-a5) 12... ♖e4 13.a4 ♖df6 14.b5 ♖xc3 15. ♖xc3 ♖e4 16. ♖c2 ♖fc8! 17. ♖b2 c6! 18.bxc6 ♖xc6.

The weakness of the a4-pawn defines Black's advantage, Spassky-Petrosian, Moscow 1969.

### A. 7. ♖f4



- A1. 7... ♖e7
- A2. 7... ♖d6!?

### A1. 7... ♖e7

A passive continuation.

8.e3 0-0 9. ♖d3 c5 10.0-0 ♖bd7

This is the most natural development since both central pawns are

now well protected. As a rule, with hanging pawns the knight is best placed on d7.

Practice has also seen 10...♖c6?! which, however, does not save Black from trouble: 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♞c1 when the hanging pawns are rather vulnerable.

10...c4 is a more challenging option, but releasing the pressure in the centre is always risky. One needs experience in such positions to assess correctly which play would run faster – Black's pawn storm on the queenside or White's offensive in the centre and on the right wing.

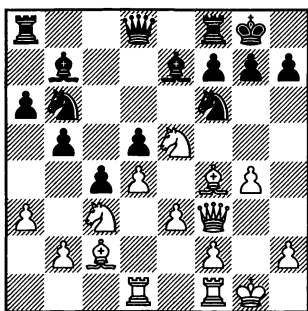
11.♙c2 a6 12.♗e5

It is also a good idea to slow down the enemy advance by 12.a4!?

12...b5 13.♞f3 ♖bd7 14.♞ad1!

Anticipating an exchange on e5, when the d1-rook would become the decisive piece.

14...♗b6 15.g4!

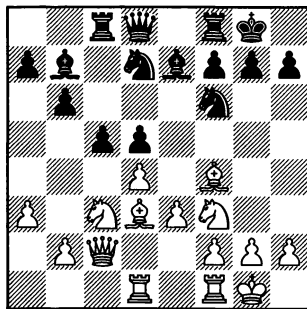


15...♗e8 16.♞h3 g6 17.♙h6 ♗g7 18.f4 f5

18...f6 would crash into 19.♗xg6 hxg6 20.♙xg6 with an irresistible attack.

19.gxf5 ♙c8 20.♞f3+-, Mikhalchishin-Luce, Budapest 1990.

11.♞c2 ♞c8 12.♞ad1



12...g6

The active 12...cxd4 13.♗xd4 ♗e4 stumbles into 14.♙xe4 dxe4 15.♗f5 with an awkward pin of the d7-knight.

13.dxc5 bxc5

The game Jobava-Nyback, Kusadasi 2006, saw 13...♗xc5? 14.♙h6 ♞e8 15.♙b5 ♗cd7 16.♞a4 ♗c5 17.♞d4 with a strangling centralisation.

White is somewhat better in the position with hanging pawns. His typical plans are linked with exchanges of minor pieces, or with the central break e3-e4. However, he should take measures against the treat of ...♗h5 first, for instance, 14.h3!?

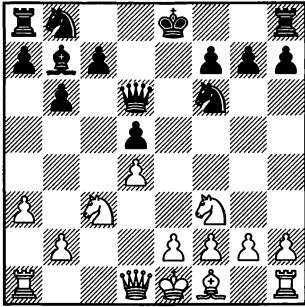
A2. 7...♙d6!?

Why not exchange the active bishop, indeed! There is enough practical evidence that Black has a comfortable position here:

A2a. 8.♙xd6; A2b. 8.♙g3

A2a. 8.♙xd6 ♞xd6

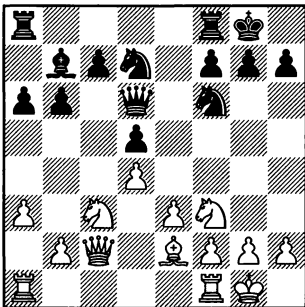
4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.cxd5 exd5



**9.e3**

9.♞c1 is a flexible alternative which keeps White's options open. The threat of 10.♟b5 should be prevented by 9...a6, for 9...♞e7 could meet the awkward check 10.♞a4+ c6 11.e3. Play might continue with 10.g3 0-0 11.♟g2 ♟bd7 12.0-0 c5. White's bishop is not too impressive on the main diagonal.

**9...0-0 10.♟e2 a6 11.0-0 ♟bd7 12.♞c2**



**12...c5**

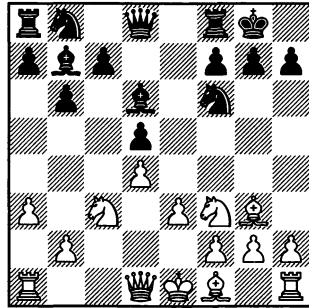
Kortschnoj tried to avoid producing hanging pawns by 12...♞fe8 13.♞fd1 g6?! 14.b4 b5, but he was worse after 15.♟d2 ♟b6 16.♟b3 ♟c8 17.♟c5 ♟c4 18.♟xc4 bxc4 19.h3, Paragua-Kortschnoj, Torino 2006.

**13.dxc5 ♟xc5 14.♞fd1 ♞ac8**

**15.♞f5 ♞fd8.**

A long fight is ahead.

**A2b. 8.♟g3 0-0 9.e3**



**9...♟e4!**

It is useful to trade knights in order to decrease the pressure on d5.

The immediate attack on the centre by 9...c5 offers White more possibilities:

10.♟e2 ♟a6 11.0-0 ♟c7 12.♟h4

More vigorous is 12.♟e5! which might be followed up even by f2-f4.

12...♞e7 13.a4 ♞e6 14.♟g5! ♞e8 15.♞e1 h6 16.♟f3 ♟e4 17.♞c2 ♞c8 18.dxc5! ♟xc5

Or 18...bxc5 19.♟xe4! dxe4 20.♟d2 and the hanging pawns are split.

19.♞b3.

White exerts pressure on d5 and soon he will hit another target – the b6-pawn, T.Petrosian-Nikolic, Niksic 1983.

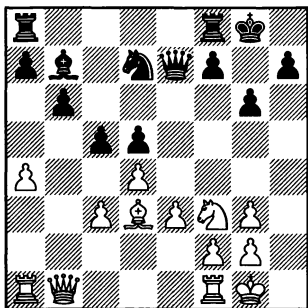
**10.♞b3 ♟xc3 11.bxc3**

Or 11.♞xc3 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♟e2 ♞e8 threatening d5-d4.

**11...♞e7**

11...c5 is also good.

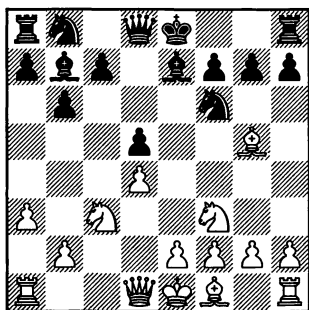
**12.♟d3 ♟d7 13.0-0 c5 14.♞b1 g6 15.a4**



White's only reasonable plan is to make a weakness on the queenside, Mikhalchishin-Brumen, Slovenia 2000. Therefore, 15...a6! followed by 16...c6= was called for.

### B. 7. g5 e7

7...d7, aiming to restrict White's options of taking on f6, is also playable. White then often tries to use the placement of Black's knight on d7 by 8. a4 e7 9. f6 f6 10. g3 0-0 11. h3, but the manoeuvre 11...d8! 12. 0-0 c6 should level the game.

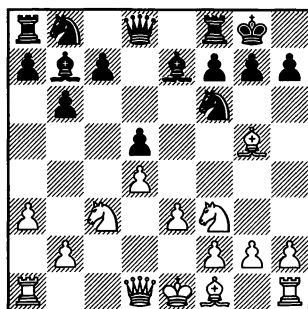


White chooses between:

B1. 8.e3

B2. 8.f6

### B1. 8.e3 0-0



### 9. d3

9. e2 is less active. After 9... d7 10. 0-0 e4! 11. xe7 xe7 12. c1 f8! 13. a4, Olafsson-Browne, Amsterdam 1976, instead of 13...c5 14. a6 with a slight advantage due to weak light squares on the queenside, Black has the prophylactic move 13...a6! which prevents the exchange of the bishops.

9... d7 10. 0-0 c5 11. c1 e4 12. xe7

12. f4 loses time and hinders White's attack: 12... dxc3 13. cxc3 c4 14. b1 b5 15. e5 e5! favours Black, for example, 16. e5 g6 17. f3 a5 18. e4 b6.

12... xe7 13. dxc5

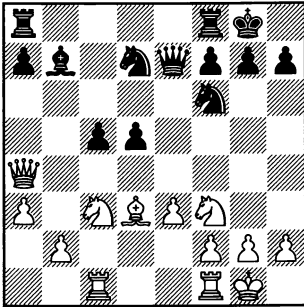
13. e2 dxc3 14. bxc3 c4 15. f5 g6 16. xd7 xd7 leaves White without a clear plan, whereas Black will be pushing ...b5, ...a5 and ...b4.

13... bxc5 14. a4!

14. e2 handed the initiative to Black in Atalik-Grischuk, Bled 2002: 14... f8! 15. xe4 dxe4 16. d2 f5.

Now White is threatening to take on e4, e.g. 14... d6 15. e4±, so Yudasin preferred to retreat the knight:

## 14...♗ef6!?



White had some initiative after 15.♞h4 h6 16.b4 c4 17.♗b1 a5 18.♗d4 ♜fb8 19.♗f5 ♞f8 in Miton-Yudasin, New York, 2005. Even more promising looks 15.♞a5, targeting the queenside pawns.

**B2. 8.♗xf6 ♗xf6 9.g3**

White persistently builds up pressure on d5, but that is hardly sufficient for an edge.

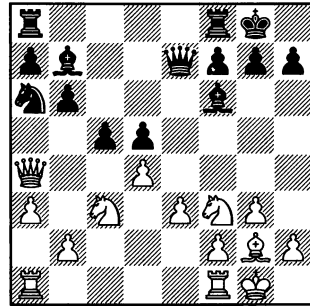
9.e3 leads to a bad version of the Tartakover variation with the useless move a3.

9.♞b3 is a more interesting alternative. White's idea is to impede ...c5 by 9...0-0 10.♗d1.

However, Black can defer it: 10...c6 11.g3 ♜e8 12.♗g2 ♗d7 13.0-0 ♗f8 14.♗d2 ♗e6 15.♜c1 ♞e7 16.e3 ♗ad8 17.♞a4 ♗a8 18.♞d1 c5! Now it is well prepared. 19.dxc5 bxc5 20.♗xd5 ♗xd5 21.♞xd5 ♗xb2 with a fine game as in Ponomariov-Kryvoruchko, Alushta 2007.

**9...0-0 10.♗g2 c5!**

Black can also prepare this advance with 10...♞e7 и ♗a6.

**11.0-0 ♗a6 12.e3 ♞e7 13.♞a4**

13.♞b3 only gives a tempo for c5-c4: 13...♞fd8 14.♗ad1 ♗ab8 15.♞fe1 ♗c7 16.h4 g6! 17.♗h2 ♗g7 18.♗h1 c4! Starting the offensive on the queenside. 19.♞c2 b5 20.e4 dxe4 21.♗xe4 ♗xe4+ 22.♞xe4 ♞d6, with an advantage, Bocharov-Sakaev, Moscow 2003.

**13...♞fd8 14.♞fd1**

Perhaps White should test a setup with ♗d1+ ♗e1.

**14...♗c7 15.dxc5**

It is possible to maintain the tension with 15.♗ac1 c4 16.b3 b5! 17.♞a5 a6∞.

**15...bxc5 16.♗e1**

A typical manoeuvre of the knight toward d3 from where it could jump to f4. Still, Black finds active counterplay:

**16...♗ab8! 17.♗d3**

It is dangerous to accept such sacrifices. After 17.♞xa7 d4 18.♗xb7 dxc3 19.bxc3 ♗b5 20.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 21.♞a6 ♗xc3 22.♗g2 ♞d2! Black's pieces are extremely active.

**17...d4! 18.exd4 ♗xg2 19.♗xg2 ♗xd4 20.♗ac1 ♗e6.**

The game is level, Mikhalchishin-Babula, Slovakia 2004.

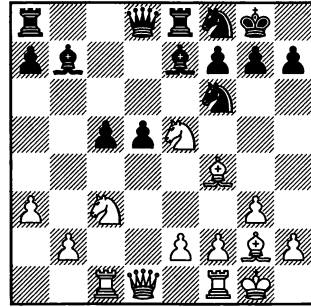
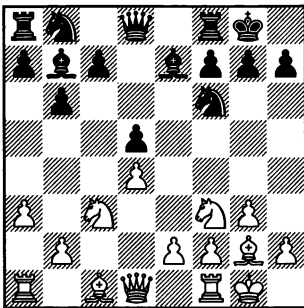
**C. 7.g3 ♖e7**

The bishop belongs to e7. After the “active” 7...♗d6 8.♗g2 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.♗g5 ♘bd7 11.♘b5 h6 12.♘xd6 cxd6 13.♗xf6 ♘xf6 a solid position arises with doubled d-pawns. This structure is notoriously static and passive. It allows White to easily manoeuvre his pieces to the points of conflict. For example: 14.♗e1! ♗d7 15.♘d3 ♖f5 16.♖e1 ♗ac8 17.♗a4. White had a clear edge in Kasparov-A.Ivanov, USSR 1981.

**8.♗g2**

We consider checks from a4 in line D.

**8...0-0 9.0-0**



**14.♗c4!**

The pin along the main diagonal enables White to add another hit on d5 with the manoeuvre ♘c4-e3.

**14...♘g6**

Or 14...♗d7 15.♘a5; 14...♗e6 15.♗e5! removing the defender of the central pawn.

**15.♗g5 ♖b8 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6 17.♘xd5 ♗xb2 18.♘xb2 ♗xd5 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.♗xd5 ♖xb2 21.e4**

White is much better in the end-game thanks to his powerful bishop and the weak c5-pawn, Nikolic-Chandler, Naestved 1985.

Black can develop now his knight to d7, c6 (after 9...c5) or a6.

**C1. 9...♘bd7 10.♗f4 c5**

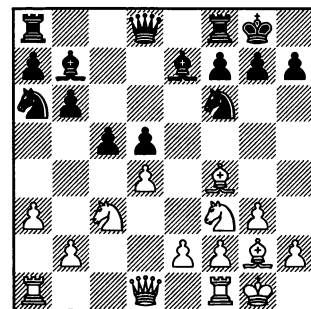
In case of 10...c6 White prepares e2-e4 following the setup with 11.♗b3, ♖ad1, ♖fe1, ♗e5.

**11.♗e5**

11.♗c2 is not appealing owing to 11...♖c8 12.♖ad1 ♗e4 13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14.♗e3 ♖c7 15.♗d4 ♗f6, Shirov-Epishin, Biel 1993.

**11...♖e8 12.♖c1 ♗f8 13.dxc5 bxc5**

**C2. 9...c5 10.♗f4 ♘a6!**



According to the research of the

great master of positions with hanging pawns, Leonid Yudasin, the knight stands best on a6. It can then shift to c7 and e6, thus supporting both central pawns.

10...♗c6 looks active, but it is useless for the defence of the c5-d5 couple:

11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♗e5 ♗d4 13.♗c4 ♖c6

In Naumkin-Gligoric, Beograd 1988, Black got some play for the pawn after 13...♞c8 14.♗a5 ♖a6 15.♖e5 ♗d8! 16.♖xd4 cxd4 17.♞xd4 ♖c5 18.♞a4 ♗d6!

14.♗e3 ♞b6 15.♗exd5 ♖xd5 16.♗xd5 ♗xd5 17.♖xd5 ♗ad8 18.e4 ♞xb2.

The d5-bishop is somewhat stronger than the the d4-knight, Petrosian-Kengis, Lvov 1984.

### 11.♞c2

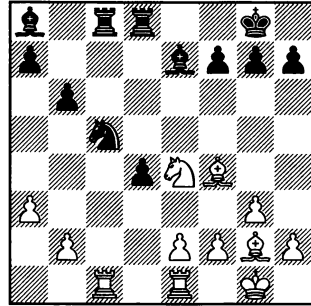
The attempt to use the pin as in the previous example led Black slip away with a draw in the game Gheorghiu-Parma, Istanbul 1980: 11.♗e5 ♗c7 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♗c4 (13.♞a4 ♗e6 14.♗ad1 ♗e8=) 13... ♗b8! 14.♖xc7 ♞xc7 15.♗xd5 ♖xd5 16.♖xd5 ♗fd8 17.e4 ♗xd5! 18.exd5 ♞b7 19.♗a5 ♞xd5 20.♞xd5 ♗xd5 21.♗c6 ♗b7=.

Alternatively, 11.♗c1 ♗c7 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♞b3 ♗b8 14.♗fd1 ♖d6 15.♖xd6 ♞xd6 is roughly equal, only Black should not allow e4. Therefore, he should meet 16.♞c2 by 16...♞e7.

### 11...♞c8!

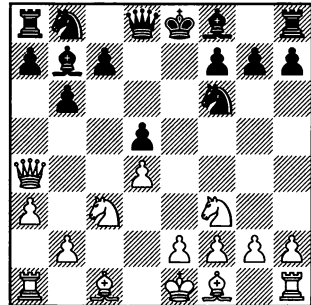
A good redeployment. The queen defends the b7-bishop, while making room to the king's rook on d8.

12.♗ad1 ♗d8 13.♗fe1 ♗e4 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♗g5 cxd4 16.♞xc8 ♗axc8 17.♗xe4 ♖a8 18.♗c1 ♗c5



Black easily defended the endgame after 19.♗xc5 bxc5 20.♗c4 ♖xg2 21.♗xg2 ♗a8!, Salov-Aseev, Lvov 1984.

## D. 7.♞a4+!?



This check now, or on the next turn, (in the variation 7.g3 ♖e7 8.♞a4) aims to disturb the normal development of the opponent and gain a tempo for bringing the rook to d1. Thus the freeing ...c5 would be somewhat impeded.

We shall consider:

D1. 7...♖bd7

D2. 7...c6

7...♞d7 is worse than in the position with 7.♙g5 ♙e7. Then 8.♞xd7+ ♖bx7 9.♖b5 ♙d6 10.♖xd6+ cxd6 11.♙f4 gives White a clear edge in view of the bishop pair and the doubled pawns on the d-file.

**D1. 7...♖bd7**

This move has practically disappeared, although it is not clear why.

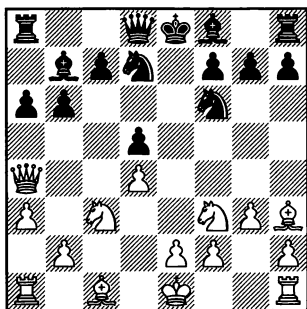
**8.g3**

Alternatives are:

8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.♙xf6 ♙xf6 10.g3 0-0 11.♙h3 c6. Then Black can follow up with ...♞e8, ...♖f8, preparing c6-c5 or a7-a5 and b6-b5;

8.♙f4 a6 9.g3 c5 10.♙g2 b5 11.♞c2 ♞b6 12.♖e5 cxd4 13.♖xd7 ♖xd7! with an extra pawn in a safe position.

**8...a6 9.♙h3**



The crossfire on the d7-knight gives White some initiative. Black is able to parry all the threats with ...b5, but it would render his pawn formation less flexible.

**9...♙d6**

After 9...♙e7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♞d1 c5 12.dxc5 ♖xc5 13.♞c2 ♖e6, Jus-

supov-Nikolic, Tunis1985, the move 14.♙e3 would give White hopes for a small edge.

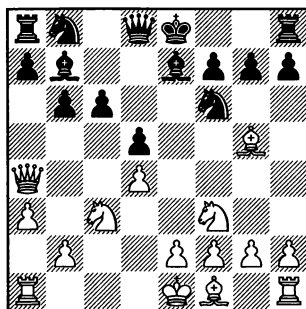
**10.♙g5**

It would be interesting to test 10.♖h4!? b5 11.♞c2 ♖b6 12.♖f5.

**10...b5 11.♞c2 ♖b6 12.0-0 0-0 13.a4.**

White has the more active pieces.

**D2. 7...c6 8.♙g5 ♙e7**

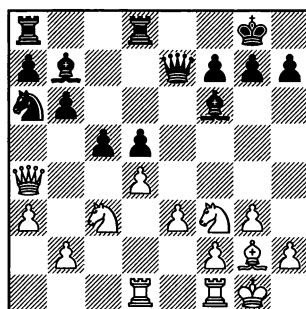


D2a. 9.♙xf6; D2b. 9.e3

**D2a. 9.♙xf6**

A thematic exchange in this structure. Still, the lost tempo on a3 reduces White's chances on achieving an advantage.

**9...♙xf6 10.g3 0-0 11.♙g2 c5 12.♞d1 ♞e7 13.0-0 ♞d8 14.e3 ♖a6**

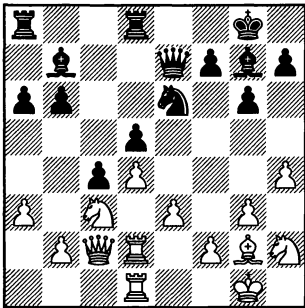


4.a3 ♖b7 5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 exd5

In this typical position Black should gradually tame the opponent's pressure on d5 and seek an opportunity to start a queenside pawn storm. Let us see a few examples:

Van Wely-Onischuk, Tilburg 1997: 15.♟f1 ♗c7 16.h4 ♗e6 17.♗h2 h5 18.♞b3 ♞d7 19.dxc5 ♗xc5 20.♞c2 ♞e6 21.♗f3 ♗e4=. It is essential here for Black not to capture on d4, to avoid opening the e-file.

Gelfand-Topalov, Novgorod 1997: 15.♞d2 ♗c7 16.♟f1 ♗e6 (Gelfand suggests 16...g6) 17.h4 g6 18.♞b3. Now Topalov should have played 18...♙g7 19.♗h2 c4! 20.♞c2 a6.



White lacks an active plan.

Tyomkin-Kortschnoj, Beersheba 1997: 15.♞b3 ♟ab8 (15...♙c6, intending c5-c4 and b6-b5, is good as well.) 16.♞d2 ♗c7 17.♟f1 g6 18.♞a2

♙g7 19.♗e5 b5! 20.f4 b4 21.axb4 cxb4 22.♗a4 f6! 23.♗f3 ♞xe3+ 24.♗h1 ♞e6 25.♗c5 ♞b6 with a tangled position.

**D2b. 9.e3 0-0 10.♙d3 ♗bd7 11.0-0**

Black's defence is based on the very sharp variation 11.♗e5 ♞c7 12.f4?! ♗xe5! 13.fxe5 ♗g4 14.♙f4 f6! The fine point is that 15.exf6 ♙d6! 16.fxg7 ♟xf4! 17.exf4 ♙xf4 spells serious trouble for White.

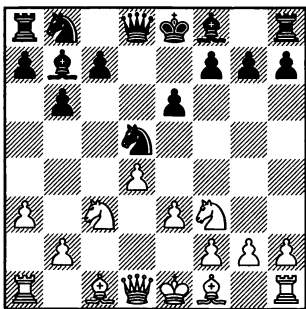
In the game Jobava-Beliavsky, Khanty-Mansijsk 2005 White decided to bail out with 12.♗xd7 ♞xd7 13.000, but he had not even a trace of an advantage after 13...h6 14.♙h4 ♟fd8 15.♟fc1 c5 16.♞xd7 ♟xd7 17.dxc5 bxc5 18.♗e2 g5 19.♙g3 ♗e4. This endgame with hanging pawns is easy for Black since the opponent is unable to hit anything.

**11...♟e8 12.♞c2 g6 13.♟ad1 ♟c8 14.♟f1 a6.**

Here, in M.Gurevich-Spraggett, Andorra 2005, White chose 15.♞e2 b5 16.b4?! and gave the opponent sufficient play against the b4-pawn: 16...a5=.

More testing would be **15.e4!? dx4 16.♙xe4**, with some spatial advantage.

## PART 6



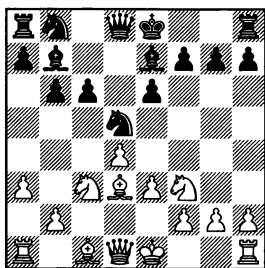
This is the oldest, “classical” treatment of the Petrosian system. It lacks the dynamic of the modern setups with 7.♖c2 and 7.♗d2. In some lines White can end up with a clear tempo down compared to those variations.

He can follow a natural development by putting the bishop on e7, castling, and executing c7-c5. He can also fianchetto the bishop to g7, fortifying his castling position and playing in the Gruenfeld spirit:

A. 7...♗e7

B. 7...g6

**A. 7...♗e7 8.♗b5+ c6 9.♗d3**

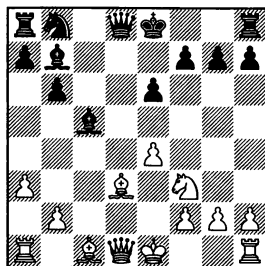


**1. ♗c5?! 10. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 11. dxc5 ♗xc5 12. e4 ♗d8**

**1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.e3**

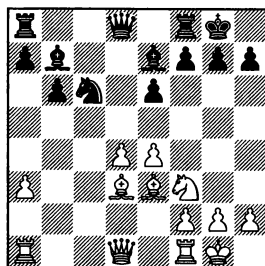
### The Old Main Line

### Main Ideas



White is better here since the opponent has not castled yet and after 13.b4! ♗e7 the check 14.♗b5+ proves to be awkward. Black has nothing better than playing a symmetrical structure with discoordinated pieces: 14...♗c6 15.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 16.♗xc6 ♗xc6 17.♗f4 f6 18.♖c1±.

**2. 9... ♗xc3 10.bxc3 c5 11.0-0 ♗c6 12.e4 cxd4 13.cxd4 0-0 14.♗e3**

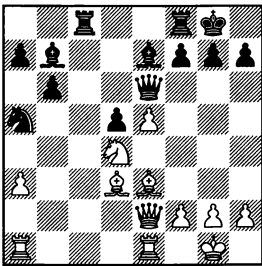


4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♜xd5 7.e3

This position is a milestone in the theory of the Petrosian system. Common sense and older understanding of the pawn centre as an advantage in itself would suggest that White is better.

The famous game Kasparov-Najdorf, Bugojno 1982 seemed to confirm such an assumption:

14...♞c8 15.♞e2 ♟a5 16.♞f1 ♞d6 17.d5 exd5 18.e5 ♞e6 19.♟d4

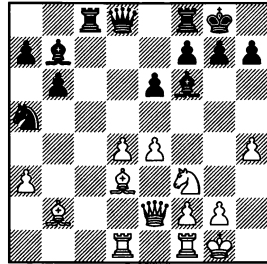


The game went on 19...♞xe5 20.♟f5 ♖f6? 21.♞g4 ♞c8 22.♟d2! and the agony was short. It is important to be acquainted with the breakthrough in the centre. It is typical for all the positions with a mobile pawn pair on d4-e4. Black has more chances to hold on with dark-squared bishop. Thus, the implacable computer suggests 20...♟d6! which trips up White's attack. Even better would be to redeploy in advance the bishop near his king. In the position of the previous diagram 14...♟f6!? would have anticipated any White sacrifices and ensure counterplay: 15.♟b1 ♞c8 16.♞d3 g6 with mutual chances.

Position 2 showed that White should look for more efficient at-

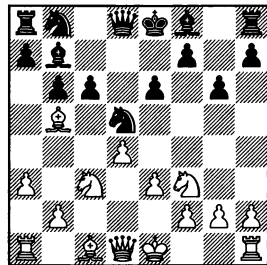
tacking setups. Thus he began to put the dark-squared bishop to b2. Most importantly, he learned that without the help of the h-pawn his attack is not too strong. This leads us to the following crucial position:

3. 12.♞e2 0-0 13.♟b2!? ♞c8 14.♞ad1 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖f6 16.e4! ♟a5 17.h4!?



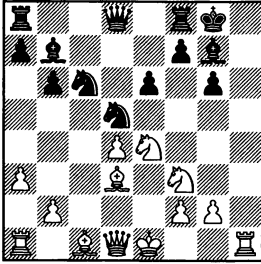
This sacrifice causes Black headache. The variations 17...♟xh4 18.d5 exd5 19.exd5 ♖f6 21.♞c5 21.d6 or 19...♞e8 20.♟e5 ♞g5 21.♟b5 ♞e7 22.f4 ♞h6 23.♞f3 are pleasant for White.

**B. 7...g6!? 8.♟b5+ c6**



This development is very topical lately. Critical for Black's setup is the immediate attack 9.h4?!. It might however backfire after:

4. 9.♔d3 ♕g7 0-0 11.h5 c5 12.♞e4 cxd4 13.exd4 ♘c6 14.hxg6 hxg6

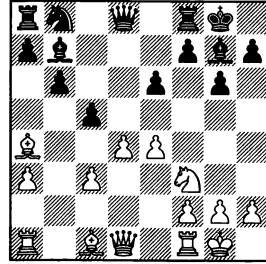


White realized his plan, only to discover that he is on the verge of losing the central pawn without compensation. In Meyer-Lautier, Hameln 1987 Black easily repelled the attack after 15.♞fg5 f5♣.

As long as the direct attack does not bring success, White should think about calm positional play. In that case Black enjoys a good version of the Gruenfeld and all the typical plans of that opening are as good as ever. We consider them in

detail in the “Move by Move chapter”. We shall examine here only:

5. 9.♔a4 ♕g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.e4 ♞xc3 12.bxc3 c5



White’s only reasonable plan here is linked with e4-e5, but Black’s pieces are too well placed for it to work:

13.♕g5 ♜d6! 14.e5 ♜c7 15.♞d2 (15.♜d2 ♕xf3 16.gxf3 ♘c6, Najer-Epishin, Elista 2001) 15...♘c6 16.♜g4 h6 17.♕e3 ♞e7! 18.♞ac1 ♞f5 19.♕c2 cxd4 20.cxd4 ♞xe3 21.fxe3 ♜c3! and Black has the edge as the white pieces and pawns are in the scope of his queen.

**Conclusion**

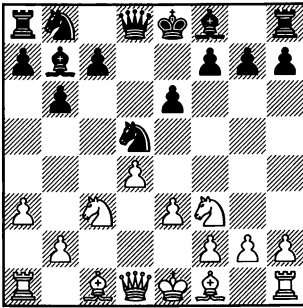
*In this chapter we consider “an ancient” setup, if we may use this term for a branch of the Petrosian system which is some 50 years old only!*

*Black achieves best results with Gruenfeld schemes – with a bishop on g7. In this case White’s chances for a kingside attack are minimal.*

*Play is usually not forced and it is easy to get lost in the maze of variations. The second player should better choose one typical setup to remember than trying to memorize sequences of moves.*

*For his part, White’s game is quite easy as he controls the centre and can keep on manoeuvring without committing himself with sharp variations.*

## PART 6



Main options are:

- A. 7...♙e7
- B. 7...g6

We shall also consider some deviations from the above-mentioned major plans.

a) 7...♗xc3 8.bxc3 g6 9.a4 ♙g7 10.♙a3 c5! 11.♙b5+ ♙c6 12.0-0 ♖c7 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♙xc5 ♙xb5 15.♙d6 ♙e2! 16.♙xc7 ♙xd1 17.♞fxd1 0-0 18.♞ab1 ♙xc3 19.♞dc1 ♙f6 20.h3 ♞c8, Portisch-Miles, Linares 1985. Here, 21.♗d2!? would have maintained White's slight advantage.

- b) 7...♗f6

This tricky retreat aims to take control over e4.

- 8.♞a4+

8.♙b5+!? c6 9.♙c4 also deserves consideration. Then the principled 9...c5 is risky because White is better developed: 10.0-0 cxd4 11.♗xd4 ♙c5 12.♞a4+ ♗bd7 13.♞d1 a6 14.♙xe6 fxe6 15.♗xe6 ♞e7 with hazy complications where White owns the initiative, Lobron-Aseev, Linares 1996.

- 8...♗bd7 9.♙a6!? ♙xa6

9...♞c8! 10.♙xb7 ♞xb7 is safer,

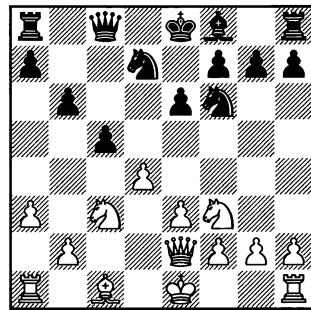
1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♙b7 5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.e3

### The Old Main Line

#### Move by Move

to control the critical light squares and especially c6.

10.♞xa6 c5 11.0-0 ♖c8 12.♞e2



12...cxd4?! (12...♞b7 was called for, e.g. 13.e4 cxd4 14.♗xd4 ♙c5.) 13.exd4 ♞b7 14.d5! ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 ♞xd5 16.♞d1 ♞b7 17.♙f4 ♙e7 18.♞ac1 ♞c8 19.♞xc8+ ♞xc8 20.♞c1, Beliavsky-Miles, Tilburg 1984. Despite his extra pawn, Black will have to struggle for equality.

- c) 7...♗d7

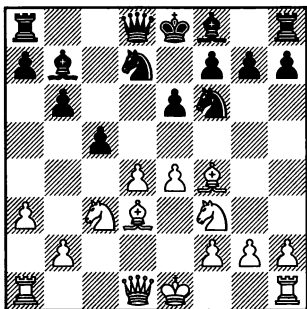
This move has a serious reason behind it. Black does not think about castling. He wants to counterattack in the centre first with c7-c5.

- 8.♙d3

Tigran Petrosian liked the plan of a minority attack on the queenside:

8. ♖xd5 exd5 9. ♗d3 ♗d6 10. ♖c2 h6 11. b4 a6 12. 0-0 0-0 13. ♖b1 ♖e7 14. a4! ♜f6 15. b5 axb5 16. axb5 ♜e4 17. ♗b2, intending to leap to e5, Petrosian-Lombard, Bath 1973.

