

The

# Ultimate Closed Sicilian



Gary Lane

# The Ultimate Closed Sicilian

The Closed Sicilian is regarded as a good way to meet the Sicilian Defence because it is reliable, with potential for kingside attacks and leads to middlegames where White has an easy plan. It has been played regularly by ex-World Champions Smyslov and Spassky with success. This has inspired another generation of stars to use it at the highest level, including Adams, Short and Ivanchuk. Author Gary Lane explains the ideas behind the Closed Sicilian, discusses all the important variations, with the emphasis on the key ideas and how these can be used in the middlegame to make it easy for those with limited time to study.

The book covers:

- The tricks and traps in the opening for both players
- The basic plan and strategies using model games
- How to play the middlegame by following easy plans.



Since winning the Commonwealth Championship, Gary Lane has established himself as a prominent figure on the European tournament circuit. He has written over a dozen books, including the popular titles *A Guide to Attacking Chess*, *The Ultimate Colle* and *Victory in the Opening*. He is also a renowned chess trainer, and has been involved in coaching some of England's and Australia's top junior players.

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# **The Ultimate Closed Sicilian**

Gary Lane

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# Introduction

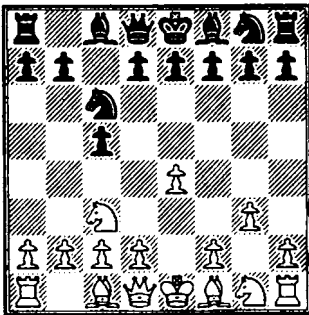
The Closed Sicilian is a reliable opening with opportunities for a kingside attack. Unlike Open Sicilian lines, such as the Dragon where new moves are routinely introduced on move thirty, there is no need to learn a vast amount of theory. Instead, White tends to follow an established plan of development against most set-ups after which the stage is set for a middlegame battle. World champions Karpov, Smyslov and Spassky have favoured it and laid the foundations for others to follow. In recent years the English duo Adams and Short have added new ideas and played it at the highest level with great success.

fianchetto on the kingside and follow with d2-d3 to develop the queen's bishop. White tends to develop his king's knight to e2 or f3. The currently fashionable 3...g6 is the most popular reply because a kingside fianchetto will allow Black to exert his influence on the centre and along the a1-h8 diagonal.

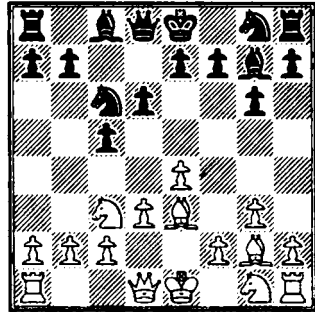
4 ♖g2 ♗g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♗e3

## The ideas behind the Closed Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3



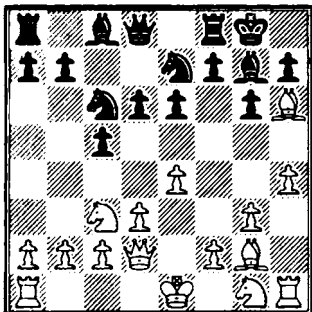
This is the move that signals White's intention to play the Closed Sicilian. Basically, the idea is to



This is the new main line and is the reason why the Closed Sicilian is being played at international level. I have paid special attention to it because I think the simple development plan is easy to follow and the ideas can be applied in a variety of positions. It is an aggressive system that puts Black under pressure at the earliest opportunity. The plan is to play ♗d1-d2 and ♗e3-h6, exchanging the key defensive bishop on g7, and perhaps following up with h2-h4-h5 to open the h-file and deliver a speedy mate. It sounds too good to be true but

was a successful formula in Adams-Ward, Redbus, Southend 2001. That game went:

6...e6 7 ♖d2 ♗ge7 8 ♕h6 0-0 9 h4

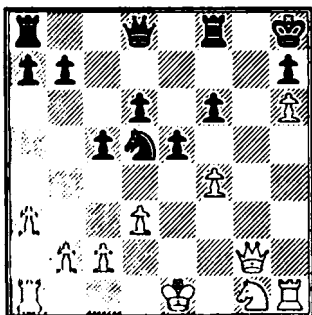


The attack looks rather obvious but it is very effective. Adams is threatening 10 h4-h5, followed by taking on g7 and hxg6, which allows the queen to jump in on h6 with a tremendous attack.

9...♗xh6 10 ♖xh6 f6

Black takes measures to parry the offensive. Basically, the text stops 11 h5? because then comes 11...g5, intending 12...♖h8 and 13...♗g8 trapping the queen. However, it compromises Black's pawn structure, which encourages White to attack.

11 ♖d2 e5 12 h5 g5 13 h6! ♗e6 14 f4 gxf4 15 gxf4 ♖h8 16 ♗d5 ♗xd5 17 exd5 ♗b4 18 a3 ♗bxd5? 19 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 20 ♖g2



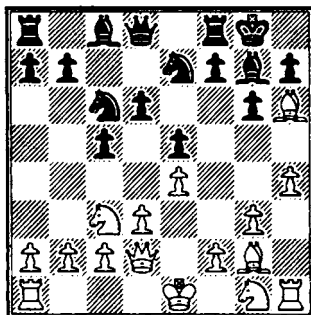
The opening has been a complete success because the twin threats of ♖xd5 and ♖g7 mate give White a winning advantage.

20...♖e7 21 ♖xd5 exf4+ 22 ♖e4 ♖xe4+ 23 dxe4 ♗ae8 24 0-0-0 ♗xe4 25 ♗f3 ♗e6 26 ♖h4 f5 27 ♗dh1 ♗g6 28 ♗xf4 ♗ff6 29 ♗fh4 ♖g8 30 ♖h5 ♗g4 31 ♗5h2 ♖f7 32 ♖d2 ♗fg6 33 ♗f2 ♗g2 34 ♖e2 ♖f6 35 ♖f1 ♗xf2+ 36 ♖xf2 d5 37 c3 b6 38 ♗d1 ♖e6 39 ♗e1+ ♖f6 40 ♗e5 ♗xh6 41 ♗xd5 ♗h1 42 ♖g3 ♗b1 43 ♗d6+ ♖e7 44 ♗d2 h6 45 ♖f4 ♖e6 46 ♖h2 ♖d5 47 c4+ ♖c6 48 ♖xf5 ♖b7 49 ♖e4 1-0

A deeper analysis of this game can be found in Chapter 1.

Black has tried various ways to counter this direct offensive. 6...e5 is one of the best but Orlov-Rago, Porto San Giorgio 2000, demonstrated that knowledge of the standard attacking procedure is sometimes enough to ensure success at the board.

1 e4 c5 2 ♗c3 ♗c6 3 g3 d6 4 ♗g2 g6 5 d3 ♗g7 6 ♗e3 e5 7 ♖d2 ♗ge7 8 ♕h6 0-0 9 h4



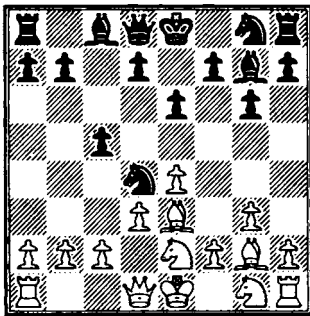
This attacking device will hardly come as a surprise to anyone who has seen the Adams-Ward game. It might not be the most accurate way

to handle the position after 6...e5 has given Black an extra move on the new main line, but in practical play it can be very effective.

9...f6 10 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 11 h5 g5 12 h6+ ♜h8 13 f4 exf4 14 gx4 gx4 15 0-0-0 ♘g6 16 ♘ge2 ♖g4 17 ♚df1 ♚a5 18 ♘xf4 ♘d4 19 ♖h3 ♖f3 20 ♚hg1 ♘xf4 21 ♚xf4 ♚xc3 22 ♖g8+ 1-0

If Black fiddles with the move-order then play usually transposes to one of the main lines, thus allowing White to play his set-up against just about everything. However, there are a few positional tricks to watch out for in the opening. A good example is Smyslov-Denker, USSR-USA, Moscow 1946, which shows not only how an opening evolves over the years but also how the lessons of the old masters can sometimes be forgotten.

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♖g2 ♖g7 5 d3 e6 6 ♖e3 ♘d4?! 7 ♘ce2!



A move which tends to set Black thinking for a long time. Usually in such positions Black exchanges knights on e2 or f3 and grabs the pawn on b2. But here White is in the pleasant position of being able

to recapture on e2 with the king's knight, promoting his development, after which which the capture of the tempting b-pawn leads to ruin.

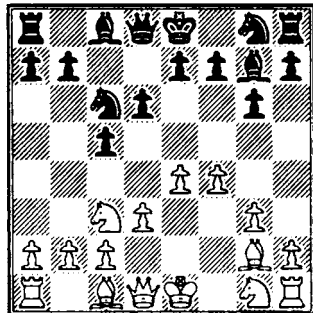
7...d6

7...♘e2, to win a couple of pawns, has caught out numerous players since 8 ♘xe2 ♖xb2 9 ♚b1 ♚a5+? (if the bishop retreats White takes back on c5 with a slight advantage) 10 ♖d2 ♚xa2 runs into 11 ♚xb2! ♚xb2 12 ♖c3 and White is winning.

8 c3 ♘c6 9 d4 cxd4 10 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 11 ♖xd4 e5 12 ♖e3 ♘e7 13 ♘e2 0-0 14 0-0 ♖e6 15 ♚d2 ♚c7 16 ♚fc1 f5 17 c4 fxe4 18 ♘c3 ♘f5 19 ♘xe4 ♘xe3 20 ♚xe3 h6 21 ♚d1 ♚fd8 22 ♚ac1 ♚ac8 23 b3 b6 24 ♘c3 ♚e7 25 ♖d5 ♜h7 26 ♖xe6 ♚xe6 27 ♚d3 ♚c7 28 ♚cd1 ♚f7 29 ♘e4 ♖f8 30 ♖d5 ♚g4 31 ♚1d3 ♖e7 32 ♘xd6 ♖xd6 33 ♚xd6 ♚df8 34 ♚xe5 ♚xf2 35 ♚d7+ ♚2f7 36 ♚xf7+ ♚xf7 37 ♚d8 ♖g7 38 ♚e8 g5 39 ♚h8+ ♜g6 40 ♚d6+ ♜f7 41 ♚xh6 ♚f5 42 ♚d1 ♚c5+ 43 ♜g2 ♚e7 44 ♚f1+ ♜g8 45 ♚f6 ♚e8 46 ♚f5 g4 47 ♚f2 ♚e7 48 ♚d3 ♖g5 49 ♚e2 ♚f8 50 ♚e4 ♖g7 51 ♚d5+ ♚f7 52 ♚e6 1-0

The game is analysed in Chapter 5.

It is also possible to enter standard lines that feature 6 f4.



This is the starting point of the main line which has been the focus of attention for years.

**White's Plan**

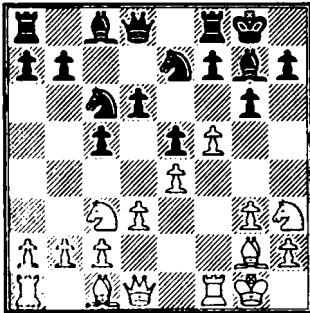
- A kingside pawn advance in preparation for an attack, which is sometimes launched by f4-f5 to weaken Black's defence.
- A transfer of pieces to the kingside, using his space advantage for quick manoeuvres.
- A restriction of Black's queenside counterplay.

**Black's Plan**

- The creation of counterplay on the queenside and/or in the centre.
- A queenside pawn advance to distract White from his kingside ambitions.
- A timely pawn thrust in the centre to open the position and activate his pieces.

A typical attacking idea is shown by the game **Krapivin-Morozov**, Pskov 1998. 1 e4 c5 2 d3 d6 3 g3 g6 4 h2 g7 5 d3 e5 6 f4 d6 7 h3 g7 8 0-0 0-0?

Castling looks a natural choice here--but it is a common mistake! 9 f5!



An excellent move that is the start of an impressive attack. The idea is

to exploit the light-squares around the black king.

9...gxf5 10 exf5 hxf5

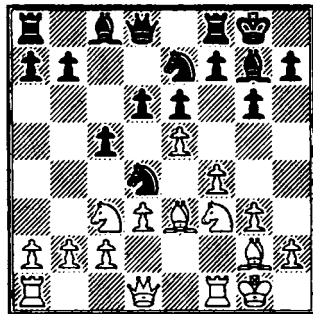
10...hxf5?! is met by 11 Wh5, heralding an attack that has a reputation for quick wins. For instance: 11...d4 runs into 12 e4 f5 13 h5+ h8 14 g5 h6 15 h6! hxg5 16 Wh5 mate.

11 hxf5 dxf5 12 e4 h6 13 Wh5 d5 14 dxd5 f5 15 h6 fxe4 16 hxg7 xg7 17 g5 xhd5 18 xh7+ f6 19 h4 d4 20 f1+ d3+ 21 g2 h8 22 xe4+ e6 23 hg6+ e7 24 hxf3 hf8 25 hg5+ e6 26 c4 1-0

This game is analysed in chapter 7.

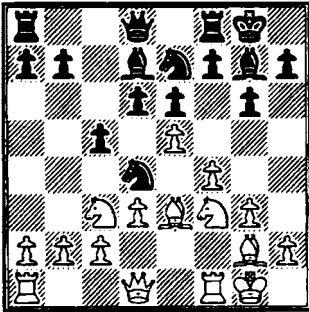
**The Main Line**

In my previous book *Winning with the Closed Sicilian* I decided to pay a lot of attention to variations arising from 10 e5. In this completely new book I still look at the various options but also try to guide White and Black through the complications without excessive theory. The main line arises after 1 e4 c5 2 d3 d6 3 g3 g6 4 h2 g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e6 7 d3 g7 8 0-0 0-0 9 e3 d4 and now 10 e5.



The idea is to open the diagonals for White's bishops and make room on e4 for the queen's knight. It has

been the centre of attention since the 1980s but, with the passage of time, the initial problems posed to Black have generally been sorted out. A well prepared player should manage to avoid the numerous tricks and traps and White should only retain a slight edge. This has prompted some players to deviate early to try and lure White away from established opening knowledge. Short-Rechlis, Ohrid 2001, saw the slightly unusual 10...♗d7.



A stunning response because it seems that Black is voluntarily conceding a pawn on d4.

11 ♗e4

The obvious 11 ♗xd4 cxd4 12 ♗xd4 dxe5 is an important position, where 13 ♗xe5? fails to 13...♚b6+ 14 ♖h1 f6 winning a piece. Instead 13 fxe5 ♗c6 14 ♗f2 ♗xg2 15 ♗xg2 ♗xe5 16 d4 offered equal chances in Turner-Dunnington, Hafnarfjordur 1996.

11...♗ef5 12 ♗f2 ♗c6 13 c3 ♗xf3+ 14 ♗xf3 dxe5 15 fxe5 ♗xe4 16 dxe4 ♗e7 17 ♗xc5 ♗c6

The opening has been great for Short because his opponent has had to resort to an exchange sacrifice in the hope of creating complications. In the circumstances this is hardly surprising considering that 17...♗e8 leads to a poor ending after 18 ♚xd8 ♗axd8 19 ♗xa7 ♗xe5 20 ♗fd1 when the extra material gives White a clear advantage. Short eventually won after 71 moves—a more complete analysis of the game is given in chapter 6.

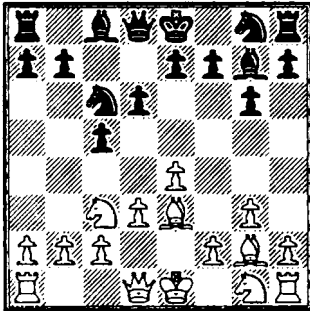
### Conclusion

The Closed Sicilian is ideal for those who do not have time to learn a lot of complicated opening theory. Instead, White tends to rely on a knowledge and understanding of the strategies and tactics available in the opening. A solid system, with chances of a kingside attack, is a good opening choice. The new main line begins with 6 ♗e3, intending ♚dl-d2 followed by ♗e3-h6 to exchange the dark-squared bishops. Once the important defensive bishop on g7 is exchanged then White attacks with h2-h4 or f2-f4 and carries on with the traditional kingside pawn attack. Though it sounds simple it is also surprisingly effective.

# 1 6 ♖e3 e6 New Main Line

Adams-Ward  
Redbus Southend 2001

1 e4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4  
♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3



The starting point of the new main line. At the time of the game Adams was rated fourth in the world, which is an indication of the respect that the variation commands at the highest level. It is also a good choice against Ward who is renowned for playing the Dragon and would not relish a battle where he has little counterplay from the opening.

6...e6 7 ♗d2 ♘ge7!?

It is still debatable whether this move is a mistake but granting White an instant attack is a risky business. At international level White's attack is dangerous while at club level it is deadly. The position is critical in that Black usually tries to stop the White onslaught—so it

makes sense to see what happens if such wisdom is ignored.

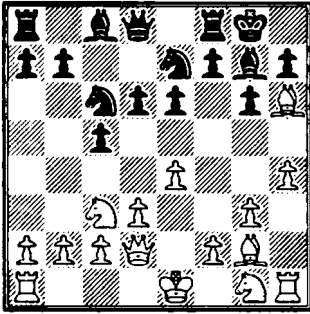
8 ♖h6

White has already achieved his short-term aim of exchanging the dark-squared bishops. 8 h4 is also possible, to gain similar play to the main game, although then Black can take evasive action with 8...h5 to stop the advance of White's h-pawn. For instance: 9 ♘h3 ♚b8 10 0-0 b5 11 ♚a1 b4 12 ♘d1 ♗a5 (perhaps 12...♘e5 is worth considering) 13 f4 (an ambitious sacrifice that is designed to distract the black queen away from the central action) 13...♗xa2 14 f5 ♖e5 15 fxg6 ♘xg6 16 ♗f2 ♚b7 17 ♘f4 (or 17 ♘g5 ♘d4 18 ♘xf7? ♚f8 winning) 17...♘d4 18 ♗h1 ♖g7 19 ♘xg6 fxg6 20 e5 ♚f8 21 ♗d2 ♚xf1+ 22 ♚xf1 ♘f5 (22...♖xe5 23 ♖xd4 cxd4 24 ♗h6 ♚g7 25 ♖c6+ ♗d8 and Black avoids any menacing checks) 23 ♖c6+ ♚d7 24 exd6 and now, instead of 24...♖b7 25 ♗g2 ♖xc6 26 ♗xc6 ♗d5+ 27 ♗xd5 exd5, Hjartarson-Shirov, Munich 1993, 24...♘xg3+ 25 ♗g1 ♘xf1 26 ♗xf1 ♖b7 27 ♗g2 ♖xc6 28 ♗xc6 ♗d5 29 ♗c8+ ♚d8 30 ♗c7 ♗f5+ 31 ♗e1 ♗f7 32 ♗xc5 ♖f8 and the d-pawn will fall.

8...0-0?!

This is really asking for White to come and get him. The alternative 8...♖xh6 is examined in the main game, Short-Movsesian.

9 h4!



A lovely position to play for White who has the simple plan of h4-h5, ♠xg7, hxg6 and ♖h6+ with a thunderous attack. Admittedly, Black can avert this but the position is still awkward to defend.

#### 9...♠xh6

Black has a cunning plan so he is happy to allow the queen to transfer to the kingside. Other lines are fun for White:

a) 9...f5?! 10 h5 and now:

a1) 10...♖e8 (the idea is take back on g6 with the queen) 11 ♠xg7 ♜xg7 12 ♖b5! with a clear advantage, Partac-Nakagori, Artek 1999.

a2) 10...♠f7 (a bid to fend off the attack by observing h7) 11 hxg6 hxg6 12 ♠xg7 ♠xg7 13 ♖f3 ♖d4 14 ♖g5 ♖ec6 15 0-0-0 ♖e5 (after 15...♖b4 16 ♠h4 ♖bxc2 17 ♠dh1 gives White a winning attack) 16 ♠h4 ♖f7 17 ♠dh1 ♖f6 (17...♖xg5 runs into 18 ♠h8+! ♖xh8 19 ♖xg5 with an easy win) 18 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 19 ♠h8 ♠b8 20 ♠1h6 b5 21 exf5 ♖xf5 22 ♖e4 ♖e7 23 ♠6h7 d5 24 ♖g5+ ♜f6 25 g4 led to victory in Pöttinger-Tschohl, Austrian Team Ch 1996.

b) 9...♖d4 10 ♠xg7 ♜xg7 11 h5 ♠h8 12 h6+ (a familiar idea that blocks in the rook on h8, giving Black long-term problems) 12...♜f8 13 f4 ♖ec6 14 ♖ge2 gave

White the superior chances in Cabrero de Cabo-Fernandez Losada, Vila de Padron 2000.

c) 9...f6 10 ♠xg7 (10 h5? ♠xh6 11 ♖xh6 g5!, intending ...♜h8 and ...♖g8 to win the trapped queen, is a killer) 10...♜xg7 when play might continue:

c1) 11 f4 ♖d4 12 h5 ♠h8 13 hxg6 hxg6 14 ♠xh8 ♖xh8 15 0-0-0 ♠b8 (or 15...♖h2 16 ♖f2 e5 17 ♖f3 ♖xf3 18 ♠h1! wins) 16 ♖f3 ♠d7 17 ♠h1 ♖g8 18 e5! ♖ef5 (or 18...dxe5 19 fxe5 f5 20 ♖g5 and the queen infiltrates Black's position) 19 ♖e4 fxe5 20 fxe5 ♖xf3 21 ♠xf3 dxe5 22 g4 ♖d4 23 ♖g5 1-0 Carton-Blot, Montlucon 1997.

c2) 11 h5 ♠f7 12 hxg6 ♖xg6 13 ♖f3 (White continues with his development, safe in the knowledge that the semi-open h-file offers excellent attacking chances) 13... ♠b8 14 ♖h4 ♖ce7 15 ♖xg6 ♖xg6 16 ♠f3 ♜g8 17 ♠h6 ♠g7 18 0-0-0 b5 19 ♠h5 (the idea is to double rooks on the h-file and then take on g6) 19...b4 20 ♖e2 ♖e5 21 ♖f4 f5 22 exf5 exf5 23 d4 cxd4 24 ♠xd4 b3 25 ♠hxd6 ♖d7 26 axb3 ♖c7 27 ♠6d5 ♖b6 28 ♠xf5 ♠a6 29 ♠f7 1-0 Cosma-Grosar, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

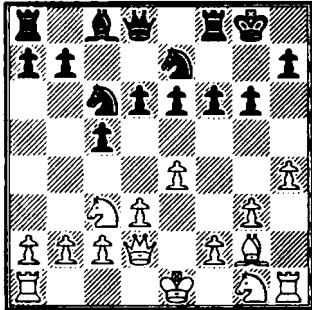
#### 10 ♖xh6 f6!?

Ward reveals his defensive idea. Now 11 h5? is bad because then 11...g5, followed by ...♜h8 and ...♖g8, traps the queen. The main alternative, 10...♜h8, is discussed in the next game. 10...f5 is a less than convincing defence: 11 h5 gxh5 12 ♖xh5 ♠f7 13 ♖f3 ♖d4 14 ♖g5 ♠g7 15 0-0-0 ♖g6 16 ♖xh7! ♠b8 (16...♠xh7 17 ♖xg6+ ♠g7 18 ♖h5 wins) 17 exf5 ♖xf5 18 ♖d5 b5 19 ♖df6+ ♜f7 20 ♠c6 ♠b6 21 ♠e8+! (a brilliant finish) 21...♜e7 22 ♠xg6 ♖d4 23 ♠he1 ♠a6 24

♗d5 ♖d7 25 ♕e8+ 1-0  
Vincendon-Morice, Italy 1997.

11 ♗d2

Although the queen retreats from the scene of action, the damage has been done since Black has been forced to compromise his position.



11...e5

The e-pawn is advanced to give scope to the light-squared bishop. If 11...♗d4 12 f4 d5 13 h5 b5 14 hxg6 hxg6 15 exd5 exd5 16 0-0-0 b4 17 ♗ce2 ♗b5 18 d4 c4 19 ♗xb4 ♗b8 20 ♕e1 (or 20 a4 a5 21 ♗c5 ♗c7 and Black has avoided losing a piece but White is still better) 20...♕e6 21 ♗d2 ♗d6 22 ♗f3 ♗b6 23 ♗h2 ♗a6 24 a3 ♗xa3 25 bxa3 ♗xa3+ 26 ♗d1 ♗f5 27 ♗eh1 ♗a1+ 28 ♗c1 ♗c3+ 29 ♗xc3 ♗xc3 and now, instead of 30 ♗d2 ♗a1+ 31 ♗c2 ♗xg3+ 32 ♗e3 ♗a3+ 33 c3 ♗xh1 34 ♗xh1 with an eventual draw, A.Ledger-Nedev, Breda 1998, White could have finished the job quickly with 30 ♗h8+ ♗f7 31 ♗1h7+ ♗e8 32 ♗b1 and it is time for Black to resign.

12 h5

To maintain the pressure by opening the h-file. The main alternative 12 f4 is also worth a look:

a) 12...exf4 13 gxf4 ♕g4 (stopping h4-h5 and 0-0-0) 14 ♕f3 ♗d7 15 ♖xg4 ♗xg4 16 ♗ge2 d5 17 exd5 ♗d4 18 0-0-0 ♗xe2+ 19

♗xe2 ♗xd5 20 h5 ♗ae8 21 ♗h2 ♗xe2 22 ♗xe2 ♗xf4 23 hxg6 hxg6 24 ♗h1 gave White a winning advantage, Shaw-Berry, Marymass 1999.

b) 12...♕g4 13 ♗d1 (13 ♕f3 with play similar to the previous note is possible but I quite like the sample line 13 ♕h3 ♗d7 14 h5 gxh5 15 f5!? ♗f7 16 ♖xg4 hxg4 17 ♗h4 ♗g7 18 ♗d1, intending ♗f2, with attacking chances) 13...♖xd1 14 ♗xd1 exf4 15 gxf4 d5 16 ♗e2 dxe4 17 dxe4 ♗b6 18 ♗c3 ♗ad8 19 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 20 ♗h3 ♗e6 21 ♗d3 ♗c6 22 ♗d6 ♗ed4 ½-½ Amelang-Baginskaite, Berlin 1994.

c) 12...h5!? (this new move, securing the g4 square, seems to be a good idea—which might explain why Adams stopped it with the text move) 13 ♗f3 (13 0-0-0 ♕g4 14 ♕f3 is the aggressive option) 13...♗g7 14 0-0 ♗d4 15 ♗f2 (this position is similar to lines explored in the chapter on 6 f4 e5) 15...♕e6 16 ♗af1 with equal chances, Hamdouchi-Bezold, French Team Ch 1999.

12...g5

Otherwise White will take on g6 to open the h-file for the king's rook.

13 h6!

A nice idea to stop Black supporting his kingside pawn structure with...h6, after f4 is played.

13...♕e6 14 f4

Once again, Adams finds the most dangerous reply—Black's kingside pawn barrier is challenged.

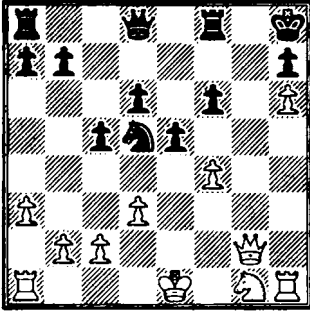
14...gxf4 15 gxf4 ♗h8 16 ♗d5 ♕xd5?!

Ward decides it is time to fight back before White castles queenside and develops the rest of his pieces. The only snag is that his plan is flawed.

17 exd5 ♖b4 18 a3 ♖bx d5?

18...♖a6 is an admission that things have gone wrong. 'The knight on the rim is grim' because it is far away from the defence of the kingside.

19 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 20 ♖g2



The opening has been a complete success for White. The twin threats of ♖xd5 and ♖g7 mate give him a winning advantage.

20...♖e7 21 ♖xd5 exf4+ 22 ♖e4 ♖xe4+ 23 dxe4 ♖ae8 24 0-0-0 ♖xe4 25 ♖f3

25 ♖xd6!? ♖el+ 26 ♖d1 also looks good for White.

25...♖e6 26 ♖h4

Black has three pawns for the piece but it is not enough because White can stop their advance and pick them off one by one. Of course, Adams' technique is legendary and the rest of the game is a model example of how to convert the advantage into victory.

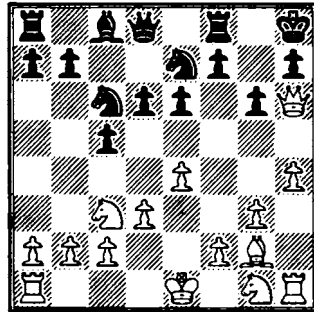
26...f5 27 ♖dh1 ♖g6 28 ♖xf4 ♖ff6 29 ♖fh4 ♖g8 30 ♖h5 ♖g4 31 ♖sh2 ♖f7 32 ♖d2 ♖fg6 33 ♖f2 ♖g2 34 ♖e2 ♖f6 35 ♖f1 ♖xf2+ 36 ♖xf2 d5 37 c3 b6 38 ♖d1 ♖e6 39 ♖e1+ ♖f6 40 ♖e5 ♖xh6 41 ♖xd5 ♖h1 Or 41...♖e6 42 ♖d8 and White is on course for the win. 42 ♖g3 ♖b1 43 ♖d6+ ♖e7 44 ♖d2 h6 45 ♖f4 ♖e6 46 ♖h2 ♖d5 47 c4+!

♖c6 1f 47...♖xc4 48 ♖d2+ wins at once. 48 ♖xf5 ♖b7 49 ♖e4 1-0.

The straightforward attack used by White is examined again in the following game. This time Black tries a different defensive structure but the result remains the same.

### Sofronie-Covaci Romanian Ch 1999

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 d3 ♖g7 5 ♖g2 d6 6 ♖e3 e6 7 ♖d2 ♖ge7 8 ♖h6 0-0 9 h4 ♖xh6 10 ♖xh6 ♖h8



The king moves into the corner to oust the queen with ...♖g8. 10...f6 would also force 11 ♖d2 because otherwise 11 h5? runs into 11...g5 when the white queen is trapped and cannot avoid 12...♖g8.

11 h5

The text threatens mate with hxg6 and ♖xh7, which is the favoured direct approach. In the game Samaritani-Aagaard, Copenhagen 1990, White tried 11 ♖h3 to threaten ♖g5 and mate on h7. There followed 11...♖g8 12 ♖d2 ♖f6 13 h5 ♖xh5 (if 13...gxh5? then 14 ♖f4 allows White to open the h-file with advantage) 14 g4 ♖f6 15 ♖g5 ♖g7 16 ♖xh7! ♖h8 17 ♖h6+ ♖g8

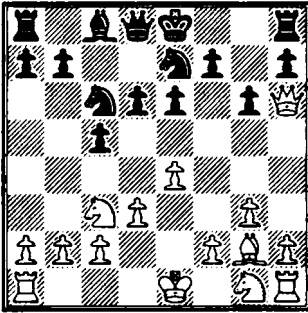


**Short-Movsesian**  
Sarajevo 2000

1 e4 c5 2 d3 e6 3 g3 d6 4  
d2 g6 5 d3 g7 6 e3 d6 7 d2  
g7 8 h6 hxh6!?

Black decides to combat the  
attack by exchanging bishops and  
castling queenside.

9 d2xh6

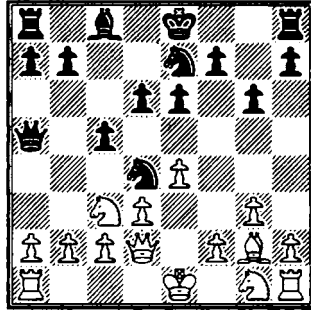


9...d4 10 0-0

The question of how to defend the  
c2 pawn is solved by this logical  
move. However, having exchanged  
bishops, 10 d2, keeping his cast-  
ling options open, is also a popular  
choice. Play might continue:

a) 10...d6 11 d1 a5 12  
xa5 (the obvious 12 c3? runs into  
12...b3! and the game is already  
lost) 12...xa5 13 e3 (the end-  
ing should be level but White does a  
good job in creating the better  
chances) 13...e5 14 c3 d6 15 e2  
c6 16 0-0 0-0 17 f4 f6 18 d5  
g7 19 fe5 fe5 20 a3 d7 21 b4  
b6 22 h4 with a slight edge due to  
his space advantage, Golubović-  
Kaplan, Zagreb 1994.

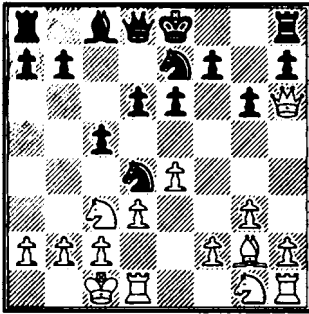
b) 10...a5 and now:



b1) 11 dge2 d6 12 dxd4  
dxd4 13 0-0 d7 14 f4 f5 15 f2  
(or 15 exf5 gxf5 16 axb7? b8 17  
g2 xb2 and Black is better)  
15...0-0 16 d1 a6 17 e3 ae8  
18 d1 b5 19 c3 d6 20 g4 fxg4  
21 dxg4 c8 22 d2 h8 23 e5  
d5 24 d4 ½-½ Hartston-Chandler,  
British Ch 1980.

b2) 11 f4 d6 12 f3 dxf3+ 13  
xf3 d4 14 g2 f5 (Black is  
wary of allowing White the possibil-  
ity of f4-f5) 15 0-0 d7 16 a3 0-0  
17 f2 led to equal chances in  
Jurković-Cebalo, Croatian Team Ch  
1995.

b3) 11 f3 d6 12 0-0 dxf3+  
13 xf3 d4 14 g2 d7 15 f4 f5  
(as usual Black stops the advance  
f4-f5) 16 f2 0-0-0 17 d1 fe4 18  
xe4 ec6 19 e3 hf8 20 c3  
xe4 21 dxe4 d6 22 g2 gb6 23  
h1 b8 24 ad1 (White will  
double rooks on the semi-open d-  
file to exert pressure against d6)  
24...e7 25 d2 c6 26 fd1  
gave White a slight edge in  
Kovalevskaia-Korbut, St Petersburg  
2001.



10... ♖a5!

Activating the queen is Black's best chance to keep the game sharply balanced. The alternatives tend to be good news for White:

a) 10... ♖ec6 11 ♗ge2 ♠d7 12 ♖g7 (also good is 12 ♗xd4 cxd4 13 ♗e2 ♖a5 14 ♖b1 ♖a4 15 c3 dxc3 16 ♗xc3 b4 17 d4 and White was better in Hort-Hodgson, Wijk aan Zee 1986) 12... ♗f8 13 ♖b1 ♖e7 14 ♖xh7 ♖f6 15 ♖h6 ♖xf2 16 ♗df1 ♖xg2 17 ♗hg1 ♖xe2 18 ♗xe2 ♗xe2 19 ♗g2 ♗ed4 20 c3 ♗b5 21 a4 ♗c7 22 ♗g12 (the white pieces are well placed to promote the attack) 22... ♗e5 23 d4! cxd4 24 cxd4 ♗c6 25 ♖xf8+! ♖xf8 26 ♖x17+ ♗g8 27 ♖xd7 ♗e8 28 ♗df7 ♗g7 29 ♖xb7 a5 30 ♖f6 ♖h7 31 d5 cxd5 32 ♖xd6 1-0 Ljubojević-Quinteros, Mar del Plata 1981.

b) 10... ♖b8 11 ♖g7 ♗f8 12 ♗ge2 ♗ec6 13 ♗hel b5 14 ♗xd4 cxd4 15 e5 d5 (or 15... ♗xe5 16 ♗e4 f5 17 ♗xd6+ ♖xd6 18 ♖xe5 and White has the better chances) 16 ♗e2 ♖a5 17 ♖b1 ♗b4 18 ♗c1 ♖a4 19 ♗d2 when White has defended well and can go over to the attack, B.Martin-Mitsud, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

c) 10... ♗xc2+ 13 ♗xe2 ♖a5 14 ♖b1 ♠e6 15 ♗c1 ♗c6 16 f4 ♖c7 17 f5! (any chance to play f4-f5 is always welcomed by Closed Sicilian

practitioners) 17... ♠d7 (17... gxf5 runs into 18 exf5 ♠xf5 19 ♖f6 and Black must lose material) 18 fxc6 fxc6 19 ♗df1 b4 20 c4 ♗d4 21 ♗f6 ♠e6 (or 21... 0-0-0 22 ♗f7 ♖a5 23 ♖xh7 ♖xh7 24 ♖xh7 when White is a pawn up) 22 ♖xg6 ♖f7 23 ♗g7 ♖f2 24 ♠h3 gave White a winning advantage in Cappon-J.Ivanov, Cappelle la Grande 1996.

11 ♖b1

Short prefers the quiet approach and provides added protection to the a2 pawn. Accepting the offered pawn, 11 ♖g7 ♗f8 12 ♖xh7, is risky because then the queen is temporarily locked out of the action. The game Wanzek-Movsesian, Sala 1995, provides a good example of likely developments for Black: 12... ♖ec6 13 ♖b1 ♠d7 (if 13... ♗b4 then 14 ♖c1 ♗b5 15 ♗ge2 keeps Black at bay for the moment) 14 ♗f3?! (White walks into a vicious combination although 14 ♗ge2 is not so impressive after 14... ♗b4 15 ♗d2 ♗xa2! 16 ♖h6 ♗b4 when Black will be eager to manoeuvre a rook to the a-file. Perhaps the defensive 14 ♖c1!? is an appropriate response when a sample line is 14... b5 15 ♗ge2 b4 16 ♗xd4 bxc3 17 ♗b3 ♖b4 18 ♖g7 e5 19 ♖f6 with better prospects for White) 14... ♗b4 15 ♗e1 ♗b5! (Black seeks to exchange the defender of the a2 pawn) 16 ♖g7 e5 17 f4 ♗xc3+ 18 bxc3 ♗xa2 19 ♖b2 ♗xc3 20 ♖a1 ♖b4+ 21 ♖c1 ♗e2+ 0-1.

11... ♠d7 12 ♗ge2 ♖ec6 13 h4

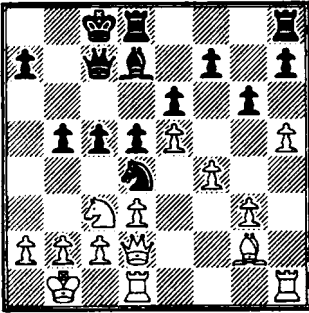
White is hoping to put his space advantage to some use by playing h4-h5. He will then just leave the pawn there until the right moment comes to capture on g6, allowing the king's rook access via the h-file. A good idea but it is matched by

Movsesian's equally good defensive technique.

13...0-0-0 14 h5 b5 15 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 16 e5 d5

On 16...dxe5 White can try 17 ♗g7 when, after 17...b4, the point of his 16th move is revealed—16 ♗c4—giving White a slight edge.

17 ♗d2 ♗c7 18 f4



Short has a reasonable position and, if he had time, one simple plan would be to double his rooks on the h-file with good chances.

18...b4 19 ♖e2 ♖b5 20 c3

20 d4!? looks like a possible improvement.

20...bxc3 21 ♖xc3 ♖d4 22 ♖c1

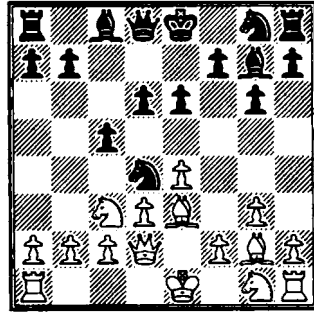
Short cannot find the right way to make progress and soon peace breaks out over the whole board.

22...♗b8 23 ♖e2 ♗b6 24 ♖xd4 cxd4 25 ♖f3 a5 26 ♖e2 ♖c8 ½-½

The attack conjured up by White on the kingside has prompted Black to seek ways of avoiding the early exchange of bishops after ♖e3-h6, by deferring ...♖ge7.

**Kosten-C.Flear**  
Monaco 2000

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♖g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3 e6 7 ♗d2 ♗d4



A waiting move designed to stop the usual ♖e3-h6 that occurs after 7...♖ge7.

8 ♖d1

This is the easiest way to get rid of the centralised knight on d4. The point is that after c2-c3 there is no chance of exchanging the knight and so it must instead retreat.

8...e5

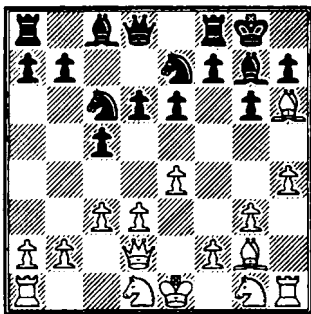
Flear wishes to increase her influence over the d4 square. Also possible:

a) 8...b6 9 c3 ♖c6 10 ♖e2 ♖b7 11 0-0 ♖ge7 12 ♖h6 (as usual White exchanges bishops) 12...0-0 13 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 14 ♖e3 f5 15 exf5 exf5 16 d4 ♖a6 17 ♖f4! ♖f6 (17...♖xf1? 18 ♖e6+ is a winning fork) 18 ♖fel ♗d7 19 dxc5 bxc5 20 ♖ed5 ♖xd5 (20...♖f7? loses outright upon 21 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 22 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 23 ♖xa8 and White has extra material) 21 ♗xd5 ♖b7 22 ♖e6+ ♖xe6 (otherwise 22...♗h8 23 ♖xc5 wins) 23 ♗xe6 1-0 Jurković-Kavčić, Bled 1998.

b) 8...♖b8 9 f4 ♖e7 (now the c1-h6 diagonal has been blocked Black activates the kingside) 10 c3 ♖dc6 11 ♖f3 0-0 12 0-0 b5 13 d4 (White has a space advantage) 13...cxd4 14 cxd4 ♗a5 15 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 16 ♖c1 ♖a6 17 b3 ♖fc8 18 ♖f2 ♗f8 19 ♖fd1 ♖b7 20 ♖d2 ♖ac6 21 e5 d5 22 g4 ♖c7 23 ♖c2

♖bc8 24 ♗de1 ♕e8 25 ♖d3 ♗xe5?  
 (in a cramped position the Australian miscalculates) 26 ♖xc7 ♗xd3  
 27 ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 28 ♖c3 1-0 Barua-  
 A Allen, London 1994.

c) 8...♗e7 allows White to achieve the aim of a quick kingside attack after 9 c3 ♗dc6 10 ♖h6 0-0 11 h4.

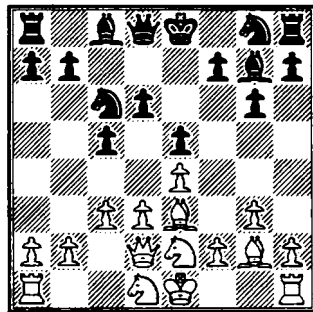


A familiar attacking idea that is obvious to anyone who has seen the main game, Adams-Ward. 11...f6 12 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 13 ♗e3 e5 14 ♗e2 ♗e6 15 ♗d5 ♖g4 16 f3 ♖e6 17 f4 ♗g8 18 h5 g5 19 h6+! ♗h8 (19...♗xh6 allows White to pursue the attack with 20 fxg5 fxg5 21 ♗c7! ♗xc7 22 ♗xg5+ ♗h8 23 ♖xh6) 20 0-0-0 gxf4 21 gxf4 b5 22 ♖h3 ♖xh3 23 ♖xh3 b4 24 c4 ♗ce7 25 ♗e3 ♗d7 26 f5 ♗c6 27 ♖g1 ♖f7 28 ♗g3 ♗d4 29 ♗h5 ♗a4 30 ♗b1 ♗xh6 31 ♗d5 ♖g8 and now, instead of 32 ♖gh1 as played in Kasparian-Simagin, Moscow 1947, White could have shortened the game with 32 ♖g6! when 32...hxg6 33 ♗hxh6 scores an easy victory.

9 c3 ♗e6

A knight on e6 is useful for the defence of the kingside.

The obvious 9...♗c6 tends to be met by 10 ♗e2 when play might continue

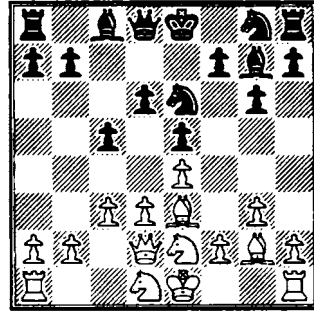


a) 10...♗e7 11 ♖h6 0-0 12 ♖xg7 (12 h4 is also possible with visions of a kingside attack similar to the main game Adams-Ward) 12...♗xg7 13 ♗e3 ♖e6 14 h4 d5 15 exd5 (15 h5 is worth a try when 15...dxe4 16 ♖xe4 f5 17 ♖g2 c4 is a suggestion by Blatny to exchange queens, but he misses something since after 18 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 19 hxg6! White is presented with a winning game after 19...hxg6 20 ♗h6+ ♗f6 21 dxc4) 15...♗xd5 16 h5 ♗de7 (16...♗xe3 encourages the white queen to infiltrate after 17 ♗xe3 with the threat of hxg6 and ♗h6+) 17 f4 f6 18 hxg6 hxg6 19 fxe5 ♗xe5 20 ♗f4 ♖f7 21 d4 cxd4 22 cxd4 ♗5c6 23 d5 ♗e5 24 d6 ♗g8 (24...♗7c6 25 0-0-0 is in White's favour) 25 ♖xb7 ♖b8 (if 25...♗h6 then White crashes through the defence by 26 ♖xh6! ♗xh6 27 ♗f5+ ♗h7 28 ♗e6 threatening ♗h6+) 26 ♗h2 ♖e8 27 ♖d5 ♗f3+ 28 ♖xf3 ♖xe3+ 29 ♖e2 ♗xd6 30 ♗h8+ ♗f8 31 ♖h7 ♗e7 32 ♖d1 ♖b4+ 33 ♗f1 ♗xb2 34 ♖xf7+ 1-0 Hjartarson-Novikov, Tlburg 1992.

b) 10...b6 11 0-0 ♗ge7 12 ♖h6 (the middlegame plan of exchanging dark-squared bishops is easy for White to find because it occurs so often) 12...0-0 13 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 14

♠c3 f6 15 f4 b5 16 d4 cxd4 17 exd4 ♖b6 18 ♗ad1 (White is fighting for control of the centre and can threaten a timely d4-d5) 18...a5 19 ♜h1 ♗a7 20 d5 ♘d8 21 fxe5 dxe5 22 ♜c1 ♘f7 23 a4?! (Minasian allows himself to be distracted when his main concern should be to support the passed d-pawn. Instead 23 ♗fd1 f5 24 exf5 gxf5 25 ♘c2 ♜c8 26 b4 is slightly better for White) 23...bxa4 24 ♘c3 ♠d7 (Van Wely is content to hang on to his extra pawn and the semi-open b-file allows him to create chances against b2) 25 ♘c4 ♖d4 26 ♗e2 (or 26 ♖xd4 exd4 27 ♘e2 ♜c8 28 ♘b6 ♜xc1 29 ♜xc1 d3 30 ♘f4 ♘e5 is better for Black) 26...♜c8 27 ♘a3 ♜b7 28 ♗fd1 ♖b4 29 ♗d2 ♘d6 (the black knight is well placed on d6 to stop the advance of the d-pawn and to exert pressure against e4) 30 ♖f3 ♖b3 31 ♗f2 ♘g8 32 ♠f1 ♜bc7 33 ♜fc2 (33 ♠g2 ♘f7 is fine for Black) 33...♜c5 (I also like the logical 33...f5 when 34 ♠a6 ♗f8 35 ♖e2 fxe4 36 ♖e1 ♘e7 gives Black a couple of extra pawns and a winning position) 34 ♠d3 h5 35 ♖c2 ♘h6 (both sides are jockeying to find the best outposts for their pieces--there is little that is constructive for White and his wait and see policy is doomed). 36 ♖d2 ♘h7 37 ♗f1 ♠h3 38 ♗e1 ♘g5 39 ♜c3 ♜8c7 40 ♖e1 ♖b4 41 ♖c1 ♖d4 42 ♘e2 ♜xc2 43 ♘xc2 ♖b6 44 ♘c3 a3 45 ♘xa3 ♘gxe4! (a brilliant combination to wrap up the game) 46 ♠xe4 (or 46 ♘xe4 ♜xc1+ 47 ♜c1 ♜xe1+ 48 ♠f1 ♜xf1 mate) 46...♘xe4 47 ♘ab1 0-1 Minasian-Van Wely, European Ch, Ohrid 2001.

10 ♘e2



10...♘f6

Black prepares to castle. Others:

a) 10...h5!? 11 d4 h4 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 14 f4 (White's motivation lies in his space advantage and temporary lead in development) 14...hxg3 15 hxg3 ♜xh1+ 16 ♠xh1 ♘h6!? (16...♘e7 might be better, although 17 ♘f2, heading for d3, gives White a slight plus) 17 ♘f2 f6 18 ♠f3 ♘c7 19 fxe5 fxe5 20 ♘d3 ♘f7 (if 20...b6 then 21 ♘xe5! overloads the bishop on g7 because 21...♠xe5 22 ♠xh6 leaves White a pawn up) 21 ♘xc5 ♘eg5 22 ♠g2 b6 23 ♘d3 ♠a6 24 ♘b4 ♠c4 25 b3 ♠e6 26 c4 gave White a winning advantage in Kagan-Geller, Netanya 1969.

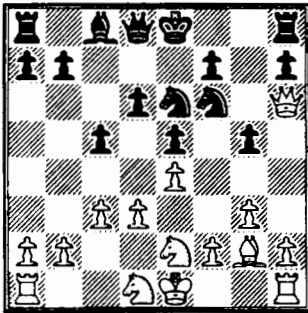
b) 10...♘e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♠h6 d5 13 ♠xg7 ♘xg7 14 exd5 ♘xd5 15 ♘e3 ♘xe3 16 ♖xe3 ♖d6 17 ♗ad1 ♗d8 18 ♗d2 ♘g8 19 f4 exf4 20 ♘xf4 ♘xf4 21 ♜xf4 ♜b8 22 d4 with a slight advantage, Spassky-Schrüfer, German Team Ch 1984.

11 ♠h6 ♠xh6?!

Flear has the good intention of trapping the queen or at least shutting it out of the game. 11...0-0 seems the more natural reply and in fact Kosten tried this, as Black, against Andrew Ledger at the

British Ch 1997. This game went 12 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 13 f4 exf4 14 ♘xf4 ♚e8 15 0-0 e4?! (Black does not want to wait for ♘e3 followed by doubling the rooks on the f-file for an attack) 16 ♘e3 cxd3 17 ♜xd3 ♜gh5 (17... ♖e6 helps to avoid losing material but 18 ♚f2, intending 19 ♚af1, is a strong reply) 18 ♘c4 ♜xf4 19 ♚xf4 ♘g4 20 ♜xd6 ♖e6 21 e5 and White gained a material advantage. After this experience, no wonder Tony Kosten was inspired to play this line for White!

12 ♜xh6 g5



13 h4

Essential, otherwise the queen is lost.

13... ♘g4

13... ♚g8 is consistent but 14 hxg5 provides an escape file when 14... ♚g6 15 ♜h2 ♚xg5 16 ♘e3 is better for White who will castle queenside and exploit the weak dark-squares around the black king.

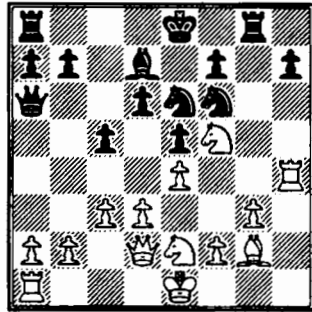
14 ♜h5 ♘f6 15 ♜f3

Not 15 ♜h6, which leads to a repetition after 15... ♘g4.

15... ♚g8 16 ♜e3 ♜a5

Black sets a trap by preparing 17 ♜d4, when, if 18 ♜d2 to break the pin, then 18... ♘b3! wins the exchange.

17 ♜d2 ♖d7 18 ♘e3 gxh4 19 ♜f5 ♜a6 20 ♚xh4



20...0-0?

20... ♘f8, heading for g6, is a reasonable alternative although White is still on top.

21 ♘e7+ ♜b8 22 ♘xg8 ♚xg8

Flear is the exchange down with no compensation. The game concluded:

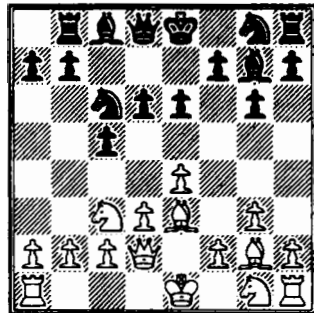
23 a3 ♜a4 24 ♚h6 ♚g6 25 ♚xg6 hxg6 26 f3 ♖c6 27 ♖h3 ♘g7 28 d4 ♖d7 29 dx e5 dx e5 30 ♜d6+ 1-0.

I have also had some experience of having to deal with a situation where Black tries to create play on the queenside. In this case 7... ♚b8 is tried but then 8 ♘f3 encourages Black to go 8... ♜b6, which, however, gives White no problems.

### Lane-Dautov

Belgian Team Ch 1992

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♖g2 ♖g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3 e6 7 ♜d2 ♚b8



Black prefers to wait and see what White's set-up will be rather than allow a quick kingside attack. The obvious idea is that the rook supports the advance ...b6-b5.

8 ♖f3

It has to be said that there are a lot of possible transpositions to games in the chapter 6 ♖e3 ♖b8 but there is also scope for independent play. The knight is developed to prepare d3-d4. The game Romanishin-Van Wely, Novy Smokovec 1992, saw a different approach with 8 ♖ge2 ♖d4 9 0-0 (9 ♖xd4?! cxd4 10 ♖b5 ♖b6 11 ♖b4 ♖e7 12 ♖b3 a6 13 ♖a3 ♖xb3 14 axb3 b5 is slightly better for Black) 9...♖e7 10 ♖h6! ♖xe2+ 11 ♖xe2 ♖xb2 12 ♖ab1 ♖f6 13 d4! cxd4 14 ♖xd4 a6 (if 14...♖c6 then White can focus on the d-pawn with 15 ♖b5 ♖e7 16 ♖fd1 when he stands better) 15 ♖fd1 ♖d7 16 ♖f3 ♖c8 17 e5 dxe5 (after 17...♖xe5? White can play 18 ♖xe5 dxe5 19 ♖g7 ♖g8 20 ♖xe5 ♖a8 21 ♖xb7 and Black's position collapses) 18 ♖g5 ♖e7 19 ♖e4 ♖g8 (an ugly move but 19...f6 is no help after 20 ♖g7 ♖g8 21 ♖xf6! ♖xf6 22 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 23 ♖xd7+ ♖f8 24 ♖c7 and White is winning) 20 ♖g5 ♖xg5 (20...♖c7 is not much of a help upon 21 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 22 ♖g5+ ♖f8 23 ♖f6 and White wins) 21 ♖xg5 b5 22 ♖e4 ♖b6 23 ♖d6 ♖c8 24 ♖xe5 f5 25 ♖d6+ ♖e7 (or 25...♖f8 26 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 27 ♖c6 wins) 26 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 27 ♖c5+ ♖f6 28 ♖c6 ♖g7 29 ♖d4+ e5 30 ♖h4+ 1-0.

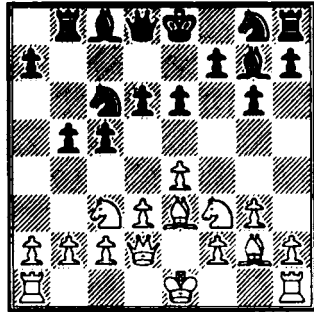
8...♖b6!?

Dautov said after the game that he was wary of allowing 9 d4 and didn't like the main alternative 8...♖d4, which is discussed in the next game.

Other moves:

a) 8...♖ge7 9 d4 cxd4 10 ♖xd4 0-0 11 0-0 d5 12 ♖ad1 ♖a5 13 exd5 ♖c4 14 ♖e2 ♖xe3 (14...♖xb2 leaves the knight without a decent retreat and 15 ♖b1 ♖f5! 16 ♖xf5 ♖xc3 17 ♖xa7 ♖a8 18 ♖h6+ ♖g7 19 ♖e3 gives White a winning advantage) 15 ♖xe3 ♖xd5 16 ♖xd5 exd5 17 ♖f4 (the isolated d-pawn is a prime target for White who can gradually build up pressure against it) 17...♖e6 18 c3 ♖b6 19 ♖d2 ♖bd8 20 ♖fd1 gave White the better chances in Hazai-Paoli, Agard 1976.

b) 8...b5 is a popular choice when White can continue:



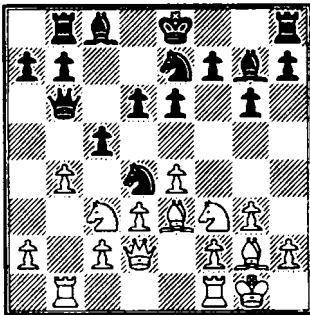
b1) 9 0-0 b4 10 ♖d1 ♖a6 (10...♖d4 11 ♖e1!? ♖e7 12 ♖h6 0-0 13 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 14 c3 bxc3 15 bxc3 ♖dc6 16 ♖e3 led to equal chances in S.Lalić-G.Jones, British Team Ch 2001) 11 ♖h4 ♖ge7 12 ♖h6 ♖f6 13 ♖f3 c4 14 dxc4 ♖a5 15 ♖f4 ♖g8 16 ♖g5 ♖xc4 17 ♖e1 h6 18 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 (18... ♖xf6 19 e5 dxe5 20 ♖xe5 is a little better for White) 19 ♖c1 ♖e7 20 b3 ♖e5 21 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 22 a3 ♖c6 23 axb4 ♖xb4 24 ♖a4 ♖c5?! (24...♖b6!? is more accurate but White maintains an edge) 25 ♖xa6! ♖xa6 26 ♖a1 when White had the advantage thanks to the threats against a6 and h8, Wiedenkiller-Murshed, Copenhagen 1982.

b2) 9 d4 b4 10  $\text{e2}$  with the following continuations:

b21) 10...  $\text{f6}$  11 e5  $\text{e4}$  12  $\text{c1 cxd4}$  13  $\text{fxd4 dxd4}$  14  $\text{xd4}$   $\text{b7}$  (14...  $\text{dxe5}$  15  $\text{xa7}$   $\text{a8}$  16  $\text{e3 f5}$  17  $\text{b6}$  is better for White) 15  $\text{e3 dxe5}$  16  $\text{xa7 f6}$  (16...  $\text{g5}$  17  $\text{f3}$   $\text{a8}$  18  $\text{b6}$   $\text{f6}$  19 0-0 gives White the better chances) 17  $\text{xb8}$   $\text{xg2}$  18  $\text{g1 d5}$  19  $\text{b3}$   $\text{e4}$  20  $\text{a7 c7}$  21  $\text{a4+ c7}$  22 c4  $\text{bxc3}$  23  $\text{c1}$   $\text{h6}$  and now, instead of 24  $\text{xc3 dxc3}$  25  $\text{xc3 a8}$  with roughly equal chances in Zakharov-Ehlvest, Volgodosk 1983, I think White could have improved with 24  $\text{e3}$  when 24...  $\text{dxe3}$  is met by 25  $\text{xc4}$  and White is winning.

b22) 10...  $\text{a5}$ ?! looks good but White can ignore the fork with 11  $\text{dxc5}$ ! (not 11 b3 when Black is better after 11...  $\text{f6}$  12 e5  $\text{e4}$  13  $\text{d3 d5}$  14  $\text{dxc5 c7}$  15 0-0  $\text{dxc5}$  16  $\text{d4}$  and now Black can pick up an easy point because, instead of 16...  $\text{d7}$  as in the game and other sources, he wins with 16...  $\text{c6}$ ! since 17  $\text{xc5}$   $\text{f8}$  traps the queen) 11...  $\text{d4}$  12  $\text{d3}$   $\text{dxe3}$  13  $\text{xe3}$   $\text{xb2}$  14  $\text{d1}$   $\text{a5}$  15  $\text{b3}$  with a material advantage.

9  $\text{b1 d4}$  10 0-0  $\text{e7}$  11 b4



I thought this was a natural idea to try and take advantage of the early

sortie of the queen. The Russian grandmaster now sank into deep thought.

11...  $\text{d8}$

On 11...  $\text{cxb4}$  then 12  $\text{xd4}$   $\text{xd4}$  13  $\text{dxd4}$   $\text{xd4}$  14  $\text{b5}$   $\text{c5}$  15  $\text{xb4}$  gives White the better game.

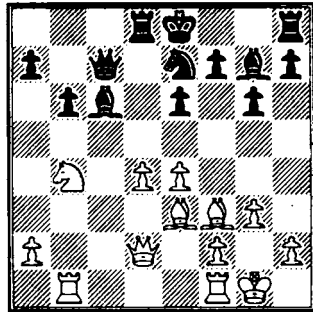
12  $\text{bxc5 dxc5}$  13  $\text{a4 c7}$

The queen is obliged to defend c5 because 13...  $\text{b6}$  fails to 14  $\text{dxc5}$  when the b-pawn is pinned.

14 c3  $\text{dxf3+}$  15  $\text{xf3 b6}$  16 d4

The pawn centre looks impressive and I should have the better chances because Black has not even had time to castle.

16...  $\text{d7}$  17  $\text{b2}$   $\text{d8}$  18  $\text{d3}$   $\text{xd4}$  19  $\text{cxd4}$   $\text{c6}$  20  $\text{b4}$



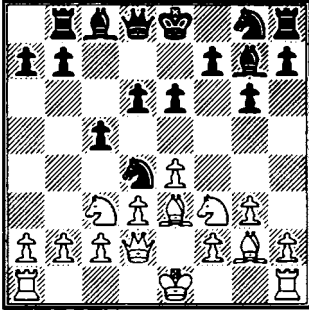
I have slightly the better chances thanks to the pawn centre and the possibility of creating a passed d-pawn. Indeed, Black has not even found time to castle. However, both players had consumed too much time on the clock and an immediate result was agreed.

20...  $\text{b7}$  21  $\text{fd1}$   $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

It is natural for Black to play 8...  $\text{d4}$  to prevent a possible  $\text{d3-d4}$ . However, in this case White has the surprising 9  $\text{xd4}$ , which causes problems directly in the opening.

**Kovalevskaya-Arakhmia Grant**  
Elista Olympiad 1998

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♜c6 3 g3 g6 4  
♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♙e3 ♞b8 7  
♜d2 e6 8 ♜f3 ♜d4



9 ♙xd4!

There are loads of games where White has continued with the tame 9 0-0 but this odd-looking reply puts Black immediately under pressure. It is so unusual for White to give up the bishop for the knight on d4 that it normally catches people out although there are some players who want to take up the challenge for Black.

9...cxd4 10 ♜b5 ♜b6

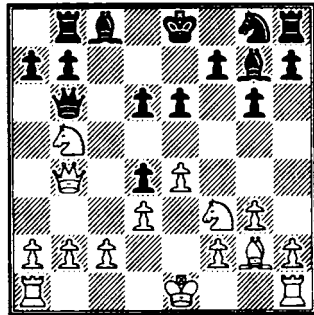
Of course, 10...a6 loses a pawn to 11 ♜bxd4, when 11...♜e7 12 c3 is good for White, but I have had this position a couple of times because Black didn't fancy the complications surrounding the text. An important move is 10...e5 when White has tried various moves of which the best is 11 ♜b4! to target the d6 pawn. Play might then proceed:

a) 11...♙f8 12 ♜xa7! (grabbing the spare pawn is simplest and best but also worth checking out is 12 ♜c4 when 12...♙e6 13 ♜c7+ ♜e7 gives White the better chances) 12...♙d7 13 ♜b5 ♜b6 14 a4 ♞c8 15 c3 d5 (or 15...dxc3 16 bxc3 ♜f6

17 0-0 and White has a lead in development and an extra pawn) 16 ♜b3 dxc3 17 bxc3 dxe4 18 ♜g5! ♜h6 19 ♜xe4 ♜a6 20 ♜d5 f6 21 ♜bd6+ ♜d8 22 ♜c5 ♜c6 (22...♞xc5 does not help after 23 ♜xb7+ ♜e8 24 ♜xc5) 23 ♜cxb7+ ♜c7 24 ♜a5+ ♜b6 25 ♜xb6+ ♜xb6 26 ♜xc8+ ♙xc8 27 0-0 gave White a winning advantage in Narciso Dublan-Mrva, Brno 1995.

b) 11...♜e7 (Black gives up the right to castle and still loses a pawn) 12 ♜xa7 (White is already winning but White now proceeds to set a good example of how to conduct the game) ♙d7 13 ♜b5 ♜b6 14 a4 ♜h6 15 ♜d2 ♜c5 16 ♜xc5 dxc5 17 ♜c4 f6 18 ♜c7 ♞hd8 19 h4 ♜f7 20 ♙h3 (White wants to exchange his bishops because then any knight of his on d5 cannot be easily exchanged) 20...♙xh3 21 ♞xh3 ♜d6 22 g4 h6 23 ♜e2 ♞h8 24 h5 g5 25 ♞a3 ♞hc8 26 ♜d5+ ♜e6 27 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 28 a5 when the strong knight and extra material led to victory in Kupreichik-Wallner, Oberwart 2000.

11 ♜b4



11...♜d7 12 e5!

The key move that opens the position in White's favour.

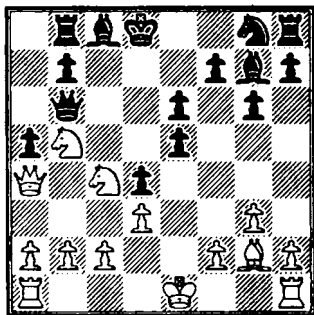
12...dxe5 13 ♜d2 a5

The only move to still make the game a contest. If 13...♗e7 then 14 ♖c4 ♗a6 15 ♛c5 and Black can resign.

14 ♗a4 ♖d8

Kovalevskaya-Hernandez, Elista Olympiad 1998, went 14...♗e7 but it did not improve the state of Black's position after 15 ♖c4 ♗a6 16 ♗cd6 ♗d5 17 ♗xf7 ♗f8 18 ♗fd6 ♖d8 19 ♛c4 ♛c6 (or 19...♗d7 20 ♗xd5 exd5 21 ♛xd5 ♗c6 22 ♛c5! maintaining White's advantage) 20 0-0 ♗d7 21 a4 ♖e7 22 ♗b3 ♛c5 23 c3 dxc3 24 bxc3 ♗xb5 25 ♗e4! ♗xa4 26 ♗xa4 ♗b6 27 ♗a2 ♛c6 (27...♗a8, to hang on to the a-pawn, allows 28 ♗b1 ♛c7 29 ♗a3+ ♖d8 30 ♖c5 and White is better) 28 ♗xa5 ♗fd8 29 ♗a3+ ♖e8 30 c4 b6 31 ♗a7 ♗b7 32 cxd5 1-0.

15 ♖c4



Up to here, the players have followed Zakharov-Karpesov, USSR 1981, which *ECO* assesses as slightly better for White. This might explain why a number of Black players have tried to defend this awful-looking position.

15...♗a6 16 ♗a3!

Another good move to avoid a pin on the knight by ...♗d7 and one which offers further evidence that

this line is good for White. Of course, 16...♗xb5? is ruled out because of 17 ♗d6+ when the rook on b8 leaves the board.

16...♗d7 17 ♖bd6 ♗f8

17...♗h6, to defend f7, is not much better after 18 ♖xa5 winning a pawn and threatening 19 ♖axb7+.

18 ♖xb7+

Kovalevskaya is spoilt for choice because 18 ♛c5 is an excellent alternative.

18...♖c7 19 ♗xa5+ ♗xa5+ 20 ♖bxa5

After the series of exchanges White has emerged with a pleasant position that includes an extra pawn.

20...♗b4+ 21 ♖d1 ♗a4 22 ♖b3 f6 23 f4 ♗xb3 24 axb3 exf4 25 c3 ♗f8

It looks rather sad to return the bishop to its original square when the rest of the kingside still needs to be developed. 25...♗c5 26 b4 ♗b6 temporarily stops the rook invading on a7 but after 27 gxf4 White remains a pawn up.

26 gxf4 ♗xb3 27 ♖c2 ♗b8 28 ♗he1 ♗e7 29 ♗a7+ ♖d8 30 ♖d6

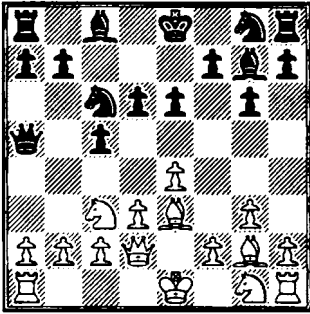
White has an overwhelming position and can look for a mate.

30...♗g8 31 ♗xe6 dxc3 32 bxc3 f5 33 ♗c6 1-0

The idea of 7...♗a5 has been recommended in some sources so it makes sense to have a look at how the maestro himself handled the opening as White.

### Smyslov-Kottnauer Moscow-Prague 1946

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 d3 e6 6 ♗e3 d6 7 ♗d2 ♗a5



A popular reply, based on the idea of pinning the knight on c3, planting a knight on d4 and delaying the development of the king's knight in order to thwart White's standard kingside attack. It is up to White to try and prove that the queen is badly placed on the edge of the board.

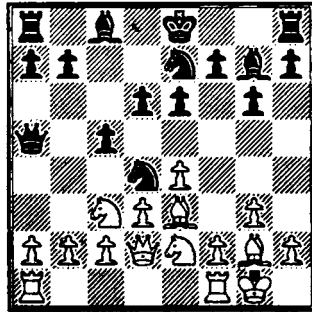
### 8 $\text{d}e2$

This old game demonstrates a sound way of handling the opening by adding support to the c3 knight and preparing to play  $\text{f2-f4}$ . Yet again, Smyslov gives a model example of how to conduct the Closed Sicilian.

The next game examines the alternative 8  $\text{d}f3$ . The game Short-Kasparov, Wijk aan Zee 2000, saw 8  $\text{f4}$  which blocks the c1-h6 diagonal but is an attempt to take advantage of Black's queen sortie. There followed 8... $\text{e6}$  9  $\text{d}f3$   $\text{d}e7$  10 0-0  $\text{d}ec6$  11  $\text{e5}$ ! (an attempt to wrest the initiative by disrupting Black's pawn structure) 11... $\text{dxe5}$  12  $\text{dxe5}$  0-0 (or 12... $\text{dxe5}$  13  $\text{fxe5}$   $\text{dxe5}$  14  $\text{wf2}$  0-0 15  $\text{d}e4$ , intending c3 followed by taking the c5 pawn) 13  $\text{d}ae1$   $\text{f5}$ ?! (Kasparov misses the impact of Short's plan. 13... $\text{dxe5}$  14  $\text{fxe5}$   $\text{dxe5}$  15  $\text{d}h6$   $\text{d}g7$  16  $\text{d}xg7$   $\text{c}xg7$  17  $\text{wf2}$  and now 17... $\text{f6}$  is Donev's suggestion of a reasonable defence but I think 18  $\text{d}e4$ , intending c3, is fine for White) 14  $\text{dxc6}$

(Short seriously weakens Black's pawns and there is little chance of the h1-a8 diagonal being opened in the short-term) 14... $\text{dxc6}$  15  $\text{dxc6}$   $\text{bxc6}$  16  $\text{d}d1$ ! (the terrible state of the queenside pawns means that Kasparov must keep the queens on the board to create complications) 16... $\text{wxa2}$  17  $\text{dxc5}$   $\text{d}d8$  18  $\text{b3}$   $\text{d}b8$  19  $\text{d}f2$   $\text{wa6}$  20  $\text{d}c3$   $\text{d}xb3$ ?! (Kasparov fights for the initiative because he has no desire to allow  $\text{d}a4$  when White has a firm grip on the position) 21  $\text{cxb3}$   $\text{d}xd3$  22  $\text{wa2}$  and White had the better chances.

8... $\text{d}d4$  9 0-0  $\text{d}e7$



### 10 $\text{c}h1$

White puts his king in the corner to prepare an advance of his kingside pawns. Others:

a) 10  $\text{a3}$ , intending  $\text{d}ab1$  followed by  $\text{b4}$ , when play might continue:

a1) 10... $\text{d}ec6$  11  $\text{d}ab1$  0-0 12  $\text{c}h1$   $\text{d}xe2$  13  $\text{wxe2}$   $\text{d}d4$  (13... $\text{dxc3}$  14  $\text{bxc3}$   $\text{wxc3}$  when White has compensation for the pawn because his dark-squared bishop can be more easily used to attack the king) 14  $\text{w}d2$   $\text{d}d7$  15  $\text{d}f4$   $\text{w}c7$  16  $\text{d}d1$   $\text{e5}$  17  $\text{d}e3$  (or 17  $\text{d}h6$ ?!  $\text{d}xh6$  18  $\text{w}xh6$   $\text{d}xc2$  and Black is a pawn up) 17... $\text{d}e6$  18  $\text{f4}$   $\text{f5}$  19  $\text{d}c3$   $\text{d}ae8$  20  $\text{fxe5}$   $\text{dxe5}$  21  $\text{exf5}$   $\text{gxf5}$  22  $\text{d}d5$   $\text{w}d7$  23  $\text{c4}$   $\text{b6}$  24  $\text{b4}$   $\text{cxb4}$  25  $\text{axb4}$   $\text{c}h8$  26  $\text{d}bel$   $\text{w}f7$  27  $\text{dxd4}$   $\text{exd4}$

28 ♖f4 gave White the better game in Stein-Sarapu, Sousse Interzonal 1967.

a2) 10...♞xe2+ 11 ♖xe2 0-0 (11...♙xc3 12 bxc3 ♖xc3 wins a pawn but the weakness of the dark squares around the king is enough compensation) 12 ♖d2 ♞c6 13 ♙h6 ♙xh6 14 ♖xh6 ♞d4 15 ♖d2 ♙d7 16 f4 f5 17 ♖f2 ♙ab8 18 ♞d1 ♖b6 19 ♙b1 ♖c7 20 ♞e3 b5 21 c3 ♞b3 22 ♖c2 c4 23 d4 ♙c6 24 ♙bd1 (the Welsh international is playing a waiting game) 24...♖b6 25 exf5 exf5 26 ♙fel ♙be8 27 ♞d5 ♙xd5 28 ♙xd5+ ♙g7 29 ♖g2 (White's pieces combine well to engineer some attacking chances. The repeated exchange of pieces has left the black knight on b3 a spectator) 29...h5 30 ♙c6 ♙xe1+ 31 ♙xe1 ♞a5 32 ♙d5 ♙h6 33 ♙e7 ♙h8 34 ♖h3 ♙h7 35 ♖h4 ♙xe7 36 ♖g5+ 1-0 Lamford-Hölzl, Dubai Olympiad 1986.

b) 10 ♞c1 (usually the knight emerges on b3) 10...0-0 11 ♞d5 (a drawing weapon to exchange pieces, while 11 ♞b3 is the fighting move) 11...♞ec6 (11...♖xd2? runs into 12 ♞xe7+ winning) 12 ♖xa5 ♞xa5 13 ♙xd4 cxd4 14 ♞e7+ ♙h8 15 b4 ♞c6 16 ♞xc6 bxc6 17 ♞b3 ♙d7 18 f4 ♙ab8 19 a3 led to equal chances in Legaspi-Rohde, Philadelphia 1996.

10...♙d7

Black gets on with developing. Also possible is 10...♞ec6 11 ♞c1 (11 a3!? can be considered) 11...♙b8 12 ♞b3 ♖c7 13 ♞d1 e5 14 c3 ♞xb3 15 axb3 with equal chances, Dumitrache-Röder, Cappelletti la Grande 1995.

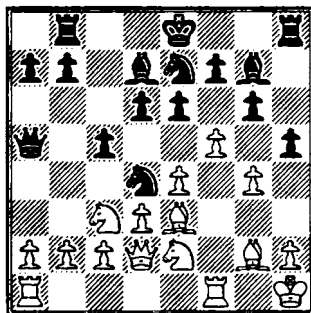
Or 10...♞xe2 11 ♖xe2 0-0 (11...♙xc3 is risky because the g7 bishop is an excellent defender; after 12 bxc3 ♖xc3 Black is left

with weak dark squares around his king) 12 ♖d2 ♞c6 13 f4 f5 gave Black equality in Ivanović-Maksimović, Herceg Novi 2001.

11 f4 ♙b8 12 g4 h5

If 12...0-0 then 13 f5! with a promising attack.

13 f5



A familiar advance in the Closed Sicilian. The immediate threat is f5-f6.

13...♙e5 14 fxxg6 ♞xxg6 15 g5 ♞xe2 16 ♖xe2 ♙xc3

If 16...♙c6, then 17 ♖f2 ♙f8 18 ♙f3. The position is complicated but White has good practical chances as Black will have problems in finding sanctuary for his king.

17 bxc3 ♖xc3 18 ♖f2 ♖g7 19 d4

For a mere pawn Smyslov has transformed his position. The pair of bishops are strong and, if Black castles, the kingside pawn weaknesses will be critical.

19...b6 20 ♙ad1 ♙b5 21 ♙fel 0-0 22 ♖g3

The game now veers out of control for several moves as both players wrestle for the advantage.

22...♙bc8 23 d5 exd5 24 ♙xd5 ♙cd8 25 ♙d2 h4 26 ♖b3 ♙c6 27 ♙f5 ♖d4 28 ♙f6 c4

Black can take the bishop with 28...♖xd2 but comes under attack

upon 29 ♠xg6+ ♖h7 30 ♠h6+ ♖g8 31 ♠g1.

