

main line Caro- Kann



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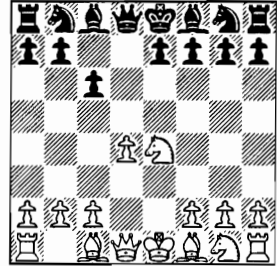
Neil McDonald

main line Caro- Kann

by Neil McDonald

EVERYMAN CHESS

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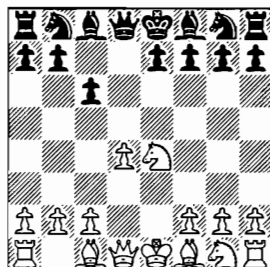
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INTRODUCTION



The Caro-Kann is one of the most solid defences to 1 e4 and it is therefore no surprise that many of the greatest positional masters of all time have been adherents at some stage in their careers – Capablanca, Botvinnik, Smyslov and Petrosian were all attracted by its reliable qualities.

Among the top players of today Anatoly Karpov deserves a special mention for the number of interesting new ideas he has contributed to Black's cause. From the other side of the board Garry Kasparov – no doubt inspired by his 'arms race' with his arch-rival Karpov – has done much to enrich White's attacking schemes.

As the best chess brains in the world engage in an unremitting search for new ideas and concepts, it is inevitable that theory in many openings is in a state of flux with well-established variations losing ground to previously neglected systems. This is undoubtedly the case in the Caro-Kann. For example, a decade ago no-one could have predicted that 7...♘d7

in Chapter 4 was going to usurp 7...♘d7 in Chapter 5 as the main way for Black to handle the Classical variation, or that 10...♙c7 was going to become the 'Modern main line' in the Smyslov system. An example from White's point of view is Paul Keres's 6 ♙c4 old line in the Classical, which has recently come back to life with rejuvenated strength.

Thematic Opening Ideas

In every opening between good players there is a battle for control of the centre. The Caro-Kann main line has many features of an open position – all the central squares are contested. Ideally it would be nice to take control of all four squares, but in a real game this is seldom possible. The secret of playing the Caro-Kann well is knowing when it is appropriate to loosen your influence over one of the central squares in order to increase your control of another, more important square. It is this which gives the opening its complexity, as for example it is

often by no means easy to tell in which specific circumstances the e5-square is more valuable than the d5-square or vice-versa. It is no wonder that Anatoly Karpov, the greatest Caro-Kann exponent of all time, is also a keen stamp collector: he knows all about the art of swapping something good for something even better!

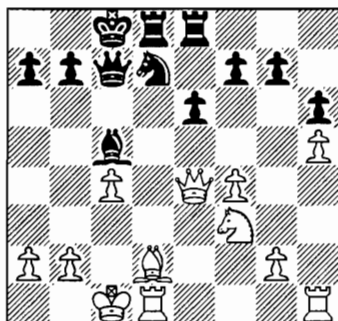
In the section that follows I will try to explain the importance of each central square in turn and also attempt to describe the strategic themes most associated with that particular square. However, you should remember that this segmentation is purely for the sake of clarity and that in an actual game all the ideas described are intertwined with one another. You need to develop a general feel for such positions so that, for example, you can judge when an attack on White's centre with ...c6-c5 will be appropriate.

The e4-square

The battle for the e4-square begins immediately after 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♘xe4. Black's third move has eliminated the white e-pawn and so prevented him from establishing a broad centre, but it has committed the positional 'sin' of conceding the e4-square to White's knight. Therefore Black's immediate aim in any line of the main line Caro-Kann is to use his pieces to contest control of e4 and dislodge or destroy the white knight. This can be done in direct style with 4...♙f5 (the Classical system) or after preparation with 4...♘d7 and then 5...♘gf6 (the Smyslov system). Alternatively, Black can

play the more radical 4...♘f6, when after 5 ♘xf6+ either 5...exf6 or the more enterprising 5...gxf6 lead to double-edged play.

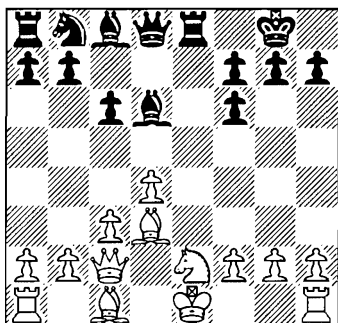
Note that 4...f5? is never played immediately as the weaknesses created on e5 and the kingside are too serious to make it worthwhile. However, this doesn't mean that Black can't use his f-pawn to fight for e4 at some point in the future. Take the following example, which greatly impressed me when I was on the receiving end.



In McDonald-Kumaran, London 1997, White appears to have a slight advantage, but after 18...f5!! 19 ♖c2 ♘f6 he was unable to prevent Black's knight from invading the e4-square, when he was in big trouble. This was excellent strategic judgement by Kumaran – he hands White's knight the e5-square, but Black's pawn structure is more compact and there are no holes in his position as serious as White's weaknesses on f4 and f2. Note that once Black's knight gets to e4 the fact that he has a backward pawn on e6 is of no importance – it is virtually impossible for White to attack it.

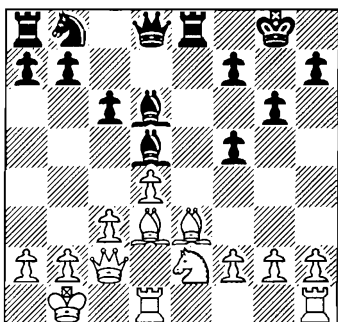
Here is another example which is

taken from Chapter 8 (4...♖f6 5 ♖xf6+ exf6).



This position is reached after 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖d2 dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♖f6 5 ♖xf6+ exf6 6 c3 ♖d6 7 ♖d3 0-0 8 ♖e2 ♖e8 9 ♖c2.

White is attacking the pawn on h7. How should Black respond? The safest-looking move is 9...h6, but the most popular is 9...g6! This may seem surprising. Why does Black create a target for White's h2-h4-h5 advance? Again it is down to the magic of the centre. After, for example, 10 ♖e3 f5! 11 0-0-0 ♖c6 12 ♖b1 ♖d5



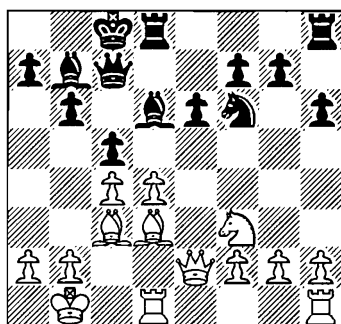
White does indeed have attacking chances, but Black can use his secure control of e4 as the basis of his coun-

terplay. You can find the remaining moves of the game De La Paz-Bellon Lopez in Chapter 8, Game 47.

The e5-square

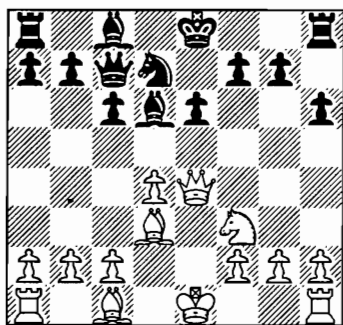
As you have seen in the McDonald-Kumaran example above, Black cannot usually strengthen his hold on e4 without lessening his influence on e5. In that game the situation was very favourable for Black, because his opponent was unable to make much use of the e5-square. Things aren't always so easy for Black, and as a result the modern treatment of the Caro-Kann has thrown up an interesting contrast in the handling of the Smyslov and Classical variations.

In the Smyslov system after 4...♖d7 5 ♖g5 e6 6 ♖d3 ♖gf6 7 ♖1f3 ♖d6 8 ♖e2 h6 9 ♖e4 ♖xe4 10 ♖xe4, it was previously thought that Black should fight for the e4-square immediately with 10...♖f6. However, this weakens his control of the e5-square and White can thereby achieve a slight advantage. A possible continuation is 11 ♖e2 b6 12 ♖d2 ♖b7 13 0-0-0 ♖c7 14 ♖b1 0-0-0 15 c4 c5 16 ♖c3.



Here White stands better – he has

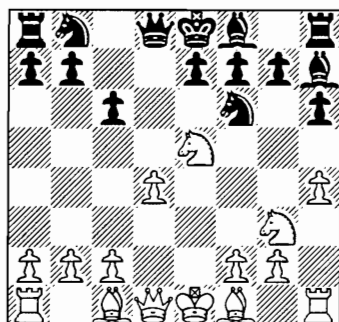
denied the black pieces use of the d5- and e4-squares and has taken a firm hold over the e5-square. Take a look at the continuation of Adams-Seirawan in Chapter 1 (Game 4). White also has sharper options, and consequently nowadays attention has been shifting to 10...♔c7.



Rather than weakening Black's control of e5, this move strengthens it considerably – the queen adds its direct influence while, by leaving the knight on d7, a quick thrust with ...c6-c5 is also on the cards. This would liquidate the d4-pawn and so loosen White's hold on e5. However, White is able to extract a price for this – 11 ♕g4 attacks g7 and usually persuades Black to relinquish castling with 11...♖f8. Nevertheless, most modern players of the Smyslov variation are willing to forfeit castling in this way, thus highlighting how much they value the maintenance of a firm guard on the e5-square.

In contrast, in the modern handling of the Classical with 4...♗f5 5 ♘g3 ♗g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♘f3 ♘f6 Black not only leaves e5-undefended, he positively invites his opponent to place a

knight on this square! However, after 8 ♘e5 ♗h7



Black's thoughts are very much on the e5-square – over the next few moves he will play ...e7-e6, ...♘bd7 and ...c6-c5, aiming to undermine the white knight. He wants to prove that the knight is worse placed on e5 than on f3, where it controlled the d4- and e5-squares.

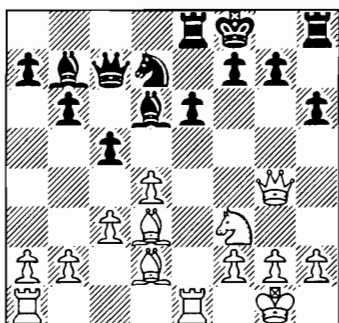
In contrast with the 10...♘f6 approach to the Smyslov variation described above, the fact that Black's bishop is already out of his pawn chain on h7 rather than shut in on c8 makes it harder for White to impose a quiet positional advantage – the black pieces are more dynamic. That is why Black can afford to be provocative.

The d5-square

White would love to station his knight on e5, solidly supported by his other pieces, but at the same time he mustn't neglect to keep a constant watch over the d5-square.

Starting from the previous diagram, 9 ♗c4 looks like a strong attacking move. However, after 9...e6 10 ♔c2 ♘d5 the d5-square has become a nice

central post for Black's knight – the white bishop is preventing it from being evicted with c2-c4. Therefore White often prefers 9 ♔d3 (see Chapter 4, Game 16) which seems on the whole to give him better chances. As so often in the Caro-Kann, a direct attacking move proves less effective than a quieter-looking move which gradually builds up the tension.



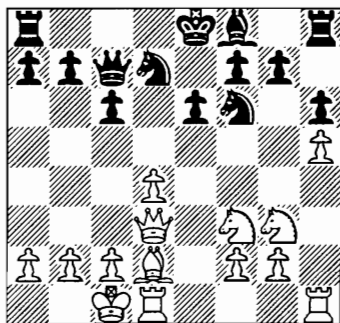
In this example too White played a natural move – 16 ♖ad1 ? centralising the rook – but Black was able to establish a blockade on the d5-square with 16...c4! 17 ♕c2 ♕d5 . Instead White should have played the more subtle 16 h4 and 17 h5 to gain space on the kingside and make it harder for Black to free his king's rook – see the analysis to Shankar-Speelman in Chapter 1, Game 7.

Finally, here is an example of White showing the d5-square proper respect.

see following diagram

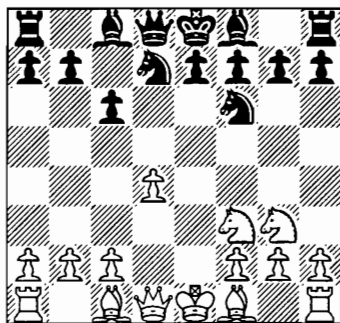
After 13 ♗e4 0-0-0 14 g3! ♗xe4 15 ♗xe4 ♕d6 16 c4! White was able to keep the black knight out of d5 while at the same time getting his own knight to the e5-square. Play continued 16...c5

17 ♕c3 ♗f6 18 ♗e2 ♖he8 19 ♗e5 ! and White had achieved his desired set-up in Motylev-Slapikas – see Chapter 5, Game 23.

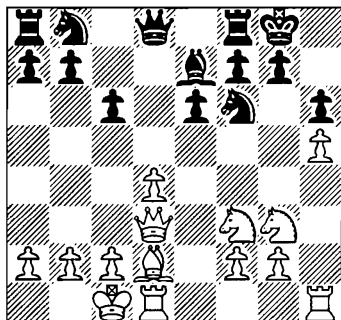


The d4-square

The main advantage of the advance ...c6-c5 is that it not only contests the d4-square but in doing so attacks the d4-pawn, which is the natural guardian of the e5-square. Therefore this pawn break is of vital strategic importance in the main line Caro-Kann. Black is often prepared to go to a lot of trouble to achieve this advance, even sometimes forfeiting the right to castle or opening lines despite his opponent's lead in development. Here are a couple of examples:



After the moves 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 $\text{d}2\text{d}2$ dxe4 4 $\text{d}1\text{e}4$ $\text{d}1\text{d}7$ 5 $\text{d}1\text{f}3$ $\text{d}1\text{g}f6$ 6 $\text{d}1\text{g}3$, we reach a quiet position in which Black can play 6...c5!? immediately. Then he intends ...c5xd4 to liquidate the white d-pawn followed by the fianchetto of his king's bishop. Leaving the pawn on e7 keeps Black's centre ultra-solid. Only if White plays 7 dxc5 will he continue 7...e6 followed by capturing on c5 with the bishop. This has worked well in practice – see Chapter 3, Game 15.



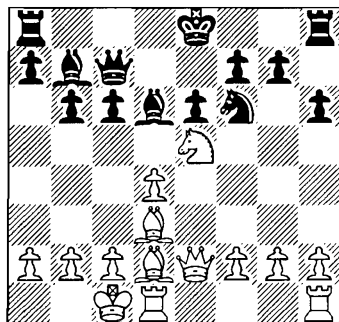
This diagram is taken from Chapter 4, Game 22. Here 13 $\text{d}1\text{b}1$ c5! would be good for Black as it exploits the position of the white queen on d3. So in the game Hracek-Epishin White played 13 $\text{d}1\text{e}2$, although Black still succeeded in freeing his game after 13...c5! 14 dxc5 $\text{d}1\text{c}7$ 15 $\text{d}1\text{e}5$ $\text{d}1\text{d}8$ 16 $\text{d}1\text{c}3$ $\text{d}1\text{c}6$ 17 $\text{d}1\text{xc}6$ $\text{d}1\text{xc}6$. He will soon regain his pawn and he has successfully broken White's grip on the centre.

Here we have a much more double-edged position.

see following diagram

Now Black decided to undermine

the knight on e5 immediately with 14...c5, when after 15 $\text{d}1\text{b}5+$ $\text{d}1\text{e}7$ his king had to remain in the centre. Often it can be perfectly safe there, but in this instance 16 dxc5! gave White the makings of a strong attack – see Chapter 1, Game 3.

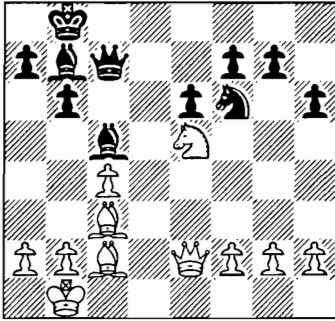


You can find a full discussion of ...c6-c5 after 4... $\text{d}1\text{d}7$ 5 $\text{d}1\text{c}4$ etc. in Chapter 2. In that variation Black achieves the advance without any resistance, but his lagging development means that his problems aren't completely solved. Nevertheless, the modern consensus seems to be that White has more chances of gaining an advantage if he chooses another system which doesn't allow Black to play ...c6-c5 so easily.

Endgame Structures

Finally, here is a brief discussion of the kind of endgames that can often arise from these main lines in the Caro-Kann.

The Adams-Seirawan game already mentioned in the 'e5-square' section above reached the following position after the subsequent exchange of rooks.



This is a standard pawn structure in the main line Caro-Kann. White can begin a minority attack on the kingside with 22 f4! ♔d6 23 a3 ♕c8 24 g4! Note how important it is that White has played c2-c4, otherwise Black could easily equalise with ...♘d5. As things stand, Black's bishops are pointing in the wrong direction to aid his kingside and he cannot easily dislodge the knight on e5. As the rest of the game demonstrated, such positions are defensible but uncomfortable for Black. He should try to break White's hold on the centre before agreeing to enter such an endgame.

As regards other types of endgames, those reached after 4...♘f6 5 ♘xf6+ exf6 are obviously unfavourable for Black due to White's mobile queenside pawn majority, though they should be okay as long as he avoids too much simplification. The game Plachetka-Bellon Lopez in Chapter 8 (Game 46) is a good example of such an endgame.

More difficult to judge is the endgame after the alternative 4...♘f6 5 ♘xf6+ gxf6. In Brajovic-Istratescu in Chapter 7 (Game 38) it all worked out very well for Black thanks to his opponent's passive play. I suspect that White may in general have a slight edge in this type of endgame, but it is nothing special. In some ways the extra control of e5 that the doubled pawns give him is helpful.

Which Variation should I play?

A player of any style, whether solid or ultra-aggressive, can find a system to suit him as Black in the main line Caro-Kann. After all, the heroes of the Caro-Kann include mavericks like Larsen and Bronstein as well as Masters of Law and Order like Smyslov and Petrosian!

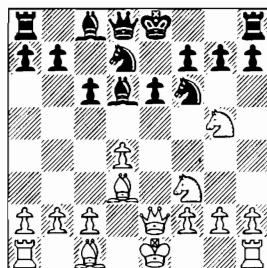
The way to decide which of these lines you would like to adopt as Black is to play through the games of each chapter and see which system generates the type of positions which best suit your style. If for example you are looking to counterattack at all costs then 4...♘f6 5 ♘xf6+ gxf6 (Chapter 7) might well be the line for you.

I hope that this work will provide a useful snapshot of the state of theory in the main line Caro-Kann in the early years of the 21st Century.

Neil McDonald
Gravesend, January 2001

CHAPTER ONE

Modern Smyslov System with 4...♞d7 5 ♞g5



1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞c3 dxe4 4 ♞xe4
♞d7 5 ♞g5 ♞gf6 6 ♟d3 e6 7 ♞1f3
♟d6 8 ♚e2

Fifteen years ago the crux of the Smyslov system revolved around 5 ♟c4 (see the next chapter). However, inspired by the example of Mikhail Tal and John Nunn in particular the aggressive 5 ♞g5 became very popular. Nowadays it occupies a position of being even more popular than 5 ♟c4.

The core of this chapter deals with the variation 8...h6 9 ♞e4 ♞xe4 10 ♚xe4, which has become the key battleground in the main line of the Caro-Kann. In the first four games we analyse Black's 'old' response 10...♞f6 which drives away the white queen. Firstly, in Game 1 there is a sharp tactical line after 11 ♚h4. Here Karpov has found the highly exotic 11...♚e7!?, but life still remains dangerous for Black after White's pawn sacrifice. The next three games discuss 11 ♚e2. Game 2 is given as a warning of what happens if Black castles kingside without taking measures to generate

any counterplay – White wins in almost automatic style by pushing his kingside pawns. In Game 3 there is more trouble for Black after his opponent plays a quick ♞e5 – he attempts to undermine the knight but soon runs into serious tactical difficulty. Finally, in Game 4 White plays in more sedate style and keeps a minimal edge. The advantage is only slight, but Black has to show a degree of accuracy not to fall into a bind and besides has very few winning chances.

From Black's problems in these games it is clear why attention has switched to 10...♚c7! (Games 5-7). In Game 5 we see the 13th World Champion in top form as he crushes the inferior line 11 ♚g4 g5?! in brilliant style. The critical line is 11...♚f8, which at the time of writing looks fine for Black. He wins both the illustrative games given here and the theoretical verdict also supports him. In Game 6 Karpov outplays his opponent in exemplary style, while Game 7 is also convincing for Black. The only poten-

tial cloud on the horizon for Black is Topalov's plan involving h2-h4, which is given in the analysis to move 14 in Game 7.

Game 1
Hector-Olsen
Politiken Cup 1998

1 ♟c3

Don't worry, you have bought the right book! This is just Jonny Hector's imaginative way of avoiding his opponent's Petroff Defence.

1...d5 2 e4 c6 3 d4 dx4 4 ♟xe4 ♟d7 5 ♟g5

Instead 5 ♟c4 and 5 ♟f3 etc. are analysed in the next two chapters.

5...♟g6

5...♟d6 is the subject of Chapter 3, Game 13.

6 ♟d3 e6

6...h6? is premature – see the notes to Chapter 3, Game 12.

7 ♟f3 ♟d6

Black's alternatives here are considered in Chapter 3, Game 12.

8 ♟e2 h6

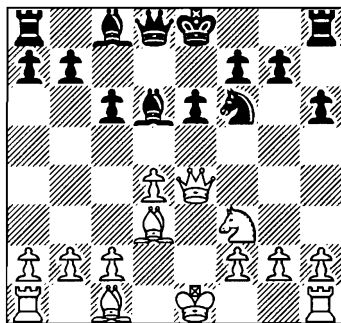
This is the correct moment to kick away the knight. At a French open some years ago one of my opponents played the very natural 8...♟c7?? here and resigned straightaway after 9 ♟xf7! for if 9...♟xf7 10 ♟g5+ ♟e7 (or 10...♟f8 11 ♟xe6+ wins the queen) 11 ♟xe6+ ♟d8 12 ♟f7 is mate. The only try was 9...0-0, when 10 ♟7g5 ♟b6 11 ♟xe6! 1-0 was the conclusion of Penson-Lammens, Eupen (rapidplay) 1994. Here 11 ♟e5? c5 is less clear, when after a struggle in Vilar-Le Thi Phuong Lien, Yerevan 1996, White

managed finally to lose the game.

9 ♟e4 ♟xe4 10 ♟xe4 ♟f6

Karpov has tried 10...c5 a couple of times here but without very convincing results. For example, 11 0-0 ♟f6 (perhaps he should try to transpose to Games 5-7 with 11...♟c7!? 12 ♟g4 – not of course forced – 12...♟f8) 12 ♟h4 cxd4 (or 12...♟c7 13 ♟e1 ♟d7 14 ♟g5! ♟e7 15 dxc5 ♟xc5 16 ♟e5 and Black was struggling in Ivanchuk-Karpov, Dortmund 1997) 13 ♟e1 ♟d7 14 ♟xd4 ♟a5 15 ♟e3! and neither the kingside nor queenside looked safe for the black king in Lautier-Karpov, Biel 1997.

The alternative 10...♟c7 (see Games 5-7) seems Black's most promising continuation at the moment.



11 ♟h4

More usual is 11 ♟e2 (Games 2-4), but the game move leads to an intriguing variation. If Black now plays slowly his opponent will achieve a slight but definite advantage, for example 11...♟d7 (compared to the move Karpov actually makes in the game this is just plain ugly) 12 ♟f4 ♟c7 13 ♟e5! ♟a5+?! 14 c3 g5 (trying to break White's hold on the centre, but it

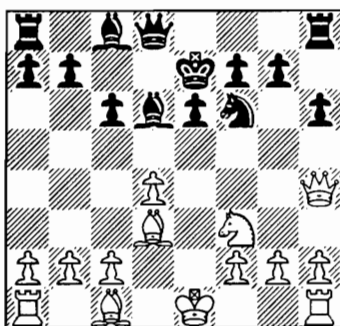
meets with an excellent riposte) 15 ♖xg5! ♙xe5 16 ♘f3! and White regained the piece with a much superior position after 16...♙xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♚e7 18 0-0-0 etc., in Svidler-Burmakin, Elista 1994.

Instead Black has an amazing resource:

11...♚e7!?

This astonishing move was introduced by Karpov in a game against Kamsky. Despite its bizarre appearance it makes a lot of sense as now that the rook on h8 is defended by the queen Black is suddenly threatening to win a piece with 12...g5.

Now White's only good response commits him to a pawn sacrifice.



12 ♘e5!

The initial awe among chess enthusiasts inspired by 11...♚e7 was soon replaced by deep analysis when it became clear that White gets serious attacking chances for his material. The next couple of moves are more or less forced for both sides.

12...♙xe5 13 dxex5 ♗a5+ 14 c3 ♗xe5+ 15 ♙e3 b6!

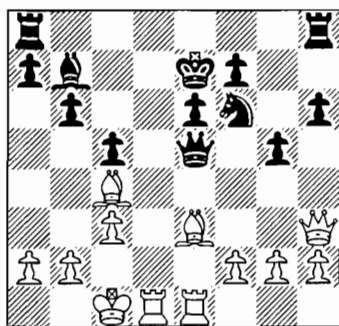
Black's best defensive scheme is to gain firm control of c5 and so restrict

the activity of White's dark-squared bishop.

16 0-0-0 g5 17 ♗h3!

This is a significant improvement on 17 ♗a4 when White's queen becomes shut out of the game after 17...c5 18 ♖he1, and now rather than 18...♙d7, as played in the stem game Kamsky-Karpov, Dortmund 1993, when 19 ♗a3 ♖hd8 was nevertheless pretty good for Black, it was possible to play more vigorously with 18...♗c7!? and seize the initiative, e.g. 19 h4 ♖g8 20 hxg5 hxg5 21 f4 ♙d7 22 ♗c4 ♘g4 23 f5 ♘xe3 24 ♖xc3 ♗f4! 25 ♖de1 ♚f6! etc., as in Golubev-Nisipeanu, Romania 1997.

17...c5 18 ♖he1 ♙b7 19 ♙c4



19...♙e4?

White is aiming his pieces at the e6-square and if the black queen runs away from a discovered attack by the bishop on e3 then a decisive ♙xe6 sacrifice will fatally expose the black king. Black must block the e-file. The question is: With which piece?

After his devastating loss to Morozevich mentioned at move 22 below, Iordaschescu later came up with 19...♘e4! when two variations have

been tried:

a) 20 ♖b3 – with the idea of putting the bishop on c2, but it seems too slow – 20... ♗ad8 21 ♖c2 ♗xd1+ 22 ♗xd1 ♖d6 23 f4! (the only way to activate his position) 23... gxf4 24 ♖h4+ ♗g5 25 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 26 ♖xf4 ♗d8 27 g3 f6 28 ♖xh6 ♗h8 29 ♖g7 ♗xh2 30 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 31 ♗xd6 ♖e7 and Black had a very tiny advantage in Ramesh-Svetushkin, Ubeda 1999.

b) 20 f3! ♖d6 21 ♖b3 (after the aggressive 21 ♖xe6! ♗xe6 [not 21... fxe6 22 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 23 ♖xe6+ ♖f8 24 ♖c7+ ♖g8 25 ♗xd6 and White wins] 22 ♖xg5+ hxg5 23 ♗xe6+ fxe6 24 ♖g3 ♖d5 25 b3 c4 26 ♖xg5+ ♖d7 chances are balanced) 21... ♗ad8 (or 21... ♖f5! 22 ♖d2 [22 ♖xg5+? hxg5 23 ♗xe5 ♗xh3 24 gxh3 ♗h8 is better for Black] 22... ♖f6 23 ♖c2 ♖h4 with obscure play) 22 ♖g4 ♖f6 23 ♖c2 ♗hg8 24 ♖a4 ♖c8, and now instead of 25 ♖b1? which allowed simplification by 25... ♗xd1+ 26 ♗xd1 ♗d8 in Berelovich-Iordaschescu, Bucharest 1998, White should have played 25 h4! keeping the tension since 25... gxh4? 26 ♖f2! is very strong for White. The analysis in variation 'b' is based on Iordaschescu's comments in *Informator* 74.

The jury is still out on this line, but clearly 19... ♖e4! is the only way for Black to proceed as after the inferior game move things quickly become hopeless for him.

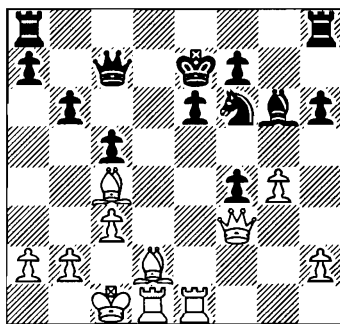
20 f3 ♖f5

Black aims to shut out the white queen's influence on e6, but it does little to lessen the strength of the attack.

21 g4 ♖g6 22 ♖d2!

An interesting moment. The neat tactic 22 ♖d5! captures Black's queen for rook and bishop after 22... ♖xd5 (if 22... ♖xd5 23 ♖xc5+ while 22... ♖c7 23 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 24 ♖xh6 is without hope) 23 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 and led to an eventual technical win for White after 24 ♖g3 ♗ad8 25 f4! etc. in Morozevich-Iordachescu, Kishinev 1998. However, Hector prefers to keep the attack going and is rewarded with a quick victory.

22... ♖c7 23 f4! gxf4 24 ♖f3!



Now the f4-point drops and White's dark-squared bishop becomes irresistible.

24... ♗hd8

The only chance was 24... ♗ad8.

25 ♖xf4 ♖c8 26 ♗xd8 1-0

Black resigned for if 26... ♖xd8 27 ♗d1 followed by 28 ♖d6+ will be a massacre.

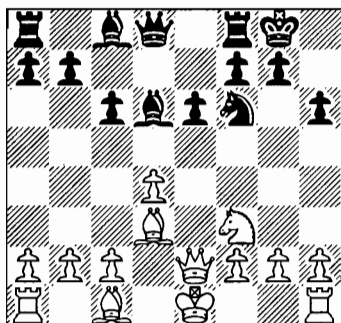
Game 2

Baklan-Matzat

Bad Zwosten 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖d2 dxe4 4 ♖xe4
 ♖d7 5 ♗g5 ♗gf6 6 ♖d3 e6 7 ♖1f3

♠d6 8 ♚e2 h6 9 ♘e4 ♘xe4 10
 ♚xe4 ♘f6 11 ♚e2 0-0?!



It is hard to believe that this natural developing move can be a mistake, but in this variation the black king belongs on the queenside. At the moment the bishop on c8 has no good way out and playing ...♘f6 has lessened the chance of an effective break in the centre with ...e6-e5 or ...c6-c5; therefore Black will be unable to generate counterplay before White launches an all-out attack on his vulnerable king.

The alternatives, 11...♚c7 and 11...b6, are considered in Games 3 and 4 respectively.

12 ♠d2 ♚c7?

This is all painfully slow. Black had to try to distract his opponent from his attack with 12...c5, e.g. 13 dxc5 ♠xc5 14 0-0-0 ♚b6. In the game he remains hopelessly passive until the end.

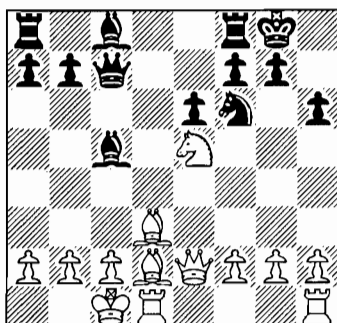
13 0-0-0 c5 14 dxc5 ♠xc5 15 ♘e5

see following diagram

15...b6

Black might as well have tried 15...b5, hoping to tempt White into 16

♠xb5? ♚b8 when he has counterplay on the b-file, but of course White can simply ignore the pawn and press on with 16 g4!

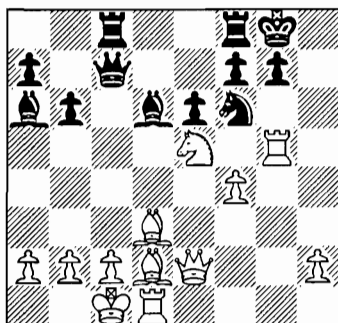


16 g4

Now the attack runs very smoothly for White.

**16...♠d6 17 f4 ♠b7 18 ♚hg1 ♚ac8
 19 g5 hxg5 20 ♚xg5 ♠a6!?**

At last all Black pieces are on active squares and he is even threatening to simplify favourably with 21...♚xc2+! 22 ♠xc2 ♠xe2. Alas, White's next move shows that it has all come much too late.

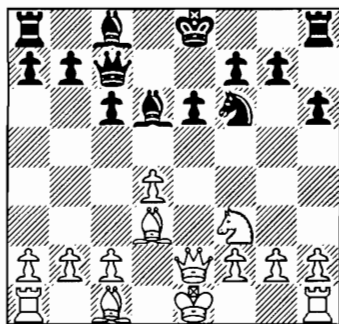


21 ♚xg7+! ♚xg7 22 ♚g2+ 1-0

It will be mate after 22...♚h8 23 ♚h3+ and 24 ♚g1+.

Game 3
Alekseev-V.Ivanov
St Petersburg 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 d c3 dxe4 4 dxe4
 d7 5 d g5 d g f6 6 d d3 e6 7 d1f3
 d6 8 e2 h6 9 e4 dxe4 10
 xe4 d f6 11 e2 c7



Black's move order indicates that he is more concerned with fighting for the e5-square than fianchettoing as soon as possible with 11...b6 and 12...d b7. This means that at move 13 he is ready to strike at the white centre with 13...c5, though in this game he declines to do so.

12 d d2 b6 13 d e5!?

White decides to put his knight on the e5-square straightaway. It is well placed here but can be undermined by ...c6-c5.

13...d b7

Black could also play 13...c5!? immediately. This sacrifices the right to castle after 14 d b5+ e7, but on the other hand White's centre is looking fragile. A possible continuation is 15 c3!? d b7 16 0-0 h d8 17 f4 d e4 18 d e3 e f8 19 e a e1! e g8 20 e g4, and

now instead of 20...d f6 21 e g3 when White had potential attacking chances on the kingside in Kamsky-Anand, Dos Hermanas 1996, Kasparov has recommended that Black should increase his grip on the centre with 20...cxd4! 21 cxd4 f5! when 22 e g6 d d5 is solid enough. However, after 15 0-0-0 d b7 play would transpose to the main game in which Black seems to have some problems.

14 0-0-0

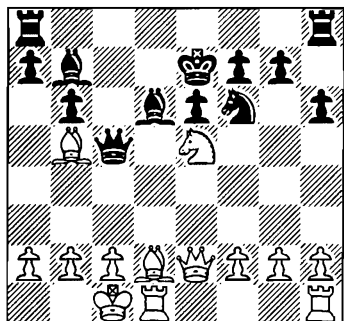
Here White could take the chance to strengthen the knight with 14 f4. Then 14...c5 isn't as forceful as on the last move, which means that White can achieve an efficient build-up with 15 dxc5 e xc5 (instead 15...dxc5 16 0-0-0 0-0-0 17 d a6 gave White an edge in Borocz-Krizsany, Budapest 1997) 16 0-0-0 0-0 17 e b1 f d8 18 e h e1 a c8 19 g4! etc., and after complications White won by a direct attack in Tiviakov-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 1996.

Alternatively after 14 f4 the quiet 14...0-0-0 15 0-0-0 e b8 16 e b1 h e8 17 h f1 c5 18 dxc5 dxc5 19 g4! gave White a typical long-term plus in Rowson-Arkell, Edinburgh 3rd match game 1996. However, unless Black's play is strengthened in the variation that follows in the main game, perhaps this will have to be regarded as Black's best option.

14...c5

This is enterprising but in the sharp variation that follows White has a dangerous idea up his sleeve. After 14...0-0-0 White can transpose to Rowson-Arkell in the previous note with 15 f4.

15 d b5+ e7 16 dxc5 e xc5



Not 16...♙xe5 17 cxb6 ♖c5?! 18 ♗xe5! ♗xe5 19 ♙b4+ and wins.

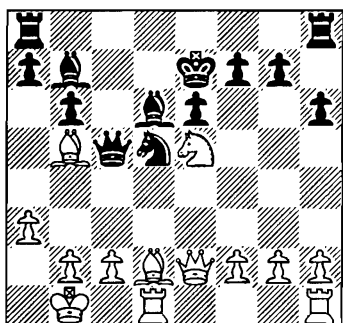
17 a3

Threatening 18 ♙b4 with horrible consequences along the a3-f8 diagonal.

17...♘d5

17...a5 is well met by 18 ♙c3, while 17...♗c7 18 f4!? (also pleasant for White was 18 ♙f4 ♙d5 19 ♘c6+ ♖f8 20 ♙xd6+ ♗xd6 21 ♘e5 ♗c5 22 ♚he1!, as in Macieja-Cyborowski, Poland 1998) 18...♚hd8 19 ♙d3 ♚ac8 20 ♖b1 ♖f8 21 ♚hf1 ♖g8 22 g4! led to a hard fight in Timoschenko-Kacheishvili, New York 1999, although White's attack looked the stronger.

18 ♖b1!



This clever move looks like the re-

sult of some home analysis. Instead after 18 ♙d3 ♗d4! (attacking the knight and if 19 ♚he1? ♙xa3! 20 c3? ♘xc3! wins) 19 ♘f3 ♗f6 20 ♖b1 ♘f4 21 ♙xf4 ♗xf4 22 ♘d2 ♙xg2 23 ♚hg1 ♙d5 24 ♙xg7 ♚ag8 Black was fine in Fercec-Epishin, Nova Gorica 1997.

18...a6

At first glance it looks as if Black can win a piece with 18...♙xe5 as 19 ♗xe5? drops the bishop on b5, but White has 19 ♙b4! ♘xb4 20 axb4 ♗xb4 (20...♗c7? 21 ♚d7+) when 21 ♗xe5 gives him a big attack, but not 21 ♚d7+? ♖f6! turning the tables due to the mate threat on b2. It must have been quite unpleasant for Black when the truth dawned on him.

Black's reply in the game seems to lose time as it drives the bishop to a square where it often goes voluntarily. A more natural move was 18...♚hd8 when 19...♙xe5 really does seem a threat, but 19 c4!? planning ♙b4 if the knight retreats looks at least uncomfortable for Black, e.g. 19...a6 20 ♙a4! b5 21 cxd5 bxa4 22 ♙b4. Nor does the alternative 18...♚hc8 19 c4 a6 20 ♙a4 ♙xe5 21 cxd5 inspire any confidence. Of course, this position needs some more practical examples before a definite conclusion can be reached, but the more I have studied the position the less I like it for Black.

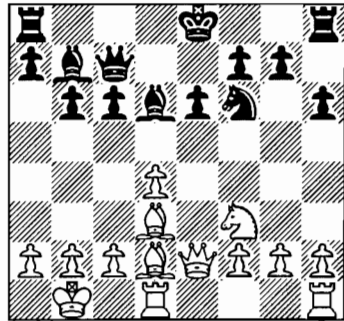
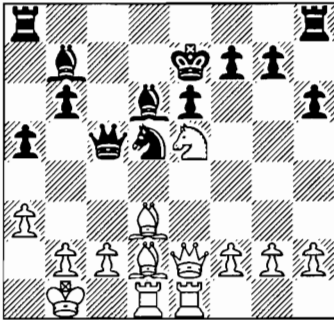
19 ♙d3 a5

This stops the idea of 20 c4 ♘f6 21 ♙b4, but White now completes his development and is ready for a decisive pawn storm.

If 19...♗d4 as in the Epishin game above, the interpolation of the moves ♖b1 and ...a7-a6 allows White to steal

a pawn with the remarkable 20 ♖xa6!!, when 20...♖xa6 21 ♘c6+ ♔e8 22 ♘xd4, 20...♗xa6? 21 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 22 ♘c6+ or 20...♗xe5 21 ♖g5+! hxg5 22 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 23 ♖xb7 all win for White. ..Amazing!

20 ♖he1



14...0-0-0 15 c4

In another game from his match with Seirawan, Michael Adams played the more direct 15 ♖a6. By exchanging bishops White loosens the black queenside and removes much of the dynamic potential from his game. A quick draw resulted after 15...♖xa6 16 ♗xa6+ ♔b8 17 ♗e2 ♗b7!? (more solid than 17...b5 when 18 ♔b1 ♖a8 19 c4 bxc4 20 ♗c1 ♗b8 21 ♗xc4 ♗b7 22 b3, as in Spasov-Seirawan, Elista 1998, was similar to lines with 15...b5 discussed in the next note) 18 ♘e5 (this simplifies the position, whereas 18 c4 keeps a slight advantage) 18...♗xe5 19 dxe5 ♘d5 20 h4 c5 21 h5 ♘e7 22 f3 ♗d7 23 ♖c1 and they stopped the clocks in Adams-Seirawan, Bermuda (2nd match game) 1999.

Already with ideas of 21 ♘xf7!?

20...♘f6 21 f4! ♗ac8 22 g4 ♗d5 23 h4 ♖xe5 24 fxe5 ♘d7 25 ♖b5 ♗f3 26 ♖b4+ 1-0

After 26...axb4 27 ♗xd7+ ♔f8 the nicest finish is 28 ♗f1! ♗xe2 29 ♗xf7+ ♔e8 30 ♗de7+ ♘d8 31 ♗e8+!! ♗xe8 32 ♗d7 mate!

Game 4
Adams-Seirawan
Bermuda (10th match game) 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘d7 5 ♘g5 ♘gf6 6 ♖d3 e6 7 ♘f3 ♖d6 8 ♗e2 h6 9 ♘e4 ♘xe4 10 ♗xe4 ♘f6 11 ♗e2 b6 12 ♖d2 ♖b7 13 0-0-0 ♗c7 14 ♔b1

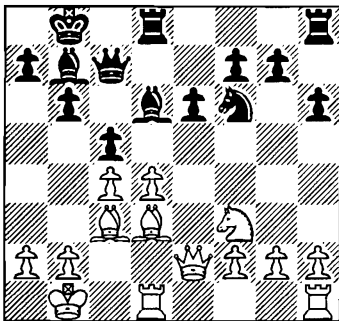
White adopts a purely positional approach which avoids the sharp consequences of putting a knight on e5 (see the previous main game, by transposition).

Instead Black could have played the more fighting 15...b5! when after 16 ♖xb7+ ♔xb7 he has secured the d5-square as a strong outpost for his knight. However, White can probably keep a slight advantage by playing for c2-c4 in order to leave Black with a vulnerable pawn on c6. For instance, 17 ♔b1 ♖a8 (similar is 17...♘d5 18 c4 bxc4 19 ♗c1 c3 20 ♖xc3 ♖a8 21 ♖d2

♖b8 22 ♜c4 ♜b7 23 b3 ♜hc8 24 ♜ec1 and White eventually ground out the win in Pavasovic-Sitnik, Pula 1999) 18 ♜c1 ♜b8 19 c4 bxc4 20 ♜xc4 ♜b5 21 ♜d3 ♜hb8 22 b3 ♜8b6 23 ♜c2!? ♜a6 24 a4 ♜f5 25 ♜c5! ♜xc5 26 ♜xa6 ♜b6 27 ♜e5 ♜xe5 28 ♜xe5 ♜e4 29 ♜f4 g5 30 f3 gxf4 31 fxe4 and White had a very nice position in McDonald-Hodgson, British Championship 1990 (though I unwittingly confirmed the potential of Black's set-up by losing the game!).

15...c5 16 ♜c3 ♜b8

Or 16...♜he8 17 ♜c2!? (after 17 ♜he1 a good plan for Black is 17...♜e7! to double rooks on the d-file) 17...♜b8 18 dxc5 ♜xc5 19 ♜e5 ♜c8?! (the king comes back to the centre, but it remains a target even after a lot of simplification, so 19...♜a8 looks a better idea) 20 f4 ♜xd1+ 21 ♜xd1 ♜d8 22 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 23 g4! and White had not only his standard pressure on the kingside but also a chance for tactical tricks against Black's king in Dolmatov-Svetushkin, Linares open 2000.

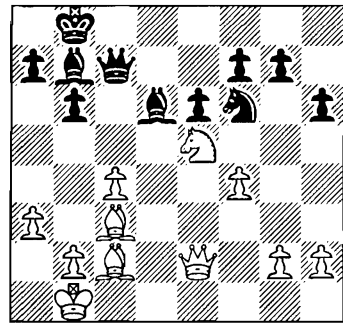


17 dxc5

Here we see the same theme as in the Dolmatov game of the note above:

rather than keeping the tension with 17 ♜c2 or 17 ♜he1, Adams elects for clarity by offering an exchange of rooks. Then in the endgame he will have the chance to try to exploit his structural advantage on the kingside without being distracted by any counterplay against his king. There is nothing seriously wrong with Black's position, but on the other hand there are few winning chances and he has to defend fairly precisely. This is one of the downsides of playing the main line Caro-Kann as Black – occasionally you will end up in a position like this. But hopefully not too often – and don't forget very few of your opponents will have the technique of a Michael Adams!

17...♜xc5 18 ♜c2 ♜xd1+ 19 ♜xd1 ♜d8 20 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 21 ♜e5 ♜c7 22 f4 ♜d6 23 a3



23...♜c8?!

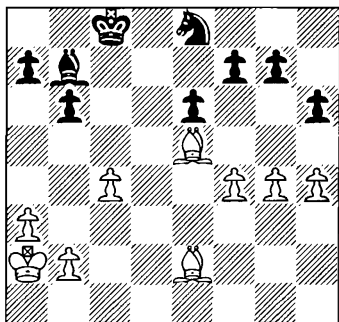
A very instructive moment. White has a dominant knight on e5 and is planning to gain more space next move with 24 g4, so Black should play to disrupt this immediately with 23...♜e8! Then 24 g4? f6 drops the f4-pawn, so White has to be satisfied with 24 g3

when after 24...f6 Black is able to evict the knight at the cost of slightly weakening his pawn structure. According to Michael Adams's analysis in *Informator 74* it is at this point that the verdict changes from a 'slight' to a 'clear' advantage to White.

24 g4! ♞xe5

Not a pleasant move to make, but Black had to do something before he was pushed back with 25 g5 etc.

25 ♞xe5 ♞c6 26 ♖a2 ♞f3 27 ♟d1 ♞xe2 28 ♞xe2 ♟e8 29 h4



The two bishops and better pawn structure give White good winning chances, but Seirawan defends resolutely.

29...f6 30 ♟d4 ♞c7 31 b4 ♟d6 32 ♖b3?

Missing the chance for 32 g5 hxg5 33 hxg5 ♟e4 34 g6 ♟d6 35 ♟f3! (Adams) when the pin is awkward for Black. If the black king stays on d6 to oppose White's potential passed pawn on the c-file rather than moving over to safeguard the kingside, then there is the possibility of a ♟xf6! breakthrough aiming to queen the g-pawn after ...g7xf6; g6-g7.

32...♟f7!

This prevents 33 g5 after which Black's position is fully defensible again.

33 c5 e5 34 fxe5 ♟xe5 35 cxb6+ axb6 36 a4 g5 37 hxg5 hxg5 38 a5 bxa5 39 bxa5 ♟d6

A 'book' draw was possible with 39...♟c8! 40 a6 ♟xg4 41 a7 ♟b7 42 ♟xg4 ♟c6 (Adams) when Black can play ...♟b7 and ...♟a8 and never be evicted from a8 as long as he keeps his bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal.

40 a6 ♟xa6 41 ♟xa6 ♟xg4

Now a different type of endgame has been reached. Two bishops would win against a knight, but in the game White isn't able to win the two black pawns.

42 ♟c8 ♟e5 43 ♞c3 ♟c6 44 ♟g1 ♟e7 45 ♟h2+ ♟d5 46 ♟b7+ ♞e6 47 ♟d4 ♟d7 48 ♟a6 ♞e6 49 ♟c4+ ♟f5 50 ♟d6 ♟g6 51 ♟d3+ ♞e6 52 ♟b4 ♟f4 53 ♟c2 f5 54 ♟a5 ♟e2+ 55 ♞e3 ♟g3 56 ♟c3 ♟f7 57 ♟e1 ♟e4 58 ♟d4 ♟f6 59 ♟a5 ♟f2 60 ♟d8+ ♞g6 61 ♟b1 ♟g4 62 ♟e7 ♟h6 63 ♞e5 ♟h5 64 ♟d3 f4 65 ♟e2+ ♟h4 66 ♞e4 ♟g4 67 ♟d8 ♟h2 68 ♟f5 ½-½

Game 5

Kasparov-Kamsky

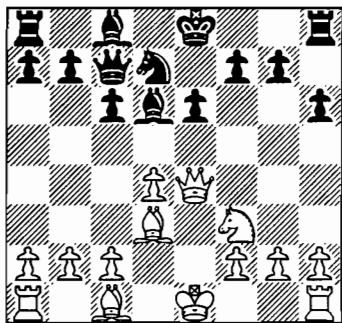
Linares 1994

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟d2 dxe4 4 ♟xe4 ♟d7 5 ♟g5 ♟g6 6 ♟d3 e6 7 ♟f3 ♟d6 8 ♞e2 h6 9 ♟e4 ♟xe4 10 ♞xe4 ♞c7

If you have looked at the earlier games in this chapter you will have noticed some drawbacks to 10...♟f6: in particular, it leaves the e5-square

weakened which enables White to generate attacking chances or gain a long-term positional edge by stationing his knight on e5. So Black has hit on the idea of playing 10...♖c7 and leaving the knight on d7. Now let's assume for a moment that White does nothing active in reply. Black can play ...b7-b6 and ...♘b7 when the thematic advance ...c6-c5 will not only be supported by the knight on d7, but may even gain time by uncovering an attack on White's queen which hasn't been driven from c4 by the knight! Alternatively, Black could try a quicker approach with a rapid ...c6-c5 without spending time on ...b7-b6 and ...♘b7. If White responds with d4xc5 then after ...♘d7xc5 Black's knight would be excellently placed on this key square.

Therefore White cannot allow his opponent to avoid ...♘f6 with impunity, or else his opening advantage will soon disappear. Black has all the central squares nicely covered, but what about the kingside?



11 ♖g4!

Of course! The attack on g7 is very annoying, as 11...0-0?? 12 ♘xh6 isn't

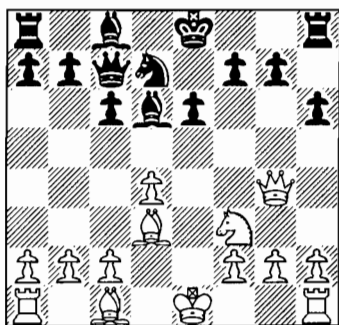
very pretty. Black must now compromise his game in some way or other, either by weakening his pawn structure on the kingside or by defending g7 with king or rook. After any of these options it is clear that castling kingside becomes either illegal or suicidal.

