

A chessboard with alternating light and dark squares. Several chess pieces are scattered across the board, including pawns, knights, and kings. The text is overlaid on the board.

Viktor Moskalenko

The Flexible French

Strategic

Explanations &

Surprise Weapons

for Dynamic

Chess Players

NEW IN CHESS

The Flexible French

Viktor Moskalenko

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Strategic Explanations and Surprise Weapons for Dynamic Chess Players

New In Chess 2008

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Contents

Foreword	7
Part One – The Black Queen’s Musketeers.	9
Advance Variation – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5	
Chapter 1 – Looking for Satisfaction	11
Chapter 2 – Labyrinths of the Old System	27
Part Two – Weapons and Dogmas	59
Tarrasch Variation – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d2	
Chapter 3 – Beyond Tarrasch	61
Chapter 4 – Exotic Deviations	110
Part Three – French Magic	149
Classical System – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♖f6	
Chapter 5 – Morozevich’s Resources	150
Chapter 6 – A Legendary Pin	164
Chapter 7 – Russian Roulette	192

Part Four – Behind the Barricades 211
Winawer Variation – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗b4

Chapter 8 – My System in the Winawer 213
Chapter 9 – Black Queen Blues: Winawer Variation 221

Part Five – Seven Samurai Swords 245

Chapter 10 – Kortchnoi’s Wedge. 246
Chapter 11 – King’s Indian Attack. 249
Chapter 12 – The Kung Fu Fight. 253
Chapter 13 – Weathering the Storm 256
Chapter 14 – The Anti-Winawer. 260
Chapter 15 – The Semi-Winawer 263
Chapter 16 – The Old Winawer 266

New In Chess Code System 270

Index of Variations. 271

Index of Players 277

A Brief Biography of the Author/Bibliography 279

Foreword

Original Variations for your Repertoire

Strategic Explanations and Surprise Weapons for Dynamic Chess Players



The French Defence is a gem in any chess player's opening repertoire. The main difference in comparison to other great openings is the display of knowledge and concepts that are required here, instead of a constant memorisation and repetition of long, forced, 'theoretical' lines. The middlegame and, with it, the real battle begins at a very early stage.

This 'Flexible French' book is an attempt to mix various aspects: my general experience in this opening, new concepts and analysis of several creative lines. Its purpose is to offer a combative repertoire to black players, and also to offer white players some sharp ideas.

With 1...e7-e6, Black builds a fortress with a closed centre, so the main roads to success are those leading to a game where White's extra tempo is not so important. This defence is also full of strategic as well as tactical resources, and according to many masters, its lines are among the most complicated in chess. There are also several forgotten systems that are still full of possibilities, sharp and exotic lines, original ideas and much more.

The current state of opening theory

During the past few years – the computer days – many books by vanguard authors have seen the light, with ambitious names like: ‘Beating the Spanish, the Sicilian, the French’ and many others. Some authors even churn out books of this type up to 3-5 times a year!

Please note that the Grand Masters, such as Botvinnik, Petrosian and also the best modern players, work on the study of their systems much more slowly, but with great depth – learning and practicing them year after year. The evaluations of their ideas hardly change, at least not as abruptly as in these new books.

Also, I think that a new time has arrived for chess books on opening theory. Instead of copying thousands of games that are played each day and presenting the analysis by the engines, it is much more effective – and more positive – to compose a book with articles according to a different concept: with space for background information, an instructive selection of the material and conclusions drawn from this material.

The reader of *The Flexible French* will find it the easiest and the most interesting to learn the main plans with the following structure in each Part:

- * Historic origin of each variation
- * Main ideas, resources, advices
- * Analysis of the most interesting lines through model games
- * Illustrative games
- * Statistics, summaries and conclusions.

I hope that my previous book *The Fabulous Budapest Gambit* and the present work can serve as good examples of this new method of writing opening books.

Of course, many questions will always remain open, for practical players as well as theoreticians.

Good luck with the study and the practice of a genuine opening – The French Defence!

Greetings to you all!

Grandmaster Viktor Moskalenko, Barcelona 2008

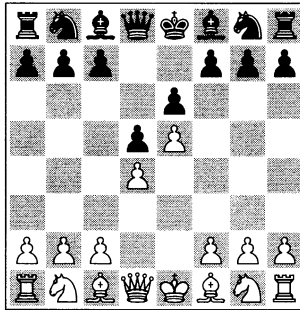
My sincerest gratitude goes out to my old friend and student Lluís Delgado for his help with translating my texts from Spanish into English.

Part One

The Black Queen's Musketeers

Advance Variation – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

A Repertoire for Black



Dedicated to Gioacchino Greco and Evgeny Sveshnikov

A Bit of History

The best way to learn the genuine French Defence is by playing the Advance Variation – 3.e5, the most natural move for White, which closes the centre immediately and gains space.

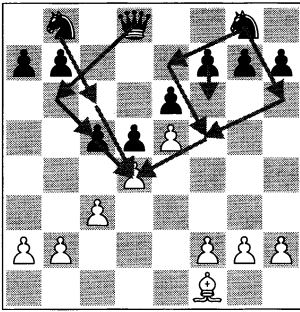


The famous Italian master Gioacchino Greco (1600-1634) played the first genuine French game as long ago as 1620.

The stem game of the Advance Variation and, we could say, the first genuine French game, was played as long ago as 1620! The famous Italian master Gioacchino Greco (1600-1634) attacked with the white pieces – see the comments to Game 1.

Strategies

From this point on, both players must develop their main plans as quickly as possible: White must get ready to castle kingside and to attack on the flanks, while Black looks for counterplay with the standard ...c7-c5, and tries to develop his queenside and exert pressure on the central pawn on d4.



Among other important resources for Black, we find the classical break ...f7-f6, exerting pressure in the centre and, of course, the manoeuvre ...♘g8-e7-f5 or else ...♘h6! With this simple strategy the battle begins.

⚠ Keep in Mind

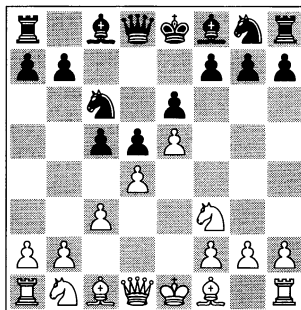
- In many of the games that we will study here, the strategic plans do not work without tactical tricks.
- Generally speaking, the two black knights and the white king's bishop are the most important pieces in the Advance Variation.

Directions

One of the 'small' advantages for Black when facing the Advance Variation is that he just needs to know a couple of lines deeply, whereas White must make a thorough study of all the existing ideas.

Throughout my career I have conducted a personal search for a weapon against the 3.e5 system, analysing in several directions.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3

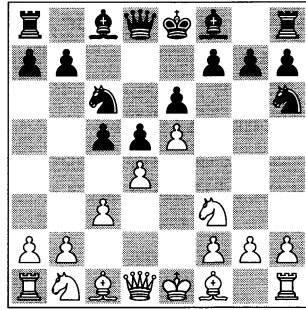
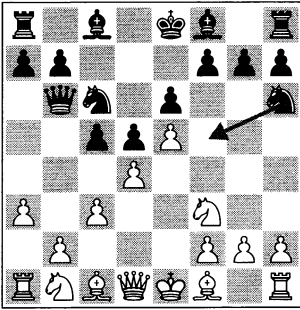


After these natural moves, the key position in the Advance Variation is reached. Black must choose his strategy now, and in this book we will investigate two of the possible plans:

- 1) First of all, we will investigate a semi-open set-up in the modern line with 5...♞b6 6.a3 ♘h6 or the direct 5...♘h6 (Chapter 1 – Looking for Satisfaction), and here Black faces a second advance: 7.b4.
- 2) Next, we will return to the classical paths in the French Defence, the blockading 6...c4, which avoids 7.b4 (Chapter 2 – Labyrinths of the Old System).

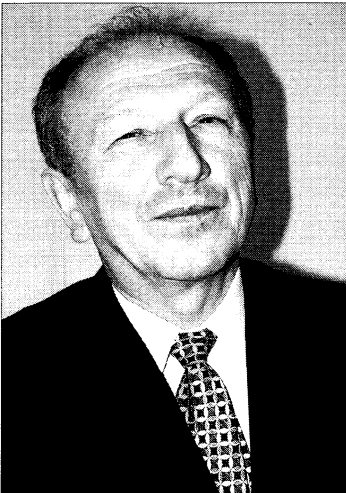
Chapter 1 – Looking for Satisfaction

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3
5...♚b6 6.a3 ♘h6 (diagram left) or deviations with 5...♘h6 (right)



History

The author of the present book defeated Sveshnikov with the black pieces in his favourite Advance Variation of the French in 1987. In that game I prepared a totally new and very creative counter-plan and I obtained a very good position. But I finally won only after a tense and spectacular fight. I felt as though I had killed a monster!



The Russian grandmaster Evgeny Sveshnikov was born in 1950. To the present day, he has tried to master the Advance Variation from the white side and he recently published a book on this variation.

I would like to thank grandmaster Sveshnikov for his combative play in both of the games annotated in this chapter. It was a real pleasure to play against him!

Introduction

In this chapter I shall retrace the most important steps in my study of the Advance Variation.

Of all the many possibilities in the opening I generally tend to choose the most aggressive plans with Black. With set-ups like 5...♘h6, Black prepares a direct attack against the d4 pawn, not allowing White time to castle and forcing him to defend his centre first. Therefore the logical reaction is the move 6.a3!?, preparing 7.b4 and then ♘b2, which seems to be the best way for White to fight for an advantage.

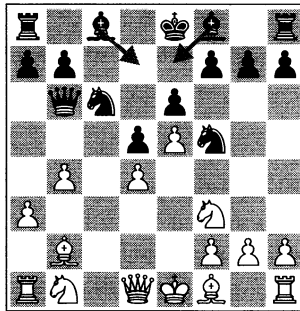
This tense situation forces Black to look for satisfaction by entering into some quite forcing lines, where pieces will be fighting against pawns.

On a historical note, this plan was suggested long ago by the well-known German master Louis Paulsen, and introduced by him in 1879. Curiously, about 100 years later, another master, of Moldavian origin, found a similar opening idea for Black in another opening: ...d5-c6-a6-b5 in the Slav. See Viktor Bologan's book *The Chebanenko Slav According to Bologan* (New In Chess, 2008).

Directions

A) 5...♖b6 6.a3 ♘h6

7.b4 White gains even more space and tries to control the entire board. After **7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5 9.♙b2** we reach the key position of this line.



The first question is: which bishop should be developed first? And the second is: what should Black do next? The answers can be found in Game 1: Sveshnikov-Moskalenko (1987) and also in the comments to the important Game 2: Shirov-Gurevich.

B) 5...♞h6

This move, bringing the knight straight into play, is more flexible than the immediate 5...♖b6, and gives several plans to choose from in this complex position – see Game 3: Sveshnikov-Moskalenko (1993).

Looking for Satisfaction – Games

GAME 1

□ **Evgeny Sveshnikov**
 ■ **Viktor Moskalenko**
 Norilsk 1987 (7)

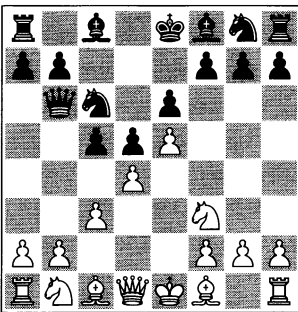
This was a very hard test for me, since I was facing a great master of the Advance Variation. However, I had prepared a ‘surprise bombshell’ at home.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6
 4... ♖b6!? is even playable right now. This move order avoids 5. ♗e3, another popular plan for White. The stem game went as follows: 4... cxd4?! 5. cxd4 ♗b4+ 6. ♘c3 ♗xc3+? 7. bxc3 ♘c6 8. ♗d3 (8. ♖g4!?) 8... ♘ge7 9. f4 ♘f5 10. ♘f3 0-0 11. g4 ♘h4 12. 0-0 ♘xf3+ 13. ♖xf3 ♗d7 14. ♖h3! g6 15. f5! (already winning) 15... exf5 16. gxf5 gxf5 17. ♖xf5 ♗xf5 18. ♗xf5 1-0 Greco-NN, Europe 1620.

5. ♘f3

With 5. ♗e3 an interesting miniature went 5... ♖b6 6. ♖d2 ♗d7 7. ♘f3 cxd4 8. cxd4 ♖c8 9. ♘c3 ♘a5!? 10. ♖c1 ♗b4 11. ♗d3 ♘c4 12. ♖e2?? (12. ♗xc4 □ ♖xc4=) 12... ♘xb2! 13. ♗d2 ♘a4! 0-1 Romero Ruscalleda-Pomes Marcet, Catalunya tt 2005.

5... ♖b6!

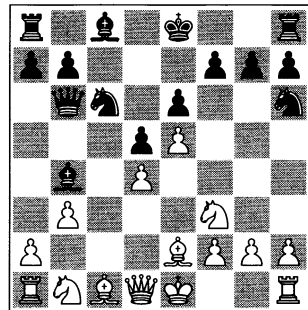


The pressure on d4 does not allow White to continue calmly.

6.a3!?

This is the first key position in this line. White already has a space advantage in the centre and on the kingside because of his e5 pawn, and he also wants to gain more space on the queenside by playing b2-b4. I am sure that both known developments of the king’s bishop are weaker:

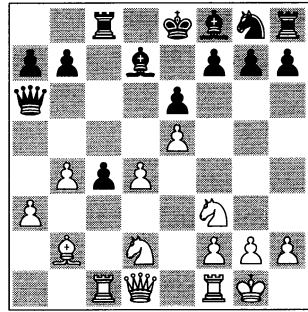
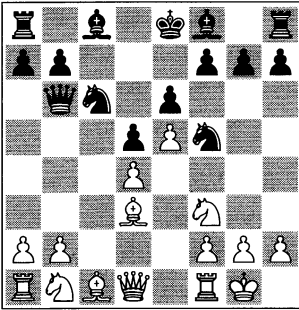
A) 6. ♗e2 ♘h6! (this is better than 6... ♘ge7) 7. b3 (after 7. ♘a3? cxd4 8. cxd4 ♗xa3! 9. bxa3 ♘f5 10. ♗e3 ♖a5+ Black has the initiative. Cubles-Moskalenko, Canovelles 2000; or 7. ♗xh6 gxh6 (7... ♖xb2? 8. ♖d2 ♖xa1 9. 0-0 is better for White) 8. ♖d2 ♗g7 9. ♘a3 cxd4 10. cxd4 0-0 11. 0-0 f6 12. exf6 ♖xf6 13. ♘c2 ♗d7 14. b4 ♗e8 15. b5 ♘e7 16. ♘e5 ♘g6! 17. ♘g4 ♖f8 18. g3 h5 ⇒ Bakre-T.L.Petrosian, Dubai 2007) 7... cxd4 8. cxd4 ♗b4+!



9. ♘f1 □ ♘f5 (9... 0-0!?) 10. ♗b2 ♗e7 11. ♘c3 0-0 12. ♘a4 ♖d8 13. g3 f6! 14. exf6 ♗xf6 15. ♘g2 ♖d6 16. ♖e1 b6 17. ♗b5 ♗b7 and Black has the better chances, Kupreichik-Piskov, Germany Bundesliga B 1998/99;

B) There is also the gambit line with 6. ♗d3, but fortunately Black is not

forced to accept the material: 6...♘h6!? (6...cxd4 7.cxd4 ♕d7 8.0-0 ♘xd4 9.♘bd2∞) 7.0-0 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5



analysis diagram


During the 1980s and 1990s theory favoured White after 9.♕xf5 exf5 10.♘c3 ♕e6, but, thinking that the books might be wrong, I studied the position more closely and eventually managed to achieve outstanding results with Black from here. For instance: 11.♘e2 h6! (this avoids the simplification with ♕g5, and prepares ...g7-g5!?) 12.♖a4 ♕e7 13.a3 0-0 14.b4 ♜fc8 and Black is dominating every aspect of the game: 15.♕d2 a6 16.♞fc1 g5! 17.♖b3 ♘a5!? 18.♖d3 ♘c4 19.♘e1 f4 20.g3 fxg3 21.hxg3 ♕g4 22.♘c3 ♖e6 23.♕e3 b5 24.♖f1 ♜a7 25.♖g2 ♘xe3 26.fxe3 ♜ac7 winning easily, Schenk-Moskalenko, Palma de Mallorca 2000.

6...♘h6!

This is a classic French manoeuvre, intending to attack the d4 pawn. Until 2005 the set-up ...♖b6-♘h6 was my main plan against the Advance Variation. The play is completely different after 6...c4!?, which we will study in Chapter 2.

I have never liked the line 6...♕d7 7.b4 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♜c8 9.♕b2, when White threatens ♘c3-a4 with the initiative, and now 9...♘a5 10.♘bd2 ♘c4 11.♕xc4 dxc4 12.♜c1 ♖a6 13.0-0.

This is also better for White, because of his better development and the threat of d4-d5.

 **WEAPON:** If 13...♕a4 14.♖e2 ♕b5 15.♞fe1 c3? 16.♖e3 cxd4 17.♞xc8+ ♘d7 18.♞xf8, White wins.

7.b4

Planning to conquer the board with his pawns. 7.♕xh6? ♖xb2! 8.♕c1 ♖xa1 9.♖c2 ♕d7 must be better for Black.

7...cxd4 8.cxd4

8.♕xh6?! is still weak. White takes the chance to exchange the knight before it reaches f5, giving Black a bad pawn structure. But on the other hand White gives up the bishop pair. In my opinion that is more than enough compensation for Black's structural weaknesses: 8...gxh6 9.cxd4 ♕g7 10.♘c3 0-0 (10...f6!?) 11.♕b5 a5⇒ Rozentalis-Berg, Stockholm 2005/06.


8...♘f5

Black's pieces will fight against the wall created by the white pawns.

9.♕b2

9.♕e3 can be met with:

A) 9...♕d7!?

 **WEAPON:** 10.♘c3? ♘xe3 11.fxe3 ♘xb4! 12.axb4 ♕xb4 13.♜c1 ♜c8 14.♖b3 ♖a5 15.♘d2 0-0∞ 16.♕d3 f6!?! and Black has the initiative.

10.♙d3 ♭xe3 (10...♖c8!? Scavo-Moskalenko, Badalona 2002) 11.fxe3 ♖c8 12.0-0 ♙e7 13.♭bd2 ♭d8!? 14.♚e2 ♖c3⇒ Baklan-Moskalenko, Donetsk Zonal 1998.

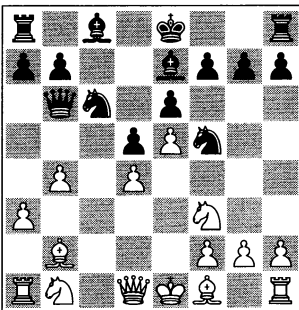
B) Interesting is 9...f6!⇒, a move very well explained in the Survey 'Fighting for Equality' by grandmaster Carlos Matamoros in Yearbook 72:

B1) 10.b5?! ♭xe5! 11.dxe5 ♭xe3 12.fxe3 ♚xe3+ 13.♚e2 ♚c1+ 14.♚d1 ½-½ Romanishin-Lputian, Yerevan 1988 and Movsesian-Lputian, New York Open 1998;

B2) 10.exf6 gxf6 11.♙d3 ♭xe3 12.fxe3 ♙h6 13.♚e2 ♙d7 14.♭c3 ♭e7 15.0-0 0-0 16.♙h1 ♖ac8 17.♭d1 ♙g7 18.♭f2 e5 19.dxe5 fxe5 20.e4 d4 21.♖ac1 ♭g6 22.♖xc8 ♙xc8 23.g3 ♙h6 and Black was clearly better in Morozevich-Bareev, Monaco blind 2002.

This is another key moment in the opening. Black faces a dilemma: which bishop should be developed first?

9...♙e7

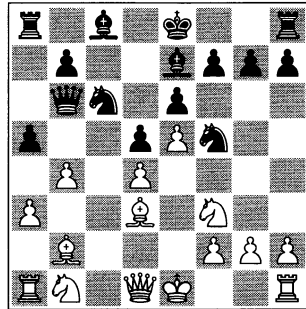


Obviously a good move: now Black is able to castle and he also maintains his knight on f5 by the possibility of 10.g4 ♭h4. However, nowadays the most fashionable move is 9...♙d7!?, thanks to several famous victories for Black in 2005. See Game 2.

10.♙d3!

The d4 pawn is protected by tactical means. 10.h4!? (comfortably preparing 11.g4) is an idea of the Leningrad grandmaster Mark Tseitlin: 10...♙d7 (10...h5?! 11.♙d3±; 10...0-0!?) 11.g4 ♭h6 12.♖g1 f5!N (12...0-0 is also playable: 13.♭c3 ♙h8!⇒ Δ ...♭g8; 13...f6?! 14.♭a4 ♚d8 15.exf6 ♖xf6 16.g5 ♖xf3 17.♚xf3 ♭f5∞ Grischuk-Johannessen, Reykjavik 2000) 13.exf6 (13.g5 ♭g4!) 13...gxf6 14.♭c3 ♭f7 with a complicated game, Lopez Martinez-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2004.

10...a5!?



My counterattack begins.

The natural 10...0-0!∞ has not yet been properly explored, although Black looks very solid here.

Black still has time to go for complications with 10...♙d7 11.0-0 g6 12.♭c3!? (12.♙xf5 exf5 13.♭c3 ♙e6 14.♭a4 ♚d8 15.♭c5 b6 16.♚a4 ♖c8 17.♭xe6 fxe6 18.♖ac1 ♚d7 19.♖c3 ♭d8= Erenburg-Moskalenko, Villa Salou 2003) 12...♭fxd4 13.♭xd4! (less good is 13.♭xd5? exd5 14.e6? (better 14.♭xd4 ♭xd4 15.e6 ♭xe6 16.♙xh8 f6!♣) 14...fxe6 15.♭xd4 ♙f6!—+ Saldano-Moskalenko, Roquetas de Mar 2004), when White gets the better chances: 13...♭xd4 (Black can consider 13...♚xd4!? 14.♚e2∞) 14.♚g4 ♭c6?

(14...♖b3!?) 15.♞fe1 ♜d8 16.b5 ♘a5 17.♘xd5!↑ (Jonkman-Moskalenko, Banyoles 2005).

A recent game with high-ranked players continued 10...a6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♞d2 h6 13.♙c2 ♙d7 14.♙xf5 exf5 15.♘c3 ♙e6 16.♘a4 ♜b5 17.♘c3 ♜b6 18.♘a4 ♜b5 19.♘c3 ½-½ Khairullin-Volkov, Sochi tt 2007.

11.♙xf5

I think that this typical exchange favours Black in almost every case. It should be borne in mind that the king's bishop is one of White's most important pieces in the Advance Variation.

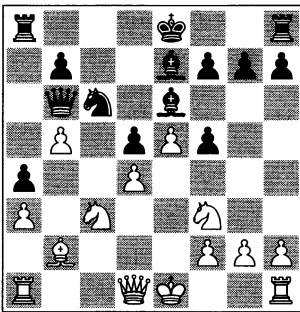
Later another move for White was found: 11.♞a4!? 0-0 12.b5 ♘h4 13.♘h4 ♙xh4∞ Kiik-Kortchnoi, Stockholm 2003/04.

Or 11.b5 ♘cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4 with the point 13.♞g4 ♘b3! 14.♞xg7 ♞f8 15.♞a2 ♙d7⇒ and Black is OK.

11...exf5 12.♘c3 ♙e6

My own experience tells me that this bishop is not as bad as theory books say.

13.b5 a4!⇒



This unexpected resource is the main idea of my plan: sacrificing the a-pawn will give Black the chance to improve his knight's position with the manoeuvre ...♘a5-c4. He gains the initiative on the queenside.

14.♞d3

Later, opponents tried new moves against me:

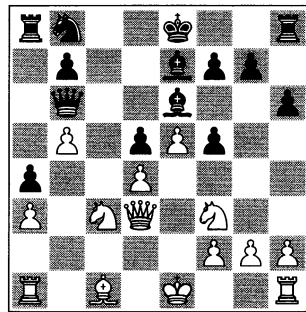
A) 14.0-0 ♘a5 15.♙c1 ♘c4 16.♘xa4 ♞xb5 17.♘c3 ♜c6 18.♞b1 ♙xa3 (18...h6) 19.♙xa3 ♘xa3 20.♞b3 0-0⚡ Vasiukov-Moskalenko, Belgorod 1990;

B) 14.♞b1 ♘a5 15.♞xa4?! 0-0! 16.♞d1? ♘c4 17.a4? ♘xb2 18.♞xb2 ♞a5+– Garrido Fernandez-Moskalenko, Barbera del Valles 2003.

14...♘b8

This might be a psychological mistake. Now the knight must spend more tempi to get to c4, but I did not want to sacrifice material against a grandmaster! The most active idea was to pursue my initial plan with 14...♘a5! 15.♘xa4 ♞a7, with full compensation for the pawn.

15.♙c1 h6!



A very useful move in this position. The white queen's bishop is kept out of play.

16.♘g1

White is also looking for the best squares for his pieces.

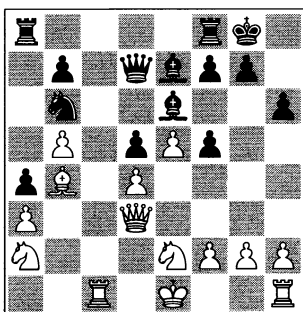
16...♘d7 17.♘ge2 ♞c7 18.♙d2 ♘b6 19.♞c1?!

Better was 19.0-0 0-0 20.♘f4 ♞fc8⇒.

19...♞d7

19...♘c4!?.

20.♘a2 0-0 21.♙b4



White has found a way to exchange his passive bishop, but the knight on c4 will be another reason for concern.

21...♖fc8 22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 23.0-0 ♙g5!? 24.f4

Now the knight will never get to f4.

24...♙e7

24...♙d8!? was a more ambitious move.

25.♙xe7 ♗xe7 26.♘b4 ♗d7 27.♖c1?

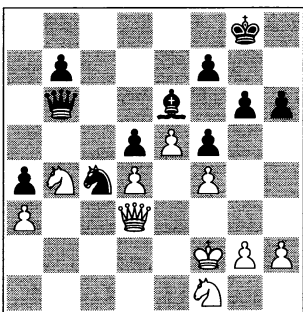
Now White loses his b5 pawn. Better was 27.♘c3 ♘c4⇌.

27...♖xc1+! 28.♘xc1 ♘c4

Winning material. Black keeps a clear advantage.

29.♗e2 ♗xb5 30.♘g3 g6 31.♙f2 ♗b6 32.♘f1?

This allows a cool sacrifice which will conquer all White's pawns in return. If 32.♘e2 ♗d8 or 32...f6!?, with advantage to Black.



32...♘xa3!-+

A combination resembling draughts: you sacrifice a piece and in return you get to capture three or four pawns.

33.♗xa3 ♗xd4+ 34.♙e1 ♗e4+! 35.♙d1 ♗xf4 36.♘d2 ♗xh2 37.♗xa4 ♗xg2

A lone knight is protecting the 'naked' white king. The game is over.

38.♗a8+ ♙g7 39.♗xb7 ♗g1+ 40.♙e2 f4 41.♘c6 ♗e3+ 42.♙d1 ♙g4+ 43.♙c2 ♙f5+ 44.♙d1 f3 45.♗b5 ♙d3 46.♗xd5 f2 0-1

In this – for the author – unforgettable game, grandmaster Sveshnikov did not manage to demonstrate a single effective idea in his favourite variation against my counterattack 10...a5 and 13...a4!. While fighting for the initiative, he forgot to defend his advanced pawns.

As a summary of the main plan with 5...♗b6, 6...♘h6 and 9...♙e7, I can assert that Black gains counterplay in almost all lines. Still, I was not completely satisfied and I thought that White could improve his play at certain points.

GAME 2

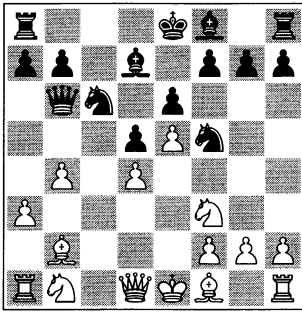
□ **Alexei Shirov**

■ **Mikhail Gurevich**

Khanty-Mansiysk 2005 (3)

In my opinion, this was an important game for the Advance Variation, which increased the popularity of 9...♙d7. I recommend the reader to make a deep study of the secondary lines, since the alternatives given there are equally important as the game moves.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♗b6 6.a3 ♘h6 7.b4 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5 9.♙b2 ♙d7!?

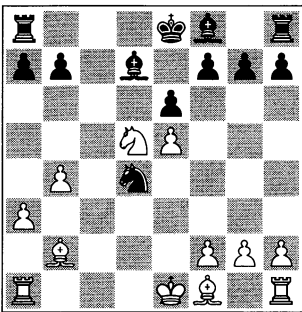


A creative continuation, allowing the advance g2-g4. Now the natural moves 10.♙d3, 10.♘c3 or 10.♘bd2 would simply lose the d4 pawn.

10.g4!

Obviously, White chooses the most aggressive move available. He achieves less than nothing after the alternatives:

A) It is interesting to analyse the variation 10.♘c3 ♘fxd4 11.♘xd4 ♙xd4! 12.♙xd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd5∞.



analysis diagram

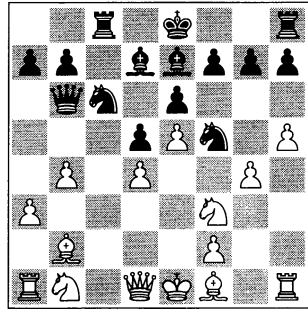
This position is like a jigsaw puzzle! 13...♘c2+ 14.♙d2 ♖c8!? 15.♖c1 ♘xa3! 16.♘c7+ ♙d8 17.♘xe6+ ♙xe6 18.♖xc8+ ♙xc8 19.♙xa3 ♙e7!↑ and Black is in excellent shape. He plans to continue with ...a5-♙b8-♖c8-♖d8;

B) 10.♙e2 is too slow: 10...♙e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♙d3 g6⇒;

C) On the other hand, 10.♙d3 is too aggressive: 10...♘cxd4 (10...a5!?)

11.♘xd4 ♘xd4 12.♘c3 ♘c6 (12...a5!?) 13.♘a4 ♙d8 14.0-0 b6 15.♖c1 g6 16.♘c3 ♙g7 17.♘xd5 exd5 18.e6 ♙xb2 19.exd7+ ♙f8! 20.♖xc6 ♙xd7= Reinaldo Castineira-Malakhatko, Sanxenxo 2007;

D) 10.h4 ♖c8 11.h5 ♙e7 12.g4 is a bizarre line:



analysis diagram

12...♘h6 (12...♘fxd4! 13.♘xd4 ♙c5! 14.bxc5 ♙xb2∞) 13.♖g1 f6 (13...0-0! 14.♘c3 ♘a5⇒) 14.exf6 gxf6 15.♘c3 ♘f7 16.♘a4∞ Shabalov-Kraai, Connecticut 2007.

10...♘fe7

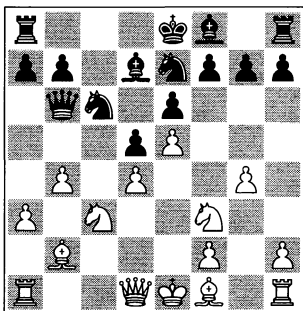
A logical retreat, although the most dynamic option seems to be 10...♘h6!?, preparing a classical counterattack against the centre, and now:

A) 11.♖g1 f6 12.exf6 gxf6 13.♘c3 ♘f7 14.♘a4 ♙c7 15.♖c1 ♙f4⇒ 16.♘c5 ♙xc5 17.dxc5 ♘ce5 18.♘xe5 ♘xe5 (18...fxe5!?) 19.♖g3 with a double-edged position, Short-Lputian, Batumi 1999;

B) 11.h3 f6! (the classic French break. Slightly slow is 11...♙e7 12.♘c3 0-0 13.♘a4∞ Haba-Kutsin, Wattens 1999, but 11...♖c8! 12.♘c3 ♘a5 offers creative chances: 13.♘a4 ♙c6 14.♖c1 ♘c4 15.♖xc4! dxc4 16.♘c3 ♙b6 17.♙g2 a5!↑, Shirov-Sadvakasov,

Astana 2001) 12.exf6 (if 12.♙d3 ♘f7 13.♗bd2 a5 (or 13...♗e7!? with another chance of playing ...♙b5, exchanging the light-squared bishops) 14.b5 ♗e7 15.a4 ♘g6 16.♙xg6 hxg6 ⇒ Wiersma-Malakhatko, Belgium tt 2004/05) 12...gxf6 13.♗c3 ♗f7! ⇒ and Black is solid, Shirov-Berg, Tallinn rapid 2006.

11. ♗c3



11... ♗a5!

A well-known resource in these structures. Grandmaster Psakhis wrote in *The Complete French*: ‘White got a few weaknesses on the queenside and Black tries to exploit them. This move has become quite popular in the last couple of years’.

An equally good alternative is the jump with the other knight: 11... ♗g6!? and now:

A) 12.h4 h5! 13.g5 ♗a5 14.♗a4 ♗c6 15.♗c5 ♗c4 is favourable for Black, Sveshnikov-Ostenstad, Oslo tt 2008 (1);

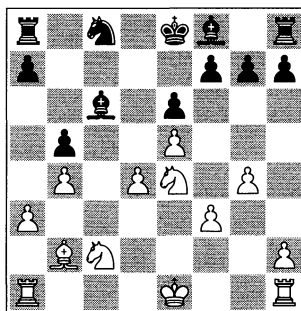
B) 12.♗a4 ♗d8 13.♗c5 (13.h4 h5! 14.g5 b6 15.♙d3 ♗f4 16.♙a6 ♗e7 17.♗c3 ♗f5 ⇒ Nevednichy-Lputian, Ohrid Ech 2001) 13...♙xc5 14.dxc5 ♗c7 15.♗e2 (Vysochin-Prezerakos, Korinthos 2004) and now the best solution for Black is 15...0-0!? intending

16.h4 d4! with satisfactory counterplay;

C) 12.♖c1 ♙e7 13.h4 ♗d8 (13...h5!) 14.♗b5 a6 15.h5? (15.♗d6+ ♙xd6 16.exd6 ♗b8 17.h5 ♗f4 18.♗d2 ♗xd6 19.♗e5 g5 20.hxg6 ♗xg6 is unclear) 15...axb5 16.hxg6 fxg6 and Black is better, Sveshnikov-Agrest, Oslo tt 2008 (3).

12. ♗d2

A defensive move. That same year White tried 12.♗c2!? ♗c4 13.♙xc4 dxc4 14.♗d2 ♗c6 15.♗ce4 ♗c8 16.♗xc4 b5! with good compensation for the pawn: 17.♗e3 ♗xc2 18.♗xc2 ♙c6 19.f3



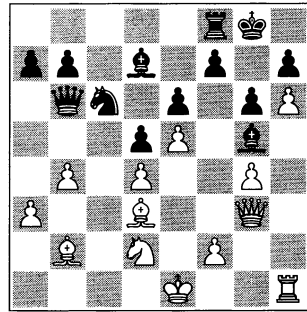
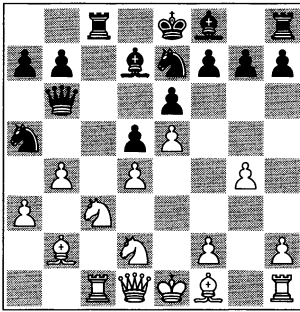
analysis diagram

19... ♗b6! (the alternative 19...h5 is probably worse, since this advance has no point and it allows the f8-bishop to be blocked in: 20.g5 ♗b6 21.♗f2 ♙e7 22.h4 0-0 23.♗e3 ♗a4 24.♖ab1 a5 ⇒ Sveshnikov-Lopez Martinez, Stepanakert II 2005) 20.♗e3 ♗a4 (better was 20...♙e7! 21.♗f2 h5 ⇒ with a strong initiative for the pawn) 21.0-0-0 ⇒ (Molander-Johannessen, Stockholm 2005/06) and now 21...a5! ⇒.

12... ♖c8

12... ♗xd4?! 13.bxa5 ♗xe5+ 14.♗e2 is better for White.

13. ♖c1



analysis diagram

Both sides can still call on many resources for the waging of a serious battle.

13...♖g6

Another possibility was 13...h5 14.♖c2!? ♘c4 (14...♘ac6!?) 15.♙xc4 dxc4 16.♘ce4 ♘d5 (16...♙a4!?) 17.♘xc4 ♖xc4 18.♗xc4 a5 19.0-0 axb4 20.axb4 ♗d8⇒ with a very complicated position, Ivanchuk-Bareev, Dubai 2002.

14.h4!?

There is no way back! After 14.♗e2?! ♙e7 15.♗e3 0-0 (15...♘h4!) 16.h4∞ f6 17.h5 ♘h8 18.♖c2 ♘c6 19.♘a4 ♗d8 20.exf6 ♙xf6 21.♘c5 e5!♣ Black very convincingly exploits the drawbacks of White's set-up! Motylev-Ponomarev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005. But also after 21...♘f7 Black's position is as solid as a rock – Psakhis.

14...♙e7

With a complicated game. The double-edged piece sacrifice 14...♗xd4!?! is also worthy of consideration: 15.bxa5 ♘xe5∞ – Psakhis.

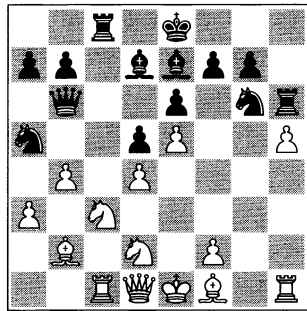
15.g5

An odd move. 15.h5!?! is obviously more interesting: 15...♘f4 16.♗f3 (16.♖c2!?) 16...♙g5 17.♘e2? (better 17.♖c2 ♘c6∞) 17...♗xc1+ 18.♘xc1 0-0 19.h6 g6 20.♘d3 ♘xd3+ 21.♙xd3 ♘c6 22.♗g3

22...♘xd4 (22...♘xb4! would have won immediately) 23.f4∞ ♙e7 24.♗f2 ♘c6 25.♗xb6 axb6 26.g5 ♘a7 27.♙e2 ♖c8 28.♖c1 ♖xc1 ½-½ Grischuk-Kruppa, Elista 2000.

15...0-0

Again, 15...♗xd4 is interesting, for instance: 16.bxa5 ♗xe5+ 17.♗e2 ♗b8∞. Black failed to equalise after 15...h6 16.gxh6 ♖xh6 (16...gxh6!?) 17.♖c2 ♘c4 18.♘xc4 dxc4 19.h5 ♘f4 20.♗g4?? ♘d3+ 21.♙xd3 cxd3 22.♖d2 ♖xc3 23.♙xc3 ♗c6–+ Panarin-Eraschenkov, playchess.com 2005) 17.h5



analysis diagram

17...♘h4 (17...♘f8?! 18.♖c2 ♘c4 19.♘xc4 dxc4 20.♙c1 ♖h8?! 21.♗g4 a5 22.b5± Thipsay-Barua, Calicut ch-IND 2003; 17...♗xd4!?! 18.bxa5 ♘xe5 19.♗e2 ♙g5∞) 18.♗g4 ♘f5 19.♙d3 ♙f8? (19...♙f8 20.♖g1 g6⇒)

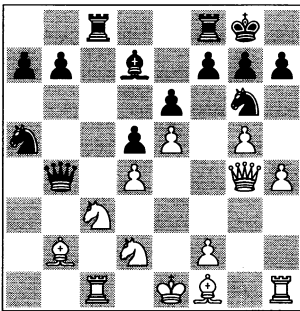
20.♟e2?! (better is 20.♟xf5 exf5
21.♞f3 with the initiative) 20...♟c4
21.♟xc4 dxc4 22.♟xf5 exf5 23.♞g2
a5 24.♟c3 axb4 25.axb4 ♖a8 26.d5
♜a2 27.♞f1! ♞a6 28.♞e1!± Grischuk-
Radjabov, Wijk aan Zee 2003.

16.♟e2!?

With the idea of 17.h5. If immediately
16.h5 ♟f4⇌.

16.♞g1? is dubious: 16...♟xh4
(16...♞xd4! 17.bxa5 ♞xe5+↑)
17.♟d3 g6? (17...♞xd4!?) 18.♞g4
♟f5 19.♟xf5 exf5 20.♞h4∞ Potkin-
Hug, Istanbul Ech 2003.

Another key move is 16.♞g4!? ♟xb4!
17.axb4 ♞xb4⇌.



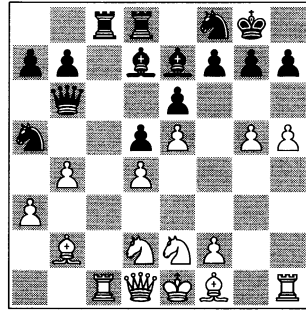
analysis diagram

18.♞b1 ♞xc3 19.♟xc3 ♞xc3 20.♞h3
♞c7 21.♟d3 ♟e7 22.h5 (22.♞f4 b5
23.h5 ♟f5 24.♟xf5 exf5 25.♞a3 b4
26.♞a1 ♞b8 27.♞c1 ♟c4 28.♟b3 ♞b5
29.♞f3 a5⌘ Solodovnichenko-Del Rio
Angelis, Castelldefels 2006) 22...♟f5
23.♞f4 ♟c6 24.♟xf5 exf5 25.g6 fxg6
26.hxg6 h6 27.♟f3 ♟d8 with chances
for both sides, Fluvia Poyatos-Gonzalez
Garcia, Badalona 2005.

16...♞fd8!

Vacating the f8-square. This manoeuvre
is much more accurate than 16...♟c4
17.♟xc4 dxc4 18.h5 ♟c6 19.♞h3 ♟h8
20.f4∞ (Gurevich).

17.h5 ♟f8



Now Black has the better chances, and
in this game Shirov's pieces do not get
to set fire on board.

18.♞g1 ♞xc1!

Again, 18...♟c4 was unclear: 19.♟xc4
(19.♞xc4? dxc4 20.♟e4 ♟c6 21.♟f6+
♞h8—+) 19...dxc4 20.♞d2 ♟c6
21.♟f4∞ – Gurevich.

19.♟xc1

19.♞xc1?! ♞c8 20.♞d1 ♟c4↑;
19.♟xc1?! ♟c4↑.

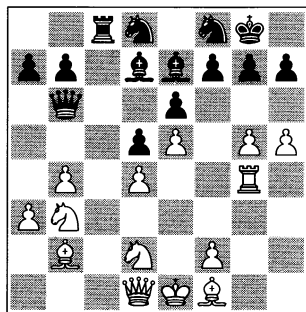
19...♟c6

19...♞c8!?.

20.♞g4

20.♟cb3 a5 21.b5 a4! 22.bxc6
(22.♟c5 ♟xd4! 23.♟xa4 ♞a7⌘)
22...♟xc6↑.

20...♞c8 21.♟cb3 ♟d8!



With the idea of 22...♟b5!. The rest of
the game is amazing. It is played in vin-
tage French style by Black.

An interesting tactical option was 21...a5!? 22.b5 ♘a7 23.a4 ♘xb5! 24.axb5 ♙xb5 with many chances for Black.

22.♘c5

22.♙e2 ♖c2♠; 22.♙d3!? ♙b5 23.♙b1∞.

22...♙b5

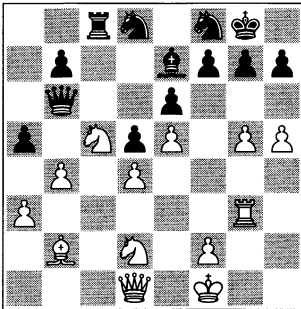
Strategically, the exchange ♙c8x♙f1 favours Black in most cases.

Remember that in the Advance Variation, as well as in many other openings (especially the Open Games) the king's bishop is White's best piece!

23.♖g3?!

23.♙h3 a5⇒; 23.♙g2 ♘c6 (23...a5!? 24.a4 ♙e8!) 24.g6?! hxg6 25.hxg6 ♘xg6 26.♖xg6 fxg6 27.♙g4 ♘xe5!♠.

23...♙xf1 24.♙xf1 a5!



Engaging in a counterattack on the opposite wing.

25.♙c3 axb4 26.axb4 ♖a8↑ 27.♙g2 ♙b5

Intending 28...♘c6 and 29...b6↑ ♚.

28.♘d3

In this game the white knights are very slow. No better was 28.h6 g6 29.♙f1 ♙xf1+ 30.♙xf1 b6 31.♘d3 ♘c6→.

28...♘c6

Or 28...♙xg5 29.♙g4→.

29.♙b1 ♖a3 30.♙b2 ♖a8 31.♘f3?T

White does not want to have to defend in time-trouble. Better was 31.♙c3

♙d8!♠ after which Gurevich was planning ...♘c6-e7-f5 and ...♙d8-b6.

31...♘xb4

Winning material and the game.

32.♘f4 ♙c4!

Aiming to exchange the queens with 33...♙c2.

33.g6

At last White makes this advance, but it is too late.

33...♙c2 34.gxf7+ ♙xf7 35.♙xc2 ♘xc2 36.♘h2?

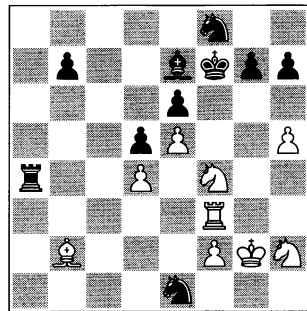
Another knight going nowhere.

36...♖a4

36...b5!-+.

37.♖f3?? ♘e1+

0-1



A fine victory by the Ukrainian/Belgian/Turkish grandmaster.

Summary: with the modern 9...♙d7 Black achieves a solid position. After the main answer 10.g4 White's pawns are very far advanced, but he still needs to complete his development and his king remains in the centre.

In many variations the black knights are the key pieces in the search for counterplay, acting impressively at the critical moments in these complicated games, right up to the end. Typical manoeuvres in this game were 10...♘e7 (♘h6), 11...♘a5 (♘g6), 21...♘d8! and 37...♘e1+.

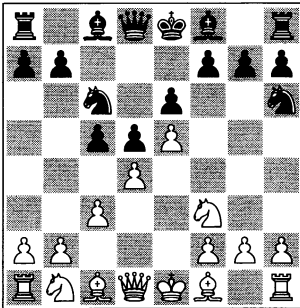
GAME 3

□ Evgeny Sveshnikov

■ Viktor Moskalenko

Rostov-on-Don Open 1993

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♟c6
5.♟f3 ♟h6!?

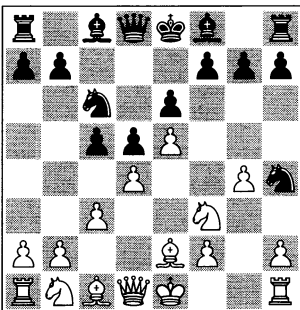


6.dxc5!?

According to GMs Sveshnikov and Kortchnoi (specialists on this line for both sides), this is the most dangerous answer. Let us check some other ideas:

A) I think that the capture 6.♟xh6?! is a mistake. For instance: 6...gxf6 7.♟d3 (7.dxc5 ♟c7!?) 7...♟b6 (7...♟g7!?) 8.♟d2 ♟d7!?! 9.dxc5 ♟c7! 10.♟f4 ♟g7 11.♟g3 0-0! and Black's pieces are excellently positioned;

B) Grandmaster Kupreichik tried against the author: 6.♟e2! ♟f5 7.g4 (White must attack the knight; if 7.0-0 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♟b6⇒) 7...♟h4

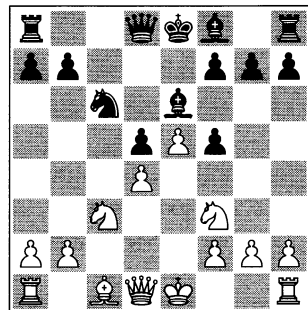


analysis diagram

I think that Black is better here: 8.♟xh4 ♟xh4 9.♟e3 ♟d7 10.♟d2 (or 10.0-0 f6 11.f4 fxe5 12.dxe5 g5! 13.♟a3 0-0-0 14.♟b5 h5! 15.fxg5 hxg4 16.♟f4 a6 17.♟d6+ ♟xd6 18.exd6 g3 (18...♟dg8!)) 19.♟xg3 ♟xg5→ Kupreichik-Moskalenko, Blagoveschensk 1988) 10...cxd4 11.♟f3 ♟d8 (11...♟xg4!? 12.♟g1 ♟xg1+ 13.♟xg1 dxe3 12.cxd4 h5 (12...♟b6!?) 13.gxh5 ♟xh5 14.h4∞ with a complicated game, Kupreichik-Moskalenko, Lvov 1988;

C) The move 6.a3 (after 6...♟f5) almost brings us back to Game 1. John Watson, in his book *Dangerous Weapons: The French*, deeply (and successfully) analyses the creative possibility 6...f6!?! , although only a few games have been played with this line;

D) Surprisingly, the most common move is 6.♟d3?! cxd4 (6...f6!? see also Watson's *Dangerous Weapons: The French*) 7.cxd4 ♟f5 8.♟xf5 exf5 9.♟c3 ♟e6 7.




analysis diagram

White has nothing in this structure. See also similar examples in the notes to Game 1.

10.♟e2 ♟e7 11.h4 h6 12.♟f4 ♟b6 13.♟h3 g6 14.♟f1 0-0-0!? 15.♟g1 g5!↑ Nun-Moskalenko, Pardubice Open 1994.

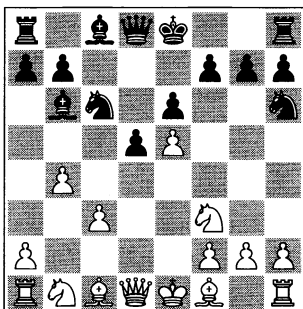
6...♟xc5

 **WEAPON:** A well-known trick is 6...♗g4? 7.♖a4! and Black cannot capture either pawn, Kupreichik-Kaidanov, Lvov 1988, and Sveshnikov-Bareev, Cheliabinsk 1991.

7.b4!

This advance is more logical than the direct exchange 7.♗xh6?! gxf6 8.b4 ♗f8! (Δ ...♗g7) 9.b5 ♘e7 10.♗d3 ♗g7 11.0-0 ♘g6 12.♖e1 ♖c7 13.♖a4 0-0 14.♖d4 f6! with an initiative for Black in the centre, Almeida-Moskalenko, Fuerteventura 1992.

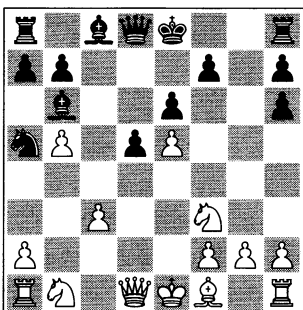
7...♗b6!



The retreat 7...♗f8?! is absurd now, since White has not played ♗xh6.

8.b5


I have tried another interesting possibility after 8.♗xh6 gxf6 9.b5: 9...♘a5!?N (9...♘e7 is similar to the main game)

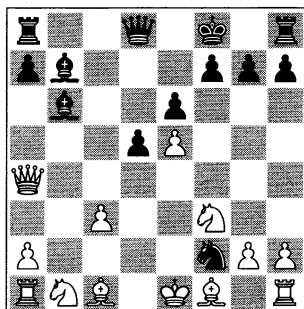


analysis diagram

With the idea of sacrificing the h6-pawn: 10.♗d3 (10.♖d2 ♖c7 11.♖xh6 ♖c5⇒) 10...♖e7 11.0-0 ♗d7 12.♖c1 ♖f8 13.♖f4 0-0-0! (Δ ...♗b8, ...♖c8) 14.♘bd2 ♗b8 15.♘d4 ♖g7 16.♖fd1 (16.♖fc1 ♖g5!) 16...♖c8 17.♖ac1 ♖c7 with active counterplay along the c- and g-files, Nikolaidis-Moskalenko, Agios Nikolaos 1995.

8...♘e7

 **WEAPON:** An interesting resource is 8...♘g4!? 9.bxc6 ♘xf7 10.cxb7 ♗xb7 11.♖a4+ ♗f8



analysis diagram

... with an extremely complicated position.

9.♗d3 ♘g6

Or 9...♘g4 10.0-0 ♖c7 11.♖e2 ♘g6 12.♗xg6 hxg6 13.♗a3 ♗d7 14.♗d6 ♖c8 15.a4.

10.0-0-0

Recently I have played 10...♖c7!? 11.♖e2 0-0 12.♗a3 ♗c5 (12...♖d8!? 13.♗d6 ♖xd6 14.exd6 ♖xd6☹) 13.♗xc5 ♖xc5 14.♘d4 f6 (14...♘f4!? 15.♖f3 ♘xd3 16.♖xd3 f6⇒; 14...♗d7!?♣) 15.♗xg6 hxg6 16.exf6 ♖xf6⇒ and Black has no problems, Rojas-Moskalenko, Badalona 2007.

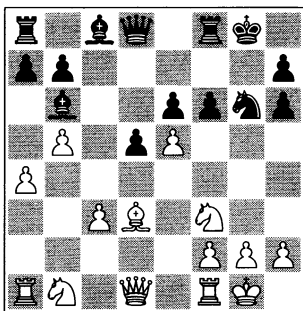
11.♗xh6 gxf6 12.a4

If White plays the natural 12.♘bd2, Black can continue 12...♘f4!?

13.♚c2 ♘h8!↑, and if 14.♙xh7? ♕f5!

15.exf6 ♚xf6 with a strong initiative.

12...f6

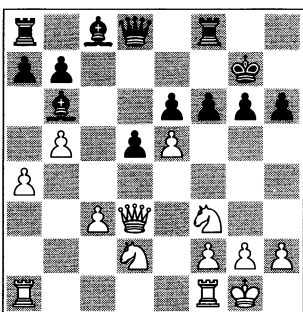


Guaranteeing Black counterplay. Activating the queen first by 12...♚c7!?, with pressure on the white pawns on c3 and e5, is more ambitious.

13.♙xg6□

There is no other way to defend the centre.

13...hxg6 14.♚d3 ♘g7 15.♘bd2



We can see that Sveshnikov has achieved no advantage in our second game either.

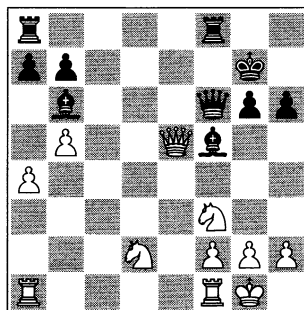
15...♙d7 16.c4 fxe5 17.cxd5

17.♘xe5 ♙e8 18.♘df3 ♚c8⇒.

17...exd5 18.♚xd5 ♙f5! 19.♚xe5+

Not 19.♚xb7+? ♚f7, winning, since the white queen has difficulty in escaping.

19...♚f6○

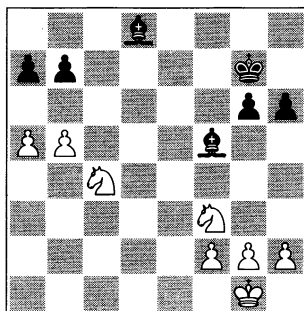


Black has an equal game thanks to his active bishops.

20.♚fe1 ♚xe5 21.♚xe5 ♚ae8

22.♚xe8 ♚xe8 23.a5 ♙d8 24.♘c4

♙f6 25.♚d1 ♚d8 26.♚xd8 ♙xd8



The game is moving towards a draw (♘g9/d in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*).

27.♘d4 ♙d7 28.f4!? ♙e7 29.♘e5 ♙c8

30.♘f2 ♙b4! 31.♘c4 ♙c5 32.♘e3

♙d7 33.b6 axb6 34.♘xb6 ♙c6 35.g3

35.♘d3 ♙xb6! =.

35...♙g2 36.♘d3 ♙b4 37.♘b3 ♘f6

38.♘c4 ♙e1 39.g4 h5 40.♘d7+ ♘e6

41.♘dc5+ ♘d6 42.♘d3 ♙d5+

43.♘d4 ♙h4 44.♘bc5 hxg4 45.♘e4+

♙xe4 46.♘xe4 g3 = 1/2-1/2

Summary: 5...♘h6 is an interesting alternative for Black, with many possibilities for both sides. However, White can

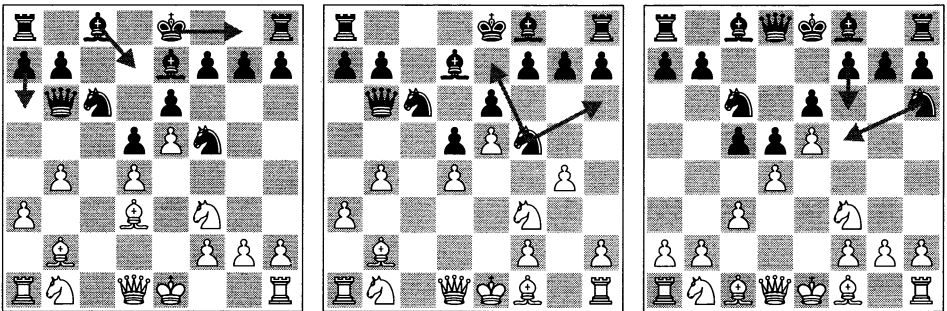
play 6.a3 and return to the paths of 6...♝b6 7.b4, a line that has already been analysed in Games 1 and 2.

Summary of Chapter 1

The plans with 5...♘h6 probably mark the most dynamic and effective defence against the Advance Variation. In the main line, the modern variation, with 6.a3 and 7.b4, White tries to control the entire board. He defends his d4 pawn and gains more space, and his minor pieces will be comfortably placed (♙b2/♙e3, ♙e2/♙d3, ♘c3/♘bd2). However, things are not so clear and Black has several ways of achieving counterplay.

The three key positions in this variation are:

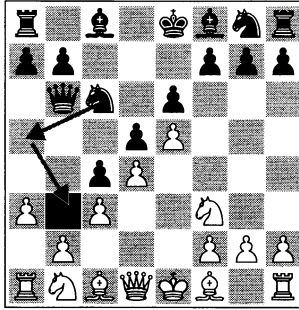
- A1) 9...♙e7 10.♙d3 (D1).
- A2) 9...♙d7 10.g4 (D2); since 2005 this has been the favourite line of black players.
- A3) 5...♘h6 - (D3), deviations.



In my opinion, there are chances for both sides to improve their play in the opening, in view of the tactical resources at key moments mentioned in Games 1-3. The analyses contain many secondary lines that can be considered equivalent variations. Time and experience have shown me that there is another way for Black to achieve a satisfactory game after 6.a3(!), which we will look at in Chapter 2.

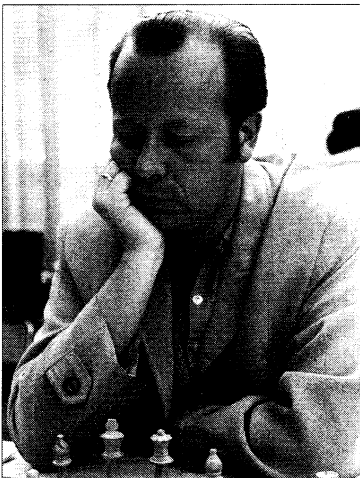
Chapter 2 – Labyrinths of the Old System

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♖c6 5.♗f3 ♚b6 6.a3 c4!?



History, Strategies

In the 1950s, the leading specialists in the French such as grandmasters Tigran Petrosian and Wolfgang Uhlmann investigated a new strategy for Black, characterised by the blockading move 6...c4. Now Black is no longer pressing on d4, but he avoids the dangerous white set-up aimed at controlling the board. This change produced completely new positions, which can lead to very creative practical play and were interesting to study.



German grandmaster Wolfgang Uhlmann (born in 1935) was, along with the Armenian legend Tigran Petrosian, the leading player of the genuine French in his time.

- Since the b3-square has been weakened, Black closes the centre and shifts the struggle to the flanks.
- Curiously, the black knights have more space (and free squares!) to manoeuvre.
- At the moment there are neither points of direct contact nor forced lines with pawn moves. Both players must devote themselves to preparatory manoeuvres.

Typical ideas for Black

- * After 6...c4 the follow-up 7...♗a5 is virtually forced, taking aim at the weakness on b3. Then, after 8...♕d7, Black always has available the option of castling kingside (but there is no need to hurry!).

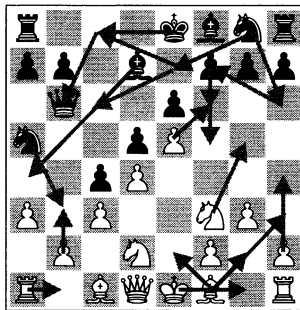
- * Sooner or later Black must prepare the classic break ...f7-f6 (sometimes this is played immediately – Games 7, 13 and 14) or the blockading move ...f7-f5 (Games 6, 8 and 11).
- * The king’s knight also has a very important role. Typical manoeuvres are: ...♘g8-e7-c6 preparing ...f7-f6 and ...fxe5; or ...♘g8-e7-c8-b6 with the intention of ...♗a4; or even ...♘g8-h6 in order to play ...f7-f6/♘f7 and exert pressure on the e5 pawn or ...f7-f5/♘f7, intending to continue with ...g7-g5.
- * The king’s bishop is usually developed on e7, keeping an eye on White’s ♘g5 sortie and sometimes supporting the counterattack with ...g7-g5.
- * Black can also play ...h7-h6 (a very useful move) in order to definitely prevent ♘/♗g5 and to prepare the advance ...g7-g5.
- * The black queen and queen’s bishop should look out for possible action along the h7-b1 diagonal.

Typical ideas for White

- * White plays 7.♘bd2!, defending the b3-square and threatening to push b2-b3.
- * Next, there are two main plans:
 - 1) 8.♗e2 and 9.0-0, playing for the centre or on the queenside with b2-b3, or
 - 2) The set-up g3-h4-♗h3/♗g2, preparing action in the centre and on the kingside. White can also combine both plans or transfer from one to another if necessary.
- * Other useful manoeuvres in the Labyrinth System involve the rooks: ♖fe1, strengthening the centre and meeting ...f7-f6, and ♖ab1, with the idea of preparing b2-b3/b4.

Theory

After studying dozens of games played at all levels, I have noticed that there is hardly any theory on this line.



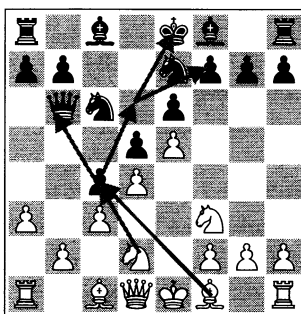
This ‘magic’ diagram is useful for visualising the most important movements in the opening.

- **The wonderful feature of this variation for both sides (especially for Black) is the huge number of different plans that can be used, even when the typical examples are known. You can discover your own labyrinths!**

Mistakes and Tactics

In order to avoid the typical traps in this line, we will check the best-known examples:

- 1) After 7.♘bd2 the natural move 7...♗ge7?? (33 games in MegaBase!) is an awful mistake, since it allows a thematic combination.



After 8.♙xc4! (curiously, Garry Kasparov did not play this move, even though he got the chance twice in simultaneous displays in 2000!) 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♖a6 10.♗d6+ ♘d7 11.♗xf7 White has a huge advantage (see Game 5).

- 2) Another possibility after 7.♘bd2 is 7...♙d7?!, another ‘hasty’ move (7...♗a5! or 7...f6!? is better), since it allows 8.b3!?, when White advantageously opens up the centre, as in Motylev-Hort, Hoogeveen 2003 and Sveshnikov-Timman, Tilburg 1992 (see comments to Games 5 and 15).
- 3) The premature sortie 7.♗g5?! is probably a waste of time. After 7...f6! 8.exf6 ♗xf6 Black gains the initiative (see comments to Game 4).
- 4) Black should be careful not to transfer too many pieces to the queenside. Often the most important operations take place on the other side of the board.
- 5) During the opening I think that Black’s best option is to keep his king in the centre for as long as possible. This allows him to castle kingside if White breaks with b2-b3.
- 6) Generally speaking, piece exchanges and simplification favour Black!

Directions and Games

There is a detail which makes the study of this variation more difficult. In the initial stage both sides have several alternatives with independent ideas, but after a few moves many different continuations will lead to the same position.

- A) White’s most flexible moves are natural development with 7-8.♘bd2/♙e2 (Games 4-8).

First of all, we will investigate an aggressive method, where White tries to open up the queenside with b2-b3 and c3-c4 (Game 4: Tal-Petrosian), or tries to play on the entire board, even without the queens (Game 5: Nakamura-Timman).

Black can defend against 10.♞b1 with the idea of b2-b3, by means of 10...♞c7!?, using his queen as a ‘submarine’, attacking the c3 pawn from ‘beneath the surface’ (Game 6: Dvoiris-Vaganian).

Other important examples and ideas can be found in:

- Game 7: Lapshun-Moskalenko: The French Breakthrough 9...f6;
- A weird plan by grandmaster Shabalov, pushing h4-h5 (Game 8: Shabalov-Akopian).

B) Quite often White prefers **7/8.g3** and **h2-h4**, seizing space on the kingside while his bishop takes up a comfortable position on g2 or h3 (Games 9-12).

In the following examples White looks for better squares for his key piece, the king’s bishop:

The ‘Classical Fianchetto’ g3-♗g2 (Game 9: Clarke-Petrosian). In this game we can see Black employing his pieces in the best manner.

The ‘Armenian Fianchetto’ g3-♗h3!?, without h2-h4, and the defensive idea of the Azeri grandmaster Radjabov (Game 10: Movsesian-Radjabov).

The ‘Austrian Fianchetto’ g3-h4-♗h3 (Game 11: Klinger-Portisch), featuring grandmaster Portisch’s counter-plan in true Dutch Stonewall style.

The ‘Weird Fianchetto’, including other ideas connected with g3-h4, played in blind, rapid and Internet games, etc. (Game 12: Ivanchuk-Bareev).

C) We conclude our study of the ‘Labyrinth’ System 6...c4 with the immediate ...f7-f6: The Uhlmann Plan – 7.g3/♘bd2 f6, a major resource in the French Defence which has been used by grandmasters Uhlmann (7.g3 f6 in Game 13 vs Malaniuk) and Pelletier (7.♘bd2 f6 in Game 14 vs Grischuk).

Summary A, B and C: Games by the Expert (Game 15)

After studying most of the possibilities in the variation with ♗e2 and the one with g3, I have not been able to find any effective plans for White. In many lines Black obtains dangerous counterplay on the kingside, advancing his f-, g- and h-pawns in order to prepare a central counterattack or an attack on the flank.

Finally, I decided to study a safer path, using the games of a leading expert with white on this variation.

The statistics of grandmaster Evgeny Sveshnikov against the blockading system with 6...c4 are fascinating: he has played several games against another Ukrainian grandmaster expert on this variation, Vereslav Eingorn, with the result of three draws and one win. Sveshnikov has played a total of 19 games with this line, winning 11 (!), drawing 7 and losing only one. What was the secret of his victories? We will look for an answer to this question in Game 15: Sveshnikov-Eingorn, Mallorca GMA Open 1989.

Labyrinths of the Old System – Games

Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian (also known as ‘Iron Tigran’) was the brilliant champion of blocked pawn structures, and his ability to play them with both sides yielded him a great number of points.

GAME 4

□ Mikhail Tal

■ Tigran Petrosian

Tbilisi 1956 (7)

First of all we investigate the system where White tries to open up the queenside with b2-b3 and c3-c4.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♚b6 6.a3

White’s main idea is to gain some space on the queenside, carrying out b2-b4.

6...c4!?

Black prefers to close the queenside. A logical idea against a2-a3 and a good choice against Mikhail Tal!

White’s initiative is temporarily frozen. This advance became a popular plan in the 1950s.

The theory of this line was not very advanced, so players tended to make many mistakes here. Except for Petrosian!

7.♙e2

The more natural option is 7.♘bd2!?, trying to achieve some activity with b2-b3 and c2-c4 – see the next games.

A) 7.♘g5? is premature: 7...f6! 8.exf6 ♘xf6 9.f4 ♙d6 10.g3 0-0 11.♙g2 ♙d7 12.♚e2 ♚ae8 and Black is better, Acs-Kabatianski, Budapest 1994;

B) It is also too early for 7.b4?! cxb3 8.♙b2 ♘a5 9.♘bd2 ♙d7 10.a4? (better is 10.c4 ♘e7) 10...♚c8 P.Littlewood-Chandler, Portsmouth 1976.

7...♙d7

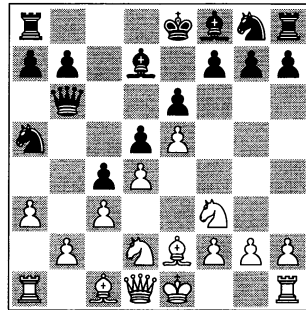
Now Black can castle queenside. My advice, however, is to wait and first play some more useful moves.

Another idea is the classical French break 7...f6!?, opening up the centre at once, although at this point it is still unclear which side will profit most from this manoeuvre. See Games 7, 14 and 15 for similar ideas.

8.♘bd2 ♘a5!



WEAPON: Remember! 8...♘ge7?? 9.♙xc4! – 21 games in MegaBase!



Black’s main trump is his continuous pressure on b3.

9.0-0

White has easily deployed his pieces, but there is no way that he can profit from his lead in development.

9...♘e7

This is a very popular, flexible manoeuvre. The other knight retains a choice between four possible destinations (c6/c8 or g6/f5).

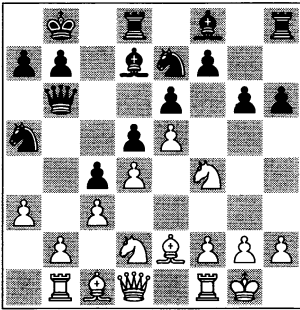
9...f6!? is still interesting, see Game 7.

Immediate castling is complicated: 9...0-0-0 10.♚b1! ♘b3! (10...♙b8 11.b3 cxb3 12.c4! ♙a4 13.♙b2∞ Delchev-Moreno Carnero, Andorra 2002) 11.♘xb3 ♙a4! 12.♙e3 ♘xb3 13.♚c1 a5 14.♘d2 a4 15.f4 ♘e7

16.g4?! h5⇒ Mamedyarov-El Gindy, Dubai 2003.

10.♖b1!?

Now, White could continue 10.♘g5 h6 11.♘h3 0-0-0 12.♘f4 g6 (12...f5 (12...f6! is better) 13.exf6 gxf6 14.♙f3 ♖d6 15.♘h5 e5± A.Grosar-Bareev, Bled 1991) 13.♖b1 ♖b8!?



analysis diagram

The position is blocked and White has no successful plans at his disposal. But Black has! 14.g4?! ♙b5 (14...♘b3!? Δ 15.♘xb3 ♙a4⇒) 15.♖e1 ♘c8 16.♙f1 ♙e7 17.h3 ♖c6! 18.♙g2 ♙a4 19.♖e2 ♙c2 20.♘xc4 ♙xb1 21.♘xa5 ♖c7 22.b4 g5! and Black won, I.Zaitsev-T.V.Petrosian, Moscow ch-URS 1969.

10...h6!?

A useful move in this kind of position: it prevents the white pieces from occupying g5 and prepares an eventual ...g7-g5. Sometimes, the vacated h7-square can be occupied by the black queen.



WEAPON: 10...♘b3? is an awful mistake: 11.♙xc4! ♘xc1

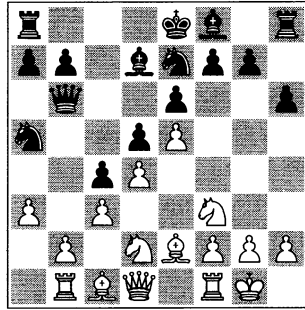
12.♖xc1± Kerkhoff-Timman, Rotterdam 1964.

A) Another interesting move is 10...♘g6!?, intending ...f7-f6, although there are no high-level games with it;

B) The following line is unclear: 10...♘ec6 11.♖e1!? (Δ 12.♙d1)

(11.♖e1 ♙e7 12.♖c2 0-0∞) 11...f5 12.exf6 (12.♙d1) 12...gxf6 13.b4!? cxb3 14.c4 0-0-0∞ Gdanski-Owczarzak, Warsaw 2002.

C) The immediate 10...0-0-0? is dangerous: 11.b4 cxb3 12.c4 (12.♙d3!?) 12...♙a4?! (Lebedev-T.V.Petrosian, Moscow 1958) and now 13.♘g5±.



11.♖c2

For 11.♖e1 see the next game; 11.g3 ♘ec6 12.♘h4 ♙e7 13.♘g2 0-0-0 (13...0-0!?)=) is unclear, Sveshnikov-Farago, Novi Sad 1979; 11.b4?! cxb3 12.♙b2 ♖c8± Balkan-Express-CapNemo, playchess.com 2006.

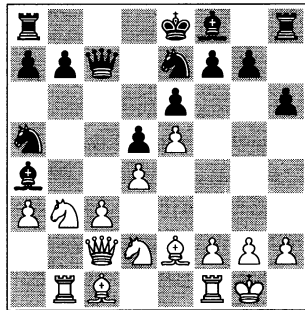
11...♖c7 12.b3

Mikhail Tal is obviously trying to open up the position in order to attack. 12.♖e1! is a good waiting alternative.

12...cxb3 13.♘xb3 ♙a4!

This pin by the bishop is an important tactical resource against b2-b3.

14.♘fd2



The position is balanced. White cannot exploit his lead in development.

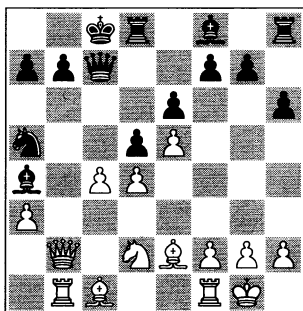
14...♖ec6

More precise may be 14...♖c8!? 15.♚b2 ♜xb3 16.♜xb3 ♜g6⇒, preparing to castle kingside; or, for example, 14...a6!? 15.♚b2 ♜xb3 16.♜xb3 ♜f5 17.♙d3 b5 with active play.

15.♚b2 0-0-0?!

This must be a joke! Only an optimist can play this and keep his nerve. More than sufficient was 15...♙e7, when after 16...0-0 Black's position is very solid.

16.♜xa5 ♜xa5 17.c4!



Now Petrosian is forced to display his best defensive skills.

17...♙e7 18.cx d5 ex d5 19.♙d1 ♙d7 20.♙c2 ♚b8 21.♙d3 ♖c8 22.♜b3 ♜c4 23.♚a2 ♙a4 24.♙f5 ♙d7 25.♙d3 ♙a4 26.♙f5 ♙d7 1/2-1/2

Summary:

With 12.b3 White starts action on the queenside, allowing Black the superior pawn structure. Logically, the correct counterplan for Black was to prepare kingside castling, which would have given him good prospects. However, the game continuation also demonstrates the solidity of the set-up with 6...c4. The analysis of other, secondary lines also shows that Black's fortress is made of hard rock!

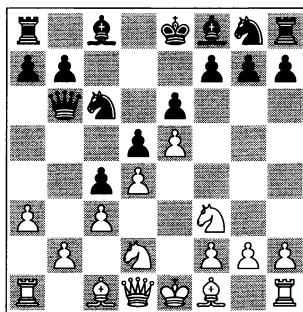
GAME 5

□ Hikaru Nakamura

■ Jan Timman

Malmö/Copenhagen 2005 (8)


1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♜c6 5.♜f3 ♚b6 6.a3 c4 7.♜bd2!

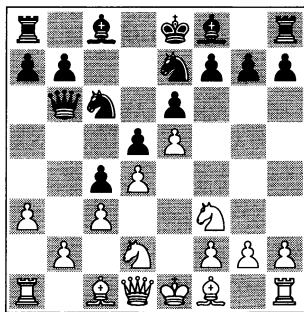


This is the best move without a doubt, since it forces Black to show his intentions.

7...♙d7?!

This is probably a mistake, since it allows b2-b3.

 **WEAPON:** Another awful mistake would be 7...♜ge7?? Remember: To play this move, the other knight must be on a5 or the black queen on c7! 33 games with this mistake can be found in MegaBase.



analysis diagram

Here a most surprising continuation was 8.♙e2? h5?? 9.0-0? (9.♙xc4!)

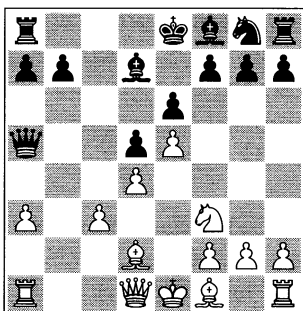
9...♘f5, Kasparov-Antwerpen Topsport, Deurne simul 2000;

Of course, White again has 8.♙xc4! dxc4 9.♖xc4 ♖a6 10.♗d6+ ♔d7 11.♗xf7 ♜g8 12.♚c2 with a decisive advantage, Sveshnikov-Milos, Budapest 1988.

The immediate 7...♗a5! is better, since it prevents all tactics, or else 7...f6!?, pressing on the centre, see Game 15.

8.♙e2

Unexpectedly, Hikaru Nakamura chooses a quiet plan. We do not get to know what Timman had prepared against 8.b3!?, seizing his chance. In these positions, opening up the game favours White in almost all cases! 8...cxb3 9.♗xb3 ♗a5 10.♗xa5 ♖xa5 11.♙d2



analysis diagram

11...♖a4 (or, for instance, 11...♗e7 12.♙d3! ♖c7 13.0-0± Motylev-Hort, Hoogeveen 2003) 12.♖b1! ♙c6 13.♙d3 and White is better, for example: 13...♗e7 14.0-0 h6 15.♜c1! ♗c8 16.c4! dxc4 17.♜xc4 ♖b5 18.♖xb5 ♙xb5 19.♜xc8+ ♜xc8 20.♙xb5+ winning, Sveshnikov-Timman, Tilburg 1992.

8...♗a5!

Returning to familiar paths.

9.♖b1

Now the move order is not really important.

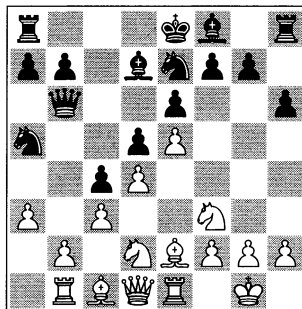


This was a sharp battle between a young ronin and a veteran samurai. In this game we check several other typical manoeuvres connected with ♙e2.

9...♗e7 10.0-0 h6

A move in Petrosian style: always safe.

11.♜e1!?



We have reached the key position, but we could still have continued in 'Poker style'...

11...0-0-0

As in the previous game, I think that this move is premature. According to grandmaster Psakhis, though, 'Practice has sufficiently proved that Black has no serious problems in this line'. These caves are full of labyrinths!

A) I like the flexible 11...♖c7!?, further preventing b2-b3 and preparing another common plan with ...♗c8-b6/♙a4, for example: 12.♗f1 (12.♖c2 ♗c8 13.♗f1 ♗b6 14.♗g3 g6 15.♙f1 0-0-0 16.♙e3

♖b8 17.h4 ♕e7 18.h5 ♜dg8⇒
Thipsay-Zillur Rahman, Calcutta 1994)
12...♗c8 (12...♗b3!? 13.♗3d2 ♕a4
14.♗xb3 ♕xb3= Galyas-Koczka, Hun-
gary tt 1994/95) 13.♕f4 ♗b6 14.♕g3
♕a4 15.♞c1 0-0-0= Haba-Naumkin,
Cappelle la Grande 1998;

B) Another possibility is 11...♕c6
12.♗f1 ♞b3 13.♕f4 ♕a4 14.♞c1
♞b6 15.♗3d2 ♗g6⇒ Sveshnikov-
Eingorn, Riga ch-URS 1985;

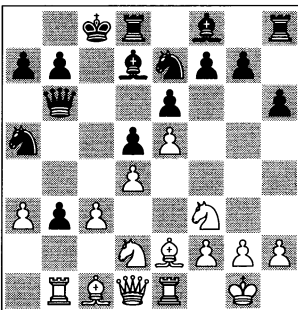
C) Or, for instance, 11...♗f5!? creat-
ing weaknesses in White's position, see:
12.g4 (12.♕f1 ♕e7 13.g4 ♗h4
14.♗xh4 ♕xh4 15.♞e3 0-0-0⇒
Lyell-Brumen, Bled 1998) 12...♗e7
13.♗f1 ♞b3 14.♞xb3 ♗xb3=
Degraeve-Levacic, Bastia 1998.

12.♞c2

A) Starting action in another area
seems absurd: 12.h4?! ♖b8 13.h5 ♞c7
14.♞c2 ♗c8 15.♗f1 ♗b6 16.♕f4 ♕a4
17.♞c1 ♕e7= Marzolo-Masserey,
Cannes 2000;

B) Another odd move would be
12.♗f1, abandoning control of b3
12...♗b3 (12...f5!? 13.exf6 gxf6
14.♗g3 h5) 13.♕e3 ♕a4 14.♗3d2
♗f5⇒ Fressinet-Radjabov, Oropesa del
Mar 1999;

C) Probably the critical move is
12.b4!? cxb3



analysis diagram

13.c4 (13.♗xb3 ♕a4⇒) 13...dxc4
(13...♕a4!?) 14.♗xc4 ♗xc4 15.♕xc4
♕a4 16.♕xb3 ♕xb3 17.♞xb3 ♞a6∞
and Black seems to have defended ev-
erything, Vlassov-Vysochin, Yalta 1995.

12...♖b8 13.♗f1

White rejects b2-b3. 13.♕d1 ♞c8
(13...♞c7 14.♗f1 ♗c8 15.♕e3 ♗b6
½-½ Sveshnikov-Vaisser, Sochi 1985)
14.♗f1 ♗b3 15.♕f4 ♖a8 16.♗g3 ♕a4
(16...f5!? 17.exf6 gxf6⇒) 17.♞e2 ♞b5
18.♗h5 ♗a5 19.♗d2 ♞c7 20.g4?! was
Sveshnikov-Casper, Moscow II 1987.

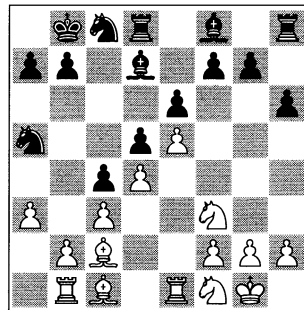
13...♞b3

This looks natural, but I would prefer to
keep the queens on the board with
13...♗b3!? and prepare a counterattack
with ...f6 or ...f5.

14.♕d1

White failed to gain any advantage after
14.♞xb3 ♗xb3 15.♕f4 ♗c8 16.♗g3
½-½ Sveshnikov-Nikolenko, Moscow
ch-URS 1991; 14.♞d2 ♞a2!?

14...♞xc2 15.♕xc2 ♗c8!?



White has got nothing from the open-
ing; Black's pieces are well coordi-
nated (he is planning ...♗b6/♕a4).

16.a4 ♗b6 17.♞a1 ♞c8 18.♗3d2 ♕e7 19.f4 g6

Timman prepares a blockade, not al-
lowing any weaknesses. The most am-
bitious move was 19...f5!?, and if

20.exf6 gxf6 21.f5 e5!⇒, obtaining activity in the centre.

20.♖e3 h5 21.g3 ♖hg8 22.h3 ♜c6 23.g4 ♖h8

Black has lost two tempi, but this is not so important in a closed position.

24.♗f3 ♜cc8 25.♞a2 hxg4 26.hxg4 ♖h3 27.♗g2 ♖ch8 28.♗f1

28.f5 gxf5 29.gxf5 ♕f8 30.f6♣.

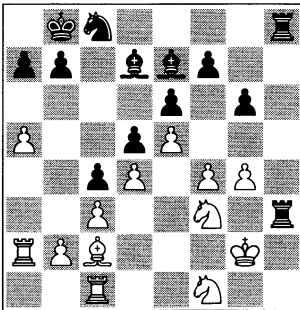
28...♗b3?!

28...♕e8!/? was a better option, with the initiative for Black.

29.a5 ♗xc1

29...♗c8♣ was preferable.

30.♖xc1 ♗c8



Now the main target is the a5 pawn.

31.♗g3 a6 32.♞aa1 ♗a7 33.♞h1 ♖xh1 34.♗xh1 ♗c6 35.♗f2 ♗c8!

The king runs along the back rank to protect the pawn on f7 – long live the king! Not 35...♕d8 36.♕a4! =.

36.♗h3 ♗d8 37.♗hg5 ♗e8 38.♗g3 ♕d8 39.♕a4 ♗b8 40.b3 cxb3

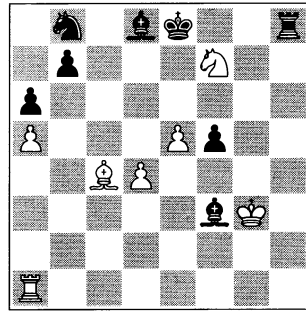
40...♕xa4 was stronger: 41.♞xa4 cxb3 42.♗d2 ♖h1 43.♗xb3 ♗c6♣.

41.♕xb3 ♕c6 42.f5! gxf5 43.gxf5 exf5 44.c4

44.♗f4!/?.

44...dxc4 45.♕xc4 ♕xf3 46.♗xf7?

This tactical blow only complicates White's task. He should have played 46.♗xf3 ♗c6 47.♗f4 ♗xa5 48.♕d3= with a probable draw.



46...♖h1!

An unexpected intermediate move.

47.♖xh1 ♕xh1 48.♗xd8 ♗xd8 49.d5 ♗d7 50.♗f4 ♗c5

This soon leads to a draw. Possibly Black should have preferred 50...♕e4!/?.

51.♗xf5 ♗e7 52.♗f4 ♕g2 53.♗e3 ♗e4 54.♕b3 ♗g5 55.♕a2 ♗f7

56.♗d4 ♕f3 57.♕b1 ♕g2 58.♕f5 ♗d8 59.♕d3= ♕xd5 60.♗xd5 ♗xe5

61.♗xe5 ♗c7 62.♗d5 b6 63.axb6+ ♗xb6 64.♕xa6 ♗xa6 1/2-1/2

Summary: Obviously, without the queens on the board it is hard to tip the balance. White should have attacked with 8/12.b3!/?.

In any case, I think that during the opening Black should always keep his king in the centre (11...0-0-0!/?!) until there is an appropriate moment to castle. In this way he can still castle kingside after White's b2-b3 break, and profit from his superior queenside pawn structure.

GAME 6

□ Semen Dvoiris

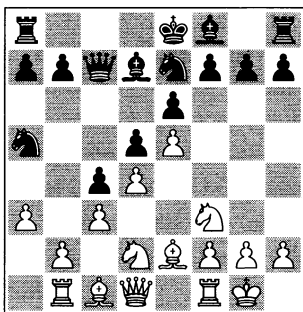
■ Rafael Vaganian

Izmir tt 2004 (7)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♖b6 5.♗f3 ♗c6 6.a3 c4 7.♗bd2! ♗a5! 8.♕e2

According to Sveshnikov, this development is more flexible than the fianchetto with $g3$ - $\text{♙}g2/\text{♙}h3$. The main plus of $\text{♙}e2$ is that it allows quick castling and the possibility of $\text{♞}b1$, $b2$ - $b3$ and $c3$ - $c4$. Unfortunately, $e2$ is not the perfect square for the bishop.

8...♙d7 9.0-0 ♞e7 10.♞b1 ♞c7!?

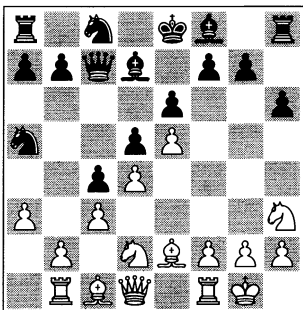


A very useful move. The black queen is acting as a submarine, eyeing $c3$ 'beneath the surface'.

11.♞h4

Semen Dvoiris applies the traditional method, preparing a possible $f2$ - $f4$.

Other knight moves are $11.\text{♞}g5$ $h6$ $12.\text{♞}h3$ $\text{♞}c8$ (equally good is $12...0-0-0!$? $13.\text{♞}f4$ $g6$ $14.\text{♞}e1$ $\text{♞}b8$ $15.\text{♙}f1$ $\text{♞}b3!$ $16.g3$ $\text{♙}a4 \rightleftharpoons$ Cardelli-Nill, corr 2003).



analysis diagram

This prepares the well-known manoeuvre $...♞b6$ - $\text{♙}a4$, for example: $13.\text{♞}f4$

$\text{♞}b6$ $14.\text{♞}f3$ $\text{♙}a4$ $15.\text{♞}d2$ $g6$ $16.h4$ $0-0-0$ $17.g3$ $\text{♙}e7$ with the possible break $...g6$ - $g5!$, Zude-Vaganian, Germany Bundesliga 2004/05.

In the event of $11.\text{♞}e1$ Black can apply the same idea: $11...♞c8!$? ($11...♞g6 \rightleftharpoons$) $12.\text{♞}f1$ $\text{♞}b6$ $13.\text{♙}f4$ ($13.\text{♞}d2$ $0-0-0$ $14.\text{♙}d1$ $\text{♙}a4$ $15.\text{♙}xa4$ $\text{♞}xa4$ $16.\text{♞}f4$ $\text{♞}b3$ $17.\text{♙}e3$ $h6 =$ Meinhardt-Akopian, Mainz 2007) $13...♞b3$ $14.\text{♞}e3$ $0-0-0$ $15.g3$ $\text{♙}c6$ $16.\text{♙}f1$ $\text{♞}b8$ $17.h4$ $\text{♞}a8$ $18.h5$ $h6$ $19.\text{♞}h4$ $\text{♙}e7$ $20.\text{♞}e2$ $\text{♞}dg8$ $21.\text{♙}e3$ $g6$ $22.\text{♞}h1$ $\text{♙}e8$ $23.\text{♙}e2$ $g5!$ $24.\text{♞}f3$ $\text{♞}d7$ $25.\text{♞}h2$ $f5$ $26.\text{exf6}$ $\text{♞}xf6$ —+ Korneev-Pogorelov, Collado Villalba 2000.

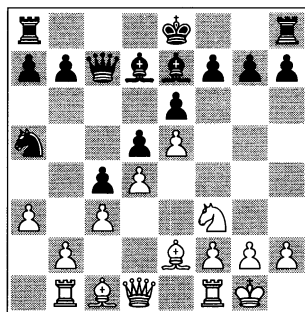
11...♞g6!?

An unexpected meeting of the kings' knights. At this point $11...0-0-0!$? is also playable: $12.g3$ (if $12.f4$ $\text{♞}g6$) $12...f6$ $13.f4$ $g5 \rightleftharpoons$.

12.♞df3

It seems that this plan is not too promising. But $12.\text{♞}xg6$ $hxg6$ $13.\text{♞}f3$ $\text{♞}b3$ $14.\text{♙}g5!$? (trying to exchange dark-squared bishops) $14...♙a4$ $15.\text{♞}e1$ $\text{♙}e7 =$ doesn't offer White much either.

12...♞xh4 13.♞xh4 ♙e7 14.♞f3



14...f5!?

Building a fortress in Dutch Stonewall style. Another strategic move is $14...h6!$?, preventing $\text{♙}g5$.

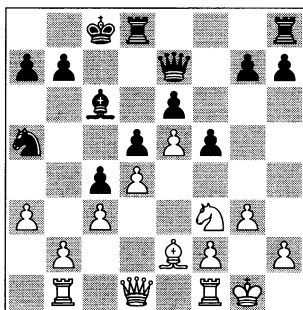
15. ♖g5

White has equalised, but the ‘moral’ advantage and the edge in space favour Black. 15.exf6?! gxf6 16.♖e1 0-0-0 would give Black a nice game.

15...♗c6 16.g3?!

16.♗xe7 ♖xe7 17.♘d2 ♘b3=.

16...0-0-0 17.♗xe7 ♖xe7



Black has completed his development and he now has some advantage: more space and greater piece activity.

18. ♘h4

Displaying something of an obsession in bringing his knights to h4. Either White underestimated the danger, or he didn't see a decent alternative.

18...g5! 19. ♘g2 f4!?

Vaganian immediately takes the opportunity to seize space on the kingside and take the initiative there.

20. ♖h1

20.gxf4 gxf4 21.♗g4 ♖df8↑ Δ ...♗e8-g6.

20...♖df8 21.♗h5 ♘b3 22.f3 ♗e8

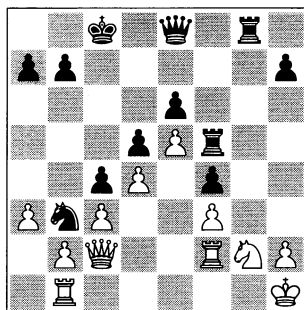
An even stronger option was to include 22...fxg3! 23.hxg3 ♗e8.

23.♗xe8 ♖xe8 24.gxf4

24.♖e2 fxg3 25.hxg3 h5→.

24...gxf4 25.♖f2 ♖hg8 26.♖c2 ♖f5

Black has excellent attacking chances, while White still has no real counterplay.



27. ♖g1 ♖fg5 28. ♖d1 ♖h5 29. ♖h1 ♖f5!?!-+ 0-1

In the Labyrinth System with 6...c4, you can also find your own paths. In the next game we see another idea for Black: the immediate break 9...f7-f6.

GAME 7

□ **Yury Lapshun**

■ **Viktor Moskalenko**

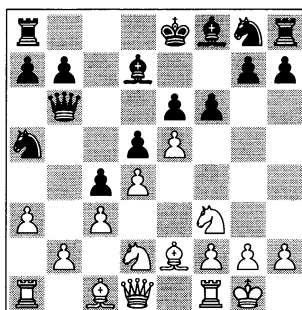
Banyoles 2007 (9)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♖b6 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.a3 c4 7.♘bd2 ♘a5

In my opinion, this reply is almost forced, see: 7...♖c7 8.b3! (8.♗e2 f6!?) 8...cxb3 9.♘xb3±.

For 7...f6!?! see Game 14.

8.♗e2 ♗d7 9.0-0 f6!?



An ultra-modern move order, mixing the blockade idea with that of the clas-

sic French break. The text prepares ... h6-f7 . 9... e7 is more usual (Games 4-6 and 13).

10. e1

A logical move. In this line, other moves lead to complex play:

A) 10. exf6 gxf6! 11. b1 0-0-0 12. b3 cxb3 13. xb3 a4! \rightleftharpoons Kosikov-S.Liukin, Kiev 2005;

B) 10. a4 0-0-0 (10... $\text{h6!?$) 11. b4 cxb3 12. b2 e7 13. c4 ec6 14. c1 e7 15. c3 b8 16. c5 c7 17. b5 g5! \rightleftharpoons Rytshagov-M.Socko, St Vincent 2001;

C) 10. b1 e7 11. b3 cxb3 12. c4 c7 13. c5 g6 14. exf6 gxf6 15. d3 f4 16. xb3 xd3 17. xd3 c6 18. e3 0-0-0 $\bar{\text{f}}$ G.Wall-N.Pert, London 2001.

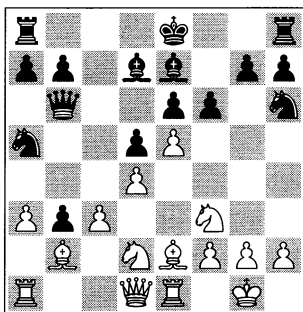
10... $\text{h6!?$

It would be premature to play 10...0-0-0 11. b1 Δ $\text{b3}\uparrow$.

11.b3

My opponent tries to open up the game. He should have prepared this advance with 11. $\text{b1!?$ and if 11... $\text{f7!?$ (11... e7 followed by ...0-0 is better) 12. b3 cxb3 13. c4! White has the initiative. Or, for instance: 11. f1 f7 12. g3 fxe5 13. xe5 xe5 14. xe5 d6 15. e1 0-0 $\bar{\text{f}}$ Mencinger-Rattinger, Latschach 2005.

11... cxb3 12. b2 e7!



Preparing an escape route for the king in the centre. The idea 13...0-0 is the

correct plan after b2-b3. 12... $\text{c8!?$ is also possible.

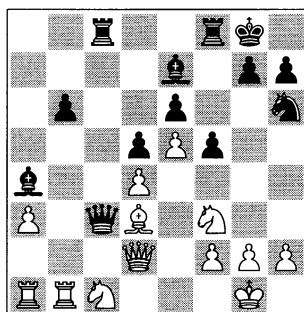
13.c4 0-0! \rightleftharpoons 14. d3 ac8

14... $\text{a6!?$.

15.c5 c7 16. c3 f5

Black finally closes the centre. 16... $\text{c6!?$ was another option.

17. xa5 xa5 18. xb3 c7 19. d2 a4 20. eb1 b6 21. cxb6 axb6 22. c1 $\text{c3}\uparrow$



After the exchange of queens the game is played in just one half of the board, and it isn't mine!

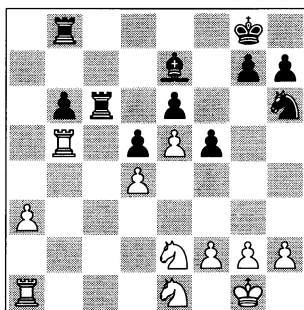
23. xc3 xc3 24. e1

24. xb6 was possible, but after 24... fc8! 25. bb1 xa3 26. e1 xc1 27. xa3 xb1 28. xb1 $\text{c4!?$ $\bar{\text{f}}$ (worse is 28... c1 29. $\text{f1}=\text{}$) Black keeps pressing.

24... b8

Or 24... $\text{c6!?$.

25. e2 c6 26. b5 xb5 27. xb5 $\bar{\text{f}}$



A typical French ending. The white pawns on a3 and d4 are significant weaknesses.

27...♖bc8

27...♖a8♭ was better.

28.a4 ♖d8 29.♗f1 ♗f7 30.♘d3 ♖a8

31.♗e1 ♘g8 32.♗d2 ♘e7 33.♖b3

♖cc8 34.♖c3 ♖c4!

White's pieces are very passive.

35.♖xc4 dxc4 36.♘b4 b5 37.♗c2

bx4 38.♘c3 a3 39.♖a2 ♖b6! 40.♘b1

♖a4!

0-1

The b4 knight is lost.

Summary of the line with 8.♖e2: In the variation with 6...c4 it is perhaps better to wait before playing 9...f6 and activate the minor pieces first. In practice, however, Black obtains very good results with this classic break.

In the following game ♖e2 and 0-0 are combined with the advance h2-h4-h5.

GAME 8

□ **Alexander Shabalov**

■ **Varuzhan Akobian**

Philadelphia 2004 (4)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♖b6

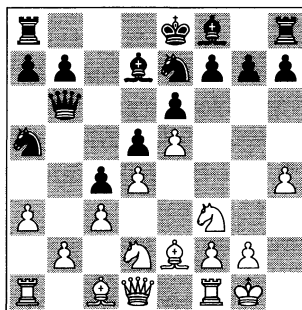
5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.a3 c4 7.♘bd2

Or also 7.h4 ♖d7 (7...f6!?) 8.h5 f6!, replying with action in the centre.

For example: 9.♖e2 ♘a5 (9...fxe5! was stronger, see 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♖c5 12.♘d2 ♘h6!?) with a clear initiative for Black) 10.♖f4 ♘b3 11.♖a2 0-0-0⇒ Djuric-Vaganian, Bled 1991.

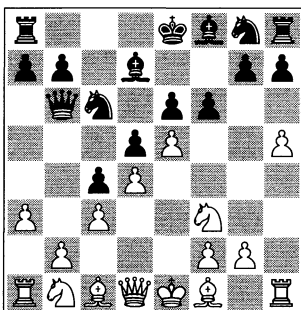
7...♘a5 8.h4

A weird move. In the French Defence this attacking method works better in the Winawer Variation (see Part Four). I have encountered a similar idea: 8.♖e2 ♖d7 9.0-0 ♘e7 10.h4?!.

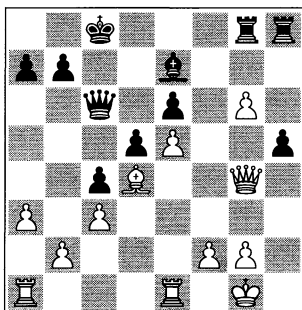


analysis diagram

After kingside castling this move is dubious: 10...♘ec6 11.♖e1 f6!⇒ (this break is very good against h2-h4 in almost all cases) 12.♖d1 0-0-0 (12...♖c7!?) 13.♖c2 ♖c7 14.♖e2 fxe5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.dxe5 h6! (preparing the ...g7-g5 push) 17.♘f3 ♖e7 18.♖e1 ♖df8 19.h5 ♘c6 20.♖g6 ♖e8 21.♖xe8 ♖xe8 22.♖e3 ♖eg8! 23.♘d4 ♘xd4 24.♖xd4 g6 25.♖g4 ♖c6 26.hxg6 h5!→



analysis diagram



analysis diagram

Black has a decisive initiative on the kingside.

27. ♖h3 ♜xg6 28. ♞e2? ♞hg8 29. f3 h4
30. ♜f1 ♞g3 31. ♖h1 ♗e8 32. ♞f2
♗g6 0-1 Parmentier-Moskalenko,
Banyoles 2005.

8...♙d7 9.h5?!

White insists on his dangerous strategy based on the march of the h-pawn. 9.g3!? would revert to the fianchetto lines.

9...f5!?

This advance enables Black to gain space.

10.♞b1

If 10. exf6?! gxf6! 11. ♞b1 e5! and Black seizes the initiative. For instance: 12. dxe5?! 0-0-0! 13. ♙e2 ♙f5 14. ♞a1 fxe5 15. ♜xe5 ♜f6 16. ♜f7? ♞e8 ♞.

10...♜h6

The knight can take a safe trip to f7 and prepare ...g7-g5.

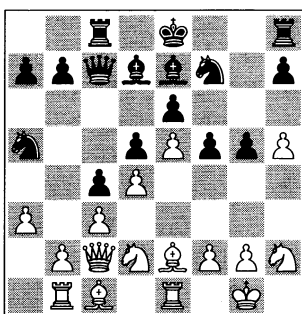
11.♙e2 ♙e7 12.0-0 ♞c8

Preventing b2-b3, White's only threat. Another option was 12... ♗c7!?.

13.♞e1 ♜f7! 14.♗c2 ♗c7 15.♜h2

Now it is hard to find useful moves.

15...g5!?!↑



The f- and g-pawns will be heavy weaponry in the impending attack against White's fortress.

16.♜hf1 g4 17.♜e3 ♜g5 18.♗d1

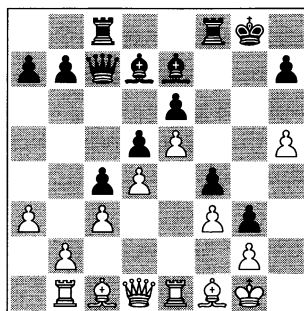
This move signifies that the white pieces are in complete zugzwang.

**18...♜b3 19.♙f1 ♜xd2 20.♙xd2 ♜e4
21.♙c1 g3 22.f3 ♜f2 23.♗c2 0-0!—+**

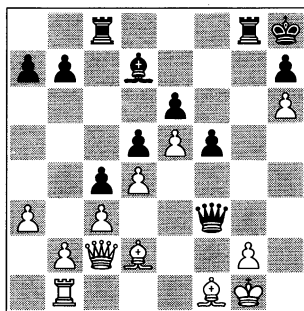
Black completes his development, with a quick win in sight.

24.♙e2

If 24. ♜d1 the simple 24... ♜xd1 25. ♗xd1 f4! decides matters, threatening mate in a few moves with ... ♗d8-e8-h5-h2.



**24...♗d8 25.♞f1 ♜h8 26.♙d2 ♞g8
27.♞xf2 gxf2+ 28.♜xf2 ♙h4+
29.♜g1 ♙g3 30.♜f1 ♗h4 31.♜xg3
♗xg3 32.♙f1 ♗xf3 33.h6**



The last of three 'aggressive' moves by the American grandmaster in this game (h4-h5-h6).

**33...♞g6 34.♞e1 ♞cg8 35.♙c1 ♙a4
36.♗d2 ♗g4 37.♗f2 ♗h5 38.♙f4
♞g4 39.♞e3 ♞h4 40.♗f3 ♞h1+
41.♜f2 ♞g4 0-1**

It is clear that Shabalov's plan, spending two tempi with the h-pawn in order to send it nowhere, is not very useful. The rest of the white army was not able to become active and Black comfortably prepared his counterattack on the kingside, by pushing his f- and g-pawns. Petrosian rarely attacked his opponents directly. At first he would focus on not allowing them too much counterplay, and then he would take advantage of their mistakes. Combinations, sacrifices and tactics could wait. The Tiger always attacked from the barricades!

The following game is an excellent example, indicating the best path to follow in this line.

GAME 9

□ Peter Clarke

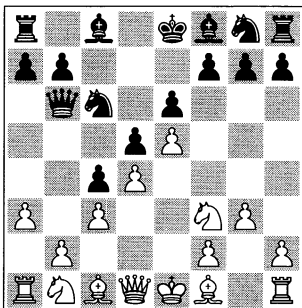
■ Tigran V Petrosian

Munich ol 1958 (8)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♖b6
5.♟f3 ♘c6 6.a3 c4

This blockading move brought Tigran Petrosian, the seventh World Champion, several outstanding strategic victories, and it certainly suited his style.

7.g3



White prepares the classical fianchetto. I think that inserting 7.♘bd2! is better, forcing 7...♟a5! or 7...f6!?.

