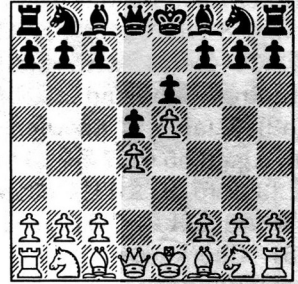


Chapter One

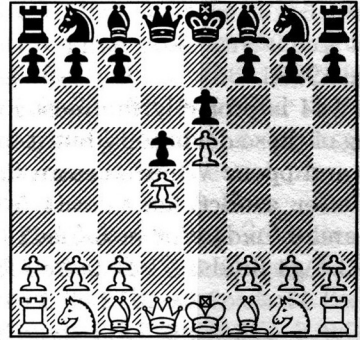
Advance Variation: Introduction



1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5

Historically, the Advance Variation and the Exchange Variation were the first popular responses to the French Defence. The theory of 3 e5 was stimulated by the provocative ideas of Nimzowitsch but no leading advocate took his place and the Advance Variation was in remission for most of the modern era. In the last two decades, however, 3 e5 has taken a quantum leap in popularity. With the increasing number of top-level players using the French and with White's inability to find promising positions in many traditional lines with 3 ♘c3 and 3 ♘d2, leading grandmasters have employed 3 e5 to get a different type of central advantage. They have devised new strategies to support that centre, notably by flank advances on both wings. These innovations have enjoyed considerable success at the top levels; at the moment, the Advance Variation is so popular that it barely lags behind 3 ♘d2 in frequency (with 3 ♘c3 still very much the leading choice, of course).

3...c5



The principled continuation, attacking the centre at its base (d4). Now White has four main choices. 4 c3 is the main line and subject of Chapters 2 and 3. Here we look at:

- 1.1 4 dxc5
- 1.2 4 ♖g4
- 1.3 4 ♘f3

Others are either unchallenging or weak:

(a) 4 b4?! is a sort of Wing Gambit that is popular at lower levels (compare Chapter 15); Black continues 4...cxd4 5 a3 and now:

(a1) 5...♘c6 6 f4 (6 ♘f3 ♖c7 7 ♙f4

♠e7 intending ...♠g6 6...♠h6 (6...a5 7 b5 ♠e7 8 ♠f3 ♠f5 9 ♠d3 ♠gh6♣ with the ideas ...♠c5 and ...♠e3 Frenkel-Rao, Boston 1988) 7 ♠f3 (7 b5 ♠e7 8 ♠f3 ♠ef5♣) 7...a5 8 b5 ♠e7 9 ♠xd4 ♠ef5♣ with multiple ideas including ...♣b6 and ...♠c5;

(a2) 5...a5! is another good solution, e.g., 6 b5 ♠d7 7 ♠f3 (or 7 f4 ♠h6 8 ♠f3 ♠f5 9 ♠d3 ♠e3 and ...♠c5) 7...♣c7 8 ♠f4 ♠e7 9 ♠e2 ♠g6 10 ♠g3 ♠c5♣ Cherkasov-Nikolenko, Czestochowa 1992;

(b) 4 ♠e3 ♣b6 5 b3!? (5 dxc5 ♠xc5 6 ♠xc5 ♣xc5 is comfortable, e.g., 7 ♣g4?! ♣xc2! 8 ♣xg7 ♣c1+ 9 ♠e2 ♣xb2+ 10 ♠d2 ♣xa1 11 ♣xh8 ♠f8) 5...♠c6 6 ♠f3 cxd4 7 ♠xd4 ♠xd4 8 ♣xd4 ♠c5 9 ♣d2 ♠e7♣ Renaud-Hook, Dubai 1986;