29 ♖c3 ♖xc3 30 ♠xc3 ♠fe8 31 ♖g1 ♠d7 32 ♠h3 ♠de7 33 ♠xd6 ♠xe4?

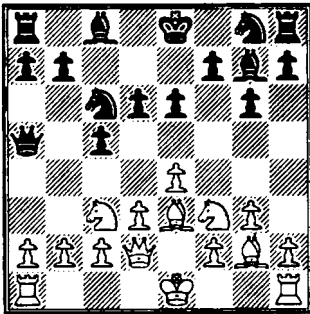
33...♠xe4 is the last chance.

34 ♠f6 ♠xc2 35 ♠xe7 ♠a4 36 ♠d8 ♠xd8 37 ♠xd8 1-0

Another approach against the early queen sortie is 8 ♖f3, to rapidly develop the kingside; once again, ♠e3-h6 and a concentration of play on the kingside is a reasonable middlegame plan.

**Bushill-Tozer**  
Kensington 1999

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 d3 ♠g7 5 ♠e3 d6 6 ♠g2 e6 7 ♖d2 ♖a5 8 ♖f3



8...♖d4 9 0-0

This tends to be an automatic choice although A.Ledger-Gallagher, British Team Ch 1999, saw 9 ♖h4!? to avoid the main lines and help to prepare f2-f4-f5. That game went 9...♖e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 f4 (11 ♖d5 is also possible when 11...♖d8 12 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 13 c3 ♖c6 14 d4 gives White a slight edge) 11...f5 12 ♖d5 ♖d8 13 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 14 c3 ♖c6 15 ♠ae1

♠d7 16 d4 (16 exf5! seems to be a better choice when 16...gxf5 17 ♖f3, intending to double rooks on the e-file, gives White a slight edge) 16...cxd4 17 cxd4 fxe4 18 ♠xe4 d5 19 ♠b1 ♖b4! (Black wants to enter the ending to increase the pressure against the isolated pawn on d4) 21 a3 ♖c6 22 ♖f3 ♠ac8 23 ♖g2 ♖a5 24 h4 ♖c4 25 ♠c1 ♖d6 26 ♠d2 ♖e4 27 ♠b4 ♠fe8 28 ♠d1 with equal chances and an eventual drawn result,

9...♖e7

Black is preparing to castle on the kingside. Others:

a) 9...♠d7 10 ♠f4 ♖b6 (Gallagher points out that after 10...e5 White should not play 11 ♖xd4? cxd4 12 ♖d5 ♖d8 when Black wins a piece. Instead, I would suggest 11 ♠e3 with an edge thanks to the vacant d5 square) 11 ♠ab1 ♠c8 12 ♠fe1 ♖e7 13 e5 ♠c6 14 ♖e4 ♠xe4 15 ♠xe4 ♖xf3+ (15...d5 is possible) 16 ♠xf3 dxe5 17 ♠xe5 ♠xe5 18 ♠xe5 0-0 19 h4 ♖f5 20 c3 h5 21 ♠bel ♠fd8 22 a3 ♖c7 23 ♠xh5! f6 24 ♠xf5 gxf5 (or 24...exf5 when 25 ♠xg6 ♠d5 26 ♖h6 ♖g7 27 ♖h5 ♠cd8 28 ♠xf5 gives White a winning attack) 25 ♠xe6 ♠d6 26 ♖e2 ♠cd8 27 ♠e7 ♠8d7 28 ♠f7+ ♖f8 29 ♠e8+ ♖g7 30 ♠g8+ 1-0 Ljubojević-Rodriguez, Biel Zonal 1985.

b) 9...h6?! (an idea to stop White playing ♠h6 after the king's knight is developed, but the knight on d4 prevents this anyway due to an attack on the c2 pawn) 10 a3 ♖e7 11 ♠fb1 ♖c7 12 ♠xd4! (this idea will be obvious to anyone who has seen the main game Kovalevskaya-Arakhmia Grant) 12...cxd4 13 ♖b5 ♖b6 14 ♖b4 0-0 15 ♖bxd4 gave White a material advantage in La Rota-Orozco, Barranquilla 1995.

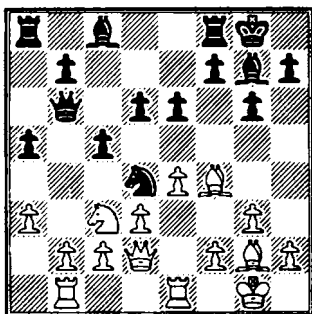
10 ♖f4 ♜b6 11 ♜ab1 0-0 12 ♜fe1

To have the option of e4-e5.

12...♞ec6 13 a3

Bushill prepares b2-b4 to open the b-file in order to chase the black king. Not 13 ♖xd6? when Black can contemplate an easy win upon 13...♞xf3+ 14 ♖xf3 ♞d4 with a discovered attack against the bishop on d6.

13...♞xf3+ 14 ♖xf3 ♞d4 15 ♖g2 a5



Tozer wants to put a stop to b2-b4.

16 e5 d5

The problem with closing the centre is that it encourages White to attack on the kingside in the knowledge that counterplay on the queenside is limited. After 16...dxe5 then 17 ♖xe5 gives White the superior chances because he can try to exchange the key defensive piece on g7.

17 ♞e2 ♞xe2+ 18 ♜xe2 ♖d7 19 ♖h6 ♖c6 20 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 21 ♜f4

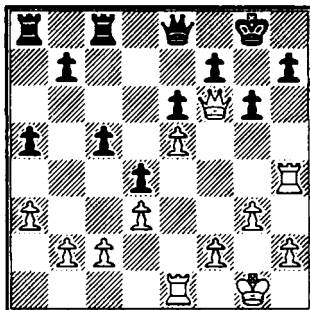
The queen is ready to exploit the dark-squares around the king.

21...d4?!

I think it makes more sense to play 21...f6 to stop the queen coming to f6 and conducting the attack. Nevertheless, upon 22 exf6+

♜xf6 23 ♜e5, White has more space and can target the backward e-pawn.

22 ♖xc6 ♜xc6 23 ♜f6+ ♜g8 24 ♜e4 ♜fc8 25 ♜bel ♜e8 26 ♜h4



An excellent position for White who is searching for mate. The big threat is 27 ♜xh7 ♜xh7 28 ♜e4 followed by a deadly check on h4.

26...♜d8 27 ♜f4 h5

Naturally, 27...g5? is too good to be true as 28 ♜g4 pins the pawn and on 28...h6 29 h4 wins.

28 ♜h3 ♜g7 29 g4

Bushill is relentless in his pursuit of the king and seeks to break the pawn barrier.

29...g5

The queen is shooed away but it is a hollow victory because the kingside pawns are fatally weakened. Instead, 29...♜e7 30 gxf5 ♜h8 31 h6+ ♜h7 leaves Black with a dour defensive task.

30 ♜d2 h4 31 ♜f3! ♜h8 32 ♜f6

A clinical finish. White cuts off the defence of the g5-pawn and closes in on the king.

32...♜g8

32...♜f8 allows 33 ♜xg5 ♜g7 34 ♜xh4+ ♜g8 35 ♜h6 winning.

33 ♜h6+ ♜g7 34 ♜xg5+ ♜f8 35 ♜xh4 1-0

### Summary

**Adams-Ward** is a marvellous example of a world-class player endorsing the new main line in the Closed Sicilian and reaching a winning position after only 20 moves. An attempt to improve Black's defensive task is given short shrift in **Sofronie-Covaci** where White easily secures victory. If Black is happy to allow White an instant attack he should at least check out the game **Short-Movesian**. The introduction of 10...♖a5 works well enough for Black to share the point. In **Kosten-C.Flear** Black tries 7...♗d4 in an effort to do something constructive while avoiding an early ...♗ge7. White bides his time and still manages to play ♖e3-h6 and end up with an advantage from the opening.

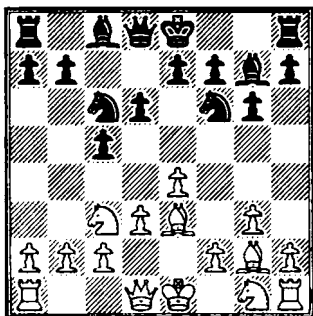
**Lane-Dautov** is an example of how I handle a quick ...♗b8 with 8 ♗f3. It works well because Black is tempted into the unusual 8...♗b6, which hardly helps queenside pawn expansion. It would seem that the obvious move to counter White's strategy is 8...♗d4 but this runs into 9 ♖xd4! and **Kovalevskaya-Arakhmia Grant** confirms my belief that White should emerge on top. 7...♗a5 is a recommendation by Gallagher but the old game **Smyslov-Kottnauer** emphasises that White has plenty of choice against the variation. **Bushill-Tozer** is another demonstration of how White can react against the queen manoeuvre, but this time with 8 ♗f3 which works out well.

This is another one of Kasparov's favourites against 6 ♖e3. He likes systems against the Closed Sicilian where the king's knight is developed to f6. For instance, take a look at Short-Kasparov in the 6 f4 ♟f6 chapter. His idea is to rapidly develop the kingside and try to divert White from his traditional kingside pawn storm by advancing on the queenside.

The English stars Adams and Short are impressive against this variation and it is noteworthy how they dispense with h2-h3 for as long as possible. This is the difference from older examples where players were wary of allowing ...♟f6-g4.

**Adams-Kasparov**  
Linares 1999

1 e4 c5 2 ♟c3 d6 3 g3 ♟c6 4  
♖g2 g6 5 d3 ♖g7 6 ♖e3 ♟f6

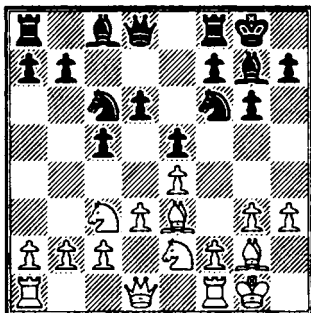


The starting point of the system.

7 ♟ge2

It is a matter of taste whether to play the text or 7 h3. I suspect White is happy to invite 7...♟g4 when 8 ♖d2 ♜b8 9 h3 ♟f6 10 f4 gives White a decent attacking plan of castling and a kingside pawn storm. 7 h3 is discussed in the main game, Bliznyuk-Conquest. An attempt to transpose into the 6 f4 ♟f6 lines backfires after 7...0-0 8 f4 e5 9 ♟f3 ♟h5! and 10 ♟f2 cannot be right.

7...0-0 8 h3 e5 9 0-0



9...b5!

A typical move by Kasparov who always seeks to grab the initiative in the opening. Others:

a) 9...♜b8 10 ♜d2 b5 11 f4 ♟d4 12 g4 (the start of a standard kingside pawn storm but the difference from the main game, Spassky-Geller, in the 6 f4 ♟f6 chapter is that the important e5 square is already occupied, making it worse

for Black) 12...b4 13 d1 h5? (the text merely weakens the kingside although 13...exf4!? 14 xxf4 e6 15 h6 offers White the better prospects) 14 f5 d7 15 c3 bxc3 16 bxc3 d6 17 gxh5 gxh5 18 d3 h4 19 h2 d6 20 d2 d4+ 21 dxg4 hxg4 22 g5 h8 23 f6 gave White a big advantage in Vilar Lopez - Campo Millan, Zaragoza 1999.

b) 9...d4 10 h2 b8 11 f4 b5 12 d2 b4 13 d1 d5 14 f5! (a favourite of all 'Closed' players because the pawn advance tends to weaken Black's defence) 14...gxf5 15 exf5 dxf5 16 xf5 xf5 17 g4 xg4 (or 17...g6 18 gxh5 xh5 19 d3 g6 20 d5 with an edge for White) 18 hxg4 h4+ 19 h3 d4 (if 19...d6 then 20 g5 dxg4+ 21 g2 h5 22 d3 g6 23 xg4 h6 24 e7 gives White the advantage) 20 dxf4 exf4 21 xf4 be8 22 e3 e5 23 xe5 xe5 24 d5 wf6 25 f1 led to victory in Keres-Darga, Amsterdam Olympiad 1954.

c) 9...e6 10 f4 d4 11 d2 dx2+ 12 dx2 exf4 13 dxf4 c7 14 f2 (White has the simple plan of doubling rooks on the f-file) 14...d7 15 c3 ae8 16 d4 c4 (otherwise the threat of d4-d5 is irritating) 17 b3 a6 18 d5 a5 19 f4 when the weakness of d6 gave Black problems in Vilar Lopez-Guasch, Majorca 2000.

10 dxb5

White temporarily wins a pawn. 10 f4 b4 11 d5 dx5 12 exd5 d4 13 fe5 dx2+ 14 xe2 xe5 is slightly better for Black.

10...b8 11 a4

Or 11 c4 a6 12 bc3 xb2 13 cl with equal chances. Instead, a

few months later in Adams-Topalov, Dos Hermanas 1999, White improved with 11 dec3. That game went 11...a6 12 a3 xb2 13 d4 b8 14 g5 h6 (or 14...e6 when 15 d5 xd5 16 exd5 e7 is unclear according to Adams) 15 xf6 xf6 16 d5 g7 17 b1 xb1 18 h1 a5 19 h6 dxc4 20 xd8 xd8 21 dxc4 d7 22 db6 c7 23 dxc8 xc8 24 b1 c7 25 h4 a7 26 h3 f8 27 a4 a5 28 c8 f6 29 b8 g7 30 b7 e7 with an equal position and an eventual draw after 56 moves.

11...a6 12 a3

White wishes, at the earliest opportunity, to oust the black rook after it has captured on b2. After 12 d3c3 xb2 Black can continue ...d4 with a decent position.

12...xb2 13 d4 b8 14 f4 exf4 15 dxf4 a5

15...e5 16 dx5 dx5 17 d5 dx5 18 exd5 d6 19 d2 d7 is unclear according to Adams.

16 d2!

After 16 xa5 Kasparov would be free to jockey for the best outposts for his pieces, e.g. 16...xa5 17 d2 c7 18 c3 c4 19 d4 b7, intending d7, is slightly better for Black.

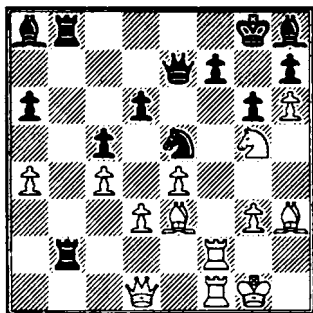
16...d7 17 a2 c6 18 d3 a8 19 c4

Perhaps 19 g4, to generate king-side play, should be considered.

19...d7 20 a2 d3 21 h4 d4 22 h3 dxf3+ 23 dxf3 e5 24 d1 e7 25 h5 b4 26 h6 h8

The only move as 26...xh6 27 dxg6! hxg6 28 xh6 would leave White with excellent attacking chances.

27 e6 f8 28 d5 b2!



29 ♖f4?!

At the critical moment White plays inaccurately. In his notes to the game, upon which our analysis is based, Adams points out the star move 29 ♖xf7! and after 29...♗xf7 30 ♖e6 ♖f6 31 ♗g4! ♖b1 (31...♖f8 32 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 33 ♖g5 ♗h8 34 ♖xf7 ♖xg5 35 ♗c8+ ♗d8 36 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 37 ♖e6 ♖e7 38 ♖f7 ♖b7 39 ♖g7 wins) 32 ♘xf7 ♖xf1+ 33 ♗xf1 ♖e8 (33...♖f8 34 ♘xd6+ ♗h8 35 ♘f7+ ♖xf7 36 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 37 ♗c8+ ♗g8 38 ♗xc5 the extra pawns White has for the piece give him the better chances) 34 ♘g5+ ♗h8 35 ♘f7+ with a draw by repetition.

29...♖f6 30 ♘f3 ♖c6 31 ♘xe5?

31 a5! maintains the tension although Black still has an edge.

31...♖xe5 32 ♗f3 f5 33 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 34 g4 ♖xf2

Kasparov points out that 34...♖xe4 35 dxe4 ♖b3 36 ♗h1! gets White back into the game.

35 ♖xf2 ♖b1+ 36 ♖f1 ♖b2! 37 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 38 gxf5 ♗d4+ 39 ♗h1 ♖xa4 40 fxc6 hxc6 41 e5! ♗xe5 42 ♗b7 ♖e8 43 ♖g2 ♗h5+?

In games at world-class level a slight inaccuracy can have serious consequences. Here Kasparov should have preferred 43...a5! 44 ♖d5+ ♗h8 45 ♖e6! ♖c6+! 46 ♗xc6 ♗xe6 47 ♗c7 ♗e5 48 ♗xa5

♗h7 with an extra pawn and a technical win.

44 ♖g1 ♗xh6 45 ♗e7?

An error in return. Instead, 45 ♗xa6 ♖f7 46 ♗xd6 ♗e3+ 47 ♗h2 ♖g7 48 ♖d5 offers reasonable chances of drawing.

45...♗c1+ 46 ♖f1 ♖f7 47 ♗xd6 ♗e3+ 48 ♗h1 a5 49 ♗d8+ ♖e8 50 ♖g2

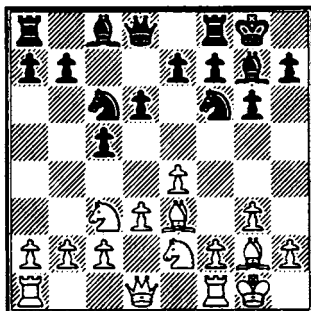
50 ♗xa5 runs into 50...♖c6+ 51 ♖g2 ♗h3+ 52 ♖g1 ♗xg2 mate.

50...♗e1+ 51 ♗h2 ♗e5+ 52 ♗h3 ♖g7 53 ♖d5 a4 54 ♗b6 ♖d7+ 55 ♖g2 ♗e2+ 56 ♖g1 a3 57 ♗xc5 ♗e1+ 58 ♖g2 a2 59 ♗d4+ ♗h7 0-1

Logical is 8...♖b8 to advance the b-pawn. Short finds a good way to blunt this queenside activity.

### Short-McShane Reykjavik 2000

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♖g2 ♖g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3 ♘f6 7 ♘ge2 0-0 8 0-0



8...♖b8

Black wishes to support the advance of the b-pawn with the rook. Alternatively:

a) 8...♖d7 9 h3 ♘e8 (9...♗c8 10 ♗h2 is fine) 10 ♗d2 (as usual the idea of exchanging Black's dark-squared piece is an easy plan to

follow) 10...f5 11 exf5 ♖xf5 12 ♗h6 ♜d7 13 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 14 g4 ♗e6 15 ♜ae1 ♖f7 16 ♜e4 a5 17 ♜h6 ♜e6 18 ♜f4! ♜cd8 (18...♜xf4 19 ♜g5 wins) 19 ♜d5 ♗e8 20 ♜g5 ♜xg5 21 ♜xe7+ ♜f7 22 ♜xg5 ♜e6 23 ♗d5 1-0 Forster-Oesterle, Vorarlberg 1995.

b) 8...♜g4 9 ♗d2 ♜d4 10 ♜c1 ♜e5 11 f4 ♜ec6 12 h3 with a small edge, Euwe-Colle, Zutphen 1924.

9 h3

An improvement on the game Adams-McShane, Kilkenny 1999, where 9 a4 was played. There followed 9...a6 10 ♜c1 b5 11 axb5 axb5 12 ♗h6 b4 13 ♜d5 e6 14 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 15 ♜e3 d5 16 exd5 exd5 17 ♜e1 ♗b7 18 ♜f4 ♜d4 19 ♜a4 ♜e8 20 h4 ♜e6 21 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 22 ♜a7 ♜b6 23 ♜a1 ♜be8 24 ♜d2 with an equal game that eventually led to a draw.

9...b5 10 a3

This is usually a good reply to ...b5 as if Black pushes on the pawn with ...b4, White captures it and has the open a-file for his queen's rook.

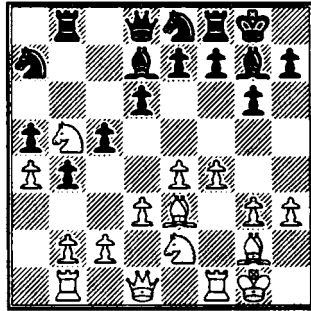
10...♗d7

10...a5, to support the advance ...b5-b4, was tried in the game Adams-Van Wely, Frankfurt 1999. There followed 11 ♜d2 b4 12 axb4 axb4 13 ♜d5 ♜d7 14 ♗h6 (the standard middlegame ploy of exchanging dark-squared bishops is a familiar theme in this line, but also possible is 14 d4 ♗a6 15 ♜fd1 e6 16 ♜df4 ♜b6 17 b3 with an edge) 14...♗xh6 15 ♜xh6 e6 16 ♜e3 ♜d4 17 ♜xd4 cxd4 18 ♜c4 ♜e5 19 b3 ♜c7 20 f4 ♜xc4 21 dxc4 f6 22 h4 when White was slightly better.

11 f4 a5 12 a4

12 g4, making way for ♜e2-g3, is another idea in this system, when 12...b4 13 axb4 axb4 14 ♜a4 ♜a8 is roughly equal.

12...b4 13 ♜b5 ♜e8 14 ♜b1 ♜a7?!



McShane tries a novel way to oust the knight from b5.

15 c4

Black's clever idea is 15 ♜xa7 ♗xa4! 16 f5 ♜b6 and the queen's knight leaves the board.

15...bxc3 16 ♜xa7 cxb2

Black has a couple of pawns for the piece but it is not enough against a former world title challenger.

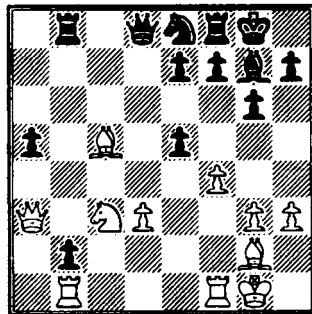
17 e5 ♜b6 18 ♜b5 ♗xb5 19 axb5 ♜xb5 20 ♜c3 ♜d7

Not 20...♜b4? 21 ♜d5 ♜a3 22 ♜xe7+ ♜h8 23 ♜c2 and White is clearly better.

21 ♜a4 ♜d8

The ending after 21...♜xa4 22 ♜xa4 is much better for White thanks to his active pieces. For instance: 22...dxe5 23 fxe5 ♗xe5 24 ♗xc5 ♜d6 25 ♜fe1 with advantage.

22 ♜a3 dxe5 23 ♗xc5



23...♘c7

Or 23...♘d6 24 ♜xb2 ♜xb2 25 ♜xb2 exf4 26 ♜xf4 and White is on top.

24 ♖xe7 ♜d4+ 25 ♔h1 ♜fe8 26 ♖d6 ♘b5 27 ♘b5 ♜xb5 28 fx5 ♖xe5 29 ♜a2 ♜e6 30 ♖xe5

30 ♜c4!? also looks good.

30...♜xe5 31 ♔h2 h5 32 ♜f4 ♜f6 33 d4 ♜d6 34 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 35 ♜xb2

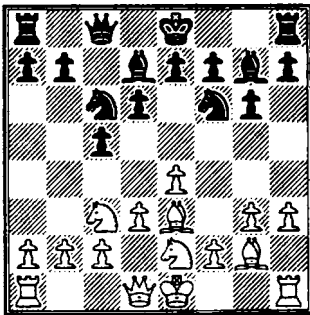
The troublesome pawn on b2 is finally captured and Short has no worries.

35...♜g5 36 ♜f2 ♜e7 37 h4 ♜g4 38 ♜xf7 1-0

The idea of ...♖d7 and ...♜c8, making it awkward for White to castle kingside, is a novel reaction to 7 h3.

**Bliznyuk-Conquest**  
Canberra 1999

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♖g2 ♖g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3 ♘f6 7 h3 ♖d7 8 ♘ge2 ♜c8



An interesting plan by the English grandmaster. The attack on h3 prevents castling and takes White away from standard lines. It is not new, Pelikan played it in the 1930s, but results of subsequent games suggest that it has not stood the test of time.

Though an early ...♜c8 may pose some problems at club level, there is plenty of scope in the Closed for White to formulate alternative middlegame plans.

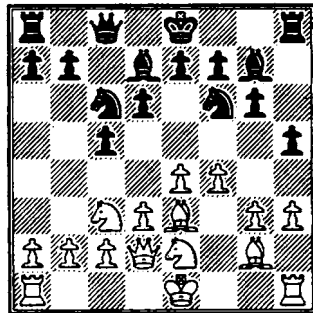
9 f4

Treybal-Pelikan, Prague 1936, saw White play passively against Black's set-up: 9 ♜d2 h5 10 ♘d5 b5 (without the queen's knight covering the square Black seizes the chance to advance the b-pawn) 11 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 12 c3 ♜b8 13 f4 b4 (Black has already achieved the short-term goal of creating counter-play) 14 c4 ♘d4 15 ♘xd4 cxd4 16 ♖f2 (the idea of obtaining a decent attack by ♖e3-h6 has had to be abandoned) 16...a5 17 ♜c1 ♖g7 18 h4 e5 19 0-0 ♜c5 20 ♖e1 ♖h6! gave Black the better chances.

9...h5

Otherwise White will eventually continue with g3-g4 to thwart the attack against h3.

10 ♜d2



10...♜b8

This rook move, to support the advance of the b-pawn, is a feature of the other main games. Other tries have not made much of an impact:

a) 10...a6 11 ♘d1 (an echo of the main game: White commences a manoeuvre to add extra protection to the h3 pawn) 11... b5 12 ♘f2 ♘h7 13 c3 0-0 14 f5!? (a

speculative sacrifice to expose Black's kingside although 14 0-0 is simple and good) 14...gxf5 15 ♠h6 (15 ♖f4, to hound the h-pawn, is not so clear after 15...♖f6 16 ♗e2 b4!) 15...fxe4 16 dxe4 f5 17 ♠xg7 ♗xg7 18 ♖f4 ♗e8 19 ♗e2 e5 (or 19...♖f6 20 ♠f3 ♚h8 21 exf5 ♠xf5? 22 ♠xc6 ♗xc6 23 ♗xe7+ wins) 20 ♖xh5+ ♗h8 and now, instead of 21 exf5 ♠xf5 22 g4 ♠g6 23 0-0 with a slight advantage, Nagy-Paszler, Hungarian Team Ch 1994, White should have played 21 ♚d1! with excellent chances.

b) 10...e5 11 fxe5 ♖xe5 12 0-0-0 ♗c7 13 ♚df1 (White has seen the obvious intention and sets a cheeky trap) 13...0-0-0? 14 ♚xf6 ♠xf6 15 ♖d5 gave White a clear advantage in Zatulovskaya-Worthmüller, Bad Wörishofen 1992.

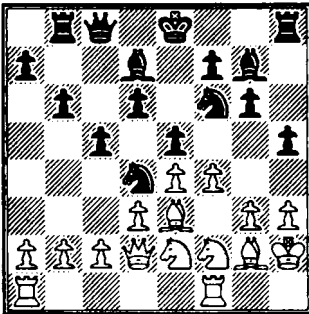
11 ♖d1!

I was watching this game and noticed how White was already well ahead on the clock because so far he had faced no real threats and could just play typical opening moves. Now the idea is to transfer the knight to f2 in order to castle kingside.

11...b6?!

Conquest is trying to keep all his options open but he needs to create some play with the superior 11...b5.

12 ♖f2 e5 13 0-0 ♖d4 14 ♗h2?!



Bliznyuk wishes to add extra protection to h3, but this is wrong. A sensible move is 14 c3 when 14...♖xe2+ 15 ♗xe2 leaves White a small advantage.

14...♗a6?

Conquest misses a chance to justify his offbeat opening strategy with the amazing 14...♠h3!, which plunges White into problems. For example: 15 fxe5 (15 ♠xh3? ♖f3+ 16 ♗h1 ♖xd2 17 ♠xc8 ♖xf1 wins or 15 ♖xh3 ♖g4+ 16 ♗g1 ♖xe3 17 ♗xc3 ♖xc2 18 ♗d2 ♖xa1 19 ♚xa1 h4 offers decent chances) 15...♠xg2 16 exf6 ♠xf1 17 ♖xd4 ♠xf6 18 ♖f3 ♠xd3 19 cxd3 h4 and it is White who is on the defensive.

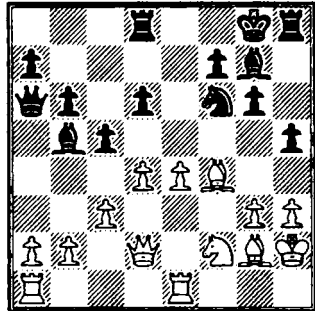
15 c3 ♖xe2 16 ♗xe2 ♗f8

Good or bad, 16...0-0 should be considered because the king walk is too slow and leaves Black's pieces lacking co-ordination.

17 ♗d2 ♚d8 18 d4!

With the king rather vulnerable on f8 and the queen a spectator on a6, it is a good decision to open the position.

18...exf4 19 ♠xf4 ♠b5 20 ♚fel ♗g8



21 dxc5 bxc5 22 e5!

Suddenly, the pin on the d-file becomes significant. Black is busted.

22...♖h7

22... ♘e8 is met by 23 ♘e4 with a clear advantage.

23 exd6 g5

A last ditch effort to create complications in a lost position.

24 ♖xg5 ♙xd6 25 ♗f4 ♘xg5 26 ♗xg5

One of the reasons why this game will not be found on any computer database is because the remaining moves were played in a frantic time-scramble and were not recorded. However, a kindly arbiter reconstructed the score for me.

The game concluded:

26...h4 27 g4 ♗b6 28 ♘e4 ♙c6  
29 ♙ad1 ♙c8 30 ♙d6 ♗c7 31 ♘h1  
♘f8 32 ♙ed1 ♖e8 33 ♙d8 ♙xd8 34  
♙xd8 ♙h6 35 ♗xc5+?

35 ♙xe8+! ♘xe8 36 ♗xg7 wins.

35... ♗xc5 36 ♘xc5 ♘e7 37 ♙a8  
♙d6 38 ♙xa7+ ♘f8 39 ♖f3 ♙d2  
½-½

White agreed to a draw due to his severe time pressure—and a glance at his opponent's high Elo rating!

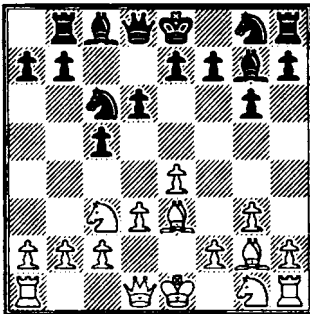
## Summary

The game **Adams-Kasparov** demonstrates Black's desire to upset his opponent's standard kingside build-up. However it is by no means lethal and Adams' improvement against Topalov in the note to White's eleventh move is worth noting. **Short-McShane** is a chance for White to show how to handle the basic plan of ... ♙b8 followed by ...b7-b5. 12 a4 is well timed to prevent this activity and after some carelessness by Black, White uses his extra material to win. An intriguing contest is **Bliznyuk-Conquest** where Black, the higher rated player, tries to catch White out in the opening. Though it backfires, White does present him with one chance to come out of the opening with a good game—but it is missed.

The success of lines starting with 6 ♖e3 has prompted leading players to look in the archives for alternatives. 6... ♜b8 is another way of doing something positive while delaying the development of the king's knight and thus avoiding ♖e3-h6. The idea of preparing ...b7-b5 was favoured by the former world champion Fischer so it comes with a good pedigree. I have chosen to concentrate on the key move 8 ♗ge2, which has been employed successfully at the highest level and provides White with a clear middlegame plan of castling kingside and exchanging the dark-squared bishops.

Adams-Sax  
German Team Ch 1997

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3 ♜b8



7 ♛d2 b5 8 ♗ge2

Adams has given this move his seal of approval—an indication that it is worth investigating. Also possible:

a) 8 ♗f3 b4 9 ♖d1 ♗g4 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♖xf3 ♖f6 12 ♗g2 0-0 13 0-0 ♜e8 14 ♖h6 with equal chances, Smyslov-Fischer, Zagreb 1970.

b) 8 f4 b4 9 ♖d1 ♛b6 10 ♖f3 f5 11 0-0! (an improvement on a critical game in this line that went 11 a3 a5 12 axb4 axb4 13 ♜b1 ♖f6 14 ♖f2 ♗g4 15 ♖xg4 fxe4 16 ♖h4 ♗c3! and Black was winning in Yudasin-Kislev, Podolsk 1991) 11... ♖f6 12 exf5! gxf5 13 ♖h1 0-0 14 ♗g1 ♗d7 15 ♖e3 ♜be8 16 ♖c4 ♛c7 17 a3 a5 18 axb4 axb4 19 ♜fe1 ♖h8 20 c3 offered White the better chances in the game, Costagliola-Shchekachev, Corsica 1997.

8... ♖d4

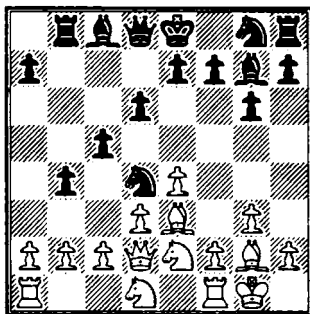
The main alternative is 8...b4 when play transposes after 9 ♖d1 ♖d4 10 0-0. If Black wants to play something different he can try 9...e5, to exert control over the d4 square. For instance: 10 0-0 ♖d4 11 ♖c1 (a standard manoeuvre to play c2-c3 and force the knight on d4 to retreat) 11... ♗g4 12 f3 ♗d7 13 c3 ♖c6 14 f4 ♖f6 15 fxe5 ♖xe5 16 ♖h6 (a common theme to exchange the important defensive bishop on g7) 16... bxc3 17 bxc3 ♖xh6 18

♜h6 ♖eg4 19 ♜f4 ♜e7 20 d4 gave White the superior chances in Lazić-Dragojlović, Cutro 2001. 8...e6 is examined in the next game.

9 0-0 b4

9...♜a5 has been suggested but Black never seems keen to win a pawn after 10 f4 when, for example, 10...♖xe2+ 11 ♜xe2 ♖xc3 12 bxc3 ♜xc3 13 f5 exposes the weak dark-squares around the black king, which gives White good compensation for the pawn. In the game Adams-Ivanchuk, Linares 1999, 9...h5 was an enterprising try, designed to initiate attacking chances on the h-file. There followed 10 b4!? (10 h4 is also possible) 10...a5!? (10...♖xe2+ 11 ♖xe2 ♖xa1 12 ♜xa1 is unclear according to Adams) 11 bxc5 dxc5 12 ♜ab1 ♖d7 (or 12...b4 13 ♖a4 ♜c7 14 c3 ♖xe2+ 15 ♜xe2 bxc3 16 ♖xc5 gives White the better chances) 13 e5! ♖xe5 14 ♖e4 ♖g4 (Adams points out that 14...♖c6 15 c3! ♖xe2+ 16 ♜xe2 ♖xe4 17 dxe4 ♜b6 18 ♜fc1 ♖d6 19 a4 b4 20 cxb4 axb4 21 e5 gives White the advantage and 14...♜c7 15 c3 ♖xe2+ 16 ♜xe2 ♖g4 17 f3 ♖f5 18 d4 is also better for White) 15 f3 ♖f5 16 f4 ♖g7 17 ♖xc5 ♖h6? (a better bet is 17...♖xe2+ 18 ♜xe2 b4 19 ♖c6+ ♖f8 20 ♜g2 ♖f6 although Black's king is misplaced) and now, instead of 18 ♖xd4?!, White should play Adams's own suggestion of 18 ♖b7 ♜xb7!? 19 ♖xb7 ♖g4 20 ♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 21 ♖xd4 ♜xd4+ 22 ♖h1 h4! 23 ♜xb5 ♜h5 24 ♜xa5 ♖f8 (24...hgx3 25 ♜a8+ wins) 25 ♜b4! ♜e3 26 ♜d8+ ♖g7 27 ♜d4+ ♜xd4 28 ♜xd4 hxg3 29 ♖g1 ♜xh2 when White has an advantage.

10 ♖d1



10...♜c7?!

Before White has revealed his setup, it is a bit early to commit the queen to c7:

a) 10...e6 and now:

a1) 11 f4!? (the latest trend is to avoid pushing the f-pawn too soon because it rules out the possibility of ♖e3-h6) 11...♖e7 12 g4!? (this advance is normally held in reserve until White can create an attack. 12 c3!? should be considered) 12...f5 13 gxf5 ♖xe2+ 14 ♜xe2 exf5 15 a3! b3 (15...a5?! allows White some active play upon 16 axb4 axb4 17 exf5 ♖xf5 18 ♜a7) 16 c3 0-0 17 ♜e1? (Nunn suggests 17 ♜d2 as an improvement) 17...g5! 18 ♖f2 (or 18 fxg5 f4 19 ♖f2 ♖g6 20 h4 ♖e5 21 ♜d2 ♖a6 22 d4 ♖d3 23 ♜f1 f3 24 ♖h1 ♜d7 and Black is better according to Nunn) 18...gxf4 19 ♖xf4 ♖g6 (19...fxe4? gives White decent chances upon 20 ♖g5!) 20 ♖d2 ♜h4 when the threat of ...♖e5 gave Black a powerful attack in Ashley-Nunn, San Francisco 1995.

a2) 11 ♖c1 (the knight steps out of the way in order to play c2-c3 without allowing the possibility of an exchange of knights) 11...♜a5 (11...♖ge7 12 c3 bxc3 13 bxc3 ♖dc6 14 ♖h6 is a little better for

White) 12 a3 ♖a4 13 ♖xd4 (13 b3 gives Black a strong a1-h8 diagonal after 13...♗d7) 13...cxd4 (the point is that the obvious 13...♖xd4 is well met by 14 ♖b3, offering to exchange on d4 and threatening axb4) 14 b3 ♖a6 15 ♖b2 ♖e7 16 ♖c4 0-0 17 ♖e2 d5 18 axb4 ♖b7 19 cxd5 exd5 (if 19...♖xd5 then 20 ♖f4 pins the d5 knight giving White an edge) 20 ♖f4 ♖h6 21 ♜fe1 ♖e6 22 ♜e2 ♖f5 23 ♖e5 ♖d6 24 ♖f3 ♖b5 25 ♜e5 ♜fc8 26 ♜ael ♜c6 27 h4 ♜bc8 28 ♖g5 (increasing the pressure on the isolated pawn on d5) 28...♜xc2 29 ♖d1 ♖g7 30 ♜xd5 ♖xd5 31 ♖xd5 ♖c7 32 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 (or 32...♖xf7 33 ♖xf7 ♜c1 34 ♖e2 ♖xf7 35 ♖e6+ ♖f8 36 ♖g2 ♜xe1 37 ♖xc8+ ♜e8 38 ♖c5+ ♖f7 39 ♖xb5 wins) 33 ♖c4 (a nice finish occurs upon 33 ♖xg6+ hxg6 34 ♖xg6, intending ♖h5+) 33...♜xc4 34 bxc4 ♖c3 35 ♖g4 1-0 A.Ledger-Shaw, Port Erin 1998.

b) 10...♖xe2+ 11 ♖xe2 ♖f6 12 a3 a5 13 axb4 cxb4 and now, instead of 14 ♖d2?! as played in Adams-Anand, Dortmund 1998, Bischoff suggests the improvement 14 e5! dxex5 15 ♖a7 ♜b7 16 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 17 ♖xe5 0-0 18 ♖xa5 ♖d7 19 ♖e3 with a clear advantage.

11 ♖c1

At first sight, not an obvious move but one which is often played in the Closed as it prevents an exchange of knights. White wants to force the knight back by c2-c3 after which it will cramp Black's position.

11...♖f6!? 12 c3

After 12 a3 bxa3! 13 ♜xa3 ♖g4 14 ♖f4 ♖e6 is a bit awkward for White who will have to exchange his bishop for the knight.

12...bxc3 13 bxc3 ♖c6 14 ♖h6 0-0 15 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 16 ♖e3 e5?

Adams suggested as a possible improvement, 16...♖a6, which was tested in A.Ledger-Sakaev, Cappella la Grande 1997. After 17 f4 ♖b6 18 ♜f2 e6 19 ♖b3 ♖d7 20 f5 White had decent attacking chances.

17 f4 ♖e7

Or 17...exf4 18 ♜xf4 ♖e6 19 ♖e2 ♖b6 20 ♜af1 (doubling rooks on the f-file is often a readily available middlegame plan in the Closed) 20...♖b2 21 ♖d1 ♖d7 22 ♜4f2 with an initiative according to Adams.

18 ♖e2 ♖b7

18...♖g4 runs into 19 f5! and White is better.

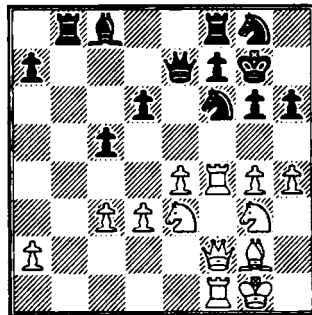
19 g4!

The time is right to go on the offensive. It is tempting to sacrifice after 19 fxe5 dxe5 with 20 ♜xf6 but 20...♖xf6 21 ♖g4+ ♖e6! 22 d4 f6! leaves the White attack floundering.

19...h6 20 h4

Adams wants to play 21 f5 and then meet 21...g5 with an exchange of pawns.

20...exf4 21 ♜xf4 ♖eg8 22 ♜af1 ♖e7 23 ♖g3 ♖c8 24 ♖f2



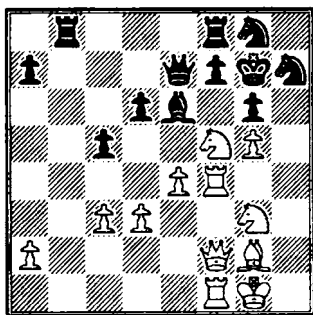
A dream position for the Closed Sicilian player who is now poised for a kingside attack. White has removed a key defender by exchanging the dark-squared bishops, transferred all his pieces to the

kingside, doubled rooks on the f-file and advanced his kingside pawns.

24...♖e6

If 24...♖d7 Adams provides analysis to show that White is on top after 25 ♖h3!, intending g5, when 25...♜b7 26 g5 hxg5 27 hxg5 ♖xh3 28 gxf6+ ♜xf6 29 ♜xf6 ♖xf1 30 ♜ef5+ ♜xf6 (or 30...gxf5 31 ♜h5+ ♜h8 32 ♜h6+ ♜g8 33 ♜g3 leads to mate) 31 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 32 ♜xf1 wins.

25 g5! hxg5 26 hxg5 ♜h7 27 ♜ef5+!



A fitting finale to a great demonstration of power play. The relentless pressure has paid off with a culminating knight sacrifice wrecking Black's defence.

27...gxf5

27...♖xf5 gives White another chance to demonstrate a brilliant attack after 28 exf5 ♜xg5 29 ♜e4 ♜d8 30 f6+ ♜h8 31 ♜h4 when there is the major threat of mating by ♜g5+ and ♜h4.

28 exf5 ♜xg5 29 ♜e4 ♜d8

If 29...♜e7 then 30 ♜g3+ ♜h8 31 ♜h4 ♜gf6 32 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 33 fxc6 ♜xe6 34 ♜ff4!, intending ♜xh7+, is a suggestion by Sadler. I think White can also win with 32 ♜g5! with the idea of 33 ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 34 ♜xf6+ mating.

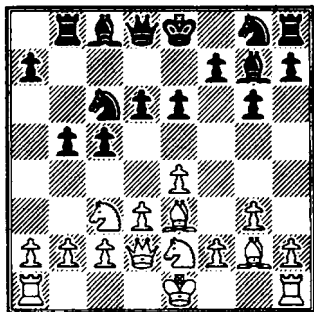
30 fxe6 fxe6 31 ♜g3+ 1-0

In practical experience a lot of players with the Black pieces try 8...e6 and eventually transpose back into main lines. However, 9 d4 is a good way to try and profit from Black's casual play.

### Klinger-Schumi

Zürich 1993

1 e4 c5 2 ♜c3 ♜c6 3 g3 g6 4 d3 ♖g7 5 ♖e3 d6 6 ♜d2 ♜b8 7 ♖g2 b5 8 ♜ge2 e6!?



Black often pushes this pawn, still thwarting the plan ♖e3-h6 and leaving White wondering how to transpose into other lines.

9 d4!

I think it makes sense to play this move in order to gain space and, after exchanges on d4, White can target the d6 pawn, which is no longer supported by a pawn. Also possible:

a) 9 0-0 b4 10 ♜d1 transposes to note 'a' after Black's tenth move in the main game Adams-Sax.

b) 9 ♜d1 (until a knight lands on d4 this manoeuvre, making way for c2-c3, is rather slow and lacks bite) 9...b4 10 c3 bxc3 11 bxc3 ♜a5 12 ♜b2 ♖a6 13 ♜c4?! (13 0-0 is a better choice when 13...♜d4 14 ♜d1 leaves Black with an edge) 13...♖xc4 14 dxc4 ♜c7 15 ♜d1

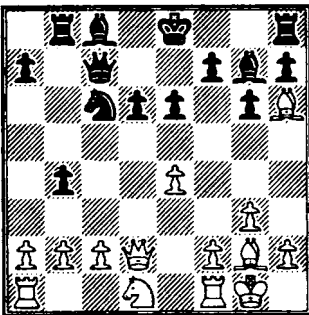
♠e5 16 ♠xd6 ♠xd6 17 ♠xd6 ♠xc4  
18 ♠d1 ♠xe3 19 fx3 ♠e7 gave  
Black a superior ending due to  
White's wrecked queenside pawns  
in Speigel-Kennedy, Exeter 1999.

c) 9 f4 ♠d4 10 ♠d1 b4 11 0-0  
♠e7 12 g4 f5 gave Black equality in  
Allgaier-Sulzbach, Berlin 1994.

9...b4 10 ♠d1 cxd4 11 ♠xd4  
♠ge7

In Westerinen-Hjorth, Gausdal  
1999, Black eyed a fork on c4 with  
11...♠e5. That game went 12 ♠e2  
♠a5 13 ♠b3 ♠a4 14 ♠d4 ♠e7  
(perhaps 14...♠f6!? should be con-  
sidered) 15 f4 ♠a6 16 ♠d2 ♠c4 17  
♠f2 ♠xd4 (if 17...e5 then 18 ♠xa7  
♠c8 19 f5! gives White a typical  
attack) 18 ♠xd4 0-0 19 0-0 ♠c6 20  
♠f6 (the queen is well placed but  
needs reinforcements) 20...♠4a5  
21 ♠f2 ♠xb3 22 cxb3 ♠a5 23 ♠e3  
♠d8 24 ♠xd8 ♠bx8 25 ♠d1 (the  
theme of attacking the d6 pawn  
carries on into the ending) 25...e5  
26 ♠f2 ♠d4 27 ♠d5 ♠b5 28  
♠xb4 with a material advantage.

12 ♠xc6 ♠xc6 13 0-0 ♠c7 14  
♠h6



"If in doubt play ♠e3-h6 to  
exchange the dark-squared bishops"  
is the theme for this line. It also  
makes it easier for White to find a  
middlegame plan.

14...0-0 15 ♠xg7 ♠xg7 16 ♠e3

Klinger's plan now is to put  
pressure on the d6 pawn by adding a  
rook to the semi-open d-file and to  
contemplate attacking the dark  
squares around the black king,  
which are more vulnerable now that  
the g7 bishop has been exchanged.

16...♠a6 17 ♠fd1 ♠fd8 18 c3  
♠g8

On 18...bxc3 then 19 ♠xc3+  
highlights the weakened black king  
after 19...♠g8 (19...e5 20 ♠ac1  
♠b7 21 ♠d5 gives White the initiat-  
ive) 20 ♠g4 e5 21 ♠ac1 ♠b7 22  
♠f3 is better for White.

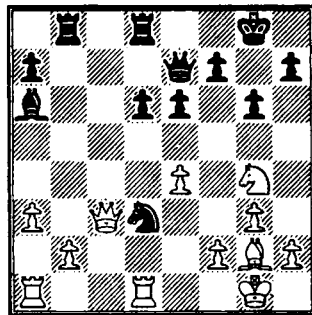
19 cxb4 ♠xb4 20 ♠g4

It now becomes a lot clearer why  
White is always intent on eliminat-  
ing the bishop on g7—its absence is  
critical because the knight threatens  
to invade on f6 and h6.

20...♠e7 21 a3 ♠d3

21...♠c6 is the obvious reply but  
then 22 ♠c3 ♠dc8 allows 23 ♠h6+  
♠f8 24 ♠h8 mate.

22 ♠c3



22...♠e5

Schumi blocks the a1-h8 diagonal  
but thereby loses material. The  
alternatives are not welcoming  
because 22...h5 23 ♠f6+ ♠f8 24  
♠d5! is a knockout blow and also  
22...e5 23 ♠xd3 ♠xd3 24 ♠xd3  
♠xb2 25 ♠c3 is good for White.

23 ♘xe5 dxe5 24 ♗xe5 ♜b5 25 ♜xd8+ ♗xd8 26 ♗c3 ♜b8 27 h4 h5 28 b4 ♗b6

28...♜c8 29 ♗e3 ♜c7 30 e5 maintains White's advantage.

29 ♜d1 ♜c8 30 ♗f6 ♖b5 31 e5 ♗c7 32 ♖e4 ♖e2 33 ♜d6 ♖b5

33...♜f8 is an attempt to create a defence but it is too late, a sample line being 34 ♜c6 ♗d8 35 ♗xd8 ♜xd8 36 f3 with a winning advantage.

34 ♖h2

White has got such a grip on the position he can take his time to find the breakthrough. The right way to make instant progress is 34 ♖xg6 since 34...fxg6 35 ♗xg6+ ♖h8 36 ♜xe6 wins.

34...♖a4 35 ♖d3 ♖c6 36 ♖xg6! fxg6 37 ♗xg6+ ♖h8 38 ♜xe6 1-0

### Summary

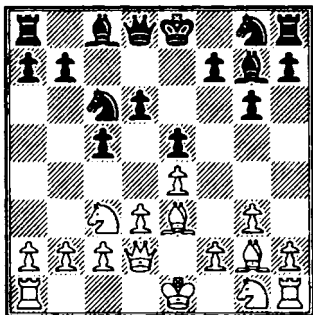
White will do well to follow White's example in the game Adams-Sax. Adams gives a model example of how to play the attack and shows how straightforward the 8 ♘ge2 system can be. It pays to look out for move-order tricks and **Klinger-Schumi** is an illustration of how White can gain the better chances in the opening. Klinger takes the opportunity to play 9 d4 and is rewarded with long-term pressure.

## 4 6 ♖e3 e5 and other 6th moves for Black

After 6 ♖e3 it clear that one of White's goals is to exchange dark-squared bishops with ♜d1-d2 followed by ♗e3-h6. Consequently 6...e5 has emerged as a favourite reply for those who wish to create a wall of pawns on the dark squares. The increased popularity of the 6 ♖e3 line has also seen the re-emergence of a number of neglected lines by Black. These do not seriously question White's opening choice but it is helpful to know how to react against such rare alternatives.

**Al.Karpov-Kallai**  
Budapest 1989

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3 e5 7 ♜d2



7...♘d4

The black knight usually occupies d4 but White will try to demonstrate that here this move is premature.

7...♖e6 can also be considered when after 8 f4 play might continue:

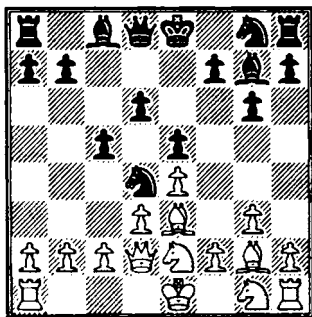
a) 8...exf4 9 ♖xf4 ♘d4 10 ♘f3 ♜d7 11 0-0 ♘e7 12 ♘g5 h6 13 ♘xe6 fe6 14 ♖h3 ♘ec6 15 ♘d5 g5? (15...0-0! when 16 c3 is met by 16...g5 with a double-edged game) 16 ♖e3 ♜d8 17 c3 exd5 18 cxd4 ♘e7 19 dxc5 dxc5 20 ♜d1 ♜a5 21 ♜g4 ♜c7 22 ♝ael ♘c6 23 ♜h5+ ♘d8 24 ♝f7 1-0 La Rota-Birboim, Saint John 1988.

b) 8...♘d4 9 ♘f3 ♘e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♝f2 (the plan of doubling on the f-file is simple and good) 11...♜d7 12 ♘g5 ♝ab8 13 ♘xe6 ♜xe6 14 ♝af1 gave White a good base for starting a kingside attack, Short-M.Rodriguez, Linares 2000.

c) 8...♘ge7 9 ♘f3 exf4 10 ♖xf4 h6 (the idea behind this move is to stop ♖e3-h6, exchanging bishops. However, it does mean that for the time being Black can't castle kingside without fear of losing his h-pawn) 11 h4 (a nice move to stop ...g6-g5) 11...♜d7 12 a3 ♘e5 13 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 (13...dxe5 14 ♖e3 is approximately level) 14 0-0-0 ♗g7 15 ♘d5 ♘c6 16 ♝dfl b5 17 ♖c3 ♖xd5 (17...b4 should be considered to accelerate an attack on the white king) 18 exd5 ♘e5 19 h5 g5 20 ♖c4 (the purpose of 19 h5 is revealed because now White stops Black from castling queenside due to the devastating threat of ♗f5.

pinning queen and king) 20...b4 21 axb4 ♖a4 22 ♖f2 ♜b8 23 b3! (Kosten told me he missed this move which thwarts his counter-play) 23...♖a3+ 24 ♔d2 ♖xb4+ (or 24...♜xb4 25 ♖xc5! dxc5 26 ♖xc5 wins) 25 ♔e2 (the white king is in the middle of the board but is fairly well protected. Black's king is also in the middle but it is particularly badly placed because it prevents the co-ordination of the rooks) 25...♜b7 (25...0-0 26 ♖f5 ♜fd8 27 ♖xg5 hxg5 28 h6 wins) 26 ♖f5 ♜c7 27 ♖d2 ♖b5 28 ♜a1 (There is a marked difference in the mobility of the white and black rooks) 28...♖d7 29 ♜a6 ♖xf5 30 ♖xf5 ♔e7 (at last the king's rook is given some scope but White already has a sizable initiative) 31 ♜ha1 ♜a8 32 ♜la4 (White has a superior ending and steadily improves his position) 32...♔d7 33 ♜e4+ ♖e5 34 ♖c3 f6 35 ♖xe5 fxe5 36 ♖xd7 ♜xd7 37 ♜ea4 ♔d8 38 ♔f3 ♔e7 39 ♔e4 ♜b7 40 ♔f5 ♜d7 41 ♔g6? (in an effort to find a decisive finish White takes his time but walks into an amazing trap) 41...♜g8 42 ♔h7?? (another mistake allowing Kosten to pull off a wonderful swindle) 42...♔f8+ 43 ♔xh6 ♜dg7 0-1 A.Ledger-Kosten, British Team Championship (4NCL) 2001.

8 ♔ce2



A clever positional idea, preparing to oust the knight by c3. This manoeuvre can also be seen in the chapter on 5...e6 6 ♖e3. There are a couple of other ways to deal with the centralised knight:

a) 8 ♔d5 ♖e6 and now:

a1) 9 c4 ♔e7 10 ♔xe7 ♖xe7 11 ♔e2 f5 12 ♖xd4 (the opening cannot be regarded as a success if the important dark-squared bishop has to be exchanged for a knight rather than the g7 bishop) 12...cxd4 13 0-0 0-0 14 f4 (14 b4, to create queenside play, runs into 14...f4!, intending ...g6-g5 with a kingside attack, when 15 gxf4 exf4 16 ♔xf4? ♖g5 wins the pinned knight) 14...fxe4 15 ♖xe4 ♖h3 16 ♜f2 ♜ae8 17 ♖a5 b6 18 ♖d5+ ♔h8 19 ♖g2 ♖f5 gave Black the advantage in Zickelbein-De Firmian, Hamburg 1999.

a2) 9 c3 ♖xd5 10 exd5 ♔f5 (the point of Black's play is revealed because he has managed to create a situation where he can exchange the dark-squared bishop for the knight) 11 ♔h3 ♔ge7 12 0-0 0-0 13 f4 ♔xe3 14 ♖xe3 ♖b6 with equal chances, König-Shabalov, Foxwoods 2000.

b) 8 ♔d1 ♔e7 9 c3 ♔e6 10 ♔e2 (10 ♖h6 is also worth considering in order to continue with the plan of exchanging the dark-squared bishop; then 10...0-0 11 ♖xg7 ♔xg7 12 ♔e2 leaves White a slight edge) 10...0-0 11 0-0 f5 12 f4 exf4 13 ♔xf4 ♔xf4 14 ♖xf4 d5 15 ♔f2 fxe4 16 dxe4 d4 17 c4 (chances are roughly equal) 17...♖e6 18 b3 ♔c6 19 ♔d3 b6 20 ♖h6 ♖d7 21 ♖xg7 ♔xg7 22 e5 ♖f5 23 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 24 ♔f4 ♜ae8 25 ♜ael ♖e4 26 e6 ♜f5 27 g4 ♜e5 28 ♖f2 ♔g8? 29 ♔xg6 1-0 Dumont-Matsuura, Rio de Janeiro 2000.

8...♗e7 9 c3 ♖e6

It might be a better idea to avoid possible congestion by exchanging 9...♗xe2 10 ♗xe2 0-0 11 ♖h6 with a slight edge.

10 f4 f5

Kallai is quick to block the advance f4-f5.

11 ♖f3 ♖d7 12 fxe5 dxe5 13 ♖h6

As usual the middlegame plan is easy to understand because it involves exchanging the dark-squared bishops when the e5 pawn will be weak.

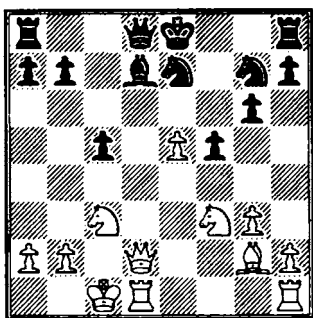
13...♖f6 14 d4

The start of an intriguing combination which exploits Black's set-up to grab the initiative.

14...exd4 15 e5 dxc3 16 ♗xc3

After 16 ♗xc3 ♗g8 17 exf6 ♗xh6 19 ♖he1 ♗c7, Black can whisk his king to safety by castling queenside.

16...♖g7 17 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 18 0-0-0



It is unusual for White to castle queenside in the Closed but the special circumstances of the position make it a good ploy. Now the pressure on the d-file is irritating for Black.

18...♗e6 19 ♗g5 h6

Black can try to block the d-file with 19...♗d4 but this would invite White to sacrifice another pawn by 20 e6! to open central lines for the rooks, e.g. 20...♗xe6 (20...♗xe6 21 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 22 ♗e3 ♗d4 23 ♖he1 ♗f7 24 ♗e5 wins) 21 ♖he1 ♗d4 (21...♗xg5 22 ♗xg5 ♗f7 23 ♗f4, intending ♗d6, is good for White) 22 ♗d5 when the pinned knight on e7 is bad news for Black.

20 ♗b5!

White ignores the threat to the king's knight and aims to wreak havoc by planting the queen's knight on d6.

20...♖xb5

A test of White's sacrifice is 20...♗xg5 but 21 ♗d6+ ♗f8 22 ♗xb7 ♗c7 23 ♗xd7 justifies the combination and leaves Black struggling.

21 ♗xe6

White traps the enemy king in the centre.

21...♗b6

Kallai would dearly like to exchange queens to reduce the attack but 21...♗xd2+ gives White a good ending with an extra pawn after 22 ♖xd2 ♖c8 23 ♖xb7 ♖b8 24 ♗xc5.

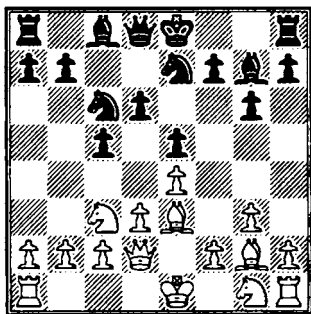
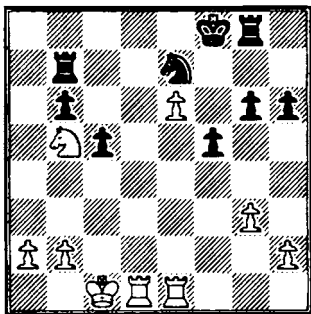
22 ♗d6 ♖c8 23 ♖he1

White brings the other rook to the centre. Now 23...♗xd6 can be met by 24 exd6 when the king's rook will target the black king.

23...♖g8 24 ♗xb6 axb6 25 ♖xb7

The forcing sequence continues. Black's main problem is that his king, stuck in the centre, disrupts the co-ordination of his rooks.

25...♖b8 26 ♗c7+ ♗f8 27 ♗xb5 ♖xb7 28 e6



To add to Black's woes, Karpov has the trump of the passed pawn.

28...♔g7 29 ♖d7 ♗xd7 30 exd7 ♔f6 31 ♘c7 ♗d8 32 ♗e6+ ♔f7 33 ♗d6 ♘g8 34 ♘e6 ♔e7 35 ♗xb6 ♗xd7 36 ♘xc5

The connected passed queenside pawns give White a clearly winning advantage. The game concluded: 36...♗c7 37 b4 ♘f6 38 a3 g5 39 ♔d2 h5 40 ♔e2 (40 ♗e6+ ♔f7 41 ♗e5 also wins) 40...♗a7 41 a4 ♔f7 42 a5 ♘d5 43 ♗b8 ♗c7 44 a6 ♘xb4 45 ♗xb4 ♗xc5 46 ♗a4 ♗c8 47 a7 ♗a8 48 ♗a6 h4 49 gxh4 gxh4 50 ♔f3 ♔e7 1-0.

The attacking scheme outlined in the chapter 6 ♖e3 e6 can also be used against 6...e5. However, it is worth noting White's alternative, 8 f4, outlined in the note after 8 ♖h6.

### Orlov-Rago

Porto San Giorgio 2000

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 d6 4 ♖g2 g6 5 d3 ♖g7 6 ♖e3 e5 7 ♗d2 ♘ge7 8 ♖h6

This is certainly consistent—the attacking ideas in the present game can be traced back to the chapter on 6 ♖e3 e6. The difference here, however, is that ...e5, an essential part of Black's defensive formation, has been played in one move instead of two.

In this position, instead of ♖h6, White should seriously consider 8 f4 when 8...♘d4 9 ♘f3 0-0 10 0-0 exf4 transposes to the Adams-Kramnik game in the chapter 6 f4 e5. In addition, 10...♖g4 would transpose to Short-Nataf and 10...♗b8 to Hernandez-De Firmian. This line with 8 f4 represents a major alternative for White and is worth checking out. 8 h4 is an old favourite of Hort but few have been willing to take up the challenge for White since the game, Conquest-Smirin, Komotini 1992. That game went 8...h5! 9 ♘h3 ♘d4 10 f4 ♖g4 11 0-0 ♗d7 (an improvement on Hort-Portisch, Wijk aan Zee 1968, which continued 11...exf4 12 ♘xf4 0-0 13 ♗f2 ♔h7 14 ♗af1 ♗d7 15 ♘cd5 ♘g8 16 ♔h2 ♘c6 17 ♘h3 f6 18 c3 with advantage to White) 12 ♔h2 0-0 13 ♗f2 b5 14 ♗af1 b4 15 ♘d1 exf4! 16 ♖xf4 (16 gxf4 f5 firmly installs the bishop on g4) 16...d5! 17 ♖h6 dxe4 18 ♖xg7 ♔xg7 19 ♘g5 (19 dxe4? fails dismally after 19...♖xh3 20 ♖xh3 ♘f3+! winning) 19...♘f3+ 20 ♘xf3 exf3 21 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 22 ♗xf3 ♘c6 23 ♘e3 (I think perhaps 23 ♗g5!?) when 23...♘d4 24 ♗e5+ ♔g8 25 ♗f2 is equal) 23...f6 24 ♗f2 f5 25 ♘c4 ♗d4 26 ♗d2 ♗ae8 gave Black at least equality.

8...0-0 9 h4

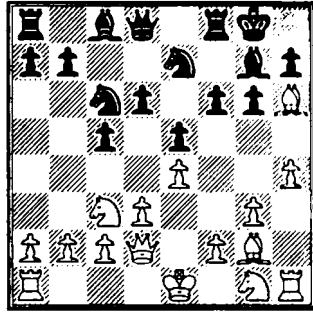
If White is well-versed in its nuances, this straightforward attack can be enough to secure victory against a poorly prepared opponent because it is so similar to the lines in the 6  $\text{e3}$   $\text{e6}$  chapter. White has also tried 9  $\text{e3}$   $\text{e6}$  but after 9...  $\text{e3}$   $\text{e6}$  10  $\text{f4}$  results have been variable. For example:

a) 10...  $\text{e3}$   $\text{e6}$  11  $\text{e3}$   $\text{f3}$   $\text{f6}$  (controlling  $\text{g5}$ ) 12 0-0  $\text{d4}$  13  $\text{h4}$  (or 13  $\text{d5}$   $\text{xf3}$ + 14  $\text{xf3}$   $\text{xd5}$  15  $\text{exd5}$   $\text{h3}$  with equal chances) 13...  $\text{b6}$  14  $\text{f2}$   $\text{c4}$  (14...  $\text{exf4}$ !? is a reliable alternative, although 14...  $\text{xb2}$ ?! hands White the initiative after 15  $\text{b1}$   $\text{a3}$  16  $\text{xb7}$ ) 15  $\text{dxc4}$   $\text{xc4}$  16  $\text{b3}$   $\text{g8}$  17  $\text{a4}$   $\text{c7}$  18  $\text{c3}$   $\text{dxc6}$  19  $\text{c4}$   $\text{d4}$  20  $\text{c1}$   $\text{ad8}$  21  $\text{h3}$   $\text{h6}$  22  $\text{g2}$ , intending  $\text{g2-e3}$ , gave White a slight edge in Spassky-De Firmian, London 1984.

b) 10...  $\text{d4}$  11  $\text{f3}$  (11  $\text{d1}$   $\text{exf4}$  12  $\text{gxf4}$   $\text{f5}$  gives Black at least equality) 11...  $\text{g4}$ ! (this is the significant difference compared to lines in the chapter 6  $\text{e3}$   $\text{e6}$  because Black is able to initiate exchanges in his favour) 12 0-0  $\text{xf3}$  13  $\text{xf3}$   $\text{b6}$ ! 14  $\text{d1}$  (King suggests 14  $\text{a1}$  or 14  $\text{f2}$  as possible improvements) 14...  $\text{c4}$  15  $\text{h1}$   $\text{cxd3}$  16  $\text{xd3}$   $\text{ac8}$  17  $\text{c3}$   $\text{xf3}$  18  $\text{xf3}$   $\text{f5}$  (the white pawns lack support and the position collapses against Black's skilful play) 19  $\text{b3}$   $\text{d5}$ ! 20  $\text{f1}$   $\text{dxe4}$  21  $\text{d7}$   $\text{fe8}$  22  $\text{b2}$   $\text{cd8}$  23  $\text{a4}$   $\text{exf4}$  24  $\text{gxf4}$   $\text{d6}$  25  $\text{d4}$   $\text{c5}$  26  $\text{a3}$   $\text{xa3}$  27  $\text{xa3}$   $\text{d3}$  28  $\text{ac1}$   $\text{ed8}$  29  $\text{db5}$   $\text{a6}$  30  $\text{d7}$   $\text{f6}$  31  $\text{c4}$   $\text{d7}$  0-1 Narayana-King, Calcutta 1993.

9...  $\text{f6}$

It is worth reminding White that this defensive move contains a sting.



Now 10  $\text{h5}$ ? fails dramatically upon 10...  $\text{hx6}$  11  $\text{wh6}$   $\text{g5}$  intending ...  $\text{wh8}$  and ...  $\text{d8}$  to attack the trapped queen. Instead, 9...  $\text{hx6}$  is examined in the next main game.

10  $\text{e3}$   $\text{g7}$   $\text{e3}$   $\text{g7}$  11  $\text{h5}$   $\text{g5}$  12  $\text{h6}$ +

A look at the main game, Adams-Ward, from the 6  $\text{e3}$   $\text{e6}$  chapter, will confirm that this is the right approach—now, when White plays  $\text{f2-f4}$ , there is no longer the possibility of ...  $\text{h7-h6}$ , supporting the  $\text{g5}$  pawn.

12...  $\text{wh8}$  13  $\text{f4}$   $\text{exf4}$  14  $\text{gxf4}$   $\text{gxf4}$  15 0-0-0

There is no rush to restore material equality. Now that the kingside has been opened White can calmly continue with his preparations for an attack. On the other hand, 15  $\text{d2}$  is met by 15...  $\text{f5}$  16  $\text{dxf4}$   $\text{fxe4}$  17  $\text{xe4}$   $\text{g4}$  and White's attack has been stilled because he cannot castle queenside.

15...  $\text{d6}$  16  $\text{d2}$   $\text{g4}$  17  $\text{d1}$

Now his pieces are fully developed, Orlov wants to recapture the pawn on  $\text{f4}$  so that his queen can contribute to the attack.

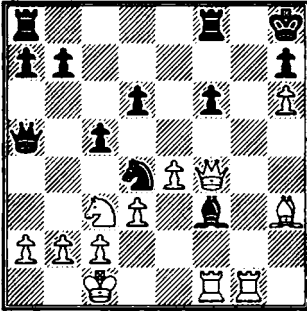
17...  $\text{a5}$  18  $\text{xf4}$   $\text{d4}$

If 18...  $\text{d5}$  then 19  $\text{h3}$ , exchanging bishops and opening the  $\text{g}$ -file, gives White the better game.

19 ♖h3 ♖f3 20 ♖hg1 ♖xf4

It is not possible to organise a decent defence. For instance 20...♗e5 comes up against 21 ♖e6 ♖xe6 22 ♖xe6, intending ♖d2-♖f4-g3 with an impending mate.

21 ♖xf4



21...♖xc3?

In a hopeless position Black tries one last shot. He is hoping for 22 bxc3 ♗e2+ 23 ♖d2 ♖xf4 24 ♖xf3 ♖xh3 25 ♖xh3 when he survives.

22 ♖g8+! 1-0

The problem with directly repeating the attacking method outlined in the chapter 6 ♖e3 e6 is that Black has an extra move, having played his pawn to e5 in one go. This addition to Black's defensive shell is very useful because the light-squared bishop can be quickly activated, usually on the g4 square.

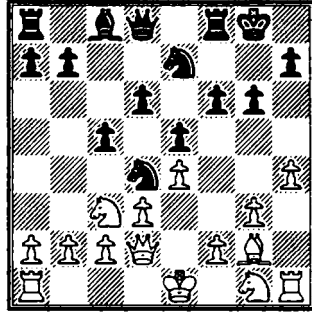
**Strijbos-Van der Wiel**  
Vlissingen 1998

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♖g2 ♖g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3 e5 7 ♖d2 ♖ge7 8 ♖h6 0-0 9 h4 ♖xh6 10 ♖xh6 f6

Of course, the idea is 11 h5? g5, intending ... ♖h8 and ...♖g8

trapping the queen. If 10...♖d4? then White has the strong answer 11 h5! and the attack continues.

11 ♖d2 ♖d4



12 ♖d1!?

This is hardly in keeping with the spirit of an all-out attack but it is understandable in view of the desire to get rid of the centralised knight on d4. The difference with lines associated with 6 ♖e3 e6 is that now the normal continuation 12 ♖ge2 comes under fire from 12...♖g4! 13 0-0 b5 14 ♖de1 (14 ♖xd4! is the best choice although 14...cxd4 15 ♗e2 ♖c8 is slightly better for Black) 14...b4 when the pin on the d1-h5 diagonal proved fatal for White in Piay Garcia-Del Rey, Orense 2000. Alternatively, after 12 h5 g5, it is difficult to find a breakthrough for White after 13 f4 h6! 14 f5 (otherwise 14 0-0 allows 14...♖g4 and Black is fine) 14...b5 15 ♖d1 b4 gives Black good chances of making progress on the queenside.

12...f5!

To meet 13 h5 with 13...f4, cutting off the white queen from its intended invasion of the kingside via h6.

13 c3 ♖e6 14 exf5 gxf5 15 ♗e3

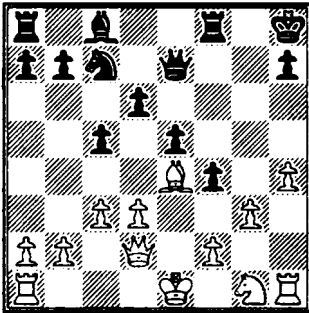
15 f4 might be worth considering when 15...exf4 16 gxf4 ♖g6 17

♗e2 ♖e7 18 ♗e3 ♗gxf4 19 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 20 0-0-0 ♖h8 is rightly considered good for Black by Van der Wiel. However, 17 ♖f2 is possible, with the idea of 18 h5, when 17...♗xh4?! 18 ♗e3 ♗xg2 19 ♗e3 ♗xg2 20 ♖ag1 offers decent compensation for the pawn.

15...f4 16 ♗d5 ♖h8 17 ♗xe7

If 17 0-0-0, then White's traditional attack fails to materialise after 17...♗xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♗c7 19 ♖g2 ♖g4 when it is Black who has the stronger position.

17...♗xe7 18 ♖e4 ♗c7



The threat is 19...d5, forcing White's only actively placed piece to retreat.

19 c4 fxg3 20 fxg3 ♖g4 21 ♗e2 ♗e6 22 ♖f1!

22 0-0-0? is hopeless on account of 22...♖f2 23 ♖de1 ♗d4 when White must lose material.

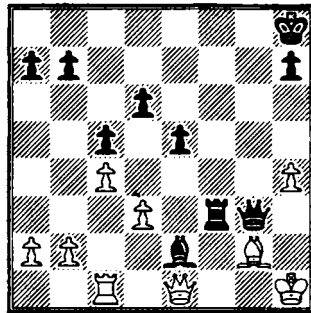
22...♖xf1+ 23 ♖xf1 ♗g7 24 ♗g1 ♗d4

Van der Wiel is steadily improving his pieces ready for a kingside attack. 24...♖g8 is tempting because the obvious 25 ♖g2 is crushed by 25...♖h3+ but the more sedate 25 ♖e1, intending 26 ♖e3, allows White to continue the dour defensive struggle.

25 ♖g2 ♖g8 26 ♗f2 ♖f8 27 ♗d2 ♖g8 28 ♗f2 ♖f8 29 ♗d2 ♗f6 30 ♖c1!?

The pawn is poisoned. If 30 ♖xb7?! ♖e2!, cutting off the white queen, then 31 ♗e3 ♖f1+ 32 ♖h1 ♗c2 wins for Black.

30...♗e2! 31 ♗xe2 ♗f2+ 32 ♖h1 ♖xe2 33 ♖g2 ♖f3! 34 ♗e1 ♗xg3



35 ♗xe2 ♗xh4+?

The final piece in the puzzle is not grasped and the game soon ends in repetition. Van der Wiel's analysis reveals the right way to win: 35...♖f2! 36 ♗e4 ♖f4 37 ♗e2 (37 ♗e1 ♖xh4+ 38 ♖g1 ♗h2+ 39 ♖f2 ♖f4+ decides) 37...♖xh4+ 38 ♖g1 ♗h2+ 39 ♖f2 (39 ♖f1 ♗f4+) 39...♖f4+ 40 ♖e3 ♗h6! (the king-hunt continues) 41 ♖h1 ♖f3+! 42 ♖e4 d5+! 43 ♖xd5 ♗c6+ 44 ♖xe5 ♗f6+ 45 ♖d5 ♖f5+ 46 ♖e4 ♖e5 mate.

36 ♖g1 ♗d4+ 37 ♖h1 ♗h4+ 38 ♖g1 ♗d4+ 39 ♖h1 ♗h4+ 1/2-1/2.

A rapid ...b7-b5 is explored in the next encounter in which White responds positively with 7 e5. A number of lesser known sixth move alternatives are also examined.

### Giorgadze-Verduga Linares 1999

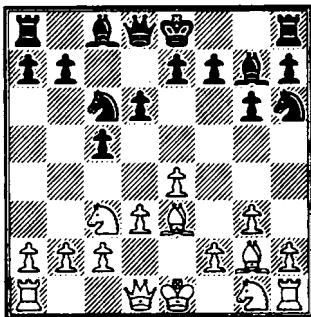
1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 g6 3 g3 ♗g7 4 ♗g2 ♖c6 5 d3 d6 6 ♖e3 b5

An energetic move that has been played a number of times. Though it saves time on a preparatory ...♗b8, it is asking for trouble with the bishop on g2 bearing down on the h1-a8 diagonal. Black has also tried other ideas:

a) 6...a6 7 ♗d2 ♗d7 8 f4 b5 9 ♖f3 b4 10 ♖d1 ♖f6 11 h3 (White prepares to advance his kingside pawns) 11...0-0 12 g4 e6 13 0-0 ♖e8 14 d4 cxd4 15 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 16 ♗xd4 e5 17 fxe5 dxe5 18 ♖c5 with a material advantage, Kislov-Dukaczewski, Warsaw 1993.

b) 6...h5 7 h3 (the idea is to meet 7...h4 with 8 g4) 7...e5 8 ♖d5 ♖e6 9 ♖e2 ♗xd5 10 exd5 ♖ce7 11 c3 ♖f5 12 ♗d2 ♗h6 13 0-0 ♖ge7 14 ♗xh6 ♗xh6?! (Black gives up the right to castle although 14...♖xh6 15 d4 is better for White) 15 d4 cxd4 16 cxd4 exd4 17 ♖xd4 ♗b6 18 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 19 ♗c1 ♗h8 20 ♗c3 ♗g8 21 ♗fel+ ♖f8 22 ♗e4 ♗d8 23 ♗cl when Black's lack of co-ordination gave White the advantage in Golubović-Lukov, Marostica 1993.

c) 6...♖h6 and now:



c1) 7 f3! (an unusual way to stop ...♖g4 but it works in this game) 7...f5 8 ♗d2 ♖f7 9 ♖ge2 fxe4 10 fxe4 ♖d4 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♗ab1 a5 13 h3 ♗d7 14 ♖d5 ♖xe2+ 15 ♗xe2 e6 16 ♖f4 b5 ½-½ Boyd-P.Popović, French Team Ch 2000.

c2) 7 h3 f5 8 ♗d2 ♖f7 9 ♖ge2 0-0 10 exf5 gxf5 11 ♖f4 e6 12 ♖h5 ♗d4 13 f4 ♖h8 14 0-0-0 (in this line White often castles queenside in an endeavour to exploit Black's advanced kingside pawns) 14...♖g6 15 ♖e2 ♗h8 16 d4 with an edge, Zichichi-Gligorić, Venice 1971.

