

The Safest Grünfeld



Alexander Delchev



Evoenij Agrest



The Safest Grünfeld

A Complete Repertoire for Black

Alexander Delchev
Evgenij Agrest

Chess Stars

www.chess-stars.com

Current Theory and Practice Series

The Safest Grünfeld

Translation and editing by Semko Semkov

Cover design by Kalojan Nachev

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Printed in Bulgaria

ISBN: 978-954-8782-81-4

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Chesspro.ru

Foreword

My first book, *The Safest Sicilian*, has been very well received and readers often asked me if I was writing something new. So when in the beginning of 2010 Chess Stars offered me to continue our collaboration, I did not hesitate long. I chose the Grünfeld Defence, because it is one of the most quickly developing openings and, like the Sicilian, offers fair chances to play for a win.

I have been studying the Grünfeld for years. I often used it in decisive games as Black, but I also have extensive practice as White.

In 2009, Topalov's assistant GM Cheparinov invited me to help him prepare for the World Cup tournaments and the World Championship in Khanty Mansiysk. During our work, we made a general examination of various openings. I was surprised by the extraordinary working capacity of Cheparinov and also by the powerful arsenal of his opening ideas. We often discussed the Exchange line in the Grünfeld. He did not need too much effort to convince me that Black was in real danger in the main line with

the exchange sacrifice: 10...♗g4 11 f3 ♠a5 12 ♗d3 cd 13 cd ♗e6 14 d5!. Although there is not a forced win, Black's defence is far from trivial. White can develop his initiative in different directions, and Black must be able to find only moves in all of them.

We were both of the same opinion about the popular system with 10...♠a5 and 11..b6. It is playable, but risky, and also requires memorization of tons of variations. As we later saw, even World champion Anand failed to cope with these problems and was crushed in the first game of the match in Sofia 2010 against Topalov.

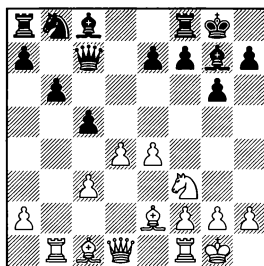
We reached the conclusion that only the Classical system with ...♞c7 gives Black fair chances to play sound positional chess. In it, it is of paramount importance to be well acquainted with its strategic ideas. The focus is shifted towards pawn structures and plans, rather than move-by-move forced play. That makes it much safer from a practical point of view, because the role of calculation and home preparation is reduced.

I have also learned how to organise effectively the joint work of two grandmasters, and how to distribute tasks in order to reap the best harvest from it.

My duties were to seek original ideas which significantly differed from established theory, and mark the main pawn structures, plans and move order tricks. Then we both put the idea under the microscope of different engines. Finally Cheparinov decided whether the idea deserved a practical test.

I used the same method with my co-author Evgenij Agrest. He plays the Grünfeld only as White so he provided the necessary critical view on my analytical work. At first I prepared a general survey of a given system, with an approximate evaluation of every branch. Zhenya's task was to find a decent way for Black to deviate from the established theory. When I deemed that his proposed setup had a solid positional background and the risk was reasonably low, we started analysing with engines. Our best assistants were Firebird and the current number 1, Houdini. The result of our effort was a number of solid alternative setups which could serve as good backup lines or even as a main repertoire.

For instance, in the Exchange System 7.♘f3 c5 8.♝b1 0-0 9.0-0, in addition to the main line with 9... ♙c6, Agrest analysed in detail 9... b6 10.0-0 ♚c7!.



This development practically eliminates all the theory and lets Black play in the centre without running any risk of being crushed “by the book”.

We followed this approach throughout the whole book. In every major system, we tried to offer at least two alternatives. That should bring about flexibility in our repertoire, and allow a variable approach to opponents according to their strength or playing style. With our backup lines, you should be able to avoid long forced variations and surprise your opponents. Even for our main lines, we aimed to focus (whenever possible) on positionally sound and less forced variations.

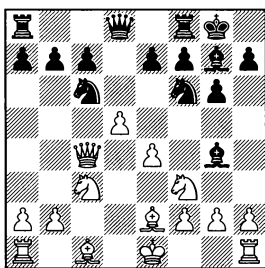
We are convinced that the studying of an opening should not begin with a memorization of variations. We should first understand what our positional aims are, what to pursue and what to avoid. Then we should examine the typical pawn structures and plans that ensue from them. Only then should we choose a system which best fits in with our style of play.

Foreword

Here are some examples from the practice of my students.

We had studied the typical ideas and a few classical examples, so when Kadric got into the position of the following diagram, he did not get crushed, despite the fact that he did not know the best move order:

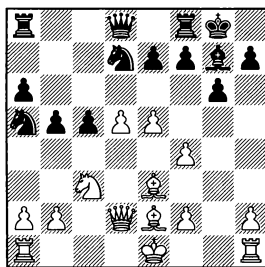
Drenchev–Kadric
Plovdiv 05.02.2011



9...♙xf3?!

Correct is 9...♞a5! 10.♞a4 ♙xf3.

10.gxf3 ♞a5 11.♞d3! c5! 12.♙e3
♞d7 13.f4 a6 14.e5 b5 15.♞d2



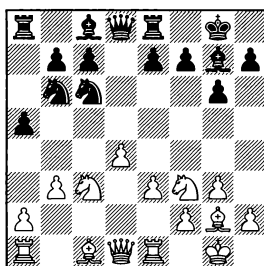
White is 150 Elo points higher rated (2521) than his opponent and much more experienced, but he was forced to think concretely in an unusual position. Black remembered that I advocate ...a6 and ...b5 in the Grünfeld and success-

fully gained space on the queenside. Now he could have applied another typical method – a pawn sacrifice – to seize the initiative: 15...f6 16.e6 ♞b6 17.♙xc5 ♞bc4 18.♞c1 f5 19.0-0 ♞c8↑, instead of the timid 15...♞c8. However, later he got the upper hand, but failed to convert his advantage.

When we studied the ideas of the g3-system, I showed the game Benko–Smyslov, Budapest 1949 (given in the intro of Part 1) which introduced for the first time the attack on the queenside by the a-pawn.

During the following game, Kadric recalled it and, inspired by Smyslov's example, followed up by:

G.Szabo–Kadric
Plovdiv 03.02.2011



11...a4!?

Consistent, though probably not best (11...e5! =).

12.♞xa4 ♞xa4 13.bxa4 e5! 14.♙b2 exd4 15.♙xd4 ♞xd4 16.♞xd4 ♙xd4 17.♞xd4 ♞xd4 18.exd4 and Black easily drew against the 185 Elo points favourite.

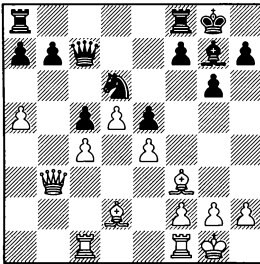
I would also like to call your attention to a thematic manoeuvre

in the Grünfeld – ...♘c6-a5-b7-d6, blockading the advanced d5-pawn.

I first delved into this idea during my work with Ivan Saric, a World and European champion under 18, and now the leading Croatian grandmaster. One of my students liked it so much that he strived to reach a similar pawn structure in every game, thinking that Black was even better. I spent some effort to convince him that the evaluation of such a position depended on the placement of the other pieces. Here is a fresh example from my own practice:

Naumkin-Delchev

Cappelle la Grande 27.02.2011



During the game, I indulged in meditation of a philosophical character – if White did not have any problems even in this ideal blockading position, I thought, then perhaps Black did not stand so well in other similar positions either. He lacks an active plan. The natural-looking move ...f7-f5 would only weaken the e5-pawn. After ♖e1, ♙c3, Black cannot make any progress since his setup is basically passive and defensive. His left flank is cramped. That is why I recom-

mend in the book to resort to this plan mostly after having gained space on the queenside first with ...b5.

My advice is: study the main strategic ideas, before drawing your conclusions. Play according to the position – do not overestimate your chances. After all, we have Black, so reaching comfortable equality should not upset us.

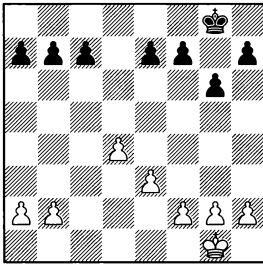
To save you time and help you quickly achieve practical results, I have used a slightly different structure than in *The Safest Sicilian*. This time I borrowed the style of presentation of my colleague in the Bulgarian national team, Kiril Georgiev, from his book *Squeezing the Gambits*, Chess Stars 2010. Again, every part is divided to 3 chapters. The titles “Step by Step” and “Complete Games” speak for themselves. The difference is in the first chapters, called “Main Ideas”. Like the “Quick Repertoire”, they also aim to give you a succinct review of the theory and the basic knowledge that should allow you to start playing the opening without much study. However, I have also included a lot of diagrams with examples of middlegame plans and typical tactical motifs. These should help you compensate for the lack of practice. The “Main Ideas” chapters are very important and complement the “Step by Step” chapters. I also tried to reduce the amount of theory in the “Step by Step” chapters by examining some backup lines in

Foreword

heavily annotated games, given in the “Complete Games”. That should facilitate your navigation between the numerous branches of our repertoire.

I have arranged the material according to the main pawn structures in the Grünfeld.

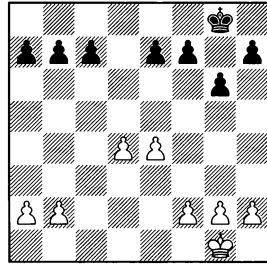
Thus Parts 1-4 consider systems where White does not hurry to occupy the centre and our g7-bishop is restrained by the d4-pawn:



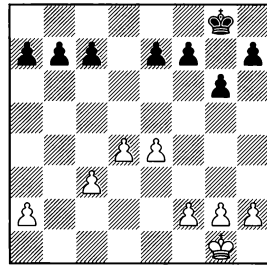
Then in Parts 5-6 I examine the more aggressive pawn formation:

I would like to thank GM Evgenij Agrest for his fruitful collaboration, and S.Semkov for editing this book.

The material in this book is up to date to April first, 2011.



Finally, Parts 7-10 are devoted to the Exchange System. This has been White’s most popular weapon.



The last parts deal with some Anti-Grünfeld approaches.

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Introduction

Black lets White build a strong pawn centre and subsequently tries to transform this strength into a weakness

Botvinnik

The dynamic character of play makes the Grünfeld Defence one of the most popular contemporary openings. However, in the beginning, this original and highly provocative setup did not inspire confidence.

The birthday of this hypermodern opening was in 1922. In the first top level game, Alekhine-Grünfeld, Vienna 1922, the future World champion probably underestimated the great idea of his opponent and lost. Subsequently, Alekhine adopted it himself, starting in the same year. He even chose it for a main weapon in his match against Euwe in 1935, but the overall score was 3-1 in White's favour and he did not try it again in the rematch.

In the match-tournament in 1948, another future World champion, Smyslov, took up the torch and opted for the Grünfeld in three games. He lost one of them to Euwe, but no one could lightly dismiss the new opening anymore.

Six years later, the Grünfeld appeared in the 1954 match Botvinnik-Smyslov and later Botvinnik himself adopted it, popula-

rising it further. Henceforth, nearly all World champions included the Grünfeld Defence in their repertoire. After the catastrophe in the Tarrasch Defence in his first match against Karpov, Kasparov put his fate in the Grünfeld. Still, the total score of 5-1 and 17 draws, shows that back in the 1980s this defence was going through a crisis. Or perhaps Karpov's seconds did a better job.

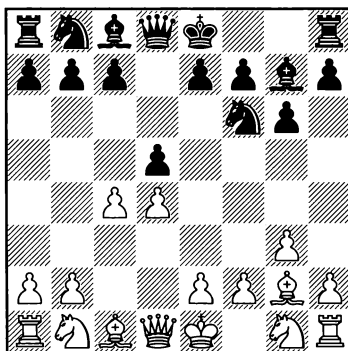
For many years, the forced character of the main Grünfeld lines put the home preparation of both sides to the test and made this opening difficult to play. The strong pawn centre allowed White to launch kingside attacks where every mistake could be fatal.

Eventually, the powerful new engines helped Black neutralise the most dangerous lines and nowadays the Grünfeld defence is as reliable as ever. Svidler and Kaminsky have brought it at a new level of competitiveness and keep on winning decisive games with it. Black is in perfect theoretical shape so do not hesitate. Join the party!

Part 1

The Fianchetto System

1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♘g7 4.♗g2 d5



Part 1

Main Ideas

Objectives and Move Orders

The Fianchetto system is in no way the most ambitious one against the Grünfeld Defence, but it is definitely quite insidious. White develops his forces slowly, but very solidly. That makes it difficult for Black to attack the centre in the same way as he does against the systems where White advances his e-pawn on the fifth or sixth move. Twenty years ago the Fianchetto system was not too popular because general opinion held that Black had good chances to equalise by holding the centre with ...c6 and ...d5. This approach is very solid indeed and play is rather drawish, but tastes have been changing lately. First of all, White players discovered that the Main (or the Exchange) line in the Grünfeld was far from clear, with Black firmly holding his own in the long forced variations. This made many of them turn to more calm systems and the Fianchetto is certainly the most solid one. Secondly, Grünfeld fans wanted sharper play for the three possible results. Struggling to draw in a symmetric position is not too inspiring, indeed. I'll provide you with advice and analyses how to play after ...c6 and ...d5, but I'll

focus on the most dynamic way to put pressure on White's centre and queenside, namely ...d5 without preparation. It leads to rich double-edged play with the main events unfolding on the queenside.

If Black seized the initiative and forced White relocate his pieces to defend weaknesses on the left wing, he could get opportunities to strike at the weakened enemy king.

Here is an instructive example of that scenario by the great expert of the Grünfeld Defence, World champion Vasily Smyslov:

Benko-Smyslov
Budapest, 1949

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♙g7
4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♙g2 0-0
7.0-0 ♖b6!**

By retreating the knight, Black starts the battle for the d4-pawn.

8.♘c3 ♘c6 9.e3 a5

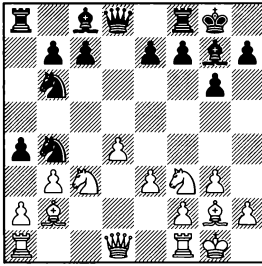
I prefer 9...♞e8, which will be analysed in the "Step by Step" chapter.

10.b3

After 10.a4 e5 11.d5 ♖b4, Black obtains a perfect stand for his knight.

10...♖b4 11.♙b2 a4!

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5



Taking over the initiative.

12.♖xa4 ♖xa4 13.bxa4 ♖d5

The second knight is on its way to recapture the a4-pawn. That will make the a2-pawn the next target.

14.♗e5 ♖b6 15.♖d3 ♖xa4

16.♙a3 ♙e6! 17.♞c1

The b7-pawn is immune in view of 17.♙xb7? ♖c3+.

The seemingly active 17.♖c5 ♖xc5 18.♙xc5 would stumble into 18...b6! 19.♙xa8 ♞xa8 with Black's advantage, for example 20.♙xe7 ♞e8 21.♙g5 ♙h3 22.f3 ♙xf1 23.♞xf1 ♞d5! ♠.

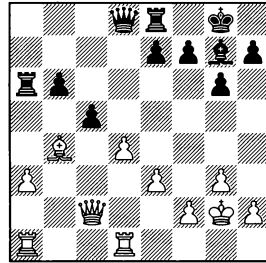
17...c6 18.♞d1 ♞e8 19.♖c5 ♖xc5 20.♙xc5 ♞a6!

Threatening 21...♙xa2 22.♞b2 ♞a8.

21.a3 ♙d5 22.♞c2?!

22.e4 would have only weakened the centre after 22...♙b3 23.♞d3 ♙a4, intending ...b6, as pointed out by Smyslov. White's best choice was probably 22.♙xd5 ♞xd5 23.♞b1 b5 24.♞c2, but after 24...e6!, Black will threaten to exchange the bishops from f8. The arising heavy pieces endgame would be unpleasant for White due to the clear target on a3. The slightly weakened White's castling position could provide a second weakness to attack.

22...♙xg2 23.♙xg2 b6!
24.♙b4 c5!



"A very strong idea probably missed by Benko." – Smyslov.

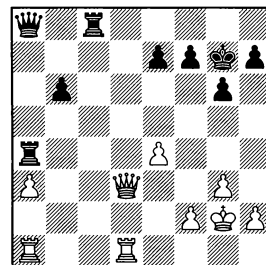
25.♙c3

In the event of 25.dxc5 ♞a8+ 26.c6 ♙xa1 27.♞xa1 b5! 28.♞c1 ♞c8 White is in trouble.

25...cxd4 26.♙xd4 ♞a8+ 27.e4

If 27.♙g1 ♙xd4 28.♞xd4 ♞xa3 29.♞xa3 ♞xa3 30.♞c6 ♞a1+ 31.♙g2, Black keeps the edge with 31...♞b8! (Smyslov) which is stronger than 31...♞a8 32.♞xa8 ♞xa8 33.♞d7! ♙f8 34.♞b7.

27...♞c8 28.♞d3 ♞a4! 29.♙xg7 ♙xg7



30.f3?

30.♞e1 ♞c5 31.♞e3 ♞c6 clearly favoured Black, but it still preserved some drawing chances.

After the text, Smyslov changes the direction of his offensive, exploiting the gaping second rank.

30...♖a5 31.h4

Or 31.♞d7 ♜c2+ 32.♙h1 ♜xa3 – Smyslov.

31...♜c3 32.♞d7 ♜xa3 33.♜xa3 ♞xa3 34.♞d4+ f6 35.♞xb6 ♜c2+ and White resigned.

Note that White chose 3.♘f3. This move has no advantages over 3.g3, which is more flexible because it leaves open the possibility for leading out the king's knight to e2. Thus I'll consider the move order:

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 (or 3...d5 at once) 4.♗g2 d5

I divided the material into three major systems:

A. White does not take on d5, offering Black to capture the c4-pawn, or entrench himself with ...c6.

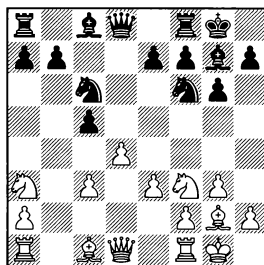
B. White takes on d5 and follows up with e2-e4 and ♘g1-e2.

C. White does take on d5, but develops the knight to f3. The e-pawn often stays back to e3, bolstering d4 and helping to restrain Black's wildest attacker, the g7-bishop.

A. 5.♘f3 dxc4!

6.♘a3 c3 7.bxc3 0-0 8.0-0 c5 9.e3 ♘c6

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures



The key to understanding this structure is the general weakness of White's light squares a4, d3, c4 and especially the latter. It is caused by the absence of the light-squared bishop which had gone to the main diagonal.

The most important strategic tasks of Black are:

1. He aims to occupy c4 by knight or pawn and leave the opponent with a bad dark-squared bishop. To achieve that, he would gladly trade his own bishop for White's last knight should it appear on e5.

2. The queen's bishop goes to f5, and eventually to e4.

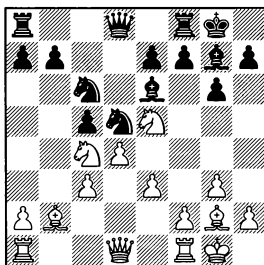
3. Black's queen has two possible routes. If White continues in the diagram position with 10.♗b2 (line A1 in the "Step by Step" chapter), then Black answers with 10...♞b6! having in mind 11.♘c4 ♞a6 or 11.♞e2 ♗f5! 12.♞fc1 ♞fd8. Should White choose 10.♞e2 (line A2), then the queen most often goes to

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

h5 via d5, after the preliminary 10... ♖d5 11.♙b2 ♖b6!

In general, Black should avoid opening the c-file. His favourite scenario is to exchange the opponent's knights and queen and exploit the queenside weaknesses.

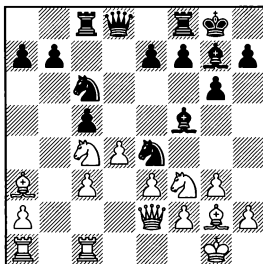
Saric-Rade
Kastel 1999



White's Achilles heel in this structure is the c4-square. Do not hesitate to kill its defenders:

12...♖xe5 13.♖xe5 ♙xe5! 14.dxe5 ♖b6+.

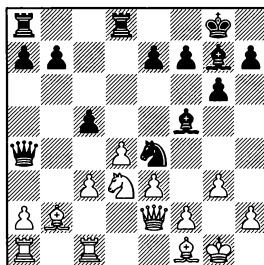
Pr.Nikolic-Van Wely
Reykjavik 2003



White is fully developed and rules in the centre. However, this impression is deceptive. The game went 13...b5 14.♖ce5 ♖xe5 15.♖xe5

♙xe5! 16.dxe5 ♙a5 17.♙b2 ♙fd8 18.♙c2 ♙a4 19.♙ac1 ♖g5+, with total domination on the light squares.

Khismatullin-Efimenko
Moscow 2008

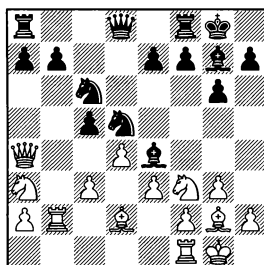


17...c4! 18.♖b4 a5 19.♖c2 ♖d6 20.♙g2 ♙d3 21.♙d1 e5+.

Compare the b2-bishop to the one on d3!

Now let us draw inspiration from an old game of the great fianchetto expert Predrag Nikolic. In the distant 1988 he was Black though!

Kurajica-Pr.Nikolic
Brezovica, 1988

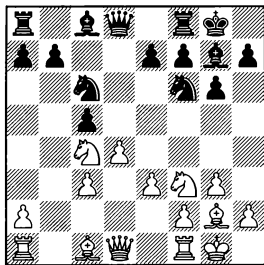


13...♖b6! 14.♙d1 ♙d5! 15.♙e2 ♙ad8. A perfect blockade! Next Black can shift the queen to f5 or h5.

Part 1

Espig–Peter Heine Nielsen

Germany 2004



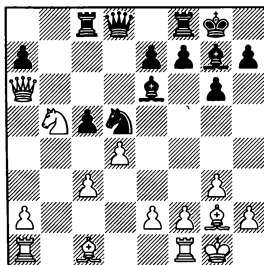
In this example, White decided to forestall the opponent's plans and immediately occupied c4, preventing ... Wb6 . The game went 10... Dd5 11. Eb2 Db6 ! 12. We2 Da4 13. Dfe5 ?! (We know this positional mistake. 13. Ead1 is equal.) 13... Dxe5 14. Dxe5 Exe5 ! 15. dxe5 Ee6 16. c4 Wb6 17. Eab1 Wa6 18. Efc1 Db6 19. Ef1 Efd8 . White is paralysed with the defence of the pawn on c4.

Typical Tactical Motifs

Most tactical hits are linked with the power of the g7-bishop. When the d4-pawn is shaky, we should always be looking for some tactics:

Schwarz–Delchev

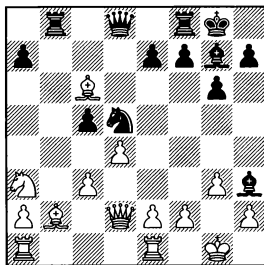
Arnhem 1990



14... Dxc3 !! 15. Dxc3 cxd4 16. Da4 (Or 16. Db5 d3 ; 16. De4 d3 17. Eb1 Ec4 18. Wa3 dxe2 19. Ee1 Ed3 +) 16... Ec4 17. Wxa7 Exe2 18. Ee1 d3 19. Ed2 Ed4 20. Wa6 Ec2 21. Eh6 d2 –+.

Panchenko–Malaniuk

Kharkov, 1980

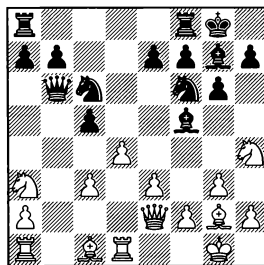


14... Dxc3 !!

This hit combines the destruction of White's centre with a double attack: 15. Exc3 cxd4 16. Eb2 (16. Ea5 Wd6 ; 16. Eb4 Wb6) 16... Wb6 17. Eb5 a6 –+.

Karpov–Leko

Cannes 2002



The d4-square looks rock-solid, but Leko's next two moves shake it dramatically:

12... Eg4 13. f3 Dd5 !

White's pieces lack coordination

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

so Black can unleash his tactical imagination:

14.♘c4

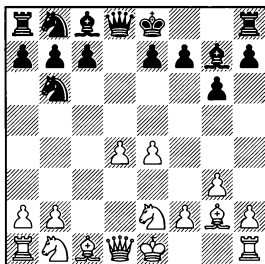
Or 14.♙b2 ♘xe3! 15.d5 (15.fxg4 ♘xd1 16.♙xd1 cxd4; 15.dxc5 ♙xc5 16.♙f2 ♙e6 17.♘c2 g5) 15...♘xd1 16.♙xd1 ♙d7 17.♘c4 ♙a6 18.dxc6 ♙xc6 19.♙f1 e6.

14...♙a6! 15.♙b2 ♘b6 (15...♙e6=) 16.♙f1 (16.fxg4 ♙xc4) 16...♙xc4 17.♙xc4 ♘xc4 18.♙xc4 ♘a5.

The endgame is pleasant for Black because the knight on h4 is misplaced, to say it mildly.

B. 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4

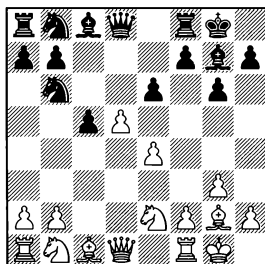
6...♘b6 7.♘e2



7...c5!

The move order is very important here!

8.d5 0-0 9.0-0 e6!



In the “Step by Step” chapter I examine in detail:

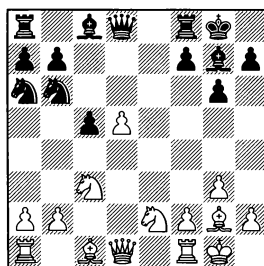
B1. 10.♘ec3 ♘a6! 11.a4 ♘b4 and

B2. 10.♘bc3 ♘a6! 11.♘f4 e5!

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

The character of play in this variation differs significantly from line A. Instead of hiding behind the pawn shield in the centre, White gains space and builds his game around the d-pawn. Dynamic factors prevail over strategy and Black should be very careful to avoid an opening catastrophe. He should not hurry to exchange too early on d5 and allow d5-d6 as in the following example:

Vaganian–Smejkal
Germany 1998



12.d6!

Avoid such a position! A passed central pawn should be treated like a dangerous criminal (remember this?) and restrained (blocked) as further back as possible. Moving to d6, it opens the long diagonal

to the g2-bishop, but most importantly, frees the d5-square for the c3-knight.

Funny, but Vaganian had the chance to teach that lesson not once, but twice. The source game went:

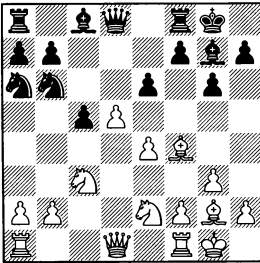
12...♖e8

Vaganian-Holzke, Germany 2002 saw 12...♖b8 13.♙f4 ♙d7 14.h4 ♙c6 15.d7! ♙xg2 16.♗xg2 ♖a8 17.♙d6+–.

13.♙f4 ♖b8 14.♙fd5 ♙xd5 15.♙xd5 ♙e6 (15...♗d6!) 16.♙f4 ♙xd5 17.♗xd5 ♙b4 18.♗d2±.

Suppose that Black had not exchanged on d5 in the last example. Then he could prevent the bishop on f4 from supporting the d6-pawn by playing e6–e5. This plan was introduced in the game:

Blumin–Reshevsky New York, 1939



Reshevsky chose here:

11...e5 12.♙c1 ♙c4 13.b3 ♙d6

The pawn is tamed and Black can start his own play on both sides with ...b7–b5 or f7–f5.

14.♖b1 ♗e7 15.f4 ♙d7 16.♗e1 b5! 17.♙d1 f5!±.

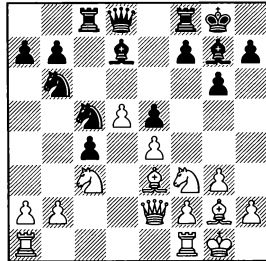
Remember:

Black should keep the tension in the centre until White defines the future of his king's knight (or plays ♙f4, as in the above example).

The reason behind the idea of delaying ...exd5 is that White cannot keep his knight on e2 forever. It has no prospects there and should be relocated to a better stand. In practice White tried at least 3 different setups of his knights: ♙e2–c3+♙a3; ♙e2–c3+♙d2; ♙bc3+♙f4. The first two of them take White's cavalry away from the kingside and then Black can already open the centre aiming to take over the initiative. Should, however, a knight appear on f4, we better close the position with ...e5 and switch to blockading ideas.

Now let us examine some typical examples:

Leko–Topalov Nanjing 2009



Black's pieces are active and Topalov decides to launch a kingside attack – 16...♗e8!±.

The game Kempinski–Bobras, Polanica Zdroj 2006 saw the more

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

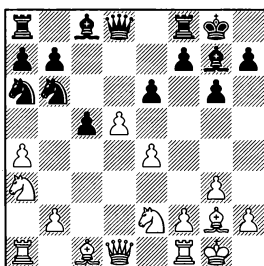
conservative 16...♖ba4 17.♖xa4 ♖xa4.

17.♖d2 f5!. The threat of ...f4 forces White to take the sacrificed pawn.

18.exf5 gxf5 19.♖xc4 ♖xc4 20.♙xc4 ♖e4 21.♙b4 ♖xc3 22.bxc3 f4!. Topalov developed a tangible initiative in only a few moves.

23.♙c5? (23.♙xa7) 23...f3! 24.♙xf8 (24.♙h1 ♖f4 25.c4 b6 26.♙e3 ♖fxc4+) 24...♙xf8 25.♙xb7 fxg2 26.♙xg2 ♙f7+.

Euwe-Smyslov Zuerich 1953

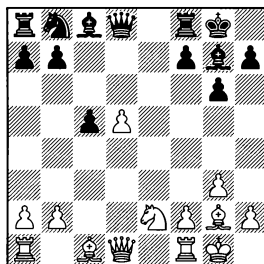


In this game from the legendary Candidates tournament in Zuerich, Euwe put his queen's knight at the edge of the board, leaving c3 for the other one. This idea is too slow and Smyslov attacked immediately with:

11...exd5 12.exd5 ♙f5 13.♖c3 ♖b4. A typical picture for this variation – the d3-square is in full control of the black pieces. The game went on with 14.♙e3 ♖c8?! (better was 14...♖d3!) 15.d6 ♙d3 and here White sacrificed the exchange with a sufficient compensation: 16.♙b7 ♖b8 17.♙g2 ♙f1 18.♙f1 ♖d7 19.♖c4

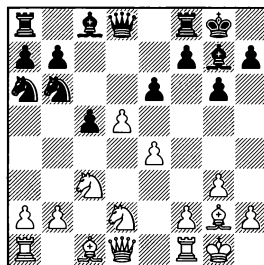
when 19...♙d4 would have been roughly equal.

Szczepanski-Szczepankiewicz corr. 2009



Another example of exploiting the d3-square: 12...♙f5 13.♖c3 c4! 14.♙a4 ♙d3 15.♖d1 ♖d7 16.♙e3 ♖e5 (16...b5!) 17.♙ac1 a6 18.b3 b5=.

Hulak-Sutovsky Istanbul 2003

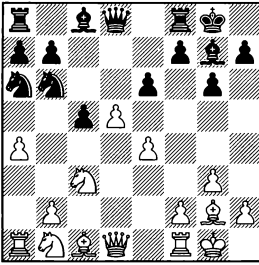


This setup of White's knights hides more venom, but again the d3-square saves the day:

11...♖b4! 12.♖b3 c4! 13.♖c5 ♖d7 14.♙e3 ♙a5 15.♖xd7 ♙xd7 16.♙d2 ♖d3+. Black has developed a strong initiative on the queenside. The central pawns only hamper the rest of White's army.

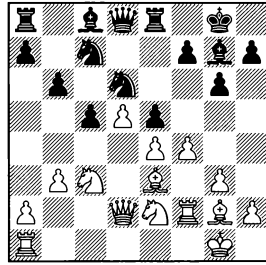
Part 1

Kempinski–Brkic Kusadasi, 2006



11...exd5 12.exd5 ♖c4 13.♘d2
♜xd2 14.♙xd2 ♙f5 15.♙e3 ♜d7
16.♜b3 ♜ac8. Preparing ...♜b4 with
good counterplay.

Euwe–Pilnik Amsterdam 1950



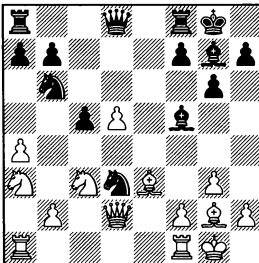
17...exf4! 18.♙xf4 (18.gxf4?
♜xe4 19.♙xe4 ♜xe4) 18...♙a6 (18...
♜xe4? 19.♙xe4 ♜xe4 20.♜xe4
♙xa1 21.♜2c3!, with a decisive at-
tack) 19.♜e1 ♜e7 20.g4 ♙e5 21.♙xe5
♜xe5.

Typical Tactical Motifs

In this line, the raging bishop on g7
has no barrier on its line of fire and
it is the main protagonist in tactical
skirmishes:

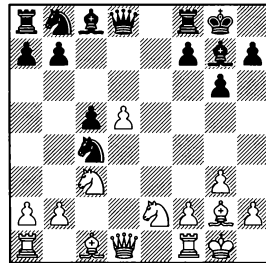
Be careful when calculating
your tactical blows. White might be
able to strike back:

Reinartz–Pusch Nordwalde 1988



15...♜xb2! 16.♜xb2 ♜xa4
17.♜xb7 (or 17.♜xa4 ♙xb2 18.♜xb2
♜e8) 17...♙xc3 18.♜a2 ♙b4.

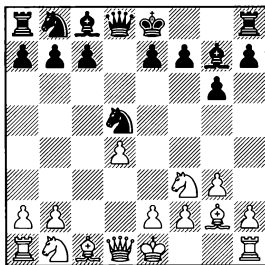
O’Kelly–Phillips Hastings 1950



12.♜e4! ♜xb2? 13.♜c2 ♜a4
14.♜xa4! ♙xa1 15.♙g5 f6 16.♙h6
♙e5 17.♙xf8 ♜xf8 18.f4. White has
a winning attack. The black king
lacks defenders, the passed d-pawn
is also very strong.

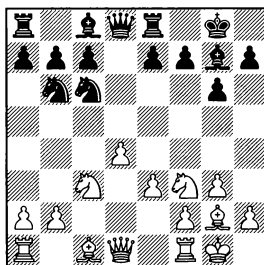
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

C. 5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.♖f3



answered by the mundane 7.0-0, we equalise at once by 7...♖c6! 8.e3 e5! 9.♖c3 exd4 10.exd4 0-0. White's best is:

7.♖c3 ♖c6 8.e3 0-0 9.0-0 ♗e8!



Objectives and Move Orders

In the Grünfeld, as a rule, we aim for asymmetric, strategically unbalanced positions. We want to have our own trumps – active pieces, pressure on weak white pawns. That should be enough to compensate the strong enemy centre. Thus, in the diagram position, we principally reject the plans with 6...c5. Being a tempo down, the arising symmetry would doom us to a long defence without serious winning chances.

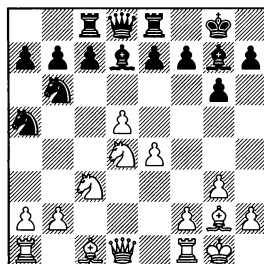
Instead, we shall be preparing ...e5, but the timing for this breakthrough will be decisive for the outcome of the opening battle.

6...♖b6!

It is important to play this move **before** castling. Thus we sidestep the unpleasant variation 6...0-0 7.0-0 ♖b6 8.♖c3 ♖c6 9.d5 which does not work now because Black can take on c3 with check and win a pawn. Note that our move order sets up a positional trap – if White

9...e5 10.d5! is better for White, so we must wait for White to weaken his main diagonal with b3. We have plenty of useful “waiting” moves as ...a5-a4, even ...♗a5 in some variations, to control d5.

After the text, 10.d5 is not that strong as the g7-bishop breaks loose along its striking diagonal. We'll be preparing ...c6, but also keeping open the option of ...c5: 10...♖a5 11.♖d4 ♙d7 12.e4 ♗c8!?



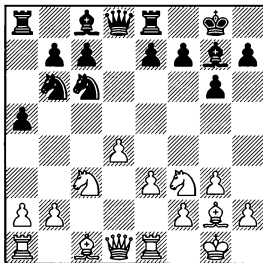
Black's position is like a compressed spring. He is ready to

Part 1

blockade the centre with tempo after 13.♔f4 c5 14.♞f3 e5!, or open it after 13.♞e1 c6 14.♔f4 cxd5 15.exd5 ♖ac4 16.b3 ♜d6.

The most topical line lately is:

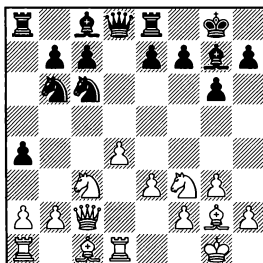
10.♞e1 a5



We have seen a fierce dispute over this position in the last year. Black is winning it convincingly so far:

11.♞e2

This is the main line in the second volume of Avrukh's repertoire book *1.d4*. A possible improvement can be 11.♞c2! a4!? and the critical position arises after 12.♞d1:



12...♔f5!? 13.e4

Or 13.♞e2 ♔g4 14.h3 ♔e6 15.d5 ♜xd5 16.♜b5 ♞c8 17.♜g5 ♞d8 18.♜xe6 fxe6∞.

13...♔g4 14.♜b5 ♞a5! 15.♞e2 ♞xb5!? 16.♞xb5 ♔xf3 17.♔xf3 ♜xd4 18.♞d3 c5.

Black has full compensation for the exchange, according to Agrest's analysis.

11...♔e6! 12.♜d2

12.♞d1 ♔c4 13.♞c2 ♜b4! 14.♞b1 has disappeared from practice after **game 1 Leitaov-Caruana**, Khanty-Mansiysk, 2010 which went:

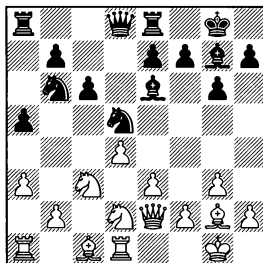
14...e5!! 15.a3 exd4 16.axb4

Black is fine. He can make a draw with 16...axb4 17.♞xa8 ♞xa8 18.♜e4 ♞a4 19.♞e1 ♔a2 20.♞d3 ♔c4= or play for a win with 16...dxc3 17.♞xd8 ♞axd8.

12...♜b4

I consider also 12...a4!? 13.♞d1 f5!?

13.♞d1 c6 14.a3 ♜4d5

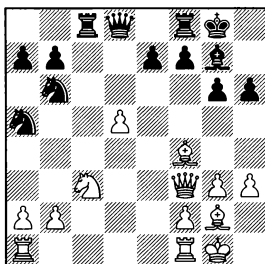


Black has a comfortable position.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

Ehlvest–Ftacnik Haninge 1990



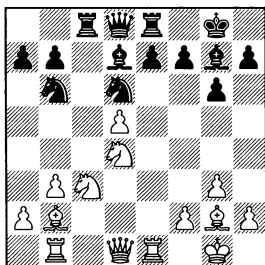
We see a typical pawn structure with an open centre. Black would have been OK, had he a bishop on d7. However, he has exchanged it on f3 and now White is better due to his bishop pair. With his next move he is aiming for d5-d6 to open play even more:

16.♙ad1! ♘ac4 17.♙c1! ♘d7
18.♙e2 ♙e8 19.h4!

White is dominating the board and exchange combinations like 19...♘xb2 are in his favour.

The correct setup of Black is:

Aronian–Rowson Noyon 2005



17...♘a8!

Black needs to activate his queen. Another way to achieve it is 17...♙c7!? 18.a4 ♙c8 19.♙d3 ♙f5 20.♘xf5 ♙xf5 21.♙xf5 gxf5 22.♘e2 ♙xb2 23.♙xb2 ♙ec8, Maletin-Zhou Jianchao, Novokuznetsk 2008.

18.a4 ♙b6 19.♘ce2 ♘c7 20.♘f4 ♘f5?!

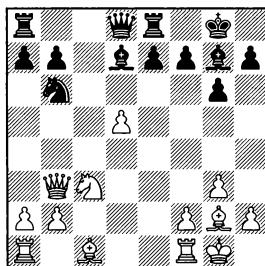
Black has an easier game so he did not need to seek exchanges. He could have fixed the queenside with 20...a5, intending ...♘a6-c5.

21.♘xf5?!

Aronian overestimates his chances. Better was 21.♙h3! ♙xd4 22.♙xd4 ♙xd4 23.♙xd4 ♘xd4 24.♙xd7 ♘f3+ 25.♙g2 ♘xe1+ 26.♙xe1 ♙cd8 27.♙xe8 ♙xe8=, where Black has no weaknesses.

21...♙xf5 22.♙xg7 ♙xb1 23.♙a1 ♙f5! and White has not enough compensation.

Kempinski–Khalifman EU–chT Plovdiv 2003



White has changed a pair of knights and prevented the thematic redeployment ...♘c4-d6. Still, the c4-square remains a perfect juncture point for Black's pieces:

15....♙c8 16.♙f4 ♙c4

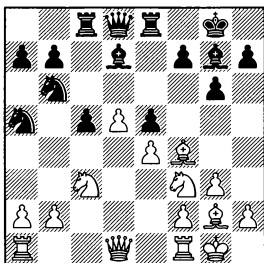
The queen is following the route

Part 1

d8-c8-c4-a6-a5.

17.♖ac1 ♜ac8 18.♞fe1 h6! 19.h4
♞a6 20.♙f1 ♞a5 21.♜b5 ♞xc1
22.♞xc1 ♞c8 23.♞xc8+ ♜xc6=.

Borovikov–Areshchenko Rivne 2005



This is another typical pawn structure with a blockaded centre.

15.♙g5 f6 16.♙c1 ♜bc4!

Making way to the b-pawn.

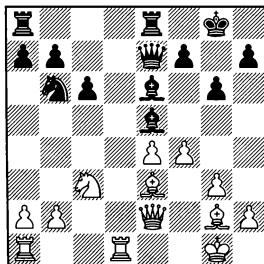
17.b3 ♜d6 18.a4?

Weakening b3. Better is 18.♙e3, b5, but even then I prefer Black.

18...c4! 19.♙a3 ♙f8 20.b4 ♜b3
21.♞a2 b5 22.axb5 ♜xb5 23.♜xb5
♙xb5 24.♙c1 ♜xc1 25.♞xc1 c3+.

I'll consider now two original ways of solving strategic problems.

Mamedyarov–Sutovsky EU–chT Leon 2001



Now 16...♙g7 is possible since 17.e5 will be attacked with 17...f6. Still, Black has a more direct way to prevent the threat of e4-e5, ♜c3-e4-d6:

16...♙xc3!? 17.bxc3 f5!

The light-squared blockade does not leave White many possibilities.

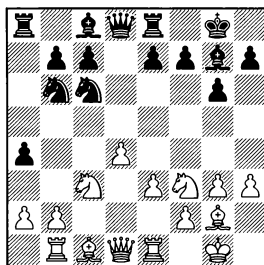
18.e5

Or 18.exf5 ♙c4+; 18.♞f2 fxe4
19.♙xb6 axb6 20.♙xe4 b5 21.♞e1=.

18...♞a3!

The game is balanced. Best is probably 19.♞c2 ♜a4 (or 19...♞ad8)
20.♞d3 ♞b2 21.♞xb2 ♜xb2 22.♞d4 ♜c4
23.♙f2 ♞ac8=, Blagojevic-I. Markovic, Budva 2004.

Bauer–Tkachiev Belfort, 2010



White's last moves, h3 and ♞b1, do nothing more than waiting. Tkachiev comes up with something far from trivial:

12...♞a5!

Taking control of d5 and b5!

13.♜d2 e5! 14.b4 (14.d5? ♜xd5
15.♜xd5 ♞xd5 16.♙xd5 ♞xd5+) 14...
axb3 15.♜xb3 ♞a8 16.d5 e4 (16...
♜b4!?) 17.♜xe4 ♜xd5 18.♜bc5 ♞a7
19.♞b3 ♜a5 20.♞c2 b6 21.♞d1 c6
22.♜a4 b5! 23.♜ac3 ♞d7=.

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♗g2 d5

Typical Tactical Motifs

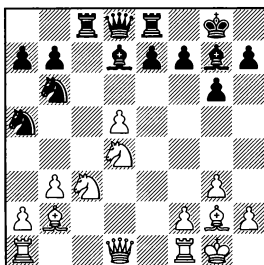
Again, the hero of the day is the g7-bishop.

♙xb5 20.♗xg7 ♜xg7 21.♙d4+ ♜g8 22.♙xa7 ♜d6 23.♙d4 ♜c2. So he strikes back with:

17.♜e6! ♜xc4! 18.♜xg7 ♜xb2 with an active position for Black.

Bacrot-Gustafsson

Germany 2001



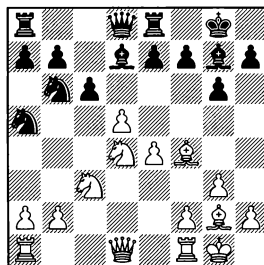
Black is in danger since his knights remained useless at the edge of the board. The tactical solution of this positional problem is:

15...♜bc4! 16.bxc4 ♙b6

White is unable to defend all his hanging pieces along the main diagonal: 17.♜a4 ♗xa4 18.♙xa4 ♜xc4 19.♗c3 ♗xd4 20.♗xd4 ♙xd4 or 17.♜cb5 ♜xc4 18.♗c3 ♗xb5 19.♜xb5

Smejkal-Khalifman

Germany 2000



13...♗c8!

Suddenly Black threatens a fork by ...e5 so White must start a retreat along the whole battlefield.

14.♜de2 cxd5 15.exd5 e5 (15...♗g4!?) 16.♗c1 ♜ac4 17.b3 ♜d6, with a typical blockading position:

18.a4 ♗g4 19.♗a3 ♜bc8 20.h3 ♗xe2 21.♙xe2 a6=.

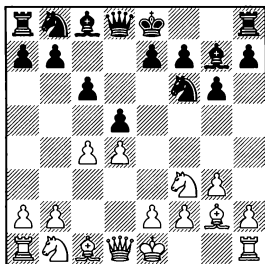
Part 1

Step by Step

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

I advocate this sharp system against the fianchetto because it is true to the Grünfeld spirit and allows Black to play for a win. However, you should be aware that many players discard the fianchetto setup against the King's Indian/Grünfeld as a main repertoire mostly because of the extremely solid variation:

3...c6 4.♙g2 d5 5.♘f3 ♙g7



Even the ultra-sharp young Kasparov placed his trust in it when he wanted to make a draw against Karpov. This approach has several positive sides: Black's game is clear and easy, one can learn all the vital variations in an hour. I do not plan to elaborate too much in this variation, but Agrest prepared for you a brief survey with some original recommendations. You might want to try it in the event of temporary

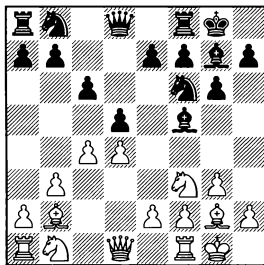
difficulties in the sharp main lines.

In the diagram position, White's most popular answers are:

a) 6.b3

This is the main repertoire in Avrukh's book *1.d4* who spent 30 pages on it. I'll confine myself to one column:

6...0-0 7.0-0 ♙f5 8.♙b2



8...♖b6!?

This move is seldom seen in practice and it is not mentioned in Avrukh's book. Thus you have a serious chance to surprise your opponent. The idea behind it is to hamper White's natural development with ♘c3. Besides threatening to capture on c4, Black is also eying the d4-pawn. His next move can be ...♞d8 or ...♞e4. The most obvious answer is:

9.♘bd2

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

A small victory for us – the knight went to a passive place and left the d4-pawn without the support of the d1-queen.

Alternatives are:

9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♗c3 ♘c6 11.♗e5 ♜fd8 12.♗a4 ♜b5 13.♗xc6 ♜xc6 14.♜c1 ♜d6 15.♗c5 ♜ab8=;

9.♗e5 ♜d8 10.♗c3 ♗bd7 11.♗xd7 ♜xd7 12.♗a4 ♜d8 13.♗c5 ♜c7=.

9...♗bd7

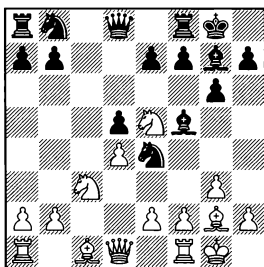
9...♗e4 is less convincing due to 10.e3 ♗xd2 11.♗xd2 (11.♜xd2 ♗e4=) 11...♗e6 (11...♗d3 12.♜e1 dxc4 13.♗a3) 12.♜c1 ♗d7 13.e4 dxe4 14.♗xe4, but despite White's space advantage, Black is still holding after 14...♜ad8 15.♗g5 c5=.

After the text, it is unclear how White should continue. His problem is that 10.e3 would fail already to 10...♗d3 11.c5 ♜a5 12.♜e1 b6=.

In general, the queen on b6 is very annoying, but 10.♗h4 ♗e6 11.c5 ♜a5 12.a3 will also face 12...b6. Finally, 10.a4 could be met by 10...a5.

I think that Black enjoys a comfortable game after 8...♜b6.

b) 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.♗e5 0-0 8.♗c3 ♗f5!? (8...e6 9.0-0 ♗fd7 is also popular) 9.0-0 ♗e4!

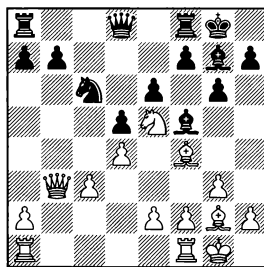


A simple and straightforward way to equality. Black takes on c3 and follows up with ...♗c6. White will have the double attack ♜b3, but it leads to a forced draw. When Botvinnik first faced this move in the world championship match against Smyslov in 1954, he took on e4 and agreed to a draw two moves later.

Main continuations are:

b1) 10.♜b3 ♗c6 11.♜xd5 (11.♜d1?! is often played, but White is even a bit worse after 11...♗xd4 12.♜xd4 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♗xe5 14.♜xd5 ♜c7.) 11...♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♜xd5 13.♗xd5 ♗xe5 14.dxe5 ♗xe5. The game Benko-Fischer, New York 1962, saw further 15.♗h6 ♜fd8 16.♗xb7 ♜ab8 17.♜ad1 ♗xc3, with a quick draw. In my game M.Ivanov-Delchev, Benasque 2008, White deviated with 15.♗e3?! ♜ac8 16.♗xb7 ♜xc3 17.♜ac1 ♜d8 18.♜xc3 ♗xc3 and managed to make a draw.

b2) 10.♗f4 ♗xc3! (It is essential to avoid the structure that arises after 10...♗c6?! 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.♗a4±.) 11.bxc3 ♗c6 2.♜b3 e6!

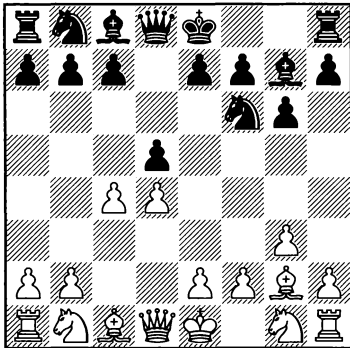


13.♜b7 (13.h3 ♗xe5 14.♗xe5 f6 15.♗f4 g5 16.♗d2 ♜d7=) 13...♗xe5 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.dxe5 ♜a5 16.♜b4

(16.c4 ♖ab8 17.♗e7 dxc4 18.e4 ♕g4 19.f3 ♖b2+) 16...♗xb4 17.cxb4 ♖fb8 18.a3 a5 19.bxa5 ♖xa5=, Huebner-Kozma, Siegburg/Bad Godesberg 1969.

b3) 10.♕e3 ♖xc3 11.bxc3 ♖c6 12.♖xc6 (or 12.♗b3 ♖xe5 13.dxe5 e6=) 12...bxc6 13.♗a4 ♗b6=. The famous game Geller-Fischer, Palma de Mallorca 1970, went further 14.♖ac1 ♖ab8 15.c4 ♕xd4 16.♕xd4 ♗xd4 17.e3 ♗e5 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.♖fd1 e6 20.♗xa7 ♖a8+.

Now, with a solid backup line in the pocket, let us return to the much more interesting positions from our main repertoire:



I examine here:

- A. 5.♖f3; B. 5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.e4;
C. 5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.♖f3.

Variations B and C look similar, but in fact they have quite different character and deserve independent main lines.

A. 5.♖f3 dxc4!

This is the best move order. After 5...0-0, White could switch to 6.cxd5 and throw us out of the proposed repertoire.

6.♖a3

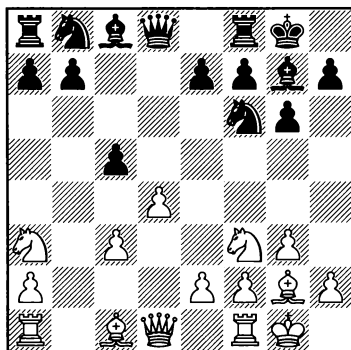
6.♗a4+ ♖fd7 7.0-0 ♖c6 8.♗xc4 ♖b6 9.♗c2 0-0 10.♖d1 ♕g4 11.e3 looks solid, but the queen lift 11...♗d5! 12.♖bd2 ♗h5 solves the problem of activating the strongest black piece. Play might continue 13.♖e1 ♖b4 14.♗c3 c5! 15.a3 ♖c6.

6...c3!

This genuine Grünfeld move was first played by Milan Vidmar in 1940. It has gradually pushed into the background the variation 6..0-0 7 0-0 ♖c6 8 ♖c4 ♕e6 where Black aims to blockade the light squares and seek counterplay on the a-file with 9.b3 ♕d5 10.♕b2 a5. The main expert for White is Predrag Nikolic who every too often proves that White's powerful centre prevails in this structure. I advocate the more active approach linked with a direct attack of the centre with ...c7-c5. It is true that 6...c3 bolsters up White's centre, but the closing of the c-file and the shift of the pawn to c3 weakens the c4-square which should become the fulcrum of Black's strategy. We should only watch out not to allow the advancing of the pawns to c4, d5, e4.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

7.bxc3 c5 8.0-0 0-0



9.e3!

White lays his hope for an advantage on this very move. He builds up a dark-squared pawn triangle to reduce the scope of the bishop on g7. He will then develop with natural moves as ♖e2, ♘b2, ♖acl, ♖fd1. In the middlegame, White will attempt to put his pawn cluster in motion. Many Black players feel uncomfortable when facing such an approach, because it is very difficult to generate any tactical threats.

I will show a good method of creating counterplay:

The f6-knight goes with tempo to b6 via d5 (hitting c3). From there it cuts the white knight on a3 off from the c4-square and prepares an attack on the b2-bishop with ♘b6-a4. Black's queen finds an employment on a4 via b6-a6, or on h5 (through d5). Sometimes the queen builds a battery on the h3-c8 diagonal after ♙e6, ♗c8.

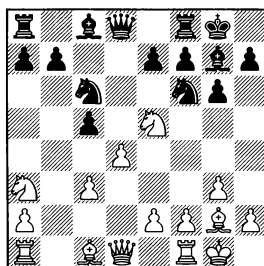
In most variations, a trade of

queens favours Black. Any exchange of minor pieces is also welcome. Hopefully, we could blockade the b2-bishop with ...c5-c4, or gain control over the c-file with a timely exchange on d4. However, do not hurry to define the fate of the c5-pawn!

You should learn carefully the recommended move order and examine the positional and tactical motifs given in the "Main Ideas" chapter.

The other options on move 9 do not set serious problems:

a) 9.♘e5 ♘c6!



A standard tactical motif. Black sacrifices a pawn in order to exchange the active knight and intercept the initiative.

10.♘xc6

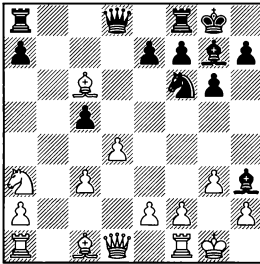
10.♘ac4 ♘d5 transposes to line b. 9.♘c4.

10...bxc6 11.♙xc6

White can take the pawn by 11.♗a4 ♘d5! 12.♗xc6 (12.♙d2 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘b6! 14.♗xc6 ♙a6 15.♗e4 ♗xd4=), but then Black's initiative is even stronger: 12...♙e6 13.♘b5

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(13.♖xc5 misses the typical tactical hit 13...♗xc3! when neither 14.♖xc3 ♗xd4 15.♖f3 ♗xa1 16.♖h6 ♗g7 17.♗xg7 ♗xg7 18.♖c3+ f6 19.♗xa8 ♖xa8, nor 14.e3 ♗e2+ 15.♗h1 ♗xd4-- would save White.) 13...♖c8 14.♖a6 ♗xc3! The same hit! 15.♗xc3 cxd4 16.♗a4 ♗c4. I was hesitant what to take first. 17.♖xa7 ♗xe2 18.♖e1 d3 19.♗d2 ♗d4 20.♖a6 ♖c2 21.♖h6 d2--+, Schwarz-Delchev, Arnhem 1990.



11...♗h3

White's position is difficult. For instance, 12.♗xa8 ♖xa8 13.f3 fails to 13...♗d5!+. 12.♗g2 is also bad owing to 12...♗xg2 13.♗xg2 ♗e4 14.♗b2 ♖b8 15.♖b1 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖d5 17.f3 ♖xa2+. Remains:

12.♖e1 ♗d5! (cutting the bishop's retreats) 13.♗b2 (13.♖d3 ♗xc3!) 13...♖b8 14.♖d2 ♗xc3!+, Panchenko-Malaniuk, Kharkov 1980.

b) 9.♗c4 ♗c6 10.♗fe5

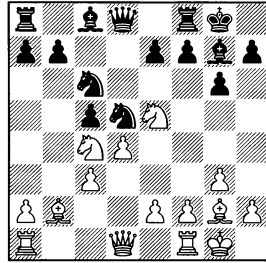
Alternatives:

10.♗ce5 ♗d5 11.♗b2 (11.♖b3 ♗xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗e6 13.♖xb7 loses to 13...♗xc3--+) 11...♗xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♗e6=;

10.♗b2 ♗e6 11.♗ce5 ♗d5 12.c4

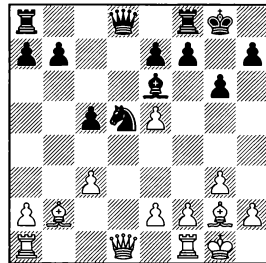
♗xf3 13.♗xf3 cxd4 14.♗xd4 ♗a5=, Sanchez-Salo, Moscow (ol) 1956.

10...♗d5! 11.♗b2



11...♗e6

We could also use here the standard strategic motif 11...♗xe5 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5!? 13.dxe5 ♗e6! (keeping the bishop pinned to the c3-pawn. 13...♗b6 is a mistake in view of 14.♖xd8 ♖xd8 15.♗c1! ♗g4 16.♗e3)



14.♖c2 (White's kingside attack reaches an impasse after 14.♖c1 ♖c7 15.f4 ♗b6 16.c4 ♗xc4 17.f5 gxf5 18.e4 ♗xb2 19.♖xb2 fxe4--+; On the other hand, the endgame also favours Black: 14.c4 ♗b6 15.♗xb7 ♖b8 16.♗e4 ♗xc4 17.♗c3 ♖xd1 18.♖fxd1 ♗b2 19.♖d2 ♗a4 20.♗a5 ♖fc8 21.♖c2 c4 22.f4 c3--+) 14... ♖c7 15.e4 ♗b6 16.f4 ♗c4 17.♖fe1

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

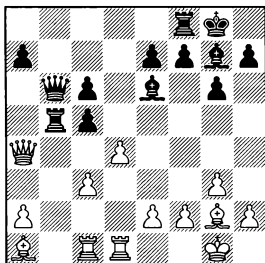
♞ad8 18.♙c1 ♙d3 19.♞f2 ♟c4 20.g4 ♞a5 21.f5 ♟xe5-+. The idea of the double exchange on e5 would be even stronger on the next move, so White should take on c6 himself:

12.♟xc6 bxc6 13.♞a4

We already know that 13.♟e5?! ♙xe5!? 14.dxe5 ♞c7 is good for Black.

13.♞c2 is also passive: 13... ♞c7 14.e3 (or 14.e4 ♟b6 15.♟e3 ♟c4 16.♟xc4 ♙xc4 17.♞fe1 ♞a5=) 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 c5 16.dxc5 ♞xc5 17.♙xg7 ♟xg7 and the opponents signed a draw, Andersson-Balashov, Buenos Aires 1980.

13...♞b8 14.♞ac1 ♞b5 15.♞fd1 ♟b6 16.♟xb6 ♞xb6 17.♙a1



The bishop is out of play on a1. “For a compensation”, the a2-pawn is weak, which was underlined by :

17...♞c8! (intending ...♞a5) 18.d5 ♞a5 19.♞c4 cxd5 20.♙xd5 ♙xd5 21.♞xd5 ♞a6 22.♞c2 c4.

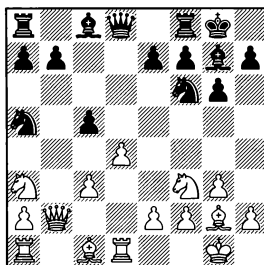
Black is on top, Mamedyarov-Van Wely, Ciudad Real 2004.

c) 9.♞b3!?

An idea of E. Vladimirov – one of Kasparov’s assistants in the KK

matches. The queen frees d1 for the rook.

9...♟c6 10.♞d1 ♟a5! (to control c4!) 11.♞b2



11...cxd4

My new idea, which you will see on move 13, is also working without the exchange on d4, but I think that the c-file opens in Black’s favour.

In the game Papin-Kokarev, St. Petersburg 04.11.2010, Black tested 11...♞b6 12.♟e5 ♙e6! (In Inarkiev-Kurnosov, Moscow 2010, Black lost tempi on manoeuvring and ended up without counterplay after 12... ♟d7 13.♟ac4 ♟xc4 14.♟xc4 ♞a6 15.♟e3!±.) 13.♞b1 ♞xb2 14.♞xb2 ♞ad8 15.♙xb7 when instead of 15... ♞b8? 16.♙f3±, he should have played the obvious 15...♟xb7 16.♞xb7 ♟d5, regaining the material.

12.cxd4 ♙f5!

Planning ...♙e4.

13.♟e5 ♟g4!

With this novelty, I improve on the game Turov-Flumbort, Haarlem 2010, which saw 13...♟d7 14 ♟ec4 ♟xc4 15 ♟xc4 ♙e6 16 ♟e3!±. The fine point is that the knight on

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g4 discourages the unpleasant manoeuvre ♖c4-e3.

14.♙f4

Alternatively:

14.♖ec4 ♜xc4 15.♜xc4 ♖c8! 16.♜e3 ♜xe3 17.♙xe3 ♖c2 or 17...b6=;
14.♜xg4 ♙xg4 15.♙f4 ♖c8 16.h3 ♙e6=.

14...♜xe5 15.dxe5 ♖b6! 16.♖xb6 axb6 17.♜b5 ♜c6

The endgame is equal, for instance, 18.e4 ♙g4 19.f3 ♙e6 20.♜c7 ♖xa2=, or 18.♜c7 ♖a5 19.♜d5 ♙e6=.

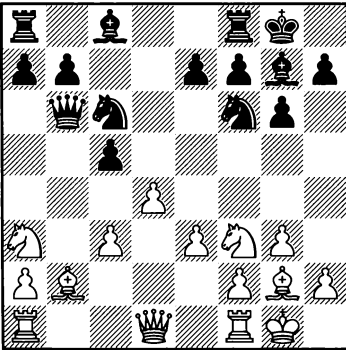
9...♜c6

Now White chooses between:

A1. 10.♙b2 and A2. 10.♖e2.

10.♜c4 is only a minor alternative: 10...♜d5 11.♙b2 ♜b6! 12.♖e2 ♜a4 13.♜fe5?! ♜xe5 14.♜xe5 ♙xe5!.

A1. 10. ♙b2 ♖b6!



10...♜d5 is an attempt to steer play into the 10.♖e2 line. However,

I have some apprehension about 11.e4 (in the line 11.♖b3 ♜a5 12.♖b5 a6 13.♖e2 ♜b6, the extra move ...a6 might be useful) 11...♜b6 12.♖c2! (Keeping a4 under control. 12.d5 ♜a5 13.♖b1 ♙d7 is fine.) Now 12...♙g4 is insufficient in view of 13.d5 ♙xf3 14.♙xf3 ♜e5 15.♙e2 when Black has no counterplay against f2-f4 and e4-e5, so we should opt for 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 ♙g4 14.d5 ♙xf3 15.♙xf3 ♜d4 16.♙xd4 ♙xd4 17.♖ac1 ♖d7 18.♖e2!. White is to be preferred here because we cannot contend for the c-file. For example, 18...♖fc8 walks into 19.♙g4! f5 20.♙h3! and Black's castling position is weakened.

11.♖e2

If 11.♜c4 ♖a6 12.♜fe5 (12.♜ce5 ♙f5) 12...♙e6! and White loses the battle for the c4-square.

11...♙f5! 12.♖fc1

I recently faced 12.♖fd1 ♖fd8 13.♜c4 ♖a6 14.♙f1 ♖a4=, Pavlovic-Delchev, Serbia 2010, 13.♙f1 does not set problems either: 12...♜a5! (Black should restrict the knight on a3 from going to the centre.) 14.♜e5 ♖ac8 15.♜ac4 ♜xc4 16.♜xc4 ♖a6 and Black is slightly better.

12...♖fd8 13.♙f1

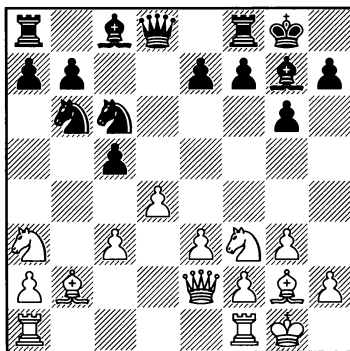
Or 13.♜c4 ♖a6 14.♙f1 (14.♜h4 ♙e6 15.♙f1 ♖a4?) 14...♖a4! 15.♜fe5 ♜xe5 16.♜xe5 ♜e4=.

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

**13...♖a5 14.♖e5 ♙ac8 15.♖ac4
♖xc4 16.♖xc4 ♙e6=.**

14.♙ac1 b5 15.♖ce5 ♖xe5 16.♖xe5
♙b8 17.♙a1

A2. 10.♙e2 ♖d5 11.♙b2 ♖b6!



Our plan is to trade the bishop on b2 with ♖b6-a4. White has a wider choice. First of all, he should decide on the setup of his rooks. It may seem that the best places for them are c1 and d1, but one of the biggest experts for White, Nikolic, preferred to put them to b1 and c1.

I further examine:

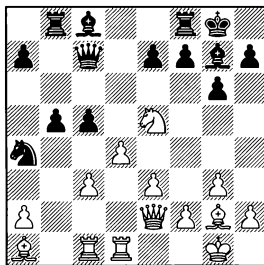
A21. 12.♙fd1!; A22. 12.♙ab1!; A23. 12.♙ac1; A24. 12.♙ad1.

A21. 12.♙fd1!?

This allows the exchange of the b6-knight for the b2-bishop. Although this piece looks passive at the moment, without it White will lack an active plan.

12...♖a4! 13.♙ac1

13.♖c4 could make Black reconsider his plans with 13...♙c7



Now Black gains the edge by 17...
♖xe5 18.dxe5 c4.

13...♖xb2 14.♙xb2 ♙b6!

As I had noted, trading queens is generally a good idea!

15.♙b5

If 15.♙e2, Black returns to the plan with ...♙a6, e.g. 15...♙a5! 16.♖c4 ♙a6 17.d5 ♖a5 18.♙f1 ♖xc4 19.♙xc4 ♙xc4 20.♙xc4 ♙d7 21.e4 b5 22.♙e2 ♙fd7.

**15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♙xb5
17.♖xb5 ♙d7 18.a4 ♙fc8=.**

A22. 12.♙ab1!?

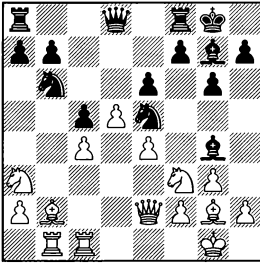
A fresh idea of Predrag Nikolic. It faces us with a new type of problems. Black should reckon with the pressure down the open b-file.

12...♙d5!?

I suppose that 12...♙f5 is a viable alternative:

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13.e4 ♖g4 14.d5 ♜e5 15.c4 e6 16
♜fc1



Here, in the game Nikolic-Nedev, Antalya 2004, Black chose 16...♜c8 and after 17.♞e3, White unpinned his knight, remaining with a solid spatial advantage.

In the Grünfeld, we often face the dilemma – to blockade the centre or to destroy it. The second approach is very tempting so I spent a lot of time on 16...f5!?. The final diagnosis is that Black is unable to rip dividends from the pressure along the f-file and eventually White gets the upper hand. My main variation runs 17.♙xe5 17...♙xe5 18.exf5 ♜xf5 19.dxe6 ♞f6 20.♞b3 ♜f8 21.♞e4 ♙xf3 22.♙xf3 ♜c8 23.♙g2 ♜d6 24.♞e2 ♙g7 25.♜b5±.

The key to understanding this position is that the b6-knight is passive while the possibility of ♜b5 and the pressure on b7 are a constant source of concern.

Logically, I came to the move:
16...♞b8!

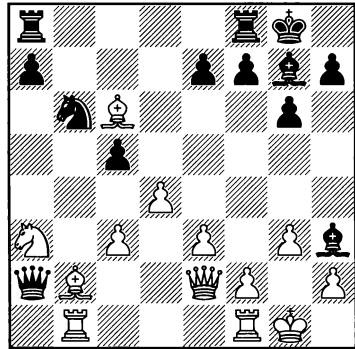
Then 17.♞e3?! ♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♞g5! 19.♙e2 (19.♞e2 ♜xf3+ 20.♞xf3 ♙xb2) 19...♞xe3 20.fxe3 should be about equal. White's most challenging continuation seems to be

17.♙xe5! ♙xe5 18.♞e3 ♙xf3 19.♙xf3 ♞e7 where Black should be able to neutralise the opponent's initiative.

13.♜e5

13.c4 ♞h5 14.d5 ♜e5 15.♙xe5 ♙xe5 was equal in Jankovic-Sebenik, Nova Gorica 2003: 16.h3 ♙g7 17.g4 ♞h6 18.♜b5 ♙d7 19.♜xa7 ♜xd5=.

12...♞xa2 14.♜xc6 bxc6
15.♙xc6 ♙h3!



16.♙xa8

After 16.♜fel ♞ab8 17.e4 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♜fc8 19.d5 ♜d7 20.♙xg7 ♞xe2 21.♙xe2 ♞xb1+ 22.♜xb1 ♙xg7, Black has some initiative.

16...♙xf1 17.♞xf1 ♞xa8
18.♞a6 cxd4 19.cxd4 e6=.

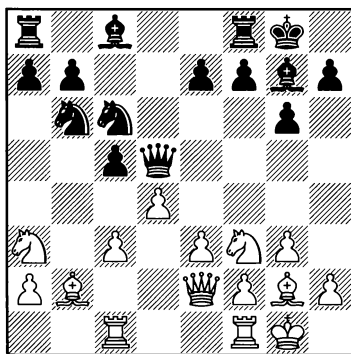
A23. 12.♞ac1 ♞d5!

This queen lift is probably the safest setup in this system. We

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

evacuate our strongest piece from the centre to h5.

12...♙e6, as in the game Adianto-Ehlvest, Bali 2000, looks interesting, for instance, 13.♙fd1 ♖c8! 14.c4 ♙g4! and Black is fine. However, I'm afraid that it is not entirely sound. White's most challenging response to it is to capture on c5 and follow up with ♖d4, e.g. 13.dxc5!? ♖a4 14.♖d4 (14.♖b5 ♖a5) 14...♖xc5±.



13.c4!

Or:

13.♖b5 ♖h5 14.♙fe1 ♙d7 15.♖f1 ♙ac8= (15...♙fd8 16.♖d2 ♙ac8=);

13.♖e5 ♖xa2 14.♖xc6 bxc6 15.♙xc6 ♖b8 16.♙a1 ♖e6 17.♙g2 ♖a4, with counterplay.

13...♖h5

Threatening to paralyse White's pieces with ...♙g4, so he must define the pawn structure in the centre.

14.dxc5

14.d5 ♖e5 is also roughly equal. See **game 3 Matnadze-Delchev**, Zaragoza 30.12.2010.

14...♙xb2 15.♖xb2 ♖a4 16.♖b5 ♖xc5 17.♙fd1 a6 18.♖b6 ♖a4 19.♖b1 ♖a5 20.♙d5 ♖c3 21.♙xa5 ♖xb1=.

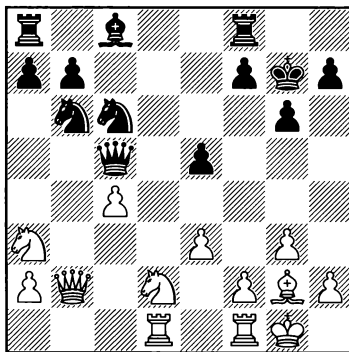
A24. 12.♙ad1 ♖d5! 13.c4

Alternatively:

13.♖e5 ♖xa2 14.♖xc6 bxc6 15.♙xc6 ♖b8 16.♙d2 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♙b7 18.♙xb7 ♙xb7 19.♙c2 (19.♖a6 ♖d5 20.♙c1 ♖d7 21.♙dc2 ♖d5 22.♖e2 a5±) 19...♖a4±;

13.♖b5 ♖h5 14.♖d2 ♙d7±.

13...♖h5 14.dxc5 ♖xc5 15.♙xg7 ♙xg7 16.♖b2+ e5 17.♖d2



17...♙f5!

It is essential to prevent the knight from landing on d6.

18.♖b3

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Or 18.♖e4 ♗xe4 19. ♗xe4 ♜ad8=.

**18...♞e7 19.c5 ♘a4 20.♞c1
♜ad8 21.♘b5 ♗d3 22.♞xd3 ♞xd3
23.♞c4 ♞xb3 24.axb3 ♘xc5=.**

B. 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4

White decides to occupy the centre. Our bishop on g7 welcomes such a strategy! It is more difficult to obtain counterplay against the rock-solid dark-squared fortress e3-d4. I consider it in line C.

I would also like to mention the move order:

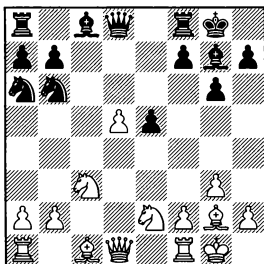
6.♘c3 ♘b6! (I prefer this to 6... ♘xc3.) 7.e3

7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.e3 0-0 9.0-0 transposes to line C.

7...0-0 8.♘ge2 e5 9.d5

9.0-0 exd4 10.♘xd4 ♞e7 was the first game in this line, Capablanca-Flohr 1935. Black took over the initiative with ...♞d8, ...c5 and ...♘a6-b4.

9...c6 10.e4 cxd5 11.exd5 ♘a6 12.0-0

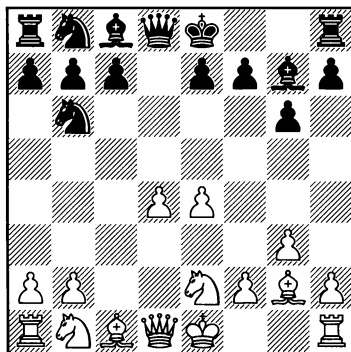


This position often arises after 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♘e2 0-0 8.0-0 e5 9.d5

c6 10.♘bc3 cxd5 11.exd5 ♘a6, when White has an extra tempo for 12.b3. In our example, it is Black to move and he seizes the initiative with 12... ♗f5 13.b3 ♘b4. The very instructive game Kortschnoj-Svidler, Tilburg 1998, saw further 14.♗a3 a5 15.♞d2 ♘c8 16.♘e4 ♗xe4 17.♗xe4 ♘d6 18.♗g2 e4 19.♞ac1 ♞e8 20.♗xb4 axb4 21.♞xb4 ♞xa2 22.♘c3 ♗xc3 23.♞xc3 e3 24.fxe3 ♞b6†.

6...♘b6 7.♘e2

7.♘f3 is not popular due to 7... ♗g4! 8.d5 c6 when the f3-knight hinders the g2-bishop from protecting the key pawn on d5. Black should only refrain from exchanging his bishop after 9.h3. Instead, 9...♗c8 or 9...♗d7 maintain the balance.



7...c5!

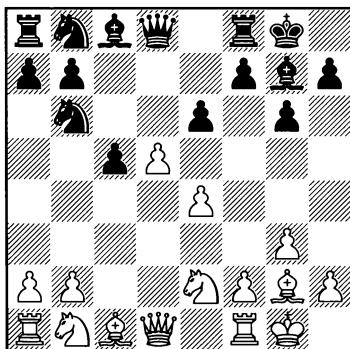
The move order is very important here! After 7...0-0 8.0-0 c5, White would have the option of 9.dxc5!

8.d5

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

8.dxc5?! does not even win a pawn owing to 8...♞xd1+ 9.♙xd1 ♖a4 10.♖bc3 ♖xc5 11.♙e3 ♖ba6 12.♙c2 ♙e6 13.♞ad1 ♞c8=.

8...0-0 9.0-0 e6!



Black has managed to disrupt the white pawn pair in the centre and prolong the scope of his dark-squared bishop. It would be essential to stop the d5-pawn from reaching d6. This task is assigned to the b6-knight which can go to d6 via c4 or c8.

It is more difficult to solve the problem with the development of the c8-bishop. We would like to trade it for its white counterpart, but that is unrealistic. On f5 it will be unstable since White could expel it by h3 and g4. Remains b7 (after ...b6). The bishop will be passive there, but it will enable the connection of Black's rooks.

Our main line branches now to:

B1. 10.♖ec3; B2. 10.♖bc3.

B1. 10.♖ec3 ♖a6!

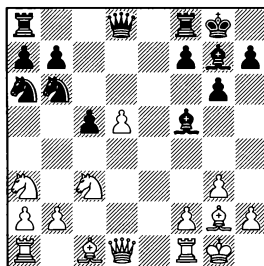
Black maintains the tension in the centre. It is important to keep open the option of ...e6-e5, followed by an eventual transfer of the knight to d6. With such a strong blockading piece Black could play on both sides of the board with ...b5 or ...f5 in a well chosen moment. I explained the typical ideas in such structure in the "Main Ideas" chapter.

11.a4!

The favourite weapon of Karpov in 2009. The other moves are weaker:

a) 11.♖d2?! is considered as an opening mistake, for example, 11...♖b4! 12.♖b3 c4! 13.♖c5 ♖d7 14.♙e3 ♞a5 15.♖xd7 ♙xd7 16.♙d2 ♖d3, Hulak-Sutovsky, Istanbul 2003.

b) 11.♖a3 exd5 12.exd5 ♙f5!



In my opinion, Black is already fighting for the edge here. The a3-knight remains very passive, its only function being to defend

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the c4-square. Black will prepare ...♟b4 to target the sensitive d3-square.

13.♙e3

13.g4 is more principled, but Black is still fine after 13...♙d7 14.♙f4 ♟b4 15.d6 ♖c8 16.h3 ♙c6=. Other alternatives are:

13.♟ab5 ♟b4 14.d6 ♟c4=+;

13.d6 ♖d7.

13...♞e8 (13...♖d7 14.♖d2 ♙h3= is also good enough.) 14.♖d2 ♖d7 15.♞ad1

15.♞fd1 is similar: 15...♞ac8 (aiming for ...♟b4) 16.♙f1 ♙h3! and Black was fine in Bukal-Rade, Si-benik 2009.

15...♞ac8

Preparing ...♟b4. 15...♞ad8 also worked well in the game Tkachiev-Cheparinov, Khanty Mansyiisk 2007: 16.♙g5 ♞c8 17.♟cb5 ♟b4 18.♟xa7 ♞a8 19.♟7b5 ♙d3 20.♟c3 c4 21.♞fe1 ♞xe1+ 22.♞xe1 ♟6xd5=.

16.d6 ♟b4 17.♟cb5 ♟a4

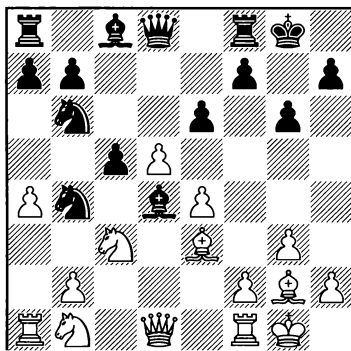
Perhaps White should opt here for 18.♟c3 ♟b6= since 18.♟c7 ♞ed8 19.♙xb7 ♞b8 hands Black the initiative.

11...♟b4!

Even after his retirement from active chess, Kasparov keeps demonstrating his deep understanding of the game. He introduced this idea in his blitz match vs. Karpov in 2009. Black delays once more

...ed5. Practice has seen only 11...exd5 12.exd5 ♟c4 (12...♟b4 was the third game of that very match: 13.♙e3 ♙d4 14.a5 ♙xe3 15.axb6 ♙d4 16.bxa7 ♙f5, with a tangled position in Karpov-Kasparov (3) rapid 2009 Valencia) 13.♟d2 ♟xd2 14.♙xd2 ♙f5 15.♙e3 ♖d7 16.♖b3 ♞ac8 when 17.♞fd1! was slightly better for White in V.Gaprindashvili-Sakaev 2001. Instead, the thematic advance 17.d6?! proved to be too early: 17...♟b4 18.♙xc5 ♟c2 19.♙xa7 ♟xa1 20.♞xa1 ♖xd6=, Kempinski-Brkic, Kusadasi 2006.

12.♙e3



12...♙d4!

The key of Black's opening strategy. By delaying the exchange on d5, he preserved the possibility of ...e5.

13.♙xd4 cxd4 14.♟a2!?

We are following the source game Karpov-Kasparov, blitz match, Valencia 2009, 4-th game. Later

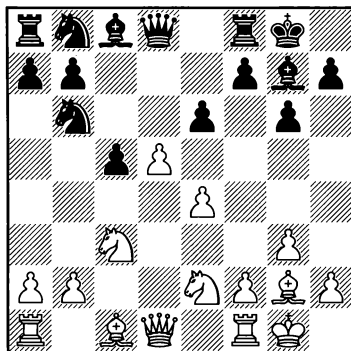
1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

Karpov tried to improve with 14.♟b5 e5 15.a5 ♙d7 16.♟1a3, but 16...♟c8 17.♟a4 ♟a6 18.♟fc1 ♟d6 19.♟b3 ♟xb5 20.♟xb5 b6 gave Black comfortable equality in Karpov-Carlssen, Moskow, rapid 2009.

14...♟xa2 15.♟xa2 e5!

The protected passed pawn on d4 completely balances the centre and Black's bishop is even more functional than its white counterpart, which is restrained by its own pawns, e.g. 16.♟d2 a5! 17.♟b3 ♟d6 18.f4 f6

B2. 10.♟bc3



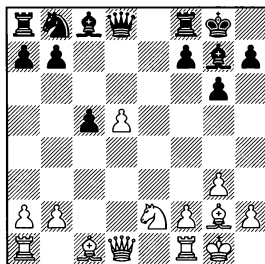
10...♟a6!

10...exd5 is the old main line. Of course it is playable, but in my opinion Black has more problems to overcome in that line:

11.exd5!

The idea of trading a pair of knights by 11.♟xd5!? is also reason-

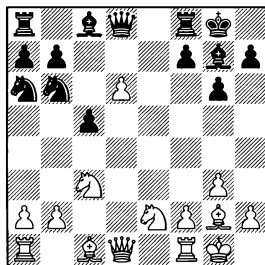
able since ♟e2 and ♟c3 essentially control the same squares. 11...♟xd5 (or 11...♙g4 12.h3 ♙xe2 13.♟xe2 ♟c6 14.♟b5 ♟d4 15.♟xc5 ♟xd5 16.exd5 ♟d7) 12.exd5



12...♙f5 13.♟c3 c4! (13...♟a6 14.♙e3 ♟d7 15.♟d2 ♟fe8 16.♟fd1±) 14.♟a4 ♙d3 15.♟d1 ♟d7 16.♙e3 b5!, with Black's initiative.

11...♙f5!

After the exchange on d5, 11...♟a6 is already dubious due to 12.d6!



Here 12...♟b8 13.♙f4! ♙d7 14.h4± leads to a typical position where all white pieces are extremely active and support well the advanced passed pawn on d6. The game Vaganian-Holzke, Germany 2002 went on 14...♙c6 15.d7 ♙xg2 16.♟xg2 ♟a8 17.♙d6 ♟xd7 18.♙xf8 +.

Part 1

12.h3!

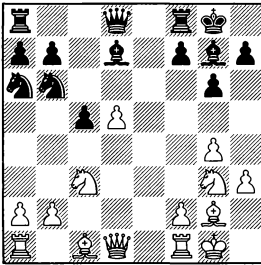
12.♙e3 ♘a6 13.b3 ♖d7 14.♗d2 is less precise in view of 14...♞fe8 or 14...♙h3=.

12...♘a6

This allows g4, but 12...h5 does not work due to 13.♘e4! ♞e8 14.♘2c3 ♘a6 15.♙g5!, with a strong pull.

13.g4! (13.♙f4 ♘b4!) 13...♙d7 14.♘g3

14.d6!?± also deserves attention.



14...♘c4!

The only way to activate the queen on d8 and hamper White's development at the same time. Or 14...♞e8 15.♘ge4!.

15.♞b1 ♖b6! 16.b3

Alternatively: 16.♙f4 ♖b4!; 16.♖b3 ♖xb3 17.axb3 ♘a5 18.d6 ♞ab8=.

16...♙xc3

16...♘e5 17.♙e3 ♘xg4 18.hxg4 ♙xc3 19.b4 ♙b5 20.bxc5 ♖a5 21.♘e4 looks too risky.

17.♖c2 ♘a3! 18.♙xa3 ♙d4 19.♙b2

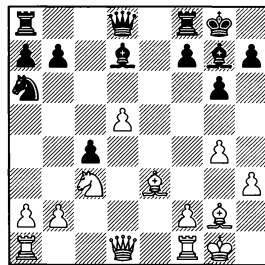
I have been following the game Wu Shaobin-Sytovsky, Shenyang 1999. White is probably a little better, but I found 19...f5!, restricting the knight on g3. My analysis suggests that play is rather unclear.

11.♘f4!

Two 2009 games of Peter Leko, against Topalov and Carlsen, established this move as the main line. At first it looks like a loss of tempo after ...e5, but Leko's idea is to redirect the knight to d3 and later to f3, from where it would target the key square e5 and enhance the effect of f2-f4. Alternatives do not give White any advantage:

a) 11.h3 exd5 12.exd5

Or 12.♘xd5 ♘xd5 13.exd5 ♙f5 14.g4 (14.♘c3 c4!) 14...♙d7 15.♘c3 (15.♘g3 ♙b5 16.♞e1 ♘b4) 15...c4! 16.♙e3



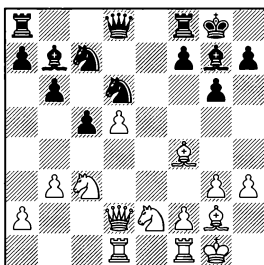
16...♘b4!

A very strong exchange sacrifice.

17.♙c5 ♘d3 18.♙xf8 ♖xf8 19.♖d2 f5 20.gxf5 ♖xf5. Black is in full control of the dark squares.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

12...♘c4! 13.b3 (13.♙e1 ♙e8 14.b3 ♘d6 15.♙f4 b6 16.♙d2 ♙b7 17.♙ad1 ♘c7=) 13...♘d6 14.♙f4 b6 15.♙d2 (15.♙xd6 ♙xd6 16.♘b5 ♙d7) 15... ♙b7 16.♙ad1 ♘c7



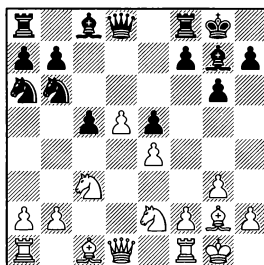
This position arose in the first rapid game Karpov-Kasparov, Valencia 2009. Black has covered most approaches to his position and stands well, for example: 17.♙xd6 ♙xd6 18.♘e4 ♙d7 19.d6 ♘b5=. Trading dark-squared bishops is anti-positional since it bolsters up the stand of the blockading knight at d6: 17.♙h6?! ♙xh6 18.♙xh6 ♙e8 19.♙fe1 ♙f6 20.♙f4 ♘g7. Perhaps best is 17.♙fe1 ♙e8=.

In the game, Karpov chose the principled 17.g4?!, but Black can exploit the weakening of White's kingside with 17...♙d7 18.a4 ♙ae8!? In my opinion, this is much safer than the continuation in the game: 18...f5 19.g5 ♙ad8 20.♙g3 f4!? 21.♘xf4 ♘f5 which still provides good compensation for the pawn. The rook is undoubtedly more active on the e-file. White should think about equalising, e.g. 19.♙fe1 f5 20.g5 ♘e4 21.♘xe4 fxe4 22.♙xc7=.

b) 11.♙f4?! e5!

This is one of the main ideas of the variation. It was played firstly by Reshevsky back in 1939.

12.♙c1



12...♘c4!

Also possible is 12...c4!? 13.b3 ♙d7 14.♙e3 ♙c8 15.♙d2 ♘c5 16.♙ab1 f5, with an active position in Medic-Brkic, Sibenik 2006.

13.b3 ♘d6 14.♙b1

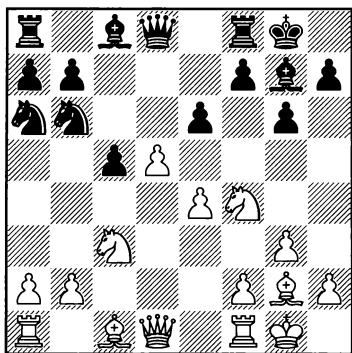
White's only sensible plan is linked with f2-f4, so he should shift the rook from the long diagonal. Any delay gives Black time to start first the offensive, e.g. 14.♙e3 ♙d7 15.♙d2 ♙c8 16.♙ab1 ♙a5 17.♙b2 f5.

14...♙e7 15.f4 ♙d7 16.♙e1 b5 17.♘d1 f5!?, Blumin-Reshevsky, New York 1939. The white knights failed to find good stands.

c) 11.b3!?

This rare move is very logical. White takes c4 under control and completes development.

11...exd5 12.exd5 ♙f5 12.♙e3 ♘a6 13.b3 ♙e8 14.♙d2 ♙d7=, Sachdev-Djingarova, Dresden ol. 2008.



11...e5!

It is time to close the centre.

11...exd5?! gives White the opportunity to trade his knight which was barring the way of the c1-bishop. Furthermore, White's light-squared bishop also gains in strength. After 12.♖fxd5! ♜xd5 13.♜xd5, White is better. Black could try 12...♗e6, but simple development like 13.♗f4 gives White an easier game. Even more unpleasant is 13.h4!, aiming for 14.♗g5 on the next move.

12.♜d3 c4!

Black repels the d3-knight from its perfect position and prepares the march of his queenside pawns with ...♜c5, ...♗d7, ...♜c8-d6, ...b5.

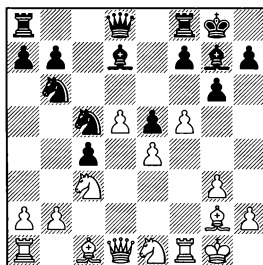
12...♜c4, aiming firstly to go to d6 before proceeding with the queenside play, spends precious tempi. White took over the initiative in Leko-Carlssen, Nanjing 2009, after 13.♞e2! ♞a5 (perhaps 13...♜d6 14.f4 f6 was relatively better, for instance, 15.b3 ♗d7 16.♗e3 ♜c8 17.♞ac1±) 14.a3! ♗d7. Black seems to be OK here – next follows ...b5 and

the pawns are rolling forth. However, Leko's excellent retort 15.♗g5! allowed him to keep the initiative. The fine point is that White can meet 15...f6 by 16.b4! cxb4 17.axb4 ♞b6 18.♜c5! ♜xc5 19.♞xc4↑.

13.♜e1 ♗d7 14.♗e3

Denying the a6-knight access to c5. Alternatives are:

a) 14.f4!? ♜c5 15.f5 was recently tried in Kharitonov-Khismatulin, Moscow 2010. (Note that 15.fxe5 ♗xe5 16.♜f3 ♗g7 17.♗g5 ♞e8 leaves White's pawn centre hanging.)



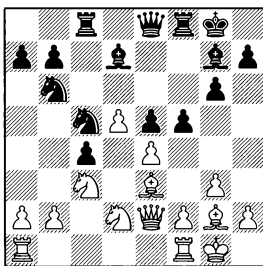
Now, instead of the ambitious but dubious 15...gxf5?! 16.exf5 e4, Black can improve by 15...♜ba4 16.g4 (16.♜xa4 ♜xa4; 16.♞b1 b5 17.♗e3 ♜c8) 16...b5 17.♞h1 (or 17.g5 f6) 17...♜c8! and Black succeeded in his queenside initiative while White's attack is still to take shape.

b) 14.♞e2!?

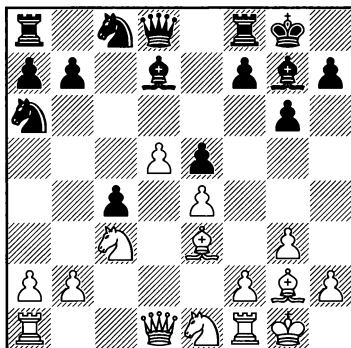
Targeting the c4-pawn thus preventing the manoeuvre ...♜b6-c8-d6.

14...♜c5 15.♗e3 ♜c8 16.♜f3 ♞e8 17.♜d2 f5!

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5



Now White strikes in the centre:
20.♙xe5!! ♙e8 21.d6 ♜c5 22.d7±.



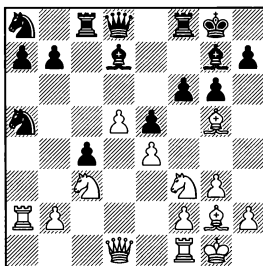
An excellent pawn sacrifice. Leko underestimated it and was quickly punished by Topalov in Nanjing 2009: 18.exf5 gxf5 19.♙xc4 ♙xc4 20.♜xc4 ♙e4 21.♜b4 ♙xc3 22.bxc3 f4 23.♙c5 f3, with a winning attack.

14...♙c8

I analysed a lot 14...♜c8?!, but came to the conclusion that White is better after 15.a4!±.

Instead, 15.♙f3 ♙c5 16.♜e2 ♜e7 17.♙d2 f5↑ occurred in Peter Heine Nielsen-Sutovsky, Malmo 2003. The position is quite similar to the game Leko-Topalov.

15...♙c5 16.a5 ♙a8 17.♙f3! ♙b3 18.♜a2 ♙xa5 19.♙g5! f6 (19...♜b6 20.d6 ♙c6 21.♙d5 ♜c5 22.♙e7+ ♘h8 23.♙xc8 ♜xc8 24.♙e3 ♙d4 25.♙xe5 ♜xe5 26.f4 ♜xd6 27.e5 ♜c7 28.♜xd4 a6 29.♜c1+—)



15.f4!

White can also stop ...b7-b5 by 15.a4, but the hole on b3 assures Black of good play: 15...♙d6 16.♙c2 ♜a5! (An important improvement over the blitz game Koneru-Lahno, Moscow 2010, which went 16...♜c7 17.♙a3 17.♙a3 ♙c5 18.♙ab5 (18. ♙cb5 ♙cxe4 19.♜c2 a6 20.♙xd6 ♙xd6 21.♙xc4 ♜ac8=) 18...♙xb5 19.axb5 ♜b4 20.♜c2 f5=.

15...♙d6

There is no time for 15...b5? as the blockade on e5 collapses after 16.fxe5 ♙xe5 17.♙f3 when 17...♙g4 would leave the b5-pawn hanging.

16.♜d2

Now 16.fxe5 ♙xe5 17.♙d4 f6 18.♙f3 ♙g4 is about equal. By moving the queen, White prevents the pin from g4.

16...f6

16...♞e8!? 17.fxe5 ♙xe5 18.♙d4 f6 is a valuable alternative to the main line. Note that 16...b5? is still premature in view of the pawn sacrifice 17.fxe5 ♙xe5 18.♙f3 ♙xc3 19.bxc3 ♙xe4 20.♚d4, with a strong attack.

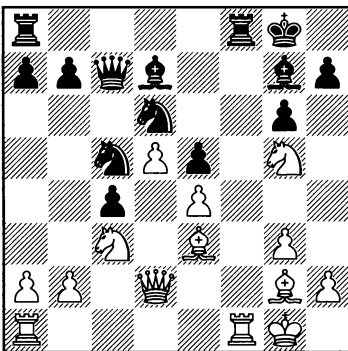
17.fxe5 fxe5 18.♙f3

Exchanges favour Black who has a clearcut plan on the queenside: 18.♞xf8+ ♚xf8 19.♙f3 ♚e7 20.♞f1 b6! 21.♙g5 (21.a4 ♙c5 22.♙xc5 bxc5, with a pressure on b2) 21...♚e8 22.♙e1 ♙c5 23.♙c2 b5 24.a3 a5↑.

18...♚c7!

Enabling ...♙c5. 18...b5 stumbles into 19.♙g5.

19.♙g5 ♙c5



20.♙e6!

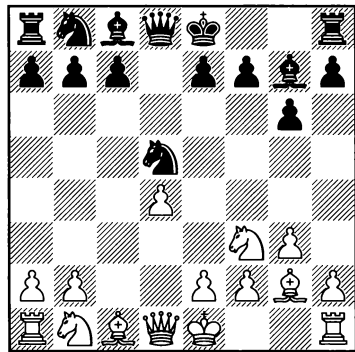
Only this pawn sac faces Black with some problems. 20.♞xf8+

♞xf8 21.♙e6 ♙xe6 22.dxe6 ♙xe6 23.♙d5 ♚b8 is totally safe.

20...♞xf1+! 21.♞xf1 ♙xe6 22.dxe6 ♙xe6 23.♙d5 ♚d8! 24.♙g5 c3! 25.bxc3 ♙c4=

Everything is under control.

C. 5.cxd5 ♙xd5 6.♙f3



6...♙b6 7.♙c3

7.0-0 ♙c6 8.e3 0-0 transposes to the main line. (8...e5 9.♙c3 is too drawish for my taste: 9.0-0 exd4 10.exd4 0-0 11.♙g5 ♚d7! 12.♙e4 ♙xd4! 13.♙f6+ ♙xf6 14.♙xf6 ♙xf3+ 15.♚xf3 c6 16.♞f1 ♚f5 17.♞e7 ♚xf3 18.♙xf3 ♙d7 19.♙d1 ♞ad8 and a draw was soon agreed in Pantsulaia-Gupta, Dubai 2006.) The only independent variation is the pawn sacrifice 8.♙c3, but it is not dangerous at all:

8...♙xd4 9.♙xd4 ♚xd4 10.♙b5

No better is 10.♚xd4 ♙xd4 11.♙b5 ♙e5 12.♙f4 ♙xf4 13.gf4 ♙d8! with an extra pawn.

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♟g7 4.♟g2 d5

10...♞c4! 11.a4

11.♞b3 regains the pawn but it is completely harmless, 11...0-0 12.♞xc4 ♟xc4 13.♟xc7 ♞b8 14.♟d5 ♞e8 15.♟f4 ♟e5 16.♟xe5 ♟xe5 17.♞fd1 ♟g4 18.f3 ♟d7 19.f4 ♟c6=, Kotsur-Kempinski Moscow 2005.

11...0-0 12.b3 ♞g4 13.♟f4!?

After 13.♟e3 ♟e6 14.♟xb7 (14. ♟xc7 ♞ad8 15.♞b1 ♟xa1 16.♞xa1 ♟xb3 17.a5 ♟c4 18.♟h6 ♞d4+, Pr.Nikolic-Kasparov, Wijk aan Zee 2000.) 14...♞ad8 15.♞c2 ♟xa1 16.♞xa1 ♟d5, Esen-Ruck, Kemer 2007, Black is the exchange up and he has an attack.

13...♟e6 14.h3 ♞h5 15.g4 ♞c5=. White's b3-pawn is weak so 16.♞c1 does not work due to 16...♞b4. Instead, Bu Xiangzhi-Timofeev, Sochi 2009 saw 16.♞c1 ♞xc1 17.♞axc1 c6 18.♟c7 ♞ad8 19.♟xe6 fxe6 20.♟g5 ♟d5=.

7...♟c6 8.e3

Our mission has been accomplished. The fine point of Black's move order is that 8.d5 is impossible in view of 8...♟xc3+ so we side-stepped the variation 6...0-0 7.0-0 ♟b6 8.♟c3 ♟c6 9.d5!?.

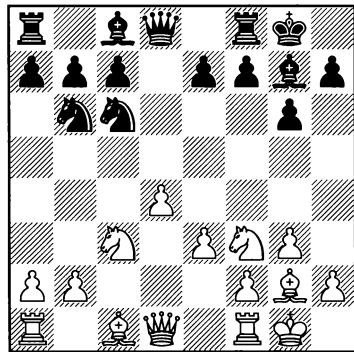
8.♟f4 aims to prevent ...e5, but nevertheless after 8...0-0 9.e3 h6 10.h4 ♟g4! 11.♞c1, Black went on with 11...e5!? (This is not the only good option. The game Nguyen-Saric, Vung Tau 2008 saw instead 11...♟d5! 12.♞b3 ♟db4 13.0-0 ♟e6! 14.d5 ♟xd5 15.♟xd5 ♞xd5 16.♞c4 ♟a5, with a material advantage

for Black) 12.dxe5 ♟c4 with active play, Ju Wenjun-Negi, St. Petersburg 2009.

8...0-0!

8...e5 9.0-0 is about equal, as we had seen above, but 9.d5 is not too clear.

9.0-0



9...♞e8!

Nimzowitsch called such moves *mysterious* – putting a rook on a closed file. Indeed, if we wanted to play ...e5, we could have done it outright. After all, we have enough hits on e5. Let us shed light on the reasons behind this strange move.

We shall be meeting time and again in the book the pawn formation e3-d4. It is getting on Black's g7-bishop nerves because this usually most active piece is biting at granite. Naturally, it is longing for action, but the immediate 9...e5 would be met by 10.d5 and the bishop will remain plugged behind its own pawn.

Part 1

Practical experience shows that after 10.d5 Black is about to struggle for a long time ahead.

It is clear that the active approach to the opening problems does not bring Black benefits. Then he should adopt a waiting strategy.

Let us consider White's plans and look at the position from his perspective. He happens to face the same problem! The pawn formation in the centre restricts its own dark-squared bishop even worse than it does with our hero on g7.

Evidently, White's only sensible setup is b3, ♖b2 followed by ♖e2, ♜fd1, ♝ac1. Should he achieve it without allowing us to get counterplay with ...c5 or ...e5, will be straddled with a passive defence. In the diagram position, Black is somewhat cramped and the lack of space will tell in future.

Thus the idea is clear. The battle is for ...e7-e5 which remains the only active option after the knight on c6 has blocked the way to the c7-pawn. The key is when to thrust the e-pawn forward. We should seize the moment when White would not have d4-d5. Let us make a useful move and pass White the turn.

We'll understand better the character of position if we briefly examine various other options:

a) 9...e5 10.d5! e4

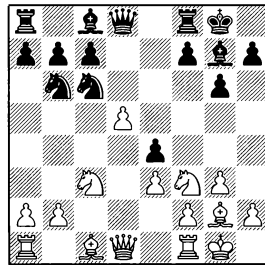
The rest is gloom for Black:

10...♞e7 11.e4 ♙g4 12.h3 ♜xf3
13.♞xf3±;

10...♞a5 11.e4 c6 12.♙g5 f6
13.♙e3 cxd5 14.♙xb6!. Many games

have proved White's advantage here. Most instructive are probably Portish-Schmidt, Bath 1973 and Hulak-P.Popovic, Zlatibor 1989.

The pawn sacrifice was introduced in the women's world championship match Chiburdanidze-Akhmilovskaya which took place in Sofia 1986. I (still very young then!) was among the spectators and I remember myself telling the neighbours that the demonstrator probably messed something on the board.



11.dxc6 ♞xd1 12.♞xd1 exf3
13.♙xf3 bxc6 14.♙d2!

This strong improvement tips the balance in White's favour. Previously White used to take the c6-pawn, but Black had sufficient counterplay after 14.♙xc6 ♜b8 15.♞d5 (or 15.♞b5 ♞c4 16.♞xa7 ♙g4 17.f3 ♙e6 18.♙d5 ♙xb2=, Konopka-Seres, Hungary 1998) 15...♞c4 16.♞e7+ ♙h8 17.♞xc8 ♜fxc8.

14...♞c4 15.♞a4! ♜b8 16.♙c3 ♙xc3 (16...♞xb2?? 17.♙xb2 ♙xb2 18.♜ab1+—) 17.bxc3 ♞e5 18.♙e2 ♙e6 19.♜d4. White has an obvious advantage which he converted to win the match for the European title, Tkachiev-Sutovsky, Dresden 2007.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

b) 9...a5

We saw this idea in the intro game Benko-Smyslov, Budapest, 1949. However, later White discovered better ways:

10.b3 ♘b4

Alternatives:

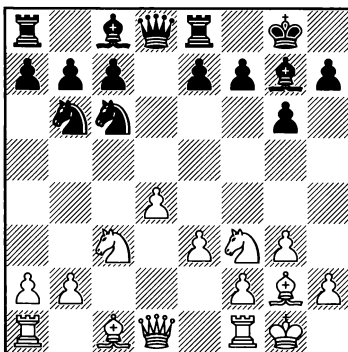
10...e5 11.♙a3! (gaining a tempo) 11...♙e8 12.dxe5! ♘xe5 13.♘d4 c6 14.♙c2. Black executed ...e5 without risking to face d5 in answer, but play opened in White's favour. The queen on d8 has no good squares;

10...a4?! 11.♘xa4 ♘xa4 12.bxa4 ♙e6 (12...♘d5, following in Smyslov's footsteps, is bad here because White has 13.♙d2! ♘b6 14.a5!.) 13.♙b1 ♙a7 14.♙c2 ♙a8 15.♘h4! and Black has no time to recapture the a4-pawn due to d4-d5.

11.♘e4!

An improvement over the passive 11.♙b2.

11...♙d7 12.a3 ♘a6 13.♙b2 ♙f5 14.♘e5! c6 15.♘d3. Black has no counterplay, Tukmakov-F.Olafsson, Las Palmas 1978.



C1. 10.d5; C2. 10.♙e1!.

Minor alternatives are:

a) 10.♙e2. The opposition of ♙e8 vs. ♙e2 suggests that we should open the centre with 10...e5! 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5

Or 12.♙d1 ♘xf3+ 13.♙xf3 ♙e7 14.h4 c6 15.♙d2 ♙e6 16.♙e1 ♘c4 17.b3 ♘e5 18.♙g2 ♙ad8=, Brunello-Safarli, Reggio Emilia 2009.

12...♙xe5.

In principle, White should aim in this structure for e3-e4-e5, but here 13.e4 would be met by 13...♙e6! so White has to change plans:

13.♙d1 ♙e7 14.e4 (14.f4 ♙xc3! 15.bxc3 ♙e6) 14...c6 15.♙e3 ♙e6 16.f4 ♙g7 (16...♙xc3 17.bxc3 f5 18.e5 ♙a3 is also interesting.) 17.e5 f6=.

b) 10.♘d2 is seldom seen lately. The idea of this move is not quite clear to me. I recommend 10...e5 11.d5 ♘e7 12.e4 c6 13.♘b3 cxd5 14.exd5 ♘f5, with counterplay.

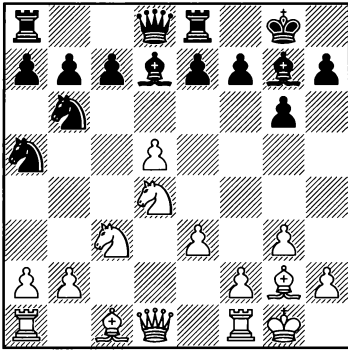
C1. 10.d5

The bishop on g7 is happy now. Black can renounce the advance of the e-pawn and prepare ...c6 instead, in order to open the c-file.

10...♘a5 11.♘d4

This centralisation of the knight only temporarily prevents the break ...c6. We meet 11.e4?! with 11...c6!.

11...♙d7

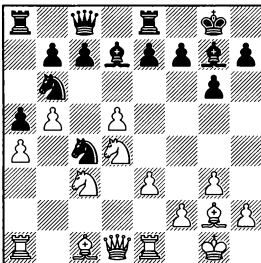


Completing development and intending ...c7-c6 while the opponent's bishop is still stuck on c1.

12.e4!

White opens the c1-h6 diagonal and reinforces his front central pawn. White has also tried in practice nearly all other legal moves:

a) 12.b4 ♖ac4 13.a4 a5 14.b5 ♗c8 15.♞e1 had been the main line for a long time. But, eventually, in 2004 Ivancuk showed a convincing way to destroy White's centre:

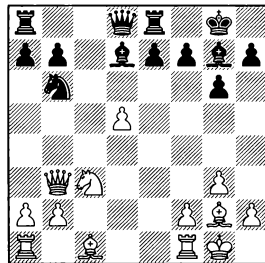


15...e5! 16.♕b3 c6! 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♞a2 cxb5 19.axb5 ♞a7, Aronian-Ivancuk, Antalya 2004.

b) 12.a4 is threatening 13.b4, but 12...♞c8! discourages it in view of the counterblow 13...c5!♣. Instead, my game Roiz-Delchev, Pamplona 2008, went on with 13.♕ce2 c5 14.dxc6 ♕xc6 15.a5 ♕c4 and I was already slightly better.

c) 12.b3 c5! underlines the weakening of the main diagonal and forces White to exchange his d5-pawn since 13.♕de2 would be attacked by 13...e6. After 13.dxc6 ♕xc6 14.♕xc6 ♕xc6 15.♕xc6 bxc6 (or 15...♗xd1 16.♞xd1 bxc6 17.♕d2 a5 as in Ljubojevic-Kasparov, Barcelona 1989) 16.♕b2 c5 17.♗e2 c4, Black gets rid of his pawn island and the game should be drawn.

d) 12.♕b3 ♕xb3 (It is natural to trade pieces when the opponent has a spatial advantage, but the blocking 12...♕ac4 followed by ...♕d6 is playable, too.) 13.♗xb3 c6 14.e4 cxd5 15.exd5



Here, in Kempinski-Khalifman, Plovdiv 2003, the ex-FIDE World champion manoeuvred his queen to its best stand on a5 via ...♗c8-c4-a6-a5 and levelled the game.

The simpler 15...♞c8 16.♕f4 ♕c4 17.♞ac1 ♗b6 is also good enough.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 d5

e) 12.♖b1. Anticipating 12...c5 which, however, still proves to be good enough:

13.dxc6 ♘xc6 14.♘xc6 ♗xc6 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♞e2 ♞d7 17.♗d2 ♞e6 18.b3 a5 19.a4 ♘d7 20.b4 axb4 21.♞xb4 ♘c5 22.♞c4 ♞xc4 23.♞xc4 ♗xc3 24.♗xc3 ♘xa4 25.♞xc6 ♘xc3, draw, Kotsur-Lahno, Satka 2008.