8...c5 9.e4 ♜5f6 10. ♗f4!



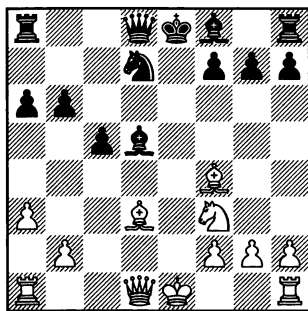
White anticipates the appearing of the black bishop on d6 where it would successfully blockade White's d5-pawn, as in the variation 10.d5 exd5 11.exd5 ♗d6 12.0-0 0-0 13. ♖e1 a6 14. ♗c2 h6 15. ♜h4 ♖c7 16. h3 ♖fe8 17. ♗e3 ♜e5 18. b3 ♖ad8 19. f4 ♜ed7 20. ♖f3 b5! with serious counterplay on the queenside in Vitiugov-Khismatullin, Russia 2006.

10...a6

10...♜h5 is bad: 11. ♗e3 cxd4 12. ♜xd4 ♜hf6 13.0-0 ♗c5 (13...a6 would face 14.b4! ♜e5 15. ♗e2 ♜xe4 16. ♜xe4 ♗xe4 17.f4 ♜d7 18. ♗f3!) 14.b4 ♗xd4 15. ♗xd4 e5 16. ♗e3 0-0 17.f3 ♖e7 18. ♖b3 ♖fd8 19. ♜e2! ♖e8 20. ♖fd1 h6 21. ♗d2!. White has an advantage, Agdestein-Olafsson, Gjo-vik 1985.

11.d5 exd5 12. exd5 ♜xd5 13. ♜xd5 ♗xd5

White has an overwhelming position. Perhaps strongest is:



14. ♖c2, intending to castle long.

14. ♗xh7 ♖e7+ (14...♗xf3 15. ♖xf3 ♖xh7 16.0-0-0 with a crushing attack) 15. ♜f1, Portisch-Miles, Tilburg 1984, is unclear. Here, instead of 15...♗c4+?! 16. ♜g1 0-0-0 17. ♖a4! ♜b8 18. ♖xc4 ♖xh7 19. h3±, Black ought to play 15...♜f6 16. ♗d3 ♖b7 17. ♖e2+ ♗e7∞. 14.0-0 ♗e7 15. ♖e1 ♜f6 16. ♖e2 is also insufficient due to 16...0-0! 17. ♖xe7 ♗xf3.

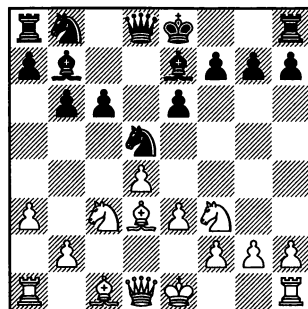
14...♜f6 15.0-0-0!

Black's defence is very difficult with all these open lines in the centre: 15...♗d6 16. ♖he1+ ♜f8 17. ♜e5.

### A. 7...♗e7

The main developing move. True, the bishop is more passive here than on g7, but it does save a tempo.

8. ♗b5+ c6 9. ♗d3



**9...♗xc3**

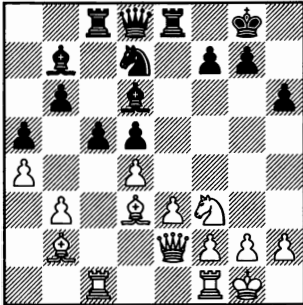
a) 9...♗d7 is very passive and gives White an edge after 10.e4 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 c5 12.♙f4.

b) 9...c5 is more testing, but it offers White additional options:

**10.♗xd5 ♞xd5**

The game Karpov-Najdorf, Mar del Plata 1982 saw 10...♙xd5 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.0-0 0-0 13.♞c2 h6 14.♙d2 ♗d7 15.♙c3 ♞b8 16.e4 ♙c6 17.♙ac1 ♞c7 18.♙fe1 ♙fc8, when 19.b3 followed up by 20.a4 would have underlined White's edge.

Recapturing by pawn is also met, but it brings about a position with a lasting initiative for White: 10...exd5 11.b3 0-0 12.♞c2 h6 13.♙b2 ♗d7 14.0-0 a5 15.a4 ♞c8 16.♞e2 ♙d6 17.♙ac1 ♙e8



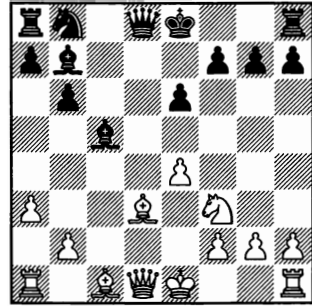
**18.♙a6!**

This typical exchange emphasizes the weakness of the d5-pawn.

18...♙xa6 19.♙xa6 cxd4 20.♙xd4. The isolator is rather poor in this situation, Olafsson-Keres, Tallinn 1975.

**11.dxc5 ♙xc5 12.e4 ♞d8**

In this critical position White can seize the initiative with:



**13.b4!**

The fine point of this move order is to discourage 13...♙e7 14.♙b5+ ♗c6 in view of 15.♞a4 ♞c8 (15...♞c8 16.♙f4) 16.♙f4±. In Petrosian-Andersson, Bugojno 1982 White played immediately 13.♙b5+ when most natural is 13...♗c6. Then 14.♞a4 ♞c8 15.b4 would not be so efficient, due to 15...♙d4! =.

13...♙e7 14.♙b5+ ♙c6 15.♞xd8+ ♗xd8 16.♙xc6 ♗xc6 17.♙f4 f6 18.♞c1. Despite some exchanges, Black is still experiencing problems.

**10.bxc3 c5 11.0-0 ♗c6**

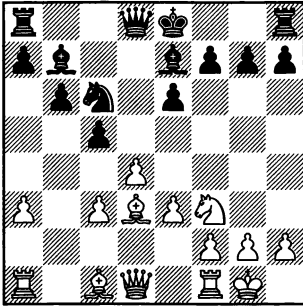
11...0-0 is less precise. White gets the chance to develop with tempo:

12.♞c2 g6 13.e4 ♗c6 14.♙h6 ♙e8 15.♙fd1 ♞c7

The endgame after 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♗xd4 17.♗xd4 ♞xd4 18.♙b5 ♞xe4 19.♞xe4 ♙xe4 20.♙xe8 ♙xe8 21.♙d7 is difficult for Black.

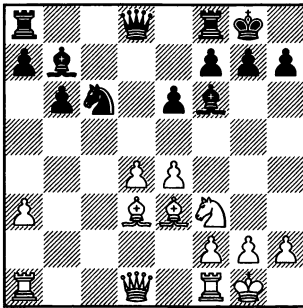
16.♞e2 ♙ed8 17.♞e3! e5 18.d5. White has bright prospects for a kingside attack, Kasparov-Petrosian, Moscow 1981.

After the text, White is at a juncture:



He can occupy the centre at once by 12.e4, or prepare this advance more thoroughly with 12.♖e2. Lately 12.♗b2!? became topical, but it simply transposes to line A2.

**A1. 12.e4 cxd4 13.cxd4 0-0 14.♗e3 ♗f6**



The bishop is redeployed near his king to ensure his safety.

14...♗c8 15.♖e2 ♖a5 16.♗f1 ♖d6 has lost appeal owing to the famous game Kasparov-Najdorf, Bugojno 1982. The future world champion crushed the defence of his experienced opponent by throwing on him all his pieces: 17.d5 exd5 18.e5 ♖e6 19.♖d4 ♖xe5 20.♖f5 ♗f6 21.♖g4 ♗ce8 22.♗d2! and the agony was short. It is important to be acquainted with the breakthrough in the

centre. It is typical for the Semi-Tarasch Defence where it earned Polugaevsky a brilliant victory against Tal in Moscow 1969 and has been imitated in thousands of games ever since. The big difference, however, is that in our concrete case Black still has a dark-squared bishop. Thus, the implacable computer suggests 20...♗d6! which trips up White's attack.

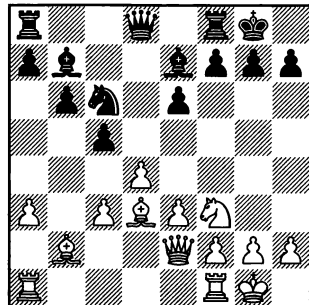
**15.♗b1 ♗c8**

In the game Plachetka-Grosz-peter, Keszthely 1981, White also failed to obtain even a trace of advantage after 15...g6 16.♖a2 ♖a5 17.♖e2 ♗c8 18.♗d3 ♖b3 19.♗d1 ♖xd4 20.♗xd4 ♗xd4 21.♗b5 e5=.

**16.♖d3 g6**

This complicated position arose in the game Furman-Panno, Madrid 1973. After 17. ♗f1 ♖d7 all the fight would be ahead. Instead, White decided to put the queen's rook to d1, keeping the other one for attack and played 17.♗a2. However the hanging state of the d3-queen enables 17...♖xd4 18.♖xd4 e5 with a fine game for Black.

**A2. 12.♖e2 0-0 13.♗b2**



4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♜xd5 7.e3

White's bishops are unequivocally pointed toward the enemy king. When the centre opens up, the bishop pair will hit the castling position. It is not so easy to choose the best setup of the rooks. Therefore 13.♟d1, while not being a mistake, is not precise. Play might continue with 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ♜c8 15.♖b2 ♖f6 16.♟d2 g6 17.♞e4 ♙g7 18.a4 ♟d5 19.♖a3 ♟fd8 20.♟ab1 ♞a5 21.f3 f5 with sharp play, Timman-Ribli, Tilburg 1981.

Black's task in the diagram position is not easy. As long as he cannot prevent e3-e4, he should focus on the d4-square or generate counterplay on the queenside.

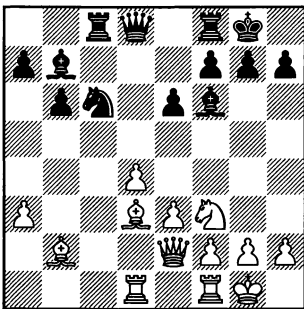
### 13...♜c8

This is a normal useful move, but 13...♖f6 is perfectly possible, too.

### 14.♟ad1 cxd4

The pawn sacrifice a la Gruenfeld 14...g6 15.dxc5 ♜e7 would face 16.c4±.

### 15.cxd4 ♜c8



### 16.♖b5

16.e4 is more consistent. Black will answer it with 16...g6.

### 16...♞a5 17.e4 ♟c7 18.a4 ♟fd8.

The game is balanced. Del Rio-

Mikhailchishin, Leon 2001 saw further 19.♖a3?! which allowed 19...♟c2, taking over the initiative.

### 14.♟ad1

White follows a flexible strategy, keeping his options open. For instance, he may switch to hanging pawns by c3-c4.

The immediate 14.e4 defines the situation in the centre a little prematurely. Black should be able to hold after 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♞a5 16.♟ad1 ♖f6 (16...♟e8 leaves White with some initiative following 17.♖b5 ♖c6 18.♖xc6 ♞xc6 19.d5±) 17.♟fe1 g6.

### 14...cxd4

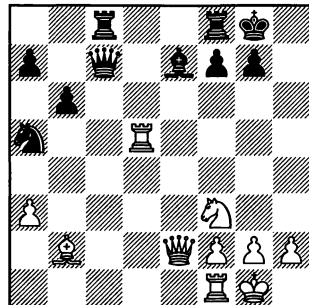
In contrast to the opponent, Black cannot allow himself to maintain the tension. Kasparov-Portisch, Nisic 1983 is a good example of the dangers that are in store to Black's king:

14...♟c7?! 15.c4! cxd4 16.exd4 ♞a5 17.d5! This destructive sacrifice unleashes the bishop pair.

### 17...exd5

Or 17...♞xc4 18.♟e4 g6 19.♖xc4 ♟xc4 20.♟e5 with an advantage.

18.cxd5 ♖xd5 19.♖xh7+ ♜xh7 20.♟xd5 ♜g8



21. ♖xg7!! ♗xg7 22. ♖e5 ♜f8

Other defences also lose: 22... ♗c2  
23. ♗g4+ ♗h7 24. ♜d3 ♜c6 25. ♗f5+!

23. ♗g4+ ♗f8 24. ♗f5! f6 25. ♖d7+  
♜xd7 26. ♜xd7 with decisive attack.

### 15.cxd4

15.exd4 is not as effective as in the previous example, because Black has two extra tempi to organize his defence:

15... ♖f6

Saeed-Sosonko, Amsterdam 1982 tested 15... ♖d6!?, when White committed a grave positional mistake by trading his knight: 16. ♖e5. Here 16... ♖xe5 17.dxe5 ♗g5 18.f4 ♖c5+ 19. ♗h1 ♗h4 would have underlined Black's advantage.

16.c4 ♖a5

16... ♖e7!?, keeping the knight closer to the king, is not bad either.

17. ♖e5 ♖xe5 18. ♗xe5.

White is struggling for the draw. Black can ensure this result with 18... ♖xc4 19. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 20.d5 ♗f6 or continue the fight with 18... 19. ♗h5 g6 20. ♗h6 ♖xc4 21. ♖xc4 ♗xc4 22.d5 f6 23. ♜d4 ♗b3 24.dxe6 ♗xe6 25. ♗fd1 ♗fe8 26.h3 ♗c6, Kozul-Najdich, Kusadasi 2006. Of course White has enough compensation for the pawn here.

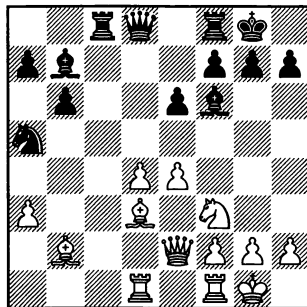
### 15... ♖f6

The setup with 15... ♖a5 16.e4 f6 17.d5 e5 is very passive. Browne-Dzhindzhishvili, Chicago 1982 went on 18. ♖h4 ♖c5 19. ♗h1 g6 20.f4! ♖d6 21. ♗g4 ♗h8 22. ♖f3 and the e5-square will be critical for Black.

### 16.e4! ♖a5

Grabbing the d4-pawn instead of winning material, is more like-

ly to lose some. A recent example is Arnold-Amanov, Chicago 2008: 16... ♖xd4 17. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 18. ♖b5 e5 19. ♖xe5 a6 20. ♖c4 ♗c7 21. ♖xf7+ ♗h8 22. ♖g6+ hxg6 23. ♖xg6±.



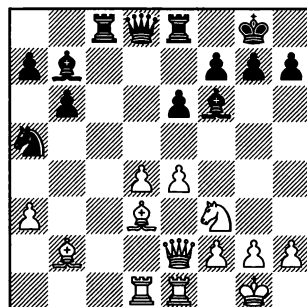
A2a. 17. ♗fe1; A2b. 17.h4!?

### A2a. 17. ♗fe1

A waiting game. White assumes that having more space for manoeuvres, he should get the most of it before forcing the game.

### 17... ♗e8

A useful move, aimed against the d5-break-through. 17... ♗c7 is worse in view of 18.h4! ♖xh4 19.d5 exd5 20. ♖xh4 ♗xh4 21.exd5 ♜d7 22. ♖f5! ♜xd5 23. ♜xd5 ♖xd5 24. ♗e5 ♗f6 25. ♗xf6 gxf6 26. ♜e3! and the attack is going on even without queens, Epishin-Aseev, USSR 1987.



4.a3 ♖b7 5.♘c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.e3

### 18.h3

Obviously, White should not seek exchanges himself. After 18.♖b5 ♖c6 19.♖a6 ♖b7 20.♖xb7 ♘xb7 Black enjoys a pleasant game: 21.♞d3 (or 21.♞a6 ♘a5!) 21...♘a5 22.♞ed1 ♞d7, Vyzhmanavin-Legky, Tashkent 1987.

### 18...♞c7

18...♖c6 can lead to the same position after 19.♖a6 19...♖b7 20.♖b5 ♖c6 21.♖xc6 ♞xc6 22.d5, but White gets the extra option of 19.d5 exd5 20.♖xf6 ♞xf6 21.e5 ♞e7 22.♘d4 with a roughly balanced game.

19.♖b5 ♖c6 20.♖xc6 ♞xc6 21.d5 exd5 22.♞xd5

Black can level the game with 22...♞xd5 23.exd5 ♞xe2 24.♞xe2 ♞c8 25.♖xf6 gxf6 26.♞e7 ♞d8=.

Instead, Dreev-A.Sokolov, Odesa 1989 saw 22...♞c8 which leaves some initiative to the opponent following 23.♖xf6 ♞xf6 24.♘d4.

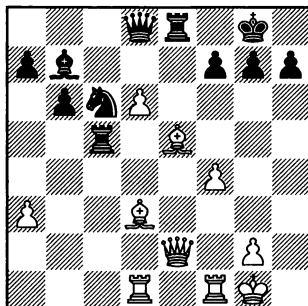
### A2b. 17.h4!?

This sacrifice is perhaps underestimated. Black should not let this pawn cross the line, so he is compelled to pick up the gauntlet:

17...♖xh4 18.d5 exd5 19.exd5 ♖f6

Black lost quickly in Campora-Barrero Garcia, Granada 2006 after 19...♞e8 20.♘e5 f6? 21.♞h5+-. Even the relatively best 20...♞g5, trying to prevent the opponent's queen from reaching h5, would be very appealing to White due to 21.♖b5 ♞e7 22.f4 ♞h6 23.♞f3. It is difficult to give Black a good advice here.

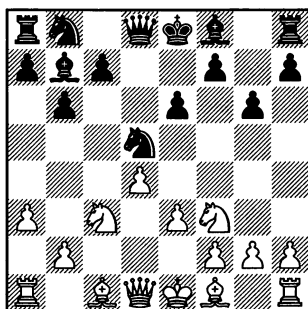
21.♘e5 ♞c5 21.d6 ♖xe5  
22.♖xe5 ♞e8 23.f4 ♘c6



This position arose in the game Jussupow-A.Sokolov, Rotterdam 1989. Now White has a tricky way to eliminate to a slightly better endgame:

24.d7! ♞e7 (24...♞e6 25.♖f5) 25.♞g4 ♘xe5 (25...g6 26.♖f6 ♞xd7 27.f5+-) 26.♖xh7+ ♘xh7 27.♞h4+ ♘g8 28.♞xe7 ♞xe7 29.d8♞+ ♞xd8 30.♞xd8+ ♘h7 31.fxe5.

### B. 7...g6



Black attempts to build up an ideal Gruenfeld position with both bishops fianchettoed on the main diagonals. The innocuous half-

moves a3 and e3 have made it possible. This development is very topical lately.

**8. ♖b5+**

a) 8. ♖xd5 is not justified here. Both recaptures give Black a decent game:

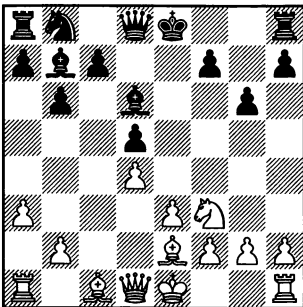
a1) 8... ♗xd5!? 9. ♗c2 ♖d7! (there is no reason to offer White the option of grabbing on c7 in a better setting after 9... ♗g7 10. ♗xc7 0-0 11. ♗c4 ♗e4 12. ♗e7, which is unclear.) 10. ♗c4

Here 10. ♗xc7 is rather dangerous for White: 10... ♗c8 11. ♗f4 ♗g7 12. ♗e2 0-0 13. 0-0 e5.

10... ♗c6 11. ♗e2 ♗g7 12. ♗d2 0-0 13. 0-0 ♗d6 14. ♗fd1 c5 15. ♗c3 ♗fd8 with roughly equal chances, Shirov-M. Gurevich, France 1993.

a2) 8... exd5 9. ♗e2 ♗d6

The bishop would be biting on granite from g7. In the game Kramnik-Lutz, BRD 1993, White obtained an advantage with a queenside play, while his opponent clearly did not know what to do: 9... ♗g7 10. b4 0-0 11. 0-0 c6 12. a4 a6 13. ♗b2 ♖d7 14. ♗b3 b5 15. a5 ♗e8 16. ♗ac1 ♗e6 17. ♗c2 ♗e7 18. ♖e1! ♗e8 19. ♖d3. The c5-square is chronically weak.

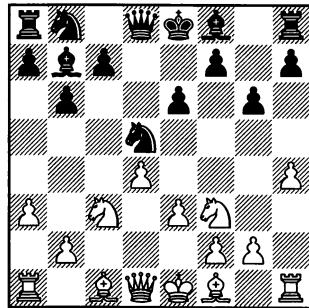


10. b4

Eljanov's idea 10. ♗d2 ♖d7 11. ♗b4 is too artificial to be good. White wants to provoke hanging pawns in order to split them later with b2-b4. However, tempi matter in the opening and Black should not have problems after 11... c5 12. dxc5 bxc5 13. ♗c3 0-0 14. b4 Eljanov-Bologan, Bosna 2005. In the arising isolator White has a firm blockade on d4 indeed, but the opponent controls well the other central squares.

10... 0-0 11. 0-0 ♖d7 12. ♗d2 a6 13. a4 c6 14. ♖e1 b5 15. a5 ♖f6 16. ♖d3 ♖e4=, Eljanov-Ramesh, Dubai 2004.

b) 8. h4 is a fresh idea, which also appears in another setting, after 8. ♗b5+ c6 9. ♗d3 ♗g7 10. h4. It may look primitive at first sight as it does not solve the problem of the centre. In fact, White's idea is rather sneaky and it poses some problems.



Black can anticipate h4-h5 by playing h7-h6, or ignore it and continue development. The latter option is more risky as it allows the opening of the h-file, but it might quickly lead to the destruction of

White's centre.

b1) 8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 h6 10.♖b5+ c6 11.♗d3 ♗g7 12.e4

White cannot make real progress without this advance: 12.0-0 0-0 13.♖b1 ♘d7 14.h5 g5 15.♗d3 ♗e8! 16.e4 e5! is excellent for Black.

12...c5 13.♗e3 ♘c6 14.0-0

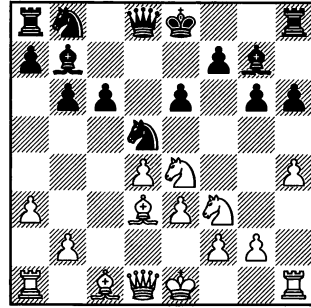
14.♗d2 looks like the only consistent way to develop the initiative. This move would be justified if Black castled: 14...0-0? because after 15.♗xh6 cxd4 16.♗xg7 ♗xg7 White is not compelled to take on d4, but he can proceed with 17.h5!. Despite simplification, Black is worse due to his exposed king: 17... ♗f6 18.cxd4 ♘xd4 19.♘xd4 ♗xd4 20.♗d1 ♗e5 (20...♗h8 21.h6+; 20... ♗g8 21.hxg6 fxg6 22.f3; 20...f5 21.hxg6 ♗h8 22.♗h7+ ♗xh7 23.gxh7) 21.hxg6 ♗h8 22.♗xh8 ♗xh8 23.gxf7 ♗xe4 24.f8♗+ ♗xf8 25.♗xe4 ♗xe4+ 26.♗f1±.

Nevertheless, the idea of castling is good enough, but it requires an exchange on d4 first: 14...cxd4! 15.cxd4 0-0 (or 15...♗c8!?), when 16.♗xh6 ♘xd4 17.♗xg7 ♘xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♗xg7 19.h5 ♗f6 20.♗e2 g5 21.h6+ ♗h8 22.♗ag1 ♗ad8! 23.♗xg5 ♗b2+ 24.♗f1 ♗a1+ 25.♗g2 ♗g8 26.♗g7+ ♗xg7+ is good for Black.

14...cxd4 15.cxd4 0-0 16.♖b1, Kharitonov-Beliavsky, Lvov 1984. Here 16...♗a6 would have been fine for Black.

b2) 8...h6 9.♗b5+ c6 10.♗d3 ♗g7 11.♘e4

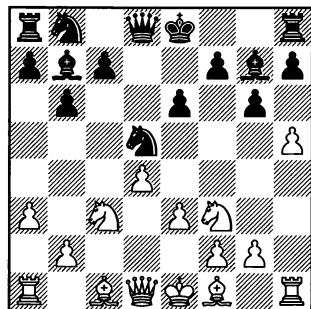
An original impeding manoeuvre. The move 11.e4 transposes to the previous line.



Here, in the game Dreev-Sax, Tilburg 1992, Black correctly sensed the danger in the variation 11...0-0 12.h5 g5?! 13.♘exg5! hxg5 14.h6 ♗f6 15.e4 ♘f4 16.♗xf4 gxf4 17.e5 ♗e7 18.♗c2 f5 19.exf6 ♗xf6 20.♘e5 ♗xe5 21.♗g4+ with unpleasant pressure and decided to defer castling. His choice, however, did not turn well. Perhaps best is 11...0-0 12.h5 f5! with mutual chances.

11...♘f6?! 12.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13.b4! ♘d7 14.♗b1 a5 15.e4 axb4 16.axb4 e5 17.0-0 ♗g7 18.h5 g5 19.♖b2 and Dreev went on to win.

b3) 8...♗g7 9.h5



9...♘d7

9...c5 is imprecise in view of the check on b5. However, 9...0-0!?

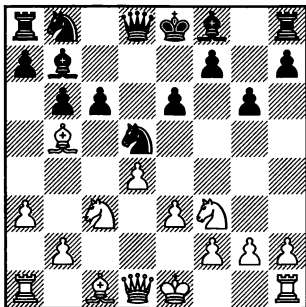
seems the most challenging answer. In that case White would have to show had he a clear plan for attack, or was he simply bluffing with h4-h5. Play can continue with 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♔d3 (11.♖e4 ♖xe3 12.♗xe3 ♗xe4 13.♜g5 ♔d5 is unclear, e.g. 14.♟g4 ♞e8 15.♞h4 ♜c6 16.♔d3 ♖e7 17.♞h7+ ♜f8 18.♖e4 ♗xe4 19.♗xe4 ♖d5 20.♗h6 ♗xh6 21.♞xh6+ ♜e7) 11...c5 12.e4 ♖xc3 13.bxc3 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♖c6 15.♗g5 ♟d7 and Black is ready to begin grabbing material.

10.♔d3 ♖xc3 11.bxc3 e5

This logical novelty of Aronian ensures Black sufficient counterplay.

12.♟c2 ♟e7 13.♗e4 ♗xe4 14.♟xe4 0-0 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.a4 c5 17.♗a3 Morozevich-Aronian, Mexico City 2007.

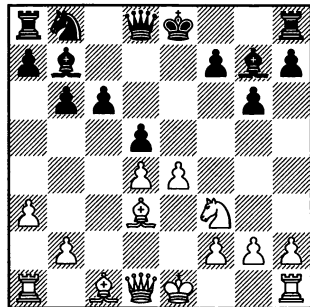
**8...c6**



White has various distinct plans, which basically aim to restrain counterplay with c6-c5:

- B1. 9.♖xd5
- B2. 9.♗a4
- B3. 9.♗c4
- B4. 9.♔d3

**B1. 9.♖xd5 exd5 10.♔d3 ♗g7 11.e4**



A typical hit in the centre while the b7-bishop is still passive.

White tested lately the other common plan in these structures 11.b4, but without great success:

11...0-0 12.♔d2 ♖d7 13.0-0 ♞e8 14.♟c2 ♞c8 15.♞ab1 ♟c7 16.♞fc1 ♟d6 17.a4 ♗a8 18.♗c3 ♞e7 19.h3 ♖f8 20.♖d2 ♖e6 21.♖b3 ♜g5 22.a5 f5!

Black has strong counterplay linked with f5-f4, Piket-Lauber, BRD 2000.

**11...dxe4**

Black can also ignore the opponent's advance: 11...0-0 12.e5 c5 13.0-0 ♖c6 14.♞e1 ♟d7

It is more risky to close the centre with 14...c4. In the game Kozul-Razuvaev, Cetinje 1991 White maintained an initiative after 15.♗c2 b5 16.♜g5 h6 17.♖h3 a5 18.♖f4 ♖e7 19.♟f3 ♞a6 20.h4!.

15.♗b5 ♞ac8 16.♗e3 a6 17.♗xc6

By this exchange White reduces the pressure on his centre.

17... ♞xc6 18.♟d2 ♞e8 19.h3 ♞cc8 20.♞ac1 cxd4 21.♗xd4.

White is slightly better as he

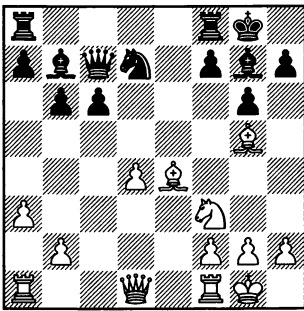
4.a3 ♖b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♜xd5 7.e3

has prospects for an attack on the kingside, Kozul-Lautier, Wijk aan Zee 1991.

**12.♟xe4 0-0**

In Kozul-M.Gurevich, Belgrade 1988 was 12...♟a6 13.♟g5 ♖d6 14.♖d2 0-0 15.0-0-0 with double-edged play. Black neglected development in favour of 15...♟c4 16.♟f4 ♖d8, when 17.h4! ♟d5 18.♟c2! would have organized a terrible attack.

**13.0-0 ♞d7 14.♟g5 ♖c7**



**15.♞c1**

The adept of this variation, Croatia GM Zdenko Kozul, preferred 15.♖d2, but Black was fine following 15...♞fe8 16.♞fel ♞f6 17.♟xf6 ♟xf6 18.♞ac1 ♞ad8 19.b4 ♖d7 20.♖c2 ♞e6, Kozul-Dautov, Ervan 1996. The text does not disturb Black either:

**15...♞fe8 16.♞e1 c5 17.♖c2 ♟xe4 18.♞xe4 ♖b7 19.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 20.dxc5 ♞xc5.**

The game is level, Kramnik-Anand, Linares 1993.

**B2. 9.♟a4**

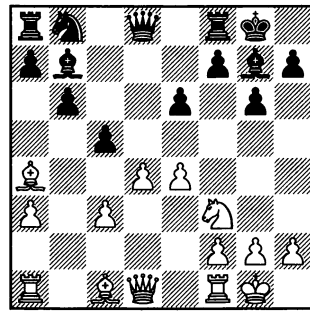
This move has been invented by

the great attacker Victor Kupreichik and taken up later by many top players, including Kasparov himself. The reason behind it is to restrain c6-c5. If Black achieves it later, then ♟c1-g5 will be awkward as the queen is denied of the natural square d7.

**9...♟g7 10.0-0**

The immediate 10.e4 ♞xc3 11.bxc3 faces 11...♟a6! 12.h4 ♖c7 13.e5 ♞d7 14.♟f4 h6 15.♖c1 0-0-0 16.♖e3 c5 17.♞d2 ♖b8 18.♟d1 g5! 19.♟g3 gxh4 20.♞xh4 ♞f8 21.a4 ♞g6 22.a5!? with a tangled game that finished in a draw, Kasparov-Timman, Amsterdam 1991.

**10...0-0 11.e4 ♞xc3 12.bxc3 c5**



B2a. 13.♟g5; B2b. 13.♞e1

**B2a. 13.♟g5**

An active move in the spirit of the 9.♟a4-variation.

**13...♖d6**

Karpov calmly held on after 13...f6 14.♟e3 ♟xe4 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.♟xc5 ♖xd1 17.♞fxd1 ♞c8 18.♟e3 ♟d5 19.♞d4?! f5!, Piket-Karpov, Monaco 2000, but 19.c4! would be critical. Then 19...♟c6 is the only move,

whereas the variation 20.♙b3 ♕xf3 21.gxf3 ♖a6 22.♗d6 ♜c5 23.♙xc5 ♗xc5 24.♗xe6 ♖b8 25.♖b1 leaves White on top.

**14.e5 ♖c7**

Practice has seen White unable to build up an attack here:

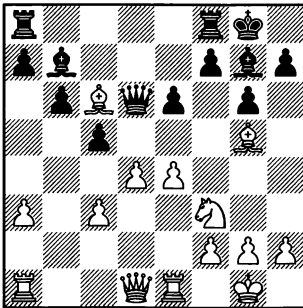
Najer-Epishin, Elista 2001 saw 15.♖d2 ♕xf3 16.gxf3 ♜c6 and Black cannot have any problems;

Kupreichik-Makarichev, USSR 1984: 15.♜d2 ♜c6 16.♖g4 h6 17.♙e3 ♜e7! 18.♗ac1 ♜f5 19.♙c2 cxd4 20.cxd4 ♜xe3 21.fxe3 ♖c3! and Black has the edge as the white pieces and pawns are in the scope of his queen.

**B2b. 13.♗e1**

White is waiting for ...♜c6.

**13...♜c6 14.♙g5 ♖d6 15.♙xc6!?**



An idea of Pelletier. Apparently his encounter with Huzman, Biel 2000, discouraged him to play 15.e5 as he had nothing after 15...♖c7 16.h4 h6 17.♙e3 ♜e7 18.h5 ♜f5 19.♙b3 g5.

**15...♙xc6 16.♖d2 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♖c8**

17...♗ac8 seems more testing, to

keep the option of ...f5 open. 17...f5 is premature in view of 18.♙h6.

**18.♙h6 ♕f8 19.h4**

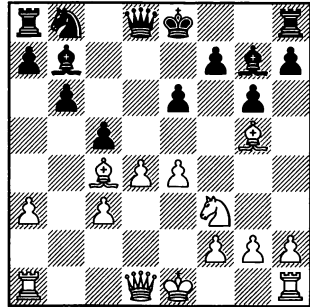
Now 19...f5 is essential to get counterplay.

19...♙e8 20.e5 ♖d5 21.♖f4 gave White play on the dark squares due to the manoeuvre ♙h6-g5-f6, Pelletier-van der Wiel, Germany 2001.