White has two ways to try the same idea but delayed a move:

a) 11 ♘d2?! b6 12 ♖g4. Here 12...g5! really is good, e.g. 13 ♖h3 ♜g8! and now in Sion Castro-Karpov, Leon 1993, White had to make an important choice. In the game he played the tactically safe but positionally ugly move 14 g4?! when the former World Champion's technique got to work on exploiting the holes in White's position after 14 g4 ♘b7 15 0-0-0 (15 ♖xh6 c5!) 15...0-0-0 16 ♜he1 ♘f4! etc. Instead it is curious that Karpov gives the sharper 14 ♖xh6 ♘f8 15 ♖h7 ♘f6 16 ♖h3 g4 17 ♖h4 gxf3 18 ♖xf6 fvg2 as a 'clear advantage' to Black in his annotations in *Informator 57*, but the editorial board at *Informator* beg to differ and have added the moves 19 ♜g1 ♖xh2 20 0-0-0 to his variation and changed the verdict to 'with equality!' I'm sure a great defender like Karpov would consider the position to be very good for Black, but White would have plenty of tactical resources. Instead Khalifman suggests 14 ♘h7 ♜h8 15 ♘d3 as a way to force a draw, but I'm not sure about this as 14...g4 15 ♖xh6 ♘f8 looks awkward for White. In any case, it's not necessary to study this deeply as Kasparov's play in the game seems a much more convincing

method for White.

b) 11 0-0 seeks to get an 'improved' version of Game 6 after 11...b6 12 ♞g4 ♖f8 13 b3. The fact that Black hasn't attacked the white centre immediately with ...c6-c5 means that White has time to put his bishop on the strong b2-square – compare the note to 12...c5 in Game 6. So in Ponomarev-Galkin, Lausanne 2000, Black tried 12...g5!? when after 13 ♞h3 ♜g8 14 ♟d2 (borrowing an idea from Kasparov!) 14...♙b7 15 a4!? 0-0-0 16 a5 ♟f6 17 axb6 axb6 18 ♟b3 rather than 18...g4?! 19 ♞h4 Volzhin has recommended 18...h5 followed by 19...h4 and only then ...g5-g4 with an unclear position.



11...g5!?

At first sight, this appears to be an impressive response, as it cuts down on the white queen's squares and introduces ideas of ...♟f6 in combination with ...g5-g4, as in the analysis to the Karpov game in the last note. However, there is a flaw which White will soon expose.

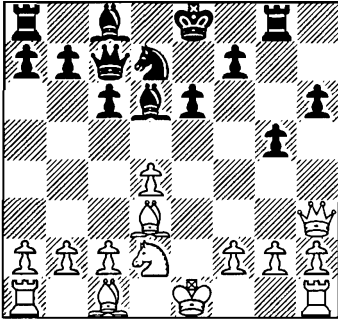
Instead 11...♞g8!?, defending the g-pawn, was Anand's choice against Kasparov at Linares 1998. Now White

can win a pawn with 12 ♙xh6, but then 12...♟f6 forcing 13 ♞g5 is unclear, and I imagine at least okay for Black – otherwise I doubt that one chess genius would have offered the pawn as Black and another declined to take it as White! So the game went 12 ♟d2! (clearing a route back for the queen) 12...♟f6 13 ♞f3 (if 13 ♞e2 b6?! 14 ♟c4! ♙b7 15 ♟xd6+ ♞xd6 16 c3 gave White a nice position with the two bishops in Dominguez-Gonzalez, Havana 1999, but instead 13...c5! appears a good chance to equalise) 13...e5! (acting fast before White plays 14 ♟c4) 14 dxe5 ♙xe5 15 ♟c4 ♙e6 16 ♙d2 0-0-0 (Black could grab a pawn with 16...♙xc4!? 17 ♙xc4 ♙xb2 leading to unclear complications) 17 0-0-0 and here rather than 17...♟d7 when 18 ♖b1 would have given White a slight edge, Black should have tried 17...♙xc4! 18 ♙xc4 ♞d4 when in the later game Gonzalez-Massara, Cuba 1998, he equalised after 19 ♙b3 (or 19 ♞b3 ♙f4!) 19...♞gd8.

Although Anand was unsuccessful I believe that 11...♞g8 is a reasonable move. However, 11...♖f8!? as in the next two main games now holds centre stage.

12 ♞h3 ♞g8 13 ♟d2!

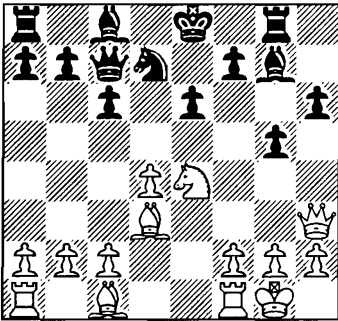
The position is almost identical to the Sion Castro-Karpov game given in the notes above, but there is a key difference. Rather paradoxically, the omission of the non-developing ...b7-b6 and the developing ♙d2 favours White – his knight has the d2-square available to escape the threat of 13...g4 and can be strongly redeployed on e4 or c4.



13...♗f8

Kamsky aims to secure the kingside and attack d4, but this wastes too much time. He should have tried 13...c5!?

14 ♖e4 ♗g7 15 0-0!



Since Black's queenside is still sleeping, this pawn sacrifice to open lines in the centre makes a lot of sense.

15...♗xd4

After this White soon gets an overwhelming attack, but if Black refuses the offer White can still break through with f2-f4 at some point.

16 ♗e3 ♗e5 17 ♖ad1 ♖f6 18 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 19 ♗h7! ♖h8 20 ♗xh6 ♗e7

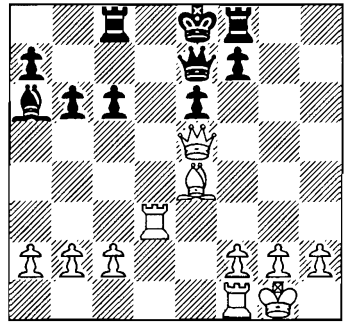
Kasparov points out the lovely

variation **20...♗e7 21 ♗c5! ♖xh7 (or 21...♗xc5 22 ♗xf6 ♖xh7 23 ♖d8 mate) 22 ♖d8+!! ♗xd8 23 ♗f8+ ♖d7 24 ♖d1+ ♖c7 25 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 26 ♗d6 mate.**

21 ♗g7 ♖f8 22 ♖d3 ♗d7 23 ♗xg5

Now White has a decisive attack and an extra pawn.

23...♗xg5 24 ♗xg5 ♗d8 25 ♗e5 ♗e7 26 ♗c7 ♗c8 27 ♗a5 b6 28 ♗e5 ♗a6 29 ♗e4 ♖c8



30 c4!

Kasparov understands the geometry of the chessboard perfectly. If now **30...♗xc4** the bishop no longer covers the c8-square and so **31 ♗xc6+! ♖xc6 32 ♗b8+** forces mate.

30...♖g8 31 b3!

The art of attack requires ruthlessly simple moves as well as dashing sacrifices. Now that the black bishop is shut out of the game there is no answer to White's build-up on the d-file.

31...♗b7

Kamsky begins a very painful manoeuvre with the bishop to bring it to life after ...c6-c5.

32 ♖fd1 ♗a8 33 c5!

...but Kasparov will only allow the

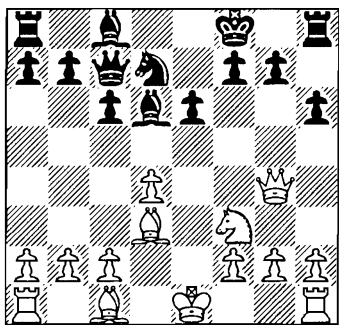
bishops to be freed on his own terms, which means the creation of a passed pawn and open lines for his pieces. Black could already quite safely resign.

33...bxc5 34 ♖d6 c4 35 bxc4 c5 36 ♗xa8 ♜xa8 37 ♛xc5 ♞b8 38 g3 ♛b7 39 ♛d4 ♗f8 40 ♛f6 1-0

A marvellous display of Kasparov's two greatest qualities: his fantastic opening preparation and his attacking flair in the middlegame.

Game 6
Sadvakasov-Karpov
Hoogerveen 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖d2 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♖d7 5 ♖g5 ♖gf6 6 ♗d3 e6 7 ♗1f3 ♗d6 8 ♛e2 h6 9 ♗e4 ♗xe4 10 ♛xe4 ♛c7 11 ♛g4 ♗f8!



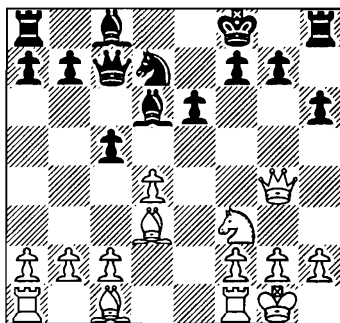
At the time of writing the position after Black defends his g-pawn with his king has become the main battleground in the Modern main line. Black has a solid pawn structure, good control of the important e5-square, and cannot be prevented from activating his queen's bishop with moves like ...b7-b6, ...c6-c5 and ...♗b7. A direct attack on Black's king is also unlikely

to be successful. So everything is in order for Black apart from one thing, which is a serious drawback to what would otherwise be an entirely satisfactory position for him: namely, it is extremely difficult to get the king's rook into active play. White can try to exploit the absence of the rook on h8 from the struggle by playing actively on the queenside or in the centre. Note that if Black opens lines on the queenside in order to free his game, he has to be careful that they don't become invasion channels for the white pieces.

12 0-0

After Kasparov's virtuoso performance with ♖d2 in the game above, it's no wonder that some players have also tried 12 ♖d2?! here. Unfortunately, it has no 'magic' in this position and after 12...e5! 13 ♗c4 ♗b6! 14 ♛h4 ♗xc4 15 ♗xc4 ♗f5 Black was equal in J.Polgar-Karpov, Sanur 2000.

12...c5



This immediate strike on White's centre seems more accurate than 12...b6 which gives White the extra option of 13 b3 c5 (or 13...♗b7) 14 ♗b2 when the bishop is well placed. In

contrast after the game move 13 b3 cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♕e5!? looks good for Black.

13 ♖h4

The idea behind this enterprising move is to play 14 ♖e4 to challenge Black's light-squared bishop without allowing his own bishop and queen to be forked by ...♗f6. However, in my opinion White has more chances of gaining the advantage if he adopts the plan of 13 c3 b6 14 ♖e1 in the notes to the next main game, i.e. he should aim to gain space on the kingside with h2-h4 at some point rather than just play with his heavy pieces.

A very common alternative is 13 ♖e1 when after 13...b6 play could easily transpose to other lines. For example, 14 c3 would transpose to the variation given in the note to 14 ♖d2 in Game 7. Instead the sharp 14 ♕e5?! proved too ambitious after 14...cxd4! 15 ♕g6+ (this is the clever idea) 15...fxg6 16 ♖f3+ ♕f6 17 ♖xa8 ♖xh2+ 18 ♖h1 ♖f7 19 ♖f3 ♖d6 when Black had ample compensation for the exchange in Forster-Khalifman, Bad Wörishofen 1996. Another aggressive attempt is 14 dxc5 ♕xc5 15 ♖d2!?, hoping for 15...♕xd3? 16 cxd3 when Black's position is in danger of crumbling in the face of moves like ♖ac1 or ♖c3. It is simply too risky for Black to open lines in this fashion with the rook passively placed on h8. Instead in Ponomarev-Speelman, Hastings 1999, Black rose to the occasion and found the accurate defence 16...h5! 16 ♖h4 ♖b7 (in some scenarios planning to break up White's pawns with 17...♖xf3) 17 ♖e2 ♕e4 18 ♖e3

♖e7 19 ♕g5 ♖e5! 20 ♖f3 ♕xg5 21 ♖xg5 ♖xg5 22 ♖xe5 ♖xh4 23 ♖xb7 ♖d8 and the game had fizzled out to complete equality.

13...b6 14 ♖e4

After the slower 14 c3 Black has fully sufficient chances, for example 14...♖b7 15 ♖e4 ♖e7!? (instead 15...♖xe4 16 ♖xe4 ♖e7 17 dxc5 bxc5 18 ♖e1 ♕f6 19 ♖e2 ♖hd8 20 h3 ♖f8 was fairly equal in Leko-Anand, Linares 2000) 16 ♖g5 ♖xg5 (or 16...♕f6!?) 17 ♕xg5 and now rather than 17...♕f6 18 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 19 ♕f3 with a draw in Andreev-Galkin, Rotterdam 1998, more fighting was 17...hxg5!? 18 ♖xh8+ ♖e7 19 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 20 ♖xa8 ♕f6 with an unclear endgame in Madl-Molnar, Budapest 1997.

14...♖b8

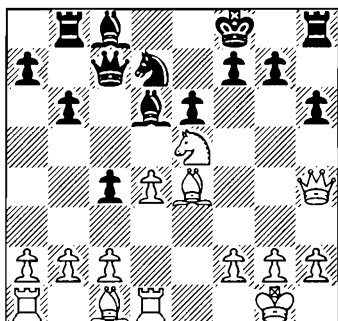
Black keeps the tension as after 14...♖b7 15 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 White achieved a slight and comfortable edge with 16 b3 ♖e7 17 ♖g3 ♖f6 18 ♖e3 g6 19 ♖ad1 ♖g7 20 c4 etc. in Topalov-Timman, Elista 1998.

15 ♖d1

On 15 b3 a draw by repetition followed with 15...♖e7 16 ♖f4 ♖d6 17 ♖h4 ♖e7 18 ♖f4 ♖d6 19 ♖h4 in Leitao-Karpov, Buenos Aires 2000. This seems a sensible choice by Black, as after the alternative 15...♕f6 16 dxc5! bxc5 17 ♖b2 White's bishop was on its ideal diagonal pointing at g7 in Timman-Karpov, Sanur 2000.

15...c4 16 ♕e5

Instead 16 d5 e5 17 ♖f5 ♖g8 18 ♕d2 ♕f6 19 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 was at least okay for Black in the game Wells-Speelman, British Championship, Millfield 2000.



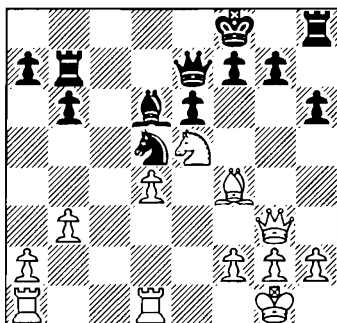
16...♘f6!

Quite rightly Black will have nothing to do with opening the centre after 16...♘xe5? Instead he plays his knight to its ideal outpost on d5.

17 ♖f3 ♗b7 18 ♗xb7 ♞xb7 19 b3?

After this move, which weakens the d4-square, Karpov makes the position almost seem like a forced loss for White. Instead he had to play quietly with say 19 ♖f4 ♘d5 20 ♗g3, though he cannot claim any advantage.

19...cxb3 20 cxb3 ♘d5 21 ♖f4 ♗e7 22 ♗g3



22...♗xe5!

This exchange ensures Black a good game as his opponent becomes weak on the light squares. Therefore he will

be unable to strike a convincing blow on the queenside or prevent Black from eventually freeing the rook on h8 by playing his king to h7.

23 ♖xe5 ♗g5 24 ♗d3 ♞d7! 25 ♞ac1 ♗d8!

Karpov's manoeuvres skilfully to ensure that White can achieve nothing on the c-file.

26 ♗a6 ♘e7 27 ♗c4 ♗g8 28 ♖c7 ♗a8 29 ♗a4 ♗e8 30 ♖b8 ♗h7!

If now 31 ♖xa7? ♞b7! followed by 32 ♗a8 wins the bishop. The black king has reached its destination and the king's rook can see daylight. From now on White is always struggling and in the end he is unable to hold the position against Karpov's magnificent technique.

31 ♖c7 ♘d5 32 ♖e5 ♗e7 33 ♗c4 ♗g5 34 ♗d3+ ♗g6 35 ♗e2 ♞hd8 36 h4 h5 37 ♞d3 ♗g4 38 ♗d2 f6 39 ♖g3 ♘e7 40 ♗e3 ♞xd4

It would have been simpler to play 40...e5!, but Karpov is able to grind out the win in the endgame.

41 ♞xd4 ♞xd4 42 f3 ♘f5 43 ♗xe6 ♗xg3 44 ♗xf5+ ♗h6 45 ♗c2 ♗xh4 46 ♞d1 ♗f4 47 ♞d3 h4 48 ♗h1 g6 49 ♗c3 ♞xd3 50 ♗xd3 h3 51 gxh3 ♗g3 52 ♗d2+ ♗h5 53 ♗e3 ♗xh3+ 54 ♗g1 ♗f5 55 ♗e2 ♗e5 56 ♗d1 ♗h4 57 ♗f2 ♗h2+ 58 ♗e3 ♗e5+ 59 ♗f2 f5 60 a4 ♗g3+ 61 ♗e3 ♗e5+ 62 ♗f2 ♗h2+ 63 ♗e3 g5 64 ♗d5 ♗g1+ 65 ♗e2 ♗g3 0-1

Game 7

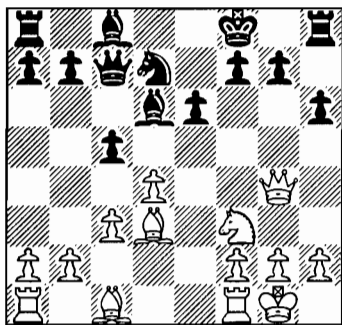
Shankar-Speelman

Calcutta 1998

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♘xe4

♠d7 5 ♘g5 e6 6 ♙d3 ♘gf6 7 ♘1f3
 ♙d6 8 ♗e2 h6 9 ♘e4 ♘xe4 10
 ♗xe4 ♗c7 11 ♗g4 ♕f8! 12 0-0 c5
 13 c3

Instead of 13 ♗h4 in the previous game White decides on a solid move to bolster his centre. Meanwhile 13 ♗e1!? b6 14 c3 transposes to the variation given in the next note.



13...b6 14 ♙d2?!

White plans to develop his queen's rook in classical style to d1, but this is completely pointless as Black can establish a firm blockade on the d5-square.

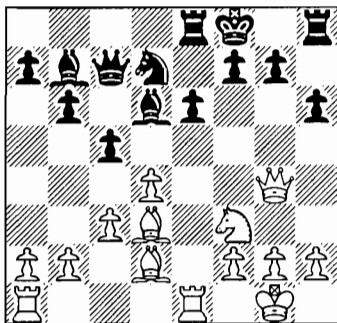
A much better strategy was to play 14 ♗e1 ♙b7 15 h4! with the idea of h4-h5, when it becomes hard for Black to find enough room to move his king out of the way in order to free his rook on h8. After 15...♗e8 (blocking the centre at once with 15...c4 16 ♙c2 b5 17 ♙d2 a5 18 h5 ♙d5, as in Anand-Karpov, Monaco rapidplay 1998, also deserves consideration) 16 h5 ♙d5 17 ♙d2 ♗d8 (moving the rook again suggests his 15th move was inaccurate, as 15...♗d8 straightaway was possible) 18 ♗e2 ♕g8 19 ♗h3 ♗c6 20 ♗e3 ♙xf3 21 ♗xf3 ♘f6 22 ♗h4 ♙e7 23

♗h3 cxd4 24 cxd4 ♗d6 25 ♙e3 ♕f8 26 ♗c1 and White had retained a slight advantage in Topalov-Anand, Linares 1998. Again, Black may seem to have some nice positional pluses such as an excellent square for his knight on d5 and a more solid structure, but remember that a rook is worth five points! How exactly is the one on h8 going to enter the game when White's bishop on d3 is preventing Black's king going to h7?

So the plan of h2-h4-h5 seems the strongest weapon at White's disposal.

14...♙b7 15 ♗fe1 ♗e8!

Pawn hunting with 15...♙xf3? is just bad for tactical reasons after 16 ♗xf3 ♙xh2+ 17 ♕h1, as the rook on a8 is hanging and 18 g3 trapping the bishop is also threatened.



16 ♗ad1?

A waste of time. White could still have tried 16 h4!? intending 17 h5 with similar play to the note at move 14. In trying to entice Black into snatching the h-pawn White avoids his best strategical move – see the next note.

16...c4!

This is much better than 16...♙xf3? 17 ♗xf3 ♙xh2+ when after 18 ♕h1

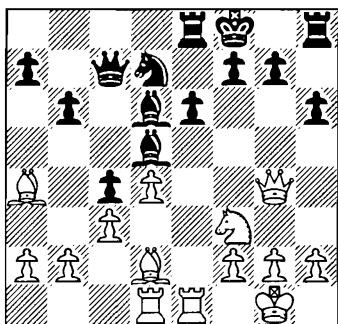
White's two bishops and the passive black rook on h8 offer him very good attacking chances.

17 ♗c2 ♗d5

Black completes his blockade of the centre, after which the white rook is looking silly on d1.

18 ♗a4?

Missing White's reply. Instead the move 18 h4 was still begging to be played!



18...b5!

This fine reply prevents White from getting a grip on the e5-square after 19 ♘e5 or 19 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 20 ♘e5.

19 ♗c2 g5!

Very instructive – because White has avoided h2-h4 Speelman is able to use his kingside pawns to harass White's pieces. He is also clearing the way for his rook on h8 to join in the game, though as it turns out the rook doesn't get the chance to do anything before the game ends!

20 ♗h3 ♔g7 21 ♘e5

If White plays slowly then 21...f5! threatening 22...g4 looks highly unpleasant. So he offers a pawn to gain some freedom for his pieces.

21...♘xe5 22 dxe5 ♗xe5 23 ♗h5 ♗f6 24 ♗e3 ♖d8 25 ♗d4 ♗xd4 26 ♖xd4 e5 27 ♖d2?

A final blunder, but in any case after 27 ♖d1 White is simply a pawn down.

27...♗f3! 28 ♗xf3 ♖xd2 29 ♗f5 ♗d6 30 h4 ♗f6 0-1

Summary

Black is struggling after 8...h6 9 ♖e4 ♜xe4 10 ♙xe4 ♜f6. White's gambit looks threatening in the 11 ♗h4 line (Game 1), while after 11 ♙e2 Black doesn't have an easier life: castling kingside immediately proves disastrous in Game 2, and in the main line White can choose between the aggressive ♜e5 (Game 3) which gives him good dynamic chances or the more positional 0-0-0 (Game 4) which should retain a slight plus.

So 10...♙c7! should be the preferred course. Then after 11 ♙g4 Black was destroyed in Game 5 when he played the inferior 11...g5?!, but 11...♜f8 seems sound enough. White doesn't manage to set any serious problems in Games 6 and 7, but the key test seems to be 12 0-0 c5 13 c3 b6 14 ♖e1 ♗b7 15 h4! as given in the analysis to Game 7, move 14.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♜d7 5 ♜g5 ♜gf6 6 ♗d3 e6 7 ♜1f3 ♗d6 8 ♙e2 (D)

8...h6 9 ♖e4 ♜xe4 10 ♙xe4 (D) ♙c7

10...♜f6

11 ♗h4 – Game 1

11 ♙e2

11...0-0 – Game 2

11...♙c7 – Game 3

11...b6 – Game 4

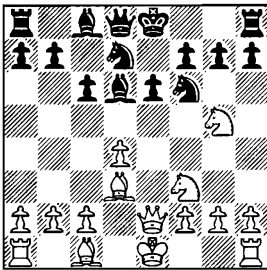
11 ♙g4 ♜f8

11...g5 – Game 5

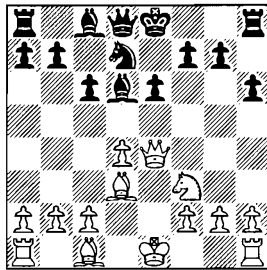
12 0-0 c5 (D) 13 c3

13 ♗h4 – Game 6

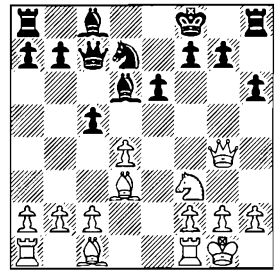
13...b6 – Game 7



8 ♙e2

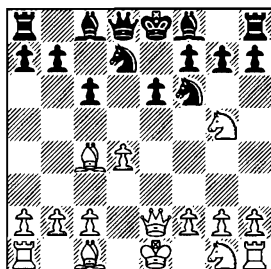


10 ♙xe4



12...c5

CHAPTER TWO



Old Smyslov System: 4...♖d7
5 ♙c4 ♘g5 6 ♘g5 e6 7 ♚e2

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dx4 4 ♗xe4
♗d7 5 ♙c4 ♘g5 6 ♘g5 e6 7 ♚e2
♗b6

Here we analyse the critical variations of the old main line, in which Black is allowed to make the strategically highly desirable ...c6-c5 pawn advance. This reduces White's space advantage by exchanging his d-pawn, but the black light-squared bishop is still passively placed on c8, which means that Black's development is backward. White can therefore try for a quick attack (exploiting the lines Black has so kindly opened for him!) to slay Black's king before all his pieces have the chance to reach the battlefield, or he can use his extra time to lay the groundwork for a pawn storm against the black king.

From our starting position White must choose between 8 ♙d3 or 8 ♙b3. The first three games of this chapter are concerned with 8 ♙d3 h6 9 ♗5f3 c5. In Game 8, Black equalises comfortably, though he then loses after a careless move brings down on his head

an extended attack which can either be described as wonderful or a swindle! In contrast in Game 9 Black has more luck when his attack gets in first after he finds an energetic response to White's ambitious plan of castling queenside. Of great interest is Game 10 as Karpov is completely routed by White's slightly unusual opening scheme with 10 ♙e3. If White wants to find a way to set Black new problems in the 8 ♙d3 system then probably he should consider choosing Rublevsky's interesting bishop move rather than entering the main line with 10 dxc5.

Next in Game 11 we examine 8 ♙b3. The bishop looks less active on b3, but on the other hand the d-file remains clear from obstruction, so White has better chances of trying to exploit it than with the bishop on d3. However, thanks in no small measure to the discoveries of former World Champion Anatoly Karpov, Black seems to have drawn the fangs of this system. His recipe for counterattacking

against the white centre offers Black plenty of activity.

Game 8
Gritsak-Cyborowski
Polanica Zdroj 1999

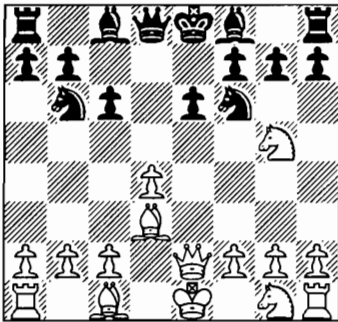
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗d7 5 ♙c4 ♗gf6

Here we are only concerned with the main line. You can find 5...♗df6 6 ♗g5 in Game 13 in the next chapter (by transposition).

6 ♗g5

Instead 6 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 is Game 14 in Chapter 3.

6...e6 7 ♗e2 ♗b6 8 ♙d3



This is the most active square for the bishop, though by sitting on d3 it reduces White's attacking options down what is soon to become an open file. The alternative 8 ♙b3 is discussed in Game 11.

8...h6

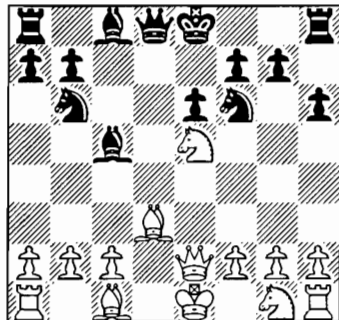
A central pawn is worth some trouble, but it was too much after 8...♗xd4? 9 ♗1f3 ♗d5 10 ♗e5 ♗xg2 11 ♗f1 ♙e7 12 ♗ef3 ♗g4 13 ♗xf7! when White had a dangerous initiative in Arnason-Helmers, Reykjavik 1982.

9 ♗5f3 c5 10 dxc5 ♙xc5

An interesting sideline is 10...♗bd7, planning to recapture on c5 with the knight. Then 11 b4 trying to hold onto the pawn is critical. After 11...♗d5 (also possible is 11...a5, but not 11...b6?! 12 ♗d4! when there is the beautiful trap 12...bxc5?? 13 ♗c6! ♗c7 14 ♗xe6+!! fxe6 15 ♙g6 mate, as in Perenyi-Eperjesi, Hungary 1984) 12 c3!? (an interesting novelty; instead 12 ♙d2 ♗f6 13 ♗b1 a5 14 a3 g5! led to an obscure position in Mestel-Flear, British Championship 1988) 12...♗f6! (12...♗xc3? 13 ♗d2 ♗d5 14 ♙b2 would be wonderful for White) 13 ♙b2 and here rather than investigate 13...♗f4 14 ♗f1 a5 when Black's initiative seems to be worth the pawn, the players agreed a draw in the encounter Milu-Szuhanek, Romania 1997.

11 ♗e5

11 ♙d2 is the subject of the next main game.



11...♗c7

The standard sequence here is 11...♗bd7 12 ♗gf3 ♗c7, but Black adopts an interesting alternative move order.

Incidentally, in the normal sequence Black could exchange a pair of knights with 12...♞xe5 13 ♞xe5. However, the opinion among both players and theorists seems to be that clarifying the situation in this way tends to favour White. After all White has two knights but only one brilliant square for them on e5 – so why not leave White with a knight on f3 doing nothing but envy his comrade sitting on e5?

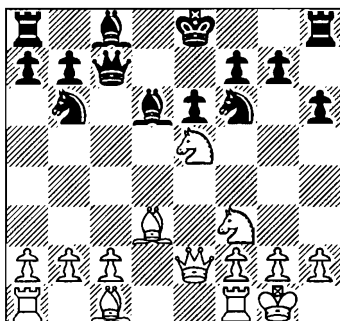
12 ♜gf3 ♗d6

If Black had played the standard 12...♞bd7, then 13 ♗f4 ♗b4+ (13...♗d6 14 ♗g3 slightly favours White) 14 ♞d2!? (not 14 c3 ♗xc3+!, while after 14 ♚f1 ♗d6 15 ♗g3 0-0 Black had equalised in Timman-Karpov, Amsterdam 1988, because of White's displaced king) 14...♗xd2+ 15 ♚xd2 0-0 16 ♞hd1 ♞d5 17 ♗g3 ♞xe5, as in Topalov-Adams, Belgrade 1995, is regarded as better for White after 18 ♚xe5, since he can always improve his king's position, while the advantage of the bishop pair is long term.

By leaving the knight on b6, Black gives himself the option of answering 13 ♗f4 with 13...♞bd5, when the knight is more actively placed than on d7. Gritsak doesn't want to allow this, but after his 13th move he finds himself no better off as play transposes to a line that is known to be unpromising for White.

13 0-0

This move has the reputation of being harmless, and although White wins this game in attractive style it doesn't really change the theoretical verdict.



13...♞bd7 14 ♞e1 0-0 15 ♗f4

Instead 15 ♞c4 ♗c7 offers White less than nothing after 16 ♞c5 (a tacit offer of a draw, but Karpov is unimpressed) 16...♞c5 17 ♗c4 a6 18 a3 b5 19 ♗a2 ♗b7 and Black was the better co-ordinated in Izeta-Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1993.

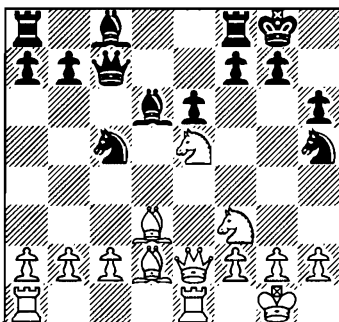
After 15 c3 Black also seems to be fine provided that he finds a couple of precise moves, i.e. 15...b6 16 ♞xd7 ♚xd7 17 ♗c2 ♗b7 18 ♞e5 ♚c7 19 ♗f4 ♞fd8 20 ♗g3 ♗d5 21 ♞ad1 ♞ac8 22 ♗b3 ♗xb3 23 axb3 ♚e7! (guarding against White's threat of 24 ♞xf7! which would win at least a pawn) 25...♚e8! (the queen must move to a protected square to make possible his next move, as the immediate 25...♞d5? drops a piece to 26 ♞xd5 ♞xd5 27 ♚xd5) 26 h3 ♞d5! 27 ♞xd5 ♞xd5 and Black was at least equal in Gormally-Speelman, London (Mind Sports Masters) 1999.

The text move doesn't seem much of an improvement after Black's active reply.

15...♞h5! 16 ♗d2 ♞c5!

This eliminates White's good bishop, after which there is surely

nothing to fear. I guess that's what Black thought as well and might explain why he lost in 29 moves!



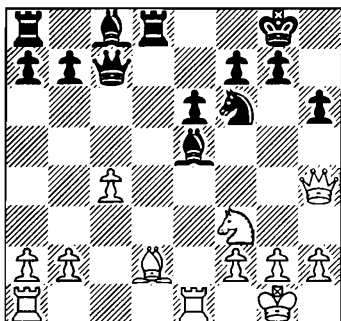
17 c4 ♘xd3 18 ♖xd3 ♜d8 19 ♔e4 ♘f6?!

Here it was safest to play 19...♙xe5 when 20 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 21 ♜xe5 ♘f6 22 ♙c3 b6 24 ♜e1 ♙b7 looks completely equal. I imagine that Black was now expecting 20 ♖e2 when 20...b6 followed by 21...♙b7 gives him the better game with a very strong light-squared bishop. Instead there came a surprise.

20 ♖h4!?

Black may have missed this possibility as it seems to just drop a piece.

20...♙xe5



Virtually forced as White threatened

21 ♙xh6 anyway.

21 ♙xh6!

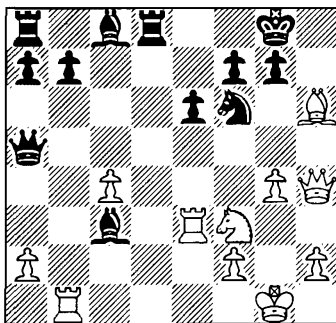
Not 21 ♜xe5 ♜xd2 when White is just a piece down. Whether or not this sacrifice is sound, in a practical game with a ticking clock it is hard to meet.

21...♙xb2!

White has big threats after both 21...♙d6 22 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 23 ♖g5+ ♖f8 24 ♖xf6 intending 25 ♜c4 followed by 26 ♜h4 or 21...♘d7 22 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 23 ♜xe5! gxf6 (if 23...♖xe5 24 ♖xd8+ ♖h7 25 ♙e3 and Black's queenside is tied up) 24 ♜e3! planning 25 ♖xh6.

22 ♜ab1 ♙c3 23 ♜e3 ♖a5 24 g4

White must do or die. He clears g2 for the king and is now threatening 24 ♜b5! without allowing 24...♜d1+ 25 ♘e1 ♙xe1! in reply. Also the pawn may come in handy for the attack. However, this move also weakens White's own king's position which gives Black many counterattacking resources, as the next note shows.

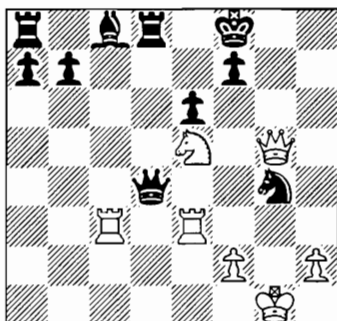


24...♖xa2?

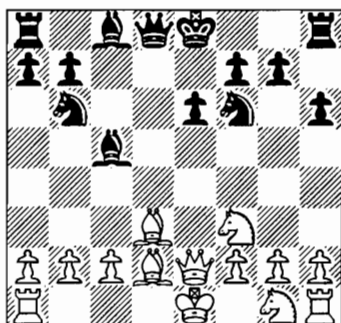
My computer program prefers the materialistic 24...gxf6! which certainly sets White problems, as after 25 ♜b5 ♖xa2 26 ♖xh6 Black can turn the tables with 26...♖xf2+!! and win after

27 ♙xf2 ♜xg4+ or 27 ♙h1 ♜d1+.
Nor does 26 ♜xc3 ♚a1+ 27 ♙g2 ♚xc3 28 ♚xh6 ♜h7 seem anything for White.

25 ♜c1 ♚xc4 26 ♜e5 ♚d4 27 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 28 ♚g5+ ♙f8 29 ♜xc3 ♜xg4! 1-0



♙xc5 11 ♙d2



White plans to castle queenside and then start pushing his pawns against Black's king.

11...0-0

In Rogovski-Svetushkin, Alushta 1999, Black preferred not to commit his king to the kingside straightaway, but after 11... ♚c7 12 0-0-0 ♜bd7 13 ♙b1 a6 14 ♜h3! ♙d6 15 ♜d4 ♜e5 16 ♙f4 ♙d7 17 ♜he1 ♜xd3 18 ♙xd6 ♚xd6 19 ♜xd3 ♚c5 20 f4 0-0 21 g4! White had nevertheless achieved the attacking set-up he desires in this line.

12 0-0-0

In view of Black's dangerous reply, White would do well to consider delaying castling. A sharp alternative is 12 ♜e5 (note that this game actually transposed via the moves 11 ♜e5 0-0 12 ♜gf3 ♜bd7 13 ♙d2) 12... ♜bd7 (instead the slow 12... ♜bd5 13 0-0-0 ♚c7 14 ♙b1 b6?! 15 f4 ♙b7 16 ♜gf3 ♜ac8 17 g4! gave White his ideal attacking set-up in Torok-Vincze, Hungary 1993) 13 ♜gf3 ♜xe5 14 ♜xe5 ♚d5!? 15 0-0-0 ♚xa2 16 c3 b5! 17 ♙b1 ♚a4 and although in the game Fritz 6-Adams, Frankfurt 1999, the

Game 9

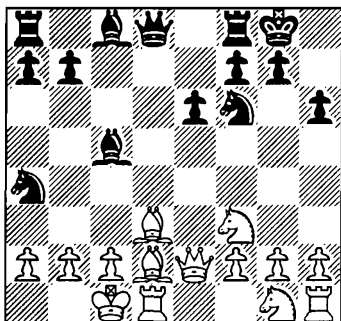
Kir.Georgiev-Adams

Groningen PC.A 1993

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜c3 dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♜d7 5 ♙c4 ♜gf6 6 ♜g5 e6 7 ♚e2 ♜b6 8 ♙d3 h6 9 ♜5f3 c5 10 dxc5

human was eventually outwitted by the computer – not a great surprise in such a highly tactical situation – I nonetheless think that Black has enough dynamic chances to make the verdict at least ‘unclear’.

12...♖a4!



In *Attack with GM Julian Hodgson* the eponymous author relates how, during a tournament in Iceland about five years before this game was played, William Watson, a GM and Caro-Kann advocate, had begun panicking that 11 ♕d2 was the refutation of his favourite opening! However, he calmed him down when in an analysis session they discovered this startling move for Black. It turned out that Michael Adams was the first of the Englishmen to get to play it as he heard about it from Watson via Jonathan Speelman.

13 ♕b5 ♕d7 14 ♕xd7

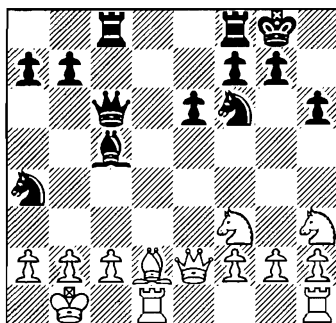
The strength of Black’s 12th move rests on the fact that White never has time to exploit a discovered attack or pin on Black’s queen with ♕xh6: the b2-square is just too vulnerable. For example, here 14 ♕xh6 (hoping for 14...gxf6 15 ♕xa4) 14...♖xb2! 15

♖xb2 ♖b6 is a disaster for White. It is also too risky for him to attempt to win a piece with 14 ♕xa4 ♕xa4 15 ♖c4 as either Adams’s suggestion 15...b5 16 ♖xc5 ♗c8 17 ♖d4 ♕xc2 or Hodgson’s 15...♗e8 16 ♖xc5 ♗c8 gives Black a huge initiative.

14...♖xd7 15 ♖h3

In a later game Svidler tried to improve on White’s play with 15 ♕xh6? but was unsuccessful: 15...♖c7 16 ♖b5 (or 16 ♕e3 ♖b6 with an awkward attack on b2) 16...♖c3! (the knight is doomed anyway so this is an excellent desperado move) 17 bxc3 gxf6 18 ♖e2 ♖e4 19 ♗d7 ♖b6 20 ♗xb7? (White had to exchange queens, though 20 ♖xb6 axb6 isn’t exactly pleasant for him!) 20...♕a3+ 21 ♖b1 ♖xf2 and Black was winning in Svidler-Khalifman, Tilburg 1994.

15...♗ac8 16 ♖b1 ♖c6



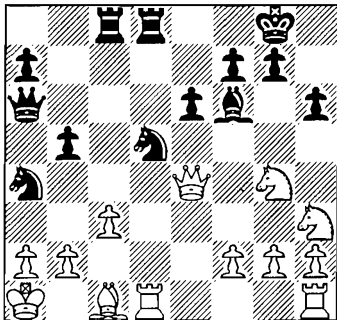
Now Black’s initiative increases with every move until the white queenside becomes indefensible.

17 ♕c1 ♖d5 18 ♖c4 ♗fd8

More accurate was 18...b5 first as now White had the chance to push back the black queen with 19 ♖e5 and avoid the worst after 19...♖e8 20 ♖b3.

19 ♙a1? b5 20 ♚e4 ♙e7 21 c3 ♚a6
22 ♗e5 ♙f6 23 ♗g4?

This allows his queenside to be wrecked by a decisive sacrifice. The only chance was to keep Black's dark-squared bishop out of the game by supporting the knight with 23 f4.



23... ♗axc3!

Black begins a fine concluding combination.

24 bxc3 ♙xc3+ 25 ♙b2 ♙c4 26 ♚f3
♙xb2+ 27 ♙xb2 ♙c2+! 28 ♙xc2
♚xa2+ 29 ♙d3 ♚c4+ 0-1

A very convincing display and I guess one of the reasons why this line has declined in popularity for White.

Game 10
Rublevsky-Karpov
Polanica Zdroj 1998

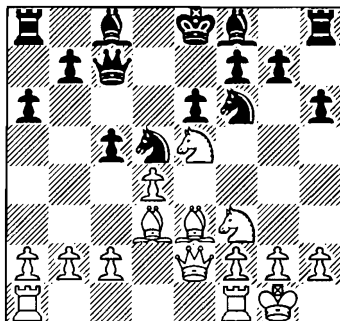
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4
♗d7 5 ♙c4 ♗gf6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 ♚e2
♗b6 8 ♙d3 h6 9 ♗5f3 c5 10 ♙e3
♗bd5

Another idea here is 10...a6 (which could of course quite easily transpose to the game continuation) 11 c3 (after 11 dxc5 ♗bd7 12 b4 b6!? Black would regain the pawn with no problems)

11... ♗bd5 12 ♗c5 ♚c7 13 ♗gf3 b6 14 0-0 ♙d6 and here rather than 15 ♙ac1, as in Hellers-Adorjan, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988, when 15... ♗xe3! to eliminate White's strong bishop would have given balanced chances after 16 fxe3 ♙b7 17 e4 0-0, the retreat 15 ♙d2! has been recommended.

Alternatively, Black can try to live without playing ...a7-a6 at all: 10... ♚c7!? 11 ♗e5 ♙d6 12 ♗gf3 ♗bd5 13 0-0 (after 13 ♙b5+ ♙e7! 14 0-0 a6 15 ♙d3 b5 16 c3 ♙b7 Black was solidly placed in Svidler-Karpov, Tilburg 1996) 13...0-0 14 c3 b6 15 ♙d2 ♙b7 16 a3 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♚e7 18 ♙fe1 ♙ac8 and a standard type of isolated queen's pawn position had been reached in Rublevsky-Galkin, Krasnodar 1997. Perhaps it was the ineffectiveness of the check on b5 in his encounter with Svidler which blinded Karpov to the danger he faced in the present game.

11 ♗e5 a6 12 ♗gf3 ♚c7 13 0-0



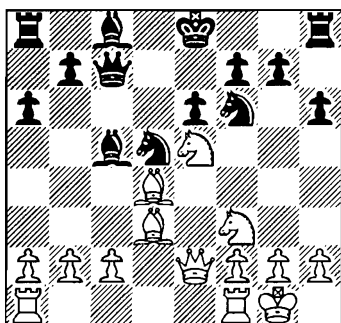
13...cxd4?!

Opening the c-file turns out to be a serious mistake after which it seems Black can no longer hope to equalise. Instead 13...b6 would transpose after

14 c3 to the Hellers game of the previous note, though White wouldn't necessarily play this. Alternatively, 13...♙d6 looks perfectly sound.

14 ♙xd4 ♙c5

In *Informator 73* Rublevsky gives the interesting variation 14...♘f4?! 15 ♗d2 ♘xd3 16 cxd3! ♙e7 17 ♖ac1 ♗d8 18 ♘c4 when you might think that Black is doing well with his two bishops and solid pawn structure, until you notice the ghastly hole on b6 which White can try to exploit with a later ♘b6 or ♙b6.



15 ♙b5+!

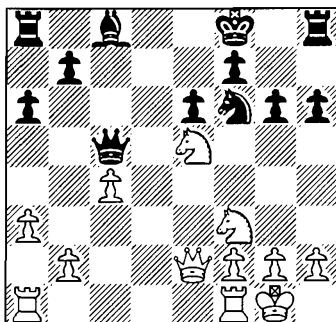
This unexpected check comes just in time to disrupt Black before he can solve all his problems by castling. The king must move, since after 15...axb5 the virtually forced variation 16 ♗xb5+ ♘d7 17 ♘d7 ♙xd4 18 ♘f6+! ♚e7 19 ♘xd5+ exd5 20 ♘xd4 would be a disaster for Black.

15...♚f8

Strategically speaking, I'm sure that Karpov would much have preferred to play 15...♚e7 here (in order to keep the way open for his king's rook to enter the game) as he did against Svidler in the extract above, but it fails

to the trick 16 ♘c6+! bxc6 17 ♙xc5+ when White's dark-squared bishop rules the roost.

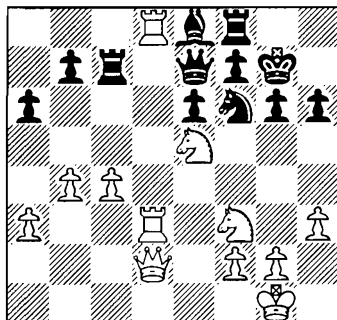
16 ♙xc5+ ♗xc5 17 ♙c4 g6 18 ♙xd5 ♘xd5 19 c4 ♘f6 20 a3



20...♙d7?!

The bishop heads for e8 where it is well placed for the defence, but the problem is that the rook on h8 becomes blocked in and never gets the chance to join in the game. It was better to play 20...♚g7, clearing a way out for the rook, though White retains the advantage.

21 ♖fd1 ♙e8 22 b4 ♗e7 23 ♗b2 ♚g8 24 ♖d4 ♚h7 25 ♖ad1 ♖f8 26 ♖1d3 ♖c8 27 h3 ♖c7 28 ♗d2 ♚g7 29 ♖d8



29... ♜g8?

Karpov is famous for liking his pieces on the back rank, but in this game he is taking the precept of a Steinitzian defence too far. He had to create some space with 29... ♙a4.

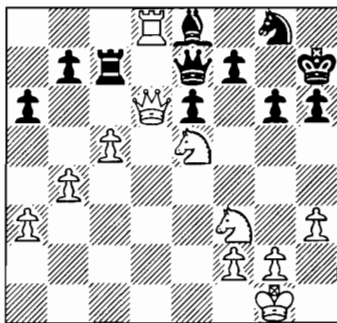
30 ♜3d6!

If Black had left his knight on f6 last move then this would have been a blunder because of 30... ♜e4. Now White's queen gets to d4 and his stranglehold on the d-file and dark squares becomes decisive.

30... ♙a4 31 ♜xf8 ♚xf8 32 ♚d4

Karpov is one of the greatest defenders of all time – indeed, looking through his games you often get the impression that he regards a bad position as a springboard to a victory rather than a draw! However, the situation here is too bad even for the maestro himself.

32... ♜h7 33 ♜d8 ♚e7 34 c5 ♙e8 35 ♚d6!



Now Karpov's defensive barrier crumbles as White is threatening 36 ♜xe8. White's rook is therefore able to decide the struggle by penetrating Black's kingside.

35... ♙a4 36 ♜f8!

You may be surprised that although White is dominant on the dark squares, the weakest chink in Black's armour turns out to be on a light square – f7. However, when I was writing my book on positional sacrifices some years ago I played through many games in which a player achieved a bind on one colour complex of squares or the other and was struck by the fact that the winning breakthrough virtually always came on a square of the other colour to the ones he controlled! When I mentioned this to Jonathan Rowson he suggested that maybe I should write a book about it and designate it 'McDonald's rule'. I'm still not sure whether or not he was joking...

36... f6 37 ♜f7+

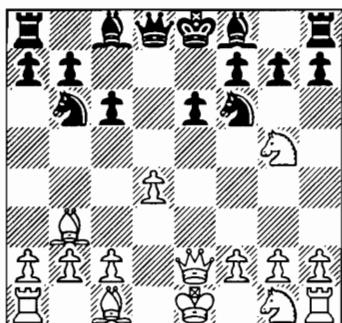
Now Karpov resists for a long time, trying to set up a blockade, but the end result isn't really in any doubt.

37... ♚xf7 38 ♜xf7 ♜xf7 39 ♚xe6 ♜d7 40 ♜h2 h5 41 ♚e3 ♜e7 42 ♜d2 ♜f5 43 ♚c3 ♙c6 44 ♜c4 ♜g7 45 ♜a5 ♙b5 46 ♚a1 ♙a4 47 ♜c4 ♜d8 48 ♚e1 ♜d7 49 ♚e6 ♙c6 50 ♜a5 ♜e7 51 ♚c8 ♜e8 52 ♚c7+ ♜e7 53 ♚b8 ♜d7 54 ♚c8 ♜e7 55 ♚b8 ♜f7 56 a4 h4 57 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 58 ♚h8 ♜e7 59 ♚g8 g5 60 b5 axb5 61 axb5 ♜d8 62 ♚h7+ ♜f7 63 f4 ♜d4 64 fxg5 fxg5 65 ♚g6 ♜d7 66 ♚b6 ♜e8 67 c6 bxc6 68 bxc6 ♜d8 69 c7 1-0

Game 11
Adams-Seirawan
Bermuda (4th match game) 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜d2 dxe4 4 ♜xe4

♠d7 5 ♙c4 ♜g6 6 ♜g5 e6 7 ♚e2
♜b6 8 ♙b3

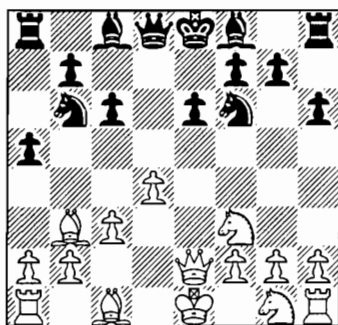


8...h6 9 ♜5f3 a5!

This is Karpov's move and has held centre stage ever since he played it against Kasparov. By threatening 10...a4 Black forces his opponent to weaken himself by moving his own queen's rook pawn, whereupon queenside castling becomes risky for him. Therefore it side-steps the line given in the next paragraph in which in another Kasparov-Karpov game White was able to castle queenside and then launch an attack on Black's king.

Nevertheless, 9...c5 is still viable, for example 10 ♙f4! (neither 10 dxc5 ♜bd7! nor 10 c3 ♚c7! have caused Black as many problems) 10...♜bd5 (after 10...♙d6?! 11 ♙g3! ♚e7 12 dxc5 ♙xc5 13 ♜e5 ♙d7 14 ♜gf3 ♜h5 15 0-0-0 ♜xg3 16 hxg3 0-0-0 beginning with the brilliant move 17 ♚h5!! – threatening 18 ♜xf7! – White developed a dangerous initiative in the well-known game Kasparov-Karpov, Linares 1992) 11 ♙e5 ♚a5+ 12 ♜d2 b5! 13 c4!? (instead 13 dxc5 ♙xc5 is just equal) 13...bxc4 14 ♙xc4 ♜b6 15 b4!? (White sacrifices as otherwise his

opponent has no problems at all) 15...♚xb4 16 ♚b1 ♚a5 17 ♙b5+ ♙d7 18 ♙xf6 gxf6 19 ♜gf3 cxd4 20 0-0 ♚d8 21 ♜e4 ♙e7 21 ♜xd4 f5 with obscure complications in Short-Speelman, Hastings 1988/89.