Still, 12...♞c8 looks even better, intending to meet 13.b4 by 13...c5! 14.♘e6 fxe6 15.bxa5 ♘c4 16.♞xb7 ♘d6 17.♖b3 ♞xa5 18.dxe6 ♗xe6 19.♗d5 ♗xd5 20.♞xd5+ ♘f7=.

12...♞c8!?

12...c6 is more common, but in this line of the Grünfeld we often observe that the “threat is stronger than its execution” à la Nimzowitsch. We keep open both options – of ...c6 and ...c5. The text presents a more annoying for White approach as he should reckon now with two quite different strategies. Black might open the centre, or blockade it with ...c5, ...e5 and bring a knight to d6 via c4.

13.♞e1!

13.♗f4 (or 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗f4) would hand us the tempo for ...e5 we have been waiting for.

13...c5! 14.♘f3

We had seen before that 14.♘de2 is misplaced in this structure: 14...e5! 15.♗c1 ♘bc4 16.b3 ♘d6 17.♖b1 b5!, with an initiative.

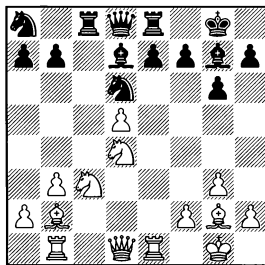
14...e5 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗c1 ♘bc4 17.a4 ♘d6 18.b3 c4!♞.

13...c6

I’m afraid to recommend 13...c5 for the main repertoire due to 14.♘f3 (Or 14.♘b3 ♘bc4 15.f4 ♞b6♞.) 14...♘bc4! 15.e5! (15.♖b1 b5 16.e5 ♗f5; 15.♞e2 b5) 15...♗g4 when both: 16.e6 or 16.♗f4 ♘xb2 17.♞e2 ♘bc4 18.h3 (18.♞ad1 f6) 18...♗xf3 19.♗xf3 g5 20.♗xg5 ♘xe5 lead to very tangled positions with White’s initiative.

14.♗f4

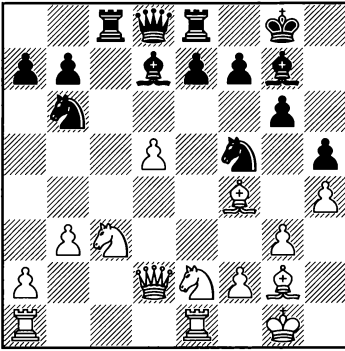
Or 14.♖b1 cxd5 15.exd5 ♘ac4 16.b3 ♘d6 17.♗b2 ♘a8!!



An amazing manoeuvre of Miroshnichenko! Black gives way to his queen which is longing to reach a5, while the knight is redeployed to c7-b5 (or a6). The game Tkachiev-Gopal, Dresden 2008, went 18.♘ce2 ♞a5 19.a4 ♗g4 20.h3 ♗xe2=.

14...cxd5 15.exd5 ♘ac4 16.b3 ♘d6 17.♞d2 ♘f5 18.♘de2 h6 19.h4 h5

Black found satisfactory stands for most of his pieces. He only needs to redeploy the b6-knight to d6.



The game Hauchard-Nataf, Montreal 2005, went further:

20. ♖ac1 ♜c5 21. ♙e1 ♞c8 22. ♞e4 ♜xc1 23. ♜xc1 ♞cd6 24. ♞c5 ♜c8 25. ♞d3 ♞b6 26. ♙e5 ♙h6 27. ♙f4 ♙g7 28. ♙e5 ♙h6 29. ♙f4 ♙g7, with a draw.

C2. 10. ♙e1!

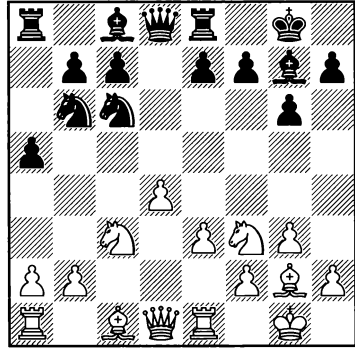
The same improving and waiting-to-see strategy. At the same time, White prepares to meet the breakthrough ...e5 by advancing his e- and f-pawns.

10...a5

Another useful move before starting operations in the centre. Black's idea could be to push a4-a3 at some point, creating weaknesses on the queenside. Another original idea behind this move is to activate the rook to a5 after a5-a4.

I can recommend as an alternative line the fresh idea of Cuban GM Dominguez 10...e6!?. It is a conti-

nuation of the waiting strategy. Black wants to see b3 and only then open the centre by ...e5. See the annotations to **game 2 Alekseev-Dominguez Perez**, Havana 2010.



C21. 11. ♞c2!?. C22. 11. ♞e2.

White has also tried:

a) 11. ♞g5. This move looks like a provocation. Indeed, 11...e5 12.d5 ♞xg5 13.dxc6 ♞d8 14. ♞c2 bxc6 15. ♙xc6 ♞b8 16.b3 ♙a6 17.e4 is slightly better for White due to his better pawn structure. Perhaps we should question White's idea with 11...h6 12. ♞ge4 e5.

b) 11.b3 e5 12. ♞xe5 ♞xe5 13.dxe5 ♙xe5 14. ♙b2 c6 15. ♞e2 ♞e7 and the counterplay with ...a5-a4 is enough for maintaining the balance.

c) 11. ♞d2?! e5 12.d5 ♞b4 13.e4 c6 14.a3 cxd5 15.axb4 axb4 16. ♜xa8 bxc3 17.bxc3 ♞xa8 18.exd5 ♞b6, with a fine game for Black in Carlsen-Giri, Wijk aan Zee 17.01.2011.

d) 11.a4?!. It is a really bad idea

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

to spend a tempo on this positional-ly wrong move which abandon the b4-square: 11...e5 12.d5 ♖b4 13.e4 c6 14.♙g5 f6 15.♙e3 cxd5 16.♙xb6 ♖xb6 17.♖xd5 ♖xd5 18.♖xd5+ ♙e6±.

e) 11.d5. This pawn sacrifice was recently played in two rapid games at top level, but apparently it only seeks the surprise effect: 11...♙xc3 12.bxc3 ♖xd5 13.♖d4 ♖c4! 14.♙a3 (Or 14.♖xc6 bxc6 15.♖d4 ♖b8 16.♙f1 ♖a4 17.c4 ♙a6 18.c5 ♖c4±.) 14...♙d7 15.♙f1 ♖a4 16.♖xa4 ♖xa4 17.♖ec1 ♖e5±, Navara-Ivancuk, rapid match, Prague 2009.

f) 11.h3 a4! 12.♖e2. (12.♖b1 ♖a5 13.♙d2 e5; 12.d5 ♖b4 13.e4 a3!) 12...♙e6 13.♖d2 ♖b4 14.♖d1 ♖c8, Zhao Zong Yuan-Navara, Khanty-Mansiysk, 29.09.2010. It is obvious that White's strategy was a failure.

g) 11.♖d2 e5 12.d5 ♖b4 13.e4 c6 and Black already has a slight initiative, Jasnikowski-Ftacnik, Pas-sau 1994.

C21. 11.♖c2!?

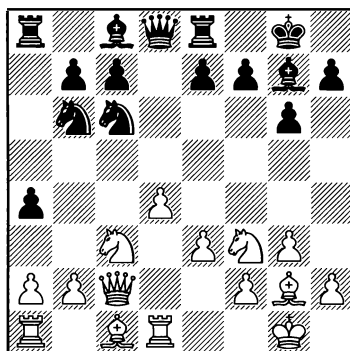
White began testing this move in the end of 2010. It might soon become the main line though. The only sure thing in this complex position is that 11...e5 12.♖xe5 ♖xe5 13.dxe5 ♙xe5 14.f4! ♙g7 15.e4, aiming for e5, is better for White. For instance, in Leitao-Mecking, Campi-nas 14.01.2011, after 15...c6 16.♙e3 ♖c4 17.♙f2 ♖d2 18.♖xd2 ♖xd2 19.e5 ♙g4 20.h3 ♙f3, White had the retort 21.♖ac1! ♖ad8 22.♖c2±.

However, it is still unclear what White has in store against the thematic answer 11...♙e6!?. I do not believe in 12.b3, as in Gunina-Huang Qian, rapid Ningbo 2010, because of 12...♙f5 13.♖e2 e5 14.♖xe5 ♖xd4 15.exd4 ♖xd4 16.♙f4 ♖xc3 17.♖ac1 ♖b4 18.♙xb7 ♖ab8 19.♙c6 ♖e6, when White's pieces are quite unstable. Anyway, I think that the most consistent retort to 11.♖c2 is:

11...a4!?

and the critical position arises after

12.♖d1



12...♙f5!?

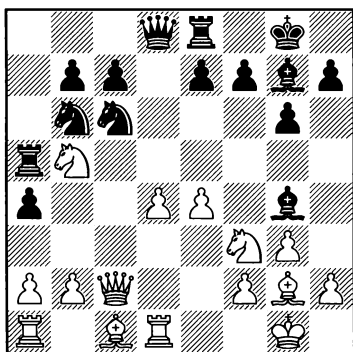
We have gained space on the queenside and made room at a5 for our rook. Furthermore, we dragged the white rook to d1. That enables a pin from g4 if White pushes e4. The game Huzman-Nepomniachtchi, Plovdiv, 22.10.2010 saw instead the innocuous move 12...h6, which weakens the castling position. Huz-

man answered with the equally mundane move 13.h3?!, but I do not like Black's position after the more purposeful thrust in the centre: 13.d5! ♖b4 14.♖e2 a3 15.e4 ♙d7 (or 15...♗a4 16.♗xa4 ♜xa4 17.b3 ♜a8 18.♜b1±; 15...♙g4 16.♜b1 axb2 17.♙xb2±) 16.♗d4 c5 17.♗e6 fxe6 18.dxe6 axb2 19.♙xb2 ♙d4 20.♗d5! ♙xe6 21.♙xd4 cxd4 22.♗xb4±.

13.e4

13.♖e2 is the other critical line. Then we'll return to e6, but it is important firstly to plug the h3 square to White's bishop: 13...♙g4 14.h3 ♙e6 15.d5 ♗xd5 16.♗b5 ♖c8 17.♗g5 ♜d8 18.♗xe6 fxe6∞.

13...♙g4 14.♗b5 ♜a5!



We see the result of 11...a4.

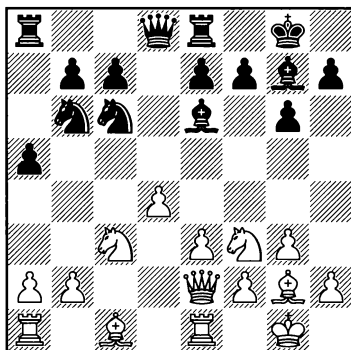
**15.♖e2 ♜xb5!? 16.♖xb5 ♙xf3
17.♙xf3 ♗xd4 18.♖d3 c5.**

Black has full compensation for the exchange, according to Agrest's analysis.

C22. 11.♖e2

This is the main line in the second volume of Avrukh's repertoire book 1.d4.

11...♙e6!



A vital move in Black's setup. The bishop is going to harass the enemy queen from c4, while the c6-knight will repel it from c2 if it ran away to this square.

Avrukh rightly points out that 11...e5 is bad due to 12.dxe5 ♗xe5 13.♗xe5 ♙xe5 14.e4! ♙e6 15.f4 ♙g7 16.♙e3 ♖e7 17.e5 ♜ab8 18.♖f2±.

12.♗d2

This move appeared in 2010. The knight is heading for c5 via e4. White does take c4 under control, but this manoeuvre is too artificial to be dangerous.

Previously he had played only:

12.♗d1 ♙c4 13.♖c2 ♗b4! 14.♖b1, but the brilliant **game 1 Leita-Caruana**, Khanty-Mansiysk 30.09.2010, has dealt this line a terrible

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

blow. Black followed with 14...e5!! and went on to win in grand style. See the “Complete Games” chapter.

12...♟b4

Simple and good. If Black seeks complications, he should opt for:

12...a4!? 13.♙d1 f5!?

I have also analysed:

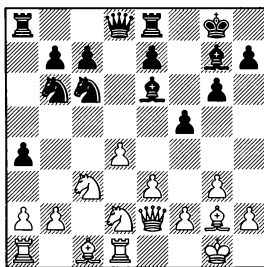
13...♙a5, bringing another hit on d5 and preparing ...e5. The game Poobalasingam-Darini, Zuerich 2010 (with a transposition), however, cast a doubt on this idea:

14.♙b1!

Or 14.♟de4 ♙c4 15.♙c2 (15. ♙e1 ♙c8! 16.f4 ♙d8! 17.♟c5 a3!=) 15...♙a8 16.♟c5 e5 17.♟3xa4 ♟b4 18.♙d2 ♙xa4 19.♟xa4 ♙xa4 20.b3 ♙xb3 21.axb3 ♙xa1 22.♙xb4 exd4 23.exd4 ♙a6=.

14...♙c8 15.b4 axb3 16.♟xb3! (16.axb3 ♙g4 17.♙f3 ♙xf3 18.♟xf3 e5=) 16...♙c4 17.♙b2 ♙h5 18.f4±.

Now let us return to 13...f5:



An original plan. Black wants to exchange 2 minor pieces through d5 while restricting the d2-knight from reaching c5.

14.♙b1 ♙f7 15.b3 axb3 16.axb3

Black was better in Maletin-Kurnosov, Irkutsk 2010, after 16.♟xb3 ♟d5 17.♟xd5 ♙xd5 18.♙b5 e6.

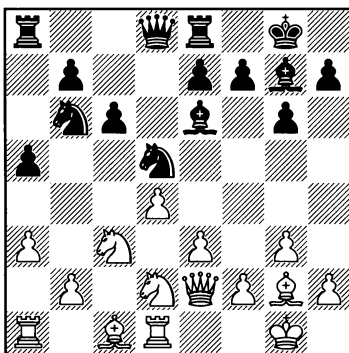
16...♟d5 17.♙b2

I have been following the game Harikrishna-So, Guangzhou 2010. Here, 17...♟xc3 18.♙xc3 ♙d5 would have been roughly equal.

13.♙d1

13.♙xb7?! ♟c2 14.♙xa8 ♙xa8 15.♙b1 ♟xe1 16.♙xe1 c5! gives Black the initiative.

13...c6 14.a3 ♟d4d5



Black has a comfortable position. It has been tested twice:

15.♟de4 ♟xc3 16.bxc3 (16.♟xc3 ♙b3) 16...♙b3 17.♙e1 ♙d5 18.♟c5 ♙xg2 19.♟xg2 e5=, Laznicka-Zhigalko, Plovdiv 2010;

15.♟ce4 ♙f5 16.♟c5 e5 17.dxe5 ♙e7 18.♟d3 ♙xd3 19.♙xd3 ♙xe5 20.♟f3 ♙e7 21.♙c2 ♙e4 22.♙xe4 ♙xe4=, Sethuraman-Zhigalko, Moscow 13.02.2011.

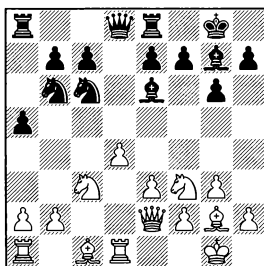
Part 1

Complete Games

1. Leita-Caruana

Khanty-Mansiysk 30.09.2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♙g7
4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♙g2 ♘b6
7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.e3 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8
10.♞e1 a5 11.♚e2 ♙e6 12.♞d1



I suppose that 12.♞d1 will soon become obsolete. Lately White began trying 12.♘d2.

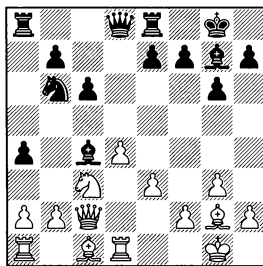
12...♙c4 13.♚c2

Perhaps here or on the next two moves White should look for deviations as the main line is not too inspiring for him. He can try 13.♚e1 ♘b4 14.b3 ♙a6 15.♚d2 c5! 16.♙a3 ♞c8=.

13...♘b4! 14.♚b1

In a blitz game, one very strong grandmaster surprised me with

14.♚d2. Having in mind that Carlsen also resorted to this move (as early as on move 11), this ugly placement of the queen is evidently White's last hope to revive the whole variation. I still do not believe in such an artificial setup. Agrest's analysis of my game showed that Black should be OK after 14...a4!? 15.♘e1 (15.♘e5 ♙xe5 16.dxe5 c6 17.e4 ♚c7) 15...c6 16.e4 ♚c7 17.♘c2 c5↑. Then I was surprised to see the Ukrainian prodigy Nyzhnyk also employing 14.♚d2 against Bok in Wijk aan Zee 2011. This game did see 14...a4 15.♘e1 c6, but here White deviated from our analysis with 16.♘c2 ♘xc2 17.♚xc2



Basically, Black should be glad to trade knights as he has less space in the centre. Furthermore, the exchange has vacated the b4-square for Black's queen. It would be very annoying to White in a number of

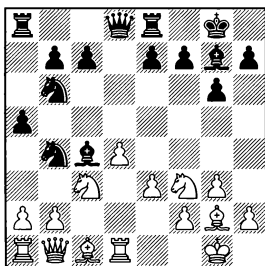
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

variations, for instance:

17...♙e6! 18.e4 ♖d6 19.e5 (19.♙e3 ♘c4) 19...♗b4 20.♘e4 ♗ed8. The d4-pawn is a nice target. Another attractive line is 17...♙e6! 18.e4 ♙g4!? 19.f3 ♙e6 20.♙e3 ♘c4 21.♙f2 ♗a5 22.♘e2 a3 23.b3 ♘b2 24.♗d2 ♗ad8, intending to meet 25.♘f4 by 25...♗b4±.

Bok chose the mundane 17...♗c7 18.e4 ♗ed8 19.♙e3 ♙e6 20.b3 axb3 21.axb3 ♗xa1 22.♗xa1 and still would have had a satisfactory game after 22...♗d6 23.e5 ♗b4 24.♘e4 ♘d5=. He opted again for the most passive setup: 22...♗c8 23.♗d1 ♘d7 24.f3 ♗c7 25.♙f2 ♘f8 26.♘a4 and even here 26...♗d6 would have been quite safe. Only his tactical mistake 26...♗a5? 27.d5! gave White an advantage.

Now let us return to the stem game:



White's heavy pieces are so cramped on the queenside, that a tactical solution would not surprise anybody. Still, the find of Djukic, first demonstrated at the Olympiad 2010, was a kind of revelation:

14...e5!!

A very deep queen sac for a rook, piece and a pawn.

15.a3

15.b3 exd4! 16.exd4 (16.bxc4 dxc3 17.♗xd8 ♗axd8—+) was the stem game McNab-Djukic, Khanty-Mansiysk 28.09.2010, when best is 16...♘d6d5±.

Perhaps White could try here 15.♘xe5 ♙xe5 16.b3 ♙d3 17.♗xd3 ♘xd3 18.♗xd3. Of course, White has full compensation for the exchange, but we do not expect to see many candidates for playing this position for a win as White.

15...exd4 16.axb4

16.♘xd4 ♙d3 17.♗xd3 ♘xd3 18.♗xd3 c5 19.♙xb7 cxd4 20.exd4 ♗b8; 16.exd4 ♘c6±.

16...dxc3

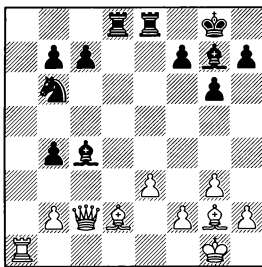
16...axb4 17.♗xa8 ♗xa8 18.♘e4 ♗a4 19.♗e1 ♙a2 20.♗d3 ♙c4 is only a draw.

17.♗xd8 ♗axd8 18.♗c2?

18.bxc3 was more safe. Then 18...♗d1+ 19.♙f1 ♙xf1 20.♗c2 ♙e2+ is a draw, Amanov-Young, Las Vegas USA 2010, but Black can play on with 19...♙xc3 20.♗xa5 ♗ed8 21.♗c2 ♗xf1+ 22.♙g2 ♙xb4.

18...axb4 19.♘d2 cxd2 20.♙xd2

Now Black deals another blow:



20...Ra8!! 21.Rxa8 Rxa8
22.h4 Ra1+ 22.b3??

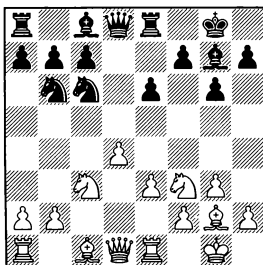
The only move was 22.h4 Ra1+ 23.h2 and White is still holding, e.g. 23...b3 24.Wxe4 Rxb2 25.Wxe7 Rd1 26.Rb4.

22...Ra1+ 23.Rc1 b3 24.Wd1
Rxb2 0-1.

Curiously, the Fianchetto system was extensively tested at the Olympiad 2010. Black scored 7 out of 8 in the first ten rounds.

2. Alekseev–Dominguez Perez Havana 14.06.2010

1.d4 Qf6 2.Qf3 g6 3.c4 Qg7
4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 Qxd5 6.Qg2 Qb6
7.Qc3 Qc6 8.e3 0-0 9.0-0 Re8
10.Re1 e6!?



This is a waiting move, but in contrast with 10...a5, here Black directs his effort to achieving ...e5 while staying passive on the queenside. There are only 2 games, so we can say that the arising positions are a blank spot in the theory. You can use this variation as a surprise weapon.

Black's main idea is to wait for b3 and then open the centre with...e5. For instance, 11.b3 e5 12.dxe5 Wxd1 13.Rxd1 Qxe5=.

White should not imitate the same tactic with 11.h3, because we will answer with a more useful move – 11...a5!. Note that 11...We7 would be less convincing, because it allows 12.e4 when neither 12...Qxd4 13.Qxd4 Rd8 14.Qd5! exd5 15.exd5 Wb4 16.Qg5, nor 12...Rd8 13.Qg5 f6 14.Qe3 Qc4 15.We2 are too pleasant to face.

11.Wc2

The other critical move is:

11.We2 e5! (using that 12.d5 is impossible)

We have analysed extensively 11...We7. Then neither 12.Rd1 Rd8 13.b3 e5, nor 12.b3 e5 do not set any problems. However, the computer suggests the unpleasant 12.a4! It is threatening not only a5-a6, but also b3, Qa3. Here are some variations:

12...a6?! 13.a5 Qd5 14.e4 Qdb4 15.e5±;

12...a5?! 13.b3 Qd5 14.Qb5 b6 15.e4 Qdb4 16.Qg5 Wd7 17.Rad1

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

♙a6 18.♙h3 ♘a7 19.♘e5 ♖c8 20.♗f3
 ♗f8 21.♘xa7 (21.♙e7 ♙xb5 22.axb5
 ♘xb5 23.♙xf8 ♗xf8↑) 21...♗xa7
 22.♙e7 c5 23.♙xf8 ♗xf8 24.♙f1 ♙xf1
 25.♙xf1 cxd4 26.♘c4 ♖b8 27.e5
 ♗d7 28.h4→.

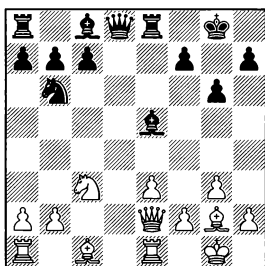
12...♘a5 13.♖d1 c5 14.b3 ♖d8
 15.♘e4±;

12...♘d5 13.e4 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 e5
 15.d5 ♘a5 16.♙a3±.

Black should try 12...e5 13.a5
 ♘d7 14.a6 ♗b8 15.axb7 ♙xb7 16.d5
 ♘b4 17.e4 c6, with unclear com-
 plications: 18.♗xa7 cxd5 19.exd5
 ♘xd5 20.♗xb7 ♘xc3 21.♖a6 ♗xb7
 22.♖xb7 ♗b8 23.♖c6 ♘a2= or 18...
 cxd5 19.exd5 a6 20.d6 ♗f8 21.♙e3
 h6 22.♘d2 ♙xg2 23.♙xg2 f5∞.

However, we have a more inter-
 esting idea in mind:

12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♙xe5

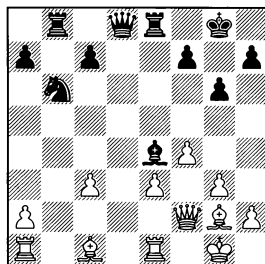


14.f4

The game Bukavshin-Lagarde,
 Batumi 2010, saw the innocu-
 ous 14.♙d2 c6 15.♗ad1 ♙e6 16.f4
 ♙g7 17.e4 (17.♙c1 ♖e7) 17...♘a4
 (17...♘c4! 18.♙c1 ♖a5 19.e5 ♗ad8∞)
 18.♘xa4 ♖d4+ 19.♙e3 ♖xa4 20.b3
 ♖a5= 21.e5 ♙f8 (21...f6=). The text
 would win a tempo after 14...♙g7?!

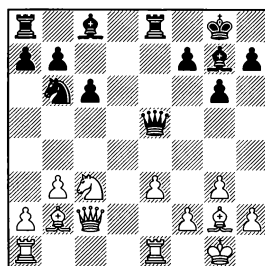
15.e4, so we have to embrace more
 drastic measures:

14...♙xc3! 15.bxc3 ♙f5 (15...♖f6?!
 16.e4 ♖xc3 17.♙e3♖) 16.♙xb7 ♗b8
 17.♙g2 ♙d3 18.♖f2 ♙e4



This position is entirely in the
 spirit of the Grünfeld. Black has ac-
 tive play and full compensation for
 the pawn.

11...♖e7 12.b3 e5 13.♘xe5 (13.
 d5?! e4!) 13...♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♖xe5
 15.♙b2 c6 (15...♖c5!?)



Black has solved most of the
 opening problems. White's only
 dangerous plan is connected with
 f4, e4-e5, ♘e4, but it is unrealistic
 here. White could continue with:

16.♗ad1 ♙g4 17.♗d2

Or 17.f3 ♙f5 18.e4 ♖c5+! (the

Part 1

point!) 19. ♖f2 ♜xf2+ 20. ♔xf2 ♙e6 21. e5 a5! underlining the weakness of White's queenside pawn formation.

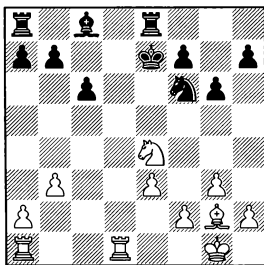
17... ♖ad8

Black has not any serious problems here.

16. ♖a4 ♜e7 17. ♙xg7 ♔xg7 18. ♖c5 ♖d7 19. ♜c3+ ♜f6

19... ♜e5 20. ♜xe5 ♜xe5= is more precise.

20. ♜xf6+ ♔xf6 21. ♖e4+ ♔e7 22. ♖ed1 ♖f6



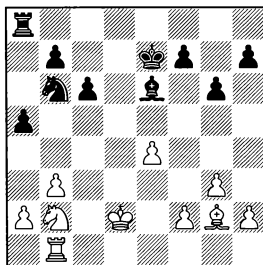
Black has no weaknesses. It would be enough to swap the enemy knight to equalise completely. The king on e7 covers all the invasion squares along the d-file.

23. ♖c5 ♖d7 24. ♖d3 ♜d8 25. ♔f1 ♖f6

25... a5 26. ♔e2 a4 27. b4 ♖b6 28. ♖c5 ♜xd1 29. ♜xd1 a3 was fine for Black, but it seems that Dominguez was waiting for a draw proposition so he did not want to alter the pawn structure. In principle, Black's

pawn majority on the queenside would be gaining in strength with every exchange. The rest is clear.

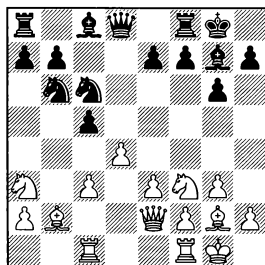
26. e4 ♙e6 27. ♖c5 ♜xd1+ 28. ♜xd1 ♙c8 29. ♖d3 a5 30. ♖b2 ♙e6 31. ♔e2 ♖d7 32. ♔d2 ♖b6 33. ♜b1



33... a4 34. ♖xa4 ♖xa4 35. bxa4 ♜xa4 36. ♜xb7+ ♔d6 37. e5+ ♔xe5 38. ♙xc6 ♜xa2+ 39. ♔e3 ♜a3+ 40. ♔d2 ♜a2+ 41. ♔e3 ♜a3+ 42. ♔d2 1/2-1/2.

3. Matnadze-Delchev Zaragoza 30.12.2010

1. d4 ♖f6 2. g3 g6 3. ♙g2 d5 4. ♖f3 ♙g7 5. 0-0 0-0 6. c4 dxc4 7. ♖a3 c3 8. bxc3 c5 9. e3 ♖c6 10. ♜e2 ♖d5 11. ♙b2 ♖b6 12. ♜ac1



1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 d5

12...♙d5!

It is time to evacuate the queen from the d-file because White was planning to put a rook on d1. The other thematic manoeuvre in this variation is 12...♘a4 13.♙a1 ♙a5, but here it is not with tempo (White had defended c3 twice!) so 14.♘d2 is possible and quite awkward – 14...♘b6 15.♙b2.

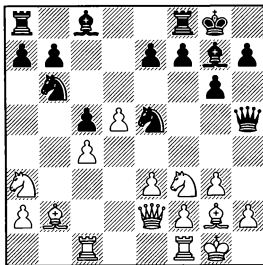
13.c4

The a2-pawn could be defended with 13.♙a1. After 13...♙h5 14.e4 ♙g4! 15.♘c2 f5!, Black destroys the enemy centre.

13...♙h5 14.d5

P.Nikolic-V.Belov, Istanbul 2003 saw 14.dxc5. Although Black was fine after 14...♙xc5=, 14...♙xb2 15.♙xb2 ♘a4, recapturing on c5 by knight, looks even better.

14...♘e5



15.♙xe5

If White has to make such moves, her opening strategy was

wrong. White remains with the bad bishop on g2. Drasko-Jankovic, Neum 2005, saw instead 15.♙c2 ♙g4 16.♙xe5 ♙xe5 17.h3 ♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♙xf3 19.♙xf3 ♘a4 20.♙b1 ♙ab8 21.♙g2 ♙fd8 22.f4 ♙g7 23.e4 ♙d4+ 24.♔h2 a6=.

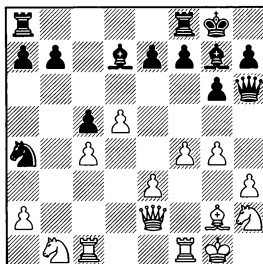
15...♙xe5 16.h3

So White's idea was to isolate my queen to h6. In fact, it can easily join the action from g7. In the game, I was influenced by other Grünfeld variations where Black counterattacks on the queenside with...b5. However, the concrete situation made possible another plan, connected with ...g5 and ...f5, for instance, 16...♙b8!? 17.g4 ♙h6.

16...♙g7 17.g4 ♙h6 18.♘h2

Matnadze is planning to gain more space with e4 and f4. However, immediate 18.e4 would let my queen slip to f4. Therefore she wants to start expanding with f4.

18...♘a4 19.♘b1 ♙d7 20.f4



The computer says that Black could have seized here the initiative

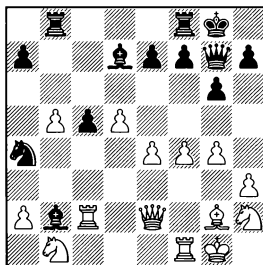
with 20...b5 21.cxb5 ♖ab8, because 21.g5 ♜h4 was not dangerous. The machine may be right, but I was getting goose skin from the sight of my caged queen. No wonder I preferred to stay on the safe side.

20...♙b2! 21.♖c2 ♜g7 22.e4?!

This does not prevent 22...f5 as it is still good, and, as a whole, lacks any sense. Pawns do not go back and now the d4-square will be permanently ill. My bishop gets the needed stable square on the main diagonal to make way to the a4-knight.

White should have waited with 22.♘d2 b5! 23.♘e4.

22...b5! 23.cxb5 (23.♘d2 ♙d4+ 24.♙h1 bxc4) 23...♖ab8



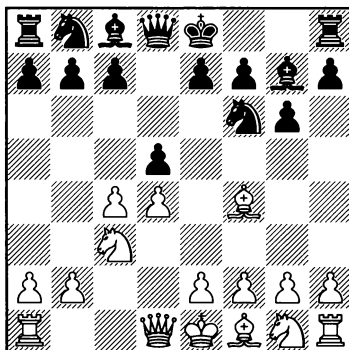
All my pieces invade White's camp from the queenside. A great triumph of the Grünfeld's ideas!

24.♖d1 ♙xb5 25.♜f3 ♙d4+ 26.♙h1 ♘b2 27.♖e1 ♘d3 28.♖d1 c4 29.♙f1 ♙a4 30.♙xd3 cxd3 31.♜xd3 ♙xc2 32.♜xc2 ♙e3 33.♖f1 ♖fc8 34.♜d3 ♙xf4 35.♘f3 ♜b2 36.♘bd2 ♖c1 37.♙g2 ♖xf1 38.♙xf1 ♜xa2 39.♙e2 a5 40.e5 ♖d8 41.e6 fxe6 42.♜e4 e5 0-1.

Part 2

The ♖f4 System

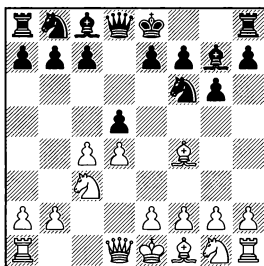
1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♙f4 ♙g7



Part 2

Main Ideas

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♕f4
♕g7



Introduction

This natural development was popular in the first half of the 20th century. White is developing his queenside pieces, intending to generate pressure on c7. A lot of variations lead to endgames or symmetric pawn structures with a slight initiative for White. No wonder it was Capablanca's favourite system. Euwe scored an important victory over Alekhin in the world title match in 1935. Also notable was the loss of Fischer to Petrosian in the Candidates final in 1971. Black had successes too, as Gligoric's victory over Botvinnik at the Olympiad in Tel Aviv 1964. Later Black found the precise move order and the whole system has receded into the background. I have not met fresh ideas for White for a long time.

Black's play is simple and very purposeful. Good calculation is paramount so you should pay special attention to the typical tactical motifs and the precise order of moves.

White's main problem arises from the absence of the dark-squared bishop from the queenside. Kingside development is also delayed and that offers Black good tactical options. His counterplay is linked with ...c7-c5, ...♖a5, ...♗e4 and a concentrated attack on the knight on c3. Pawn losses should not scare Black. As a rule, he gains a strong initiative and sometimes even queens trade does not help White.

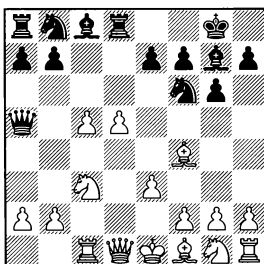
Tolush-Botvinnik
Leningrad 1939

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
4.♕f4 ♕g7 5.e3 0-0 6.♖c1 c5

The greatest chess thinker and researcher of his time, Botvinnik, has an enormous contribution to the development of the Grünfeld Defence. He played it with both colours and his games were milestones in the opening theory. Here he showed one of his famous home preparations.

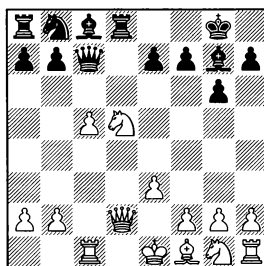
3.♟c3 d5 4.♙f4

7.♟xc5 ♖a5 8.cxd5 ♜d8



This position had occurred in the game Capablanca-Reshevsky, AVRO Tournament 1938. White answered 9.♖a4, but after 9...♖xa4 10.♟xa4 ♟xd5 Black reached a pleasant game. So Tolush prepared an improvement:

9.♞d2?! ♟xd5 10.♙c7?! ♜xc7
11.♟xd5



11...♞xd5!

Surprise! Perhaps the fine tactician and master of the attack Tolush missed this blow. Now Black's pieces come into play with tempi and White's position becomes critical.

12.♞xd5 ♙e6!

12...♙xb2 13.♞c2 ♙e6 14.♞d2 would have given White time for consolidation. Botvinnik also mentions 12...♟c6!? 13.♞d2 (13.♙c4 ♙e6) 13...♙f5.

13.♞d2 ♟c6 14.♞d1

14.♙c4 loses to 14...♞d8 15.♞c2 ♖a5+ 16.♟f1 ♞d2, so White decides to contest the d-file. In his annotations, Botvinnik recommended 14.♞c3!? as the only chance, whereas he intended to continue the attack with 14...♟b4 15.♟f3 ♞d8 16.♟d4 ♙xa2. Of course, the most natural 14...♙xc3 15.♞xc3 ♙xa2 16.♟f3 ♞c8 17.♙e2 a5! would be also in his favour.

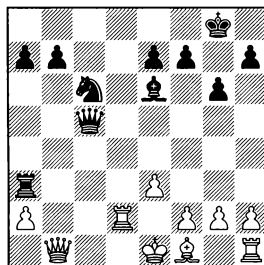
14...♞d8 15.♞c1 ♖a5+ 16.♞d2 ♞d5

Suddenly, the decisive blow comes from the c-file, for instance: 17.♟f3 ♞xc5 18.♞b1 ♙xa2 19.♞a1 ♞c2 20.♙d3 ♙xb2. Note the importance of the d5-square which served as a juncture point for Black's pieces.

17.♟e2 ♞xc5 18.♟c3 ♙xc3
19.bxc3 ♞xc3 20.♞b2 ♞a3

White is helpless against the killing threat of ...♞xa2.

21.♞b5 ♞c3! 22.♞b2 ♞c5!
23.♞b1



23...♙xa2! 24.♞xa2 ♖a5+
25.♞d2 ♞a1 26.♙d3 ♞xb1+
27.♙xb1 ♟e5!

The game is over. The rest is a short agony.

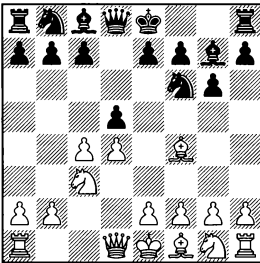
**28.♙e2 ♖b5+ 29.♗d3 ♜xd3
30.♗xd3 a5 31.♗hd1 ♖c4 32.♙f3
b5 33.♗d7 b4 34.♗a7 a4 35.♗d8+
♙g7 36.♗da8 a3 37.g3 ♖b5 0-1.**

Undoubtedly, such games are capable of boosting up the popularity of any opening.

Objectives and Move Orders

The ♗f4-system is relatively easy to play with Black because the strategic ideas are clear and most games feature one and the same symmetric pawn structure. The centre is open, with an early elimination of the c- and d-pawns. This enhances the role of tactics and requires heavy calculation. On the other hand, Black commonly has no theoretical problems. Black's plan is to play ...c5, ...♖a5, ...♜e4 while the important pawn on d5 can be sacrificed or bolstered up with ...♗e6.

The first thing we should decide is when to push ...c5. This depends on White's fifth move:



A. 5.♗c1; B. 5.♜f3; C. 5.e3.

My recommendation is:

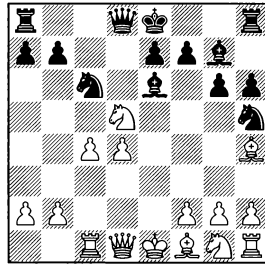
We meet 5.e3 by 5...c5!. In the event of 5.♜f3, we castle (Note that

5.♜f3 c5? is outright bad!), and after 5.♗a1 we repel the f4-bishop by 5...♜h5 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗h4 and only then push 7...c5. Let us now go into some detail:

A. 5.♗c1

This move anticipates Black's counterplay, but ...c5 is still possible, albeit with a preparation:

5...♜h5!? 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗h4 c5 8.e3 (8.♜xd5 ♜c6 9.e3 cxd4 10.exd4 0-0 11.♗e2 ♗e6! and Black is fine.) 8...cxd4 9.♜xd5 ♜c6 10.exd4 ♗e6!

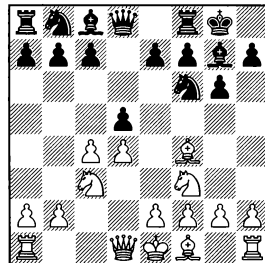


White has to struggle to equalise.

B. 5.♜f3

Botvinnik thought this natural developing move to be the best. It discourages the immediate 5...c5, but we have other good options:

5...0-0

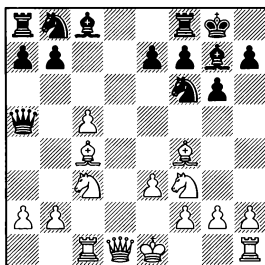


3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4

B1. 6.e3; B2. 6.♖c1.

8.♙xd8

B1. 6.e3 c5 7.dxc5 ♖a5 8.♖c1 dxc4 9.♙xc4

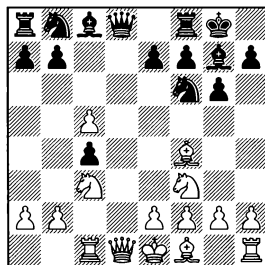


Now 9...♙xc5 is my main line, but it requires more studying. Check the “Step by Step” chapter. Instead, you can opt for:

9...♖bd7!? 10.0-0 ♖xc5

Our next move will be ...♙e6 and Black should be OK, e.g. 11.♙e2 ♙e6 12.♖d4 ♙xc4 13.♙xc4 ♖fc8=. The only way to prevent it is 11.♖d4 when we have to develop the bishop to d7, but it is important firstly to weaken the enemy kingside: 11...♙g4! 12.f3 ♙d7 13.♙e2 ♖ac8 14.♖fd1 a6 15.e4 b5 16.♖b3 ♖xb3 17.♙xb3 b4 18.♖b1 ♙e6! 19.♙xe6 ♙b6+ (the point of 11...♙g4!) 20.♙e3 ♙xe6=.

B2. 6.♖c1 c5!? 7.dxc5 dxc4!



8.e4 ♙a5 9.e5 ♖h5! 10.♙e3 ♖c6 11.♙xc4 ♙g4 is unclear.

8...♖xd8 9.e4 ♖a6 10.e5 ♖h5! 11.♙e3 ♙g4! 12.♙xc4 ♙xf3 13.gxf3 ♙xe5

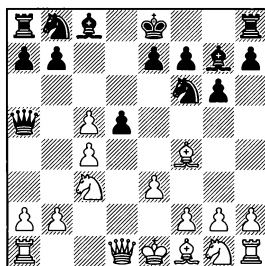
Now White should take on a6, with equality, because the alternatives give Black the initiative:

14.c6 ♖c7 15.cxb7 ♖ab8 16.♙xa7 ♖xb7 or 14.a3 ♖b8 and the knight is heading for d4.

C. 5.e3 c5

This is the sharpest line. The main reason to play 5...c5 instead of 5...0-0 is to avoid the drawish endgame after 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.♖xd5 ♙xd5 8.♙xc7 ♖a6 9.♙xa6 ♙xg2 10.♙f3.

6.dxc5 ♙a5



7.♖c1

I also examine as separate branches:

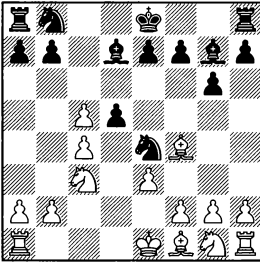
a) 7.♙b3 ♙d7!, preventing the exchange of queens from b5.

Part 2

b) 7.♖a4+ ♜xa4 8.♟xa4

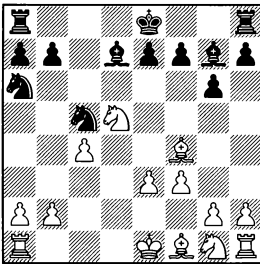
White eliminated the threats along the a5-e1 diagonal, but he is behind in development and his minor pieces are uncoordinated. Black counts on a long-term initiative.

8...♙d7 9.♞c3 ♞e4!



You should always consider this move in the ♙f4 system. It helps the ♙g7 break loose.

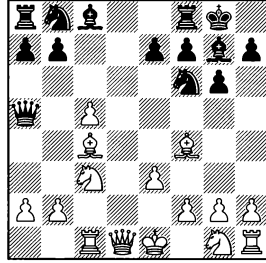
10.♞xd5 (or 10.♞ge2 ♞xc5!? 11.♞xd5 ♞d3+ 12.♞d2 ♞xf2) 10...♞a6 11.f3 ♞exc5



Despite the extra pawn, White achieves the meagre 27% in practice. His whole queenside is vulnerable.

c) 7.♞f3 is not of independent significance. After 7...0-0 8.♙c1 dxc4, play transposes to other lines. However, I recommend the simpler 7...♞e4!? =.

7...dxc4! 8.♙xc4 0-0!



Black does not need to recapture immediately on c5. For instance, 9.a3 is well met by 9...♞c6.

9.♞ge2!

The only way to set some problems. The c3-knight is overprotected now and we have no reason to keep the queen on a5 anymore.

9...♜xc5 10.♜b3!

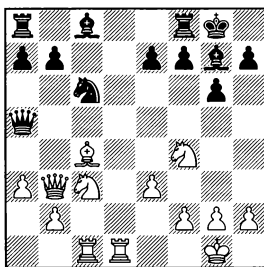
Eying f7 and freeing d1 for the other rook. The alternatives lead to easy equality. We simply retreat the queen back to a5 after 10.♜d4 or 10.♙b3.

10...♜a5

I also examine the much sharper line 10...♞c6!?. See the detailed annotations of **game 4 Wang Yue-Topalov**, Sofia 2009. However, it is not something that even remotely fits into my conception for a quick preparation.

11.0-0 ♞c6 12.♙fd1! ♞h5!
13.a3 ♞xf4 14.♞xf4

3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4



Black is still experiencing minor problems with his light-squared bishop, but a few precise moves level the game:

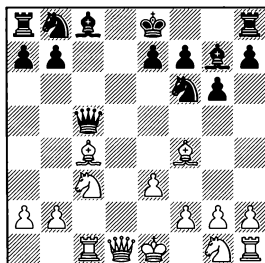
14...e6 15.♙e2 ♜d8 16.♘d3
♙d7 17.♘e4=

I have been following the game Kraidman-W.Schmidt, Nice 1974, which eventually ended in a draw.

Typical Tactical Motifs

Perhaps the most critical moment in the ♙f4 system is when to recapture the c5-pawn. The general rule is to delay it if there are other good developing moves. Here is a typical mistake where Black was too hasty to regain the pawn with 8...♞xc5??:

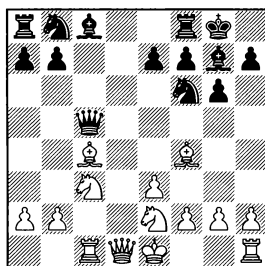
Example



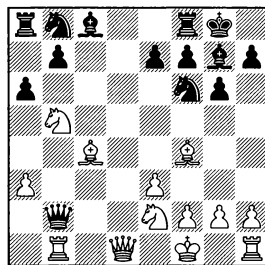
9.♘b5! ♞b4+ 10.♙f1 ♘a6 11.a3
♞a5 (11..♞b2 12.♞c2+-) 12.♙c7!
♘xc7 13.♘xc7+ ♞xc7 14.♙xf7+ ♙xf7
15.♞xc7+-.

One move later, when Black has already castled, 9...♞xc5 is possible and sets up an insidious trap:

Zaja–Brkic Omics 2005



10.♘b5? ♞b4+ 11.♙f1 a6 12.a3
♞xb2 13.♞b1



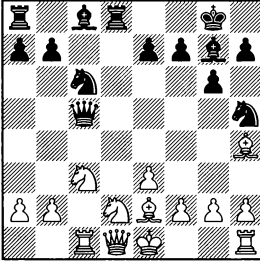
White wins the queen, but this proves to be an unfortunate idea. Black's pieces generate amazing energy:

13...♞xb1 14.♞xb1 axb5 15.♙xb5
♞xa3 16.♙xb8 ♘e4!! 17.♞xe4
♞a1+ 18.♘c1 ♞xc1+ 19.♙e2 ♞xh1
20.♞xe7 ♙g4+ 21.f3 ♙xf3+, with a
clear edge.

Part 2

The most often cause for opening catastrophes is the a5-e1 diagonal. Here are some instructive examples:

Barbosa-Rojas Santiago 2005

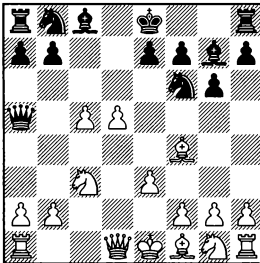


13...♖b4!

White is desperately behind in development so this double attack finishes the game.

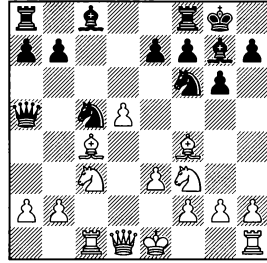
14.♙xh5 gxh5 15.♙g3 ♖xb2
16.♖c2 ♖xc3! 17.♖xc3 ♙xc3 -+.

Farago-Ftacnik Passau, 1994

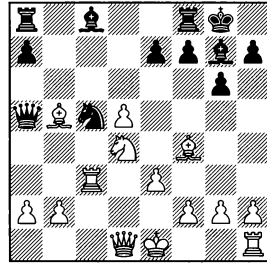


7...♘xd5! 8.♖xd5 ♙xc3+ 9.bxc3
♖xc3+ 10.♙e2 ♖xa1 11.♙e5 ♖b1!
12.♙xh8 ♙e6 13.♖d3 ♖xa2+ 14.♙f3
f6!. Black has a winning attack.

Komljenovic-Luecke Olot 1992



10...b5! 11.♙xb5 ♘fe4 12.♘d4
♘xc3 13.♗xc3 (13.bxc3 e5!)



White survived the first wave of the attack. He is not afraid of the variation 13...♘e4 14.♖a4 ♖xa4 15.♙xa4=, but Black deals another blow: 13...e5! and this time White loses composure:

14.dxe6?

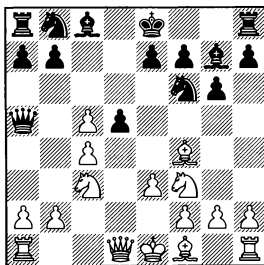
14.0-0! ♘b7 15.♖a3 ♖b6 16.♙g5
exd4 17.♙c6 dxe3 18.♙xe3 ♖c7
19.♖b3 would have been unclear.

14...♘xe6 15.♙c6 ♙xd4 16.exd4
♘xf4 17.♖f3 ♖b8 18.♖xf4 ♖xb2
19.♖c1 ♖b1! 20.♖xb1 ♖xc3+ 21.♙f1
♖xc6 0-1.

Sometimes tactical stabs only help Black solve the opening problems:

3.♘c3 d5 4.♙f4

Pinter–Ruck
Hungary 2001

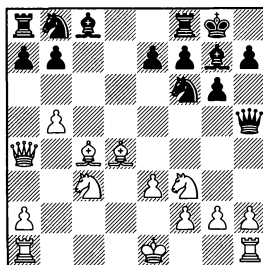


7...♘e4!? 8.♙e5 ♙xe5 9.♘xe5
♘xc3 10.♖d2 ♙e6! 11.♞c1 0-0
12.♗xc3 ♗xc5 13.b4 ♗c7, with
counterplay.

The most sensitive point in
Black's position is, apart of c7, the
square f7. White usually attacks it
by ♗b3, but sometimes he can hit
without this preparation, as in the
following example:

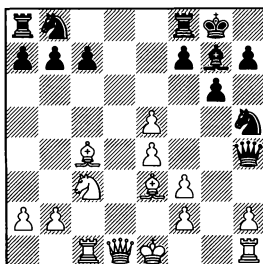
est. Later he can evacuate his king
to the queenside.

7. Secrieru–Szabo
correspondence game 2006



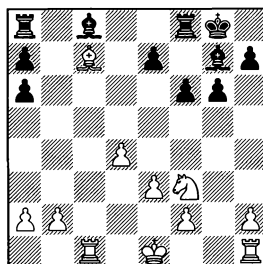
13...♙h3! 14.♙f1 ♘bd7 15.♘e2
e5! 16.♘g3 ♗g4 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5
18.♙e2 ♘d3+! 19.♙f1 ♗h4 20.♙xd3
♙e6, with an initiative.

Bosboom–Finkel
Dieren 1997



12.♙xf7+! ♞xf7 13.e6 ♞f8 14.♗b3
White regains the piece with inter-

Pelletier–Illescas Cordoba
Pamplona 2003

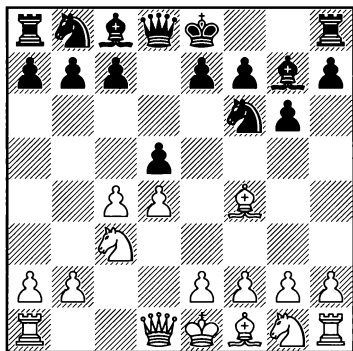


13.♙e2? The king goes under a
fatal pin: 13...♙g4!, with an edge.

Part 2

Step by Step

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♙f4
♙g7



A. 5.♙c1; B. 5.♘f3; C. 5. e3.

A. 5.♙c1 ♘h5!?

An interesting attempt to fight for the initiative. The common 5...0-0 is a good alternative, but then 6.e3 would throw us out of the main repertoire, based on the aggressive 5.e3 c5.

6.♙g5

Alternatively:

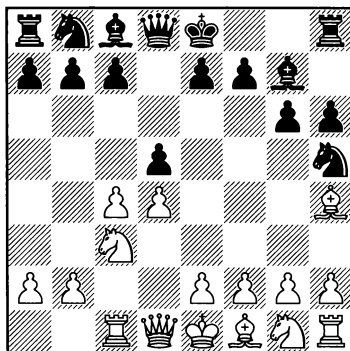
a) 6.♙e5 ♙xe5 7.dxe5 d4!♣.

b) 6.♙d2 c5! 7.e3 (Or 7.dxc5 d4; 7.cxd5 cxd4 8.♘b5 ♘a6) 7...cxd4 8.exd4 dxc4! 9.♙xc4 0-0 10.d5 ♘d7

11.♘f3 a6 12.a4 b5! 13.axb5 ♘b6 14.b3 axb5 15.♘xb5 ♘xd5 with a pleasant game, Stohl-Ilincic, Vrnjacka Banja 1989.

c) 6.♙e3. I. Sokolov beat Smirin recently with this move, but I really do not grasp White's idea. What is he going to do if we simply return 6...♘f6!?. Sooner or later play will transpose to the main line, e.g. 7.♘f3 0-0 8.♙f4. However, we have an even better option: 6...dxc4! 7.♙a4+ c6! 8.♙xc4 ♙e6 9.♙d3 (or 9.♙b4 ♙b6 10.♙a3 ♙a6) 9...0-0 (9...♘a6 10.a3 ♙a5 11.♘f3 ♙d8♣) 10.♘f3 ♘a6 11.a3 ♙a5 12.♙d2 ♙fd8 13.♘e4 ♙b6 14.♙c3 ♙f5♣, Bergmann-Arenhoevel, Germany 2001.

6...h6 7.♙h4



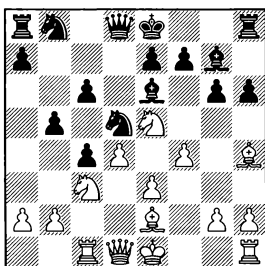
If 7.♙d2, we can eat the c4-pawn and keep it: 7...dxc4 8.e3

3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4

♙e6! 9.♗f3 c6 10.♗e4 ♙d5 11.♞c2 b5 12.♗c5 Pinter-Popovic, Thessaloniki 1988, when 12...♙xf3! 13.gxf3 0-0 is better for Black.

7...c5

7...dxc4 is not bad either, but it gives White a strong centre for the sacrificed pawn: 8.e3 ♙e6 9.♙e2 ♗f6! 10.♗f3 (10.♙xf6 exf6! planning ...f5!) 10...c6 11.♗e5! (11.0-0 ♗bd7! 12.♗e5?! ♗xe5 13.dxe5 ♗d5) 11...b5 12.f4! (12.0-0 ♗d5! 13.♗e4 ♙xe5! 14.dxe5 ♗d7) 12...♗d5!



13.♞d2

It is not too inspiring to defend the pawn with 13.♙f2. Play would be balanced after 13...♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♙d5 15.♙f3 (15.0-0 ♗d7) 15...♙xf3 16.♞xf3 ♞d5 17.e4 ♞d6 18.0-0 ♗d7=.

13...♗xc3! 14.bxc3

White can try counterplay with b3, for instance, 14.♞xc3!? ♙d5 15.0-0 ♗d7 16.b3!, or 15...a5 16.b3 cxb3 17.axb3 ♙f6 18.♙f2 a4∞.

14...♙d5 15.♞c2□ (15.0-0 ♗d7) 15...♙f6!.

This position is in Black's favour: 16.♙f2 ♙xg2 17.♞g1 ♞d5! 18.♞xg2 ♞xg2 19.♙f3 ♞h3 20.♙g4 (20.♞e4? ♞f5!) 20...♞xh2 21.♙e2 ♙h4 22.♞f1 ♙xf2 23.♞xf2 ♞h4 24.f5 ♗d7+.

8.e3

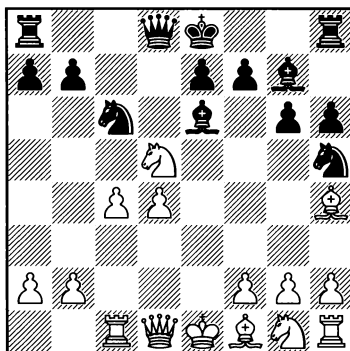
8.cxd5 cxd4 9.♗b5 ♗a6 10.♗xd4 loses to 10...♞a5+;

8.♗xd5 ♗c6 9.e3 cxd4 10.exd4 0-0 11.♙e2 ♙e6! and Black is fine.

8...cxd4 9.♗xd5

Or 9.exd4 dxc4 (9...♗c6 10.♗f3 ♙g4 11.cxd5 ♗xd4=) 10.♙xc4 0-0 11.d5 ♗f4 12.♙g3 e5 13.dxe6 ♙xe6=.

9...♗c6 10.exd4 ♙e6!



White has to struggle to equalise here:

a) 11.♗e2 ♙xd5 12.cxd5 ♞xd5 13.♗c3 ♞xd4.

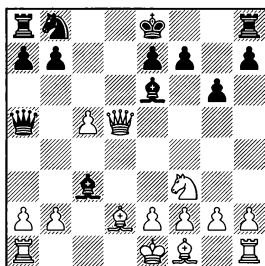
b) 11.♙e2 ♙xd5 12.cxd5 ♞a5+ 13.♞d2 ♞xd5 14.♙f3 ♞xd4.

c) 11.♗f3 ♙xd5 12.cxd5 ♞xd5 13.♙c4 ♞e4+ 14.♙f1 0-0=.

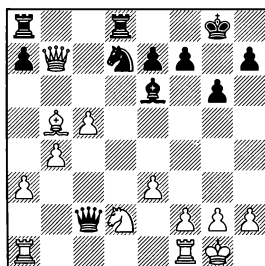
B. 5. ♖f3 0-0

5...c5?, intending to sacrifice two pawns, is entirely in the spirit of the Grünfeld. Botvinnik believed it to be incorrect, but it is often seen in practice so I put it under the microscope. My verdict is that Black should forget about this move! Thus the intuition of the patriarch of the Soviet chess school proved right. The problem line is:

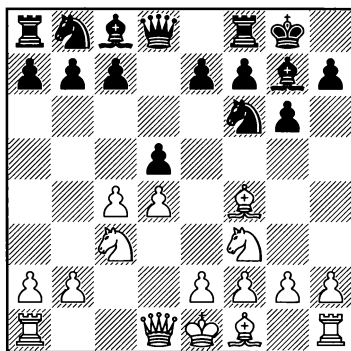
6.dxc5 ♖a5 7.cxd5! ♜xd5
8.♞xd5 ♙xc3+ 9.♙d2 ♙e6



10.♞xb7 ♙xd2+ 11.♜xd2 0-0
12.b4 ♞a4 13.e3! ♜d7 14.a3. Black is two pawns down without sufficient compensation. This position has been tested in practice and it is believed that Black gets counterplay with 14...♞fd8, but I found 15.♙b5! ♞c2 16.0-0!! This novelty eliminates all Black's threats.



Black wins a piece, but gets into a doom-and-gloom position without any counterchances after 6... ♞ab8 17.♞c7 ♞bc8 18.♞xa7 ♞a8 19.♞c7 ♞ac8 20.♞g3 ♞xd2 21.♙a6 ♞a8 22.♙b7 ♞ab8 23.♞ad1 ♞e2 24.♙f3 ♞a6 25.c6± ♜f8 26.♞a1.



B1. 6 e3; B2. 6. ♞c1.

B1. 6. e3 c5 7.dxc5

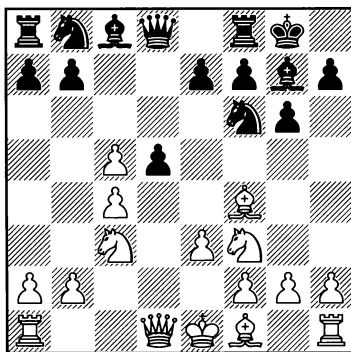
Occasionally White tries to avoid complications with the innocuous 7.♙e2. After 7...♜c6!, White has a choice – to play in the Tarrasch style with an isolani on d4, or opt for a symmetric pawn structure with 8.dxc5:

a) 8.0-0 cxd4 9.exd4 dxc4
10.♙xc4 ♙g4 11.d5 ♜a5 12.♙e2
♞c8=.

b) 8.h3 cxd4 9.exd4 dxc4
10.♙xc4 ♜a5 11.♙e2 ♙e6 12.0-0
♞c8. Black has a clearcut plan on the queenside in this Tarrasch with reversed colours.

c) 8.dxc5 ♜e4! 9.0-0 ♜xc3
10.bxc3 dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♞a5=.

3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4



7...♙a5

7...♖e4!? is a well known alternative to our main line. It leads to an endgame where Black should be OK:

8.♞c1

8.♙e5?! is a bad idea. After 8...♖xc3 9.♙xc3 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♙a5 11.♙b3 dxc4 12.♙xc4 ♖a6, White has not compensation for his split pawns, Markov-Wang Hao, Khan-ty-Mansiysk 2010.

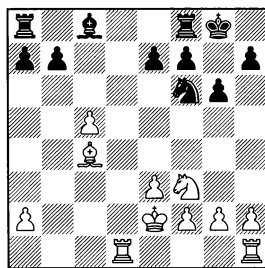
8...♖xc3 9.bxc3 dxc4!

9...♙a5 is an interesting pawn sacrifice tried in various games by Sutovsky but I consider the text more correct.

10.♙xd8 ♞xd8 11.♙xc4 ♖d7 12.♞d1

Or 12.♙g5 ♞e8 13.♙b5 a6 14.♙a4 h6 15.♙h4 g5 16.c6? loses to 16...♖c5! 17.cxb7 ♙xb7 18.♙xe8 gxh4+, Ribli-Timman, Amsterdam 1978, when the e8-bishop has no retreats.

12...♞f8 13.♙g5 ♙xc3+ 14.♖e2 ♙f6 15.♙xf6 ♖xf6



16.♖e5 (16.♞d4?! ♙g4!=, Harkad-Delchev, Cappelle la Grande 04.03.2011) 16...♙f5 17.c6! (17.f3 ♞ac8 18.♞c1 ♞c7=) 17...bxc6 18.♖xc6 ♞fe8 19.♖e5 ♞ec8 20.♙xf7+ ♖g7 21.♙b3 ♖e4.

8.♞c1

Botvinnik showed how to neutralise 8.♙a4 back in 1937: 8...♙xc5 9.♙b5 ♙xb5 10.♖xb5 ♖a6 11.♞d1 ♙e6! 12.♖fd4 ♙d7 13.♙e5 ♞fc8!? 14.cxd5 ♖xd5 15.♙xg7 ♖xg7 16.e4 ♖db4 17.♖c3 ♖c5 18.a3 ♖c6 19.♙e2 ♖xd4 20.♞xd4 e5+, Levenfish-Botvinnik, Leningrad/Moscow 1937.

8...dxc4

Here 8...♖e4 is already bad in view of 9.♙e5 ♙xe5 10.♖xe5 ♖xc3 11.♞xc3 ♙xa2 12.♙c1 ♙a5 13.cxd5±.

9.♙xc4 ♙xc5

9...♖bd7!? is a valuable alternative to the main line. The idea behind it is instead of shuttling the queen between a5 and c5, to develop the knight to an active position. It is unexplored and gives you a

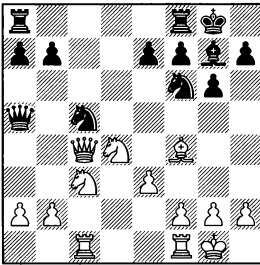
Part 2

chance to surprise a well prepared opponent:

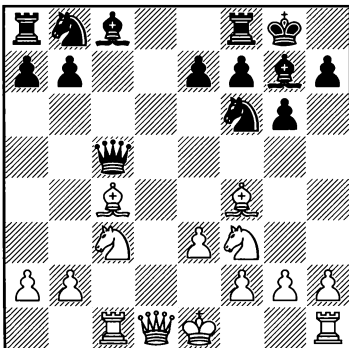
10.0-0 ♖xc5 11.♖e2

11.♖d4 is the only way to prevent ...♗e6 since 11.a3 is still answered with 11...♗e6!. The correspondence game Plauth Herr-Geissler, 2001, went 11...♗g4! 12.f3 ♗d7 13.♖e2 (or 13.a3 ♖a4) 13...♗ac8 14.♗fd1 a6 15.e4 b5 16.♖b3 ♖xb3 17.♗xb3 b4 18.♖b1 ♗e6! 19.♗xe6 ♖b6+ (the point of 11...♗g4!) 20.♗e3 ♖xe6=.

11...♗e6 12.♖d4 ♗xc4 13.♖xc4



White is only a little ahead in development, but 13...♗fc8, intending 14.b4 ♖a6, neutralises that. 13...♖cd7 also withstood practical tests.



10.♗b3

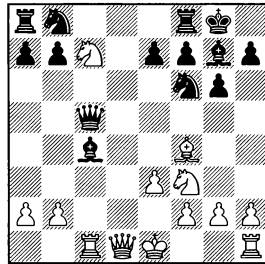
Rare alternatives are:

a) 10.b3 ♖c6 11.0-0 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗fd8 13.♖e2 ♗xf3 14.♖xf3 ♖a5=.

b) 10.♖b3 ♖c6 11.♖b5 ♗e6!, exploiting the hanging state of the c1-rook. 12.♖c7 ♗xc4 13.♗xc4 ♖a5+.

c) 10.♖e2?! ♗g4 11.♖b5 (11.0-0 ♗xf3 12.gxf3 ♖c6) 11...♖b4+ 12.♖f1 ♖c6 is quite dubious for White.

d) 10.♖b5 ♗e6! 11.♖c7 ♗xc4.



White is worse because of his uncastled king, for instance:

12.♖xa8 ♖a5+ 13.♖d2 ♖xa2 14.b4 ♖c6 15.♖xa2 ♗xa2 16.♖c7 ♖xb4 17.0-0 ♖e4+ and the black bishops control the queenside;

12.♖d2 b5 13.b3 (13.♖xa8 ♖d5) 13...♖d5+;

12.b3 ♖a5+ 13.♖d2 ♖xd2+ 14.♖xd2 ♗d3 15.♖xa8 ♖d5 16.♖c7 ♗c8!. The point of Black's play. The knight is pinned and the threat of ...♗b2 assures Black of the better game, Inkijov-Lputian St.John 1988.

10...♖a5

10...♖c6 11.0-0 ♖a5 transposes to the main line as 11...♖h5 12.h3

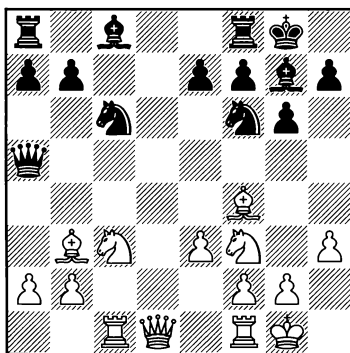
3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4

e5 13.♙h2 ♖d8 14.♗d2! ♜h6 15.♞e2
♙f5 16.♞fd1 ♙d3 17.♞f3, Larsen-
Tal, Bled 1965, left Black with un-
coordinated pieces.

11.0-0 ♗c6 12.h3!

Preventing both ...♙g4 and
...♗h5. 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗ge4 allows
13...♗h5=, and 12.♞e2 ♗h5 13.♙g5
– 13...♙g4, when 14.♗e4 ♞f5 15.♙c2
♞e6 hands the initiative over to
Black.

12...♙f5



12...♞a6?! is an interesting mul-
tipurpose move. It denies White's
queen the e2-square, frees a5 for
the c6-knight, and prepares the ex-
change of the light-squared bishops
through e6 (after ...♗b4 first).
However, Black is severely lagging
behind in development so White
easily takes command in the centre:

13.e4! ♖d8 14.♞c2! ♙d7! (14...
♗b4? 15.♙xf7+!) 15.♞fd1 ♗a5 16.♙a4
♙xa4 17.♞xa4 ♗c4 18.♞xa6 bxa6
19.b3±. The a7-pawn is too weak.

13.♞e2

13.♗d4 ♙d7 14.♞e2 ♗xd4
15.exd4 e6 was equal in Karpov-
Kasparov, London 1986.

13.♗g5, targeting f7, is more
challenging, but Black has at least
two good defences:

13...♖ad8!? 14.♙xf7+ ♞xf7 15.♞b3
♗d5 16.♙c7 (16.♗xf7 ♗xf7 17.♗xd5
♗xc7 17.♞xf7+ (17.♗xf7 ♙e6
18.♞xb7 ♗xf7 19.♞xc6 ♗e8 20.♞fd1
♞c8 21.♞f3+ ♙f6=) 17...♗h8 18.♞b3
♗e5, with a tangled position;

13...e5 ♖ad8 15.♞f3 (15.♙xf7+?!
♞xf7 16.♞b3 ♞c7 17.♞fd1 ♖xd1+
18.♖xd1 ♞e7 19.e4 ♙c8 20.♗d5
♗xd5 21.♗xf7 ♞xf7 22.exd5 ♗d4
23.♞c4 ♙d7 24.♞e1 ♙b5 25.♞c8+
♙f8 26.d6 ♙c6 27.♙xe5 ♞d5 28.f3
♗xf3+ 0-1, Grigore-L'Ami, Brat-
to 2010) 15...h6 16.♗ge4 ♗xe4
17.♗xe4 ♞b4 (17...♖d3 is also good:
18.♗c5 ♗d4 19.♞xb7 ♗e2+ 20.♗h2
♗xc1 21.♞xc1 ♖dd8=) 18.♗c3 (18.
♞c4 ♞e7=) 18...♖d2 19.♗d5 ♞a5,
with a pleasant game.

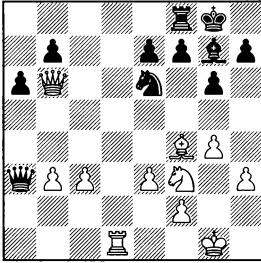
13...♗e4 14.♗d5

White should keep more pieces
on the board.

14.♗xe4 is very timid: 14...♙xe4
15.♞fd1 (15.♗d2 ♙d5) 15...♖ad8
16.♗g5 ♙d5 17.♙c7 ♞xc7 18.♖xd5=,
L.Hansen-Shirov, Novi Sad 2009.

14.g4!? was first played by Ka-
simdzanov in 2009. White repels
Black's centralised pieces and gains
some temporary initiative. How-

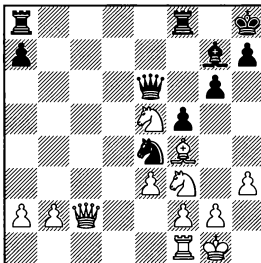
ever, his pawn weakness give us just enough counterplay to maintain the balance: 14...♖xc3 15.bxc3 ♔d7 16.♟fd1 ♟ad8! 17.♟d5 ♟a3! 18.♟cd1 ♟e6 19.♟xd8 ♖xd8! 20.♟b5 a6 21.♟b6 ♔xb3 22.axb3 ♖e6=.



See the annotated **game 6 Dreev-Delchev**, Cento 11.02.2011.

14...e5 15.♔h2

a) 15.♟xc6 gained popularity after the world championship match Karpov-Kasparov in 1986. Kasparov did not accept the sacrifice, preferring 15...exf4, but later practice showed that 15...bxc6 16.♖e7+ ♖h8 17.♖xc6 ♟b6 18.♖cxe5 ♟e6! 19.♟xe6 ♟xe6 20.♟c2 f5!



is quite safe for Black.

White usually continues with 21.♟a4 to tie Black's rook with the

defence of the a7-pawn, when Black grasps the opportunity to generate threats on the kingside with:

21...g5!

In 2010 the great Grünfeld expert Svidler introduced the novelty 21...a6, but it seems a bit slow. It is true that the a8-rook recovers its freedom, but on the other hand, White can petrify the kingside with 22.h4. I think that 21...g5 is more straightforward and easy to play.

22.♔h2 ♟e8

Black has sufficient counterplay against the enemy king. See the annotated **game 5 Iljushin-V.Be-lov**, Sochi 2006.

b) 15.♔g5 looks a very ugly move, but Lysyj and Riazantsev apparently have another opinion since they chose it recently. We eat the bishop, of course, 15...♖xg5 16.♖xg5, and question White's plan with 16...♟d8.

The game Lysyj-Salem, Biel 2009, saw further 17.h4 h6 18.g4! ♔d7 19.♖e4 ♟xh4 20.f3 ♖h8! 21.♖g2 f5 22.♟h1. Now 22...♟d8 is possible, but Black decided to force play with 22...fxe4 23.♟xh4 exf3+ 24.♟xf3 ♟xf3 25.♖xf3 e4+ 26.♖g2 g5 27.♟hh1 ♔xg4 which was only about equal.

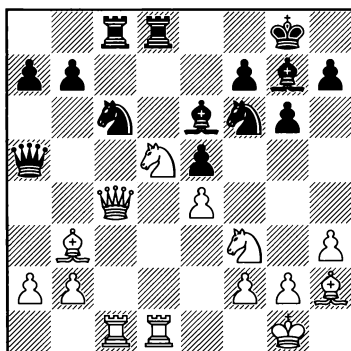
15...♔e6!

An alternative is 15...♖c5!? 16.♔c4!? (or 16.e4 ♟ad8!) 16...e4 17.♖d4 ♖xd4 18.♖e7+ ♖h8

3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4

19.exd4 ♖d3 20.♞cd1 ♞ad8 21.♜xf5
 ♞xf5 22.♙xd3 exd3 23.♞xd3 ♞xd3
 24.♞xd3 ♞xd4=, Mecking-Lima,
 Sao Paulo 2005.

16.♞fd1 ♞fd8 17.♞c4 ♜f6
 18.e4 ♞ac8



This position has been known since 1971 as the main line of the ♙f4 system. The opening stage is over. Both sides completed their development. The white bishop is not too impressive on h2, so White should try something quickly:

19.♜g5!

Alternatively:

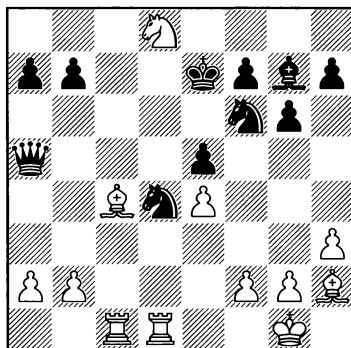
a) 19.♞c3 ♞xc3 20.♜xf6+ ♙xf6
 21.bxc3 ♙xb3 22.axb3 ♜a5=.

b) 19.♞c5 ♞xc5 20.♞xc5 ♜xe4
 21.♞xc6 ♞xc6 22.♜e7+ ♜f8 23.♜xc6
 ♞xd1+ 24.♙xd1 bxc6 25.♙c2
 ♜c5 26.♜xe5 ♙xa2 27.♜xc6 ♙b3
 28.♙xb3=.

19...♜d4 20.♜e7+ ♜f8

Note the funny mate after 20...
 ♜h8 21.♞xe6! fxe6 22.♜f7#.

21.♜xe6+ ♜xe7 22.♜xd8
 ♞xc4 23.♙xc4



A critical position for the assessment of line B1. Black has several playable options, but in all of them draw is the most likely outcome:

a) 23...♜xe4 24.♜xf7 (24.♜xb7
 ♞b6) 24...♞b6 25.♜xe5 (25.♙xe5?
 ♜f3+! 26.gxf3 ♞xf2+ 27.♜h1
 ♞xf3+ 28.♜h2 ♞f2+ 29.♜h1 ♙xe5
 30.♜xe5 ♜g3#) 25...♙xe5 26.♙xe5
 ♜f3+ and a draw with perpetual
 as in the game Pinter-Maslik Graz
 2010: 27.gxf3 ♞xf2+ 28.♜h1 ♞xf3+
 29.♜h2 ♞f2+ 30.♜h1 ♞f3+. Draw.

b) 23...♙h6 24.♜xb7 (24.♙xe5?!
 ♞xe5 25.♜xf7 ♞f4 26.♜xh6 ♞xh6+
 Huzman-Dorfman, Lvov 1988)
 24...♞c7 25.♞c3 ♜xe4 26.♞xd4
 ♜xc3 27.bxc3 ♞xb7 28.♙xe5, with a
 balanced position.

c) 23...♜e8!?. This was the
 choice of Kamsky against Kramnik,
 Moscow 2008: 24.♜xf7 b5 25.♙d5
 ♜e2+ 26.♜h1 ♜xc1 27.♞xc1 ♞d2
 28.♞c6 (or 28.♞c8 ♞xf2 29.♙g1 ♞f1
 30.♞a8 ♜c7 31.♞xa7 ♜d7 32.b3 g5
 33.a4 g4 34.hxg4 ♞f6 35.g5 ♞f4

36.axb5 ♖h4+) 28...♞xf2

The correspondence game Kovacs-Klimakov 2008, saw 28...♞xb2 and a draw was signed.

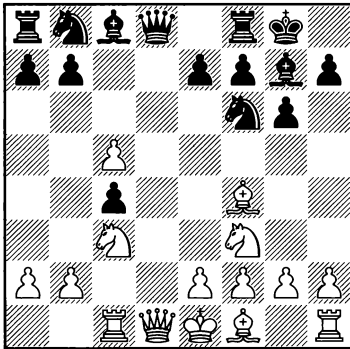
29.♙g1 ♞f1 30.♞a6 ♘c7 31.♞xa7 ♘d7 32.b3 g5 33.a4 g4 34.hxg4 ♞f6 35.g5 ♞f4 36.axb5 ♞h4+, draw.

B2. 6.♞c1

This line is assessed as not too challenging. Black usually answers with 6...dxc4 – line B22, but I recommend instead a simple and easy to learn approach (line B21).

B21. 6...c5!?: B22. 6...dxc4.

B21. 6...c5!? 7.dxc5 dxc4!



8.♞xd8

White can switch here to line B1 with 8.e3 ♞a5 9.♙xc4 ♞xc5.

8.e4 ♞a5 9.e5 (9.♘d2 ♙e6 10.♙xc4 ♙xc4 11.♘c4 ♞xc5=)

9...♘h5! is unclear. My analysis suggests that Black has good counterplay in the sharp middle-game: 10.♙e3 ♘c6 11.♙xc4 (11.♘d2 ♙d8!?) 11...♙g4 12.♙e2 (12.e6 fxe6 13.♞b3 ♙xf3 14.gxf3 ♘e5 15.♙e2 ♘f4 16.♙xf4 ♙xf4 17.♞xb7 ♙af8) 12...♙ad8 13.♞a4 ♞xa4 14.♘xa4 ♙d7! 15.0-0 ♘xe5=.

8...♙xd8 9.e4

9.e3 ♘a6 10.c6 bxc6 11.♙xc4 ♘d5 or 11...♘b4 is equal.

9...♘a6 10.e5 ♘h5! 11.♙e3 ♙g4! 12.♙xc4 ♙xf3 13.gxf3 ♙xe5

Now White should take on a6 with equality since the alternatives give Black the initiative:

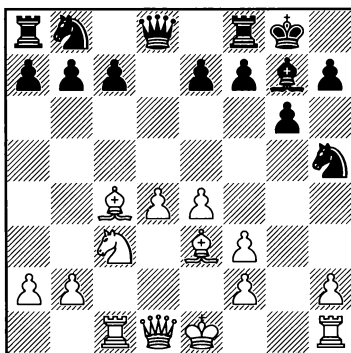
14.c6 ♘c7 15.cxb7 ♙ab8 16.♙xa7 ♙xb7 or 14.a3 ♘b8 and the knight is heading for d4.

B22. 6...dxc4 7.e4

The solid 7.e3 is best met by 7...♙e6! White must now move a second time the same piece: 8.♘g5 when both answers – the original 8...♙g4!? 9.f3 ♙c8 10.♙xc4 c6, Karpov-Kasparov, New York 2002, and the well tested 8...♙d5 9.e4 h6 10.exd5 hxg5 11.♙xg5 b5!? 12.♞f3 (12.♙e2 c6!) ♞d7, lead to interesting sharp play.

7...♙g4 8.♙xc4 ♙xf3 9.gxf3 ♘h5 10.♙e3

3.♖c3 d5 4.♗f4



**14...♖a5 15.♗g5 ♜d7 16.♗b5
c6 17.b4! cxb5 18.bxa5 ♜e8!**

The game is level. Black prepares counterplay with ...f5, for instance, 19.♞fd1 f5! 20.♗e3 a6 21.f4 ♗b2 22.♞c2 ♗a3=.

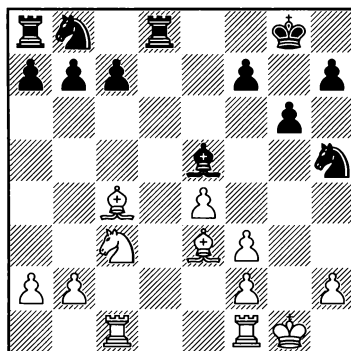
Sumets-Shishkin, Milan 2009 saw 19.♞c5 a6 20.♞fc1 f6=, 20...f5 also deserves attention.

We play on the dark squares:

10...e5! 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♞xd8

Or 12.♞b3?! ♖c6 13.♞xb7 ♞f6=.

12...♞xd8 13.0-0



Black has two decent plans here – the solid 13...♖d7, leaving c6 for the pawn, and the more active:

13...♖c6!? 14.♖d5!

Or 14.♞fd1 ♖d4! 15.♗d5 c5, with full control of the dark squares, Bosboom-Akesson, Hafnarfjordur 1998. Similar is 14.♗d5 ♖d4!.

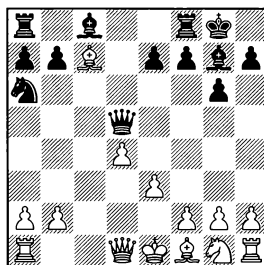
C. 5.e3!

The most unpleasant move. White keeps the option of developing the king's knight to e2 which would be able to support ♖c3.

5...c5

Botvinnik claims that 5...0-0 is more precise, because Black avoids the very sharp line with ♖ge2. Instead, White can win the c7-pawn by exchanging first on d5. This variation is not dangerous, but it should lead almost certainly to a draw. This is the main reason I do not recommend it. Still it is a reliable weapon and I examine it on the next few pages:

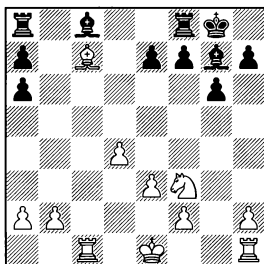
a) 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.♖xd5 ♞xd5
8.♗xc7 ♖a6!



9.♔xa6

It is very risky to spend a new tempo on retreat: 9.♔g3 ♕f5 10.a3 ♜ac8 11.♞e2 ♜b5! (an improvement over 11...♔c2 12.♜d2 e5? 13.dxe5 ♜b3 14.♞d4 ♜xb2 15.♞c1±, Levenfish-Ragozin, Leningrad 1936) 12.b4 (Or 12.♞f4 ♜xb2 13.♞d5 ♜fe8 14.♔xa6 bxa6 15.0–0 e6 16.♞c7 ♜ed8 17.♞xa6 e5+ 12...♞c2 13.♞c3 ♜c6–+.

9...♜xg2 10.♜f3 ♜xf3 11.♞xf3 bxa6 12.♞c1 (12.♞g1 f6)



White too quickly returned the extra pawn. Furthermore, he conceded the bishop pair. Why then is this line still occurring in practice?! White's positional aim is to double rooks on the c-file behind the shield of the c7-bishop. Black's bishop on g7 is passive, restricted by the d4-pawn. We can try to activate it from f8, but then White will exchange it with the help of a3, ♕a5–♕b4. The arising endgame would be clearly in his favour. The other problem is that the black rooks cannot find any open file to operate on. Thus White is not risking anything and could torture us to put our endgame technique to the test. However, Black

has an original way to regroup his forces and solve all practical problems. According to Megabase, White has not won a single game after his next move:

12...f6! 13.♞g1

The game Pelletier-Illescas, Pamplona 2003, saw 13.♞e2? ♔g4+, with a deadly pin.

13...♞f7!

Very flexible! Black does not define the future of his light-squared bishop, which could be useful both on d7 (threatening to check from b5), or on b7. Instead, 13...♔d7 14.♞d2 ♜fc8 15.♞c3 ♕f8 16.a3 ♞f7 17.♞gcl e6 18.♞e1 ♕e7 19.♞d2 ♞e8 20.♞e4 gave White some pull in Trifunovic-Najdorf, Opatija 1949.

14.♞e2

We understand now the finesse of Black's previous move. 14.♞d2 would be met by 14...♔b7! and apparently White should correct himself with 15.♞e2 e6=.

14...♔d7 15.d5

15.♞d2 led to a repetition after 15...e5 16.d5 ♕b5+ 17.♞f3 f5 18.b3 e4+ 19.♞g2 ♕b2 20.♞c2 ♔d3 21.♞c6 ♕b5 22.♞c2 ♔d3 23.♞c6, draw, Radjabov-Ivanchuk, Morelia/Linares 2006.

15.♞c3 looks more natural, but Black has 15...e5! 16.dxe5 (16.d5 ♕b5+ 17.♞d2 ♕f8 gains a crucial tempo, e.g. 18.a3 ♞c8 19.♞gcl ♞d7 20.e4?? ♕h6+) 16...fxe5 17.♞g5 ♕b5+ 18.♞e1 e4 19.♞xf7 ♕xc3+

20.bxc3 ♖xf7=, Gyimesi-Luther, Germany 2008.

15...e5 16.dxe6=, Chatalbashev-Brkic, Zagreb 2010.

In my opinion, White can try to set us problems only with:

b) 6.♖c1!?

This is aimed against Black's counterplay with ...c7-c5. However, developing another queen's piece leaves White 3 moves away from castling so we should seek to open up the centre.

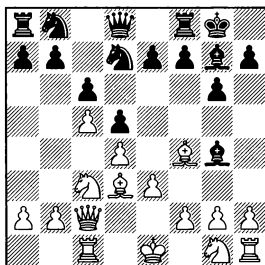
6...♙e6!

A Korchnoi's idea which aims to define the setup in the centre. 6...c5 7.dxc5 ♙e6 was the famous game Botvinnik-Gligoric, Tel Aviv 1964.

7.♞b3!

A nice way to remain in the battle for the centre. 7.cxd5?! ♜xd5 8.♜xd5 ♞xd5 9.a3 ♞c8 10.♜f3 ♞a2 11.♞d2 c5 gives Black the initiative.

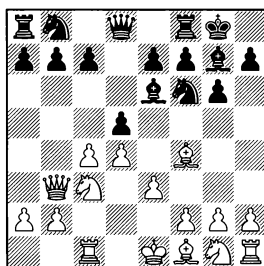
7.c5 is inconsistent. The point is whether we can break through the centre with ...e7-e5 or not: 7...c6 8.♙d3 ♙g4 (8...♜h5 9.♙g5) 9.♞c2 (9.♜ge2 ♜h5) 9...♜fd7



10.♙xb8 (10.h3 does not succeed in preventing ...e5 either: 10...e5! 11.dxe5 ♙e6 12.♜f3 ♜xc5) 10...♜xb8 11.h3 ♙c8 12.f4 b6 13.♜a4 (13.b4 bxc5 14.bxc5 ♞a5) and now 13...e5!! 14.dxe5 f6 15.exf6 ♞xf6 16.♜f3 ♞e7 17.♜f2 b5 18.♜c3 ♜a6, with an initiative in Wang Yue-Carsen, Nanjing 2009.

7.♜f3 transposes to line B2 – 4.♙f4 ♙g7 5.♜f3 0-0 6.♖c1 d4 7.e3 ♙e6.

Let us return to 7.♞b3:



7...c5!

An important novelty of V.Belov, played for the first time in 2010. It significantly improves on the common 7...b6 8.♜f3 c5 9.dxc5 bxc5! (9...♜a6 10.c6) 10.♞d1! (10.♞b7 is dubious due to 10...♞b6 11.♞xb6 axb6 12.♜g5 d4 13.exd4 cxd4 14.♜b5, Galojan-Khotenashvili, Plovdiv 2010 and now 14...♙d7!) 10...dxc4 11.♙xc4 ♙xc4 12.♞xc4 ♞b6 13.0-0 ♜c6 14.♞d2 ♞fd8. White has some minimal edge here.

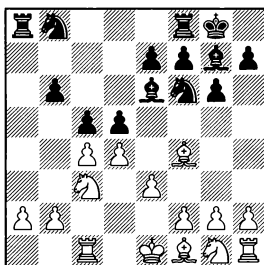
8.♞xb7

8.dxc5 is hardly better after 8...♜c6 9.♜f3 ♞c8 10.♞d1 ♞a5 11.♞b5 dxc4 12.♙xc4 ♙xc4 13.♞xc4 ♜b4

Part 2

14.0-0 ♖xc5 15.♗xc5 ♜xc5=, Edouard-Rodshtein, Khanty-Mansiysk 23.09.2010.

8...♗b6 9.♗xb6 axb6



Black has a big lead in development and he will quickly regain the pawn. Obviously White cannot dream of any advantage here.

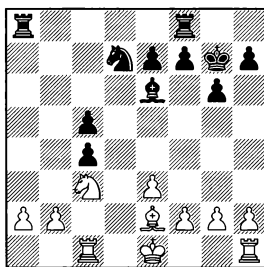
10.♟f3

White failed to equalise in Hammer-Le Quang Liem, Cap d'Agde 2010: 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.♙e5 dxc4 12.♟h3 ♟c6 13.♙g3 ♟h5 14.♟g5 ♙xc3+ 15.bxc3 ♟xg3 16.hxg3 ♟e5 17.♜c2 ♜fb8 18.♟xe6 ♜b1+ 19.♟e2 fxe6+.

10...♟c6

10...dxc4 11.dxc5 ♟d5 12.cxb6 ♟xf4 13.exf4 ♜a6 is a draw – 14.♟d1 ♜xb6 (14...♜xa2 15.♙xc4 ♙xc4 16.♜xc4 ♜a6 17.b7 ♜b6 18.♜c7, draw, Wang Yue-Khmelniker, Zue-rich 2010) 15.♙xc4 ♜c8 16.b3 ♙xc4 17.♜xc4 ♙xc4 18.bxc4 ♜b4 19.0-0 ♜xc4=.

11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♟e5 ♟xe5 13.♙xe5 dxc4 14.♙e2 ♟d7 15.♙xg7 ♟xg7



The stem game Sargissian-V. Belov, Moscow 2010, saw further 16.0-0?! ♜fb8 17.♜c2 ♟e5 18.♜a1 ♟d3, with serious pressure.

White has to play 16.♟d2! ♜fb8 17.♟c2 ♟e5 18.♜hd1 ♜b6 19.♜d2 ♜ab8 20.♟b1 ♟d3 21.♙xd3 cxd3 22.♟a4 ♜a6 23.♟xc5 ♙xa2+ 24.♟a1 ♜a5 25.b4 ♜xb4 26.♜xa2 d2 27.♜d1 ♙xc5 28.♜axd2=.

6.dxc5

Botvinnik considers 6.♙xb8 ♜xb8 7.♜a4+ ♙d7 8.♜xa7 as an argument against the early 5...c5, but I think that such a greedy approach in a sharp opening as the Grünfeld is rather misguided. After all, the a7-pawn has no significance while development does matter. We continue with 8...cxd4 9.♜xd4 0-0 10.cxd5 ♜a5 and White must be happy to live up to move 30.

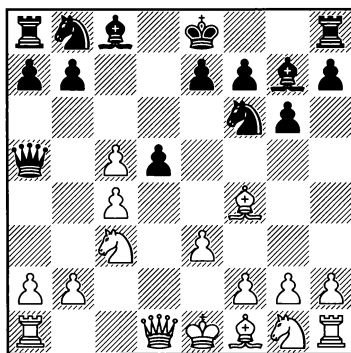
6...♜a5

Black's idea is based on the variation 7.cxd5? ♟xd5 8.♜xd5 ♙xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♜xc3+ 10.♟e2 ♜xa1 11.♙e5 ♜b1 12.♙xh8 ♙e6 13.♜d3 ♜xa2+, with a winning initiative, for instance: 14.♟e1 f6 15.♙g7 ♟c6

3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4

16.♗f3 ♖d8 17.♗d4 ♙f5 18.♗b5 ♖d7
19.♙e2 ♗a1+ 20.♙d1 ♗xd4 21.exd4
♗xd4–+ or 14.♗f3 f6 15.♙g7 ♗c6
16.♗g3 ♖d8 17.♗e2 ♗b1 18.h4 ♖d1
19.♗f3 a5.

Instead, White has the following reasonable continuations:



C1. 7.♗b3; C2. 7.♗a4+; C3.
7.♗f3; C4. 7.♖c1!

C1. 7.♗b3 ♙d7!

Preventing the possible exchange of queens after 7...0-0 8.♗b5!±.

8.♙e5

White has also tried:

a) 8.cxd5 ♗xd5 9.♗xd5 ♙xc3+
10.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 11.♗e2 ♗xa1–+,
Levesque-Gustafsson, playchess.
com 2004.

b) 8.♗xb7 0-0 9.♙c7 (9.♗xa8
♙c6 10.♗xb8 ♖xb8 11.♙xb8 ♗e4–+)
9...♗xc5 10.♗xa8 ♙c6 11.♗xb8
♖xb8 12.♙xb8 ♗e4 13.♗ge2 ♗b4
14.♖d1 ♗xc3, with a decisive at-

tack, Gleeson-Chabot, WCCF email
2000. White is lost after both
15.bxc3 ♗xb8 16.cxd5 ♙a4 17.♖c1
♗b2–+ and 15.♗xc3 ♗xb8 16.♗xd5
♗xb2 17.♗xe7+ ♗f8–+.

c) 8.♗f3 ♗a6! (8...♗e4 9.♖c1
♗xc5 10.♗d1±) 9.♗xb7 0-0 with
perfect compensation since 10.c6
fails to 10...♗e4.

d) 8.♖c1 ♙c6 9.♗f3 ♗bd7=.

8...dxc4 9.♙xc4

9.♗xc4 ♗c6 10.♗f3 ♗xe5
11.♗xe5 0-0 also gives Black nice
compensation.

9...0-0 10.♗f3 ♗a6 11.♙xa6

It is difficult to play such a
move, but 11.0-0 ♗xc5 12.♗c2 b5
was clearly better for Black in Lau-
tier-Ivanchuk, Monte Carlo 1998:
13.♙d5 ♖ac8 14.a3 ♙f5 15.♗d2
♗d3+.

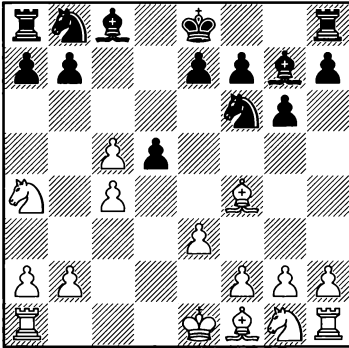
11...♗xa6 12.0-0-0 ♖fc8.

Black's bishop pair makes his
position preferable.

C2. 7.♗a4+ ♗xa4 8.♗xa4

The exchange of queens elimi-
nates most of Black's imminent
tactical threats. White hopes to
consolidate and remain a pawn up
in the endgame. Still, Black's piece
activity promises him a nice game.
Recently only Dreev opted for this

line at top level, and was happy to escape with a draw.



8...d7 9.d3 d4!

After 9...dxc4 10.dxc4 d6 11.f3 (11.b5 d7!) 11...dbd7, White's task is easier:

12.d5

Or 12.0-0 d5 13.d5 dxc5 14.d5 dxc5 15.d5 dxc5 16.d5 dxc5 17.d5 dxc5 18.d5 dxc5 19.d5 dxc5 20.d5 dxc5 21.d5 dxc5 22.d5 dxc5+. Here Spacek and Berndt, Berlin 1990, signed a draw although only Black can play for a win.

12...dxe5 13.dxe5 dxc2 14.dg1 d6 15.b4 a6 16.d2, Yuferov-Gogichaishvili, Naberezhnye Chelny 1988. White has some initiative on the queenside.

10.dxd5

10.dxc1 dxc3 11.bxc3 dxc4 12.dxc4 d6 13.f3 d7+ or

10.dxe4 (Ftacnik) 10...dxe4 11.0-0 d6 are obviously fine for Black. Sharper positions arise after:

10.dg2 dxc5!?

Immediately targeting the weak square d3. 10...d6 11.cxd5 dxc5 is inferior in view of 12.d1! (The alternatives assure Black of active play: 12.d4 dxc3 13.bxc3 d8 or 12.dxe4 dxe4 13.d4 d8 14.d1 d4!? 15.b3 d7 or 15.b1 0-0 16.d3 d6 17.d6 exd6 18.dxd6 d8 19.d3 d5) 12...d8 13.dxe4 dxe4 14.f3 d5 15.b3+.

11.dxd5 d3+ 12.d2 dxf2 13.d7+ d8 14.dxa8 e5 15.dg5+ f6. The knight at a8 is doomed.

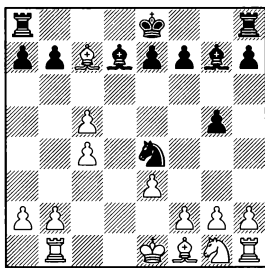
10...d6 11.f3

This way White anticipates ...e6, which leads to a slight edge for Black after 11.f3 e6 12.d7+ dxc7 13.dxc7 dxb2 14.d1 d3+ 15.d2 dxc5.

11.d1 is an ambitious attempt to keep the extra pawn. Then 11...d5? 12.f3 d3 13.d1 dxd5 14.cxd5 dxb2 15.d5+ d8, as in Faldt-Hermansson, Sweden 2003, should fail to 16.dxa6! bxa6 17.d1 d2 18.d2 d3 19.d2+ when suddenly White takes over the initiative. The best reply to 11.d1 is 11...g5! 12.d7+ dxc7 13.dxc7.

We see a typical picture for this variation. Black's pieces are so active, that it is White who must be careful. For instance:

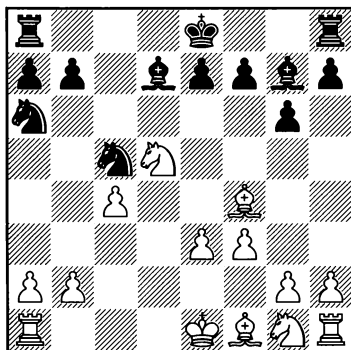
3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4



a) 13...♙f5 14.♙d3 ♜c8 15.f3 ♘g3 16.♙xg3 ♙xd3 17.♞d1 ♙xc4 18.b3 ♙b5 19.♞d5 h5. The game is level, for instance: 20.a4 ♙c6 21.♞xg5 ♙f6 22.♞f5 ♙d7 23.♞d5 h4 24.♙f2 ♙e6 25.♞d3 ♞xc5 26.♘e2 ♜c2 27.e4 ♞b2 28.♘d4 ♞b1+ with a draw, or:

b) 13...♞c8!? 14.c6 ♞xc7 (14...♙xc6 15.♙a5 ♘c5) 15.cxd7+ ♞xd7 16.♙e2 ♘d2 17.♞c1 ♙xb2 18.♞c2 ♙a3=.

11...♘exc5



Despite the extra pawn, White achieves the meagre 27% in practice.

12.0-0-0

The other ways to defend b2 are:

a) 12.♘c3 ♘a4+.

b) 12.♙g5 ♙xb2 13.♞b1 f6=, Dreev-Gopal, Zuerich 2009.

c) 12.♞b1 is too passive. We should answer 12...e6 (12...♞c8 13.♙g5! f6 14.♙h4 g5 15.♙g3 e6 16.♘c3 ♘b4 17.♞d1 f5 18.♞d2!±) 13.♘c7+ ♘xc7 14.♙xc7 ♘a4 15.♙d6 ♘xb2 16.♙a3 ♘a4 17.♞xb7 ♙f8!

Paradoxically, exchanges favour Black who will eventually remain with a raging rook on the second rank and a perfect blockading knight at c5. White is unable to cut across his plans with 18.♙c1 a5 19.a3 because after 19...♙d6 20.e4 f6, Black will follow with ...♙e7, ...♞hb8 and invade the queenside anyway.

18.♙xf8 ♞xf8 19.♘e2 ♙e7 20.♘d4 ♘c5 21.♞b4 ♞fb8 22.a3, Novikov-Sutovsky, Koszalin 1998. Black owns the initiative and he could have underlined that with 22...♞b6! 23.♙e2 ♙a6 24.♘b3 ♜c8 25.♘xc5 ♞xc5 26.♞b3 ♙ca5 27.♞b7 ♞xa3 28.c5 ♜c6 29.0-0 ♘d8 30.♞d1 ♞c7, winning a pawn.

12...e6

12...♞c8 is imprecise owing to 13.e4 and Black fails to build a pawn barrier on f6, e5 – 13...e6 14.♘c3 ♙xc3 15.bxc3 f6 16.e5!

13.♘c7+

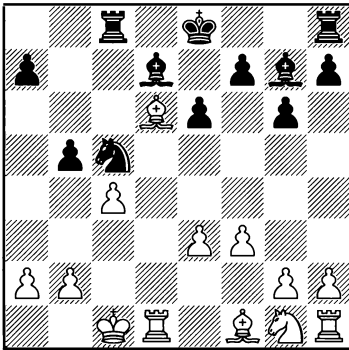
13.♘c3?! ♙xc3 14.bxc3 f6= leaves White an extra double pawn, but this structure is unpleasant for

him, because his pieces have not good stands: 15.♖e2 ♕a4 16.♞d2 e5 17.♙h6 ♜f7

13...♜xc7 14.♙xc7 ♞c8 15.♙d6

Ftacnik also considers 15.♙g3 15...b5 16.cxb5 (16.b3 bxc4 17.♙xc4 ♜a4+) 16...♜a4+, with an initiative.

15...b5



Even without queens, the position remains very sharp. White's king is in danger under the fire of 3 long-range pieces, but our own monarch is in his turn rather restrained by the bishop on d6. In general, Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn.

16.b3

Of course, 16.cxb5? loses to 16...♜e4+ 17.♖b1 ♜f2. The attempt to close the queenside by 16.♙xc5 ♞xc5 17.b4 ♞c7 18.c5 does not work too well due to 18...♙c3 19.a3 a5 20.♖c2 (20.♞xd7 ♖xd7 21.♙xb5+ ♖e7+) 20...axb4 21.♖b3 ♞xc5 22.axb4 ♞c7.

16...♜b7

16...bxc4 is about equal: 17.♙xc4 (17.bxc4 ♜b7 18.♙a3 ♙b5 19.♖b1 ♙a4+) 17...♜a4! 18.♞d2 (18.bxa4 ♞xc4+ 19.♖d2 ♙xa4+; 18.♖d2 ♙c3+ 19.♖e2 ♜b2 20.♞c1 ♜xc4 21.bxc4 ♞xc4 22.♖d3 ♙b5 23.a4 ♙a6 24.♞xc3 ♞c6+ 25.♖c2 ♞xd6 26.♜h3=) 18...♙b5 19.♞c2 ♙xc4 20.bxc4 (20.♞xc4 ♞xc4+ 21.bxc4 ♖d7 22.♙g3 ♞c8+) 20...♖d7 21.c5 (21.♙a3 ♞c6 22.♜e2 ♞hc8 23.♞d1+ ♖e8=) 21...♞c6! 22.♜e2 (22.♞d2 ♖c8 23.♞c2 ♖b7 24.♜e2 ♜xc5) 22...♜xc5! 23.♞d1! (23.♙xc5 ♞hc8 24.♞d1+ ♖e8 25.♖d2 ♞xc5 26.♞xc5 ♞xc5+, Novikov-Yermolinsky, New York 1998) 23...♞xd6 24.♞xc5=, intending ...♙a5.

17.♖b1 ♜xd6 18.♞xd6 ♖e7 19.♞d2

Or 19.♞d1 ♙h6 20.f4 e5 21.fxe5 ♞hd8.

19...♙h6 20.f4 e5

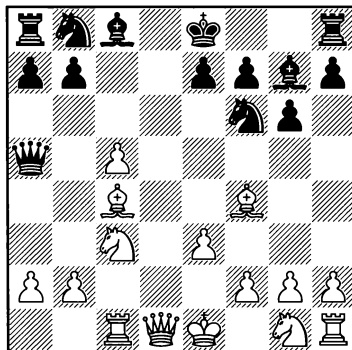
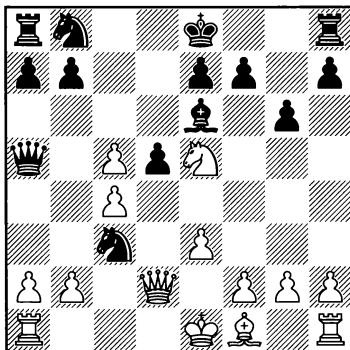
Black's bishop pair is in full control, e.g. 21.♙d3 bxc4 22.♙xc4 ♙f5+, Kiss-Rowson, Reykjavik 2002.

C3. 7.♜f3 ♜e4!?

We can transpose to other main lines by 7...0-0 8.♞c1 dxc4, but the text is simpler.

8.♙e5 ♙xe5 9.♜xe5 ♜xc3 10.♞d2 ♙e6

3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4



Black recaptures the material and comfortably castles: 11.♖c1 0-0 12.♙xc3 ♗xc5 13.b4 ♖c7 14.c5, Pinter-Ruck, Hungary 2001, when 14...♖c6= is a little more precise than 14...♗fd8 as in the stem game.

8...0-0!

In most branches of this system, Black should not hurry to regain the sacrificed pawns. Here 8...♙xc5?? loses the queen after 9.♖b5 ♖b4+ 10.♔f1 ♖a6 11.a3 ♗a5 12.♙c7 ♖xc7 13.♖xc7+ ♗xc7 14.♙xf7+.

C4. 7.♖c1 dxc4 8.♙xc4

Losing tempi with 8.♗a4+ might be risky for White, even without queens: 8...♗xa4 9.♖xa4 ♙d7 10.♖xc4 0-0

9.♖ge2

Mind the trap 10...♖a6? 11.c6!.

11.♖f3 ♖c8 12.♖c3

9.♖f3 transposes to line B1.

The text bolsters up the c3-knight. White is undeveloped for tactical attempts like:

9.♗a4 ♗xc5 10.♖b5 ♖d5 11.♖e2 ♖a6 12.♗b3 ♖xf4 13.♖xf4 ♗b4+ or:

9.a3?!

It is probably safer to continue development with 12.♙e2 ♖d5 13.♙e5 ♙xa4 14.♖xa4 ♖xc5=.

12...♖c6! 13.♖e5 ♙e6 14.♖xc6 ♖xc6 15.♗b4 ♖h5!?

Setting up a trap, which in fact leads to unclear consequences: 9...♗xc5!? 10.♖b5 ♙e6 11.♙e2 ♗f5 12.♖c7 g5! 13.♙g3 ♖e4. Now my opponent showed good appetite and took the rook, but turned up worse after 14.♖xa8 ♙xb2 15.♖f3 ♗a5+ 16.♔f1 ♙xc1 17.♗xc1 ♖a6, Nikolov-Delchev 2001. He could have tried instead 14.f3!? ♖xg3 15.hxg3 ♙xb2 16.♗b1 or 16.♙d3, aiming to exploit

The game Gunawan-Dorfman, Sarajevo 1988, saw 15...♖d5 16.♖xd5 ♙xd5 17.e4 ♙xa2 18.♙e3 ♖c7 19.♙d3 a5=.

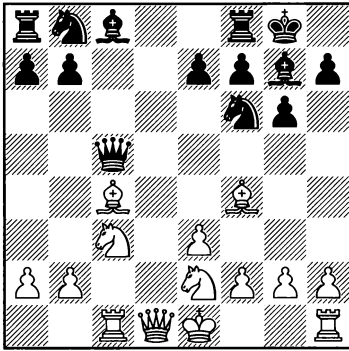
16.♖xb7 ♖xf4 17.exf4 ♖xc5, with an initiative.

Part 2

the open h-file. However, I recommend:

9...♖c6! 10.♗b3 (10.♕ge2 ♗xc5 11.♕b5 ♗h5=) 10...♗xc5 (10...♕e4=) 11.♗b5 ♗xb5 12.♙xb5 ♙e6 13.♕ge2 ♕d5.

9...♗xc5



10.♗b3!

a) 10.♕b5? ♗b4+ 11.♖f1 a6 12.a3 ♗xb2 13.♙b1. White wins the queen, but this idea proves rather dubious. The rest of Black's pieces generate tons of threats while the rook at h1 is out of play: 13...♗xb1 14.♗xb1 axb5 15.♙xb5 ♙xa3 16.♙xb8 ♕e4!! 17.♗xe4 ♙a1+ 18.♕c1 ♙xc1+ 19.♖e2 ♙xh1+ 20.♗xe7 ♙g4+ 21.f3 ♙xf3+ 22.♖xf3 ♙xb8 23.♗c7 ♙f8. This position should be lost for White.

b) 10.♙b3?! Black has no problems after this waste of time. Any normal move should be OK: 10...♗a5 11.0-0 ♕a6! (eyeing the d3-square) 12.♗e1 ♙d8 13.♙d1 ♙xd1 14.♗xd1 ♕c5 15.♙c2 ♙e6+, Kaka-geldyev-Sasikiran, Jodhpur 2003, or 10...♕c6 11.0-0 ♗h5 (10...♗a5)

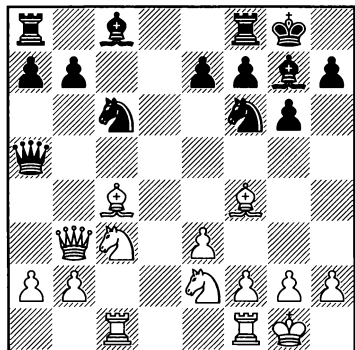
12.♕g3 ♗h4 13.♕ge2 ♙d8 14.♗e1 ♕h5=.

c) 10.♗d4 ♗a5! (Or 10...♗h5 11.♙xb8 ♙xb8 12.♗xa7 ♙d7 13.♕g3 ♗h4 14.♙d4 ♗xd4 15.exd4 b5, Istratescu-Iordachescu, Predeal 2006.) 11.b4 ♗a3 12.♙xb8 ♙xb8 13.0-0 ♕g4+.