**B3. 9.♙c4 ♕g7 10.e4**

It is possible to defer this advance: 10.0-0 0-0 11.e4 ♜xc3 12.bxc3 c5 13.♙g5 ♖d6! 14.e5 ♖d7 15.♗e1 ♖a6 16.♖e2 ♕xf3! 17.♖xf3 b5 18.♙d3 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♖ab8 with a tangled position in Babula-Navara, Fuegen 2006.

**10...♜xc3 11.bxc3 c5 12.♙g5**



**12...♖d6!**

The queen is allegedly a bad blocker, but that is better than none. More importantly, the queen is eyeing the a3-pawn.

12...♖c7 13.♖d3 ♜c6 14.♗d1 0-0 15.0-0 ♗ac8 16.♙a2 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♖a5 18.♖fe1 occurred in Pavlovic-Sax, Lugano 1987.

Black's previous play would have been justified if 18...♖c2 were possi-

4.a3 ♟b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♟xd5 7.e3

ble. However, 19.♟xc2 ♟xc2 20.♟b1 followed by d4-d5 would thrust the d-pawn in full sail toward d7. Black tried to redeploy his forces with:

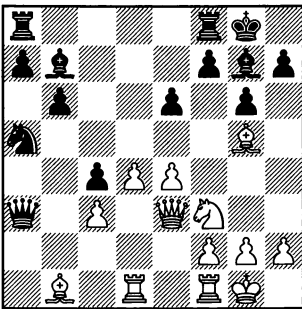
18...♟d6 when 19.♟d2! intending d5 or ♟b4 would have underlined White's edge. Instead, he followed his general plan:

19.♟e3 ♟c4 20.♟xc4 ♟xc4 21.♟h6 ♟d8 22.h4! with initiative.

13.♟d3 ♟c6 14.♟d1 0-0 15.0-0 ♟a5 16.♟a2 c4

It is risky to grab a pawn at the price of giving the opponent a perfect pawn centre, but it is unclear what other plan to recommend.

17.♟e3 ♟xa3 18.♟b1



18...f6

Black will hardly survive without this move now, or on the next turn.

Browne-Olafsson, New York 1984 went on with 18...♟fe8 19.h4 f6 20.♟h6 ♟xh6 21.♟xh6 ♟f8 22.♟e3 ♟ad8 23.h5 ♟c6 24.hxg6 hxg6 25.e5 with initiative.

19.♟f4

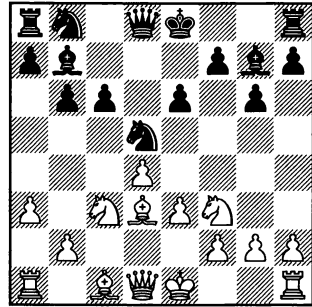
19.♟h6 loses the c3 pawn: 19...♟xh6 20.♟xh6 ♟xc3 21.h4 ♟f7!

19...♟ae8 20.h4 ♟c6 21.h5 g5 22.♟g3 h6.

White is unable to make any

progress, Pavlovic-Olafsson, Yerevan 1988.

#### B4. 9.♟d3 ♟g7



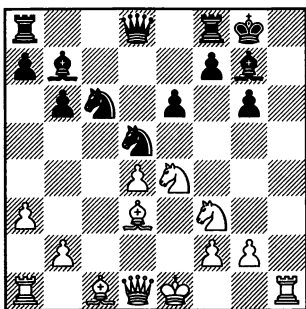
Now White has four distinct plans which we shall examine in detail. He often delays his choice for the next turn by playing 10.0-0 0-0, but then play transposes to the other lines.

B4a. 10.h4; B4b. 10.♟e2; B4c. 10.e4; B4d. 10.♟a4

#### B4a. 10.h4

In most cases play should transpose to positions which we discussed earlier in this chapter – see 8.h4. Probably Black's best approach is to ignore the opponent's threats and castle, then attack the centre with ...c5 and ♟c6. Thus he will eliminate ideas as 10...c5 11.h5 ♟c6 12.h6 ♟f6 13.♟e4 cxd4 14.♟xf6+∞ (the bishop will have the h8-square to retreat). 10...h6 is a solid reply, which transposes to the game Dreev-Sax, Tilburg 1992 after 11.♟e4.

10...0-0 11.h5 c5 12.♟e4 cxd4 13.exd4 ♟c6 14.hxg6 hxg6



White realized his plan, only to discover that he is on the verge of losing the central pawn without compensation. In Meyer-Lautier, Hameln 1987 Black easily repelled the attack after 15.♘fg5 f5♣.

#### B4b. 10.♗e2

A clumsy move which allows typical Gruenfeld counterplay:

**10...c5 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♖c2 ♘d7 13.e4 ♘5b6 14.♘c3 c4 15.♗e2 ♘c5 16.0-0 ♖c7! 17.♗g5**

Following 17.♗xc4 0-0! all the white pieces are hanging. The bishop cannot retreat – 18.♗e2 in view of 18...♘xe4.

**17...0-0 18.♘d2 ♜fc8 19.f4 a5 20.e5 ♗a6 21.♘de4 ♘xe4 22.♘xe4 ♘d5.**

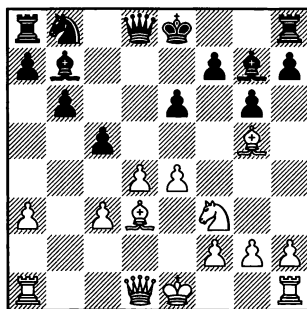
Black is on top, Lobron-Karpov, Dortmund 1995.

#### B4c. 10.e4

This move has earned a bad reputation due to the famous game Kasparov-Kortschnoj, London 1983, which went on:

**10...♘xc3 11.bxc3 c5 12.♗g5**

Kasparov assesses the position after 12.♗b5 ♗c6 13.♗xc6 ♘xc6 14.♗e3 as equal.



#### 12...♗d6

More aggressive than 12...♖c7.

**13.e5 ♗d7**

13...♖c7 is also satisfactory.

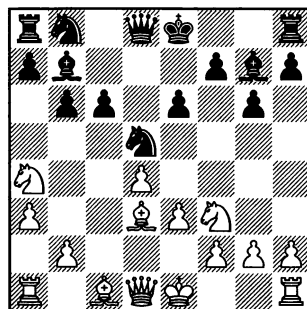
**14.dxc5?**

In the Gruenfeld such a capture is almost always bad. Kasparov undoubtedly knew it, but obviously he did not like his game in case of 14.0-0 0-0 15.♗d2 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♘c6 17.♖f4 ♘e7.

**14...0-0 15.cxb6 axb6 16.0-0 ♖c7! 17.♗b5 ♗xe5!**

Black is clearly on top.

#### B4d. 10.♘a4



White's reasoning is simple – exchanges should favour Black, since he has less space. At the same time the knight move impedes ...c5,

which is Black's most important resource in the Gruenfeld.

**10...♞c7**

Aimed against e4, when Black will have the f4-square for his knight.

10...♗d7 is even more popular.

11.e4 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗e3 ♗h7 15.♞b3 ♞c7

White appears to be clearly better, but Black has efficient counterplay, linked with f7-f5. In the game Kozul-Grischuk, Istanbul 2003 was 16.♞ad1 ♞ae8 17.♗c3 f5!? with a sharp game.

It is much worse to put the knight at the edge: 10...♗a6?! 11.e4 ♗dc7 12.♗e3 ♗b5 13.♗xb5 cxb5 14.♗c3 0-0 15.h4! h5 16.♞b3 ♗c7 17.0-0 a6 18.♞ad1 ♞d6 19.♞fe1 ♞fe8 20.♗g5 with a serious advantage in Kozul-Epischin, Nova Gorica.

**11.0-0 ♗d7 12.e4**

The plan with 12.b4 is nearly unexplored, but it should be tested.

**12...♗f4 13.♗c2 0-0 14.♗e3**

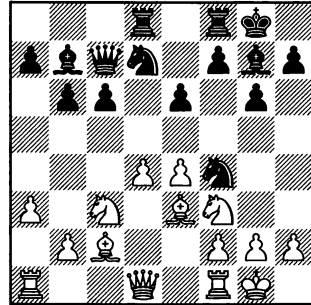
The tactic 14.♗e5 ♗xe5 15.♗xf4 does not work in view of 15...♞ad8!

**14...♞ad8**

Black could have displayed activity by 14...c5, but he was reluctant to retreat to the edge of the board after 15.♞d2 ♗h5.

**15.♗c3**

Or 15.♞d2 e5 16.♗xf4 exf4 and Black is fine.



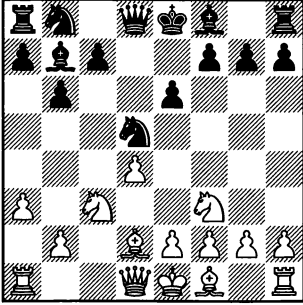
**15...c5**

Another interesting possibility was 15...e5!? 16.♞c1 ♗e6 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♗xe5 19.f4 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 f5.

**16.♞c1 ♗h5 17.♞d1 cxd4**

The game is balanced, Gelfand-Kramnik, Monaco 2004.

## PART 7



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♠f3 b6 4.a3  
 ♙b7 5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.♙d2

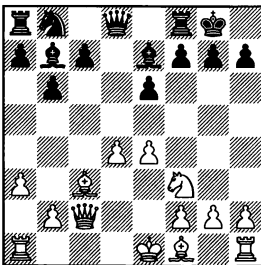
### The Dementiev System

#### Main Ideas

White's main strategic idea in the Petrosian system is to build an ideal pawn centre d4-e4. In this part however, we shall meet a different approach. White is planning to take on c3 by piece and reach a symmetrical pawn structure with some spatial advantage. He may castle short, or opt for a long castling and a direct attack on the kingside. The latter plan is very committing and risky, but might surprise the opponent.

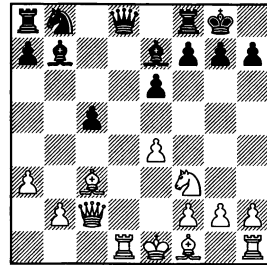
- A. 7...♙e7
- B. 7...♗d7

A. 7...♙e7 8.♞c2 0-0 9.e4  
 ♗xc3 10.♙xc3



Black has castled so checks from b5 are no longer an issue. His safest treatment of this position is to attack immediately the centre before White had put a rook on d1:

1. 10...c5 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♙d1



White will be enjoying some tiny edge for many moves ahead due to his better pawn structure. Black's only possible counterplay is connected with the d4-square, so most consistent seems 12...♞b6.

Black will be suffering after 12...♞c7 13.♙d3 ♗c6 (or 13...♗d7 14.0-0 ♙fd8 15.♙fe1 h6 16.♙b5! ♗f6 17.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 18.♞a4! ♞b8 19.♙c6!, Mikhalchishin-Kabatianski, Simferopol 1983) 14.0-0 ♙fd8 15.e5!? h6 16.♙e4 ♙xd1 17.♙xd1 ♙d8

18.♗xd8+ ♜xd8 19.h3.

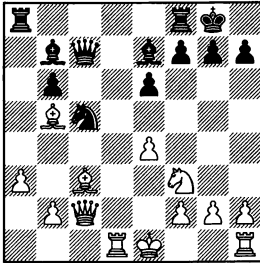
13.♘e5

Alternatives like 13.♗d3 ♘c6 14.♞a4 or 13.♗e2 ♘c6 14.0-0 ♗ad8 15.♞a4 are also slightly better for White.

13...♞c7 14.♗d3 ♗f6 15.♘c4 ♗xc3+ 16.♞xc3 ♘c6 17.e5 ♘d4 18.0-0 ♗a6 19.♗fel

Black's knight is not very stable on d4 in view of the possibility for b2-b4.

2. 10...♘d7! 11.♗d1 c5! (11...♞c8 leads to a cramped position: 12.♗c4 ♘f6 13.♗d3) 12.dxc5 ♞c7! 13.cxb6 axb6 14.♗b5 ♘c5



Black regains the sacrificed pawn with roughly even chances:

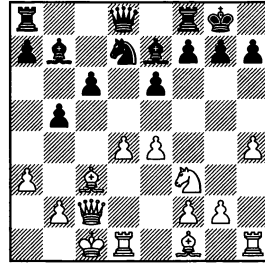
15.♗e5 ♞c8 16.0-0 ♗xe4 17.♞e2 ♗d5 18.b4 ♘e4 19.♗c1 ♞d8 20.♗b2=.

White's attempt to perplex the opponent by castling queenside is strategically ungrounded:

3. 10...♘d7! 11.0-0-0 c6!? (11...c5!? is also good)

Black changes his plans for attack. Now he aims for a pawn storm with b- and a-pawns, restricting White's play in the centre at the same time.

12.h4 b5



Black's play is natural and efficient. He wants to push a7-a5 and b5-b4: 13.♗h3 a5 14.d5 cxd5 15.♗xb5 ♘f6 16.♘g5! ♞b6, with counterplay, Kamsky-Anand, India 1994. White's only way to impede this plan is the break in the centre d4-d5:

13.♗d3!?, but the answer 13...h6 revives Black's threats.

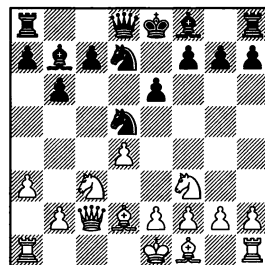
14.♗h3 a5 15.♗g3 ♘f6!

The knight ensures sufficient defence, for instance, 16.♗d2 ♘h5 17.♗g4 ♘f6 18.♗g3 ♘h5=.

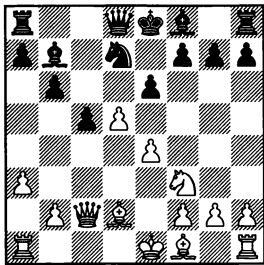
**B. 7...♘d7**

By this move Black prepares an early c7-c5. Now 8.cxd5 exd5 should not be a problem for Black as White has played 2 pretty useless moves – a3 and ♗d2. So he should follow the main plan with:

**8.♞c2**



4. 8...c5 9.♘xd5 ♙xd5 10.e4 ♚b7 11.d5!?



A brainchild of one of the leading exponents of the Petrosian system, Alexey Dreev. White castles queenside and tries to gain benefits from his spatial advantage.

11...exd5 12.exd5 ♙d6 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.♙b5!

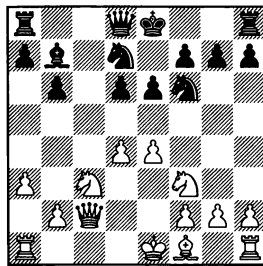
This critical position needs more tests. It is analyzed in the “Move by Move” chapter in line B1b.

5. 8...♗5f6!/? 9.♙f4 ♙d6 10.♙xd6 cxd6 11.e4

### Conclusion:

*The system with 7.♙d2 is logical and rich in ideas. It enables some sharp variations with long castling. In that case the rook supports the d-pawn for a breakthrough in the centre. Another possible approach is a fight in the centre in a symmetrical pawn structure.*

*Black has various good defences. It is very interesting to retreat the knight from d5 to f6. Still the most positionally correct plan is to fulfil ...c5 at an opportune moment. It brings about doubled-edged positions with a passed pawn on d5. The assessment depends on the total activity of White’s pieces and their ability to disturb Black’s king. As a whole, Black is currently in a good theoretical shape in the 7.♙d2 system.*

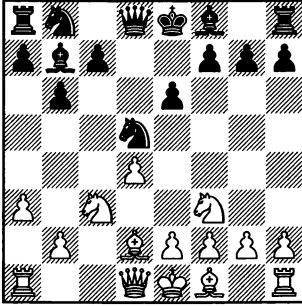


White is only slightly better, since Black has no weaknesses: 11... ♖c8 12.♙d3 0-0 13.0-0 e5 14.♗ad1.

### Move order tricks

White could try to sidestep Position 5 by capturing immediately on d5: 8.♗xd5. Then 8...♙xd5 9.♖c2 c5 10.e4 would transpose to Position 4. However, Black can recapture by pawn on d5 and White would hardly manage to obtain an advantage with those useless moves a3 and ♙d2. This possibility is examined in line B1a.

## PART 7



1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3  
 ♙b7 5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.♙d2

### The Dementiev System

#### Move by Move

This system has been conceived by the great Yerevani coach Oleg Dementiev, famous with many opening insights. It's idea is simple – after the exchange on c3, White will have a bishop on this square instead of a pawn. From c3 the bishop will have an impact on the centre as well as on the kingside, namely the g7-square. The modest-looking bishop move branched out into a whole system with numerous variations.

A. 7...♙e7

B. 7...♗d7

7...c5 can be faced by 8.e4! – see line B of part 12.

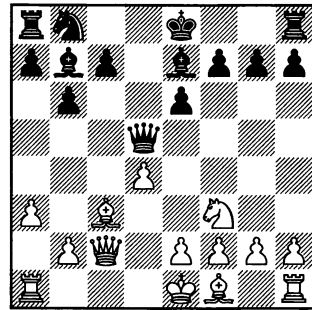
A. 7...♙e7

Black completes development, but concedes the centre. White's only problem is that he is lagging behind in development and his king remains in the centre.

8.♙c2 0-0

In the mid-1990ies Black often tried a blockade on the light squares:

8...♗xc3 9.♙xc3 ♙d5

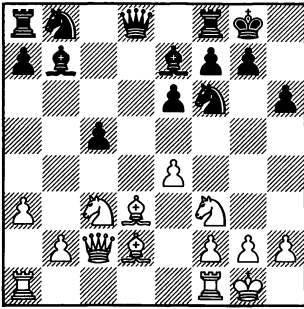


However, it turned out that 10.g3 ♙f5 11.♙xf5 exf5 12.d5! gives White a serious spatial and structural advantage: 12...0-0 13.♗d4 g6 14.♙g2 ♗d7 15.0-0 ♙fe8 16.♙ac1 a6 17.♙fd1, Dreev-Epishin, Tilburg 1994.

10.e3 ♗d7 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.♙a4 ♗b8 13.♙c4 ♙c6 14.♙a6 ♙h5 15.♙he1 ♙c8 16.e4 also proved good in Galliamova-A.Maric, Tilburg 1994, where even the best answer 16...♙hd8 17.♙f1 would have left White with an easier game and a strong centre.

Another rare option is 8...♗f6. Black hopes to attack the opponent's centre by c7-c5, instead of bolstering it. Of course we all know

about the rule to exchange pieces in cramped positions, so such a retreat should not be an example to follow. 9.e4 0-0 10.♔d3 h6 11.0-0 c5 (Perhaps Black should choose a more restrained tactic with 11...♗bd7, followed up by 12...♖c8.) 12.dxc5 bxc5!? (Black suffers after 12...♗xc5 13.b4 ♕e7 14.♖fd1)



13.♖ad1!

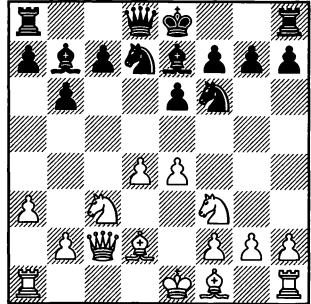
In Dreev-Mikhalchishin, Lvov 1987, White put on d1 the wrong rook: 13.♖fd1 when, instead of 13... ♗bd7? 14.♕f4 ♖b6 15.♗d2!, Black could have levelled the game with 13...♗c6! After the text, 13...♗c6 is not so good, because of 14.e5 ♗d5 15.♗d5 (or 15.♖a4 ♗d4 16.♗d4 ♗b6 17.♖c2 ♖d4 18.♖fe1 ♖g4 19.♕h7 ♗h8 20.♕e4±) 15...exd5 16.♖fe1 and the threat of e5-e6 defines White's advantage.

Finally, we shall examine 8... ♗d7. It aims to quickly organize counterplay with c7-c5 and ♖a8-c8, while castling might be deferred. White can continue with:

a) the modest, but not without venom: 9.e3 0-0 10.♔d3 h6 11.♗xd5 exd5 12.0-0, Mikhalchishin-Ostojic,

Becici 1994. Black should choose here the principled advance 12...c5 13.dxc5 ♗xc5 (13...bxc5 14.b3 ♖b6 15.a4! fixes White's advantage) 14.♗c3 ♗xd3 15.♖xd3 with an isolator that is slightly more pleasant for White.

b) the aggressive 9.e4 ♗f6



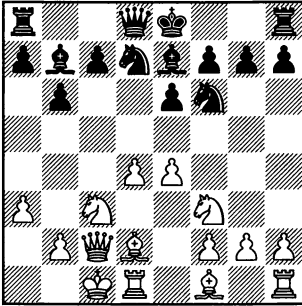
In this very interesting and tense position White has tested various ideas, but it is clear that he should not waste time:

b1) 10.♗c4 c5 11.d5 exd5 12.exd5 a6 13.0-0 0-0 (13...b5? fails to 14.d6! ♗xd6 15.♖fe1+ ♕e7 16.♗xf7+ ♗xf7 17.♗g5+ with a crushing attack) 14.♖ad1 ♖c7 15.♕g5 ♖fe8 16.a4 ♗d6 with full equality, Ftacnik-Stempin, Prague 1985. The d5-pawn is blocked and requires White's constant attention;

b2) 10.♖d1 c5 (10...0-0 would face the awkward 11.♕g5) 11.d5 (or 11.dxc5 ♖c8! exploiting the pin on the c-file) 11...exd5 12.exd5 ♗d6! 13.♕e2 0-0 14.0-0 a6 15.a4 ♖c7 16.♕g5 ♖ae8 17.♗h1 h6 18.♕h4, Vyzhmanavin-Mitenkov, Elista 1995. As usual in this structure, Black is fine. The game saw further 18...♗g4 (18... ♗h5=) 19.♕g3 ♗df6=.

4.a3 ♖b7 5. ♜c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♜xd5 7.♗d2

b3) 10.0-0-0!?



The most aggressive and persistent continuation. White evacuates his king from the centre, activating the rook at the same time. From d1 it will support the advancing of the d-pawn.

10...0-0

It is risky to defer castling by 10...c6, although if Black succeeds in pushing b5 and a5, he might take over the initiative. (10...c5?! is dubious: 11.d5 exd5 12.exd5 0-0 13.♗f4 ♖e8? Bayram-Asilkefeli, Kusadasi 2004, 14.d6! ♗f8 15.♜g5+-) 11.♞b1 ♜c8 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗h4 g5 14.♗g3 ♜h5 15.d5! highlighted the vulnerable position of Black's king in the centre. The game Gofstein-Kabatiansky, USSR 1985, went 15...cxd5 16.exd5 ♗xd5 17.♜e5! ♜d6 18.♞a4 ♜f8 19.♜xd5 exd5 20.♞e1 (or 20.♗d3) with excellent compensation for the pawn.

After 10...0-0 White should play the prophylactic move 11.♞b1!?, for it is still unclear where the f1-bishop would be most useful. In the only practical example we have, Khenkin-Vyzhmanavin, Barnaul 1988,

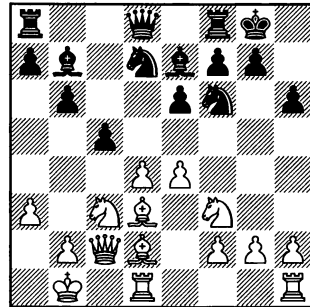
White rushed to put it on d3:

11.♗d3 h6

Here Black missed his chance to complicate things with 11...c5! 12.d5 c4! 13.♗xc4 ♜c8 14.dxe6 ♜xc4 15.exd7 ♜xe4.

12.♞b1 c5

White's attack would be running faster after 12...a6 13.♞hg1 intending 14.g4.



13.d5 exd5

The fine point is that now 13...c4 14.♗xc4 ♜c8 15.dxe6 ♜xc4 16.exd7 ♜xe4 faces 17.♞d3! with an edge.

14.exd5 ♗d6

Of course the d5-pawn must be blocked. 14...♜xd5 15.♜xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗xh6! ♗xf3 17.gxf3 gxh6 18.♗f5 is obviously in White's favour.

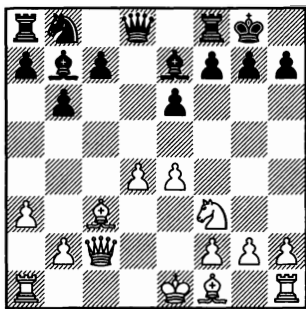
15.g4! ♜e5

Opening files is more than risky: 15...♜xg4 16.♞hg1 or 15...♜xd5 16.♗e4! ♜xc3+ 17.♗xc3 ♗xe4 18.♞xe4 ♜f6 19.♞f5 with an overwhelming attack.

16.♜xe5 ♗xe5 17.g5! hxg5 18.♗xg5.

White's threats are difficult to deflect.

9.e4 ♜xc3 10.♗xc3



- A1. 10...c5  
A2. 10...d7

### A1. 10...c5 11.dxc5 bxc5

11...e5 12.b4 brings about a symmetrical structure where all the white pieces are better placed. Besides, Black's queen will be harassed by the enemy rooks on the open central files.

### 12.d1

The text is more in the spirit of the variation than the developing 12.d3. In the game Khalifman-Ivanchuk, Tilburg 1994 Black built a fortress after 12...c6 13.e5 d4!? 14.dxd4 cxd4 15.d1 g6 16.e4 xe4 17.xe4 dxc3!? 18.xd8 fxd8 19.bxc3 ac8 20.c4 xa3 21.e2 e5. However, only a few would go for such an endgame right from the beginning.

A1a. 12...c7; A1b. 12...c8; A1c. 12...b6

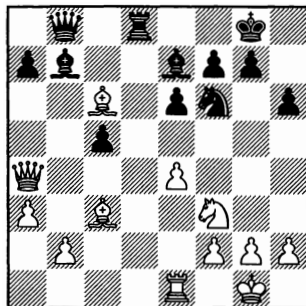
### A1a. 12...c7 13.d3 d7

Black will be suffering for a long time after 13...c6 14.0-0 ffd8 15.e5!? h6 16.e4 xd1 17.xd1 dd8 18.xd8+ xd8 19.h3.

14.0-0 ffd8 15.fef1 h6  
16.eb5! d7f6

16...a6 faces 17.f1 d6 18.ea5 with an unpleasant pin.

17.xd8+ xd8 18.a4! b8  
19.e6!



The exchange of the light-squared bishops leaves White with the better pawn structure and a lasting advantage, I. Sokolov-Grischuk, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

A1b. 12...c8 13.eb5 e6  
14.a4 b7 15.xc6 dxc6 16.0-0  
ffd8 17.h3 a6 18.xd8+ xd8  
19.d1

The exchange of rooks does not promise Black full equality, Mikhailchishin-Kabatianski, Simferopol 1983.

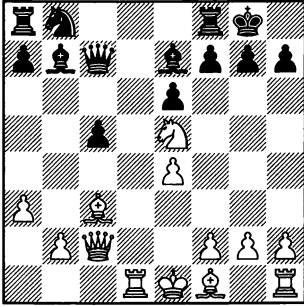
### A1c. 12...b6

From here the queen controls d4 and supports the manoeuvre...d6-b8-c6-d4. Of course that does not seriously change the assessment of the position and White should remain slightly better after 13.d3 d6 14.a4 or 13.e2 d6 14.0-0 dd8 15.a4. In practice he prefers:

### 13.d5 c7

13...dd8 14.xd8+ xd8 is not too appealing. After 15.eb5 c7

16.0-0 ♜c6 17.♜xc6 ♗xc6 18.♗xc6 ♜xc6 19.♞d1 White can torture the enemy for a long time, Bellon-Garcia Padron, Ponferrada 1992.



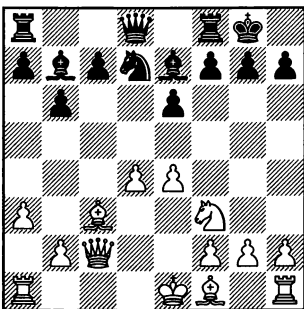
**14.♗d3**

14.♜c4 is premature as the knight should control c6. After 14... ♜c6 15.♗d3 ♜d4 16.♞b1 Black has various good continuations: 16...a5 prepares to petrify the queenside by a5-a4; 16...♞f4!? 17.♜a5 f5! switches the focus to the other wing.

**14...♗f6 15.♜c4 ♗xc3+ 16.♞xc3 ♜c6 17.e5 ♜d4 18.0-0 ♗a6 19.♞e1**

Black's knight is not very stable on d4 in view of the possibility for b4.

**A2. 10...♜d7**



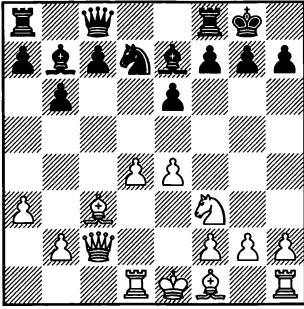
A2a. 11.♞d1; A2b. 11.0-0-0

**A2a. 11.♞d1 c5!**

Black's future is connected with the breakthrough c7-c5, but it could be achieved in different ways. Practice has shown that any delay leads to a cramped position:

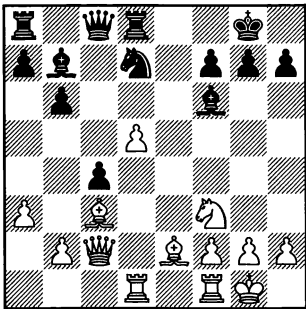
a) 11...♞c8 is a rare, but solid alternative. Carlsen has been its leading exponent lately: 12.♗c4 ♜f6 13.♗d3 (The active advance is not effective: 13.d5 exd5 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.♞xd5 ♞e7 17.0-0 c6 18.♞d2 ♞fe8 and Black easily equalizes, P.Nielsen-Sasikiran, Warsaw 2005.) 13...c5 (A good timing. After 13...h6 14.0-0 c5 15.dxc5 ♞xc5 16.♜d4 ♞a8 17.f3 ♞d8 18.b4, White enjoys an advantage in the centre, his pawns restrain Black's bishops, Gavrilov-Dvalishvili, Moscow 2006.) 14.dxc5 ♞xc5 15.0-0 (15.e5?! ♜d5 16.♗xh7+ ♜h8 17.♗e4 ♞c7 gives Black perfect compensation for the pawn.) 15...♞a8 16.♞fe1 ♞d8 (This might be more precise than 16...♞fc8 17.♞e2 ♞5c7 18.a4 a6 19.♜e5 ♗f8 20.♜c4 ♜d7 21.♞e3±, Riazantsev-Carlsen, Warsaw 2005.) 17.e5 ♜d5 18.♗xh7+ ♜h8 19.♗e4 g6. Black's pieces are very active and compensate for the missing pawn, for instance, 20.♞d3 ♜g7 21.h3 ♞c8±. Akopian preferred to force a draw by 20.♞d2 ♜xc3 21.♞h6+ ♜g8 22.♗xg6=, Akopian-Ivanchuk, Yerevan 1996.

b) 11...♞c8. The queen shifts from the opposition with the d1-rook and prepares c7-c5. White must find the best place for his light-squared bishop:



Black aims to play ...c5 and reach a symmetrical pawn structure. Trading bishop via a6 only wastes time and gives the opponent a free hand in the centre, for instance, 12.♔d3 ♖a6 13.0-0 ♗xd3 14.♜xd3 (14.♞xd3!? might be even better) 14...♞b7 15.♞fe1 ♕f6 16.h4 The position reminds the Gruenfeld – White has a powerful centre and a kingside attack while Black lacks counterplay. However, on d3 the bishop does not support d4-d5, which is a serious drawback:

12.♔d3 ♞d8 13.0-0 c5 (13...♗f8 is rather passive and gave White play on both wings in the game Lputian-Almasi, Moscow 1994: 14.b4 ♗g6 15.♞b2 ♕f8 16.♔d2 c5 17.♞c1 ♕c6 18.h4! with an edge.) 14.d5 c4 15.♕e2 exd5 16.exd5 ♕f6



White possesses a couple of interesting ideas, but Black is able to hold:

17.d6 b5 18.♗d4 does not work due to 18...♗c5 19.f3 ♗e6;

17.♗d4 ♗xd5 18.♗f5 ♕e6 19.♗xf6 ♗xf5 20.♞xf5 ♗xf6 21.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 22.♗xc4 with only a symbolic advantage, Miles-Polugaevsky, Biel 1990;

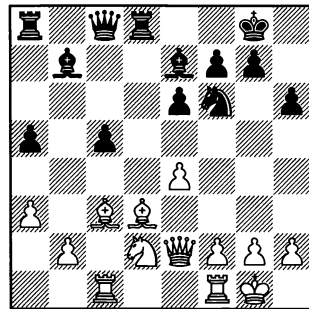
17.♞fe1!? ♕c3 18.♞c3 ♗f6 19.d6 (or 19.♗c4 ♗d5 20.♗e5 ♗c4 21.♞d8 ♞d8 22.♞c4 ♞e8=) 19...♗d5 20.♗e5 ♞d6 21.♗c4 ♞c5=, H.Olafsson-Stefansson, Munkebo 1998.

Dreev's choice 12.♗c4 is probably best. The game Dreev-Riazantsev, St. Petersburg 2004 saw further:

12....♗f6

12...♗a6 is not any better. After 13.♗e5! ♗xd3 14.♞xd3 c6 15.0-0 ♞d8 16.♞f3 ♞b7 17.♞d3, White's game is preferable, Burmakin-Dvalishvili, Tula 2002.

13.♗d3 h6 14.♞e2 c5 15.0-0 ♞d8 16.♞c1 a5 17.dxc5 bxc5 18.♗d2

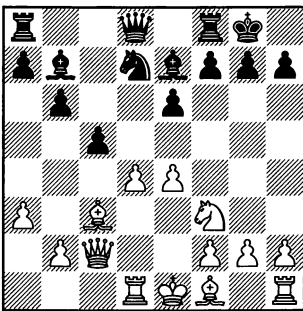


White's pieces are more active and the knight has a perfect outpost on c4. Dreev soon began a direct attack:

18...♞d7 19.♗b5 ♗c6 20.♗xc6 ♞xc6 21.♞f1 a4 22.♜c4 ♜e8 23.♞h5 ♞b7 24.f4 ♜d6 25.♞g4 ♗f8 26.f5→.