(c) 4 f4 is probably the most interesting of these deviations, but it takes time and opens White's centre to attack after 4...♠c6 (or 4...cxd4 5 ♠f3 ♠c6 and 6 ♠xd4 ♣b6 or 6 ♠bd2 ♠h6 7 ♠d3 ♠g4 8 ♠b3 ♠b4+ 9 ♠e2 f6 10 h3 ♠e3 11 ♠xe3 dxe3 12 c3 ♠e7♣) 5 c3 ♣b6 6 ♠f3 ♠h6 7 b3 (two lines that leave Black with a pair of bishops and White with a miserable one are 7 ♣b3 cxd4 8 ♣xb6 axb6 9 cxd4 ♠f5 10 ♠b5 ♠d7 11 ♠xc6 bxc6 Pulnikov-Iljin, Togliatty 2001; and 7 ♠d3 ♠d7 8 ♣b3 ♣xb3 9 axb3 cxd4 10 ♠xd4 ♠xd4 Ozkan-Ozturk, Ankara 2002, when simplest was 11 cxd4 ♠f5 12 ♠xf5 exf5♣) 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 ♠b4+ 9 ♠f2 – analysis by Minev. At this point a cute and effective line is 9...♠g4+! 10 ♠g3 (10 ♠g1 ♠e1!, and 11 ♣xe1? ♠xd4 12 ♠e3 ♠xf3+ 13 gxf3 ♠xe3-+ or 11 g3 ♠f2+ 12 ♠g2 ♠xd4♣) 10...h5 11 h3 h4+! 12 ♠xh4 (12 ♠xg4 f5+ 13 exf6 e5+) 12...♠xh4! 13 ♠e2 (13 ♠xh4 ♠f2 14 ♣h5 ♣xd4!) 13...♠f2! 14 ♠xf2 ♠xd4♣;

(d) 4 ♠d2!? is the equivalent of the Tarrasch variation 3 ♠d2 c5 with the strange-looking 4 e5!?. Black can play 4...cxd4 (or 4...♠c6, e.g., 5 ♠g3 ♣b6 6 dxc5 ♠xc5 7 ♣e2 Balogh-Rittner, corr 1958, and now the easiest move is 7...f6 8 ♠b3! fxe5 9 ♠xc5 ♣xc5 10 ♠xe5 ♠f6 with development and activity; Black even has the idea of ...♠xe5 and then ...♣xf2+) 5 ♠gf3 ♠c6 6 ♠b3 ♣c7 7 ♠b5 (7 ♠f4 ♠b4+) 7...♠d7 8 ♠xc6 (8 ♣e2 ♠b4+ 9 ♠d2 ♠xd2+ 10 ♠bxd2 ♠ge7♣) 8...bxc6 9 ♣xd4 c5 10 ♣f4 ♠e7 with the two bishops and intending 11 ♠g5 f6! 12 exf6 ♣xf4 13 ♠xf4 gxf6 with a massive centre;

(e) 4 ♠f4 cxd4 (4...♣b6 5 b3 ♠c6♣) 5 ♠d2 ♣b6 6 ♠b3 ♠b4+ (Harding). Then 7 ♠d2 ♠c6 8 ♠f3 f6 is good for Black;

(f) 4 ♠b5+ will trade White's 'good' bishop for Black's 'bad' one, but the real problem is that it helps Black to develop: 4...♠d7 (or 4...♠c6, since 5 ♠f3 ♣b6 gains a tempo unless White plays the depressing 6 ♠xc6+ bxc6) 5 ♠xd7+ ♠xd7 6 ♠f3 (6 c3 ♣b6 followed by ...♠e7-c6 and/or ...f6 depending upon White's plan) 6...cxd4 7 ♣xd4 ♠c5 8 ♣d3 f6! 9 ♠f4 ♣b6 10 0-0 ♠e7! (10...g5!, e.g., 11 ♠g3 g4 12 ♠fd2 fxe5) 11 exf6 gxf6 12 ♣b3!? ♣c6 13 ♠e3 e5 and Black has his typical central advantage, T.Barnes-Sporn, email 1998.