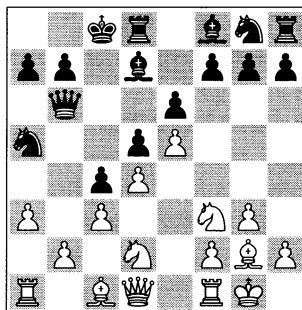
7...♟d7

7...f6!? is an interesting try, see Game 14.

8.♟g2 0-0-0

8...f6!?⇒ was still possible. 8...♟a5 would transpose into the usual positions: 9.♘bd2 ♘e7 10.0-0 f5!? (or 10...h6 11.♞b1 ♖c7 12.♞e1 ♘c8 13.♘f1 ♘b6 14.♘e3 0-0-0⇒ Havranek-Prandstetter, Decin 1996) 11.exf6 (11.♘g5!?) 11...gxf6 12.♘h4 0-0-0! 13.♞h5?! (13.f4? e5♣) 13...♟e8 14.♞e2 ♘g6 (14...♟g7!? 15.♟h3 ♟d7 16.♞e1 e5♣) 15.♘df3 ♟f7 (≥ 15...♘b3 16.♞b1 ♟f7♣) 16.♟e3 ♟b8!? Black retains the better chances in the centre, Golod-Finkel, Ramat Aviv/Modiin ch-ISR 2000.

9.0-0 ♟a5 10.♘bd2



10...h6!

Or 10...♟b8 11.♘g5!? Δ 12.f4.

11.♞e1

In the Labyrinth System, two useful manoeuvres are: ♞e1, to face ...f7-f6, and ♞b1, preparing b2-b3.

11...♘e7 12.♘f1 ♘f5 13.♘e3

13.g4 ♘e7 14.♞b1 ♘g6⇒.

13...♘xe3

Simplification tends to favour Black in this line.

14.♞xe3

Worse would be 14.fxe3?! f5! Δ 15.exf6 gxf6 16.e4 dxe4 17.♞xe4 e5!↑. How-

ever, 14. ♖xe3 was possible: 14... ♟b3 (14... ♖xb2? 15. ♖b1♖) 15. ♖b1 ♖e7⇌.

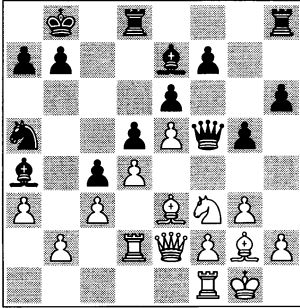
14... ♖e7 15. ♖e1 ♖b3! 16. ♖e2

16. ♖xb3 ♟xb3 △ b5, a5, b4→.

16... ♖a4 17. ♖e3 ♟b8

Planning the manoeuvre ... ♖c8-c6-b6, pressing on b2. 17... ♖c2!?! was also possible.

18. ♖ad1! ♖c2 19. ♖d2 ♖f5 20. ♖f1 g5!→



The Tiger starts one of his famous counterattacks, this time with his g- and h-pawns.

21. h3 h5 22. ♟h2 ♖dg8 23. g4?

The blockade does not work. 23. f4 g4 24. h4 would have left White without counterplay.

23... ♖g6 24. ♖f3

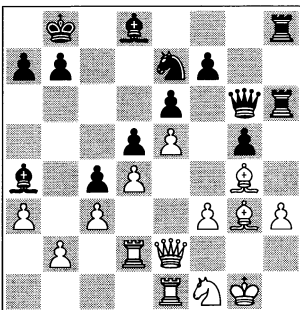
24. f4 gxf4 25. ♖xf4 hxg4 26. ♟xg4 ♖g7⇌.

24... hxg4 25. ♖xg4 ♟c6! 26. f3

26. ♟h1 with the idea of 27. f4 was slightly better.

26... ♖d8 27. ♖f2 ♟e7 28. ♖e1 ♖h6

29. ♟f1 ♖gh8 30. ♖g3



30... ♖xh3!-+

A well-prepared sacrifice which destroys the enemy's fortress.

31. ♖xh3 ♖xh3 32. ♖g2 ♖h7 33. ♟e3 ♟g6

The white pieces cannot protect their king. 34... g4 and 35... ♖g5 will be next.

34. ♟g4 ♟f4 35. ♖xf4 gxf4 36. ♟f1 ♖g3 37. ♖f2

Or 37. ♖h2 ♖xf3+ 38. ♖f2 ♖h3 39. ♖xf4 ♖h1+ 40. ♟e2 ♖d3 mate.

37... ♖h3+ 38. ♟e2 ♖g2 39. ♖g1 ♖xf2+ 40. ♟xf2 ♖h7 41. ♖h1 ♖g6 0-1

A classic game, in which Petrosian demonstrated a good set-up for Black, with his active pieces combining well with the march of the g- and h-pawn pair.

In the next game an Azeri grandmaster found the best way to meet the 'Armenian Fianchetto' (a bit of politics!).

GAME 10

□ **Sergei Movsesian**

■ **Teimour Radjabov**

Sarajevo 2002 (6)

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 ♟c6

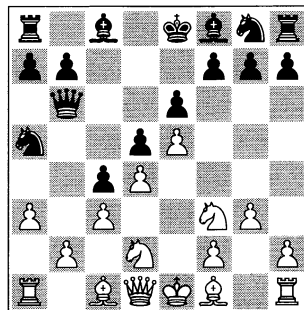
5. ♟f3 ♖b6 6. a3 c4 7. ♟bd2

7. g3 ♖d7 8. ♖h3 ♖e7 9. 0-0 h5

10. ♖e2 ♟a5 11. ♖g5 ♟b3⇌

Hermann-Van der Wiel, Bochum 1981.

7... ♟a5 8. g3



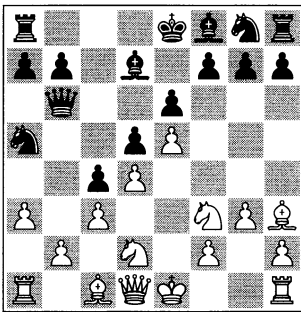
8...♗d7!

In many variations of the French Defence the most natural plan for Black is to complete the development of his queenside, while White castles kingside.

8...f5 is too hasty. Portisch waited until move 10 before playing this advance – see the next game. 9.♘g5!? gives White a slight initiative.

However, 8...h6 is possible: 9.♘h4 ♗d7 10.♘g2 0-0-0 11.♗e3?! Malaniuk-G.Kuzmin, Nikolaev Zonal 1995, and now, the best move is 11...f6! 12.f4 g5!⇒.

9.♗h3



This way of developing the bishop, employed by several Armenian masters, is quite odd and could be called the ‘Armenian Fianchetto’. The most natural option is to play 9.h4 first. This we will call the ‘Austrian Fianchetto’ and it will feature in Games 11 and 12.

9...♗e7!

The most efficient defence, preventing ♘g5 and preparing ...g5 and ...h5.

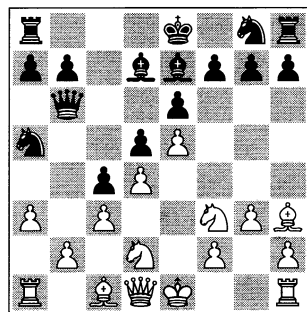
A) Petrosian’s old way of playing in typical ‘Labyrinth fashion’ would be 9...♗e7 10.0-0 g6!? (10...h6!? 11.♖b1 ♗ec6 12.♗e1 ♗e7 with scope for creative play, Pinter-Farago, Budapest ch-HUN 1976) 11.♖b1 h6 12.♗h4

0-0-0 13.♘g2 ♗b8 14.♗e3 ♖c8 15.♘g4 ♗g7 16.♗g2 ½-½ I.Zaitsev-T.V.Petrosian, Sochi 1977;

B) Things do not change much after 9...h6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♖e1 (11.♗e1 0-0-0 12.♘g2 ♗b8 13.♖b1= Lobron-Hjartarson, Manila izt 1990; 11.♘h4 ♗ec6 12.f4 0-0-0⇒ Psakhis-Farago, Banja Luka 1985) 11...0-0-0 12.♖b1 ♗b8=, when Black can be happy with the outcome of the opening;

C) The most complicated move order is 9...0-0-0 10.0-0 h6 11.♗e1 h5! 12.♘df3 ♗b3 13.♖b1 ♗xc1 (13...f6!?⇒) 14.♖xc1 ♗a4 15.♘g5 ♗h6 16.f4 g6 (16...h4!↑) 17.♘g2 ♗e7 with equal chances, Motylev-Balashov, Ekaterinburg tt 2002;

D) Again, 9...f5?! is too hasty: 10.exf6 gxf6 11.0-0 (11.♗e5 fxe5 12.♖h5+ ♗e7 13.♖g5+ ♗f7=) 11...0-0-0 12.♖b1 ♗g7 13.♖e1 ♗h6 14.b3! cxb3 15.♘xb3 ♖de8 16.♗xh6 ♗xh6 17.♗c5 ♖c6 18.c4!→ Sveshnikov-Simon Padros, Calvia 2007.



10.0-0

Castling followed by ♗e1 looks the most solid. Another Armenian grandmaster unsuccessfully tried 10.♖b1 h5! 11.0-0 (11.♗g2 h4 12.h3 hxg3 13.fxg3 ♗h6 14.g4 0-0-0

Etchegaray-Apicella, Nantes ch-FRA 1993) 11...♙b5!?

Now Psakhis comments: ‘Black wants to stop b2-b3 while preparing the typical manoeuvre ♖c6 and ♙a4. In anticipation of the coming ♘e1 Black is ready to answer ...♘b3! although maybe 11...g5!? would be good enough; 12.♘e1 0-0-0 13.♙g2 ♘h6 14.♖e2 ♙a4! 15.b4 cxb3 16.♘d3 g4 17.♗e1 ♖b8—+ Stilling-Van Manen, corr 1990. 12.a4?! stops Black’s plan, but the a4-pawn will become a real target: 12...♙c6♣ 13.♗e1 g5!? 14.♙f1 (14.g4? does not work due to 14...♘h6) 14...g4 15.♘h4 ♙xh4 16.gxh4 ♘e7. There is a strong threat: ♘e7-f5-h4, Art. Minasian-Kortchnoi, Ohrid Ech 2001, but I prefer 16...♖d8!♣ winning the h4-pawn at once.’

10...h5!?

This advance reveals the disadvantages of the plan with ♙h3 without the preliminary h2-h4. Now Black threatens ...h4 or ...g5-g4.

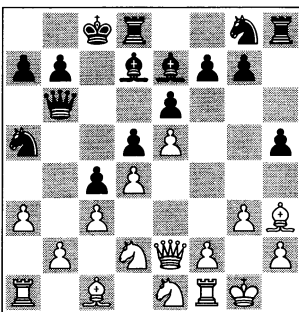
11.♖e2

Or 11.♘e1 g5! Δ 12.f4? g4 13.♙g2 ♘h6♣.

11...0-0-0♣

Or 11...g5!?

12.♘e1



This is a key moment in the opening.

12...g6?!

This weak move allows White to block the kingside. 12...g5! was much stronger, with a clear initiative for Black.

13.f4

Now the position is balanced.

13...♘h6 14.♘df3 ♘b3 15.♗b1 ♘xc1 16.♗xc1 ♗dg8 17.♘g5 ♖d8 18.♖d2 b5 19.♘c2 ♖b8 20.♗b1 ♖c7 21.♘b4 ♖a8 22.♗a1 a5 23.♘c2 ♗b8 24.♗fb1 ♗b6 25.♙g2 ♖b8 26.♙f3 1/2-1/2

Summary: The ‘Armenian fianchetto’ with ♙h3 and without h2-h4 must be incorrect. According to strategic rules, the bishop is better placed behind its pawns.

Theory giant grandmaster Lajos Portisch (1937) always demonstrated a fine knowledge of the French Defence.

GAME 11

□ **Josef Klingler**

■ **Lajos Portisch**

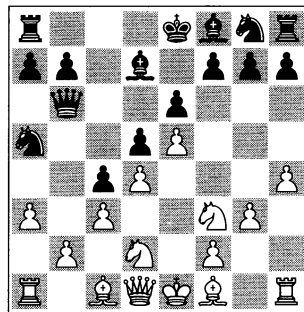
Dubai ol 1986 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.c3 e6 3.d4 d5 4.e5 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♖b6 6.a3 c4

In the 1950s Portisch often used the idea of 6...♘h6 (see Chapter 1).

7.g3 ♙d7 8.♘bd2 ♘a5 9.h4

Perhaps, this preparatory advance is more effective than the direct 9.♙h3.



9...0-0-0!?

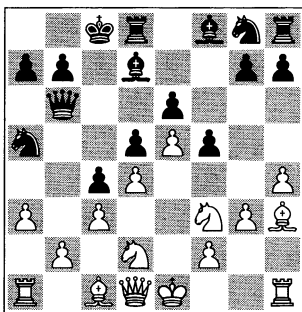
Now queenside castling is logical. White has spent two tempi on g3 and h4. For continuations such as 9...f6 see Game 12. Another original manoeuvre is 9...♖c6 with the idea ...♗a4, see the comments to Game 15. If immediately 9...f5?!, 10.♘g5! will cause trouble.

10.♗h3

This looks natural, but it is still difficult to assess whether this is the best square for the bishop. 10.h5?! is an absurd move. We already know that the march of the h-pawn only weakens White's position: 10...♘h6! 11.♗h3 f6 (11...f5!?) 12.♖e2 ♘f7 13.0-0 f5!♣. In the game Maslak-Asrian, Moscow 2007, after constructing the 'Portisch-Stonewall' (see the main game), Black won by preparing a typical attack with ...g7-g6-g5.

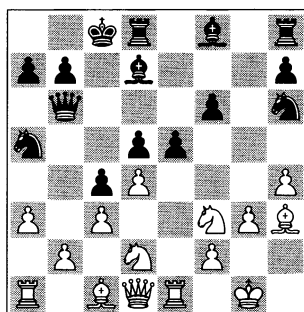
10...f5!?

This is Portisch's plan: an aggressive break in the spirit of the Dutch Defence. The bishop on h3 will face a 'stonewall'! More common was 10...♘e7 11.0-0 h6 12.♖b1 (12.♖e2 ♘ec6 13.h5 ♗e7 14.♗e1 ♖dg8 15.♘f1 ♘b3 16.♖b1 g6! 17.hxg6 ♖xg6 18.♙h2 h5 with the initiative for Black on the kingside, Flugzeug-CapNemo, playchess.com 2007) 12...♙b8∞ with a satisfactory position, Sax-Knaak, Szirak 1985.



11.0-0

The critical moment in this line. Logically, the bishop on h3 should aid White in the fight against f6 or f5, by attacking the h3-c8 diagonal. But bad now is 11.exf6?! gxf6! 12.0-0 ♘h6 13.♖e1 e5! (for 13...♗g7, see Game 13)



analysis diagram

with a strong initiative for Black, who controls the greater part of the board: after 14.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 15.♖e2 ♘f5 16.♖c2 e4 17.♘e1 ♖g8 18.♘g2 ♗d6 he has a great advantage, Jonkman-Lemos, Pinamar 2006.

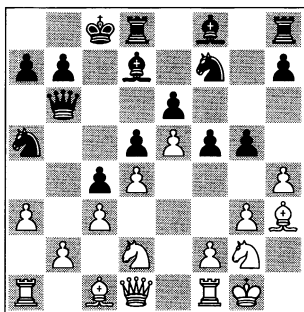
11...♘h6!

Preparing ...♘f7 and ...g7-g5.

12.♘e1!?

A dubious manoeuvre. A more tense continuation for both sides is 12.♘g5 ♗e7 13.♖b1 ♘b3!? 14.♘xb3 ♗a4⇝ with excellent possibilities for Black.

12...♘f7 13.♘g2 g5!→



After only a few moves Black has achieved a very promising position. As in Game 8, the f- and g-pawns start an assault on the white king's fortress.

14.hxg5 ♖xg5 15.♟f4 ♜xh3+!

Exchanging White's best piece.

16.♟xh3 ♙e7 17.♞b1

White's counterplay is clearly too slow.

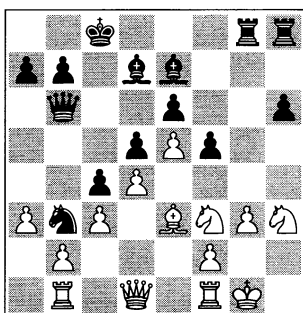
17...♞dg8!

The second phase of the game begins: converting the advantage.

18.♟f3 h6!

Controlling the g5-point.

19.♙e3 ♜b3



At the moment the knight on b3 blocks the queenside, but later it will have to return through the 'labyrinth': ...♟b3-a5-c6-d8-f7-g5.

19...♞d8!??

20.♟g2 ♞d8!

The black queen helps her musketeers! As in several other games in this chapter, Black prepares a decisive attack on the kingside.

21.♞h1 h5! 22.♞e2 h4—+

The rest is a matter of style and taste.

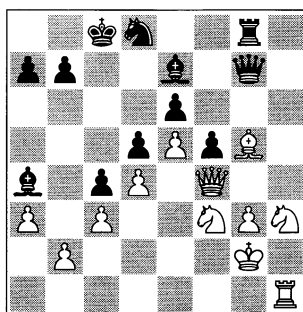
23.♟f4 ♞e8 24.♞h3 hxg3 25.fxg3

♞xh3 26.♟xh3 ♞g6 27.♙f4 ♟a5

28.♞h1 ♟c6 29.♞e3 ♟d8 30.♙g5

♞g7 31.♞f4 ♙a4!

Portisch releases the genie from the bottle!



This is a classic example of a successful game, with the ♙c8 traversing the route c8-d7-a4-c2-e4.

32.♙xe7 ♞xe7 33.♞h6 ♙c2! 34.♟f4
♙e4 35.♟h5 ♟f7 36.♞f6 ♞d7 37.♟f4
♟g5 38.♞h8 ♙xf3+ 39.♟f1 ♞xh8
40.♞xh8+ ♞d8 0-1

A model game by the Hungarian grandmaster. White's strategy (the fianchetto g3-h4-♙h3) was refuted with great elegance. The key moves of the 'Portisch Stonewall' are 9...0-0-0, 10...f5! and then an attack with the kingside pawns.

Perhaps in this case the best square for the f1-bishop is e2 or g2.

More ideas with g3-h4:

GAME 12

□ **Vasily Ivanchuk**

■ **Evgeny Bareev**
Monaco blind 2003 (11)

1.e4 e6

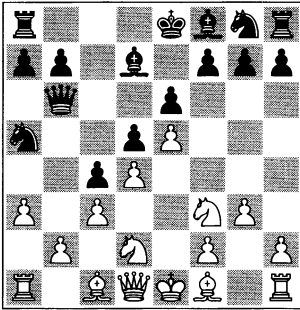
An old favourite of Evgeny Bareev, who by this time had already switched to the Caro-Kann, with which he is now so familiar.

2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♟c6 5.♟f3 ♞b6
6.a3 c4 7.♟bd2 ♟a5 8.g3

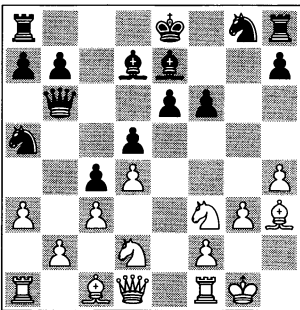
Quite rare is 8.g4 h5!? 9.gxh5 ♞xh5
10.h4 ♞h8 11.♟g5 ♙e7 12.♞f3

♟h6 13.♖g1 ♕d7 14.♕h3 0-0-0!
15.♜xf7 ♜xf7 16.♚xf7 ♕xh4♣
Kseroks-CapNemo, playchess.com
2007.

8...♕d7



Equally good would be 8...♕e7!? 9.h4
♕d7 10.♕h3 f5, similar to the previ-
ous game (or, for instance,
10...0-0-0!? 11.0-0 f5 12.exf6 gxf6
13.♖e1 e5! 14.♕xd7+ ♖xd7 15.dxe5
♕c5 16.♚e2 fxe5 17.♜xe5 ♖g7♞
Sprinkhuizen-Hyldkrog, cr 1985-89)
11.exf6 (if 11.♜g5!? Black has the
good reply 11...♜h6!?, and now
12.♚h5+ does not work because of
12...g6! 13.♚xh6? ♕f8, when the
white queen has no retreat) 11...gxf6
12.0-0



analysis diagram

12...h5 (preparing the manoeuvre
...♜h6-g4, but 12...0-0-0!? was also

good) 13.♖e1 ♜h6!♞, Grischuk-
Kortchnoi, Biel 2001.

Psakhis comments: ‘Grischuk has won
many games in the Advance Variation,
but in this case he meets with one of
the greatest experts of the French De-
fence.’

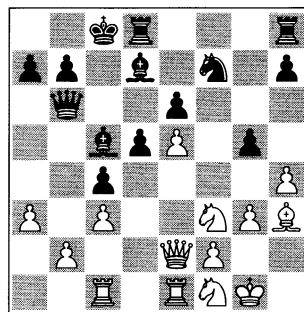
9.h4

White has spent two tempi on the ad-
vance of his g- and h-pawns.

9...♜e7!

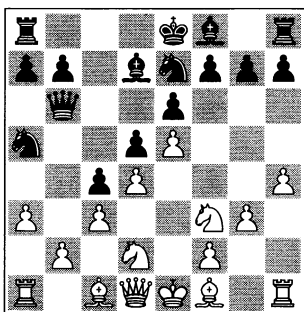
This is a typical, flexible manoeuvre in
these positions, keeping four possible
jumps for the knight: ...♜c6/c8/g6/f5.
In the previous game Portisch played
9...0-0-0!

The other logical option is to counterat-
tack in the centre immediately: 9...f6!?
10.♕h3 (with 10.exf6 White can force
a draw: 10...gxf6 11.♜e5!? fxe5
12.♚h5+ ♜e7 13.♚g5+ ♜f7=)
10...♜h6 11.0-0 ♜f7 12.♖e1 0-0-0
13.♜f1?! fxe5 14.dxe5 ♜xe5
15.♖xe5 ♕d6 16.♖e2 ♖de8♣)
14...♜b3 15.♖b1 (15.♕e3 ♕c5♣)
15...♕c5 16.♚e2 ♜xc1 17.♖bxc1 g5!↑



analysis diagram

18.h5 g4 19.♕xg4 ♖hg8 20.♕h3 ♖df8
(20...♜g5!-+) 21.♜e3 ♜g5 22.♜xg5
♖xg5 with a winning initiative for
Black, Lapshun-Moskalenko, Banyoles
2006.

**10.g5**

A slow attempt to improve the knight's position. But the popular alternatives on the Internet don't offer too much:

A) 10.♖b1 ♘ec6 11.♙h3 ♙e7 (11...♗c7 12.0-0 h6 13.♘h2 ♙e7 14.f4 0-0-0 15.f5? exf5 16.♙xf5 ♙xf5 17.♖xf5 f6 ♣ Gemini-CapNemo, playchess.com 2006) 12.0-0 0-0!? (12...♗c7 13.♘h2 0-0-0 14.f4 f5 15.♘hf3 h6 16.g4?! fxg4 17.♙xg4 g6 18.♖f2 ♖df8 ♣ Stevic-Moskalenko, playchess.com 2006) 13.b4? (13.♘h2 f6 14.exf6 ♙xf6 15.♘g4 ♙e7 ♣ Stevic-Moskalenko, playchess.com 2006) 13...cxb3 14.♘xb3 ♘xb3 15.♖xb3 ♗c7 ♣ Bregadze-Moskalenko, playchess.com 2006;

B) 10.♙e2 ♘ec6 11.0-0 ♙e7 12.h5 h6 13.♙g2 0-0-0 14.♘h2 f6 15.f4 ♖dg8 ♣ Panarin-Moskalenko, playchess.com 2006;

C) 10.♙h3 ♘ec6 (10...h6!? 11.♖b1 ♘ec6 12.♘f1 ♙e7 13.h5 ♘b3 14.♙f4 0-0-0 15.♘e3 ♘ba5 16.0-0 ♖dg8 17.♘h2 ♗d8 18.♗f3 g5 19.hxg6 fxg6 20.♘g2 g5 21.♙e3 h5 22.g4 ♖f8 23.♗e2 ♗e8 24.♘e1 ♗g6 25.♙g2 ♗xb1 0-1 BenoitP08-CapNemo, playchess.com) 11.0-0 ♙e7 12.♘h2 0-0-0 13.♖e1 h6 14.h5 ♖dg8 15.♖b1 (15.♘g4?! ♗d8 16.♖b1 g6 17.hxg6 ♖xg6 18.♘e3 h5 → Poisseroux-

Moskalenko, playchess.com 2007) 15...♗d8 16.♘df1 g6 17.hxg6 fxg6 18.♘e3 h5 19.♘g2 g5 → BenoitP08-CapNemo, playchess.com 2007.

10...h6 11.♘h3 0-0-0!

Bareev continues his development without wasting any tempi.

12.♘f4

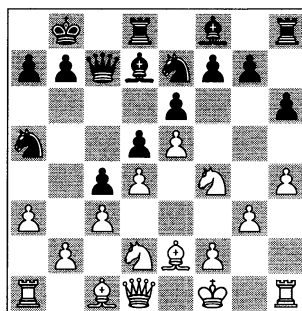
12.♗f3 can be met with the interesting 12...f6! (12...♘f5!?) 13.exf6 gxf6 14.♗xf6 ♖g8↑.

12...♙b8 13.♙e2?!

Ivanchuk keeps trying to solve this jigsaw puzzle blindfolded!

13...♗c7

This was a good chance to seize the initiative with 13...f6! 14.♘f3 ♙e8!?!.

14.♙f1**14...♘c8!?**

With the idea of playing ...♘b6/♙a4. Breaking with 14...f6! ♣ was another correct plan.

15.♙h5 g6 16.♙e2 ♘b6 17.♗e1 ♙a4 18.♙g2 ♗c6 19.♙d1 ♙e7 20.♖b1 ♙xd1 21.♗xd1 ♣ 1/2-1/2

After exchanging ♙c8x♙f1, Black is better (21...g5!?).

Summary of Games 11 and 12: It seems that the fianchetto with g3 and h4 does not prevent Black from successfully completing his plans.

We conclude the study of the ‘Labyrinth System’ by investigating the idea of the immediate break ...f7-f6, in several games of an expert on the French Defence, Wolfgang Uhlmann.

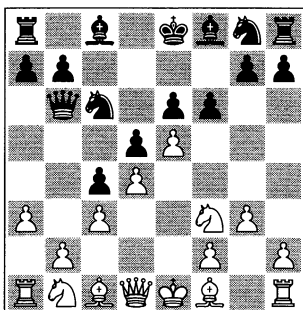
GAME 13

□ Vladimir Malaniuk
 ■ Wolfgang Uhlmann
 Tallinn 1987 (3)

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6
 5.♟f3 ♖b6 6.a3 c4 7.g3**

This fianchetto, without the moves 7.♘bd2 ♘a5, allows a direct counter-thrust in the centre.


7...f6!



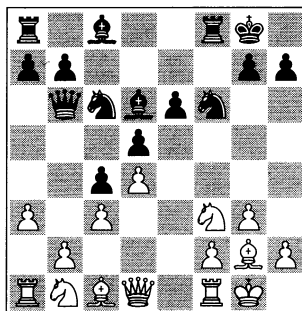
This classical French break is also Uhlmann’s favourite weapon. Petrosian and Portisch preferred the closed line 7...♙d7, playing on the flanks – see Games 9 and 11. Uhlmann’s plan is applicable after 7.♘bd2 f6!?, as we will see in Game 14.

8.♙h3

Similar to the ‘fianchetto Armenio’.

 **WEAPON:** Not 8.♘h4?! fxe5!
 9.♖h5+ g6 10.♘xg6 ♟f6 11.♖h4
 ♜g8!± and Black seizes the initiative.

Here are a few examples from Uhlmann’s experience with the line 8.exf6 ♘xf6! (Black is also OK after 8...gxf6!?) 9.♙g2 ♙d6 10.0-0 0-0.



analysis diagram

11.♖e2 (there is no time to play 11.♘bd2 e5! 12.dxe5 ♙xe5! 13.♘xe5? ♘xe5↑ Przewoznik-Uhlmann, POL-DDR, Zakopane 1980) 11...♙h8?! (a key moment. A more effective plan would have been to activate the queen with 11...♖b3!? or 11...♖c7, with excellent counterplay. An unclear line is 11...♙d7 12.♘e5 ♙e8 13.♘xc4! ♘xd4□ 14.cxd4 dxc4∞ C.Alexander-Uhlmann, Munich Olympiad 1958) 12.♘e5 ♙xe5 13.dxe5 ♘d7 14.♙e3 ♘c5 15.♘d2 ♖a5 16.f4 ♙d7 17.♙xc5 (or 17.♞ad1± Sax-Uhlmann, Sarajevo 1982) 17...♖xc5+ 18.♖f2 ♖xf2+ 19.♞xf2 g5!± as played in C.Alexander-Uhlmann in the finals of the Munich Olympiad. The line with 11...♙d7 was tried earlier by Uhlmann, in the preliminaries.

8...fxe5!

The main idea of 7...f6 is to open up the game in Black’s favour.

9.♘xe5

White is worse in the line 9.dxe5 ♙c5 10.0-0 ♘ge7 11.♘bd2 0-0 12.♖e2 ♙d7 13.♞b1 ♘a5± Dückstein-Uhlmann, Baden bei Wien 1961.

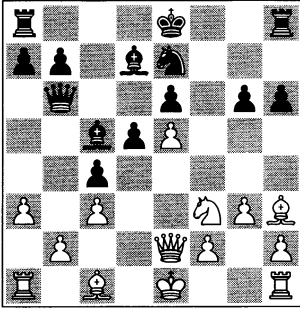
9...♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♙c5

This looks natural. Another option is 10...♘e7!?, activating the knight first.

11.♖h5+ g6 12.♖e2 ♔d7 13.♘d2
♘e7 14.♘f3 h6!?

This move always protects the dark squares.

Another idea is 14...0-0-0 15.♙g5
♞df8 16.♙f6 ♞hg8∞.



15.0-0 0-0-0

15...♘f5!? was more flexible, aiming to meet 16.g4 with 16...♘e7, achieving a superior pawn structure.

16.♞e1?

White could have gained equality with 16.♙e3.

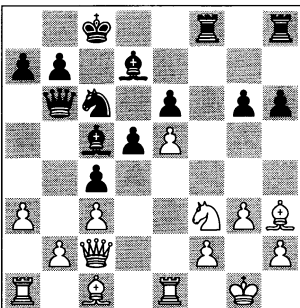
16...♘c6

16...♘f5!?♞ was better.

17.♖c2?

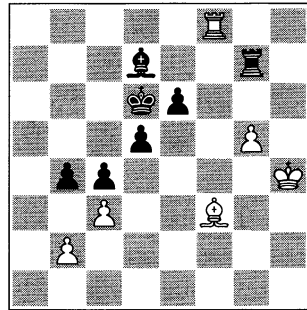
A hasty manoeuvre. 17.♙e3 was still the only defence.

17...♞df8↑



Now Black is clearly better and he keeps the advantage until the end of the game.

18.♙g2 g5! 19.♙e3 ♞f5 20.♙xc5
♞xc5 21.h3 ♞hf8 22.♞e3 h5! 23.♞f1
g4 24.hxg4 hxg4 25.♘h2 ♞xf2!?
26.♞xf2 ♖xe3 27.♘xg4 ♖e1+ 28.♙f1
♞g8 29.♖e2 ♖xe2 30.♙xe2 ♞g5
31.♞f8+ ♘c7 32.♘f2 b5 33.♘e3 ♘xe5
34.♘xe5 ♞xe5+ 35.♘f2 ♞g5 36.♙f3
a5 37.g4 ♘d6 38.♘g3 ♞g7 39.♘h4 b4
40.axb4 axb4 41.g5♞ 1/2-1/2



The draw in this position is a gift to White.

Summary of Uhlmann’s plan: The immediate 7.g3 f6! offers dynamic play. Black’s idea is to open up the centre in order to exploit the weaknesses created by g2-g3. However, I am not sure that this is absolutely necessary. Logically, the main idea behind 6...c4 is to play with a closed centre, at least until the end of the opening.

In the variation with 6...c4 it is perhaps better to wait before playing ...f7-f6 and develop the minor pieces first.

GAME 14

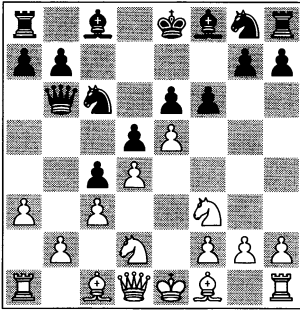
□ Alexander Grischuk

■ Yannick Pelletier

Biel 2001 (4)

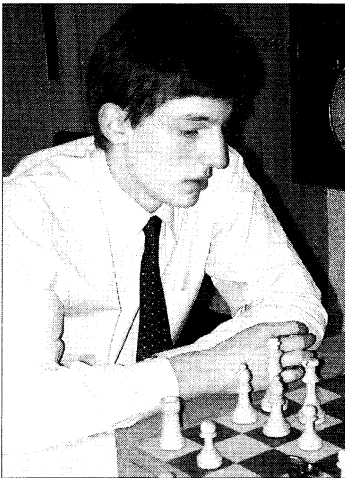
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6
5.♘f3 ♖b6 6.a3 c4 7.♘bd2 f6

Black does not play the usual 7...♘a5, but instead exerts pressure on the centre. It's not clear at this point who will profit from the immediate opening of the centre.



8.♙e2!

The best reply. After castling White will be ready to engage in action in the centre. 8.g3?! is similar to the previous game: 8...fxe5! 9.♘xe5 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♙c5 11.♙h5+ g6 12.♙e2 ♘e7 13.♙g2 ♙d7 14.0-0 0-0-0⇒ Honfi-Uhlmann, Solingen 1974. 8.b3 is also not very appealing: 8...fxe5 9.bxc4 e4 10.♘h4? (10.♘g5 ♙e7



Grandmaster Alexander Grischuk (here seen playing in Linares, 2001) is another 'expert/fanatic' on the white side of the Advance Variation.

11.♙g4 ♘f6 12.♙g3 0-0⇒) 10...♘f6 11.g3?! ♙e7 12.♙b1 ♙c7 13.♙e2 0-0 14.0-0 ♘a5 with advantage to Black, Enders-Uhlmann, Eggesin ch-DDR 1978.

8...fxe5

This is Uhlmann's plan. Trying to mix ...f7-f6 with other 'Labyrinth' plans would now be a serious mistake: 8...♙d7? 9.0-0 0-0-0 10.b3! cxb3 11.♘xb3 ♙c7 12.♙b1 ♙e8 13.♙f4 with the initiative for White, Sveshnikov-Meshkov, Podolsk tt 1990. But 8...♘h6 or 8...♙c7!? are flexible replies.

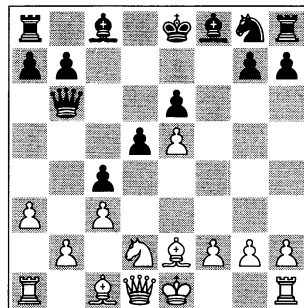
9.♘xe5

9.dxe5?! is worse: 9...♘h6! 10.0-0 ♘g4!↑ 11.b3? ♙c5 12.♙e1 cxb3 13.♙b1 0-0⇒ Rapcsak-E.Moser, Tallinn 1997.

9...♘xe5!?

Uhlmann's other idea is rapid development with 9...♘f6?!, but White is more comfortable after 10.f4! (10.0-0 ♙d6 11.♘df3 0-0 12.♙c2 ♙c7 13.♙f4 ♘h5 14.♘xc6 ♘xf4⇒ Teske-Uhlmann, Nordhausen ch-DDR 1986) 10...♙d6 11.♙h5+ (11.♘df3± Δ 0-0, ♙c2, ♘h1, ♙e3 Sveshnikov) 11...g6 12.♙f3 0-0 13.♙e2 ♙c7 14.g3 ♙d7 15.♘xd7!?!± T.Pähtz-Uhlmann, Nordhausen ch-DDR 1986.

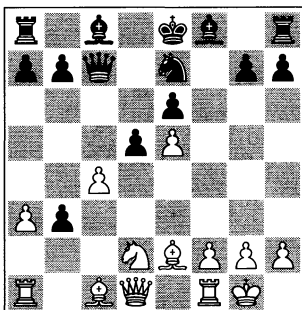
10.dxe5



Another key moment.

10...♙c5

10...♙c7?! seems worse: 11.0-0! (11.♘f3 ♙c5⇒) 11...♘e7 (11...♙xe5?! is dangerous: 12.♞e1 ♙d6 13.b3! cxb3 14.c4!↑ Casper-Knaak, Fürstenwalde ch-DDR 1981) 12.b3! (12.♙h5+ g6 13.♙g4 ♙g7 14.f4 0-0 15.♘f3 ♘f5 16.♙h1 ♙d7 17.♘d4 ♘xd4 18.cxd4 ½-½ Kraft-Mischustov, Germany tt 2003/04) 12...cxb3 13.c4!



analysis diagram

and White has the initiative, Casper-Uhlmann, East Berlin 1982.



WEAPON: Or 10...♘h6?

11.♘xc4! dxc4 12.♙xh6→

T.Pähtz-Uhlmann, Erfurt 1985.

11.0-0 ♘e7

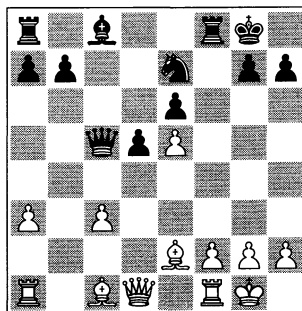
Now 11...♙c7!? 12.b4!? ♙b6 13.♘f3 ♘e7 is interesting.

12.b4!?

In this way White gains the bishop pair and he can fight for the initiative, while Black will have the better pawn structure.

A complicated option is 12.♙h5+!? g6 13.♙g4 h5!? (13...♙d7 14.♘f3±; 13...0-0 14.♘f3 ♘f5 15.♙c2±) 14.♙e2 (14.♙h3?! g5) 14...♙d7 15.♞b1∞ and the game ended in a draw on move 56, Vallejo Pons-Pelletier, Biel 2002.

12...cxb3 13.♘xb3 0-0 14.♘xc5 ♙xc5



Uhlmann has played this position three times.

15.♙d3!

This is the best square for the white queen. 15.♙c2?!, played in Haba-Uhlmann, Wattens 1996, is passive. Now 15...♘c6!⇒ was best.

Also after 15.♙b3?! ♘f5 16.a4 ♙c7 17.♙a3 ♞f7 18.♞ae1 ♙d7 19.♙d3 ♞c8 20.♙b2 ♙c6 Black's position is not worse, J.L.Roos-Uhlmann, Germany Bundesliga 1997/98.

15...♙c7

The alternatives are worse:

A) 15...♙d7?! 16.a4±;
 B) 15...♘f5?! can be met by 16.g4!↑;
 C) 15...♞f7?! 16.♙e3! (16.a4 ♙c7 17.f4± Li Shilong-Arizmendi, Linares Open 2002; 16.♙g5 ♙d7 17.c4 ♙xc4 18.♙xc4 dxc4 19.♙xe7 ♞xe7 20.♙xc4± Predojevic-Pelletier, Turin Olympiad 2006; 16.♞b1 b6 17.♙h3 ♙c7∞ Conquest-Pelletier, France tt 2002) 16...♙c7 17.f4 ♙d7 and after 18.c4 White has the better chances;

D) 15...b6?! The white player later wrote: 'I'm not sure if Black chose the best move.' 16.a4!± with the threat of 17.♙a3, Erenburg-Uhlmann, Dresden 2004.

16.♙g5!

Black is in good shape after 16.f4 ♖d7 17.♙e3 ♙e8 18.♙g4 ♜c6 19.♞fc1 ♙g6 20.♞d4 h5 21.♙h3 ♙f5 ♣ Ilijin-Huss, Biel Open 2000.

16...♞f7!? 17.f4 ♖d7!?

The plan with 17...♗f5 seems to be worse: 18.g4! h6 (18...♞c5+ 19.♞f2±) 19.gxf5 hxg5 20.fxg5±.

18.♙h5! ♞c5+ 19.♙h1

Or 19.♞d4!? ♞xd4+ 20.cxd4 g6 21.♙xe7!±.

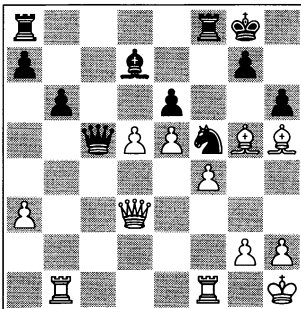
19...♞ff8 20.♞ab1 b6?

Allowing a dangerous attack. 20...b5!⇒ was necessary, when Black has an almost ideal position.

21.c4!

With complicated play.

21...♗f5! 22.cxd5 h6⇒



After a sharp and dramatic battle, the game ended in a draw on move 61.

23.dxe6 ♙xe6 24.♙g6 ♞c4 25.♞h3 ♗e7 26.♙d3 ♞a2 27.♞h5 ♗f5 28.♙f6 ♙d5 29.♞g6 ♞xg2+ 30.♞xg2 ♙xg2+ 31.♙xg2 ♗e3+ 32.♙h3 ♗xf1 33.♙e7 ♞fe8 34.♙b4 ♗e3 35.♞e1 a5 36.♙d6 ♞ad8 37.♙g6 ♗c4 38.♙xe8 ♞xe8 39.♞d1 ♞d8 40.♞c1 ♗xd6 41.exd6 ♞xd6 42.♙g4 ♙f7 43.♙f5 ♞d5+ 44.♙e4 ♞d2 45.♞c7+ ♙g8 46.♞b7 ♞xh2 47.♞xb6 ♞h3 48.f5 ♞xa3 49.♞b8+ ♙f7 50.♞b7+ ♙f6 51.♞b6+ ♙f7 52.♞b7+

♙g8 53.♞b8+ ♙h7 54.♞b7 ♞a4+ 55.♙e5 ♞a1 56.♞a7 ♙g8 57.♞a8+ ♙f7 58.♞a7+ ♙g8 59.♞a8+ ♙h7 60.♞a7 ♙h8 61.♞a8+ ♙h7 1/2-1/2

Summary of the breakthrough 7...f6 after 7.♗bd2: This is a dynamic option, but quite risky as well. In general, White gains a lead in development and the bishop pair. It is difficult to analyse all the sharp possibilities.

In the 6...c4 variation, Black is quite solid, so after 7.♗bd2 I recommend that he should wait before playing ...f7-f6 and activate his minor pieces first. In Game 7, for instance, the author successfully tried 7.♗bd2 ♗a5! 8.♙e2 ♙d7! 9.0-0 and now 9...f6!?, although this is still complicated.

We will now take a look at the successful career of the expert Evgeny Sveshnikov. We will check a whole series of his games against 6...c4 and try to understand his ideas.

GAME 15

♣ **Evgeny Sveshnikov**

♣ **Vereslav Eingorn**

Palma de Mallorca 1989 (7)

1.e4 c5 2.c3 e6 3.d4 d5 4.e5 ♞b6 5.♗f3 ♗c6 6.a3 c4 7.♗bd2!

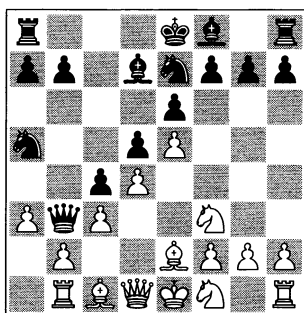
Now the main threat is 8.b3!.

7...♗a5!

In my opinion, this move is forced. The first wins by Sveshnikov are characterised by the harsh punishment of his opponents for their typical mistakes:

A) 7...♗ge7??? 8.♙xc4 dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♞a6 10.♗d6+ ♙d7 11.♗xf7 ♞g8 12.♞c2!± and Black's position is awful, Sveshnikov-Milos, Budapest 1988;

B) Another dubious option is 7...♔d7?! when the expert found 8.b3! (if 8.♖b1 ♘a5!, returning to usual patterns and White has the initiative: 9.♕e2 ♘e7 10.♘f1 ♗b3 (the exchange of queens is sufficient for equality, but if Black prefers more ambitious play the best option is 10...f6 or 10...♘b3).



analysis diagram

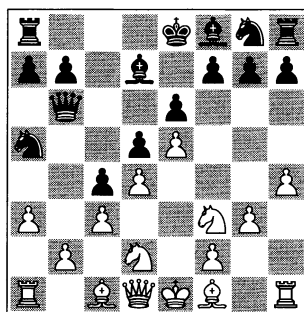
11.♕f4 ♔a4 12.♗xb3 ♕xb3 13.♘e3 ♘g6= Sveshnikov-Eingorn, Sochi 1985) 8...cxb3 9.♘xb3 ♘a5 10.♘xa5 ♗xa5 11.♔d2 ♗a4 12.♗b1! ♕c6 13.♔d3± (the desired set-up for White) 13...♘e7 14.0-0 h6 15.♖c1! ♘c8?! 16.c4! dxc4 17.♖xc4 ♗b5 18.♗xb5 ♕xb5 19.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 20.♕xb5+ and wins, Sveshnikov-Timman, Tilburg 1992;

C) There was only one game with the French break 7...f6 (see the analysis in Game 14) 8.♕e2 ♔d7?! (another typical mistake, mixing different plans. Better options are 8...fxe5 and 8...♗c7) 9.0-0 0-0-0? 10.b3!↑ cxb3 11.♘xb3 ♗c7 12.♖b1 ♕e8 13.♕f4±, Sveshnikov-Meshkov, Podolsk 1990.

8.♕e2

In recent years Sveshnikov has preferred the fianchetto 8.g3 ♔d7 9.h4 (9.♕h3 is the 'Armenian fianchetto': 9...f5?

(9...♕e7! is the most effective move, see Game 10) 10.exf6 gxf6 11.0-0 0-0-0 12.♖b1 ♕g7 13.♖e1 ♘h6 14.b3! cxb3 15.♘xb3 ♖de8 16.♕xh6! ♕xh6 17.♘c5 ♗c6 18.c4!→ Sveshnikov-Simon Padros, Calvia 2007)



analysis diagram

and now:

A) 9...h5 10.♕h3?! ♘h6 11.♘f1 ♘b3!↑ 12.♖b1 ♘xc1 13.♗xc1 0-0-0 (13...♔a4!) 14.♘e3 ♗b8 15.0-0 ♕e7 16.♘g2 g6 17.♘f4 ♔a4!± Sveshnikov-Balashov, Novgorod 1995;

B) 9...♘e7! (see also Game 12) 10.♕h3 ♗c7 11.0-0 ♘c8 12.♘e1 h5?! 13.♖b1 ♘b6 14.♘df3 0-0-0 15.♕g5 ♖e8 16.♘g2 ♔a4 17.♗e2 ♘d7 18.♘e3 ♗b8 19.♕f4 ♘c6 20.♖be1∞ Sveshnikov-Golovanov, Cheliabinsk 2004;

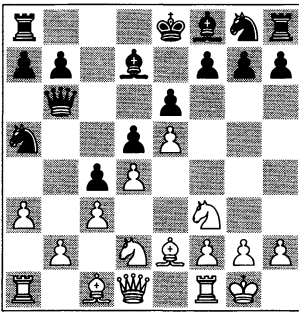
C) The sharpest game continued: 9...♗c6! 10.♘g5 h6 11.♘h3 ♗a4 12.♗f3 ♗c2 13.♘f4 ♘e7 14.♘g2 ♗h7 15.b4!! cxb3 16.♔d3 ♗g8 17.♖b1 ♔a4 18.♘e3 ♖c8 19.c4!↑ dxc4 20.♘dxc4 ♘xc4 21.♘xc4 ♘d5 22.♔d2 ♕e7 23.0-0 g5? 24.h5 ♗g7 25.♘e3 ♕c6 26.♘xd5 ♕xd5 27.♕e4 g4 28.♗e2 ♕c4 29.♔d3 ♔d5 30.♕b5+ ♖c6? 31.♕xc6+ bxc6 32.♖xb3! 33.♖b1 0-0? 34.♖xb3± Sveshnikov-Eingorn, Sochi 1986;

D) 9...0-0-0! (the best plan, intending 10...f5!, which was discovered by

Portisch – Game 11) 10.♔h3 f5!
11.exf6 gxf6 12.0-0 ♖h6 13.♞e1 ♕g7
(13...e5! – Game 11) 14.♞b1 ♞he8
15.♞c2 e5! 16.♔xd7+ ♞xd7
17.♞xh7?! f5 18.h5?? e4—+ ... this was
Sveshnikov's only defeat (after 36
moves), Sveshnikov-Batchuluun, Turin
Olympiad 2006.

Summarizing: In the fianchetto lines
Sveshnikov has not demonstrated any
advantage or, for that matter, any espe-
cially effective plans for White. He
gained his points thanks to his oppo-
nents' lack of knowledge or lack of at-
tention in the sharp middlegame.

8...♔d79.0-0



This is a key moment in the line with
8.♔e2 (see Games 4-7).

9...♖e7 10.♞e1

Awaiting the action in the centre. An
equivalent alternative is 10.♞b1!? and
now:

A) 10...♖ec6 11.♞e1 ♔e7 12.♞c2
♞c8!? 13.♖f1 ♞b3!? (13...0-0?!
14.♖g5!) 14.♔d1 ♞xc2 15.♔xc2
♖b3= Sveshnikov-Donchev, Lvov 1983;

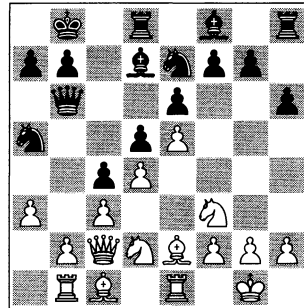
B) 10...♔b5!? is an idea that looks
odd to me: 11.♖e1 ♖b3 12.♖xb3 ♔a4
13.♔f4 ♔xb3 14.♞d2 ♖c6 15.g3 ♖a5
16.♖g2 ♔a4 17.♔h5 ♔e7 18.h4 h6
19.♔e3 g6 20.♔f3 ♖b3 21.♞e2
0-0-0= Sveshnikov-Ivkov, Sochi 1983;

C) 10...h6!? (the old defence used by
Petrosian) 11.♞e1 ♔c6 (11...♖c8
12.♖f1 ♞b3?! 13.♞xb3 ♖xb3 14.♔f4
♔a4 15.♖g3 b5?! 16.♖h5∞
Sveshnikov-Lutz, Berlin 1989) 12.♖f1
♞b3?! (better is 12...♖b3; or
12...0-0-0) 13.♔f4 ♔a4 14.♞c1 ♞b6
15.♖3d2 ♖g6 16.♔e3 ♖h4 17.f4 h5
18.♔f2 ♖f5 19.♖g3 ♖xg3 20.♔xg3=
Sveshnikov-Eingorn, Riga ch-URS
1985.

10...♞c6!?

Showing a certain obsession with
reaching the 'magical' square a4 and
exchanging the queens, but 10...♖ec6
(or 10...♖g6!?) is more natural:
11.♔f1 ♔e7 12.g3 0-0!?=.

10...h6!? is also very solid, for example:
11.♞c2 0-0-0 12.♞b1 ♖b8

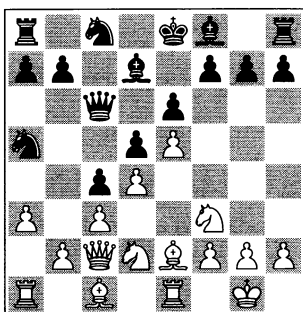


analysis diagram

13.♔d1 (13.♖f1 ♞b3 14.♞xb3 ♖xb3
15.♔f4 ♖c8 16.♖g3 ½-½ Sveshnikov-
Nikolenko, Moscow 1991) 13...♞c8
(13...♞c7 14.♖f1 ♖c8 15.♔e3 ♖b6
½-½ Sveshnikov-Vaisser, Sochi 1985)
14.♖f1 ♖b3!? 15.♔f4 ♖a8 16.♖g3
♔a4 (16...f5!?) 17.♞e2∞ Sveshnikov-
Casper, Moscow II 1987.

11.♞c2 ♖c8

This manoeuvre is not forced, but
Eingorn always brings his g8 knight to
the queenside.



12. ♘g5

12. ♖d1 ♜b6 13. ♘f1 (13. ♜b1 ♚a4!)

13... ♜b3 14. ♜b1 ♘xc1!??

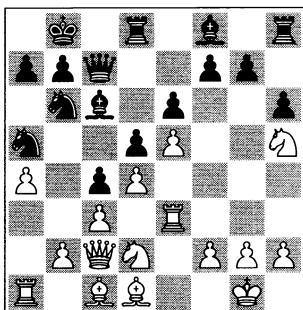
12...h6 13. ♘h3 ♜b6 14. ♘f4 0-0-0

15. ♘h5 ♚c7 16. a4!

The only move. If 16. ♜b1?? ♖a4! and the white queen has great trouble in escaping.

16... ♖c6 17. ♖d1 ♜b8 18. ♜e3!?

Sveshnikov, on the other hand, always brings his army to the kingside.



18... ♜c8 19. ♜g3 g6 20. ♘f6 ♘d7!

Trying to exchange some pieces.

21. ♘xd7+ ♚xd7 22. ♜f3 ♜c7 23. ♚b1 ♚e8 24. h4?!

A dubious advance which weakens his king. However, the two players are playing on different sides of the board.

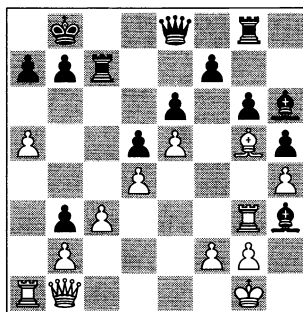
24. ♚a2!?.

24...h5?!

A symmetrical mistake. Why not 24...g5!?! or 24... ♖e7!?.

25. ♜g3 ♖d7 26. ♘f3 ♘b3 27. ♖xb3 cxb3 28. a5 ♖b5 29. ♖g5 ♖e2 30. ♖f6 ♜g8 31. ♘g5 ♖h6 32. ♘h3 ♖g4 33. ♖g5 ♖xh3

Sticking to the same strategy.



34. ♜xh3 ♖xg5 35. hxg5 ♚d8 36. ♜g3

♜c6 37. ♚f1 ♜a6 38. ♚b5 ♜e8 39. c4

dxc4 40. ♜c3 ♜c6 41. ♜xc4 ♜xc4

42. ♚xc4 ♚xg5 43. a6 ♜c8 44. ♚xb3

♜c1+ 45. ♜xc1 ♚xc1+ 46. ♜h2 ♚f4+

1/2-1/2

With perpetual check.

Summary:

* In most of his games Sveshnikov wins by taking advantage of his opponents' mistakes, but he obtains positions with no advantage.

* Grandmaster Eingorn, a reputed expert and 'fanatic' of this line, followed his own concepts: trying to exchange the queens and to simplify the position as much as possible. This is the reason why he made some mistakes at key moments in his games against Sveshnikov.

* Tigran Petrosian has demonstrated some very rich possibilities in these positions, looking for creative plans instead of exchanging pieces.

* The most successful try was the 'Stonewall' set-up created by Portisch, and later also used by Rafael Vaganian.



Statistics – Summary of the Old Blockade System

Nowadays the most popular continuation for Black is the blockading move 6...c4, preventing 7.b4 – we can find almost 3000 games (2840, approximately) in MegaBase, with an equal score for the two sides.

- **In this line the play is not spectacular during the initial moves, but it is a solid defence which allows for a sharp middlegame and enjoyable tactics at a later stage.**
- **White has some space advantage, but this factor is not too relevant in the positions arising.**
- **After castling queenside, Black often succeeds in developing an initiative on the kingside.**
- **This seems to be another good and creative possibility for Black after 6.a3 – as long as you do not get lost in the Labyrinth!**

Focus your attention on the games played by the experts!

Conclusions on the Advance Variation

At the moment, and after a long study of the ways to play against 3.e5, I am satisfied with both lines, since they allow Black to play real chess.

I would like to point out that nowadays the historic move 3.e5 is not as popular as 3.♘c3 (see Parts Three and Four), so you should simply choose one of the two systems **(1. Forcing counterattack 5./6...♚b6/♘h6** or **2. Solid plan with 6...c4)** and study it well, in order to develop a strong weapon against the ambitious Advance Variation.

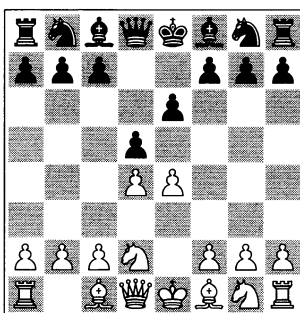
Part Two

Weapons and Dogmas

Tarrasch Variation – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2

A Repertoire for White and for Black

‘Dogmas exist to camouflage defects and fears’ – the author



Dedicated to Siegbert Tarrasch, Vasily Ivanchuk and Michael Adams



The illustrious grandmaster Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch (1862-1934) was well known as an ‘anti-dogmatic’ chess player in the end of the 19th–beginning of the 20th century. He was the first to play 3.♘d2 against the French.

A Bit of History

Over the period 1891-94, Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch played (in Germany) the historic first three games with the move 3.♘d2 and won them all. But during the rest of his career he mainly played 3.♘c3 when facing the French Defence. It should be noted that the (French) line 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5 exd5 is quite similar to the Queen’s Gambit with an isolated pawn on d5, and thus it resembles the Tarrasch Defence.

The theoretical question is: Where in the French Defence is Tarrasch most conspicuously present?

Strategies and Problems

3.♘d2 is undoubtedly more flexible than 3.e5. It supports the pawn on e4 and offers a

Part Two – Tarrasch Variation: 3.♘d2

foundation for lines with very different structures and styles of play. It is true that it allows Black secondary escapes such as 3...dxe4, or, for instance, going into the Tarrasch Variation with 3...c5 4.exd5 exd5. However, as we have already commented, the main aim of this book is getting to understand the genuine French Defence variations.

The main problem for Black when facing 3.♘d2 is how to achieve satisfactory counterplay.

In order to solve this problem, in Chapter 3 we check the main lines after 3...♗f6 4.e5 ♘fd7, analysing the most interesting and dynamic lines in my repertoire.

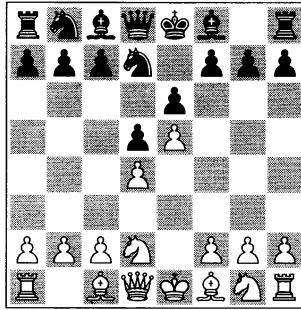
In most of the variations in Part Two, the keys that lead to black counterplay are the thematic breaks ...c7-c5 and ...f7-f6.

Chapter 4 investigates modern ideas like 3...♗e7, an odd ‘poker-style’ move. And, of course, 3...c5 4.exd5 ♖xd5!?, an interesting hybrid defence in French-Scandinavian style.

This part is useful for increasing the second player’s number of weapons against 3.♘d2, in order to make his black repertoire more universal.

Chapter 3 – Beyond Tarrasch

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♗f6 4.e5 ♘fd7



Introduction

Ukrainian grandmaster Vasily Ivanchuk is one of the best-known modern chess players. In 2007 he reached second place in the world rankings. He tends to use all theoretical variations without any clear preference. However, when facing the French Defence he used to play 3.♘d2 very often; he played this move even in our last game in Barcelona 2005! – see Game 16. In this important key game we will discover some things about the French Defence; trying to expose some persistent dogmas and to show some new weapons.



Ukrainian top grandmaster Vasily Ivanchuk (born 1969) is an incredibly versatile opening player. But against the French Defence, he used to prefer Tarrasch's move 3.♘d2.

Directions and Concepts

From my point of view (I play this opening with Black), if Black wants to enjoy the natural spirit of the French Defence he should continue 3...♗f6!?. As usual, the pressure on e4 forces White to close the centre with 4.e5 (4.♗d3 c5 5.e5 ♘fd7 is a similar line). After 4...♘fd7 (see diagram above) the genuinely French (temporarily blocked) positions arise.

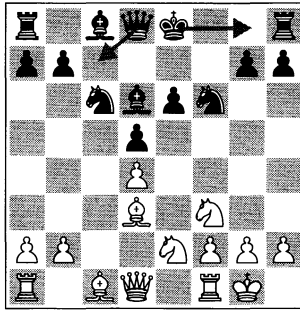
The black knight on d7 is rather passive (whereas in the Advance Variation 3.e5 it is more flexible on its original g8-square). For

Part Two – Tarrasch Variation: 3. ♖d2

this reason, Black must attack the centre immediately with his pawns by ...c7-c5 and ...f7-f6, activating his minor pieces as well.

In this position White has five interesting plans at his disposal, which we will investigate here.

- A) Dynamic alternatives in the most popular lines – 5.c3 c5 6. ♘d3 ♗c6 7. ♗e2 cxd4 8.cxd4 f6 9.exf6 ♗xf6 10. ♗f3 ♘d6 11.0-0**

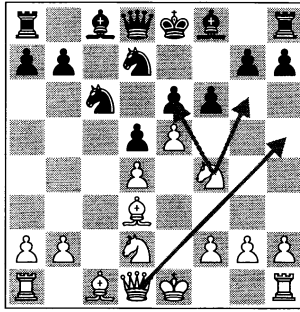


Here Black has two different possibilities: 11...0-0, see Game 16, and 11...♔c7, see Game 17.

Black can prepare the thematic sacrifice ...♖x♗f3. This is an important resource in the middlegame, but also after the queens are exchanged.

- B) Salto Mortale – 9. ♗f4**

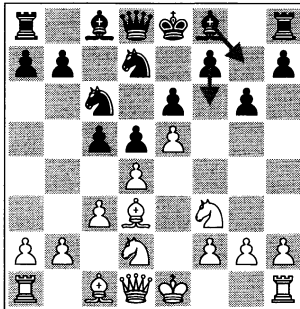




This acrobatic knight manoeuvre creates the threat of 10.♞h5+. This may be the most aggressive idea for White.

Black can choose from three creative defences. 9...♞e7 and 9...fxe5 are relatively rare options. However, the counter-jump 9...♟xd4! offers more resources, and therefore it is analysed more thoroughly in Games 18 and 19.

C) Fianchetto versus Symmetry – 7.♟gf3 g6!?

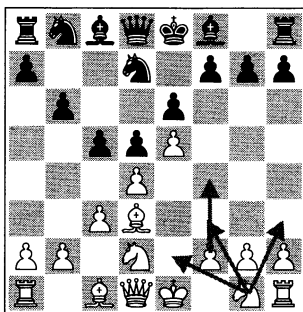


What are White’s intentions after 7.♟gf3 ? If Black plays the ‘logical’ 7...♞b6?!, his idea is to sacrifice the d4-pawn, gaining a long-term initiative. White is also posing a strategic threat to block the centre with his pieces: 0-0, ♖e1, dxc5 and ♟b3, with a solid positional advantage.

The black counter-plan with 7...g6! looks rather artificial, but it is sound. Since White cannot support his e5 pawn any further, Black uses the fianchetto to break later in the centre with ...f7-f6, first offering his bishop on g7 a powerful role. Beautiful, wouldn’t you agree?

For White’s reaction 8.0-0 see Game 20, for 8.h4 see Game 21.

D) Plan with the Exchange $\text{c}8\text{x}\text{f}1 - 6\dots\text{b}6$



This is an old strategic method to avoid the main lines. Among the 915 games played in this line, we find the names of some specialists on the French Defence, such as Botvinnik, Petrosian, Kortchnoi, Portisch, Short, Yusupov, Knaak, Moskalenko... and recently Socko.

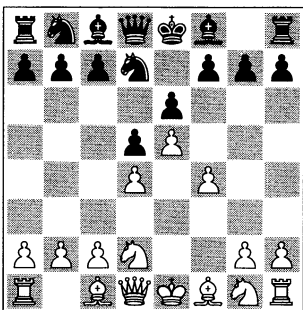
This non-standard move has a sound positional idea: Black is intending to force the favourable exchange of light-squared bishops by $7\dots\text{a}6$. However, this plan is rather slow and it gives White several additional tempi for his development.

White can choose between two main plans: $\text{f}2\text{-f}4$, strengthening his centre with a 'concrete pawn wall', or, alternatively, the knight manoeuvre $7.\text{h}3$, preparing an attack with his pieces. The two resources can also be combined.

The most dangerous set-up for Black is the one that prepares an attack with pieces: $\text{e}2/\text{h}3\text{-f}4\text{-g}4$. After a crisis was experienced in this uncomfortable (for Black) set-up, many grandmasters abandoned the $6\dots\text{b}6$ variation.

I have made a deep investigation of this favourite scheme, trying to reanimate it. I even delved into Mikhail Botvinnik's fundamental key ideas! See Games 22-23.

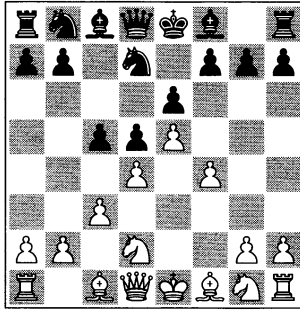
E) A Pawn Wedge – $5.\text{f}4$



White makes solid preparations, creating a great chain of central pawns. This line has been very popular since the 1960s (now there are already 5000 games in MegaBase with it). So, we must study the best chances against (and with) the white wall.

After 5...c5! White can play in classical style, without c2-c3, trying to occupy the d4-square with his knights: 6.♟gf3. See the comments to Game 24 and Part Three (Classical System) Chapter 5, by transposition.

However, the most appropriate move in this line is 6.c3!?, strengthening the centre with another pawn. Now Black must reveal his plans and resources:



- 1) Black can revert to the plan with the exchange ♟c8x♟f1 by playing 6...b6 (see examples in Game 24).
- 2) The forgotten (but still legendary) ‘Nimzo-Botvinnik-Kortchnoi-Petrosian’ method is 6...♟c6 7.♟df3 c4 (Game 24).
- 3) Another blockading line, creative and flexible, is 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 a5!?, following old (yet again fresh) paths. Or else 8...f5 (Game 25).
- 4) Combining counterattacks with pieces (7...♞a5 or 7/8...♞b6, 9...♟b4+) and breakthroughs (...f7-f6 or ...g7-g5) (Games 25 and 26).
- 5) An important resource is the preparation of a spectacular knight sacrifice in the centre: ...♟xe5!. See the attacks led by grandmasters Uhlmann, Vaganian, Coimas, Moskalenko, etc. (Game 26).
- 6) Also, Black can combine several ideas and resources as if he were making a salad (Game 26).
- 7) For his part, White has a dangerous counter set-up against the plan with 7...♞b6, devised by the strong master Sakharov and grandmaster Isaac Boleslavsky and developed by the latter’s pupil Boris Spassky: g3-♟f2-♟g2-h4-♟d3 and a3-b4, dominating the board (Game 26).

Beyond Tarrasch - Games

When analysing Ivanchuk's games, I noticed a little detail: sometimes he is uncomfortable when his opponents counterattack! In certain cases he prefers to play safer, technical lines, trying to exploit a minimal advantage. This knowledge was the key to my preparation and my strategy during this important game (we had both won our three previous games in this short tournament).

GAME 16

□ Vasily Ivanchuk

■ Viktor Moskalenko

Barcelona 2005 (4)

1.d4 e6!? 2.e4

Played immediately.

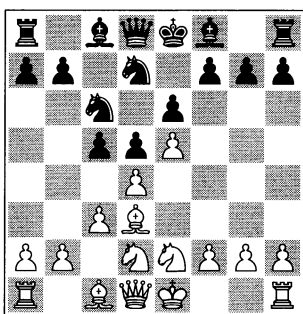
2...d5 3.♘d2 ♘f6!?

Played genuinely!

4.e5 ♘fd7 5.c3 c5 6.♙d3 ♘c6 7.♗e2

This is the most natural development.

The other knight will go to f3.

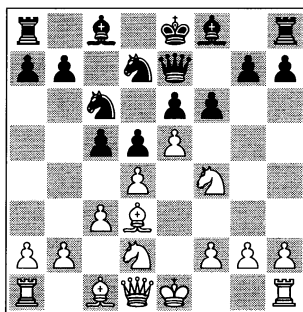


7...cxd4!?

Historically, Black is forced to exchange the central pawns before playing ...f7-f6.

A) Theory has always condemned 7...f6. Psakhis: 'This once popular move can today only be encountered in the first rounds of open tournaments.'

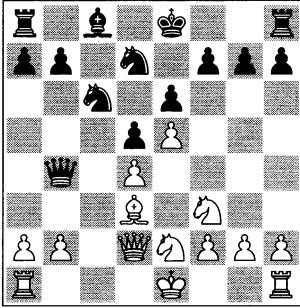
However, we will continue our analysis, testing the dogmas: 8. ♘f4 (the advantage of 7...f6 is clear in the variation 8.exf6 ♙xf6!? (preparing ...e6-e5) 9. ♘f3 ♙d6 10.0-0 0-0≠; the presence of the pawns on c3 and c5 favours Black) 8...♙e7.



This is the only defence. 9. ♘f3! (if 9. ♙h5+ ♙f7≠ Black looks OK in all variations, for example: 10. ♙g6? hxg6 11. ♙xh8 fxe5⌘) 9...cxd4! (a worse option is 9...fxe5?! 10.dxe5 ♘dxe5 11. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 12. ♙h5+ ♘f7 13. ♙xh7! ♙g5 14. ♙xg5 ♘xg5 15. ♙c2 ♘f7 16. ♘g6 with a solid advantage for White, Motwani-De Jager, Netherlands tt 1996) 10.cxd4 (or 10.exf6 ♙xf6! 11.cxd4 ♙b4+! 12.♙f1□ 0-0 13.♙e3 ♙d6 14.♘h5 ♙e7↑ Bernard-Szymczak, Porabka tt 1986) 10...fxe5 11.dxe5 ♘dxe5 12. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 13. ♙h5+ ♘f7 14.0-0 (now 14. ♙xh7? does not work in view of 14...♙b4+! 15. ♙d2 ♙xb2⌘) 14...g6 15. ♙e2 ♙g7! 16. ♙b5+ ♙f8 17. ♙e3⌘, Danin-Kosyrev, Minsk 2006. In return for his pawn, White has an edge thanks to his better development and the good positions of his pieces. However, things are not clear yet;

B) I have tested 7...♙b6 in several games, trying to exchange the queens:

8.♟f3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♟b4+ 10.♟d2 (in the AVRO tournament of 1938, Alekhine defeated Capablanca with 10.♟f1!?, but 10...f6! instead of Capablanca's 10...♟e7 leads to a complicated position after 11.♟f4 g6!?N 12.♟xe6 fxe6∞ – analysis) 10...♟xd2+ 11.♟xd2 ♟b4.

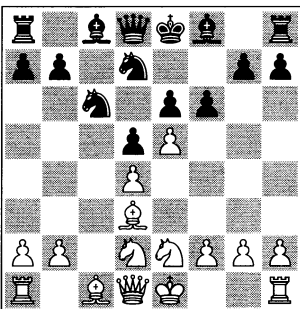


In the ensuing endgame Black is slightly passive, but he has no weaknesses, for instance:

B1) 12.♟c1 ♟xd2+ 13.♟xd2 ♟b6 14.b3 ♟d7 15.♟f4 0-0!? 16.h4 f6⇌ Korneev-Moskalenko, Sants 1999;


B2) 12.a3 ♟xd2+ 13.♟xd2 ♟b6 14.b3 ♟d7 15.♟ac1 f6⇌ Narciso Dublan-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2004.

8.cxd4 f6



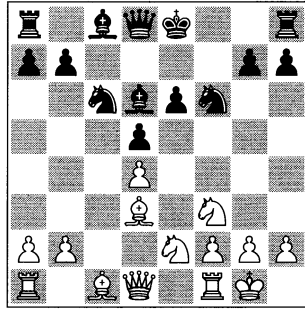
9.exf6

The immediate attack 9.♟f4 will be analysed later, in Games 18 and 19. 9.f4?! does not work: 9...fxe5! 10.dxe5 and now, both 10...♟b6↑ and 10...♟c5⇌ favour Black.

 WEAPON: 9...fxe5 10.fxe5? ♟xd4! 11.♟xd4 ♟h4+±.

9...♟xf6 10.♟f3 ♟d6 11.0-0

We have reached the key position of the main line 3.♟d2 ♟f6. Black has several options available.



11...0-0!?

This natural move allows the strategic exchange of the dark-squared bishops. 11...♟c7 is more ambitious, controlling the b8-h2 diagonal. See Game 17.

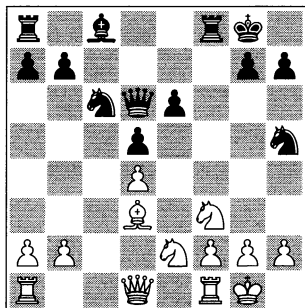
12.♟f4

According to theory, White has a slight advantage in this line, but I think that Black has enough resources to equalise.

12...♟xf4

Here are some different ideas:

A) My favourite line in order to complicate is 12...♟h5!? (see also Game 17) 13.♟xd6 ♟xd6



With the idea of the thematic sacrifice ... ♖xf3!?

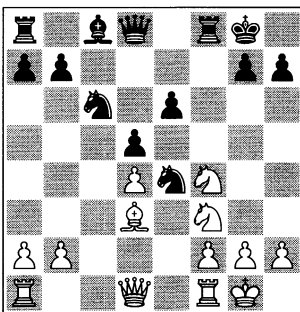
A1) 14. ♖g3 ♖f4 15. ♖c2 a6 16. ♖e1 ♖d7 17. ♖c1 g6 18. a3 ♖ae8 19. ♖d2 ♖h3+ 20. ♖h1 ♖xf3!? 21. gxf3 ♖f8 22. ♖h6? e5! 23. ♖h5 ♖f7 24. dxe5 ♖xe5+ Kobalia-Moskalenko, play-chess.com 2005;

A2) 14. ♖d2 ♖d7!? (also 14...a6 15. ♖ac1 ♖xf3!? 16. gxf3 ♖d7 17. ♖g5 g6 18. ♖h1 ♖f8 19. ♖g1?! ♖f4⇌ 20. ♖g3 ♖b8 21. ♖gd1 ♖f6 22. b4?! ♖xb4 23. ♖b1?? ♖a4!+ Garrido Dominguez-Moskalenko, Roquetas Mar 2006) 15. ♖ad1 (15. ♖e3 ♖f4!?) 15... ♖xf3!? (15... ♖ae8) 16. gxf3 ♖f8 17. ♖e3 e5 18. dxe5 ♖xe5 19. f4 ♖xd3 20. ♖xd3 ♖xf4 21. ♖xf4 ♖xf4⇌ Wolff-Moskalenko, Wijk aan Zee B 1992.

B) A curious continuation is 12... ♖h8 13. ♖d2 ♖xd4!? 14. ♖exd4 ♖e4 15. ♖xe4 ♖xf4 16. ♖d3 dxe4 (16...e5!? 17. ♖xh7 exd4∞) 17. ♖xe4 ♖f6 18. ♖ae1 ♖b8 19. b3 ♖e8 20. ♖e5± A.Sokolov-Lautier, Clermont-Ferrand 1989.

13. ♖xf4 ♖e4

Another key position.



14. ♖c1

The most important alternatives are:

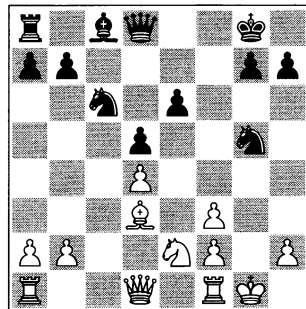
A) 14. ♖h5 g6 (14... ♖b6!?) 15. ♖g3 ♖xg3 16. hxg3 ♖b6 17. ♖a4 a6! =

18. ♖ab1 ♖d7 19. ♖e2 ♖e5 (19...e5!?) 20. dxe5 ♖xe5 21. ♖d1 ♖xf3+ 22. ♖xf3 d4=) 20. ♖d1 ♖xf3+ 21. gxf3 ♖ac8 22. ♖d2 ♖b5 23. ♖bc1 (23. ♖b4 ♖c6!?) 23... ♖xe2 ½-½ Rios Parra-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2002;

B) If 14. ♖e2!? Black can continue:

B1) 14... ♖d7!? with quiet play, for example: 15. ♖xe4 dxe4 16. ♖d2 ♖h4 17. ♖b3 (if 17. ♖c2 ♖b4! 18. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 19. ♖xe4 ♖b5⇌ 20. ♖c3 ♖xe2 21. ♖xe2 ♖ac8=) 17... ♖ad8!? and the game is balanced, for instance: 18. ♖xb7 ♖e8 19. ♖c4 ♖f6⇌;

B2) The typical sacrifice 14... ♖xf3!? is more popular, but also more complicated: 15. gxf3 ♖g5.



In general, White must be slightly better, but there are plenty of complications: 16. ♖h1!? (16. f4 ♖h3+ 17. ♖h1 ♖h4⇌) 16...e5 (16... ♖xf3 17. ♖xh7+ ♖h8 18. ♖d3 ♖f6 19. ♖g6±) 17. ♖b3!? (17. dxe5 ♖xe5 18. ♖d4 ♖f6∞) 17... ♖h8 18. ♖b5!?) (18. ♖c2!?) 18... ♖f5!?)⇌.

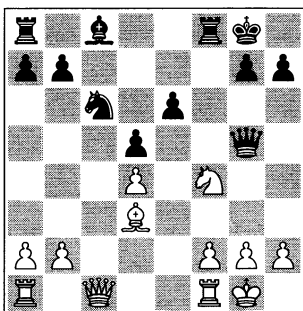
C) Or 14. g3 ♖f6! 15. h4 h6 16. ♖e5 ♖xd4 17. ♖g4 (17. ♖fg6 ♖d8 18. ♖g4 ♖c6⇌) 17... ♖d8 18. ♖xe4 (18. ♖e1 ♖f6∞) 18... dxe4 19. ♖xh6+! with lots of checks and a probable draw: 19... ♖xh6 (if 19... ♖h7? 20. ♖h5 ♖e8 21. ♖xe8!?)±) 20. ♖g4+ ♖h7 (20... ♖f7

21.♞h5+! ♟e7? 22.♟g6+!→;
 20...♟h8!? with the idea 21.♟g6+ ♟g7
 22.♟xf8+ ♟xf8 23.♞xe4 ♞d5!?⇒
 21.♞g6+ ♟h8 22.♞xh6+ ♟g8
 23.♞g6+ ♟h8 24.♞xe4 ♞xf4!?
 (24...e5!? 25.♟g6+ ♟g8 26.♟xf8
 ♞xf8∞) 25.gxf4 ♟f5? (better is
 25...♞d5! 26.f3 ♟f5⇒; but worse is
 25...♟c6 26.♞g6 ♞g8 27.♞xg8+
 ♟xg8 28.♞ad1↑) 26.♞fd1 with a win-
 ning initiative, Szczepkowska-Khudaver-
 dieva, Chisinau Ech-W 2005.

14...♟g5!

In the event of 14...♞f6 15.♟e2 e5
 16.dxe5 ♟xe5 17.♟xe5 ♞xe5
 18.♞e3!± White maintains slight
 pressure.

15.♟xg5 ♞xg5



16.♟e2

The tactical attempt 16.♟xh7+ ♟xh7
 17.♟xe6 ♞f5 18.♟xf8+ ♞xf8
 19.♞g5 ♞f5 20.♞xf5+ ♟xf5 gives
 equal chances, ½-½ Barkhagen-Glei-
 zerov, Stockholm 2002/03.

16...♞xc1 17.♞axc1 a6!

After this important prophylactic move
 Black equalises without trouble. The
 standard (and theoretical) 17...♟d7 al-
 lows 18.♟b5!± and after the ♟xc♟ ex-
 change Black would be very passive.

18.♞fd1

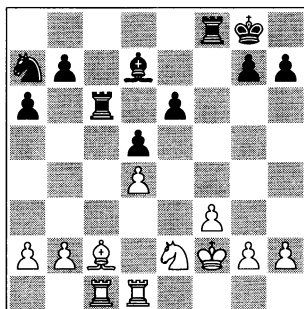
Other important games do not change
 the evaluation of the position:

A) 18.a3 ♟d7 19.f4 ♞ac8 20.g3 ♟a7
 (20...♟a5!⇒) 21.♞xc8! (21.♟f2
 ♟b5=) 21...♞xc8 22.♞c1 ♞xc1+
 23.♟xc1 ♟b5 24.♟f2 ♟xd3 25.♟xd3
 b6! = Korneev-Moskalenko, Salou 2000;

B) 18.♞fe1 ♟d7 19.f3 ♞ac8 20.♟b1
 ♟a7 21.♞cd1 ♟b5 22.♟f2 ♞c7
 23.♟c1 ♞fc8 = Tiviakov-Rahal,
 Sanxenxo tt 2004;

C) 18.♞c3 ♟d7 19.♞b3 ♞ab8
 20.♞b6 h6 21.♞c1 ♟f7 22.♞c3 ♟e7
 23.♞cb3 ♟a5 24.♞c3 ♟c6 = Can-
 M.Gurevich, Istanbul ch-TUR 2006.

**18...♟d7 19.f3 ♞ac8 20.♟f2 ♟a7
 21.♟c2 ♞c6=**



As in many other examples, the simpli-
 fication along the c-file leads to a draw.

**22.♟e3 ♞fc8 23.♟d2 ♞c4 24.♟b1
 ♞xc1 25.♞xc1 ♞xc1 26.♟xc1 h6
 27.♟d2 ♟f7 28.♟e3 ♟f6 29.g3 ♟c8
 30.♟f4 ♟e8 31.♟d3 ♟d6 32.b3 ½-½**

After this game and our post-mortem,
 Ivanchuk more often chose 3.♟c3!?

Summary of 11...0-0: Black's game is
 very solid, leading to a probable draw.
 The problem is that he is too passive to
 improve on this result.

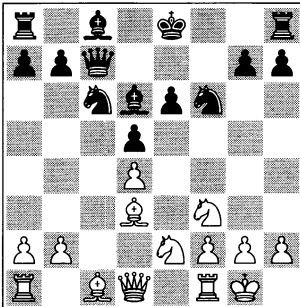
To test the 'dogmas', it is very interest-
 ing to analyse almost forgotten possibili-
 ties such as 7...f6!?, 12...♟h5, 17...a6!
 and many other lines after 11...0-0!?

In the line played in the following game, Black changes his 11th move, activating his queen and trying to complicate. In these lines the thematic sacrifice ...♞x♗f3 can be an important resource, both in the middlegame and after the exchange of queens.

GAME 17

□ **Sergey Fedorchuk**
 ■ **Viktor Moskalenko**
 Alushta 1999 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗f7
 5.♙d3 c5 6.c3 ♘c6 7.♗e2 cxd4
 8.cxd4 f6 9.exf6 ♗xf6 10.♗f3 ♙d6
 11.0-0 ♚c7!?



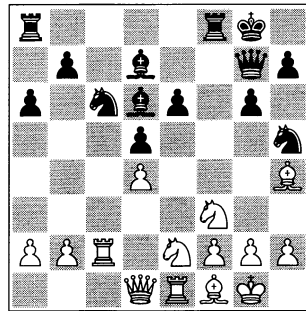
The ideas behind this move are analysed in many books on the French Defence, and are easy to understand: Black controls the b8-h2 diagonal, reinforces his e5 point and temporarily avoids the exchange of the dark-squared bishops. Also the black queen is more active on the seventh rank and does not disturb the development of the queenside. However, these factors are not too noticeable at this point, and White controls the situation.

12.♙g5

With the popular manoeuvre ♙g5-h4-g3, White continues the fight

for the h2-b8 diagonal. The main alternatives are:

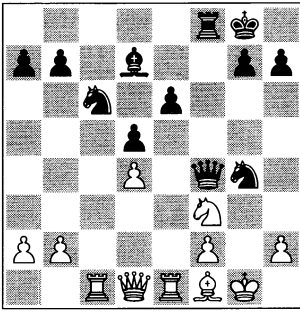
A) 12.♘c3 (I think that this manoeuvre is too hasty, since the knight is more effective on e2 than on this square) 12...a6 13.♙g5 0-0 14.♙h4 ♗h5!?! (14...g6 15.♞c1 ♗h5 16.♗a4 ♙d7 17.♗e5 ♞f4!?) 18.♙g5 ♞xd4 19.♗xd7 ♙xh2+ 20.♗h1 ♙f4 21.♗f6+□ ♗xf6 22.♙xf6 e5⚡ Kuijf-Moskalenko, Wijk aan Zee B 1992) 15.♞e1 g6 16.♞c1 ♙f4 (16...♙g7!?) may be better) 17.♞c2 ♙g7 18.♙f1 ♙d7 19.♗e2?! ♙d6



analysis diagram

20.a3 h6! 21.♗g3 ♗f4 22.♗e2 ♗h5 (22...♗h3+!?) 23.♙g3 ♗xg3 24.♗xg3 ♞f4 (24...♞xf3!) 25.♗e2 ♞f7 26.♙d3 ♞af8↑ and Black is clearly ahead, as in Kruppa-Moskalenko, Kharkov 1984;

B) 12.g3, intending ♙f4, brings us back to simplification: 12...0-0 13.♙f4 ♙d7 (13...♗g4!?) 14.♞c1 ♙xf4 15.♗xf4 ♞xf4 16.gxf4 ♙xf4 17.♙e2 ♗f6! 18.♗h1 ♗e4!⚡ Azarov-Berescu, Djakovo 2005; 13...e5?! 14.dxe5 ♗xe5 15.♗xe5 ♙xe5 16.♞c1±) 14.♞e1 (14.♞c1!?) 14...♗g4 15.♞c1 ♙xf4 16.♗xf4 ♞xf4 17.gxf4 ♙xf4 18.♙f1 (18.♙b5 ♞f8 19.♙xc6 ♙xc6 20.h3 ♗f6↑) 18...♞f8⚡.



analysis diagram

Black's position is quite satisfactory. 19.♟g2 e5? (a tactical mistake; 19...♟h6!? 20.♞d2 ♞xd2 21.♟xd2 ♟f5 22.♟b3 ♟fxd4) 20.dxe5 ♟cxe5 21.♞xe5!± Rozentalis-Moskalenko, Lvov 1985.

12...0-0 13.♞c1 ♟h5!?

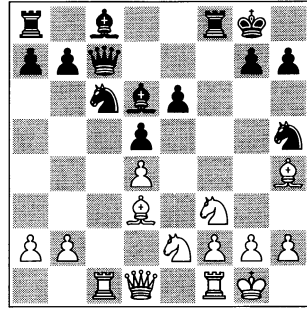
An original and effective manoeuvre. Other possible move orders are:

A) 13...a6 (preventing ♖/♗/♟b5) 14.♟h4 ♟h5 (14...g6 15.♟g3 ♟h5 16.♟xd6 ♞xd6 17.♞d2 ♞xf3 (17...♟f4!?!; 17...♟d7!?!)) 18.gxf3 ♟d7 19.♞e3 ♞f8 20.♞h1∞ Kolev-Moskalenko, Castellar 1999) 15.♞c2 h6 16.♟h7+ ♞h8 17.♟g6 ♟f4 (17...♞xf3!? 18.gxf3 ♟xh2+ 19.♞h1 ♟f4 20.♟g3 ♞d7∞) 18.♟xf4 ♟xf4 19.♟g3 (19.♞cd1 ♟d7=) 19...♞e7 20.♞cd1 ♟d7 21.♞fe1 ♞b4 22.♟xf4 ♞xf4 23.♞d2 ♞xd2 24.♞xd2= Alsina Leal-Moskalenko, Barcelona 2004;

B) 13...♟d7?! This development is a little slow. 14.♟g3 (14.♞c2 h6=; 14.♟h4 h6 15.♟g3±) 14...h6 (14...♟f4 15.♟xf4 ♞xf4 16.♞e1 a6) 15.♟d2 ♞b6!?! 16.♟c3 ♟f4 (16...♟b4=) 17.♞c2 ♟b4 18.♟xb4 ♞xb4 19.♟e5 ♟xe5? (≥ 19...♟e8!?! 20.♞e1 ♞b6=) 20.dxe5 ♟g4? 21.♞e2 ♞f4 22.♞c1!± Korneev-Moskalenko, Moscow 1995;

C) Another popular line is 13...♟g4!?! 14.♟g3 (14.h3 ♞xf3 15.hxg4 ♞f7⇒) 14...♞b6!⇒ 15.♟h4 ♟f6 16.♟h5 ♟e4 17.♟xe4 dxe4 18.♟h6? (18.♞g4 e5 19.♞g3 ♟xd4 20.♞fe1 ♞f7) 18...gxh6 19.♞g4+ ♞f7∞ Jobava-Larino Nieto, Torrelavega tt 2007.

14.♟h4



14...g6!?

In my opinion, this move is quite useful: it defends the b1-h7 diagonal and prepares a queen's fianchetto with ...♞g7, attacking the pawn on d4. It also allows the manoeuvre ...♟g7-f5.

The immediate sacrifice is interesting: 14...♞xf3!?! 15.gxf3 ♟xh2+ 16.♞h1 ♟d6∞.

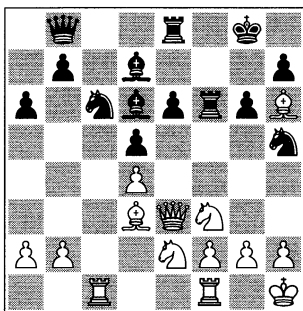
15.♞d2N a6

15...♞g7 16.♟b5!?!; maybe less clear is 16.♟g5?! ♞xf3 17.gxf3 ♟xd4 18.♟xd4 ♞xd4∞;

15...♞xf3!?! deserves closer analysis: 16.gxf3 ♟xh2+ 17.♞h1 ♟d6, with the possible tactical line 18.♞g1?! (≥ 18.♟g5∞) 18...♞f7! 19.♟xg6? (≥ 19.♞e3 ♟d7) 19...hxg6 20.♞h6 ♞xf3+ 21.♞g2 ♞e4 with advantage for Black.

16.♞e3 ♟d7 17.♟g5 ♞ae8 18.♟h6 ♞f6 19.♞h1 ♞b8

Black's queen acts as a submarine, preventing ♟e5.



20. ♖c2!? ♗g7

20...e5 21. ♖b3∞.

21. ♖d2 ♖f8 22. ♗eg1 ♖f4

Unexpectedly, Black offers to simplify, in order to profit from the passivity of the remaining white pieces.

Another possibility was 22...b5!? with the idea of ...♖b6 (pressing on d4), ...♖b8 and ...♖c7→.

23. ♖xf4 ♖xf4!? 24. ♖xf4

24. ♖e3 g5!

24...♖xf4

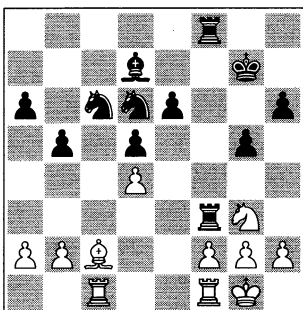
After the exchange of queens, the pawn on d4 is weaker than the one on e6.

25. ♗e2 ♖f4f7 26. ♖fe1 ♗e8! 27. ♗g1 ♗d6∞ 28. ♖ed1

At this point my opponent was already rather short of time.

28...♗g7 29. ♖a4 b5 30. ♖c2 h6 31. ♖f1 g5 32. ♗g3? ♖xf3!

The most desired moment for a French Defence player!



33.gxf3 ♗c4

33...♗xd4! was better, when the white pawns begin falling like ripe fruit.

34. ♗e2 ♗xb2 35. ♗g2 ♗c4

≥ 35...♖e8.

36. ♖cd1

36.h4!?

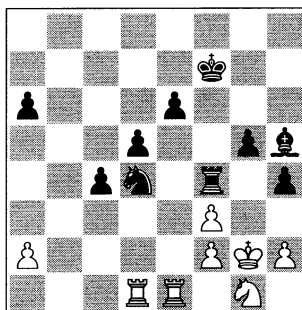
36...♖e8! 37. ♗g3 h5!

The army of black pawns decides the game.

38. ♖fe1 h4 39. ♗e2 ♖h5 40. ♗g1 ♖f6

41. ♖b1 ♗f7 42. ♖c2 ♖f4 43. ♖d3

♗xd4 44. ♖xc4 bxc4+—



White's position is hopeless.

45. ♖e3 g4! 46.fxg4 ♖xg4+ 47. ♗h3 ♖f4 48. ♖f1 ♗f3!? 49. ♗xf3 ♖xf3

50. ♖a3 d4 51. ♖xa6 d3 52. ♖a7+ ♗f6

53. ♖d7 ♖d5 54.a4 c3 55. ♖c7 ♖c4 0-1

Summary of 11...♖c7: This move is more aggressive than 11...0-0, and it can be used to change Black's way of playing the opening. White should try to simplify with g2-g3 and ♖f4, but this does not guarantee him any advantage.

GAME 18

□ Ni Hua

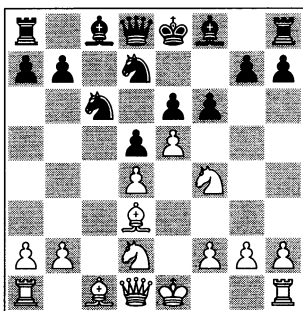
■ Wang Hao

Singapore 2006 (5)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖d2 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7

5. ♖d3 c5 6.c3 ♗c6 7. ♗e2 cxd4

8.cxd4 f6 9.♟f4

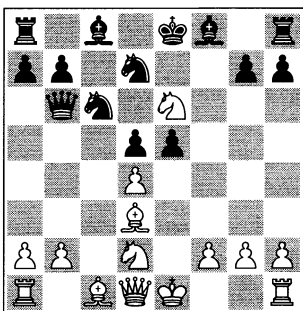


With this knight jump, with contempt for death, White wants to launch a direct attack with the threat of 10.♞h5+. In these original lines the black king moves forwards and backwards.

9...♟xd4

The main response. Black is not afraid of entering the complications.

A) 9...fxe5!? is a fresh idea: 10.♟xe6 (White has nothing after 10.♞h5+ ♟e7 11.♟g6+? hxg6 12.♞xh8 e4± Schuster-Wehner, playchess.com INT 2004) 10...♞b6

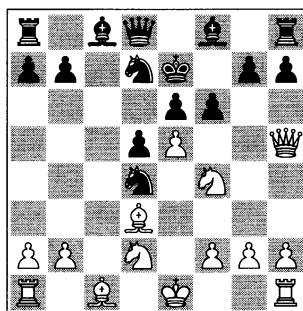


11.♞h5+ (11.0-0!?) 11...♟e7!
 12.♟xf8 (if 12.♟g5 ♟f6! 13.♞f7+ ♟d8 and the black king is in great shape) 12...♟xf8 13.dxe5 ♟dxe5!
 (13...♟cxe5? is a worse option, Sengupta-Owczarzak, Legnica 2006, 14.♟e2!±) 14.♟e2? (≥ 14.0-0 ♟g4

15.♞g5 h6!? 16.♞f4+ ♟g8⇌)
 14...♟g4! 15.♟xg4 ♟d3+ 16.♟d1 ♟xf2+ 17.♟e2 ♞e8+ 18.♟f1 (Vysochin-Owczarzak, Warsaw rapid 2007), and now 18...♞e5! was winning;

B) 9...♞e7 is an old line, which basically leads to Game 16, see the analysis of 7...f6 there. For example: 10.♟f3 fxe5 11.dxe5 ♟dxe5 12.♟xe5 ♟xe5 13.♞h5+ ♟f7 14.0-0 g6 15.♞e2 ♟g7!? 16.♟b5+ ♟f8 17.♟e3☞.

10.♞h5+ ♟e7



11.exf6+!

11.♟g6+?! hxg6 12.exf6+ is a favourable transposition for Black: 12...♟xf6! 13.♞xh8 ♟f7±, and the white queen must lose more time to get back into play.

11...♟xf6 12.♟g6+ hxg6 13.♞xh8 ♟f7!

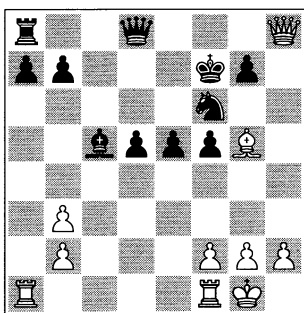
Now that the position has stabilised, the play becomes calmer.

13...e5?! would appear to be weak: 14.♟xg6 (14.♟f3 transposes into the main line) 14...♞a5 15.0-0! ♟e2+ 16.♟h1 ♟xc1 17.♟f3± with the initiative for White.

14.♞h4

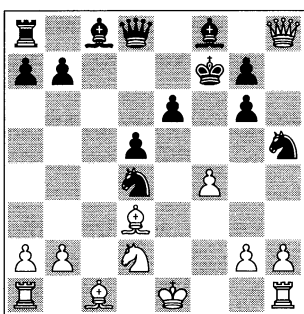
Alternatives:


A) The following was a model game for Black: 14.0-0 e5 15.♟b3 ♟xb3 16.axb3 ♟f5 (16...e4!? 17.♟e2 ♞c7⇌) 17.♟xf5 gx5 18.♟g5 ♟c5! with play typical of the 9.♟f4 variation:



19.♗h3!? ♗d7 20.b4 (20.♖ad1 ♘e4!
21.♙e3 d4⌘ Bednarski-Kosten, Lille
1985) 20...♙b6 21.♙xf6!? ♘xf6
22.♖a3 g6 23.♗h4+ ♙e6! 24.g4 f4
(24...♗e7!?) 25.♖e1 ♗g7 26.♗h3 e4!
27.g5+ ♘d6 28.♗g4 ♖f8⌘ 29.♖c3
♗d7!? 30.♗xd7+ ♘xd7⌘ 31.♖h3 ♙e6
32.♖h7 ♖c8 33.♖g7 ♖c2 34.♖f1 ♙f5
35.h4 f3 36.♖f7+ ♙g4 37.♖f6 ♙h5
38.♖d6 ♖d2 39.b3 ♙d4 40.b5 ♙c5
41.♖e6 ♙b6 42.b4 ♖e2 43.♙h2 ♙xh4
0-1 Kengis-Moskalenko, Lvov 1984;

B) 14.f4?! is met by the strong
14...♘h5! and now:



 WEAPON: 15.0-0?? ♘e2+
16.♙h1 ♗h4 0-1 Murillo-
Minero Pineda, Costa Rica *chplay-off* 1997.

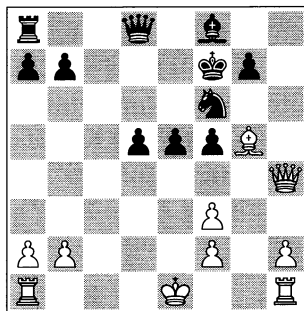
B1) 15.g3? e5!↑ 16.fxe5 ♘f3+
17.♙d1 ♘xe5 18.♙e2 ♘f6 19.♖f1
♙f5 20.♘b3 d4+ Majdan-Arutyu-
nova, Heraklion jr 2002;

B2) 15.♗h7 ♗h4+ 16.g3 ♗g4↑
17.0-0 ♙d7! and White is lost because
of the threat of 18...♘xg3!, Barbitsky-
L.Smirnov, St Petersburg 2000.

14...e5 15.♘f3 ♘xf3+

An automatic move. Analysis of the la-
tent resource 15...e4!? can be found in
Game 19.

16.gxf3 ♙f5 17.♙xf5 gxf5 18.♙g5!



The only chance of attacking the black
fortress. The position is quite balanced.

18...♗a5+!?

An evergreen check.

The alternative is 18...♙c5 19.0-0-0 d4
(19...♗b6!? 20.♙xf6 ♙xf2 21.♗a4
gxf6∞) 20.♗h3 ♗d7 (20...g6!?)
21.♙xf6 ♙xf6? (≥ 21...gxf6! 22.f4 e4
23.♗b3+ ♙e7 24.♖hg1 ♙d6!≠)
22.♖hg1↑ and White's heavy pieces
guarantee him the initiative, Yandemi-
rov-Moskalenko, Kemerovo 1985.

19.♙f1 g6!?

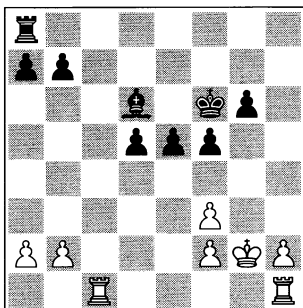
Taking advantage of tactical motifs,
Black prepares ...♘h5 or ...♙g7 and
...♖h8. This is probably not the only
possible plan.

20.♙xf6

More testing was 20.♗h8!? ♗a6+
21.♙g2 ♖e8 22.♖ac1 ♙e7 23.♗h6
♗d6 24.♖hd1 d4 25.♙xf6 ♙xf6=
26.♗e3 ♖e7 27.♗b3+ ♗e6 28.♖c4
(Yandemirov-Iliushin, Ishevsk 2005)
and now, for instance, 28...e4!?!≠.

20... ♖a6+ 21. ♖g2 ♖xf6 22. ♖a4!

White must keep the queens on the board. 22. ♖xf6+?! is worse: 22... ♖xf6 23. ♖ac1 ♖d6=.



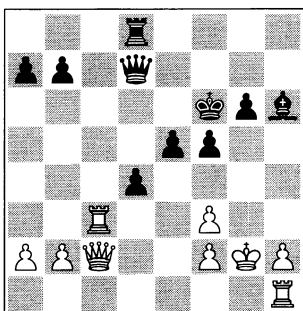
A desirable endgame for Black.

24. ♖hd1 ♖e6 25. ♖c3 ♖d8 26. ♖dc1 d4 27. ♖c8 ♖d7 28. ♖g8 ♖f6 29. ♖f1 d3 30. ♖d1 ♖c5 (30... ♖c7!?) 31. ♖c8 b6 32. a3 e4 33. b4 ♖e7 34. ♖c4 ♖e5 35. fxe4 fxe4 36. ♖e1 ♖d4 37. ♖xd4??T (≥ 37. ♖c7 ♖g5 38. ♖xa7 ♖c4=) 37... ♖xd4+ Salgado-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2000.

22... ♖c6! 23. ♖b3 ♖h6

This complicates matters. 23... ♖c5!? was safer, for example: 24. ♖ac1 b6=, holding off the white rooks.

24. ♖ad1 ♖d8 25. ♖d3!? ♖f6! 26. ♖c3 ♖d7 27. ♖c2 d4=



Black's central pawns are his main resource in the variation with 9. ♖f4.

28. ♖c7 ♖d5 29. ♖d1 ♖f4 30. ♖c8 ♖xc8 31. ♖xc8 ♖g7 32. ♖c7+ ♖h6 33. ♖b8 ♖g7 34. ♖xa7 d3 35. ♖b8 d2

Now Black's position is solid.

36. ♖c7+ ♖h6 37. b3 b5 38. ♖c3 g5 39. h3 g4 40. hxg4 fxg4 41. a4??

The only serious mistake in this game happens to be decisive. 41. b4! was necessary to keep the balance: 41... ♖g5 42. ♖b3=.

41... b4!+–

The white queen loses control over f3.

42. ♖c2 gxf3+ 43. ♖h3 e4 0-1

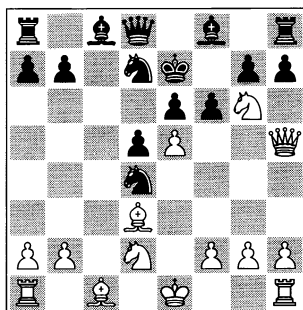
After enjoying this great duel between two Chinese players, we will check another key idea for Black in the Salto Mortale variation with 9. ♖f4: a surprising defence arising on move 15.

GAME 19

□ Thomas Luther

■ Carlos Matamoros Franco
Cienfuegos 1997 (4)

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♖d2 ♖f6 4. e5 ♖fd7 5. ♖d3 c5 6. c3 ♖c6 7. ♖e2 cxd4 8. cxd4 f6 9. ♖f4 ♖xd4 10. ♖h5+ ♖e7 11. ♖g6+?!

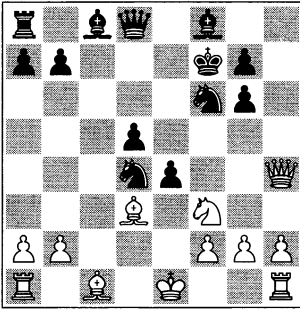


White is not very inspired. 11. exf6+! should be played first. See Game 18.

11... hxg6 12. exf6+ ♖xf6

Returning to the common paths. Advancing with the king is the best way to take advantage of White's error: 12... ♖xf6!? 13. ♖xh8 ♖f7⇒, or else capturing with the pawn: 12... gxf6!? 13. ♖xh8 ♖e5↑.

13. ♖xh8 ♖f7 14. ♖h4!? e5 15. ♖f3 e4!?



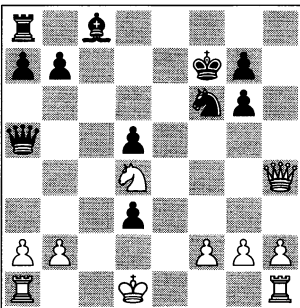
Certainly a creative idea. Its resources are based on the many intermediate checks in the position. Still, this move has not been played too often in practice.

16. ♖xd4 ♖b4+!