After 10.♗b3, Black has two good continuations. 10...♗a5 is much simpler and easier to learn. This way Black avoids long forced variations. However, if you seek complications and are ready for an opening dispute, line C42 should be your choice. It leads to very interesting, materially unbalanced positions.

C41. 10...♗a5; C42. 10...♕c6!?

C41. 10...♗a5 11.0-0 ♕c6!



I do not like 11...♕bd7?! in view of 12.♙fd1 (Or 12.a3?! ♕b6 13.♙c7 ♙d7 and the game Wang Yue-Carlsen, Sofia 2009, eventually ended in a draw.) 12...a6 (12...♕c5 13.♗b5 ♗xb5 14.♕xb5 ♙e6±) 13.♕d5!±.

3.♟c3 d5 4.♟f4

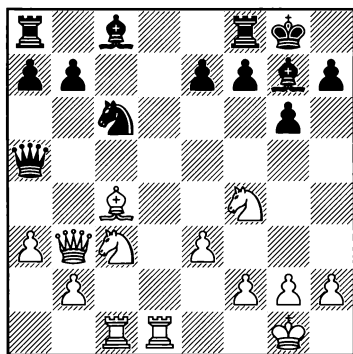
12.♟fd1!

The idea of ensuring a retreat to the dark-squared bishop by 12.h3 doesn't promise much. After 12...♞e5! 13.♟xe5 (13.♞d5 ♞xd5 14.♟xd5 e6 15.♟e4 ♟d7 16.♟xb7 ♖ab8 17.♟c7 ♟xc7 18.♖xc7 ♟b5 19.♖e1 ♟d3 20.♟b7 ♟f6!=, threatening to win the exchange with ...♟d8 as in Riazantsev-Najer, Linares 2003) 13...♟xe5 14.♟fd1 e6 (aimed against ♞d5) 15.♞d4 ♟a5, Black protects the a7-pawn and will soon develop the light-squared bishop, e.g. 16.♞db5 ♟d7 17.♞d6 ♟c6=.

12...♞h5! 13.a3

White prevents an exchange of queens through b4 and threatens to disturb Black's queen with 14.♖d5, or thrust the b-pawn after the preliminary ♟a2.

13...♞xf4 14.♞xf4



14...e6

The game Kaidanov-Mikhalevski, Lubbock 2008, introduced the

amazing, I would even say, arrogant, idea:

14...♟g4!? 15.f3 (15.♖d5 ♟c7 16.♖c5∞) 15...♟c8.

Is the weakening of the whole complex of White's kingside dark squares worth two tempi?! I doubt it, but it is not easy to prove a White's advantage. Kaidanov was obviously so perplexed, that he immediately lost the thread and decided to spend 2 tempi on his turn with 16.♞d5? in order to provoke... the useful move 16...e6!.

A sterner test of Black's idea would be 16.♞a4! e6 (preventing ♞c5) 17.♟d3 ♖d8 18.♟e4 ♖xd1+ 19.♟xd1.

It looks like Black is still under pressure, but 19...♟g5 seems to solve the problem of the ♟c8-development: 20.b4 e5! 21.♞d5 ♟e6 22.♟e1 ♟xd5 23.♟xd5 ♟h6 24.♖c3 ♖d8=. Black is ready to counter-attack: 25.♟e4?! ♞e7 26.♟xb7? ♞f5 27.e4 ♞e3+.

15.♟e2

White can try 15.♟b5 and take on c6, but Black should not have problems having the bishop pair.

15...♖d8 16.♞d3

Or 16.♖xd8+ ♟xd8 17.♖d1 ♟e7=.

16...♟d7 17.♞e4=

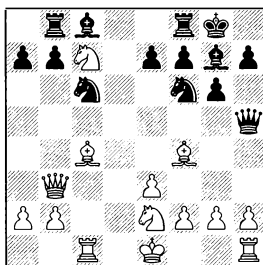
We have been following the game Kraidman-W.Schmidt, Nice 1974, which eventually ended in a draw.

C42. 10...♖c6 11.♗b5

Heading for c7. Mundane moves like 11.♖b5 ♗xb5 12.♗xb5 ♗d7= or 11.00 ♗a5 12.♖b5 ♗xb5 13.♗xb5 a6 14.♗d3 ♗d7= do not deserve more attention.

11...♖h5! 12.♗g3!

12.♗c7 ♖b8 does not trouble Black:

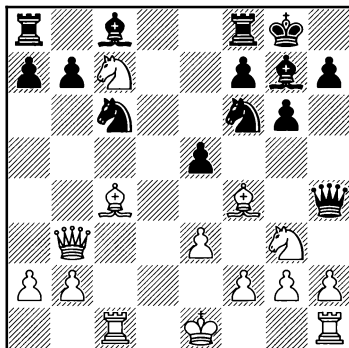


a) 13.♗d5 e5 14.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 15.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 16.♖xc6 bxc6 17.♖xb8 ♖g4! 18.♗g3 (18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♖xe5 ♖xg2 20.♖f1 ♗h3 21.♗g3 ♖f3) 18... ♖b7 19.♖d6 ♖xb2 20.0-0 ♖e6±.

b) 13.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 14.♖xc6 loses to 14...♖a5+ 15.♖c3 (15.♗c3 e5 16.♖xf6 ♗xf6 17.♗7d5 ♗e6 18.♗g3 ♗xd5 19.♖xd5 ♖xd5 20.♗xd5 ♖c8 21.0-0 ♗g7 22.e4 ♖c2-+) 15...e5 16.♗g3 ♗e4-+.

c) 13.♗a6 ♖a5+ 14.♗c3 ♖a8 15.♗c7 e5 16.♗xa8 exf4 17.0-0 fxe3 18.fxe3 ♖e5!±, Perun-Shishkin, Kiev 2005.

d) 12.♖a3 a6!? (or 12...♗d7 13.0-0 ♗g4 14.♗g3 ♗ge5 15.♗bd4 ♗xc4 16.♖xc4 ♗xd4 17.♗xd4 e5=) 13.♗c7 ♖a7, with an initiative.

12...♖h4 13.♗c7 e5!

Note the trap 13...♖b8? 14.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 15.♖xc6.

13...g5? is popular, but bad: 14.♗xg5 ♖xg5 15.♗xa8 ♗d7 16.♖xb7 ♖b8 17.♖c7 ♖xa8 (17...♖c8 18.h4 ♖h6 19.♖f4 or even 19.♖xc8!?±) 18.♗a6 ♖g4 19.♖xc6 and White keeps a healthy extra pawn, for instance: 19...♗d5 20.♖b7 ♗xc6 21.♖xc6 ♖b4+ 22.♗e2 ♖xb2+ 23.♗f3 ♖d8 24.♖d1±, Tregubov-Oral, Selfoss 2002.

14.♗g5!

White will lose the bishop anyway, but he should keep the centre closed. The other options are:

a) 14.♗h6? ♗xh6 15.♗xa8 ♗d4 16.♖c3 b5±;

b) 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.♗xa8 b6!

Protecting the b7-pawn, which is vulnerable after 15...♗d7 16.♗c7 ♗c6. This position has been tested extensively in practice. After 17.♗d5 (17.♗f1 ♖d8 18.♖xc6 bxc6 19.♗e2 ♗fg4 was equal in P.Cramling

3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4

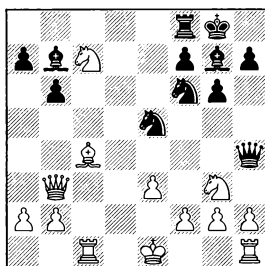
-Lahno, Plovdiv 2008) 17...♗h8, Black has some compensation, but he should only struggle for the draw: 18.♖xf6 (18.♖f4 is an inferior option: 18...g5 19.♖d3 ♖xd3+ 20.♗xd3 ♙xg2 21.♖f5 ♗h3 22.♖xg7 ♗xg7 23.♙g1 ♖c8 24.♗d4 b5 25.♗e5 h6 26.♗xb5 ♗xh2 27.♗e2 ♖b8 28.♙xg2 ♗h5+.) 18...♙xg2 19.♙g1 ♙c6 20.♙d5 ♗xf6 21.♙xc6 bxc6±.

16.♖c7

White should not even think about castling under the fire of four black pieces: 16.0-0? ♙b7 17.♖c7 ♖fg4 18.h3 ♖f3+!.

16.♗b5 is well met by 16...♙b7 (16...♖fd7 is not that simple due to 17.♙e2 ♙b7 18.♖xb6 ♖xb6 19.0-0 ♖g4 20.♙xg4±) 17.♗xe5 ♙xg2 – see line a) below.

16...♙b7



17.♖d5

a) 17.♗b5 ♙xg2 18.♗xe5 ♖g4 19.♗b5 ♙xh1 20.♖xh1 ♖xe3. Black has terrific compensation, for example, 21.♖d5 (21.♙xf7+ ♙xf7 22.♗e8+ ♙f8 23.♗xe3 ♙e7 24.♖e6 ♗g4 25.♙c6 ♗b4+) 21...♖f5 (21...♖g4!?) 22.♖g3 ♖d4 23.♗b4 ♖f3+=.

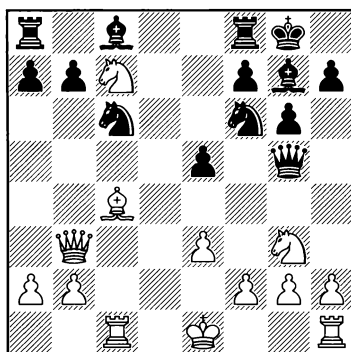
b) 17.♙f1 ♖c8 18.♙c2 ♖e4 19.♙e2 ♙d8 (19...♖xg3 20.fxg3 ♗e4 21.♙f1

♙f8 22.♙c3 ♙b4 23.♙f4 ♙xc3+ 24.♗xc3 ♗b1+ 25.♗f2 g5 26.♙a4 ♗f5+ 27.♗g1 a5=) 20.0-0 ♖d2 with an edge.

17...♖xd5 18.♙xd5 ♙xd5 19.♗xd5 ♙d8 20.♗b3 ♖d3+ 21.♗e2 ♖xc1+ 22.♙xc1 ♙e5.

Two 2009 games: Golod-Nestorovsky, Israel 2009 and Govcayan-Negi, Paris 2009, proved that play is equal, but not obligatory a draw: 23.♗b5 (23.f4 ♗xh2 24.♗f3 ♙d2) 23...♙b8 (23...♙xg3 24.hxg3 ♗g4+ 25.♗e1 ♗e4 26.♙d1 ♙xd1+ 27.♗xd1 ♗b1+=) 24.♗c6 ♙xg3 25.hxg3 ♗h5+ 26.f3 ♗e5=.

14...♗xg5

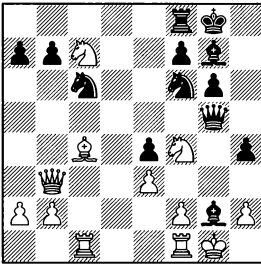


15.h4

The point of White's idea. It turns out that the queen is a bit awkwardly placed. The only hope of Black is to exploit the weakening of the kingside.

15.♖xa8 e4 16.0-0 is not in the limelight of modern theory, but it deserves consideration. At first glance, Black should have a strong

attack. The e5-square is a good juncture point for Black's pieces. The advance of the h-pawn could be also unpleasant. Meanwhile the a8-knight needs whole two moves to join in the battle. However, tactics work in White's favour and he is likely to end up with a tiny edge in the endgame, arising after 16... h5?! 17.♖c7! (17.♖e2 ♖g4 18.♖f4 ♖e5 19.h3 ♖f6 20.♖fd1 ♖g7, Berczes-Braun, Balatonlelle 2006) 17... h4 18.♖e2 ♖h3 19.♖f4 ♖xg2



20.♖ce6!! ♖g4 21.♖xg2 h3 22.♖ef4 22...♖e5 23.♖e2 ♖f3+ 24.♖h1 hxg2+ 25.♖xg2 ♖h5! (25...g5 as in Bhat-Gupta, Benasque 2008, is insufficient owing to 26.♖xb7! ♖h3 27.♖c7 ♖h5 28.♖xf3 exf3 29.♖g1 fxg2+ 30.♖xg2 g4 31.♖b7 ♖f6 32.b4!±, followed by ♖c8) 26...♖h3 27.♖xf3 ♖e5 28.♖f4 ♖xf3+ 29.♖g2 ♖xf4 30.exf4 ♖xb3 31.axb3 ♖xf4 32.♖g4 ♖d3 33.♖c2 ♖e8. The draw is very likely, but still White can play on. He will sooner or later untangle his rooks with the help of f2-f3.

Instead of playing for mate, Black should stake on the isolation of White's knight on a8 with:

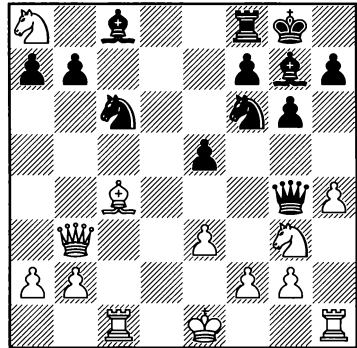
16...♖e5! 17.♖e2 h5!

This is an important improvement over 17...♖e7? 18.♖a3! ♖e5 19.b4±, Kuzubov-Swinkels, Neuhausen Baden, 2007. The key moment is to keep the threat of going to b8 (which currently does not work due to ♖xc6) and gain space on the kingside.

18.♖fd1 h4 19.♖f1 h3 20.g3 ♖d7+

Now Black's queen will be protected on b8 so White should look for equality, maybe with 21.♖d2 ♖c5 22.♖b5 ♖d3 23.♖xd3 exd3 24.♖xe5 ♖xe5 25.b3 ♖e6 26.f4 ♖g4 27.fxex5 ♖xd1 28.♖xd1 ♖xa8=.

15...♖g4 16.♖xa8



16...♖a5!?

Two elite players, Topalov and Sasikiran, preferred recently 16... ♖d7. I have no reason to discard their choice so I examine it in detail in the "Complete Games" chapter. See **game 4 Wang Yue-Topalov**, Sofia 2009.

However, the text is more simple and easy to play.

3.♘c3 d5 4.♙f4

17.♞b5

White is worse after:

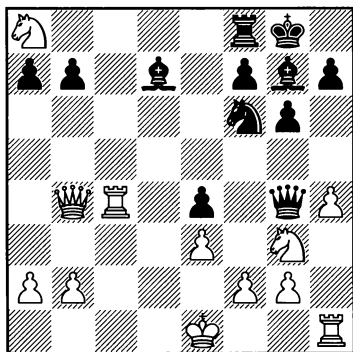
a) 17.♞b4 ♙e6 18.♞xa5 ♙xc4 19.♘c7 ♙d3!± (or 19...♘h5!?).

b) 17.♞d3 e4 18.♞d2 ♘xc4 19.♙xc4 ♘h5! (19...♙e6 20.♙c5) 20.♙xe4 ♞d7 21.♘h5 gxh5. The knight cannot be saved without other material losses. 22.f3 ♞xd2+ 23.♔xd2 ♙f5 24.♘c7 ♙d8+ 25.♙d4 (25.♔e2 ♙xe4 26.fxe4 ♙c8) 25... ♙xd4 26.exd4 ♙xd4+.

17...♘xc4 18.♙xc4 ♙d7!
19.♞b4

19.♙xg4 loses to 19...♙xb5 20.♙b4 ♙c6 21.♘c7 ♙c8 22.♘b5 ♙xg2+.

19...e4



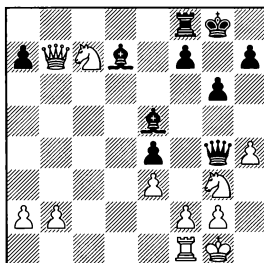
20.♘c7

20.♞xb7 is more aspiring. White destroys our queenside. 20...♙e6 21.♙d4 ♘d7! 22.♙xd7

Or 22.♙xe4 ♘c5 23.♙xg4 ♘xb7

24.♙b4 ♘c5 25.♙b5 ♘d3+ 26.♔e2 ♙c4 27.♘c7 ♘e5+ with an excellent position.

22...♙xd7 23.♘c7 ♙e5 24.0-0



24...♙xg3!

24...♞xh4 25.♞xa7 ♙xb2 occurred in Mamedjarov-Eljanov, Gothenburg 2005. Material balance has been restored, but White's a-pawn should not be underestimated. White eventually won the game and I think that it would be wise to avoid this position. Fortunately, we have a direct way to the draw.

25.fxg3 ♞xg3 26.♘d5 ♙e6 27.♘f6+ ♔g7 28.♞xa7 ♙h3 29.♙f2 ♙c8 30.♘h5+ gxh5 31.♞xf7+ ♔h8 32.♞f6+ ♔g8=.

20...♙c6 21.♞d6

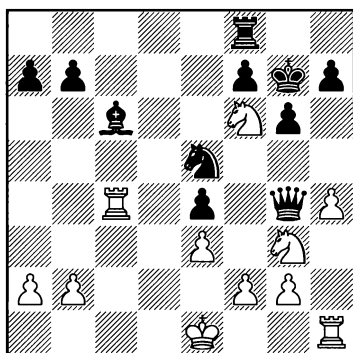
White is under attack after:

21.♞e7 ♘d7 22.0-0 ♙f6 23.♞b4 ♙e5 24.♘b5 ♙xg3 25.fxg3 ♞xg3 or:
21.♘b5 ♘d5 22.♞d6 ♙xb5 23.♙c5 ♘b4 24.♙xb5 ♘d3+ 25.♔d2 ♞c8.

21...♘d7 22.♘d5 ♙e5 23.♞xe5

23.♘e7+ ♔h8! (avoiding ♘f5+ in some lines) 24.♙b4 a5 25.♙xa5 ♙e6=. Stayed the king on g7, White would have been better following 26.♙b4 ♕d6 27.♙xd6!.

23...♘xe5 24.♘f6+ ♔g7



25.♖xc6

The game Matveeva-Danelia, Rijeka 2010, saw 25.♘xg4 ♘xc4 26.b3 ♘b6 27.h5 f5 28.h6+ ♔g8 29.♘h2 ♖d8 30.♘e2 ♕b5 31.♘d4 ♕d3, with Black's pull.

25...♙xg3

Or 25...♘d3+ 26.♔d2 ♘xf2 27.♘g4 ♘xh1=.

26.fxg3 ♘xc6 27.0-0 ♖d8 28.♘xe4 ♘e5

Black has some initiative so White should be careful in this end-game.

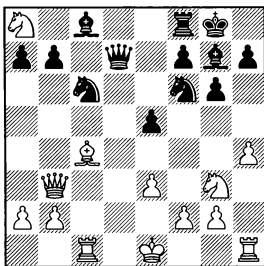
Part 2

Complete Games

4. Wang Yue–Topalov

Sofia MTEL Masters 23.05.2009

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5
4.♙f4 ♙g7 5.e3 c5 6.dxc5 ♚a5
7.♞c1 dxc4 8.♙xc4 0-0 9.♘ge2
♚xc5 10.♚b3 ♘c6 11.♘b5 ♚h5
12.♘g3 ♚h4 13.♘c7 e5 14.♙g5
♚xg5 15.h4 ♚g4 16.♘xa8 ♚d7



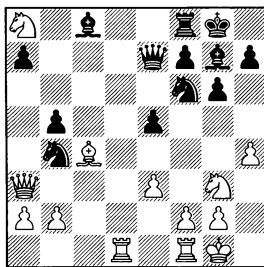
I consider 16...♘a5 in the “Step by Step” chapter. Topalov’s novelty is also playable and gives Black enough counterplay. The knight on a8 is in a critical situation and White has to rely on tactics in order to save it. He has not time for 17.h5 e4 18.hxg6 hxg6.

17.0-0 is possible. Then we can continue with the thematic 17...e4, making room for our queen on e5, or 17...♚e7 18.♚a3 ♚d8 19.b4 ♚e7! (dragging first the rook to c3)

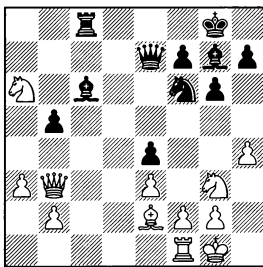
20.♞c3 ♘g4 21.f3 ♘h2 22.♙xh2
♚xh4+ 23.♙g1 ♚xg3 24.b5 e4!.

17.♞d1 ♚e7 18.♚a3 ♘b4 19.0-0
♙g4!?

Two months later, Sasikiran tried to improve with 19...b5!?



I’m not sure whether Black’s compensation would be sufficient after 20.♙xb5 ♙g4 (20...♙b7 21.♘c7 a6 22.♙e2 ♞c8 23.♞c1 ♙f8 24.♙xa6 ♞xc7 25.♞xc7 ♚xc7 26.♙xb7 ♚xb7 27.♚b3 is also unclear.) 21.♘c7 ♙xd1 22.♞xd1 ♚xc7 23.♚xb4 ♞b8, e.g. 24.a4 a6 25.♚c4 ♚xc4 26.♙xc4 ♞xb2 27.♙xa6 ♞a2 28.♙b5±. In the game, White chose the safer 20.♙e2 ♙b7 21.♘c7 a6 22.♞c1 ♞c8 23.♚b3 e4 (23...♙f8 24.a3 ♘c6 25.♘d5 ♘xd5 26.♚xd5 ♘d4 27.♚a2±) 24.a3 ♘c6 25.♞xc6 ♙xc6 26.♘xa6



The weakness of the h4-pawn and the active rook promises Black fair counterchances. Perhaps he should play here 26...♔d7. Sasikiran opted for 26...♔f8?! 27.♖d1 ♔e5 28.♖d2 h5 29.♟b4 ♟b7 30.♖c2 ♟c5 31.♟xb5 ♟g4, when 32.♔d7! ♟xe3 33.♟xg4 ♔xg3 34.♔x3 would have been better for White, Olszewski-Sasikiran, Warsaw 21.07.2009.

Topalov's treatment is more energetic. It is vital to provoke f3, thus making the whole castling position of White vulnerable. The e3-pawn will be a target, as well as the knight on g3.

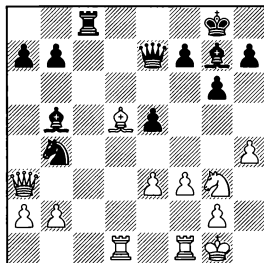
20.f3 ♟h6

I spent a lot of time on the novelty 20...♔d7?!. It looks very tempting and all principled variations looked very promising for Black:

21.♟c7 (21.♔xa7 ♟c6 22.♔xb7 ♟a5) 21...♖c8 22.♖c1?! ♟h6! 23.♖fe1 (Or 23.♟e4 ♟c6! 24.♟xf6+ ♔xf6 25.♟b5 ♖d8! – eyeing the second rank – 26.♖c3 a5 27.♔xa5 ♟c2 28.♖xc2 ♟xe3+ 29.♖cf2 ♔xh4 30.♔c3 ♔g5 31.♖e1 ♟b6) 23...♟g7! 24.♟b5 ♟xb5 25.♟xb5 ♖xc1 26.♖xc1 ♔d7 27.♟c7 ♟c6 28.♟b5 ♔d2→. However, the rational machine

found an amazing defence which came as a cold shower for my enthusiasm. After:

22.♟d5! ♟fxd5 23.♟xd5 ♟b5,



the engine recommended the really inhuman move:

24.♟b3!!

Instead of defending, White counterattacks! The threat is ♟g3-e4-d6. The “normal” 24.♖fe1 ♟f6 25.♟e4 ♟xh4 26.♟xf7+ ♟g7 is fine for Black, e.g. 27.♟e6 ♖c7 28.♟d6 ♟c2 29.♔xa7 (29.♔a5 ♟xe1 30.♔xb5 ♖c6 31.♟f5+ gxf5 32.♖d7 ♖xe6 33.♔xb7 e4 34.♔xa7 exf3) 29...♟f2+! (29...♟xe1 30.♔b8!±) 30.♟xf2 ♔h4+ 31.♟g1 ♟xe1=.

Now Black has to switch over to a dull defence:

24...♟xf1 25.♟xf1 a6 26.♟e4 ♟f8 27.♟g5 (27.♟d6 ♔xh4=; 27.♔a5 ♟c6 28.♔b6 ♖d8±) 27...♟g7 28.♔a5 ♟c6 29.♔e1 ♟d8 30.♔g3±.

Topalov's intuition in dynamic positions once again proved to be fantastic.

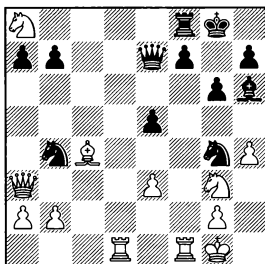
21.fxg4

The other way to defend e3 is 21.♔xa7 ♟e6 22.♟xe6 fxe6 23.♖fe1 (23.e4 ♟c6) 23...e4! 24.♟xe4 ♟xe4

3.♘c3 d5 4.♙f4

25.fxe4 ♘c6 26.♚a4 ♚xh4, with at least a draw.

21...♘xg4



22.♙xf7

Krasenkow suggests 22.♙f3 ♚xh4 23.♘f1 ♘c2 24.♚xf8+ ♙xf8 25.♙xf7+ ♘h8 26.♙b3 ♙c5 27.♙xc2 e4 28.♙xe4 ♘xe3 29.♘xe3 ♚xe4 30.♘f2 b5 31.♙d8+ ♘g7 32.♘e2 ♙xe3 33.♙xe3 ♚xg2+, with sufficient counterplay.

22...♙xf7 23.♘f1 ♘g7 24.♙xf7 ♙xf7 25.♚xb4

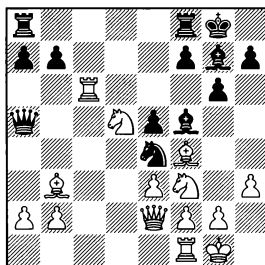
Here Topalov gave perpetual check.

25...♚f2+ 26.♘h1 ♚xh4+ 27.♘g1 ♚f2+ 28.♘h1 ♚h4+ 29.♘g1 ♙xe3+ 30.♘xe3 ♚f2+ 31.♘h1 ♚h4+ 32.♘g1 ♚f2+ 33.♘h1 ♚h4+ 1/2-1/2.

5. Iljushin-V.Belov Sochi 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♙g7 5.♙f4 0-0 6.e3 c5 7.dxc5 ♚a5

8.♙c1 dxc4 9.♙xc4 ♚xc5 10.♙b3 ♘c6 11.0-0 ♚a5 12.h3 ♙f5 13.♚e2 ♘e4 14.♘d5 e5 15.♙xc6!!

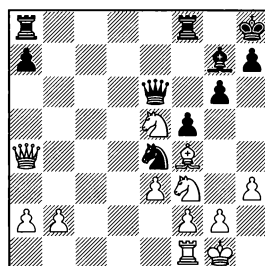


This move became popular in 1986, after the match Karpov-Kasparov in London. Kasparov took on f4 and went on to draw, but White retains a small plus in this line. Lately Black prefers the more challenging capture.

15...bxc6 16.♘e7+ ♘h8 17.♘xc6 ♚b6 18.♘cxe5 ♙e6 19.♙xe6 ♚xe6 20.♚c2 f5!

Occasionally, Black opts for 20...♘f6 to avoid making weaknesses on the kingside. However, we can turn this vulnerability into a strength – if we push the pawns even further!

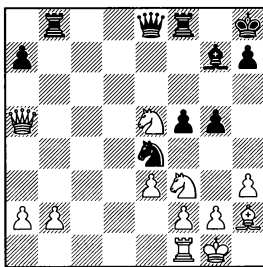
21.♚a4



21...g5! 22.♙h2 ♚e8 23.♚a5

Kosyrev-Sakaev, Internet 5' 2004 saw 23.♙c6 ♚c8 24.♚c1 f4!± (24...g4±). The point is that 26.♚e1 would lose to 26...♙c3!! 27.♚xe8 ♚fxe8 28.♚c4 ♚xc6! 29.♚f1 ♙xd4 30.bxc3 ♙xc3.

23...♚b8



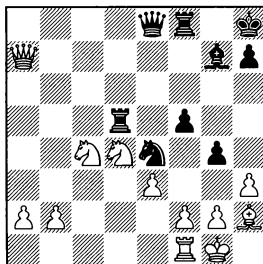
24.♙c4

24.♚xa7 ♚xb2 25.♙c4 ♚c2 (25...♚b5=) 26.♙d6 ♚e6 is roughly equal.

24...♚b5 25.♚xa7 g4 26.♙d4

Of course, White should not open the f-file.

26...♚d5



Such positions are very difficult to evaluate over the board. One really needs an engine in the head to play them. This task can be facilitate by formulating a few postulates which both sides should have in mind:

1. White has not any advantage here. No matter how many extra pawns he has, he is the defending side because his castling position is vulnerable and his only stronghold in the centre, d4, is about to be undermined after ...f4. The bishop on h2 is rather useless.

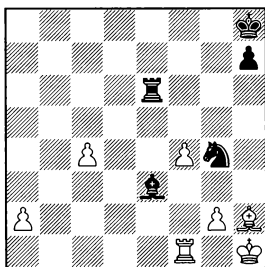
2. White should be seeking to trade queens at any cost.

3. Any other exchanges also help White.

4. He should keep his pieces together around the king. Any attempt to push queenside pawns only wastes time and discoordinate White's forces.

In the light of this to do list, 27.♚b6! f4 28.♚e6! looks best, because Black cannot avoid queens trade. Variations like 28...♚xd4 29.♚xe8 ♚xe8 30.exd4 g3 31.♙e5 gxh2+ 32.♙xh2 ♚a8 33.a3 ♙g8= or 28...♚c5 29.b3 (29.♙d6 ♙xd6 30.♚xd6 ♚c8 31.♙xf4 ♚d8 32.♚c7 ♚d7 33.♚c1 gxh3 34.♙g3 hxg2 35.♙xg2=) 29...g3 30.fxg3 ♚xc4 31.♚xe8 should lead to a draw. If you do not believe in Black's attacking resources, look at this variation: 31.bxc4? ♙xd4 32.♚xe8 ♙xe3+ 33.♙h1 ♚xe8 34.gxf4 ♙f2+ 35.♙g1 ♙xh3+ 36.♙h1 ♙f2+ 37.♙g1 ♙g4+ 38.♙h1 ♚e6-+:

3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4



White has no defence against ...♙h6!

27.♙b7 ♖d7 28.♙b5 f4

Perhaps 28...gxh3 left more chances to Black:

29.♖e5 ♖a7 30.gxh3 ♙xb5 31.♖xb5 ♖xa2+, or 29.♖xf5 hxg2 30.♙xg2 ♙h5 31.♙xd7 ♖xf5 32.♙c8+ ♖f8 33.♙h3 ♙g5+ 34.♙h1 ♖xf2+ 35.♖xf2 ♖xf2+.

29.♖f5 g3 30.fxg3 ♖xf5 31.♙xf5 fxg3 32.b3 ♖a7

In the next moves, Belov is trying to maintain some tension and confuse his opponent. 32...gxh2+ 33.♙xh2 ♖d2 was equal.

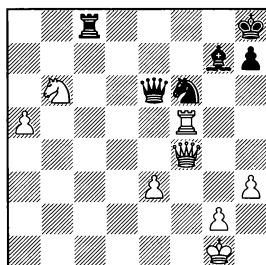
33.a4 ♖e7?! 34.♙f4?!

34.♖f4 gxh2+ 35.♙xh2 ♙b8 36.g3 ♖f6 was still unclear.

34...gxh2+ 35.♙xh2 ♖b7 36.a5 ♖xb3 37.♙c7 ♖b8 38.♖f4 ♖f6 39.♖f5 ♖c8 40.♙f4 ♙e6

40...♖e4! to prevent the knight from returning home with 41.♖d2, was better

41.♖b6?



The knight is protected on this square, but it is far away from its king. 41.♖d2 was called for, with good drawing prospects after 41...♖c1+ (41...♖d5 42.♙e4 ♙xe4 43.♖xe4 ♖xe3 44.♖b5 ♖c4=) 42.♙h2 h6.

41...♖d8

Black misses his chance to obtain a probably decisive advantage with 41...♖c3! 42.♙h2 h6, making a *luft* for his king.

42.♖c5?

Losing outright. 42.♖c4! was holding the position.

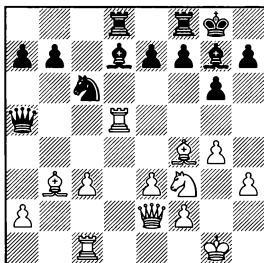
42...♙h6 43.♙e5 ♙xe3+ 44.♙f1 ♖d1+ 45.♙e2 ♙a2+ 0-1.

This game is a good example of the power of Black's coordinated forces. The f- and g-pawns tear apart White's castling position.

6. Dreev-Delchev
Cento 11.02.2011

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5 4.♙f4 ♙g7 5.e3 c5 6.dxc5 ♙a5 7.♖c1 dxc4 8.♙xc4 0-0 9.♖f3

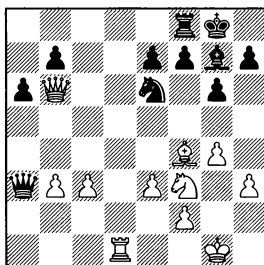
**♖xc5 10.♙b3 ♜c6 11.0-0 ♖a5
12.h3 ♙f5 13.♖e2 ♜e4 14.g4 ♜xc3
15.bxc3 ♙d7 16.♗fd1 ♗ad8 17.♗d5**



17...♖a3!

The game Postny-Caruana, Aix-les-Bains 31.03.2011, saw 17...♖b6?! 18.♗b1! ♙c8 19.♗g5 ♙e6 20.♗b5 ♖a6 21.♙xe6, with a pull.

**18.♗cd1 ♙e6 19.♗xd8 ♜xd8
20.♖b5 ♙xb3 21.axb3 a6 22.♖b6
♜e6**



This position has occurred in 5 games so far. White won one and drew the others. It may look absolutely equal as the weakness on b7 is balanced by the weak c3-pawn. However, Black still has to work before claiming a full equality. The difference is made by the active white rook. The f3-knight is also

slightly more dangerous than its counterpart on e6.

23.♙e5

23.c4 a5 24.♖xb7 ♜c5 25.♖xe7 ♖xb3 led to a draw in Mamedyarov-Sutovsky, Bursa 2010: 26.♗d5 ♜d3 27.♙g3 a4 28.♗d8 h6 29.♜e5 ♖b1+ 30.♙g2 ♜e1+=.

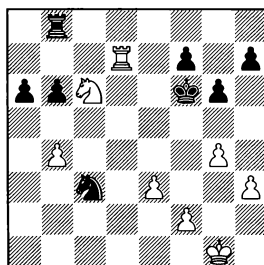
23...♖c5?!

I underestimated a little White's threats. After the game, I came to the conclusion that 23...♙xe5! is slightly more precise: 24.♜xe5 ♖c5 25.♖xc5 (25.♜d7 ♖xb6 26.♜xb6 ♗d8 27.♗xd8+ ♜xd8 28.f4 f6 29.♙f2 ♙f7 30.♙f3 ♙e6) 25...♜xc5 26.b4 ♜e4 27.♗d7, draw, Tomashevsky-Svidler, Moscow, 15.12.2010.

**24.♖xc5 ♜xc5 25.♙xg7 ♙xg7
26.b4 ♜e4 27.♗d7 ♗b8 28.♗xe7
♜xc3 29.♗d7 ♙f6 30.♜d4 b6**

I did not like 30...h6 31.h4 ♜a2 32.g5+ hxg5 33.hxg5+ ♙xg5 34.♗xf7 ♜xb4 35.♜e6+ ♙h5 36.f3!, but 34... ♙h6! would have neutralised most of the enemy's threats.

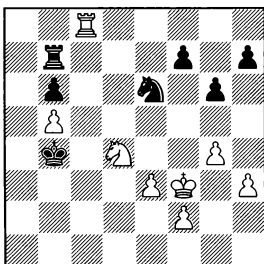
31.♜c6



3.♖c3 d5 4.♗f4

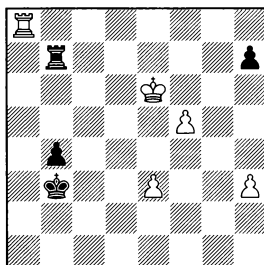
A critical position. White is threatening with ♖d8. During the game, I was afraid of some mating threats so I sadly decided to switch to a gloom defence. Later I discovered that I could have ignored the attack on f7. My distant a-pawn could become a serious trump after 31...♖a8! 32.♘d8 (32.♙g2 a5 33.♗d3 ♘b1 34.♗d6+ ♙g7 35.bxa5 bxa5) 32...a5 33.bxa5 bxa5 34.♗xf7+ ♗e5 35.♗d7 ♖c8! (35...a4 36.f4+ ♗e4 37.♙f2) 36.♘f7+ ♗e6 37.♖a7 a4 38.♘g5+ ♗d5. Black is even better. After my mistake, the rest of the game is irrelevant for the theory. I finally activated my king and held the draw despite the horrible time trouble in the end.

31...♖f8?! 32.♖b7 ♘a4 33.♘b8 ♗d8 34.♘xa6 ♗e6 35.♙g2 ♗d7 36.♖b8 ♖a7 37.b5 ♗d5 38.♖c8 ♘c5 39.♘b4+ ♗c4 40.♘c6 ♖b7 41.♘d4 ♗b4 42.♙f3 ♘e6



The good thing about rook end-games is that one can always resort to them being a pawn down. It is more important that I'll have my own passer:

43.♘xe6 fxe6 44.♙e4 ♗xb5 45.♙e5 ♗a4 46.♙xe6 b5 47.♖a8+ ♗b3 48.f4 b4 49.f5 gxf5 50.gxf5 ♖b6+ 51.♙e5 ♖b5+ 52.♙e6



52...♖b6+!

The only move! Black loses the pawn race for one tempo. So I must try to stop the f-pawn somehow:

53.♙e7 ♖b7+ 54.♙e8 ♖b6

The f-pawn cannot advance and I win the precious tempo which I needed.

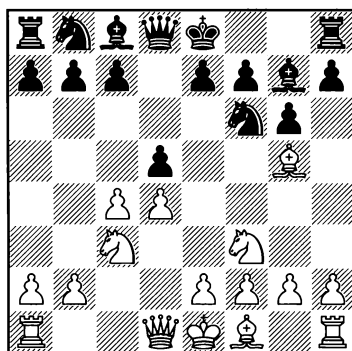
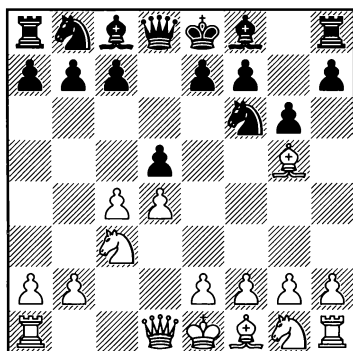
55.♖c8 ♗a3 56.♙e7 ♖b7+ 57.♙f8 b3 58.♖a8+ ♗b4 59.♖a1 b2 60.♖b1 ♗c5 61.f6 ♗d6 62.f7 ♗e6 1/2-1/2.

Part 3

The ♖g5 System

1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♞g5

4.♘f3 ♞g7 5.♞g5



Part 3

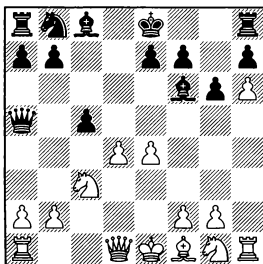
Main Ideas

Introduction

In this part, I deal with systems where White develops his bishop to g5. Line A is devoted to 4.♘g5 while line B considers its “improved” version 4.♘f3 ♘g7 5.♘g5.

The first test of this system was the game Alekhine-Grünfeld, Vienna 1922. It saw 4.♘g5 ♘e4! and the future World champion unexpectedly answered with 5.cxd5. This probably took the godfather of the opening, Grünfeld, unawares as he failed to find the best continuation. (nevertheless he won the game) It was demonstrated a year later: 5...♘xg5 6.h4 ♘e4! 7.♘xe4 ♖xd5 8.♘c3 ♗a5 9.h5 ♘g7 10.h6 ♙f6 11.e4 c5!

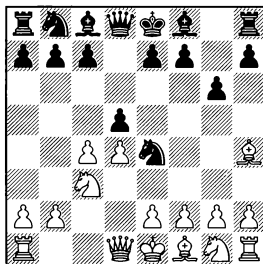
Euwe-Von Hoorn
Amsterdam 1923



12.e5 cxd4!, with a big advantage.

For half a century White did not come up with any fresh ideas until the year 1970. Then the ♘g5 system enjoyed a burst of popularity, connected with the novel move 5.♙h4. Black reacted with the thematic ...c5, but Taimanov won a number of games which put the whole Black's setup under question. The turn of the tide was the game:

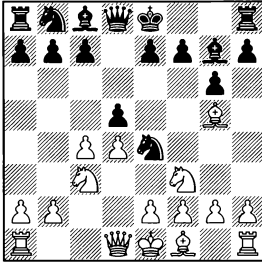
Mecking-Fischer
Buenos Aires 1970



Bobby Fischer played here 5...♘xc3! 6.bxc3 dxc4! 7.e3 ♙e6!. His idea marked the beginning of a new era in the development of the ♘g5 system. It is the foundation of our proposed repertoire, although we also provide a more solid and safe setup as a backup line.

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♗g5

The improved branch of the ♗g5 system – 4. ♖f3 ♗g7 5. ♗g5, had similar development. In the beginning, White linked it with the idea to grab the d5-pawn after 5... ♖e4



6. cxd5, using the fact that the g5-bishop was defended. Of course, Black could easily regain the pawn, but not without concessions: 6... ♖xg5 7. ♖xg5 e6 8. ♖d2 exd5 9. ♖e3+ ♖f8, losing the right to castle. So Black should play first 8... h6 9. ♖f3 and only then recapture the pawn. The resulting Carlsbad pawn structure with ...h6 on the kingside was assessed as slightly better for White. However, Black gradually learned how to cope with this approach. He found a good manoeuvre – before castling, the g7-bishop returned to f8 and then went to d6 to support play on both flanks. Alternatively, it turned out that Black was not even obliged to level the pawns. Firstly Korchnoi tried 7... c6?!, and then 7... 0-0!? was discovered. Thus about 1970, White had to borrow the retreat to h4 from the 4. ♗g5 variation. As a result, after 6. ♗h4 ♖xc3 7. bxc3 dxc4, instead of having an extra pawn, White was playing a real gambit.

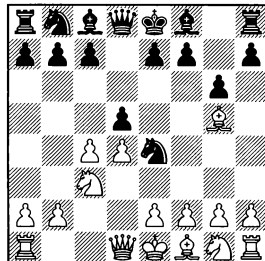
A. 1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♖c3 d5 4. ♗g5

Objectives and Move Orders

Similarly to the previous part, White leads out his bishop, intending to complete development with e3. The big difference is that instead of targeting the c7-pawn, which is a remote threat, he now simply wants to snatch the central pawn on d5. Black has not a convenient way to defend it so he will have to take on c4. However, he should first exchange his f6-knight to reduce the number of minor pieces which is important in a cramped position. The immediate 4... dc?! 5. e4 ♗g7 6. ♗xc4 0-0 7. ♖e2! would be horrible for Black so he answers with:

4... ♖e4

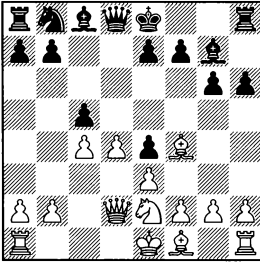
This is by no means the only move. Svidler's efforts in the early 1990s popularised the amazing move 4... ♗g7!?. Practice has confirmed that Black gets good compensation for the central pawn. Still, I advocate the opposite approach – instead of sacrificing a pawn, to pocket one. It gives more chances to win.



Part 3

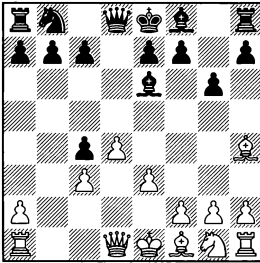
5.♖h4

5.♜xe4 deprives White of the f3-square. Black can use this to attack the central dark squares, e.g.: 5...dxe4 6.e3 ♖g7 7.♜e2 c5 8.♚d2 h6! 9.♜f4 leads to the following position:



Now simplest is 9...e5! 10.♜xe5 ♜xe5 11.dxe5 ♚xd2+ 12.♜xd2 ♜c6 13.♜c3 ♜f5 14.♜e2 0-0-0+ 15.♜c2 ♜xe5 16.♜ad1 ♜e6 17.b3 f5=.

5...♜xc3! 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 ♜e6!

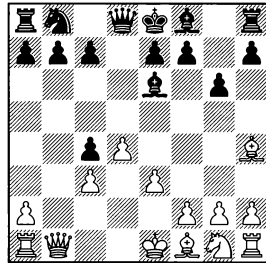


Our plan is to finish development with ...♜d7-b6, ...♜g7, and ...0-0. Then we'll wait for an opportunity to push ...c7-c5. If White played e3-e4, we should be ready to stop his central expansion with ...f7-f5 or ...e7-e5. Whenever White plays a4, we blockade the pawn with ...a5 and attack the target on a4 with ...♜d7, possibly ...♚e8.

A1. 8.♜e2 ♜d7!? 9.d5?! ♜f5 10.♚d4 ♜g8

Black has the initiative. For instance, 11.e4? ♜g7 12.♚xc4 would fail to 12...♜xe4.

A2. 8.♚b1?! c5!



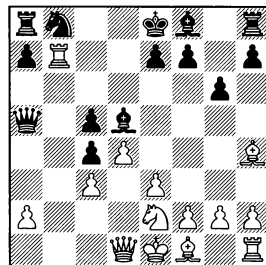
9.♚xb7 ♜d5 10.♚b5+ ♚d7! 11.♚b1 ♚xb5 12.♜xb5 ♜d7 13.♜e2 e5 14.f3 ♜g7

Black has completed development with a roughly equal position.

A3. 8.♜b1 c5!

An idea of Agrest.

9.♜xb7 ♚a5 10.♜e2 ♜d5

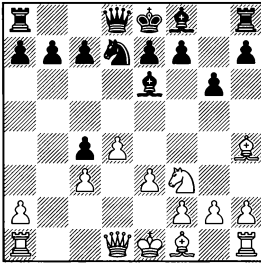


Black has full compensation for the pawn and an easy game, for

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♗g5

instance: 11. ♖b1 (11. ♖b2 ♖d7) 11...
 ♖d7 12. ♖b5 ♖a3.

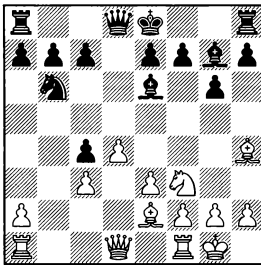
A4. 8. ♖f3 ♖d7!?



9. ♗e2

9. d5 ♗g4 10. ♖d4 ♗xf3 is fine for Black.

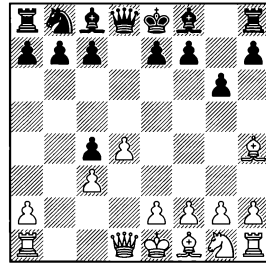
9... ♖b6 10. 0-0 ♗g7



Here White can try to build up play on the kingside with e3-e4, or on the opposite flank with ♖c2, ♖d2, ♗f3.

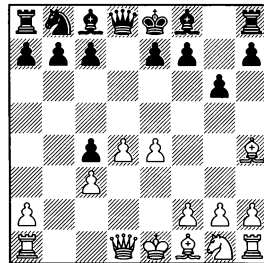
Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

Most often we'll be dealing with the following pawn structure:



In positions with a mobile pawn centre, White usually aims for a kingside attack. However, here our c4-pawn prevents the light-squared bishop from arriving at the b1-h7 diagonal. Furthermore, our fianchettoed bishop on g7 provides good protection to our castling position. That inspires confidence in our defensive possibilities and allows us to cling to the extra pawn and temporarily concede the initiative to the opponent. When we consolidate, we will think about rolling forth our queenside pawn mass.

Drozдовskij-Shipov Internet 2004



White hurried to occupy the centre with 7.e4?!, but now his light-squared bishop and his knight have no prospects. We successfully defend the pawn with:

Part 3

7...b5!

Note that this would have been a blunder after 7.e3, because the white queen could hit our rook from f3.

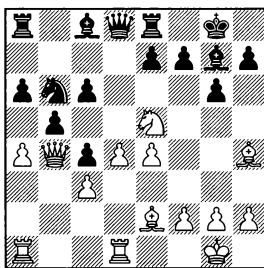
8.a4 c6 9.♘f3 ♙g7 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0 a6!

Do not put the bishop to b7 as it will be hanging there after 12.♖b1.

12.♖b1 ♘d7

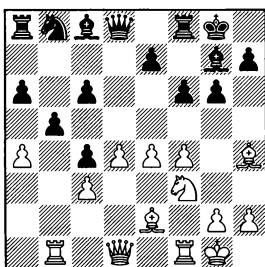
We aim to define the queenside pawn structure by...♘b6

13.♙d1 ♘b6?! (13...♙e8! was better, discouraging 14.♖b4 in view of 14...a5) 14.♖b4 ♙e8 15.♘e5



Now Black had the spectacular combination 15..a5! 16.♖c5 ♘xa4! 17.♙a4 ♖d6!!± and White is losing material.

Dreev–Svidler Poikovsky 2005



White has built a broad centre which restricts our minor pieces. The decision is a light-squared strategy:

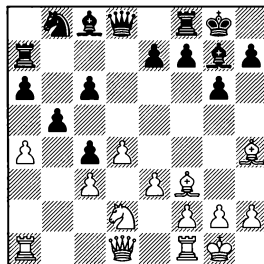
16...f5!

We have nothing to worry about with the d5-square in our control.

17.♖e1 ♙f6! 18.♙d1 fxe4 19.♘g5 ♖d5 20.♙c2 ♙f5 and Black took over the initiative.

The following position arose from the move order with 4.♘f3 ♙g7 5.♙g5, but the game soon transformed in the same pawn structure as in the previous examples:

Delchev–Karr TOP 16 France 2010



I was quite happy with my position. All my pieces are better than its counterparts. Black cannot easily develop his queenside. All I need is to finish regrouping with ♖b1 and ♙fd1. However, look what happened in just a few moves:

13...♙f5! What is this for?!

14.e4

Off course I cannot let him land on d3! (which would have been perhaps the best decision – 14.♙e1 ♙d3 15.♘b3=)

3. ♠c3 d5. Systems with ♠g5

14...♠c8!

Black has lost too tempi, but the white centre became unstable.

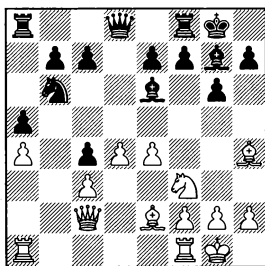
15.♟b1?!

This routine move is a mistake.

15...c5! 16.axb5 ♟b7! 17.♠xc4 cxd4!

My centre has fallen apart. Only with very precise play and a little help from my opponent did I manage to escape.

Delchev–Ve.Schneider La Massana 2010



We see here the same pawn formation in the centre, but the queenside setup is different. Black's counterplay is linked with the weak a4-pawn. The breakthrough ...c7-c5 is efficient as always in the Grünfeld.

In the diagram position, I was expecting something like 13...h6 with idea of ...f7-f5 next which I was planning to meet with ♟fe1! However, practically without even thinking, my opponent surprised me with:

13...♠d7!

It turns out that the a4-pawn is very sensitive. For instance: 14.♠d2

c5 15.d5 ♟e8 16.♠xc4 ♠xa4; 14.♟fb1 ♟e8 15.♠d1 f5!

14.♠g3 ♟e8!

Remember this battery!

15.♠d1 ♟c8

Black gives me a respite. She could have taken on a4 with a better endgame: 15...♠xa4! 16.♟xa4 ♠xa4 17.♟xa4 ♟xa4 18.♠xa4 c6 19.e5 b5 20.♠c2 ♠h6.

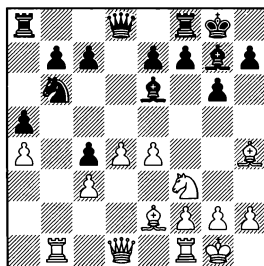
16.♟e1 (against ...f7-f5!)

Now the most consistent was 16...c5+, but my opponent suddenly changed her mind in favour of a restraining tactic:

16...f6 17.♟a2 e5=.

My bishop on g3 is a poor sight. I had to use a great deal of imagination (and help from the opponent) to activate it through h2-g1.

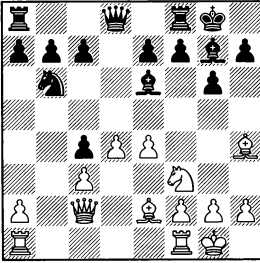
Akobian–Roiz Khanty Mansiysk 2007



13...♠d7! 14.♟c1 ♠xa4 15.♟a3 ♟d6! 16.♠xe7 ♟xa3 17.♠xa3 ♟fe8 18.♠d2 ♠c2 19.♟b2 ♠d3!-+.

In the next example, White's pawn is on a2 so Black should seek counterplay in the centre:

Analysis

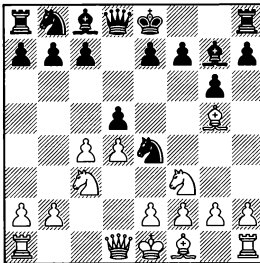


12...f5!!

With this essential novelty Black wins the battle for the d5-square.

13.♖fe1 fxe4 14.♜xe4 ♔d5! 15.♜e3 ♕f6 16.♗g3 e6. Black gained an important central square and now he will aim for ...c7-c5.

B. 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗g5 ♘e4

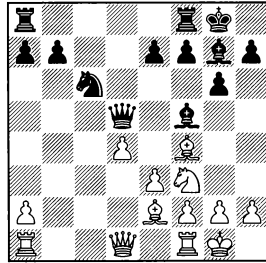


Main lines

I chose this move for our repertoire because it offers Black active pieces and clear plans. Alternatives are 5...dxc4 and 5...0-0!?

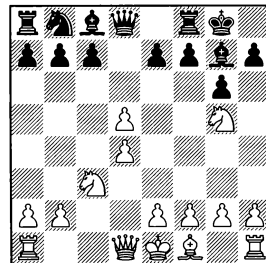
B1. 6.♗f4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5 e5

8.e3 0-0 9.cxd5 cxd4! 10.cxd4 ♜xd5 11.♗e2 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♗f5=



Stayed White's bishop on h4, White would have been better due to the pressure on e7 and the d8-h4 diagonal. From f4, the bishop is hitting void. Even more, in many variations, when the d5-queen had retreated to a5, ...e7-e5 will be with tempo.

B2. 6.cxd5 ♘xg5 7.♘xg5 0-0!?

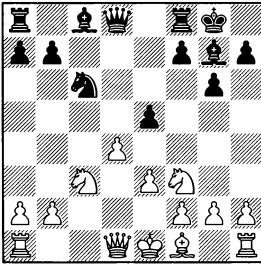


I prefer this move to 7...e6 or 7...c6?!. Now we threaten to regain the pawn with 8...e6 or even meet 8.e3 with the sharp 8...c6 9.dxc6 e5!? so White retreats with:

8.♘f3 c6 9.dxc6 ♘xc6 10.e3

e5

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♗g5

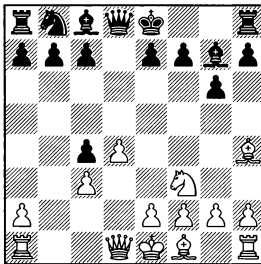


Black has full compensation for the pawn:

11.dxe5 ♖xe5 12.♗e2 ♖xf3+ 13.♗xf3 ♗e6 14.0-0 ♔a5 15.♔c2 ♗ab8, Smyslov-De la Villa, Barcelona 1990, or:

11.d5 e4 12.♖xe4 ♗f5 13.♖c3 ♖b4 14.♗c1 ♔a5.

B3. 6. ♗h4 ♖xc3 7. bxc3 dxc4!

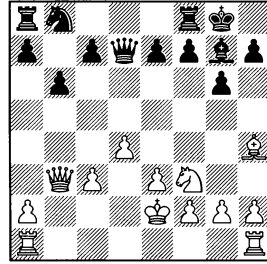


8.e3 b5! 9.a4 c6 does not give White substantial compensation so he commonly answers in Catalan style:

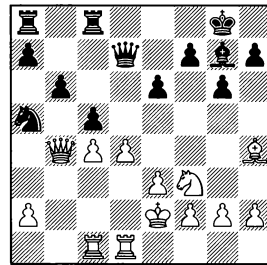
8.♔a4+ ♔d7! 9.♔xc4 b6! 10.e3 ♗a6 11.♔b3 ♗xf1 12.♗xf1 0-0 13.♗e2

It is obvious that Black's only reasonable plan is connected with

...c7-c5, but I prefer to execute it when we'll be better mobilised.



13...♖c6!? 14.♗hd1 ♖a5 15.♔b4 e6! 16.♗ac1 ♗fc8 17.c4 c5!



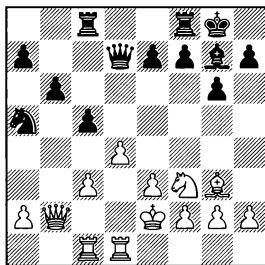
Now 18.dxc5 ♔b7 19.cxb6 axb6 would give Black excellent compensation while 18.♔b5 is also sharp and unbalanced: 18...♔b7 19.d5 exd5 20.cxd5.

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

We have seen already examples where White sacrificed the c4-pawn and allowed Black to defend it with ...b5 and ...c6. I'll examine here only structures that are specific for the 4. ♖f3 ♗g5 line.

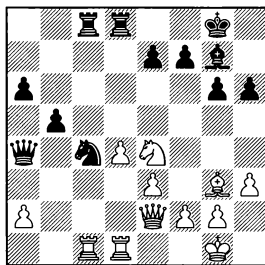
Sahovic–Dorfman

Lvov 1984



A typical position for the line B3 with ♖a4+. White has a very solid pawn structure, but the weakness of the c4-square gives Black the better game. It is very instructive to watch how the fine strategist Dorfman accumulates small advantages:

17...♖a4! 18.♔f1 ♜fd8 19.♞e2 ♜c4 20.♔g1 b5 21.h3 a6 22.♜g5 h6 23.♜e4 cxd4 24.cxd4

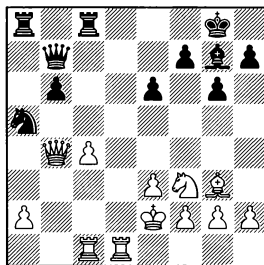


No matter how good Black's position is, he can hardly win the game without activating the g7-bishop. This is achieved by:

24...e5! 25.dxe5 ♜xd1+ 26.♞xd1 ♞xd1+ 27.♜xd1 ♜xe5 28.♞d6 ♜c6+ and Black went on to convert his edge.

Cebalo–Mark Tseitlin

Davos 2008



Black has compensation for the pawn. Both c4- and a2-pawns are weak. Still, the white pieces are active and there is no an immediate way to regain the pawn.

20...e5!

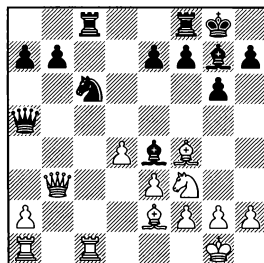
Cutting off the bishop and the knight. Black can always redeploy his own bishop via f8. White got nervous from this turn of events and tried to force exchanges:

21.♔f1 ♜f8 22.♞b5?! (22.♞b1 f6) 22...♜c5! 23.♞d7 ♞xd7 24.♜xd7 ♜xc4 25.♜cd1 f6 and Black won easily this endgame.

Typical Tactical Motifs

Gelfand–Kasparov

Astana 2001



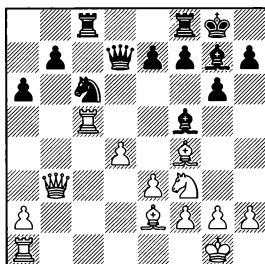
3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♖g5

Like in the other Grünfeld systems, White often falls victim to the bishop on g7. However, Gelfand was on his guards and played 16.h3, avoiding the insidious trap:

16. ♖c5 ♖xd4!!

when 17. ♖xa5 ♖xe2+ 18. ♖f1 ♖xa1 19. ♖xe2 ♖c2+ 20. ♖f1 ♖c1+ is a draw by perpetual while 17.exd4?? would leave the a1-rook hanging.

Pantev-Bratimirova
Bulgaria 2009

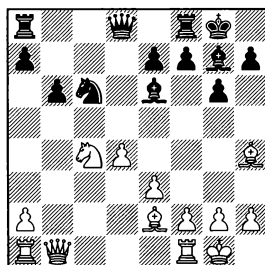


Apparently White was not acquainted with the above-mentioned tactical motif as his last move was 16. ♖c5??. It should not be a problem for us to find:

16... ♖xd4!

Black finished the game in a beautiful way.

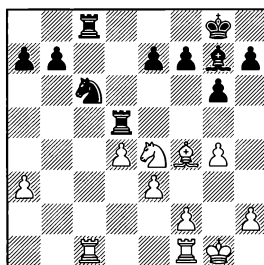
Stefanova-Sutovsky
Hoogeveen 2005



The hanging h4-bishop is often a precondition for double attacks along the 4th rank:

14... ♖xd4! 15.exd4 ♖xd4 16. ♖xe7 ♖fe8 17. ♖b4 a5! and Black regains the piece.

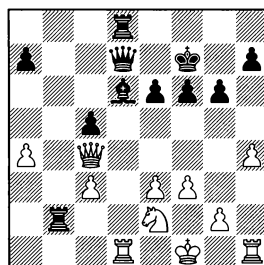
Eljanov-Svidler
Nalchik 2009



Even top players can overlook the linear attack along the 4th rank. The whole combination is quite long and complicated, but once you recognised the pattern, the rest should be easier:

21... ♖xd4! 22. ♖cd1 ♖cd8 23.exd4 ♖xd4 24. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 25. f3 f5 26. gxf5 gxf5 27. ♖e3 ♖d3-+.

Marcelin-Miton
Top 16 France, 2008



21... ♖g3!! 22. ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 23. ♖d4 cxd4 24. ♖c8 ♖db7 0-1

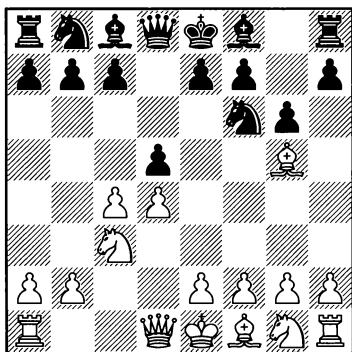
Part 3

Step by Step

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5

I examine 4.♗g5 in line A and 4.♗f3 ♗g7 5.♗g5 – in line B.

A. 4.♗g5



A1. 4...♗e4!?!; A2. 4...♗g7.

White's fourth move threatens the d5-pawn. In line A1, I deal with the most popular and interesting retort of Black. It brings about unbalanced positions with mutual chances. 4...♗g7 is a safe and solid variation. If White takes the pawn on d5, Black obtains an easy game. He puts his rooks on the open files and his activity fully compensates for the material deficit. Black's only problem is that he cannot play for a win. On the other hand, having 4...♗g7 in the repertoire saves some

study since White's choice is restricted to 5.♗xf6, or 5.♗f3 (line B).

A1. 4...♗e4!?! 5.♗h4

a) 5.h4!?, 5.♖c1. I consider these moves in Part 11 – SOS systems.

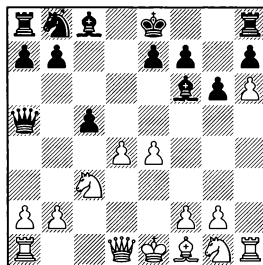
b) 5.cxd5?!

Alekhine's choice in the very first game where 4...♗e4 was played. It is based on the tactical trick:

5...♗xg5 6.h4

White regains the piece, but we have the bishop pair:

6...♗e4 7.♗xe4 ♖xd5 8.♗c3 (Rogers mentioned 8.f3?! in his SOS book. Black answers 8...♗g7 9.e3 e5↑ 10.♗e2 exd4 11.♗xd4 0-0 12.♖c1 ♖xa2 13.h5 ♗c6→) 8...♖a5 9.h5 ♗g7 10.h6 ♗f6 11.e4 c5!



It is easy to find this move nowadays. The source game Euwe-Von Hoorn, Amsterdam 1923 went:

12.e5 cxd4! 13.♗b5+ ♗c6 14.♖xd4 0-0 15.♗xc6 ♗xe5 16.♖e3 bxc6.

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♖g5

c) 5. ♖f4

This retreat often transposes later to line B1: 4. ♖f3 ♖g7 5. ♖g5 ♖e4 6. ♖f4.

5... ♖xc3 6. bxc3 c5

6... dxc4 7. e4 ♖g7 8. ♖xc4 c5 9. ♖e2 0-0 10. 0-0 ♖c6 is a paradoxical attempt to transpose to the main line of the Exchange system. Here White has a pure extra tempo, but it is not obvious how (and is it possible at all) to make any use of it: 11. d5!? ♖a5! 12. ♖d3 e6!.

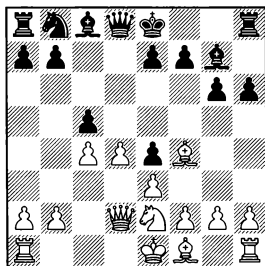
7. e3 ♖g7 8. cxd5 cxd4! (8... ♗xd5 9. ♗f3) 9. cxd4 ♗xd5 10. ♖f3 0-0 11. ♖e2 ♖c6 12. 0-0 ♖f5. I examine this position in line B1.

d) 5. ♖xe4

This is an attempt to deprive Black of his usual counterplay in the centre and eventually prove that the pawn on e4 is weak. However, White's knight would need one more tempo for activation, and his king will be constantly in danger, no matter which side it will choose for castling.

5... dxe4 6. ♗d2

6. e3 ♖g7 7. ♖e2 c5 8. ♗d2 h6! 9. ♖f4 leads to this position:



Now simplest is 9... e5! 10. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 11. dxe5 ♗xd2+ 12. ♖xd2 ♖c6 13. ♖c3 ♖f5 14. ♖e2 0-0-0+ 15. ♖c2 ♖xe5 16. ♖ad1 ♖e6 17. b3 f5=.

6... ♖g7 7. e3

7. 0-0-0 is dubious, because Black will have nice attacking prospects after 7... c5 8. d5 h6 9. ♖f4 ♖d7 10. e3 b5↑, Erdogan-Khachiyan, Yerevan 2000.

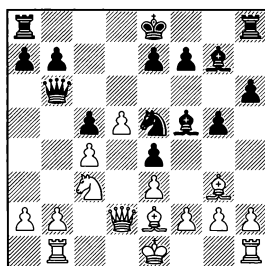
7... c5 8. d5!

8. ♖e2 h6 9. ♖f4 e5 transposes to the position of the above diagram, while 9. ♖h4?! cxd4 10. exd4 ♖c6 11. d5 ♖e5 12. ♖c3 ♖f5 is even more pleasant for Black.

8... ♗b6 9. ♖b1

Again, 9. 0-0-0!? ♖a6 10. a3 ♖d7→ would place White's king under attack.

9... ♖d7 10. ♖e2 ♖e5 11. ♖c3 h6 12. ♖h4 g5 13. ♖g3 ♖f5 14. ♖e2

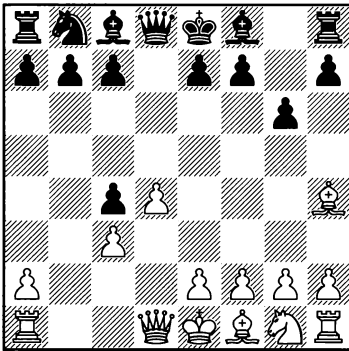


Here, in Golod-Fercec, Rieka 2010, Black chose to break through the centre with 14... ♖d8 15. 0-0 0-0 16. ♗c2 e6. I prefer to shift the focus to the kingside with 14... ♗g6 (if 14... 0-0, White could try 15. h4) 15. 0-0 0-0, with a pleasant game.

5...♟xc3!

After 5...c5 6.cxd5 ♟xc3 7.bxc3 ♟xd5 8.e3, Black has many options, but all of them lead to positions with only two possible results. Instead of struggling to make a draw, I prefer to snatch a pawn and play on counterattack in the centre.

6.bxc3 dxc4



7.e3

The pawn sac 7.e4?! is unclear: 7...b5 8.a4 c6 9.♟f3 ♟g7 10.♟e2 0-0 11.0-0 a6 and White is yet to prove his compensation.

It is best to meet 7.♟a4+ with ...c6!

7...♟d7 8.♟xc4 b6 9.♟g3 c5! is also a good option, Dreev-Najer, Ulan Ude 2009.

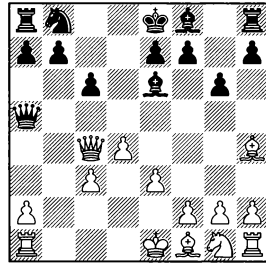
8.♟xc4 ♟a5 9.e3

9.♟f3 is less precise since after 9...♟e6! 10.♟b4 (Or 10.♟d3 ♟d7 11.e4 ♟b6 12.♟g5 ♟b3! and the bishop will retreat later to a4.) 10...

♟xb4 11.cxb4 a5! White has not the answer 12.b5.

9.e4 is not as good as in line B, where ♟f3 ♟g7 is inserted, since Black can lead out the bishop to h6: 9...♟e6 10.♟d3 ♟d7 11.♟f3 ♟b6 12.♟d2 ♟h6!? followed by 13...♟d8, 14...♟a4, and eventually 15...♟c5.

9...♟e6



10.♟b4

On d3, the queen is exposed to tactical tricks, for instance: 10.♟d3?! ♟g7 11.♟f3 ♟d7 12.♟e2 ♟c5 13.♟c2 ♟f5 14.♟b2 ♟a4 15.♟b4 ♟xb4 16.cxb4 ♟c3 17.♟c4 a5+ or 12.♟d2 ♟c5! 13.♟c1 ♟e4 14.♟c2 ♟d6! 15.♟d3 ♟xa2 16.♟xa2 ♟xa2+, Wang Yue-Kamsky, Sochi 2008.

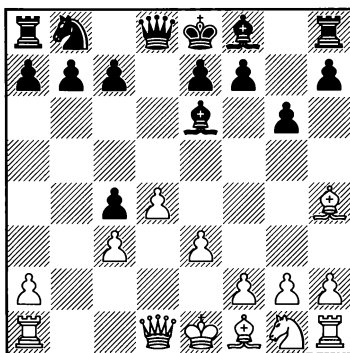
10...♟xb4 11.cxb4 ♟d5 12.♟f3 ♟d7=. Black even has some initiative so White should be careful. In P.Genov-Bok, Groningen 2009, he carelessly wasted a tempo with 13.a3 when the thematic 12...a5! 13.b5 c5 would have earned Black an edge.

7...♟e6!

Of course we should defend the pawn. Our plan is to finish devel-

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♕g5

opment with ... ♖d7-b6, ... ♕g7, and ... 0-0. (Beware the blunder 7...b5?? 8.a4 c6 9.axb5 cxb5 10. ♖f3.) Sometimes Black also chooses a setup with ... ♕h6.



I examine here:

A11. 8. ♕e2; A12. 8. ♖b1?!; A13. 8. ♖b1; A14. 8. ♖f3.

A11. 8. ♕e2 ♖d7!? 9. d5?!

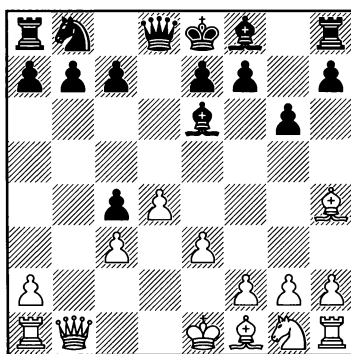
9. ♖f3 ♖b6 10. 0-0 ♕g7 transposes to line A4. Agrest thinks that 10... ♕h6 also deserves a practical test.

9... ♕f5 10. ♖d4 ♖g8

Black has the initiative. For instance, 11.e4? ♕g7 12. ♖xc4 would fail to 12... ♕xe4.

A12. 8. ♖b1?! c5!

This idea of Svidler seems to have discouraged White from playing 8. ♖b1 anymore.



9. ♖xb7

9. ♖f3 ♖a5 is bad for White, so the only alternative to the text is 9. ♖b5+?! ♖d7 (9... ♖c6 10. ♖xc5 ♖b6 was unclear in Iljushin-Dominguez, Khanty Mansiysk 2007) 10. ♕xc4 ♕xc4 11. ♖xc4 cxd4 12. exd4 (12. ♖xd4 e5!; 12. cxd4 ♖a5+) 12... ♖b6 with clear play against White's central pawns.

9... ♕d5 10. ♖b5+ ♖d7! 11. ♖b1 ♖xb5

It is better to trade queens or White will have some initiative after 11... ♖c6 12. ♖f3.

12. ♖xb5 ♖d7 13. ♖e2

13. ♖f3 e6 14. ♖d2 does not win the c4-pawn due to 14... cxd4 15. exd4 ♕e7 16. ♕xe7 ♖xe7 17. ♖xc4 ♖hc8.

13... e5 14. f3 ♕g7

Black has completed development with a roughly equal position.

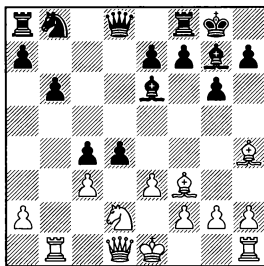
White has tried here:

a) 15.♖b1 ♖c6 16.♗c1 exd4 17.cxd4 cxd4 18.♙xc4 dxe3 19.♙g5 ♗b6 20.♙b5 ♙xb5 21.♙xb5 0-0 22.♙xe3 ♗c4+, Sanikidze-Rod-shtein, Plovdiv 2008.

b) 15.dxc5?! 0-0 16.e4 ♖c6 17.♖b1 ♖fb8 18.♖d1 ♙a4+, Arutian-Pashikian, Martuni 2007.

A13. 8.♖b1

This move aims to prevent ...b5. Since Fischer's times, Black nearly automatically answered 8...b6 9.♗f3 ♙g7 10.♗d2 0-0 11.♙e2 (11. ♙xc4? ♙xc4 12.♗xc4 ♖d5) and here Svidler's fascinating rook sac 11... c5! 12.♙f3 cxd4!



gives Black a strong attack. However, the game is most likely to end in a draw after:

13.♙xa8

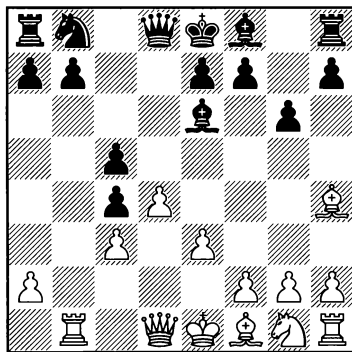
Or 13.cxd4?! ♗d7 14.♙xa8 (14. d5 ♙f5 15.e4 c3 16.♗b3 ♖c8 17.♖c2 g5! 18.♙xg5 ♙g6, with an excellent position) 14...♖xa8, Moiseenko-Svidler, Sochi 2005, and the bishop pair dominates the board.

13...dxc3 14.♗f3 ♖d3 15.♖c1 ♗a6 16.♙b7 (16.♙c6 ♗b4 17.♙a4 ♗xa2

18.♖c2 ♗b4 19.♖c1 ♗a2=) 16...♗c5 17.♙xe7 ♗xb7 18.♙xf8 ♗xf8 19.♗d4 ♗c5 20.♖xd3 (20.♗xe6+ ♗xe6 21.♖c2 ♗c5 22.♖e2 b5 23.a3 a5+) 20...♗xd3+ 21.♗e2 ♗xc1+ 22.♖xc1 ♙xd4 23.exd4 b5 24.a3 a5 25.♖xc3 ♗e7 26.♖e3 ♗d6 27.♖e5 ♙d5 28.f3 b4 29.axb4 axb4=.

Lately Black discovered that he did not need to spend a tempo on 8...b6 and began playing 8...♗d7=. The problem of this move is that usually the knight is more active on c6. We are going to make a further step forth and propose the novelty:

8...c5!



An idea of Agrest. Black simply ignores the threat on b7.

9.♙xb7 ♖a5 10.♗e2

Or 10.♖d2 ♙d5 11.♖b2 ♗c6 12.♗e2 ♙g7+.

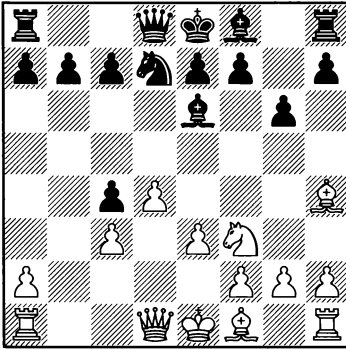
10...♙d5 11.♖b1 (11.♖b2 ♗d7) 11...♗d7 12.♖b5 ♖a3

Black has full compensation for the pawn and an easy game. He can

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♗g5

develop his bishop to g7 or h6 while White should think up a way to disentangle his pieces.

A14. 8. ♖f3 ♖d7!?

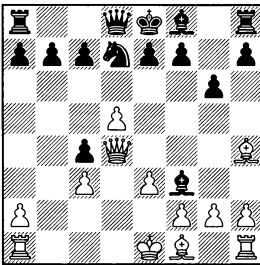


Perhaps this is the most precise move order. Thus Black cuts off sidelines like 8... ♗g7 9. ♖b1 or 9. ♖b1.

9. ♗e2

Rare alternatives are:

a) 9. d5 ♗g4 10. ♖d4 ♗xf3



11. ♖xh8

11. gxf3 may be objectively better, but then White has not a compensation for his split pawn struc-

ture. After 11... ♗g8 12. ♖xc4 ♗g7 13. 0-0 (or 13. ♗d1 ♖b6 14. ♖b3 ♖d6) 13... ♖b6 14. ♖b5+ ♖f8 Black has good prospects connected with the option of ... ♖d6.

11... ♗xd5 12. ♖d4 ♖b6 13. e4 ♗c6

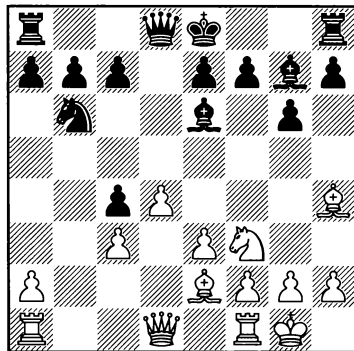
Black had more than sufficient compensation for the exchange in Gelfand-Ponomarev, Nice 2010.

b) 9. a4

Played by Kiril Georgiev against Rodshtein in 2010. Black answered with the mundane 9... ♗g7 and White regained the pawn with 10. ♖d2 – the idea of White's previous move. (10. ♖g5 does not work in view of 10... ♗d5 11. e4 h6 12. exd5 hxg5 13. ♗xg5 ♖b6 14. a5 ♖xd5 15. ♗xc4 ♖d6 16. ♖b3 ♖xc3!.) After 10... ♖f6 11. ♗e2 c5 12. ♖xc4 cxd4 13. cxd4 ♖e4 14. ♗c1 ♗xc4 15. ♗xc4 ♖a5+ 16. ♖f1 ♖d2+ 17. ♖g1 ♖xc4 18. ♗xc4, play was about equal, for instance, 18... 0-0! 19. h3 ♗fc8.

I think that Black should preserve tension with 9... a5 when play will be similar to the main line.

9... ♖b6 10. 0-0 ♗g7



Here White chooses between plans with e4 – line A141, and without it – line A142.

A141. 11.a4 a5 12.♖c2

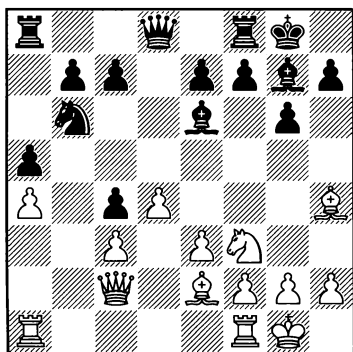
This seems to be the most flexible move order. An alternative is:

12.♘d2

White vacates the f3-square for the bishop and prepares to send the knight to c5 via e4. The latter threat is not dangerous so we do not see a reason to hamper it by 12...f5 as in Wojtaszek-Krasenkow, Warsaw 2010. Still, Black had a good game after 13.♖b1 ♗d7 14.♖a2 0-0 15.♞fb1 ♙d5.

12...0-0 13.♙f3 ♖a7 14.♘e4 ♙d5 15.♘c5 ♙xf3 16.♞xf3 ♘d5 17.♞fc1 b6 18.♘e4 ♗d7 19.♘d2. Here Black gets a preferable game by opening the c-file and trading all the rooks. In the endgame, White's a4-pawn will be very sensitive: 19...c5! 20.♘xc4 cxd4 21.cxd4 ♞c7 22.♙g3 ♞c6 23.♘e5 ♞xc1+ 24.♞xc1 ♙xe5 25.♙xe5 ♞c8♯.

12...0-0



13.♞fb1

Alternatively:

a) 13.♘d2 should be met by 13...c5! (13...♞e8 14.♙g3 ♙d7 15.♙xc7! ♘xa4 16.♘xc4 b5 17.♘b6 ♘xb6 18.♙xb6 a4 19.♙c5 ♙c6 20.c4 bxc4 21.♙xc4±) 14.♞b2 (14.dxc5 ♘d5 15.♙xc4 ♞c7) 14...cxd4 15.cxd4, Petran-Hoelzl, Budapest 1987, 15...♞c8! 16.♞fc1 ♞c7 17.♞b5 c3. This pawn is cramping White's pieces. I prefer Black here: 18.♘e4 ♘d5 19.♘c5 ♞c6 20.♞xb7 ♞xb7 21.♘xb7 c2 22.♘xa5 ♞c3 23.♙f1 ♞fc8↑.

b) 13.♙g3 ♙f5!

A typical motif. We provoke e3-e4 in order to weaken d4. Thus our future breakthrough ...e7-e5 will gain strength.

14.e4 ♙g4 15.♘e5 (or 15.♞fb1 ♙xf3 16.♙xf3 e5 17.dxe5 ♞e8) 15...♙xe2 16.♞xe2 ♙xe5 17.♙xe5 ♗d7 18.♞c2 f6 19.♙g3. Black is fine here. He can continue, for instance, with 19...♞ae8 20.♞fb1 e5 21.dxe5 fxe5 22.f3 ♞c6 23.♞b5 ♘d7 24.♙d1 b6 25.♙dd5 ♞e6, or even better: 19...f5!? 20.f3 fxe4 21.fxe4 ♞xf1+ 22.♙xf1 ♞f8+ 23.♙g1 e6 24.h3 ♞c6 25.♙h2 ♘d7 26.♙d1 ♘f6 27.♞e1 ♘h5 28.♙e5 ♘f4♯.

13...♞e8!

Underlying the drawback of the early a4 – this pawn is a constant source of concern for White. Now he must reckon with ...♙d7.

14.♘d2 ♙d7 15.♘xc4 ♙xa4

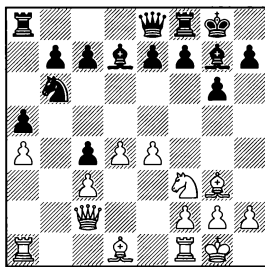
Black has active pieces, not to mention that he is still a pawn up. See **game 9 Bo.Vuckovic-Sutovsky**, Moscow 11.02.2011.

A142. 11.e4 0-0 12.♖c2!

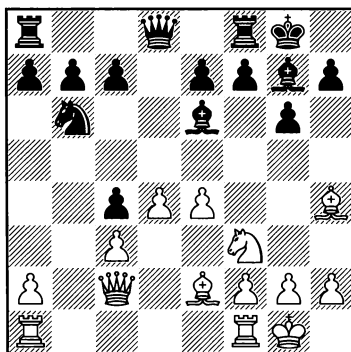
The insertion of 12.a4 a5 is hardly in White's favour since the a4-pawn is likely to fall. For instance:

13.♗g5 ♗d7 14.f4 ♖e8 15.♗d2 f6 16.♗f3 ♗xa4, Kazhgaleyev-Smirin, Chalons en Champagne 2009, when 17.d5 f5!? 18.e5 ♗b3 would have paved the way to conversion to the a5-pawn. White's d5-pawn is also quite weak;

13.♖c2 ♗d7! 14.♗g3 (14.♗d2 c5 15.d5 ♖e8 16.♗xc4 ♗xa4; 14.♞fb1 ♖e8 15.♗d1 f5) 14...♖e8! 15.♗d1



The game Delchev-Ve.Schneider, La Massana 2010, went 15...♞c8 16.♞e1 f6 17.♖a2 e5 18.♗c2, with a double-edged game which I eventually won. However, in the diagram position, Black can eliminate to a better endgame with 15...♗xa4! 16.♞xa4 ♗xa4 17.♖xa4 ♖xa4 18.♗xa4 c6 19.e5 b5 20.♗c2 ♗h6.



12...f5!!

With this essential novelty, Black wins the battle for the d5-square. Without it, his position would remain cramped and somewhat worse despite the extra pawn: 12...c6 13.a4 a5 (13...♗c8 14.♗g5 ♗d7 15.♗xe6 ♖xe6 16.e5 ♗b6 17.a5 ♗d5 18.♗xc4±) 14.♞ab1±.

13.♞fe1

Alternatives are:

a) 13.♗g5 ♗d7 14.f4 ♖e8 15.♞ae1 h6 16.♗f3 ♖f7 17.♗e5 ♗xe5 18.fxe5 g5 19.♗f2. Now Black has several good options, for instance, 19...fxe4 20.♖xe4 c6+ or the simpler: 19...♖g6 20.d5 fxe4 21.♗xb6 ♖xb6+ 22.♗h1 ♞xf1+ 23.♞xf1 ♖e3.

b) 13.d5 fxe4 14.dxe6 exf3 15.♗xf3 (15.♞fd1 ♖c8 16.♗xf3 ♞xf3! 17.gxf3 ♖xe6) 15...♞xf3! 16.gxf3 ♖d5+.

c) 13.a4!? Now Black can continue as in the main line with 13...a5. In many variations he has not ...b5, but that seems irrelevant, e.g.

Part 3

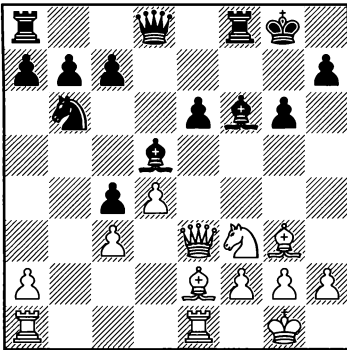
14.♘g5 ♔d7 15.♙xc4 ♘xc4 16.♖b3 h6 17.♗xc4+ ♕h8 18.♘f7+ ♜xf7 19.♗xf7 g5 20.♙xg5 hxg5 21.exf5 ♗e8 22.♖b3 b6 23.g4 ♗g8 24.d5 ♙e5! intending ...♙d6 and Black's position should be preferred.

Another good answer to 13.a4 is 13...fxe4 14.♗xe4 (14.♘d2 ♙f5 15.g4 ♙e6) 14...♙d5 15.♗e3 ♗e8 (15...♙f6!?) 16.♘e5. White has compensation, but it's not easy to decide whether it's sufficient or not. This is really a position for practical testing.

13...fxe4 14.♗xe4 ♙d5! 15.♗e3

Naturally, White would prefer to keep queens on. 15.♗xe7 ♗xe7 16.♙xe7 ♜f7 17.♙g5 ♘a4 18.♙d2 ♜e8 19.♘g5 ♜fe7 is obviously better for Black.

15...♙f6 16.♙g3 e6



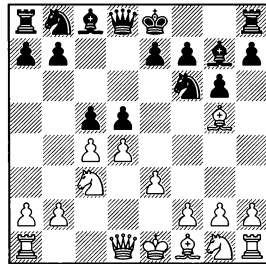
This position is sharp and unbalanced, but besides the extra pawn, Black has plenty of counterplay in the centre, for example: 17.h4 (17.♜ad1 ♗e7) 17...c5 18.h5 (or 18.dxc5

♘a4 19.♙e5 ♙xe5=) 18...cxd4 (or 18...gxh5∞) 19.♘xd4 ♙g5 20.f4 e5! 21.♗xe5 ♙f6 22.♗e3 ♜e8 23.♗d2 ♗d7∞.

A2. 4...♙g7 5.♙xf6

5.♘f3 ♘e4 is considered in line B.

5.e3 c5! faces White with a choice:



a) 6.dxc5 ♗a5 7.♙xf6 (The bishop is hanging in many lines so White exchanges it. Instead, 7.♗d2 dxc4 8.♙xc4 ♗xc5 9.♙xf6 ♙xf6 10.♜c1 ♘c6 11.♘e4 ♗f5 12.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 13.♙d5 0-0 is equal.) 7...♙xf6 8.♜c1 dxc4 9.♙xc4 0-0 10.♘f3 ♗xc5 11.♗e2 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♗a5=. Next, Black plays 13...♙g4.

b) 6.♘f3 cxd4 7.exd4 0-0!? 8.♙xf6 ♙xf6 9.♘xd5 ♙g7 10.♘c3 ♙g4 11.♙e2 ♘c6 12.d5 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 ♘a5 14.♙e2 ♜c8 15.♗a4 ♗c7 (15...♙xc3+!? 16.bxc3=) 16.♘b5 ♗e5! 17.♗xa5 ♗xb2 18.♜d1 a6=.

c) 6.♙xf6 ♙xf6 7.cxd5 (7.♘xd5?! ♙g7 8.♘f3 ♘c6) 7...cxd4 8.exd4 0-0 9.♙c4 ♗b6 10.♘ge2 ♗xb2 11.♜b1 (11.0-0 ♗b4 12.♙b3 ♘d7) 11...♗a3

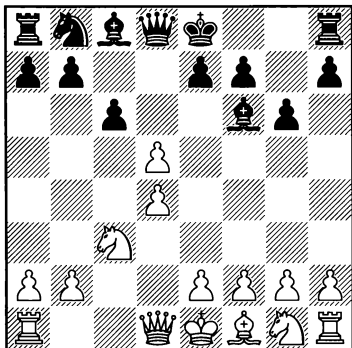
3. ♘c3 d5. Systems with ♙g5

12.0-0 ♘d7 13. ♙e4 ♘b6 14. ♙b3 ♙g7
15. ♚e1 ♚d8 16. ♘2c3 ♙f5=, Krasen-
kow-Svidler, Jonkoping 1998.

5... ♙xf6 6. cxd5

6. ♘xd5?! ♙g7 7. e3 (7. ♘f3) is bad
due to 7... c5! ♚.

6... c6!



A21. 7. dxc6?!; A22. 7. e3; A23.
7. e4; A24. 7. ♚c1.

**A21. 7. dxc6?! ♙xd4! 8. cxb7
♙xb7**

The lead in development offers
Black full compensation. Some of
White's queenside pawns will fall
sooner or later:

a) 9. ♘f3 ♙xc3+ 10. bxc3 ♚a5
11. ♚b3 0-0 12. e3 ♙xf3 13. gxf3 ♘d7
14. ♚b4 ♚f5 15. ♙e2 ♚ab8 16. ♚e4
♚xe4 17. fxe4 ♚b2+, Orlinkov-Najer,
Moscow 1996.

b) 9. ♚b3 ♙xc3+! 10. bxc3
(10. ♚xc3 0-0 11. e3 ♚b6 12. ♘f3 ♚c8

13. ♙c4 ♙xf3 14. gxf3 ♘c6 15. 0-0
♘a5 16. b3 ♘xc4 17. bxc4 ♚c5 18. ♚fc1
♚ac8 19. ♚d4 ♚c6 20. f4 a5 21. ♚ab1
♚xc4=) 10... ♚c7 11. ♘f3 ♘d7 12. e3
♙xf3! 13. gxf3 0-0 14. ♙e2 ♚ab8
15. ♚a3 ♚c5 16. ♚xc5 ♘xc5+.

c) 9. e3 ♙xc3+ 10. bxc3 ♚a5
11. ♚d4 0-0 12. ♚b4 ♚c7 13. ♘f3
(13. ♚c1 ♘c6 14. ♚c5 ♚b6! 15. ♚b5
♚fc8 16. ♘f3 ♘b4†) 13... ♘c6 14. ♚c5
♚fc8 15. ♙e2 ♘a5 16. ♚xc7 ♚xc7
17. ♚c1 ♚ac8+.

d) 9. ♚c1

White defended the knight on
c3, but the b2-pawn is also vulne-
rable:

9... 0-0 10. e3 ♙f6! 11. ♚xd8 ♚xd8
12. ♘f3 ♘d7 13. ♙e2 ♚ab8+.

A22. 7. e3

This line has disappeared as
White gets nothing in return for the
exchange of his bishop.

**7... cxd5 8. ♙b5+ ♘f8! 9. ♘ge2
♘g7 10. ♚b3 e6**

Evidently, only black can be bet-
ter here. After 11.0-0 a6 12. ♙d3 ♘c6
13. ♚ac1, simplest is 13... b5.

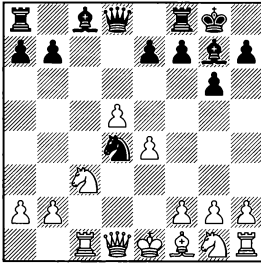
A23. 7. e4 0-0!

7... cxd5?! 8. ♙b5+! ♙d7 9. ♙xd7+
♚xd7 10. exd5 ♘a6 11. ♘f3 ♘b4
(11... 0-0 12.0-0 ♘c7 13. ♚b3 ♚ab8
14. ♘e5) 12. ♘e5 ♙xe5 13. dxe5
♚d8 14.0-0 ♘xd5 15. ♘xd5 ♚xd5
16. ♚a4+ b5 17. ♚xa7 favours White.

8.e5

Bulgarian grandmaster Iotov mentioned the interesting novelty:

8.♖c1!? ♕g7! (8...cxd5 9.♜xd5 ♕g7 10.♜xc8!+-) 9.dxc6 (9.♕c4 cxd5 10.exd5 ♖b6 11.♜ge2 ♖xb2=) 9...♜xc6! 10.d5 ♜d4



I analysed here:

a) 11.♜ge2 e5! (11...♖b6 12.♜xd4 ♕xd4 13.♖d2 ♕d7 14.♕d3 ♜ac8 15.0-0 ♜c7 16.♜c2 ♜fc8 17.♜fc1 ♖f6) 12.♜g3 h5.

b) 11.♖d2 f5 12.♕c4 ♕d7 13.♜ge2 ♜c8.

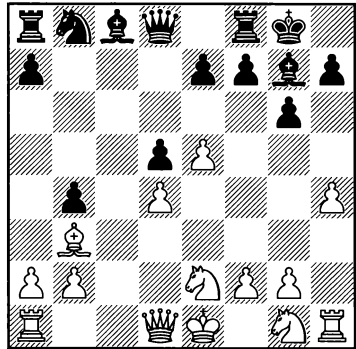
c) 11.♕d3 e6! 12.♜ge2 exd5 13.♜xd5 ♜xe2 14.♖xe2 ♕e6 15.♕c4 b5 16.♕b3 ♖a5+, with more than sufficient compensation, e.g. 17.♜c3 ♕xc3+ 18.bxc3 ♜ac8 19.0-0 ♕c4 20.♕xc4 ♜xc4=.

8...♕g7 9.♕c4 b5 10.♕b3 b4!
11.♜ce2 cxd5

11...♕a6 has not advantages over the recapturing of the sacrificed pawn. White has many options, but simplest is perhaps 12.♖d2. Then 12...cxd5 would be similar to the main line while 12...c5 13.♜f3! c4

14.♕c2 ♕b7 15.♖xb4 ♕xd5 16.0-0 ♜c6 17.♖c3 f6 18.exf6 ♕xf6 19.♜ad1 should be in White's favour.

12.h4



I do not believe in this attack because White lacks a dark-squared bishop. See the complete **game 8 Bukavshin-Matlov**, Moscow 01.02.2011.

A24. 7.♜c1

Developing a piece and indirectly keeping the extra-pawn in view of 7...cxd5?! 8.♜xd5.

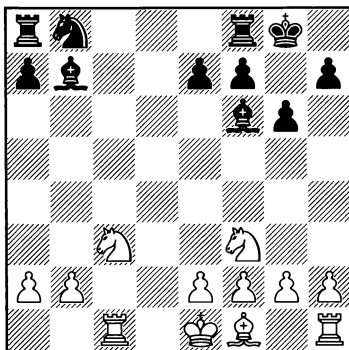
7...0-0 8.dxc6 (8.e4 ♕g7!)
8...♖xd4! 9.♖xd4 ♕xd4 10.cxb7

a) 10.c7 ♜c6 11.♜f3 ♕b6!
12.♜d5? ♕a5+.

b) 10.♜f3 ♕xc3+ 11.♜xc3 ♜xc6 12.e3 ♕e6! 13.♕c4 (13.♕b5?! ♕xa2) 13...♕xc4 14.♜xc4 ♜fc8 15.♜d2 ♜a5=, Ivanchuk-Dominguez, Havana 2010.

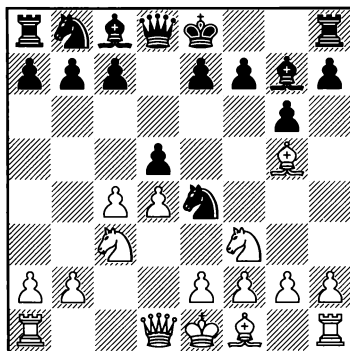
3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♖g5

10... ♖xb7 11. ♖f3 ♖f6



Black's activity balances the game. He has different ways to develop his initiative. See the annotations to **game 7 Bo. Vuckovic-Mekhitarian**, Moscow 10.02.2011.

B. 4. ♖f3 ♖g7 5. ♖g5 ♖e4



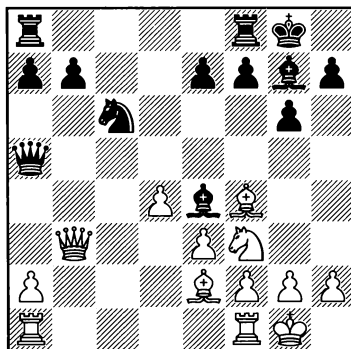
I examine here:

B1. 6. ♖f4; B2. 6. cxd5; B3. 6. ♖h4

B1. 6. ♖f4 ♖xc3 7. bxc3 c5 8. e3 0-0 9. cxd5 cxd4! 10. cxd4 ♖xd5 11. ♖e2 ♖c6 12. 0-0 ♖f5

The bishop is misplaced on f4. It does not attack e7, moreover, White has to reckon with ...e5, e.g. 13. ♖d2 e5!. That's why White prefers:

13. ♖a4 ♖a5! 14. ♖b3 (14. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 15. ♖c7 ♖c6! 16. ♖fc1 ♖ac8 17. ♖g3 ♖fd8=) 14... ♖e4!



Indirectly defending the b7-pawn (15. ♖xb7 ♖xd4!) while keeping the queen at a5 to support the break ...e7-e5. Our plan is to trade as many heavy pieces as possible and get an ending with a distant passed pawn.

a) 15. ♖ac1 ♖b4! 16. ♖c5 (16. ♖c4 h6 17. ♖fd1 ♖xb3 18. axb3 ♖ac8 19. ♖d2 ♖f5 20. ♖d5 ♖b4 21. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 22. ♖xb7 ♖c2 23. ♖b8 a5 24. h3 ♖a2 25. ♖e4 ♖c3 26. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 27. g4 ♖xb3) 16... ♖xb3 17. axb3 b6 18. ♖c3 (18. ♖c4 ♖a5 19. ♖c7 ♖xb3 20. ♖xe7 ♖fe8 21. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8) 18... ♖b4 19. ♖d2 ♖f5 20. ♖f3 ♖ac8 21. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 22. ♖a1 ♖d3, Gasanov-Kurnosov, Dagomys 2010.

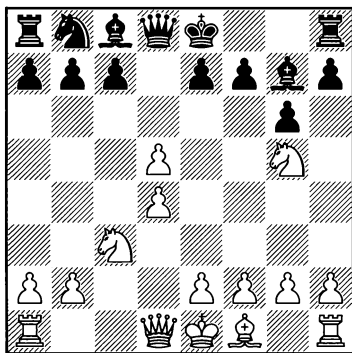
b) 15. ♖fc1! ♖ac8 16. ♖g3!

Part 3

The game Gelfand-Kasparov, Astana 2001, saw 16.h3 e5! and it suddenly turned out that 17.♖c5 did not work due to 17...♙xf3! 18.♙xf3 ♜xd4!! 19.♙xa5 ♜xb3 20.axb3 exf4.

16...♙d5 17.♖d1 (17.♙c4 ♙xc4 18.♙xc4 ♖d5=) 17...♜b4! 18.a3 ♜a2 19.♙c2 ♜c3 20.♖e1 ♜xe2+ 21.♖xe2 ♙e4.

B2. 6.cxd5 ♜xg5 7.♜xg5



7...0-0!?

There is a very good chance that this move will be a surprise to your opponents as it occurs in less than 7% of the games.

The most popular answer is 7...e6 8.♖d2 when 8...exd5 allows the awkward 9.♖e3+, while 8...h6 9.♜f3 exd5 leads to the Carlsbad pawn structure with the insertion of ♖d2 h6 which is undoubtedly in White's favour. Contemporary theory has found a reliable setup where Black redeployes the ♙g7 to

d6 via f8. Still, I prefer the more lively positions of our repertoire.

Now I would like to draw your attention to another interesting option:

7...c6?!

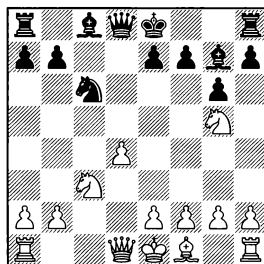
Black gets some compensation for the pawn, but it is hardly sufficient for equality:

8.dxc6!

a) 8.e3 e6! 9.♜f3 exd5 10.♙e2 transposes to the main line.

b) 8.♖b3 0-0 9.♜f3 cxd5 10.♖xd5 ♖b6 11.♖b5 (11.♖b3 ♙xd4 12.♜xd4 ♖xd4 13.♖d1 ♖c5) 11... ♙xd4 12.♜xd4 ♖xd4 13.♖d1 ♖b6 14.♖xb6 axb6 15.e3 ♙e6 16.a3 ♜a6 17.♙e2 ♜c5 18.0-0 ♙b3 19.♖d4 ♖fd8=.

8...♜xc6



9.d5!

9.e3 e5 10.d5 ♖xg5 11.dxc6 0-0 12.h4 (12.c7 e4 13.♖c1 ♖a5 14.♙e2 ♖xc7 15.0-0 ♖d8 16.♜xe4 ♖e7=) 12...♖e7 13.♜d5 ♖d6 14.♖c1 (14.c7 ♙d7 15.♖c1 ♙c6 16.♙c4 ♖ac8 17.♙b3 e4 18.♖c2 ♖e5 19.h5 ♙xd5 20.♖xd5

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♕g5

♖xc7 21. ♗xe5 ♕xe5 22. ♖xc7 ♕xc7
23. ♖e2 ♖g7=) 14...e4 15.c7 ♕xb2
16. ♖c2 ♕e5 17. ♕c4 ♕d7 18.0-0
♖ac8=.

9... ♗a5 10. ♗d2

10. ♖ge4 is bad owing to 10... ♕f5
11.dxc6 ♕xe4 12. ♗d7+ ♖f8 13. ♗d2
♖d8 14.cxb7 ♕xb7 15. ♗c2 ♕e4
16. ♗b3 ♕e5-+.

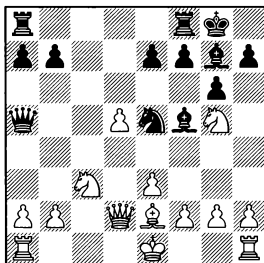
10... ♖e5 11.e3

White would like to bolster up
his d5-pawn with 11.e4, but af-
ter 11...h6 12. ♖f3 (12. ♕b5+ ♕d7
13. ♕xd7+ ♖xd7) 12... ♖xf3+ 13.gxf3
♕d7, he has nothing to oppose to
Black's queenside play: 14.h4 ♖c8
15. ♖c1 0-0 16.f4 b5.

11...0-0 12. ♕e2

Black's plan is simple: he will
put the rooks to c8 and d8 and
threaten with ... ♖c4 or ...b7-b5.
Contrary to the first impression,
White's pawns on d5 and a2 are
very sensitive. If he decides to repel
the knight from e5 before it could
reach c4, it will go to f6: 12.f4 ♖g4
13.h3 (13. ♕e2 ♖d8 14. ♖d1 ♗c5) 13...
♖f6 14. ♖d1 ♖d8 15. ♕e2 ♖b8 16.e4
h6 17. ♖f3 b5 18.e5 b4=.

12... ♕f5



13.e4

White counterattacks. He aims
to plug the g7-bishop with f4, e4-e5.

Routine development is less
convincing:

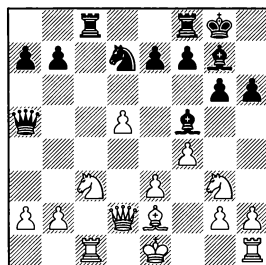
a) 13.0-0 ♖ac8 14. ♖ac1 ♖c4
15. ♕xc4 ♖xc4 16. ♖f3 (16. ♖fe1
♖fc8 17.e4 ♕d7 18.e5 ♕h6 19.f4
♗b6+ 20. ♖h1 ♗d4 21. ♗xd4 ♖xd4
22.g3 ♕xg5 23.fxg5 ♖d2 24. ♖b1 b5
25. ♖ed1 ♖c2=) 16... ♕xc3 (16...b5!?)
17. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 18.bxc3 ♖c8 19.c4
(19. ♖c1 ♕e4) 19... ♗a4 20. ♖d4 ♕d7
21. ♖c1 ♖xc4.

b) 13.f4!? h6 14. ♖ge4 ♖d7
15. ♖g3!

Kiselev-Vorobiov, Moscow
1996 saw 15. ♖f2 ♖c5 16.0-0 ♖fd8
17. ♕f3 ♖a4 18. ♖ac1 ♖ac8 19.e4
♖xb2 20. ♗xb2 ♖xc3 21. ♖xc3 ♕xc3
22. ♗xb7 ♕d7 23. ♖g4, when 23...
♕d2 24.f5 gxf5 would have been
unclear. Another option is 15. ♖d1
♗xd2+ 16. ♖xd2 ♖b6 17.e4 ♕d7
18. ♖c1 ♖ac8 19. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 with suf-
ficient compensation due to possi-
ble breaks as ...f5 or ...e6.

15... ♖ac8 (15... ♖b6 16.e4!) 16. ♖c1

Or 16.e4 ♖xc3; 16.0-0 ♕xc3
17.bxc3 ♖f6; 16. ♖d1 ♖b6.



16... ♖c5!

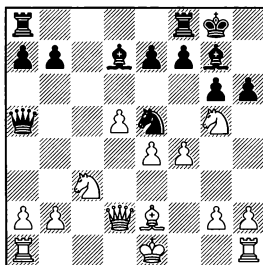
Part 3

Controlling e4 and planning ... $\text{d}4$. The other setup, 16... $\text{b}6$ 17.0-0 $\text{d}7$ 18.e4 $\text{f}d8$, does not look good. White is slightly better after 19. $\text{c}h1$ h5 (19... $\text{d}a4$ 20.e5) 20. $\text{f}d1$ h4 21. $\text{d}f1$ $\text{d}a4$ 22.e5.

17.0-0 (17.e4 $\text{d}xe4$) 17... $\text{d}a4$ 18.e4 $\text{d}d7$ 19.e5 $\text{b}b6+$ 20. $\text{c}h1$ $\text{b}xb2$ 21. $\text{b}xb2$ $\text{d}xb2$

Black finally regained the pawn, but his dark-squared bishop is cut off and that gives White some practical chances even without a pawn: 22. $\text{d}ge4!$ f5 23. $\text{d}d2!$ $\text{f}d8$ 24. $\text{d}b3$ $\text{e}e8$ 25. $\text{d}b5$ $\text{e}xc1$ 26. $\text{e}xc1$ $\text{e}xb5$ 27. $\text{e}xb5$ $\text{e}xd5$ 28. $\text{e}e2\pm$.

13... $\text{d}d7$ 14.f4 h6



15. $\text{d}h3$

15.fxe5 hxg5 16. $\text{b}xg5$ $\text{b}b6$ offers Black a strong initiative: 17.0-0-0 (17. $\text{b}b1$ $\text{a}ac8$) 17... $\text{a}ac8$ 18. $\text{d}d2$ (18. $\text{h}he1$ $\text{b}b4$; 18. $\text{h}hf1$ $\text{a}a5$ 19. $\text{c}b1$ $\text{e}xc3$ 20.bxc3 $\text{b}xc3$ 21. $\text{f}f3$ $\text{b}b4+$ 22. $\text{b}b3$ $\text{b}xe4+$ 23. $\text{d}d3$ $\text{b}xd5$ 24. $\text{c}c2$ $\text{e}e6$ 25. $\text{e}xb7$ $\text{c}c6$ 26. $\text{e}xe7$ $\text{e}b8+$; 18. $\text{d}d3$ $\text{b}b5$ 19. $\text{d}d2$ $\text{e}xe2$ 20. $\text{e}xe2$ $\text{a}a5$ 21. $\text{c}b1$ $\text{e}xc3$ 22.bxc3 $\text{b}xc3$) 18... $\text{b}b4+$ (18... $\text{c}h7!$?) Only Black can play here for a win, for example: 19. $\text{e}c2$ $\text{a}a4$ 20.a3 $\text{a}a5$ 21. $\text{g}g4$ $\text{e}xc2$ 22. $\text{e}xc8$ $\text{e}xc8$ 23. $\text{c}xc2$ $\text{a}a4+$ 24. $\text{c}b1$ $\text{e}xc3$ 25.bxc3 $\text{b}b3+$ 26. $\text{c}c1$

$\text{c}h7$ 27. $\text{f}f1$ $\text{b}xc3+$ 28. $\text{c}d1$ $\text{b}d3+$ 29. $\text{c}e1$ $\text{b}xe4+$ 30. $\text{c}f2$ $\text{e}xe5$ 31. $\text{c}g1$ $\text{b}d4+$ 32. $\text{c}h1$ f6 33. $\text{b}c1$ $\text{b}h4$ 34.h3 $\text{g}g3$.

15... $\text{e}hx3$ 16.gxh3 $\text{d}d7$ 17.e5 $\text{a}ac8$ 18.0-0 $\text{f}d8$ 19. $\text{a}ad1$ $\text{d}b6$ 20.h4 $\pm$.

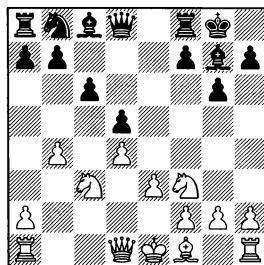
As long as Black's bishop remains out of play, White's game will be preferable.

8. $\text{d}f3$

8.h4?! h6 (or 8...c6 9.dxc6 $\text{e}xd4$ 10.cxb7 $\text{e}xb7$) 9. $\text{d}ge4$ c6 10.dxc6 $\text{e}xd4$ 11.cxb7 $\text{e}xb7$ 12.e3 $\text{g}g7$ 13. $\text{b}xd8$ $\text{e}xd8$ is fine for Black.