After 11...♞c8 White can also choose 12.♗e2. Then 12...♜f6 13.♗d3 would transpose to the 12.♗c4-line, while after 12...♞d8 13.0-0 ♜f6 (13...c5 is worse: 14.d5 ♜f8 15.♗c4 and it is clear that Black still has to struggle to equalize.) 14.♗d3 ♗a6 15.♞f1 c6 16.♞e2 ♗xd3 17.♞xd3 the concentration of White's major pieces in the centre discouraged Black from breaking through with c6-c5. The game Zaharevich-Gavrilov, Vladimir 2004 went on 17...♞b7 18.♞ed1 h6 19.♜e5 a5 20.♜g4 ♜xg4 21.♞xg4 ♗f8 where White has the initiative. He can develop his attack with 22.h4 or 22.♗d2 while maintaining a grip on the centre.

Let us return to the main line:



### 12.dxc5

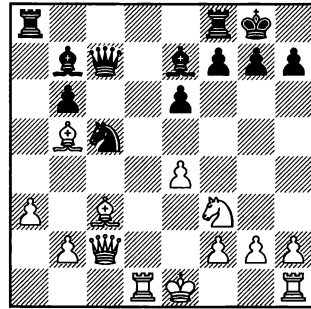
12.♗b5 ♞c7! is fine for Black. The game Roeder-Lalic, Benasque 1996, ended in a draw after 13.♗d7 ♞d7 14.dc5 ♞b5 15.cb6 ab6 16.♜d4 ♞c4 17.f3 ♞fc8 18.♞e2 ♗a3 19.♞c4 ♞c4 20.♜b3 1/2-1/2.

### 12...♞c7!

By this enterprising pawn sac-

rifice Black solves the problem of piece development and takes over the initiative. We know similar ideas in the Gruenfeld, but in that opening Black's play is on the queenside, while in our case he targets the e4-pawn.

### 13.cxb6 axb6 14.♗b5 ♜c5



### 15.♗e5

Alternatives are:

15.♜d2 ♞f4 16.0-0 ♜xe4 17.♜xe4 ♗xe4 18.♗d3 ♗xd3 19.♞xd3;

15.♞d4 ♞fd8 16.0-0 ♞d4 17.♗d4 ♗e4 18.♞c3 ♞f4=, Riazantsev-Sulskis, Warsaw 2005.

15...♞c8 16.0-0 ♗xe4 17.♞e2 ♗d5 18.b4

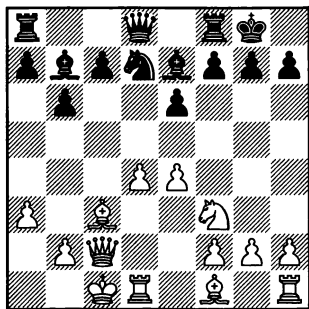
White can sacrifice the exchange with 18.♗xg7 ♜xg7 19.♞xd5 exd5 20.♞xe7 ♞e6 21.♞g5+ ♜h8 22.♞f4=, but we can hardly speak about his advantage here.

### 18...♜e4 19.♞c1 ♞d8 20.♗b2

The chances are roughly level.

### A2b. 11.0-0-0

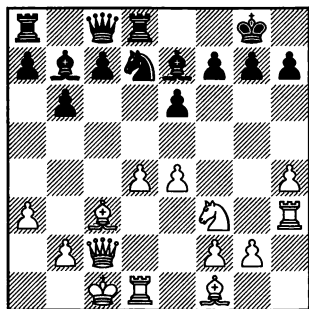
A modern, but risky strategy. White improves his control on the centre, having in mind a kingside attack.



Black chooses between:

a) The passive **11...♖c8**

Then White launches a direct attack with **12.h4 ♜d8 13.♞h3**



White combines various threats like ♜g3, h5 or ♜g5. Against Piket in Monaco 1997, Karpov chose 13... ♜f8, but following 14.h5 (14.♞g3! ♜g6 15.d5 ed5 16.h5±) 14...c5 15.♞g3 (15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 ♞xd5 17.♞g3 ♞xd1+ 18.♞xd1 ♜e6 is unclear) 15... cxd4 White could have obtained a positional advantage with 16.♞xd4 ♞xd4 17.♜xd4 ♜f6 18.♜b5. Another attempt is:

**13...h6 14.d5 ♜f6 15.♜g5 hxg5 16.hxg5 ♜g4 17.f4 ♜c5**

Akopian-Granda, Groningen 1993, saw further the hazy 18.♜xg7?! Instead, **18.♞h4!** would have been

very awkward as 18...♜f2 loses to 19.♜xg7!.

b) The counterattack **11...c5!?**

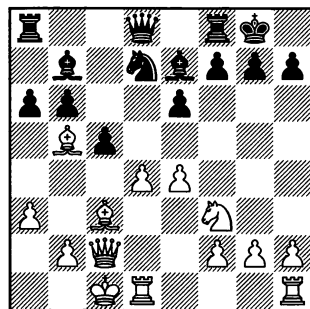
As a rule, it is the most testing approach.

**12.♜b5**

12.d5 is a serious alternative, but after 12...exd5 13.exd5 ♜f6 it is unclear what the white king is looking for on the queenside.

**12...a6!**

The timid 12...♞c7 13.d5 exd5 14.exd5 ♞fd8 15.♞he1 ♜f8 16.♞e4 ♜g6 17.h4! gives White a strong attack, Piket-Polugaevsky, Aruba 1994.



**13.♜d7**

Black's play is based on the variation 13.dxc5 axb5 14.♜e5 ♜e4! 15.♞e4 ♜c5 16.♞g4 f5 with initiative.

**13...♞d7 14.dxc5 ♞b5**

Black has sufficient compensation and White must be careful. Despite his extra pawn, he would be in a difficult position after 15.cb6?! ♞ac8. 15.a4 is a better option, but 15...♞xc5 16.♞d7 ♜d8= neutralises all the threats. Most ambitious is:

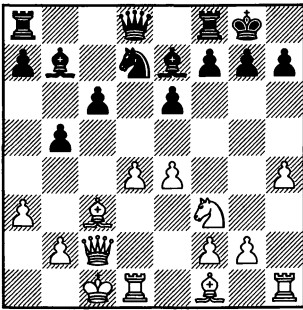
**15.♜e5 ♞fd8 16.cxb6**, when

16...♗d6! allows Black to maintain the balance, for instance, 17.a4 ♗b6 18.♘c4 ♗f4 19.♘b1 ♗c6=.

**c) 11...c6!?**

Black changes his plans for attack. Now he aims for a pawn storm with b- and a-pawns, restricting White's play in the centre at the same time.

**12.h4 b5**



A critical position. Practice has seen 13.♖h3 a5 14.d5 cxd5 15.♗xb5 ♘f6 16.♘g5! ♗b6 17.exd5 ♖ac8 18.♗d7 ♗xd5! 19.♗xc8 ♖xc8 20.♖xd5 exd5 21.♗f5 ♗a6 with counterplay, Kamsky-Anand, India 1994 and the prophylactic 13.♘b1. However, Black has excellent prospects after 13...a5. Now, neither 14.♗d2 b4 15.a4 c5, Mikhalchishin-A. Petrosian, Lviv 1994, nor 14.♗e1 b4 15.a4 ♖c8 16.♘g5 c5 (16...♗c7!? 17.e5 g6) 17.d5 exd5 18.exd5 ♗g5 19.hxg5 g6 20.f4 ♘b6 21.♗f2 f5 seem to even equalize.

We tried to improve White's play with 14.d5, but again Black emerges with a good position after 14...cxd5 15.♗b5 (15.♘g5 dxe4 16.♗b5 ♗d5 17.♘e4 ♖b8) 15...♘f6 16.♘g5 ♗c7

17.e5 ♘e4 18.♘e4 de4 19.♗d7 ♗b6 20.a4 ♗c5.

Perhaps in the diagram position White should employ even sharper means:

**13.♗d3!?**

Now the familiar approach is no longer working:

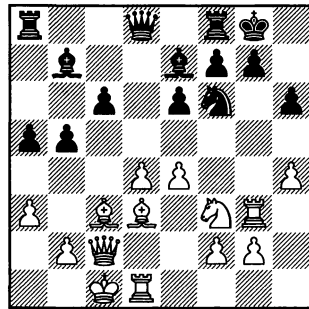
13...a5 14.d5 cd5 (14...b4 15.de6 bc3 16.♗c4±) 15.ed5 ♗d5 16.♗h7 ♘h8 17.♗e4;

13...♗b6 14.d5 ♘c5 15.de6 fe6 (15...♘e6 16.e5) 16.♗e2 ♘a4 (16...a5 17.♗d4 b4 18.♗c4±) 17.♗d4 with initiative. We see that the threat of 14.d5 cannot be ignored and Black must accept a weakening of his castling position by playing:

**13...h6**

Both sides have only a narrow path to maintain the balance:

**14.♖h3 a5 15.♖g3 ♘f6!**



**16.♗d2**

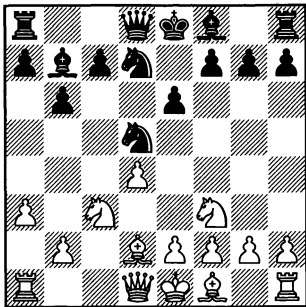
16.e5 ♘h5 17.♖g4 is dubious. Black's counterattack is powerful after 17...b4 18.♗d2 (18.♗d2 ba3 19.♗h6 ♖b8) 18...♘h8 19.ab4 ab4 20.♗b4 ♖a1 21.♘c2 ♖a4.

**16...♘h5 17.♖g4 ♘f6 18.♖g3 ♘h5=.**

White cannot escape the repeti-

tion of moves since 17.♞h3 will face 17...c5!

**B. 7...♘d7**

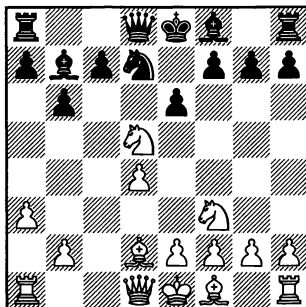


B1. 8.♘xd5

B2. 8.♞c2

**B1. 8.♘xd5**

This fine move faces Black with a choice. He must decide what structure he prefers – a stable centre after 8...ed5 or an open position following 8...♙d5.



B1a. 8...exd5; B1b. 8...♙d5

**B1a. 8...exd5 9.g3**

For his part, White can deviate from the classical treatment in favour of the modern plan with imme-

diante play on the queenside. Black achieves a good game though:

9.b4 ♙d6 10.♙g5

This may look consistent, but the modest 10.e3 0-0 11.♙d3 ♘f6 12.0-0 ♘e4 13.♞c2 is not any worse than the bishop move. It should be tested in practice.

10...f6 11.♙h4 c5 12.♙g3 ♙xg3! 13.hxg3 c4!

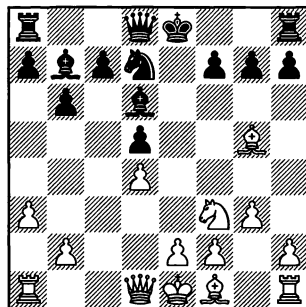
It is good to close the centre, because White's queenside structure a3-b4 is vulnerable to the attack with a7-a5.

14.♞c2 g6 15.e3 b5 16.g4 a5 17.♞b1 axb4 18.axb4 ♞e7 19.♙e2 ♘b8!, Dreev-Psakhis, Internet 2004. Black is better since the b4-pawn is a permanent target.

**9...♙d6**

From here the bishop controls e5. 9...♙e7 is more passive. The game Karpov-Anand, Bastia 2002 saw further 10.♙g2 (The thematic 10.♙h3 is also interesting.) 10...0-0 11.0-0 c5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.b4 ♙f6, when 14.♞c1! would have ensured a slight edge. Perhaps 13...d4!? was more promising although 14.♞c1! would be good again.

**10.♙g5**



**10...♗e7**

10...♜f6 is a decent alternative. The fine point is that 11.♜e5 h6 12.♞a4+ c6 13.♗xf6 ♞xf6 14.♜xc6 wins a pawn, but dooms White to a difficult defence after 14...0-0. Therefore he should probably go for an equal endgame as in Bischoff-Huebner, Altenkirchen 1999, 11.♞a4 ♞d7 12.♞d7 ♜d7 13.♗h3 c5 14.♞c1 c4 15.♞c3 ♗c6=.

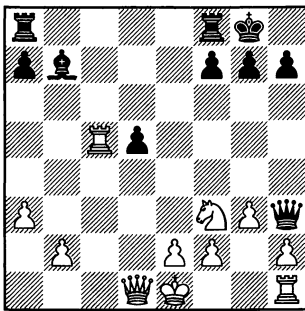
**11.♗xe7 ♞xe7 12.♞c1 c5**

12...c6 is unnecessary timid. Kramnik-Psahis, Halkidiki 1992 went 13.♗h3 0-0 14.0-0 ♜f6 15.b4 ♜e4 16.♞b3 f5 17.♞c2 and doubling rooks on the c-file will be very unpleasant.

**13.♗h3**

A daring continuation. 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♗h3 ♜b6 15.b4 cxb4 16.♞d4 0-0 17.♞xb4 ♞xb4+ 18.axb4 a5 is a dead draw.

**13...0-0 14.dxc5 bxc5 15.♗xd7 ♞xd7 16.♞xc5 ♞h3**



Black held the enemy king in the centre, for a pawn indeed. He does not have apparent threats, but is able to calmly improve his position in the centre. In Akopian-Polgar, Merida 2000 White found two

good moves:

**17.♞d3 ♞ac8 18.♞xc8 ♞xc8**

Here he should have connected his rooks by:

19.♜d2 d4! 20.♞d1 ♞h6+ 21.♜e1 ♗xf3 22.♞xf3 ♞xh2, still retaining a slight initiative.

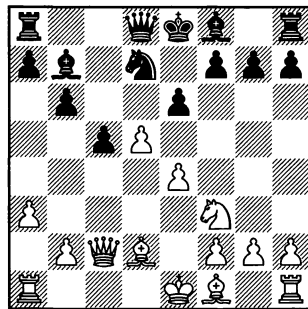
**B1b. 8...♗xd5 9.♞c2**

White must prepare e2-e4. All the other moves do not fit in with the general plan and do not deserve consideration.

**9...c5**

A thematic reply. Sasikiran tried twice the sneaky 9...♞c8 10.e4 ♗b7. P.Nielsen inadvertently put his rook on d1 first and got nothing. Then in a blitz game Gustafsson improved with 11.♗c4 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♞fe1 c5 14.d5 ed5 15.ed5 ♜f6 16.♞ad1 a6 and was better. He could have underlined his advantage with 17.♗g5!±.

**10.e4 ♗b7 11.d5!**



A brainchild of one of the leading exponents of the Petrosian system, Alexey Dreev. We meet this pawn sacrifice in various settings and it always requires from Black a

very precise reaction.

Normal continuations do not promise White anything substantial:

11.♞d1 cxd4 12.♟xd4 a6 13.♙e3 b5 14.f3 ♙e7 15.♙e2 ♞c8 16.♞d2 ♟e5 17.0-0 0-0 18.b4 ♟c4, Dreev-Anand, Hyderabad 2002;

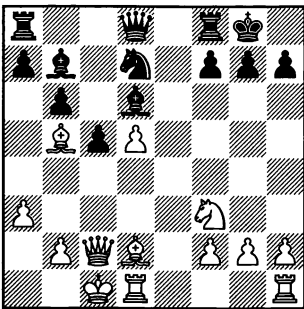
11.♙c3 cxd4 12.♟xd4 a6 13.g3 ♞c8 14.♙g2 ♙c5 15.♞e2 0-0 16.0-0 ♞c7 17.♞fd1 ♞fd8 18.♟b3 ♙e7 19.♞ac1 ♟c5 20.♙b4 ♞xd1+ 21.♞xd1 a5! Mikhalchishin-Schandorff, Bled 2002.

**11...exd5 12.exd5 ♙d6**

It would be irresponsible to grab the pawn: 12...♙xd5 13.0-0-0 ♙xf3 14.gxf3 a6 15.♞e4+ ♙e7 16.♙c3 and Black has many pieces under attack. The pinned d7-knight is in great danger.

**13.0-0-0 0-0 14.♙b5!**

This powerful move, found by correspondence world champion Sanakoev, caused Black plenty of trouble. Previously White had played 14.♟g5?! ♟f6 15.♟b1 ♙e5 16.♟f3 ♙d4 17.♟xd4 cxd4 18.♙b4 ♞e8 19.♙b5 ♞e5 with complications, Dreev-Karpov, France 2002.



**14...h6**

In this critical position Black has also tried:

14...a6 15.♙c6 ♞c7 16.♙c3 ♞ae8, Sanakoev-Morgado, corr. 1999, when 17.♞f5! gives a strong initiative;

14...♟f6 15.♙g5 h6 16.♙h4 g5 17.♙g3 ♟xd5 18.♙c4 ♟f4 19.h4! g4 20.♟g5! with unpleasant threats.

14...♞c7!/? White should pay attention to this setup since the only game which saw it, Dreev-Yakovenko, Toliatti 2003, was not convincing: 15.♙c3 ♞fd8 16.♟b1 ♟f8 17.♞e4 a6 18.♙d3 b5 19.♞g4 ♟g6 20.♟g5. Here, instead of 20...b4? 21.♙xg6! hxg6 22.♞h4 bxc3 23.♞he1 with a crushing attack, Black has 20...♙f4! with counterplay.

**15.♙c3 ♟f6**

White's main idea is seen in the variation 15...a6 16.♙c6 ♞c7 17.♞a4!, heading for g4.

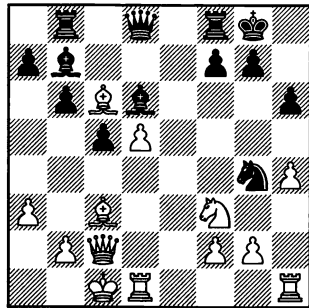
**16.♙c6 ♞b8**

16...♙xc6 17.dxc6 ♞c8 is dangerous, owing to 18.♞f5 ♞xc6 19.♟e5 ♞c7 20.♟c4 ♞d7 21.♙xf6 gxf6 22.♞f3!

**17.h4!**

White has no time for prophylaxis, for 17.♟b1 can be immediately counterattacked by 17... b5!

**17...♟g4!**



Capturing on d5 loses to 17... ♘xd5 18.♗xd5 ♗xd5 19.♞xd5 ♗f4+ 20.♞d2.

**18.♗b1 ♗c8?**

18...♞c7 was better, but after 19.♘g5! hxg5 20.hxg5 f5 21.gxf6 ♘xf6 22.♞h4! White's attack would be running by itself.

**19.♞de1 g6**

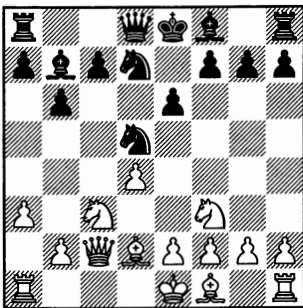
Or 19...b5 20.♘g5! hxg5 21.hxg5 f5 22.gxf6 ♘xf6 23.♞g6 and, according to Dreev, the attack is victorious.

**20.♞e6!! ♗xe6 21.dxe6 f5 22.h5!**

White's onslaught is unstoppable, Dreev-Tiviakov, Dos Hermanas 2003.

Even the relatively best 22...g5 loses to 23.e7! ♗xe7 (or 23...♞xe7 24.♗d5+ ♗h7 25.♞e1 ♞d8 26.♗e6!) 24.♞d1 ♞c7 25.♞b3+ ♞f7 26.♞e6, winning.

**B2. 8.♞c2**



Continuing to prepare active play in the centre. Now 8...c5 9.♘xd5 (9.e4 ♘xc3 10.♗xc3 cxd4 11. ♘d4 a6 is roughly equal, Mikhalchishin-Schandorff, Bled ol. 2002) can

transpose to the previous line 9... ♗xd5 which is considered in B1b. The other recapture 9...ed5 10.dc5 bc5 11.e4!? is unexplored: 11...de4 (11...♗e7 12.ed5±) 12.♘g5 ♗c6 13.0-0 ♗e7 14.♘e4 0-0 15.♗f4 with double-edged play.

We shall examine below plans of independent significance:

B2a. 8...♘7f6?!; B2b. 8...♘5f6!?

**B2a. 8...♘7f6?!:**

Black tries to contest the e4-square, but he encounters problems, linked with the threat of check on b5 after the following move:

**9.e3 ♘xc3**

9...♗e7 gives White a clear edge after 10.♘xd5 ♞xd5 11.♞xc7 ♞c8 12.♞e5.

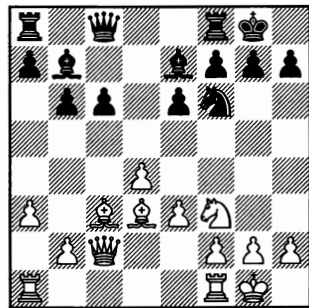
**10.♗xc3 ♗e7**

Black is unable to maintain the blockade on e4 due to 10...♞d5 11.♘e5 ♗e7 (11...♗d6 12.f3! ♗xe5 13.e4 ♞d8 14.dxe5) 12.f3.

**11.♗b5+**

11.♗d3 0-0 12.0-0 gives Black counterplay after 12...♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♞d5.

**11...c6 12.♗d3 0-0 13.0-0 ♞c8**



13...c5 is too risky in view of

14.dxc5 ♖xc5 15.♟fd1 ♞e7 16.b4 ♗d6  
17.♞b2 with a big advantage.

**14.♞e2**

Decent alternatives are 14.b4, or  
14.♗g5 h6 15.♖e4 where Black has  
not resolved his opening problems.

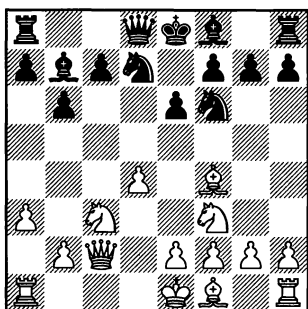
**14...c5 15.dxc5!**

15.♟a1 ♖e4 16.dxc5 ♖xc5 is not  
that clear.

**15...♞xc5 16.♗b4 ♞c7 17.♟a1  
♞d8 18.♟fd1 ♖d5 19.♗d2!**

White has centralized both rooks  
and the advance of the e-pawn is go-  
ing to reject the enemy pieces back.

**B2b. 8...♖5f6!? 9.♗f4**

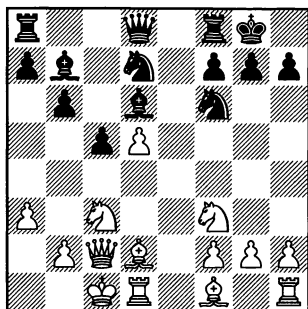


9.e4 is less precise due to 9...  
c5!

Instead, 9...a6 10.0-0-0 b5 11.d5!  
e5 12.♖b1 ♗d6 13.g4! gave White  
a strong initiative in S.Pedersen-  
Schandorff, Horsens 2003.

10.♟d1

10.d5 is dubious in view of 10...  
exd5 11.exd5 (11.e5 ♖e4! 12.♖xe4  
dxe4 13.♗g5 ♗e7 14.e6 ♗xg5  
15.exd7+ ♖xd7! favours Black, Mata-  
moros-Komarov, Cordoba 1994)  
11...♗d6 12.0-0-0 0-0



13.♖h4 (or 13.♗g5 ♞b8 14.♗b5  
a6) 13...a6! 14.♖f5 ♞b8! 15.♖b1  
b5 and the queenside pawn storm  
spells trouble for White's king, Bay-  
ram-Gershon, Aosta 2004.

10...cxd4 11.♖xd4 a6 12.♗e2 ♞c7  
13.♞b1 ♗d6 14.h3 0-0 15.0-0 ♖e5  
16.♗f3 ♟ad8 with a good game, Tuk-  
makov-Polugaevsky, USSR 1984.

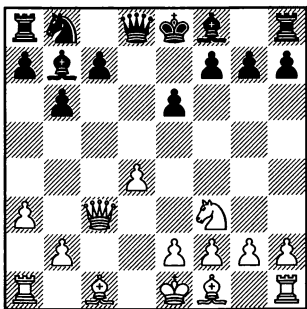
**9...♗d6 10.♗xd6 cxd6 11.e4**

11.♖b5 is pointless owing to 11...  
♖e7! 12.♖d2 a6 13.♖c3 b5 14.e4  
♞b6 with a fine game for Black in  
Schcherbakov-Timoshenko, Chelia-  
binsk 1989.

**11...♟c8 12.♗d3 0-0 13.0-0 e5  
14.♟ad1**

White is only slightly better.

## PART 8



7. ♖c2 is the modern way of playing the Petrosian system. White does not waste time on e3, but immediately prepares e2-e4. Black's counterplay is linked with c7-c5. He can achieve it in various settings. In the following parts we shall deal with different move orders which often lead to similar basic positions. We start with 7... ♟xc3. This exchange is not premature as Black will execute it anyway on the next turn when he faces e2-e4. By anticipating it, Black forces the opponent to define his plans about the future pawn structure. 8. bxc3 is the best answer and we shall discuss in detail such structures in the next parts. Capturing by queen brings about positions which are less explored and demand concrete play from Black. This variation is similar to the Dementiev variation where the bishop stays on c3.

At first sight the queen looks good on c3 – it is eyeing g7 and impedes ...c5. However, it releases the control of e4. In the Petrosian system this square is the most crucial

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 b6 4.a3  
 ♟b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♟xd5 7.♖c2  
 ♟xc3 8.♗xc3

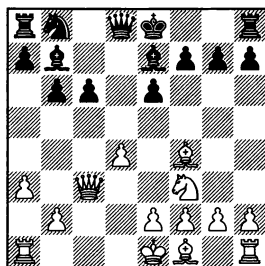
### Main Ideas

point of the position. No wonder that Black has various paths to equality.

Perhaps he should discard 8... ♟d6 though, because after 9. ♟g5 f6 10. ♟h4 the weakness on e6 is a constant source of concern.

Decent replies to 8. ♗xc3 are:

1. 8... ♟e7 9. ♟f4 c6



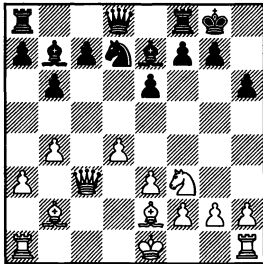
Black's move may look ugly, but it neutralizes the most serious threat of the opponent. Now White can try to hit g7 by 10. ♟e5, when 10... ♟f6 is a simpler equalizer, while 10... 0-0!? invites the opponent to enter the unclear variation 11.d5 cxd5!? 12. ♟xg7 ♖e8 with double-edged play.

2. 8...h6

The simplest positional solution

– Black prevents ♕g5 or ♖g5.

9.b4 (9.♙f4 ♙d6) 9...♙e7 10.♙b2  
 ♖d7 11.e3 0-0 12.♙e2



Black achieves the breakthrough  
 12...c5 and gradually levels the game  
 after 13.dxc5 ♙f6 14.♚d2 ♙xb2  
 15.♚xb2 bxc5, Bocharov-Bakre,  
 Abu Dhabi 2004.

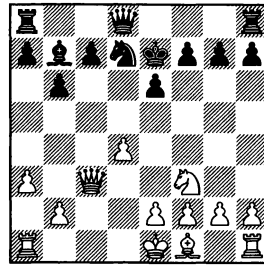
3. 8...♖d7 9.♙g5 ♙e7! 10.♙xe7  
 ♖xe7!

This great idea of grandmas-  
 ter Sergey Makarichev is the most  
 enterprising branch of the 8.♚xc3  
 variation.

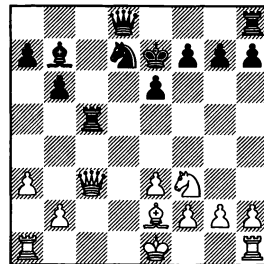
The reason behind it is to open  
 the centre with c7-c5 even at the  
 cost of the g7-pawn:

**Conclusion**

*By capturing on c3 with queen, White releases his grip on the central square e4. This allows the opponent to obtain sufficient counterplay in various ways. We like most the Makarichev's idea of recapturing on e7 by king – see Position 3.*



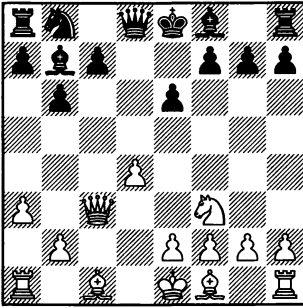
11.e3 (or 11.g3 ♖f6 12.♙g2 ♚d6  
 13.0-0 c5! 14.dxc5 ♚xc5=) 11...♙c8  
 12.♙e2 c5 13.dxc5 ♙xc5!



A clever pawn sacrifice based on  
 better development. The game Por-  
 tisch-Karpov, Biel 1996 saw fur-  
 ther:

14.♚xg7 ♙g8 15.♚xh7 ♙xg2  
 16.♚h4+ ♖f6 17.♙d1 ♚c7 18.♖d4  
 a5! 19.♖b5 ♙xb5! 20.♙xb5 ♙g4 and  
 Black was winning.

## PART 8



1.d4 ♭f6 2.c4 e6 3.♁f3 b6 4.a3  
 ♗b7 5.♁c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♁xd5 7.♖c2  
 ♁xc3 8.♗xc3

### Move by Move

Note that 8.bxc3! is more popular and it is probably the only way to fight for an opening advantage. We examine such positions in the next parts of the book.

Black has various ways to obtain fair chances:

- A. 8...♗d6
- B. 8...h6
- C. 8...♗e7
- D. 8...♁d7!?

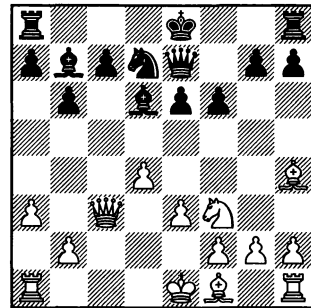
#### A. 8...♗d6

This move prevents one of the main threats of the opponent – the attack on c7 with ♗f4, but now the other development of the enemy bishop proves to be rather awkward:

9.♗g5 f6 10.♗h4 ♁d7 11.e3 ♗e7

Black has two weaknesses to worry about – c6 and e6. If he castles immediately 11...0-0, then 12.♗c4 ♗e7 13.0-0 ♖h8 14.♗g3!, Roeder-Spence, Port Erin 2005, maintains some pressure as 14...♗xf3 15.gxf3

f5 16.♗fe1± does not fully equalize. The text is more flexible. It hides the sneaky idea of castling long against 12.♗c4. Therefore, White provokes a weakness on the queenside first:

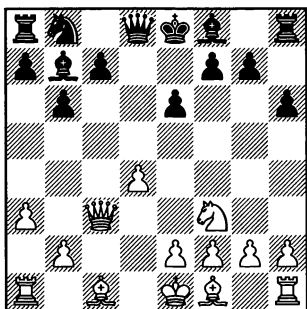


12.♗b5! c6 13.♗c4 b5 14.♗e2 b4 15.♗b3 c5 16.0-0 ♗d5 17.♗c4 ♗xc4 18.♗xc4±.

White has no weaknesses and his pieces are better coordinated, L'Ami-Spoelman, Wijk aan Zee, 2008.

#### B. 8...h6

Black chooses the simplest positional solution – he prevents ♗g5 or ♁g5.



- B1. 9.e3  
 B2. 9.b4  
 B3. 9.♟f4

### B1. 9.e3 ♟e7

9...♟d6 10.♟b5+ c6 11.♟d3 ♫d7, intending c6-c5, is quite good as well.

#### 10.♟b5+

This manoeuvre does not fit in well with the placement of the queen on c3.

#### 10...c6 11.♟a4

A typical way to delay a little the breakthrough c7-c5.

The timid 11.♟e2 has no venom at all: 11...0-0 12.0-0 ♫d7 13.♟d1 ♟c8 14.b4 c5! 15.bxc5 bxc5 16.♟b2 ♟f6 17.♟d2 ♟d5 with equality, Vaganian-Adorjan, Dubai 1986.

#### 11...0-0 12.0-0 ♫d7 13.♟d1

13.e4 is premature. Black can answer it with 13...c5 14.♟d1 ♟c7, setting up his pieces like in the main line, but 13...b5 14.♟c2 c5 15.♟d1 ♟c8!? (15...♟c7=) would be more testing.

Be sure to avoid 15...♟b6? 16.dxc5 ♫xc5 17.♟e3 ♟c6 18.♫e5 ♟c8, Ivanchuk-Karpov, Roquebrune 1992, since White could have

earned an advantage with 19.♟a1! threatening ♟b1. Black experiences problems with his c5-knight. For instance, 19...♟xe4 loses outright to 20.♟xc5 while 19...♫xe4 is not much better owing to 20.♟b3! ♟e8 21.♫d7±.

#### 13...♟c7

Black's queen should not tolerate the opposition with White's rook on d1. After 13...♟c8 14.b4 it must run anyway: 14...♟c7 15.♟b2 ♟f8 16.♟a1 ♫f6, Lputian-Lerner, Harkov 1985. In this cramped Cambridge Springs-type position Black's only hope is to achieve c6-c5. Still, White is somewhat better, e.g. 17.♫e5 c5 18.dxc5 ♟xd1+ 19.♟xd1 bxc5 20.♟f3±.

#### 14.e4

Or 14.b4 a5, intending to meet 15.b5 with 15...c5.

#### 14...♟f8 15.g3 c5!

Black realized his plan and now the passed d-pawn will prove to be rather vulnerable.

16.♟f4 ♟c8! 17.d5 exd5 18 exd5 ♫f6 19.d6 ♟xd6! 20.♟xd6 ♟xd6 21.♟xd6 ♫e4 22.♟d3 ♫xd6.

Black is better, Hjartarson-Portisch, Linares 1988.

### B2. 9.b4

This expansion on the queenside tries to discourage c7-c5.