A check in the style of the *Fabulous Budapest Gambit!*

17. ♖f1

Psakhis's recommendation for White is 17. ♖d2!? ♖xd2+ 18. ♖xd2 ♖a5+ (another intermediate check) 19. ♖d1 exd3



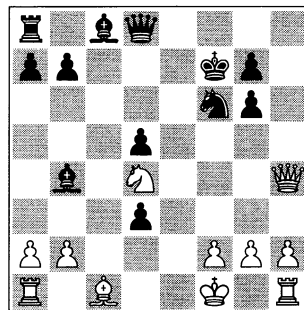
analysis diagram

and now, the best move is 20. ♖b3!? (if 20. ♖f4? ♖b4⚡; or else 20. f3?! ♖d7

21. ♖f2 ♖c8 22. ♖e1? ♖c4! 23. ♖e3 ♖b4 0-1, And. Horvath-Bakk, Budapest 1997) 20... ♖c7 (20... ♖a6!?) 21. ♖c1 ♖e5 22. ♖e1 ♖g4+! (one more check. 22... ♖xb2 is unclear: 23. ♖d4 ♖xa2 24. ♖c7+ ♖d7! 25. ♖xd3 Anagnostopoulos-Emms, Southampton ch-GBR 1986, and now 25... ♖f8!? is interesting, with the idea 26. ♖xb7 ♖c8 27. ♖c7 ♖f5⇒) 23. f3 (23. ♖xg4 ♖xe1+!) 23... ♖e4? (this is not good enough. The best idea was the tactic 23... ♖xb2! 24. ♖c7+ ♖g8 25. ♖e7 ♖e8 26. ♖xg4 ♖xc7=, with a probable draw) 24. fxg4? (24. ♖xe4! ♖xe4 25. ♖c7+ ♖g8 26. ♖e7±) 24... ♖xb2 25. ♖xe4 dxe4 26. ♖e1?? (26. ♖c7+ ♖g8 27. ♖e7∞) 26... ♖xg2⚡ and Black has won too many pawns. Ferguson-C.Morris, England tt 2000/01.

17... exd3⇒

We are on a very narrow path, where good analysis is still lacking.

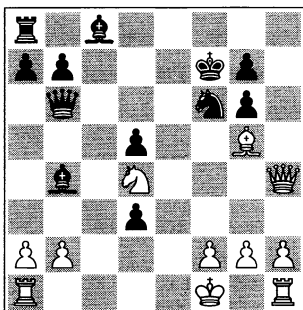


18. ♖g5

18. ♖f3 ♖e7 19. ♖e3 ♖f5 20. ♖c1 ♖e8 21. ♖g1 ♖g4?! (≥ 21... ♖g8!? 22. h3 b6!? with the idea 23. ♖h2?! ♖d6+↑) 22. h3∞ And. Horvath-Dobcsanyi, Budapest 1997; 18. ♖f4?! ♖b6 19. ♖b3 ♖d7 20. ♖e3 ½-½ Arzumian-Cech, Brno 2004. Black has the initiative after 20... ♖b5!?!⚡.

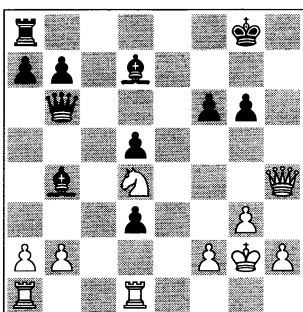
18...♟d7

After this move the position is balanced. In the stem game with 15...e4 the continuation was 18...♞b6!.



This manoeuvre offers better chances of active counterplay: 19.♟xf6 (19.♟b3 ♟e4♠) 19...♞xf6 20.♞xf6+ gx6 21.♞d1 b6⌘ 0-1 Daberitz-Kosten, Avoine 1985. The game could continue: 22.a3 ♟c5 23.♟b5 ♟d7! with an excellent position for Black.

19.g3 ♟g8 20.♟g2 ♞b6 21.♟xf6 gx6 22.♞hd1



22...g5

Forcing the draw. 22...♞e8 23.♞xd3 ♞e4 24.♞h6 ♞xd4 25.♞xg6+ ♟f8 also leads to perpetual check.

**23.♞h6 ♞xd4 24.♞g6+ ♟f8
25.♞xd3 ♞e5 26.♞h6+ ♟g8
27.♞g6+ ♟f8 28.♞h6+ ♟g8
29.♞g6+ 1/2-1/2**

Summary of the 'Salto Mortale' 9.♟f4:

It is obvious that White does not have enough resources to unleash a serious attack. After a forced sequence of moves, the resulting positions are balanced, but the material is not. The advantage will be on the side of the player who has analysed these positions better and understands them more deeply. Key moments: Black can choose from three defences: 9...♞e7. In the main line, after 9...♟xd4! 10.♞h5+ ♟e7, the move 11.♟g6+?! seems to be a mistake (11.exf6+! is better), and 15...e4!? is useful for its surprise value, but it probably leads to a forced draw, while 15...♟xf3 is more flexible and offers many possibilities to both sides.

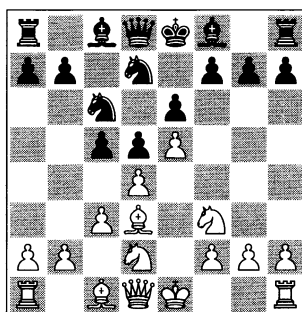
GAME 20

♣ Swayangsu Satyapragyan

♣ Viktor Moskalenko

Andorra 2006 (9)

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟d2 ♟f6 4.e5 ♟fd7
5.♟d3 c5 6.c3 ♟c6 7.♟g3**

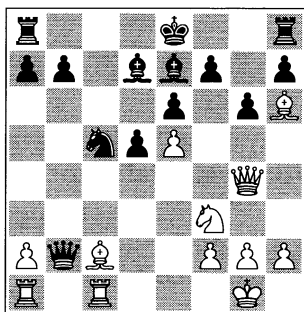


Playing this way, White aims to block the centre with the following plan: 0-0, ♞e1, dxc5 and ♟b3, a set-up that would guarantee a slight but solid positional advantage.

7...g6!?

In my opinion, this is the most effective answer. Black prepares the fianchetto ...♗g7, ...0-0 and ...f7-f6! with counterplay along the f-file and the long g7-a1 diagonal.


A) As usual, taking the central pawn straight away is dangerous: 7...♖b6 8.0-0 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♖xd4 11.♙f3 ♗b6 12.♗a4, with a lasting initiative for White. For instance: 12...♗e7!? (12...♖b4 is more passive: 13.♖c2 ♖c5?! 14.♗e2 ♗e7?! 15.♗e3 ♖a5 16.♖fc1↑ and Black does not have any counterplay, Nedev-Moskalenko, Barbera 2000) 13.♖g4!/? g6 14.♗h6 ♘c5 15.♗c2 (15.♗e3 h5! 16.♖d4 ♗d7) 15...♖xb2! 16.♖fc1 ♗d7.

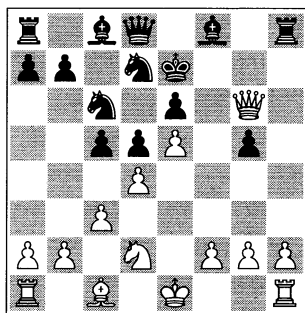


analysis diagram

The position is extremely sharp and complicated. 17.a4 ♖c8 18.♖ab1 ♗a2 (or 18...f5!?) 19.♘g5 ♘a6 20.♗d3 ♖xc1+ 21.♖xc1 ♖b2? (21...♖a3! was better 22.♖d1 ♘c5⚡) 22.♖f4 f6 23.exf6 ♖xf6 24.♖g3 e5!/? 25.♗xa6 bxa6 26.♖e1 ♗d6 27.♖d3∞ Vajda-Spiess, Balatonlelle 2007;

B) The most interesting alternative is to continue in the spirit of the French Defence with 7...f6!/? and now:

 **WEAPON:** *The attacking move 8.♘g5? does not work: 8...fxg5 9.♖h5+ g6 10.♗xg6+ hxg6 11.♖xg6+ ♗e7.*

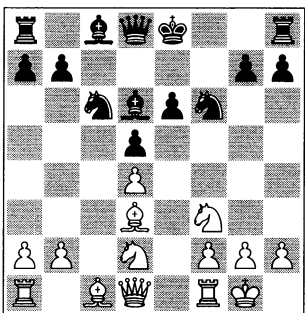


analysis diagram

Black is ready to play 12...♘dxe5!: 12.♘e4 ♘dxe5!! 13.♗xg5+ ♗d7 14.♘f6+ ♗c7 15.♘e8+ ♖xe8 16.♖xe8 ♗g7—.

B1) 8.0-0 is no better: 8...fxe5 9.♘xe5 ♘dxe5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11.♖h5+ ♘f7 12.♖e1 ♗d6⚡;

B2) 8.exf6 ♘xf6 (capturing with the queen is worse: 8...♖xf6?! 9.0-0 ♗d6 10.♖e1!↑ 0-0? 11.♗xh7+! ♗xh7 12.♖xe6! ♗xh2+ 13.♗xh2 ♖f4+ 14.♗g1± Kasparov-Rodgaard, Torshavn simul 2001) 9.0-0 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗d6=.



analysis diagram

The knight on d2 is slightly passive. 11.b3 (11.♖e1 0-0 12.a3 ♖b6⇌ Garcia Luque-De la Riva Aguado, Linares ch-ESP 1993, by transposition) 11...0-0 12.♗b2 ♖b6 13.♖c1 ♗d7 14.♘e5 ♗e8 15.♗b1? (15.♘df3 ♘b4⇌; 15.♘xc6 ♗xc6 16.♖e2 ♖ae8=) 15...♗h5 16.♖e1 ♘xd4 17.♗xd4

♙xd4 18.♟ef3 ♚b6 ½-½ Lastin-Kosyrev, Moscow 2006;

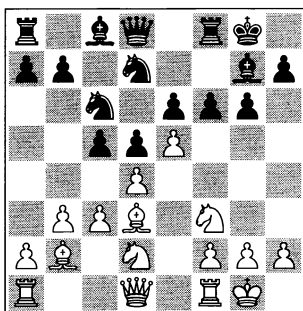
C) For 7...♙e7!? see Chapter 4, Game 27.

8.0-0

White does not harass his opponent and continues in a natural way. The most aggressive reaction would be 8.h4!?, a typical attacking plan against the fianchetto. See the next game.

8...♙g7 9.♙e1

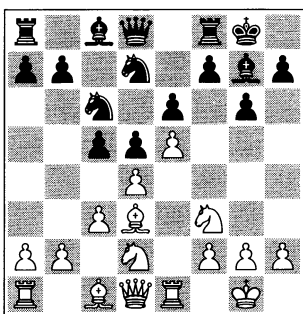
9.b3 0-0 10.♙b2 f6! would be an ideal set-up for Black.



analysis diagram

11.exf6 ♙xf6 12.c4? (12.♞e1 ♙f4!?) 12...cxd4 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♙b5 ♙d6 15.♙xc6 bxc6 16.♙xd4 ♙xd4 17.♟xd4 ♟e5 18.♙e2 ♙g4 19.f3 ♙d7 20.♞fd1 ♞ae8—+ with a winning initiative: 21.♙a6 ♙c5 22.♟f1 ♙c8 23.♙a4 ♙b6 24.♟h1 ♞f4 25.g3 ♞xf3! 26.♞d2 ♙h3 0-1 Vogt-Bareev, Budapest 1988.

9...0-0



From this point on, Black threatens ...f7-f6.

10.♟f1

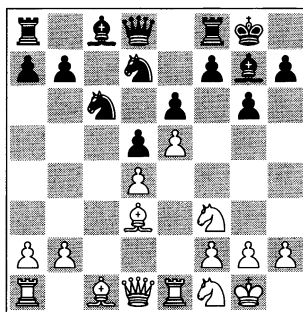
A) In the event of 10.♙e2, a possible answer is 10...f6!?! 11.exf6 ♙xf6 12.♙xe6+? (12.♙b5!?! e5 13.♙xc6 ♙xc6 14.♟xe5 ♟xe5 15.dxe5 b6 16.♟b3 a5 17.a4 ♞a7 with activity for the pawn) 12...♙xe6 13.♞xe6 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♟xd4 15.♞e7? (15.♞d6 ♟c5 16.♞xd5 ♟xd3 17.♟xd4 ♟f4—+; 15.♟xd4 ♙xd4 16.♟f3 ♟c5 17) 15...♟c5—+, Fluvia Poyatos-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2005;

B) Another good position for Black arises after 10.dxc5?!, since this plan is not successful: 10...♟dxe5 (including 10...b6!?! is interesting from a tactical point of view) 11.♟xe5 ♟xe5 12.♙c2?! ♙c7, Chanwxt-CapNemo, playchess.com 2007.

10...cxd4!

Preparing a counterattack with the f-pawn. Another possibility is 10...♙b6!?! and if 11.dxc5 ♙c7!?, winning the e5 pawn.

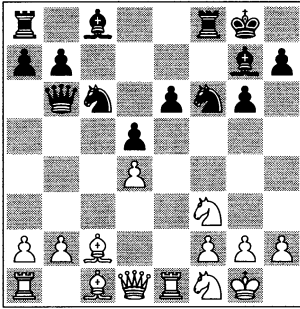
11.cxd4



11...f6

The battle in the centre begins. A strong alternative is the favourite move of two specialists, grandmasters Mikhail Gurevich and Mikhail Ulbin, who develop their queen first: 11...♙b6!?

12. ♖c2 (12. ♖e3 f6⇒) 12...f6!⇒
13. exf6 ♘xf6



14. ♖a4!?

Other moves have even less point:

A) 14. ♖b3?! ♖d7 and now:



WEAPON: 15. ♘g3 ♘g4 16. h3
♖xd4! 17. hxg4 ♘xf2+ 18. ♖h2

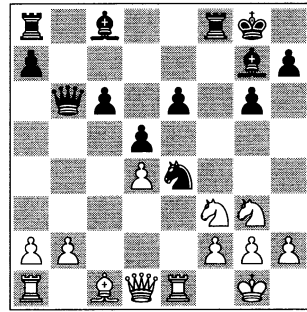
♖c7—+.

15. h3 ♘e4↑ 16. ♖e3 a5 17. ♖b1 ♖xf3
18. gxf3 ♘d6 19. ♖a4 ♘f5 20. f4 ♖f8
21. ♘g3 ♘fxd4 22. ♖g2 ♖d8 23. ♖xd4
♘xd4 24. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 25. ♖d2 e5
26. fxe5 ♘f3 27. e6 ♘xd2 28. exd7
♘xb1 29. ♖xb1 ♖d8 30. ♘e2 ♖xd7 with
a winning endgame for Black,
Nisipeanu-M. Gurevich, St Vincent 2004;

B) 14. h3?! ♖d7 (14...♘e8!?) 15. ♖e3
♘d6⚡ 15. ♘g3 ♖ac8 16. a3? ♘e8
17. ♖a4 ♘d6⚡ Murdzia-Socko, Warsaw
ch-POL 2003;

C) 14. ♖b1?! ♖d7 15. h3 ♘b4 16. ♖b3
♖b5 (16...♘e4!?) 17. ♘e5? ♘e4!
18. ♖e3 ♘xf2! 19. ♖xf2 ♖xf2 20. ♖xf2
♖xe5 21. ♖g1 (21. ♖xe5 ♘d3+ 22. ♖g3
♖xd4—+) 21...♖xd4+ 22. ♖h2 ♘d3
23. ♖e2 ♖g1+ 24. ♖h1 ♘f2+ 25. ♖xf2
♖xf2 and Black won easily,
Benjamin-M. Gurevich, Cap d'Agde 2000;

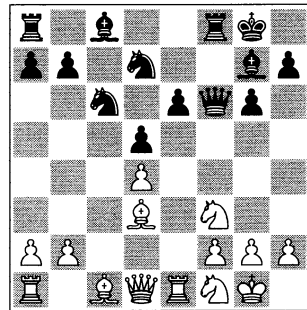
D) After 14. ♖a4!?, the reply 14...♘e4
(14...♖d7!?)⚡ prepares a surprising
stroke: 15. ♖xc6 bxc6 16. ♘g3



analysis diagram

16...♘xf2. A thematic but perhaps un-
necessary sacrifice (a quieter alternative
was 16...♘d6!?) 17. b3 ♘b5 with slight
pressure on d4, or else 16...e5!?)
17. ♖xf2 ♖xd4+ 18. ♖e3 ♖xe3+, lead-
ing to a drawing line (18...♖xb2+!?)
19. ♖g1 ♖xa1 20. ♖xd4 ♖xd1
21. ♖xd1 ♖a6⇒ with a complicated
ending): 19. ♖xe3 e5 20. ♖b3! e4
21. ♘xe4 ♖xb3 22. axb3 dxe4 23. ♖xe4
♖f5 24. ♖e7 ♖g4 25. ♖xa7 ♖xa7
26. ♖xa7 ♖xf3 27. gxf3 ♖b8 28. ♖c7
♖xb3 29. ♖xc6 ♖xb2+ ½-½ Mahjoob-
Ulibin, Teheran 2004.

12. exf6 ♖xf6⇒

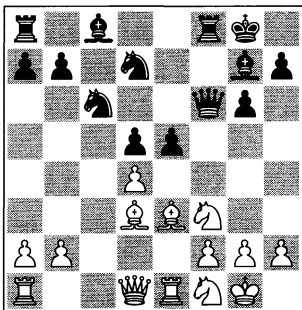


In my analysis I believed Black's posi-
tion to be satisfactory. He needs to open
up the position, preparing ...e6-e5, in
order to take advantage of the fact that
White is slightly passive at the moment.
However, 12...♘xf6! is also playable.

13. ♖e3

From a tactical point of view, 13.♙g5!? ♜f7 14.♙e3 was interesting, and if now 14...e5, 15.♟g5! with certain complications after 15...♜f6 (15...♜e7?! is worse in view of 16.♜b3↑) 16.♟xh7!? ♟xh7 17.♜h5+ ♟g8 18.♙xg6 ♜f7 and the position is double-edged.

13...e5!



Offering a real fight.

14.♜b3!

Playing on the Internet is always easier: 14.dxe5 ♟dxe5 15.♟xe5 ♟xe5↑ 16.♙c2 ♟g4!? 17.♙b3 ♟xe3 18.fxe3 ♜xb2 19.♜xd5+ ♟h8♯ Sergey Azarov-CapNemo, playchess.com 2007.

14...♜d6!?

14...exd4 transposes into the game: 15.♜xd5+ ♜f7 16.♙c4 ♜xd5 17.♙xd5+ ♟h8.

15.♙e4

Or 15.dxe5 ♟dxe5 16.♟xe5 ♟xe5 17.♙e2 ♙e6♯.

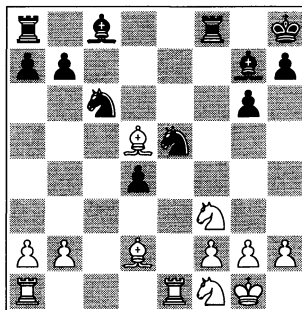
15...exd4

The game now goes into an extremely complicated endgame, whereas 15...♟f6!? would have kept the queens on the board: 16.dxe5 ♟xe5 17.♟g3 ♟xe4 18.♟xe4 ♟xf3+ 19.gxf3 ♜e6 20.♟g5 ♜f5 21.♜ad1 ♜d8♯ with good chances for the black army: the bishop pair and the absence of the white pawn on d4 are good signs.

16.♜xd5+ ♜xd5 17.♙xd5+ ♟h8 18.♙d2

18.♙g5 ♟b4!?!♯.

18...♟de5



19.♟g5?

A step on the path towards defeat. After 19.♟xe5 ♟xe5 20.♙b4 ♜d8 21.♙e4 ♙f5↑ Black has a slight initiative. Or 19.♟g3 ♟d3♯.

19...h6 20.♟e4 ♟d3 21.♜e2 ♜d8!♯

And Black kept the initiative right to the end of the game.

21...♟xb2!? 22.♙xh6 ♙xh6 23.♜xb2 ♜d8 24.♙xc6 bxc6♯.

22.♙b3

22.♟d6 ♟h7♯.

22...b6

22...♟xb2!?.

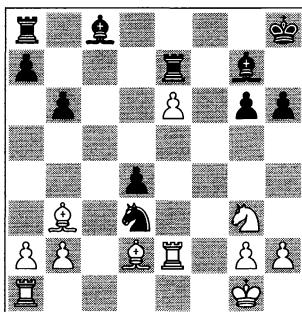
23.♟d6 ♟ce5

≥ 23...♟h7 24.♟f7+ ♜d7♯.

24.f4 ♜xd6 25.fxe5 ♜d7 26.e6 ♜e7

27.♟g3?†

27.♙d5 ♜b8♯.



27... ♖a6

27... ♗c5!

28. ♖b1? ♗c5 29. ♖f2 ♗xb3 30. axb3

♗xe6 31. ♖a1 ♖b5 32. ♖f7 a6 33. ♖c1

♖c6 34. h4 h5 35. ♖g5 ♖f8

35... d3!

36. ♖a7 a5 37. ♗e2?? ♗xe2 38. ♖xc6

♖e1+ 0-1

Summary of this game: When studying the line 7. ♗g3 it is interesting to begin with the immediate French break 7... f6!?, which offers both sides a lot of chances. Later, in the event of the solid 7... g6!?, the continuation 8. 0-0 is quite weak for White, since Black gains counterplay without trouble, by preparing the set-up ... ♖g7, ... 0-0 and ... f7-f6. From move 10 onwards, ... ♗b6!? is an interesting preliminary move before attacking with the f-pawn. The final summary of 7. ♗g3 will be given after we have analysed the advance 8. h4!? in the next game.

GAME 21

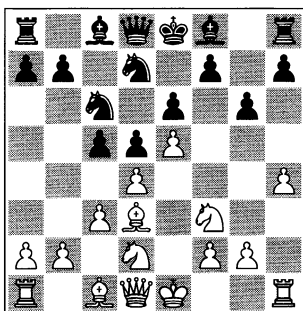
□ Charles Monroy

■ Viktor Moskalenko

Illes Medes 2006 (3)

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗d2 ♗f6 4. e5 ♗fd7

5. ♖d3 c5 6. c3 ♗c6 7. ♗g3 g6 8. h4!



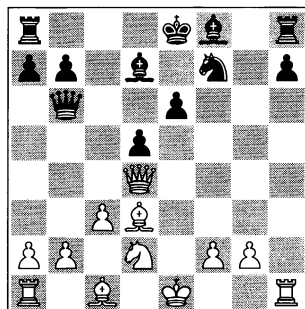
This advance is more logical against the fianchetto.

8... h6!?

With the idea of repeating the plan examined in the previous game: ... ♖g7, ... 0-0, ... f6.

A) 8... ♗b6 is more fashionable, but in my opinion the resulting complications favour White: 9. h5 and now:

A1) Surprisingly, I have never tried 9... cxd4!? 10. hxg6 (10. cxd4 g5 leads back to 9... g5) 10... ♗dx5!, after which a possible continuation would be 11. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 12. gxf7+ ♗xf7 13. ♗a4+ ♖d7 14. ♗xd4



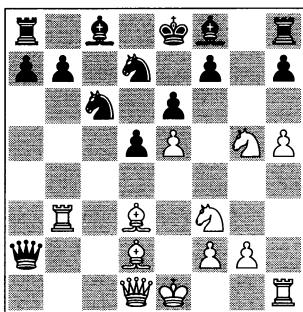
analysis diagram

and here both 14... ♖c5 15. ♗h4 h5 and 14... ♗xd4!? 15. cxd4 e5 guarantee good counterplay;

A2) 9... ♖g7?! is weak: 10. ♗f1! cxd4 11. cxd4 ♗xd4 12. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 13. ♗f3 ♗b6 14. ♗a4 with a dangerous initiative for a single pawn, Jirovsky-De Andres Gonalons, Hamburg 1999;

A3) 9... g5 This is the main resource of Black's defence. 10. ♗xg5 cxd4 11. cxd4 ♗xd4!? (very complicated, but objectively necessary. If 11... ♗xd4 12. ♗df3! ♗xf3+ (12... ♖c5? is virtually losing on account of 13. 0-0 h6 14. ♗xf7 ♗xf7 15. b4!+-) 13. ♗xf3 ♗c5 14. 0-0 ♗xd3 15. ♗xd3±. All this was played in Degraeve-Brynell, Leon

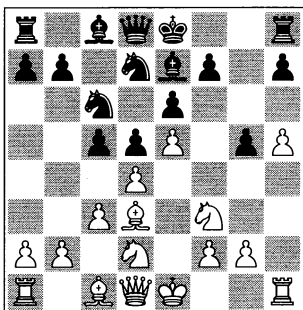
Ech-tt 2001. White has successfully executed the main idea behind 7.♟g3. With a blocked centre, Black is passive and his king is unsafe) 12.♟df3 ♖b4+ 13.♙d2 ♖xb2 14.♞b1 ♖a3 15.♞b3 was played in Fedorchuk-I.Rajlich, Warsaw rapid 2005. And now the critical response is 15...♖xa2!?∞.



analysis diagram

This position is hard to assess without deep analysis. With two extra pawns, Black is threatening ...♟c5 or ...♟dxe5, but it is clear that his king will remain in the centre until the end of the game.

B) The most suitable response may be 8...♙e7!? and if White continues aggressively with 9.h5?! (9.0-0 0-0!?), 9...g5! is better for Black.



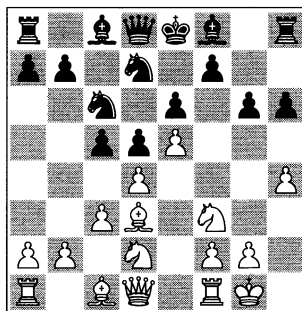
analysis diagram

For instance: 10.dxc5?! ♟dxe5 (10...g4!?) 11.♟xe5 ♟xe5 12.♟b3 ♖c7 13.h6 ♙d7 14.♙e3 0-0-0 15.♟d4 f5!≠ Jones-Sengupta, Gibraltar 2007.

9.♟b1!?

Absurd, but not necessarily bad! The knight goes back to its home square to free the path for the queen's bishop. Let us check some important alternatives:

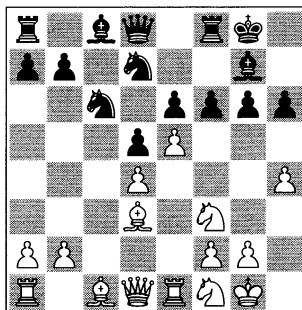
A) The most popular continuation is quite absurd as well: 9.0-0!?



analysis diagram

In my opinion, this move is not very logical after h2-h4.

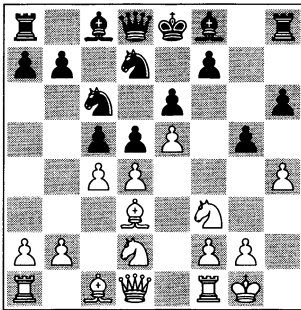
A1) 9...♙g7!? (I cannot recommend either 9...♖b6?! 10.♞e1 ♙g7 11.dxc5 ♟xc5 12.♟b3±, or 9...♙e7 10.g3 ♖b6 (...g7-g5!? is always interesting here) 11.♞e1 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♟xd4 13.♟xd4?! ♖xd4 14.♟f3 ♖b6 15.♖a4 ♙f8 16.♙e3∞ Mark Tseitlin-Simon Padros, Dresden 2007) 10.♞e1 0-0 (as before, 10...g5!? is possible) 11.♟f1 (11.♙c2 f6 12.exf6 ♖xf6 13.dxc5 b6!⇒) 11...cxd4! (11...f6? 12.exf6 ♖xf6? 13.♟1h2 cxd4 14.♟g4→) 12.cxd4 f6!⇒



analysis diagram

Black has reached his desired position. 13. exf6 (if 13. ♖xg6 fxe5 14. dxe5 ♘dxe5 15. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16. ♖xe5 ♖xe5! 17. ♖xh6 ♖xh4! 18. ♖xf8 ♖xf8 19. ♖b3 ♖f6⇒) 13... ♖xf6 14. ♖e3 e5! 15. dxe5 ♘dxe5 16. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 17. ♖e2 (17. ♖d4 ♖f4 18. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 19. ♖e2 ♖d4⇒) 17... ♖e6 18. ♖d4? (≥ 18. h5 ♘c4) 18... ♖xh4 19. g3 ♖e4! 20. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 21. ♖f3 ♖f5 22. ♖xe6 ♖xf3 – analysis of the game Oratovsky-Moskalenko, Santpedor rapid 2004;

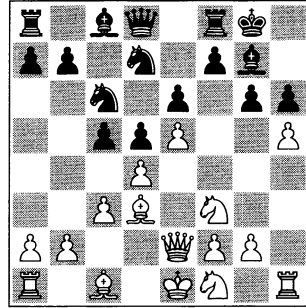
A2) 9...g5!? This is the move I advise! Generally speaking, this is Black's best resource in this line. 10. c4!?



analysis diagram

A sharp attack, invented by the young star Fabiano Caruana. 10... ♘b4 (a genuine duel arises after 10...g4!? 11. cxd5! gxf3 (or 11...exd5!? 12. e6!? fxe6 13. ♖g6+ ♖e7 14. ♘h2 h5∞ – staying cool is important here) 12. dxc6 fxc2 13. cxd7+ ♖xd7 14. ♖xg2 ♖xh4 15. ♖g1 ♖g8+ 16. ♖f1 ♖xg1+ 17. ♖xg1 ♖c6 18. d5 ♖xd5 19. ♖e4 0-0-0! 20. ♖f3 ♖g7 21. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 22. ♖xf7 ♖g4+ 23. ♖f1 ♖d1+ 24. ♖g2 ♖g4+ with a guaranteed draw for Black, Gopal-Ganguly, Dhaka Zonal 2007) 11. ♖b1 g4! 12. ♘h2 ♖g8 (12...h5!?) 13. cxd5 ♘xd5 14. ♘e4 h5 and the position is double edged.

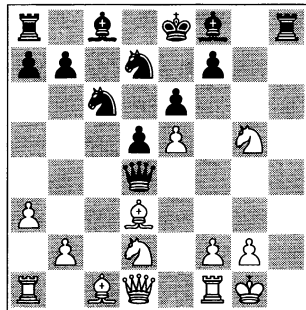
B) 9. ♖e2 ♖g7 (9...cxd4!? 10. cxd4 ♘b4⇒; 9... ♖b6!? 10. dxc5 ♘xc5 11. ♖c2 ♖a6 12. ♖xa6 bxa6⇒) 10. ♘f1 0-0 11. h5



analysis diagram

11...g5?? (11...cxd4! was necessary: 12. cxd4 g5 with the idea 13. ♖xg5? ♘xd4!) 12. ♖xg5!+ – Fluvia-Mayo Martinez, Calella de Palafrugell 2004;

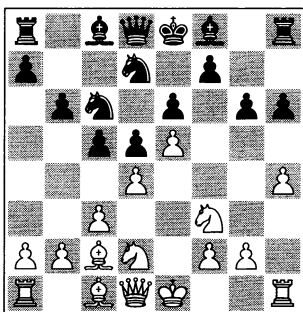
D) Another important example is 9.a3 with a position similar to those in the Advance Variation (3.e5): 9... ♖b6! (9... ♖g7?! 10. b4±) 10. 0-0 g5! 11. hxg5 hxg5 12. ♘xg5 cxd4 13. cxd4 ♖xd4!⇒ (13... ♘xd4!?)



analysis diagram

with very tactical lines, for example: 14. ♘df3 ♖g4 15. ♘xf7! ♖g8 16. ♘7g5 ♘dxe5 17. ♖e2 ♘xf3+ 18. ♖xf3 ♖h4 19. g3?? ♖xg5! and Black won, Perunovic-Berg, Gothenburg 2005;

E) Several strong players, even grandmaster Adams, used to play 9.♟c2 b6!?.



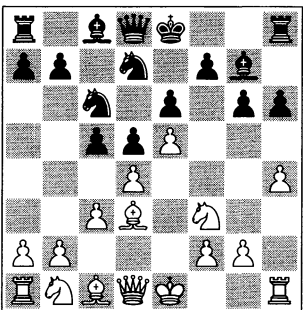
analysis diagram

Now, the most logical option is to activate the other bishop by way of a6: 10.0-0 (10.♞e2 a5!) 10...♟a6 11.♞e1 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♟b4 (12...g5!?) 13.♟b1 (13.♟b1 g5!?) 13...♞c7 (13...♟e7!?) 14.♟c3 g5⇒ 14.♟c3 ♟xc2 15.♞xc2 0-0-0 (15...♟g7!?) 16.♟f4 ♟b7∞ with scope for creative play, Gopal-Ghane Gardeh, Visakhpatnam Ach-tt 2008;

F) Fritz 11 suggests 9.b3! followed by ♟b2 as the optimal set-up, but Black can do the same: 9...b6!? 10.♟b2 ♟b7 and the position is quite balanced.

9...♟g7

Following the main plan. However, at this point in the opening Black could include 9...♞b6!⇒, attacking d4, as in the Advance Variation.



10.♟e3!

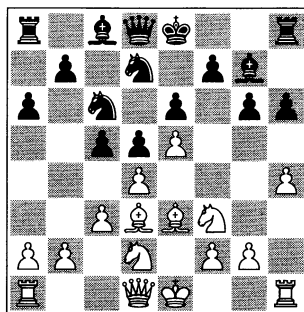
Black is strong in the centre, so...

10...a6!?

10...0-0?! is a provocative option:

11.♞d2, with a potential attack.

11.♟bd2

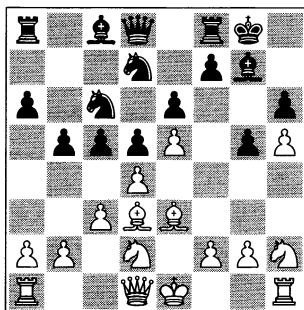


After an absurd intermezzo, we have landed in the variation 3.♟d2. with the 'extra' 10.♟e3.

11...b5!


11...0-0 is still dangerous.

12.h5 g5 13.♟h2?! 0-0!



At just the right time! This is exactly what Black needs to achieve a comfortable position. 13...cxd4?! 14.cxd4 ♟dx5 15.dxe5 d4 16.♟e4!±.

14.♟g4 f5?!

 WEAPON: As in many cases, the best option is to include the exchange 14...cxd4! 15.cxd4 and now 15...f5! 16.exf6 ♟xf6 17.♟xf6+ ♞xf6 18.♟f3 e5!.

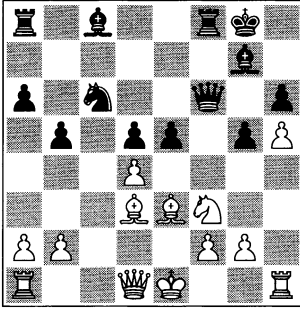
15.exf6 ♟xf6 16.♟xf6+ ♚xf6 17.♟f3

Going back to the set-up of the stem game. 17.dxc5!? was a good chance to take advantage of Black's error on move 14: 17...b4 18.♞c1 bxc3 19.bxc3 e5 20.0-0 ♞b8☞.

17...cxd4

But now, best was 17...g4! 18.♟h2 e5↑.

18.cxd4 e5!



Eventually, I have managed to execute the same plan as if White had played 8.0-0, and I have gained the initiative. The position is not so clear after 18...g4 19.♞c1!.

19.dxe5 ♟xe5 20.♟d4?

The blockade does not work. 20.♟xe5 was more natural: 20...♚xe5 21.0-0 ♚xb2!? 22.♙e4, with chances of equalising.

20...♟g4!

Now my friend Charles faces a tough defence.

21.♚d2 ♟xe3 22.fxe3 ♙g4 23.♙g6 ♚e5

23...♞ad8!? was more precise.

24.♟f3 ♚xb2

The technical path was 24...♙xf3!? 25.gxf3 ♚g3+ 26.♚f2 ♞xf3 27.♚xg3 ♞xg3 28.♟f2 ♙e5↑.

25.♚xd5+ ♟h8 26.0-0 ♞ad8 27.♚e4 ♙xf3 28.gxf3 ♞d2

Time-trouble is the deciding factor in such situations: 28...♙e5! 29.f4 gxf4—+.

29.f4 gxf4 30.♞ab1 ♚e5

30...♚xa2!?

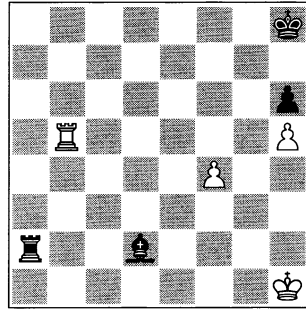
31.♞xf4 ♞xf4 32.exf4 ♚d4+ 33.♟h1

♚d8 34.♚e1 ♙c3 35.♚e8+ ♚xe8

36.♙xe8 ♞xa2 37.♙xb5??

37.♞g1 ♙d2!↑.

37...axb5 38.♞xb5 ♙d2—+



And my opponent resigned soon after:

39.♞b8+ ♟g7 40.♞b7+ ♟g8 41.♞b8+

♟f7 42.♞b7+ ♟e8 43.♟g2 ♙xf4+

44.♟f3 ♙g5 45.♟g4 ♞a5 46.♞g7 ♟f8

47.♞g6 ♟f7 48.♟g3 ♞a4 0-1

Conclusions regarding 'Fianchetto vs. Symmetry' – 7.♟g3 g6:

It is clear that the best option for White is 8.h4!. However, after the semi-blockading move 8...h6!? (8...♙e7 is also interesting, whereas the immediate 8...♚b6 is risky), the h-pawn cannot progress and it becomes quite weak. White must revert to central action – his d4 pawn is in trouble – and solve the problem of his queenside development.

In the attack against the centre Black can combine three important resources: ...f7-f6, ...♚b6 and ...g6-g5, at any moment during the opening. The positions arising are very complicated and neither side is guaranteed success. Michael Adams, Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu and other grandmasters won several games

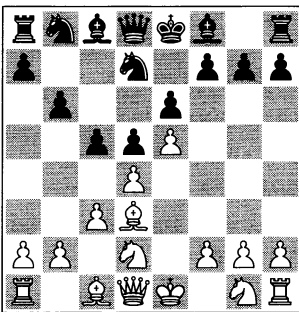
with white, but later Mikhail Gurevich, Evgeny Bareev and the author of this book, among others, improved the line and its statistics. Since it is hard to imagine a thematic tournament where all doubts will be resolved, we will have to wait for new games in this line!

In the following game I was not able to improve my score against Ivanchuk, but thanks to it I learned a great deal about the French Defence, and this knowledge was very useful to me in subsequent games. What I especially learned about was the kind of positions Black should avoid.

GAME 22

□ Vasily Ivanchuk
 ■ Viktor Moskalenko
 Lvov 1988 (12)


1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♞d2 ♟f6 4.e5 ♞fd7
 5.c3 c5 6.♙d3 b6

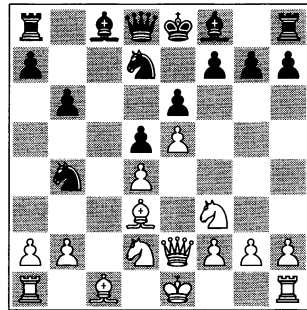


The idea behind this move is to exchange White's most dangerous piece with ...♙a6 and ♙x♙ and, from then on to block the position as much as possible. White has two different plans in this position, but he can also combine them both.

7.f4

Vasily chooses the plan of maintaining the centre with pawns. Another useful move is the king's knight manoeuvre 7.♞h3, with which White aims to attack with his pieces. See Game 23.

 **WEAPON:** *The automatic response 7.♞e2?! temporarily avoids ...♙a6, but it allows a more serious counterattack: 7...♞c6 (7...cxd4!? may be a better move order) 8.♞gf3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♞b4.*



analysis diagram

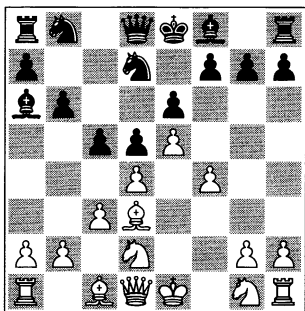
Now Black succeeds in exchanging the terrible ♙d3 'for free'. Here, 10.♙b5?? is another automatic response, played very often in my Internet games! After 10...♞c2+! my opponents close the window!

10.0-0 ♞xd3 11.♞xd3 ♞b8 (11...a5!?)
 12.b4 ♙d7 13.♞b1 a6 14.♞e1 ♙b5
 15.♞b3 ♞d7 16.♞e3 ♙e7 17.h4 ♙a4
 18.♞d3 ♞b5 19.♞c3 ♞c6 20.♞g5 ♞c8
 21.♞g3 0-0 22.♞e3 ♙c2! 23.♞b2 ♙g6
 24.♞df3 ♞d3 25.♞f4 ♞xd4! (all Black's dreams came true in this game)
 26.♞xd4 ♞d1+ 27.♙h2 ♞xc1 28.♞f3 ♞h1+ 29.♙g3 ♞g1 0-1 Garcia Padron-Moskalenko, Maspalomas 2002.

7.♞g4!? is a more interesting move. This is a dangerous queen manoeuvre, especially in the Winawer Variation. See the next game.

7...♙a6

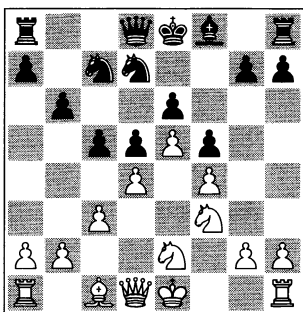
The ball is again in White's court.



8.♙b1!?

A radical concept. White keeps his bishop as an extra attacking resource. Black must react in an ultra-active way. Natural moves would help Black to execute his plan:

A) 8.♙xa6 ♘xa6 9.♘df3 ♘c7! (my plan was to prepare the super-blockade ...f7-f5 and ...c5-c4. This idea does not work in the move order 9...♙e7 10.♘e2 c4? (playing ...f7-f5! first works better) 11.0-0 0-0 12.g4!? f5 13.exf6 ♘xf6 14.♘e5 ♘c7 15.♘g3 b5 16.♙e2 ♙d6 17.♙d2 ♘d7 18.f5! ♙e7 19.♞ae1 and White has the upper hand, Krogius-Kortchnoi, Tbilisi 1956) 10.♘e2 f5!?

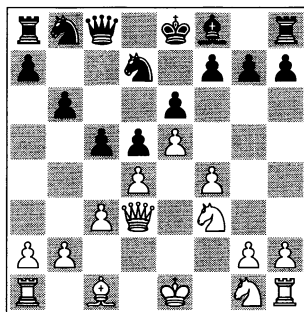


analysis diagram

In Nimzowitsch style. 11.a4 (11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♘e5 ♙d6⇒) 11...♘b8! 12.b3 ♘c6 (a successful end to a long journey: ...♘g8-f6-d7-b8-c6) 13.♙a3 ♙e7 14.0-0 0-0 15.♙c2 ♙d7 16.♞fd1 ♞fc8 17.♙b2 ♞ab8 18.♞ac1 c4 19.bxc4


dxc4 20.♘d2 ♙xa3 21.♙xa3 ♘a5 22.♞f1 ♘d5 23.♞f3 b5! 24.axb5 ♞xb5 25.♘f1 ♘b3 26.♞d1 ♞a5 27.♙b2 ♙b5⌘ 28.♘e3? ♘xd4! 0-1 Ortel-Moskalenko, Cannes 1990;

B) 8.♘df3 ♙xd3 9.♙xd3 ♙c8! is a different strategy.



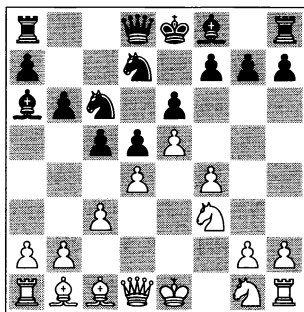
analysis diagram

Aiming to exchange the queens using the same exit. In this game there were some interesting hidden resources: 10.f5! ♙a6! 11.♙e3 (11.♙xa6 ♘xa6=) 11...♘c6 12.fxe6 fxe6 13.♘e2

 WEAPON: 13...cxd4!⇒ with the idea 14.cxd4? ♘b4.

13...♙e7 14.0-0 0-0 15.♘f4 ♘d8?! (more tactics: 15...cxd4! with the idea 16.cxd4 ♞xf4! 17.♙xf4 ♘xd4!⌘) 16.♙f2 Kr.Georgiev-Moskalenko, Orange 1990, and now 16...cxd4 17.cxd4 ♘c5!⇒ was another pretty resource.

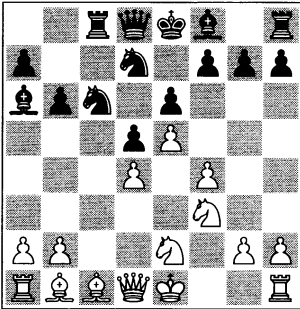
8...♘c6 9.♘df3



9...cxd4!?

Theoretically, the development of the 6...b6 system hardly changes. However, I have found a few fresh games with 9...g6, another way to prevent f4-f5: 10.♟e2 ♟e7 11.0-0 ♖c7 12.♗f2 0-0-0 (12...0-0!? is also good) 13.♟e3 ♘b7 14.h3 ♗c8 15.a3 with equal chances. Ramesh-Buchenau, Sitges 2006, and (after 10.♟e2) 10...h5 11.♟g5 ♟e7 12.♟g1 ♟f5 13.♟f3 ♟e7 14.♘f2 ♟b8 15.b3 ♟c6 16.♟b2 ♗c8 17.a3 ♖d7 18.♞e1 (the position is balanced, but Black has no active counterplay) 18...cxd4 19.cxd4 ♟a5 20.♟xf5!? gxf5 21.♞e3 White is better in many ways, Vachier Lagrave-Akopian, Moscow 2006.

10.cxd4 ♗c8 11.♟e2



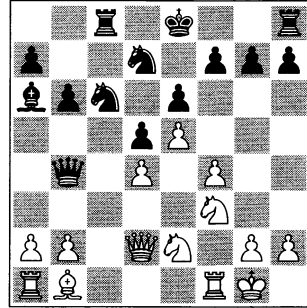
The critical position for the plan implemented by Ivanchuk (8.♟b1).

11...f5

Since I could not find a single dynamic idea over the board, I decided to trust in the fabulous concept of the blockade.

In the 1980s I spent some time studying the series of books about strategy written by Aaron Nimzowitsch. I discovered that he adhered to many dogmas and his concepts don't work well in dynamic positions. Chess might need a 'New System' in the 21st Century!

A) Of course, possibilities involving the check must be investigated: 11...♟b4+! 12.♟d2 (12.♘f2 f6!⇒) 12...♟xd2+ 13.♖xd2 ♖e7!? 14.0-0 ♖b4⇒.



analysis diagram

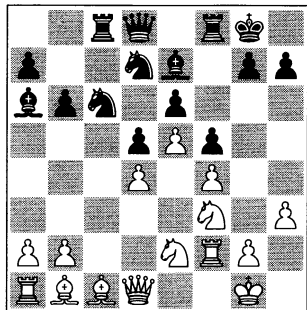
I think that, with regard to the resulting ending, Black's position is satisfactory.

B) 11...♟e7?! is too slow: 12.f5! 0-0 13.0-0 ♖c7 14.♟d2!? and White is in control.

12.0-0

The critical move was 12.♟g5 ♟b4+ (an automatic defence; 12...♖e7! 13.♟c3 g6⇒) 13.♘f2 ♟f8 14.♟e3 h6 15.♟f3 ♟g6 16.h4 and White has a slight initiative, Graf-Priehoda, Leipzig 2002.

12...♟e7 13.♗f2 0-0 14.h3



The resulting position is hard to assess. White prepares g2-g4 and Black should wait, since at the moment he has no counterplay.

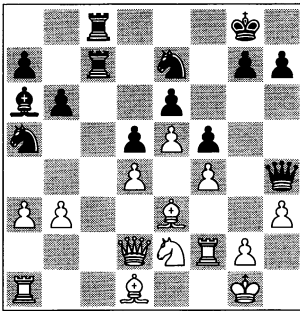
14...♙h4

A slightly desperate move. 14...♖c7!? was probably better: 15.♙e3 (15.♟c3 b5⇒) 15...♟a5 16.b3 ♟c6 17.a3∞ with a complex game.

15.♟xh4 ♖xh4 16.♙e3 ♟a5 17.b3 ♟b8

17...♖c7.

18.♙c2 ♟bc6 19.♖d2 ♖c7 20.♙d1 ♖fc8 21.a3 ♟e7



The position is balanced, but easier to play for White.

22.♖f3 ♟g6 23.♙f2 ♖e7 24.♙e1 ♖f8 25.♖e3 ♟c6 26.♙d2 ♙b5 27.♟c3 ♙a6 28.♖f2 ♟ge7 29.♟a2 ♙b5

29...♟g6=.

30.a4 ♙a6 31.♙c3 ♙b7?! 32.b4 a5?

32...♟g6=.

33.b5 ♟b4 34.♙xb4 axb4 35.♟xb4±

And White had no trouble in converting his advantage:

35...♖c3 36.♖d2 ♟g6 37.♟d3 ♖a3

38.♖c1 ♖xc1 39.♟xc1 ♖c8 40.♙b3 ♖a1 41.♖f1 ♖a3 42.♖b2 ♖f8 43.♟d3

h5 44.♖f3 h4 45.♟h2 ♟h7 46.♟c5 1-0

The truth is that I did not have many chances in this game. Ivanchuk increased his advantage very carefully. From a theoretical point of view, the creative plan implemented by Ivanchuk with 8.♙b1 is interesting. I think that the easiest way to equalise is

11...♙b4+!, but the blockade option 11...f5 is quite solid as well.

In the following game we will analyse the natural knight manoeuvre 7.♟h3. White prepares to attack with his pieces, or he can combine this idea with the advance f2-f4. For his part, Black has several defensive set-ups. There is a considerable number of good and bad examples!

GAME 23

♣ **Ibragim Khamrakulov**

♠ **Viktor Moskalenko**

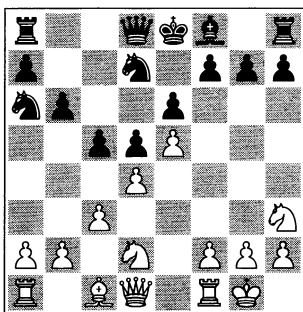
Salou 2002 (8)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟d2 ♟f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.♙d3 c5 6.c3 b6 7.♟e2!?

The knight's position on e2 is very flexible, so this is the most practical move.

A) The natural development 7.♟gf3 offers fewer ideas: 7...♙a6 8.♙xa6 (not 8.c4? cxd4 9.0-0? ♟c5! 0-1 Monroy-Moskalenko, France tt-2 2002/03, an ultra-miniature!) 8...♟xa6 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♖e2 (for 10.♖e1 see Chapter 4, Game 27) 10...♟c7 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.c4 0-0 13.♖d1 f6! (or, for example, 13...a5 14.a4 ♖c8 15.b3 ♖b7 16.♙a3 ♖fe8 17.♖ac1 ♖ad8=, A.Frolov-Moskalenko, Lvov ch-UKR 1988) 14.cxd5?! (≥ 14.exf6 ♙xf6⇒) 14...exd5 15.e6 ♟e5 16.♟xe5 fxe5 17.♖xe5 ♙d6 18.♖h5 ♖f6 19.♟f3 ♖ae8= Black's pieces and pawns are more active, A.Frolov-Moskalenko, Simferopol ch-UKR 1990;

B) 7.♟h3!? is another popular and strong move, with many similarities to the lines with ♟e2: 7...♙a6 8.♙xa6 ♟xa6 9.0-0 and now we reach a very important position in the 6...b6 variation:



analysis diagram

B1) 9...b5 is rather provocative:

B11) 10.f4 ♖b6 11.♟b3 c4 12.♟d2 ♟c7 13.♟h1 f5 14.exf6 ♟xf6 15.f5 ♟d6! 16.fxe6 0-0 ♖ Siklosi-Moskalenko, Hungary 1988;

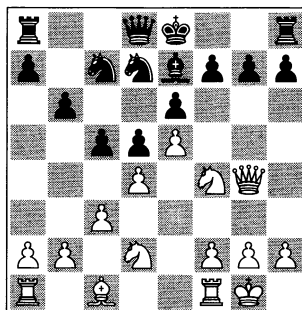
B12) 10.♖g4 ♟b6 (10...cxd4!? 11.cxd4 ♟b6 12.b3 ♖d7 13.a4?! bxa4 14.bxa4 ♟b4 15.a5 ♟c4 16.♟xc4 dxc4 17.♟e3 ♖c8 with good prospects for Black, Semeniuk-Moskalenko, Riga 1988) 11.♟f3 ♖d7 12.dxc5 ♟xc5 13.♟f4 g6 14.♟e3 Akopian-Short, Cap d'Agde Ech rapid 1996, and now 14...♟e4!?! was the best response;

B13) 10.a4 cxd4!N (10...b4 11.c4!?) 11.axb5 (11.cxd4 ♖b6) 11...dxc3! 12.♖xa6 cxd2 13.♟xd2 ♖b8! (13...♟xe5? 14.♖e1↑; 13...♟e7!? 14.♖g4 g6+ 14.♖h5! g6 15.♖e2 ♟g7 (15...♖xe5!? 16.♖xe5 ♟xe5 17.♟c3 ♟g7 18.♖fa1 d4!?) 16.♟b4 (16.f4!? ♟c5 17.♖a3 0-0 18.♟e3 ♖c8) 16...♟f8 (16...♖xe5! 17.♖c2 ♖xb2 18.♖c6 (18.♖xa7 ♖xc2 19.♖xa8+ ♟b8 20.♖xb8+ ♟d7 21.♖b7+ ♟c8 22.♖xf7 ♟e5) 18...♖xb4 19.♖xa8+ ♟e7 20.♖xa7 ♖xb5) 17.♟d2 ♟g7 18.♟b4 ½-½ Fernandez Garcia-Moskalenko, Solsona 2003.

B2) 9...cxd4!? is a very interesting try to solve Black's problems: 10.cxd4 ♟b4 11.♟f3 ♖c8 12.♟fg5?! (Kruppa-Kutsin,

Lvov ch-UKR 1988), and now best was 12...♟c2 13.♖b1 h6 14.♟f3 ♖c4⇌;

B3) 9...♟c7. This manoeuvre maintains the centre and prepares the usual plans in this line: ...c4/...b5/...f5. 10.♟f4 (10.♖g4 ♟b8 11.♟f4 g6 12.♟f3 ♟c6 13.♟e3 c4) 10...♟e7 11.♖g4

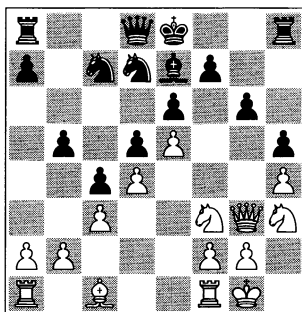


analysis diagram

11...g6 12.♟f3 c4. In my opinion, closing the centre is very risky from the tactical point of view. White begins to exert pressure on the kingside, where his pieces are well placed to unleash an attack.

I have tried 12...h5!? 13.♖g3?! (≥ 13.♖h3 ♟b8∞) 13...g5! 14.♟e2 g4⇌ Siklosi-Moskalenko, St Ingbert 1990.

13.h4 h5 14.♖g3 b5 (14...♟b8!? 15.b3 ♟c6) 15.♟h3

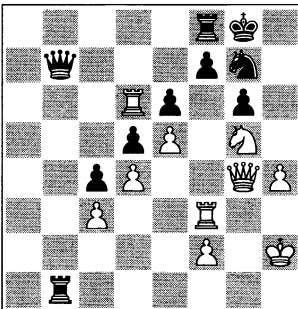


analysis diagram

Starting from this position, there are two games of theoretical interest, but with a dismal outcome for Black:

A) 15...a5 16. ♖fg5 ♜g8? (16...b4 was obligatory: 17. ♞e1 (17. ♙d2 ♞b8⇒) 17...bxc3 18. bxc3 ♞b8 19. ♞e3 0-0 20. ♖f4 ♖b6 21. g4) 17. ♞e1 ♖f8 18. ♞e3 ♜g7 19. ♞f3 ♖d7 20. ♙d2 ♖a6 21. ♞e1 ♖b8 22. ♞ee3 ♙xg5 23. ♖xg5 with a massacre on the kingside, Berelovich-Yusupov, Germany Bundesliga 2002/03;

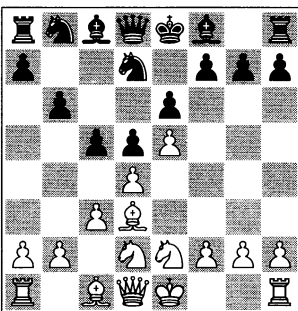
B) 15...♖f8!? is the best defensive move, and now: 16. a4 bxa4?! (16...b4 is better) 17. ♞xa4 a6 18. ♖fg5 ♖h7 19. ♖f3 ♖xg5 20. ♙xg5 ♞b8 21. ♞a2 ♙xg5 22. ♖xg5 ♖e7 23. ♞e1 0-0 24. ♞e3 ♖e8 25. g4 hxg4 26. ♖xg4 ♖g7 27. ♞xa6 ♞xb2 28. ♞f3 ♞b1+ 29. ♖h2 ♖b7 30. ♞d6



analysis diagram

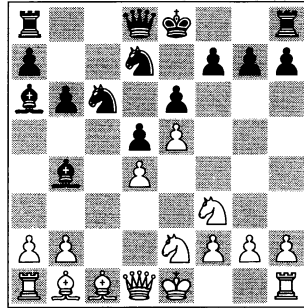
with a sharp position, Rublevsky-Kosyrev, Kazan 2005.

Back to the position after 7. ♖e2.



7... ♙a6 8. ♙xa6

If White combines ♖e2 with Ivanchuk's idea, he achieves nothing: 8. ♙b1 ♖c6 9. ♖f3 cxd4 10. cxd4 ♙b4+!?



Simplifying the position with gain of tempo is always interesting. 11. ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 12. ♖xd2 ♖e7 13. a3 (if 13. 0-0, then 13... ♖b4!⇒; against 13. ♖c3 a possible answer is 13... ♖a5 14. ♙d3 ♙xd3 15. ♖xd3 0-0 16. 0-0 ♞fc8 17. ♞ac1 a6 with equal chances, Baron Rodriguez-Moskalenko, Alcudia 2003) 13... ♖a5!⇒ 14. ♙c2 ♞c8 15. b3 0-0 (15...f6!) 16. 0-0 ♞c7 (16...f6!?) 17. ♞fb1 ♙xe2 (17... ♞fc8!?) 18. ♖xe2 ♞fc8 with a slight initiative for Black, Rozentalis-Moskalenko, Odessa 1989.

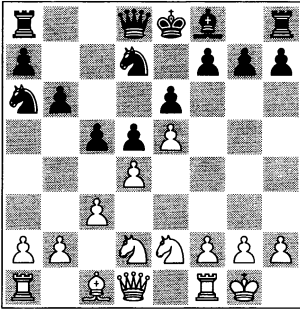
8... ♖xa6 9. 0-0

A key moment in the 6...b6 variation. White can also show his cards before castling:

A) 9. f4 b5 (9... ♖c7!? 10. 0-0 f5) 10. 0-0 g6 11. g4 ♖b6 12. ♖f3 f5 13. exf6 ♖xf6 14. ♖e5 ½-½ Banikas-Barsov, Athens 2007;

B) 9. ♖f4 cxd4!? (9...b5 10. 0-0 c4 11. ♖g4 ♖c7 12. a4 bxa4 13. ♞xa4 a5 14. h4 ♖b6 15. ♞a1 g6 16. h5± Adams-Nguyen Chi Minh, France tt 2003) 10. cxd4 ♖b4 11. 0-0 ♞c8 12. ♖f3 ♙e7 13. ♙d2 ♖c6 14. ♖a4 0-0 15. b4 a6!⇒ Hracek-Kutsin, Czechia tt 1994/95;

C) 9.♟f3 b5?! (≥ 9...♟e7) 10.0-0 ♟b6 11.a4 c4 12.axb5 ♟c7 13.♞a5 ♣d7 14.♟f4 g6 15.h4 ♟xb5 16.h5 0-0-0 17.♟g5+ – Nisipeanu-Yusupov, Germany Bundesliga 2003/04.



9...♟c7

We already know the objective of this manoeuvre.

A) However, we still have to study the fundamental method of Mikhail Botvinnik! 9...g6 10.♟f3 (immediately attacking the centre would be more aggressive: 10.c4!? ♟g7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.f4 0-0 13.f5!? ♞e8 14.f6 ♟f8 15.♟f3 cxd4 16.♟exd4 ♟xe5 17.♟xe5 ♞xe5 18.♟c6 ♣e8 19.♟xe5 ♣xe5 20.♟f4 ♣e6 21.♞e1 and White is slightly better, Miroschnichenko-Savon, Ordzhonikidze ch-UKR 2001) 10...♟g7 (another World Champion played 10...♣c7!? 11.♣a4 ♣b7 12.c4 dxc4 13.♣xc4 b5 14.♣c3 ♟g7! 15.♟e3 ♞c8 16.♞fd1 0-0⇒ and Black is OK, Daniliuk-Smyslov, Elista ch-RUS 1995) 11.♟g5 ♣c8 12.♣d2 h6 13.♟e3 ♣b7 14.♟e1 ♟ab8! 15.f4 ♟c6 16.b3 ♟e7 17.♟d3 ♞c8 18.♞f3 h5 19.♟f2 ♟f5 20.♟e1 ♟h6 21.♟c2 ♟f8 22.♟e3 ♟e7 23.♟xf5 gxf5 24.♞h3 ♟f8 25.♞b1 ♟g6 26.♟h1 ♟f8 27.♟g3 cxd4 28.♟xd4 h4 29.♟e2 ♟c5 30.♟g1 ♟g7 31.a4 ♣e7 32.♞f3 ♞c7 33.♣d3 ½-½ Ragozin-Botvinnik, Leningrad m-6 1940;

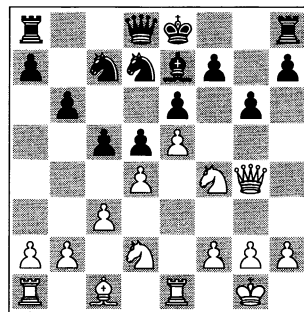
B) Another logical continuation is 9...♟e7!? 10.f4 f5 (10...0-0!? 11.♟f3 ♣c8) 11.exf6 ♟xf6 12.♟f3 0-0 13.♟e3 ♟c7 14.♣d3 ♣c8!? 15.♟g3 ♣a6 16.♣d2 with equal chances. Botvinnik-Petrovs, Moscow ch-URS 1940.

10.f4

This attacking method is the most popular in practice.

A) The main alternative is 10.♟f4!?, to bring the pieces into play. Note that the resulting position is the same as in the event of 7.♟h3 – see the analysis there. Here we give some different examples:

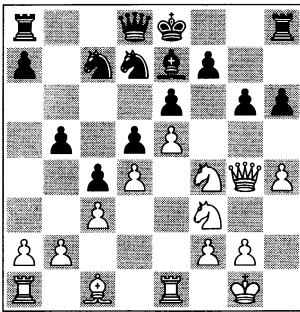
10...♟e7 11.♣g4 (11.c4?! cxd4 12.cxd5 ♟xd5 (12...♟xe5!) 13.♟xd5 exd5 14.f4 ♟c5 15.♟f3 0-0 16.♟xd4 ♟e6 17.♟f5 ♟c5+ 18.♟h1 ♟h8 19.♞f3 f6 20.♞h3 ♣e8 21.♟h4 f5?! (21...g5! 22.f5 gxh4 23.fxe6 fxe5) 22.♞d3 d4 23.♟d2 a5 24.b3 g6 ½-½ Munoz Pantoja-Moskalenko, Catalunya ch 2003) 11...g6 12.♞e1



analysis diagram

12...c4 (a different strategy would be to open the c-file: 12...cxd4!? 13.cxd4 ♟b8 14.♟f3 ♟c6 15.♟e3 ♟b4 16.♞e2 h5 17.♣h3 ♞c8⇒ 18.a3 ♟c6 19.♞c2 ♟a5 20.b4?! ♟c4 21.♟d2 b5 22.♟b3 ♞a8 23.♞ac1 ♟f8 24.♟d2 ♟e8 25.♟c5 ♟g7 26.g4?? ♟xc5 27.bxc5

♟xd2 28.♞xd2 ♔g5 and Black won, Renaudin-Foisor, Bourbon Lancy 1998)
13.♟f3 b5 14.h4 h6!?

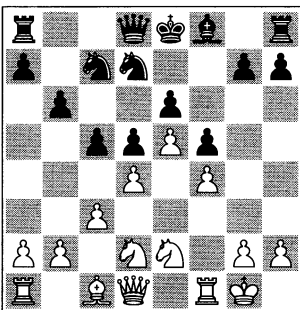


analysis diagram

This defence is more creative than the blockade 14...h5. 15.♟h3 a5 16.h5 g5 17.♟h2 f5!? 18.exf6 ♟xf6 19.♔e2 ♞g8 (19...♔d7!? 20.♟g4 ♟xg4 21.♔xg4 0-0-0⇌) 20.♟g4 ♟xg4 21.♔xg4 ♟d7 22.f4 gxf4 23.♔e2 ♟d6 24.♟xf4 ♔h4 25.♟xd6 ♟xd6 26.♔e5+ ♟c6 27.♟f4 ♞g5 28.♔e3 ♔g4 29.♞e2 ♟d6 30.♞f1 ♞e8 ½-½ Grischuk-Zakharov, Moscow 1997;

B) The manoeuvre 10.♟g3 is slightly odd: 10...♟e7 11.♟f3 h5 (11...♔c8!?) 12.♟e3 ♟b8 (12...h4!? 13.♟e2 h3⇌) 13.♟e1 g6 14.♟d3 c4 15.♟e1 ♟c6 16.♔d2 b5 17.♟f3 a5 18.♟g5 ♟xg5 19.♟xg5 b4 with counterplay, Averbakh-Botvinnik, Moscow m-2 1956.

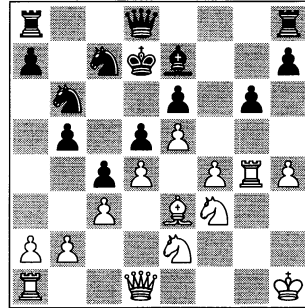
10...f5!



I think this is the best defence.

11.exf6

A different response by another classical player was 11.♟f3 ♟e7 12.♟e3 c4 13.♟h1 b5 14.♞g1 ♟b6 15.g4 fxg4 16.♞xg4 g6 17.h4 ♟d7!.

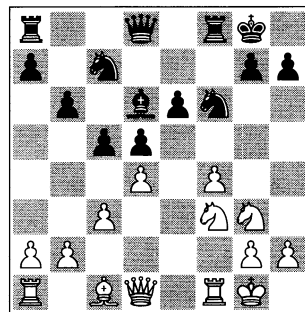


analysis diagram

Black gets the better chances thanks to the exchange of ♟c8x♟f1. 18.♔c2 ♔f8 19.♞ag1 ♟e8 20.♞4g2 ♟g7 21.♟g3 ♔f7 22.h5 ♞af8 23.hxg6 hxg6+ 24.♞h2 g5 25.♞xh8 ♞xh8+ 26.♟h2 gxf4 27.♞f1 ♟g5 28.♔f2 ♟f5 29.♟xf5 fxe3 30.♔g2 e2 0-1 Bednarski-Petrosian, Lugano Olympiad 1968. This game shows the best aspects of the 6...b6 plan.

11...♟xf6 12.♟f3 ♟d6 13.♟g3 0-0

Another satisfactory position for Black.



14.b3

I guess that the idea of this move was to prepare c3-c4. During my visit to Cuba (a wonderful country!) I faced 14.♔e2

31. ♖xf6

Only move: 31. ♖xd8?? ♖h2+ 32. ♖f1 ♖h1+ 33. ♖e2 ♖xg2+ 34. ♖d3 ♖d2+.

31... ♖h2+ 32. ♖f1 ♖h1+ 33. ♖e2 ♖xg2+ 34. ♖d3 ♖d2+ 35. ♖e4 ♖xe1+ 36. ♖xf4 ♖f8! 37. ♖g4! g2! 38. ♖xd4 g1♖+ 39. ♖xg1 ♖xg1+ 40. ♖g3??

These things always happen on the last move before the time control. 40. ♖h3!= would have saved the game.

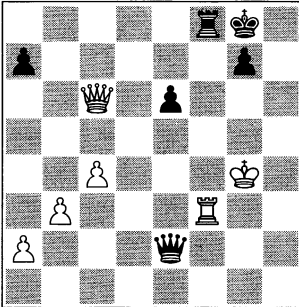
40... ♖d1+?

I repeat my last words! 40... ♖d4+! 41. ♖h3 ♖f6–+.

41. ♖f3!

41. ♖h3 ♖h5+ 42. ♖g2 ♖e2+ 43. ♖h3 ♖f6–+.

41... ♖e2!→



Black must start from scratch again.

42. ♖g3 ♖e5+ 43. ♖h3 ♖d8! 44. ♖b7??

My opponent was tired. 44. ♖b5! ♖e1 45. ♖b7 holds.

44... ♖h5+ 45. ♖g3 ♖g6+?

45... ♖g5+! 46. ♖f2 (46. ♖h3 ♖d4) 46... ♖h4+ 47. ♖e2 ♖h2+ 48. ♖f2 ♖e5+ 49. ♖f1 ♖d1+ 50. ♖g2 ♖g5+.

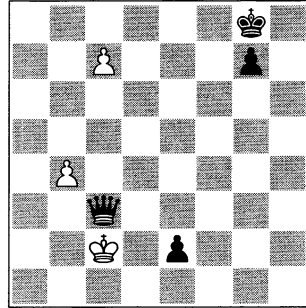
46. ♖h3

46. ♖f2!.

46... ♖d1 47. ♖xa7 ♖h5+!?

Enjoying the attack and time-trouble at the same time. 47... ♖h1 mate was better.

48. ♖g2 ♖g4+ 49. ♖g3 ♖d2+ 50. ♖f2 ♖e4+ 51. ♖f3 ♖xf2+ 52. ♖xf2 ♖c2+ 53. ♖e3 ♖xa2 54. ♖e4 ♖a3 55. ♖c3 ♖c5 56. ♖d3 e5 57. b4 ♖d4+ 58. ♖c2 e4 59. c5 e3 60. c6 e2 61. c7 ♖xc3+!



The last hit in this memorable game.

62. ♖xc3 e1♖+ 63. ♖c4 ♖c1+ 64. ♖b5 ♖xc7 0-1

Exactly on the 64th move!

Summary of the ♖c8x♖f1 exchange plan with 6...b6: Even if Black gets to exchange White's best piece, he loses some tempi and has little space. Nowadays, the best French Defence players hardly use 6...b6. This might be due to the difficulty of obtaining serious counterplay and also to its bad statistics (Short and Yusupov have lost nearly all the games they played in this variation).

The most dangerous plan is ♖e2/♖h3-♖f4-♖g4, which promises White a long-term initiative and a possible attack on the kingside. At this point, closing the centre with ...c5-c4 is very risky, but Black cannot afford to open up the game either! From a dynamic point of view, in many lines White has more tempi available.

Some advice to fans of the ...b6/...♖a6 plan: analyse all possibilities in the opening (see again Game 23). The old

Botvinnik idea of ...g6/...♞g7, for instance, could be interesting, returning to the idea of fianchetto versus symmetry. Otherwise, Black can try other variations against 3.♞d2.

The dogma according to which the c8 bishop is bad might not be correct. As yet there is no evidence of this rule!

In their classic games, Botvinnik, Petrosian and Kortchnoi demonstrated the best defensive qualities of the French Defence.

GAME 24

□ Predrag Ostojic

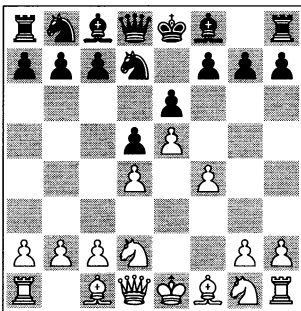
■ Mikhail Botvinnik

Wijk aan Zee 1969 (1)

1.e4 e6

Botvinnik's favourite reply to 1.e4.

2.d4 d5 3.♞d2 ♟f6 4.e5 ♞fd7 5.f4!



A very solid plan. Usually in this line Black tends not to get too much space for his pieces. The knight on d7 suffers a lot, but never the bishop on c8!

5...c5 6.c3

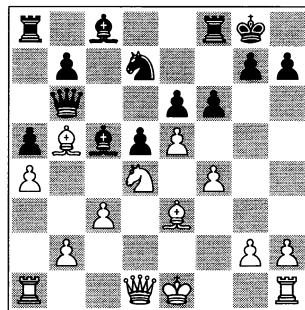
Maintaining the centre with pawns, according to the concept behind f2-f4. A somewhat independent idea is the manoeuvre 6.♞g3!?, which was excellently analysed by John Watson in his



World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik (1911-1995). The French Defence was his favourite opening against 1.e4. Many of Botvinnik's ideas still retain their value.

book *Dangerous Weapons: The French* (for white players). Let's look a bit deeper for Black:

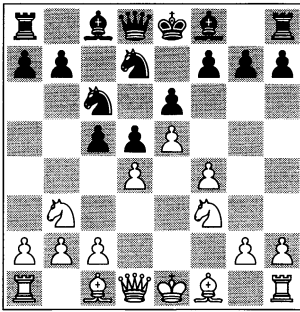
A) In the game Smagin-Moskalenko, Moscow 1995, I played 6...cxd4!?. In this way Black can simplify and improve his passive ♞d7. 7.♞b3 ♞c6 8.♞bxd4 ♞xd4 9.♞xd4 ♞c5 10.c3 ♞b6 11.a4 a5 12.♞b5 0-0 13.♞e3 f6!⇒



14.♞h5 (if 14.exf6 ♞xf6 15.0-0 ♞d7 with a balanced position, or 14.♞g4 fxe5! 15.♞xe6 ♞f7 16.♞xc5 ♞xc5 17.♞f3 exf4 18.0-0 ♞e6 19.♞d4 ♞d6 20.♞ae1 ♞af8!?)⇒, which is excellent for

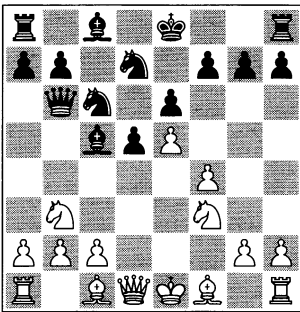
Black) and now the best continuation was 14...g6! 15. ♖e2 fxe5 16.fxe5 ♖f7! 17.0-0-0 ♗xe5 with an extra pawn in a complex position. For example: 18. ♖he1 ♖ (18. ♖hf1?! ♗d7!) 18...♗d7 (or 18...♗c4!? 19. ♗xc4 dxc4 20. ♗xe6 ♗xe3+ 21. ♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 22. ♖xe3 ♗d7 23. ♗g5 ♗xa4! =) 19. ♗xe6 ♗xe3+ 20. ♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 21. ♖xe3 ♗g4±;

B) 6...♗c6 7. ♗b3 and now:



analysis diagram

B1) 7...♖b6 8.dxc5 (if 8.c3!? (Watson) 8...a5 9.a4 ♗e7 10. ♗e2, 10...0-0!? is better than 10...f6 (Moskalenko) 11.0-0 f6! 12. ♖h1 (12.exf6 ♖xf6!) 12...fxe5 13.fxe5 ♖d8!? 14. ♗e3 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♗b4∞ with a typically complex game) 8...♗xc5!N



analysis diagram

An anti-dogmatic move. Watson suggests 8...♗xc5?! 9. ♗e3 a5 10.a4± with a slight advantage for White due to the pin and his control on d4.

9. ♗d3 (in the event of 9. ♗xc5 ♗xc5 10.c3 0-0 11. ♖e2 ♖c7!? 12. ♗e3 b6!± Black is OK) 9...♗f2+ (9...a5!±; 9...♗b4=) 10. ♖e2?! (10. ♖f1 is better) 10...f6 (10...0-0 11. ♖f1 ♗c5 12. ♗xc5 ♗xc5 13. ♗e3 ♖d8±) 11. ♖f1 ♗c5 12. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 (12...♗xc5! 13. ♗e3) 13. ♗e3 ♖e7 14.exf6 ♗xf6 with equal chances, Cabrera Trujillo-Moskalenko, Tenerife rapid 2006.

B2) Another main response is the blockading move 7...c4!?, quite similar to the main game but saving a few tempi: 8. ♗bd2 b5 9. ♗e2 ♖b6?! (this might not be necessary. Black wastes an important tempo. 9...♖a5!± was interesting, preventing the manoeuvre ♗d2-f1: 10.0-0 ♗e7 11. ♖f2 0-0 12. ♗f1 b4 13. ♗e3 f6!±; or else a dynamic line: 9...♗e7!± with the idea 10. ♗f1 ♖a5+!±) 10. ♗f1! f6 11. ♗e3 fxe5 12.fxe5 ♗e7 13.c3 0-0 14.0-0 b4 15. ♖e1 bxc3 16.bxc3 ♖a5 17. ♗d1!, intending ♗c2, with the initiative for White, Smagin-M.Gurevich, Essen 2001.

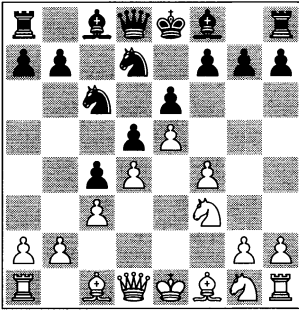
As usual in 'classical' lines like 6. ♗gf3, domination and balance go together. Other knight moves, such as 6. ♗df3 ♗c6 7. ♗e2, lead to the Classical System, which can be found in Part Three, Chapter 5, the game Morozevich-Moskalenko.

6...♗c6

Reverting to the plan ♗c8x♗f1 is still possible with 6...b6?!, but White can save a tempo by keeping his bishop on f1: 7. ♗h3!± (if 7. ♗df3 ♗a6 8. ♗xa6 ♗xa6 9. ♗e2 ♗c7 10.0-0 f5 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12. ♗e5 ♗d6 13. ♗g3 0-0 14. ♗e3, the extra tempo, compared with Game 23, does not alter the balance, Dobrovolsky-Moskalenko, Odessa 1989) 7...♗a6?! (the waiting move 7...♗e7!± is better) 8. ♗xa6 ♗xa6 9.0-0

♟c7 (9...g6!?, with the idea 10.g4 cxd4 11.cxd4 h5 12.f5 gxf5 13.gxf5 ♖h4 14.♟f4 ♙h6 15.fxe6 fxe6⇒) 10.f5! and White starts his attack, Glek-Moskalenko, Odessa 1989.

7.♟df3 c4



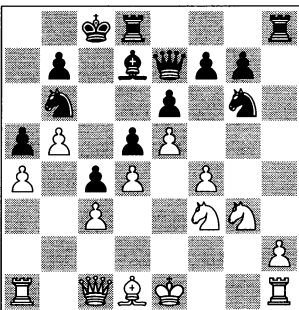
This is the old concept. Black puts an end to the central tension by blocking the position. We will check the modern choices in the two following games, 25 and 26.

8.g4

Of course, this is not the only way. 8.♟h3 ♙e7 9.♙e2 b5∞, with many possibilities for both players.

8...b5

Beginning an attack on the opposite flank. A classic defence is provided by Petrosian's move 8...h5!?. 9.gxh5 ♖xh5 10.♟e2 ♟b6 11.♟g3 ♖h8 12.b4 ♙d7 13.a4 a5 14.b5 ♟e7 15.♙a3 ♟g6 16.♙xf8 ♟xf8 (16...♟xf8!?) 17.♖c1 ♟g6 18.♙e2 ♖e7 19.♙d1 0-0-0.



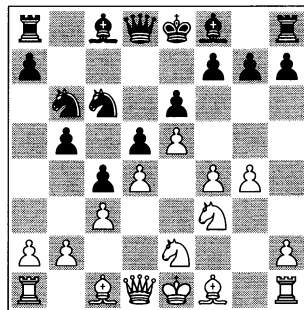
analysis diagram

From here, Black won in fascinating strategic style. The whole game deserves to be given: 20.♖a2 f6 21.♖f2 ♖df8 22.0-0 f5 23.♖g2 ♙e8 24.♖ff2 ♟h4 25.♟xh4 ♖xh4 26.♟f1 ♙h5 27.♙c2 ♖h8 28.♖g3 ♟b8 29.♖fg2 g6 30.♖f2 ♟a7 31.♖fg2 ♖f8 32.♖g5 ♖h6 33.♖2g3 ♙g4 34.♖d2 ♟d7 35.♖g2 (35.♙d1 ♙xd1 36.♖xd1 ♖xh2!) 35...♟f8 36.♟e3 ♙f3 37.b6+ ♟b8 38.♖c1 ♙xg2 39.♖a3 ♖h7 40.♖d6+ ♟c8 41.♖c5+ ♟d8 42.♙xf5 ♖xh2 43.♖d6+ ♖d7 44.♖b8+ ♟e7 45.♙c2 ♙f3 46.♖g3 ♖xc2 47.♟xc2 ♙e4 48.♟e3 ♖h1+ 49.♟f2 ♖xa4 0-1 Kupper-Petrosian, Tel Aviv Olympiad 1964.

9.♟e2

Some unexpected resources arise after 9.f5 ♙e7 (9...♟b6!?) 10.♟e2 h5!?. 11.fxe6 hxg4! 12.exf7+ (12.exd7+ ♙xd7⇒) 12...♟xf7 13.♖c2? ♟f8 (13...♟c5! would have won; or else 13...gxf3!? 14.♖f5+ ♙f6!) 14.♟fg1 ♙h4+ 15.♟d1 ♟e7 16.♙g2 ♙f5 ♠ Dukurs-Bodisko, corr. 1976.

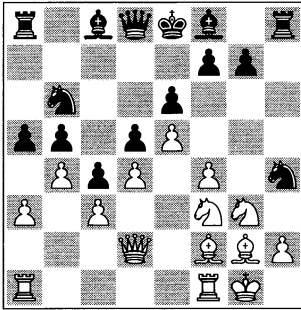
9...♟b6



10.♙h3

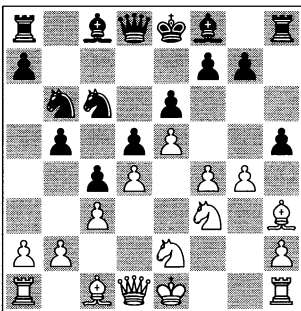
With 10.♟g3!? ♙e7!?, the chess program 'Dragon' lost a 52-move game against Seirawan, The Hague 1997. That same year Viktor Kortchnoi scored another victory for the defence with the blockading move 7...c4: 10.♙g2 h5!?

11.gxh5 ♖xh5 12.♗g3 ♜h8 13.♙e3 ♗e7!? (13...♙e7; 13...b4) 14.♚d2 ♜b8 15.b4 ♗g6! 16.♙f2 a5! 17.a3 ♜a8 18.0-0 ♗h4! ♚.



This was another very interesting game, similar to the Labyrinths in Part One, Chapter 2. After gaining control over the entire board, Black won slowly but without relaxing for a moment:

19.♙h1 g6 20.♗g5 ♙e7 21.♞fe1 ♙d7 22.♗f1 ♗f8 23.♙e3 ♜a6 24.♙f2 ♗g7 25.♞ac1 ♙c6 26.♗g3 ♚a8 27.♚e2 ♜h6 28.♚g4 ♚h8 29.♞e2 ♙d7 30.♙e3 ♗f8 31.♞f1 axb4 32.axb4 ♜a3 33.♙d2 ♗e8 34.♞ef2 ♗a4 35.♚d1 ♗xc3 36.♚c1 ♙xb4—+ 37.f5!? gxf5 38.♗xf7 ♗xf7 39.♙xh6 ♙e7 40.♙g5 ♗a2 41.♞xa2? ♞xa2 42.♙xe7 ♗xe7 43.♚g5+ ♗f7 44.h3 ♜a3 45.♞f2 b4 46.♞f4 b3 47.♞xh4 ♚g7 48.♞h7 ♚xh7 49.♙f3 ♜a8 0-1 Garcia Martinez-Kortchnoi, Havana 1969.
10...h5! ♚



A common defence against the attack with the f- and g-pawns.

11.gxh5 ♖xh5 12.♗g4 ♜h8 13.♗g3 ♗e7

Quite similar to the Kortchnoi and Petrosian games. 13...♙e7!? 14.♚c2 g6 15.♙e3 b4 16.h4∞.

14.♚c2

14.♗g5!?

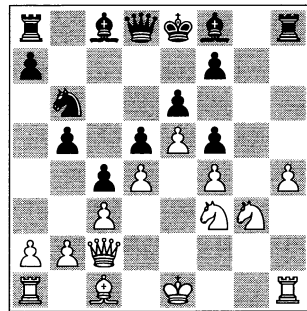
14...g6 15.h4

Looking for new attacking resources. 15.♙d2 ♙d7 16.h4 ♗f5!.

15...♗f5! 16.♙xf5

16.♚h2 ♗xh4 (16...b4!) 17.♗xh4 ♙e7 Botvinnik.

16...gxf5!



‘Now Black’s position on the kingside is secure. He has sufficient space for manoeuvring, while the white h-pawn is not only blocking the enemy forces, but is also a target.’ – Botvinnik.

17.♗g5 f6! 18.exf6 ♚xf6 19.♚e2 ♙d6 20.h5 ♜h6!

‘The h-pawn must be blockaded, since it is restricting three of its own pieces: queen, rook, and knight at g3.’ – Botvinnik.

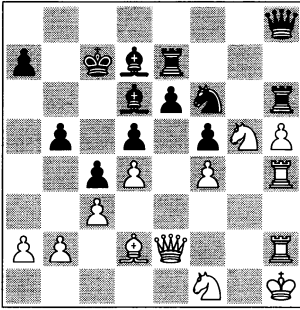
21.♗f3 ♙d7 22.♗e5 0-0-0

♚ (Gligoric).

23.♙e3 ♜g8 24.♗f2 ♙e8 25.♞ag1 ♜gh8 26.♞h3 ♗c7 27.♞gh1 ♜h7 28.♞h2 ♚h8 29.♗g2 ♗c8! 30.♙d2 ♗e7 31.♗f3 ♙d7 32.♗g5

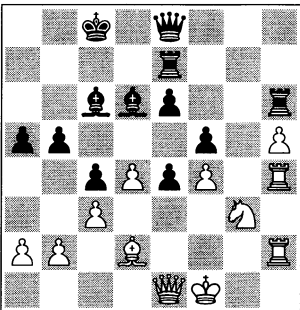
‘White has returned his knight to its former position, from where it at least prevents the opponent from tripling on the h-file.’ – Botvinnik.

32...♞g7 33.♟f1 ♟g8 34.♞h1 ♞e7 35.♞h4 ♟f6±



‘From this point until the time control White does not do anything, since he has no such opportunity, and Black waits for the end of the time scramble.’ – Botvinnik.

36.♞h3 ♞c8 37.♟g3 ♞f8 38.♞g2 ♟c6 39.♞f1 a5 40.♞h2 40.♟xe6? ♞e8 41.♟xf5 ♞xe6! (41...♟e4? 42.♞xe4!) 42.♟xd6+ ♞xd6 winning. 40...♞e8 41.♞e1 ♟e4 42.♟5xe4 dxe4!



43.♞e2 ♟d5 44.a3 ♞b7 45.♞f2 ♞g7 46.♟f1 ♟e7 47.♞h3 ♞g8 48.♞g3 ♞xg3 49.♟xg3 ♞d8 50.♞f1 ♟h4 51.♞h3 ♞xh5 52.♞e2 ♞h8 53.♟xf5?

exf5 54.♟e1 ♟f6 55.♞xf5+ ♞c7 56.♞xh8 ♟xh8 57.♟h4 ♞d7 58.♞f8 ♞g4+ 59.♟d2 e3+ 60.♞xe3 ♞xh4 61.♞c5+ 0-1
61...♟c6 62.d5 ♞e1+ 63.♞f3 ♞h1+ 64.♞g4 ♞xd5-+.

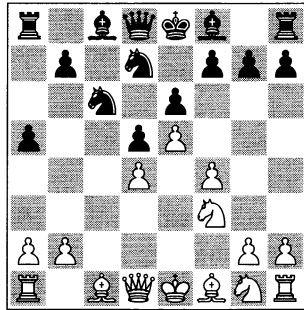
Summary of the blockading 7...c4:

In all honesty, I have not been able to find a single immediate refutation of this legendary, but forgotten plan. However, I greatly enjoyed analysing the games of the best players of that period! I doubt whether the authors of books like ‘Beating the French Defence’ (and other good defences) could actually have defeated heroes such as Petrosian, Kortchnoi or Botvinnik. The value of their ideas will be retained for as long as our game is played!

GAME 25

□ Vitaly Pesotsky
■ Viktor Moskalenko
Chernigov 1985 (7)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟d2 ♟f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.c3 ♟c6 7.♟df3 cxd4 8.cxd4 a5!?



With this advance Black prepares an attack on the queenside, while keeping the usual possibilities open. As yet this

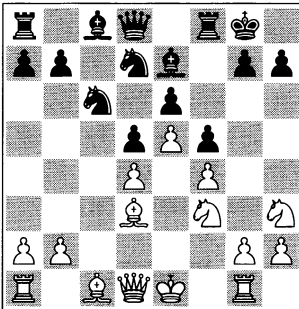
idea has not been very widely developed (35 games in total).

In some games I have practised the blocking possibility 8...f5?!, and now:

A) 9.a3?! ♘b6 10.♔d3 ♔e7 11.♘e2 0-0 12.h3 ♔d7 (12...a5!?) 13.g4 ♔e8 14.0-0 (14.gxf5 exf5⇌) 14...♔g6 15.♖c2? (better is 15.♘g3 ♖c8⇌) 15...♖c8 was better for Black, Alonso Moyano-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2001;

B) 9.♔d3 ♔e7 10.♘e2?! ♘b6 11.0-0 ♔d7 12.♘c3 0-0 13.♖h1 ♔e8 14.h3 ♔h5 15.♔e2 ♖c8 16.♖g1 a6 17.g4 ♔g6 18.♔d3 ♖e8 19.a3 ♘a5 20.♖b1 fxf4 21.hxf4 ♔xd3 22.♖xd3 ♖g6 23.♖xg6 hxf6 24.♔g2 ♘b3⚡ Moroz-Moskalenko, Alushta 1999;

C) 9.♘h3! ♔e7 10.♔d3 0-0 11.♖g1!?



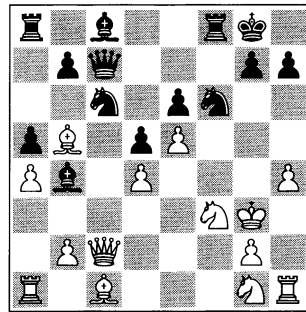
analysis diagram

Preparing a quick g2-g4 is the best plan for White. 11...♘b6 12.a3 ♔d7 13.g4! ♖e8 (13...fxg4?! 14.♖xg4 ♖c8 15.b3 ♖e8 16.♖a2! intending ♖g2) 14.b3 fxf4 (14...a5 is too slow: 15.♖a2 a4 16.gxf5 exf5 17.♖ag2 g6 18.b4 ♘d8 19.♘hg5! intending h2-h4, with an unstoppable attack) 15.♖xg4 ♖h5 16.♖g3± White keeps the initiative and continues ♖a2-♖g2!, Parligras-Moskalenko, Sitges 2006.

9.♔d3

Some alternatives which turned out successfully for Black were:

A) 9.a4 f6! 10.h4 ♖b6 11.♔b5 ♔b4+ 12.♖f2 0-0 13.♖g3 ♖c7 14.♖c2 fxe5 15.fxe5 ♘f6!.

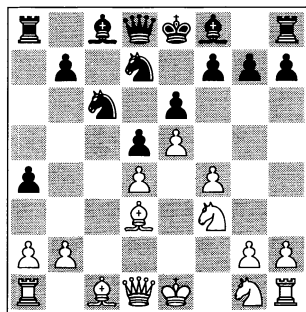


analysis diagram

Black's initiative has become very dangerous. 16.♔d3 ♔d7 17.♖h3 ♖ac8! (also, 17...♘e4!) with a cascade of sacrifices and checks: 18.exf6 e5+ 19.g4 e4 20.fxf7?? (if 20.♖b3 ♔xg4+! 21.♖xg4 h5+!→) 20...♔xg4+! 21.♖xg4 ♖xg7+ 22.♖h3 ♖d7+! 23.♖g2 ♘xd4! 24.♖f2 ♘xf3 (or else 24...♖g4+! 25.♖g3 exf3+ 26.♘xf3 ♖xg3+ 27.♖xg3 ♖xf3+, winning lots of material) 25.♖g3+ ♖h8 26.♘xf3 ♔d6! 27.♘e5 ♖e6 28.♘g6+ hxf6 29.♖e3 ♖g4+ and mate is coming, 0-1 Heinel-Bukal, Pula 1997;

B) 9.♘e2 a4 10.g4?! h5! 11.gxh5 ♖xh5 12.♘g3 ♖h8 13.h4 ♘b6 14.h5 ♘c4⚡ Laubsch-Becker, Germany Bundesliga B 2006/07.

9...a4



10.a3

This natural blockade weakens the squares b3 and c4, which will be the next destinations of Black's knights.

Another option for White is to ignore the advance of the a-pawn: 10.♟e2!? ♟b6 11.0-0 ♟e7! (11...♟b4?! 12.♟b1 ♟d7 13.♟c3 ♟c6 14.♟c2 ♟b4 15.♟b1 ♟c6 16.g4 h5 17.♟g5 hxg4 18.f5!→ Sax-Bukal, Tucepi tt 1996) 12.g4 h5 (12...♟c4!? 13.f5 ♟b4 14.♟b1 h5⇒) 13.gxh5 ♟xh5 14.♟g3 ♟h8 15.f5 ♟c4 16.fxg6 ♟xe6 17.♟f5 ♟xf5 18.♟xf5 ♟b6⇒ with a sharp position, Motwani-Dolezal, Luxembourg 1990.

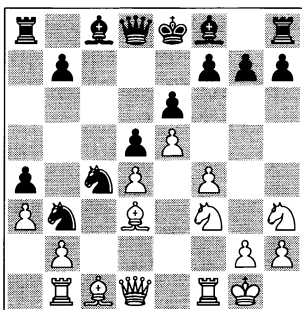
10...♟b6

Now Black gets good counterplay with the manoeuvres ...♟a5-b3 and ...♟bc4.

11.♟h3

Alternatively, 11.♟e2 ♟a5 12.0-0 g6 13.♟b1 ♟d7 14.g4 ♟c7 15.♟g3 0-0-0!? 16.♟e1 ♟bc4 17.♟d2 ♟b8 (17...♟xd2!?) 18.♟xa5 ♟xa5 19.♟f2 ♟b6 20.♟g2 ♟b3 21.♟c2 ♟b5 22.♟fd1 ♟c8 23.♟f1 h5!♣, Mongontuul-Benitah, Moscow 2004.

11...♟a5 12.0-0 ♟b3 13.♟b1 ♟c4



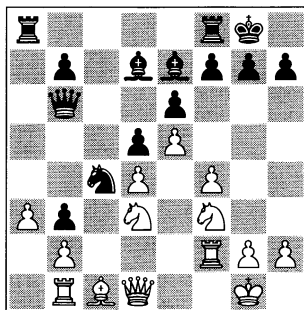
Black celebrates his opening success.

14.♟c2?

White is in trouble and he fails to find a suitable plan. If 14.♟e1 b5!?, or, for instance: 14.f5 exf5 15.♟xc4 dxc4

16.♟e1 b5 17.♟f4 ♟e7 18.d5 ♟xc1 19.♟xc1 ♟c5+ 20.♟h1 0-0♣.

14...♟b6 15.♟xb3 axb3 16.♟f2 ♟d7 17.♟d3 ♟e7 18.♟f2 0-0♣



Black has a comfortable advantage.

19.♟d2 ♟xd2! 20.♟xd2 ♟fc8 21.♟c1 ♟a4 22.♟e2 ♟a5 23.♟c3 ♟xc3! 24.bxc3 ♟xc3 25.♟d3 ♟c4 25...♟c2!.

26.♟e3?

Better was 26.♟bxb3!? b5!? 27.♟b1 ♟xb3 28.♟xb3 ♟a5!♣.

26...♟xa3 27.♟d3 ♟c1 28.♟d2 ♟xd3 29.♟xd3 b2 30.♟b3 ♟xb3 0-1

Summary of 7.cxd4 cxd4 8.a5!?: At the moment, this plan has not yet been widely explored. It may present a new field for investigation by black players.

With a 'mixed salad' of lines we conclude the study of 3...♟f6. Here Black combines all his resources in the fight against the pawn wedge created by 5/6.f4.

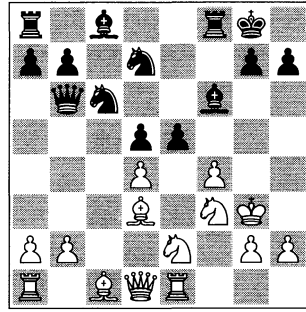
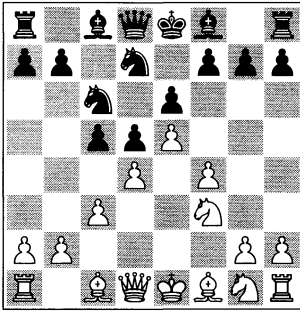
GAME 26

□ Leonid Yudasin

■ Viktor Moskalenko

Lvov 1984 (2)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♟d2 ♟f6 4.e5 ♟fd7 5.c3 c5 6.f4 ♟c6 7.♟df3



analysis diagram

7...cxd4!?

In order to determine White’s pawn structure.

First, we must study some famous games in the French Defence, to understand its great popularity. Black prepares the sacrifice of his d7 knight: ...♞dx5.

A) 7...♞a5 is a very original manoeuvre. This is probably not the best idea, but in this line I like the immortal game by virtuoso Rafael Vaganian in A3.

A1) If 8.dxc5, Black has the interesting 8...♞c7!? N 9.b4 a5 10.♠d2 axb4 11.cxb4 f6 12.exf6 ♞xf6

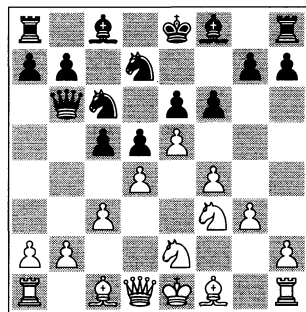
A2) 8.♠e3!? is another critical move, with the idea 8...b5? 9.dxc5 b4 10.♞d4! ♞xc5 11.♞a4! bxc3 12.♞xc6 cxb2 13.♞b1 ♞a3 14.♞f2 – this is fatal for Black, Adorjan-Watson, New York 1981;

A3) 8.♞f2 is the most popular reply: 8...♠e7 9.♠d3 ♞b6 10.♞e2 f6 11.exf6? (11.♞g3 g5!? is a new but probably important resource: 12.♞e1 cxd4 13.♞exd4?! gxf4+ 14.♠xf4 fxe5 15.♞xe5 ♞dx5 16.♞xe5 ♞xe5 17.♠xe5 ♞g8+ 18.♞h3 ♞g5! with the initiative for Black, Adorjan-Vaganian, Teesside 1974; 11.♠e3!? is unclear) 11...♠xf6 (11...♞xf6!?!⇒ is also good) 12.♞g3 cxd4 13.cxd4 0-0 14.♞e1 e5!!→

A fascinating attacking resource. 15.fx5 (15.♞c3 exf4+ 16.♠xf4 ♠xd4!; 15.dxe5 ♞dx5!) 15...♞dx5! 16.dxe5 ♠h4+! (the decisive move) 17.♞xh4 (forced; 17.♞xh4 ♞f2 mate) 17...♞xf3! and Black won after some spectacular moves: 18.♞f1 (18.gxf3 ♞f2+ 19.♞g3 ♞xh2+ 20.♞g5 ♞h6 mate) 18...♞b4+ 19.♠f4 ♞e7+ 20.♠g5 ♞e6! 21.♠f5 ♞xf5 22.♞f4 ♞xe5 23.♞g4 ♞f7 24.♞h5 ♞e7 25.g4 ♞g6+ 26.♞g3 ♠d7 27.♞a1 ♞d6 28.♠h6 ♞af8 0-1 Reshevsky-Vaganian, Skopje 1976.

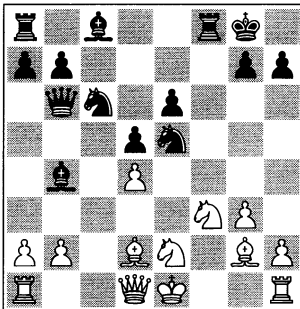
In time, Vaganian changed his defence from 7...♞a5 to Tarrasch’s idea of 3...c5 4.exd5 exd5.

B) The most effective manoeuvre is 7...♞b6! (the best square for the queen) 8.♞e2 (8.g3!? similar to the main game) 8...f6! 9.g3.



analysis diagram

This is one of the tactically important positions in the ‘Pawn Wedge’ variation. 9...cxd4!? 10.cxd4?! (≥ 10.♖exd4 fxe5! 11.fxe5 ♖c5 12.♗h3 ♗e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖e2 ♖xd4 15.♖xd4 ♖xf1+ 16.♗xf1 ♗d7⇒ Atlas-Luther, Austria tt 2001/02) 10...♗b4+ 11.♗d2? (allowing a frontal attack in the centre. Better was 11.♖c3 fxe5! 12.fxe5 0-0 13.♗f4 ♗e7 14.♗h3 ♖xb2!, although also in Black’s favour, Anand-Sisniega, Philadelphia 1987. If now 15.♗xe6+?? ♗h8 16.♖xd5 ♖dxe5!; 11.♗f2?? is another error: 11...fxe5 12.fxe5 ♖dxe5!) 11...fxe5 12.fxe5 0-0 13.♗g2 ♖dxe5!!→



analysis diagram

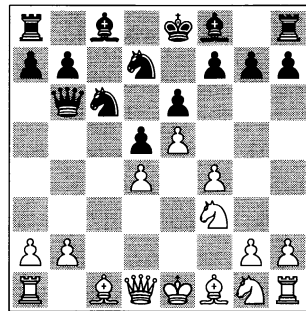
One solution to the problem of the d7 knight in the ‘Pawn Wedge’ is to give it away. 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15.♗xb4! (the best chance. After 15.♖f4? ♖e3+ 16.♗f1 ♗xd2 17.♖xe5 ♖xe5 18.♖xd2 g5 19.♖e1 ♖f6 Black had gained two pawns and continued attacking in Slobodjaniuk-Moskalenko, Alushta tt 1994. The oldest example is 15.♖ed4? ♖d3+ 16.♗e2 ♖xb2 17.♖b3 ♖a6+ 18.♗f2 ♗xd2 19.♖xb2 ♖d3 20.♖ad1 ♖e3+ 21.♗f1 b6! (winning) 22.♖xd2 ♗a6+ 23.♖e2 ♖xf3+ 24.♗xf3 ♖xf3+ 25.♗g1 ♗xe2 26.♖e1 ♗d3 0-1 Hamann-Uhlmann, Halle Zonal 1963) 15...♖xb4+ 16.♗f2

and now Black has several ways of continuing: 16...♖b6+ 17.♖d4 ♖xf3 18.♗xf3 e5 19.♖xb6 axb6, always with a slight advantage; or 16...♖e4!? 17.♖c3 ♖g4+ 18.♗f1 ♖b4K; or 16...g5 17.h3 h5↑ 18.♖d4? (18.g4□) 18...g4—+ M. Mayer-Lindorfer, Schöneck 1998.

8.cxd4

This must be the main reply. In the event of 8.♖xd4 ♖c5!⇒ Black frees his passive knight on d7.

8...♖b6!?



The black queen is activated, but the d7 knight still does not have any squares available. Maybe, for that reason, the most flexible move is 8...a5!?, which we saw in the previous game.

9.g3

Another white pawn move which supports the centre, at the same time vacating the g2-square for the king.

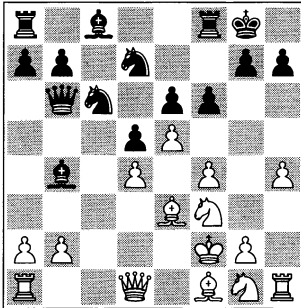
The continuation, 9.♖e2 f6!?, (9...♗b4+ 10.♖c3±) 10.a3 is analysed in Morozevich-Moskalenko, Part Three, Chapter 5, Game 37.

The advance 9.h4 is quite popular. Now:

A) A classic example is 9...f6 10.a3 ♗e7 11.♗d3 0-0 12.♖e2 h6 13.b4 ♗h8 14.♗b1 f5 15.♗d3! ♖d8 16.h5 ♖b6 17.♗f2 ♗d7 18.♖g1 ♖c4 19.g4 b5 20.gxf5 exf5 21.♖g6 ♗e8 22.♖g2 ♖d7

23. ♖g1 ♖d8 24. ♘g3 ♘xd4?? 25. ♘xd4 ♗b6 26. ♗e3—+ and White won easily, Spassky-Yusupov, Belfort 1988;

B) 9... ♗b4+!? 10. ♖f2 (forced: 10. ♗d2? ♘xd4) 10...f6 11. ♗e3 0-0⇌



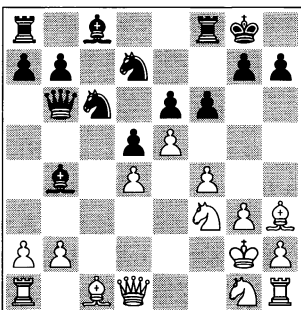
analysis diagram

With a different move order we have arrived in the game Drazic-Cebalo, Bratto 2002. Now, typical play ensued after 12. ♘e2 ♗d8!? 13. ♖g1 ♘b6 14. ♘g3 f5 15. ♗d3 ♗d7 16. ♖f2 a5!? 17. h5 a4 18. a3 ♗e7 19. ♘e2 ♘a5!⚡. Black dominates on the queenside (similarly to Game 25).