8.e3 only offers Black additional options. He can transpose to the main line with 8...c6 9.dxc6 e5! (9... $\text{d}xc6?$! 10.h4! h6 11. $\text{d}ge4$) 10. $\text{d}f3$ (10.cxb7 $\text{e}xb7$ 11. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{e}xd4$ 12. $\text{d}xd4$ $\text{b}b6$ 13. $\text{b}b3$ $\text{e}xd4$ 14. $\text{e}xd4$ $\text{e}e8+$ 15. $\text{e}e2$ $\text{b}xb3$ 16.axb3 $\text{e}xg2$ 17. $\text{g}g1$ $\text{e}f3$ 18. $\text{c}f1$ $\text{e}xe2+$ 19. $\text{d}xe2$ $\text{d}c6$ is balanced) 10... $\text{d}xc6$. However, he can also choose a good version of the Carlsbad structure with:

8...e6! 9. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{e}xd5$ 10.b4 c6



In this pawn formation, White commonly builds up a minority at-

tack on the queenside with ♖c3-a4-c5 followed up by b4-b5. Black, for his part, seeks counterplay on the opposite flank. The concrete position, however, suggests another setup. In order to activate our dark-squared bishop, we should aim to push ...c6-c5. Then the c-file will open in our favour. I recommend ...♙e6, ...♚d6, ...♜d7 and ...a5, intending to meet b4-b5 by ...c6-c5.

11. ♙e2

11. ♚c1 b5 12. a4 stumbled into 12...a5↑ in Matveeva-Chiburdanidze, Jakarta 1993.

11...♙e6 12. 0-0

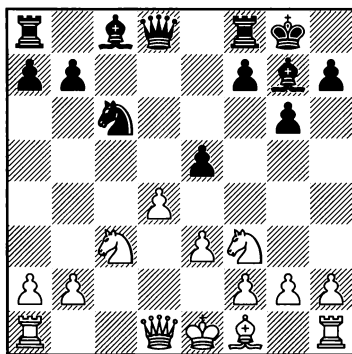
Or 12. ♚c1 ♚d6 13. ♚b3 ♜d7 14. ♜a4 a5 15. b5 ♚b4+ 16. ♜d2 ♚fc8♞, Saric-Pashikian, Plovdiv 2010.

12...♚d6 13. ♚b3 ♜d7 14. ♚ac1

Or 14. a4 a5 15. b5 (15. bxa5 ♚xa5 16. ♚fd1 c5) 15...c5 16. ♚a3 ♚fc8 17. ♚ac1 ♜b6 18. ♚fd1 ♚f8♞.

14...a5 15. b5 c5 16. ♚a3 ♚fc8=.

8...c6 9. dxc6 ♜xc6 10. e3 e5



11. d5

We'll understand better the strength of Black's position on the example of the game Smyslov-De la Villa Garcia, Barcelona 1990: 11. dxe5 ♜xe5 12. ♙e2 ♜xf3+ 13. ♙xf3 ♙e6 14. 0-0 ♚a5 15. ♚c2 ♚ab8 16. ♚fd1 ♚fc8 17. ♚d3 ♙f5 18. e4 ♙e6 19. ♚d2 ♙xc3 20. bxc3 ♚c4 (20... ♚d8=) 21. h4 h5 22. ♚b1 b6 23. ♚f4 ♚bc8 24. ♚bd1 ♜g7 25. ♚d6 ♙e8 26. ♙e2 ♚c5 27. c4 ♚xa2=. All the moves of the ex-World champion proved to be the first line of the engine, and still he had to be careful to make a draw.

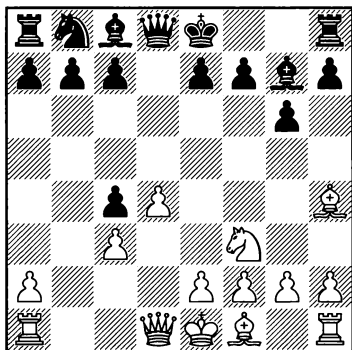
11...e4 12. ♜xe4 ♙f5 13. ♜c3 ♜b4 14. ♚c1 ♚a5

White should play precisely to hold the equality.

B3. 6. ♙h4 ♜xc3

After 6...c5 7. cxd5 ♜xc3 8. bxc3 ♚xd5 9. e3, White has a small, but stable advantage. Furthermore, Black's chances to play for a win seem next to none: 9...cxd4 10. cxd4 ♜c6 11. ♙e2 0-0 12. 0-0 e5 13. dxe5 ♚a5 14. ♙f6 (14. ♚b3 ♜xe5 15. ♜d4 ♜c6 16. ♜xc6 bxc6 17. ♚ac1 ♙e6 18. ♙c4 ♚ab8=) 14...♙xf6 15. exf6 ♚f5 16. ♜d4 ♚xf6 17. ♜xc6 ♚xc6 18. ♙f3 ♚a6 19. ♚d4 ♙f5 20. ♚fd1 ♚ac8, Kotronias-Ghinda, Athens 1988. With good defence, Black should be able to make a draw.

7. bxc3 dxc4!



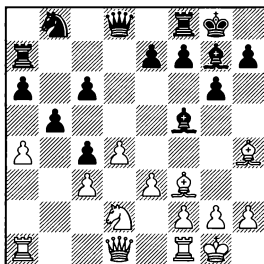
8. ♖a4+

Alternatives do not set Black any problems:

a) 8.e4?! b5 9.a4 c6 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0 a6 12.♗b1 ♘d7;

b) 8.e3 b5! 9.a4 c6 10.♙e2 a6 11.♘d2 0-0 12.♙f3 ♖a7! 13.0-0 ♙f5!

In Beliaivsky-Kamsky, Belgrade 1991, Black realised the interesting manoeuvre: 13...♗d7 14.♗b1 ♗c7 15.♘e4 ♗dd8 16.♗b4 f5 17.♘c5 ♗de8. The rooks have finally connected in a most unusual manner. Play is double-edged.



14. ♗e1

I have learned from my own experience that in this structure 14.e4?! is a strategic mistake. White

only weakens the support of the d4-pawn and limits the scope of his light-squared bishop. If Black succeeds in breaking through with ...b4 or ...c5, White's centre will collapse. Black can retreat to d7 or e6, but perhaps most unpleasant is 14...♙c8! as in Delchev-Karr, France 2010, which went 15.♗b1? c5! 16.axb5 ♗b7! 17.♘xc4 cxd4!.

14...♙d3 (14...a5!?) 15.♘b3 ♙f5 16.♘d2 (16.♘c5 ♘d7=) 16...♙d3 and White should repeat moves.

8... ♗d7!

8...c6 9.♗xc4 ♗a5 10.e4! ♙e6 11.♗d3 ♘d7 is too passive. White can prevent the threat of 12...♘c5 by 12.♘d2!

9. ♗xc4 b6!

We know that in the Grünfeld, the c4-square is often Black's main strategic aim. Therefore it would be helpful to trade light-squared bishops. White can prevent that by:

10.♙g3?! c5 11.♘e5, but then the typical motif 11...♙xe5! 12.♙xe5 ♙a6 13.♗b3 0-0 gives good play due to his lead in development: 14.e3 (14. d5 ♗f5 15.♙g3 c4 16.♗b4 ♗xd5 17.♗xe7 ♘c6 18.♗f6 ♗ad8 19.♙f4 ♗fe8 20.♙h6 ♗e5 21.♗xe5 ♘xe5 22.♙e3 ♙b7 23.♗d1 ♙d5 24.h4 f6=; 14.♗d1 ♘c6 15.♗a4 ♘xe5) 14...♙xf1 15.♙xf1 ♘c6 16.♙g3 ♙a5.

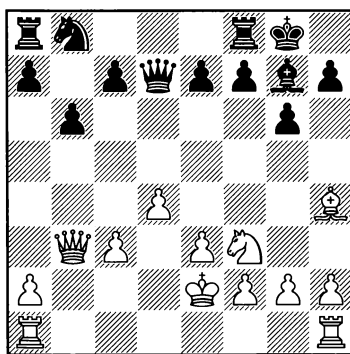
10.e4 ♙a6 11.♗d5 is outright bad: 11...♗xd5 12.exd5 ♙xf1 13.♙xf1 ♘a6 14.a4 0-0-0 15.♙xe7 ♗xd5 16.g3 c5.

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♔g5

10.e3 ♔a6 11.♖b3

11.♖b4? ♔xf1 12.♕xf1 goes half-way Black's plan to open play with 11...c5! 13.dxc5 ♖a6 14.♖e4 ♖c8 15.cxb6 ♖c5 16.♖b4 axb6 with a decisive attack.

11...♔xf1 12.♕xf1 0-0 13.♕e2



13...♖c6!?

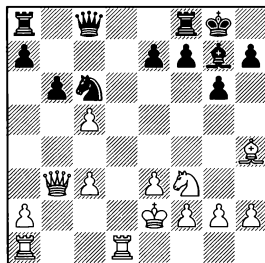
13...c5 is more popular, but I prefer to execute this move when Black is fully developed. Anyway, White cannot prevent it. The problem position arises after:

14.♖hd1

14.dxc5?! at this moment is risky because our knight will arrive at c5 with tempo: 14...♖a6! 15.♖hd1 ♖c7! (15...♖b7 16.c6 ♖xc6 17.♔xe7 ♖fe8 18.♔a3 ♖xc3 19.♖xc3 ♔xc3 20.♖ac1 ♔b4 21.♔b2 ♔f8 22.♖d4 ♖c5 23.g4 ♖e4 24.♕f3 ♖ae8 25.h3 f6 26.♔a3 ♕f7 27.♖c2 ♖a6 28.♔xf8 ♕xf8 29.♖c6 ♕g7 30.♖b5 ♖4e7 31.♖dd6±) 16.cxb6 (or 16.c6 ♖c5 17.♖c4 e6 18.♖d4 ♖xh2) 16...axb6 17.♔g3 ♖c6 18.♕f1 ♖c5 19.♖d5

♖xd5 20.♖xd5 ♔xc3 21.♖c1 ♔f6 22.♖c2 ♖a6=.

14...♖c6! 15.dxc5 (15.♖ab1 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖fc8=; 15.♕f1 ♖a5) 15...♖c8



16.♖ab1! parries all the threats: 16...bxc5 17.♖c4 ♖b8 18.♖xb8 ♖xb8 19.♖xc5 ♖c8 20.♕f1±. White evacuated his king from the centre and he is still a pawn up (20...e6 21.♖a3).

14.♖hd1 ♖a5 15.♖b4 e6!

Saving the pawn and controlling d5. 15...♖fe8 16.♖ac1 ♖ac8 17.c4 ♖g4 18.h3 ♖e4 19.♖a4 c5 20.d5 is slightly better for White.

16.♖ac1 ♖fc8 17.c4 c5!

Just in time! Now 18.dxc5 ♖b7 (18...♖c6 19.cxb6 axb6 20.♖d6 ♖e4 21.♖xb6 ♖xc4 22.♖b1 ♖d5 23.♖b3 h6) 19.cxb6 axb6 gives Black an excellent compensation. After 20.♕f1 ♔f8 he should be even better.

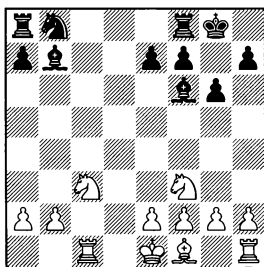
18.♖b5 is also sharp and unbalanced after 18...♖b7 19.d5 exd5 20.cxd5. Here Black can choose between 20...c4 21.d6 ♖c5 22.♖a4 f6 and the more solid 20...♖c7!? 21.♕f1 ♖d7 22.e4 ♖e8.

Part 3

Complete Games

7. Bo.Vuckovic-Mekhitarian Moscow 10.02.2011

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5
4.♙g5 ♙g7 5.♙xf6 ♙xf6 6.cxd5 c6
7.♖c1 0-0 8.dxc6 ♖xd4 9.♖xd4
♙xd4 10.cxb7 ♙xb7 11.♘f3 ♙f6



12.e3

This move weakens the d3-square, but 12.g3 ♘d7 13.♙g2 ♖ab8! regains the pawn by force: 14.♖c2 ♙xf3 15.♙xf3 ♖xb2 16.♖xb2 ♙xc3+ 17.♖d2 ♖b8+; 14.♘a4 ♖fc8 15.0-0 ♙a6↑; 14.0-0! ♙xf3=.

12...♖d8

The biggest weakness in White's position is not the b2-pawn, but the squares d2 and d3. White will castle and after the exchange on f3, Black's rook will invade the second

rank. 12...♘d7 13.♙b5 ♖fd8 should also be enough to make a draw:

14.0-0 ♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♖ab8 16.♙xd7

Or 16.b3 ♙xc3 17.♙xd7 ♙d2 18.♖c7 ♙a5 19.♖c5 ♙b4 20.♖b5 ♖xb5 21.♙xb5 ♖d2 22.a4 g5=.

16...♖xd7 17.♖c2 ♖db7 18.♖b1 ♙xc3 19.♖xc3 Kazhgaleyev-So, Guangzhou 2010.

13.♙e2 ♘a6 14.0-0 ♘b4 15.a3

15.♖fd1 ♖xd1+ 16.♙xd1 ♖d8 17.♙e2 ♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♖d2 equalises outright.

15...♘d3 16.♙xd3

Or 16.♖c2 ♙xf3 17.gxf3 ♘xb2 18.♘e4 ♙g7=.

16...♖xd3 17.♖fd1 ♖xd1+ 18.♖xd1 ♙xc3

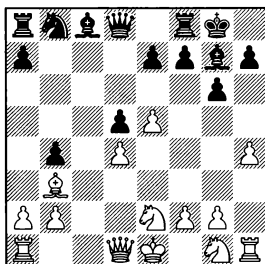
Black eliminates now to a draw rook endgame.

19.bxc3 ♖c8 20.♖c1 ♙xf3 21.gxf3 ♖c4 22.♘f1 e5 23.♘e2 ♘f8 24.♘d3 ♖a4 25.c4 ♘e7 26.♖c3 ♘d6 27.f4 exf4 28.♘d4 fxe3 29.♖xe3 ♖a5 30.♖f3 ♘e6 31.♖e3+ ♘d6 32.♖f3 ♘e6 33.♖e3+ 1/2-1/2.

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♖g5

8. Bukavshin–Matlakov
Moscow 01.02.2011

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5
4.♗g5 ♗g7 5.♗xf6 ♗xf6 6.cxd5
c6 7.e4 0-0 8.e5 ♗g7 9.♗c4 b5
10.♗b3 b4 11.♖ce2 cxd5 12.h4

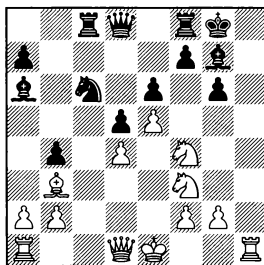


To allow or not to allow h4-h5? The game Pashikian-Edouard, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010, went 12...h5 13.♖f4 e6, with unclear play.

12...h6?! 13.♖f4 e6 14.♖f3 ♖d7 15.♗c2 ♗a6 16.♗d3 ♗xd3 17.♖xd3 ♖e7 18.0-0 ♖fc8 19.♖ac1±, Rodshtein-Khusnutdinov, Moscow 2010, is not inspiring either.

Agrest is an optimist about Black's defence in a position with an open h-file, because White lacks a dark-squared bishop. He proposes the novelty 12...♗f5, which would be justified in the event of 13.h5 ♖c6 14.♖c1 ♖c8 15.♖f3 ♗g4 or 13.♖f4 ♖c6 14.g4 (14.♗xd5 ♖c8) 14...♗d7 15.h5 e6 16.♖f3 g5. However, 13. ♖c1!, preventing ...♖c6, looks unpleasant. For instance, 13...e6 (13...♗h6 14.f4 ♗g4 15.♖f3 f6 16.h5!) 14.h5 f6 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.f3. Evidently, he is not alone to think that 12...h5 is not an obligatory retort. This game presents another interesting idea:

12...♖c6 13.h5 e6 14.♖f3 ♗a6
15.♖f4 ♖c8 16.hxg6 hxg6



A critical position. Let us consider the plans of both sides.

Evidently, White should try to bring his pieces closer to Black's king. However, even if he checked from h7 with his queen, that would not be any progress since the king would be comfortable on f8. White could think about some destructive sacrifice on e6 or g6, but this idea does not seem efficient as a simple move like ...♖e8 or ...♖d7 would be enough to parry it.

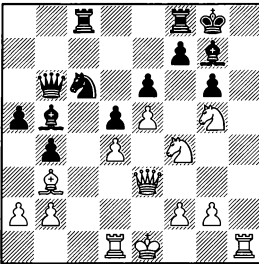
A closer look at the position reveals the manoeuvre ♖f3-g5-h7-f6. It is really dangerous. White would have at least a draw in the pocket if not a direct win. This manoeuvre is not possible yet, because the d8-queen controls g5, so perhaps a useful move like 17.♖d2 should be a candidate number 1 in our calculations. If Black did not shift the queen from the h4-d8 diagonal (for instance, to b6 or a5), White could think about ♖f4-h3-g5-h7.

You might ask, why not then immediately 17.♖h3? Because Black would answer 17...♗h6!, followed up by 18...♗g7, with domination on both flanks!

So we decide on:

17. ♖d2 and start thinking about what Black can do in his turn.

The engines very enthusiastically point out to 17... ♜b6?!, “having in mind” to double the rooks on the c-file. They underestimate White’s attacking possibilities. I checked first 18. ♘d1!, overprotecting d4 à la Nimzowitsch. How to proceed further? 18... ♙b5 19. ♘g5 a5 20. ♜e3



Suddenly a mate is looming – 20...a4?? 21. ♖h8+!. This is a bad sign. Black should answer 20... ♜fe8, but once launched, White’s attack is difficult to be deflected: 21. ♘xf7 ♗xf7 22. ♘xd5 exd5 23. ♜f3+ ♗e7 24. ♖h7→.

Perhaps 19...a5? was a mistake? Let us see – 19... ♜fe8 20. ♘h7! ♜d8 21.g4 a5 22.g5 a4 23. ♘f6+ ♗f8 24. ♙c2→. There is something definitely wrong with Black’s setup here. So we discard 18... ♙b5? and check 18... ♘a5. Again – 19. ♘g5 is unpleasant.

It is clear that Black’s only counterplay could be connected with an invasion down the c-file since he has not any other open

files or diagonals on the queenside. I suppose, Black would be glad to steel the b4-pawn from the board, but GM Vuckovic would have noticed, I’m sure!

As the pawn is still on b4, however, let us think how to shift its blocker – the b3-bishop.

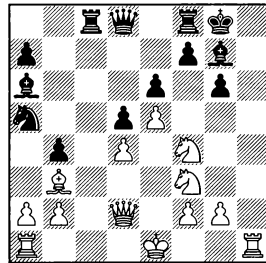
17... ♙c4 seems consistent, but:

1. It does not really threaten to take on b3, since 18. ♘h3 ♙xb3 19. axb3 is positionally great for White. He can even castle now.

2. 18. ♙d1!? would put Black into an awkward situation – how to continue?

3. The variation 18. ♘h3 ♘a5 19. ♘hg5 ♙xb3 20. ♜f4 ♜e7 21. ♘h7, when 21...f6 is the only move, does not look too attractive.

The only sensible option remains 17... ♘a5!



Now the Force (and the tempi!) are with us!

a) 18. ♘h3 ♙xb3 19. axb3 ♜c6! (the point!) 20. ♘hg5 ♜c7 21. ♜f4 ♜c8+.

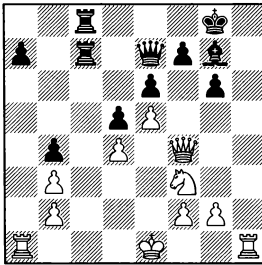
b) 18. ♜xb4 ♙xb3 19. axb3 ♜c2!.

c) 18. ♘d1 ♙c4 (18... ♙xb3 19. axb3 ♜c7) 19. ♙xc4 ♜xc4→. Black doubles or triples on the c-file

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♕g5

and disembarks on c2.

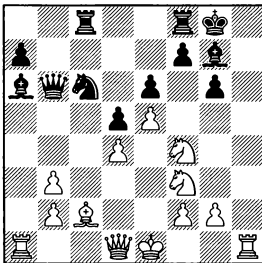
d) 18. ♖d3 ♕xd3 19. ♖xd3 ♖c7 (Black should be very precise with the move order and keep an eye on g5. For instance, 19... ♖c7 20. ♖g5 ♖xb3 21. ♖h3 ♖fe8 22. axb3 ♖c2 23. ♖h7+ ♔f8 24. ♖h4↑ would have been risky.) 20. ♖e3 (After 20. ♕d1 ♖e7 21. ♖b1 ♖c4 22. ♔e2, Black can even gain space on the kingside with 22... f5) 20... ♖e7 (20... ♖d7!? 21. ♖g5 ♖fc8 22. ♖h7 ♖xb3 23. axb3 ♖c6 24. ♖f6+ ♔f8 25. ♖h7+=) 21. ♖f4 ♖xb3 22. axb3 ♖fc8.



This position would be roughly equal after 23.0-0.

White has hardly paid due attention to this critical moment of the game, as he made a serious positional mistake:

17. ♕c2?! b3 18. axb3 ♖b6



Black owned the initiative and White has to beat the retreat. He tries to cover the diagonal a6-f1.

19. ♖e2 ♕xe2 20. ♔xe2 ♖b4 21. ♕d3 ♖c7 22. ♖d2

22. ♔f1 ♖b8 23. ♕e2 ♖c2+ regains the pawn.

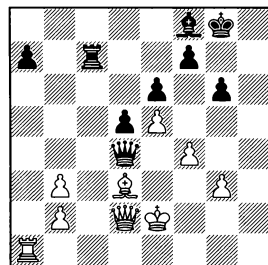
22... ♖fc8 23. ♖hc1 ♖c6

It is understandable that Black wants to maintain more pieces on the board, but 23... ♖xc1 24. ♖xc1 ♖xc1 25. ♖xc1 ♖xd3 26. ♔xd3 ♖xb3+ would have won a pawn and, why not, the game. For instance: 27. ♔e2 ♖b5+ 28. ♔e1 ♕f8 29. ♖d2 ♖b4 30. ♖c2 ♕a5 31. ♔d1 ♖b6+.

24. g3 ♖xd4+

24... ♕f8!? was more tricky. White should find 25. ♔f1 ♖xd4 26. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 27. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 28. ♖e2 to remain in the game.

25. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 26. f4 ♕f8 27. ♖xc7 ♖xc7



28. ♖a4?

Now White is lost. 28. ♔f3!

Part 3

would have been more stubborn. The fine point is that he can hide the vulnerable king to g4 in some variations.

28...♖g1 29.♖e1 ♖b6?

29...♖g2+ 30.♗f2 ♖h3 should be winning. The opposite coloured bishops attack continues in full steam, e.g. 31.♖e1 ♖h5+ 32.♔f2 ♖h2+ 33.♔f3 ♖xb2 – winning a couple of pawns. In the game, Black gradually let his advantage slip away.

30.♖a5 ♖c6 31.♞a1 ♞b7 32.♖c3 ♖b6 33.♞c1 ♖xb3 34.♖xb3 ♞xb3 35.♞c2 ♠b4 36.g4 ♠a5 37.f5 gxf5 38.gxf5 exf5 39.♠xf5 ♠b6 40.♔d1 ♞e3 41.♞e2 ♔f8 42.e6 ♞xe2 43.♔xe2 f6 44.♔f3 a5 45.b3 ♔e7 46.♠g4 ♔d6 47.♔f4 ♠d8 48.♠h3 ♔c5 49.♠g2 d4 50.♔e4 ♠e7 51.♠f3 ♔b4 52.♔xd4 ♔xb3 53.♠d5+ ♔b4 54.♔d3 a4 55.♠c4 ♔c5 56.♠a2 ♠d8 57.♠c4 ♔d6 58.♔e4 ♔c5 59.♔d3 f5 60.♠a2 ♠g5 61.♔e2 ♔d4 62.♔f3 ♔e5 63.♠c4 a3 64.♠a2 ♔d4 65.e7 ♠xe7 66.♔f4 ♔c3 67.♔xf5 ♠f6 68.♔xf6 ♔b2 69.♠e6 a2 70.♠xa2 ♔xa2 1/2–1/2.

9. Bo.Vuckovic– Sutovsky

Moscow 11.02.2011

I chose to annotate this game because of three reasons:

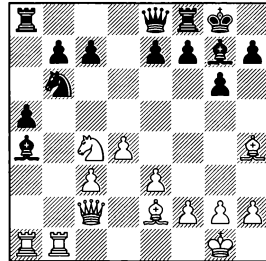
It was played recently by two strong grandmasters;

White introduced a novelty in a sharp, topical line;

The engines fail to evaluate

correctly the arising positions and might deceive readers.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♠g5 ♘e4 5.♠h4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 ♠e6 8.♘f3 ♠g7 9.♠e2 ♘d7 10.0–0 ♘b6 11.a4 a5 12.♖c2 0–0 13.♞fb1 ♠d7 14.♘d2 ♖e8 15.♘xc4 ♠xa4



16.♖e4

The game Avrukh–Popilski, Israel 2010, saw 16.♖a2 ♘d5 17.♖a3 (17.♖d2 could be met by 17...b5 18.♘xa5 e5!), when Black should have retreated the bishop to c6. Vuckovic's novelty looks dubious at first – the engines stubbornly claim a Black's advantage after the natural:

16...♠c6?!

I suspect that White's prospects are better after this move. Black's problem is that he is left without any decent plan. White obtains a powerful pawn centre which allows him to manoeuvre at his ease.

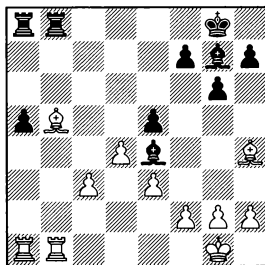
We should all learn to part with central pawns very carefully. I think that Black should have taken a deep breath here, and switch from move-

3. ♖c3 d5. Systems with ♖g5

by-move calculation to a long-term thinking. My understanding tells me that the centre should be attacked immediately by:

16... ♖xc4! 17. ♖xc4 e5!

Then 18. ♖xb7 ♖c6 19. ♖xc7 ♖e4 20. ♖b5 ♖b8 21. ♖xb8 ♖fxb8 reverses the roles.



White is a pawn up, but Black is extremely active and the a-pawn will probably win material. For example: 22. ♖b3 ♖c2 23. ♖b2 ♖d3 24. ♖c6 ♖xb2 25. ♖xa8 a4+. Black trades rooks and dark-squared bishops, and the pawn reaches a2.

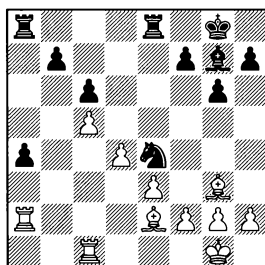
17. ♖xe7 ♖d5

This is also against basic chess rules. Black avoids exchanges having less space in the centre. 17... ♖xc4 18. ♖xc4 ♖e4 seems more precise. Now 19. ♖b2 is bad due to ♖c6, so White should play 19. ♖c1 or 19. ♖xe8. In both cases Black may be holding, but it is only White who can improve his position. Variations are not forced and my examples can only illustrate the character of play, nothing more:

19. ♖c1 ♖xe7 20. ♖xe7 ♖fe8 21. ♖a3 c6 22. f3 ♖f5 23. e4 ♖d7 24. ♖c5 b5 25. ♖a2 ♖f8∞;

19. ♖xe8 ♖fxe8 20. ♖b2 a4 21. ♖g3 ♖ec8 22. f3 ♖c6 23. ♖f2 ♖a5 24. ♖e2 b5 25. ♖d3 a3 26. ♖b3 ♖f8 27. ♖e1 ♖b8∞.

18. ♖xe8 ♖fxe8 19. ♖c1 a4 20. ♖g3 ♖b5 21. ♖b6 ♖xb6 22. ♖xb5 c6 23. ♖e2 ♖d5 24. c4 ♖f6 25. c5 ♖e4 26. ♖a2



A critical moment. Black should play 26... ♖xc3 27. hxc3 a3 28. ♖f1 ♖a7 29. g4 ♖b8 30. ♖c3 ♖ba8 (30... b6 31. ♖b3) and struggle to hold this unpleasant endgame. White will blockade the a-pawn with his king and will try to win it and advance his central chain.

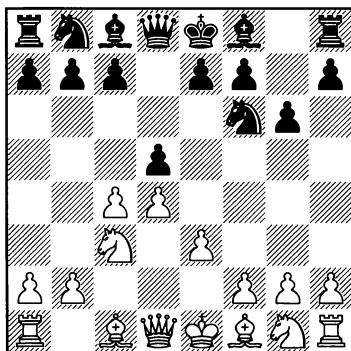
Instead, Sutovsky opts for a hopeless position:

26... f5 27. ♖ca1 ♖xc5 28. dxc5 ♖xa1 29. ♖xa1 a3 30. ♖f1 ♖g7 31. ♖e1 ♖f6 32. ♖d2 ♖a5 33. ♖d6 b5 34. ♖c3 ♖a4 35. ♖f3 ♖c8 36. ♖b3 ♖e6 37. ♖xa3 ♖xa3+ 38. ♖xa3 ♖d7 39. ♖b2 ♖e8 40. h4 ♖a8 41. ♖d1 ♖e8 42. ♖b3 ♖a8 43. ♖e5 ♖e7 44. ♖c2 ♖e8 45. ♖d3 ♖d7 46. ♖d4 ♖a8 47. f3 ♖a3 48. ♖c2 ♖a8 49. ♖e5 ♖e8 50. ♖f4 ♖a8 51. ♖b2 ♖f8 52. g3 ♖e8 53. ♖c2 ♖a8 54. e4 fxe4 55. fxe4 ♖a1 56. ♖g8 ♖e8 57. ♖d6 ♖g1 58. ♖d2 ♖g2+ 59. ♖e3 b4 60. ♖d3 1-0.

Part 4

The e3 System

1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.e3



Part 4

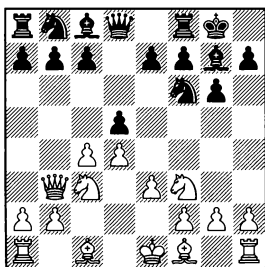
Main Ideas

Introduction

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.♟c3 d5 4.e3 ♟g7

In this system, White adopts an anti-Grünfeld approach. Instead of gaining space in the centre, he tries to anticipate Black's thematic counterplay with ...c7-c5, or at least render it inefficient. Such a restraining tactic could hardly assure White of an opening advantage, but it might be justified in practice since Black will have to handle positions which are closer to the Anti-Meran, the Tarrasch Defence or even the Panov Attack. The focus of the battle is often shifted towards middle-game plans. In general, Black needs to adjust his play to White's setup and calmly complete development before choosing where to break in.

The godfather of the opening himself employed the e3-system as White: 5.♟f3 0-0 6.♞b3



The game Gruenfeld-Steiner, Vienna 1923, went 6...c6 7.♟d2 dxc4 8.♟xc4 ♟bd7 9.0-0 ♟b6 10.♟e2 ♟e6 11.♞c2 ♟f5 12.e4 and White was better. One of the greatest visionaries in opening theory, Rubinstein, also preferred the e3 system. Look at his miniature against the future World champion: Rubinstein-Alekhine, Vienna 1922: 1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.♟f3 ♟g7 4.♟c3 d5 5.e3 0-0 6.cxd5 ♟xd5 7.♟c4 ♟xc3 8.bxc3 c5 9.0-0 ♟c6 10.♟a3 cxd4 11.cxd4 a6 12.♞c1 b5 13.♟xf7+ ♞xf7 14.♞xc6 ♟b7 15.♞c5 ♟d5 16.♞c2 e6 17.♞c1 ♟f8 18.♟e5, with a huge advantage.

Later Rubinstein migrated to 6.♞b3 and 6.♟d2. The real boom of the e3-system, however, came in the 50s, when the Russian master Makogonov introduced the plan with b2-b4. It is still bringing White a positive score and we should be well prepared for it.

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

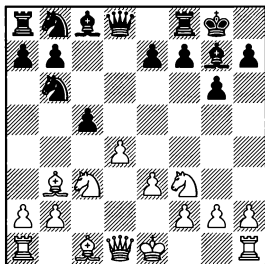
A. White allows an early ...c7-c5

We should always prefer the active plan with ...c7-c5 to the solid, but passive ...c7-c6. However, to

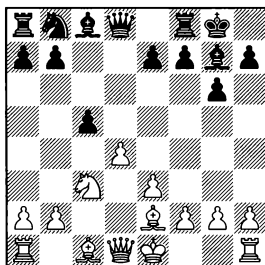
3. ♖c3 d5 4.e3

make this break work, we should not reinforce White's centre by exchanging on c3. Typical positions arise after:

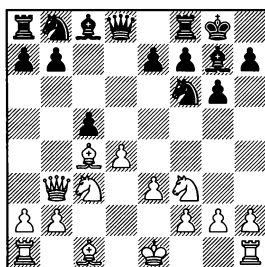
5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6. ♘c4 ♜b6! 7. ♘b3 0-0 8. ♖f3 c5



or 5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6. ♖xd5 ♜xd5 7. ♖e2 0-0 8. ♖c3 ♜d8 9. ♘e2 c5!?



or 5. ♜b3 dxc4 6. ♘xc4 0-0 7. ♖f3 c5

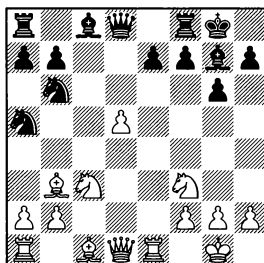


In this structure, White can aspire to an advantage only by seizing space in the centre with d4-d5. Let

us examine a few instructive examples:

Ehlvest–Kamsky

Philadelphia 2010



White has a huge spatial advantage so any exchange of minor pieces should be helpful:

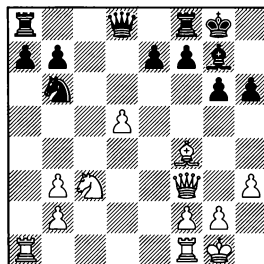
12... ♖xb3 13. axb3 ♘g4 14.h3 ♘xf3 15. ♜xf3 ♜e8 16. ♘e3 ♘xc3!

This typical exchange operation is very timely. White was ready to support the d5-pawn with a rook from d1. Then his more active heavy pieces would be able to join in a kingside attack.

17. ♘xb6! ♜xb6 18.bxc3 ♜xb3 19. ♜ab1 ♜a3 20. ♜xb7 ♜ac8, with a quick draw.

Gligoric–Portisch

1972



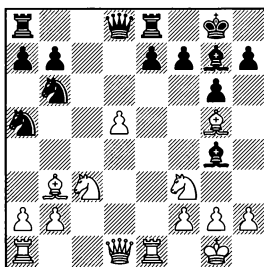
Here White had played ♘g5 to

provoke the weakening move ...h7-h6. Black could have answered with ...♖e8 as in the next example, but he had in mind the simplification arising after:

16...♙xc3! 17.bxc3 ♖xd5 18.♖xd5 ♜xd5 19.♙xh6 ♜fd8 20.c4 ♜b4 with a roughly equal ending.

Tregubov–Kurnosov Moscow 2008

You should also remember the following tactical skirmish:



14.d6!? ♖xd6

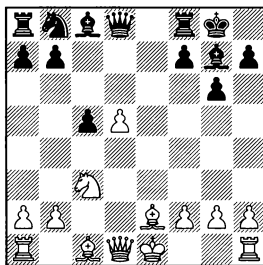
It is too late for 14...♜b3? 15.♙e7+–, Delchev–Gupta, Sort 2008.

15.♙xf7+ ♜xf7 16.♞xe7+ ♖xe7 17.♙xe7 ♜xe7.

The game went 18.♜b5?! ♜f8! and White was eventually outplayed. However, even the best continuation 18.♜d5+ ♜f8! does not give him any winning chances after 19.♖d2 ♙xf3 20.♜c7 ♙c6 21.♖xa5 ♜g8 22.♜xe8 ♞xe8 23.♞e1 ♞f8!. With rooks on board, Black keeps the initiative.

If White pushes immediately d4-d5, he can get the following position:

Zivanic–Kritz Brownsville 2010



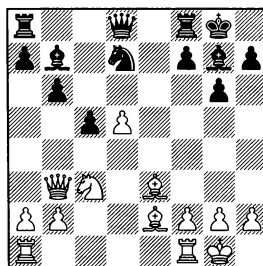
The passed pawn on d5 is rather unstable. In comparison with the g3-system, the white bishop is less useful on e2. Therefore Black can set up a blockade and gradually surround the overextended pawn:

12...b6 13.0-0 ♙b7 14.♖b3! ♜d7

In my opinion, 14...♖d6!? is stronger, for example: 15.♞d1 (15.♜b5 ♖e5 16.♙f3 ♜d7; 15.♙e3 ♜d7 16.♞ad1 ♞ad8 17.♞fe1 ♞fe8 18.♖a4 a6=) 15...♜d7 16.g3 ♞fd8 17.♙f4 ♜e5 18.♜b5 ♖d7=.

15.♙e3

The same idea as in the game also works after 15.♙f4 a6 16.a4 ♞e8 17.♞fe1 ♙d4!.



15...♙d4! 16.♞ad1 ♙xe3 17.fxe3 ♖g5. White's pawns are weak and Black has good control over the central dark squares.

3.♟c3 d5 4.e3

B. White prevents ...c7-c5

5.♟f3 ♟g7 6. b4

White can play 6.♟d2 as well. It also discourages 6...c5, but the bishop has no future on d2. I answered 6...e6, obtaining something similar to the Nimzo, where Black has saved the useless walk to b4. See game 10 **G. Rodriguez-Delchev**, La Massana 2011.

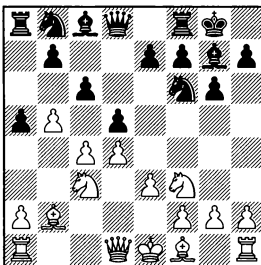
6...c6!

The plan with ...c7-c5 is no longer attractive since after ...b6 and ...c5, White will open the queenside in his favour. I prefer to prepare counterplay with ...a7-a5.

7.♟b2

7.c5 gains space on the queenside, but it allows the breakthrough ...e7-e5: 7...♟bd7 8.♟b2 e5 9.♟e2 exd4 10.♟xd4 ♟e5, Rustemov-Svidler, Germany 2006.

7...a5 8.b5

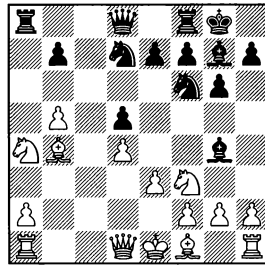


8...a4!

Black has clear counterplay on

the queenside. He is going to exchange on b5 and send a knight towards c4 via d7-b6. Any White's attempt to grab the a4-pawn is unreasonable: 9.bxc6 bxc6 10.♟xa4 ♖a5+ 11.♟c3 ♟a6! or 9.♟a3 cxb5 10.cxb5 ♟g4 11.♟b4 ♟bd7 12.♟xa4?:

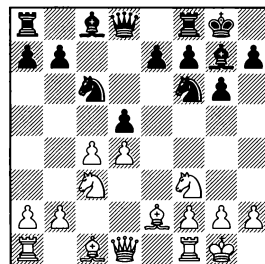
Akopian-Perelshteyn Stillwater 2007



12...e5!! 13.♟e2 (13.♟xf8 ♟xf8+) 13...♟e8 14.dxe5 ♟xe5 15.♟c5 ♟xf3+ 16.gxf3 ♟h3. The stem game did not last long: 17.♟c3 b6 18.♟b3 ♟xe3!! 19.♟d4 (19.fxe3 ♟e4 20.fxe4 ♟xc3+) 19...♟e8 20.♟g1 ♟h5 21.♟d2 ♟a4 22.0-0-0 ♟c8+ 23.♟b1 ♟f5+ 24.♟a1 ♟c2 and White resigned.

C. White hurries to castle

5.♟f3 ♟g7 6.♟e2 0-0 7.0-0 cxd4 8.exd4 ♟c6



This is the Tarrasch Defence with colours reversed. Black can choose most of the typical White plans, linked with a light-squared blockade in the centre, for instance:

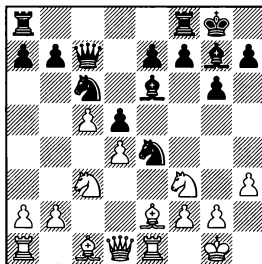
9.h3 dxc4 10.♙xc4 ♖a5 11.♙e2
♙e6 12.♘e5 ♜c8.

Should White prevent that by c4-c5, we can easily undermine his pawn centre, for instance:

9.c5 ♘e4 10.♙e3 b6! 11.♚a4
♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♙d7 or:

9.♞e1 ♙e6! 10.c5 ♘e4 11.h3 ♚c7!:

Franic–Delchev Zadar 2009

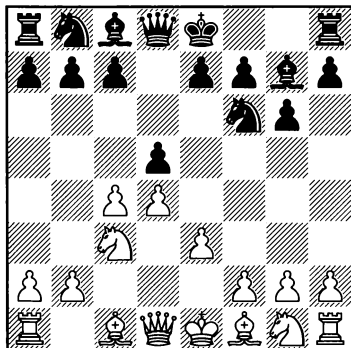


12.♙b5 ♜ad8 13.♚a4 ♙f5 14.♘e2
e5!. Everything went well and I got
a lasting advantage after 15.♙xc6
bxc6 16.♙e3 f6.

Part 4

Step by Step

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.e3
♙g7



A. 5.cxd5; B. 5.♖b3; C. 5.♗f3

A. 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♗xd5

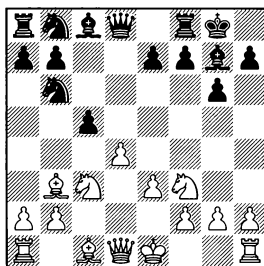
This has been the most popular move lately. White drags the queen to d5 in order to gain a tempo later with ♗g1-e2-c3. The alternative:

6.♗c4 brings Black a positive score after:

6...♗b6!

In my opinion, 6...♗xc3 7.bxc3 0-0 8.♗f3 c5 9.0-0 should be slightly better for White. He can develop his pieces to good squares: ♗b2, ♖e2, ♖fd1, ♖ac1 and next e3-e4, with a strong centre.

7.♗b3 0-0 8.♗f3 c5



9.0-0

9.dxc5?! deprives White of the advantage in the centre and opens the main dark-squared diagonal. Black can fight for the initiative with 9...♗d6d7 (9...♖xd1+ 10.♗xd1 ♗d6d7 is only equal.) 10.♗e4 (10.♖d5 ♖c7 11.0-0 ♗xc5 12.♖g5 ♖e8 13.♗d5 ♖d6 14.♖d1 ♗xb3 15.axb3 ♗c6 16.e4 h6 17.♖h4 g5) 10...♗a6 11.c6 bxc6 12.0-0 ♗dc5 13.♗xc5 ♗xc5 14.♗c4 ♖xd1 15.♖xd1 ♗g4.

9...cxd4

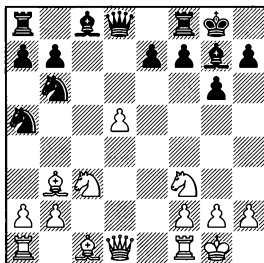
9...c4 does complicate things, but it is hardly recommendable. White's setup looks more natural after 10.♗c2 ♗c6 11.h3! a6 12.♖e2 ♖c7 13.♖d1 ♖d8 14.a3 ♗e6 15.a4.

10.exd4

10.♗xd4?! ♗c6 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.♖f3 is in Black's favour. He can

simply ignore the threat on c6 with 12...a5!, e.g. 13.♖xc6 a4 14.♙c2 a3 15.♙b3 ♙a6.

10...♗c6 11.d5 ♗a5



12.♙e1!

The d5-pawn is already hanging, so White should oppose counterpressure on e7. He can achieve that also with 12.♙g5. Then 12...h6 13.♙f4 ♙g4 14.h3 ♙xf3 15.♖xf3 ♗xb3 16.axb3 ♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♖xd5 18.♖xd5 ♗xd5 19.♙xh6 ♖fd8 eliminates to a drawish endgame, but still White can claim that he has a bishop vs. knight. Probably 12...♗xb3 13.axb3 ♖e8, transposing to the main line, is the better continuation.

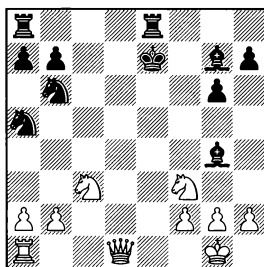
12...♙g4

12...♗xb3 avoids the complications of the main line, but after 13.♖xb3!? (13.axb3 ♙g4) 13...♙xc3! 14.bxc3 ♖xd5 15.♖xe7 ♖xb3 16.axb3 ♗d5 17.♖e5 ♗xc3 18.♙b2 f6! 19.♖ee1 ♗d5 20.♖ad1 ♗b4 21.♖d6 ♙g4 22.♙xf6 ♙xf3 23.gxf3 ♖ac8 24.♖e4 ♗c6 25.♙g2 ♖f7 26.f4 ♖cf8 27.♙g5 ♙g7 28.♖ee6 the game is a dead draw according to the chips, and even a little unpleasant for Black from practical point of view.

13.♙g5!?

13.h3 ♙xf3 14.♖xf3 ♗xb3 15.axb3 ♖e8 16.♙e3 ♙xc3 17.♙xb6 ♖xb6 18.bxc3 ♖xb3 19.♖ab1 ♖a3 20.♖xb7 ♖ac8 was a quick draw in Ehlvest-Kamsky, Philadelphia 2010.

13...♖e8 14.d6 ♖xd6 15.♙xf7+ ♗xf7 16.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 17.♙xe7 ♗xe7



Only Black can play for a win here. In the stem game Tregubov-Kurnosov, Moscow 2008, White immediately erred with 18.♗b5? and after 18...♗f8 19.♖d6+ ♗g8 20.♗c7 ♖ed8 21.♖b4 ♖ac8, he ended up without material. More interesting is 18.♗d5+! ♗f8! 19.♖d2 ♙xf3 20.♗c7 ♙c6 21.♖xa5 ♗g8 22.♗xe8 ♖xe8 23.♙e1 ♖f8!. With rooks on board, Black keeps the initiative.

6...♖xd5 7.♗e2 0-0 8.♗c3 ♖d8 9.♙e2 c5!?

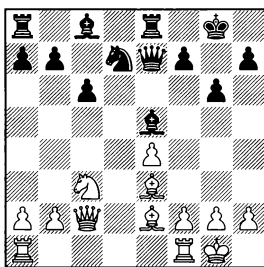
I suggest to adopt the standard Grünfeld approach. Some fans of the Meran might prefer 9...c6 10.0-0 e5. Still, White is usually slightly better in such a pawn structure. Play can continue with:

11.dxe5

3.♟c3 d5 4.e3

11.d5 is obviously innocuous:
11...cxd5 12.♞xd5 ♟c6 13.♞d1 ♟e6
14.♞b5 ♞b6=, Prins-D.Byrne, Tel
Aviv 1964.

11...♟xe5 12.e4 ♞e7! 13.♟e3 ♞e8!
14.♞c2 ♟d7



15.♞ad1

Black prevents f4 by tactical
means: 15.f4? ♟xc3 16.♞xc3 ♞xe4.

15...♟f6 16.♟d4 b6 17.f3

Again, 17.f4? is bad due to 17...
♟xd4+ 18.♞xd4 ♞c5 19.♞fd1 ♟xe4.

17.♟h1 would give us time
for simplification with 17...♟xd4
18.♞xd4 ♟b7 19.f3 ♞ad8 20.♞fd1
♞xd4 21.♞xd4 ♞d8.

17...♟b7 18.♟xe5 ♞xe5. Black
has everything covered.

**10.d5 e6 11.e4 exd5 12.exd5
b6**

The position after 12...♟f5
13.0-0 ♟a6 14.♟e3 is similar to the
fianchetto system, but the white
bishop favourably covers the d3-
square: 14...♞a5 15.♞c1 ♞fe8 16.♞b3
♟b4 17.♞fd1±, Salgado Lopez-Fer-
cec, Rijeka 2010.

13.0-0 ♟b7

The placement of the bishop on
e2 has its drawbacks, too. The d5-
pawn is hanging.

14.♞b3!

White should not take a pas-
sive stand. In the event of 14.♟f3
♟d7 15.♞e1 ♟e5 16.♟e2 ♞d6!,
Black's queen proves to be a decent
blocker. This means that only Black
can display activity, for example:
17.♟g5 a6 18.a4 h6 19.♟e3 f5 20.f4
♟d7 21.♟f3 ♞ae8.

14...♞d6

It is useful to take out the f4-
square from White's bishop, al-
though 14...♟d7!? 15.♟f4 (15.♟e3
♟d4 16.♞ad1 ♟xe3 17.fxe3 ♞g5∞
Zivanic-Kritz, Brownsville 2010)
15...a6 16.a4 ♞e8 17.♞fe1 ♟d4 18.♟c4
(18.♞ad1 ♞f6 19.♟g3 h5) 18...♟e5
19.♟xe5 ♞xe5 20.♞xe5 ♟xe5 21.♞e1
♞c7 22.g3 ♞d8 is also fine for Black.

15.♞d1

15.♟b5 only discoordinates
White's pieces: 15...♞e5 16.♟f3 ♟d7
17.d6 ♟xf3 18.♞xf3 c4 19.♞c6 ♟c5±;

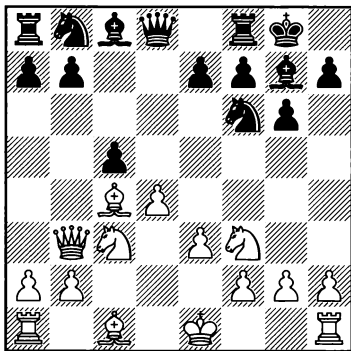
15...♟e3 is too passive. Black can
intercept the initiative with 15...a6
16.♞ad1 f5.

15...♟bd7

Black has successfully complet-
ed development.

B. 5. ♖b3 dxc4

5...e6 is a solid variation. I prefer the text as it leads to more unbalanced play.

6. ♖xc4 0-0 7. ♜f3 c5**8.d5**

Evidently, 8.0-0 cxd4 9. ♜xd4 ♜bd7 10. ♜d1 a6 11. ♖d2 e5 does not set any problems.

8.dxc5 is more ambitious, but Black has good play after 8...♗a5:

a) 9. ♜e5 ♜e4! 10. ♖xf7+ ♔h8 11.f4 ♖xe5 12.fxe5 ♜xc5 13. ♗c4 ♖f5 14.0-0 ♜c6 15. ♖d2 ♜fd8 16. ♖e1 ♜xe5 17. ♜e4 ♜xc4 18. ♖xa5 ♜xa5 19. ♜xc5 ♜d2=.

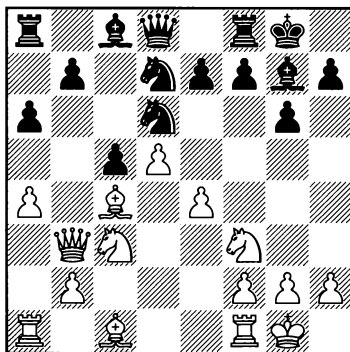
b) 9. ♗b5 ♗c7 10. ♜d5 ♜xd5 11. ♖xd5 ♜d8 12.e4 e6 13. ♖c4 ♖d7.

c) 9. ♖d2 ♗xc5 10. ♜b5 ♜c6 11. ♜c1 ♗h5! (11...♗b6!? 12.0-0 ♖g4=) 12.h3 ♜e4, with active pieces.

8...a6! 9.a4 ♜bd7 10.0-0!

In practice White only linked

this setup with 10.e4, but it is a tactical error due to 10...♗a5 11. ♖d2 b5 12. ♜xb5 ♗b6 13. ♜c3 ♗xb3 14. ♖xb3 ♜b8 15. ♖c2 ♜xb2 16. ♜a2, Kovalyov-Cornette, Montreal 2010. Here 16... ♜xe4! 17. ♜xb2 ♜xc3 would have earned Black a second pawn (on d5 or a4) for the exchange and very active minor pieces. White would have been doomed to a passive defence.

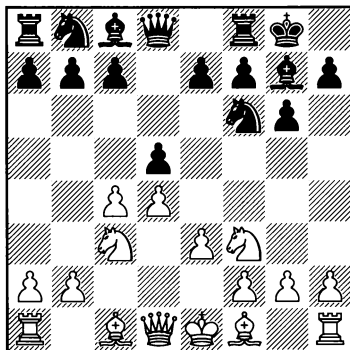
10...♜e8! 11.e4 ♜d6**12. ♖f4**

12.a5 would entice Black to open the b-file. That could be done immediately: 12...b5!? 13.axb6 ♜b8, or after a preparation: 12...♜e5 13. ♜xe5 ♖xe5 14. ♖h6 ♜e8 15.f4 ♖d4+ 16. ♔h1 ♖d7 17. ♖e2 ♜b8.

12...♗a5 13.e5 ♜xc4 14. ♗xc4 ♗b4

White's pawns are hanging: 15. ♗xb4 cxb4 16. ♜e4 f5 17. ♜eg5 ♜c5 18. ♖e3 ♜d3 19. ♖d4 ♜f4 20. ♖c5 h6 21. ♜e6 ♜xe6 22.dxe6 ♜fe8.

C. 5. ♖f3 ♗g7



I consider here:

C1. 6.b4 and C2. 6. ♗e2.

Alternatively:

6.cd5 ♖xd5 7. ♗c4 ♖b6 8. ♗b3 c5 transposes to a position which I mentioned in line A.

6. ♖b3 dxc4 7. ♗xc4 c5 8.d5 a6 is line B.

6. ♗d2 is another way to prevent ...c5, without committing oneself with b4. I answered it with 6...e6! – see game **10 G. Rodriguez-Delchev**, La Massana 04.01.2011.

C1. 6. b4 c6!

Preparing counterplay with ...a7-a5.

Another safe continuation is 6...b6, reviving the threat of ...c5. White can discourage it with 7. ♗a3! (7. ♖b3 c5 8.bxc5 bxc5 9.cxd5 ♖bd7 10. ♗e2 ♖b8 11. ♖a3 ♗b7 gives Black sufficient counterplay, for instance: 12.0-0 ♖xd5 13. ♗d2 cxd4 14. ♖xd4

e5 15. ♖f3 e4 16. ♖d4 ♖f4!?∞, Akopian-Ponomarev, Khanty-Man-siysk 2009, or 12. ♖b1 ♗xd5.) 7...c6! (After 7...c5 8.bxc5 bxc5 9. ♖c1, White retains a slight advantage: 9...♖e4 10. ♗xc5! ♖xc5 11.dxc5 ♖a5 12. ♖d2 dxc4 13. ♗xc4 ♖c6 14. ♖d5 ♖xd2+ 15. ♖xd2±) 8. ♖c1 a6! 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.b5 axb5 11. ♖b3 (11. ♖xb5 ♗d7 12. ♖b3 ♖c6 13. ♖b2 ♖a4!) 11...b4! 12. ♗xb4 ♖c6 13. ♗e2 ♖xb4 14. ♖xb4 ♖e4 15.a3 (or 15.a4 ♖xc3 16. ♖xc3 ♗d7 17. ♗b5 ♗xb5 18. ♖xb5 ♖a5 19. ♖b4 ♖d7 20. ♖xb6 ♖xa4 21.0-0 ♖c4=) 15...♗g4 16.0-0 (16. h3 ♗xf3 17. ♗xf3 ♖xc3 18. ♖xc3 ♖d7 19.0-0 e6 20. ♖xb6 ♖fb8) 16...e6, with a balanced game.

7. ♗b2

7.c5 gains space on the queenside, but allows the breakthrough ...e7-e5: 7...♖bd7 8. ♗b2 e5 9. ♗e2 exd4 10. ♖xd4 ♖e5 11.0-0 ♖e8=, Rustemov-Svidler, Germany 2006.

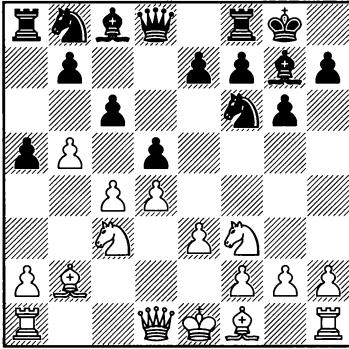
After 7. ♖b3, we could follow up with our main plan: 7...dxc4!? 8. ♗xc4 b5 9. ♗e2 a5 10.a3 (or 10.0-0 ♗e6 11. ♖b2 axb4 12. ♖xb4 ♖a6 13. ♖b2 b4 14. ♖a4 ♖a5 15. ♖c2 ♗f5 16. ♖b3 ♖e4, Troianescu-Botvinnik, Budapest 1952) 10...axb4 11. ♖xb4 ♖a5 12. ♖xa5 ♖xa5 13. ♗d2 ♖a7 14.0-0 ♗f5 15. ♖e5 ♖e4=, Kempinski-Lagowski, Warsaw 2004.

7...a5 8.b5

White could also keep the clamp on c5 with 8.a3 axb4 9.axb4 ♖xa1

Part 4

10. ♖xa1, but then the b4-pawn is a good target: 10... dxc4 11. ♕xc4 b5 12. ♕d3 ♖a6.



8...a4!

It would have been premature to define the pawn structure on the queenside with 8... cxb5?! 9. ♖xb5 a4. White was slightly better in Tomashevsky-Evdokimov, Pardubice 2006, after 10. ♖c1 ♖c6 11. ♕e2 ♕e6 12. cxd5 ♖xd5 13. 0-0.

9. ♕a3

If White grabs the pawn with:

9. bxc6 bxc6 10. ♖xa4 ♖a5+ 11. ♖c3, he should be ready to face 11... ♕a6! Even with two extra pawns in the endgame, he'll have to find only moves to equalise following:

12. cxd5

Or 12. ♕e2 ♖bd7 13. ♖d2 ♖fb8 14. ♖b3 ♖b4 15. cxd5 ♕xe2 16. ♖xe2 cxd5+; 12. c5? ♕xf1 13. ♖xf1 ♖bd7.

12... ♕xf1 13. ♖xf1 cxd5 14. g3 ♖e4! 15. ♖b3

15. ♖xe4 loses a piece to 15... dxe4 16. ♖d2 ♖b5+.

15... ♖c6 16. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 17. ♖xd5 ♖fb8 18. ♕c1 e5=.

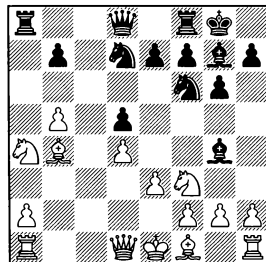
The immediate 9. ♖xa4 does not actually win a pawn since Black regains it by force: 9... cxb5 10. cxb5 ♖a5+ 11. ♖c3 ♖e4 12. ♖c1 ♕f5 13. ♕d3 ♖b4 14. ♖b3 ♖xb3 15. axb3 ♖xc3 16. ♖xc3 ♕xd3 17. ♖xd3 ♖a5=.

To 9. ♖c1 ♖a5 10. ♕d3, Aronian-Svidler, Morelia/Linares 2007, simplest is 10... dxc4 11. ♕xc4 cxb5 12. ♕b5 a3 13. ♕a1 ♕e6=.

9...cxb5 (9... ♕f5 10. ♖c1 ♖e4=) 10. cxb5

Or 10. ♖xb5 ♖c6 11. ♕e2 ♕e6 12. cxd5 ♖a5+ 13. ♖d2 ♖xd5 14. 0-0 ♖fc8 15. ♖fc1 ♕f5=.

Afer the text, Black has good chances due to the weak square c4. He can direct his knight towards it with 10... ♖bd7 11. ♕e2 ♖b6 12. 0-0 ♕f5=, or firstly develop the bishop with 10... ♕g4 11. ♕b4 ♖bd7. The tactical background of the latter variation is seen in the game Akopian-Perelshteyn, Stillwater 2007 which went 12. ♖xa4?

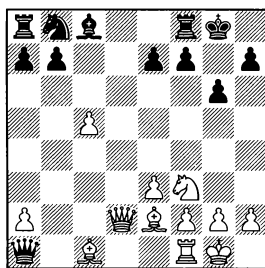


3.♟c3 d5 4.e3

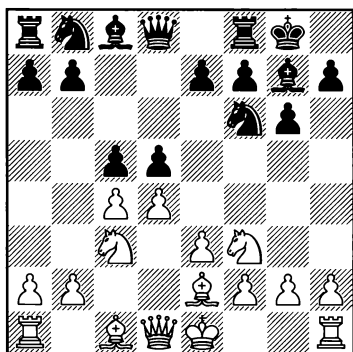
12...e5!! 13.♙e2 (13.♙xf8 ♙xf8+) 13...♞e8 14.dxe5 ♜xe5 15.♜c5 ♜xf3+ 16.gxf3 ♙h3. Black has a terrific compensation for the pawn. The source game did not last long: 17.♙c3 b6 18.♜b3 ♞xe3!! 19.♙d4 (19.fxe3 ♜e4 20.fxe4 ♙xc3+) 19...♞e8 20.♞g1 ♜h5 21.♞d2 ♞a4 22.0-0-0 ♞c8+ 23.♜b1 ♙f5+ 24.♜a1 ♞c2 and White resigned.

white has a lot of activity in return for the spoiled structure.

10...♞xc3+ 11.♞d2 ♞xa1 12.0-0



C2. 6.♙e2 c5



White has a dangerous initiative for the exchange. The best way to defend is:

12...♙e6! 13.♙b2 ♞xa2 14.♜g5 f6 15.♙f3 ♙c4! 16.♙xb7!=. (16.♞c1 ♜c6! 17.♞xc4 ♞ad8 18.♙d5+ ♞xd5 19.♞xd5+ ♜h8 favours Black.)

7...dxc4 is simpler and leads to a typical balanced position.

8.0-0

C21. 7.dxc5; C22. 7.0-0.

C21. 7.dxc5 dxc4!?

7...♞a5 is considered as main line, but it leads to forced play which needs deep study. It is also possible to stumble into a home preparation:

8.cxd5! ♜xd5 9.♞xd5 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3!?

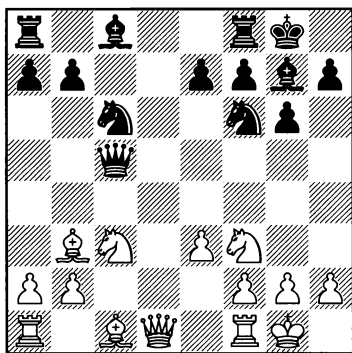
10.♙d2 is about equal after 10...♞d8 11.♙xc3 ♞xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♞xd5 13.♞d1 ♞xc5 14.♞d8+ ♜g7 15.♜d4

Black has some initiative in the endgame after 8.♞xd8 ♞xd8 9.♙xc4 ♜bd7 (9...♜fd7) 10.c6 bxc6 11.0-0 ♜b6 (It would be interesting to try 11...♜e8!? 12.♙d2 ♞b8 13.♜a4 ♜b6 14.♙a5 ♙g4+.) 12.♙e2 ♜fd5=.

8...♞a5 9.♙xc4

White has also tried 9.♞d4. I prefer here the new move 9...♜fd7! 10.♞xc4 ♞xc5 11.♞h4 ♜c6 12.♙d2 (12.♜g5 h6 13.♜ge4 ♞a5) 12...♞d8 13.♞ac1 ♜de5, heading for the weak square d3.

9...♞xc5 10.♙b3 ♜c6



The position is similar to the f4 system, but White still has to work to develop his dark-squared bishop:

11.e4 g4 12. e3 a5

Of course, the queen will be also safe on h5: 12... h5 13.h3 xf3 14. xf3 xf3 15.gxf3 d7= .

13.h3 ad8 14. e2 xf3 15. xf3 d7 16. fd1 e6=

I have been following the game Fressinet-Dorfman, Belfort 2010, where the opponents signed the draw on the next move.

C22. 7.0-0 cxd4 8.exd4 c6

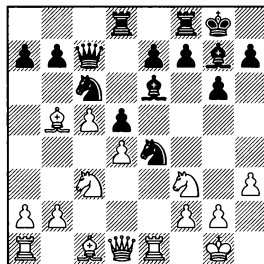
We have reached the Tarrasch Defence with colours reversed. Black can choose most of the typical White plans, linked with a light-squared blockade in the centre.

9.c5

Trivial alternatives do not set any problems:

a) 9.h3 dxc4 (Or 9... e6 10. g5 e4 11. xe4 dxe4 12.d5 exf3 13. xf3 h6 14. e3 d7 15.dxc6 xc6= .) 10. xc4 a5 11. e2 e6 12. e5 c8 13. f3 d5 14. e4 b4 .

b) 9. e1 e6! 10.c5 (10. g5? dxc4 11. xf6 xf6 12.d5 xc3-+ ; 10. g5 f5 11. e3 dxc4 12. xc4 a5 13. f1 d5 14. f3 xe3 15.fxe3 c8 16.h3 e6 17. d2 c4 18. ad1 e6=, Vera Gonzalez -Ernst, Thessaloniki 1988) 10... e4 11.h3! (11. $\text{e3?!$ xc5 12.dxc5 d4 $\bar{+}$) 11... c7 12. b5 ad8 .



The battleplan is to reinforce the d5-pawn, then play ...f6 and break through in the centre with ...e7-e5. My game Franic-Delchev, Zadar 2009, went 13. a4 f5 (13... xc3 14.bxc3 f5 15. d2 f6 16.c4! e4 17.cxd5 xd5 18. c4=) 14. e2 e5! 15. xc6 bxc6 16. e3 f6 $\bar{+}$.

9... e4 10. e3 b6! 11. a4

Or 11. b5 xc3 12.bxc3 a5 ; 11.cxb6 xc3 12.bxc3 axb6 $\bar{+}$.

11... xc3 12.bxc3 d7 13. b3 bxc5 14.dxc5 g4 15.h3 xf3 16. xf3 e6

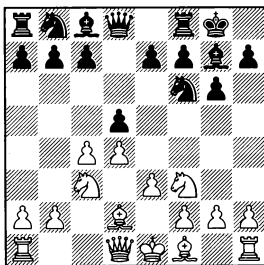
Black is already slightly better.

Part 4

Complete Games

10. G. Rodriguez-Delchev La Massana 04.01.2011

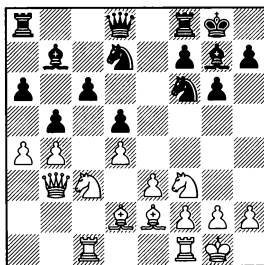
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♙g7
4.♘c3 d5 5.e3 0-0 6.♙d2



White aims to prevent ...c5. Some Grünfeld adepts feel ill at ease when they cannot break through White's centre. However, I have enough practice in Queen's Gambit/Slav positions so I was aware that the bishop had no prospects on d2. In the event of pawn exchanges in the centre, this piece would be only hampering the coordination of White's pieces. In any case, it would have been better placed on c1. I decided to follow up with simple developing moves:

6...e6 7.♙c1 b6 8.♙e2

8.cxd5 leads to similar positions: 8...exd5 9.b4 a6! (It is better to avoid b5 which hits c6.) 10.♙b3 ♙b7 11.♙e2 ♘bd7 12.0-0 b5! 13.a4 c6



This is a typical defensive setup against White's minority attack. As a rule, Black is fine here if he succeeds in manoeuvring a knight to d6. From there, it controls e4 and it can also plug the c-file on c4. The game Zimmerman-Van der Weide, Triesen 2006, went 14.♙fd1 (14. a5! was necessary, but after 14... ♘e4! 15.♙fd1 ♘d6 Black would have the easier game.) 14... ♘b6! 15.♘e5 ♘fd7! 16.♘xd7 ♙xd7 17.♙c2 f5 18.♙e1 ♙ae8, with a clear positional advantage

8...♙b7 9.0-0 ♙e7!

9...♘bd7?! is imprecise due to 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♘b5!

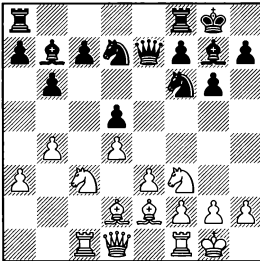
10.a3?!

A strange move that only loses time. It looks that White was not sure what plan to choose. Or he was setting the positional trap 10...c5?! 11.cxd5 exd5 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.b4!.

He could have played immediately 10.b4!, threatening to gain space on the queenside with c5. So I should take 10...dxc4 11.♙xc4 and counterattack in the centre with 11...c5! 12.dxc5 (12.bxc5 bxc5 13.dxc5 ♘bd7=) 12...bxc5 13.b5 a6 14.a4 axb5 15.axb5 ♘bd7=.

Another option was 10.cxd5 exd5 11.b4 c6! 12.♚b3 ♘bd7 13.♙c2 ♙fc8 14.♙fc1 ♙f8 15.a3 b5!, achieving the setup I mentioned before.

10...♘bd7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.b4



In this typical pawn structure, White commonly tries to push b5 and activate or exchange his dark-squared bishop from a3. But it is now on d2, so this plan does not work here. On the contrary, I will attack the queenside myself.

12...♙fc8 13.♚b3 ♙f8!

My bishop also was on the wrong diagonal, but it took an important step in the right direction. Now White's queenside pawns are stopped. I hoped to complete the regrouping by bringing the bishop to d6 where it belongs.

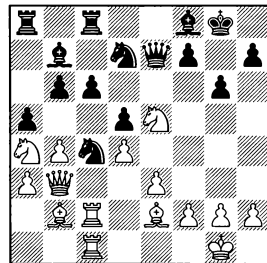
14.♙c2 c6

I was planning ...b5, ...♘b6, ...a5 so White anticipated it with:

15.♘a4 ♘e4 16.♙c1 ♘d6 17.♙b2 ♘c4 18.♙fc1 a5!

So far so good. White's queenside begins to crumble.

19.♘e5



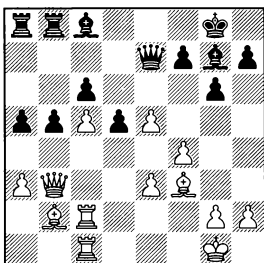
19...b5

I had better options here. For instance, 19...axb4 20.♘xd7 ♚xd7 21.axb4 ♙a7! or 19...♘dx5 20.dxe5 axb4 21.axb4 ♙a6 would have earned me a clear edge.

20.♘c5 ♘xc5 21.bxc5 ♘xe5 22.dxe5 ♙g7?!

I provoke f4 which is obligatory anyway. 22...♖cb8, with the idea of ...♙c8-f5 and ...b5-b4 was slightly better for Black.

23.f4 ♖cb8 24.♙f3 ♙c8



I am ready to push ...b4. Then White cannot close the queenside with a4, because I would have ...f6 (after due preparation). It is clear that White should seek an active plan, too. It is evidently connected with 25.e4!, when my only reasonable answer would be 25...d4! 26.♙xd4 b4, with a compensation for the pawn, for instance: 27.a4 (27.♖e3 ♙e6 28.♖b2 bxa3 29.♖xa3 ♖xb2 30.♖xb2 a4 31.♖a1 ♙b3) 27...♙e6 28.♖e3 ♖d8. White decides to deprive me of this option, but tempi are important in this sharp position and I seized the initiative:

25.♙d4 b4 26.axb4?!

This is too cooperative. 26.♖a4! ♖c7 27.e4 bxa3 28.♖xa3 dxe4 29.♙xe4 ♙e6 would have been un-

clear. After the text, I could have fixed a clear edge by 26...axb4! when White is unable to stop my pawn from further advancing. 27.e4 would lose outright to 27...♙h6! 28.g3? ♖a3. However, in the time trouble, I wanted everything to be with tempi so I chose:

26...♖xb4?! 27.♖a3 f6?!

Playing on the flank where the opponent is stronger. Of course, 27...♖b7! looks more natural.

28.♖b2?!

28.♙c3! would have left me struggling for the draw, probably with 28...♖bb8 29.e4 dxe4 30.♙xe4 fxe5 31.♙xc6 ♖a6 32.♙d5+ ♙e6. The text, and especially the next mistake, quickly finish the game in my favour.

28...♖ab8 29.♖cb1? fxe5 30.♙xe5

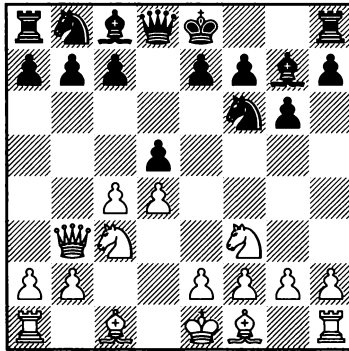
White finally noticed that 30.fxe5 ♙xe5 31.♖xb4 axb4 32.♖xb4 loses to 32...♙xh2+! 33.♙xh2 ♖h4+ 34.♙g1 ♖e1+.

30...♙xe5 31.fxe5 ♖xe5 32.♖xb4 axb4 33.♖b3 ♙f5 34.♖d1 ♖c3!-+ 35.♙xd5+ cxd5 36.♖xd5+ ♙h8 37.e4 ♖e3+ 38.♙h1 ♖xe4 39.♖d6 ♖e8 40.♖f6+ ♙g8 41.♖f1 ♖e5 42.♖b6 ♖b8 0-1.

Part 5

The ♔b3 System

1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♘g7 5.♔b3



Part 5

Main Ideas

Objectives and Move Orders

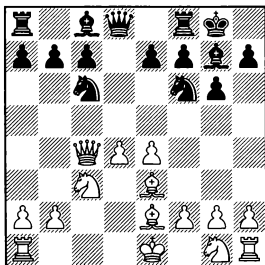
White has two ways of reaching the ♖b3 system:

**1.d4 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.♠c3 d5
4.♠f3 ♠g7 5.♖b3 or 4.♖a4+ ♠d7
5.♖b3**

I suggest to use the same approach to both of them: we attack the d4-pawn with ...♠g7, ...♠c6 and ...♠g4. Our aim is to provoke d4-d5 when we retreat to a5 with tempo and attack White's centre with ...c6.

If White tries to trick us with the move order 4.♖b3 dxc4 5.♖xc4 ♠g7 6.e4 0-0 7.♠e2 ♠c6 8.♠e3, avoiding the main line with 8.♠f3 ♠g4, we intercept the initiative with the thematic break:

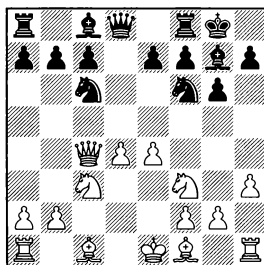
Shabalov–Mikhalevski
Philadelphia 2009



8...e5! 9.dxe5 (or 9.d5 ♠d4!?)
9...♠xe5, or even 9...♠g4!.

White can also prevent ...♠g4 by
8.h3:

Portisch–Korchnoi
Bad Kissingen, 1983



It would be a big disadvantage to play against such a powerful centre with all the minor pieces on the board. We could think about developing our bishop to b7, but having put our knight to c6 rules out this idea. In no way should we concede to a cramped position after 8...♠d7 9.♠e3 ♠b6 10.♖c5 f5 11.e5.

In this very important game one of the greatest Grünfeld (and not only!) players of all times introduced a heavyweight novelty:

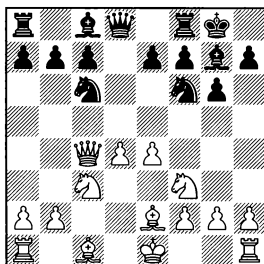
8...e5! 9.dxe5 ♠d7! 10.e6 fxe6
11.♖xe6+ ♠h8 12.♖d5 ♠xf3! 13.gxf3

3.♖c3 ♗g7 4.♖f3 d5 5.♜b3

♖d4 14.♗e3! ♖c2+ 15.♗d2 ♖xa1 with sufficient compensation for the pawn.

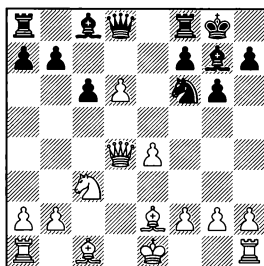
As we see, White does not gain much by avoiding the main line:

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5 4.♖f3 ♗g7 5.♜b3 dxc4 6.♜xc4 0-0 7.e4 ♖c6 8.♗e2



Our main recommendation here is **8...♗g4**, but we also analyse the interesting alternative:

8...e5!? 9.d5 ♖d4 10.♖xd4 exd4 11.♜xd4 c6 12.d6

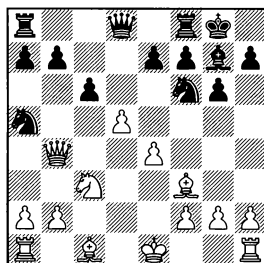


where I propose the novelty 12...♖d7! and Black regains the pawn in a few moves. If you want to surprise your opponent at an early stage, and save time on preparation, you can check the “Step by Step” chapter for more detail.

9.d5! ♖a5 10.♜b4!

10.♜a4?! ♗xf3! 11.♗xf3 c6 12.0-0 b5! 13.♜b4 is similar to the main line, but with an extra move (...b5) for Black.

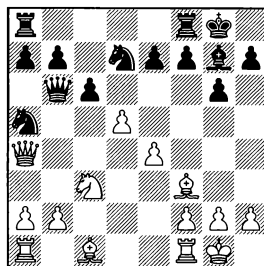
10...♗xf3 11.♗xf3 c6



12.0-0

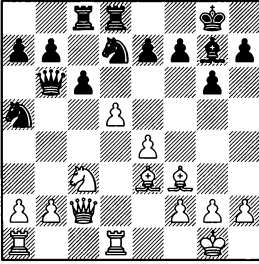
12.♗e3 is premature since Black gains the initiative with 12...cxd5! 13.exd5 ♖c8! and the a5-knight suddenly enters play with a great effect.

12...♜b6 13.♜a4 ♖d7



White has several reasonable options here, but I would like to focus your attention on the most topical of them:

14.♖d1 ♗fd8 15.♜c2 ♖ac8 16.♗e3



16...♖c7!

I think that in this open position with a bishop pair for White Black should aim for a symmetric pawn structure. Furthermore, the combination of ♖+♘:♖+♙ is known to be more efficient than the ♘:♙. Therefore we retreat the queen and take on c6 by piece:

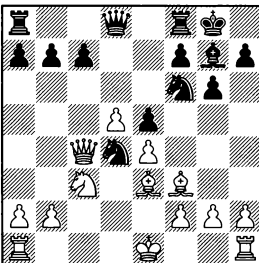
17.dxc6 ♘xc6 18.♙ac1 ♖b8!

White has not any advantage.

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

When White attempts to hold his pawns on d4 and e4, we should counterattack with ...e5:

Rjazzantzev-Delchev
Port Marly 2009



No matter what White plays, we should keep our knight on d4, at least until White castled short. Only then we could take on f3 and attack the enemy king. Otherwise we should develop a queenside initiative with ...b5 and ...c5, for instance:

a) 12.♙c1 ♘e8 13.h4 ♘d6 14.♖d3 c5.

b) 12.0-0-0 ♘e8 13.h4 ♘d6 14.♖d3 c5.

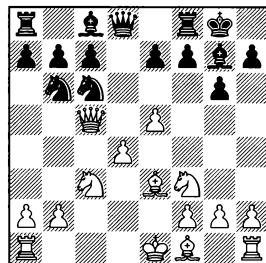
c) 12.♙d1 c6+ (Δ...b5-b4) 13.dxc6 ♙c8 14.♖a4 ♙xc6.

Even after 12.♘e2, as Rjazzantzev played, Black still can hold on to the outpost at d4:

12...b5! 13.♖d3 (13.♖c1 ♙e8 14.♖d2 ♖d7 15.0-0-0 c5) 13...c5.

Another typical structure arises when White plays e4-e5:

Gershon-Tseitlin
Ramat Aviv/Modiin 2000



Here we should switch to a light-squared strategy with:

10...a5!

This enables ...♘b4 or ...a4 followed up by ...♙a5. The other typical way of fighting against e4-e5 is connected with ...f6. I think that it

3.♟c3 ♟g7 4.♟f3 d5 5.♟b3

can be efficient only when White had developed his bishop to g5 so ...f6 would be with tempo.

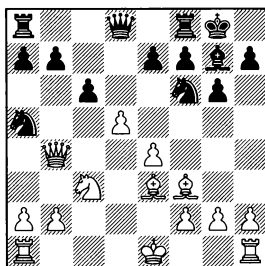
11.♟e2

11.a3?! prevents ...♟b4, but after 11....a4 and 12..♟a5 all the light squares we'll be in our possession.

11...♟b4! 12.0-0 c6! 13.♟e4 ♟f5 14.♟g3 (14.♟fd2 ♟6d5?) 14...♟d3.

Black has established domination on the light squares.

Gurevich–Urban
Groningen 1997



Most often you will face this pawn structure. Commonly we should not hurry to exchange on d5, because that would prolong the working diagonal to the bishop on f3. On the contrary, we would like to keep the centre closed until we are fully mobilised with ...♟d7, ...♟fd8, ...♟fc8. In the current position, however, White denied us the b6-square for our queen. He achieved that by delaying castling and we should exploit that with energetic play:

12...cxd5! 13.exd5 ♟c8 14.♟d1!

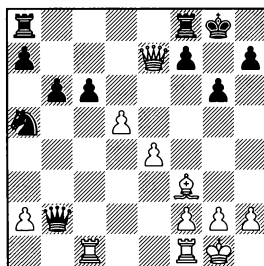
It is very dangerous to accept the pawn offer: 14.0-0 ♟c4 15.♟xa7 ♟d2!.

14...♟c4 15.♟d4 ♟d6! developing the queen with tempo.

16.♟b3 ♟d7

Exchanging the dark-squared bishops will leave Black with two active knights and the better chances.

Babula–Ruck
Novi Sad 2009



This example shows how important it is to delay the exchange on d5 as much as possible (except for tactical reasons).

Black's play is based entirely on blockade:

21...♟fe8! (to stop e5) 22.♟g5!

Bareev-Lalic, Javorina 2003 saw 22.♟d7 whereas Black should have continued with 22...♟e5!. Then 23.dxc6 would not be good owing to 23...♟ed8 followed by 24...♟ac8.

22...♟e5! 23.♟d2 ♟ad8 24.g3

Now that Black's pieces took their best places, he can exchange on d5:

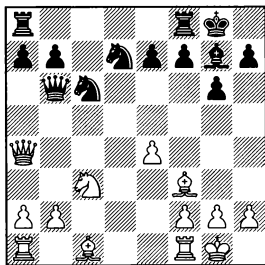
24...cxd5 25.exd5 ♟b7=

The problem knight is on its way to the dream squares d6 and c5.

Now, an example of an open centre with symmetric pawn structure:

Part 5

Cmilyte-Howell Caleta 2005



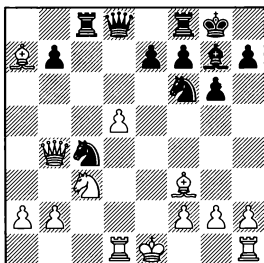
Such a position is our main aim in the ♖b3-system. It may seem passive, but in fact we have no weaknesses and our knights will be very active on the dark squares. We only have to parry a few pokes first:

15.♞d5 ♜d8 16.♙g5 ♞b6 17.♜a3 ♜e8 18.♞ad1 ♞xd5 19.exd5 ♞d4. Black is rock solid.

Tactical Motifs

In this system, White aggressively occupies the centre with e4 and often pushes d5. That enables the typical tactical hits, based on the unleashed power of the g7-bishop.

Vshivkov-Vokarev Omsk/Perm 1998

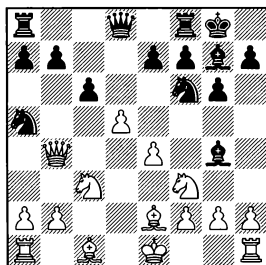


15...♞xb2! 16.♜xb2 ♞e4 17.♙d4 ♙xd4 18.♞xd4 ♞xc3 19.0-0 b5.

Note the specifics, linked with the placement of White's queen on the fourth rank. Even good players become victims of mundane play and lose their bishop on g4:

Nyback-Sammalvuo Finland 2009

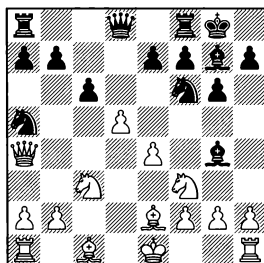
1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞c3 d5 4.♞f3 ♙g7 5.♜b3 dxc4 6.♜xc4 0-0 7.e4 ♙g4 8.♙e2 ♞c6 9.d5 ♞a5 10.♜b4 c6?? (10...♙xf3)



11.e5 1-0

Look at the next diagram:

Evdokimov-Zakharov Nizhnij Novgorod 1999



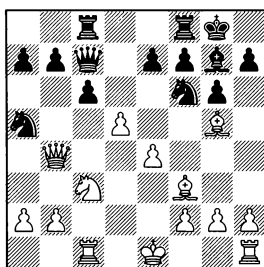
3.♖c3 ♗g7 4.♖f3 d5 5.♚b3

You might think that White grabbed a piece by 11.e5!. Not at all! He firstly took “automatically” on c6, and only when he started thinking to make a plan, did he notice e5:

11.dxc6?? ♖xc6?? 12.e5 ♗xf3 13.exf6 ♗xe2 14.fxg7.

This recurring blunder can only be explained by the fact that the mind of the Black player does not “register” the white queen on its unusual stand. Even in a correspondence game, the queen on b4 is a precondition for blunders. In the next example, Black falls victim of the hanging knight on a5:

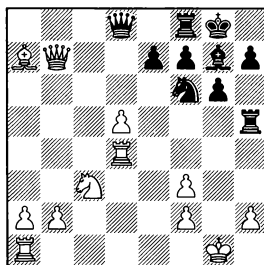
Peschardt–Hess corr. 2003



14.d6!+–. The fine point is that 14...exd6 loses to 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.♖d5. The game went instead 14...♚b6 15.♚xb6 axb6 16.e5 ♖d5 17.dxe7+–.

On the next diagram, we see another original position, typical only for the ♚b3-system:

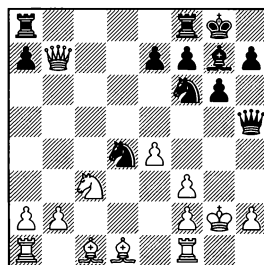
Karolyi–Nogrady Hungary, 1992



Black has not an overwhelming superiority in forces on the king-side, nor has he an advantage in the centre. Still, the split castling position of White enables various tactical possibilities.

20...♚d6 21.h4 ♖e8 22.♗b8 ♚f6 23.♗f4 ♖d6!! 24.♚b4 ♖f5 25.♗e1 ♗xh4→ 26.♗g4 ♖d4!! 27.♗e3 ♗xg4+ 28.fxg4 ♖c2 29.♚f4 ♖xe3+.

Giorgadze–Dunne Philadelphia 1991



16...♚h4 17.♚xe7 ♗fe8 18.♚a3 ♗e5 19.f4 ♖c2 20.♚a4 ♗h5 21.♗xh5 ♖xh5 22.♚xc2 ♚g4+.

Part 5

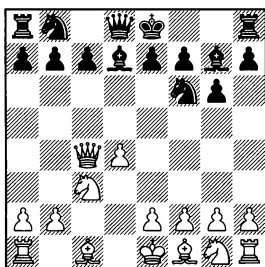
Step by Step

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞c3 d5 4.♞f3 ♟g7 5.♟b3

Note that 4.♟b3 dxc4 5.♟xc4 ♟g7 6.e4 0-0 7.♟e2 ♞c6 8.♞f3 ♟g4 transposes to the main line.

White tries occasionally the “tricky” move order:

4.♟a4+ ♟d7 5.♟b3 dxc4! 6.♟xc4 ♟g7



White’s only achievement is that he prevented Black from fianchettoing the bishop to b7. However, we advocate in the main line ...♟g4, so White’s move order does not throw us out of our repertoire. Even more, the extra move ...♟d7 is quite useful as it helps ...b5 in some variations.

7.♟f4

After 7.e4 0-0 8.♞f3 (8.e5 ♟e6! 9.exf6 ♟xc4 10.fxg7 ♜xg7 11.♟xc4 ♟xd4 12.♟e2 ♞c6), Black can trans-

pose to our main repertoire by 8...♟g4, but he has a more enterprising option: 8...b5! 9.♞xb5 ♞xe4 10.♟xc7 (10.♞xc7 ♞c6 11.♞xa8 ♟a5+ 12.♟d2 ♞xd2 13.♞xd2 ♞xd4+) 10...♞c6 11.♟d3 ♞b4 12.♟xe4 ♟xb5 13.♟xd8 ♜axd8 14.♟d2 ♞d3+ 15.♟xd3 ♟xd3 16.♟c3 ♟e4 17.♞e2 ♜d6!?, with a nice compensation for the pawn.

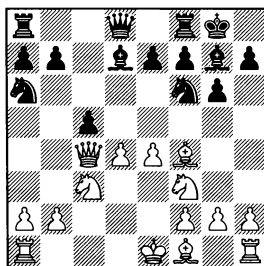
7...♞a6

7...c6!? is more solid, but it leads to symmetric pawn structures. The game Van Lommel-Posazhennikov, Vlissingen 2002, went 8.♞f3 ♟e6 9.♟d3 ♞d5 10.♞xd5 cxd5 11.e3 ♟a5+.

8.♞f3 0-0 9.e4

Black is slightly better after the passive 9.e3 c5 10.♟b3 (10.♟e2 ♜c8) 10...cxd4 11.exd4 ♟c6.

9...c5



3.♖c3 ♗g7 4.♜f3 d5 5.♞b3

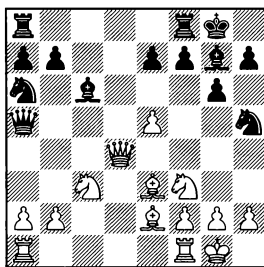
10.e5!

Alternatively:

a) 10.d5 b5 11.♜xb5 ♜xe4.

b) 10.dxc5 ♗e6 11.♞b5 ♗d7
12.♞xb7 ♜xc5 13.♞b4 ♜e6 14.♗e5
(14.♗g3 a5 15.♞a3 ♗c6 16.♞d1
♞b6 17.e5 ♜h5) 14...a5 15.♞a3
♞b6 16.♗c4 (16.♜d5 ♜xd5 17.exd5
♜d4! 18.♗xd4 ♗xd4 19.♜xd4 ♞xd4
20.♗e2 ♞ab8=) 16...♜g4 17.♗g3
♞b4 18.♞xb4 axb4 19.♜d5 ♗xb2
20.♞b1 ♗c3+ 21.♜e2 (21.♜xc3 bxc3
22.0-0 ♞ac8 23.♗a6 c2 24.♞a1 ♞c3
25.♞fc1 ♜c5 26.♗e2 ♜xe4) 21...♜c5
22.♜b6 ♗e6 23.♗xe6 fxe6 (23...
♜xe6 24.♜xa8 ♞xa8 25.♞hd1 ♞xa2+
26.♜f1 ♜f6 27.e5 ♜e4 28.♞d7
♜f8=) 24.♜xa8 ♞xa8 25.h3 ♞xa2+
26.♜f1 ♜f6 27.e5 ♜d5-+.

10...♜h5 11.♗e3 cxd4 12.♞xd4
♗c6 13.♗e2 ♞a5 14.0-0



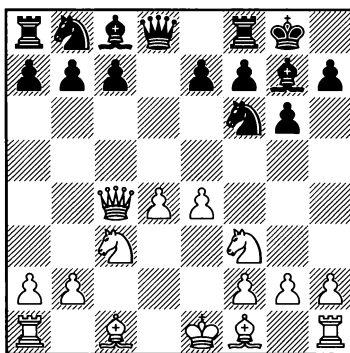
A critical position. The game
I.Sokolov-Van Wely, Belgium 2003,
saw further:

14...♗xf3!? 15.♗xf3 ♗xe5 16.♞d5
♞xd5 17.♜xd5 ♞fe8 18.♞ac1 e6=.
18.g4 is only a minor improve-
ment: 18...♜g7 19.♞fd1 e6 20.♜f4
♜b4 21.♜d3 ♜xd3 22.♞xd3 ♞ad8
23.♞ad1 ♞xd3 24.♞xd3 b6=. In a lat-
ter game, Topalov played against Ja-

kovenko in Nanjing 2009, 14...♜b4,
but I cannot recommend it, because
Krasenkow's suggestion 15.♞c5!?
gives White an obvious advantage.

5...dxc4 6.♞xc4 0-0 7.e4

7.♗f4 is not played anymore: 7...
c6 8.e4 b5 9.♞b3 ♞a5 10.♗d3 ♗e6
11.♞d1 c5 12.0-0 b4 13.♜e2 ♗g4
14.e5 ♜d5 15.♗e4 ♞d8=.



7...♜c6

I chose this move for our rep-
ertoire, because it is much closer
to the spirit of the other chapters.
Black's play in this variation is
natural and it does not require ex-
tensive home preparation. If White
further finds all the best moves, he
will have a tiny advantage in the
endgame, but practice shows that
Black easily holds his own.

7...♜a6 and 7...a6 are much
more complex systems.

8.♗e2!

White has also tried nearly all
legal moves:

Part 5

a) 8.d5?! ♖a5 9.♗d3 c6=.

b) 8.♙e3 ♘g4 9.0-0-0 (9.e5 ♙e6! 10.♗c5 a5 11.a3 a4, followed by ...♙a5) 9...♗xe3 10.fxe3 e5!=.

c) 8.e5 ♘d7!?

8...♙e6 9.exf6 ♙xc4 10.fxg7 ♗xg7 11.♙xc4 ♘xd4 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4 13.♙e2 ♗b4 gives Black a material advantage, but there is too little practice for a definite judgment.

9.♙e3

Or 9.♙e2 ♘b6 10.♗c5 a5 11.♙e3 ♘b4 12.0-0 ♘d7.

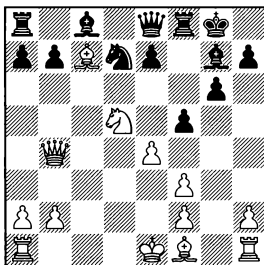
9...♘b6 10.♗c5 a5! 11.♙e2 ♘b4 12.♗c1 (12.0-0 c6 13.♗e4 ♙f5 14.♗fd2 ♘6d5∞) 12...♙f5 13.0-0 ♙d3+.

d) 8.♙f4 ♘d7!

Black can try to intercept the initiative with 8...♘h5 9.♙e3 ♙g4 10.0-0-0 e5 11.dxe5 (11.d5 ♘d4) 11...♗e8 12.♗b3 ♗xe5 13.♙e2 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♙e6, but after 15.♗xb7 his compensation is not easy to prove.

9.♗d1

9.♘d5 can be met by 9...♗xd4 10.♙xc7 ♗xf3+ 11.gxf3 ♗e8 12.♗b4 f5!

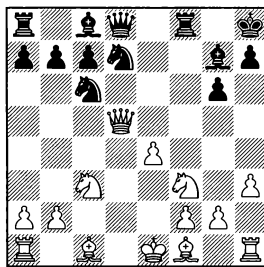


Black has a strong attack. His next move will be ...♗e5.

9...♘b6 10.♗c5 ♙g4 11.♘b5 (11.♙e3 ♗d6) 11...♙xf3 12.gxf3 ♘d7 13.♗c1 Here, 13...a6 14.d5 ♗ce5 15.♘d4 c5 forces a good endgame for Black: 16.dxc6 bxc6 17.♗xc6 ♗xc6 18.♗xc6 ♗a5+ 19.♙d2 ♗e5 20.♙xa5 ♗xc6 21.♙c3 ♙xc3+ 22.bxc3 ♗fb8.

e) 8.♙g5 ♙g4 (8...h6 9.e3) 9.0-0-0 ♘d7 10.e5 ♘b6 11.♗c5 f6!.

f) 8.h3!? This prophylactic move deprives Black of his main resource ...♙g4. Perhaps he should force the events by 8...e5!? 9.dxe5 ♘d7 10.e6 fxe6 11.♗xe6+ ♗h8 12.♗d5



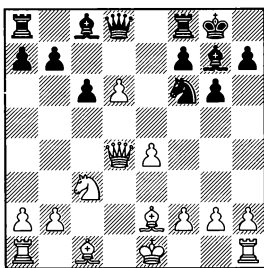
12...♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♘d4 14.♙e3 ♘c2+ 15.♘d2 ♗xa1 16.♙e2 c6 17.♗d6 ♙e5 18.♗d3 b6 19.♗xa1 ♙a6, with a sufficient compensation for the pawn.

8...♙g4

Black has a rare, but worthy alternative:

8...e5!? 9.d5 ♘d4 10.♗xd4 exd4 11.♗xd4 c6 12.d6

3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.♘f3 d5 5.♚b3



12...♘d7!

The stem game Carlsen-Dominguez, Sofia 2009 went 12...♘d5 13.♚d3 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♚f6 15.♙b2 ♘d8 16.♘d1 ♚e6 17.f4 ♚xa2 18.♘d2 and White prevailed with brilliant play. Our novelty is less committing. Black will regain the pawn with ...♙e8, ...♙e5, ...♙e6. In some variations he also has ...b5, ...♘c5, ♘b7.

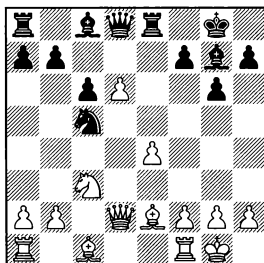
13.♚d2

Alternatives are:

a) 13.♚e3 ♙e5 14.0-0 ♙xd6 15.♘d1 ♚e7=.

b) 13.♚d1 ♘c5 14.♙e3 (14.0-0 ♙e8=; 14.♙f4 ♙xc3+ 15.bxc3 ♚f6) 14...♙xc3+ 15.bxc3 ♘xe4 16.♚d4 ♙e8 17.♙h6 ♚f6 18.♚xf6 ♘xf6 19.f3 ♙e6 20.♘d1 ♘d5=.

13...♘c5 14.0-0 ♙e8



15.♙f3 (15.f3 b5 16.♘h1 ♙e5=) 15...♙e6 16.♘d1 (16.♚g5 ♚xg5 17.♙xg5 ♙xc3 18.bxc3 ♘xe4 (18...f6 19.♙f4 ♘xe4 20.♘ad1 ♙d7 21.c4 b6 22.h3 ♘g7 23.♙e3 c5 24.♘d3 h6 25.♘b1 f5 26.h4±) 19.♙xe4 ♙xe4 20.♙fel ♙xe1+ 21.♙xe1 ♙d7= 22.♘f1 ♙e8 23.♙e7 is a drawish endgame with opposite coloured bishops) 16...♙e5 17.♚g5 (17.d7 ♘xd7; 17.♚h6 ♙xd6 18.♙f4 ♙xf4 19.♚xf4 ♙xd1+ 20.♙xd1 ♚e7 21.h4. It looks that White is slightly better, but in fact he has no approaches to Black's position: 21...♙e6 22.h5 ♘d8 23.♙xd8+ ♚xd8 24.h6 f6=.) 17...♚xg5 18.♙xg5 ♙xd6 19.♙xd6 ♙xd6 20.♘d1 ♙e5 21.♙e3 b6 22.♙d4 ♙xd4 23.♙xd4 ♙e6=.

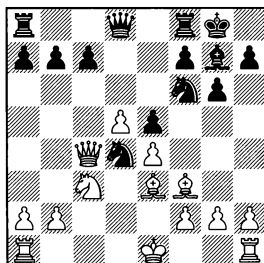
I think that 8...e5 could be a reliable backup line for our repertoire.

9.d5!

White should repel the c6-knight from the centre before Black got time for ...e5:

9.♙e3?! ♙xf3 10.gxf3!

10.♙xf3 e5 11.d5 ♘d4 occurred in my game Rjazantzev-Delchev, Port Marly 2009:



Only in the postmortem did I understand that Black's knight should not budge from d4:

a) 12.♖c1 ♖e8 13.h4 ♖d6 14.♗d3 c5 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.h5 ♖6f5.

b) 12.0-0-0 ♖e8 13.h4 ♖d6 14.♗d3 c5 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.♖e2 c5.

c) 12.♙d1 c6 (Δb5,b4) 13.dxc6 ♖c8 14.♗a4 ♖xc6 15.0-0 a6 16.♗a3 ♖e8 17.b4 ♗d6 18.♗b2 ♖ec8 19.♖c1 ♗c7 20.♖e2 ♖xc1 21.♖xc1 ♖xe4+, Rajkovic-Sedlak, Kragujevac 2009.

Even after:

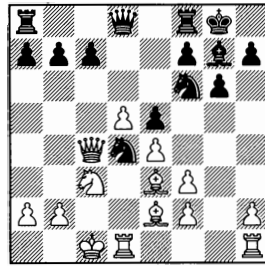
d) 12.♖e2, as Rjazantzev played, Black still can hold on to the outpost at d4:

12...b5! 13.♗d3 (13.♗c1 ♖e8 14.♗d2 ♗d7 15.0-0-0 c5; 13.♗c3 ♖xe2 14.♖xe2 ♖xd5 15.exd5 e4; 13.♗c5 ♖d7 14.♗c3 ♖xf3+ 15.gxf3 ♗f6 16.♙d2 ♖fc8 17.♖c1 ♙f8 18.h4 c6 19.dxc6 b4 20.♗e3 ♖xc6 21.h5 ♙c5) 13...c5 14.0-0 (14.♖xd4 exd4 15.♙g5 ♖e8 16.0-0 c4) 14...c4 15.♗d2 ♖xf3+ (White has castled so this exchange is already good.) 16.gxf3 a6 17.a4 ♗d7=.

10...e5 11.d5

11.dxe5 opens the centre so White can hardly count on a kingside attack anymore: 11...♖xe5 12.♗d4 (Or 12.♗b3!? ♖h5! 13.h4 ♖d3+; 12.♗b5 ♖h5! 13.♗xb7 ♖b8 14.♗d5 ♗f6 15.0-0-0 ♖f4!, Bareev-Balashov, Irkutsk 1986) 12...♗xd4 13.♙xd4 ♖c6! 14.♙e3 ♖fd8=, Gurevich-Kaidanov, Lvov 1987.

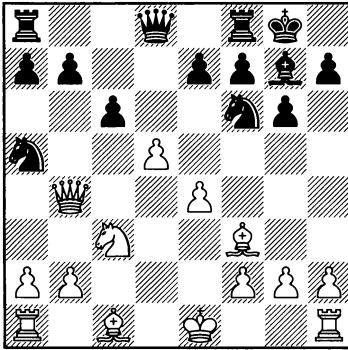
11...♖d4 12.0-0-0



3.♟c3 ♘g7 4.♟f3 d5 5.♟b3

22.♙xb5 ♜xb2. This endgame is equal, for instance: 23.♙c1 ♜d5 24.♜xd5 ♝xd5 25.a4 ♜d1 26.♝e1 ♜c3 27.♙f1 ♜xb5 (27...♝d4 28.♙e3 ♝d8 29.f3 ♝a8=) 28.axb5 ♝d3 29.♝e8+ ♙h7 30.♙e3 ♝b3=.

10...♙xf3 11.♙xf3 c6



A. 12.♙e3; B. 12.0-0.

White can also try to restrain the a5-knight by 12.♝b1 ♟b6 13.♟xb6 axb6 14.b3, but Black quickly develops a queenside initiative with 14...♜d7 15.♙d2 b5 16.0-0 b4 17.♜a4 b5 18.♜b2 ♙c3 19.♝fd1 c5=.

A. 12.♙e3 cxd5! 13.exd5 ♝c8!

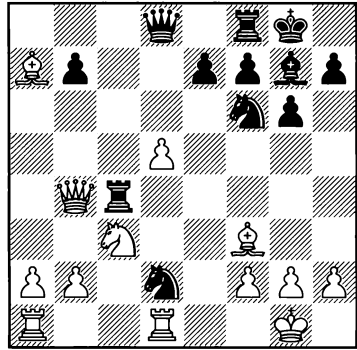
If we do not play actively, we risk to remain with a passive knight on the rim.

14.♙xa7

White should take the pawn or he might become even worse after the exchange of the dark-squared

bishops: 14.♝d1 ♜c4 15.♙d4 (15.♙xa7 ♜xb2 16.♟xb2 ♜e4=, Vshivkov-Vokarev, Perm 1998) 15...♟d6 16.♟b3 ♜d7 17.0-0 ♙xd4 18.♝xd4 ♟c5 19.♝fd1 ♜d6!±.

14...♜c4 15.0-0 ♜d2 16.♝fd1 ♝c4!



17.♟b6

White is walking on thin ice:

a) 17.♟xb7? should lose after 17...♜xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♝c7 19.♟a6 (19.♟b6 ♟d7) 19...♟a8 20.♜b5 ♝d7 21.♝ac1 ♝xd5 22.♝xd5 ♟xd5 23.♟c6 ♟g5+! 24.♙h1 ♜d5 25.♝c5 e6 26.♜c7 ♟f6 with a decisive attack, for instance: 27.♜xd5 ♟xf3+ 28.♙g1 ♟g4+ 29.♙h1 exd5 30.♟xd5 (30.♝xd5 ♝c8-+) 30...♙d4 31.♝c4 ♝e8-+.

b) 17.♟b5 ♜xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♝c8!±.

Black is threatening to double his heavy pieces on the h-file or re-deploy the f6-knight to d6 (via e8) or e5 (via d7). White can defend with:

19.♝d4

Or 19.♙e3 ♜d7! 20.♙g2 ♜e5 21.h3 ♝h4 22.♝h1 ♟f5 23.f4 ♜d3-;

19.♖ac1?! ♠e8! 20.♠e2 ♠d6 21.♗b3 b5 22.♙e3 ♗f5+ 23.♜g2 ♖h4 24.♠g1 ♙e5 25.h3 ♠c4.

19...♙xd4 20.♙xd4 ♗h3 21.♙xf6!

Or 21.♗e2 ♠xd5!? 22.♠xd5 ♙xd4 23.♠xe7+ ♜g7, with an initiative.

21...♙xf6 22.♗e2 ♖c8 23.♠e4 ♙e5 24.♠g3 ♙d6, Miton-Tyomkin, Philadelphia 2002. Black will advance his h-pawn, the d5-pawn is also quite sensitive.

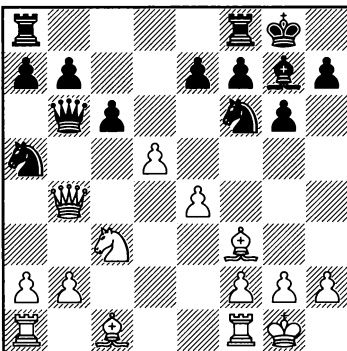
17...♠xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♗c8 19.♙d4

19.♗e3 ♗h3 20.♙d4 ♙xd4 21.♙xd4 is also insufficient due to 21...♠g4 22.♗f4 ♜xh2.

19...♖c7

Black is clearly better. He could have fixed his advantage with 19...♙xd4 20.♙xd4 ♠d7 21.♗e3 b6! 22.♙xb6 ♠xb6 23.♗xb6 ♙xc3 24.bxc3 ♗xc3, but the text is more unpleasant as Black keeps more pieces on the board.

B. 12.0-0 ♗b6



13.♗a4

Black is better developed so pawn eating like:

a) 13.♗xe7!? should be dubious. We should meet it with:

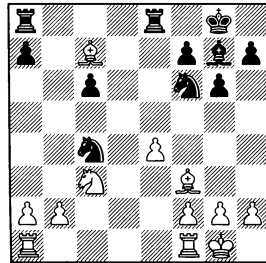
13...♠c4! (threatening with ...♖e8) 14.dxc6!

14.♙f4 (or 14.a3 a5) 14...♖ae8 15.♗c7 ♗xb2 favours Black.

14...bxc6 15.♙f4

Or 15.a3 a5 16.♠a4 ♗b5 17.♠c3 ♗b6=.

15...♖fe8 16.♗c7 ♗xc7 (16...♠h5 17.♙xh5 gxh5 18.♖ac1 ♗xc7 19.♙xc7 ♠xb2=) 17.♙xc7



This position is equal and Black has many ways to prove that. Perhaps strongest is:

17...♖ac8!

Alternatively: 17...♠d7 18.♖ad1, Gyimesi-Flumbort, Nagykanizsa 2003, 18...♠c5! 19.e5 ♠e6=.

18.♙g3

Or 18.♙f4 ♠h5 19.♙c1 (19.♙xh5 gxh5 20.♖ab1 ♙xc3 21.bxc3 ♖xe4=) 19...♖b8 20.♠a4 ♠xb2 21.♠xb2

3.♖c3 ♗g7 4.♜f3 d5 5.♜b3

♙xb2 22.♜b1 ♙xc1 23.♜fxc1 ♜xb1
24.♜xb1 ♜f6=.

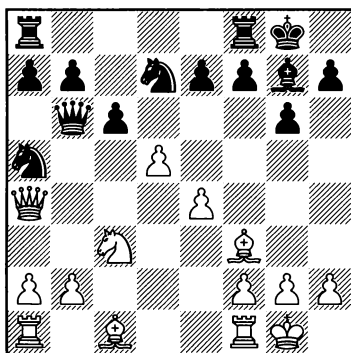
18...♜h5 19.♜ac1 ♜xg3 20.hxg3
♜xb2=, Gyimesi-Swinkels, Liver-
pool 2006.

b) 13.♜xb6 axb6 14.dxc6 bxc6 is
totally equal. White has tried:

15.♞d1 ♜a7=, Radjabov-Rowson,
Torshavn 2000. A more direct way
is 15...♜b3 16.♜b1 ♜xc1 17.♜bxc1
♙h6 18.♜c2 ♙f4 19.e5 ♙xe5 20.♙xc6
♜ac8=;

15.♜ab1 ♜fd8 (Δ♜a5-c4-d2)
16.♙e2 ♜d7 17.♙e3 b5 18.♜fc1 ♜c4
19.♙xc4 bxc4 20.b3 ♜a3, Caspi-Su-
tovsky, Ramat Aviv/Modiin 2000.
Black has a slight initiative.

13...♜d7

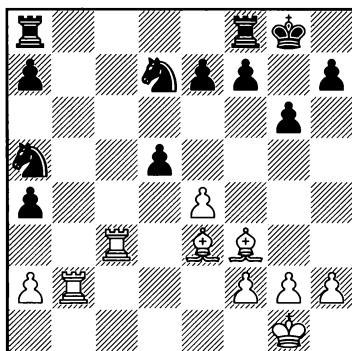


I examine here:

B1. 14.♙e3; B2. 14.dxc6; B3.
14.♙e2; B4. 14.♞d1.

Another possible move is 14.♜c2
when we could continue with the
thematic 14...♜b4 15.♜b1 ♜ac8
16.♙g4 ♜cd8=.