1.1.4 dxc5

One of White's most popular options to 4 c3. Rather than defend d4, White shifts his attention to bolstering e5 and bringing his pieces to more active squares than in other lines. The drawbacks to 4 dxc5 are that White gives up the pillar of his centre and Black develops rapidly. I find

this variation truly instructive in that one will see the combination of dxc5 and e5 throughout this book in remarkably many variations exhibiting similar strategies.

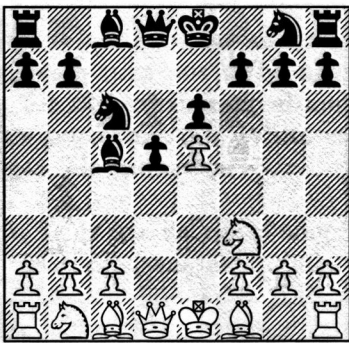
4...♘c6

Avoiding the awkward 4...♗xc5 5 ♖g4.

5 ♘f3!

White should avoid 5 ♗f4?! ♗xc5 6 ♗d3?, which practically loses after 6...♖b6! 7 ♘c3 (7 ♘f3 ♗xf2+ 8 ♖e2 ♖xb2) 7...♗xf2+! 8 ♖f1 ♗d4 and Black stands to win. Also not impressive are 6 c3 ♘ge7 7 ♘f3 ♘g6 8 ♗g3 f6! 9 b4 ♗b6 10 exf6 ♖xf6 11 ♗d3 0-0 and 6 ♖g4 ♘ge7! with the idea 7 ♖xg7 (7 ♗d3 ♖b6) 7...♗g8 8 ♖xh7 ♗xf2+! 9 ♖xf2 ♖b6+ 10 ♖e2 ♖xb2.

5...♗xc5



6 ♗d3

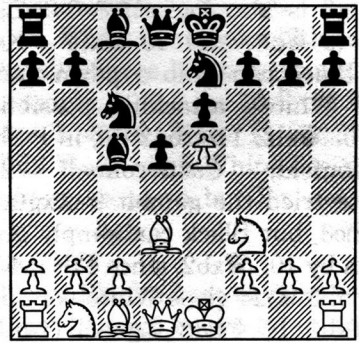
(a) 6 a3?! is too slow after 6...f6: 7 b4 ♗b6 8 b5!? (8 exf6 ♘xf6 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 0-0 e5! 11 b5 ♘d4) 8...♘xe5 9 ♘xe5 fxe5 10 ♖h5+ ♖f8 11 ♖xe5 ♗c7 and Black wins the centre again, e.g., 12 ♖e3 ♖f6 13 ♗a2 ♘e7 14 ♗b2 e5;

(b) 6 ♗f4?! allows 6...♖b6 (6...♘ge7 and 6...f6 are also fine) 7 ♗g3 ♖xb2 8 ♘bd2 ♘ge7 with White having insufficient compensation for a pawn.

6...f6

The clearest course, since it liqui-

dates the centre. For those wishing for a game of a more closed nature, 6...♘ge7 is a good alternative:

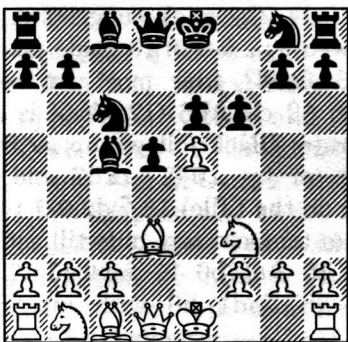


(a) 7 0-0 ♘g6 8 ♗e1 (a good plan for Black is illustrated by 8 ♖e2 0-0 [or 8...♗b6 9 c3 ♗c7 10 ♗g5 ♖d7 11 ♗xg6 fxg6] 9 c3 ♗b6 10 ♘a3 ♗c7 Avirovic-Subaric, Novi Sad 1945; now White should try 11 ♗xg6 fxg6, but Black has at least equal play, especially since in many lines ...♗xf3 can give him a pawn, mobile centre, and attack for the exchange) 8...♖c7!? (8...0-0 may be the easiest course, intending ...♗b6, ...♗d7, ...♗c7 and responding to ♗xg6 with ...fxg6) 9 ♖e2 ♘d4 (Czerniak suggests 9...♗d7 followed by ...0-0-0) 10 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 11 ♗xg6 fxg6!? (the most interesting move) 12 c3 ♗b6 (12...♗c5! is more accurate; Black follows up as in the game, or by ...0-0, ...♗d7 and doubling on the f-file) 13 ♘d2 0-0 14 ♘f3 ♗c5 (a tempo down, but still satisfactory) 15 ♗e3 b6 16 ♗d4 a5 17 ♖e3 ♗a6 18 ♗ad1 h6 with interesting play, Westermeier-Reefschlaeger, Menden 1974. Black has the idea of ...g5 and again doubling rooks;

(b) 7 ♘c3 a6!? (to secure a7 for the bishop; 7...♘g6 is equal) 8 0-0 ♘g6 9 ♗xg6!? (9 ♗e1 0-0 and White lacks for a plan) 9...hxg6 10 ♘e2 ♖c7 11 ♗f4

Biti-Thi Thanh Houng, Moscow 1994, when 11...♔d7 12 ♖d2 0-0-0 was natural and good;

(c) 7 ♖f4 ♗b6 (the most ambitious; 7...♗g6 is also logical) 8 0-0 ♗g6 9 ♖g3 (9 ♗c1 ♗xf4 10 ♗xf4 - Keres, but Black can grab a pawn and reduce White's attacking possibilities by 10...♗xb2 11 ♗bd2 f5!; in P.Short-Heidenfeld, Castleconnell 2000, White tried the gambit 9 ♖xg6 fxxg6 10 ♗c3, but Black can simply grab a pawn by 10...♗xb2, since 11 ♗a4 ♗b4 12 ♗xc5 ♗xf4 gives White very little) 9...♗xb2 10 ♗bd2 ♗gxe5! (10...♗a3 11 h4 ♗a4!? with the idea 12 h5 ♗f4 is also interesting) 11 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 12 ♖b1 ♗c3 13 ♖b3 ♗d4 14 ♖xe5 (14 ♖b5+ ♗d7 15 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 16 ♖xb7 - Pachman, when 16...♖c6 17 ♖c7 ♗a4 consolidates the pawn) 14...♗xe5 15 ♖b5+. This keeps the king in the centre but Black has the bishop pair and mobile central pawns: 15...♗e7 16 ♖e1 ♗d4 17 ♖ee3 a6 18 ♖f1 ♖d8 19 ♖bd3 ♗h4 20 ♖g3 g6 21 c4 ♗f8 and White had no compensation, T.Johansson-E.Berg, Bergen 2001.



7 ♗e2

7 ♖b5? ♗b6 intending 8 ♗e2 ♖xf2+ is weak, and the others are fun for Black:

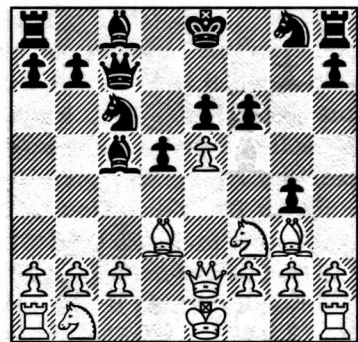
(a) 7 ♖xf6?! ♗xf6 8 0-0 0-0 9 c4 (9

♖e1 e5!; 9 ♗e2 e5! 10 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 11 ♗xe5 ♗g4 12 ♗h5 g6?) 9...♗d6 (9...e5!? 10 cxd5 e4 11 dxc6 ♗xd3 12 ♗xd3 exd3? Van Scheltinga-Van der Tol, Netherlands 1946) 10 ♗c3 a6 11 ♖g5?! ♗g4!+ intending ...♖xf3 Camilleri-Debarnot, Malta 1980;