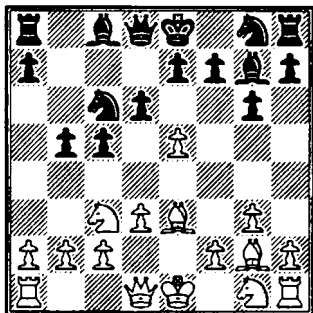
d) 6...b6, when play might continue:

d1) 7 f4 ♖b7 8 ♖f3 ♗d7 9 0-0 ♖h6?! (9...e6, intending ...♖ge7, is a better idea) 10 h3 f5 11 ♗d2 0-0-0 (11...0-0 12 ♗ael with a slight edge) 12 ♗ad1! e6 (or 12...♖f7 13 d4 cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 15 ♗xd4 e5 16 ♖e3 gives White the better chances) 13 ♗fel ♗he8 (13...d5, to fork the pieces on c3 and e3, is met by 14 exd5 exd5 15 d4 with the better chances for White) 14 ♖f2 ♖f7 15 a3! (the plan is to start queenside play with b2-b4) 15...e5 16 ♖d5 ♖d4?! (16...exf4 17 gxf4 fxe4 {17...♖xb2? 18 c3 wins} 18 dxe4 g5 19 fxg5 ♗g8! 20 b4 is also better for White) 17 ♖xd4 exd4 18 exf5! ♗xd5 19 ♗xd5 ♗xf5 20 ♖g2!? and the dominating bishop gave White pretty good chances in Giorgadze-H.Olafsson, Moscow Olympiad 1994.

d2) 7 ♖ge2 ♖b7 8 ♗d2 ♖d4 9 0-0 ♗d7 10 a4 f5 11 ♗ael fxe4 12 ♗xd4 cxd4 13 ♖xe4 e5 (13...d5 14 ♖g5, intending ♖f4, with advantage since 14...h6 fails to 15 ♖h3! and a strong knight will be installed on e6) 14 ♖xd6+! ♗xd6 15 ♖xb7 ♗b8 16 ♖a6 ♖e7 17 ♖b5+ ♖d8 18

c3 and the exposed black king and pawn minus leaves Black's position in ruins, J.Houska-Stojanović, Aviles 2000.

7 e5!



This is the reason why 6...b5 has never had popular appeal. White is now presented with an instant initiative.

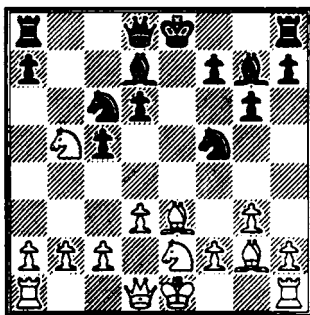
7...♖d7

a) 7...♗d7 8 exd6 exd6 9 ♖ge2 (9 ♖f4 was recommended in *Informator* 37 with the sample line 9...♖ge7 10 ♖xb5. But Black can do better than the 10...0-0?! 11 ♖xd6 of Lebredo-Hernandez, Bayamo 1984 with a more likely sequel being 10...♖f5! 11 c3 0-0 12 ♗d2 ♖b7 13 ♖e2 ♖e5! winning) 9...♖ge7 (9...b4 10 ♖d5 ♖xb2 11 ♖b1 ♖g7 12 0-0 ♖b7 13 c3 and, according to Romanishin, White has adequate compensation for the pawn) 10 d4 b4 11 ♖e4 0-0 12 ♖h6 c4?! (12...♖a6 13 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 14 d5 ♖e5 15 0-0 ♖c4 16 ♖e1 ♖xd5 (16...♖xd5 17 ♖d2 is better for White) 17 ♖f4 ♖xe4 18 ♖xe4 ♖ad8 19 a3) 13 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 14 d5 ♖e5 15 f4 ♖g4 16 h3 ♖h6 17 g4 f5 18 ♗d4+ ♖g8 19 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 20 ♗xf6 fxe4 21 ♗e6+! (White has a material advantage and is happy to enter the ending) 21...♗xe6 22 dxe6 d5 23 ♖d4 ♖b8 24 0-0-0 ♖b6

25 ♖he1 ♖g7 26 ♖e5 gave White a clear advantage in Romanishin-Torre, Indonesia 1983.

b) 7...♖b7?! 8 exd6 exd6 9 ♖xb5 ♖ge7 10 ♖c3 (10 ♖e2 is a suggestion by Miles when 10...♖xb2 11 ♖b1 ♖g7 12 ♖xd6+! ♗xd6 13 ♖xb7 gives White a clear advantage) 10...♗b6 11 ♖b1 ♖e5 12 ♖f3? (or 12 ♖xb7 ♗xb7 13 ♖e4 0-0 14 f4 ♖c4 15 ♗f3 d5 16 ♖xc5 ♗b4+ 17 ♖f1 d4 and Black has good play) 12...♖xf3+ 13 ♖xf3 ♖xc3+ 14 bxc3 ♖xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♗xb1+ 16 ♖d2 ♗b8 17 ♖b1 ♗d8 18 ♖g5 f6 19 ♖xf6 0-0 20 ♖b7 ♖c8 21 ♖xa7 ♖c7 22 ♖a6 ♗d7 23 g4 ♗e6 24 g5 ♖d5 25 ♗g3 ♖e8 0-1 Ljubojević-Miles, London 1982.

8 exd6 exd6 9 ♖ge2 ♖ge7 10 ♖xb5 ♖f5



11 ♖c1

The bishop retreats, covering b2 and thereby maintaining White's pawn advantage.

11... h5 12 0-0 h4 13 ♖e1 ♖f8

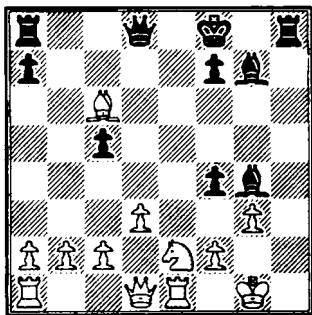
13...0-0 would remove the potentially attacking rook from the h-file and leave White much better after 14 g4.

14 ♖f4 hxe3 15 hxe3 g5 16 ♖xd6

Giorgadze is spoilt for choice: 16 ♖xd6+ is also good when 16...♖xd6 17 ♖xd6 ♖b8 18 c3

♖xb2 19 ♜c1 ♖b6 20 ♜e3 is in White's favour thanks to the extra pawn and weakness of c5.

16...gxf4 17 ♜xf5 ♖xf5 18 ♖xc6 ♖g4



19 ♜d2

I think White can adequately defend the position, mainly because it is difficult for Black to make much impression along the h-file—unless of course White blunders with 19 ♖xa8?? when 19...♜xa8 mates due to the indefensible weakness of the light squares around the castled king.

19...♜c8

Or 19...♖c8 20 ♖g2 fxf3 (21...f3 is well met by 22 ♜f4!) 21 ♜xg3 ♖xb2 22 ♖ab1 ♖g7 23 ♖b7 and White has the stronger position.

20 ♖d5 ♜d8 21 ♖g2 fxf3

21...f3 forks two pieces but 22 ♜f4 saves the day since 22...fxg2 23 ♜xg4 is good for White.

22 ♜xg3 ♜h4 23 ♖xa8 ♖d4

A last ditch attempt to salvage something by the threat of

24...♜xg3+—but it is not good enough.

24 ♜f4 ♖h6 25 ♜f5 ♖xf5 26 ♜xh4 ♖xh4 27 c3 ♖g4+ 28 ♖g2 ♖f6 29 ♖e3 ♖g6 1-0.

## Summary

Black often installs a knight on d4 early in the game and **Al.Karpov-Kallai** demonstrates that White can employ the positional nuance 8 ♜ce2 to gain the upper hand. **Orlov-Rago** is a sign that prior knowledge of the attacking set-up outlined in the chapter 6 ♖e3 e6 can work wonders if Black goes astray. It should be observed that this game features a note on 8 f4, which transposes to the 6 f4 e5 chapter. The problem with adopting a direct attacking scheme against 6...e5 is highlighted by the game, **Strijbos-Van der Wiel**, where the possibility of ...♖g4 prompted the meek 12 ♜d1 after which Black soon gained a superior position. Finally, **Giorgadze-Verduga** is an example of 6...b5, which enjoyed a bout of popularity in the 1980s. A more recent example spells doom and gloom for Black after the correct 7 e5, enabling White to seize the initiative. None of the alternatives on move six, examined in that game, are particularly encouraging for Black.

The importance of move-order is sometimes a neglected subject in standard reference books but in the Closed Sicilian it can catch people out at a very early stage of the game. There is an assumption that just about everything transposes back into the main lines. I have to say there is some truth in this because when in doubt White can continue with the standard plan of ♖e3, ♜d2 and ♖e3-h6 or just play an early f4. However, a great example is the following encounter that trips up Black after only seven moves.

**Smyslov-Denker**  
USSR-USA Moscow 1946

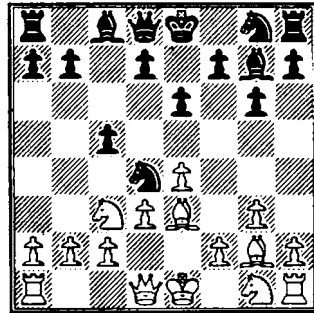
1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♖g2 ♖g7 5 d3 e6 6 ♖e3

A move designed to take advantage of Black's move-order. The idea is that once Black has protected the c-pawn with 6...d6 then White can transpose to the favourable line 6 ♖e3 e6.

6...♘d4?!

A classic mistake, which I have seen played countless times. The problem is that players of the Black pieces have been told that they have to put the knight on d4 in most instances to block the attack on the c-pawn and stop any future d3-d4 advance. Of course, there are always exceptions and this is such a case.

If Black protects the c-pawn with 6...d6 then White can again transpose to the favourable line 6 ♖e3 e6. Alternatively 6...♜a5 7 ♜d2 d6 is again covered in the 6 ♖e3 e6 chapter, where the important games are Smyslov-Kottnauer and Bushill-Tozer.



7 ♘ce2!

The move that tends to set Black thinking for a long time. The difference from other positions is that Black normally exchanges knights on f3 and grabs the pawn on b2. Here, White is in the pleasant position of being able to recapture on e2 with the king's knight which helps his development, while taking the extremely tempting b-pawn, now leads to ruin.

7...d6

Other moves:

a) 7...♘xe2 8 ♘xe2 ♖xb2 9 ♖b1 ♖g7 (9...♜a5+? 10 ♖d2 ♜xa2 11 ♖xb2! ♜xb2 12 ♖c3 wins) 10 ♖xc5 d6 (10...♜a5+ 11 ♖b4 ♜xa2

12 0-0 and Black will have grave problems castling kingside due to the dominance of the bishop on c5) 11 ♖b4 (the long-term plan is to put pressure on the d6 pawn which gives White an edge) 11...♟e7 12 0-0 0-0 13 c4 ♛c7 14 ♛b3 ♜d8 15 ♟c3 ♟d7 16 ♛a3 ♖c6 17 ♟e2 b6 18 ♜fcl ♛d7 19 d4 (White has a strong initiative and an impressive pawn centre) 19...♟h6 20 f4 ♟f8 21 d5 exd5 22 cxd5 ♖b7 23 ♜c2 ♜dc8 24 ♜xc8 ♟xc8 25 ♜cl a6 26 ♛e3 ♟g7 27 ♟c3 ♟xc3 28 ♛xc3 a5 29 ♟d4 ♛a4 30 e5 ♛xa2 31 ♜al 1-0 Wojcieszyn-Borysiak, Polish Team Ch 1975.

b) 7...b6 8 ♟xd4! cxd4 9 e5 ♜b8 10 f4 f6 (10...d6? fails to 11 ♟xd4 threatening ♟c6) 11 ♟f3 fxe5 12 fxe5 ♛c7 13 ♟exd4 ♟xe5 14 ♛e2 ♟xd4 15 ♟xd4 ♛c5 16 ♟b3 ♛g5 17 0-0 ♟e7 (Black's major problem is that his king is stuck in the centre) 18 ♜ael ♜f8 19 ♟d2! ♜xf1+ 20 ♜xf1 ♟f5 21 ♟c4 ♟e7 22 g4 b5 23 gxf5 bxc4 24 ♛e5! 1-0 Spassky-Hjartarson, Belfort 1988.

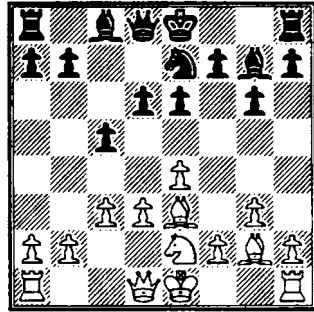
c) 7...d5 8 c3 ♟xe2 9 ♟xe2 dxe4 and now:

c1) 10 dxe4 ♛c7 11 0-0 ♟e7 12 ♜cl 0-0 13 b4 ♜d8 14 ♛c2 b6 15 a4 ♟b7 = J.Claesen-Schlindwein, Rotterdam 1998.

c2) 10 ♟xc5! (this old move is the best way for White to fight for an advantage) 10...exd3 11 ♟f4 d2+ 12 ♛xd2 ♛xd2+ 13 ♟xd2 ♟f6 14 ♜ad1 ♟d7 15 ♟d6 ♟e5 16 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 17 ♜hel ♟d7 18 ♟cl with a lead in development, Barczay-Uhlmann, Trencianske Teplice 1979.

8 c3 ♟c6

The knight retreats in an effort to reduce the effectiveness of White's positional idea. After 8...♟xe2 9 ♟xe2 d6 play might proceed:



a) 10 ♛d2 is a familiar sort of set-up from the new main line. Now:

a1) 10...0-0 11 h4 ♟c6 12 d4 (the advance in the centre is to White's advantage) 12...cxd4 13 ♟xd4 ♟e5 14 ♛e2 d5 15 0-0 ♟c4 16 ♟g5 f6 17 ♟cl ♟b6 (the knight retreats in order to defend the d5-pawn after White exchanges in the centre and plays ♟e6) 18 exd5 exd5 19 ♜e1 ♟h8 20 ♟f4 ♟d7 21 ♟e6 ♟xe6 22 ♛xe6 ♜e8 23 ♛f7 ♛d7 24 ♛xd7 ♟xd7 25 ♟xd5 gave White a clear advantage in Smyslov-Renter, Parnu 1947.

a2) 10...♟c6 11 ♟h6 ♟xh6 12 ♛xh6 ♛f6 13 0-0 ♟d7 14 ♜acl 0-0 15 d4 cxd4 16 cxd4 ♟b8 17 ♛d2 ♜c8 18 f4 ± Schekachev-Cherniak, Moscow 1991.

b) 10 d4 (a move also recommended by Emms) 10...cxd4 11 ♟xd4 0-0 12 0-0 a6 13 ♛d2 (White follows the standard plan to exchange dark-squared bishops by ♟e3-h6 with the bonus of exerting pressure along the d-file and hitting the vulnerable d6 pawn) 13...♛c7 14 ♟h6 e5 15 ♟xg7 ♟xg7 16 ♟c2 ♟e6 17 f4 f6 18 ♟e3 ♜ad8 19 ♟h1 ♛c5 20 ♜ad1 a5 21 f5 ♟c4 22 ♜f2 gxf5 23 exf5 gave White the better chances in King-Domont, Swiss Team Ch 1999.

9 d4 cxd4 10 ♟xd4

White takes with the knight to enable him to exploit the semi-open d-file for an attack the d6 pawn.

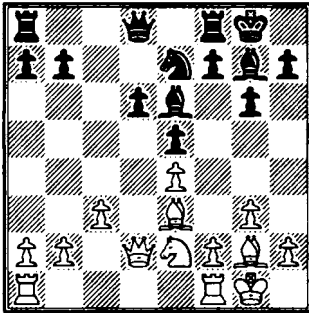
10...♞xd4 11 ♖xd4 e5?!

This kicks the bishop out of the way but it creates the long-term problem of a backward d-pawn.

11...♞f6 should be considered.

12 ♖e3 ♞e7 13 ♞e2 0-0 14 0-0 ♗e6 15 ♛d2

A natural but strong move. Now the rooks are connected and will play a more active role.



15...♛c7

By stopping the bishop from going to the c5 square, Black prepares ...d5 and makes way for a rook to come to d8. Instead, the immediate 15...d5? falls victim to 16 ♖c5! when 16...dxe4?? 17 ♛xd8 ♞fxd8 18 ♖xe7 is embarrassing for Black.

16 ♞fc1!

An excellent choice because it is more tempting to play ♞fd1 to stop ...d6-d5—but in the long-term this would not work out well. Smyslov demonstrates a great understanding of the position in taking steps to ensure the pawn on d6 remains where it is by preparing c2-c4.

16...f5

16...b5? is an attempt to stop c4 but it backfires after 17 a4! a6 (17...bxa4 18 ♞xa4 a5 19 ♞ca1

♞fb8 20 b4 and White is on top thanks to the pin on the a-file) 18 ♞d1 ♞ad8 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♞a7 wins.

17 c4 fxe4 18 ♞c3 ♞f5

If 18...♖xc4 White is much better according to an analysis by Smyslov: 19 ♞xe4 d5 20 ♞g5! d4 21 ♞e6 dxe3 22 ♛xe3 ♛d6 23 ♞xf8 ♖f7 (or 23...♖d5 24 ♖xd5+ ♞xd5 25 ♛c5 ♖xf8 26 ♛xd6 ♖xd6 27 ♞d1+) 24 ♞d1 ♞d5 25 ♛b3 ♞d8 26 ♞xg6! hxg6 27 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 28 ♞xd5 ♛xd5 29 ♞d1! winning.

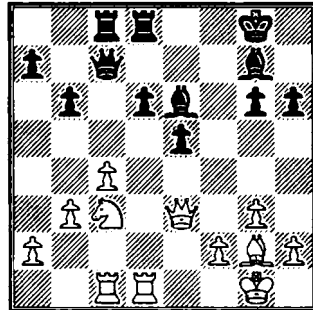
19 ♞xe4 ♞xe3

After 19...♞d4 20 c5! d5 21 ♞g5 ♖f7 22 f4 seriously weakens the black knight's support.

20 ♛xe3 h6 21 ♞d1 ♞fd8

21...♖xc4? 22 ♞ac1, intending b3, looks good for White.

22 ♞ac1 ♞ac8 23 b3 b6 24 ♞c3!



Smyslov intends to occupy the d5 square with his knight. At the moment Black is only too eager to exchange pieces so White cunningly plans a trade of light-squared bishops to emphasise the superiority of his knight over Black's remaining bishop.

24...♛e7

24...♞h7 is logical to avoid the forced exchange of light-squared bishops but it merely prompts White to change course and secure an

advantage after 25 ♖e4! intending h4-h5 or 26 ♘b5 and 27 ♗d3.

25 ♖d5 ♘h7 26 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 27 ♗d3 ♗c7 28 ♗cd1 ♗f7 29 ♘e4 ♖f8 30 ♗d5 ♗g4 31 ♗1d3

After 31 ♘xd6? ♖xd6 32 ♗xd6 ♗xd1+! is the move that had to be seen by White; then 33 ♗xd1 ♗xd1+ 34 ♖g2 e4 35 ♗xe4 ♗d2 and Black has at least a draw.

31...♖e7

31...♗e6 is a futile attempt to hold on to the d-pawn. For instance: 32 ♗d2 ♗fd7 33 c5 bxc5 34 ♘xc5 is a cool way to fork the rook and queen.

32 ♘xd6 ♖xd6 33 ♗xd6 ♗df8 34 ♗xe5 ♗xf2 35 ♗d7+ ♗8f7 36 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 37 ♗d8!

Smyslov allows the American no hint of counterplay and forces him into a passive position.

37...♗g7 38 ♗e8 g5 39 ♗h8+ ♖g6 40 ♗d6+ ♖f7 41 ♗xh6 ♗f5 42 ♗d1 ♗c5+ 43 ♖g2 ♗e7 44 ♗f1+ ♖g8 45 ♗f6 ♗e8 46 ♗f5 g4 47 ♗f2 ♗e7 48 ♗d3 ♗g5

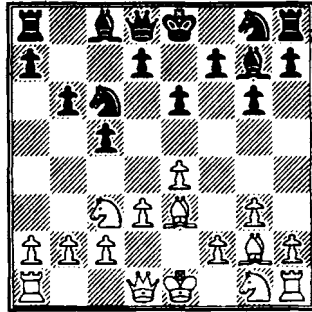
48...♗b7+ 49 ♗d5+ exchanges queens and enters a winning end-game for White.

49 ♗e2 ♗f8 50 ♗e4 ♗g7 51 ♗d5+ ♗f7 52 ♖e6! ♗c7 1-0

The great thing about the Closed Sicilian from White's point of view is that even if Black deviates from the main line, the plan of development usually remains the same. In the following encounter, Black plans a double fianchetto but comes under attack after White simply follows the standard plan given in the new main line.

**Bachin-Shovunov**  
Russian Ch 2001

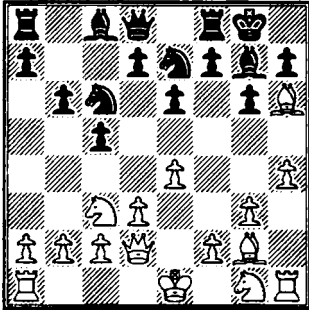
1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♖g2 ♖g7 5 d3 e6 6 ♖e3 b6



7 ♗d2

This is in keeping with the strategy outlined in the new main line by preparing ♖e3-h6 and an exchange of the defensive bishop on g7. In the classic game Crown-Kotov, England-USSR, London 1947, White tried 7 ♘g2 which worked out well upon 7...♘f6 8 h3 ♖a6 9 ♗d2 (or 9 e5 ♘xe5 10 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 when the weakness of the light-squares is sufficient compensation for the exchange) 9...d5 10 exd5 ♘xd5 11 ♖g5 ♗d7 12 ♘xd5 exd5 13 ♖h6 ♖xb2?! (Black grabs a poisoned pawn, which gives White an initiative. Instead, 13...0-0 should be considered) 14 ♗b1 ♖e5 15 0-0 d4 16 ♗fe1 0-0-0 17 ♘f4 ♗he8 18 ♘d5! (the strong threats are 19 ♗xb6 axb6 20 ♘xb6+ or 19 ♖g5 winning) 18...♗d6 19 ♘xb6+! axb6 20 ♗xb6 ♖b7 21 ♗eb1 ♗e7 (21...♗d7 is another way to defend but White can continue with 22 ♗c1 ♗c7 23 ♗a3 ♗d8 24 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 25 ♗a6 ♗dd7 26 ♖xc6 when White wins) 22 ♗c1 ♗dd7 23 ♖f8 ♗c7 24 ♗a3! ♗e6 25 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 26 ♗a4 ♘d8 27 ♗b5 h5 28 a4 h4 29 gxh4 ♖d6 30 a5 ♗d7 (30...♖e5 is of little help for Black after 31 ♗xb7! ♘xb7 32 a6 ♘d8 33 ♗b8+ ♖d7 34 a7 and White wins. 31 a6 ♗xb5 32 axb7+ ♖b8 33 ♗1xb5 ♖f4 34 ♗a6 ♘xb7 35 ♗ab6 1-0.

7...♗ge7 8 ♖h6 0-0 9 h4



A typical attacking idea in the Closed Sicilian. White wants to open the h-file for the benefit of his king's rook. A good example of how to conduct the attack is outlined in this game but it is worth making a comparison with Adams-Ward in the 6 ♖e3 e6 chapter.

9...f6

Black has to be careful about his conduct of the defence because an inaccurate move such as 9...f5?! allows White a fierce attack. For example: 10 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 11 h5 ♜h8 12 0-0-0 d5 13 h6+ ♜f7 14 exf5 exf5 15 ♗f3 (the knight prepares a timely leap to g5 while Black's pieces lack co-ordination) 15...♞e8 16 d4 c4 17 ♞he1 ♖d7 18 ♗g5+ ♜g8 19 ♗xd5 1-0 Parkanyi-Barabas, Miskolc Avas 1999.

10 0-0-0

White whisks the king to safety and makes way for the queen's rook to join in the attack. Of course, 10 h5? is a blunder on account of 10...♖xh6 11 ♜xh6 g5!, intending ...♜h8 and ...♗g8 to win the trapped queen.

10...e5 11 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 12 f4 h6 13 f5 ♗d4

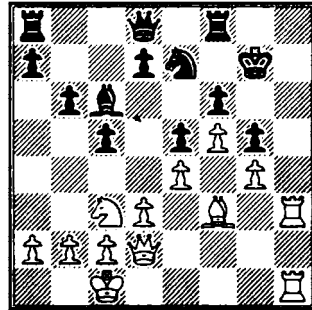
A cautious move that allows White to carry on with the kingside attack. It might seem odd to expose the black king but 13...gxf5 is

probably the best try when 14 exf5 ♗xf5 15 g4 ♗fd4 16 ♗h3 gives White compensation for the pawn. For instance: 16...d6 17 g5 hxg5 18 hxg5 ♖xh3 19 gxf6+ ♜xf6 20 ♜xh3 gives White good attacking chances.

14 g4 g5 15 ♗f3 ♗xf3 16 ♖xf3 ♖b7 17 ♞h3 ♖c6 18 hxg5 hxg5

Or 18...fxg5 19 ♞dh1 ♞h8? (19...♗g8!? 20 ♗d5, threatening ♜xh6, is better for White) 20 ♞xh6 ♞xh6 21 ♜xg5+ wins.

19 ♞dh1



The finale sees White achieving his principal aim of creating a winning attack on the h-file.

19...♞f7 20 ♜h2

Now the queen prepares to use the h-file to invade Black's defence.

20...♗g8 21 ♞h8 1-0

### Summary

**Smyslov-Denker** is a timeless example of how to exploit 6...♗d4 by precise play. A number of alternative suggestions are available for Black but White should emerge with the better chances. Knowledge of the attacking plan given in the 6 ♖e3 e6 chapter is clearly a big help in White's quick success in **Bachin-Shovunov**. It is another reminder of how White can find and carry out a middlegame plan even when faced with a slightly offbeat variation.

# 6

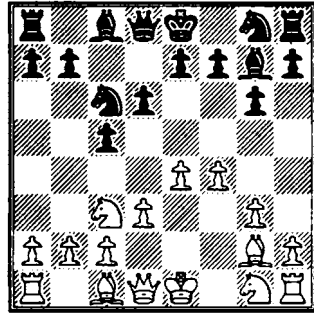
# Main Line 6 f4 e6

The main line with 6 f4 has enjoyed considerable success over the years. White's basic plan is to attack with a kingside pawn advance and then use his space advantage to transfer his pieces to superior outposts. Black usually stops an early d3-d4 by occupying the d4 square with a knight. In the 1980s a great surge of interest in the line was generated by the pseudo-sacrifice 10 e5—and the changing assessments of this variation are a feature of this chapter. Of course, there is a large amount of theory associated with the main line so I have taken steps to try and make things clearer by presenting an overview of what is going on in the fashionable lines. Finally, I take a look at some of White's alternatives if 10 e5 is rejected and also find room to mention what White should do if Black chooses not to play the standard 9...d4.

**Dovramadjiev-Semkov**  
Bulgarian Ch 1996

1 e4 c5 2 d2c3 d2c6 3 g3 g6 4 g2 g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4

The obvious difference from the new main line is that White is not relying on exchanging dark-squared bishops to aid the attack. Instead, White generally aims for an attack based on pushing his kingside pawns.



## 6...e6

The popular way of handling the line is to develop the king's knight to e7 and castle kingside. The main alternatives, 6...e5 and 6...d6, are considered in separate chapters but there is still a chance for Black to play lesser known alternatives:

a) 6...f5 7 d2f3 d2f6 8 0-0 0-0 9 h1 d7?! (I think Black should follow White's example and play 9...h8 to make room for the bishop when it is developed to e6) 10 e3 b8 11 e2! (here rather than d2 because, with the black pawn on f5, the c1-h6 diagonal is closed and on e2 the queen is well placed to create pressure on the e-file after a capture on f5) 11...b5 12 g1 b4 13 d1 d2e8 14 c3 (White covers the d4 square and prepares to move the queen's knight) 14...d2c7 15 c1 d2e6 16 d2e3 (the knight moves to co-ordinate the rooks and exert influence on d5 and f5) 16...a5 17 exf5 gxf5 18 d2h4 d2e8 19 g4 (this is why White

exchanged on f5—to facilitate an opening of the position) 19...fxg4 20 f5! (White cuts the bishop off from its protection of g4 and prepares ♗d5+) 20...♗e5 21 ♖xg4 ♗xg4 22 ♜xg4 ♗f7 23 ♗d5 ♜a6 24 ♖c2 and White prepares to swing the rook across to the g-file with an excellent attack that led to victory in Smyslov-Larsen, Munich Olympiad 1958.

b) 6...♗h6 7 ♗f3 ♗g4 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♜xf3 ♗d4 10 ♜f2 ♖b8 11 0-0 b5 12 g4 (the kingside pawn advance highlights the lack of mobility of the knight stuck on h6) 12...f6 13 ♗e3 ♗c6 14 g5 ♗f7 15 e5 and the discovered attack against the knight on c6 gave White a clear advantage, Freinhofer-Happala, Velden 1993.

c) 6...♗d7 7 ♗f3 ♗d4 8 ♗e3 ♗xf3+ 9 ♜xf3 ♗c6 10 0-0 e6 11 ♜f2 ♗f6 12 h3 ♗d7 13 g4 (as usual, White is quick to start a kingside pawn storm) 13...e5 14 f5 g5 15 ♜d2 h6 16 ♗e2 (the knight is heading for h5 now that Black has compromised his pawn structure) 16...♗f6 17 ♗g3 ♜c7 18 ♗h5 0-0-0 19 a4 ♖b8 20 b4 b6 21 a5 ♜hg8 22 ♜fb1 ♗e7 23 axb6 axb6 24 c4 gave White a winning advantage in Dizdarević-Schneider, Mainz 1995.

d) 6...♖b8 7 ♗f3 b5 8 0-0 b4 9 ♗e2 (9 ♗d5 is also possible) 9...♗d4 10 a3 ♗xf3+ 11 ♗xf3 a5 12 axb4 axb4 and now, instead of 13 g4 which occurred in Donev-Gallagher, Lenk 1991, Donev suggests 13 d4! cxd4 14 ♗xd4, intending ♗e3 with an edge.

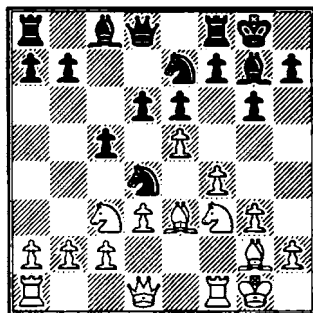
7 ♗f3 ♗ge7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♗e3

White continues with his development and prepares the possibility of d3-d4. A number of alternatives are discussed in the next main game.

9...♗d4

The knight comes to d4 to block the possible advance d3-d4. The alternative 9...b6 is discussed in the main game Donev-Zeller.

10 e5



This is the move that has renewed interest in the line. The idea is that White will strive to open diagonals for his bishops, weaken the c5 pawn, vacate the e4 square for the queen's knight and generate attacking chances by opening the f-file after Black captures on e5.

10...♗ef5

10...dxe5 is rarely played, probably because Black wants to maintain the tension. Bhat-Lobo, San Francisco 1999, continued 11 ♗xe5 0-0 12 ♗e4 b6 13 c3 ♗df5 14 ♗f2 ♗b7 (14...♗a6?! 15 ♜a4! ♗xd3 16 ♗xd3 ♜xd3 17 ♜ad1 ♜e2 18 ♜d2 ♜h5 19 h3 and the black queen is trapped; 14...♜c7 is met by 15 ♜a4) 15 ♜a4 f6 16 ♗d7 b5 17 ♜xa7 ♗c6 18 ♜b6 ♜xd7 19 ♗xc5 ♜d8 20 ♜xb5 ♗cd4 21 ♗xb7 ♗xb5 22 ♗xd8 (White has three pawns for a piece but Black puts up little resistance) 22...♜fxd8 23 a4 ♗c7 24 a5 ♗a6 25 b4 ♜xd3 26 ♜ab1 ♜xc3 27 b5 ♗c5 28 a6 1-0.

11 ♗f2 ♗xf3+

Black exchanges on f3 to eliminate the defender of the e5 pawn.

Lesser known alternatives are:

a) 11...dxe5?! 12 ♖xe5 (if White gets the chance he takes back on e5 with the knight) 12...♚c7 13 ♘e4 f6 14 ♘c4 e5?! 15 fxe5 fxe5 16 g4 ♘e7 17 ♗xd4 exd4 18 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 19 ♚f3+ ♜g8 20 ♘f6+ 1-0 San Segundo-Frois, Linares 1995.

b) 11...d5?! (this does not seriously test White's idea and the blockade in the centre reduces the effectiveness of the bishop on g7) 12 ♘d4 ♘d4 (it should be noted that this position can also be reached after 11...♘xf3+ 12 ♚xf3 ♘d4 13 ♚d1 d5) 13 ♘a4 b6 14 b4! (14 c3 has also been tested but the text is the most irritating for Black because the pawn on c5 is undermined) 14...♗d7 15 bxc5 (it is normal for White take the material but 15 c4 is also worth investigating) 15...♗xa4 16 ♗xd4 ♜c8 17 cxb6 ♜xc2 18 ♚b1 axb6 19 ♗xb6! ♚a8 20 ♜f2 gave White the advantage in Hansen-Grand, Aarhus 1994.

c) 11...♜b8 12 ♘e4 ♘xf3+ (12...b6, to lend support to c5, is met by 13 ♘d4! cxd4 14 g4 with White enjoying the better chances) 13 ♚xf3 dxe5 14 ♗xc5 ♘d4 15 ♚f2 f5 (this has been played a few times but White will emerge on top) 16 ♗xf8 ♚xf8 17 fxe5 ♗xe5 (17...fxe4 18 ♚xd4 wins) 18 c3 ♘c6 19 d4 ♗c7 20 ♜h1 b6 21 ♘g5 with a winning advantage, Van Wissen-Röder, Leeuwarden 1993.

d) 11...♗d7 12 ♘e4 transposes to the main game Short-Rechlis.

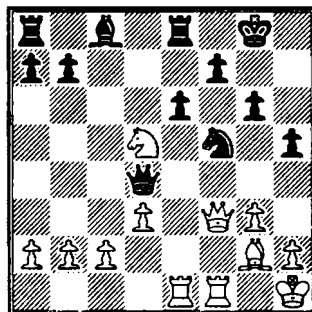
### 12 ♚xf3 dxe5!

Black allows White to activate his dark-squared bishop and conveniently open the f-file for the queen and rook. 12...♘d4 is considered the main line, although 12...♗d7 transposes to the main game via the move-order 10 e5 ♗d7.

### 13 ♗xc5 ♜e8

Black is in trouble and an attempt to create counterplay by sacrificing the exchange with 13...exf4 did not improve matters in Hansen-Wil-lumsen, Aarhus 1989. That game went 14 ♗xf8 ♗d4+ 15 ♜h1 ♚xf8 16 ♚xf4 e5 17 ♚d2 ♘e3 18 ♗d5! ♗g4 (if 18...♘xf1 then White targets f7 with 19 ♜xf1 ♗f5 20 g4) 19 ♜xf7 ♚c5 20 ♗b3 ♜f8 21 ♚f2 ♘d5 22 ♜xf8+ 1-0.

14 fxe5 ♗xe5 15 ♜ael ♗d4+ 16 ♗xd4 ♚xd4+ 17 ♜h1 h5 18 ♘d5!



The big threat is ♘c7 to fork the rooks. Black's lack of development gives White pretty good tactical chances.

### 18...♗d7?

A misguided attempt to generate activity by sacrificing the exchange. 18...♜d8 is an improvement for Black, although 19 ♘e7+ ♜g7 (19...♘e7? 20 ♚xf7+ wins) 20 b3 still leaves White with an edge.

19 ♘c7 ♗c6 20 ♚f2 ♚xb2 21 ♗xc6 bxc6 22 ♘xe8 ♜xe8 23 c4

White is happy to offer Black the chance to enter a better ending.

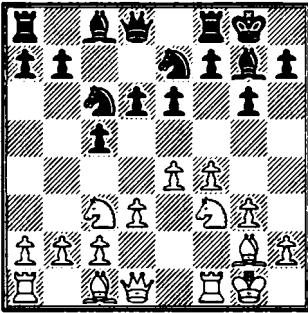
23...♚b7 24 ♜b1 ♚d7 25 ♚f3 ♜d8 26 ♜fd1 c5 1-0

The advance of the white e-pawn also makes room for the queen's knight on e4.

**A.Martin-Britton**  
Barnsdale 1989

1 e4 c5 2 d3 c6 3 g3 g6 4  
g2 g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e6 7 f3  
f7 8 0-0-0

Martin used an interesting move-  
order to reach this position because  
the original sequence was 1 e4 c5 2  
f3 c3 d6 3 f4 g6 4 f3 g7 5 g3  
f6 6 g2 e6 7 0-0 g7 8 d3 0-0.



9 e3

There are plenty of alternatives  
available for White but they have  
failed to make much of an  
impression. For instance:

a) 9 e2 b8 (against an unusual  
set-up Black advances the queenside  
pawns) 10 b1 b5 11 a3 d7! 12  
h1 (if 12 b4 then 12...d4=)  
12...a5 13 a4 b4 14 b5 a7 15  
xa7 xa7 16 e3 (perhaps 16  
h3!? should be considered) 16...d5  
17 e5 d4 18 e2 (18 e2 is also  
met by 18...b3 19 cxb3 a6 intend-  
ing ...b6 and ...xb3) 18...b3 19  
cxb3 a6 20 c2 (20 xa5? runs  
into 20...d5 when 21 e2 fails to  
21...xd3) 20...b6 21 fcl f8  
22 e1 d5 23 e4 e8! gave  
Black the advantage in Spassky-  
J.Polgar, Monaco 1994.

b) 9 a3 (apparently a cautious  
measure against ...b7-b5-b4 but in  
fact preparation for b2-b4 to exert  
pressure on the queenside) 9...e7

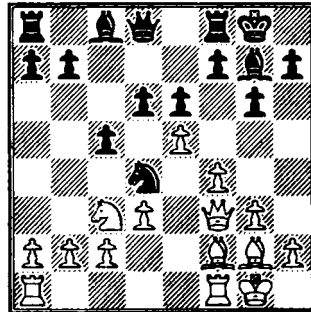
10 b1 c8 11 e2 d4 12 e2  
(Black prevents 12 b4? because  
12...cxb4 13 axb4 dxf3+ 14 xf3  
xc3 wins) 12...a4 13 b3 c6 14  
c4 dxf3+ 15 xf3 d5 16 e3 d4  
17 e2 d7 18 g4 f5 19 d3 when  
White has play on both sides of the  
board, Spassky-Geller, Candidates  
match, Suhumi 1968.

c) 9 e2 (this prepares the ad-  
vance d3-d4, while the knight can  
later be transferred to g3 after  
g3-g4) 9...b8 10 c3 b5 11 d4 b4 12  
e3 bxc3 13 bxc3 a6! (Black  
undermines the defence of d4) 14  
e1 b2 15 c1 cxd4 16 xd4  
dxd4 17 cxd4 b6 gave Black the  
better chances in Bigot-Breyther,  
Germany Team Ch 1995.

d) 9 g4 f5! (the pawn blockades  
the advance f4-f5) 10 gxf5 exf5 11  
e2 d7 12 c3 b6 13 d3 e6 14  
e3 h3 a8 15 e3 with equal  
chances, Kosanski-Videki, Croatian  
Team Ch 1999.

e) 9 h4 d4 10 e2 b8 11 c3  
xe2+ 12 xe2 b5 13 a3 a5 14  
d2 d7 15 g4 f5 (Black spots the  
forthcoming f4-f5 and stops it) 16  
ael b4 when I prefer Black,

9...d4 10 e5 d5 11 e2  
xf3+ 12 xf3 d4



The knight is handily placed on  
d4 to block the g1-a7 diagonal and  
knock the queen off the f-file.

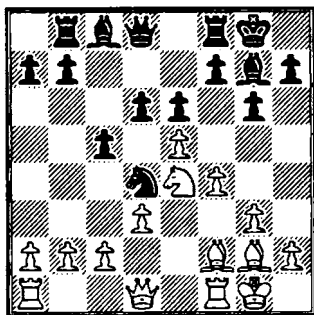
## 13 ♖d1 ♜b8?

A natural move that allows White to explore the attacking potential of the position. 13...dxe5 is considered the main line and discussed in the next game. Other moves:

a) 13...d5 transposes into note 'b' after Black's eleventh move in the game Dovramadjiev-Semkov.

b) 13...f5?! 14 exf6 ♜xf6 15 ♘e4 ♜e7 16 c3 ♘c6 17 ♜d2 e5 18 ♜ael exf4 19 gx4 ♜c7 20 ♘g5 ♘d8 (Black has a rather passive game with a dormant queenside) 21 d4 h6 22 dxc5 dxc5 (22...hxg5 allows 23 cxd6 ♜d7 24 ♜e7 and White wins) 23 ♜d5+ ♜h8 24 ♘xc5 hxg5 25 ♘xf8 ♘xf8 26 ♜e8 ♘e6 27 f5 gx4 28 ♜xf5 ♜g7 1-0 Bagirov-Rantanen, Kuopio 1995.

## 14 ♘e4!



A key idea in this line is to bring the knight to e4 where it can exert a great deal of influence.

## 14...dxe5 15 c3 ♘f5

Once Black drifts into this position it is difficult to retrieve the situation, judging by the game Stromberg-Sunehag, Borlange 1995, when Black sacrificed a piece for some pawns with 15...exf4?! but came under a fierce attack. There followed 16 cxd4 f4 17 ♘g3 ♘d4 18 ♜h1 e5 (or 18...♜a8 19 ♘d6 ♜e8 20 ♘xc5 is good for

White) 19 ♘f6+ ♜h8 20 ♜c1! (the weak dark-squares around the black king allow White to invade and destroy) 20...♜g7 21 ♘h4 ♜a5 22 ♘e8+ 1-0.

## 16 ♘xc5

The error of 13...♜b8 is clear because the pawn on a7 is under threat as well as the rook on f8, which gains time for White and helps to win a pawn.

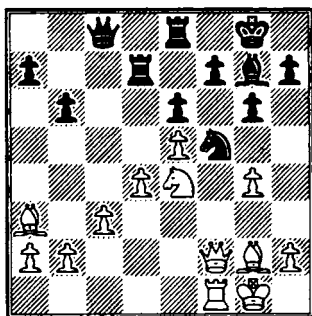
## 16...♜e8 17 fxe5 b6

If 17...♘xe5 then 18 ♘xa7 ♜a8 19 ♘f2 also gives White an extra pawn.

18 ♘d6 ♜b7 19 ♜e2 ♜d7 20 d4 ♘b7 21 ♘a3 ♜c8 22 g4 ♘a6 23 ♜f2

White is content to give up the exchange because his opponent will have to move the king's knight, allowing ♘d6 or ♜xf7+.

## 23...♘xf1 24 ♜xf1



## 24...♘e7 1-0

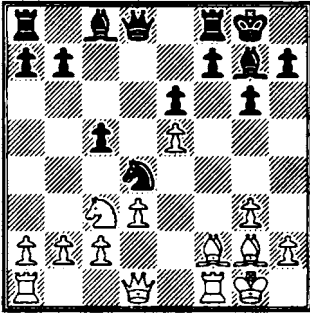
The loose pawn on e5 is taken in the next game, which is considered to be the main line featuring 16...♜c7.

## Stjzhkina-Polovodin

St Petersburg 1999

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♘g2 ♘g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e6 7 ♘f3 ♘ge7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♘e3 ♘d4 10 e5

7.e5 11 ♖f2 ♗xg3+ 12 ♜xf3 ♗d4  
13 ♛d1 dxe5 14 fxe5



14...♗xe5!

Judging by results, this has emerged as the best choice for Black. There is also plenty of room for Black to go wrong:

a) 14...♗d7?! 15 ♗e4 (15 ♗xb7?! ♜b8 16 ♗g2 ♜xb2 is fine for Black) 15...♗xe5 16 c3 ♗f5 17 ♗xc5 ♜e8 18 d4 ♗g7 19 ♛f3 ♗c6 20 g4 ♗xe4 (20...♗h6!? must be considered) 21 ♛xe4 ♗h4? 22 ♛xb7 ♗xg2 (or 22...♜b8 23 ♛xf7 ♗h6 24 ♗c6 wins) 23 ♜xf7 ♗h6 24 ♜xh7 1-0 Nordhaug-Sheldon, World Junior Ch Guarapuava 1995.

b) 14...♜b8?! 15 ♗e4 b6 16 ♗f6+! ♗xf6 (16...♗h8 17 c3 ♗f5 18 g4 ♗e7 19 ♛f3 ♗d5 20 g5 gives White a strong attack) 17 exf6 (now the dark-squares around the king are a long-term liability)

b1) 17...♛xf6 18 c3 ♗f5 19 g4 ♗d6 20 ♗xc5 ♛e7 21 ♗d4 gave White an edge in Logdahl-Rajlich, Budapest 2000.

b2) 17...♗b7 18 ♗xb7 ♜xb7 19 c3 ♗f5 20 g4 ♗d6 20 ♛f3 with the better chances in Korotonozhkin-Vasilchenko, Voronezh 1997.

15 ♗e4 f5

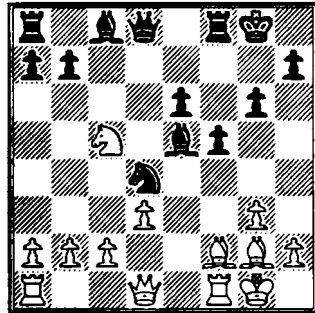
Polovodin follows the fashion of ousting the knight from e4 otherwise White will play c2-c3 and take on c5 with bishop. Other moves:

a) 15...c4?! (this move has been enthusiastically supported by commentators but I can only assume that is because they want to play the White side of the line!) 16 c3 ♗f5 17 dxc4 ♛c7 18 ♛e2 with the better game.

b) 15...♗f5 16 c3 (16 ♗xc5? runs into 16...♗xb2 when 17 ♜b1 ♗d4+ is to Black's advantage) 16...c4?! transposes to the previous note.

c) 15...♜b8?! (this transposes to the line mentioned after move 17 in the main game A.Martin-Britton) 16 c3 ♗f5 17 ♗xc5 ♜e8 18 ♗xa7 ♜a8 19 ♗f2 left White with an extra pawn in Smolak-Winter, Warsaw 2001.

16 ♗xc5



16...♛c7

The queen attacks the knight. The alternative 16...♛d6 is discussed in the next game. Koch-Lautier, Besancon 1999, saw 16...f4!? to immediately put pressure on the kingside. There followed: 17 c3 (17 gxf4 ♗xf4 18 ♗e4 is another possibility offering equal chances) 17...f3 18 cxd4 (18 ♗h3?! is made to look poor after 18...♗e2+ 19 ♗h1 ♛g5 20 ♛a4 ♛h6 21 ♛h4 ♛xh4 22 gxh4 ♗f4 which gave Black the superior ending in Rogulj-Ljubicić, Makarska Tucepi 1995) 18...fxg2 19 ♗xg2 ♗xd4 20 ♗xd4!? ♜xf1 21 ♛xf1 ♛xd4 22 ♛f2 ♛xf2+ (or

22...e5 23 ♖xd4 exd4 24 ♘b3 ♙f5  
25 ♘xd4 bxd3 26 ♚d1) 23 ♜xf2 b6  
24 ♘e4 ♙a6 25 ♜e3 =

17 b4 f4!?

An adventurous idea to try and expose the white king to attack. Others:

a) 17...♚b8?! 18 c3 ♘b5 19 d4 ♙g7 (19...♘xc3? loses quickly to 20 ♖e1 when White will win a piece) 20 ♖b3 ♜h8 21 a4 ♘d6 22 ♚ael gave White the advantage in Kovacević-Bogić, Pula 1990.

b) 17...♘c6?! (this move is far less effective with the queen on c7, compared to d6 as in the next main game) 18 d4 ♙g7 19 c3 b6 19 ♖f3! bxc5 20 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 21 ♙xc6 ♚b8 22 bxc5 left White a pawn up in Mason-S.Ledger, British Ch 1999.

c) 17...♙g7 (the best of the bunch) 18 c3 ♘b5 19 ♖b3! (now that the bishop is on g7, 19 d4 can be met with 19...♘xc3) 19...♘xc3 20 ♚ael ♖f7 21 ♘xe6 ♙xe6 22 ♙xe6 a5! and Black drew despite White's useful pair of bishops, Balashov-Karpman, Moscow 1989.

18 c3!? ♘f5

The alternative 18...♘b5 did not work out well in Novitzky-Korzubov, Minsk 1998, when 19 d4 fxg3 20 hxg3 ♙g7 21 ♖d3 ♘d6 22 ♚ael gave White strong pressure against the e6 pawn.

19 g4 f3

If 19...♘e3 the exchanges favour White who has the better development after 20 ♙xe3 fxe3 21 ♚xf8+ ♜xf8 22 ♖f3+ ♜g8 23 ♚f1 ♙xh2+ 24 ♜h1 ♙d6 25 ♘e4.

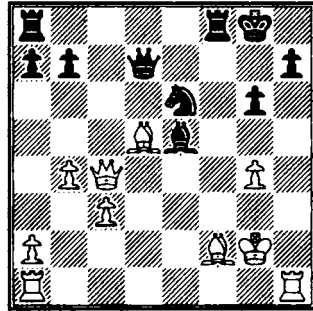
20 ♙xf3 ♙xh2+ 21 ♜g2 ♘g7 22 ♚h1 ♙f4 23 d4 ♙d7 24 ♘xd7

A safe choice although 24 ♙xb7 is tempting when 24...♙c6+ 25 ♙xc6 ♖xc6+ 26 ♜g1 gives Black some compensation for the pawn due to the exposed white king.

24...♖xd7 25 ♖d3 e5?!

An improvement is 25...♚f7, to double rooks on the f-file, when 26 ♚h3 ♚af8 27 ♚ahl ♘e8 28 c4 gives White the brighter prospects.

26 ♖c4+! ♘e6 27 dxex5 ♙xe5 28 ♙d5



28...♜g7?

It is worth considering 28...♚ae8.

29 ♙xe6 ♚xf2+ 30 ♜xf2 ♖d2+ 31 ♖e2 ♚f8+ 32 ♙f5!

The bishop blocks the f-file and consequently stops the counter-attack, leaving White with an easy win.

32...♖xc3 33 ♚ael ♖g3+

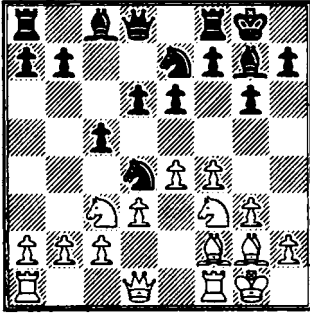
33...♙g3+ is no better after 34 ♜g2 ♙xe1 35 ♖e7+ ♚f7 36 ♚xh7+! ♜xh7 37 ♖xf7+ ♖g7 38 ♙xg6+ ♜h8 39 ♖e8+ ♖g8 40 ♖xe1 ♖xg6 41 ♖e5+ when White has all the winning chances.

34 ♜f1 ♙d6 35 ♖e4 1-0

The introduction of 10 ♙f2 is usually a prelude to a transposition to the 10 e5 line. In this case the main line with the 15...♖d6 variation is the centre of attention.

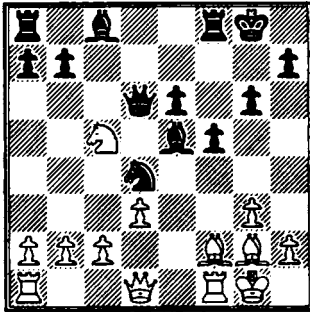
Spassky-Hjartarson  
French Team Ch 1991

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e6 7 ♘f3 ♘ge7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♙e3 ♘d4 10 ♙f2



A little nuance by Spassky who intends to transpose into 10 e5 positions, but, compared to the previous game, with one move saved on the scoresheet.

10...dxc6 11 dxd4 dxd4 12 e5 dxe5 13 fe5 xe5 14 de4 f5 15 dxc5 wd6



The keeps the queen on the d-file and attacks the knight on d6. In this line White tends to have a slight edge but accurate defence should be enough to hold the position.

16 b4 dxc6!

I think this is the best available move for Black who should be able to avoid the various obstacles and end up with equality. Also possible:

16...xb8?! 17 c3 db5 18 d4 ef6 (18...dxc3? is losing upon 19 dxe5 wxd1 20 axd1 dxd1 21 xd1) 19 wb3 b6 20 d3 eb7 21 ebx7 xb7 22 a4 dc7 23 xfe1 d5 24

c4 de7 25 df4 ± Spassky-Giufield, Wellington 1988.

16...db5?! 17 a4! exa1 18 wxa1 dc7 19 dxb7 ebx7 20 ebx7 ab8 21 ec5 and White is better.

16...eg7 17 a4 preparing c2-c3) 17...xb8 18 c3 dc6 19 d4 and I favour White.

17 b1 ed4!

The most precise reply to achieve equality. A casual response hands White the initiative:

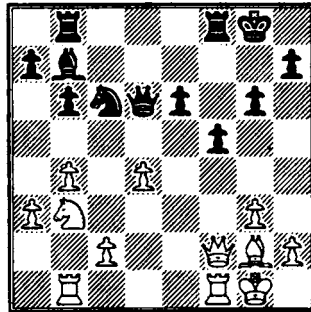
a) 17...b6?! 18 db3 eb7 19 d4 ef6 20 c4! wxb4? 21 dc5 wins.

b) 17...xb8 18 we1!? eg7 (18...ed4 19 edx4 wxd4+ 20 wf2 is slightly better for White) 19 db3 b6 20 c4 with an edge, Radulovski-Georgiev, Stara Zagora 1991.

18 wd2 exf2+

Or 18...a5!? 19 exc6 (19 a3?! axb4 20 axb4 a2 activates the black rook) 19...exf2+ (19...bxc6 20 c3 exf2+ 21 wxf2 axb4 22 cxb4 e5 23 a4 ee6 24 dxe6 wxe6 25 a5 wd5=) 20 wxf2 bxc6 (if 20...wxc6? then 21 b5 wd6 22 da4 ed7 23 wc5 is better for White) 21 a3 e5 with equal chances.

19 wxf2 xb8 20 a3 b6 21 db3 eb7 22 d4



22...d8!

Black prepares to exchange bishops to reduce White's chances of creating a plus. Instead, 22...e5?!

23 d5 ♖e7 24 c4 ♜f6 25 ♞bd1 is better for White because the passed pawn inhibits Black's light-squared bishop.

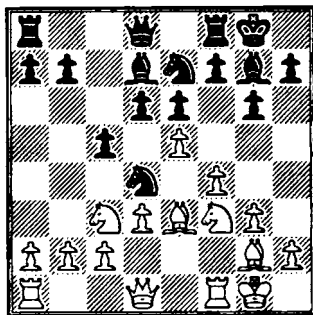
23 c4 ♖f7 24 ♙xb7 ♞xb7 25 ♜e3 e5 26 dxe5 1/2-1/2.

Black is always searching for ways to avoid the well-analysed lines and a relatively new idea is 10...♙d7.

### Short-Rechlls

Ohrid 2001

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e6 7 ♖f3 ♖ge7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♙e3 ♖d4 10 e5 ♙d7



A stunning response because it seems that Black is voluntarily conceding a pawn on d4.

11 ♖e4

The obvious 11 ♖d4 cxd4 12 ♙xd4 dxe5 is an important position when 13 ♙xe5? fails to 13...♜b6+ 14 ♖h1 ♜f6 winning a piece. However, 13 fxe5 ♙c6 14 ♙f2 ♙xg2 15 ♖xg2 ♙xe5 16 d4 ♙g7 17 ♜f3 ♖d5 18 ♖e4 ♜c8 19 c3 offered equal chances in the game, Turner-Dunnington, Hafnarfjordur 1996. Instead, 11 exd6 releases the tension in the centre which is fine for Black after 11...♖ef5 12 ♙f2 ♙c6 13 ♖e4

♖xf3+ 14 ♙xf3 b6 15 c3 ♜c8 16 ♜e2 ♖xd6.

11...♖ef5 12 ♙f2

Black tends to play 10...♙d7 so it makes sense to start our survey of the line at that point. However, this position was reached by a slightly different move-order, 10...♖ef5 11 ♙f2 ♙d7 12 ♖e4.

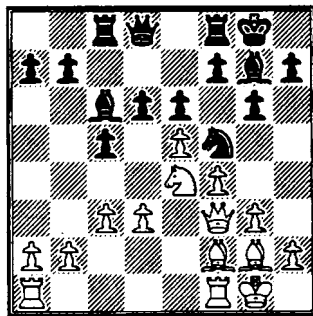
12...♙c6

Black is trying to shake off Short from the accepted theory by using a careful move-order. Here he is protecting the d-pawn while challenging the h1-a8 diagonal. Also possible:

12...♖xf3+ and now:

13 ♙xf3 ♙c6 14 c3 transposes to the main game.

13 ♜xf3 ♙c6 (13...dxe5?! 14 ♙xc5 exf4 15 ♜xf4 is better for White) 14 c3 ♜c8



and now:

a) 15 exd6 ♖xd6 16 ♜e2 b6 17 ♜fd1 ♜d7 18 h4?! (a reckless attempt to create a kingside attack in an awkward position—my excuse was that at the time I had never seen 10...♙d7 before and had already consumed a lot of time on the clock trying to find the best line against my strong opponent) 18...♜fe8 19 d4 ♖xe4 20 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 21 ♜xe4 ♜b5 22 ♜d2 cxd4 23 ♙xd4 ♜ed8 when Black had the better chances, Lane-Sadler, London 1992.

b) 15 ♖e2 b6? (15...h5 is best to stop g3-g4) 16 g4 dxe5 17 gxf5 exf5 18 ♘d2 ♕h6 19 ♖g3 with a winning advantage, Gesing-Rohde, Ilyères 2001.

c) 15 d4 cxd4 16 cxd4 ♖a5 17 g4 dxe5 18 fxe5 ♘e7 19 a3 ♕xe4 20 ♖xe4 ♘d5 left Black with a strong knight on d5, ensuring an edge in Rogulj-Jovanić, Bled 2001.

13 c3 ♘xf3+ 14 ♕xf3!

Short prefers to take back with the bishop while 14 ♖xf3 ♕c6 transposes to the note after Black's twelfth move.

14...dxe5

Black releases the tension in the centre. This is the most popular reply although the alternative 14...h5 is worth investigating:

a) 15 exd6 b6 16 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 17 ♕xc6 ♖c8 18 ♕b7 ♖b8 19 ♕e4 ♘d6 (19...♖xd6 20 ♖a4?! {the queen is misplaced on the side of the board so White should consider 20 ♖e2} ♖c7 21 ♖a6 b5 22 ♖ac1 ♖fc8 23 ♖fel ♖d8 24 b4 ♕e7 25 a4 ♖d6 26 ♖a5 ♖xa5 27 bxa5 ♖a6 0-1 Sale-Sadler, Cannes 1995) 20 ♖e2! ♖c7 21 ♕f3 ♖fd8 22 ♖ad1 ♘f5 23 ♖fel ♖d6 24 ♕e4 ♘e7 25 h3 ♕g7 26 g4 hxg4 27 hxg4 with equal chances, Kveinys-Dokhoian, Bonn 1994.

b) 15 h3 dxe5 16 g4 hxg4 17 hxg4 exf4!? (a remarkable idea to construct a draw right out of the opening) 18 gxf5 exf5 19 ♘xc5 ♖g5+ 20 ♔h2 ♖h6+ 21 ♔g2 ½-½ Keskinen-Molander, Helsinki 2001.

15 fxe5

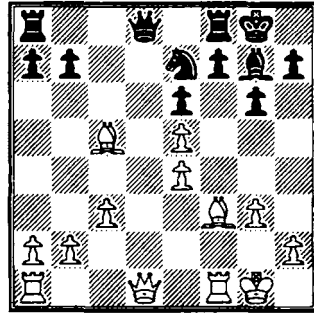
Not 15 ♘xc5 exf4 16 ♕xc6 bxc6 17 gxf4 ♖d6 and Black is better due to the weak f4 pawn and exposed white king.

15...♕xe4

J.Claesen-Schebler, Belgian Team Ch 1998, saw 15...♖c8 16 ♘xc5 b6

17 ♕xc6 ♖xc6 18 ♘e4 ♕xe5 19 ♖f3 ♖c7 (19...♖c8 is a sensible precaution to avoid any future pin on h2-b8 diagonal) 20 d4 ♕g7 21 g4 ♘d6 (21...♘e7 22 ♕h4 f5 23 ♘g5 is slightly better for White due to the backward e-pawn) 22 ♕g3 ♘xe4 23 ♕xc7 ♖d5 24 ♖ael gave White a winning advantage.

16 dxe4 ♘e7 17 ♕xc5



17...♘c6

Rechlis hopes to instigate complications by sacrificing the exchange. In the circumstances this is hardly surprising considering that 17...♖e8 leads to a poor ending after 18 ♖xd8 ♖axd8 19 ♕xa7 ♕xe5 20 ♖fd1 when the extra material gives White a clear advantage.

18 ♕xf8 ♖b6+ 19 ♔h1 ♕xf8 20 ♖b3

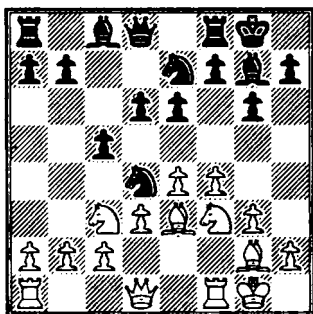
Short has a material advantage and is happy to offer an exchange of queens. The game concluded: 20...♖c7 21 ♕g4 ♖e8 22 ♕e2 ♘xe5 23 ♖a4 ♖a8 24 ♖ad1 h5 25 ♖d4 ♕e7 26 b4 ♔g7 27 a3 b6 28 c4 Short reveals his plan of creating a passed c-pawn 28...a5 29 ♖b1 axb4 30 axb4 ♖a2 31 ♖b2 ♖a3 32 ♖bb1 ♖a2 33 ♖f2 h4 34 ♕f1 ♖a3 35 gxh4 ♕xh4 36 ♖c2 ♕f6 37 c5 bxc5 38 bxc5 Finally the c-pawn is advanced and Black has no chance. 38...♘c6 39 ♖d6 ♖a7 40 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 41 ♕a6 ♘d4 42 ♖c4 ♕e5 43

♖b7 ♗xb7 44 ♙xb7 ♘b5 45 ♙c6  
 ♘c7 46 ♗g2 ♖h6 47 ♗c1 ♙d4 48  
 ♙a4 ♗g7 49 ♖f3 ♖f6 50 ♗c2 ♙e5  
 51 h3 ♗g5 52 ♖e3 ♖h4 53 ♗f2 f6  
 54 ♗f3 g5 55 ♙d1 ♙f4+ 56 ♖d3  
 ♙e5 57 ♙e2 ♙f4 58 c6 ♘e8 59  
 ♖c4 ♘d6+ 60 ♖d4 ♘e8 61 ♖c5  
 ♙g3 62 ♙f1 g4 63 hxg4 ♖xg4 64  
 ♙e2 ♙d6+ 65 ♖b6 ♗g5 66 ♙c4 f5  
 67 exf5 exf5 68 ♙f7 ♘c7 69 ♗d3  
 ♙e5 70 ♗d7 ♖f6 71 ♗xc7 1-0

Former world champion Karpov has stayed faithful to the Closed Sicilian through the years and his handling of the opening is a model example. Indeed, the next game is one of the main reasons why I took up the line.

**Karpov-Quinteros**  
 Buenos Aires 1980

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2  
 ♙g7 5 d3 ♘c6 6 f4 e6 7 ♘f3 ♘ge7  
 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♙e3 ♘d4



**10 ♗b1**

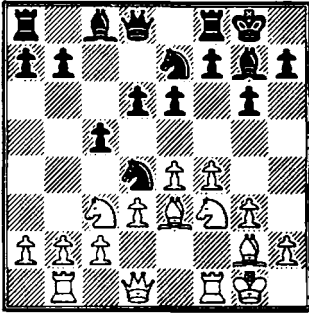
This used to be the main move—so that after White plays ♘ce2 and Black exchanges knights, the b2 pawn is protected. At the time of the game Karpov was world champion and his use of the opening inspired numerous imitators. Also possible:

a) 10 ♖d2 ♗b8 11 ♘d1 b6 12 ♘h4 (12...c3 should be considered) 12...f5 (whenever White prepares f4-f5 it makes sense to block the advance) 13 ♘f2 ♙a6 14 ♗fe1 d5 15 ♙xd4 ♙xd4 16 exf5 ♘xf5 17 ♘xf5 exf5 18 c3 ♙f6 19 ♘h3 h6 20 ♖h1 ½-½ Grefe-Cusi, Californian Ch 1997.

b) 10 ♖h1 (the king makes room for the bishop to retreat to g1) 10...♘ec6 11 ♙g1 ♗b8 12 ♖d2 ♘xf3 13 ♙xf3 ♘d4 14 ♙g2 ♗a5 15 ♖f2 ♙d7 16 ♘d1 f5 17 ♘e3 ♖c7 18 c3 ♘c6 19 ♗acl ♘e7 20 g4 gave White an edge in Blatny-Anand, World Junior Ch 1985.

c) 10 ♘h4 f5 (as usual when White is preparing f4-f5 Black takes action to stop it) 11 ♖d2 ♗b8 12 ♗ael b6 13 ♖h1 ♖h8 14 ♙gl ♖b7 15 ♘d1 (a standard middlegame plan is to move the knight out of the way and play c2-c3 to oust the d4 knight) 15...d5 16 c3 ♘dc6 17 exd5 exd5 18 ♘f3 ♖d7 19 d4 ♙a6 20 ♗f2 cxd4 21 cxd4 ♘g8 22 ♘e5 ♖d6 23 ♗f3 ♘f6 24 ♗a3 ♖b7 25 ♘xc6 ♖xc6 26 ♗xa7 with advantage to White although the game was eventually drawn, Tal-Matanović, Wijk aan Zee 1968.

d) 10 g4 ♙d7 11 ♗b1 ♙c6 12 ♙xd4?! (in general White does not exchange on d4 with the bishop unless there is a positive return) 12...cxd4 13 ♘e2 f5 (once again Black stops the advance f4-f5) 14 gxf5 gxf5 15 ♖e1 fxe4 16 dxe4 ♘g6! (16...♙xe4 is met by 17 ♘exd4) 17 ♙h3 ♘xf4 18 ♘xf4 ♗xf4 19 ♙xe6+ ♖h8 20 ♙f5 (White wants to trap the bishop but 20 ♖g3 is better, hoping for 20...♗xe4 when 21 ♘g5 wins) 20...♖f6 21 ♖d2 ♙h6 22 ♖d3 d5! 23 ♗bel dxe4 24 ♖xd4 ♗xf5 0-1 Sbraccia-Rotstein, San Benedetto 1998.



### 10...dxc6!?

The knight reinforces Black's control of the d4 square. There are a variety of alternatives:

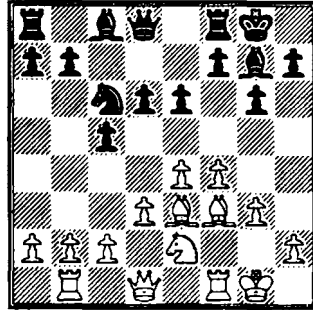
a) 10...d5 11 dxe2 dxf3+ 12 exf3 d4 13 ed2 e5 14 eg2 (White retreats the bishop to prepare the advance f4-f5) 14...b5 15 f2 f8 16 Wf1 f5 17 fe5 ex5 18 ef4 exf4 19 dxf4 fxe4 20 ex4 d5 21 exf5 exf5 22 el eb7 23 we2 f7 24 we6 wf8 25 dxg6! wg7 26 we8+ 1-0 Mastermak-Cyborowski, Bytom 1995.

b) 10...ed7 11 dxe2 dxf3+ 12 exf3 wc7 13 wd2 ead8 14 c4!? (White decides to try and make progress on the queenside) 14...b6 15 b4 ec6 16 ef2 eh8 17 dc3 df5 18 de2 de7 19 dc3 df5 20 de2 de7 1/2-1/2 Davies-Sherbakov, London 1992.

c) 10...b6 11 dxe2 dxf3+ 12 exf3 eb7 13 eg2 wc7 14 c3 (14 c4, intending b2-b4, is a possible idea) 14...eae8 15 wc2 eh8 16 ebel f5 17 ed2 dg8 18 c4 de7 19 ec3 dc6 20 exf5 exf5 21 exg7+ wxg7 22 wc3 1/2-1/2 Casper-Foisor, Moscow 1987.

d) 10...eb8 11 dxe2 dxf3+ 12 exf3 b6 13 a3 eb7 14 b4 wd7 15 c4 f5 16 eg2 with equal chances, Bastian-Vogt, German Team Ch 1998.

### 11 dxe2 dxf3+ 12 exf3



12...b6  
Black indicates a desire to complete his queenside development with a queenside fianchetto. 12...d4 13 eg2 wa5 (if 13...f5 then 14 c3 dxe2+ 15 we2 eb8 16 e5! is slightly better for White) 14 dc1 wa4 15 c3 wxd1 16 exd1 dc6 17 de2 e5 18 h3 ee6 led to equal chances in Balashov-Rashkovsky, USSR Ch 1981.

### 13 c3 eb7 14 wd2 d5?!

Quinteros allows White the chance to close the centre. This might well be a ploy to steer the game towards a draw but White has the edge due to his space advantage, which allows him to manoeuvre his pieces to superior squares. 14...f5 is an improvement.

### 15 e5 a5

Or 15...d4? 16 cxd4 cxd4 17 dxd4 when White takes advantage of the pin on the h1-a8 diagonal to win a pawn.

### 16 d4 we7 17 ef2 ea6 18 fel h5?!

An inaccuracy that is designed to counter g3-g4 but in the long-term it weakens the kingside pawn structure. 18...cxd4 is possible when 19 dxd4 (19 cxd4?! is met by 19...db4, intending ...d3, with an

edge) 19...♖fc8 20 ♜bd1 leaves roughly equal chances.

19 h3 ♖ac8 20 ♖g2 f5 21 ♜e3 ♜f7

The exchange in the centre, 21...cxd4, is slightly better for White due to his space advantage after 22 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 23 ♜xd4.

22 a3!

White takes steps to stop ...♟c6-b4. Instead, 22 dxc5? allows Black off the hook by relieving the tension; after 22...bxc5 23 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 24 ♙xc5 ♜xe5! is fine for Black.

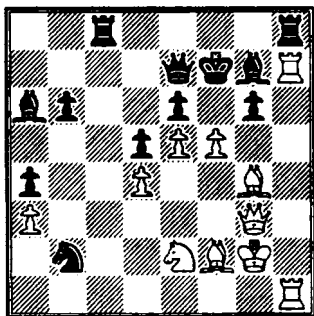
22...a4 23 g4 cxd4 24 cxd4! hxg4 25 hxg4 ♟a5 26 gxf5 ♜xf5

A compromise because the black defence has been steadily undermined. The natural 26...gxf5 runs into 27 ♙h5, intending ♙g6 and ♜h3.

27 ♙g4 ♜ff8 28 ♜h1 ♖f7 29 ♜h7 ♜h8 30 ♜bh1 ♟c4

If 30...♜xh7 then White can continue the attack by 31 ♜xh7 ♜h8 32 ♜h3 ♜xh7 33 ♜xh7 ♜e8 34 f5! exf5 35 ♜f4 fxg4 36 e6+ ♖f6 37 ♙h4+ ♖f5 38 ♜xg7.

31 ♜g3! ♜xb2 32 f5!



Once more the advance f4-f5 is the key to breaking up Black's defensive barrier.

32...♜xh7

If 32...exf5 then 33 ♙xf5 wins.

33 fxg6+ ♖g8

33...♖xg6 allows a nice finish after 34 ♙xe6+ ♜g5 35 ♜f4 mate.

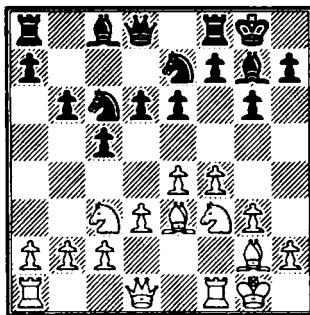
34 gxh7+ ♖h8 35 ♜f4 0-1

It is also possible to go against conventional wisdom and refrain from occupying the d4 square with the knight.

Donev-Zeller

Reutlingen 1997

1 e4 c5 2 ♜c3 ♜c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e6 7 ♜f3 ♜ge7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♙e3 b6



This sly little move has been growing in popularity but it can hardly be considered a refutation of the line. Black merely seeks to play solidly and undermine the pawn centre.

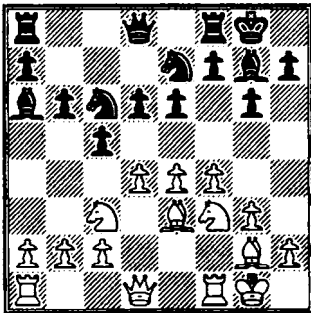
10 ♙f2!?

A good way to keep Black guessing. White has the option of opening up the game with d4 or launching a kingside pawn advance when the dark-squared bishop will emerge on h4. I also like the look of 10 d4 when play might continue:

a) 10...d5!? 11 exd5 (if 11 dxc5 then 11...d4 is a winning fork and 11 e5 ♜f5 12 ♙f2 ♙a6 13 ♜e1 cxd4 14 ♜xd4 ♜cxd4 15 ♙xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 ♜c7 is assessed in

Black's favour by Gallagher) 11...♟f5 12 ♙f2 ♟cxd4 13 ♟e5 exd5 (13...♙a6 14 ♟e1 ♟c8 15 dxe6 ♟xe6 16 ♟d5 ♙b7 17 c4!? {17 c3 ♙a8! 19 ♟d7! ♟e8! was fine for Black in Abramović-Razuvaev, Paris 1989} 17...♟fd4 18 ♙a4 a5 19 ♙d7 ♙xe5 20 ♟xe5 ♙xd5 21 ♙xd5 ♙c7 22 ♟ael ♟cd8 23 ♙e4 ♟fe8 24 h4 gave White a strong attack in Bastian-Loew, Binz 1995) 14 ♟xd5 ♙e6 15 c4 ♟c8 16 a4 ♟e8 17 ♟e1 ♙d6 18 ♟g4 ♙d7 19 ♟ge3 ♟cd8 20 ♟a3 ♙c6 21 ♟d3 ♟xe3 22 ♟dxe3 ♟xe3 23 ♟xe3 ♟e8 1/2-1/2 Rogulj-Wittmann, Austrian Team Ch 1996.

b) 10...♙a6 and now:



b1) 11 ♟e1 (I prefer to keep the rooks co-ordinated on the first rank) 11...♙c7 12 a4 ♟ad8 13 ♟b5 ♙xb5 14 axb5 ♟xd4 15 ♟xd4 cxd4 16 ♙xd4 e5 (16...♙xd4+ 17 ♙xd4 ♙xc2 18 ♟ec1 ♙e2 19 ♙f1 and the black queen is chased away before White takes on a7) 17 ♙c3 d5 18 ♙xe5 ♙c5+ 19 ♟h1 dxe4 20 ♙e2 f6 21 ♙c3 f5 22 ♙xg7 ♟xg7 23 ♟xa7 and White was a pawn up in Gonzalez-Vera, Ubeda 2001.

b2) 11 ♟f2 ♙c7 12 a4 ♟ad8 13 ♟b5 (there is a distinct echo in White's plan from the previous note) 13...♙xb5 14 axb5 ♟xd4 15

♟xd4 cxd4 16 ♙xd4 e5 17 ♙c3 exf4 18 ♙xg7 fxg3 19 hxg3 ♙xg7 20 ♙d4+ f6 21 c4 ♟f7 22 ♙h3 ♟c8 23 ♟h2 ♟g8 24 b4 h5 25 ♟fa2 ♙h8 26 ♟d2 ♙c7 27 ♟da2 ♙b8 28 ♟d2 ♙c7 1/2-1/2 Rogulj-Kengis, German Team Ch 1999.