**B1. 14.♙e3 ♜xb2 15.♜fc1
♙xc3 16.♜ab1! b5 17.♜xb2 bxa4
18.♜xc3 cxd5**



White has the bishop pair, but
Black's knights are well coordinat-
ed:

19.exd5

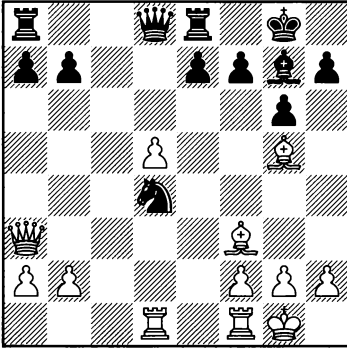
19.♜b5 was not any better: 19...
♜c4 20.exd5 ♜db6! 21.♙xb6 ♜d6
22.♜b4 axb6, Gyimesi-Roiz, Tel
Aviv 2001.

**19....♜ac8 20.♜bc2 ♜b6
21.♜c7 ♜ac4 22.♜xe7 ♜xe3
23.♜xc8 ♜xc8 24.♜xe3 ♜d8**

Babula has tested this position
twice, only to prove that it is abso-
lutely balanced.

**B2. 14.dxc6 ♜xc6 15.♜d5
♜d8 16.♙g5 ♜b6 17.♜a3 ♜e8
18.♜ad1 ♜xd5 19.exd5 ♜d4**

I have been following the game
Cmilyte-Howell, Gibraltar 2005.

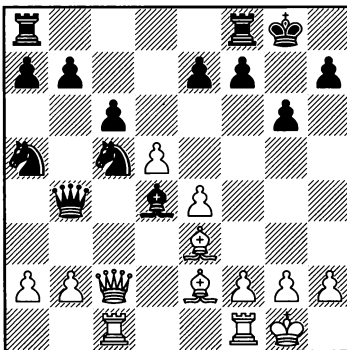


Black has not problems.

B3. 14.♙e2 ♘c5

This is more active than 14...♙ac8!? which is also enough for equality. The game Flear-Howell, Yarmouth 2007, saw further 15.♙a3 ♙c5 16.♙xc5 ♘xc5 17.♙d2 cxd5 18.exd5 (18.♘d5 ♘c6 19.♙ac1 ♘xe4 20.♙xc6 ♙xc6 21.♘xe7+ ♔h8 22.♘c6 ♘d2 23.♙d1 ♘e4 24.♘xa7 ♙xb2) 18...♘d7=.

15.♙c2 ♙b4 16.♙e3 ♙xc3
17.♙ac1 ♙d4!



18.♙xd4

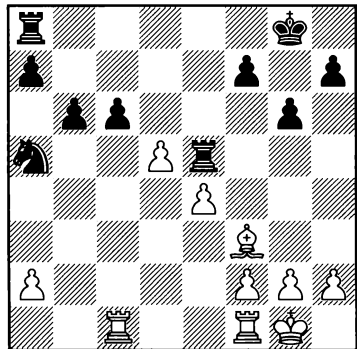
Anyway, White cannot keep his bishop pair: 18.a3 ♙a4 19.♙xa4 ♘xa4 20.♙xd4 ♘b3 21.♙c4 b5 22.♙b4 ♘xd4 23.♙xd4 ♙fd8 24.♙c1 c5 25.♙d2 c4♞.

18...♙xd4 19.♙xc5 ♙xb2
20.♙f3 b6 21.♙xe7 ♙fe8 22.♙g5

This move was suggested as an improvement on the game Bareev-Lalic, Jahorina 2003, which went:

22.♙d7 ♙e5 23.dxc6 (23.♙fd1 ♙e7 24.♙g4 ♙d8 25.g3 would allow 25...c5! 26.♙g2 f5 27.♙h4 fxe4 28.♙e1 ♙de8, with a balanced position: 29.♙xe4 ♙d6 30.♙ce1 ♙xe4 31.♙xe4 ♙xe4 32.♙xe4 ♔g7.) 23...♙ed8 24.♙g4 ♙ac8=.

22...♙e5! 23.♙xe5 ♙xe5



The game is balanced. Black can play on the dark squares with ...♙d8, ...cxd5, ...♙e7, ...♘a5-b7-d6, or gain space on the queenside with ...b5, ...♘c4.

3.♖c3 ♗g7 4.♜f3 d5 5.♞b3

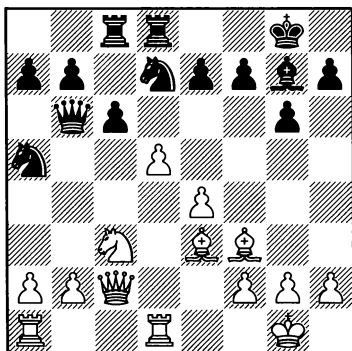
B4. 14.♞d1 ♞fd8!

Jovanic-Avrukh, Zuerich 2009, saw 14...♜c5. This move may also equalise, but the text is more precise. The game went 15.♞c2 ♜c4 16.♙e2 ♞b4 17.a3 ♞b3 18.♞xb3 ♜xb3 19.♞b1 ♜b6 20.♙e3, with a small plus according to Onishchuk.

15.♞c2

15.♙e2 weakens the e4-pawn so we can attack it with 15...♜c5! 16.♞c2 ♞b4 17.♙e3 ♙xc3 18.♞ac1 b6 19.♙xc5 ♞xc5 20.♞xc3 (20.♞b1 cxd5 21.♞xc3 ♞b4 22.exd5 ♞ac8) 20...♞xc3 21.♞xc3 cxd5. The end-game is level, for instance: 22.♞xd5 (22.b4 ♜c4 23.♞xd5 ♞xd5 24.exd5 ♜d6 25.♙a6 ♜e8; 22.exd5 ♞ac8 23.♞dc1 ♞xc3 24.♞xc3 ♞xd5 25.b4 ♜b7 26.♞c7 ♜d8 27.♞xe7 ♜c6 28.♞c7 ♜xb4 29.♞xa7 ♞d2 30.♙c4 ♞d1+ 31.♙f1 ♞a1 32.g3 ♞xa2 33.♞b7 ♜c6=) 22...♞dc8 23.♙a6 ♞xc3 24.bxc3 ♜f8 25.g3 ♜e8 26.h4 e6 27.♙b5+ ♜f8 28.♞d7 a6=.

15...♞ac8 16.♙e3



16...♞c7!

Avrukh obviously likes to keep the queen on b4 as he played this move twice. Against Onishchuk in 2007, he chose 16...♞b4 and gradually went on to equalise after 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♙e2 ♜c4 19.♙xc4 ♞xc4 20.♞ac1 ♜b6. I do not like too much Black's position after 17.♞ab1 although 17...♜b6 seems to hold everything.

In general, I think that in this open position with a bishop pair for White Black should aim for a symmetric pawn structure. Furthermore, the combination of ♞+♜:♞+♙ is known to be more efficient than the ♜:♙.

17.dxc6

a) 17.♞ac1 ♜c4 18.♙xa7 ♜de5 (18...♙h6!?) 19.♙e2 b6 20.dxc6 ♞xd1+ 21.♞xd1 ♜xb2 22.♞xb2 ♞xa7=.

b) 17.♞a4?! b5 18.♞b4 ♜e5 19.dxc6 (19.♙e2 ♜ac4) 19...a6! 20.♜d5 ♜xf3+ 21.gxf3 ♜xc6!.

c) 17.♙e2 cxd5 18.♞xd5 e6 19.♞d2 a6 20.♞ad1 ♜b6 21.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 22.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 23.b3 ♜c6 24.♜d1 ♜c8=.

17...♜xc6

My analysis suggests that 17...♞xc6 also gives sufficient counterplay, but the text is more simple.

18.♞ac1 ♞b8!

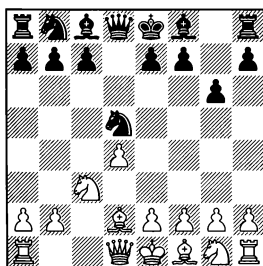
Our next move will be 18...e6. White has not even a trace of advantage.

Part 6

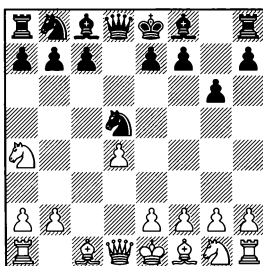
Rare Systems I

1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5

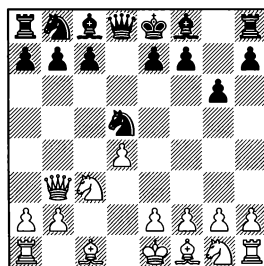
5.♙d2



5.♘a4



5.♙b3



Part 6

Main Ideas

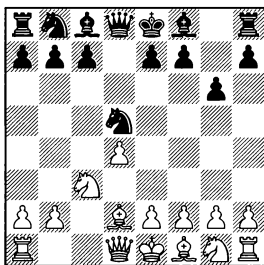
In this chapter, I examine rare lines where White takes on d5, but then refrains from e2-e4:

**1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♟c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♜xd5**

A. 5.♗d2, B. 5.♞a4, C. 5.♞b3.

All these moves contradict the principle of quick development and often lead to loss of tempi. However, Black should not think that he will automatically obtain some advantage. On the contrary, he still has to play for equalisation first, because White's noncommittal play does not give him many options for a sharp counterattack.

A. 5.♗d2



Introduction

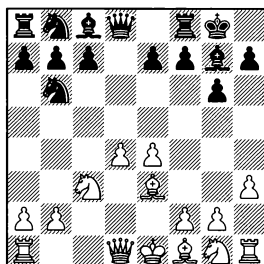
This “ugly” move aims to cut across Black's main plan in the Grünfeld.

White will recapture on c3 by piece, thus avoiding the chronic weakness of the c4-square and tactical motifs on the long diagonal. Break-throughs like ...c5 and ...e5 become less effective, as well as queenside counterplay in general.

5.♗d2 was the pet line of the great Grünfeld expert Smyslov. In the 80s it was popularised by Moskalenko. In the recent years Khalifman and Dreev use it occasionally to achieve solid strategic play where positional factors prevail. As a rule, White resorts to 5.♗d2 in order to evade theoretical battles in the main variations.

Objectives and Move Orders

White's main aim is to build up a strong centre, keeping more minor pieces on board: 5...♗g7 6. e4 ♞b6 7.♗e3 0-0 8.h3!



4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♗d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♞b3

Steer clear from this position! White is slightly better after 8... e5 9.♖f3 exd4 10.♗xd4 or 8...♖c6 9.♖f3.

The simplest way to disturb White's plan is to play:

5...♖b6 before castling. Then White should decide what to do with his dark-squared bishop.

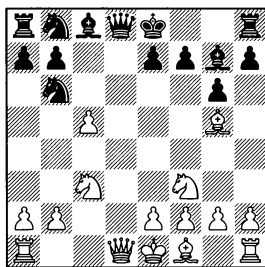
a) He can opt for a quick development with ♖f3, e3, leaving the bishop very passive on d2. We meet it by ...♖c6, aiming for ...e7-e5.

b) He can make a second move with the bishop to f4 or g5. This is the more ambitious approach, but we can exploit the loss of a tempo by switching to aggressive play with ...c7-c5.

e5! 10.♗xc6 exd4, so Black is not losing a pawn. The game went on with 11.♖xd4 bxc6 12.♖ce2 ♞d5 13.0-0 c5. Black has the more active pieces.

After 6.♗g5 ♗g7 7.♖f3 c5! 8.dxc5 we reach the following extremely important position:

Oleksienko–L'Ami Rijeka 2010

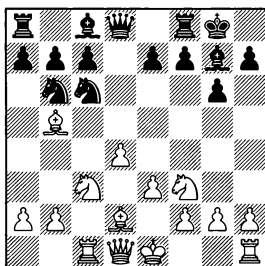


Now Black executes his main positional motif in the ♗d2-system:

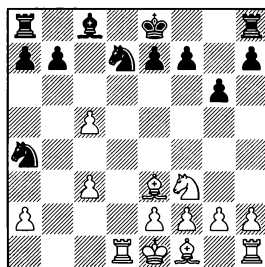
8...♗xc3+! 9.bxc3 ♞xd1+ 10.♗xd1 ♖a4 11.♗e3 ♖d7

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

Marcelin–Sasikiran France 2008



The tactical foundation of Black's plan is the possibility of 9...



We'll be meeting this pawn structure time and again in various settings. Perhaps you should remember that Black is OK if he has not castled yet. The fine point is that he should play sooner or later ...f6 and it is important that White's

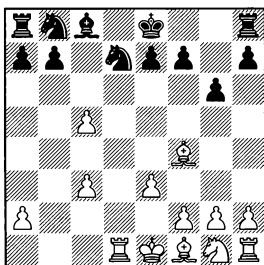
Part 6

retort ♖h6 would be without tempo.

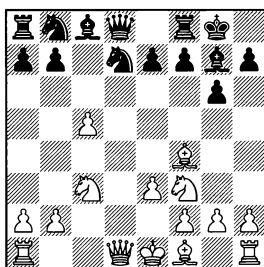
In our example, play continued with 12.g3 (12.h4 f6!) 12...♗dxc5 13.♗d4 ♗d7 14.♖g2 ♖c8 15.♖c1 e5 16.♗b3 b6 17.♗xc5 ♗xc5 18.♖h6 ♖g8 19.♖g5 ♖e6 20.0-0 ♗d7 21.a4 f6 22.♖e3 ♗c5.

The same idea also works with a white bishop on f4: 6.♖f4 ♖g7 7.♗f3 c5! 8.dxc5 ♖xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♗xd1+ 10.♖xd1 ♗a4 11.e3 (11.♖e3 f6! 12.g3 ♗xc3) 11...♗xc5.

Even after 6.♖f4 ♖g7 7.e3 we can try 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♖xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♗xd1+ 10.♖xd1 ♗b6d7.

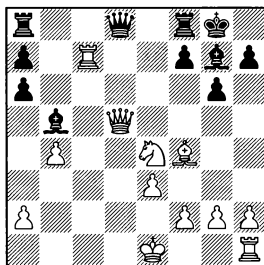


However, Nyzhnyk's idea 11.♖xb8 sets some problems to Black. That's why I recommend to meet 6.♖f4 ♖g7 7.e3 by 7...0-0 8.♗f3 c5! 9.dxc5 ♗d6d7!:



You should remember the following forced variation:

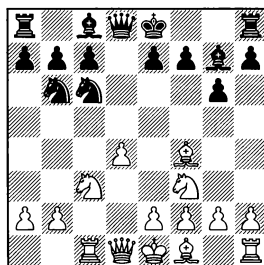
10.♗d5 ♗xc5! 11.♖ac1 ♗ba6 12.b4! ♗e4 13.♖xa6 bxa6 14.♖c7 ♗d7! 15.♗g5 e6 16.♗xe4 exd5 17.♗xd5 ♖b5



Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn – see **game 11 Dreev-Karavade**, Reykjavik 2010.

Typical Tactical Motifs

De Jong–Sasikiran
Kemer 2007



In this example, White mixed up the move order. He firstly decided to play ♖c1, and only then realised that the bishop will be caged after e3. So his last move was 8.♖f4, hoping to transpose to the main line with 8...0-0 9.e3. However, Black has the fork:

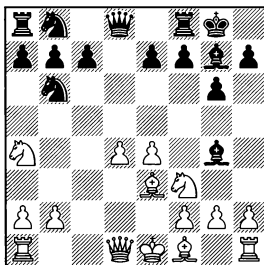
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♗d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♝b3

8....♖xd4! 9.♖xd4 e5! 10.♖cb5 0-0 11.♗g3 c6! with better piece play.

B. 5.♖a4

There is nothing special to learn for this variation. We should develop following the typical Grünfeld recipes:

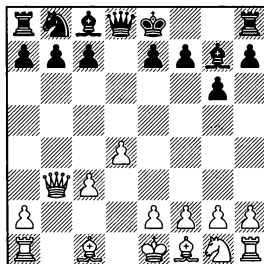
5...♗g7 6.e4 ♖b6 7.♗e3 0-0 8.♖f3 ♗g4



9.♗e2 (9.♖c5 ♖c6!) 9...♖c6 10.d5 ♖e5 11.♖xe5!? ♗xe2 12.♝xe2 ♖xa4 13.f4 e6 14.dxe6 ♗xe5 15.exf7+ ♖xf7 16.fxe5

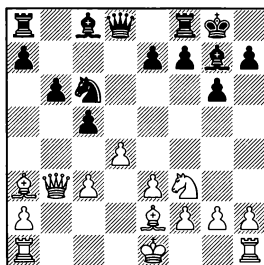
Black can repeat moves with 16...♝h4+ or play on with 16...♝e7!?

C. 5.♝b3 ♖xc3! 6.bxc3 ♗g7



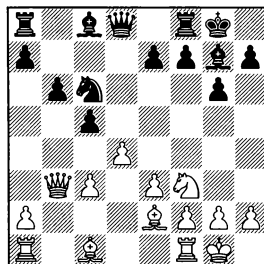
Objectives and Move Orders

I'm not too sure what exactly White wanted to achieve with his fifth move, except for deviating from the main lines. If he aimed to restrain Black's counterplay with 7.♗a3?!, he evidently missed the goal since we'll play ...b6! and ...c5 is on the agenda again, while the bishop will be a ridiculous sight on a3: 7...0-0 8.♖f3 (8.e4 b6!) 8...b6! 9.e3 c5 10.♗e2 (10.dxc5? bxc5 11.♗xc5 ♝c7) 10...♖c6!



The knight is heading for a5, the light-squared bishop takes the other main diagonal, and Black obtains a good game.

7.♖f3 0-0 8.e3 c5 9.♗e2 ♖c6 10.0-0 b6!

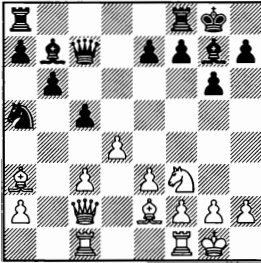


Black has a comfortable development.

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

When White plays ♠a3 early, he is likely to reach the following position:

Smejkal–Ribli Budapest 1975



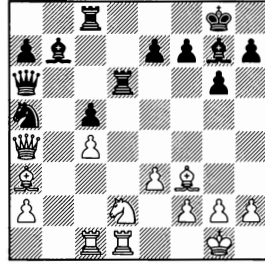
It is difficult to find an active plan here. White would like to advance in the centre, but 14...♣fd8 and d5 would be still impossible. So Smejkal opts for a symmetric structure with:

14.dxc5 bxc5 15.c4 ♣fd8 16.♣fd1 ♣ac8.

The position is roughly equal, but White should not forget that his bishop is misplaced at a3. It would be wise to exchange it with 17.♠b2!? ♠xb2 18.♣xb2 ♠xf3! 19.♠xf3 ♣xd1+ 20.♠xd1, but White was stubborn to justify his previous play and embarked on a wrong plan:

17.♠d2?! ♣c6 18.♠f3 ♣a6 19.♣a4 ♣d6!

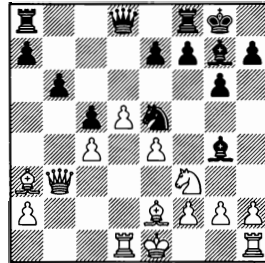
It turns out that the a3-bishop is much more shaky than the c5-pawn. White went on to lose quickly:



20.♠e4?! ♣xd1+ 21.♣xd1 ♠c6
22.♣c2 ♠xc4 23.♠e2 ♠xa3 24.♠xa6
♠xc2 25.♠xc8 ♠xe4-+.

White can also combine the early ♠a3 with an expansion in the centre with e4, followed by d5:

Example



Black commonly attacks White's centre with:

13...f5!

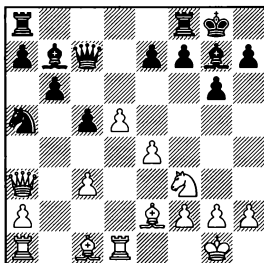
This move is good here, because White is behind in development. He has not castled yet and that tells in a number of variations:

14.♠xe5 ♠xe2 15.♣d2 ♠xe5
16.♣xe2 when Black can choose between the blockading 16...f4 17.♠b2 ♣c7 18.f3 ♠d4! or the simplifying 16...♣d6 17.exf5 ♣xf5 18.♠b2 ♣af8

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♗d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♝b3

19.h3 ♗xb2 20.♝xb2 e6!? 21.♞xe6
(21.dxe6 ♞e8) 21...♝f4 22.0-0 ♝xc4=.

Example



Here the bishop is on c1, but again, Black is ahead in development. That allows him to destroy the enemy centre by 14...e6!? or follow the previous example:

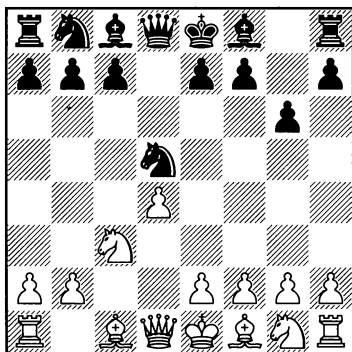
14...f5!? 15.♖g5 ♝e5 16.♖e6 fxe4!?

Grabbing a pawn with 16...♝xc3 17.♖xg7 ♝xa3 18.♗xa3 ♜xg7 would offer White some compensation while the text gives Black firm control over the centre after 17.♖xf8 ♞xf8 18.♗e3 ♗xd5 19.♞ac1 ♝e6 20.♞d2 ♝f7.

Part 6

Step by Step

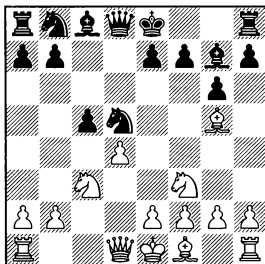
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♗xd5



A. 5.♗d2, B. 5.♗a4, C. 5.♞b3

I'll also mention:

5.♗g5 ♗g7 6.♗f3 (6.♞c1 ♗xc3
7.bxc3 c5 8.e3 0-0) 6...c5!



7.♞c1

7.e3 cxd4 8.exd4 0-0 gives Black a pleasant version of an isolated queen's pawn position.

7...♗xc3 8.bxc3 0-0 9.e3 (or 9.e4 ♗g4) 9...♗e6!

Black is developing with tempo. His next moves could be ...♗c6, ...♞c8 while White's pawn centre is immobile. Our general plan in such positions is to complete development, open the c-file and advance the queenside pawns. Trading queens would be in our favour because in the endgame we could make a distant passer.

10.♞a4

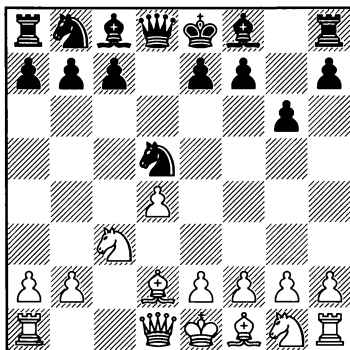
10.♞d2 ♗c6 11.♗e2 (11.♗d3 ♞a5) 11...♞c8 12.0-0 h6 13.♗h4 cxd4 14.cxd4 g5 15.♗g3 ♞a5= is a good illustration of the above-mentioned plan.

10...♗c6 11.♗e2 (11.♗d3 ♞d7 12.♞a3=) 11...♞c8 12.0-0 h6 13.♗h4 g5 14.♗g3 ♞a5.

Black has equalised. Banikas-Eljanov, Plovdiv 2003 went 15.♞xa5 ♗xa5 16.h4 (or 16.a4 ♗c4 17.♞fe1 ♗xe2 18.♞xe2 ♞fd8 19.♞b1 b6=) 16...cxd4 17.cxd4 ♗xa2 18.♞a1 ♞c2, when only 19.♗d1 keeps the balance.

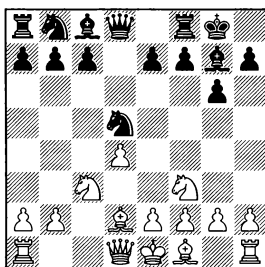
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♔d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♜b3

A. 5.♔d2



The other move order, 4.♖f3 ♗g7 5.cd ♖d5 6.♔d2, is less precise since Black can equalise by pinning the f3-knight. Play might continue with:

6...0-0!



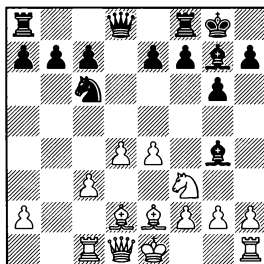
a) 7.e4 ♖xc3 8.♔xc3 ♔g4!.

b) 7.e3 c5! 8.♜b3 ♖xc3 9.♔xc3 cxd4 10.♖xd4 e5 11.♖b5 ♔e6 12.♔c4 ♔xc4 13.♜xc4 ♖c6 14.0-0 ♜e7 15.♜fd1 ♜fd8=.

c) 7.♜c1 ♖c6! 8.e4 (8.e3 ♖b6! 9.♔b5 e5 10.♔xc6 exd4! or 8...e5 9.♖xd5 ♜xd5 10.♔c4 ♜e4! 11.d5 ♖d4) 8...♖xc3 9.♔xc3.

In the recent game Naumkin-Delchev, Cappelé la Grande

02.03.2011, my opponent surprised me with 9.bxc3!?. I followed the general plan with 9...♔g4! 10.♔e2



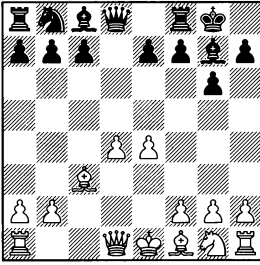
10...♔xf3! 11.♔xf3 e5 12.d5 ♖e7! 13.c4 c5 and quickly equalised: 14.♜b3 ♜c7 15.0-0 ♖c8 16.a4 ♖d6=. Black has achieved the perfect blockade – a strong knight on d6 and a very passive white bishop on f3. I cannot speak of a Black's advantage though, since White has no weaknesses and his pawn centre should serve as a sufficient protection against active attempts from Black.

9...♔g4 10.d5 ♖e5 11.♔e2 ♖xf3+ 12.♔xf3 ♔xc3+ 13.♜xc3 ♔xf3 14.♜xf3 e6=, Fridman-Ftachnik, Bundesliga 2008.

5...♖b6

Underlining the downside of White's last move. The d4-pawn is hanging so White should either lose a tempo on a second move with the bishop, or allow the pin on the f3-knight.

Practice has seen Black also equalising after 5...♔g7 6.e4 (6.♖f3 c5!) 6...♖xc3! 7.♔xc3 0-0

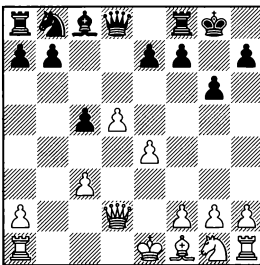


8.♙c4

a) 8.♞c1 c5 9.d5 ♙xc3+ 10.♞xc3 e6 11.♙c4 exd5 12.♙xd5 ♘d7 13.♘e2 ♘f6 14.0-0 ♘xd5 15.exd5 b6=.

b) 8.♘f3 ♙g4 9.♙e2 c5 10.d5 ♙xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♙xf3! 12.♙xf3 ♘d7 13.0-0 ♞c7 14.c4 ♞ad8 15.♞b3 e5=. The dark-squared strategy could be completed with the blocking manoeuvre ♘d7-f6-e8-d6.

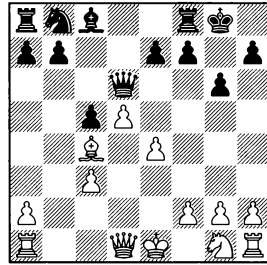
c) 8.♞d2 The best move, according to Rowson. However, it does not hamper our blocking plan from the previous line: 8...c5! 9.d5 ♙xc3 10.bxc3. (Or 10.♞xc3 e6 11.dxe6 ♙xe6 12.♘f3 ♞e7 13.♙e2 ♘c6 14.0-0 ♞fd8=, Solozhenkin-Holmsten, Finland 2005.)



10...♞d6!? (The game Mamedyarov-Vachier Lagrave, Germany 2010, saw the thematic 10...♘d7

11.♘f3 ♞c7 12.♙d3 ♘f6 13.h3 e5 14.♞h6 ♘e8 15.0-0 f6 16.♘d2 ♘d6 17.♞h4 c4 18.♙c2 ♙d7 which is fine for Black. My suggestion is more challenging though.) 11.♘f3 ♙g4! 12.♘g1 ♙c8! What now?! Draw? 13.♙c4?! ♘d7 (13...f5!??) 14.f4?! ♘b6 15.♙b3 c4 16.♙c2 f5+, Gupta-Li Chao, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

8...c5 9.d5 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♞d6!



A very important move! Black takes control of e5 and threatens to counterattack with ...f7-f5.

11.♞e2!

We know that 11.♘f3 ♙g4 should be good for Black even though White has 12.e5. Here it only loses a pawn after 12...♞c7 13.0-0 ♙xf3 14.♞xf3 ♞xe5 although White had compensation in Grachev-Vachier Lagrave, Moscow 2010: 15.♞ab1 ♘d7 16.♞fe1 ♞d6 17.♞xb7 ♞fb8 18.♞b3 ♘e5 19.♞e4 ♘xc4 20.♞xc4 ♞xb3 21.axb3 ♞d8=.

11.♘e2 allows both plans: the active 11...f5 12.exf5 ♙xf5 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.♘g3 ♘b6 15.♞b3 ♞f4 (15...♞ab8=) 16.♙e2 c4 17.♞b5 ♙d3= 18.♙xd3 cxd3 19.♞xd3 ♞ad8=, and the solid 11...♘d7 12.♙b3 ♘b6

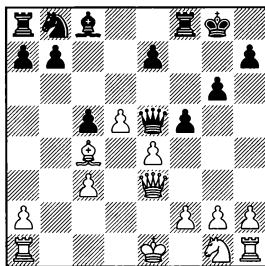
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♗d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♜b3

13.a4 c4 14.♗c2 e5 15.dxe6 ♜xd1+
16.♞xd1 ♗xe6 17.♞b1 ♞ab8! 18.0-0
♜d7 19.♞b4 ♜c5 20.♜d4 ♞fc8=.

11...♜e5

11...♜d7 also deserves attention:
12.♜f3 ♜b6 13.h3! (13.e5? ♜d7) 13...
♜f4! (preparing ...e7-e6) 14.♗b3 e6
15.dxe6 ♗xe6 16.♗xe6 ♞ae8!=.

12.♜e3 f5!



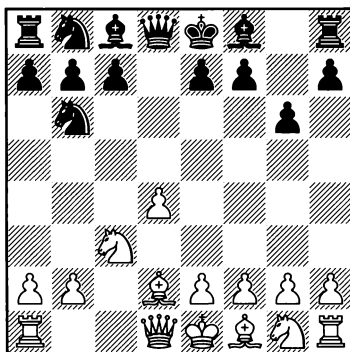
In the Grünfeld, the break ...f7-f5 is either very bad, or quite unpleasant to White. In the diagram position, it is not so destructive as usual, but it is still enough for leveling the game:

13.♜f3 ♜xe4 14.♜xe4 fxe4
15.♜g5 ♗f5 16.0-0-0 ♜d7 17.d6+
♜g7 18.♜xe4 ♜b6 (or 18...♗xe4
19.dxe7 ♞f4 20.♞xd7 ♞e8 21.♞d8
♞xe7 22.♞e1 ♞f8 23.♞d2=.) 19.dxe7
♞f8 20.♜d6 ♜xc4 21.♜xc4 ♞xe7=,
Zhou Weiqi-Sutovsky, Khanty-Man-
sinsk 2009.

Conclusion:

5...♗g7 is a reliable option.

Let us return now to the main line.



After 5...♜b6, I consider:

A1. 6.♜f3, A2. 6.♗g5, A3. 6.♗f4.

A1. 6.♜f3 ♗g7 7.♞c1

If White boxes in his bishop with 7.e3, we should aim at achieving ...e5, for instance: 7...0-0 8.♗e2 ♜c6 9.0-0 e5=.

7.♗g5 is considered in line B.

7.e4 deserves attention. Accepting the sac by 7...♗xd4 8.♜xd4 ♜xd4 is unclear: 9.♜c2 c6 10.♗h6 ♗e6 11.♞d1 ♜e5 12.f4 ♜a5 (12...♜c5 13.♜d5) 13.♗e2 ♜8d7 14.0-0 0-0-0 so I prefer:

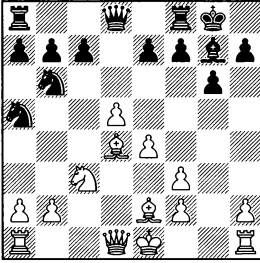
7...0-0 8.♗e3

Following 8.h3, we could already eat the pawn, 8...♗xd4 9.♜xd4 ♜xd4, for instance: 12.♗e3 ♞d8 13.♗e2 ♗e6 14.b3 ♜c6 or 10.♜c2 ♜e5 11.♜b5 ♜a6 12.♗c3 ♜f4.

8...♗g4 9.♗e2 ♜c6 10.d5 ♗xf3
11.gxf3 (11.♗xf3 ♜e5 12.♗e2 ♜ec4

Part 6

13.♙c1 c6) 11...♘a5 (11...♗e5
12.♚b3±) 12.♙d4



12...♚d6! 13.♙xg7 ♗xg7 14.♚d2
(14.♙c1 c6) 14...♚f6! 15.b3! (15.f4
c6! gives Black an initiative.) 15...
e6! This novelty assures Black of a
good game. I have analysed:

16.♙d1 (16.0-0-0 ♙ad8 17.♗b1
♗c6) 16...♙ad8 17.0-0 (17.♚c1 exd5
18.exd5 c6) 17...♗c6 (or 17...exd5
18.exd5 ♗c6 19.♗e4 ♚e5) 18.f4.

Black has now several good op-
tions, as 18...♗e7 19.♙f3 exd5 (19...
e5 20.♗e2 c6 21.♚c3 exf4 22.♚xf6+
♗xf6 23.dxc6 ♗xc6=) 20.exd5 ♚h4
21.♙fe1 ♗f5 or 18...exd5 19.exd5 ♗e7
20.♙f3 (20.♗e4 ♚f5) 20...♚h4.

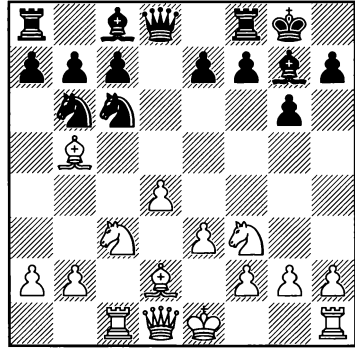
7...♗c6 8.e3

8.♙f4 ♗xd4 9.♗xd4 e5 10.♗cb5
passes the initiative to Black after
10...0-0 11.♙g3 c6! 12.♗xc6 bxc6
13.♚xd8 ♙xd8 14.♗c3 ♗d5 15.e4
♗b4 16.♙h4 ♙h6 17.♙xd8 ♙xc1
18.♙e7 ♙xb2 19.♗d2 a5, De Jong-
Sasikiran, Kemer 2007.

8...0-0 9.♙b5

White has prevented ...c5, now
he tries to discourage the other

breakthrough in the centre. But it is
nevertheless possible:



9...e5! 10.♙xc6 exd4 11.♗xd4

11.♙e4 dxc3 12.♙xc3 ♙xc3+ is
completely equal.

11...bxc6 12.♗ce2 ♚d5 13.0-0
c5 14.♗f4 ♚d6 15.♗b5 ♚e7!
16.♗c3 (16.♙c3 ♙a6) 16...♙a6
17.♙e1 ♙fd8

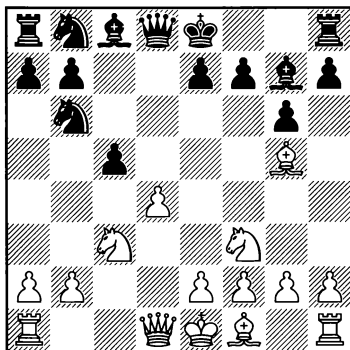
Black has the more active pieces.

A2. 6.♙g5 ♙g7 7.♗f3

Delaying development is dan-
gerous – 7.e3 allows 7...c5 8.dxc5
♙xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♚xd1+ 10.♙xd1 ♗d6d7
11.♙b5 ♗c6. In this typical posi-
tion, Black has good counterplay
due to the crippled white queenside
pawns. The tactical background of
this idea is seen in the variation
12.♙d5 f6 13.♙f4 e6 14.♙d6 ♗xc5!
15.♙xc6 bxc6 16.♙xc6+ ♗f7 17.♙xa8
♗d3+ 18.♗e2 ♙a6 and White
should think about salvation.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♗d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♜b3

7...c5!

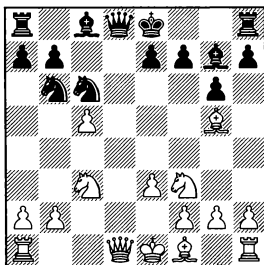


8.dxc5

Karpov chose against Shirov 8.e3, but his reply 8...cxd4 was hardly the best. More testing is:

8...♖c6! 9.dxc5

9.♗b5 ♗g4 10.dxc5 could be met with the same idea as in the previous note: 10...♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♜xd1+ 12.♞xd1 ♜d7 13.h3 ♗xf3 14.gxf3 ♖xc5 15.e4 ♞c8 16.♗e3 a6! and again, White has not even a trace of advantage.



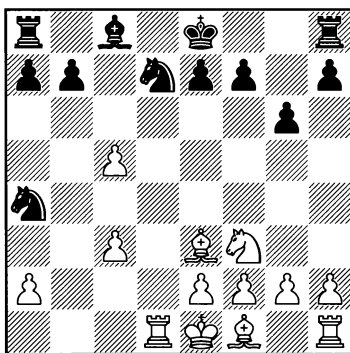
9...♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♜xd1+ 11.♞xd1 ♜a4 12.♞c1

Or 12.♗h6 f6! 13.♗c4 fails to 13...

♜b2 14.♗g7 ♖xc4 15.♗xh8 ♜f7.

12...♖xc5 13.♗b5 ♗d7 14.0-0 f6 15.♗h4 ♖e5! 16.♗e2 ♖xf3+ 17.♗xf3 ♞c8, with a clear edge, Paprocki-Vovk, Warsaw 2008.

8...♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♜xd1+ 10.♞xd1 ♜a4 11.♗e3 ♜d7



Black is one step away from restoring the material balance. Then he can start molesting White's weak pawns. The game Oleksienko-L'Ami, Rijeka 2010, continued:

12.g3 (12.h4 f6!) 12...♖dxc5 13.♜d4 ♗d7 14.♗g2 ♞c8 15.♞c1 e5 16.♜b3 b6 17.♖xc5 ♖xc5 18.♗h6 ♞g8 19.♗g5 ♗e6 20.0-0 ♜d7 21.a4 f6 22.♗e3 ♖c5.

A3. 6.♗f4 ♗g7 7.e3!

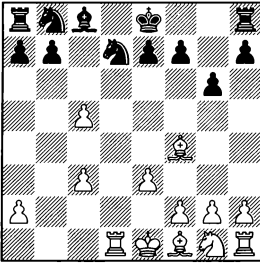
We shall routinely meet 7.♖f3 by 7...c5! (although this move seems to be a novelty!) 8.dxc5 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♜xd1+ 10.♞xd1 ♜a4 11.e3 (11.♗e3 f6! 12.g3 ♖xc3) 11...♖xc5.

7...0-0

Part 6

Lately Black has been often experimenting with the immediate:

7...c5!? 8.dxc5 ♖xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♜xd1+ 10.♞xd1 ♜d6d7



Here the only problem variation is the idea of the new Ukrainian prodigy Nyzhnyk:

11.♙xb8!?

11.♙b5 a6 12.♙a4 ♜c6 13.♙c7 0-0 14.♙b6 ♜c5. The c4-square is as weak as ever and White has not any target. Now 15.♞d4 ♜xb6 16.cxb6 ♙e6= would give Black easy play on the c-file, so in the game M.Muzychuk-Bok, Wijk aan Zee 2010, White preferred 15.♜f3 ♜xb6 16.cxb6 ♜c4 17.♞b1 ♙f5 18.♞b4 ♞fc8 19.♙b3 ♜d6. Black has the initiative, despite being a pawn down.

11...♜xb8

11...♞xb8 looks insufficient for equality: 12.♙b5 e6 13.♜f3 ♜e7 14.♙xd7 ♙xd7 15.♜e5 ♞hd8 16.♜e2 ♞bc8 17.♜xd7 ♞xd7 18.♞xd7+ ♜xd7 19.♞d1+ ♜e7 20.♞b1 ♞c7±.

12.♜f3 0-0

12...♙e6 13.♙b5+! ♜f8 14.h4 ♜g7 (or 14...h6 15.h5 g5 16.♜d4 ♙xa2 17.♞d2 ♙b1 18.0-0 ♙h7 19.f4±)

15.h5 ♞c8 16.h6+ ♜g8 17.♞h4 ♜c6 18.♙xc6 ♞xc6 19.♞hd4 ♞f8 20.♜g5 favours White.

13.♜d4 ♙d7!?

The stem game Nyzhnyk-Negi, Hoogeveen 2010, saw 13...b6?! which is clearly better for White.

14.♙e2 ♞c8 15.♞b1 ♞xc5 16.♞xb7 e5 17.♜f3 ♙c6 18.♞b3 ♜d7 19.0-0 ♜b6 20.♞c1 ♞d8.

Black has compensation for the pawn, but evidently, he has not winning chances.

8.♜f3

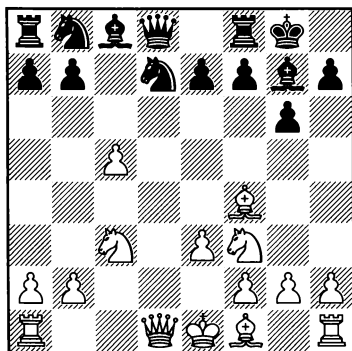
8.♞c1 looks senseless as it does not prevent ...c5: 8...c5 9.dxc5 ♙xc3+ 10.bxc3 (10.♞xc3 ♜xd1+ 11.♜xd1 ♜d6d7 12.♙b5 (12.♙h6 ♞e8 13.♙b5 a6 14.♙a4 ♜c6 15.♜f3 ♜xc5 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♜d4 e5 18.♜b3 ♜xb3 19.axb3 ♙e6 20.b4 a5=, Dreev-Shirov, blitz, Moscow 2007) 12...♜c6 13.♞d5 ♜f6 14.♞d1 ♜e4 15.♜e2 ♜xc5 16.0-0, Dreev-Ponomarev, blitz, Moscow 2007, 16...♙e6 17.♜d4 ♜xd4 18.cxd4 a6 19.♙e2 ♜e4 20.♙f3 ♙d5=.

8...c5! 9.dxc5 ♜d6d7!

The thematic 9...♙xc3+?! is not so good here because Black has castled already. That gives White a critical tempo on ♙h6, for instance: 10.bxc3 ♜xd1+ 11.♞xd1 ♜d6d7 12.♙g5! ♞e8 (12...f6 13.♙h6 ♞e8 14.♙c4+ e6 15.♜d4 ♜xc5 16.♜b5 ♜ba6 17.0-0 ♙d7 18.♜d6±; 12...

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♗d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♞b3

♗c6 13.♖d4!) 13.♙b5 a6 14.♙a4 ♖c6 (14...f6 15.♙h6 ♖c6 16.♙b3+ e6 17.♖d4 ♖xc5 18.♙c2 ♖e7 19.e4 ♗d8 20.♙e3 b6 21.♞b1 ♗d6 22.♖f3 e5 23.♙xc5 bxc5 24.♙b3+ ♖f8 25.♖d2 ♞b8 26.♖c4 ♗d8 27.♖e2 ♗d7 28.♞hd1 ♙b5 29.♙xd8+ ♞xd8 30.a4 ♙e8 31.♙c2±, Khalifman-Kojovic, Budva 2009) 15.♗d5! e6 16.♗d6 ♖xc5 (16...f6 17.♙h4 ♖xc5 18.♙xc6 bxc6 19.♖d2 g5 20.♙g3 ♙b7 21.♖e2 ♞ad8 22.♞b1 ♖f7 23.♗d4±) 17.♙xc6 bxc6 18.♖d2! a5 (18...♙b7 19.♙f6±) 19.♙xc6 ♖d3+ 20.♖e2 ♖e5 21.♞c5.



10.♖d5

White's only hope for advantage is to grab something while Black is still undeveloped. The mundane 10.♙c4?! ♖xc5 11.♞e2 ♖c6 12.0-0 allows 12...♙e6 and White's light squares are very weak: 13.♖g5 (13.♞fd1 ♞b6 14.♙xe6 ♖xe6 15.♖d5 ♖xf4 16.exf4 ♞xb2=) 13...♙xc4 14.♞xc4 ♖d3 15.♞b5 ♗d7! 16.♞fd1 ♞ad8 17.♖ge4 ♖cb4±.

10...♖xc5! 11.♞c1

Alternatively:

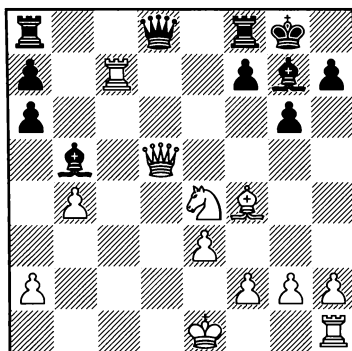
a) 11.♙c7 ♗d7 12.♞c1 ♖ba6 13.♙e5 ♗d8 14.♙xg7 ♖xg7 15.♗d4+ f6=.

b) 11.♖c7 ♙xb2 12.♞c1 (12.♙e2 ♖e6 13.♖xa8 ♖xf4 14.exf4 ♙xa1 15.♞xa1 ♙g4 16.♗d1 ♞c8 17.0-0 ♖c6) 12...♙xc1 13.♞xc1 ♙g4 14.♖xa8 (14.♞xc5 ♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♖d7 16.♞a3 e5) 14...♖bd7!? (14...♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♖e6 16.♖c7 ♖xf4 17.exf4 ♗d6 18.♖b5 (18.♙h3 a6 19.0-0 ♖c6) 18...♞b4+ 19.♗d2 ♞b1+ is equal) 15.♖c7 e5 16.♖xe5 ♞xc7 and White cannot take on g4.

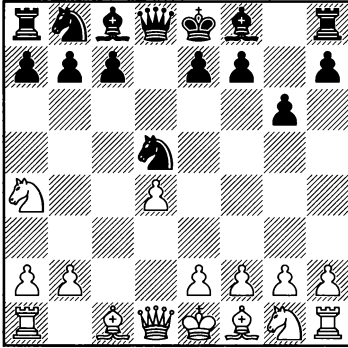
11...♖ba6 12.b4! ♖e4 13.♙xa6 bxa6 14.♞c7 (14.0-0 ♙b7) 14...♙d7! 15.♖g5

15.♗d3 e6 16.♞xe4 exd5 17.♞xd5 ♙e6 should be safe for Black with his bishop pair.

15...e6 16.♖xe4 exd5 17.♞xd5 ♙b5



Black has a sufficient compensation for the pawn – see **game 11 Dreev-Karavade**, Reykjavik 2010.

B. 5. ♖a4

This strange move is the favourite weapon of GM Lysyj. Its main idea is the same as in the ♔d2-system – to take over the centre by e2-e4 without having to recapture on c3 by pawn. However, its drawbacks outweigh any positive sides it may have – from a4 the knight has only three options:

a) to take on b6, but we know that exchanges favour Black in the Grünfeld.

b) to go to c5, threatening b7, but this idea requires so many tempi, that Black will have plenty of time to hit the d4-pawn.

c) to return to c3 which will net in 2 tempi lost.

Black gets a comfortable game with natural moves:

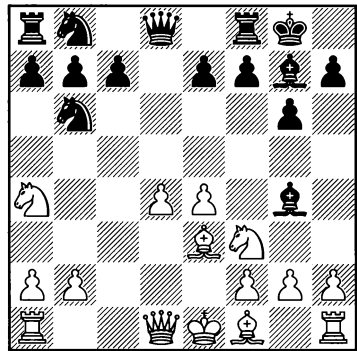
5... ♗g7 6.e4 ♖b6 7. ♔e3 0-0

Black's development is almost complete. His next step will be to

attack the enemy centre, but that will depend on White's next move:

8. ♖f3

8. ♗c1 wastes yet another tempo and we should be even better after 8... ♖c6 9.d5 ♖xa4 10. ♗xa4 ♖e5 11.h3 e6. The same applies to 8. ♖c3 ♖c6!.

8... ♗g4**9. ♗e2**

After 9. ♖c5 ♖c6 10. ♖xb7, Black regains the pawn with 10... ♗b8 11. ♗a6 (11...e5!?) 11... ♖b4 12. ♖c5 ♗xf3 13.gxf3 ♖d8 14.0-0 ♗xd4=.

9... ♖c6 10.d5

10. ♖xb6?! weakens White's queenside: 10...axb6 11.d5 ♖b4! 12. ♗b3 ♖a6 13.0-0 ♖c5 14. ♗c2 ♗d7 15. ♗fd1 ♗a4!.

10... ♖e5 11. ♖xe5!?

Evidently, 11. ♖xb6 axb6 12. ♖xe5 ♗xe2 13. ♗xe2 ♗xe5 14.0-0 ♗d7

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♔d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♜b3

15.a3 is not more than equal. Black even has a slight initiative after 15...f5!?, underlying the weakness of the d5-pawn.

11...♙xe2 12.♜xe2 ♖xa4 13.f4 e6 14.dxe6

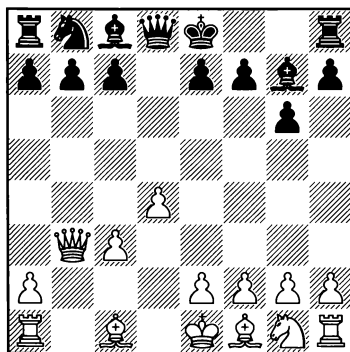
This is a draw offer, but 14.0-0 exd5 15.♖ad1 ♖b6 is clearly in Black's favour.

14...♙xe5 15.exf7+ ♖xf7 16.fxe5 ♜h4+

Black could deviate from the repetition of moves with 16...♜e7!?

17.♙f2 ♖xf2 18.♜xf2 ♜xe4+ 19.♜e2 ♜b4+ 20.♜d2 ♜e4+=.

C. 5.♜b3 ♖xc3! 6.bxc3 ♙g7



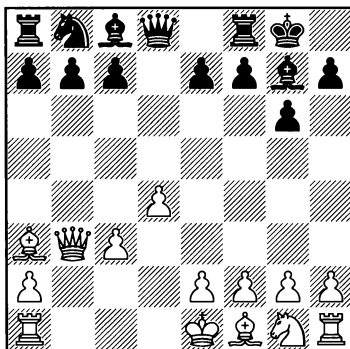
C1. 7.♙a3?!; C2. 7.♖f3.

C1. 7.♙a3?!

This is an attempt to prevent ...c5, but it does not achieve its

goal. We'll only have to prepare the breakthrough with ...b6. Then we'll offer a pawn sac on c5, which White should not accept. In that scenario the a3-bishop will look very clumsy.

7...0-0



8.♖f3

8.e4 does not fit in with the placement of the bishop on a3. Black replies:

8...b6! 9.♖f3 c5 10.♖d1 (It would be senseless to take on c5: 10.dxc5 ♙e6 11.♙c4? ♙xc4 12.♜xc4 b5 13.♜b3 ♜d3) 10...♖c6! 11.♙e2 ♙g4

11...♜c7 12.0-0 ♙g4 is also good: 13.d5 [13.♙b2?! ♖ad8 14.d5 (14.♜a4 ♙xf3 15.♙xf3 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♜d7 17.d5 ♖e5 18.♜b3 ♖xf3+?) 14...♖e5 15.c4 ♖xf3+ 16.♙xf3 ♙xf3 17.gxf3 ♙e5] 13...♖e5 14.c4 f5, with some edge.

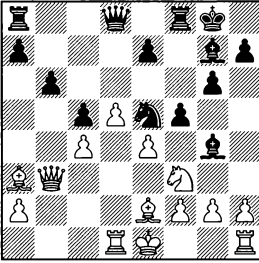
12.d5

Or: 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 cxd4 14.e5 ♖c8 15.♙xc6 ♖xc6 16.cxd4 ♜c7

Part 6

17.0-0 ♖d8 18.d5 ♖c3 19.d6 exd6
20.♙xd6 ♖c4♣; 12.♙b2 ♖c7 13.0-0
♖ad8; 12.dxc5 ♖c7 13.0-0 ♖e5.

12...♖e5 13.c4 f5!



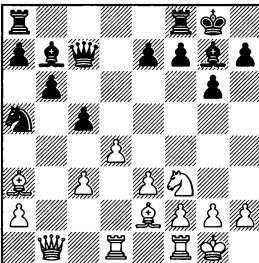
Black owns the initiative, for example, 14.♖xe5 ♙xe2 15.♖d2 (15.♖xe2 ♙xe5→) 15...♙xe5 16.♖xe2 f4 17.♙b2 ♖c7 18.f3 (18.0-0 f3 19.♙xe5 ♖xe5 20.gxf3 ♖f4↑) 18...♙d4♣.

8...b6! 9.e3

White intends to finish development with ♙e2, 0-0, ♖ac1 and ♖fd1, then start rolling his central pawns. We should prepare to meet this plan with ...f5!

White does not gain benefits from putting the rook on d1 at once:

9.♖d1 c5 10.e3 (10.dxc5 ♖c7 11.cxb6?! ♙xc3+) 10...♖c7 11.♙e2 ♖c6 12.0-0 ♖a5 13.♖b1 ♙b7



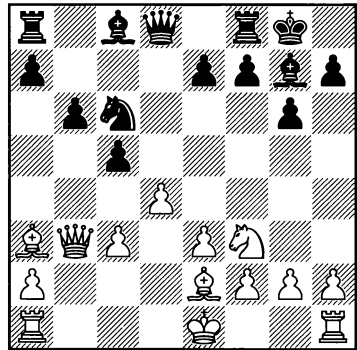
Now the only way to justify the early move 9.♖d1 is:

14.dxc5

Following 14.e4 ♖fd8 15.♙b2 e6! Black obtains a perfect version of the exchange system, with all White's pieces set to wrong places.

14...bxc5 15.♖b5 ♖fc8!. Black's game is easier, because 16.♖d7 fails to 16...♖b6 17.♖xe7 ♙f6 18.♖d7 ♙c6 19.♖xb6 axb6, while 18.c4 ♙f6! 17.♖d7 ♖xd7 18.♖xd7 ♙c6 19.♖d2 ♙e4 leaves him with the more active pieces in a symmetric pawn structure.

9...c5 10.♙e2 (10.dxc5? bxc5 11.♙xc5 ♖c7) **10...♖c6!**



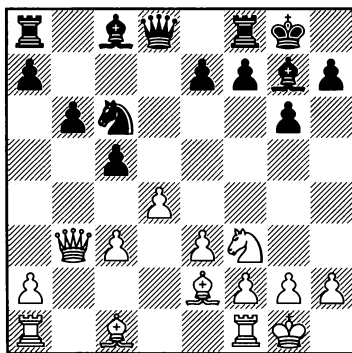
The knight would be much better placed on a5 than on d7.

11.dxc5? would still be bad due to 11...♙e6 12.♖b2 bxc5 13.♙xc5 ♖a5 14.♙d4 ♖xd4 15.♖xd4 ♖ab8 16.♖d2 ♖fc8 17.0-0 ♙xd4 18.♖xd4 ♖b2 19.♙f3 ♖c4 20.♖d1 ♖xc3♣.

11.0-0 ♖a5 12.♖c2

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 Rare Lines: 5.♔d2, 5.♖a4, 5.♛b3

12.♛b2 places the queen in the firing range of the g7-bishop. Play might continue with 12...♛c7! 13.♟fd1 (discouraging ...♔e6) 13...♔e6! 14.d5 ♔f5. Black lost a tempo, but prolonged the diagonal to the beast on g7. The next step will be to open up the centre in order to stress the ridiculous position of the a3-bishop: 15.♖h4 ♔d7 16.♛c2 e6! 17.d6 (17.e4 exd5 18.exd5 ♟f4 19.g3 ♟a4⌘) 17...♛c6 18.♔f3 ♟a4!⌘.



12...♛c7 13.♟ac1 ♔b7 14.dxc5

White cannot advance his central pawns anyway – 14.♟fd1 ♟fd8!.

14...bxc5 15.c4 ♟fd8 16.♟fd1 ♟ac8

All White has achieved is a symmetric position where Black has the better bishops.

C2. 7. ♖f3 0-0 8.e3

8.e4?! is an obvious mistake, because it destabilises White's centre. After 8...c5 9.d5 ♔g4! 10.♔e2 ♖d7 11.0-0 (11.♟b1?! c4 12.♔xc4 ♖c5 13.♛c2 ♖xe4) 11...♟a5 12.♔d2, Black can launch a strong attack with the typical pawn sac 12...c4! 13.♔xc4 ♔xf3 14.gxf3 ♟ac8 15.♟fc1 (or 15.♟ab1 ♖c5 16.♛c2 ♛c7 17.♔e2 ♔e5 18.h3 b6 19.♔e3 f5⌘) 15...♖c5 16.♛b5 ♛c7 17.♔f1 ♔e5 18.h3 f5↑.

8...c5 9.♔e2 ♖c6 10.0-0 b6!

11.♟d1

The only sensible plan of White is to push e4. Alternatives pass the initiative to Black:

11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♔a3 ♟a5;

11.♔b2 ♖a5 12.♛c2 ♔b7 13.♟ad1 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♟c8 15.♛b1 ♛d6! 16.e4 ♛b4 17.♔d3 ♖c4 18.♔a1 ♛xb1 19.♟xb1 e6, with a better endgame in Barlov-J.Horvath, Tivat 1995.

11...♛c7 12.e4! ♖a5 13.♟a3

Or 13.♛b1 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♔b7 15.♔e3 ♟ac8 16.♟c1 ♛d6=.

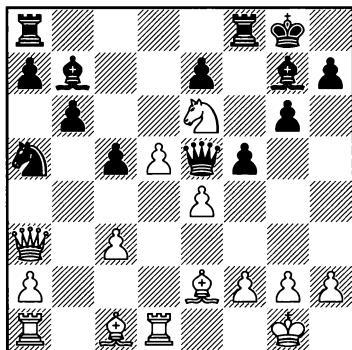
13...♔b7 14.d5

White cannot keep the pawn on e4 since 14.♔d3 will be attacked with 14...f5 15.♖g5 fxe4.

14...f5!?

This is thematic, but simple 14...e6 is also good enough for achieving an advantage: 15.♟b1 exd5 16.exd5 ♛e7 17.♔e3 ♛e4!⌘.

15. ♖g5 ♜e5 16. ♖e6



Black has the initiative, but winning a pawn with 16... ♜xc3 17. ♖xg7

♜xa3 18. ♙xa3 ♔xg7 19. ♞ac1! is quite unclear. It is probably better to stay active with:

16...fxe4!?

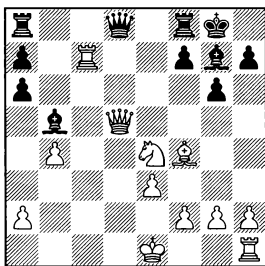
Here 17. ♖xf8 ♜xf8 18. ♙e3 ♙xd5 19. ♞ac1 ♜e6 20. ♞d2 ♜f7 would give Black firm control over the centre, whereas 17. ♖xg7 ♜xg7 18. ♙e3 ♞ad8 19. c4 e6 20. dxe6 ♜f6 is not too clear, but still Black is a pawn up. He can always bar the main dark-squared diagonal with ... ♖a5-c6-d4 if White managed to build up a dangerous ♜-♙ battery on it.

Part 6

Complete Games

11. Dreev–Karavade Reykjavik 2010

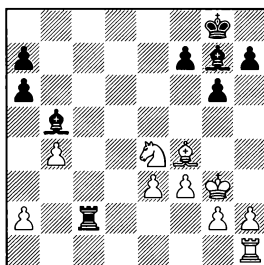
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♙c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♙d2 ♘b6 6.♙f4
♙g7 7.e3 0–0 8.♘f3 c5 9.dxc5
♘6d7 10.♘d5 ♘xc5 11.♖c1 ♘ba6
12.b4 ♘e4 13.♙xa6 bxa6 14.♖c7
♙d7 15.♘g5 e6 16.♘xe4 exd5
17.♖xd5 ♙b5



This is a critical position for our repertoire against 6.♙f4. It first occurred in the game Grandelius-Gupta, Wijk aan Zee 2010. White decided to keep the queens with 18.♙d6?!, but after 18...♖c8 19.♖xc8 ♖xc8 20.♙xf8 ♖g4! (20... ♖c1+ 21.♖d1 ♙c3+ is a draw.), he had to find the only move 21.♖d1!. Then 21...♖xg2 22.♙xg7 ♖xh1+ 23.♘d2 ♖xe4 24.♙d4 should be a draw. Instead, he stumbled with 21.♖d2?! ♖xg2! 22.♘g3 ♙xf8 23.a3

a5 24.bxa5 h5 25.f4 ♖f3 and Gupta went on to win.

18.♖xd8 18...♖fxd8 19.f3 ♖ac8
20.♘f2 ♖xc7 21.♙xc7 ♖c8 22.♙f4
♖c2+ 23.♘g3



Dreev wants to play a safe position with small, but lasting advantage after 23...♖xa2 24.♖c1 h6 25.h4. In this variation White is the more active side. He will eventually win the f7-pawn and the black king will be under attack. I analysed further and it seems that Black has just enough counterplay against g2, for instance: 25...♙d3! 26.♖c8+ ♘h7 27.♖c7 ♙f1 28.♘h2 ♖xg2+ 29.♘h1 ♖e2.

Similarly, 23...f5 24.♘d6 ♙c3 25.a3 ♙b2 26.e4 fxe4 27.♘xe4 ♙xa3 28.♙d6 leaves White with some initiative. However, Karavade takes a more practical decision to keep

White's rook caged in his half of the board.

23...♙e2 24.a4 f5 25.♘d6 ♙f8 26.e4

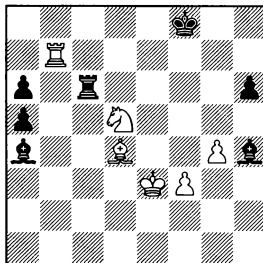
After this move, the game is completely balanced. White had two other attractive options:

26.h4!? ♜d2 27.♞e1 ♙d1 (The rook endgame after 27...♙xd6 28.♙xd6 ♙xf3 29.gxf3 ♜xd6 30.♞c1 ♞b6 should be a draw.) 28.e4 ♙xd6 29.e5 ♙xe5 30.♞xe5 ♜d7 when White has a nice advantage, which, however, cannot be converted;

26.♞b1 g5! (26...♜d2 27.♘b7 ♙d3 28.♞c1 ♙xb4 29.♞c8+ ♔f7 30.♘d8+ ♔f6 31.♞c7±) 27.♙e5 ♜d2 28.♘b7 (28.♞e1 ♙d1 29.♘xf5 ♙xb4 is unclear) 28...♔f7=. The bishop pair neutralises White's extra pawn.

26...fxe4 27.♘xe4 ♙xb4 28.h4 ♜c6 29.♙e5 a5 30.h5 gxh5 31.♞xh5 ♙d3 (31...♙d1) 32.♙d4 a6 33.♞d5 h6 34.♞d7 ♜g6+ (34...♙c2) 35.♔f2 ♙c2 36.♘f6+ ♔f8 37.♞b7 ♙xa4

38.g4 ♙e7 39.♘d5 ♙h4+ 40.♔e3 ♜c6



The rest is irrelevant. Dreev took some risks, trying to complicate things, but it all ended with the logical outcome.

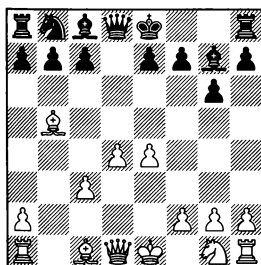
41.f4 ♙d1 42.g5 hxg5 43.f5 g4 44.♙g7+ ♔g8 45.f6?! (45.♙e5 ♙f3=) 45...♙g5+ 46.♔e4 ♙f3+ (46...♙c2+ 47.♔e5 ♞c5 48.♞b8+ ♔f7 49.♔d6! ♜xd5+ 50.♔xd5 g3 51.♙f8 g2 52.♙c5 ♙xf6=) 47.♔f5 ♙xf6 48.♘xf6+ ♞xf6+ 49.♙xf6 ♙xb7 50.♔xg4 ♔f7 51.♙c3 a4 52.♔f5 a3 53.♔e5 a2 54.♙a1 ♔e7 55.♔d4 ♔d6 56.♔c3 ♔c5 57.♔b3 ♙d5+ 58.♔a3 ♙c4 1/2-1/2.

Part 7

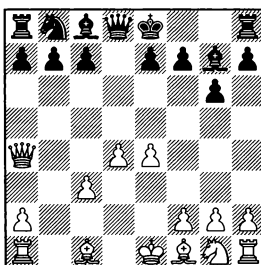
Rare Systems II

1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♘xd5
5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7

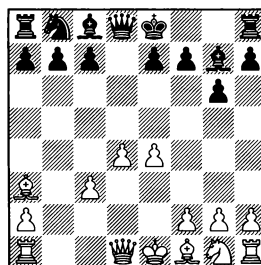
7.♙b5+



7.♙a4+



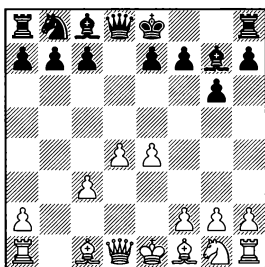
7.♙a3



Part 7

Main Ideas

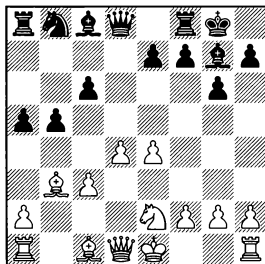
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♜xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7



A. 7.♙b5+; B. 7.♚a4+; C. 7.♙a3.

I consider 7.♙g5 in Part 11.

A. 7.♙b5+ c6! 8.♙a4 0-0
9.♜e2 b5!? 10.♙b3 a5



Our plan is to gain total control over the light squares by ...a4, ...♜d7-b6, ...♙e6, while restricting the mobility of the enemy's central pawns with ...♚e8 and ...e5, or first

...f6, ...♙e6 and push ...e5 later.

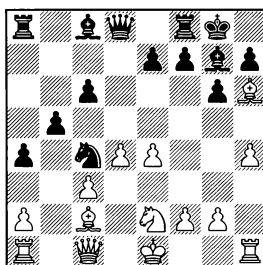
Evidently, White has to produce some threats against our king or he will come out of the opening with an inferior position.

Vaisser-Jansa
Arco 2010

11.♙e3 ♜d7 12.h4

White opts for a direct assault. Black does not have to change his general plan:

12...a4 13.♙c2 ♜b6 14.♚c1 ♜c4
15.♙h6



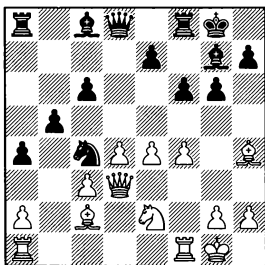
15...e5! 16.♙xg7 ♜xg7 17.h5 ♚e7
18.♙d3 ♙e6

The first wave of the attack has passed by without causing any harm.

The other logical way to break through Black's defence is to use the f-pawn. We can simply stop it by ...f5:

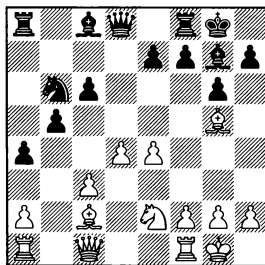
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 Rare Lines

11.0-0 ♜d7 12..♙g5 a4 13.♙c2
♜b6 14.f4 f6 15.♙h4 ♜c4 16.♚d3



16...f5! 17.♜g3 fxe4 18.♜xe4
♜a3! 19.♜h1 (19.♙ae1 b4) 19...♙e6
20.♚d2 ♜xc2 21.♚xc2 b4, destroy-
ing White's centre.

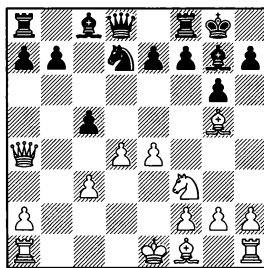
11.0-0 ♜d7 12..♙g5 a4 13.♙c2
♜b6 14.♚c1



14...f6 15.♙h6 e5 16.♙xg7 ♜xg7
17.h3 (17.f4 ♙g4) 17...♙e6 18.f4 ♙c4.

The bottom line is that Black's
play is thematic and easy – he aims
for ...e5 (or even ...c5 at an opportu-
nity) while White has not shown yet
any dangerous plan.

**B. 7.♚a4+ ♜d7 8.♜f3 0-0
9.♙g5 c5**



You should aim for the following
setup:

1. Expel the bishop from the ac-
tive position on g5 with ...h6.

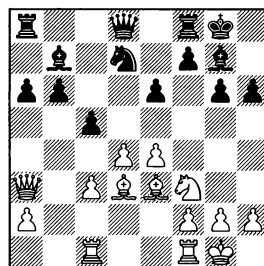
2. Fianchetto the bishop to b7
with ...a6, ...b5, if possible, or ...b6,
if White meets ...a6 with ♚a3.

3. Take d5 under control with
...e6 and bring both rooks in the
centre.

10.♙c1

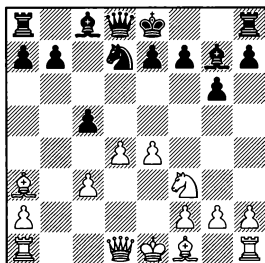
10.♙d1 h6! 11.♙e3 cxd4 12.cxd4
♜b6 13.♚a3 ♚d6! =.

**10...h6! 11.♙e3 a6! 12.♚a3!
(12.♙e2 b5) 12...b6 13.♙d3 e6
14.0-0 ♙b7**



Najer-Shomoev, Warsaw 2005,
saw further: 15.♚b3! ♚c7 16.♚d1
when best is 16...♜f6=, e.g. 17.♜d2
♙ac8 18.a4 ♙fd8.

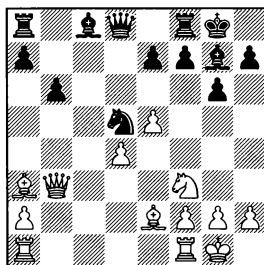
C. 7.♖a3 ♜d7 8.♜f3 c5!



White's main problem here is that the a3-bishop is hanging, for instance, after 9.♖c4 cxd4 10.cxd4?? ♜a5+. So he must protect it:

9.♜b3 0-0 10.♖e2 (10.♖d3

b5!?) 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♜f6 12.e5
♜d5 13.0-0 b6



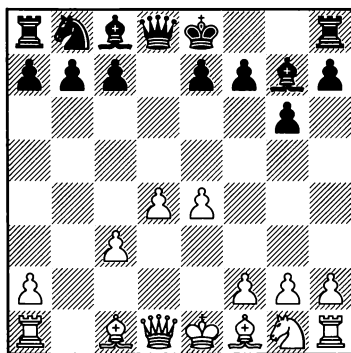
Black is fine here:

14.♜g5! h6! 15.♖f3 ♖b7
16.♜e4 ♜d7=, Atalik-Lin Weiguo,
Beijing 1997.

Part 7

Step by Step

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7



In this chapter, I continue the survey of rare systems which are often stored in White's repertoire as backup lines of the main variations. I'll consider:

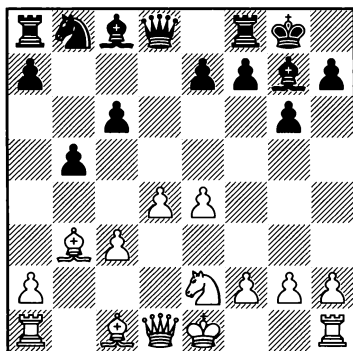
A. 7.♗b5+; B. 7.♝a4+; C. 7.♗a3.

**A. 7.♗b5+ c6! 8.♗a4 0-0
9.♖e2**

We have a wide choice here, like 9...c5 or 9...e5, but I recommend the most consistent and straightforward:

9...b5!? 10.♗b3

The bishop would be too passive on c2. After 10.♗c2 we can play immediately 10...c5! 11.♗e3 (White cannot develop the bishop to the more active square g5, because he should defend d4 against the threat of ...b4.) 11...♖d7 12.0-0 ♖b6! 13.♗d3 (13.dxc5 ♖c4±) 13...♖a4! 14.♗xb5 (14.♝c2 ♗d7; 14.♝d2 b4) 14...♖xc3 15.♖xc3 cxd4=.



10...a5!? 11.0-0

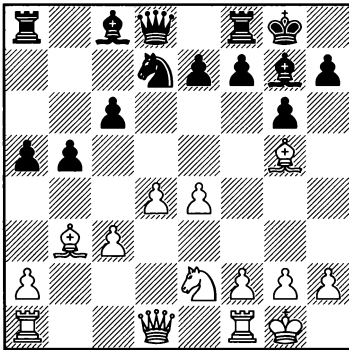
White can prevent the positional bind on the queenside by 11.a4, but this move would help us open the a6-f1 diagonal. Practice has been satisfactory for Black after 11...b4, but Agrest suggest a slightly different move order: 11...♗a6!, intending to meet 12.0-0 with 12...b4. If White chooses 12.axb5 cxb5 13.0-0,

Part 7

then 13...♖c6 14.♙e3 a4 15.♙d5 (15.♙a2 b4; 15.♙c2 ♖a5 16.♙d3 ♗d7) 15...♙c8 16.♙e1 e6 17.♙a2 ♖a5, with an edge.

11...♖d7 12.♙g5!

12.♙e3 has no bite: 12...a4 13.♙c2 ♖b6 14.♙d3 (14.♖f4 e5 15.dxe5 ♖c4=) 14...♙e6 15.♖f4 ♙c4, with a total light-squared domination.



Black has here at least two decent plans:

A1. 12...a4 and A2. 12...c5.

A1. 12...a4! 13.♙c2 ♖b6

Our idea is clear – we aim to restrict the mobility of the enemy's central pawns with ...♗e8 and ...e5, or first ...f6, ...♙e6 and push ...e5 later. White finds it difficult to come closer to our king, for instance:

a) 14.♙d3 ♙e6 15.♖f4 ♙c4 16.♙xc4 ♖xc4 17.♖d3 ♗c7 18.e5 c5!.

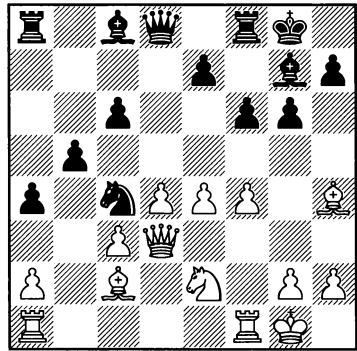
b) 14.♖c1 c5 (14...♗e8 15.♖d3 e5

16.dxe5 ♖c4) 15.dxc5 ♖c4 16.♗xd8 ♗xd8 17.♖e2 f6 18.♙c1 e5, intending ...♙f8.

c) 14.♗c1 f6 15.♙h6 e5 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.h3 (17.f4 ♙g4) 17...♙e6 18.f4 ♙c4.

Perhaps he should try to open the f-file with:

14.f4 f6 15.♙h4 ♖c4 16.♗d3



Here we blockade the f-pawn with:

16...f5! 17.♖g3 fxe4 18.♖xe4 ♖a3! 19.♖h1 (19.♙ae1 b4) 19...♙e6 20.♗d2 ♖xc2 21.♗xc2 b4

Nothing has left from White's centre, our bishop pair is in control.

A2. 12...c5

This move is connected with ...♗c7, ...e5, which could lead to a closed centre should White answer it with d5.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♔g7 Rare Lines

13.♚d2

Alternatively:

13.♚b1 ♔a6! 14.♞e1 (14.e5 h6 15.♙e3 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖b6±) 14...h6 15.♙e3 ♞c8 16.♖f4 a4 17.♙c2 cxd4 18.cxd4 e5!;

13.♙d5 ♚b8;

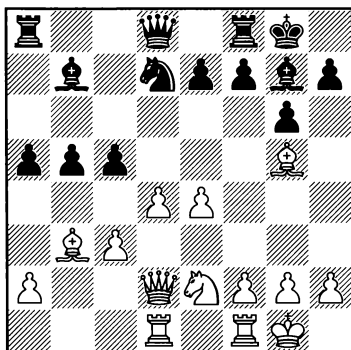
13.d5 ♖b6±;

13.♚c1 ♔a6!.

13...♙b7! 14.♞ad1!?

The alternatives are passive:

14.f3 a4 15.♙c2 ♖b6 16.dxc5 ♚xd2 17.♙xd2 ♖c4 18.♙g5 f6 19.♙h4 ♞fc8 or 14.d5 a4 15.♙c2 ♖e5=.



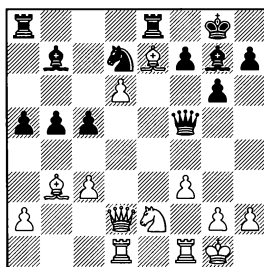
14...♚c7!?

The game Stoczek-Evdokimov, Travemuende 2009, saw 14...cxd4?!. In my opinion, in the Grünfeld Black should exchange on d4 only if he gets concrete benefits. White is better after 15.cxd4 ♞c8 (15...♖b6!? 16.d5 a4 17.♙c2 ♞c8 18.♙d3±) 16.d5! (The game went 16.♖c3 a4 17.♙d5 ♔a6 18.e5 ♖b6 19.♙f3 ♖c4 20.♚e2 ♞e8 21.e6∞.) 16...♙c5 17.♙c2 b4 18.♖d4 ♚d7 19.♚e3!±.

My idea is to prepare ...e5 which would be quite good in the event of 15.♚e3 e5 16.d5 c4 17.♙c2 f6 18.♙h4 ♚c5 19.♚xc5 ♖xc5 20.f3 ♞fc8 21.♚b1 ♔a6 22.♙f2 ♙f8±.

White should take the pawn:

15.♙xe7 ♞fe8 16.d5 (or 16.♙xc5 ♖xc5 17.dxc5 ♞xe4 18.♚d7 ♞e7 19.♚xc7 ♞xc7 20.♙d5 ♞ac8 21.♙xb7 ♞xb7 22.♙d5 ♙f8) 16...♚e5 17.d6 ♚xe4 18.f3 ♚f5.



At first White's position looks overwhelming, but we need only one move – ...♙f6(f8), to balance the game. Play might continue with 19.♖h1 (19.♙c2 ♚e6; 19.♖g3 ♚e5) 19...c4 20.♙c2 ♚c5 21.♖d4 (21.♚b1 ♙f6 22.♙xf6 ♖xf6 23.♖d4 b4 24.♖f5 ♞e5 25.cxb4 axb4 26.♚xb4 ♚xb4 27.♞xb4 gxf5 28.♞xb7 ♞xa2 29.♙b1 ♞d2=) 21...♙f8 22.♙xf8 ♖xf8 23.♚f4 ♞ad8=.

B. 7.♚a4+ ♖d7

White's check was aimed against our thematic plan with ...c7-c5, ...♖c6 so our suggested answer looks like a concession. However, I think that this is the best way to achieve rich dynamic play. After all, the knight supports ...c5 and can be

quickly redeployed to f6 or b6 with tempo. Let us consider the alternatives:

7...c6 seems illogical as after 8.♟f3 0-0 9.♙e2 c5 10.0-0 ♝c6 11.♙e3 white is a clear tempo ahead with ♖a4. On the other hand, it is arguable that the queen is so much better placed on that square. After 11...♖a5 12.♖xa5 ♜xa5 Black should not have serious problems;

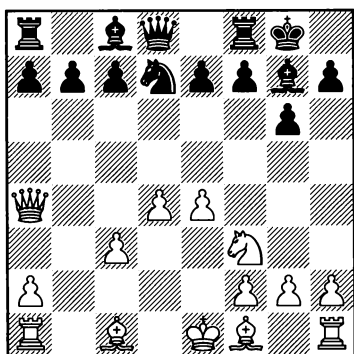
7...♙d7?! 8.♖a3! is not quite in the spirit of the Grünfeld as ...c5 begins to look as a distant mirage.

7...♗d7 may be as good as the text after 8.♖a3 b6! 9.♟f3 ♙b7 10.♙d3 c5 11.♙e3 0-0 12.0-0 with a complex battle ahead.

8.♟f3

Another setup is 8.♙g5 0-0 9.♞d1. Black obtains a pleasant flexible position without any weaknesses with 9...c5 10.♖a3 ♖c7 11.♟f3 ♜f6 12.♙d3 ♙g4 13.0-0 ♙xf3 14.gxf3 ♞fc8. The f6-knight is eyeing the square f4.

8...0-0



9.♙g5

The a1-rook should quickly leave the big diagonal or Black will easily equalise exploiting the pin after 9.♙e2 c5 10.0-0 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♜c5! 12.♖c2 ♜e6 13.♙e3 ♜xd4 14.♜xd4 (14.♙xd4 ♙xd4 15.♞ad1 e5 16.♜xe5 ♖b6) 14...♙xd4 15.♞ad1 e5 16.♙xd4 exd4 17.♖b2 ♙e6 18.♖xb7 ♖b6=, Miton-Ivanchuk, Havana 2007.

The white bishop could also go to e3, but it would be passive there. Following 9.♙e3 c5 10.♞d1 ♜b6! 11.♖a3 (11.♖a5 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♙g4 13.♙e2 ♖d6 14.0-0 ♞fc8; 11.♖b3 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♙d7, threatening ...♙a4) 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 Black finds time for 12...♖d6 or 12...♙g4.

9...c5 10.♞c1

The c-file will be probably open in future, so the rook's most natural place is on c1.

10.♙e2?! again is dubious, but this time things are more complicated than in the note to White's ninth move: 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♜c5! 12.♖a3 ♜xe4 13.♙xe7 ♖b6 14.♙xf8 ♙xf8 with a terrific compensation, for example: 15.♖a6 ♙b4+ 16.♟f1 ♙f5, followed by ...♞e8.

10.♞d1 h6! faces White with a difficult choice. 11.♙h4?! maintains the hit on e7, but the bishop will be missing from the centre – 11...♜f6! 12.♙d3 (12.e5 ♜d5 13.dxc5 ♜xc3 14.♞xd8 ♜xa4 15.♞d4 ♜xc5 16.♙xe7 ♜e6) 12...♙g4 13.0-0 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♜h5. 11.♙e3, on the other hand, leads to nearly the same position as

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 Rare Lines

in the event of 9.♙e3. Black follows the same recipe: 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♖b6 13.♗a3 ♗d6! 14.♗xd6 exd6 15.♙d3 f5! 16.0-0 (16.e5 ♗d8) 16...g5 17.d5 ♖a4, Jacobsen-Petrosian, Gibraltar 2008. Black is already slightly better.

10...h6! 11.♙e3

The game Dreev-Gulko, New York 1989 saw 11.♙h4?!. According to the computer, Black should punish it with 11...g5 12.♙g3 g4, but my human advice is 11...♖f6! Then White should part with his dark-squared bishop with 12.♙xf6 as 12.12.♙d3 ♖h5! would be quite awkward for him.

11...a6! 12.♗a3!

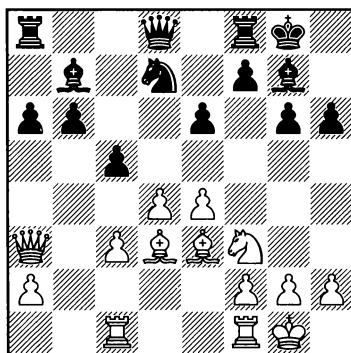
Or 12.♙e2 b5 13.♗a3 ♙b7; 12.♙d3 b5 13.♗a3 ♙b7 14.0-0 ♗c7 15.d5 c4 16.♙b1 ♗fe8 17.♖d4 ♖e5.

12...b6 13.♙d3 e6

It is good to restrain White's d4-pawn. 13...♙b7 14.0-0 ♖f6 15.d5 is better for White since the only counterplay with 15...♖g4 16.♙d2 f5?! can be met by 17.♗e1! and play opens in White's favour.

14.0-0 ♙b7

This position would have been pleasant for White, stayed his queen on d2 or e2. It has nothing to do on the left flank which is, in principle, a Black's domain.



The game Serper-Chuchelov, Novosibirsk 1989, went 15.♗fd1 ♗c7 16.♖d2 ♗fd8 17.♙b1, when Black should have displayed activity with 17...b5=. Instead, he removed his knight from the main battleground with 17...♖f6?! 18.f3 ♗ac8? (19...c4) 19.dxc5! bxc5 20.♖c4 and unexpectedly White's knight obtained a dominating stand.

Najer-Shomoev, Warsaw 2005, saw a more logical idea: 15.♗b3! ♗c7 16.♗d1. The queen is already closer to the kingside so here 16...♖f6 is already a reasonable move. (In the game, Black ruined his position with 16...f5? 17.♙c4 ♗ae8 18.exf5 gxf5 19.a4±. He should have stayed passive on the kingside.) After 17.♖d2 ♗ac8 18.a4 ♗fd8, I do not see how White could improve his setup since 19.♗e2 is hardly good due to 19...cxd4.

C. 7.♙a3 ♖d7

We know from the previous part that White's bishop on a3 is not a serious barrier before our favourite breakthrough ...c7-c5. I recom-

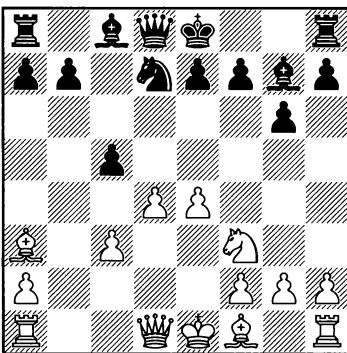
mended ...b6, followed up by ...c5. However, here White has saved a tempo on ♖b3. With 7...♘d7, we try to exploit the drawbacks of White's move order. The bishop on a3 is unprotected which enables the threat ...c7-c5xd4, ♖a5+. That does not mean 7...b6 is bad, on the contrary, it is a valuable alternative: 8.♙c4 ♙b7, and here the aggressive 9.♖f3!? is probably too committal: 9...0-0 10.h4! ♘d7! 11.h5 ♘f6 12.hxg6 hxg6, with a sharp position.

8.♘f3

8.♖b3 would obtain a somewhat better version for White of line C1/Part 6, because on d7 the knight is more passive than on c6. Still, Black is fine after 8...c5 9.♖d1 0-0 10.♙e2 ♖a5 11.♘f3, Milov-Mikhalevski, Biel 2002, whereas Kogan suggests 11...♘f6! 12.♙d3 ♙e6 13.♖b2 b6 14.0-0 ♙g4.

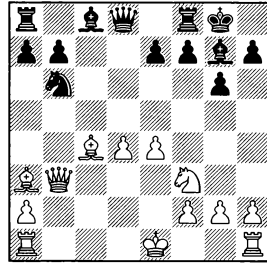
Alternatively, 8.♙c4 c5 9.♖b3 0-0 10.♘f3 can be attacked by 10...b5! 11.♙d5 ♖b8.

8...c5!



9.♖b3

9.♙c4 cxd4 10.♖b3 (10.0-0 dxc3!? 11.♙xf7+ ♘xf7 12.♘g5+ ♘e8 13.♘e6 ♖a5 14.♘g7+ ♘f7) 10...0-0 11.cxd4 ♘b6 leads to the following position:



Now 12.♙e2 ♙e6! 13.♖b4 ♖c8! would give Black full compensation in the event of 14.♖xe7 ♖xe7 15.♙xe7 ♖fe8 16.♙d6 (16.♙g5 ♙c4 17.e5 f6!; 16.♙a3 ♙c4 17.e5 f6; 16.♙h4 ♙g4 17.e5 f6!) 16...♙c4! so Milov preferred 12.0-0 against Svidler, Moscow 2001. However, with the bishop pair and no weaknesses, Black's game is very pleasant: 12...♘xc4 13.♖xc4 ♙g4 14.♘e5 ♙e6 15.♖b4 ♖b6!. This improves on 15...♖e8 from the stem game and leaves Black with some initiative, e.g. 16.♖a4 ♖fd8 17.♖fd1 ♙xe5! (a universal motif in the Grünfeld) 18.dxe5 ♖c7 19.♙b2 (19.f4 ♖xd1+ 20.♖xd1 a5 21.♖d4 b5 22.♖c1 ♖b7) 19...a6 20.♖ac1 ♖xd1+ 21.♖xd1 b5.

9...0-0 10.♙e2

White has also tried:

a) 10.♙d3

On this square the bishop provokes 10...b5!? (Kogan), when

White cannot simply castle due to the fork at c4. After 11.♗xb5 ♖b8 12.♗a4 ♖b6 13.♗c2 cxd4 14.♖xd4 (14.cxd4 ♙g4↑) 14...♙d7 15.0-0 ♖c8, Black has enough compensation for the pawn. Furthermore, Black can calmly prepare ...b5 with 10... ♖b8! 11.0-0 b5, when either the b3-queen or the d3-bishop should retreat. Then Black has many useful moves on the queenside as ...♗c7, ...a6, ...♙b7, while White seems to lack an active plan.

b) 10.♙c4

This is really begging for 10...b5! 11.♙d5 (or 11.♙xb5 ♖b8 12.♗a4 ♖b6 13.♗a4 cxd4 14.♖xd4 ♙b7↑) 11... ♖b8↑.

c) 10.♙b5?! cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖f6 12.♙d3 ♙g4±.

d) 10.♙d1 does not prevent ...b5 either: 10...♗c7 11.♙e2 b5!

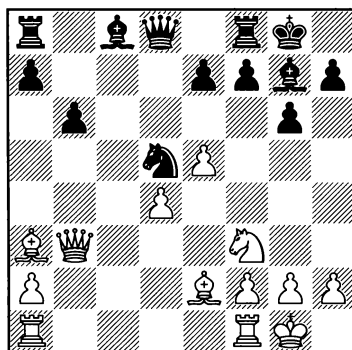
11...cxd4

11...♖b8!?, enabling ...b5, looks a valuable alternative.

11.cxd4 ♖f6 12.e5 ♖d5 13.0-0 b6

It looks like Black is already better due to his control over the d5-

square, but White has some threats, connected with:



14.♖g5!

Now 14...♙b7 would allow 15.e6! f6 16.♖f7 ♗c8 17.♖fe1 ♗c3 (17... ♗xe6 18.♙c4) 18.♙f3±, so:

14...h6! 15.♙f3 ♙b7 16.♖e4 ♗d7

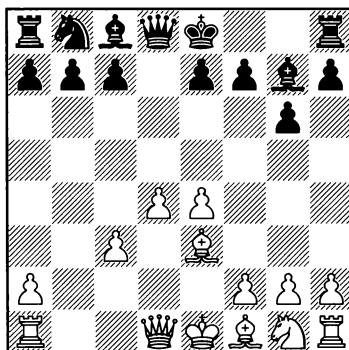
Black has consolidated his pieces. In Atalik-Lin Weiguo, Beijing 1997, White sought counterplay with 17.♖fe1 ♖ac8 18.♖ad1 ♖fd8 19.e6 fxe6 20.♙g4 ♖c6 21.♙c1, with some compensation.

Perhaps Black should deprive the enemy of that resource by 18... ♖c7, when 19.e6 fxe6 20.♙g4 ♖f4± would be outright bad.

Part 8

The Exchange System 7.♘e3

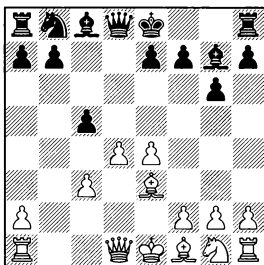
1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3
6.bxc3 ♘g7 7.♘e3



Part 8

Main Ideas

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♙e3 c5

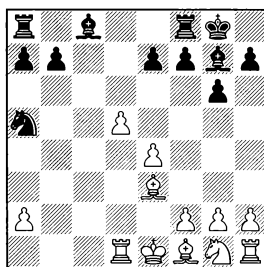


By firstly developing the bishop, White hopes to get the best of the 7.♗f3 system while sidestepping the pin from g4. This move order is often adopted by players who love endgames. Their favourite line is 8.♙d2 ♙a5 9.♙c1 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♙xd2+ 11.♙xd2 with an active king and a safe position. I propose to complicate their task with the relatively rare setup:

**A. 8.♙d2 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘c6
10.♙d1 0-0**

Now White can trade queens with 11.d5 ♙a5 12.♙xa5 ♘xa5, but his rook is not on the open c-file, and, more importantly, his centre has lost its flexibility and can be attacked with ...f5:

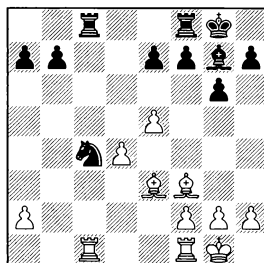
**Dumitrache–Vokarev
Bucharest 1998**



13.♙d2 b6 14.♙b4 f5! 15.♙d3
fxe4 16.♙xe4 ♙b7+.

In most games White prefers to develop the knight, but then our favourite plan with ...♙g4 works fine:

**11.♘f3 ♙g4 12.♙e2 ♙a5 13.0-0
♙ac8 14.♙xa5 ♘xa5 15.♙c1 ♙xf3
16.♙xf3 (16.gxf3 ♘c6) 16...♘c4
17.e5**

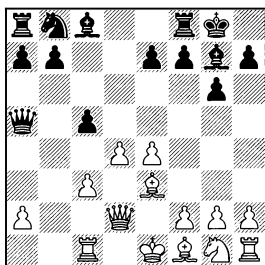


4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♔g7 7.♗e3

It is true that Black has no chances to win this position, but, on the other hand,

17...b5! 18.♗b7 ♖b8 19.♗d5 ♜fc8 20.e6 ♜b6 21.exf7+ ♔f8 22.a4 e6 looks like an easy draw.

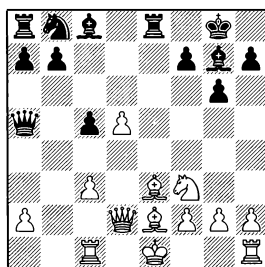
B. 8.♖c1 ♜a5 9.♜d2 0-0



This leads to original and interesting positions. Since White's rook is already on c1, we'll not hurry to open the c-file. Instead, we'll build up play against the queen on d2 by bringing our rook to d8.

10.♖f3

10.d5 is more principled, but the arising pawn structure with an open e-file is good for Black: 10...e6 11.♖f3 exd5 12.exd5 ♜e8 13.♗e2:

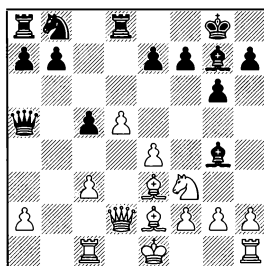


York 1990, continued 13...♗f5 14.0-0 ♖d7 15.h3 ♖b6 (15...♖f6=) 16.g4 ♗d7 17.c4 ♜xd2 18.♖xd2 ♖a4=.

10...♜d8

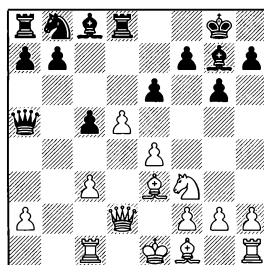
The whole White's setup is devised to support d5, followed by c4. He can play it now or on the next move.

11.♗e2 ♗g4! 12.d5



12...c4! is pleasant for Black so the main danger should be:

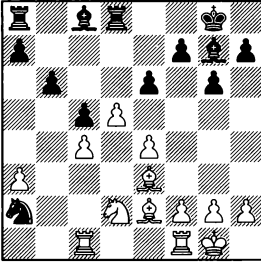
11.d5 e6!



Now White can finally play 12.c4, but after 12...♜xd2+ he faces an unpleasant dilemma. If he recaptures with the king, it will feel in the draught on the open d-file: 13.♔xd2 ♖a6 14.a3 f5!? 15.exf5 exd5. In the event of 13.♖xd2 b6

Karpov-Kasparov, Lyon/New

14.♙e2 ♘a6 15.0-0 ♘b4 16.a3 ♘a2,
his pieces lack coordination:



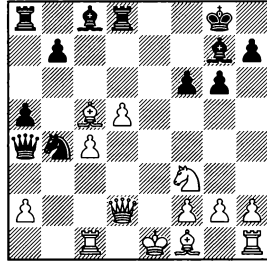
See game **12 Tunik-Timofeev**,
St. Petersburg 2002.

12.♙g5 f6! 13.♙f4

For 13.♙e3 ♘c6 14.♙d3 exd5

15.exd5 c4! 16.♙xc4 ♙e6 17.♙d1 ♘e7,
see **game 14 Pashikian-Cornette**, Aix-les-Bains 28.03.2011.

13...♙a4! 14.c4 ♘c6 15.♙e3
exd5 16.exd5 ♘b4! =

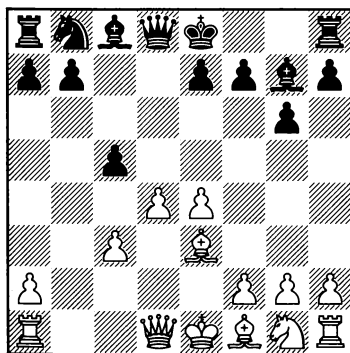


See **game 13 Sargissian-Svidler**, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010.

Part 8

Step by Step

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♠c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♙e3 c5



A. 8.♙d2; B. 8.♞c1.

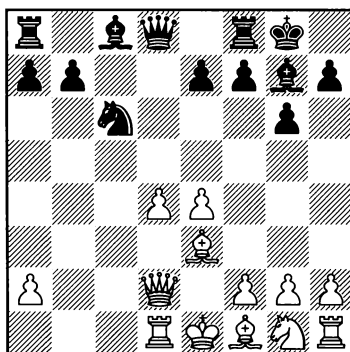
8.♘f3 transposes to part 9, line D while 8.♙c4 ♙a5 9.♙d2 ♘c6 10.♘e2 0-0 11.♞d1 does not set Black any problems. He can trade queens by 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♙xd2+ 13.♞xd2 ♘a5 14.♙d3 ♙d7 15.0-0 ♞fc8=.

A. 8.♙d2

This move is by far the most popular choice of White. Most often Black answers with 8...♙a5 9.♞c1 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♙xd2+ 11.♘xd2 when White's king is quite active in the endgame.

We chose for our repertoire a more straightforward and universal approach, which is efficient in a wide variety of variations:

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘c6 10.♞d1
0-0



11.♘f3

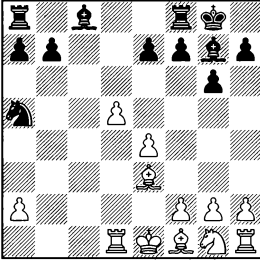
Alternatives allow counterplay in the centre:

a) 11.d5 ♙a5 12.♙xa5

It is dubious to move again the rook, because Black's knight will be very active on d4: 12.♞c1 ♙xd2+ 13.♙xd2 ♘d4 14.♙e3 a6!=. The last move aims to ensure protection for the centralised knight, should he retreat to b5. The immediate 14..f5

is also possible, but the sharp end-game after 15.e5! ♖xe5 16.♞c4 ♘b5 17.♘f3 ♖c3+ 18.♙d1 ♖f6 19.♞xc8 ♞axc8 20.♙xb5 ♞fd8 21.♙e2 ♞c2+ 22.♘d2 ♞xa2 23.♞b1 looks dangerous for Black.

12...♘xa5



It becomes obvious that White's rook missed its best square – c1. The pawn centre also lost its flexibility and can be attacked now with ...f5, as in the event of 13.♖b5 f5. Instead, Dumitrache-Vokarev, Bucharest 1998, went 13.♖d2 b6 14.♖b4. Here the thematic 14...f5 took over the initiative: 15.♖d3 fxe4 16.♖xe4 ♖b7 17.f3. Now the simple 17...♖f6 would have fixed Black's edge.

b) 11.♖e2 may be preventing the pin from g4, but lets in 11...e5 12.d5 ♘d4. The game Gelfand-Svidler, Ohrid 2009, saw further 13.♘f3 ♘xe2 14.♞xe2 ♞a5+ 15.♖d2 ♞a4=. (15...♞xa2 16.0-0 f5 is sharper, but risky.)

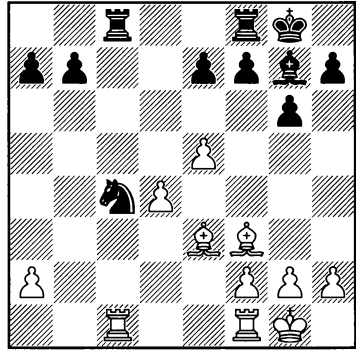
11...♖g4 12.♖e2 ♞a5 13.0-0

13.♞xa5 ♘xa5 14.♘d2 ♖xe2 15.♙xe2 facilitates Black's task.

13...♞ac8 14.♞xa5

14.h3 ♖xf3 15.♖xf3 ♞xd2 16.♞xd2 ♘a5 17.♖g5 ♘c4 is evidently safe for Black.

14...♘xa5 15.♞c1 ♖xf3 16.♖xf3 (16.gxf3 ♘c6) 16...♘c4 17.e5



This position has occurred in several games which all ended in a draw. White hopes for some tiny advantage despite the opposite coloured bishops. Perhaps the most precise move is:

17...b5!

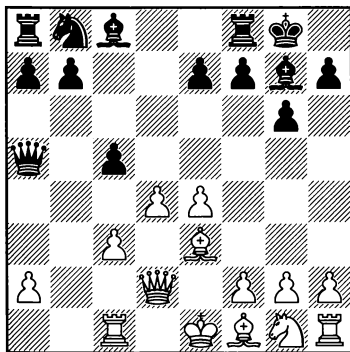
The blindfold game Ivanchuk-Svidler, Nice 2010, went instead 17...♘xe3 18.fxe3 ♖h6 19.♙f2 b5 20.♙e2 e6 21.♖b7 ♞c4 22.♞xc4 bxc4=.

18.♖b7 ♞b8 19.♖d5 ♞fc8 20.e6 ♖b6 21.exf7+ ♙f8 22.a4 e6=.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♔g7 7.♗e3

B. 8.♞c1 ♖a5 9.♜d2 0-0

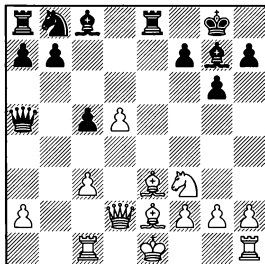
There is no need to hurry with the exchange on d4, although it also leads to a balanced game. Let us give the enemy more options to err...



10.♖f3

a) 10.♗c4 does not fit in with White's scheme. A possible retort is 10...♜c6 11.♜e2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♜xd2+ 13.♜xd2 ♞d8 14.d5 e6=.

b) 10.d5 is more principled. We should attack the centre with 10...e6, using that White's king is far from safe in the middle of the board after 11.c4?! ♜xd2+ 12.♜xd2 b6, followed up by 13...f5. So White usually prefers 11.♜f3 exd5 12.exd5 ♞e8 13.♗e2 (13.c4 ♜xd2+ 14.♜xd2 b6=).



Black's pieces are active and compensate for the enemy passed pawn in the centre. In the world championship match, Kasparov continued against Karpov (Lyon/New York 1990):

13...♗f5

13...♜d7 is equally good: 14.0-0 ♜f6 15.c4 ♜xd2 16.♜xd2 ♗d7 17.♞fe1 b6 18.h3 ♗a4 19.♗d1 ♗xd1 20.♞exd1 ♜d7 21.♞e1 ♜e5=.

14.0-0 ♜d7 15.h3

Alternatives are:

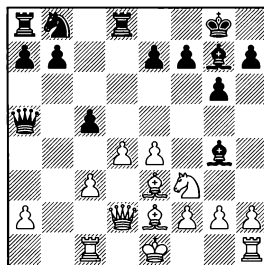
15.c4 ♜xd2 16.♜xd2 ♗b2 17.♞ce1 ♗c3 18.♞d1 ♗d4 19.♗xd4 cxd4 20.♗f3 ♗c2 21.♞c1 d3+; 15.♜b2 ♜f6 16.♗c4 ♜b6 17.♜a3 ♗f8 18.♞cd1 ♗d6 19.h3 a6 20.♗h6 ♜c7+.

15...♜b6 (15...♜f6=) 16.g4 ♗d7 17.c4 ♜xd2 18.♜xd2 ♜a4=.

10...♞d8 11.d5

This way White anticipates 11...♗g4 because he can meet it by 12.c4 ♜xd2+ 13.♜xd2, while:

11.♗e2 ♗g4! is already good.



This position occurs from time to time, so we'll elaborate a little. After:

12.d5

Black has a wide choice. In practice he fares best with 12...♖d7, but this move allows 13.c4 with a space advantage. We like the more challenging:

12...c4!

Now 13.♙xc4 fails to 13...♜c8. Also bad is 13.♜d4?! ♙xe2 14.♜xe2 (14.♞xe2 e6) 14...e6 15.0-0 exd5 16.♞fd1 ♜c6 17.exd5 ♜e5 18.♜f4 ♜d3 19.♜xd3 ♞xd5+. We'll focus on:

13.0-0 ♜d7 14.h3!

White should attack on the kingside. Any loss of time would concede the initiative to Black, e.g. 14.♞c2 ♞ac8 15.♞b1 ♙xf3 16.♙xf3 b5+.

14...♙xf3 15.♙xf3 b5

15...♜e5 is unclear. White should sac a pawn with enough compensation after 16.♙e2 e6 17.f4 ♜d3 18.♙xd3 cxd3 19.♞xd3 exd5 20.e5 ♞xa2 21.♙d4 ♞c4 22.♞e3 ♞e8 23.f5 ♞c7.

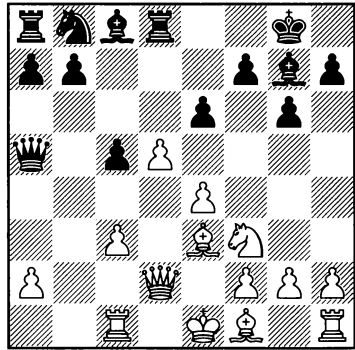
16.♞fd1 ♞a3 17.h4 a5

Black has clearcut play on the queenside.

Finally, 11.♙h6 hardly deserves attention, because the whole idea to trade dark-squared bishops is strategically unsound. In many Grünfeld endgames, Black finds it difficult to activate his g7-bishop while the white one could be rather

nasty to our queenside. We should grasp the opportunity and quickly exchange the queens: 11...cxd4 12.♙xg7 ♜xg7 13.cxd4 ♜c6 14.♞xa5 ♜xa5 15.♜d2 ♙e6! 16.d5 f5! 17.♜d4 ♙g8 18.f3 fxe4 19.fxe4 e6 and White's centre is crumbling down.

11...e6!



12.♙g5

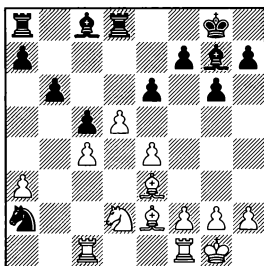
a) After 12.c4 ♞xd2+ White is at a crossroads.

13.♜xd2 ♜a6 14.a3 looks more testing, but the centralised king is a good reason for busting the white pawn formation with 14...f5!? 15.exf5 exd5 16.fxcg6 hxcg6 17.cxd5 ♜c7 18.♙d3 ♜xd5. White's king is in the draught on the open d-file. This sharp position is yet to be tested in practice.

Much more popular is 13.♜xd2 13...b6 14.♙e2 ♜a6 15.0-0 ♜b4 16.a3 ♜a2.

Black's knight is incredibly jumpy and makes all the difference in Black's favour.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙e3



White seems unable to set up coordination between his pieces. See game **12 Tunik-Timofeev**, St. Petersburg 2002 for more details about this line.

b) 12.♙e2 exd5 13.exd5 b5!?

It is good to immediately destroy the enemy centre. 13...♜d7 14.0-0 ♜f6 is a little slow and gives White time to reinforce his passed pawn with 15.c4 ♜xd2 16.♜xd2 b6 17.h3.

After 13...b5, both 14.c4 ♜xd2+ 15.♜xd2 bxc4 16.♙xc4 ♙b7 and 14.♙xc5 ♙b7 15.c4 ♜xd2+ 16.♜xd2 bxc4 17.♙xc4 ♙xd5, Brunner-Rod-shtein, La Bordeta 2010, completely level the game.

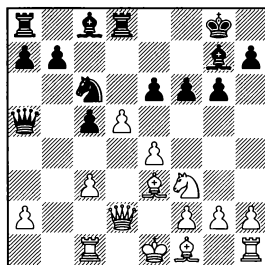
12...f6! 13.♙f4

Alternatively:

a) 13.c4 does not save a tempo on retreating the bishop due to 13...♜c6! 14.♜xa5 ♜xa5 15.♙d2 b6 16.♙d3 ♜b7 17.0-0 ♙d7 18.♙fe1 ♙e8 19.♙c3, Melkumyan-Sasikiran, Moscow 2010. Here 19...exd5! 20.exd5 (20.cxd5 b5↑) 20...♜d6 21.♜d2 ♜f7 would have easily equalised.

b) 13.♙e3 was Kramik's choice against Howell, London 11.12.2010. The game went 13...exd5 14.exd5 ♜a6 15.♙e2 ♙e6 16.c4 ♜xd2+ 17.♜xd2 ♙d7, and it turned out that Black has lost a tempo. The correct retort was shown a week later in Potkin-Svidler, Moscow 18.12.2010:

13...♜c6:



White tried to expel the knight with 14.♙d3, but 14...exd5 15.exd5 c4! 16.♙xc4 ♙e6 17.♙d1 ♜e7 apparently keeps the balance.

This position was further tested at the European Championship in Aix-les-Bains, see **game 14 Pashkian-Cornette**, 28.03.2011.

In the diagram position, 14.♙e2 would not change anything after 14...exd5 15.exd5 c4, but in Bacrot-Timofeev, Moscow 2010, Black chose the more ambitious 15...♜e7!? 16.c4 ♜xd2+ 17.♜xd2 b6 18.g4 f5 19.g5 ♙e8, with a level game.

14.h4 exd5 15.exd5 ♙g4 16.♙e2 also allows 16...c4!? 17.0-0 ♙e6 18.♙xc4 ♙xd5=.

13...♜a4! 14.c4

14.♔c2 is too timid and gives Black an excellent game after 14... ♖xc2 15.♞xc2 exd5 16.exd5 ♕f5 17.♞b2 ♕e4 18.c4 ♕xf3 (18...♞e8=) 19.gxf3 ♞e8+ 20.♜d2 b6 21.h4 ♜d7.

14...♜c6 15.♕e3

Or 15.♕d3 ♜b4 16.♕b1 b5!.

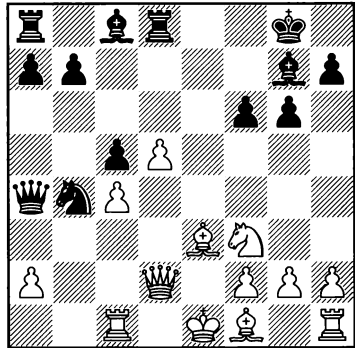
15...exd5

15...b6!? 16.♕d3 ♜b4 17.♕b1 exd5 18.exd5 ♕g4 deserves attention, too.

16.exd5 ♜b4!

Black lured the opponent into a

home analysis and brilliantly won an extremely important game at the Olympiad.



See game 13 Sargissian-Svidler, Khanty-Mansiysk, 2010. Of course, the diagram position is far from clear, but Black's threats are more direct and menacing.