9... ♗b4+!

The most dynamic option.

A) 9...f6 is a little slow: 10. ♗h3!? ♗b4+ 11. ♖f1! 0-0!? (11...fxe5 12.fxe5 ♘f8?! 13. ♘e2 ♘g6 14. ♖g2 0-0 15. ♗g4! ♗d7 16.h4! and White is better, Portisch-Tal, Oberhausen Ech-tt 1961) 12. ♖g2

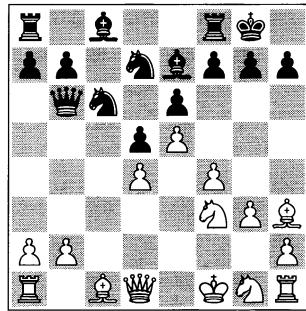


analysis diagram

12...fxe5?! (Black has delayed this move and he should now have dedicated himself to the blockade with 12...f5!?)

13.fxe5 ♘dxe5? 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15. ♗e2 ♘c4 16.b3 ♗c3 17. ♖b1 e5 18. ♗d3! ♗e1 19. ♗e2? (19. ♗xc8!+—) 19... ♗c3 20. ♗d3 ½-½ Moroz-Moskalenko, Marganets 1999;

B) 9... ♗e7!/? leaves the white king on its original square: 10. ♗h3 0-0 11. ♖f1



analysis diagram

11...f6 (11... ♘b4!/? 12. ♖f2!∞; 11...f5!/? is always a solid option) 12. ♖g2 ♖h8 13.b3 a5 14.a4 (14. ♘e2!?) 14...f5 15. ♘e2 ♘b4 16. ♗e3 ♘b8! 17.g4 ♗d7 18. ♖g1 ♘8a6 19. ♖h1 ♖ac8⇌ and Black has a strong position, Adams-Illescas Cordoba, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

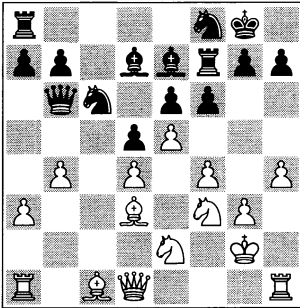
10. ♖f2

Now Black must start tactics with the help of his foot soldiers.

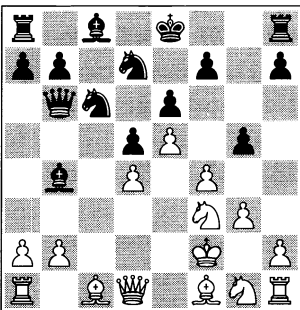
10...g5!/?

An important resource invented by the American IM Edward Formanek. Nowadays, this fantastic idea has been transferred to the Classical Variation 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 (see the famous games by Alexander Morozevich in Part Three). Starting the counterattack with the other pawn is insufficient: 10...f6 11. ♖g2! (11. ♗h3? fxe5 12.fxe5 ♘dxe5!; 11.a3 ♗e7

12.♟g2 g5!?⇒) 11...0-0 12.h4!
 (12.♟d3! is also possible: 12...♟e7
 13.♟e2 g6? (there is no good advice for
 Black) 14.♟c2 ♖d8 15.h4 ♗e8 16.h5
 f5 17.♗g1 ♟b6 18.hxg6 ♗xg6 19.♟f2
 ♟d7 20.g4!→ Yudasin-Vladimirov,
 Tilburg rapid 1994) 12...♞f7 13.♟d3
 (only in the event of 13.♟h2? fxe5
 14.dxe5 ♟e7⇒ 15.♟g5 ♟xg5 16.hxg5
 is the sacrifice on e5 possible again:
 16...♟dxe5!? 17.fxe5 ♟xe5 18.♟g2
 ♗b4 19.♟h3 ♟g4 20.♗xg4?? e5 and
 Black won, Gomez Esteban-Comas
 Fabrego, Burgos ch-ESP 2003) 13...♟f8
 14.a3 ♟e7 15.b4 ♟d7 16.♟e2±.



White dominates the board. 16...♞c8
 (16...a6 17.♟d2± Olsson-Berg,
 Gothenburg ch-SWE 2004) 17.♟e3 h5
 18.♗d2 ♟d8 19.b5 a6 20.a4 g6
 21.exf6 ♟xf6 22.♟e5 ♞g7 23.a5 ♗d6
 24.bxa6 bxa6 25.♞hb1 with a great ad-
 vantage for White, Boleslavsky-Laurine,
 Stockholm 1963/64.



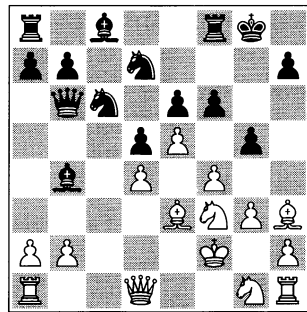
11.h3

A defence against ...g5-g4! Other criti-
 cal replies are:

A) 11.fxg5!? ♟dxe5 12.♟xe5 ♟xe5
 13.♟g2 ♟c6! (13...♟c4 14.♟f3
 ♟d7∞ Yakovich-Gleizerov, Kursk 1987)
 14.♟f3 ♟f8 15.b3 ♟g7 16.♟b2 ♟d7
 17.♞c1 h6 18.♗d2∞ Almeria Vivo-
 Camarena Gimenez, Madrid 2006;

B) 11.♟h3!? h5 12.fxg5 ♟dxe5
 13.♟xe5 ♟xe5 14.♟g2 ♟g4
 (14...♟g6!? 15.♟e2 ♟d6⇒)
 15.♟xg4 (15.♟f3 ♟d6 16.♞e1
 ♟d7⇒) 15...hxg4 16.♗xg4 e5!
 (Black has the initiative for the pawn)
 17.♗e2 ♗xd4 (17...e4!?) 18.♟f4
 ♟f5 (18...♗e4+!? 19.♗xe4 dxe4
 20.♟xe5 0-0 21.♟f6 b6⇒)
 19.♗xe5+ ♗xe5 20.♟xe5± Varta-
 petyan-Moskalenko, Yalta 1996;

C) A very interesting game went
 11.♟e3 f6 (11...g4; 11...gx4) 12.♟h3
 0-0

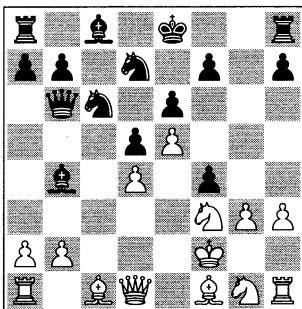


analysis diagram

13.♟g4 (13.♟xe6+ ♟h8 14.♟xd5
 fxe5!⇒) 13...fxe5 (13...f5; 13...♟a5)
 14.fxe5 ♟c5 15.♟xe6+ ♟h8 16.dxc5
 ♗xb2+ 17.♟d2 (17.♟f1) 17...g4
 (17...♟xc5) 18.♟xd5?? (18.♟xg4
 ♗d4+; 18.♞b1!?) 18...♟dxe5 and
 Black wins in all lines, Emms-Kosten,
 Edinburgh ch-GBR 1985.

11...gxf4

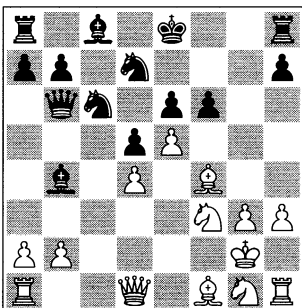
11...f6!?⇒.



12. ♖xf4

The development of the pieces is a natural concept. In the event of 12.gxf4, supporting the centre, Black continues to bomb the ‘Pawn Wedge’: 12...f6! 13. ♖e3 ♖e7 (13...fxe5!? 14.fxe5 ♖f8⇒ preparing queenside castling) 14. ♖d2 ♖f8 15. ♖d3 ♖d7 16. ♖e2 0-0-0 17. ♖a1 ♖b8 18. ♖c3 fxe5 19.fxe5 ♖g6 20. ♖a4 ♖b4 21. ♖xg6 ♖xa4 22.b3 ♖a6 23. ♖d3 ♖b6 24. ♖g2 ♖e8 25. ♖hf1 ♖h5 26. ♖h2 ♖df8 27. ♖e2 ♖a3 28. ♖cd1 ♖e7 29. ♖h6 ♖c8± with a clear initiative on all parts of the board, Vasiukov-M.Gurevich, Moscow 1987.

12...f6 13. ♖g2



The king’s fianchetto has been successfully carried out.

13...♖f8

This counter-argument was my home preparation. However, other options are also interesting:

A) 13...fxe5!? 14.dxe5?! (≥ 14. ♖xe5 ♖dxe5 15.dxe5 ♖d7⇒) 14...♖e7 15. ♖b1 ♖f8 (15...0-0!?) 16. ♖g5 ♖g6 17. ♖h5 ♖xg5 18. ♖d3 ♖xf4 19. ♖xg6+ ♖d8 20. ♖xh7 ♖c7 21. ♖h4+ ♖e7 22. ♖xf4 ♖xh7 23. ♖f6+ ♖c7 0-1 Delchev-Dreev, Arnhem Ech-jr 1988;

B) 13...♖e7!? 14.b3 fxe5 15. ♖xe5 (15.dxe5?! 0-0±) 15...♖dxe5 16.dxe5 ♖d7 17. ♖h5+ ♖d8⇒.

14. ♖b1

14. ♖d3 fxe5 15. ♖xe5 (15.dxe5 ♖c5!?) 15...♖dxe5 16.dxe5 ♖xb2+ 17. ♖e2 ♖g7±.

14. ♖d2!? fxe5 (14...♖g7=) 15. ♖xe5 (15.dxe5 ♖g7 16. ♖e1 ♖c5!? 17. ♖e3 ♖e4!) 15...♖xd4±.

14...♖g7 15. ♖d3 0-0!

Black is well prepared for the tough fight ahead. The wedge will soon dissolve. 15...fxe5? 16. ♖xe5 ♖dxe5 17.dxe5± Δ ♖f3; 15...♖xd4? 16. ♖xd4 fxe5 17. ♖h5+ ♖f8 18. ♖h6+.

16.exf6

16. ♖c2!? fxe5 (16...♖xd4?! 17. ♖xh7+ ♖h8 18. ♖g6 fxe5 19. ♖h6↑) 17. ♖xh7+ ♖h8 18.dxe5 ♖dxe5 19. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 20. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 21. ♖f3 ♖g7 22. ♖h4 ♖f6∞.

16...♖xf6 17. ♖d6

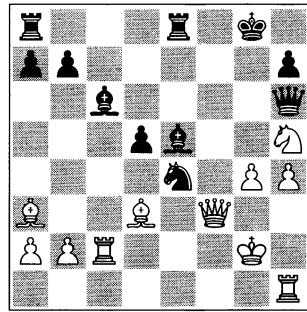
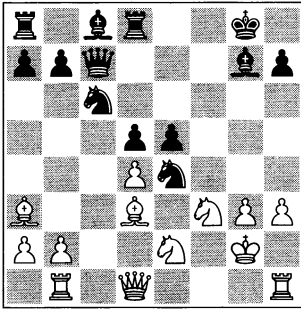
17. ♖e2 ♖b4! 18. ♖e5 ♖d7!⇒; 17.a3 ♖e4 18. ♖e2 e5!?

17...♖d8! 18. ♖c5 ♖c7 19. ♖e2 ♖e4!

19...e5? 20. ♖xe5! ♖xe5 21.dxe5 ♖xc5 22.exf6 ♖xf6 23. ♖f4↑.

20. ♖a3?! e5!↑

The culmination of Black's strategy.



21.dxe5 ♟xe5 22.♟xe5 ♟xe5!
23.♞c1 ♟b6 24.♟g1 ♟h6
 24...♟g6!? 25.♟e3 ♟f5↑.
25.♞c2
 Or, for instance, 25.♟xe4 dxe4 26.♟c5
 ♟g7♣.
25...♟f5
 25...b6!?♣.
26.g4 ♟g7!

This seems like a strong move. Another good continuation was 26...♟h8!? 27.♟c5 d4! 28.♟xd4 (28.♟c1 ♟g7 29.♟f4 ♞ac8) 28...♟xd4 29.♟xd4 ♟d6! (29...♟g6!?♣) 30.♟xf5 ♟xd3→.
27.♟e3 ♞e8 28.♟f3 ♟d7 29.♟f4 ♟c6
30.♟h5♣ ♟h6 31.h4?

31...♟h8?

Too slow. The correct move was 31...♞f8! 32.♟xf8 ♞xf8 33.♟xe4 dxe4 34.♟b3+ ♟h8 35.♞f1 e3+ 36.♟g1 ♞g8 with a decisive advantage.

32.g5 ♞g8 33.♟g3! ♟g6 34.♞e1

34.♟f5!? ♟f6!.

34...♟xg3! 35.♟xg3 ♟xg3 36.♟xg6 hxg6 37.♟xg3± ♞ge8 1/2-1/2

A really interesting and dramatic game.

Summary of the 'Pawn Wedge' – 5/6. f4: In any database you can find almost 5000 games with this scheme. I offer three model-games (24-26), with (almost) all the important themes for both colours. Enjoy the very complicated positions and the sometimes quite bizarre play!

General Conclusions to Chapter 3 – Beyond Tarrasch (3.♟d2 ♟f6)

In my opinion, the main dilemma for both sides in this complex opening is the choice between solid but passive positions on the one hand, and attacking ideas that force the player to take extreme risks on the other.

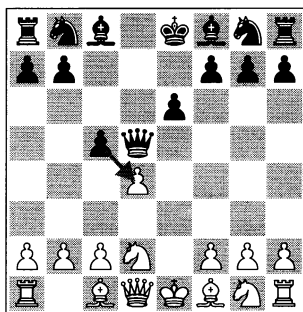
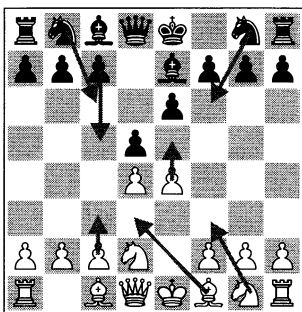
Grandmaster Psakhis, in his book *The Complete French*, says about 3...♟f6!?: 'A sharp and complex variation, which has had, still has, and I am sure always will have, its supporters. Black provokes the advance e4-e5 and thereby permits his opponent to create a powerful pawn centre. If White succeeds in consolidating this centre, the advantage will be on his side; if not, the consequences for him may be truly catastrophic.'

If the ideas mentioned in Chapter 3 were not enough for you, we will present in Chapter 4 a brief update of some very special variations against 3.♟d2. Let's leave the closed battles aside and open the game up!

Chapter 4 – Exotic Deviations

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♙e7!?

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5 ♖xd5!?



Directions/Ideas

In general, players use these variations to avoid their opponents' home preparation. However, some 'exotic' lines have grown to be so popular that they have become main weapons!



English grandmaster Michael Adams (born 1971). A great expert on the 3.♘d2 variation with the white pieces and a 'Terminator' in exotic lines.

A) Romanishin Variation 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♙e7!?

Ukrainian GM Oleg Romanishin is a specialist in exotic variations in all kind of openings. In the mid-1970s he rediscovered 3...♙e7.

The French with 3...♙e7! is Alexander Morozevich's main weapon against 1.e4. Everybody knows this well in advance before the game, but no one has been able to claim a serious opening advantage against him here.

The Russian grandmaster Ian Nepomniachtchi (born 1990) is a new generator of ideas, for and against the French Defence. The young Russian star does not mind repeating the move 3...♙e7 against any player (Games 29, 30).

3...♗e7 is an asymmetrical response! Although, it is very similar to a poker-style waiting.

Nowadays it is very fashionable, because of its peculiarity, but also thanks to the support given to it by grandmasters Romanishin in the 1970s, Rainer Knaak in the 1980s and more recently Morozevich, Lputian, Radjabov, Pert and Nepomniachtchi. They have enriched the line with new and unusual ideas.

Grandmaster Psakhis writes: ‘The main idea of 3...♗e7 is that Black first wants to see what plan White will adopt, before deciding on a corresponding course of action. Another point of some significance is that in this line Black avoids the numerous exchanges that can occur following 3...c5.’ Author’s note: But the tempo spent is very important here. White must try to take advantage of this.

Grandmaster Arizmendi writes: ‘This variation is becoming popular nowadays, but it was Romanishin, back in the seventies, who first began to use it frequently. The main idea behind 3...♗e7 is to wait and see White’s piece setting, and react accordingly, while having developed the bishop (admittedly not to such an active square, but a normal one in the French). Thus after 4.♘gf3 ♗f6 5.e5 ♗fd7 we reach a Tarrasch with the knight on f3, something which is not to everyone’s liking. Or 4.c3 c5 5.dxc5 ♗xc5 6.exd5 exd5, which leads us to a normal 3...c5 Tarrasch where White has committed himself to an early c2-c3, which is not considered to be dangerous for Black at all. I guess 4.e5 c5 5.♖g4 is the most ‘principled’ variation, but Black has scored quite OK with Morozevich’s 5...♕f8, making use of White’s misplaced queen to develop a quick initiative.’ Author’s note: I am sure that the most critical positions arise after the flexible move 4.♗d3!?. On the other hand, many positions in the 3...♗e7 variation can be defended thanks to unexpected tactical resources!

Statistics with 3...♗e7

Total 2812 games 1-0=963, 0-1=816, 0,5=1033

Line 4.♘gf3 = 1062 games=52.3%

Line 4.♗d3 = 1037 games=53.2%

There are some transpositions between these two moves.

Line 4.e5= 343 games=54.7%

Line 4.c3= 318 games=50.9%.

White Terminators

Michael Adams: total 12 games=70.8% 4.♗d3= 5 games=90%, 4.e5= 5 games=50%, 4.♘gf3= 1 game=100%, 4.c3= 1 game=50%

Peter Svidler: 6 games=50% 4.♗d3= 2 games=50%, 4.e5= 2 games=50%, 4.♘gf3= 1 game=50%, 4.c3= 1 game=50%

Sergey Tiviakov: 6 games=80.3% 4.♗d3= 5 games=90%, 4.c3= 1 game=50%

Vasilios Kotronias: 4.♗d3= 9 games = 77.8%

Black Heroes

Oleg Romanishin: total 7 games=50%

Rainer Knaak: 17=35.3%

Smbat Lputian: 30=65%

Alexander Morozevich: 19=60.25%

Teimour Radjabov: 8=56.3%

Ian Nepomniachtchi: 20=60%

Nicholas Pert: 19=47.4%

Yannick Pelletier: 12=41.7%

The Most Interesting Novelties

These novelties will be examined in the main lines.

First playing with the pawns:

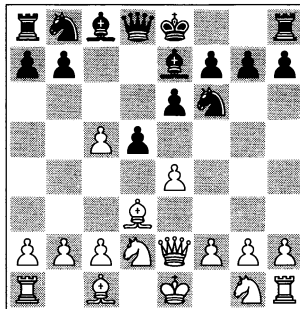
* 4.e5 – an ‘ambitious’ line, Game 27: Adams-Morozevich.

* 4.c3 – a ‘discreet-modest’ line, Game 28: Onischuk-Morozevich.

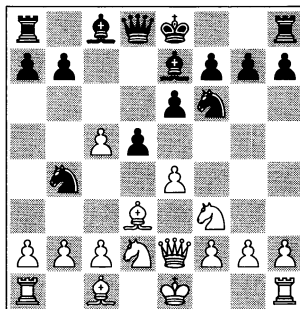
And two different moves with pieces that merit serious attention are:

* 4. ♖gf3 The most natural move, Game 29: Andriasian-Nepomniachtchi.

* 4. ♕d3 This move is more flexible. With the idea 4...c5 5.dxc5 ♖f6 6. ♖e2.

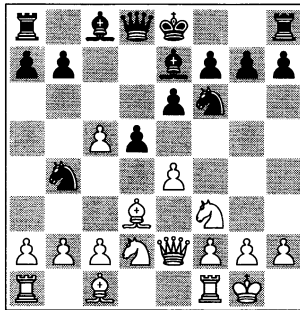


This popular set-up is perhaps the most dangerous for Black. Game 30: Kotronias-Nepomniachtchi. In this game, Black followed in the footsteps of Romanishin and Morozevich with the manoeuvre ... ♖c6-b4.



But Black also has other possibilities, as is shown in the notes.

In Game 31: Cheparinov-Riazantsev, White played 8.0-0!? with the idea of exploiting his lead in development and the active placing of the white pieces.



What are the possibilities after White's castling? This has the appearance of being a positional refutation of the manoeuvre ...♗c6-♗b4 (Games 27-31).

B) A French-Scandinavian Hybrid: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d2 c5 4.exd5 ♖xd5!?

Introduction

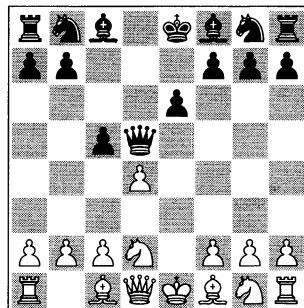
The Italian player Davide Marotti was the first to discover this unusual move on the board in 1923. Soon the idea was developed by grandmasters such as the Austrian Argentine Erich Eliskases, the Armenian Tigran Petrosian and the Swede Ulf Andersson. Now this popular system has a base of 4700 games!

Statistics:

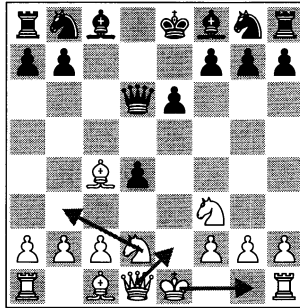
Petrosian played 17 games in this line, scoring 16 draws (!) and one win. Peculiarly, Andersson also played 17 games, with the result: 7 wins, 1 loss and 9 draws – of course his opponents were not so strong...



The Italian player Davide Marotti was the first to discover the unusual move 4...♖xd5 on the board in 1923.

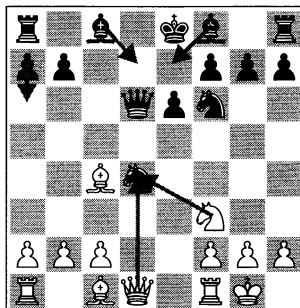


If we compare these positions with those that arise in the Scandinavian Defence, we can observe that Black is better here! The added moves are: ♖b1-d2 and d2-d4 for White and the pawn moves ...c7-c5 and ...e7-e6 for Black. However, White keeps a lead in development after 5. ♖gf3 cxd4 6. ♕c4 ♚d6.



Play in this line is similar to the Rubinstein Variation 3...dxe4. But both sides have an additional possibility: that of castling queenside. At this point White has three main ideas:

- 1) The sharp line 7. ♚e2, preparing the development ♖b3/♕g5 and queenside castling (Game 32, De la Paz-Moskalenko). This modern set-up mainly owes its resurrection to grandmaster Eduardas Rozentalis, who has used it successfully in extremely important games. However, for many years this plan was sidelined by theory, and the only continuation to be employed at high level was the classical:
- 2) 7.0-0 ♖f6 8. ♖b3 ♖c6 9. ♖bxd4 ♖xd4.



Now White can choose between:

- A) A modest ending: 10. ♚xd4 ♚xd4! (Game 33, Velicka-Moskalenko), or
- B) 10. ♖xd4!, without a doubt the strongest and most popular move, which we will examine in the three last games (34-36). Black's natural replies are 10...♕e7, 10...♕d7 and 10...a6 (Games 32-36).

Exotic Deviations – Games

GAME 27

□ **Michael Adams**

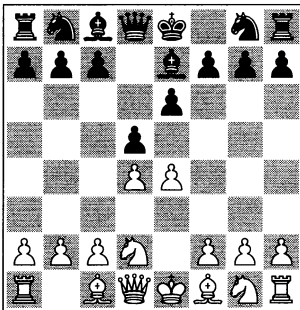
■ **Alexander Morozevich**

Sarajevo 1999 (5)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2

Michael Adams is one of the leading experts on the French Defence for the white side. Strangely enough, he gets excellent results playing this modest move.

3...♙e7



Playing hide-and-seek! This is Morozevich's main weapon against 3.♘d2.

4.e5

White chooses an ambitious but risky line. This has been the main move in the sharpest encounters between Adams and Morozevich.

However, we have now reached a position typical of the Advance Variation with the extra moves 3.♘d2 ♙e7. I am sure that this favours Black, since the g8 knight is more flexible on its original square (...♘h6-♘f5), whereas it is hard for the knight on d2 to find a way out.

For 4.c3, see Game 28;

For 4.♘gf3, see Game 29;

For 4.♙d3, see Games 30 and 31.

The attacking idea 4.♖g4?! fails after, for instance, 4...♘f6! 5.♖xg7 ♖g8

6.♖h6 dxe4 7.♖e3 ♖d5 8.♘e2 (8.c3 c5!) 8...♘c6 9.♘c3 (9.c3 e5!) 9...♖xd4 10.♘dxe4 ♘xe4 11.♖xe4 ♖xe4+ 12.♘xe4 ♘b4♯ with the initiative for Black.

4...c5!

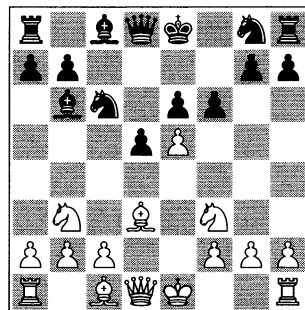
The first move that must be studied. The second is 4...♘h6!? 5.♙d3 c5 6.c3 ♘c6 7.♘e2 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5 9.♘f3 ♙d7 10.g4 ♘h4 11.♘xh4 ♙b4+! 12.♔f1 ♖xh4↑ Zhou Weiqi-Yu Shaoteng, Hyderabad 2005.

4...♙f8 5.♘b1 c5 would be a strange move order, leading us back into the Advance Variation!

5.♖g4

This idea from the Winawer Variation is not a panacea for the entire French!

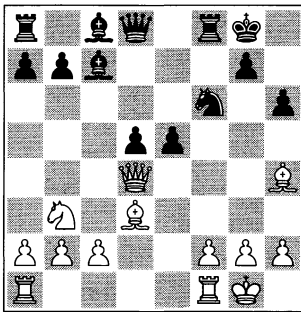
A) A powerful demonstration of Black's possibilities is 5.dxc5 ♘c6 6.♘gf3 ♙xc5 7.♘b3 ♙b6 8.♙d3 f6!.



The critical moment in this line. The battle for the strategic e5 point begins. 9.♖e2 fxe5 10.♘xe5 ♘f6 (10...♘xe5!?) 11.♖xe5 ♘f6⇒ is an easier way; there is also room for creativity: 10...♖f6 11.♘g4 ♖e7∞) and now:

♞ WEAPON: 11.♙b5? ♖c7! with the idea 12.♙f4 0-0 13.♙g3 ♘xe5 14.♙xe5 ♙xf2+!
≥ 11.♙f4 0-0=.

The inaccuracy 11.0-0?! has tragic consequences, since Black gets a chance to develop a dangerous initiative: 11...♗xe5! 12.♙xe5 0-0 13.♕g5 ♖c7! 14.♙d4 h6 (14...e5! 15.♙h4 h6♣ was also good) 15.♕h4 (15.♕f4 ♕b6!?) 15...e5!↑.

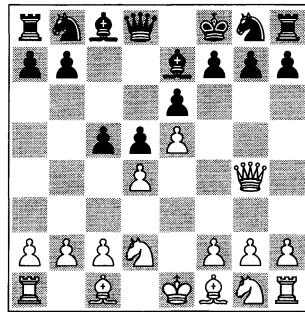


analysis diagram

After succeeding in playing this important advance, Black is clearly in a comfortable position. 16.♙c5 ♕e6 17.♖ad1 ♜c8?! 18.♙e3 (18.♙xa7 ♕b6!?) 18...e4 19.♕xe4 ♕xh2+ 20.♔h1 ♙d6 (I think Morozevich must have overestimated the tactical potential of his active position; 20...♗g4 21.♕xd8 ♗xe3 22.fxe3 ♜xf1+ 23.♜xf1 dxe4 24.♔xh2 ♕xb3 25.axb3 ♜xd8 26.♜f4=) 21.♕xf6 ♕f4 (21...♜xf6=) 22.♙f3? (22.♙xa7! ♜xf6 23.♙xb7 ♜b8 24.♜xd5!±) 22...♜xf6 23.♕xd5 ♕e5! 24.♕xb7 ♙e7!. It is probable that Adams did not sense the danger clearly enough. He lost dramatically after 25.♙e4 ♜f5! 26.♜fe1?? ♜f4! 27.♙e3 ♜h4+ 0-1 Adams-Morozevich, Dortmund 2001;

B) In the event of 5.c3 ♗c6 6.♗g3 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♗h6 8.♕d3 ♗f5 9.♗b3 a5! 10.a4 ♗b4⇒ Black gets good chances.

5...♔f8!?



Black loses the right to castle, but White's central pawn chain is about to fall apart. The text is preferable to ...g7-g6, in order not to weaken the dark squares. Practical results in master tournaments confirm this point of view. But it is not the only reasonable move here:

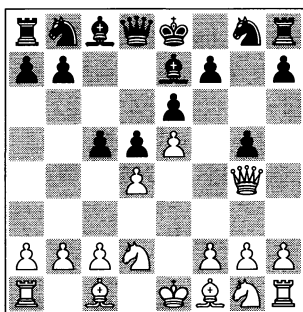
A) 5...♕f8!?. Dancing with the genie! In the Winawer, ...♕f8-b4-f8 is a typical manoeuvre. All the pieces on the last rank are ready to reload! For example:

A1) 6.♗df3 ♗c6 7.dxc5 ♙c7 8.♙g3 ♗ge7 9.c3 ♗g6 (9...♗f5! 10.♙f4 ♕xc5 is good for Black) 10.b4 a5 (10...b6!?!; 10...♗cxe5!?) 11.♕ b5 axb4 12.cxb4 ♕d7 13.♕xc6 ♕xc6 14.h4! b6 15.h5 ♗e7 16.♗d4 bxc5 17.bxc5∞ Adams-Kristjansson, Reykjavik 2003;

A2) 6.dxc5 ♙c7 (6...♗h6!?) 7.♗gf3 ♗d7 8.♗b3 ♗xe5 9.♗xe5 ♙xe5+ 10.♕e3 ♕d7 11.0-0-0 ♗f6⇒ Khamrakulov-Lopez Martinez, Ayamonte ch-ESP 2007;

B) We can also check 5...g6 6.dxc5 ♗d7! (6...f5?! is bad in view of 7.♙g3 ♗d7 8.♕b5 ♙a5 9.♕xd7+ ♕xd7 10.c3 ♙xc5 11.♗e2 ♕d8 12.♗b3 ♙e7 13.h4!± Adams-Short, Sarajevo 1999) 7.♗df3 ♗xc5 8.♕d3 ♙a5+ 9.♕d2 ♙b6 10.b4 ♗xd3+ 11.cxd3 ♕d7 12.a4 h5! 13.♙d4 ♗h6 14.♗e2 ♗f5 15.♙b2 0-0 16.0-0 ♜fc8= Svidler-Lputian, playchess.com blitz 2004;

C) 5...g5

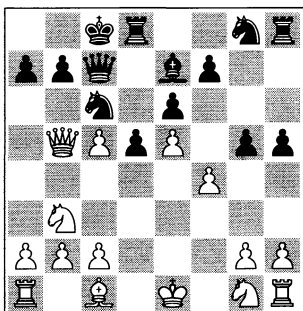


analysis diagram

The most creative move and a typical advance in this line.

C1) It is interesting to look for a refutation with 6.♖h5!?. The queen will block the kingside. After 6...cxd4 (6...♘c6 7.♘gf3 cxd4 8.♘b3±) 7.♘df3! (7.♘gf3 ♖c7!?) 7...♘c6 8.♘h3 (8.♙xg5!?) 8...♖c7? 9.♘hxg5 ♘xe5 10.♙b5+ ♙d7 (10...♙f8? 11.♘xh7+) 11.♘xe6!+- ♘xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♖xc2 13.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 14.♖xd5+ White is absolutely winning, Blehm-Ionescu, Budapest Zonal 2000;

C2) 6.dxc5 h5! (I love irrational positions!) 7.♙b5+ ♙d7 8.♖e2 ♖c7 (8...♖a5!?) 9.♘b3 ♙xb5 10.♖xb5+ ♘c6 (10...♘d7!?) 11.f4 (11.♘f3 0-0-0 12.0-0 g4∞) 11...0-0-0!

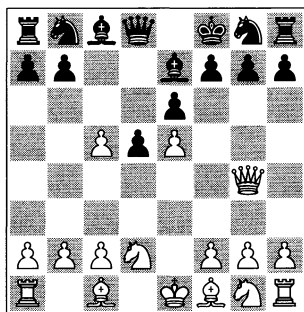


analysis diagram

This position was the setting for another of Morozevich's popular hits.

12.♘f3 g4 13.♘fd4 ♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♙xc5 15.♙e3 ♙xd4 16.♙xd4 ♙b8 17.♙c5 ♙a8 18.♙d6? ♖xc2 19.0-0 ♖c8 20.f5 ♘h6 21.♖f2 ♖e4 22.fxe6 fxe6 23.♖af1 h4 24.♖d7 ♖d4! 25.g3 hxg3 26.hxg3 ♘f5 27.♖xe6 ♘xg3 0-1 Adams-Morozevich, Frankfurt 1999.

6.dxc5

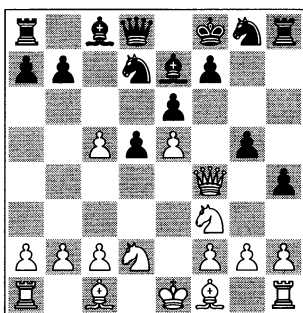


Another key moment. 6.c3?! ♘c6 must be good for Black.

6...♘c6

The usual move in this position, but there are some quite interesting alternatives:

- A) 6...♘h6!?! – no games;
- B) A totally new concept is 6...♘d7!?, an important improvement recently played by Nicholas Pert: 7.♘gf3! (the right answer. In the first game with this fresh line, something weird happened: 7.♘df3?! ♙xc5 8.♘h3 f5! 9.exf6? (≥ 9.♖f4 ♘h6 10.♙e2 ♘e4↑) 9...gxf6?! (9...♘xf6! with a clear advantage) 10.♖h4 e5 11.g4? h5 (11...♖a5+!?) 12.♘d2 h5) 12.gxh5? ♖d7!± Black is about to win the game, but... ½-½ Ferguson-Pert, England tt 2006/07) 7...h5 8.♖g3 (8.♖f4 g5!?) 9.♖e3 ♙xc5 10.♘d4 ♘h6 11.♘2b3 ♘g4 12.♖xg5 ♙e7 13.♖d2 ♘dxe5± with an irrational position) 8...h4 (8...♙xc5=) 9.♖f4 g5!?!±



analysis diagram

10.♞e3 ♟xc5 11.♞e2?! (≥ 11.♟d4 ♞c7 12.♟f3 g4 13.♞f4 ♟xd4!) 11...g4 12.♟g1 ♟d4 13.♞xg4 ♟xe5 14.♟gf3 ♟g7 (14...♟d6!?) 15.♞b4+ ♞e7 16.♞xe7+ ♟xe7 17.♟b3 b6 18.♟b5?! ♟e5 19.♟xe5 ♟xe5 20.0-0 ♟g6 21.♞e1 ♟f6 22.♟d3?! ♞ ½-½ Gormally-Pert, Hastings 2007/08.

7.♟gf3

A logical response.

A) On the other hand, the recently played 7.♞g3, and then 7...f6!, is also critical and more tempting: 8.♟gf3 ♟h6!? 9.♟b3 (the line 9.♟d3 ♟f7 10.exf6 gxf6 11.0-0 e5 12.♟h4 e4 looks excellent for Black, Nevednichy-Pelletier, Gothenburg Ech-tt 2005) 9...♟f5 10.♞f4 g5!? 11.♞d2 ♟xe5 12.♟xe5 fxe5 Black's pawn structure is stronger than the Great Wall of China, Wang Yu-Lputian, Beer-Sheva Wch-tt 2005;

B) A new, creative French/Benko/Volga idea is 7...b6!? 8.cxb6 ♞xb6 9.♟d3 ♟a6☞;

C) 7...♟h6 appears to be a bad novelty: 8.♟d3! ♟h4?! 9.♞f4 ♟g5 10.♞g3 ♟h4 11.♞f4 ♟g5 12.♞a4 ♟xe5 13.♟gf3 ♟xd3+ 14.cxd3 and White's position must be preferable, Svidler-Nepomniachtchi, Moscow ch-RUS 2006;

B) 7.♟df3 is not very successful: 7...f6 (7...♟xc5!?! 8.♟d3 f6 9.♞g3 fxe5

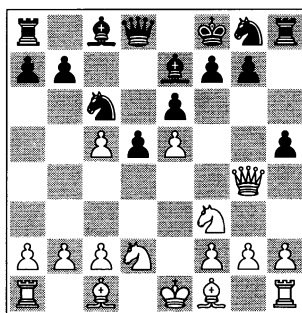
10.♟xe5 ♟xe5 11.♞xe5 ♟f6 12.♟g5 ♟d6 13.♞e2 e5 ♞ Jo. Armas-Knaak, Cienfuegos 1980) 8.♞g3 (8.♟f4! (Akopian's improvement) 8...♞a5+! 9.c3 ♞a4 10.♞g3 ♞c2) 8...fxe5 9.♟xe5 ♟xe5 10.♞xe5 ♟xc5 11.♟f3 ♟f6 12.♟e3 ♟d6 13.♞c3 ♞e7☞.



WEAPON: 12.♟d3?! ♟xf2+!
13.♟d1 ♟c5 14.♞f1 ♟d6

Akopian-Pelletier, Aubervilliers rapid 2002.

7...h5!?

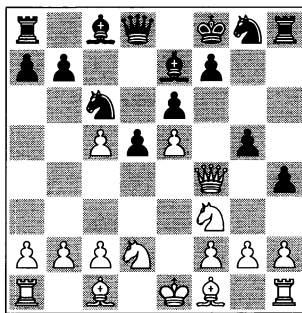


Morozevich prefers to play with pawns.

8.♞g3 h4!

An incredible Internet blitz game went 8...♟h6!? 9.♟d3 h4 10.♞f4 g5! 11.♞e3 ♟f5 12.♟xf5 exf5 13.♟b3 f4 14.♞c3 h3 15.g3 d4! 16.♟fxd4 ♞d5 17.♞f3 ♞xe5+ 18.♟e2 ♟f5 19.gxf4 ♞e6 20.♞g1 g4 21.♞e3 ♞d5 22.♟d2 ♞e8 23.♞c3 ♞h6 24.♟e3 ♟f6 ♞ Zhang Zhong-Shipov, ICC 2007.

9.♞f4 g5!



The key to Black's counterplay.

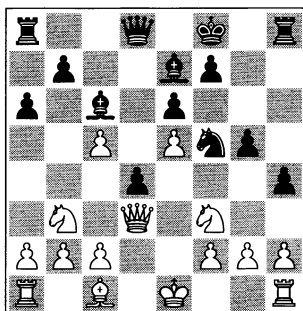
10.♖a4

Against 10.♖e3 it would be interesting to continue playing with the pawns: 10...d4!? (10...♟h6 is the normal move here) 11.♖e4 f5! 12.exf6 ♟xf6 13.♖d3 g4! 14.♟g5 ♖d5 15.♟de4 ♟b4! 16.♖e2 ♟xe4 17.♟xe4 b6!⇒ Black uses almost all his resources in this line.

10...♙d7! 11.♙b5 a6! 12.♙xc6 ♙xc6 13.♖d4 ♟h6!

Now the black pieces find their way out, entirely in harmony with his previous play.

14.♟b3 ♟f5 15.♖d3 d4!



A nice anti-blockade sacrifice. But 15...♙b5!? 16.♖c3 ♖c8 17.♙e3 b6⇒ was also interesting.

16.♖g1 ♖c7! 17.♟fxd4 ♖xe5+

Normally this central pawn is more important than the one on c5.

18.♙e3 ♖xh2

And this one...

19.0-0-0 ♟xd4

19...♟xe3!? was a better exchange; 20.fx3 ♖d8⇒ with a strong position for Black.

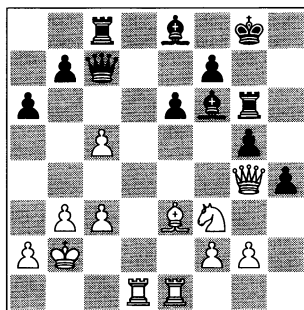
20.♖xd4 ♖h6 21.♖g4 ♖e5

21...f5 was in the spirit of the previous play.

22.♟d4

As usually happens in the games between these two players, the final stage is attractive and dramatic.

22...♙f6 23.c3 ♖e4 24.♖e2 ♙a4 25.b3 ♙e8 26.♟b2 ♟g8 27.♖ge1 ♖g6 28.♖f1 ♖e5 29.♖c4 ♖c7 30.♟f3 ♖c8 31.♖g4!?



31...b6 32.♙d4 ♙xd4 33.cxd4 bxc5

Recovering this pawn at last. 33...f5 34.♖h5 ♖g7 35.♖h6 ♖g6=.

34.d5

34.♟e5!? ♖g7 35.d5.

34...c4! 35.♖xc4 ♖xc4 36.bxc4 exd5

37.cxd5 ♖d8 38.♖e5 f6 39.♖e7 ♟f8?!

39...♖g7! 40.♖xg7+ ♟xg7 41.♟d4 ♟f7⇒.

40.♖a7 f5 41.♖h7 ♟g8 42.♖b7 ♙b5

43.♖c1 ♖g7 44.♖xg7+ ♟xg7

45.♟xg5 ♖xd5 46.♟f3 ♟f6 47.♟xh4

♖d4 48.♟f3 ♖g4 49.g3 f4 50.♟h2

♖g8 51.♖c3 fxg3 52.♖xg3 ♖xg3

53.fxg3 ♟f5 54.♟c3 ♟e4 55.♟d2

♙d7 56.a3 ♙e6 57.♟f1 1/2-1/2

Summary 4.e5: The many games mentioned here are a fantastic window display of modern chess, full of resources!

After 5.♖g4 the most important moves in the opening are those made by the black pawns: ...h7-h5, ...g7-g5, ...f7-f6 and also the knight manoeuvre ...♟h6-♟f5. After 6.dxc5 Black does not recover this pawn, but looks for tactical possibilities instead.

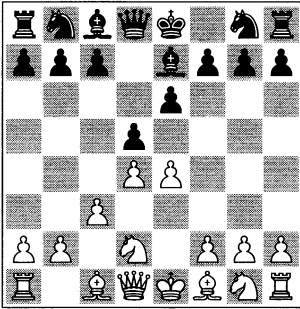
GAME 28

□ Alexander Onischuk

■ Alexander Morozevich

Germany Bundesliga 1998/99 (8)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♘d2 ♙e7 4.c3



A modest try for technical players. The present game is the most interesting and attractive played in this line.

4...c5!?

4...dxe4 (analogous to the Rubinstein Variation) is a good way to equalise: 5. ♘xe4 ♘f6 (5... ♘c6) 6. ♘xf6+ ♙xf6 7. ♘f3 ♘d7 8. ♙f4 0-0 9. ♙e2 b6 10.0-0 ♙b7 11. ♙d2 c5 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13. ♙e3 ♙d5 14. ♙fd1 ♙e4 15. ♙xe4 ♘xe4 16. ♙e5 ♙fd8 17. ♙xf6 ♘xf6 18. ♘e5 ♘f8 19. f3 ♘d5 20. ♘f2 f6 21. ♘g4 ♘e7 ½-½ A.Sokolov-Kortchnoi, Madrid 1988.

5.dxc5

5.e5?! leads to the line with 4.e5 c5 5.c3?!, see the comments to the previous game.

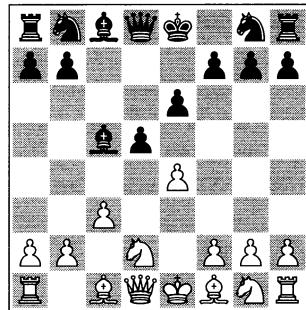
The other option is 5.exd5:

A) 5...exd5!? 6.dxc5 ♙xc5 7. ♘gf3 ♘f6 8. ♙b5+ ♘c6 (8... ♙d7=) 9.0-0 0-0 10. ♘b3 ♙b6 (10... ♙d6=) 11. ♙g5 a6 12. ♙a4 ♙c7 13. ♘bd4 ♙d6 14. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15. ♙d3 ♙g4 16. ♙c2 g6 17.h3 ♙d7 Black's counterplay compensates for his isolated pawn on

d5, Drabke-Fluvia Poyatos, Oropesa del Mar jr 2000;

B) After 5... ♙xd5 we have actually reached a position from one of the main C07 lines (with 3...c5 4.exd5 ♙xd5), with the inclusion of the moves c2-c3 and ...♙f8-e7. This difference seems to slightly favour Black, so he should not have any problems in equalising: 6. ♘gf3 (6.dxc5 ♙xc5 7. ♘e4 ♙c6 8. ♙d3 ♘d7 9. ♘f3 ♘gf6 10. ♙e2 ♘xe4 11. ♙xe4 ♙c7 12.0-0 0-0 13.a4 ♘f6 14. ♙c2 b6 15. ♙g5 ♙b7= Dvoiris-Morozevich, Samara 1998) 6...cxd4 7. ♙c4 ♙h5 8. ♘xd4 ♙xd1+ 9. ♘xd1 a6 10. ♙e1 ♘f6 11.a4 b6 12. ♙e2 ♙b7 13. ♙f3 ♙xf3+ 14. ♘2xf3 0-0 15. ♘c2 ♘bd7 16. ♘c6 ♙c5 17. ♙e3 ♙fc8 18. ♙xc5 ♙xc6 19. ♙d4 ♘d5 20.g3 ♙ac8 21. ♘b3 f6 22. ♙ad1 ♘f7 23. ♙e3 ♙c4 24. ♙f4 ♙xc3+ 25.bxc3 ♙xc3+ 26. ♘b2 ♙xf3 ♣ Khamrakulov-Caruana, Dos Hermanas 2006.

5...♙xc5

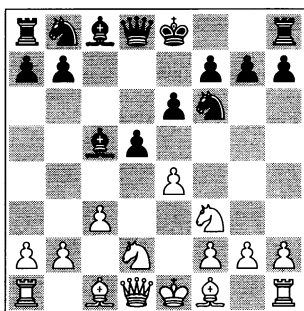


6. ♘gf3

6. ♘b3 ♙b6 7.e5 (7.exd5 exd5 8. ♘f3 ♘f6 9. ♙e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘c6 11. ♘fd4 (11. ♙g5?! ♙e8 12. ♙h4 h6 13. ♙e1 g5 14. ♙g3 ♘e4 15. ♘fd4 ♙f6↑ Smeets-Shipov, ICC 2005) 11... ♙e8 12. ♙e3 ♘e5 13. ♙e1 h6 14. ♙c2 ♙d7 15. ♙ad1 ♙c7 ♣ Black is more active,

½-½ Tiviakov-Kasimdzhanov, Kemer 2007) 7...♘c6 8.♘f3 f6 (very similar to the line played by the same contestants in Game 27; 8...♖c7!?: 8...♘ge7) 9.♙b5! (the bishop was on d3 earlier – see the line 4.♙d3) 9...♙d7 10.♙xc6 bxc6 11.0-0 ♘e7 12.♙e3 0-0 (Black's position is very comfortable) 13.♖e1 ♘g6 14.♘c5 (Adams-Morozevich, Cannes rapid 2001) and now 14...fxe5 15.♘xd7 ♖xd7 16.♙xb6 e4! 17.♞xe4 axb6=.

6...♘f6



7.e5!?

This advance always leads to sharp and double-edged positions. 7.♙d3 dxe4 (7...♘c6!?) 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♖a4+! ♙d7 10.♖xe4 ♙c6 11.♖e2 ♘d7 12.0-0 a5 13.♞d1 ♖c7 14.b4 ♙e7 15.♙b2 = Svidler-Shipov, Moscow blitz 2006.

7...♖b6! 8.♘d4 ♘fd7 9.♖g4

This is a very provocative manoeuvre. After 9.♘b3 ♘xe5 Black wins a pawn; 9.♘2f3 ♘c6=.

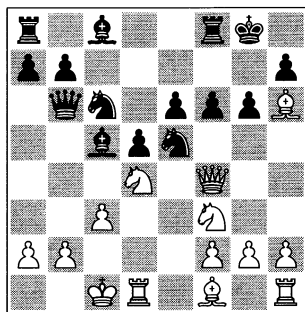
9...0-0!

Thanks to his lead in development, Black soon obtains a dangerous initiative after preparing an exchange sacrifice.

10.♘2f3 ♘c6! 11.♙h6 g6 12.0-0-0

12.♙xf8? ♖xb2!.

12...♘dxe5 13.♖f4 f6!



14.♙xf8 ♙xf8 15.♖xf6 ♘g4! 16.♖h4 e5!

The attacking machine is turned on, but tactical mistakes are also about to appear.

17.♘g5

17.♘xc6 bxc6 18.♞d2 ♙h6 19.♘g5 ♘g7! ♣.

17...h5! 18.♘df3 ♙f5?

Too optimistic. 18...♘xf2? was weak in view of 19.♞xd5! ♘xh1 20.♖c4! ♠. But 18...♘e7!, defending and attacking at the same time, and intending ...♘f5→♖h4, would have won tactically: 19.♙d3 ♙h6! 20.♘b1 ♙f5—+.

19.♞xd5

Suddenly White is back in the game.

19...♘b4 20.♙c4! ♘g7??

Another serious mistake. Black should have played 20...♘xd5, with a complicated position.

21.♞hd1?

21.♞xe5!.

21...♘xd5 22.♞xd5 ♞c8

22...♙c5!?.

23.♘xe5 ♙e7 24.♙d3?

≥ 24.♙b3! ♘xf2! (24...♘xe5? 25.♞xe5 ♙f6 26.♞xf5!+—) 25.♖f4 ♖a6 26.c4!∞ – 26.♘gf7 is parried by 26...♖e2! (not 26...♖f1+? 27.♞d1 ♖xg2 28.♖h6+ ♘f6 29.♘d7+! ♙xd7 30.♖f4+ ♘g7 31.♞xd7+—) 27.♖h6+ ♘f6 28.♘d7+! ♙xd7 29.♖f4+ ♘g7 30.♖h6+ ♘f6 with a perpetual.

24... ♖xf2??

24... ♙a3 25. ♙xf5 ♖xc3+ or 25. bxa3 ♖xc3+ both lead to perpetual check; 24... ♗d8!±.

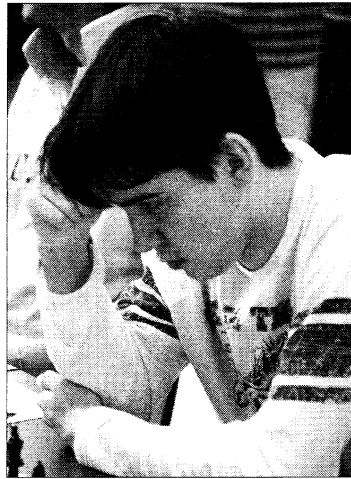
25. ♘e6+ ♖h6?

And Black resigned without waiting for 26. ♘xg4+ ♙xg4 27. ♖xf2, winning the queen.

25... ♙xe6 26. ♖xe7+ ♙f7 27. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 28. ♘xf7 ♖xf7 29. ♗d7+ ♖e6 30. ♖xb7 is not really saving Black either.

1-0

Another sharp and dramatic game by Alexander Morozevich.



The talented Ian Nepomniachtchi (born 1990) is a new generator of ideas, for and against the French Defence. His score with black in the 3... ♙e7 line is 60%

Summary of 4.c3:

This move is not especially useful in these lines. The game is still very balanced. If White plays the advance e4-e5, the arising positions are very similar to those of the Advance Variation with 4.e5, but the extra move ♘d2 is not very appropriate here.

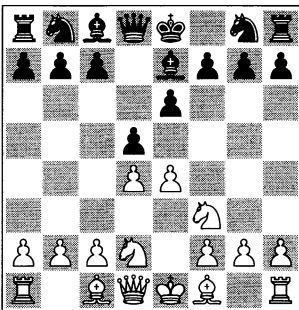
GAME 29

□ **Zaven Andriasian**

■ **Ian Nepomniachtchi**

Kirishi 2007 (6)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♘d2 ♙e7!? 4. ♘g3



A natural and therefore popular devel-

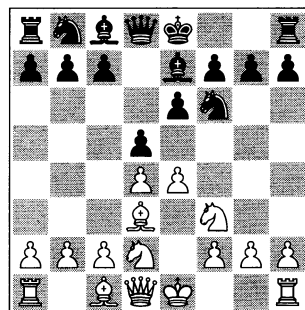
opment of the knight, but it does not grant any advantage.

4... ♘f6!?

Black does not have a great deal of choice, since, for example, 4... ♘c6 5.c3!? dxe4 6. ♘xe4 ♘f6 7. ♙d3±, and also 4...c5?! 5.exd5 exd5 6.dxc5 ♘f6 7. ♘b3 0-0 8. ♙e3± are both better for White.

5.e5

White closes the centre. An alternative to keep the position open would be 5. ♙d3!?

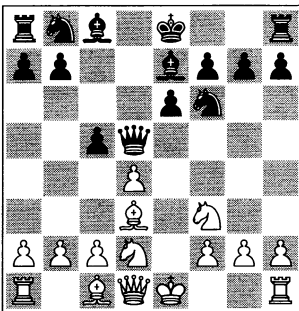


analysis diagram

A) 5...b6?! is too hasty: 6.e5 ♗fd7 7.c4 c5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.0-0 ♙a6 10.♙xa6 ♗xa6 11.♗b1! ♗c7 12.♗c3 ♗f8 13.♙e3 ♗fe6 14.♖c2 0-0 15.♖ad1 c4 16.♗e1 f5 17.exf6 ♖xf6 18.f4 ♖d6? 19.f5± Adams-Rivas Pastor, Dos Hermanas 1993. But there is always a way out, such as 5...dxe4!;

B) 5...c5 6.exd5 (Black seems OK after 6.dxc5 dxe4 (simplest) 7.♗xe4 ♗xe4 8.♙xe4 ♖xd1+ 9.♗xd1 ♙xc5 10.♗e2 ♗d7 11.♖d1 ♗f6 12.♙d3 0-0 13.♗e5 b6= Kobalia-Morozevich, Elista Olympiad 1998; 6.e5 ♗fd7 transposes into the main game) and now:

B1) 6...♖xd5



analysis diagram

Activating the queen as in the ‘Scandinavian Hybrid’. This is also a position from a main C07 line, this time with the inclusion of the moves ♙d3 and ...♙e7. This difference also seems to slightly favour Black: 7.dxc5 ♗bd7 8.b4 (trying to get something out of nothing. The usual variation is 8.0-0!? ♗xc5 9.♙c4 ♖d6!? 10.♗b3 with equal chances. Or, for instance, 8.♖e2 ♗xc5 9.♙c4 ♖d6 10.♗b3 0-0 11.♙e3 ♖c7 12.♙d4 b6 13.♙e5 ♙d6 14.0-0-0 ♗ce4 15.♙xd6 ♗xd6 16.♙d3 ♙b7 17.♗e5 ♖ac8 18.♖hg1 ♗d5 19.♗b1 f6 20.♗g4 e5 21.f3 ♗f4 22.♖f2 a5⚡ with a big ad-

vantage for Black, Shulman-Morozevich, Elista Olympiad 1998) 8...a5 (Black will obtain satisfactory counterplay) 9.♙c4 ♖h5 10.c3 ♗d5 (10...axb4 11.cxb4 b6!?) 11.♙xd5 ♖xd5 12.♖b3 ♙f6! 13.♖b1 ♗e5!⇒ Kholmov-Morozevich, Omsk/Perm 1998;

B2) 6...♗xd5!? is also sufficient: 7.dxc5 ♗d7 8.♗b3 ♗xc5 9.♗xc5 ♖a5+!? 10.c3 ♖xc5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖e2 ♖d8 13.♗e5 g6 14.♖e1 ♖c7 15.♙h6 f6⇒ preparing ...e5 and ...♙e6, Abdelnabbi-Lputian, Abu Dhabi 2003.

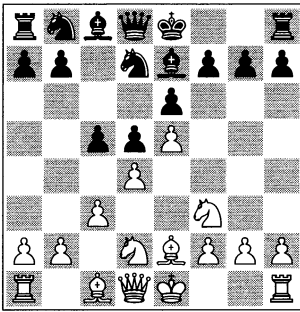
5...♗fd7

5...♗e4?! is insufficient: 6.♙d3 ♗xd2 7.♙xd2 0-0?! (if 7...c5 8.dxc5!±, or 7...b6 8.c3 0-0 9.b4±) 8.h4! with a nice attack: 8...h6 9.c3 ♗d7 10.♗g5! c5 11.♖h5 (11.♗h7!?) 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 ♖b6 13.♙c3 ♙b4 14.♗f1 ♙xc3 15.bxc3 ♖b2 16.♖d1 ♖xa2 17.♖h3 b6 18.♙h7+ ♗h8 19.♖g3 ♙a6+ 20.♗g1 ♖e2 21.♗xf7+! ♖xf7 22.♖xf7 ♖xd1+ 23.♗h2 g5 24.♙g6 ♗f8 25.♖f6+ ♗g8 26.♙f7+ ♗h7 27.hxg5 1-0 Chandler-Short, Brighton 1981.

6.♙d3

A) 6.c4?! is rather ambitious: 6...dxc4 (6...c5!? 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♙d3 ♗c6 9.0-0 cxd4 10.♖e1 ♗c5 11.♗b3 (Godena-Caruana, Cremona ch-ITA play-off 2006) 11...♗xd3 12.♖xd3 ♗b4 13.♖d1 d3⇒) 7.♗xc4 (7.♙xc4 ♗b6 8.♙d3 ♙d7 9.0-0 ♙c6 10.♖e1 ♙d5! 11.♙c2 ♗c6= Mahjoob-Lputian, Yerevan Wch-tt 2001) 7...♗b6 8.♗xb6 axb6 9.♙d3 ♙d7 10.0-0 ♙c6 11.♖e1 ♙d5! 12.♙e3 ♗c6 13.a3 0-0 14.♗d2 f5! = and Black is quite comfortable in this completely blocked position, Svidler-Visser, Groningen 1990;

B) 6.c3 c5 7.♙e2!? is quite a rare continuation compared with ♙d3.

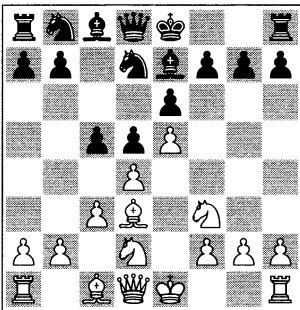


analysis diagram

White's main idea is to keep a stable centre, protecting the d4 pawn with ♘b3. In this case, Black cannot punish White with ...c5-c4.

7... ♘c6 8.0-0 0-0 9. ♖e1 (9. ♘b3 c4 10. ♘bd2 b5 11. a3 a5 12. ♖e1 ♘b6 13. ♘f1 ♘d7 14. ♘f4 b4 15. ♖c1 bxa3 16. bxa3 a4 17. ♘g5 ♘a5 18. ♖a2 ♖b8 19. ♘g3 ♘a8 20. ♘h5 ♘h8 21. ♘xe7 ♖xe7 22. ♘d1 ♖b3⇒ Erenburg-Kuraszkiewicz, Warsaw Ech 2005) 9...f6 (9...a5!?) 10. exf6 ♘xf6 11. ♘f1 (transferring the knight to the kingside; 11. ♘d3 ♖b6!?) 11...cxd4! (after White has moved the knight from the centre to f1, there is no point in Black delaying the capture on d4) 12. cxd4 ♖ (Erenburg-Timman, Reykjavik 2006) and now 12... ♖b6! 13. ♘g3 ♘d7 and Black's prospects are better.

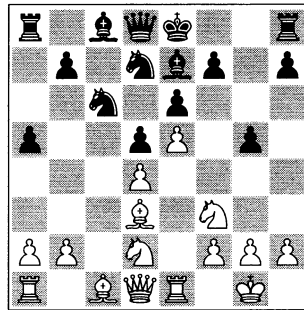
6...c5 7.c3



7...b6!?

An excellent idea in this position, trying to return to the exchange plan ♘c8x♘f1 (Game 23), where the knight at f3 is not on its best square. 7... ♘c6 (transposing into C06. In the same chapter (Games 20 and 21) we studied a different position with the theme 'Fianchetto versus Symmetry' – with the pawn on g6 and the bishop on f8) 8.0-0

A) 8...a5! (this advance is quite useful. It prepares tactical operations over the entire board: ...cxd4 and ...g5) 9. ♖e1! (allowing a direct counterattack. 9.a4! would be a better idea, for instance: 9... ♖b6 10. dxc5 ♘xc5 11. ♘c2 ♖c7 12. ♖e1 ♘d7 13. ♖e2 b6 14. ♘b3 ♘a6 15. ♖e3 0-0-0? 16. ♘bd4 ♘c5 17. ♘d2 ♘b7 18. ♖ac1± intending b2-b4!, Fedorchuk-Giaccio, Lorca 2007) 9...cxd4 10. cxd4 g5!⇒



analysis diagram

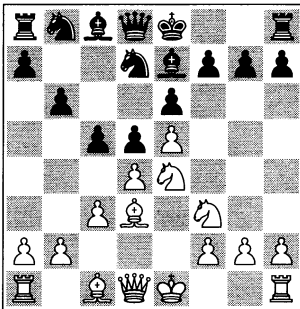
A common resource in this position. 11.g4 (if 11. ♘b3? a4; or 11. ♘b1 g4 12. ♘fd2 h5⇒; or 11.h3! h5 12. ♘f1 g4 13. hxg4 hxg4 14. ♘3h2 ♘xd4 15. ♖xg4 ♘c5 16. ♘g5 ♖b6 17. ♖f4 ♘c6∞ Halasz-Knaak, Kecskemet 1985) 11...h5 12.h3 ♖b6 13. ♘f1? (13. ♖a4! was a better option, and then 13... ♘db8!⇒, intending ...♘d7-♘a6) 13...hxg4 14. hxg4 ♘xd4 ♖ favours Black, Shirov-Kasimdzhanov, Moscow blitz 2007;

B) The active 8...g5!? remains another popular choice: 9.dxc5 ♗dx5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.♙b5+ ♙d7 12.♙xd7+ ♗xd7 13.b4 b6⇒ Rublevsky-Morozevich, Togliatti tt 2003;

C) 8...♖b6 9.dxc5 ♖c7!? (9...♗xc5 10.♙c2±) 10.♗b3 ♗dx5 11.♗xe5 ♖xe5 12.f4 (12.♞e1!?) 12...♖c7 13.♙e3 (13.f5 e5 14.♙e2 ♖d8 15.♙e3 0-0=) 13...♙d7∞ Tischbieriek-Knaak, Halle 1981; 8...♗f8?! 9.♞e1 ♙d7 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 (Geller-Romanishin, Minsk ch-URS 1979) and now 11.h4!±.

8.0-0

The only move to take advantage of White's temporary lead in development is 8.♗e4!?.



analysis diagram

Going for tactics! 8...♖c7 (8...0-0!?!; 8...♙a6 9.♙xa6 ♗xa6 10.♗d6+ ♙xd6 11.exd6∞ – the pawn on d6 can be powerful) 9.♗g3 ♙a6 with a lot of play for both sides.

Or perhaps 8.♖e2 a5 (8...♗c6!? 9.0-0 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗b4⇒) 9.c4 (9.0-0 ♙a6 10.c4 ♗c6⇒) 9...♙b7 10.cxd5 ♙xd5 11.♙e4 (Smirin-Pelletier, Biel 2002), and now 11...♗c6! =.

8...♙a6 9.♙xa6 ♗xa6 10.♞e1

10.♖e2 would transpose into Chapter 3, Game 23, Khamrakulov-Moskalenko.

10...b5

10...0-0 probably equalises, but Black keeps playing hide-and-seek.

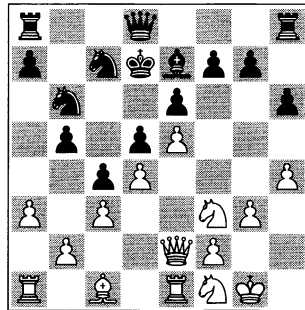
11.♖e2

If 11.a4 b4 12.c4 ♗c7 13.b3 0-0 14.♙b2= there is no way to make progress.

11...c4! 12.a3?!

After this move the game heads back to the Labyrinths explained in Chapter 2, but without the light-squared bishops. ≥ 12.b3!?

12...♗c7 13.♗f1 ♗b6 14.g3 h6 15.h4 ♗d7!?



This is the ideal square for Black's king, while the queen travels to h7: ...♖g8-♖h7.

16.♗3h2 ♖g8 17.♗d2 ♖h7 18.b3 cxb3 19.♗xb3 ♞hc8 20.♞d1 ♙e8!?

Central castling.

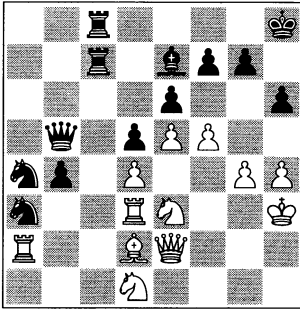
21.♞d3 ♞ab8 22.♗f1 ♗ca8 23.♗e3 ♗a4 24.♗d1 ♗8b6†

Black dominates on the queenside.

25.f3 ♞c7 26.♙g2 ♞bc8 27.♙d2 a6 28.♞a2 ♖g8 29.♗a1 ♗c4 30.♙c1 ♖h7 31.♗b3 ♙f8 32.♙h2 ♙g8

Kingside castling at last!

33.♗a1 ♗a5 34.♙d2 ♙h8 35.♗c2 ♗c4 36.♙c1 ♖g8 37.♗b4 a5 38.♗c2 ♖e8 39.♙h3 ♗cb6 40.♙d2 ♖c6 41.♗ce3 ♗c4 42.f4 ♗xa3 43.g4 b4 44.cxb4 axb4 45.f5 ♖b5—+



Black wins after a few tactical skirmishes.

46.f6 b3! 47.♖xa3 ♜xa3 48.fxg7+ ♔xg7 49.♗f5+ ♔f8 50.♖e3 exf5 51.♖xh6+ ♔e8 52.♖f3 ♖e2 53.♖xf5 ♖xd1 0-1

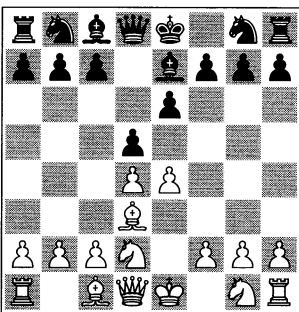
A very instructive game by the young and talented Ian Nepomniachtchi.

Summary of 4. ♖gf3: This is the normal continuation. White is not trying to refute Black’s system, and his only aim is to gain a slight space advantage and play on from there. Although natural, this does not seem dangerous for Black.

GAME 30

□ **Vasilios Kotronias**
 ■ **Ian Nepomniachtchi**
 Moscow 2007 (8)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖d2 ♜e7 4.♞d3

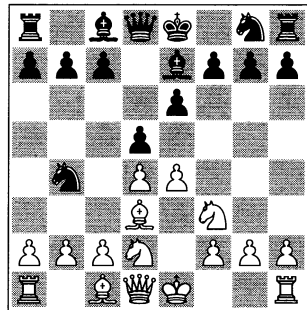


Another popular set-up, which is probably more flexible and more dangerous for Black. The difference with 4. ♖gf3 is that the text move allows ♖e2 at a favourable moment.

4...c5!

The most dynamic response.

A) Romanishin’s original idea was 4...♗c6, but this manoeuvre is somewhat slow: 5. ♖gf3 (now 5.c3 can be met by 5...dxe4! 6. ♞xe4 (6. ♖xe4 e5! is fine for Black) 6...♗f6 7. ♞f3 0-0 8. ♖c4 and now interesting is 8...♞e8!?) 9. ♖e2 e5!? 10. ♞xc6 bxc6 11. ♖xe5 ♞d6 12.0-0 ♞a6 13.f4 ♖g4 14.h3 ♖xe5 15.fxex5 ♞xe5=) 5...♗b4!?



Later Morozevich used this resource in a more sensible set-up. See the comments to move 7 in this game. 6. ♞e2 dxe4 (6...c5!?) is slightly weird but playable, since it carries with it several structural choices, for instance: 7.exd5 ♖xd5 8. ♗b3 cxd4 9.0-0 ♖gf6 10. ♗bxd4 0-0 11.c4 ♗b4 12.b3 ♖c7 13. ♗b5 ♖b8 14. ♞b2 ♖c6 15. ♗bd4 ♞d7 16. ♖xc6 ♞xc6= Kotronias-Lputian, Yerevan Zonal 2000) 7. ♖xe4 ♖f6 8. ♖xf6+ ♞xf6 9.0-0 0-0 10.c3 ♖d5 11. ♞d3. Black’s position is temporarily passive (Radulov-Romanishin, Leningrad 1977; 8 games in MegaBase). My advice here is to con-

tinue 11...♖e7!? (instead of ...b6?!), preparing ...♗d8 and ...c7-c5, with an equal game;

B) 4...♗f6 is more appropriate in the French, but after 5.e5 (5.♗gf3 leads back to 4.♗gf3) 5...♗fd7 6.c3!? (6.♖g4 g6 7.h4 c5 8.c3 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♗c6 10.♗e2 ♖b6 11.♗f3?? ½-½ Abergel-Farago, Scanno 2005, but now 11...♖b4+! and 12...♗dx5 gains material) we reach the usual position of Chapter 3, with the added move ...♙e7 which does not seem useful here: 6...c5 7.♗e2 ♗c6 8.0-0 must favour White, even though this position is quite new in practice;

C) 4...dxe4 would follow the same idea as in the 3...dxe4 Rubinstein Variation (or also the Petroff Defence); Black tries to equalise without allowing any weaknesses: 5.♗xe4 ♗d7 6.♗f3 ♗gf6 7.♖e2 (preparing to castle queenside) 7...c5 8.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 9.♙e3 0-0 10.dxc5 ♗d5 11.0-0-0 ♖a5 12.♗b1 ♗xe3 13.♖xe3 ♖xc5= Navara-Shirov, Prague blitz 2005.

5.dxc5

The logical continuation (after ...♙e7) and also the main one. 5.exd5?! is nothing to worry about: 5...♖xd5! 6.♗gf3 is similar to the previous game with 4.♗gf3, but after 6...cxd4! we arrive in a theoretical variation with the extra moves ♙d3 and ...♙e7. This should favour Black, since White's normal move, with the bishop on f1, would be ♙c4. Now, that would mean the loss of a tempo.

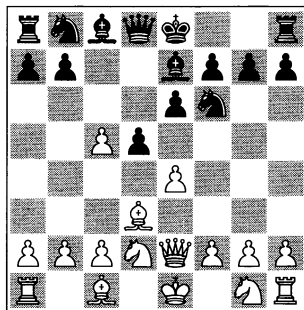
5...♗f6!?

Black prefers to develop. After the solid move 5...♗d7 he has to reckon with 6.b4! (≤ 6.exd5 exd5 7.♗b3 ♗xc5 8.♗f3 ♗f6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♙e3 ♗ce4!∞

11.♙e2 ♙d6 12.♗e1 ♗e8 White has no advantage at all, and he may even be slightly worse, Adams-Lputian, Manila Interzonal 1990) 6...a5 7.♙b2! (7.a3? is dubious: 7...axb4 8.♙b2 bxa3! 9.♙xg7 ♙f6 10.♙xh8 ♙xh8 11.♗a2 ♗xc5 is in Black's favour, Parligras-Rocha, Calvia Olympiad 2004) 7...♙f6 8.♙xf6 ♖xf6 (8...♗gxf6!? 9.a3 ♗e5∞) 9.♗gf3 axb4 10.exd5 exd5 11.0-0 ♗e7 12.♗b3 0-0 13.♖d2 ♖c3 (13...♗c6!?) 14.♖g5 (14.♖xc3!? bxc3 15.♗fe1 ♗c6 16.♙b5 ♗b4 17.♗fd4±) 14...♗f6= Wolff-Lputian, Tilburg rapid 1992.

6.♖e2!?

This possibility is the difference between 4.♙d3 and 4.♗gf3.



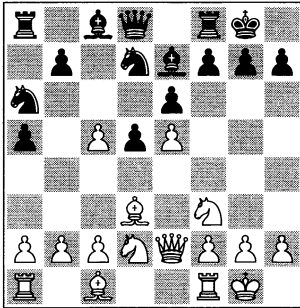
6...♗c6

The older but more solid theoretical line here is 6...0-0!?. Black is not in a hurry to take on c5, but he prepares to capture the pawn with his queen's knight: 7.♗gf3 a5!?

A) The advance 8.e5?! does not seem to disturb the black army: 8...♗fd7 9.h4 h6!? 10.c3 ♗xc5 11.♙c2 (Rozentalis-Vallejo Pons, Calvia Olympiad 2004) and now after 11...b6!↑ White is in trouble, since he faces threats such as ...♙a6!;

B) 8.a4?! ♗a6 9.e5 ♗d7 10.♗d4 ♗dxc5 11.♙xa6 ♗xa6= Navara-Pelletier, Plovdiv Ech-tt 2003;

C) 8.0-0 d6 9.e5 (9.exd5 exd5 10.Ke1 Ke8 11.d3 dxc5 12.b5 d7= Naiditsch-De la Riva Aguado, Pamplona 2004) 9...d7.



analysis diagram

This is the key position in the old line and perhaps in the entire 3...e7 variation.

C1) 10.d4 dxc5 11.d2f3 (11.f4 Bb6 12.d2f3 d7 13.a3 d4 (13...d3! was good for Black) 14.Ba2 dxc5 15.e3 a4 16.h1 f6 17.exf6 f6= Kotronias-Barsov, Montreal 2002) 11...d3 12.cxd3 d7 13.e3 a4 14.a3 d5 15.Bac1 b6 16.Bc3 f5! 17.Bd2 h6 18.d1 e1 B8= 1/2-1/2 Satyapragyan-Pert, Hastings 2007/08.

But this is not the only move here;

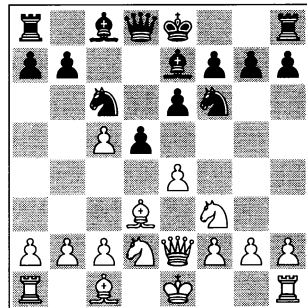
C2) 10.c3 dxc5 11.e2 f6!? (a very typical push in the French. Black removes White's e5-pawn, gaining more space for his pieces. 11...b6 is unclear: 12.Ke1 e6 13.B3 f6 14.b4 fxe5 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.bxc5 dxc5 17.Bxe5 fxf2+ 18.h1 xe1 19.Bxe6+ (19.Bxe1!) 19...h8 20.Bxe1 d4! 21.e2 d3 22.d1 Bg5 23.d3 Bae8 24.Bf2 d2 25.ea4 Be2 26.Bg1 Be7 27.c4 eb7 28.Bf1 Ke1 29.d1 Bxf3 30.gxf3 Bxd1! 0-1 Kristjansson-Caruana, Reykjavik 2008) 12.exf6 dxf6 13.d3 b6! 14.dxc5 dxc5 15.Bd1 e6= Black's pieces are

more active, Kotronias-Ni Hua, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005;

C3) 10.c4!? dxc5 (10...dxc5 fails to 11.eb1! d4? (≥ 11...d4∞) 12.Bd1 d3 13.B3 e3 d4 14.d4 Bc7 15.dxc5 dxc5 16.B4 e4 Bc7 17.a3 f2+ 18.f1 d6 19.d3 g6 20.h6 f5 21.B2 e2 c5 22.f8 f8 23.c5 dxc5 24.c4 a4 25.B3 c7 26.Bad1 e7 27.Bd6 d8 28.d4 d6 29.exd6 Bf7 30.d7 d7 31.dxe6+- Vachier Lagrave-Baklan, Paris 2004) 11.e2 b6!? 12.b3 b7 13.e2 f5 14.d4 B8 15.Bad1 Bxe5 16.Bxe5 dxe5 17.dxf5 (Vachier Lagrave-Sprenger, Germany Bundesliga 2007/08), and now 17...f6! 18.d6 ea6 19.Bfe1 d3 20.d3 d3 21.f6 Bxf6 with a slight initiative for Black.

It is dubious to change the move order with 6...a5 7.dg3 d6?! (it is remarkable that top players sometimes play the opening so carelessly... 7...0-0! is preferable) 8.eb5+ (8.exd5!?) 8...d7 9.d5 dxc5 10.d7 dxd7 11.exd5 exd5 12.B5 with a comfortable advantage, Gelfand-Aronian, Monaco rapid 2008. Levon Aronian is a great specialist in the Ruy Lopez, but in the French he is still quite a 'green' participant! :-)

7.dg3



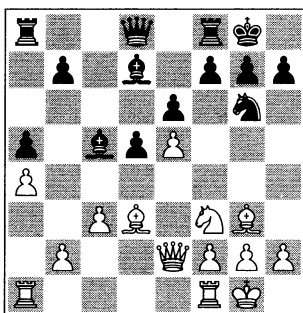
7...d4!?

Following in the footsteps of Romanishin and Morozevich. After one of his games Morozevich mentioned this move as being a new theoretical course. The alternatives are suffering a crisis:

A) 7...a5 8.0-0 0-0 and now:

A1) 9.c4 a4! 10.♞d1 ♙xc5 11.exd5 exd5 12.cxd5 ♘b4 13.♘e4 ♘xd3 14.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 15.♗xd3 ♙f5 16.♗b5 b6 with good compensation for the pawn, Asrian-Lputian, Yerevan ch-ARM 2000;

A2) 9.a4! Tiviakov: ‘The point of my idea is that White has to stop Black’s counterplay on the queenside, preventing the black pieces from becoming too active.’ 9...♘d7 10.♘b3 ♘xc5 11.♘xc5 ♙xc5 12.c3 ♙d7 13.♙f4 ♘e7 14.e5 ♘g6 15.♙g3.



analysis diagram

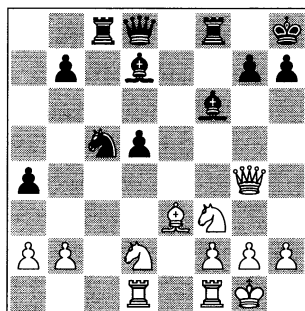
White’s prospects are better. 15...f5 16.exf6 gxf6 (≥ 16...♗xf6±) 17.c4! dxc4 18.♙xc4 ♖e7 19.h4! (a decisive attacking resource which introduces a fine conclusion) 19...♞fe8 20.♞fd1 ♘h8 21.h5 ♘f8 22.♘e5! ♞ad8 23.♙h4 ♙c6 24.♘g4 ♞xd1+ 25.♞xd1 ♘d7 26.♞xd7! ♗xd7 27.♙xf6+ ♘g8 28.♘h6+ ♘f8 29.♗g4 1-0 Tiviakov-Lputian, Ohrid Ech 2001.

B) 7...0-0?! 8.e5! ♘d7 9.♘b3 ♘xc5 10.♘xc5 ♖a5+ (Tricks: 10...♙xc5? allows the famous sacrifice 11.♙xh7+!

♘xh7 12.♘g5+ ♘g6 13.h4!+–) 11.c3 ♗xc5 12.h4! f6 13.exf6 ♙xf6 14.♘g5! Adams-J.Soza, Internet blitz ICC 2000.

8.♘b3

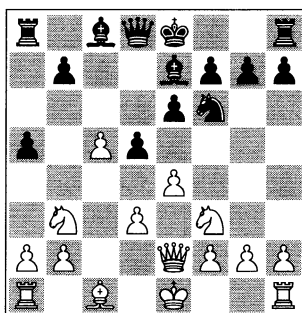
White tries to defend his extra pawn on c5. The developing move 8.0-0!? will be examined in the next game. In the event of 8.e5 ♘d7 9.♘b3 ♘xd3+ 10.♗xd3 (10.cxd3 a5!? with the idea 11.d4? a4 12.♘bd2 b6!↑) 10...a5 11.♙e3 a4 12.♘bd2 0-0 13.0-0 ♘xc5 14.♗d4 ♙d7 15.♗g4 ♘h8 16.♞ad1 ♞c8 17.c4 f5! 18.exf6 ♙xf6 19.cxd5 exd5f7.



analysis diagram

Black has a clear initiative: 20.♗b4 ♘d3!? 21.♗xb7 ♙g4 22.h3 ♙h5 23.♘b1 ♙xf3 24.gxf3 ♞b8 25.♗c6 ♘b4 26.♗xa4 ♖c8 27.♙f4 ♞b6 28.♞fe1 ♙h4 29.♘g2 ♗f5 30.♞d4 ♘c2 31.♞e8 ♘xd4 32.♞xf8+ ♗xf8 33.♗xd4 ♞b4 0-1 Zagrebelyn-Morozevich, Moscow 2003.

8...♘xd3+ 9.cxd3 a5



10.♙g5

The most popular move at the moment.

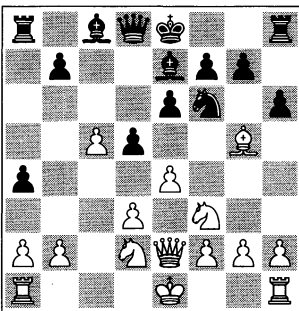
A) Another interesting idea is 10.0-0!?, with which only one single game has been played so far! 10...a4 11.♘bd4 ♙xc5 12.e5 ♘d7 13.♙d2 (13.♙e3!?) 13...0-0 14.a3 (14.b4!?) 14...b6? (Ma. Pavlov-Firman, Alushta 2002). Now 15.♙g5!↑;

B) The blockading move 10.a4 can be met by a clear reply:

B1) A sharp tactical duel arises after 10...b6 11.e5 ♘d7 12.c6 ♘c5 13.♘bd4 ♙a6 14.♘b5 ♘b3 15.♚b1 ♙b4+ 16.♙f1 0-0 17.d4 f6 18.♚e3?! (wasting an important tempo. 18.♙e3!?, or 18.♚d3!?, was probably better) 18...♙xb5+ 19.axb5 a4 20.g3 ♚e8 21.♚d3 ♘xc1 22.♚xc1 a3!⇒ Adams-Morozevich, Wijk aan Zee 2000;

B2) The improvement 10...dxe4!?, solves virtually all Black's technical problems: 11.dxe4 0-0 12.0-0 b6 (12...♚c7!?, 13.♙g5 e5⇒) 13.♚d1 ♚c7 14.♙g5 (14.cxb6 ♚xb6) 14...bxc5 15.♚ac1 (if 15.e5!?, ♙a6!?, 16.♚c2 ♘d5 17.♙xe7 ♚xe7 18.♚xc5 (or 18.♘xa5 ♘b4 19.♚e4 ♙d3!⇒) 18...♚xc5 19.♘xc5 ♙e2 and then ...♙xf3, Black gains sufficient counterplay) 15...♙a6 16.♚c2 ♚fc8 17.♙h4 ½-½ Rublevsky-Radjabov, Hyderabad 2002.

10...a4 11.♘bd2 h6!?



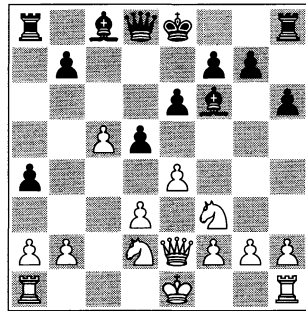
It is very important to force White's bishop to choose a diagonal.

12.♙xf6

If 12.♙e3 ♚a5 13.0-0 ♙xc5 14.exd5!?, ♙xe3 (14...♘xd5 15.♘c4 ♚c7 16.♚ac1↑) 15.♘c4! ♚a6 16.♚xe3 0-0 17.dxe6 ♙xe6= we reach a tactical position where White has an extra pawn but Black has active pieces in compensation, Ganguly-Hanley, Torquay ch-BCF 2002.

Or 12.♙h4 g5!?, 13.♙g3 ♙xc5 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.0-0 f6 (15...a3!?) 16.♚ac1 ♙e7 17.♚fe1 0-0 18.♘d4 ♚a6 19.♘2f3 ♙d7 20.h4 ♚e8 and the position is equal, Aagaard-P.H.Nielsen, Denmark tt 2000/01.

12...♙xf6



13.exd5

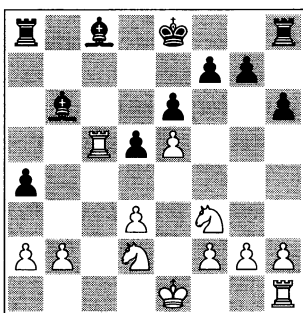
Another logical idea is 13.e5 (Nicholas Pert in Yearbook 84: 'The hero of the line, Morozevich, had previously struggled against 13.e5 against England's Michael Adams, but appeared to reach a reasonable position when he improved with 14...♚a5 against Godena. Here he gained piece activity and the bishop pair in return for a pawn – a common theme – and eventually went on to regain his pawn and later to win. A word of warning, though: this endgame was later repeated in the game Bauer-Libiszewski and this time round the ex-

tra pawn counted for White!') 13...♙e7 and now:

A) 14.d4 ♖a5 15.0-0 0-0 16.♞fc1 b6 17.♞e3 ♞b8 18.♞c2 ♙a6 19.♞ac1 ♞fc8 20.h3 bxc5 21.dxc5 ♞b5 22.c6 ♖b6 23.♞d4 ♞b4 24.♞xb6 ♞xb6 25.♟d4 ♙d3 26.♞c3 ♙g6 and with the bishop pair Black has an initiative compensating for the pawn, Losev-Radjabov, Alushta 2001;

B) 14.♞c1 ♞a5?! 15.♞e3 0-0 16.0-0 ♙d7 17.♞c2 ♖a8 18.♞fc1 ♞c8 19.♟f1 ♖a7 20.d4 ♖a6 21.♟g3 b6 22.c6± Adams-Morozevich, Sarajevo 2000;

C) 14.♞e3 ♖a5 15.♞c1 b6 16.cxb6 ♙d8 17.♞c5 ♖xc5 18.♞xc5 ♙xb6.



analysis diagram

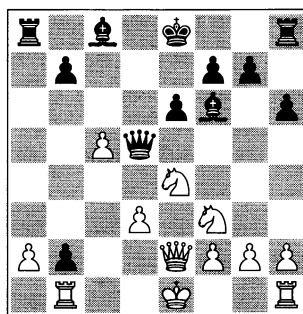
Black's bishops prove their worth in the ending: 19.♞c6 (19.♞c2 0-0 20.♟f1 ♙a6 21.♟e2 ♙b5 22.♟e3 f5!? 23.♞hc1 ♞ab8 24.a3 g5!⇌ Godena-Morozevich, Istanbul Olympiad 2000) 19...♞b8 20.♟e2 ♙d7 21.♞c2 0-0 22.b3 f5 (22...f6!?) 23.bxa4 g5? (23...♙xa4=) 24.♞b1 g4 25.♟h4 ♙d4? 26.♟g6 ♞xb1 27.♟xf8! ♞b7 28.♟xd7 ♞xd7 29.♞c6 ♟f7 30.♟b3 ♙xe5 31.g3± with an almost winning ending, Bauer-Libiszewski, Besancon ch-FRA 2006.

13...♖xd5!

A) GM Nicholas Pert in Yearbook 84: 'In the game I came up with a very in-

teresting and probably quite powerful novelty': 13...0-0!? (author's note: In my opinion, with this move Black can only fight for equality. Central action is more important than the tempo invested in castling) 14.♟e4 (14.d6!?) 14...exd5 15.♟xf6+ ♖xf6 16.0-0 b6 17.♞ac1 bxc5 18.♞xc5 ♙g4 19.♞e5 ♖b6 20.♞xd5 ♙xf3 21.gxf3 ♞ab8= Rozentalis-Pert, Dublin ch-IRL 2007;

B) The intermediate 13...a3!? might just introduce a new line, with many possibilities: 14.♟e4 (14.dxe6 ♙xe6 15.0-0 0-0⇌; 14.d6 axb2 15.♞b1 ♞xa2∞) 14...axb2! (14...♖xd5!? 15.♟xf6+ gxf6 16.b4 ♙d7 17.♞e4 ♙c6 18.♖xd5 ♙xd5 Vachier Lagrave-Marzolo, Chartres ch-FRA 2005) 15.♞b1 ♖xd5!?!⇌ (using Nepomniachtchi's idea again. 15...♞xa2 16.♟d6+ ♟f8 17.0-0 b6 18.♟e5 ♙xe5 19.♞xe5 bxc5 20.♟xc8 ♖xc8 21.dxe6±)

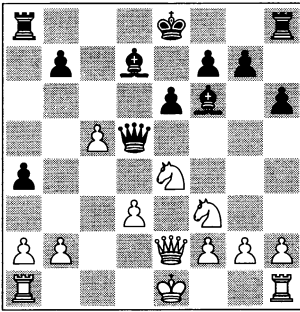


analysis diagram

16.♟xf6+ gxf6 17.♞xb2 ♞g8! 18.0-0 ♙d7!∞ with good chances for Black to take the initiative via the g-file.

14.♟e4 ♙d7!?

This was another interesting novelty. 14...♙e7!? 15.d4 0-0 16.♟c3 ♖d8 17.0-0 ♖a5 18.♟e5 a3 19.b4 ♖xb4 20.♞e3 ♖a5 21.♞ab1± Kotronias-Ostenstad, Gausdal 2002.



15.0-0

In the second game of this new line the move chosen was 15.d4 ♖c6 16. ♖d6+ ♗f8 (16... ♗e7!? 17.0-0 ♞hd8⇒) 17. ♖e5 ♖xe5 18. ♗xe5 ♗xe5+ (18... ♗xg2 19. ♞f1) 19.dxe5 ♖xg2 20. ♞g1 ♖d5 21. ♞g4 g5 22. ♞b4 ♗e7 23.a3 ♞hb8 24. ♗d2 f6 25.exf6+ ♗xf6 26. ♞b6 ♞a6 27. ♗e3 ♞xb6 28.cxb6 ♞d8⚡ Korbut-Tairova, Moscow ch-RUS 2007.

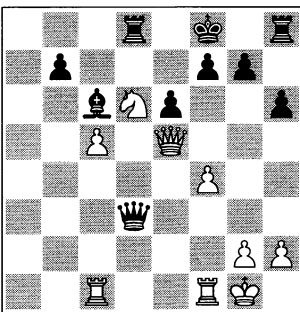
15... ♖c6 16. ♞ac1 ♞d8

16... ♗xa2!? 17. ♖d6+ ♗f8 18. ♖e5 ♖xe5 19. ♗xe5 ♗d5=.

17. ♖d6+ ♗f8 18.b4 axb3 19.axb3 ♗xb3 20. ♖e5

20. ♞c4!?.

20... ♖xe5 21. ♗xe5 ♗xd3 22.f4??



A terrible blunder. Kotronias was probably obsessed with his own attack. 22.f3=.

22... ♗d2—+

0-1

23. ♖e4 ♗e3+ 24. ♖f2 ♗xe5 25.fxe5 ♗e7 is a technical win.

Summary of 4. ♖d3 and Black's counterplay:

This offers richer and more dynamic play than 4. ♖f3. Both sides can vary their opening moves. Objectively, Morozevich's plan with 6... ♖c6, 7... ♖b4 is an especially tactical operation. In this line, the possibility of White castling should be constantly reckoned with (8.0-0!? – see next game). The classical plan of 6...0-0, 7...a5!?, 8... ♖a6 and recovering the pawn is much safer.

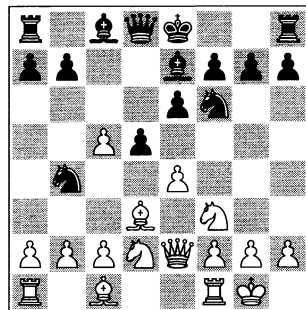
GAME 31

□ **Ivan Cheparinov**

■ **Alexander Riazantsev**

Hoogeveen 2002 (6)

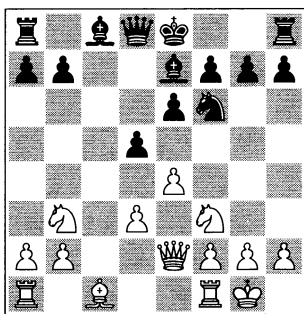
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖d2 ♖e7 4. ♖d3 c5 5.dxc5 ♖f6 6. ♗e2 ♖c6 7. ♖gf3 ♖b4 8.0-0!?



White does not try to hold on to the pawn anymore, but prefers to exploit his lead in development. This is a positional attempt against Morozevich's ... ♖c6- ♖b4 set-up.

For 8. ♖b3 see the previous game.

8... ♖xd3 9.cxd3 ♖xc5 10. ♖b3 ♖e7



11...♙g5

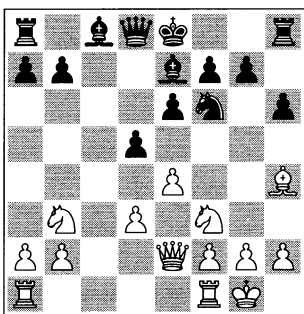
The most popular move. Svidler's idea 11.e5 has not been very successful: 11...♘d7 12.♘fd4 0-0 13.♙f4 ♘c5 14.♖g4? ♔h8 (14...f5!?) 15.♘xc5 ♙xc5 16.♘f3 ♙e7 17.♞fe1 ♙d7 18.♖h5 f6 19.♞ac1 ♙e8! 20.♖h3 f5= Svidler-Radjabov, Moscow rapid 2002.

But an interesting alternative (in serious or non-serious games) is 11.♙f4! with the idea of attacking along the c-file: ♞ac1) 11...♖b6 12.♞ac1 (12.e5!?) 12...♖a6 (12...dxe4 13.dxe4 ♖a6) 13.e5 ♘d7 14.♞c7 ♘b8?? 15.♞xc8+ 1-0 Berczes-Rendle, Budapest 2002.

11...h6!

In order to force the white bishop to choose a diagonal again.

12...♙h4



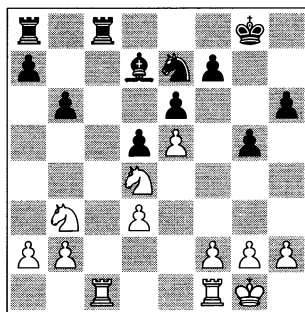
The critical moment in this line. Black must find an effective defence.

12...♙d7!?

The most usual and logical move. Other ideas should be carefully analysed:

A) Black now has the possibility of playing 12...♖b6, without having to worry about an immediate ♙g5-♙e3: 13.e5! ♘g8 (very striking, but also the only move) and now:

A1) After 14.♙xe7 Black gets an easy game: 14...♘xe7 15.♘fd4 ♙d7 16.♞ac1 0-0 17.♖d2 ♞fc8 18.♖a5 ♖xa5 19.♘xa5 b6 20.♘ab3 g5!.



It is clear that White has many problems, the most critical being his pawn on e5: 21.♞ce1 ♘g6 22.g3 a5 23.♘d2 a4 24.♞e3 a3 25.b3 ♞c7 26.♔g2 b5 27.b4 ♞a4 28.♞b1 f6! (after this fine and unexpected stroke Black is completely winning) 29.exf6 e5-+ Leko-Morozevich, Sarajevo 1999;

A2) 14.♙g3! (this is the critical move, with the idea of bringing the bishop to e3 to gain some tempi. Black will have to move his queen and king's bishop to be able to develop his knight.

14...♙d8 proved catastrophic in the following game: 15.♙f4 ♖b5?! 16.♞fc1 ♘e7 17.♘bd4 ♖a4 18.b3 ♖d7 19.a4 0-0 20.♙d2 a5 21.♙e3 ♘c6 22.♘xc6 bxc6 23.♙c5 ♞e8 24.♞c3 ♖b7 25.♞ac1 ♙d7 26.d4 ♙e7 27.♙xe7 ♞xe7 28.♘e1 ♖b4 29.♖e3 ♞f8 30.♘d3 ♖b6 31.♘f4 ♔h7 32.♖d3+

♔h8 33. ♗h5 ♕e8 34. ♗f6 g6 35. ♖d2 ♔g7 36. ♖f4 ♖d8 37. ♖xh6+! and mate in 6 moves, Brodsky-Jenetl, Krasnodar 1999.

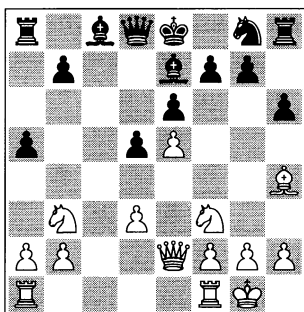
After 14... ♗d7 15. ♕f4 ♖a6 16. a4 ♖c8 17. ♗bd4 ♕c5 18. ♗d2 ♖b6?! (18... ♗xd4 19. ♗xd4 ♗e7 with an equal game) 19. ♕e3 (19. a5!±) 19... ♖d8 20. ♖fc1 White's advantage is obvious, Anisimov-Nepomniachtchi, Krasnoyarsk 2007.

B) 12... g5 is very provocative; after 13. ♕g3 things are very unclear. No games have been played in this line, perhaps for this reason;

C) The natural continuation is 12... 0-0 13. e5 ♗d7 14. ♕xe7! ♖xe7 15. ♗fd4 (15. ♖ac1!±) 15... a5 16. f4 (16. ♗b5!?) 16... a4⇒ Nguyen Ngoc Truongson-Nepomniachtchi, Moscow 2007;

D) 12... dxe4!? 13. dxe4 – there are no games with this line;

E) The most recent game with this line went: 12... a5!? 13. e5! ♗g8



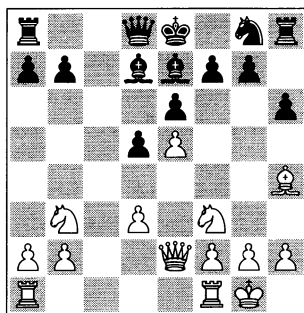
14. ♕xe7 (14. ♕g3 h5 15. ♕f4 ♗h6 16. ♗bd4±) 14... ♗xe7 15. ♖ac1 0-0 16. ♗bd4 ♗d7 17. ♖c2 and Black equalised easily after 17... ♖b8 18. ♖c7 ♖d8 19. ♖xb8 ♖axb8 20. ♖c5 b6 21. ♖c7 ♔f8 22. g3 ♔e8 23. ♗d2 ♖dc8 24. ♖fc1 ♖xc7 25. ♖xc7 ♔d8 26. ♖c3 g5!⇒

Renet-Vitiugov, Cappelle la Grande 2008.

13.e5!

The best solution. 13. ♖ac1 allows Black to equalise: 13... dxe4! 14. dxe4 ♖b6 15. ♖fd1 ♕a4 16. ♖c4 (16. ♖c3 ♖d8 17. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 18. ♗c5 ♕c6 19. ♗e5 ♕xc5 20. ♗xc6 bxc6 21. ♖xc5 g5 22. ♕g3 ♗xe4!= Zhang Pengxiang-Pert, Liverpool tt 2007) 16... ♕xb3 17. axb3 0-0 18. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 19. e5 ♕g5! 20. ♖d6 ♖a5 21. b4 ♖a4 22. ♗xg5 hxg5 23. g3 ♖ac8! 24. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 25. ♖xc8+ ♔h7= Ponomariov-Morozevich, Istanbul Olympiad 2000.

13... ♗g8



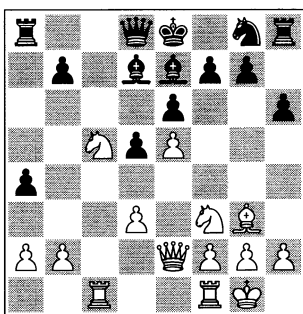
14. ♕g3!

Exchanging pieces is not in White's interests, since it would simplify the position too much: 14. ♕xe7 ♗xe7 15. ♗c5 ♖b6 16. ♖fc1 ♖c8 17. d4 ♕c6 18. ♖c3 ♖d8 19. ♖ac1 0-0 20. ♖d2 b6 21. ♗d3 ♖d7 22. ♗f4 ♕b5 23. h3 ♖xc3 24. ♖xc3 ♖c8= Baklan-Arizmendi Martinez, St Vincent 2003.

14... h5!?

An imaginative decision. 14... ♕f8! would lead to a new set-up if followed up by ... ♗g8-♗e7. No games, no theory!

14... a5 would be more solid: 15. ♖ac1 a4 16. ♗c5



16...♙xc5 17.♖xc5 ♗e7 and the position is almost equal.

15.♗f4

Another idea is 15.♙f4 ♗h6 16.♗fd4 ♗f5 17.♗xf5 exf5 18.♙e3 ♙e6 19.♖ac1 h4 20.f4 h3⇒ Lipka-Vavrak, Slovakia tt 2002/03.

15...g6

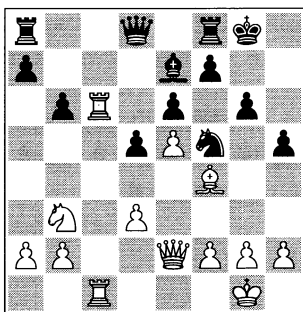
A slightly passive but quite solid method. 15...a5!? is more creative, intending 16...a4 to chase ♗b3 away; or inserting 15...h4!? 16.♙f4 h3 17.g3 and only now 17...a5∞.

16.♖ac1 b6 17.♗c6

17.♙f4 ♗h6∞.

17...♙xc6 18.♖xc6 ♗h6 19.♙f4 ♗f5

20.♖fc1 0-0=



White dominates the c-file, but Black is not worse here because of other factors: his minor pieces are better and he has no major weaknesses.

21.d4 ♙g5 22.♖d2

22.♙d2 a5!.

22...♙xf4 23.♖xf4 ♖d7 24.♖1c2 ♖fc8

25.♖c1 ♗e7 26.♖c7= 1/2-1/2

The black knight on e7 is more effective and flexible than its opposite number on b3.

Summary of 8.0-0: Even though Black is behind in development, he retains good chances of equalising. In the middlegame his position is slightly passive, but simplification is in his favour. White's weak central pawns can become a liability in the endgame.

GAME 32

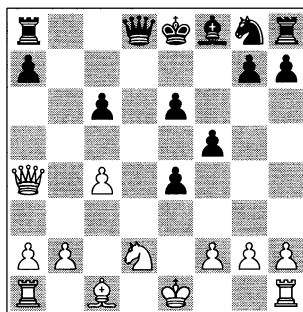
□ Frank De La Paz

■ Viktor Moskalenko

Montcada 2003 (7)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d2 c5 4.exd5

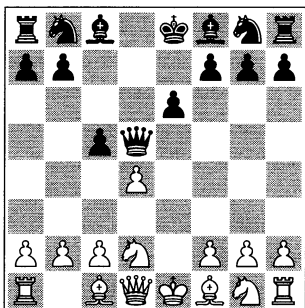
Against 4.♗gf3 Black can play 4...cxd4 5.♗xd4 (5...exd5 ♖xd5 transposes into the main line) 5...♗c6 6.♙b5 ♙d7 7.♗xc6 ♙xc6!? (7...bxc6 8.♙d3∞) 8.♙xc6+ bxc6 9.c4! dxe4!? 10.♖a4? (≥ 10.♗xe4 ♖xd1+ 11.♗xd1 ♖d8+⇒) 10...f5!.



Black has an excellent position. 11.f3? (≥ 11.♖xc6+ ♗f7 12.0-0 ♗f6⇒) 11...♖b6 12.fxe4 ♗f6! 13.exf5 0-0-0! 14.c5 ♙xc5 15.♗c4 ♖b5! 16.♖xb5

cxb5 17. ♕e3 ♖b4+! 18. ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 19. ♗xd2 exf5 ♞ with an extra pawn, Kolev-Moskalenko, Montcada 2001.

4... ♞xd5!?



This ingenious Scandinavian-style move is quite popular in practice.

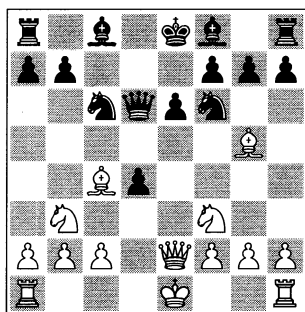
5. ♗f3 cxd4 6. ♕c4 ♞d6

The most usual retreat. However, Black has the alternative 6... ♞d8!?. There are only a few grandmaster games in this line, that has proved successful: 7.0-0 ♗f6 8. ♗b3 ♗c6 9. ♗bx4 (9. ♞e2 ♕e7 10. ♞d1 0-0 11. ♗fxd4 ♞c7 12. ♗xc6 ♞xc6 13. ♗d4 ♞e4 14. ♕g5 ♞xe2 15. ♕xe2= Kornev-Lysyj, Serpukhov 2007) 9... ♗xd4 10. ♗xd4 ♕c5! (10...a6 11.c3 ♕c5 12. ♕e3 ♞c7 13. ♕b3 0-0 14. ♞f3 ♕d7 15. ♞fe1 ♕d6 16.h3 e5!⇒ 17. ♗c2 ♕c6 18. ♞e2 h6 with a playable position for both sides – however: ½-½ Hübner-Petrosian, Bugojno 1982) 11. ♗b3 ♞xd1 12. ♞xd1 ♕b6 13. ♕b5+ (13.a4 ♕d7=) 13... ♕d7 14. ♕xd7+ ♗xd7 15. ♕d2 ♞c8 16. ♕c3= ½-½ Solozhenkin-Hübner, Finland tt 2007/08.