10...♙b7 11 ♙d2 ♟c8 12 ♟ael ♙d7 13 g4

The centre is closed so White starts an attack on the wing—a typical theme in this opening.

13...f5!

Rather than allow White to have things go his own way, the text stops any ideas of speculatively sacrificing a pawn with f4-f5.

14 h3

Donev wishes to keep his kingside pawn mass intact in readiness for a timely exchange of pawns.

14...♟d4

14...fxe4!? is probably better, when 15 fxe4 fails to 15...♙xc3 16 ♙xc3 and 16...♙a6 targets the rook on f1 with advantage. Or 15 ♟xe4 (15 ♟xe4 is less spectacular and probably better after 15...♙xb2 16 c3 ♙a3 when Black's dark-squared bishop is well away from the kingside, making it easier for White to attack) 15...♟d4 16 ♟xd4 ♙xe4 17 dxe4 cxd4 18 ♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 19 ♙xd4 and White has some compensation for the exchange.

15 ♙h4 ♟ec6 16 ♟d1

The knight retreats to d1 so that if Black takes on f3 then the pawn on b2 is protected. Now White wants to play c3 to get rid of the imposing knight on d4.

16...♟ce8 17 c3 ♟xf3+ 18 ♙xf3 ♙h6 19 exf5 gxf5 20 g5

If 20 gxf5 then 20...♟xf5 21 ♙g4 ♟ff8 22 ♙g5 offers equal chances.

20...♙g7 21 ♙g2!

The queen and bishop combine well to exert pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal.

21...♖d8 22 ♖xb7 ♗xb7 23 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 24 ♗e2!

Donev signals the fact that he has pinpointed the e6 pawn as the weak link in Black's pawn structure.

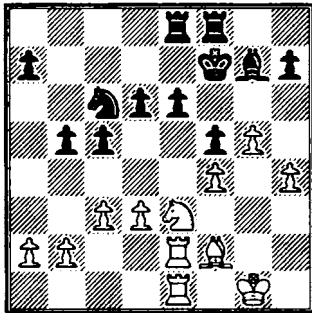
24...b5 25 ♖f1 ♖f7 26 ♖e3 ♖a5

Also possible:

a) 26...a5 27 ♖xf5 exf5 28 g6+ hxg6 29 ♗e7+ ♗xe7 30 ♗xe7+ ♖g8 31 ♗xb7 c4 32 ♗xb5 cxd3 33 ♗d5 when White is the firm favourite for victory.

b) 26...d5 27 ♖xd5! exd5 28 g6+ hxg6 29 ♗e7+ ♗xe7 30 ♗xe7+ ♖g8 31 ♗xb7 a6 32 ♗b6 and White will win a pawn and the game.

27 ♖f2 ♖c6 28 h4



28...h5?

28...♗g8 should be considered although White is still slightly better.

29 ♖xf5!

White spots a tactical chance and goes on the offensive.

29...♗d8

If 29...exf5 then 30 g6+ when it is clear to everyone why the pawn should have stayed on h7.

30 ♗xe6 ♖e5

30...♖e5 does not help the defence after 31 ♗e7+ ♖g6 32

♗xg7+ ♖xf5 33 fxe5 dxe5 34 ♖xc5 with an easy win.

31 ♗1xe5 ♖xe5

Or 31...dxe5 32 ♗xc6 exf4 33 ♖xc5 ♗h8 34 g6+ wins.

32 ♗f6+ 1-0

## Summary

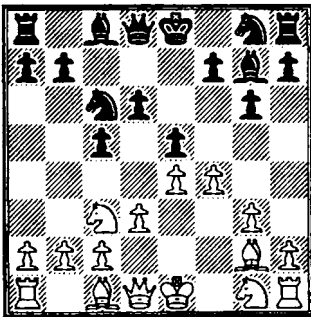
**Dovramadjiev-Semkov** is an example of how easy it is for Black to go wrong in the 10 e5 variation. Black prematurely takes back on e5 and is punished. An interesting example is **A.Martin-Britton**, where White installs a strong knight on e4 and manages to dictate play. The future of the main line is under inspection in the game **Stjzshkina-Polovodin** where White eventually comes out on top. Arguably, the best variation for Black is featured in **Spassky-Hjartarson** where Black enters the main line and tries 15...♗d6. White cannot dent the defence and the game is soon drawn. The search for alternatives, in order to avoid heavy theory, has seen Black try a variety of moves. A popular choice is 10...♖d7 and **Short-Rechlis** is an elite demonstration that as long as White avoids a few tricks he should be fine and it is Black who will soon go wrong. **Karpov-Quinteros** is a reminder that it is possible to play something other than 10 e5. It is a classic example of how to gradually improve White's position before breaking through on the kingside. Finally, **Donev-Zeller** is a demonstration of what to do if Black chooses to play 9...b6 rather than occupy the d4 square. 10 ♖f2 has been shown to be good in practice although 10 d4 is also a worthy choice.

# Main Line 6 f4 e5

A popular choice is 6...e5, which is the Botvinnik System for Black. This line is better known, with colours reversed, from the English Opening after 1 c4 g6 2 ♖c3 ♗g7 3 g3 e5 4 ♗g2 ♖c6 5 e4 d6. The question is whether White's extra move in the Closed Sicilian tips the balance in his favour? Certainly rigid play by Black will backfire due to the traditional advance f4-f5 which has added bite to this line and which we examine in various games. The system for Black appeals to those who want a more open game, especially when exchanges occur on f4.

## Krapivin-Morozov Pskov 1998

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e5



The starting point of the variation.

7 ♗h3 ♗ge7 8 0-0 0-0?

A common mistake because castling looks like a natural choice. It particularly trips up those who play the system as White in the English because, with the colours reversed, being a move down on normal lines does make a difference.

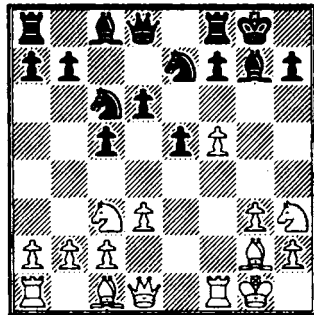
9 f5!

An excellent move that is the start of an impressive attack. The idea is based on exploiting the light-squares around the black king.

9...gxf5

It is quite normal for Black to accept the sacrifice partly because it is difficult to fathom the strength of the forthcoming onslaught. The alternative 9...f6 is examined in the next game.

10 exf5



10...♗xf5

Morozov grabs the pawn and waits for White to prove there is any compensation. Alternatives are:

a) 10... $\text{Qxf5?}$ ! 11  $\text{W}h5$  (this queen move heralds an attack with a winning reputation) 11... $\text{Qce7}$  (11... $\text{Qfd4}$  is well met by 12  $\text{Re4}$  f5 13  $\text{Rd5+}$   $\text{Ch8}$  14  $\text{Qg5}$  h6 15  $\text{Wg6}$ ! hgx5 16  $\text{W}h5$  mate or 11... $\text{Qcd4}$  when 12 g4 is no good due to 12... $\text{W}h4$ , but 12  $\text{Re4}$  maintains White's advantage) 12 g4  $\text{Qd4}$  13  $\text{Qg5}$  h6 14  $\text{Qxf7}$   $\text{We8}$  15  $\text{Qxh6+}$   $\text{Rxh6}$  16  $\text{Rxf8+}$   $\text{Wxf8}$  17  $\text{Rxh6}$   $\text{Wf7}$  18  $\text{Wxf7+}$   $\text{Cxf7}$  19 h3  $\text{Qxc2}$  20  $\text{Rf1+}$   $\text{Qe6}$  21  $\text{Qe4}$   $\text{Qg8}$  22  $\text{Qg5+}$  1-0 Mikule-Svub, Czech Team Ch 1997.

b) 10...f6 11  $\text{W}h5$  (11 g4 is also possible but I think the text is stronger) and now:

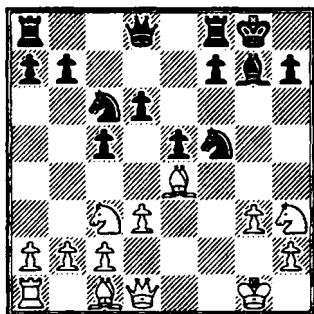
b1) 11...d5 12 g4  $\text{Qd4}$  13  $\text{Rf2}$  b5 14  $\text{Rh6}$   $\text{Rxh6}$  15  $\text{Wxh6}$  b4 16  $\text{Qg5}$ ! fxg5 17 f6  $\text{Qe6}$  (or 17... $\text{Qef5}$  18 exf5  $\text{Rxf6}$  19  $\text{Wxg5+}$   $\text{Ch8}$  20  $\text{Qxd5}$  is also winning) 18 fxe7  $\text{Wxe7}$  19  $\text{Qxd5}$   $\text{Wg7}$  20  $\text{Rxf8+}$   $\text{Qxf8}$  21  $\text{Qf6+}$   $\text{Ch8}$  22  $\text{Wxg7+}$   $\text{Cwg7}$  23  $\text{Qh5+}$  1-0 Nabiev-Tokarev, Russian Junior Ch 2000.

b2) 11... $\text{Qd4}$  12  $\text{Qd5}$   $\text{Qd7}$  (12... $\text{Qxc2}$  13  $\text{Qxg5}$ ! fxg5 14  $\text{Rxg5}$   $\text{Rf7}$  15  $\text{Qxe7+}$   $\text{Rxe7}$  16  $\text{Qd5+}$   $\text{Ch8}$  17 f6 and Black can resign) 13  $\text{Qg5}$  fxg5 14 f6  $\text{Qxd5}$  15  $\text{Qxd5+}$   $\text{Qe6}$  16 f7+! (an unexpected move that helps to create a mating net) 16... $\text{Ch8}$  17  $\text{Re4}$   $\text{Qf5}$  (17...h6 18  $\text{Wg6}$  wins) 18  $\text{Rxf5}$   $\text{Rxf5}$  19  $\text{Rxf5}$   $\text{Qd7}$  20 g4 e4 (Black is in big trouble and attempts to activate his bishop) 21 dxe4  $\text{Qd4+}$  22  $\text{Qg2}$   $\text{We6}$  23  $\text{Rxg5}$   $\text{Wxe4+}$  24  $\text{Ch3}$   $\text{Wxc2}$  25  $\text{Raf1}$   $\text{Wxb2}$  26  $\text{Rf6+}$  (26  $\text{Qe7}$ ! is a simple win) 26... $\text{Rxf6}$  27  $\text{Rxf6}$   $\text{We5}$  28 g5  $\text{Rad8}$  29  $\text{W}h6$   $\text{We3+}$  30  $\text{Rf3}$   $\text{Qd2}$  31  $\text{W}h5$   $\text{Qg7}$  32  $\text{Rg6+}$   $\text{Ch8}$  33  $\text{Rh6}$  1-0 F.Solomon-Wojtkiewicz, Philadelphia 1994.

11  $\text{Rxf5}$ !

Now the rook is sacrificed to accelerate the attack.

11... $\text{Qxf5}$  12  $\text{Re4}$



A few moves after 9 f5 and it is a lot clearer why White was happy to give up material to reach this position. The bishop on e4 radiates power on the b1-h7 diagonal, especially with  $\text{W}h5$  coming up next.

12... $\text{Qh6}$

The knight tries to block White's access to the weak pawn on h7. Other moves are not encouraging for Black:

a) 12... $\text{Qcd4}$  13  $\text{W}h5$   $\text{Wf6}$  14  $\text{Qd5}$   $\text{We6}$  15 c3  $\text{Wg6}$  16  $\text{Qd1}$   $\text{Qc6}$  17 g4 when White is clearly winning, Zhigalko-Noroozi, Oropesa del Mar 2000.

b) 12... $\text{Qfd4}$  13  $\text{W}h5$  f5 14  $\text{Qg5}$  (14  $\text{Qd5+}$  is even quicker: 14... $\text{Ch8}$  15  $\text{Qg5}$  h6 16  $\text{Wg6}$  hgx5 17  $\text{W}h5$  mate) 14... $\text{Rf6}$  15  $\text{Qd5+}$   $\text{Cf8}$  16  $\text{Qxh7+}$   $\text{Qe7}$  17  $\text{Qxf6}$   $\text{Wf8}$  18  $\text{Qh7}$  1-0 Bücker-Fabisch, Germany 1993.

c) 12... $\text{Qfe7}$  13  $\text{Rxh7+}$   $\text{Cxh7}$  14  $\text{W}h5+$   $\text{Qg8}$  15  $\text{Qg5}$   $\text{Re8}$  16  $\text{Wxf7+}$   $\text{Ch8}$  17  $\text{Qe6}$  wins.

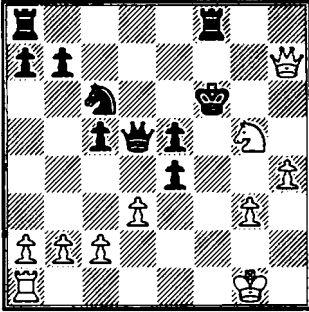
13  $\text{W}h5$  d5

The central pawn is given up in an effort to deflect White from the attack. 13... $\text{Wf6}$  runs into 14  $\text{Qd5}$   $\text{We6}$  15  $\text{Qg5}$   $\text{Wg4}$  16  $\text{Qf6+}$   $\text{Rxf6}$  17  $\text{Wxh6}$  and Black will be mated.

14 ♖xd5 f5 15 ♙xh6 fxe4 16 ♗xg7 ♜xg7 17 ♘g5

Black has to deal with the dual threats of ♖e6+ and ♗h7+.

17... ♗xd5 18 ♗xh7+ ♜f6 19 h4!



It is usually the quiet moves in combinational play that are difficult to foresee. In this case, Krapivin has enough time to secure his knight before bringing the queen's rook into the action.

19... ♘d4 20 ♙f1+ ♘f3+ 21 ♜g2 ♙h8 22 ♖xe4+ ♜e6 23 ♗g6+ ♜e7 24 ♙xf3 ♙hf8 25 ♗g5+ ♜e6 26 c4 1-0

Black resigned in view of 26... ♗c6 27 ♗g6+ ♜e7 28 ♗g7 and White wins a rook.

The mistaken 8...0-0 is often played and it pays to know how to take advantage of this error. In the next game I find a way to wreck Black's passive defence.

### Lane-Manet Fourmies 1995

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e5 7 ♘h3 ♘ge7

Other moves should not trouble White:

a) 7...h5!? 8 f5 ("If in doubt advance the f-pawn" could be a

slogan for Closed Sicilian specialists, although 8 ♘f2 h4 9 ♘d5 is a safe way of making slight but steady progress) 8...gxf5 9 0-0 f4 10 gxf4 ♙g4 11 ♗e1 ♘d4 12 ♗f2 ♗d7 13 ♘g5 f6 14 ♘f3 ♘e7 15 f5 (closing the kingside to confine the black pieces; anyway 15 fxe5 fails to make an impression against 15... ♙xf3! 16 ♙xf3 fxe5) 15... ♙xf3 16 ♙xf3 0-0-0 17 ♘d1 d5 18 c3 (or 18 ♙g2 dxe4 19 dxe4 h4 with equal chances) 18... ♘xf3+ 19 ♗xf3 c4 20 exd5 ½-½ El Debs-Matsuura, Sao Paulo 2000.

b) 7... ♘f6 and now:

b1) 8 0-0 ♙g4 9 ♗e1 ♘d4 10 fxe5 dxe5 (10... ♘xc2 11 ♗f2 ♘xa1 12 exf6 wins) 11 ♙g5 ♘xc2 12 ♗f2 ♗d4 13 ♙ac1 ♘b4 14 ♘b5 ♗xf2+ (the best chance of survival lay in 14... ♗d7 but after 15 ♙xf6 ♘xd3 16 ♙xg7 ♘xf2 17 ♘xf2 f5 18 ♙xh8 ♗xb5 19 ♙xe5 White wins) 15 ♘xf2 ♙e2 16 ♙fe1 ♙xd3 17 ♘c7+ ♘d7 18 ♘xa8 ♙a6 19 ♙ed1+ ♜c6 20 a3 ♘a2 21 ♙c2 1-0 Lyrberg-J.Bellin, Gausdal 1993.

b2) 8 f5 gxf5 9 ♙g5 h6 10 ♙h4 ♘e7 11 0-0 ♙g8 12 exf5 ♙xf5 (12... ♘xf5 13 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 14 ♘d5) 13 ♙xf6 (13 ♗f3!? is worthy of consideration) 13... ♙xf6 14 ♙xf5!? (14 ♗f3!? is interesting when 14... ♙h8 15 ♗xb7 is equal) 14... ♘xf5 15 ♗h5 ♘g7 16 ♗xh6 ♘e6 17 ♙xb7 ♙g7 18 ♗h5 (the intention is ♙f1 to put pressure on f7) 18... ♙b8 19 ♙c6+ ♜f8 20 ♙f1 f6 21 ♙d5 (the bishop is dominant on d5) 21... ♙h8 22 ♗f5 ♘d4 23 ♗g6 ♗e7 24 ♘g5 ♙xb2 25 ♘ce4 (White increases the pressure on the f-pawn) 25... ♙xc2 26 ♘h7+? ♙xh7 27 ♗xh7 ♜e8 and the black king escaped the mate threats in Neumeier-G.Timoshenko, Oberwart 1995, with the game being

eventually drawn. However, I think White has a big improvement with 26 ♖b1! when 26... ♖e8 (now there is no escape square on e8 for the king) 27 ♖h7+ ♖xh7 28 ♗xh7 wins.

**8 0-0 0-0?**

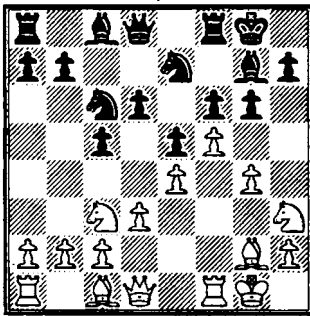
In my experience, a great many players will play this move rapidly, wrongly assuming both sides are merely completing their development.

**9 f5 f6**

Black decides to deal with the threat of f5-f6 by blocking the f6 square. This usually allows White to carry out a strong pawn storm on the kingside.

**10 g4**

White is already on top with a space advantage and an instant attack based on advancing the kingside pawns.



**10...g5?!**

Releasing the tension and allowing White a variety of ways to conduct the kingside attack. Now that the kingside is blocked, White can use the space advantage to manoeuvre his pieces in preparation for a breakthrough. Other moves:

a) 10... ♖d4 and now:

a1) 11 ♖e3 ♖d7 (11... ♖b8 12 ♗d2 b6 13 ♖f2 ♖b7 14 ♖af1 {White logically transfers his pieces

to the kingside} 14...d5 15 ♖xd4 cxd4 16 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 17 exd5 g5 18 ♖e2 ♖f7 19 ♗b4 ♖xd5 20 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 21 ♗b3 ♗xb3 22 axb3 ♖c8 23 ♖f2 and the knight heads for the strong outpost on e4, giving White an edge in the ending, Hug-Birboim, Caracas 1976) 12 ♖f2 ♖c6 (12...g5 blocks the kingside allowing White continuously to improve the position of his pieces on the kingside by 13 ♗d2 b5 14 ♖d5 b4 15 c3 bxc3 16 bxc3 ♖dc6 17 ♖h1 h6 18 ♖g3 ♖b8 19 h4 Karakas-Kowalska, Naleczow 1979) 13 ♖e2 d5 14 ♖g3 b6 15 h4 dxe4 16 ♖fxe4 gxf5 17 gxf5 ♖d5 18 ♖d2 ♖f4 (Black sacrifices a pawn to activate his pieces) 19 ♖xf4 exf4 20 ♖xf4 ♖h6 21 ♖g4+ ♖h8 22 c3 ♖b5 (22...♖e6 looks tricky but after 23 fxg6 f5 24 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 25 ♗e2 White is better) 23 ♗e2 when Black's temporary initiative has been quenched, leaving White with an extra pawn, Saravanan-Thipsay, Chalapatthi 2000.

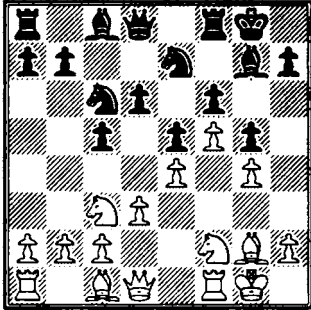
a2) 11 ♖f2 ♖f7 12 ♖e3 b6 13 ♗d2 ♖b7 14 ♖h1! (White has enough time for this nice manoeuvre, which brings the knight to g3) 14... ♗d7 15 ♖g3 ♖d8 16 ♖d5 gxf5 17 gxf5 ♖xd5 18 exd5 ♖dxf5? 19 ♖xf5! ♖xf5 20 ♖h3 and the pinned knight will soon be captured, with a clear advantage, Bucker-Illner, Nord Wittlich 1990.

b) 10... ♖d7 11 ♖e3 (another approach is 11 ♖f2 ♖h8 12 ♖e2 ♖e8 13 ♖g3 d5 14 h4 with better chances for White, Balashov-Illić, Kusadasi 1990) 11... ♗a5 12 a3 ♖ac8 13 ♖e2 (a common theme in this line is to transfer the queen's knight to g3) 13... ♖d4 14 ♖g3 c4 15 dxc4 ♖xc4 16 c3 ♖dc6 (16... ♖b5 17 a4 ♖c7 18 ♗xd6 ♖f7 19 b4 wins) 17 ♗xd6 ♖d8 18 ♗d3

♙e6 19 ♖e2 ♙f7 20 g5 gxf5 21  
gxf6 ♙xf6 22 ♘xf5 ♘xf5 23 ♜xf5  
♞d6 24 ♞af1 ♔g7 25 ♙h6+ 1-0  
Galarza-Minaya, Madrid 1999.

11 ♘f2

I moved the knight out of the way  
to permit the advance h2-h4.



11...♞b8

Black can do little on the kingside  
so chooses to advance his pawns on  
the opposite wing. A look at other  
games stemming from this position  
is not encouraging for Black:

a) 11...♙d7 12 h4 h6 13 ♘h3  
(now White always has the threat of  
multiple exchanges on g5)  
13...♘d4 14 a4 ♞c8 15 ♞f2 a6 16  
♘d5 ♘dc6 17 hxg5 hxg5 18 ♘e3  
b5 19 c3 ♙e8 (Black's passive posi-  
tion is a sure sign that he has prob-  
lems) 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖b3+ c4 22  
dxc4 ♘a5 23 ♖b4 ♘xc4 24 ♞a6  
♘c6 25 ♖b3 ♞f7 26 ♘xc4 bxc4 27  
♖xc4 and White is a pawn up with  
the advantage, Shchekachev-Hultin,  
Hallsberg 1991.

b) 11...a6 12 h4 h6 13 hxg5 (it is  
probably best to delay capturing on  
g5 so as to keep open his options)  
13...hxg5 14 ♘h3 ♖e8 15 ♘e2  
♙h6 16 ♘g3 b5 17 ♘h5 ♘d8 18  
♙e3 ♘ec6 19 ♖d2 ♖e7 20 ♘xg5

♙xg5?! (20...fxg5 is better when  
21 f6 ♖f7 22 ♙xg5 ♙xg5 23  
♖xg5+ ♔h7 24 ♖h4 ♔g8 25 ♖g5+  
gives White at least a draw) 21  
♙xg5 fxg5 22 f6 ♖e6 23 ♖xg5+  
♔f7 24 ♖g7+ ♔e8 25 ♖h7 ♖xg4  
26 ♘g7+ ♔d7 27 ♔h1 1-0 Jirovsky  
-Savickas, Duisburg 1992.

12 h4

I decided to put Black under im-  
mediate pressure by playing for an  
infiltration on the kingside. In retro-  
spect it might have been better to  
improve the position of White's  
pieces before sacrificing on g5. For  
instance: 12 ♙e3 b5 13 ♘e2 (as  
usual the queen's knight is better  
placed on the kingside) 13...b4 14  
♘g3 ♞b5 15 ♘h5 h6 16 h4 ♞f7 17  
♘h3 gxh4?! (in such a passive posi-  
tion Black is likely to go wrong and  
here the capture on h4 will allow  
White a timely g4-g5) 18 ♖e1 ♔f8  
19 ♖xh4 ♘g8 20 ♘g7 ♔xg7 21  
♖h5 ♘ce7 22 ♞f3 ♞a5 23 ♞af1  
♞xa2 24 g5! (at last White signals  
the attack) 24...hxg5 25 ♘xg5 fxg5  
26 f6+ ♞xf6 27 ♞xf6 ♘xf6 28  
♖xg5+ ♔f7 (28...♘g6 29 ♖h6+  
♔f7 30 ♖h7+ wins) 29 ♖xf6+ 1-0  
Collinson-Sakhatova, Oakham  
1993.

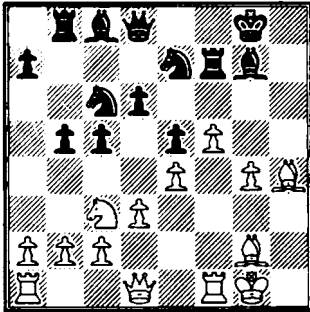
12...h6 13 ♘h3 b5 14 hxg5 hxg5  
15 ♘xg5!?

Such a capture on g5 is often  
delayed but during the game I could  
tell that my opponent feared the  
sacrifice. Indeed, there is no  
refutation and White is rewarded  
with a strong initiative.

15...fxg5 16 ♙xg5 ♞f7

If 16...♙f6 then 17 ♙xf6 ♞xf6  
18 g5 ♞f7 19 g6 ♘xg6 (otherwise  
20 ♖h5 is strong) 20 fxg6 ♞xf1+ 21  
♖xf1 gives White the advantage.

17 ♙h4



17... ♖f8

Manet makes it clear that he intends to counter-sacrifice material on f5. It is difficult to find a strong alternative, for instance: 17...b4 18 ♘d5 ♜d7 19 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 20 g5 ♘xf5 21 exf5 ♜xf5 22 ♙d5+ ♚f8 23 ♜h5 gives White a winning attack.

18 g5 ♙xf5 19 exf5 ♜xf5 20 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 21 ♙e4

The material balance is equal but I have excellent attacking chances based on bringing my queen to h5.

21... ♜f7 22 g6 ♜f4

22... ♘xg6? 23 ♙d5 pins the queen.

23 ♜h5 ♜h6

The alternative way of blocking the g-file, 23... ♙h6, fails to 24 ♘d5! and White wins.

24 ♜xh6 ♙xh6 25 ♘d5 ♙f8

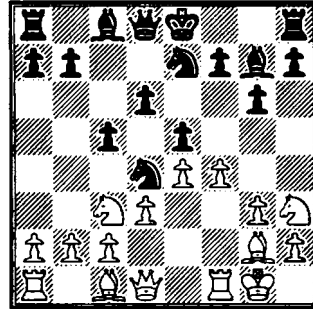
Black is completely tied up because 25... ♘d5 26 ♙xd5+ leaves the knight hanging on c6.

26 ♜f1 ♙c8 27 ♜f7 1-0.

The success of White's system has prompted Black players to analyse ways of increasing their control over the sensitive f5 square. However, in the next game, despite the inclusion of 8... ♘d4, White is still tempted to play f4-f5 and it works out well.

**Berg-De Firmian**  
Akureyri 1994

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 g3 ♘c6 4 ♙g2 g6 5 d3 ♙g7 6 f4 e5 7 ♘h3 ♘ge7 8 0-0 ♘d4



9 f5

A favourite move of Spassky's which should be fairly obvious to anyone who habitually plays this line with White. In return for the f-pawn, White will activate his pieces on the kingside and obtain good practical play. Less ambitious is the main alternative 9 ♙e3 when, after 9...0-0, play might continue 10 ♜d2, preparing the doubling of rooks on the f-file as part of the standard middlegame plan.

a) 10... ♙d7 11 ♜f2?! (in view of Black's play 11 ♜ae1!?, intending ♘d1 and c3, should be considered) 11... ♜c8 12 f5 (conceding that he made a mistake but 12 ♘g5 is roughly equal) 12... ♙xf5 13 ♙h6 f6 14 exf5 ♙xf5 15 ♙d5+ ♚h8 when Black can defend stoutly while maintaining his extra pawn, Lerch-Gofshtein, Cannes 1999.

b) 10... ♜b8 11 ♜f2 f6 12 ♜af1 ♙e6 13 ♘d5 ♙xd5 14 exd5 ♘ef5 15 g4 (if 15 fxe5 then 15... ♘xc2! is better for Black) 15... ♘xe3 16 ♜xe3 ♜d7 17 c3 ♘b5 18 f5 g5 19

♙e4 h6 20 ♖g2 a5 21 ♜f2 a4 22 a3 ♜f7 23 ♜h1 ♜c7 24 ♜g3 when the blocked position favours White, who will soon play h2-h4, Shaw-Sher, Hastings 1995/96.

9...gxf5 10 ♖h5

A look at the previous main games in this chapter would suggest that this is a strong move for White. The queen is transferred to the kingside as part of a lightning attack. Instead, 10 ♜g5 is a relatively recent twist to the line:

a) 10...h6 11 exf5!? (Previous analysis considered only 11 ♜f3) 11...hxg5 12 f6 ♙f8 13 fxe7 ♙xe7 14 ♜d5 f5 (14...♙e6 15 c3 ♜c6 16 ♖a4 ♜f8 17 ♙e3 ♜g7 18 d4 gave White decent chances against the vulnerable black king, Day-Smirin, Calgary 1996) 15 c3 ♜c6 16 ♖a4 ♙d7 17 ♙d2 left White struggling to justify the pawn deficit in Welling-Jirovsky, Liechtenstein 1999.

b) 10...h5!? 11 exf5 f6 12 ♜ge4 ♙xf5 13 ♖f2 ♖c8 14 h3 ♖d7 15 ♜h2 d5 16 ♜d2 ♙e6 when Black is a pawn up with few worries, although White held on to the draw in the game Day-Teplinsky, Calgary 1996.

10...h6

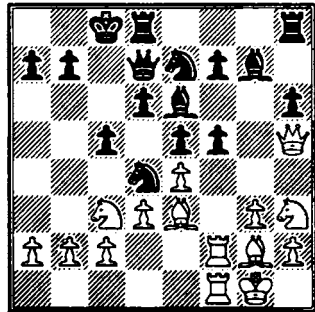
It is important to know what to do if Black decides to carry on grabbing material with 10...♜xc2, thereby taking the knight further away from the kingside. I think, before continuing with the attack, 11 ♖b1 is a possibility, when 11...f4 12 ♜g5 ♜g6 13 gxf4 exf4 14 ♙xf4 gives White good attacking chances. In some sources 11 ♜g5! is recommended, with the idea 11...♜g6 (11...♜xa1? 12 ♜xf7 wins or 11...♖f8 12 ♖hx7 ♙f6 13 ♖b1 is fine for White) 12 exf5

♜xa1 13 ♜xf7 ♜xf7 14 fxg6+ winning.

11 ♖f2 ♙e6

In the game Stjashkina-Aseev, St Petersburg 2000, the strong GM uncorked the novelty 11...♖b6 but was soon in trouble. There followed 12 exf5 ♙xf5 13 ♜d5! (a simple remedy against Black's queen sortie) 13...♙g6 (or 13...♜xd5 14 ♙xd5 ♖c7 15 ♖xf7 is winning) 14 ♜xb6 ♙xh5 15 ♜xa8 ♜d7 16 ♙xb7 d5 17 c3 ♜f3+ and now, instead of 18 ♜f1, White could have won quickly with 18 ♜g2 ♖b8 19 ♙a6 ♜e1+ 20 ♜f1.

12 ♙e3 ♖d7 13 ♖af1 0-0-0



It makes sense for Black to move the king away from the kingside attack.

14 ♜d5

Berg follows the accepted formula of offering to exchange knights and making way for c2-c3—all of which is designed to weaken the defence of the pawn on f5. White also has the pleasant choice of 14 ♙xd4, which has a good record. For instance: 14...cxd4 15 exf5 ♜xf5 (15...♙xf5 16 ♖xf5 ♜xf5 17 ♜d5 ♜xg3! 18 hxg3! ♖hf8 19 ♙e4 gives White compensation for the material based on domination of the white squares and restriction of Black's

pieces) 16 ♖d5 ♖e3 (16...♗xd5 looks like a viable alternative but 17 ♗xd5 ♖e3 18 ♜xf7 ♞hf8 19 ♚g6 wins) 17 ♜xf7! ♖xd5 18 ♜xd7 ♗xd7 19 ♚g6 (White is clearly on top thanks to his material advantage and the fact that Black's pieces lack harmony) 19...♞e7 20 ♖f2 ♖c7 21 ♗h3 d5 (or 21...♗xh3 22 ♖xh3 ♞d8 23 ♞f7 ♜xf7 24 ♚xf7 winning easily) 22 ♗xe6+ ♖xe6 23 ♖g4 ♖d8 24 b4 ♞he8 25 b5 e4 26 ♚f5+ 27 ♚xd5 and Black was on the verge of resigning in Sale-Psakhis, Portoroz 1995.

14...f6

The American creates an escape square for his light-squared bishop, which is an attempted improvement on the model game Spassky-Hort, Bugojno 1978, which went 14...fxe4 15 ♖xe7+ ♚xe7 16 ♗xd4 cxd4 17 ♜xf7! ♞e8 18 ♗xe4 ♞f8 (White had an easy win by following Spassky's example in the game, Neumeier-Pilaj, Austrian Team Ch 2000, where the end was swift after 18...♞d7 19 ♗f5 ♜xf7 20 ♗xe6+ ♚xe6 21 ♜xf7 ♞f8 22 ♜xg7 ♚f6 23 ♚g4+ ♖b8 24 ♖f4 exf4 25 ♚d7 1-0) 19 ♗f5! ♚xf7 20 ♚xf7 ♜xf7 21 ♗xe6+ ♞fd7 22 ♞f7 (White steers the game towards an ending where he has a 'good knight' versus 'bad bishop') 22...♖c7 23 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 24 ♜xd7+ ♖xd7 25 ♖g2 ♖e6 26 ♖f3 d5 27 ♖g4 ♖f6 28 ♖h5 ♗f8 29 ♖gl b5 30 ♖e2 a5 31 g4 a4 32 h4 b4 33 b3 a3 34 ♖g3 e4 35 g5+ hxg5 36 hxg5+ ♖e6 37 ♖g4 ♗g7? 38 ♖h5 ♗f8 39 g6 e3 40 ♖f3 ♖f5 41 g7 1-0.

15 ♖xe7+ ♚xe7 16 exf5 ♗f7

16...♗xa2? is made to look silly after 17 b3, trapping the bishop.

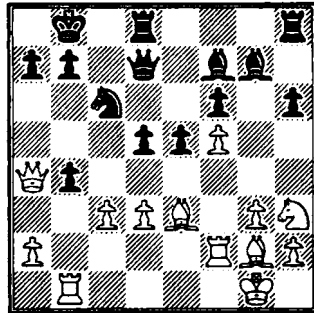
17 ♚d1

With its job done on the kingside White gets ready to give the queen an attacking role on the other flank after c2-c3 and ♚d1-a4.

17...d5 18 c3

At last the knight on d4 is obliged to leave its central outpost and White can get on with the job of pursuing the black king. 18 b4!? is also worth investigating, to speed up the attack. For example 18...cxb4 19 ♗xd4 exd4 20 ♚g4 ♗f8 21 ♚xd4 ♖b8 22 ♞b1 with the better chances.

18...♖c6 19 ♚a4 ♖b8 20 b4 cxb4 21 ♞b1 ♚d7



22 ♜xb4

The right way to keep the initiative. The rook cannot be captured as the knight on c6 is tied to the defence of a7. On the other hand, 22 cxb4 d4 23 ♗c1 ♖e7 24 ♚xd7 ♜xd7 would give Black a superior ending.

22...♚c7

22...♖xb4 runs into 23 ♚xa7+, which demolishes the pawn shield and gives White a winning position after 23...♖c8 24 ♚a8+ ♖c7 25 ♚a5+ ♖c8 26 cxb4 (the rook on f2 is heading for the c-file) 26...♚c6 27 b5 and Black will give up.

23 ♞b2 ♖xb4

De Firmian must accept the dire consequences of allowing the white queen to invade his camp, otherwise the threat 25 ♖xb7+ ♚xb7 26 ♜xb7+ ♜xb7 27 c4 is very strong.

24 ♚xa7+ ♜c8 25 ♜xb4 ♞d6 26 ♜b6

White is busy cutting down the number of escape squares available to the king.

26... ♚b8 27 ♚a5 ♜f8 28 c4 dxc4 29 ♜f2 ♞h7

29... ♞d7 30 ♜b5 ♜e7 31 dxc4 is good for White.

30 ♜a7

Berg could have won quickly with 30 ♚c5+ ♜d7 31 ♚b5+ ♜e7 32 ♜c5.

30... ♞a6 31 ♚xa6! ♜xb4 32 ♚b6 ♚d6

32... ♚a8 solves the immediate problem but the queen would look a sorry sight and could only look on helplessly while Black is slowly crushed.

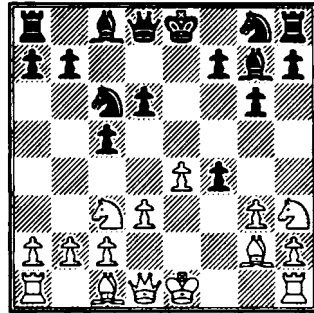
33 ♚xb7+ ♜d8 34 ♜e4 ♚d7 35 ♚b8+ ♚c8 36 ♜b6+ ♜d7 37 ♜xf6+ ♜e7 1-0

After suffering a number of stunning defeats, it is hardly surprising that Black has turned to other moves to combat White's system. A good choice is 7...exf4 and the next game looks at how Black copes with 8 ♜xf4, which prepares to install a knight on d5.

### Spassky-Sax Reykjavik 1988

1 e4 c5 2 ♜c3 ♜c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♜g2 ♜g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e5 7 ♜h3 exf4

This is probably the best way for Black to avoid a future f4-f5.



8 ♜xf4

Spassky takes with the knight, although there is some debate about how best to recapture the pawn. It is clear that White dominates the d5 square and can occupy it with one of his knights; also the semi-open f-file will be available to the king's rook after castling. But Black too has some plus points in his strong bishop on g7 and the fact that the d5 square can be covered by ...♜ge7 with a subsequent fianchetto of the queen's bishop. The alternative recapture, 8 ♜xf4, is discussed in the next illustrative game while 8 gxf4? can be dismissed due to 8... ♜xh3 9 ♜xh3 ♚h4+ and Black wins a piece.

8... ♜ge7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♜e3

Spassky sensibly gets on with developing his pieces. The relative lack of success for White in the line has led to a variety of moves being tried at this juncture. For instance:

a) 10 g4! (nobody has dared to repeat this idea which involves a weakening of the kingside pawn structure) 10...h6 (perhaps 10...♜e5!? should be considered) 11 h3 ♞b8 12 ♜e3 b5 13 ♞b1 b4 14 ♜cd5 ♜xd5 15 ♜xd5 ♜e6 16 ♚d2 and White had a slight initiative in Sale-Teofilović, Croatian Team Ch 1994.

b) 10  $\text{Qcd5}$  (10  $\text{Qfd5}$  transposes after 10... $\text{Qxd5}$  11  $\text{Qxd5}$ ) 10... $\text{Qxd5}$  11  $\text{Qxd5}$   $\text{e6}$  12  $\text{Qf4}$   $\text{d7}$  13  $\text{c3}$   $\text{b5}$  14  $\text{e3}$   $\text{d5}$  15  $\text{h3}$   $\text{Nb8}$  and now:

b1) 16  $\text{b3}$   $\text{b4}$  17  $\text{d4}$   $\text{Qc6}$  18  $\text{Nc1}$   $\text{Bxc3}$  19  $\text{dxc5}$   $\text{Wa5}$  20  $\text{Wxd6}$   $\text{Nfd8}$  21  $\text{Qd5}$  gave White the advantage in Bastian-Schuh, German Team Ch 1985.

b2) 16  $\text{Nf2}$   $\text{b4}$  17  $\text{c4?!}$  (a compromise that surrenders the  $\text{d4}$  square to Black) 17... $\text{a5}$  18  $\text{b3}$   $\text{Qc6}$  19  $\text{Nb1}$   $\text{e6}$  20  $\text{Qe2}$   $\text{Wb6}$  21  $\text{Wd2}$   $\text{a4!}$  (the closed nature of the position allows Black to increase the pressure on the queenside without worrying about kingside play) 22  $\text{Nd1}$   $\text{axb3}$  23  $\text{axb3}$   $\text{Qd4}$  and Black had the better chances, Donev-Spiridonov, Polandsk 1984.

c) 10  $\text{Wh1}$   $\text{d5}$  11  $\text{e3}$   $\text{b5}$  12  $\text{a3}$  (12  $\text{Qxb5}$   $\text{Nb8}$  allows Black to capture on  $\text{b2}$ , while 13  $\text{Qxa7?}$   $\text{e4}$  14  $\text{Wd2}$   $\text{Wb6}$  traps the white knight) 12... $\text{Nb8}$  13  $\text{Wd2}$   $\text{a5}$  14  $\text{h3}$   $\text{b4}$  15  $\text{axb4}$   $\text{axb4}$  16  $\text{Qce2}$   $\text{e7}$  17  $\text{b3}$   $\text{Na8}$  with equal chances, Roos-Spiridonov, French Team Ch 1997.

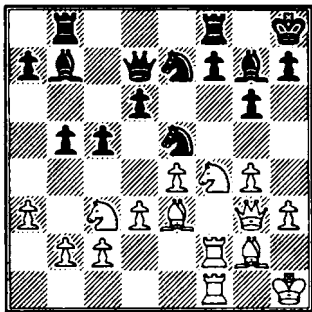
10... $\text{Nb8}$  11  $\text{a3}$

In the game Spassky-Franco, Buenos Aires 1979, White tried 11  $\text{Wd2}$  when Black carried on with the usual queenside pawn expansion. There followed 11... $\text{b5}$  12  $\text{a3}$   $\text{a5}$  13  $\text{Nab1}$  (13  $\text{h3}$   $\text{b4}$  14  $\text{axb4}$   $\text{axb4}$  15  $\text{Qd1}$   $\text{Qd4}$   $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  Balashov-Kharlov, Tomsk 2001) 13... $\text{b4}$  14  $\text{Qcd5}$   $\text{Qxd5}$  15  $\text{Qxd5}$   $\text{e6}$  16  $\text{Qf4}$   $\text{Qd7}$  17  $\text{c3}$  with roughly equal chances.

11... $\text{Qe5}$

The fact that there is no enemy pawn on  $\text{f4}$  means that the  $\text{e5}$  square is a perfect outpost for the queen's knight.

12  $\text{Wh1}$   $\text{b6}$  13  $\text{We2}$   $\text{e7}$  14  $\text{g4}$   $\text{Q7c6}$  15  $\text{h3}$   $\text{Wd7}$  16  $\text{Wf2}$   $\text{Qe7}$  17  $\text{Wg3}$   $\text{Wh8}$  18  $\text{Nf2}$   $\text{b5}$  19  $\text{Naf1}$



Spassky has shifted his pieces to the kingside in preparation for an attack. However, if Black is careful it is not obvious how White can break through.

19... $\text{a5}$  20  $\text{e1}$   $\text{b4}$  21  $\text{axb4}$   $\text{axb4}$  22  $\text{Qcd5}$

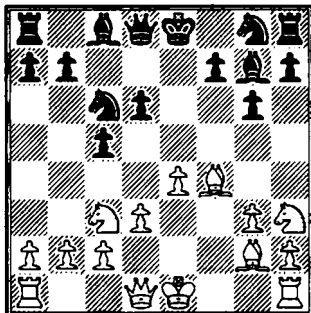
22  $\text{Qd1}$  has been suggested as a possible improvement but 22... $\text{Na8}$ , intending ... $\text{Na1}$ , is at least equal.

22... $\text{Qxd5}$  23  $\text{exd5}$   $\text{Nfe8}$  24  $\text{e4}$   $\text{b3}$  25  $\text{c3}$   $\text{c4}$  26  $\text{dxc4}$   $\text{Qxc4}$  27  $\text{e2}$   $\text{e6}$  28  $\text{Nd1}$   $\text{Ne7}$   $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

The next encounter looks at 8  $\text{e4}$ .

A.Gurevich-Duchov  
Russian Team Ch 1993

1  $\text{e4}$   $\text{c5}$  2  $\text{Qc3}$   $\text{Qc6}$  3  $\text{g3}$   $\text{g6}$  4  $\text{e2}$   $\text{e7}$  5  $\text{d3}$   $\text{d6}$  6  $\text{f4}$   $\text{e5}$  7  $\text{Wh3}$   $\text{exf4}$  8  $\text{exf4}$



The advantage of taking on f4 with the bishop is that White is presented with the simple plan of ♖d2 and ♗h6, exchanging off Black's key defensive bishop on g7.

8...♗e7 9 0-0 h6

Black is wary of allowing White to exchange bishops by ♗h6 and puts a stop to it. Not everyone thinks that this is so critical and 9...0-0 is also seen. After 10 ♖d2 play might continue:

a) 10...♗e5 11 ♗h6 ♗7c6 (11 ♗f2 ♗e6 is supposed to be equal but 12 h4, getting ready to open the h-file for the king's rook, might give Black a fright) 12 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 13 ♗f4 ♗d4 14 ♗ce2 ♗xe2+ 15 ♖xe2 ♗g4 16 ♖d2 ♗c6 17 ♗d5 f6 18 ♖f2, intending to double rooks on the kingside, gave White an edge in Schlesinger-Schuster, Griesheim 2000.

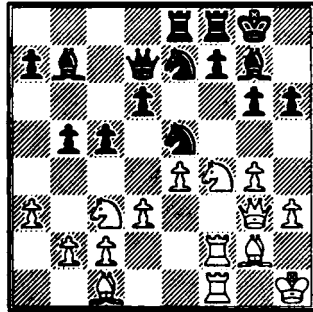
b) 10...b6 11 ♗h6 ♗d4 12 ♖f2 (the middlegame plan of doubling rooks is a natural choice for anyone who regularly plays this line) 12...♗b7 13 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 14 ♗f4 ♗e6 15 ♖af1 ♗xf4 16 ♖xf4 ♖d7 17 ♗h3! ♖e8 (17...♖xh3 runs into 18 ♖h4, intending ♖h6+) 18 ♗e6! fxe6 19 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 20 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 21 ♗b5 d5 22 ♖g5 ♗c6 23 exd5 exd5 24 ♖xd5 ♖f5 25 ♖g2 ♖f6 26 ♗c7 ♖f7 27 ♗e8+ 1-0 as played in Shchekachev-Mezentsev, Russian Ch 1992.

c) 10...♗xh3?! (Black gains little from this exchange but it does give White a strong light-squared bishop) 11 ♗xh3 a6 12 ♗h6 b5 13 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 14 ♖f4 (as usual in this line White is able to increase his attack by doubling rooks on the semi-open f-file) 14...b4 15 ♖h4 h5 16 ♗e2 ♗g8 17 ♖f1 ♗h6 18 ♗f4 ♖h8 19 ♗d5 ♗e7 20 ♗f6 ♗eg8 21 ♖hf4 allowed White to exert strong

pressure in Donev-Herzog, Bad Ragaz 1992.

10 ♖d2

A logical idea to prevent Black from castling kingside by targeting the h6 pawn. Spassky-Portisch, Candidates, Geneva 1977, saw White takes steps to curb a queenside advance with 10 ♖b1 before gradually improving the pieces on the kingside: 10...0-0 11 a3 (in preparation for ...b7-b5) 11...♗e6 12 ♗e3 ♗e5 13 ♗f4 ♗d7 14 ♗h1 ♖c8 15 ♖d2 ♗h7 16 h3 ♗c6 17 g4 ♖d7 18 ♖f2 b6 (18...b5 is well met by Forintos' suggestion of 19 b4) 19 ♖bf1 ♗b7 20 ♖e2 ♖ce8 21 ♗c1 ♗g8 22 ♖e3 b5 23 ♖g3 (one should note the similarity of this position with that after White's 19th move in the previous main game)



23...b4?! (23...a5!? maintains the tension by not weakening Black's queenside pawn structure) 24 axb4 cxb4 25 ♗d1 d5 26 d4 ♗5c6 27 exd5 ♗xd4 28 c4 bxc3 29 bxc3 ♗b3 30 ♗a3 ♖c8 31 c4 ♗a5 32 ♖e2 ♖fe8 33 ♖fe1 ♗f8 34 ♗h5 ♗xd5 35 cxd5 gxh5 36 gxh5+ ♗g7 37 ♗b2 f6 38 ♖xf6 ♖xe2 39 ♖xe2 ♖f7 40 ♗e6 1-0.

10...g5

Black compromises his pawn structure to deal with the nuisance of the attack on the h6 pawn.

Other moves:

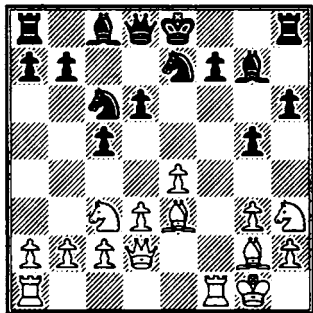
a) 10...♖d4 (the problem of placing the knight on d4 is that it can be relatively easily ousted by c2-c3) 11 ♖d5 ♗g4 12 ♖ael ♗e6 13 c3 ♖dc6 14 ♗e3 ♖e5 15 ♖hf4 ♗d7 16 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 17 ♖d5 ♗d8 18 ♗f4 when the threat of d3-d4 gave White an edge in Nabiev-Bolschakov, Moscow 2000.

b) 10...♗e6 11 a3 (a waiting move that puts Black off from advancing the queenside pawns) 11...♗d7 12 ♖f2 g5 13 ♗e3 ♗e5 14 ♖ael ♖d4 15 ♖d5 ♗xd5 16 exd5 ♗a4 17 b3 (17 c3 looks interesting when 17...♖c2 18 ♗d1 b5 19 ♖e2 ♖xe3 20 ♗xa4 bxa4 21 ♖xe3 favours White) 17...♗d7 18 ♗d1 ♖df5 19 ♗xc5! ♗c7 (19...♗xg3 seems to win a pawn back but 20 ♖e4! shortens the game after 20...♗e5 21 ♖xf5 ♗xf5 {21...♖xf5 22 ♖f6+ wins the queen} 22 ♖xd6+ ♗xd6 23 ♗xd6 and White wins) 20 ♗b4 and White had an extra pawn in Medina Garcia-Pavlov, Torremolinos 1977.

c) 10...♖b8 (it makes sense for Black to distract White from his kingside ambitions by preparing an advance of the queenside pawns) 11 ♖h1 b5 12 a3 g5 13 ♗e3 a5 14 ♖ael b4 15 axb4 axb4 16 ♖d1 ♗e6 17 ♖g1 ♖e5 18 ♖f3 with equal chances, Medina Garcia-Gheorghiu, Torremolinos 1976.

d) 10...♖e5 11 ♖h1 ♗e6 12 ♖ael ♗d7 13 ♖f2 g5 14 ♗e3 b5 (as usual, Black creates queenside play by pushing the b-pawn) 15 b3 (perhaps 15 a3!? should be considered) 15...b4 16 ♖e2 ♖7c6 17 d4 cxd4 18 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 19 ♗xd4 ♖c8 20 ♖d1 0-0 21 ♖e3 a5 22 ♖e2 ♗b5 ½-½ Roos-Sindik, Kecskemet 1979.

11 ♗e3



### 11...♗e6

Another idea for Black is to get the king into safety by 11...0-0 and then decide how to respond to White's set-up. 12 ♖f2 (better than 12 ♖h1 when Black had no problems after 12...♖e5 13 ♖f2 ♗e6 14 a3 ♖c8 15 ♖d5 f5, Mihalincić-Lakos, Croatian Team Ch 2000) 12...♖d4 13 g4 (if White is given enough time he will exploit the vacant g3 square by the manoeuvre ♖h1-g3) 13...♗e6 14 h3 d5 15 exd5 ♖xd5 16 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 17 ♖e4 b6 18 c3 ♖c6 19 ♖f5 (the threat is 20 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 21 ♖f6+ winning) 19...♗e6 20 ♖f2 ♖e5 21 ♖d1 ♗e7 22 ♖g3 ♖ad8 23 ♗e4 ♖xd3 24 ♗xd3 c4 25 ♗d4 cxd3 26 ♗xd3 ♗xd4 27 cxd4 ♗d7?! 28 ♖f6 ♗e7 29 ♖df1 ♗d7 30 ♖d1 ♗e7 31 ♖h5 ♖d5 32 ♖xh6 f5 33 ♖e1 ♖d6 34 d5 led to victory in S.Pedersen-J.Kristiansen, Danish Team Ch 1999. Instead, 11...♖e5 can be met by 12 ♖f2 0-0 13 h4 with roughly equal chances.

12 ♖f2 ♖g6 13 ♖ael 0-0 14 ♖e2 14 ♖d5 is also possible.

### 14...♖ge5

If 14...♗xb2 then 15 ♖b1 ♗g7 16 ♖xb7 restores the material balance.

### 15 b3 ♗d7 16 c3

White prepares to kick away the e5 knight with d3-d4.

16...♖g6 17 d4 cxd4 18 cxd4 d5  
19 e5

An immediate 19 h4 is also possible and after 19...gxh4 20 ♖xh6 h3 21 ♙f3 dxe4 22 ♙xe4 ♖ad8 Black has pressure on d4, thereby reducing White's advantage to a minimum.

19...♖ge7

19...f6!? is a sterner defence although 20 ♖d3 offers White some promising chances.

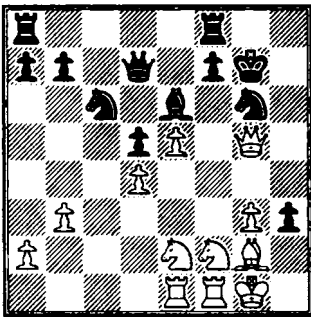
20 h4 gxh4 21 ♖xh6 h3 22 ♖xg7

Also good is 22 ♖xh3 when play might continue 22...♙xh3 23 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 24 ♖g5+ ♖g6 25 ♖f4 ♖d8 26 ♖h5+ ♖h7 27 ♖f6+ ♖g7 28 ♖xh3 ♖xd4 29 ♖g2 winning.

22...♖xg7

Or 22...hxg2 allows White to give away pieces and win in style with 23 ♙f6 gxf1=♖+ 24 ♖xf1 ♖f5 25 ♖g5+ ♖h7 26 ♖g2 ♖e3+ 27 ♖h2 ♖f5 28 ♖h1 ♖cxd4 29 ♖g2+ ♖h6 30 ♖xh6 mate.

23 ♖g5+ ♖g6



24 ♖f4?

In an effort to force checkmate, White tries to be too clever. A better idea is to transpose back into the note to White's 22nd move. For instance: 24 ♖xh3 ♙xh3 25 ♖f4 ♖d8 26 ♖h5+ ♖h7 27 ♖f6+ ♖g7 28 ♖xh3 ♖xd4 29 ♖g2 with a clear advantage.

24...h2+

Duchov assumes that it is a lost cause and allows his position to fall apart without a fight. It would be interesting to see what White had planned against 24...hxg2! when Black can hope to stay alive after 25 ♖h5+ ♖h7 26 ♖f6+ ♖g7 27 ♖xd7 gxf1=♖+ 28 ♖xf1 ♖xd7. The game concluded: 25 ♖h1 ♖e7 26 ♖h5+ ♖h7 27 ♖f6+ ♖g7 28 ♖h5+ White repeats moves to save time on the clock. 28...♖h7 29 ♖f6+ ♖g7 30 ♖d3 ♖h8 31 ♖f4 ♖ad8 31...♖h6 does not help Black after 32 ♖c1, intending ♖xc6 to eliminate the defender of the black queen and follow up with ♖fh5+, 32...♖d8 33 ♖4h5+ ♖xh5 34 ♖xh5+ ♖h7 35 ♖f6. 32 ♖6h5+ ♖g8 33 ♖f6+ ♖g7 34 ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 35 ♖h5+ ♖xh5 36 ♖xh5 ♖xd4 37 ♖g5 37 ♖f6!? makes it even easier for White: 37...♖e8 38 ♖e1 ♖d7 39 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 40 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 41 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 42 ♖h7+ ♖e6 43 ♖xg6+ ♖xe5 44 ♖g7+ ♖d6 45 ♖xb7 wins. 37...♖d7 38 ♖f6 ♖e8 39 ♖h3 ♖e7 40 ♖d6 ♖c6 41 ♖f6+ ♖h6 42 ♖h4+ 42 e6! finishes off the opponent. 42...♖g7 43 ♖f6+ ♖h6 44 ♖xd5 Once again 44 e6 is the shorter path; then 44...♖h8 45 ♖xh8+ ♖xh8 46 ♖xh2 wins. 44...♖xe5 45 ♖dx5 ♖cx5 46 ♖e4 Threatening mate with 47 ♖h4. 46...♖c6 47 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 48 ♖xh2 ♖g5 49 ♖g2 ♖ge5 50 ♖f4 f5 51 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 52 ♖g2 a6 53 ♖f3 ♖f6 54 ♖e3 ♖e5 55 ♖h4 b6 56 ♖h5 ♖e7 57 g4 a5 58 ♖d3 1-0

Are there any opening tricks if Black refrains from developing the kingside? Judging by this masterful display by Short, the answer is yes. It is worth noting that Short prefers the flexible approach with 7 ♖f3.

### Short-Nataf Istanbul Olympiad 2000

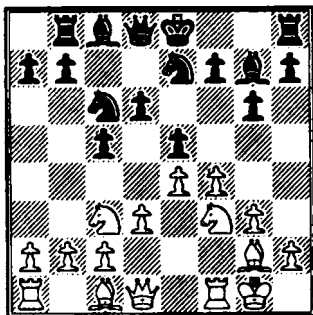
1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e5 7 ♘f3

One has to take notice when a former world title challenger chooses to employ this particular system. The knight on f3 has the merit of being more centrally placed, which gives White extra possibilities.

7...♙b8?!

After the game Nigel said that an early ...e5 and ...♙b8 do not mix well: "a bit like coca-cola and champagne." The motivation behind the rook move is logical enough: Black wants to advance the b-pawn while keeping his options open by delaying castling. In the past Black has frequently played this move and usually got away with it—even though it seems to be flawed. The original move-order was 1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 ♙b8 6 f4 d6 7 ♘f3 e5 but to make it more in keeping with the chapter 1 have slightly changed it.

8 0-0 ♘ge7



9 f5!

Short spots the chance to make the classic f4-f5 advance. The tempo spent on the extra rook move means that Black is not so well

developed on the kingside which allows White more attacking chances.

Other moves do not impress:

a) 9 ♘h4 (White chooses a slow way to organise the f4-f5 advance) 9...♘d4 (Or 9...f5 10 exf5 ♘xf5 11 ♘xf5 ♙xf5 12 fxe5 ♙xe5?! 13 ♙xf5! gx5?! {13...♙xc3 14 ♙f1 gives White an edge}) 14 ♙h5+ (wins) 10 fxe5 dxe5 11 ♙g5 ♙d6 12 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 13 ♘d5 ♙d6 14 c3 ♘c6 15 a3 0-0 16 b4 ♘e7 (the chances are roughly equal but now White plays riskily on the queenside) 17 ♙a4 a6 18 ♙a5?! (the queen is misplaced on the edge of the board) 18...♘xd5 19 exd5 b5 20 bxc5 ♙xc5+ 21 ♙h1 ♙b7 22 c4 e4! 23 ♙ac1 ♙h6 and Black had a clear advantage in Turner-Tkachiev, Oakham 1994.

b) 9 ♙e3 ♘d4 10 ♙h1 0-0 11 ♙d2 b5 12 a3 a5 13 ♙g1!? (13 ♙ae1 looks consistent although 13...b4 14 axb4 axb4 15 ♘d1 b3! is slightly better for Black) 13...exf4 14 gxf4 b4 15 axb4 axb4 16 ♘d1 ♙c7 with equal chances, Thorhallsson-Arnason, Icelandic Ch 1989.

9...gxf5 10 ♘h4 ♘d4

Continuing his exchanging policy by 10...fxe4 would merely open the f-file for White's king's rook. For instance: 11 ♙h5 ♙e6 12 ♘xe4 h6 13 ♙h3! ♙xh3 (13...♙d7 14 ♙xe6 ♙xe6 15 ♙xf7!) 14 ♙xf7 ♙g4 15 ♙xe7++ ♙xe7 16 ♙xg4 is winning.

11 exf5 f6

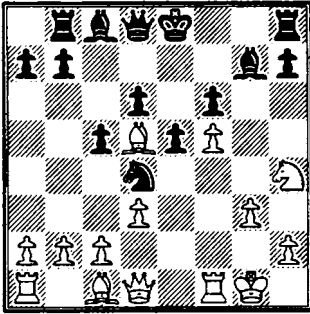
11...♘exf5? runs into 12 ♙h5 and Black will lose material.

12 ♘d5 ♘xd5

A sad necessity for Black who will now have problems castling. Indeed, he would like to play 12...0-0 here, but the strength of White's position is revealed upon

13 ♖xe7+ ♜xe7 14 c3 ♘c6 15 ♜b3+ (15 ♘g6 is a flashy win) 15...♙h8 16 ♖xc6 and the b-pawn is pinned, leaving White with an extra piece.

13 ♖xd5



The bishop on d5 is a monster that prevents castling and ensures that the black king remains in the centre of the board. Now Short has the immediate threat of ♜h5+ and a longer-term aim of opening the position and getting at the hapless king. Nataf tries to hold on but it is a difficult task when he has so little room to manoeuvre and his king prevents the co-ordination of his rooks.

13...♜e7 14 a4 ♖d7 15 c3

A typical idea which forces the knight to retreat and prepares d3-d4.

15...♘c6 16 ♖e3 ♘d8 17 d4 ♘f7 18 dxc5 dxc5 19 ♜b3 b6

With his knight manoeuvre, Nataf has managed to block the a2-g8 diagonal but still cannot castle since this would be destroyed by 20 ♘g6! when 20...hxg6 21 fxg6 ♖e8 22 ♜d1 intends 23 ♜h5 and mate.

20 ♖ad1 ♖d8

Of course, Black has to defend against the threat 21 ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 22 ♜xf7+ ♙xf7 23 ♖xd7+.

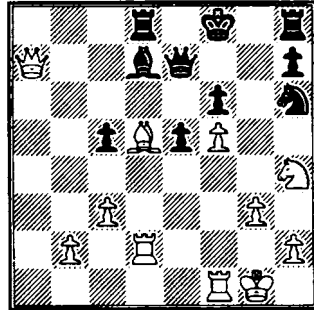
21 ♖d2 ♙f8 22 a5

Short shows his class. Having tied up Black on the kingside he now shifts his attention to undermining the other flank.

22...♖h6

A desperate pawn sacrifice to stir up complications. However, this is hardly surprising considering that that the obvious 22...b5? fails to 23 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 24 ♖xc5+ ♙g8 25 ♜xf7+ ♙xf7 26 ♖ad1 ♙e7 27 ♖xa7 and Black can resign.

23 ♖xh6+ ♘h6 24 axb6 axb6 25 ♜xb6 ♙g7 26 ♜a7 ♙f8



27 ♖e4?!

Short later pointed out that the simplest win is 27 ♖e6!, steering the game towards a winning ending. For example: 27...♖e8 28 ♜xe7+ ♙xe7 29 ♖xd8 ♙xd8 30 ♖al ♙c7 31 ♖a8 and White has a grip on the black pieces and is a pawn up. The text is also sufficient to win but the task takes some time. The game concluded: 27...♘f7 28 ♖fd1 ♖e8 29 ♜xe7+ ♙xe7 30 ♖xd8 ♘xd8 31 ♘g2 ♖a4 32 ♖d2 ♘f7 33 ♘e3 ♘d6 34 ♘d5+ ♙f7 35 ♘xf6 ♘c4 36 ♖d5+ ♙xf6 37 ♖xc4 ♙xf5 38 ♙f2 h5 39 b3 ♖c6 40 ♖d6 ♖h1 41 h3 ♖f8 42 ♙e3 ♙g5 43 h4+ ♙g4 44 ♖g6+ ♙h3 45 ♖e2 ♖b8 46 ♖d1 ♖d5 47 c4 ♖f7 48 ♖g5 ♖b4 49 ♙e4 ♖e6 50 ♖xh5 ♙xg3 51 ♙xe5 ♖xc4 52 ♖g5+ ♙h3 53 bxc4 ♖xc4 54 h5 ♙h4 55 ♖g1 1-0

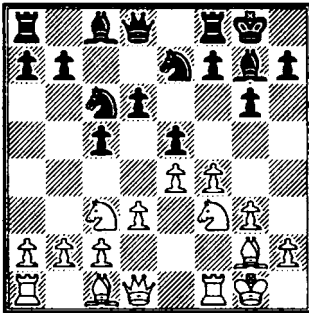
With a knight on f3, the assumption is that the attacking device of f4-f5 is not so effective because the king's rook is obscured. However, the following heavyweight encounter suggests that White can just sacrifice and gain good play.

**Markowski-Smirin**  
Saint Vincent 2000

1 e4 c5 2 d3 d6 3 g3 g6 4 g2 g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e5 7 f3 dge7

I have used the normal move-order but the game in fact went 1 g3 g6 2 g2 g7 3 e4 c5 4 d3 d6 5 f4 d6 6 f3 e5 7 d3 dge7.

8 0-0-0



9 f5

The f-pawn is advanced in an effort to break up Black's kingside defensive barrier. It is also clear where Short found his inspiration for the previous main game. The main alternative 9 e3 is discussed in the next game. In Movsesian-Topalov, Spanish Team Ch 1999, White tried a novelty with 9 d2?! and after 9...exf4 10 gxf4 e6 11 d3 it became clear that nothing had been achieved by the knight tour. There followed 11...Wd7 12 e3 g4 13 Wd2 Mac8 14 d1 b6 15 c4 xf3 16 Mxf3 d4 when

Black had a strong central knight, giving him an edge. Also possible is the waiting move 9 Mb1 although it did not bring any dividends to White in Murioz-Milligan, Istanbul Olympiad 2000. That game went 9...Mb8 10 e3 d4 11 de2 e6 12 c4 b5 13 b3 b4 (Black has more space although 13...bxc4 looks a superior choice upon 14 dxc4 xc4! 15 dfxd4 exd4 16 bxc4 Mxb1 17 Wxb1 dxe3 with the better position) 14 Wd2 dxf3+ 15 Mxf3 Wc7 16 h3 f5 17 ch2 Mbd8 18 Mff1 c8 19 f3 b7 20 g4?! (20 Mbel is an improvement and leads to roughly equal chances) 20...fxe4 21 dxe4 exf4 22 dxf4 c8 and Black eventually won after 50 moves. However, quicker was 22...d5! 23 cxd5 e5 24 g2 g5 and the pinned knight is lost.

9...gxf5 10 dh4

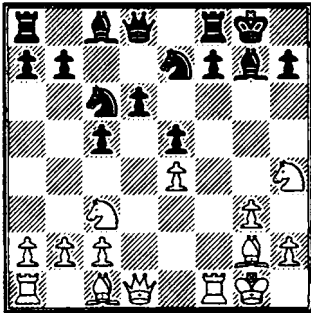
This is the point of White's play. The king's rook is poised to take a more active role and play will focus on White trying to create attacking chances based on his control of the white squares on the kingside.

10...fxe4

The only way to really test a gambit is to hang on to the extra pawn. However, I have seen a few players try to avoid the forthcoming attack with 10...f4 but it is a poor choice. For example: 11 gxf4 dg6 12 df5 xf5 13 exf5 dxf4 14 xf4 exf4 15 Wh5 (15 Mxf4 might be more precise) 15...Wh6 (perhaps 15...e5!? should be considered) 16 Mxf4 Wh6 17 Wxh6 xh6 18 h4 (even in the endgame White can continue his attack) 18...e3+ 19 ch1 ch8 20 f6 (intending e4) 20...de5 21 dd5 dg6 22 Mh3 g5 23 e4 Ma8 (or 23...h6 24 Mg1 df4 25 Mxg5! d3h3 26 h5 gives White a mating attack) 24 Mg1 e5

25 ♖e7 ♜xe4 26 dxe4 ♜f4 27 ♜hg3 h6 28 ♜xg5 1-0 Slovineanu-Burnoiu, Bucharest 1999. Perhaps 10...♞d4, to protect the extra pawn, is worthy of further investigation. For example: 11 exf5 (11 ♞d5 intending c3 to get rid of the d4 knight is a promising alternative) 11...♞exf5 12 ♞xf5 ♙xf5 (12...♞xf5 13 ♞d5 with the plan of ♜h5, ♙e4 and ♙g5 with an attack) 13 ♙xb7 ♜b8 14 ♙g2 ♞d7 15 ♜f2 ♙g6 16 ♞d5 f5 17 c3 ♞e6 18 ♙e3 ♜h8 19 ♞d2 with equal play, Ortega-Ermenkov, Varna 1983.

11 dxe4



11...f6

Smirin wants to form a solid wall of pawns. A reasonable strategy if he can later use the extra pawn, although in the short-term his bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal will have a limited role. It is difficult to find any practical examples but, after 11...f5, White can play 12 ♙g5 recommended by Daniel King. I prefer 12 exf5 when after 12...♞xf5 13 ♙d5+ ♜h8 14 ♜h5 ♞xh4 15 ♙g5 White has decent attacking chances. After 11...♞d4 (if 11...♜b6 12 ♞f5 gives White attacking possibilities but not 12 ♜xd6? when 12...♜d8 traps the white queen and finishes the game) 12 ♞d5 ♞xd5 13 exd5 play might continue:

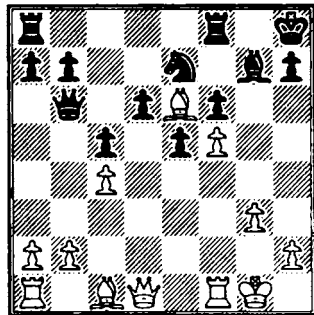
a) 13...♙f6 14 ♙h6 (14 c3 is also possible) 14...♜e8 (or 14...♙xh4 15 g4 ♜xh4 16 ♙xf8 ♙g4? 17 ♙e7 1-0 Denoth-Écabert, Berne 1991) 15 ♙e4 (15 c3!? should be considered) 15...♙xh4 16 ♜h5 (now that the ...g6 pawn has moved this is the best square for the queen to conduct the attack) 16...f5 17 g4 ♜h8 18 ♙g5 ♜g8 19 ♜h1 ♜f8 20 c3 ♞b5 21 ♙h6 ♜f6 22 ♙xf5 ♙xf5 23 ♜xf5 ♜g6 24 ♜xg6 ♜xg6 25 ♙f8 h5 26 ♜af1 ♜g8 27 a4 (27 ♙e7 ♜e8 28 ♜f8+ ♜xf8 29 ♜xf8+ ♜h7 30 a4 is also good for White) 27...♞c7 28 c4 ♜e8 29 ♙xd6! gave White the advantage in Tiller-Ftáčnik, British Team Ch (4NCL) 2000.

b) 13...f5 14 c3 ♞b5 15 ♜h5 (as usual the queen comes to h5 where it can put pressure on the f-pawn) 15...♞c7 (15...♜d7 is well met by 16 ♙h3) 16 ♞xf5 ♙xf5 17 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 18 ♜xf5 ♜c8 19 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 20 ♙e3 (the pair of strong bishops gives White a good ending) 20...♞e8 21 ♙h3 ♜c7 22 ♙e6+ ♜f8? 23 ♜f1+ ♜e7 24 ♜f7+ 1-0 Simons-Twyble, British Team Ch (4NCL) 1998.

12 ♞f5 ♙xf5

Also possible is 12...♞xf5 13 exf5 ♞e7 14 g4 with equal chances.

13 exf5 ♜h8 14 ♞d5 ♞xd5 15 ♙xd5 ♜b6 16 c4 ♞e7 17 ♙e6



A fantastic square for the bishop, which dominates the light-squares. It represents an opening success for White who is now poised to gradually improve his position by g3-g4-g5.

17...d5 18 cxd5 c4+ 19 ♖g2 ♜fd8 20 ♜f3 ♜d6

20...♜b4, to control the d6 square, is well met by 21 ♜d1.

21 ♜d1

21 b3!?, intending ♙a3, also looks good.

21...♜ad8 22 b3 c3

22...♜c5, to block the a3-f8 diagonal, fails to 23 bxc4 b5 24 ♙e3 ♜xc4 25 ♖h3, intending ♜ac1, with advantage for White.

23 ♙a3 c2 24 ♜d3 ♙h6 25 ♜h5 c1=♜ 26 ♙xc1 ♙xc1

Of course 26...♙g7 runs into 27 ♙a3.

27 ♜xc1 ♜a5 28 ♜f7 1-0

The next game is important because it shows how White can transpose from the popular 6 ♙e3 e5 system. The elite players battle it out in the Closed Sicilian and honours are even.

### Adams-Kramnik

FIDE World Ch, Las Vegas 1999

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e5 7 ♘f3 ♘ge7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♙e3

This position is popular with those who wish to carry on with development before committing themselves to any gambits.

9...♘d4

Black installs the knight on d4, which is a normal idea in this line.

9...exf4 10 ♙xf4 is also possible when play might continue:

a) 10...♙g4 11 ♜d2 ♜d7 12 ♙h6 ♜ae8 13 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 14 ♜ael with

a slight edge for White, Stepovaia-Bojkovic, Warsaw 2001.

b) 10...h6 11 ♜d2 ♖h7 12 ♜ael ♘d4 13 h4 (this is the difference compared to a main game like Gurevich-Duchov because, with a knight on f3, it is possible to play h2-h4 to deal with the possibility of ...g6-g5) 13...♘ec6 14 ♘d5 ♘xf3+ 15 ♙xf3 ♘e5 16 ♙g2 b6 17 b3 (White takes steps to block the queenside before concentrating on creating chances on the kingside) 17...♜b8 18 ♖h1 a5 19 a4 ♙a6 20 ♙h3 h5 21 ♜e2 ♙c8 22 ♙xc8 ♜xc8 23 ♖g2 f5 24 ♜ef2 ♘f7 25 ♜e2 ♜e6 (25...fxe4 26 dxe4 ♘e5 27 ♙xe5 ♜xf2+ 28 ♜xf2 dxe5 29 ♜f7 gives White a strong position) 26 ♘c7 ♜d7 27 exf5 ♜c6+ 28 ♖h2 ♘h8 29 fxg6+ ♘xg6 30 ♜xh5+ 1-0 Rechlis-Birnboim, Israel Ch 1986.

10 ♜d2

The original move order was 1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♙e3 e5 7 ♜d2 ♘ge7 8 f4 ♘d4 9 ♘f3 0-0 10 0-0. This is the fashionable way to reach this position and it is flagged in the 6 ♙e3 chapter. However, I think it is easier to examine it via this sequence of moves.

10...exf4

Instead of waiting for White to find the right time to play f4-f5, Black takes positive action. Another way to stop the advance of the f-pawn is 10...f5, which made an appearance in Ljubojević-Radulov, Belgrade 1981. There followed 11 fxe5 dxe5 12 ♜ael f4?! 13 gxf4 exf4 14 ♙xf4 ♘xc2 15 ♜xc2 ♜xf4 16 ♘e2! ♜f8 17 ♜c4+ (the drawback to advancing the f7 pawn is revealed) 17...♖h8 18 ♘g5 when the threat of ♘f7+ gave White a winning position. 10...♙g4 is discussed in the next game. A young

Karpov had to cope with 10...♖c6 against Steinberg at Leningrad 1969 and was soon on top after 11 ♖a1 ♗g4 12 ♕d5 (the middlegame plan of preparing c2-c3 is easy to follow) 12...♗e7 13 ♗xe7+ ♜xe7 14 c3 exf4 15 ♗xf4 ♗xf3+ 16 ♗xf3 ♗e6 17 b3 ♖ae8 18 ♖bel b6 19 d4 and White's space advantage gave him the better chances.

### 11 ♗xf4

The pawn is taken with the bishop in order to keep open the option of ♗f4-h6, to exchange dark-squared bishops. Instead 11 gxf4, to facilitate an eventual f4-f5, has not really worked well in practice. For example: 11...f5 12 ♖a1 ♖h8 13 ♜f2 (13 b4!? should be considered) 13...♗dec6 14 ♕d5 ♗xf3+ 15 ♗xf3 ♗e6 16 c3 ♜d7 17 ♖h1 ♖ae8 18 ♖bd1 b6 and Black had a solid position with the brighter prospects in D.Ledger-King, British Team Ch (4NCL) 2000.

### 11...♗xf3+

J.Houska-Kouvatsou, Istanbul Olympiad 2000, saw Black try 11...d5. After 12 ♗xd4 ♗xd4+ 13 ♖h1 ♗e6 14 ♗g5 f6 15 ♗h6 ♖f7 16 ♗e2 dxe4 17 ♗f4 ♗d7?! (17...e3! 18 ♗xe6 exd2 19 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 20 ♗xd2 is equal) 18 dxe4 ♜e8 19 c3 ♗e5 20 ♕d3 ♗d6 21 e5! fxe5 22 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 23 ♗xe5 ♜e6 24 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 25 ♖d1 ♖d8 26 ♗f4 ♗f5 27 g4 winning. Instead 11...♗g4 failed to make much of an impact in Fahnenschmidt-Gauglitz, German Team Ch 1994. That game went 12 ♗xd4 (with the bishop no longer on e3 this exchange is possible) 12...cxd4?! (12...♗xd4+ 13 ♗e3 ♗g7 14 ♗h6 with a slight edge) 13 ♗b5 a6 14 ♗xd6 g5 15 ♗xb7 ♜b6 16 ♗d6 ♜xb7 17 ♜xg5 ♗e2 18 e5 with a winning game.