10 c3

An important alternative is 10 a3. Then 10...a4 (here 10...c5!? 11 ♙e3 ♚c7 12 ♜e5 cxd4 13 ♙xd4 ♙c5 14 ♜gf3 0-0 15 0-0-0 a4 16 ♙a2 ♜bd5 led to a hard fight in Kupreichik-Nielsen, Alborg 1997) 11 ♙a2 c5 12 ♙f4 (or 12 ♙e3 ♜bd5!) 12...♜bd5 13 ♙e5 ♚a5+ 14 ♜d2 b5 15 ♜gf3 b4 (in view of what follows, maybe Black should consider the idea of blocking the queenside with 15...c4!?) 16 ♙c4 ♙a6 17 0-0 bxa3 18 ♚xa3 cxd4 and now rather than 19 ♚aa1, which was equal after 19...♙e7 20 ♜xd4 0-0 in Ivanchuk-Karpov, Tilburg 1993, White won quickly after the active 19 ♚d3! ♙e7 20 ♜xd4 in Espindola-Portillo, correspondence 1996.

Alternatively, 10 a4 c5 11 ♙f4 (11 ♙e3 ♚c7) 11...♙d6 12 ♙g3 0-0 13 ♜e5 ♚e7 14 ♜gf3 ♜bd5 15 0-0 was played in Anand-Karpov, Linares 1994, when 15...b6!? has been suggested as

Black's most solid option.

10...c5

Another reasonable way to play was 10...a4 11 ♙c2 ♜bd5 12 ♙d2 ♚b6 13 ♚b1 c5 with fairly equal chances in Anand-Epishin, Biel 1993.

11 dxc5

When confronted with Karpov's idea in the stem game for the 9...a5 system at Linares 1994, Kasparov reacted over-aggressively with 11 a3 ♚c7 12 ♜c5?! and was soon in trouble after 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 a4 (not 13...♙xa3?! 14 ♙xh6!) 14 ♙c2 ♙d7 15 ♜xd7 ♜bx7 16 ♚d1 ♙d6 17 ♜c2 (17 ♙xa4? ♚a5+) 17...♜d5 18 ♙d2 b5! and Black had a clear advantage. The alternative 12 ♜h3 is more accurate but doesn't seem to cause Black too many problems, e.g. 12...♙d7 13 0-0 cxd4 14 ♙f4 ♙d6 15 ♙xd6 ♚xd6 16 ♚fd1 0-0 17 ♚xd4 ♚c5 18 ♜f4 ♚b5! 19 ♚xb5 ♙xb5 20 ♚c1 ♜bd7! with equality in Short-Gulko, New York 1994.

With the game move Michael Adams immediately opens lines in the centre: a sensible strategy in view of his slight lead in development, but as usual Black has adequate resources.

11...♙xc5 12 ♜e5 0-0 13 ♜g3 ♜bd7

Seirawan clears the way to advance his b-pawn in order to develop his queen's bishop onto the excellent a8-h1 diagonal. The alternative was 13...♜bd5.

14 0-0 ♜xe5 15 ♜xe5 b6 16 ♚f3!

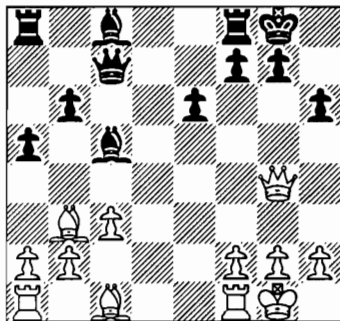
Naturally Adams isn't going to allow Black a painless 16...♙b7.

16...♚c7!? 17 ♜g4!

Instead 17 ♚xa8 ♙b7 18 ♚xf8+

♜xf8 gives Black a superior version of the game continuation – he has no weakness on e6 and the presence of an extra pair of minor pieces aids him since the knight will combine well with the queen.

17...♜xg4 18 ♚xg4



18...f5!

Here in *Informator 74* Seirawan suggests either the solid 18...e5 19 ♚g3 ♜h8 20 ♚e1 ♙d6 or the aggressive pawn sacrifice 18...a4 19 ♙xa4 f5!? 20 ♚d1 ♙a6 21 ♚e1 ♚ad8 with the initiative as better ways for Black to handle the position.

19 ♚f3! ♙d6!

Black prefers to play dynamically rather than move his rook to safety, after which 20 ♙f4 would give White a risk-free game and the chance to exploit the weak e6-pawn and gain control of the dark squares in the centre. I imagine that White is slightly better in what follows, but it is by no means easy for him to kill off Black's counterplay.

20 ♚xa8 ♙b7 21 ♙xe6+ ♜h8 22 ♚xf8+

If 22 ♚a7? Black has various attractive looking continuations such as

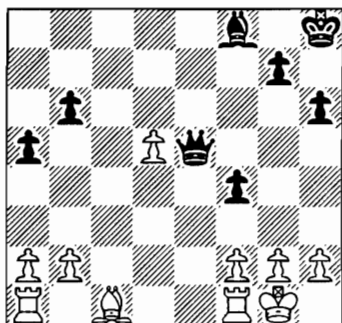
22...♖a8 or 22...♙xh2+, but he should beware 22...♜c6 23 f3 ♙b8? 24 ♖e1!! ♙xa7 25 ♖xe6.

22...♙xf8 23 c4

Not 23 ♙xf5? since after 23...♙d6 Black will win the h-pawn as both 24 g3? ♜c6! 25 f3 ♜c5+ and 24 h3? ♜c6! 25 f3 ♜c5+ cost White his bishop.

23...♜e5 24 ♙d5 ♙xd5 25 cxd5 f4!

The advance of this pawn guarantees Black plenty of counterplay.



26 ♙d2

Or 26 ♖d1 ♙d6 with a blockade when it is hard to see what White can

do.

26...f3! 27 ♜fe1??

Perhaps White should have gone in for the variation 27 ♜fd1 ♙d6 28 gxf3 ♜xh2+ 29 ♖f1 with equal chances. In any case it would have been far better than the game continuation which immediately proves disastrous.

27...♜d4!

Michael Adams has a fine sense of danger, but this amazing move had escaped his tactical radar. Rather than take the passed pawn, Black attacks the bishop which cannot move as 27...♜g4 28 g3 ♜h3 then forces mate! Therefore White has to give up the bishop, after which he is able to put up fierce resistance with the aid of his passed pawn, but in the end Black's superior firepower prevails.

28 g3 ♜xd2 29 ♖ad1 ♜b4 30 a3 ♜a4 31 ♖d3 ♙c5 32 ♖xf3 ♜d4 33 b4 axb4 34 ♖f4 ♜d2 35 ♖e8+ ♖h7 36 axb4 ♙d6 37 ♖f5 ♜d3 38 ♖f7 ♜g6 39 ♖e6 ♜xf7 40 ♖xd6 b5 41 h4 ♜e7 42 ♖b6 ♜e1+ 0-1

Summary

First of all, it should be pointed out that 8 ♘d3 offers White better chances than 8 ♘b3, as the latter move is well answered by 8...h6 9 ♟5f3 a5! (Game 11).

After 8 ♘d3 White achieved nothing from a theoretical perspective in the main line with 8...h6 9 ♟5c3 c5 10 dxc5 ♘xc5 11 ♜e5 in Game 8, while in Game 9 11 ♘d2 is roughly handled, so perhaps prospective players of White should concentrate on Rublevsky's method with 10 ♘e3 in Game 10. This is a fresh approach to the variation and if it's good enough to beat Karpov it must be worth a try!

At the time of writing the 5 ♘c4 variation has fallen out of favour compared to 5 ♟g5, as it is generally considered that the bishop will find a more useful role on d3 than on c4. Furthermore, the bishop often has to drop back to b3 or d3 in any case, costing White valuable time compared to 5 ♟g5 and then a quick ♘d3.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟c3 dxe4 4 ♟xe4 ♟d7 5 ♘c4 ♜g6 6 ♟g5 e6 7 ♚e2 ♟b6 (D)

8 ♘d3

8 ♘b3 – Game 11

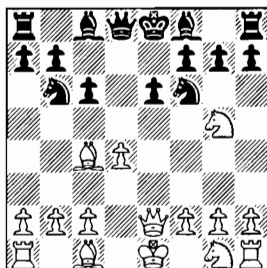
8...h6 9 ♟5f3 c5 (D) 10 dxc5

10 ♘e3 – Game 10

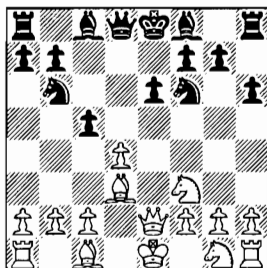
10...♘xc5 11 ♜e5 (D)

11 ♘d2 – Game 9

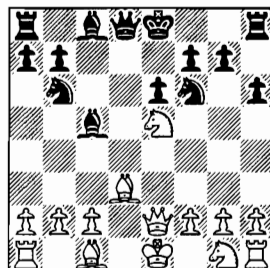
11...♚c7 – Game 8



7...♟b6



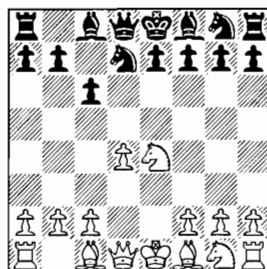
9...c5



11 ♜e5

CHAPTER THREE

Smyslov System: Other Variations after 4...♞d7



1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞c3 dxe4 4 ♞xe4 ♞d7

This chapter contains a mass of important side-variations for both White and Black which any serious player of the Smyslov variation will ignore at their peril.

In Game 12 we consider all of the lines in which Black provokes a positional sacrifice of White's knight on e6. This can take many forms, with the best versions for Black being assessed as merely promising for White, whilst the worst are just terrible. The most famous game in this line is Kasparov's shattering defeat by Deep Blue in the decisive game of their match – you can find the game in the analysis to Game 12. Statistically speaking White scores around 70% in the most popular form of the sacrifice. This is highly respectable, but the fact that Black gets 30% shows it isn't just a walkover for White. This suggests two things: firstly, a good defender can score a lot of points in the line with Black; and secondly if you are playing the Caro-

Kann main line as White you had better look at some of these lines just to make sure you have some idea how to handle them!

Game 13 concentrates on 5 ♞g5 ♞df6. About ten years ago it was thought that White could put this idea under pressure, but nowadays it seems fully viable. As you will see Ivanchuk beats Shirov as Black in good style in this variation. Note that in this game Black adheres to Pillsbury's maxim that 'you should castle because you want to or need to, never just because you can.' In view of the Caro-Kann's solid reputation, it is surprising to see how often Black delays or omits castling altogether!

After the excitement of Games 12 and 13, we look at the comparatively quieter line 5 ♞c4 ♞g6 6 ♞xf6+ ♞xf6 in Game 14. Nevertheless, as you will see, play can become very sharp as the players frequently castle on opposite wings. The Russian GM Sergei Tiviakov used this idea as White to cause problems for Michael Adams

in their match in 1994, while it has also been adopted by Bobby Fischer. Therefore it isn't a system to be underestimated.

A similar comment can be made about 5 d3 g6 6 g3 (and 6 xf6+) in Game 15. These moves seem less direct than 5 g5, but they store up energy for a hard-fought middlegame. If Black is careless then he can suddenly find himself facing a dangerous attack, as happens in Game 15 itself. The most famous victim of this variation is Karpov, who was defeated by his erstwhile rival Kasparov in 1994 with a cascade of sacrifices, though if Karpov had had more time on the clock he might well have won. In any event the potential dynamism of White's pieces means that his opponent has to be aware of one or two key variations before he sits down at the board.

Game 12

Kalod-Yevseev

Pardubice 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 d2 dx4 4 xe4 d7 5 g5

First of all, it should be mentioned that 5 d3 can transpose to lines in other chapters, but White seems to have lost his enthusiasm for this natural developing move, principally because of the reply 5...df6! which attacks d4 and also plans to gain time with 6...xe4 7 xe4 f6. Then via a transposition Black had no problems after 6 g5 g4! (but not 6...xd4?? 7 xf7! winning as 7...xf7 8 g6+ created a discovered attack on Black's

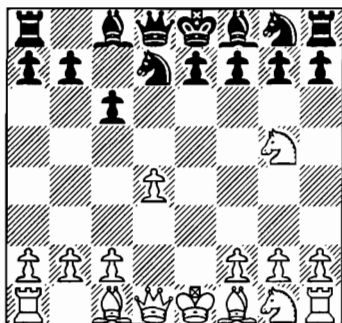
queen) 7 f3 h5 (this defends the f7-pawn again and so avoids any tricks based on xf7) 7 c3 e6 9 b3 c7 10 e5 d6 intending 11...e7 with equality in Van der Wiel-Karpov, Amsterdam 1988.

More fun for White is 5 e2 g6?? 6 d6 is mate. Black has fallen for this countless times. The great Paul Keres pulled it off in a consultation game against a team of three amateurs, while fairly recent examples include Reinecker-Vaut, Bargteheide 1989, Drexel-Volz, Mehlingen 1992, and Felez-Obon, Ibercaja 1994. Even more curious is the game Hosticka-Kovaliov, Czech Republic 1996, which according to my database went 5 e2 g6?? 6 xf6+?? with an eventual draw. In fact, this can be explained by a typographical error, as 5...df6!? 6 xf6+ xf6, which equalises for Black after 7 c3 f5 8 f3 e6 etc.

Another route to equality after 5 e2 is 5...e6, e.g. 6 f3 g6 7 f4 xe4 8 xe4 f6 9 d3 e7 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 e5 c5! 12 e2 cxd4 13 g4, when Black has broken his opponent's grip on the centre and so the projected attack on his kingside shouldn't cause him much trouble. In fact a draw was agreed here in Vallejo Pons-Franco, Elgoibar 1997.

So assuming Black isn't mated next move, 5 e2 reduces White's chances for advantage as it blocks in the king's bishop. Furthermore, after the response 5...df6 he cannot really avoid the exchange of knights as d4 is hanging, so he loses the chance of any

aggressive options based on ♖g5.



5...♖gf6

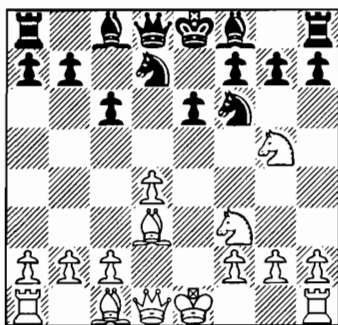
A recurring theme of this game (and the analysis of it) is the disruptive ♖e6! piece sacrifice. This becomes possible if instead of keeping to the straight and narrow of well-established moves Black is tempted to try to drive the knight back from g5 with a premature ...h7-h6. Here is the first instance: 5...h6? 6 ♖e6! when 6...fxe6? 7 ♖h5+ exploits the diagonal that Black has weakened with his fifth move to force mate. Instead 6...♖a5+ 7 ♖d2 ♖b6 8 ♖d3 fxe6? (completely missing White's idea – he must still have been reeling from White's sixth move; instead 8...♖gf6 9 ♖f3 would transpose to Tal's 9 ♖f3 in the next note) 9 ♖h5+ ♖d8 10 ♖a5 and Black had lost his queen in Nunn-Kir.Georgiev, Linares 1988.

6 ♖d3 e6

Here 6...h6 7 ♖e6! is another variation of the knight offer. After 7...♖a5+ 8 ♖d2 ♖b6 9 ♖f3!? (more ambitious than taking the two bishops with 9 ♖xf8) 9...fxe6 10 ♖g6+ ♖d8 11 0-0 c5?! (Tal gives 11...♖c7, intending ...b7-b6 and ...♖b7, as a solid defence,

but White can methodically build up his game with moves like c2-c4, ♖e1, ♖e2 etc. There is no need to rush! What does the bishop on f8 think of the play so far?) 12 c4 cxd4 13 ♖xd4 e5 14 c5! ♖xc5 (or 14...♖a6 15 ♖a5+ ♖xa5 16 ♖e6 mate!) 15 ♖a5 and White was winning in Tal-Oll, Riga 1986.

7 ♖1f3



7...h6

Once again rather than play the main line with 7...♖d6 Black provokes a piece sacrifice. Also risky was 7...♖c7?! 8 ♖e2 (with the often-seen threat of 9 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 10 ♖g5+ winning at once) 8...h6 9 ♖g6! hxg5 10 ♖xf7+ ♖d8 (acceptance of the second piece with 10...♖xf7 11 ♖xg5+ ♖g6 loses quickly after 12 ♖d3+) 11 ♖xg5 ♖b6. So far this is Van der Wiel-Karpov, Amsterdam 1987, and now the Dutch Grandmaster gives 12 g3! (stopping any 12...♖xh2 counterplay) as very strong for White after 12...♖d7 13 ♖xe6 etc. However, Karpov disagrees with the verdict and says that after the superior 12...♖d6! 13 ♖xe6 ♖e8! 14 ♖f7+ ♖e7 White's attack 'has run out of

steam'. That may be true, but White doesn't have to rush to capture on e6. Instead 13 c4 looks like a simple way of maintaining a good position, as the threat of 14 c5 is very embarrassing and 13...b4+ 14 f1!? doesn't look very attractive for Black.

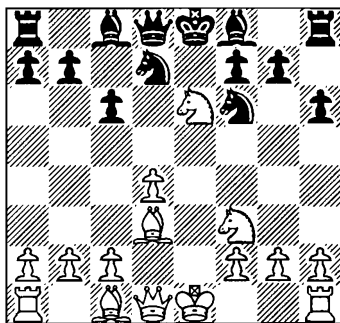
8 dxe6!

Instead 8 dxe4 dxe4 9 exe4 shouldn't offer White much of an advantage. Nevertheless, some years ago I remember seeing the strong English player John Littlewood voluntarily take back on e4 with the bishop, even after playing We2. He then followed up with 0-0 and Ke1, and answered the standard attack on his centre with ...c6-c5 by the defensive c2-c3 and finally – since his opponent had castled kingside – he began a direct attack with Qc2 and Wd3 and won in good style.

Moreover, Kasparov added his weight to the idea when he did something very similar versus Karpov at Amsterdam 1988 in the sequence 7...d6 8 0-0 (8 We2 is the standard main line move to recapture on e4 with the queen after 8...dxe4) 8...h6 9 dxe4 dxe4 10 exe4. Now play continued 10...0-0 11 c3 e5 (the logical freeing move) 12 Qc2 Ke8 13 Ke1 exd4 14 Kxe8+ Wxe8 15 Wxd4 We7 16 Qf4 Qxf4 17 Wxf4 d8 18 Ke1 and White kept a very slight edge.

If you strongly dislike the idea of sacrificing a piece you could try the knight retreat on the rare occasions that you meet 7...h6. Though remember that if Kasparov always played this variation, then his opponents would be

queuing up to play the Caro-Kann against him!



8...fxe6

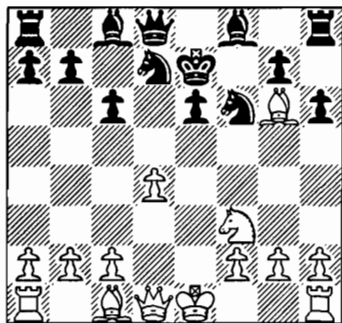
After the alternative 8...We7 9 0-0 fxe6 10 Qg6+ Qd8 the best way for White to keep control seems to be 11 c4!? denying Black's knight the d5-square. Then after 11...Wd6 12 We2 Wc7 13 Ke1 d6 14 dxe5 Kf8 15 Qf4 Black was unable to disentangle his pieces in Leko-Bakhtadze, Las Palmas 1995.

In contrast, Black achieves more freedom of action after 11 Qf4, though he must be careful, e.g. 11...Wb4?! 12 We2! with ideas of Wxe6 or c2-c4 would keep up the pressure, while it isn't possible to avoid mentioning Kasparov's drastic loss against Deep Blue in New York 1997 which went 11...b5? – this is designed to counter c2-c4, but it is dreadfully weakening – 12 a4! Qb7 13 Ke1 Qd5 14 Qg3 Qc8 15 axb5 cxb5 16 Wd3 Qc6 17 Qf5! exf5 18 Kxe7 Qxe7 19 c4! breaking open Black's rotten queenside defences. Here Kasparov resigned before his king was massacred.

The correct approach by Black is

11...♘d5!, e.g. 12 ♖g3 ♚b4 13 ♜e1 ♗e7 14 ♚e2 ♗f6 15 c4 ♘e7 etc., as in Chandler-Hübner, Biel 1987, though such is the pressure of defending this type of game that Black soon blundered and lost.

9 ♖g6+ ♗e7



Now White has two pawns and enormous positional compensation for the piece:

Black's king is not only a potential target but is also blocking in his own king's bishop, which in turn is shutting in the rook.

10 0-0

This is almost universally played, but after becoming worried by Black's plan in the game Wolff-Granda Zuniga mentioned at move 13 below I came up with the idea of 10 ♖f4! to rule out 10...♚c7. This proved successful after 10...♚a5+ 11 c3 ♘d8 (perhaps Black should try to exploit White's move order with 11...♚b5, preventing castling, when 12 ♗d3?! ♚xb2 13 0-0 g5! looks good for Black, so 12 ♚c2! seems like a better response) 12 0-0 ♗e7 13 ♜e1 ♘f8 14 ♗d3 ♗d7 15 ♘e5 ♗c8 16 b4 ♚b6 17 ♘f7 etc., when Black was unable to escape from the

bind in McDonald-Summerscale, London 1994.

10...♚c7 11 ♜e1

Instead Malinin and Poleschuk have recommended 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♗f4 and claim a clear advantage for White after 12...♘f7 13 ♚h5 ♗d8 14 dxe5 ♗e7 15 ♜ad1 followed by 16 ♗f7. However, Black can throw a spanner in the works with 12...♚d7!!, when 13 dxe5? ♚xd1 14 cxf6+ ♗xf6 15 ♜axd1 ♗xg6 just leaves White a piece down, so he has to try 13 ♗xe5 ♗d8 14 f4. Then it seems that White's initiative is starting to evaporate after 14...♗d6 followed by 15...♗c7.

11...♗d8 12 c4 ♗b4 13 ♗d2

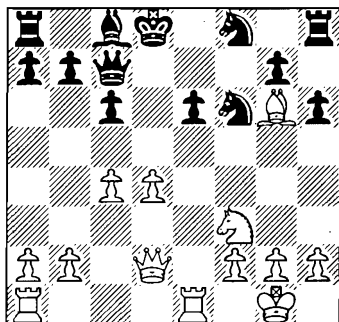
Very calmly played: a piece down White offers the exchange of bishops. In doing so he increases his ascendancy over the dark squares, notably the e5-outpost.

A less efficient approach was 13 ♜e2, because of the variation 13...♘f8 14 ♘e5 (maybe 14 ♗c2!?) 14...♘xg6 15 ♘xg6 ♜e8 16 c5 (very committal, as if White doesn't succeed in exploiting the precarious position of Black's bishop on b4 then he has just conceded the d5-square to Black's knight) and now rather than 16...♗a5, as played in Wolff-Granda Zuniga, New York 1992, Granda Zuniga points out that after 16...♚f7! (firstly, attacking the knight to rule out 17 ♚a4) 17 ♘e5 ♚h5 (...secondly the rook) 18 ♘c4 b5! (...and finally the knight again!) 19 ♘e5 ♗d7 20 a4 bxa4 21 ♜xa4 a5 White has inadequate compensation for the piece.

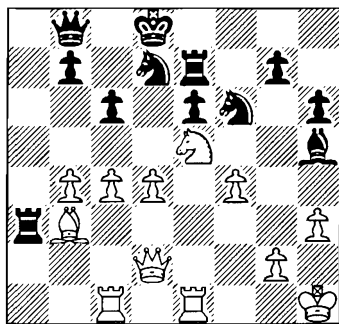
13...♗xd2 14 ♚xd2 ♘f8

Now both players jockey for position.

In what follows it is important to remember that there is no real need for White to hurry, either to restore material parity or to mate the black king. White's compensation won't disappear if he spends some time developing his game.



15 ♙c2 ♙d7 16 b4 ♙e8 17 ♙b3
 ♙h5 18 ♙e5 ♟8d7 19 f4 ♞e8 20 h3
 ♞e7 21 ♟h1 a5 22 a3 axb4 23 axb4
 ♟b8 24 ♞ac1 ♞a3



Black has defended efficiently, but his pieces remain badly co-ordinated. Most importantly, he doesn't have any strong squares for his minor pieces in the centre apart from f6, which means neither the knight on d7 nor his bishop have secure posts. White on the other hand has an excellently placed knight, a

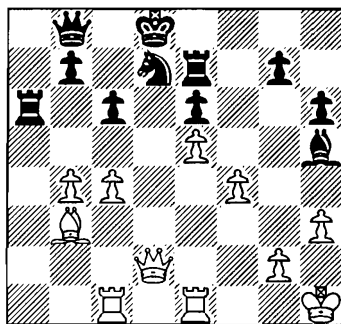
firm bind on the centre and a pawn structure without any weaknesses at all.

All in all the position is still finely balanced, since if White starts pushing his central pawns he will disrupt the present harmonious layout of his pieces and pawns. A central breakthrough would have to be assessed very carefully to make sure that it was worthwhile.

25 ♟b2 ♞a6 26 ♟d2 ♟xe5?

This is a serious mistake as by taking on e5 Black is doing White's work for him by opening the centre. Instead he should repeat moves with 26...♞a3 and leave it up to White to decide if he should agree to a draw.

27 dxe5+ ♟d7



28 f5!

Black must have underestimated this powerful pawn advance.

28...♙f7

If 28...exf5 29 e6 regains the piece and keeps up the assault.

29 c5!

Now the bishop is brought to bear on e6. If Black's blockade of this point collapses then his king will become exposed to a lethal attack.

29...♙e8 30 ♟d6!

The entry of the white queen decides matters. If now 30...♖xd6 31 exd6 traps the rook, so Black can no longer hold on to the e6-square.

30...♠a8 31 fxe6 ♕xe6 32 ♕xe6 ♖f8

Naturally after 32...♖xd6 33 exd6 White's rook defends the bishop on e6.

33 ♕f5 ♖c7 34 ♕g6+ ♖xg6 35 ♖xg6+ ♗f8 36 ♖h7 ♠ae8 37 ♚cd1 ♜f7 38 e6 1-0

A typical win for White in this variation – defending Black's position after the sacrifice is very difficult, whatever the theoretical verdict.

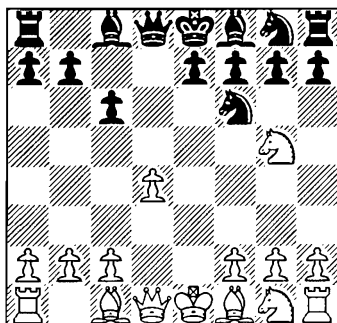
Game 13
Shirov-Ivanchuk
Linares 1998

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♖d7 5 ♖g5 ♖df6

This is an interesting alternative to 5...♖g6. The queen's knight usurps the square that seemed predestined for its brother in arms on g8. However, the king's knight still has the option of coming out via h6 if it proves necessary to defend the f7-pawn or to the e7-square after ...e7-e6. In the latter scenario Black could quite reasonably claim that it is better to have his knights on e7 and f6 than on d7 and f6 – or b6, as is frequently the case in the 5 ♕c4 variation discussed in Chapter 2.

Another noteworthy idea is 5...♖b6. Black aims to prevent his opponent from moving his bishop to one of its natural squares on c4 and also makes the d3-square less attractive by setting up a firm barrier on g6. Now the usual

moves are 6 ♖f3 g6, when the straightforward 7 ♕d3 isn't particularly promising for White, e.g. 7...♕g7 8 0-0 ♖h6 9 ♠e1 0-0 10 c3 ♕f5 11 ♕f1?! (surely 11 ♖e4 with a slight plus is more sensible) 11...c5! 12 h3 cxd4 13 ♖xd4 e5 14 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 and Black was at least equal in Jansa-Meduna, Lazne Bohdanec 1999. Therefore I believe that White should try to test just how solid the barrier is on g6 with the immediate 7 h4!?, which seems very threatening, e.g. 7...♖h6 (7...♕g4? 8 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 9 ♖e5+ wins or 7...h6 8 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 9 ♖e5+ ♗g7 and now rather than Ulibin's 10 h5!?, with unclear play I like 10 ♕d3!?, e.g. 10...♖xd4 11 ♖xg6 or 10...♕f5 11 ♕xf5 gxf5 12 ♖h5 etc.) 8 h5 ♕g4 9 hxg6 hxg6 10 ♠xh6! ♕xh6 (or 10...♠xh6 11 ♖xf7! ♗xf7 12 ♖e5+ with a very strong onslaught) 11 ♖xf7! ♗xf7 12 ♖e5+ ♗g7 13 ♖xg4 ♖d6 14 f4! ♠af8 15 ♕d2 ♠f6 16 0-0-0 and White had a decisive attack in Ulibin-Lokotar, USSR 1988.



6 ♕c4

For a long time it was thought that Black's last move was poor against 5 ♖g5 (though satisfactory against 5

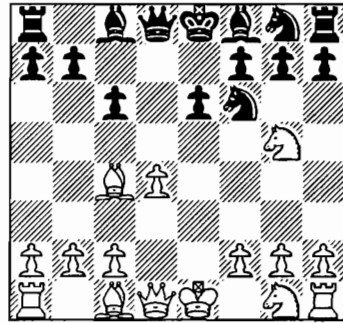
♙c4 ♘df6 6 ♘g5, transposing to the present game) as White can play 6 ♘1f3 when Black has no time to evict the knight from g5, for if 6...h6? 7 ♘xf7! ♙xf7 8 ♘e5+ ♙e8 9 ♙d3 and the check on g6 will win the game for White. So in Nunn-Tal, Brussels 1988, Black tried 6...c6 but he was soon in trouble: 7 ♘e5! ♘h6 8 ♙d3 ♙d6 (not 8...♙xd4 9 ♘gx7! ♘xf7 10 ♘xf7 ♙b4+ 11 c3) 9 c3 ♙c7 10 ♙e2 c5 (after 10...0-0 11 ♘g3 ♘f5 12 g4 Black is facing a huge attack) 11 ♙b5+ ♙e7 12 0-0 cxd4 (if he plays passively White can attack with 13 f4 etc.) 13 cxd4 ♘f5 14 ♙e3! and Black was unable to withstand White's attack and lost in six more moves.

However, one good feature of 5...♘df6 is that the diagonal of the queen's bishop has already been opened. Therefore 6...♙g4!? is a logical response. After 7 ♙e2 ♙xf3 8 ♘xf3 e6 9 0-0 ♙d6 10 ♙e1 ♘e7 11 ♙d3 0-0, as in Adams-Seirawan, Bermuda (7th match game) 2000, White enjoys the two bishops and a little more space, but Black has an exceptionally solid structure and all of his minor pieces are on useful squares. The game continued 12 ♙g5 ♙c7! 13 g3 (preventing 13...♙f4) 13...c5 14 c3 ♙ad8 15 ♙c2 h6 16 ♙xf6 gxf6 (Black's kingside is fractured, but every important square is well protected) 17 ♙d2 ♙g7 18 ♙ad1 cxd4 19 ♘xd4 ♙c5 20 ♘f3 ♘g6 21 ♙e2 f5 and after a few more moves a draw was agreed.

Alternatively, Black can try for a more complicated middlegame with 6...g6, e.g. 7 ♙c4 ♘h6 8 c3 ♙g7 9 0-0

0-0 10 ♙e1 and now in Smirin-Smyslov, USSR 1988, White gained the advantage after 10...♘f5?! 11 ♘e5 ♘d5 12 ♘g3 ♙c7 13 ♙b3 because he had redeployed his knights to control the centre. However, the immediate 10...♘d5 makes more sense, as White cannot play 11 ♘e5 because of 11...f6. Therefore he tried 11 ♙e2 reaching an unclear position after 11...♙e8 12 ♘e4 ♘f5 13 ♙g5 h6 in Guedon-Eperjesi, Budapest 2000.

6...e6



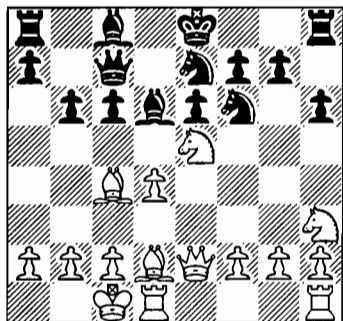
7 ♙e2

White offers a gambit. Instead 7 ♘1f3 h6 8 ♘h3 ♙d6 seems to be fine for Black, e.g. 9 ♙e2 ♘e7 10 ♙d2 ♙c7 11 0-0-0 b5 12 ♙d3 a6 13 ♙he1 ♙b7 14 g3 c5 with an active enough position in Hübner-Karpov, Belfort 1988.

7...♙d6

Here 7...♙xd4 looks risky: 8 ♘1f3 ♙d6 9 ♘e5 ♘h6 10 0-0, and now rather than 10...♘d5 11 ♙d3! ♙e7 12 c4 with an initiative for White in Goloshchapov-Burmakin, Tomsk 1999, developing with 10...♙e7 was safer.

8 ♙d2 ♙c7 9 0-0-0 b6 10 ♘1f3 h6 11 ♘h3 ♘e7 12 ♘e5



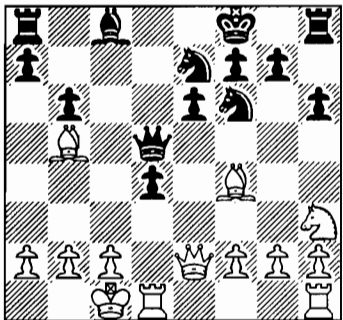
12...c5!?

Clearly Ivanchuk had been studying Karpov's games, as the former World Champion has demonstrated in several systems of the Caro-Kann that it is correct to sacrifice the right to castle in return for carrying out a plan that improves his strategical chances.

13 ♖b5+ ♜f8 14 ♘c4

Now a very hard battle begins with White trying to land a blow down the d-file or along one of the central diagonals. After the game Ivanchuk thought that he should have avoided giving White the tactical option described in the next note with 14...♙b7!?

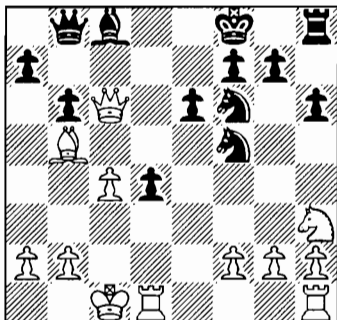
14...cxd4 15 ♘xd6 ♜xd6 16 ♙f4 ♜d5



17 ♙e5?

Shirov has an amazing gift for accurately assessing positions with an imbalance of material, but here he misses the chance for 17 ♜xd4! ♜xd4 18 ♜d1 ♜xd1+ (forced) 19 ♜xd1 when the unpleasant situation of the black king means that White has a definite advantage. Instead he plays to win the exchange, but Black achieves ample compensation.

17...♘f5 18 c4 ♜c5 19 ♜f3 ♜xe5 20 ♜xa8 ♜c7 21 ♜c6 ♜b8!



This nice retreat retains the dynamism in Black's position. The verdict is probably 'unclear' hereabouts, but Ivanchuk shows the greater finesse in what follows.

22 ♜f3 ♙b7 23 ♜a3+ ♜g8 24 f3 g5!

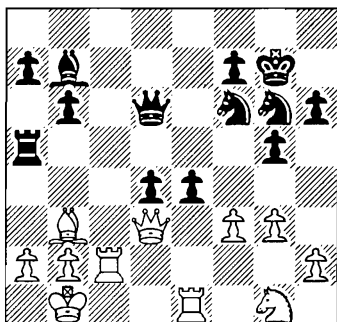
A fine positional move: Black clears g7 for the king so that the way is opened for the king's rook to enter the fray. He also restrains White further on the kingside and increases his grip on the dark squares.

25 ♙a4 e5 26 ♜he1 ♜g7 27 ♙c2 ♘h4!

Mistaken would be 27...♘e3? 28 ♜xe3 dxe3 29 ♜xe3 when White has

the advantage again.

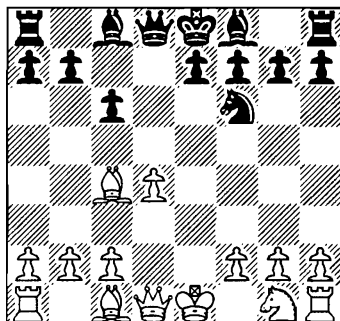
28 ♖d2 ♖c8 29 ♖b1 ♖xc4 30 ♖g1
 ♖c5 31 g3 ♖a5 32 ♖d3 ♖g6 33
 ♖b3 ♖d6 34 ♖c2 e4!



Ivanchuk clears the e5-square for his knight, after which the onslaught from his well co-ordinated pieces spear-headed by the passed pawn will be too much for White's scattered army to handle. Shirov can now only hope for a tactical 'accident'.

35 ♖c4 ♖e5 36 ♖c7 ♖b4 37 ♖d1
 ♖d5 38 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 39 ♖xe4 ♖xe4
 40 a3 ♖b5 41 ♖a2 d3 42 ♖cc1 d2
 43 ♖c2 ♖d3 44 ♖cx2 ♖c5 45 ♖d8
 ♖c4+ 46 b3 ♖c3+ 47 ♖a1 ♖a5! 0-1

An elegant finish. If White takes the queen it is mate in two.



7 c3

Judging from the games on my database this quiet move normally indicates that White is happy with draw. However, it will be seen that in the right circumstances Black can enliven the struggle by castling queen-side.

A much more vigorous approach by White is 7 ♖f3, e.g. 7...♖f5 (not falling for the old trap 7...♖g4?? 8 ♖e5!) 8 ♖e2!? (instead 8 c3 e6 9 0-0 ♖e7 was fine for Black in Kholmov-Galkin, Moscow 1998, while 8 0-0 e6 9 ♖e5 ♖d6 10 c3 ♖c7 11 ♖e2 0-0-0 was played in Akopian-Adams, Manila Interzonal 1992, and as in his game with Short mentioned at move eight below Michael Adams generated sufficient attacking chances against the white king) 8...e6 9 ♖g5 ♖e7 10 0-0-0 ♖g4! (a good decision – this pin prevents the natural strengthening of White's position with 11 ♖e5 and 12 g4 etc.) 11 ♖b1 0-0 12 h3 ♖xf3 13 ♖xf3. So far this is Tiviakov-Adams, New York 1994, and Black was soon facing a fierce onslaught after 13...b5?! 14 ♖d3 ♖d5?! 15 ♖e3! ♖ac8 16 g4 ♖fd8 17 f4 etc.

Game 14

Kovalev-lordachescu

Minsk 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖d2 dxe4 4 ♖xe4
 ♖d7 5 ♖c4

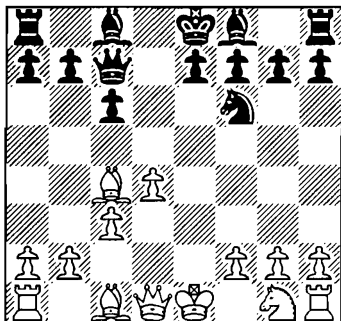
It seems that White is preparing to enter the lines of Chapter 2, but here, as we soon see, he has a different idea in mind.

5...♖gf6 6 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6

However, Petrosian had successfully defended a similar position against Fischer at Bled 1961 (White had played ♖he1 rather than ♔b1) by showing that the knight, not the queen, belongs on d5: 13...♘d5! 14 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 was safe for Black. Tiviakov's 11 ♔b1 has given him the option of replying with 14 ♕c1, but then Black's own attack with 14...b5 15 ♕d3 a5 must provide him with enough activity.

7...♖c7!

If 7...♕f5? 8 ♖b3 is nasty as it attacks both f7 and b7. With this precise queen move Black defends b7 as a preliminary to developing his queen's bishop. It is also useful to prevent 8 ♕f4.



8 ♖b3

Instead 8 ♘f3 ♕g4 9 h3 ♕h5 10 g4 ♕g6 11 ♘e5 e6 12 ♘xg6 hxg6 13 ♖f3 0-0-0 14 0-0 ♘d5 15 ♖e1 ♕d6 16 ♕f1 ♕f4! looked good for Black in view of the weakness on f4 in Zagreblyny-Galkin, Moscow 1998.

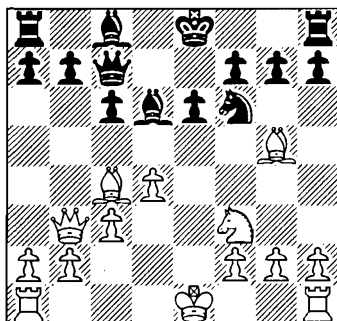
In an earlier game, Kovalev had tried 8 ♘e2 to avoid the pin on his knight, but this only led to quick draw after 8...e6 9 ♕f4 ♕d6 10 ♖d2 ♕xf4

11 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 12 ♘xf4 b6 13 0-0-0 ♕b7 14 ♖he1 0-0-0 15 ♘d3 ♘d7 in Kovalev-Bets, Alushta 1999.

Finally, the pin could also be avoided with 8 h3, but after 8...♕f5 9 ♘f3 e6 10 0-0 ♕d6 11 ♖e1 h6! 12 ♖e2 0-0-0 13 a4 g5! Black's attack was more dangerous in Short-Adams, Groningen 1997. Something similar happens in the main game.

8...e6 9 ♘f3 ♕d6 10 ♕g5?!

This turns out poorly. He should have waited until Black had castled kingside before committing his bishop to g5, e.g. 10 0-0 0-0 (if 10...♕d7, aiming to castle queenside, White could change his plan with 11 ♖e1 with the idea of 12 ♘e5) 11 ♕g5 ♘d5 12 ♖ad1 b6 13 ♕d3 c5? (instead 13...♕b7 is solid) 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 ♖a4! and the queen swung over to h4 with an attack in Iuldachev-A.Ledger, Hastings 1999.



10...h6! 11 ♕xf6?

White generously gives his opponent the two bishops and the g-file along which to attack. Instead 10 ♕h4 would have kept equal chances.

11...gxf6 12 0-0 ♕d7 13 ♖fe1 0-0-0!

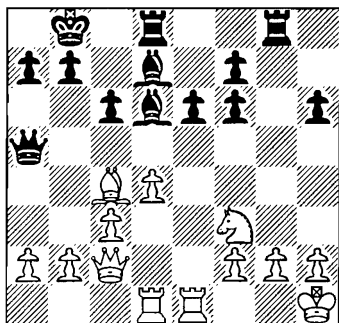
White is now suffering from the fact that his bishop blocks the advance of his c-pawn and the queen obstructs the b-pawn, so a pawn storm on the queenside will need considerable preparation. Meanwhile, Black can easily increase the pressure on White's kingside structure – not only g2 but also h2 will prove very vulnerable.

14 ♖h1 ♜hg8 15 ♚ad1?

White doesn't have the time for the luxury of such stereotyped centralising moves. He had to get his pawns involved in a counteraction to Black's kingside build-up. Therefore either 15 ♙f1 followed by c3-c4 and d4-d5 (play in the centre) or 15 ♚c2 clearing the way for the advance b2-b4-b5 (play on the queenside) were to be preferred. White's pawnless play leads to his defeat.

15...♙b8 16 ♚c2 ♚a5!

An excellent manoeuvre to bring the queen into the attack.



17 ♙f1 ♚h5 18 ♜e4 ♚g6 19 ♟h4 ♚h7 20 b4

This bid for counterplay has come much too late.

20...♜g4 21 ♙d3 ♚g7 22 ♜xg4 ♚xg4 23 ♟f3 ♜g8 24 ♜g1 e5!

Black activates his central pawn majority and opens the diagonal for his light-squared bishop. Strategically White's position can already be considered to be lost as he has no answer to the pressure of all the black pieces on his kingside.

25 dxe5?

This doesn't help at all as it increases the mobility of Black's pawns, but it is difficult to recommend anything that might have saved White.

25...fxe5 26 ♙h7

Eventually the bishop will become trapped on the kingside, but if White does nothing then Black will play ...f7-f5 and ...e5-e4 with an overwhelming position.

26...♜e8 27 ♚d2 ♙c7 28 ♚xh6 ♙c8 29 ♜e1 e4 30 ♟d4 ♜e5!

The threat of 31...♜h5 hitting both the queen and h2 will at least win the bishop whilst keeping up a lethal attack.

31 ♚h3 ♚g5 32 ♚e3 ♚h5 33 ♙g8 ♜e8 34 g3 ♜xg8 35 ♚xe4 f5 36 ♚f3 ♚h7 37 ♜e2 ♜h8 38 h4 f4 39 ♟g2 fxg3 40 fxg3 ♜g8 0-1

White has no good way to defend the g3-pawn.

Game 15
Circ-Ernst
Bern 1999

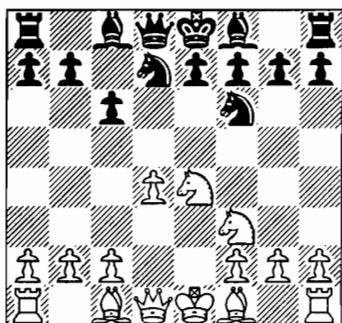
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟d2 dxe4 4 ♟xe4 ♟d7 5 ♟f3

This is a natural developing move.

5...♟gf6

see following diagram

6 ♟g3



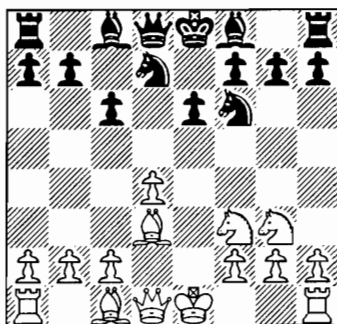
Instead after 6 $\text{Nxf6} + \text{Nxf6}$ White could transpose with 7 Bc4 to the note to move 7 in the previous main game, while 7 Nde5 is an independent alternative. Now Black must choose between challenging the knight immediately or just developing, but Karpov's games have demonstrated that the best strategy involves the fianchetto of the king's bishop, e.g. 6 $\text{Nxf6} + \text{Nxf6}$ 7 Nde5 Nd7 (the former World Champion also equalised after 7... Bc6 8 Bc2 g6 9 0-0 Bg7 10 c4 0-0 11 Bc3 Nde4 12 Wc2 Nd6 13 b3 c5! 14 Mad1 Nf5 15 d5 Bxe5 16 dxe6 Wc7 in A.Sokolov-Karpov, Linares 1987) 8 Nd3 g6 9 c3 (or 9 Bc3 Bg7 10 Wd2 Nc6! and the positional threat of 11... Nc4 activated Black's game in Timman-Korchnoi, Montpellier 1985) 9... Bg7 10 Bf4 Wa5! (now nothing can stop Black from freeing his position with ... e7-e5) 11 Wd2 0-0 12 Bc2 e5 and Black had achieved complete equality in Karpov-Sosonko, Amsterdam 1980.

6...e6

A much more fighting alternative is 6... c5! ? which plans to dissolve White's centre immediately with 7... cxd4 .

Unless White counters this by taking on c5 himself then Black is able to avoid ... e7-e6 in favour of the fianchetto of his king's bishop. This would seem to give him good chances, e.g. 7 c3 cxd4 8 Nxd4 g6 9 Bc4 Nc6 10 Bb3 Bg7 11 0-0 0-0, as in Ye Jiangchuan-Karpov, Shenyang (3rd match game) rapidplay 2000, or 7 Bd3 cxd4 8 Nxd4 g6 9 0-0 Bg7 10 c3 0-0 11 Re1 Nc5 12 Bf1 Bg4 13 f3 Bd7 etc., as in Deviatkin-Yevseev, St Petersburg 1999, and in both cases Black had comfortably equalised. The critical test is 7 dxc5 , but here too Black seems fine, e.g. 7... e6 8 c3 (in another game from his match in China Karpov also achieved a solid position after 8 c6 bxc6 9 Bc2 Bc7 10 0-0 Wb6 11 Nb1 0-0 12 c4 Nd8 13 Wc2 c5 14 Bd2 Bb7 in Ye Jiangchuan-Karpov, Shenyang 1st match game 2000) 8... Bxc5 9 Bd3 Wc7 10 0-0 0-0 11 Wc2 b6 12 Nc4 Bb7 and Black had fully mobilised his pieces with no worries in Stefansson-Anand, Kopavogur 2000.

7 Bd3



7...Bc7

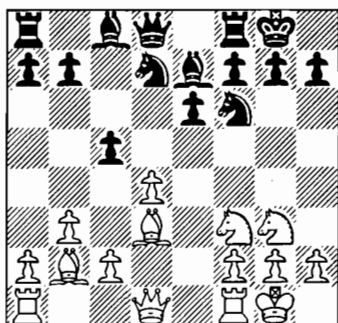
The natural move is 7... c5 immediately. Then 8 0-0 (8 c3 is too slow as

8...d6 9 0-0 ♖c7 10 ♗e2 0-0 was comfortable for Black in Loskutov-Erikalov, Smolensk 2000) 8...e7 (also possible is 8...cx4 when 9 dxd4 e5 10 b3 e7 11 e1 0-0 12 ♗f3 a5! 13 a4 d5 – intending 14...b4 to exchange White's strong bishop – gave balanced chances in Leko-Epishin, Dortmund 1994) 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 ♗d1 ♗c7 11 c4 e8 (this makes it harder for White to assume an aggressive posture than 11...cx4, when 12 dxd4 a6 13 b3 e8 14 e2 b6 15 dh5!? led to a hard tactical battle in Kasparov-Karpov, Horgen 1994) 12 dxc5 dxc5 13 e2 dcd7 14 dg5 df8 15 d3e4 dx4 16 ♗xe4 f5 17 ♗e2 e7 and Black had nothing to fear in Leko-Lutz, Horgen 1994.

8 0-0 0-0

Black could have played 8...c5 transposing to the previous note.

9 b3 c5 10 e2



10...h6?

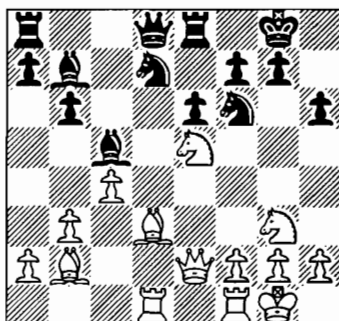
Black is afraid of an attack based on dg5, but there is much more danger in weakening his kingside and wasting time than in allowing such a move! Other moves would have left him in a solid, albeit passive position – for

example, 10...b6 or 10...c7 or even 10...cx4.

11 c4 b6

Perhaps Black should roll up into a ball with 11...cx4, 12...e8 and 13...df8.

12 ♗e2 e8 13 ead1 e7 14 dxc5 e5 15 de5



White now has his ideal attacking position.