7. ♞e2

White prepares ♗b3-♕g5 and 0-0-0. The main continuation 7.0-0 ♗f6 8. ♗b3 will be examined in the next four Games 33-36.

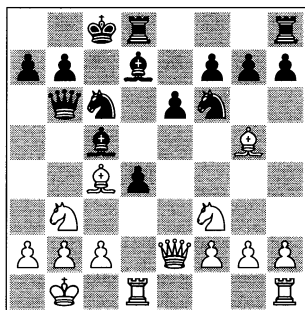
7... ♗f6 8. ♗b3 ♗c6 9. ♕g5



9... ♕e7

A very solid concept (Black intends ...0-0), but this move is no stronger than:

A) 9... ♞b4+! (a tactical manoeuvre to improve the queen's position) 10. ♕d2 ♞b6 11.0-0-0 ♕d7 12. ♕g5 (if 12. ♕f4 ♕c5 13. ♗e5 0-0 14.g4 ♞fd8 15. ♞hg1 ♕e8 ♞ Black defends his extra pawn on d4, Koscielski-Malakhatko, Bad Zwosten 2005) 12... ♕c5 (or else 12...h6!? 13. ♕h4 ♕c5 14. ♗e5 ♗xe5 15. ♞xe5 ♕d6 16. ♞e2 ♕c5 17. ♞e5 ♕d6 18. ♞xd4 ♞xd4 19. ♗xd4 (Oleksienko-Ni Hua, Calvi 2007) and now 19...0-0-0=) 13. ♗b1 (13. ♗e5 ♗xe5 14. ♞xe5 ♕d6 15. ♞xd4 ♞xd4 16. ♗xd4 (Oleksienko-Malakhatko, Cappelle la Grande 2005) and now 16...0-0-0=) 13...0-0-0! =.

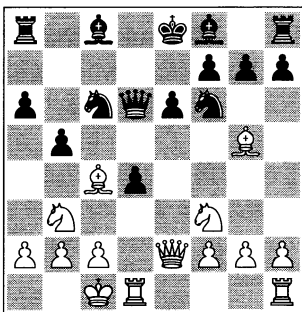


analysis diagram

There is nothing special for White in this position. A good illustration is:

14.♗e5 ♗xe5 15.♚xe5 ♙d6 16.♚e2?! (16.♚xd4 ♚xd4 17.♗xd4 h6 18.♙h4 g5 19.♙g3 ♗e4=) 16...h6 (16...e5!? 17.♙xf7 ♗b8 18.f3 ♚c8↑) 17.♙d2 ♙b4 18.♙xb4 ♚xb4 19.♗xd4= Adams-Akopian, Enghien les Bains 2003.

B) Black could also try 9...a6!? intending to push ...b7-b5 on the next move – the most optimistic and complicated Sicilian-style plan is implemented here. 10.0-0 b5.



analysis diagram

The main trick is that the d4 pawn is indirectly defended by the attack on the bishop. 11.♙d3 ♙e7 (11...♙d7!? holds the d4-pawn, for example: 12.♙xf6 gxf6 13.♙e4 ♚f4+ 14.♗b1 f5 15.♙xc6 ♙xc6⇒) and now:

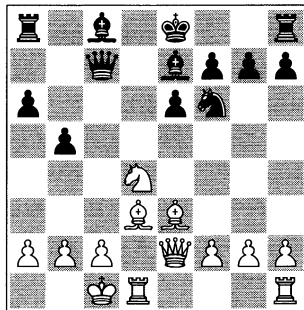
B1) In the event of 12.♗b1, Black can choose from several options:

B11) 12...♙b7!? 13.♗bxd4 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 ♚c5 15.♗f3 ♚d8 16.h4 h6!? 17.♙e3 ♚c7 18.♙d2 ♗d7 19.♙c3 0-0= Zinchenko-Malakhatko, Cappella la Grande 2008;

B12) 12...♙d7!? 13.♚he1 ♚d8!?!∞;

B13) 12...e5 13.♚he1 (13.c3!? dxc3 14.♙xb5 ♙f5+!∞) 13...♙g4 14.♙xf6?! (14.c3 0-0=) 14...♙xf6 15.♚e4 ♙xf3 16.gxf3 ♗f8 17.c3 g6! and Black is better, Rozentalis-Khalifman, Germany Bundesliga 2000/01.

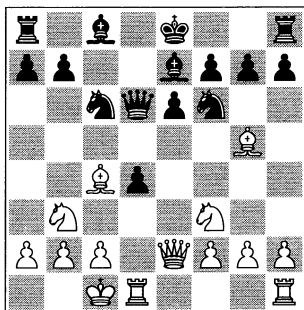
B2) 12.♗bxd4 (the most reasonable option) 12...♗xd4 13.♗xd4 ♚c5! (the most effective manoeuvre. 13...♚d5?! is more risky: 14.♙xf6!? (14.f4 ♚xa2 15.c3 ♙d7 16.♙b1 ♚a5 17.♚e5 0-0 18.♗b3 ♚a4 ½-½ Akopian-Roiz, Sochi tt 2006) 14...♙xf6 15.♗b1! ♚c5 16.♙e4↑ with the unavoidable check 17.♙c6+) 14.♙e3 ♚c7.



analysis diagram

The position is sharp, and typically Sicilian. At the moment the chances are equal. Both sides have a lot to say, though: 15.g4 ♙b7 16.♚hg1 ♗d5!? 17.g5 ♗b4 18.♗b1 ♙d5 19.a3 ♗xd3 20.♚xd3 ♚d8!?! 21.f4 0-0 22.h4 ♚b7! 23.♙f2 b4!→ 24.axb4 ♙xb4 25.h5 ♚b8 and Black arrives first; 26.g6?? fxe6 (26...♙e1!) 27.hxe6 ♙e1!-+, winning a piece, Korneev-Matamoros, Malaga 2001.

10.0-0-0



10...e5?!

A dubious advance. During the game I thought that ...♙g4 was a good defensive resource, but unfortunately it is inadequate.

10...h6! was necessary. This move order offers different possibilities:

A) 11. ♖bxd4? is bad: 11...hxg5 12. ♖xe6 ♖b8! 13. ♖exg5 ♖f4+! 14. ♖b1 0-0 15. g3 ♖c7 16. ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 17. ♖c4 ♙f8 and Black gains a decisive advantage, 0-1 Tischbierek-Luther, Bremen ch-GER 1998;

B) 11. ♙h4 ♖f4+!? (11...e5!? 12. ♙g3 ♙g4 13. ♙b5 0-0 14. ♙xc6 ♖xc6 15. ♙xe5 ♖fe8) 12. ♖b1 ♖e4 13. ♖he1 ♖xe2 14. ♖xe2 ♙d7 with a typical, quite balanced ending.

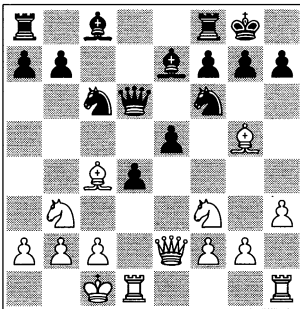
11.h3?!

Perhaps my opponent was afraid of the possibility ...♙g4, but this is a passive option.

11. ♙b5?! 0-0!;

11. ♖he1! is the critical move: 11...h6 (11...♙g4 12. ♙b5±) 12. ♙h4 ♙g4 13. ♙b5! ♙xf3 14. gxf3 0-0-0 15. ♙xc6 ♖xc6 16. ♖xe5 d3 17. c3!?

11...0-0



Black can be very satisfied with the opening. In the remainder of this dramatic encounter, both players made many

mistakes right up to the end... 11...♙e6!?

12.g4?

A pseudo-aggressive advance. ≥ 12. ♖he1 h6 13. ♙h4 e4! with strong counterplay.

12...♖d5

The alternative 12...♙e6! was also strong.

13. ♖he1 ♙xg5+ 14. ♖xg5 h6

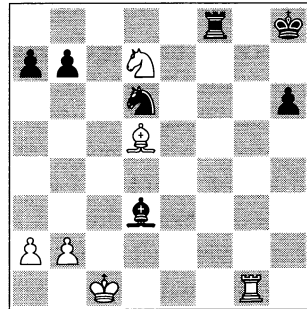
14...♖f4! 15. ♖e4 ♖h6! would have won easily.

15. ♖f3 ♖f4 16. ♖e4 ♖xh3 17. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 18. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 19. ♖xe5 ♖xf2

20. ♖f1 ♖xg4

20...♙e6!?

21. ♙xf7+ ♖h8 22. ♖e7 ♖e3 23. ♖g1 d3T 24. cxd3 ♖f5 25. ♖c7 ♖d6 26. ♙d5 ♙f5 27. ♖cxg7 ♙xd3 28. ♖d7 ♖ad8 29. ♖c5 ♖xd7 30. ♖xd7



30...♖c8+?

Allowing White to finally escape. 30...♖f1+?

31. ♖d2 ♙c4 32. ♖g6 ♙xd5 33. ♖xh6+ ♖g7 34. ♖xd6 ♙xa2 35. ♖e5 ♙b1 36. ♖d7+ ♖f6 37. ♖d3 ♖c2+ 38. ♖d1 ♖h2 39. ♖c1 ♖h1+ 40. ♖d2 ♖h3 41. ♖c5 ♖h2+ 42. ♖e3 b6 43. ♖a4 ♖h7 44. ♖xh7 ♙xh7 45. ♖d4 ♖e6 46. ♖c3 ♖d7 47. ♖b5 a5 48. ♖c3 ♖c6 49. ♖d4+ ♖c5 50. ♖b3+ ♖b5 51. ♖d4+ ♖a4 52. ♖e6 1/2-1/2

Summary of the plan with 7.♖e2 and 0-0-0: This is a fashionable and interesting set-up, which deserves much attention, but it does not guarantee White any advantage in all the lines that arise after 9...♙e7 or 9...♖b4+. And it does not even guarantee White an easy life after 9...a6!? and the Sicilian advance...b7-b5!

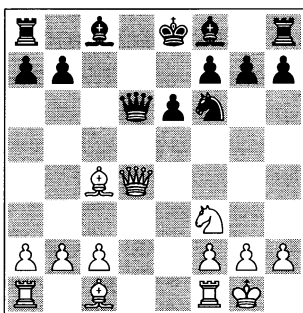
GAME 33

□ Petr Velicka

■ Viktor Moskalenko

Solsones open 2003 (9)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5
 ♖xd5 5.♗gf3 cxd4 6.♙c4 ♖d6 7.0-0
 ♘f6 8.♘b3 ♘c6 9.♘bxd4 ♘xd4
 10.♖xd4



Quite a modest continuation. The most ambitious try is 10.♘xd4! – see the next three games. But in the last game of this tournament my opponent needed a draw to achieve his grandmaster norm – whereas I needed the prize money!

10...♖xd4!

10...♙d7 11.♖h4!?

11.♘xd4

The main idea for White after the queen exchange is to reach a better ending: three pawns against two on the queenside and more active minor pieces. However, historically and tech-

nically this rule only prevailed in Capablanca's day.

11...♙d7

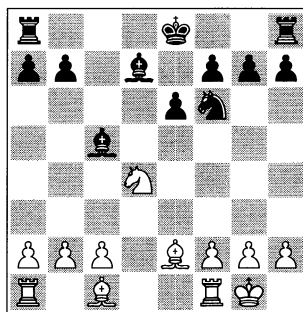
With an equal position. 11...♙c5!? is another developing strategy: 12.♘b3 (12.♘b5?! ♖e7! 13.♙f4 a6!? 14.♘c3 b5⇒) 12...♙e7 13.♙f4 ♙d7 14.♙e2 ♘d5 15.♙g3 h5!? 16.h3 h4 17.♙h2 0-0-0 18.♖fd1 ♘b6 19.♘a5 ♙b4 20.♘c4 ♘xc4 21.♙xc4= Akopian-Shirov, Merida 2000.

12.♙e2

If 12.♘b5?! ♖c8!. Or, for instance, 12.♙b5?! ♖d8 (12...♙c5!?) 13.c4 ♙xb5 14.♘xb5 a6 15.♘c3♞. Here Black has many moves to gain a slight advantage, Rios Parra-Moskalenko, Barbera 2003.

Or else 12.♙f4 ♖c8 13.♙e2 (13.♙b3 ♙c5 14.♖ad1 0-0 15.h3 ♖fd8 16.♙e5 a5 17.a4 ♙e8 18.♙xf6?! gxf6♞ Rios Parra-Moskalenko, Montcada 2005) 13...♙c5 14.♘b3 ♙b6 15.c4 ♘e4⇒ 16.♘d2 ♘xd2 17.♙xd2 ♙d4! 18.♙e3 ♙xe3 19.fxe3 ♖e7= Fluvia-Moskalenko, Catalunya 2003.

12...♙c5!?



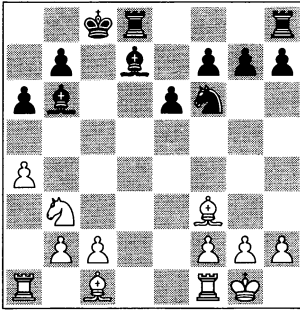
Attacking the knight with gain of tempo is a logical decision.

13.♘b3 ♙b6 14.a4 a6!?

The blocking move 14...a5 is more complicated: 15.c4 ♙c6 16.♙f4 ♘e4 17.♙f3 ♘c5 18.♙xc6+ bxc6 19.♘xc5

♙xc5 20.♖fd1 ♔e7 21.♞d3 ♜h8
22.♞ad1 ♜xd3 23.♞xd3 f6 24.♙d2
♞b8 25.b3 ♙b4 26.♙e3 and a draw
was agreed very soon, Motylev-
Ivanchuk, Moscow 2002.

15.♙f3 0-0-0



Black has solved all his opening problems and his position is quite flexible for a change.

16.♙g5?!

16.♞e1 ♔b8 (16...♙c6!?)=) 17.a5 ♙a7
18.♙f4+ ½-½ Nevednichy-Akopian,
Heraklion Ech-tt 2007.

16...h6 17.♙xf6

A dubious exchange, after which Black will play for a win. In the event of 17.♙h4 ♙c6 18.♙xc6 bxc6⇒ the game has only just started.

17...gxf6 18.♖fd1 f5 19.♘d2 e5
20.♘c4 ♙c7 21.♘d6+ ♙xd6 22.♞xd6
♙c7!?

22...♙e6=.

23.♞dd1

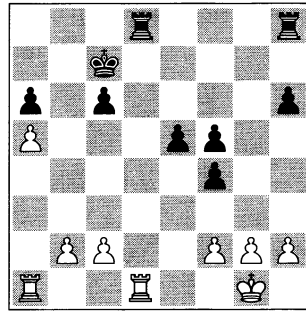
White wants to simplify ♞x♞ along the d-file. 23.♖f6!? was a more active attempt. With 23...♙e6 24.♙h5 ♞d7 25.♙g6 ♞hd8 Black gets good chances along the d-file and the second rank.

23...f4

23...e4!/? 24.♙e2 f4↑.

24.a5 f5 25.♙d5 ♙c6 26.♙xc6
bxc6!≠

More pawns towards the centre!



27.♙f1 ♞d5! 28.♙e2 ♞b8 29.♞xd5

29.b3 ♞b4!? 30.g3 ♞c5↑.

29...cxd5 30.b3 ♙d6

30...e4!/?.

31.g3 ♞c8! 32.♙d2 f3 33.♞a4??

The decisive mistake. White should have tried 33.c3□. If 33.b4 d4. 34.♞b1 ♙c6 35.♞b3 e4 36.c3 ♙b5↑.

33...d4 34.♞b4 ♙d5!-+ 35.♞b7

Or 35.♞b6 e4! 36.♖f6 ♙e5 37.♞xa6 e3+ 38.fxe3 ♞xc2+! 39.♙xc2 f2-+.

35...e4 36.♞d7+ ♙e5 37.c4 dxc3+

The b-pawn has changed direction many times in this game! Before its capture, let us remember its route: bxc6-cxd5-d4-dxc3.

38.♙c2 ♞c5 39.♞d8 ♞xa5 40.♙xc3

♞a2 41.♞e8+ ♙f6 42.g4 ♞xf2 43.♖f8+

♙g5 44.♙g8+ ♙f4 45.gxf5 ♙g2 0-1

The endgame is extremely important. After the queen exchange 10.♞xd4 ♞xd4!, the only thing the two players can demonstrate is their technique!

GAME 34

□ Michael Stean

■ Jonathan Mestel

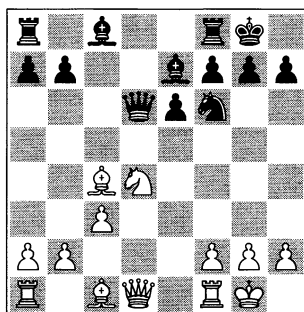
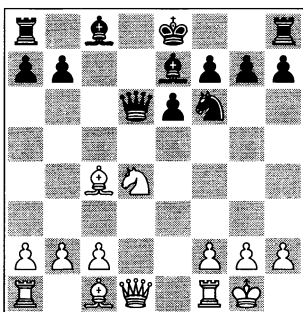
Marbella zi-B 1982 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5

♞xd5 5.♘gf3 cxd4 6.♙c4 ♞d6 7.0-0

♘c6 8.♘b3 ♘f6 9.♘bxd4 ♘xd4

10.♘xd4 ♙e7!/?



analysis diagram

This possibility is not very popular (only 40 games in the MegaBase), but it can be useful for players looking for a quick draw, just as in the Rubinstein Variation with 3...dxe4.

Instead, 10...♙d7 would be more ambitious, or even 10...a6 – see Games 35 and 36.

11.b3!?

With the idea of defending the bishop on c4 and preparing ♙b2. There are three alternatives that should be checked:

A) 11.♟b5!?. The most aggressive move, looking for some tricks. The truth is that White will not find anything effective: 11...♖c6 (11...♖b8!?. is another good option: 12.♖f3 a6 13.♟c3 ♖c7 14.♙d3 0-0=) 12.♖e2 0-0 13.♙f4 a6 (13...b6!?. 14.♟d4 ♖c5 15.♞ad1 ♙b7=) 14.♟d4 ♖c5 15.♟b3 ♖c6 16.♟d4 ♖c5 ½-½ Tal-Petrosian, Tbilisi 1976;

B) 11.♙e3 0-0 12.♖f3 ♖c7 (12...e5!?. 13.♟b5 ♖b4 14.♖e2 ♙g4 15.f3 ♙c5 16.b3 a6⇒) 13.♙b3 ♙d7 14.h3 and the position is completely equal, Onischuk-Gulko, New York Open 1998. Now the simplest continuation is 14...♙c5 15.♞ad1 e5 16.♟f5 ♙xf5 17.♖xf5 ♙xe3 18.fxe3 ♞ad8=;

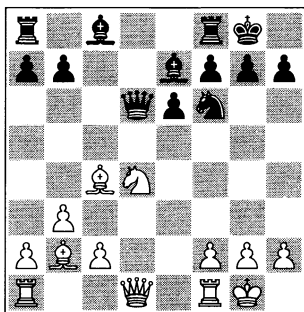
C) 11.c3 0-0

12.♖f3 (12.♖e2 ♙d7 13.♞d1 ♖c7=; 12.♞e1 ♞d8!?) 12...♖c7 13.♙b3 ♙d7 (13...e5 14.♟f5 ♙xf5 15.♖xf5 g6 16.♖h3 ♞fd8 17.♙e3 b5 18.♞fd1 a5⇒) 14.♙g5 (14.♞e1!?. ♙d6 15.h3 e5!↑ Tiviakov-Makarov, Podolsk 1992, by transposition) 14...♞ad8 (14...h6!?. 15.♙h4 ♙c6 16.♟xc6 bxc6∞) 15.♞fe1= Aagaard-I.Almasi, Budapest 1996. Now 15...♙c6!?. (15...h6!?.) 16.♟xc6 bxc6 17.♞ad1 ♟d5⇒.

11...0-0!

Now 11...a6!?. would be a waste of time: 12.♙b2 0-0 13.♖f3 ♖c7 14.♞fe1 b5?! 15.♙d3 ♙b7 16.♖h3 g6 17.a4! bxa4 18.♞xa4 ♟h5 19.♟xe6!→ Stein-Uhlmann, Moscow 1967.

12.♙b2



12...♙d7

12...♖f4!?. 13.♖e2!?. (13.♟f3 b6 14.♙e5 ♖g4 15.♟d4 ♖xd1 16.♞axd1 ♙b7 17.♟b5 ♙c5 18.♙d6 ♙xd6

19. ♖xd6 ♖fc8 20. ♖fd1 ♖f8 ½-½
Tal-Petrosian, Biel Interzonal play-off
1976) 13... ♖e4 14. ♖d2! ♖d8 15. ♖fe1
♖h4 16. ♖ad1 ♖c5 17. ♖e5± Geller-
Vaganian, Moscow ch-URS 1976.

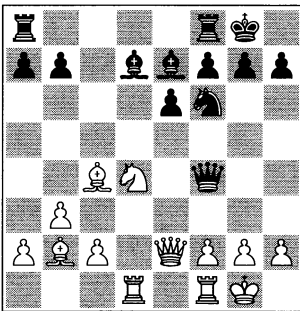
13. ♖e2 ♖f4

13... ♖fe8!? 14. ♖ad1 ♖b6 15. ♖f3
♖ad8 16. ♖e5 ♖c8 17. ♖g4 ♖xg4
18. ♖xg4 ♖f8 19. h3 ½-½ Khalifman-
Kholmov, Minsk 1985.

14. ♖ad1

½-½

But I found the following interesting
game which reached this position by
transposition (... ♖d7/ ♖e7): 14. ♖ad1



14... ♖fd8 15. ♖fe1 ♖b4 (15... ♖c5!?)
16. c3 ♖d6 17. g3 ♖g4 18. ♖f1?! (≥
18. ♖xg4 ♖xg4 19. h3 ♖f6 20. ♖f1±)
18... e5 19. ♖e2 ♖g6 20. ♖b5 ♖c5
21. ♖a3 ♖b6 22. ♖d6 ♖g4
(22... ♖c6!?) 23. ♖xg4 ♖xg4±,
A.Sokolov-Smagin, Riga ch-URS 1985.

In my opinion (and also that of Akiba
Rubinstein), the plan with 10... ♖e7 and
11... 0-0 is slightly passive but very solid.

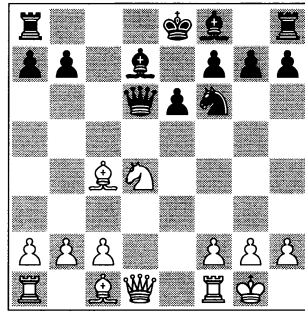
GAME 35

□ **Magesh Chandran**
Panchanathan

■ **Zviad Izoria**
Philadelphia 2007 (4)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖d2 c5 4.exd5
♖xd5 5. ♖gf3 cxd4 6. ♖c4 ♖d6 7.0-0

♖f6 8. ♖b3 ♖c6 9. ♖bxd4 ♖xd4
10. ♖xd4 ♖d7!?



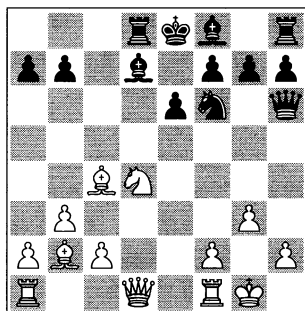
This development is quite useful as
well, since it defends b5 and enables
Black to castle queenside.

11.c3

I cannot figure out why this modest
move is the most popular.

A) 11. ♖b5 has been played in just a
few games: 11... ♖b6!? 12. ♖e3 ♖c5
13. ♖xc5 ♖xc5=;

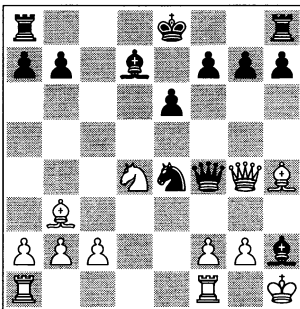
B) However, the fianchetto 11.b3!? is
quite active: 11... ♖d8! (successfully em-
ployed by Kruppa. ≤ 11...0-0 12. ♖b2
♖c7 13. ♖e2 ♖d6 14. h3 ♖h2+ 15. ♖h1
♖f4 16. ♖ad1± Black does not get
enough counterplay. Jobava-Khamra-
kulov, Spain tt 2007) 12. ♖b2 ♖f4
(12... ♖e7!? is more solid) 13. g3
(13. ♖f3?! ♖xf3 14. ♖xf3 ♖c5 15. ♖e5
0-0 16. ♖xd7 ½-½ Yandemirov-Kruppa,
St Petersburg 2004) 13... ♖h6



analysis diagram

The queen switches to the kingside and becomes a secret weapon: 14.♚f3 ♙c5 15.♞ad1 (15.♚xb7 0-0) 15...0-0 16.♞fe1 ♙xd4 17.♞xd4 ♙c6⇒ 18.♚f4 ♚h5!? 19.h4 h6 20.♞xd8 ♞xd8 21.♙xf6 gxf6 22.♙d3 (22.♚xf6 ♞d1↑) 22...♙g7 23.♚e3 ½-½ Solak-Kruppa, Predeal 2007;

C) Some attractive tactical ideas have been seen in the line 11.♙b3 ♚c7 12.♙g5 ♘e4 13.♙h4 ♙d6 14.♚g4 ♙xh2+ 15.♙h1 ♚f4



analysis diagram

16.♚xg7 ♚xh4 17.♚xh8+ ♙e7 18.♘f3 ♚h6 19.♚xa8 ♘g3+ 20.fxg3 ♙xg3+ 21.♙g1 ♚e3+ 22.♙h1 ♚h6+ ½-½ Stean-Mestel, Llanelli ch-BCF play-off 1974;

D) And, last but not least, 11.♙e3 ♚c7!? 12.♙d3 a6 (12...♙d6!?) 13.♞e1 ♙d6 14.h3 0-0 15.♙g5 ♙e5 16.c3 h6 17.♘f3 ♙xc3 18.♞c1 hxg5 19.♞xc3 ♙c6= Armas-Vaganian, Germany Bundesliga 1990/91.

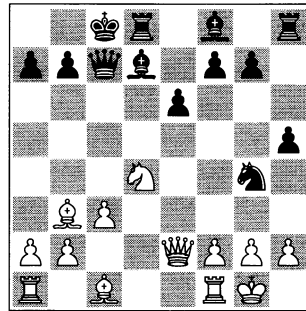
11...♚c7

A typical manoeuvre in this line, aiming to prepare a set-up with ...♙d6, controlling the b8-h2 diagonal.

A) 11...♙e7!? is a solid choice, after which some games finished after just a few more moves: 12.♞e1 0-0 (12...♚c7 13.♙b3 0-0 14.♙g5 ♘d5 15.♙xe7 ♘xe7 16.♚h5 ♞ad8 ½-½

Balashov-Spassky, Munich 1979) 13.♙b3 ♙c6 14.♙g5 ½-½ Adams-Seirawan, Bermuda m-5 2000;

B) 11...0-0!? would be a sharper and more risky option: 12.♚f3?! (or else 12.♙e3 ♚c7 13.♚e2 ♘g4!? 14.♚xg4 ♚xc4⇒ Matanovic-Klinger, Vienna 1986) 12...♚c7 13.♙b3 h5 (13...e5!) 14.♚e2 ♘g4↑.



analysis diagram

A dream position in the ...♚xd5! variation. 15.g3 e5 16.♘f3 h4!? 17.♙e3 hxg3 18.hxg3 ♘xe3! 19.♚xe3 ♙c5 20.♚xe5 ♙c6!—, Zapata-Klinger, Havana 1986;

C) Also popular is 11...a6 with a quiet game: 12.♚e2 ♙e7 13.♙g5 0-0 14.♞ad1 ♚c7 15.f4 ♞fe8 16.♙h1 ♞ad8= Black won a queen ending on move 60, Adams-Andersson, Biel 1991.

12.♚e2

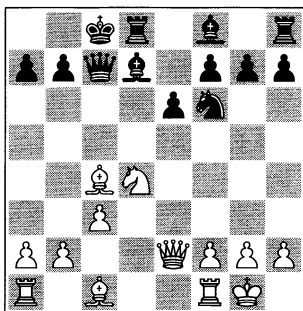
Continuing to play natural moves. 12.♙b3?! offers aggressive play: 12...♙d6 13.h3 and now:

A) We can always follow the standard plan, employed by former World Champion Tigran Petrosian: 13...0-0 14.♚e2 ♙h2+ 15.♙h1 ♙f4 16.♙xf4 ♚xf4 17.♞fe1 ♞fe8 18.♚f3 ♚xf3 19.♘xf3 ♞ed8 20.♘e5 ♙e8 21.♞ad1 ♘f8 ½-½ Radulov-Petrosian, Moscow Ech-tt 1977;

B) 13...♙h2+!? 14.♙h1 ♙f4 15.♙xf4 ♚xf4 16.♙a4 0-0-0! (with a psychological initiative!) 17.♙xd7+ ♞xd7 18.♚b3


♖hd8 19.♚a4?? e5!—+ and Black won the knight on d4, Erenburg-Izoria, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005.

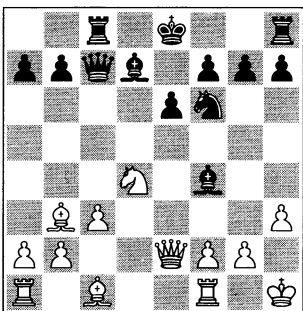
12...0-0-0!



Let us check the other resources:


A) 12...♗d6 leads to positions with a slight but clear advantage for White: 13.♘b5!? ♗xb5 (13...♗xh2+? 14.♖h1 ♚e5 15.g3±) 14.♗xb5+ ♖e7 15.g3 ♖hd8 (15...h5 16.h4 ♘g4 17.♖g2± Psakhis-Herzog, Vienna 1991) 16.♖e1 ♖f8 (this manoeuvre does not change the character of the position) 17.♚f3!? (intending ♗f1-g2) 17...♚e7 18.a4 a5?! 19.♗e3 ♘d5 20.♗d4± ♗c5? 21.♗xc5 ♚xc5 22.♚h5! and Black simply lost a pawn (by c2-c4! or ♚xh7), Adams-Seirawan, Bermuda m-3 2000;

 WEAPON: 12...♖c8?! 13.♗b3 ♗d6 14.h3 ♗h2+?! 15.♖h1 ♗f4? (Rublevsky-Rustemov, Internet 2004)

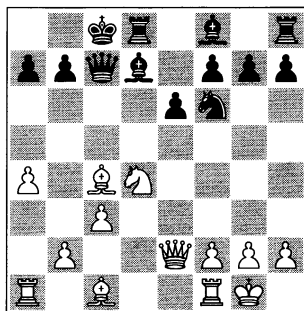


analysis diagram

And now 16.♗xe6! was winning.

 WEAPON: 12...a6 13.h3 ♗d6 14.♘f5?! ♗h2+ 15.♖h1 0-0 16.♘xg7?? ♖xg7 17.g3 ♗xg3—+ Korneev-Fernandez Romero, Pamplona 2002. If 18.fxg3 ♚xg3 and ...♗c6+.


13.a4

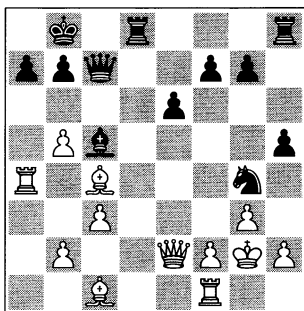


13...h5!?

13...♘g4?! seems to be a mistake. 14.g3! h5 15.♗g5!↑ (15.h3 is unclear in view of 15...♘e5 16.♗f4 ♗d6 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♘b5 ♗xb5 19.axb5∞, Kudrin-Bonin, Philadelphia 1989) 15...♖e8 16.♘b5 ♚c5 17.♗f4+— Rachels-Rahman, Los Angeles 1991.

14.♘b5 ♗xb5 15.axb5 ♗c5!

 WEAPON: 15...♘g4?! 16.g3! ♗c5 17.♖g2!? (or 17.♗g5!? ♖d7 18.♖g2 ♗b6 19.♖a4 ♚e5 20.♗f4 ♚xe2 21.♗xe2± Wolff-Bonin, Philadelphia 1990) 17...♖b8 (17...♚e5 18.h3!) 18.♖a4!±.



analysis diagram

This is a key game for white players. 18...♖he8 19.h3 ♘f6 20.♙g5 ♗d7 21.♖fa1 ♘d5 22.♙xd5!? ♗xd5 23.♙f4 e5 24.b4! (a decisive attack with the two b-pawns and the c-pawn) 24...♗d7 25.♙g5 ♙b6 26.c4 ♗d3 27.c5 ♗xb5 28.♙h2! ♙c7 29.♖xa7 ♙c8 30.♖a8+ ♙b8 31.♗d1! 1-0 Adams-Lautier, Biel 1991.

16.♖a4

16.g3!? could be another key move in this line: 16...h4!? 17.♙f4! ♗e7 18.b4 ♙b6 and since Black threatens 19...♘d5, White's reply 19.♗fd1 is forced, but then Black simplifies with 19...hxg3 20.hxg3 ♗xd1+ 21.♗xd1 ♗d8!?, and with correct play he will achieve an equal position.

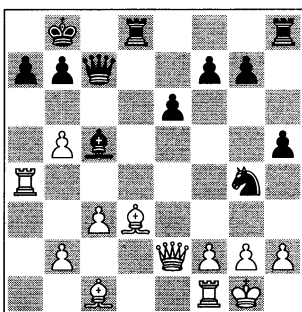
16...♙b8

Now the sortie 16...♘g4!? had more significance: 17.♙f4 e5 18.♙g3 ♙b8!⇒.

17.♙d3

17.♙b3!? ♘g4 18.g3∞.

17...♘g4!



At this point we can already assess the outcome of the opening. White's attack has been delayed, his pieces are passive and the b- and c-pawns cannot advance yet.

18.g3 f5! 19.♙g5 h4! 20.♙xd8 ♗xd8 21.♖xg4 fxg4 22.b4 ♙b6 23.c4 ♗d6?!

This leads only to a draw.

Tactics: ≥ 23...hxg3! 24.c5□ gxf2+ 25.♙h1 ♗d7! 26.cxb6 ♗xd3∞ with winning chances in the endgame.

24.c5 ♗xd3 25.♗xd3 ♗xd3 26.cxb6 ♖b3 27.♖e1 ♖xb4 28.gxf4 ♖xb5 29.bxa7+ ♙xa7 30.♖xe6 ♖h5 31.♖g6 ♖xh4 32.♖xg7 ♙a6 33.♙g2 b5 34.♖g8 b4 35.♖b8 ♙a5 36.♙g3 ♖h6 37.♙xg4 ♖xh2 38.f4 ♙a4 39.f5 b3 40.f6 ♖f2 41.♙g5 b2 42.f7 ♙a3 43.♙g6 ♖xf7 44.♙xf7 1/2-1/2

As we have seen, the move 10...♙d7 is quite flexible, and it offers a good range of continuations and ideas with very different concepts.

For Black it is very important to study the counterattacking set-up with ...h7-h5 and ...♘f6-g4 at every moment in the game.

GAME 36

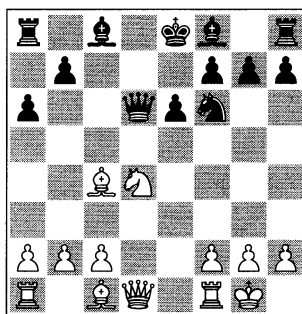
□ Michael Adams

■ Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu

Sofia 2007 (3)

This brilliant game is the last one in our study of the ...♗xd5 variation and also the last game in Chapter 4.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5 ♗xd5 5.♘gf3 cxd4 6.♙c4 ♗d6 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.♘b3 ♘c6 9.♖bxd4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 a6



The real idea behind this move is hard to understand (is it aggressive or defensive?), but it is the most popular move in practice. It forestalls any tricks on b5 and prepares the Sicilian-style advance ...b7-b5. However, according to general rules, White should be able to take advantage of his lead in development and he must attack at any price.

11. ♖e1!?

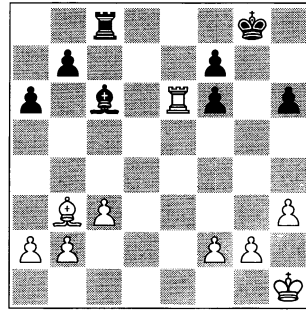
A forceful manoeuvre which obliges Black to abandon his original plans and to take good care of his e6-square.

A) 11. ♖b3 is an unnecessary manoeuvre, but the following game is a very good example: 11... ♖c7 12. ♖f3 ♖d6 and now:

A1) 13. h3 0-0 14. ♖g5 ♘d7∞ is the main line: 15. c3 b5 16. ♖c2 ♖b7 17. ♖h5 g6 18. ♖h4 ♖fe8 19. ♖fe1 ♘b6 20. ♖e2 ♖e7= and the position is equal, Tiviakov-Lalic, Port Erin 2005;

A2) 13. ♘h1!? An interesting idea introduced in the game Ivanchuk-Anand, Reggio Emilia 1991/92, which continued 13... 0-0!? 14. ♖g5 ♘d7 15. c3 ♘e5 16. ♖h5 ♘g6 17. ♖c2 h6 18. ♘f3 b5 19. ♖ad1 ♖f4 20. ♖xf4 ♘xf4 21. ♖e5 ♖xe5 22. ♘xe5 ♖b7 23. f3 ♖fd8= and later the game was drawn.

A second game with this line continued 13... ♖d7 14. ♖g5 ♖e5 15. ♖ad1 h6 16. ♖h4 0-0 17. ♖fe1 ♖fd8 18. c3 ♖ac8 (18... ♖e8 19. ♖e3!? ♖f4 20. ♖e2±) 19. h3 ♖xd4 20. ♖xd4 ♖c6 21. ♖e3 ♖xd4 22. ♖xd4 ♖d8. Exchanging the queens is a good idea, but after 23. ♖xf6!? the reply 23... ♖xf6?? meets with a tactical refutation. Good or bad, Bareev had to play 23... gxf6 24. ♖e3 ♘h7±. After 24. ♖xf6 gxf6, 25. ♖xe6! terminated the game (1-0), Adams-Bareev, Wijk aan zee 2004.



analysis diagram

B) 11. b3 ♖c7 12. ♖b2 ♖d6 13. h3 (13. ♘f3 b5!? 14. ♖d3 ♖b7 with the idea 15. a4 0-0⇒) 13... 0-0 14. ♖e1 b5 15. ♖f1 ♖d8 16. ♖e2 ♖b7 – this is the only game won by the former World Champion in the ... ♖xd5 variation, Lobron-Petrosian, Plovdiv Ech-tt 1983.

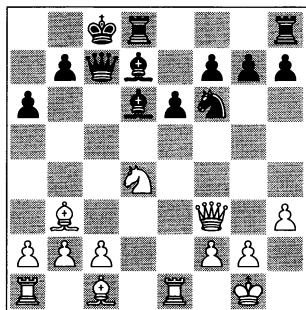
11... ♖d7

Compared to the position reached in the previous game, White has an active rook on e1 and Black has a pawn on a6.

The other option is 11... ♖c7!?. Generally speaking, the queen tends to conclude its manoeuvres (... ♖xd5-d6-c7) with this move. 12. ♖b3 and now:

A) 12... ♖d6!? 13. ♘f5 ♖xh2+ 14. ♘h1 0-0⇒ is the most popular, most complicated line. It has been analysed in many books and articles, but to my mind it has always been slightly weird and unnatural;


B) 12... ♖d7 13. ♖f3 ♖d6 14. h3 0-0-0



analysis diagram

The position is equal.

B1) 15.♙g5?! ♚c5

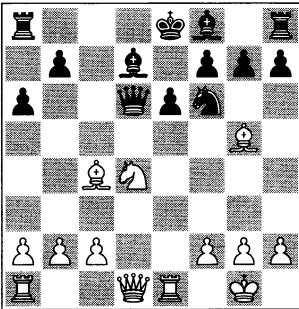
 WEAPON: 16.♙xf6? gxf6

17.♚xf6 ♜hg8 18.♘f3 ♜g6!→
19.♚d4 ♙c6 20.♚xc5 ♙xc5 21.♘h4 ♜h6
22.g3 ♜d2 23.♜f1

B2) 15.c3 h6 16.a4 ♙b8 17.♚e2
g5⇒ – this was one of the few games
lost by the ‘Terminator’, Adams-
Akopian, Las Vegas 1999.

12.♙g5!?

A modern move, more aggressive than
the alternatives.



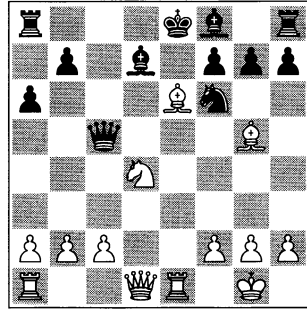
12...♚c5?

This move allows a beautiful, but them-
atic combination. 12...0-0-0! seems
to be Black’s best chance, but after
13.♜e3! the ‘Capablanca Rook’ goes
mad and attacks along the third rank:
13...♚c7 (13...♙b8? 14.♜b3 ♜c8
15.♚f3! ♙c6 16.♘xc6+ ♚xc6
17.♙xf6 gxf6 18.♚xf6 ♜g8 19.♙f1
♜g6 20.♚xf7 ♙c5 21.♚f3± Asrian-
Wang Hao, Taiyuan 2006) 14.♙xa6!?
(safer is 14.♚e2! ♙c5 15.c3∞)
14...♙c5! (not 14...♙c6? 15.♜c3! bxa6
16.♜xc6 and White soon converted his
material advantage, Warakomski-
Krensing, Pardubice 2007; or
14...bxa6? 15.♜c3) 15.♙xb7+
(15.♜c3 ♘e4! 16.♙xd8 ♘xd8 17.♙e2
♘xc3 18.bxc3 e5⇒) 15...♚xb7?

(15...♙xb7□ 16.♚f3+!?) with a dan-
gerous initiative in exchange for the
sacrificed piece) 16.♙xf6 gxf6 17.♜c3
♚b6 18.♚h5 e5 19.♘b3 winning,
Venevtsev-Nakhapetian, Moscow 2008.

13.♙xe6!

Adams sacrifices his bishop to destroy
the opponent’s fortress.



13...fxe6 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♘e6 ♙xe6 16.♜xe6+ ♙e7

The only defence. 16...♙f7 loses even
more quickly: 17.♚d7+ ♙e7 18.♜ae1
♜he8 (18...♜ae8 19.c3+–) 19.b4!
♚xb4 20.♜e4 with a decisive advan-
tage in all lines.

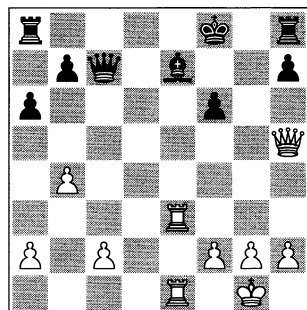
17.b4!

A very strong resource which com-
pletely diverts the black queen.

17...♚c3

17...♚b5 18.♚g4!; 17...♚xb4
18.♜b1+–.

18.♜e3! ♚c7 19.♚h5+ ♙f8 20.♜ae1±



White holds onto the initiative right to the end of the game.

20...♖e8 21.♖h6+

21.♖g3!?.

21...♗f7 22.♖h5+ ♗f8 23.♖h6+ ♗f7

24.c3 ♖hg8 25.♖xh7+ ♖g7 26.♖h5+

♗f8 27.g3

27.h4!?.

27...♖d7 28.♖e6 ♖g5 29.♖h8+

♗f7 30.♖h7+ ♖g7 31.♖h5+ ♖g6

32.c4

32.f4!? ♗g7 33.f5 ♖h6 34.♖xe8!,

winning.

32...♗g7 33.♖d5 ♖c7 34.♖e4 ♗f7

35.c5 ♖d7 36.♖f5 ♗g7 37.♖e4 ♗f7

38.♖f5 ♗g7 39.♖h5 1-0

After studying (and enjoying) several easy wins by grandmaster Michael Adams, I cannot understand the idea behind the popular advance 10... a6?!. It seems to be a significant waste of time that allows White to develop his initiative, forcing Black to revert to safer ideas, such as ...♗e7, ...♗d7 etc. (see again Games 34 and 35).



Statistics/Summary of the ‘Hybrid Line’ 3...c5 4.exd5 ♖xd5

Total MegaBase: 4700 games, White wins=1685=56%, Black=1140=44%, Draw=1875.

At the moment, this variation is the most popular of the exotic deviations after 3.♘d2. But it is also remarkable that lately there have been no wildly courageous heroes in these lines. We see only terminators and their victims.

Dogmas and Weapons

After studying this chapter of weapons versus 3.♘d2, you can use the following repertoire with the black pieces:

- * against Vasily Ivanchuk, respond with the authentic 3...♗f6.
- * against Michael Adams, revert to tactics with 3...♗e7.
- * and finally, against Tarrasch, use the wild ideas of the Scandinavian-style 3...c5 4.exd5 ♖xd5.

Good luck with your combats!

Postscriptum – Opinion about 3.♘d2

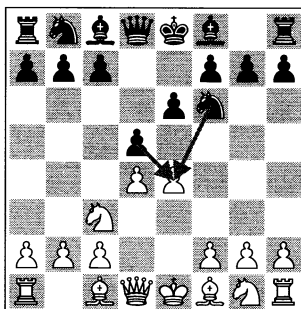
Statistically speaking, during the last 10 years most of the world’s best players (Anand, Svidler, Shirov et al.) have hardly ever placed their knight on the d2-square. They prefer developing it at c3. This may be the most accurate move, and we will study it in the next two Parts.

Part Three

French Magic

Classical System – 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6

A Repertoire for White and for Black



Directions

We already know that French Magic works from the very first moves. After 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 White must spend an important tempo on defending, sacrificing, exchanging or advancing his e4-pawn. Therefore the game can very soon become quite complicated...



The first World Champion Wilhelm Steinitz (1836-1900) was the inventor of the move 4.e5 against the Classical System 3.♘c3 ♘f6.

3.♘c3 – a good move at last! However, Black can reply in vintage French style with 3...♘f6 and the discussion continues!

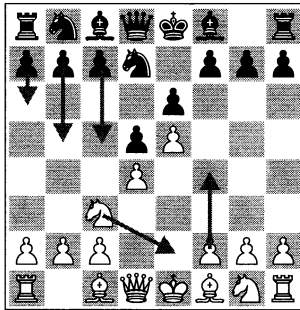
Chapter 5 (C05 and C11) is a brief study of the main resources after 4.e5 ♘fd7.

Chapter 6 (C12) 'A Legendary Pin': the MacCutcheon 4.♗g5 ♗b4 completes Black's repertoire in the Classical French.

Chapter 7 (C11) 'Russian Roulette': White sacrifices his centre: 4.e5 ♘fd7 and now 5.♗f3 (White repertoire), a position that usually arises from the Two Knights Variation 2.♗f3 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.d4.

Chapter 5 – Morozevich’s Resources

Practical possibilities in the classical line 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘f7



Directions/Resources

In the diagram position there are three main directions and some deviations. We will give a brief description of the typical games and strategic ideas for both sides.

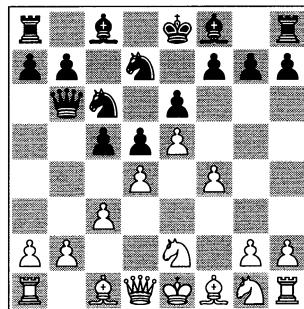
- * Apparently, Morozevich is delighted to play these positions with either colour.
- * We will observe that Morozevich’s typical tactical resource in many games is the ‘Black Jet’ advance ...g7-g5, but he prepared it specially for the ‘Roulette’ tournament in Monaco.



The hero of the French Defence: the Russian grandmaster Alexander Morozevich (born 1977). He often chooses less popular lines, aiming for a complicated fight.

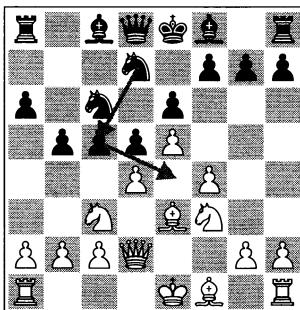
A) 5.♘ce2

This manoeuvre maintains the possibility of the ‘Pawn Wedge’ seen in Part Two, Chapter 3. Transpositions lead to similar examples. I think the most interesting way for Black to create counterplay is: 5.♘ce2 c5 6.c3 ♘c6 7.f4 and now 7...♔b6!?



And then he continues depending on the circumstances, for example: 8.♖f3 ♕e7 9.a3 or 8.♖f3 f6!? 9.g3 (Game 37).

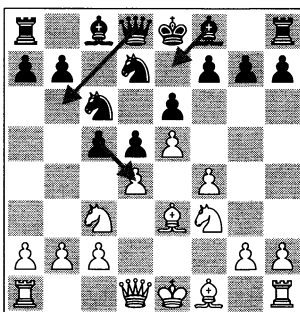
B) 5.f4 c5 6.♖f3 ♖c6 7.♕e3 a6 8.♚d2 b5



This is a solid, important plan in the Classical Variation: Black plays ...a6 and ...b5, preparing an attack similar to those in the Sicilian Defence, especially when castling takes place on opposite sides.

- * One of Black's possible resources is the knight manoeuvre ...♖c5-♖e4!?
- * Common replies for White are: 9.a3/dxc5/♕e2/h4 (Game 38).

C) The popular line 7...cxd4 and the classical deviation 7...♚b6.



After 7...cxd4 8.♖xd4 ♕c5 Black will soon castle and look for counterplay on all sides (Game 39).

Morozevich's Resources - Games

This is a game I played during a private match against Alexander Morozevich. It was an agreement between us and a sponsor, and also a match intended to improve his strength before playing some important tournaments. 'Moro' is a very ambitious and aggressive player, and when playing he does not enjoy just winning the game, he also wants to destroy his opponent's mind! During play he applies a lot of pressure and looks aggressively into his opponent's eyes – a bad tendency that arose in the era of Tal, continued in the Fischer-Spassky match and was further developed, in my opinion, by Karpov and Kasparov. I felt very uncomfortable in the Central Chess Club of the Russian capital...

GAME 37

□ Alexander Morozevich

■ Viktor Moskalenko

Moscow m 1994 (2)

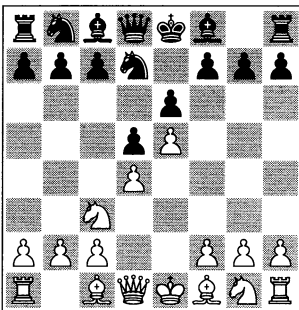
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3

The most aggressive move against the French Defence, and the most popular.

3...♘f6

The main alternative is the Winawer Variation 3...♘b4!? – see Part Four.

4.e5 ♘fd7



5.♘ce2


Similarly to the idea of the 'Pawn Wedge' (see Game 26), White chooses a plan which strengthens his pawn structure in the centre, at the same time preparing an attack on the kingside. However, Black can profit from his lead in development by starting counterattacks all over the board.

Here there are possible transpositions to the line with 5.♘ce2, for example: 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♘e2 and now:

A) 7...♞b6!?. I think that this move order is more interesting and dynamic, since it attacks d4, prevents ♘e3 and retains certain tactical chances, such as ...♘b4+ / ...f6 / ...g5.

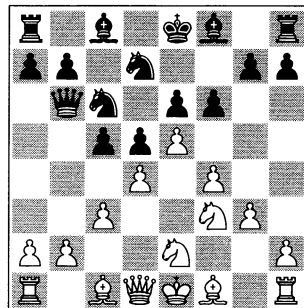
8.c3 (8.g3 g5!? 9.♘h3? h5? 10.fxg5? cxd4 11.♘f4? ♘g7 H.Matthias-M.Berg, Germany tt 2002/03) and now:

A1) 8...♘e7!? 9.a3 f6 10.b4 cxd4 11.♘exd4 ♘xd4 12.cxd4 0-0 13.♘d3 fxe5.


 WEAPON: 14.fxe5 ♞xf3! 15.gxf3 ♘h4+ 16.♞f1 ♘xe5.

14.dxe5 a5 15.b5 a4 16.h4 h6 17.♞f1 ♘c5 18.♘e3 ♘d7 19.♞b1♠, but draw agreed in Morozevich-Zhukova, Mainz 2004.


A2) 8...f6!? 9.g3



The only way to get the bishop out and castle. 9...cxd4 (opening up the centre by 9...fxe5!? is interesting) 10.cxd4?! (after this move White can find himself in trouble. Black gets many tactical possibilities. Better was 10.♗exd4 and now 10...♗c5!?)

 WEAPON: 10...♗b4+ 11.♗d2?! fxe5 12.fxe5 0-0 13.♗g2 ♗dxe5 14.dxe5 ♗xe5↑ Finkel-Holzke, Groningen 1996.

A22) 10...fxe5 11.fxe5 ♗b4+ 12.♗c3 0-0 13.♗f4 ♗e7!? 14.♗h3 (14.♗a4 ♗d8!? 15.♗d3 ♗b6≐; 14.♗d2? g5!↑ Dolmatov-Bareev, Elista ch-RUS 1997; 14.a3 g5!?) 14...♗xb2


 WEAPON: 15.♗xe6+? ♗h8 16.♞c1 ♞xf4 17.gxf4 ♗xd4—+. 15.♗c1□ ♗xc1+ 16.♞xc1 ♗b6 17.♗b5 (Anand-Sisniega, Philadelphia 1987) and now 17...h6!? 18.♗e2 ♞b8♞.

B) 7...♗e7 has also been played: 8.c3 0-0 9.a3 (a strange move) 9...a5 (9...f6!? could be the most logical reply) and now:

B1) 10.♗g3 f5 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♗d3 ♗b6 13.♗c2 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♗d6 15.♗d3 ♗d7 16.0-0 g6♞ Pähz-B. Socko, Port Erin 2006;

B2) 10.h4 f6 11.♗eg1 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♗b6 13.♗d3 fxe5 14.fxe5 ♗dxe5!? 15.dxe5 ♗xe5 16.♗c2 ♗d7 17.♗e2 ♞ac8→ and Black won after some favourable tactics, Macieja-Ivanchuk, Moscow 2001;

B3) 10.g3 cxd4 (10...f6!? 11.♗h3 fxe5 12.dxe5 ♗b6 13.0-0 a4 14.♗c2 ♗c4♞ Baramidze-Short, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007) 11.cxd4 f6 12.♗h3 fxe5 13.dxe5 (13.♗xe6+ ♗h8 14.♗xd5 ♗xd4∞) 13...♗b6

 WEAPON: 14.♗xe6+ ♗h8 15.♗xd5? (15.♗xd5 ♗c5∞) 15...♗c5 16.♗xc8 ♞d8♞ Baramidze-Prusikin, Bad Königshofen ch-GER 2007.

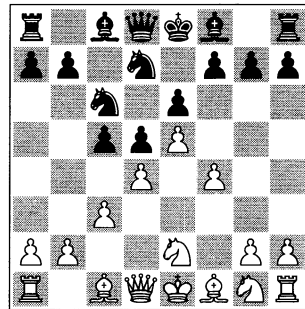
14.♗c3 ♗dxe5!? (14...♗c5!♞) 15.fxe5 ♗xe5∞ Bologan-M. Gurevich, Cap d'Agde 2002.

C) Or else 7...b5!?, gaining a tempo by omitting ...a7-a6: 8.♗e3 b4 9.g4 ♗a6 10.♗g3 ♗xf1 11.♞xf1 ♗b6 12.♗d2 cxd4 13.♗xd4 ♗c5 14.0-0-0 a5 15.♞f3 ♗xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗xd4 17.♗xd4 ♗xd4 18.♞xd4 ♗e7= Short-Navara, Prague m-1 2007.


5...c5 6.c3 ♗c6

6...cxd4!? 7.cxd4 f6 8.♗f4!? ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 10.♗xd2 ♗e7 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.♗d3 ♗c6 13.♗ge2 0-0 14.0-0 ♗d7 15.♞ad1 ♗d6 16.♗b1 ♞ae8 17.♗d3 e5= Morozevich-Moskalenko, Moscow m-6 1994.

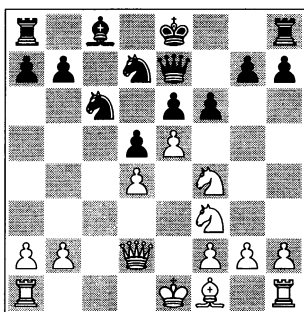
7.f4



The key position. Now Black must choose his plan.

 WEAPON: 7.♗f3 led to a spectacular game against another attacking player: 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 f6 9.♗f4 ♗b4+ 10.♗d2 ♗e7 11.♗xb4 ♗xb4+ 12.♗d2 ♗e7!

Black is fighting for the initiative.



analysis diagram

13. exf6 ♘xf6 14. ♕d3 ♘e4! 15. ♖e3
(15. ♕xe4 dxe4 16. ♘e5 0-0⇌) 15... ♗b4+
16. ♖f1 0-0 17. ♞e1 (17. ♕xe4 dxe4 18. ♖xe4
♗xb2⇌) 17... ♗d6!? 18. g3? (18. ♘e2 e5↑)
18... g5! 19. ♘e2 ♞xf3!.

17... ♗xb2 18. ♕xe4 dxe4 19. ♖xe4
♖xa2 20. g4? ♘b4?! (20... e5! △
21. ♘g5? ♞xf4 22. ♖xf4 h6!-+)
21. ♞e2 ♖a5 22. h4 ♘d5 23. ♘g5 ♘f6
24. ♖d3 b6 25. ♘h5 g6 26. ♘xh7!
♖xh7 (26... ♘xh5? 27. ♖xg6+ ♘g7
28. ♘g5+-) 27. ♘f4 ♕a6 (27... ♞g8?
28. h5→) 28. ♖xg6+ ♖h8 29. ♖h6+
♘h7 30. ♘g6+ ♖g8 31. ♘e7+ ♖h8
32. ♘g6+ ½-½ Velimirovic-Moska-
lenko, Belgrade 1988.

7...cxd4

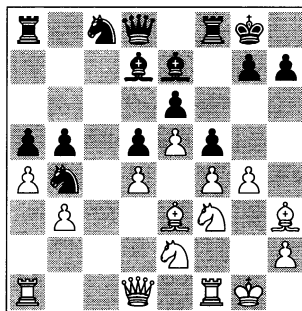
Of course, there are many possibilities here (see again the transpositions to 7.♘e2 mentioned after 5.♘ce2): 7...b5 8.a3 c4 (we recommend the blocking idea of Botvinnik and Petrosian, see Part Two, Game 24. Unclear is 8...♗b6 9.♘f3 c4 10.g4 f6 11.♕h3 Golubev-Relange, Groningen 1993) 9.♘f3 ♘b6 10.g4 f5 (a possibly better idea was 10...h5!? 11.gxh5 ♞xh5 12.♘g3 ♞h8∞) 11.gxf5 exf5 12.♕g2 (a slightly passive move) 12...♕e7 13.0-0 h6!? 14.♞f2 ♕e6 15.♕f1 g5 16.fxg5 hxg5 17.h4!∞ with chances for both sides, Anand-Morozevich, Frankfurt 2000.

8.cxd4

8.♘xd4 allows 8...♘c5, activating Black's passive knight.

8...♗b6

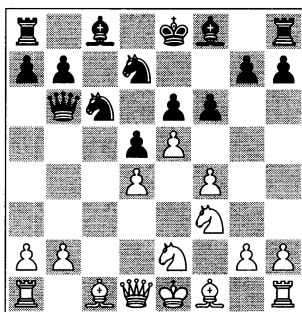
8...f5 is an attempt to block all play in the centre and play on the flanks: 9.♘f3 ♕e7 10.g3 ♘b6 11.b3 ♕d7 12.♕h3 0-0 13.0-0 a5 14.a4 ♘b4 15.♕e3 ♘c8 (preparing ...b7-b5) 16.g4! b5!



analysis diagram

The two sides launch their attacks: 17.axb5 ♕xb5 18.♘g5 (an aggressive jump; 18.gxf5 exf5 19.♞f2 ♞a6!/?⇌) 18...♕xg5 (18...♞a6) 19.fxg5 ♘e7 20.♖d2? (looks natural, but it is a serious mistake: 20.gxf5 ♘xf5 21.♕xf5 ♞xf5 22.♞xf5 exf5⇌) 20...♞c8!↑ 21.♞fc1 ♕xe2! 22.♖xe2 f4!⚡ and White's bishops are out of the game! Fernandez Aguado-Moskalenko, Sants Open 2006.

9.♘f3 f6!




Black wants to open up the centre.

10.a3

Preventing the check on b4.

A) If 10.♘c3 ♙e7 11.♙d3 0-0 12.a3 fxe5 and now:

 WEAPON: 13.fxe5? ♖xf3!
14.♗xf3 ♗xd4!

A2) Better is 13.dxe5 ♘c5! 14.b4 ♘xd3+ 15.♗xd3 ♙d7 16.♙e3 ♗d8 17.0-0 ♙e8⇌;

A3) 13.♘a4 ♗c7 14.dxe5 b5!?!⇌ Hellers-Andersson, Haninge m-4 1993;

B) 10.exf6 ♘xf6 11.♘c3 ♙d6 12.♙e2 0-0 13.0-0 a6 14.♖h1 ♙d7 15.a3 ♗ac8⇌ Gostisa-Mohr, Slovenia ch 1992.


10...♙e7!

10...fxe5?! 11.fxe5 ♙e7 12.♘f4! Milicevic-Hadjjiyannis, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

11.♘c3

A reasonable move. White is behind in development and he prepares ♙d3/♙e2/0-0.

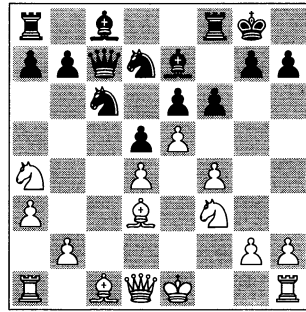
A) There is no time to play 11.g3?! 0-0

 WEAPON: 12.♙h3? fxe5!
13.♙xe6+ (13.dxe5 ♘c5⌘)
13...♖h8 14.♙xd5 exd4!

12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.♙g2 ♘e4! 14.0-0 ♙d7! (14...e5! 15.fxe5 ♙g4∞ Tischbierek-Knaak, Zittau ch-DDR 1989; 14...♙f6! 15.♙e3 ♘e7⌘) 15.♘c3 ♙e8⌘.

B) 11.h4 is slightly odd, but aggressive: 11...0-0 (11...♘a5!?) 12.♖h3 ♘a5! (or 12...fxe5, preparing to sacrifice the knight on e5, which is typical for this kind of position: 13.fxe5 ♖f5! 14.♘f4 ♘cxe5 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♘d4 ♖f7∞ Nijboer-M.Gurevich, Escaldes Zonal 1998) 13.b4 ♘c4 14.♘c3 a5! 15.b5 fxe5 16.fxe5 ♖f7!?!⌘ or 16...a4, with mutual chances.


11...0-0 12.♘a4 ♗c7 13.♙d3



We have arrived at a position which was presumably well prepared by Alexander and his trainer. Morozevich played his moves very quickly and without hesitation.

13...♘b6

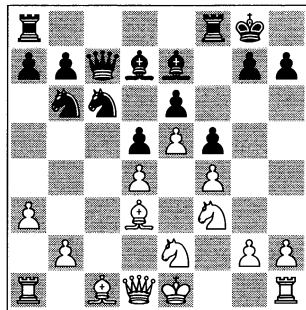
This reply is more solid than the knight sacrifices on e5 or d4.

 WEAPON: However, the possibilities after 13...fxe5! are highly interesting. 14.fxe5? (14.dxe5 b5!?!⇌ Andersson) 14...♖xf3! (14...♘xd4!?) 15.gxf3 (15.♗xf3 ♘xd4 16.♗h3 ♗xe5+ 17.♙e3 ♙h4+!↑) 15...♘xd4 16.f4 ♘xe5! 17.0-0 (17.fxe5 ♗xe5+ 18.♖f2 ♙d7→) 17...♘xd3 18.♗xd3 ♙f6 19.♙d2 ♙d7 and Black is winning, Vergun-A.Rabinovich, Rimavska Sobota jr 1996.

14.♘c3 ♙d7 15.♘e2

If 15.0-0 then 15...f5!?

15...f5!?



My idea was to block the centre and play on the queenside.

16.♖g1!

Starting an attack on the enemy king.

16...♗e8

The bishop goes to g6 in order to maintain the blockade.

17.h3 ♖c8 18.g4 ♗g6! 19.♘g3 fxg4!

20.hxg4 ♗xd3

Now that the light-squared bishops are gone, Black can breathe more easily!

21.♗xd3 ♘a5 22.b4

There is no time to play 22.♖h1?! because of 22...♗c2! with a great advantage.

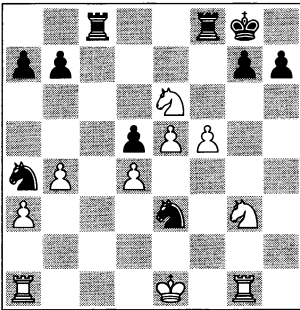
22...♗c4!

Exchanging the queens as well is the best option.

23.♗xc4 ♘axc4 24.f5 ♘a4 25.♗g5!

♗xg5 26.♘g5 exf5 27.gxf5 ♘e3

28.♘e6



It seems as if White has the initiative, but calm down, there are still some resources available to Black.

28...♖c2!

A very strong reply. We have counterplay! I did not like the check 28...♘c2+ because of 29.♕f2 ♘xa1 30.♘xf8 ♖c2+ 31.♕e3 ♕xf8 32.♖xa1± and the white king is more active.

29.♘f1?

Perhaps this was brought on by nerves, but I think that my opponent did not expect such a fierce struggle.

A) If 29.♘xf8 ♘b2! 30.♖d1 ♘bxd1 31.♘e6 ♘b2↑;

B) A better option was 29.f6 ♘g2+ 30.♖xg2 ♖xg2 31.♘xf8 ♕xf8 32.♖c1±, or;

C) 29.♘e2 ♘b2 30.♖xg7+ ♕h8 31.♖xh7+ ♕xh7 32.♘xf8+ ♕g8 33.♕f2 ♘bd1+ 34.♕e1 ♘b2 with a draw.

29...♘xf5! 30.♕d1?

30.♘xf8 was the only move, to which Black replies 30...♘xd4, with the initiative.

30...♖f2

30...♖fc8!—+. I saw this move, but I wanted to save time on the clock!

31.♕e1 ♖c2 32.♕d1 ♖f2

We repeated moves in time-trouble.

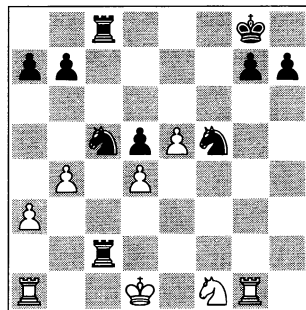
33.♕e1 ♖c2 34.♕d1

White couldn't claim a draw here, as on move 30 he still had the right to castle!

34...♖fc8!

Finally the winning move.

35.♘c5 ♘xc5!



This exchange sacrifice is decisive.

36.♕xc2 ♘xd4+ 37.♕d1 ♘e4

The two black knights are very strong in the centre of the board.

38.♖g2 ♘c3+ 39.♕e1 ♘b3

There are no squares available for the rook.

40. ♖e3 ♗xa1 41. ♖f5 ♖c7 42. e6 g6! 0-1

My opponent resigned at last and left the room at once...

After 5/7. ♖ce2 White is behind in development, so in many cases knight sacrifices on e5 or d4 will favour Black. The blockade with ...f5 offers him a solid game.

I think the best move order is first ... ♖b6/...f6, etc.

GAME 38

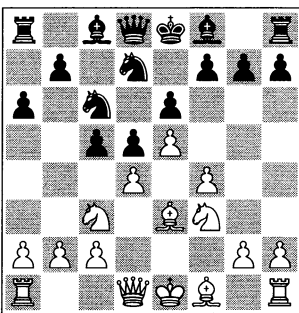
□ **Karsten Rasmussen**

■ **Viktor Moskalenko**

Estartit Open 2007/08 (5)

This game is typical of the Classical French with 3. ♖c3 ♗f6. Apart from the opening, we should take note of the good middlegame and also of the classic endgame, which helps the chances for both sides to be understood.

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♖c3 ♗f6 4. e5 ♗fd7 5. f4 c5 6. ♗f3 ♗c6 7. ♖e3 a6!?

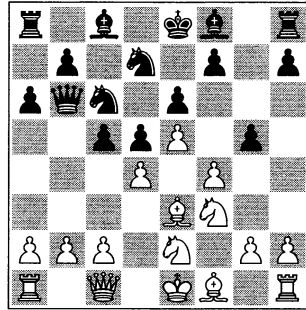


An important idea in this system, preparing the advance ...b7-b5. I discovered this plan in the 1980s.

8. ♖d2

The most flexible reply, keeping all options open.

8. ♖e2 would be similar to Game 37, aiming to consolidate the d4-square at the cost of delaying queenside development: 8... ♖b6 9. ♖c1 g5!?

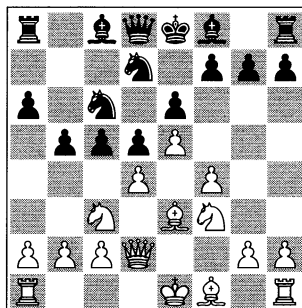


analysis diagram

A well-known resource in the French, but also in accordance with Morozevich's creative style. 10. c3 (10. fxc5 cxd4 11. ♖exd4 ♗cxe5⇌) 10... cxd4 (10... g4!? 11. ♖d2 f6⇌) 11. cxd4 ♖b4+ 12. ♖f2 f6!∞ Black radically solves the problems of searching for counterplay and it is difficult for White to find a continuation over the board, Topalov-Morozevich, Morelia/Linares 2007.

The typical break 9...f6! also leads to a fierce struggle for the central squares, for instance: 10. c3 ♖e7 11. g3 0-0 12. ♖h3 cxd4 13. cxd4 fxe5 14. ♖xe6+ ♖h8↑ and the black king finds a really safe square.

8...b5

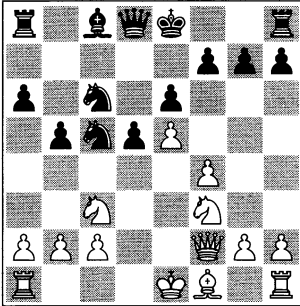


Now White can choose from several continuations.

9.a3

A matter of fashion. Those who have no time to study, and who do not have an opinion of their own, follow the fashion.

A) In former times 9.dxc5 used to be the main reply: 9...♙xc5 10.♙xc5 ♘xc5 11.♙f2



analysis diagram

and now 11...♙b6 with a different idea: 12.♙d3 ♖b8 13.0-0 ♘a4 (Black proposes to enter an endgame. 13...0-0!? 14.♘e2 ♘b4⇒) 14.♘xa4 bxa4 15.b3 f6!? (or 15...♙e7 16.♖fb1 a3 17.c3 ♙xf2+ 18.♙xf2 a5!⇒ Videki-Moskalenko, Balatonbereny 1994) 16.♖ae1 (16.bxa4 ♙xf2+ 17.♙xf2 ♖b4⇒) 16...♙xf2+ 17.♖xf2 0-0!? with an equal game, Perpinya Rofes-Moskalenko, Barbera 2004.



WEAPON: 11...♙e7?! is a weak move: 12.♙d3 b4 13.♘e2 a5 14.0-0 ♙a6 15.♙e3! △ 15...0-0?? (≥ 15...♘xd3 16.cxd3 0-0 17.♘ed4±) 16.♙xh7+! (a thematic sacrifice) 16...♙xh7 17.♘g5+ ♙g6 18.f5+ and mate in four, Svidler-Renner, Germany Bundesliga B 2001/02.

B) The attacking player's choice has always been 9.h4 b4 10.♘e2 ♙e7 11.dxc5 ♘xc5! ♣ 12.♘g3 h5?! 13.♙e2 g6 14.0-0

♘a4 15.c3 bxc3 16.bxc3 ♙a5⇒ Anand-Morozevich, Monaco blind 2004;

C) But the computer move is 9.♙e2 ♙b6 (9...♙b7!? 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.♙h1 0-0 12.a3 ♙c7 13.♖ae1 ♖ac8 14.♙d3 cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♘c5= Nijboer-Visser, Tilburg 2003) 10.♘d1 b4 11.0-0 a5 12.c3 ♙e7 13.♙f2 0-0 14.f5 bxc3 15.bxc3 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♙a6 17.♙xa6 ♙xa6 18.♘e3 and the position is equal, Svidler-Morozevich, Monaco rapid 2005. We now reach a popular position in practice.

9...♙b6

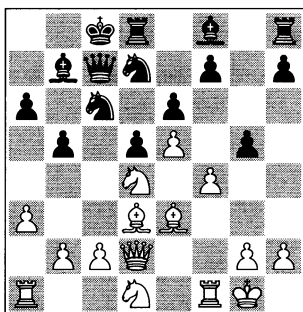
A) 9...♙b7!? Another positive move.

A1) After 10.dxc5 ♙xc5 11.♙xc5 ♘xc5 Morozevich showed in the following game that he favours dynamic factors (rapid development) over static ones (the exchange of the dark-squared bishops): 12.♙d3 b4 (12...♙b6!?) 13.♘e2 (after this voluntary retreat, all the aspects mentioned in the previous comment seem to become valid; 13.axb4 ♘xb4 14.♙e2 ♙b6⇒) 13...♙b6 14.♙e3?! d4! (a thematic pawn sacrifice in order to activate the pieces) 15.♘fxd4 ♘xd4 16.♙xd4 bxa3 17.♖xa3 ♖d8! 18.♙e3 ♙xb2 19.♙xc5?? (19.♙f2=) 19...♙b1+ 20.♙d2 ♙xh1 and Black won, Svidler-Morozevich, Morelia/ Linares 2007;

A2) 10.♙e2 ♙b6 11.♘d1?! ♖c8 12.c3 cxd4 13.♘xd4 (Karjakin-Wang Hao, Taiyuan 2005) 13...♘c5!⇒;

A3) 10.g3 ♙a5!? 11.♖a2 (Ponomarev-Bareev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005) 11...♙c7!⇒; 10.♘e2 ♙c7!? 11.g3 cxd4 12.♘fxd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♘c5! 14.♙d3 ♘e4 15.♙e2 b4! 16.♙xe4 dxe4 17.axb4 ♙xb4+ 18.c3 ♙e7 19.f5 ♙xe5 20.fxe6 0-0 21.exf7+ ♖xf7 22.♖f1 ♙d5 ½-½ Lopez Martinez-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2008;

A4) 10.♔d3 ♔c7 11.0-0 0-0-0 (there are not enough games played to draw any conclusions, but this seems to be risky) 12.♘d1? cxd4 13.♘xd4 g5!?

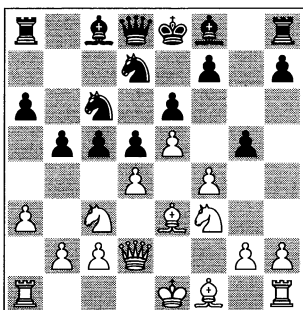


analysis diagram

The 'Black Jet' in Monaco? The rest is almost forced! 14.♘xc6 ♔xc6 15.♔d4 gxf4 16.♔xf4 ♖g8 17.♘e3 f6 18.exf6 e5 19.f7 ♖xg2+ 0-1 Svidler-Morozevich, Monaco blind 2007.

B) 9...cxd4 introduces play similar to the next game: 10.♘xd4 ♘xd4 11.♔xd4 ♔c5 12.0-0-0 (12.♔xc5 ♘xc5 13.♔f2 ♔c7 14.♔d3 0-0 15.0-0 f6 Perpinya Rofes-Moskalenko, Sabadell 2008) 12...♔b7 13.h4 0-0 14.♔e3 ♔xd4 15.♖xd4 f6 16.exf6 ♔xf6 17.g3 ♖ae8 18.♔h3?! ♘b8! 19.♔d2 ♘c6 20.♖d3 ♘a5 21.♖e1 ♘c4↑ Kogan-Moskalenko, La Gomera 2006;

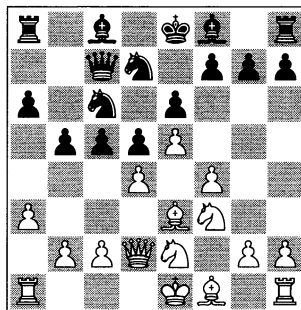
C) The French experts' choice has always been the more aggressive 9...g5.



analysis diagram

A dubious blow, but prepared by Morozevich especially to play a 'Black Jet' roulette game in Monaco! 10.fxg5 cxd4 11.♘xd4 (the main reply. The stem game continued 11.♔xd4 ♔g7 12.0-0-0 Anand-Morozevich, Monaco blind 2005; 12...♘xd4!?) 11...♘dx5! (11...♘cxe5 12.♔d3 ♔b7 (12...♔g7 13.♘ce2 0-0 14.♘g3 ♘xd3+ 15.cxd3 ♔b6 16.♔f2 Yakovenko-Bareev, Sochi tt 2006; and now 16...e5! 17.♘df5 d4 18.♔d2 ♘c5) 13.0-0 ♔c7 14.♘h1 ♔g7 15.♖ae1 0-0⇌ Motylev-Volkov, Moscow ch-RUS 2005) 12.♔e2 (12.♘ce2 ♔a5 13.c3 b4 14.cxb4 ♔xb4 15.♘c3∞ Dworakowska-Malakhatko, Cappelle la Grande 2006) 12...h6 13.g6! f6 14.0-0 with very good compensation for the pawn, Bracker-Jacoby, Hamburg 2007.

10.♘e2 ♔c7!?




11.g3

11.♘g3 ♔b7∞.

11...cxd4

Of course Black can also wait before exchanging and develop his bishops first.

12.♘exd4 ♘c5 13.♔d3

 WEAPON: 13.♔c3 ♔d7 14.♘xb5 axb5 15.♔xc5 b4!↑.

Or, for instance, 13.♘xc6 ♘e4 14.♔a5 ♔xc6 15.♘d4 ♔b7=.

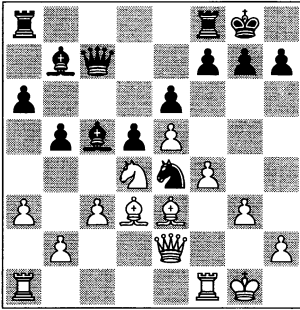
13...♔b7 14.0-0 ♘e4!?

A common manoeuvre in these positions.

15.♖e2 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4

16.♙xd4 ♙c5 17.c3 ♙xd4+⇒.

16...♙c5 17.c3 0-0



I think that this position is equal. However, if White tries to open up the game his king will be in a dangerous position.

18.♖fc1

Or 18.a4 bxa4 (18...b4?! 19.cxb4 ♙xb4 20.♖ac1 ♖a5 21.f5↑) 19.♖xa4 a5=.

18...♖fc8 19.a4 bxa4 20.♖xa4 a5

21.♖ca1 g6

21...♖b6!?.

22.♘b3 ♙b6! 23.♙b5 ♘c5!?

A provocative manoeuvre. 23...♙c6=.

24.♘xc5 ♙xc5 25.♙d4

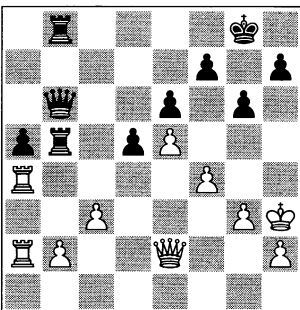
25.♖f2 ♖b6 26.♙xc5 ♖xb5!?∞.

25...♙xd4+ 26.♖xd4 ♖b6 27.♖a2

♙c6 28.♙xc6 ♖xc6 29.♙g2

Some small problems are starting to appear.

29...♖b8 30.♙h3 ♖c5 31.♖da4 ♖b5↑



This is what I had hoped for from this line. Now the white king is quite weak.

32.c4 dxc4 33.♖xc4 ♙g7!

A very useful manoeuvre, preparing a bold attack by the h-pawn. 33...♖d8!?.

34.♖e2T

In time-trouble the dangers are better hidden. 34.♖d4 ♖c7≠.

34...h5!

A fresh resource.

35.♖d2 ♖d5 36.♖e1 ♖d8

36...h4!→.

37.♖e4?

37.♖xa5 ♖d1 (37...h4!?!→) 38.♖e4 h4

39.♖a8 hxg3 40.♖xb8 ♖xb8↑.

37...h4!

0-1

White should be losing in many ways, but the most elegant would have been... on time!

GAME 39

□ Dmitry Yakovenko

■ Alexander Morozevich

Moscow ch-RUS 2007 (1)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7

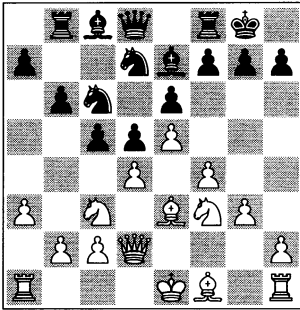
5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 cxd4

After this exchange Black wants to exert pressure on d4 with his pieces.

A) 7...♖b6 is an almost forgotten idea: 8.♖d2?! (the main line is 8.♘a4 ♖a5+ 9.c3 cxd4 10.b4 ♘xb4 11.cxb4 ♙xb4+ 12.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 13.♘xd2± and Black does not get enough compensation for the piece) 8...♖xb2! 9.♖b1 ♖a3 10.♙e2 a6 11.f5 cxd4 12.fxe6? dxe3 winning too much material, Fluvia Poyatos-Vaganian, Barcelona 2007;

B) 7...♙e7! is another old, natural method, recently popular: 8.♖d2! (8.♙e2 0-0 9.♖d2 b6!? Nijboer-Narciso Dublan, Barcelona 2007) 8...0-0 9.g3 (9.a3 b6!? 10.♙d3 f6 11.exf6

♗xf6 12.♙b5 ♖c7 13.♙xc6 ♖xc6
14.♗e5 ♖e8⇒ Macieja-Morozevich, St
Petersburg 1997) 9...♞b8 10.a3 b6!?

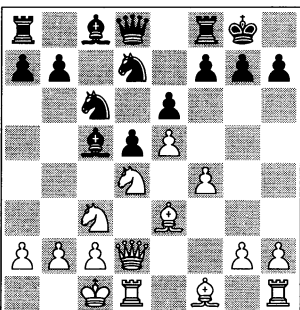


This strategic concept, strengthening the centre, is the key to Black's defence. 11.♙e2 f6 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♞d1? (13.0-0-0) 13...♗g4♣ Bologan-Luther, Moscow 2007.

8.♗xd4 ♙c5

A sharp line arises after 8...♖b6!? 9.♖d2 (9.a3 ♙c5 10.♗a4 ♖a5+ 11.c3 ♙xd4 12.♙xd4 ♗xd4 13.♖xd4 b6 14.♖b4 ♖xb4 15.axb4= Aguas-Sanmartin-Moskalenko, Benasque 1993; 9.♙e2 ♗xd4 10.♙xd4 ♙c5 11.♗a4 ♖a5+ 12.c3 ♙xd4 13.♖xd4 b6⇒ Dreev-Moskalenko, Lvov 1985) 9...♖xb2 10.♞b1 ♖a3 11.♗cb5 ♖xa2 12.♞b3 ♞b8 13.♗c7+? ♗d8 14.♗xe6+ fxe6 15.♗xe6+ ♗e7 16.♗g5 ♖a1+ 17.♗f2 d4!-+ Levchenkov-Moskalenko, Riga 1984.

9.♖d20-0 10.0-0



The key position in this line.

10...a6

Preparing ...b7-b5. 10...♗xd4!?

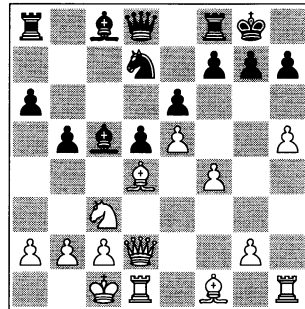
11.♙xd4 a6 (11...b6!? is an idea that deserves attention) 12.♗b1 (for 12.♖f2, see the main game) 12...b5 13.♙xc5 ♗xc5 14.♖d4 ♖b6 (14...♖c7!?) 15.a3 ♞b8 16.g3 b4 17.axb4 ♖xb4 18.♖xb4 ♞xb4 19.♗a2 ♞b6 20.♞d4 a5 21.b3 ♙d7 22.♙g2 ♞fb8↑ Kruppa-Moskalenko, Chernigov 1985.

11.♖f2

This move was brought back into fashion by Kramnik, after he scored a very convincing win with it over Radjabov in Linares.

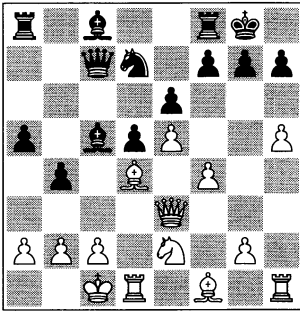
A) 11.h4!?

(this advance is always relevant) 11...♗xd4 12.♙xd4 b5 13.h5



analysis diagram

13...b4 (13...♙b7 is also playable: 14.h6 g6 15.♖e3 ♞c8 16.♙xc5 ♗xc5 17.♞d4 ♖e7 18.♗b1 ♞c7 19.g3 b4! 20.♗d1 a5 21.♗f2 a4 22.♙g2 ♞fc8⇒ 23.♗g4 a3 24.♗f6+ ♗h8 25.bxa3 ♗a4! 26.♞xb4 (A.Ivanov-Moskalenko, Frunze 1987) and now 26...♗c3+ 27.♗b2 d4! 28.♖f2 ♗xa2!♣) 14.♗e2 (14.♗a4 ♙xd4 15.♖xd4 ♖a5 16.b3 ♙b7∞ Δ 17...♙c6 De la Riva Aguado-Campos Gambuti, Barcelona 1993) 14...a5 15.♖e3 ♖c7!

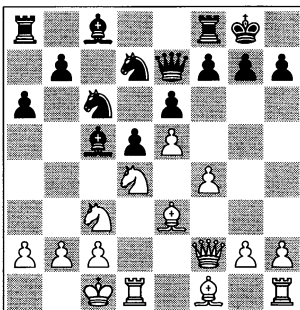


analysis diagram

16.♗b1 ♕a6 17.♕xc5 ♘xc5 18.♘g3 (covering the e4-square; 18.♘d4 a4 19.♕xa6 ♖xa6 20.f5 ♘e4 21.♗f4 a3→) 18...♖fc8 19.♖c1 a4 20.♕xa6 ♖xa6 21.♖hd1 a3 22.b3 ♖c6↑ and soon after, Black won the game, Topalov-Morozevich, Sarajevo 1999;

B) 11.♘ce2 White's idea is to exchange the dark-squared bishops, reducing Black's attacking potential on the queenside: 11...♗e7 12.♘b3 ♕xe3 13.♗xe3 f6! (starting counterplay in the centre) 14.exf6 ♘xf6 15.h3 (White is forced to waste a tempo since ...♘g4 is not so easy to meet, for example: 15.♘ed4 ♘g4 16.♗f3 ♘xd4 17.♘xd4 e5!⇒) 15...a5! 16.a3 b5 17.g4⇒ with a double-edged position, Svidler-Morozevich, Moscow ch-RUS Superfinal 2005.

11...♗e7!?



An important improvement: the queen is much better placed on e7.

A) 11...♘xd4 is rather different: 12.♕xd4 ♗c7?! 13.♕d3 b5 14.♗h4! (this is White's idea: to create a couple of weaknesses on the kingside and to push his pawns to open up the position of the black king) 14...h6 (14...g6!? 15.♘e2 ♕b7 16.♗b1±) 15.♘e2 f6 (15...♕b7 16.g4!) 16.♗g4± Kramnik has won the theoretical discussion. White has developed a dangerous initiative on the kingside, while Black is deprived of any counterplay, Kramnik-Radjabov, Linares 2003;

B) Or 11...♕xd4 12.♕xd4 b5 13.♕e3! (13.♕d3 b4 14.♘e2 a5⇒ Kharitonov-Iliushin, Krasnoyarsk ch-RUS 2003) 13...b4!? (considerably better than 13...♕b7 14.♕d3 f6 (14...♘b4 15.♕d4 ♖c8 16.♗b1 ♗a5 17.a3 ♘c6 18.f5 ♘dx5?? 19.♕b6 1-0 Kramnik-Shirov, Monaco blind 2003) 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♗g3± Dominguez Perez-Narciso Dublan, Barcelona 2007) 14.♘a4! (14.♘e2 a5 15.♘d4 ♘xd4 16.♕xd4 ♕a6=. After exchanging the light-squared bishops Black has no problems at all, Shirov-Radjabov, Leon 2004) 14...a5!? 15.h4 ♕a6 16.♕xa6 (16.h5 ♗c7 17.h6 g6 18.♗b1 ♕xf1 19.♖hxf1 f5∞ Ragger-Stellwagen, Yerevan Wch-jr 2007) 16...♖xa6 17.♗e2 ♖a8 18.h5 ♗c7 19.h6 g6 20.♗b1 ♘a7 21.♕xa7 ♖xa7 22.♗f2 ♖a6 23.♖he1 ♖c6⇒ Yakovenko-Ni Hua, Taiyuan 2006.

12.♕d3

12.♗b1 ♘xd4 13.♕xd4 b5 14.♕d3 b4 (14...♕xd4!? 15.♗xd4 ♕b7) 15.♘e2 a5!? 16.♖he1 ♕a6 17.f5 ♕xd3 18.♖xd3 exf5 19.♘f4 ♕xd4 20.♗xd4± (Radjabov-Ivanchuk, Morelia/Linares 2008) and now 20...♗c5=.

12...f6 13.exf6 ♜xf6 14.h3

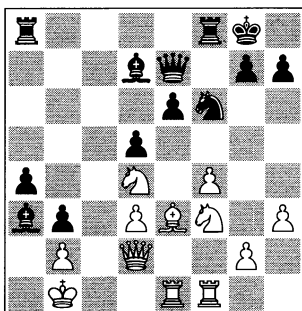
14.♖he1 ♜g4!? (14...♙b4 15.♚h4∞ Karjakin-Morozevich, Tomsk 2006)
15.♜xc6 ♚f6!.

14...♙d6 15.♖hf1 ♙d7 16.♖de1 ♜b4
17.♚d2 ♜xd3+ 18.cxd3?

18.♚xd3 ♖ac8⇒.

18...b5! 19.♙b1 b4 20.♜ce2 a5
21.♜f3 a4! 22.♜ed4 b3 23.a3
♙xa3!?→

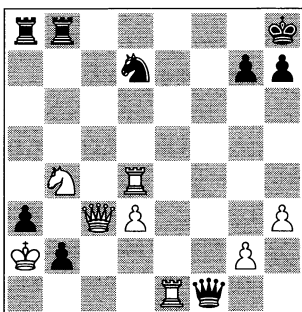
Black is already OK, but this thematic sacrifice enables him to launch a dangerous attack against the enemy king.



24.bxa3 ♚xa3 25.♜e5?

25.f5!? was a better defence: 25...exf5
26.♜e5⇒ with a sharp position.

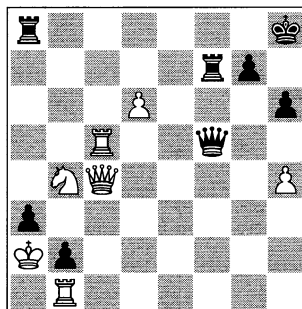
25...♖fb8! 26.f5 b2 27.♜c2 ♚d6
28.♜xd7 ♜xd7 29.♖f4 a3 30.♙a2 e5
31.♖b4 d4 32.♙xd4 exd4 33.♖xd4
♚f6 34.♚c3 ♚xf5 35.♜b4 ♙h8
36.♖e7 ♚f1 37.♖e1



37...♚f2?

The game becomes uncontrollable. As we can see, on many occasions, Morozevich lacks resources to finish a game properly. There was an easy win by 37...♚f7+ 38.♖c4 (38.♚c4 ♚f2 39.♖b1 ♖c8) 38...♜b6 or else 37...♚f6! with zugzwang.

38.♖xd7 ♚xg2 39.♖b1 h6 40.♖c7 ♖f8
41.h4 ♚g4 42.♖c4 ♚g2 43.♖c7 ♚g4
44.♖c4 ♚g2 45.♖c6 ♙h7 46.d4 ♚g4
47.d5 ♖f4 48.♚c2+ ♙h8 49.♜d3 ♖f5
50.♖c4 ♚f3 51.♜b4 ♖ff8 52.♚c3
♚f5 53.♚d3 ♚d7 54.♚c3 ♖f7 55.♖c6
♙g8 56.♚c4 ♚f5? 57.d6 ♙h8
58.♖c5



58...♚g6? 59.♜d3?

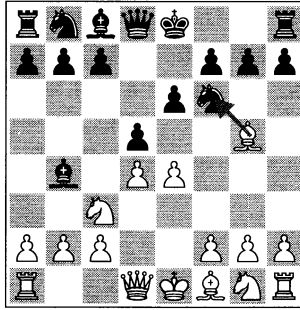
It was White's turn to win: 59.♖c8+!
♖xc8 60.♚xc8+ ♙h7 61.♚c2!+-.

59...♖fa7 60.♖d5 ♖a4 61.h5 ♚xd6
62.♖xd6 ♖xc4 63.♖d5 ♙h7 64.♖d7
♖g4 65.♖c7 ♖a5 66.♜c5 ♖a8 67.♜d7
♖f4 68.♜b6 ♖a5 69.♜c4 ♖xh5 1/2-1/2

Summary of 7...cxd4: After castling queenside White controls the centre and the kingside, while his opponent must find some counterplay on the queenside. Sometimes Black plays ...f7-f6!? in order to open up the centre. The positions arising are very similar to the sharper lines of the Sicilian Defence, but with a closed centre.

Chapter 6 – A Legendary Pin

MacCutcheon Variation 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙b4



Introduction

Historically, the MacCutcheon Variation emerged at the end of the 19th Century. The first recorded game with it was in a simultaneous display against William Steinitz at the Manhattan Chess Club on Thanksgiving Day, November 1885.

For a long time a refutation by White of this popular variation has been sought, but I think that the old MacCutcheon still has many resources and several unexplored ideas. This is the reason why the variation stays alive year after year and has been successfully defended even at the highest levels by super grandmasters such as Viktor Kortchnoi and Alexander Morozevich.



Legendary grandmaster Viktor Kortchnoi has been a champion of the MacCutcheon.

The Variation's Secret

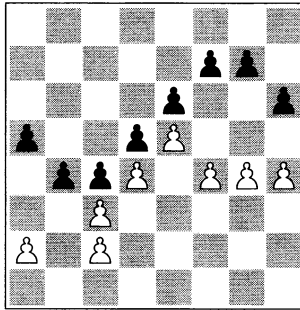
The opening begins with a few tactical tricks (such as 5.e5 h6!), but after that almost the entire game is based on the strategy of preparing attacks;

The main positions become very closed if Black blocks the centre by playing ...c7-c5-c4 (see Kortchnoi's games in the examples), or semi-open after ...c7-c5-cxd4/♙a5 (Morozevich's preferred plan) or White's move dxc5. In all cases the game develops quite progressively;

In contrast to other, similar variations in the French, in this line two minor pieces are exchanged (...♖xc3 and ...♟xd2), so the potential to play for an attack diminishes, although the major pieces remain on the board, as do most of the pawns (usually, 14-16 of them);

A feature of this variation is that White can easily increase the number of his pieces on the kingside;

Meanwhile, after exchanging his f8 bishop and his g8 knight, Black is slightly passive and must prepare counterplay in the centre with his usual French break ...c7-c5 or block the centre with ...c7-c5-c4, preparing a counterattack on the queenside with ...b5-a5-b4;

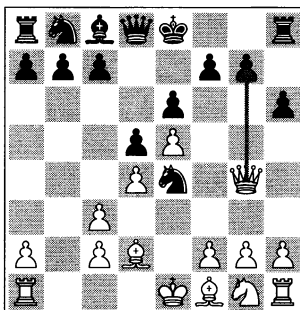


With the centre closed, White can also advance his f-g-h-pawns to attack on the kingside;

Finally, the best part of this variation is that the kings can move freely!

Analysis of the Main Lines with 6. ♖d2, 8. ♖g4

The opening continues with 5.e5 h6, after which 6. ♖d2! is the most usual move for White. Now, after 6...♖xc3 7.bxc3 ♟e4 White attacks g7 with 8. ♖g4!. This is the most aggressive move against the French Defence.



We have arrived at the main position in the system. White is preparing action on the kingside.

Some Statistics

Black has two normal ways of defending his g7-pawn:

- A) 8...♗f8 (700 games in Mega Base, with the result=43.2%)
- B) 8...g6 (1531 games=46%).

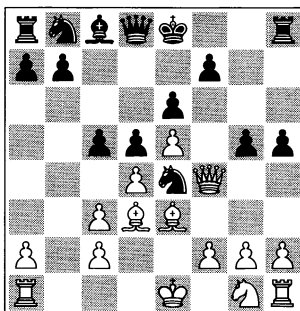
Morozevich used to play 8...♗f8, but later he replaced it by 8...g6, whereas Kortchnoi did the opposite, opting for 8...♗f8.

White usually plays 9.♘d3/♘f3/h4 and sometimes ♖f4/♖d1 without worrying about the order of these moves.

Analysis of the Old Lines: 6.exf6/6.♘h4 (Game 48)

Analysis of the Modern Lines: 6.♘e3 (Game 49)

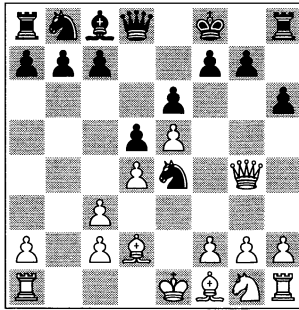
One of Black's main resources in many lines of the MacCutcheon Variation is the 'Black Jet' plan with the pawn moves ...h5, ...g5.



See Games 43, 47 and 49 (the black king may be on e8 or f8 and the white a2-pawn may be on a3). Other examples are Games 40, 42, 44, and 46.

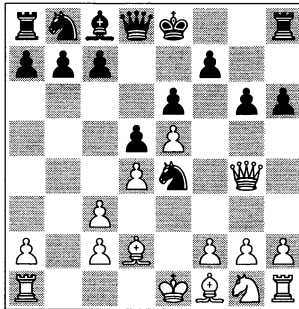
Finally, there is a magical/optical secret in the MacCutcheon that may be of practical interest: there is not so much difference between 6.♘d2 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♘e4 8.♖g4 ♗f8 White can always surprise Black by playing 9.♘e3!? and the same position arises, the only difference being the a-pawn's position: a2/a3.

A) 8...♔f8 – the ‘modern’ defence



This is a ‘strategic’ defence of the g7-square. Black loses the right to castle, but he keeps his kingside free of weaknesses and retains a flexible pawn structure. Today, this is the favourite option of Kortchnoi and Volkov, two MacCutcheon experts (Games 40-44).

B) 8...g6 – the most popular move



With this move Black keeps the option to castle queenside, but the price is the weakening of his kingside and, especially, of the f6-square. This line has been used by Morozevich recently.

A Legendary Pin – Games

First we study White's natural development move 9.♘f3. In my opinion, the following has been the sharpest game in this line.

GAME 40

□ Nigel Short

■ Alexander Morozevich

Germany Bundesliga 1998/99 (3)


**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5
♙b4 5.e5 h6 6.♙d2**

Two almost forgotten old methods are 6.exf6 (see Game 48) and 6.♙h4 (see Game 49).

But another popular move for White is 6.♙e3, which will be examined in Game 50.

6...♙xc3 7.bxc3

Incidentally, 7.♙xc3?! does not seem to be a successful idea: 7...♘e4 8.♘e2 0-0 9.♙b4 c5!

 WEAPON: 10.dxc5?? ♙h4!

10.♙a3 and now:

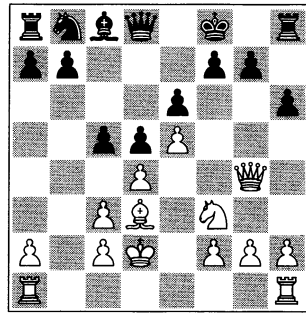
A) 10...♘c6!? This move promises Black good chances in the forthcoming struggle: 11.f3 b5! 12.fxe4 b4 13.♙xb4 ♘xb4 14.c3 ♘c6 15.exd5 ♙xd5 16.dxc5 ♙xc5 17.♘c1 (17.♙d6 ♙b6!) 17...♙xe5+ 18.♙e2 ♙c7 and Black's lead in development begins to play a significant role, Svidler-Morozevich, Frankfurt 1999.

B) 10...b5!? is also good: 11.♙xc5 (11.dxc5 b4! 12.♙xb4 ♙h4!) 11...♘c5 12.dxc5 ♙c7⇒ ½-½ Velicka-S.Petrosian, Hamburg 2000.

7...♘e4 8.♙g4 ♙f8

Keeping the pawn structure intact. Later, Morozevich chose 8...g6 (see Games 46-48).

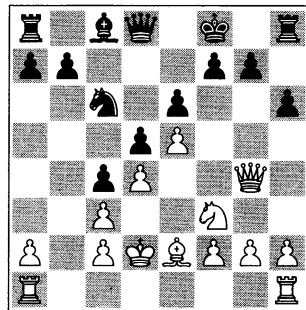
9.♘f3 c5 10.♙d3 ♘xd2 11.♙xd2



11...c4

11...♘c6!? is similar to the main game: 12.♙f4 c4 13.♙e2 b5 14.a3 ♖b8 15.h4 a5 16.h5 b4?! (this advance should be well prepared) 17.axb4 axb4 18.cxb4 ♖xb4 19.♙e3 with a slight initiative for White, because of the insecure position of the black king, De Firmian-Kaidanov, Salt Lake City ch-USA 1999.

12.♙e2 ♘c6



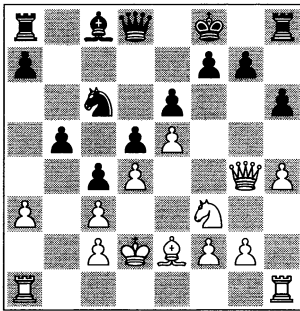
The critical position in this line.

13.a4!?

To prevent ...b7-b5. Some alternatives, leading to typical play, are:

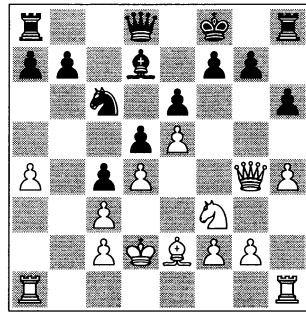
A) 13.♖hb1 ♖b8 14.a4 a6 15.h4 b5 16.axb5 axb5 17.♙f4 ♙e8 18.g4 ♙e7 19.g5 hxg5 20.♘xg5 f5 (20...f6!?) 21.♘f3 ½-½ De Firmian-Volkov, Stockholm 2004

B) 13.h4 b5 14.a3



analysis diagram

There's no other way.



and now Black has the following possibilities:

B1) 14... ♖d7 15.h5 (or 15. ♖f4 ♖e7 16.h5 ♖e8 17. ♘h4 a5 18. ♖g3 ♖g8 19. ♖e3 ♖d7 20.f4 b4 21. ♖hb1∞ and this tense game ended in a draw, J.Polgar-Kortchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 2000) 15...a5 16. ♖hb1 (or 16. ♖f4 ♖e7 17. ♖e3 ♖b8 18. ♖hb1 ♖e8 19.g4 ♖d8 20.g5 ♖c7 21. ♖g1 hxg5 22. ♖xg5 ♖xg5+ 23. ♘xg5 ♖bf8= without any possibilities of improving the position, Hernandez Guerrero-Moskalenko, Evry rapid 2001) 16... ♖b8 17. ♖f4 ♖e7 18.g4 ♖f8 19. ♖e3 ♖d8 20. ♘e1 ♖c7 21.f4∞ b4 22.axb4 axb4 23.cxb4 ♖xb4 24. ♘f3 g6 25. ♖c3 ♖xb1 26. ♖xb1 gxh5 27.gxh5 ♖e7 28. ♖a1 ♖b8 29. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 30.c3 f5⇌ and Black took advantage of the pawn weaknesses c3, f4 and h5, Christiansen-Kortchnoi, Reykjavik 2000;

B2) 14...a5 15. ♖f4 ♖e7 16.h5 ♖a7 17.g4 b4 18. ♖e3 bxa3 (18...b3) 19. ♖a2 a4?! (19... ♖b7 20. ♖ha1 ♖d7 21. ♖xa3 f6!⇌) 20. ♖ha1 ♖d7 21. ♖xa3 ♘b8 22. ♖3a2 ♖b7∞ with a complex game, J.Polgar-Lautier, Madrid 1993.

13... ♖d7

13...f6!? could be a new try – or 13...f5, in Nimzowitsch style.

14.h4!

14...a6

Volkov has preferred:

A) 14... ♖e7 15.h5 b6 16. ♘h4 ♖g5+ 17.f4 ♖xg4 18. ♖xg4 ♘e7 19.a5 b5!⇌ Akopian-Volkov, Port Erin 2006, and;

B) 14... ♖e8 15. ♖h3 ♖g8 16.h5 ♖e7 17. ♘h4 ♖a5∞ T.L.Petrosian-Volkov, Moscow Aeroflot 2006.