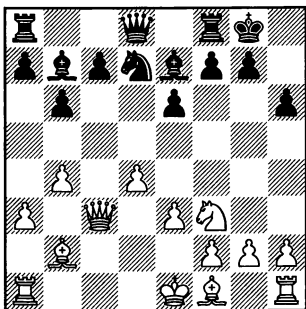
#### 9...♟e7 10.♟b2

10.♟f4 strikes at thin air in view of 10...0-0! Then both captures give Black a strong initiative: 11.♟xc7 ♟d5 or 11.♟xc7 ♟xc7 12.♟xc7 ♟c8 13.♟f4 a5. If White persists with his idea and

4.a3 ♖b7 5. ♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.♞c2 ♗xc3 8.♞xc3

plays 11.♞c1, Black counters it with 11...c5! 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.bxc5 ♞d5, planning to regain the pawn at his ease after ♖a8-c8, Browne-M.Gurevich, New York 1989.

**10... ♗d7 11.e3 0-0**



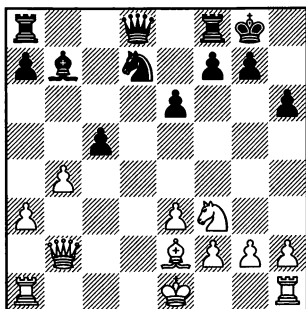
**12. ♖e2**

White is forced to restrict himself to this modest move as 12.♞d1 allows the counterattack 12...a5! 13.b5 (13.♖e2? axb4 14.axb4 ♗f6) 13...♞c8 14.♞b3 c6 15.bxc6 ♖xc6 16.♖b5 ♖b4+! 17.axb4 ♖xb5 18.bxa5 ♖c4, Karpov-Ju.Polgar, Wijk aan Zee 2003.

**12...c5**

Black should not linger with this breakthrough.

**13.dxc5 ♖f6 14.♞d2 ♖xb2 15.♞xb2 bxc5**



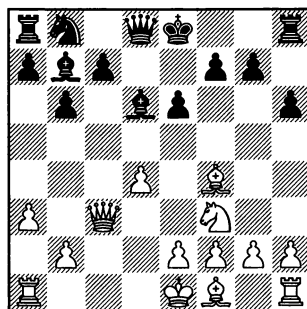
This position arose in the game Bocharov-Bakre, Abu Dhabi 2004. White attempted to build a nice pawn majority with 16.b5, but Black is ahead in development and he countered it with 16...a6! 17.0-0 axb5 18.♖xb5, when 18...♞b8! 19.♞ad1 ♖xf3 20.gxf3 ♞g5+ 21.♗h1 ♗e5 22.f4 ♞e7 23.fxe5 ♞b7+ 24.♗g1 ♞xb5 25.♞xb5 ♖xb5 would have been even slightly better for him.

In the diagram position White should therefore complete development: **16.0-0** with a tiny plus in a symmetrical position.

**B3. 9. ♖f4**

It is appealing to develop the dark-squared bishop, but Black can oppose it with:

**9... ♗d6**



**10. ♗e5**

Of course exchanges perfectly suit Black: 10.♖xd6 cxd6 11.♞c1 ♗d7 12.♞c7 ♞c8 with a fine game, Stoi-savljevic-Kalevic, Belgrade 1993;

10.♖g3 0-0 11.e3 ♗d7 12.♞d1 (12.♖b5 ♖xg3 13.hxg3 c5! 14.♞d1 ♞c8! =, Atalik) 12...♞c8 (After 12...♗f6

13.♔d3 ♖e4 14.♖c2 ♗xg3 15.hxg3  
 ♙xf3 16.gxf3 the opposite coloured  
 bishops favour White who has the  
 more active pieces, Hort-Farago,  
 Amsterdam 1987) 13.♙b5  
 ♙xg3 14.hxg3, Chernin-Sax, Hunga-  
 ry 2003, c5!=) 13...♗e7 14.0-0 ♙xg3  
 15.hxg3 c5 with full equality.

**10...♗d7**

10...0-0 11.♞d1 ♗d7 12.f3 ♗e7  
 13.e4 transposes to the main line.

**11.f3 ♗e7**

This is better than 11...♞c8 12.e4  
 0-0 13.♞d1 ♗f6 14.♙e3, when 14...  
 c5 would give White an edge after  
 15.♗c4! (but not 15.dxc5 ♗xe4!  
 16.fxe4 ♗h4+ 17.g3 ♗xe4 18.♞xd6  
 ♞xc5 19.♗c4 ♞xc4 20.♙xc4 ♗xh1+  
 21.♙e2=) 15...cxd4 16.♗xd4. Thus  
 in M.Gurevich-Adorjan, Akureyri  
 1988, Black had to content himself  
 with 14...c6.

11...♗xe5!? is a sound alterna-  
 tive: 12.dxe5 ♙c5 13.e3 a5 14.♙b5  
 c6 15.♙c4 0-0 with mutual chances,  
 Krebs-Seben, E-mail 2000.

**12.e4 0-0**

12...0-0-0?! is sharp and risky.  
 Then 13.♗c6? ♙xc6 14.♗xc6 would  
 fail to 14...♗b8! and the f4-bishop  
 is hanging. 13.♙e3 ♙xe5! 14.dxe5  
 ♗h4+! 15.♙f2 ♗g5 16.♞c1 c6 17.♙e3  
 ♗xe5 18.♙d4 ♗g5 19.♙xg7 ♞hg8  
 20.♙d4 f5! also gave Black good  
 counterplay in A.Petrosian-Mikhal-  
 chishin, Pavlodar 1987. However,  
 13.b4! is rather unpleasant. After  
 13...♙xe5 14.dxe5 ♗b8 15.♞c1 ♞c8  
 16.♙e2 c5 17.b5 (or 17.♗b2) White  
 has the better chances.

**13.♞d1 ♞fd8 14.♙e2 ♞ac8  
 15.♗d3 ♙xf4 16.♗xf4 c5 17.d5**

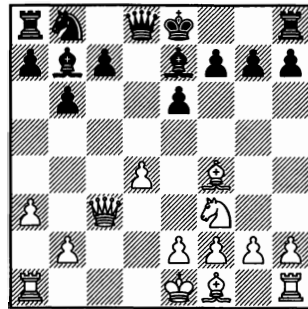
**exd5 18.♗xd5 ♙xd5 19.♞xd5  
 ♗f8.**

Black has no problems, Najer-  
 Estremera Panos, Linares 2001.

**C. 8...♙e7**

A modest developing move.  
 Black must play very precisely to  
 avoid getting into a cramped posi-  
 tion.

**9.♙f4**



**9...c6**

This looks ugly, but the more ac-  
 tive option 9...0-0?! 10.♗xc7 ♗xc7  
 11.♙xc7 ♞c8, Seirawan-Anand, Am-  
 sterdam 1992, could have turned  
 bad after 12.♙f4! ♗c6 13.e3 ♗a5  
 14.♙d3 ♗b3 15.♞d1 – we do not see  
 an adequate compensation for the  
 pawn.

9...♙d6 leads to a position, which  
 is nearly identical with line B3. The  
 only difference is that the pawn is  
 still on h7. It works in Black's favour  
 in case of 10.♗e5 f6!?. (A. Petrosian-  
 Anand, Moscow 1987 saw 10...0-0  
 11.e3 ♗d7 12.♙b5 ♙xe5 13.dxe5 a6  
 14.♙e2 ♗c5 15.f3 a5 with a satisfac-  
 tory game due to the possibility of  
 ♙b7-a6.)

White in his turn can spend an extra tempo on 10.♙g5, transposing to line A, but perhaps 10.♙g3 is the most unpleasant reply since it best exploits the absence of ...h6: 10...0-0 11.e3 ♘d7 12.♙b5 and here the equalizer from line A does not work: 12...♙xg3 13.hxg3 c5 14.♙d1 ♙c8? because White's queen can shift from line c with a decisive tempo, hitting h7. Instead, Yermolinsky-Al.Kuzmin, Tashkent 1987, went on with 2...♘f6 13.♙c6 ♘d5 14.♙c2 ♙xc6 15.♙xc6±.

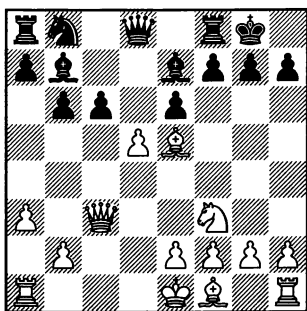
**10.♙e5**

10.e4 0-0 11.♙d1 ♘d7 12.♙d3 c5 13.d5 looks appealing only at first sight. After 13...exd5 14.exd5 ♙f6 15.♙c2 ♙e8+ 16.♘f1 g6 17.♙b5 a6 18.♙c6 ♙c8 19.♙xb7 ♙xb7 only White can have problems with the d5-pawn, Barbero-Cvitan, Basel 1999.

**10...0-0!?**

The alternative 10...♙f6 is a simpler equalizer, but Black has no reason to avoid complications.

**11.d5**



**11...cxd5!?**

Practice has seen only 11...♙f6 ♙xf6 13.♙xf6 gx6 14.dxe6 fxe6

15.♘d4 ♘f7 16.e3 ♘e7 17.♙c4 ♙c8 18.0-0-0 c5, Bareev-Lerner, Harkov 1985, when the tactical trick 19.♘f5+! exf5 20.♙d5 would have faced Black with an unpleasant ending.

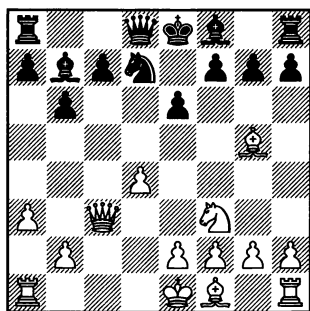
**12.♙xg7 ♙e8**

The position is extremely tangled, but tactics work in Black's favour, because White's pieces are undeveloped. For example, 13.h4 ♘d7 14.♙h3 ♙c8 15.♙g3 ♙xc3 16.♙f6+ is a draw by perpetual, but Black might keep on fighting by 14...♙d6.

**13.♘e5 d4 14.♙g3 ♙h4 15.♙f4 f5 16.♙h6 ♘c6.**

Play is double-edged.

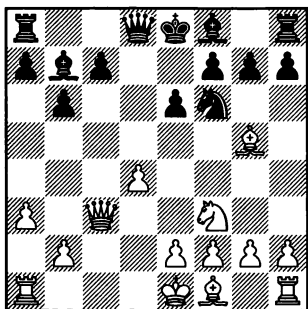
**D. 8...♘d7 9.♙g5**



- D1. 9...♘f6
- D2. 9...f6
- D3. 9...♙c8
- D4. 9...♙e7!

**D1. 9...♘f6**

The whole Black manoeuvre is dubious as it loses tempi to place the knight on a square which is hardly the best stand for it.

**10.e3**

10.e4 does not achieve its aims:

10...c6

10...♞c8? led to a spectacular attack in the game Spragett-Karklins, Toronto 1965: 11.♙xf6! ♜xf6 12.♙a6! ♙xa6 13.♞c6+ ♘d8 14.♘e5 ♞e7 15.d5! ♞e8 16.♘xf7+!! ♞xf7 17.dxe6 ♞e8 18.♞d1+ ♗e7 19.♞d7+ ♗f6 20.e7+.

11.♙xf6

11.♙a6?! ♞c7 12.♙xb7 ♞xb7 13.♙xf6 gxf6 14.0-0 ♙g7 is fine for Black who controls the centre.

11...gxf6 12.♞d1

In the game Benjamin-Razuvaev, Dortmund 1985, White chose the kamikadze style 12.d5, burning all bridges behind. After 12...exd5 13.0-0-0 ♞d6 14.exd5 0-0-0 15.♙b5 c5 16.♗b1 ♞g8 17.g3 ♙xd5 he had 18.♙c4 with a very sharp and unclear position.

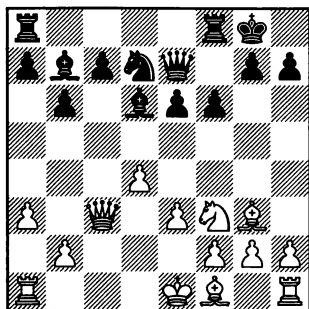
12...♙e7 13.♙c4 0-0 14.0-0 ♞c7 15.♞e3 ♞ad8 16.h4 ♗h8 17.♞c1 ♞d6 18.♙b3 ♞g8 19.♞fd1

White's game is easier. It would be difficult for Black to achieve c6-c5 or f6-f5 in a good setting, and the g-file is also useless, Vladimirov-Petran, Tbilisi 1986.

10...♞c8 11.♞b3 ♞d5 12.♞a4+

♙c6 13.♞a6 ♙b7 14.♙b5+ ♘d7 15.♞a4 c6 (15...a6 loses a pawn to 16.♙xa6) 16.♙c4 (16.♙d3 is also attractive) 16...♞a5+ 17.♞xa5 bxa5 18.♗e2. White is better, Kharitonov-Bandza, USSR 1995.

**D2.** 9...f6 10.♙f4 ♙d6 11.♙g3 0-0 12.e3 ♞e7

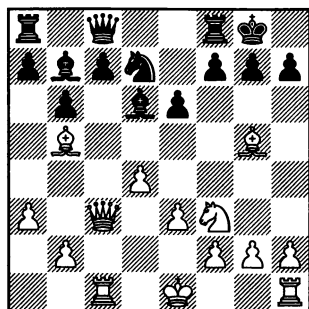


Black had tested 12...e5, but it has not caught up since it weakens a whole complex of light squares.

13.♙xd6 cxd6 14.♞c7 ♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♞fc8 16.♞b7 ♞cb8 17.♞c7 ♞c8.

Here the game Dreev-Ehlvest, Goodricke 1992 ended in a draw.

**D3.** 9...♞c8 10.♞c1 ♙d6 11.e3 0-0 12.♙b5



4.a3 ♟b7 5. ♞c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♞xd5 7.♞c2 ♞xc3 8.♞xc3

### 12...c5

Alternatively:

12...♞b8 13.0-0 a6 14.♙d3 ♞d7  
15.♞d2 ♞b8 16.♙e4 c5 17.♙xb7 ♞xb7  
18.dxc5 ♞xc5 19.b4 ♞a4 20.♞c6  
with a slightly better endgame in M.  
Gurevich-Ilincic, Eger 1987;

12...a6 13.♙c6 ♙e8 14.0-0 e5  
15.♙h4! ♙xc6 16.♞xc6 exd4 17.exd4  
♙e6 18.♞d5 ♞f6 19.♙xf6 ♙xf6  
20.♞e5 and the c7-pawn is weak,  
M.Gurevich-Vilela, Havana 1986.

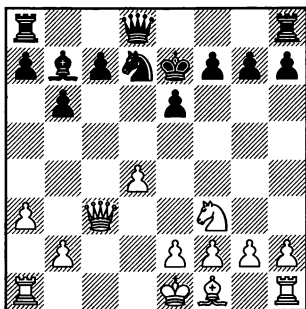
### 13.0-0 a6 14.♙e2

Or 14.♙xd7 ♞xd7 15.dxc5 bxc5!  
16.♙fd1 ♙xf3 17.gxf3 ♞c6 and Black's  
weakness on c5 is compensated by  
the weakness of f3.

14...♞b8 15.♙h4 ♙c8 16.♙fd1  
c4! 17.♞c2 b5 18.e4 ♞f8

Black has clear play around the  
enemy centre, Cebalo-Unzicker, Bern  
1987.

### D4. 9...♙e7! 10.♙xe7 ♞xe7!



A great idea of grandmaster  
Sergey Makarichev. It is entirely in  
the spirit of contemporary chess –  
a king in the centre is not a weak-  
ness. Black's excellent development  
is a more important factor. This is

the most enterprising branch of the  
8.♞xc3 variation.

Now White has two serious op-  
tions:

D4a. 11.e3 and D4b. 11.g3

11.d5 is only a minor alternative  
which offers Black the initiative af-  
ter 11...♙xd5 12.♞xg7 ♞g8 13.♞c3 c5  
14.0-0-0 ♞g6.

### D4a. 11.e3 ♙c8 12.♙e2

Perhaps White should consider  
a restraining strategy with 12.b4 c5  
13.dxc5 bxc5 14.b5.

### 12...c5 13.dxc5 ♙xc5!

A clever pawn sacrifice based on  
better development.

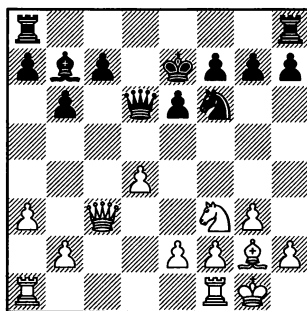
14.♞xg7 ♙g8 15.♞xh7 ♙xg2  
16.♞h4+ ♞f6 17.♙d1 ♞c7 18.♞d4  
a5!

White is a pawn up, but he is un-  
able to coordinate his pieces.

### 19.♞b5 ♙xb5! 20.♙xb5 ♙g4.

Black is winning, Portisch-Kar-  
pov, Biel 1996. Well, if Karpov him-  
self played this, the variation must  
be of highest grade!

### D4b. 11.g3 ♞f6 12.♙g2 ♞d6 13.0-0



The attempt to restrict Black's

c7-c5 play is inefficient: 13.b4 ♖ad8 14.0-0 ♙xf3! 15.♙xf3 ♜xd4 16.♜xc7+ ♖d7 17.♜c2 ♖hd8 18.♖ac1, Yermolinski-Ivanov, Reno 1999. Here Ivanov should have launched an expansion on the kingside by 18... h5 19.h4 ♜e5! preparing g7-g5.

**13...c5!**

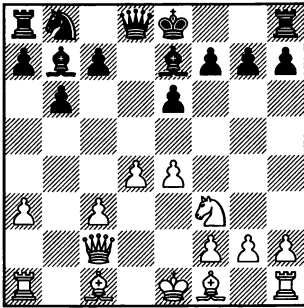
This move directly solves the opening problems. If Black tried to prepare it more thoroughly, then 13...♖hc8 14.♜e3 c5 15.♗h4! ♜c7

16.♗f5+ ♗d7 17.♙xb7 ♜xb7 18.♗xg7 would give White an edge, as in the game Nisipeanu-Tiviakov, Saint-Vincent 2003.

**14.dxc5 ♜xc5 15.♜xc5+ bxc5 16.♗e5**

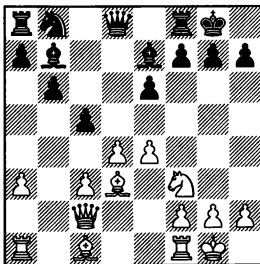
We have been following the game Atalik-Komarov, Yugoslavia 1999. Now 16...♙xg2 17.♗xg2 ♖hc8 18.♖fc1 ♗d5 followed by f7-f6 leads to a roughly equal ending. The c5-pawn is not much weaker than b2.

## PART 9



In this chapter we consider the most topical positions of the Petrovian system. Most of them are strategically unbalanced, with opposite attacks. In practice, White's assault on the enemy king brings better results, probably because humans in principle attack better than they defend. We should also note, that White's play is significantly more clear and straightforward. Black, for his part, has more possibilities to vary with the move order.

**9...0-0 10.gd3 c5 11.0-0**



Further play depends mostly on Black's decision whether to trade light-squared bishops or not.

We examine these distinct plans as system A. 11...♞c7, and system

**1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♘b7 5.♗c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7.♞c2 ♙e7 8.e4 ♗xc3 9.bxc3**

**The Main Line**

**Main Ideas**

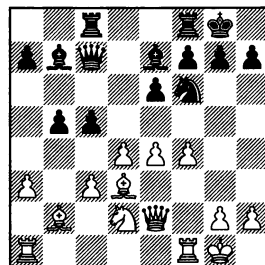
B. 11...♞c8. The latter option is by far the most popular choice, but recent practice is not too encouraging to Black.

Minor options are 11...♗c6 12.d5 or 11...♗d7 12.♙f4, linked with the advance a4-a5 in future. The immediate 11...♙a6 12.♙xa6 ♗xa6 is also dubious since the knight is misplaced at a6.

**A. 11...♞c7!? 12.♞e2 ♗d7**

Let us examine some key positions:

**1. 13.♙b2 ♜ac8!? 14.♗d2 ♗f6! 15.f4 b5!**

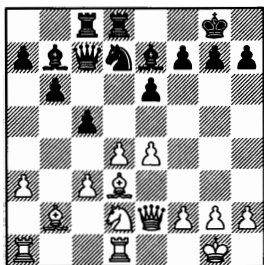


This is the most direct attempt to crush Black's defence. Practice has

shown that White's attack is not too impressive. (He has a forced draw though: 16.e5 c4 17.♙c2 ♘d5 18.f5 f6! 19.fxe6 fxe5 20.♖h5 g6 21.♙xg6, I. Sokolov.)

16.♙h1 g6 17.♗f3 (17.♗ae1 c4 18.♙c2 a5 19.♗f3 ♘h5 20.♖e3 b4! 21.g4 ♘f6 22.♗g1 bxa3⌘) 17...♘h5 18.♗af1 c4! 19.♙c2 f5!, blocking White's play, I.Sokolov-Hracek, Calvia 2004.

2. 13.♙b2 ♗ac8!? 14.♘d2 ♗fd8 15.♗fd1

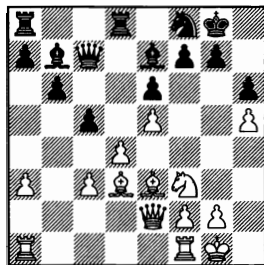


Here White refrains from pushing f4 and hopes to achieve a4-a5, but Black can prevent it. This position first occurred in the game Kasparov-Kramnik, Linares 2004. It saw long manoeuvring in the centre but neither side was able to take the upper hand: 5.♗fd1 ♘f6 16.a4 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♙b4 18.♘f3 ♖e7 19.h3 h6=. In Svidler-Karjakin, Foros 2008 Black released his control of e4 by 15...♘b8?! and that immediately tipped the balance in White's favour: 16.♘c4 ♙a6 17.d5 b5 18.♘e3 c4 19.♙c2 ♘d7 20.a4↑.

**Conclusion for 13. ♙b2:**  
*The bishop is too passive on b2.*

*That could be ignored if the rest of White's forces suffice for a direct attack with f4, but Black has enough defensive resources and an active plan of his own with b5-c4, followed by b5-b4. Without pushing his kingside pawns, White is unable to make progress and the game is roughly equal. In that case Black should watch out for a4-a5.*

3. 13.e5!? ♗fd8 14.h4! ♘f8 15.h5 h6 16.♙e3

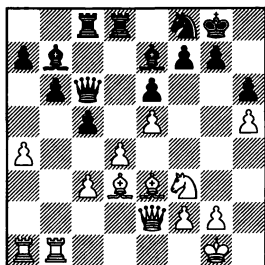


White gained space on the kingside and restricted the enemy knight. This is a promising setup. Basically, White wants to get to Black's king. But he is also secretly eyeing the other wing, where he can develop pressure by a4-a5, ♗fb1. The fine point is that White has a spatial advantage and more active pieces which could be swiftly relocated from one part of the board to another. So he tries to shatter Black's defence by shifting the direction of the main blow. (Here is an example: 16...♖c6 17.a4 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♙b4 19.♗fc1 ♖d5 20.♗ab1 ♙a5 21.♗b5 ♖d7 22.♘d2 ♙c6 and suddenly White exploded on the other wing:

23.♗e4 ♖xb5 24.♖xb5 ♗d5 25.♗f6+  
gxf6 26.♗g4+) Note that 15...h6 is  
indispensable or White will play h6  
himself and penetrate through the  
queenside.

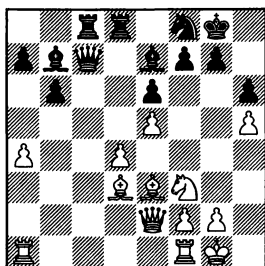
Play can continue with:

a) 16...♗c6 17.a4 ♖ac8 18.♖fb1!±,



White prevented the manoeuvre  
♖b4-a5 and his game is prefer-  
able, Krasenkow-Romanov, Dago-  
mys, 2008.

b) 16...♖ac8 17.a4!? cxd4 18.cxd4

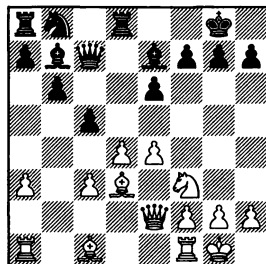


This position is yet to be tested  
in practice. White wants to activate  
the knight, for instance, 18...♖b4  
19.♖ab1 ♕a5 20.♗d2 ♖xd2 21.♗xd2  
♗c6 22.f3 ♗c3 23.♖fd1 and the bi-  
shop pair makes his game preferable.

### Move order tricks:

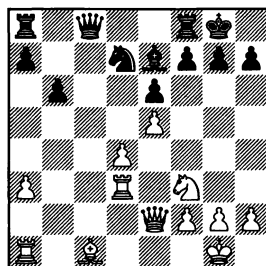
11...♗c7!? 12.♗e2 ♖d8!? is a sel-  
dom seen move order, which practi-

cally denies White the most danger-  
ous setup with 13.e5, because Black  
keeps open the option of developing  
the knight to c6.



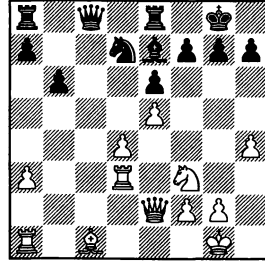
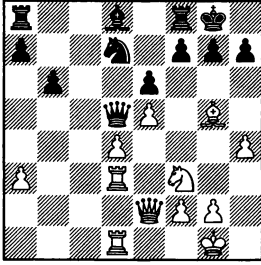
This topic is discussed in detail in  
the “Move by Move” chapter, line A.

**B. 11...♗c8 12.♗e2 ♕a6 13.♖d1  
♖xd3 ♗d7 15.e5! cxd4 16.cxd4**



Black’s plan looks most logical –  
the swop of light-squared bishops  
in principle should reduce White’s  
attacking potential. However, the  
e4-square becomes weak and often  
a white knight lands there to torture  
the enemy on both wings.

4. 16...♗c4 17.♖g5 ♖d8 (trying  
to keep White’s knight off the e4-  
square) 18.♖ad1 ♗d5 19.h4



Black experiences difficulties.

19...h6 will face 20.♙f4! and Black has serious problems with the imminent sacrifice on h6.

19...f6 (or 19...♞e8 20.h5 f6 21.exf6 ♙xf6 22.♙xf6 ♘xf6 23.h6±) 20.exf6 ♙xf6 21.♞e3±, Radjabov – Leko, Dortmund 2003 offers White a stable advantage because his rooks are much more mobile.

5. 16...♞e8 17.h4!

White’s aim is to keep the d7-knight out of play.

The fine point is that 17...♘f8 allows 18.♘g5 and both white heavy pieces are ready to hit the g7-square. (18.h5?! justifies the the manoeuvre of Black’s knight to f8. It goes on further to g5 after 18...h6 19.♘h2 ♘h7 20.♟g4 ♖h8 21.♙d2 ♟b7=) The queen moves are not sufficient either since White’s knight conquers the e4-square: 17...♟b7 18.♙g5 ♘f8 19.h5; 17...♟c4 18.♙g5 ♘f8 19.♙xe7 ♞xe7 20.♘d2 ♟c2 21.♟f3 ♞d8 22.♘e4±.

Black has no counterplay.

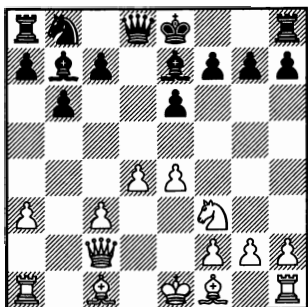
**Conclusion:**

The exchange of bishops via a6 (plan B) faces Black with some strategic problems. He often finds himself cramped, without counterplay.

11...♟c7 currently appears to be Black’s best choice. In that case the “Gruenfeld” setup with 13.e5 is more committing, but it is perhaps White’s only way to fight for an edge. He aims for a4–a5 or ♘f3–d2–e4 with threats on both wings.

We think that the rare move order 11...♟c7!? 12.♟e2 ♞d8!? deserves serious test. It deprives Black of his most aggressive plan with early ...c4 (considered in the “Move by Move” chapter, line A1a), but it also avoids White’s e5 setup.

## PART 9



### 9...0-0

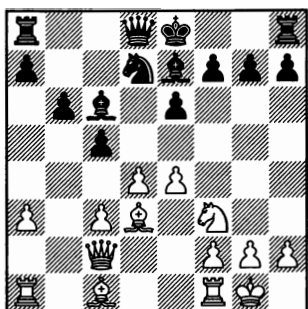
Black does not gain any benefits by delaying his castling. On the contrary, d4-d5 is always a threat:

a) 9...c5 seems less precise because White gets the possibility to drag the enemy bishop to a shaky position on c6:

10.♖b5+ ♗c6 11.♗d3 ♘d7

Black can also try to develop his knight to c6 with 11...0-0 12.0-0 ♖b7, but then 11.d5 is rather unpleasant. He might improve this idea with 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖b7, but he lands in a known position with a clear tempo down. This enables White after 14.♖b2 to meet 14...♘c6? by 15.d5!

12.0-0



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♖b7 5.♘c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♙c2 ♗e7 8.e4 ♘xc3 9.bxc3

### The Main Line

### Move by Move

### 12...0-0

Recently Motylev won a game with 12...♙c7 13.♙e2 0-0 14.d5 ♖b7 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.♖c4 ♘h8 17.♗xe6 ♘e5 18.♘g5 ♗xg5 19.♗xg5 ♗ae8 and he obtained sufficient compensation, Papin-Motylev, Moscow 05.02.2008. His idea to sacrifice the e6-pawn should be put to the test with 13.♗e1!? Then 13...♖b7 14.d5 0-0 15.dxe6 fxe6 16.♖c4 ♘h8 is not so efficient as White retains the extra pawn following 17.♗xe6 ♘e5 18.♘xe5 ♙xe5 19.♖c4 ♗f6 20.♗d2.

Note that Black has no time for prophylaxis like 12...h6?!. In that case the d5-break definitely tips the balance in White's favour: 13.♗d1 ♙c7 14.d5! exd5 15.exd5 ♗xd5 16.♖b5 a6 17.♗f4! ♙xf4 18.♗xd7+ ♘xd7 19.♗xd5+ ♘c7 20.♗e1 with a crushing attack in Kasparov-Gheorghiu, Moscow 1982.

13.♗d1

In Kasparov's opinion, 13.d5 exd5 14.exd5 ♗xd5 15.♗xh7+ ♘h8 16.♖e4 ♗xe4 17.♙xe4 gives White the initiative. He does have practical chances over the board due

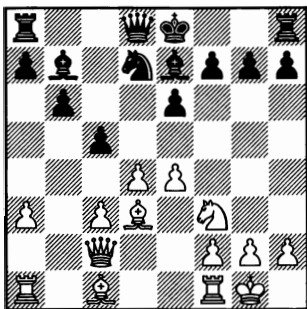
to the weakened castling position of the enemy king, but objectively Black should be able to defend successfully after 17...♔g8. So lately White prefers to maintain the tension in the centre.

13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ♖c8 15.♞e2±.

In this typical position the black pieces are more passive.

b) 9...♘d7 often leads to transpositions to the main line. It has a drawback though – Black commits his knight to a passive place.

10.♗d3 c5 11.0-0



11...cxd4

Alternatively:

11...0-0 12.♗f4 – see 9...0-0, 11...♘d7;

11...♖c8 12.♞e2 0-0 13.♗f4 ♘f6 is a popular setup where White should probably prefer 14.a4 intending to use the absence of the black knight from the queenside by a4-a5. The game Bilobrk-Groszpeter, Split 2002, saw instead 14.♞fd1 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖c3 16.♗d2, but 16...♞xd3!? 17.♞xd3 ♗xe4 ensured good compensation, although Black eventually lost. In general, White should not define the place of his king's rook before seeing the enemy set-

up. Thus he will meet ...♖c3, followed up by ...♞a8 by ♞fe1.

11...♞c7 12.♞e2 cxd4 13.cxd4 0-0 – see the main line.

12.cxd4 ♖c8 13.♞e2 0-0 14.♗f4

Now that Black has already exchanged on d4, the bishop has also good reasons to go to b2. It would deny any counterplay with ♖c8-c3 and will back a kingside attack. The famous game Kasparov-Akesson, Dortmund 1980 saw (with different move numbering) 14.♗b2 ♞c7 15.♞e3 (15.♘d2 allowed 15...♗g5 16.a4 ♞fd8 17.♞fc1 ♞b8 18.♞xc8 ♖xc8 19.♘c4 ♗a6∞, Mamedyarov-Sargissian, Reykjavik 2006) 15...♘f6 16.♗e5 b5 17.f4 ♞b6 18.♔h1 b4 19.axb4 ♗xb4 20.♞ab1 a5 21.♞e2 ♞a7 22.f5 with an initiative. We examine 14.♗f4, for it is a more typical way to exploit the absence of Black's queen from c7.

14...♘f6 15.♗d2!

This retreat may seem strange, but it is connected with a change of plans. Black has committed his knight to the kingside, so White chooses to put pressure on the other flank by a4-a5. However, the immediate 15.a4 allowed 15...♖c3 16.♗d2 ♞xd3! 17.♞xd3 ♗xe4 with nice compensation for the exchange, Graf-Goy, Germany 2008.

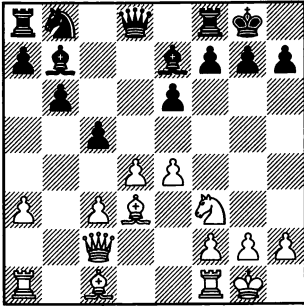
15...♖c7 16.a4 ♞a8 17.♞fe1 ♞fc8 18.a5±, Gulko-Benjamin, Lugano 1988.