15...c7 16 dxd7 dxd7 17 dh5! e7 18 ♗g4

If Black hadn't weakened himself with 10...h6, he could have battled on with 18...g6, but here it would lose at once to 19 e7xg6. Therefore the only way to carry on resisting was 18...e5, but 19 e5f5! then wins the exchange after 19...d5 20 df6+.

In the game Black plays a truly horrible-looking move.

18...g5 19 e7h7+! 1-0

This uncovers an attack on d7 with gain of time so that 19...hx7 20 e7xd7 wins. A prosaic finish is then 20...cxd7 21 df6+, but pretty would be 20...c6 21 df6+ g6 (21...g7 22 dx8+) 22 ♗h5+ g7 23 dd5+ g8 24 ♗g6+! fxg6 25 df6+ h8 26 e7h7 checkmate!

Summary

In Game 12 Black is taking a risk by allowing White to make the piece sacrifice, though in the best version for him after 7...h6 he isn't without practical chances, especially against a player who is unprepared or doesn't like sacrificing.

The slightly unusual 5...♘df6 in Game 13 seems fully playable now that Black has found ways to counter the plan of 6 ♘f3. This could be a great way to surprise an unsuspecting opponent. On the other hand, the alternative 5...♘b6 in the notes gives White the option of the aggressive 6 ♘1f3 g6 7 h4! which looks quite strong for him.

Games 14 and 15 deal with slower opening systems, though the capacity for middlegame 'explosions' shouldn't be overlooked! Black's method with 7...♖c7 solves his problems in Game 14, though special attention should be paid to the 7 ♘f3 line given in the analysis. Finally, 6...c5 in Game 15 seems to give Black very good equalising chances.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘d7 (D)

5 ♘g5 (D)

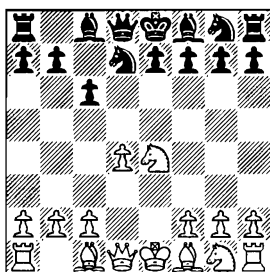
5 ♘c4 ♘gf6 6 ♘xf6+ – Game 14

5 ♘f3 – Game 15

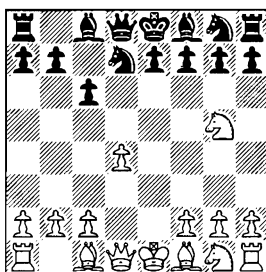
5...♘gf6

5...♘df6 – Game 13

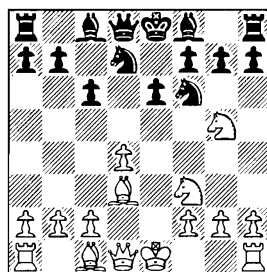
6 ♘d3 e6 7 ♘1f3 (D) h6 – Game 12



4...♘d7



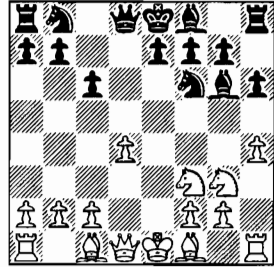
5 ♘g5



7 ♘1f3

CHAPTER FOUR

Modern Classical Main Line with 7...♞f6



1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4
♙f5 5 ♖g3 ♙g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♗f3 ♗f6

In the last few years the Classical main line with 7...♗f6 has risen from comparative obscurity to become one of Black's most popular ways of handling the main line Caro-Kann. I remember about eight years ago I was playing in the same tournament as the future GM Demetrios Agnos and one of his opponents had played 7...♗f6 against him. Naturally we were both convinced this was wrong, as the accepted wisdom at the time was that only 7...♗d7 in order to prevent 8 ♗e5 was playable. However, Demetrios lost the game, and even in a long analysis afterwards to our surprise we couldn't find any 'refutation' of the line after 8 ♗e5 ♙h7 9 ♙c4 e6 etc. And no wonder, as these days 7...♗f6 is a fully accepted weapon in the armoury of some of the strongest players in the world.

The positional basis for the system is simple. Black goads his opponent into playing 8 ♗e5 and then after the

preliminary retreat 8...♙h7 he tries to prove that the knight is a target rather than well placed on e5. Black can undermine its support by playing for ...c6-c5, or attack it directly with moves like ...♗bd7, ...♙d6 and ...♞c7. Remember that a piece doesn't control the square it is standing on, so by going to e5 the knight is not only relinquishing its control of d4 but also the e5-square itself.

After 8 ♗e5 ♙h7 White has to make an important decision as to where to put his light-squared bishop. His choice in the first four games here is 9 ♙d3, with the standard continuation 9...♙xd3 10 ♞xd3 e6. In Games 16-18 White continues with 11 ♙d2, with three main possibilities:

a) In Game 16 Stohl responds 11...♙d6. This has been seen in some big-name games but Black's results have been poor. Here Michael Adams plays powerfully to exploit Black's errors and win in good style.

b) Leko had an improvement ready as Black in Game 17 after the alterna-

tive 11...♖bd7 and should have achieved easy equality.

c) In Game 18 after 11...♙e7!? Black provokes a sacrificial attack from his opponent, but it doesn't seem good enough for more than a draw.

In Game 19 we look at the line in which White supports his knight with 11 ♙f4. White wins in excellent style after Black's experimental opening, but as you will see in the notes there was a path to equality for Black.

In Games 20 and 21 we consider the alternative 9 ♙c4. At first glance this appears a more aggressive approach than 9 ♙d3, but remember that it allows Black to put a knight on the strong outpost d5-square with impunity – it cannot be ousted by c2-c4 as White's own bishop is in the way! After 9...e6 10 ♚e2 ♘d5 White has a whole host of moves to choose from, of which 11 ♚f3 is one of the sharpest. This leads to a hair-raising battle in Game 20, but Black finally comes out on top. The quieter 11 ♙b3 in Game 21 also doesn't achieve its aim as Black is able to develop efficiently and then begin probing for weaknesses in White's camp. Therefore I don't consider that 9 ♙c4 offers White as many chances as 9 ♙d3.

Finally, Game 22 is of great interest as White resists the provocation to play 8 ♘e5 and instead prefers 8 h5 ♙h7 7 ♙d3 etc. Here Epishin finds a way to preserve the integrity of 7...♗f6 as an independent system by showing that Black isn't compelled to play a quick ...♖bd7 and enter the territory of Chapter 5. This is an important game

which adds a new weapon to Black's armoury in the main line Caro-Kann.

Game 16
Adams-Stohl
Hamburg 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♙f5 5 ♘g3 ♙g6 6 h4

All early divergences, including 6 ♙c4, are considered in Chapter 6.

6...h6 7 ♗f3 ♗f6

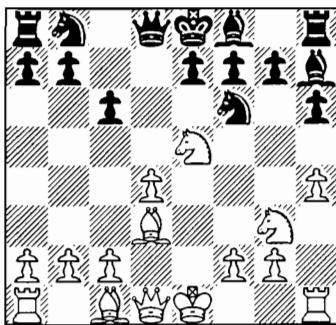
This is the defining move of the 'modern' way of handling the Classical variation. The well established 7...♘d7 is analysed in the next chapter.

8 ♘e5

8 h5 is the subject of Game 22.

8...♙h7 9 ♙d3!?

White clarifies the situation by exchanging bishops. Instead 9 ♙c4 is the theme of Games 20 and 21.



9...♙xd3

The tactical justification of White's last move is that 9...♚xd4? loses to 10 ♗xf7! ♙xd3 (10...♚xf7 11 ♙g6+) 11 ♗xh8 and White wins easily, e.g. 11...♚e5+ 12 ♙c3 ♙h7 13 ♚d8+! ♙xd8 14 ♗f7+.

A more serious alternative is

9...♟bd7!? Now 10 ♙xh7 ♟xe5 (or 10...♟xh7 11 ♖e2 e6 12 ♙d2 ♙e7 13 0-0-0 0-0 14 f4 f5 – not pretty, but he has to stop 15 f5 with an attack – 15 ♖c4 ♟xe5 16 dxe5 ♖d5 17 ♖xd5 cxd5 18 h5 and White had a slight edge in Svidler-Hauchard, Istanbul 2000) 11 dxe5 ♖a5+ (instead 11...♖xd1+ 12 ♟xd1 ♟xh7 13 ♟e2 e6 14 ♙e3 f5 15 exf6 ♟xf6 16 ♖ad1 ♙e7 looked like a tiny plus for White in Vallejo Pons-Magem Badals, Leon 2000) 12 ♟f1 ♟xh7 13 ♖e2 0-0-0 14 e6 ♖d5 15 exf7 ♖xf7 16 ♙e3 and now 16...♟b8 looks fairly equal. Instead 16...a6? (this helps White by giving his bishop a hole on b6 and creating a further ‘hook’ for his queenside pawn advance) 17 b4 e6 18 ♙b6 ♖d7 19 ♖b1 ♟f6 20 c4 ♙d6 21 ♖h3! gave White a clear advantage in Leko-Bareev, Dortmund 2000.

10 ♖xd3 e6 11 ♙d2

The alternative 11 ♙f4 is seen in Game 19.

11...♙d6?!

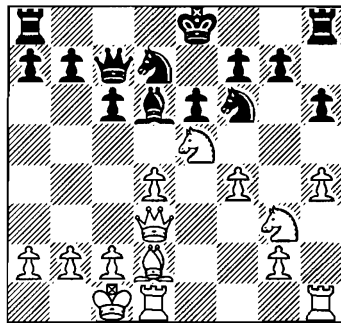
This has turned out poorly in some high profile games. Superior alternatives are 11...♟bd7 (Game 17) or 11...♙e7 (Game 18).

12 f4 ♟bd7 13 0-0-0 ♖c7

The continuation 13...0-0 14 ♟b1 ♖c7 15 ♟e2 ♖ad8 16 ♖f3 h5 has been tested several times. Now the slow 17 ♖hg1 allowed Black to more or less equalise with the energetic 17...c5 18 g4 ♙xe5 19 dxe5 ♟xg4 20 ♟g3 f5! 21 exf6 ♟dxf6 22 ♟xh5 ♟xh5 23 ♖xg4 ♖f5! in Anand-Ivanchuk, Linares 1999, so White preferred the direct 17 g4! in the encounter Illescas-Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1999.

Now it looks as if White already has the makings of a decisive attack. However, the former World Champion has a wonderful instinct for survival and found a way to escape into the endgame with 17...♙xe5! 18 fxe5 ♟xg4 19 ♟f4 ♟dxe5! 20 dxe5 ♖xe5 21 ♙c1 ♖f5 22 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 23 ♖d1 ♖xd1 24 ♖xd1 e5 25 ♖d8+ ♟h7 26 ♟d3 e4 27 ♟f4. Here rather than 27...♟e5? when White restrained the passed pawn with 28 ♖e7! and eventually won, Illescas in *Informator* 75 gives a long analysis to show that Black is just about alright after 28...e3! 28 ♖d3 ♖xd3 29 cxd3 g5 30 hxg5 h4 31 ♟c2 ♟f2 32 ♙xe3 h3 33 ♟e2 h2 etc. However, he thinks that 28 ♟e2 may be good for White.

All this is distinctly unappealing for Black – he must find a lot of exclamation mark moves just to have a chance of staying alive! So it is no wonder that Stohl avoids all this.



14 ♟e4

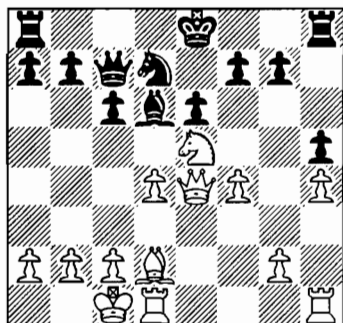
White takes immediate action. In an earlier game Michael Adams had played the somewhat slower 14 ♖he1 when Black succeeded in equalising: 14...0-0 15 ♖f3 ♖ad8 16 ♟c4 ♖fe8 17

♠e4 ♘xe4 18 ♜xe4 f5! (a strategic motif every Caro-Kann player should know – the outpost square created on e4 is more important than any weakness in Black's pawn structure) 19 ♜f3 ♘f6 20 ♖b1 ♜f7 21 ♙c1 ♙c7 22 ♘e5 ♜h5 23 ♜xh5 ♘xh5 24 c3 ♘f6, heading for e4, with unclear play in Adams-Dreev, Las Vegas 1999.

Also possible was 14 ♖b1 when 14...0-0 would transpose to the variation given in the note at move 13 above after 15 ♘e2, though I imagine that Stohl may have had some other idea ready.

14...♘e4 15 ♜xe4 h5?

He had to be satisfied with 15...♘f6 16 ♜e2 (16 ♜f3!?) 16...0-0-0, though White retains a positional advantage after 17 g4. The game move allows White to break through in the centre.

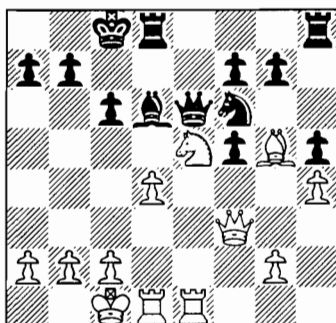


16 f5! ♘f6 17 ♜e2 ♜e7 18 ♜he1 0-0-0 19 ♙g5! exf5?

It is fatal to allow the opening of lines. The only hope was 19...♜he8, when 20 ♜f3 maintains the pressure.

20 ♜f3! ♜e6

Black seeks to escape by tactical means, but White's lead in development means that this is doomed.



21 ♘xc6! ♜xa2 22 ♘xd8 ♜a1+ 23 ♘d2 ♙b4+ 24 ♖d3

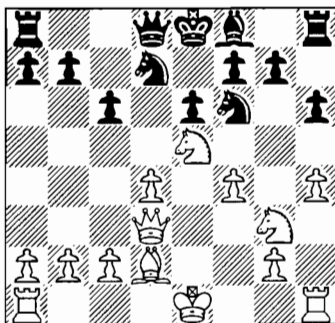
A dodgy situation for the white king in the middlegame, but an extra rook is worth some inconvenience.

24...♜a6+ 25 c4 ♜xd8 26 ♜xf5+ ♖b8 27 ♙f4+ ♖a8 28 ♙c7 1-0

If 28...♜h8 the surest win is 29 ♜a1 ♜c6 30 ♜xa7+ ♖xa7 31 ♜a1+ etc.

Game 17
Adams-Leko
Linares 1999

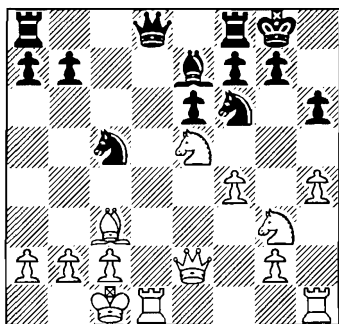
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♙f5 5 ♘g3 ♙g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♘f3 ♘f6 8 ♘e5 ♙h7 9 ♙d3 ♙xd3 10 ♜xd3 e6 11 ♙d2 ♘bd7 12 f4



12...e7

Here 12...d6 transposes to the previous main game, while 12...c5 seems premature as 13 0-0-0 cxd4? falls for the trap 14 d6! when 14...fxg6 15 xg6+ e7 16 b4+ wins at once. Black can squirm with 14...g8, but the arch-tactician Hector handled the attack against Rausis at Hamburg 2000 in exemplary style: 15 xf8 xf8 16 b4! b6 17 c4 d5 18 c5 c7 19 xd4 d7 20 xd5! exd5 21 ce2+ d8 22 ce7+ c8 23 d6 d8 24 xf7 f6 25 f5 d7 26 g6 e6 27 e5 b6 28 h3! d4 29 xd4 g4 30 c3+ 1-0.

13 0-0-0 0-0 14 e2 c5 15 dxc5 dxc5 16 c3



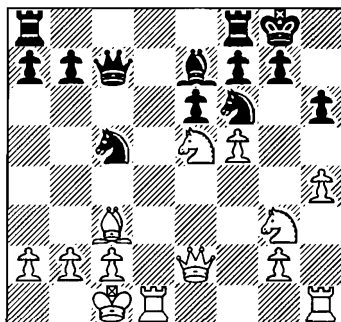
16...c7!

Peter Leko comes armed with an improvement over Michael Adams's game against Magem Badals, French Team Championship 1999, which went 16...b6? 17 d6! and already Black was in terrible trouble as he loses at once after 17...dcd7 18 d6+ gxh6 19 xd7! or 17...d5 18 d6+ h7 19 dhf5, while 17...d4 18 xg4 f6 19 f5 e5 20 d5 f7 21 d2 h8 22 h3 gives White a big attack – varia-

tions by Adams in *Informator 75*. In the game Black tried 17...a6, but after 18 xf6+ xf6 19 xa6 xa6 20 xf6 gx6 21 f5, intending 22 h5, he was left in a wretched endgame which he duly lost.

The point of Leko's move is that 17 d6?? now loses to 17...xf4+.

17 f5



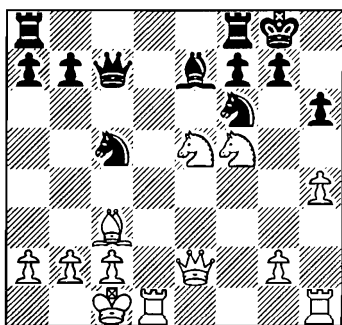
17...exf5??

One of the worst blunders that Leko has made in his career. The games of Tal have long ago taught us that Black is usually mated if he lets White get his knight to f5 in this sort of structure – though in Tal's case it was normally reached through the Sicilian Defence!

If Black goes piece hunting with 17...d5 18 d4 f6? it all falls apart from him after 19 d6 xg3 20 dxe7+ dxe7 21 dxc5, but much more testing was 17...fe8! when 18 f3?! d6! ½-½ was the laconic course of Maciejka-Rustemov, Swidnica 1999. After a subsequent 19 he1 both 19...a4 and 19...ac8 look fine for Black. However, 18 fe6 dxe6 (I have a certain sympathy for 18...fxe6?! but I can't quite recommend it) 19 d5

looks like the critical response to Adams.

18 ♖xf5



18...♞fe8

When a top-class player makes a strategic mistake it is almost always because he has trusted in a flawed tactical calculation and ignored the warnings of his positional sense. Thus Leko may have believed that he could save himself in the variation 18...♗ce4 19 ♞d7! with 19...♗xc3 (19...♗xd7 20 ♗xe7+ ♖h8 21 ♞xe4 is simple for White) but noticed too late that after 20 ♗xe7+ ♖h8 White can win with 21 ♗5g6+! fxg6 22 ♗xg6+ ♖g8 23 ♞e6+ saving his own queen and picking up Black's.

19 ♞f3

Threatening 20 ♞g3 when at least h6 will drop, so Black gives away the pawn immediately.

19...♗f8 20 ♗xh6+ gxh6 21 ♗g4!

Of course Adams wouldn't fall for 21 ♞xf6?? ♗g7.

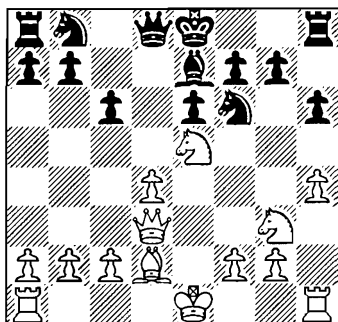
21...♗xg4 22 ♞xg4+ ♖h7 23 ♞f5+ ♖g8 24 ♞f6 ♖h7 25 ♞h8+ ♖g6 26 h5+ 1-0

White will soon have a choice of mates. A pretty final attack by Michael

Adams.

Game 18
Tiviakov-Ernst
Hoogveen 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗d2 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗f5 5 ♗g3 ♗g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♗f3 ♗f6 8 ♗e5 ♗h7 9 ♗d3 ♗xd3 10 ♞xd3 e6 11 ♗d2 ♗e7!?



Although on e7 the bishop seems less active than on d6, it is also less of a target once the centre opens up. This is important as Black intends to play an immediate ...c6-c5 to strike at White's centre rather than the more usual ...♗bd7. Indeed, as we shall see, Black is more than happy to delay developing his queen's knight – it finally emerges into the game on move 26 via a6!

12 0-0-0 0-0 13 f4

After 13 ♖b1 Black should respond in quiet style, e.g. 13...♗bd7 14 ♞e2 ♞c7 15 f4 ♞fe8 with balanced chances in Zontakh-Epishin, Cutro 1999. It's important to be aware that the natural 13...c5? fails tactically to 14 dxc5 ♗xc5 15 ♗xh6!, e.g. 15...♞c7 (of course, if 15...gxh6? 16 ♞xd8, while Black remains a pawn down after 15...♞xd3

16 ♖xd3 ♙xf2 17 ♙xg7! ♔xg7 18 ♖xf2) 16 ♜f3 and after 16... ♜xe5? 17 ♙f4! rather surprisingly the black queen has no safe moves!

A new and challenging alternative is 13 ♖e2!? which clears the way for a g2-g4-g5 pawn advance. In the game Luther-Döttling, Schwerin 1999, Black played 13... ♖bd7, but he was soon facing a big attack after 14 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 (if 14... ♜xd7 15 g4 ♖xg4 would be okay after 16 ♜hg1 f5! as 17 f3? fails to 17... ♖f2, but 16 ♜g3! seems strong) 15 g4 ♙xh4 (or else 16 g5 is very strong) 16 ♜h3! ♙e7 17 ♜dg1 ♙e8 18 ♙xh6 gxh6 19 g5 ♙xg5+ 20 f4 ♜f6. Here a draw was agreed after 21 ♜xh6? ♜xh6, but on chesspublishing.com Volzhin gives a detailed analysis to show that 21 fxxg5 hxg5 22 ♜c3! is overwhelming, e.g. 22... ♖f8 23 ♜xg5 ♜ed8 24 ♜a3+! c5 25 ♜g3 ♖b6 26 ♖c3! and the entrance of the knight into the attack is decisive.

Going back to move 13, perhaps 13...c5 14 g4 ♜d5!? is the best try for Black, when he is attacking a2 and also threatening 15...cxd4 to undermine the knight on e5. Then 15 g5 ♜xa2, 15 c4 ♜e4 and 15 ♖c3 ♜xd4 all look satisfactory for him.

13...c5!?

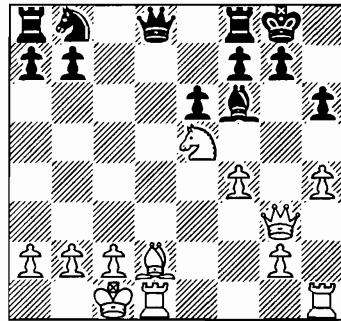
13... ♖bd7 would have transposed to the previous main game.

14 dxc5 ♙xc5

An obvious recapture, but 14... ♜c7!? looks fine for Black, e.g. 15 ♜he1 (or 15 ♙c3 ♖c6 16 ♜f3 ♙xc5 and here Mittelman points out in *Informator* 76 that neither 17 ♖g4 ♖xg4 18 ♜xg4 f5! nor 17 ♖xc6 ♜xc6 18 ♜xc6 bxc6 are dangerous for Black,

while 17 ♜d3 ♖b4 18 ♙xb4 ♙xb4 offered equal chances in Baklan-Mittelman, Antwerp 1999) 15... ♖c6 16 ♖xc6 ♜xc6 17 f5 ♜ad8 18 ♜b3 (18 ♜e2 ♜a4! 19 ♖b1 ♜xh4 also looks fine for Black) 18... ♜d5 with an unclear position in David-Mittelman, Antwerp 1999.

15 ♖e4 ♙e7 16 ♖xf6+ ♙xf6 17 ♜g3



The sight of Black's queen's rook and knight still slumbering well into the middlegame provokes Tiviakov into launching an attack to try to capitalise on his lead in development. On the other hand, this attack will involve sacrifices, and assuming that Black isn't mated he will have a guaranteed draw at least.

17... ♜b6 18 ♙c3

Threatening to win at once with 19 ♖c4.

18... ♜b5 19 f5! exf5 20 ♜d6!

Things begin to look very dangerous for Black as the bishop is attacked and cannot afford to desert its post, e.g. 20... ♙e7 21 ♖c6! ♙g5+ 22 ♜xg5!! hxg5 23 ♖e7+ ♖h7 24 hxg5 mate.

20...f4!

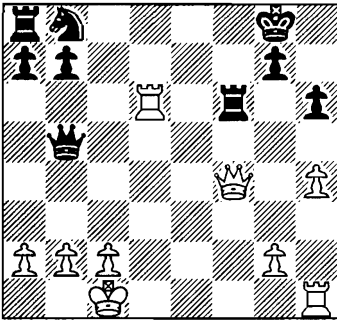
The only defence is to deflect the

white queen from the attack on g7.

21 ♖xf4 ♕xe5 22 ♕xe5 f6 23 ♕xf6?!

If 23 ♕c3 then Black has the chance to develop his pieces with 23...♘c6 when White's advantage begins to evaporate. Therefore Tiviakov sacrifices a piece to keep up the momentum of his attack. This is made to seem like a dubious decision thanks to Black's precise defence.

23...♞xf6



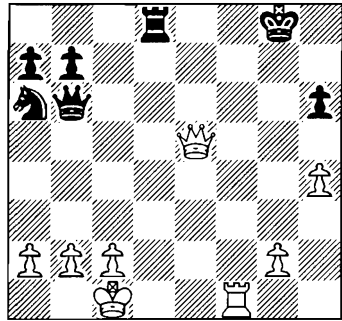
24 ♞xf6

At first it seems that White can win with 24 ♞d8+ ♖h7 (24...♖f7!?) 25 ♖e4+ ♖f5 26 ♖xb7, but Black can turn the tables with 26...♞c6!! 27 ♞d2 (27 c3 ♖f4+ 28 ♖b1 ♖e4+ is similar) 27...♖e4! and as 28 ♖xa8 fails to 28...♞xc2+, Black has time to defend his rook next move with 28...♞e6.

24...gx6 25 ♖xf6 ♖b6! 26 ♖e5 ♖a6!

The black knight finally awakes. Now Black's king is denuded, but his opponent has almost run out of pieces with which to attack. If he tries to bring his rook into the attack via the third rank, he may find his own king exposed to a nasty back-rank check.

27 ♞f1 ♞d8



28 ♖e7

Not of course 28 ♞f6?? ♖g1+ and Black gets his mate in first. The game move prevents the consolidating 28...♖d6, which can now be answered with 29 ♞f8+! and wins.

28...♘b4

The entrance of the knight prevents White from making a safe hole for his king as a prelude to moving his rook off the first rank and into the attack.

29 a3 ♘d5 30 ♖f7+ ♖h8 31 ♖b1 ♘c3+ 32 ♖a1 ♘d1!

The knight makes up for its long sleep by becoming super-active now.

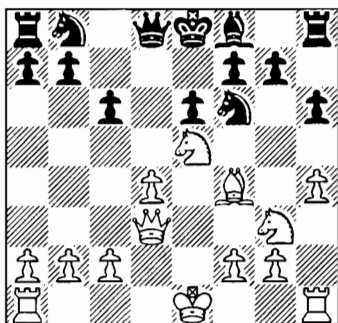
33 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 34 ♞xf6 ½-½

Black should have played on with 34...♖g7 and if 35 ♞f3 ♞d2. This was a complex game and there may be a strong improvement for White lurking somewhere, but at the moment it seems fine for Black.

Game 19
Ponomariov-Conquest
Torsbavn 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♕f5 5 ♘g3 ♕g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♘f3 ♘f6

8 ♖e5 ♗h7 9 ♗d3 ♗xd3 10 ♖xd3
e6 11 ♗f4



White chooses to support his centre with the bishop rather than with 11 ♗d2 and 12 f4 as we saw in the previous games.

11... ♗a5+!

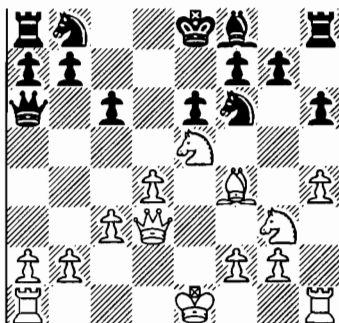
Instead 11... ♖bd7 12 0-0-0 ♗e7 13 ♖b1 0-0 14 c4 is a standard continuation, and now:

a) 14...c5? 15 d5! ♖xe5 16 ♗xe5 ♖g4 17 ♗xg7! (a strong piece sacrifice that soon recoups a lot of pawns and leaves Black's king badly exposed) 17...♖xg7 18 ♖e2 f5 19 f3 ♖f6 20 ♖xc6 ♖g8 21 ♖xf5+ and White had a winning attack in Ponomariov-Tukmakov, Donetsk 1998.

b) 14... ♗a5! (the right way to play!) 15 ♖f3 ♗ad8 16 ♗d3 ♖xe5 17 dxe5 ♖d7! 18 ♖e2 ♖c5 with equality in the game Chernov-Nisipeanu, Romania 1999.

12 c3 ♖a6

This is the idea. As most of Black's losses in this variation seem to come from a direct attack on his king in the middlegame, it makes sense to offer the exchange of queens.



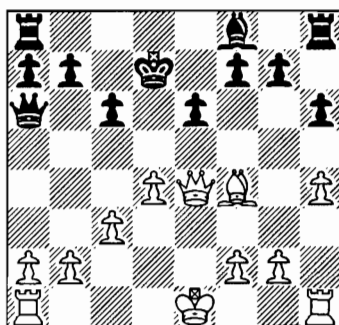
13 ♖e4!

White meets his opponent halfway by offering him an endgame, but a very slightly worse one after 13... ♖xd3 14 ♖xf6+ gxf6 15 ♖xd3. The isolated h-pawn could become a factor in the future but still Black would be a long way from losing. In any case, having come this far Black should have exchanged queens.

13... ♖xe4?

A fatal change of plan.

14 ♖xe4 ♖d7 15 ♖xd7 ♖xd7



The queen on a6 prevents White from castling short and deters queen-side castling by attacking a2. Nevertheless, White finds a way to provoke a weakness in his opponent's centre.

16 ♗h3! ♗c8 17 ♗e5! ♖c4 18 ♗f3

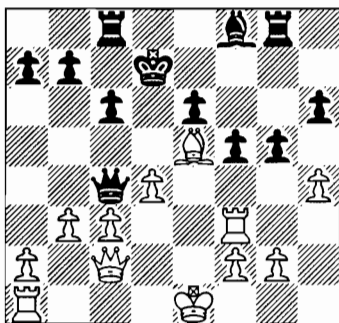
f6

Now White has accomplished his aim – the e6-pawn will be a target in the future.

19 ♖g3 f5

Black strives for activity but this further weakens his centre by conceding the e5-square to White's bishop.

20 ♛c2 g5 21 ♙e5 ♜g8 22 b3!



This is a good time to nudge the black queen as if 22...♛a6 23 ♜xf5! exf5 24 ♛xf5+ ♔d8 25 ♛f7! threatening both the rook and 26 ♙f6+ with mate wins at once. So Black has to lose time with his queen, which White can use to build up further in the centre.

22...♛d5 23 c4 ♛a5+ 24 ♔f1 ♙e7

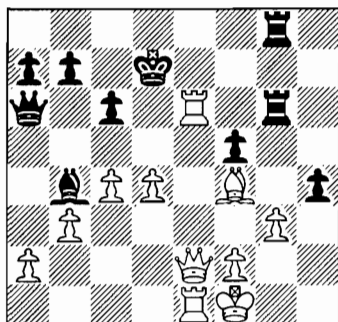
Not 24...gxf4 25 ♜xf5! as in the previous note.

25 hxg5 ♜xg5 26 ♙d1

Black has the g-file but his pieces are much worse co-ordinated than White's – his queen is offside and the king gets in the way of their action. Now White has a straightforward winning plan – pile up all the heavy pieces against the weakness on e6.

26...h5 27 ♛e2 ♛a6 28 ♙f4 ♜g6 29 ♜e3 ♜cg8 30 g3 h4 31 ♜e1 ♙b4 32

♜xe6!



White's fine positional play is crowned with a well-calculated tactical finish.

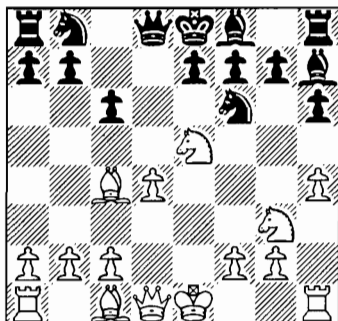
32...♜xe6 33 ♜e7+ ♔d8 34 ♙c7+ ♔c8 35 ♛e5! b5 36 ♙d8 ♙a5 37 ♜c7+! ♔b8 38 ♜xc6+ 1-0

Game 20

Haba-Khenkin

Poland 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♙f5 5 ♗g3 ♙g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♗f3 ♗f6 8 ♗e5 ♙h7 9 ♙c4



This very natural move is less popular than 9 ♙d3. This is partly because d5 becomes an attractive square for

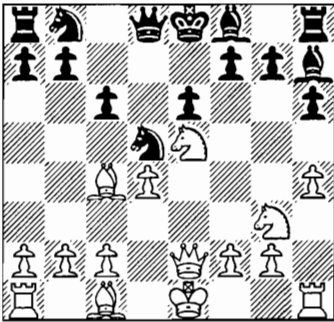
Black's knight – his own bishop on c4 obstructs White from kicking it away with c2-c4.

9...e6

Not 9...♟d5 at once as 10 ♖f3 would force the awkward looking 10...♟g8.

10 ♖e2 ♟d5

Whereas now this move is virtually forced to block the attack on f7 as 10...♖xd4? 11 ♟xf7! in Hlgatian-Jamal, Istanbul 2000, and 10...♟d6? 11 ♟xf7! in Xu Yuhua-Payet, Shenyang 2000, are both disastrous for Black.



11 ♖f3

This sharp move leads to a hard tactical struggle.

The more common 11 ♟b3 is analysed in the next game, but we should also look at some other of White's moves here:

a) 11 c3 seems too slow to be effective. After 11...♟d7 12 ♟d3 (or 12 ♟h5 ♟xe5 13 ♖xe5 ♜g8! and Black had no problems in Kreiman-Dautov, Bad Wiessee 1997) 12...♟xd3 13 ♟xd3 ♖c7 14 ♟d2 0-0-0 15 b4 ♟7b6 16 0-0 g5! 17 h5 ♟c4 18 a4 ♟xd2 19 ♖xd2 ♟f4 20 ♜fe1 ♟d6 Black stood better in Mrdja-Rausis, San Giorgio 2000.

b) In contrast 11 ♟xd5?! cxd5 12 ♖b5+ ♟d7 13 ♖xb7, just grabbing a pawn, is in too much of a hurry. After 13...♟xe5 14 dxe5 ♜b8 15 ♖a6 (if 15 ♖xa7 ♟xc2, whereas if now 15...♟xc2? 16 ♖c6+) 15...♖d7 Black had plenty of positional compensation in Miralles-Speelman, Andorra 1998.

c) A much more testing move is 11 ♟d2!? which offers the c2-pawn. I think that Black does well to ignore it, as after 11...♟xc2 12 ♜c1 ♟h7 13 0-0 ♟d7 14 ♟xd5 cxd5 15 ♟h5! looked very risky for Black in Xie Jun-Chiburdanidze, Elista 1998. So more sensible is 11...♟d7 when White has two main alternatives:

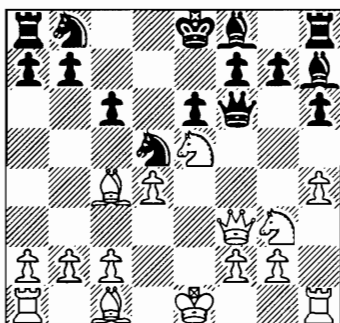
c1) 12 ♟d3 ♟xd3 13 ♖xd3 (or 13 ♟xd3 ♖b6 14 c4 ♟b4 with equality in Kashtanov-Yevseev, St Petersburg 2000) 13...♟5f6!? 14 f4 c5 15 0-0-0 ♟e7 16 dxc5 ♟xe5 17 ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 18 fxe5 ♟d7 19 b4 b6! 20 cxb6 ♟xb6 21 c3 ♜c8 and Black had enough play for the pawn in Smirin-Epishin, Saint Vincent 2000.

c2) 12 0-0-0 ♟xe5 13 dxe5 ♖c7 14 f4 0-0-0 15 ♜h3!? (or 15 ♟e4 ♟e7 16 h5 ♟b8 17 ♜he1 f6!? 18 exf6 gxf6 19 ♖f3 ♜he8 and Black was solidly centralised in Ye Jiangchuan-Dreev, Shenyang 1999) and here in De Firmian-Dautov, Essen 1999, Black embarked on an interesting adventure with 15...♟b4!? (by no means forced – 15...♟e7 looks sound enough) 16 ♟xd5 ♟xd2+ 17 ♜xd2 ♜xd5 18 ♜xd5 cxd5! 19 ♟f5! ♟xf5 (he has to prevent 20 ♟d6) 20 ♜c3 ♖xc3 21 bxc3 h5 and Black had an impenetrable fortress after 22 c4 dxc4 23 ♖xc4+ ♟b8 24 ♖d4 ♜c8 25 c3 b6 26 a4 ♜c5 27 a5

♞xa5 28 ♖d8+ ♔b7 etc.

11...♜f6!

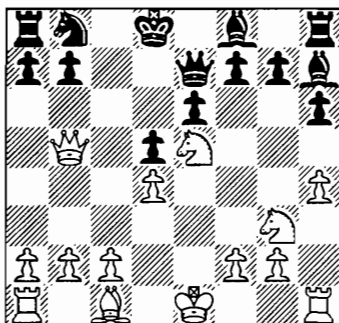
A more natural-looking move is 11...♜c7?!, but this allowed White to build up a dangerous attack with 12 0-0 ♔d6 13 ♘h5! ♙xe5 14 dxe5 ♜xe5 15 ♙xd5 cxd5 16 ♙f4 ♜e4 17 ♜c3! in Andres-Garcia Palermo, Rosario 1996.



12 ♙xd5

The only way to continue his attack, since 12 ♜b3 ♘b6 shields b7 and gives White nothing.

12...cxd5 13 ♜b3 ♜e7 14 ♜b5+ ♔d8



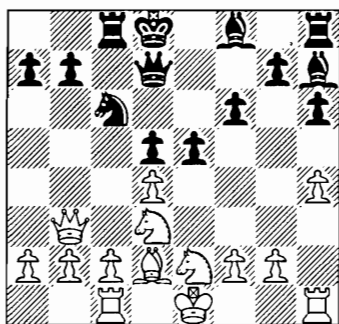
White has displaced the black king, but in return Black has been given the two bishops and more pawn control of the centre than he is accustomed to in

the Caro-Kann.

15 ♔d2

The endgame held no fears for Black after 15 h5 f6 16 ♘g6 ♜b4+ 17 ♜xb4 ♙xb4+ 18 c3 ♙xg6 19 hxg6 ♔d6 20 ♘h5 ♜g8 21 ♙f4 ♙xf4 22 ♘xf4 ♔d7 in Gdanski-Khenkin, Germany 1998.

15...f6 16 ♘d3 ♜d7 17 ♜b3 ♘c6 18 ♘e2 ♜c8 19 ♜c1 e5



White's early attack has failed to land a knock-out blow and now Black can strive to utilise the dynamism of his centre pawns. A difficult and obscure position is soon reached.

20 0-0!

A very good decision. White sacrifices a pawn to wrest the initiative from his opponent and try to exploit the black king's uneasy situation. The drawback is that the opening of lines enhances the value of Black's bishops.

20...♘xd4 21 ♘xd4 exd4 22 ♜fe1 ♜c4 23 ♙b4

Khenkin points out that a more energetic way to continue the attack was 23 ♘f4!? ♔c8 24 ♘d5! ♜xd5 25 ♜e8+ ♔d7 26 ♜ce1, when the pin on f8 and the open black king give White sufficient compensation for the piece.

23...♙xb4 24 ♖xb4 ♜e8 25 ♖a3!

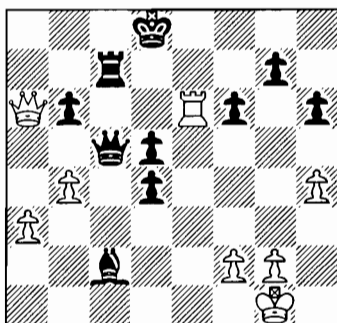
White has to be prepared to give up his knight to generate enough attacking chances to hold the balance.

25...♜xe1+ 26 ♜xe1 ♖d6 27 ♖a5+ b6 28 ♖xa7 ♖xb4 29 ♜e6 ♜c7 30 ♖a8+ ♜c8 31 ♖b7!

Not letting Black's king escape after 31 ♖xd5+ ♔c7.

31...♙xc2 32 a3 ♖c5 33 b4 ♜c7 34 ♖b8+ ♜c8 35 ♖b7 ♜c7 36 ♖a6?

Playing to win but missing his opponent's reply. Instead 36 ♖b8+ ♜c8 37 ♖b7 is a draw by repetition.



36...♙d3!

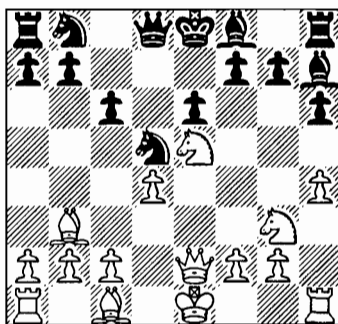
The mirage that trapped White was 36...♖c4? 37 ♖a8+ ♜c8 38 ♖b7 ♜c7 39 ♖b8+ ♜c8 40 ♖d6 checkmate!

37 ♖xd3 ♖c1+ 38 ♖f1

Losing at once, but 38 ♔h2 ♖f4+ 39 g3 ♖xf2+ was terrible.

38...d3! 39 ♜e1 d2 40 ♜d1 ♖xd1 41 ♖xd1 ♜c1 0-1

8 ♖e5 ♙h7 9 ♙c4 e6 10 ♖e2 ♖d5 11 ♙b3



This is probably the most natural and popular move. White defends c2 in preparation for ♙d2 and clears the way for c2-c4 if appropriate. Nevertheless, as you will notice in the analysis that follows, Black doesn't seem to have any real problems.

11...♖d7

Or 11...a5 12 a4 ♙b4+ 13 ♔f1 (13 c3 ♖xc3!) 13...♖d7 14 ♖h5!? ♜g8 15 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 16 ♙xh6! gxh6 17 ♙xd5 ♙c7! and in this unclear position a draw was agreed in Velicka-Rausis, Bern 1999.

12 ♙d2 ♖xe5

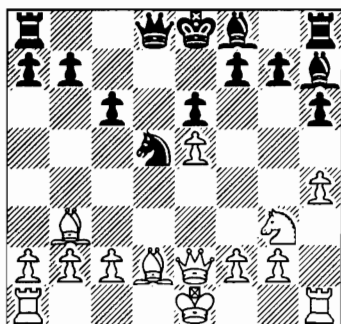
It is interesting that Bogdan Lalic avoids the chance to play 12...a5 here and also consistently declines to advance his a-pawn in what follows. Normally 12...a5 is regarded as a useful move, since if White responds with 13 a4 to prevent the further advance 13...a4 then a subsequent c2-c4 will be much less effective as it leaves a hole on b4 for Black's knight. Also advancing 13 a4 loosens White's queenside in general, and therefore makes it a less desirable residence for

Game 21
Konguvel-B.Lalic
Calcutta 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♙f5 5 ♖g3 ♙g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♖f3 ♖f6

his king. One example is 12...a5 13 a4 ♘f6 14 c4!? (a radical move, showing that he isn't afraid of the hole on b4) 14...♘b4 15 ♙c3 ♙e7 16 ♖d1 0-0 17 0-0 ♜c7 18 ♙xb4 axb4 19 c5 ♘d5 20 ♜g4!? f5 21 ♜e2 ♙xh4 22 ♘f3 ♘f4 23 ♜e1 ♙f6 24 ♜xb4 h5! and Black was striving for the initiative in this unclear position in Ziatdinov-Yermolinsky, USA 2000.

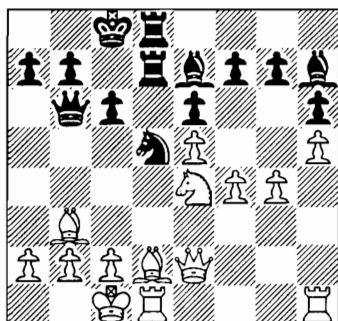
13 dxe5



13...♜c7

Perhaps the following excerpt gives us a clue to Lalic's thinking in declining the chance to play ...a7-a5: 13...a5 14 a4 ♜b6 15 ♖d1 ♙e7 16 ♜g4 ♗g8 17 0-0 0-0-0 18 ♘e4 ♖d7 19 ♜f3 ♙xe4 20 ♜xe4 ♗gd8 21 g3 ♙c5 22 ♜e2 and in Borriß-Speelman, Solingen 1998, Black had achieved a pleasant and well centralised position, but on the other hand the weakness of a5 is annoying as it requires constant defending. If Black is careless then ♜e1 may suddenly win the a5-pawn. Black cannot claim any real advantage here, so Lalic tries to get the same type of central build-up without committing himself to the loosening ...a7-a5.

14 0-0-0 0-0-0 15 f4 ♙e7 16 h5 ♖d7 17 ♘e4 ♗hd8 18 g4 ♜b6



Black has achieved his opening aims: all his pieces are solidly entrenched in the centre – or in the case of the bishop on h7, controlling a diagonal with important centre squares – and he hasn't felt compelled to loosen his queenside with ...a7-a5 at any point. As White has reached this uninspiring situation without making any obvious mistakes, it is possible to conclude that this opening system is unpromising for him.

19 c3 ♜b5!

A clever positional move which increases the pressure after both 20 ♙c4 ♜a4, when the bishop on c4 is pinned against the knight on e4, or 20 c4 ♜a6 and b4 is suddenly a weak square. So White exchanges queen, but then the newly created b5-pawn can be used to undermine him on the c-file.

20 ♜xb5 cxb5 21 ♙c2 b4 22 c4?

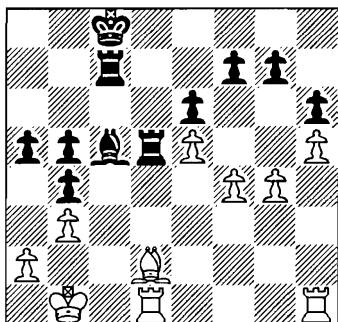
White had to play 22 cxb4, e.g. 22...♖c7 and now 23 ♘b1? ♗xc2! or 23 ♙c3 ♙xe4 24 ♙xe4 ♘xc3 are both horrible, so the best continuation would be 23 ♘c3 ♙xc2 24 ♙xc2 ♙xb4 25 g5!? when White is only very

slightly worse.

22... ♖c7 23 b3 ♗xe4 24 ♗xe4 b5!

This wins a pawn as 25 ♗d3 ♜b6 doesn't help White.

25 ♗xd5 ♞xd5 26 c5 ♗xc5 27 ♔b1 a5!



The way to exploit the extra pawn is to use it to open lines against the white king and create awkward mating threats.

28 g5!?

White's only chance is to utilise his kingside pawns before Black can strike a deadly blow on the queenside.

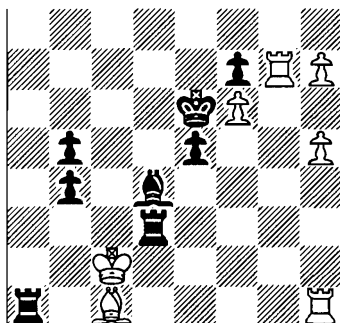
28...a4 29 f5 axb3 30 f6

If 30 axb3 ♞d3 31 ♖c2 ♞f3 followed by 32... ♗d4+ puts the white king in a mating net.

30...bxa2+ 31 ♖xa2 gxf6 32 gxf6 ♞cd7!

The simplest. Black pins the white bishop and prepares to head off the advance of the h6-pawn, after which he can switch to mating ideas at his leisure.

33 ♞h2 ♞d8 34 exf6 e5 35 ♞g2 ♖d7 36 ♖b1 ♞h8 37 ♞h1 ♖e6 38 ♗c1 ♞d3 39 ♞g7 ♗d4 40 h7 ♞a8+ 41 ♖b1 ♞a1+ 42 ♖c2



42... ♞c3+

Quite sufficient, but the quiet 42...e4! with unstoppable mate by 43...b3 next move is more elegant.

43 ♖d2 ♞a2+ 44 ♖d1 ♞d3+ 45 ♖e1 ♗c3+ 0-1

Game 22

Hracek-Epishin

Porz 1998

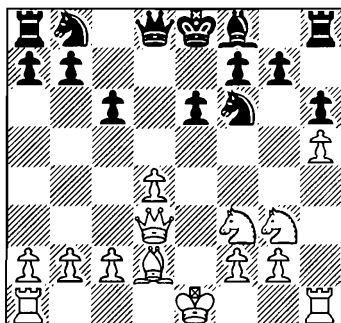
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞d2 dxe4 4 ♞xe4 ♗f5 5 ♞g3 ♗g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♞f3 ♞f6 8 h5

White spurns the critical 8 ♗e5 and instead tries to direct play into the channels of Chapter 5. However, as will be seen Epishin has no wish to transpose into these lines with ... ♞bd7 at any point.

8... ♗h7 9 ♗d3 ♗xd3 10 ♞xd3 e6 11 ♗d2

After the alternative 11 ♗f4 the course of the game Milos-Dreev, Shenyang 2000, is very interesting: 11... ♗d6 12 ♗e5 ♗xe5 13 dxe5 ♞xd3 14 cxd3 ♞fd7 15 ♗e4 c5!? (an inspired pawn sacrifice to free his queen's knight to attack the white centre) 16 ♞d6+ ♖e7 17 ♞xb7 ♞c6 18 0-0 ♞cxe5 19 ♞xe5 ♗xe5 20 ♞xc5 ♞hd8

21 ♖fd1 ♜d5 22 ♞ac1 ♞b8 23 b3 ♝c8
24 d4 and a draw was agreed as after
24...♟c6 White has hanging pawns on
d4 and h5. This seems to be a complete
answer to 11 ♟f4.



11...♟f4 12 0-0-0 0-0

12...♟bd7 transposes to Chapter 5,
Games 27 and 28.

13 ♞e2

After 13 ♟b1 Black has good
chances with 13...c5! which exploits
the awkward position of the white
queen. Now 14 dxc5? ♞xd3 15 cxd3
♟xc5 would just leave White with a
weakness on d3, so White has tried
three other moves, none of which
look like providing him with any real
advantage:

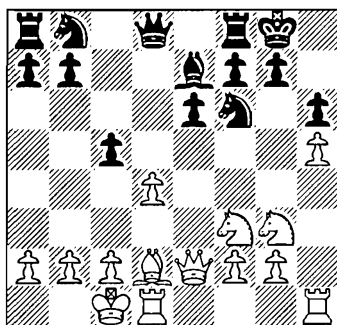
a) 14 ♟c3 ♟bd7 15 dxc5 ♟xc5 16
♞e2 ♞b6 17 ♟d4 ♞a6! and Black had
equalised in Svidler-Leko, Madrid
1998.

b) After 14 ♟e4 ♟bd7 15 dxc5 in
Berelovich-Schlosser, Calcutta 1998,
Black might have tried 15...♞c7!?

c) Finally, 14 ♟e3 ended in disaster
for White after 14...♟bd7 15 ♟e4 ♞c7
16 dxc5 ♞fd8 17 ♟xf6+ ♟xf6 18 ♞c4
♟d5 19 ♟d4 b5! (a strong sacrifice to
gain attacking chances along the b-file)

20 ♞xb5 ♞ab8 21 ♞e2 ♟xc5 22 ♟a1?
(22 ♟e5! was essential with an unclear
position) 22...♟xd4 23 ♞xd4 ♞xb2! 24
♞xd5 (if 24 ♟xb2 ♞c3+ 25 ♟c1
♞a1+ 26 ♟d2 ♞xh1 should win as 27
c4? fails to 27...♞b8) 24...♞db8! 25
♞d3 ♞xc2 26 ♞d1 ♞c4 27 ♞d8+
♞xd8 28 ♞xd8+ ♟h7 and White
resigned in Luther-Rausis, Germany
1998.