But 14... ♖a5!∞ and 14... ♖b8 are the options given by Fritz 10 and 11.

15. ♖f4 b5 16.g4

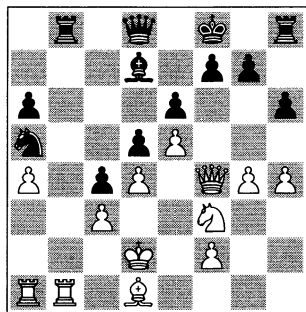
Symmetrically, Short replies by attacking on the other flank. If 16. ♖hb1 bxa4!?.

16...b4!?

This advance is always interesting. But 16...bxa4!? is also possible.

16... ♘e7 17.axb5 axb5 18.h5 ♖a4⇌ is a strong defensive concept, Antok-Baches, Barcelona 2003.

17.cxb4 ♘xb4 18.c3 ♘c6 19. ♖hb1 ♖b8 20. ♖d1 ♘a5



The position is balanced, but there is a long game still to be played...

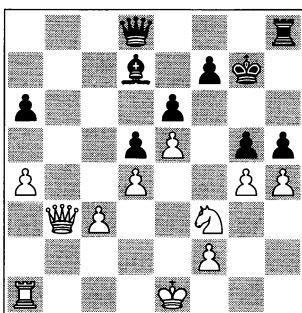
21.♖e1! ♘b3 22.♙xb3 cxb3 23.♖c1 g5!?

I assume that Morozevich did not want to draw, as in the variation 23...♙g8 24.♖a3 ♖b6 25.♘d2 ♖d8=.

24.♖a3+ ♙g7 25.♙xb3

This allows Black to open the game on the opposite wing. 25.♙d2!?∞.

25...♙xb3 26.♖xb3 h5!



Now Black's counterplay becomes very dangerous.

27.gxh5 g4 28.♘d2 ♙hx5 29.♖e2 ♖xh4 30.♙g1 ♙f5

30...♖g5!, to activate the queen.

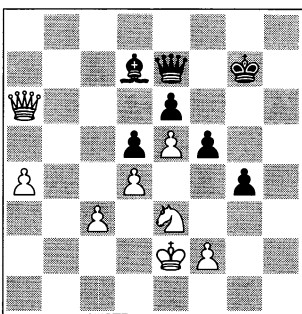
31.♙g3 ♙f4 32.♘f1 f5

This plan is too risky; 32...♖h1!?

33.♖b7! ♖e7 34.♖xa6 ♙e4+ 35.♙e3 ♙xe3+?

35...♖a3⇒ was the only move.

36.♘xe3



36...♙e8?

The decisive mistake. Black had to try 36...♖a3 37.♖d6! (37.♘xf5+ exf5 38.♖f6+ ♙h7=) 37...♖xd6!?

(37...♖xa4 38.♖e7+ ♙h8 39.♙f1± Δ ♙g2-g3-f4-g5, etc.) 38.exd6 ♙xa4 39.c4 dxc4 40.♘xc4 ♙f7 41.♙e3± with possibilities of escaping.
37.a5 ♙h5 38.♖d6 ♖f7 39.♖d8 g3+ 40.♙f1 f4 41.♖g5+ ♙f8 42.♘g2 ♙e2+ 43.♖e1 f3 44.♘f4 g2 45.♘xe2 fxe2 46.♖xg2 ♖f5 47.♖g3 ♖c2 48.♖f4+ ♖e8 49.♖d2 ♖a4 50.♙xe2 ♖xa5 51.♖d3 ♙d8 52.♙f3 ♖a1 53.♙g4 ♖h1 54.♖f3 ♖h7 55.♖f8+ 1-0

Summary of 9.♘f3: Black has no serious weaknesses, but when complications arise White's spatial advantage will show its power, since he can bring his pieces to either wing more quickly. This is White's main advantage.

Black must prepare ...b5-b4 carefully. In any case, there are many possibilities and resources in the complicated play.

The critical line begins when White plays h2-h4 and ♙h3.

GAME 41

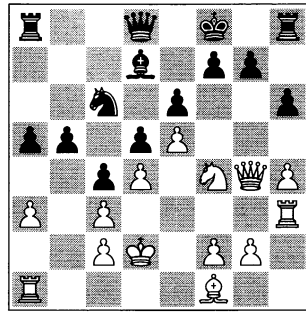
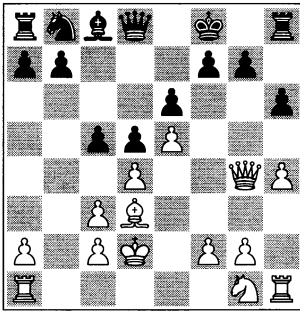
□ **Andrey Volokitin**

■ **Viktor Kortchnoi**

Igualada 2005 (1)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙b4 5.e5 h6 6.♙d2 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 ♘e4 8.♖g4 ♙f8 9.♙d3 ♘xd2 10.♙xd2 c5 11.h4!?

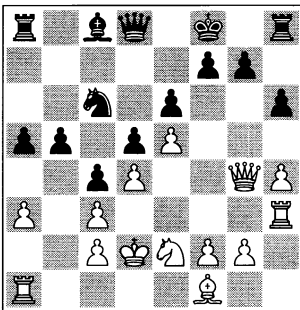
A logical move. White brings his rook to the third rank – this is the plan favoured in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings*.



analysis diagram

11... ♖c6

Kortchnoi invariably closes the position: 11...c4 12. ♖f1!? (this is another important possibility, in order to play ♖e2-♖f4-♖h5. 12. ♖e2 is the move in the present game) 12... ♖c6 13. ♖e2 b5 14. a3 a5 15. ♖h3



analysis diagram

It is dangerous for Black to delay seeking counterplay for too long:

A) 15... ♖g8 prepares an escape route for the king: 16. ♖f4 ♖e7 (16... ♖a7 17. ♖f3 ♖d7 18. ♖b1 ♖b7 19. ♖e2 ♖e7 20. ♖h5 ♖e8 21. ♖g4= was a draw in 65 moves, Aronian-Vallejo Pons, Menorca jr 1996) 17. ♖f3 ♖f5 18. ♖h3 ♖e8 (18...g5!?⇒) 19. h5 ♖h4 20. g4 ♖hx3 21. ♖hx3 ♖e7 22. g5 ♖h8 and Black retains counterplay – the ending is equal, J.Polgar-Kortchnoi, Zurich blitz 2006;

B) 15... ♖d7 16. ♖f4

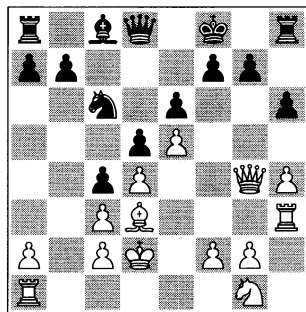
A) 16... ♖e7!? A typical defensive resource. However, it reduces Black's possibilities of counterattacking on the opposite wing. 17. ♖h5 ♖g8 (17... ♖f5!? 18. ♖f4 b4!⇒ Fressinet-Belozarov, Izmir tt 2004) 18. ♖f4 b4! 19. axb4 axb4 20. ♖xa8 bxc3+ 21. ♖xc3 ♖xa8 22. g4 ♖a5! and Black has made the best of the MacCutcheon; 23. g5 hxg5 24. hxg5 ♖h8! (activating the rook) 25. ♖e2 (Muzychuk-E.Pähtz, Krasnoturinsk 2007). Now 25...g6 26. ♖f6 ♖a4 is completely winning.

There are two famous examples by Kortchnoi:

B) 16... ♖g8 17. ♖f3 ♖e7 18. ♖h5 b4 19. ♖f4 bxc3+ 20. ♖e1 ♖e8 21. ♖xc3↑ Leko-Kortchnoi, Essen 2002 (2);

C) 16...b4 17. ♖f3 bxc3+ 18. ♖d1 h5 19. ♖hx5 ♖g8 20. ♖e1? ♖b6⇒ Lutz-Kortchnoi, Essen 2002 (5).

12. ♖h3 c4



The plans for both sides are perfectly plain: White tries to create something on the kingside, while Black plays on the opposite side, aiming to advance ...b5-b4.

13.♙e2

For 13.♙f1, see the comments to 11...c4.

13...b5

I'm sure that Kortchnoi has tried out all the possible moves in this line:

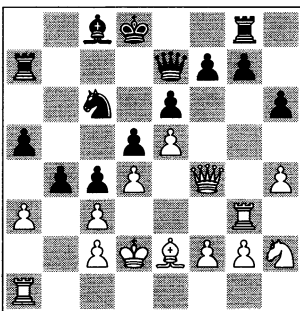
A) 13...♖g8 14.♗f4 ♙d7 15.♙h5 ♙e8 16.♘e2 (16.♗f3 f5!) 16...f5! 17.g4 (17.♙xe8 ♗xe8∞) 17...♘e7 18.♖g1 ♙xh5 19.gxh5 ♗e8 20.♗f3 (Δ ♘f4-g6) 20...♗c8 21.♘f4 ♖c6 22.♗hg3 ♖a6 23.♗g2 ♗f7 24.♗f1 ♗e8 (24...♖xa2? 25.♗b1) 25.♖1g2 ♗f7 26.♖g1 ♖xa2 27.♗g2 ♗f8 28.♖b1 ♗c8 (28...b6? 29.♖g6!±) 29.♖g1 ½-½ Anand-Kortchnoi, Dos Hermanas 1999;

B) 13...♘e7 14.h5 ♘f5 (a premature move) 15.♘f3 ♙d7 16.♗f4 b5? 17.g4 ♘e7 18.♘h4 ♗g8 19.♖g1 → Vysochin-Moskalenko, Yalta 1996.

14.♗f4

14.♗f3 a5 15.a3 ♘e7 16.♗f4 ♘f5!? 17.h5 ♗g5 18.♗xg5 hxg5 19.♖h3 ♙d7 20.g4 ♘h6 21.f4 gxf4 22.♖f1 with a slight initiative for White in the ending, J.Polgar-Panno, Buenos Aires 1992.

14...♗e7 15.♙h5 ♗e8 16.a3 a5 17.♖g3 ♖g8 18.♘f3 ♖a7 19.♘h2 ♗d8 19...b4!?. 20.♙e2 b4⇒



The chances are equal.

21.axb4 axb4 22.♖xa7 ♗xa7 23.cxb4 ♘xd4 24.♗e3 ♗a1

24...c3+!?.

25.♗a3 ♘b3+ 26.♖xb3 ♗d4+ 27.♗c1 cxb3 28.♗a5+ ♗e7 29.♗c7+ ♙d7 30.♗d6+ ♗e8 31.♗b8+ ♗e7 32.♗d6+ ½-½

A study of this interesting collection of games by experts such as Viktor Kortchnoi (Black) and other elite players with White will always help the reader. In my opinion, Black's position is solid, but somewhat passive, behind the barricades.

Black's main alternative is to play a semi-open game without the blockading move ...c5-c4, but with ...cxd4 for Black or dxc5 for White, as shown in the following game.

GAME 42

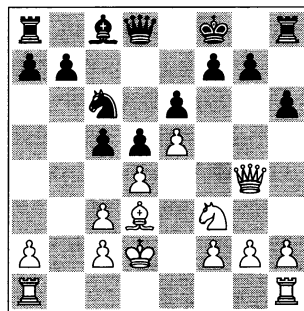
♣ **Ara Minasian**

♣ **Sergey Volkov**

Jurmala ch-URS U18 1992

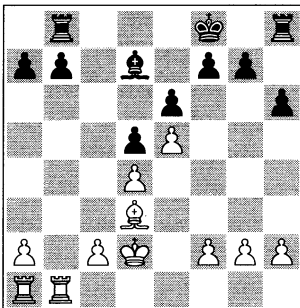
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙b4 5.e5 h6 6.♙d2 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 ♘e4 8.♗g4 ♗f8 9.♙d3

Here are some possibilities involving dxc5 by White: 9.♘f3 c5 10.♙d3 ♘xd2 11.♗xd2 ♘c6! and now:



A) 12. ♖f4 ♖e7!? (for 12... ♖a5!? see the present game; 12...c4 is similar to Game 40) 13.a3 ♘d7 14. ♖hb1 b6 15. ♖e3 ♘a5 16. ♖e1 ♖c8= 17. ♖f1 ♖e8 (Black could also close the position now with 17...c4!?=, when he will have gained several tempi compared with Kortchnoi's ideas mentioned in Games 40 and 41; 17...cxd4!? is another reasonable idea) 18. ♖g1 ♖d8 and now Black committed a significant error, leaving his king in danger: 19.h3 ♖c7? 20. ♘a6 ♖b8 21.dxc5!↑ Anand-Ivanchuk, Linares m-8 1992;

B) 12.dxc5 (trying to open the position) 12... ♖a5 13. ♖f4 ♖xc5 14. ♘d4 ♘xd4! (exchanges simplify Black's task. 14... ♘d7!? would be a slightly risky alternative: 15. ♖hb1 (Morozевич-Vallejo Pons, Pamplona 1998/99) and now 15... ♖b8=) 15. ♖xd4 (if 15.cxd4 ♖a5+ 16. ♖e2 b6!? ♘ 17. ♘g6 ♖b5+⇒) 15... ♖xd4 (15... ♖e7= or 15... ♖c7= amount to the same) 16.cxd4 ♘d7 17. ♖hb1 ♖b8!.=.

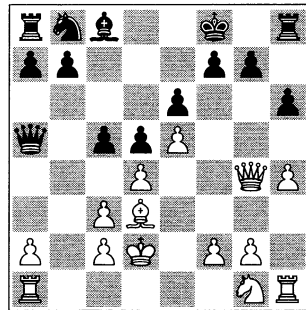


White retains slight pressure on the queenside, where there is nothing to attack. A draw is the most likely result. Lacasa Diaz-Moskalenko, Catalunya 2006.

Summary of dxc5: in a semi-open game Black does not have the aggressive re-

sources that arise in the c5-c4 blocked positions. His king is not very safe on f8, but White also lacks attacking resources. After a few exchanges, unbalancing the position becomes an impossible task.

9... ♘xd2 10. ♖xd2 c5 11.h4 ♖a5!?



Surprisingly, this counterattack is not used by the best players. Perhaps they are afraid of a white attack...

12. ♖h3!?

White surrenders his centre. The main alternative, 12.dxc5, is given in the comment to 9. ♘d3.

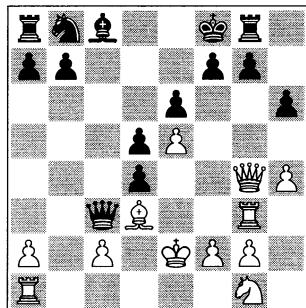
12...cxd4 13. ♖g3

The critical position in this line. If there is no mate, Black is OK...

13...g5?

Panic. Let's check some other resources:

A) 13... ♖xc3+! could be the critical move: 14. ♖e2 ♖g8.



TRICK: 15. ♖h7? d3+! and Black is winning, Salgado Lopez-Diaz Rodriguez, Sevilla 2006.

15. ♖e1!? ♘d7 (15... ♖d7!?) 16. ♖f1 ♘c5? (16... ♗b4! 17. ♘f3 ♘c5⇒)

17. ♘e2↑ Keres-D.Keller, Zurich 1968;
 B) 13... dxc3+? is a mistake: 14. ♖e1 g6 15. ♖xg6 ♗g8 16. ♗f4 ♗c7 17. ♘f3→;

C) 13... g6!?

TRICK: 14. ♖xg6? ♗g8 15. ♗f3 ♗xg6! 16. ♗xg6 ♗xc3+! winning in all lines.

14. ♗xd4 ♘c6 15. ♗f4 d4⇒.

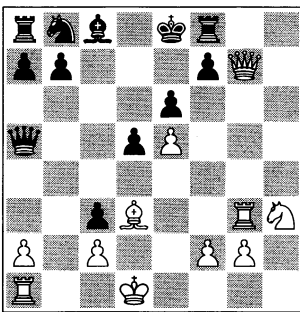
14.hxg5 dxc3+

If 14... ♗xc3+ 15. ♖e2 ♗xa1 16.g6 ♖e7 17.gxf7 ♗f8 18. ♗h4+ ♘d7 19. ♗g8, winning for White.

15.♖d1?

15. ♖e2! was the easy way: 15... hxg5 16. ♗xg5 with a decisive attack.

15...hxg5 16. ♗xg5 ♖e8 17. ♗g7 ♗f8 18. ♘h3



With the initiative for White. We will give the rest of the game without comment.

18... ♗b4 19. ♗g4 ♗e7 20. ♗f4 ♘d7 21. ♖b5 ♘d8 22. ♘g5 f6 23. ♘xe6+ ♗xe6 24. ♖xd7 ♗f7 25. ♗xf7 ♗xf7 26. ♖xc8 ♗xc8 27. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 28. exf6 ♗c6 29. ♗b1 ♗xf6 30. ♖e2 ♖c7

31. ♗b3 d4 32. ♗b4 ♗f4 33. ♗c4+ ♘d6 34.g3 ♗e4+ 35. ♘d3 ♘d5 36. ♗b4 a6 37.a3 b6 38.a4 ♖e5 39. ♗xb6 ♗e1 40. ♗xa6 ♗d1+ 41. ♖c4 ♗d2 42. ♗a5+ ♖e6 43. ♗d5 ♗xf2 44. ♗xd4 ♗xc2 45. ♗d3 ♗a2 46. ♖b3 ♗a1 47. ♗xc3 ♗b1+ 48. ♖c4 ♘d6 49. ♗b3 ♗a1 50. ♖b5 ♖c7 51. ♗c3+ ♘d6 52.a5 ♗b1+ 53. ♖a6 ♗b4 54. ♖a7 ♘d7 55.a6 ♘d6 56. ♖a8 ♘d7 57.a7 ♘d8 58.g4 ♘d7 59. ♗g3 ♖c7 60.g5 ♖b6 61.g6 ♗d4 62. ♗b3+ ♖a6 63.g7 ♗d8+ 64. ♗b8 ♗d7 65. ♗b6+ ♖xb6 66.g8=♗ 1-0

Summary:

The sharp possibility 11... ♗a5!? 12. ♗h3 has not been well explored. The king on f8 is now not very safe, but White does not have great attacking resources either. Both sides should investigate 13... ♗xc3, a line full of interesting resources.

An attacking plan worked out by Peter Svidler is 9. ♖e3, imitating the popular idea of 6. ♖e3 (another possible plan for White is 9. ♗f4/♗d1 with the idea ... ♘xd2, ♗xd2 and kingside castling). We will begin the study of Black's defensive resources against the modern 6/9. ♖e3 with the following game, and we will analyse this plan more deeply in Games 47 and 49.

GAME 43

□ Peter Svidler

■ Nigel Short

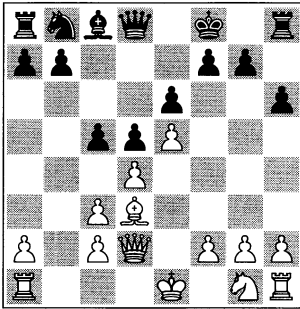
Internet rapid 2000 (2)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. ♖g5 ♖b4 5.e5 h6 6. ♖d2 ♖xc3 7.bxc3 ♘e4 8. ♗g4 ♖f8 9. ♖e3

Peter Svidler's attack. 6. ♖e3 is more popular, but at first sight the same position arises! Only, here the white pawn is on its original square instead of a3, and both players may be able to take advantage of this difference.

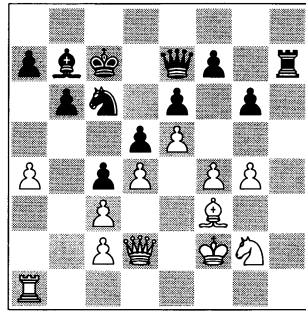
A) 9. ♖d1 is another strange plan. This manoeuvre allows White to castle (if ... ♗xd2, ♖xd2), but he wastes several tempi and some attacking chances;

B) 9. ♖f4 has the same problem: 9...c5 10. ♖d3 ♗xd2 11. ♖xd2



analysis diagram

11... ♗c6! (11... ♗d7?! is more passive: 12.f4 c4 13. ♖e2 ♗b6 14. ♖f3 ♖d7 15. ♗e2 h5 16. ♖e3 g6 17. ♗d2 ♗a4 18.f5!? gxf5 19.h4 ♖e7 20.a3 ♗e8 21. ♗f4 ♗d8 22. ♗xh5± Motylev-Prusikin, Dresden Ech 2007) 12. ♗f3 c4!? (as usual, semi-open play was the main alternative: 12... ♖a5 13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14. ♖b1 playing for the centre and the queenside, Kurnosov-Volkov, Dresden Ech playoff rapid 2007. However, Black is very solid and has no weaknesses, for example 14...b6!?) 13. ♖e2 ♖e7!? (the black queen could also go 13... ♖a3) and now 14.a4 b6 15.g3 ♗e8 (15... ♗g8 was another way to 'castle') 16. ♗h4 ♗d8 17.f4 g6 18. ♗g2 h5 19.h3 ♗c7 20. ♖f3 ♖b7 21. ♗f2 ♖h7 (21...f6!?) 22.g4?! hxg4 23.hxg4 ♖ah8 24. ♖xh7 ♖xh7⇒.

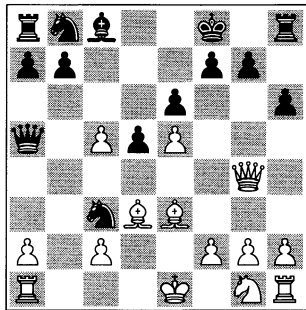


analysis diagram

Black has the better chances thanks to his control of the h-file, Ricardi-Kortchnoi, Buenos Aires 2001.

9... ♗xc3

Capturing the pawn is not forced, and it is certainly out of place in the MacCutcheon! I am sure that 9...c5!? will always be the most creative reply, giving Black many interesting resources: 10. ♖d3 and now Black must take profit of his extra move: 10... ♗xc3!? (10...h5!? would be in the spirit of the variation: 11. ♖f4 ♖a5 (11...g5!? is a famous resource in the MacCutcheon Variation; 12. ♖f3 ♗xc3∞) 12. ♗f3!? (12. ♗e2 ♗xc3!⇒) 12... ♖xc3+ 13. ♗e2 ♗c6 14.dxc5 b6 15. ♖hd1∞ Veresov-Kluger, Minsk tt 1957) 11.dxc5 ♖a5!?!⇒ (11... ♗c6!?)



analysis diagram

Now it is clear that the position is different from those arising after 6. ♖e3,

since White's a-pawn should be on a3 in order to play 12.♖b4.

12.♘f3 (12.♙d2 ♖a4!) 12...♗e4+ 13.♙f1 ♘xc5 and from here on, both sides can try to show what they're worth.

10.♙d3

10.♗e2!?

10...♗c6 11.♘f3 ♗b4 12.♙d2 ♗xd3+

12...♗bxa2 is very risky, since the black knights are not safe on enemy territory. 13.0-0☞.

13.cxd3 ♗a4 14.0-0 ♙d7 15.♞ab1 b6

16.♗h4 ♖e8?!

16...c5!?

17.♞fe1!?

Svidler chooses to attack with his pieces. 17.f4 g6☞.

17...♙g8 18.♞e3 ♞h7!

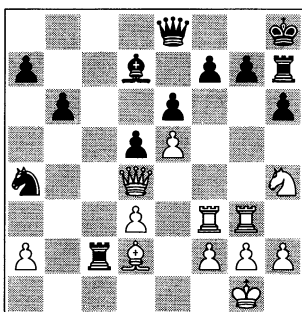
A truly spectacular move.

19.♞g3 ♙h8 20.♞e1

White needs more material for his attack.

20...♞c8 21.♞ee3 c5! 22.♞ef3 cxd4

23.♖xd4 ♞c2☞



Black has a clear advantage in this position. Both players are deploying their rooks to maximum effect.

24.♖f4 ♞xa2 25.h3 ♞xd2?

Now, however, Svidler's rooks will finally manage to gain control of the board. 25...♙g8 26.♙b4 ♗c5☞ was better.

26.♖xd2 g5!

A typical MacCutcheon advance.

27.♖b4 a5

Of course, Black cannot take the knight: 27...gxh4? 28.♖xh4 followed by ♖f6+ and mate.

28.♖d4 ♖c8 29.♞e3 ♖c3 30.♖g4 d4

31.♞e4 ♗c5 32.♞xd4 a4?

32...♖e1+!?

33.♘f3 ♖c1+ 34.♙h2 h5?

If 34...a3 35.♗xg5 ♖xg5 (35...hxg5 36.♖f3+–) 36.♖f3 ♖d8 37.♞dg4 and White wins.

35.♖xg5 ♖xg5 36.♗xg5 ♞g7 37.♞d6

♞xg5 38.♞xg5 a3 39.d4 a2 40.dxc5

a1♖ 41.♞xd7 ♖c1 42.♞xh5+ ♙g7

43.♞h4 bxc5 44.g3 ♙f8 45.♞f4 ♙e8

46.♞xf7 1-0

In my opinion, the 9.♙e3 manoeuvre is dubious in this situation. Black gains a tempo, a pawn and sufficient counter-play. In any case, we should analyse more deeply the reply 9...c5, simply because it is more in the MacCutcheon spirit! More analysis of similar positions after 6.♙e3 ♗e4 7.♖g4 ♙f8 will be given in Game 10.

After 8...♙f8 9.♙d3 ♗xd2 10.♙xd2

Black has a peculiar alternative: 10...♖g5+! – endings are basic!

GAME 44

♖ Jorge Iglesias

♜ Viktor Moskalenko

Sant Feliu Open 2001 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♙g5

♙b4 5.e5 h6 6.♙d2 ♙xc3 7.bxc3

♗e4 8.♖g4 ♙f8 9.♙d3

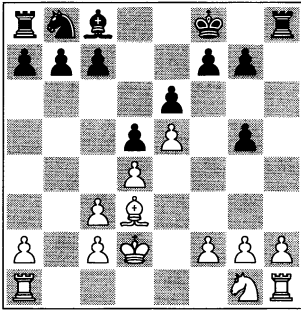
The immediate attack against the knight on e4 allows the exchange of queens after:

9...♗xd2 10.♙xd2 ♖g5+!?

A possibility that has not been used very often. However, I think that the


ending offers interesting motifs. 10...c5 is the usual move.

11.♙xg5 hxg5



12.♗h3!?

A) Slightly passive is 12.♗e2 c5!.

 WEAPON: 13.f4? c4 winning a piece, Capablanca-Stearns, Cleveland simul 1922.

B) Against the critical move 12.g4!? a good option seems to be 12...f6! 13.h4 fxe5 14.dxe5 ♗c6 (14...♗d7 15.♗f3 gxf4 16.♖ae1 h3! 17.♗g5 ♖e7 18.♖xh3 ♖xh3 19.♗xh3 c5⇒) 15.♗f3 gxf4 16.♖ae1 h3 17.♖h2 ♗d7 18.♖eh1 ♖e7 19.♖xh3 ♖xh3 20.♖xh3 ♖g8 21.♖e3 ♗a5 (21...♗e8!?)=) 22.♖h7 with an equal position, Gdanski-Dittmar, St Vincent Ech 2000, for instance: 22...♗c4+ 23.♗xc4 dxc4=.

12...g4!

12...f6? is a mistake here: 13.f4! g4 14.♗f2 f5 15.g3! c5 16.h3 and White is better.

13.♗f4

13.♗g5 ♖h5!?

13...g5!


The 'Black Jet' attack is a famous resource in the MacCutcheon Variation.

The alternative is 13...c5 and now:

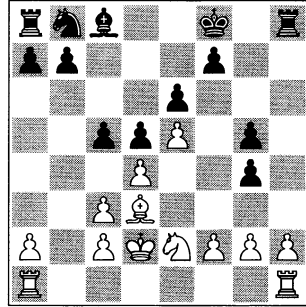
A) 14.♗e2 ♗c6 15.♖e3 ♗a5 16.♗xg4 ♗c4+ 17.♖e2 b6 18.♗d3

♗a6⇒ Jackova-Repkova, Turin Olympiad 2006;

B) Less good is 14.h3 g3!

 WEAPON: 15.fxf3? g5 16.♗e2 c4, trapping the ♗d3.

14.♗e2 c5⇒



The game is quite balanced, but Black also has chances of gaining the full point.

15.♗g3 ♗c6 16.♖e3 ♗d7

16...b6!?

17.♖ab1 b6! 18.h3 gxf3 19.♖xh3

♖xh3 20.gxf3 ♖e7!⇒ 21.♗h5 ♖h8

22.♗e2 ♗a5! 23.♖g1

23.f4 ♗c4+ 24.♖f2 ♗d2! is winning for Black.

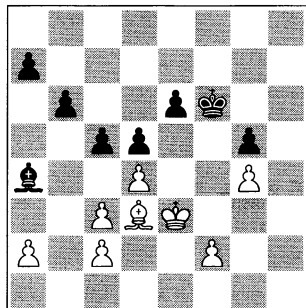
23...♗c4+ 24.♗xc4 ♖xh5 25.♗f1 f6!

26.exf6+ ♖xf6 27.♖g3

27.♖g4 ♖h4!? 28.♖xh4 gxf4⇒

27...♖h4 28.♗d3 ♖f4! 29.♖g4 ♖xg4

30.hxg4 ♗a4!



White has problems in saving this position.

31.♖d2

Or also 31.f4 c4 32.♙e2 (32..♙h7? ♖g7) 32...♙xc2±.

31...e5! 32.dxe5+ ♖xe5 33.♖e3 d4+!

Winning easily after:

34.cxd4+ cxd4+ 35.♖f3 ♙c6+

36.♖g3 ♙e4! 37.f3 ♙xd3 38.cxd3 b5!

Pawns are the soul of chess!

39.f4+♖ gxf4+ 40.♖f3 a5 41.g5 b4!

42.g6 ♖f6 0-1

This can be an interesting line for those who like to play endgames. If White wants to avoid this ending, he will have to play 9.♘f3, which considerably narrows his options in the opening.

Summary 8...♖f8

This king move allows Black to control the situation, equalising the game in many lines, but in order to win he needs superior endgame technique. White must attack without any let-up. The critical line is characterised by the white moves h2-h4 and ♖h3.

In the following games we will investigate the most popular move: 8...g6.

First we will check the classical blockade ...c5-c4 in another game by Viktor Kortchnoi.

GAME 45

□ **Vasily Panov**

■ **Viktor Kortchnoi**

Leningrad tt 1953

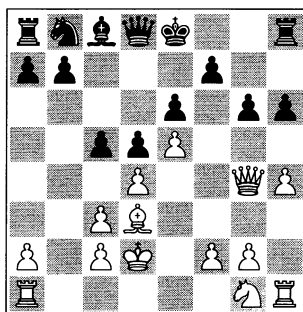
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙b4 5.e5 h6 6.♙d2 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 ♘e4 8.♖g4 g6!?

As we can see, the veteran grandmaster Kortchnoi used this move early on, but

later he replaced it by the king move 8...♖f8.

Weaker is 8...g5?! 9.h4! ♘xd2 10.♖xd2 ♖g8 11.♘f3 c5 12.hxg5 hxg5 13.♖h5± and Black does not have enough time to organise counterplay.

9.♙d3 ♘xd2 10.♖xd2 c5 11.h4!?




White must do something. Another, more recent attempt is 11.♘f3 c4 12.♙e2 ♘c6 13.♖f4 ♖e7 14.♖f6 ♖xf6 15.exf6 ♘d7 (15...♘b8!?! 16.♘e5 ♘d7=) 16.♘e5+ ♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♖c6 18.♖e3 ♖c5= and soon a draw was agreed in Guseinov-Rodshtein, Moscow 2008.

11...♘c6

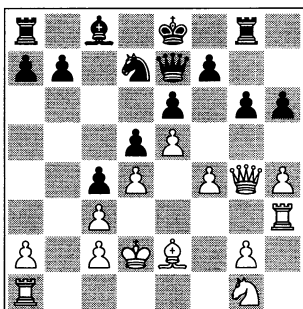
A standard move. For the alternative idea 11...♖a5 I recommend a study of the next game, Leko-Morozevich.

The direct 11...c4 is an interesting option with the idea 12.♙e2 ♘d7!?, controlling the f6-square and preparing ...f7-f6 and/or ...f5 (unusual according to Kortchnoi, who mentions 12...♘c6 as ‘the well-known alternative’) There could follow: 13.♖h3

 **WEAPON:** 13.h5?! g5 14.f4 is met by 14...f5! 15.♖g3 g4± and White’s minor pieces cannot get into play.

13...♖e7 (counterattacking with the queen by 13...♖b6!?) could be an inter-

esting alternative; Black plans to follow up with ...♗b2) 14.f4 ♖g8!

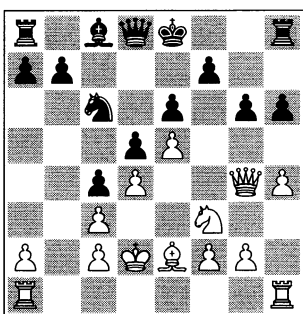


Now ...f7-f5 is coming. 15. ♖g3 (with 15. ♖f3 White would make up his mind to take on f6: 15...f5! 16.exf6 ♖xf6 17. ♗g3 ♖d7 Sedlak-Delchev, Subotica 2003) 15...f5 16. ♗h3 b5 17.h5 g5 18.fxg5 hxg5 19.h6 g4 20. ♗h5+ ♗f7 21. ♗h4 ½-½ Van der Weide-Tereick, Senden 2006.

12. ♖f3 c4!?

Kortchnoi's favourite option, closing the position as usual. 12...♗a5 was still possible, see next game.

13. ♖e2



13... ♖d7

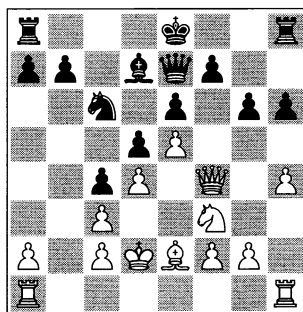
Or, for instance, 13...♗e7!? 14. ♖hb1 b6 (14...♗a3!?) 15.a4 ♖d7 16. ♗f4 0-0-0 17. ♗f6 ♗xf6 18.exf6 ♖c7 19. ♖e5 ♖xe5 20.dxe5 a5 21. ♖e3 h5 22. ♖d4 ♖a8 23.f4 b5!? 24.axb5 ♖b6

Castella-Moskalenko, Ampolla rapid 2006.

14. ♗f4

If 14. ♖ab1 b6 (14...b5!?) 15. ♗f4 ♗e7 16.h5 g5 17. ♗e3?! 0-0-0 Nakamura-Laznicka, Oropesa del Mar jr 1999; 17...♗a3!?

14... ♗e7



We have reached the critical position of this line.

15. ♗f6

A) 15. ♖h2 h5=;
 B) 15.g4 b5 16.a3 a5 17. ♗e3 ♖f8 18. ♖e1 ♖g7 19.f4 b4= Su7338-CapNemo. playchess.com 2006;
 C) 15.a3 0-0-0 16. ♖h2 g5!?!= 17.hxg5 hxg5 18. ♗f3 ♖d8 19. ♗f6 ♗xf6 20.exf6 e5!↑ 21. ♖f3 exd4 22.cxd4 g4 23. ♖e5 ♖xe5 24.dxe5 ♖e8 (24...♖xh1 25. ♖xh1 ♖g5) 25. ♖xh8 ♖xh8 26. ♖e3 ♖h5 27. ♖d4 ♖e6 28.c3 ♖h2 29. ♖g1 ♖c7= Golubev-Moskalenko, Alushta 1994.

15...0-0-0

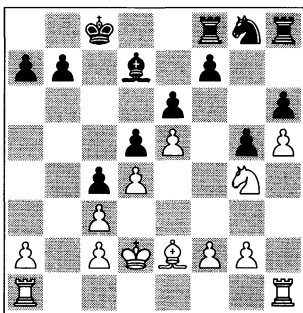
The main characteristic of 8...g6 is that it retains the option of castling queenside. 15...♗xf6 16.exf6 0-0-0 gave equal chances.

16.h5 g5 17. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 18. ♖h2 ♖g8!

An important manoeuvre.

19. ♖g4 ♖f8! =

Preparing ...f7-f5.



20.♘f6

20.f4 f5! 21.exf6 gxf4=.

20...♗xf6 21.exf6 e5! 22.dxe5?

22.♖ae1 was a little better: 22...♖e8

23.♙d1 e4♞.

22...♖e8 23.♖af1 ♖hg8!? ♞

Black now has the better ending and the great endgame specialist Viktor Kortchnoi hauls in the point.

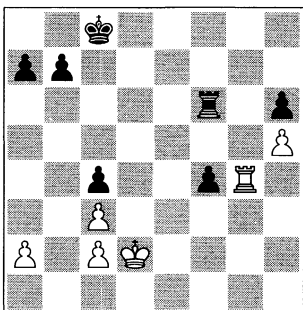
24.g4 ♖xe5 25.f4 ♖e4

25...gxf4 26.♖xf4 ♙c7♞ was even better.

26.♙f3 ♖xf4 27.♙xd5 ♙xg4 28.♖xf4

gxf4 29.♙xf7 ♖f8 30.♖g1 ♖xf7

31.♖xg4 ♖xf6



32.♖g6 ♖c6 33.♙e2 ♙d7 34.♖g7+

♙e6 35.♖xb7 ♖a6 36.♙f3 ♖xa2

37.♙xf4 ♖a5 38.♙e4 ♖xh5 39.♖xa7

♖h4+ 40.♙e3 h5 41.♖a6+ ♙f5

42.♖a5+ ♙g4 43.♖c5 ♖h3+ 44.♙d4

♖f3 45.♙xc4 ♖f4+ 46.♙d3 h4 47.♖c8

h3 48.♖h8 ♙g3

0-1

Good technique is an important quality in the MacCutcheon Variation.

This blockade line with ...c5-c4 is very safe; its evaluation has not changed for a century.

In the following line Black aims for a semi-open centre either without the possibility of castling, or preparing queenside castling.

GAME 46

♖ Peter Leko

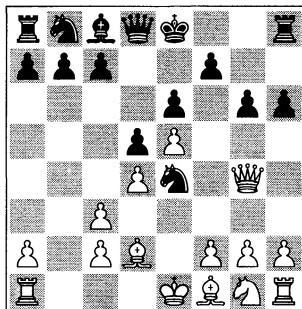
♜ Alexander Morozevich

Morelia/Linares 2007 (2)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5

♙b4 5.e5 h6 6.♙d2 ♙xc3 7.bxc3

♘e4 8.♖g4 g6



Both players had some experience with the main alternative 8...♙f8.

9.♙d3

A famous classic battle went: 9.♘f3 c5

10.dxc5 (instead of the traditional flank

attack, White gets ready to open up the

centre) 10...♘d7 11.♙d3 ♘xd2

12.♙xd2 ♘xc5 13.♖he1 ♙d7 14.♖e3

♖c7 15.♖b1 0-0-0!? (15...♖c8!? trying

to attack down the c-file) 16.♖b4 ♖hf8

17.c4 (similar to the present game)

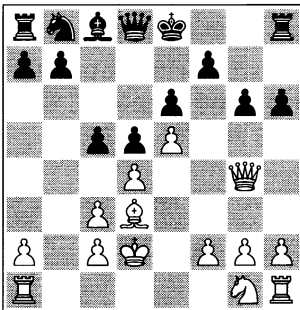
17...♘a6 (this was a good moment to

undertake action in the centre with

17...f6!?) 18. ♖c3 dxc4 19. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 20. ♘xc4 ♘c6+ and Marshall's army had the better of it in Lasker-Marshall, World Championship, 4th match game, United States 1907.

9... ♘xd2 10. ♖xd2 c5!

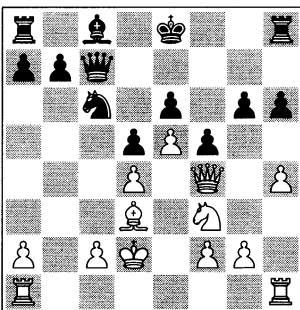
Black would not be able to breathe without this resource.



11.h4

We have already seen this move in the previous games, but this advance may not be as effective now as in the event of 8... ♖f8.

If 11. dxc5 ♘d7⇒. The main alternative is 11. ♘f3 ♖c7! (11... ♖a5!? is similar to the main game) with a very interesting idea: 12.h4 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♘c6 14. ♖f4 f5!.

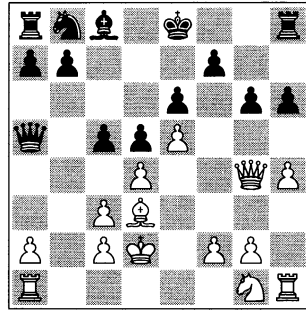


analysis diagram

With this blockade White cannot make progress on the kingside: 15. ♖g3 ♘e7 16. ♖hc1 ♘d7 17. ♖e2 ♘c6 18. ♘g1 0-0-0 19. ♘h3 ♖d7 20.a4 ♖b8 21.a5

♘b5 22. ♘f4 ♖c8 23. ♖ab1 ♘xd3+ 24.cxd3 ♘c6 25. ♖e3 ♖hg8! Black is better in many respects: he has possibilities such as ...g5 or ...♘xa5→, Aseev-Dolmatov, Odessa ch-URS 1989.

11... ♖a5!?



Black opts for a semi-open game. As usual, Morozevich aims for as complicated a fight as possible. Other options, apart from closing the centre, are:

A) 11... ♘c6!?



WEAPON: 12.h5?! g5 13.f4? cxd4 14.cxd4 ♖a5+!? with the point 15. ♖e3 f5! 16.exf6 e5! and Black is winning.

A1) The manoeuvre 12. ♖h3?! is not very effective because of 12...cxd4 (12... ♖a5 13. ♘xg6 ♘xd4 is unclear, but 12... ♘d7!?) is interesting) 13.cxd4 ♖b6!?



WEAPON: 14. ♘e2? ♖b4+ 15. ♖d1 ♘xe5 ♖ Felgaer-Montoro, Villa Ballester 1996.

14. ♘f3 ♘d7 15. ♖hh1 ♖ Spassky-L.Grigorian, Moscow tt 1967.

A2) Or, for instance, 12. ♘f3 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖a5+ 14. ♖e2 b6 15. ♖f4 ♘a6 16. ♖hc1 ♖a3 17. ♖e3 ♖c8 with counterplay, Feygin-Gharamian, Belgium tt 2007/08;

A3) 12. ♖f4! (controlling f6 and h6) 12...cxd4! (with the strategic idea

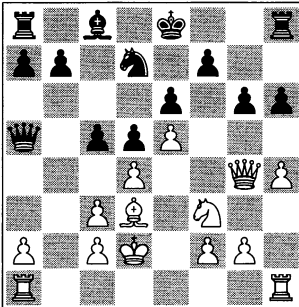
...♗a6, to exchange the bishops) 13.cxd4 ♖a5+ 14.c3 (14.♖e2 b6) 14...b6 (14...b5 15.♖f6 ♗g8 16.♗f3 b4 17.♖hc1 ♗a6∞) 15.♖f6 (15.h5 gxh5) 15...♗g8 16.♗e2 ♗a6 17.♗xa6 ♖xa6 18.h5 ♖c8⇒ and Black has a strong position, ½-½ Rodriguez Cespedes-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2008.

B) 11...♗d7 is also playable: 12.h5 g5 13.f4 ♗c6 14.fxg5 ♖a5 15.dxc5 d4 16.♗f3 0-0-0∞ Leko-Radjabov, Linares 2003.

12. ♗f3

If 12.h5?! g5 13.f4? cxd4 14.♗f3 dxc3+ 15.♖e2 ♖a4!♣ Seirawan-Makarichev, Reykjavik 1990.

12... ♗d7N



It would be interesting to know how Morozevich came to choose this move. 12...♗c6!? would be more natural: 13.♖f4 cxd4 (or 13...b6!? with the same idea: ...♗a6 followed by the exchange of bishops) 14.♗xd4 ♗xd4 15.♖xd4 ♗d7 16.♖hb1 ♖c7= Nyysti-Glek, Helsinki 2002.

13. ♖hb1

A logical reaction, preventing Black from taking the initiative on the queenside. The tempting 13.♗xg6!? could have been met by the cool-headed 13...♗b6!? (13...fxg6? 14.♖xe6+ ♖d8 15.♖xd5↑) when Black gains time for his development,

whereas the small material disadvantage is of a temporary nature; 14.♗d3 ♗a4 15.♖g7∞ with complicated play.

13...cxd4 14. ♖xd4

From a structural point of view the opening has been quite a success for Black.

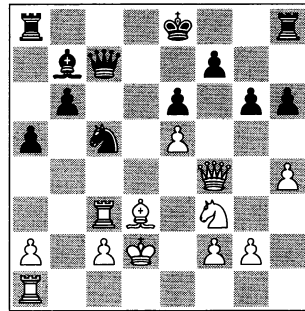
14...a6 15. ♖b4 ♖c7

To improve the queen's position before playing ...b6 and ...♗b7.

16.c4

White must open up the game.

16...a5 17. ♖b3 dxc4 18. ♖xc4 ♗c5 19. ♖c3 b6 20. ♖f4 ♗b7

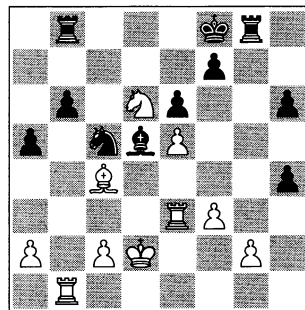


Black has almost completed his development. But now he needs to bring his king into safety.

21. ♗d4 ♖d8 22.f3 g5!?

This resource was an idea of MacCutcheon himself.

23. ♖e3 gxh4 24. ♗b5 ♖f8 25. ♗d6 ♗d5 26. ♖b1 ♖g5 27. ♗f1 ♖xe3+ 28. ♖xe3 ♖b8 29. ♗c4 ♖g8



Black's plan has been crowned with success. White does not have any chance of an advantage.

30. ♖e2 ♘xc4 31. ♗xc4 h3

31... ♗a4!? ♞.

32. gxh3 ♜g3 33. ♖e3 ♗a4 34. ♖f4 ♜g5 35. ♞b3 ♖e7 36. h4 ♜f5+ 37. ♖g3 ♜g8+ 38. ♖f2 ♜f4 39. ♗xb6 ♜xh4 40. ♗xa4 ♜xa4 41. ♞b7+ 1/2-1/2

As we have seen in many examples, a semi-open game is also acceptable for Black.

In the next game, we will analyse White's try to keep his dark-squared bishop on the board.

GAME 47

□ **Ruben Felgaer**

■ **Viktor Moskalenko**

Barcelona 2005 (2)

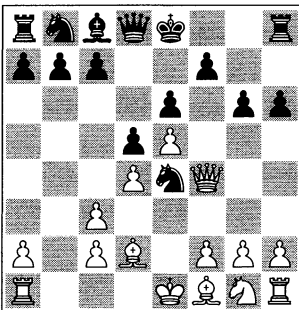
1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗c3 ♗f6 4. ♖g5 ♘b4 5. e5 h6 6. ♖d2

6. ♖e3 is another popular move, which we will look at in Game 49.

6... ♖xc3 7. bxc3 ♗e4 8. ♞g4 g6 9. ♖e3

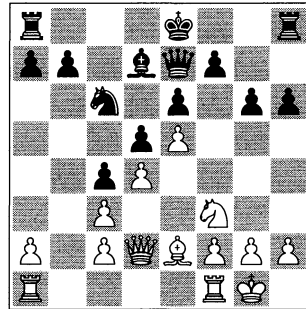
Finkel on ChessBase: 'I don't think White can fight for an opening advantage by wasting another tempo to keep the bishop on the board.'

Just as in the event of 8... ♖f8, let us look at White's alternative 9. ♞f4.



This move has the aim of recapturing on d2 with the queen in order to castle kingside. 9...c5! 10. ♖d3 and now:

A) 10... ♗xd2 11. ♞xd2 ♗c6 12. ♗f3 c4!? (12... ♞a5 is an equivalent alternative) 13. ♖e2 ♖d7 14. 0-0 (completing the main idea of the ♞f4 plan. The truth is that White has nothing in this situation) 14... ♞e7 (14...f5!?).



analysis diagram

The position is balanced and it is hard to make progress right away: 15. a4 0-0-0!? 16. a5 g5 17. a6?! b6 ♞ The a6 pawn will be another weakness in the ending, Korneev-Moskalenko, Roquetas Mar 2006.

B) Also, ♞f4 can always be met by 10...g5!?, an interesting alternative to the 'Black Jet' plan, gaining space. Now, for instance: 11. ♞e3 ♗xd2 12. ♞xd2 ♗c6 13. ♖b5 (13. h4 g4) 13... ♞a5 14. a4 ♖d7 15. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 with equal chances, Demchenko-Skorchenko, Sochi 2005.

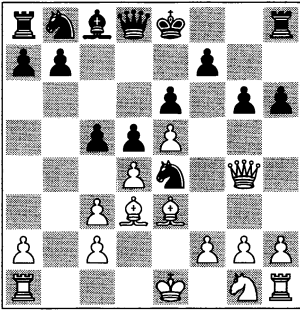
Summary of the idea ♞g4-f4xd2: After castling kingside, White cannot proceed with his attack on that flank, so at many points Black can improve his game (and also his king's position), whereas White cannot do the same.

9...c5!

If Black accepts the pawn with 9... ♗xc3, White will gain good compensation after 10. ♖d3 (10. ♗e2! ♞

has never been tried yet) 10...♘c6
 11.♘f3 ♘d7 (11...♘b4!?) 12.♖h3
 (12.♘d2!?) 12...♗e7 13.♙g5 ♗a3
 14.0-0 ♘e4∞ Sutovsky-Nakamura, Tu-
 rin Olympiad 2006.

10.♙d3



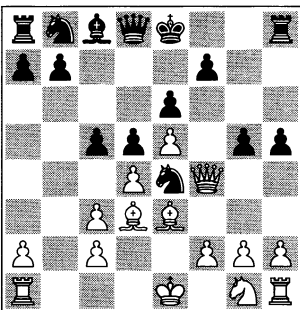
10...h5!?

The attack against White's queen be-
 gins. 10...♗a5?! is a weaker option on
 account of 11.♘e2 ♘xc3 12.♘d2 cxd4
 13.♘xd4 with the initiative. However,
 10...♘xc3! is interesting, and if
 11.dxc5 ♗a5 12.♘d2 ♗a4!, Black is
 OK. As in the line 8...♗f8 9.♙e3,
 White lacks his pawn on a3 in order to
 continue with ♗b4! (see Game 43).

11.♗f4N

If 11.♗d1 ♘xc3 12.♗d2 cxd4!
 13.♘xd4 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 dxe4 with equal
 chances. Or, for instance, 11.♗f3 ♘xc3!
 12.dxc5 ♘c6⇒ and Black is doing fine.

11...g5!



A typical attack in MacCutcheon style!

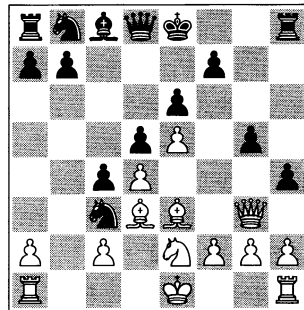
12.♗f3 ♘xc3 13.♗g3?

If 13.♘e2 ♘c6!⇒. The best alternative
 was 13.dxc5 when Black has a pleasant
 choice: 13...♘c6! with excellent
 counterplay, see 14.♗f6 ♗xf6 15.exf6
 e5!, or including the advance 13...d4!?
 with an unclear position, or else
 13...♘d7!? 14.♘d4 ♗a5⇒.

13...c4! 14.♘e2

More tenacious was 14.♘d2 ♘b5!
 15.♘e2 ♘xd4, but Black is clearly
 better anyway. If 14.♘g5 ♗b6! 15.
 ♘e2 ♗b2, winning material.

14...h4!



Combining pawn thrusts, Black com-
 mands the board. 14...♘a4 15.♘g5⇒.

15.♗g4

In the event of 15.♗xg5 ♗xg5
 16.♘g5 ♘b5 17.♙f6 cxd3 18.♘h8
 dxe2 the resulting position is dismal for
 White.

15...♘a4 16.0-0

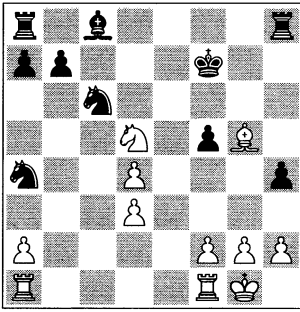
Or 16.♘g5 ♗g8 17.f4 cxd3 18.cxd3
 ♗a5+, winning.

**16...cxd3 17.cxd3 f5!? 18.exf6 ♗xf6
 19.♘g5 ♗f5!?**

The simplest option.

**20.♗xf5 exf5 21.♘f4 ♘c6 22.♘xd5
 ♗f7+**

White does not have enough compen-
 sation for his piece.



23.♘c7 ♙d7

23...♖b8!?

24.♔xa8 ♜xa8 25.d5 ♘e7 26.d6 ♘g6

27.♞fe1 ♘c5 28.♞ac1 ♘e6!

28...♘xd3? 29.♞c7 ♘xe1 30.♞xd7+ ♙e6 31.♞g7 ♘e5 32.d7⇒.

29.♙d2 ♙c6! 30.♙a5 ♘gf4

≥ 30...♞g8♣.

31.♞e3?T

31.♞xc6!? bxc6 32.d7 h3!♣.

31...♘g2 32.♞e5 ♞g8 33.♙f1 ♘gf4

34.♞xf5+ ♙g6 35.♞xc6 bxc6 36.♞e5

♙f6 37.♙c3 ♙f7 38.d7 ♙e7 39.♞a5

♙xd7 40.♞xa7+ ♙d6 41.♞a4 ♞f8

42.d4 ♙d5 43.♙e1 ♙e4 0-1

Conclusion: Among other disadvantages, 9.♙e3?! wastes an important tempo.

Summary of 8...g6

This may be a more adventurous option due to the possibility of queenside castling. In some variations (such as ♙e3 or ...♞a5) the play becomes quite forced. White moves such as 9.♙e3 are more effective against 8...♙f8, but in this line they can become a waste of time. In my opinion White should look for continuations where he can exploit the weakness of the f6-square.

Now for some general conclusions about the MacCutcheon with 6.♙d2, 8.♞g4.

- Both 8...♙f8 and 8...g6 are perfectly playable for Black, although in the line with 8...♙f8 we can find more ideas for both sides.

- When the centre is closed, the game becomes quite strategic. Both sides have limited attacking resources and they have to engage in lengthy preparatory manoeuvres.

- White's position is very solid, but if he wants to win he should look for risky continuations which allow Black some counterplay.

- This line of the French Defence can be suitable for Black when he is playing against a strong player and a draw is a satisfactory result. Some examples of players using the MacCutcheon are Kortchnoi and Morozevich.

In the following games we investigate several other MacCutcheon lines.

GAME 48

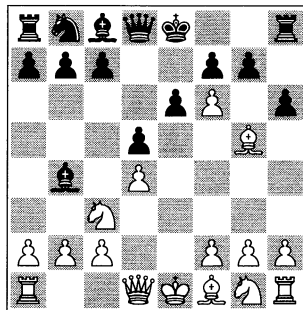
□ **Konstantin Landa**

■ **Alexander Morozevich**

Samara 1998 (1)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5

♙b4 5.e5 h6 6.exf6



An old method. Or else 6.♙h4 g5 7.♙g3 (7.exf6?! gxh4♣) 7...♘e4

8.♘e2 and now:

A) 8...f5!? (aiming for counterplay on the kingside) 9.exf6 ♖xf6 10.a3 ♘xg3!? 11.hxg3 (11.♘xg3?! 0-0!↑ Galkin-Belozerov, Tomsk 2004) 11...♙f8 (11...♙e7!?) with good prospects for Black thanks to the presence of the dark-squared bishop. 12.♘b1? ♙d7 13.♘d2 ♘c6 14.c3 0-0-0 15.f4 ♙d6 16.fxg5 hxg5 17.♖xh8 ♖xh8 18.g4 e5 0-1 Deutsch-Volkov, playchess.com 2006;

B) 8...♘d7!? can be a good alternative: 9.a3 ♘xg3 10.hxg3 ♙e7 11.b4 a5 12.b5 c5 13.f4 a4 14.♖d2 ♖a5 15.♙f2 ♘b6 Karjakin-Volkov, Panormo Ech blitz 2002;

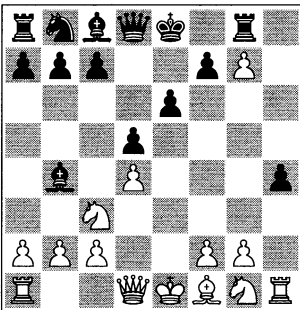
C) The typical advance 8...c5?! does not work here: 9.a3 ♙xc3+ 10.♘xc3 ♖a5 11.♖d3 ♘c6 12.dxc5 ♙d7 13.0-0-0± Landa-Ara Minasian, Linares 1999.

6...hxg5 7.fxg7 ♖g8 8.h4

8.♖h5?! ♖f6.

8...♘c6!?

A new approach in a well-known position. The text move simply promises Black a chance to start a tough struggle at this early stage of the game. However, the classical move 8...gxh4!?



also offers Black very good counterchances:

A) 9.♖g4 ♙e7 Alekhine's complicated move. (9...♖f6 is sufficient for Black: 10.♖xh4 ♖xg7 11.♖h8+ ♙e7 12.♖f3 ♘d7⇒) 10.♘f3 ♙f6 11.♘xh4?! ♖xg7 12.♖f4 ♙g5 13.♖e5 ♖h7 Prochaska-Rogulj, Oberwart 2000;

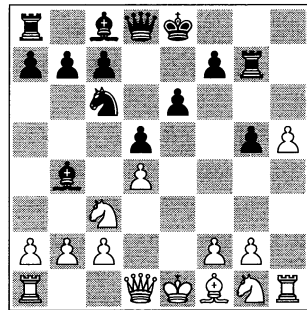
B) 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.♖xh4 ♖f6 11.♖d2 ♙d7 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.♙b1 ♖xg7 Hodgson-Garbarino, Benidorm 1991;

C) 9.♖h5?! ♖f6 (9...♖xg7 10.♘f3 ♘d7 11.♖xh4 ♘f6⇒ Tartakower-Vidmar, Vienna 1907) 10.♖xh4 ♖xg7! 11.♘f3 (11.0-0-0 ♙e7!?) 11...♘c6 12.0-0-0 ♙d7 13.♘b5 ♙a5 14.♙d3 (14.c4 ♘e7!?) 14...a6 15.♘c3 ♙b4 16.♖de1 ♙e7 17.♖f4 0-0-0 and Black won this comfortable position, Kan-Verlinsky, Odessa ch-URS 1929.

9.h5!?

This looks like a natural and aggressive move. In case of 9.♘f3 gxh4 10.♖xh4 ♖f6 11.♖d3 ♙d7 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 a complicated position arises where Black's chances should be preferable.

9...♖xg7



10.h6

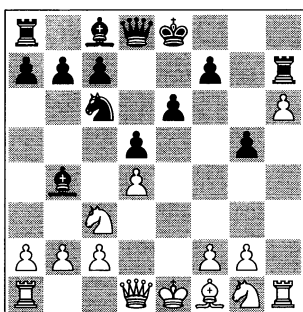
A) 10.♖d3!? (probably the best try for White) 10...♖f6 11.h6 ♖g8 12.h7 (12.0-0-0 ♖h8 13.h7) 12...♖h8 13.0-0-0 ♙d7 14.♘b5 0-0-0 15.♖g3 ♙a5 16.♘f3 ♖g7;

B) 10.♙b5 ♖f6 11.♘f3 ♙d7 12.♖d3 ♙d6! (taking e5 under con-

trol) 13.h6?! (after this move Black is probably better; 13. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 14. ♗b5 g4!? with chances for both sides) 13... ♗g6! 14.h7 0-0-0 and Black won the pawn on h7 and also the game, Finegold-Kraai, Seattle ch-USA 2003;

C) 10. ♖d2 ♖f6 11.0-0-0 ♖d7 12.g4 0-0-0 13. ♖g2 ♗a5 ♞ Abadia Pascual-Torres Coll, Cala Mendia 2001.

10... ♗h7



11. ♖d3

11. ♖d3 f5 12.0-0-0 ♖f6 13.g4 ♖xc3 (13... ♗xh6!? 14. ♗xh6 ♖xh6 15.gxf5 ♖d7⇒) 14.bxc3?! ♗xh6 15. ♗xh6 ♖xh6 16.gxf5 g4+ favours Black, l'Ami-Barsov, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

11... ♗h8 12. ♖h5 ♖f6

12... ♗xd4! also looks fine for Black.

13. ♗f3

13. ♗e2 ♗xd4 14.0-0-0 ♗xe2+ 15. ♗xe2 ♖d7 and Black is better, Oms Fuentes-Rodriguez Fontecha, Oropesa del Mar jr 2001.

13... ♗xd4 14. ♗xg5

If 14. ♗xd4 ♖xd4 15. ♖xg5 ♖d7!? 16.0-0-0 ♖e7!⇒.

14... ♗f5 15.h7

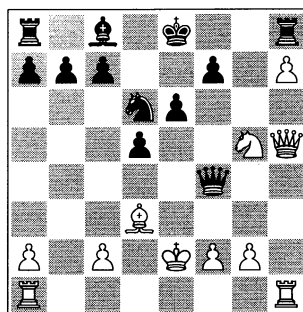
A risky advance. Better was 15. ♖xf5!? ♖xf5 16. ♗h4∞.

15... ♖xc3+

15...d4!? 16.0-0-0∞.

16.bxc3 ♖xc3+ 17. ♗e2 ♖e5+

18. ♗d2 ♖f4+ 19. ♗e2 ♗d6!?



True to his combative character, Morozevich decides to play on. 19... ♖e5+ only repeats moves.

20. ♗ae1 ♖d7 21. ♗f1 0-0-0 22. ♖h6

Trying to prevent e5. 22. ♗h3!?.

22... ♖b5 23. ♖xb5 ♗xb5 24. ♗h4 ♖f5

25. ♖g7 ♗d6 26.g3

26. ♗e5? ♖xc2 27. ♗xf7 ♗f5干.

26... ♗de8 27.c3?

27. ♗e3!? ♖xc2 28. ♗f3⇒.

27.. ♖d3+ 28. ♗g1 ♖d2

28... ♗f5!.

29. ♗e5 ♖xc3 30. ♗f4 ♖c2 31. ♗g2 b5

32.a3 a5 33. ♗f6? b4 34.axb4 axb4

35. ♗exe6 fxe6 36. ♗xe6 ♗xh7

37. ♗xe8+ ♗xe8 38. ♖e5 ♗d6 0-1

The old MacCutcheon lines are considered by modern opening theory to lead to very comfortable positions for Black. The following game, with the fashionable 6. ♖e3, merely supports this theoretical evaluation.

In this final game we will check White's (modern) attempt to keep his dark-square bishop. We will use the knowledge acquired in Games 43 and 47 of the main lines with 6. ♖d2 to suggest the best options for Black.

The sharp 6. ♖e3 is Rudolf Spielmann's move against the MacCutcheon. White wants to keep his bishop on the board and is ready to sacrifice the pawn on c3



The great attacker Rudolf Spielmann was one of the first grandmasters to introduce the sharp move 6.♗e3 in the MacCutcheon.

in order to obtain good piece play and a dangerous initiative. The main difference with 6.♗d2 is the presence on the board of 3+3 minor pieces (on the black and the white side), a detail that allows more tactical possibilities. However, this does not mean that Black must defend.

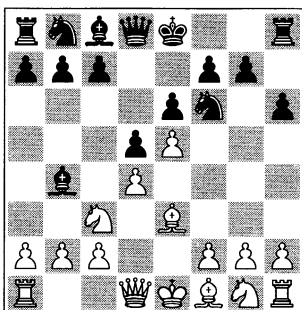
GAME 49

□ Dmitry Yakovenko

■ Nikita Vitiugov

Moscow ch-RUS 2007 (10)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗b4 5.e5 h6 6.♗e3!?



6...♗e4 7.♖g4

After 7.♗e2 c5! 8.dxc5 (if 8.a3 cxd4! 9.♗xd4 ♗a5 10.b4 ♗xc3!? 11.♗xc3 ♗b6⇒) 8...♗c6 (8...♖a5!?) 9.a3 ♗xc3+ 10.♗xc3 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♗xe5⇒ Black is OK.

Black basically has three ways of answering the text move.

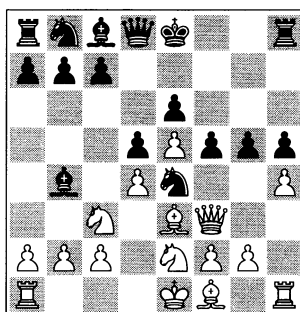
7...g6!

I recommend this defence. The game will soon acquire a more dynamic character and the possibility of castling queenside is an important resource.

A) 7...c5? is very risky: 8.♖xg7 ♖f8 (8...♗e7!?) 9.♗xh6 cxd4 (9...♗d7 10.a3 ♗a5) 10.a3!± Magem-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt 2005;

B) 7...g5?!, from Reggio-Albin, Monte Carlo 1902, one of the first games with the move 6.♗e3, is the option recommended by many authors, but it is also dubious:

B1) 8.♗e2! h5 (8...c5 9.0-0-0!?) 9.♖f3 f5 (9...c5 10.0-0-0) 10.h4!. By fixing Black's structure, White achieves a clear advantage.



10...g4 (if 10...f4 11.♗c1 g4 12.♖xf4 ♖f8 13.♖h6±) 11.♖f4± Black has no serious counterplay, Aroshidze-Moskalenko, Banyoles 2007;

B2) 8.h4 is also interesting, with the attractive idea of sacrificing the queen.

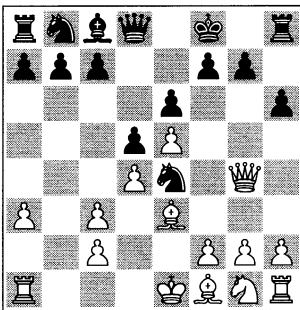


WEAPON: 8...c5 9.hxg5? ♗xc3.

8...h5 9.hxg5!? hxg4 10. ♖xh8+ ♘f8
 11. ♗xe4 dxe4 12. ♗e2. If Black gets to
 complete his queenside development,
 he can win, but things are not so easy in
 practice: 12...c5 (or, for instance,
 12...♗d7?? 13.0-0-0 c6 14. ♗g3 ♖e7
 15. ♗xe4 ♗c7 16. ♖h7! ♗d7 17.g6+-
 Ganguly-Nakamura, ICC 2006)
 13.0-0-0 ♖a5 (13...♗d7 14.g6 fxg6
 15. ♗f4∞) 14. ♗c3 cxd4 15. ♘xd4 ♗c6
 16. ♗xe4 ♗xd4 ½-½ Shirov-Volkov,
 Rethymnon tt 2003;

B3) 8.a3!? ♘xc3+ 9.bxc3 c5 10. ♘d3
 h5 11. ♖d1! ♗xc3 12. ♖d2 ♗e4
 13. ♘xe4 dxe4 14. ♗e2± is similar to the
 main game, but the g5 pawn is weak.

C) Defending with the king by
 7...♗f8!? is a solid option. A particular
 possibility is the advance ...f7-f5: 8.a3!
 (the most common move; 8. ♗e2 c5!±;
 9.f3?! ♗xc3 10.bxc3 cxd4 11. ♘xd4
 ♘a5±, B.Savchenko-Volkov, Sochi tt
 2008) 8...♘xc3+ 9.bxc3



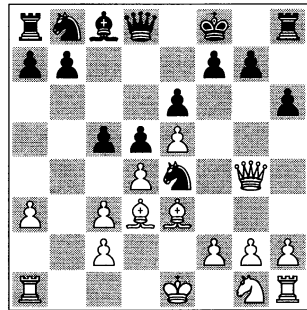
analysis diagram

The key position in this line.
 Personally, I do not like accepting the
 pawn, but this has recently become
 popular:

C1) 9...♗xc3 10. ♘d3 (10. ♗e2!? has
 never been tried) 10...♗c6 (Black can re-
 turn to the main line with 9/10...c5)

11.h4 (if 11. ♗h3 f5!? 12. ♖g3 g5 13.f4
 g4⇒ Areschenko-Volkov, Gibraltar 2006;
 11. ♗f3 ♗a4!? 12.0-0 ♗b2 13. ♘e2 ♗c4
 14.h4 ♗e7 15.h5 b6 16. ♖f4 ♘a6=
 Nestorovic-Kiselev, playchess.com 2007)
 11...♗e7!? (11...f5!? 12. ♖f3 ♗e7 13.g4
 c5⇒ Bezgodov-Kortchnoi, Cheliabinsk
 2007) 12.f3 ♗a4 13. ♖b1 ♗b6 14. ♗e2
 ♗c4 15. ♘c1 ♗f5 16. ♖f4 h5 17. ♗g3↑
 I.Popov-Andreikin, St Petersburg ch-RUS
 jr 2007.

C2) 9...c5! is the most active move,
 and an appropriate choice in this type
 of position. 10. ♘d3 and now:



analysis diagram

C21) 10...♗xc3 has recently been ex-
 perienicing a crisis: 11.dxc5 ♗c6 12. ♗f3
 f5 13. ♖h5!? (before this well-known
 game, White would automatically take
 on f6: 13.exf6 ♖xf6 14. ♗h4 (14. ♖h5
 e5 15. ♘g6 ♗g8∞) 14...e5 15. ♗g6+
 ♗g8 16. ♖f3 ♖h7! 17. ♗f8 ♖h8=
 13...d4 (13...♘d7 14.g4 ♘e8 15. ♖h3
 d4 16. ♘f4 fxg4 17. ♖xg4 g5 18. ♖g1↑
 Fressinet-Libiszewski, France tt 2005)
 14. ♘d2 ♖d5? (14...♗e4!?)∞ was the
 best chance) 15. ♘xc3 dxc3 16. ♖d1!
 ♖xc5 17.0-0↑ (now all the white pieces
 take up comfortable positions) 17...♗g8
 (17...♗xe5 18. ♗xe5 ♖xe5 19. ♖fe1→)
 18. ♘xf5! (a strong tactical blow)
 18...exf5 19. ♖d6! ♘e6 (19...b5
 20. ♖e8+ ♗h7 21. ♖g6+ ♗g8 22. ♖fd1

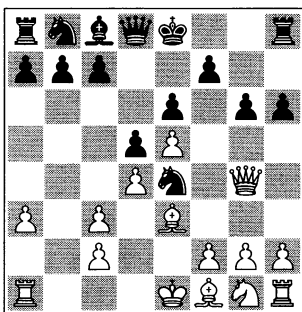
♙b7 23.♚d7+–) 20.♚xe6 winning, Goloschapov-Volkov, Istanbul Ech 2003;

B2) 10...h5!? (Black begins the MacCutcheon counterattack) 11.♚f4 (alternative queen moves are: 11.♚f3 ♘xc3! 12.dxc5 ♘c6 13.♚f4 d4 14.♙d2 ♘d5!? 15.♚e4 h4 16.h3 f5!± or 11.♚h3 ♘xc3 12.dxc5 d4 13.♙d2 ♚d5!? 14.f4 ♘c6 15.♙xc3 dxc3 16.♘e2 ♚xc5 17.♙e4 ♙d7 with chances for both sides. Fressinet-Vaisser, France tt 2001) 11...♚a5 (11...g5!? would be more in MacCutcheon style: 12.♚f3 ♘xc3 13.dxc5 (after 13.♚g3 the game would be similar to Game 47, but with a pawn on a3) 13...d4 14.♙d2 ♘d7!? and there are neither games nor theory on this line) 12.♘e2 ♘xc3 13.0-0 ♘xe2+ 14.♙xe2 ♘c6 15.c4 cxd4 16.♙xd4 ♘xd4 17.♚xd4 ♙d7 18.cxd5 exd5 19.♙f3 ♙c6 and Black maintains the balance, ½-½ Kasparov-Kortchnoi, Kopavogur 2000.

8.a3

After 8.♘e2 we have only few games: 8...c5! (8...♘xc3?! 9.♘xc3 c5 10.dxc5 ♚a5 11.♙d2±) 9.0-0-0!? (9.dxc5 ♘c6!?) 9...♘xc3 10.♘xc3 ♙xc3 (10...♘c6!?) 11.bxc3 ♚a5 12.♘b2 ♘c6± with scope for creative play.

8...♙xc3+ 9.bxc3



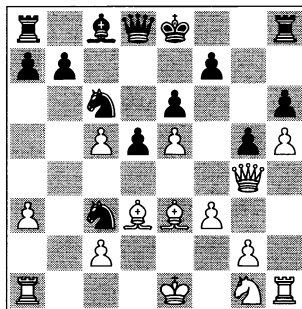
9...c5

Black declines any gifts and fights for the initiative, in the true spirit of the MacCutcheon. Also popular is the capture of the pawn: 9...♘xc3!? 10.♙d3 ♘c6 (or 10...b6 11.h4 ♙a6 12.h5 g5 13.f4 gxf4 14.♚g7 ♘d7 15.♚xf7+ ♚e7 16.♚xe7+ ♘xe7 17.♙xf4± Naiditsch-Stellwagen, Wijk aan Zee II 2006) 11.h4 (an automatic move; 11.♘f3 b6!? 12.♙d2 ♘e4∞) 11...♘e7 12.h5 g5 and now:

A) 13.♙d2?! ♘e4! 14.♙xe4 dxe4 15.♚xe4 (Cuijpers-Buchenau, Sitges 2007) and now 15...♙d7!±;


B) Recently White has also played 13.♘e2!? ♘xe2 14.♚xe2 (I.Popov-Nepomniachtchi, Sochi tt 2008) and here instead of the game move 14...c5!?, 14...♘f5!? was better;

C) 13.f3?! c5! 14.dxc5 ♘c6.



analysis diagram

Another interesting position. 15.f4 (15.♙d2?! f5! 16.♚g3 ♘a4 17.f4 g4± I.Popov-Nepomniachtchi, Krasnoyarsk 2007) 15...d4 (a solid central concept. Worthy of attention is:

 WEAPON: 15...f5!? 16.exf6 e5 17.♙g6+ ♘f8 18.♚f3∞ Zawadzki-Vysochin, Polanica Zdroj 2001.

Or 15...♚a5!? 16.♘f1 d4 17.♙f2 gxf4∞) 16.♙d2 ♚d5 17.♘f3 ♙d7 18.0-0 gxf4 19.♚h4 (19.♚xf4!?)

19... ♖xc5 20. ♖f6 (or 20. ♖xf4 ♗d5
21. ♗d2 ♖e7 22. ♖xe7+? ♗xe7
23. ♖g3 ♖ag8 24. ♖h4+ ♗f8) Roma-
nov-A.Rychagov, Moscow 2007)
20... ♖g8! 21. ♖xf4 ♗d5 22. ♖xh6
0-0-0↑ (Black has more active possibili-
ties) 23. ♖g5 ♖h8 24. ♖g7 ♖dg8
25. ♖xf7 ½-½ Amonatov-Nepomni-
achtchi, Moscow 2008. After 25... ♗e3!
Black is probably winning here...

10. ♖d3 h5!?

The right method in the MacCutcheon
is the ‘Black Jet’ counterattack with
...h5 and ...g5! Only three games have
been played with this concept.

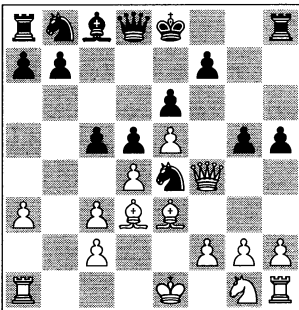
10... ♖a5?! 11. ♗e2! is better for White.

11. ♖f4

Or 11. ♖h3 ♗xc3 12. dxc5 d4 13. ♖d2
♗d7!?!; and if 11. ♖d1 ♗xc3 12. ♖d2
♗e4 (12... cxd4!? 13. ♖xd4 ♗e4 is sim-
ilar) 13. ♖xe4 dxe4.

11...g5!

11... ♗xc3? 12. dxc5 ♖a5 13. ♖b4±.



A highly interesting position has arisen.

12. ♖f3 ♗xc3 13. dxc5

If 13. ♗e2 ♗c6!.

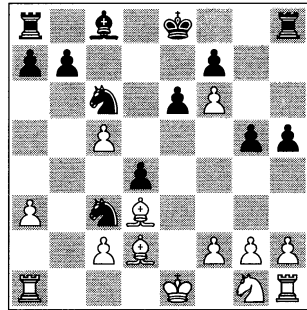
13...d4

13... ♗c6!? 14. ♖g3 ♖a5 15. ♗f1∞;
13... ♗d7!? 14. ♖g3 (14. ♖d4 ♖a5
15. ♗f1 ♗b5) 14... ♖g8 15. h4 g4
16. ♗f3∞ with a complicated position.
Vogler-Hess, Germany Bundesliga B
1994/95.

14. ♖d2 ♗c6

14...g4!?

15. ♖f6 ♖xf6 16. exf6



A critical moment after the opening.

16...g4?!

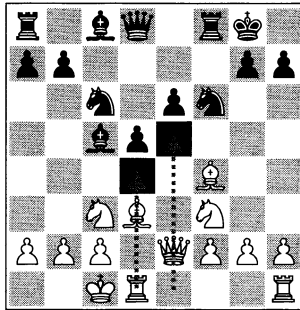
After this inaccurate move White is
slightly better. 16... ♗a4!, attacking the
c5-pawn, was a better idea, for exam-
ple: 17. ♖xg5 ♗xc5 (17...e5!?) 18. ♗f3
♗xd3+ 19. cxd3 b6!? 20. ♖c1 ♘b7
21. ♗d2 ♖d8 22. ♖c2 ♖d5 23. ♖hc1
♗d7 24. ♖f4 ♖c8= Areschenko-
Smerdon, Port Erin 2007.

17. ♖xc3 dxc3 18. ♗e2 ♗e5 19. ♖e4
♖b8 20. h3 ♗d8 21. ♗xc3 ♖d7 22. a4
♖c8 23. ♖xb7 ♖xc5 24. ♗e4 ♖xc2
25. hxg4 ♗c7 26. ♖xh5 ♖xh5 27. gxh5
♗xb7 28. h6 ♖c6 29. ♗d6+ ♗c7 30. h7
♗d3+ 31. ♗d1 ♖xf2 32. ♖a3 ♖xg2
33. ♖xd3 ♖h2 34. ♗xf7 ♖xa4+ 35. ♗e1
♖xh7 36. ♗g5 ♖h1+ 37. ♗f2 ♖e8
38. ♗xe6+ ♗c6 39. ♖d8 ♖h6
40. ♗d4+ ♗c5 41. ♖xe8 ♗xd4 42. ♖e6
♗d5 43. ♖a6 ♗e5 44. ♖xa7 ♖xf6+
1/2-1/2

Possibly the modern line 6. ♖e3 is the
future of the MacCutcheon Variation.
The possibilities are very rich and there
are many resources for both sides.
The option 9/10...c5 is always more ac-
tive than 9/10... ♗xc3, but the latter
leads to more complicated play.

Chapter 7 – Russian Roulette

Classical System: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7 5.♗f3 c5 6.dxc5
♗c6 7.♙f4 ♙xc5 8.♙d3 f6 9.exf6 ♗xf6 10.♚e2!? 0-0 11.0-0-0!



In this chapter we will investigate a sharp idea for White in the Classical Variation, which usually arises on the board by transposition from the Two Knights Variation: 2.♗f3 d5 3.♘c3 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7 5.d4 c5, etc. The first player surrenders his pawn centre in order to develop quickly and smoothly.



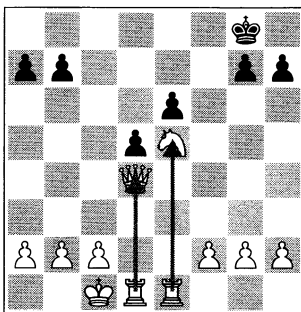
Sergey Volkov (born 1974) is one of the present-day champions of the Classical French.

Introduction: Zakharov's idea

Not long ago a young Russian player, Alexander Zakharov, devised an interesting idea in this complex variation. This new idea, in my opinion, will soon be very popular, and can be useful for players who are looking for a real fight.

In the old days, great masters such as Steinitz, Nimzowitsch, Tarrasch and later Keres and others, discovered a powerful but now practically forgotten way of fighting with white against the French Defence: by sacrificing or, in our case, simply exchanging his central pawns.

What concepts lie behind this idea?



- 1) By vacating the d4- and e5-squares, White secures control over them, gaining the possibility of establishing his minor pieces or queen on those squares.
- 2) The two half-open files allow White to quickly activate his rooks.
- 3) Black has many weaknesses in his pawn structure.
- 4) The above-mentioned factors, in addition to his space advantage, allow White to start an attack quickly on any side of the board, especially in the centre and on the kingside.
- 5) The play becomes much more dynamic than in other variations of the French with a closed or semi-open centre.
- 6) Also, the line which we analyse in this part is sharper, due to the fact that the kings castle on opposite sides ('Russian Roulette').
- 7) The middlegame starts very early, and lengthy theoretical variations are avoided!

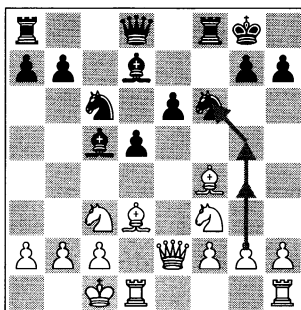
Directions and Plans

After 11.0-0-0 Black has several plans to choose from:

A) 11...♗d7

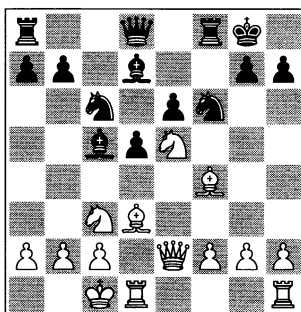
Nowadays this natural move is the most popular response for Black, preparing the development of his heavy pieces.

From the stem game of this variation, Game 50 (Zakharov-Potkin, also a model game), we can understand Zakharov's main idea.



This is a very aggressive plan, but also a risky one, beginning with 12.♘e5!? and preparing the sharp g-pawn thrust g2-g4-g5. Black, for his part, can choose from several interesting defences.

We will find other possibilities for White in the line with 11...♙d7 in Game 51: Nepomniachtchi-Volkov.

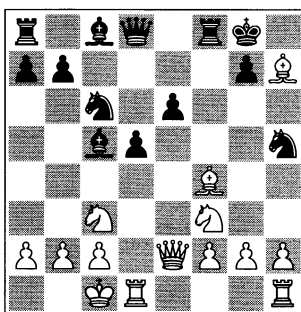


Here we will analyse more solid plans:

- * 12.♝b1!?, a normal move in this kind of position;
- * 12.♞he1 with pressure against the centre, and
- * 12.h4!?, another possible attack on the kingside.

B) 11...♞a5 and 11...♘h5?

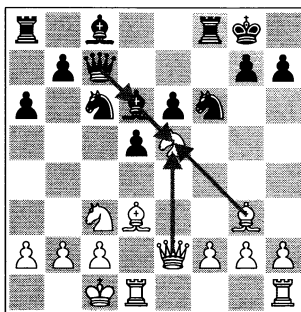
The move 11...♞a5!? is a direct counter-action on the queenside. 11...♘h5? looks dubious, since it allows the brutal blow 12..♙xh7+!.



Both moves are analysed in Game 52: Kosteniuk-Giddins.

C) 11...a6

The analysis of the other popular response 11...a6 demonstrates a typical plan for Black in the French Defence, preparing a set-up with ♙d6/♞c7 and fighting for control of the e5-square. After 12.♘e5 ♙d6 13.♙g3 ♞c7! the knight can no longer stay on e5.



(Game 53: Rodriguez Guerrero-Cuenca Jimenez)

Other possibilities for both sides after 11...a6 (12.g4) can be found in the notes to Game 54: Esplana-Schneider.

D) Novelties: 11...♘b4, 11...♙d6, 11...♚e7

Game 55: Slovineanu-Warner, concludes our study of the Zakharov Variation 11.0-0-0. It provides an update with several novelties for Black on move 11. Recently, we have seen 11...♘b4!?, a fresh manoeuvre, with the idea of exchanging ♘xd3. The move 11...♙d6 looks slightly hasty, while 11...♚e7 prepares central action.

Strategy and Tactics!

After 11.0-0-0 the positions that arise are very flexible, so during the opening both players can change their strategic plans, play waiting moves or enter very specific tactical lines.

Russian Roulette - Games

The main ideas of a new system are usually investigated and developed by young players.

GAME 50

□ Alexander Zakharov

■ Vladimir Potkin

Moscow jr 1997

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3

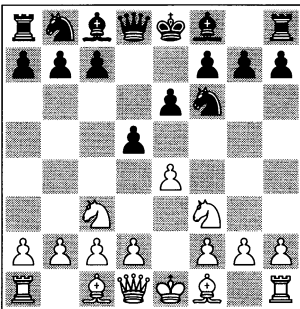
Also possible is 2.♘c3, for Closed Sicilian adepts.

2...d5

Black can still transpose into a Sicilian with 2...c5.

3.♘c3 ♘f6

The advance 3...d4 is another option with which Black can aim for an Indian structure, for example: 4.♘e2 c5 5.c3 dxc3 (5...♘c6 6.cxd4 cxd4 7.♖a4!? ♙c5 8.b4!) 6.bxc3 ♘f6 7.♘g3 ♙e7 (7...♘c6 8.♙b5!?) 8.d4 ♘c6 9.♙d3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♖a5+ (10...0-0 11.0-0!? Δ 11...♘xd4?! 12.e5!↑) 11.♙d2 ♖a3 12.♖e2 ♘b4 13.♙b5+ ♘d7 14.0-0 a6 15.♙c4 ♘b6 16.♖ab1 ♙d7 17.♘e5! ♖c8 18.♘h5→ Ljubojevic-Garcia Martinez, Palma de Mallorca 1971.

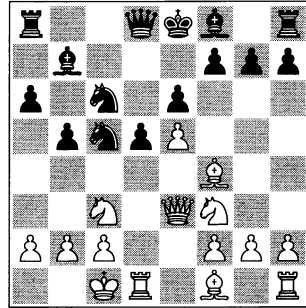


4.e5 ♘fd7

If 4...♘e4 5.♘e2!?

5.d4 c5 6.dxc5 ♘c6 7.♙f4 ♙xc5

The most popular continuation. Black develops his bishop and prepares ...f7-f6. The main alternative is 7...♘xc5 8.♖d2!? (8.h4; 8.a3) 8...a6 9.0-0-0 b5 10.♖e3 ♙b7



analysis diagram

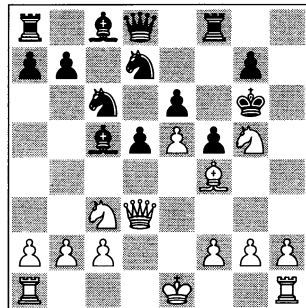
11.h4 ♖a5 12.♙b1 h6 13.♖h3 0-0-0 (13...♖c8!?∞) 14.♘e2 ♘e4 15.♘fd4 ♙c5? 16.f3± G.Guseinov-Noori, Tehran 2005.

8.♙d3 f6!?

Theoretically the best recipe.



WEAPON: 8...0-0? would be a fatal mistake because of 9.♙xh7+! ♙xh7 10.♘g5+ ♙g6(10...♙g8 11.♖h5) 11.♖d3+f5



analysis diagram

12.♘xe6! (12.exf6+ ♙xf6 13.0-0-0 ♖a5∞) 12...♘dxe5 13.♖g3+ (13.♘xf8+!?) 13...♘g4□ 14.♘xd8 ♙xf2+ 15.♖xf2 ♘xf2 16.♘xc6 ♘xh1 17.♘e5+ ♙h5 18.♙e3! ♖e8 19.♙d4 and soon ♙f1-g1, winning the knight on h1.

9.exf6 ♘xf6

Nowadays in the French Defence it is usual to steer towards positions with a closed or semi-open centre, giving the game a strategic character. This line, however, requires very dynamic play in view of the open centre.

10.♖e2!?

In most of the games White continued automatically with 10.0-0, but here Zakharov initiates a new line that has come to be used recently by players who are looking for a direct attack.

10...0-0 11.0-0!

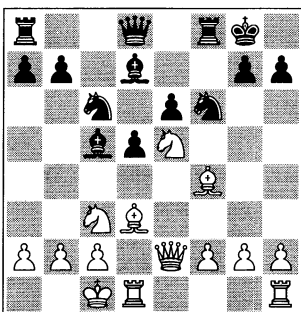
The key: queenside castling is a common idea in the Sicilian, but it is completely new in this variation of the French, although the plans in the positions that now arise are quite similar. This is the critical position of the variation, and Black must quickly take some serious decisions.

11...♗d7

This looks like the logical response. However, Black has also other options, which will be studied in Games 52-55.

12.♘e5!?

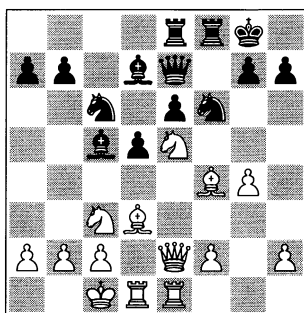
This move is perhaps slightly premature, but still it is very energetic. The idea is to follow up with g2-g4-g5. Other important possibilities are 12.♝b1, 12.♞he1, and 12.h4. We will analyse them in Game 51.



12...♘e5

Black simplifies and prepares a counter-attack on the queenside. There are other interesting tries here for both sides:

A) 12...♖e7 13.♞he1!? ♞ae8 (13...♘e5?! 14.♗xe5 ♗c6 15.g4? (15.f4!↑) 15...♘d7! 16.♗g3 ♞ae8 and Black is OK, Romero Holmes-Zlotnik, Salamanca 2005) 14.g4!?



analysis diagram

14...♗d6 15.h3 (15.g5!?) 15...♘e4 16.♗xe4 ♞xf4 17.♘d7 dxe4 18.♖d2 ♖xd7 19.♖xd6 ♖xd6 20.♞xd6 ♞xf2 21.♘e4 with a slight edge for White, G.Guseinov-Farakhov, St Petersburg 2000;)

B) 12...♞c8!? 13.♘xc6 (13.♞he1!?) 13...♞xc6 14.g4? (14.♝b1∞) 14...♘h5! 15.gxh5 ♞xf4 with a great advantage for Black, Bachin-Chuprikov, Sochi tt 2005;

C) 12...♘d4 13.♖d2 ♞c8? 14.♗e3! ♗e8 15.♗xd4 ♗xd4 16.♗xh7+! ♘xh7 17.♖xd4± Rendle-Curien, Davos 2005;

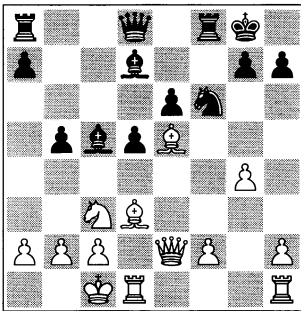
D) 12...♗d6 13.♘g6 (maybe 13.♝b1!?) 13...♗xf4+ 14.♘xf4 ♖a5⇌ 15.a3 a6 16.h4 b5 17.g4 b4! 18.axb4 ♖xb4 19.♘h5 ♘h5 20.gxh5 ♞ab8→ Sengupta-Rodshtein, Erevan Wch-jr 2006.

13.♗xe5 b5!?

13...♖b6 has also been played:
 14.♗hf1 a6 15.g4 ♕b5?! 16.♘xb5
 axb5 17.g5!♗ ♘d7 18.♗h5+– and
 White won quickly after 18...♗f5
 19.♕xf5 exf5 20.♗xd5 ♘xe5 21.♗xe5
 ♗xa2 22.♖b1 ♗a6 23.♗e8+ ♕f8
 24.♗e6+ ♗xe6 25.♗xe6 ♗a5 26.♗e5
 g6 27.♗d1 1-0 G.Guseinov-Rojas,
 Calvia Olympiad 2004.

14.g4!?

Who will get there first?! An instructive attacking game ensues, with castling on opposite sides of the board. A possibility that should be studied is 14.♘xb5!?.



14...b4

The time for direct contact has arrived.

15.g5!?

15.♘b5 ♕xb5 16.♕xb5 ♘e4⇌.

15...bxc3 16.gxf6 g6?!

16...cxb2+! was obligatory, for example: 17.♖b1! ♗xf6! with a very complicated position.

17.♗g4!?

Continuing the attack without hesitation. If 17.♕xc3 d4⇌, but 17.h4! was another interesting possibility, for instance: 17...cxb2+ (17...d4!?) 18.♖b1 ♗xf6 19.f4! and White threatens h4-h5 with a dangerous initiative.

17...♗xf6

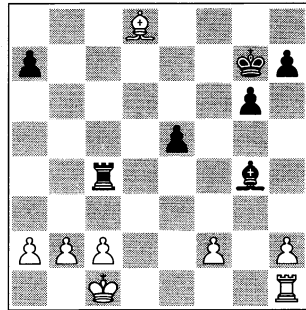
17...cxb2+.

18.♕xc3 d4 19.♕xd4! e5 20.♕c4+ ♖g7 21.♕xc5! ♕xg4 22.♗xd8 ♗xd8

23.♕e7 ♗f4?!

23...♗d4! was a better resource, for example 24.♕xf6+ ♖xf6 25.b3 ♗f4 with counterchances.

24.♕xd8 ♗xc4±



White has every chance of winning this ending.

25.♕g5 ♕f5 26.c3 a6 27.♗e1 ♗g4 28.h4 h6 29.♕d8 ♗g2 30.♕b6 ♖f6 31.c4 ♖e6 32.♕d4 ♖d6 33.♕xe5+ ♖c5 34.♕g3 ♖xc4 35.♖d2 ♖d4 36.b3 ♕e4 37.♗c1 g5 38.hxg5 hxg5 39.♖e2+– g4 40.♖f1 ♕f3 41.♗c7 ♖d3 42.b4 ♖d2 43.a4 ♖d1 44.♗d7+ 1-0

This was an important battle, where a new aggressive weapon against the Classical French was born. White plays in 'Russian roulette' style. The key moves of Zakharov's plan are 11.0-0-0, 12.♘e5, 14.g4 and 15.g5.

In the next game a strong Russian expert on the French, grandmaster Sergey Volkov, is beaten by another young pioneer of the Zakharov Variation.

GAME 51

□ **Ian Nepomniachtchi**

■ **Sergey Volkov**

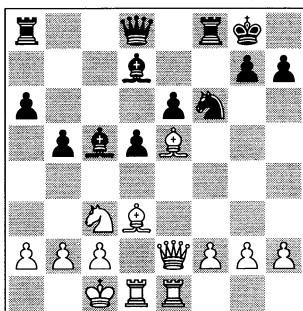
Tomsk 2006 (1)

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.d4 c5 6.dxc5 ♘c6 7.♕f4 ♕xc5

8.♘d3 f6 9.exf6 ♘xf6 10.♖e2 0-0
11.0-0-0 ♘d7 12.♖b1

A prophylactic move which is very common in the Sicilian Defence. Other important options (besides 12.♘e5 from Game 50) are:

A) 12.♖he1!? (a solid move; White is well prepared for central action) 12...a6 (with the idea of playing ...b7-b5 at his leisure. 12...♘b4!? is an interesting move: 13.♘e5? (13.♘d2!?) 13...d4?! (13...♘xc3! 14.bxc3 ♘e4⇌ is preferable) 14.♘e4 ♘xe1 15.♖xe1∞ Nepomniachtchi-Zorko, Herceg Novi jr 2005) 13.♘e5! ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 b5.



analysis diagram

Here White pursued a path similar to Zakharov's main plan: 15.g4 (15.♖f3!? b4 16.♘e2 ♖b6 17.♘f4 ♖f7 18.♖e2 ♘e4?? 19.♖xe4! ♘d6 20.♖e2 ♘xe5 21.♖xe5 1-0 Zakharov-Alavkin, Novgorod 1997 (5)) and now:

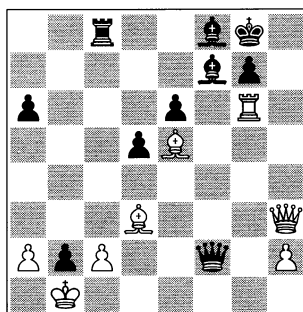
A1) The intermediate 15...♘e8!? is a defensive idea, for example: 16.f4 b4 17.♘b1 (17.g5? ♘h5!) 17...♘d7.



WEAPON: Now 18.♘d6? looks strong, but Black has good resources for holding the position (18.♘d2!? is a better move, with a whole game ahead): 18...♖f6! 19.g5 ♘xd6 20.gxf6 ♘xf4+ 21.♘d2 ♖xf6 22.♖b1 (22.♖xe6+? ♖xe6

23.♖xe6 ♘c5--+) 22...♘c5! Zakharov-Dolmatov, Novgorod 1997 (1).

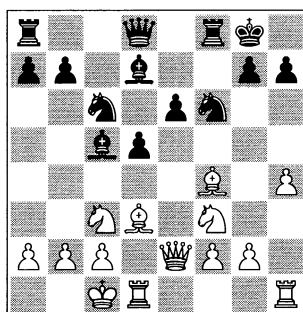
A2) 15...b4! (this should perhaps be considered the main line) 16.g5 bxc3 17.gxf6 cxb2+ 18.♖b1 ♖xf6! 19.♖g1 ♘e8 (19...g6!? was interesting) 20.♖g4 ♘f8 21.♖h4 ♖g6 22.♖h3 ♖b6 23.♖g2 ♖c8 24.♖d1 ♘f7 25.♖xg6 hxg6 26.♖xg6 ♖xf2.



analysis diagram

From this sharp position the game ended with an amusing perpetual check: 27.♖h8+!? ♖xh8 28.♖h6+ ♖g8 29.♘h7+ ♖h8 30.♘g6+ ♖g8 ½-½ I. Smirnov-Erdős, Denizli 2003.

B) 12.h4!?



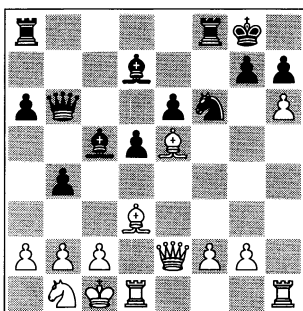
analysis diagram

Strategically I like this advance, as it does not weaken the white position and it prepares action on the kingside. In two games Black now tried out different queen moves:

B1) 12... ♖b6 13. ♘a4 ♖b4 14. ♘xc5 ♖xf4+ 15. ♘b1 ♖d6 16. ♘xd7 ♖xd7 17. ♖he1 ♖ae8 18. ♘e5± Van de Oudeweetering-Holzke, Amsterdam 2006;

B2) 12... ♖a5 13. ♘b1 a6 14. ♘e5 ♘xe5 15. ♙xe5 b5 16. g4! ♙e8 17. ♙xf6 ♖xf6 18. ♘e4! dxe4 19. ♖xe4 ♖d8 20. ♖xh7+ ♘f8 21. ♖h8+ ♘f7 22. ♖h5+ 1-0 Fernandez Romero-Linan Baena, Leon 2006;

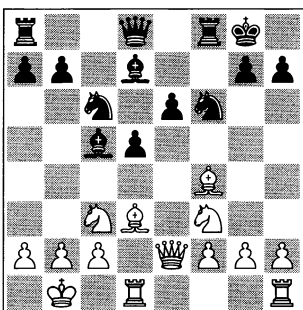
B3) A third possibility is 12...a6 13. h5 b5 14. ♘e5 (14. h6!?) 14... ♘xe5 15. ♙xe5 b4 16. ♘b1 ♖b6 17. h6!→.



analysis diagram

White's threats look much more serious than Black's: 17...g6 18. ♙xg6! hxg6 19. h7+ ♘h8 20. ♖f3 ♙e7 21. g4! d4 22. g5 ♖c6 23. ♖d3 ♖d5 24. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 25. ♖xd4 ♙c6 26. ♖hh4 with a decisive advantage for White, Sambuev-Potkin, St Petersburg 2001.


Back to the game.



12... ♖c8!?

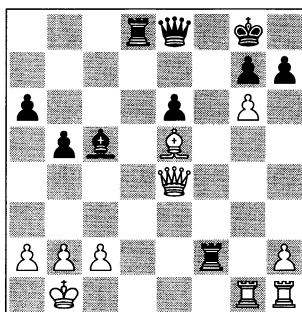
Other typical examples are:

A) 12... ♖e7 13. ♘e5 ♖ae8 (13... ♘xe5 14. ♙xe5 b5 15. f4 a6 16. ♖f3 b4 17. ♘e2 ♙b5 18. ♘d4 ♘d7⇒ Grabarczyk-Bobula, Opole ch-POL 2007, 19. ♙xg7!?) 14. g4 ♘xe5 15. ♙xe5 ♙c6 16. g5

 WEAPON: 16... ♘d7? 17. ♙xh7+!

16... ♘e4 17. f4! ♘xc3+ 18. bxc3 ♖f5 19. ♙xf5 exf5 20. ♖he1± Rodrigues-Foisor, Grenoble 2006.

B) 12...a6 13. ♘e5 (13. ♙e5?! b5 14. h4 ♘xe5 15. ♖xe5 h6 16. ♖g3 ♖b8 17. ♖xb8 ♖axb8⚡ Bellon Lopez-Gleizerov, Stockholm 2006/07) 13... ♘xe5 14. ♙xe5 b5 15. g4 ♖e8 16. ♖dg1! ♙c6 17. g5 ♘e4 (17... ♘d7 18. ♙xh7+!?) 18. ♘xe4 dxe4 19. ♙xe4 ♖xf2 20. ♖d3 ♙xe4 21. ♖xe4 ♖d8 22. g6!±



analysis diagram

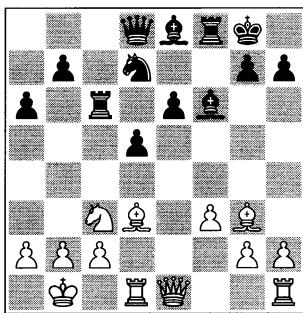
With the initiative for White. The game concluded: 22...h6 23. ♙xg7! ♖f5 24. ♙xh6 ♙xg1 25. ♖xg1 ♖h5 26. ♙f4 e5 27. ♖f3! ♖f5 28. ♖h3! ♖d7 29. g7! and White won, Maximov-Drozdovsky, Kiev jr 1999.

13. ♘e5

Of course, this is not the only possible move. 13. ♖he1! is an interesting option.

13... ♙e8

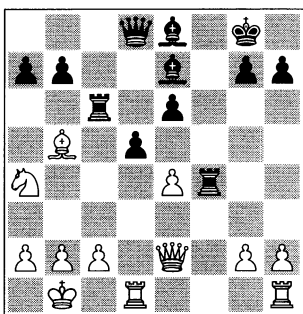
13...a6 14.♗xc6 ♖xc6 15.♙e5 ♙e8
16.f3 ♘d7 17.♙g3 ♙e7 (17...♖f6!?)
18.♙f2 ♙xf2 19.♖xf2 ♘c5 20.♗a1?!
b5! with advantage to Black, Zubarev-
Chuprikov, Alushta 2001) 18.♖d2
♙g5 (18...♙b4!?) 19.♖e1 ♙f6±.



analysis diagram

With good counterplay for Black, even though in the end White won after a great fight: 20.♙f2 ♙f7 (20...♙xc3!?)
21.♘e2 ♘c5 22.♙xc5 ♖xc5 23.♘c1 ♖b6
24.♘b3 ♖fc8?! 25.g4 g6 26.f4 a5
27.a4 ♙e8 28.f5 exf5 29.gxf5 ♙xa4
30.♖e2 ♖e8 (30...♙xb3!?) 31.♖g2
♙xb3 32.cxb3 ♖xb3 33.fxg6 h6 34.g7
♖c7 35.♖he1 ♖d8 36.♖d2 ♖xg7?
(36...♙xb2!-+) 37.♖h3 ♙g5?
38.♖de2 ♖b4?? (38...♖a4□)
39.♖e8+ ♖xe8 40.♖xe8+ ♗f7 41.♖e6
mate, Lastin-Volkov, Tomsk tt 2001.

14.♗xc6 ♖xc6 15.♗a4 ♙e7 16.♙b5
♘e4 17.f3 ♖xf4 18.fxe4

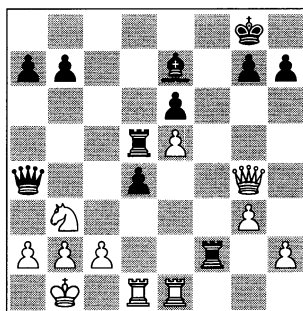


In this game we can observe a very sharp fight right to the end. At the key moments, pressure forced Volkov to stray from the correct path.

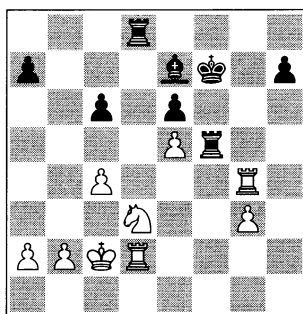
18...♖d6

18...♙g6!? 19.♙xc6 ♖xe4± with a good position for Black.