### 10.♗d3 c5 11.0-0

A. 11...♞c7

B. 11...♞c8

5...d5 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.♖c2 ♕e7 8.e4 ♖xc3 9.bxc3



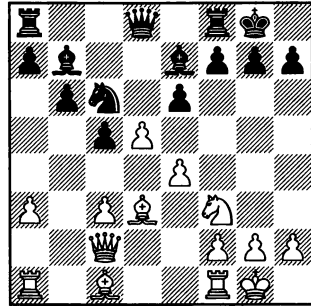
Black has a wide choice of other moves which are considerably less popular:

a) Black can trade immediately light-squared bishops: 11...♗a6 12.♗xa6 ♖xa6. In this case, however, his knight is misplaced at a6. White also gets the additional possibility after 13.♟d1 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♖c8 to retreat the queen to a more active place than e2, namely d3. Novikov-Kortschnoj, Ostrava 1994 developed in White's favour after the traditional 15.♖e2 ♟e8 16.♗b2 (Dautov suggests 16.♗f4) 16...♖b7 17.♟d3! ♟ac8 18.♟ad1 b5, when Novikov recommends 19.♟b3! b4 20.♟e5!;

b) 11...♟d7 allows 12.♗f4 (12.d5 c4! 13.♗xc4 ♟c8 14.♗a2 exd5 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.exd5 ♗f6 17.♗b2 b5! 18.♟ad1 ♟b6 gives Black ample compensation for the pawn, Moskalenko-Morozevich, Moscow 1994) 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 ♟c8 14.♖e2 ♟f6. White has an easier game. His plan is to push a4-a5 and make a weak black pawn on that wing. However he should start with 15.♗d2! in order to prevent any ideas with ...♟c3 and a possible exchange sac on d3.

c) 11...♟c6 is a rare move. Main

reason for that should be the possibility of 12.d5 (12.♗b2 cd 13.cd ♟c8 14.♖e2 ♗f6 15.♟ad1 transposes to line A2 of Chapter 6)



The arising positions are unpleasant for Black over the board in view of the constant weakness of his king:

12...exd5

The typical countersac 12...c4?! is not so good here, because White manages to take control of the strategically vital square c4: 13.♗xc4 ♟a5 14.♗a2 exd5 15.exd5 ♗f6 (15...♟c8 16.♖d3±) 16.♖d3±.

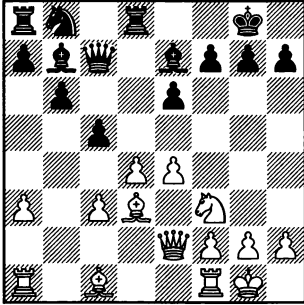
13.exd5 ♖xd5 14.♗xh7+ ♟h8 15.♗e4 ♖h5 16.♟e1 (It is better to avoid exchanges of rooks.) 16...♟ae8 17.♗f4±.

### A. 11...♖c7 12.♖e2 ♟d7

12...♟c6 is a very rare guest in tournaments, probably in view of 13.d5 ♟a5 14.c4 exd5 15.exd5 b5 16.cxb5 c4 17.♖c2±.

It is a mystery why nobody from the top plays 12...♟d8!?. This move practically denies White the most dangerous setup with e5, which is considered in line A2. The fine point

is that Black keeps open the option of developing the knight to c6.



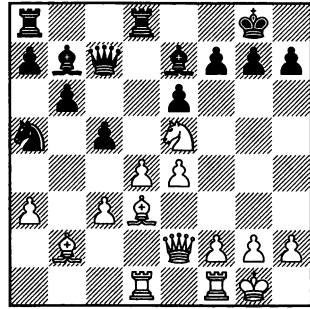
White has a wide choice of continuations that lead him to transpositions to other main lines or totally unexplored positions:

a) 13.♟e3 ♘c6 14.♞f1 (intending d5) 14...♘a5 15.♘d2 ♞ac8∞;

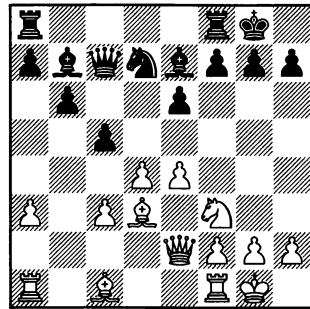
b) 13.♞d1 ♘c6 (Or 13...♘d7 14.g3 ♘f8 15.♟f4 ♟d6 16.♟g5 ♟e7, Ruck-Lutz, Budapest 2004, when White should have exchanged the bishops and play a4.) 14.d5 ♘a5 15.c4 ♘b3 16.♞b1 ♘xc1=;

c) 13.♟b2, when 13...♘d7 14.♞f1 ♞ac8 15.♘d2 14.♞f1 ♞ac8 15.♘d2 ♘f6 would transpose to the game Kasparov-Kramnik, Linares 2004 which saw a balanced fight. Svidler-Karjakin, Foros 2008 saw a more ambitious, but rather risky redeployment of the knight: 15...♘b8 16.♘c4 ♟a6 17.d5 ♘b5 18.♘e3 c4 19.♟c2 ♘d7 20.a4±.

We should also mention that after 13.♟b2 Black can develop the knight to c6: 13...♘c6 14.♞ad1 ♘a5 15.♘e5. We see a strategically unbalanced position which needs more testing.

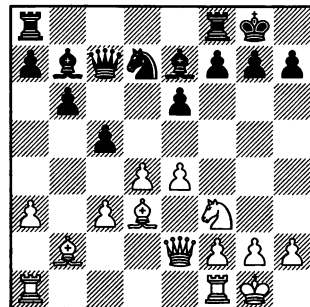


White's idea is to play f4 and attack on the kingside: 15...♟d6 (15...♘c6 16.f4 ♘xe5 17.fxe5 ♟g5 18.♞f3 h6 19.♞df1 ♞f8 20.♞g3↑) 16.f4 with double-edged play.



- A1. 13.♟b2
- A2. 13.e5!?

**A1. 13.♟b2**



This position first occurred in 1967 in the game Szabo-Polugaevsky, but it became topical only in our century, thanks to the effort of Kasparov and Carlsen. Black is currently in good shape in it. We shall consider A1a. 13...c4 and its improved version A1b. 13...♗ac8!?

13...♗fd8 is also a good move, but it is less purposeful than 13...♗ac8. Usually play transposes to line A1b after 14.♗ad1 ♗ac8 15.♘d2. Only 14.d5 is of independent significance:

14...exd5 15.exd5 ♗f6

15...c4 is dubious due to 16.♗xh7+! ♘xh7 17.♖xe7 ♗xd5 18.♗ad1 ♖c5 19.♗h4+ ♔g8 20.♘d4. The white bishop will soon join in the attack via c1 and will cause a lot of trouble to the weakened Black's castling position.

16.c4 b5!

Black has no time to waste. After 16...♗e8 17.♖c2 ♗xb2 18.♖xb2 ♘e5 19.♘e5 ♗xe5 20.a4 his queenside weaknesses begin to hurt.

17.cxb5 ♗xd5 18.♗xf6 ♘xf6 19.♗c4 ♗e8. The game is balanced, Ponomariov-Leko, Moscow 2006.

### A1a. 13...c4

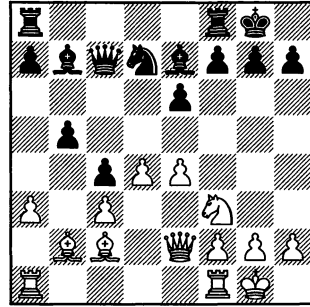
This is a consistent, but premature move. It is better to wait first White to discoordinate his pieces somehow, usually with the manoeuvre ♘f3-d2. We examine such an approach in line A1b.

14.♗c2

14.♗xc4 ♗xe4 15.♗b5 ♖b7 16.♗fe1 ♘f6 17.♗a6! was slightly better for

White, Almasi-Tiviakov, Groningen 1998. That is why Black should take away the a6-square to the bishop by 15...a6! =.

14...b5



15.♗fb1

White underlines the drawbacks of the early ...c4.

The source game of this variation saw 15.a4 b4 16.cxb4 ♗xb4 17.♗a3 ♗xa3 18.♗xa3 ♗fc8 19.♗c3 ♖a5 20.♖e3 ♗ab8 with counterplay, Szabo-Polugaevsky, Budapest 1967.

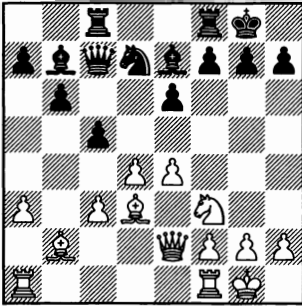
In the most recent highest level game Carlsen-Aronian, Elista 2007 White opted for a kingside attack with 15.♗c1!? Here Black should have prepared his queenside offensive with 15...♗ab8 in order to meet 16.♗b1 by 16...♗a8. In that case White's attack would have been not so easy. Instead, Aronian hurried with 15...a5 and after 16.♗b1 ♗a6 17.e5 b4 18.axb4 axb4 19.♗g5± Carlsen seized the initiative.

15...a5 16.♗c1 ♗a6 17.e5 ♗fb8 18.♘g5±.

White's pieces are well set for both defense and attack, I.Sokolov-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2004

**A1b. 13...♖ac8!?**

Black has pawn majority on the queenside and his most logical plan is to organize a passer on this wing. So he prepares ...c4.



**14.♟d2**

White impedes 14...c4 and enables a pawn storm on the kingside.

14.♞ad1 is a waiting move which has no clear idea. First of all, it encourages 14...c4 15.♙c2 b5. Strangely, no one has tested this natural continuation. Perhaps because Black achieves a satisfactory game with 14...♞fd8, when White will have to play 15.♟d2 anyway. Then:

a) 14...cxd4?! 15.cxd4 e5 16.♞c1 ♖b8 17.♞xc8 ♙xc8 18.d5 ♟c5, Galliamova-Tiviakov, Elista 1998, when 19.♙b5!± blocks Black's counterplay with ...b5.

b) 14...♙g5?! 15.e5 ♙xd2 16.♞xd2 ♟f8 17.f4 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♙d5 19.f5 exf5 20.♞xf5±, Krasenkow-Anastasian, Podolsk 1990.

Apparently Black should solve first the problem with his knight. He can shift it to f8, e.g. 16...♟f8 17.g3 ♙f6 18.♟f3 g6 19.h4 ♙g7=, Vitiugov-Zagrebelny, St. Petersburg 2006, or attack the centre by 15...♟f6!? 16.f4 b5! 17.e5 ♟d5 18.♟e4 cxd4 19.cxd4

b4 with excellent counterplay.

**14...♟f6**

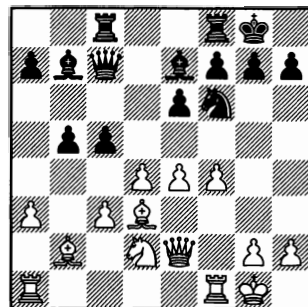
Black improves the position of his knight and hits e4. Thus he revives the threat of ...c4.

14...♞f4? is a clumsy attempt to weaken White's position. Following 15.♞ad1 (15.♟c4 ♟f6 16.f3 also looks pleasant for White) 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♞fd8 17.e5 b5 18.♟e4, White was clearly better in Bareev-Lutz, Torino 2006.

14...♞fd8 occurred in the game Kasparov-Kramnik, Linares 2004. Perhaps White should have switched to the plan with 15.f4!, when 15...♟f6 16.e5 cxd4! (16...♟d5? 17.c4±) 17.exf6 dxc3 18.fxe7 ♖xe7 19.♞ac1 cxb2 20.♞xc8 ♞xc8 is not too clear. Three pawns and active pieces should save Black from trouble. Instead, Kasparov preferred to maintain the tension with 15.♞fd1, but such tactic cannot be dangerous for Black.

**15.f4 b5!**

15...cxd4 16.cxd4 g6 is definitely not in the spirit of the position. After 17.g4! (17.♞ac1 ♖b8 18.♟c4 is more strategical.) 17...♟d7 18.♞ac1 ♖b8 19.♞xc8 ♙xc8 20.e5 ♙b7 21.f5, White had an attack in Ponomarev-Karjakin, Tomsk 2006.



Practice has shown that White's attack is not too impressive:

### 16.♗h1

I. Sokolov gives here a forced draw with 16.e5 c4 17.♗c2 ♖d5 18.f5 f6! 19.fxe6 fxe5 20.♖h5 g6 21.♗xg6.

Another direct attempt is 16.♖f3 g6 17.♗h1 (In Sokolov's opinion, 17.♖af1!? would be roughly equal.) 17...♖h5 18.♖af1 c4! 19.♗c2 f5!, blocking White's play, I.Sokolov-Hracek, Calvia 2004.

16...g6 17.♖ae1 c4 18.♗c2 a5 19.♖f3 ♖h5 20.♖e3 b4!

It is unclear how White could develop further his attack, while the enemy threats on the opposite wing are very real. The game Jakovenko-Wojtaszek, Pamplona 2006 saw 21.g4 (Or 21.axb4 axb4 22.g4 ♖f6 23.g5 ♖h5 24.♗d1 f6 and the attack is parried.) 21...♖f6 22.♖g1 bxa3 23.♗a1 ♖fe8 24.h4. Here 24...h5 25.gxh5 ♖xh5 26.f5 exf5 27.♖xf5 ♖g7 28.♖f3 ♗f8 would have tamed White's attack.

### A2. 13.e5!?

White borrows this setup from the Gruenfeld Defence.

### 13...♖fd8

Anand played 13...♗d5 14.♖g5 ♗xg5 15.♗xg5 h6 and White forced a draw by 16.♗xh6, Sakaev-Anand, Germany 2003. However, the simple retreat 16.♗e3 would have given him a pleasant game due to his better centre and the grim prospects before Black's knight. White can choose plans on both sides after 16...♖ac8, for instance, 17.♖g4 ♖h8 18.♖h4 ♖g8 19.♖fel or 17.♖fc1,

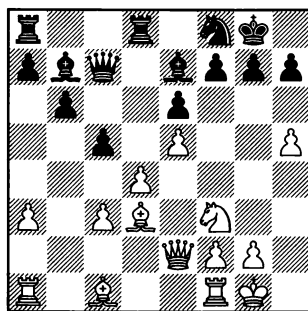
intending a4.

Radjabov-Macieja, Plovdiv 2003, saw another setup of the rooks: 13...♖fc8. White's play is identical to the main line: 14.h4 ♖f8 15.h5 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖d7 17.♗e3 ♖d5 18.a4! ♖c3 19.♖fb1 ♖a3 20.♖xa3 ♗xa3, when 21.♖b5! ♖c6 22.a5± would have been in White's favour due to his more active pieces.

### 14.h4!

The march of this pawn is very awkward to Black. He must relocate his knight for defence of the kingside, thus leaving the other wing vulnerable.

### 14...♖f8 15.h5



### 15...h6

This move is indispensable. It not only stops the pawn, but also enables the manoeuvre ♖f8-h7-g5. If White achieves h6, Black's back rank and dark squares will be chronically ill. Krasenkov-Ponomariov, Wijk aan Zee 2003 is a good model of White's play: 15...♖ac8 16.♗e3 ♖c6 17.a4 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♗b4 19.h6 g6 20.♖fc1± ♖d5 21.♗g5 ♖xc1+ 22.♖xc1 ♖c8 23.♖xc8 ♗xc8 24.♖b2! a5. Here 25.♗d2+- was winning material.

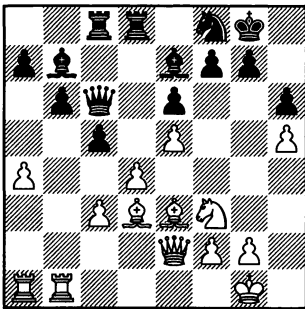
### 16.♗e3 ♖ac8!?

16...♖c6 is significantly more popular, but it is probably less precise than the text. The idea of this move is to deprive the opponent of the possible knight manoeuvre ♖f3-d2. It is arguable that White needs it though as we will soon see. At the same time the queen move has two drawbacks: it renounces the option of ...♙xf3, followed up by ...♗xe5 which is possible in some variations, and it wastes a tempo.

White should continue with 17.a4!

This is the only efficient plan of White. He will need his king's rook on b1. 17.♟fd1 ♜ac8 18.♗e1 ♖h7 19.♞g4 ♗g5 20.♙h2 ♙h8 21.a4 ♗e4 was fine for Black in Gelfand-Carlsen, Biel 2005.

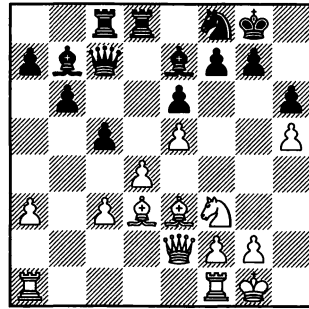
17...♟ac8 (or 17...cxd4 18.cxd4 ♙b4 19.♟fc1 ♞d5 20.♟ab1 ♙a5 21.♟b5 ♞d7 22.♗d2±) 18.♟fb1±, Krasenkow-Romanov, Dagomys, 2008.



White prevented ...♙b4 and his game is preferable. Instead, 18.a5 proved premature as 18...cxd4 19.cxd4 ♙b4 20.axb6 axb6 21.♟ab1 ♙a5 allowed Black to protect every-

thing in Navara-Hracek, Karlovy Vary 2005.

We see that control of the c-file does not ensure Black counterplay. He can also attempt to activate his knight with 17...♗h7 18.♟fc1 ♗g5, but in the game Krasenkow-Johannessen, Tromsøe 2006, White was slightly better after 19.♗e1 ♜ac8 20.f3 ♞d7 21.♟cb1 ♙d5 22.♙a6 ♟c7 23.a5 ♟b8 24.♗d3±.



### 17.a4!?

Black took over the initiative after 17.♗d2 cxd4 18.cxd4 f5, Golod-Zhigalko, Plovdiv 29.04.2008.

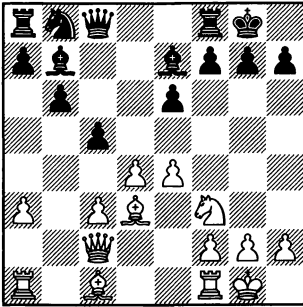
It is tempting to play first 17.♟fb1 in order to prevent ... ♙b4, but then Black would be able to demonstrate the pluses of his queen being on c7 by 17...♗d7, threatening to capture on f3 and e5. So White must play 18.♗d2, when 18...f5 is very strong.

After the text move Black can hold firmly by:

**17...cxd4 18.cxd4 ♙b4** (or 18...♗d7!? 19.♟fc1 ♞b8 20.♗d2 ♟xc1+ 21.♟xc1 ♟c8 22.♗c4 ♙d5) **19.♟ab1 ♙a5 20.♗d2 ♙xd2 21.♞xd2 ♞c6 22.f3 ♞c3 23.♟fd1 ♞xd2.**

All this is yet to be tested.

**B. 11...♖c8**



This plan looks most logical – the swop of light-squared bishops in principle should reduce White’s attacking potential. However, the e4-square becomes weak and often a white knight lands there to torture the enemy on both wings.

- B1. 12.♖a2
- B2. 12.♖e2!

Rare alternatives:

a) 12.♖d1 ♗a6 13.♗xa6 ♖xa6 14.♗f4 (or 14.d5 exd5 15.exd5 ♗f6 16.♗g5 ♗xg5 17.♖xg5 ♖f5=, Ivanchuk-Kortschnoj, Luzern 1993) 14...♞d8 15.♖e2 ♖b7, transposing to line B1, game Gershon-M.Gurevich, Antwerp 1999.

b) 12.♖b3 c4 (12...♗a6 13.♗xa6 ♖xa6 14.♗f4 gives White some advantage) 13.♗xc4 ♗xe4 14.♗g5, Solozhenkin-Genov, Primorsko 1999, 14...♖c6 and Black has not serious problems.

c) 12.e5 h6 13.♖e2 ♞d8 14.♞d1 ♖d7 15.♗e3 ♖c6 16.♗b5 ♖c7 17.♖d2 f5!. Black attacks the centre and easily equalizes, Kasparov-Ribli, Reykjavik 1988.

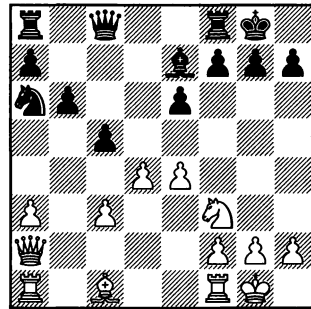
**B1. 12.♖a2**

By this move White wants to support a plan with d4-d5. However this advance is not dangerous for Black even if White achieves it.

**12...♞d8**

The favourite move of Leko.

There is nothing wrong with Black’s initial plan of trading light-squared bishops: 12...♗a6 13.♗xa6 ♖xa6.

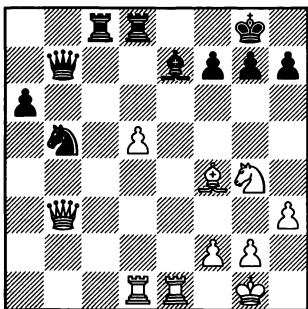


Now White should decide whether to place his bishop on the long diagonal, which is connected with d4-d5 in future, or to put it on f4 and organize a kingside pawn storm. The latter plan is rather risky and White might end up in a difficult position. In practice however, Black players often blundered which explains their negative score. Let us follow the game Lautier-Leko, Cannes 2002:

14.♞d1 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖b7 16.♖e2 ♞fd8 17.♗b2 ♗f6 18.h4 ♖c7 19.h5 h6 20.♖h2 ♖e8 21.♞d3 ♞ac8 22.♖g4 ♗g5 23.♞f1. Here Leko showed a typical way to put a break to White’s activity on the kingside: 23...f5 24.exf5 exf5, seizing the initiative.

The latest model game in this

variation, Dreev-Postny, Ermioni 2006, probably explains why Black does not like too much the immediate 12...♔a6. White set up his rooks on e1 and d1, aiming to push d5. 14.♙e1 ♖d8 15.♙f4 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♗b7 17.♙ad1 ♘c7 18.♗b3 ♙ac8 19.♘e5 ♙f6 20.h3 a6 21.a4 b5 22.♘g4 ♙e7 23.axb5 ♘xb5 24.d5 exd5 25.exd5



Although Black drew the game, he had to struggle for this result without having a trace of counterplay.

### 13.♙d1

13.♙f4 disappeared after the game Krasenkow-J.Polgar, Wijk aan Zee 2003 which went on 13...♘c6 (13...♔xa6 also should be enough for equalizing, since Gelfand's recommendation 14.♙xa6 ♗xa6 15.d5 is at least double-edged: 15...exd5 16.exd5 ♙f6! 17.d6 c4 18.♙fd1 ♘d7 19.♙g5 ♙xg5 20.♘xg5 ♘c5) 14.d5 ♘a5 15.c4 b5! with an initiative.

### 13...♔a6

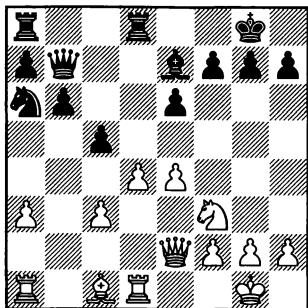
13...♙f6 is unnecessarily provocative and gives White a chance to start an attack after 14.♙f4 cxd4 15.e5!? ♙e7 16.cxd4 ♙d5 17.♗e2 ♘c6 18.♘g5 g6 19.♗e3 ♗d7 20.♗h3, Krasenkow-Stohl, Germany 2003.

### 14.♙xa6 ♘xa6 15.♗e2

The queen should leave the edge of the board anyway.

### 15...♗b7

In his previous game Leko exchanged on d4 first, but it is more flexible to keep this option in reserve.



A critical position for this line. Black has good long-term prospects, because he has no weaknesses while the a3-pawn is a target. His only problem is the knight on the rim, but that can be easily remedied by the manoeuvre ♘a6-♘c7-e8. Indifferent play in the centre would cause White to lose his temporary initiative:

16.♙f4 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♙ac8 18.♙d3 ♘c7 19.♘e5 ♘e8! has proved to be very solid in Gershon-M.Gurevich, Amsterdam 1999. Instead of thinking how to maintain the balance, White attempted a desperate raid against the enemy king, which was promptly punished: 20.♗h5? ♙d6! 21.♙g3 f6 22.♙h3 g5!. The only reason to choose this variation with White should be the possibility to gain space on the kingside with:

### 16.h4 ♘c7 17.h5 h6 18.♘e5 ♘e8

Obviously Black has solved the opening problems. He needed two more moves to overtake the initiative after:

**19.♖b2 ♖f6 20.♞e1 b5!?**

Black went on to win in Radjabov-Leko, Linares 2003.

## B2. 12.♖e2 ♖a6

Black has no reason to hurry with the exchange on d4, because the opening of the long diagonal offers White the additional option of developing the bishop to b2: 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖a6. Still, transition to the main line with 14.♞d1 seems best, as 14.♖b2 ♖xd3 15.♖xd3 ♖a6 16.♖d2 ♖d7 17.d5 ♖c5! is roughly equal. (Gelfand-Lerner, Norilsk 1987 saw 17...exd5?! 18.exd5 ♖f6 19.d6! with a clear edge.)

12...♖d7 is inconsistent since if Black had not planned to trade bishops, he should have put the queen on c7. White can continue 13.♖f4 c4 14.♖c2, with a pleasant game.

## 13.♞d1

If White creates a passed pawn, 13.d5, Black obtains a good game after 13...♖xd3 14.♖xd3 c4 15.♖c2 exd5 16.exd5 ♖d7 17.♞d1 ♞d8 18.♖f4 ♖f6, Cramling-Marin, Sevilla 1994.

Another possible setup for White is 13.♖b2 ♖xd3 14.♖xd3 ♖d7 (This is better than 14...♖a6 15.c4 cxd4 16.♖xd4 and White's pieces are eyeing the kingside.) 15.♞ad1 ♞d8 followed by 16...♖f8. Having secured the castling position, Black would be able to turn his attention to the enemy centre.

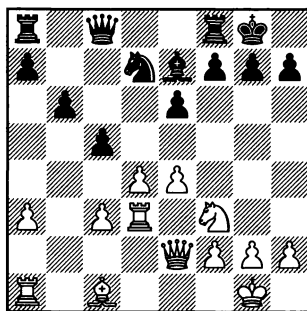
Finally, White has tested 13.♖f4. It is a good place for the bishop, but it is better to have on d3 a rook, not a queen. After 13...♖xd3 14.♖xd3 ♞d8 15.d5 c4 16.♖e2 exd5 17.exd5 ♖f6 18.d6 ♖f5 19.♖g3 ♖d7, the d6-pawn is not dangerous, Piket-van der Wiel, The Netherlands 1996.

## 13...♖xd3

This swap is inevitable, although Black sometimes tries to put off his opponent by maintaining tension with 13...♞d8. White can answer with 14.h4.

## 14.♞xd3 ♖d7

Or 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖d7.



## 15.e5!

White unambiguously defines his main strategic aim – to get to the enemy king. It is very important to deprive the d7-knight of the f6-square.

In the game Zhao Xue-Ivanchuk, Beersheba 2005, White chose 15.h4. It is difficult to guess what he had planned to 15...♖f6. Anyway, Black answered 15...♖a6 16.♖g5 ♞fe8 and finally White resorted to 17.e5. The game went on 17...♞ac8 18.♞e1, when instead of eating a pawn (18...♖xa3?! 19.d5 ♖a4) Black

should have preferred 18...cxd4 19.cxd4 ♙f8 20.♘d2 ♖c2, pinning the knight and preparing to double the rooks on the c-file.

**15...cxd4**

15...♙c6 is a major alternative. Black does not want to open the c-file to White's rooks. Play is similar to the main line: 16.♙g5 ♖ae8

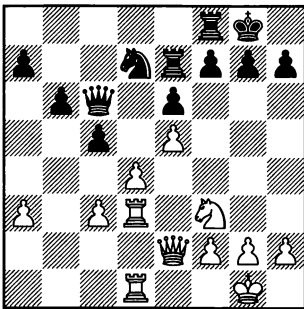
Alternatively:

16...♗fe8 17.♙xe7 ♗xe7 18.♙ad1!? (18.♘g5 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♜f6 allowed Black to hold firmly, Radjabov-Anand, Linares 2003);

16...♙g5?! practically offers White an extra tempo: 17.♘g5 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♖ac8 19.♙ad1 h6 20.♘e4 ♙d5 21.♙g3 with heavy pressure, Agrest-Akesson, Sweden 2005.

17.♙xe7 ♗xe7 18.♙ad1!?

A sneaky move. The immediate 18. ♘g5 could be attacked by ...f6. By doubling rooks on the d-file, White enables the breakthrough d5 at an opportunity.



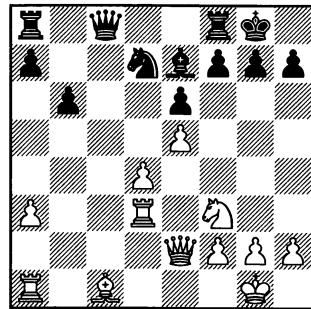
**18...cxd4**

It is very dubious to hunt for the a3-pawn with 18...♙a4. White generates tactical threats by 19.♘g5 ♙xa3 20.dxc5! ♘xc5 21.♙d8.

19.cxd4 ♖ee8

19...h6 does not prevent the knight from reaching e4: 20.♘d2 ♙c2 21.♙f1 and the black queen will be repelled with ♖c1. Note that d5 does not promise an advantage while Black's rook is on e7, for he will double his heavy pieces on the e-file, for example, 20.d5 exd5 21.♙xd5 ♗fe8. After the retreat of the rook however, 20.d5± is a good option and it ensures White's domination in the centre. In the game Peredy-Kragelj, Nova Gorica 2008, White preferred 20.♘g5, which was also slightly better for him.

**16.cxd4**



B2a. 16...♙c4; B2b. 16...♖e8

**B2a. 16...♙c4 17.♙g5**

White eliminates the defender of the d6-square.

**17...♙d8**

17...♗fe8 is no longer possible since the white knight reaches e4 via d2 with tempo. The same happens after 17...♙g5 18.♘g5 ♖ac8 19.♙ad1 ♖c6 20.♘e4 f6 21.♘d6 ♙d5 22.♗h3↑. The text impedes this manoeuvre due to the hanging d3-rook: 18.♙xd8 ♖axd8 19.♘d2 ♙a6, threatening ...♘xe5.

5...d5 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.♖c2 ♕e7 8.e4 ♖xc3 9.bxc3

### 18.♖ad1

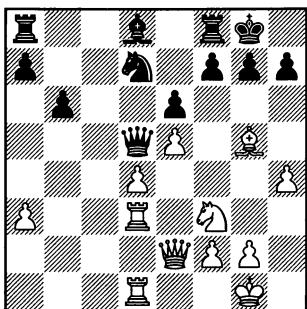
Bolstering the d3-rook and the d4-pawn. The outwardly appealing idea of seizing control on the c-file is unproductive: 18.♖c1? ♖d5 19.♖dc3 h6 20.♗xd8 ♖fxd8 21.h4 b5 22.♖c7 ♖b6 23.♖1c5 ♖b3 24.♖xb5 ♖xa3=.

Besides the rook move, White can also play 18.h4. The move order is not significant.

### 18...♖d5

Sooner or later Black will need this move. In the game Krasenkow-Cvitan, Plovdiv 2003 was 18...♖c8 19.h4 h6 20.♗f4! ♖d5 21.♖h2! with 22.♖g3 to come and White's forces are gathering against the enemy king.

### 19.h4

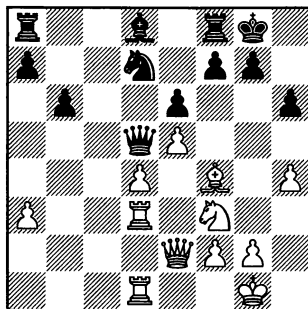


A crucial position for the evaluation of the 16...♖c4-line. Black experiences difficulties. He has tried:

a) 19...f6 20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♖e3 h6 22.♗xf6 (or 22.♗f4 ♖ae8 23.♗g3± Radjabov-Leko, Dortmund 2003) 22...♖xf6. White has a stable advantage because his rooks are much more mobile. He can occupy the c-file now by 23.♖c3 or 23.♖c2.

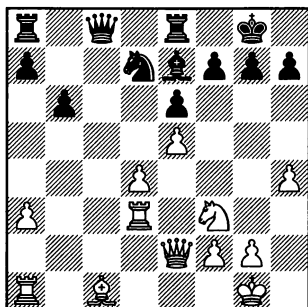
b) 19...♖e8 20.h5 f6 (20...h6 gives White a lever on the kingside and his attack is running smoothly: 21.♗f4! ♖c8 22.♖h2 ♕e7 23.♖g4 ♖h8 24.♖f3±) 21.exf6 ♗xf6 22.♗xf6 ♖xf6 23.h6±. Black's castling position is decisively weakened.

### c) 19...h6 20.♗f4!



Now that White has a target on h6, he needs his bishop alive. Engines tend to underestimate White's attack, but Black's position is a sorry sight. His pieces are totally disorganized and are unable to prevent the imminent sacrifice on h6: 20...♖c8 21.♖h2 ♖h7 (21...f5 22.♗xh6±) 22.♖g3 ♕e7 23.♖d3+±.

### B2b. 16...♖e8 17.h4!



An important finesse. Black finds it difficult to make a useful move now. Let us examine the more popular 17.♔g5, in order to better understand the insidiousness of the pawn advance. In Radjabov-Akopian, Engghien les Bains 2003, Black surprisingly answered with 17...♟f8!

It is vital to activate the knight. 17...♔f8 18.h4 leaves Black with passive pieces against White's attack. A possible continuation is 18...♞c4 19.♟d2 ♞d5 20.♟e4 ♞ac8 21.h5 ♞c4 22.h6 ♟xe5 23.♟c3 ♞c6 24.♞xe5 ♞xc3 25.d5 ♞c5 26.dxc6 ♞xe5 27.c7 ♞c8 28.♔f4±.