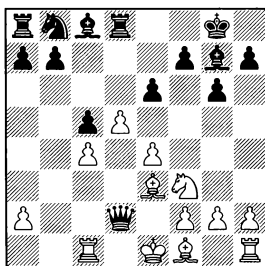
Part 8

Complete Games

12. Tunik–Timofeev

St. Petersburg 2002

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5
 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7
 7.♙e3 c5 8.♞c1 ♚a5 9.♞d2 0-0
 10.♘f3 ♞d8 11.d5 e6 12.c4 ♞xd2+



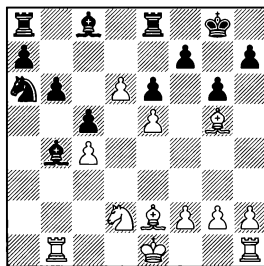
13. ♘xd2

When White chose 7.♙e3, he was planning to play an endgame with his king remaining in the centre. Meanwhile, Black has put a rook on d8, and now White finds it reasonable to reconsider his intention. Evidently, he was not ready for a theoretical battle in the sharp (but roughly equal) variation 13.♘xd2 ♙a6 14.a3 f5 15.exf5 exd5.

13. ♘xd2 b6 14.♙e2 ♘a6 15.0-0

Following the same “safe” strategy, started on move 13. Instead,

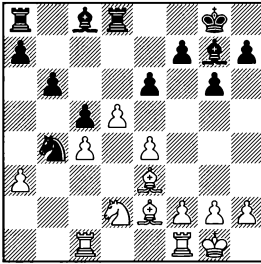
White could have attempted a re-deployment of the awkward knight on d2: 15.♘b1, but, again, 15...f5 is strong. 16.f3 (16.exf5 exd5 17.cxd5 ♘b4 looks out of question) 16...fxe4 17.fxe4 ♙b2 18.♞d1 (18.♞c2 ♙d4) 18...♘b4! does not give White time for castling (19.0-0 ♘xa2!) so the whole idea with 15.♘b1 turned out to be dubious. This example, and the course of the game, suggest that perhaps White should restrain the enemy beast from jumping to b4 with 15.a3. White loses a pawn after 15...♙b2 16.♞b1 ♙xa3, but activates his passed pawn with 17.♙g5 ♞e8 (17...♞d7 18.♙d1!) 18.d6 ♙b4 19.e5



It seems that Black’s greediness will be punished, but the unfortunate stand of the knight on d2 once again ruins White’s game. Black has 19...♙b7! 20.d7 ♞ed8 21.♙xd8 ♞xd8 22.♙f3 ♙xf3 23.gxf3 ♞xd7 24.♞d1 ♙c3, collecting a good pawn har-

vest. If White does not take the exchange, he will be bound to struggle without a pawn after 20.♙f3 ♜xf3 21.gxf3 ♜b8 22.♜e2 ♜xd2 23.♜xd2 ♜d7 24.♞he1 f6 25.exf6 ♜f7.

15...♜b4 16.a3



16...♜a2!

This incredible knight makes all the difference! It is treading under the enemy position, racing all over the queenside along the route b8-a6-b4-a2-c3-a4-b2.

17.♞c2 ♜c3 18.♙d3

The bishop will be hanging on this square, but White is firmly decided to expel the c3-knight back to the rim, or eat it. His attitude is easy to understand since 18.♞e1 ♜xe2+ 19.♞xe2 exd5 20.cxd5 ♙a6 21.♜c4 f5 22.f3 ♞d7 23.♞e1 fxe4 24.fxe4 ♞e8 is gloom for him, e.g. 25.♙f2 ♞de7 26.♜d6 ♞f8 when White lacks good moves.

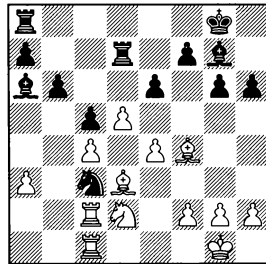
As a matter of facts, White can maintain the balance with the solid 18.♙f3 exd5 19.exd5! (19.cxd5 ♙a6 20.♞fc1 ♜e2+ 21.♙xe2 ♙xe2 22.f3 ♙d3 23.♞a2 f5 24.♙g5 ♞d7 25.a4

♞e8—+) 19...♙f5 20.♞cc1, gripping for the tactical straw 20...♜a2 21.♞a1!=. Still, Black might be a little bit better after 20...♞ac8, preparing ...b5. However, if White was to cling to such variations, it would have been wiser to make a better choice much earlier!

18...♙a6 19.♙g5 ♞d7

It is senseless to force play with 20.♙xd8 ♞xd8 21.exd5 ♜xd5 22.♞e1 ♜f4 23.♙f1 and, as passive as White is, he is nevertheless the exchange up, e.g. 23...♜e6 24.♜b3 ♙b7 25.♞d2±.

20.♞fc1 h6 21.♙f4



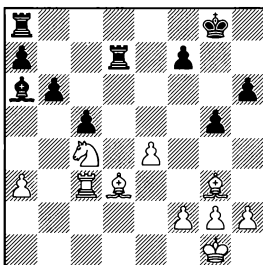
The critical position for 18.♙d3. It has arisen in several games! Now 18...♜a4 or 18...g5 would be about equal, but Black has a tactical solution:

21...exd5! 22.♞xc3 ♙xc3 23.♞xc3 g5

The two minor pieces that provoked nightmares to White have disappeared, but the heavy artillery comes in place.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙e3

24.♙g3 dxc4 25.♖xc4



25...♙d4!?

A computer would have chosen 25...♙xd3 with a pawn up, but the opposite coloured bishops depreciate the advantage. Over the board, the initiative is often a bigger advantage, than a pawn. As a rule, a rook + pawn in an endgame are not weaker than a knight+bishop. If we throw in the bad coordination of White's pieces, Black's edge becomes substantial.

26.♙f1 ♙ad8 27.f4?

White breaks up too easily. 27.f3 offers good chances for survival: 27...♙d1 28.♙f2 b5 29.♙e2 ♙a1 (29...♙1d4!? might be a better try: 30.♖a5 ♙a4 31.♙c2 ♙c8 32.♖b3 ♙xa3 33.♖xc5 b4 34.♙d6 ♙xe2 35.♙xe2 b3 36.♙c1 ♙a6 37.e5 ♙ac6 38.♙d3 b2 39.♙b1 ♙xc5 40.♙xc5 ♙xc5 41.e6 ♙d5+! 42.♙c3 ♙b5! 43.e7 ♙e5 with an extra pawn and practical chances.) 30.♖d6 b4 31.♙xc5 ♙a2 32.axb4 ♙xe2 33.♙g1 a6. White's pieces are very active. After the text, White's material quickly evaporates:

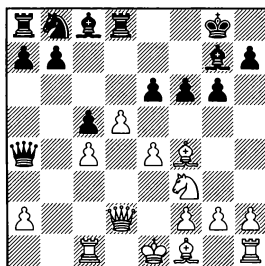
27...♙xe4 28.♖b2 ♙xf1 29.♙xf1 ♙d2 30.♖c4 ♙d1+ 31.♙f2 gxf4 32.♙h4 ♙dd4 33.♖b2 f3 34.♙f6 ♙d2+ 35.♙xf3 ♙e6 0-1.

13. Sargissian-Svidler

Khanty-Mansiysk 30.09.2010

This game was extremely important for both opponents. It took place in the ninth round of the Olympiad in Russia. The Armenian team was, as usual, one of the main contenders for the gold, so the fight was ferocious. Undoubtedly, both sides came armed with the most advanced theoretical preparations of their team and clubs. The rigid opening tastes of Svidler did not leave much room for doubts – White was sure to face the Grünfeld.

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙e3 c5 8.♙c1 ♙a5 9.♙d2 0-0 10.♖f3 ♙d8 11.d5 e6 12.♙g5 f6 13.♙f4 ♙a4 14.c4



14...♖c6

This is a novelty. Two weeks earlier the game Navarro Molina-Alsi-

na Leal, El Sauzal 04.09.2010, saw 14...exd5 15.exd5 ♖a6 16.♗e2 ♘b4 17.0-0 ♜xa2 18.♞e3 ♙f5 19.♞xc5 ♘xd5 20.cxd5 ♞xe2 21.♞fe1 ♗a2 22.d6 ♞ac8 and Black went on to win this tangled position. A week after Svidler's resounding win in Khanty-Mansiysk, Ernst-Gustafsson, Baden-Baden, 09.10.2010, featured 22.♞b5 ♗a6 23.♞b3 ♞b6 24.♗a2 ♗a6 25.♞b3 ♞b6 26.♗a2 ♗a6 27.♞b3, draw by repetition.

We see that the idea of ...♘b4, hitting the a2-pawn, was not completely new. Svidler's finesse is that he refrains from opening the centre. Thus, in the event of 15.♗e2, he could continue with 15...♘b4 16.0-0 ♜xa2 17.♞e3 e5 18.♗g3 ♗a5∞. White should also reckon with 15.♗e2 e5 16.♗e3 ♘d4 17.♗d1 ♗a3 18.0-0 ♞d6!?. We prefer White's game here, but Svidler had tried a similar rook lift against Topalov, so Sargissian could not be sure what his opponent really had in mind.

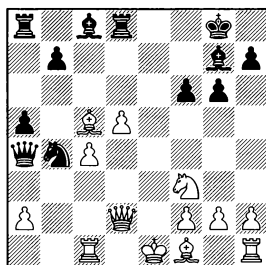
Let us note that after 15.♗e2, Black could not simply transpose to the previously known game by 15...exd5, because White has the *zwischenzug* 16.♗d1, e.g. 16...♞b4 17.exd5 ♞xd2+ 18.♙xd2 b5 19.cxb5 ♞xd5+ 20.♙e2 ♘a5 21.♞e1 where Black has more weaknesses. Sargissian goes for the most testing move:

15.♗e3 exd5 16.exd5 ♘b4

I doubt that Svidler had even thought about 16...♗f8. At the same time, it is not easy to prove

any White's advantage there: 17.♞c2 ♞xc2 18.♞xc2 ♙f5 19.♞b2 ♘a5 20.♗e2 b6 21.0-0 ♞e8 22.♘h4 ♗d7 23.g3 ♘b7=.

17.♗xc5 a5!



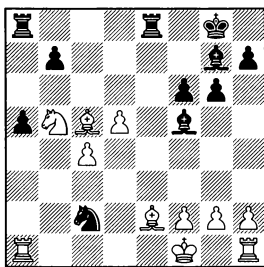
The first critical position in the game.

Some commentators assessed Sargissian's next move as dubious. 18.♗e2 was allegedly better and should lead to a balanced game. The latter is almost true: 18...♜xa2 19.♗e3 (after 19.♞c3 Black can repeat moves with 19...♞b1+ 20.♞c1 ♗a2) 19...♞xd2+ 20.♙xd2 b5!? (20...♗f8 21.♘d4 ♗d7 22.♘c2 b5 23.♗d4) 21.cxb5 ♞xd5+ 22.♙e1 ♘d3+. Still, Black's distant passer looks more dangerous. We see, however, that in many variations the break ...b5 is awkward for White. Understandably, he wants to discourage it with:

18.♘d4 ♞e8+ 19.♗e2 ♜xa2 20.♘b5 ♙f5 21.♞xa2 ♘xa2 22.♞a1 ♘b4

The next critical position. Svidler said he had reached it in his home analysis. White has 23.♙f1 ♘c2:

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙e3

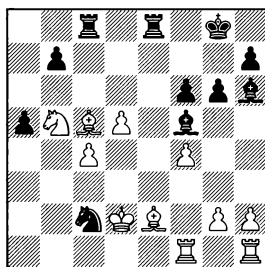


Now 24.♖c1 is risky because ...♙h6 will be with tempo: 24...♞ec8 25.♙e7 a4 26.g4 ♙h6 27.♞d1 ♙e4 28.♞g1 ♜f7, with an initiative.

Remains: 24.♞a2 ♙d3! 25.♙e3 ♜xe3+ 26.fxe3 ♞xe3 27.♙xd3 ♞xd3 28.♜e2 ♞b3 29.♜c7 ♞c8 30.d6 b6=. White does not risk anything here with a strong passer and an active king.

Sargissian opts for the more consistent and ambitious:

23.♜d2!? ♜c2 24.♞af1 ♙h6+ 25.f4 ♞ac8



26.♙d6?

“White has such a healthy structure that if he manages to consolidate, even giving up a full exchange with check, then all the same I’d have a very difficult technical task.” – Svidler. Indeed, he

should have made way to his d-pawn with 26.♙b6 ♙f8 27.d6 when Black should decide how to make a draw. He could choose opposite-coloured bishops after 27...♙d7 28.♙f3 ♙xb5 29.cxb5 ♙xd6 30.♙xb7 ♙b4+ 31.♜d1 ♞b8 32.♙d5+ ♜g7 33.♜xc2 ♞e2+ 34.♜b3 ♞xb6 35.♙c6 ♞e3+ 36.♜c4 ♞c3+ 37.♜d4 ♞b8= or a bishop+2 pawns:rook after 27...♞xe2+ 28.♜xe2 ♞xc4 29.♖c1 ♙d7 30.♜d2 ♙xb5 31.♞xc2 ♙xd6 32.♞xc4 ♙xc4 33.g3 a4= 34.♖c1 ♙d5=.

26...♜e3 27.♜c7?

This is too much. Evidently, Sargissian has lost the thread of the game. He could have put up resistance with 27.c5.

27...♜xf1+?!

Black returns the favour. He should have stayed active with 27...♞e4! 28.c5 ♜xg2. He needs the knight which is a very important piece for the attack. Nevertheless, Svidler showed good technique and won convincingly:

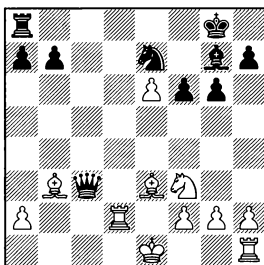
28.♞xf1 ♞ed8 29.♜b5 ♙f8 30.♙xf8 ♜xf8 31.g4 ♙d7 32.♜d6 ♞c7 33.f5 gx f5 34.gxf5 b5 35.cxb5 ♞c5 36.♙c4 ♙xb5 37.♜xb5 ♞xc4 38.♜d3 ♞c5 39.♜c3 ♞dc8 0-1

According to Svidler, his opponent thought he was much better after the opening, and broke up when he faced concrete problems.

14. Pashkian-Cornette

Aix-les-Bains 28.03.2011

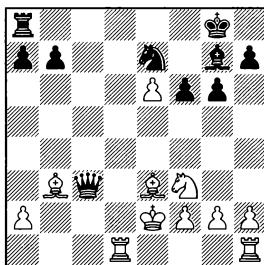
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♙e3 c5 8.♖d2 0-0 9.♘f3
♖a5 10.♖c1 ♜d8 11.d5 e6 12.♙g5
f6 13.♙e3 ♘c6 14.♙d3 exd5
15.exd5 c4 16.♙xc4 ♙e6 17.♜d1
♘e7 18.dxe6 ♜xd2 19.♞xd2 ♖xc3
20.♙b3



20...♖c1+!

20...♖a1+? quickly lost in Lupulescu-Bukavshin, Aix-les-Bains 2011, 23.03.2011, after 21.♙d1! ♘f5 22.0-0 ♖c3 23.♙b3 ♖h8 24.♜d7+-. White went on to win on move 35.

21.♜d1 ♖c3+ 22.♜d2 ♖c1+
23.♜d1 ♖c3+ 24.♙e2



24...♖b4!

Cornette improves on the stem game Potkin-Svidler, Moscow 2010, which saw 24...a5 25.♜d7 a4 26.♖c1 ♖b2+? (26...♖b4!) 27.♖c2 ♖b1, when instead of 28.♘d2, White could have gained some edge with 28.♜d1 ♖xd1+ 29.♙xd1 axb3 30.axb3±.

25.♜d3

Cornette's idea is seen in the variation 25.♜d7 ♖b5+!. This check is awkward to White. Following 26.♙d2 a5 27.♖c1 a4 28.♙c4 ♖b2+ 29.♖c2 ♖b4+ 30.♙c1 b5 31.♙d3 ♜e8, Black is better.

25...a5 26.♖c1 a4 27.♖c4 ♖b5
28.♜c5 ♖b4 29.♖c4 ♖b5 30.♜c5
♖b4 31.♙c4?

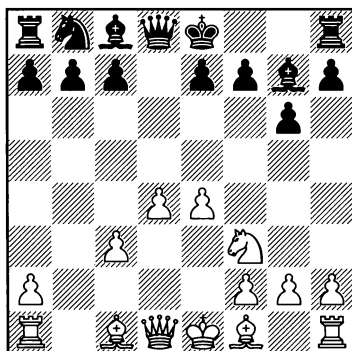
White avoids the repetition of moves, but now 31...♙h6! would have tipped the balance in Black's favour. Later in the game, White again deviated from repetition, trying to win (or lose!), but eventually everything finished in peace.

31...♜b8?! 32.♜d7 ♙f8 33.♞cc7
b5 34.♙d3 ♖a3 35.♘d2 ♖xa2
36.♞xe7 ♙xe7 37.♞xe7 a3 38.♙d4
♙f8 39.♙c5 ♖g8 40.♙d4 ♖f8
41.♙c5 ♖g8 42.♙e3? f5? 43.♙d4
♖f8 44.♙c5 ♖g8 45.♙d4 ♖f8
46.♙f6 ♜b6 47.♞f7+ ♖e8 48.♞e7+
♖f8 49.♞f7+ ♖e8 1/2-1/2.

Part 9

The Exchange System 7. f3

1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3. c3 d5 4.cxd5 xd5 5.e4 xc3
6.bxc3 g7 7. f3



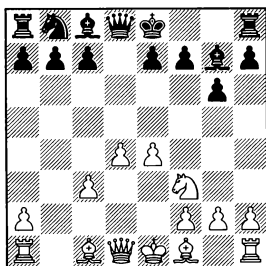
Part 9

Main Ideas

Introduction

In this part, I examine White's set-up with:

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♘f3



Perhaps this is the most natural development. White is following the classical principles – he seized the centre, then leads out the knights, and the bishops have excellent places on e2 and e3.

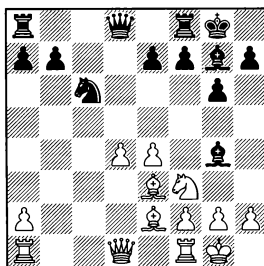
Nevertheless, Botvinnik considered 7.♘f3 to be insufficient for achieving an opening advantage and devoted only short notes on this variation in his book.

The reason for that is the square d4. The c8-bishop, which is usually the only problem minor piece in Black's army, begins to exert a strong impact on the centre by the

possibility of reaching g4. The mere threat of that sortie upsets White's plans.

White's dream after 7.♘f3 is to achieve the following position:

7...0-0?! 8.♙e2 c5 9.0-0 cxd4
10.cxd4 ♘c6 11.♙e3 ♙g4



12.d5!±

Black's best retort is to attack immediately d4 with:

7...c5

Remember! Unlike in the 7.♙c4 system, the move order is important here! We should not waste a tempo on castling.

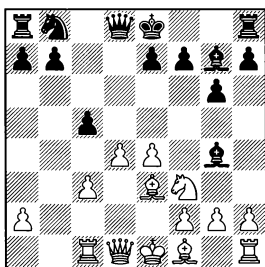
White's only way to exploit our early break is 8.♙b5+, but 8...♘c6! equalises smoothly, as shown in line A.

Ever since the early days of the Grünfeld, it has been established

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♘f3

that 7...c5 8.♔e2 ♘c6! 9.♔e3 ♙g4!
wins the battle for the d4-square.

8.♔e3 ♕g4! 9.♖c1 is not a significant improvement, but we should adjust our tactic a little. Since White has removed his rook from the long diagonal, he is ready to meet the pressure on d4 with d4-d5. Therefore, we should prepare also an attack on d5. The best way to accomplish that is to oppose a rook to White's queen:



9...0-0! 10.♙e2 ♖a5 11.♗d2 ♜c6
12.d5 ♙xf3 13.gxf3 ♜ad8 14.0-0 e6
15.♞fd1 exd5 16.exd5 ♞d7=.

The lines where Black puts his bishop on g4 demonstrate that White is unable to hold a mobile centre. So the first players began to seek ways of preventing the bishop's sortie.

8.h3 looks consistent, but this prophylactic puts White behind in development. Black typically uses the tempo for undermining the enemy centre by ...f7-f5: 8...0-0 9.♙e2 ♘c6 10.♙e3 cxd4 11.cxd4 f5!, with fair counterplay.

Only in the 80s did White find the sneaky move:

8.♖b1!

which brought the burst of popularity of the 7.f3 variation.

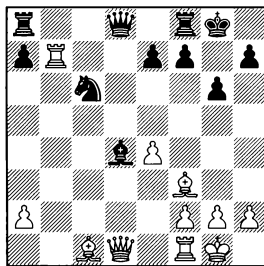
With this multipurpose move
White:

1. Discourages ...g4 due to the attack on b7.
2. Removes the rook from the long diagonal so the d4-d5 advance becomes an option, regardless of the fact that the c3-pawn may be left en prise.

This setup was introduced by Viacheslav Eingorn, but became really popular thanks to the practical successes of Boris Gelfand and Alexander Khalifman.

It has been quickly discovered that the thematic ... ♔g4 does not work against 8.♖b1. The last significant game on this subject was Gelfand-Dvoiry, Odessa, 1989:

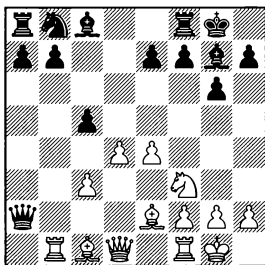
8...0-0 9.♙e2 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗g4
11.0-0 ♙xf3 12.♙xf3 ♙xd4 13.♜xb7
♜c6



14. ♔a4! ♕d6 15. ♖b5! ♙e5 16. ♖d5
♜f6 17. ♙e3

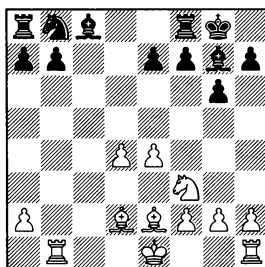
White's bishop pair and active heavy pieces assure him of an edge.

Then the prominent Grünfeld expert for both colours, Tukmakov, was first to spot one of the draw-backs of 8.♖b1. The a2-pawn was hanging and he had the courage to grab it twice against one of the best players of the 80s, Jussupow, in Yerevan 1982 and Moscow 1983. After 9...♙a5 10.0-0 ♖xa2,



Black has won a pawn, but he is to survive a dangerous initiative: 11.♗g5 ♜e6 12.e5 ♞d8 13.♙a4. Tukmakov was crushed in the first game, but convincingly won the second duel. Later practice proved that Black should firstly exchange on d4 by 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♜a5+, but then White can simply defend the pawn with 11.♞d2 ♜xd2 12.♗xd2:

Lputian–Tukmakov
Riga 1985

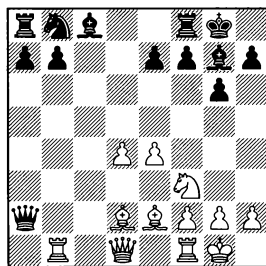


Tukmakov showed that Black should not be afraid of this end-game: 12...e6! 13.0-0 b6 14.♞fd1 ♗b7 15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 ♞d7 17.♗b4 ♞fc8 18.♗b5 ♞f6 and White had to think about equalising.

Since that game, it has been clear that White should seek improvements in the pawn sac line: 11.♗d2 ♜xa2 12.0-0.

Perhaps the next milestone in the theory of this system was:

Kamsky–Anand
Las Palmas 1995



12...♗g4!. At last Black can safely develop his bishop! 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗e3 ♞c6! 15.d5 ♞a5 16.♞b4 ♗xf3 17.♗xf3 ♞c4 18.♗d4 ♞d2 19.♞b2 ♞xf3+ 20.♜xf3 ♙a6 21.♗xg7 ♞xg7 22.♜c3+ ♞g8 23.♜c7 and now Anand came up with an improvement over his previous game: 23...♞d6! (23...♞fe8 24.♞xb7 ♞d3 25.♞e5 a5?? 26.♞xe7+- Vaisser-Anand, Paris 1994), and Black achieved a draw ending.

Still, I think that the line with taking the a2-pawn completely hands over the initiative to White. Black is on the defensive and, as you

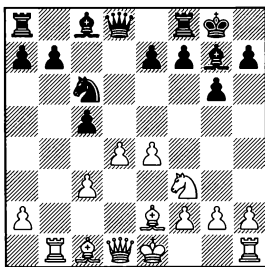
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♗f3

see, often has to find only moves to save the day!

Black can avoid the sharpest lines with the modest 8.♖b1 0-0 9.♙e2 b6. This positionally sound system is not easy to refute. It offers calm play where understanding of plans and pawn structures is of paramount importance. Agrest shed a lot of sweat to build up a decent backup system to our main repertoire. I discuss it in the “Step by Step” chapter.

However, my preferred choice is:

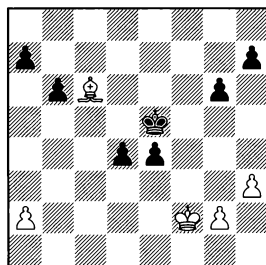
9...♖c6



It was considered as main line in the early 80s. The new system quickly grew up and accumulated a tremendous bulk of theory. Some sharp variations were analysed at home up to bare kings. The most notorious example is probably Novikov-Tukmakov, Lvov 1984:

10.d5 ♖e5 11.♖xe5 ♙xe5 12.♞d2 e6 13.f4 ♙g7 14.c4 ♞e8 15.e5 f6 16.d6 fxe5 17.♙b2 exf4 18.♙xg7 ♖xg7 19.0-0 ♞f8 20.♞xf4 ♞xf4 21.♞xf4 ♞f6 22.♞e4 ♞b8 23.♞f1 ♞d4+ 24.♞xd4+ cxd4 25.♖b1 ♙d7 26.♙f3 b6 27.c5 ♞c8 28.c6 ♙xc6

29.♞c1 ♙d7 30.♞xc8 ♙xc8 31.♙c6 ♖f6 32.d7 ♙xd7 33.♙xd7 e5? 34.♖f2 e4 35.♙c6 ♖e5



36.h4! and White went to win this endgame. Years later Kasparov revealed in his book the improvement 33...♖e5!.

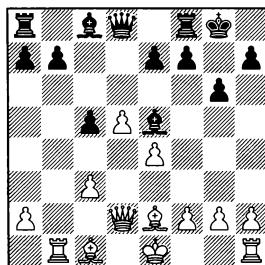
In the pre-computer era, the big learning overhead of the 8.♖b1 system repelled many Grünfeld fans from their favourite opening.

Nowadays the engines helped to neutralise White’s most dangerous lines and 7.♗f3 yielded precedence to the 7.♙c4 system.

Objectives and Move Orders

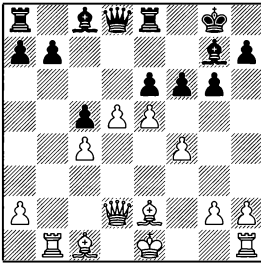
Let us consider:

7.♗f3 c5 8.♖b1 0-0 9.♙e2 ♖c6!? 10.d5! (10.♙e3 ♙g4=) 10... ♖e5 11.♖xe5 ♙xe5 12.♞d2!



12.c4 would cost a pawn without compensation after 12...♖a5+, while 12.♖b3 c4! would ban c3-c4 at least for a while. 12.♗d2 also does not work due to 12...♖d6! followed by ...f5.

After 12.♖d2!, White's plan becomes clear. He will try to push his whole central cluster one step further, even if it cost him a pawn, as in the following example:

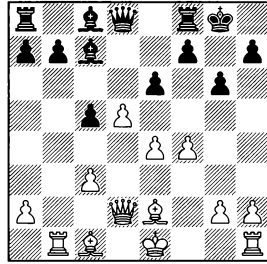


16.d6! This pawn will be a constant source of concern for Black even though practice suggests that he can hold this position. In this example, White managed to play c3-c4 thus enabling the activation of his dark-squared bishop on the main diagonal. I do not like such type of positions where I should be only defending for many moves ahead. That is why I recommend to actively disturb the enemy plan and focus our attention on preventing c3-c4. Let us move forward in small steps now:

12...e6 13.f4 ♗c7!?

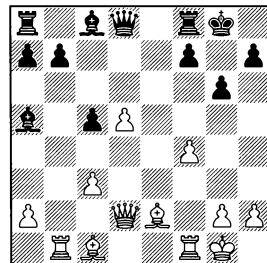
This amazing idea was revealed for the first time in the world cham-

pionship match Alexandria-Chiburdanidze in 1981.



Its main (and only!) objective is to prevent White from playing c3-c4. As a result, White will have to recapture on d5 by the e-pawn and the e-file will open up in Black's favour. On the flip side, our king remains without defenders and we should not spare any effort to keep the enemy dark-squared bishop out of play. Once we neutralised the positional threat of c3-c4, the only other way to activate the c1-bishop will be with g2-g4 and f4-f5. However, that would uncover White's king and we should seek then an opportunity to counterattack. The next few moves are critical:

14.0-0 exd5 15.exd5 ♗a5!

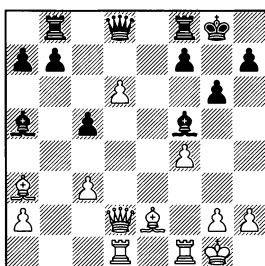


16.d6

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♗f3

White has many other continuations, but none of them sets serious problems. We'll examine some examples later. The general principle of Black's defence is counterattack. He can either target the c3-pawn by ...♗f6, or generate counterplay on the queenside with ...c4 or ...a6 and ...b5.

16...♞b8! 17.♙a3 ♙f5 18.♞ad1



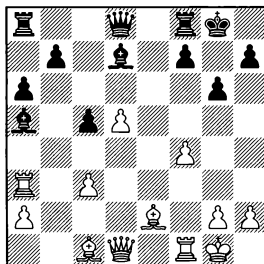
This looks like the critical position for the 13...♙c7 line. Black can either eliminate to an ending with 18...♗f6 19.♙xc5 ♙xc3 20.♙d4 ♙xd4, or venture into complications with 18...♞c8!? 19.g4 ♙d7 20.f5 ♗h4. I analyse further these positions in line E16.

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

I will consider here only the most topical variation which is examined in line E1. The other variations are less fashionable. The introduction covers the most essential ideas that should be remembered.

Black's main plan is to expand on the queenside where he has a pawn majority.

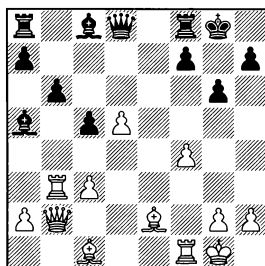
Dannevig-Svidler Gausdal 1992



Black can continue with 18...b5, but then 19.c4 would open the main diagonal. It is safer to keep it close or in our possession:

18...c4! 19.♙xc4 ♞c8 20.♙d3 ♙xc3. Black has won the opening battle. The passive bishop on a5 transformed into the most powerful piece on the board. Svidler easily won after 21.♗h1 ♙b4 22.f5 ♗h4! 23.♙b1 ♙xa3 24.♙xa3 ♙b5 25.g3 ♗g5 26.♗f4 ♗fe8 27.♙e4 ♞c4 28.♗f3 ♗h5 29.g4 ♗h4 30.fxg6 hxg6 31.♗g2 ♗e1 0-1.

Pelletier-Ashley Bermuda 1999



In this example, Black chose a more passive setup with ...b6 and

Part 9

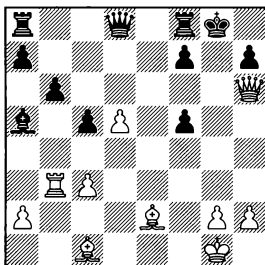
now White's threat of c4 is very dangerous. It should be prevented even at a cost:

17...♖xd5! 18.♙f3 ♖c4 19.♙xa8 ♙a6 20.♖e1 ♖xa8

Black has full compensation due to the split enemy pawns on the queenside. In Almasi-Peng Xiaomin, Las Vegas 1999, White also ceded the d-file and after 21.♖a3 ♖d8 22.h3 ♙c8 23.♙h2 ♙e6 24.♙e3 h5, Black was in total control.

21.♖d2 ♖d3! 22.♖xd3 ♙xd3 23.♖a3 ♖d8 24.♙e3 ♖d5 25.g4 f5 26.♖d1 c4=. Black is not worse in this endgame.

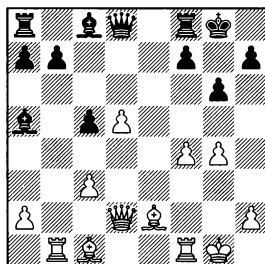
Aubel-Finkel Dieren 1997



In this example, White sacked on f5 a pawn, then the exchange. His attack looks horrifying, but 19...c4! again helps Black save the day: 20.♙xc4 f6 21.♙a3 ♖c7 22.♖h4 ♖fc8. White still has a perpetual by 23.♖xf6. However, he erred with 23.♙a6 when Black could have launched a powerful counterattack: 23...♖e5!

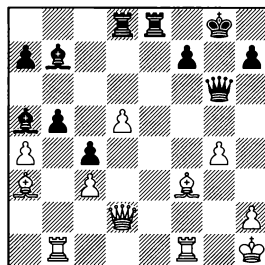
The safest way to meet White's attack with g4 is to bind him with defence of the c3-pawn by ...♖f6:

I.Rajlich-Boros Budapest 2006



16...♖f6 17.♙b2 c4! 18.f5. Now best is 18...b5, for instance, 19.fxg6 ♖xg6 20.♙h1 ♖e8 21.♙f3 ♙b7=. The game might end in the old masters style:

22.a4 ♖ad8!? 23.♙a3!

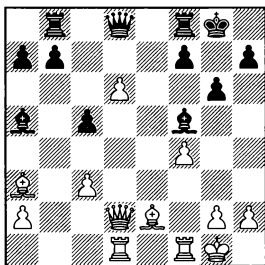


23...♖xd5! 24.♙xd5 ♖e2!! 25.♖be1!! ♖e4+!! 26.♙xe4 ♙xe4+ 27.♙g1 ♙b6+ 28.♖d4 ♙xd4+ 29.cxd4 ♖g2+ 30.♙h1 ♖e2+, with a perpetual check with the only two pieces from the black army which have survived.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♜g7 7.♗f3

Mikhalevski–Ftacnik

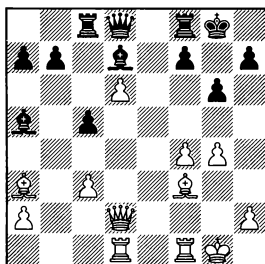
Bellevue 2006



18...♞f6 (18...♞c8!? is the sharper option) 19.♙xc5 ♙xc3 20.♙d4 ♙xd4+ 21.♞xd4 ♞xd4+ 22.♞xd4 b5 with a balanced endgame.

Learte Pastor–Koronowski

corr. ICCF 2008

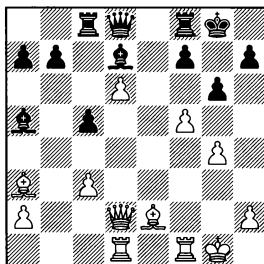


20...♞f6 21.♙b2 c4! 22.♖h1 ♙a4 23.♞c1 ♞fd8 24.♙a3 ♙c7! 25.♞cd1?! (25.g5=) 25...♙xd1 26.♞xd1 b5 27.♙b7 ♙xd6 28.♙xd6 ♞b8 29.♙d5 ♞xd6 30.♙xf7+ ♖xf7 31.♞xd6 ♞xd6 32.♞xd6 b4±.

One thing Black should remember to avoid: taking on f5 by pawn is generally a bad idea. It opens not only the g-file, but also the b1-h7 diagonal:

Engelhardt–Atakisi

corr. ICCF 2006



20...gxf5? (20...♞h4 or even 20...b5 are much better options.) 21.♙d3! fxg4. Here White could have fixed his advantage with 22.♞de1!, going to e7.

Part 9

Step by Step

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♗f3 c5**

A. 8.♗b5+; B. 8.♗e2; C. 8.h3; D.
8.♗e3; E. 8.♗b1.

A. 8.♗b5+ ♘c6!

It is true that this move could lead to an inevitable draw, but it is objectively the best retort to White's check.

Instead, 8...♗d7 9.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗e3 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘c6 13.d5 ♘e5 14.♘xe5 ♗xe5 15.♖c1 ♖fc8 16.♗b3 b6 17.f4 ♙g7= is playable, but also drawish.

Only 8...♘d7?! preserves more pieces on board, but we suspect that White opts for 8.♗b5+ exactly in the hope to see 8...♘d7. From this square the knight misses its primary target – the d4-square. That dooms Black to a passive defence:

9.0-0 0-0 and now:

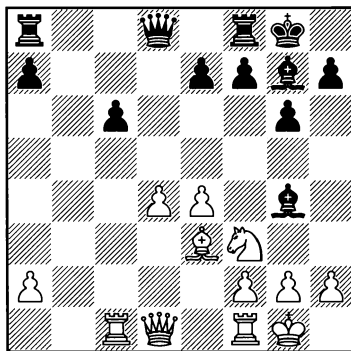
a) 10.♗e3!? ♘f6 11.♗d3 b6 12.♗e2 ♗b7 13.♗d2 ♖c8 14.♖fd1 ♗c7 15.a4 e6 16.a5.

b) 10.♙g5 h6! 11.♗f4 ♗a5 12.♗b3 g5 13.♗e3 ♘f6 14.♗d3±.

c) 10.a4 ♗c7 (10...a6 11.♗c4 ♗c7 12.♗e2 b6 13.e5 e6 14.♙g5 ♗b7

15.♖fc1 ♗c6 16.h3 ♖fc8 17.♗d3 c4 18.♗c2 b5 19.a5!) 11.♗e2 ♘f6 12.h3 b6±.

**9.0-0 cxd4 10.cxd4 0-0
11.♗e3 ♙g4 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♖c1**



13...♖c8!?

The only way to complicate things. 13...♗a5= is well tested. It has a strong drawish tendency after:

14.♗e2!

Alternatively:

a) 14.♗d2 ♗xd2 15.♘xd2 ♖fd8 16.♘b3 a5 17.♗xc6 a4 18.♘c5 ♗e2 19.♖e1 ♗xd4=, Komarov-Svidler, France 2009.

b) 14.♗xc6 ♗xa2 15.♖c7 ♗e6 16.h3 ♗d6 17.♖c5 ♗xf3 18.♗xf3 a5=, I.Sokolov-Leko, Sarajevo 1999.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♜f3

14...♜fd8 15.♞c5 ♞a3! 16.♞c4 ♙e6 17.♞c1 ♞xa2 18.♞xc6 a5 19.♙h6 ♙g4=.

14. ♞a4

Play is sharper after:

a) 14.e5 ♙e6 15.♞a4 ♙d5 16.♜d2 ♞d7 17.f3 f6±.

b) 14.♞c5 ♙xf3 15.gxf3 (15.♞xf3 ♙xd4 16.♞d1 e5 17.♙xd4 exd4 18.♞d3 ♞e7 19.♞dc1 ♜fe8±) 15...♞d7 16.♞e2 f5 17.♞d1 e6. Next, Black plays ...♜f7, ...♙f8.

14...♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♞d7 16.♜g2 f5 17.h3 f4 18.♙d2 ♙xd4

Or 18...♞xd4 19.♞b3+ ♜h8 20.♙c3 ♞b6 21.♞e6 ♙xc3 22.♞xc3 ♞a5 23.♞xc6 ♞xc6 24.♞xc6=.

19.♜fd1 e5 20.♙c3 ♜fd8

The stem game Feller-Negi, Evry 2009, went 21.♙xd4 exd4 22.♞c5 d3 23.♞b3+ ♜g7 24.♞c3 ♞b8 25.♞a3 d2 26.♞c2 ♜h6 27.♞cxd2 ♞xd2 28.♞xd2 ♞xd2 29.♞e7 ♞bb2 30.♞h4+ ♜g7 31.♞e7+, draw. Simpler was 21.♙a5 with a repetition of moves.

B. 8. ♙e2 ♜c6!

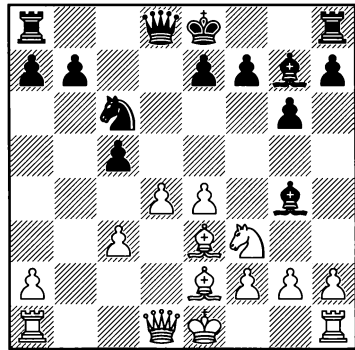
White's last move looks very natural, but in fact it loses the battle for the d4-square. We should play concretely to avoid ending up in a passive position, for instance:

8...0-0?! 9.0-0 cxd4 (9...b6 10.♙g5! ♙b7 11.♞d3±) 10.cxd4 ♜c6 11.♙e3 ♙g4 12.d5 ♜e5 (12...♙xa1 13.♞xa1 ♜a5 14.♙h6±) 13.♜xe5 ♙xe2 14.♞xe2 ♙xe5 15.♞ab1±.

9. ♙e3

9.d5 is inefficient since Black can favourably return the exchange after 9...♙xc3+ 10.♙d2 ♙xa1 11.♞xa1 ♜d4 12.♜xd4 cxd4 13.♞xd4 0-0! (13...f6 is also seen. White has sufficient compensation for the exchange.) 14.♙h6 ♞a5+ 15.♜f1 f6 16.♙xf8 ♜xf8±.

9...♙g4!



Practice has seen White struggling in this position. 10.♞b1 ♙xf3 11.♙xf3 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♙xd4 13.♙xd4 ♜xd4 14.♞xb7 loses a whole rook after 14...♜xf3+ so White is forced to a major strategic concession.

10.e5 0-0 11.0-0 ♞c8

White has not any active plan, while Black will expand on the

queenside, e.g. 12. ♖a4 cxd4 13. cxd4 ♗a5 14. ♗xa5 ♜xa5 15. ♝ac1 ♕e6 ♞.

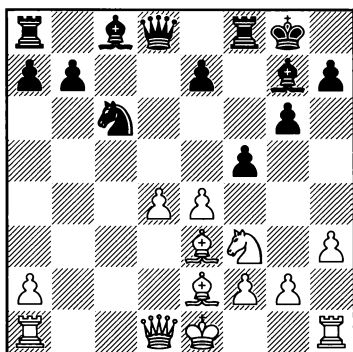
C. 8.h3

This prophylactic move lived its moment of glory in 2000 when Kramnik employed it against Kasparov in Linares. Its idea is crystal clear – to prevent the annoying pin and keep a mobile pawn centre. However, the tempo tells and Black has at least two decent ways to achieving a good game:

8... 0-0 9. ♕e2 ♜c6

Kasparov was tempted by the opportunity of starting immediately queenside play with 9...b5 10. ♕e3 ♕b7 11. ♗d3 cxd4? (11... ♜d7!? 12. 0-0 ♜b6! 13. dxc5 ♜a4) 12. cxd4 ♜d7 13. 0-0 ♜b6, but after 14. ♗b1!, he had to switch to defence: 14... ♜a4 15. ♗xb5 ♜c3 16. ♗xb7 ♜xe2+ 17. ♜h1 ♜xd4 18. ♞ad1 e5 19. ♜xe5 ♕xe5 20. f4.

10. ♕e3 cxd4 11. cxd4 f5!



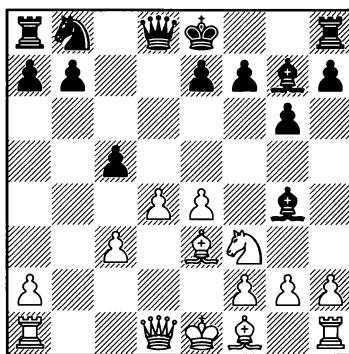
12. ♕c4+

12. exf5 ♗a5+ is awkward for White who should move back the bishop to d2 and struggle to keep the balance.

12... ♜h8 13. e5 b5 14. ♕b3 f4

Black has the initiative. He can develop it with 15. ♕d2 a5 16. 0-0 ♕f5.

D. 8. ♕e3 ♕g4



The well trodden path is 8... ♗a5 9. ♗d2 ♜c6, but we chose a more straightforward setup. In practice White has been floating in this position. He has tried no less than 8 different continuations:

9. ♝c1

a) 9. ♕e2?! ♜c6! 10. d5?! (10. e5=) 10... ♕xc3+ 11. ♜f1 ♕xf3 12. gxf3 ♕xa1 13. ♗xa1 ♜d4 14. ♕b5+ ♜f8 15. ♕xd4 cxd4 16. ♗xd4 f6 17. ♜g2 ♗d6 ♞, Zhu Chen-Van Wely, Batumi 2001.

b) 9. ♞b1 ♜c6!

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♟f3

This move is more ambitious than 9...♙xf3 10.gxf3 ♖c6 11.♞xb7 (Or 11.e5 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♖a5+ 13.♞d2 ♞xd2+ 14.♟xd2 0-0-0 15.♟c3, Kir.Georgiev-Leko, Dubai 2002, 15...♞d7=.) 11...0-0 12.♙b5 (Stayed the bishop on g4, this move would have lost to 12...♙a5 and the d7-square is covered.) 12...cxd4 13.♙xc6 dxe3 14.♞d7 ♖a5 15.♙xa8 ♞xa2 16.♞e2 ♙xc3+! (16...♞a1+ 17.♞d1 ♞xc3+ 18.♟f1 ♙xa8 19.♞xe3 a5 20.♞d3 ♞b4 21.♟g2 a4 22.♞hd1, Malakhatko-Sarkar, Caleta 2010, proved to be in White's favour.)

10.♞xb7

10.♙b5 0-0 11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.0-0 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♞d7 leaves White wondering what to do with his rook on b1.

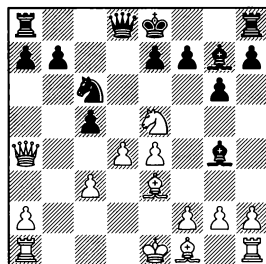
10...0-0 11.♙e2 ♙xf3 12.♙xf3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♙xd4 14.♙xd4 ♖xd4 15.0-0 ♞d6.

c) 9.♞d2 ♙xf3 10.gxf3 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖c6 12.♞d1 (12.♙b5 0-0 13.♙xc6 bxc6 14.0-0 c5=) 12...0-0 13.f4 (13.d5 ♖e5 14.♙e2 ♞c8 15.0-0=, Doettling-Svidler, France 2002) 13...e6 14.h4 ♞e7 15.♙g2 ♞ac8 16.e5 ♞fd8 17.♞c1 h5.

d) 9.♙b5+ ♖c6 10.0-0 cxd4 11.cxd4 0-0 12.♙xc6 bxc6=. Play has transposed to line A.

e) 9.♞a4+ ♖c6! 10.♙e5

It is amazing how often in the Grünfeld Black can favourably part with his otherwise most useful piece:

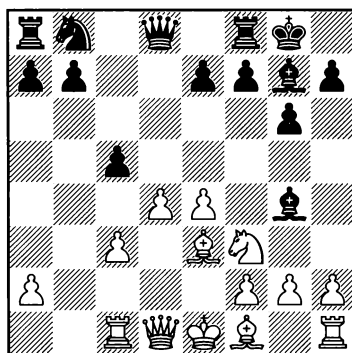


10...♙e5!

White's pawn weaknesses and bad development do not give him time for organising an attack:

11.dxe5 0-0 12.h3 ♙e6 13.f4 ♞c8 14.♙e2 ♖a5 15.♞xa5 ♖xa5 16.♞f1 f5= (16...♞fd8!?), Grischuk-Svidler, Amber rapid, Nice 2010.

9...0-0



10.♙e2

There were times when 10.d5 was considered best, but 10...♞a5 11.♞d2 ♙xf3 12.gxf3 c4! allows Black to seize the initiative: 13.♙d4 ♖d7 14.♙xg7 ♟xg7 15.♙xc4 ♞ac8 16.♙b3 ♞c5 17.0-0 ♞fc8=, Caruana-Rodshtein, Biel 2010.

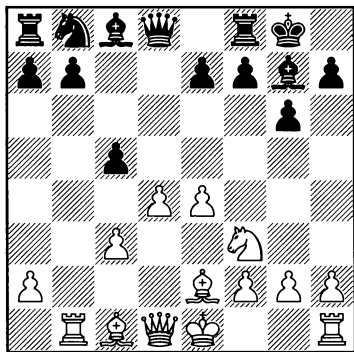
Another try is 10.♖d2 ♕xf3 11.gxf3 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘c6 13.d5 ♘e5 14.♕e2 ♗d7 15.f4 ♘g4 16.0-0 (16.♕c5 ♘f6 17.♗e3 ♕h6 18.♕f3 ♘g4) 16...♘xe3 17.fxe3 ♖fd8 18.♕f3 e5 19.♔g2 ♗d6=.

10...♗a5 11.♖d2 ♘c6! 12.d5 ♕xf3

12...♖ad8 is also possible: 13.0-0 (13.c4 fails to 13...♘b4 14.a3 ♗xa3 15.♕xc5 ♘d3+.) 13...e6 14.c4 ♗xd2 15.♕xd2 ♕xf3 16.♕xf3 ♘d4 17.♕d1 exd5 18.cxd5 b6 19.f3 f5=.

13.gxf3 ♖ad8 14.0-0 (14.♗b2 ♘d4) **14...e6 15.♖fd1 exd5 16.exd5 ♖d7=.**

E. 8.♖b1! 0-0 9.♕e2



We'll examine here the sharper E1. 9...♘c6 and the more restrained E2. 9...b6. We recommend the latter for a backup system, because it is less forced and it is unlikely that a new game could dramatically change some evaluation.

E1. 9...♘c6 10.d5

10.♕e3 ♕g4= is considered in line D. However, Black could also play 10...cxd4!? 11.cxd4 ♗a5+ 12.♕d2 (12.♖d2 ♗xd2+ 13.♘xd2 ♖d8 14.♖h1 ♘xd4 15.♕xd4 ♕xd4 16.♘xd4 ♖xd4+ 17.♘e3 ♖a4) 12...♗xa2 13.d5 ♘e5 14.♘xe5 ♕xe5 15.0-0 ♕d7! 16.♖xb7 ♕a4 17.♗e1 ♖fb8 18.♖xb8+ ♖xb8, with better pieces and a strong passer.

10...♘e5 11.♘xe5

11.♘d2?! wastes a tempo. We should attack by ...f5 immediately, or a couple of moves later: 11...e6 12.f4 ♘d7 13.c4 ♘b6 14.0-0 f5 15.♕b2 ♕xb2 16.♖xb2 ♖e8= or 11...f5 12.0-0 (12.c4 fxe4 13.0-0 b6 14.♖b3 ♘d3=) 12...fxe4 13.♘xe4 ♕f5.

11...♕xe5 12.♖d2

Another way to defend the c3-pawn is:

12.♖b3, when simplest is 12...c4 13.♕xc4 ♗c7 14.♕e2 (14.♗e2 ♕g4 15.♗xg4 ♗xc4 16.♕d2 b6 17.♗e2 ♖fc8 18.f4 ♕g7 19.♘f2 ♗a4=, Shulman-Kamsky, Saint Louis 2009) 14...♕xc3+ 15.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 16.♗xd2 ♗e5 17.♖e3 ♕d7=.

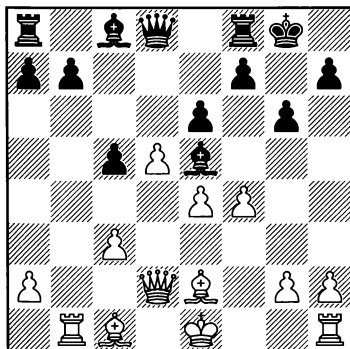
12.♕d2 is bad due to 12...♖d6 13.h4 f5.

12.c4 ♗a5+ 13.♕d2 is outright dubious. Without knights, Black is not cramped and he can safely grab the a2-pawn: 13... ♗xa2 14.0-0 ♕d4 15.♕h6 ♖e8 16.♘h1 e6 17.f3 b6

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♜g7 7.♗f3

18.♙d3 ♙d7 19.♚c1 ♚a6, Wirig-Atakisi, Antalya 2009.

12...e6 13.f4



13...♙c7

This weird retreat has been all the rage lately. It is aimed against c3-c4. If needed, Black will sac his c5-pawn by ...c5-c4 to keep the pawn on c3. However, the older:

13...♙g7 seems to be in good health, too:

14.c4!

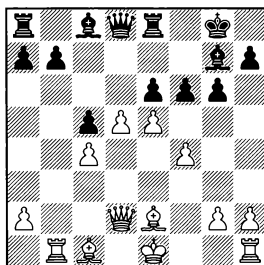
Black's task is easier after 14.d6 b6 15.0-0 e5 16.♙c4 (16.fxe5 ♙b7 17.♚f4 ♚e8 18.♙c4 ♙c6! 19.♚g3 ♙xe5 20.♙f4 ♙xf4 21.♚xf4 b5 22.♙d5 ♙xd5 23.exd5 ♖d8 24.♖e1 ♚d7 25.♖f6 ♖de8 26.♖ef1 ♖e2 27.a3 ♚b7 28.♚g5 c4 29.h4 ♚b6+ 30.♗h2 ♚e3 31.♚xe3 ♖xe3 32.d7 ♖e7 33.♖b1 ♖xd7 34.♖xb5 ♖fd8 35.♖a5 ♖xd5 36.♖xa7 ♖d7=) 16...♙e6 17.♙xe6 [Or 17.♙b5 exf4 18.♚xf4 (18.♚d3? c4! 19.♚d1 ♚g5!) 18...♙xc3 19.♙b2 ♙xb2 20.♖xb2 f6 21.♖d1] 17...fxe6 18.♚d3 ♚d7 19.♙e3 ♖ad8 20.♖bd1

♚c6 21.c4 ♖f7 22.fxe5 ♖xf1+ 23.♖xf1 ♙xe5 24.♙h6, Gomez Esteban-Sion Castro, Leon 1994, 24...♚xd6.

14...♖e8! 15.e5!

The pawn structure after 15.0-0 exd5 16.exd5 ♙d4+ 17.♗h1 b6 is favourable to Black, due to his control of the e-file and the weaknesses of White's second rank: 18.♙d3 ♙f5!? 19.♙b2?! ♙xb2 20.♖xb2 ♚f6.

15...f6



16.d6

Or 16.0-0 fxe5 17.fxe5 exd5 18.cxd5 ♙xe5 19.♙b2 ♙xb2 20.♖xb2 b6 21.d6 ♙e6 22.♙b5 ♖f8 23.♖f4 ♖f5=.

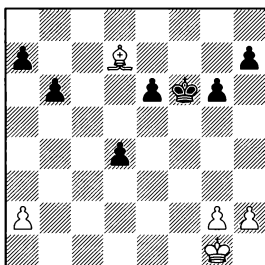
16...fxe5 17.♙b2 exf4 18.♙xg7 ♗xg7 19.0-0 ♖f8 20.♖xf4

20.♖bd1 ♙d7 21.♚b2+ ♗g8 22.♚xb7 offers enough compensation, but still White is a pawn down: 22...♙a4 23.♖d3 ♚d7 24.♚c7 ♙c6 25.♙g4 h5 26.♙h3 ♖ac8 27.♚a5 ♙e4 28.♖dd1 ♙f5.

20...♖xf4 21.♚xf4 ♚f6 22.♚e4

Or 22.♚e3 b6 23.♚e4 ♖b8 24.♚c6 ♚d8 25.♖d1 ♙b7 26.♚a4 ♖a8=.

22...♖b8 23.♟f1 ♔d4+ 24.♗xd4+ cxd4 25.♖b1 ♕d7 26.♕f3 b6 27.c5 ♖c8 28.c6 ♕xc6 29.♖c1 ♕d7 30.♖xc8 ♕xc8 31.♕c6 ♔f6 32.d7 ♕xd7 33.♕xd7



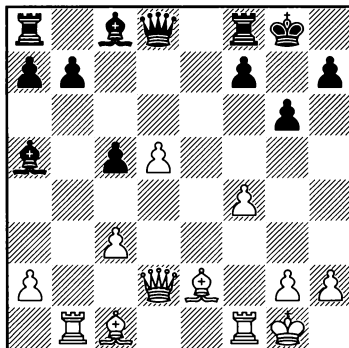
33...♔e5! This move improves on 33...e5? and even faces White with some problems. It was mentioned by Kasparov and tested in Shulman-Marin, Reykjavik 2009: 34.♔f2 ♔d5! 35.♔e2 e5=.

14.0-0

14.♕c4?! wastes a tempo in a sharp position. White will stroll on the edge of the abyss: 14...a6 15.a4 (After 15.dxe6 ♗xd2+ 16.♕xd2 fxe6 17.0-0 b5 the black queenside pawn majority has more potential.) 15...b5 16.axb5 axb5 17.♕xb5 exd5 18.♕c6 ♖a6 19.♕xd5 (Or 19.exd5 ♕f5 20.♖b2 ♖xc6 21.dxc6 ♖e8+ 22.♔f2 ♗h4+ 23.g3 ♗h3, with a terrific attack. Even if White repels the first wave, his king will be permanently in danger.) 19...♖d6 20.0-0 ♕f5 21.♗c2 ♖xd5=, Smirin-Neven, Calgary 1996.

14...exd5 15.exd5 ♕a5!

The point of Black's plan. c3-c4 should be prevented at any cost.



Play has been more or less forced so far, but now we should examine a great number of branches:

E11. 16.g4; E12. 16.♖b5; E13. 16.♖b3; E14. 16.♕a3; E15. 16.f5; E16. 16. d6.

E11. 16.g4!?

White is unable to activate his dark-squared bishop through the main diagonal, so he tries to break it loose with f4-f5. We must anticipate that with:

16...♗f6! 17.♕b2 c4! 18.f5 b5

In this variation, 18...gxf5 seems to be always dubious as it opens up either the b3-h7 diagonal, or the g-file: 19.♕xc4 ♗h4 20.♔h1!± fxg4 21.♕a3, with a rout.

19.fxg6 ♗xg6 20.♔h1 ♖e8 21.♕f3 ♕b7=.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♖f3

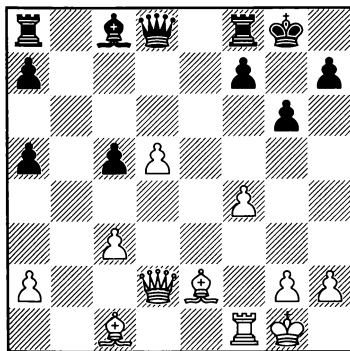
E12. 16.♖b5

This is a dangerous attempt to win by a direct attack.

16...b6 17.♖xa5

17.♖b2!? ♙a6 18.f5 is also very challenging. (18.d6 ♖d7 19.a4 ♖ad8–+) You should memorise the following variation: 18...♖e8! 19.fxg6 (19.♙c4 ♖d6) 19...hxc6 20.♖f4 ♖e7 21.♖f3, when only 21...g5!! offers winning chances (21...f5 22.♖g3 ♖f7 23.♙f1 ♙xb5 24.c4 ♙d7 25.♖h6 ♖g8 26.♖h7+ ♖f8 27.♖h6+ ♖f7=), for instance: 22.♖g4 f6 23.♖f2 ♖e4 24.♖h5 ♖h7 25.♖f3 ♙xb5 26.♙xb5 ♖e1+ 27.♙f1 ♖f8 28.c4 ♖e4 29.♖h5 ♖f7 30.d6 b5±.

17...bxa5



18.c4

White has a compensation for the exchange, but the most straightforward tries to mate Black's king do not work. He should instead think about maintaining the balance, for

instance: 18.♙a3 ♖d6! 19.♖e3 (19.c4 ♖e8 20.♙d3 ♖e7 21.♖f2 ♖e3 22.♖d1 ♖xf2+ 23.♖xf2 ♙g4 24.♖b1 ♖ab8±) 19...♖xd5 20.♙xc5 ♖e6 21.♖d4 ♖xe2 22.♙xf8 ♖xf8 23.♖d5 ♖e3+ 24.♖h1 ♙b7 25.♖xb7 ♖e8=.

18...♖d6 (18...♖e8!?) 19.♙b2

19.♙d3 ♙d7 20.f5 ♙xf5 21.♙xf5 gxf5 22.♖xf5 f6 is level.

19...f6 20.♙d3

In the stem game Kiriakov-Sowray, Hastings 1998, White quickly became worse after 20.g4 ♖b8 21.♙a1 ♖e8 22.♙f3 ♖b4±.

20...a4 21.f5=

Black's rooks are too passive and busy ensuring protection of its king.

E13. 16.♖b3 a6!

16...b6 is allegedly best, but I think that White can keep some pull after:

17.♖d3!

Alternatively:

a) 17.f5 ♙xf5 18.♖xf5 gxf5 19.♖h6 (19.♖f4 ♖e8 20.♖xf5 ♖h4) 19...c4! 20.♙xc4 f6! 21.♙a3 (21.d6+ ♖h8 22.♖d2 ♖d7 23.g3 ♖ad8) 21...♖c7 22.♖h4 ♖fc8, Auel-Finkel, Dieren 2000, 23.♖xf6 ♖xc4=.

b) 17.♖d1 ♙d7 18.c4

Part 9

No one has tested 18.f5!? ♖a4 19.♟d2 ♙xb3 20.axb3 ♟d6 21.♙b5. Then 21...a6 22.♙c6 ♜ac8 practically ensures an exchange of queens. The arising endgame is about equal: 23.♟e3 b5 24.c4 bxc4 25.bxc4 ♞xc6 26.dxc6 ♟d4 27.♟xd4 cxd4 28.♙h6 ♞c8 29.♞a1 ♙c3 30.♞xa6 d3=. The text was recommended by Ftacnik in 1998, but later practice showed that Black defends easily:

18...♙a4 19.♙b2 ♙xb3 20.axb3 ♟e7 21.♙h1 (It turns out that 21.f5 or 21.♙e5 are parried by 21...♙c3.) 21...♞ae8 22.♙f3 ♟e1♠.

c) 17.♟b2 ♟xd5 18.♙f3 ♟c4 19.♙xa8 ♙a6 20.♞e1 ♞xa8 changes the roles. Now Black has the initiative, Pelletier-Ashley, Bermuda 1999.

17...♙f5

Computers suggest 17...♟e7, but it does not prevent White's main plan with 18.c4!±.

18.♟f3 ♞e8 19.c4 ♟h4, Ivanov-Greenfeld, Belgrade 1999. The endgame after 20.♙d3! ♙g4 21.♟f2 is somewhat better for White.

17.f5

In Dannevig-Svidler, Gausdal 1992, Black seized the initiative after 17.♟d1 ♙d7 18.♞a3 c4! 19.♙xc4 ♞c8 20.♙d3 ♙xc3 21.♙h1 ♙b4 22.f5 ♟h4.

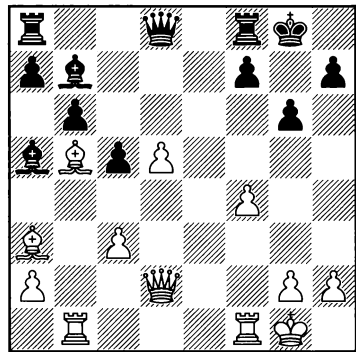
17...♙xf5 18.♞xb7 ♟d6 19.♙c4 ♞ae8!

This is the difference in comparison with line E15. 16.f5. The a7-pawn is not hanging and Black takes control over the e-file.

E14. 16.♙a3 b6 17.♙b5

Aiming to prevent Black's main counterplay with ...♞e8. Instead, 17.♙b4 ♙xb4 18.cxb4 ♟d6 is equal.

17...♙b7



Now, 18.♞bd1 a6 19.♙e2 ♞e8 would make White's 17th move pointless so he should try:

18.d6 ♟f6 19.♙b2 ♞ad8 20.♞bd1 a6 21.♙e2 ♞fe8 22.f5

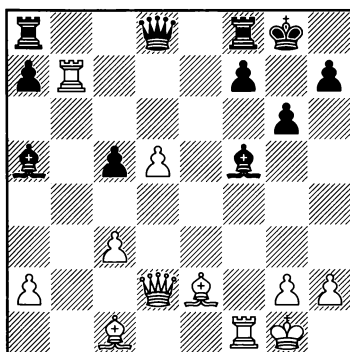
Here the simple 22...g5= is enough to repel the attack.

E15. 16.f5!? ♙xf5 17.♞xb7

This variation is a little underestimated. White discards the plan for a kingside attack and stakes his

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♗f3

hopes on the strong d-pawn. Most endgames should be better for him, mostly due to the misplaced bishop on a5.



Black's task is not easy. For instance, 17...♗f6 is often met, but then critical is 18.g4 ♙xc3 19.♙b2 ♙xd2 20.♙xf6. The d6-pawn is very dangerous so 20...♙c8 is the only move, whereas 21.♖b2 keeps some initiative.

17...♗d6 18.♙c4

18.♖b5 ♙c7 19.g3 offers Black a choice: 19...c4 allows a draw by perpetual after 20.♖xf5 gxf5 21.♙a3, while 19...♖ae8 is unclear, for example, 20.c4 a6 21.♖b7 ♙a5 22.♗xa5 ♖xe2 Becker-Brkic, Dresden 2007.

18...♗e5 19.♖f3

19.♖e1 ♗f6!?, with good counterplay, has been tested twice by Sutovsky.

19...♖fb8

19...♗e4 20.♗f4± trades queens in a favourable situation.

20.♖xb8+ ♖xb8 21.♗f4

I have been following the game Wells-Howell, Halifax 2009, which continued 21...♙c7=. 21.d6 looks more testing, but 21...♙e6 22.♙xe6 fxe6 23.♗f4 ♗xf4 24.♙xf4 c4 should level the game.

E16. 16.d6 ♖b8!

16...b6 is less precise because Black's b-pawn place is on b5 and not on b6. Another point in favour of 16...♖b8 is that the weakness of the c6-square could be vital in some endgames, for example: 17.♙f3 ♙f5?! 18.♙xa8 ♙xb1 19.♙c6 ♗f6 20.♙b2 ♙xa2 21.c4! ♙xd2 (21...♗e6 22.f5!!+–) 22.♙xf6±.

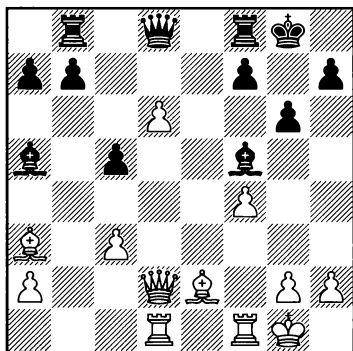
17.♙a3

17.♙f3 allows Black to fulfil the main idea of his previous move: 17...b5 18.♙b2 ♙f5 19.♖bd1 c4! 20.♗fe1 (20.♗d5 ♗f6 21.♙e4 ♙xe4 22.♗xe4 ♗fe8 23.♗d5 ♖e2) 20...♙d3 21.♙a3 b4! 22.♙xb4 ♙xb4 23.cxb4 ♗xd6 24.a3 a5 25.♙e4 axb4 26.♙xd3 cxd3 27.♗xd3 ♗b6+ 28.♙h1 b3±, Rubio Mejia-Mekhitarian, Madrid 2008.

17...♙f5 18.♖bd1

18.♖b5 is pointless in view of 18...a6!. Then 19.♖xc5 ♙b6 20.♙h1

♙xc5 21.♙xc5 does not offer full compensation, see **game 17 Gajewski-Sutovsky**, Rijeka 2010.



A crucial position for the whole idea with 13...♙c7.

I'll consider the more solid E161. 18...♗f6, and the sharp E162. 18...♗c8.

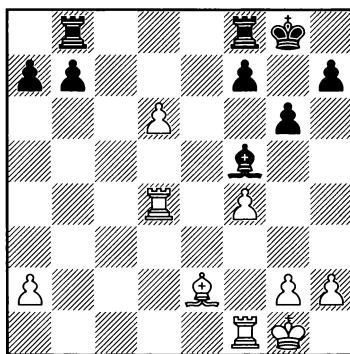
E161. 18...♗f6

Introduced in Ftacnik-Mikhailevsky, Bellevue 2006. It leads nearly by force to a drawish endgame:

19.♙xc5

19.♗f3 c4! is awkward to White: 20.♙c5 (20.♙xc4 ♙g4) 20...♗bc8 21.♙f2 ♗c6 22.d7 ♗d8.

19...♙xc3 20.♙d4 ♙xd4+ 21.♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 22.♗xd4



22...b5

Activating the rook with 22...♗fc8, followed by ...♗c5, also levels the game.

23.♗c1 ♙e6 24.♗d2 ♗fd8
25.♗c6 b4 26.♗a6 ♗b6=

The stem game finished in a draw after 27.♗xb6 axb6 28.h3 ♗f8 29.♙f1 h5 30.h4 ♗a8 31.♗d4 ♗d8 32.♗d2 ♗a8 33.♗d4 ♗d8 34.♗d2.

E162. 18...♗c8 19.g4!

19.♙f3 ♗f6! equalises outright. White must answer 20.d7 (or 20.♙b2?! c4! 21.♗fe1 ♙d3+, V.Belov-Nikolenko, Moscow 2000) 20...♗cd8 21.♙xc5 ♗xd7 22.♗e3 ♗c8 23.♙d4 ♙b6=.

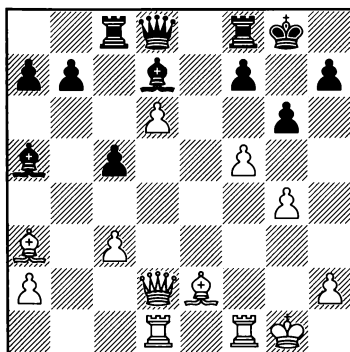
19...♙d7 20.f5!

20.♙f3 does not fit in with White's previous move. Black has at least two good retorts:

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♞f3

20...♞f6 21.♙b2 c4 22.♞h1 ♙a4
23.♞c1 ♜fd8 24.♙a3 ♙c7! 25.g5
(25.♞cd1 ♙xd1 26.♞xd1 b5 27.♙b7
♙xd6 28.♙xd6 ♜b8 29.♙d5 ♞xd6
30.♙xf7+ ♞xf7 31.♞xd6 ♞xd6
32.♞xd6 b4, Learte Pastor-Ko-
ronowski, ICCF 2008) 25...♞f5
26.♞ce1 ♙xd6 27.♙xd6 ♞d7=, Fal-
coni-Koronowski, ICCF 2008;

20...b5 21.♞h1 ♞f6 (or 21...c4
22.f5 ♞f6 23.fxg6 hxg6 24.♞c1 ♙b6)
22.♙b2 ♞ce8 23.♞fe1 ♞e6! 24.h3
(24.f5 c4 25.♙g2 ♞xe1+ 26.♞xe1
♙d8!=) 24...♞fe8 25.♞xe6 ♞xe6
26.♙g2 c4 27.f5 ♞e3, Bennborn-
Popelka, ICCF 2007.



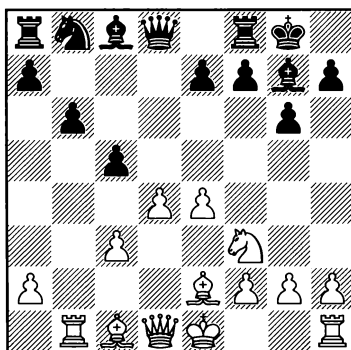
20...♞h4!

20...gxf5? 21.♙d3! gives White
a terrific attack. See the important
game 15 Meyer-Bokar, ICCF
2007.

21.♙f3 ♞fe8

Black is holding in this sharp
line. He should control the e7-
square and refrain from taking on
f5. See **game 16 Souza-Barbosa,**
ICCF 2008 for a detailed analysis.

E2. 9...b6



*This line is entirely written by
Agrest.*

10.0-0

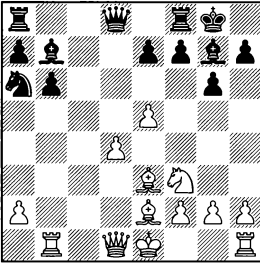
a) 10.♙e3?! does not fit in with
White's strategy. Black continues
with 10...♙b7 and now:

a1) 11.♞d3 ♙a6 12.♞d2 ♞c8
13.0-0 13...♙xe2 14.♞xe2 ♞a6!
15.♞d2 (Black has good counterplay
in the endgame after 15.♞xa6 ♜xa6
16.♞fc1 ♞ac8! 17.d5 f5!, Roiz-Golod,
Beer Sheva 2001.) 15...♙d8 16.♙h6
(16.♙g5 ♜d7 17.♙xe7 ♞e8 18.♙d6
♞xe4 19.dxc5 ♜xc5 is equal.)
16...♙h8 17.♞f4 ♞xa2. We got a bet-
ter version of the standard pawn
sacrifice since a pair of minor pieces
has been already exchanged while
White still has nothing tangible in
the centre.

a2) 11.e5

This advance surrenders the d5-
square so White can count only on
a direct kingside attack.

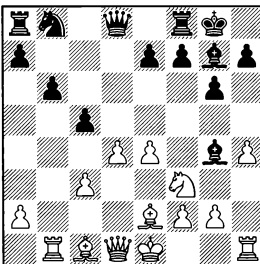
11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♜a6!



Simple and strong. The knight is heading for d5. Now 13.h4 ♖c7 (I don't like the weakening 13...h5 and also see no reason to waste time on it.) 14.h5 ♖d5 15.hxg6 hxg6! leaves Black better developed. That allows him to easily neutralise the attack along the h-file: 16.♙h6 ♙xh6 17.♗xh6 ♔g7 18.♚d2 ♖c3 and White's position is on the verge of collapsing. Instead, Nemet-Korchnoi, Switzerland 1985 went:

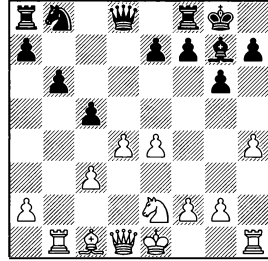
13.♚d2 ♖c7 14.h4 ♖d5 15.h5 ♖xe3 16.fxe3 (16.♚xe3?! ♚d5 gives Black a clear edge, due to White's sensitive pawns on a2 and d4) 16... e6 17.♙d3 ♗c8, with an edge to Black. The h4-h5 thrust has turned out to be a waste of time.

b) 10.h4 is another version of the same plan as in line a. I should mention that it is inconsistent with 8.♗b1. Black can now prevent h4-h5 by the natural 10...♙g4



b1) 11.♙f1 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♖c6. This suggestion of Rowson aims to disrupt the harmony of White's centre. After 13.d5 ♖a5 14.h5 ♙xh5 15.♖g5 ♙xe2+ 16.♚xe2 h6 17.♖f3 h5, Black has the upper hand.

b2) 11.♖g1 ♙xe2 12.♖xe2.



White is stubbornly pursuing his idea of opening the h-file, but his light squares are weak, especially c4. Krivoshey-Vallejo Pons, German League 2005, continued:

12...♚d7! 13.♙e3

13 d5?! ♚g4! is embarrassing for White, but he might try 13.f3 when 13...♖c6 14.dxc5 (14.d5 ♖e5 15.f4 ♖c4 16.♚d3 ♚a4 looks OK) 14...♚c8 would be unclear, according to Vallejo. I can add that over the board, it is easier to play with Black due to the numerous weaknesses of the enemy pawn formation.

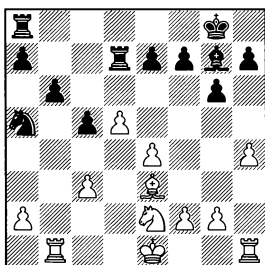
13...♖c6 14.♚a4

14.h5 ♗ad8 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.d5 ♚g4 is a typical example of the rule that an attack can only succeed when the active side has superior forces on that wing. In our case, the roles are reversed, and Black

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♗f3

goes on the offensive himself with
17.♞c2 ♖e5 18.♙f1 f5!.

14...♞fd8 15.d5 ♖a5 16.♞xd7
♞xd7



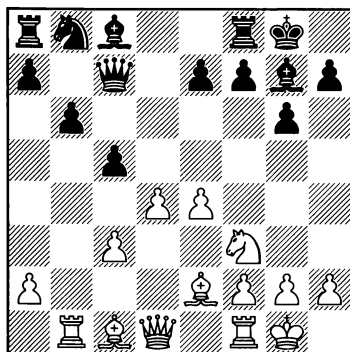
Black reached the typical Grünfeld endgame with full control over c4.

b3) 11.♙e3 ♖c6

Black is back to the standard Grünfeld scheme of development with the insertion of h4 b6, which is undoubtedly in his favour. White is under pressure.

12.e5 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♞c8!? 14.h5
♙xh5. I doubt that White would be able to justify his opening strategy.

10...♞c7!?



A flexible move which keeps open both options – of ...♙g4 and ...♙b7(a6).

11.♙g5!

It is a general rule in the Grünfeld that when Black refrains from an early attack on d4, White should lead out his bishop to g5 in order to keep an eye on e7.

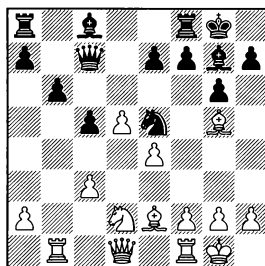
11.♙e3 ♙b7 12.♙d3 (12.♞d3
♙a6 13.♞d2 ♙xe2 14.♞xe2 ♖d7)
12...♖d7 13.♞d2 ♞ad8 14.♙h6 e5!
effectively paralyzes White's centre.

11...♖c6!

Commonly Black connects ...b6 with ...♖d7, but our sneaky queen move let us see White's setup and adjust accordingly.

12.♞d2

a) 12.d5 ♖e5 13.♖d2



It looks correct to keep more pieces on board, but this retreat allows Black to stab first.

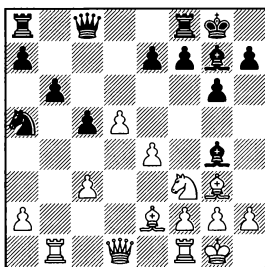
13.♖xe5 ♙xe5 14.f4 ♙xc3 15.e5
♙d4+ 16.♙h1 ♙f5 is also better for Black, but 13.c4 f5 14.exf5 ♙xf5
15.♞b3 ♖xf3+ 16.♙xf3 ♞ae8 17.♞e1
♙d4 18.♙e3 e5 would be equal.

13...f5! 14.exf5 ♖xf5 15.♖b3 c4 16.♖b4 a5 17.♖b5 ♗d7 18.♖b1 ♗f5 19.♖b5 ♖d3 20.♗e3 ♖ab8, Del Rio Angelis-Krasenkow, Leon 2010.

b) 12.♗h4

A computer move. It aims to take control of e5.

12...♗g4 13.♗g3 ♖c8 14.d5 ♖a5!



Instead, 14...♖d8 15.♖c2 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♖e5 17.♗e2 c4 is also worth consideration, but we want to drag White's pawns forward where we could attack them later.

15.e5

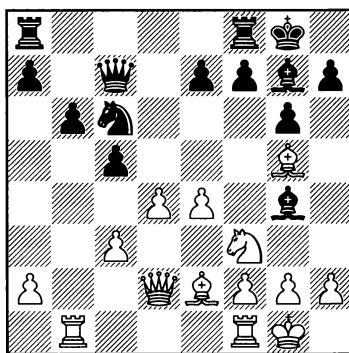
If White misses his chance to gain more space now, he will have to allow the blockading ...e7-e5, for instance:

15.♖c1 ♗xf3 16.♗xf3 ♖c4 17.♖e1 (17.♗e2 ♖d6 18.♖c2 f5!) 17...e5 18.♗h4 ♖c7 19.♖e2 b5 20.♖a1 ♖d6, or 15.♖e5 ♗xe2 16.♖xe2 e6! 17.d6 f6 18.♖f3 e5 19.♖fd1 ♖e6=. In both positions, it is unclear how White can make any progress.

15...♖d7 16.♖d2 ♖ad8 17.♖bd1 (Or 17.d6 exd6 18.exd6 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♖c4; 17.♖fd1 ♗f5 18.♖b2

♖a4) 17...♖a4!=. Despite White's enormous space advantage, Black does not experience problems. His pieces are constantly harassing the enemy pawns.

12...♗g4!



Our plan is to provoke d4-d5 and blockade the centre with ...e7-e5, or destroy it by ...f7-f5.

13.d5

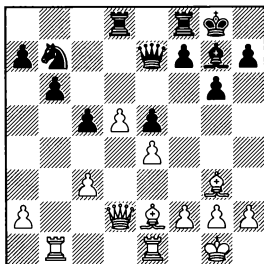
13.♖fc1 does not improve White's position. We can answer 13...♖ad8 14.d5 (14.♖e3 ♗xf3 15.♖xf3 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖d7 17.d5 ♖d4 18.♖e3 ♖xe2+ 19.♖xe2 ♖c8=) 14...♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♖e5 16.♗e2 f5! 17.exf5 ♖xf5 18.c4 ♖f7 19.♗e3 e6 20.♗g4 ♖f6 21.♖e1 exd5 22.cxd5 ♖e5 23.♗e2 ♖f7 24.♖bd1 ♖fd6=.

13...♖e5

The blockading plan 13...♖ad8 14.♗f4 e5 is also viable: 15.♗g3 ♖e7 (15...♖a5 is also possible as 16.♖xe5 ♗xe2 17.♖d3 ♖e7 18.♖xe2 ♖xd5=

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♞f3

recaptures the pawn.) 16.♞fe1 ♙xf3
17.♙xf3 ♜a5 18.♙e2 ♜b7



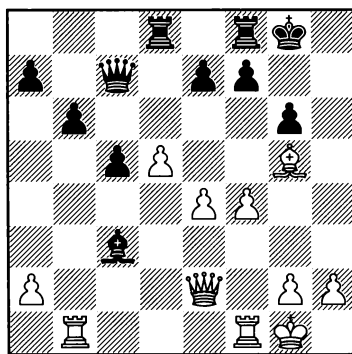
19.c4

19.♙a6 ♜d6 20.c4 would cut off the white bishop on a6. We could immediately launch an attack with 20...f5 21.exf5 and now both 21...♞xf5!? and 21...♜xf5 22.f3 ♜xg3 23.hxg3 e4 24.♞xe4 ♜d6 25.♜h2 ♞f5 offer Black an initiative.

The text is more solid, but the breakthrough ...f7-f5 is still possible:

19...♜d6 20.♙d3 f5 21.exf5 gxf5 22.f3 e4 23.♙xd6 (23.fxe4 ♜xe4) 23...♞xd6 24.fxe4 f4, with a classical opposite coloured bishops attack.

**14.♜xe5 ♙xe2 15.♜xg6 hxg6
16.♞xe2 ♙xc3 17.f4 ♞ad8!**



The game Czerwonski-Olszewski, Warsaw 2010, saw 17...e6, but it is basically wrong to further weaken our kingside pawns in view of 18.dxe6 fxe6 19.e5. The text prevents e4-e5 and prepare ...♜g7 or ...♙f6. White's only chance is:

**18.f5 ♜g7 19.♙f4 (19.g3 ♞h8)
19...♙e5 20.♞e3 ♞h8**

Black's c-pawn might become the hero of the day.

Conclusion:

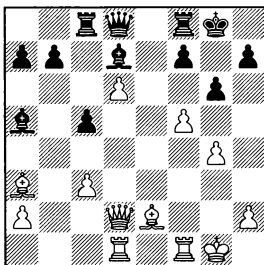
9...b6, followed by 10...♞c7, is a solid positional system. It ensures an easy development and avoids long theoretical variations.

Part 9

Complete Games

15. Meyer–Bokar corr. ICCF 2007

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♘f3 c5 8.♞b1 0–0 9.♙e2
♘c6 10.d5 ♘e5 11.♘xe5 ♙xe5
12.♞d2 e6 13.f4 ♙c7 14.0–0 exd5
15.exd5 ♙a5 16.d6 ♞b8 17.♙a3
♙f5 18.♞bd1 ♞c8 19.g4 ♙d7 20.f5



20...gxf5?

This is a mistake. It seems that Black should never take on f5 in this line. It is very helpful, however, to be well acquainted with White's attacking resources.

21.♙d3!

Now all the enemy pieces gather around the black king. Alternatives would justify the capturing on f5:

21.g5 c4 22.♙f3 ♞e8 23.♙h1 b5
Gerzhoy-Tyomkin, Ashdod 2004;

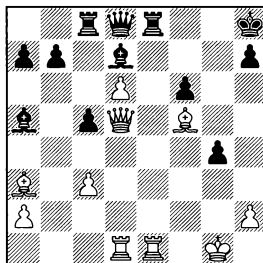
21.gxf5 ♞f6 22.♙b2 c4 23.♙f3
(23.♙h1 ♞c5) 23...b5 24.♞fe1 ♙b6+
25.♙h1 ♙h8 26.♞e7 ♞g8 27.♞f4 ♞g5
28.♙c1 ♞cg8 29.♙e3 ♞xf5 30.♞d4
♞xf3 31.♞xd7 ♙xd4 32.♙xd4 ♞xd4
33.cxd4 ♞d3–+, Tortato-Henrichs,
LSS 2008.

21...fxg4 22.♞de1!

The point! The rook is rushing to e7. Before this game, Black was defending successfully:

a) 22.♞h6 f5 23.♞fe1 ♞f6
24.♞xf6 (24.♙c4+ ♙h8 25.♞xf6+
♞xf6 26.♞e7 ♙a4 27.♙b3 ♙xb3
28.axb3 ♙b6 29.c4 ♙g8 30.d7 ♞d8
31.♙b2 ♞f7 32.♞e8+ ♞f8=) 24...♞xf6
25.♞e7 c4 26.♞xd7 cxd3 27.♞xb7
♞xc3 28.♙b2 ♞xd6 29.♙xc3 ♙xc3
30.♙b3 ♙d4+.

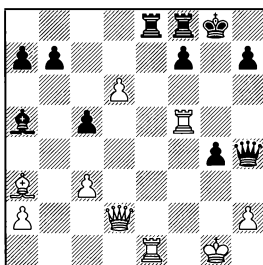
b) 22.♙f5 f6 23.♞d5+ ♙h8
24.♞fe1 ♞e8



4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♗f3

25.♙xh7 (25.♞f7 ♞xe1+ 26.♞xe1
♙xf5 27.♞e7 ♞f8 28.d7 ♞xf7
29.dxc8♞+ ♙xc8 30.♞xf7 ♜g8
31.♞e7 ♙f5 32.♙xc5 ♙xc3 33.♞xb7
a6=) 25...♙xh7 26.♞f7+ ♜h8
27.♞e7 ♞xe7 28.dxe7 ♞e8 29.♞xf6+
♜h7 30.c4 ♙c6 31.♞e5 ♙e6 32.♞f5+
♞g6 33.♞xg6+ ♜xg6 34.♙xd7 ♜f7
35.♙xc5 ♙b6 36.♙xb6 ♞xb6 37.♜f2
♞b2+ 38.♜g3 ♞xa2 39.♞xb7 a5
40.♞a7 ♙c2 41.♞xa5 ♞xc4 42.♞e5=
♜e8 43.♞e2 1/2 Engelhardt-Ataki-
si, ICCF 2006.

22...♞h4 23.♙f5! ♙xf5 24.♞xf5
♞ce8



25.♞e7! h6

Alas, 25...♞xe7 leads to a catastrophe along the main diagonal, something Black has been trying to avoid ever since the opening: 26.♞g5+ ♜h8 27.dxe7 ♞e8 28.♙b2! f6 29.c4!, mating in 5.

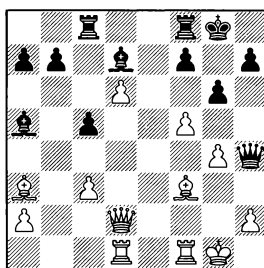
26.♞fe5 ♙d8 27.♙xc5 ♞f6 28.d7
♙b6 29.♙xb6 ♞xb6+ 30.♞e3

The rest is clear:

30...a6 31.♞d5 ♜g7 32.a4 ♜g8
33.c4 ♞f6 34.♞e8 ♜g7 35.♞3e5
♞b6+ 36.c5 ♞b2 37.♞d6 1-0.

16. Souza-Barbosa ICCF 2008

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♗f3 c5 8.♞b1 0-0 9.♙e2
♗c6 10.d5 ♗e5 11.♗xe5 ♙xe5
12.♞d2 e6 13.f4 ♙c7 14.0-0 exd5
15.exd5 ♙a5 16.d6 ♞b8 17.♙a3
♙f5 18.♞bd1 ♙c8 19.g4 ♙d7 20.f5
♞h4! 21.♙f3



21...♞fe8

21...b5 looks a viable alternative:

22.♞de1 (or 22.fxg6 hxg6
23.♞de1 ♙e6=) 22...♙d8!?

An original way to take the critical square e7 under control. The passive bishop on a5 will soon become very active:

23.♜h1 ♙g5 24.♞g2 ♞fe8
25.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 26.♙xc5 ♙f4 27.♞f2
♞xf2 28.♙xf2 a6

This game provides yet another proof that Black's active pieces and a better pawn structure on the queenside balance White's extra pawn in a wide range of Grünfeld endgames.

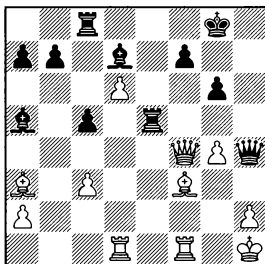
29.fxg6 hxg6 30.♙c5 ♞e6 31.♞d1
♙e3 32.♙a3 ♙b6 33.♜g2 ♞e3 34.♞d2
a5 35.♙b2, draw, Meyer-Bauer,
ICCF 2007.

22. ♖fe1

I have also analysed:

a) 22.♙c1 b5 (22...♖cd8 23.fxg6 hxg6 24.♖g5 ♜xg5 25.♙xg5 ♙b5 26.♙xd8 ♖xd8 27.♖fe1 ♙xc3 28.♖e7 ♙d4+ 29.♙g2 ♖xd6 30.♖xb7 a6 31.h4±) 23.♙h1 ♖e5∞.

b) 22.♙h1 ♖e5 (22...b5 23.fxg6!? hxg6 24.♙d5) 23.fxg6 (23.♙b2 c4 24.♖de1 ♖ce8 25.♖xe5 ♖xe5 26.fxg6 hxg6 27.♖f4 ♖e1 28.♙d5 ♙f5 29.♖xc4 ♖xf1+ 30.♖xf1 ♖xg4) 23...hxg6 24.♖f4



An important position. 24...♖g5? fails to 25.♖g3, but 24...♖f5! apparently solves the problems: 25.♖g3 (25.♖e3 ♖e8 26.♖xe8+ ♙xe8 27.gxf5 ♙b5 28.♖g1 ♖f4 29.♖g3 ♖xf5) 25...♖xg3 26.hxg3 ♖xf3 27.♖xf3 ♙xg4 28.♙g2=.

22...♖h3!

The alternatives are worse:

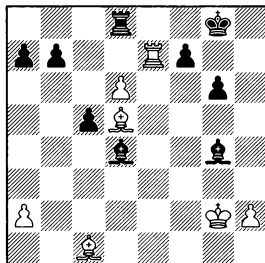
22...c4 23.♖e7!;

22...b5?! 23.♖xe8+ ♖xe8

24.♙xc5 gxf5 25.gxf5 ♖f6 26.♙d4 ♖xf5 27.♖g2+ ♖g6 28.♙h5 ♖xg2+ 29.♙xg2±

23.♖g2 ♖xg2+ 24.♙xg2 ♖xe1

25.♖xe1 ♙xc3 26.♖e7 ♖d8 27.♙d5 ♙d4! 28.fxg6 hxg6 29.♙c1 ♙xg4 1/2-1/2.

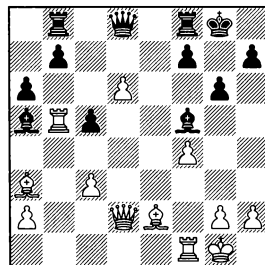


It seems that the position is still unclear, but in a correspondence game it is easy to check that after 30.♙xf7+ ♙h8 31.♙f4 g5 32.♙g3 b5 33.♖e8+ ♖xe8 34.♙xe8 c4 35.d7 ♙b6 36.♙f2 ♙d8 37.♙xa7 ♙g7, neither side can make progress.

17. Gajewski–Sutovsky

23.01.2010 Rijeka

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♙g7 4.♘c3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.♖b1 0-0 9.♙e2 ♘c6 10.d5 ♘e5 11.♘xe5 ♙xe5 12.♖d2 e6 13.f4 ♙c7 14.0-0 exd5 15.exd5 ♙a5 16.d6 ♖b8 17.♙a3 ♙f5 18.♖b5 a6!



This improves on the game

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♗f3

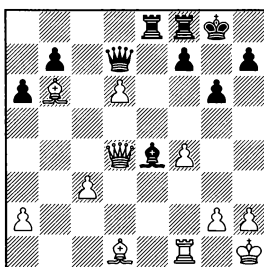
Fahnenschmidt-Mark Tseitlin, Bad Homburg 2005, which saw 18...b6 19.♞xa5 bxa5 20.♙xc5. The two connected pawns in the centre, backed by the bishop pair, are very strong, although White quickly lost.

19.♞xc5

White can try 19.♞b3, intending to grab a pawn after 19...b6 20.♙xa6 ♜f6 21.♞d1 ♙g4 22.♙e2 c4 23.♞b4 (23.♞bb1 ♙xc3) 23...♙xe2 24.♜xe2, when Black is not obliged to take the exchange. Instead, he has 24...b5! 25.♞bb1 ♜fe8 with active play.

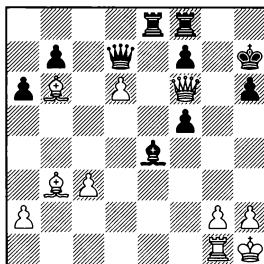
Even simpler is 19...b5! 20.♙xc5 ♙b6 21.♙xb6 ♜xb6+ 22.♖h1 ♞bd8 23.♞d1 ♜fe8 24.♞b4 ♜e3 25.♙f1 ♙g4, regaining the pawn.

19...♙b6 20.♖h1 ♙xc5 21.♙xc5 ♜d7 22.♙b6 ♙e4 23.♜d4 ♞be8 24.♙d1

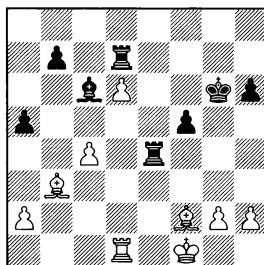


White's venture turned into a failure. He does have a strong passed pawn, but his pieces lack coordination. Now Black could have fixed his advantage by returning the exchange with 24...♞e6 25.♙c7 ♜c6 26.♜d2 ♞d8, but we would have missed the instructive endgame that followed:

24...♙c6? 25.f5! gxf5 26.♙c2 ♙e4 27.♙b3 h6 28.♜f6 ♖h7 29.♞g1



29...♞g8 30.♜xf7+ ♞g7 31.♜xd7 ♞xd7 32.♞d1 ♙c6 33.♖g1 ♞e2 34.♙f2 ♖g6 35.♖f1 ♞e4 36.c4 a5



A critical position. White should have fixed the pawn at a5 where it will be a target for the dark-squared bishop. After 37.a4 ♞e6 38.c5 ♞e4 39.♙d4 ♜f4+ 40.♖e2 White is holding. The only sensible plan could be 40...b6, but after 41.cxb6 ♞xd6 42.♙c3 ♞xd1 43.♖xd1 White's passed pawns balance Black's extra exchange. Play might continue 43...♜f1+ 44.♖c2 ♙xg2 45.♙xa5 f4 46.♙d2 ♙e4+ 47.♖c3 f3 48.♙e3 f2 49.♙c4=.

White allows the enemy to pin his pawn to a3. Then the plan with ...b6 is winning, because the white bishop will be overcharged with the

defence of two pawns – on a3 and b6.

37.a3 ♖f6 38.♞d2 a4 39.♙a2 b5?

This pawn should be used for undermining the c5-pawn. The right plan was 39...♙e5 40.c5 b6!±. Now White is fine.

40.c5 b4 (40...♙e5! =) 41.♙d4+?

After 41.axb4 ♞xb4 42.♙d4+ ♙g5 43.g3± only White can play for a win.

41...♞xd4! 42.♞xd4 bxa3 43.♞b4 ♙e5 44.♞b6 ♙e4 45.♙e1?

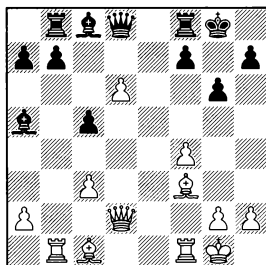
This strange move loses the g2-pawn and the game. White should have waited with 45.♞b4 ♞a7 46.g3.

45...♞a7 46.♞b4 ♙xg2 47.♞c4 ♙c6 48.♞c3 ♙d4 49.♞c4+ ♙d3 50.♞b4 ♞g7 51.♞b6 ♙e3 52.♙f1 ♙g2+ 53.♙e1 ♙e4 0-1.

18. Xu Jun–Ni Hua Wuxi 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♙g7 4.♘c3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.♞b1 0-0 9.♙e2 ♘c6 10.d5 ♙e5 11.♘xe5 ♙xe5 12.♞d2 e6 13.f4 ♙c7 14.0-0 exd5 15.exd5 ♙a5 16.d6 ♞b8 17.♙f3

17.♙a3! ♙f5 18.♞bd1 ♞c8 has been more topical lately.



17...b5 18.♙a3 ♙f5

18...b4 would have unnecessarily opened the main diagonal – 19.cxb4 cxb4 20.♙b2 b3 21.♞d5 bxa2 22.♞xa2 ♙b4 23.♞bd1 ♙xd6 24.♙h1 ♞c7 25.♞a1, with a compensation.

19.♞bd1 c4

19...b4! 20.cxb4 ♙xb4 21.♙xb4 ♞xb4 22.♞c3 ♞b6 was good and safe. Perhaps Ni Hua overestimated the importance of the square d3 for his bishop.

20.♞fe1

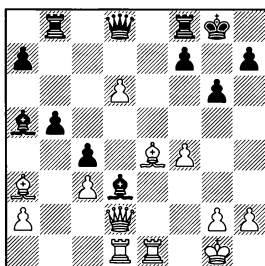
Black was threatening with ...♞f6. White was unable to prevent it with 20.♞d4?? due to 20... b4. 20.d7 was also dubious in view of 20...♞b6+ 21.♞f2 ♞fd8.

20...♙d3 21.♙e4?

It looks like White miscalculated something. Naturally, 21.♙d5 ♞b6 22.♙h1 ♞xd6± or 21.d7 b4 22.cxb4 ♙b6+ 23.♙h1 ♞xd7 24.♙b2 ♙d4 25.♙e4 ♙xb2 26.♞xc4 ♙a3 are fine for Black, but 21.♙e5! would have

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♗f3

set problems to Black. Then 21... ♗f6 is not a threat so White could choose from 22.d7, 22.♖de1! and even 22.♕h1. Perhaps Black should switch to a struggle for the draw with 21...b4 22.cxb4 ♙b6+ 23.♕h1 ♗xd6 24.♙b2 ♖be8 25.♖xe8 ♖xe8 26.♗c3 f6 27.♗xf6 ♗xf6 28.♙xf6 ♖e3. This sad necessity teaches us that the white dark-squared bishop should be restricted by all possible means and the sooner the better.



21... ♗f6!

This hit on c3 saves Black often in this line. Here it gains the edge.

22.♖c1 ♖fe8 23.♙xd3 ♖xe1+ 24.♗xe1 cxd3 25.d7?!

White had to pull himself together for a stubborn defence with 25.♗d2 b4 26.cxb4 ♗d4+ 27.♗f2 ♗xd6 28.bxa5 ♗xa3 29.♗e3. Instead, he errs again:

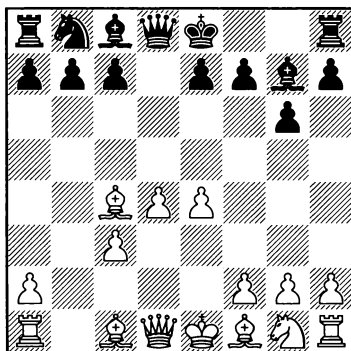
25... ♗c6 26.♗e5 ♙c7 27.♗e7 ♖d8 28.♙c5 ♗xd7 29.♗f6?? d2 0-1.

30.♖d1 loses to 30... ♗g4.

Part 10

The Exchange System 7.♔c4

1.d4 d5 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3
6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♔c4



Part 10

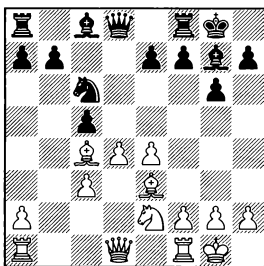
Main Ideas

Introduction

In this part, we are going to study White's most aggressive and dangerous plan – the king's bishop goes to c4 while the knight takes a stable stand on e2. This setup ensures a secure defence of the d4-pawn and allows White to preserve a mobile pawn centre. It was popularised in the 50s and the 60s by the great attackers Bronstein, Spassky, Geller.

After:

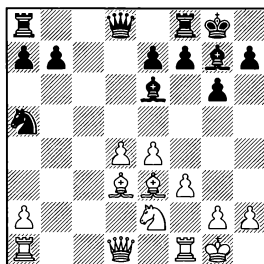
7.♖c4 c5 8.♘e2 ♖c6 9.♙e3
0-0 10.0-0,



Black tried at first the direct attack on the d4-pawn: 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖a5 12.♙d3 ♖c6!?. A draw proposition which White can decline by 13.♙b5 or 13.♙c2, conceding to a more passive stand for his bishop. This line is absolutely play-

able. It is still bringing Black satisfactory results, but he has very little chances to entangle the opponent in a messy unbalanced struggle that most Grünfeld players like.

Another straightforward approach is 10...♙g4 11.f3 ♖a5 12.♙d3 (12.♙xf7+ enjoyed a peak of popularity after the world title match Karpov-Kasparov in 1987, but then has gradually drifted out of fashion.) 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 ♙e6.



Here White must sacrifice something in order to keep the initiative. In my opinion, 14.♖c1 ♙xa2 is perfectly fine for Black, so the only challenging line is the exchange sacrifice 14.d5!. I believe in Black's position, but play is too forced for my taste. Real fight, if ever, begins around move 30, and one can never be sure if the latest engine did not come up with some nasty surprise.

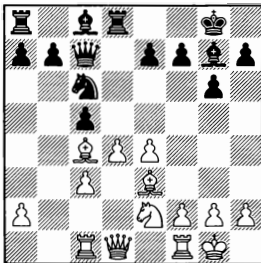
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♟g7 7.♙c4

The fact that Topalov confidently enters this line as White suggests that he hides trumps up his sleeve.

In the 60s, the focus began to shift to a more flexible setup where Black aims first to complete development with ...♞c7, ...♞d8, ...b6, ...♙b7, and only then seek counterplay. This plan was regularly used by World champions Botvinnik, Smyslov and Fischer. I recommend it as a main repertoire since it gives the better player fair chances to win. For a backup line I examine in detail the very topical 10...♜a5 11.♙d3 b6, see **game 20 Shirov-Vachier-Lagrave**, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

The game Gligoric-Smyslov, Kiev 1959, was the first high-level encounter where Black adopted this completely new approach. Instead of fighting for elimination of the central pawns, he aimed to restrict their mobility and eventually blockade them:

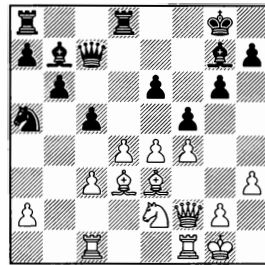
10...♞c7! 11.♞c1 ♞d8



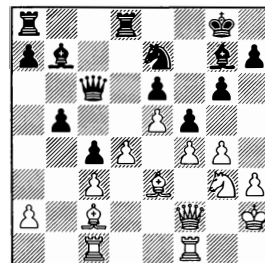
12.h3!? This move is very consistent. White intends to open the f-file with f4-f5, but firstly he prevents the annoying pin ...♙g4. (Six

years later Geller played against Smyslov 12.f4 without any prophylactics and went on to win, but that happened because Black did not follow his own blocking plan. He correctly started wit 12...e6, but after 13.♜h1 he should have followed up by 13...♜a5 14.♙d3 f5!.)

12...b6 13.f4 e6 14.♞e1 ♙b7 15.♞f2? (15.f5! ♜a5 16.♙d3 exf5 17.exf5 ♞e8!) 15...♜a5! 16.♙d3 f5!.



This plan is vital for Black's setup. It stops the enemy attack and questions the whole White's strategy. 17.e5 c4!. The blockade now extends over the queenside, too! 18.♙c2 ♜c6 19.g4 ♜e7 20.♜h2 ♞c6 21.♜g3 b5



We can only admire the domination of the black pieces.

This game earned the ...♞c7 system many followers and it became

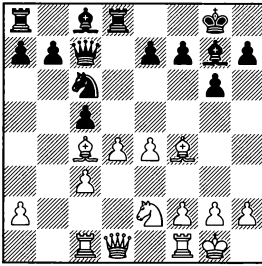
the main line for quite a long time.

White tried to strike back with:

12.♔f4!

The idea of this move is to fix the centre after 12...e5 13.♔g5 ♖e8 14.d5, with a better position.

Korchnoi–Stein Moscow 1971



12...♙d7! 13.d5! ♘a5 14.♔d3 e5.

Later it has been established that 14...b5! gives more chances for generating counterplay, but before this game Black used to overestimate his chances in the blockaded position after ...c5 and ...e5. It was widely accepted that the manoeuvre ...♘c6-a5-b7-d6 should assure Black of bright prospects. Korchnoi shook this assessment:

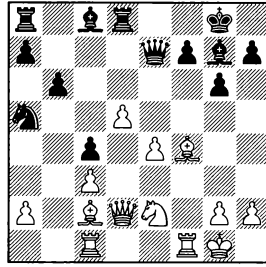
15.♔e3 c4

An obligatory move, or White will play c4 himself. Then he could choose active plans on both flanks.

16.♔c2 ♙e7! 17.♙d2! (17.f4 ♔g4!)

17...b6 18.f4! exf4 19.♔xf4.

Black had to take on f4 because of the threat of f4-f5. But now White obtains an excellent stand on d4 for his knight and the f-file for the rooks:

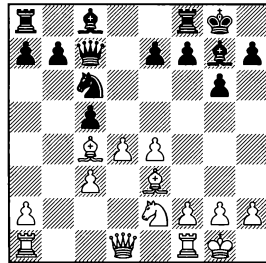


19...♘c6 20.♙f2 (or 20.♘d4±) 20...♘e5 21.♘d4 ♔d7 22.♙cf1. White owns the initiative – he is threatening with ♔g5.

Instead of trying to blockade the centre at any cost, I propose for the aims of our repertoire to keep the tension and gain space on the queenside with ...b5. This is a modern plan which began to gain popularity in the last 5 years.

Objectives and Move Orders

We begin with 10...♙c7



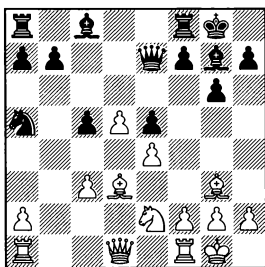
Black's queen stands up against the enemy bishop on c4. It also vacates d8 for the king's rook.

It seems that White's only reasonable move is 11.♙c1 because his

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗c4

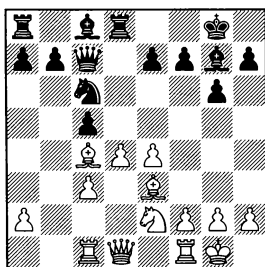
bishop on c4 is hanging, but that is not true. Sometimes he tries 11.♖b1 or even 11.h3 when we should enhance the threat of taking on d4 with 11...e6! Then 12.♗f4 would be pointless due to 12...♞e7.

One might ask why should White wait, but not play immediately 11.♗f4? The reason is that we'll answer 11...e5! and 12.♗g5 will be impossible (our rook is not on d8!) due to the hanging state of the d4-pawn. So White will have to retreat to g3, but after 12.♗g3 ♞e7! 13.d5 ♖a5 14.♗d3,



14...f5 (The thematic 14...c4 15.♗c2 b6 16.f4 exf4 17.♖xf4! is unclear.) 15.exf5 gxf5 17.f3 b6 Black has active play.

11.♖c1 ♖d8



Our backup line could be 11...e6!?. It leads to calm play in the cen-

tre. See the detailed annotations to **game 20 Onischuk-Zhou Jianchao**, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010.

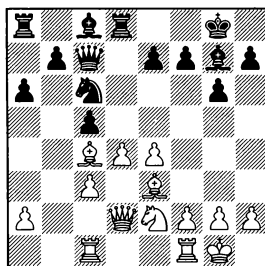
The diagram position is the modern tabya for the 7.♗c4 system. White's main moves are:

A. 12.f4

Since the game Spassky-Fischer, Santa Monica 1966 (with a transposition), Black knows that he should stop White's advance with:

12...e6! 12.♞e1 ♖a5 14.♗d3 f5=.

B. 12.♞d2 a6!



This might come as a big surprise for White as this challenging continuation is rarely seen in practice and it is practically ignored by older books.

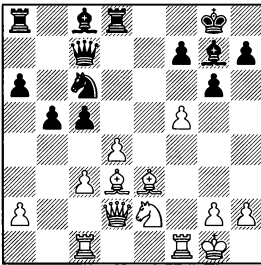
Black is going to seize space on the queenside. The light-squared bishop can go to b7, the e-pawn can move to e6 or e5 depending on the enemy's setup.

We would exchange the c-pawns only when we consider it necessary:

1. To trade queens;
2. To start play along the c-file;
3. To win material.

White, for his part, should try to organise a kingside attack. For that, he should weaken Black's castling position. Possible plans are connected with f4-f5 or h4-h5.

The first one is not efficient. After 13.f4 b5 14.♔d3 e6! 15.f5 (or we'll play ...f7-f5 on the next move) 15...exf5 16.exf5



16...cxd4! 17.cxd4 ♔d7, Black has the more active pieces. The same can be said about 13.♟fd1 b5 14.♔d3 ♔b7 15.f4 e6! 16.♟e1 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♔d7 18.♔b1 ♔e7.

The second plan does not weaken White's position, but it requires some preparation:

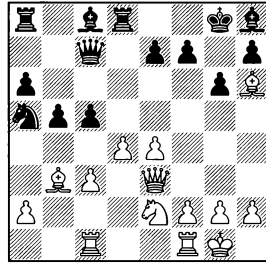
13.♔h6 ♔h8!

We need the bishop!

14.♟e3

Or 14.h4 b5 15.♔b3 (15.♔d3 ♔e5! 16.♔f4 ♔d7=) 15...♔a5 16.♔d5 ♔b7=.

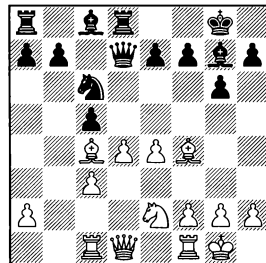
14...b5 15.♔b3! ♔a5



It is not clear how White should continue. After:

16.♔f4 (16.dxc5 ♔b7) 16...e5 17.♔g5 ♟e8 18.d5=, Black obtains a good version of the typical pawn structure with a closed centre.

C. 12.♔f4 ♔d7!



White can choose here between 13.dxc5 and 13.d5. The first variation leads to a calm, very static position with a temporary advantage for White after 13.dxc5 ♟e8! 14.♔d5 ♔d7! 15.♟d3 e6 16.♔xc6 ♔xc6 17.♔d6 b6 18.♟e3 ♔b7, see **game 24 Delchev-Ruck**, Sibenik 2006.