19.♙xe8 ♖xe8 20.♘c3 d4 21.g3 ♖f8
22.e5□ ♖d8 23.♘e4 ♖c6 24.♖he1
♖d5 25.♘f2 ♖a5 26.♘d3 ♖a4
27.♘c1□ ♖f5 28.♖e4 ♖d5 29.♘b3
♖f2 30.♖g4!↑



30...♖d7 31.h4 d3 32.c4 ♖c6 33.♖e4
♖d7 34.♖xc6 bxc6 35.♖e3 g5?
36.hxg5 d2 37.♗c2 ♙xg5 38.♖e4
♗f7 39.♘c5 ♖d8 40.♖g4 ♙e7 41.♘d3
♖f5 42.♖xd2±



Now White obtains good winning chances.

42...h5 43.♖f4 ♖g8 44.♖h2 ♖xf4
45.♘xf4 h4 46.gxh4 ♖g4 47.♖f2
♙xh4 48.♖f3 ♗e7 49.♗c3 ♙e1+
50.♗b3 ♙a5 51.♘d3 ♖h4 52.♖g3 ♗f7

53.♘b4 c5 54.♘d3 ♘b6 55.a3 ♖e4
 56.♗f3+ ♘g7 57.♘c3 ♘a5+ 58.b4
 cxb4+ 59.axb4 ♘c7 60.c5 ♗g4
 61.♗f2 ♘b8 62.c6 ♗h4 63.♘b3 ♖e4
 64.♗a2 ♗d4 65.♘c5 ♘f7 66.c7 1-0


Summary of 12.♘b1/12.♗he1/12.h4:
 With these alternative moves White
 looks for different plans. But many lines
 simply lead to very similar positions.

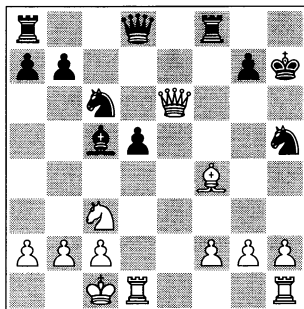
In 1999, young analysts incorporated
 the system into their repertoire.



Former Women's European Champion
 Alexandra Kosteniuk incorporated the
 Zakharov system into her repertoire at an
 early age.

In order to start hostilities on the
 queenside.

 WEAPON: 11...♘h5? is dubious
 because of the typical sacrifice
 12.♘xh7+! ♘xh7 13.♘g5+ ♘g6 14.♘xe6!
 with a decisive advantage for White:
 14...♘xe6 (14...♘xf4 15.♗g4+-)
 15.♗xe6+ ♘h7



analysis diagram

16.♗xd5 (16.♗h3!? g6? 17.♗xd5 ♗e8
 18.g4 ♗e6 19.♗xh5+ gxh5 20.♗xh5+
 ♘g7 21.♗xc5+- Pablo Marin-Narciso
 Dublan, Barbera del Valles 2005)
 16...♘xf4 17.♗e4+ ♘h8 18.♗xd8
 ♗axd8 19.g3 ♗de8 20.♗c4 ♘e6 21.f4
 ♘b6 22.♘e4 ♘cd4 23.c3 ♘f5 24.♘b1
 ♘e3 25.♗b5 ♘xf4 26.♘d6 ♖e6
 27.♗d7 ♗ef6 28.gxf4 ♗xf4 29.a3 ♗g4
 30.♗e1 ♗f3 31.♘f7+ 1-0 Kosteniuk-
 Stellwagen, Wijk aan Zee 2000.

GAME 52

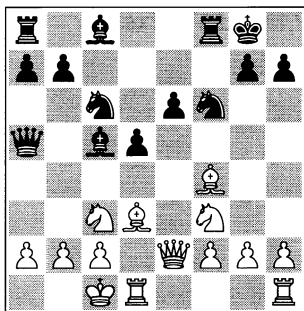
□ Alexandra Kosteniuk

■ Stephen Giddins

Port Erin 1999 (6)

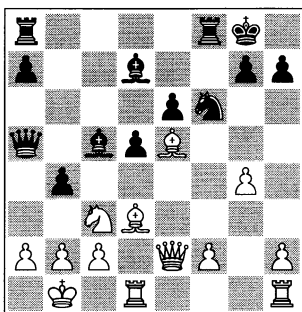
Here we have an interesting fight be-
 tween youth and experience. Giddins
 tries an alternative on the 11th move.

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5
 ♘fd7 5.d4 c5 6.dxc5 ♘c6 7.♘f4 ♘xc5
 8.♘d3 f6 9.exf6 ♘xf6 10.♗e2 0-0
 11.0-0 ♗a5!?



12.♘b1 ♘b4!?

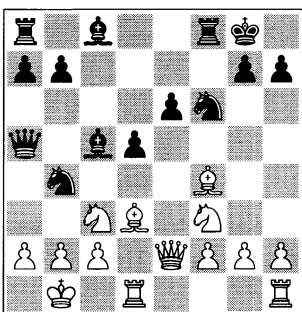
This seems to be a logical move. In the event of 12...♙d7 the game reverts to usual Zakharov lines: 13.♘e5!? ♘xe5 14.♙xe5 b5 15.g4!? b4



analysis diagram

16.g5! bxc3 17.gxf6 ♖ab8 18.b3!
 (18.♙xb8?? ♖xb8–+) 18...♖xf6
 (18...g6 19.♖hg1+–; 18...gxf6
 19.♗h5 1-0 Stukopin-Stella, Sibenik jr
 2007) 19.♙xf6 gxf6 20.♖hg1+ ♘f8
 21.♗g4 ♘e8 22.♗g8+ ♙f8 23.♖g7!
 1-0 Alagulian-Sambuev, Moscow
 ch-city 1999.

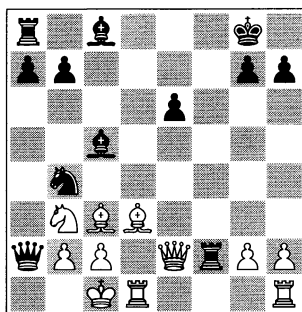
Back to the game.



13.♙e5 ♙d7

13...d4? is an unsuccessful counter-attack:

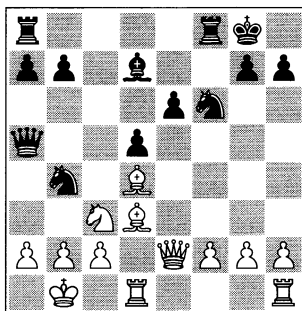
14.♘d4 ♘fd5 15.♘b3 (15.♙c4!?)
 15...♘xc3+ 16.♙xc3 ♗xa2+ 17.♘c1
 ♖xf2.



analysis diagram


And now it is White's turn: 18.♗e5
 ♙f8 19.♙xb4 ♙xb4 20.♙xh7+ ♘xh7
 21.♗e4+ ♘g8 22.♗xb4+– Navarro-
 Stella, Fiuggi ch-ITA-jr 2007.

14.♘d4 ♙xd4 15.♙xd4



This may be the critical position in the 11...♗a5 line.

15...♘c6

 WEAPON: The trap 15...e5?! does not work because of

16.♗xe5! (but not 16.♙xe5 ♖ae8⇒)
 16...♘c6 17.♗f4 ♘g4 18.♗g5 ♘xd4
 19.♙c4!! and White is better in all lines.

The most natural move would be 15...♖ac8!? with lots of possibilities for both players.

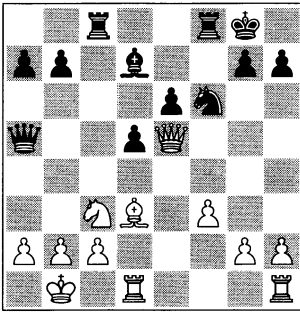
16.♙e5 ♘xe5

16...b5!? was a sharper option.

17.♗xe5 ♖ac8

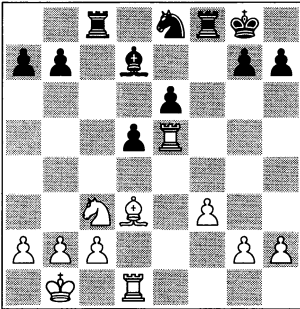
According to my engine, 17...♘g4
 18.♗h5 ♘f6 offers better chances of equalising.

18.f3!±



White has a classic strategic advantage, as Black's minor pieces are now inactive.

18...♙c7 19.♖he1 ♙xe5 20.♗xe5 ♘e8



In the ending that now arises White has a clear advantage, but Kosteniuk failed to do the technical job properly.

21.♘e2

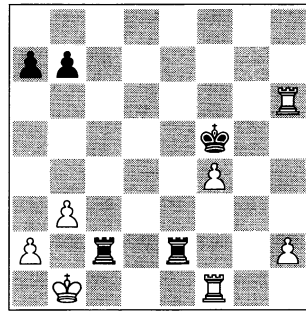
21.♙b5!? ♙xb5 22.♘xb5 ♖f6 23.♗de1 with pressure for White; 21.♘b5!?±.

21...♘d6 22.f4 ♗ce8 23.♗e3 ♙b5 24.♙xb5 ♘xb5 25.g3 ♘f7 26.b3 h6 27.♗e5 ♘f6 28.c4 ♘c7 29.♘c3 g5!±

Changing the character of the game.

30.cxd5 gxf4 31.gxf4 exd5 32.♘xd5+ ♘xd5 33.♗exd5 ♗e2 34.♗d6+ ♘f5 35.♗xh6 ♗c8! 36.♗f1 ♗cc2=

Even though Black is two pawns down, the ending is still a draw. The active position of his rooks on the second rank compensates for the missing material.



37.♗h5+ ♘f6 38.♗a5 a6 39.h4 ♗h2 40.h5 ♗b2+ 41.♘a1 ♗bd2 42.b4 ♗de2 43.♗b1 ♗ef2 44.b5 ♗xh5 45.♗a4

Not 45.bxa6?? ♗xa5 46.axb7 ♗axa2 mate.

45...♗xb5 46.♗xb5 axb5 47.♗b4 ♘e6 48.♗xb5 ♗xf4 49.♗xb7 ♘d6 50.♘b2 ♘c6 51.♗b8 ♘c7 1/2-1/2

Summary: After 11...♙a5 and 12...♘b4 Black was unable to create any support for his active pieces and he soon had to switch to passive defence. In any case, this was a complicated game right up to the last move.

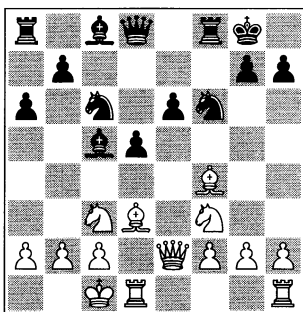
Later, in the year 2004, Spanish youngsters improved their repertoire with this line.

GAME 53

□ Enrique Rodriguez Guerrero
 ■ Jose Cuenca Jimenez
 Seville 2004 (7)

1.e4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.d4 c5 6.dxc5 ♙xc5 7.♙d3 ♘c6 8.♙f4 f6 9.exf6 ♘xf6 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0-0 a6!?

Quite a useful move in these lines. Actually this is the most common response.



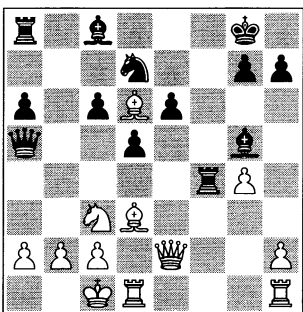
12.♘e5!?

White chooses Zakharov’s plan, just like after 11...♗d7. 12.h4!?, 12.♖b1, 12.♞he1 and 12.g2-g4 have also been played – see the next game.

12...♗d6!?

Continuing in proper French style, fighting for the control of the central square e5. Other tries are:

A) 12...♞a5 13.♘xc6!? bxc6 14.♗e5 ♗e7?! 15.g4 ♘d7 16.♗d6 ♗g5+? (16...♞f7) 17.f4! ♞xf4 and now:

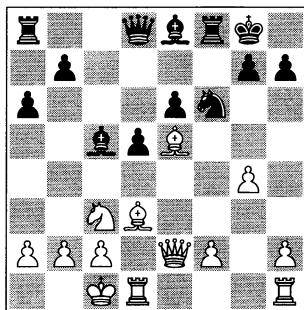


analysis diagram

A1) 18.♞xe6+?! ♞f7+ 19.♖b1 ♘f6 20.♞e5 ♞d8 21.h4 ♗f4? (the only move was 21...♗e3 with counterplay) 22.♞xf4 ♘e4 23.♞xf7+! ♖xf7 24.♘xe4+- G.Guseinov-Romon Poves, Aviles Ech-jr 2000;

A2) 18.h4!! ♞e4+ 19.hxg5 ♞xe2 20.♗xh7+ ♖f7 21.♞df1+ ♘f6 22.♘xe2 winning.


B) 12...♘xe5 13.♗xe5 ♗d7 14.g4 ♗e8



analysis diagram

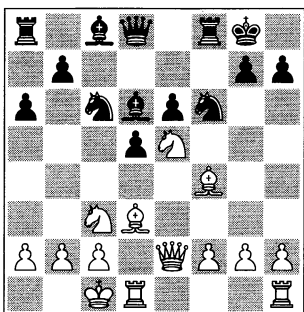
If we included the moves ♞he1 and ...b5 now, we would find ourselves in the Zakharov-Dolmatov game seen in the comments to Game 51.

15.♞hf1?! (an unnecessary move. 15.f4!? was a better option) 15...b5! 16.f4 b4∞ with equal chances, Alcazar Jimenez-Brynell, Calvia Olympiad 2004; C) 12...♘b4 13.♗g5?! (13.a3!? ♘xd3+ 14.♘xd3 ♗d4 15.♗e5±) 13...b5 and now:

 WEAPON: 14.♗xh7+ ♖xh7 15.a3.

14.a3 ♘xd3+ 15.♞xd3 ♞c7 16.f4 ♗b7 17.♗xf6 ♞xf6⇌ Black is OK, Berg-J. Akesson, Gothenburg ch-SWE 2006;

D) 12...♘d4?! 13.♞d2 b5?! 14.g4? (14.♗e3±) 14...b4⇌ Green-Yardley, Swansea 2006.



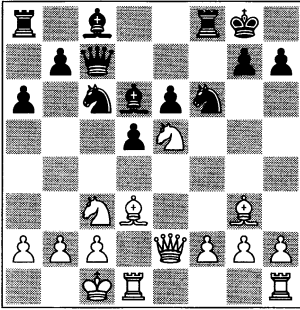
13.♙g3



WEAPON: 13.♚b1 ♔c7!

14.♞he1? ♘xe5 15.♙xe5 ♙xe5
16.♞xe5 ♞xe5 17.♞xe5 ♘g4 18.♞e2 ♞xf2

13...♞c7!



14.♘g4

Black's pressure forces White to abandon the e5-square. 14.f4?! is weak because of 14...g6!⇒, intending 15...♘h5.



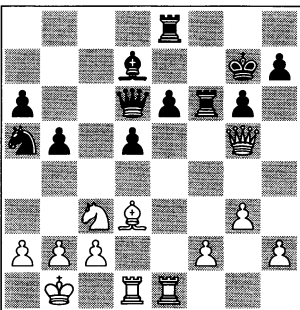
WEAPON: 14.♞he1? ♘xe5

15.♙xe5 ♙xe5 16.♞xe5 ♞xe5
17.♞xe5 ♘g4 18.♞e2 ♞xf2

14...♘g4!?

This exchange reduces White's initiative. Another try had been played earlier: 14...♙d7 15.♚b1

A) 15...♘a5?! 16.♞he1 ♞ae8
17.♘xf6+ ♞xf6 18.♞h5! g6 19.♞g5
♚g7 20.♙xd6 ♞xd6 21.g3 b5



analysis diagram

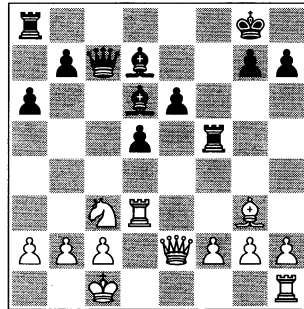
22.♘e4!+– dxe4 23.♙xb5 ♞b4
24.♞xd7+ ♚g8 25.♞ed1 ♞f8
26.♞xh7! axb5 27.♞h4 1-0 Vega
Gutierrez-Olaizola Ortega, San
Sebastian 2005;

B) 15...b5 16.♙f5!? ♞ae8 17.♘xf6+
♞xf6 18.♙xd6 (Tactic: 18.♙xh7+
♚xh7 19.♘e4 dxe4 20.♞xd6 ♚g8
21.♞hd1 ♙c8∞) 18...♞xd6 19.♙g4
♞ff8 20.g3 b4 21.♘e4 ♞e7 22.♘d2 e5
23.♙xd7 ♞xd7 24.♘b3 d4 25.♞c4+
♞e6 26.♞xe6+ ♞xe6 27.♘c5 ♞e7
28.♘e4 with approximate equality,
Zakharov-Kashtanov, St Petersburg 1997.

15.♞xg4 ♘e5 16.♞h5

16.♞d4!?! ♘xd3+ 17.♞xd3 ♞f5
18.♞e1 ♙d7 19.♚b1 ♞af8 20.♘d1
½-½ Fox-Palmer, Dublin ch-IRL 2007.

**16...♘xd3+ 17.♞xd3 ♞f5 18.♞e2
♙d7⇒**



The chances are equal. The game continued:

19.♙xd6 ♞xd6 20.g3?

Tactics: White has no time to build a strong pawn structure.

20...♞b6

20...d4!?!↑.

21.f4 d4!

Now Black gets strong counterplay.

22.b3?!

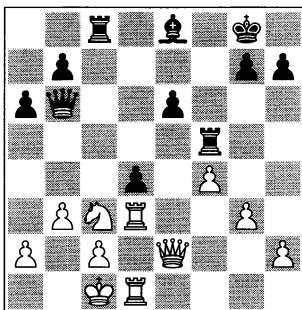
22.♞xd4!?! ♞xd4 23.♞d1 ♞b6
24.♞xd7 ♞c6 25.♞d1 ♞e8

22...♖c8

22...♗e8!?

23.♖hd1 ♗e8

1/2-1/2



A draw was agreed here, but Black is better.

Summary of 11...a6 12. ♗e5: A flank attack should be met by an attack in the centre! Following this classical concept, Black played ...a6/...♗d6/...♖c7, and defended his position against Zakharov's dangerous plan. After this White did not have enough time or resources to attack the opponent's king.

In the next game we investigate the various possibilities after 11...a6.

GAME 54

□ Christian Esplana


■ Dmitry Schneider

Yucay jr 2001 (7)

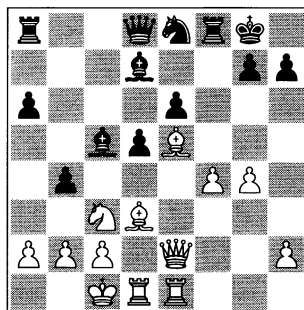
1.e4 e6 2.♗c3 d5 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.e5
 ♗fd7 5.d4 c5 6.dxc5 ♗c6 7.♗f4 ♗xc5
 8.♗d3 f6 9.exf6 ♗xf6 10.♖e2 0-0
 11.0-0 a6 12.h4!?

In my opinion, this advance is a strong alternative. As in the line with 11...♗d7, we will check the alternatives:

A) 12.♖b1 ♗b4!? 13.♗e5??
 (13.♗d2∞) 13...♗xc3 14.bxc3


 WEAPON: 14...♗e4! (14...♖a5
 15.♗d2∞ Skorchenko-Pipnikov,
 Belorechensk 2007) 15.♗xe4 ♖xf4+.

B) 12.♖he1 b5 13.♗e5 ♗xe5
 (13...♗d4 14.♖d2 ♖a5 15.♗e3 b4
 16.♗b1∞ Hammer-Time, Gausdal
 2006) 14.♗xe5 ♗d7 15.g4 ♗e8? 16.f4
 b4

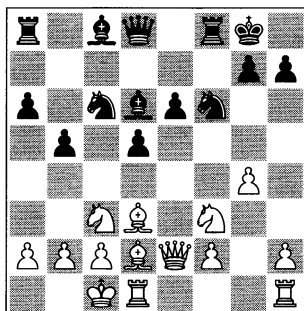


analysis diagram

17.♗b1 ♗d6 18.♗d2 ♗f7 19.♗b3
 ♗b6 20.♗d4 ♗d6 21.♖e5 ♗xd4
 22.♗xd4 ♖e7 23.♗xe6+ Mirzoeva-
 Khudaverdieva, Chisinau Ech-W 2005;

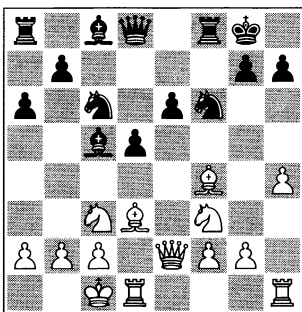
 WEAPON: 17.♗e4 dxe4
 18.♖xe4 g6 19.♗c4+.

C) 12.g4!? (an interesting move for
 blitz play) 12...b5 (12...♗xg4
 13.♗xh7+ ♖h8) 13.♗d2 ♗d6.



analysis diagram

All is ready for a Russian Roulette game!
 Yuzhakov-Pogosian, Sochi tt-2 2007.



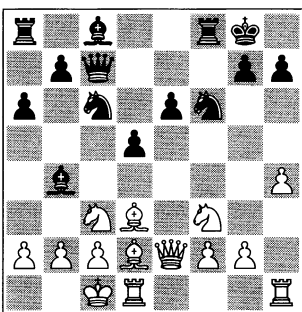
12...♙b4!?

Playing in MacCutcheon style. Other ways to gain counterplay are:

A) 12...b5 (a normal counterattack) 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 (13...♘d4 14.♚d2 ♘h8? 15.h5 ♚e8 (Klimov-Toth, Heraklion jr 2004) 16.♙g6!+-) 14.♙xe5 ♙d6 15.f4 ♚c7∞ Vrublevskaya-Tereick, Pardubice 2006;

B) 12...♙d6!? 13.♙e5 (13.♙xd6!? ♚xd6 14.h5) 13...♘xe5 14.♘xe5 ♚c7 15.f4 b5 Ashton-Miedema, Amsterdam 2006.

13.♙d2 ♚c7



14.g4

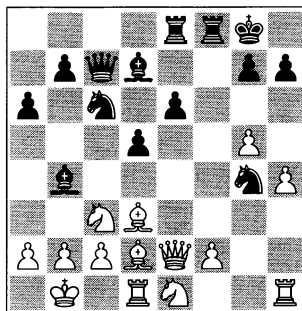
Too risky. Of course, 14.h5!? was a more natural move, with the idea of playing 15.h6, and if 14...e5? 15.♘xd5!.

14...♙d7

14...e5!?∞.

15.♖b1 ♜ae8 16.g5 ♘g4 17.♘e1!?

After this move incredible complications arise. 17.h5!?∞ was a slightly calmer option, waiting for Black's reaction.



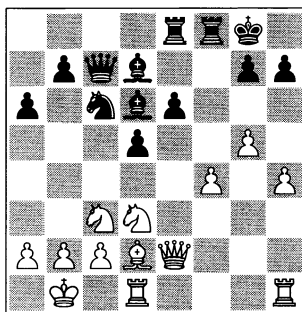
17...♘ge5!?

Without deep analysis it is impossible to evaluate 17...♘xf2!?, which would be met by 18.♙xh7+! ♘xh7 19.♚h5+ ♖g8 20.g6 ♜f5! 21.♚h7+ ♖f8 with an extremely complicated position.

18.f4

18.♙xh7+!? ♘xh7 19.♚h5+ ♖g8 20.g6 ♘xg6 21.♚xg6∞.

18...♘xd3 19.♘xd3 ♙d6!



And Black won after a tough battle:

20.♚g2 ♘d4 21.♙e3 ♘f5+ 22.♙c1 ♙c6 23.♜de1 b5! 24.♜h3 b4 25.♘e2 ♙b5 26.♙d2 a5 27.♜c1 ♚b8 28.♚g1 ♜c8 29.h5 ♜c4 30.b3 ♜e4 31.♚g2 a4 32.c4 bxc3 33.♘xc3 ♜d4 34.♘xb5 ♚xb5 35.♜c3 ♜a8 36.♙c1 ♚a6 37.g6 h6 38.♚e2 ♜e4 39.♚c2 axb3 40.♚xb3 ♜b8 41.♚xb8+ ♙xb8 42.♘c5 ♜b4+ 0-1

Summary: The alternatives 12.h4, 12.♖b1, 12.♞he1 and 12.g4 merely provide more bullets for Russian Roulette!

In recent years there has been considerable activity in this variation, with the introduction of several new ideas.

14.♙e5 ♙xe5 15.♚xe5 ♚b4 (15...♗d7!? 16.♚g3 ♞b8 17.a3 e5⇌) 16.f3 ♞b8 17.♗e2 c5 18.a3 ♚b6 19.c4 ♗d7 20.♚c3 d4 21.♚c2 ♗e5 22.♞d2 ♗xd3+ 23.♞xd3 ♙d7 with a huge advantage, Bellini-Garcia Palermo, Porto San Giorgio 2006.

GAME 55

□ Viacheslav Slovineanu

■ Delisle Warner

Turin ol 2006 (1)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7
5.♗f3 c5 6.dxc5 ♗c6 7.♙f4 ♙xc5
8.♙d3 f6 9.exf6 ♗xf6 10.♚e2 0-0
11.0-0-0 ♗b4

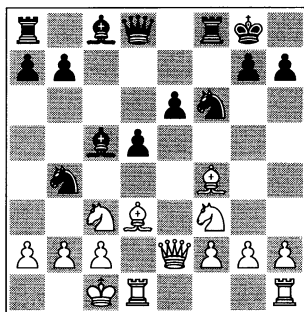
A new move – only two more games have been played with this line so far. Black abandons control of the strategic e5-square, but he can exchange the dangerous bishop on d3.

Two other novelties are:

A) 11...♙d6 (this manoeuvre may be slightly premature. The best option is to wait until White moves his knight to e5) 12.♙xd6 (12.♙g3!?) 12...♚xd6 13.♞he1 (13.♞de1?! ♙d7 14.♗b5 ♚f4+ 15.♖b1 ♞ae8 16.c4?! ♗b4⇌ Eggleston-Brown, Liverpool 2006) 13...♙d7 14.♖b1 ♞ae8 15.♙b5 ♖h8 16.♙xc6 ♙xc6 17.♗e5 ♗d7 18.f3 ♗xe5 19.♚xe5 ♚xe5 20.♞xe5± and step by step White managed to win this ending, Madan-Castaldo, Torre del Greco 2006;

B) 11...♚e7 (a waiting move to see the opponent's plan) 12.♗e5 (12.♞he1!?) 12...♙d4 13.♗xc6 bxc6 and now:

WEAPON: 14.♙xh7+ ♗xh7
15.♞xd4 c5 16.♗xd5 ♚f7
17.♗e7+ ♚xe7 18.♙d6∞.



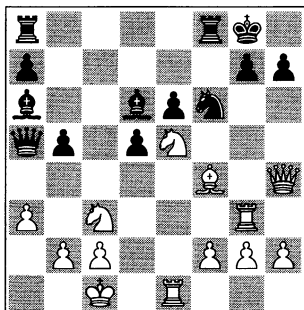
12.♗e5

In the most recent game Black won after 12.♞he1 ♗xd3+ 13.♚xd3 ♙xf2 14.♞e2 ♙b6 15.♗g5 ♙c7 16.♙xc7 ♚xc7 17.♗xe6 ♙xe6 18.♞xe6 ♞ad8 19.h3 ♚f7 20.♞e5? (20.♞ee1 d4 21.♖b1!±) 20...d4 21.♗b1 ♗g4! 0-1 Lopez Rodriguez-Rodriguez Fontecha, Cartagena 2007.

12.♙e3!? is interesting.

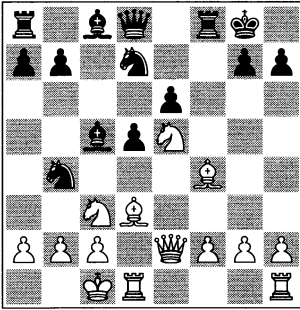
12...♗d7!?

12...♚a5?! is no good: 13.a3 ♗xd3+ 14.♞xd3 ♗d7 15.♚g4!↑ ♗f6 16.♚h4 ♙d6 17.♞e1 b5 18.♞g3 ♙a6



analysis diagram

19. ♖xg7+! ♔xg7 20. ♕h6+ ♔h8
 21. ♗g6+ hxg6 22. ♕xf8+ ♔g8
 23. ♕xd6+– Savitsky-Cherniuk,
 Salekhard 2007.



13. ♗xd7



WEAPON: 13. ♕xh7+!? ♔xh7
 14. ♖h5+ ♔g8 15. ♗g6 ♖f6

16. g4∞.

13... ♕xd7 14. ♕e3 ♗xd3+ 15. ♖xd3
 ♕xe3+ 16. ♖xe3 ♖f6 17. f3 ♖f4
 18. ♖xf4 ♖xf4 19. ♖he1±

White's game is easier.

19... ♖c8 20. ♖e5 ♖h4 21. h3 ♖hc4
 22. ♖d2 ♔f7 23. ♗d1? ♔f6 24. ♖e1 h5
 25. ♗f2 ♕e8 26. b3? ♖4c6 27. f4 ♕g6
 28. ♖ee2 b5 29. g4 ♖c3 30. gxh5 ♕xh5
 31. ♗g4+ ♔f5??

A mistake typical for an Olympiad game.

32. ♖e5+ ♔xf4 33. ♖xh5 a5 34. ♗e5
 a4 35. ♗d3+ ♔g3 36. ♖g5+ ♔xh3
 37. ♗f4+ ♔h4 38. ♖xg7 1-0

Summary: Black's latest alternatives, 11... ♗b4, 11... ♕d6 and 11... ♖e7, do not essentially change the evaluation of the variation. Play is very similar to the usual lines after 11.0-0-0.



Statistics and Summary of the Zakharov Variation (11.0-0-0)

Total in the period 1997-2008: 86 games.
 White wins =45=67% Performance 2400
 Draw =25
 Black wins =16=33% Performance 2187

The sharpest and most intense fight occurs in the lines where White uses Zakharov's plan beginning with ♗e5!? followed by the advance of his kingside pawns. For his part, Black must choose the effective counter-plan that can be found in my notes, and study it thoroughly.

As we can see after a brief study of this variation, the theory is as yet not developed, so it is very difficult to assess the huge amount of sub-variations, full of possibilities for both players. But the idea of 11.0-0-0!? should be investigated. We can expect rapid practical and theoretical advances in this line.

Even though in many lines the position is more or less balanced, it is interesting that White has more than one original plan available: he can develop an attack on the kingside or play in classical style in the centre. His advantage lies in the strategic points given at the beginning of this chapter.

Since this new variation is now being played quite often, we can expect a rapid evolution of the line.

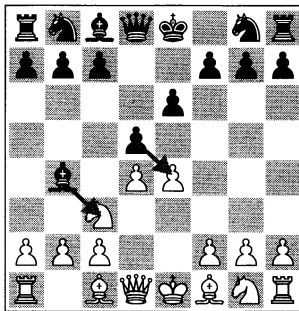
Part Four

Behind the Barricades

Winawer Variation - 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4

A Repertoire for Black

‘Barricades always have two sides’



Introduction

The first player who investigated the 3.♘c3 ♙b4 variation in the French Defence was the well-known Polish master Szymon Winawer (1838-1920). He defended from both sides of the barricades, playing this line both as White and as Black.



Another specialist in the French Defence, and the author of *My System*, Aaron Nimzowitsch (1886-1935), was one of the strongest dogmatic chess players of his time. Both in his games and his concepts, he preferred using one colour or the other: White or Black, but not both.

Meanwhile, another main character of that period of chess history, the fourth World Champion Alexander Alekhine (1892-1946), often liked to play openings with both colours and he made investigations beyond dogmas and general rules.

In my opinion, the main debate has carried on until the present day, only the protagonists have changed. This clash of concepts will be the key subject of Part Four, where we will learn how to play using ‘both colours’ in the Winawer Variation of the French Defence.

Ideas

The main ideas of the 3...♘b4 pin are quite simple: attacking the centre and not wasting any tempi (as in the Classical Variation 3...♘f6 4.e5). In this way, the king’s knight stays on its most flexible square: g8. In the event of ...♘b4x♘c3-bxc3 Black will obtain a favourable pawn structure. The other bishop can be exchanged after ...b6 and ...♘a6, or activated by manoeuvres such as ...♘d7-a4 or ...♘d7-e8-g6. For his part, White must take advantage of his space advantage, the weakness created on g7 (with ♖g4!), the mobility of his minor pieces, and also the attacking resources offered by the h-pawn with h2-h4.

Directions

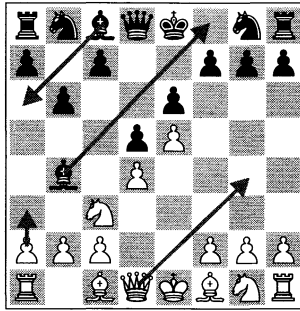
In this Part we will investigate two directions:

Chapter 8 (C16) My System in the Winawer – 4.e5 b6 5.♖g4 ♘f8

Chapter 9 (C18) Black Queen Blues – 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♘xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖a5 7.♘d2 ♖a4

Chapter 8 – My System in the Winawer

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 b6



This is a typical plan in the Winawer, with a couple of strategic ideas: it is based on trying to exchange the light-squared bishops by ...♘a6, thereby reducing White's initiative, or else playing in Petrosian's fianchetto style with ...♘b7/...♘c6/...♙d7 followed by queenside castling. In both cases the position remains very closed (Games 56 and 57).

Black always has the option of playing the typical French advance ...c7-c5. Then, after dxc5 bxc5, a wonderful pawn centre is created for him: c5-d5 (Games 56-58). There is very little theory on these lines!



The well-known Polish master Szymon Winawer (1838-1920) was the first to investigate the system with 3.♘c3 ♘b4. He defended from both sides of the barricades, playing this line both as White and as Black.

5. ♙g4 ♘f8!? Genie returns to the Bottle – a bishop is a long-striding piece

In this theoretically important position, after the natural move 5.a3 the bishop's retreat was probably first used by Petrosian and Kortchnoi in 1957. But in the most aggressive line with 5.♙g4 the idea was known much earlier; see Alexander-Alekhine, Margate 1938, in the notes to Game 56.

It may seem that Black has just wasted two full tempi, but he can claim that ♘c3 and a2-a3 are not very useful moves in the closed structure, and he may just be right...

My System – Games

GAME 56

□ Alexander Chistiakov

■ Tigran V Petrosian

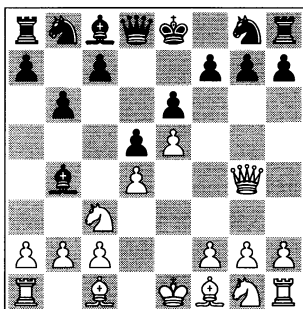
Moscow ch-city 1956

The following old game is a perfect example for demonstrating the main ideas in the Winawer line with ...b6/...♙f8.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖c3 ♙b4 4.e5 b6!?

A clever sideline.

5. ♗g4



The most aggressive manoeuvre in the French Defence. The pawn on g7 is under attack. The well-known alternative is 5.a3!?, a move we will examine in Games 57 and 58.


5... ♙f8!

The genie returns to the bottle and the barricades are reinforced. This was Alekhine's preferred choice. In the stem game the choice was 5...g6, the 'dogmatic' way of defending the kingside in old times, Thomas-Nimzowitsch, Carlsbad 1929.


6. ♘f3

Other attempts are more or less equivalent:

A) 6. ♙g5; although this move has its own tactical ideas. It is very popular in practice, also on the Internet.

 WEAPON: 6... ♘e7? 7. ♙xe7 ♗xe7 8. ♘xd5!.

6... ♗d7 7. 0-0-0 ♙a6

 WEAPON: 7... h6!? ♠ 8. ♙h4?? g5! winning material and Internet

coinage, Padevsky-Portisch, Varna Olympiad 1962. For example 9. ♙g3 h5! 10. ♗xg5? ♙h6.

8. ♘h3 (8. ♙xa6 is similar: 8... ♘xa6 9. ♙b1 h6 10. ♙c1 ♘e7 11. ♗e2 ♘b4 12. f4 h5= Lopez Martinez-Moskalenko, Mataro 2004/05) 8... ♙xf1 9. ♗hxf1 ♘c6 10. f4 ♘ge7 11. ♙xe7 ♘xe7 12. ♗e2 h5 13. ♘g5 ♘f5 with an equal position, Alexander-Alekhine, Margate 1938;

B) 6. ♘h3 introduces the most flexible manoeuvre: 6... ♗d7 7. ♙g5 (or 7. ♙e3 ♙a6 8. ♙xa6 ♘xa6 9. ♘f4 ♘b4 10. 0-0-0 0-0-0 11. ♗e2 ♙b7= Vehi Bach-Moskalenko, Badalona 2003) 7... ♘c6 8. 0-0-0 ♙b7 9. ♙b1 h6 10. ♙h4 ♘ge7 11. ♘f4 ♘f5! 12. ♘h5 ♘xh4 13. ♗xh4 ♗e7 14. ♗g4 0-0-0=.



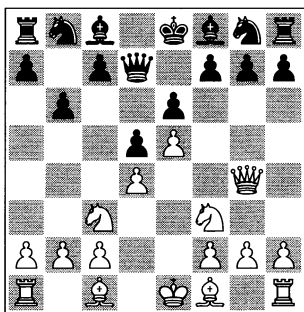
analysis diagram

This is a key game: 15. h4 ♙b8 16. ♗h3 ♘a5 17. ♘e2 c5 18. dxc5 bxc5 19. ♗f4 ♗c7 20. ♘c1 ♘c6 21. ♗e1 d4 22. ♗b3?! ♘a5 23. ♗g3 g6 24. ♘f6 c4 25. ♗d1

g5!♠ and with this ‘Black Jet’, Black soon won, Makarichev-Timman, Amsterdam 1975;

C) 6.f4 – the pawn wedge; 6...♟h6!? 7.♖d1 ♟c6 8.♟f3 ♕b7 9.♕e3 ♕e7 10.♖d2 ♖d7 with equal chances.

6...♖d7



7.a3

In order to play b2-b4. If 7.♕b5 ♟c6!.

A) Or else, for instance: 7.a4 ♟c6!? (a common alternative is 7...♕a6 8.♟b5 ♟e7! 9.c4 ♟bc6! 10.♕d2 ♕b7! 11.cxd5 ♟xd5⇒ Montell Lorenzo-Moskalenko, Catalonia tt 2006) 8.♕d2 ♟ge7 9.♕e2 ♟f5! 10.0-0 h5 11.♖f4 g6! = and the barricades are built, Tal-T.V.Petrosian, Leningrad ch-URS 1977;

B) 7.♕d3 ♟c6!? (alternatively, 7...♕a6 8.0-0 ♟e7 9.♟e2 ♕xd3 10.cxd3 ♟bc6∞ Kamsky-Zugic, Buenos Aires 2005) 8.a3 ♕b7 9.♕g5 h6 10.♕e3 0-0-0 with equal chances, Sax-Bronstein, Budapest 1977.

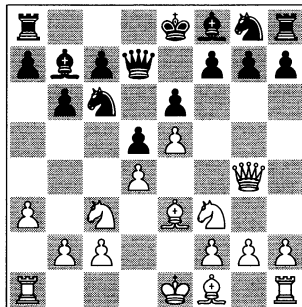
7...♟c6

The main alternative is the exchange of the bishops: 7...♕a6!?: 8.♕xa6 ♟xa6 9.0-0 ♟e7 10.♟e2 ♟b8 11.♕g5 ♟bc6 12.b3 ♟f5 13.♟g3 h6! 14.♕d2 g6 (14...0-0-0!?) 15.♖f4 ♕e7 16.♖fd1 g5! – a new Black Jet, Matanovic-Kortchnoi, Uppsala 1956.

8.♕e3 ♕b7



Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian (1929-1984) never attacked his opponent directly. He liked to attack from behind the barricades.



Remarkably, Petrosian never offered to exchange his queen’s bishop. His favourite set-up was the fianchetto: ...b6, ...♟c6 and ...♕b7.

9.♕b5?!

A useless move. There is nothing to attack here.

9...0-0-0 10.0-0 ♟ge7 11.b4?! f6!⇒

Black is ready for action.

12.♖fe1 ♟f5 13.♖h3 h5! 14.g3

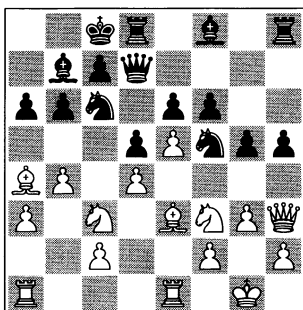
Not 14.g4? hxg4 15.♖xh8 ♕xb4!.

14...a6 15.♕a4

Or 15.♕d3 ♟xe3 16.fxe3 (16.♖xe3 g5!) 16...g5!♠.

15...g5!

The Black Jet is jumping from the barricades! Black controls the game.



16.g4 hxg4

16... ♖xe3!? 17. ♖xe3 f5! also wins.

17. ♖xh8 gxf3 18. ♖h5

Or else 18. ♖xf6 b5 19. ♘b3 ♖cxd4 with a great advantage.

18...b5 19. ♖xb5 axb5 20. ♘b5 fxe5 21. ♖h1 ♖g7 22. ♘xc6 ♘xc6 23.dxe5 ♘e7 24.b5 ♘b7! 25. ♖g4 ♖h8 26. ♖g1 d4 27. ♘d2 g4 28. ♘f4 g3! 29. ♘xg3 ♖xg3+ 0-1

A typical, excellent win by Tigran ('the Tiger') Petrosian.

The opening ends after 5. ♖g4 ♘f8. However, the main question for Black is which of the two plans to choose: the strategic exchange of the queen's bishop or the powerful Petrosian plan ... ♖c6/... ♘b7. Both choices offer possibilities of a creative defence.

Potentially, the set-up with ...b6/... ♘f8 offers dynamic play quite soon, thanks to the fact that all the pieces and pawns (and squares!) remain on the board.

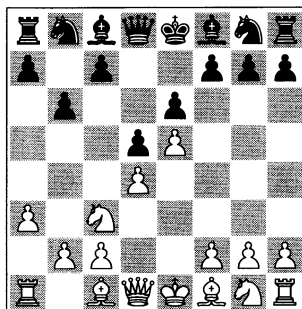
GAME 57

□ **Garry Kasparov**
 ■ **Vasily Ivanchuk**
 Horgen 1995 (6)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖c3 ♘b4 4.e5 b6 5.a3!?

A logical and automatic move to clarify the two sides' strategies.

5... ♘f8!?



Vasily Ivanchuk, one of the greatest champions of modern chess, sets his opponent tough tasks in all kinds of games. 5... ♘xc3+!? remains a popular alternative: 6.bxc3 ♖e7 7. ♖g4 ♖g6 8.h4·h5 9. ♖g3 ♘a6 10. ♖e2 (10. ♘xa6 ♖xa6 11. ♖e2 c5⇒ Retinsky-Moskalenko, Alushta 1995) 10... ♖f8 11.a4 ♖c6!? 12. ♖f4 ♘xf1! 13. ♖xg6+ fxg6 14. ♖xf1 ♖e8∞ 15. ♖d3 ♖g8 16.c4 dxc4 17. ♖xc4 ♖d8 18.c3 ♖h7 19. ♖h3 ♖f8 20. ♘g5 ♖d5 21. ♖g1 ♖a5 22. ♖a6 ½-½ Leko-Moskalenko, Copenhagen 1995.

6. ♖f3

A very natural developing move. The following examples from my own games may also be instructive:

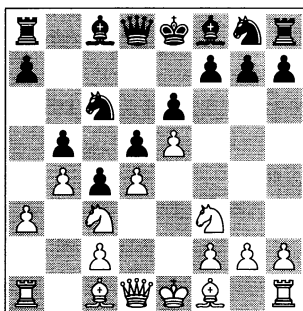
A) 6.h4 c5!? 7. ♖f3 ♘a6 8. ♘xa6 ♖xa6 9. ♖d3 ♖c7 10.h5 h6 11. ♖e2 ♖e7 12.c3 ♖c6 13.b4 c4! 14. ♖e3 a5 15. ♖b1 axb4 16.axb4 ♖b5 17. ♘d2 ♖a2 18.0-0 ♘e7 19. ♖h2 ♖a8 20.f4 ♖a3 21. ♖c1 ♖xd2! 22. ♖xd2 ♖xc3—+ Baches Garcia-Moskalenko, Catalonia-ch 2003;

B) 6. ♘e3 ♖e7 7. ♘d3 ♘a6 8. ♖ge2 ♖d7 9. ♖g3 ♘xd3 10. ♖xd3 ♖bc6 11.b4∞ Colovic-Moskalenko, Montcada Open 2003;

C) 6. ♘b5+ (avoiding the exchange of the light-squared bishops) 6...c6 7. ♘a4

♘d7 8. ♖ce2 c5 9. ♘b3 ♘b5 10. c3 ♖c6
11. ♖f3 ♖ge7 12. 0-0 ♖f5= Korneev-
Moskalenko, Montcada Open 2003;

D) Or else 6.b4 c5!? 7. ♖f3 ♖c6!?
8. ♘d3 c4 9. ♘f1 b5!.



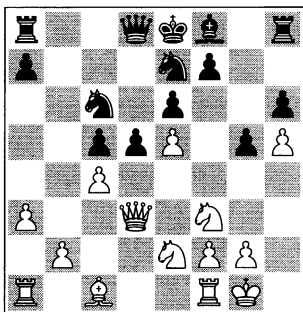
analysis diagram

In Nimzowitsch's 'System' style. 10.g3
(10. ♖xb5 a5 11. ♘g5 ♖b6⇒) 10...a5
11. ♖xb5 axb4 12. a4 ♘a6 13. ♘d2 ♖a5
14. ♖b1 ♘xb5 15. axb5 ♖xb5 ♢ Baron
Rodriguez-Moskalenko, Mataro 2004/05.

6... ♖e7!?

The right manoeuvre, waiting for one
more tempo. We will examine the risky
advance 6...c5!? in the next game.

The strategic idea 6...♘a6 could be too
hasty, but it has its good points: 7. ♘xa6
♖xa6 8. ♖e2! (the knight heads for f4.
Or, for instance, 8.h4 ♖e7 9.h5 h6
10. ♖d3 ♖b8 11. ♖e2 c5 12. dxc5 bxc5
13. c4 ♖bc6 14. 0-0 g5!



analysis diagram

15. hxg6 ♖xg6 16. cxd5 ♖xd5 17. ♖b5

♖d7⇒ threatening ...♖xe5, Berzinsh-
Moskalenko, Solsona 2003) 8... ♖d7
9. 0-0 c6 10. ♖f4 ♘e7 11. ♖d3 ♖c7
12. ♘d2 h5 13. ♖ac1 0-0-0 14. c4 ♖b7
(14...g5! (Black Jet) 15. ♖e2 g4⇒)
15. ♖c3↑ preparing ♖fc1, increasing the
pressure along the c-file, Leko-
Vaganian, Yerevan 2001.

7.h4

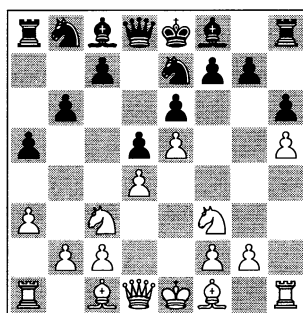
However, we all know that Kasparov
will never wait for you!

After 7. ♘d3 a possible answer is
7... ♖bc6! (Petrosian's favourite plan. Or:
7... ♘a6 8. ♘xa6 ♖xa6 9. 0-0 c5?! 10. ♖e2
♖c6 11. ♖f4∞ Lopez Martinez-Moska-
lenko, Salou 2006) 8. 0-0 ♘b7 9. ♘d2
♖d7 10. b4 ♖g6 11. ♖e1 ½-½ Nedelj-
kovic-Petrosian, Vienna Ech-tt 1957.

7...h6!?

This move seems to be useful, since it
defends the g5-square. On the other
hand, after 7...h5 8. ♘g5! White gained
a slight initiative in A.Sokolov-Portisch,
Moscow GMA 1990.

8.h5 a5!?



As usual, Ivanchuk finds his own path
instead of choosing between ...♘a6 or
...♖c6/...♘b7.

9. ♘b5+

A thematic check, avoiding the ex-
change of the light-squared bishops.

9...c6 10. ♘a4 ♖d7 11. ♖e2 b5 12. ♘b3
c5 13. c3 ♖c6 14. 0-0 ♖c7 15. ♖e1 c4

16.♖c2

With a position very similar to the Lab-
yrynth seen in Part One, Chapter 2.
White will have a hard time trying to
find an effective plan.

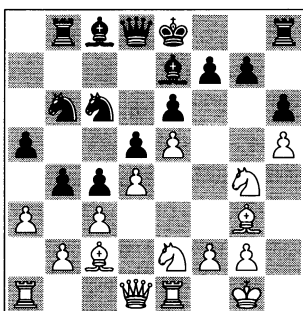
16...♗b6 17.♖f4 ♖e7 18.♖g3 ♜b8!

Everything is ready for the ‘barricades’
attack ...b5-b4.

19.♗h2 ♝d8?!

Lacking confidence. 19...b4! was a
good move.

20.♗g4 b4!



21.axb4 axb4 22.cxb4?

After this unfortunate exchange Black
gains the initiative on the queenside.

22...♗xb4 23.♖b1 ♖d7 24.b3 ♜a8

25.♜xa8 ♝xa8 26.bxc4 ♗xc4 27.♗c1?

The white knights’ manoeuvres have
not been very successful in this game.

27...♖a4 28.♝e2 ♝a7!

Winning the d4 pawn.

29.♗e3 ♝xd4 30.♗xc4 dxc4 31.♝f1

0-0

0-1

This was one of Kasparov’s last losses
with white.

GAME 58

□ **Viktor Moskalenko**

■ **Jorge Gonzalez Rodriguez**

Montcada Open 2006 (5)

‘Barricades always have two sides.’

1.e4!

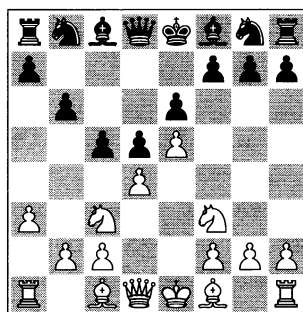
I usually play 1.d4, but I took this deci-
sion because I knew that against 1.e4
my opponent always chooses the
French Defence, which is also part of
my repertoire.

1...e6

Now I do not care about the colour of
my pieces!

2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♖b4 4.e5 b6 5.a3 ♖f8

6.♗f3 c5!?



An almost unknown move invented by
Kortchnoi back in 1976. Black changes
his plan and goes back to the usual
French paths by attacking the centre.

7.♖g5!?

In another game against 6...c5 White
continued 7.♖d3 ♗c6 8.0-0 ♗ge7
9.♗b5 ♗g6 10.♗g5?! (too ambitious)
10...a6 11.♗d6+ ♖xd6 12.exd6 c4
13.♖xc4 Golubev-Nosenko, Klaipeda
1985. And here 13...f6!?♠ could have
refuted White’s plan entirely.

7...♝d7

A novelty. My opponent in this game is
a very creative player who always finds
his own paths, even if they are (too)
risky. I have also played this line with
the black pieces, but I preferred
7...♖e7!? 8.♖xe7 (8.h4!?, threatening
♗b5, was somewhat better for White in
Kurajica-Kortchnoi, Amsterdam IBM
1976) 8...♗xe7 9.♗b5 0-0!= Fluvia
Poyatos-Moskalenko, Badalona 2005.

8.dxc5!?

From this point onwards I felt that White should open up the position as much as possible, in order to take advantage of his better development. One of my games with Black continued 8.♘b5 ♘c6 9.♘a4 a6 10.dxc5 b5 11.♘b3 ♘xc5 12.♖e2 h6 (12...♘ge7!?) 13.♘f4 ♘ge7 14.0-0-0 ♖a7∞ Lopez Martinez-Moskalenko, Sants Open 2006.

8...bxc5 9.♘b5 ♘c6 10.0-0

Black's centre is strong, but he is under-developed, and so White has many tactical chances.

10...a6?!

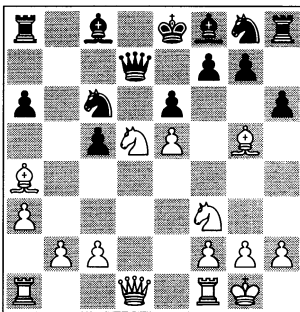
The unnecessary weakening of the b6-square will cost Black dearly. Better was 10...♖b8!? 11.♖e2±, or perhaps the immediate 10...h6!?

11.♘a4 h6?

The white bishops prevent Black from developing comfortably. Defending is not easy here.

12.♘xd5!!

I had foreseen this blow and now the moment has arrived. White sacrifices his minor pieces in order to penetrate into the opponent's fortress.



12...hxcg5

The main point of White's combination is 12...exd5? 13.e6! fxe6 (13...♖xe6 14.♖e1) 14.♘xc6 ♖xc6 15.♘e5+-

with the threats 16.♘xc6 and 16.♖h5+.

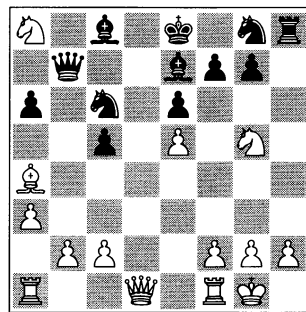
13.♘b6 ♖b7 14.♘xa8

This seems natural. Also good was Fritz's 14.♘xg5!? ♖h4 (14...♖xb6? 15.♖f3 with decisive threats) 15.b4! with an almost winning advantage.

14...♘e7

Black is ready to capture the a8 knight, but...

15.♘xg5!



15...♘d7

There is no time for 15...♘xg5 16.♖d6 ♘d7 17.♘c7+ ♔d8 18.♖f1 ♖xc7 19.♖f8 mate, or 15...♖xa8 16.♖f3!.

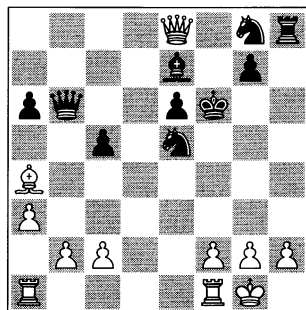
16.♘xf7!

Another kamikaze knight!

16...♔xf7 17.♘b6! ♖xb6

In the event of 17...♘e8 18.♖f3+ ♔g6, simply 19.♘c4 wins.

18.♖xd7 ♘xe5 19.♖e8+ ♔f6

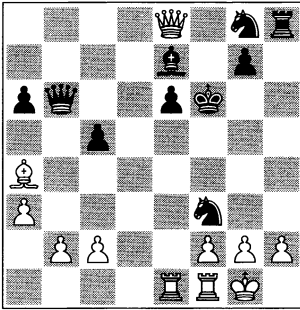


It looks as though the storm has blown over and Black can begin to breathe, but now the second part of the attack begins, this time with the heavy pieces.

20. ♖ae1!

This game follows strategic concepts. The ideas are activating the rook and preparing ♘b3 and f2-f4, with an irresistible attack.

20... ♖f3+!?



23. ♘b3 with a big advantage for White.

21. gxf3

21. ♖h1?? ♖xh2+ mate.

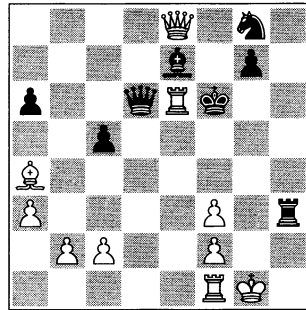
21... ♖d6

Threatening mate in one! A counterattacking attempt that fails.

22. h3!

This quiet move solves the problem.

22... ♖xh3 23. ♖xe6+!!



Attack is the best form of defence! This resource seems to be very strong, since it opens up the white king's position. We now arrive at the key moment in the game.

After 20... ♖d6 White has 21. ♖e3!, threatening 22. ♖fe1! and parrying the threat of 21... ♖f3+, because now the knight will be captured with check.

The most tenacious was probably 20... ♖d8 21. ♖xd8 ♘xd8 22. f4 ♖g6

The final hardhitter in this game.

23... ♖xe6

Or 23... ♖xe6 24. ♘d7+ (24. ♖g6+!? wins as well) 24... ♖xd7 25. ♖e1+ winning the queen.

24. ♘d7

1-0

Black resigned, since he loses his rook on h3 without compensation. I greatly enjoyed this dynamic game, both while playing and while analysing the lines more calmly at home.

Epilogue

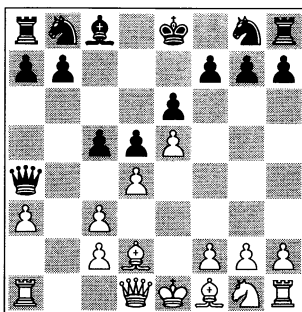
The defensive system with 4... b6 and 5... ♘f8 allows you to:

- 1) either fight dogmas or follow them (and even beating Garry Kasparov!);
- 2) avoid long theoretical lines;
- 3) go straight into the middlegame;
- 4) defend against the dangerous attack with ♖g4;
- 5) spend some time playing purely strategic chess...

What else can we ask for? Oh yes, STATISTICS! However, in these lines there are only attackers, defenders and eventually, just ruins, so statistics simply do not exist. What you must keep in mind is: barricades always have two sides!

Chapter 9 – Black Queen Blues: Winawer Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♚a5 7.♙d2 ♚a4



‘Queens never make bargains’ – Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*



History

In the 1940s a new concept in the Winawer Variation was devised: the sharp queen move 6...♚a5!?. Soon the idea was developed by several leading players, such as Mikhail Botvinnik and David Bronstein. And later on, in 1956, Black found out that the queen was useful not only for launching a bold attack, but also for establishing a powerful blockade with 7...♚a4!?. And this is the key move of our second handling of the Winawer Variation; see also Game 59, Zsedenyi-Portisch.

The idea of ...♚a5 and then ...♚a4 has survived, and with the years it has come back into use as an exotic variation. Black fights for the initiative and starts a direct counterattack, making use of the great capabilities of the black queen.

Plans

First, let us look at the possibilities and resources offered by the ...♚a5-a4 manoeuvre:

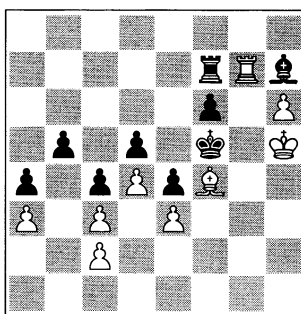
- * The black queen attacks the pawn on c3 and prevents White from developing comfortably;

- * After the black queen goes to a4, either the squares d4 and c2 will be attacked, or the queenside will be blocked with the advance ...c5-c4. After this White's two bishops will be temporarily out of play;
- * Black has the option of castling queenside and counterattacking in the centre and on the kingside;
- * Another possible plan is ...b6 and ...♙a6 – the exchange of the light-squared bishops reduces White's initiative and increases the weaknesses in White's pawn structure;
- * The classical break ...f6!? will always help Black to achieve counterplay in the centre; a blockade with ...f7-f5 is also possible;
- * Another important strategic resource for Black is an attack with his queenside pawns by ...b5/...a5/...b4;
- * If the queens are exchanged, Black retains good counterplay on all sides of the board;
- * From the start White has two different strategies at his disposal. He may choose closed and slow play, trying to dominate the entire board, or he can look for sharp lines, trying to open up the position right from the very first moves. However, both sides can change their strategy suddenly, at any point, and this is the most interesting and amusing aspect in the games presented.

Typical Endings

Here's an example from my own practice with a typical Winawer ending (see the notes to Game 62)..

After checking everything, my opponent played 53. ♖g7, thinking that he was playing only for two results; a draw or a win.



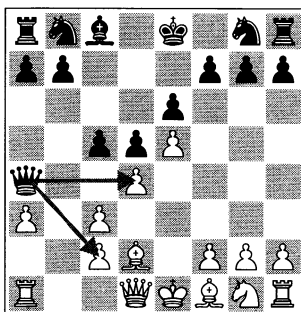
However, after 53... ♖xg7 (53... ♙e6? 54. ♖xh7!) 54. hxg7 ♙g8 55. ♙h6?? ♙g4!., this evaluation changed dramatically. Later, with 66... a1 ♙, Black's queen was resurrected and he ended up with a full point (Corrales-Moskalenko, Sabadell 2008).

Directions

After 6... ♙a5 we have the first critical position. It looks as though White doesn't achieve anything with the gambit 7. ♘f3?! because of 7... cxd4!, with sufficient counterplay for Black.

Therefore, if White wants to fight for the advantage he must choose between:

- 1) a solid game with 7.♙d2, in which the chances are equal;
- 2) ambitious play with 7.♙d2!, which is White's main move. But here Black continues with his queen manoeuvre; 7...♙a4!?, blocking the a-pawn and attacking the d4- and c2-squares.

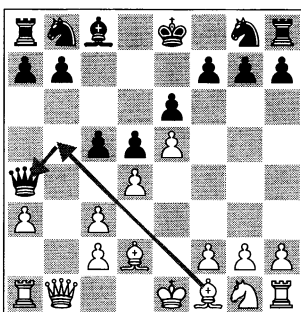


This is the starting position of our study. It is very complicated, and it contains many possibilities for both sides.

White has four natural reactions: two queen moves: A) 8.♙b1, B) 8.♙g4, or rapid development with the aim of attacking with C) 8.♘f3 or D) 8.h4.

In MegaBase there are many games with this line. But here we will analyse some illustrative games which have been played recently, with typical play for each side in every line:

- A) 'Anti-blues': 8.♙b1 – the threat of 9.♙b5+ prevents the classical plan with ...b6 and ...♙a6 (Games 60-62).



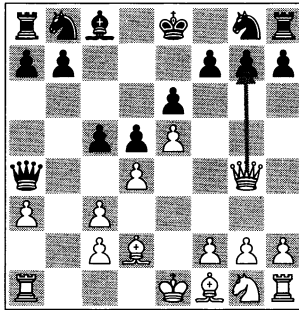
In this case Black blocks the centre with 8...c4, forcing the white queen to waste time getting reactivated. The alternative is 8...a6, which allows the exchange of queens after 9.♙b3!? ♙xb3 10.cxb3, with a comfortable ending for White.

- A1) 8...c4 9.♘f3 and now:

A11) 9...f6, the classic break in the French Defence (Game 60);

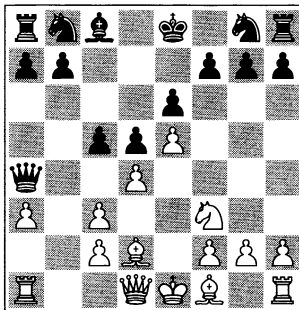
A12) 9...♘c6 is a natural reply and a standard plan which prepares queenside castling (Game 61).

- A2) 8...c4 9.h4. Just as in 9. ♖h3, there are two main plans: 9... ♖c6/f6; here we find several examples with very complicated play (Game 62).
- B) Super blues: 8. ♖g4 – this is the most aggressive move in all variations of the French Defence, creating weaknesses in Black’s position (Games 63, 64).



The pawn on g7 is under attack and there are two ways of defending it:

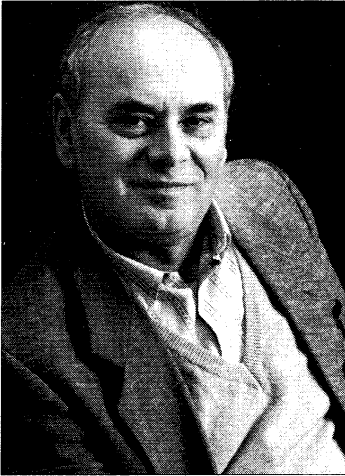
- B1) 8...g6 is the classical ‘Winawer-Nimzowitsch’ defence, with a sharp fight between the queens after, for instance, 9. ♖d1 b6 10.h4 ♗a6 11. ♗xa6 ♖xa6 12.h5 cxd4 (Game 63);
- B2) 8...♗f8 is a modern idea in the French Defence; the king defends the dark squares! After 9. ♖d1 b6!? 10.c4/h4/dxc5 White tries to become active in the centre and/or attacks on the kingside (Game 64).
- C) 8. ♖f3 – White prefers quick development (Games 65-67)



- C1) 8...b6!? with the idea ...♗a6, reducing White’s initiative. At this point White can either open the game with 9. ♖b1 or continue developing with 9. ♗d3 (Game 65);
- C2) 8...c4 with ideas of blockading and/or attacking on the wings (Game 66)
- C3) 8... ♖c6, developing and looking for pressure in the centre (Game 67).
- D) 8.h4 – on the attack! This leads to an even more creative game (Game 68).

Black Queen Blues – Games

Let us look at the stem game with the ...♚a5-a4 manoeuvre, which illustrates the character of the ensuing play.



The famous grandmaster Lajos Portisch was the first to play the 'Black Queen Blues'.

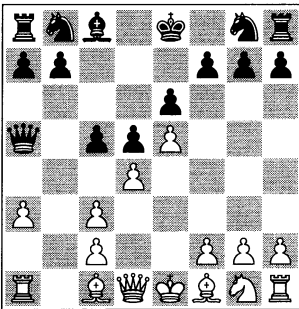
GAME 59

□ Bela Zsedenyi

■ Lajos Portisch

Budapest Szikra 1956

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 c5
5.a3 ♘xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♚a5!



The black queen begins playing the 'blues'.

7.♙d2!

A) The critical reply to the gambit 7.♘f3 is 7...cxd4! 8.♙d3 (8.♚xd4 ♘c6⇒) 8...♘c6 9.0-0 dxc3 10.♚b1 ♘ge7 with two extra pawns; or else 10...f6∞ B.Martin-Dreyer, Otago ch-NZL 1991;

B) The modest defence 7.♚d2 offers a solid game for both sides: 7...♘c6 8.♘f3 ♘ge7!? (other interesting plans are 8...f6 9.♚b1∞, or 8...b6 9.dxc5 bxc5 10.a4 ♙a6 11.♙xa6 ♚xa6 12.♙a3 ♚c8∞ Poulton-Pert, England tt 2001/02) 9.♙e2 ♙d7 (9...b6!? 10.dxc5 ♙a6!⇒) 10.a4 ♚c8 11.0-0 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♚xd2 13.♙xd2 ♘f5 14.c3 ♘a5 and Black managed to win this equal ending, Ragozin-Botvinnik, Moscow match 1944.

7...♚a4!?

This is the key move of Black's plan. Black immediately exerts pressure on White's weaknesses on the queenside, limiting the activity of the white pieces. The alternatives in the years 1943-46 were:

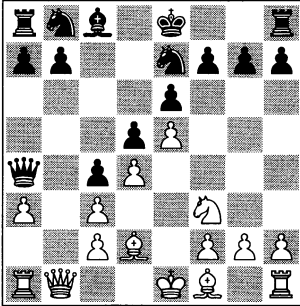
A) In the stem game 7...c4?! was played. This is a typical blockade, but at the moment it is premature: 8.h4 (8.♚g4!↑) 8...♘e7 9.f4?! ♘bc6 10.h5 ♙d7 (10...♘f5!) 11.♘f3 h6 12.♙e2 0-0-0 13.♚c1 ♘f5 14.♙f2 ♚df8⇒ preparing ...f7-f6, with a complex game, De Agustin-Alonso Leira, Madrid 1943;

B) Also interesting is 7...♘e7!? 8.♙d3 (8.c4 ♚c7⇒; 8.♚g4!?) 8...♘bc6 9.♘f3 c4! 10.♙f1 ♙d7 11.g3 f6!⇒ Simagin-Bronstein, Moscow city championship 1946.

8.♚g4!

The white queen's move to g4 is the most aggressive plan in the Winawer Variation. For 8.♚b1, see Games 60-62

and for 8.h4, see Game 68. Another old game by the famous black player went: 8. ♘f3 (see also Games 65-67) 8... ♘e7 9. ♖b1 (threatening ♙b5+) 9...c4!.



We have one of the key positions of the ‘black queen’ variation. 10.g3 ♘bc6 11. ♙g2 ♙d7 12.0-0 0-0-0 13. ♘g5 ♗df8 14.f4 f6! (the customary break, which ensures counterplay in the centre) 15. ♘f3 ♖b8 16. ♗b2 ♙e8! (a typical manoeuvre with the French bishop) 17. ♙h3 ♙g6 18. ♗ac1 ♙f5 with excellent possibilities for Black, Dely-Portisch, Balatonfüred 1959.

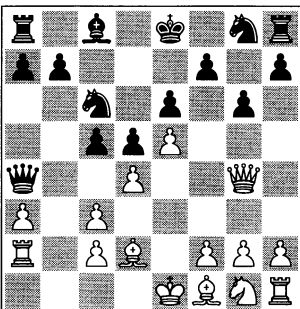
8...g6

The modern defence is 8... ♖f8!?, see Game 64.

9. ♗a2?!

9. ♖d1 is the main line, see Games 63 and 64.

9... ♘c6



With pressure on the d4-square and the threat 10... ♘xe5!.

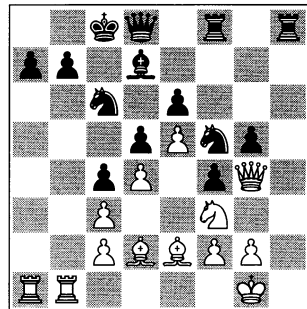
10. ♘f3 h6 .11. ♗f4 c4 12.h4 ♙d7 13. ♘h2 ♖b5 14. ♗a1 ♗b2 15. ♗c1 ♗xa3 16. ♙e2 0-0-0 17.0-0

17. ♗xf7 ♘ge7 is unclear.

17... ♗f8 18. ♗a1 ♖b2 19. ♗fc1 f6 20. ♙d1 ♖b6 21. ♗cb1 ♗d8 22. ♗g3 ♘ge7 23. ♙g4 f5 24. ♙e2 f4 25. ♗g4 ♘f5 26. ♘f3 g5 27.hxg5?

Opening the h-file to Black’s advantage. 27.h5 was better.

27...hxg5→



28. ♗xg5 ♖e8 29. ♘h2 ♗h4 30. ♙g4 ♗fh8 31. ♙xf5 ♗xh2 32. ♙h3 ♗2xh3 33.gxh3 ♗g8 34. ♙xf4 ♗xg5+ 35. ♙xg5 ♗g6

And the black queen comes alive!

36.h4 ♖xc2 37. ♗c1 ♖f5 38.f4 ♙e8 39. ♗a2 ♖d3 40. ♗f2 ♗g3+! 0-1

With this ‘old blues song’ we have begun the study of the sharp ‘black queen’ variation.

GAME 60

□ Ponnuswamy Konguvel

■ Viktor Moskalenko

Andorra Open 2006 (2)

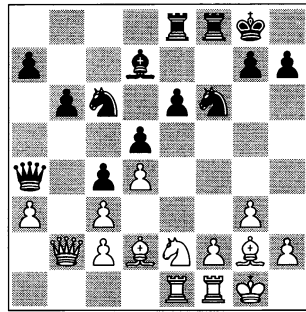
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖a5

A risky but interesting idea, which is gaining popularity in modern practice.

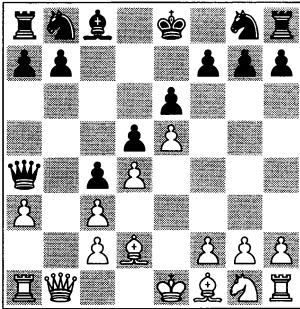
7. ♖d2 ♖a4 8. ♖b1

This is White's most popular move, but I am not sure that it is stronger than 8. ♖g4 or 8. ♖f3. The idea is to prevent Black's strategic plan of ...b6 and ...♖a6 by threatening 9. ♖b5+.

8...c4



analysis diagram

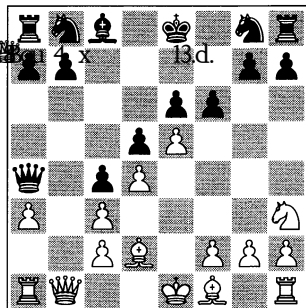


Black blocks the centre in order to play a closed game. The three bishops on the board are temporarily out of play. Black can also try 8...a6 9. ♖b3 (9. ♖f3!?) 9... ♖xb3 10. cxb3±; on the other hand, 8... ♖c6 9. ♖b5 ♖a5 10. ♖f3 seems favourable for White.

9. ♖h3!?

The knight is flexible on h3, preparing ♖f4 and ♖h5 → with an attack on g7.

A) Quite similar is 9. ♖e2 f6 (in this case I prefer 9... ♖c6!?, see the next game) 10. exf6 ♖xf6 11. g3 (a logical move. But 11. ♖g3 ♖c6 12. ♖e2 0-0 (12...e5?! 13. dxe5 ♖xe5 14. ♖f4 ♖g6 15. ♖e3 0-0 16. 0-0 b6 17. ♖d1±



This typical counterthrust may be the most satisfactory move in this position. The knight on h3 isn't defending the e5-square. For 9...♖c6!? see the next game.

10.f4

White prefers a pawn wedge set-up.

If 10. ♖f4 fxe5 11. dxe5 ♖e7 ⇒.

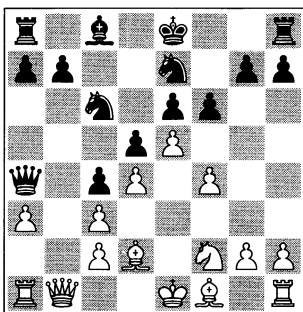
Interesting is 10. ♘e2!? (preparing ♘h5+) 10...fxe5 (10...♖c6!?) 11. dxe5 ♖c6 12. f4 ♖ge7 13. ♘h5+! g6 14. ♘f3 ♘d7 15. 0-0 0-0-0∞ Timman-Jacimovic, Gothenburg Ech-tt 2005.

10...♖c6 11. ♖f2

11. ♘e2!? f5 12. 0-0 ♖ge7 13. ♘h5+ g6 14. ♘e2 ♘d7 15. ♖b2 0-0-0 16. ♖fb1 b6 17. ♖c1 h6 18. ♘e1 ♖dg8 19. ♖h1 ♘e8 20. ♖d2 ♖a5 21. ♘h4 g5 22. fxg5 ♖g6 23. ♘f2 hxg5 24. ♖xg5 ♖d7 25. ♘f3 ♖e7 26. ♖h3 ♖h4 27. ♘xh4 ♖xh4 ⇒ Short-Akopian, France tt 2004.

11...♖ge7

This position allows both sides to experiment. Play whatever you like, but play well!



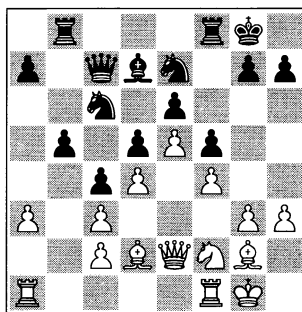
12.g3

Activating the light-squared bishop.

12...0-0!? 13. ♘h3 ♖b8 14. 0-0 ♘d7 15. ♖d1 f5!?

At last – the blockade.

16. ♘g2 b5! 17. h3 ♖a5 18. ♖e2 ♖c7



Preparing a 'Queenside Jet' attack with ...a5 and ...b4. Or 18...♖c8!? with the idea ...♖b6-a4.

19. ♖d1 a5 20. ♖e3 b4! 21. axb4 axb4

22. g4 ♖h8

Black has two interesting ideas to make progress: 22...b3!? or 22...♘e8!/?...♘g6.

23. ♘e1 ♘e8! 24. ♖d1 b3! 25. cxb3 ♖xb3

25...cxb3!?

26. ♖c2 ♘g6

26...♖xd4! 27. cxd4 ♖xe3 28. ♘b4 ♘g6 29. ♘d6∞.

27. ♖d1 ♖fb8 28. ♖f2 h6 29. ♖fa2 ♖c8

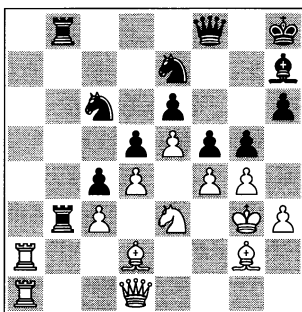
30. ♖h2 ♖f8 31. ♖g3? T

Defending the pawn wedge with the king is very dangerous. 31. ♖f2 was better, with an unclear position.

31...♘h7

31...♖b4! 32. ♖f2 ♖d3 T.

32. ♘d2 g5!



This 'Black Jet' is the decisive resource in Black's attack.

33.♙f1 gxf4+ 34.♗xf4

Or 34.♙xf4 ♘g6 followed by 35...f4+, winning a piece.

34...♘g6+

The black knights enter the game. 34...♘xd4!?

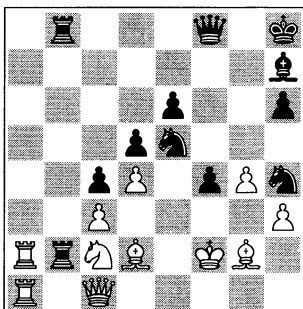
35.♗f3 f4 36.♘c2 ♖b2!?

36...♘gxe5+! 37.dxe5 ♙xc2 38.♖xc2 ♘d4+ was easier.

37.♗f2 ♘h4

37...♘gxe5! 38.dxe5 ♙c5+ 39.♘d4 ♘xd4 is curtains.

38.♙c1 ♘xe5!



The battle approaches a dramatic finish.

39.dxe5

If 39.♙f1, 39...♖xc2 40.♖xc2 ♙xc2 41.♙xc2 ♘ef3, winning.

39...♖xc2! → 40.♖xc2 ♙c5+ 41.♙e3 ♙xe3+! 42.♙xe3

The queens are eliminated, but...

42...fxe3+ 43.♗g3 ♙xc2 44.♗xh4 e2

45.♗g3 ♙d3 46.♗f2 ♖f8+ 47.♗g1

♗g7 48.♖e1 ♗g6 49.h4 ♖f4 50.♙h3

♖f3 51.♙g2 ♖g3 0-1

GAME 61

□ Oleg Korneev

■ Ildar Ibragimov

Montreal 2006 (5)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5

5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♙a5 7.♙d2 ♙a4

8.♙b1

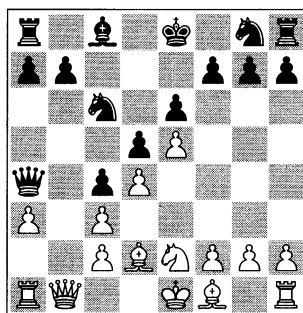
An interesting move, but after playing this line many times with Black I have come to the conclusion that 8.♙g4 or 8.♘f3 may be stronger.

8...c4 9.♘h3

Other moves of the g1 knight (involving the reply ...♘c6 and the plan with ...0-0-0) are:

A) 9.♘f3 ♘c6!? 10.g3 (10.♙e2 is simpler) 10...♙d7 11.♙g2 0-0-0 12.♘g5 ♖f8 13.0-0 h6 14.♘h3 g5! 15.f3 f6⇐ Timman-Vaganian, Bazna 2007;

B) 9.♘e2 (this manoeuvre has similar ideas to the main game) 9...♘c6!?



analysis diagram

with numerous possibilities:

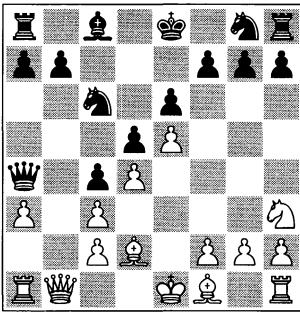
B1) 10.g3 ♙d7 11.♙g2 0-0-0 12.0-0 ♘ge7 13.♖e1 ♗b8 14.♘f4 g6 15.♙c1 h6 with a blocked position, Predojevic-Asrian, Moscow 2007;

B2) 10.♘g3 ♙d7 and now:

B21) 11.♘h5 g6 12.♘g3 0-0-0 13.♙e2 f6 14.exf6 ♘xf6 15.0-0 h5!?!⇐ 16.h4 ♙a5 17.♙g5 ♖df8 18.♙b2 ♘h7 19.♙h6 ♖f7 20.♖ab1 ♙c7 21.f4 b6 22.♖be1 ♘f6 23.♙g5 ♘h7 24.♙h6 ♙d8!⇐ Yakovenko-Zhang Pengxiang, Taiyuan 2006;

B22) 11.♙e2 0-0-0 12.0-0 (12.f4 g6=) 12...f5 13.♘h5 g6 14.♘f6 ♘xf6 (14...h6!?) 15.exf6 h6±, Spoelman-Hou Yifan, Wijk aan Zee II 2008.

9... ♖c6



Natural development. Instead of playing his resource ...f7-f6, Black prepares queenside castling.

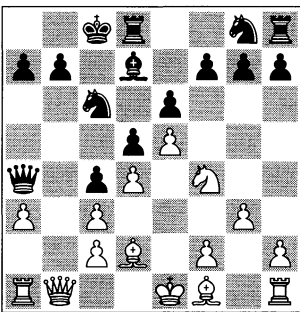
10. ♖f4 ♗d7!

Worse is 10... ♖ge7?! 11. ♖h5!; or 10...g6! (it is better to wait with this move) 11.g3 ♗d7 12. ♗h3 0-0-0 13.0-0 ♖b8 14. ♖e1 ♖a8 15. ♗b2 ♗a5?! 16.a4 ♖ge7 17. ♖eb1 ♖b8 18. ♗c1 ♖c8 19. ♖g2 ♖b6 20. ♖e3 ♖xa4? 21. ♖xd5! and White brutally punished his opponent, Volokitin-Lputian, Sochi tt 2006.

11.g3

If 11. ♗xb7?! ♖b8 12. ♗c7 ♗xc2!?, or, for instance, 11. ♗e2 0-0-0 12.0-0 f6! ♗g4 ♖e8 14. ♖e1 fxe5 15.dxe5 ♖e7 (15... ♖h6!?) 16. ♖h5 ♖f7 17. ♖f4 ♖e7 18. ♖h5 ♖f7 19. ♖f4 ♖e7 ½-½ Kamsky-Onischuk, New York 2006.

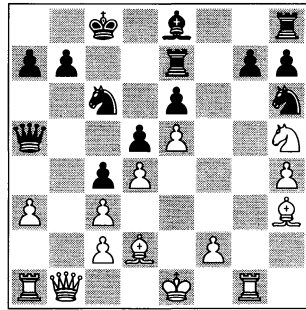
11...0-0-0!



12. ♗h3 f5

This blockade is a feasible plan. But here 12...h5!? is also interesting: 13. ♗d1 h4 14.g4 f6!? (14... ♖f8 15.0-0 ♖ge7=) 15.0-0 ♖ge7 16.exf6 gxf6 17.g5 ♖dg8 18. ♖xe6 b6 19. ♖h1 fxg5∞ Kruppa-Krivoshey, Nikolaev Zonal 1995.

13.g4 fxg4 14. ♗xg4 ♖e8 15.h4 ♖e7 16. ♖g1 ♗a5 17. ♗h3 ♖h6 18. ♖h5 ♗e8!



Black has obtained a more than satisfactory game.

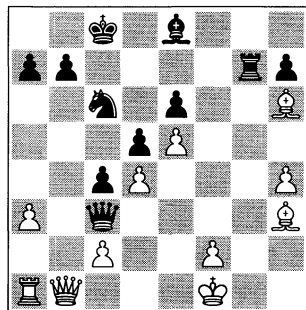
19. ♖xg7

Tactical operations begin, but the white king is not very safe.

19... ♖g8! 20. ♖f1??

There is no time for such manoeuvres. 20. ♗b2 ♖exg7 21. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 22. ♗xh6 ♖g1+∞.

20... ♖xg7 21. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 22. ♗xh6 ♗xc3!†



An unexpected intermediate move. Now Black's counterattack is irresistible.

23.♙xe6+ ♕d7 24.♙xd7+
 24...♖e1 ♖f3!
 24...♗xd7 25.♙e3 ♘xd4 26.♖e1
 ♖xe1+ 27.♗xe1 ♘xc2–+
 Forcing a winning rook ending.
 28.♗e2 ♘xe3+ 29.♗xe3 d4 30.♗e4
 c3 31.♙e1 d3 32.♙d1 d2 33.♗c4+
 ♗c7 34.♗xc7+ ♙xc7 35.a4 b6 36.f4
 a6 37.f5 ♙d7 38.f6 ♙e6 0-1

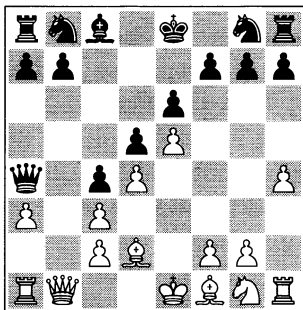
GAME 62

□ Darmen Sadvakasov

■ Ruslan Pogorelov

Moscow Aeroflot 2002 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5
 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖a5 7.♙d2 ♖a4
 8.♖b1 c4 9.h4!?



Go! With the centre blocked, the white player organises a flank attack.

9...♘c6

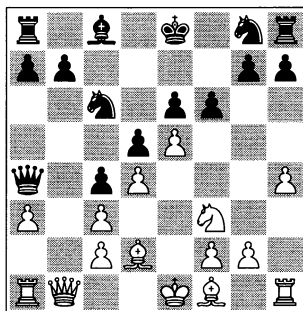
The alternative, as always, is 9...f6!?, for instance:

A) 10.h5 fxe5 11.dxe5 (11.h6?! ♘xh6 12.♙xh6 gxh6 13.♖c1?! ♘c6! 14.♖xh6 ♙d7 15.dxe5 ♖xc2 and Black soon achieved an advantage, Corrales Jimenez-Moskalenko, Sitges 2007) 11...♘c6 12.f4 ♘h6!⇌; in this position castling kingside is preferable

for Black, Yakovenko-Zhang Pengxiang, Ergun 2006;

B) 10.♖d1 ♘c6 11.♖g4 ♙f8∞ Sommerbauer-Pilaj, Köflach ch-AUT 2006;

C) 10.♘f3 ♘c6.

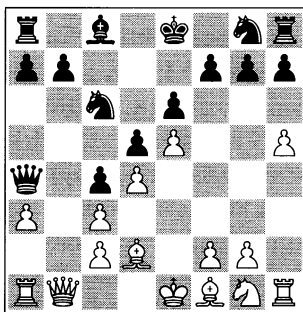


A key moment.

C1) 11.♙f4 ♖a5 12.♖b2 ♘ge7! (worse is 12...fxe5 13.♘xe5 ♘ge7 14.♘xc6 ♘xc6 15.♙d6± Corrales Jimenez-Moskalenko, Barcelona Sants Open 2007) 13.h5 (13.exf6 gxf6∞) 13...0-0 14.♙e2 fxe5 15.♙xe5 ♘xe5 16.♘xe5 ♘c6 with equality, Van Riemsdijk-Moskalenko, Montcada Open 2007;

C2) 11.h5 fxe5! 12.h6 ♘xh6 13.♙xh6 gxh6 14.♘xe5 ♖a5! 15.♗h3 (15.♖b2 ♘xd4!) 15...♘xe5 16.dxe5 (Yagupov-Nikitin, St Petersburg 2000) and here Black could have fought for an advantage with 16...♗g8!.

10.h5

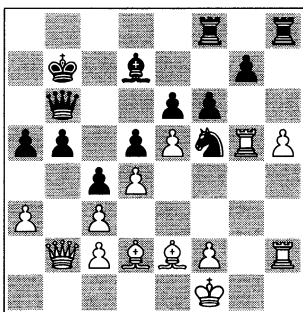


10...h6

This leads to an unclear game. Also possible is 10... ♘d7!? 11. ♖f3 (11.h6?! ♖xh6) 11...0-0-0 and now:

A) In case of the fianchetto 12.g3 f6!? 13. ♘h3 ♖f8 14.0-0 f5 (the choice of two Armenian grandmasters, but 14...fxe5!? is the most concrete, for example: 15. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 16.dxe5 ♖e7) 15. ♖h4 ♖a5 16. ♖d1 ♖d8∞ Filipov-Akopian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007 and Sutovsky-Vaganian, Kemer tt 2007;

B) 12. ♘e2!? with a spectacular battle: 12...h6 13.g3 ♖ge7 14. ♖f1 ♖b8 15. ♖g2 ♖a8 16. ♖b2 ♖b8 17. ♖h4 b5 18. ♖g1 ♖a5 19. ♖f1 ♖b6 20.g4 a5 21. ♖h2 ♖b8 22. ♖c1 ♖b7 23.g5 hxg5 24. ♖xg5 ♖f5 25. ♖h4 ♖ce7 26. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 27. ♖b2 f6!?



analysis diagram

I recommend that the reader study this position for a while.

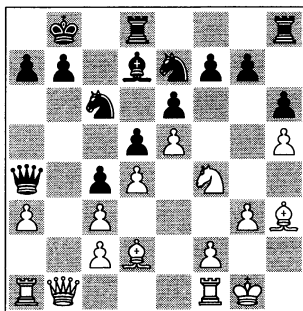
Both players have showed the best possibilities in the ‘Black Queen Blues’ variation, but in the end, only one of them can win... 28.exf6 gxf6 (probably equivalent were 28... ♖xf6!? 29. ♘f4 ♖f7 or 28... ♖d6!? 29. ♖h3 ♖xf6 30.a4∞ with attractive play) 29. ♖xf5?! exf5 30. ♘f4 ♖e8 White does not have compensation for the exchange, Corrales Jimenez-Moskalenko, Sabadell 2008 – the dramatic final phase of this game is given in the introduction.

11. ♖f3

Or, for example:

A) 11. ♖d1 ♘d7 (≥ 11... ♖ge7!) 12. ♖g4 ♖h7 13. ♖d1 0-0-0 14. ♖e2 f6! 15. ♘f4 ♖ge7⇒ Lopez Martinez-Moskalenko, Montcada 2006;

B) 11.g3 ♖ge7 12. ♘h3 ♘d7 13. ♖e2 0-0-0 14. ♖f4 ♖b8 15.0-0



analysis diagram

B1) 15... ♖dg8!? 16. ♖h2 ♖d8 17. ♖b2 g5! 18. ♖e2 g4? (this is a strategic error. The g- and h-pawns should stay together. A better idea was 18... ♖g7!?, preparing ... ♖f8 and ...f7-f6) 19. ♘g2± Naer-Pushkov, Moscow 2007;

B2) 15... ♖c8 16. ♖h2 ♖b6 17. ♖g2 ♖a5 18. ♖d1 ♖a4 (or 18... ♖dg8!? 19.f4 g6 20. ♖f2 ♖e7 Naer-Zhang Pengxiang, Ergun 2006) 19.f4 ♖e7 (19...g6!? 20. ♖e3 gxh5 21. ♖g2 ♖dg8∞ Kobalia-Akopian, Sochi 2006) 20. ♖e3 g6 21. ♖f3∞ Shabalov-Ibragimov, Stillwater ch-USA 2007;

C) 11. ♖e2 ♖ge7 12. ♖c1 (here 12.g4 with the idea ♖g3 deserves serious consideration) 12... ♘d7 13.g3 0-0-0 14. ♘h3 ♖b8 with many possibilities for both sides, Nijboer-Nikolic, Rotterdam ch-NED 1997;

D) 11.g4 ♘d7 12. ♘h3 0-0-0 13. ♖e2 ♖ge7 14. ♘e3 ♖df8 15. ♖d2 f6 16.f4 f5⇒ Bacrot-Eingorn, France tt 2007.

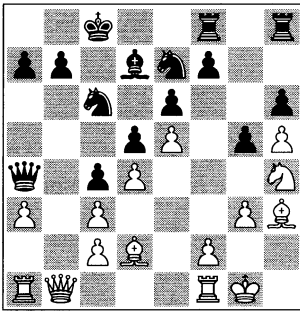
11...♘g7 12.g3

Or 12.g4 ♕d7 13.♘h4 0-0-0 14.♙b2 ♜d8 (14...f6!?) 15.♕h3 g6 16.hxg6 fxg6 17.0-0-0 g5! 18.♘g2 ♕e8! 19.f4 ♕g6 20.♞hf1 ♕e4⇒ Yurtaev-Nikolic, Elista Olympiad 1998.

12...♕d7 13.♕h3 0-0-0

13...0-0!?

14.0-0 ♜df8 15.♘h4 g5!?



After the Black Jet advance, the black army is ready to counterattack.

16.♘g2?!

16.hxg6ep fxg6=.

16...f5 17.exf6 ♞xf6

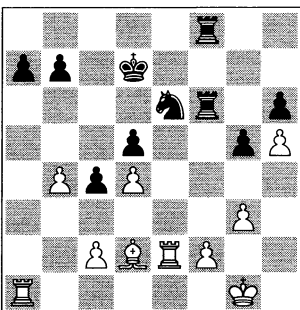
17...♘g8!? with the idea ...♘xf6, →h5.

18.♕e3 ♞f7 19.♞e1 ♘g8 20.♘g4 ♘f6

21.♘xf6 ♞xf6 22.♞e2 ♞hf8 23.♕g4 ♘d8!?

23...b6=.

24.♙b2 e5! 25.♙b4 ♙xb4 26.♕xd7+ ♘xd7 27.axb4 exd4 28.cxd4 ♘e6

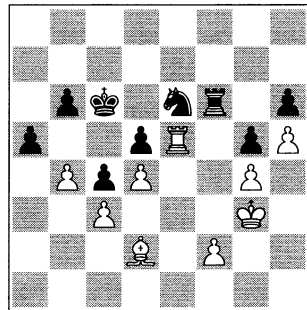


In such positions the black knight has better prospects than the white bishop.

29.c3 a6 30.♞ae1 ♞8f7 31.♘g2 ♘g7 32.♞h1 ♞e6

32...♘f5!? Δ ...♘d6 and ♘e4.

33.♞xe6 ♘xe6 34.♞e1 ♞f6 35.g4 ♘c6 36.♘g3 b6 37.♞e5 a5!



The passed a-pawn decides the game in Black's favour.

38.bxa5 bxa5 39.♞e1 a4 40.♞a1 ♘b5 41.♕c1 ♘f4 42.♕xf4 ♞xf4 43.f3 ♞f6 44.♘f2 ♞e6 45.♞b1+ ♘a5 46.♞a1 ♞b6 47.f4 gxh4 48.♘f3 ♞b3 49.♞c1 a3 50.♘xf4 ♘a4 51.g5 hxg5+ 52.♘xg5 a2 53.♞a1 ♘a3 54.h6 ♘b2 0-1

Summary of 8.♙b1 c4

It is clear that the closed positions created with ...c4 offer White a space advantage. But the downside is that it will cost him time to bring his queen into play. The middlegame is very rich in possibilities for both sides.

GAME 63

□ Mohamad Naser Al Sayed

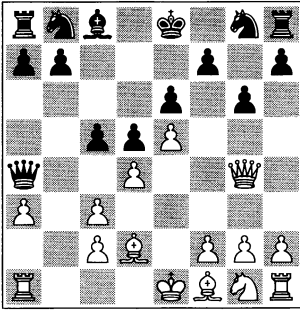
■ Bartosz Socko

Port Erin 2006 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♕b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♕xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♙a5 7.♕d2 ♙a4 8.♙g4!?

If the black queen plays the blues, then the white queen plays the super-blues here. Their fight already starts in Round 1: ♚→g7, ♛→c2.

8...g6



This is how black players defended the kingside in the old days. The disadvantage of this move is that the dark squares are weakened.

The modern defence is 8...♟f8, see the next game.

9. ♛d1

A typical and strong manoeuvre.

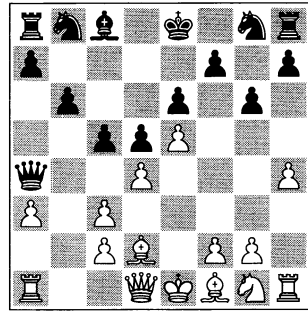
9...b6!?

This is one of the most useful plans in the ‘Black Queen’ variation; it prepares ...♟a6. Of course there are always intermediate moves, such as:

A) 9...♘c6 10.♚b1!? (putting a very specific question to Black: the threat is 11.♟b5!). If 10.♘f3 b6 11.h4 (Bologan-Psakhis, playchess.com 2004) 11...cxd4 12.h5 ♘ge7∞) 10...a6 11.♘f3 b5!?) with a very complicated game ahead, Berg-Zhang Pengxiang, Fügen tt 2006;

B) 9...cxd4?! 10.♚b1 d3?! (better is 10...a6 11.cxd4 ♛xd4 12.♘f3↑) 11.♟xd3 ♛xa3 12.♘f3 ♛c5 13.h4± as in the game Anand-Nikolic, Groningen 1997.

10.h4



Attacking players just love to advance this pawn!

10...♟a6!?

This is a fresh idea of grandmaster Lev Psakhis. Black allows the advance h4-h5. For the moment no one has ever captured 10...cxd4 and we still don’t know why.

Another typical line is the normal blockade move 10...h5!?) and now:

A) A solid possibility is 11.♘f3 ♟a6 12.♟xa6 ♛xa6 13.a4 ♘c6 14.♛b1 ♛c4 15.dxc5 ♘ge7!⇒ Colovic-Psakhis, Andorra 2002;

B) Or White can fight for the initiative with 11.c4 ♘c6 12.♘f3 ♘ge7 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.cxd5 (if 14.♟e2 dxc4 15.0-0 ♘d5 16.♟g5 ♟a6 17.♚e1 c3!?) and Black is in good shape, Carlsen-Agdestein, Moss ch-NOR 2006) 14...exd5 15.♟e2 ♟g4 16.0-0 ♟xf3 17.♟xf3 ♛xh4 18.c4 ♘xe5 19.cxd5 0-0 20.♟c3 ♘xf3+ 21.♛xf3 ♘f5 – this position is ideal for Black, Karjakin-Zhang Pengxiang, Kemer tt 2007;

C) 11.♟d3 (simply developing) 11...♟a6 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♘f3 ♘d7 14.0-0 ♘e7 15.♟g5 ♘f5 16.♚e1 ♟xd3 17.cxd3 ♛xd1 18.♚exd1 0-0 19.♚db1 ♚fb8 with an equal ending, Bobras-Akopian, Port Erin 2006.

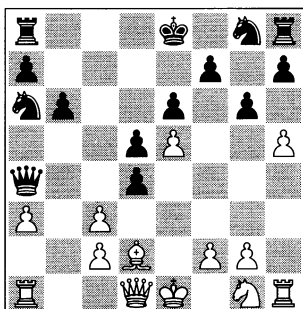
11.♟xa6 ♘xa6

11... ♖xa6!? is a different concept:
 12.h5 ♘c6 13.hxg6 fxg6 14. ♖g4 ♘d7
 15. ♘f3 h5!? 16. ♖xg6 ♘ge7 17. ♖d3
 ♖xd3 18.cxd3 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♘f5
 20. ♙c3 ♖ag8= Apicella-Jacimovic,
 Fügen tt 2006.

12.h5

White continues according to plan. Two other gentlemen played a solid game with 12. ♘e2 h5 13. ♙g5 ♖c8 14.0-0 ♘e7 15. ♙f6 ♖f8 16. ♖d2 ♘b8 (16...cxd4!?) 17. ♖fb1 ♘d7 18.dxc5 ♖xc5 19. ♖b4 ♖a6= Chandler-N. Pert, London match 2000.

12...cxd4!



At last someone decides to capture the pawn!

13.hxg6 fxg6 14. ♖g4

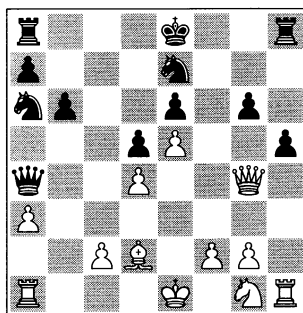
Round 2 of the queens' confrontation (see the move 8. ♖g4). In the stem game of 10... ♙a6 the black queen had to face a white rook: 14. ♖h4 ♘e7 15.cxd4 ♖c8 (15... ♘c5!?) 16.c3 ♘c5! 17. ♖h3 ♖xd1+ 18. ♖xd1 ♘a4 19. ♘e2 h5 20. ♙c1 ♘d7 21. ♖dd3 ♘f5 and Black won by improving his position little by little, David-Psakhis, Bad Wiessee 1999.

14.cxd4 ♖xd4 15. ♘f3 is unclear – sorry, no games.

14... ♘e7!

In this way Black retains dangerous counterplay.

15.cxd4 h5!?



This was not the only possibility, but...

16. ♘e2??

Leaving his queen en prise! 16. ♖h4!?! ∞ or 16. ♖xe6 ♖xd4=.

16...hxg4

And the sharp duel between the two queens is decided in favour of the 'Black Queen'.

17. ♖xh8+ ♘d7 18. ♖xa8 ♘c8! –+

Winning easily.

19.f3 ♖c6 20. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 21.c3 gxf3
 22.gxf3 ♖h8 23.0-0 ♖f8 24. ♖g1
 ♖xa3+ 25. ♘c2 ♖a2+ 26. ♘d3 ♘c7
 27. ♘e3 a5 28. ♖xg6 ♖c2 29. ♖g7+
 ♘c8 30. ♖g1 a4 31. ♖a1 ♘b5 32. ♘f4
 a3 33. ♘d3 ♘d7 0-1

The sequence 8. ♖g4 g6 9. ♖d1 b6!?

promises a creative game in all lines.

GAME 64

□ Joost Michielsen

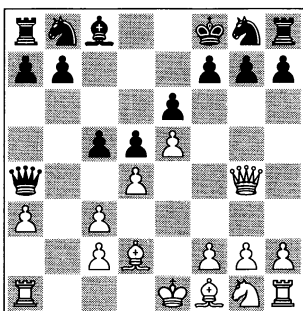
■ Viktor Moskalenko

Banyoles Open 2006 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5
 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖a5 7. ♙d2 ♖a4
 8. ♖g4 ♘f8!?

A modern resource in the French Defence. The idea is to defend g7 with the king without weakening the dark squares, as is the case after 8...g6. But

now Black's plan of castling queenside has become impossible.



8...♗e7?! is very sharp but too risky:
 9.♙xg7 ♖g8 10.♙xh7 cxd4 11.♘f3
 (or, for instance, 11.♗e2 ♗bc6 12.f4
 ♘d7 13.♙d3 ♘f5 14.g3 0-0-0
 Mitkov-C.Hernandez, Mexico City
 2006) 11...♗bc6 12.g3 ♘d7 13.♘e2
 0-0-0 14.0-0? (14.♙d3 is better)
 14...dxc3 15.♘g5? ♙e4! and Black
 won material, Mata-S.Williams, London
 2001.

9.♙d1 b6!?

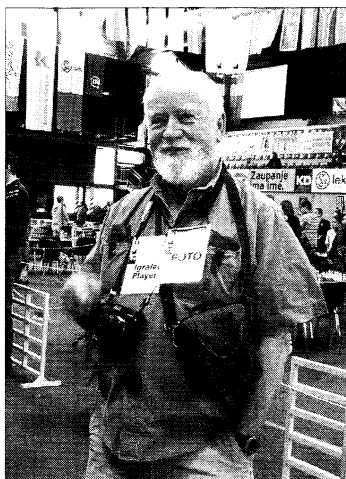
Preparing ...♘a6.

10.c4!?

Normally with this advance White starts action in the centre. Other moves:

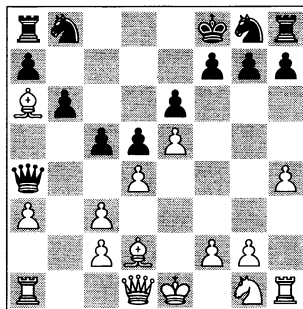
A) 10.dxc5 bxc5 (10...♗d7!?)
 11.♘f3 ♗e7 12.♘d3 ♘a6⇌ Kurnosov-
 Ustinov, Cheliabinsk 2005;

B) The alternative is the flank attack
 10.h4! (starting another of White's
 typical plans: Δ h5, h6, ♖h4, ♗f4)
 10...♘a6 (the stem game saw 10...♗e7
 11.h5 h6 12.♖h4 ♘a6 13.♘xa6 ♗xa6
 (13...♙xa6!?) 14.♗f4 ♙d7 15.♙f3
 ♗c6 16.♗h3 ♖c8 17.g4∞ Fischer-
 Hook, Siegen Olympiad 1970)
 11.♘xa6 (11.h5 ♘xf1 12.♙xf1 h6
 13.♖h4!? ♗e7 14.♗f4 ♗bc6 15.♘f3
 ♗a5 16.♙g1 ♗c4 17.♗e1 ♖c8⇌
 Konguvel-Vilela, Balaguer 2006 (6))



The 'Blues Hook' 12...♘a6 after 10.c4 was developed by the number one player from the British Virgin Islands, William Hook, against none other than Bobby Fischer.

and now:



B1) 11...♙xa6! (this allows the knight to develop towards the centre: ...♗c6) 12.h5 h6 13.♖h4 ♗e7 14.♗f4 ♗bc6 and the position looks equal. The attacking and defensive resources balance each other, for example: 15.a4 ♖c8 16.a5 cxd4 17.cxd4 ♙c4 18.axb6 axb6 19.c3 ♙e8 20.♖a4 ♙b5 21.♗e2 ♗a5 22.♘c1∞ Castellanos-Vilela, Balaguer 2006 (8);

B2) The other option is 11...♗xa6, to activate the a8 rook and play on the c-file, although the a6 knight will be out of play,

30.♖g3 ♘d4

30...♞ab8!±.