### 12 ♖xf3

There is an argument for 12 ♗xf3 if a rapid doubling of rooks on the f-file is awkward to achieve. Play might then continue:

a) 12...♗e6 13 ♖ae1 ♗c6 14 ♗g2 ♜d7 15 ♗h6 with equal chances, Murariu-Parligras, Baile Tusnad 1999.

b) 12...♗c6 13 ♗g2 ♕d4 14 ♖ae1 ♗e6 15 ♕d5 ♜d7 16 c3 ♗c6 17 ♗g5 ♗xd5 18 exd5 with a slight edge for White in Masternak-Perdek, Polish Team Ch 1995.

### 12...♜b6!

A good move by Kramnik who, with a threat to the b2-pawn, wishes to distract White from doubling rooks on the f-file. 12...♗e6 allows White to pursue kingside attacking chances. For instance: 13 ♗h6 ♗c6 14 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 15 ♖af1 (White has managed to double the rooks and has a slight initiative) 15...♜e7 16 ♖f4 ♖ad8 17 ♕d1 d5 18 exd5 ♗xd5 19 ♖e1 ♜d6 20 ♗xd5 ♜xd5 21 ♗c3 ♜d7 22 ♗e4 with roughly equal play, Smyslov-Tal, Leningrad 1962.

### 13 ♖b1 ♗e6 14 ♗h6

Adams chooses to exchange the g7 bishop which is usually a key defensive piece. At this juncture there is a difference of opinion on how best to proceed:

a) 14 ♗g5!? ♗c6 15 ♗e3 (15 ♖ff1 is also possible) 15...♗e5 16 ♖ff1 ♗g4 17 ♗f4 c4+ 18 ♖h1 cxd3 19 cxd3 ♗d4! (the threat of ...♗f2+ will force White to give up the bishop pair) 20 h3 ♗e3 21 ♖fe1 ♗xg2 22 ♖xg2 ♜c6 23 ♗e3 ♗h8 24 ♖bc1 ♜d7 25 ♖h2 a6 (if 25...♗xh3 then 26 ♕d5! gives White decent compensation upon 26...♖ac8 27 ♗g5) 26 ♜g2 ♖ac8 when Black had the better prospects in Larsen-Portisch, Rotterdam 1977.

b) 14 ♖e3 ♘c6 15 ♜ff1 (it is probably best to co-ordinate the rooks at once rather than try to double on the f-file) 15...♘d4 16 a3 ♜ac8 17 ♘d1 (intending c3 to oust the d4 knight) 17...♖a2 18 ♜a1 ♖e6 19 ♜b1 ♖a2 20 ♜a1 ½-½ A.Ledger-Emms, British Team Ch (4NCL) 2000.

14...♜ae8 15 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 16 ♜h1 f6

Kramnik has enough time to deny White access to the f6 square, in case ♜g5 should be contemplated.

17 a3 d5 18 b4

One of the features of the Closed is that White can often create play on the queenside by advancing the b-pawn.

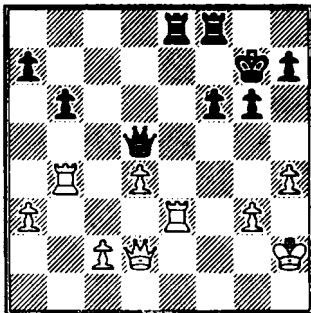
18...cxb4 19 ♜xb4 ♜c7 20 ♘b5 ♜d7 21 ♘d4

If 21 ♘xa7 then 21...dxe4 22 ♜e3 (22 ♜xe4 ♖d5 wins) 22...b6! (22...♘d5 23 ♜d4 saves White's rooks) 23 ♜xb6 ♘d5 gives Black the better position.

21...♖g8 22 ♜e3 ♘c6 23 ♘xc6 ♜xc6 24 h4

Adams gives his king an escape square in case of any back rank checks.

24...b6 25 ♜h2 ♜c5 26 d4 ♜d6 27 exd5 ♖xd5 28 ♖xd5 ♜xd5



White has some practical chances thanks to the passed d-pawn but his

ambitions are handicapped by his exposed king. The game concluded: 29 c4 ♜f7 30 d5 ♜xe3 31 ♜xe3 ♜e8 32 ♜d3 ♜e7 33 ♜b2 ♜e1 34 ♜d2 ♜xd2+ 34...♜f1 intending ...♜e1 is also possible. 35 ♜xd2 ♜f7 36 a4 ♜e4 37 a5 Better than 37 ♜c2 ♜d4 38 c5 ♜xd5 39 c6 ♜d8 40 c7 ♜c8 when the c-pawn is stopped and Black is better. 37...♜xc4 38 axb6 axb6 39 ♜b2 ♜d4 40 ♜xb6 ♜xd5 41 ♜b7+ ♜g8 42 ♜g2 h5 43 ♜f3 ♜e5 44 ♜a7 ♜f8 45 ♜b7 ♜e7 46 ♜b6 ♜f7 47 ♜a6 ♜d7 48 ♜b6 ♜e7 49 ♜a6 ♜d6 50 ♜a5 ♜e6 51 ♜a3 ♜e5 52 ♜e3+ ♜f5 53 ♜a3 ♜d5 54 ♜e3 g5 55 hxg5 fxg5 56 ♜a3 g4+ 57 ♜e3 ♜e5+ 58 ♜f2 ♜c5 59 ♜a4 ♜c2+ 60 ♜g1 ♜e2 61 ♜f1 ♜d2 62 ♜g1 ♜e5 63 ♜a5+ ♜d5 64 ♜a4 ♜d1+ 65 ♜f2 ♜d2+ 66 ♜g1 ♜f5 67 ♜f4+ ♜e5 68 ♜a4 ♜d4 69 ♜a5+ ♜e4 70 ♜xh5 ♜f3 71 ♜a5 ♜d1+ 72 ♜h2 ♜d2+ 73 ♜g1 ♜g2+ 74 ♜h1 ♜e2 75 ♜g1 ♜xg3 76 ♜a3+ ♜f4 77 ♜b3 g3 78 ♜b8 ½-½

A good example of how precise play by Black can neutralise White's attacking prospects is presented by the next game.

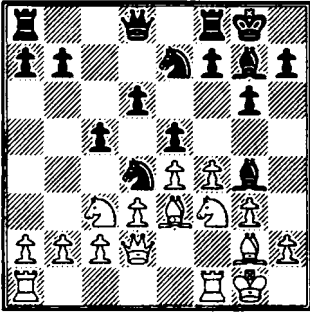
**Short-Nataf**  
FIDE-World Ch,  
New Delhi 2000

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♖g2 ♖g7 5 d3 e5 6 f4 d6 7 ♘f3 ♘ge7 8 0-0 0-0

An improvement on a previous example in this chapter when Short demolished Nataf's 8...♜b8.

9 ♖e3 ♘d4 10 ♜d2 ♖g4

The latest fashion. Black activates his queen's bishop and is prepared to exchange it in order to reduce White's forthcoming attack.



### 11 ♖f2

Short opts to double rooks on the kingside. Black must be prepared for a variety of replies:

a) 11 ♘g5?! f6 12 h3 fxg5 13 hxg4 gxf4 14 gxf4 exf4 15 ♙xf4 ♗d7 16 ♘e2? (16 g5 b5 is a bit better for Black) 16... ♗xg4 17 ♘xd4 ♙xd4+ 18 ♙e3 ♗g5! (the pin is very strong) 19 ♖ael ♖xf1+ 20 ♗xf1 ♖f8+ 21 ♔g1 ♖f3 0-1 Flower-Williams, London 2000.

b) 11 ♘d1 (this is designed to facilitate c2-c3 but it loses control over the d5 square) 11... ♙xf3 12 ♙xf3 exf4 13 ♙xf4 ♘xf3+ 14 ♖xf3 d5! led to easy equality in Blatny-Adamcik, Moravian Team Ch 1999.

c) 11 fxe5 (releasing the tension in the centre to make sure ♙e3-h6 is possible) 11... dxe5 12 ♖f2 ♖c8 13 ♙h6 f6 (defending the e-pawn and blocking the f-file) 14 ♙e3 ♗d7 15 b3 b5 (now that the kingside defence has been sorted out Black gives a text book example of how to handle queenside counterplay) 16 a4 a6 17 ♖ff1 ♖fd8 18 ♗f2 ♙e6 19 ♖fd1 ♘ec6 20 axb5 axb5 21 h4 ♘b4 22 ♘e1 ♖a8 when Black had the initiative in Flecker-T.Horvath, Wattens 1999.

d) 11 ♘h4 is the main alternative when play might continue:

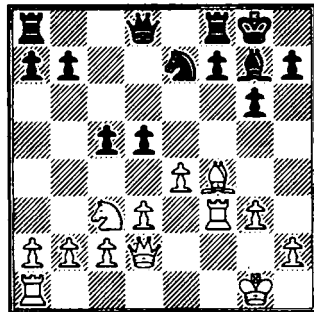
d1) 11... ♗d7 12 f5!? gxf5 13 ♙h6 ♘g6 14 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 15 h3

♘h4 16 gxh4 f4 17 hxg4 ♗xg4 18 ♖f2 ♗h8 19 ♘d5 ♗xh4 20 c3 ♘e6 21 ♗f1 ♘g5 22 ♗e2 ♗h5+ 23 ♗e1 f5 24 ♗e2 ♗h6 25 ♙f3 fxe4 26 dxe4 ♖g8 27 ♗d2 and the white king is safe, guaranteeing a clear advantage. Todorcević-Velikov, Marseilles 1990.

d2) 11...exf4 (the pawns are exchanged to avoid the potential problem of f4-f5) 12 ♙xf4 (12 ♖xf4 ♙e6 13 ♖f2, intending to double rooks on the f-file, is another idea) 12...b5 (Black advances the b-pawn — the traditional way to create queenside play) 13 ♙g5 f6 14 ♙e3 (14 ♙h6? ♙xh6 15 ♗xh6 ♘xc2 wins a pawn) 14... ♗d7 15 ♘d1 ♖ae8 16 c3 ♘dc6 17 ♘f2 ♙e6 18 a3 ♘e5 19 b4 with equal chances, Brodsky-Neveerov, Donetzk 1998.

### 11... ♗d7

Black's latest try to wrest equality from the position by preparing ...b7-b5. He might also seek immediate exchanges with 11...exf4 (note that 11... ♘xf3+ 12 ♙xf3 ♙xf3 13 ♖xf3 exf4 14 ♙xf4 transposes) 12 ♙xf4 ♘xf3+ 13 ♙xf3 ♙xf3 14 ♖xf3 d5



and now:

a) 15 ♙e1 ♗d7 16 ♙h6 ♖ae8 17 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 18 ♗f4 f5 19 ♖ff1 ♗g8?! 20 exd5 b5 (or 20... ♘xd5? 21 ♗c4 ♖d8 22 ♖e5 wins) 21 d6

♞c8 22 ♞d5 ♞xd6 23 ♜xe8 ♞xe8  
24 ♜e5 ♜d6 25 ♜e1 gave White the  
advantage in Hort-Ostojic, Hastings  
1967/68.

b) 15 ♞g2 ♜b6 16 ♜b1 (not 16  
♞xd5?! ♞xd5 17 exd5 ♜xb2 18  
♜af1 ♜xa2 leaving Black with an  
extra pawn) 16...dxe4 17 ♞xe4  
♞f5 18 c3 ♜ad8 19 ♜f2 ♜e6 20  
♞xc5 ♜xa2 21 ♜e1 ♜d5 22 ♞e4  
b6 23 g4 ♞e7 24 ♞g5! when White  
had the advantage in Pelikian-  
Matsuura, Maringa 1991.

12 ♜af1 exf4 13 ♞xf4

If 13 gx f4 then 13...♞xf3 14  
♞xf3 f5 15 ♞g2 ♜ae8 is equal.

13...♞xf3+ 14 ♞xf3 ♞xf3 15  
♜xf3 b5

Black could also challenge the  
centre with 15...d5 when 16 ♞g5  
(16 ♞h6 is worth testing) 16...d4  
17 ♞e2 ♞c6 18 ♞f6 ♞e5 19 ♞xe5  
♞xe5 20 ♞f4 offers equal chances.

16 ♞h6 b4 17 ♞xg7 ♞xg7

20...bxa3 is met by 21 bxa3 with  
the idea of ♜c3, targeting f6 and  
giving White a slight edge.

21 ♜f4 ♜f7 22 ♜g2 ♜af8 23 g4

The prospect of 23...f5 compels  
White to restrict Black's ambitions.

23...♞h8 24 ♞h1 ♞c6 25 ♞d5  
♞e7

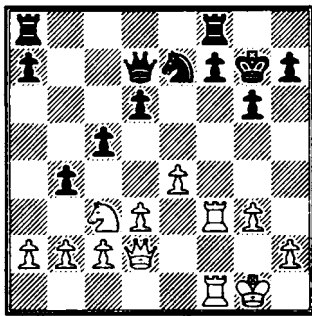
Nataf takes steps to get rid of the  
knight before White has a chance to  
play ♜f2 to attack the f6 pawn.

26 ♞e3 ♞c6

Black invites a repetition. Despite  
his positive approach White is not  
able to make a breakthrough.

27 ♞c4 ♞e5 28 ♞xa5 bxa3 29  
bxa3 ♜a8 30 ♞b3 ♜xa3 31 d4  
cxd4 32 ♞xd4 ♜c4 33 ♜d1 ½-½

In the next game Black advances  
his pawns on the queenside while  
White gets on with the job of  
doubling rooks on the f-file to assist  
in an attack.



18 ♞d1

Short steers the knight towards e3  
where it will be well placed to re-  
strain the freeing move ...f7-f5.  
After 18 ♞e2 ♜e6 (18...d5 19 ♜g5  
f5 20 ♞f4! intending ♞h5+) 19 c4  
bxc3 20 ♜xc3+ ♜e5 21 ♜c4 White  
has pressure against f7.

18...f6 19 ♞e3 ♜e6 20 a3 a5

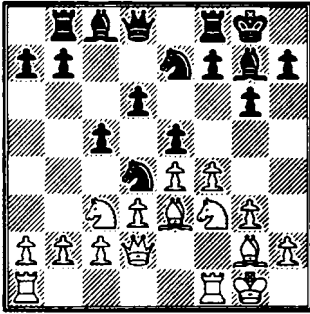
### G.Hernandez-De Firmian Chicago 1997

1 e4 c5 2 ♞c3 ♞c6 3 g3 g6 4  
♞g2 ♞g7 5 d3 e5 6 f4 d6 7 ♞f3  
♞ge7

The move-order has been slightly  
changed to make it more logical for  
this book but in fact the original  
sequence was 1 e4 c5 2 d3 ♞c6 3  
g3 g6 4 ♞g2 ♞g7 5 f4 d6 6 ♞f3 e5  
7 ♞c3 ♞ge7.

8 0-0 0-0 9 ♞e3 ♞d4 10 ♜d2  
♜b8

This is another way for Black to  
prepare the advance ...b7-b5. It is  
also useful in some lines to remove  
the rook from the firing-line of the  
bishop on g2.



### 11 a3

A little ploy to keep Black guessing White's true intentions. In fact a2-a3 is a normal precautionary reaction to the forthcoming queenside pawn storm, signalled by ...b7-b5. There are various alternatives:

a) 11 a4 b6 (11...a6 is met by 12 a5 when 12...b5 13 axb6 ♖xb6 14 b3 stops Black's usual play on the queenside, giving White a slight advantage) 12 ♖f2 ♗b7 13 fxe5 dxe5 14 ♗h6 f6 15 ♖af1 ♗d7 16 b3 led to equal chances in Nikolić-Martinović, Vrnjacka Banja 1981.

b) 11 ♖ael b5 12 fxe5 dxe5 13 ♗d5 ♗e6 14 c3 ♗xf3+ 15 ♗xf3 ♗xd5 16 exd5 ♗xd5 17 ♗xc5 ♖e8 18 ♗e3 with roughly equal play, Burović-Chuchelov, Eupen 1994.

c) 11 h3 b5 12 fxe5 dxe5 13 a3 a5 (Black just carries on with his queenside pawn advance, in keeping with the standard plan of creating counterplay) 14 b3 ♗c7 15 ♗h6 f6 16 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 17 a4 b4 18 ♗d1 f5 19 ♗e3?! fxe4 20 dxe4 ♗xh3! gave Black a winning position in Valet-Rabiega, Berlin 1991.

d) 11 ♗h4 is played regularly at club level to help force through f4-f5 so it makes sense for Black to play 11...exf4 when play might continue 12 ♗xf4 (12 gx4 f5 puts a halt to any idea of f4-f5) 12...b5 13

a3 a5 14 ♖ael ♗c7, resulting in equal chances.

e) 11 ♗d1 and now:

e1) 11...b6 (having prepared to push the pawn two squares Black decides on a safe but modest development) 12 ♗h4 exf4 (the right decision to stop f4-f5 but unlike note 'd' Black does not have active play on the queenside) 13 ♗xf4 ♗b7 14 ♗f2 ♗d7 15 c3 ♗e6 16 ♗h6 f5 17 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 18 ♖ael fxe4 19 ♗g4! (20 ♗h6+ is the menacing threat) 19...♗g8 20 ♗xe4 gave White a small initiative in Vilar Lopez-Franco Ocampos, Zaragoza 1999.

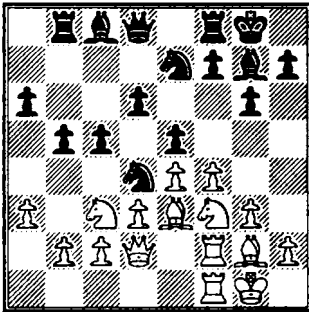
e2) 11...b5 12 c3 ♗xf3+ 13 ♗xf3 b4 14 fxe5! (or 14 ♗f2 exf4 15 ♗xf4 ♗c6 16 ♗h6 bxc3 17 bxc3 ♗xh6 18 ♗xh6 ♗f6 is a bit better for Black) 14...bxc3 15 bxc3 ♗xe5 16 ♗h6 (White has carried out the familiar plan of c2-c3 to remove the black knight from d4 and now finds a way to exchange the dark-squared bishops) 16...♗g7 (16...♖e8 is met by 17 d4 with the better chances) 17 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 18 d4 ♗b6 19 ♗e3 ♗a6 20 ♖f2 cxd4 21 cxd4 ♗c6 (21...f5!? should be contemplated) 22 ♖d1 ♗b4 23 ♗c1 ♖bc8? (23...♗a4!? is the best chance but Black is still worse) 24 ♗g4! when the need to defend the knight on c6 will cause Black to lose material, Frost-Fantin, York 2000.

### 11...a6?!

The American is wary of what White is planning and bides his time. However, there is nothing wrong with the immediate 11...b5. This was tested in the Buchal-Roos, Dresden 1999, when White got on with the task of doubling rooks on the kingside by 12 ♖f2. That game went 12...a5 13 ♖af1 b4 14 axb4 axb4 15 ♗d1 b3 (this idea looks

very logical but is flawed and bound to trip up Black in future games) 16 c3 ♖c2 17 fxe5! (suddenly it is clear that Black must lose a pawn) 17...♞xe3 18 ♗xe3 ♞c6 (18...♞xe5 19 ♞xe5 dxe5 20 ♗xc5 wins) 19 exd6 ♗xd6 20 ♖h1 ♙a6 21 ♞d2 ♞bd8 22 ♞f2 and White gradually prepared to play d3-d4 to exploit his extra pawn.

12 ♞f2 b5 13 ♞af1



This is the kind of position that White should be aiming for in this line. The doubled rooks are a standard feature and there is always the possibility of ♙e3-h6. One of the good points is that Black will now have to make concessions to avoid a stampede on the kingside.

13...exf4 14 ♙xf4 b4

Revealing the defect in Black's strategy. A better situation is to have a pawn on a5 so that any exchange on b4 can be met by ...axb4 to open the a-file for the queen's rook. But 14...a6-a5 here would just be an admission that his 11th move was a mistake.

15 axb4 cxb4 16 ♞d1 ♞xf3+ 17 ♙xf3 ♞c6 18 ♙g2 ♙e6 19 ♙g5 ♗b6 20 ♙e3 ♗c7 21 d4

The pawn exchange on move 15 has led to the departure of Black's

c5 pawn from the centre—where White now exerts his influence.

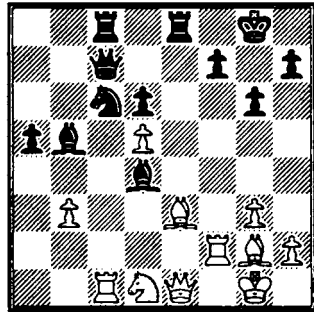
21...♙g4 22 b3 a5 23 ♞b2 ♙c8 24 ♞c1

Hernandez reacts to the changing circumstances by shifting a rook to the c-file to exploit the presence of the black queen on c7.

24...♙a6 25 c3 bxc3 26 ♗xc3 ♙b5 27 e5!

The discovered attack on the c6 knight is very awkward for De Firmian.

27...♞bc8 28 d5 ♙xe5 29 ♗e1 ♞fe8 30 ♞d1 ♙d4



31 ♗d2?

In a complicated position White goes wrong. A much stronger continuation is simply 31 dxc6 when 31...♗a7 is well met by 32 ♞c3! with a clear advantage.

The game concluded: 31...♙xe3 32 ♞xe3 ♗b6 33 ♞xc6 ♞xc6 34 dxc6 ♞xe3 35 c7 ♙a6 36 ♙h3 ♞xb3 37 ♗d5 ♞b1+ 38 ♖g2 ♗xc7 39 ♗a8+ ♗b8

39...♖g7 40 ♗xa6 ♗c1 gives Black a very strong attack.

40 ♗xa6 ♗b7+ 41 ♗xb7 ♞xb7 42 ♞a2 ♞b5 43 ♙d7 ♞d5 44 ♖f3 ♖f8 45 ♖e2 ♞e5+ 46 ♖d3 h5 47 ♙c6 ½-½

### Summary

The question whether White can take advantage of the extra move he has compared to the English Opening is neatly answered by the game **Krapivin-Morozov** where Black makes one mistake and is crushed. Another example of what to do if Black goes wrong is shown by **Lane-Manet** where an attempt to block the kingside ends in failure. The desire to stop the advance f4-f5 has resulted in various responses, such as the 8...♟d4 of **Berg - De Firmian**. However, a better idea is 7...exf4, as played in **Spassky-Sax**, which has made the whole line far less attractive for White. After 8 ♟xf4, White will find that planting a knight on d5 has little effect, and anyway Black is well compensated by being able to occupy the important e5 square. A possible

improvement is 8 ♟xf4, which is analysed in **A.Gurevich-Duchov** but Black should be fine with correct play. In **Short-Nataf**, Istanbul Olympiad 2000, White changes tack, posting his king's knight on f3 and gaining excellent results after Black goes astray. In **Markowski-Smirin**, the lure of f4-f5 proves too tempting for White who jumps at the chance of playing it in even with his knight on f3. An important variation is illustrated by **Adams-Kramnik**, where White transposes from the chapter on 6 ♟e3 e5. **Short-Nataf**, FIDE-World Ch 2000, is a demonstration of how Black can go in for a plan of exchanging pieces to reduce the impact of White's attack—and it works well. The White attack in the game **Hernandez-De Firmian** is easy to follow although Black manages to create decent counterplay.

# 8 6 f4 ♖f6 Kasparov Variation

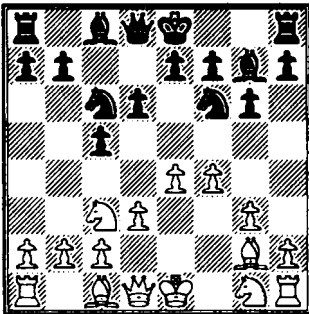
6...♖f6 is usually linked to a King's Indian Defensive system. This has probably spurred on Kasparov to give it his seal of approval by playing it at the highest level. Commentators were quick to dub it the Kasparov Variation despite its long history—but the name has stuck. Black allows White to push forward his kingside pawns, including the familiar ploy f4-f5, in the hope that rapid expansion on the queenside, coupled with pressure on the a1-h8 diagonal, will prove to be sufficient compensation.

For decades the whole line has been dismissed for Black on the basis of a brilliant victory by Boris Spassky.

## Spassky-Geller

Game Six, Candidates match,  
Suhumi 1968

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 d6 3 g3 ♘c6 4 ♙g2 g6 5 d3 ♙g7 6 f4 ♖f6



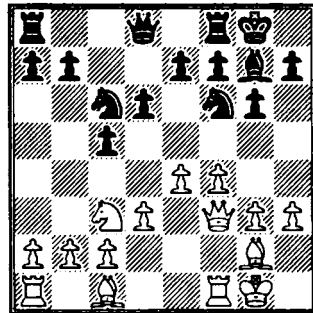
This continuation requires expert handling by Black as he will be faced with the usual advance of the kingside pawns and his knight on f6 will be a natural target. Meanwhile, White can expect a rapid counter on the queenside where his opponent will try to gain space.

7 ♖f3 0-0

Played almost automatically, which is understandable considering the low success rate of the alternatives:

a) 7...♙d7 8 0-0 ♜b8 9 h3 0-0 10 g4 ♜c7?! (Black's queenside play is rather slow which allows White to launch a strong kingside attack) 11 f5 b5 12 ♙e3 c4 13 ♜d2 cxd3 14 cxd3 ♜fe8 15 ♙h6 ♙h8 16 ♘h4 with the better chances, Paredes Cordo-Villegas Salazar, Oropesa del Mar 1999.

b) 7...♙g4 8 h3 ♙xf3 9 ♜xf3 0-0 10 0-0



and now:

b1) 10...♞d4 (the popular reply to harass the white queen) 11 ♖f2 ♘d7 12 ♞d1 ♚c8 13 c3 ♞c6 14 ♙e3 b5 15 h4 (a signal for White's aggressive intentions which herald the start of a pawn storm) 15...b4 16 ♙h3 bxc3 17 bxc3 ♞b4 18 ♖d2 c4 19 d4 (19 dxc4 might be a possible improvement when 19...♞xc4 is met by 20 e5!) 19...♞d3 20 ♞f2 ♞xf2 21 ♙xf2 e6 22 f5 exf5 23 exf5 ♚c7 24 fxg6 hxg6 25 ♙e3 ♚b7 26 ♙g5 ♖a5 27 h5 ♚b5? (27...gxh5 28 ♙f5 ♚b5 29 ♚af1 is also good for White) 28 ♙e7 gave White a winning advantage in Hebden-D.Gurevich, Hastings 1985/86.

b2) 10...♞b8 11 ♖f2 ♘d7 12 ♙e3 ♞d4 13 ♞d1 ♖a5 14 ♙d2 ♖a4 15 ♞e3 b5 (if 15...♞xc2 then 16 b3 is good for White) 16 c3 ♞c6 17 e5 ♖a6 18 exd6 exd6 19 g4 b4 20 f5 (the middlegame plan is predictably to push the f-pawn and attack) 20...♞de5 21 f6 ♙h8 22 ♙e4 bxc3 23 ♙xc3 ♚fe8 24 ♚ad1 ♖xa2 25 g5 ♖e6 26 ♖h4 ♞xd3 27 ♙xc6 ♖xe3+ 28 ♖h1 ♚ec8 29 ♙d5 (the twin threats of ♙xf7+ and ♚f3 are very strong) 29...h6 30 ♖xh6 ♞f4 31 ♚xf4 ♖xf4 32 ♖xg6+ 1-0 Welling - Van Mechelen, Belgian Team Ch 2001.

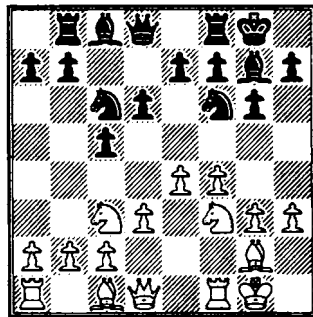
c) 7...♞b8 8 0-0 ♙d7 (or 8...0-0 9 h3 transposes to the main game) 9 h3 ♞d4 10 ♙e3 ♞xf3+ 11 ♖xf3 0-0 12 ♖f2 ♙c6 (perhaps 12...b5!? should be considered) 13 ♚fd1 ♖c7 14 d4 cxd4 15 ♙xd4 b6 16 e5! with an edge for White, Bhend-Attard, Kecskemet Zonal 1964.

### 8 0-0 ♞b8

Geller prepares the advance ...b7-b5 to help create queenside counterplay. It is worth noting that 8...♙g4 9 h3 ♙xf3 10 ♖xf3 transposes to note 'b' after Black's

seventh move. 8...♞e8 is premature because White has not yet signalled his exact set-up and was rightly punished in Smyslov-Ilivitsky, Moscow 1952. That game continued 9 h3 ♞c7 10 ♙e3 b6 11 ♖d2 ♙b7 12 f5 (the traditional advance in the Closed to soften up Black's kingside pawn wall and allow ♙e3-h6 to exchange the dark-squared bishops) 12...d5 13 ♙h6 dxe4 14 ♞xe4 ♞d4 15 ♞h4 ♙xe4 16 ♙xe4 ♙xh6 17 ♖xh6 ♖d6?? (another bit of territory lost: 17...♞xc2 has been suggested but I think White is clearly better after 18 ♞f3 ♞xa1 when, instead of 19 ♞g5 ♖d4+ and 20...♖g7, White should just play 19 ♖h2, intending ♞g5, when Black will struggle to fend off the attack) 18 ♖h2 ♚ae8 (if 18...♞d5 then 19 fxg6 fxg6 20 ♞xg6 ♚xf1 21 ♚xf1 hxg6 22 c4 and White wins) 19 fxg6 fxg6 20 ♞xg6! (smashing the defensive barrier in pursuit of mate) 20...♞f3+ (20...hxg6 21 ♙xg6 and the threat of mate on h7 is fatal) 21 ♚xf3 ♚xf3 22 ♞xe7+! ♖xe7 23 ♙xf3 and White was a couple of

9 h3



This has the dual purpose of preparing a kingside pawn advance and also 10 ♙e3, without having to worry about the threat of 10...♞g4.

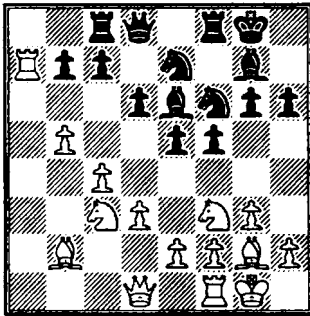
If 9 ♙e3 then 9...♘g4 10 ♙d2 c4!, threatening ...♗b6+, is fine for Black. For instance: 11 ♖h1 ♗b6 12 ♗e2 ♗xb2 and White does not have any compensation for the pawn. Instead 9 a4 is met by 9...a6 followed by ...b5 with similar play to the main game. The main alternative 9 ♘h4 is discussed in the next game.

**9...b5**

It makes sense to be consistent and expand on the queenside.

10 a3 a5 11 ♙e3 b4 12 axb4 axb4 13 ♘e2

It is worth pointing out that learning this line with White will help you to beat the English! There are a lot of people who don't realise that one can play the Closed Sicilian against the English and be a move down. This tempo is not that significant and in practical terms a hefty knowledge of the Closed will give Black more experience in such lines. For instance: 1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 ♘f3 f5 6 d3 ♘f6 7 0-0 d6 8 ♗b1 0-0 9 b4 a6 10 a4 h6 11 b5 axb5 12 axb5 ♘e7 13 ♙b2 ♙e6 14 ♗a1 ♗c8 15 ♗a7.



Compare this diagram with the one after Black's 15th move in the main game. 15...b6 16 ♗c2 g5 17 ♗fal f4 18 ♘d2 fxg3 19 hxg3 ♗e8

20 ♘ce4 ♘g4 21 ♘fl ♘f5 22 e3 ♗g6 23 ♗b7 ♘h4 24 gxh4 gxh4 25 f3 ♗xf3 26 ♗e2 ♗f7 27 ♘h2 ♗cf8 28 ♗aa7 h3 29 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 30 ♗xc7 ♘f2 0-1 Schneider-Short, Solingen 1986. After the game the experts greeted Short's rapid victory as a brilliancy but he just referred reporters to Spassky-Geller, Game Six, Candidates, Suhumi 1968!

Another way to handle the attack for Black was explored in Resende-Kramnik, Sao Paulo 1991: 1 ♘f3 d6 2 g3 e5 3 d3 f5 4 ♙g2 ♘f6 5 c4 g6 6 ♘c3 ♙g7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♗b1 a5 9 a3 ♘c6 10 b4 axb4 11 axb4 h6 12 b5 ♘e7 13 ♙b2 ♙e6 14 ♗c2 (this is the difference in that White does not bother moving the rook to the a-file) 14...g5 15 ♘d2 ♗b8 16 ♘b3 ♗e8 17 ♘a5 ♗h5 18 e3 f4 (Black's pieces are well placed for the attack while White's counterplay on the queenside is poor) 19 exf4 gxf4 20 f3 (or 20 ♘xb7? when 20...f3 blocks the defence of the knight) 20...fxg3 21 hxg3 ♗g6 22 ♖h2 b6 23 ♘c6 ♘xc6 24 bxc6 ♙xc4 25 ♘e4 ♙e6 26 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 27 ♗e2 ♗h5+ 28 ♖g1 ♗bf8 29 ♗f2 ♗g6 30 ♖h2 ♗h5+ 31 ♖g1 ♗g5 32 ♖h2 ♗g6 33 g4 h5 34 gxh5 ♗xh5+ 35 ♖g1 ♗f4 36 ♖fl (36 ♗a1 allows Black to reveal his winning plan: 36...♗h4 37 ♗a7 ♗hl mate) 36...♙f6 37 ♙cl ♗h4 38 ♖el ♗h2 39 ♙f4 ♗hxg2 40 ♗xg2 ♗h1+ 41 ♖d2 ♗xg2 0-1

**13...♙b7**

The logical choice to allow ...♗a8, contesting the a-file. Others:

a) 13...c4? 14 dxc4 ♙b7 (Black must have missed that 14...♘xe4? is simply refuted by 15 ♘h2 f5 16 ♗d5+ winning a piece) 15 ♘d2 ♘d7 16 ♗b1 gave White the advantage in Hebden-Plaskett, London 1986.

b) 13...♞e8 (the knight retreats to reveal a direct attack on b2 which will ensure that, unlike the main game, White has no time for b2-b3) 14 ♖b1 ♘c7 15 ♛d2 ♘b5 16 c3 ♟a6 17 f5 bxc3 18 bxc3 ♘c7 19 g4 ♟xb1 20 ♟xb1 d5 21 exd5 ♘xd5 22 ♟xc5 ♟a5 23 ♟f2 (it is pointless to try and hold on to the extra pawn with 23 ♟d4 when 23...♘xd4 24 ♘fxd4 ♘xc3 25 ♟h1 ♟a3 is slightly better for Black because White's pieces lack harmony) 23...♘xc3 24 ♘xc3 ♟xc3 25 ♛c1 ♞c8 26 fxg6 hxg6 27 ♟e3 e6 28 d4 (White cuts off the dark-squared bishop from the kingside defence) 28...♞d8 29 ♛f4 ♞d5 30 ♘g5 ♞xg5 31 ♟xc6 ♟g7 32 ♟e3 f6 33 ♛d6 led to victory in Bastian-Sosonko, Hannover 1983.

c) 13...♛c7 14 g4 (14 b3, intending ♞c1 with similar play to the main game, is the alternative) 14...♘d7 15 c3 ♟b7 16 ♛c2!? (16 f5 should be considered) 16...♞fc8 17 g5 ♞a8 18 ♘h2 ♞xa1 19 ♞xa1 ♞a8 20 ♞xa8+ ♟xa8 21 d4 with equal chances, Weiss-Hörsch, German Team Ch. 2000.

#### 14 b3!

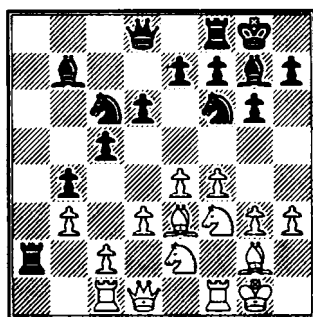
This is a significant improvement on an earlier game in this match against Geller when Spassky tried 14 ♛d2. There followed 14...♞a8 15 ♖ab1 ♟a5 16 b3 ♞fc8 (16...d5! 17 e5 d4 is equal according to Vorotnikov) 17 f5 ♛b6 18 g4 ♞a2 19 ♘c1 ♞a5 20 ♛f2 with good attacking chances and White eventually won. Instead, Ibragimov-Kuporosov, Berlin 1995, saw 14 g4 to launch an immediate kingside offensive. There followed 14...♘d7 15 ♖b1 e6 16 ♛d2 ♛e7 17 ♘g3 (17 f5!? is an interesting gambit when 17...exf5 18 gxf5 gxf5 19 ♘g3 {19 exf5 ♞fe8! is better for Black}

19...fxe4 20 dxe4 gives White some compensation for the pawn in the form of the f5 square for the knight) 17...♘d4 18 c3 bxc3 19 bxc3 ♘xf3+ 20 ♟xf3 ♟a6 21 ♟xb8 ♟xb8 22 ♞a1 ♟b5 23 ♖b1 ♟c6 24 ♟xb8+ ♘xb8 25 d4 cxd4 26 cxd4 ♟b7 27 ♟a5 ♟f8 28 ♛b6 d5 29 e5 ½-½.

#### 14...♞a8 15 ♞c1

Spassky reveals his excellent idea by moving the rook to defend the c-pawn, which allows the queen to get on with the job of attacking on the kingside.

#### 15...♞a2



#### 16 g4 ♟a8

I think the queen ends up being out of the game after it is transferred to the a-file—so 16...♛c7 should be considered.

#### 17 ♛e1 ♟a6 18 ♛f2 ♘a7

Geller embarks on the slow manoeuvre ♘a7-b5-a3 to exploit the weak dark squares on the queenside.

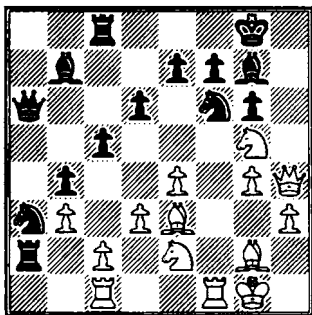
#### 19 f5

Anyone who plays the Closed will instantly spot this continuation that helps to undermine Black's pawn barrier.

#### 19...♘b5 20 fxg6 hxg6

20...fxg6 21 ♘f4 ♘c7 22 ♘g5 is good for White.

#### 21 ♘g5 ♘a3 22 ♛h4 ♞c8



Black's position is beginning to crack because he is obliged to give his king an escape square. For instance 22... ♖xc2? loses to 23 ♜xf6 threatening mate on h7.

23 ♜xf6!

Spassky eliminates the knight so as to enable the queen to invade Black's position.

23... exf6 24 ♜h7+ ♔f8 25 ♖xf7 ♜xc2

25... ♔xf7 is no better in view of 26 ♖h6 (26... ♖xc2? doesn't solve anything: 27 ♜xg7+ ♔e8 28 e5! wins) 26... ♜g8 27 ♖f4 ♜xc2 28 ♜f1 ♔f8 29 ♖xg6+ ♔f7 30 ♖xg7 ♜xg7 31 ♖h8+ is winning.

26 ♖h6 ♜xc1+

Grabbing the knight with 26... ♜xe2 is no help: 27 ♜xg7+ ♔e8 28 ♖g5! fxg5 29 ♜f1 with mate to follow.

27 ♖xc1 ♔xf7

An attempt to wriggle out of the position with 27... ♖xh6 is doomed after 28 ♖xh6 ♔e8 29 ♖g8! ♔f8 30 ♖e7 with a winning advantage.

28 ♜xg7+ ♔e8 29 g5 f5 30 ♜xg6+ ♔d7 31 ♜f7+ ♔c6 32 exf5+ 1-0.

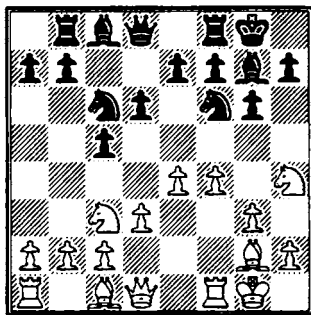
A look at older sources will reveal that Black largely disregarded the whole line after the Spassky encounter and in fact some writers on the Closed scarcely mention the

possibility at all. It is rumoured that as part of his preparation for the World Championship match against Kramnik, Kasparov analysed some old lines which included this one.

### Short-Kasparov Zürich 2001

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 d6 3 g3 ♖c6 4 ♖g2 g6 5 d3 ♖g7 6 f4 ♖f6 7 ♖f3 0-0 8 0-0 ♜b8 9 h3

Kasparov's seal of approval has seen a new surge of interest in this line. Therefore, it might be wise to have a decent alternative available just to put off the dedicated followers of fashion. 9 ♖h4, intending to assist the advance f4-f5, was popular in the 1960s but has since been neglected. For example:



a) 9... ♖g4?! (occasionally played but I don't think it should be a problem for White) 10 ♜e1 ♖d4 11 ♜f2 ♖d7 (the bishop retreats otherwise White plays f4-f5, followed by h2-h3, to attack the bishop) 12 h3 (12 f5 seems to be good but 12... ♖g4 is awkward when 13 ♜d2 ♖h6 14 ♜d1 ♖e3 15 ♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 16 ♔h1 ♖h6 and the dark-squared bishop will be a strong defender) 12... b5 13 f5 ♖c6 14 g4 when the chances are roughly equal although the surge of pawns on the kingside

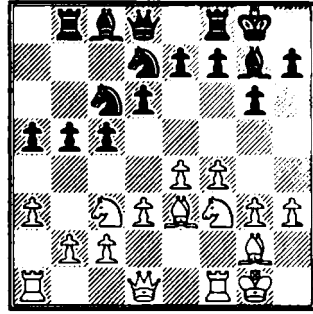
will tend to make Black rather nervous.

b) 9...♗d7 10 f5 b5 11 ♔g5! b4 12 ♖d5 a5 (Or 12...♖xd5 13 exd5 ♖e5 14 ♗d2!, intending ♔g5-h6, is better for White) 13 ♖h1 (13 ♗d2!? is a reasonable alternative) 13...♖e5 14 ♗d2 ♗c6 15 ♗ae1 a4 16 ♗e2 ♗d7 17 ♗c1 ♗b7 18 ♖e3 e6 19 fxe6 (if 19 g4 exf5 White could try the dangerous 20 ♖hxf5 with attacking prospects) 19...fxe6 20 ♖f3 ♖xf3 21 ♗xf3 d5 22 exd5 exd5 23 ♖g4 ♗be8 24 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 25 ♗e3 ♗xe3 26 ♗xe3 ♗e8 27 ♗f2 ♗xe1+ 28 ♗xe1 ♖f7 29 ♗e2 ♗e7 ½-½ Spassky-Petrosian, World Championship Moscow 1966

c) 9...♖g4 10 ♖h1 f5 11 h3 ♖h6 12 ♖d5 (possible is 12 ♖f3!? centralising the king's knight) 12...e6 13 ♖e3 e5 14 exf5 exf4 15 fxg6 fxe3 16 gxf7+ ♖xf7 (not 16...♖h8? when 17 ♖g6+ ♖xf7 18 ♖xf8 ♗xf8 19 ♗h5 wins) 17 ♗e4+ ♖g8 18 ♗d5+ ♖h7 19 ♗e4+ ½-½ Hecht-Darga, Berlin 1982.

d) 9...♖d4 (probably the best of the bunch) 10 f5 b5 11 ♔g5 b4 12 ♖e2 (12 ♖b1 looks odd but after 12...a5 13 ♖d2 ♗a6 14 ♖c4 ♗xc4 15 dxc4 ♖d7 16 ♗d2 the position offered equal chances in Krapivin-Mirumian, Olomouc 2000) 12...♖xe2+ (12...♖d7!? is also possible) 13 ♗xe2 ♖d7 14 ♗ab1 ♖e5 15 ♗d2 a5 16 ♗h6 ♗d7 17 ♖f3 ♗b6?! (17...♖xf3+ is an obvious way to avoid the doubled e-pawns) 18 ♖xe5 dxe5 19 ♗e3 ♗bc8 20 g4 ♗d6 21 b3 f6 22 h4 e6 23 ♗h3 a4 24 ♗f3, intending to double rooks, helped White to an eventual win in Lein-Sakharov, USSR Ch 1968.

9...b5 10 a3 a5 11 ♗e3 ♖d7



Kasparov uncorks his improvement on the Spassky-Geller game. Basically, he wishes to attack the b2 pawn before White has had time to employ the system with b2-b3 and ♗a1-c1.

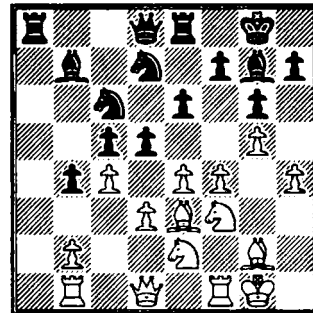
12 ♗b1 b4 13 axb4 axb4 14 ♖e2 ♗b7 15 g4

The middlegame plan of advancing the kingside pawns is underway.

15...♗a8 16 c4!

A search through the archives reveals this is an improvement on the game Chernov-Fedorov, Kishinev 1998, which continued 16 b3 ♗a2 17 ♖c1 ♗a6 18 ♗e1 e6 19 ♗f2 ♖a7 when the manoeuvre ...♖b5-c3 is more dangerous with the rook on b1, thereby giving Black an edge.

16...e6 17 g5 ♗e8 18 h4 d5



19 e5

White closes the centre, which is usually a prelude to an attack on the kingside. Not 19...exd5 when 19...exd5 20 exd5 ♘e7 (20...♙xe3 21 dxc6 ♙xc6 is also good for Black) 21 d6 ♘f5 with advantage.

19...♘e7 20 ♘g3 ♙c7 21 ♙f2 ♘f5

Kasparov is quick to offer exchanges so as to give himself more room for manoeuvre.

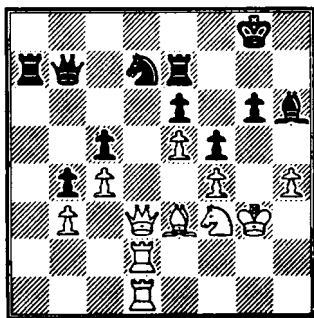
22 ♙c1

22 ♘f5 exf5 23 cxd5 ♙xd5 is fine for Black.

22...♘g3 23 ♙xg3 ♙ed8 24 ♙e2 ♙a2 25 ♙f2 ♙f8 26 ♘h2 dxc4 27 dxc4 ♙xg2 28 ♙xg2 h5 29 gxh6

If Short keeps the kingside closed then he can make little progress.

29...♙xh6 30 ♙e3 ♙b7+ 31 ♙g3 f5 32 ♙cd1 ♙e8 33 ♙f2 ♙e7 34 ♘f3 ♙e4 35 ♙d3 ♙b7 36 b3 ♙a3 37 ♙fd2 ♙a7



38 ♙c2?!

In time trouble Short gives Kasparov a chance to escape from the pressure on the d-file. A better idea is 38 ♙d6!, to threaten 39 ♙xc5. when 38...♙f8 39 ♘g5 gives Black problems.

38...♙a8 39 ♙d6

39 ♙xc5 seems to be strong although after 39...♘xc5 40 ♙d8+ Black has compensation due to the

exposed white king. For instance: 40...♙e8 41 ♙xa8 ♙xa8 42 ♘g5 ♙a2 43 ♙d8+ ♙g7 44 ♙d1 ♙xg5 45 ♙d7+ ♙e7 46 ♙xe7+ ♙h6 and the white attack will take some time to work.

39...♙a2 40 ♙d3 ♙a7 41 ♙d2 ½-½.

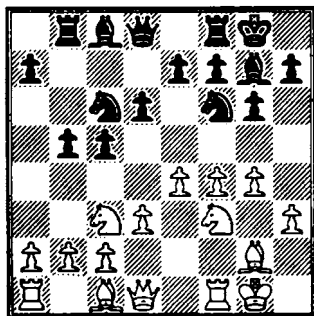
Ruslan Ponomarev is in the world's elite and his choice of 6...♘f6 is further proof that the line is now given due respect. However, the usual middlegame plan of advancing the kingside pawns is enough to cause him problems.

**Al Modiahki-Ponomarev**  
FIDE World Ch, Las Vegas 1999

1 e4 d6

This is not a misprint! The game soon transposes from a Pirc to the Closed Sicilian.

2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 g3 g3 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 f4 c5 6 ♘f3 ♘c6 7 0-0 0-0 8 d3 ♙b8 9 h3 b5 10 g4



White avoids a2-a3 in the hope that he can accelerate his kingside attack and reduce his opponent's queenside counterplay by keeping the a-file closed.

10...b4 11 ♘e2 a5

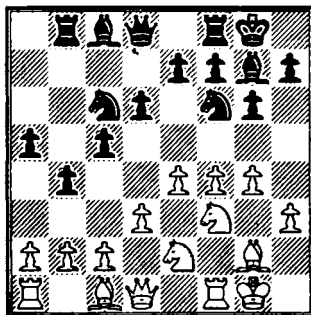
a) 11...c4 (designed to undermine the c2-d3-e4 pawn chain—but in

practice it has been shown to be relatively harmless) 12 ♖e3 (12 f5 is well met by 12...♗b6+ 13 ♖h1 b3 when White will have to deal with the question of his queenside pawns and shift his attention away from the standard kingside assault) 12...♖a6 13 ♘ed4 ♘xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗c7 15 ♖f2 ♖fe8 16 f5 e5?! 17 fxe6 fxe6 18 e5 ♘d5 19 exd6 ♗d7 (19...♗xd6 loses a piece after 20 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 21 dxc4 ♖xc4 22 ♗d4+) 20 dxc4 ♘f4 21 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 22 ♗d4 ♘g2 23 ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 24 ♖xg2 ♖xc4 25 ♘e5 ♖d5+ 26 ♖g3 ♖ed8 27 d7 1-0 Smyslov-Taimanov USSR Olympiad 1959.

b) 11...♘e8 (there is some debate as to what is the best square for the king's knight, when it uncovers the diagonal of the dark-squared bishop) 12 ♗e1 ♘c7 13 f5 ♘b5 14 ♗h4 ♘bd4 15 ♘exd4 ♘xd4 16 ♖h6 f6 (Black is understandably wary about the prospect of ♘g5. If 16...♘xc2!? then White creates attacking chances after 17 ♖a1 {17 ♘g5 f6 18 ♖xg7 fxe5! should save Black} 17...♘d4 18 ♖xg7 ♘xf3+ 19 ♖xf3 ♖xg7 20 g5) 17 ♘xd4 cxd4 18 g5 ♗e8 19 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 20 ♗f2 gxf5 21 exf5 fxe5 22 ♗xd4+ ♖f6 23 ♖ael ♖f8 (23...a6 has the merit of saving the a-pawn although White has a decent attack after 24 ♖e3 ♗d8 25 ♖g3) 24 ♖e3 ♖b7 (24...♗d8 is not much better when 25 ♗xa7 ♖b5 26 ♖fel is good for White) 25 ♖e6 ♗d8 26 ♗xa7 ♖xg2 27 ♖xg2 ♖f7 28 ♖fel ♖xe6 29 fxe6+ ♖g8 30 ♖f1 ♖c8 31 ♖f7 led to victory in A.Rodriguez-Seminara, Buenos Aires 1998.

c) 11...♘d7 (More popular than 11...♘e8, partly due to the fact that when f4-f5 is played the e5 square can be a strong outpost for a black

knight) 12 ♗e1 a5 13 f5 (as usual the f-pawn advances in order to probe for weaknesses and open the c1-h6 diagonal for White's bishop) 13...♘de5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 ♖g5 a4 16 ♖d1 ♖d7 17 ♗f2 ♘c6 18 b3 ♘e5 19 ♗h4 ♖e8 20 ♖f2 (the queenside counterplay is slow enough to allow White time to double his rooks on the f-file) 20...axb3 21 axb3 ♖a8 22 ♖df1 ♖a2 23 ♘c1 ♖a1 24 ♖e3 ♖b5 25 g5 with excellent attacking chances, Giorgadze-Xu Jun, Erevan Olympiad 1996.

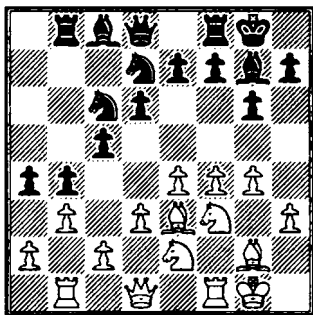


### 12 ♖e3

White carries on developing. It is also possible to try the natural-looking 12 f5. The game Morovic Fernandez-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 1994, continued 12 f5!? c4!? 13 ♖e3 cxd3 (13...♖a6?!, to exert pressure on the d-pawn, is not impressive after 14 d4! c3 {14...♘xe4? allows 15 d5! winning} 15 d5 cxb2 16 ♖b1 ♘e5 17 ♘xe5 dxe5 18 ♖xb2 when White is a little better due to the kingside onslaught) 14 cxd3 ♖a6 15 ♘ed4 ♘xd4 16 ♘xd4 ♖c8 17 ♘f3 ♘d7 18 ♖f2 d5! 19 a3 ♘c5 (in his notes to the game Van Wely suggests 19...♖b7 20 axb4 axb4 21 ♖a7! ♖c7 as an alternative but I assume he missed

23 ♙f4! which wins material) 20 ♙xc5 dxe4 21 axb4 exf3 22 ♜xf3 (if 22 ♜xa5, then 22... ♙xc5 23 ♜xa6 ♜c7 24 ♜xf3 ♙xb2 gives Black good prospects of a draw thanks to his powerful bishop) 22...axb4 23 d4 ♙c4 24 ♜d1 b3! 25 g5! (the strong threat of f5-f6 requires accurate defence) 25...gxf5 26 ♜xf5 e6 27 ♜g4 f5 28 gxf6 ♜xf6 29 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 and White should have played 30 ♙e4 to ensure the game fizzled out to a draw.

12...♘d7 13 ♜b1 a4 14 b3



It is necessary to block the advance of the b-pawn because a direct attack with 14 ♜e1!? is quickly thwarted by 14...b3! 15 axb3 axb3 16 c3 ♙a6 and White will have to defend.

14...axb3 15 axb3

Despite the best of intentions Al Modiahki has been obliged to open the a-file. This means that White needs to get on with the job of attacking on the kingside before the black rooks infiltrate his position via a2.

15...♙b7 16 ♜e1

16 ♜d2!?, intending f4-f5 followed by ♙e3-h6 to exchange the key defensive piece, is also possible.

16...e6 17 f5!? exf5 18 gxf5 ♘ce5

Now that the e5 square is no longer controlled Black leaps at the

chance to install a knight on the important e5 square.

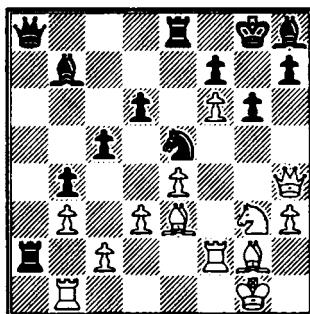
19 ♘xe5

If 19 ♘f4 then 19... ♜a8 20 ♜g3 ♜a2 21 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 22 fxg6 hxg6 23 ♜bc1 ♜d7 is equal.

19...♘xe5 20 ♜f2 ♙e8

Ponomarev is very cool under pressure and resists the chance to stop f5-f6 with 20...♙f6? which runs into 21 ♙h6 ♙h4 22 ♜f4 ♙e8 23 f6 g5 24 ♙xg5 ♘g6 25 ♜d2 winning.

21 f6 ♙h8 22 ♜h4 ♜a8 23 ♜f2 ♜a2 24 ♘g3 ♜a8?



Black needs to play 24...♘d7 followed by ...d5 to tie down White's pieces to the defence of f6—otherwise his bishop on h8 just looks silly.

25 ♜g5?

White misses his chance to finish in style with the astounding 25 ♘f5!! when acceptance of the sacrifice leads to an ordeal for Black. For example: 25...gxf5 26 exf5 ♙xg2 (26... ♜c8 27 ♙h6 ♜a1 28 ♜xa1 ♜xa1+ 29 ♜f1 ♜d4+ 30 ♜xd4 cxd4 31 ♙xb7 ♜b8 32 ♜a1 winning) 27 ♜xg2+ ♘g6 28 fxg6 hxg6 29 ♜f1 (intending ♜xg6+ swiftly followed by f6-f7+) 29... ♜a7 30 ♙c1 ♜c7 31 ♙b2 ♜a2 32 ♜xg6+! fxg6 33 f7+ ♜xf7 34 ♜xh8 mate.

25... ♙e6

After 25... ♖a1 White emerges on top thanks to kingside play: 26 ♖xa1 ♗xa1+ 27 ♜f1 ♗b2 28 ♘f5.

26 ♜b1 ♖a1 27 ♙c1 ♘d7 28 ♘f5

The f-pawn is lost so White decides to create complications. Instead, 28 ♙b2 is shown to be poor after 28... ♜xf1+ 29 ♜xf1 ♗a2 when White's position collapses.

28... ♙xf6 29 ♗g3 ♘e5?!

29... ♗a6 should be considered, to guard the d-pawn and remain a pawn up.

30 ♙b2 ♜xf1+ 31 ♜xf1 ♗d8? 32 ♘xd6! ♙a6

32... ♗xd6 runs into 33 ♜xf6! ♜xf6 34 ♙xe5 ♗e6 35 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 36 ♗b8+ and White wins.

33 ♘f5 ♙f8 34 ♘e3 ♙h4 35 ♗f4 ♙g5 36 ♗g3

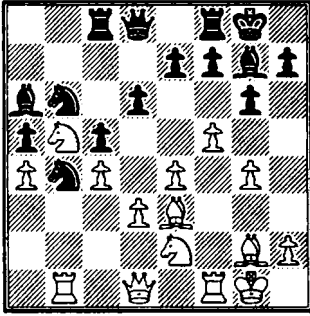
It is not worth White avoiding the repetition because 36 ♗f2 ♙h4 37 ♗e2 allows a tricky combination: 37... ♘xd3 38 cxd3 ♙xd3 39 ♗d2 ♙xf1 40 ♗xd8+ ♙xd8 41 ♘xf1 ♜d6, intending ... ♜d3, which gives Black the better ending.

36... ♙h4 37 ♗f4 ♙g5 38 ♗g3 ½-½

## Summary

Spassky-Geller is rightly regarded as a classic. White steamrollers Black with a fine attack that has been imitated many times and can even be played against the English Opening! A new idea is given a platform on the world stage in **Short-Kasparov**, where Black uncorks 11... ♘d7 to help argue Black's case by trying to exploit the a1-h8 diagonal. In addition to launching his usual kingside attack Short also switches his attention to the other flank—but Kasparov displays incredible defensive technique. When is a Pirc a Closed Sicilian? The answer is contained in **Al Modiahki - Ponomarev** where Black is lured away from his usual opening. The result is a typical kingside attack where Black tries to divert his opponent's attention by strong queenside counterplay.





18... $\Delta$ b7 19 h4 e6 20  $\Delta$ g5  $\mathbb{W}$ d7 21 f6  $\Delta$ h8 22  $\mathbb{D}$ f4  $\mathbb{F}$ d8 23 h5 (with the centre closed White can safely continue to advance his pawns in front of the white king) 23...d5 24 cxd5 exd5 25 e5 gxh5 26 e6! fxe6 27 gxh5  $\mathbb{W}$ f7 28  $\mathbb{W}$ g4 1-0 Maiwald-Pähitz, Dresden 2001.

7 0-0

7 h3 tends to transpose to the game, although in Slobodjan-Gallagher, German Team Ch 2000, Black quickly activated the queenside. That game went 7... $\mathbb{N}$ b8 8  $\Delta$ e3 0-0 9  $\mathbb{W}$ d2 b5 10 0-0 b4 11  $\mathbb{D}$ d1  $\mathbb{D}$ e8 12 a3 (White makes an effort to open the a-file for his rook) 12...a5 13 axb4 axb4 14 d4 cxd4 15  $\mathbb{D}$ xd4  $\Delta$ d7 16  $\mathbb{D}$ xc6  $\Delta$ xc6 17  $\mathbb{N}$ e1  $\mathbb{D}$ c7 18  $\Delta$ h6  $\Delta$ xh6 19  $\mathbb{W}$ xh6  $\mathbb{D}$ e6 20  $\mathbb{D}$ e3  $\mathbb{D}$ c5 21  $\mathbb{D}$ g4 when White had a slight edge.

7...0-0 8 h3

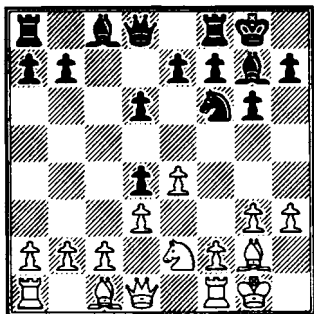
White wishes to stop a possible ... $\mathbb{D}$ g4. Instead 8  $\Delta$ e3  $\mathbb{N}$ b8 9 h3 transposes to Short-McShane in the  $\Delta$ e3 main line.

8... $\mathbb{D}$ d4

8...a6, to start a queenside pawn advance, is considered a slow approach after which 9  $\Delta$ e3 b5? 10 e5! is strong. With hindsight this

advance, exploiting the power of the bishop on g2, is obvious—yet it continues to catch people out. For instance: 10... $\mathbb{D}$ xe5 11  $\Delta$ xa8  $\Delta$ xh3 12  $\Delta$ g2 when Black had every right to resign in Wibe-Donne, Lugano Olympiad 1968. Also possible is 8... $\mathbb{D}$ d7 9  $\Delta$ g5  $\mathbb{D}$ d4 10  $\mathbb{D}$ d5 (a little ploy which not only hits e7 but, more importantly, makes way for c3 to oust Black's centralised knight) 10... $\mathbb{N}$ e8 11 c3  $\mathbb{D}$ xe2+ 12  $\mathbb{W}$ xe2 h6 13  $\Delta$ e3 e6 14  $\mathbb{D}$ f4 b6 15  $\mathbb{W}$ d2  $\Delta$ b7 16  $\mathbb{D}$ e2 (White has a comfortable middlegame; the simple plan is to restrict Black with d4 and follow up with the long-term idea of grabbing more space on the queenside) 16...h5 17 d4  $\mathbb{D}$ f6 18 f3  $\mathbb{W}$ c7 19  $\mathbb{N}$ fd1  $\mathbb{N}$ ad8 20  $\mathbb{W}$ e1 a6 21 g4 hxg4 22 hxg4 e5 23 d5  $\mathbb{D}$ h7 24  $\mathbb{W}$ h4  $\mathbb{W}$ e7 25  $\mathbb{W}$ xe7  $\mathbb{N}$ xe7 26 b4  $\Delta$ c8 27 a4 a5 28 bxa5 bxa5 29  $\mathbb{N}$ db1  $\Delta$ a6 30  $\mathbb{D}$ g3  $\mathbb{N}$ a7 31  $\mathbb{N}$ b6  $\Delta$ f8 32  $\Delta$ f1 (Black is still defending but now White is poised to infiltrate into the heart of Black's position) 32... $\Delta$ xf1 33  $\mathbb{N}$ xf1  $\mathbb{D}$ f6 34  $\mathbb{N}$ fb1  $\mathbb{D}$ d7 35  $\mathbb{N}$ b7  $\mathbb{N}$ da8 36  $\mathbb{D}$ f1 when the knight has served its purpose on g3 and can now be moved to a better square. Of course, this time-consuming task is possible thanks to White's stranglehold on the position, as seen in Landa-Kaiumov, Kobanya 1992. Things can easily go drastically wrong, judging by the evidence of Kulik-Esser, Dortmund 2000, where Black tested 8... $\Delta$ e6 and rapidly went astray after 9  $\Delta$ e3  $\mathbb{W}$ d7 10  $\mathbb{D}$ h2  $\mathbb{D}$ e5 11  $\mathbb{D}$ f4 c4? 12 d4 winning a piece.

9  $\mathbb{D}$ xd4 cxd4 10  $\mathbb{D}$ e2



10... ♖b6

The queen defends the d4 pawn.

Also possible:

a) 10... ♖d7 11 f4 f5 (otherwise White himself plays f5, followed by a pawn avalanche on the kingside) 12 ♖h2 (White wants to put pressure on the d4 pawn but is wary of any possible pins against the king after ... ♖b6) 12... ♖h8 13 exf5 gxf5 14 c3 dxc3 15 bxc3 ♖a5 16 ♖e3 ♖c5 17 ♖d4! (to exchange the dark-squared bishop, which is an important defensive piece) 17... e5 18 ♖e3 (the bishop retreats but now Black will be subjected to constant pressure because of his weakened pawns) 18... ♖e6 19 ♖b1 ♖ad8 20 d4 ♖e4 21 ♖xb7 (with no pawn on e7 the rook has even greater presence) 21... ♖xa2 22 ♖b4 ♖d5 23 ♖g1 (it makes sense to guard the bishop, e.g. 23 ♖a4 ♖xc3! 24 ♖xc3?? ♖xg2 mate) 23... ♖a8 24 ♖a4 ♖b2 25 ♖b4 ♖a2 26 ♖a4 ♖b2 27 ♖xa7 ♖xc3 28 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 29 ♖h5 exd4 (or 29... ♖xe3 30 ♖g5 ♖g8 31 ♖xg7! wins) 30 ♖xg7 1-0 Spassky-Gipslis, USSR Ch, Baku 1961.

b) 10... e5 then White has the initiative after 11 f4 ♖d7 12 f5! with a space advantage on the kingside.

11 c3 dxc3 12 bxc3 ♖d7 13 a4

White wishes to gain time by harassing the black queen.

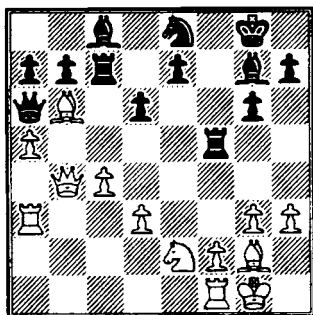
13... ♖ac8 14 c4 ♖e8

Or 14... ♖xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♖xa1 16 ♖e3 ♖b2 17 ♖f4 is better for White.

15 a5 ♖a6 16 ♖a3 ♖c5 17 ♖b3 ♖c8?!

A passive response that merely helps to congest Black's queenside. A better chance is 17... ♖xa5!? 18 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 19 ♖xb7 when the queen on the seventh rank gives him an edge.

18 ♖b4 f5 19 ♖e3 ♖c7 20 exf5 ♖xf5 21 ♖b6!



A wonderful move that exploits Black's misplaced and boxed-in queen.

21... ♖d7

After 21... axb6 22 axb6 ♖xa3 23 ♖xa3 ♖cc5 24 ♖a8 White is easily winning.

22 ♖d5+ ♖h8 23 ♖e6 ♖e5 24 ♖f4

A sign that White is toying with his opponent because 24 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 25 ♖f4 g5 26 ♖d5 ♖xh3 27 ♖a4!, intending ♖b4, also wins.

24... g5 25 d4 ♖e4 26 ♖f5 gxf4 27 ♖xe4

White is the exchange up and dominates the board. The rest is relatively easy for White:

27... e6 28 gxf4 ♖f7 29 ♖d3 ♖xf4 30 c5 ♖xd4 31 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 32 ♖xa6 axb6 33 ♖b5 ♖xc5 34 ♖f3

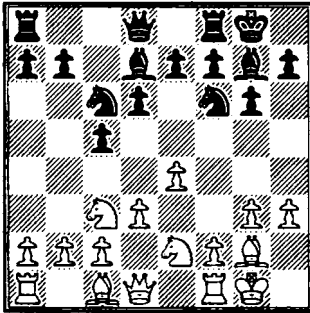
♞c7 35 ♜f8+ ♕g7 36 ♜xc8 ♖xb5  
37 ♜b8 ♕f6 1-0

The knight on e2 can sometimes play a more useful role by manoeuvring to g3 after White has played g3-g4.

### Brufman-Valois

Pan American Ch 1996

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4  
♗g2 ♗g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖ge2 ♖f6 7  
0-0 0-0 8 h3 ♗d7



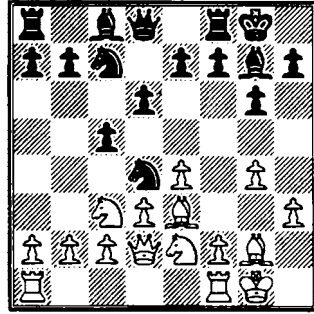
Black simply wishes to develop his pieces. It should be noted that for ease of reference the move-order has been changed. The game originally began 1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 ♖f6 4 ♗g2 g6 5 ♖ge2 ♗g7 6 d3 d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 ♗d7.

Instead 8...♖e8 is a major alternative:

a) 9 ♗e3 and now:

a1) 9...♖d4 10 ♜b1 (10 ♜c1 or 10 f4 are both worth considering) 10...♗e6 11 a3 a5 12 ♕h2 ♖c7 13 f4 ♜b8 14 g4 f5 15 ♖g3 ♜d7 16 exf5 gxf5 17 g5 b5 18 ♖ce2 ♖d5 19 ♗d2 b4 20 axb4 axb4 21 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 22 ♜e2 ♖c7 23 ♜fe1 ♜fe8 ½-½ Neumann-Rudolph, Hessen Ch 1988

a2) 9...♖c7 10 ♜d2 ♖d4 11 g4!?



An interesting idea to make room on g3 for the knight. This pawn advance is usually made after f4 but Schneider is hoping his move-order will allow more options such as ♗e3-h6) 11...♜b8 12 ♖g3 b5 13 ♖d1 (I prefer 13 a3!? in order to open the a-file for the rook) 13...b4 14 c3 ♖c6 15 f4 (15 ♗h6 bxc3 16 bxc3 ♗xh6 17 ♜xh6 ♗a6 18 ♜d2 with equal chances) 15...bxc3 16 bxc3 ♖b5 17 ♜c1 ♜a5 18 e5! (White finds a way to relieve the pressure on c3 by blocking the a1-h8 diagonal and at the same time unleash a discovered attack on the c6 knight) 18...♗d7 19 exd6 exd6 20 f5 (the advance f4-f5 is always an important part of White's attacking strategy. One plan might be to play ♗h6 followed by f6) 20...♗e5 21 ♖e4 f6 22 fxg6 hxg6 23 ♗f4 (the bishop on e5 is a key defensive piece because it protects f6 and d6—therefore White aims to exchange it) 23...♜d8 24 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 (or 24...fxe5 25 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 26 a4 ♖c7 27 ♜g5 ♗e8 28 ♖c3 ♖e6 29 ♜h4 and White has good attacking chances) 25 ♜h6 ♗e6 26 a4 d5 (or 26...♖c7 27 d4 gives White a winning position) 27 ♖xc5 ♜b6 28 d4 ♖c7 29 a5! ♜xa5 30 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 31 dxe5 1-0.

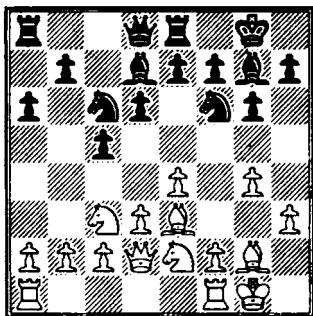
b) 9 f4 f5 (a point of the knight's retreat is to make way for this move

which blocks any ambitions White may have of f4-f5) 10  $\text{e}3$   $\text{d}4$  11  $\text{b}1$  a5 12 a4  $\text{c}7$  13  $\text{exf}5$   $\text{gxf}5$  14  $\text{ch}2$   $\text{b}8$  15  $\text{d}g1$   $\text{e}d7$  16  $\text{df}3$   $\text{e}c6$  17  $\text{w}d2$  led to roughly equal chances in Smirin-Huzman, Pula Zonal 2000.

9  $\text{e}3$   $\text{c}8$ ?

The rook will be doing very little on the c-file if White delays playing d3-d4. Also possible:

a) 9...a6?! (... $\text{b}8$  is a better way of preparing the advance of the b-pawn because later, when carrying out a pawn storm, he may have to lose a move with ...a6-a5) 10  $\text{w}d2$   $\text{e}8$  11 g4!



An instructive idea which makes room for his knight on g3, initiates a kingside pawn advance and keeps open the option of  $\text{e}3$ -h6) 11...b5 12  $\text{d}g3$  b4 13  $\text{d}d1$   $\text{ch}8$  14  $\text{e}h6$   $\text{g}8$  15  $\text{xg}7+$   $\text{xg}7$  16 f4 e6 17  $\text{e}3$   $\text{d}g8$  18 f5 gave White a kingside space advantage in Palau-Lynch, Buenos Aires 1931.

b) 9... $\text{b}8$  and now:

b1) 10 a4 a6 11  $\text{w}d2$   $\text{e}8$  12 f4 h6 13 g4 (this old game remains an excellent example of how White can storm the kingside) 13... $\text{w}b6$  14 a5  $\text{w}d8$  15 e5!  $\text{dxe}5$  16  $\text{fxe}5$   $\text{d}h7$  17  $\text{x}h6$   $\text{e}5$  18  $\text{e}f4$   $\text{f}8$  19  $\text{e}5$   $\text{dxe}5$  20  $\text{w}e3$   $\text{w}c7$  21  $\text{d}d5$   $\text{w}d6$  22

$\text{d}g3$   $\text{e}c6$  23  $\text{a}e1$  f6 24 c4  $\text{e}d5$  25  $\text{e}d5+$  e6 26  $\text{d}e4!$  (Dake blockades his own bishop in order to carry out a fine tactical combination) 26... $\text{w}e7$  27  $\text{d}xf6+$   $\text{x}xf6$  28  $\text{w}xe5$   $\text{x}f1+$  29  $\text{x}f1$   $\text{e}8$  30  $\text{e}e4$   $\text{w}g5$  31  $\text{x}g5$   $\text{d}xg5$  32  $\text{e}xg6$   $\text{d}d8$  33 h4  $\text{g}7$  34  $\text{e}h5$   $\text{d}h7$  35  $\text{f}7+$  1-0 Dake-Fine, New York 1930.

b2) 10  $\text{w}d2$  b5 11 a3 (or 11  $\text{d}d1$   $\text{w}a5$  12 c3  $\text{f}c8$  13  $\text{e}h6$   $\text{e}h8$  14 g4  $\text{d}e8$  15 f4 b4 16 f5 with good kingside play, Karpov-Tsamryuk, Leningrad 1967) 11...a5 12 a4 b4 13  $\text{d}d1$   $\text{d}e8$  14 c3  $\text{d}c7$  15 f4 (the threat is f4-f5) 15...f5 16  $\text{d}f2$  led to equal chances in King-Collinson, British Team Ch (4 NCL) 2000.

c) 9... $\text{w}c8$  10  $\text{ch}2$   $\text{d}e5$  11  $\text{d}g1$  (11  $\text{d}f4!$ ? is possible but White wants to play 11  $\text{w}d2?$  to exchange dark-squared bishops but the knight retreat is designed to stop 11... $\text{e}xh3!$  12  $\text{e}xh3$   $\text{d}f3+$  13  $\text{c}g2$   $\text{d}xd2$  14  $\text{e}xc8$   $\text{d}xf1$  and Black is ahead on material) 11... $\text{e}8$  12  $\text{w}d2$   $\text{b}8$  13  $\text{a}e1$  a6 14 f4  $\text{d}c6$  15 e5!  $\text{dxe}5$  (15... $\text{d}h5$  16 g4 wins) 16  $\text{fxe}5$   $\text{dxe}5$  17  $\text{e}f4$  and the pin on the knight gave White a winning advantage in Schubert-Waechter, Niederbayern 2000.

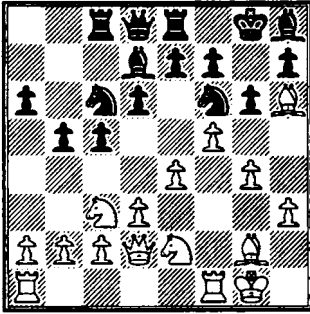
d) 9...h6 is an idea to stop White occupying the h6 square with a bishop: 10  $\text{w}d2$   $\text{ch}7$  11 f4 e6 12 g4  $\text{w}e7$  13  $\text{d}g3$  when the idea of f4-f5 gave White an edge in Wade-Cherta, Barcelona 1946.

10  $\text{w}d2$   $\text{e}8$  11  $\text{e}h6$

A regular theme in the Closed Sicilian because White is always happy to exchange one of Black's key defensive pieces.

Nevertheless 11 f4, intending g3-g4 and f4-f5, looks like a reasonable alternative.

11... $\text{e}h8$  12 f4 a6 13 f5 b5 14 g4



The plan of  $\Delta$ e3-h6 followed by advancing the kingside pawns is a powerful feature of the Closed Sicilian—and hard to resist.

14...b4 15  $\Delta$ d1  $\Delta$ e5 16  $\Delta$ g3 a5?!

16... $\Delta$ c6 is an improvement when 17 g5  $\Delta$ fd7 18  $\text{W}$ f2 gives White slightly the better chances.