13...c5!?



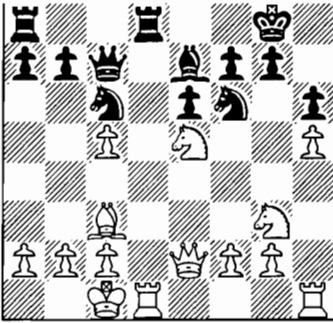
Black avoids the usual 13...♟bd7.
The pawn advance seems riskier now
than after 13 ♟b1 in the note above as
the retreat of the white queen has
cleared the d-file. However, Epishin
has it all worked out.

14 dxc5 ♞c7 15 ♟e5 ♞d8!

This is more accurate than
15...♟xc5, when 16 ♟f4 ♟d5?! 17
♞xd5! exd5 18 ♟g6 ♞a5 19 ♟xf8
♞xa2 20 ♟e6! wins for White, as given
by Epishin in *Informator* 74.

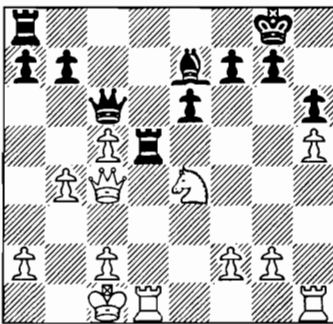
16 ♟c3 ♟c6!

Still Black is in no rush to recapture
the pawn, as now the continuation 17
♟d3 ♟d5 18 ♟d2 b6! would give him
the makings of a strong attack once the
lines on the queenside are forced open.



17 ♟xc6 ♜xc6 18 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 19 ♟e4 ♙e7 20 b4?

White misjudges the situation and does irreparable harm to his king's defences. He should simplify matters by playing with 20 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 21 ♜d1 ♜xd1+ 22 ♙xd1 ♙xc5 with approximate equality after 23 ♜c4. 20...♜d5 21 ♜c4?



This loses without a fight as he has missed Black's reply. Instead Epishin recommends 21 ♜xd5 exd5 22 ♟d6 ♙xd6 23 cxd6 ♜xd6 which should hold for White, though he faces a long and unpleasant defence.

21...b5!

Now White will be forced into a lethal pin on the e-file, since 22 ♜b3 drops the knight at once after 22...♜xd1+.

22 ♜e2 ♙e5 23 f3 f5 24 c4

Unfortunately for White the only way to save the knight is through a suicidal weakening of his queenside. Unsurprisingly, he does not survive long after this concession.

24...bxc4

This side-steps any counterplay after 24...fxe4 25 cxb5.

25 ♜b2 ♜d5 26 b5 ♜c7 27 ♜xd5 exd5 28 ♜d4

White makes a desperate attempt to complicate, as after 28 ♟d2 ♜xc5 his position collapses. However, not surprisingly his king proves to be fatally exposed.

28...dxe4! 29 ♜d5+ ♙h7 30 ♜xa8 ♜e5 31 ♜c8 ♜c3+ 32 ♙d1 ♜d3+ 33 ♙e1 e3 0-1

White resigned as mate is unavoidable.

Summary

Often such things are a matter of fashion, but it is surely noteworthy that since the time when Ivanchuk introduced (8 ♘e5 ♗h7) 9 ♗d3 into top-class tournament play it has been the preferred choice of most of the world elite. Then on 9...♗xd3 10 ♖xd3 e6 11 ♗d2 Black doesn't seem to equalise after 11...♗d6 (Game 16), but 11...♗bd7 seems perfectly fine despite the mishap in Game 17 and 11...♗c7 (Game 18) is also interesting. In Game 19 11 ♗f4 shouldn't be dangerous for Black if he follows the solid line suggested at move 11.

After the alternative 9 ♗c4 e6 10 ♖e2 ♗d5, White has various possibilities but none seem particularly convincing – neither 11 ♖f3 (Game 20) nor 11 ♗b3 (Game 21) lead him to success in the illustrative games.

Finally, Epishin's treatment of the 8 h5 line in Game 22 in which he delays ...♗bd7 deserves close attention.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗f5 5 ♗g3 ♗g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♗f3 ♗f6 (D)

8 ♗e5

8 h5 – Game 22

8...♗h7 9 ♗d3

9 ♗c4 e6 10 ♖e2 ♗d5 (D)

11 ♖f3 – Game 20

11 ♗b3 – Game 21

9...♗xd3 10 ♖xd3 e6 (D) 11 ♗d2

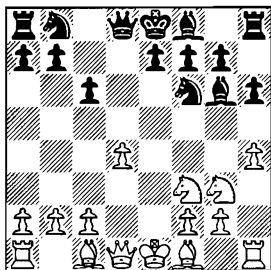
11 ♗f4 – Game 19

11...♗d6

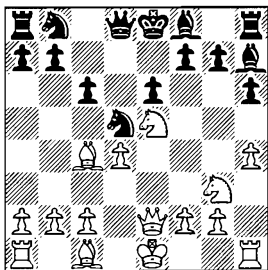
11...♗bd7 – Game 17

11...♗c7 – Game 18

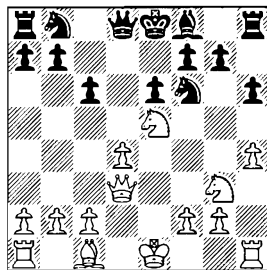
12 f4 – Game 16



7...♗f6



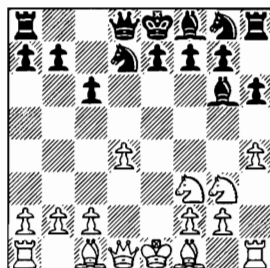
10...♗d5



10...e6

CHAPTER FIVE

Old Classical Main Line with 7...♞d7



1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4
♙f5 5 ♗g3 ♙g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♗f3 ♗d7
8 h5 ♙h7 9 ♙d3 ♙xd3 10 ♚xd3

In this chapter we investigate one of the most well-established variations of the whole Caro-Kann. Whereas there have been exciting new developments in the other two chapters on the Classical variation, the main line with 7...♗d7 has proved less fruitful. It seems to me that many of the ideas here were deeply researched in the years when Karpov was World Champion, and therefore there are few avenues left for modern players to explore. Of course, in one sense this is a compliment to the durability of the opening system: if White had found a way to get a definite advantage against it then he wouldn't be researching 'new' – in the sense of 'forgotten'! – means of attack such as 6 ♙c4 in Chapter 6.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the system hasn't shaken off its reputation as being drawish and leading to slightly worse, though

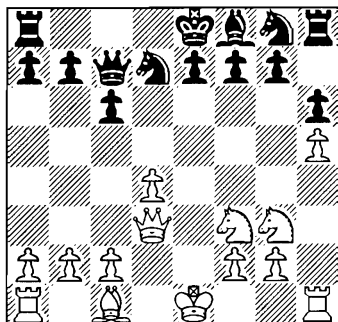
perfectly playable positions with Black, and modern advocates of the Caro-Kann are unwilling to tolerate having to defend with no winning chances. That would also explain why the more provocative 7...♗f6 is enjoying a renaissance.

In any case, you will find several interesting and instructive games in this chapter, but very few startling new ideas or reinterpretations of old lines. The heroes of the variation for Black are still players like Karpov and Korchnoi.

In the first two games Black aims to castle queenside. The critical test is the 'long' variation 10...♚c7 11 ♗d2 ♗gf6 12 0-0-0 e6 13 ♗e4 0-0-0 14 g3 ♗xe4 15 ♚xe4 ♙d6 16 c4 c5 when White has the choice between the solid 17 ♙c3 (Game 23) which gives Black the chance to equalise with best play, or the more aggressive 17 d5 (Game 24). This second option rebounds on White in our illustrative game thanks to Volzhin's resourceful defence, though ambitious Black players should

note that White could have virtually forced a draw at one point in this sequence. Also in the notes to Game 24 you will find two particularly interesting divergences from the long variation – the complex 13 ♖e2!? by White and the little explored but rather appealing move 14...♘c5!? by Black.

In the remaining games Black opts for kingside castling, with the black queen staying put on d8 for some moves. Games 25 and 26 deal with White's ♕f4 response with a typical sequence being 10...e6 11 ♕f4 ♘g6 12 0-0-0 ♕e7. Now 13 ♖b1 ♗b6? turns out badly for Black in Game 25, but instead 13...0-0 would have led to unclear play. In Game 26 White opted for the more aggressive 13 ♘e5, though Black had enough defensive resources. Finally we examine the less effective ♕d2 by White in the typical move order 10...♘g6 11 ♕d2 e6 12 0-0-0 ♕e7, when 13 ♖b1 was too slow to give any real advantage in Game 27, while 13 ♗e2 in Game 28, although more aggressive, also proved insufficient to cause Black problems. Of great importance is the observation in Game 28 about how by adopting the move order of Chapter 4 Black can rule out White's 11 ♕f4.



Black's key decision in this variation is whether he wants his king on the queenside or kingside. If he goes to the queenside then his king is generally safe from a direct pawn storm, as White will also house his king on the queenside and so pushing pawns would expose his own monarch to attack. But equally, with his own king on the queenside Black isn't normally able to generate any real tactical threats against White's king. If he makes just a couple of slips his task in life could easily be reduced to defending against a white pawn advance on the kingside in a simplified middlegame or an endgame. That's exactly what occurs in the present game after Black makes a slight inaccuracy.

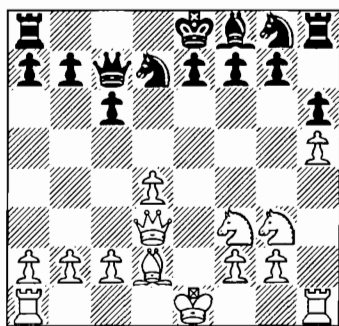
Of course, if White makes some mistakes or over-presses then Black could be successful, as the next game demonstrates, but the impression remains that castling kingside, although it looks riskier, offers Black more dynamic chances. White seems to agree with this verdict, as after say 10...e6 he often plays 11 ♕f4, so that if Black leaves the queen on d8 and plays the line with castling kingside, the bishop

Game 23
Motylev-Slapikas
Swidnica 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4
 ♕f5 5 ♘g3 ♕g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♘f3 ♘d7
 8 h5 ♕h7 9 ♕d3 ♕xd3 10 ♗xd3
 ♗c7

is better placed on f4 than it would be on d2, whereas if he plays 11...♞a5+ 12 ♔d2 ♞c7 – a very common sequence – then Black is being cajoled, though not forced, into playing the less dynamic line with queenside castling. Note that this popular sequence could easily transpose within a couple of moves to our game here where Black has ‘voluntarily’ played 10...♞c7 but with one extra move having been played by both sides. So be warned when you look through games that the same position may have a different move appellation, as you will see in the next game, where 12 0-0-0 was really 13 0-0-0!

11 ♔d2



If White decides that he wants his bishop on f4 at all costs then 11 ♞h4 is way to do it. For example, an interesting continuation is 11...e6 12 ♔f4 ♔d6 13 ♙xd6 ♞xd6 14 ♟e4 ♞e7 15 ♞a3!? ♞xa3 16 bxa3 ♟e7 17 ♟c5 ♟xc5 18 dxc5.

White has wrecked his own pawn structure, but he hopes that the rook on h4 will be able to swing over to the queenside and, in combination with the other rook positioned on b1, will

be able to strike a blow along the b-file before Black has time to develop. After 18...a5 (preventing 19 ♞b4) 19 ♞b1 ♞b8 as in Moreno-Arencibia, Varadero 2000, White should perhaps try 20 ♞a4. What makes the position so difficult to assess, is that even if White wins a pawn he might still be no better or even much worse due to his debilitated structure.

11...♟gf6 12 0-0-0 e6 13 ♟e4

Instead 13 ♞e2 can lead to very complex positions after 13...0-0-0 14 ♟e5 ♟b6, e.g.

a) 15 c4 ♞xd4 16 ♔e3 ♞xd1+ 17 ♞xd1 ♞g8! (not 17...♞xe5 18 ♞d8+) 18 f4 ♟b8 19 ♟e4!? ♟xe4 20 ♔xb6 axb6 21 ♞xe4 ♔d6 22 ♞h7 ♞c8 23 ♞xg7 b5! 24 c5 ♔xe5 25 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 26 fxe5 ♞g8! and Black had the better endgame in Ulibin-Galkin, Russian Cup 1997.

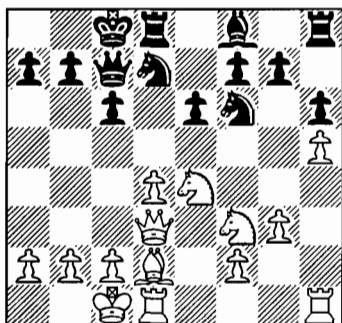
b) 15 ♞h4 ♔d6 16 c4 c5 17 ♟b1 ♞hf8 (17...cxd4 18 c5 ♔xc5 19 ♞c1!? is very risky for Black) 18 dxc5 ♔xe5 19 cxb6 axb6 20 ♞c1 ♞d4 with complications in Tiviakov-Nguyen Anh Dung, Jakarta 1997.

c) 15 ♔a5 ♞d5 16 ♔xb6 axb6 17 c4 ♞a5 18 ♟b1 ♔d6 19 f4 ♞d8 20 ♟e4 ♟xe4 21 ♞xe4 f5 22 ♞e2 b5! again with unclear play in Tiviakov-Galkin, Elista 1996.

13...0-0-0 14 g3!

More than thirty years after it was introduced by Efim Geller, this little pawn move is still regarded as White's best try for advantage. The positional threat of 15 ♔f4, supporting an incursion with ♟d6+, persuades Black to exchange the knight on e4. This helps White increase his control of the e5-

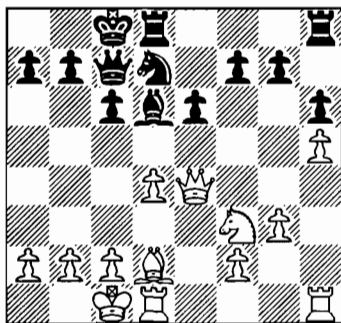
point and also gets his queen away from any possible pin on the d-file after a future ...c6-c5.



14...dxc5

The alternative 14...dxc5 has long been thought to give White a slight edge after 15 dxc5 e5xc5, but in Kudrin-Furdzik, Philadelphia 1999, Black came up with an interesting plan to invigorate his position: 16 c4 ehe8 17 e3 ed6!? 18 we2 eb8 (he begins by tucking his king away in the corner) 19 eb1 ea8 20 we2 b5!? 21 de5 (Black has plenty of play after 21 cxb5 cxb5 22 wxb5 eb8 followed by ...d5) 21...bxc4 22 wxc4 d5 with at least equal chances for Black.

15 we4 ed6



16 c4

Other things being equal, White can always expect a slight advantage in this type of centre if he manages to consolidate his hold on the strategically important d5-square with this pawn move. The white minor pieces now have a potential outpost on e5, whereas the black minor pieces are denied a similar strong square on d5.

A quieter approach was 16 we2 ehe8 17 eb1, which provoked the reaction 17...b5?! in J.Polgar-Adianto, Sanur 2000, when after 18 c4! bxc4 19 wxc4 db6 20 we2 dd5 21 ec1 eb7 22 de5! Black's weaknesses on the c-file and the queenside in general proved more important than the admittedly fine-looking knight on d5. Polgar later suggested 17...e5!? 18 dxe5 dxc5 19 de5 e5xe5 20 ehe1 ee6 21 wg4 as only a slight plus for White. However, there also doesn't seem to be anything wrong with 17...df6 18 c4 (if 18 de5 c5!) 18...c5 19 ec3 cxd4! 20 dxd4 a6 which proved okay via a transposition for Black in Dzhakaev-Kharitonov, Hoogeveen 2000.

An alternative with independent value was 16 ehe1, when 16...df6 17 wh4!? c5 18 eb1 cxd4 19 dxd4 wc4!? 20 b3 was played in Hracek-Nisipeanu, Krynica 1998, and now 20...wc5 is unclear.

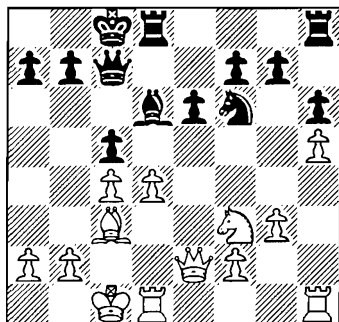
16...c5

Black for his part can be happy to have carried out this thematic attack on White's centre.

17 ec3

The more aggressive 17 d5 is analysed in the next game.

17...df6 18 we2



18...♖he8?

This is a very instructive moment, as after White's precise reply Slapikas never escapes from the bind.

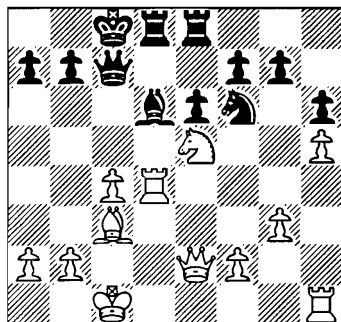
A much better way to handle the position was 18...cxd4! 19 ♘xd4 (after 19 ♙xd4 ♖he8 the option of 20 ♖xd4! in the game has vanished) 19...a6 (ruling out 20 ♘b5) 20 ♖b1 ♗d7 (preparing active play along the d-file) 21 ♖c1 ♖b8 22 ♖c2 ♖c8 23 b3 ♗c5 24 ♘f3 ♖cd8 25 ♘e5 ♙xe5 26 ♗xe5+ ♗xe5 27 ♙xe5+ ♖c8 28 ♖h4 (the same idea will be seen in the main game, but here Black has sufficient counterplay) 28...♗d1+ 29 ♖c1 ♖1d2 30 ♖c2 ♗d1+ 31 ♖b2 ♘e8! (Black prepares to strengthen his pawn structure on the kingside) 32 ♙c3 f6 33 ♖c2 ♘c7 34 ♖g4 ♖8d7 35 ♖c2 ♖h1 36 ♗d2 ♖xd2+ 37 ♖xd2 ♘e8 38 ♖e4 e5 39 g4 and a draw was agreed in Berelovich-Kharitonov, St Petersburg 1999.

19 ♘e5!

Now it soon becomes clear why Black should have played 18...cxd4: he needed to deflect the knight from the e5-square.

19...cxd4 20 ♖xd4!

This is much better than the obvious 20 ♙xd4.



20...♙xe5

If Black plays quietly – say with 20...♖b8 – then White can continue his build-up along the d-file with 21 ♖hd1, when he is already threatening 22 ♘xf7! So Black decides to take on e5, though the white bishop will prove much stronger than the black knight in the endgame.

21 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 22 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 23 ♙xe5 ♗d3

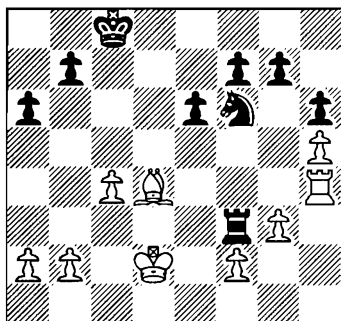
It was better to consolidate his pawn structure on the kingside with 23...♘e8 followed by ...f7-f6 and ...e6-e5 as in the example given at move 18 above. In putting his pawns on dark squares Black would thereby succeed in reducing the scope of the white bishop.

24 ♖h4!

White finds a powerful way to activate his rook. Black can only prevent 25 ♖f4 by putting his own rook on a passive square.

24...♖f3 25 ♙d4 a6 26 ♖d2!

The white king joins in the battle. The plan is to evict the rook from f3 and then begin an advance of the kingside pawns.



26...♖f5 27 ♔e3! ♕d7

Both 27...♖xh5 28 ♖xf6 and 27...♗xh5 28 g4 lose a piece.

28 g4 ♖a5 29 f4!

The battle will be decided on the kingside, so White ignores the attack on a2.

29...♖xa2 30 ♖xf6 gxf6 31 g5! ffg5 32 fxg5 ♔e7

If 32...hxg5 33 ♖h2 (simplest) and the h-pawn is unstoppable.

33 gxxh6 ♔f6 34 ♖f4+ 1-0

Game 24
Frolov-Volzhin
Samara 2000

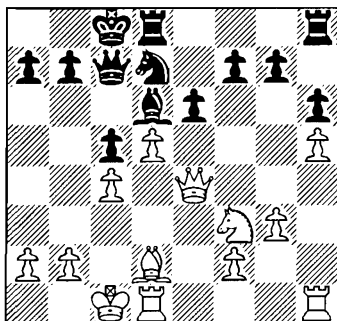
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♖f5 5 ♗g3 ♖g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♗f3 ♗d7 8 h5 ♖h7 9 ♖d3 ♖xd3 10 ♗xd3 ♗c7

The exact game continuation was in fact 10...♗gf6 11 ♖f4 ♗a5+ 12 ♖d2 ♗c7 and only then did things proceed as in the game as given here, except with one extra move having been played by both sides: 13 0-0-0 e6 14 ♗e4 0-0-0 15 g3 ♗xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♖d6 17 c4 c5 18 d5 etc.

11 ♖d2 ♗gf6 12 0-0-0 e6 13 ♗e4

0-0-0 14 g3 ♗xe4 15 ♗xe4 ♖d6 16 c4 c5 17 d5

White tries for a sharp tactical solution to the position. The more solid 17 ♖c3 was seen in the game above.



17...♗f6 18 ♗c2 exd5 19 cxd5 ♖he8 20 ♖c3 ♗d7 21 ♖xf6 gxf6 22 ♔b1

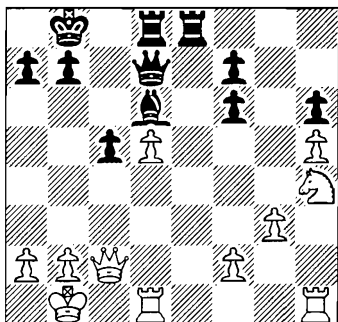
Instead 22 ♗h4 led to equality after the sharp continuation 22...♖e5!? 23 f4 ♖xh5 24 ♗e2 ♖xd5! 25 ♖xd5 ♖xf4+ 26 gxf4 ♗xd5 27 ♗d1 ♗xa2 28 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 in De Firmian-Fridman, Essen 1999. Black's four pawns and the open white king balance the extra piece. White tried to win with 29 ♗f5, but after 29...♗e6 30 ♗d3+ ♔c7 31 ♗xh6 ♗e1+ 32 ♔c2 ♗h4 33 ♗xf7 ♗xf4 34 ♗d8+ ♔c6 35 ♗e8+ ♔b6 36 ♗e6+ ♔c7 37 ♗e7+ ♔b6 38 ♗d6 ♗a4+ 39 ♔d2 ♗f4+ a few more checks were sufficient to confirm a draw by repetition.

White's idea with his quiet king move in the main game is to enter this sequence with 23 ♗h4 having ruled out ...♖xf4 with check.

22...♔b8

Black also takes the chance to rule out an annoying check on f5.

23 ♖h4



23...♗g4! 24 ♗f5 ♗e2!

Of course, he avoids the horrible endgame after 24...♗xf5? 25 ♘xf5. If now 25 ♗xf6?? ♙e5 wins at once.

25 ♖he1

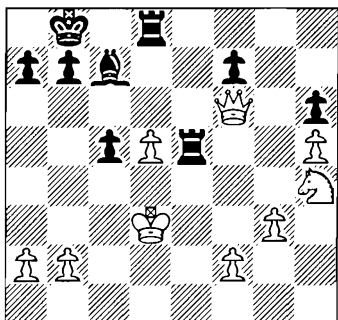
As this turns out badly, White's whole strategy with 22 ♖b1 has failed.

25...♗xe1 26 ♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 27 ♖c2 ♖e2+ 28 ♖d3

28 ♖b1 ♙e5 is also awful for White.

28...♖e5 29 ♗xf6 ♙c7!!

The key move, defending the rook and uncovering an attack on d5. Instead after 29...♖xd5+? 30 ♖e4 the white king can run to the safety of the kingside, where the knight helps its defence.



30 ♗xh6 ♖dxd5+

Now the white king is unable to escape from the attentions of the black pieces and will be driven back to the queenside.

31 ♖c2 ♖e2+ 32 ♖c1 a6 33 ♗f8+ ♖d8 34 ♗xf7 ♙e5 35 ♗b3 ♖xf2 36 h6 c4 37 ♗b6 ♖dd2 38 h7 ♖c2+ 0-1

Game 25

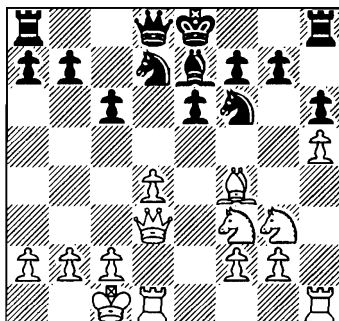
Galego-Ribeiro

Porto 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♙f5 5 ♘g3 ♙g6 6 ♘f3 ♘d7 7 h4 h6 8 h5 ♙h7 9 ♙d3 ♙xd3 10 ♗xd3 e6 11 ♙f4 ♘g6

If Black wants to castle queenside in this line, then he has to gain the c7-square for his queen with 11...♗a5+ 12 ♙d2 ♗c7 etc., transposing to Games 23 and 24.

12 0-0-0 ♙e7



This position was much debated by the world elite around twenty years ago. The then World Champion Anatoly Karpov has been on both sides of the argument.

13 ♖b1

The alternatives 13 c4 and 13 ♘e5

are considered in Game 26.

13...♚b6?

This commits the queen prematurely. Not only does it lose its defensive role on d8, but also on b6 it obstructs the b-pawn and so rules out any counterplay based on ...b7-b5.

An interesting alternative idea is 13...a5!? Black plans to use the a-pawn as a battering ram to weaken White's defences on the queenside. Then 14 ♖e4 ♖xe4 15 ♚xe4 ♖f6 16 ♚e2 a4 17 ♖e5 ♚d5 18 g4 a3 19 b3 ♚e4 20 ♙e3 0-0 was unclear in Torre-Karpov, Moscow 1981.

Instead 13...0-0 is a sensible developing move, after which White has a choice.

a) Black also has good chances to equalise after 14 ♖e4 ♖xe4 15 ♚xe4 ♖f6 16 ♚e2 ♚d5 17 ♖e5 ♚e4!

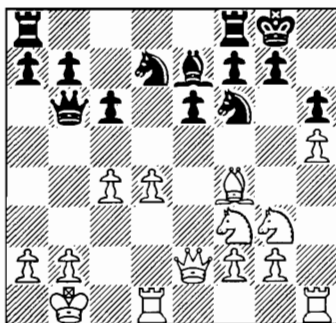
b) 14 c4. Now Black can continue in the style of the line above with 14...a5!?, when after 15 ♖e5 a4 16 ♖e4 a3 17 b3 ♖xe4 18 ♚xe4 ♖xe5 19 ♙xe5 ♙f6 20 f4 ♚e7 21 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 22 ♚e5 ♚d8 23 ♜h3 a draw was agreed in W.Watson-Berg, Herning 1991. Probably White didn't like the look of his position after 23...♙a5 when he either has to weaken his pawn structure with 24 c5 (allowing 24...♚d5) or retreat his queen.

A more solid option is 14...♚a5, when 15 ♚e2 ♜ad8 16 ♖e5 ♖xe5 17 ♙xe5 ♖d7 18 f4 ♖xe5 19 dx5 ♜xd1+ 20 ♜xd1 ♜d8 21 ♖e4 ♜xd1+ 22 ♚xd1 ♚b6 23 ♚e2 ♚d4! 24 ♖c2 b5! gave Black good play in Luther-Groszpetzer, Pardubice 1999.

c) White can instead try to exploit the bishop on f4 with the immediate

14 ♖e5 ♖xe5 (an interesting idea is 14...♜c8 15 ♚f3 ♚a5 16 c4 ♜fd8 17 ♜d3 ♚a6 18 ♜hd1 b5 19 c5 b4, as in Glek-Bareev, St Petersburg 1998, and now Bareev recommends 20 ♖e4! ♖xe4 21 ♚xe4 ♖f6 22 ♚e2 ♚b5 with unclear play) 15 ♙xe5 ♖d7 (15...♖g4!? looks stronger) 16 ♙f4 ♖f6 17 ♚e2 ♚b6 18 ♜d3 ♜ad8 19 ♜hd1, as in Kupreichik-S.Kasparov, Minsk 2000, and here 19...c5 looks best with unclear play.

14 c4 0-0 15 ♚e2



Already there are ideas of 16 d5 or 16 ♖f5.

15...♜fe8 16 ♖e5 a5 17 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 18 ♖e4 ♖f6 19 ♖d6!

This ensures White gains a bind on the central dark squares.

19...♙xd6 20 ♙xd6 ♚d8 21 ♙f4 ♚e7 22 ♜h3!

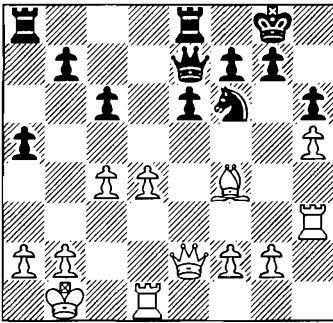
see following diagram

The rook prepares to home in on the g7-square.

22...c5 23 ♜g3 ♖h8 24 ♙e5 cxd4

The entry of the other white rook into the attack is decisive. The only hope was 24...♜ad8.

25 ♜xd4 ♜ad8 26 ♜f4

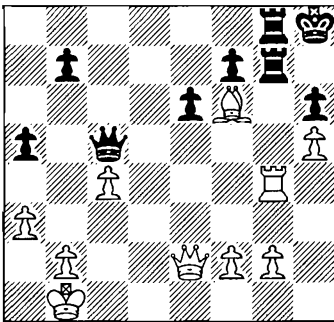


White's pressure on the kingside is now irresistible.

26...Rg8 27 Rxc7!

Here 27 Rxf3!, aiming for a mid-game win, also looks decisive.

27...Rxc7 28 Qxf6 Qd6 29 Rg4 Rg8 30 a3 Qc5



31 Qe5

This wins, but much more elegant and forcing was 31 Rxc7 Rxc7 32 Qg4!, when 32...Qf5+ 33 Qxf5 exf5 34 b4 axb4 (if 34...a4 35 c5 Qh7 36 Qxc7 Qxc7 37 b5 etc.) 35 a4 Qg8 36 Qxc7 Qxc7 37 c5 Qf8 38 c6 bxc6 39 a5 queens. Similar lines occur after 32...Qf8 33 b4 axb4 (33...a4 34 c5) 34 a4 Qh7 35 Qxc7+ Qxc7 36 Qxc7 Qxc7 37 c5 etc.

31...Qxe5 32 Qxe5 Qh7 33 Rxc7+ Rxc7 34 Qxc7 Qxc7 35 b4 axb4 36 axb4 Qf6 37 Qc2 Qe5 38 Qd3 f5 39 g3 Qd6 40 f4 e5 41 fxe5+ Qxe5 42 Qe3 b6 1-0

The outside passed pawn will win the day.

Game 26

De Firmian-Korchnoi

Lugano 1989

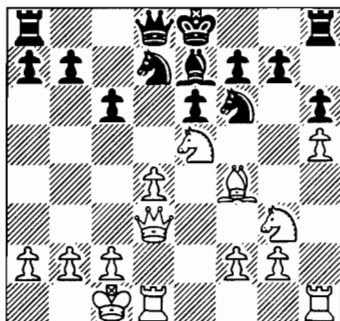
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Qc3 dxe4 4 Qxe4 Qf5 5 Qg3 Qg6 6 h4 h6 7 Qf3 Qd7 8 h5 Qh7 9 Qd3 Qxd3 10 Qxd3 Qg6 11 Qf4 e6 12 0-0-0 Qe7 13 Qe5

This is White's most aggressive option at this juncture.

After the alternative 13 c4 Black has the chance to disrupt White's smooth build-up with 13...b5!? Now if White accepts the pawn offer with 14 cxb5? cxb5 15 Qxb5 0-0 he will soon be facing a big attack along the open files on the queenside. So the best response is 14 c5, when play could go 14...0-0 15 Qb1 a5 16 Qc1 a4 17 Qe2 Qb8, and now instead of the direct 18 g4?! as played in Ivanchuk-Seirawan, Novi Sad 1990, Seirawan recommends the more subtle 18 Qf4! Then after 18...Qd8 19 Qc2 b4 20 Qc4! Qd5 21 Qxd5 exd5 22 Qd3 Black's attack can't get through on the queenside and White can prepare his own pawn advance on the kingside.

In a later game the ever-inventive Korchnoi came up with a radical way to improve Black's play: the king should go to the queenside rather than the kingside! He tried 14...a5

and after 15 ♖f1 a4 16 ♗e3 ♜a5 17 g4 0-0-0! 18 ♖b1 ♖b7 19 ♜c2 ♞he8 20 ♞dg1 a3 an unclear position was reached in Ivanchuk-Korchnoi, Monaco 1993.



13...0-0

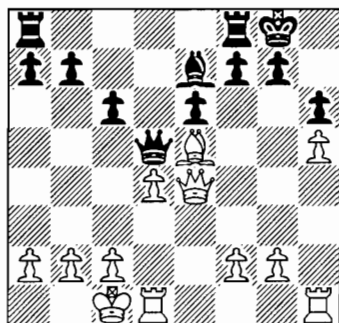
Or 13...a5!? planning to strike out at White's queenside. After 14 ♞he1 Black has to be careful, since 14...a4? allows 15 ♗g6!, e.g. 15...♗d5 16 ♗f5! ♗f8 17 ♗d6! and Black was already lost in Beliavsky-Larsen, Tilburg, 1981. This game finished in drastic style after 17...♞g8 18 c4 ♗b4 19 ♜h3 fxg6 20 ♞xe6+ ♖f7 21 hxg6+ ♖xe6 22 ♞e1+ ♗e5 23 ♗xe5 1-0. Instead of allowing this Black should play 14...0-0 with unclear play, though in my opinion White retains the better chances.

14 ♗e4?!

After this Black is able to equalise. The critical variation was 14 c4 c5 15 d5 and now rather than 15...♗xe5?! 16 ♗xe5 ♗g4?!, when 17 ♗xg7! gave White a decisive attack after 17...♖xg7 18 ♜e2 ♗g5+ 19 ♖b1 ♗f6 20 dxex6 ♜c8 21 e7 ♞e8 22 ♞d6 ♜g4 23 ♜e5 in the well-known game Karpov-Hübner, Tilburg 1982, a much more solid

continuation for Black is 15...♗d6 16 ♗g6!? ♗xf4+ 17 ♗xf4 ♜c7! etc.

14...♗xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♗xe5 16 ♗xe5 ♜d5!



A timely entrance by the black queen. Now White should content himself with 17 ♜xd5 cxd5, when Black has a favourable pawn structure on the queenside and can apply pressure down the c-file, but as compensation White can expand on the kingside where he has a space advantage.

17 ♜g4?

White wants to attack, but in this type of position an invasion by the black queen on a2 is always something special. You will have noticed looking at games in this variation, that even when there are a lot of active moves for White to choose from, he often takes time out to play ♖b1 to safeguard a2.

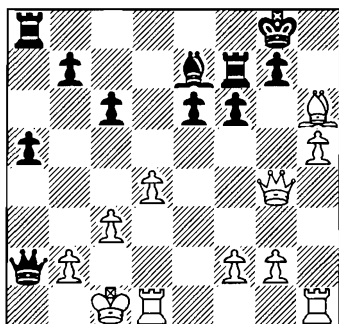
17...f6 18 ♗f4 ♜xa2 19 ♗xh6 ♞f7

Now the white rook's pawn will prove to have been far more valuable than Black's.

20 c3 a5!

There is little White can do against this advance except run with his king, since his already weakened queenside

defences are about to be pulverised

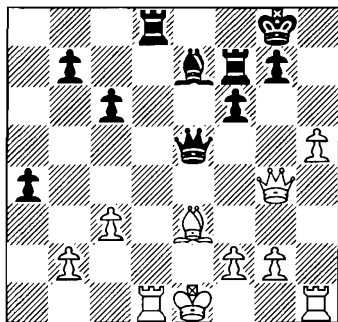


21 ♖d2 a4 22 ♖c2 ♖b3+ 23 ♖d3

Not a very nice journey for the white king, but his residence on the queenside was on fire. It turns out the centre is also not exactly hospitable.

23...♖d8 24 ♖e2 e5! 25 dxe5 ♖b5+ 26 ♖e1 ♖xe5+ 27 ♖e3?

It was necessary to play 27 ♖e2 when White is only slightly worse. This verdict seems to suggest that Black didn't find the most incisive moves to exploit White's mistake at move 17. In any case, after the game move Korchnoi finishes the game in energetic style.



27...♖xd1+ 28 ♖xd1 ♖d5+ 29 ♖e2 f5! 30 ♖g6 f4 31 ♖c1 ♖c5!

So that if 32 ♖d1 ♖e7+ wins.

32 ♖d3 ♖xg2 33 ♖f1 ♖g4+ 34 ♖d2 ♖d7 0-1

Game 27

Macieja-Karpov

Polanica Zdroj 1998

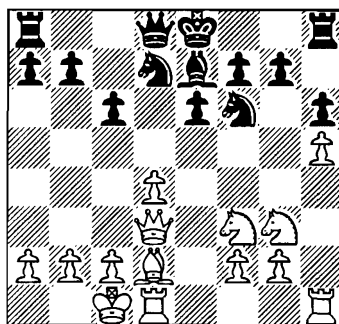
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♖f5 5 ♖g3 ♖g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♖f3 ♖d7 8 h5 ♖h7 9 ♖d3 ♖xd3 10 ♖xd3 e6 11 ♖d2

As we have seen, 11 ♖f4 is White's most accurate choice in this particular move order.

11...♖gf6

An alternative idea is to delay the development of the king's knight in favour of preparing to castle queenside, but after 11...♖c7 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13 ♖e2 ♖d6 14 ♖e4 ♖f4 (naturally not wishing to give White the two bishops for nothing) 15 ♖xf4 ♖xf4+ 16 ♖e3! (White finds a way to strengthen his centre) 16...♖xe3+ 17 fxe3 ♖df6 18 ♖f2 ♖e7 19 e4 White was slightly better in Berelovich-Burmakin, St Petersburg 2000.

12 0-0-0 ♖e7



The actual move order of the game

was 7... ♖f6 8 h5 ♙h7 9 ♙d3 ♙xd3 10 ♚xd3 e6 11 ♙d2 ♙e7 12 0-0-0 ♖bd7 – see Chapter 4, Game 22 for a full discussion of this important sequence, which has the key advantage of defusing an early ♙f4 by White.

Instead of 12... ♙e7 Black can also try the sharp 12... ♚c7 13 ♚c2 ♙d6 14 ♖f5 ♙f4! 15 ♙xf4 (White could play 15 ♖xg7+ ♙f8 16 ♖xe6+ fxe6 17 ♚xe6 with three pawns for the knight, but Black's extra piece is quite useful in the middlegame) 15... ♚xf4+ 16 ♖e3 0-0 17 g3 ♚c7 18 g4 c5! 19 dxc5 ♖e4! with balanced chances in Galkin-Khlian, Russia 1998.

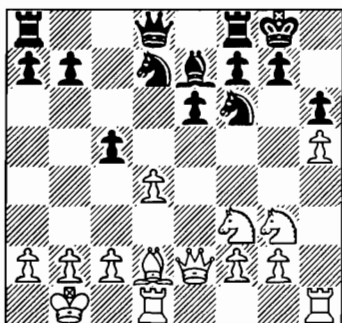
13 ♙b1

This is too slow to set Black any problems. More critical is 13 ♚e2 which is examined in the next game, though even there Black appears to equalise without much trouble.

13...0-0 14 ♚e2

Or 14 ♖e4 c5 15 dxc5 ♖xc5 16 ♖xc5 ♙xc5 17 ♚b3 ♚d5! (after the exchange of queens the weakness of f2 becomes significant) 18 ♚xd5 ♖xd5 19 ♙e1 ♚fd8 and Black held the initiative in Milligan-Kachiani, Istanbul 2000.

14...c5



Already Black is looking comfortable.

15 c4 cxd4 16 ♖xd4 ♚b6 17 ♙c3

If 17 ♖df5 ♙c5! 18 ♖xh6+ gxh6 19 ♙xh6 ♚fd8 20 ♖e4 ♙d4! and Black has refuted the attack according to Karpov in *Informator 73*.

17...♙b4

This rules out any ideas of ♖gf5 in the future and carries out a favourable exchange of bishops.

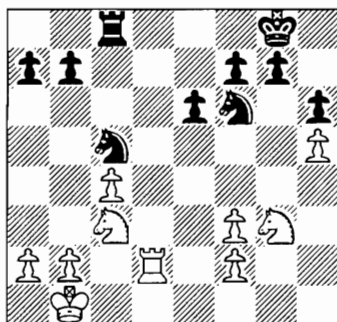
18 ♖b5 ♙xc3 19 ♖xc3 ♖c5 20 ♚d2 ♚ad8 21 ♚hd1 ♚xd2 22 ♚xd2 ♚c6

The attack on g2 provokes a surprising response.

23 ♚f3?

It shows enormous self-confidence to enter such an endgame against Karpov! Instead 23 f4 looks fairly equal – White's pawns are a bit loose but his control of the d-file must be worth something.

23...♚xf3 24 gxf3 ♚c8



It is highly instructive to see how Karpov now gradually wears down White's pawn structure on both wings with a series of undermining attacks.

25 b3 ♙f8 26 ♖ce4 ♙e7 27 ♖xf6 gxf6!

The correct recapture. Now Black

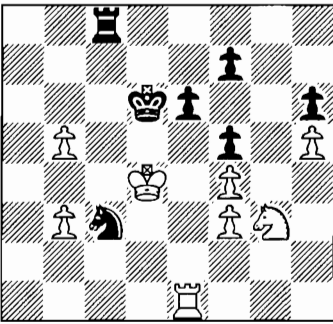
plans to advance the front f-pawn to f4 and thereby drive the knight away from the defence of the pawn on h5, when it would soon be lost to the black king or rook. White is able to prevent this, but only at the cost of further weakening his kingside pawns.

28 ♖c2 f5 29 f4 ♟d7 30 ♖d3 ♜c6
31 ♖e3 ♟f6 32 f3 ♜c8 33 ♞d1 a6
34 a4 b5!

To add further to White's troubles, this temporary sacrifice gives him a couple of weak pawns on the queen-side to worry about.

35 axb5 axb5 36 cxb5 ♞b8 37 ♖d3
♟d5 38 ♞e1 ♖d6 39 ♖c4 ♜c8+ 40
♟d4 ♟c3

Now Black regains his pawn and leaves White with the impossible task of holding on to all his weak pawns.



41 ♟e2 ♟xb5+ 42 ♖d3 ♟c7 43
♟c3 ♟a6 44 ♞a1 ♟b4+ 45 ♖d2
♟c6 46 ♞a4 ♞b8 47 ♖c2 ♞b4 48
♞xb4 ♟xb4+ 49 ♟d2 ♖c5 50 ♟a4+
♟d4 51 ♟c3 ♟c6 52 ♟a4 ♟a5 53
b4 ♟c4+ 54 ♖e2 ♟e3 55 ♟c5 ♟d5
56 ♟d3 f6 57 ♟c5 ♟xf4+ 58 ♖f2
♖c4 59 ♖e3 ♖xb4 60 ♟d7 ♟xh5 61
♟f8 e5 0-1

A fine display by the former World

Champion. In games of this type he is still the king of chess!

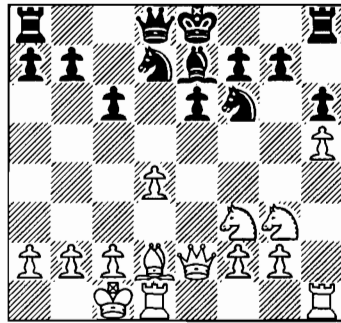
Game 28
Xie Jun-Brunner
Bern 1995

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟c3 dxe4 4 ♟xe4
♟f5 5 ♟g3 ♟g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♟f3 ♟d7

This game, like the previous one, began with the 'Modern' move order (7...♟f6 8 h5 ♟h7 9 ♟d3 ♟xd3 10 ♜xd3 e6 11 ♟d2 ♟bd7 12 0-0-0 ♟e7 etc.).

8 h5 ♟h7 9 ♟d3 ♟xd3 10 ♜xd3
♟gf6 11 ♟d2 e6 12 0-0-0 ♟e7 13
♞e2

This looks as if it should be the most dangerous move for Black to face, but judging from recent games he has absolutely nothing to fear. Therefore the whole line seems harmless.



13...0-0 14 ♟e5

After 14 ♞he1 c5 15 ♟f5?! (or 15 dxc5 ♜c7!?) 15...cxd4 16 ♟3xd4 ♟c5! White had no convincing sacrifice in Spasov-Magem Badals, Debrecen 1992.

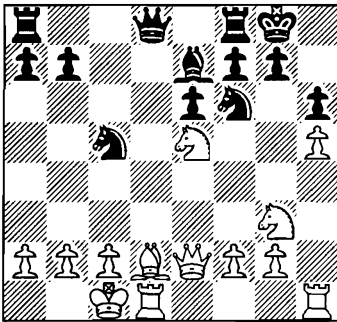
14...c5 15 dxc5

Black also equalised easily after 15 ♟xd7 ♜xd7 16 dxc5 ♜c7 17 ♟e4

♖xe4 18 ♜xe4 ♜xc5 in Xie Jun-Kachiani, Istanbul 2000, and a draw followed on 19 ♙e3 ♜b5 20 ♙d4 ♜fd8 21 ♜e5 ♜xe5 22 ♙xe5.

15...♖xc5!

This fearless move is an idea of the Spanish GM Magem Badals, although 15...♙xc5 isn't bad either, e.g. 16 ♖xd7 ♜xd7 17 ♖e4 ♖xe4 18 ♜xe4 ♜c7 19 ♜g4 ♙xf2 20 ♙xh6, as in Godena-Brunner, Horgen 1994, and now Brunner gives 20...♜g3 as being equal. However, as will be seen the game move gives Black chances to play for a win.



16 ♖g4

Not 16 ♙xh6? ♜a5 when if the bishop retreats to safety 17...♜xa2 puts the white king in grave danger.

Instead 16 ♖b1 defends a2 and so threatens 17 ♙xh6, but 16...♜b6 doesn't leave White with any trace of an opening advantage – indeed, an attack on his king with ...♖a4 will soon be looming. White decided to exchange queens with 17 ♖c4? ♜a6 18 ♖e3 ♜xc2 19 ♖xe2, but she was terribly passive after 19...♖ce4 20 ♙e1 ♜fd8 in Babaeva-Chiburdanidze, Istanbul 2000, and was soon losing.

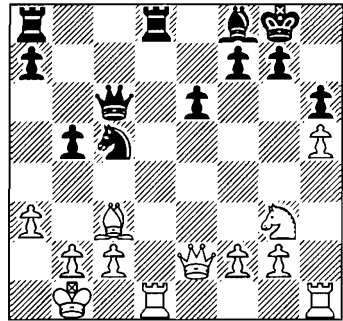
16...♜c7 17 ♖b1 ♜fd8 18 ♙c3 ♖xg4

Another good continuation for Black was to simplify with 18...♜xd1+ 19 ♜xd1 ♜d8, when after 20 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 21 ♖xf6+ ♘xf6 22 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 23 b3 ♜d4! the dominant black queen gave him the better chances in Xie Jun-Hort, Marbella 1999.

19 ♜xg4 ♙f8 20 a3?

Black seems slightly better, but creating a target for a black queenside pawn advance hardly helps. Instead Brunner suggests either 20 ♙d4 or 20 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 21 ♜d1 ♖a4 22 ♙d2! as a better way to defend the position.

20...b5! 21 ♜e2 ♜c6



22 f3?

Now Black's attack becomes irresistible. It was necessary to deflect the black rook from a8 with 22 ♜xd8.

22...♜xd1+ 23 ♜xd1 a5

The rest is all very easy.

24 ♜d2 b4 25 axb4 axb4 26 ♙xb4 ♜a6 27 ♙a3 ♖a4!

This removes the last defender on the a-file as 28 ♙xf8 ♖c3+ leads to mate.

28 ♜d4 ♙xa3 29 bxa3 ♜b5+ 30 ♜b4 ♖c3+ 0-1

Summary

As has already been observed in the introduction to the chapter, theory is developing at a slower pace in the Classical 7...♞d7 line than in the two other chapters on the Classical given in this book. In general, Black's plan of castling queenside exposes him to greater risks than going to the kingside, as he could end up in a slightly worse endgame (as in Game 23). On the other hand, a more aggressive approach by White (Game 24) gives him enough chances for counterplay.

In contrast, Black doesn't have too many worries when he castles kingside, even if he has to face White's strongest ♠f4 idea (Games 25-26). Things are even more comfortable for him if he can 'cheat' White into playing the less effective ♠d2 – see the analysis in Games 27 and 28 and the discussion therein on move order.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞c3 dxe4 4 ♞xe4 ♠f5 5 ♞g3 ♠g6 6 h4 h6 7 ♞f3 ♞d7 8 h5 ♠h7 9 ♠d3 ♠xd3 10 ♚xd3 (D)

10...♚c7

10...c6

11 ♠f4 ♞gf6 12 0-0-0 ♠e7 (D)

13 ♚b1 – Game 25

13 ♞e5 – Game 26

11 ♠d2 ♠c7 12 0-0-0 ♞bd7

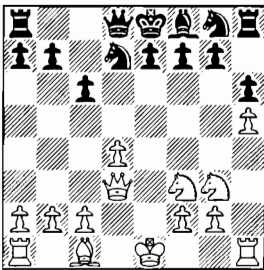
13 ♚b1 – Game 27

13 ♚c2 – Game 28

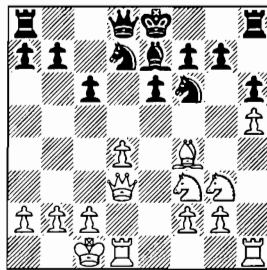
11 ♠d2 ♞gf6 12 0-0-0 e6 13 ♞e4 0-0-0 14 g3 ♞xe4 15 ♚xe4 ♠d6 16 c4 c5 (D) 17 ♠c3

17 d5 – Game 24

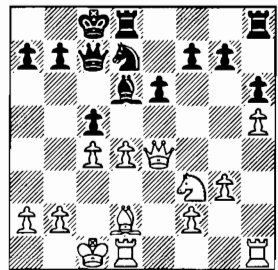
17...♞f6 – Game 23



10 ♚xd3



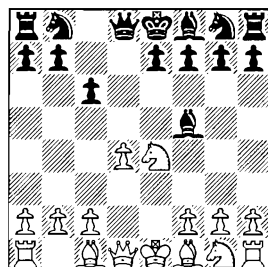
12...♠e7



16...c5

CHAPTER SIX

Classical System: Other Variations



1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♕f5

The main theme of this chapter is the recent revival of interest in Paul Keres's old idea of 6 ♗c4. The first three games examine the sharpest variation 6...e6 7 ♗1e2 ♗f6 8 0-0 ♗d6 9 f4 when Black has to take adequate measures against the further advance of the f-pawn. Black fails to do so in Game 29 and is completely crushed. This game demonstrates that even strong modern grandmasters can be ill-prepared to meet this dangerous system. In Game 30 Black delayed the advance of the pawn with 9...♗d7, but it still managed to push on in sacrificial style after 10 ♗d3 ♗xd3 11 ♗xd3 g6 12 f5! when 12...gxf5 would have led to wild complications. Instead in the game 12...exf5? led to disaster. In Game 31 Black decides to block the advance of the f-pawn once and for all with 9...♗f5!? and achieved a solid enough position after 10 ♗xf5 exf5 11 ♗g3 g6 12 ♖e1+ ♗f8.