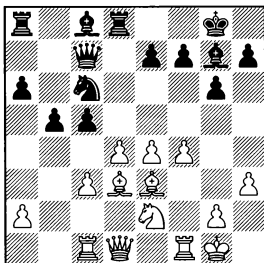
13.d5 ♔a5! is more dynamic and leads to sharp play: 14.♔d3 (14.♔b3!? ♔xb3 15.axb3 a5 16.c4 b5 17.♔c3 bxc4 18.bxc4 a4) 14...b5 15.♔e3 e6!.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♔g7 7.♙c4

Basic Plans and Pawn Structures

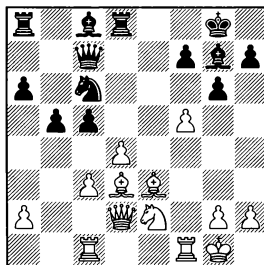
Mihailovs-Ipatov
Barcelona 2009

Our main plan is to attack the d4-pawn and either win it, or provoke e4-e5. As a rule, d4 is very shaky if White pushes f4:

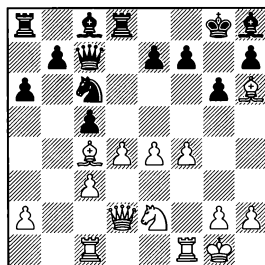


White has played very consistently indeed. He prevented ...♙g4 and then put in f4. The problem is that his e3-bishop is hanging! Black hits d4 with: 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖b6! and the only way to hold d4 is the ugly 16.e5 ♖b4.

Duessel-Moor
Zuerich 2002



16...cxd4! 17.cxd4 ♖d7! 18.fxg6 (18.♙c2 ♜e5! 19.♙b3 ♜c4; 18.f6?! ♙f8) 18...hxg6 19.♙g5 (19.♙e4 ♙b7) 19...♞e8 and the d4-pawn is about to fall.



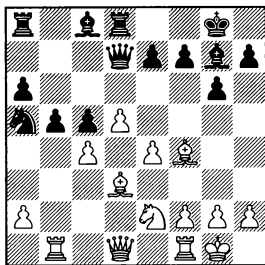
Black followed with the program move 14...b5. There is nothing wrong with it, except for the fact that 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖xd4! was winning a healthy pawn after 16.♖xd4 ♖b6 17.e5 ♞xd4 18.♞e3 ♙f5.

Most often White leaves his pawn on f2 and prefers first to complete development with ♞d2 and, eventually, ♞fd1. In this scenario, we try to get in ...b5. Note – not ...b6, but ...b5! That allows us:

1. To expel the active bishop from c4 without removing the c6-knight from the centre. Thus we keep the pressure on d4 and restrain the enemy's play.
2. To deny White the possibility of bolstering his d5-pawn by c3-c4.
3. To expand further on the queenside with ...a5.

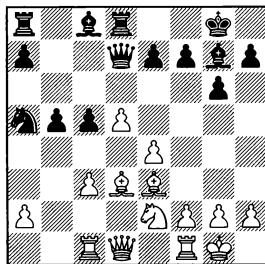
As a whole, this approach is much more aggressive than ...b6, which is linked mostly with the plan of blockading the centre. We'd rather destroy it!

Game 25 Topalov–Svidler Sofia 2006



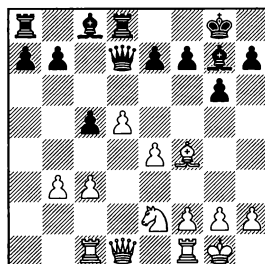
16...e6! 17.♔g5 ♖e8 and White is unable to defend his centre. See the rest in the “Complete Games” chapter.

Example



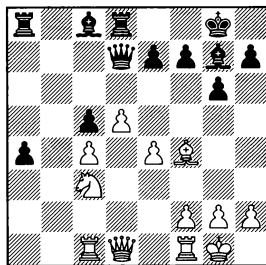
Instead of closing the centre with 15...c4 16.♔c2 e5, we attack it with 15...e6!

Roder–Laubsch Copenhagen 2001



15...a5!? 16.♜c2 b5 17.♞fd1 a4.

The same march of the a-pawn is possible after 16.c4 b5 17.♘c3 bxc4 18.bxc4 a4



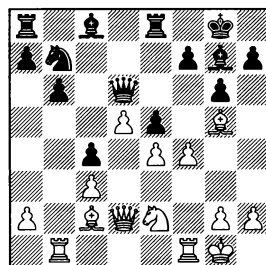
The a-pawn, strongly supported by the rook and the dark-squared bishop, balances the game: 19.♞c2 a3!?

We often should choose between closing the centre or maintaining the tension. Therefore we should have clear criteria how to assess such positions.

Firstly I will offer an example of what we should be avoiding:

Lukacs–Ruck

Perenyi Memorial 1997



Black allowed:

20.f5! and was very passive after 20...f6 21.♔e3 ♔d7 22.♘g3 ♜e7

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

23.h4 ♖d6.

White is in full command and can easily improve his pieces:

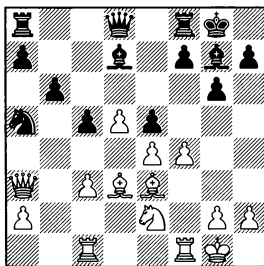
24.♙d1! ♙f8 25.♙g4 ♗g7 26.♗e2 ♙e7 27.fxg6! ♙xg4 28.♗xg4 hxg6 29.h5. Black is helpless.

We should be careful when entering such type of positions.

That could be advisable only if White's pieces were misplaced and did not support the plan with f4, for example, White's rook is not on f1, or our knight is closer to d6 so we could meet f4 by ...f5.

Game 22 Sasikiran–Kamsky

Dresden ol. 2008



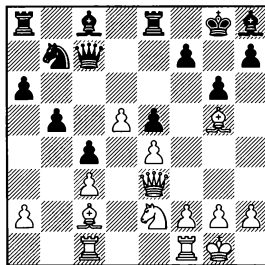
Here White's strongest piece is misplaced at a3. This encourages Black to counterattack with 16... f5, e.g. 17.exf5 ♙xf5 18.c4 ♙xd3 19.♗xd3 e4 20.♗c2 ♗e7, or complete the long manoeuvre of the knight:

16... ♖b7

White's pieces are not as active as in the previous example so 17.f5 is not so efficient: 17...gxf5 18.exf5 e4 19.♙a6 ♖d6 20.♖g3 ♙e5 21.♗b2 ♗h4 22.♗d2 f6=.

17.c4 ♖d6 18.♗ce1 ♙e8 19.♖g3 exf4=.

Example



In this example, Black's rook is on e8. This is not its ideal place, but the opposition with the enemy's queen makes it useful in the imminent clash in the centre:

20.♖h1 (20.f4 ♗c5!) 20... ♖d6 21.f4.

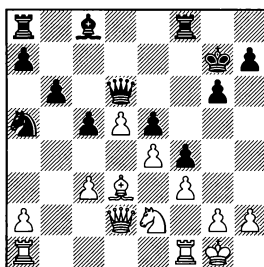
Black has two good replies:

21...f6 22.fxe5 ♖xe4! 23.♗xe4 ♗xe5=, or:

21...f5 22.♖g3 fxe4 23.♖xe4 ♙f5 24.♖xd6 (24.♖f6+ ♙xf6 25.♙xf6 ♙xc2 26.♗xc2 ♖f5 27.♗f3 exf4) 24... ♗xd6 25.♙xf5 gxf5 26.♗g3 ♗g6=.

P.Nielsen–Ivanchuk

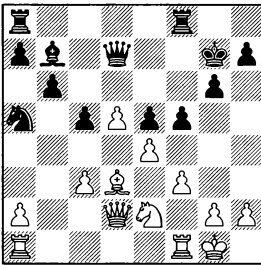
Monte Carlo 2006



This structure is, as a rule, pleasant for Black since the opponent has no active plan:

17...c4! 18.♔c2 g5 with an advantage.

However, ...c5-c4 should be carefully calculated. Always check the consequences of the possible breakthrough g3, followed up by h4. Compare this position with the following one:



17...c4? is a mistake here (17...f4! should be safe enough): 18.♔c2 f4 18.g3 g5.

If Black controlled the d4-square, he could have defended with 18...♖d6 19.gxf4 exf4 because White's knight would not have any prospects.

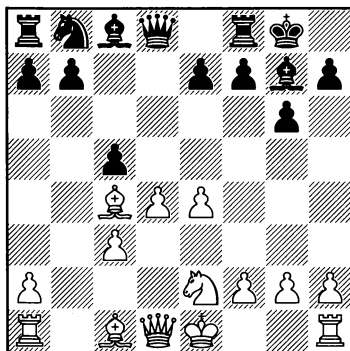
19.h4 h6 20.hxg5 hxg5 21.gxf4 gxf4 22.♕f2 and White should be winning because he was first to start the attack.

The same pawn structure with dark-squared bishops is safe for Black since his king is well protected. Therefore he should try to insert ...c4 in order to gain space and free c5 for his pieces.

Part 10

Step by Step

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♙c4 0-0 8.♘e2 c5

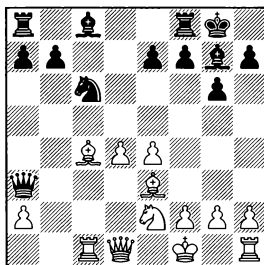


We do not advocate slow development like 8...b6 or 8...♘c6, because they offer the enemy extra options.

9.♙e3 ♘c6 10.0-0

10.♙c1 was popularised by Polugaevsky in the late 80s, but it has drifted out of fashion in the last decade. The decline of this line began in 1992 when Kudrin found a convincing setup against it. The last blow was dealt in the Kamsky-Anand candidates match for the PCA world title in 1995. After this game, 10.♙c1 has disappeared from top level practice. Black answers:

10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖a5+ 12.♔f1
♖a3!



Black vacates the a5-square for his knight and keep an eye on the e3-bishop, thus hampering f3. That is essential in the variations:

13.h4 ♙g4! (f3 is impossible!)
14.h5 ♙xh5! Δ15.♙xh5 g4 16.♘g3
♙xd4 17.♙xd4 ♘xd4 18.♘h5 ♖d6+,
and 13.e5 ♙g4 14.♖b3 ♖xb3 15.axb3
♘a5 16.f3 ♙d7+.

13.d5?! is also bad as White is lagging behind in development:
13...♘a5 14.♙d3 ♙d7 15.♙c5 ♖xa2
16.♙xe7 ♖fc8→.

Another dubious try is:

13.♖d2?! ♙d8! (hitting d4)
14.d5 ♘e5 15.♙b5 b6! 16.f4 (16.♙d4
♙a6 17.♙xa6 ♖xa6 gives Black the
initiative. Sakaev also mentions
16.♖c3 ♖xc3 17.♘c3, but Black's
pieces are more active after 17...♙b7
18.♔e2 ♖ac8.) 16...♘g4 17.♙d4 e5!
18.♙b2 ♖xa2 19.♙a1 ♖b3 20.♙c6

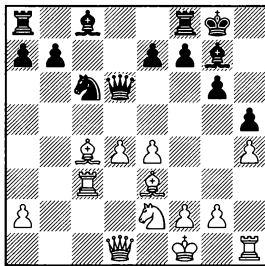
Part 10

♖b8 21.♙xa7 ♜e3+ 22.♙f2 ♜c4
23.♙c3 ♙xb2 24.♙xc4, Ftacnik-I.
Gurevich, Biel 1993, 24...exf4+.

The only reasonable moves for White in the diagram position are:

a) 13.♙c3!? ♗d6 14.h4 (14.f3 ♗d8
15.♙f2 ♜xd4+) 14...h5!

In my opinion, Black should not allow h4-h5.



15.♗d2!

Hawkins-Gormally, Liverpool 2008, saw 15.f3 ♗e6 16.♗xe6 ♙xe6
17.♙b1 ♗d7 18.e5 e6 19.♙f2 ♜e7+. Or 15.♗d3 ♗d8 16.e5 ♙b4 17.e6 ♜e5
18.exf7+ ♙f8 19.♙c2 ♜xc4 20.♙xc4 ♗d6 21.♙c5 b6+.

15...♗d8!

Black had previously played only 15...e5 16.d5 ♜a5 17.♗d3 b6, but I do not like the position after 18.♙g1! f5
19.f3 fxe4 20.fxe4 ♗g4 21.♙h2±.

16.♙g1 (16.♗d3 ♙b4) 16...♜xd4

The text simplifies to an equal heavy pieces endgame. 16...a6!?, intending ...b5, ...♗b7, keeps more tension.

17.♜xd4 ♗xd4 18.♗d3 e5
19.♗xd4 exd4 20.♗d5 ♗e6 21.♙xd4

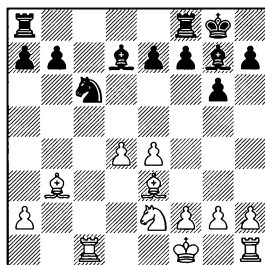
♙e5 22.g3 ♗xd5 23.exd5 ♙ac8
24.♙g2=.

b) 13.♙b3 ♙xb3

Sakaev recommends 13...♗d6!?. Indeed, Black is fine in the arising complex positions:

14.♗d5 ♜a5 15.♙b5 e6 16.♙xa5
b6 17.♗d2 exd5 18.e5 ♙e6; 14.♙c3
♗e6=; 14.e5 ♗d8 15.♙a3 ♗f5 16.f3
♜a5 17.♙f2=.

14.♗xb3 ♗d7



Black has a clear plan to exchange the c6-knight for the b3-bishop and start rolling his queenside pawns. See the annotated **game 19 Kamsky-Anand**, Las Palmas 1995 for more detail.

10...♙c7

This is one of the oldest systems against the Exchange Variation. It was employed by World champions Botvinnik and Fischer. Later Kasparov shifted the focus to 10...♗g4 while in the last years 10...♜a5 seems to be all the rage at top level. I have nothing against these systems, except for the fact that they require deep computer assisted preparation. Even Anand,

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

in the 2010 match for the world title against Topalov, fell victim of a home analysis, to lose without any fight. I have extensively analysed the variation of that game and think that it is perfectly playable.

You can find a detailed survey on this system in the comments of game 21 Shirov-Vachier Lagrave, Wijk aan Zee, 2011 in the “Complete Games”. It could serve as a backup repertoire.

However, I advocate sound positional chess where understanding and practical strength decide the outcome of the game. The only other setup that meets these requirements is:

10...e6

It is practically unexplored so your opponent will most likely be surprised to see it. White has the following logical answers:

a) 11.f4?! ♙d7 (11...cd4!? 12.cd4 ♙d7) 12.g4?! ♖c8 13.dxc5 ♖a5 14.♙d3 ♙a4 15.♗d2 ♗h4 16.g5 ♖fd8, Leverett-Svidler, Philadelphia 1995.

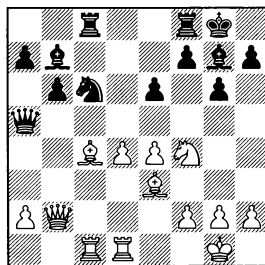
b) 11.♖b1?! ♖a5 12.♙d3 cxd4 13.cxd4 b6. Compared to the 10... cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖a5 system, the white rook is now misplaced on b1. 14.♗a4 ♙d7 15.♙b5 ♙xb5 16.♗xb5 ♗e8 17.♗b4 ♗c6 18.♖g3 ♖fc8 19.♖bc1 ♗d7 20.♖e2 ♙f8 21.♗b1 ♖c4, Leoni-Davies, Bratto 2000.

c) 11.♗d2 ♗a5

Black's main idea is to trade queens and play an endgame with

a pawn majority on the queenside.

12.♗b2 b6 13.♖ac1 (13.a4 ♙b7 14.♙b5 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♗b4=) 13...♙b7 14.♖fd1 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖ac8 16.♖f4



Sakaev assess this position as preferable for White due to the threat of ♖xe6. He continues his analysis with 16...e5 17.♙d2 ♗a4 18.♖d5±. I propose to take care of the e6-square and return to the initial idea of swapping queens:

16...♖fe8 17.♗b3 ♗b4 (but not 17...♙a6 18.d5 exd5 19.♙xd5 ♖e5 20.♖xc8 ♖xc8 21.♙d4 ♙c4 22.♗b2±, with an awkward pin) 18.d5 exd5 19.♙xd5 ♗xb3 20.axb3 ♙a8. In these endgames, Black usually neutralises the enemy activity and hopes to exchange the rooks. Then he could produce a distant passer on the queenside. Play might continue:

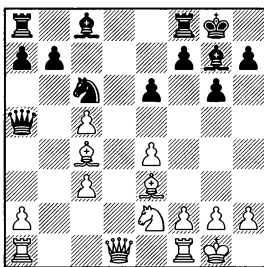
21.g3 ♖b4 (21...♖e5 22.♖xc8 ♖xc8 23.♙xa8 ♖xa8 24.♖d5) 22.♙xa8 ♖xc1 23.♖xc1 ♖xa8= 24.♖g2 ♙f8 25.♖c7 ♙d6 26.♖d7 ♙xf4 27.♙xf4 ♖a6 28.♙e3 ♖c5.

d) 11.dxc5

This pawn structure is commonly safe for Black if the pawn is

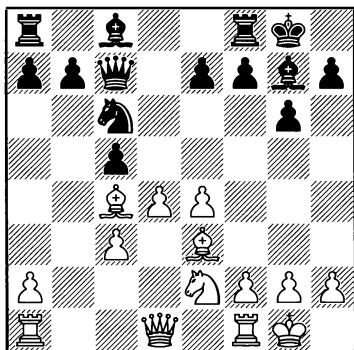
still on a7 and the b6-square is not weakened. Black should continue with:

11...♞a5!



The threat is 12...♞d8, then ...♞f8xc5. 12.♞c2 does not set problems due to 12...♞e5 13.♞b3 ♞g4. The thematic in such structures 12.♞d4 is innocuous here in view of the simple 12...♞xc5. The plan with 12.f4 leads to an equal game after 12...♞d8 13.♞b3 ♞f8 14.f5 ♞xc5 15.♞d4 ♞xd4 16.cxd4 ♞xd4 17.♞xd4 ♞xd4+ 18.♞h1 ♞xa1 19.fxe6 ♞xe6 20.♞xe6 fxe6 21.♞xe6+ ♞h8 22.♞xa1 ♞f8=.

Let us now return to 10...♞c7:



We vacated the d8-square for the rook from where it will be at-

tacking the central pawn on d4. In many lines we'll play later ...e6 in order to stop the advance d5. On the queenside, we'll gain space with ...a6 and ...b5. The natural place for our light-squared bishop is b7, but concrete reasons might require ...♞d7.

11.♞c1

White has a fair range of other options. He can easily make positional mistakes trying to follow typical recipes from other variations. Next I will examine some of his inferior moves:

a) 11.♞f4?!

This is dubious when Black's rook is not on d8, because after:

11...e5!,

the thematic 12.♞g5 will be without tempo so Black can grab the d4-pawn. Thus he should retreat:

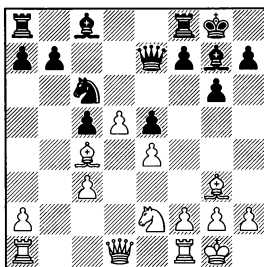
12.♞g3

and close the centre after

12...♞e7! 13.d5

Note that 13.dxe5 ♞xe5 14.♞d5 ♞e6! is fine for Black, mostly because of his control of the c4-square: 15.♞f4 (15.♞b1 ♞xd5 16.exd5 ♞ad8 17.♞e1 ♞fe8 18.♞f4 b5 19.h3 a6 20.a4 ♞d7) 15...g5! 16.♞d3 ♞c4 (16...♞d7 17.♞xb7 ♞ad8) 17.♞xe6 fxe6 18.e5 (18.♞c2 ♞ad8 19.♞ad1 b5 20.a4 a6 21.axb5 axb5=) 18...♞ad8 19.♞e2 ♞b6 20.♞b2 ♞d5 21.♞ac1 ♞f4 22.♞xf4 gxf4. After the text, the following position arises:

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4



We have examined this structure in the “Main Ideas” chapter. Here Black has the best of it – the rook is on its ideal place f8 while, on the contrary, White’s dark-squared bishop is not on e3 where it belongs. That saves us some effort since there is no need to regroup. We continue with:

13...♖a5 14.♙d3 f5

The thematic 14...c4 15.♙c2 b6 is unclear. White’s bishop on g3 attacks e5 while our knight is still too far from d6: 16.f4! (16.♖d2 is a bit slow – 16...♖b7 17.f4 ♙g4 18.f5! gxf5 19.exf5 f6 20.♙f2 ♙xe2 21.♖xe2 ♖a3 22.♖d2 ♖ad8 23.g4 ♖d7 24.♙e4 ♖fd8=.) 16...exf4 17.♖xf4! (17.♙xf4 ♙g4) 17...♖b7 18.♖d4 ♖a3 (18...♙d7 19.♖f1) 19.♖d2 ♙h6 20.♖e1 ♙xf4 21.♙xf4 f6 22.♖g3, with an excellent compensation for the exchange.

15.exf5

15.f3 c4! 16.♙c2 f4 17.♙f2 ♙d7 leads to the pawn structure from **game 23 Van Wely-Kamsky**, Dagomys 2008, where White has no plan and can only wait.

15...gxf5 17.f3 b6

Black has an active position. He will play ...♙d7, ♖a5-b7-d6.

b) 11.d5

This advance is premature as White cannot bolster his pawn with c4 after 11...♖a5 12.♙d3 e6=, e.g. 13.♖c1 exd5 14.exd5 ♙e5! 15.h3 (15.f4 ♙d6 16.♖g3 f5!) 15...b6.

However, I think that we could play more concretely:

11...♖e5!? 12.♙b3

12.♙f4 ♖a5! 13.♙b3 (13.♙xe5?! is grim for White: 13...♙xe5 14.♖d2 b5 15.♙d3 ♖b8 16.a4 b4 17.f4 ♙xc3 18.♖xc3 bxc3 19.♖e3 ♖b2) 13...c4! 14.♙c2 (14.♙xe5 ♙xe5 15.♙xc4 ♖c7 16.♙b3 ♙xh2+ 17.♖h1 ♙d6 18.f4 ♙g4) 14...e6.

12...b6!

We are threatening with ...♙a6!. The fine point is that 13.c4 f5! 14.exf5 ♙xf5 would send our bishop to an even better place. 13.♙f4 ♙a6 14.♖c1 c4 15.♙c2 ♖c5 is also fine.

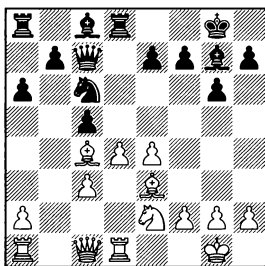
13.♖c1 c4! 14.♙c2 ♙a6 15.♖f4 ♖d7! 16.♖d2 ♖c5 17.♖fd1 ♖fd8 and Black has the better prospects in this complex middlegame.

c) 11.♖c1?!

This move was well forgotten until the early 70s, when Dutch grandmaster Donner dared to test it at high level. It is certainly not deprived of logic. White is going to defend the d4-pawn by rook, avoiding the awkward opposition after the usual ♖d2 – ♖d8. However, the queen move hampers the coordination between White’s rooks and clearly lacks harmony.

The last high level game was Eljanov-Sasikiran where Black opted for the timid 11...♙d7. I prefer a more active approach:

11...♖d8 12.♖d1 (12.d5 ♘a5 13.♙d3 e6!=) 12...a6



The common 12...♘a5 13.♙d3 e5!= 14.d5 (14.dxe5 ♗xe5; 14.dxc5 ♙e6=) 14...c4 15.♙c2 b6 is fine, of course. The d1-rook is obviously misplaced since it does not help f4. However, 12...a6 better fits in with our repertoire for the main line.

13.a4

I do not see any other reasonable ideas: 13.d5 ♘e5 14.♙f4 (14.♙b3 c4 15.♙c2 e6) 14...b5 15.♙b3 ♗b6.

13...♘a5!

The weak b3-square forces the bishop to retreat to a passive place.

14.♙a2 ♙d7

The vulnerable a4-pawn makes the endgame after 14...cxd4!? 15.cxd4 ♗xc1 16.♖dxc1 (16.♖axc1 ♙d7) 16...♘c6 easy for Black, but there is still no need to simplify play.

15.dxc5

It is hard to suggest anything better. Brionne-Leko, Paris 1990 saw instead 15.♙f4 e5 16.♙g5 ♖e8 17.dxc5 ♙e6 18.♙xe6 ♖xe6 19.♗a3 ♖c8.

15...e6

This structure is better for Black, especially with the horrible weakness on a4. He has many other good moves, as 15...♙e8 16.♖d4 ♘c6 17.♖xd8 ♖xd8 18.f4 e6 19.♙f2 ♙f8 20.♗e3 ♖c8 21.e5 ♘b8 22.♘g3 ♘d7 23.♘e4 ♙xc5 24.♗f3 ♙xf2+ 25.♗xf2 ♘c5 26.♘f6+ ♔g7.

16.♙g5 ♖dc8 17.♙f4 e5 18.♙e3 ♙f8 19.♗c2 ♙e8.

Next we recapture on c5, with a strategic advantage.

d) 11.♖b1!?

This move unexpectedly rose from oblivion in 2010, but only temporary, I think. Perhaps the reason is that White discovered holes in Black's most frequent responses. For instance, after 11...♘a5 12.♙d3 e5, White has 13.f4! which puts under question Black's setup. The thematic 11...♖d8?! is not too good either due to 12.♙f4!.

11...a6, which is in the spirit of our repertoire, is playable. In practice White answers 12.♗c1 (Or 12.a4 ♖d8! when critical is 13.♙f4! ♙e5! 14.♙xe5 ♘xe5 15.♙b3! b5! 16.f3 e6 17.♗e1 ♘c6 18.♗f2 ♘a5 19.♙a2 bxa4?) 13...e6! 14.♙g5!? (14.♖d1 ♘a5 15.♙a2 ♙d7) 14...♖e8 15.d5 ♘a5 16.♙a2 c4 17.♙f4 ♗d7.

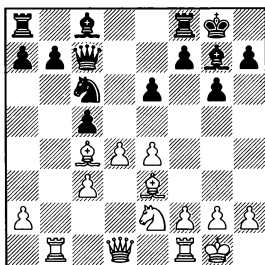
4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗c4

I suppose that attentive readers of Chess Stars books have noted Sakaev's suggestion in his *An Expert Guide to the 7. ♗c4 Gruenfeld*:

11...a6 12.♗f4! e5 13.♗g3. Here he mentions only 13...♞e7 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15.♗d5±. Stronger is 13...b5 14.♗d5 ♗b7 15.a4 ♖e7 16.♗xb7 ♞xb7 17.d5 ♖c8 18.f3 ♖d6 19.♗f2 ♞c7 20.♖c1 c4. Of course, Black is holding here, but his setup is a little passive.

There is no reason to go for this line when we have a more testing retort to White's tricky eleventh move:

11...e6!



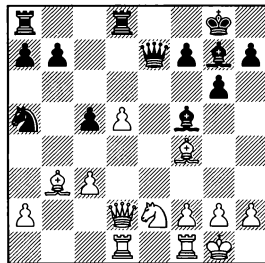
This useful move revives the threat of taking on d4 and pinpoints the drawbacks of 11.♞b1 – the c4-bishop is hanging. All White's defences have their flip sides:

d1) 12.♞c1 b6 13.♗h6 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♖a5 15.♗xg7 ♖xg7 16.♗d3 ♞xc1 17.♞bxc1 ♗b7 18.♞c7 ♞fc8, with an equal ending.

d2) 12.♞d2 cxd4 (12...♞d8!? 13.♗f4 ♞e7 14.♗g5 ♗f6=) 13.cxd4 ♖xd4 14.♗xd4 ♞xc4 15.♞fc1=/∞.

d3) 12.♗f4 ♞e7 13.♞d2 ♞d8

14.d5 ♖a5 15.♗b3 exd5 16.exd5 ♗f5 17.♞bd1



The stem game Wang Hao-Zhou Jianchao, Shenzhen 2010, went 17...♞e4?! (17...♖xb3?! 18.axb3 c4 19.d6 ♞d7 20.bxc4 ♞ac8 21.♞fe1 ♞xc4 22.♖d4 gives White a strong initiative, for example: 22...♗e6 23.♖xe6 fxe6 24.♗g5! ♗xc3 25.♞e2 ♞cc8 26.♗xd8 ♗xe1 27.♗e7 ♗c3 28.h4!) 18.♖g3 ♖xb3 19.axb3 ♞c2 20.♖xf5 ♞xf5 21.♗g3 a5±. I suggest:

17...c4! 18.d6 ♞d7 19.♗c2 ♗xc2 20.♞xc2 b6 with excellent play. Our knight will soon reach c5. White cannot impede that because of 21.♖g3 ♖b7 22.♖e4 ♞e8 23.f3 f5.

e) 11.h3

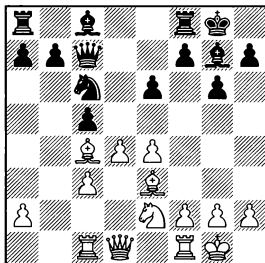
I would not have mentioned this move hadn't it appeared in the blitz game Bareev-Grischuk, Moscow 2009. Everything we said about 11.♞b1 applies to this move, too. We should refrain from 11...♞d8 due to 12.♗f4 e5 13.♗g5 ♞d6 14.d5. Instead, we can choose:

11...e6, enhancing the treat of capturing on d4 and making a retreat square on e7 in the event of 12.♗f4.

11...♖d8

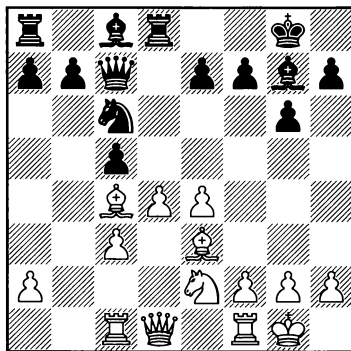
Before diving in the depths of the main line, I would like to draw your attention to a fresh untrod-den path which seems to be gaining popularity lately:

11...e6!?



This move is connected with an original concept. Black renounces all the ideas of expanding on the queenside with ...a6, ...b5. Instead, he builds up a solid fortification in the centre. The knight is not going to a5, but is keeping an eye on d4, the queen has a good reserve square to e7 thus pre-emptying the often awkward ♕f4. Our setup also includes ...b6, ...♙b7, ...♞ad8, while the other rook stays on f8 to protect f7 or support a breakthrough like ...f5.

This setup challenges White to demonstrate an active plan. In my opinion, d4-d5 is not dangerous. An attack on the kingside would involve e4-e5, but that would weaken d5. As a whole, the arising positions are double-edged. See the detailed annotations of **game 20 Onischuk-Zhou Jianchao**, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010.



Our main line branches here to:
A. 12.f4; B. 12.♙d2; C. 12.♙f4.

Minor alternatives are:

a) 12.d5?! ♖a5 13.♙d3 c4 14.♙b1 e6 15.♙d2 b6 16.♞fd1 ♖b7!. The point here is that we keep both options – ...exd5 and ...e5 – open. 17.♙g5 f6 18.♙e3 ♖c5=.

b) 12.h3?! a6! 13.f4

The game Radjabov-Carlsen, Nanjing 2009, saw 13.♙f4 ♙a5! 14.♙b3 e6 15.a4 (15.d5 b5 16.dxc6 bxc4 17.♙xc4 e5 18.♙e3 ♙e6 19.♙xc5 ♙xc5 20.♙xc5 ♙c4 21.♞c2 ♞dc8) 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖xd4 17.♖xd4 ♞xd4 18.♙e3 ♞d6 19.♞fd1 ♞xd1+ 20.♞x d1 b5 (Black could keep the tension with 20...♙f6 21.♙h6 ♙h5=, Mikhalchishin.) 21.axb5 axb5 22.♙xb5 ♙xb5 23.♞d8+ ♙f8 24.♙xb5 ♙b7 25.♞xa8 ♙xa8=.

13...b5 14.♙b3 (14.♙d3 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♙b6) 14...♖a5 15.f5 ♖xb3 16.♙xb3 gxf5 17.exf5 ♙b7, with an active bishop pair in Alexandrova-Sulypa, Alushta 2000.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗c4

c) 12.♖e1?!

Players usually link this move with the game Spassky-Fischer, Santa Monika 1966. White hopes to transfer the queen to the kingside after f4, but:

12...♖a5! ensures an exchange of queens: 13.♗d1 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♖xe1 15.♖fxe1 b6 16.d5 ♖e5 17.♗b5 ♗d7 18.♖d4 ♗xb5 19.♖xb5 ♖c4=.

d) 12.♖a4 ♗d7 13.♖a3 ♗f8! 14.♗f4 (Or 14.♖b2 b5 15.♗d3 ♖ab8 16.♗f4 e5; 14.f4 e6 15.♖b2 ♖a5 16.♗d3 f5=.) 14...e5 15.♗g5 ♖e8 16.dxc5 ♖d8!? (16...♖a5 17.♗d5 ♗xc5 18.♖b2 ♗e6 19.c4 ♖c6=.) 17.♗e3 ♖e6 18.♖fd1 ♗xc5=.

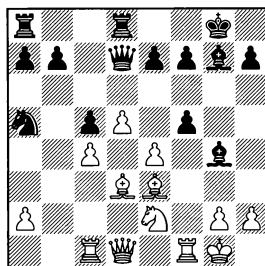
A. 12.f4

Initially, White linked the bishop's development to c4 with a direct attack on the f7-square by f4-f5. However, it was quickly discovered that White's onslaught is not running smoothly at all. 12.f4 quickly lost appeal and nobody has played it at top level in the last 20-30 years. Still, this variation has plenty of blank spots.

For instance, Sakaev recommends:

12...♗g4 13.f5 ♖a5 without offering any variations. Indeed, 14.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 15.fxg6+ ♖g8 16.gxh7+ ♖h8 would be good for Black, but what to do after:

14.♗d3 ♖d7! 15.d5!. If 15...gxf5, then 16.c4!



All White's pieces are directed toward the kingside and the position is completely unclear.

12...e6!

Preparing to bar further advancing of the f-pawn with ...f5 (after ...♖a5 first). White has tested many continuations here:

13.♖e1

Transposing to Spassky-Fischer, Santa Monika 1966. Despite losing the game, Fischer showed a reliable defensive setup so the opening was hardly to blame.

Alternatives are:

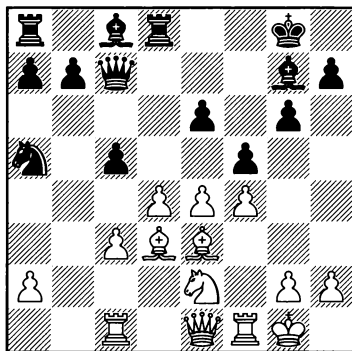
a) 13.♖h1 ♖a5 14.♗d3 f5 15.exf5 exf5 16.dxc5 ♗e6 17.♖c2 ♖c6 18.♖b1 ♖f7=, Tukmakov-Stein, Moscow 1971.

b) 13.f5 exf5 14.♗g5 ♖f8 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♖g3 (16.♖xf5 gxf5 17.♖g3 ♖d6 18.♗d3 ♖e7 19.♖h5 h6! 20.♗xe7 ♖xe7 21.♖xf5 ♖g5) 16... cxd4 17.♖xf5 (17.♖xf5 gxf5 18.cxd4 ♖xd4 19.♖h1 ♖d6=) 17...gxf5 18.♖xf5 ♖e5 19.♗d3 dxc3! 20.♖g4 (20.♖h5 ♖fd8) 20...♖h8 21.♖h4 ♖ad8+.

13...♖a5

13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ♜xd4 15.♙xe6
♞e7 16.♙xc8 ♜xe2+ is equal.

14.♙d3 f5



This stalls White's attack at least for a while. Now Black should watch out for the potential threat of d5.

15.g4 only uncovers White's king, without breaking the blockade on f5: 15...b6 16.♜g3 ♞f7 17.gxf5 exf5 18.exf5 gxf5 19.♞f2 ♙e6!? (The game Cebalo-Ruck, Celje 2003, went 19...♜c4 20.♙xc4 ♞xc4 21.dxc5 bxc5 22.♙xc5 ♙b7 23.♙d4 ♞d7, with a decent compensation for the pawn.) 20.♞fd1 cxd4 21.♙xd4 ♞ac8 22.♙xg7 ♞xg7. Only Black can be better here.

Spassky opted for the more positional:

15.♞d1 b6 16.♞f2 cxd4

Later Fischer suggested 16...♙f8, but it is hardly better than the move he chose in the game. Play might continue with 17.♜g3 ♙b7

18.d5! fxe4 19.♜xe4 ♙xd5 20.♜f6+ ♜h8= (19...♞g7 20.c4 exd5 21.♜g5 ♜xc4=).

**17.♙xd4 ♙xd4 18.cxd4 ♙b7
19.♜g3 ♞g7!**

In the game, Fischer erred with 19...♞f7 when 20.d5! earned White a strong attack.

After the improvement, suggested by Fischer, play is balanced: 20.♙c2! fxe4 21.♜xe4 ♙d5! =.

B. 12.♞d2 a6!

In my opinion, this rare move is the most challenging continuation. Interestingly, Sakaev does not even mention it in his fundamental book on the 7.♙c4 system. That is a good sign – you have a fair chance to take your opponent unawares.

12...♞a5!? is also in good theoretical health, but play is less complex:

13.♞fd1!

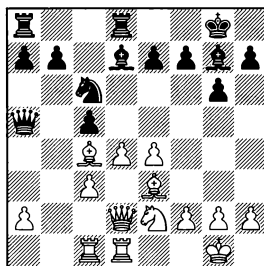
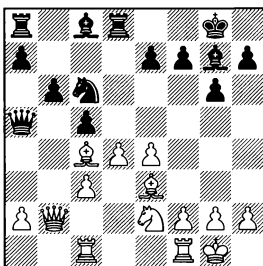
White's pieces are directed toward the kingside. His main plan is to exchange dark-squared bishops with ♙h6, and destroy Black's castling position with h4-h5, possibly followed by a piece sac on g6. Therefore

13.♞b2

is not consistent. Black should follow up with:

13...b6!, preparing to trade bishops with ...♙a6. The only way to prevent that is:

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4



14.a4!?

Alternatively:

a) 14.dxc5 ♖e5 15.♙d5 ♖xd5 16.exd5 ♖d3 17.♙b1 ♖xc1 18.♖xc1 bxc5 19.d6 exd6 20.♙e4 d5 21.♙xd5 ♖b8 22.♙xc5 ♙xc5 23.♙xc5 ♖b2 24.♖e1 a5, with an initiative.

b) 14.♖fd1 ♙a6 15.♙d5 ♖ac8 16.♖f4 e6= (or 16...cxd4 17.cxd4 ♙b4=).

c) 14.♙d5 ♙b7 15.♖fd1 e6 16.♙b3 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♖ac8=, Gligoric-Tukmakov, Leningrad 1973.

d) 14.f4 ♙a6 15.♙b3 ♙xc4 16.♙xc4 ♙a3+.

14...♙d7! 15.♙b3!

In Ponomarev-Dominguez, Amber rapid, 2010, White opted for 15.♖fd1 when instead of 15...♙e8, 15...cxd4! would be an improvement: 16.cxd4 ♙xa4 17.♙b3 ♙a6+ 18.♙c4 ♙b7 19.♙a2 ♙e8 20.♙a6 ♙d7. Or 15.♙a2 e6 16.♖fd1 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♖b4 18.♙b2 ♙xa4+.

15...e6! 16.♖fd1 ♖xd4! 17.cxd4 ♙xa4 18.♙d3 (18.♙a2 ♙xd1 19.♙xa5 bxa5 20.♖xd1 cxd4) 18...b5 19.♖a1 bxc4 20.♙xc4 ♙b5 21.♙xc5 ♙b6+.

13...♙d7!

Sakaev recommends 13...♖e5 14.♙b3 ♙g4, but it loses a pawn after 15.h3! ♙f3 16.♙e1! c4 17.♙c2.

14.♙b2

Alternatively:

a) 14.♙h6 is the most principal, but after 14...cxd4 15.♙xg7 ♖xg7 16.♙f4 (16.cxd4 ♙xd2 17.♖xd2 ♖ac8=), Black has either a forced draw with 16...dxc3! 17.♙xf7+ ♖h8 18.♖d5 (18.♖xc3 ♖f8 19.♙d5 ♖ad8= Gatto-Tal, corr. 1989) 18...♙b4 19.♖f4 ♙xc4 20.♖xg6+ hxg6 21.♙xg6 (21.♖h5+ gxh5 22.♙xc4 e5 23.♙xc3 ♖d4=) 21...♙g4=, Neverov-Novikov, Tallinn 1986, or a safe playable position with 16...♙e8 17.cxd4 e5. The latter was proven in many top level games as Polugaevsky-Vaganjan, Linares 1985 and Pinter-Tukmakov, Plovdiv 1983.

b) 14.dxc5 ♖e5 15.♙b3 ♙b5 16.♖d4 ♖d3 17.♖c2 ♖xc5 18.c4 ♙xd2 19.♖cxd2 ♙e8! (19...♖xb3 20.axb3 ♙e8 21.♖b5) 20.♖c6 ♖xd2 21.♖xe7+ ♖f8 22.♖xg6+ ♖g8 23.♖e7+=.

c) 14.f4 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♙xd2 16.♖xd2 ♖a5 17.♙d3 ♖ac8 18.d5 (18.♖dc2 ♖xc2 19.♖xc2 ♖c6) 18...♖xc1+ 19.♖xc1 ♖c8 20.♖c2 ♖xc2 21.♙xc2 b6=.

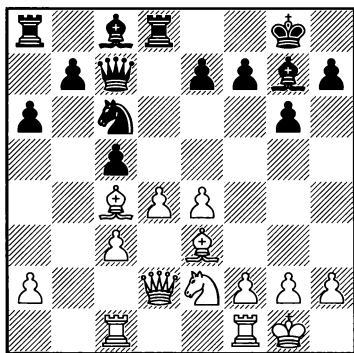
d) 14.♙c2 b5 15.♙d5 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖ac8 17.♙b3 e6=.

Part 10

14...b5!

This sacrifice was seen for the first time in Pinter-Jansa, Prague 1985. It leads to a draw endgame after:

15. ♖xb5 ♜xb5 16. ♙xb5 ♜xd4 17. ♜xd4 cxd4 18. ♙xd7 dxe3 19. fxe3 ♙e5! 20. c4 ♙d6 21. ♙a4 ♜dc8 22. ♜d5 ♙c5=. The only thing Black should watch for is not to allow e4-e5, which could lead to suffocation. Perhaps he should put his pawn to f6 and White would lack any active plan.



13. ♙h6

This looks the most consistent. White tries to reduce the defenders of Black's king and makes room for the queen on e3 at the same time.

In practice he has also tried:

a) 13.a4?!. This move will fail to restrain our counterplay on the queenside. We will play ...b5 anyway, but first we should protect the critical point in our position – f7: 13...♙d7 14. ♖a2 ♙e8 15. ♖a3 b5! 16. ♙a2 b4 17. cxb4 cxd4 18. ♙d2

♜d6+, Farago-Adorjan, Budapest 1991.

b) 13.a3?! Preparing a retreat to a2. However, the white bishop has no future on this diagonal: 13...b5 14. ♙a2 ♙b7 15. ♜fd1 ♜ac8 16. d5 c4 17. f4 ♜a5 18. ♖b2 e6+.

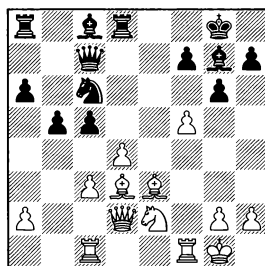
c) 13.f4 b5 14. ♙d3

The other retreats are worse: 14. ♙b3?! e6! 15. f5 exf5 16. ♙g5! (16. exf5 ♙xf5 17. ♜g3 ♙e6) 16...♜f8+ 17. exf5 ♙xf5 18. ♜g3 ♙e6 19. d5 c4 20. dxe6 cxb3 21. exf7+ ♜xf7 22. axb3 ♜a5; 14. ♙d5 e6 15. ♙xc6 ♖xc6 16. ♜g3 cxd4 17. cxd4 ♜d7 18. ♜fd1 ♙b7+.

14...e6!

14...f5?! 15.exf5 is better for White.

15.f5 (or we'll play ...f7-f5 on the next move) 15...exf5 16.exf5



16...cxd4!

Wang Hao-Ruck, Beijing 2008, saw a curious repetition of moves: 16...♜d7 17.f6 ♙f8 18. ♙h6 ♜d6 19. ♙f4 ♜d7 20. ♙h6 ♜d6.

17.cxd4 ♜d7 (17...♜d6!? 18. ♙e4 ♙b7) 18. ♙c2 (18.fxg6 hxg6 19. ♙g5

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

♙e8+) 18...♗e5 19.♙b3 ♗c4 20.♙xc4 bxc4 21.f6 (21.♙xc4 ♗d5) 21...♙f8 22.♙h6 (22.♙xc4 ♙b7 23.♙fc1 ♗e6) 22...c3.

Black can play for a win only with 22...♙a3!? 23.♙xc4 a5 24.♙f4 ♙a6 25.♙c7 ♗e6 26.♙e1 ♗e4, with a compensation for the pawn.

23.♗xc3 ♗xd4+ 24.♗xd4 ♙xd4 25.♙xf8 ♗xf8 26.♙fd1 ♙xd1+ 27.♙xd1 ♙f5=. Next, Black plays ...♗e8 while the enemy knight is unable to hit anything in 2 moves.

d) 13.♙fd1 is similar to the main line:

13...b5 14.♙d3

14.♙b3 ♙b7 15.♙h6 ♙h8 16.♗e3 ♙ac8 transposes to 13.♙h6, while 14.♙d5 e6 15.♙xc6 ♗xc6 16.d5 exd5 17.exd5 ♗b6 18.c4 ♙b7 is about equal.

14...♙b7 15.f4 (15.d5?! ♗e5 16.♙f4 ♗a5) 15...e6! 16.♗e1 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♗d7 18.♙b1 ♗e7 19.♗f2 ♙ac8=.

The f5-square is under control so Black's pawn majority on the queenside should begin to tell.

13...♙h8!

Note this move! We need the bishop both for attack and defence.

14.♗e3

This is the ideal place for the

queen – it defends d4 and is beyond the range of the d8-rook. And it is closer to Black's king, too!

a) 14.a4?! ♙d7 15.e5 could be met by 15...b5 16.axb5 axb5 17.♙xb5 ♗xe5 18.♙xd7 ♗xd7+, Kallai-Adorjan, Hungary 1992.

b) 14.f4?! is hardly possible in view of 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♗xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗b6 17.e5 ♙xd4 18.♗e3 ♙f5+.

c) 14.d5?! ♗e5 15.♙b3 c4 16.♙c2 e6 17.♙cd1 exd5 18.exd5 ♙d6! 19.♙fe1 (19.♙e4 b5 20.♗d4 f5 21.♙f3 ♙b7 22.♗e6 ♙xe6 23.dxe6 ♙xf3; 19.♗g3 ♙e6) 19...b5 20.♗e3 ♙b7 21.♗d4 ♗d7!+.

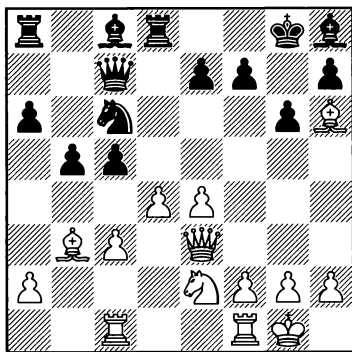
d) 14.♙fd1 b5 15.♙d3! (or 15.♙b3 ♙b7 16.♗e3 ♗a5 17.♙c2 ♗c4 18.♗f3 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♙ac8 20.♙b3 f5) 15...♙b7 16.♗e3 ♙ac8. This branch has merged with the main line.

e) 14.h4 b5 15.♙b3 (15.♙d3 ♗e5! 16.♙f4 ♗d7=) 15...♗a5 16.♙d5 ♙b7 17.♗f4 ♗d7 18.h5 e6 19.♙xb7 ♗xb7 20.d5 ♗c4 21.♗e2 exd5 22.♗xd5 ♗b6=.

14...b5 15.♙b3!

White needs his bishop for the attack. After 15.♙d5 e6 16.♙xc6 ♗xc6 17.♗f4 ♙b7 18.d5 ♗d6 19.dxe6 fxe6 20.h4, Adler-Gobet, Bern 1988, simplest would have been 20...e5 21.♗h3 ♗d3=.

On d3 the bishop would be harmless and we could complete development with 15.♙d3 ♙b7 16.♙fd1 ♙ac8=.



15...Qa5!?

The only argument against:

15...Qb7 is that in positions with a closed centre the b7-bishop would be an obstacle to the knight's manoeuvre ...Qc6-a5-b7-d6. The main position arises after:

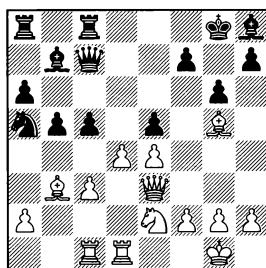
16. Bfd1

Perhaps we could keep the tension in the centre for one more move with 16...Bac8!?, but I have analysed mainly:

16...Qa5 17. Qf4!

In the event of 17.dxc5 Bxc8! 18.Bxd8+?! Bxd8 our control over the d-file would allow us to ignore the enemy's extra pawn and count on piece activity with ...Qc4 or ...Qxb3, followed up by ...a5-a4. 18.f3 or 18.Qf4 give us a tempo for 18...Be8!. The latter variation could be prolonged with 19.Qd5 (or 19.Qd3 Qc4 20.Bxe2 Bxd5!) 19...Qxd5 20.Bxd5 e6 21.Qf4 Bxa7 22.Bd6 Qxb3 23.axb3 Bxc5=.

17...e5 18.Qg5 (18.Qg3 cxd4 19.cxd4 Bb6) 18...Bdc8 (18...Bd7!?)



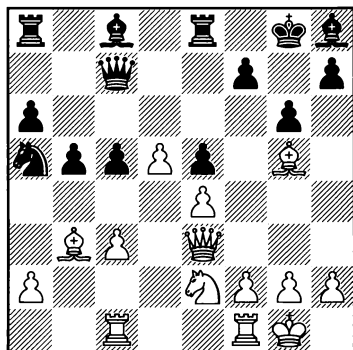
19.d5!

19.dxc5 would be strongly met by 19...Qg7! (shifting to f8) 20.Qd5 Bxc5 21.Bxc5 Bxc5 22.Qxb7 Qxb7 23.Bd7 Qa5 24.Bcd1 Qf8=.

19...Qxb3! (19...c4?! 20.Qc2+!) 20.axb3 c4 21.b4 a5.

Black has enough counterplay. His only weakness, the b5-pawn, could be defended with ...Qc8-d7, for instance, 22.bxa5 Bxa5 23.Ba1 Bca8 24.Bxa5 Bxa5 25.h4 Bb6 26.h5 f6 27.Qh4 Qg7 28.Bb1 Qc8=.

16.Qf4 (16.dxc5 Qb7) 16...e5 17.Qg5 Be8 18.d5=

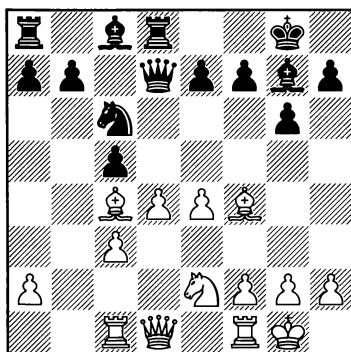


Black has obtained a good version of the typical pawn structure

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

with a closed centre. I like here the straightforward plan with 18...♖xb3!? 19.axb3 c4 20.b4 a5=, but the more habitual plan with ...f5 also works: 18...c4 19.♙c2 ♖b7 20.♖h1! (20.f4 ♙c5!) 20...♖d6 21.f4 f5! This should lead to numerous exchanges in the centre: 22.♖g3 fxe4 23.♖xe4 ♙f5 24.♖xd6 (or 24.♖f6+ ♙xf6 25.♙xf6 ♙xc2 26.♙xc2 ♖f5 27.♙f3 exf4) 24...♙xd6 25.♙xf5 gxf5 26.♙g3 ♙g6 27.d6 exf4 28.♙xf4 ♙a7 29.♙f3 ♖d7 30.♙f4 ♙xg3 31.♙xg3+ ♖f8=.

C. 12.♙f4 ♙d7!



C1. 13.dxc5; C2. 13.d5

C1. 13.dxc5 ♙e8! 14.♙d5

a) 14.♙a4 ♙d7 15.♙a3 ♖e5! 16.♙xe5 ♙xe5 17.f4 ♙g7 18.f5 ♙b5 19.♙b3 ♙xc4 20.♙xc4 ♖ac8 gives Black standard play against the queenside pawns, Bick-Khamrakov, Ubeda 2000.

b) 14.♙c2 ♙d7 15.♙fd1 ♖ac8 16.♙b5 ♖a5 17.♙xd7 ♖xd7 18.♖xd7

♙xd7 19.♖d1 ♙b5 20.♙d3 ♙xd3 21.♖xd3 ♖f8=, Aoiz Linares-W. Arenicibia, Badalona 1995.

14...♙d7! 15.♙d3

White is a pawn up, but he lacks an active plan. Black does not need to regain the c5-pawn. He can even exchange it by ...b6 when the activity of his rooks should counterweigh White's slight material advantage.

From d3 the queen can go to e3, giving a hand to the c5-pawn. Here are other examples:

a) 15.♙c2 e6 16.♙b3 (16.♙xc6 ♙xc6 17.♙d6 b6 18.e5 bxc5=) 16...♖e5 17.♙fd1 ♙e7 18.♙d6 ♖dc8 19.♖cd1 ♙e8=.

b) 15.♙d2 e6 16.♙b3 ♖e5 17.♙e3 ♙b5 18.♙xe5 ♙xe5 19.♙fd1 ♙xe2 20.♙xe2 ♖xd1+ 21.♖xd1 ♖d8=, Babuiian-Ipatov, Lvov 2008.

c) 15.♖b1 e6 16.♙b3 ♖e5 17.♙g5 ♙b5 18.♙xd8 ♖xd8=.

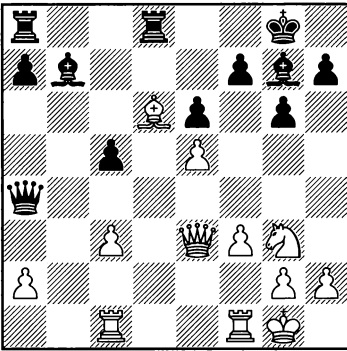
d) 15.♙g5 h6 (or 15...♖a5 16.f4 ♖dc8 17.f5 e6 18.fxe6 fxe6 19.♙b3 ♖xc5↑, Kushnir-Gaprindashvili, Riga 1972) 16.♙e3 (16.♙h4 ♖dc8) 16...e6 17.♙b3 ♖e5= 18.♙c2 ♙c6 19.♙fd1 ♙e7 20.♖d4 ♖g4 21.♙f4 ♙e5 22.♖xc6 bxc6 23.♙xe5 ♖xe5 24.♖d4 ♙xc5 25.♙d2 ♙f8 26.♖d1 ♖db8=.

15...e6 16.♙xc6

The knight is too jumpy while the white bishop has not good prospects anyway: 16.♙b3 ♖a5 17.♙e3 ♖ac8 18.♙d6 ♙a4 19.♖b1 b6 20.e5 ♖b7 21.cxb6 ♖xd6 22.exd6 axb6

23.♖xb6. Draw, Cleto-Nimtz, ICCF 2008.

16...♙xc6 17.♙d6 b6 18.♖e3
♙b7 19.e5 ♖c6 20.f3 bxc5
21.♘g3 (21.c4 ♖a4 22.♗fd1 ♖xa2=)
21...♖a4

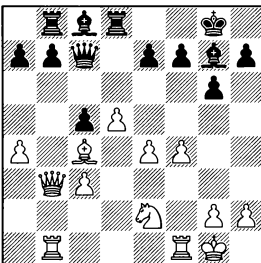


Of course, White has a space advantage, but it is unclear how to make real progress. See **game 24 Delchev-Ruck**, Sibenik 2006.

C2. 13.d5 ♘a5

In the World cup 2009 Dominguez staked on 13...♘e5?!, but it leads to a difficult position, because White seizes the centre:

14.♙xe5 ♙xe5 15.f4 ♙g7 16.♖b3
♖b8 17.a4 ♖c7 18.♖b1!



White is ready to grab even more space with e5 so Black should prepare to undermine the centre with ...f6. Meanwhile, 18...a6 19.♙xa6 ♙f5 is insufficient due to the simple 20.exf5±.

18...♙h8 19.♘g3 ♙d7 20.e5
a6 21.♖b6! ♖xb6 22.♖xb6 f6
(22...♙xa4?! 23.♘e4), Caruana-Dominguez, Khanty-Mansiysk, 2009. In all three games in my database, White answered with 23.e6 and went on to draw. However, 23.♘e4!± fixes a serious advantage for him, for instance: 23...fxe5 24.fxe5 ♙xa4 25.♘g5 ♖f8 26.♖xf8+ ♙xf8 27.♙xa6 ♙g7 28.♙b5 ♙b3 29.c4; 23...♙f5 24.exf6 ♙xe4 25.fxf7+ ♙xg7 26.♖e1 ♙xd5 27.♙xd5 ♖xd5 28.♖xe7+ ♙g8 29.♖f6; 23...♙xa4 24.d6 fxe5 25.♘g5 ♙e8 26.fxe5 exd6 27.e6 h6 28.e7 hxg5 29.exd8 ♖xd8 30.♖xb7.

14.♙d3

Caruana chose 14.♙b3!? in 3 consecutive white games in his match against Dominguez at the World cup 2009 in Khanty Mansiysk. Despite the three draws, Black was struggling a little after 14...b5 15.♙e3 ♖d6 16.c4 ♘xc4 17.♙xc4 bxc4 18.♖xc4.

I recommend a more straightforward approach:

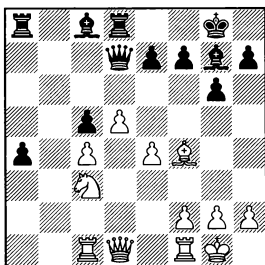
14...♘b3 15.axb3 a5 16.c4
(16.♖c2 b5 17.♖fd1 a4±, Roder-Laubsch, Copenhagen 2001) 16...b5 17.♘c3.

The greedy 17.♙e3 ♙a6 18.♘f4 bxc4 19.bxc4 a4 20.♘d3 a3 21.♘xc5

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♔g7 7.♗c4

offers Black the initiative after 21... ♗d6 22.♖xa6 ♖xa6 23.♗d4 ♗xd4 24.♗xd4 ♖a4↑.

17...bxc4 18.bxc4 a4



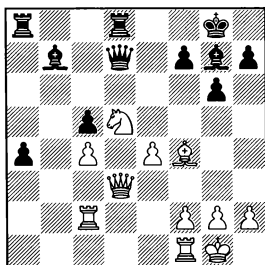
The a-pawn, strongly supported by the rook and the dark-squared bishop, creates a havoc in White's camp. I think that play is dynamically balanced. Here are some variations:

19.♖c2

19.♗e2 a3 or 19.♗d3 e6 20.♖fd1 a3 are similar.

19...a3!?

Black could also attack the centre with 19...e6 20.♗d3 exd5 (20...f5 21.e5±) 21.♖xd5 ♗b7

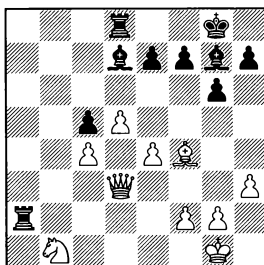


The bishop is ready to take the d5-knight, but only in the event of dire necessity. Otherwise it would

be better to keep the bishop pair, for instance, 22.♖a2 ♗e6!. Note that 22...f5 is also possible. Then 23.♖d1 ♗d4 24.♖f6+ ♗xf6 25.♗xd7 ♖xd7 26.♖xd7 ♗xe4 27.♖d1 ♗c3 28.f3 ♗c6 29.♖b1 a3 30.♗c1 ♗b4 leads to a position where White cannot make further progress: 31.♖f2 (31.♖ba1 ♗c3) 31...♗e8 32.♖ba1 ♖f7 33.♗xa3 ♗xc4=.

In the diagram position, White could also try 22.♖d1 a3 23.♖a2 ♗a4 24.g3 (24.♗e3 ♗xd5 25.exd5 ♗b2=) 24...h6 25.♖b1 ♗a6 26.♖c1 ♗b2 27.♖c2 ♖ab8! 28.♗xb8 (28.♗xh6 ♗b3) 28...♖xb8 29.♖g2 ♗b3 30.♗xb3 ♖xb3=.

20.♗d3 ♗b7 21.♖b1 ♗xb1+! 22.♖xb1 a2 23.♖xa2 ♖xa2 24.h3 ♗d7



Black has open files for his rooks so he should not be worse here:

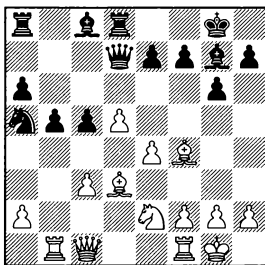
25.♖d2 ♖da8 26.♗g3 (26.d6 exd6 27.♗xd6 ♗e6 28.♗xc5 ♖c8 29.♗d6 ♖c2=) 26...♖b2=.

14...b5 15.♗e3

15.♖b1 a6 does not offer White any benefits. The fine point is that after 16.c4 Black is not obliged to

release the tension in the centre by 16...b4. Instead, he can further undermine it with 16...e6!. See the instructive **game 25 Topalov-Svidler**, Sofia 2006.

Apart from 16.c4, White has also tried 16.♖c1, preparing ♔h6 or ♖a3. Then we should attack the centre, but not close it with ...e5:



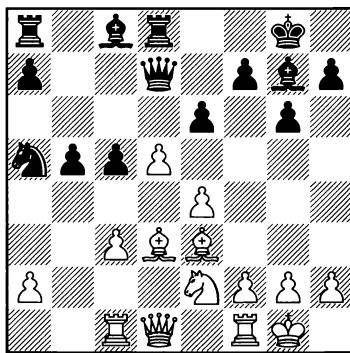
16...e6!

Now 17.♞d1 exd5! 18.♖a3 (18. exd5 ♔b7) 18...c4 19.♔c2 ♘c6! 20.exd5 (20.♞xd5 ♖e8) 20...♙e5 would favour Black while 17.♖a3 c4 18.♔c2 ♘b7! 19.dxe6 (19.♞fd1 exd5 20.♞xd5 ♖e8 21.♙d4 ♔f8 22.♞xd8 ♖xd8 23.♖b2 ♘c5 24.♞d1 ♔b7=) 19...♖xe6 20.♞bd1 [20.♙d4 ♖b6! 21.♔e3 (21.♔g5 ♞e8 22.♙xb5 ♔f8 23.♙d4 ♖xb1 24.♖xf8+ ♘xf8 25.♞xb1 ♘c5 26.f3 ♔d7 27.♞b4 ♞ac8) 21...♔f8 22.♖c1 ♘c5 23.a4 ♔d7 24.♖d2 ♖a5 25.f4 bxa4 26.f5 ♘b3 27.♖f2 ♔g7, Dosi-Nimtz, ICCF 2007.] 20...♔f8 21.♖c1 ♞xd1 22.♞xd1 ♘c5 is about equal.

15...e6!

It is not advisable to insert 15... c4 16.♔c2 before 16...e6 because White can exchange on e6 and

the arising pawn structure is in his favour: 17.dxe6 fxe6 18.♖e1 e5 19.f4!.



16.♔xc5

16.♙f4 c4 17.♔e2 (17.♔b1 ♘b7) 17...♖e7 18.♖d2 e5 19.♙h3 ♔xh3 20.gxh3 is balanced, Najdorf-Gheorghiu, Manila 1973.

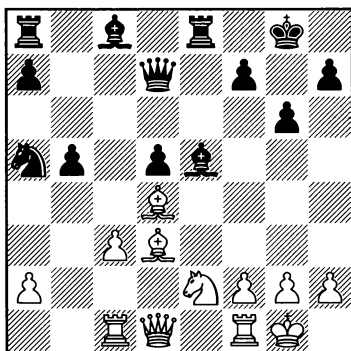
16...exd5 17.e5!?

An enterprising novelty of Vachier Lagrave at the Olympiad in Khanty Mansyisk 2010. White obtains nice attacking chances and a strong knight on d4 for only a pawn. 17.exd5 ♖xd5 18.♔e4 ♖xd1 19.♞fxd1 ♞xd1+ 20.♞xd1 ♔b7= is hardly an enticing alternative.

17...♔xe5 18.♔d4 ♞e8!?

The stem game Vachier Lagrave -Nepomniachtchi, Khanty Mansyisk 2010, continued 18...♙c4 19.♔xc4 ♔xd4 20.♔xb5 ♔xf2+ 21.♞xf2 ♖xb5 22.♙d4, with fair compensation.

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4



The critical position for White's idea. It looks that Black risks to be crushed after f4-f5, but concrete analysis does not support such an assessment. Black's counterplay is linked with ...♖b8 and ...b4. I could not find anything dreadful after:

19.♙xe5

19.f4 could lead to a similar position after 19...♙xd4+ 20.♖xd4 ♖c4 21.f5 ♖b8, but we could also opt for 19...♙c7 20.f5 ♖c4.

19...♖xe5 20.♖d4 ♖c4∞ 21.f4 ♖e7 (21...♖e8)

Now the most direct attack 22.f5 ♖e3 23.♗d2 ♖xf1 24.♖xf1 fails after 24...♗d6 25.♗h6 ♖b7 26.♖f3

Or 26.h4 b4 27.h5 ♙xf5 28.♖xf5 bxc3 29.hxg6 fxg6 30.♖g5 ♗f6 31.♖xd5 ♖e8 and Black takes over the initiative.

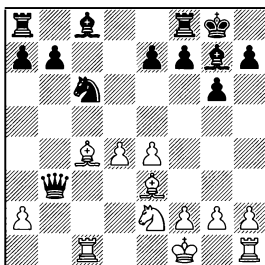
26...b4 27.♖h3 f6 28.♖g3 ♗f8 29.♗e3 g5.

Part 10

Complete Games

19. Kamsky–Anand Las Palmas 1995

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♘e2 0-0 9.♙e3
♘c6 10.♙c1 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♖a5+
12.♙f1 ♖a3 13.♗b3 ♗xb3



Sakaev advocates 14...♗d6, which leads to a complex balanced middlegame. However, I chose to comment this game, because it is an instructive example of the force of the bishop pair. In many Grünfeld positions we can observe that Black's activity fully balances a pawn deficit. This compensation is often not a matter of concrete variations, but it ensues from the character of the position – an open centre with pawns on both wings. It is also important that Black keeps a rook on the board, because it cooperates well with the bishops.

14.♙xb3

After 14.♙xb3, Black can weaken the enemy centre with 14...♗d8 15.d5 ♘a5 16.f4 e6 17.♙f7 ♙d7. Then 18.e5 will be undermined with 18...f6 and 18.d6 – with 18...b5 ♙d3 e5!.

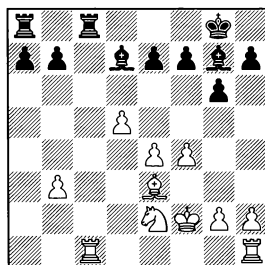
14...♙d7

Anand is planning to sacrifice a pawn, but this idea could be shaped differently: 14...♘a5! 15.♙c7 (15.f3 ♘xb3 16.axb3 f5) 15...♘xb3 16.axb3 a5 17.♙xe7 a4 18.bxa4 ♙xa4 19.♙c7 b5, with full compensation.

15.f4 ♙fc8 16.♙f2

Obviously, 16.d5 ♘a5 17.♙xc8+? ♙xc8 18.♙xa7 loses to 18...♘xb3 19.axb3 ♙b5 20.♙e1 ♙c2.

16...♘a5 17.d5 ♘xb3 18.axb3

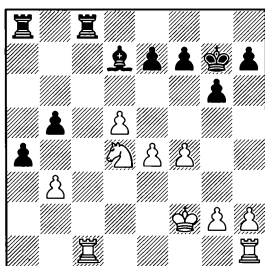


4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

A critical position.

Black has not time for mundane moves like 18...b6 because White will exchange one of the bishops with 19.♙d4. Then his centralised king, plus space advantage, will assure him of the edge.

A typical plan would be: 18...a5! 19.♙d4 (19.♙b6 a4 20.bxa4 ♖xa4 21.♖xc8+ ♙xc8 22.♖c1 ♙g4 23.h3 ♙xe2 24.♖xe2 ♖xe4+ 25.♖d3 f5 26.♖c8+ ♖f7 27.♖c7=) 19...b5± 20.♙xg7 ♖xg7 21.♙d4 a4



Black has sufficient counterplay because the knight is not good at stopping distant passers. The game is level, for instance: 22.♖xc8 ♖xc8 23.bxa4 bxa4 24.♖b1 a3 25.♖a1 ♖a8 26.♖a2 f5 27.e5 ♙c8 28.♖c2 ♙b7 29.♖xa3 ♖xa3 30.♖xa3 ♙xd5=. Anand decides to stay active even at the cost of a pawn:

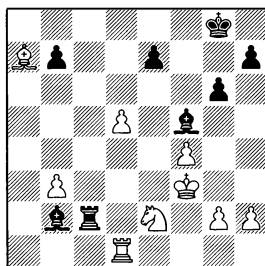
18...♙b2 19.♖xc8+ ♖xc8
20.♙xa7 ♖c2 21.♖f3

21.♖e3 would have taken control of d2, but at the expense of g4: 21...♙g4 22.♖e1 ♙xe2 23.♖xe2 ♙c1+ 24.♖d3 ♖xe2 25.♖xe2 ♙xf4=.

21...f5 22.exf5

White is not happy to split his centre, but 22.e5?! loses a pawn to 22...♖d2 23.♖e3 ♖xd5 24.♖b1 ♙a3 25.♖c3 ♖a5 26.♙d4 ♙b4±. After the text, Short suggests 22...gxf5=, having in mind 23.♖d1 ♙b5 24.♖g3 ♙d7. I suppose that Anand wanted to leave more freedom to his bishop.

22...♙xf5 23.♖d1

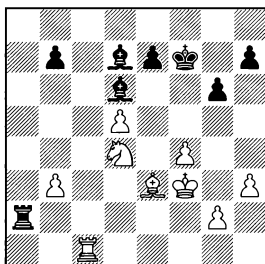


It is time to take stock. White's healthy extra pawn makes his position a bit more pleasant, but it should be technically impossible to convert it in view of the activity of Black's long-range pieces. A simple waiting strategy as 23...♖f7 24.h3 ♙d7 should be successful. The point is that 24.♙d4 would stumble into 24...♖xe2!= while 24.♙e3 ♙f6 25.♖d2 ♖xd2 26.♙xd2 ♙c2 27.b4 ♙b3 would also force a draw. Anand's next move is a concession:

23...♙a3?! 24.♙e3 (24.♙d4) ♙d6 25.h3 ♖a2 26.♙d4 ♙d7 27.♖c1 ♖f7

Black assumes that the opponent has no invasion squares. The bishop pair is out of reach and covers both flanks. White should pre-

pare for a long manoeuvring in the hope that Black would make some mistake. Instead, he embarks on an active plan, which only facilitates Anand's task. It seems that Kamsky did not really believe he had winning chances at all.



28.g4 h5!=

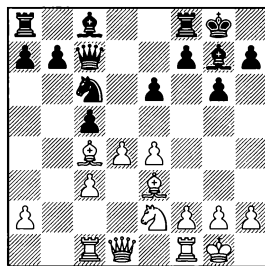
The more pawn islands, the stronger the bishop pair is. 29.gxh5 gxh5 30.♖h1 ♕c5 would lead to opposite coloured bishops.

29.♗g3 ♖a5 30.♘e6 ♙xe6
31.dxe6+ ♗xe6 32.♗f3 ♖a2 33.♗d1
♖b2 34.♗d3 hxg4+ 35.hxg4 ♖b1
36.♙d2 ♖f1+ 37.♗e4 ♖g1 38.♗f3
♖f1+ 39.♗e4 ♖g1 40.♗f3 ♖f1+
41.♗e4 1/2-1/2.

20. Onischuk-Zhou Jianchao Khanty-Mansiysk 29.09.2010

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♘e2 ♘c6 9.♙e3
0-0 10.0-0 ♖c7 11.♖c1 e6

This is a backup line to our main repertoire.



Apart from the main move 12.♙d2, I will also consider:

a) 12.f4?! b6 13.♙d3 ♙b7 14.f5
exf5 15.exf5 ♖ae8 16.♙d2 cxd4
17.cxd4 ♙d6.

b) 12.♙f4

This otherwise typical move looks senseless here as the queen has an excellent retreat square:

12...♙e7 13.♙d2 ♖d8

13...b6 looks consistent, but White has the annoying 14.d5! (14.♙h6 ♙xh6 15.♙xh6 ♙b7) when Black must play very precisely: 14...♖d8 15.♙b3 ♙a6! 16.c4 ♘d4 17.♘xd4 cxd4 18.e5 exd5 19.♙g5 ♙xe5 20.♙xd8 ♖xd8 21.♖fe1 ♙d6 22.cxd5 ♙b7 23.♙c2 ♙xd5 24.♙c7 ♙xc7 25.♖xc7 ♙xb3 26.axb3 d3 27.♖d1 a5=. Nothing can prevent ...♙f8-b4 or a similar draw stand.

14.♙g5 ♙f6 15.♙xf6 ♙xf6 16.♖fd1 b6 17.♙e3 ♙b7=. Here, in the game Strelnikov-Arnaudov, Bansko 2010, White tried 18.e5, but Black had good counterchances after 18...♙h4!.

c) 12.d5 ♘e5!

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

The standard 12...♖a5 13.♙d3 c4 14.♙c2 b6! (14...exd5 15.exd5 b6=) is also good enough: 15.♞d2 exd5 16.exd5 ♙b7 17.♞fd1 ♞ad8 18.♙e4 ♞fe8 19.♙f3 ♙e5=.

13.♙f4! (13.♙b3 c4 14.♙c2 exd5 15.exd5 ♞d8 16.h3 ♜d3 17.♙xd3 ♞xd5 18.♙d4 cxd3 19.♞xd3 ♙e6+) 13...♞d8 14.♞b3 ♞d6! 15.♙xe5 ♙xe5 16.f4 ♞b6 17.♞c2 ♙g7 18.♜g3 e5 19.f5 ♞d6=.

12.♞d2 b6!

Dvoiry's often plays 12...♖a5 13.♙d3 b6, but it is better to keep the knight in the centre for a while.

13.♞fd1

Brunner-Jo.Horvath, Vaujany 2010, saw 13.♙d3 ♙b7 14.d5 exd5 15.exd5. I do not completely understand White's idea, since it is well known that this structure, with an open e-file, is about equal – 15...♜e5 16.c4 ♞d7, waiting an opportunity for ...b5. However, in the game Black opted for the thematic pawn sac 13...c4!? 16.♙xc4 ♜e5 17.♙b3 ♜c4 and even White should be careful after 18.♙xc4 ♞xc4 or 18.♞d3 ♜xe3 19.fxe3 ♞c5.

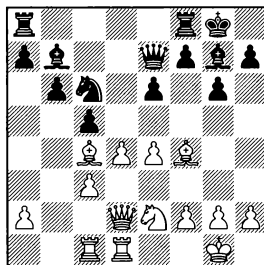
Another possible plan is 13.♙h6. It aims to gain control over the dark squares with h4-h5 and eventually h6. Then Black's last rank will be quite sensitive, especially after the imminent trade of rooks on the c-file.

Play might continue with 13...♙b7 14.♙xg7 ♜xg7 15.♞fd1 (15. h4 is slightly premature due to 15...♞e7 16.h5 ♞h4) 15...♞fd8 16.♞e3 ♞ac8 17.h4 ♞e7 18.h5 ♜a5 (it is good to repel the bishop from the a2-g8 diagonal in order to avoid tactical hits on e6 after 18...♞h4 19.g3 ♞xh5 20.♜f4) 19.♙d3 ♞h4 20.♜g3 cxd4 21.cxd4 ♞xc1 22.♞xc1 ♜c6.

13...♙b7 14.♙f4

14.d5 is again dubious: 14...♜a5 15.♙b3 ♜xb3 16.axb3 exd5 17.exd5 c4!.

14...♞e7



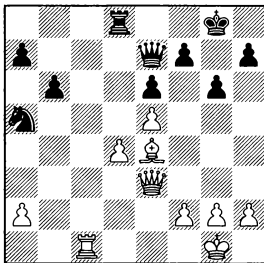
15.♙g5

Or 15.d5 ♜a5 16.d6 ♞d7 17.♞d3 e5 18.♙g5 ♜xc4 19.♞xc4 b5 20.♞xc5 ♞g4+.

15...♙f6 16.♙xf6 ♞xf6 17.♞e3 ♜a5 18.♙d3 ♞ac8

While Black's play is clear and easy – to hit d4 with ...♞fd8, ...cxd4, ...♞xc1, ...♜c6, White lacks an active plan. That is why Onischuk decides to fix the dark-squares:

19.e5 ♖e7 20.♠g3 cxd4 21.cxd4
♙d5 22.♗e4 ♙xe4 23.♙xe4 ♖xc1
24.♖xc1 ♖d8



The opening is over. Black has the better pawn formation, so White should be careful to maintain the balance.

25.g3 ♖d7 26.♙f3 b5! 27.♖d1
♗e7

Black plays it safe. 27...♗c4 allows 28.♗g5 when some regrouping would be needed: 28...♗c7 29.h4 ♖d7 30.h5 ♗d8 31.♗f4 ♗b2=.

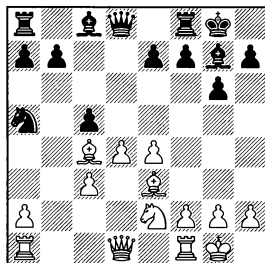
28.d5 exd5 29.♙xd5 ♗c4
30.♗b3 ♗xe5 31.♗xb5 ♙g7=

The rest of the game is not interesting.

32.♗e2 ♖f6 33.♙g2 ♖xd1+
34.♗xd1 h5 35.♗e2 ♗d6 36.♗b2
♙g8 37.♗b3 ♗g4 38.♙f3 ♗d4
39.♗c2 ♗e5 40.♙g2 ♗d3 41.♗d2
h4 42.♙f1 ♗a1+ 43.♗d1 ♗d4
44.♙e2 ♗xf2+ 45.♙xd3 ♗xh2
46.gxh4 ♗xa2 47.♙e3 ♗e6+
48.♙f2 ♗f6 49.♙g3 ♗e5+ 50.♙g2
♙g7 51.h5 1/2-1/2.

21. Shirov–Vachier Lagrave Wijk aan Zee 2011

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.e4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3
♙g7 7.♙c4 0-0 8.♙e3 c5 9.♗e2
♗c6 10.0-0 ♗a5



This system has become recently Black's most popular weapon against 7.♙c4. Kamsky, Anand, Svidler, Shirov, to name a few, put their faith in it. Black did take some ferocious beating, but latest developments show that he is in good theoretical shape and the onus is on White.

11.♙d3

Ivanchuk experimented once with 11.♙b5, but it does not bring any dividends after 11...♙d7 (11...cxd4 12.cxd4 b6 13.♖c1 e6 14.♗d2 ♙b7 15.f3 a6 16.♙d3 ♗c6 17.♙b1 b5 18.♖fd1 ♗a5 19.♗xa5 ♗xa5 20.♙d3 ♖fc8=) 12.♙d3 b6 13.♙b1 ♗c7!? 14.♗d2 ♖ad8=.

11...b6 12.♗d2

12.dxc5?! bxc5! 13.♙xc5 ♗c7 offers Black an excellent compensa-

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

tion: 14.♙d4 (14.♙b4 ♖d8 15.♖c2 ♖c6 16.♙c4? ♖xb4 17.cxb4 ♙e6 18.♖ac1 ♖ac8 19.♙b3 ♖xc2 20.♙xc2 ♙b2 21.♖cd1 ♖xd1 22.♙xd1 ♙xa2+, Markos-Le Roux, Olbia 2008) 14... e5 15.♙e3 ♖c4 16.♙xc4 ♖xc4 17.♖c2 (17.♖d5 ♖xd5 18.exd5 ♙a6 19.♖fe1 ♖fd8 20.♖ad1 ♙c4+, Nikolaev-Yandemirov, St. Petersburg 1998) 17...♙e6 18.♖fb1 a5 19.a4 ♖fb8 20.♖g3 ♙f8 21.♖f1 ♖xb1 22.♖xb1 ♙d7 23.♖a1 ♖c8 24.♙d2 ♙c6 25.f3 ♖d8 26.♖g3 ♖c5+ 27.♖f1 ♙b7 28.♖e2 ♙a6 29.♖e1 ♙e7+, Seres-Groszpeter, Zalakaros 2001.

An improved version of the same idea is:

12.♖c1 e5! 13.dxc5

Modern development of this variation began with the game Topalov-Svidler, Morelia/Linares 2006. In his comments, Krasenkow assessed 12...e5 as dubious. Sakae also claimed an advantage to White. However, the current state of this variation is satisfactory for Black. In practice first players score even below 50%.

Note that the alternatives have no bite at all:

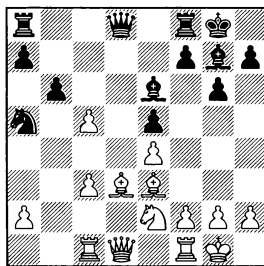
a) 13.d5?! f5! 14.exf5 (14.f3 c4 15.♙c2 f4 leaves White without a plan – 16.♙f2 ♖f7 17.♖b1 ♙f8) 14... gxf5 15.c4 e4! 16.♙b1 ♙a6+, Krush-Ganguly, Gibraltar 2009.

b) 13.dxe5 ♙e6! A pawn sacrifice for domination on the light squares. After 14.f4 ♖c4 15.♙xc4 ♙xc4 he has some edge, e.g. 16.♖c2 ♖d3 17.♖xd3 ♙xd3 18.♖d2 ♙xe4+. Even more enterprising is 14...♙xa2

15.c4 ♙b3 16.♖d2 ♖d7 17.♖c3 ♖ad8 18.♖b2 ♖xd3 19.♖xd3 ♖xd3 with a fine compensation for the queen.

c) 13.♖a4 ♙d7 14.♖a3 ♙e6! 15.d5 ♙d7, **game 22 Sasikiran-Kamsky**, Dresden 2008. Black has achieved the ideal blockading position, with his rook on f8 and the enemy queen far from the kingside.

13...♙e6!



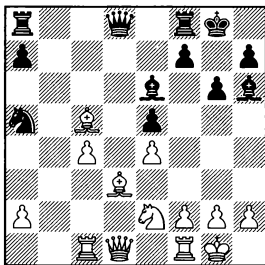
14.c4!

White links his hopes for an opening advantage with an occupation of the d5-square with the manoeuvre ♖e2-c3-d5. The immediate 14.cxb6 axb6 brings about a typical structure, in which White's extra pawn is irrelevant. Black is just in time for preventing the crucial c4-c5 which would break loose the "big pawn" on d3: 15.c4 ♖b8! 6.♖c3 ♖c8 17.♖c2 ♙f8! 18.♖b1 ♙c5 19.♙xc5 ♖xc5 20.♖c1 ♖c7 21.♖b3 ♖c6=, Van Wely-Eljanov, Foros 2008.

14...bxc5 15.♙xc5 ♙h6!

A very important *zwischenzug* of Eljanov which revived the whole system. Previously Black had been suffering after 15...♖e8?! 16.♙e3! ♖e7 17.♖c2 ♖d7 18.♖fd1 ♖c6 19.a3

♖a5 20.♘c3!, Topalov-Svidler, Morrelia/Linares 2006.



White has tried in this position:

a) 16.♙xf8 ♙xc1 17.♘xc1 ♜xf8! 18.♘b3 (18.♖a4 ♖c8) 18...♙xc4 19.♘xa5 ♖xd3 20.♘xc4 ♖xc4 21.♗d6+ ♜g8=.

b) 16.♖c2 ♖e8 17.♘c3 ♖c8! 18.♙xa7 (18.♙b4 ♘xc4 19.♘d5 ♙xd5 20.♙xd5 ♖b6 21.a3 ♘d6 22.♖xc8 ♖xc8 23.♖a4 e4 24.♙a6 ♖c7) 18...♖e7 19.♙e3 ♙xe3 20.♙xe3 ♘xc4= 21.♘d5 ♙xd5 22.♙xc4 ♙xe4= Williams-Kurnosov, Dresden 2007.

c) 16.f4 ♖e8 17.f5!?

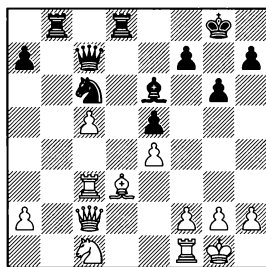
Or 17.♙e3 ♖e7 18.♖c2 ♖d7 19.♖cd1 ♙g4 (19...♘c6!?) 20.c5 (20.h3 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 22.♖xf4 ♙xe2 23.♙xe2 ♖xd1+ 24.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 25.♙xd1 ♘xc4=, Zhou Jianchao-Li Chao, Beijing 2008) 20...♙xf4 21.♙xf4 ♙xf4 22.♖xf4 ♙xe2 23.♙xe2 ♖xd1+ 24.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 25.♙xd1 ♖c8 26.♖f6 ♖xc5 27.♙a6 ♖c1=.

17...♖c7 18.♙f2! (18.♙a3 ♙xc1 19.♙xe6 ♙e3+ 20.♜h1 ♖xe6) 18...♙xc4 19.♙xc4 ♘xc4 20.♘c3!?. Here, in Harikrishna-Sutovsky, Montreal 2007, Black chose 20...♘b2 21.♘d5 ♖xc1 22.♘f6+ ♜g7 23.♘xe8+ ♖xe8 24.f6+ ♜g8

25.♖xc1 ♙xc1 26.♖xc1 ♘d3 27.♖c3 ♘xf2 28.♜xf2 h5=, but he could have ventured into 20...♙xc1!? 21.♘d5 ♖d8 22.♖xc1 ♘d6 23.♖e3=, for example, 23...♙xf5 24.♙xf5 ♜h8 25.♙g3 f6 26.♙h4 ♖f8=.

d) 16.♖c3 ♖e8 17.♙e3!?

It looks strange that White concedes to ruin his pawn structure, but alternatives did not bring him an advantage: 17.f4 ♖c8 18.♙xa7 ♘xc4 19.♖c2 ♖a5 20.♙f2 ♘a3 21.♖xc8 ♖xc8=, Svidler, or 17.♖c2 ♖c7 18.♙a3 ♖ab8! 19.c5 (19.♙c1 ♙xc1 20.♖xc1 ♖ed8; 19.♖b1 ♖xb1+ 20.♖xb1 ♘xc4=) 19...♖ed8 20.♙c1 (20.c6?! ♖b6=; 20.♖d1 ♘c6 21.♙c4 ♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♙xc4 23.♖xc4 ♖a5=) 20...♙xc1 21.♘xc1 ♘c6



Black has a dangerous initiative. The game Korotylev-Timofeev, Moscow 2009, went 22.♖a4 ♖d4 23.♖a3 ♘b4 24.♖e1 when 24...a5! 25.h3 ♖bd8 would have left White short on useful moves. The text at least takes d4 under control.

17...♙xe3 18.♙xe3 ♖b8

Play is not forced and both sides have a wide choice, but Black's activity levels the chances. In Giri-Danin, Bussum 2009, he preferred to keep the queen on the kingside:

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

18...♗g5 19.♖c1 ♖ed8 20.♙h1 ♖b7 21.c5 ♖xc5 22.♗xc5 ♗xd3 23.♖f4 ♗d6 24.♗a1 ♗ad8 25.♗xe5 ♗g4 26.h3 ♗g3 27.♗e1=.

19.c5 (19.♗a4 ♗e7 20.c5 ♗b2 21.♗a3=, Prohaszka-Rodshtein, Rijeka 2010) 19...♖c7 20.♗a4 ♖ed8 21.♖c1 ♗b2! 22.♗f2 (22.c6 ♗b6!=) 22...♙d7 23.♗a3 ♗xf2 24.♙xf2 ♙c6. White's structural defects are hampering him to convert the extra pawn. The game Cheparinov-Maslak, Rijeka 2010 went 25.♙g1 ♙g7 26.h3 h5 27.♖b3 ♖xb3 28.axb3 a5 29.b4 axb4 30.♗xb4 ♗b8 31.♗a3 h4 and White's further efforts to win this position were futile.

The bottom line is that White keeps an extra pawn, but his winning chances are very slim. That has been steadily reducing the appeal of the 12.♗c1 variation lately and the focus has shifted to 12.♗d2.

12...e5 13.♙h6

This whole line is only 4 years old so we cannot speak about more or less tested moves. Anything is new and tastes change with every important game. Still, it is clear that:

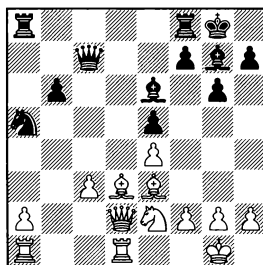
a) 13.d5 is not the refutation of Black's setup. In the game P.Nielsen-Ivanchuk, Monte Carlo 2006, Black immediately took over the initiative on the kingside with 13...f5!. The only sensible answer is 14.♙g5 (14.♙h6 c4 15.♙c2 f4), but both 14...♗e8 15.f3 c4 16.♙c2 f4 17.♙h1 h6 18.♙h4 g5 19.♙e1 ♙d7, Van Wely-Kamsky, Dagomys 2008,

or 14...♗d6 15.f4 fxe4 16.♙xe4 ♙g4! 17.♖g3 ♖c4 18.♗d3 exf4 19.♗xc4 fxc3 20.hxc3 b5 21.♗xb5 ♙xc3 give Black an edge.

b) 13.dxe5 ♙e6! is similar to the 12.♗c1 line. After 14.f4 ♖c4 15.♙xc4 ♗xd2 16.♙xd2 ♙xc4 17.♗fel ♗ad8 18.♙e3 ♗d3 19.♙f2 ♗fd8 White's extra pawn does not play while the black queenside pawns will start marching.

14.♗fd1 ♖c4 15.♙xc4 ♙xc4 16.f4 ♗e7 17.♗c2 ♗fd8 led to a balanced game in Gozzoli-Safarli, Zuerich 2009.

c) 13.dxc5 ♙e6! 14.♗fd1 ♖c7 15.cxb6 axb6



Our favourite structure on the queenside! Even the material-oriented engines learned to assess it in Black's favour:

16.♗b2 ♖c4 17.♙xc4 ♗xc4 18.♖g3 h5 19.♗b4 b5 20.a3 ♗fc8 21.♙d2 ♙f8 22.♗xc4 ♗xc4 23.f3 ♙c5+ 24.♙f1 ♗ca4+, Beliavsky-Sutovsky, Natanya 2009;

16.♙h6 ♗fd8 17.♙xg7 ♙xg7 18.♗e3 ♙xa2!+, Ni Hua-Navara, Dagomys 2008. Black regained the pawn retaining all his positional advantages.

d) 13.♖ad1

This is play for equalisation.

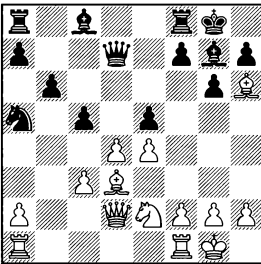
13...cxd4 14.cxd4 exd4 15.♙h6
♙b7 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7 17.♗b2 ♗f6
18.♜xd4 ♜c6=, Golichenko-Mas-
lak, Pardubice 2010.

The following move hides more
venom:

e) 13.♙g5!? This aims to provoke
...f6, but we should not oblige:

13...♗d7! 14.♙h6

14.♖ad1 exd4 15.cxd4 cxd4
16.♙h6 ♙b7 17.♙xg7 ♖xg7 18.♗b2
♗fd8 19.♙b5 ♗e7 20.♜xd4 ♜g8 is
roughly equal.



This is the same position as
in the main game, except for the
queen, which is on d7. It is still dif-
ficult to weigh down the pros and
cons. One thing is clear though –
the defensive setup with ...f6, for
instance, 14...cxd4!? 15.♙xg7 ♖xg7
16.cxd4 exd4 17.f4 f6? 18.f5! or 17...
♗d6 18.f5 f6? does not work any-
more. This is due to the fact that
White saved a tempo on ♖c1 (in
the main line White should include
this move since f4 would be met by
...♙g4, which is now impossible).

In my opinion, eating the

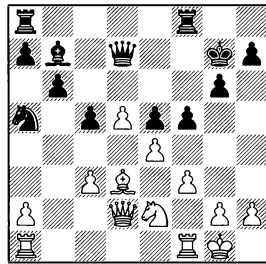
**d4-pawn is possible and the
only way to play for a win!**

But after 17.f4 Black should an-
swer 17...♜c6!?. In no way should
we play ...f6. White's mating threats
are scaring, but not working: 18.f5
♜e5 19.f6+ ♜h8 20.♗h6 ♗g8 21.♗f4
g5+. Of course, White can try
18.♙c4 ♙b7 19.♙d5 ♗fe8 20.♖ad1
♜g8 21.♜xd4 ♜xd4 22.♗xd4 ♙xd5
23.exd5 ♗d6 or 18.♖ac1 ♙b7 19.♗b2
♗ae8 20.♗fd1 f6 21.f5 ♜h8, but in
both examples we retain fair chan-
ces in a complex position. I would
be curious to see that tested in
practice!

14...♙b7 15.♙xg7 ♖xg7 16.d5

16.f4? stumbled into 16...f5!
17.d5 fxe4 18.♙xe4 ♜c4 19.♗d3 ♗a4
20.f5 ♜d6! 21.♜g3 ♙a6+, Leita-
o-Sutovsky, Bursa 2010.

16...f5 17.f3



The same structure occurs often
in the Exchange system (see 17.d5
above), but with a significant nu-
ance – Black usually keeps a bishop
on g7. Then the typical treatment is
...c4 followed up by ...f4. Here this
approach is losing! After 17...c4?
18.♙c2 f4 19.g3 g5 20.h4 h6 21.hxg5
hxg5 22.gxf4 gxf4 23.♜f2 nothing

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

could stop White's rooks.

The game Nakamura-Vachier Lagrave, Wijk aan Zee 2011, saw another positional mistake: 17...♙f7?! 18.exf5 and with an open centre White should be better because of the weakness of Black's king. I think that the only way to hold is:

17...f4! (keeping control of d4!) 18.g3

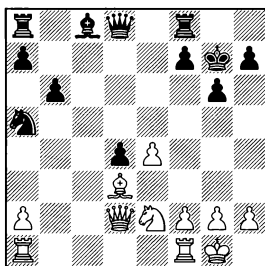
Or 18.c4 ♖ae8 19.♖c3 (19.g3 ♖d6 20.♖c3 ♖g8) 19...♙a6 20.♖e2 g5.

18...♖d6!

I do not believe White can make any progress here:

19.c4 ♖ae8 20.♖c3 ♖g8 21.gxf4 exf4 22.♖h1 (22.♖c1 ♖c8 23.♙e2 ♙h3 24.♙f2 ♖e5 25.♖xe5 ♖xe5 26.♖b3 ♖xb3 27.axb3 ♖g5+ 28.♖h1 a5) 22...♖e5 23.♖xe5 ♖xe5 24.♖g1 ♖c8 25.♖g2 ♖b7 26.♖c3 (26.♖c1 ♖d6) 26...♙d7=.

13...cxd4 14.cxd4 exd4 15.♙xg7 ♖xg7



Currently, this is the most topical position in the 10...♖a5 line.

16.♖ac1

A sneaky move. White is developing, waiting for the bishop to

leave the c8-h3-diagonal. At the same time the rook prevents ...♖c6, which would be a perfect manoeuvre against f2-f4-f5.

16.f4 seems a little premature because after 16...f6! 17.♖ac1 (Or 17.f5 ♖c6! 18.♙b5 ♖e5 19.♖d4 gf5! 20.exf5 ♖h8=, Rodshtein-So, Biel 2010, or 20.♖ad1 fxe4 21.♖f4 ♖e7 22.♖e4 ♙b7=, suggested by So.) the strong 17...♙g4! prevents White's knight from reaching f4: 18.♖g3 ♙d7 19.h4 ♖c8 20.♖xc8 (20.h5 ♖e7 21.♙a6 ♖xc1 22.♖xc1 ♖c6 23.♙b5 ♖d6 24.h6+ ♖xh6 25.e5 ♖d5+, Golichenko-Shishkin, Kiev 2008) 20...♙xc8 21.♖e2 ♖e7 22.h5 ♙d7+ Cheparinov-Kamsky, Sochi 2008, or 18.f5 ♙xe2 19.♖xe2 ♖d6=.

Another idea is to break in through the centre with:

16.f4 f6 17.e5 ♙d7!

Topalov introduced against Kamsky, Sofia 2008, a novelty – 17.e5, but Kamsky's answer seemingly surprised him as he spent some time before opting for:

18.exf6+ (18.♖xd4 ♖c6 19.♖f3 ♙g4=) 18...♖xf6 19.♖g3 ♖h8 20.f5 gxf5 21.♙xf5 ♙xf5 22.♖xf5 ♖d6=. The exposed king should not allow Black to convert his extra pawn.

16...♙b7!?

A Carlsen's move. Black completely ignores White's attack and provokes the opponent into weakening his position. Concrete analysis seems to favour this bold approach.

Part 10

Lately Black made two quick draws with 16...♖b7!? 17.♖c4 ♘c5 18.♖xd4 ♖e7, for instance: 19.♘c3 ♕e6 20.♖b5 ♖ad8 21.♖d1 ♖xd4 22.♖xd4+ ♖f6. Draw, Parligras-Lupulescu, Sarata Monteoru, 17.02.2011.

However, Anand's:

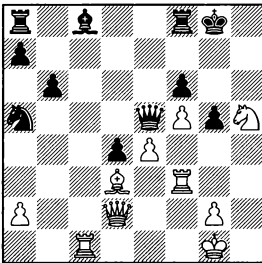
16...♖d6!? 17.f4 f6 18.f5! ♖e5 (18...♗d7!?)

is not refuted, despite his painful loss against Topalov in Sofia 2010. The critical position arises after:

19.♘f4 g5! 20.♘h5+ ♖g8

20...♖h8 21.h4 ♖g8 is also unclear. Then the sacrifice 22.♘xf6 ♖xf6 23.e5 does not win in view of 23...♖xe5 24.f6 ♕e6 25.f7 ♖gf8 26.♖ce1 ♖d5 27.♕e4 ♘c4 28.♖f2 ♖xf7 29.♕xd5 ♖xf2 30.♕xa8 ♖xf1+ 31.♖xf1 d3 32.hxg5 d2 33.♖f8+ ♖g7 34.♖d8 ♖g6 35.♕f3 b5 36.♖f2 ♖xg5=.

21.h4 h6 22.hxg5 hxg5 23.♖f3



Here Anand messed something up and was crushed after 23...♖f7? 24.♘xf6! ♖xf6 25.♖h3 ♖g8 (25...♗d7 26.♖h6+ ♖f7 27.♖xg5 ♖g8 28.♖h5+ ♖f8 29.♖h7 ♖g7 30.f6) 26.♖h6+ ♖f7

27.♖h7+ ♖e8 28.♖cc7 ♖d8 29.♖b5 ♖xe4 30.♖xc8+, 1-0.

The correct defence is:

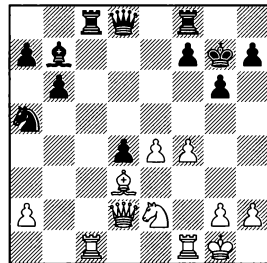
23...♗d7! with the following possibilities:

a) 24.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 25.♖xg5+ ♖f7.

b) 24.♖h3 ♖ac8 25.♘xf6+ (25.♖e1 ♖c5 26.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 27.e5 ♖xe5 28.♖xe5 ♖xe5 29.♖xg5+ ♖f7 30.♕e2 ♖f6 31.♖h7+ ♖e8 32.♖f4 ♘c6 33.♖c7 ♖f7 34.♕h5 ♘e5) 25...♖xf6 26.♖xc8 ♖xc8 27.e5 ♖xe5 28.♖xg5+ ♖f8 29.♕e4 (29.♖h7 ♖e3+ 30.♖xe3 dxe3 31.♖xd7 ♖c1+ 32.♖h2 ♖d1) 29...♕e8 30.♕d5 ♖e1+ 31.♖h2 ♖e5+=.

c) 24.♖g3 ♖f7 25.♕c4+ (Or 25.♖h3 ♖h8 26.♕c4+ ♖e7 27.♕d5 ♖ac8; 25.♘xf6 ♖xf6 26.♖e1 ♖c3 is unclear.) 25...♘xc4 26.♖xc4 ♖h8 27.♖xd4 ♕e8 28.♖d7+ ♖f8 29.♘xf6 (29.♖b4+ ♖c5+ 30.♖xc5+ bxc5 31.♘xf6 ♕xd7 32.♘xd7+ ♖e7 33.♘e5 ♖hc8) 29...♖xf6 30.♖b4+ ♖g8 31.e5 ♖xf5 32.♖c4+ ♖f8 33.♖b4+ ♖g8 34.♖b3+ ♖f8 35.♖f3 ♕xd7 36.♖xf5+ ♕xf5 37.♖f3 ♖e7 38.♖xf5 ♖hf8=.

17.f4 ♖c8 (or 17.♖fd1 ♖d6) 17...♖c8!



18.f5

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

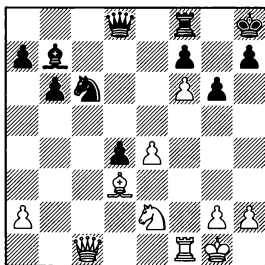
18.♙xc8!? should be met by 18...♙xc8! (Karjakin-Carlsen, Foros 2008, saw 18...♙xc8, but after 19.f5 ♖c6?! 20.f6+! ♖h8 21.♙g5 would have been very unpleasant, because Black has no defence against the rook lift ♙f1-f3-h3.) 19.f5 ♖c6! 20.♖f4 ♖e5 21.♖d5, Peralta-Alonso, La Plata 2008, when simplest is 21...f6. The dark-squared blockade should keep Black out of danger.

18...♙xc1!

Generally, the exchange of just one pair of rooks is in Black's favour. Then if White tries to manoeuvre his rook to h3, his first rank will be left on the mercy of Black's queen. On the other hand, Black needs one rook to defend the mate on g7.

In the event of 18...♖c6 19.f6+ ♖h8 20.♙h6 ♙g8 21.♙f3 ♙f8 23.♙g5 ♙e8, White has 24.♙xc6! ♙xc6 25.♙h3 ♙c8 26.g4 when 26...♙g4 is the only move, with a tangled position.

19.♙xc1 ♖c6 20.f6+ ♖h8



21.♙g5

21.♙h6 ♙g8 22.♙f3 is neutralised with 22...♙f8 23.♙g5 ♙c5. From g5 the queen controls e5.

21...♙d6 22.♖g3?!

Probably a decisive mistake. White's attack has come to an impasse, but he could have tried to fight for the e5-square with 22.♙f5. Then 22...♙b4 23.♖f2 ♙e8 24.♙h6 ♙f8 25.♙xf8+ ♙xf8 26.♙d5 ♖b4 27.♙xd4 ♖xd3+ 28.♙xd3 ♙xe4 29.♙d7 a5 30.g4 h6 31.h4 g5 would be about equal, but the other queen sortie, 22...♙a3, is more unpleasant: 23.♙f3 ♙c8 24.♙b5 ♙a5 25.♙h6 ♙g8 26.♙xc6 ♙e1+ 27.♙f1 ♙xe2 28.♙f2 ♙e3 29.♙xe3 dxe3 30.♙e2 ♙d8 31.♙xe3 ♙d6.

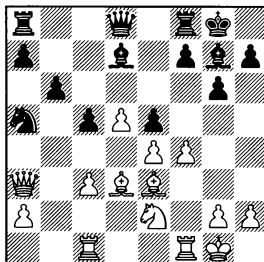
After the text, White's game quickly goes downhill.

22...♙g8 23.♙c4 ♖e5 24.♙b3 d3 25.h3 ♙a6 26.♙f4 d2 27.♖h2 ♙c5 28.h4 ♖d3 29.e5 ♖xf4 30.♖e4 ♖e6 31.♙xe6 ♙c6 32.♙xf7 d1♙ 0-1.

22. Sasikiran-Kamsky

Dresden ol. 2008

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♖e2 ♖c6 9.♙e3 0-0 10.0-0 ♖a5 11.♙d3 b6 12.♙c1 e5 13.♙a4 ♙d7 14.♙a3 ♙e6 15.d5 ♙d7 16.f4



Understanding positions with closed centre is essential for playing well the Exchange system. Their assessment depends on the placement of several key pieces. For White, this is the queen. It belongs to d2, from where it can go quickly to f4 or another dark square of the kingside. More importantly, it restricts the enemy queen from going to g5 after an exchange of the dark-squared bishops. On b2 or a3 the queen is misplaced and needs tempi to return home.

For Black, the most important is the light-squared bishop. It is best placed on d7, from where it supports both breaks ...f5 and ...b5. Unfortunately, Black often gets the closed centre with a bishop on b7. Not only doesn't it help the counterplay, but it also hampers the a5-knight to reach d6. I would generalise, that with a bishop on b7, Black should avoid closing the centre. The other important piece is the king's rook. It is better to have it on f8, from where it supports both ...f6 and ...f5.

In the diagram position, Black has the ideal setup while the opponent's queen is on the worst possible place. That enables him to choose between both main plans in this structure:

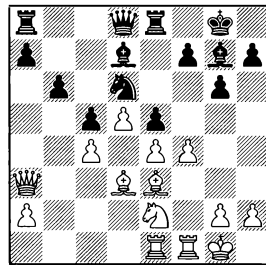
1. A central break with ...f7-f5;
2. A dark-squared blockade with ...f6 and counterplay on the queenside.

Kamsky opts for the latter, probably because it keeps more tension, but 16...f5 17.exf5 ♙xf5 18.c4 ♙xd3 19.♖xd3 e4 20.♗c2 ♜e7 was also possible.

16...♖b7 17.c4

17.f5 is not dangerous for the same reason as f4 – White's queen is too far from the main battlefield. This allows Black's queen to invade the kingside after 17...gxf5 18.exf5 e4 19.♙a6 ♖d6 20.♖g3 ♙e5 21.♗b2 ♗h4 22.♗d2 f6.

17...♖d6 18.♖ce1 ♜e8



Black's defence is commonly based on ...♗e7, ...f6. Kamsky decides to put more pressure on e4, exploiting the bad coordination of the enemy's pieces. Now White must define the situation in the centre. Best is 19.fxex5 ♙xe5 20.♗c1 (20.♙f4 ♙xf4 21.♖xf4 ♗g5) 20...b5! with sufficient counterplay. Instead, he sets up a positional trap:

19.♖g3

White dreams about 19...a6? or a similar mundane move) 20.f5! with

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

an initiative on the kingside. In this structure, White's knight should go to f3 (via g1), but not to g3.

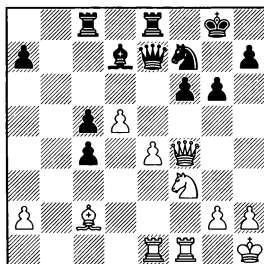
19...exf4! 20.♙xf4 ♙e5 21.♖c1 ♖e7 22.♗h1 ♙ac8

Evidently, Black's main plan is linked with ...b5. It will open the b-file so 22...♙ab8! would have been better, for example, 23.♙f2 b5 24.cxb5 ♙xb5 25.♙xb5 ♙xb5↑.

23.♗e2 b5 24.♗g1 f6?!

Finally, White improved the placement of his knight. Black should have answered with 24...bxc4 25.♙xe5 ♖xe5 26.♗f3 ♖g7 27.♙c2 f6=, or 24...♙xf4 25.♖xf4 bxc4 26.♙c2 ♖e5 27.♖f2 ♖d4=. Instead, he presents the opponent with a tempo: 25.♙xe5 ♖xe5 26.♗f3 ♖e7 27.e5 fxe5 28.♗xe5 ♖g7=, but White misses this opportunity:

25.♗f3?! ♙xf4 26.♖xf4 bxc4 27.♙c2 ♗f7



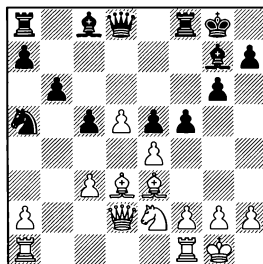
Black has achieved his ideal setup. Now Sasikiran should have switched to a patient defence with 28.♖d2 ♙b8 29.♖c3, but he sud-

denly decided to play on the flank where the opponent is stronger. That quickly loses the game:

28.♙b1?! ♖d6! 29.♗d2 (29.♖d2 ♙b8?) 29...♖xf4 30.♙xf4 c3 31.♗c4 ♙b8 32.♙xf6 ♙a4! 33.♙b3 ♙b4 34.♙xf7 ♙xb3 35.axb3 ♗xf7 36.♗g1 ♙xc4 0-1

23. Van Wely–Kamsky
Dagomys 2008

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♗e2 ♗c6 9.♙e3 0-0 10.0-0 ♗a5 11.♙d3 b6 12.♖d2 e5 13.d5 f5



The same pawn structure as in the previous game, but White's queen is on d2 and the black bishop is still on c8. Note also that White's rook on a1 could be useful for a plan with a4-a5, for example: 13...♗b7 14.c4 ♗d6 15.♗c3 f5 16.f3 f4 17.♙f2 g5 18.a4±.

14.♙g5

It is not easy to recommend something else for White. 14.♙h6

Part 10

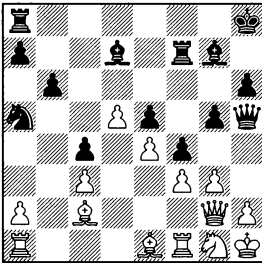
♙xh6! 15.♚xh6 c4 16.♙c2 f4 leaves White without an active plan. A similar position arose in Nielsen-Ivanchuk, Amber-blindfold 2006: 14.♙g5 ♚d6 15.♙h6 f4 16.♙xg7 ♜xg7 17.f3 c4 18.♙c2 g5 19.♜h1 ♙d7 It is clear that Black is slightly better: 20.g3 ♚ae8 21.gxf4 gxf4 22.♚g1+ ♜h8 23.♚g5 ♚g8 24.♚xg8+ ♚xg8 25.♚g1 ♚xg1+ 26.♜xg1 ♜b7+. By keeping the dark-squared bishops, White nurtures some hopes for counterplay on the queenside.

Similar to the stem game is 14.f3 f4 15.♙f2 c4 16.♙c2 ♙d7! (to prevent 17.♙a4).

14...♚e8 15.f3 c4 16.♙c2 f4
17.♜h1 h6 18.♙h4 g5 19.♙e1

White is planning to defend with g3 so he leaves the f2-square for the rook.