17 g5  $\Delta$ h5 18  $\Delta$ xh5 gxh5

Black's kingside pawn barrier is broken and it is difficult to construct a defence.

19  $\text{W}$ f2

19  $\text{W}$ e2 allows Black to conjure up some counterplay by 19... $\text{W}$ b6! 20  $\Delta$ h1 c4.

19... $\Delta$ c6 20  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ d7 21 g6

Brufman is really going for it with a direct attack that will enable his well-placed pieces to infiltrate Black's camp.

21... $\Delta$ e5 22 g7!  $\Delta$ xg7 23  $\text{W}$ g3  $\Delta$ g6 24 fxc6 hxc6 25  $\Delta$ xg7  $\Delta$ xg7 26  $\Delta$ f5+  $\Delta$ h8 27  $\Delta$ h6 1-0

Once again the theme is g3-g4 followed by  $\Delta$ e2-g3 to help support the advance f4-f5. However, this time the attack is too slow and Black, with great style, reacts with a quick counterattack.

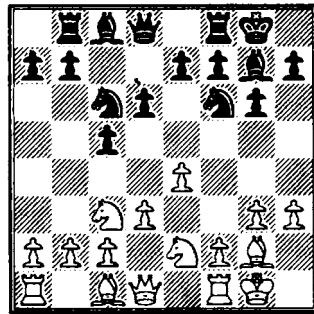
### Knoppert-Van Wely

Dordrecht rapidplay 2000

1 e4 c5 2  $\Delta$ e2

This idea was sometimes played by Fischer. It keeps open options of playing d2-d4 if Black is fooled into playing a variation of the Sicilian he is not familiar with—for example: 2...e6 is not very useful for a Dragon player after 3 d4. At club level it may well gain some time on the clock while Black is deciding how to meet the unusual opening choice.

2...d6 3  $\Delta$ bc3  $\Delta$ f6 4 g3 g6 5  $\Delta$ g2  $\Delta$ g7 6 d3 0-0 7 0-0  $\Delta$ c6 8 h3  $\text{W}$ b8



9 f4

White adopts the traditional idea of advancing his kingside pawns. Other moves:

a) 9  $\text{W}$ b1 b5 10 a3  $\Delta$ d7 11 b4 (this idea of blocking the queenside has not caught on because Black is not faced with any threats) 11... $\Delta$ d4 12  $\Delta$ b2  $\Delta$ b6 13  $\Delta$ xd4 cxd4 14  $\Delta$ e2  $\Delta$ a4 15  $\Delta$ a1 (15  $\Delta$ xd4?!  $\Delta$ xd4 16  $\Delta$ xd4  $\Delta$ c3 is better for Black) 15... $\text{W}$ b6 16  $\text{W}$ d2  $\Delta$ d7 17  $\text{W}$ bc1  $\text{W}$ bc8 18 c3 dxc3 19  $\Delta$ xc3  $\Delta$ xc3 20  $\Delta$ xc3  $\Delta$ xc3 21  $\text{W}$ xc3  $\text{W}$ xc3 22  $\text{W}$ xc3  $\text{W}$ c8 23  $\text{W}$ b2  $\text{W}$ c6 and the domination of the c-file gave Black the better chances in Tarjan-Browne, Lone Pine 1975.

b) 9 a4 a6 10 f4  $\Delta$ d7 11  $\Delta$ e3 b5 12 axb5 axb5 13  $\text{W}$ d2 b4 14  $\Delta$ d1  $\text{W}$ b6 15 f5  $\Delta$ d4 16 g4 (16  $\Delta$ xd4 is

another idea when 16...cxd4 17  $\text{d}6$ , intending a kingside pawn advance, is promising for White) 16...b3! 17 c3  $\text{d}c2$  18  $\text{b}1$   $\text{d}xe3$  19  $\text{d}xe3$   $\text{d}h6$  with good play on the dark squares, Rodriguez-G.Hernandez, Sao Paulo, 1992

c) 9  $\text{d}e3$  is also possible when the position is similar to the previous main game and play might continue 9...b5:

c1) 10 d4 b4 11  $\text{d}d5$   $\text{d}d7$  12 dxc5 dxc5 13  $\text{c}1$   $\text{a}6$  14  $\text{e}1$  e6 15  $\text{d}f4$   $\text{e}7$  and Black's bishop-pair give him an edge, Gruenfeld-Van Wely, New York 1994.

c2) 10  $\text{d}d2$  and now:

c21) 10...b4 11  $\text{d}d1$  e5 12 f4 (12  $\text{d}h6$ !? should be considered) 12... $\text{d}d4$  13 g4 exf4 14  $\text{d}xf4$   $\text{d}e6$  15  $\text{d}g3$   $\text{d}e8$  16 a3 b3 17 c3  $\text{d}8c7$  18  $\text{d}e3$   $\text{a}6$  19  $\text{f}2$   $\text{c}8$  20  $\text{a}f1$   $\text{d}h6$  1/2-1/2 Boyd-Acs, Baden 1999.

c22) 10... $\text{d}d7$  11  $\text{d}h6$  (White wants to exchange the important defender on g7 before advancing the kingside pawns) 11... $\text{c}7$  12  $\text{d}xg7$   $\text{c}xg7$  13 f4 e5? 14 fxe5  $\text{d}xe5$  15  $\text{d}xf6$  1-0 Sulleva Baiget-Flores, Linan 1999.

c23) 10... $\text{d}e8$  11  $\text{d}h6$  e5 12  $\text{d}d5$   $\text{d}c7$  13  $\text{d}xg7$   $\text{c}xg7$  14  $\text{d}e3$   $\text{d}d4$  15 c3  $\text{d}xe2+$  16  $\text{c}xe2$  b4 17  $\text{d}d2$  a5 18 f4 f6 19 a4 h5 20 h4  $\text{h}8$  21  $\text{f}2$  (White has the simple and good plan of doubling rooks and preparing the advance f4-f5—a main theme in this line) 21... $\text{d}e8$  22  $\text{a}f1$   $\text{d}d7$  23 f5  $\text{c}f7$  24  $\text{d}h3$   $\text{c}f8$  25  $\text{d}d5$  g5?! (25... $\text{c}g7$  is necessary when 26 fxc6  $\text{d}xh3$  27  $\text{d}xf6$   $\text{c}xg6$  28  $\text{d}d7+$   $\text{c}e7$  is fine for Black although 26  $\text{c}h2$  maintains the tension) 26 hxg5 fxc5 27  $\text{c}xg5$   $\text{c}g7$  28  $\text{c}h4$   $\text{c}f7$  29 g4  $\text{d}b7$  30  $\text{d}e3$  d5 31 g5 dxe4 32 dxe4  $\text{d}d8$  33  $\text{d}g4$   $\text{c}c4$  34  $\text{d}xe5$  1-0 Pedersen-Ekebjærg, Danish Ch 1967.

### 9... $\text{d}d7$

Van Wely follows the standard idea of activating the queenside. In the game Hofmann-Marjanović, Bled 1996, Black tried 9...e5 but missed the potential danger of f4-f5 and was crushed after 10  $\text{d}e3$   $\text{d}h5$  11 f5! h6 12  $\text{d}d2$   $\text{c}h7$  13 g4  $\text{d}f6$  14 g5 hxg5 15  $\text{d}xg5$   $\text{c}b6$  16  $\text{c}e1$   $\text{d}d4$  (16... $\text{d}e8$  17  $\text{c}h4+$   $\text{c}g8$  18 f6  $\text{d}h8$  19  $\text{d}d5$  wins) 17  $\text{c}h4+$   $\text{d}h5$  18  $\text{d}g3$   $\text{h}8$  19  $\text{d}d5$   $\text{c}xb2$  20 fxc6+ fxc6 21  $\text{d}xh5$  1-0.

### 10 g4

Knoppert is focused on creating a rapid kingside pawn attack. This has a lot of merit but against a world class player like Van Wely one must always watch out for a counter-attack. 10  $\text{d}e3$ !? is the main alternative to bolster his development when, after 10...b5, play might continue:

a) 11 a3  $\text{d}e8$  (the bishop on g7 can now support a possible ... $\text{d}d4$ ) 12 d4 cxd4 13  $\text{d}xd4$  b4 14  $\text{d}xc6$  (not 14 axb4? because Black has a tactic in 14... $\text{d}xd4$ ! 15  $\text{d}xd4$   $\text{c}xb4$  16  $\text{d}f2$   $\text{c}xb2$  leaving him a pawn up) 14... $\text{d}xc6$  15 axb4  $\text{c}xb4$  16  $\text{c}xa7$   $\text{c}xb2$  17 e5 (White can also try 17  $\text{d}d5$   $\text{d}xd5$  18 exd5 with a slight edge) 17... $\text{d}xg2$  18  $\text{c}xg2$   $\text{d}c7$  19 exd6 exd6 20  $\text{d}a4$   $\text{a}2$  21  $\text{d}b6$   $\text{c}e8$ ! 22  $\text{c}xc7$   $\text{c}xa4$  23  $\text{c}xd6$   $\text{c}xc2+$  24  $\text{c}xc2$   $\text{c}xc2+$  25  $\text{d}f2$   $\text{c}e4+$  26  $\text{c}g1$  1/2-1/2 Spassky-Fischer, Belgrade 1992.

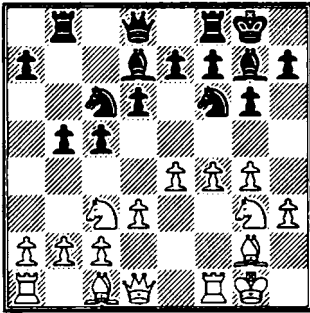
b) 11  $\text{d}d2$  b4 12  $\text{d}d1$  and now:

b1) 12... $\text{d}e8$  13 f5  $\text{d}d4$  14 g4  $\text{d}c6$  (or 14...a5 15  $\text{d}xd4$  cxd4 16  $\text{d}h6$   $\text{c}c7$  17  $\text{d}xg7$   $\text{c}xg7$  18 a3! gave White counterplay on the a-file in Turner-Hennigan, British Ch 1995) 15  $\text{d}g3$   $\text{c}c7$  16 c3 bxc3 17 bxc3  $\text{c}a5$ ?! 18 cxd4  $\text{c}xd2$  19  $\text{d}xd2$   $\text{d}xd4+$  20  $\text{d}f2$   $\text{d}xa1$  21  $\text{c}xa1$  with the better position for

White, thanks to his two pieces for the rook, Yodornov-Bellaiche, World Junior Ch, Oropesa del Mar 2000.

b2) 12... $\blacktriangleleft$ b6 13 g4 (13 c3 is also possible) 13... $\Delta$ d4 14  $\Delta$ g3  $\Delta$ c6 15  $\Delta$ f2 with equal chances, Day-A.Ivanov, Montreal Zonal 1981.

10...b5 11  $\Delta$ g3



11...a5

The latest twist in this line. Van Wely maintains the tension by reserving the option of ...b5-b4. The alternative, 11...b4 12  $\Delta$ ce2, leads to double-edged middlegames where White is attacking on the kingside and Black is seeking to create a diversion on the queenside. For example:

a) 12...a5 13 f5 a4 14  $\Delta$ f4 (once f4-f5 has been achieved White endeavours to exchange the dark-squared bishops) 14... $\Delta$ e8 15  $\Delta$ b1 (15  $\blacktriangleleft$ c1!?) has been suggested by Daniel King as a possible improvement on the basis of 16 b3  $\Delta$ b2 17  $\blacktriangleleft$ d2  $\Delta$ xa1 18  $\Delta$ xa1  $\Delta$ g7 19  $\Delta$ h6, when White has some attack for the exchange. I suspect Black is more likely to play 16... $\Delta$ xa1 17  $\blacktriangleleft$ xa1 f6 when White still has work to do to prove he has sufficient compensation for the sacrifice) 15...a3 16 b3  $\Delta$ c7 17  $\blacktriangleleft$ d2  $\Delta$ b5 18  $\Delta$ h6  $\Delta$ c3 19  $\Delta$ xg7  $\Delta$ xe2+ 20  $\Delta$ xe2

$\Delta$ xg7 21  $\Delta$ f2 f6 22 g5 fxg5, Maus-Bönsch, Germany Team Ch 1993, and now 23  $\blacktriangleleft$ xg5! would have maintained White's strong attack.

b) 12... $\Delta$ e8 13 f5 a5 14  $\Delta$ b1 a4 15  $\Delta$ g5 a3 16 b3  $\Delta$ d4 17  $\blacktriangleleft$ d2  $\Delta$ c6 18  $\Delta$ h6  $\blacktriangleleft$ xb6 (not 18... $\Delta$ xh6 19  $\blacktriangleleft$ xh6  $\Delta$ xc2? when 20  $\Delta$ bcl  $\Delta$ d4 21  $\Delta$ xd4 cxd4 22  $\Delta$ xc6 wins) 19  $\Delta$ h1  $\Delta$ xe2 20  $\Delta$ xe2  $\Delta$ f6 21  $\blacktriangleleft$ g5  $\Delta$ h8 22  $\Delta$ f4 gave White decent attacking chances in Maus-Moiseev, German Team Ch 1995.

12  $\Delta$ e3

I prefer 12 f5, aiming to exchange dark-squared bishops with  $\Delta$ f4 and  $\blacktriangleleft$ d2, as in the note to Black's 11th. After 12...a4 White should respond with 13  $\Delta$ b1 because the natural 13 a3 runs into 13...b4 14 axb4 a3! 15 b5 (15 bxa3  $\Delta$ xg4 16 hxg4  $\Delta$ xc3 17  $\Delta$ b1 cxb4 18 axb4  $\Delta$ xb4 is equal and 15  $\Delta$ xa3? cxb4 is winning) 15...axb2 16  $\Delta$ xb2  $\Delta$ d4 with equality.

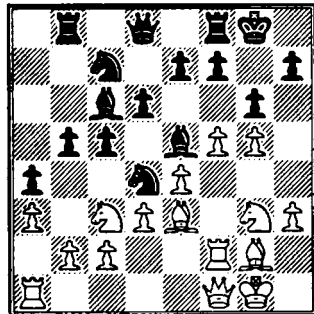
12...a4 13 a3  $\Delta$ d4 14 g5

14  $\blacktriangleleft$ d2 is also possible, with the plan f4-f5 and an eventual  $\Delta$ e3-h6.

14... $\Delta$ e8 15 f5  $\Delta$ c6 16  $\Delta$ f2  $\Delta$ c7 17  $\blacktriangleleft$ f1?!

17  $\blacktriangleleft$ d2 looks more logical, intending to double rooks on the f-file. If 17...b4 18 axb4 cxb4 19  $\Delta$ xa4 b3? 20 f6! wins.

17... $\Delta$ e5!



Van Wely uses all his skill to pose White problems. It is not so easy to defend the attacked knight without losing material.

18  $\psi h2$

18  $\Delta f4 \Delta xf4$  19  $\Sigma xf4 \Delta xc2$  20  $\Sigma c1 \Delta e3$  and the extra pawn gives Black the better game and 18  $\Delta ge2 \Delta xc2$  is also good for Black.

18... $b4$  19  $axb4 \Sigma xb4$  20  $\Sigma b1 \psi b8$  21  $\Delta d5$

21  $\Delta d1$ , threatening c3, is Knopert's last chance, although after 21... $\Sigma b7$ , countering the threat of c2-c3, Black has the superior position because he is the one who is now attacking. Meanwhile White's prospects on the kingside have come to a standstill due to the powerful bishop on e5.

21... $\Delta xd5$  22  $exd5 \Sigma xb2$  23  $\Sigma c1 a3$

Van Wely has won a pawn and has a strong passed a-pawn to boot.

24  $c3 \Sigma xf2$  25  $\psi xf2 \Delta xf5$  26  $\Delta f4 \psi b2!$

Black has found a great way to exploit White's troubled position, overloaded with defensive duties.

27  $\Sigma c2 \Delta xf4$  0-1

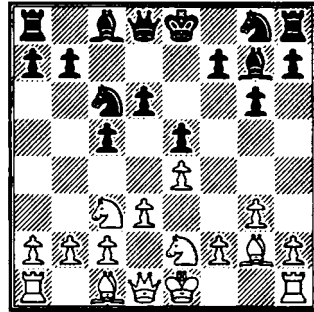
The former world championship contender Nigel Short has introduced plenty of good ideas in the Closed Sicilian. In the following game he gives a neglected line a new twist with 7 h4.

### Short-Stohl

European Team Ch 1999

1  $e4 c5$  2  $\Delta c3 d6$  3  $d3 \Delta c6$  4  $g3 g6$  5  $\Delta g2 \Delta g7$  6  $\Delta ge2 e5$

A popular move which rose to prominence after Botvinnik employed it in his world championship match against Smyslov in 1954.



Black wants to block White's king's bishop and make it awkward to play d3-d4. He also has the option of meeting a later f2-f4 with ...f7-f5 to block the habitual advance of White's f-pawn. The main drawback to Black's position is that the d5 square is weak and White will strive to occupy it with a knight.

7  $h4$

It seems outrageous to start attacking so soon but in fact this advance is a *positional* idea, popularised by the Austrian player Wittmann and which has had good practical results.

7... $h6$

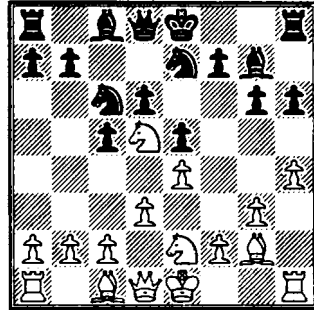
In the game Wittmann-Kraschl, Austrian Team Ch 1995, Black gave the game a different character by playing 7... $\Delta d4$  but landed in the worse position after 8  $\Delta xd4 cxd4$  9  $\Delta d5 \Delta e6$  10  $c4 dxc3$  11  $bxc3 \Delta xd5$  12  $exd5 \psi a5$  13 0-0  $\Delta e7$  14  $\psi b3 \psi a6$  15  $\Sigma b1 \Sigma b8$  16  $\Sigma d1$  0-0 17  $a4 b6$  18  $\Delta a3 \Sigma fd8$  19  $\Delta h3$  since White's active bishop-pair gave him the better chances. Instead, King-A.Sokolov, Swiss Team Ch, saw 7... $h5$  to halt the progress of White's h-pawn. However this concedes the g5 square to White's bishop which can no longer be driven away by... $h6$ . The game continued 8  $\Delta d5 \Delta ce7$  (8... $\Delta ge7$

can be met by 9  $\Delta$ g5) 9  $\Delta$ ec3  $\Delta$ xd5 10  $\Delta$ xd5  $\Delta$ e6 11 c4  $\Delta$ xd5 12 cxd5  $\Delta$ h6 13 b4  $\Delta$ xc1 (13...cxb4 14  $\Delta$ a4+  $\Delta$ d7 15  $\Delta$ xb4 with good play on the queenside) 14  $\Delta$ xc1 b6 15  $\Delta$ h3  $\Delta$ h6 16  $\Delta$ d2  $\Delta$ f8 17 0-0  $\Delta$ g7 18 f4 exf4 19  $\Delta$ xf4  $\Delta$ e8 20  $\Delta$ b2+  $\Delta$ e5 (20... $\Delta$ h7 21  $\Delta$ f6 is better for White) 21 bxc5 bxc5 22  $\Delta$ xc5! and White gains an extra pawn.

### 8 $\Delta$ d5

The knight on d5 is well-placed. 8 h5 looks tempting but actually it is ineffective because Black can allow his kingside formation to be compromised and castle queenside. For example: 8...g5 9 f4  $\Delta$ g4 (the bishop cannot easily be driven away from this square) 10  $\Delta$ e3 (10 fxg5!? is also possible when 10...hxg5 11  $\Delta$ d2 is slightly better for Black) 10...gxf4 11 gxf4  $\Delta$ ge7 (I think a better idea is to play 11...exf4 since 12  $\Delta$ xf4  $\Delta$ f6 puts pressure on the h5 pawn, thereby ensuring an advantage) 12  $\Delta$ d2  $\Delta$ d4 13  $\Delta$ g3  $\Delta$ d7 14 f5! (this traditional advance claims more territory) 14... $\Delta$ f6 15  $\Delta$ f2 0-0-0 16 a4 (16  $\Delta$ ac1!? is worth contemplating with a view to 17  $\Delta$ xh6) 16... $\Delta$ dg8 17  $\Delta$ b5  $\Delta$ b8 18 b4  $\Delta$ g5! 19  $\Delta$ a2  $\Delta$ xe3+ 20  $\Delta$ xe3  $\Delta$ f3 21  $\Delta$ xd4  $\Delta$ xg2 22  $\Delta$ xg2 exd4 23  $\Delta$ f2  $\Delta$ g4 24 b5 (24 bxc5!?  $\Delta$ hg8 25  $\Delta$ h3 dxc5 maintains Black's advantage) 24... $\Delta$ hg8 25  $\Delta$ h3 d5 26  $\Delta$ f3 dxe4 27 dxe4  $\Delta$ d6 28 c4 (28  $\Delta$ h2  $\Delta$ f4 29  $\Delta$ e2  $\Delta$ e5 is very good) 28... $\Delta$ e5 29  $\Delta$ e2  $\Delta$ c8! (Black has such a stranglehold on the position that he has the luxury of this knight manoeuvre) 30 a5  $\Delta$ d6 31  $\Delta$ h2  $\Delta$ xc4 32 a6 b6 33  $\Delta$ b3 (33  $\Delta$ g2 does not help after 33... $\Delta$ e3 34  $\Delta$ g1  $\Delta$ f4 35  $\Delta$ e2  $\Delta$ g4+ winning) 33... $\Delta$ d6 34  $\Delta$ f3 c4 0-1 Kornev-Korotylev, Bor 2000.

### 8... $\Delta$ ge7

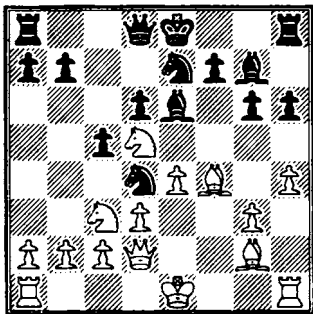


### 9 $\Delta$ ec3

A logical choice to reinforce the knight on d5. In the game Fries Nielsen-Curt Hansen, Danish Ch 1999, White supported the knight with 9 c4, creating a position that is similar to the English. There followed 9... $\Delta$ xd5 10 cxd5  $\Delta$ b8 11  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ d7 12  $\Delta$ d2 b6 13 a3 a5 14  $\Delta$ c3  $\Delta$ f6 15 f3  $\Delta$ h5 16  $\Delta$ e2 f5 17 exf5 gxf5 (not 17... $\Delta$ xf5? 18 g4 winning) 18 f4  $\Delta$ f6 19  $\Delta$ f3  $\Delta$ f7 20 0-0-0  $\Delta$ f6 21  $\Delta$ c3  $\Delta$ b7 (increasing the pressure on the isolated pawn on d5) 22  $\Delta$ g2 0-0 23  $\Delta$ hf1  $\Delta$ h8 24 fxe5 dxe5 25  $\Delta$ d2 h5 (if 25... $\Delta$ xd5 then 26  $\Delta$ xd5  $\Delta$ xd5 27  $\Delta$ xh6 leaves the black king exposed) 26  $\Delta$ h6  $\Delta$ ad8 (or 26... $\Delta$ xd5? is no good after 27  $\Delta$ xg7+  $\Delta$ xg7 28  $\Delta$ xd5  $\Delta$ xd5 29  $\Delta$ xd5  $\Delta$ xd5 30  $\Delta$ g5+ and White is winning) 27  $\Delta$ del  $\Delta$ xd5 28  $\Delta$ xd5  $\Delta$ xd5 29  $\Delta$ g5 (planning 30  $\Delta$ xf5) 29... $\Delta$ e6 30  $\Delta$ xg7+  $\Delta$ xg7 31  $\Delta$ xh5+  $\Delta$ g8 32  $\Delta$ e2  $\Delta$ c8 (32... $\Delta$ b3!? has to be considered) 33  $\Delta$ xe5  $\Delta$ xe5 34  $\Delta$ xe5  $\Delta$ xd3 35 g4! with a winning advantage.

9... $\Delta$ e6 10 f4 exf4 11  $\Delta$ xf4  $\Delta$ d4 12  $\Delta$ d2

The great thing about the Closed is that the plan of action for White is so easy to follow.



Here Short adopts the formula of reinforcing the c1-h6 diagonal, to deter Black from castling kingside, and then doubling rooks on the f-file.

12...♖c6 13 0-0 ♖e5 14 ♖ab1 ♖c8 15 ♖d1 ♖g4 16 ♖1e3

This is a winning attempt because 16 ♖f2, to avoid a knight fork on f3, allows 16...♖e2+ 17 ♖h1 ♖xf4 18 ♖xf4 with equal chances.

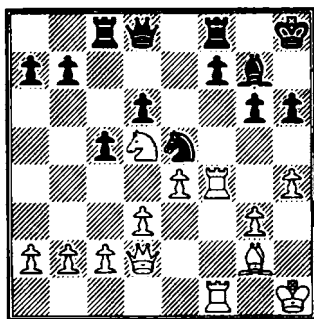
16...♖e2+

A sterner test is the suggestion 16...♖ef3+ 17 ♖xf3 ♖xf3+ 18 ♖xf3 ♖xf3, winning the exchange, but 19 ♖f2 ♖h5 20 g4 g5 21 ♖g3 ♖g6 22 h5 ♖h7 23 ♖c4 ♖c6 24 ♖h2 gives White excellent compensation.

17 ♖h1 ♖xf4 18 ♖xf4 ♖e6 19 ♖bf1 0-0

19...g5!? is also possible.

20 ♖f6+ ♖h8 21 ♖ed5 ♖xd5 22 ♖xd5



This is the sort of position in which Short excels. He has a strong knight on d5 and doubled rooks on the f-file—with no sign of counterplay from Black. A perfect middle-game scenario for devotees of ♘ge2 because, while White strives to gradually increase his advantage, Black has the thankless task of passive defence.

22...♖d7 23 ♖h2 ♖ce8 24 ♖h3 ♖d8 25 a4 h5 26 ♖4f2 ♖g8 27 b3 ♖c6 28 c3 ♖e5 29 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 30 ♖xf6 ♖e5 31 d4

Short's patient approach pays off because he is now able to knock the knight off its central pedestal.

31...cxd4 32 cxd4 ♖c6 33 ♖f4 ♖e7

Of course 33...♖xd4? fails to 34 ♖xd6 ♖e2 35 ♖xd8 ♖xf4 36 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 37 ♖xf4 and White has an extra piece.

34 ♖e6!

Emphasising the power of White's pieces. The tripled pieces on the f-file have enabled Short to uncork this wonderful move to break Black's resistance.

34...♖xe6 35 ♖xe6 fxe6 36 ♖c1

The active queen is too much for Black and the game was rapidly concluded:

36...♖xd4 37 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 38 ♖g2 ♖c6 39 b4 ♖e8

39...♖xb4 40 ♖c4 wins.

40 b5 ♖e7 41 ♖f4 1-0.

The possibility of transposing into ♘ge2 lines is investigated in the next game. The original move-order is given in the note to White's 9th move but the game is more logically placed in this section. Thus readers will no longer wonder why some sources fail to mention the transposition and will see how it fits into the 6 ♘ge2 strategy.

**Kosten-Hennigan**  
British Team Ch (4NCL) 2000

1 e4 c5 2  $\Delta$ c3  $\Delta$ c6 3 g3 g6 4  $\Delta$ g2  $\Delta$ g7 5  $\Delta$ ge2 d6 6 d3 e5 7 0-0

An alternative is 7  $\Delta$ d5 to exploit the d5 square. Then 7... $\Delta$ ge7:

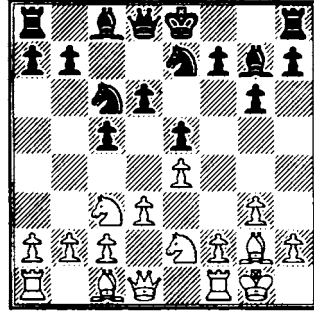
a) 8 c3  $\Delta$ xd5 9 exd5  $\Delta$ e7 10 0-0 11 f4 (Botvinnik criticised this move because it limits the mobility of both the knight and queen's bishop) 11... $\Delta$ d7 12 h3  $\mathbb{W}$ c7 13  $\Delta$ e3  $\mathbb{A}$ ae8 14  $\mathbb{W}$ d2  $\Delta$ f5 15  $\Delta$ f2 h5 (a good way to deter g3-g4) 16  $\mathbb{A}$ el  $\mathbb{W}$ d8 17  $\mathbb{C}$ h2  $\Delta$ h6 18 h4  $\mathbb{W}$ f6 19  $\Delta$ e4 exf4 20  $\Delta$ xf4  $\Delta$ xh4! when the extra pawn gave Black a winning game, Smyslov-Botvinnik, World Championship, Moscow 1954.

b) 8  $\Delta$ ec3  $\mathbb{A}$ b8 9 h4 h6 10 a3  $\Delta$ xd5 11  $\Delta$ xd5  $\Delta$ e7 12  $\Delta$ xe7  $\mathbb{W}$ xe7 13  $\Delta$ d2 1/2-1/2 Spassky-Suba, Reggio Emilia 1986.

c) 8  $\Delta$ g5 h6 9  $\Delta$ f6  $\Delta$ xf6 (perhaps 9...0-0!? should be considered) 10  $\Delta$ xf6+  $\mathbb{C}$ f8 11  $\Delta$ c3 (an obvious plan to reinforce his control of the d5 square) 11... $\mathbb{C}$ g7 12  $\Delta$ fd5  $\Delta$ e6 13  $\Delta$ e3  $\mathbb{W}$ d7 14 f4 exf4 15 gxf4 f5 16  $\mathbb{W}$ d2  $\mathbb{A}$ ab8 17 0-0-0 b5 18  $\mathbb{A}$ hg1 b4 19 exf5  $\Delta$ xf5 20  $\Delta$ xc6  $\mathbb{W}$ xc6 21  $\Delta$ cd5  $\mathbb{C}$ f7 22  $\mathbb{A}$ xg6!  $\mathbb{C}$ xg6 23  $\Delta$ xf5  $\mathbb{C}$ f7 (or 23... $\Delta$ xf5 24  $\Delta$ e7+ wins) 24  $\Delta$ fe7  $\mathbb{W}$ b7 25  $\mathbb{W}$ g2  $\mathbb{A}$ hg8 26  $\mathbb{W}$ e4  $\mathbb{A}$ g7 27  $\mathbb{A}$ el 1-0 Spassky-Ostl, German Team Ch 1990.

7... $\Delta$ ge7 8  $\Delta$ e3

This is consistent with other lines in this chapter, where White develops the bishop to e3, puts the queen on d2, castles kingside and doubles rooks on the f-file. It makes White's task a lot easier when he knows what kind of middlegame to aim for, straight out of the opening. However it is far from being White's only choice here:



a) 8 a3 0-0 9  $\mathbb{A}$ b1 f5 10  $\Delta$ d2 (10 b4?! runs into 10...f4! when the pawn cannot be taken because of a discovered attack against the knight on c3) 10...a5 11 a4  $\Delta$ e6 12  $\Delta$ d5 h6 13 c3  $\mathbb{C}$ h7 14  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ f7 15 f4  $\Delta$ xd5 16 exd5  $\Delta$ e7 17  $\mathbb{W}$ b3 b6 18  $\mathbb{A}$ bel  $\mathbb{A}$ a7 19 c4 and White's space advantage gave him an edge in Spassky-Hort, German Team Ch 1986.

b) 8  $\Delta$ d5  $\Delta$ xd5 (8...0-0 is met by 9  $\Delta$ g5 f6 10  $\Delta$ e3, followed by  $\mathbb{W}$ d2 and castling kingside, with play similar to the main game) 9 exd5  $\Delta$ d4 10 c3  $\Delta$ xe2+ 11  $\mathbb{W}$ xe2 0-0 12  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ d7 13  $\mathbb{W}$ d2 f5 14 f4  $\mathbb{A}$ e8 15 fxe5  $\Delta$ xe5 16  $\mathbb{A}$ fe1 b5 17 d4 cxd4 18  $\Delta$ xd4  $\Delta$ xd4+ 19  $\mathbb{W}$ xd4  $\mathbb{W}$ b6 20  $\mathbb{W}$ xb6 axb6 21 a3  $\mathbb{A}$ xe1+ 22  $\mathbb{A}$ xe1  $\mathbb{A}$ e8 led to a draw in Parameswaran-Gufeld, Calcutta 1994.

c) 8 f4 0-0 9 fxe5 (9  $\Delta$ e3 transposes to the main game) 9...dxe5 10  $\Delta$ d5 (judging by the success of the game, I think this slightly different approach might soon become popular) 10... $\Delta$ xd5 11 exd5  $\Delta$ e7 12 c4  $\Delta$ f5 13  $\Delta$ c3  $\Delta$ d6 14  $\Delta$ e3 b6 15  $\mathbb{W}$ d2  $\Delta$ f5 16  $\Delta$ f2  $\Delta$ d7 17  $\Delta$ e4  $\Delta$ h6 18  $\mathbb{W}$ e2 f6 19  $\mathbb{A}$ el  $\Delta$ d4 20  $\mathbb{W}$ d1 f5 21  $\Delta$ c3  $\Delta$ g7 22  $\Delta$ e3 h6 23 a3 a5 24 d6! (White makes room for the knight to occupy the d5 square) 24... $\mathbb{A}$ a7 25

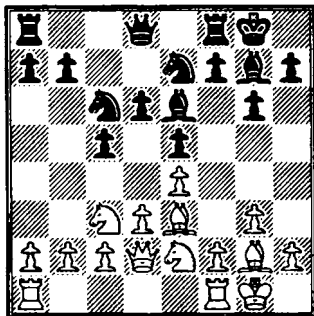
$\Delta d5$   $\textcircled{h}7$  26  $\textcircled{x}d4$   $cxd4$  27  $b3$   
 $b5$  28  $c5$  (28  $cxb5?$ !  $\textcircled{e}6$  29  $\textcircled{w}c2$   
 $\textcircled{x}d5$  30  $\textcircled{x}d5$   $\textcircled{w}xd6$  is slightly  
 better for Black) 28...  $b8$  29  $\textcircled{c}7$   
 $\textcircled{f}6$  30  $\textcircled{x}e5$  Kharitonov-Timofeev,  
 Kaluga 2000.

8...0-0 9  $\textcircled{w}d2$

I have changed the original move-  
 order to make it easier to follow but  
 the game actually arose from the  
 popular 6  $\textcircled{e}3$  line: 1  $e4$   $c5$  2  $\textcircled{c}3$   
 $\textcircled{c}6$  3  $g3$   $g6$  4  $\textcircled{g}2$   $\textcircled{g}7$  5  $d3$   $d6$  6  
 $\textcircled{e}3$   $e5$  7  $\textcircled{w}d2$   $\textcircled{g}e7$  8  $\textcircled{g}e2$  0-0 9  
 0-0.

9... $\textcircled{e}6$

The bishop provides some cover  
 to the d5 square. Also possible is  
 9... $\textcircled{d}4$ , which, after 10  $f4$   $\textcircled{e}6$ ,  
 tends to transpose to the main game  
 although Bisby-Kargin, Witley  
 1998, saw 10... $exf4$ . There  
 followed 11  $\textcircled{c}xf4$   $\textcircled{b}8$  12  $\textcircled{f}2$  (the  
 customary plan of doubling the  
 rooks on the f-file makes it easy for  
 White to make progress) 12... $\textcircled{c}ec6$   
 13  $\textcircled{a}f1$   $\textcircled{e}5$  14  $h3$   $f5$  15  $\textcircled{d}f5$   $\textcircled{f}7$   
 16  $\textcircled{g}5$   $\textcircled{w}f8$  17  $exf5$   $\textcircled{x}f5$  18  $g4!$   
 $\textcircled{e}6$  19  $\textcircled{x}f7$   $\textcircled{c}xf7$  (or 19... $\textcircled{x}f7$   
 20  $\textcircled{e}7$  wins) 20  $\textcircled{e}7$   $\textcircled{w}e8$  21  
 $\textcircled{d}f6!$   $\textcircled{x}f6$  22  $\textcircled{x}f6$  and the  
 domination of the dark-squares  
 around the black king gave White  
 excellent attacking chances.



10  $f4$

White adopts the traditional plan  
 of advancing the f-pawn. The game  
 Karpov-Volpert, Yalta 1966 went  
 10  $h3$   $\textcircled{w}d7$  11  $\textcircled{c}h2$   $f5$  12  $f4$  (it is  
 interesting to see how Karpov deals  
 with the problem of ... $f7-f5$ , which  
 blocks the position) 12... $b6$  13  
 $\textcircled{a}e1$   $\textcircled{a}e8$  14  $fxe5$   $dxe5$  15  $\textcircled{h}6$   
 (the theme of exchanging the dark-  
 squared bishop is a readily available  
 plan in the middlegame and in this  
 case it helps to weaken the e5 pawn)  
 15... $\textcircled{d}4$  16  $\textcircled{x}g7$   $\textcircled{c}xg7$  17  $exf5$   
 $gxf5$  18  $\textcircled{c}xd4$   $cxd4$  19  $\textcircled{e}2$   $h6$  20  
 $c3$   $dxc3$  21  $\textcircled{w}xc3$   $\textcircled{c}h7$  22  $\textcircled{x}e5$   
 $\textcircled{x}a2$  23  $\textcircled{d}f4$   $\textcircled{g}6$  24  $\textcircled{c}xg6$   $\textcircled{c}xg6$   
 25  $\textcircled{w}f4$  gave White the better  
 chances thanks to the exposed black  
 king. Another idea is 10  $\textcircled{h}6$  to  
 exchange the dark-squared bishops  
 before deciding upon the rest of  
 White's set-up. For example:  
 10... $\textcircled{w}d7$  11  $\textcircled{x}g7$   $\textcircled{c}xg7$  12  $f4$   
 $\textcircled{a}d8?$ ! (12... $f6$  is necessary to  
 cover the g5 square) 13  $f5!$   $gxf5$  14  
 $\textcircled{w}g5+$   $\textcircled{c}h8$  15  $\textcircled{w}f6+$   $\textcircled{c}g8$  16  $h4$   
 (the intention is simply  $h4-h5-h6$   
 and mate) 16... $h6$  17  $\textcircled{w}xh6$   $f6$  18  
 $exf5$  (18  $\textcircled{f}2!$ ?, intending to double  
 rooks, looks reasonable) 18... $\textcircled{c}xf5$   
 19  $\textcircled{x}f5$   $\textcircled{x}f5$  20  $\textcircled{d}5+$   $\textcircled{e}6$  21  
 $\textcircled{w}g6+$   $\textcircled{c}h8$  22  $\textcircled{w}h6+$   $\textcircled{c}g8$  23  
 $\textcircled{x}e6+$   $\textcircled{w}e6$  24  $\textcircled{d}e4$   $\textcircled{w}e7$  25  $\textcircled{f}1$   
 $f5$  26  $\textcircled{x}f5$   $\textcircled{x}f5$  27  $\textcircled{w}g6+$   $\textcircled{w}g7$  28  
 $\textcircled{w}xf5$   $\textcircled{w}h6$  29  $\textcircled{g}5$  led to equal  
 chances in Zaitsev-Bitman, Moscow  
 1966.

10... $\textcircled{d}4$

The knight comes to d4 to deter  
 White's plan of 11  $fxe5$   $dxe5$  12  
 $\textcircled{h}6$  because now 12... $\textcircled{x}h6$  13  
 $\textcircled{w}xh6$   $\textcircled{c}xc2$  wins a pawn. In  
 Neumark-Goetz, German Team Ch  
 1988, Black tried 10... $\textcircled{w}d7$ . After  
 11  $fxe5!$  Black could not take back  
 with the pawn because then c5  
 would hang. There followed:  
 11... $\textcircled{x}e5$  12  $\textcircled{h}6!$   $f5$  13  $\textcircled{x}g7$

♙g7 14 ♜f4 ♙e4 15 ♜xe4 ♙f5 16 ♚a1 (the threat is 17 ♜xc5) 16...♜7c6 17 c3 ♚a8 18 b3 b6 19 d4 ♜g4 20 h3 ♜h6 (if 20...♜f6 then 21 ♜xf6 ♚xf6 22 g4 ♙e6 23 d5 wins) 21 ♜g5 ♚xel 22 ♚xel ♚e8 23 g4 and the bishop on f5 had no decent squares left.

### 11 ♚f2

The plan of doubling the rooks on the f-file is easy to follow and effective. 11 ♜d1, to get rid of the knight on d4, is also possible. Karpov-Tsikhelashvili, Moscow 1966, saw a model example of how White can make progress by first thwarting queenside counterplay and only then embarking on a kingside pawn storm: 11...♚d7 12 c3 ♜xe2+ 13 ♚xe2 ♚ac8 14 ♜f2 d5 15 ♙d2 d4 16 c4 (Karpov blocks the queenside in preparation for shifting his attention to the kingside) 16...b5 17 b3 bxc4 18 bxc4 ♚b8 19 ♚fb1 ♜c6 20 ♚d1 a5 21 a3 ♚a7 22 f5! (the classic advance of the f-pawn is a feature of such lines) 22...♙d7 (22...gxf5 23 exf5 ♙xf5 24 ♙xc6 wins) 23 g4 ♜e7 24 h4 a4 25 ♚f3 f6 26 ♙h3 ♚b3 27 ♚f1 ♚b7 28 ♙h1 h6 29 fxg6 f5 30 gxf5 ♙xf5 31 ♙xf5 ♚xf5 32 ♚g2 ♚h5 33 ♚g4 ♜f5 34 ♙g1 ♚b2 35 exf5 ♚xd2 36 ♚xh5 and White won.

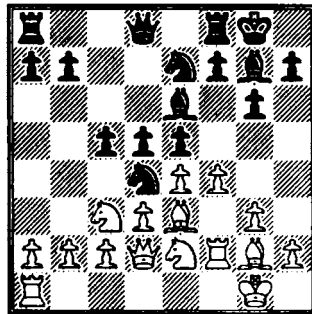
### 11...d5

Black takes the opportunity to challenge the centre. Other moves:

a) 11...♚c8 12 ♚af1 ♚d7 13 ♜d5 (13 ♜c1, intending 14 ♜d1 and 15 c3 to oust the knight on d4, is another plan, but 13 ♜d1 is not so strong after 13...♙g4! and White has no time for c2-c3) 13...♙xd5 14 exd5 ♜df5 15 c3 ♙h6 16 ♚c1 ♜xe3 17 ♚xe3 ♚b5 18 b3 ♚a5 19 g4 ♚ce8 20 ♚h3 ♙xf4 21 ♜xf4 exf4 22 c4 g5 23 ♚h6 f6 24 ♙e4 ♚f7 25 h4 ♚c3 26 hxg5 f5 27 ♚xf4

♜g6 28 ♚xf5 (on 28 ♚4f2 ♚xe4 29 dxe4 ♚g3+ 30 ♚g2 ♚e3+ 31 ♙h2 f4, despite his material advantage, it is difficult for White to force victory since Black has the plan of ...f4-f3 and ...♜e5) 28...♚xe4! 29 dxe4 ♚g3+ 30 ♙h1 ♜h4 31 ♚1f2 ♚h3+ 32 ♙g1 ♚g3+ 33 ♙h1 ♚h3+ 34 ♙g1 ♚g3+ 35 ♙h1 ½-½ Spassky-Podzielnny, German Team Ch 1985.

b) 11...♚b8 12 ♚af1 f5 13 ♜d5 ♜xd5 14 exd5 ♙f7 15 ♜c1 (White wants to play c2-c3 and avoid the exchange of knights on e2) 15...exf4 16 ♙xf4 ♜b5 17 a4 ♜c7 18 c4 ♚d7 19 ♜e2 b5! (a clever move to generate play along the b-file) 20 axb5 ♙6 21 b4 (21 bxa6 ♚xb2 22 ♚c1 ♜xa6 23 ♙h6 ♙xh6! 24 ♚xb2 ♙e3 leads to equality) 21...axb5 22 bxc5 dxc5 23 ♚a5 gave White a slight edge thanks to the passed d-pawn, Braga-Alonso, Mar del Plata 1999.



### 12 f5!?

Is there any Closed Sicilian player who cannot resist playing f4-f5? Probably not, but in this case I think an improvement is 12 ♙e5! when 12...♙e5 13 ♜f4 is slightly better for White.

12...gxf5 13 exd5 ♜xd5 14 ♜xd5 ♙xd5 15 ♙xd5 ♚xd5 16 ♜xd4 cxd4 17 ♙h6

The upshot of the multiple exchanges is that White has managed to weaken Black's defences and now threatens  $18 \text{Wg5}$ . However, the key factor is that it is difficult for Kosten to add reinforcements to the attack.

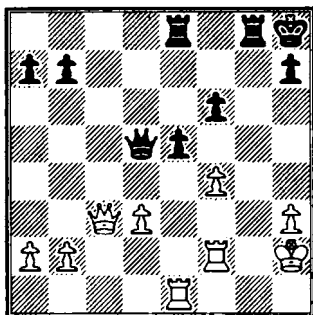
17...f4!

At a stroke Hennigan cancels out the threat of  $\text{Wg5}$  and offers to return the extra pawn in order to expose the white king.

18  $\text{Ag7 Axg7}$  19  $\text{gxf4 Ah8}$  20  $\text{h3 Aae8}$  21  $\text{c4 dxc3}$  22  $\text{Wxc3 f6}$  23  $\text{Ae1 Ag8+}$

The white king will now hide in the corner which suggests that 23...c8! 24  $\text{Wb3 Wd4}$  is a better way for Black to try and attack.

24  $\text{Ah2}$



The position is equal although White does well to conjure up attacking opportunities. The game concluded: 24...Ae7 25 Aee2 Ag7 Weaker is 25...Wxa2, capturing an unimportant pawn, when 26 fxe5 Wd5 27 Axgf6 is better for White. 26 Wc4 26 fxe5? allows Black to create a mating net after 26...Ag1 27 Ae4 Wd7! 28 exf6 Ah1+! 29 Ah1 Wxh3+ 30 Ah2 Wf1 mate. 26...Wd7 27 fxe5 fxe5 28 We4 Ag5 29 h4 Ah5 30 Ag2 Af8 31 Aef2 Ahf5? 31...Af7 is the best chance for survival. 32 Wg4 1-0 White

could also have finished the game in style with 32  $\text{Wxe5+! Axex5}$  33  $\text{Axexf8}$  mate.

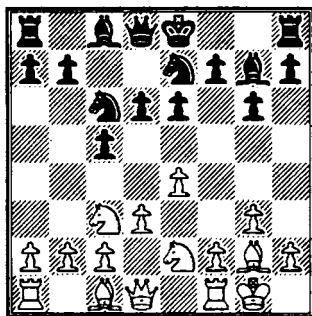
It is clear from the many examples in this book that the Closed Sicilian owes a lot in its development to the influence of former world champion Spassky. In the following encounter he uses a slightly different move-order to try and outfox Karpov. The honours are even and, once again, even with a top player conducting the Black pieces, there is no magic formula to wrest the initiative from White.

**Spassky-Karpov**  
Bugojno 1986

1 e4 c5 2  $\text{Ac3 Ac6}$  3 g3 g6 4  $\text{Ag2 Ag7}$  5 d3 d6 6  $\text{Dge2 e6}$

Black declares his intention to develop the king's knight to e7, which is a set-up used in the main lines.

7 0-0  $\text{Dge7}$



8  $\text{Ag5!?$

The bishop pins the knight in the hope of confusing Black. Basically, the idea as usual is  $\text{Wd2}$  and  $\text{Ah6}$  to exchange the dark-squared bishops. 8 f4 is examined in the next example, while 8  $\text{Ae3}$  is similar to the main game. For instance:

a) 8...Ad7 9  $\text{Wd2 h5!?$  (a novel idea to stop  $\text{Ae3-h6}$  and conjure up

kingside play) 10 h3 ♘d4 11 ♘d1 e5 12 c3 ♘dc6 13 d4 (with the black king still in the centre it makes sense to try and open the position for a possible attack) 13...♚c8 14 ♖h2 h4 15 g4 f5 16 exf5 gxf5 17 dxc5 ffg4 18 cxd6 gxh3 19 ♙e4 ♘g8 (19...♘f5 is stronger when 20 ♙c5 ♙h6 21 ♘e3 is double-edged) 20 ♙gl ♖f8 21 ♙g5 ♚e8 22 ♘e3 ♘h6 23 ♙af1 ♘d8 24 ♙e7+ ♖g8 25 ♙xg7+ ♖xg7 26 ♙gl+ 1-0 Stanojević-Mrozinski, Dortmund 1987.

b) 8...0-0

b1) 9 ♚d2, intending ♙h6, is the usual idea, which tends to transpose to the main game.

b2) 9 f4 ♙b8 10 a4 ♘d4 11 ♚d2 a6 12 ♙f2 ♘xe2+ 13 ♚xe2 ♘c6 14 ♚d2 (14 ♘d1, with the idea of c2-c3, is worth considering) 14...♘d4 15 ♙ab1 ♙d7 16 b4 ♚c7 17 b5 ♚a5 18 ♙e1 ♚xc3! 0-1 Forman-Civin, Czech Junior Ch 1996.

b3) 9 d4 d5 (9...b6!? is possible) 10 exd5 exd5 11 ♙g5 ♘xd4 12 ♘xd4 cxd4 13 ♘xd5 f6 14 ♘xe7+ ♚xe7 15 ♙f4 ♚b4 16 c3 ♚xb2 17 ♚xd4 gave White the slightly better chances. in Mortensen-Jacobsen, Nordic Team Ch 1985 due to the pressure on the queenside pawns.

8...0-0

Also possible:

a) 8...a6?! (in general ...♙b8, like the main game intending ...b7-b5, is a better way to launch a queenside advance because it saves a move on a later ...a7-a5) 9 ♚d2 (sometimes it is not clear what to do when Black plays something odd but with this line White has the standard plan of strengthening the c1-h6 diagonal and launching a kingside pawn storm) 9...h6 10 ♙e3 ♚b6 11 ♙ab1 ♚c7 12 f4 ♙d7

13 a3 ♙d8 14 g4 h5 15 f5 (a position to please any fan of the Closed because the f-pawn once again causes mayhem) 15...exf5 16 gxf5 gxf5 17 exf5 ♙xf5 (an old source suggests 17...♘xf5 but the white attack looks ominous to me after 18 ♘d5 ♚b8 19 ♙g5 ♘ce7 20 ♘xe7 ♘xe7 21 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 22 ♚g5+ ♖f8 23 ♙xf7+! ♖xf7 24 ♙f1+ ♖g8 25 ♙d5+ ♖h7 26 ♙f7 mates) 18 ♙xf5 ♘xf5 19 ♘d5 ♚b8 20 ♙g5 ♙d7 21 ♙h3 ♘e5 22 ♙f1 ♘h6 23 ♙xd7+ ♖xd7 24 ♘g3 h4 25 ♘h5! ♘f5 26 ♘df6+ ♙xf6 27 ♘xf6+ ♖e6 28 ♚g2 ♘d4 29 ♚h3+ 1-0 Keres-Kaukitis, Riga 1945.

b) 8...b6 9 ♚d2 h6 10 ♙e3 ♙a6 11 ♙fel ♘d4 12 f4 ♙c8 13 ♙ab1 ♚d7 14 ♙f2 (the bishop drops back so that White can exchange knights on d4 without suffering a pawn fork) 14...0-0 15 ♘xd4 cxd4 16 ♘e2 ♘c6 17 c3 dxc3 18 bxc3 d5 19 e5 ♙c7 20 ♘d4 ♙fc8 21 g4 and White has ambitions of breaking through with f4-f5, Spassky-Panno, World Team Ch, Lucerne 1985.

c) 8...h6 9 ♙e3 and now:

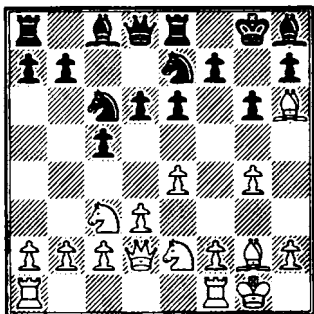
c1) 9...♘d4 10 ♙b1 0-0 11 b4 ♘xe2+ 12 ♘xe2 cxb4 (12...b6 allows White good play after 13 ♚d2 ♖h7 14 e5! ♘d5 15 exd6 cxb4 16 ♙xd5 exd5 17 ♚xb4 when he is a pawn up) 13 ♙xb4 d5 14 ♚d2 ♖h7 15 ♙c5 ♙e8 16 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 17 exd5 exd5 18 ♘f4 ♙e6 19 ♘xe6 fxe6 20 d4 led to a draw in Mesropov-Hübner, Bad Wiessee 1997.

c2) 9...0-0 10 ♚d2 ♖h7 11 ♙ab1 ♙b8 12 f4 ♙d7 (or 12...♘d4 13 b4 with roughly equal chances, Kazmierczak-Tomczak, Zakopane 2001) 13 d4 cxd4 14 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 15 ♙xd4 ♙xd4+ 16 ♚xd4 when White has the better chances thanks to the weak d6 pawn, Del Dotto-Zehfuss, Imperia 1989.

9  $\mathbb{W}$ d2  $\mathbb{B}$ b8

Karpov certainly knows his openings well, so getting ready for the advance of the b-pawn looks like a good plan. Here Black has a choice:

a) 9... $\mathbb{E}$ e8 is an idea to avoid the exchange of dark-squared bishops: 10  $\mathbb{A}$ h6  $\mathbb{A}$ h8 11 g4!?



A recurring theme in this line, making room for a knight on g3 and helping to promote the standard kingside pawn storm. 11...d5 12  $\mathbb{G}$ g3 d4 13  $\mathbb{C}$ ce2  $\mathbb{C}$ e5 14 h3 f6 15  $\mathbb{W}$ c1  $\mathbb{F}$ f7 16  $\mathbb{A}$ d2  $\mathbb{B}$ b8 17 f4 f5 (Black puts a stop to any hopes of f4-f5 but the closed nature of the position suits White because he has more room to manoeuvre) 18 e5 b6 19 g5  $\mathbb{A}$ b7 20  $\mathbb{H}$ f2  $\mathbb{A}$ xg2 21  $\mathbb{H}$ xg2  $\mathbb{W}$ d5 22  $\mathbb{W}$ f1 b5 23 h4  $\mathbb{A}$ g7 24 h5  $\mathbb{C}$ d8 25  $\mathbb{H}$ h2 gave White pressure on the kingside and he eventually won in Petrosian-Makogonov, Tbilisi 1949.

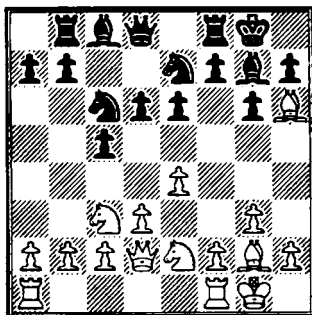
b) 9...e5 10  $\mathbb{C}$ d5 (White cannot resist occupying the vacant d5 square) 10...f6 11  $\mathbb{C}$ xe7+  $\mathbb{C}$ xe7 12  $\mathbb{A}$ e3 b6 13 c4  $\mathbb{B}$ b8 14 b4  $\mathbb{A}$ e6 15  $\mathbb{H}$ ab1  $\mathbb{W}$ d7 16  $\mathbb{C}$ c3  $\mathbb{C}$ c6 17 a3  $\mathbb{C}$ d4 18 f4 exf4 19  $\mathbb{A}$ xf4  $\mathbb{B}$ be8 20  $\mathbb{B}$ be1 with equal chances, Spassky-Fedorowicz, Cannes 1987.

c) 9... $\mathbb{C}$ d4 and now:

c1) 10  $\mathbb{C}$ xd4 cxd4 11  $\mathbb{C}$ e2 f6 12  $\mathbb{A}$ h6 e5 13  $\mathbb{A}$ xg7  $\mathbb{C}$ xg7 14 c3 dxc3

15 bxc3  $\mathbb{A}$ e6 (15...d5 is logical, to create more space, although 16 exd5  $\mathbb{C}$ xd5 17 d4!  $\mathbb{C}$ b6 18 f4 still leaves White with an edge) 16  $\mathbb{H}$ ab1 b6 17 c4  $\mathbb{W}$ d7 18 f4  $\mathbb{H}$ ac8 19  $\mathbb{C}$ c3  $\mathbb{C}$ c6 and the knight heads for the strong outpost on d4, leading to equal chances, Nielsen-Kristiansen, Norresundby 2000.

c2) 10  $\mathbb{H}$ ae1  $\mathbb{W}$ d7 11  $\mathbb{C}$ d1 b6 12 c3  $\mathbb{C}$ xe2+ 13  $\mathbb{W}$ xe2  $\mathbb{A}$ b7 14 h4 (an adventurous way to provoke Black into compromising his pawn barrier) 14... $\mathbb{H}$ ae8 15 h5  $\mathbb{C}$ c6 16 hxg6 fxg6 17 f4  $\mathbb{C}$ d8 18 g4  $\mathbb{F}$ f7 19  $\mathbb{A}$ h4 g5 20 fxg5  $\mathbb{C}$ e5 (an intriguing sacrifice to activate his pieces, leaving White sufficiently impressed to defer the argument until another day) 21  $\mathbb{H}$ xf8+  $\mathbb{H}$ xf8 22  $\mathbb{H}$ f1 ½-½ Balashov-Predein, Kurgan 1994.

10  $\mathbb{A}$ h6

## 10...b6

In the game Kazmierczak-Tworuszka, Zakopane 2001, Black tried 10...b6 and White continued with the familiar kingside pawn advance, 11  $\mathbb{A}$ xg7  $\mathbb{C}$ xg7 12 f4  $\mathbb{A}$ b7 13 g4 f5 14 g5  $\mathbb{C}$ d4 15  $\mathbb{C}$ xd4 cxd4 16  $\mathbb{C}$ b5  $\mathbb{C}$ c6?! (16...e5! is essential) 17 exf5  $\mathbb{H}$ xf5 (17...gxf5 18  $\mathbb{A}$ xc6  $\mathbb{A}$ xc6 19  $\mathbb{C}$ xd4  $\mathbb{A}$ d7 20  $\mathbb{H}$ ae1 is winning) 18  $\mathbb{A}$ xc6  $\mathbb{A}$ xc6 19  $\mathbb{C}$ xd4 winning.

11  $\mathbb{A}$ xg7  $\mathbb{C}$ xg7 12 f4

Spassky advances his f-pawn as part of the usual plan to create kingside activity. Also possible:

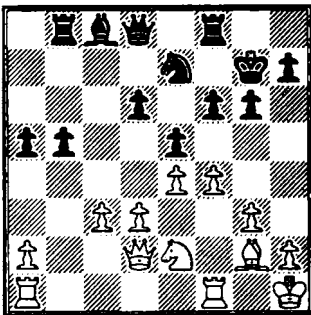
a) 12 d4?! looks natural but Black has play against the centre after 12...b4 13  $\Delta$ d1  $\Delta$ a6! 14 c3?! cxd4 15 cxd4  $\Delta$ xe2 16  $\blacktriangle$ xe2  $\Delta$ xd4 17  $\blacktriangle$ d2  $\blacktriangle$ b6 with the better position.

b) 12  $\Delta$ d1 e5 13  $\Delta$ e3  $\blacktriangle$ c7 14 f4 f5 15 fxe5 dxe5 16 exf5  $\Delta$ xf5 (16...gxf5 is the safe alternative) 17  $\Delta$ d5  $\blacktriangle$ d6 18 g4  $\Delta$ fd4?! (18... $\Delta$ e6! connects the rooks and attacks the knight when White has a small advantage after 19 gxf5  $\Delta$ xd5 20 f6+  $\Delta$ xf6 21  $\Delta$ xf6  $\Delta$ xf6 22  $\Delta$ xd5  $\blacktriangle$ xd5 23  $\blacktriangle$ h6) 19  $\Delta$ xf8  $\blacktriangle$ xf8 20  $\Delta$ f1  $\Delta$ xe2+ 21  $\blacktriangle$ xe2  $\blacktriangle$ d8 22  $\blacktriangle$ f2  $\blacktriangle$ e8 23  $\Delta$ f6  $\blacktriangle$ e6 24  $\Delta$ d5 1-0 Groot-Fakkell, Hengelo 2000.

12... $\Delta$ d4 13  $\Delta$ xd4 cxd4 14  $\Delta$ e2 e5 15 c3

15 f5 is more aggressive but Black has no worries after 15...gxf5 (15...f6 is also solid) 16  $\blacktriangle$ g5+  $\Delta$ g6 17  $\blacktriangle$ xd8  $\Delta$ xd8 18 exf5  $\Delta$ f8 19 c3 dxc3 20  $\Delta$ xc3  $\Delta$ d7 with equal chances.

15...dxc3 16 bxc3 f6 17  $\Delta$ h1 a5



Karpov uses queenside play to deter White from expanding further on the kingside. The game is evenly balanced and mutual respect quickly dictates the outcome.

18  $\Delta$ g1  $\Delta$ e6 19  $\Delta$ f3  $\blacktriangle$ c7 20  $\Delta$ ac1  $\Delta$ bc8 21  $\blacktriangle$ b2  $\Delta$ b8 22  $\blacktriangle$ d2  $\Delta$ bc8 23  $\blacktriangle$ b2 ½-½.

The crude attacking weapon of going for an out and out kingside pawn storm works well in the following encounter but there is room for improvement by Black.

### Hoen-Clocaltea

Havana Olympiad 1966

1 e4 c5 2  $\Delta$ c3  $\Delta$ c6 3 g3 g6 4  $\Delta$ g2  $\Delta$ g7 5 d3 d6 6  $\Delta$ ge2 e6 7 0-0

There are a couple of alternatives that White can adopt to give the opening a twist:

a) 7 a3  $\Delta$ ge7 and now:

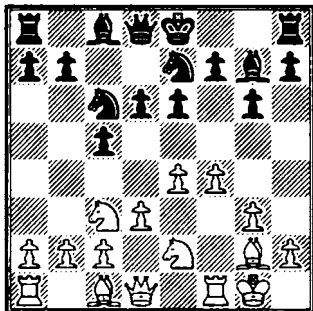
a1) 8  $\Delta$ b1 b6 9 0-0  $\Delta$ b7 10  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ d4 11  $\blacktriangle$ d2 0-0 12 f4  $\blacktriangle$ d7 13 b4  $\Delta$ ac8 14 bxc5 dxc5 15  $\Delta$ f2 c4 16  $\Delta$ xd4  $\Delta$ xd4 17  $\Delta$ b5  $\Delta$ xf2+ 18  $\blacktriangle$ xf2 cxd3 19 cxd3  $\Delta$ a6 20 a4  $\Delta$ c5 gave Black the better game in Seiranwan-Anderson, Mar del Plata 1981.

a2) 8 h4 h5 (blocking the advance of the white h-pawn but allowing White to plant a bishop on g5 without having to worry about ...h6) 9  $\Delta$ b1  $\Delta$ d4 10 b4  $\Delta$ ec6 11 0-0 0-0 12  $\Delta$ g5  $\blacktriangle$ c7 13  $\blacktriangle$ d2  $\Delta$ xe2+ 14  $\Delta$ xe2  $\Delta$ d4 15 c4  $\Delta$ xe2+ 16  $\blacktriangle$ xe2  $\Delta$ b8 17  $\blacktriangle$ d2 and the idea of  $\Delta$ g5- $\Delta$ h6 offers a slight edge, Adams-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 1993.

b) 7 h4 h5 (7...h6 is met by  $\Delta$ e3 and  $\blacktriangle$ d2) 8  $\Delta$ g5  $\Delta$ b8 9 a3 b5 10  $\Delta$ b1 d6 11  $\blacktriangle$ d2  $\Delta$ d7 12 0-0 a5?! 13 a4! (an important idea in the Closed: if now 13...b4, then 14  $\Delta$ b5 is better for White as it slows down the queenside counterplay) 13...bxa4 14  $\Delta$ xa4  $\Delta$ e5 15 b3 f6 16  $\Delta$ f4  $\Delta$ f7 17  $\Delta$ b2  $\Delta$ c6 18  $\Delta$ c4, with the idea of  $\Delta$ b1-a1, will put pressure on the weak a-pawn,

King-Meister, German Team Ch 1994.

7... $\Delta$ ge7 8 f4



This classic example gives a demonstration of the chances generated by a rapid kingside pawn advance. It is a line that has never really caught on, mainly because other lines are considered to be more flexible—particularly those that involve the idea of  $\Delta$ h6, exchanging bishops. I have changed the move-order slightly but it is worth checking out how White managed to trick Black out of a Modern Defence and into a Closed Sicilian: 1 e4 g6 2 g3  $\Delta$ g7 3  $\Delta$ g2 d6 4  $\Delta$ e2 c5 5  $\Delta$ bc3  $\Delta$ c6 6 d3 e6 7 0-0  $\Delta$ ge7 8 f4.

8...0-0

It is also possible to delay castling:

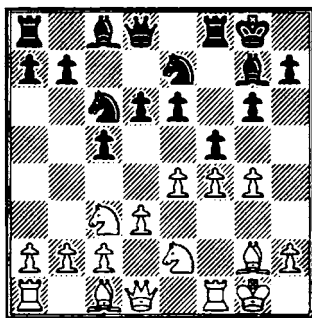
a) 8... $\Delta$ b8 9  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ d4 10  $\mathbb{W}$ d2 b5 11 g4 b4 12  $\Delta$ d1  $\mathbb{W}$ a5 13  $\Delta$ g3  $\mathbb{W}$ a4 14 c3 bxc3 15 bxc3  $\Delta$ c2 16  $\Delta$ c1  $\Delta$ xe3 17  $\Delta$ xe3 f5 18 h3 (the pawn structure is similar to the main game so it is interesting to see how Karpov tries to make progress) 18...0-0 19 gx f5 ex f5 20 ex f5  $\Delta$ xf5 21  $\Delta$ gx f5  $\Delta$ xf5 22  $\Delta$ xf5  $\Delta$ xf5 23  $\Delta$ e4  $\Delta$ h5 24  $\Delta$ h2  $\Delta$ f8 25  $\Delta$ f2 (25  $\Delta$ f3!? can be considered when 25... $\Delta$ h4 26  $\Delta$ g4 cancels out Black's initiative) 25... $\mathbb{W}$ d7 26  $\Delta$ g2  $\Delta$ h6 27 c4  $\Delta$ hf5 28  $\Delta$ cf1  $\mathbb{W}$ e7 29  $\Delta$ d5+  $\Delta$ h8

30  $\mathbb{W}$ b2+  $\Delta$ g7 31  $\mathbb{W}$ e2  $\mathbb{W}$ h4 32  $\mathbb{W}$ g4  $\mathbb{W}$ xg4 33 hxg4  $\Delta$ xf4 34  $\Delta$ xf4  $\Delta$ e5 35  $\Delta$ g2  $\Delta$ xf4 36  $\Delta$ b1  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  Karpov-Lilein, Moscow 1966.

b) 8...d5 9 exd5 (9 e5 looks a good alternative to close the centre before embarking on the usual kingside pawn advance) 9...exd5 10  $\Delta$ b1 0-0 11  $\mathbb{W}$ d2?! f5 (the Irish international gives a short lesson on how to deal with a bad plan) 12 b3  $\Delta$ b8 13  $\Delta$ a3  $\mathbb{W}$ a5 14  $\Delta$ b2? d4 and Black was winning easily, Warlick-S.Connolly, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1984.

c) 8...f5 9  $\Delta$ e3 (9 h3, intending g4, is another possibility and more in keeping with the main game) 9... $\Delta$ d4 10  $\Delta$ b1  $\mathbb{W}$ a5 11 a3 (the queen on a5 invites White to pursue the standard queenside pawn advance of b2-b4) 11...0-0 12 b4  $\mathbb{W}$ xa3?! (12...cxb4 13 axb4  $\mathbb{W}$ b6 14  $\mathbb{W}$ d2 with an edge) 13  $\Delta$ xd4 cxd4 14  $\Delta$ b5  $\mathbb{W}$ a4 15  $\Delta$ xd6  $\mathbb{W}$ a6 16 e5  $\mathbb{W}$ b6 17  $\mathbb{W}$ c1  $\Delta$ b8 18  $\mathbb{W}$ b2  $\Delta$ d8 19  $\Delta$ c4  $\mathbb{W}$ c7 20  $\Delta$ xd4 with an extra pawn and a strong outpost for a knight on d6, Markland-Hawson, British Ch 1967.

9 g4 f5



Black blockades the advance of White's f-pawn. If 9... $\Delta$ d4 then 10  $\Delta$ g3, to support f4-f5, is the consistent approach.

**10 gxf5 gxf5?!**

This looks like a natural reply but results indicate that the open g-file is more beneficial to White who can use it to conduct his attack. I think Black should try 10...exf5, keeping his king covered. Also, the fixed pawn on f4 means there is little chance of exchanging the dark-squared bishops. For example:

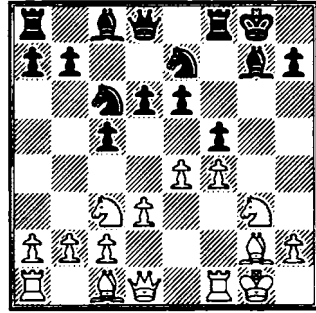
a) 11  $\Delta$ g3  $\Delta$ d4 12  $\Delta$ ce2 fxe4 13 dxe4  $\Delta$ g4 14 c3  $\Delta$ xe2+ 15  $\Delta$ xe2  $\Delta$ d7 16  $\Delta$ b3+ d5 (16... $\Delta$ h8 17  $\Delta$ g3  $\Delta$ e6 is slightly better for Black) 17  $\Delta$ g3 c4 18  $\Delta$ a3 d4 19 cxd4  $\Delta$ xd4+ 20  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ c6 21  $\Delta$ ael  $\Delta$ ad8 22 e5  $\Delta$ h3 23  $\Delta$ xh3  $\Delta$ xh3 24  $\Delta$ xd4  $\Delta$ xd4 25  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ d3 26  $\Delta$ e4  $\Delta$ d4 27  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ d3 28  $\Delta$ e4  $\Delta$ d4 29  $\Delta$ e3  $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  Hoen-Byrne, Tel Aviv Olympiad 1964.

b) 11  $\Delta$ d5  $\Delta$ e6 12 c4  $\Delta$ d7 13  $\Delta$ b1  $\Delta$ ae8 14  $\Delta$ e3 fxe4 15 dxe4  $\Delta$ g4 (Black has done well to centralise his pieces and fights for control of the d4 square) 16  $\Delta$ d2 b6 17  $\Delta$ h1  $\Delta$ h8 18  $\Delta$ bel  $\Delta$ xe2 19  $\Delta$ x2  $\Delta$ d4 20  $\Delta$ d3  $\Delta$ xd5 21 cxd5  $\Delta$ a4 22  $\Delta$ b1 (the queen looks misplaced here but 22 a3  $\Delta$ c2 23  $\Delta$ b1  $\Delta$ xe3 24  $\Delta$ x2 b5 offers Black the brighter prospects) 26... $\Delta$ e7 23 b3  $\Delta$ a6 24 e5  $\Delta$ f5 25  $\Delta$ d2 dxe5 26 fxe5  $\Delta$ xe5 27  $\Delta$ xe5  $\Delta$ xe5 gave Black a clear advantage in Khechumyan-Csom, Budapest 1999.

c) 11  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ d4 12  $\Delta$ h1  $\Delta$ d7 13  $\Delta$ d2  $\Delta$ b8 14  $\Delta$ ael b5 15  $\Delta$ d1 offered equal chances in Bareyre-Wauters, French Team Ch 1998.

**11  $\Delta$ g3**

Now that the g-pawn is no longer covering the h5 square it makes sense for White to send a knight there.



The game Bermejo Arruego-Romero Holmes, Villalba 1995, saw instead 11  $\Delta$ e3 b6 12  $\Delta$ g3  $\Delta$ b7 13 exf5  $\Delta$ xf5 14  $\Delta$ xf5  $\Delta$ xf5 15  $\Delta$ e4 d5?! (Black is banking on the strength of his bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal but its merit is doubtful) 16  $\Delta$ xf5 exf5 17  $\Delta$ e2 d4 18  $\Delta$ d2  $\Delta$ d5 19  $\Delta$ g3  $\Delta$ b4 20  $\Delta$ f2 when all the mating threats on the diagonal are covered and White should have good chances of converting his material advantage.

**11... $\Delta$ d4 12  $\Delta$ ce2  $\Delta$ d7**

A few years later at the Nordic Championship in Lidköping 1969, Black came up with the possible improvement, 12... $\Delta$ b8!?, to create a diversion on the queenside by pushing the b-pawn. Then 13  $\Delta$ h5  $\Delta$ h8 14  $\Delta$ eg3  $\Delta$ f7 15 c3  $\Delta$ dc6 16  $\Delta$ e3 b5 was roughly equal.

**13 c3  $\Delta$ xe2+ 14  $\Delta$ x2  $\Delta$ h8 15  $\Delta$ e3  $\Delta$ c8?**

Black must always be on guard against potential threats from White's light-squared bishop, which means 15... $\Delta$ b8, preserving the b-pawn, should have been considered.

**16 exf5  $\Delta$ xf5 17  $\Delta$ xf5 exf5 18  $\Delta$ xb7**

Hoen has won a pawn but has to be wary about his exposed king.

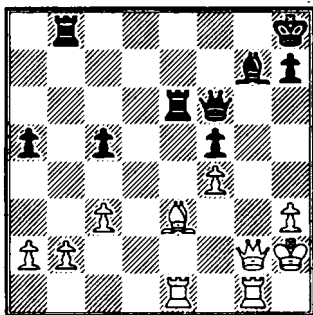
**18... $\Delta$ g8 19  $\Delta$ h1  $\Delta$ c6 20 h3**

To give the king more space since 20 ♖xc6?! hands Black the initiative after 20...♗c6+ 21 ♚f3 ♜h4 22 ♚af1 ♖f6, when the threat of ...♗g3 is awkward for White.

20...♜h4 21 ♜h2 ♚b6 22 ♖d5 ♗e8 23 ♗ael a5

A sign that Black has run out of possible tricks. White can now consolidate.

24 ♜g2 ♚bb8 25 ♗g1 ♜f6 26 d4 ♖e6 27 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 28 dxc5 dxc5



29 ♖d4!

The start of an impressive combination based on his control of the g-file, which can be traced back to 10...gxf5. The game concluded:

29...cxd4 30 ♗xe6 ♜f7 31 cxd4 ♖xd4 32 ♗gel ♗g8 33 ♜xg8+ ♜xg8 34 ♗e8+ ♜g7 35 ♗h8e7 ♖xb2 36 ♗xf7+ ♜xf7 37 ♚bl ♖c3 38 ♚b5 ♜e6 39 ♜g3 h5 40 ♜h4 ♖f6+ 41 ♜xh5 1-0






### Summary

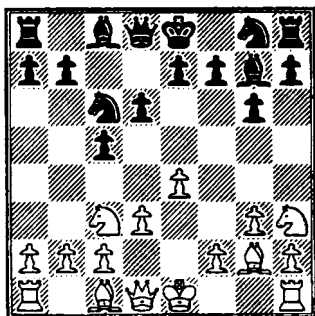
The game, **King-Miralles**, shows how tricky 6 ♘ge2 can be against

the 6...♗f6 set-up and how Black can soon land in trouble. It is noteworthy how White grabs more space on the queenside before securing the advantage by a spectacular looking tactic. **Brufman-Valols** is an example of a classic attack by White. The plan of ♖c1-e3, ♜d1-d2 and ♖e3-h6, is geared to exchanging Black's key defender, the bishop on g7. After Black takes evasive action, a pawn avalanche on the kingside proves to be too much and White triumphs. **Knoppert - Van Wely** is a reminder that Black also has decent chances if he can rapidly create counterplay on the queenside. There is always room for new ideas in the Closed and **Short-Stohl** is an example of a new method to play against 6...e5. The former world title challenger shocks his opponent with 7 h4—an aggressive advance which would also do well at club level. An important transposition is highlighted after White's ninth move in **Kosten-Hennigan**, because the position can also arise after 6 ♖e3. A meeting of two players who have each specialised in 6 ♘ge2 makes things just a little bit more interesting. **Spassky-Karpov** sees Black avoiding any of the usual pitfalls and achieving equality. Finally, **Hoen-Clocaltea** is a typical example of White concentrating on a kingside pawn storm. This can be very awkward but Black's defensive resources in this game should be noted by anyone who wishes to play the position for either side.

Developing the knight on the edge of the board is nowadays regarded as something of a surprise weapon. An obvious idea is to clear the f-file so that the white rook can assist with the advance f2-f4-f5. However, it is rather committal and in general it is believed there are more options available in other lines.

**Smyslov-Romanishin**  
USSR Ch 1976


1 e4 c5 2 c3 c6 3 g3 g6 4 g2 g7 5 d3 d6 6 h3


































White displays an independent streak by developing the knight on h3.

**6...h5**


A look in the books tells us that this is the move that White should worry about because Black can install a bishop on g4. Nevertheless the practical results tend to be encouraging for White. Instead, 6...e5

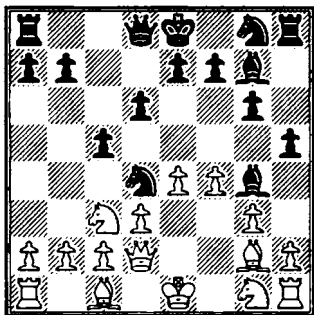
transposes to the chapter 6 f4 e5, such as the main game Krapivin-Morozov. 6...f6 and 6...e6 are discussed later in the chapter.