However, recently Black has been

applying the principle that prevention is better than a cure, and has adopted a move order which may dissuade White from even advancing 9 f4. This move order with 7...♗d6 is seen in Games 32-34. After 8 ♗f4 ♗c7 9 ♗fh5 leads to a double-edged battle in Game 32, while in Game 33 White plays an imprecise move order and is punished by Dreev in ruthless style. Finally after 6 ♗c4 in Game 34 White plays in a very positional style, after which Black succeeds in equalising before being led astray by his attempt to generate winning chances.

The last two games in the chapter see other variants from the main line by White, namely 6 h4 h6 7 f4!? (Game 35) and 5 ♗c5 (Game 36). In both cases Black should equalise, but these are respectable systems.

Game 29

Belotti-Solozhenkin

Montecatini Terme 1999

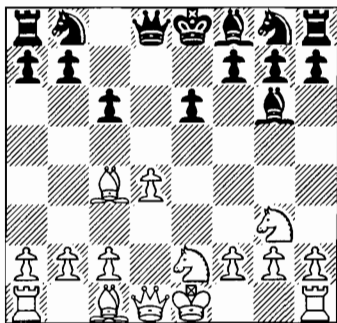
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗d2 dxe4 4 ♗xe4

♙f5 5 ♘g3 ♙g6 6 ♙c4

The alternative 6 ♘1e2 reaches the territory of Games 32-34 after 6...e6 7 ♘f4 ♙d6 8 c3 ♘f6 9 ♙c4 etc., but notice that 9 h4?! is ineffective here after the simple 9...0-0! as 10 h5 ♙f5 does not cause Black any problems at all.

6...e6 7 ♘1e2

Joe Gallagher told me recently that he has had great success with the line 7 ♘f3!?, e.g. 7...♘f6 8 0-0 ♘bd7 9 ♙e1 ♙e7 10 ♘h4! ♚c7 11 c3 ♘d5 12 ♘xg6 hxg6 13 ♚f3 and White won after a hard fight in Gallagher-Van der Sterren, Istanbul 2000. In general, if Black ever tries to free himself with ...c6-c5 then the white bishops will have good opportunities to exploit the open lines.

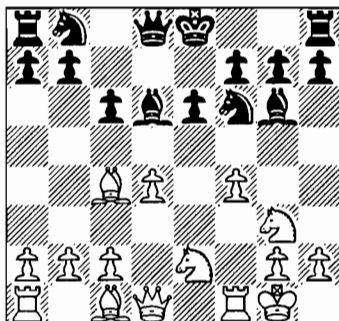


7...♘f6

If Black wants to take the sting out of White's ninth move, then 7...♙d6 is a better move order – see Games 32-34.

8 0-0 ♙d6 9 f4!?

This aggressive thrust is an idea of the great Paul Keres. As will be seen it contains more venom than is first apparent.



9...♚c7?

This natural response fails to stop the advance of White's f-pawn. Better defences are analysed in Games 30 and 31.

10 f5!

Almost every games in this line has led to catastrophic defeats for Black.

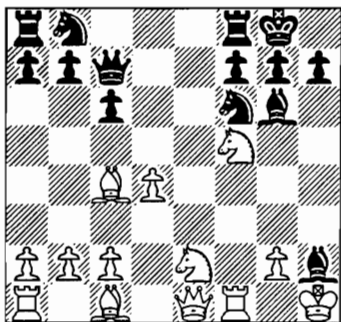
10...exf5 11 ♘xf5 ♙xh2+

He could decline the pawn with 11...♙xf5 12 ♙xf5 ♘bd7, but 13 ♘g3! keeps the advantage, e.g. 13...0-0-0 (13...♙xg3 14 ♚e2+!? looks good for White) 14 ♙xf7 ♙h8 15 ♙b3 ♙xg3 (this is essential to get the pawn back, but White's dark-squared bishop is very strong) 16 hxg3 ♚xg3 17 ♙f4 ♚g6 18 ♙g5 ♚e8 19 ♚f3 ♚e4 20 ♙f1 ♚xd4+ (he had to try to defend the endgame after 20...♚xf3 21 ♙xf3) 21 ♙e3 ♚h4 22 ♙e6 (Black is now under tremendous pressure) 22...♘e4? 23 ♙xd7+ ♘xd7 24 ♙xg7+ ♚e6 25 ♙f7 ♘g3 26 ♚f6+ 1-0 Marciano-Mittelman, Biel 1998.

12 ♙h1 0-0 13 ♚e1

White now has ideas of 13 ♚h4 or 13 g3 trapping the bishop. Black's next move seems to lead to a forced loss, but I don't see any way for him to

substantially improve his chances.



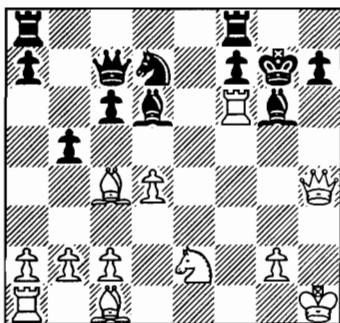
13...♙d6 14 ♖xg7!

This is elegant, though it was first played as long ago as 1966.

14...♙xg7 15 ♜xf6! ♖d7

The point is that 15...♙xf6 16 ♜h4+ ♙g7 17 ♙h6+ ♙g8 18 ♜f6 mates.

16 ♜h4 b5



It is always a problem for an annotator to know how much of a game excerpt to give before resorting to an 'etc'. Here, for example, Shianovsky-Spiridonov, Kiev 1966, went 16...♜fe8 17 ♙h6+ ♙h8 18 ♜af1 ♜d8 19 ♙g5! ♙e7 20 ♜xg6 'etc.' according to Kasparov and Shakarov in their book on the Caro-Kann. In fact the 'etc.' in this case was a shaking of hands or a

stopping of the clocks, as in view of the looming massacre after 20...fxg6 21 ♜f7 ♖f8 22 ♙xe7 the best Black could come up with was 20...Resigns!

17 ♙d3!?

I wonder if Black, FIDE rated 2544, had deliberately gone into this line or if he was surprised. Since the theory has been well known since the 1950s, it seems strange that such a strong player was unaware of it. Perhaps he had prepared 16...b5 but underestimated the strength of the retreat to d3. Certainly the natural 17 ♙b3 ♜fe8 (but not 17...♙e7? 18 ♜xg6+ hxg6 – 18...fxg6 19 ♜xe7+ ♙h8 20 ♙h6 wins – 19 ♙h6+! ♙g8 20 ♜xe7 ♜ae8 21 ♙xf7+ and wins) 18 ♙h6+ ♙h8 is less clear than in the Shianovsky-Spiridonov game mentioned in the last note, as 19 ♙g5? just drops the knight on e2. Nevertheless, 19 ♖f4 still looks dangerous for Black, as 19...♙e7? (19...♜e7!?) allows 20 ♖xg6+ fxg6 21 ♙g7+ ♙xg7 22 ♜f7+ ♙g8 23 ♜xh7 mate.

17...♜fe8

Against most other moves 18 ♙h6+ just picks up the exchange. Every good player would prefer to face a strong attack with the chance of the opponent going wrong, rather than just to concede material and submit to a slower but surer defeat.

18 ♜f3 ♜d8

This is hopeless, but 18...♙xd3 19 cxd3! ♜xe2?! 20 ♙h6+ ♙h8 21 ♜xf7 leaves Black unable to defend the h7-point in a satisfactory way against the threat of an uncovered attack with for example 22 ♙g5.

19 ♙g5 ♙e7 20 ♙xg6 hxg6 21

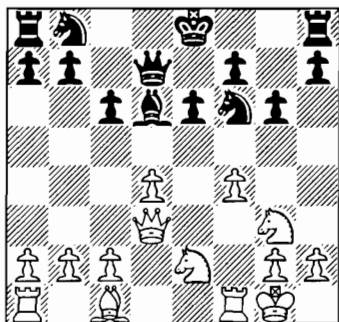
♖h6+ ♜g8 22 ♜h3 ♙f6 23 ♜f1 1-0
 Black is completely overwhelmed.

Game 30
Fressinet-Mulder
French Team Championship 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4
 ♙f5 5 ♗g3 ♙g6 6 ♙c4 e6 7 ♗1e2
 ♗f6 8 0-0 ♙d6 9 f4 ♖d7

Black tries to stop 10 f5 in a direct way.

10 ♙d3 ♙xd3 11 ♖xd3 g6



This is necessary, since if White is allowed to play 12 f5 ‘for free’ he is guaranteed a good position. Now passive play is unpromising for White: his pawn would remain permanently fixed on f4 where it would deprive his knight of a good square and curb the activity of his dark-squared bishop. Therefore positionally speaking the following advance – which commits White to a piece sacrifice – is entirely justified.

12 f5!

The undefended knight on f6 now becomes an important target.

12...exf5?

This is a serious mistake. The cor-

rect 12...gxf5! has been tested in several games, with the general conclusion that White has enough activity in lines with the sacrifice ♗xf5! to give him fair chances, but Black also has enough resources to hold the balance. Play could go 13 ♙g5 ♙e7 14 ♜ae1 ♜g8!

This is the essential difference with 12...exf5 in the main game: Black is able to activate his rook for both defensive and counterattacking purposes along the g-file and in doing so gain time by attacking the bishop. Now White has a choice:

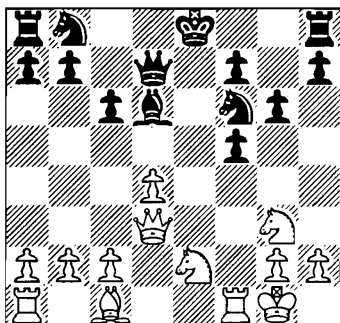
a) 15 ♙h4 leads to truly wild play after 15...♜g4 16 ♜f4! ♗a6 17 ♗xf5! exf5 18 ♜xg4 ♗xg4 19 ♗f4 (this looks decisive, but...) 19...♗b4! (in fact my computer program prefers the truly shameless 19...f6!? 20 h3 ♗h6 21 ♙xf6 ♗g8 holding on to the extra piece; perhaps 20 ♗e6!? planning ♖xf5 is a better approach by White) 20 ♖d2 0-0-0 21 ♜xe7 ♖xd4+ 22 ♖xd4 ♜xd4 23 ♜e8+ ♜c7 24 c3 ♜d1+ 25 ♜e1 ♜xe1+ 26 ♙xe1. So far this is Ganguly-Prakash, Kelamabakkam 2000, and now 26...♗xa2 taking another pawn looks pretty good for Black.

b) 15 ♙xf6!? ♙xf6 16 ♗xf5! exf5 17 ♜xf5 ♙h8! (it is important to keep the double attack on d4) 18 ♖b3 (aiming at f7) 18...♜g6 (not 18...♖e7? 19 ♗f1!) 19 ♗f4+ ♗f8, as in Genocchio-Solozhenkin, Reggio Emilia 1999/2000, and here Solozhenkin believes White should bail out with 20 ♗xg6+ hxg6 21 ♜f3 ♗a6 22 c3 with equal chances.

Naturally in such a sharp and relatively untested variation there is tre-

mendous scope for independent analysis – a new discovery could prove decisive for either player!

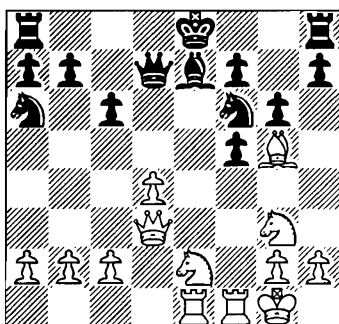
In contrast, the game continuation just seems to be bad for Black.



13 Qe7!

One of the most awkward features about Black's position is that his queen is sitting on the natural square for the queen's knight – he would love to be able to shuffle his queen to c7 and play ...Qbd7 here!

13...Qe7 14 Nae1 Qa6



15 Qxf5!

This cannot really be called a sacrifice – it is better described as a combination to emerge with extra material, as the consequences are clear.

15...gxf5 16 Qg3 Qb4 17 Wc4

Now there are three threats: 18 Wxb4, 18 Qxf6 or 18 Qxf5. Black cannot defend against all of them.

17...0-0-0 18 Qxf5 b5 19 Wxf7 Qd6 20 Wxd7+ Qxd7 21 Qxf6 Qf8

This allows a combination, but two pawns down it was already hopeless.

22 Qxd6+ Qxd6 23 Qe7! Qxf1+ 24 Qxf1 1-0

Game 31

Efimov-Khenkin

Reggio Emilia 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Qc3 dxe4 4 Qxe4 Qf5 5 Qg3 Qg6 6 Qc4 e6 7 Q1e2 Qf6 8 0-0 Qd6

With the same idea in mind Black could also try 8...Qbd7 9 f4 Qf5!? 10 Qxf5 Wxf5. However, after 11 Wd3!? Qb6 (11...g6? 12 Wb3!) 12 Qb3 g6 13 Qg3 Qe7 (after 13...Qg7 14 Qe1+ Qf8 the bishop is nice on g7 but it denies this square to the king) 14 Qd2 0-0 15 c4 Qc8 16 Qae1 Qd6 17 Qc3 Qe8 18 Qe5 White had a pleasant positional advantage in Minasian-Asrian, Yerevan 2000.

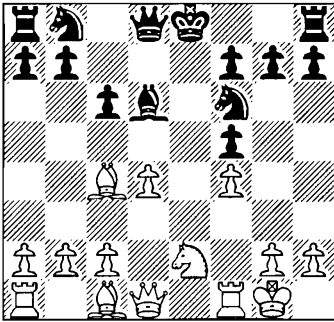
9 f4 Qf5!?

As more mild methods of restraint have proved inadequate to deter the advance of the white f-pawn, Black decides to physically block it with his bishop. This move has become the most popular response here, though mention should be made of the move order designed to dissuade White from playing 9 f4 in the first place with 7...Qd6 etc. – see Games 32-34.

10 Qxf5 exf5

Black has doubled pawns, but as

usual it is nice to retain influence over the important e4-square.



11 ♖g3

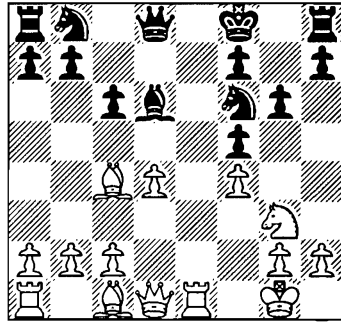
Too slow is 11 ♖h1 0-0 12 ♖g1 ♗bd7 13 ♖f3 ♖c7 14 ♗e5 ♜ad8 15 ♖f3 c5 when Black was already better in Fontaine-Khenkin, French Team Championship 1999.

11...g6 12 ♜e1+ ♗f8

Black has been prevented from castling, but his wall of pawns on the kingside makes it hard for White to launch a lightning attack, even if Black seems to be giving him some help! – see the note to the Khalifman game at move 13 below.

However, there is a structural weakness in the wall on the f6-square. This may not seem very serious at the moment, but in the long term it gives White a clear plan to activate his dark-squared bishop with b2-b3 and ♗b2, when his pressure on the a1-h8 diagonal could well cause Black a lot of discomfort. On the other hand, it won't be easy for White to implement this plan, as the f4-pawn needs protection, and even after ♗b2 is achieved Black can try to restrain the bishop's influence by bolstering his defences of

the d5-square to make the line-clearing d4-d5 unattractive for White.



13 ♖f3

A sensible starting move – White defends the f4-pawn as a prelude to b2-b3 and ♗b2.

13...h5

A very interesting alternative is 13...♗bd7!?, simply developing. Then 14 ♖b3 (this appears strong as both b7 and f7 are attacked, but note that White's queen is now blocking the plan b2-b3 and ♗b2 and no longer guarding f4; the natural alternative was 14 b3) 14...♖c7! (Black gambits the f7-pawn but is now hitting f4) 15 ♗xf7 ♖g7! and White doesn't have any convincing way to continue as if 16 ♜f1 ♗c5! looks a strong answer. After 16 ♗e6 ♜he8 17 ♗d2 (returning the pawn as 17 ♗e2 ♗b6 leaves him awkwardly placed on the e-file) 17...♗f8 18 ♗c4 b5 19 ♗f1 ♗xf4 20 ♗xf4 ♖xf4 Black was at least equal in Khalifman-Rustemov, Germany 2000.

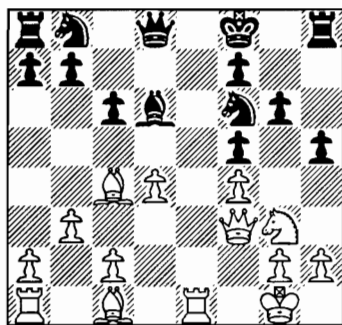
14 b3

see following diagram

14...h4?

The most active move, but probably

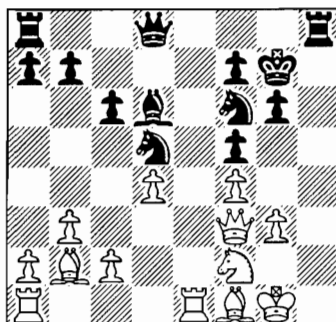
Black not best. The point is that driving White's knight away from g3 isn't necessarily favourable to Black, as it clears the way for White to play g2-g3: this means that White can play ♖b2 without worrying about Black attacking f4 a second time with ...♙c7. Of course, things aren't quite so simple as this, since Black can try to utilise the h-file after ...h4xg3, but the impression is that White has the better chances.



More appropriate was the straightforward 14...♗bd7, e.g. 15 ♖b2 (15 ♖f1, keeping f4 defended twice, was less committal, e.g. 15...♙c7 16 c4 ♗d8 17 ♖h1 ♗e4 18 ♖f2 ♖xf2 19 ♙xf2 ♖b4 20 ♗d1 ♖f6 with equal chances in Naiditsch-Kachiani, Dortmund 2000) 15...♙c7 16 ♗e5 (strategically speaking, this exchange sacrifice is more or less forced, as defending f4 in a direct way with 16 ♗e2 or 16 ♗f1 would lessen White's grip on the centre) 16...♖g4 17 ♗ae1 (or 17 ♗f1, when 17...♗dx5? 18 fxe5 ♖b4 19 ♖xf5! is very strong, but 17...h4! chasing the knight from g3 first looks okay for Black) 17...♗dx5 18 fxe5 ♖b4 19 c3 ♖e7 20 h3 ♖h6 21 ♗e2

and White's big centre gave him enough compensation for the exchange in Aldrovandi-Solozhenkin, Reggio Emilia 1999.

15 ♖h1 ♗bd7 16 ♖f2 ♙g7 17 ♖b2 ♗b6 18 ♖f1 ♗bd5 19 g3 hxg3 20 hxg3



Over the last six moves White has achieved a lot – his bishop is on b2, the f4-pawn is securely defended and the e4- and g4-squares are denied to Black's knight. If Black does nothing active he will soon be pushed back with c2-c4 and d4-d5, when White's dark-squared bishop would come to life. So he tries for a tactical solution.

20...♖h5 21 ♖h3 ♖xg3!? 22 ♙xg3 ♗h4 23 ♖g2 ♗g4 24 ♙f2 ♖xf4 25 c4!

At last! White is prepared to return the extra material to kill the attack and bring his dark-squared bishop into the game.

25...♖g3 26 ♙f3 ♖xe1 27 cxd5 ♖h4 28 dxc6 bxc6 29 ♖f2 ♗g3 30 ♙f4 ♙f6 31 ♗b1! g5 32 ♙c7 ♗xg2+

A desperate move as otherwise 33 d5 would destroy him. The rest is easy.

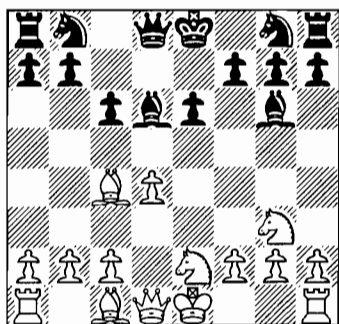
33 ♖xg2 ♖xf2 34 ♙xf2 ♙h6 35 ♗g1

♖e8 36 ♖g3 f6 37 d5! ♖h5 38
 ♗xg5+ ♗xg5 39 ♖xg5+ ♕f7 40
 ♗xf5 cxd5 41 ♗xf6+ 1-0

Game 32
Landa-Fridman
Frankfurt 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4
 ♗f5 5 ♗g3 ♗g6 6 ♗c4 e6 7 ♗1e2
 ♗d6

This move order has become popular as a way to avoid, or at least make less dangerous, White's attack with f2-f4 as seen in the games above. Thus if White now plays 8 0-0 then 8...♗c7, still delaying the development of his king's knight, gives Black the option of replying to 9 f4 with 9...♗e7, when he is much more efficiently deployed to meet the plan of f4-f5 than he would be after the usual 7...♗f6. Take a look at the analysis of 8 0-0 ♗c7 9 f4 in the next note.



8 ♗f4

White can still try the plan of 8 0-0 ♗c7 9 f4, but it isn't so strong with the black knight on e7 rather than f6. After 9...♗e7 10 ♗d3 Black managed to get away with the immediate 10...c5!? and

emerged with equal chances after 11 ♗xg6 hxg6 12 ♗e4 ♗d7 13 c4 ♗f6 (if 13...0-0 14 b4! looks strong) 14 ♗a4+ ♕f8 15 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 16 ♗a3 ♗e4 17 dxc5 ♗xc5+ 18 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 in Jackova-Xu Yuanyuan, Yerevan 2000.

Alternatively, 10...♗d7 11 c4 b6 (risky is 11...0-0-0 12 ♕h1 ♗f5 13 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 14 ♗e3 ♕b8 15 ♖b1 c5 16 b4! cxb4 17 a3 and White opened lines against the black king in Movsesian-Zelcic, Croatia 1998) 12 ♗e3 0-0 13 ♗c3 ♖ad8 14 ♕h1 ♗xd3 15 ♗xd3 g6 16 ♗ge4 ♗f5 17 g4 ♗xe3 18 ♗xe3 and White held a slight plus in Movsesian-Timoschenko, Pardubice 1998.

If White wants to adopt the plan of advancing the h-pawn to attack the bishop on g6, then the immediate 8 h4 was best. For example, 8...h6 9 ♗f4 ♗xf4 10 ♗xf4 ♗f6 11 h5 (after 11 ♗e2!? ♗bd7 12 0-0-0 ♗d5 13 ♗d2 ♗7f6 14 h5 ♗h7 15 ♗d3 ♗xd3 16 ♗xd3 a5 17 ♕b1 White was slightly better in Rublevsky-Burmakin, Russia 1998; perhaps like Schlosser Black should have boldly captured on d4) 11...♗h7 12 ♗e2 (after 12 ♗b3 0-0 13 c4 e5 14 dxc5 ♗a6 15 0-0 ♗xc5 16 ♗f3 ♗d3! Black was equal in Glek-Tukmakov, Zurich 1998) 12...♗xd4 (taking the pawn looks risky, but White fails to prove anything against Black's accurate defence) 13 ♗e5 ♗c5 14 0-0-0 ♗bd7 15 ♗d6 ♗g5+ 16 ♕b1 0-0-0 17 ♗f3 ♗e5! (White was hoping for something like 17...♗g4?? 18 ♗xc6+ bxc6 19 ♗a6 mate!) 18 ♗c3 ♗xc4 19 ♗xc4 ♗b5! 20 ♗c3 ♖d7 and Black had the better of the eventual draw in Movsesian-Schlosser, Germany 1998.

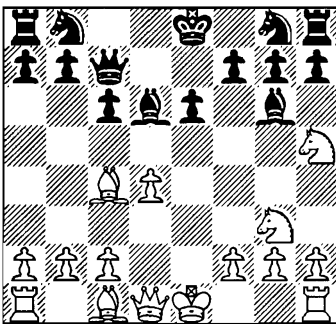
8...♗c7

Black immediately attacks the knight on f4 and thereby prevents White from building up an attack based on h4-h5 which would embarrass the bishop on g6. The drawback is that Black has left the g7-pawn undefended and the h5-square isn't yet controlled by his knight. Therefore with his rather strange-looking reply White tries to exploit this. For this reason Black often prefers 8...♘f6 (Games 33 and 34) – after all, he has already accomplished his mission in ruling out f2-f4 ideas.

Short but noteworthy was 8...♙h4!? 9 ♖gh5 ♙xh5 10 ♚xh5 ♚xh5 11 ♘h5 when a draw was agreed in Gallagher-Ekström, Pontresina 2000. After 11...♜f8 followed by ...♞d7 and ...♞g6 Black will equalise.

9 ♘fh5!?

In some games mentioned in the following notes, 9 ♖gh5 was played, but it turned into a mere transposition after Black took on h5. I don't see any significant difference.



9...♙xh5 10 ♘h5 g6

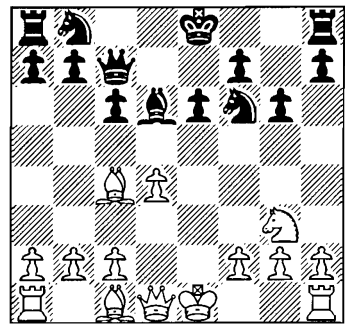
At first glance, it looks as if Black's kingside is seriously undermined by this advance, but in fact his pawn

structure on the light squares is very compact. Furthermore, he still has the right bishop to oppose White's attempt to gain ascendancy over the dark squares.

11 ♖g3

The knight would never emerge alive after 11 ♖g7+? ♜f8.

11...♞f6



Also fine for Black is 11...♙f4 aiming to exchange dark-squared bishops. Then 12 ♙e3 (the only try for advantage is to open the f-file, but it turns out that the exchange on e3 weakens rather than strengthens White's centre) 12...♞d7 (or 12...♙xe3 13 fxe3 ♞f6 14 0-0 ♞bd7 15 ♚f3 0-0 16 ♙f1 ♜g7 17 ♚d1 h5! 18 e4 h4 19 e5 ♖g4 20 ♞e4 ♞dxe5! 21 dxe5 ♙xe5 22 ♙e1 ♙xh2+ 23 ♜f1 ♙h1+ 24 ♜e2 ♙xg2+ 25 ♞f2, as in Iordachescu-Svetushkin, Kiev 2000, and now 25...♚ad8 looks good for Black) 13 ♙f3 ♙xe3 14 fxe3 ♖g6 15 0-0-0? (castling kingside is double-edged as the extract at move 12 showed, but this is just too ambitious) 15...0-0 16 ♜b1 ♚ab8 17 ♙e2 b5 18 h4 h5! (considerably slowing down White's attack) 19 ♞f1 c5 20 ♞h2 ♚fc8 and Black had the makings

of a tremendous attack in Socko-Tukmakov, Koszalin 1999.

12 ♖f3 ♜bd7 13 0-0 h6

This move indicates a very ambitious strategy: Black will castle queenside and then launch a direct attack on White's king!

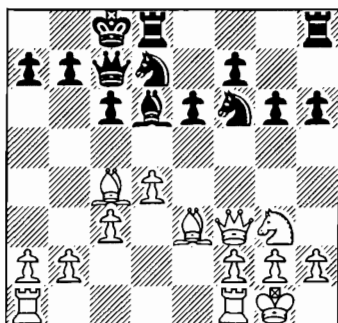
Instead the quiet 13...0-0 gave Black a perfectly respectable position after 14 ♖d1 ♗g7 15 ♙f1 ♜ad8 16 c4 b6 17 ♙e3 c5 18 ♜ac1 in Vorobiov-S.Kasparov, Kiev 2000, though White was allowed to activate his light-squared bishop and probe for a long time in the endgame before agreeing a draw.

14 c3?

This is a normal move in the line, but in view of what Black is intending, a more aggressive approach with 14 ♙b3 planning 15 c4 seems necessary.

14...0-0-0 15 ♙e3

White appears to have completely underestimated the danger facing his king. He had to try to generate some counterplay with 15 b4 and 16 b5.



15...g5 16 h3

This fails to restrain Black's kingside pawns.

16...♞dg8 17 ♜h5 ♜xh5 18 ♞xh5

g4! 19 hxg4 ♜f6 20 ♞h3 ♜xg4 21 ♞fe1 h5 22 ♙f1 h4 23 c4?!

Now Black exploits the weakness of f2 to win material, but few players could bear to play 23 ♞e2 here.

23...♙h2+ 24 ♞h1 ♙f4! 25 ♞g1

Here 25 ♞e2 ♜xe3 26 fxe3 ♞g3 is ghastly.

25...♜xe3 26 ♞xe3

26 fxe3 ♞g3 is also resignable.

26...♙xe3 27 ♞xe3 ♞b8

The rest needs no comment, except that it takes Black a surprisingly long time to exploit his material advantage.

28 ♞d1 h3 29 g3 f5 30 ♞h2 f4 31 ♞xf4 ♞xf4 32 gxf4 ♞h4 33 ♙xh3 ♞xf4 34 ♞d2 ♞d8 35 ♙xe6 ♞fxd4 36 ♞xd4 ♞xd4 37 ♞g3 ♞d2 38 f4 ♞xb2 39 f5 ♞c7 40 c5 ♞c2 41 f6 ♞d8 42 ♞f4 ♞xc5 43 ♞e4 b5 44 ♞d4 ♞h5 45 ♞e4 a5 46 ♙f7 ♞g5 47 ♞f4 ♞c5 48 ♞e4 ♞d7 49 ♙g8 a4 50 ♙f7 b4 51 ♙g8 b3 52 axb3 a3 53 b4 ♞d5 54 f7 ♞e7 55 b5 ♞xb5 0-1

Game 33

Tiviakov-Dreev

Ubeda 1999

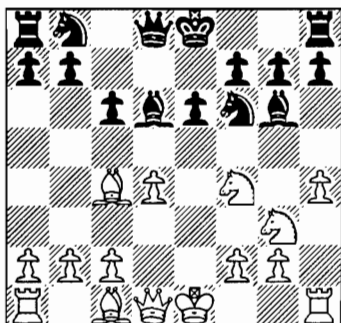
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜d2 dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♙f5 5 ♜g3 ♙g6 6 ♙c4 e6 7 ♜1e2 ♙d6 8 ♜f4 ♜f6

The game actually went 7...♜f6 8 ♜f4 ♙d6, but I have decided for the sake of clarity to give it the same move order as its natural companion Game 34.

9 h4?!

After this mistake the game ceases to be of much theoretical worth as White is always struggling. Neverthe-

less, it is fine display of the dynamic potential of Black's set-up if White loses control. White's various better alternatives can be found in Game 34.



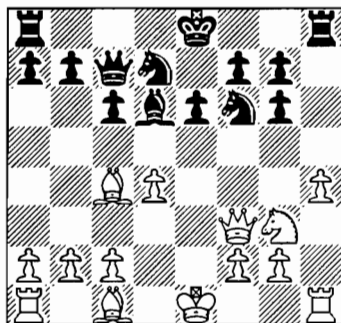
9...♖c7!

Enterprising players such as Dreev are always looking for opportunities such as this to seize the advantage. White's last move is exposed as merely weakening as there is no time for 10 h5 and if 10 ♖f3, supporting the knight, then 10...♗xc2 comes.

10 ♖xg6 hxg6

Now White has no compensation for the weakness of the h4-pawn.

11 ♖f3 ♖bd7



12 ♗g5?

After this White is in big trouble. He

had to play 12 ♗b3.

12...c5!

The thematic attack on White's centre is especially strong here as it crosses his plan to castle queenside, for if 13 0-0-0 cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗e5 wins material.

13 dxc5 ♗xc5

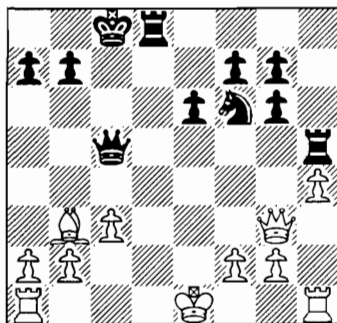
As Dreev demonstrates in *Informator* 74 the position is now full of pitfalls for White, e.g. 14 ♖e2? ♗xg3 15 fxg3 ♗xg5! 16 hxg5 ♖xh1+ wins. Meanwhile, White's bishop is hanging and 14...♖e5+ picking up the b2-pawn is also threatened, so the only way to resist seems to be 14 ♖b3!

14 ♗xf6

This just makes matters worse by leaving the h-pawn with no defender.

14...♖xf6 15 ♗b3 0-0-0 16 c3 ♗xg3

17 ♗xg3 ♖h5!



Now White's king must choose between being buffeted in the centre by 18...♖e5+ or meeting his fate on the kingside. In either case the end wouldn't be long in coming.

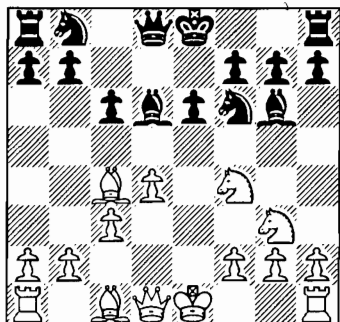
18 0-0 ♖dh8 19 ♖f3 ♖xh4 20 g3 ♖h2 21 ♗c2 g5! 22 ♗e4 g4 23 ♖f4 ♖h5 0-1

Dreev won the opening battle and

was then remorseless. It's not often that a 2600+ player suffers such a drastic defeat against the Caro-Kann.

Game 34
Shchekachev-Bareev
St Petersburg 1998

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4
 ♙f5 5 ♗g3 ♙g6 6 ♙c4 e6 7 ♗1e2
 ♙d6 8 ♗f4 ♗f6 9 c3



This is much better than 9 h4? from the previous main game. There are many other possibilities here of which the following are a couple of interesting examples:

a) 9 ♙b3 a5! (as so often in the Classical variation of the Caro-Kann, this is a useful move; by threatening 10...a4 Black incites his opponent's reply, after which his knight can sit more securely on d5, since if White evicts it with c2-c4 he will be leaving himself with a hole on b4) 10 a4 ♗d5 11 ♗xg6 hxg6 12 ♗e4 ♙e7 13 0-0 ♗d7 14 ♚f3 ♗7f6 15 ♗g5 ♚c7 16 g3 0-0 17 c3 c5! and having carried out this standard advance Black was doing fine in Hracek-Tukmakov, Koszalin 1999.

b) 9 0-0 ♗d5!? 10 ♗d3 ♗b6 (steal-

ing a pawn; 10...♗d7 was the safer course) 11 ♙b3 ♙xg3 12 hxg3 ♚xd4 13 ♙c3 ♚d8 14 ♗c5 ♚e7 15 ♚e1 with an unclear position in Foldi-Kallai, Budapest 2000. Black has a solid structure and, although it's hard to shake off the pressure, I suspect that he is at least okay.

9...♗bd7 10 ♚f3 ♗b6 11 ♙b3 a5!

Bareev doesn't rush to put his knight on d5, since after 11...♗bd5 12 ♗xg6 hxg6 13 ♙g5 ♙e7 14 ♗d2 a5 15 a3 ♚b6 16 c4 ♗c7 the knight had been pushed back with some advantage to White in Rublevsky-Anand, European Club Cup 1999.

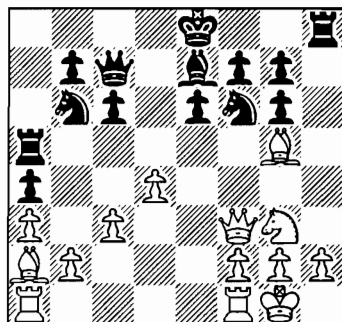
12 ♗xg6 hxg6

White gains the two bishops, but Black is so solid that it will be hard for his opponent to prove their superiority over the black knights.

13 a3

White makes a retreat square for the bishop but he avoids 13 a4 so that an eventual c3-c4, if it proves useful to eject the knight from d5, won't leave a hole on b4.

13...a4 14 ♙a2 ♚c7 15 ♙g5 ♙e7
 16 0-0 ♚a5



After this exotic development of the

rook Black seems to have a safe and active position, but he later becomes confused in the complications.

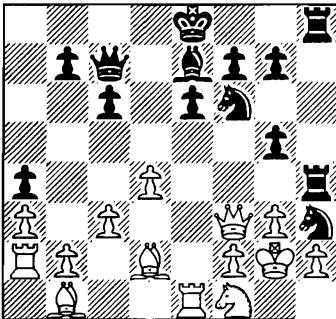
17 ♖d2 ♜f5 18 ♛e2

The queen has to retreat at 18 ♖xf5 allows mate on h2.

18...♗bd5 19 ♖b1 ♖f4 20 ♛d1 ♜b5 21 ♜a2 ♜g5 22 ♛f3 ♜g4

Black's kingside build-up looks impressive but he cannot inflict any damage on White's solid defensive line.

23 ♜e1 ♜gh4 24 ♖f1 g5 25 g3 ♖h3+ 26 ♔g2



26...g4?

This loses the a pawn for inadequate compensation, so it was necessary to play 26...♜h5 with complications.

27 ♛d1 ♜h5 28 ♛xa4

Now White has an extra pawn and there is no way for Black to break through on the h-file. Bareev fights on, but ultimately it is hopeless.

28...♛d7 29 c4 b5 30 ♛a8+ ♖d8 31 b3 0-0 32 ♛a6 bxc4 33 bxc4 ♛xd4 34 ♖b4 ♜e8 35 ♛xc6 ♖a5 36 ♜d2 ♛a7 37 ♖e3 ♖xb4 38 axb4 ♛b8 39 ♜ed1 g6 40 ♜d4 ♔g7 41 ♖xg4 1-0

A tragic end to Black's attacking aspirations, but at least the theoretical

verdict is fine for him.

Game 35

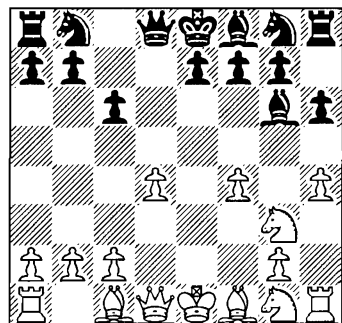
Kaminski-Korchnoi

Polanica Zdroj 1992

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♖f5 5 ♖g3 ♖g6 6 h4

White could also play the immediate 6 f4!?, e.g. 6...e6 7 ♖f3 ♖d6. Now White got nothing much from 8 ♖e2 ♖e7 9 ♖e5 ♖xe5 10 fxe5 c5 11 dxc5 ♛xd1+ 12 ♖xd1 ♖a6 13 0-0 ♖xc5 with equality in J.Polgar-Khalifman, Las Vegas 1999, but after 8 ♖c4 or 8 h4 the game could transpose into other lines considered in this chapter.

6...h6 7 f4



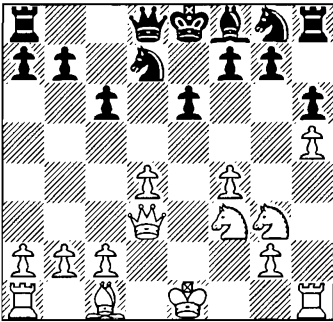
This is an attempt to escape from the well analysed main line. The next couple of moves are more or less forced.

7...e6 8 ♖f3 ♖d7

After 8...♖d6 White was provoked into 9 ♖c5!?, when 9...♖xe5 10 fxe5 ♖e7 11 h5 ♖h7 12 c3 gave him the two bishops and attacking chances in Arnason-Adianto, Dubai Olympiad 1986. Here Arnason considers 12...0-0 13 ♖d3 to be slightly better for White.

Instead of this slightly wild course, White could play quietly with 9 h5 $\text{\textcircled{d}}d7$ 10 $\text{\textcircled{d}}d3$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}xd3$ 11 $\text{\textcircled{w}}xd3$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}f6$ 12 $\text{\textcircled{w}}e2$ $\text{\textcircled{w}}c7$ 13 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e5$ etc., keeping the standard small edge for White.

9 h5 $\text{\textcircled{d}}h7$ 10 $\text{\textcircled{d}}d3$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}xd3$ 11 $\text{\textcircled{w}}xd3$



11... $\text{\textcircled{w}}c7$

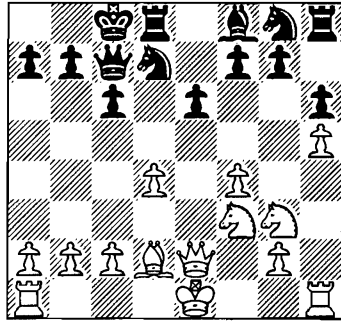
Here, however, Black has a choice. The direct 11... $\text{\textcircled{d}}gf6!$? might be best. For example, 12 $\text{\textcircled{d}}d2$ c5 13 0-0-0 $\text{\textcircled{w}}c7$ 14 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e5!$ (as so often this is the only good move) 14... $\text{\textcircled{c}}xd4$ 15 $\text{\textcircled{w}}xd4$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}c5$ 16 $\text{\textcircled{w}}c4$ 0-0 (an earlier game between the same players went 16... $\text{\textcircled{c}}c8$ 17 $\text{\textcircled{d}}xd7$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}xd7$ 18 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e4$ 0-0 19 $\text{\textcircled{c}}b1$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}e7$ 20 $\text{\textcircled{w}}b3$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}c5$ 21 $\text{\textcircled{d}}xc5$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}xc5$ 22 g4! with attacking chances for White in Z.Almasi-Magem Badals, Moscow 1994) 17 $\text{\textcircled{d}}xd7$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}xd7$ 18 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e4$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}fc8!$? 19 g4 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e7$ 20 $\text{\textcircled{w}}xc7$ (compared to their earlier game Black has put his other rook on c8; this seems to deter White from playing 20 $\text{\textcircled{w}}b3$ because of 20...a5, and with a rook still on a8 Black has some counterplay) 20... $\text{\textcircled{c}}xc7$ 21 $\text{\textcircled{d}}c3$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}f6$ 22 $\text{\textcircled{d}}xf6$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}xf6$ and a draw was eventually agreed in Z.Almasi-Magem Badals, Buenos Aires 1996.

12 $\text{\textcircled{d}}d2$ 0-0-0

White had a slight plus after 12... $\text{\textcircled{d}}gf6$ 13 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e5$ c5 14 0-0-0 $\text{\textcircled{c}}xd4$ 15 $\text{\textcircled{w}}xd4$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}c5$ 16 $\text{\textcircled{w}}c4$ in Prasad-Ravi, Calcutta 1993.

13 $\text{\textcircled{w}}e2$

The only way to try to keep up the initiative, because if White casually plays 13 0-0-0 then 13... $\text{\textcircled{d}}d6!$ comes, and since 14 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e5$ drops a pawn, the anti-thematic 14 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e2$ is necessary, when 14... $\text{\textcircled{d}}gf6$ is equal.



13... $\text{\textcircled{d}}xf6$

I once reached this position as White in a club match and after 13...c5!? I followed a variation recommended in *Informator* without, alas, checking it carefully first: 14 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e5!$ (the only move to fight for the advantage) 14... $\text{\textcircled{d}}b6$ 15 $\text{\textcircled{d}}xc5$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}xc5$ 16 $\text{\textcircled{d}}e4$ 'with a clear advantage to White'. However, after Black's fairly obvious reply 16... $\text{\textcircled{d}}d4!$ matters were far from clear. The game continued 17 $\text{\textcircled{d}}c3?!$ $\text{\textcircled{d}}f6$ 18 $\text{\textcircled{c}}h3$ and here I realised my opponent could play 18... $\text{\textcircled{d}}bd5!!$, which on the face of it looks very strong. Instead he went wrong with 18... $\text{\textcircled{d}}a4?!$ when White was better after 19 0-0-0 etc, in McDonald-C.Blackwell, London League 1992. The critical move has to be 17 0-0-0 which

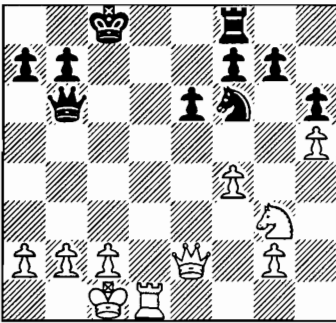
leads to complicated play.
14 0-0-0?!

Korchnoi considers that 14 ♖e5! gives White the edge after either 14...♗xe5 15 dxe5 ♘d5 16 0-0-0 or 14...♗b6 15 c3 c5 16 0-0. In the game White delays putting his knight on e5 for a move, which enables Black to defend f7 without entering these variations.

14...♗d6 15 ♖e5 ♜hf8! 16 ♜hf1 c5!

Korchnoi successfully undermines the knight on e5. After it retreats from its outpost square Black has no more strategic problems.

17 ♘c4 ♗b6 18 ♘d6+ ♜xd6 19 dxc5 ♜xc5 20 ♖e3 ♜xd1+ 21 ♜xd1 ♜c7 22 ♖xb6 ♜xb6



A fairly equal position has been reached, but the former World Championship contender has spotted that the white kingside pawns will become targets if the queens are exchanged.

23 ♖e4 ♘d5 24 g3 ♜d8 25 ♜d3 ♜d7 26 ♜d4 ♜xd4 27 ♜xd4 b6 28 c4 ♖e3 29 ♘d6+ ♗b8 30 b3?!

Safer was 30 ♜d2 to break the pin on his knight and prepare to play ♖e4.

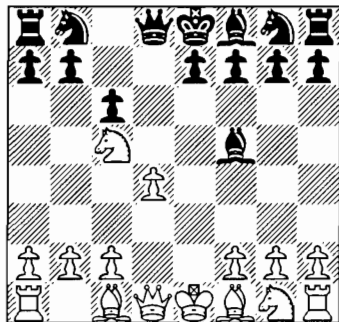
30...♗g4 31 b4 ♗f6 32 c5 bxc5 33 bxc5 ♜c7 34 ♜a4 ♜c6 35 ♜a5 ♗xh5

Finally Black wins the h-pawn, but his opponent has generated considerable counterplay on the queenside. After a very tough endgame battle Korchnoi finally manages to neutralise White's passed pawns and emerges victorious.

36 ♗c8 ♜c7 37 ♗xa7+ ♗b7 38 ♘d2 ♗b8 39 ♗b5 ♜xc5 40 a4 ♗xg3 41 ♜a6 ♖e4+ 42 ♜e3 ♗c3 43 ♘d6 ♘d5+ 44 ♘d4 ♜c1 45 ♗xf7 ♗xf4 46 ♜e5 ♘d3+ 47 ♘d6 e5 48 ♜b6+ ♗a7 49 ♜b5 e4 50 ♖e5 ♗xe5 51 ♜xe5 ♜g1 52 ♜xe4 ♜g5 53 ♜b4 ♗a6 54 ♜c6 ♜g6+ 55 ♘d5 ♗a5 56 ♖h4 ♜g5+ 57 ♜e6 h5 58 ♖f4 g6 59 ♖f7 ♜g4 60 ♜f1 ♗xa4 0-1

Game 36
Feletar-Tukmakov
Pula 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗d2 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♖f5 5 ♗c5



An unusual but logical move – the knight attacks the pawn weakened by Black's last move.

5...♗d7

Also possible was 5...b6!? to drive away the knight, when Black was solidly entrenched, and only a little bit worse after 6 ♖b3 e6 7 ♗f3 ♕d6 8 g3 h6 9 ♙g2 ♗e7 10 0-0 ♗d7 11 ♜e2 ♜c7 12 c4 ♝c8 13 ♙e3 ♜b8 14 ♝ac1 0-0 in Kupreichik-Dautov, Germany 1998.

The game move is a more dynamic response, though White is able to curb his opponent's piece activity and remain with a slightly better pawn structure. Nevertheless, this shouldn't be dangerous for Black and the whole line has the virtue that it is very forcing – there are very few sidelines to worry about.

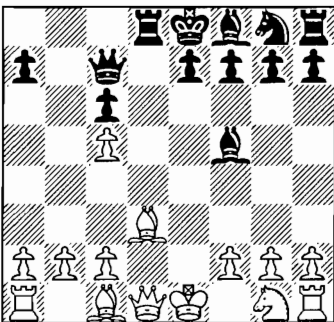
6 ♗xb7 ♜c7!

This is more accurate than 6...♜b6 7 ♗c5 ♗xc5 8 dxc5 ♜xc5 9 c3 etc. – it speeds up Black's development to delay recapturing the pawn until he can take it with the f8-bishop.

7 ♗c5

It would be very foolhardy to exploit Black last move with 7...♙a6??, as White drops a piece after 7...♗b8! 8 ♗c5 ♗xa6 9 ♗xa6 ♜a5+.

7...♗xc5 8 dxc5 ♝d8 9 ♕d3



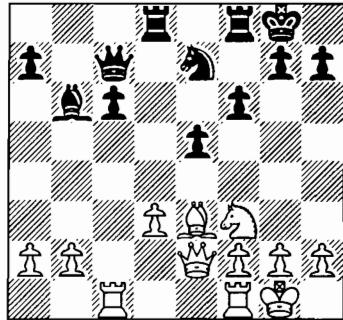
White is forced to agree to a back-

ward pawn.

9...e5

Instead 9...e6 would have kept his pawn structure more solid, leading to equality after 10 ♗f3 ♙xc5 11 0-0 ♗f6. However, I guess that Tukmakov played 9...e5 because he wanted to rule out the line 9...e6 10 ♙e3 here, which defends c5. Rublevsky claims the sequence 10...♗e7 11 ♗f3 e5 is okay for Black, but then 12 ♗d2!? ♙xd3 13 cxd3 in fact seems to favour White, as 13...♝xd3 14 ♜e2 with ideas of ♗c4 and ♗d6+ gives him the initiative.

10 ♜e2 ♙xd3 11 cxd3 ♙xc5 12 ♗f3 f6 13 0-0 ♗e7 14 ♙e3 ♙b6 15 ♝ac1 0-0



Black appears to have easily equalised, but it soon becomes clear that there are still some hidden reefs to avoid.