31.♘xd4 cxd4 32.♞d1 ♞ac8 33.♞d2

♞c4!? 34.♖g2 d3!?

35.♞g3!?

35...♞xg4+ 36.♖f3 ♞xd3+ 37.♞xd3

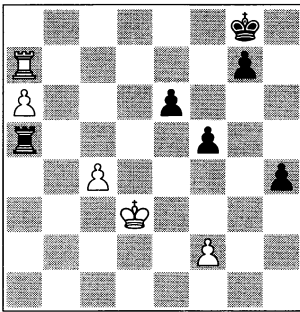
♞g5 38.♖e4 ♞xh5 39.♞d8+ ♖e7

40.♞b8 ♞h4+ 41.♖e3 f5!?

42.♞b7+ ♖f8 43.♞xa7 ♞e4+ 44.♖d3 ♞xe5

45.a4 h5 46.a5 h4 47.a6 ♞a5 48.c4

♖g8!–+



The h-pawn will arrive first.

49.c5 ♞xc5 50.♞e7 ♞a5 51.♞xe6 h3

52.♞b6 h2 53.♞b1 ♞xa6 54.♖e3 ♞h6

55.♞h1 ♞h3+ 56.f3 ♖f7 57.♖f2 ♖f6

58.♖g2 ♞h8 59.♖g3 g5 60.♖g2 ♞a8

61.♖g3 ♞a2 62.♖h3 ♖e5 63.♖g3

f4+ 64.♖h3 ♞f2 0-1

Hook's defence to 8.♞g4 ♖f8 will always be a good alternative.

Summary of 8.♞g4

The early black queen sortie takes the sting out of White's play, since after 8...♖f8 or 8...g6 he must take the threat against c2 into account, and there is nothing better than to ruefully retreat with 9.♞d1. Black can combine the development of his knight and the attack on the d4 pawn with the strategic plan ...b6/...♖a6.

GAME 65

□ Walter Browne

■ Ildar Ibragimov

San Diego ch-USA 2004 (5)

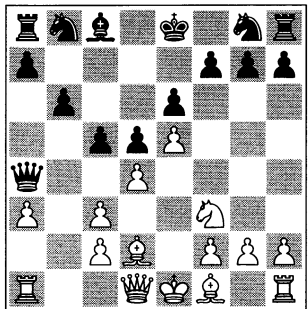
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♖b4 4.e5 c5

5.a3 ♖xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♞a5 7.♘d2 ♞a4

8.♘f3

White prefers quick development.

8...b6!?



It is clear that the exchange of the light-squared bishops is favourable for Black. For the options 8...c4, 8...♘e7 and 8...♘c6, see Games 66 and 67.

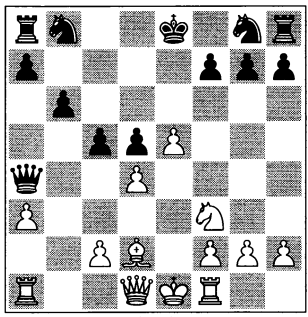
9.dxc5!?

White tries to blast open the position to take advantage of his two bishops.

Other popular options are:

A) The aggressive advance 9.c4!?:

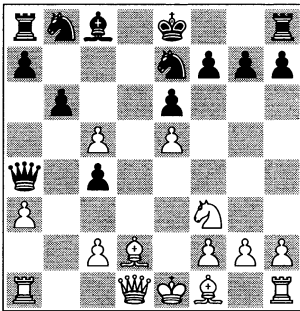
A1) Now, with 9...♖a6 Black pursues his initial plan: 10.cxd5 ♖xf1 11.♞xf1 (11.♖xf1 exd5⇒) 11...exd5



analysis diagram

12.c3 (12.dxc5 bxc5 13.♘g5 ♘h6 14.c3 ♙c6 15.f4 ♘d7 ½-½ Iordachescu-Totsky, Bucharest 1998; or, for example: 12.c4 ♙xc4 13.♞c1 ♙a6 14.dxc5 ♘e7! and Black has a good position) 12...♙d7 13.♙e3 ♘e7 14.dxc5 0-0 15.cxb6 axb6 16.♘d4 ♙c7 ½-½ Al Modiahki-Al Sayed, Beirut Zonal 2004;

A2) The alternative 9...dxc4!? liquidates the central pawns: 10.dxc5 (eating his portion. 10.♘g5!? ♙b7 11.♙h5 g6 12.♙h4 ♘d7!∞ should also be analysed) 10...♘e7!



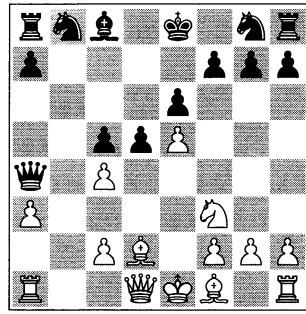
analysis diagram

intending 11.♙g5 ♘d5! with an excellent position.

B) 9.♙d3 is a rather modest attempt: 9...♙a6 10.0-0 ♘e7 (continuing development. Or 10...♘d7!?⇒ Δ ...♘e7-c6; 10...♙xd3 is a pleasant alternative: 11.cxd3 ♙xd1 12.♞fxd1 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♘e7=) 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♙e3 ♘d7= Landa-Shipov, playchess.com 2004; 12...c4!? 13.♙e2 ♘d7∞;

C) 9.♙b1 (perhaps White was looking to exchange queens) 9...♙a6 10.♙xa6 (10.♙b3 ♙xb3 11.cxb3 ♙xf1 12.♞xf1 ♘d7=) 10...♙xa6 (10...♘xa6! was simpler; 11.♙b3 ♙xb3 12.cxb3 ♘e7=) 11.a4± Macieja-Jacimovic, Halkidiki 2002.

9...bxc5 10.c4



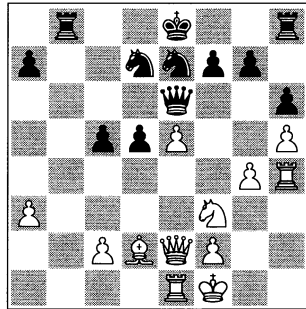
10...♙a6!?

10...♘e7!? 11.cxd5 exd5 12.c4 ♙xd1+ 13.♞xd1 d4⇒ A.Smith-S.Lalic, England tt 2000/01.

11.cxd5 ♙xf1

Completing the strategy begun with 8...b6.

12.♙xf1 exd5 13.h4 ♘e7 14.h5 h6 15.♞h4 ♙c6 16.♙e2 ♘d7 17.♞e1 ♙e6 18.g4 ♞b8



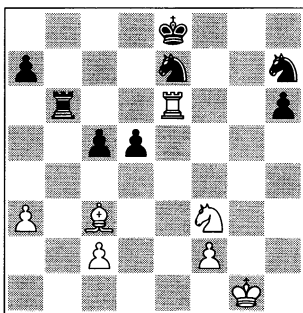
This move, seizing an open file, ensures Black counterplay.

19.g5 ♞b6 20.♙g2 ♘f8 21.♞f4 ♘h7 22.gxh6 gxh6 23.♙h2 ♞g8 24.♙a5 ♞b7 25.♙c3?

If 25.c4 d4 26.♙e4 ♞b2 27.♙a8+ ♙c8 28.♙xc8+ ♘xc8̄.

25...♞g4 26.♞xg4 ♙xg4 27.e6 ♙xh5+ 28.♙g1 ♙g4+ 29.♙f1 ♙h3+ 30.♙g1 fxe6 31.♙xe6 ♙xe6 32.♞xe6 ♞b6!—+

With a technical win.



33.♖e1 ♘f6 34.♙xf6 ♗xf6 35.♔g2 ♗g6+ 36.♔f1 ♖a6 37.♘e5 h5 38.♘d3 c4 39.♘b4 ♗d6 40.♖e5 a5 41.♘a2 h4 42.♘c3 h3 43.♗h5 ♗b6 44.♗h8+ ♔d7 45.♗h7 d4 46.♗xe7+? ♔xe7 47.♘d5+ ♔d8 48.♘xb6 d3 0-1

GAME 66

□ **Milos Pavlovic**

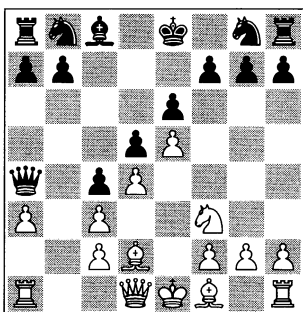
■ **Lev Psakhis**

Andorra Open 1998 (9)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖a5

Psakhis: ‘This move has become very popular in the last couple of years.’

7.♙d2 ♖a4 8.♘f3 c4!?

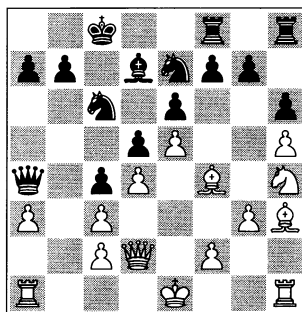


The key that closes the centre.

9.g3

Enabling the fianchetto ♙g2 and also ♙h3. 9.h4! (see also the previous game) 9...♘c6 10.h5 h6 11.g3 (if now 11.♖h4 we transpose into Game 68. Or 11.♘h4

♘ge7 (11...♙d7!?) 12.g4 (12.♗h3!? ♙d7 13.♗f3) 12...♙d7 13.♙g2 0-0-0 14.0-0 g5 15.♘f3 ♗df8, intending ...f6/f5⇒, Roiz Baztan-Fernandez Diaz, Oviedo 2003. The text is not at all a new idea) 11...♙d7 12.♙h3 0-0-0 13.♙f4 ♘ge7 14.♖d2 ♗df8 15.♘h4.



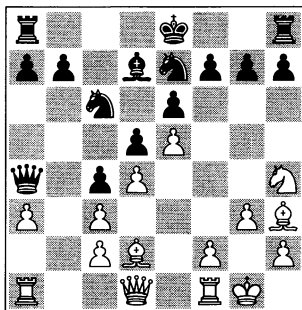
analysis diagram

White’s space advantage gives him the better chances, but Black’s position is still fairly solid. White intends ♘g2-♘e3. 15...♗h7 (better seems 15...♖a5!? with the idea ...g5) 16.♘g2 ♔b8 (16...g5!? 17.hxg6 fxg6⇒) 17.♘e3 ♔a8 18.♙g2 ♘c8 19.g4↑ (planning ♙g3, f4-f5) 19...♖a5 20.♙g3 ♘b6 21.a4!∞. Both sides have completed their development and now White hurries with his attack, Bologan-Roiz, Rethymnon tt 2003.

9...♘c6 10.♙h3

10.h4 f6!?

10...♙d7 11.0-0 ♘ge7 12.♘h4



It is far from easy to find an effective plan here.

12...0-0-0

12...0-0!?.

13.♘g2

13.f4 ♘f5 14.♘g2 h5 15.♘e3 g6= Gunnarsson-Psakhis, Torshavn 2000.

13...♘g6 14.f4 ♘ge7

14...h5!?.

15.♘e3 g6 16.♙g2 h5!? 17.♙e1 ♖h7

18.♙f3 ♘b8 19.♙d2 ♙c8 20.♙f2 ♘f5

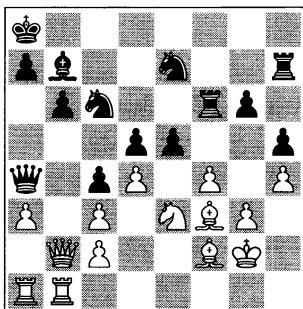
21.♖fb1 b6 22.h3 ♙b7 23.♙g2 ♘dh8

24.♖h1 ♘a8 25.♖hb1 ♘fe7 26.♙c1

♖f8!

Finally Black decides to open up the game with ...f7-f6.

27.♙b2 f6!⇒ 28.exf6 ♖xf6 29.h4 e5!!



A powerful tactical blow.

30.♙b5

If 30.dxe5 ♘xe5! 31.fxe5 ♖xf3

32.♙xf3 d4+ with a dangerous attack.

30...♙xb5 31.♖xb5 e4!-+

Again blocking the position. Now the black knights will have better options.

32.♙e2 ♖d6 33.♖h1 ♙c8 34.♙e1

♙d7 35.♖b1 ♘f5 36.♙d2 ♘xe3+

37.♙xe3 ♘e7!

Preparing to wrap up with ...♙g4 and ...♘f5.

38.♙f2 ♘b7 39.♖bg1 ♙g4 40.♙e1 ♘f5

Winning strategically.

41.♙d2 b5

0-1

In view of ...♖a6-a4 and ...a5/...b4 -+.

GAME 67

□ **Darmen Sadvakasov**

■ **Juan Armando Rohl Montes**

Willemstad Open 2003 (8)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5

5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♙a5 7.♙d2 ♙a4

8.♘f3 ♘e7

Or 8...♘c6!?, pressurising the centre:

9.dxc5!? (after 9.♖b1 the threat of ♙b5

forces Black to release the pressure in

the centre; 9...c4 (or 9...a6!?) 10.♙c1

f6?! (≥ 10...♘ge7 or 10...b6) 11.h4!↑)

9...f6!⇒ This typical break gives Black a

satisfactory game, for example: 10.♖b1

fxe5 11.♙b5 ♙e4+ 12.♙e3 ♘e7

13.♙d3 ♙g4 14.h3 ♙h5 15.g4 ♙f7

16.♘g5 ♙g8♣. But not 9...♙e4+?!,

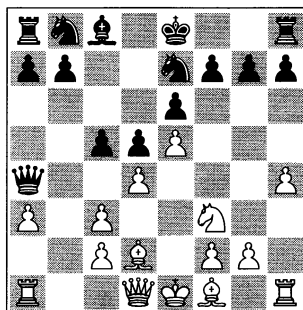
which only wastes time, for example:

10.♙e3 ♘xe5 11.♘xe5 ♙xe5

12.♙b5+ and White has the initiative,

Dominguez-Rojas, Buenos Aires 2005.

9.h4!?



This time White prefers a flank attack.

9.♙b1!? c4 transposes into 8.♙b1.

9...♘bc6!?

Taking responsibility in the centre: →

d4. 9...c4 is the blockade option.

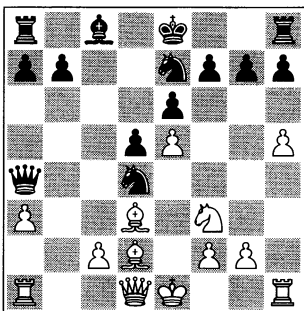
10.h5 cxd4!

It is never too late to stop the h-pawn with 10...h6!?.

11.cxd4

If 11. ♖h4!? ♜f5!? 12. ♖f4 b6! 13. g4 ♜fe7∞.

11... ♜xd4 12. ♙d3



A tactically important position in this line.

12... ♜ef5

12... ♜ec6; 12... ♜xf3+ and 12... b6 are worthy alternatives.

13. ♖b1

13. h6 gxh6!?

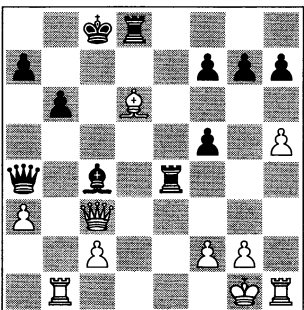
13... ♜c6 14. ♙f1 b6

14... ♖xa3!?

15. ♙g1 ♙a6 16. ♙xf5 exf5 17. ♙b4 0-0-0! 18. ♙d6 ♖he8

18... f6!?

19. ♖xd5 ♙c4 20. ♖d2 ♜xe5 21. ♜xe5 ♖xe5 22. ♖c3 ♖e4!



The culminating point of the game. The position is complicated and both players commit many errors, as always happens when you look for the truth.

23. f3 ♖xd6?

The correct move was 23... ♖e2!, winning after 24. ♖b4 ♖xc2!.

24. fxe4 ♖c6 25. exf5 ♖c5+ 26. ♙h2 ♖d4 27. ♖g3?! ♖xf5 28. ♖he1? ♖xh5+ 29. ♙g1 ♖g4??

One mistake follows another! 29... ♖c5! ♖ gives Black the initiative.

30. ♖e3?

Now White could have won by tactical means: 30. ♖e8+! → ♙d7 31. ♖d1+!! ♙xe8 (31... ♙c6 32. ♖f3+--) 32. ♖b8+ ♙e7 33. ♖d6+ ♙e8 34. ♖d8 mate.

30... ♖c5??

After 30... ♙e6 things are still unclear.

31. ♖xc5+ bxc5 32. ♖e5 1-0

A dramatic game, where both sides were in search of luck until the end!

GAME 68:

□ **Andrey Volokitin**

■ **Zhang Pengxiang**

Fügen tt 2006 (3)

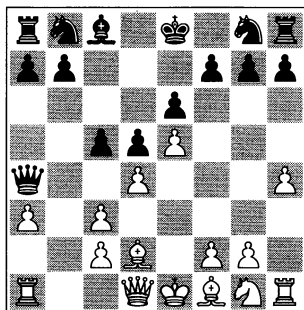
1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 ♙xc3+ 6. bxc3 ♖a5

This move does not have a great reputation, but it is better than it looks.

7. ♙d2 ♖a4

Zhang Pengxiang periodically uses this variation. The blues line is in the repertoires of many strong Chinese players.

8. h4



With creative play.



Zhang Pengxiang (born 1980) is a member of a strong new Chinese generation, several of whom play the 'Black Queen Blues' move 7...♚a4.

8...♗c6

In an interesting Internet blitz game Black played 8...♗e7 9.h5 h6 10.♚g4 ♗f5 11.♙d3 0-0 12.♚f4 c4!⇒ Sutovsky-Psakhis, playchess.com 2006.

9.h5

Another Internet blitz version was 9.♚g4!?! g6 (9...♗f8!?) 10.h5 ♗ge7 (10...♚xc2!?!∞) 11.♗f3 ♙d7 12.♚f4 0-0-0! 13.♙d3 c4 14.♙e2 ♚xc2 15.♗g5 ♗df8∞ Sutovsky-Psakhis, playchess.com 2006.

9...♗ge7!?

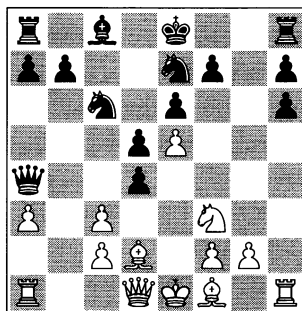
Black prefers to develop his pieces first.

A) 9...cxd4!?! is more concrete; 10.♗f3 b6!?!∞;

B) 9...h6 is the most typical reaction: 10.♗f3 (10.♚g4 ♗f8) 10...♗ge7 11.♚h4 c4 (Black is obliged to close the centre; with transposition you can see similar examples in Game 66) 12.♗f4 (or 12.♗g4 ♗g8 13.g3 ♙d7 14.♗f4 0-0-0! 15.♗xf7?! ♙e8 16.♗f4 ♙xh5 17.♙h3 ♗d7⇒ Fontaine-Psakhis, Andorra 1998) 12...♙d7 13.♗h4 (if 13.♙e3?! ♗f8

14.♙d2 0-0-0⇒ Khalifman-Shulman, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005) 13...♗f5!?! 14.♗xf5 exf5 15.g4 fxg4 16.♙e2 ♗d8! 17.♙xg4 ♗e6 (17...0-0=) 18.♗f3 ♗g5 19.♗g3 0-0-0! (19...♗e4!?) 20.♙xg5 hxg5 21.♗d2 f5! 22.♙f3 g4! 23.♙xd5∞ (Khalifman-Shulman, Khanty-Mansiysk 2005). It is hard to draw any ultimate conclusions in such a complex position. But with 23...♗xh5!?! (the game move 23...♚b5? merely helped White to improve the coordination of his pieces with 24.♚h1!±) 24.♚e2 ♙c6! Black could have achieved a nice game.

10.h6 gxh6 11.♗f3 cxd4!



From now on the game becomes very dynamic – like Chinese ping-pong!

12.cxd4 ♗xd4 13.♙d3 ♙d7 14.♙b4 ♗dc6 15.♚h4?! ♗g6 16.♙xg6 hxg6

Black is better here.

17.♙d2 ♚a6

17...d4!?.

18.♙g5 ♗c8

18...h5!?.

19.♙f6 ♗g8

(≥) 19...♗f8 20.♚xh6 ♗e7±.

20.♚xh6 ♗a5

20...g5! 21.♚d2 ♚c4±.

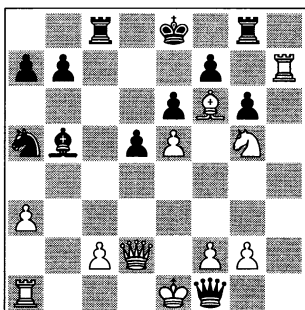
21.♗g5 ♚c4 22.♚d2??

≥ 22.♚h7 ♙b5 23.♚d3 ♚xd3 24.cxd3 ♗f8 25.♗g7 ♗g8 26.♙f6=.

22...♙b5→

Winning the game, thanks to...

23.♗h7?? ♕f1 mate



The black queen successfully completes her long trip and her blues song.

Summary of 8.♘f3/h4

In theory White should have some advantage, but that can change at any given moment. As soon as the real game starts, it is impossible to play totally error-free, and therefore it is hardly relevant.

Blues Statistics 7... ♕a4

In general Black scores well, with dozens of attractive games.

Out of a total of 802 games in MegaBase (note that there are probably more games, as some of the positions arise by transposition), it is remarkable that the first 400 games were played in the period 1956-2004, and 400 more in the past four years.

White wins = 301 = 38% total 53% = performance 2366

Draw = 249 = 31%

Black wins = 252 = 31% total 47% = performance 2328

Lines

- * 8.♕b1 = 292 games = 59.4%
- * 8.♕g4 = 228 = 49.3%
- * 8.♘f3 = 197 = 47.7%
- * 8.h4 = 32 = 65.6%

Conclusions

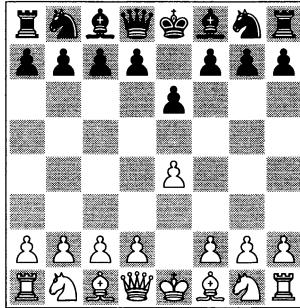
The black queen manoeuvre 6... ♕a5/7... ♕a4 undoubtedly offers a game full of creativity, with positions rich in resources and difficult to understand because of their complexity.

Another important factor is that these situations are still beyond the understanding of computer engines.

Part Five

Seven Samurai Swords

Surprise Weapons for Dynamic Chess Players (White and Black)



Dedicated to the catena of Master Samurai Hattori Hanzo

Directions

In this last part, in order to complete this book on flexible French lines, we present a number of surprising but useful ideas in some popular lines of the French Defence.

Chapter 10: Kortchnoi's 'wedge' against the French Super Gambit (C00)

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 (Game 69);

Chapter 11: The King's Indian Attack in the Closed Variation (C00-A08)

1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.♖e2 (Game 70);

Chapter 12: The 'Kung Fu fight' in the symmetrical Exchange Variation (C01)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 (Game 71);

Chapter 13: Weathering the kingside storm in the Alekhine-Chatard Attack (C14)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4 0-0 (Game 72);

Chapter 14: The Anti-Winawer (C15)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♘e2 (Game 73);

Chapter 15: The Semi-Winawer (C17)

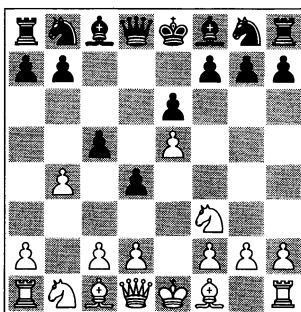
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.♙d2 (Game 74);

Chapter 16: The Old Winawer (C18)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖c7 (Game 75).

Chapter 10 – Kortchnoi's Wedge

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 d4



Before we learn an opening or a certain line properly, we should check the games of the experts and, after that, try to find our own directions.

In the gambit 1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4, which used to bother me, the idea of 4...d4! was invented by the specialist Viktor Kortchnoi.

Black uses his d-pawn as a 'wedge' on d4. I like this concept, where Black fights for space in the centre.

GAME 69

□ **Stefaan Deman**

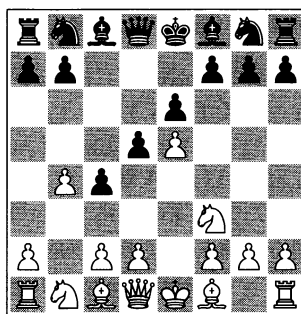
■ **Danny Haberkorn**

Belgium tt 1999/00 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4 d4!

A) In the event of 4...cxb4 White sacrifices a pawn by 5.a3, with exactly the same idea as in the Benko Gambit, although in this case the centre is closed. For instance: 5...♗c6 6.axb4 ♖xb4 7.c3 ♖a5 (or else 7...♗e7 8.d4) 8.d4 ♗ge7 9.♗d3 h6 10.0-0 with a typical position in this gambit: Black is slightly passive and he does not have any counterplay, Westerinen-Brinck Clausen, Esbjerg 1978;

B) I once tried another blockade with 4...c4!?



analysis diagram

B1) 5.c3 a5!? (5...♗e7 6.d3 cxd3 7.♗xd3 ♗g6 8.♖e2 ♗d7 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♗a3 0-0 11.♗d2± Vafiadis-Moskalenko, Kavala 1998) 6.b5 ♗d7 7.d4 cxd3 8.♗xd3 f6!⇒ (8...♖c7!? 9.♖e2 ♗e7 10.0-0 ♗g6 11.♞e1 ♗e7∞) 9.♖c2? (9.♖e2 fxe5⇒)

9...♞xe5 10.♞xe5 fxe5 11.♞xh7 ♞d6
Naer-Moskalenko, Moscow 1995;

B2) Or, for instance, 5.a3 a5!
(5...b5?! 6.a4 ♞xb4 7.axb5 ♖b6
8.♞a3 ♞xa3 9.♞xa3 ♞h6 10.♞xc4!
dxc4 11.♞xc4 ♖c7 12.♞d6+ ♔e7
13.0-0♠ Stripunsky-Moskalenko,
Simferopol ch-UKR 1990) 6.b5 ♞d7
7.d3 cxd3 8.♞xd3 f6⇒.

5.bxc5

If 5.♞b2 cxb4!?

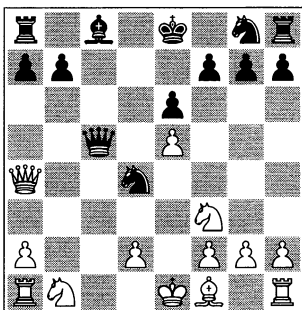
5...♞xc5 6.♞a3!?

White carries on with his main idea.
6.♞d3 does not offer anything special:
6...♞c6 7.♖e2 ♞ge7 (7...f5!?) 8.0-0
♞g6 9.g3 0-0⇒.

6...♖a5!

The best option. If 6...♖e7 7.c3! ♞xa3
8.♖a4+ ♞c6 9.♖xa3±.

7.♞xc5 ♖xc5 8.c3 ♞c6 9.cxd4 ♞xd4
10.♖a4+



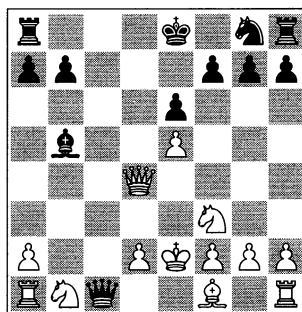
Only seven games have been played
with this line, but in one of them Black
found a very attractive possibility:

10...♞d7!!

This knight sacrifice is an unexpected
resource. 10...♞c6 has mainly been
played. This reply seemed to be forced,
but after 11.♞c3 White gains the initia-
tive, threatening ♞e4-d6+: 11...♖a5
12.♖xa5 (or else 12.♖g4!? ♔f8
13.♞b5♠) 12...♞xa5 13.♞b5 ♔e7

14.♞c7 ♜b8 15.d4 with a favourable
endgame, Boersma-Kortchnoi, Leeuw-
arden ch-NED 1977.

11.♖xd4 ♖c1+ 12.♔e2 ♞b5+

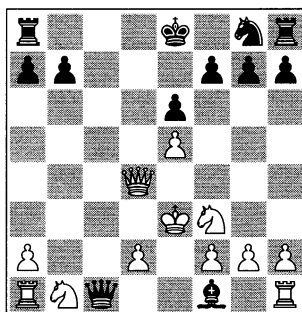


A spectacular check. This is the key po-
sition for this new idea. If the oppon-
ent is not ready for this surprise, finding
the right response over the board is a
tough task.

13.♔e3

The alternative is 13.d3 ♜d8! (in Year-
book 50 and Secrets of Opening Sur-
prises 1, Jeroen Bosch gives
13...♞xd3+ 14.♖xd3 ♖b2+)
14.♞bd2□ ♖a3! (14...♞xd3+? is a
mistake in view of 15.♖xd3 ♖xa1
16.♖c2) 15.♖f4 (not 15.♞c4? ♞xc4
16.♖xc4 ♖b2+, winning the rook on
a1) 15...♖b2 16.♜d1 ♞xd3+ 17.♔e1
♞c2 and the position remains compli-
cated.

13...♞xf1



Another key moment.

14. ♖c3?

White makes too many defensive mistakes. The best ideas are 14. ♖a4+ ♜f8 15. ♖b5 and now, for instance, 15... ♖xd2+!?, winning a pawn; or else 14. ♖d3 ♖c5+! 15. ♖d4 ♖xd4+!? (15... ♖c1= repeats moves) 16. ♜xd4 ♙xg2 17. ♖g1 ♙c6 18. ♖xg7 ♜e7 with interesting counterplay for Black.

14... ♖d1!↑

Threatening 15... ♖e2+ and 16... ♙xg2.

15. ♖xf1?

15. ♖d3 was the only defence, for example: 15... ♖xf3+!? 16. gx ♙xd3

17. ♜xd3 0-0-0+↑ with the better chances.

15... ♖xf1 16. ♜a3 ♖a6!

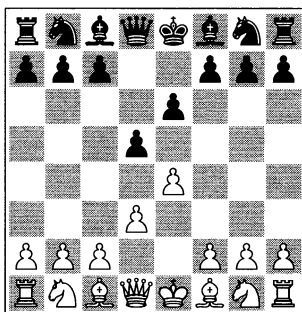
And Black did not have any trouble in converting his material advantage.

17. ♖c5 ♜e7 18. ♜b5 0-0 19. ♜c7 ♜f5+ 20. ♜f4 ♖a4+ 21. d4 ♖ac8 22. ♖c1 ♖fd8 23. ♖c4 ♖d7 24. ♖a5 ♜e7 25. ♖c3 ♖xc7 0-1

It is obvious that the Kortchnoi ‘wedge’ 4.b4 d4!?, reinforced with the fantastic resource 10... ♙d7!, can be a nasty surprise for b4-gambit lovers – incidentally, a line which is especially popular on the Internet.

Chapter 11 – King’s Indian Attack

1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5



In the King’s Indian Attack 1.e4 e6 2.d3, the following game presents you with two fighting possibilities for Black in two main lines:

- A) In the Barcza System with 3.♖e2, Black can take his chance with the central knight jump 10...♘d4!;
- B) In the main line with 3.♘d2, where play develops slowly, Black can increase the pressure on the e5 pawn by first fianchettoing ♗g7 and ♗b7 and then launching the surprising ‘Black Jet’ 11...g5!?, a radical concept that can lead to very sharp play.

GAME 70

□ German Kochetkov

■ Viktor Moskalenko

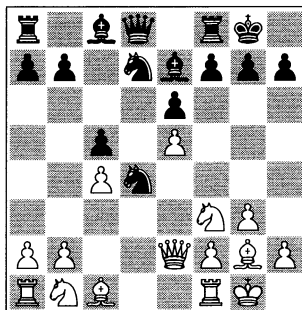
Alushta 1994 (9)

1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.♘d2

The main move for White. However, 3.♖e2, known as the Barcza System, is also possible: 3...♘f6 (a natural move) 4.♘f3 ♗e7 5.g3 c5 (5...dxe4 6.dxe4 ♘c6=) 6.♗g2 ♘c6 7.0-0 0-0!? (in my opinion, the best plan consists in bringing the king to a safe place first and then trying to get some activity) 8.e5! (White’s plan is based on an attack on the kingside, but he needs to close the centre first) 8...♘d7 9.c4 (with the idea of bringing the knight into the game

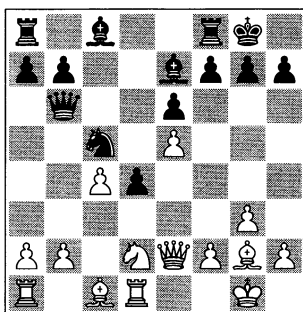
via c3) 9...dxc4 (9...d4? would be a strategic mistake, since the blocked centre offers Black no counterplay) 10.dxc4.

This is the key moment. Black must look for some chances as quickly as possible: 10...♘d4!.



analysis diagram

11.♟xd4 (11.♞e4? f5! 12.exf6 ♟xf6 13.♞d3 e5!↑) 11...cxd4 12.♞d1 (12.♞e1? ♞b6 13.♟d2 ♞d8⇒ Magem Badals-Moskalenko, Santa Coloma de Queralt 2004) and the d4 pawn is very strong: 12...♞b6! 13.b3?! (13.♞e4?! ♟c5 14.♞xd4?? ♞d8; 13.♟d2 is better; 13...♟c5



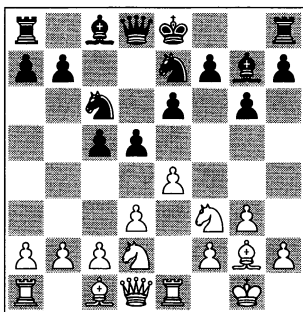
analysis diagram

with equal chances, Sibarowski-Moskalenko, Swidnica rapid 1997) 13...f6!↑ (White has no time to attack the d4 pawn and his plans are failing) 14.exf6 ♟xf6 15.♟b2 ♟c5↑ with the idea ...e5! and Black controls the board, Prats-Moskalenko, Canovelles 2001.

3...c5 4.♟f3 ♟c6 5.g3 g6!?

A fianchetto against a fianchetto. 5...♟f6 is the classical response.

6.♟g2 ♟g7 7.0-0 ♟ge7 8.♞e1



8...b6

Including the move 8...h6!? is quite useful: 9.h4 b6 10.a3 a5 11.exd5 exd5! 12.d4?! cxd4 13.♟b3 ♟g4! and now White cannot play moves like h2-h3 or ♟g5: 14.♞d3 ♟xf3 (14...♟f5!? 15.♞d1 d3⇒) 15.♟xf3 (15.♞xf3 a4 16.♞xd5 ♞xd5 17.♟xd5 0-0 18.♟xc6 ♟xc6 19.♟d2 ♞ac8干) 15...a4! 16.♟d2 0-0 17.♟g2 ♟e5干 and Black won easily, Kogan-Moskalenko, Barcelona 2000.

9.c3

The most popular move.

A) 9.exd5!? has recently come into fashion: 9...♟xd5 (or else 9...exd5!? 10.d4!? cxd4 11.♟b3 ♟g4⇒) 10.d4!? (10.♟c4 has been played several times; 10...0-0 11.♟fe5 ♟b7 12.♟xc6 ♟xc6 13.♟e5 ♟xe5 14.♞xe5 ♞d6 15.♞e1 e5=) 10...cxd4 11.♟b3 0-0! (11...♟b7 12.♟fxd4 ♟xd4? is weaker: 13.♟xd4 ♞c8 14.♞xe6+! fxe6? 15.♟xe6↑ Komliakov-Moskalenko, Noyabrsk 1995) 12.♟bxd4 ♟xd4 13.♟xd4 ♟a6! = 14.c3 ½-½ Psakhis-Dokhoian, Sochi 1988;

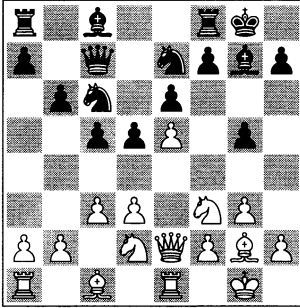
B) 9.e5?! is premature, in view of the weakness of the e5 pawn: 9...♞c7 10.♞e2 h6 11.h4 g5! with active counterplay: 12.hxg5 hxg5 13.♟xg5 ♞xe5! 14.♞xe5 ♟xe5干 Yandemirov-Moskalenko, Baku 1984.

9...0-0

We have arrived at the key position in this line with two fianchettoes. The alternative 9...h6!? is still playable: 10.h4 (10.exd5 ♟xd5!? 11.♟c4 0-0 12.♟fe5 ♟b7 13.♟xc6 ♟xc6 14.♟e5 ♟xe5 15.♞xe5 ♞d6 16.♞e1 ♟g7=) 10...♟b7!? (another idea is 10...dxe4 11.dxe4 ♟a6 12.♞a4 ♟d3∞ Varavin-Moskalenko, Alushta 1994) 11.exd5 ♟xd5 12.♟c4 0-0 13.♟fe5

♟xe5 14.♟xe5 ♖c7 15.♞e2 ♜ad8= Zolnierowicz-Moskalenko, Orange 1990.

10.e5 ♖c7 11.♞e2 g5!



A radical concept, inviting the exchange of White’s central pawn. 11...♞a6!? is the usual move.

12.♟xg5

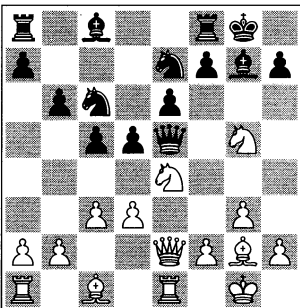
12.♞h3?! seems to be bad: 12...h6 13.♞g4 ♟g6 14.d4 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♟b4!♣ T.Gustafsson-Murugan, Gausdal 1991.

If 12.h3 ♟g6 13.♟f1 ♟cxe5 14.♟xg5 (Fernandez Aguado-De la Riva Aguado, Barcelona 1993/94) 14...♞a6!♣.

12...♞xe5!

The moment has come to take some tough decisions.

13.♟de4!



A creative reply, but also a forced move, which leads to a sharp fight.

If 13.f4? ♞xe2 14.♞xe2 ♞a6—+ Höhn-S.Pedersen, Duisburg 1992; or 13.♞xe5 ♟xe5 14.♞f1 ♞a6 15.d4 ♞xf1♣.

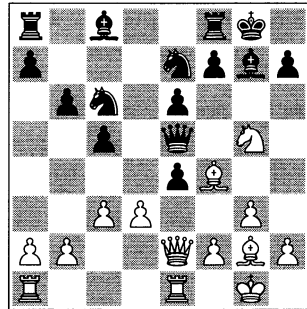
13...♟g6?

This move allows White to initiate a strong attack.

A) If Black accepts the material with 13...dxe4!?, then:

A1) 14.♞h5? is weak in view of 14...h6 15.♞f4 ♞f6 16.♞xe4 e5! 17.♟h7 ♞d6 18.♞g5 ♜d8 19.♞xe7 ♞xe7 20.♞xc6 ♞b7 21.♞xb7 ♞xb7♣ and the white knight remains in a tight spot on h7, Berry-Gershon, Dresden 2003;

A2) Fritz 11 gives the wonderful variation 14.♞f4!?



analysis diagram

14...♞f6 15.♞xe4 (15.♟xh7 ♟xh7 16.♞xe4+ ♟g8 17.♞h5 ♟g6!♣) 15...e5 16.♞xh7+ ♟h8 17.♞h5 (17.♟e4? ♞e6 18.♞h5 ♞g4!) 17...♞g4! 18.♞h4! ♞h6! 19.♞xe5! ♟xe5 20.♞xe5 ♞xe5 21.♞xh6 ♞g7 22.♞h4 f6 and White has a perpetual.

B) 13...♞c7!? is the best try to keep on playing: 14.♟xh7 dxe4 15.♟xf8 exd3∞.

14.♟xh7?

Another incorrect reply. The game has gone berserk and there are many tacti-

cal possibilities. The right move was 14.f4! ♖c7 15.♗h5→ (also 15.f5!? exf5 16.♗h5 h6 17.♘f6+ ♙xf6 18.♙xd5±) 15...h6 16.f5 dxe4 17.fxg6 fxg6 18.♗xg6 hxg5 19.♙xe4, winning; 14.♗h5!? leads to the same line.

14...♗xh7!

≤ 14...dxe4? 15.♘xf8 ♗xf8 16.h4!↑.

15.f4! ♖c7

15...♗f5? loses the queen after 16.♙h3! ♗xh3 17.♘g5+.

16.♘g5+ ♗g8 17.♗h5 ♖d8 18.♗h7+ ♗f8 19.h4

Trying to complicate with h5-h6.

19...♘ge7! 20.♗h5

20.h5? does not work because of 20...♘g8!.

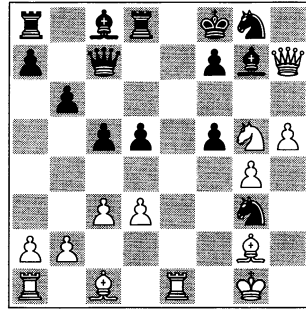
20...♘f5 21.g4 ♘g3! 22.♗h7 ♘e7 23.f5

There is no time to play 23.♗h2? ♘g8! 24.♗xg3 ♘f6 and White loses his queen.

23...exf5 24.h5?

A ‘ping-pong’ reply would be 24.♘xf7!? ♗xf7 25.♙h6 ♖g8 26.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 27.♙xd5+ ♙e6 28.♖e1 ♖ae8!±.

24...♘g8!



In order to defend against h5-h6, but also to trap the queen on h7 with ...♘f6!

25.h6 ♘xh6 26.♘e6+ fxe6?

Victory would have been Black’s reward after 26...♙xe6! 27.♙xh6 ♙xh6 28.♗xh6+ (28.♖xe6 ♙g7) 28...♗e7±.

27.♙xh6 ♗f7 28.♙xg7+ ♗xg7

29.♗h4 ♙d7 30.♗xg3 ♗xg4

31.♗d6+ ♗f7 32.♖e3 ♗g6 33.♖g3

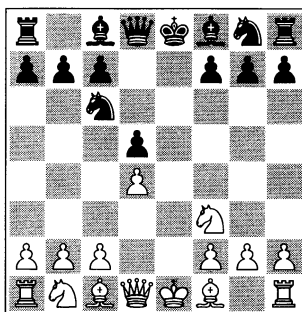
♙e8 34.♗f4 ♗f6 35.♖e1 ♖ac8!±

36.♖g5 ♖d7T 1/2-1/2

A game full of tactics, odd and beautiful, mixing bits of everything. However, the ambitious ‘exchanging’ plan with 9...0-0 and 11...g5 can be a dangerous surprise in your repertoire.

Chapter 12 – The Kung Fu Fight

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.♘f3 ♘c6



The symmetry with 2.exd5 exd5 never guarantees White a quiet life, but this is only possible if you learn to play in ‘kung fu’ fashion with black. After 4.♘f3, it is possible to immediately break the symmetry with 4...♘c6!?, unbalancing the game. This move promises Black rich piece play.

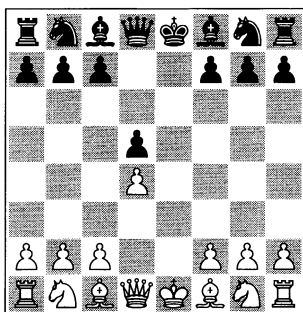
GAME 71

□ **Fernando Braga**

■ **Viktor Moskalenko**

Barbera 2001 (7)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5



As the legendary Bobby Fischer used to say: ‘In symmetrical positions the player who makes the first mistake loses

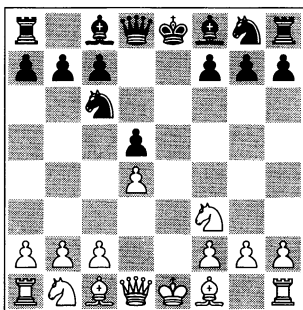
the game.’ If this is the case, we just have to wait!

4.♘f3

A) It is not too late to revert to aggressive mode: 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗e7!? 6.♘f3 0-0 7.♗e3 c6 (7...♗e6!? 8.cxd5 ♘xd5⇒ Plaskett-Gallagher, Hastings 1989/90) 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♘bd7 10.0-0 ♘b6 11.♗b3 ♘bd5 12.♘e5 ♗e6 13.♗g5 ♗e8 14.♗e1 ♗a5 15.♗f3 ♗ad8 16.♗ad1 ♗b4 17.♘xd5 ♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♗xd5 19.♗xf6?? (19.♗e3⇒) 19...gxf6 20.♗xf6 ♗d6! 21.♘d7 ♗xe1 0-1 Velimirovic-Uhlmann, Skopje 1976;

B) Quiet development does not offer White much: 4.♗d3 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c5!? 6.0-0 (6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.0-0 0-0 8.c3 ♘c6 9.♗f4 ♘e4 10.♘bd2 ♗e8 11.♘b3?! ♗b6 12.♗c2 ♗f6↑ Martinez

Gutierrez-Moskalenko, Badalona 2001)
 6...c4 7.♖e1+ ♕e7 8.♗f1 0-0 9.b3
 (9.♗g5 ♘c6 10.♘e5 h6 11.♘xc6
 bxc6) Gaponenko-Moskalenko,
 Montcada Open 2007) 9...cxb3
 10.axb3 ♘c6 11.c3 ♗f5 ½-½
 Narciso Dublan-Moskalenko, Catalonia
 tt 2006.
4...♘c6!?



This symmetrical knights' 'Kung fu' allows Black to unbalance the game.

5.♗d3

5.♗b5 would lead to a Ruy Lopez hybrid: 5...♘e7 (5...♗d6?! 6.c4!↑) and now:

A) 6.0-0 a6 7.♗d3?! (7.♗a4 g6!?)
 8.♖e1 b5 9.♗b3 ♗g7=) 7...♗f5 8.♗f4
 ♖d7= Yakovenko-Moskalenko, play-chess.com 2006;

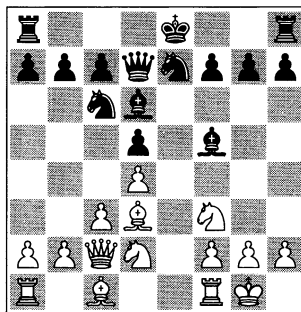
B) White's bishops met a horrible fate after 6.♗g5?! f6 7.♗f4 a6 8.♗e2 g5
 9.♗c1 ♗f5 10.0-0 ♖d7 11.a3 h5
 12.c4 dxc4 13.♗xc4 0-0-0 Narciso
 Dublan-Moskalenko, Barcelona 2001;

C) 6.♘e5 a6 7.♖h5?! ♗e6 8.♘xc6
 ♘xc6 9.♗xc6+ (this move leads to a
 'double' Exchange Variation
 (French/Ruy Lopez), but here it favours
 Black) 9...bxc6 10.0-0 ♖f6 11.♖e1
 ♗d6) Kruppa-Moskalenko, Sverdlovsk
 1984.

5...♗d6! 6.c3 ♘ge7!

Preparing either the strategic exchange with ...♗f5, or an aggressive plan with ...♗g4/...♖d7 followed by queenside castling.

7.♖c2 ♗g4! 8.♘bd2 ♖d7 9.0-0 ♗f5! =



Black has solved his opening problems. However, the middlegame still offers rich play.

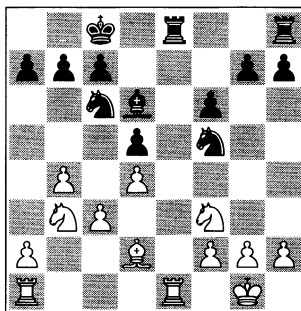
10.♖e1 ♗xd3 11.♖xd3 0-0-0!?

The most aggressive continuation; 11...0-0=.

12.b4 ♖f5! 13.♖xf5+

13.♖f1? ♖c2!.

13...♘xf5 14.♘b3 ♖de8 15.♗d2 f6! ♖

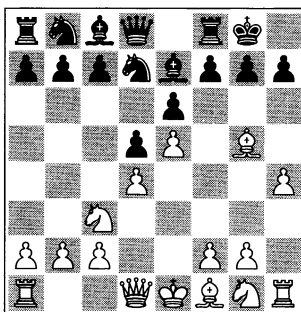


This move is very useful in this type of structure, since it cuts off some options for White's king's knight and dark-squared bishop. 15...h5!?

16.b5 ♘d8 17.♗f1 h5!

Chapter 13 – Weathering the Storm

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♝f6 4.♙g5 ♚e7 5.e5 ♜fd7 6.h4 0-0



In the Alekhine-Chatard Attack (C14), White aims to start a kingside storm with 6.h4. But in an old game with Ilia Smirin the author managed to prove that Black can provocatively castle 6...0-0 and weather this storm with accurate play! This forgotten game and some others in the notes cannot be found in any database, but fortunately they were written down in my old notebook, biding their time.

GAME 72

□ **Ilia Smirin**

■ **Viktor Moskalenko**

Beijing 1991

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♝f6 4.♙g5
♚e7 5.e5 ♜fd7 6.h4!**

An aggressive attack in World Champion Alexander Alekhine's style.

6...0-0!?

Castling is a healthy concept, but in this structure it is very provocative, inviting an immediate storm on the kingside!

7.♙d3

White wants to attack from a comfortable position. The most aggressive option is 7.♙g4.

A) Now 7...c5?! does not work because of 8.♙h6 g6 9.h5!→;

B) But 7...f6!? can be a surprise weapon: 8.♙d3 ♜f7!? 9.♜xd5 exd5 10.e6 ♙b4+!∞ Papa-Ulibin, Geneva 2004;

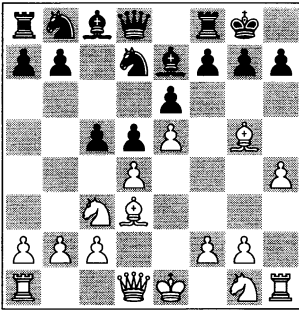
C) 7...f5 and now:

C1) 8.♙xe7 ♜xe7 9.♙g5!? ♜b4 10.0-0-0 c5 11.♙e7 ♜b6 12.♜a4 ♜c6 13.♜xc5 ♜xc5 14.♙xc5 ♜xc5 15.dxc5 ♜d7 16.♜f3 ♜xc5= Hebden-M.Gurevich, England tt 1997/98;

C2) 8.♙g3 c5 9.♙h6 ♜f7 10.♜xd5 exd5 (≤ 10...cxd4 11.♜xe7+ ♜xe7 12.0-0-0 ♜c6 13.♜f3± Barrientos-Moskalenko, Badalona 2005) 11.e6 ♜h8! 12.♙f4 ♜f6 13.exd7 ♙xd7⇒;

C3) 8.exf6?! ♜xf6 9.♙g3 c5 (9...♙d6!?) 10.dxc5 ♜bd7 11.0-0-0 ♜xc5 12.♙d3 b5! 13.♜f3 b4 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♜e2 a5 16.♜b1 ♙a6

17. ♗ed4 ♖b6 ♣ Kupreichik-
Moskalenko, Pinsk 1986.
7...c5!



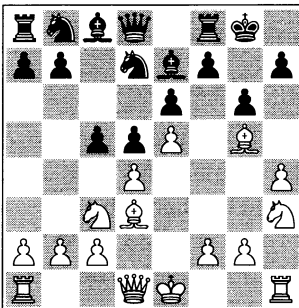
With this energetic reply in the centre the battle begins! The blockade 7...f5? does not work because of the manoeuvre 8. ♗h3!, threatening ♗h3-f4, with the initiative, Khalifman-Ulibin, Sochi 1989.

8. ♖h5!?

Bringing up all the resources against the enemy king.



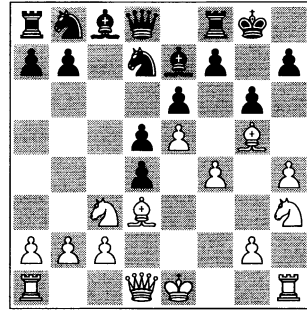
WEAPON: Now Khalifman's move 8. ♗h3?! prepares the thematic trick 9. ♙xh7+, but Black has a very strong defensive resource in 8...g6! (the key move. If 8...f5? 9. ♗f4±, or 8...cxd4? 9. ♙xe7 ♖xe7 10. ♙xh7+! ♗xh7 11. ♖h5+ ♗g8 12. ♗g5+—)



analysis diagram

The main defensive resource for Black is based on the exchange sacrifice after 9. ♙h6?!

cx4! 10. ♙xf8 ♙xf8 11. ♗e2 ♗xe5
12. ♗xd4 ♖xh4 with a great advantage for
Black, Hall-Moskalenko, Cambados 1992.
9. f4 cxd4!



analysis diagram

10. ♗b1? (or, for instance, 10. ♗e2 ♖a5+ (10...f6! 11. exf6 ♗xf6 ♣) 11. ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 12. ♗xd2 ♙b4+ 13. ♗d1 f6 14. ♙h6 fxe5!?) Relange-M. Gurevich, Belfort 1997) 10...♗c6 11. ♗d2 ♗c5 (11...f6!?) 12. ♗f2 f6! 13. exf6 ♙xf6 14. ♙h6 ♙g7 15. ♙xg7 ♗xg7 16. h5 g5! 17. h6+ ♗h8 18. ♖h5 gxf4 19. ♗f3 e5! and the position is completely won for Black, Hector-Moskalenko, Copenhagen 1995.

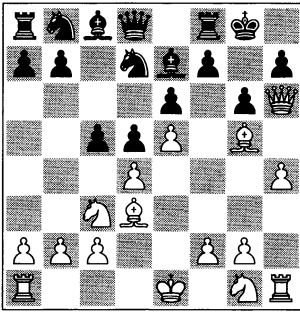
B) 8. ♗f3 is not very useful, since it blocks the d1-h5 diagonal for the white queen: 8...f5 9. ♖d2 ♗c6 10. ♙b5 cxd4 11. ♗xd4 ♗dxe5 ♣ winning a pawn. Dubois-Moskalenko, Val Thorens 1990. Also, 8...cxd4! is now possible, with an advantage for Black, since 9. ♙xe7? ♖xe7 10. ♙xh7+? loses to 10...♗xh7 11. ♗g5+ ♗h6! and there is no attack.

8...g6

Black builds a fortress. 8...h6? 9. ♙xh6!.

9. ♖h6

This was the key position of my studies in the 1990s, when I did not have a computer and I had to analyse at home over the board!



There is no way back: 9.♙xe7?! ♖xe7
10.♖g5 ♖xg5 11.hxg5 cxd4 ♞.

9...♟c6!

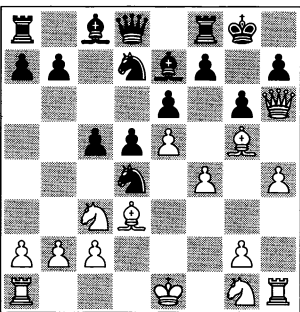
This is the continuation which allows Black to keep on fighting.

If 9...cxd4!? White has 10.♟f3!? ♟xe5□ (10...dxc3? 11.h5! cxb2 12.♞b1 ♙b4+ 13.♟d1 f6 14.hxg6 and White wins) 11.♟xe5 dxc3 12.♟xg6 (analysis will show if other moves are better) 12...fxg6 13.♙xg6 hxg6 14.♖xg6+ ♟h8 and there is nothing better than a draw.

10.f4

10.♙xe7 must be analysed: 10...♖xe7 11.h5 cxd4 (11...♟b4 12.♟f3 ♟xd3+ 13.cxd3 cxd4 14.♟e2 g5 15.♞h3 f6 16.exf6 ♖xf6 17.♖xg5+ ♖xg5 18.♟xg5 e5 19.♟e6 ♞f6 20.♟c7 ♞b8 21.♟xd5) 12.hxg6 fxg6 13.♙xg6 hxg6 14.♖h8+ ♟f7 15.♞h7+ ♟e8 16.♞xe7+ ♟xe7 ♞ Bezemer-Wüstefeld, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

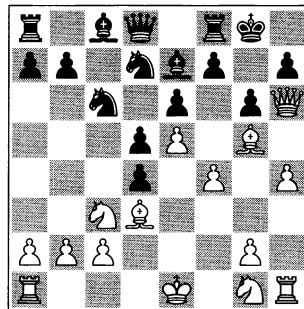
10...♟xd4!



The only defence (discovered in my old analysis). However, in several recent games Black did not find the right path:

10...♞e8? 11.♟f3 (11.dxc5 ♙f8?! 12.♖xf8+ ♞xf8 13.♙xd8± Iordachescu-Tadic, Zlatibor tt 2007) 11...♟xd4 12.♟xd4 cxd4 13.♙xe7 ♖xe7 (13...♞xe7! and Black is OK) 14.♟b5 ♟c5 15.0-0-0↑ B.Muhren-Middelveld, Hilversum ch-NLD 2008;

 WEAPON: 10...cxd4??



analysis diagram

Unfortunately, this loses due to mating threats: 11.♟f3!! dxc3 (11...♟dxe5 12.fxe5 dxc3 13.h5! cxb2 14.♞b1, winning) 12.h5 cxb2 13.♞b1↑ and there is no defence according to my analysis back in the 1990s, and confirmed by Fritz 11.

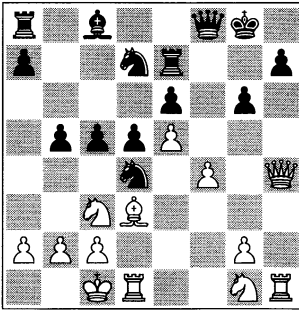
11.♟f3

A) 11.0-0-0!? might be more interesting for White, and here several options should be checked:

A1) 11...f5 12.♟f3 ♟xf3 13.gxf3 (Bellon Lopez-Gleizerov, Stockholm 2004/05) 13...c4!?∞;

A2) 11...♞e8!? (a defensive resource, threatening 12...♙f8) 12.♙xe7!? (12.h5 ♙f8!) 12...♞xe7!? (12...♖xe7 13.h5

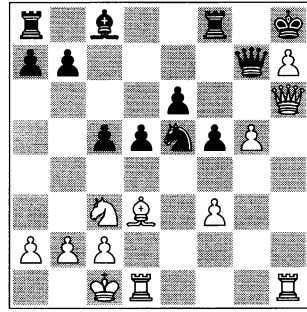
♗f8 14. hxg6 fxg6 15. ♗h3∞) 13. h5
 ♖f8 14. hxg6 (14. ♖g5!? f6! 15. exf6
 ♖xf6) 14... fxg6 15. ♖h4 b5!⇒.



analysis diagram

B) On 11. h5 the critical continuation is 11... ♙xg5! (11... ♗f5!? 12. ♙xf5 gxf5 13. ♙xe7 ♖xe7 14. 0-0-0 f6⇒) 12. fxg5 ♖e7!, when Black seems to maintain his fortress, for instance: 13. hxg6 fxg6 14. ♙xg6 hxg6 15. ♖h8+ ♗f7 16. ♖h7+ ♗e8 17. ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 18. ♖h7+ ♖f7 19. ♖xg6 ♗xe5⚡, favouring Black.

11... ♗xf3+ 12. gxh3 f5
 12... ♖e8!? with the same idea
 13... ♙f8!
13. h5 ♙xg5 14. fxg5 ♗xe5
 14... ♖e8!?.
15. hxg6 ♖e7 16. gxh7+ ♗h8 17. 0-0-0 ♖g7



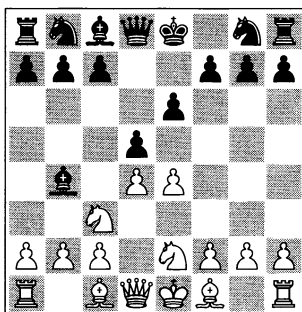
Now Smirin sacrifices two pieces, trying to put an end to the game.

18. ♙xf5?
 ≥ 18. ♖h5∞.
18... ♖xh6 19. ♖xh6 ♖xf5 20. ♗xd5 exd5 21. ♖xd5 ♗f7
 21... ♗c6 22. g6 ♙e6-+.
22. ♖xf5 ♙xf5 23. ♖f6 ♗d6 24. ♖xd6 ♖f8 25. ♗d2 ♗xh7 26. c3 ♗g7 27. b4 cxb4 28. cxb4 ♖e8 29. a4 ♖e7 1/2-1/2
 The position is technically winning for Black, but the old time control did not allow me to finish the game properly.

Summary of the ‘storm’ variation 6. h4 0-0!? in the Alekhine-Chatard-Smirin Attack: this ensures a hard fight for the initiative with bags of adrenalin and lots of enjoyable tactics. All this thanks to my old notebook, where all the details of this battle were preserved.

Chapter 14 – The Anti-Winawer

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♞e2



The Two Knights Variation with 4.♞e2 is one of many anti-Winawer lines, which is quite fashionable these days. It offers an escape from the main lines and interesting play. Objectively it gives an equal game. However, the final outcome usually depends on the two players' knowledge of the line. So when Marc Narciso Dublan steered towards a French game against my usual 1.d4, I decided to give it a try.

GAME 73

□ **Viktor Moskalenko**

■ **Marc Narciso Dublan**

Catalunya tt 2005 (4)

1.d4

My opponent in this game now carelessly played the move

1...e6

forgetting that I am a specialist in the French Defence.

2.e4

I decided to test my knowledge and also my opponent's in this opening.

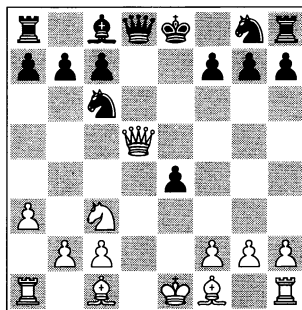
2...d5 3.♘c3

This move has been the most popular in recent years.

3...♙b4 4.♞e2 ♞f6

This looks very logical: development and pressure on the centre, but we are not in a genuine French!

The most straightforward way to equalise is 4...dxe4!? 5.a3 ♙xc3+ (5...♙e7 6.♞xe4 ♞f6=) 6.♞xc3 ♞c6 7.d5 (7.♙b5?! ♞e7 8.♞xe4 0-0 9.♙e3 f5 10.♞g5 f4 11.♙d2 ♔d5 ♚Thorhalls-son-Moskalenko, Copenhagen 1995) 7...exd5 8.♚xd5=.

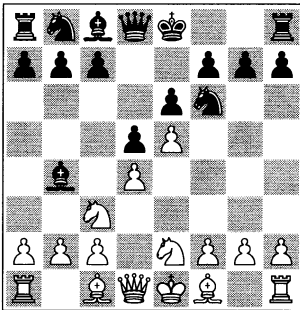


analysis diagram

White has no advantage at all. For instance: 8...♙e6!? 9.♚xe4 (9.♚xd8+?!)

♙xd8 10.♗xe4 ♘d4 11.♙d3 ♙c4!
 12.0-0 ♙xd3 13.cxd3 (Landenbergue-
 Rozentalis, Chiasso 1991) 9...♗f6
 10.♙h4 ♙e7 11.♙e2 0-0-0 12.♙e3
 ♘d5 13.♙xe7 ♗dxe7 ⇒ Gaponenko-
 Kononenko, Antalya rapid 2002.
 Nimzowitsch's move 4...♗c6 contains
 some interesting ideas as well. How-
 ever, it would lead to the same paths af-
 ter 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.♗xc3 dxe4 etc.

5.e5

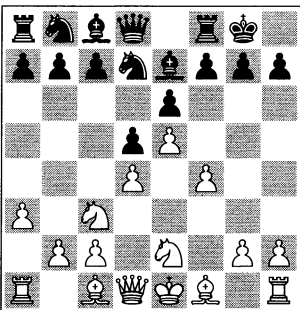


5...♗e4

Imitating the MacCutcheon Variation,
 but there are certain differences.

A hybrid of the Classical Winawer and
 the 'Pawn Wedge' would arise after
 5...♗fd7!?

A) 6.f4 0-0 (6...b6?! 7.a3 ♙e7?
 8.f5!± Kalod-Moskalenko, Catalunya tt
 2007) 7.a3 ♙e7!



analysis diagram

with a position quite similar to the lines
 we have seen before. 8.g3 c5 9.♙e3

♗c6 10.♙g2 b6!? 11.0-0 ♙a6 ⇒
 Asis-Moskalenko, Montcada 2006;

B) 6.♙d3 is another sharp line:
 6...0-0 7.a3 ♙e7 8.♙g3 ♗h8 9.♙e3 c5
 10.0-0-0 ♗c6 11.f4 b5!? 12.dxc5 b4
 13.axb4 ♗xb4 14.f5 ♙xc5 15.fxe6
 fxe6 16.♗d4 ♙xd4 17.♙xd4 ♙a5 →
 0-1 De la Riva Aguado-Moskalenko,
 Sitges 2006.

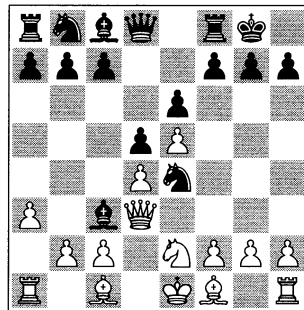
6.♙d3

Intending 7.a3, with the idea of not al-
 lowing the pawns to be doubled. 6.a3!?
 can also be played right away: 6...♗xc3
 7.♗xc3 ♙xc3+ 8.bxc3 0-0 9.♙d3 f5!
 and the game is more or less equal.

6...0-0

Slightly slow. The most energetic reply
 is 6...c5! 7.a3 c4 8.♙e3 ♙a5 9.b4
 cxb3 10.cxb3 ♗xc3 11.♗xc3 ♙d7
 12.b4 ♙b6 13.♙d3 ♗c6 14.♗e2 f6
 15.♙g3 0-0 ⇒ Alsina Leal-Moskalenko,
 Barcelona Sants 2005.

7.a3 ♙xc3+



8.bxc3!

I preferred to keep more pieces on the
 board, intending to play 9.f3. On
 8.♗xc3, 8...f5! is a very strong reply.

8...f6

Virtually the only defence, but it is ade-
 quate.

9.f3!

We must attack the pieces that are too
 active.

9...♖g5 10.♙xg5

Eliminating the poor knight, but this might not be necessary. 10.exf6!? was more interesting, and after 10...♖xf6 11.h4 ♖f7 12.♙g5! White has the initiative.

10...fxg5 11.h4!

Everybody on the attack!

11...g4!

This is a strong reply, allowing Black to fight for the initiative. 11...gxh4?! 12.g3!↑ Pablo Marin-De la Villa Garcia, Ciudad Real tt 2004.

12.fxg4

12.f4!?

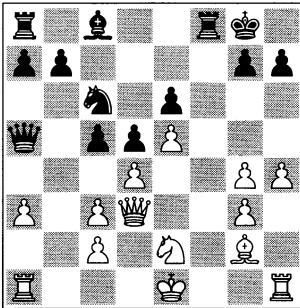
12...c5!

Activating the queenside.

13.g3

An attempt at a fianchetto.

13...♖a5 14.♙g2 ♖c6



15.♔f4!

Castling is essential! With my king in the centre I would not have survived for too long. I did not like 15.♖d2? because of 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♖xd2+ 17.♙xd2 ♖f2 and Black is doing very well here.

15...cxd4 16.0-0

Now I could breathe much more easily.

16...dxc3

Eating so many pawns can be bad for your stomach! If 16...♖xc3 17.♖xc3 dxc3 18.♔xd5!⇒.

17.♙h2!

The last prophylactic move. Narciso has played well up to this point. 17.♔xd5? does not work yet because of 17...♖d8!.

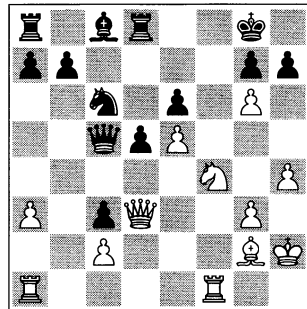
17...♖d8?

A serious mistake which hands White the initiative. Better possibilities were 17...♙d7 18.♔xd5!?, or else 17...♔xe5 18.♖e2∞, or perhaps 17...♖c5!?, with a complicated game in all cases.

18.g5! ♖c5

18...♔xe5 19.♖e2↑.

19.g6!



Driving a wedge into Black's defensive lines.

19...h6 20.♖ae1 ♖d4 21.♖e2 ♖f8?

This allows a strong blow. However, in the event of 21...♙d7 White can also play 22.♔xd5!.

22.♔xd5! ♙d7 23.♔f4!

Holding on to the advantage.

23...♖c5 24.♖d1! ♖e7T

Black was short of time and he had the worse position. If 24...♖xe5 25.♖c4!↑ ♖ad8 26.♖xd7! ♖xd7 27.♔xe6 ♖xf1 28.♔c5+!.

25.♙h3!

Threatening 26.♖xd7.

25...♖ae8 26.♖d6 ♙c8 27.♖e3 ♖c7

28.♖xc3

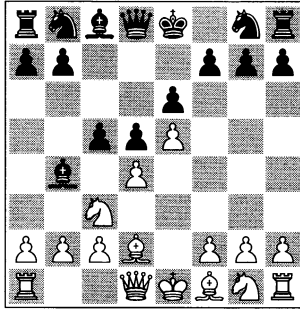
I like eating pawns too! 28.♔xe6!?.

28...♙h8 29.♙g2 ♙d7 30.♖fd1+—

and White won in the time scramble.

Chapter 15 – The Semi-Winawer

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.♙d2



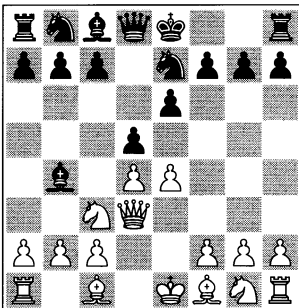
5.♙d2 is a problematic move in the Winawer. After this Black has experienced some problems in unbalancing the game and fighting for the initiative in the opening. In this chapter we will look at a surprising bishop retreat: 6...♙c5!. Instead of getting exchanged on d2, on c5 the bishop defends d4 and at the same time controls the dangerous check on d6.

GAME 74

□ Alfonso Jerez Perez
 ■ Viktor Moskalenko
 Montcada 2004 (5)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5

The same player used to play a modest line: 4.♙d3?! ♘e7!?.



analysis diagram

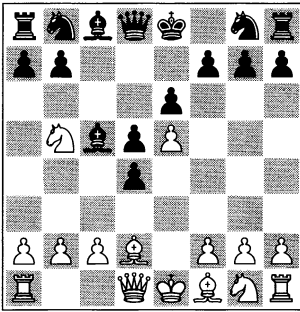
This development is more flexible than 4...♘f6 and it enables Black to save some tempi.

5.♙d2 0-0 6.a3 ♙xc3 7.♙xc3 b6! (ensuring the typical French counterplay) 8.0-0-0 ♙a6 9.♙e3 ♙xf1 10.♙xf1 a5! (the bishop on c3 is now a useless piece) 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.♙d2 b5 13.♙d3 dxe4 14.♙xe4 ♙d5 15.♙xd5 ♘xd5 16.♙d1 ♙fb8 17.b3 a4! 18.♙b2 f6! ♞ with a comfortable endgame which allowed Black to win easily, Jerez Perez-Moskalenko, Barbera 1999.

4...c5 5.♙d2 cxd4!?

Our line begins with this move. The most usual options are 5...♘h6, 5...♘c6 and especially 5...♘e7.

6.♘b5 ♙c5!



This is the line we are going to develop. Those who play 5.♔d2 against the Winawer are used to seeing the black bishop exchanged on d2 after 6.♘b5. After that, White tends to regain his pawn with a comfortable game.

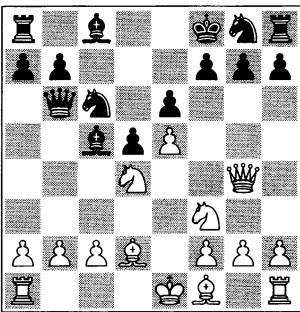
7.♚g4!?

The most aggressive line, much in the Winawer style.

The main alternative is 7.b4 ♔e7! (the usual retreat, but 7...♔f8! 8.♘xd4 ♘e7 9.♘g3 ♘bc6⇐, and 7...♔b6! 8.♚g4 ♘f8!∞ Ibarra Jerez-Suba, Granada 2007, also have their advantages) 8.♘xd4 ♘c6 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♚g4 g6 11.♘f3 h5! 12.♚f4 ♘h6⇐ with a playable position.

7...g6

This defence leads to a complicated game. 7...♘f8! is more solid, for instance: 8.♘f3 (8.b4 ♔b6!∞) 8...♘c6 9.♘bxd4 ♚b6!



analysis diagram

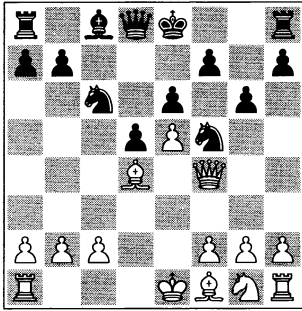
10.♔c3 f6! (10...♔xd4! 11.♔xd4 ♚b4+!⇐ is an interesting alternative) 11.♚f4 (there is nothing better) 11...♔xd4! 12.♘xd4 (if 12.♔xd4?! ♘xd4⇐) 12...♘xe5 and Black has an extra pawn in exchange for an insecure position.

8.0-0-0!?

A novelty.

A) The usual move is 8.b4 ♔f8! (8...♔e7!?) 9.♘xd4 ♔g7!⇐ B.Muhren-Van den Berg, Hengelo 2000;

B) In another game I faced 8.♘xd4 ♘c6 9.♔c3 ♘h6! 10.♚f4 ♔xd4 11.♔xd4 ♘f5↑. The knights on f5 and c6 should guarantee that Black will not have any problems here.

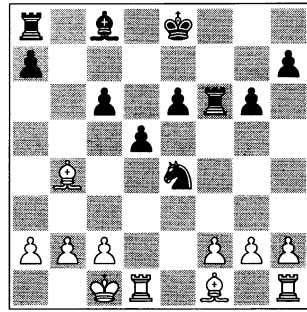
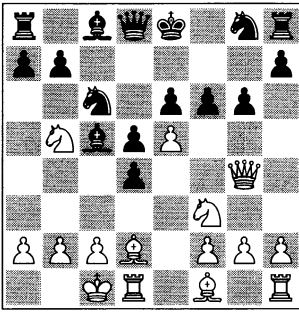


analysis diagram

12.♘f3? (a dubious move, since it allows a tactical sequence. 12.♘e2 was safer) 12...g5! (the white queen is overloaded) 13.♘xg5 (13.♚d2? g4) 13...♘cxd4 14.0-0-0 and the position is complicated, but advantageous to Black, Ayza Ballester-Moskalenko, La Pobra de Lillet 2004. Now, 14...f6!.

8...♘c6 9.♘f3 f6!?

A typical fight for the centre. 9...♚b6 deserves consideration, for instance: 10.♚f4 ♔d7∞, or else 9...♘ge7 with equal chances.



10. ♖bxd4!

Starting a virtually forced sequence. If 10. exf6? ♕xf6 ♢ Black develops his knight while threatening the queen.

10... ♙xd4

10... ♗b6?! does not work. 11. ♕xc6 bxc6 12. ♗f4±.

11. ♕xd4 fxe5 12. ♕xc6 bxc6

13. ♙c3?!

13. ♗g3!? e4∞ was better.

13... ♕f6!

Or 13... d4!?.

14. ♗g3 ♕e4!

14... e4 15. ♗e5∞.

15. ♗xe5 ♗f8 16. ♙b4?

16. ♙d3 was necessary: 16... ♕xc3

17. ♗xc3 ♙d7 with an equal position.

16... ♗f6!

Utilising the possibility of this intermediate move.

17. ♗xf6

Or else 17. ♗c7 ♗f4+ 18. ♗xf4 ♗xf4 ♢.

17... ♗xf6

With an advantage for Black, since the pawn on f2 is doomed.

18. ♙e2 a5! 19. ♙a3?!

19. ♙e1 was a better chance: 19... ♕xf2

20. ♗f1 ♕e4 21. ♗xf6 ♕xf6 ♢.

19... ♙a6! 20. ♙xa6 ♗xa6 21. ♗hf1

♕xf2 ♢

The rest is a matter of technique.

22. ♗de1 ♖f7 23. ♙c5 ♕e4 24. ♙d4

♗xf1 25. ♗xf1+ ♖e7 26. a4 c5 27. ♙e5

h5 28. h3 c4 29. b3 cxb3 30. cxb3 ♕c5

31. ♗f3 ♕d7 32. ♙c3 e5 33. ♖b2 d4

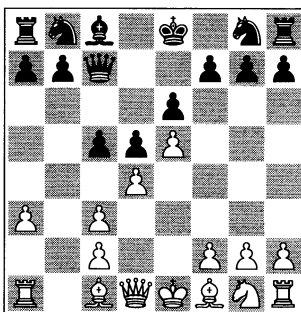
34. ♙d2 ♖e6 35. ♙g5 e4 36. ♗f4 ♖d5

37. ♗f7 ♕e5 38. ♗b7 e3 **0-1**

The move 5. ♙d2 is not especially strong (compared with 5.a3), but since it prevents the doubling of pawns on c3 it tends to lead to positions with a slight advantage for White without any risk. The statistics are very reasonable for White. However, the black counter-plan 5... cxd4!? 6. ♕b5 ♙c5! is not very well known and it has given me good practical results.

Chapter 16 – The Old Winawer

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♘xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♚c7



This is a method of playing the Winawer which was preferred by Mikhail Botvinnik. The manoeuvre of the black queen is ‘multi-geometric’, since it protects the seventh rank against ♚g4 (with ...f7-f5) and usually counterattacks tactically along the c-file. This ‘old Winawer’ contains many resources – and it is always possible to revert to the modern lines.

GAME 75

□ **Jordi Fluvia Poyatos**

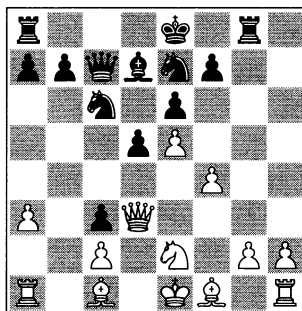
■ **Viktor Moskalenko**

Catalunya ch 2005 (7)

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5
5.a3 ♘xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♚c7!**

Another old/new surprise weapon can be 6...♘e7 7.♚g4 cxd4!? (peculiarly, the most fashionable defences are: 7...♚c7 (which does not seem to have much logic independently after ...♘e7 as then the queen cannot protect g7, but it could transpose into the main line after 8.♚xg7 ♖g8 9.♚xh7 cxd4 etc.) and 7...0-0. I have never used kingside castling in this Winawer ‘pseudo-main’ line, since White has many possibilities of launching pretty mating attacks. But 7...♙f8!? is possibly more suitable),

with the follow-up 8.♚xg7 (8.cxd4 ♚c7⇒ Ragozin-Botvinnik, Moscow 1935) 8...♖g8 9.♚xh7 ♚c7 (9...♚a5?! Alexander-Botvinnik, England-Soviet Union radio match 1946) 10.♘e2 ♘bc6 11.f4 ♘d7 12.♚d3 dxc3



analysis diagram

A) In the old days white players responded classically with 13.♘e3 d4!?

14.♗f2 0-0-0 15.♞xd4 ♞xd4 16.♚xd4 b6 17.♗h4 ♗b5⇒ Spassky-Kortchnoi, 2nd match game, Belgrade 1977;

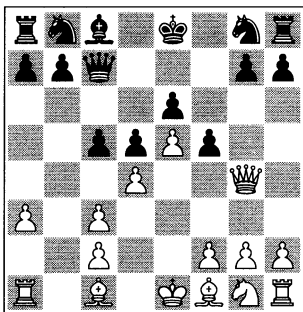
B) 13.♞g1 is a modern manoeuvre, preferred by Svidler and Shirov: 13...0-0-0 14.g4 d4 15.h4 (15.♞b1 ♗e8 16.♞g3∞ Svidler-Berg, Heraklion Ech-tt 2007) 15...♗e8 16.h5 f6!? 17.exf6 ♞d5 18.♗h3 ♝b8 19.g5 ♗xh5 20.♗xe6∞ Shirov-Shulman, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007;

C) 13.♞xc3 a6 (13...♞a5!?) 14.♞b1 ♞a5 (14...0-0-0?? 15.♚xa6!) 15.h4?! ♞f5 16.♞h3 0-0-0⇒ occurred in Cheparinov-Grischuk, Baku 2008.

7.♚g4

Logical and strong. The most conventional play occurs after 7.♞f3 b6!? 8.♗b5+ ♗d7 9.♗d3 ♗a4 10.0-0 c4 11.♗e2 ♞c6 12.♞g5 (another option is 12.♞e1 ♞ge7 13.f4 0-0-0 14.♗e3 f6 15.♗f2 ♚d7 16.g4 h5! 17.exf6 gxf6 18.g5 ♞f5⚡ Felgaer-Moskalenko, Barcelona 2004) 12...h6 13.♞h3 ♞ge7 (or 13...0-0-0 14.f4 f5 15.exf6 ♞xf6 16.♞f2 g5!↑ Slaby-Moskalenko, Salou 2005) 14.f4 (14.♞f4!?) 14...0-0-0 15.g4 f5 16.g5 ♞df8 17.♞f2 ♞d8 18.♞g2 hxg5 19.♞xg5 ♞h6 20.♗e3 ♞f7 21.♞f3 ♞g6 22.♚d2 ♞g8 23.♗f2 ♚e7!⚡ Jimenez Albadalejo-Moskalenko, Barcelona Sants 2001.

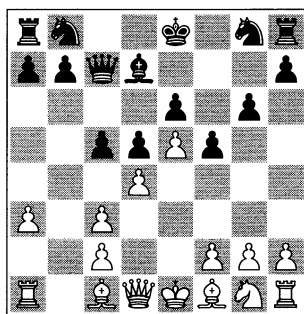
7...f5!



The key defence of g7.

8.♚g3

With pressure on the kingside. Another interesting possibility is 8.♚h5+!? g6 (8...♚f7 9.♚d1 b6 10.c4 ♞e7 11.♞f3 0-0= Escobar-Moskalenko, Montcada 2006) 9.♚d1 ♗d7



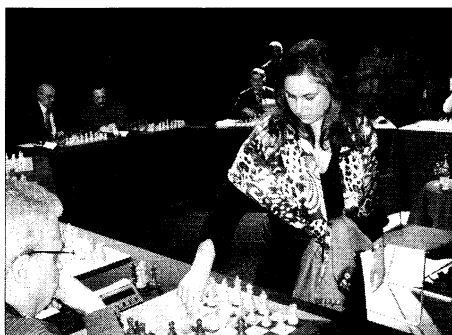
analysis diagram

10.♞f3 cxd4 (the main idea is 10...♗a4!? 11.♗d3 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♚c3+ 13.♗d2 ♚xd3! 14.cxd3 ♗xd1 15.♝xd1=) 11.cxd4 ♗a4 12.♗d2 h6 13.♗d3 ♞c6 14.0-0 (14.h4!? ♝f7 15.♚c1 ♞c8 16.0-0 ♝g7 17.c4 ♞ge7 is quite similar, Kamsky-Moskalenko, playchess.com 2005) 14...♞ge7 (14...g5!?) 15.h4 ♝f7 16.♚c1 ♝g7∞ Sutovsky-Moskalenko, France tt 2004; Judit Polgar's 10.♗d3?! is less good: 10...♗a4 11.♞b1 ♞c6 12.dxc5 0-0-0 (12...♞xe5!?) 13.♗f4 h6 14.h4 ♞f6!? 15.♞e2?! (15.exf6 ♚xf4 16.♚e2 ♚e5⇒) 15...♞e4⚡, J.Polgar-Simon, Barcelona simul 2007.

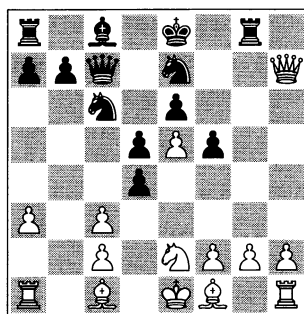
8...♞c6!?

This is perhaps the best move order, to avoid dangerous manoeuvres such as ♞e2-♞f4:

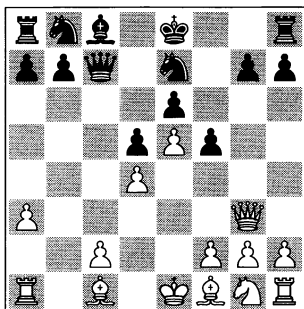
A) 8...cxd4 9.cxd4 (9.♞e2!? ♞c6 10.cxd4 ♞ge7 11.c3 0-0 12.h4 ♞a5⇒ Castaner Halster-Moskalenko, Catalunya-ch 2002) 9...♞e7



My companion from the historical Terrassa chess club, FM Emilio Simon, was the only player to use the French Defence against Judit and also the only one to win his game.



analysis diagram



analysis diagram

10.♔d2 (or 10.♘e2!? ♜f7? 11.c3 b6? 12.♘f4 ♘a6?? 13.♚xc3 R. Rodriguez Guerrero-Moskalenko, La Roda 2004. Another example was 10.c3 ♘bc6 11.♘h3 ♘g6!? (with the idea of exchanging knights on f4) 12.♘e2 0-0 13.0-0 ♘d7 14.a4 ♜fc8 15.♘a3 ♘a5 16.♘d6? ♚xc3 17.♚xc3 ♜xc3 18.♘b4 ♜xh3! Karjakin-Moskalenko, Bilbao rapid 2004) 10...♘bc6 11.♘e2 0-0 12.h4 f4! 13.♘xf4 ♘f5 14.♚c3 ♘fxd4! Vehi Bach-Moskalenko, Barcelona Foment rapid 2004;

B) 8...♘e7!? (a rare alternative) 9.♚xc3 ♜g8 10.♚xc3 cxd4 11.♘e2!? (11.♘d1 is the oldest answer. Here, a new weapon could be 11...♚c5!? with the idea 12.♘f3 ♘bc6⇒ 11...♘bc6!?)

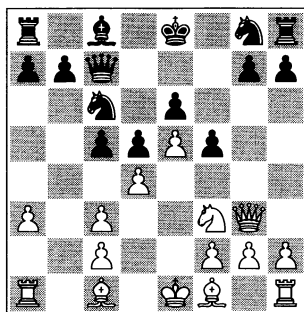
With quite flexible play:

B1) 12.f4!? ♘d7 13.♚h3 dxc3 14.♚xc3 0-0-0 15.g3 ♘e8 16.♘g2 ♘h5⇒ R.Byrne-Botvinnik, Monte Carlo 1968;

B2) 12.h4 is unclear: 12...dxc3 13.♘g5 ♚xe5 14.♚h5+ ♘g6 (14...♜g6!? 15.♜h3 d4 16.f4 ♚g7 17.0-0-0 ♘d5!⇒) 15.f4 (Berg-Berelovich, Fügen tt 2006) and now the best move was 15...♚g7;

B3) 12.♚h5+ ♘d8!? (12...♘g6!? is also possible: 13.♘g5?! (Anand-Cu.Hansen, Middelfart 2003) and here the best chance was 13...d3! 14.cxd3 ♘xe5↑ and Black fights for the initiative) 13.f4 dxc3 14.♘e3 ♚a5 15.♚h4 b6 16.♚f2 ♘a6 17.h4 ♘d7 18.♜h3 ½-½ Baklan-Borovikov, Alushta 2002. But after 18...♘xe2!? there are still many resources in the position.

9.♘f3



9...cxd4

≤ 9... ♖ge7 10. ♚xg7 ♗g8 11. ♚xh7 cxd4 12. ♗b5!±.

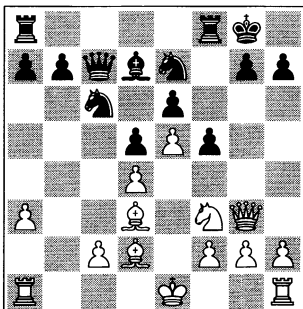
10.cxd4 ♖ge7 11. ♗d2

If 11. ♚xg7?! ♗g8 12. ♚xh7 ♖xd4!⇒. An interesting line is 11. ♗e2!? 0-0 12. ♗h6 ♚a5+! 13. ♗d2 ♚a4 14.c3 ♖a5⇒ Korneev-Moskalenko, Naval-moral 2005.

11...0-0

A natural move. More risky is 11... ♗g8!? 12.h4 ♗d7 13. ♗d3 h6 14.0-0∞ Iglesias-Moskalenko, Cano-velles 2001.

12. ♗d3 ♗d7



The key moment in this line.

13.h4?!

Players with an attacking style prefer this move, but Black will get there first. It was better to continue developing with 13.0-0 ♗e8!? 14. ♗ab1 ♗g6 (or 14... ♚d7 15. ♖g5 ♗g6 16.c3 f4!?⇒ Handke-Moskalenko, Sants 2005) 15. ♚f4 h6⇒ Alsina Leal-Moskalenko, Salou 2006.

13...f4!

With many tactical tricks for Black.

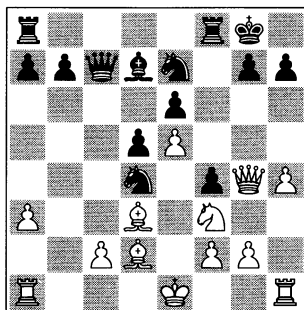
14. ♚g4?

Allowing another strong blow.

A) The main trick is revealed after 14. ♗xf4 ♖xd4! 15. ♖xd4 (if 15. ♗xh7+? ♗xh7 16. ♖xd4 ♗xf4!; or 15.0-0 ♖f5 16. ♚g4 ♖xf3+ 17. ♚xf3 ♖xh4∞ Dolce-CapNemo, playchess.com 2006) 15... ♚c3+ 16. ♗e2 ♚xd4↑ Lacasa-Moskalenko, Barcelona Sants 2003;

B) 14. ♚g5 does not work either. After 14...h6! 15. ♚g4 ♖xd4! 16. ♖xd4 ♚xe5+ 17. ♗f1 ♚xd4 Black won easily in the blitz games Barreiro-CapNemo and High_me-CapNemo, playchess.com 2007.

14...♖xd4!



The point of Black's counterplay.

15. ♗xh7+

Looking for complications, but everything is under control. In the event of 15. ♖xd4 ♚xe5+ White cannot play 16. ♖e2 because of 16... ♚xa1+.

15...♗xh7 16. ♚h5+ ♗g8 17. ♖xd4 ♗f5!

Another surprise.

18. ♖xf5 ♚xe5+! 19. ♗e3 ♚c3+

19... ♖xf5 also wins.

20. ♗e2 ♖xf5 21.g4 fxg3

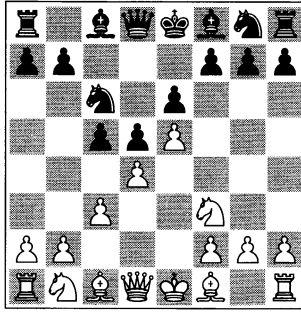
0-1

New In Chess Code System

White stands slightly better	±
Black stands slightly better	∓
White stands better	±
Black stands better	∓
White has a decisive advantage	+—
Black has a decisive advantage	—+
balanced position	=
unclear position	∞
compensation for the material	∞
strong (sufficient)	>
weak (insufficient)	<
better is	≧
weaker is	≦
good move	!
excellent move	!!
bad move	?
blunder	??
interesting move	!?
dubious move	?!
only move	□
with the idea	△
attack	→
initiative	↑
lead in development	↑↑
counterplay	⇄
correspondence	corr.

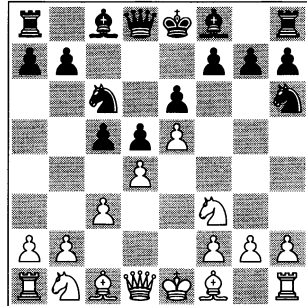
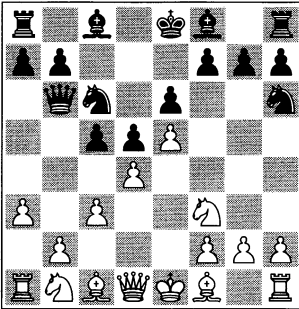
Index of Variations French Defence 1.e4 e6

Part One – Advance Variation 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♗f3 9

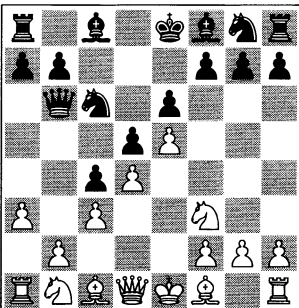


Chapter 1 5... ♗b6 6.a3 ♘h6
(Games 1, 2)

5... ♘h6
(Game 3)

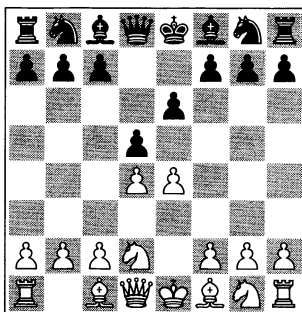


Chapter 2 5... ♗b6 6.a3 c4



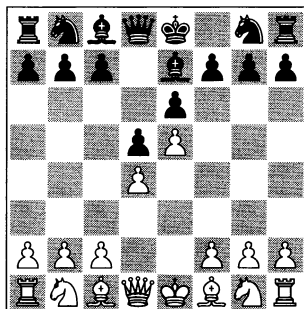
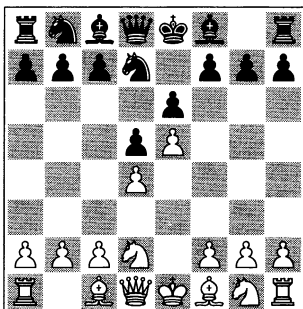
7. ♘bd2, ♙e2 (Games 4-8)
7.g3, 8.h4 (Games 9-12)
7.g3 f6, 7. ♘bd2 f6 (Games 13-15)

Part Two – Tarrasch Variation 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 59



Chapter 3 3...♘d2 4.e5 ♘f7

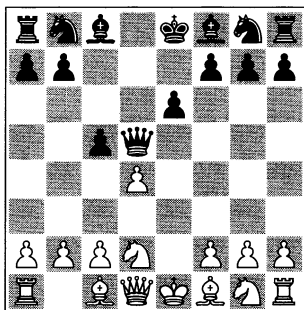
Chapter 4 A) 3...♗e7



- 5.c3 c5 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.♗e2 cxd4 8.cxd4 f6 9.exf6 (Games 16, 17)
- 5.c3 c5 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.♗e2 cxd4 8.cxd4 f6 9.♗f4 (Games 18, 19)
- 5.c3 c5 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.♗gf3 g6 (Games 20, 21)
- 5.c3 c5 6.♗d3 b6 (Games 22, 23)
- 5.f4 (Games 24-26)

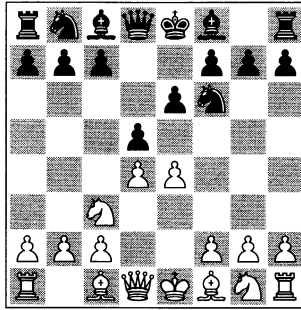
- 4.e5 (Game 27)
- 4.c3 (Game 28)
- 4.♗g3 (Game 29)
- 4.♗d3 (Games 30, 31)

B) 3...c5 4.exd5 ♗xd5



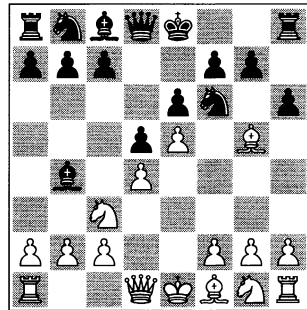
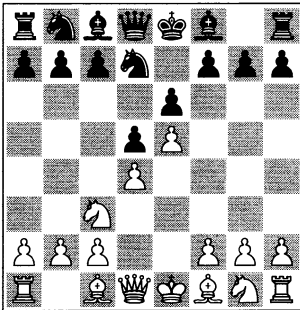
- 5.♗g3 cxd4 6.♗c4 ♗d6 7.♗e2 (Game 32)
- ...7.0-0 ♗f6 8.♗b3 ♘c6 9.♗bxd4 ♘xd4: 10.♗xd4 (Game 33); 10.♗xd4 (34-36)

Part Three – Classical Variation 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 149



Chapter 5 4.e5 ♗fd7

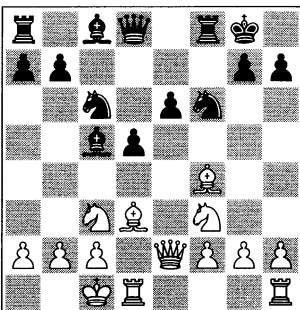
Chapter 6 4.♙g5 ♙b4 5.e5 h6



5.♗ce2 (Game 37)
 5.f4 c5 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.♙e3 a6 8.♙d2 b5 (Game 38)
 5.f4 c5 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♗xd4 ♙c5 (Game 39)

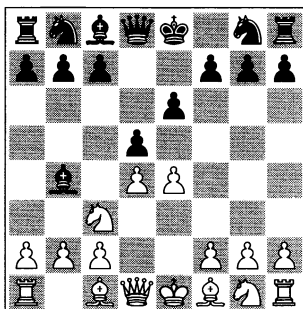
6.♙d2 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 ♗e4 8.♙g4: 8...♗f8 (Games 40-44); 8...g6 (45-47)
 6.exf6 (Game 48)
 6.♙e3 (Game 49)

Chapter 7 4.e5 ♗fd7 5.♗f3 c5 6.dxc5 ♗c6 7.♙f4 ♙xc5 8.♙d3 f6 9.exf6 ♗xf6 10.♙e2 0-0 11.0-0-0



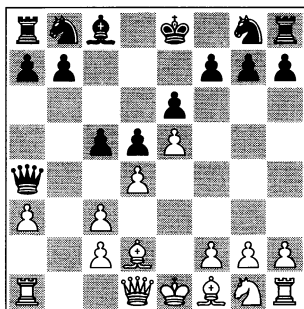
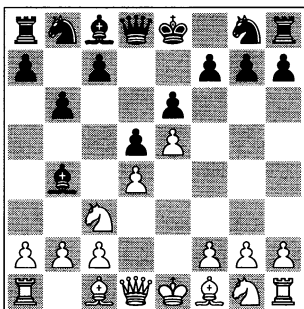
11...♙d7 (Games 50, 51)
 11...♙a5 (11...♗h5) (Game 52)
 11...a6 (Games 53, 54)
 11...♗b4 (11...♙d6, 11...♙e7) (Game 55)

Part Four – Winawer Variation 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4..... 211



Chapter 8 - 4.e5 b6

Chapter 9 - 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+
6.bxc3 ♗a5 7.♙d2 ♖a4



5.♖g4 ♙f8
5.a3 ♙f8

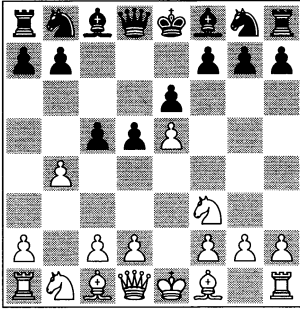
(Game 56)
(Games 57, 58)

8.♖g4, 9.♖a2
8.♖b1
8.♖g4, 9.♖d1
8.♘f3
8.h4

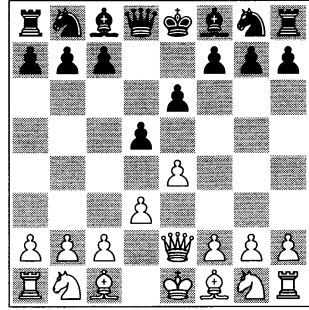
(Game 59)
(Games 60-62)
(Games 63, 64)
(Games 65-67)
(Game 68)

Part Five – Seven Samurai Swords..... 246

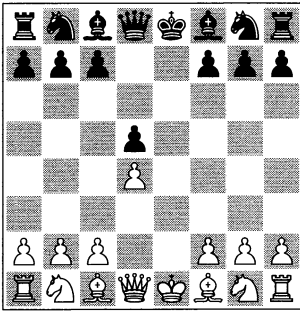
Chapter 10 – 2.♘f3 d5 3.e5 c5 4.b4
(Game 69)



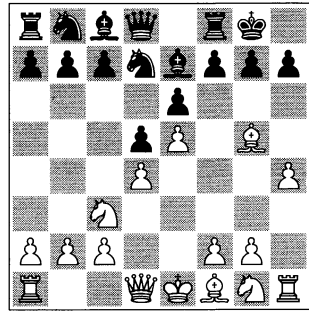
Chapter 11 – 2.d3 d5 3.♙e2
(Game 70)



Chapter 12 – 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5
(Game 71)

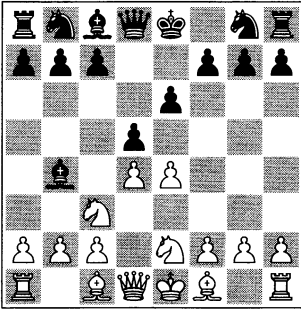


Chapter 13 – 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4 0-0
(Game 72)



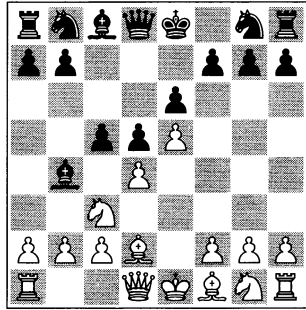
Chapter 14 – 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4
4.♗e2

(Game 73)



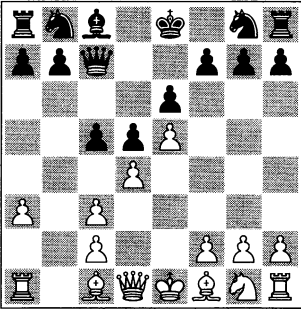
Chapter 15 – 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5
c5 5.♙d2

(Game 74)



Chapter 16 – 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5
c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♖c7

(Game 75)



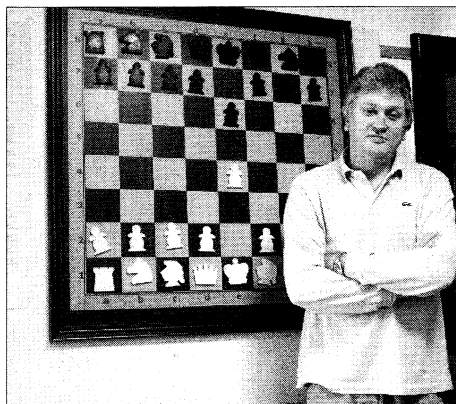
Index of Players

Numbers refer to pages.

A		H	
Adams	115, 145	Haberkorn	246
Akobian	40		
Al Sayed	233	I	
Andriasian	122	Ibragimov	229, 238
		Iglesias	176
		Ivanchuk	47, 66, 87, 216
B		Izoria	142
Bareev	47		
Botvinnik	97	J	
Braga	253	Jerez	263
Browne	238		
		K	
C		Kasparov	216
Cheparinov	132	Khamrakulov	90
Chistiakov	214	Klinger	45
Clarke	42	Kochetkov	249
Cuenca Jimenez	204	Konguvel	226
		Korneev	229
D		Kortchnoi	170, 178
De La Paz	135	Kosteniuk	202
Demian	246	Kotronias	126
Dvoiris	36		
		L	
E		Landa	185
Eingorn	54	Lapshun	38
Esplana	207	Leko	180
		Luther	75
F		M	
Fedorchuk	70	Malaniuk	50
Felgaer	183	Matamoros	75
Fluvia	266	Mestel	140
		Michielsen	235
G		Minasian	172
Giddins	202	Monroy	82
Gonzalez Rodriguez	218	Morozevich	115, 120, 152, 160, 168, 180, 185
Grischuk	51		
Gurevich	17		

Moskalenko	13, 23, 38, 66, 70, 77, 82, 87, 90, 101, 103, 135, 139, 152, 157, 176, 183, 218, 226, 235, 249, 253, 256, 260, 263, 266	Satyapragyan	77
Movsesian	43	Schneider	207
N		Shabalov	40
Nakamura	33	Shirov	17
Narciso	260	Short	168, 174
Nepomniachtchi	122, 126, 198	Slovineanu	209
Ni Hua	72	Smirin	256
Nisipeanu	145	Socko	233
O		Stean	140
Onischuk	120	Sveshnikov	13, 23, 54
Ostojic	97	Svidler	174
P		T	
Panchanathan	142	Tal	31
Panov	178	Timman	33
Pavlovic	240	U	
Pelletier	51	Uhlmann	50
Pesotsky	101	V	
Petrosian	31, 42, 214	Vaganian	36
Pogorelov	231	Velicka	139
Portisch	45, 225	Vitiugov	188
Potkin	196	Volkov	172, 198
Psakhis	240	Volokitin	170, 242
R		W	
Radjabov	43	Wang Hao	72
Rasmussen	157	Warner	209
Riazantsev	132	Y	
Rodriguez Guerrero	204	Yakovenko	160, 188
Rohl Montes	241	Yudasin	103
S		Z	
Sadvakasov	231, 241	Zakharov	196
		Zhang Pengxiang	242
		Zsedenyi	225

A Brief Biography of the Author



Viktor Moskalenko

Born April 12, 1960 in Odessa, Ukraine

Champion of Ukraine in 1987

Champion Catalunya (Spain) in 2001, 2005, 2007

Chess Grandmaster since 1992

Residing in Barcelona, Spain, since 2000

Winner of numerous international tournaments

Chess coach

Specialist in theoretical articles

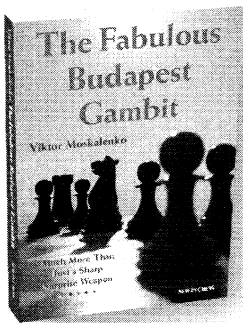
Elo rating in April 2008: 2572

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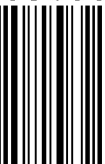
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