**7 f4**

A consistent approach, in keeping with other lines of the Closed. It is easy to go wrong and the game Hassan-Ramesh, Dubai 2001, is a warning to White where, after 7 f4?!, casual play is punished: 7...d4 8 h3 f6 9 e3 a5 10 d2 d7 11 c1 e6 12 b1 (12 0-0!? e5 13 d1 is slightly better for Black) 12...e5 13 xd4 cxd4 14 ce2 (14 d1 xa2 leaves Black a pawn up) 14...xd2+ 15 xd2 g5! when White had no decent square left for his f4 knight. It should be noted that one of the reasons why 6...h5 has got such a great reputation is that Kasparov employed it against Hug in a simultaneous display in Zürich 1987. That game went 7 d5 g4 8 f3 xh3 9 xh3 e6 10 e3 h4 11 f4 hxg3 12 hxg3 d5 13 exd5 exd5 14 g2 hxh1+ 15 exh1 f6 16 d2 e7 17 f2 0-0-0 18 f1 with equal chances.

**7...g4 8 d2 d4 9 d1!**

At first glance this may seem like a rather foolish move but it is the best way to deal with the threat of ...f3+. It seems a backward step but White can now gain time by pushing away the light-squared bishop with h3.



9...♙d7

Smyslov suggested 9...♙a5 as a possible alternative and I think 10 h3  $\Delta d7$  11  $\Delta f3$  is equal. Shaw-Vaisser, European Club Ch 1993, saw the French GM play 9...e5, which is suggested by ECO as being unclear. After 10  $\Delta d5$  exf4 11 gxf4  $\Delta f6$  12  $\Delta xf6+$  ♖xf6 13 c3  $\Delta c6$  14  $\Delta f3$  ♙xf3 15 ♙xf3 g5 16 ♙g2 g4 17 ♖f2 White had the superior chances because Black's king is vulnerable in the middle of the board, although upon 17...♙e7 18 ♙e3 ♙f6 19 0-0-0 ♚c8 20 ♜b1 b6 21 h3 (White is still better) 21...♚g8 the game was drawn. Also possible is 9...♙d7 and once again Scottish international Shaw is supporting White's cause, in this case against Etchegary in a game played at Cappelle la Grande 1994. There followed 10 h3 e5 11  $\Delta d5$   $\Delta e7$  12  $\Delta xe7$  ♖xe7 13 c3 (as usual White takes the chance to oust the centralised knight on d4) 13... $\Delta e6$  14 f5  $\Delta c7$  15 ♖f2 ♙f6 16  $\Delta e2$  gxf5 17 exf5 0-0-0 18 0-0 ♙b5 19 c4 ♙c6 20 ♙xc6 bxc6 21 ♙e3 ♚dg8 22 ♚ab1 ♙g5 (22...e4!? should be considered) 23 b4 cxb4 24 ♚xb4 c5 25 ♚b3 ♙xe3 26 ♖xe3 ♙g5 27 ♖f3  $\Delta d7$  28 ♚fb1 ♖d8? (28...h4 is well met by 29 g4 to block the kingside) 29 ♚b7 ♖a8 30 ♖d5 ♚f8 (30...♚h7 is insufficient to save Black after 31

$\Delta c3$  ♖d8 32  $\Delta b5$  winning) 31  $\Delta c3$  ♚h6 (31...♖d8 loses after 32  $\Delta b5$ ) 32  $\Delta e4$  1-0.

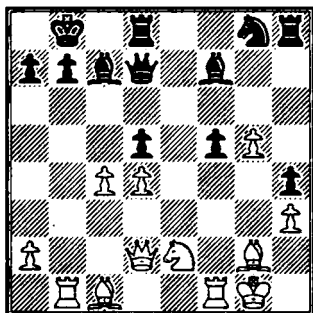
10 h3 ♙e6 11  $\Delta ce2$  h4 12 g4 f5 13 exf5 gxf5 14 g5

A clever way of stopping Black from developing the kingside because the knight on g8 cannot move. Therefore, White has the privilege of continuously improving his position while Romanishin struggles to get his pieces into the action.

14...0-0 15  $\Delta xd4$  cxd4 16  $\Delta e2$  ♙f7 17 c3 dxc3 18 bxc3 ♜b8 19 ♚b1

The semi-open b-file is perfect for the rook and White can create strong attacking chances without worrying about any possible counterplay on the kingside.

19...d5 20 0-0 e5 21 fx e5 ♙xe5 22 d4 ♙c7 23 c4!



The pawn is obviously taboo due to 24 ♚xb7+ but the key factor is that now the white queen can come to the b-file and can meet a potential ...♙b6 with c4-c5.

23... $\Delta e7$  24 c5

I think 24 ♖b4!? is also good when, after 24... $\Delta d6$  25 c5 ♙g3 26 ♚f3, White is threatening to take on g3 and swing the king's rook across to b3.

24...♚dg8 25 ♖b4 ♙d8 26 ♚f3  $\Delta c6$  27 ♖b5 ♙h5 28 ♚fb3 ♚g7

An attempt to add weight to the defence of b7.

Or 28...♙c8 29 ♖f4 (29 ♗xb7+!? is less clear-cut upon 29...♗xb7 30 ♜xb7 ♙xe2 31 ♙xd5 ♙xg5 {31...♖xd4? fails because of 32 ♜b8+ ♙d7 33 ♜1b7+ ♙c7 34 ♜xg8 ♜xg8 35 ♙xg8 winning} 32 ♙f2 ♙a6 33 ♙e6+ with an advantage for White) 29...♙xg5 30 ♗xb7+ ♗xb7 31 ♜xb7 and Black is busted.

29 ♖f4

29 ♗a6! also looks good with White on course for victory after 29...♗c8 (29...♜hg8 allows 30 ♜xb7+ ♗xb7 31 ♙f4+ ♙a8 32 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 34 ♗xc6 winning) 30 ♙xd5 ♙xe2 31 ♙f4+ ♙a8 32 ♗xc6! ♗xc6 33 ♙xc6 with a big advantage.

29...♙xg5

If 29...♖xd4 then 30 ♗xd7 ♜xd7 31 ♖d3 is good for White.

30 ♖xh5 ♜xh5 31 ♗e2 ♙xc1?

In the circumstances, 31...♜hh7 is the best option, although 32 ♜xb7+ ♗xb7 33 ♜xb7+ ♙xb7 34 ♙xg5 ♜xg5 35 ♙f1 is still in White's favour.

32 ♜xb7+! ♗xb7 33 ♗e8+ ♙c7 34 ♜xb7+ ♙xb7 35 ♗xh5 ♖xd4 36 ♙f1

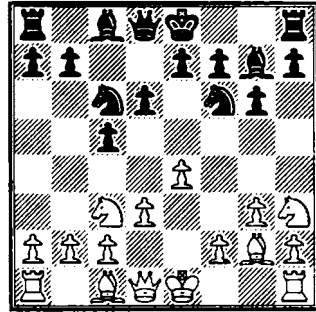
There is no need to be greedy because taking the pawn by 36 ♗xh4?? loses after 36...♖f3+.

36...♙e3 37 ♗h8 ♜d7 38 ♗e8 1-0

This game seemed to inspire the loser because 6 ♖h3 then became part of his repertoire.

### Romanishin-Yudasin Moscow 1983

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♖h3 ♖f6



Black continues with his development and prepares ...♙g4.

7 0-0 ♙g4

A consistent approach to try and exploit the fact that the knight is on h3. Also occasionally seen is the adventurous 7...h5, when, in Shchekachev-Kotronias, Reykjavik 1994, White tried the interesting 8 f3!? to meet 8...h4 with 9 g4. The game continued 8...b6 9 ♖b1 ♙b7 10 ♖g5 ♖h7 11 ♖xh7 ♜xh7 12 f4 ♗d7 13 ♖d5 e6 14 ♖e3 0-0-0 15 a3 h4 16 g4 h3 17 ♙h1 d5 18 b4 with a slight edge for White. But 7...0-0 deserves serious consideration:

a) 8 ♙g5 ♜b8 9 ♗d2 ♖d4 10 f3 b5 11 ♜ae1 b4 12 ♖e2 a5 13 g4! (White will have decent play on the kingside after manoeuvring his knight to g3) 13...♗c7 14 ♖g3 ½-½ Hug-Dzindzichashvili, Geneva 1977.

b) 8 f4 ♙g4 and now:

b1) 9 ♗e1 ♖d4 10 ♗f2 h6 11 ♙h1 b5 12 ♖g1 b4 13 ♖d1 ♖h5 14 ♖e3 ♙d7 15 g4 ♖f6 16 f5 ♖c6 17 h4 gave White excellent chances on the kingside in Shakhov-Nikanorov, St Petersburg 1997, but this much-quoted game has a flaw that could have presented Black with an easy victory after 13...♙e2! since 14 ♜e1, to avoid the loss of the exchange, fails to 14...♖g4 and the white queen is lost.

b2) 9  $\blacktriangleleft d2$   $\Delta d4$  10  $\Delta h1$   $\Delta h5$  (or 10... $\Delta c8$  11  $\Delta g1$   $h5?$  12  $f5!$   $gxf5$  13  $h3$  gave White a winning advantage in Shaw-Arakhmia Grant, Isle of Man 1993) 11  $\Delta d5$   $\blacktriangleleft d7$  12  $\Delta g1$   $f5$  13  $c3$   $\Delta c6$  14  $\Delta e3$   $e5$  15  $\Delta xg4$   $fxg4$  16  $f5$   $gxf5$  17  $\blacktriangleleft g5$   $\Delta f6$  18  $\blacktriangleleft xf5$   $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$  Suttles-Bilek, Sousse Interzonal 1967.

c) 8  $\Delta h1$   $\Delta b8$  (8... $\Delta d4$  9  $f4$   $\Delta g4$  10  $\blacktriangleleft d2$  transposes to the previous note 'b2') 9  $f4$   $b5$  10  $\Delta d5$   $\Delta xd5$  11  $exd5$   $\Delta b4$  12  $\Delta f2$   $\Delta b7$  13  $c4$   $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$  Hug-Robatsch, Malta Olympiad 1980.

8  $f3$   $\Delta xh3$  9  $\Delta xh3$  0-0

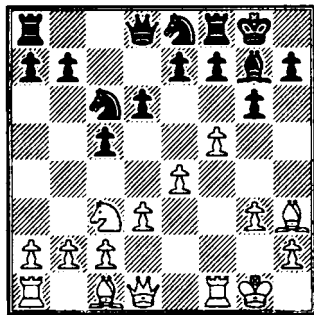
9... $d5$  was seen in Hartmann-Kunstowicz, Bad Neuenahr 1982, where White retained a slight pull in the middlegame with the standard advance of the kingside pawns. He even created a clever tactical idea after 10  $\blacktriangleleft e2$   $\Delta d4$  (10... $dxe4!$ ? 11  $fxe4$  0-0 12  $\Delta e3$  when White has a slight edge) 11  $\blacktriangleleft f2$  0-0 12  $f4$   $e6$  13  $e5$   $\Delta e8$  14  $\Delta d1$   $\Delta c8$  15  $b4!$  (with the queen on  $f2$  White spots a trick based on the need for the c-pawn to support the knight on  $d4$ ) 15... $b6$  16  $c3$   $\Delta c6$  (16... $\Delta b5$  17  $a4$   $\Delta c7$  18  $bxc5$   $bxc5$  19  $\blacktriangleleft xc5$ ) 17  $bxc5$   $bxc5$  18  $\Delta a3$   $\Delta c7$  19  $\Delta xc5$  and White had an extra pawn.

10  $f4$

White advances the f-pawn as part of his usual plan of kingside expansion. 10  $\Delta e3$  is an interesting alternative, after which White aims to complete his development by transferring the queen's rook to the centre. Spassky-Petrosian, World Championship, Moscow 1966, continued 10... $\Delta e8$  11  $\blacktriangleleft d2$   $\Delta c7$  12  $\Delta ael$   $b6$  13  $\Delta d1$  (if White is looking for a possible improvement on this classic game then 13  $\Delta h6$  should be considered) 13... $d5$  14  $\blacktriangleleft e2$   $e6$  15  $f4$   $f5$  (the position offers

equal chances) 16  $\Delta cl$   $\Delta f7$  17  $\Delta g2$   $\blacktriangleleft d7$  18  $\Delta f2$   $\Delta d8$  19  $c3$   $b5$  20  $exd5$   $exd5$  21  $\Delta d2$   $c4$  22  $\blacktriangleleft f3$   $\Delta e7$  23  $dxcl$   $bxc4$  (23... $dxcl$  24  $\Delta e3$   $\Delta ed5$  25  $\Delta d1$  gives White a slight edge) 24  $b3$   $\Delta c8$  25  $bxc4$   $dxcl$  26  $\Delta cl$   $\blacktriangleleft a4$  27  $\Delta d1$   $\Delta df8$  28  $\Delta e3!$   $\Delta b6$  (or 28... $\blacktriangleleft xa2?!$  29  $\Delta c5$   $\Delta e8$  30  $\blacktriangleleft c6$   $\blacktriangleleft a6$  31  $\Delta d5$   $\blacktriangleleft xc6$  32  $\Delta c6$  when White is better) 29  $\Delta c5$  gave White a slight initiative although the game was eventually drawn.

10... $\Delta e8$  11  $f5$



White gains space with this typical advance of the f-pawn.

11... $\Delta c7$  12  $\Delta d5$   $\Delta xd5$  13  $exd5$   $\Delta e5$

Yudasin responds to White's kingside ambitions by centralising his knight. However, White has a slight edge and can carry on with his plan of  $\Delta f4$ ,  $\blacktriangleleft d2$  and doubling the rooks on the f-file.

14  $c3$   $\blacktriangleleft b6$  15  $\Delta f2$   $c4$

Black seeks another square for his knight before White plays  $\Delta f4$ .

16  $d4$   $\Delta d3$  17  $\Delta e2$   $\Delta xc1$  18  $\blacktriangleleft xc1$   $\Delta f6$  19  $\blacktriangleleft h6$   $\Delta g7$  20  $\blacktriangleleft d2$   $\Delta f6$  21  $\Delta g2$   $g5?!$

In a difficult position Black chooses a risky plan of weakening his kingside pawn barrier and relying on the dark-squared bishop to fend off the mass of white pieces poised for attack on the kingside.

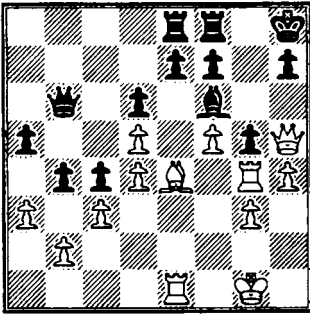
22 ♖e4 ♕h8 23 ♖ae1 ♜c7 24 ♜e2 b5 25 ♜h5

White has to work out how to increase the pressure on the h7 square — the weakest point in Black's position.

25... ♖ae8 26 a3 a5 27 ♖g4 b4 28 ♜e4!

Now Black has to face the potential threat of f5-f6, unleashing the bishop.

28... ♜b6 29 h4!



An excellent move that leaves Black's position in tatters. The point is that 29... gxf4 runs into 30 ♖xh4! ♜xh4 31 f6 and the threat of ♜xh7 brings the game to a sudden halt.

29... bxc3 30 bxc3 ♜b2 31 hxg5 ♜xc3 32 ♖h4 ♜xe1+ 33 ♕g2 1-0

The regular set-up against 6 ♘h3 tends to be 6...e6, intending ...♗ge7 and 0-0, which is also employed against the main line. White responds in a familiar way by playing ♜c1-e3 followed by ♜d1-d2 with the aim of exchanging dark-squared bishops after ♜e3-h6.

### Sulskis-Efimenko

European Ch, Ohrid 2001

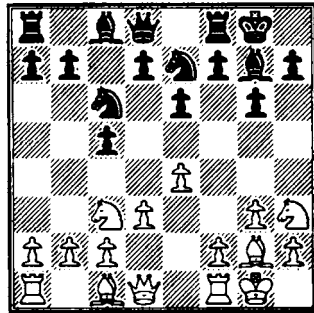
1 e4 c5 2 g3 ♘c6 3 ♜g2 g6 4 d3 ♜g7 5 ♘c3 d6 6 ♘h3 e6

This rules out White's ideas of installing a knight on d5. More importantly it is in keeping with the main line where Black develops with ...♗ge7 and castles kingside.

7 0-0

The normal continuation and probably best, although it is worth noting the course of the game, Romanishin-Lerner, Moscow 1983, where White tried to provoke complications: 7 ♜g5 ♗ge7 8 ♜c1 (8 ♜d2 is a nice way to try and transpose back into the main game by employing an unusual move-order) 8... ♘d4 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♜h6 e5 11 ♜xg7 ♕xg7 12 ♕h1 f6 13 f4 ♜e6 14 ♜d2 (the opening has not been a complete success because 8 ♜d2 would have saved White a move) 14... ♜d7 15 ♗g1 ♖ae8 16 ♖f2 with roughly equal chances.

7... ♗ge7



8 ♜e3

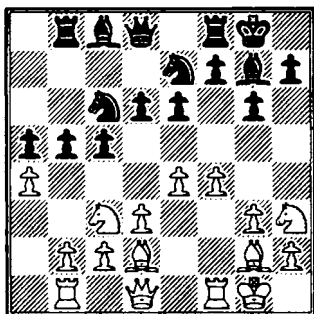
White intends to exchange dark-squared bishops with ♜d2 and ♜h6, depriving Black of a key defender. There is a possible alternative in 8 f4 when, after 8...0-0, White has tried a number of alternatives:

a) 9 f5? (a reckless sacrifice whose only merit lies in securing the d5 square for a knight) 9...exf5 10 ♘f4 fxe4 11 dxe4 ♗e5 12 ♘fd5 ♘xd5 13 ♘xd5 ♜g4 14 ♜e1 ♜e6

15  $\text{Wd1}$  b5 and Black was a pawn up for nothing, Halser-Palac, Feldbach 1997.

b) 9 g4 f5 (a good reply to dash any hopes of f4-f5) 10 gxf5 gxf5 (10...exf5!? should be considered to keep the king safe on a closed g-file) 11  $\text{Ch1}$   $\text{Ed7}$  12  $\text{De2}$   $\text{Ee8}$  13  $\text{Dg3}$   $\text{Wd7}$  14 c3  $\text{Eb8}$  15 exf5  $\text{Dxf5}$  (or 15...cxf5 16  $\text{Eg1}$   $\text{Eg6}$  17  $\text{Dh5}$  with a slight edge) 16  $\text{Dxf5}$  exf5 17  $\text{Dg5}$   $\text{Ch8}$  18  $\text{Ee3}$  led to equality in McNab-Züger, Dortmund 1980.

c) 9  $\text{Ed2}$   $\text{Eb8}$  10  $\text{Eb1}$  b5 11 a3 a5 12 a4!



A classic way to try and stem Black's counterplay by preparing to put a knight on b5.

12...b4 (not 12... $\text{Exc3}$ ?! giving up the important dark-squared bishop when 13  $\text{Exc3}$  bxa4 14  $\text{Ea1}$  allows White to restore material equality and still dominate the a1-h8 diagonal) 13  $\text{Db5}$   $\text{Dd4}$  14 c4 f5 15  $\text{Ee3}$  fxe4 16 dxe4 d5?! (16... $\text{Wb6}$ , to support the knight on d4, is a possible improvement) 17  $\text{Exd4}$  cxd4 18 cxd5 exd5 19 e5  $\text{Df5}$  20  $\text{Ef2}$   $\text{Ch8}$  21  $\text{Wd2}$   $\text{Wb6}$  22  $\text{Dg5}$   $\text{Ed7}$  23  $\text{Exd5}$  when the threat of  $\text{Df7+}$  gave White the better game in Fedorov-Filippov, Maikop 1998.

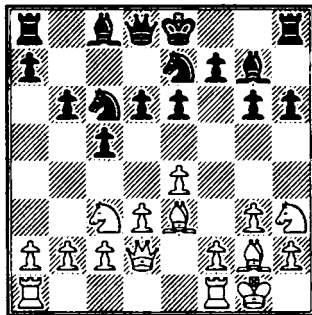
d) 9  $\text{Ee3}$ !? (the problem with having a bishop on e3 is that, compared to normal lines, the option of

d3-d4 is no longer available because his knight is on h3—and this makes White vulnerable to a fork after ...d6-d5-d4) 9...b6 10  $\text{Eb1}$  (10  $\text{Wd2}$ ? is a reasonable alternative) 10... $\text{Eb7}$  11  $\text{Df2}$  (11  $\text{Ch1}$  is possible to retreat the bishop to the kingside after 11...d5 12  $\text{Eg1}$  when Black is slightly better) 11...d5 12  $\text{Ed2}$   $\text{Wd7}$  13 e5 f6 14 exf6  $\text{Exf6}$  15  $\text{Eh3}$   $\text{Eae8}$  16  $\text{De2}$ ?! (a passive response whereas 16 a3, intending b2-b4, would be far more positive) 16... $\text{Df5}$  17 c3  $\text{Eg7}$  18 g4  $\text{Dh4}$  19  $\text{Dg3}$   $\text{Wc7}$  20  $\text{We2}$  g5! (a great attacking idea designed to gain the e5 square) 21 fxg5  $\text{De5}$  22  $\text{Eg2}$   $\text{Def3+}$  23  $\text{Exf3}$   $\text{Dxf3+}$  24  $\text{Ch1}$   $\text{Ee5}$  25  $\text{Eg1}$  (25  $\text{Cg2}$  is met by 25... $\text{Dxh2}$ ! giving Black a winning advantage) 25...d4 26  $\text{Dfe4}$  c4! (Black continues to play energetically and does well to undermine the knight on e4 which blockades the h1-a8 diagonal) 27  $\text{Eg2}$  cxd3 28  $\text{Wxd3}$   $\text{Wc6}$  29  $\text{Ee2}$   $\text{Dxd2}$  30  $\text{Wxd2}$  dxc3 31 bxc3  $\text{Exg3}$  32 hxg3  $\text{Wxe4+}$  0-1 Padevsky-Mainka, Dortmund 1991.

### 8...0-0

Black carries on with developing his kingside. Others:

a) 8...b6 9  $\text{Wd2}$  h6 and now:



a1) 10  $\text{Df4}$   $\text{Eb7}$  11  $\text{Eab1}$   $\text{Wd7}$  12  $\text{Dce2}$  e5!? (12...0-0!?) 13  $\text{Dd5}$

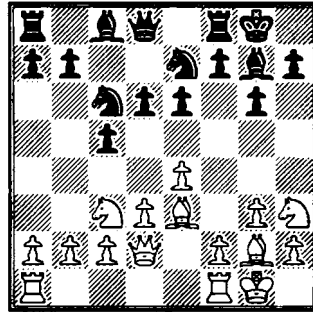
♖d5 14 exd5 ♖e7 15 c4 g5 16 f4 exf4 17 gxf4 g4 (if 17...gxf4 18 ♖xf4 gives White good piece play and, after 18...0-0? allows 19 ♖h5 hitting the bishop on g7 and uncovering an attack on f7, with a clear advantage) 18 ♖g3 h5 19 f5 ♖e5 20 d4 cxd4 21 ♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 22 ♖xd4 0-0-0 23 f6 ♖g6 24 ♖e4 ♖h4 (or 24...♖b8 25 ♖xg6 fxg6 26 ♖bel, threatening ♖e7, is better for White) 25 ♖f5 ♖xf5 26 ♖xf5 ♖b8 27 ♖bel ♖a4 28 ♖e7 ♖c8 29 c5 ♖c2 30 c6 ♖dg8 31 ♖e3 ♖e2 32 ♖c4 ♖c2 33 ♖xa7! 1-0 Augustin-Kavalek, Luhacovice 1968.

a2) 10 ♖ael ♖b7 11 f4 f5 12 e5?! (12 ♖f2 has been suggested as a possible improvement, while 12 exf5 exf5 13 ♖h1, intending ♖h3-g1-f3, is another idea but hardly inspiring for White) 12...dxe5 13 fxe5 g5! (a clever move because the weak e5 pawn is not going anywhere and 13...♖xe5? is revealed to be weak after 14 ♖xc5 ♖xc3 15 ♖xc3 and White wins) 14 ♖b5 ♖xe5 15 ♖f2 (15 ♖xg5 hxg5 16 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 17 ♖xb7 ♖b8 is better for Black) 15...♖g6 16 ♖d1 0-0 17 c3 a6 18 ♖a3 ♖e7 19 ♖c4 g4 20 ♖f4 ♖xf4 21 gxf4 b5 22 ♖b6 ♖ad8 23 ♖d2 ♖a5 24 ♖xb7 (24 c4 is best refuted by 24...♖xg2! 25 ♖xg2 ♖b7+ and the knight on b6 will leave the board) 24...♖xb7 25 b4 ♖d6 26 ♖e3 (26 bxc5 does not save the position after 26...♖xc5 27 ♖xc5 ♖xc5+ 28 ♖e3 ♖xe3+ 29 ♖xe3 ♖d6 and Black wins) 26...♖xb6 27 bxc5 ♖c6 28 ♖xe6+ 0-1 Romanishin-Petursson, Malmö 1993.

b) 8...♖d4 9 f4 (9 ♖d2 transposes to the main game after 9...0-0) 9...0-0 10 ♖d2 ♖b8 11 ♖d1 f5 12 c3 ♖dc6 13 ♖h1 b6 14

♖g1 (take a look at the knight on h3 and note how little it is doing) 14...d5 15 exd5 ♖xd5 16 ♖e3 ♖xe3 17 ♖xe3 ♖d6 18 a3 led to equal chances in Spraggett-Yrjöla, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

9 ♖d2



9...♖d4

As usual in this line Black plants a knight on d4. Also possible:

a) 9...e5?! (an idea that is not highly thought of because the black pawn has taken two moves to reach e5 instead of one) 10 f4 f5 11 fxe5 ♖xe5 (Black would like to play 11...dxe5? to maintain control of the d4 square but then 12 ♖xc5 simply wins a pawn) 12 ♖h6 ♖c6 13 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 14 ♖f4 ♖d7 15 ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 16 ♖ael gave White an edge in Tkachiev-Gelfand, FIDE-World Ch, Groningen 1997.

b) 9...b6 10 ♖h6 ♖b7 11 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 12 f4 f5 (12...f6!? is also possible) 13 ♖g5 ♖d7 14 ♖ael (the threat is 15 exf5 exf5 16 ♖e6+) 14...h6 15 ♖f3 ♖ae8 16 d4 fxe4 17 ♖xe4 d5? (17...♖d8!? is necessary) 18 dxc5! ♖g8 (18...♖d8 is met by 19 ♖d1) 19 ♖d6 and White was a pawn up in Shaw-Britton, Sheffield 1996.

c) 9...♖e8 (an interesting way to avoid the exchange of bishops) 10 ♖abl b6 11 ♖h6 ♖h8 12 f4 ♖d7 13

g4 f5 14 gxf5 exf5 15  $\mathbb{N}b1$  a6 16  $\Delta g5$   $\Delta g7$  17  $\Delta xg7$   $\Delta xg7$  18  $\Delta f3$  with equal chances, Day-Spassky, Montreal 1971.

d) 9... $\mathbb{N}b8$  10  $\Delta h6$  e5 (10...b5 is met by 11  $\Delta xg7$   $\Delta xg7$  12 f4 with plans to advance the pawns on the kingside) 11  $\Delta xg7$   $\Delta xg7$  12 f4 f6 (12...b5 runs into 13 f5! when White has excellent chances because the pawn cannot be captured on f5 due to a discovered attack against the knight on c6) 13  $\mathbb{N}f2$   $\Delta e6$  14  $\Delta h1$   $\mathbb{W}d7$  15  $\Delta g1$  d5 16 fxe5  $\Delta xe5$  17 exd5  $\Delta xd5$  18  $\Delta e4$  b6 19  $\mathbb{N}e1$   $\mathbb{N}be8$  20 a3  $\Delta g4$  21  $\mathbb{N}fe2$  h5 22  $\Delta f3$   $\Delta f7$  23 c4  $\Delta c7$  24 h3  $\Delta e5$ ?! (Black is carried away by his attack on d3 and misses the reply. He should try 24...f5 when 25  $\mathbb{W}c3+$   $\Delta g8$  26 hxg4 fxe4 27  $\mathbb{N}xe4$   $\mathbb{N}xe4$  28  $\mathbb{N}xe4$  hxg4 29  $\Delta e5$  is good for White) 25  $\Delta xe5$  (25  $\Delta xf6$ ! is a straightforward way to gain the advantage since 25... $\Delta xf3$  26  $\mathbb{W}c3+$  wins) 25... $\mathbb{N}xe5$  (25...fxe5 allows 26  $\Delta g5$  giving White a strong outpost for the knight) 26  $\Delta xf6$ !  $\mathbb{N}xe2$  27  $\mathbb{W}xe2$  gave White an extra pawn and an attack in S.Bücker-M.Becker, German Team Ch 1999.

### 10 $\Delta h6$ $\Delta dec6$

In the game Petrushin-Shariyazdanov, Krasnodar 1997, Black tried to erect a defensive pawn barrier after 10... $\Delta xh6$ . There followed 11  $\mathbb{W}xh6$  f6 (not 11... $\Delta xc2$ ? which wins a pawn but loses the game after 12  $\Delta g5$ ) 12  $\mathbb{W}d2$  e5 13 f4  $\Delta g4$  14  $\Delta f2$   $\Delta e6$  (14... $\Delta f3+$  looks good but 15  $\Delta xf3$   $\Delta xf3$  16  $\mathbb{W}e3$   $\Delta h5$  17 g4 corners the black bishop) 15  $\Delta d5$   $\mathbb{W}d7$  16 c3  $\Delta dc6$  17  $\Delta d1$   $\Delta g7$  18  $\Delta le3$   $\Delta g8$  19  $\mathbb{N}f2$   $\Delta xd5$  20 exd5  $\Delta e7$  21  $\mathbb{N}af1$  b5 22 h4 f5 (perhaps 22...h6!? should be considered) 23 c4 b4 24 b3  $\mathbb{N}ae8$  25  $\mathbb{W}b2$   $\Delta c8$  26 g4  $\mathbb{W}e7$  (or 26...fxg4

27 fxe5  $\mathbb{N}xf2$  28  $\mathbb{W}xf2$   $\mathbb{N}xe5$  29  $\mathbb{W}f6+$   $\Delta h6$  30  $\Delta e4$  gives White a winning advantage) 27 gxf5 gxf5 28 fxe5  $\mathbb{W}xe5$  29  $\mathbb{W}xe5+$   $\mathbb{N}xe5$  30  $\Delta xf5+$   $\Delta h8$  31  $\Delta h3$   $\mathbb{N}f6$  32  $\Delta h2$  a5 33  $\Delta g3$   $\mathbb{N}xf2+$  34  $\mathbb{N}xf2$   $\Delta e7$  35  $\Delta e4$   $\Delta g6$  36  $\Delta g3$   $\Delta g7$  37  $\Delta xd6$   $\mathbb{N}e3+$  38  $\mathbb{N}f3$   $\mathbb{N}e2$  39  $\Delta f5+$   $\Delta h8$  40  $\mathbb{N}f2$   $\mathbb{N}e1$  41 d4 cxd4 42  $\Delta xd4$   $\mathbb{N}d1$  43  $\Delta c6$   $\mathbb{N}d3+$  44  $\mathbb{N}f3$  1-0

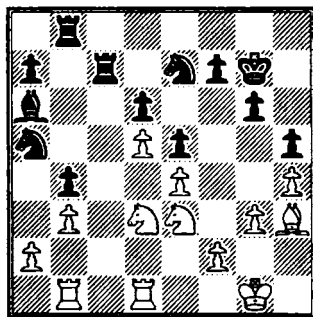
### 11 $\Delta d1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xa5$

Sulskis decides to enter the endgame where he can attempt to exploit his space advantage. It is a safe choice for White whereas the tempting 12 c3 fails to 12... $\Delta b3$ ! handing Black victory.

### 12... $\Delta xa5$ 13 $\Delta xg7$ $\Delta xg7$ 14 $\Delta e3$ b5 15 c3 $\Delta dc6$ 16 $\mathbb{N}fd1$

Both sides engage in a great deal of manoeuvring. White prepares d3-d4.

### 16... $\Delta b7$ 17 $\Delta f4$ $\mathbb{N}fc8$ 18 h4 h5 19 $\mathbb{N}ab1$ b4 20 cxb4 cxb4 21 d4 $\Delta e7$ 22 b3 $\Delta a6$ 23 d5 e5 24 $\Delta d3$ $\mathbb{N}ab8$ 25 $\Delta h3$ $\mathbb{N}c7$ ?!



A careless move that allows White to gain the initiative.

### 26 $\Delta xe5$ ! dxe5 27 d6 $\mathbb{N}cb7$ 28 dxe7 $\mathbb{N}xe7$ 29 $\Delta d5$ $\mathbb{N}eb7$ 30 $\mathbb{N}bc1$ $\Delta e2$ 31 $\mathbb{N}d2$ $\Delta f3$ 32 $\Delta c8$ !

A surprising move but it wins the exchange.

### 32... $\mathbb{N}b5$ 33 $\Delta a6$ $\Delta xe4$ 34 $\Delta xb5$ $\mathbb{N}xb5$ 35 $\Delta c7$ $\mathbb{N}b6$ 36 $\mathbb{N}d6$ $\Delta f8$ 37

$\mathbb{H}xb6$   $axb6$  38  $\mathbb{H}e1$   $\mathcal{R}d3$  39  $\mathbb{H}xe5$   
 $\mathcal{D}c6$  40  $\mathbb{H}e8+$   $\mathcal{G}g7$  41  $\mathcal{D}d5$   $\mathcal{R}b1$  42  
 $\mathbb{H}c8$   $\mathcal{D}a7$  43  $\mathbb{H}a8$   $\mathcal{D}c6$  44  $f3$   $b5$  45  
 $\mathcal{W}f2$   $f6$  46  $\mathbb{H}a6$   $\mathcal{D}e5$  47  $\mathbb{H}a7+$   $\mathcal{G}f8$   
 48  $\mathcal{D}xf6$   $\mathcal{D}d3+$  49  $\mathcal{G}e3$   $\mathcal{D}c1$  50  
 $\mathcal{W}d2$  1-0

### Summary

**Smyslov-Romanishin** is a good example of the joys of  $6 \mathcal{D}h3$  because it prompts Black to play  $6\dots h5$ , which steers the game to less

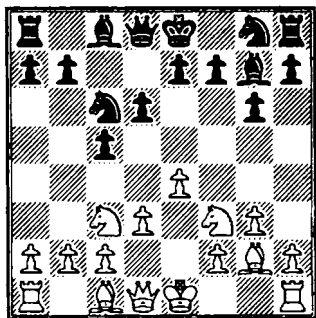
analysed areas.  $9 \mathcal{D}g1$  is a good idea which thwarts Romanishin's opening plan. However his defeat as Black inspired him to play the opening as White and **Romanishin-Yudasin** is proof that it can be a tricky opening weapon. A good defensive system for Black is  $\dots e6$ ,  $\dots \mathcal{D}ge7$  and  $\dots 0-0$ , which is explored in the game **Sulskis-Efimenko**. White responds in the accepted manner with  $\mathcal{R}c1-e3$  and  $\mathcal{W}d1-d2$  so as to exchange the important defensive piece on  $g7$ .

The lines with  $\text{Nf3}$  tend to drift in and out of fashion. White relies on developing his pieces quickly and keeping his options open. This might mean a future kingside attack although active queenside play is also possible. I have changed the move-orders to accommodate those players who wish to play  $6 \text{ Nf3}$  rather than the usual sequence that comes from the Réti Defence.

Not as direct as the new main line, it has lacked popularity and has fewer tricks and traps than lines featuring  $6 \text{ f4}$ . However, Tal and Timman are amongst a host of star names who have enjoyed success with this system.

### Sanduleac-Solcanean Palanka 2001

1  $\text{e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 g3 g6 4 \text{Bg2 Bg7 5 d3 d6 6 Nf3}$

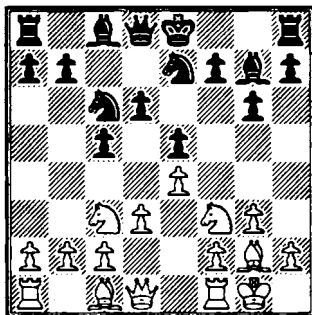


White declares his intention to employ the  $\text{Nf3}$  system. For ease of reference I have changed the original move-order which was  $1 \text{ g3 c5 2 Bg2 Nc6 3 e4 g6 4 d3 Bg7 5 Nc3 d6 6 Nf3}$ .

6...e5

A direct way of curtailing the prospect of  $\text{d3-d4}$ .

7 0-0  $\text{Nge7}$



8  $\text{Nbd2!}$

White starts to manoeuvre the knight to a better square before deciding to push the kingside or queenside pawns. Also possible:

a)  $8 \text{ a3 0-0 9 Bb1 a5 10 Nbd2}$  (the plan  $\text{b2-b4}$  has been ruled out, but now the knight can come to  $\text{c4}$  without worrying about the threat of  $\dots\text{b7-b5}$ )  $10 \dots \text{Bb8 11 a4 Bg6 12 Nc4 d5 13 exd5 Nxd5 14 Nxd5 Bxd5 15 Bg5! f6}$  (or  $15 \dots \text{Wxg5 16 Bxd5 16 Bg5! f6}$ )  $17 \text{ Bxg2 Nxb4 18 f4}$  (the pawn is poisoned: 18

♙xc5? ♜d5+) 18...♜d7 19 ♖f2 with equal chances, Ciolac-Palac, Montecatini Terme 1994.

b) 8 ♘h4 0-0 9 f4 exf4 10 ♙xf4 ♙e6 (10...h6 has been tried in the past but ♙cl-e3 followed by ♜d1-d2 is as good as always) 11 ♜d2 d5 12 exd5 (perhaps 12 ♙h6 should be considered) 12...♘d5 13 ♙h6 ♘xc3 14 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 15 bxc3 ♜d7 16 ♜f2 b6 17 ♜f6+ ♙g8 18 ♙xc6 ♜xc6 19 ♘f5 gxf5 20 ♜g5+ ♙h8 21 ♜f6+ ♙g8 22 ♜g5+ ♙h8 23 ♜f6+ ♙g8 ½-½ Shchupaleev-Belov, Serpukhov 1999.

### 8...0-0

The natural move which allows White to carry out his plan of finding the king's knight a decent outpost. Black has tried a variety of alternatives:

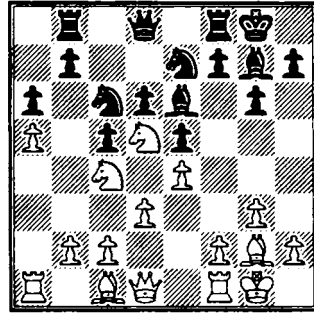
a) 8...♘d4 (slightly premature in view of the fact that the knight can be forced back by a future c2-c3) 9 ♘c4 0-0 10 ♘e3 ♖b8 11 ♘cd5 ♘xd5 12 ♘xd5 ♙e6 13 c3 ♘c6 14 a3 a5 15 a4 when the strong knight on d5 and space advantage gave White an advantage in Bilek-Barczay, Sousse Interzonal 1967.

b) 8...♖b8 9 a4 a6 10 ♘c4 b5 11 axb5 axb5 12 ♘e3 0-0 13 ♘cd5 ♘xd5 (or 13...f5 14 exf5 gxf5 15 f4 gives White a chance to undermine Black's pawn chain) 14 ♘xd5 ♘e7 15 ♙g5 f6 16 ♘xe7+ ♜xe7 17 ♙e3 ♙b7 18 ♜d2 b4 19 ♖a7 ♖a8 20 ♖fa1 ♖xa7 21 ♖xa7 ♖a8 ½-½ Bilek-Smejkal, Skopje Olympiad 1972.

9 ♘c4 a6 10 a4 ♖b8 11 a5!

This is the difference compared to note 'b' to Black's eighth move. The addition of castling by Black gives White the chance to hamper the advance of the queenside pawns.

11...♙e6 12 ♘d5



The knight comes to d5 to deny Black the opportunity of exchanging on c4 and getting rid of the defender of the a5 pawn.

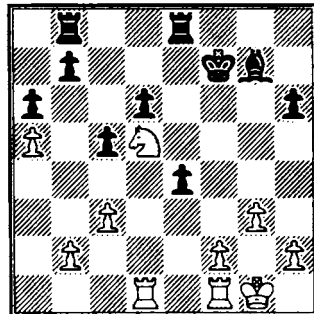
12...f5 13 c3 ♙f7 14 ♙g5 h6 15 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 16 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 17 exf5 gxf5 18 ♘b6 ♖fd8 19 ♙d5!

An instructive way to secure the d5 square for the knight. After swapping off the light-squared bishops his knight will dominate the position. On the other hand an immediate 19 ♘d5 is met by 19...♙xd5 and White's advantage begins to evaporate.

19...♙xd5 20 ♘xd5 ♜f7 21 ♜f3 ♖e8 22 ♖ab1 e4 23 dxe4 fxe4

If 23...♙xe4 then 24 ♖bd1 protects the knight and White can double rooks on the d-file in order to pile up on the backward pawn on d6.

24 ♜xf7+ ♙xf7 25 ♖bd1



The strong knight on d5 gives White a superior ending. The game concluded: 25...♖bd8 26 f4 exf3 27 ♖xf3+ ♔g6 The king is cut off from the queenside because 27...♗e6? walks into 28 ♘c7+ losing material. 28 ♔f2 ♗e5 29 ♖f1 ♖f8 30 ♔e2 ♖xf3 31 ♖xf3 ♗e8 32 ♔d3 h5 33 ♔c4 ♖h8 34 h3 ♖h7 35 ♘e3 ♖d7 36 ♔d5 The white king is well placed to attack Black's weak pawns. 36...♖f7 37 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 38 ♘f5 ♔f6 39 ♘xd6 1-0

Black can also dispense with an early ...e7-e5 and try a queenside pawn advance. White responds with the simple but effective plan of ♗e3 and ♖d2 followed by ♗e3-h6.

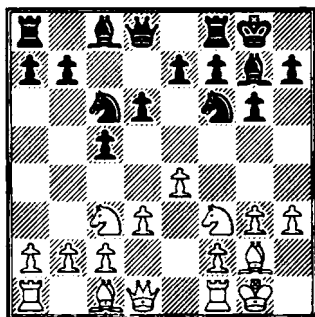
**Sepp-Danilov**

Estonian Team Ch 2000

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 d3 d6 6 ♘f3 ♘f6

Black favours the development of his king's knight to f6, which is a set-up also explored in the chapter on the Kasparov variation.

7 0-0 0-0 8 h3



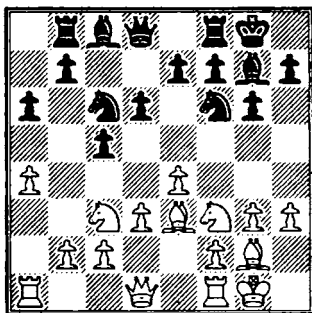
The pawn is nudged forward to enable the bishop to be developed to c3 without harassment from ...♘g4. The original move-order was 1 ♘f3

♘f6 2 g3 g6 3 ♗g2 ♗g7 4 0-0 0-0 5 d3 d6 6 e4 c5 7 ♘c3 ♘c6 8 h3.

8...♖b8 9 a4

White intends to open the a-file if Black persists in advancing his queenside pawns.

9...a6 10 ♗e3



10...b5!?

A logical choice in view of Black's preparations. Then again, other moves have been tried:

a) 10...♘d7 11 ♖d2 b5 12 axb5 axb5 13 ♗h6 b4 14 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 15 ♘d5 e6 16 ♘e3 when White will move the king's knight and advance the f-pawn with approximately equal chances, Schaefer-Lutz, Bad Neuenahr 1991.

b) 10...♗d7 (Black is wary of playing ...b7-b5 when there is a possibility of e4-e5 with a discovered attack against c6) 11 ♖d2 (White follows the standard plan of preparing ♗e3-h6 to exchange bishops) 11...♗e8 12 ♗h6 ♗h8 13 ♘g5 b5 14 axb5 axb5 15 f4 c4 16 f5 b4 17 ♘e2 b3 18 d4 bxc2 19 ♖xc2 ♘b4 20 ♖c3 ♖c8 21 b3! gxh3 22 bxc4 fxe4 23 ♖ab1 ♘c6 24 ♖xb8 ♘xb8 25 g4 ♗e6 26 ♖e3 ♗g7 27 ♘xe6 ♖xe6 28 ♗g5 ♘h5 29 ♖xh5 ♗xh6 30 g5 ♗g7 31 ♗xe4 gave White a winning attack in Martin del Campo-Verduga, Bayamo 1990.

c) 10...e5 is regarded as an important way of stopping e4-e5 and preventing the option of d3-d4. Play might continue:

c1) 11 ♖d2 (again with the idea of ♗h6) 11...b5 12 axb5 axb5 13 ♗h6 ♖e8 14 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 15 ♖d5 ♗e6?! (15...f6 is necessary when 16 c3 preserves White's edge) 16 ♖h6 f6 17 ♖xf6+! ♗xf6 18 ♖g5 ♗b7 19 ♖xh7+ ♖f8 occurred in Milos-Leitao, Americana 1995. White later pointed out that he could have finished the job quicker by 20 ♖h8+! ♗g8 21 ♖h7+ ♖f7 22 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 23 f4 with a winning advantage.

c2) 11 ♖e2 ♖d4 12 ♖h4 ♖h5 13 c3 ♖e6 14 ♖d2 ♖e7 15 ♖h2 ♗d7 16 ♗f3 ♖f6 17 ♗g2 ♗c6 18 f4 cxf4 19 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 20 ♗xf4 h6 21 ♗f2 ♖h7 22 a5 c4 23 ♗f4 ♗bd8 24 ♗e1 cxd3 25 ♖xd3 ♖h5 26 ♖f3 ♗fe8 27 ♖d4 ♗d7 28 ♗ef1 gave White a slight edge and he eventually won in Hochstrasser-Gallagher, Zürich 2000.

### 11 axb5 axb5 12 ♖d2

This is consistent with the standard plan of ♗e3-h6 to exchange the influential bishop on h6. If White is looking for something different then 12 e5!?! is worth checking out, even though it has had a poor reputation ever since Fischer won a famous game in the 50s against it. However there is room for improvement by White. For example: 12...dxe5 13 ♗xc5 ♖d7 (or 13...♖c7 14 ♗e1 b4 15 ♖a4 ♗d8 16 ♖d2 ♖d4 17 ♖c4 ♖d5 was fine for Black in Mednis-Fischer, USA Ch, New York 1958, but White can do better by not putting the queen's knight on the rim but instead playing 15 ♖e4) 14 ♗e3

♖c7 15 ♗e1 e6 16 ♖e4 ♖d4 17 c3 ♖f5 18 ♗d2 h6 19 ♖b3 ♖e7 20 ♖b4 ♖c6 21 ♖b3 (it is best to avoid the ending that arises after 21 ♖d6 ♖xd6 22 ♖xd6 ♖c5 when the position is roughly equal) 21...♗b7 (21...♖e7!?! is also possible) 22 ♗e3 ♖e7 23 ♗a7 ♖c8 24 ♗a3 ♗d5 25 ♖b4 ♗e8 26 ♗a6 ♗f8 27 ♖a5 ♖b7? (27...♖xa5 28 ♗xa5 ♗d8 gives Black a passive but defensible ending) 28 ♖xe5! (a clever way of deflecting the queen's knight from its defence of the f6 square) 28...♖xe5 29 ♖f6+ ♖h8 30 ♗xd5 (30 ♗d4 also looks good) 30...exd5 31 ♖xe8 ♖f3+ 32 ♖f1 ♖e7 (32...♖xe1 loses to 33 ♗d4+) 33 ♖c7 gave White a clear advantage in Kogan-Summerscale, Tel Aviv 1997.

### 12...♗e8

A common ploy to avoid the exchange of the bishops. However, the scheme is flawed because it allows White to accelerate his attack. I think Black should try 12...b4 when a sample line is 13 ♖e2 ♗b7 14 ♗h6 ♖b6 with roughly equal chances.

### 13 ♗h6 ♗h8 14 ♖g5

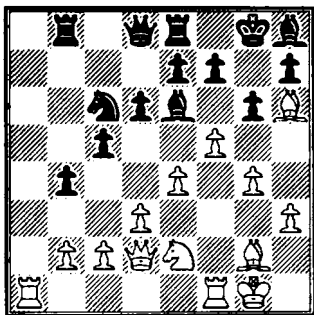
The knight makes way for the f-pawn to advance.

### 14...b4 15 ♖e2 ♖h5?!

White needs no invitation to start a kingside pawn storm. Therefore, 15...♖d7 is a better idea although I still prefer White's attacking chances.

### 16 g4 ♖g7 17 f4 ♖e6 18 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 19 f5

As usual the idea of advancing the f-pawn to undermine Black's kingside barrier is a useful attacking tool.



19...e6 20 ♖ab1 d4 21 f4  
e6

21...e6!? is necessary to cover the g5 square with the queen.

22 fxg6 hxg6 23 dxc6!

The remains of the defensive shell are blown apart by this astute sacrifice.

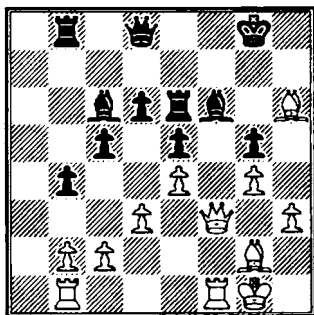
23...fxg6 24 ♖g5

The threat of ♖xg6+ is lethal.

24...dxe2+ 25 ♕f2 d4

Black returns the piece in a desperate bid to fend off the onslaught.

26 ♖xf4 e5 27 ♖e3 e6 28 ♕g1  
g5 29 ♖f3 ♖e6



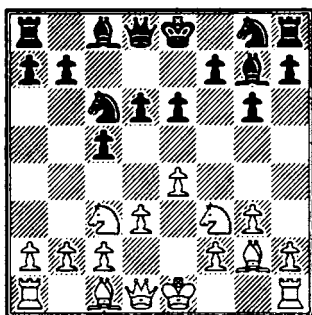
30 e6! 1-0

There are some players who like to play the same set-up against any White system. This means that ...e7-e6, to develop the knight to e7, has remained a popular continuation.

### Kogan-Ashley Budapest 1997

1 e4 c5 2 d3 d6 3 g3 g6 4  
e6 5 d3 d6 6 d3 e6

Black decides to employ a standard set-up, designed to facilitate ...d6e7 and ...0-0. Incidentally, this game brings to light another transposition: the original move-order was 1 e4 c5 2 d3 d6 3 d3 c6 4 g3 g6 5 e6 6 d3 e6.



7 e6

I like this move which not only makes use of the knight on f3 but also is likely to take Black out of his routine.

7...d6 8 ♖d2

The theme of e3-h6 to exchange dark-squared bishops should be a natural reaction for anyone who plays the Closed Sicilian.

8...h6 9 e3

Kogan has been denied the chance to swap bishops but now he can stop Black from castling kingside by constant pressure on the h6 pawn.

9...d4

Another try is 9...e5, aiming to stop d3-d4, but Black is a move down on a similar pawn structure in the main game, Sanduleac-Solcanean, although admittedly the manoeuvre d3-d2 is no longer reasonable. In the game Smyslov-

Kotov, Moscow 1943, White continued 10 0-0 ♗e6 11 ♘e1 ♜d7 12 a3 ♗h3 13 f4 ♘d4 14 ♚b1 exf4 15 ♗xf4 ♗xg2 16 ♜xg2 0-0 17 g4 with roughly equal chances.

10 0-0 ♘ec6 11 ♘e1

Also possible is 11 ♘d1 but Black can still try 11...♜a5 even though 12 ♜xa5 ♘xf3+ 13 ♗xf3 ♘xa5 14 c3 ♘c6 15 a4 gives White a slight edge in the ending thanks to his space advantage.

11...♜a5 12 ♘d1 ♜a6?!

The queen is out of the way on a6, which suggests that the American should have entered the ending with 12...♜xd2, when the chances are equal.

13 a3

Black would smile after the obvious 13 c3? since then 13...♘b3! wins the exchange.

13...b5 14 ♚b1 ♗b7 15 h3 ♘f8

An indication that Black thinks that the opening has gone awry because this slow way of getting his king into safety gives White plenty of time to improve his position.

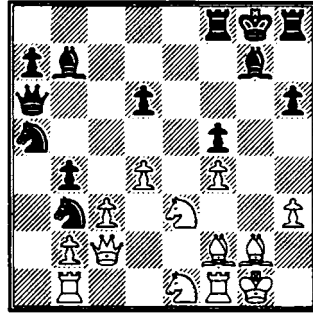
16 f4 f5 17 g4!

A kingside pawn avalanche is part of White's usual attacking repertoire and is particularly suitable when the black king is struggling to find safety.

17...♘g8 18 c3 ♘b3 19 ♜c2

The queen attacks the b3 knight, which means Black will concentrate his forces on the queenside. This will inevitably make the defence of the kingside more difficult. At the moment White's pieces look restricted but they will soon start attacking Black's over-extended pawn structure.

19...♘ca5 20 exf5 gxf5 21 gxf5 exf5 22 ♗f2 b4 23 ♘e3 ♚f8 24 axb4 cxb4 25 d4



The discovered attack on the weak f5 pawn helps to expose Black's fragile defence.

25...♜b5

Or 25...♗xg2 26 ♘l xg2 ♜b5 27 ♘h4 and once again Black will struggle to defend f5.

26 ♗xb7 ♜xb7 27 ♘xf5

White is a pawn up and has the better co-ordinated pieces. The game concluded:

27...♜d7 28 ♘xg7 ♘xg7 29 ♘h2 ♚hg8 30 ♚g1+ ♘h8 31 ♚xg8+ ♚xg8 32 ♘g2 ♘c4 33 ♜xb3 ♘d2 34 ♜d1 ♘xb1 35 ♜xb1 bxc3 36 bxc3 ♜c6 37 d5 ♜xc3

If 37...♜xd5 then 38 ♗d4+ wins.

38 ♜e4 1-0

## Summary

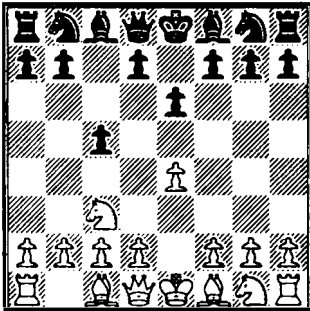
**Sanduleac-Solcanean** is a good example of how White can employ the knight manoeuvre ♘f3-d2-c4 to good effect. The new main line is based on playing ♗e3, ♜d2 and ♗e3-h6, which is a policy that is effective in a number of situations. **Sepp-Danilov** sees White using it to create a strong attack and the game itself is a model example of how to pursue the black king.

# 12 French Defence set-up

The idea of playing ...e6 followed by ...d5 is regarded as a solid response. It finds favour with those who wish to avoid the main lines associated with a kingside fianchetto. In reply, White should continue with the usual plan of a kingside fianchetto, exerting pressure against the d5 pawn with a bishop on g2 and ensuring a slight edge. This French Defence pawn structure cannot appeal to all Sicilian players because of a move-order trick that often occurs in practice. For example Dragon or Najdorf players are reluctant to advance the e-pawn because after 3 ♘f3 with the intention of 4 d4 they are no longer able to play their favourite opening. This tends to frighten off a great many players who might otherwise be tempted to play this solid set-up.

**Lane-Nunn**  
Stroud 1980

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 e6

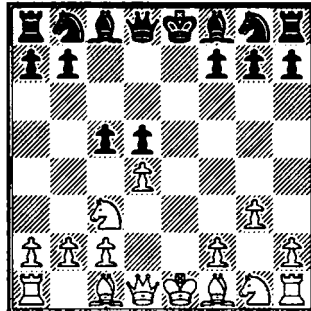


Black prepares the central challenge ...d7-d5.

3 g3 d5 4 exd5

It is usual to exchange pawns in the centre. In the game, Van der Weide-Van der Werf, Netherlands Ch, Leeuwarden 2001, White tried 4 d3 and was happy to enter the ending after 4...♘f6 5 ♙g2 dxe4 6 dxe4 ♜xd1+ 7 ♘xd1 when the position is level. However, White gave a good example of how to handle the position after 7...♝c6 8 ♘e3 ♙e7 9 b3 0-0 10 ♙b2 ♘d7 11 f4 b5 12 ♘e2 ♙b7 13 0-0-0 ♘b6 14 e5 b4 15 f5 (the standard advance of the f-pawn, threatening f5-f6, is a good way to increase the pressure) 15...c4?! (a pawn sacrifice to disrupt White's plans but it is not convincing) 16 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 17 bxc4 ♜ad8 18 f6! gxf6 19 exf6 ♙d6 20 ♜d3 ♙c5 21 ♜hd1 ♜b8 22 ♜d7, when White's rook invades to the seventh rank and he stands much better.

4...exd5 5 d4



A speciality of mine, which is intended to put pressure on Black's central pawns.

**5...cxd4**

Nunn wishes to lure the white queen out in the open so that it can be attacked. Also possible:

a) 5...dxc6 6 dxc5 d4 7 dxe4 dxc5 8 dfg2 (8 dxc5 Wa5+ 9 dd2 Wxc5 10 dfg2 df5 is awkward for White due to the weakness of c2) 8...df5 9 dxc5 Wa5+ 10 c3 Wxc5 (if 10...dxc3? then 11 dxb7! cxb2+ 12 dxa5 bxa1=W 13 dxc6+ wins) 11 de2 with roughly equal chances.

b) 5...c4!? releases the tension in the centre when White can proceed 6 dfg2 de6 7 dge2 df6 8 dfg5 de7 9 0-0, intending df4 with some pressure against the d5 pawn.

c) 5...df6 6 dge2 (6 dfg2 cxd4 7 dce2 is also possible) 6...dgg4 7 dfg2 cxd4 8 Wxd4 dc6 9 Wa4 db4 10 0-0 Wa5 11 Wxa5 dxa5 12 h3 df5 13 dgg5 (13 dxd5 dxd5 14 dxd5 0-0-0 gives Black a slight initiative) 13...de4 14 dxe4 dxe4 (14...dxe4 allows White to put pressure on the e-pawn after 15 g4 dgg6 16 dgg3) 15 c3 0-0 16 de3 ffd8 17 fad1 with equal chances, Novitzky-Balashov, St Petersburg 2000.

**6 Wxd4 df6**

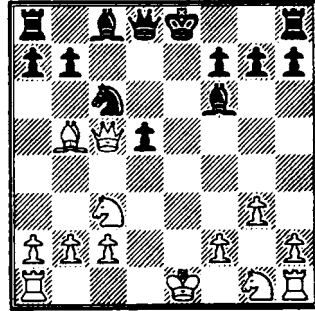
Simply defending the d-pawn.

**7 dfg5 de7 8 db5+**

I had in mind a special plan, which is soon revealed. Instead, 8 0-0-0 is the main alternative to target the isolated d-pawn. For instance: 8...dc6 9 Wa4 de4?! (9...de6 is more reliable to add support to d5 when Kupreichik-Morawietz, Germany Team Ch 1996 continued 10 dfg2 0-0 11 dge2 Wb6 12 de3 dc5 13 dxc5 Wxc5 14 df4 with equal chances) 10 dxe7 dxc3 11 dxd8 dxa4 12 dfg5 (the ending is favourable to

White thanks to the pair of bishops and the vulnerable d-pawn) 12...de6 13 dfg2 h6 14 de3 0-0-0 15 de2 b6 16 df4 de7 17 fhe1 dc5 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 dxe6 fxe6 20 fxe6 and White was a pawn up in Peters-Mentel, Leipzig 1997.

**8...dc6 9 dxf6 dxf6 10 Wc5!**



I could sense that Nunn feared this move. In my home preparation I had analysed this position and noticed that, amazingly, it amounts to a reversed Göring Gambit Declined! If you try out the moves 1 e4 e5 2 df3 dc6 3 d4 exd4 4 c3 d5 5 exd5 Wxd5 6 cxd4 dgg4 7 de2 db4+ 8 dc3 dxf3 9 dxf3 Wc4 then an almost identical position to the illustrative game is reached. The only difference is that White has played g3, which doesn't alter the assessment of the position as being equal. I think that because this game was played in a weekend tournament it has escaped the attention of computer databases, making it relatively unknown. However, *New in Chess Magazine* did mention it when I published some analysis in 1992, after which a few games were played with this line.

**10...dxc3+ 11 bxc3**

11 Wxc3 is well met by 11...0-0 12 de2 (12 dxc6 bxc6 13 Wxc6 fe8+ 14 of1 fb8 when Black has

plenty of play for the pawn) 12...d4  
13 ♖d2 ♗b6 14 ♙xc6 bxc6.

11...♗e7+ 12 ♗xe7+ ♕xe7 13  
0-0-0 ♙e6 14 ♘e2 ♕d6?!

It may be a little harsh to assess this move as dubious but it is the start of a misguided plan to march the king up the board to provoke complications. The problem for GM Nunn was that the position looked like it was heading for a draw and in a weekend tournament this can be enough to deprive you of 1st place. This explains his risky game plan. A better approach is 14...♞hd8, played in the game Gdanski-Wojtkiewicz, Warsaw 1993, when after 15 ♞he1 ♞d6 White should have played 16 ♘f4 with equal chances.

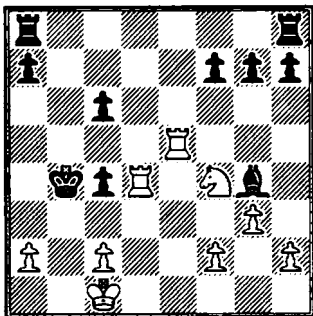
15 ♞he1 ♕c5 16 c4 dxc4 17  
♙xc6 bxc6

17...♕xc6 is necessary although I can quickly head for a draw after 18 ♘d4+ ♕c7 19 ♘xe6+ fxe6 20 ♞xe6.

18 ♘f4 ♙g4 19 ♞e5+ ♕b4

If 19...♕b6 then 20 ♞d4 wins back the sacrificed pawn and, with threats such as ♞g5, leads to an initiative for White.

20 ♞d4!



This is what Nunn missed. The threat of ♘d3+ gives White a winning advantage.

20...♙e6

20...♞ae8 21 ♘d3+ ♕c3 22 ♞xg4 f5 23 ♞f4 wins or 20...♞ad8 21 ♘d3+ ♕c3 22 ♞xg4 cxd3 23 ♞c5 mate.

21 a3+!

The black king is snared in a mating trap.

21...♕xa3 22 ♘xe6 ♕b4

Desperate but no better is 22...fxe6 when White wins after 23 ♞xc4 a5 24 ♞e3+ ♕a2 25 ♞a4 mate.

23 ♞c5 1-0

John Nunn accepted his loss against a teenager with good grace. However, it seemed to inspire him because, according to his book *Secrets of Grandmaster Chess*, he then went on to play 85 consecutive games without defeat.

The theme of attacking the isolated d5 pawn is explored in the next game. This time Black delays ...♘f6, forcing White to adopt a slightly different strategy.

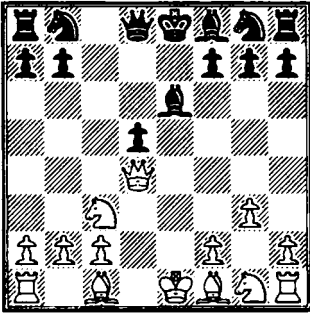
### Lane-Bologan

Cappelle la Grande 1992

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 e6 3 g3 d5 4 exd5  
exd5 5 d4 cxd4 6 ♗xd4

6 ♘b5 is an interesting try, to capture on d4 with the knight, but 6...♙b4+ prevents White having his own way. For example: 7 ♙d2 ♗e7+! 8 ♘e2 (8 ♙e2 ♘c6 9 ♘f3 ♙h3 is good for Black) 8...♘c6 9 ♙g2 a6 10 ♘xd4 (10 ♘a3 ♙xa3 11 bxa3 ♘f6 is winning) 10...♘xd4 11 ♙xb4 ♗xb4+ 12 c3 ♗xb2 13 cxd4 ♘f6 leaves Black with an extra pawn.

6...♙e6



This is the slight difference from the previous game. Black defends the d-pawn with the bishop, thereby avoiding a pin on his king's knight after 6...♟f6 7 ♟g5.

7 ♟g2

Increasing the pressure on the isolated d5 pawn.

7...♟c6 8 ♟a4

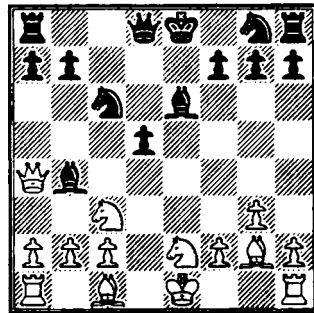
The most active continuation, pinning the knight. Koubek-Valtera, Prague 1996, saw White try the tame 8 ♟d1. After 8...♟f6 9 ♟g5?! (9 ♟ge2, intending 0-0, looks like an improvement) White seemed to have chances against the d-pawn. Black reacted energetically: 9...d4 10 ♟ce2 ♟b4+ 11 ♟d2 (11 c3 is met with 11...dxc3 12 bxc3 ♟e7 and White's weak queenside pawns are a long-term worry) 11...♟b6! 12 b3 0-0 13 a3 ♟xd2+ 14 ♟xd2 ♟ad8 (intending ...d3) 15 b4 (15 ♟f3, to catch up on development, fails after 15...♟e4! 16 ♟f4 ♟xf2 17 ♟xf2 d3+ 18 ♟e3 ♟xe3+ 19 ♟xe3 dxe2 20 ♟xe2 ♟g4 and Black wins) 15...♟fe8 16 ♟h3 ♟c4 17 ♟hf4 ♟xe2 18 ♟xe2 d3! 19 cxd3 ♟d4 0-1

8...♟b4

It makes sense to restrict the movement of White's queen's knight. Instead, 8...♟c5 was tried in Radzhabov-Maistrovsky, Moscow 1996, when 9 ♟b5 is supposed to

cast doubt on the continuation based on the sequel 9...♟e7 10 ♟g5 f6 11 ♟e3 d4 12 ♟xc6+ bxc6 13 ♟xc6+ with a winning advantage. However, Black can improve on this game by 10...♟xf2+! 11 ♟xf2 ♟xg5 12 ♟xb7 ♟f5+ 13 ♟f3 ♟xc2+ 14 ♟g1 ♟c8 and it is Black who is better because the white king is vulnerable. Perhaps White should consider 9 ♟ge2.

9 ♟ge2



9...a6

The Moldavian grandmaster spent some time on this move, suggesting that he was not familiar with the position. It is clear that Black wants to chase the queen by introducing the possibility of ...b7-b5. A suggestion of mine, 9...♟ge2!?, was tested in the game Jurković-Zichichi, Cannes 1996. Play went 10 a3 (White makes room for his queen by clearing the fourth rank) 10...♟a5 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♟g5 ♟b6 (12...h6 13 ♟xe7 ♟xe7 14 ♟e1 intending ♟ad1 and ♟f4 gives White good chances) 13 ♟f4 d4 14 ♟cd5 ♟d7 (14...h6 allows 15 ♟xe7 ♟xe7 16 ♟xe6 fxe6 17 ♟f4 and White targets the b7 and e6 pawns) 15 ♟b3 ♟h8 16 ♟xe7 ♟xe7 17 ♟xe7 ♟xe7 18 ♟d5 ♟c5 19 ♟xb6 axb6 20 ♟xb7 ♟a5 21 ♟b4! (21 ♟a1 ♟b5 22 ♟a2 preserves the

extra pawn, though the white queen is temporarily out of the action) 21...♠b5 22 ♜xc5 bxc5 23 ♙e4 f5 24 ♙d3 ♠xb2 25 ♠fb1 ♠fb8 26 ♠xb2 ♠xb2 27 a4 when White was winning due to the passed a-pawn.

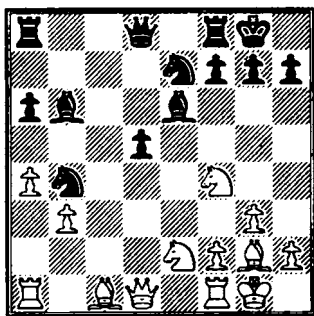
10 0-0 ♘e7 11 ♘f4 0-0

11...b5, in keeping with the plan started at move 9, is made to look ineffectual by 12 ♜b3 ♘d4 13 ♜xb4 ♘xc2 14 ♘xe6 fxe6 15 ♜g4 ♘xa1 16 ♜xe6 ♜d7 17 ♜e2 0-0 18 ♙g5 and White is much better.

12 ♘ce2 ♙c5 13 c3 b5 14 ♜d1 ♙b6 15 a4

This advance is not only designed to disrupt Black's queenside pawn structure but also I had in mind an idea how it might help to develop my dark-squared bishop. However, I wanted to delay taking on e6 because then Black would have instant pressure against f2.

15...b4 16 cxb4 ♘xb4 17 b3



This is the position I was aiming for. The queenside fianchetto will give me pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal and Black's dark-squared bishop is in no position to contest this.

17...♠c8 18 ♙b2 ♙f5 19 ♘d4

The knight not only defends the c2 square but increases its attacking options.

19...♙e4 20 ♜g4!

The simple mating threat by ♘e6, uncovering an attack on g7, forces Bologan to make concessions.

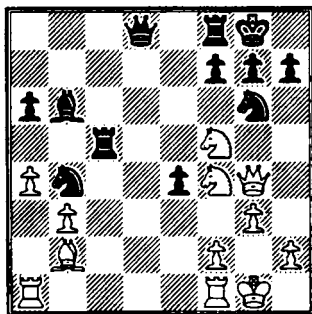
20...♘g6

Or 20...g6 21 ♙xe4 ♙xd4 (21...dxe4 22 ♠ad1 ♜c7 23 ♘de6 fxe6 24 ♜xe6+ ♠f7 25 ♠d7 wins) 22 ♙xd4 dxe4 23 ♠ad1 when the combination of weak dark squares around the black king and the dominant bishop on d4 gives White the advantage.

21 ♙xe4 dxe4

After this the strength of my attack surprised Bologan. A better chance to carry on fighting was 21...♙xd4!/? although 22 ♘xg6 hxg6 23 ♙xd4 dxe4 24 ♜xe4 ♠e8 25 ♙e5 leaves White a pawn up.

22 ♘f5 ♠c5



23 ♘h5!

It is important to conduct the onslaught carefully to avoid any pitfalls. 23 ♘xg7 is tempting but 23...♠g5! 24 ♘f5 h5 is good for Black. 23 ♙xg7 is a decent alternative, although in the game I was wary of allowing 23...♠xf5 24 ♜xf5 ♜xg7 25 ♠ad1 when Black has some hopes of survival. The text is more direct.

23...f6? 24 ♘hxg7 ♜d5

If 24...♜d2 then 25 ♙d4 ♠xf5 26 ♘xf5 ♙xd4 27 ♠ad1 ♜g5 (27...♙xf2+ 28 ♜g2 is decisive) 28 ♠xd4 ♜xg4 29 ♘h6+ and wins.

25 ♖e7+!

I had thought about this line when deciding to go ahead with 23 ♖h5. The double attack destroys the black position.

25...♗xe7 26 ♖f5+ ♖f7

26...♗g6 runs into 27 ♖e7+ and the black queen makes an early exit from the board.

27 ♗g7+ ♖e6 28 ♗xe7+

In time-trouble I chose what appeared to be the simplest route to victory. 28 ♖xe7 is also strong. For instance: 28...♗a8 29 ♖ad1 ♖f7 30 ♗g4+ ♖xe7 (30...f5 31 ♗g5 with an attack) 31 ♖d7+ ♖f8 32 ♗e6 ♖xd7 33 ♗xf6+ ♖e8 34 ♗h8+ wins.

28...♖xf5 29 ♗xf8 ♗c6 30 ♖d4 ♖d3 31 ♗g8 h5 32 h3 ♖c7

There is no defence and 32...♖a5 merely prolongs the agony: 33 ♗h7+ ♖e6 34 ♖xb6 ♗xb6 35 ♗xe4+ ♖e5 36 b4+ ♖d5 37 ♖ad1.

33 ♗c8+ ♖g6 34 ♗g8+ ♖f5 35 ♖xc5 ♖xc5

Or 35...♗xc5 36 ♗h7+ ♖e5 37 ♗xh5+ f5 38 ♗h8+ winning.

36 ♖a1 ♖d6 37 b4 ♗d7 38 ♗d5+ 1-0

A slightly different approach is explored in the next game where White promptly tries a kingside fianchetto to put pressure on the d5 pawn.

**Murey-Ungure**  
Cappelle la Grande 1995

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 e6 3 g3 d5 4 exd5 exd5 5 ♖g2 ♖f6 6 d3 ♖e7

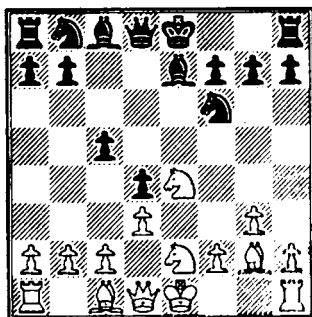
Alternatively, 6...d4 is possible when 7 ♖e4 ♖e7 8 ♖e2 was slightly different from the main game in Moizhess-Barsky, Moscow Ch, 1992, where, after 8...0-0, White gradually built up an attack on the

kingside. There followed: 9 0 0 ♖c6 10 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 11 ♖f4 ♖f5 (or 11...♖e8 12 ♖d2 ♗d6 13 ♗f3 ♖d7 with equal chances) 12 ♖d5 ♖e5 (also possible 12...♖e6 13 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 14 ♗h5 ♗f5 15 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 16 ♖xc6 bxc6 17 ♖f4 ♖b3! intending 18 ♖a3 looks like a possible improvement) 17...c4! 18 ♖fe1 ♖fe8 19 ♖e5 ♖xe5 20 ♖xc5 ♖d8 21 ♖d1 f6 22 ♖c7 ♖d7 23 ♖u5 ♖d5 24 ♖c7 ♖d7 with an equal ending, N.Thomas-Gayson, British Team Ch (4NCL) 1999) 13 ♖e1 ♗d7 14 ♖g5 ♖fe8 15 ♗d2 h6 16 ♖xh6 ♖e6 (16...gxh6, accepting the sacrifice, is neatly foiled by 17 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 18 ♖f6+ and the black queen leaves the board) 17 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 18 ♗g5 ♖g6 (18...f6 19 ♖xf6+ wins) 19 ♖f6+! gave White a winning advantage.

7 ♖ge2 d4

7...0-0 transposes to the main game after 8 0-0 d4 9 ♖e4. Instead, 7...b6?! is a logical but flawed way of defending the d5 pawn. For example: 8 ♖g5 (the simple threat against d5 is surprisingly hard to meet) 8...♖b7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖f4 ♖a6 11 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 12 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 13 ♖fxd5 and White was a pawn up for nothing, Klauner-Knight, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1984.

8 ♖e4





black king, but also prevents Black developing smoothly by ... $\text{f5}$ . By chance I was playing on the board next to this game and was impressed by the lightning speed with which Murey played the opening.

13... $\text{d7}$  14  $\text{d2}$

White gets on with the job of developing his pieces. Basically, Black needs to play energetically on the queenside to distract White from his ambitions on the other flank.

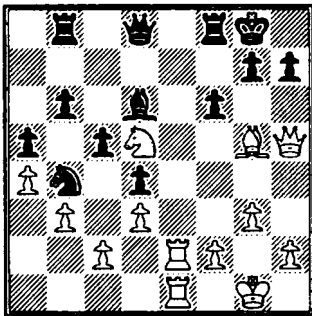
13... $\text{b8}$  15  $\text{a4}$   $\text{a5}$ !

Ungure is allowing the queenside to be blocked, which will enable Murey to shift his pieces to the kingside. A better option is 15... $\text{d7}$ , intending ... $\text{c6}$  to trade pieces.

16  $\text{e2}$   $\text{d7}$  17  $\text{b3}$   $\text{b6}$  18  $\text{ae1}$

Now that the pawns on the queenside are locked together, the queen's rook is added to the centre.

18... $\text{c6}$  19  $\text{xc6}$   $\text{xc6}$  20  $\text{d5}$   
 $\text{b4}$  21  $\text{g5}$   $\text{f6}$



22  $\text{xf6}$ !

An inspired sacrifice that takes into account the fragile nature of the black king's position.

22... $\text{gxf6}$  23  $\text{de7+}$

This key move of the combination was missed by the spectators who by now had gathered to watch a demonstration of Murey's renowned attacking flair.

23... $\text{h8}$

If 23... $\text{xe7}$  then 24  $\text{xe7}$  leads to mate, while 23... $\text{g7}$  encourages 24  $\text{e4}$ , winning for White.

24  $\text{g6+}$   $\text{g7}$  25  $\text{xf8}$

White has given up two pieces for the rook but, more importantly, still has a tremendous attack.

25... $\text{xf8}$  26  $\text{g4+}$   $\text{h6}$

26... $\text{h8}$  is well met by 27  $\text{d7}$ !, intending 28  $\text{e8}$ , while 26... $\text{f7}$  loses to 27  $\text{d7+}$   $\text{g6}$  28  $\text{e8}$   $\text{xe8}$  29  $\text{xe8}$   $\text{f7}$  30  $\text{g4+}$   $\text{h6}$  31  $\text{g8}$  with mate to follow.