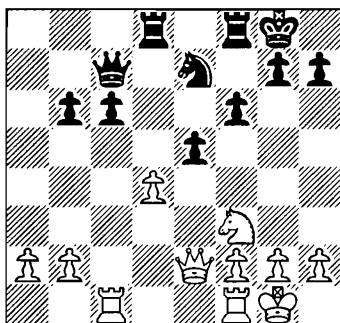
16 ♙xb6

This unisolates Black's queenside pawns, but White has a specific idea in mind. In any case, it was the only winning attempt since otherwise White's d-pawn would be just as weak as Black's on c6.

16...axb6 17 d4!

This energetic move provokes a mis-

take from a usually very sound opponent.

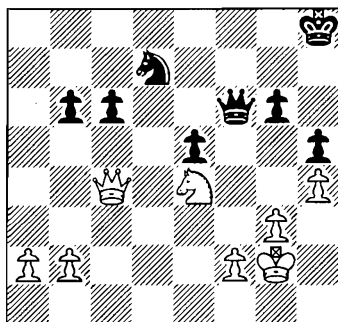


17...d5?

This is the key moment in the game. As played Black is saddled with a weak pawn and is left struggling. Tukmakov probably thought that he was just losing the exchange after 17...exd4 18 ♖c4+ ♜h8 19 ♘xd4, when 20 ♘e6 threatens to fork three black pieces, but in fact he has the defence 19...b5!, since after 20 ♘xb5?! Black would regain the pawn with 20...♗b6! Therefore Feletar suggests 20 ♘e6!? bxc4 21 ♘xc7 ♜d2 22 ♜xc4 ♜xb2 23 a4 as a slight advantage to White, but taking this further I can't see much for him after 23...♜c8 24 ♘e6 ♘d5 etc.

18 dxe5 fxe5 19 ffd1 ffd8 20 fxd5 fxd5 21 ♗e4 ♗d6 22 ♜e1 ♘g6 23 h4!

This forces Black to weaken himself or else lose the e-pawn after 24 h5 etc.
23...h5 24 ♗f5 ♜d1 25 ♜xd1 ♗xd1+ 26 ♜h2 ♗d6 27 g3 ♗f6 28 ♗e4 ♘f8 29 ♜g2 ♘d7 30 ♘g5 g6 31 ♗c4+ ♜h8 32 ♘e4



The black queen can't remain defending c6, and therefore White's pressure is finally converted into material gain. As is so often the case in this type of game it isn't the pawn that has been the target of all White's middlegame manoeuvres that falls. Probably Black should have jettisoned the e-pawn at an earlier moment and fought on with a solid structure minus one pawn on the kingside.

32...♗e7 33 ♗xc6 ♜g7 34 b4 ♜h6 35 a3 ♗f7 36 a4 1-0

Black is powerless to prevent the advance of White's queenside pawns.

Summary

As the first three games in the chapter demonstrate, Black should by no means underestimate White's attacking system based on 6 ♖c4 and the advance of the f-pawn to spearhead an attack. Game 29 is just a disaster for Black and the line in Game 30 also looks risky for him, even if the correct theoretical verdict is probably 'unclear'. Game 31 features a much more solid approach by Black. However, stopping this line altogether with 7...♙d6 seems sensible, when in Games 32-34 White doesn't succeed in making much impression with his alternative plan based on 8 ♗f4.

Finally, Games 35 and 36 show that other offbeat lines also have to be handled with care by Black.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♙f5 (D)

5 ♗g3

5 ♗c5 – Game 36

5...♙g6 6 ♙c4

6 h4 h6 7 f4 – Game 35

6...e6 7 ♗1e2 (D) ♗f6

7...♙d6

8 ♗f4 ♖c7 – Game 32

8...♗f6

9 h4 – Game 33

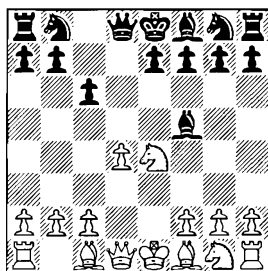
9 c3 – Game 34

8 0-0 ♙d6 9 f4 (D)

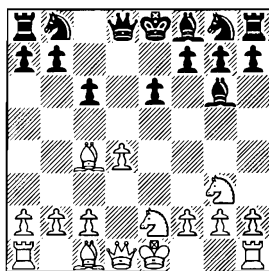
9...♖c7 – Game 29

9...♖d7 – Game 30

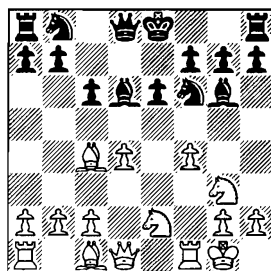
9...♙f5 – Game 31



4... ♙f5



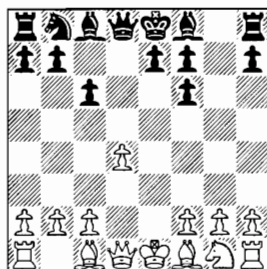
7 ♗1e2



9 f4

CHAPTER SEVEN

Larsen-Bronstein System with 4...♞f6 4 ♞xf6+ gxf6



1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4
♙f6 5 ♘xf6+ gxf6

It is curious that the Caro-Kann has the reputation of being one of the most solid of all openings and yet fighters such as Korchnoi, Bronstein and Larsen have had their names appended to its variations! Of course, like all great players this trio have interpreted the opening according to their own style. Thus as you would expect Black isn't interested in holding a slightly inferior endgame here – he wants to strike a knock-out blow in the middlegame or if there has to be an endgame, he wants to be the one who is better – see Game 38!

In the 1970s Black players enjoyed a great deal of success with this line as White's best response was little known. Only when Miles beat World Champion Karpov with it in the 1980s did the theorists really get their fangs into the opening! On a personal note I used to play this variation in junior tournaments when I was aged 14 or so, and I found that most of my

opponents had no idea how to counter Black's simple plan of putting all his pieces on fine active squares, whisking his king away to safety on the queen-side and then attacking along the g-file.

Game 37 shows everything going according to plan for Black – White reacts in just the way he hopes for when he plays 5...gxf6. I'm sure that Tarrasch would have approved of White's natural developing move 6 ♘c4, but unfortunately this isn't a classical type of position! White's opening is equally harmless in Game 38 and Black is already striving for the advantage within the first ten moves.

Whereas White played too passively in the games above, in Game 39 he tries for an outright refutation of Black's opening system beginning with 6 ♘e2. However, the plan of snatching the h-pawn is deeply unconvincing and Miles scores another impressive win to add to his collection in this variation. Game 40 features the same variation, but instead of going pawn-hunting

White decides to seek an attack on Black's queenside. The result is a drastic defeat for Black, but if he had found the correct continuation at move 15 things might have been very different – the analysis to Black's 15th move in this game is absolutely critical.

Finally, in Games 41-43 we move on to what has become established as White's best response to the Larsen-Botvinnik, though it took a number of games to prove this. The white king's bishop is most effective on g2, where it is well placed for the attack if Black castles queenside and, in unison with the pawn on g3, erects a huge barrier to Black's attacking aspirations on the g-file.

In Game 41 everything goes right for White and he scores a model win after some inaccurate play by Black. In Game 42 Black repeats the variation but he plays in a more flexible style and manages to achieve a very active position. This exciting game features an attractive queen sacrifice. Again there is a lot of critical analysis here, especially on the position after 12 ♟f1.

Finally, in Game 43 we look at lines in which Black responds to White's fianchetto by castling kingside. This has the virtue of keeping his king out of the firing line of the bishop on g2, but having his own king on the kingside rules out any hopes Black may have had of starting an all-out attack on White's king. This idea seems fairly sound but a little passive. Overall the Larsen-Bronstein system is alive and kicking and deserves to be seen more in international chess.

Game 37

Kiselev-Ovetchkin

St Petersburg 1998

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞c3

After 3 ♞d2 a much maligned move is 3...♟f6. Judith Polgar once tried it against Fritz to get the computer out of its theory. The game went 4 e5 ♞fd7 5 e6 (an obvious positional pawn sacrifice to undermine Black's kingside) 5...fxe6 6 ♟d3 g6 7 ♞gf3 (the sharp 7 h4 looks very threatening, but I can't see anything for White after 7...e5!? 8 h5 e4 9 hxg6 [or 9 ♟e2 ♟g7] 9...exd3 10 ♞xh7 ♞g8) 7...♟g7 8 ♞b3 c5!? 9 ♞g5 (a tactical approach, as if White captures on c5 then ...e6-e5 will free Black's game) 9...♞b6 10 ♞xh7 c4 11 ♞g4 (Fritz doesn't want d4 to drop after 11 ♟xg6+ ♟d8 12 ♞d2 ♞xd4) 11...♞xh7 12 ♟xg6+ ♟f8 13 ♟xh7 ♞f6 14 ♞g6 cxb3 15 ♟h6 ♟xh6 16 ♞xh6+ ♟e8 17 ♟g6+ ♟d7 18 c3 bxa2 19 ♞d2 ♞c6 20 f4 ♟c7 21 ♞xa2 ♟d7 22 ♟d3 ♞g8 23 ♞e2 ♟e8 24 h3 ♟g6 25 ♟xg6 ♞xg6 26 ♞f1 ♞e4 and in view of her control of the e4-square Black was doing nicely in Fritz 6-J.Polgar, Frankfurt 1999.

However, White doesn't need to play so violently. Instead after 4 e5 ♞fd7 the plausible 5 f4 e6 6 ♞df3 c5 7 c3 ♞c6 simply leaves White a tempo up on a well-known variation of the French Tarrasch: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞d2 ♞f6 4 e5 ♞fd7 5 f4 c5 6 c3 ♞c6 7 ♞df3. Of course, the French Tarrasch isn't to everyone's taste with White, but an extra move in a sharp main line isn't to be ignored.

3...dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♜f6 5 ♜xf6+

White could also decline to take on f6 with 5 ♜g3, which leads to play similar to Game 15 in Chapter 3. Indeed 5...♜bd7 6 ♜f3 would transpose directly to this game. However, Black can play more flexibly, e.g. 5...g6 (or 5...c5!?) 6 ♜f3 ♙g7 7 ♙e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♖b6 9 b3 a5 10 a4 ♜a6 11 h3 ♜b4 12 ♙e1 ♖c7 13 ♙b2 b6 with equal chances in Sax-Larsen, Tilburg 1979.

5...gxf6 6 ♙c4

This is too passive to be effective.

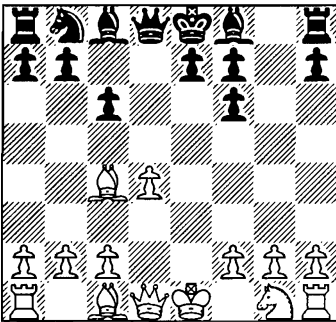
In contrast, an interesting avant-garde way for White to handle the position was 6 ♖d3!?, stopping Black from playing ♙f5. Then 6...♙g4 7 ♜e2 ♜d7 8 f3 ♙h5 9 ♖b3 ♖c7 10 ♙e3 ♙g6 11 0-0-0 e6 12 c4 0-0-0 13 h4 h5 14 ♜f4 ♙f5 15 ♜xh5! ♙xh5 16 g4 ♙xg4 17 fxg4 ♙h8 18 ♙e2 gave him some advantage in Belov-Orlov, St Petersburg 1998. Naturally there is a lot of scope for new ideas in this line.

White's common alternatives are discussed later in this chapter: 6 ♜f3 (Game 38), 6 ♜e2 (Games 39 and 40) and 6 c3 (Games 41-43).

expanding on the kingside. Then 8 c3 e6 9 h4 (this puts a stop to any further black advance, but White's king will find its future residence less than secure) 9...♜d7 10 ♜f4 ♙g4 11 ♙e2 ♙xe2 12 ♖xe2 ♖a5 13 0-0 0-0-0 14 ♙e3 ♙d6 15 g3 ♙dg8 16 ♖d3 ♜f8! (a strong manoeuvre to undermine White's defences on the g-file) 17 ♙h2 ♙xf4 18 ♙xf4 ♜g6 19 ♖e4 ♖d8! (the queen retreats before White can gain time with b2-b4 and introduces the threat of 20...f5 21 ♖f3 ♜xh4!) 20 ♖f3 ♜xf4 21 ♖xf4 ♙g4 22 ♖e3 ♙hg8 23 ♙g1 ♖d5 24 f3 ♙4g6 and Black's pressure on the g-file gave him all the winning chances in Belov-Ovetchkin, St Petersburg 1998.

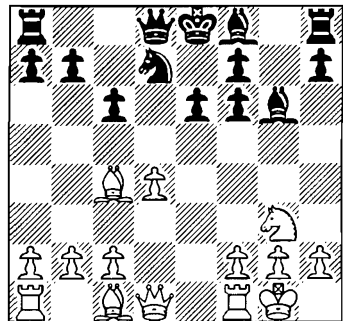
Alternatively, 7...e6 8 ♙f4 ♙d6 9 ♖d2 ♙xf4 10 ♜xf4 ♜d7 11 0-0-0 ♖c7 12 f3?! (safer was 12 ♙b3) 12...♜b6 13 ♙b3 0-0-0 14 ♜h5?! (a useless adventure – 14 g4 was more logical) 14...c5! 15 ♖a5 c4 16 ♙a4 ♙d5 17 ♖xa7 ♙xc2! 18 ♙xc2 ♙xh5 19 ♖a3 ♙b8 20 ♙b1 ♙b5 and Black had a clear advantage in G.Timoschenko-Saleh, Dubai 2000.

8 ♜g3 ♙g6 9 0-0 e6



6...♙f5 7 ♜e2 ♜d7

Also possible is 7...h5!?, immediately



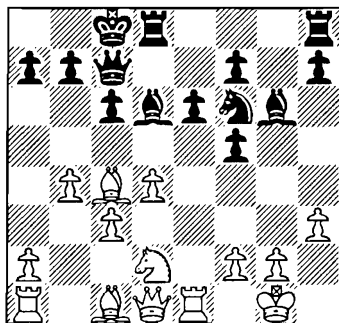
10 ♙e1

If 10 f4 it is important to understand that 10...f5!, blocking White's attack, is a good response. It may seem strange that Black is happy to bury his bishop on g6, but on the other hand the bishop's influence would still be felt on the e4-square as he could aim to exploit this hole in White's centre with an eventual ...♟e4. And besides, the bishop could still hope to become active again after ...h7-h5-h4 and ...♟h5. As will be seen, something similar happens in the game.

10...♟c7 11 ♟e4 0-0-0 12 c3 f5 13 ♟d2 ♟d6 14 h3 ♟f6

Black has achieved an effortless development and can now think about seizing the initiative by utilising the g-file.

15 b4



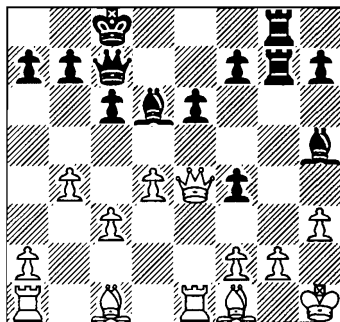
White's own activity is based on an assault along the b-file with ♟b1, b4-b5 etc. Under the right circumstances this can prove deadly for the black king, but here Black is so well placed that his opponent is soon distracted by the need to defend along the g-file.

15...♟hg8 16 ♟f1 ♟h5 17 ♟c2 ♟g7 18 ♟h1 f4!

Such a pawn advance has to be

weighed carefully as Black is shutting out his dark-squared bishop from the kingside and weakening the e4-square. However, here all the conditions are right: Black's build-up along the g-file will become overwhelming once the f-pawn has provided the final pressure needed to overturn White's defence.

19 ♟e4 ♟xe4 20 ♟xe4 ♟dg8



21 f3

He has to prevent 21...f3 when 22 g3 ♟xg3 would quickly mate.

21...♟g3 22 ♟xh7 ♟xf3!

The long-awaited breakthrough.

23 gxh3 ♟e7!

Once the black queen reaches the g-file it will all be over for the white king.

24 ♟h6

This keeps the queen out of g5 but it soon finds another way to reach the g-file.

24...♟3g6 25 ♟h5 ♟g1+ 26 ♟h2 ♟f6 27 a4 ♟g7 28 ♟g4

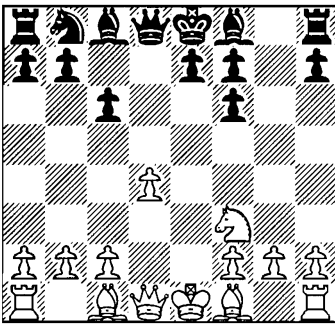
Hopeless, but if 28 ♟h4 then 28...♟g2+! 29 ♟xg2 ♟8xg2 mate is the prettiest way to win.

28...♟xg4 29 hxg4 ♟h6+ 30 ♟g1 f5 31 ♟a2 fxg4 32 ♟h2 gxf3+ 33 ♟h1 f2! 0-1

A model game that perfectly demonstrates Black's chances against hesitant play in this system.

Game 38
Brajuvic-Istratescu
Bucharest 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4
 ♙f6 5 ♗xf6+ gx f6 6 ♗f3



6...♗f5

White normally waits for Black to commit his bishop to f5 before bringing out his king's knight so that it can't be pinned. So 6...♗g4 is logical, after which I once tried as White 7 ♗e2 ♚c7 8 0-0 ♘d7 9 ♘h4 ♗xe2 10 ♚xe2 e6 11 c4 0-0-0 12 g3 ♗g8 13 d5!? ♚e5 14 ♚f3 cxd5 15 cxd5. Now Black went wrong with 15...♚d4? and was soon losing after 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 ♗f4 in McDonald-Schmedders, Hastings 2000. The critical continuation was 15...♚xd5! 16 ♚xd5 exd5. Here I had imagined that after 17 ♘f5 or 17 ♗e3 I would soon capture the pawn on d5 with a good game, but things aren't at all clear as Black's knight jumps effectively into e5.

7 ♗d3

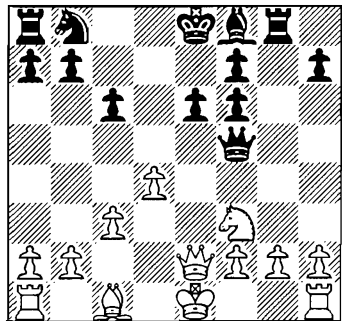
White can set his opponent considerably more problems with 7.c3 ♘d7 8 g3, transposing to Games 41-43.
 7...♗g8!

Black exploits a tactical trick based on ...♚a5+ to activate his game. I like the idea of attacking g2 straightaway, before White has time to consolidate on the g-file with ♗f4 and ♗g3. Instead 7...♘d7 8 ♗f4 ♗xd3 9 ♚xd3 ♚a5+ 10 c3 0-0-0 11 0-0 ♚h5 12 ♗fe1 ♗g8 13 ♗ad1 e6 was played in Zagrebny-Orlov, St Petersburg 1994, and here instead of 14 ♚e2, which allowed Black to exchange off White's well placed bishop with 14...♚g4! 15 ♗g3 ♗d6 leading to unclear play, Zagrebny has suggested 14 ♗g3 f5 15 b4!?, though even here I don't believe Black is worse.

8 ♗xf5

If 8 0-0? ♗h3.

8...♚a5+ 9 c3 ♚xf5 10 ♚e2 e6



Naturally not 10...♗xg2 11 ♘h4. Now White decides to force the exchange of queens, since in the middle-game after 11 0-0 ♘d7 12 b4 ♗d6 etc., Black would have the better attacking chances due to the already open g-file and his well placed queen.

11 ♟h4 ♖g4 12 ♗xg4 ♙xg4 13 g3 ♟d6

In the endgame Black's fractured kingside pawns don't cause him any problems – his isolated h-pawn is very difficult to attack and the doubled f-pawns increase his control of the centre.

14 ♟e3?

After this passive move White is gradually outplayed. A better plan was 14 ♟g2 followed by either 15 ♟f4!? or 15 ♟e3, with fairly equal chances. White's failure to recentralise his knight will prove costly.

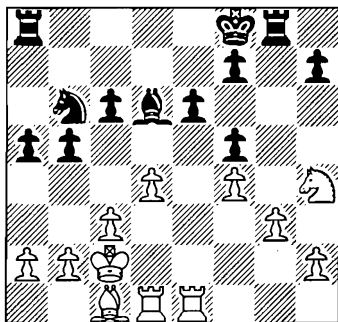
14...♟d7 15 0-0-0 b5!

Black gains space on the queenside.

16 ♜he1 ♟b6 17 ♟c2 a5 18 f3

A better defensive plan was 18 ♟g2 ♟d5 19 ♟c1 followed by ♟e3.

18...♙g8 19 f4 f5 20 ♟c1 ♟f8



21 ♙g1?!

White runs out of patience and embarks on an ambitious scheme to advance g3-g4, but this turns out to be a disaster. It wasn't too late to reactivate the knight with 21 ♟f3.

21...a4 22 ♜df1 ♜c8 23 h3? h5

This stops White's plan and saddles him with a serious weakness on g3.

24 ♟f3 f6 25 ♟d3 ♟f7 26 ♟e3 ♟c7 27 b3?

Opening the a-file is a very bad idea. He should sit tight with 27 ♟c1, for example.

27...axb3 28 axb3 ♜a8 29 ♜a1?

White makes a miscalculation. The only hope was waiting with 29 ♟d2.

29...♜xa1 30 ♜xa1 ♙xg3 31 ♜a7 ♙xf3 32 ♟e2

White had missed that after 32 ♜xc7+ ♟g6 he would have no defence to 33...♟d5 or 33...♜xe3+! 34 ♟xe3 ♟d5+ with a fork.

32...♜xe3+! 33 ♟xe3 ♟e8 34 c4 bxc4 35 bxc4 ♟d8 36 ♟d3 h4 37 c5 ♟d5 38 ♜a8+ ♟d7 39 ♜h8 ♟xf4+ 40 ♟c4 ♟xh3 41 ♜xh4 ♟f4 42 ♜h7+ ♟c8 43 ♜f7 ♟d5 44 ♟d3 ♟d8 45 ♜h7 ♟e8 0-1

Game 39

Rogovski-Miles

Alushta 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟d2 dxe4 4 ♟xe4 ♟f6 5 ♟xf6+ gxf6 6 ♟e2

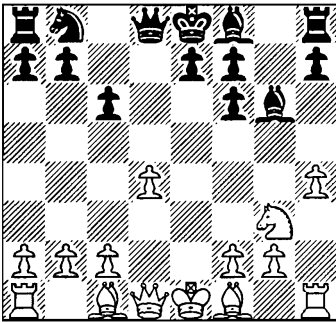
This is one of White's most aggressive responses to Black's system, but of course the double-edged positions that arise are exactly what Black is aiming for when he plays a counterattacking opening.

6...♟f5

Or 6...h5 7 ♟e3!? (instead 7 h4 ♟g4 8 ♗d3 e5 9 ♟e3 ♟a6! 10 a3? – necessary was 10 c3 with unclear play – 10...♗a5+! 11 ♟d2 ♗b6 12 dxe5 ♟c5 13 ♗e3 0-0-0 14 b4 ♟h6 15 f4 ♜xd2! 16 ♗xd2 ♟e4 17 ♗d4 ♗xd4 18 ♟xd4 ♟xf4 was winning for Black in Mikhalchishin-Speelman, Frunze 1979)

7...♙f5 8 c4 e6 9 ♘c3 ♘d7 10 ♙e2 ♙g6 (10...h4 is more consistent, since it keeps the chance of activity on the g-file with ...♖g8) 11 a3 ♚c7 12 b4 f5 13 ♚d2 and White held the advantage in Oratovsky-Shrentzel, Tel Aviv 1999.

7 ♘g3 ♙g6 8 h4



By threatening 9 h5 White provokes the advance of Black's h-pawn and then plays to win it. In the meantime Black hopes to generate powerful counterplay, especially as White's kingside has been undermined and so will never provide a completely safe haven for his king.

8...h5

The alternative 8...h6 has never appealed to Black as after 9 h5 ♙h7 his king's bishop or rook will have to remain tied uncomfortably to the defence of h6.

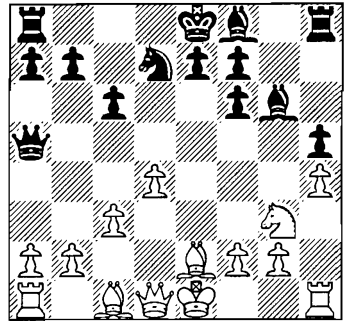
9 ♙e2 ♘d7 10 c3

A necessary precaution, as taking twice on h5 would drop a piece to ...♚a5+.

10...♚a5

see following diagram

11 b4



Finally, White will win the h-pawn. An alternative strategy of launching an all-out attack on Black's king beginning with 11 a4 has also been tried and is analysed in the next game. Two quieter alternatives have proved less effective:

a) 11 ♙d2?! (just the type of schematic response Black was hoping for; the plan of putting the bishop on c3 to strengthen the centre is too slow here) 11...0-0-0 12 c4 ♚b6 13 ♙c3 ♘c5?! (instead 13...e5! was more consequent with the better game, as 14 ♚a4? then fails to 14...exd4 15 ♙a5 ♚xb2) 14 ♚d2? (this blunder doesn't help at all; he had to try something like 14 0-0) 14...♙h6 15 ♚d1 e5! 16 b4 (White's centre collapses, since 16 d5 cxd5 17 cxd5 ♘e4 18 ♘xe4 ♙xe4 is also fatal) 16...♘e4 17 ♘xe4 ♙xc4 18 c5 ♚c7 19 ♙xh5 exd4 20 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 21 ♘xd2 ♚f4+ 22 ♘e1 ♖de8 23 ♘f1 ♖hg8 24 ♙f3 d3 25 ♙xe4 ♚xe4 26 ♚f3 ♚c4 27 ♖h3 d2+ 28 ♚d3 ♚c1+ 0-1 S.Pedersen-Dongart, Copenhagen 2000.

b) 11 0-0 (White wants to attack on the queenside, so the immediate 12 a4 0-0-0 13 b4 ♚c7 13 a5 etc., as in

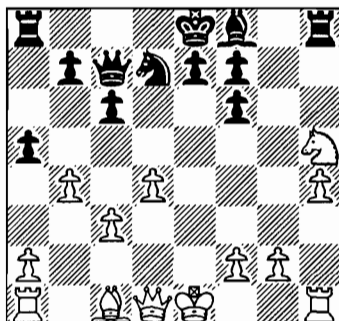
Game 40, was more thematic) 11...0-0-0 12 b4 ♖c7 13 a4 e5 14 ♖b3?! (it was unnecessary to think about defending b4, as after 14 a5 the greedy 14...exd4?! 15 cxd4 ♙xb4? allows 16 a6 b6 17 ♙c3, planning ♖c1, which looks very dangerous for Black – see the note to 15...♙d6 in Game 40 below – so Black would do best to play 14...e4!?, when 15 a6 b6 also transposes to analysis to 15...♙d6 in Game 40) 14...e4! (this ‘by-passing’ move is a very important theme in the set-up reached; in contrast, opening the c-file with 14...exd4 15 cxd4 would have bad consequences for Black’s king) 15 b5 c5! 16 a5 ♖d6! (Black’s last two moves are also concerned with keeping lines closed; the queen side-steps 17 b6 so that it can be answered with 17...a6) 17 ♙a3 f5 (finally Black can think about his own attack) 18 ♖fd1? (the wrong rook! 18 ♖ad1 was unclear, e.g. 18...♖e6!?) [to rule out ♖c4; the risky 18...f4 19 dxc5 ♖e5 may also be playable] 19 ♙c4 ♖f6) 18...e3! (with the rook still on f1 White could have answered this with 19 f4!) 19 dxc5? (19 ♟h1) 19...exf2+ 20 ♟h2 ♖f6 and White had no good answer to the threatened mate on h4 in Pushkedra-Filipovich, North Bay 1999.

11...♖c7 12 ♙xh5?

This turns out badly. He had to capture with the knight, even though 12 ♟xh5 ♙xh5 13 ♙xh5 a5! gives Black plenty of activity. After 14 ♙g4?! (14 ♙e2!?) 14...axb4 15 cxb4 f5! 16 ♙c2 (if 16 ♙xf5 e6 and then 17...♙xb4+) 16...♖d6 17 ♖b3 ♟b6 18 ♙b2 ♟a4!

19 ♖d1 ♟xb2 20 ♖xb2 ♙g7 Black had more than enough pressure for the pawn in Boskovic-Rohde, USA 1979.

12...♙xh5 13 ♟xh5 a5!



The same recipe as in the note to move 12 above, yet even stronger here. By undermining the white queenside structure Black creates enormous dynamic chances for his pieces.

14 ♙f4 ♖b6!

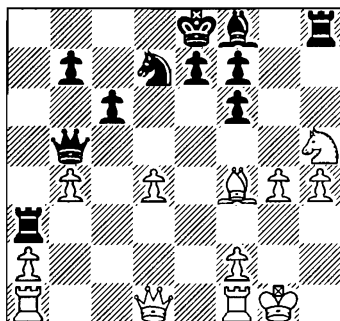
Miles avoids being provoked into a messy line such as 14...e5 15 dxe5 fxe5 16 ♙g5 axb4 17 cxb4 ♙xb4+ 18 ♟f1 when his king is airy. Instead he wants the centre to remain a compact shell for his king while his pieces are mobilised via the flanks.

15 0-0

After this White’s kingside proves too flimsy to safeguard his king. However, if 15 a3 axb4 16 cxb4 (16 axb4 ♖xa1 drops the knight) 16...♖xh5! 17 ♖xh5 ♖xd4 and Black wins two pieces for the rook. Also inadequate is 15 ♖b1 axb4 16 ♖xb4 ♖a5 with the double threat of 17...♖xh5 and 17...e5 attacking both bishop and rook.

15...♖b5! 16 g4 axb4 17 cxb4 ♖a3!

Miles manoeuvres admirably to keep up the initiative.



18 ♖e1 ♗g8 19 ♕h2 e6 20 ♖e3
 ♖xe3 21 fxe3 ♔d5 22 a3 ♙e7 23
 ♕h3 ♜e4 24 ♜h1 ♜g6 25 ♜f3 f5!

This completes the demolition of White's kingside and exposes his king to an unstoppable attack.

26 gx f5 ♜xf5+ 27 ♕h2 ♗g4 28 ♔g3
 ♖xh4+ 29 ♕g1 ♜c2 30 ♜f2 ♜g6 31
 ♕g2 ♔f6 32 ♖h1 ♗g4 33 ♖h8+ ♕d7
 34 ♕h1 ♔d5 35 ♔e2 ♜e4+ 36 ♕h2
 ♔xf4 37 ex f4 ♙d6 38 ♕h3 ♜f5 39
 ♔g3 ♖h4+! 0-1

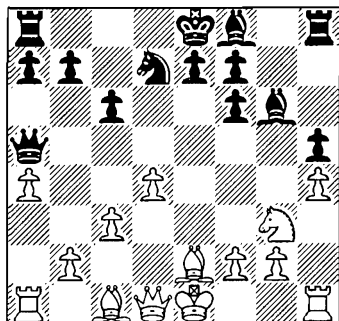
A nice finish. If 40 ♕xh4 ♙e7 is mate, while 40 ♕g2 ♜h3+ picks up the rook.

Game 40
Rodriguez-Pieterse
Dieren 1987

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♔d2 dxe4 4 ♔xe4
 ♔f6 5 ♔xf6+ gxf6 6 ♔e2 ♙f5 7
 ♔g3 ♙g6 8 h4 h5 9 ♙e2 ♔d7 10 c3
 ♜a5 11 a4!

This seems to be a better strategy than 11 b4 in Game 39 above. White aims to keep control of the position; he wants to keep the kingside as a shelter for his king and open up lines against the black king with b2-b4 etc.,

once it has gone to the queenside.



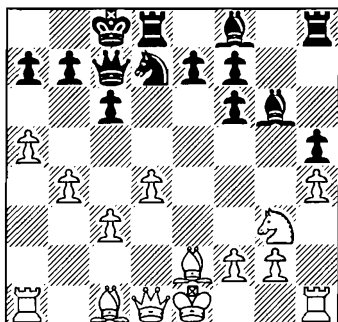
11...0-0-0

Instead Black could strike in the centre with 11...e5!?, e.g. 12 b4 ♜c7 13 0-0 and now for better or worse he should play 13...e4!? with an unclear position. Instead after the slow 13...♙e7 White ruined his opponent's counterplay by controlling the e4- and f5-squares with 14 ♙d3 and left him strategically busted after 14...a5 15 b5 cxb5 16 ♙xb5 ♖d8 17 ♜f3 ♕f8 18 ♔f5 in Ilincic-Groszpeter, Belgrade 1988.

12 b4 ♜c7 13 a5!

This is more incisive than 13 ♜b3?! when 13...e5 14 ♙e3 ♙d6 15 0-0 f5! 16 dxe5 ♔xe5 17 b5 c5 18 a5 ♜e7! (not allowing any line-opening with 19 b6, which can now be answered by 19...a6; since 19 a6 is answered by 19...b6, there is no way through on the queenside for White's attack) and Black's well centralised pieces gave him the advantage in Timmerman-Niermann, Ostend 1993.

White normally plays his queen to b3, since he is worried about losing the b-pawn in the future, but as Rodriguez demonstrates it can be offered as a strong gambit.



13...e5 14 a6

Or 14 0-0 f5?! (14...e4!? could well transpose to 15...e4 in the next note) 15 f4! (to prevent 15...f4) 15...exd4 (I have some sympathy with 15...e4, though the rather strange-looking line 16 a6 b6 17 ♟h1! ♟e7 18 g3 looks better for White) 16 ♟xd4 ♟e7 17 ♟xa7 ♟xh4 18 ♟h1 ♟he8 19 ♟f3 ♟f6 20 ♟a3 and White came out on top in Ilincic-Markotic, Pula 1990.

14...b6 15 0-0 ♟d6?

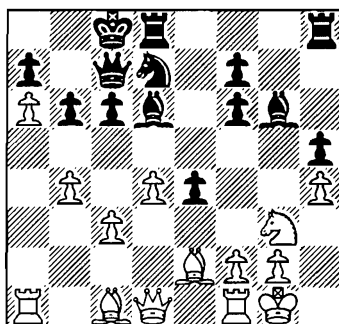
A critical moment. First of all, snatching the b-pawn is very risky for Black: 15...exd4?! 16 cxd4 ♟xb4? 17 ♟e3! ♟d6 18 ♟c1 and Black has problems along the c-file. One possible finish is 18...♟he8?! (15...c5!?) 19 ♟b5! c5 (19...♟c5!?) is a tactical attempt to turn the tables, but 20 dxc5 ♟xg3 21 ♟b3! wins) 20 ♟f3 ♟xg3 21 fxg3 ♟e4 22 ♟f2 ♟d6 23 dxc5 and Black resigned in Morawietz-Schlenga, Germany 1989.

Much more logical is 15...e4!?

see following diagram

We have already seen this pawn thrust in the note to 11...0-0-0 above and also in the previous game in the

note to 11 b4, variation 'b'. Black prevents his opponent from gaining control of the e4- and f5-squares with ♟d3 and keeps the queenside as blocked as possible. Now 16 b5 ♟e5 17 ♟d2? gives Black enough time to develop a big attack after 17...f5! 18 bxc6 (18 dxe5 f4! 19 ♟h1 e3 20 ♟a2 ♟h6 21 bxc6 f3! 22 ♟xf3 exd2 is good for Black – variation by Blasberg) 18...♟g4! For example, 19 ♟g5 ♟d6! 20 ♟xd8 ♟xd8 21 ♟xg4 hxg4 22 h5 ♟h4 23 ♟e1 ♟xh5! 24 ♟xh5 ♟h2+ 25 ♟f1 ♟xh5 and White resigned in Espindola-Blasberg, correspondence 1996, as he has no good defence to the threat of 26...g3, e.g. 26 g3 f4! 27 ♟e2 fxg3 28 ♟f1 g2 and wins.



A more challenging try is 17 bxc6, but after 17...f5 I still like Black's chances after, for example, 18 ♟b5 ♟g4 and 18 ♟f4 ♟f3+ 19 ♟xf3 ♟xf4 20 ♟e2 ♟d6 both give him excellent play, while after 18 ♟g5 Black can play as in the Blasberg game with the sacrificial 18...♟g4!?: 19 ♟xd8 ♟xd8 20 ♟xg4 hxg4 21 h5 ♟h4! and again Black has a very menacing attack.

16 ♟d3!

This kills all the dynamism in Black's

centre by taking control of the key light squares on e4 and f5.

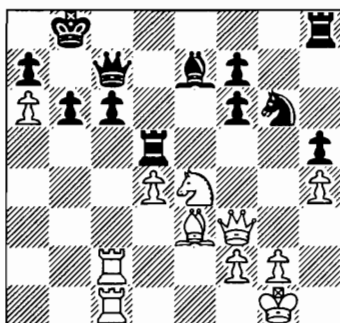
16...exd4

Opening the c-file is bad, but Black no longer had any constructive plan.

17 cxd4 ♖xb4

If 17...♙xg3? 18 fxg3 ♚xg3 19 ♙xg6! fxg6 20 ♙f4 ♚g4 21 ♚c1! wins – Rodriguez.

18 ♙e3 ♜b8 19 ♚c1 ♙a3 20 ♚c2 ♜e5 21 ♙xg6 ♜xg6 22 ♚f3 ♚d5 23 ♜e4 ♙e7 24 ♚fc1

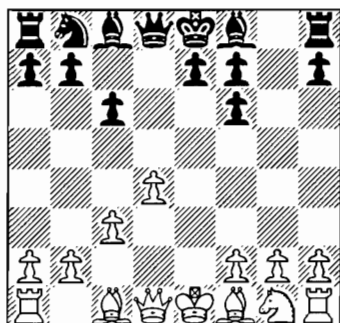


Now Black cannot avoid a collapse on the c-file as 24...♚c8? fails to 25 ♜xf6 ♙xf6 26 ♚xc6! etc., winning material.

24...♜h4 25 ♚h3 ♜g6 26 ♚xc6 ♚d7 27 ♚g3+ ♙a8 28 ♚c7 ♚e6 29 ♚1c6 1-0

Black resigned as he is mated after 29...♚f5 30 ♚xa7+ ♙xa7 31 ♚c7+ etc.

Bronstein. He waits a move before playing ♜f3 so that the knight doesn't get pinned with ...♙g4 and then fianchettoes his bishop on g2. This will make the kingside much more secure than in the games above where the attack on g2 after ...♚g8 was often problematical for White. Having safeguarded his kingside, White will then try to break through in the centre with d4-d5 or – assuming that Black has castled queenside – launch an attack with moves such as b2-b4, ♚b1 and b4-b5.



6...♙f5

An unusual alternative for Black is 6...♚d5!? The idea is to deter White from fianchettoing his bishop after say 7 ♜f3 ♙g4 (or perhaps 7...♚g8 8 g3 ♚e4+!?). Instead 7 ♚b3!? is an interesting riposte, e.g. 7...♚e4+ 8 ♙e3 ♙h6 9 ♜d2 ♙xc3+ 10 fxg3 b6 11 ♜e2 ♙e6 12 ♜g3! ♙xb3 13 ♜xe4 ♙e6 14 ♜g3 h5! 15 ♙e2 h4 16 ♜h5 ♚g8 17 ♜f4 ♙g4 18 ♙d3 e5 19 ♜e2 ♜c7 20 ♚hg1 ♜d7 21 ♙e4 ♚ac8 22 ♚af1 ♚g5 and although White eventually won in Turov-Eliseev, St Petersburg 1998, I think that Black is doing okay here.

7 ♜f3 e6

Game 41

Canfell-S. Rutherford

Melbourne 1998

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜d2 dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♜f6 5 ♜xf6+ gxf6 6 c3!

This has become established as White's most promising counter to the

The main alternative is 7...♟d7 which is the subject of Game 43.

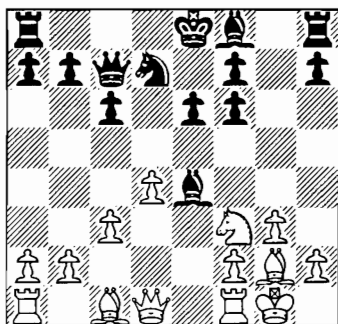
8 g3 ♟d7?!

Instead of this natural but imprecise move, in Game 42 Black delayed the development of the knight in favour of 8...h5!? and achieved good chances.

Another possibility is 8...♞d5, which is similar to the idea mentioned at move six. However, it doesn't seem to achieve the desired effect as simply 9 ♟g2 ♞c4+ 10 ♟e3 ♞c2 (this side-steps the discovered attack and forces the exchange of queens) 11 ♟h4 ♞xd1+ 12 ♞xd1 ♟g6 13 0-0 ♟d7 14 f4 f5 15 c4 was better for White in McDonald-S.Lalic, Birmingham 1998.

9 ♟g2 ♟e4 10 0-0 ♞c7?

This is a serious inaccuracy. Necessary was either 10...f5 or 10...♟e7, with play similar to lines discussed in the next main game.



11 ♞e1 ♟xf3

Black has no choice but to give up his powerful bishop as 11...f5 allows 12 ♟g5! ♟xg2 13 ♟xg2 when White's knight hovers menacingly over the f7- and e6-squares. Note that if Black had played 10...♟e7 instead of 10...♞c7? then after 11...f5 White's knight would

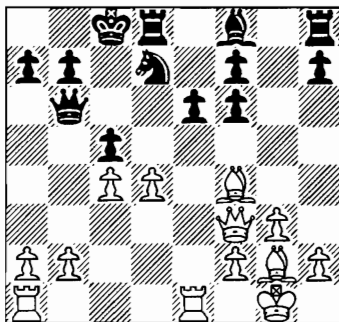
have been kept out of g5.

12 ♞xf3 0-0-0 13 c4 c5??

This is a horrible move which does White's work for him by opening up the long diagonal for the king's bishop. Black was already badly placed, but perhaps 13...h5 14 h4 ♟h6 was the best defence.

14 ♟f4 ♞b6

Or 14...e5 15 dxe5 fxe5 16 ♞xe5! ♟d6 (16...♟xe5 17 ♟xe5 doesn't help) 17 ♞c7! ♟xf4 18 gxf4 followed by 19 ♞d1, which leaves Black a pawn down and in a bind.



15 b4!!

The killer blow.

15...cxb4

Or 15...cxd4 16 c5 ♞a6 17 b5 ♞xb5 18 ♞ab1.

16 c5 ♞c6 17 ♞b3 ♞a6 18 a3 1-0

Whether or not he takes on a3 Black will be quickly mated on the open queenside files.

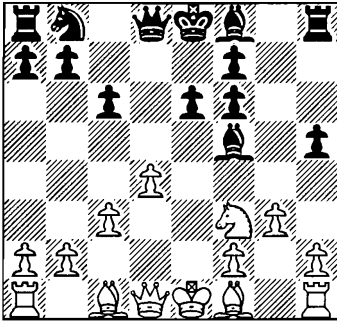
Game 42

Riemersma-Pieterse

Holland 1987

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟d2 dxe4 4 ♟xe4 ♟f6 5 ♟xf6+ gxf6 6 c3 ♟f5 7 ♟f3

e6 8 g3 h5!?



This is more flexible than 8...d7 in Game 41 – as will be seen, the knight can sometimes be developed more actively on c6.

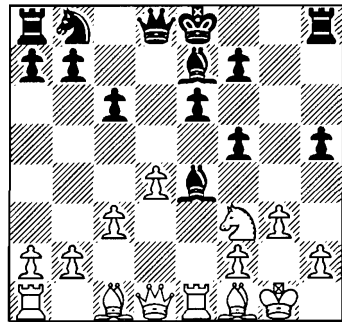
9 g2 e4 10 0-0 e7

Probably transposing is 10...f5 after 11 e1. Instead Gelfand once tried 11 b3, but he was certainly no better after 11...b6 12 e5 g2 13 g2 d7 14 c4 a6 15 f4 b6 16 e3 h6 17 g6 h6 18 c4 f4! 19 gxf4 0-0-0 due to his fragmented kingside in Gelfand-Pieterse, Amsterdam 1988.

11 e1 f5 12 f1

According to some analysis by Blasberg and Volzhin, White can achieve the advantage after 12 h4 d7 13 f1, as 13...c5? fails to the sacrificial line 14 g5 e6 15 e6! fxe6 16 e6 b6 17 d5 e8 18 e8 f8 19 dxc6 bxc6 20 g2 and White has every chance to win thanks to the denuded position of the black king. Also unsatisfactory for Black is 13...xf3 14 xf3 e6 15 g5 d5 (White threatened 16 xf6 xf6 17 xf5) 16 e2 0-0-0 17 g2 and Black will face an attack similar to that in the game above.

However, I think that 13...g8! keeps Black very much alive, as after 14 e5 e5 15 e5 g5! 16 h5 g5 b5 looks fine for Black – he has a pawn for the exchange, a safe position and the chance to attack with 17...h4. Note that White can't win the bishop with 17 f3?, since after 17...g3+ 18 g2 e5 he can't play c3-c4 any longer. Other lines after 13...g8 are 14 h2 e6! or 14 d2 and now Black should avoid 14...xh4, as 15 e4 fe4 16 e4 e7 17 e6! fe6 18 xh5+ e8 19 e6+ looks dangerous for him, but 14...e6! seems okay since 15 f3?, trying to trap the bishop, fails to 15...d6! 16 g4 e4 and Black wins.



12...c5!

This leads to a wild struggle in which the result – win, loss or draw – becomes almost impossible to predict.

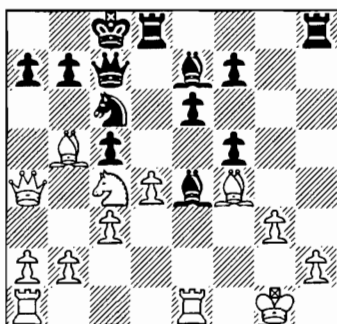
13 e3 c6 14 e5 h4! 15 d2 hxg3 16 fxg3 b6 17 a4 0-0-0 18 c4

At first sight this looks very strong, but it turns out White would have been wiser to play more carefully with 18 e4 fe4 19 a1 with a murky position, but not 19 e6 bxc6 20 dxc5 e5 21 xe4 d2! 22 h4 c7!

which looks very dangerous for him.

18...♞c7 19 ♠f4

Now Black appears to be lost as both 19...e5 20 dxe5 and 19...♞d7? 20 ♞b6+! axb6 21 ♞a8+ mating are hopeless for him. However, he has a little surprise waiting for his opponent!



19...♞xf4!! 20 gxf4 ♞dg8+

Now, despite having a queen for only one minor piece, White is in grave danger of losing!

21 ♠f1 ♞xh2 22 ♟d6+?

White should have played 22 ♞xe4! to eliminate the dangerous bishop, when the game should finish as a draw after 22...fxe4 23 ♟xc6 ♞h1+ 24 ♠f2 ♞h2+ 25 ♠f1 ♞h1+ etc. as playing to win with 26 ♟e2? walks into a mating net with 26...♞g2+ 27 ♟e3 ♞h3+ 28 ♟xe4 ♞c2+ 29 ♟e3 ♞exe3 mate – variation by Volzhin on chesspublishing.com.

22...♟xd6 23 ♞xe4 fxe4 24 ♞e1 ♟e7 25 ♞e2 ♞h1+ 26 ♠f2 cxd4 27 cxd4 ♞h2+

Black forces a draw, whereas according to Volzhin he should have played on with 27...♞h3!, e.g. 28 ♟e1 ♞g1+ 29 ♠f2 (perhaps Black missed that 29

♟d2? ♟b4+ 30 ♟c2 ♟xd4 is mate!) 29...♞gh1! 30 ♞xe4 ♟h4+ 31 ♟e2 ♞b1 and it is up to White to try to find a defence as 32 ♟xc6? allows 32...♞xb2+ 33 ♟d1 ♞h1+ mating.

28 ♠f1 ♞h1+ 29 ♠f2 ♞h2+ 30 ♠f1 ♞h1+ ½-½

A tremendous fighting game which is typical of this line.

Game 43

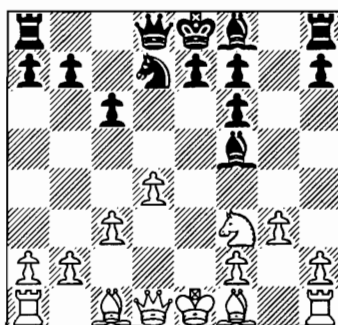
Moreno-Tempone

Villa Ballester 1997

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟c3 dxe4 4 ♟xe4 ♟f6 5 ♞xf6+ gxf6 6 c3 ♟f5 7 ♟f3 ♟d7

This game illustrates Black's plan of castling kingside.

8 g3

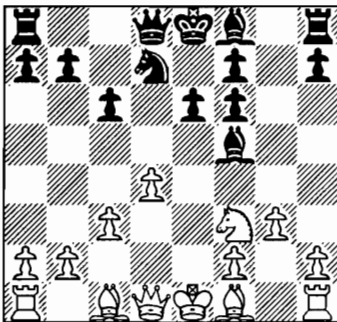


8...e6

Some years ago one of the future stars of chess suffered a shattering defeat after the inferior 8...♟b6?!: 9 ♟g2 ♞d7 10 0-0 h5 11 a4! (refuting Black's opening scheme, as after the necessary response 11...a5 the black king will never have any safe refuge on the queenside; Morozevich tries to complicate matters but his position

just collapses) 11...♙h3?! 12 ♖xh3 ♜xh3 13 a5 ♝c8 14 a6 b6 15 d5! c5 16 ♜e1 ♞d7 17 ♜h4 ♞g4 18 ♞c2 ♞d7 19 ♙f4 ♙h6?! 20 ♜g6! ♜g8 21 ♜xe7! ♜xe7 22 d6 and Black resigned in Campora-Morozevich, Moscow 1994.

Games 41 and 42 have shown that it is reckless for Black to castle queenside if he hasn't made any provision for opposing White's king's bishop with ...♙e4 followed by ...f6-f5. This 'rule' applies equally here, as after 8...♞c7?! 9 ♙g2 0-0-0?! 10 ♜h4 ♙g6 11 0-0 ♞b8 12 b4 e6 13 a4 ♙d6 14 b5 Black had no answer to White's queenside assault in Milov-Ionov, Budapest 1991. Although he battled on with 14...cxb5 15 axb5 ♜b6 16 ♞f3 ♙c2 17 c4! (opening the c-file is a shrewd idea) 17...♜xc4 18 ♙h6 e5 19 ♜fc1 e4 20 ♞f5 ♜a3 (White now finds a way to exploit the scattered black pieces) 21 ♞xf6 ♜he8 22 ♜f5 ♞a8 (the potential pin on the f4-b8 diagonal costs Black a piece) 23 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 24 ♙f4 ♜xf6 25 ♙xc7 ♜xb5 26 ♜xc2, White soon gained the full point.

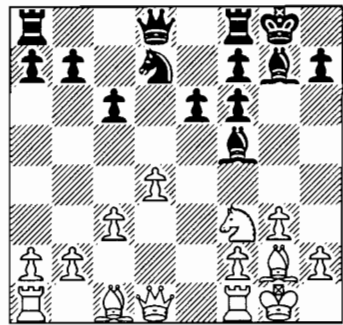


9 ♙g2 ♙g7 10 0-0 0-0

It is sensible to castle kingside away from the baleful glare of the bishop on

g2. Despite his broken pawns, Black's king is safe as both of his bishops can block the g-file if necessary.