18.h4 h6, and it turned out that White cannot crush his defence. That was confirmed in the later game Kazhgaleyev-Karpov, Aix En Provence 2004, 19.♔e3 ♞b7 20.h5 ♞ac8 21.♟d2 ♟h7 22.♞g4 ♟h8

23.♞d1 ♞d5=.

In the diagram position Black has the following options:

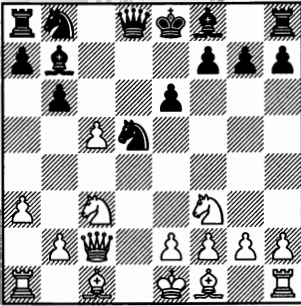
a) 17...♔h6? 18.♟h2 ♟f8 19.♔xh6! gxh6 (19...♔xh4 20.♞h3→) 20.♟g4 ♟g6 21.♞d2 h5 22.♟h6+ ♟g7 23.♟xf7 ♟xf7 24.♞h6→;

b) 17...♟f8 Now g7 becomes sensitive: 18.♟g5 (18.h5 justifies the manoeuvre of Black's knight to f8. It goes on further to g5 after 18...h6 19.♟h2 ♟h7 20.♞g4 ♟h8 21.♔d2 ♞b7=) 18...♞c6 (18...♔xg5 19.♔xg5 ♟g6 20.h5 ♟e7 21.h6) 19.♞g3 f5 20.exf6 ♔xf6 21.♔e3 ♞ac8 22.♞g4±;

c) 17...♞b7 18.♔g5 ♟f8 19.h5;

d) 17...♞c4 18.♔g5 ♟f8 (18...♔f8 transposes to the variation 19.♟d2 ♞d5 20.♟e4 which we considered above) 19.♔xe7 ♞xe7 20.♟d2 ♞c2 21.♞f3 ♞d8 22.♟e4±. Black has no counterplay.

## PART 10



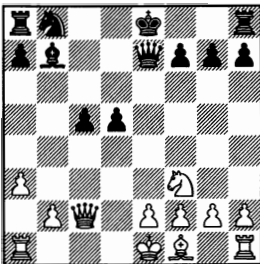
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3  
 ♙b7 5.♘c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♚c2  
 c5 8.dxc5

### Main Ideas

7...c5 is Black's most active option. The attack in the centre brings about a sharp position. Of course, Black takes risks by delaying castling. Main answer is 8.e4, which is the subject of our next part.

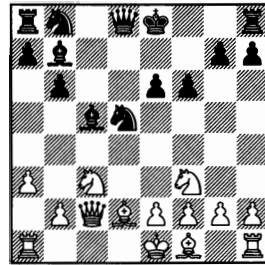
The idea of 8.dxc5 is to gain time for quick development of the queen's bishop. White could lead it out immediately:

1. 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.♙xe7 ♚xe7 10.♘xd5  
 exd5 11.dxc5 bxc5



This typical position with hanging pawns should not be of any concern to Black: 12.e3 0-0 13.♙d3  
 g6 14.0-0 ♘d7, with an imminent  
 ...d5-d4.

2. 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♙g5 f6 10.♙d2

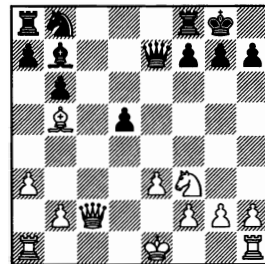


The chronic weakness on e6 makes White's game preferable.

10...0-0 11.e3 a5 12.♙d3 ♖h8!  
 13.♙d1 ♘d7 14.0-0 ♚e7 15.♙e4!

White achieved a lasting edge in Gelfand-Lautier, Manila 1990.

3. 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♙g5 ♙e7 10.♙xe7  
 ♚xe7 11.♘xd5 exd5 12.e3 0-0  
 13.♙b5!?



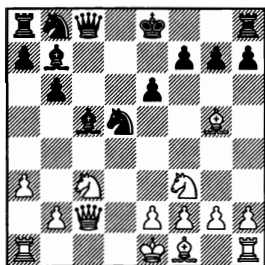
Black has an isolator on d5 and not a trace of attack on the kingside. However, he should be able to hold this position because he has good control of the c-file:

13...♞c8 14.♞d2 ♠d7 15.0-0

Or 15.♙xd7 ♞xd7 followed by ♞c8-c5, ♞a8-c8.

15...♠c5 16.♠d4 ♠e4 17.♞e2 ♞c5

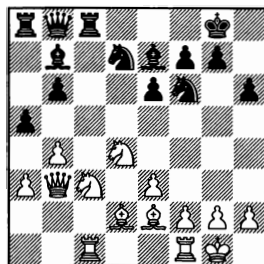
4. 8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♙g5 ♞c8!



The most popular reply. Black avoids producing weaknesses and aims for a symmetrical pawn structure.

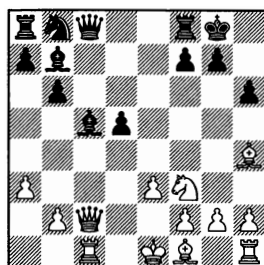
10.♞c1 h6 11.♙h4

11.♙d2 should be met by 11...♠f6 12.e3 0-0 13.♙e2 ♠bd7 14.0-0 ♞b8 15.b4 ♙e7 16.♠d4 ♞c8 17.♞b3 a5!



18.f3 axb4 19.axb4 ♙d6! =, Chekhov-G.Timoshenko, Berlin 1986.

11...0-0 12.♠xd5 exd5 13.e3



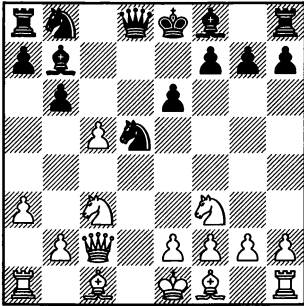
13...a5 Black secures the c5-square for his bishop and inevitably achieves d5-d4, reestablishing the symmetry: 14.♙d3 ♠c6 15.0-0 d4 16.♙h7+ ♠h8 17.♙f5 ♞b8 18.exd4 ♠xd4 19.♠xd4 ♙xd4 20.♞cd1 ♙e5.

Black gradually levels the game, A.Petrosian-Novikov, Lvov 1988.

### Conclusion

*The variation with capturing on c5 by White gives Black good development, but he must understand well the typical positions with an isolator on d5 or hanging pawns. Perhaps simplest is to play on elimination of the centre, as in example 4. White does not run any risks indeed, but he can hardly aspire to an advantage. That's why lately he prefers to meet 7...c5 by 8.e4, building up a perfect pawn centre.*

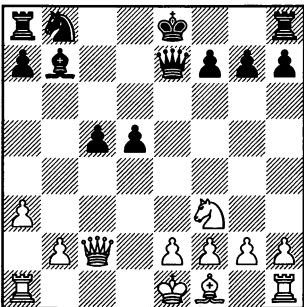
## PART 10



White prepares to develop his dark-squared bishop to g5, but he wants to avoid hanging pawns in the variation 8. ♖g5 ♗e7 9. ♗xe7 ♜xe7 10. ♘d5 exd5 11. dxc5

The other way of fighting Black's central pawn pair is not promising either: 11. g3 0-0 12. ♗g2 ♘d7 13. 0-0 ♗ac8 14. dxc5 bxc5 15. ♗fd1 d4! 16. b4 cxb4 17. ♝b2 ♗xf3 18. ♗xf3 b3! 20. ♝xb3 ♘c5 with active play.

11...bxc5



This typical position with hanging pawns should not be of any concern to Black. Here is an example:

12. e3 0-0 13. ♗d3 g6 14. 0-0 ♘d7

It is also possible to play 14...a5 15. ♗fe1 ♘d7 16. e4! d4 17. ♗ac1 ♗fc8

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘f3 b6 4. a3 ♗b7 5. ♘c3 d5 6. cxd5 ♘xd5 7. ♝c2 c5 8. dxc5

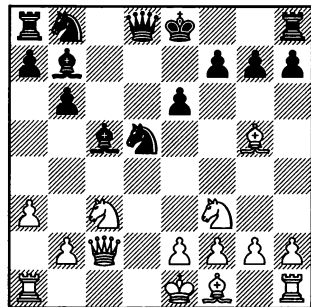
### Move by Move

18. ♝d2 a4 19. h4 ♘e5 20. ♘xe5 ♝xe5 and the weakness of the c5-pawn is balanced by the b2-pawn while the d4-pawn is a passer, Larsen-Miles, Tilburg 1981.

15. b4!? d4 16. e4 ♗fc8 17. ♝e2 ♗ab8 18. ♗ab1 ♗a8 19. ♗fc1 ♗e8 20. ♝a2 ♝f8!

Black has sufficient counterplay on the b4- and e4-pawn, Miles-C. Hansen, New York 1987.

8...♗xc5 9. ♗g5



Main lines here are:

- A. 9...f6
- B. 9...♗e7
- C. 9...♝c8

#### A. 9...f6

This aggressive attempt to gain

a tempo creates a chronic weakness on e6.

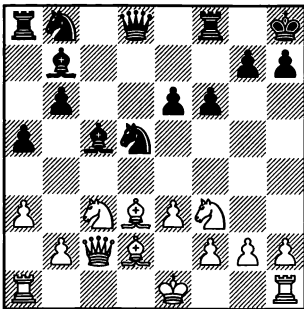
**10.♠d2 0-0 11.e3**

At first White preferred the straightforward 11.e4 ♖xc3 12.♗xc3, but 12...a5 13.♞d1 ♗c8 14.♗d3 ♖a6 15.0-0 ♗h8 16.♞fe1 e5! 17.♖h4 ♗c6 18.♗e2 ♖c7 19.♖f5 g6 proved to be absolutely balanced. Black will play ♗a8-d8, equalizing, Vyzhmanavin-Lautier, Sochi 1989.

**11...a5**

Lautier tested 11...♗h8 against Piket: 12.♗c4 ♖xc3?! (The modest 12...♗e7 was preferable: 13.b4 ♗d6 14.♗b3 ♖c7 15.0-0 ♖d7, intending a7-a5 at an opportunity.) 13.♗xc3 ♗e7 14.h4! ♖d7, Piket-Lautier, Leiden 1995 (m/1), when 15.h5 followed up by 16.h6 would have compromised Black's castling position.

**12.♗d3 ♗h8!**



**13.♞d1**

The sharp attack 13.h4!? is very interesting. White is threatening both ♖f3-g5 or ♗xh7.

**13...♖d7 14.0-0 ♗e7 15.♗e4!**

The h7-pawn is immune in view of f6-f5.

**15...♖xc3 16.♗xc3 ♗a7**

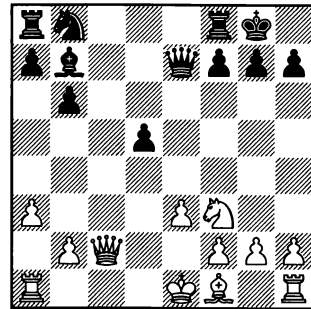
White achieved a lasting ad-

vantage (Gelfand-Lautier, Manila 1990) which could have been underlined by doubling the rooks on the d-file with 17.♞d2. Of course the symmetrical structure gives Black defensive chances.

**B. 9...♗e7**

This timid answer is somewhat underestimated, but it is positionally well grounded.

**10.♗xe7 ♗xe7 11.♖xd5 exd5 12.e3 0-0**



**13.♗b5!?**

Introduced by M. Gurevich.

The alternative 13.♗d3 ♗c8! 14.♗e2 ♖d7 15.0-0 ♖c5 16.♖d4 ♖xd3 17.♗xd3 ♗c5! brings about a typical isolator, where the pressure down the c-file ensures Black sufficient counterplay, Ehlvest-Kortschnoj, Zagreb 1987.

**13...♗c8**

13...d4? is worse due to 14.♖xd4 ♗xg2 15.♞g1 ♗e4 16.♖f5! ♗xf5 (16...♗xc2 17.♖xe7 ♗h8 18.♗c1±, M.Gurevich) 17.♗xf5 a6 18.♗d3 g6 19.♗d5! with an edge, M.Gurevich-Ionescu, Moscow 1987.

**14.♗d2 ♖d7**

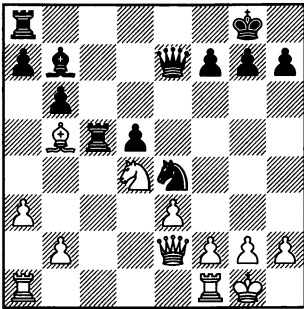
5...d5 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.♗c2 c5 8.dxc5

14...♗a6 should give White a slight advantage after 15.b4 ♖c7 16.♗e2 ♗e6 17.0-0 a5 18.♗d4.

### 15.0-0

After 15.♗xd7 ♗xd7 Black follows the above-mentioned Kortschnoj's setup: ♗c8-c5, ♗a8-c8.

15...♗c5 16.♗d4 ♗e4 17.♗e2 ♗c5



Black has no problems. In our opinion, this is a typical balanced IQP position. We must note however, that many players would enjoy having this structure as White who does not run any serious risks.

### C. 9...♗c8

The most popular reply.

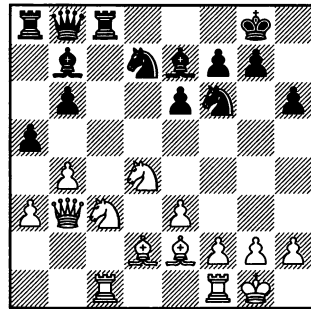
10.♗c1 h6 11.♗h4

Alternatively:

a) 11.♗e4 ♗d7 12.♗xc5 ♖xc5 13.♗d2 does not promise any advantage. Following 13...♗d8 or 13...0-0 Black is very well developed. Note that 13.e4?! is outright dubious and Black obtained a superior game after 13...hxg5 14.exd5 exd5 15.♗xg5 ♗f8, Ligterink-Beliavsky, Wijk aan Zee 1986.

b) 11.♗d2 should be met by 11...

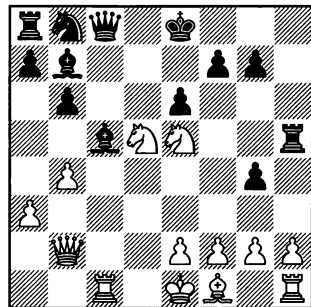
♗f6, anticipating ♖c3xd5. (The game Nikolic-Timman, Tilburg 1987 saw 11...♗c6, but after 12.b4 ♗e7, Nikolic-Timman, Tilburg 1987, the most precise move 13.♗xd5 offers White after 13...exd5 a pleasant choice: 14.e3 or 14.e4 with a clear edge in both variations) 12.e3 0-0 13.♗e2 ♗bd7 14.0-0 ♗b8 15.b4 ♗e7 16.♗d4 ♗c8 17.♗b3 a5!



18.f3 axb4 19.axb4 ♗d6! Black has an excellent game since the opponent must weaken his kingside, Chekhov-G.Timoshenko, Berlin 1986.

c) 11.♗xd5 leads to double-edged play where both sides can easily commit a mistake.

11...hxg5 12.b4 g4 13.♗e5 (13.♗d4!?) 13...♗h5 14.♗b2



14. ♖a4+ is weaker: 14... ♖c6 (14... ♗f8!?) 15. bxc5 ♙xe5 16. ♖e3 ♙xc5 17. ♙xc5 bxc5, Petursson- C.Hansen, Borgarnes 1985, when 18. ♖xg4 would face 18... ♗c7! threatening a check from a5 and long castling.

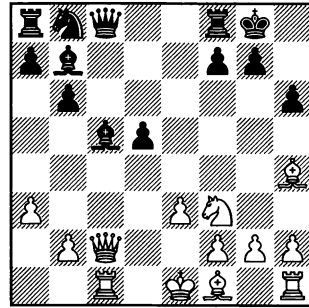
In the diagram position, instead of the natural move 14... ♗xd5, Black triggered a combination: 14... ♙xe5! 15. ♖xe5 ♗xb4+ 16. ♗d1 ♖c6. The game should be about balanced after the best continuation 17. ♖xg7 ♗xa3 18. ♖g8 ♗f8 19. ♖f6+ ♗e7 20. ♖g5 ♗d8 21. ♗e1 ♗d4 22. ♖d5. However both sides began to err and White went on to win after 17. ♙xc6?! ♗xc6? (17... ♗d7! would have regained the material keeping an initiative) 18. ♖xb4 0-0-0+ 19. ♖d3 f6 20. ♗b2, Dreev-Gelfand, USSR 1981.

**11...0-0**

Black cannot afford 11...a5 in view of 12. ♖a4 ♖d7 13. e4! ♖c7 (13... ♖f4 14. ♗g3 ♖h5 15. ♗b5±; 13... ♖5f6 14. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 15. ♗b5±) 14. ♖xc5 bxc5 (14... ♖xc5? 15. b4 axb4 16. axb4 ♗xe4 17. ♗b2+-) 15. ♗e2 ♗a6 16. 0-0 17. ♗fd1 f6 18. ♗c4! ♗xc4 19. ♖xc4 ♗f7 20. ♗g3 e5 21. ♖h4 with a serious

positional advantage, Kasparov-Van der Wiel, Amsterdam 1988.

**12. ♖xd5 exd5 13. e3**



**13...a5**

It is possible to get without this prophylaxis: 13... ♖d7 14. ♗e2 ♗d6 15. ♗d1 ♗e8 16. 0-0 ♖c5 17. ♖d4 ♗e4! 18. ♗g3 ♗xg3 19. hxg3 ♗e5 as this isolator is quite innocuous for Black, Jussupow-Chernin, Tunis 1985.

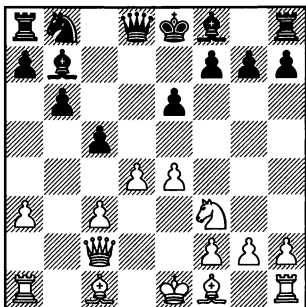
**14. ♗d3 ♖c6 15. 0-0 d4 16. ♗h7+**

16. e4 deserves testing.

**16... ♗h8 17. ♗f5 ♗b8 18. exd4 ♖xd4 19. ♖xd4 ♗xd4 20. ♗cd1 ♗e5.**

Black gradually levels the game, A.Petrosian-Novikov, Lvov 1988.

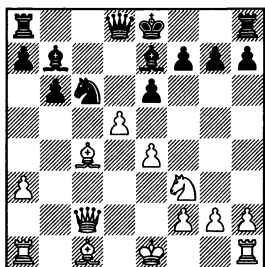
## PART 11



Simple and straightforward. The central pawn pair does not guarantee yet an advantage, but it is at least a good start. The question is would Black be able to set up his pieces harmoniously. In the diagram position his first major decision should be where to put the knight. It would be more active on c6, but White can seize the initiative by d4-d5. The other option, 9...d7, is solid and often transpose to variations from part 9.

### A. 9...dxc6

1. 10. ♖c4 cxd4 (10...a6 11.d5 ♜a5 12. ♙a2) 11.cxd4 ♙e7 12.d5!



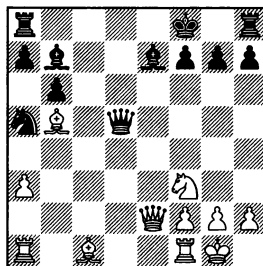
The only way to justify the place-

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞f3 b6 4.a3 ♙b7 5.♞c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♞xd5 7.♚c2 c5 8.e4 ♞xc3 9.bxc3

## Main Ideas

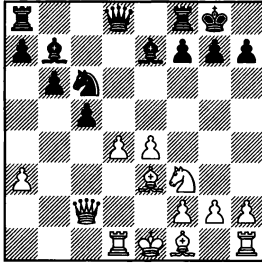
ment of the bishop on c4. White sacrifices a pawn and obtains sufficient compensation.

12...♞a5 13.♙b5+ ♜f8 14.0-0 exd5 15.exd5 ♚xd5 16.♚e2



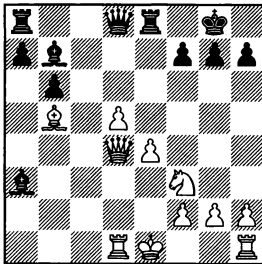
A critical position. Perhaps Black can hold it, but his defence is not easy and any mistake might be lethal. White, for his part, has a much wider choice. His primary task is to keep queens on. Then he should activate his rooks along the d-file, trying to get closer to the enemy king. If he feels that he is losing the initiative, he can always find a draw by constantly chasing the black queen. You can find more details in the "Move by Move" chapter.

2. 10. ♖e3 ♗e7 11. d5!? exd5 12. ♞d1 d4 13. cxd4 0-0



Here White achieved d5 without any sacrifices and his game is preferable. He can settle down with a small structural advantage after 14. dxc5 ♜c7 15. ♗c4±, (I. Sokolov) or opt for the more committing:

14. d5!? ♟d4 15. ♜b2 ♞e8 16. ♗xd4 cxd4 17. ♗b5 ♗xa3! 18. ♜xd4!



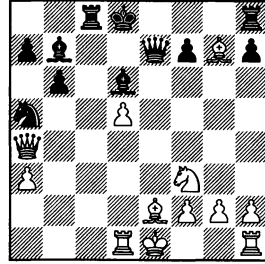
White went on to win in I. Sokolov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2004: 18... ♗c5 19. ♜d3 ♗b4+ 20. ♟f1 ♞f8 21. ♟d4 ♜c8 22. h4 ♗c5 23. h5±.

3. 10. ♗b2 ♞c8 (10... ♗e7 11. d5! exd5 12. ♞d1) 11. ♞d1 cxd4 12. cxd4 ♗d6 13. d5!

It is a bit disturbing that Dreev recently discarded this breakthrough against Shomoev, Moscow 2007,

preferring the very timid 13. ♜b1 ♜e7 14. ♜a2=. That could mean he had some reserves about the critical position on the next diagram:

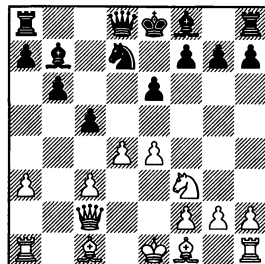
13... exd5 14. exd5 ♜e7+ 15. ♗e2 ♟a5 16. ♜a4+ ♟d8 17. ♗xg7



In Naumkin-Adorjan, Kusadasi 1990, Black followed up with 17... ♞g8 18. ♜d4 with some advantage to White.

More testing would be 17... ♞c4 18. ♜b5 ♞e8 19. 0-0 ♞c5 20. ♜a4 f6∞ or 18. ♜xc4 ♟xc4 19. ♗xh8 with an amazing position. Still, White should be somewhat better here.

**B. 9... ♟d7**

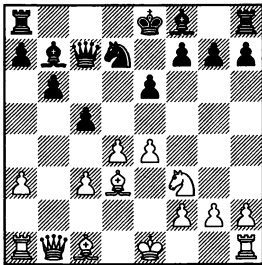


In part 9 we have dealt with a similar position. The difference is that instead of a knight on d7 Black had a bishop on e7. That allowed him to

5...d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♖c2 c5 8.e4 ♘xc3 9.bxc3

keep open the option of ...♘c6 and also develop the queen first to c7. On the flip side, he was deprived of early counterplay down the c-file with ...c5 and ...♖c7 because of the awkward check from b5. All in all, it is a matter of taste what variation Black should choose. We must note however, that White's choice is more restricted. For instance, if he attempts to transpose smoothly to the lines of part 9 with 10.♗d3, he will be immediately disappointed due to 10...♖c7! Then the usual retreat to e2 is impossible, due to check from c3, so the white queen must go to b1:

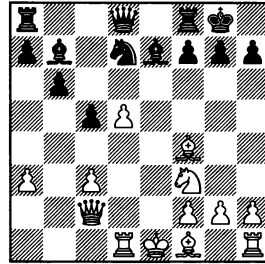
4. Position after 9...♘d7 10.♗d3 ♖c7! 11.♖b1



The queen is rather awkward on b1 so White can hardly hope for an advantage. Black has tested successfully the fianchetto 11...g6 12.0-0 ♗g7 and the central blockade with 11...♗e7!? 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗e3 e5 14.d5 c4 15.♗e2 f5! with good counterplay in Sakaev-Lilov, Plovdiv 2008.

5. 10.♗f4! (depriving the black queen of c7) 10...♗e7 11.d5 (11.♗d3 is

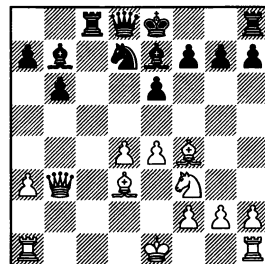
a good option, too) 11...exd5 12.exd5 0-0 13.♗d1



Generally, White has an active game in this structure: 13...♗e8 14.♗e2 c4 15.0-0 ♖c8 (15...♗xa3 16.♗xc4 ♖f6 17.♗g3±) 16.d6!? ♗f6 17.♗f1, playing on domination in the centre. That's why in several games Black tried to change this course of events with concrete play:

13...g5 14.♗g3 f5, but 15.♗d3! leaves White on top in a sharp position: 15...g4 16.♘g1 f4 17.♗xh7+ ♖h8 18.♗f5 ♗g5 19.h3 ♖e7+ 20.♘e2 ♖xf5 21.hxg4+ ♖g8 22.♖xf5± or 15...f4 16.♗xh7+ ♖h8 17.♗f5 ♖g7 18.c4. It is rather unpleasant to defend such a position.

6. 10.♗f4! cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖c8 12.♖b3! ♗e7 13.♗d3



13...♗f6

If Black misses the chance to hit e4 before White has castled, he will have to struggle in a cramped position after 13...0-0 14.0-0 ♗f6 15.♖fe1.

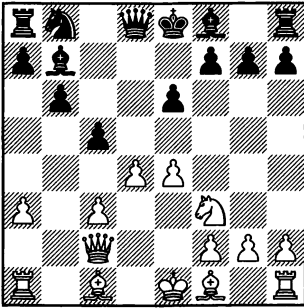
14.♖b5+ ♕c6 (14...♗d7 15.♗e5±)

15.♖b1 0-0 16.0-0. White's game is easier. He will put his dark-squared bishop on d2 and will patiently prepare a3-a4-a5 or d4-d5 or even both.

### **Conclusion**

*This part deals with the sharpest approach of Black to the Petrosian system – the early counterattack 7...c5. A logical continuation of this strategy would be the setup with 9...♗c6, but currently White seems in control. The arising positions are very risky for Black and he should enter them only with some home analysis and novelties up his sleeve. 9...♗d7 is more conservative. White should restrict the enemy queen by 10.♕f4! and retreat his own one to b3. That leaves him with a slightly better position due to his mobile pawn centre.*

## PART 11



1.d4 2.c4 e6 3.2f3 b6 4.a3  
 5.b7 5.2c3 d5 6.cxd5 2xd5 7.2c2  
 c5 8.e4 2xc3 9.bxc3

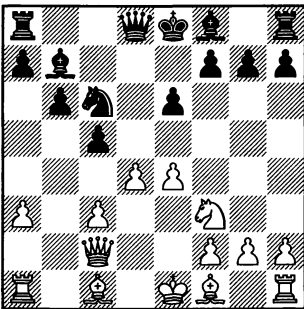
### Move by Move

Main options are:

- A. 9...2c6
- B. 9...2d7

#### A. 9...2c6

This move had dubious reputation, but modern practice is seeing numerous attempts of Black to shake such an assessment.



Black's knight is more active on c6. It discourages any ideas with a3-a4-a5 which are usually annoying. The obvious drawback of such development is that it provokes d4-d5. In many cases White can sacrifice this pawn to obtain a strong initiative. In contrast, trivial development which gives Black time to cas-

tle leads to a balanced game. White has different ways to stage d4-d5:

- A1. 10.2c4
- A2. 10.2e3
- A3. 10.2b2

#### A1. 10.2c4

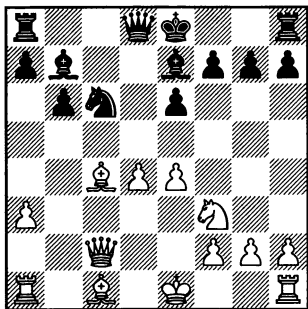
White wants to support d4-d5 with his bishop.

#### 10...cxd4

10...a6 is also met by 11.d5 2a5 12.2a2 exd5 13.exd5 and Black cannot capture on d5 due to 13...2xd5 14.2g5 f6 15.0-0-0. Instead, Ruck-Shchekachev, Austria 2005 saw 13...2e7 14.0-0 0-0, when best is 15.2f4! c4 16.2ad1 2xa3 (16...2xd5 17.2b1 g6 18.2e2+) 17.2fel with a strong initiative, for instance, 17...2e8 18.2xe8+ 2xe8 19.2c7.

#### 11.cxd4 2e7

11...b5 delays the breakthrough d4-d5 only for a few moves: 12.2d3 a6 (12...2c8? 13.2e2 a6 14.d5 2a5 15.2xb5+! winning, Lenic-Bartel, Portoroz 2005) 13.2b2 2c8 14.2e2 2e7 15.0-0 0-0 16.2ad1 2a5 17.d5 exd5 18.exd5 2f6 19.2e5 2c5 20.d6±, Ruck-Babula, Graz 2008.



**12.d5!**

This move was suggested by Semkov during the editing of this book. It is White's only way to face Black with problems. Routine development leads to a balanced game: 12.♖b5 ♝c8 13.♞e2 0-0 14.♖b2 ♖f6 15.0-0 ♘a5! 16.♙xc1 ♙xc1 17.♙xc1 ♞a8=, Gelfand-Grischuk, Sochi 2005.

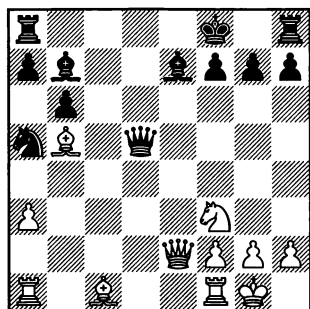
**12...♘a5 13.♖b5+**

White is forced to sacrifice the pawn, for 13.dxe6 ♞c8 is fine for Black.

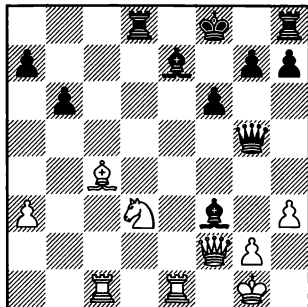
**13...♙f8 14.0-0 exd5 15.exd5**

15.♙d1 allows Black to trade queens: 15...♞c8 16.♞xc8+ ♙xc8 17.exd5 ♘b3 18.♙b1 ♘xc1 19.♙bxc1 ♙xc1 20.♙xc1 g6=. The bishop pair compensates for White's more active rooks.

**15...♞xd5 16.♞e2**



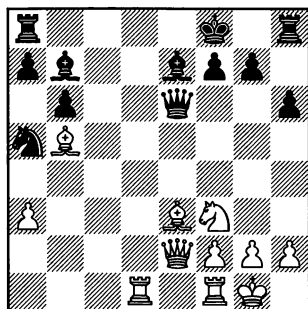
A critical position. Engines do not assess the diagram position too correctly and propose 16...♘b3 17.♖c4 ♘xc1 18.♙xc1 ♞e4 19.♞b2 ♙d8 20.♙fe1 ♞f4 21.♘e5 f6 22.♘d3 ♞g4, but here a second pawn sac earns White a powerful attack: 23.f3 ♖xf3 24.h3 ♞g5 25.♞f2→



Black is already beyond salvation. Semkov's analysis goes on with 25...♖c6 26.♘f4 ♖d7 27.♙xe7! ♘xe7 28.♙e1+ ♙f8 29.♙d1 ♞e5 30.♞h4 ♙g8 31.♖a2 ♞f5 32.♘e6+ ♖xe6 33.♙xd8+ ♙f7 34.♙d7+ ♘e8 35.♙c7+-.

If we go back to the 16th move, we'll notice that 16...♞e6 offers more chances for survival:

**17.♖e3 h6 18.♙ad1**



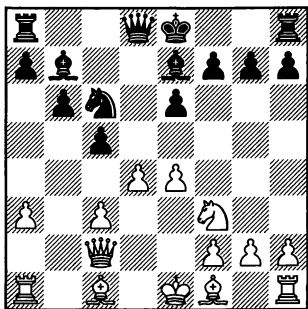
According to Semkov, White has

full compensation, but play is too complex to simplify it to straightforward variations. The fine point is that even when Black's king reaches h7, it will be still under attack. Here are some examples of White's resources:

18...♔g8 19.♞d7 ♙c8 20.♞d2 ♔h7  
21.♞d4 ♖f6 22.♙d3+ g6 23.♞b5 ♙b7  
24.♙d4 ♖c6 25.f4 ♙f6 26.♙e5♞;

18...♙xa3 19.♞d7 a6 20.♞fd1 ♙e7  
21.♞xb7 ♞xb7 22.♙c4 ♖f5 23.♞d4  
♖e4 24.♖a2 ♞d8 25.♙xf7 ♞c5 26.♙h5  
g6 27.♙f3 ♖h4 28.g3 ♖f6 29.♙d5♞.

## A2. 10.♙e3



### 10...♙e7

10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♞c8 12.♖a2!?  
(12.♖a4 ♙e7 13.♞e5 0-0 14.♙a6 b5!  
15.♙xb5 ♞xe5 16.dxe5 ♙c5! gave  
Black an excellent game in Solozhen-  
kin-Ionov, Russia 2003.) 12...♙d6  
13.♙d3 0-0 14.0-0 occurred in Pono-  
mariov-Anand, Sofia 2006. Here  
Anand redeployed his knight to de-  
fend the kingside, but that gave White  
a chance to open a second front on  
the other wing: 14...♞e7 15.♞fc1 ♞g6  
16.g3 ♖e7 17.a4 ♙b4 18.h4! ♞fd8  
19.h5 ♞f8 20.h6 with an edge.