27  $\text{h3+}$   $\text{g6}$  28  $\text{e4}$

The rook enters the fray, adding another piece to the g-file. Murey could also play 28  $\text{g4+}$   $\text{h6}$  (28... $\text{f7}$  29  $\text{d7+}$  transposes to the note to Black's 26th move) 29  $\text{e6}$ !, with the clever threat of 30  $\text{f4}$  and 31  $\text{g5}$  mate, when the pawn on f6 is pinned. The game concluded:

28... $\text{h5}$  29  $\text{g4}$   $\text{h4}$  30  $\text{f3}$   $\text{h6}$  31  $\text{f5+}$   $\text{g7}$  32  $\text{d7+}$   $\text{g8}$  33  $\text{xd6}$   
 $\text{f8}$  34  $\text{e8}$   $\text{xc2}$  35  $\text{d5+}$  1-0

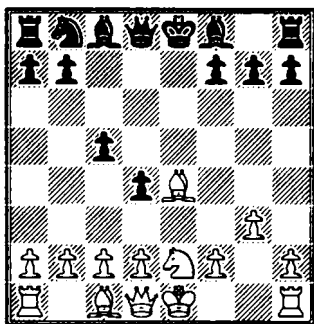
The latest treatment of the game, Spassky-Kasparov, is revealed in the following encounter. White adopts the accepted formula to obtain a slight edge and a transposition to the older game is highlighted on move 20.

J.Claesen-Chuchelov  
 Belgian Team Ch 1998

1  $\text{e4}$   $\text{c5}$  2  $\text{c3}$   $\text{e6}$  3  $\text{g3}$   $\text{d5}$  4  $\text{exd5}$   
 $\text{exd5}$  5  $\text{g2}$   $\text{f6}$  6  $\text{ge2}$   $\text{d4}$  7  $\text{e4}$   
 $\text{xe4}$  8  $\text{xe4}$   $\text{d7}$

The knight is heading for f6 where it will be handily placed to fight for control of the d5 square and to defend the vulnerable h7 pawn.

Other moves are:



a) 8...♙d6 9 0-0 0-0 10 d3 ♘c6 (10...♘d7 is likely to transpose to lines discussed in the note to White's ninth move in the main game) 11 ♘f4 ♘e5 12 c3 (a standard idea in this line; if the pawn is taken the position is opened up for White's pieces) 12...♚b8 13 cxd4 cxd4 14 ♗a4 ♙c5 15 b4 b5 16 ♗a3 (I think 16 ♗b3!? might be an improvement because, compared to the game, 16...♙b6 17 a4 gains a move, while 16...♙e7 17 ♙b2, focusing on the d4 pawn, gives White a slight edge) 16...♙b6 17 ♗b3 ♘h8 18 a4 bxa4 19 ♚xa4 ♙g4 20 b5 ♘f3+ 21 ♚g2 ♘e5 22 h3 ♙c8 23 ♙b2 gave White a slight edge due to his active pieces, Minasian-Piote, Linares 2000.

b) 8...♙e7 9 c3 dxc3 10 bxc3 ♘d7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘f4 ♘f6 13 ♙g2 ♚b8 (as usual, the rook has to defend b7 before the queen's bishop can move) 14 d4 b6 15 ♙e3 cxd4 16 ♙xd4 ♙d6 17 ♘h5! (the most aggressive continuation designed to increase pressure on the kingside) 17...♘hx5 18 ♗hx5 h6 19 ♚ad1 and White had a small initiative in the game, Babb-Sasikiran, Winnipeg 1997.

9 0-0

9 d3 is a major alternative. For instance: after 9...♘f6 10 ♙g2 ♙d6 11 0-0 0-0, play might proceed:

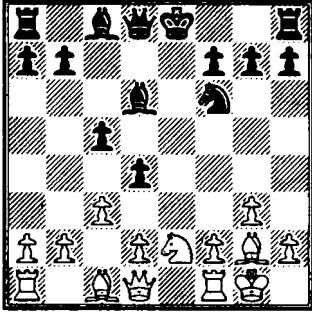
a) 12 ♙f4 ♙g4 13 ♙xd6 ♗xd6 14 h3 ♙d7 15 ♘f4 ♚ae8 (a possible improvement on the game Spassky-Korchnoi, USSR Ch 1968, which went 15...♚fe8 16 ♗d2 ♙c6 17 ♚ael ♘d7 18 ♙xc6 ♗xc6 19 ♘g2 h6 20 f4 ♘f6 21 a3 b6 22 ♗f2 with equal play) 16 ♗d2 ♙c6 17 ♙xc6 ♗xc6 18 ♚fel?! (a slight inaccuracy by White who should try 18 ♚ael with similar play to the note to Black's fifteenth move) 18...♘d7 19 ♚xe8 ♚xe8 20 ♘g2 ♘e5 21 ♘h4 ♗f6! 22 ♗f4 (the big difference of having moved the f-rook is that now 22 f4 can be met by 22...♗xh4! 23 gxf4 ♘f3+ and Black wins) 22...♗xf4 23 gxf4 ♘c6 when Black has an edge due to his superior pawn structure, Gonzalez-Psakhis, Linares 2001.

b) 12 c3 dxc3 (12...♙g4 is met by 13 h3 ♙h5 14 g4! ♙g6 15 f4 and the bishop on g6 is awkwardly placed, giving White the better chances) 13 ♘xc3 (13 bxc3 is more normal but White is striving to activate his pieces) 13...♙e5 14 ♚el ♚e8 15 ♙e3 ♙d4 (if 15...♗c7 then 16 ♚c1, putting pressure on the c5 pawns, is slightly better for White) 16 ♙xd4 ♚xel+ 17 ♗xel ♗xd4 18 ♘b5 ♗d7 (18...♗xd3? is a disaster after 19 ♚d1 when White wins) 19 a4 a6 20 ♘c3 ♗d6 21 a5 ♚b8 22 ♘a4 with roughly equal chances, although White eventually won, Minasian-Kupreichik, Elista Olympiad 1998.

c) 12 h3 (White is wary of allowing ...♙g4) 12...♚e8 13 ♚el ♚b8 (an obvious way of defending b7 and allowing the light-squared bishop to move) 14 c3 dxc3 15 bxc3 ♙f5 16 d4 cxd4 17 ♘xd4 ♙e4 18 ♙xe4 ♘xe4 19 ♗f3 ♘c5 20 ♙a3 ♙f8 21 ♚xe8 ♗xe8 22 ♚b1 b6 23 ♘c6 ♚c8?! (23...♚b7!? has the

merit of protecting a7) 24 ♖xa7 ♜a8 25 ♜b5 and the extra pawn gave White an edge in the game, V.Bhat-Moreno, Dos Hermanas 2000.

9...♟f6 10 ♙g2 ♙d6 11 c3!



It was Spassky who originally demonstrated that this clever move is White's best choice. Kasparov reckoned that 11 d3 0-0 was better for Black because he has more space to manoeuvre.

11...d3

The critical move which is a test of White's variation. Also possible:

a) 11...dxc3?! 12 dxc3 (White can now easily develop his dark-squared bishop, while the bishop on g2, controlling the h1-a8 diagonal, is very strong) 12... 0-0 13 ♜c2 ♜b8? 14 ♜d1 ♜e7 15 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 16 ♙f4 ♜e7 17 ♙xb8 ♙g4 18 ♙xa7 1-0 Bormgässer-Blaskowski, Germany Team Ch 1995.

b) 11...0-0 12 cxd4 cxd4 13 d3 ♜b6 (or 13...♜e8 14 ♟f4 ♜b6 15 ♜b3 ♜a5 16 ♜c2 ♙f5 17 ♙d2 with equal chances, Hug-Ribli, Lucerne Olympiad 1982) 14 ♜b3 ♜xb3?! 15 axb3 (the doubled b-pawns look ugly but the rook on the semi-open a-file and the strong bishop on g2 give White a pleasant ending) 15...♙e5 16 ♙f4 (if 16 f4 ♙c7 17 ♟xd4? then 17...♙b6 18 ♙e3 ♟g4

wins) 16...♙xf4 17 ♟xf4 ♜d8 18 h4 a6 19 ♜fe1 ♜b8 20 ♜ac1 ♟f8 21 ♜c7 and the rook on the seventh rank gave White the better chances in Berg-Andersson, Gothenburg 1997.

12 ♟f4 0-0

The tempting 12...♙xf4?, to buckle White's kingside pawns, comes unstuck after 13 ♜a4+ ♙d7 14 ♜e1+! ♟f8 15 ♜xf4 when White has the better position because Black has lost the right to castle.

13 ♟xd3 ♙xg3 14 fxg3!

Now the f-file is opened for the benefit of the king's rook. Not 14 ♟xc5? when Black can proceed 14...♙xh2+ 15 ♟xh2 ♟g4+ 16 ♟g3 (16 ♟g1 ♜h4 wins) 16...♜d6+ and Black regains the piece with the bonus of making white's exposed king look silly.

14...♜xd3 15 ♜f3 ♜xf3

It is important for Chuchelov to hamper White's queenside development otherwise the bishop-pair will prove strong. Therefore, 15...♜d8 is not so convincing after 16 ♜xd3 ♜xd3 17 ♜e1 ♟f8 18 ♙f1 ♜d8 19 d3 ♙f5 20 ♙e3 with a slight edge for White.

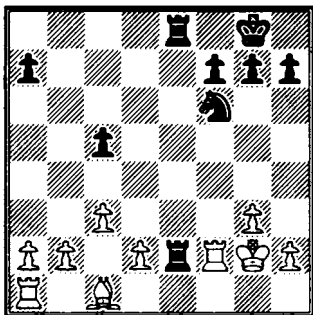
16 ♙xf3 ♙h3 17 ♙xb7 ♜ae8 18 ♙g2

If 18 ♜d1, intending d2-d3, then Black carries on fighting to keep the queenside closed by 18...♙g4 19 ♜f1 ♙e2 20 ♜e1 ♙d3.

18...♙xg2 19 ♟xg2 ♜e2+ 20 ♜f2 ♜fe8

Black is minus a pawn but has active pieces—although it is not clear how he can force an advantage. I was also playing a match at the same venue and so was able to watch this game first hand. The one thing that was obvious was that Black, a grandmaster, was already an hour behind on the clock. After

the game he explained that he was not only trying to remember the game Spassky-Kasparov, Bugojno 1982, but also trying, in vain, to improve upon it. He was totally amazed that Claesen, a young Belgian international, should be aware of what he considered was a fairly obscure game. I then revealed that White had read my previous book *Winning with the Closed Sicilian* where the game had been annotated. At this point Vladimir said something in Russian that cannot be repeated here!



**21 b3!**

White plays the best move to develop the queenside. Kasparov poured scorn on 21 d4?! due to 21...cxd4 22 cxd4 ♖e1 and White is still struggling to develop his queenside.

21...♖xf2+ 22 ♔xf2 ♘g4+ 23 ♔g2 f5!

The idea behind 21 b3 becomes clear after 23...♖e1? 24 ♖b2 ♖e2+ 25 ♔f3 ♖xd2 26 ♖a3 ♘hx2+ 27 ♔e4 which is very strong for White according to Kasparov.

24 h3 ♘e5 25 d4 cxd4 26 cxd4 ♘d3

Black is still playing like Kasparov by keeping the knight active.

27 ♖g5

If White tries to win with 27 ♖a3? then 27...♘e1+ 28 ♔f2 ♘c2 and the knight fork hands Black victory.

27...h6 28 ♖d1 hxg5 29 ♖xd3 ♖e2+ 30 ♔f3 ♖xa2 31 d5 ♔f7 32 d6 ♔e8

Black offered a draw here knowing that this is where Spassky and Kasparov agreed peace terms.

**33 g4**

White has at least a draw and just wants Black to prove his endgame technique. An analysis by Kasparov shows that 33 ♖e3+ ♔d7 34 ♖e7+ ♔xd6 35 ♖xg7 ♖b2 36 ♖xg5 ♔e6 is drawing.

33...g6 34 gxf5 gxf5 35 ♖d5 g4+ 36 hxg4 fxg4+ 37 ♔xg4 ♔d7 38 ♔f5 ♖e2 39 ♖a5 ♔xd6 40 ♖xa7 ½-½

The ploy of delaying the advance ...d7-d5 is a popular continuation.

**Gershon-Shabalov**  
Bermuda 2001

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 e6 3 g3 d6**

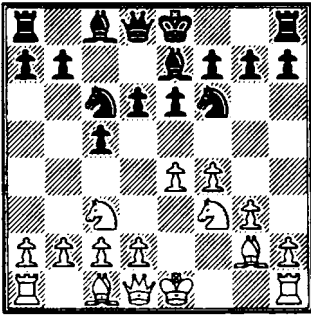
Black signals his intention to defer ...d5 and concentrate on development. This seems fairly logical but a lot of books barely mention the idea because accessing so many of the games requires great care in identifying transpositions.

**4 ♖g2 ♘f6 5 f4**

"If in doubt—play f4" could be White's motto in the Closed Sicilian.

**5...♘c6 6 ♘f3 ♖e7**

The French Defence set-up is thought to be one of the most reliable replies to the Closed Sicilian, although the line delaying ...d5 is not considered to be critical for White.



It should be noted that the present position sometimes occurs via the Grand Prix Attack. Indeed, I have changed the original move-order of this game, 1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 d6 3 f4 e6 4 ♟f3 ♟f6 5 g3 ♟c6 6 ♙g2 ♙e7, to make it easier to follow. A useful idea for those who know in advance that their opponent plays a particular line against the Grand Prix—and then wish to trick them into a Closed Sicilian line in which they will have more knowledge.

6...♛c7 has been tried, although Black usually keeps the queen on d8 until White has declared his formation. For instance: 7 0-0 ♙e7 8 d3 a6 9 a4 b6 10 ♟e2 ♙b7 11 c3 0-0 12 h3 ♟d7 13 g4 (as usual the theme of a kingside pawn advance is in evidence) 13...d5 14 e5 f6 15 d4 (the pawn structure resembles a French Defence which is fine for White who has a space advantage) 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 fxe5 17 fxe5 ♟a5 18 ♟f4 ♛c6 19 b3 ♜fc8 20 ♜f2 ♟f8 21 ♙b2 ♛e8 22 ♙f1 ♟c6 23 ♙c1 ♟b4 24 ♙d2 a5 25 ♟h5 with roughly equal chances, Kierzek-Asibor, Elista 1998.

**7 0-0 0-0 8 d3**

The great thing about the Closed is that if White faces an offbeat defensive system he can just make the same developing moves and still get a reasonable position.

**8...♙b8**

If Black has a choice then the text move, supporting ...b7-b5, is the right way to advance on the queenside. The inferior 8...a6?! is discussed in the next illustrative game.

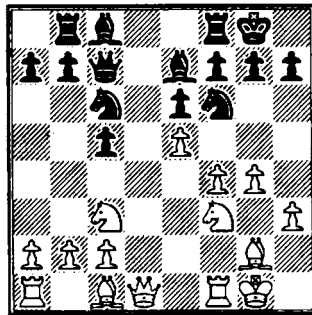
**9 h3**

The h-pawn is nudged forward. This is to help support the advance g3-g4 and sometimes allow ♙e3 without the worry of the irritating ...♟f6-g4.

**9...d5 10 g4 dxe4 11 dxe4 ♛c7**

The ending after 11...♛xd1 is favourable for White because of his space advantage, which makes it easier to manoeuvre the pieces. For instance: 12 ♜xd1 ♜d8 13 ♙e3 b6 14 ♜xd8+ ♙xd8 15 ♜d1 with an edge.

**12 e5**



**12...♜d8**

Black doesn't want to cut his king's rook off from the action by immediately retreating the knight, because 12...♟e8 13 ♙e3 would result in an improved version of the game for White.

**13 ♛e2**

By moving to e2, the queen clears the way for the connection of the rooks and also covers the b5 square. 13 ♛e1, as played in Spraggett-Lesiège, Vancouver 1998, seems to make little difference because the

queen usually ends up on f2, but Black no longer needs to spend time on ...a6 before advancing ...b7-b5. That game went 13...♘e8 14 ♖e3 ♘d4 15 ♜f2 b5 16 ♚h2 (White prepares to take on d4 because the immediate exchanges don't work upon 16 ♘xd4? cxd4 17 ♖xd4 ♜xd4! 18 ♜xd4 ♖c5 and the white queen is pinned against the king) 16...b4 17 ♘e4 ♖a6 18 ♜fc1 ♜b6 19 ♘fd2 (White feigns defence but is now ready to create an attack with 20 f5 and play c3 to oust the knight on d4 so as to uncover an attack against c5) 19...f6 20 exf6 gxf6 21 ♘b3 ♖b7 22 ♜g1 ♘g7 23 ♜ad1 e5 24 f5 (as usual in this opening White has managed to play f5, creating the right conditions for a potential pawn storm) 24...♜f8 25 c3 ♘xb3 26 axb3 bxc3 (because of the awkward attack on c5 and the threat of ♜d7, Black has little choice but to go into the pawn-grab variation) 27 bxc3 ♜xb3 28 ♜d7 ♜f7 (28...♜fe8 is no better after 29 ♘d2 ♜b5 30 ♜xb7! ♜xb7 31 ♜b1 ♜xb1 32 ♘b1 ♜xb1 and now 33 ♜a2+ picks up the rook on b1) 29 ♘d2 ♜b5 30 ♜xb7! ♜xb7 31 ♜b1 ♜xb1 32 ♘xb1 ♜xb1 33 ♖d5 ♜b8 34 ♜a2 ♜bf8 35 ♜xa7 ♖d6 36 ♜d7 1-0

13...♘e8 14 ♖e3 a6

The American has not had a happy opening and is struggling to form a plan. With his pieces confined he tries to give himself more room by advancing the b-pawn.

15 ♘e4 ♘d4 16 ♜f2

If 16 ♘xd4 then 16...cxd4 17 ♖f2 ♖d7, threatening ...♖b5, offers Black decent chances.

16...♘xf3+

16...b5? 17 ♘xd4 cxd4 18 ♖xd4 wins a pawn for nothing, while 16...f5 17 exf6 ♘xf6 18 ♘xc5!

♘xc2 19 ♜xc2 b6 20 ♘e5 ♖xc5 21 ♖xc5 bxc5 22 ♘c6 wins.

17 ♖xf3 b6 18 ♜ad1 ♖b7 19 c4

Gershon is playing an admirable game and demonstrates how White can frustrate his opponent by patiently annexing more squares. In this instance, the d5 square is covered and the advance ...b5 temporarily halted.

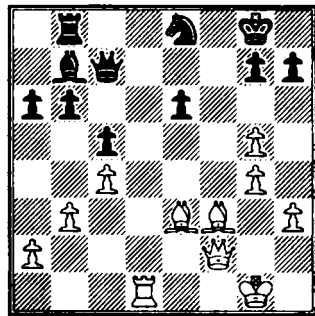
19...f6

A textbook move which attempts to undermine the extended pawn chain. However, it also compromises Black's kingside pawn cover.

20 exf6 ♖xf6 21 b3 ♖e7 22 ♘g5 ♖xg5

If Black swaps off with 22...♜xd1 then 23 ♜xd1 ♖xg5 24 fxg5 ♖xf3 25 ♜xf3 ♜d8 26 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 27 ♚f2 is slightly better for White and transposes to the note after Black's 24th move.

23 fxg5 ♜xd1 24 ♜xd1



24...♘d6?

Shabalov blunders under pressure. Instead, 24...♖xf3 is a better choice when 25 ♜xf3 ♜d8 26 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 27 ♚f2 leaves White a slight edge.

25 ♖f4 1-0

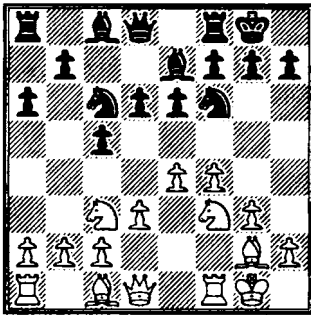
Black resigned since White wins a piece after 25...♜d8 26 ♖xb7.

In the next game Black chooses to advance the queenside pawns by

...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5. This is a slower approach than ...♖b8 followed by ...b7-b5 and White endeavours to exploit this by accelerating his attack.

**Spraggett-Vilalta**  
Manresa 1995

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 e6 3 g3 ♖c6 4 ♗g2 ♜f6 5 d3 ♗e7 6 f4 d6 7 ♜f3 0-0 8 0-0 a6?!



This has not got an impressive track record, partly because if White responds with a timely a3, then Black is deterred from playing ...a5 which would lose a tempo. The same goes for lines when Black wants to push the a-pawn to disrupt White's queenside pawn structure. For ease of reference I have tinkered with the opening moves, since the original game actually started 1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 d6 3 f4 ♖c6 4 ♜f3 e6 5 g3 ♜f6 6 ♗g2 ♗e7 7 d3 a6 8 0-0 0-0. The Grand Prix Attack move-order means that Black often transposes to a different line of the Closed Sicilian than he usually plays against standard moves.

**9 h3**

White prepares to play g3-g4 or ♗e3 without having to worry about ...♜g4. Hodgson-Ravikumar, British Ch 1984, saw White try 9 a4

to slow down the advance of Black's queenside pawns but that makes ...a6 look like a reasonable move. After 9...♗c7 10 h3 ♖b8 11 g4 b5 12 axb5 axb5 13 g5 ♜d7 14 h4 b4 15 ♜e2 ♖b6 the position was double-edged.

**9...♗c7**

The queen covers the e5 square to prevent a possible e4-e5. Other moves:

a) 9...♖b8 10 ♗e3 b5 11 ♜e2 ♗c7 12 g4 (no prizes for predicting this traditional kingside pawn advance) 12...♜e8 13 f5 ♜e5 14 ♜xe5 dxe5 15 ♜g3 ♜d6 16 g5 exf5 17 exf5 ♜e8 18 ♜h5 ♗b7 (or 18...f6 19 g6 h6 20 ♗d5+ ♜h8 21 ♗xh6! gxh6 22 ♗d2 leads to mate) 19 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 20 f6 (White has achieved the aim of f2-f4-f5-f6 to wreck Black's kingside pawn structure) 20...♗d6 21 fxg7 ♜xg7 22 ♜f6+ ♜h8 23 ♗g4 ♖bd8 24 ♗h4 h5 25 ♜xh5 ♜xh5 26 ♗xh5+ ♜g7 27 ♗h6+ ♜g8 28 ♖f6 ♗e7 29 g6 1-0 Ingram-Smith, Parsippany 2001.

b) 9...d5 10 g4 (White follows the easy plan of advancing the kingside pawns) 10...dxe4 11 dxe4 b5 12 e5 ♜d7 13 ♜e4 ♖b6 14 ♗e2 ♗c7 15 g5 (an ambitious attacking idea based on transferring a knight to f6 in order to break up the defensive pawn barrier) 15...♜d5 16 c3 ♗b7 17 ♜h2 ♖fd8 18 ♜g4 ♗f8 19 ♜gf6+ ♜h8 (19...♜xf6 20 gxh6 g6 is tough for White to crack but the weak dark-squares are a long-term liability and 19...gxf6 20 gxf6 c4 21 ♗h5 presents White with a strong attack because it is difficult for Black to manoeuvre his pieces to the kingside for defensive duties. For example: 21...♖d7 22 ♖f3 ♜h8 23 ♖g3 intending ♗g4 wins) 20 ♗h5 ♜xf6 21 gxf6 g6 22 ♗h4 ♖d3 23 ♜g5 h6 24 ♗e4 ♖ad8 and now,

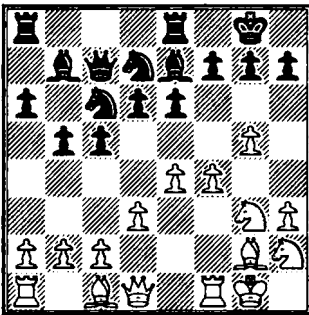
instead of 25  $\text{d}f3$ ? h5 26  $\text{d}g5$   $\text{c}g8$  27  $\text{d}xe6$   $\text{f}xe6$  28  $\text{d}xg6$   $\text{d}xe5$  29  $\text{f}xe5$   $\text{w}xe5$  30  $\text{d}xd3$   $\text{d}xd3$  31  $\text{d}f4$   $\text{w}d5$  0-1 Wells-Gormally, London 1998, White could have improved with 25  $\text{d}xd3!$ , to gain material, when 25... $\text{d}xd3$  26  $\text{d}f3$   $\text{d}d4$  27  $\text{cxd4}$   $\text{d}xf3$  is much better for White after 28  $\text{f}5!$  unleashing a discovered attack on the h6 pawn. The improvement could be very important because this game is supposed to be a good way of handling the opening for Black. So if anyone uncritically follows this advice, White will have an easy win!

c) 9...b5 10 e5 (10 g4!?, starting the usual kingside pawn advance, should also be considered) 10... $\text{d}d5$  11  $\text{exd6}$   $\text{w}xd6$  12  $\text{d}e4$   $\text{w}c7$  13 c3  $\text{d}b7$  14  $\text{w}e2$   $\text{d}ad8$  15  $\text{d}e3$   $\text{d}b8$  16  $\text{d}ad1$   $\text{d}xe3$  17  $\text{w}xe3$   $\text{d}d7$  18  $\text{d}fe1$   $\text{d}f6$  19  $\text{d}xf6+$   $\text{d}xf6$  20  $\text{d}e5$  led to equal chances in Bellon-Ghitescu, Olot 1974.

10 g4  $\text{d}e8$  11 g5  $\text{d}d7$  12  $\text{d}e2$

An important middlegame idea. Once the g-pawn has advanced, the g3 square provides a good attacking post for the queen's knight.

12...b5 13  $\text{d}g3$   $\text{d}b7$  14  $\text{d}h2$



Spraggett plays very aggressively and signals his intention to play  $\text{d}h2$ -g4 followed by  $\text{d}g3$ -h5 with

threats such as  $\text{d}f6+$ , wrecking the defensive barrier. Also worth considering is 14 h4, intending h5-h6 to weaken Black's hold on f6 and making the manoeuvre  $\text{d}h2$ -g4 more attractive for White.

14... $\text{d}ad8$  15  $\text{d}g4$   $\text{d}b6$  16  $\text{d}h5$   $\text{d}5$  17  $\text{w}e1$

The queen moves out of the way to avoid a pin on the d-file after ... $\text{d}xe4$ . White would like to add reinforcements to the attack but Black's active play on the queenside is a distraction.

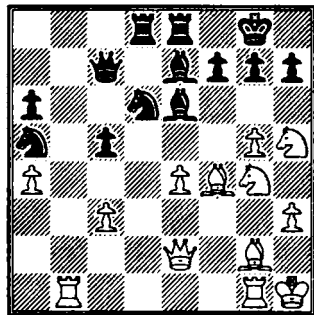
17... $\text{d}d4$  18  $\text{w}f2$   $\text{d}xe4$  19  $\text{d}xe4$   $\text{b}4$  20  $\text{c}h1$   $\text{d}c4$  21 c3  $\text{bxc3}$  22  $\text{bxc3}$   $\text{d}b5$  23 a4  $\text{d}bd6$

If 23... $\text{d}xc3$  then 24  $\text{w}c2$   $\text{w}a5$  25  $\text{d}f3$  is better for White.

24  $\text{w}e2$   $\text{d}a5$  25  $\text{d}b1$   $\text{d}dc4$  26  $\text{f}5$

It will come as no surprise to any Closed Sicilian expert to see f4-f5 forming an essential part of the attack.

26... $\text{exf}5$  27  $\text{d}xf5$   $\text{d}d6$  28  $\text{d}f1$   $\text{d}c8$  29  $\text{d}f4$   $\text{d}e6$  30  $\text{d}g1$



It is sometimes easier to understand how a winning attack is achieved just by counting the pieces massed on the kingside. In this case, White has his two knights, the bishop-pair, rook and queen all poised for the breakthrough.

30... $\text{d}c4$

After 30... ♖ac4, to prevent ♗e5, White releases his pent up energy by 31 ♖gf6+! gxf6 32 gxf6 ♗f8 33 ♗f3+ ♖h8 34 ♗g2 and mates.

31 ♗f3 ♗d7 32 ♗e5 ♗xg5

32... ♗f8 defends g7, but then 33 ♖gf6+ gxf6 34 ♖hx6+ wins.

33 ♗xg7! ♖xe4 34 ♗xe4 1-0

### Summary

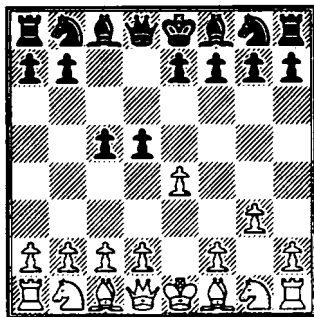
The game **Lane-Nunn** demonstrates an interesting way of countering the French Defence set-up. It leads to fairly equal positions that bear a remarkable resemblance to a reversed Göring Gambit Declined. Another way to handle the early queen sortie by White is explored in **Lane-Bologan**. Black chases the queen but is complacent and allows a rapid attack. Black's system can

lead to simple positions that end in a draw—but there are also some attacking opportunities for White, of which **Murey-Ungure** is a model example. The game, **Claesen-Chuchelov**, covers familiar ground by following the important example, **Spassky-Kasparov**, which is mentioned on move 20. It offers White a slight edge against high-class opposition. If Black delays the advance ...d5 then he can play a fairly reliable system that is examined in the game **Gershon-Shabalov**. White creates some pressure and, with help from his opponent, triumphs. A queenside pawn advance is the usual way to deflect White's attention from a kingside attack but 8...a6 in **Spraggett-Vilalta** is a slow way to promote ...b7-b5.

White can also transpose to the Closed Sicilian via a different move-order, with 2 g3 or 2 d3. It is closely linked to other lines and transpositions are usual. These are noted so that players of the Black pieces, who normally face 2 ♘c3, will not be tricked into lines they are not familiar with. White is sometimes wary of allowing Black to quickly push the b-pawn to attack the knight on c3 so lines with 2 g3 are a way with dealing with that problem. It also disguises White's true intentions, making it more difficult for the opponent to decide which formation to adopt since it is not clear which direction White will eventually take.

**Nadyrhanov-Odeev**  
Voskresensk 1993

1 e4 c5 2 g3 d5



The critical way to test the effectiveness of White's opening choice. In the absence of 2 ♘c3 Black immediately challenges the centre.

3 exd5

There have been various attempts to revive 3 ♗g2 but none are convincing for White. For example: 3...dxe4 4 ♘c3?! (4 ♗xe4 ♘f6 5 ♗g2 ♗g4 6 ♘e2 ♘c6 is fine for Black) 4...f5 5 d3 exd3 6 ♗f4 ♘c6 7 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 8 cxd3 ♗d7 when Black had a pawn plus in a better ending, Grishanovich-Vorobiov, St Petersburg 1999.

3...♗xd5 4 ♘f3

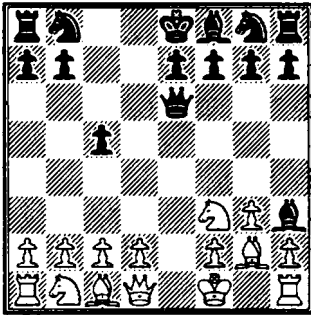
4 ♗f3 has been played but it offers White no advantage and it would speed things up if White simply offered a draw.

4...♗g4 5 ♗g2 ♗e6+ 6 ♗f1

White is content to give up the right to castle in the knowledge that the black queen is awkwardly placed. 6 ♗e2 is not to be recommended since 6...♗xe2+ 7 ♗xe2 ♘c6 gives Black an edge in the ending.

6...♗h3!?

6...♘c6 is considered in the main game, Veselovsky-Haba, but a number of masters have played the bishop move because it is so obvious.



**7 b4!**

An unexpected gambit! White sacrifices a pawn to speed up his development and take advantage of the awkwardly placed black queen. 7 d3 is a reliable alternative and after 7...dxc6 8 d3 ♖d7 9 ♙e3 ♙xg2+ 10 ♜xg2 e6 11 ♛e4 the position is equal. White can also play it safe with 7 d4 cxd4 8 ♝xd4 ♜d7 9 ♛c3 ♛c6 10 ♝xc6 ♜xc6 11 ♜d5 ♜xd5 12 ♛xd5 ♙xg2+ 13 ♜xg2 0-0-0 ½-½ Lane-Dunnington, Dudelage 1991.

**7...cxb4 8 a3 ♛c6**

If 8...bxa3 then 9 ♛xa3 gives White a pleasant lead in development with the immediate idea being ♛a3-b5.

8...b3 is the main alternative and is featured in the next illustrative game.

**9 ♙b2**

The text keeps his options open. Instead 9 axb4 is only tested occasionally, e.g. Chavez-Gardelini, Guatemala City Zonal 2000, saw 9...♜c4+ (9...♝xb4 10 ♛a3 ♜d7 11 d4 ♙xg2+ 12 ♜xg2 e6 13 c4, intending ♛e5 and ♜a4, gives White sufficient compensation for the pawn) 10 d3 ♙xg2+ 11 ♜xg2 ♜xb4 12 ♛bd2 ♜d6 13 ♙a3 ♜c7 14 ♙e1 ♛f6 15 ♛c4 e6 16 ♙xf8 ♜xf8 17 ♜c1 (White has to try and stop Black's pieces co-ordinating to

justify the pawn sacrifice) 17...a6 18 ♜b2 b5 19 ♛ce5 ♛xe5 20 ♙xe5 ♜b7 21 ♙a5 ♛g4? 22 ♜b4+ 1-0.

**9...♛f6 10 axb4 ♛xb4 11 ♛a3**

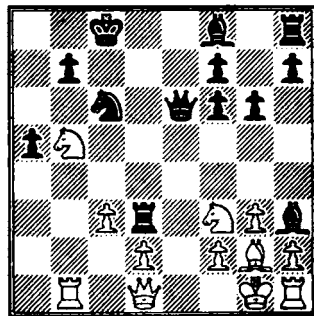
White is a pawn down so he hurries to activate his pieces.

**11...g6 12 ♙b1 a5 13 ♙xf6 exf6**

Black voluntarily doubles his f-pawns because he wants to maintain the bishop on h3. 13...♙xg2+ 14 ♜xg2 ♜xf6 15 c3 ♛d3 16 ♙xb7 ♜c6 17 ♜b1 ♙g7 18 ♙b8+ ♙xb8 19 ♜xb8+ ♛d7 20 ♜a7+ ♜c7 21 ♜e3 gives White a slight edge thanks to Black's exposed king.

**14 c3 ♛c6 15 ♛b5 0-0-0 16 ♜gl ♙d3?!**

Odeev is understandably not keen on allowing d2-d4, giving White more space. However, the rook is needed in defence and a better policy would be 16...♙xg2 when 17 ♜xg2 ♜d5 18 d4 ♙e7 19 ♜a4, intending c4 and d5, is fine for White.



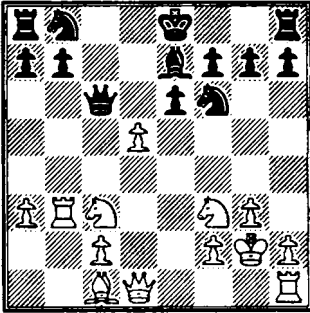
**17 ♙fd4!**

This is what Black missed because the knight cuts off the rook. 17 ♛bd4 is another way: after 17...♜d7 18 ♙xh3 ♜xh3 19 ♜e2 ♙xd4 20 ♛xd4 White is clearly better.

**17...♜d7 18 ♙xh3 ♜xh3 19 ♛xc6!**

The quickest way to win.





14...♞c8

If 14...exd5 15 ♞e1 ♞bd7? 16 ♞d4 ♞c7 17 ♞f5 wins or 14...♞xd5 15 ♞xd5 ♞xd5 16 ♞xd5 exd5 17 ♞e1 when the twin threats of ♞xb7 and ♞be3 make White favourite to win.

15 ♞e2 0-0 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 ♞e1

The pin on the e-file is the theme for this game and White has come out of the opening with the better position. Black has no choice but to surrender the e-pawn.

17...♙c5 18 ♞xe6+ ♞xe6 19 ♞xe6 b6 20 ♞e4 ♞bd7 21 ♙b2

White is simply a pawn up and just has to make sure that there is no counterplay.

21...♞xe4 22 ♞xe4 ♞f6 23 ♞e2 ♞ae8 24 ♞xe8 ♞xe8 25 ♞e5

The knight does a good job of shutting the black rook out of the game.

25...♞c8 26 ♞d3 ♙e7 27 c4 ♞f8 28 ♞f3 ♞e8 29 g4 ♞c5 30 g5 ♞g8 31 h4 h6 32 ♞g4 hxg5 33 hxg5 b5 34 ♞h3 bxc4 35 ♞h8 c3

35...♞f8 36 ♞d7+ wins.

36 ♞xg8+ ♙f8 37 ♞g6 1-0

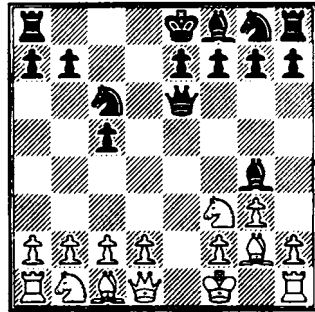
The success of the 7 b4 gambit has prompted Black to make a serious examination of the alternatives. An obvious idea is to catch up with development by 6...♞c6.

### Veselovsky-Huba Ceske Budejovice 1996

1 e4 c5 2 g3 d5

The strength of this move has prompted a few players to try the move-order 1 g3 g6 2 ♙g2 ♙g7 3 e4 to avoid the possibility.

3 exd5 ♞xd5 4 ♞f3 ♙g4 5 ♙g2 ♞e6+ 6 ♞f1 ♞c6



This is considered stronger than 6...♙h3 because Black activates the queenside and maintains the pin on the king's knight.

7 h3 ♙h5 8 d3 ♞d7

The queen steps out of the way to allow the e-pawn to move.

9 ♞a3 f6

Black wants to give his bishop an escape square on f7 and avoid the exchange of this bishop after g4 and ♞h4 or ♞e5. This idea becomes evident after the major alternative 9...e6. For example, after 10 ♞c4 play might continue:

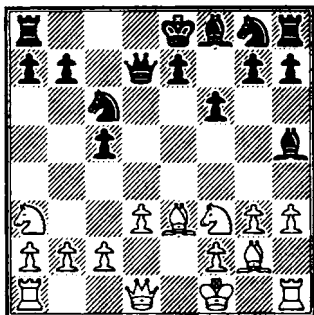
a) 10...♞f6 11 g4 ♙g6 12 ♞fe5 ♞xe5 13 ♞xe5 ♞c7 14 ♙f4! ♙d6 (14...♞b6 15 ♞xg6 hxg6 16 ♙e5 gives White a slight plus) 15 ♞xg6 hxg6 16 ♙xd6 ♞xd6 17 ♙xb7 ♞b8 18 ♞f3 when the extra pawn gave White the better game in Milov-Arakhmia Grant, Isle of Man 1995.

b) 10...f6 (this is probably better than 10...♞f6 because the bishop

can escape exchange) 11 ♖e3 ♜d8! (Black does not want to allow White to free his position with g3-g4 followed by d3-d4) 12 g4 ♙f7 13 a4 b6 14 ♗e2 ♚e7 15 ♙f4 ♚d5 16 ♙g3 ♙e7 17 h4 0-0 18 h5 h6 19 ♚h4 ♚d4 20 ♗d1 e5 21 g5?! fxg5 22 ♚xe5 ♗e6 23 ♙h3 gxh4 24 ♙xe6 ♙xe6 25 ♚g1 hxg3 26 fxg3 ♚e3 27 ♗d2 ♙g5 0-1 Flower-Aseev, London 1994.

### 10 ♙e3

White carries on with his development and targets the c5 pawn. It should be noted that 10 ♚c4 e6 transposes to note 'b' to Black's ninth move.



### 10...e6

10...e5? simply allows White to transpose into the illustrative game with a pawn bonus after 11 ♚xe5.

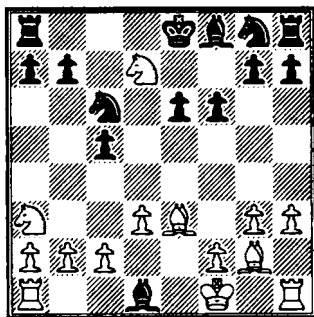
In the game Ibragimov-Tolnai, Budapest 1992, Black tried 10...♚d4 to try and exploit the pin. That game went 11 c3 ♙xf3 12 ♙xf3 ♚xf3 13 ♗xf3 (as usual the lead in development is crucial and a sign that 10...♚d4 is ineffective) 13...e5 (13...♗xd3+ 14 ♚g2 ♗d7 15 ♙xc5 with advantage to White) 14 ♚g2 0-0-0 15 d4! (White spots that the black king will be vulnerable if the position is opened) 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 ♙xa3 (16...exd4 17 ♜hd1 pins the pawn) 17 bxa3

♚e7 18 dxe5 fxe5 19 ♙xa7 ♜hf8 20 ♗g4 g6 21 ♙b6 ♜de8 22 ♜ac1+ ♚c6 23 ♗a4 ♚b8 24 ♜hd1 ♗e6 25 ♚g1 (White wants to play ♜xc6 without worrying about ...♗xc6+) 25...♜f7 26 ♙c5 ♜d7 27 ♜xd7 ♗xd7 28 ♜a5 1-0.

### 11 ♚e5!?

The idea is that White enters an ending where he will have the edge due to his bishop-pair. In practice Black tends to hold the ending to a draw but it can be a struggle. 11 ♚c4 is a quieter way to handle the position when Black quickly equalised after 11...♙f7 12 a3 e5 13 ♚fd2 ♜d8 14 ♗f3 ♜c8 15 ♚e4 b5 16 ♚cd2 ♚d4 ½-½ Renner-Fahnenschmidt, Bodensee Cup 1996.

### 11...♙xd1 12 ♚xd7



### 12...♙xc2

12...♚xd7?! is not as good because White's queenside pawn chain remains intact. For instance: 13 ♜xd1 e5 14 c3 ♜d8 15 ♚e2 ♚c7 16 ♚c2 ♙d6 17 a3, intending b4, and White's bishop-pair looks impressive.

### 13 ♚xf6+ gxf6

13...♚xf6 was played in Veselovsky-Blehm, Czech Team Ch 1999 and was an attempt to improve on the main game. 14 ♙xc6+! (the doubled c-pawns give White a long-

term edge, so this is better than 14  $\text{Qxc2}$   $\text{Qd5}$  15  $\text{Qd2}$   $\text{Qd7}$  16 a3  $\text{Qd6}$  17  $\text{Qe3}$   $\text{Qce7}$  18  $\text{Qe4}$   $\text{Qxe3+}$  19  $\text{Qxe3}$   $\text{Qd5}$  20  $\text{Qg2}$   $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$  Brito-Solana, Las Palmas 1991) 14... $\text{bxc6}$  15  $\text{Qxc2}$   $\text{Qf7}$  16  $\text{Qa3}$   $\text{Qd8}$  17  $\text{Qc4}$   $\text{Qd5}$  (17... $\text{Qxd3?}$  18  $\text{Qe5+}$  wins) 18  $\text{Qc1}$   $\text{Qe7}$  19  $\text{Qc3}$   $\text{Qd7}$  20  $\text{Qa3}$  with a superior ending.

14  $\text{Qxc2}$  0-0-0 15  $\text{Qe2}$   $\text{Qd4+}$  16  $\text{Qxd4}$   $\text{cxd4}$  17  $\text{Qd2}$   $\text{Qb8}$  18  $\text{Qac1}$   $\text{Qh6}$  19  $\text{Qc5}$

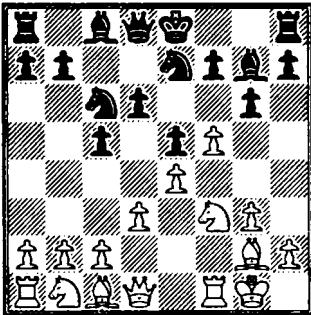
19  $\text{Qc4}$   $\text{Qxd2}$  20  $\text{Qxd2}$   $\text{Qe7}$  21  $\text{Qhcl}$  is slightly better for White.

19... $\text{Qxd2}$  20  $\text{Qxd2}$   $\text{Qe7}$  21 h4  $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

There are plenty of games where Black is reluctant to play 2...d5 and relies on playing a standard defensive formation. The lessons from the Closed Sicilian are easy to learn and one can usually dispense with  $\text{Qb1-c3}$ .

### Trapl-Pribyl Czech Team Ch 1995

1 e4 c5 2 g3  $\text{Qc6}$  3  $\text{Qg2}$  g6 4 f4  $\text{Qg7}$  5  $\text{Qf3}$  d6 6 d3 e5 7 0-0  $\text{Qge7}$  8 f5!



White sacrifices the f-pawn in a bid to open lines and make development awkward for Black. This is an idea borrowed from the Closed Sicilian. A model example is the

illustrative game, Markowski-Smirin, in the chapter 6 f4 e5.

8... $\text{gxf5}$  9  $\text{Qh4}$   $\text{fxe4}$

In Boguszlavszky-Schneider, Hungarian Team Ch 1992, Black tried to reduce the influence of the white rook by keeping the f-file closed with 9...f4. That game went 10  $\text{Qh5}$   $\text{Qg6}$  11  $\text{Qf5}$   $\text{Qf6}$  12  $\text{Qc3}$   $\text{Qd4}$  13  $\text{Qxd4}$   $\text{cxd4}$  14  $\text{Qd5}$   $\text{Qe6}$  15  $\text{gxf4}$   $\text{Qxd5}$  16  $\text{exd5}$   $\text{Qe7}$  17  $\text{fxe5}$   $\text{Qxe5}$  18  $\text{Qh3}$   $\text{Qh4}$  19  $\text{Qxh4}$   $\text{Qxh4}$  20  $\text{Qf4}$   $\text{Qg6}$  21  $\text{Qael}$   $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ .

10  $\text{dxe4}$   $\text{Qe6}$

An improvement is 10...0-0, when 11  $\text{Qa3}$   $\text{Qc6}$  12  $\text{Qf5}$   $\text{Qx15}$  13  $\text{exf5}$  f6 14  $\text{Qe3}$  is considered unclear. It is probably best to avoid the example set by the games Davies-Horvath, Budapest 1987, and Brandner-Amann, Oberwart 1997, which proceeded with 14... $\text{Qd7?}$ , handing back the extra pawn after 15  $\text{Qxc5}$ .

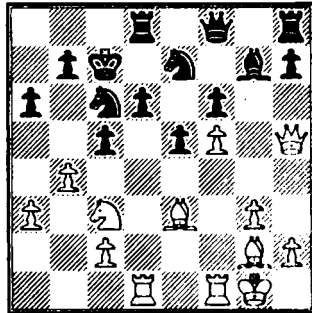
11  $\text{Qf5}$   $\text{Qxf5}$

After 11... $\text{Qxf5}$  12  $\text{exf5}$   $\text{Qc4?}$  White has won a few games with 13  $\text{Qg4!}$ , hitting the bishops on c4 and g7.

12  $\text{exf5}$  f6 13  $\text{Qh5+}$   $\text{Qd7}$

Pribyl has been forced to give up the right to castle and his king must now spend time trying to find sanctuary.

14  $\text{Qc3}$   $\text{Qc7}$  15  $\text{Qe3}$  a6 16  $\text{Qad1}$   $\text{Qf8}$  17 a3  $\text{Qd8}$  18 b4!



It makes sense to open up lines in a bid to track down the black king.

18...♖d4

18...cxb4 19 axb4 ♖xb4 20 ♜b1 a5 21 ♖b5+ ♜b8 22 ♙a7+ ♜a8 23 ♙b6 is better for White.

19 bxc5 dxc5 20 ♜b1 ♖ec6 21 ♖d5+ ♜xd5?!

The pressure is not relieved by giving up the exchange so it is probably best to try 21...♜b8, although 22 ♜b2, intending to double rooks on the b-file, maintains White's advantage.

22 ♙xd5 ♖xc2 23 ♙xc6 bxc6 24 ♜e2

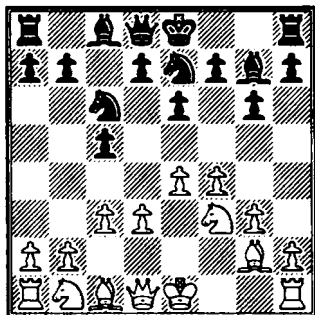
Now that the black queenside has been wrecked it is easy for the white queen to invade and destroy.

24...♖xa3 25 ♜xa6 ♜a8 26 ♜b6+ ♜d7 27 ♜b7+ ♜xb7 28 ♜xb7+ ♜c8 29 ♜xg7 1-0

The problem with f4-f5 has prompted many players to try ...e6 with the idea of ...♖ge7 and 0-0.

### Clemens-Naumann German Team Ch 1993

1 e4 c5 2 d3 ♖c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 f4 e6 6 ♖f3 ♖ge7 7 c3



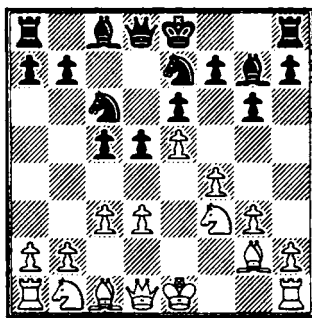
The pawn on c3 allows White to consider d3-d4 and also stops the black knight occupying the d4

square, which often happens in the Closed Sicilian. This opening sequence is known by a variety of names, but 'The Big Clamp' is the most common. White has a number of plans but the theme of keeping the position closed and creating a pawn centre is constant. It is also possible to play 7 0-0 0-0 and then 8 c3. 7 ♖c3 would transpose to the main line.

7...d5

Another approach is 7...0-0 to avoid the a fixed pawn structure which occurs after an early ...d7-d5, as seen in Dodgson-Hillarp Persson, St Helier 2000. That game continued: 8 ♙e3 b6 9 0-0 a5 10 ♖a3 (perhaps 10 ♙f2!?) 10...♙a6 11 ♖c2 ♜c8 12 ♜e1 d6 13 ♙f2 e5 14 f5?! gxf5 15 ♖h4 f4 and White had insufficient compensation for the pawn.

8 e5



An important idea that aims to close the position, allowing White to use his space advantage to manoeuvre his pieces to better squares.

8...♖f5 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♖a3

It makes sense to develop the queen's knight via a3-c2 to help support the advance d4 or to play ♖c2-e3.

10...♜b8 11 ♖c2

In the game Moser-Helm, Dresden 2000, White tested 11 g4 with good results after 11... ♖h4 12 ♖xh4 ♗xh4 13 g5! (White locks the queen out of the game) 13... ♖xe5?! (a speculative piece sacrifice) 14 fxe5 ♗xe5 15 h3 ♗g3 16 ♗f3 ♗h2+ 17 ♖f2 f6 18 ♗h1 when Black's attacking chances have evaporated.

11...b5 12 g4

With this pawn lunge Clemens gains more space on the kingside. The weakness of advancing the king's protective cover can only be seriously tested if Black opens the centre, thereby allowing his pieces to gather for an attack.

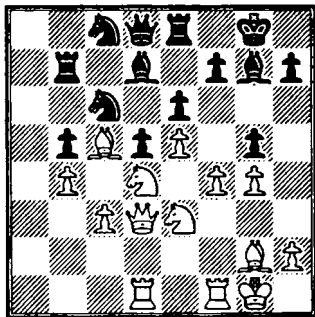
12...♖fe7 13 ♗e3 c4

Naumann would like to secure control over the d4 square but 13... ♗b6 walks into a pin which costs a pawn after 14 b4.

14 a3 a5 15 ♗c5 cxd3 16 ♗xd3 ♗e8 17 ♗ad1 ♗d7

The bishop on d7 is not really going anywhere but stays on the h3-c8 diagonal to keep an eye on the advance f4-f5. Basically, Black has a passive position while White can steadily improve his pieces, looking for a breakthrough with something like f4-f5.

18 ♖e3 ♗b7 19 b4 axb4 20 axb4 ♖c8 21 ♖d4 g5



This is a familiar way of undermining the e5 pawn. However, it is too little, too late.

22 ♖xd5!

In such a dominant position it is hardly surprising that White finds a winning tactic.

22...exd5 23 ♗xd5 ♗c7

1f 23... ♖xd4 then 24 ♗xb7 ♗xg4 25 cxd4 ♗xd1 26 ♗xd1 gxf4 27 ♗g4 is winning.

24 ♗xf7+!

Another stunning move confirms Black's demise. 24... ♖xf7 is well met by 25 ♗xh7 when the threat of discovering a check with fxg5+ wins easily.

24...♖h8 25 ♗xe8 ♗xe8 26 ♖e6 ♗d7 27 ♗f5 ♖8e7 28 ♗xd7 1-0

It is possible for White to be flexible and choose another system that dispenses with an early f4. Black still has to be wary of White transposing to the Closed Sicilian.

### Van der Welde-Weeks Wijk aan Zee 1997

1 e4 c5 2 d3

It is often the case that the text is played first and the game later transposes to positions familiar to 2 g3.

2...e6

As usual, it is possible to challenge the centre with 2...d5 when, after 3 exd5 ♗xd5, it is not easy to exploit the fact that the queen is in the open. One example is 4 ♖f3 ♖c6 5 g3 when Black can force a draw after 5... ♖d4 6 ♗g2 ♗h3! 7 ♗xh3 (7 0-0 ♗xg2 8 ♖xg2 ♖xf3 9 ♗xf3 ♗xf3+ 10 ♖xf3 is equal) 7... ♖xf3+ 8 ♖f1 ♖d2+ 9 ♖g1 ♖f3+ 10 ♖f1 ♖d2+ 11 ♖g1 ♖f3+ ½-½ Davies-Renet, European Team Ch 1989. It would be more in keeping with the style of the main game

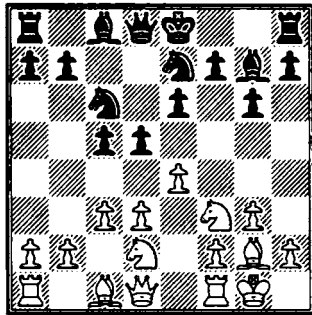
to play 3 ♘d2. If White needs inspiration then the model game Davies-Karolyi, Hastings 1987, is worth checking out. There followed 3... ♘c6 4 g3 e5?! (Davies criticised this move because it is normally played in conjunction with an early ... ♘f6. This means that if White captures on d5, the knight can take back and Black can quickly complete his development. It soon becomes clear that even a natural move in the opening can lead to future problems in activating the pieces) 5 exd5 ♗xd5 6 ♘gf3 ♙e6 7 ♙g2 ♗d7 8 0-0 f6 9 ♘e4! (the centralised knight exerts a strong influence on the position. Karolyi has difficulty developing the kingside because 9... ♘ge7? fails to 10 ♘xc5 while 9... ♘h6?? is just awful due to 10 ♙xh6 when the bishop is taboo because of the threat ♘xf6+) 9... ♗d8 10 ♙e1 b6 11 a3 ♙e7 12 ♗e2 ♘f7 13 b4! (an enterprising sacrifice which has the aim of opening up the game to take advantage of Black's poor piece co-ordination) 13... cxb4 14 axb4 ♙xb4 (or 14... ♘xb4 15 ♘eg5+! ♘e8 16 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 17 ♙xa7 and White has the better chances thanks to the vulnerability of the black king) 15 c3 ♙e7 16 d4 exd4 17 cxd4 ♘b4? 18 ♘eg5+! 1-0.

3 ♘f3 ♘c6 4 g3 g6 5 ♙g2 ♙g7 6 0-0 ♘ge7 7 c3

If 7 ♘c3 then the game transposes to a Closed Sicilian.

7... d5 8 ♘bd2

This is the point where White declares his true intention to play a King's Indian Attack. The benefit of the pawn on c3 is that it introduces the possibility of expanding on the queenside and establishing an influential centre with an eventual e4-e5 followed by d3-d4.



8... 0-0 9 ♙e1 b6 10 e5 ♗c7 11 ♗e2 g5!?

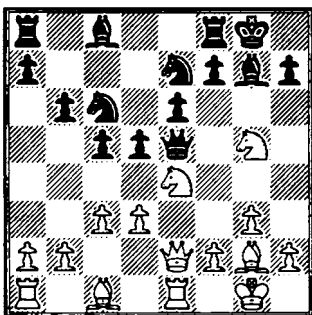
A standard idea to undermine the support of the e5 pawn. In general, White tends to heavily support the e5 pawn because it helps to cut off Black's pieces from defending the kingside. But there is an exception to every rule. Instead 11... ♗b8 was tried in Heissler-Philipowski, Bad Godesberg 2001. That game went 12 ♘f1 f6 13 exf6 ♙xf6 14 ♘e3 (with the intention of ♘g4 and ♙h6) 14... e5 15 c4 e4 (15... dxc4!? should be considered) 16 dxe4 dxe4 17 ♘g5 ♘d4 18 ♗d1 ♙b7 19 ♘xe4 and White had an extra pawn, although the strong knight on d4 gives Black some compensation.

12 ♘xg5

12 ♙h3 was tried in Gustafsson-Murugan, Gausdal 1991, to stop the advance ... g5-g4, but it does little to stop the plan of undermining the e5 pawn. The game continued: 12 ♙h3 h6 13 ♙g4 ♘g6! 14 d4 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♘b4 16 ♗d1 ♙a6 17 ♗e1 ♘c2 and White can go home.

12... ♗xe5 13 ♘de4

A wonderful position to have on the board. A knight is offered as a sacrifice, which can be accepted as long as Black is happy to allow a fierce attack.



It is worth remembering that when your opponent asks "how come you played such a stunning move after 20 seconds thought" it is correct chess etiquette to ponder for a moment before claiming that Tal was a distant cousin.

13...♘g6

If 13...dxe4 then 14 ♖f4 ♜f6 15 ♗xe4 e5 16 ♘xh7 (the continuation 16 ♗xh7+ ♚h8 17 ♘e4 ♜e6 18 ♜h5 is recommended in some sources but I cannot find anything against 18...♜g4!, entering a winning ending for Black) 16...♜d6 17 ♘xf8 exf4 18 ♘h7 and White has the superior chances.

14 f4 ♜c7 15 ♘f2 h6

It is understandable that Weeks is keen to oust the knight from its attacking post. The big problem for him is that the loss of the g-pawn has left his kingside relatively exposed and it this positional factor that Van der Weide is poised to exploit. A casual move such as 15...♗b7 is shown to be bad upon 16 ♜h5 h6 17 ♘xe6! fxe6 18 ♜xg6, winning a pawn for nothing.

16 ♘gh3 ♘ce7 17 ♜h5 ♗b7 18 g4 d4 19 f5

The discovered attack on the h6 pawn spells problems for Black.

19...♗xg2 20 ♚xg2 ♜c6+ 21 ♚g1 exf5 22 ♗xh6 ♘e5 23 ♗xe5! ♗xe5 24 ♗e1 ♗fe8

Or 24...♜d6 25 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 26 ♘g5 and the threat of mate means that Black will end up losing more material.

25 ♗xe5 ♘g6

Black is lost but the Australian continues until any hope of a miracle is extinguished.

26 ♗xe8+ ♗xe8 27 ♗d2 ♗e2 28 ♘g5 ♜f6 29 gxf5 ♗xd2 30 ♘fe4 ♜xf5 31 ♘xd2 ♘f4 32 ♜h4 f6 33 ♘ge4 ♜g6+ 34 ♘g3 ♘xd3 35 cxd4 ♘b2 36 dxc5 bxc5 37 ♘de4 f5 38 ♜d8+ ♚f7 39 ♘g5+ ♚g7 40 ♜c7+ 1-0

It is clear that the set-up with ...e7-e6, ...♘ge7, ...0-0, followed by pushing the queenside pawns has its qualities but there is another important possibility. The seal of approval from Garry Kasparov confirms that 6...♘f6 should be taken seriously.

**Fedorov-Kasparov**  
Wijk aan Zee 2001

1 e4 c5 2 d3

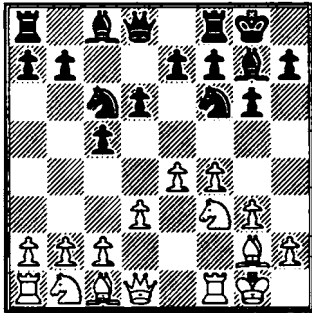
Fedorov is renowned for his aggressive style but in this case he chooses to avoid the main lines. This is probably in response to Kasparov's renowned opening preparation, while bearing in mind the illustrative game, Adams-Kasparov, in the chapter 6 f4 ♘f6 where there was a similar set-up with the king's knight developed to f6.

2...♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 f4 d6 6 ♘f3 ♘f6

If it is good enough for Kasparov then it can be recommended for the rest of us! Black is happy to develop the king's knight on f6 instead of e7 and the plan is to complete his kingside development and advance the queenside pawns. A key idea is to

leave the e-pawn on e7 and, when f4-f5 is played, occupy e5 with a knight.

7 0-0 0-0



### 8 h3

Fedorov wants to construct a kingside set-up identical to that in the Closed Sicilian. However, he hopes to accelerate the attack by delaying  $\text{d}2\text{c}3$ , which often becomes a target for Black after ...b7-b5-b4.

Others:

8 c3 is another attempt to play The Big Clamp when play might proceed:

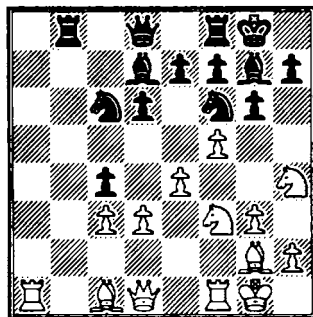
a) 8... $\text{g}4$  9 h3  $\text{x}f3$  10  $\text{W}xf3$   $\text{N}c8$  11  $\text{e}3$  (or 11  $\text{W}f2$  b5 12  $\text{e}3$  b4 13  $\text{d}2$   $\text{d}7$  14  $\text{N}fc1$  with equal chances) 11... $\text{d}7$  12 g4 b5 13 a3 a5 14  $\text{d}2$  (14 f5 looks logical but the e5 square will be occupied by a knight, so White catches up on development) 14... $\text{b}6$  15  $\text{W}f2$  b4 16 axb4 axb4 17  $\text{N}fc1$   $\text{W}d7$  18  $\text{d}f3$   $\text{N}a8$  19  $\text{N}xa8$  (19 d4 is also possible when 19... $\text{cxd}4$  20  $\text{cxd}4$   $\text{N}xa1$  21  $\text{N}xa1$   $\text{d}c4$  22 d5! is better for White) 19... $\text{N}xa8$  20 f5  $\text{N}a2!$  (with the threat 20... $\text{bxc}3$  when the pawn on b2 is pinned) 21  $\text{W}h4$   $\text{d}e5$  22  $\text{dxe}5$   $\text{xe}5$  23 cxb4  $\text{N}xb2$  24  $\text{bxc}5$   $\text{dxc}5$  25  $\text{e}f1$   $\text{W}d6$  26 fxc6 hxc6 27  $\text{g}2$   $\text{W}xd3$  28  $\text{W}e1$   $\text{N}e2$  0-1 Ye Jiangchuan-Gelfand, Shenyang 2000.

b) 8...c4 9  $\text{d}a3$   $\text{cxd}3$  10  $\text{W}xd3$   $\text{W}a5$  11 h3 (the standard way to start advancing the kingside pawns) 11... $\text{d}8$  12 g4  $\text{N}b8$  13  $\text{d}c2$   $\text{W}a6!$ ? (13...b6 is a possible alternative but Black is hoping that after the exchange of queens the semi-open b-file will compensate for the doubled a-pawns) 14  $\text{W}xa6$  bxa6 15  $\text{d}fd4$   $\text{d}xd4$  16  $\text{d}xd4$   $\text{e}b7$  17  $\text{N}e1$  e5 18  $\text{d}b3$   $\text{d}d7$  19 f5 when the space advantage gave White the better ending in Beshukov-Arkhangelsky, Moscow 1999.

c) 8... $\text{N}b8$  and now:

c1) 9  $\text{d}a3$  b5 10  $\text{N}b1$  a5 11 b3 b4 12 cxb4 axb4 13  $\text{d}c4$   $\text{N}a8$  (Black already has good play on the queenside, while White's kingside attack has not even started) 14 a4 bxa3 15  $\text{e}xa3$   $\text{N}b8$  16 e5  $\text{d}d5$  17  $\text{e}b2$   $\text{dxe}5$  18  $\text{d}fxe5$  (18 fxe5 is well met by 18... $\text{d}b4$  with pressure against the weak pawn on d3) 18... $\text{dxe}5$  19  $\text{e}xe5$   $\text{e}xe5$  (intending ... $\text{d}c3$  or ... $\text{d}e3$  so White seeks to eliminate that problem) 20  $\text{e}xd5?$   $\text{e}d4+$  0-1 Rodas-Orrego, Medellin 2000.

c2) 9 a4 a6 10  $\text{d}h4$   $\text{e}d7$  11  $\text{d}d2$  b5 12 axb5 axb5 13  $\text{d}df3$  b4 14 f5  $\text{bxc}3$  15  $\text{bxc}3$  c4!



Black breaks up the d3-e4-f5 pawn chain 16  $\text{e}f4$   $\text{W}b6+$  17  $\text{d}h1$   $\text{cxd}3$  18  $\text{W}xd3$   $\text{d}g4$  19 fxc6 hxc6 20 e5  $\text{W}b5$  (the weakened white

pawn structure prompts Black to offer an invitation to an ending) 21 ♖xb5 ♜xb5 22 exd6 e5! 23 ♙c1 e4 (exploiting the fact that White's pieces lack harmony) 24 ♘g5 e3 25 ♜e4 f5 26 ♘xg6 ♜e8 27 h3 fxe4 28 hxg4 e2 29 ♜e1 ♙xc3 led to victory in Quezada-Dominguez, Camaguey 1999.

### 8...b5

In the Closed Sicilian the knight on c3 covers this square but in its absence Black is able to launch an immediate queenside pawn storm. Or 8...e5 9 f5 d5 (9...gxf5 10 exf5 ♙xf5 11 ♜xe5 dxe5 12 ♜xf5 is slightly better for White) 10 exd5 ♜xd5 11 fxg6 hxg6 12 ♜e1 ♙f5 13 ♜bd2 ♖d7 14 ♜h2 ♜ad8 15 ♜h4 (15 ♜c4!? increasing pressure on the e5 pawn looks logical) 15...♙e6 16 ♜e4 b6 17 ♘g5 ♜d4 18 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 19 ♜f3 ♖d6 20 c3 (White stops the knight invading on d4 but now the d3 pawn is weak) 20...♜e7 21 ♖a4 ♜f5 22 ♖g4 ♜d7 23 ♙f1 and White has a passive position and has still not completed his development, Berescu-Burnoiu, Bucharest 1999. Also possible is 8...♜b8 when Kokolias-Verivakis, Chania 2000, continued 9 a3 ♖c7 10 g4 b5 11 ♜c3! (White spots a good time to transpose back into a favourable version of the Closed Sicilian) 11...a5 12 g5 ♜d7 13 ♜d5 ♖d8 14 f5 ♜d4 15 ♜h4 b4 16 axb4 axb4 17 ♙f4 and White had the initiative. An interesting try is 8...c4 to leave White worrying about his pawn structure. For example: 9 ♜c3 cxd3 10 cxd3 b5 11 ♙e3 (of course, 11 ♜xb5? loses after 11...♖b6+ 12 ♜h1 ♖xb5) 11...b4 12 ♜e2 ♖a5 13 ♖d2 ♙a6 14 ♜fc1 (the early pressure on the queenside prompts the grandmaster to change tactics and put a stop to Black's ambitions)

14...♖b5 (14...♜ac8!? should be considered) 15 ♜ed4! (the start of a clever combination designed to win material—a usual ploy in this system based on the hidden strength of the light-squared bishop on g2) 15...♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 ♖xd3 (or 16...♖b7 17 e5 ♜d5 18 ♜c6 ♜xe3 19 ♖xe3 is excellent for White) 17 ♖xd3 ♙xd3 18 e5! (White reveals a double attack) 18...dxe5 19 fxe5 ♜h5 20 ♙xa8 ♜xa8 21 g4 when White was winning in Barlov-Ristić, Yugoslav Team Ch 1994.

### 9 g4

Or 9 e5 dxe5 10 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 11 fxe5 (11 ♙xa8 ♙xh3! 12 ♙g2 ♙xg2 13 ♜xg2 ♖d5+ 14 ♜g1 ♜eg4 offers roughly equal chances) 11...♜d5 12 c4 ♜c7 13 ♙xa8 ♜xa8 when Black has decent compensation for the exchange. 9 ♜c3 no longer transposes directly into a Closed because Black has managed to play ...b7-b5 without the need to spend time supporting it with a move such as ...♜a8-b8. For instance: 9...b4 10 ♜e2 a5 11 g4 c4 12 ♙e3 ♙a6 13 ♘g3 cxd3 14 cxd3 ♜d7 when I prefer Black's chances thanks to his influential pair of bishops.

### 9...a5

A consistent approach to help the queenside onslaught. Paragua-Atalik, Saint Vincent 2001, saw Black trying to weaken the c2-d4-e4-f5 pawn chain with help from his queen: 9...♖b6 10 f5 c4+ 11 ♜h1 cxd3 12 cxd3 b4 (making room for the light-squared bishop to target the d3 pawn) 13 ♜e1 ♙a6 14 ♙e3 ♖a5 15 ♖b3 ♖b5 16 ♙f1 ♜a5 17 ♖d1 ♜d7 18 d4 (the pressure against the d3 pawn has not worked because now White has a strong pawn centre) 18...♖b7 19 ♙xa6 ♖xa6 20 ♜bd2 ♜b6 21 ♙g5 ♖b7

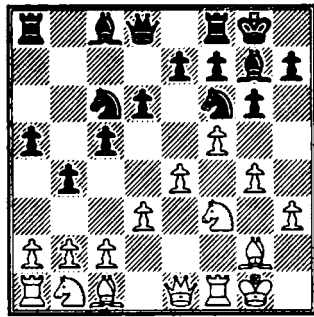
22 ♖e2 ♘c6 23 ♖f2 ♘ac8 24 ♖h4 (having fended off the queenside probe White can get on with the kingside attack) 24...♘xd4?! 25 ♗xe7 ♖fe8 26 f6 ♖xe7 (26...♘c2 runs into 27 ♘g5!) 27 ♘xd4 ♘c4 28 ♘f5 ♖e5 29 ♘h6+ ♖h8 30 fxg7+ ♖xg7 31 ♖f1 f5 32 ♘xf5+ gxf5 33 gxf5 ♖f7 34 ♘f3 1-0.

10 f5!?

One might think that once Kasparov has played this line as Black then everyone will be scared to challenge his choice. Amazingly, just a few days later in the Grandmaster B tournament at Wijk aan Zee, the game Visser-De Vreugt, saw White try to improve with 10 a4. There followed: 10...b4 (if 10...bxa4 then 11 ♘c3 is fine for White) 11 ♘bd2 ♖a6 12 ♖e1 (the rook is removed from the f-file but it is usually needed to lend support to the advance. In this case, Visser intends to challenge Black's set-up with e4-e5) 12...♖c8 13 ♖b1 d5 14 e5 ♘d7 15 ♘f1 e6 16 b3 f6! (a correct approach to White's pawn on e5 because it allows Black to undermine the centre) 17 exf6 ♖xf6 18 ♘g3 ♖h8 19 h4 (a vigorous response by White who is happy to pose Black problems with a kingside pawn advance; on the other hand 19 g5 ♖f7 20 ♖f1 adds support to the f-pawn but leaves White standing worse because of Black's very active pieces) 19...e5 20 f5 ♖d6 (De Vreught rightly ignores the pawn avalanche on the kingside in the knowledge that without piece support it is fairly harmless) 21 ♘g5 ♘d4 22 ♘e2 (in an effort to complicate matters, White gives up a pawn) 22...gxf5 23 ♘xd4 cxd4 24 gxf5 ♖xf5 25 ♖h5 (the twin threats of ♘f7+ and ♖xh7 mate are easily rebuffed)

25...♖g6 26 ♖xg6 hxg6 27 ♗xd5 ♖xc2 28 ♘f7+ ♖xf7 29 ♗xf7 ♗xd3 (Black has lost the exchange but has compensation in the form of two extra passed pawns. It is White who is losing because his pieces are relatively passive and can do little to stop the advance of the d- and e-pawns) 30 ♗g5 ♗f5 31 ♖bcl ♖c3 32 ♖f1 e4 (the central pawns start to roll and Black is clearly winning) 33 ♗f4 ♘e5 34 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 35 h5 e3 36 hxg6 e2 37 ♖fe1 d3 0-1

10...b4 11 ♖e1



Kasparov himself was later quoted as saying that this move was optimistic! White is still keen to attack on the kingside and leaves his queenside pieces on their original squares.

11...♗a6

11...♘d7 12 ♖h4 ♘de5 is another way to cope satisfactorily with the white attack.

12 ♖h4 c4!

Black wishes to disrupt White's plans by undermining the c2-d3-e4-f5 pawn chain.

13 ♗h6

Fedorov goes for a direct attack. His ideal sequence would be to follow up with ♘g5 and then threaten to exchange pawns on g6, opening up the possibility of ♖xf6 to eliminate the defender of h7. The only

snag is that Black is allowed to move! If you want to see how he was inspired to create such an attack then look at the illustrative game Spassky-Geller. Alternatively, if he had defended the d3-pawn with 13 ♖d1 then Kasparov would have kept up the pressure by 13...cxd3 14 cxd3 ♖b6+ 15 ♖h1 ♗e5 16 ♗xe5 dxe5 17 ♖g3 ♗fd8 18 ♗e3 ♖c6.

13...cxd3 14 cxd3

The onslaught has to wait. White must deal with his crumbling pawn structure. After 14 fxg6 fxg6 15 ♗g5 ♗xh6 16 ♖xh6 ♖d7! 17 ♗xf6? exf6 and the queen on d7 protects h7, giving Black a won game.

14...♗xd3 15 ♗e1 ♗xh6

Kasparov is understandably reluctant to lose control and allow a king-hunt. Then again, it is not clear that White has enough pieces to finish off the job of mating the exposed black king. For example: 15...♗xe4 16 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 17 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 18 ♗g5 ♖b6+ 19 ♖h2 ♗xg2 20 ♖xh7+ ♖f6 21 ♖xg2 (21 ♗xf7 ♗xf7 22 ♖xg6+ ♖e5 23 ♖e6+ ♖f4) 21...♖xg5 and White cannot force checkmate.

16 ♖xh6 ♖b6+ 17 ♖h1 ♗e5 18 ♗bd2

Realistically, the best practical chance is to offer an exchange of queens and then suffer a pawn down in the ending after 18 ♗xe5 dxe5 19 ♖e3 ♖xe3 20 ♗xe3 ♗fd8.

18...♗ac8 19 ♗g5 ♗c2 20 ♗f1 ♗xf1 21 ♗xf1 ♗fc8 22 fxg6 hxg6 23 ♗b3

23 ♗xf7 is a good example of how to sacrifice too many pieces: 23...♖xf7 24 g5 ♖e3 25 ♖h7+

♗e6 26 gxh6 exf6 27 ♖g7 ♖g5 and White can resign. A last minute exchange sacrifice with 23 ♗xf6 also fails to 23...exf6 24 ♖h7 ♖h8 and the white attack fades away.

23...♗xg2! 24 ♖xg2 ♗c2+ 25 ♖g3 ♖e3+ 0-1

## Summary

The natural reply to 2 g3 is 2...d5, which successfully challenges White's control of the centre. In the past this has often led to short draws but the games Nadyrhanov-Odeev and Sepp-Maliskauskas are an indication that the gambit 7 b4 is a useful weapon. A better approach by Black is to concentrate on development and Veselovsky-Haba demonstrates how Black can comfortably equalise. It is more usual for Black to defend with a formation that is usually played against the Closed Sicilian. The difference in omitting ♗c3 shows to White's advantage in Trapl-Prilbyl, where the thematic f4-f5 is used to steer White to victory. A glance at Clemens-Naumann indicates that The Big Clamp can be awkward for Black to handle when White substitutes ♗b1-c3 with c2-c3. Van der Welde-Weeks is another approach by White who avoids f2-f4 and then invites tremendous complications straight out of the opening. The final say on the line is appropriately enough by Kasparov who makes quick work of Fedorov by playing a system with ...♗f6 and 0-0. It is this system that is likely to be the main response for years to come.

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*The Closed Sicilian: 1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♜c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 d3 d6*

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6 ♗e3 e6 7 ♜d2 ♜ge7 8 ♗h6

8...0-0 9 h4 ♗xh6 10 ♜xh6 f6 11

10...♜h8 13

8...♗xh6 9 ♜xh6 ♜d4 10 0-0-0 15

7...♜d4 8 ♜d1 e5 (8...b6/♜b8/♜e7) 9 c3 17

7...♜b8 8 ♜f3 (8 ♜ge2) 8...♜b6 (8...♜ge7/b5) 20-21

8...♜d4 9 ♗xd4 23

7...♜a5 8 ♜ge2 (8 f4) 8...♜d4 9 0-0 (9 ♜h4 27)

9...♜e7 (9...♗d7/h6 27) 10 ♜h1 27 (10 a3/♜c1 25) 27

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