The downside of castling kingside is that Black forgoes any chance of attacking the white king with ...h7-h5 etc. It is therefore less appealing from a dynamic point of view than the variations discussed in the previous main game.

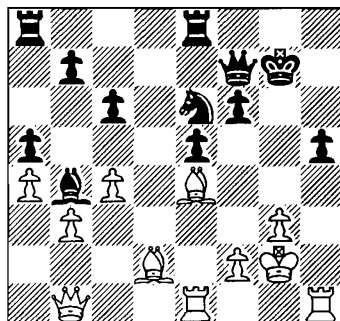
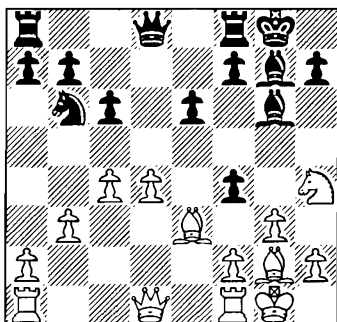


11 ♜h4

Or 11 ♜c1 (reached though the move order 8...♙g7 9 ♙g2 0-0 10 0-0 e6 11 ♜c1) 11...♙e8 12 ♙f4 ♞b6 (it becomes clear that Black thinks he has a good defensive position and so he makes a lot of waiting moves with his queen; meanwhile White also adopts a probing approach) 13 ♞c1 ♙g6 14 ♜d2 ♞d8 15 ♜e4 ♙xe4 16 ♜xe4 f5 17 ♜e2 a5 18 ♞c2 a4 19 ♜ae1 ♞a5 20 ♞c1 ♞d8 21 h4 ♞h8 22 ♞c2 ♜g8 23 ♜d1 ♜f6 24 ♙g5 h6 25 ♙c1 ♜g4 26 ♙f4 and after all the toing and froing a draw was agreed in Tempone-Soppe, Saenz Pena City 1996. In the final position White could still build up for c3-c4 and d4-d5 advance, but perhaps he feared that Black would find a way to generate pressure on the g-file.

11...♙g6 12 c4 ♞b6 13 b3 f5 14 ♙e3 f4!

This clever move conquers the d4-point, after which Black appears to have equalised.



15 ♙xf4 ♙xd4 16 a4 ♜f6 17 ♞a2 a5

Here 17...e5 would have kept more control of the centre, e.g. 18 ♞f3 ♙h5!? or 18 ♙h6 ♞fd8 with reasonable play in each instance.

18 ♞f3!

Now White drives the bishop to c5 and regains the initiative

18...♙c5 19 ♜c1

Instead the alternative continuation 19 ♙e5 ♜f5?! (19...♜e7) 20 ♜a1! looks strong.

19...♜e7 20 ♞e5 f6 21 ♞xg6 hxg6 22 ♞e2 ♞fe8 23 h4 e5 24 ♙d2?!

It was better to play 24 ♙h6 ♞d7 25 ♙e4 keeping the edge. The pawn sacrifice next move doesn't prove as strong as White anticipates.

24...♞d7 25 h5? gxh5 26 ♙e4 ♜f7 27 ♜b1 ♙g7 28 ♙g2 ♞f8 29 ♞h1 ♞e6 30 ♞ee1 ♙b4

31 ♙h6+!?

An interesting attempt to keep his initiative going, but one that proves ultimately insufficient.

31...♙xh6 32 ♞xh5+ ♜xh5 33 ♞h1 ♜xh1+ 34 ♜xh1+ ♙g7 35 ♜h7+ ♙f8 36 ♙g6 ♞g5!

The only move, but one that allows Black to defend successfully by running with his king.

37 ♜h8+ ♙e7 38 ♜g7+ ♙d6 39 ♜xf6+ ♞e6 40 c5+

He has to deflect the bishop from guarding d2 as becomes clear in the next note, but Black gains more material and pressure on f2.

40...♙xc5 41 ♜xg5 ♙c7

If 41...♞g8 42 ♜d2+ breaks the pin with check. Nevertheless, Black wins because his king is much safer and the opposite-coloured bishops favour his attack.

42 ♙f5 ♞e7 43 ♜f6 ♞d8 44 f3 ♙b6 45 g4 ♞d6 46 ♜g5 ♞e8 47 ♙e4 ♞h8 48 ♜c1 ♞dh6 49 g5 ♞h2+ 50 ♙g3 ♞h1 0-1

Summary

Straightforward developing moves such as those seen in Games 37 and 38 fail to prevent Black from achieving good chances. The ultra-sharp lines after 6 Qe2 lead to a very difficult clash – if White goes pawn-hunting as in Game 39 he is likely to get his fingers burnt, but the idea of beginning a pawn storm on the queenside in Game 40 is much more effective. The analysis at Black’s 15th move here has to be carefully studied. The conclusion seems to be that Black has enough dynamic play.

Games 41-43 feature White’s strongest riposte to the Larsen-Bronstein variation: the fianchetto of his king’s bishop. In Game 41 White wins easily after his opponent responds poorly. In Game 42 Black plays the same system, but rather than the automatic developing move 8... Qd7 he plays 8... h5! ? and later manages to follow up with an attack on White’s centre with ... c6-c5 and ... Qc6 , when the knight finds a more active square than in Game 41. The key moment is after 12 Qf1 . Finally, Game 43 examines Black’s plan of castling kingside against the fianchetto. Black’s king seems secure but he has less active play than usual – White is probably slightly better.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Qc3 dxe4 4 Qxe4 Qf6 5 Qxf6+ gxf6 (D)

6 c3

6 Qc4 – Game 37

6 Qf3 – Game 38

6 Qe2 Qf5 7 Qg3 Qg6 8 h4 h5 9 Qc2 Qd7 10 c3 Qa5 (D)

11 b4 – Game 39

11 a4 – Game 40

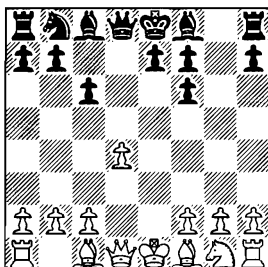
6... Qf5 7 Qf3 e6

7... Qd7 – Game 43

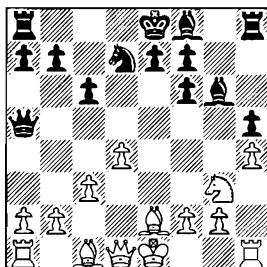
8 g3 (D) h5

8... Qd7 – Game 41

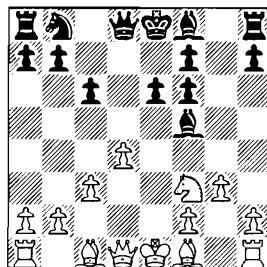
9 Qg2 – Game 42



5... gxf6



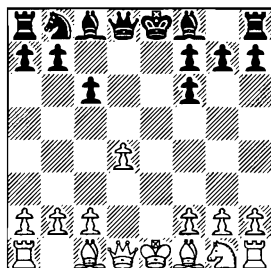
10... Qa5



8 g3

CHAPTER EIGHT

Korchnoi System with 4... ♖f6 5 ♘xf6+ exf6



1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dx4 4 ♖xe4
♗f6 5 ♗xf6+ exf6

The main advantage of the Korchnoi system is that Black achieves free and rapid development of his pieces: the bishops have nice central squares on d6 and e6 and the king's rook can easily be brought to the open e-file. Furthermore, Black has an extra pawn on the kingside which can prove handy for both defensive and aggressive purposes.

I have chosen Game 44 to illustrate the danger of passive play for White: beginning with 6 ♗f3, he develops his pieces quietly, after which Black is able to seize the initiative and use the front f-pawn as an attacking weapon.

Of course, Black faces a much harder test if his opponent plays in a more purposeful style. Since Black has doubled pawns, the classical plan for White is to try to utilise his queenside majority. Experience has shown that White can keep a slight edge if he aims for simplification, notably with 6 ♕c4 as in Game 45. However, as a rule the

inferiority of Black's pawn structure doesn't seem to cause him too many problems in either the middlegame or the endgame. It only becomes nasty for him if he reaches a very simplified endgame, which means he shouldn't exchange too many pieces! In Game 45 we see Korchnoi winning in great style as Black against 6 ♕c4 after White loses control.

The remaining games in the chapter are dedicated to White's most dangerous system: 6 c3 followed by ♕d3. At its root this has the aim of launching a direct mating attack against Black's king. Such a plan is positionally justified, since although Black has four pawns defending his king, he has exchanged his king's knight and the pawn on f6 is denying his queen's knight a good defensive square. Of course, if in the process of building up the attack the chance to simplify to a good endgame appears, White will often be wise to take it.

Assuming Black castles kingside and is faced with the aggressive ♖c2, then

in my opinion he should avoid the responses which are examined in Game 46. In the game itself he becomes trapped in the simplified end-game mentioned above that should be avoided at all costs. The correct approach for Black is shown in Game 47 which seems to provide him with sufficient counter-chances.

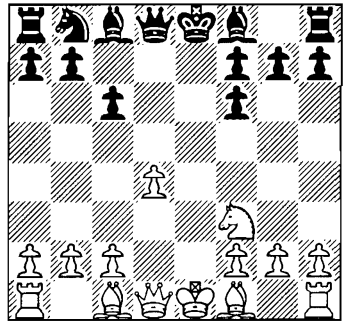
Black should be especially careful when facing the seemingly quieter line in Game 48. White castles kingside and rapidly gains a decisive attack against what seem very natural moves from Black. So be warned!

Finally, in Game 49 we look at lines where Black plays ...♙e6 and ...♙d6 rather than hurrying to castle kingside. This turns out badly in the illustrative game, but Black's play can be improved. In particular, you might like to examine the interesting side line for Black given in the analysis to move seven.

Game 44
Berg-P. Olsen
Copenhagen 1999

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗f6 5 ♗xf6+ exf6 6 ♗f3?!

The critical moves 6 ♙c4 and 6 c3 will be analysed in subsequent games. The opening phase of the present game is of no great theoretical interest, as White makes no attempt to prevent his opponent from achieving easy and harmonious development. However, the middlegame is instructive as it instructively shows the dynamism in Black's set-up if he is allowed a free hand.



6...♙d6

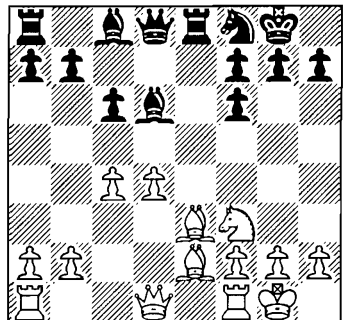
Black might have taken the chance to play 6...♙g4 here or on the next move.

7 ♙e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♖e8

Already Black's fifth move has been justified: his uncontested control of the e-file will prove useful later on.

9 ♙e3 ♗d7 10 c4 ♗f8!

An interesting manoeuvre. Black will put his knight on g6 and threaten to invade White's territory with ...♗f4, when he would at least acquire the two bishops. In order to stop this White feels obliged to play g2-g3, but then other weaknesses appear in his position.



11 ♙d2

This opposes a future bid for ...♟f4 by Black. However, in cutting off the retreat of the bishop on e3 it makes an even stronger plan available to his opponent. A sensible alternative was 11...c5 still intending to carry out the ...♟f4 manoeuvre.

11...♟g6 12 ♖fd1 ♜c7 13 g3 ♖g4 14 ♟g2 ♗ad8

Now every black piece is well centralised and exerting pressure on White's centre.

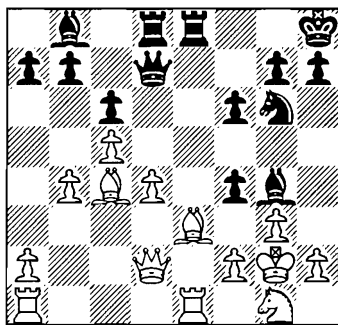
15 b4 f5! 16 ♟g1

The lesser evil was the immediate 16 c5, though 16...♞e7 intending 17...♞f6 to attack d4 is unpleasant for White.

16...♞e7!

This attacks b4 and also has ideas of 17...♞e4+.

17 c5 ♞b8 18 ♟g5 f6 19 ♞c4+ ♜h8 20 ♞e1 ♞d7 21 ♞e3 f4!



White's brief flurry of activity is followed by this strong counterattack. Black's fifth move is made to look wonderful!

22 ♟xf4

22 gxf4 ♞h3+! is similar.

22...♟xf4 23 gxf4 ♞h3+! 24 ♜h1

Or 24 ♟xh3 ♞g4+ regaining the

piece with a dangerous attack.

24...♟h4!

White has bolstered the f4-square but now disaster strikes from a different direction. The threat of mate on g2 can only be averted by White at terrible cost.

25 ♖xe8+

If 25 ♟xh3 ♞xh3 26 ♞f1 Black wins with a curious zigzagging queen manoeuvre: 26...♞f3+ 27 ♟g1 ♞h5! – clearing f3 for a big fork – 28 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 29 ♞d3 ♟f3+ 30 ♟g2 ♞g4+ and mate next move.

25...♖xe8 26 ♞f1 ♞d5+ 27 f3 ♟xf3 28 ♟xf3 ♞xf3+ 29 ♟g1?

White could have put up stiffer resistance after 29 ♟g2 ♞xg2+ 30 ♞xg2 ♞xf4.

29...♞g4+ 30 ♜h1 ♞xf1 31 ♞f2

If 31 ♖xf1 ♞e2.

31...♞c4 32 h4 ♞d5+ 0-1

Game 45
Arakhamia-Korchnoi
Roquebrune 1998

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟d2 dxe4 4 ♟xe4 ♟f6 5 ♟xf6+ exf6 6 ♞c4 ♟d7

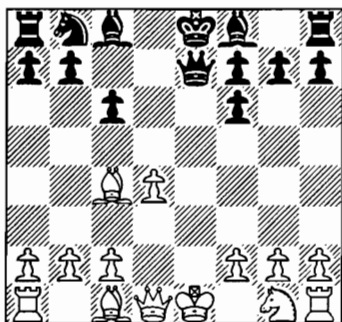
This move is something of a Korchnoi speciality. Black aims to get his knight to the d5-square with gain of time by attacking the bishop on c4 en route.

Despite the successful outcome of the game, fans of this line should also investigate the more vigorous 6...♞e7+!?

see following diagram

One of the points is that after the natural 7 ♟e2?? ♞b4+ White felt

obliged to resign in Sira-Konopkova, Slovakia 1994. Also ineffective for White is 7 ♖e2?! ♜c7! 8 ♘f3 ♙d6 9 0-0 0-0 with similar play to Game 44 above.



A more sensible variation is 7 ♜e2 ♙e6! 8 ♙xe6 (or 8 ♙b3 a5! – here 8... ♘a6 intending 9... ♘b4 also looks safe – 9 h4 a4 10 ♙xe6 ♜xe6 11 ♞h3 ♜xe2+ 12 ♘xe2 ♘a6 13 ♙f4 ♘b4 14 ♘d2 b5 and Black had equalised in Mokry-Firt, Czech Republic 1998) 8... ♜xe6 9 ♘h3 (9 ♜xe6+ fxe6 gives Black no problems) 9... ♘a6 10 ♘f4 ♜xe2+ 11 ♙xe2 0-0-0 12 ♞d1 ♘c7 and Black was solid enough to draw in Hübner-King, Germany 1987, while in this sequence a more enterprising option is 11... ♘b4! 12 ♘d2 c5! 13 c3 ♘c6 14 d5 0-0-0 15 c4 ♘e5 16 b3 ♙d6 17 ♙b2 ♞he8 18 ♞hf1 ♙c7 19 h3 b5 and Black eventually won in Panchenko-Hodgson, Sochi 1987.

Also possible is 6... ♙d6 7 ♜e2+ ♜e7 8 ♜xe7+ ♙xe7 9 ♘e2 ♙e6 10 ♙d3 ♘d7 11 ♙f4 ♘b6 12 ♙xd6+ ♙xd6 13 b3 ♙c7 14 c4 with a small but enduring plus to White in Matulovic-Smyslov, Siegen 1970. The former World Champion held the

draw, but I don't think lesser mortals should go into such a prospectless endgame!

Finally, 6... ♜d6! is a curious idea which threatens 7... ♜b4+ whilst keeping the e7-square free for the bishop. Then after 7 c3 ♙e6 8 ♙xe6 fxe6 9 ♘f3 (if 9 ♜b3 ♜d5!, when in *Informator 48* Mirkovic analyses 10 ♜xb7? ♜xg2 11 ♜xa8 ♙d6! 12 ♜xa7 0-0! 13 ♙e3 ♜xh1 14 0-0-0 ♙xh2 15 ♘e2 ♜f3 as being good for Black) 9... ♘a6 10 0-0 0-0-0 11 ♜e2 ♘c7 12 a4 g5 Black had plenty of play in Abramovic-Mirkovic, Yugoslavia 1989.

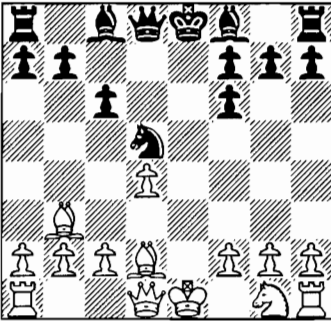
7 ♙f4?!

Instead 7 ♘e2! has been played in a World Championship match. The game continued 7... ♙d6 8 0-0 0-0 (perhaps after 8... ♜c7, preventing White's next move, Korchnoi was afraid of the gambit 9 ♘g3 0-0 10 ♘f5!?) 9 ♙f4 ♘b6 10 ♙d3 ♙e6 11 c3 ♘d5 12 ♙xd6 ♜xd6 13 ♜d2 ♞ad8 14 ♞fe1 g6 15 ♞ad1 ♙g7 16 ♙e4 ♘c7! (a fine positional retreat: the knight is more useful than the bishop) 17 b3 ♞fe8 18 ♙b1 ♙g4! 19 h3 ♙xe2 20 ♞xe2 ♞xe2 21 ♜xe2 ♘d5 22 ♜d2 ♘f4 and Black seemed sufficiently active in Karpov-Korchnoi, Baguio City 1978, though later he fell into a bind and was fortunate to escape with a draw.

7... ♘b6 8 ♙b3 ♘d5 9 ♙d2

see following diagram

The knight's journey to d5 has been expedited by an attack on not one but two white bishops! This shows that White's seventh move just lost time.



9...♙e7 10 ♘e2 0-0 11 0-0 f5!

This clears f6 for his bishop and exerts influence over the e4-square.

12 ♖g3 ♙e6 13 ♖e1 ♙f6

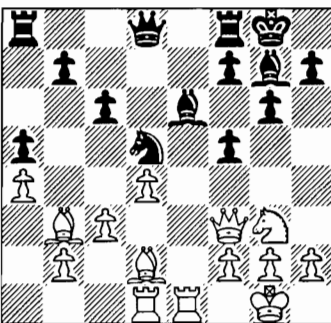
All this is a chess master-class from the veteran of two World Championship matches. By putting pressure on d4 Black deters his opponent from evicting the knight from its wonderful central post with c2-c4.

14 c3 g6 15 ♗f3 a5!

Black gains space on the queenside and also prepares an interesting positional sacrifice by provoking White's reply.

16 a4 ♙g7 17 ♖ad1

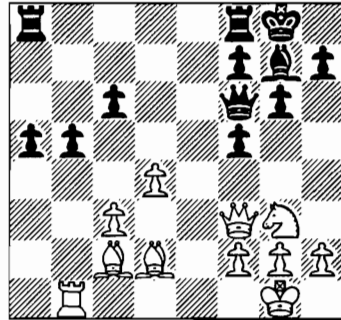
It was safer to play 17 ♙a2.



17...♘e3!?

Korchnoi's advancing years haven't dulled his eye for a combination, or indeed his fighting spirit, as the consequences of this enterprising move are far from clear.

18 ♙xe6 ♘xd1 19 ♙b3 ♘xb2 20 ♖b1 ♘xa4 21 ♙xa4 b5 22 ♙c2 ♗f6



The dust has settled and White has two minor pieces for a rook and two pawns. This is approximate material parity, but Black seems to have the better of it because his kingside pawn structure is very solid and blunts the power of White's bishop pair. In the absence of a direct white attack, Black's passed pawn becomes the most significant factor. Therefore Arakhmia aims to regroup her pieces and strive for the initiative.

23 ♘e2!

This begins a long manoeuvre to bring the knight to an aggressive square.

23...a4 24 ♘c1 ♖fe8 25 ♘d3 ♗e6 26 ♘f4 ♗d6 27 h4 a3 28 ♙b3 b4 29 ♙a2! bxc3 30 ♙xc3 ♖ab8 31 ♖d1 ♗e7 32 ♗xc6?

This seems entirely bad, whereas 32 h5!, threatening to take twice on g6, keeps White well in the game.

32...♖bc8 33 ♗f3 ♗xh4

The fact that White now has a passed pawn is of less relevance than the disappearance of her attacking chances.

34 g3 ♗g4 35 ♗xg4 f×g4 36 ♖d3 ♙f8 37 d5 ♙d6 38 ♙f1 ♖e4 39 ♘e2 h5!

Very cunning, as it is horrible having to face such a quiet move when you need to make the last move of the time control! White's reply allows a decisive simplification, but in any case she was in an unpleasant bid. Maybe 40 f3! was the best chance.

40 ♘c1? ♙b4! 41 ♘e2 ♖xe2 42 ♙xe2 ♖xc3 43 ♖xc3 ♙xc3 44 d6 ♙g7 45 ♙d3 ♙b4 46 d7 ♙e7 47 ♙e4 ♙f6 48 ♙b3 ♙d8 49 ♙f4 ♙e7 0-1

Black plays 50...f6 and then captures the passed pawn. A highly interesting game.

This is the main battleground after 5...exf6. White defends the d-pawn and so makes possible his most efficient development with ♙d3 and ♘e2.

6...♙d6

Instead 6...♙f5 has been harshly treated: 7 ♘e2! ♙d6 8 ♘g3 ♙g6 9 ♙c4 0-0 10 0-0 ♖e8? (he had to try 10...♙xg3) 11 f4! and there is no good answer to the threat of 12 f5. After 11...b5 12 ♙b3 ♙e4 13 ♗h5 ♗d7 14 ♘xe4 ♖xe4 15 ♙c2 g6 16 ♗h4 ♖e8 17 f5 ♙e7 18 ♖f3 (intending 19 ♖h3) 18...g5 19 ♗h5 ♙d8 20 ♙xg5, seeing that 20...fxg5 21 f6 is hopeless, Black resigned in Nunn-Arkell, London 1987.

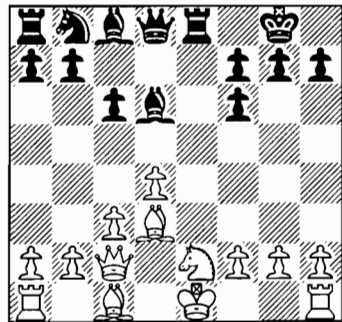
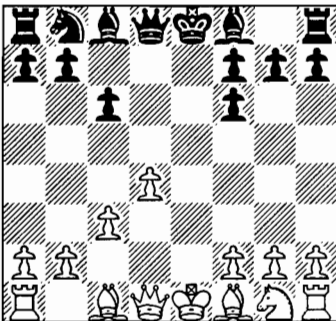
7 ♙d3 0-0 8 ♘e2

The game actually went 8 ♗c2 ♖c8+ 9 ♘e2, but for the sake of clarity I have amended it to the slightly more common move order.

8...♖e8 9 ♗c2

Game 46
Plachetka-Bellon Lopez
Metz 1987

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dx×e4 4 ♘xe4 ♙f6 5 ♘xf6+ exf6 6 c3



The aim of this aggressive queen move is to force a weakness on Black's kingside before he has time to consolidate with ...♘d7 and ...♘f8 defending h7. Nevertheless, 9 0-0 as in Game 48 may in fact set Black more problems.

9...h6

Instead 9...g6 – perhaps best – is analysed in the next game.

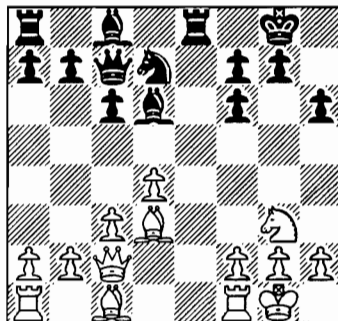
Another possibility is 9...♟h8. Now if White plays 10 ♟xh7? g6 11 ♟xg6 fxg6 12 ♟xg6 the best he can hope for is a draw after say 12...♟e6 13 ♟h6+ ♟g8 14 ♟g6+ ♟h8 with a repetition. White has to force a draw, as otherwise Black's extra piece will prove more valuable than the pawns in the middle-game. However, Black can play to win with 14...♟f8 15 ♟h6+ ♟e7 when 16 0-0-0 is unclear, but I suspect that Black will emerge with the advantage once he consolidates his king's position.

So White does better to keep the idea of ♟xh7 as a latent threat. Sooner or later Black will have to guard against it. Thus 10 0-0 ♟c7 11 ♟g3 g6 (if Black continues to ignore the attack on h7 with 11...♟d7, then 12 ♟xh7!? now seems good, e.g. 12...g6 13 ♟xg6 fxg6 14 ♟xg6 ♟e6 15 ♟h5+ ♟g8 16 ♟g4+ ♟f7 17 ♟f5! ♟f8 18 ♟g7+ ♟e8 19 ♟xc7 ♟xc7 20 ♟g7+ ♟f7 21 ♟xe6 ♟xe6 22 b3 ♟g6 23 g3 and the rook and three pawns outweighed the two minor pieces in Pröhl-Thielsch, Berlin 1998) 12 c4 (I have tried 12 ♟e4 when 12...♟e7! – best, since 12...♟xh2+ 13 ♟h1 leaves him in trouble as f6 is hanging – 13 g3 ♟e6 14 ♟f4 ♟d8 15 ♟fe1 ♟a6 16 b4 ♟c7 17 ♟c5 gave White a slight advantage in McDonald-Okrajek, Bad Wörishofen 1993, but Horvath's move is more logical; one idea is to play b2-b3 and then ♟b2 with a potential attack on f6) 12...f5 13 ♟g5 ♟e6 14 ♟d2 ♟d7 15 d5! (a strong break-

through) 15...cxd5 16 cxd5 ♟xd5 17 ♟xf5 ♟c6 18 ♟ad1! and White held a clear advantage in J.Horvath-Hodgson, Sochi 1987.

The game move 9...h6 makes it harder for White to drum up an attack than 9...g6, when there is a ready target for White's h2-h4-h5 advance. On the other hand, 9...g6 has the virtue that Black can follow up with ...f6-f5, when his kingside pawns, although loosening their cover of the king, are dynamic and contesting central squares. The danger for Black after 9...h6 is that the kingside pawns will always remain inert and so give White a free hand with his extra pawn in the centre. That is why I think that 9...g6 as in Game 47 should be preferred.

10 0-0 ♟c7 11 ♟g3 ♟d7



12 ♟d2

In an earlier game White came up with a curious seesaw manoeuvre with his queen: 12 ♟d1!? ♟f8 13 ♟h5!? ♟f4 14 ♟f3! and after 14...♟xc1 15 ♟axc1 ♟e6 16 a3 ♟ad8 17 ♟fe1 ♟e7 18 ♟h5 ♟de8 19 ♟e3 ♟g6 20 ♟ce1 he had a pleasant position in Hawelko-Onat, Dubai Olympiad 1986.

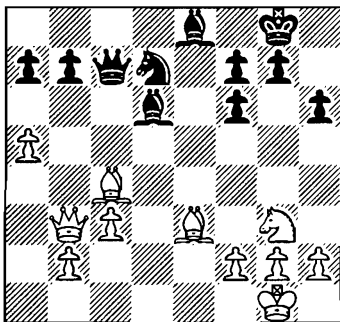
Possibly strongest of all is 12 ♟e3!?

when 12...♟f8 13 ♖ae1 ♙d7 14 ♙h1 c5?! 15 ♟e4! c4? 16 ♟xd6 ♜xd6 17 ♙xc4 was already a pawn up for White in Rytshagov-T.Hansen, Gausdal 2000.
12...♟f8 13 ♖ae1 ♙d7 14 ♙c4 ♜xe1 15 ♜xe1 ♞e8 16 ♜xe8 ♙xe8

Black is far from being lost here, but on the other hand he hasn't succeeded in creating any dynamic play. He can only wait and see how White will try to exploit his 4-3 pawn advantage on the queenside.

17 a4 c5 18 dxc5 ♜xc5 19 ♜b3 ♜c7 20 ♙e3 ♟d7 21 a5

Not of course 21 ♙xa7? b6. In the game White continues to make steady progress on the queenside.



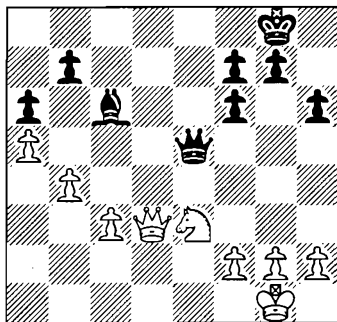
21...♟c5 22 ♜a2 ♙f4 23 ♟f1?!

A better way to keep up the pressure was 23 ♙d4. The exchange of bishops makes the dark squares more accessible to Black's queen.

23...♙xe3 24 ♟xe3 ♟e4 25 ♙d5 ♜f4 26 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 27 b4 ♙c6

In his notes in *Informator 43* Plachetka points out that Black could have activated his kingside pawns with 27...f5! when 28 ♜c2 ♜e5, intending ...f5-f4, gives him enough counterplay.

28 ♜c2 ♜e5 29 ♜d3 a6?



Black misses the last chance to turn his kingside pawns into a dynamic factor. Here he must play 29...f5! 30 ♜d4 (or 30 ♜xf5 ♜xc3 31 ♜c8+ ♙h7 32 ♜f5+ with a draw) 30...♜xd4! 31 cxd4 f4! with equality – Plachetka.

30 ♜d4!

After this Black's kingside pawn mass remains lifeless while the battle is being lost on the queenside.

30...♜b5

Black must avoid the passive minor piece endgame after 30...♜xd4 31 cxd4.

31 h3 ♜e2 32 ♟f5

White finds the best reply to the threat of 32...♜e1+, as if now 32...♜e1+ 33 ♙h2 ♜e5+?! 34 ♜xe5 fxe5 35 ♟e7+ ♙f8 36 ♟xc6 bxc6 37 c4! followed by 38 b5 will soon queen a pawn.

32...♙h7 33 ♙h2 ♜f1 34 f3 ♜e1 35 ♜e3 ♜d1 36 ♟d4 ♙d5 37 ♜f4!

Now the threat of 38 ♜f5+ will pick up at least a pawn unless Black simplifies into a hopeless endgame.

37...♜d3 38 ♜f5+ ♜xf5 39 ♟xf5

The endgame is totally lost for Black: his king is badly placed, his

bishop has nothing to attack and the pawn structure means that to all intents and purposes he is a pawn down. This is the kind of simplified endgame that Black should do anything to avoid in the 5...exf6 variation.

39...h5 40 ♖g3 g5 41 ♜f2 h4 42 ♜e3 ♙c6 43 c4 ♙d7 44 ♟d6 ♙e6 45 ♜d4 f5 46 ♟xb7 1-0

♙h4 ♙d5 17 ♙h6 gave White a very promising attacking position which soon became decisive after 17...♙xg2?! 18 ♙g1 ♙xe2 (retreating the bishop allows a sacrifice on g6) 19 ♙xe2 ♙d5 20 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 21 ♙h5 and Black resigned in Serper-Lim, Adelaide 1988.

So Black's best reply is 10...♙e6, when White has a choice:

a) 11 ♙h6 f5 12 0-0-0 ♟d7 13 ♜b1 ♙a5 14 ♟c1 ♟f6 15 h5!? ♟xh5 16 ♙xh5 gxh5 17 ♙h1 f4! (the only move, defending h5 with the queen) 18 ♙xh7+ ♜h8 19 ♙e4 ♙g4 20 f3 ♙e6 21 ♟b3?! (here Julian Hodgson suggests that 21 ♙xf4! keeps the edge for White, but this looks pretty unclear, e.g. 21...♙xf4 22 fxg4 ♙h6) 21...♙d8 22 fxg4 ♙xh6 23 gxh5 ♙g5 24 ♙f3 ♙e8! and Black, who seems at least equal here, won after a hard struggle in M.Chandler-Hodgson, British Championship 1988.

b) 11 h5 (the most direct – Black already has to guard against a sacrifice on g6) 11...f5 and now:

b1) If 12 ♙h6?? g5! and White discovers to his horror that his opponent is about to win the bishop with 13...♙f6. After 13 ♙d2 f4 14 g3 ♙g4! 15 gx4 ♙xf4 16 ♙xf4 (a desperate measure which is easily refuted) 16...gx4 17 ♙g1 ♙h4 18 0-0-0 ♜h8 19 f3 ♙xh5 20 fxg4 ♙xh6 21 g5 ♙h2 22 ♙h1 ♙xe2 (simplest) White resigned in Abramovic-Hodgson, London Haringey 1988.

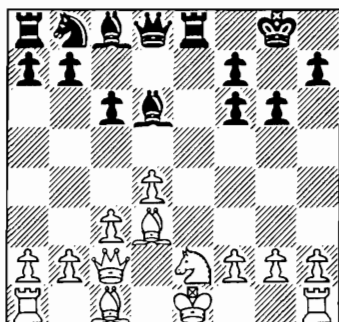
b2) 12 hxg6! fxg6 13 ♙d2 ♟d7 14 c4 ♟f6 15 f3 b5!? (Black disrupts his opponent's smooth build-up, even at the cost of a pawn) 16 cxb5 cxb5 17 ♙xb5 ♙c8 18 ♙a4 ♙e7!? 19 ♜f2

Game 47

De la Paz-Bellon Lopez

Santa Clara 2000

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟d2 dxe4 4 ♟xe4 ♟f6 5 ♟xf6+ exf6 6 c3 ♙d6 7 ♙d3 0-0 8 ♟e2 ♙e8 9 ♙c2 g6!



Although this creates a 'hook' for White's h2-h4-h5 advance, it nevertheless seems to be Black's best option. Instead of trying to defend passively, he stakes a claim for control of some central squares and takes the fight to his opponent.

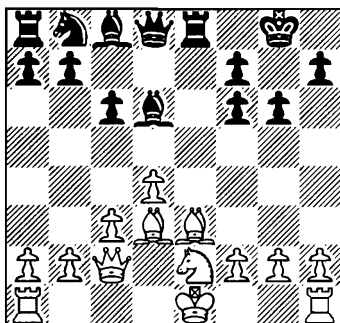
10 ♙e3

A sharper alternative is 10 h4!?, aiming for an immediate breakthrough on the kingside. Now 10...♟d7?! 11 h5 ♟f8 12 ♙e3 (12 ♙h6!?) 12...♙c7 13 0-0-0 ♙e6 14 ♜b1 b5 15 hxg6 fxg6 16

(White doesn't want to get involved in 19 ♙xe8 ♜c4!) 19... ♞f8 20 ♞ae1 ♚f7 21 ♝c3 ♜h5 22 ♞h3 with a murky position in De Firmian-Rogers, Gausdal 1995.

The conclusion seems to be that 10 h4 looks dangerous, but that Black has enough defensive resources and can even play to win, especially if he is as resourceful as Hodgson!

The game move is safer but appears too slow to set Black any serious problems.



10...f5 11 0-0-0 ♙e6 12 ♚b1 ♙d5!

This is much better than the stereotyped 12... ♜d7 , when White doesn't have to play for the attack: simply 13 ♜f4 will acquire the two bishops and give him a slight advantage in the centre.

13 ♞dg1

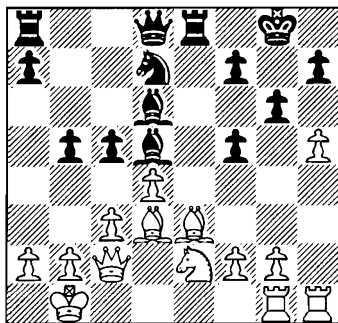
This is very defensive, but after 13 h4 ♙xg2 14 ♞hg1 ♙e4 (or 14... ♙f3! ? intending 15 ♙xf5 ♙xe2) 15 h5 ♜d7 Black's kingside looks strong enough to resist any attack.

13...b5!

Black cements the bishop on the excellent d5-square.

14 h4 ♜d7 15 h5 c5!

The classic response to an attack on the wing: counterplay in the centre. It has the immediate threat of 16...c4 trapping the bishop.



16 hxg6 fxg6 17 c4

If 17 ♙xb5? ♞b8 gives Black a ready-made attack on the b-file – note that 18 ♙xd7 ♙e4 would win White's queen.

17...cxd4 18 ♙xd4 ♞c8

Now the c4-pawn is about to drop and 19 ♙xf5? gxf5 20 ♚xf5 loses to 20... ♙e4+ , so White decides that it is time to force a draw.

19 ♞xh7 ♚xh7 20 ♞h1+ ♙g8 21 ♞h8+ ♙f7 22 ♞h7+ ♙g8

Instead 22... ♙f8? would be a risky winning attempt, e.g. White could try 23 ♞h8+ ♙g8 24 ♚d2 . In any case, if White wanted he could still force a draw after 23 cxd5 ♞xc2 24 ♞h8+ ♙f7 25 ♞h7+ etc.

23 ♞h8+ ♙f7 24 ♞h7+ ♙g8 25 ♞h8+ ♙f7 ½-½

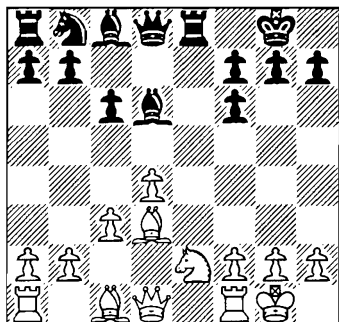
Game 48

Khalifman-Seirawan

Wijk aan Zee 1991

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜c3 dxe4 4 ♜xe4

0-0 8 ♗e2 ♜e8 9 0-0



This simple developing move makes a controversial statement about the position: it claims that the inclusion of the moves 9 ♗c2 and 9...g6 helps Black to gain control of the f5-square. Instead White wants to keep the option of ♗g3 and ♗f5.

9...♗c7?

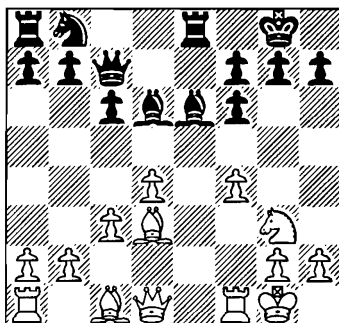
It is surprising that such a natural move can be a mistake. Nevertheless, Black should take immediate action to bolster his kingside with 9...♗d7, e.g. 10 ♙f4 (10 ♗g3 g6 11 ♗e4 ♙f8 etc. is nothing for White) 10...♙xf4 (this forces White's knight onto the wrong 'circuit', and therefore seems more accurate than 10...♗f8 when 11 ♙xd6 ♗xd6 12 ♗g3 g6 13 ♗e4 ♗d8 14 ♜e1 ♙e6 15 ♗f3 gave White some advantage in Hector-Preuss, Roskilde 1998) 11 ♗xf4 ♗f8 12 ♗d2 ♗a5 (temporarily stopping c3-c4 and activating the queen) 13 ♜fe1 ♙d7 14 ♜e3 ♗g5 15 ♗e2 ♜xe3 16 ♗xe3 ♜e8 17 ♗xg5 fxg5 18 ♗f1 ♗g6 19 ♗d1 ♙e6 20 c4 ♗d8 and Black held the draw comfortably in V.Knox-Orr, British Championship 1988.

10 ♗g3 ♙e6

If 10...♗d7 11 ♗f5! ♙xh2+ 12 ♗h1 ♙d6 13 ♗xg7! (Khalifman suggests 13 ♙h6!? g6 14 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 15 ♜e1 with the initiative for White, but the game move is more forcing) 13...♗xg7 14 ♗g4+ ♗h8 15 ♙h6! (this seems stronger than 15 ♗f5 ♗f8!) 15...♗g8 16 ♗h4 ♗g6 (he has to block the attack on h7 as 17 ♙xh7! was threatened and 16...f5 17 ♙xf5 ♗d8? 18 ♙g5! ♗xg5 19 ♗xh7 is mate) 17 ♜ae1 ♗d8 18 ♙xg6 fxg6 19 ♜e6 ♙e7 20 ♜fe1 ♗e5 (the only try) 21 ♜xe7 ♗xe7 22 dxe5 g5 23 ♗d4 ♙f5 24 ♜e3 and White was winning in Löffler-Dichev, Cannes 2000.

This variation proves that it is a waste of time for Black to move his queen to c7 as the threat to h2 does nothing to slow down White's attack. Perhaps Black should go over entirely to defence with, for example, 10...g6 when 11 ♗e4 ♙e7 12 ♗f3 ♗d8 (if 12...f5 13 ♗g5) 13 ♙f4 gives White nothing clear after 13...f5.

11 f4!



11...c5

Black also had a rotten position after 11...♗d7 12 f5 ♙d5 13 ♗h5! g6 14

♖g4 ♘h8 15 ♙h6 ♙f8 16 ♙xf8 ♜xf8
17 ♜f4 g5 18 ♜h5 b5 19 ♞fe1 ♞ae8 20
h4! in Zapata-Hodgson, Palma de
Mallorca 1989.

12 d5! ♙d7

If 12...♙xd5 13 ♜h5 attacks d5 and
h7.

**13 c4 ♜a6 14 ♜f3 ♜b6 15 b3 ♙f8
16 ♙b2 ♜c7 17 ♙f5**

White wins the f5-square for his
knight. How Black must have wished
that he had found time for ...g7-g6!

**17...♙xf5 18 ♜xf5 ♞ed8 19 ♞ae1
♜e8 20 ♜h5 ♜a5 21 ♜xe8!**

It is time for a combination to ex-
ploit White's dominance on the king-
side.

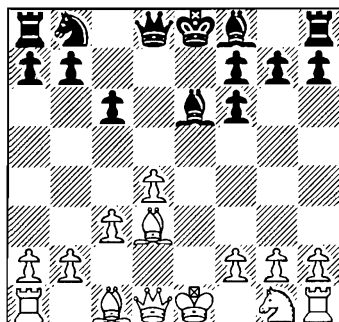
21...♞xe8 22 ♜h6+ gxh6

Or 22...♘h8 23 ♜xf7 ♙e7 24
♜g8+! with a smothered mate to
follow.

23 ♜g4+ 1-0

If 23...♙g7 24 ♙xf6 mates.

should retreat the bishop with 11 ♙e3
to hold onto the d4-square, though this
may represent a loss of time compared
with the 7...c5 line in the next note)
11...♙xc5 12 ♜c2 g6 13 ♞ad1 ♜e7 14
♜g3 ♜e5 and Black was at least equal
in Stummer-Mirkovic, Pula 1988.



7...♙d6

I reckon 7...c5!? is a very interesting
idea. For example, 8 ♜e2 ♜c6 9 0-0
(White has already committed his
bishop to d3, so an aggressive response
based on ♙b5 seems too slow: 9 ♙e3
cxd4 10 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 11 ♙xd4 ♙d6 12
♙b5+ ♘e7 13 0-0 ♜c7 14 ♜h5 h6 15
♞fe1 ♞hd8 with unclear play in
Marinkovic-Mirkovic, Belgrade 1991)
9...cxd4 10 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 11 cxd4 ♙d6
12 ♜a4+ ♘f8 13 ♙e3 and Black has
succeeded in consolidating his king's
position and activating his game:
11...h5! 14 ♞ac1 g6 15 ♙e4 ♘g7 16 d5
(no better is 16 ♙xb7 ♙xh2+ 17 ♘xh2
♜b8+) 16...♙d7 17 ♜b3 ♞e8 18 ♙d3
♜b8 with balanced chances in Laketic-
Mirkovic, Kladovo 1990.

8 ♜e2 ♜c7

Here 8...0-0 could easily transpose
to Games 46-48 above, for example 9
♜c2 g6 10 ♙h6 ♞e8 11 h4 f5 12 0-0-0

Game 49

W. Watson-Hodgson

Bangi 1992

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♜c3 dxe4 4 ♜xe4
♜f6 5 ♜xf6+ exf6 6 c3 ♙e6**

The Watson game actually went
6...♙d6 7 ♙d3 ♙e6, but slightly
amending the move order gives us the
chance to look at an interesting side-
line.

7 ♙d3

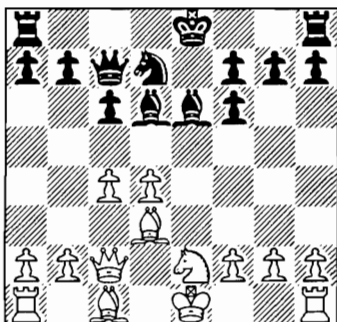
Instead White can try 7 ♙f4 to ex-
change bishops after 7...♙d6 8 ♙xd6
♜xd6. However, Black can play more
dynamically with 7...♙e7, e.g. 8 ♙d3
0-0 9 ♜e2 c5! 10 0-0 ♜c6 11 dxc5 (this
makes things very easy for Black; he

and 10 h4 ♞e8 11 h5 f5 are variations 'a' and 'b' respectively in the note to move 10 in Game 47. Alternatively, if you think even a blitz game by Kasparov is of interest, note that 9 ♟f4 ♞e8 10 0-0 ♟g4 11 f3 ♟h5 12 ♞d2 ♟g6 13 ♟xd6 ♞xd6 14 ♟f4 ♟d7 15 ♟xg6 hxg6 16 ♞fe1 gave White a tiny advantage in Kasparov-Miles, Internet five-minute game 1998.

9 ♞c2

This is more effective than 9 ♟g3, when 9...♟d7 10 ♟e4 0-0-0 11 ♟xd6+ ♞xd6 12 0-0 h5 gave Black enough play in Golubev-Mirkovic, Belgrade 1991.

9...♟d7 10 c4

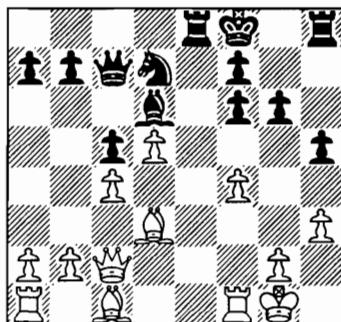


10...c5!?

Allowing his opponent a protected passed pawn in the centre. If this is Black's best option then clearly the variation he has chosen is not good for him. I would imagine that 10...♟b4+ 11 ♟d2 (instead 11 ♟f1!? with the idea of c4-c5 is Watson's suggestion, but displacing the white king is no small achievement for Black) 11...♞a5 12 ♟xb4 ♞xb4+ 13 ♞d2 a5!? is a more appropriate approach by Black. As so often in this variation, he is slightly

worse but remains very solid.

11 d5 ♟g4 12 h3 ♟xe2 13 ♞xe2+ ♟f8 14 0-0 ♞e8 15 ♞c2 h5 16 f4 g6



17 ♞f2

In his analysis in *Informator 55* Watson was critical of this move as it allows Black to re-route his bishop to f6 with approximate equality. Instead 17 b3 would have prevented this as 17...f5? 18 ♟b2 would be obviously bad for Black.

17...f5! 18 b3 ♟e7 19 ♟b2 ♟f6 20 ♟xf6 ♟xf6 21 ♞b2 ♟g7 22 ♞f3 h4

Black deals with the threat of 23 ♟xf5 followed by 24 ♞g3+, but much safer was 22...♞d6.

23 ♞c3 ♞e7?

Here the move 23...♞d6 was essential.

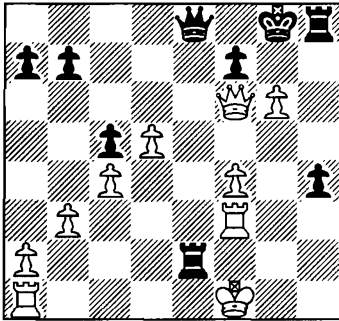
24 ♟xf5!

An unexpected breakthrough which exploits the pin on f6.

24...gxf5 25 g4! fxg4

Taken by surprise, Black fails to find the best defence, i.e. 25...♞h6! when Watson gives 26 g5 ♞g6 27 ♟h1 ♞e4 28 gxf6+ ♟h7 as only slightly better for White.

26 hxg4 ♟d7 27 g5 ♞e2 28 ♞xf6+ ♟g8 29 ♟f1 ♞e8 30 g6!



This advance comes just in time before Black can play 30...♙e4. Hodgson strives for counterplay, but in the long term White's strategical trump – the protected passed pawn on d5 – will prove decisive.

30...fxg6 31 f5 h3 32 ♖xg6+ ♗xg6
 33 fxg6 ♜d2 34 ♔g1 ♔g7 35 ♔h1
 ♞h4 36 ♞g1 ♞e2 37 ♞f7+ ♔g8 38
 g7 ♞g2 39 ♞xb7 ♞hg4 40 ♞xg2
 ♞xg2 41 ♞xa7 ♞d2 42 a4 1-0

Summary

White's response 6 ♟f3?! in Game 44 is too slow to trouble his opponent. In Game 45, 6 ♞c4 is a sound positional approach favoured by Karpov, when besides 6...♟d7 Black should also seriously consider 6...♞e7+ as given in the notes. A much sharper possibility is 6 c3 aiming for ♞d3 and ♞c2 to attack h7 once Black has castled. Then in Game 46 Black responded to the threat to h7 with ...h7-h6, but a better approach seems to be ...g7-g6! (Game 47). Although White can then attack with h2-h4-h5 etc., Black can fight for centre squares with ...f6-f5 etc., with an unclear position.

In Game 48 White played 6 c3 but without including the move ♞c2. By not provoking ...g7-g6 he kept the f5-square as an attacking base for his knight. However, at his ninth move an antidote is suggested for Black. Finally, Black tried to make do without castling kingside in Game 49, but this turned out poorly – White always seemed to have some positional advantage. However, take a look at the suggestion 7...c5!? in the notes to this game.

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♟c3 dxe4 4 ♞xe4 ♟f6 5 ♞xf6+ exf6 (D)

6 c3

6 ♟f3 – Game 44

6 ♞c4 – Game 45

6...♞d6

6... ♞c6 – Game 49

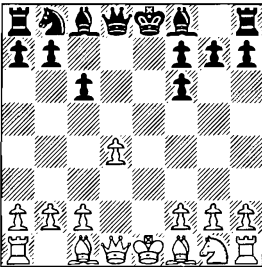
7 ♞d3 (D) 0-0 8 ♟e2 ♞e8 9 ♞c2 (D)

9 0-0 – Game 48

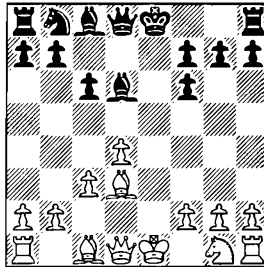
9...g6

9...h6 – Game 46

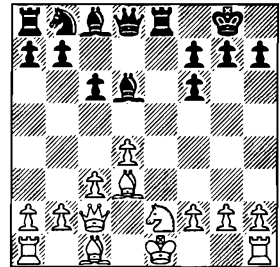
10 ♞e3 – Game 47



5...exf6



7 ♞d3



9 ♞c2

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