19...♙d7 20.g3 ♚h5 21.♜g1 ♚f7
22.♚g2 ♜h8



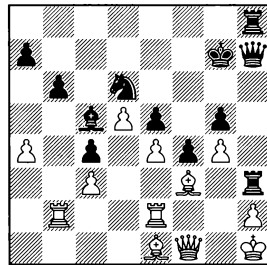
A very gloom position for White straight from the opening! He cannot plug the kingside with 23.h4 (hoping for g4 and h5) due to 23...fxg3 24.♙xg3 ♜b7 25.♚h2 g4. The only thing he can do is wait and

watch Black regrouping for the final assault:

23.♙d1 ♚g8 24.♚b1 ♙f8 25.♙e2
♙c5 26.♙f2 ♙d6 27.♚b2 ♚f6
28.♙e1 ♚e8 29.♜h3 ♚fg6 30.♜f2
h5 31.g4

White decides to change the stand, but this only opens files on the kingside.

31...♚h6 32.gxh5 ♚xh5 33.♜g4
♜g7 34.♙d1 ♚gh8 35.♚ff2 ♚h3
36.♚f1 ♙xg4 37.fxg4 ♚g6 38.♙f3
♙c5 39.♚fe2 ♜b7 40.♚g2 ♜d6
41.a4 ♚h7 42.♚f1



42...♜f6

It looks like Kamsky wants to prolong the suffering of his opponent. He could have finished him off outright with 42...♜xe4 43.♙xe4 ♚xh2+ 44.♚xh2 ♚xe4+.

43.♚g2 ♚d7 44.♚a2 ♚h6
45.♚f1 ♚h7 46.♚g2 ♚xf3 47.♚xf3
♚h3 48.♚g2 ♜e7 0-1

24. Delchev-Ruck
Sibenik 2006

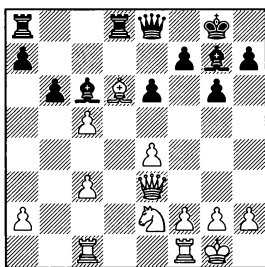
1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♜c3 d5
4.cxd5 ♜xd5 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.bxc3

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4

♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♖e2 ♖c6 9.♙e3
0-0 10.0-0 ♖c7 11.♙c1 ♖d8 12.♙f4
♖d7 13.dxc5

In his book, Sakaev chooses this variation as a main line against Black's setup.

13...♖e8 14.♙d5 ♙d7 15.♖d3 e6
16.♙xc6 ♙xc6 17.♙d6 b6 18.♖e3



18...♙b7

The bishop frees the way to the queen on e8. A year later against Harikrishna, Ruck tried to improve with 18...e5, but after 19.c4 ♖e6 20.♖c3 ♖xc4 21.♖d5 White was better, for instance: 21...♖a4 22.♖e7+ ♖h8 23.♖fe1 (23.cxb6 ♖xd6 24.♖c5 ♖d2 25.♖xc6 axb6 26.♖xb6 ♖xe4) 23...f6 24.♖h3! ♙xe4 25.c6±.

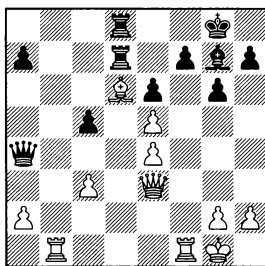
19.e5 ♖c6

In this type of positions, Black should worry only about his king. If he trades queens, he would play ...f6 and his bishop pair, backed by active rooks, would completely compensate for the missing pawn. For instance, he could try 19...♖a4!? 20.cxb6 axb6 21.a3 ♖e4 22.♖xe4 ♙xe4 23.♖fd1 ♖dc8 24.c4 ♖a4

25.f3 ♙b7 26.♖f2 h5 (or 26...♖axc4 27.♖xc4 ♖xc4 28.♖b1 ♙d5 29.♖xb6 h5 30.♖b1 ♖c2) 27.♖d4 ♙a6 28.♖b1 ♙xc4 29.♖xb6 ♖a5 30.f4 f6, with counterplay.

20.f3 bxc5 21.♖g3 ♖a4 22.♖f2

I understood that White's only active play is linked with 22.♖e4. However, after 22...♙xe4 23.fxe4 ♖d7 24.♖b1 ♖ad8:

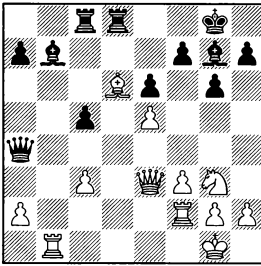


Black is threatening with ...♙f8. How to continue? My bishop on d6 is cementing my centre. Should it be swapped, I would remain with 5(!) pawn islands and no winning prospects at all. For example: 25.♖b2 ♖c6 26.♖f4 ♙f8 27.♖d2 c4 28.h4 ♙xd6 29.exd6 e5! 30.♖xe5 ♖xd6 31.♖xd6 ♖xd6±.

Grabbing a pawn by 22.♖xc5 does not help much: 22...♙h6 23.♖b1 ♖ac8 24.♖b4 ♖xb4 25.cxb4 ♖c2. So I decided to wait for a better moment.

22...♖ac8 (22...♖d7 23.♖xc5) 23.♖b1!

23.♖e4 did not guarantee an edge: 23...♙xe4 24.fxe4 ♙f8 25.♖d2 ♖d7 26.♖cd1 ♖cd8 27.♖xc5 ♖xe4.



23...♙d5

23...♞d7 24.♞fb2 ♙d5 allows 25.♞xc5! so Black anticipates the doubling of White's rooks on the b-file.

24.♙xc5?!

Now was the last possible moment for 24.♙e4!? ♙xe4 25.fxe4 ♞d7 (25...♙f8 26.♞bf1 ♞d7) 26.♞bf1 ♞c6 27.♞f4 (27.♞f3 ♙f8 28.♞f2 f5) 27...♙f8 28.♞d2 and White is still in control although he can hardly improve his position. For instance, after 28...c4 29.h4, Black could try 29...f5, or stay passive after 29.♙h1 ♙g7 30.h4 h6. After my mistake, the initiative switches to Black.

24...♙xa2 25.♞a1 ♞d1+ 26.♞f1 ♞xf1+ 27.♙xf1 ♞c2 28.♙xa7?!

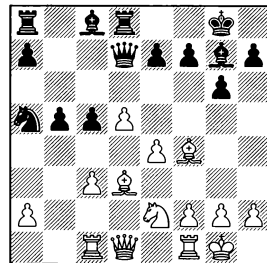
More precise was 28.♞f2 ♞xf2+ 29.♙xf2 ♙c4 30.♙d4 a6 31.♙d2 ♙d3 32.♙f2 ♙h6 33.♙e4 ♞b8= or 33...♙xe4 34.fxe4 ♞a8 35.♞a5 ♙f8 36.♙e2 ♙e8 37.♙d3 ♙g5 38.♙b6 ♙d8 39.♙xd8 ♙xd8 40.♙c4 ♙c7 41.♙c5 ♙b7=.

28...♞xc3 29.♞xa2 ♞xa2 30.♞xc3

♞xa7+ 31.♙e3 ♙h6 32.♙f2 ♙f4 33.g3 ♞a2+ 34.♙g1 ♙xe3+ 1/2-1/2.

25. Topalov–Svidler Sofia 2006

1.d4 ♙f6 2.c4 g6 3.♙c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♙xd5 5.e4 ♙xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♙e2 ♙c6 9.♙e3 0-0 10.0-0 ♞c7 11.♞c1 ♞d8 12.♙f4 ♞d7 13.d5 ♙a5 14.♙d3 b5



15.♞b1

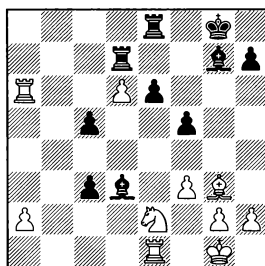
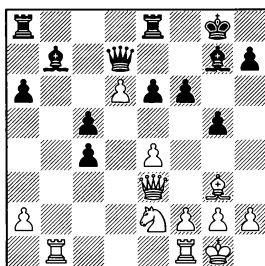
After this game, White began to try other moves, as 15.♙e3 e6! – see our main line.

15...a6 16.c4?

It is difficult to understand what Topalov had in mind with this unfortunate novelty. After Svidler's retort, White's centre is falling apart. The usual 16.♞c1 e6 does not set any problems either, but 16.a4 deserves attention.

16...e6! 17.♙g5 ♞e8 18.♞d2 ♙xc4 19.♙xc4 bxc4 20.d6 ♙b7 21.♞e3 f6 22.♙h4 g5 23.♙g3

4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗c4



23...f5!!

Every other move would have justified White's play. For instance, White would be fine after 23...♗c6 23.♖c3 or 23...h6 24.e5. But Svidler is in his element in his beloved opening. His feel of the Grünfeld dynamics is perfect.

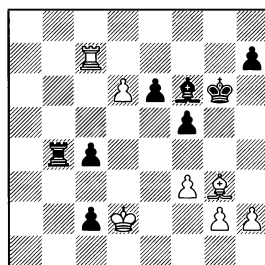
24.♖xg5 ♗xe4 25.♖b6 ♖d8!

The best move again. Generally, most endgames with a bishop pair are better for Black. He often even sacs a pawn in order to trade queens.

26.♖xd8 ♖axd8 27.♖d1 ♖d7 28.f3 ♗c2 29.♖e1 ♗d3 30.♖xa6 c3

Black has a big edge and despite Topalov's dogged defence, Svidler went on to convert it into a point:

31.♖a3 ♗xe2 32.♖xe2 ♖b8 33.♖b3 ♖xb3 34.axb3 ♖f7 35.♖f1 ♖b7 36.♖a2 ♗f6 37.♖e2 c4! 38.b4 ♖xb4 39.♖a7+ ♖g6 40.♖c7 c2 41.♖d2

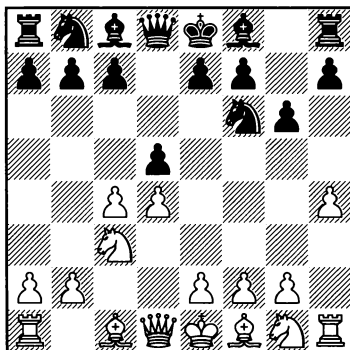


41...f4 42.♗e1 ♖b1 43.♖xc4 ♖d1+ 44.♖xc2 ♖xe1 45.♖xf4 ♖e2+ 46.♖d3 ♖e5 47.♖g4+ ♖f7 48.♖a4 ♖d5+ 49.♖e3 ♖xd6 50.♖a7+ ♖g6 51.♖f4 ♖d4+ 52.♖g3 ♗h4+ 53.♖h3 ♗f2 54.g3 ♖h4+ 55.♖xh4 ♗xa7 56.♖h3 ♖f5 57.♖g2 ♗e3 58.♖h3 ♖e5 59.♖g4 ♗g1 60.h4 ♗f2 61.h5 h6 0-1.

Part 11

SOS Systems

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4, 4.g4

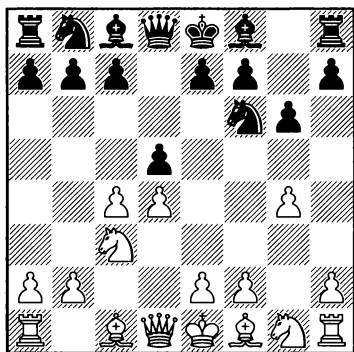


Part 11

Step by Step

I'll consider shortly several dubious variations called SOS systems after the New in Chess series *SOS*. Every adept of the Grünfeld enjoys them very much as they commonly lead to sharp original play which perfectly fits in the profile of the players that opt for this opening. There are only a few fine points to remember.

A. 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.g4?!



Even in the Meran, the Bayonet attack sets more problems to White, than to Black. Here, it is outright dubious and should cost White the natural advantage of the first move. Bulgarian master Pantaleev used to

play it a lot 40 years ago, but in our databases times the surprise effect can work in one game only.

The idea of 4.g4 is to create chaos on the board after 4...♙xg4?! 5.♖b3 dxc4 6.♖xb7, although it is arguable that White is any better after 6...♘bd7 7.♘b5 ♖c8 8.♙f4 e5 9.dxe5 ♘h5 10.♙g5 ♘c5. However, we have more challenging options:

4...dxc4!

White was threatening to win the d5-pawn so it is consistent to save it with interest!

I found only two games with 4...c5!, yet this is the obvious retort to all SOS tries. White should struggle to equalise after 5.dxc5 (5.g5 cxd4 6.♘b5 dxc4!) 5...d4 6.♘b5 (6.g5 dxc5 7.♖xd8+ ♘xd8 8.gxf6 exf6 9.b4 a5) 6...♘c6 7.♘f3 ♙g7 8.♙f4 (8.♘fxd4 a6 9.♘xc6 ♖xd1+ 10.♘xd1 axb5 11.♘e5 ♘e4) 8...0-0.

5.h3

Or 5.g5 ♘d5 6.♙g2 (6.e4 ♘b6 7.♙e3 ♙g7) 6...c6 (6...♘b6) 7.♖a4 ♘b6 8.♖a5 ♙g7 9.♘f3 0-0.

5...♙g7

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3, SOS Systems

The thematic manoeuvre 5...♗d5 6.e4 ♗b6 is unclear: 7.♗e3 ♗g7 8.f4, Obsivac-Pribyl, Czechia 1998.

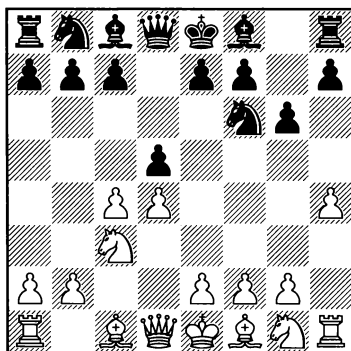
6.e4 c5 7.dxc5

7.d5 b5 8.g5 ♗h5 9.♗xb5 ♖a5+ 10.♗c3 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♖xc3+ 12.♗d2 ♖e5+.

7...♖xd1+ 8.♗xd1 ♗a6 9.♗e3 ♗e6

White has problems here.

B. 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.h4?!



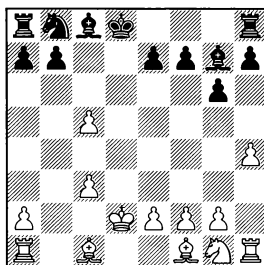
4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.h4 transposes to 4.h4 c5 5.cxd5.

4...c5!

Thematic and strong!

5.dxc5

5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.dxc5 ♗xc3 7.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 8.bxc3 ♗g7 9.♗d2



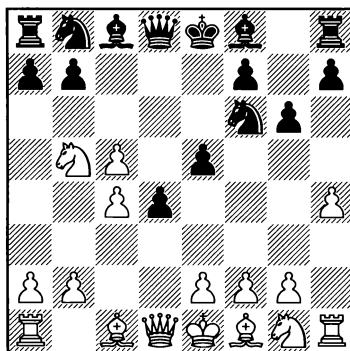
9...♗a6

Suggested by Jeroen Bosch in his SOS book. 9...♗f5 allowed White to equalise after 10.f3 ♗d7 11.e4 ♗e6 12.c6 bxc6 13.♗e2=, A.Zaitsev-Smyslov, Sochi 1963.

9...♗d7, heading for f6, is also in Black's favour.

10.♗a3 ♗f5 11.f3 ♗h6+ 12.e3 ♗c7 13.♗xa6 ♖ad8+ 14.♗e1 bxa6+.

5...d4! 6.♗b5 e5!



Six moves after the beginning of the game, Black is already ahead in development. Any mistake can be fatal for White. Perhaps his only move now is:

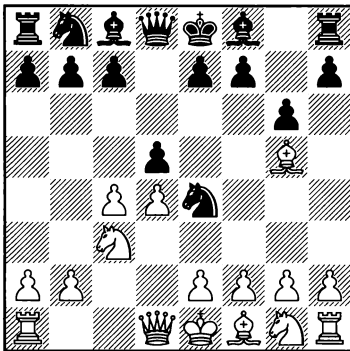
7.e3

7.b4 a6 8.♖a4 ♗d7 9.♕g5 ♖e7 ♜c6! 10.♜d6+ ♗xd6 11.cxd6 h6 12.♗xf6 ♖xf6 13.c5 e4 should end up with a debacle.

7...♗xc5 8.cxd4 exd4 9.♜f3 0-0 10.♗e2 ♜c6

Without h4, White would have been only slightly worse. As things are now, he is a big underdog. The game Cebalo-Riazantsev, Biel 2009, went 11.♗f4 ♗f5 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♖xd3 a6 14.♜c7 (14.♜a3 ♖e8+ 15.♜f1 ♜b4 16.♖b3 d3) 14...♖c8 15.a3 ♖xc7 16.♗xc7 ♖xc7 17.b4 ♖e8+ 18.♜f1 ♗f8, with a material and positional advantage.

C. 1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♜c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♜e4



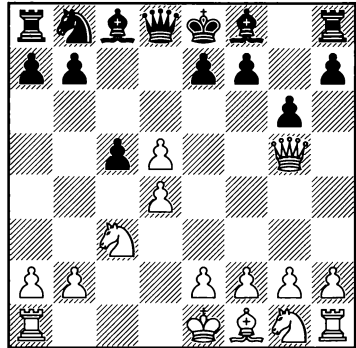
I have devoted Part 3 to this system, but I decided to examine two rare moves separately in this chapter:

C1. 5.♖c1; C2. 5.h4!?

C1. 5.♖c1 c5!

5...♜xg5 6.♖xg5 dxc4 brings Black very good results, but 7.♖e5 f6 8.♖b5+ c6 9.♖xc4 b5 10.♖d3 b4 11.♜e4 ♗f5 is unclear to me. Black's pawn formation is seriously compromised.

6.cxd5 (6.♜xd5 cxd4) 6...♜xg5 7.♖xg5



7...♖b6!

Rogers considers only 7...cxd4!? 8.♖e5 dxc3! (8...♖b6? 9.♗d1) 9.♖xh8 f6, with a great compensation for the exchange – 10.♖xh7 (10.0-0-0 cxb2+ 11.♜xb2 ♖b6+ 12.♜a1 ♖c7+) 10...♗f5 11.bxc3 ♖a5 (11...♖xd5 12.e3 ♜c6 13.♗d1 ♖xa2) 12.♖c1 ♖a3 13.♜d1! (13.♜d2 ♖xa2+ 14.♜e1 ♖b2 15.♜d1 ♜c6 16.♖h4 0-0-0+) 13...♖a4+ [13...♜c6 14.f3 ♜e5 15.e4 (15.♖h4 ♗d8 16.e4 ♖a4+ 17.♜e1 ♖xd5 18.♜h3 ♖a5) 15...♗d7 16.♜d2 ♖b2+ 17.♖c2 ♖b1 18.♖c1 ♖xa2+ 19.♖c2 ♖b1 20.♖c1] 14.♜e1 ♖a3=. The text looks more simple.

8.dxc5 ♖xb2 9.♖c1

Or 9.♖c1 ♗g7 10.♗d2 ♖xd2+
11.♗xd2 0-0 12.♗b5 ♗d7 13.e3 ♗f6.

9...♖b4 10.♖b1 ♖xc5 11.♗b5
♖xc1+ 12.♖xc1 ♗a6

There is no way to be worse with
the bishop pair and no weaknesses.

C2. 5.h4!?

This is a very young line with
only 15 games in my database.

5...♗xc3!

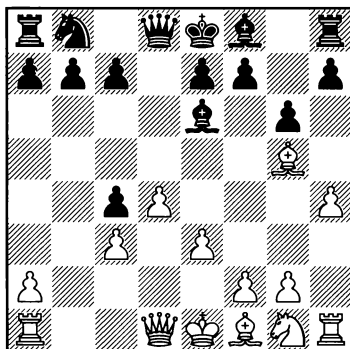
Black has a number of interest-
ing alternatives:

a) 5...c6 6.♗f3 ♖a5! brings Black
comfortable equality, e.g. 7.e3
(7.cxd5 cxd5 8.♖b3 ♗xc3 9.bxc3
♗c6 10.h5 ♗g7) 7...dxc4 8.♗xc4
♗xc3 9.bxc3 (9.♗d2?? f6 10.♗f4 e5)
9...♖xc3+ 10.♗d2 ♗d7 (10...♖a5
11.♖b3) 11.h5!? (After 11.♖c1 ♖a5
12.0-0, White does have some com-
pensation, but in my opinion, it is not
enough) 11...♗g7 (11...♗b6 12.♖c1
♖a5 13.♗xf7+ ♗xf7 14.hxg6+ ♗g8
15.♖c5 ♖xa2 16.gxh7+ ♖xh7 17.♖xh7
♗xh7 18.♖h5+ ♗g8 19.♖g6+ ♗g7
20.♖e8+) 12.♖c1 ♖a5 13.♖f3 ♖f5=;

b) 5...c5 6.cxd5 ♗xc3 7.bxc3
♖xd5 8.e3;

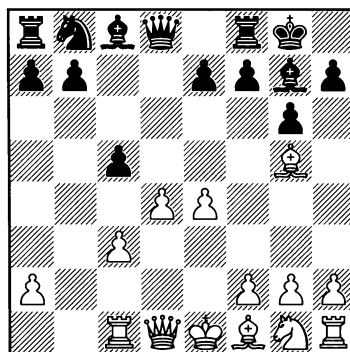
c) 5...♗g7?! I mention this move
only because it occurred in the re-
cent European championship in the
game Jobava-Safarli 2011: 6.cxd5
♗xc3 7.bxc3 ♖xd5 8.e3 h6 9.♗f4 e5
10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♖xe5 12.♗d4
♗c6 13.♗b5 ♗d7 14.♗f3±.

6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 ♗e6



This position differs from our
main line in Part 3 only by the h4-
pawn (and the bishop is on g5).
The only way to justify the pawn
move seems to be 8.h5, but I do
not believe in such an approach
to the opening: 8...♗g7 9.h6 (9.e4
c6) 9...♗f6 (or 9...♗f8 10.♖b1 ♖d5
11.♗f4 ♖c6 12.♗f3 ♗d7 13.♗g5 ♗d5
14.f3 f5 15.♖e2 ♖f6!) 10.♗xf6 exf6
11.♗e2 ♗d5 12.♗f4 c6 13.♗e2 0-0=.

D. 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.e4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗g5 (a SOS line?!) 7...c5 8.♖c1 0-0



9. ♖f3

The bishop would have stood very well on g5 had Black developed his queen's knight to d7. In the current position, however, he cannot defend the d4-square and sooner or later he will have to move the d-pawn forward. Still, 9.d5?! is premature in view of 9...f5, for instance: 10. ♖c4 ♘h8 11. ♖e2 (11. ♖e2 b5! 12. ♖xb5 fxe4 13. ♖xe4 ♖f5 14. ♖e3 ♖xd5 15. ♖e2 ♖c6 16. ♖f3 ♖d7 17. ♖d1 ♖c7 18. ♖e2 ♖ac8 19. 0-0 ♖e5.) 11...fxe4 12. ♖g3 ♖d7 (12...♖f5 13. ♖e2 ♖d7) 13. ♖xe4 ♖b6 14. ♖e2 ♖xc4 15. ♖xc4 ♖f5 16. d6 (16. 0-0 b5; 16. ♖g3 ♖d6 17. 0-0 e6) 16...♖f6.

9... ♖g4 10. d5 ♖d6!

The blockade on the dark squares levels the game.

11. ♖e2

11. ♖b3 ♖xf3 12. gxf3 ♖d7 (12... b6 13. f4 h6 14. e5 ♖c7 15. ♖h4 ♖xe5 16. fxe5 ♖xe5+ 17. ♖e2 ♖f4) 13. h4 (13. ♖xb7 ♖ab8 14. ♖c6 ♖b6 15. ♖xd6 exd6) 13... ♖ab8 14. a4 ♖e5 was better for Black in Erdos-Tazbir, Griesheim 2010.

11... ♖d7! 12. 0-0

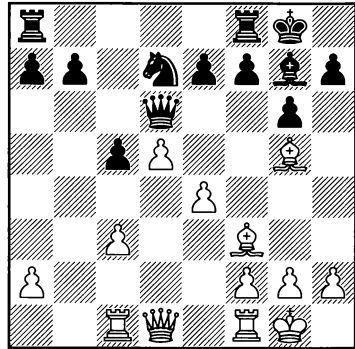
Alternatively:

12. h3?! ♖xf3 13. ♖xf3 c4;

12. ♖d2 ♖xe2 13. ♖xe2 ♖fe8 14. ♖b5 a6 (14...e6 15. ♖c4 ♖c7 16. d6 ♖c8 17. a4 b6 18. a5 a6 19. ♖b1 b5 20. ♖b6 ♖xb6 21. axb6 ♖d7 22. ♖d3

♖eb8 23. 0-0 ♖e5 24. ♖e7 ♖xb6, Jenkinson-Fenwick, corr. 2008) 15. ♖xb7 ♖e5 16. 0-0 ♖ab8=.

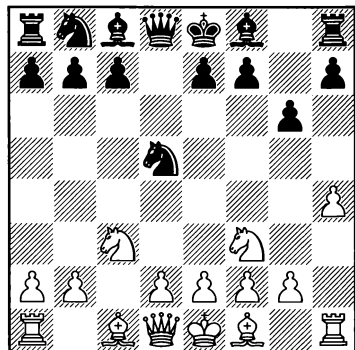
12... ♖xf3 13. ♖xf3



13... c4!

This ensures the c5-square for the knight. Now Black has good counterplay. The game Batsiashvili-Gopal, Cappelle la Grande 2011 saw further 14. ♖a4 ♖fc8 15. ♖g4 ♖c7 16. f4 ♖c5 17. ♖xc4 ♖e6 18. ♖b3 ♖xg5 19. fxg5 ♖b6+=.

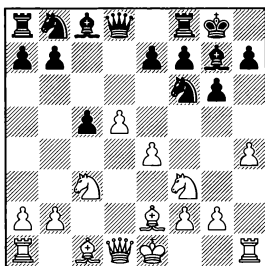
E. 1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♖c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♖xd5 5. h4!?



Why not!? White has more pawns in the centre and he is better developed. The move ...g6 is “begging” for h4, especially after the f6-knight has left f6. That is why the retreat:

5...♖f6!? is consistent and it has prominent adepts as Svidler. Play might continue with:

6.d4 ♖g7 7.e4 0-0 8.♙e2 c5 9.d5



In the stem game game Svidler chose 9...e6, but lost to Piket in 2000 and his idea has not caught up.

Najer tested 9...b5?! 10.e5 (10. ♙xb5 ♖xe4!) 10...♖g4 11.♙xb5! to reach a very tangled and unclear position.

I recommend, however, the most natural answer:

5...♙g7 6.h5 ♖c6

Continuing the developing strategy. 6...♖xc3 is a sound alternative.

7.g3

Or 7.d4 ♙f5 8.♙d2 ♖d7!?

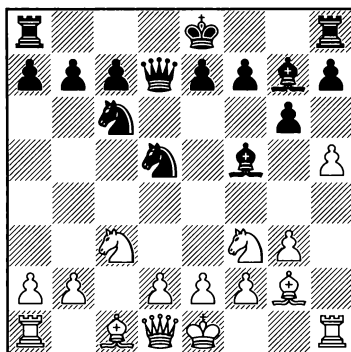
In Aronian-Svidler, Nice 2010, Black opted for 8...e5 9.dxe5

♖xe5 10.e4 ♖xc3 11.♙xc3, when 11...♖xd1+ 12.♙xd1 ♖xf3+ 13.gxf3 ♙xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♙e6 15.hxg6 fxg6 would have been equal. Svidler tried to keep more pieces with 11...♖e7!? to win eventually.

The text is an attempt to fight for the edge. For instance, 9.e3 e5 would be an improved version of Svidler's play since 10.dxe5 ♖xe5 11.e4 would stumble into 11...♖xf3+ 12.♖xf3 ♙g4. Apart from 9...e5, Black could also choose the plan with long castling.

9.e4 ♖xc3 10.bxc3 ♙xe4 11.♖g5 ♙f5 12.♖b3 e6 13.♖xb7 ♖b8 14.♖a6 h6 15.♖f3 g5.

7...♙f5 8.♙g2 (8.♖b3?! ♙e6) 8...♖d7



9.♖xd5

White has many alternatives, for instance:

a) 9.0-0 gxh5 10.♖xd5 ♖xd5 11.d3 ♙g4.

b) 9.♖g5 ♖d4 10.d3 (10.♖xd5

Part 11

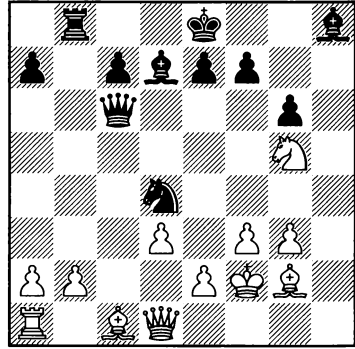
♙c2) 10...c6 11.e4 ♗g4 12.f3 ♖b4
13.fxg4 ♖dc2+ 14.♘e2 ♖xa1.

c) 9.hxg6 hxg6 10.♞xh8+ ♙xh8
11.♜g5 ♜d4 12.d3 c6 13.♙d2 ♗g4
14.f3 ♙e6 15.♜xe6 ♞xe6.

**9...♞xd5 10.d3 ♞d7 11.hxg6
hxg6 12.♞xh8+ ♙xh8 13.♜g5
♜d4 14.♙xb7 ♞b8 15.♙g2**

Or 15.♙e4 ♙xe4 16.dxe4 ♞c6.

**15...♙g4 16.f3 ♞c6 17.♘f2
♙d7**

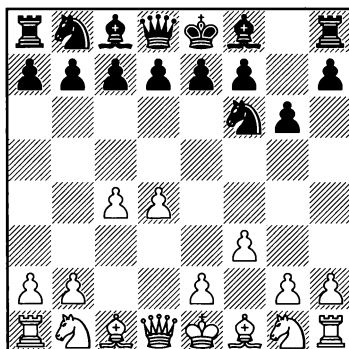


Black has active play on the queenside.

Part 12

Anti-Grünfeld – 3.f3

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3



Part 12

Main Ideas

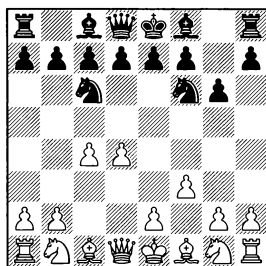
Introduction

Would you guess which is the best scoring third move of White after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6? Right – 3.f3! Four percent better than 3.♘c3 or 3.♘f3. Let us go further. Following 3.f3 d5, White achieves an even higher percentage – 61. Does that mean that it is wrong to insist on playing the Grünfeld against 3.f3? Should we admit that White has tricked us by the move order and we have to switch to the Sämisch or Modern Benoni? Not at all. The problem is that Black is often unprepared for 3.f3 and the opponent enjoys a serious advantage in opening knowledge. I suggest to strike back with his own weapon. We'll answer with the rare, but ultra-modern move:

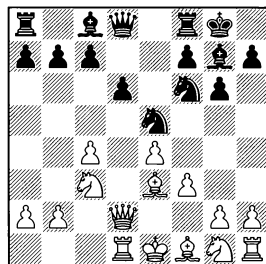
3...♘c6

Theory is very scarce here and you can study most of the games in your database in an hour. Add my guidance, and you would probably turn out better versed than your opponent even if it were your first game in this variation. Oh, and the stats will be with you – White is still struggling to break even against the “modest” knight's move.

Objectives and Move Orders



Our aim is to push ...e5. It seems that we'll get some sort of the Sämisch with ...♘c6, but the position has an important peculiarity – our bishop is still on f8 and it can pop up on c5. For instance: 4.e4 e5 5.d5 ♘d4 6.♗e3 ♗c5! 7.♗f2 ♔e7. Instead, 5.dxe5 ♘xe5 6.♗e3 (6.♘c3 ♗c5!) 6...♗g7 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♖d2 d6 9.♗d1

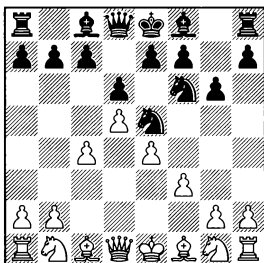


White cannot complete development so we prepare to open the centre with 9...♗e8! 10.b3 a6! 11.♘e2 b5! 12.cxb5 axb5 13.♘xb5 d5.

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

Let us consider now:

A. 4.d5 ♖e5 5.e4 d6



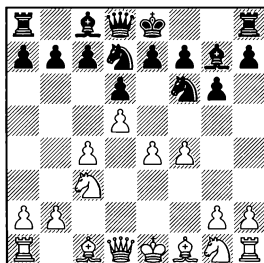
White's most testing plan here is to grab even more space and try to consolidate his centre:

6.f4

6.♖e2, intending ♖ec3 or ♖g3, is too slow. Black can hamper the enemy's development with 6...c6!, followed by 7...♞b6.

6.♖c3 ♗g7 7.f4 leads to the same positions as the main line.

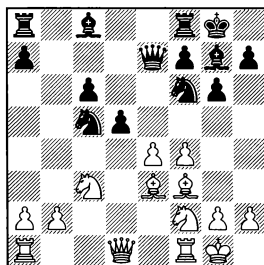
6...♖ed7 7.♖c3 ♗g7



I think that Black should attack d5 with both pawns – ...c6 and ...e6. It is still difficult to say in what order, but probably starting with the queen's pawn is better. White can-

not allow two exchanges on d5 because such a pawn structure is generally good for Black. Therefore he should be ready to take on c6 or e6 and reinforce the remaining pawn on e4. 8.♖f3 0-0 9.♗d3 does not look impressive as Black will have a tempo for ...♖c5: 9...c6 10.0-0 ♖c5 11.♗c2 cxd5 12.cxd5 e6! 13.dxe6 ♗xe6 14.♗e3=, Donchev-Ermekov, Sofia 1984. Grischuk's idea to lead the knight to f2 deserves more attention:

8.♖h3!? 0-0 9.♗e2 ♖c5 10.♖f2 e6 11.0-0 exd5 12.cxd5 c6 13.dxc6 bxc6 14.♗f3 ♞e7 15.♗e3 d5!?

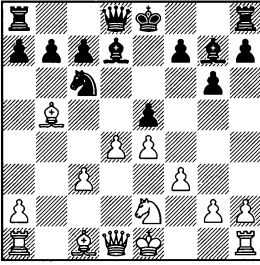


Play is double-edged. See **game 27 Grischuk-Giri**, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

B. 4.♖c3 d5 5.cxd5

5.e4!? dxe4 6.d5 ♖e5 7.fxe4 ♗g7 8.♖f3 ♖fd7 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♞d2 f5! was fine for Black in Caruana-Howell, Biel 2010.

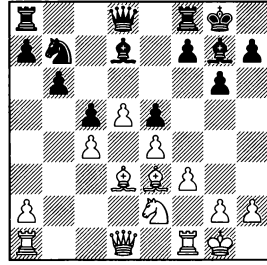
5...♖xd5 6.e4 ♖xc3 7.bxc3 e5! 8.♗b5! ♗d7 9.♖e2 ♗g7



10. ♖e3

10. ♖b1 ♘a5 11. dxe5 ♙xb5 12. ♗xb5 ♜xd1+ 13. ♙xd1 0-0-0+ 14. ♙c2 b6 15. f4 c5 16. h4 ♘c4 17. h5 ♗hg8 brings about a typical position with ample compensation for the pawn.

10... 0-0 11. d5 ♘a5 12. ♙d3 b6 13. 0-0 ♘b7 14. c4 c5



Now White is faced with a crucial choice. 15. ♙c3 f5 keeps a space advantage, but it is unclear what White can do further.

In Anand-Carlsen, Linares 2009, White preferred:

15. dxc6 ♙xc6

The game is level.

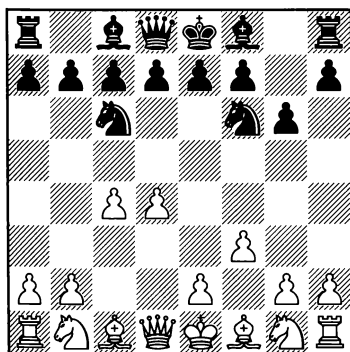
Step by Step

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

Black has three reasonable ways to avoid Modern Benoni structures that arise after 3...c5 4.d5 e6 and the Sämisch variation 3...♗g7 4.e4.

The most popular by far is 3...d5. People who play 3.f3 are usually best prepared for it. Lately Black has been testing 3...e5 occasionally, but I think that the most contemporary retort to White's sneaky move order is the even more tricky:

3...♘c6!

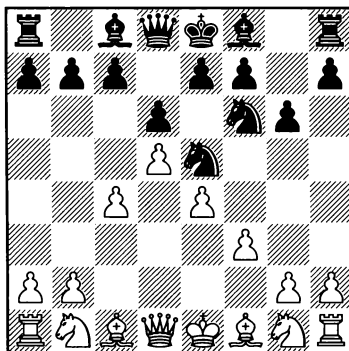


It looks like we are going to play ...e5, but that is not the whole truth. After 4.e4, we do push 4...e5, but in the event of 4.♘c3, we switch to the Grünfeld approach with 4...d5, exploiting the fact that

we can exchange on c3 after 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4. Finally, 4.d5 is not so crushing as it might seem at a first glance. The gaping main diagonal and the general weakness of the dark-squares in White's camp assures Black of good counterplay. In the Four Pawns Attack against the King's Indian, Black tries sometimes ...♘c6, hoping to provoke d5. White's best answer then, however, is e5, but not d5! In our case, the f-pawn is only halfway to f4, so he will probably spend later a tempo to advance it.

A. 4.d5; B. 4.♘c3; C. 4.e4.

A. 4.d5 ♘e5 5.e4 d6



A1. 6.♘e2; A2. 6.f4; A3. 6.♘c3

A1. 6.♠e2 c6!?

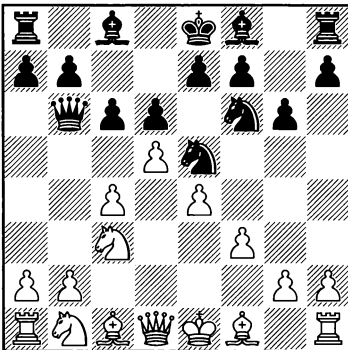
In this structure, Black will play ...c6 anyway, so it makes sense not to delay it. Our queen will go to b6 while the bishop could still be useful on f8 to protect the d6-pawn should we decide to undermine d5 with an early ...e6.

The other plan is to push first ...e6. It also leads to balanced play:

6...♠g7!? 7.♠ec3 0-0 8.♠e2 e6 9.0-0 (9.f4 is too committal. The game Nakamura-Svidler, Amsterdam 2009, went 9...♠ed7 10.0-0 exd5 11.cxd5 ♠e8 12.♠f3 ♠c5 13.♠e1 h5 14.h3, when instead of 14...b5!? 15.e5 dxe5 16.fxe5 ♠fd7 17.e6 ♠e5∞, the simple 14...c6 would have been better for Black.) 9...exd5 10.cxd5 c6 11.dxc6 bxc6±, Mamedyarov-Carlsen, Wch. blitz, Moscow 2009.

7.♠ec3

7.♠g3 ♠b6! questions the opponent how will he develop. 8.♠c3 ♠g7 9.♠b3, Chatalbashev-Dvoirys, Oberwart 2003. Here 9...♠fd7 would have led to Black's edge.

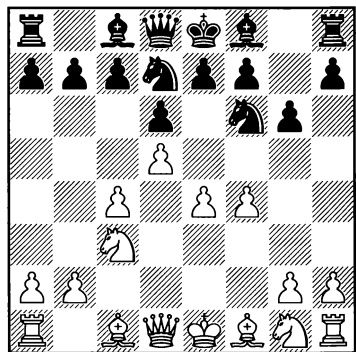
7...♠b6**8.♠b3**

This is too timid. White should test 8.♠e2 ♠g7 9.♠e3 ♠a5 10.♠d2 0-0 11.♠e2 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♠d7 13.0-0 a6=.

8...♠g7 9.♠xb6 axb6 10.♠e3 0-0 11.♠e2 (11.♠xb6 c5) 11...b5

I'm following the game Haba-Jansa, Czechia 2009. Black decides to sacrifice a pawn for the initiative. That is entirely in the spirit of the Grünfeld, but also he had a number of other good options. As a whole, Black can be satisfied from the opening.

12.cxb5 cxd5 13.exd5 ♠f5 14.♠d2 ♠fc8 15.♠f2 ♠d3+ 16.♠xd3 ♠xd3∞.

A2. 6.f4 ♠ed7 7.♠c3

This position is a blank spot in theory. I suppose White does not like it because his setup looks rather airy. That is not easy to exploit

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

though. Perhaps Black should try to exchange some pieces to avoid suffocation due to the lack of space:

7...♙g7 8.♜f3 0-0 9.♙e2 (9.♙d3 c6 10.0-0 cxd5 11.cxd5 b5⇒) 9...c6 (or 9...e6 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.0-0 ♖e7 12.♞h1 a5) 10.♙e3 ♜g4 11.♙d4 ♙xd4 12.♙xd4 ♙b6 13.♙xb6 ♜xb6=.

Another interesting option is 7...c6!?, transposing to **game 26 Kramnik-Navara**.

A3. 6.♜c3 ♙g7

6...c6!? is more challenging, but a bit too committal. Black gives the opponent a free hand in the centre:

7.f4 ♜ed7 8.♙e3!

After 8.♜f3, 8...♙a5 is an awkward pin (8...♙g7 9.♙e2 is considered in line C2.) 9.♙d3 ♜c5 10.0-0 cxd5 11.cxd5 ♜xd3 12.♙xd3 ♙g7=.

8...e5

8...♙a5 is not so efficient already as White has 9.♙d2. Still, the position after 9...♜c5 10.♙b1 ♙b6 11.♜a4 ♙c7 is unclear.

9.dxe6 fxe6

See the detailed commentaries of **game 26 Kramnik-Navara**, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010.

7.f4

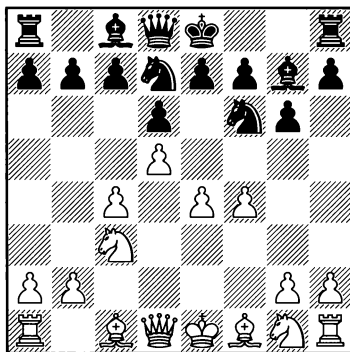
Slow development offers Black good counterplay on the queenside:

a) 7.♙g5 c6 8.♙d2 0-0 9.♙d1

♙b6 10.♙e3 ♙b4 11.b3 ♜fg4 12.♙d4 ♙h6 13.♙b2 c5, Dreev-Sutovsky, Internet ICC 2002.

b) 7.♜ge2 0-0 8.♜g3 c6 9.♙e3 (9.♙e2 ♙b6) 9...a6 10.♙e2 b5 11.cxb5 axb5 12.dxc6 b4 13.♜d5 ♜xc6 14.0-0 ♜xd5 15.exd5 ♜e5⇒.

7....♜ed7



8.♜h3!?

A Grischuk's idea. The knight hurries to f2. From there it will bolster the pawn centre so that White's space advantage could begin to tell.

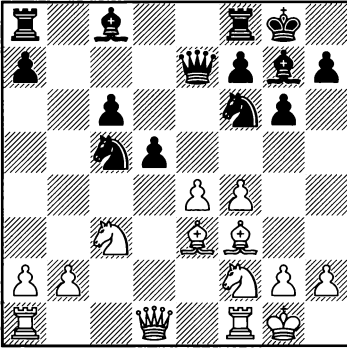
8.♜f3 0-0 9.♙d3 gives Black a tempo for ...♜c5 so the plan with ...c6 becomes more attractive: 9...c6 (9...e6 10.dxe6! has never been tested) 10.0-0 ♜c5 11.♙c2 cxd5 12.cxd5 e6! 13.dxe6 ♙xe6 14.♙e3=, Donchev-Ermenkov, Sofia 1984.

8...0-0 9.♙e2 ♜c5 10.♜f2 e6

It looks sensible to neutralise White's spatial advantage as quickly as possible. After 10...♙e8 11.0-0 e5 12.dxe6 ♙xe6 13.♙c2 ♙d7 14.♙f3 ♙c6 15.♙d2 a5 16.♙fe1, Grischuk-

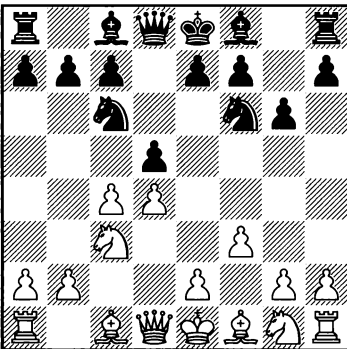
Kurnosov, Moscow 2010, White consolidated while retaining some pull.

11.0-0 exd5 12.cxd5 c6 13.dxc6 bxc6 14.♙f3 ♖e7 15.♙e3 d5!?



Play is double-edged. See **game 27 Grischuk-Giri**, Wijk aan Zee 2011.

B. 4.♘c3 d5



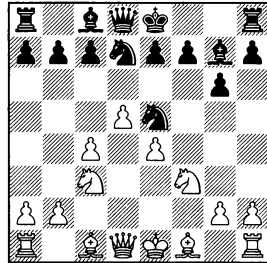
5.cxd5

In Nice 2010, Kramnik surprised Dominguez with 5.♙g5?! ♙g7 6.e3. Black lacked the courage for 6...0-0! (choosing the passive 6...e6 instead) 7.♙xf6 (7.♚d2 ♙e8 8.cxd5 ♘xd5) 7...exf6 where Black will quickly develop an overwhelming initiative:

8.cxd5 ♘e7 9.e4 (9.♙c4 ♘f5) 9...f5 10.♚d2 fxe4 11.fxe4 c6;

8.♘xd5 ♙e8 9.♘e2 (or 9.♙f2 f5 10.f4 b5) 9...f5 10.♚d2 b5→ 11.♘ef4 bxc4 12.♙xc4 g5 13.♘e2 ♙e6 14.♘ec3 ♘a5.

5.e4!? is an enterprising idea which attracted several super GMs. After 5...dxe4 6.d5 ♘e2 7.fxe4 ♙g7 (7...c6?! 8.♘f3) 8.♘f3 ♘fd7 we reach the critical position:



The first game that featured this position, Rodshtein-Bykhovsky, Rishon le Zion 2004, went 9.♙e2 0-0 10.♙f4 c6 11.♚d2 ♚b6 12.♙e3 ♚b4!, with counterplay. White should have played 12.0-0-0 though. I suppose that play in the centre is more safe and clear than queenside stabs, for instance: 10...♘xf3!? 11.gxf3 f5! 12.♚d2 fxe4 13.fxe4 ♘e5 14.0-0-0 ♚d6, with an initiative.

A new attempt to improve White's play was Caruana-Howell,

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

Biel 2010: 9.♙e3 0-0 10.♗d2, but again 10...f5! proved to be strong: 11.♙h6 ♘xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♘e5 13.♙e2 ♙xh6 14.♗xh6 fxe4 15.♘xe4 e6 16.0-0-0. Here 16...exd5!? is probably slightly more precise than 16...♗e7, which allowed 17.d6. After 17.♗xd5 ♗e7 18.♘g5 ♘c6 19.♖e1 ♗g7, play would have transposed to the game which was fine for Black.

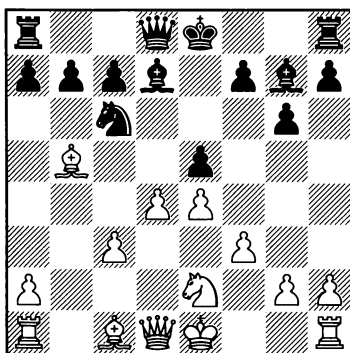
5...♘d5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 e5!

This is the right plan so Black has no reason to delay it. Still, 7...♙g7 8.♙d3 (8.♙b5 ♙d7 9.♘e2 e5) 8...0-0 9.♘e2 e5!? is also possible, as in the game Ward-Seel, Catalan Bay 2004. It went 10.d5 ♘a5 11.♙a3 ♖e8 12.♙b4 b6 13.♙b5 ♙d7 14.♙xd7 ♗xd7 15.♙xa5 bxa5 16.0-0 ♖ab8 17.♗c2 ♙f8, with an easy game for Black.

8.♙b5!

8.d5 ♘a5 does not set Black any problems.

8...♙d7 9.♘e2 ♙g7



10.♙e3

10.♖b1 offers Black a choice. He can allow the opponent to split his queenside pawns by 10...0-0 11.♙xc6 bxc6 (or try the “improved” version of this idea – 10...♗h4+ 11.g3 ♗e7, when 12.♙xc6+ bxc6 13.♗b3! ♗e6 14.♙a3 ♗xb3 15.♗xb3 f5 is about equal).

A more flexible continuation is 10...♘a5. This move is connected with an interesting pawn sacrifice: 11.dxe5 ♙xb5 12.♖xb5 ♗xd1+ 13.♙xd1 0-0-0+ 14.♙c2 b6 15.f4 c5 16.h4 ♘c4 17.h5 ♖hg8. Despite the extra pawn, White lacks any idea what to do further and he can easily find himself in a bad position. Instead, in Kuzubov-Timofeev, Ohrid 2009, he preferred the noncommittal 11.♙d3 ♗h4+ 12.g3 ♗e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♙e3 ♖ad8 15.♗c1 b6 16.♗f2, but Black took over the initiative with 16...f5.

10...0-0 11.d5

Or 11.0-0? ♘xd4!; 11.♖b1!? ♘a5! 12.♙d3 c5.

11...♘a5 12.♙d3 b6

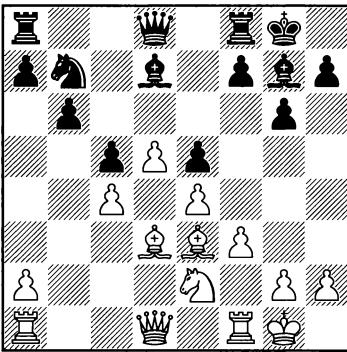
Black had a wide choice here. For instance, he could have played 12...♙h6!?. Then 13.♙xh6 ♗h4+ 14.♘g3 ♗xh6 15.♗e2 b6 16.♙a6 ♙c8! should be equal so White would probably answer 13.♙f2.

12...♗h4+ 13.♙f2 ♗e7 does not change the character of position either – 14.0-0 ♙h6 15.c4 c5 16.dxc6 ♙xc6 17.♘c3 b6 18.♘d5 ♗d6.

13.0-0 ♖b7

We know from the previous part that 13...c5 14.c4 (14.♖d2 f5) 14...f5 should be OK for Black if he can close the kingside with ...f4. On the other hand, 15.exf5 gxf5 would give Black a dynamic centre. Carlsen postpones this plan for a while.

14.c4 c5



Finally Black wants to define the pawn structure in the centre. The plan with ...c6 leaves White the better chances: 14...♖e7 15.♖d2 ♖ac8 16.♗c1 c6 17.♗b3 cxd5 18.cxd5 ♗d6 19.♖ac1 f5 20.♖b4 ♗f6 21.♗d2±.

15.dxc6

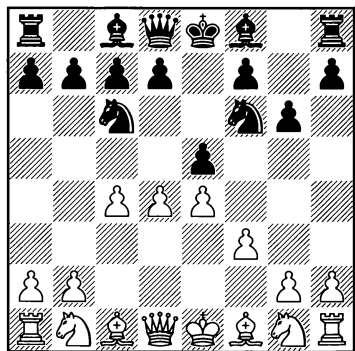
Engines tend to overestimate space advantage so they prefer 15.♗c3, but what should White do after 15...f5? Then 16.♖d2 f4 17.♗f2 g5 cannot be appealing so he should take on f5: 16.exf5 gxf5 17.♖c2 ♗d6 when it turns out that the threat of ...e4 is very unpleasant, e.g. 18.♖ae1 ♖f6 19.♗d2 a6 20.a4 e4! 21.fxe4

♖d4+ 22.♗h1 fxe4 23.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 24.♗xe4 ♗xe4 25.♗xe4 ♖f2, with a strong initiative. White is lucky to have a draw with 26.♗xh7+ ♗h8 27.♗d3 ♖g4 (27...♗xa4 28.♖xa4 ♖xd3 29.♖e8+ ♖f8 30.♖h5+ ♗g8 31.♖d1 ♖xc4∞ is too risky.) 28.♗f1 ♖d4 29.♗d3=.

After the exchange on c6, play was level in Anand-Carlsen, Linares 2009:

15...♗xc6 16.♗c3 ♗d7 17.♗d5 ♗e6 18.♖d2 ♖c8 19.♖fc1 f6 20.♗h1 ♗h8 21.♖ab1 ♖f7 22.♖e2 ♗f8 23.♗d2 ♗d6 24.♗c3 ♗g8 25.♖d2 ♖f8 26.♗e2 ♗d8 27.♗d1 ♖c8 28.♗dc1 ♗d8 29.♗d1. Draw.

C. 4.e4 e5



5.dxe5

Alternatively:

a) 5.d5 ♗d4 6.♗e2 (6.♗e3 ♗c5! 7.♗f2 ♖e7 or 6.♗c3 ♗h5 7.♗e3 ♗c5 8.♗f2 d6 9.a3 0-0 10.b4 ♗b6 11.♗a4 f5±, Abdelmoumen-Van Bommel, IECG 1999.) 6...♗c5 7.♗xd4 ♗xd4

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

8.♗c3 (8.♗a3 ♗h5 9.g3 d6 10.♗c2 ♗b6 11.♗e3 f5!=) 8...♗h5 9.g3 d6 10.♗d3 c6!↑, A.Kuzmin-Kurnosov, St. Petersburg 2004.

b) 5.♗e2 exd4 6.♗xd4 ♗g7 7.♗xc6

7.♗e3? loses to 7...♗xe4 8.fxe4 ♖h4+ 9.♗f2 ♖xe4+ 10.♗e2 ♗b4.

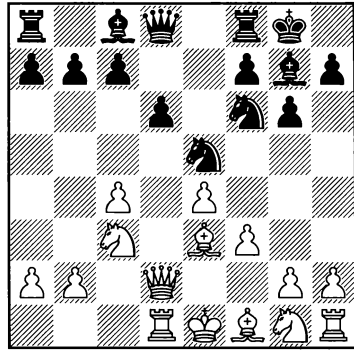
7...bxc6 8.♗c3 0-0 9.♗e2 d5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.exd5 ♗b7 12.0-0 ♗xd5 13.♗e4 c5, with an edge for Black in Bercys-Shabalov, rapid, USA, 2009.

5...♗xe5 6.♗e3

Of course White should not allow 6...♗c5.

6...♗g7 7.♗c3 0-0 8.♖d2 d6 9.♗d1

This position occurred in Laznicka-Dvoiry, Pardubice 2007. Black offered a typical for the King's Indian pawn sac:



9...c6!? 10.b3 (Perhaps White had to take it: 10.♖xd6!? ♖xd6 11.♗xd6 ♗e6 12.c5 ♗fd8=.) and another one: 10...d5!? (10...♖a5!? 11.♗a4 ♖xd2+ 12.♗xd2 d5) 11.♗ge2 ♖a5! 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.exd5 ♗e8±.

However, in the diagram position, 9...♗e8! 10.b3 a6! would have been even better since White cannot complete development. For instance, 11.c5 will be met by 11...d5 while 11.♗e2 is not any better due to 11...b5! 12.cxb5 axb5 13.♗xb5 d5.

Part 12

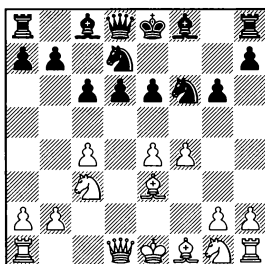
Complete Games

26. Kramnik–Navara

Khanty–Mansiysk 27.09.2010

In this game, Navara opts for the challenging plan with ...c6. It is totally unexplored and I hoped that an encounter at such a high level would shed some light on it. Unfortunately, the game posed more questions than it answered.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 ♘c6 4.d5
♘e5 5.e4 d6 6.♘c3 c6 7.f4 ♘ed7
8.♙e3! e5 9.dxe6 fxe6

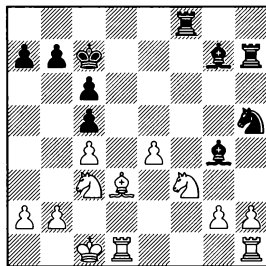


10.♘h3

White wants to control g4, but 10.♘f3!? e5 11.f5! (11.♙e2 ♘g4; 11.♘g5 ♙e7) was also possible. As a rule, this structure is in White's favour, so Black should find something concrete.

11...♘g4?! 12.♙g5 ♙b6 (12...♙e7 13.h3!) 13.♙e2± or 11...♙e7?! 12.♙e2 ♘c5 13.0-0 → are gloom.

11...♘c5 looks hopeless after 12.♙xc5 dxc5 13.♙xd8+ ♘xd8 14.♘xe5 ♘c7 15.fxg6 ♙g7 16.gxh7 ♙xh7 17.0-0-0, but it turns out that White cannot easily cope with the activity of Black's long-range pieces. I suppose that 17...♘h5 18.♘f3 ♙g4 19.♙d3 ♙f8 gives sufficient compensation to neutralise the enemy's material advantage. For instance:



20.♘e2 (20.e5 ♙hh8 21.♙e4 ♘f4 22.g3 ♘g6 23.♙df1 ♘xe5 24.♘xe5 ♙xe5 25.♙xf8 ♙xf8 26.♘d1 ♙d4 27.♙d3 ♙h8=) 20...♙xf3 21.gxf3 ♙xf3 22.♙hf1 ♙xf1 23.♙xf1 ♙e5=.

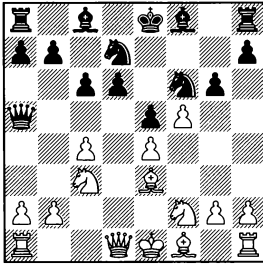
10...e5 11.f5 ♙a5

11...♘c5 12.♙f3 gxh5 13.exh5 e4 14.♙f4 ♘h5 15.♙f2 ♘f6 16.♙xc5 dxc5 17.♙d1 ♙e7 18.♙e2 ♙g8 19.♙h4 ♙d7 20.♙h5+ favours White.

12.fxg6?!

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

A strange move, which does not fit in with White's previous play. I have no idea why Kramnik rejected the obvious 12.♖f2!:



White seems to gain a stable edge after:

12...♖c5 13.♙d2 ♜d8 (13...gxf5 14.b4; 13...♜b6 14.b4 ♖cd7 15.g4±) 14.♜f3;

12...d5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.♙d2 ♜b6 15.fxg6±;

12...gxf5 13.exf5 d5 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.♙d2±;

In these examples, Black is over-extended in the centre, and his king desperately lacks a safe haven.

White's mistake steers the game into unclear complications. Most importantly, the terrible threat of g2-g4 is no longer on the agenda.

12...hxc6 13.a3 ♜c7

13...♖xe4 loses to 14.♜g4 ♖xc3 15.♜xg6+ ♖d8 16.♖g5.

14.b4 a5!?

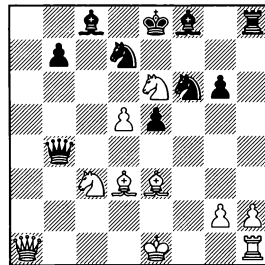
Navara conducts the game in the sharpest possible manner, obviously seeking to create chaos all over the board. Instead, he had the

sound manoeuvre 14...♙e7 15.♙e2 ♖f8, heading for e6.

15.♖g5 axb4 16.axb4 ♜xa1 17.♜xa1 d5 18.♖e6 ♜d6 19.exd5

In such open positions with queens, knights are often more valuable than bishops. 19.♜a8 ♜xe6 20.♜xc8+ ♖f7 21.cxd5 cxd5 22.exd5 ♜g4 gives Black the initiative.

19...cxd5 20.cxd5 ♜xb4 21.♙d3



21...e4

It is never too late for being mated! 21...♖xd5 22.♙g5!? ♜xc3+?? 23.♜xc3 ♖xc3 eliminates queens, but unfortunately the black king goes down, too – 24.♙xg6 mate!

22.♙b5 ♙d6 23.♙d4 ♖e7 24.♖e2 ♜xh2 25.♜b1

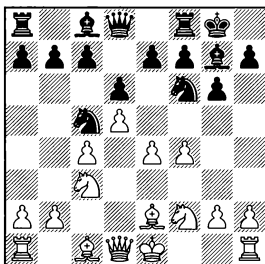
Now the game suddenly ends in peace.

25...♜a3 26.♜xa3 ♙xa3 27.♙xd7 ♙xd7 28.♙xf6+ ♖xf6 29.♜xb7 ♜xg2+ 30.♖f1 ♜c2 31.♖xe4+ ♖e5 32.♜xd7 1/2-1/2.

27. Grischuk–Giri

Wijk aan Zee 25.01.2011

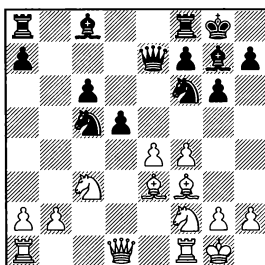
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 ♜c6 4.d5
 ♞e5 5.e4 d6 6.♜c3 ♙g7 7.f4 ♞ed7
 8.♜h3 0-0 9.♙e2 ♜c5 10.♜f2



10...e6

It may be tempting to use the open main diagonal and try something on the queenside, but in the long run White's overwhelming superiority in the centre should prevail. Instead, Black should quickly undermine the enemy centre. White cannot advance further since his knight on f2 has only defensive functions and it does not support ideas with e5.

11.0-0 exd5 12.cxd5 c6
 13.dxc6 bxc6 14.♙f3 ♖e7 15.♙e3
 d5!

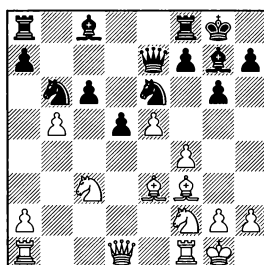


In only four moves, Black changed dramatically the situation in the centre. The only question now is whether he will be able to defend his d5-pawn.

16.e5 ♜fd7 17.b4 ♜e6 18.b5

17.♜e2 would give Black time to consolidate after 17...♜e6 (17...f6?! is basically a good idea, but probably Black should find a better timing for it, when he will be better developed: 18.b4 ♜e6 19.b5 fxe5 20.bxc6 exf4 21.♜xf4 ♜xf4 22.♙xf4 ♜b6 23.♙e1 ♙e6 24.♙d2 ♙xa1 25.♙xa1 ♙ac8 26.♜g4 h5 27.♜e5 offers a strong initiative for the exchange.) 18.♙c1 ♙b7 19.♙d2 f6 20.exf6 ♙xf6=.

18...♜b6



19.f5

Perhaps variations like 19.bxc6 d4 20.♙xd4 ♙d8 21.♜b5 ♙a6 22.♜d6 ♙xf1 23.♜xf1 ♜xf4 convinced Grischuk that the f-pawn was likely to fall anyway so he decides at least to weaken Black's castling position.

19...gxf5 20.♙xb6 axb6

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3

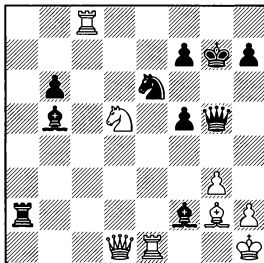
21.bxc6 ♙xe5 22.♟xd5 ♚h4 23.g3
♚g5 24.♙g2

White wanted to anticipate ...f4 or ...♟d4, I guess. Still, 24.♟d3 (24.♟xb6 ♙xa1 25.♚xa1 ♜a3) 24...♙xa1 (24...♙d4+ 25.♜h1 ♜a5 26.♟3f4±) 25.♚xa1 ♚g7 26.♟e5 ♜a5∞ looks more natural. After the text, Black could have taken the exchange: 24...♙xa1 25.♚xa1 ♚g7, with a solid position.

24...♙a6 25.♜e1 ♙d4 26.♜c1
♙b5 27.c7 ♜xa2

The engines say that Black is holding after 27...♜fc8 28.♚b3 ♙xf2+ 29.♜xf2 ♚d2+ 30.♜g1 ♜xa2 31.♚xa2 ♚xa2 32.♟e7+ ♜f8 33.♟xc8 ♚d2=, but it is difficult to be sure about that 6 moves in advance. Most humans would prefer to stay active.

28.c8♚ ♙xf2+ 29.♜h1 ♜xc8
30.♜xc8+ ♜g7



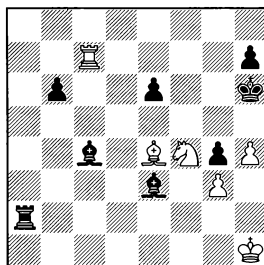
31.♜xe6

It seems that White is getting impatient or his time was drained to the last minute. 31.♚b1!? ♜a5

32.♜d1 ♙d4 33.♚b4 ♚g4 34.♜e1 ♙a6∞ would have retained the tension, but it is practically impossible to guess over the board what is going on with all these hanging pieces.

31...fxe6 32.♟f4 ♜h6 33.♚b1

White could have set an insidious trap with 33.♙c6, when Giri was to find the only defence 33...♙e3! 34.♙xb5 ♙xf4=. Look, however, at the position after 33...♙c4?! 34.♜c7!. Suddenly, Black has no defence against ♚d7, for instance, 34...♙e3 35.h4 ♚g4 36.♚xg4 fxg4 37.♙e4



Not only is White threatening with mate, but the c4-bishop is hanging!

33...♜a5 34.♟xe6?? (34.♚c1!=)
34...♚f6 35.♚c1+ f4 36.♜c3 ♙e3?

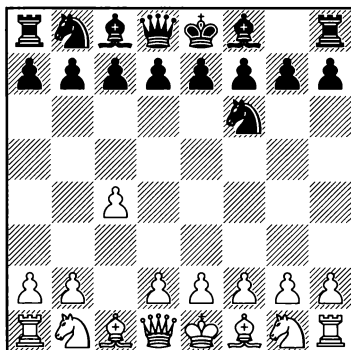
The opponents were definitely in time trouble. 36...♚xe6 was winning: 37.♚xf4+ ♜g6 38.♙e4+ ♜g7 39.♜c7+ ♙d7-+.

37.♚e1 ♙f2 38.♚c1 ♙e3 39.♚e1
♚xe6 40.gxf4 ♚f6 41.♚xe3 ♜a1+
42.♜c1 ♙d7 43.h3 ♜xc1+ 44.♚xc1
♚d4 45.♚c7 ♙f5 46.♚e7 ♚xf4
47.♚f6+ ♜h5 48.♚xb6 1/2-1/2.

Part 13

The English Anti-Grünfeld

1.c4  f6



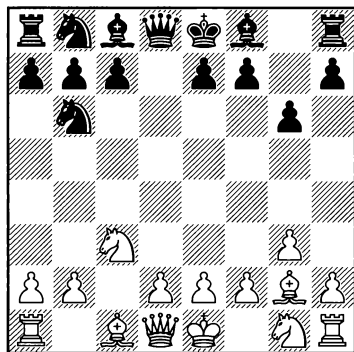
Part 13

Step by Step

This part aims to serve you as a guide in some of the most popular Anti-Grünfeld systems. It cannot present a full move-by-move repertoire as we should have dealt then with a good half of the theory of closed openings.

In principle, the most challenging retorts to 1.c4 should be 1...c5 or 1...e5!. That is why White often prefers the move order with 1.♟f3. Then 1...d5 2.d4 would throw us out of the Grünfeld, so we should answer (apart of 1...c5!? of course) 1...♞f6 2.c4 g6 when White has various options. I examine the most important of them in lines B – E. I reserved line A for the event when White fianchettoes his king's bishop before developing the knight to f3.

A. 1.c4 ♞f6 2.♞c3 d5 3.cxd5 ♞xd5 4.g3 g6 5.♙g2 ♞b6



6.d3!

Black can neutralise flank advances like 6.a4 with 6...a5, and 6.h4 with 6...h6 when 7.f4?! ♞8d7 8.h5 gxh5 9.♞xh5 ♞g8 10.♞f2 ♞f6 would be equal – Pribyl.

6...♙g7 7.♙e3!

The inclusion of 7.h4 h6! is in Black's favour:

8.♙d2 (After 8.♙e3, Black has the strong manoeuvre 8...♞8d7! aiming for ...♞f6-g4.) 8...♞c6 (Do not hurry to castle 8...0-0 9.♞c1 ♞h7, since White would have 10.f4 Δ h5!?→, Benko) 9.♞c1 ♞d4 10.♞f3 ♞xf3+ 11.♙xf3 c6 12.0-0 ♙e6 13.♞e4 ♞d7. White is hampering Black's castling, but he cannot keep the ♞-♙ battery for ever, for instance, 14.♙g2 ♞b6. He can play immediately 14.♙c3 0-0 15.♙xg7 ♞xg7 16.b4 ♙d5=.

Alternatively, 7.♙d2!? ♞c6 8.♞c1 ♞d4 9.♞f3 e5.

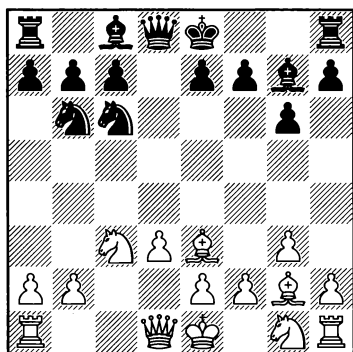
7...♞c6!

White's attack on the h-file should not be underestimated: 7...0-0?! 8.♞d2 e5 9.♙h6!? (9.h4!? h5 10.♙h6 ♞e8 11.♙xg7 ♞xg7 12.♞c1

The English Anti-Grünfeld

c6 13.♘f3 ♘a6 14.0-0 ♘c7 15.♟fd1 f6 16.e3 a5 17.♟c2 ♟e7 18.♘e4± Miles-Panno, Wijk aan Zee 1978) 9...♘d8d7 (9...♟e7 10.♟xg7 ♘xg7 11.♟c1±, Taimanov-Konopka, Erevan 1986) 10.h4 ♘f6 11.♟xg7 ♘xg7 12.h5 ♘xh5 13.♟f3. Remember that White can always castle left!

It is safer to delay castling, even at the cost of split pawns on the queenside.



A1. 8.♟d2; A2. 8.♟xc6+; A3. 8.♟c1; A4. 8.♟c1; A5. 8.♘f3.

A1. 8.♟d2 ♘d4 9.♟c1

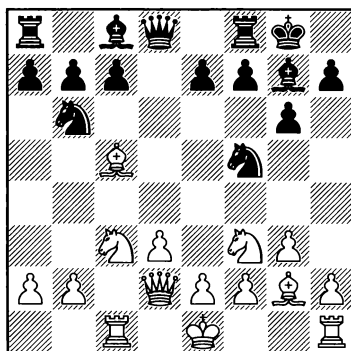
9.h4 could be stopped by the thematic 9...h6. It has the advantage of controlling g5, but 10...h5 is also possible – 11.♟c1 c6 12.0-0 ♟g4 13.♘g5 0-0 14.♘h2 ♟e7 15.♟ce1 ♟ad8 16.♟c1 ♘d7 17.♘ge4 ♘c5 18.♘xc5 ♟xc5 19.♟h6 ♘b5 20.♟xg7 ♘xg7=, Conquest-Areshchenko, Coventry 2005.

9.♘f3 e5 10.♟c1 deprives White of the right to castle queenside so we can already play 10...0-0.

Then 11.♟h6 ♟xh6 12.♟xh6 ♘xf3+! 13.♟xf3 c6 14.h4 f6 15.g4 ♟e7 would be roughly equal, while 11.0-0 ♟e8 12.♟h6 ♟h8 13.♘xd4 exd4 14.♘e4 c6 (Or 14...♘d5 15.♟g5 f6 16.♟h6 c6 17.e3 f5 18.♟g5 dxe3 19.fxe3 ♟c7 20.♘c5 ♟d6 21.♘h1 ♟f6 22.e4 ♟xg5 23.♟xg5 ♟e7=, Arkhipov-Leko, Nettetal 1992.) 15.♟c2 would lead to a typical English position where Black puts a knight on d5 and manoeuvres in the centre.

9...♘f5 10.♟c5 0-0 11.♘f3

11.e3 ♟e8 (In his book, Marin gives the plan with ...c5 – 11...♘d7 12.♟a3 ♘e5 13.♟d1 ♟b8 14.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 15.♟xf3 b6 16.0-0 c5 17.b4 cxb4 18.♟xb4 a5 19.♟a3 b5 20.♟b2 b4±, Grigorian-Gulko, Soviet Union 1974) 12.♘ge2 e5 13.0-0 c6 14.b3 a5 15.♟fd1 ♘d7 16.♟a3 ♘b6 17.♟c5 ♘d7 was equal in Gritsak-Zezulkin, Zakopane 2000.



11...c6

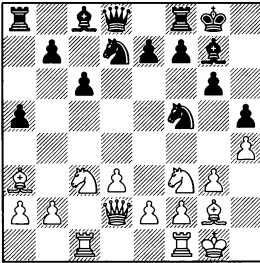
Another possible plan is connected with ...c5, for instance: 11...♘d7 12.♟a3 c5?!. Then 13.0-0,

as in Dannevig-Bae, Bergen 2000, would be fine for Black in view of 13...a5! 14.b3 ♖b8 14.♟a4 b6. However, White could anticipate this idea with 13.b4! enjoying an initiative due to his better pawn centre. Black can try to trick the opponent with the move order, starting with:

11...a5!?

Then 12.0-0 c5! would be nice, so White should try other ideas. 12.e4? loses the exchange to 12...♟h6. 12.e3 c6 is also equal. The only sensible attempt seems to be:

12.h4, provoking weaknesses in Black's castling position. Then 12...h5 13.0-0 c6 (13...♟h6 14.♞c2) leads to the following position:



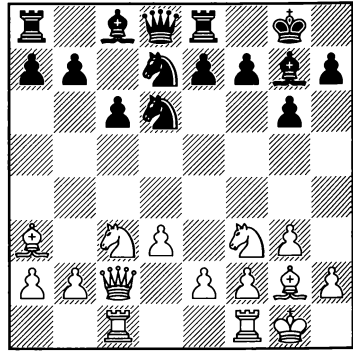
White is a couple of moves ahead in development, but he cannot hit anything in near future. Thus we'll have time to consolidate, for instance, 13.♟e4 ♟f6=.

12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♞c2

'The queen was not placed well on d2 already. It deprived the knight from an important square and it may get under an attack with ...♟c4 or ...♟h6.' – Marin.

13...♟d7 14.♟a3 ♟d6

14...♟e5 15.♟xe5 ♟xe5 16.e3 ♟d6! is totally equal. (Marin cites only the game Vilela-Pribyl, Trnava 1979 which saw 16...♟g7.), for instance: 17.♞a4 ♟e6 18.♟e4 ♟xa3 19.♞xa3 ♟d5 20.♞fd1 ♞c7 21.♞c3 ♟d6=. But I do not see any reason why Black should be playing for equalisation in this position:



What has White achieved?! The dubious manoeuvre ♟e3-c5-a3 definitely misplaced the bishop. It is funny, but White should now think how to fianchetto the unfortunate piece to b2 since on a3 it would be exposed to attacks, for instance, 15.b3 ♟xc3 16.♞xc3 ♟b5 17.♞b2 ♞a5 18.♟c5 ♟xc5 19.♟xc5 ♞a3=. Or 15.♟a4 ♞a5 (heading for h5) 16.♟c5? ♟b5!. White can also try 15.♟d2 ♟f6, and again 16.♟a4 would face 16...♟b5, while 16.♞fd1 ♟e6 would leave White wondering what to do further.

The bottom line is that White cannot be any better with not a single piece before the third rank.

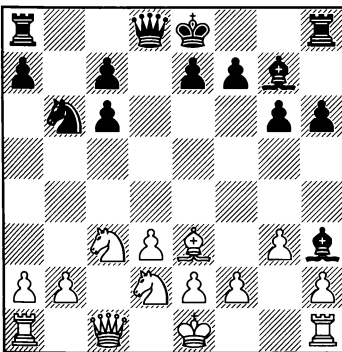
A2. 8.♗xc6+ bxc6

This exchange has been a subject for discussion for many years. On the one hand, Black's pawn formation on the queenside is irreparably damaged, on the other hand, the weakened light squares in White's camp on the opposite wing will become a target. A very important nuance is that Black has not castled yet so 9.♖d2 will be attacked with 9...h5!. Finally, taking by pawn toward the centre creates a good outpost for Black's knight on d5. Grünfeld players are commonly accustomed to sharp dynamic play so they should be able to handle successfully this type of positions.

9.♖c1

Black obtained good counterplay in Nakamura-Mamedyarov, Mainz 2009, after 9.♖c1 ♗g4! 10.♖d2 h5 11.h3 ♗f5 12.♗f3 ♖d7 13.h4 ♗g4 14.♗g5 ♗d5 15.♗a4 ♗xe3 16.♗xe3 0-0 17.♗e4 ♖d5.

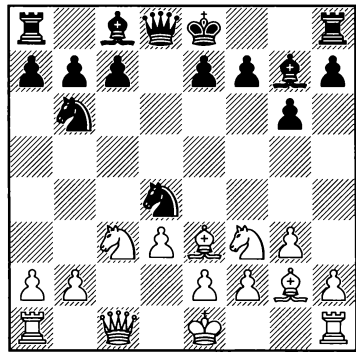
9...h6 10.♗f3 ♗h3 11.♗d2
(11.♗g1 ♗g4 12.♗d2 ♗d5)



11...0-0 12.♗de4 ♗h7 13.f3
♗d5 14.♗c5 ♗e6 15.♗f2 ♗h3
16.♗d1

This position occurred in Malakhov-T.L.Petrosian, Dubai 2010. Black could have intercepted the initiative with 16...f5 17.♗c5 ♖d6.

A3. 8.♖c1!? ♗d4! 9.♗f3



9...♗xf3+!

9...♗f5 is also possible, but Black should be happy to trade one of his knights. Note that 9...e5 should be avoided in these positions. We should first complete development, neutralise the enemy's initiative, and only then could we think about advancing in the centre. Black's play in the game Brenke-Naumann, Lippstadt 1999 is an excellent example to follow:

10.♗xf3 c6 11.♗h6 ♗xh6
12.♖xh6 ♖d4 13.0-0 ♗e6
14.♗fc1 ♗d7 15.♗g2 ♗f6 16.h3
♗g8 17.♖d2 ♗f6=.

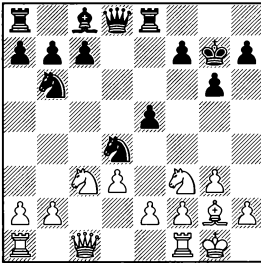
A4. 8.♖c1

White hopes to see Black castling and then take on c6. We should not oblige though. We answer 8...♘d4! 9.♗d2 ♘f5 and play transposes to line A1. I mention 8.♖c1 separately only to help the readers of Marin's book on the English where it is the main line.

A5. 8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0

Minor alternatives are:

a) 9.♗c1 e5 10.♗h6 ♖e8! (10...♘d4 and 10...♗e7 are also possible.) 11.♙xg7 ♘xg7 12.0-0 ♘d4



13.♖e1

The e2-pawn needs protection. That is well seen in the variation 13.b4 ♙g4! 14.♘xd4 exd4 15.♗f4 ♗d7 16.♘b5 ♙xe2 17.♘xc7 ♙xf1 18.♙xf1 ♖ac8 19.♘xe8+ ♖xe8=.

13...a5! (aimed against b4) 14.♘xd4 exd4 15.♘e4 c6=.

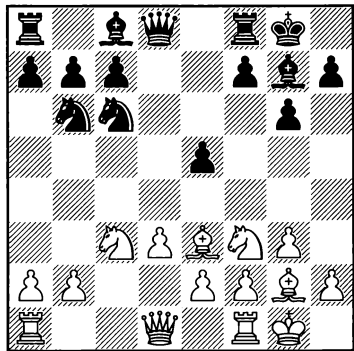
b) 9.♗d2 e5 10.♗h6 ♘d4! 11.♙xg7 ♘xf3+ 12.♙xf3 ♘xg7 13.0-0 (13.h4 h6 14.b4 c6 15.♗b2 ♗d4 16.0-0 a5 17.a3 axb4 18.axb4 ♗e6=,

Ribli-Pribyl, Germany 1989) 13...c6 14.b4 ♗e6. The game is level, for instance: 15.b5 cxb5; 15.♖fc1 ♘c4 16.♗c2 ♘d6 17.♗b2 f6 18.♘e4 ♘xe4 19.♙xe4 ♖f7, Robatsch-Polugaevsky, Sochi 1974.

9...e5

9...h6!?, preventing bishop exchange, is worth considering: 10.♗d2 ♘h7 11.♖fc1 e5 12.b4 ♘d4 13.♖ab1 (13.♘e4?! ♘d5!) 13...♗e6 (13...♙g4 14.♘e1 ♖b8) 14.♘e4 ♘d5 15.♘c5∞.

9...♖e8 is often played to avoid the modern variation 9...e5 10.b4. I do not find it dangerous, but that is a matter of taste. In most games play transposes later to our main line.



A51. 10.♗d2; A52. 10.♖c1; A53. 10.a4; A54. ♗c1; A55. 10.b4!?.

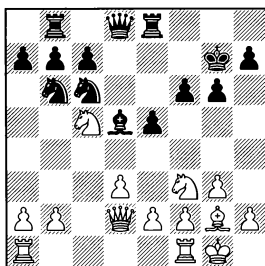
A51. 10.♗d2 ♖e8 11.♙g5

Or 11.♗h6 ♗h8 12.♖fc1 ♘d4 13.♘xd4 exd4 14.♘e4 ♘d5 15.h4 c6

The English Anti-Grünfeld

16.♔f3 f5 17.♘g5 ♔g7! and the game is balanced, Tkachiev-Cheparinov, Khanty Mansiysk 2007.

11...f6 12.♘h6 ♔e6 13.♘xg7 ♗xg7 14.♘e4 ♔d5 15.♘c5 ♖b8



16.e3

Perhaps White should try 16.e4 ♔f7 17.♖c3 ♗d6 18.♗fc1 ♖ed8 (18...♘d7 19.♘xb7 ♖xb7 20.♖xc6 ♖xb2 21.♔f1 ♖xc6 22.♗xc6 ♖c8) 19.♔f1 ♘d4 20.♘xd4 exd4 21.♖c2 ♘d7.

16...♘d7 17.♘a4 ♘b6 18.♘c5 ♘d7=

White seemed unable to show any plan in Lenic-Areshchenko, New Delhi, 15.01.2011.

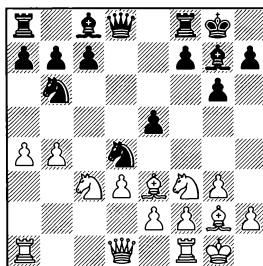
A52. 10. ♖c1 ♘d4 11.♘e4 h6 12.♘c5 c6

Black has not any problems. White's only plan is linked with b4, but 13.b4 could be attacked by 13...a5 so he should play first 13.♔d2. Cvitan-Kolbus, Biel 2006, went 13...♖e8 14.b4 ♘d5=.

A53. 10.a4 a5 11.♘xb6 cxb6 12.♘d2 ♖e8 13.♘c4 ♔f8 14.♗h1 ♔e6=, D.Kovalev-Areshchenko, Alushta 2007.

A54. 10.♖c1 ♖e8 11.♘h6 ♘h8 12.♖e1 ♘e7 13.♘e4 ♔e6 14.♘c5 ♔d5 15.e4 ♔c6 16.♖c3 ♖d6 17.♖ac1=, Moldobaev-Teske, Frunze 1989.

A55. 10.b4 ♘d4 11.a4



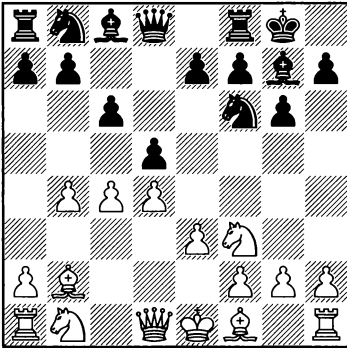
This position is nearly unexplored. At the European championship, my student Kadric easily equalised after:

11...c6 12.a5 (12.♘d2 ♔e6 13.b5 ♘d5=) 12...♘xf3+ 13.♔xf3 ♘d5 14.♘xd5 cxd5 15.♖c1 ♔h3 16.♖e1 ♖d7 17.♖c5 ♔e6 18.♖c2 ♖fc8= 19.♖c1 ♔f8! 20.♖xc8 ♖xc8 21.♖xc8 ♖xc8 22.♖xc8 ♔xc8 – draw, Yakovich (2546)-Kadric (2379), ECC, 28.03.2011.

11...a5 presents a more aggressive approach: 12.b5 c6 (It would be interesting to see what White is going to oppose to the thematic Sicilian plan 12...f5!? aiming for ...f4.)

13.bxc6 bxc6 14.♖b1 ♕g4 15.♗d2
♗d5 (15...♖b8=) 16.♗xd4 exd4
17.♗xd5 cxd5 18.♖b5 ♖e7 19.♖e1
♗d7 20.♖xd5 ♗c6 21.♖b5 ♗xb5
22.♗xa8 ♖xa8 23.axb5 ♖b4=.

**B. 1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4
♗g7 4.♗b2 0-0 5.e3 c6 6.d4 d5**



This is a sideline of the Schlechter System. White's bishop was committed to b2 too early. In many lines it would have stayed better on a3.

7.♗bd2

This move, as well as 7.♗c3, allows 7...a5, but 7.a4!? is not impressive either: 7...♗f5 8.♗bd2 ♗bd7 9.♗e2 ♗e4 10.0-0 ♗xd2 11.♗xd2 a5 (11...e5!? 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.dxe5 ♗xe5 14.♗d4 a5) 12.b5 e5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.dxe5 ♗xe5 15.♗d4 ♖c8±.

7...a5! 8.b5

8.a3?! axb4 9.axb4 ♖xa1 10.♖xa1 dxc4 11.♗xc4 b5 would leave White with a target on b4.

8...cxb5! 9.cxb5 ♗bd7 10.♗d3

10.♗e2 is passive – 10...♗b6 11.0-0 ♗f5 12.♖b3 ♗e4

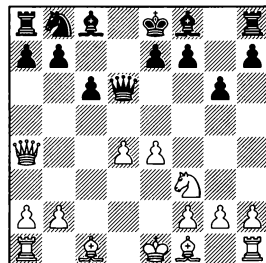
10...e5!?

This equalises easily: 11.♗xe5 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♗g4 13.♗f3 ♖e7 14.0-0 ♗xe5 15.♗xe5 ♗xe5 16.♖d2 b6 17.♗e2 ♗b7 18.♗d4 ♖f6 19.♗xe5 ♖xe5 20.♗f3 ♖fc8 21.♖ac1 ♖ab8! 22.♖fd1 ♖c4=.

C. 1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♖a4+

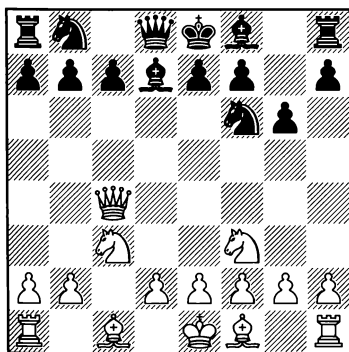
4.cxd5 ♗xd5 5.♖a4+ was once popular because White believed that 4...c6! 6.♖d4 (6.e4?! ♗b6 7.♖c2 ♗g4! 8.♗e5 ♗e6 9.d4 ♖xd4 10.♗f4 ♗g7±) 6...f6 7.e4 favoured him. However, 7...e5 8.♗xe5 ♗xc3 9.♖xc3 ♖e7 10.♗f3 ♖xe4+ 11.♗e2 ♗d7! has proven to be balanced: 12.d4 ♗e7 13.♗e3 ♗b6=, or 12.0-0 ♗b4 13.♖e3 (13.♖b3 ♗c5 14.♖d1 ♗d3 15.♗e1 ♗xc1 16.♖xc1 ♗e6) 13...♖xe3 14.dxe3 ♗e7 15.e4 ♗d6 16.♖d1 ♖d8 17.♗e3 ♗e5=.

Then White turned his hopes to 6.♗xd5 ♖xd5 7.e4 ♖d6 8.d4



Here, 8...♖d7! (8...♙g7 9.♙e3 ♙g4 10.♖e5) 9.♙e2 (9.♙e3 ♖b6 10.♙c2 ♙g7 11.♙e2 ♙g4) 9...♖b6 10.♙c2 ♙g4 11.♙e3 ♙g7 12.♙d1 [12.0-0 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 (13.e5 ♙d7 14.♙xf3 ♖d5=) 13...♙xd4 14.♙ad1 e5 15.♙xd4 exd4 16.e5 ♙e6 17.♙c5 0-0-0! 18.♙xd4 ♙xd4 19.♙xd4 ♙d8 20.♙f4 h5, Miton-Vachier Lagrave, Evry 2010] 12...♙xf3 13.♙xf3 ♙b4+! 14.♙c3 (14.♙d2 ♖c4 15.a3 ♙b5 16.♙d3 e5) 14...♙xc3+ 15.bxc3 e5! levels the game.

4...♙d7! 5.♙b3 dxc4 6.♙xc4 (6.♙xb7?! ♖c6 7.♖b5 ♖d5↑)



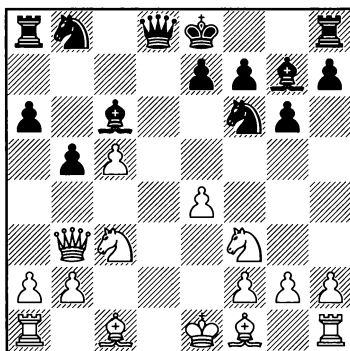
6...♙a6 7.d4 b5 8.♙b3

It may seem that the queen would stay better in the centre, but 8.♙d3 ♙g7 9.e4 b4! unleashes the “bad” bishop: 10.♖e2 (10.♖d1 ♙b5 11.♙c2 ♙xf1 12.♙xf1 c5! 13.dxc5 ♖c6) 10...♙b5 11.♙c2 0-0 12.♖f4 ♙xf1 13.♙xf1 ♙d7 14.♙e3 ♙b5+ 15.♖g1 ♖bd7.

8...♙g7 9.e4 c5! 10.dxc5

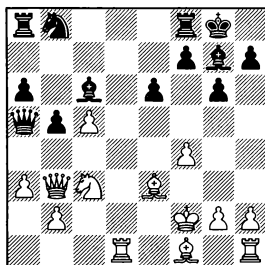
Alternatively, 10.e5?! ♖g4 11.h3 [11.♙d5?! cxd4! 12.♖xd4 (12.♙xa8 dxc3 13.♙e4 ♙c7↑) 12...♙xe5 13.♙e2 e6!] 11...cxd4 12.hxg4 ♙e6!↑.

10...♙c6!



You’ll not find this position in Khalifman’s *Opening for White According to Kramnik, volume 3a*. It first occurred in the game Grischuk-Svidler, Moscow 2007. White sensed the danger and chose:

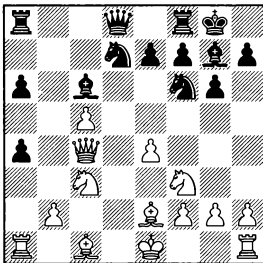
11.e5 ♖fd7 12.♙e3 (12.e6 ♖xc5 13.exf7+ ♖f8 14.♙b4 ♙xf3 15.gxf3 ♖d3+ 16.♙xd3 ♙xd3↑) 12...♖xe5 13.♖xe5 ♙xe5 14.f4 ♙g7 15.♙d1 (15.♖f2 0-0 16.♙d1 ♖d7 17.♙e2 e5, Lalić, Li, Puerto Madryn 2009) 15...♙a5 16.♖f2 e6 17.a3 0-0



Black's kingside is safer and that makes his game easier. Play went on with 18.♙e2 ♖c7 19.♞d6 ♜d7 20.♞hd1 ♜f6 21.♙c2 ♜fd8 22.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 23.♞xd8+ ♙xd8 24.♙f3?! when 24...♜g4+! 25.♙xg4 ♙h4+ 26.♜f1 ♙xg4 would have been better for him.

The other developing move, **11.♙e2**, also returns the pawn: 11...♜xe4 12.♜xe4 ♙xe4 13.0-0 ♙d5 (or 13...♙d5 14.♙xd5 ♙xd5 15.♞d1, Hungaski-Ganguly, Edmon-ton 2008, 15...e6=) 14.♙e3 ♜c6 15.♞d1 0-0 16.♙b1 ♙a7 17.b3 ♞d7 18.♙b2 ♙xb2 19.♞xb2 ♙xf3 20.♞xd7 ♙xd7 21.♙xf3 ♜d4=, Maksimenko-Areshchenko, Kallithea 2008.

The computer at first likes very much **11.a4** bxa4 12.♙c4 0-0 13.♙e2 ♜bd7



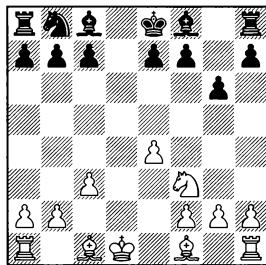
14.♜d4 (14.0-0 ♙c7 was unclear in Jankovic-Grandelius, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010) 14...♙xe4 15.♜xe4 ♜xe4 16.♜c6, but it turns out that Black obtains a terrific initiative after 16...♙c7 17.♜xe7+ (17.♙xe4 ♜xc5 18.♙d5 ♜b3 19.♙b1 ♙ad8! 20.♙e4 ♙d6) 17...♜h8 18.♜d5 ♙e5 19.c6 ♜d6 20.♙a2 ♜c5†.

Conclusion:

This young (born in 2007!) line sets up serious problems to White.

D. 1.♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♜c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♜xd5

There is little we can do if White decides to dry out play with 5.e4 ♜xc3 6.dxc3 ♙xd1+ 7.♜xd1



It has been established that the best plan is:

7...f6! 8.♙c4

Alternatives are:

a) 8.♜c2 e5 9.♙e3 ♙e6=.

b) 8.♙e3 e5 9.♜d2 ♜d7! aiming to trade dark-squared bishops with ...♙c5 while keeping the other one.

c) 8.e5 ♜c6 9.exf6 exf6 10.♙b5 (10.♙f4 ♙c5 11.♙xc7 ♙xf2 12.♙c4 ♙g4) 10...♙e6 11.♙e3 0-0-0+ 12.♜e2 ♙d5 13.♞hd1 a6 14.♙d3 ♙g7 15.♜f1 f5, Vaganian-Donchev, Haifa 1989.

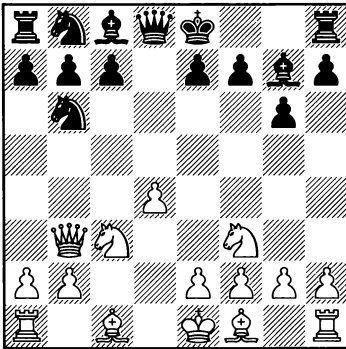
d) 8.h4!? ♙g4 9.♙e3 e5 10.♙c4 ♜d7 11.♜c2 ♙xf3 12.gxf3 ♙c5 13.♙h6 ♜e7 14.♞hf1 a5=.

8...e5 9.♙e3 ♜d7 10.♜e2 ♙c5! 11.♞hd1 ♙xe3 12.♜xe3 ♜e7 13.♜d2 a5 14.f3 ♜b6 15.♙e2 ♙e6 16.♜b3

The English Anti-Grünfeld

♟c4+ 17.♙xc4 ♙xc4 18.♞c5 b6
19.b3 ♙e6, draw, Ivanchuk-Nepom-
niachtchi, Havana 2010.

5.♟b3 ♞b6 6.d4 ♙g7

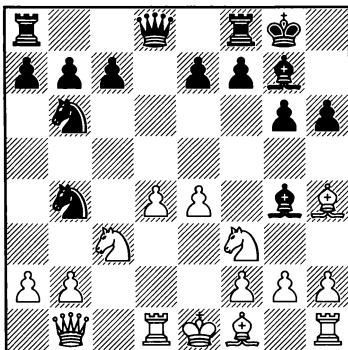


D1. 7.♙g5; D2. ♙f4; D3. e4.

D1. 7.♙g5 h6 8.♙h4 ♙e6
9.♟c2 ♞c6 10.♞d1 (10.e3 ♞b4!)
10...♞b4! 11.♟b1 0-0 12.e3

12.e4 will be met by 12...♙g4
while 12.a3 ♞d4d5 13.♞xd5 by
13...♟xd5! 14.♙xe7 ♞fe8 15.♙b4 ♙g4
16.♞e5 c5, Skembris-A.Mikhal-
chishin, Portoroz 1993.

12...♙f5 13.e4 ♙g4



14.d5

White cannot preserve a flexible
pawn centre: 14.♙e2 ♙xf3 15.♙xf3
♞c6 16.e5 ♞xd4 17.♙xb7 ♞b8
18.♙a6 ♙xe5 19.0-0 (19.♟e4 ♙g7
20.♙xe7 ♟d7 21.0-0 ♞fe8) 19...c5
20.♟e4 ♟c7 21.♞fel ♙xh2+ 22.♞h1,
Conquest-Smejkal, Germany 1989,
when 22...g5! would have given
Black the upper hand.

14...f5

14...♙xf3!? 15.gxf3 ♟d7 16.a3
♞a6 leads to a balanced game. The
text is sharper.

15.a3 g5 16.♙g3

Or 16.axb4 gxh4 17.h3 ♙h5
18.♙e2 ♟d6 19.♞xh4 ♙xe2 20.♞xe2
fxe4+; 16.♙xg5 hxg5 17.axb4 ♟d6
18.♙e2 ♟xb4↑.

16...f4 17.axb4 fxg3 18.hxg3
♞xf3 19.♙e2!?

Practice has proved that 19.gxf3
♙xf3 20.♞h2 ♙xd1 21.♟xd1 ♟d6 is
roughly equal.

19...♞xc3 20.♙xg4 ♞b3

Or 20...♞c4 21.♙e6+ ♞h8 22.e5
♟e8 23.♟f5 g4=.

21.♙e6+ ♞h8 22.e5 ♟e8

White should be able to keep the
balance with precise play, Bauer-
Svidler, Germany 2004.

D2. 7.♠f4 ♘e6 8.♞a3

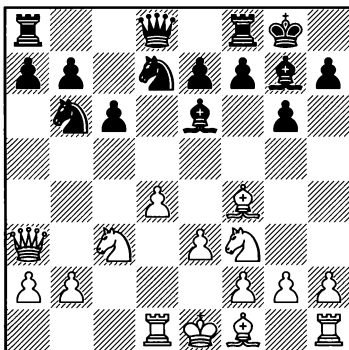
The queen is misplaced on c2 – 8.♞c2?! ♘c6 9.e3 (9.♞d1 ♘b4 10.♞b1 ♘4d5 11.♘xd5 ♞xd5 12.e4 ♞xa2 13.d5 ♞xb1 14.♞xb1 ♘d7 15.♘xc7 0-0 16.♘d3 f5 17.0-0 fxe4 18.♘xe4 ♠f5+, Berkes-Lupulescu, Balatonlelle 2002) 9...♘b4 10.♞d1 (10.♞c1 0-0 11.♘e2 c5 12.dxc5 ♘6d5 13.♘xd5 ♞xd5 14.0-0 ♞ac8) 10...0-0 11.♘e2 c5↑.

8...0-0 9.e3

Gelfand-Svidler, Sochi 2008, saw 9.e4 c6 10.♞d1 ♘8d7 11.♘g5 ♘g4 12.f3 h6 13.fxg4 e5 14.♘f3 exf4 15.e5 ♞e8 16.♘e2 ♞e7 17.♞xe7 ♞xe7 18.0-0 c5=.

9...♘8d7 (aiming for ...c5) 10.♞d1

Radjabov-Vachier Lagrave, Kalithea 2008, ended in a draw after 10.♘e2 c5 11.dxc5 (11.0-0 ♘c4 12.♞a4 ♘db6 13.♞c2 ♠f5 14.♞c1 cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♘d7) 11...♘c4 12.♞b4 a5 13.♞b5 ♞c8 14.0-0.

10...c6!**11.♘g5 (11.b3?! c5!) 11...♘d5 12.e4**

Alternatives are: 12.♘ge4 ♞e8 13.♘e2 e5 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♘g5 ♞d7 16.♘f6+ ♘xf6 17.♘xf6 ♞f5 18.♘xe5 ♞xe5=; 12.h4 e5.

12...♘c4

Black is fine here. I have analysed 13.♘xc4 ♘xc4 14.♞b3 (14.♞b4?! b5 15.b3 a5) 14...b5 15.♘f3 e5 16.dxe5 ♞e7=, and 13.h4 ♘xf1 14.♘xf1 ♘c4 15.♞b3 b5 16.♘f3 e5 17.dxe5 ♞e7 18.♘g5 ♞e8+.

D3. 7.e4 0-0 8.♘e3

The early e4 defined a clear target in White's position – the d4-pawn. We should attack it as usual: 8.♘e2 ♘g4 9.♘e3 (9.d5 c6 10.♘e3 cxd5 11.exd5 ♘8d7 12.0-0 ♞c8 13.♞fd1 ♘e5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe2 15.♘xe2 ♘xe5=) 9...♘xf3 10.♘xf3 ♘xd4.

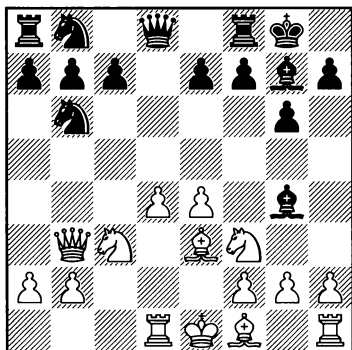
8...♘g4 9.♞d1

a) 9.0-0-0 is risked. Black can loosen the enemy's castling position with 9...a5 10.h3 a4 11.♞c2 [11.♞a3 ♘xf3 12.gxf3 ♞d6 13.♘b5 ♞xa3 14.♘xa3 ♘8d7 (14...f5!?) 15.f4 f5 16.e5 c6 17.♘g2 e6, Addison-Uhlmann, Palma de Mallorca 1970] 11...♘xf3 12.gxf3 a3 13.b3 e6 14.♘b1 ♘c6 15.♘b5 ♘c8 16.h4 ♘d6 17.e5 ♘xb5 18.♘xb5 ♘b4 19.♞c5 ♘d5 20.♘d2 c6 21.♘d3 h5.

b) 9.a4 a5 10.d5 is best met by

The English Anti-Grünfeld

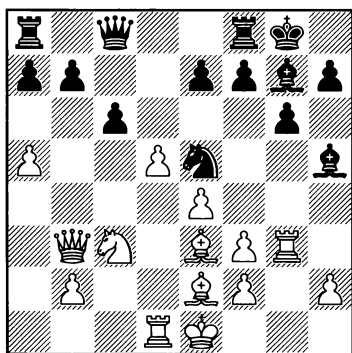
10...e6! 11.♞d1 exd5 12.♜xd5 ♜8d7
13.♙e2 ♙e6.



9...♜c6! 10.d5 ♜e5 11.♙e2
♜xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♙h5 13.♞g1

White tries to isolate the h5-bishop from play. 13.f4 ♙xe2 14.♜xe2 should be answered with 14...♞d7 15.h4 c6.

13...♞c8 14.♞g3 c6 15.a4! (15.
dxc6 bxc6) 15...♜d7 16.a5 ♜e5!



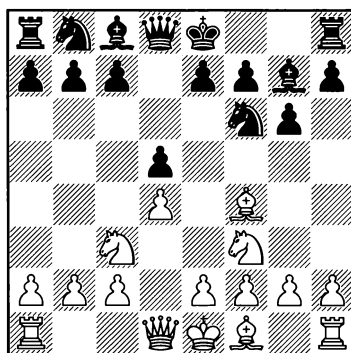
We have reached a sharp position with mutual chances. I have analysed:

17.♞c1 c5! 18.♜f1 (18.f4 ♙xe2
19.♜xe2 c4) 18...c4 19.♞b4 f5=;

17.f4 ♙xe2 18.♜xe2 ♜g4 19.♙c5
♞e8 20.e5 ♜h6;

17.♜f1 c5 18.♜b5 (18.♞b5 c4
19.♞b4 f5 20.d6 exd6 21.♜d5 ♞f7)
18...b6!=.

**E. 1.d4 ♜f6 2.♜f3 g6 3.♜c3
d5 4.♙f4 ♙g7**



5.e3

The plan with long castling is not dangerous. We should counter-attack in the centre:

5.♞d2 0-0! 6.0-0-0

Or 6.♙h6 ♞d6! 7.0-0-0 [7.♙xg7
♜xg7 8.e3 (8.♜e5 c5 9.e3 ♜c6 10.f4
♙f5) 8...c6 9.♙e2 ♜bd7 10.0-0 ♞e8
11.♞fd1 b6 12.♙d3 ♙b7=] 7...♜e4
8.♜xe4 dxe4 9.♙xg7 ♜xg7 10.♜g5
(10.♜e5 ♞d5 11.e3) 10...♞d5 11.♞f4
♜c6 12.b3 (12.♜b1 ♜b4) 12...♞a5
13.♜b2 f5 14.e3 h6 15.♜h3 e5
16.dxe5 ♞xe5+ 17.♞xe5+ ♜xe5=.

6...♜e4 7.♜xe4 dxe4 8.♜e5

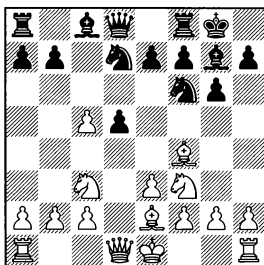
(8.♖g5 ♖d5 9.♘b1 h6) 8...♗d5
9.♘b1 (9.c4 ♗e6) 9...f6.

5...0-0 6.♗e2 c5

This break could be prepared with 6...b6!? 7.♗e5 (7.0-0 ♗b7 8.♗e5 c5) 7...c5 8.0-0 ♗b7 9.a4 a6 10.a5 cxd4 11.exd4 b5 12.♖e1 e6 13.♗d3 ♗fd7 14.♗d6 ♖e8 15.♗e5 ♗xe5 16.♗xe5 ♗f8 17.♗f1 ♗c6 ♢ Bisguier-Nakamura, New York 2004.

7.0-0

White often takes on c5:
7.dxc5 ♗bd7!



a) 8.♗xd5 ♗xd5 9.♗xd5 ♗xb2
10.♖b1 ♗a5+ 11.♗f1 ♗g7=, Zhang

Pengxiang-Zhou Jianchao, Jin-Zhou 2009.

b) 8.♗b5 a6! (8...♗xc5 9.♗c7 ♖b8 10.♗b5=) 9.♗c7 (9.♗c7 ♖a7) 9...♗e8 10.♗bd4 ♗xc5 11.0-0 ♗fe4=.

c) 8.0-0 ♗xc5 9.♗b5 (9.h3 b6 10.♗b5 ♗b7 11.♗e5 ♗cd7 12.♗h2 a6 13.♗bd4 ♖c8 ♢, Izeta-Khalifman, Dos Hermanas 1993.) 9...a6 10.♗c7 ♗e8 11.♗c3 ♗c6 12.♗e5 e6 13.♗d4 ♗b6 14.♗b3 ♗cd7 15.♗g3 ♗d8 16.♗d6 ♖e8 17.a4 b6 18.a5 b5 19.♗f3 ♗b7 20.♗d2 ♗b6! 21.♗b4 ♗c4 22.♗c1 ♗d7 ♢, Murshed-So, Guangzhou 2010.

Other alternatives to 7.0-0 are:
7.h3 ♗c6 8.0-0 ♗e4;

7.♗e5 ♗c6 8.♗xc6 (8.0-0 cxd4 9.♗xc6 bxc6 10.exd4 ♗d7 11.♗a4 e5 12.dxe5 ♗xe5=) 8...bxc6 9.♗e5 ♗d7 10.♗xg7 ♗xg7 11.0-0 (11.dxc5 ♗a5) 11...e5 12.dxe5 ♗xe5=.

7...cxd4 8.exd4 ♗c6 9.♗e5
♗b6 10.♗xc6 ♗xc6=.

Index of Variations

Part 1. The Fianchetto System

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7

3...c6 4.♙g2 d5 5.♗f3 ♙g7 6.b3 26 (6.cxd5 27)

4.♙g2 d5 5.♗f3 28

5...dxc4 6.♗a3 c3 7.bxc3 c5 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗e5 29

9.♗c4 30

9.♞b3 31

9.e3 ♗c6 10.♞e2

(10.♙b2 32) 10...♗d5 11.♙b2 ♗b6 12.♞fd1 33

12.♞ab1 33

12.♞ac1 34

12.♞ad1 35

5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.e4 (6.♗c3 36) 6...♗b6 7.♗e2 (7.♗f3 36) 7...c5

8.d5 0-0 9.0-0 e6 10.♗ec3 ♗a6 11.a4 (11.♗d2 37; 11.♗a3 37) 11...♗b4 38

10.♗bc3 ♗a6! (10...exd5 39) 11.♗f4 e5 42

11.h3 40

11.♙f4 41

11.b3 41

6.♗f3 ♗b6 7.♗c3 (7.0-0 ♗c6 8.♗c3 44) 7...♗c6

8.e3 0-0 9.0-0 ♞e8 (9...e5 46; 9...a5 47)

10.d5 47

10.♞e1 a5 (10...e6!? 56)

11.♞c2 51

11.♗g5 50

11.b3 50

11.♞d2 50

11.a4 51

11.d5 51

11.h3 51

11.♗d2 51

11.♞e2 52

Index of Variations

Part 2. The ♠f4 System

1.d4 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.♠c3 d5 4.♠f4 ♠g7

5.♠c1 70

5.♠f3 0-0 (5...c5? 72) 6.e3 72

6.♠c1 c5 78

6...dxc4 78

5.e3

5...c5 6.cxd5 79

6.♠c1 81

5...c5 6.dxc5 ♡a5

7.♡b3 83

7.♡a4+ 83

7.♠f3 86

7.♠c1 dxc4 8.♠xc4 (8.♡a4+ 87) 8...0-0 9.♠ge2

♡xc5 10.♡b3 ♡a5 88

10...♠c6 90

Part 3. Systems with ♠g5

1.d4 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.♠c3 d5

4.♠g5 ♠e4 5.♠h4 (5.cxd5 114; 5.♠f4 115; 5.♠e4 115; 5.h4!? 309)

5...♠xc3 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 (7.e4 116) 7...♠e6

8.♠e2 117

8.♡b1 117

8.♠b1 118

8.♠f3 ♠d7

9.♠e2 (9.d5 119; 9.a4 119) 9...♠b6 10.0-0 ♠g7 11.a4 120

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4...♠g7 5.♠xf6 (5.♠f3 125; 5.e3 c5 122) 5...♠xf6 6.cxd5 c6

7.dxc6 123

7.e3 123

7.e4 123

7.♠c1 124

4.♠f3 ♠g7 5.♠g5 ♠e4 6.♠f4 125

6.cxd5 ♠xg5 7.♠xg5 0-0 126 (7...c6 126)

6.♠h4 ♠xc3 7.bxc3 dxc4 8.♡a4+ 130

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5.♟b3 dxc4 6.♙xc4 0-0 7.♟f3 c5 8.d5 148 (8.dxc5 148)

5.♟f3 ♙g7 6.♙d2 153 (6.cxd5 149; 6.♟b3 149)

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8.♙e3 236

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(11.♙f4 270; 11.d5 271; 11.♖c1 271; 11.♙b1 272; 11.h3 273) **11...♙d8** (11...
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ISBN 978-954-8782-81-4



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