### 11.d5!?

As usual in this variation, this break is the only serious way to pose problems to the opponent.

### 11...exd5 12.♞d1 d4

Black is in trouble after 12...0-0  
13.exd5 ♞a5 14.♙d3 g6 15.c4 b5  
16.cxb5 c4 17.♙e2.

### 13.cxd4 0-0 14.d5!?

Sokolov also mentions 14.dxc5  
♖c7 15.♙c4±.

### 14...♞d4

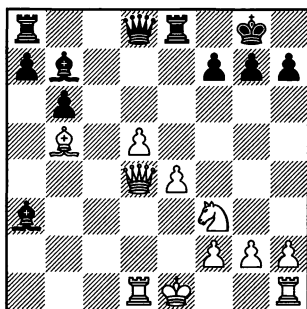
14...♞a5 will be met by 15.♙d2,  
intending to split Black's pawn  
structure on the queenside.

### 15.♖b2 ♞e8

The alternative was 15...♞xf3+  
16.gxf3 ♞e8 17.f4 ♙f8 18.♙g2, but  
White's pawn centre should pre-  
vail.

16.♙xd4 cxd4 17.♙b5 ♙xa3!  
18.♖xd4!

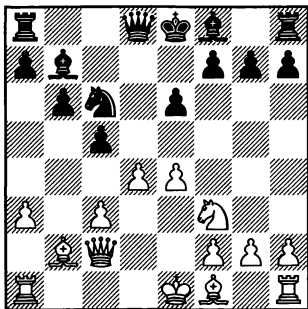
It would have been too danger-  
ous to grab a piece: 18.♖xa3 ♞xe4+  
19.♔f1 ♖xd5 20.♙d3 ♞f4.



In this position White's centre  
makes his game preferable and he  
went on to win in I.Sokolov-Kram-  
nik, Wijk aan Zee 2004: 18...♙c5  
19.♖d3 ♙b4+ 20.♔f1 ♞f8 21.♞d4  
♖c8 22.h4 ♙c5 23.h5±.

**A3. 10. ♖b2**

This old variation is still topical. Its current state depends on the evaluation of the hazy position which arises in the main line.

**10... ♖c8**

10... ♖e7 allows 11.d5! exd5 12. ♖d1 ♖d6 (12... ♖f6 was bad in Tukmakov-Oll, Kujbyshev 1986: 13.exd5 ♖e5 14. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 15. ♖b5+ ♖f8 16.0-0 ♖d6 17.f4 ♖f6 18.c4) 13.exd5 ♖e5 14. ♖b5+ ♖f8 15. ♖xe5 ♖xe5, Komarov-Aseev, Leningrad 1987, 16. ♖e2±.

10...g6 does not prevent d4-d5: 11. ♖d1 ♖g7 12.d5 exd5 13.exd5 ♖e7+ 14. ♖e2 ♖e5 15. ♖a4+ ♖d7 16.0-0 0-0 17. ♖fe1 ♖d6 18. ♖b5!. Then the bishop goes to c6, ensuring White a serious advantage, T.Petrosian-Sosonko, Tilburg 1982.

10...cxd4 in most case leads to a transposition. Its only drawback is that White obtains an additional option: 11.cxd4 ♖c8 12. ♖d2. (Without the exchange on d4 Black could try here 12...c4) It is hardly a big plus though as Black comfortably developed his pieces in Dreev-Palac, Dresden 2007: 12... ♖d6 13. ♖d3 0-0 14.0-0 ♖a5 15. ♖e2 ♖d7=.

**11. ♖d1**

Alternatively:

11.d5 exd5 12. ♖d1 ♖e7 13. ♖xd5 g6 is pleasant for Black.

11. ♖d3 led to a nearly forced draw in Dreev-Bologan, Poikovskiy 2007: 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♖b4 13. ♖a4+ ♖c6 14. ♖b5 ♖d7 15. ♖xc6 ♖d3+ 16. ♖d2 ♖xc6 17.d5 exd5 18. ♖d4 b5 19. ♖xb5 ♖b6 20. ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 21. ♖xd3 ♖xb2 22. ♖hb1 dxe4+ 23. ♖xe4 ♖b6 Draw.

**11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♖d6**

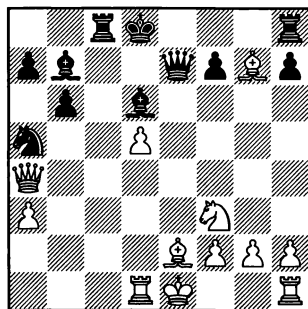
Development first! 12...b5 13. ♖d2 a6 13.d5! is in White's favour.

12...a6 13. ♖d2! ♖a5 is even worse: 14.d5 exd5 15.exd5 ♖d6 16. ♖xg7 and Kasparov quickly won against Murey in Moscov 1982. The relatively better defence 15... ♖e7+ 16. ♖e2 ♖c4 would face 17.d6!! ♖xd6 18.0-0 with attack.

**13.d5!**

It was very curious to see that recently Dreev chose against Shomoev, Moscow 2007, the very timid 13. ♖b1 ♖e7 14. ♖a2 0-0 15. ♖d3 where Black can attack the centre in different ways. Our understanding however tells us that against setups with ♖c6 White can aspire to an edge only by advancing the d-pawn.

**13...exd5 14.exd5 ♖e7+ 15. ♖e2 ♖a5 16. ♖a4+ ♖d8 17. ♖xg7**

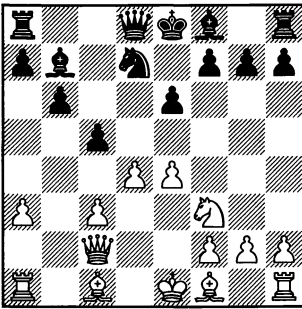


5...d5 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.♖c2 c5 8.e4 ♖xc3 9.bxc3

In Naumkin-Adorjan, Kusadasi 1990, Black followed up with 17... ♗g8 18.♗d4 with some advantage to White. More testing would be 17... ♗c4 18.♗b5 ♗e8 19.0-0 ♗c5 20.♗a4 f6 or 18.♗xc4 ♖xc4 19.♗xh8 with an amazing position. Still, White should be somewhat better here.

♗f8 13.♗xf8 ♖xf8 14.0-0 ♖g7 15.a4 ♖c7 16.♗e2 ♖f6 17.a5 ♗hd8 18.a6 ♗c6 19.h3 ♗ac8 20.♗e3 and the a6-pawn is binding Black's queenside.

### B. 9...♖d7

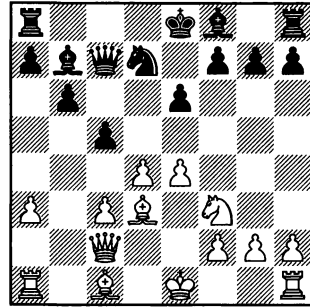


- B1. 10.♗d3  
B2. 10.♗f4!

### B1. 10.♗d3 ♖c7

10...♗e7 11.0-0 transposes to part 9. The position after 10...♖c7 favourably compares to part 9 of the book, which deals with an early ♗e7. The point is that White's queen cannot retreat to e2, due to check from c3. That brings about positions of independent significance, with a white queen on a2 or b1.

The alternative 10...g6 is too primitive. The fianchetto does not fit well to the ♖d7-setup as the knight does not help the bishop in the attack on the centre. The game Mamedyarov-Riazancev, Sochi 2006 went on 11.♗f4 ♗g7 12.♗d6



### 11.♗b1

11.♗a2 was tested in the game Dreev-Greenfeld, Fuegen 2006: 11...♗e7 (11...♖f6 faces 12.♗b5+ ♗c6 13.♗f4! ♖b7 14.♗e2 ♗xb5 15.♗xb5+ ♖d7 16.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 17.0-0 ♗e7 18.d5 and the d5-pawn causes Black a lot of trouble, Banikas-Mastrovasilis, Greece 2003) 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗b2 ♗ac8 14.♗ad1 ♗fd8 15.♗fe1 ♖f8 16.♗f1=. It is clear that White has not a clear plan. Black could have followed up with 16...♖g6 17.g3 h5 18.h4 ♗f6.

### 11...g6

The fianchetto bolsters up Black's kingside and discourages any attack on that wing. Anyway, we know that White's most unpleasant plan against a d7-knight is linked with a3-a4-a5, so he should not be too impressed by the enemy plan.

11...♗e7!? 12.0-0 0-0 leads to a typical pawn structure of the Petrosian system. White can maintain a strong centre or attempt a kingside attack by pushing d5 or e5. Usually

Black prefers to restrict the enemy's options and blocks the centre:

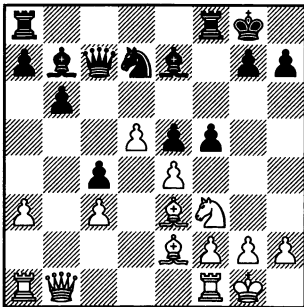
13.♙e3

Black had no problems after 13.e5 h6 14.a4 ♜f8 15.♙e3 ♙d5 16.♘d2 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♖b7 18.f3 ♜ac8 19.♗d1 ♜c3, I.Sokolov-Tiviakov, The Netherlands 2005.

13...e5

The best timing for this plan. In Miralles-Nijboer, Groningen 1983, Black gave the opponent time to consolidate after 13...♜ac8 14.♞d1 ♜f8 15.a4 e5 16.d5 c4 17.♙e2 ♙a6 18.♘d2 ♙d6 19.♞a2 f6 20.g3 ♘c5. Here 21.♙xc5! ♙xc5 22.♙g2 would have been in White's favour.

14.d5 c4 15.♙e2 f5!



Enterprising play by Black in Sakaev-Lilov, Plovdiv 2008. Now it would be very interesting to test 16.exf5 ♘f6 17.♗b5 ♜ac8∞. Instead Sakaev opted for 16.♗b5 f4!? (16... ♜ac8∞) 17.♙xc4 ♙d6 18.♙d2 ♘c5 19.♗b1 ♗d8 20.♘h1 g5 and Lilov organized an attack against the white king.

12.0-0

The insertion of 12.h4 h6 looks only in Black's favour.

12...♙g7 13.a4

In Yermolinsky-A.Ivanov, USA 2006, White also resorted to the advance of the a-pawn, but first he manoeuvred his dark-squared bishop to g3. It is arguable that it stands there better than on d2: 13.♙g5 0-0 14.♙h4 ♜ac8 15.♙g3 ♗d8 16.♞d1 ♗e7 17.a4 with complex play.

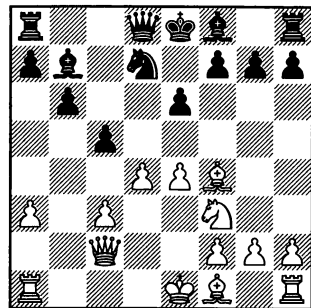
13...0-0 14.a5 ♜fe8

Here, in Fedorowicz-Levitt, London 1988, White chose to spend three tempi on bishop moves and the game became balanced: 15.♙g5 15...♞ab8 16.axb6 axb6 17.♙h4 ♞a8 18.♙g3 ♗c8.

It would be interesting to try 15.♙d2 with some pressure on b6.

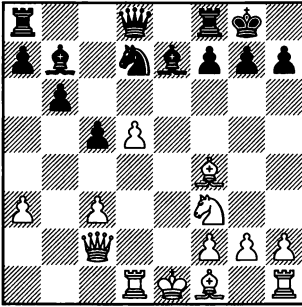
## B2. 10.♙f4!

This is the main objection to Black's move order. White aims to take control of the dark squares and especially of c7. That significantly hampers Black's development.



10...cxd4

This exchange is aimed against 11.d5 which is possible after 10... ♙e7. White gains some spatial advantage and a slight edge: 11...exd5 12.exd5 0-0 13.♞d1

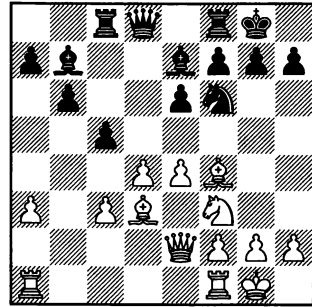


13...♙e8

13...g5 has disappeared from tournaments. We suppose that Black reasonably dislikes the position after 14.♙g3 f5 15.♙d3! f4 (Krasenkov-Schandorf, Esbjerg 2003 saw 15...g4 16.♖g1 f4 17.♙xh7+ ♖h8 18.♙f5 ♙g5 19.h3 ♚e7+, when simplest would have been 20.♖e2 ♙xf5 21.hxg4+ ♖g8 22.♚xf5±. White is better even if he trades queens.) 16.♙xh7+ ♖h8 17.♙f5 ♖g7 18.c4. It is rather unpleasant to defend such a position.

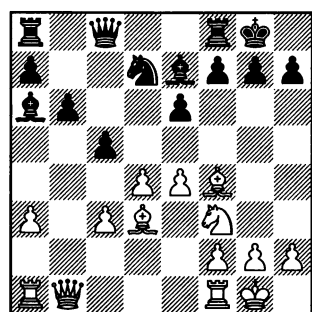
14.♙e2 c4 15.0-0 ♙c8. (It is worse to grab the pawn by 15...♙xa3 16.♙xc4 ♚f6 17.♙g3±) Here critical would be 16.d6!? ♙f6 17.♙fe1 with initiative. Instead, in Papin-Zontakh, Lipetsk 2008, White offered a central pawn by 16.♖d4, but Black cleverly declined the sac and held on following 16...♖f6 17.♖c6 ♚d7 18.♙f3 ♙xa3.

Lately White players prefer to maintain the tension by 11.♙d3, inviting the opponent to reconsider his strategy and exchange on d4. If he persists with keeping c-pawns on, play could continue with 11...0-0 12.0-0 ♙c8 13.♚e2 ♖f6



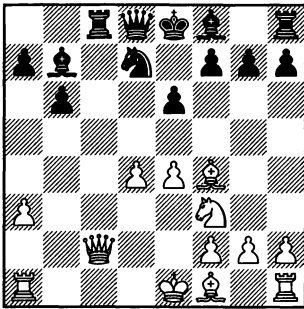
This is one of the typical positions of the Petrosian system. White's plan here is to put pressure on the enemy queenside by a3-a4-a5 and then to proceed with a breakthrough in the centre. He can start immediately with 14.a4, but then Black has 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♙c3 (intending to take on d3 and e4) 16.♙fe1 ♙a8=, T.Petrosian-Szabo, Portoroz 1958. So 14.♙fe1! is more precise. The difference is seen in the line 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♙c3 16.♙d2, when 16...♙xa3 17.♙xa3 ♙xa3 18.♙a1 ♙e7 (or 18...♚e7?! 19.e5! ♖e8 20.♖e1 b5 21.♖c2) 19.♙a7 ♚c7 20.♙a1! ♙a8 21.♙c1 and the b6 pawn is vulnerable.

Finally, we shall consider 11...♚c8 12.♚b1 0-0 13.0-0 ♙a6



14.a4 (White can also set up his rooks on d1 and e1 and push d5: 14.♞e1 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♟xd3 16.♞xd3 ♞b7 17.♞ad1 h6 18.d5 exd5 19.exd5 ♟f6 20.♞e5 ♞xe5 21.♟xe5 ♟xe5 22.♞xe5 ♞ad8 23.d6 ♞d7 24.h3 ♞fd8 25.♞d5±. White then tries to launch a pawn storm on the kingside.) 14... ♟xd3 15.♞xd3 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♞b7 17.♞ab1 ♞ac8 18.♞fel ♞fd8 19.a5 h6 20.h3 ♞f6 21.axb6 axb6 22.♞b3 ♞d7, Bagaturov-M.Gurevich, Vlissingen 1999, 23.♞b2!. In both examples White is slightly better.

**11.cxd4 ♞c8**



This is the most important starting position for this branch of the Petrosian system.

B2a. 12.♞b1

B2b. 12.♞b3

The third option, 12.♞a4, does not pose any problems:

12...a6 13.♟d3 b5 14.♞b3 ♟e7

It was possible to hit immediately e4 by 14...♞f6!?

15.0-0 0-0 16.♟d2

Black can meet 16.♞fel by 16... ♞b6, planning to leap further to a4 or c4.

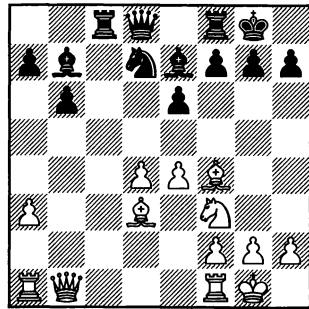
16...e5! 17.♞xe5 ♞xe5 18.dxe5

♞d4! 19.♞ad1 ♟xe4 20.♟xe4 ♞xe4 21.♞fel ♞c4, Anastasian-Mikhailchishin, Pavlodar 1987. Black is on top, for his pieces are more active.

**B2a. 12.♞b1**

By this move White anticipates the opponent's pressure on e4, but common sense suggests that such a setup is too artificial and can hardly ensure an advantage.

**12...♟e7 13.♟d3 0-0 14.0-0**



**14...♞c3!**

This is the best plan for counterplay. 14...♞f6 15.♟d2 (15.a4 or 15.♞d1 is also good) 15...h6 16.a4 ♞h7 occurred in Jankovic-Atalik, Bosna 2005. Now 17.♟e3! ♞g5 18.♞e5 ♟d6 19.f3!, restricting Black's knight, would have been clearly in White's favour.

**15.♞c1**

15.♟d2 ♞xa3 16.♞xa3 ♟xa3 17.♞a2 ♞e7 18.♞a1 ♟b4, Jankovic-Najditch, Kusadasi 2006, could have led to a draw after 19.♞b1 ♟xd2 20.♞xa7.

**15...♞xc1+ 16.♟xc1 e5!**

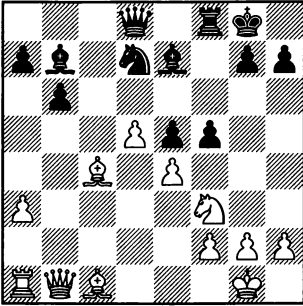
The calm 16...♞a8 is not any worse.

5...d5 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.♖c2 c5 8.e4 ♖xc3 9.bxc3

**17.d5**

17.dxe5 ♖c5 18.♗c2 faces 18...  
♗xe4!

**17...f5! 18.♗c4**



**18...♖h8!**

This is more precise than 18...  
♖c8 19.♗a2 ♖h8, Lenic-Beliavsky,  
Portoroz 2005, when White had  
20.♗b2 ♖c5 21.exf5 e4 22.♖d4 ♖d8  
23.♖d1 ♗xd5 24.♗xd5 ♖xd5 25.♖e6  
♖xd1+ 26.♗xd1 with some pull in  
the endgame. After the text, White  
should be careful not to end up under  
der attack, like in the variation:

19.exf5 (19.♗b2 ♖c5) 19...♖c5  
20.♖xe5 ♗xd5 21.♗b2 ♗xc4 22.♖xc4  
♖d3 23.♖e5 ♖xf2 24.♖xf2? (24.♖c6  
♖h3+=) 24...♗c5+ 25.♖e2 ♖d5→.

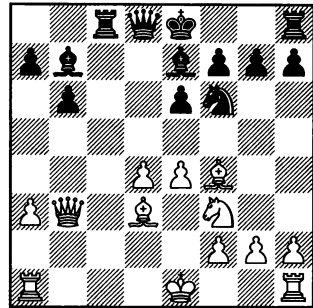
**B2b. 12.♖b3 ♗e7**

I (A.M.) have tried here the pro-  
vocative move 12...♖f6 13.♖e3 ♖g6,  
but after 14.♗d3! (14.♗b5 should be  
met by 14...f6! 15.d5 ♗c5! 16.dxe6  
0-0! with a sharp game) the g2-  
pawn is immune and Black's queen  
remains stuck unemployed on the  
kingside: 14...♗e7 15.0-0 0-0 16.e5  
♖h5. The game Gelfand-Mikhal-  
chishin, Minsk 1986 went on with

17.♗e4 ♗xe4 18.♖xe4 when I could  
have exchanged queens by 18...♖g6.  
However, 17.♖g5 h6 18.♖e4 would  
have been more unpleasant.

**13.♗d3 ♖f6**

This is the only way to underline  
the drawbacks of White's retreat to  
b3 on the 12th move. After 13...0-0  
14.0-0 ♖f6 White can defend the  
e4-pawn by 15.♗fe1.



**14.♖b5+**

White does not get compensa-  
tion for the pawn after 14.♗b5+  
♖f8 15.0-0 ♖xe4 16.♗ac1 g5 17.♗xc8  
♗xc8 18.♗c1 ♖g7, Khalifman-Anand,  
Moscow 1987.

14.d5?! is not impressive either.  
In Miles-Polugaevsky, Sarajevo  
1987, Black had an excellent com-  
pensation for the queen following  
14...exd5 15.♗d1 0-0 16.0-0 dxe4!  
17.♗xe4 ♖xe4 18.♗xd8 ♗fxd8 19.♗e1  
♖c5 20.♖a2 ♗xf3 21.gxf3 ♗f8.

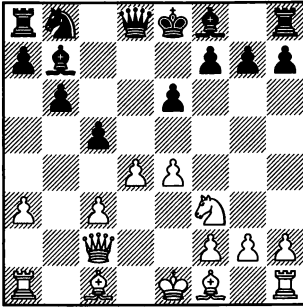
**14...♗c6**

14...♖d7 15.♖e5 ♖xb5 16.♗xb5+  
♖f8 17.f3 ♖e8 18.♗d7 ♗d8 19.♗c6  
♗c8 20.♗e3 f6 21.♖d3 ♗d7 22.♗xd7  
♗xd7 23.♖e2 ♖f7 24.♗hc1 ♖d6 25.a4  
♖b7 26.♗c3 gave White a small, but  
lasting advantage in Khalifman-Ti-  
viakov, Elista 1998.



## PART 12

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3



## Gambit Systems

The Petrosian system was developed with the thoroughly positional aim to avoid the awkward pin from b4. However, there is no limit to creativity, and some players constantly generate new ways of facing the opponent with sharp, highly demanding ideas, often connected with pawn sacrifices.

We shall consider in this part several rare, but daring lines, in order to show a different approach to the otherwise sound and reliable Petrosian system.

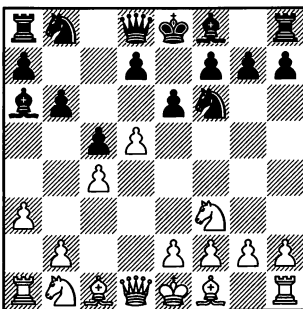
This crazy idea first dawned on GM Speelman and found quite a few followers. Lobron was even more uncompromising in his game against Chekhov, Germany 1991:

6.e4?! ♗xe4 7.♗d3 ♘f6

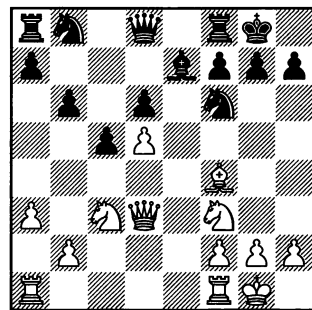
7...f5 weakens the e6-square: 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♞e1 exd5 10.cxd5 ♗xd3 11.♞xd3 0-0 12.♗c3 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 d6 14.♗f4 with a comfortable game for the pawn. 7...♗d6 also looks clumsy.

8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♗f4 exd5 10.cxd5 ♗xd3 11.♞xd3 d6 12.♗c3 0-0

### A. 4...c5 5.d5 ♗a6



### 6.♗c3



13.♞f1 ♞e8 14.♞e2 ♗bd7 15.♞ae1 ♗f8 16.h3 ♞xe2 17.♞xe2 ♞c7

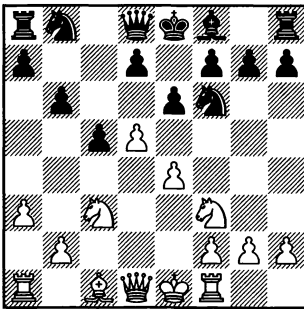
Chekhov suggested the slow

17...a6 18.a4 ♖c7 intending ♖c7-b7, ♜a8-f8, but in that case White's knight arrives at c4, attacking d6.

18.♠d2 ♝e8 19.♞xe8 ♝xe8 20.♞b5!

The threat of penetrating to c6 gives White fair compensation, but it would not be serious to play for a win. The game soon ended in a draw.

**6...♙xc4 7.e4 ♙xf1 8.♞xf1**



- A1. 8...b5
- A2. 8...d6

**A1. 8...b5**

Enterprising and risky. White cannot take on b5 at once due to 9.♠xb5 ♖a5+ 10.♠c3 ♝xe4 11.♙d2 and now beside 11...♠xd2 12.♠xd2 ♙e7 13.♞f3 0-0!, Gulko-Nisipeanu, Elista 1998, the computer also finds 11...♠f6!? intending 12.♞e2 ♖a6. Still, the b5-pawn is hanging and can be a problem later.

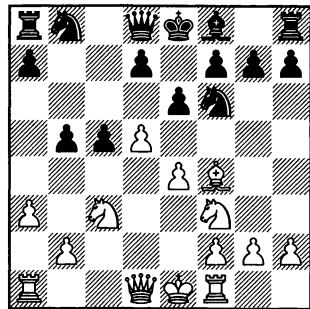
**9.♙f4!?**

We should examine the other options first, to better understand the venom behind the text. In some cases White practically wins a tempo, compared to the lines 9.e5 b4

10.axb4 cxb4 11.exf6 bxc3 12.bxc3 gxf6 13.♠d4 or 9.dxe6 fxe6 10.e5 b4 11.exf6 bxc3 12.♙g5 (Recommendation of Nisipeanu. Eriksson-Brynell, Sweden 1999, saw 12.f7+ ♠xf7 13.♠e5+ ♠g8 14.♞f3 ♞f6! 15.♞xa8 ♞xe5+ 16.♙e3 cxb2 17.♞b1 c4! and the two black pawns were irresistible.) 12...gxf6 (12...♞c7!? 13.bxc3 ♠c6 14.♞d3 ♠f7 15.fxg7 ♙xg7 16.♙e3 h6 17.♞d1 d5 18.♙xc5 ♞ab8↑) 13.♠e5 with perpetual.

Another possible continuation is 9.d6 ♠c6 10.b4, but Black has 10...♞b8!, when the White king has dangerously stuck in the centre, while the black one will safely castle after 11...g6.

The text keeps open all of the above-mentioned options:



It is not clear how Black should develop here. After 9...♖a5, 10.♠d2 threatens with 11.a4, 10...d6 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.♞b3 is a double attack, and 10...a6 11.♞f3↑ is also very unpleasant. Apparently the queen is not any better on a5, than on d8, so it makes sense to defend the b-pawn:

**9...a6**

Now White can force play by:

**10.e5 b4 11.axb4 cxb4 12.exf6**

**bxc3 13.bxc3 ♖xf6 14.♗e5 ♜e7 15.♚b3.**

### A2. 8...d6 9.e5!?

This is more promising than 9.dxe6 fxe6 10.e5!

10.♚b3 keeps queens on, but Black successfully castles long after 10...e5! 11.♗g5 ♘c6 12.0-0-0 ♚d7.

10...dxe5 11.♚xd8+ ♔xd8 12.♘xe5 ♔c8 13.♗g5 ♗e7 14.0-0-0 ♘d8 15.f4 ♔b7 16.♙de1 ♘a6 17.f5!?

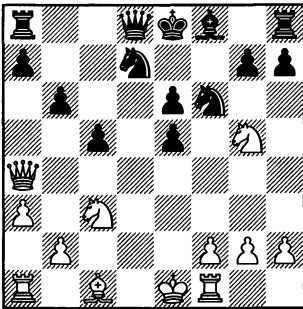
White has sufficient compensation also with 17.♘b5 ♘c7 18.♘xc7 ♔xc7 19.♘f3, but in the game Speelman-Romanishin, Elista 1998, he preferred to simplify to a drawish endgame:

17...exf5 18.♘c6 ♔xc6 19.♙xe7 ♙d7 20.♗xf6 gxf6 21.♙xd7 ♔xd7 22.♙xf5 ♙f8 23.♘d5 ♔e6 24.g4=.

### 9...dxe5 10.♚a4+! ♘bd7

10...♚d7 fails to 11.♘b5, so Black cannot trade queens.

### 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.♘g5

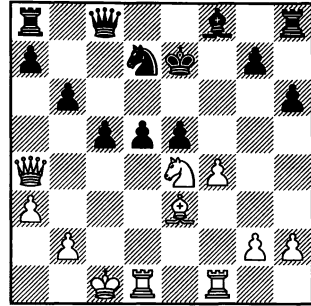


White has strong initiative in this completely unexplored position. The following illustrative variation demonstrates how crucially all White pieces can enter play:

12...♚c8 13.f4! (suddenly the f1-rook is dangerously alive) 13...♔e7

14.♗e3 h6 15.♘ge4 ♘d5 16.♘xd5+ exd5 17.0-0-0±

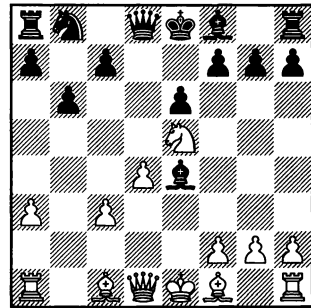
We cannot resist the temptation to add a diagram here.



Speelman should be glad to see it!

### B. 4...♗b7 5.♘c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♗d2

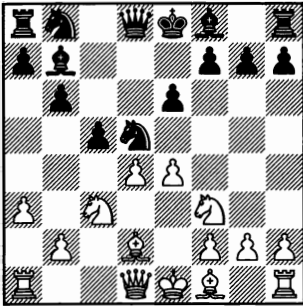
Let us also mention the stunning idea of GM Oleg Romanishin who had great contribution to the opening theory in the 70ies and 80ies: 7.e4?! Just like that! White is going for the kill right at the start of the game. 7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 ♗xe4 9.♘e5



9...♚h4! Unfortunately, this move spoils White's fun. Black denies the g4 and h5 squares to the enemy queen and neutralizes the op-

ponent's threats. It may look easy today, but in practice Black has suffered enough painful losses before focusing on the queen's sortie. 10.g3 ♖d8 11.♖a4+ c6 12.f3 ♙d5 13.c4 b5 14.cxb5 ♙d6 15.♙e2 0-0.

**7...c5 8.e4!**



Who else but Romanishin could have thought up such a move!

**8...♗xc3**

It would be dubious to shy away from the challenge with 8...♗f6 9.♖a4+! ♗bd7 10.d5! a6 (bad is 10...exd5 11.e5) 11.dxe6 fxe6 12.♖b3! b5! 13.♙e3! (White should not take the pawn: 13.♖xe6+ ♖e7 14.♗g5 h6 15.♖xe7+ ♗e7!) 13...♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♙xe4 15.♖xe6+ ♖e7 16.♖h3! with a tangible White's advantage in Miles-Lautier, Biel 1990.

**9.♙xc3 ♙xe4**

Black has serious alternatives:

a) 9...♗d7 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 11.♙d3 0-0 12.0-0 ♙e7, when 13.b4 ♖c8 14.♖c1 would be better for White;

b) 9...a6 is similar to line a), e.g. 10.♙d3 cxd4 11.♗xd4 ♗d7 12.0-0 ♖h4 13.♖e1 ♙c5, Lputian-Short, Corus 2000. Here both 14.♗f3! and 14.b4 favour White.

c) 9...cxd4 10.♗xd4 ♗d7. This is bad at least due to the daring

11.♗xe6!? fxe6 12.♖h5+ g6 13.♖h3 e5 14.♙b5 a6 15.♙xe5 axb5 16.♙xh8 ♗c5 17.♙d1 ♖e7 18.0-0 and Black's king feels awkward in the middle.

**10.♗e5 a6 11.♖h5 ♖a7**

11...♖c7?! does not help as after 12.dxc5 ♙xc5 13.♖g4! ♙g6 14.♖a4+ ♗e7 15.♖h4+ Black's king would be doomed to stay in the centre.

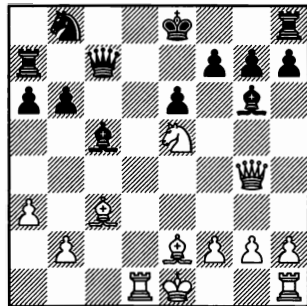
11...g6 12.♖e2 cxd4! is more testing. (Instead, 12...♙d5? 13.dxc5 ♙xc5 14.♗g4 was disastrous in Crouch-Stanton, London, 1987)

White cannot win material, but 13.♙d1 ♙d5 14.♙xd4 f6 15.♗c4 ♗d7 16.♗e3= gives him fair compensation for the pawn.

**12.dxc5! ♙xc5 13.♖g4 ♙g6 14.♙d1!**

The source game Romanishin-Panchenko, Sochi 1983 saw 14.♖a4+ ♗e7? 15.♙d1 ♖c8 16.♙d3! ♙xd3 17.♖xd3 f6 18.♖g4! and White went on to win, but Black had a difficult to find defence: 14...♗d7! 15.♙b5 axb5 16.♖xa7 ♙xf2+! 17.♗xf2 ♗xe5=.

**14...♖c7 15.♙e2**



It is unclear where Black will hide his king. His task is not trivial at all, since 14...0-0 16.♗xg6 hxg6 17.h4± would most likely end up with a catastrophe.

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Alexander Beliavsky was four times USSR champion. He won three times the Tilburg super tournament and played many Olympiads for USSR, Ukraine and Slovenia. He was a challenger for the world title. Beliavsky coaches wunderkinds as Najdich, Caruana, Jobava, Gashimov. He worked with Kasparov and Karpov.



Adrian Mikhalchishin played many USSR championships. He was Slovenian champion in 2002. He played four Olympiads for Ukraine and Slovenia. Mikhalchishin coached Karpov, the Polgar sisters, Chiburdanidze, as well as the national teams of USSR, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Poland and Turkey

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