(b) 7 ♖f4? practically loses by force: 7...fxe5 (or 7...♗b6) 8 ♖xe5 (8 ♗xe5? ♗f6+, e.g., 9 ♗xc6 ♗xf4 10 ♗h5+ g6 11 ♖xg6+ ♗f8 12 ♗e5 ♗f6 13 ♗e2 ♗c1+ 14 ♗d1 ♗xd1+ 15 ♗xd1 ♖d4+ Rohel-Keitlinghaus, Badenweiler 1990) 8...♗f6 (or 8...♗xe5! 9 ♗xe5 ♗g5) 9 0-0 0-0 (threatening ...♗g4) 10 h3 ♗e4! 11 ♗e2 ♖xf3! 12 gxf3 ♗g5+ 13 ♗h1 ♗xf2+, etc.

7...fxe5

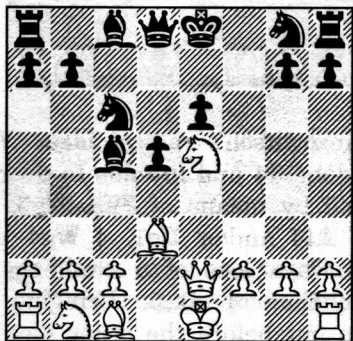
Here Black can play ultra-dynamically by 7...♗c7!? 8 ♖f4 g5! 9 ♖g3 g4.



This wins a key central pawn at the cost of exposing Black's king. Thus far this move has done reasonably well and I see nothing wrong with it. Here are two examples: 10 ♗fd2 (10 ♗h4 ♗xe5 11 0-0 ♖d6 12 ♗c3 a6 was solid enough in Van der Nat-Van Oirschot, corr 1976) 10...♗xe5 11 ♖b5+ ♗f8!? (11...♖d7 12 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 is also unclear. White wants to attack, Black to consolidate his extra pawn by, e.g., ...♖e8 and ...♗c8) 12 ♗c3 ♖d4 13 0-0 a6 14 ♖d3 h5 with

the idea ...h4, Thomson-Caamano, corr 1988. Black's intended ...h4 will interfere with White's only dangerous plan of $\text{c}\text{h}1$ and f3. The game continued 15 $\text{f}\text{f}e1$ h4 16 $\text{e}\text{e}5$ $\text{e}\text{e}5$ 17 $\text{w}\text{w}g4$ $\text{e}\text{e}h2+$ 18 $\text{c}\text{h}1$ $\text{e}\text{d}6$ 19 $\text{w}\text{w}f3$ $\text{e}\text{d}7$ and White didn't have enough for the pawn.

8 $\text{e}\text{e}5$



It's remarkable that this position might even turn out to be advantageous for Black. His central majority is very important and White cannot maintain his outpost on e5.

8... $\text{e}\text{e}5$

This leads to a degree of simplification, but there remains an imbalance in the position. Instead 8... $\text{e}\text{e}6$ can be played in order to equalise or even win if Black is willing to take some risks. He threatens ... $\text{e}\text{e}5$ and ... $\text{e}\text{e}f2+$, and play might go 9 $\text{e}\text{e}4$ (9 0-0?! $\text{e}\text{e}5$ 10 $\text{w}\text{w}e5$ 0-0 11 c4 $\text{w}\text{w}b6$ again threatens ... $\text{e}\text{e}f2+$: 12 $\text{w}\text{w}e2$ $\text{e}\text{d}7$ 13 $\text{e}\text{d}2$ $\text{f}\text{f}ac8$ Makropoulos-Hug, Nice 1974; 9 $\text{e}\text{e}c6$ $\text{b}\text{b}c6$ 10 $\text{e}\text{d}2$ 0-0 11 $\text{e}\text{e}f3$ $\text{w}\text{w}c7!$ planning ... $\text{e}\text{e}d6$ and in some cases ... $\text{e}\text{e}g4$) and now:

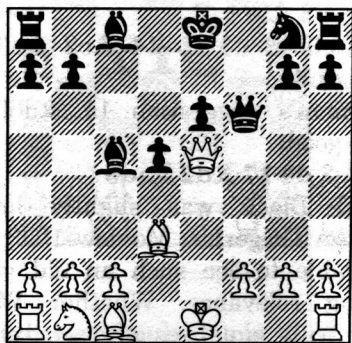
(a) 9...0-0 heads for equality: 10 0-0 $\text{e}\text{e}4$ 11 $\text{e}\text{e}c6$ $\text{b}\text{b}c6$ 12 $\text{e}\text{e}3$ $\text{e}\text{e}3$?! 13 $\text{w}\text{w}e3$ $\text{e}\text{e}f6$ 14 $\text{e}\text{d}2$ Becker-Maroczy, Karlsbad 1929; now Becker gives 14... $\text{w}\text{w}b6!$ when a plausible line is 15

$\text{w}\text{w}b6$ (15 $\text{w}\text{w}e5$ $\text{w}\text{w}b8$!? 16 $\text{e}\text{e}f3$ $\text{e}\text{e}g4$ 17 $\text{w}\text{w}h5$ $\text{e}\text{e}f6$ 18 $\text{w}\text{w}e5$) 15... $\text{a}\text{b}6$ 16 $\text{e}\text{e}f3$ c5 17 $\text{e}\text{e}5$ (17 c4 $\text{f}\text{f}a4$!? 18 b3 $\text{f}\text{f}a3$) 17...c4 18 $\text{e}\text{e}2$ $\text{e}\text{e}d7$ 19 $\text{e}\text{e}d7$ $\text{e}\text{e}d7$ 20 f4 $\text{e}\text{e}f7$ = intending ... $\text{e}\text{e}7$ -d6.

(b) 9... $\text{w}\text{w}b6$!? is more ambitious and practically forces White to gambit by, for example, 10 0-0 (or 10 $\text{e}\text{e}c6$ $\text{w}\text{w}b2$ 11 $\text{w}\text{w}e5$ $\text{w}\text{w}b6$) 10... $\text{w}\text{w}b2$ 11 $\text{e}\text{e}c6$ $\text{b}\text{b}c6$ 12 $\text{e}\text{d}2$ $\text{f}\text{f}a3$, when White has something for the pawn but I'm not sure that it's enough.

9 $\text{w}\text{w}e5$ $\text{w}\text{w}f6$

This is Black's best chance for advantage: he tries to get to an ending that will be favourable to him by virtue of his central majority. Again 9... $\text{e}\text{e}6$ suffices for easy equality and perhaps a tiny bit more. White must take care, e.g., 10 0-0 (10 $\text{e}\text{e}4$? $\text{e}\text{e}f2+$; 10 $\text{e}\text{e}b5$ +?! $\text{e}\text{e}f7$ when ... $\text{w}\text{w}b6$ and ... $\text{f}\text{f}f8$ with ... $\text{e}\text{e}g8$ will follow: 11 0-0 $\text{w}\text{w}b6$ 12 $\text{e}\text{e}2$ – versus ... $\text{e}\text{e}f2+$ with a ... $\text{e}\text{e}g4$ + fork in mind – 12... $\text{f}\text{f}f8$ 13 $\text{e}\text{d}2$ $\text{e}\text{e}g8$ 14 $\text{w}\text{w}g3$ e5!) 10...0-0 11 c4?! $\text{e}\text{e}d6$ 12 $\text{w}\text{w}e2$ $\text{e}\text{e}d7$ 13 $\text{e}\text{e}c3$ $\text{w}\text{w}c7$ 14 h3 $\text{f}\text{f}ac8$!? 15 $\text{c}\text{d}5$ $\text{e}\text{d}5$ 16 $\text{e}\text{e}g5$ $\text{f}\text{f}ce8$ 17 $\text{w}\text{w}d2$ Gallego-Mawed, Bled 2002, and one course was 17... $\text{e}\text{e}c6$ 18 $\text{e}\text{e}f6$ $\text{f}\text{f}f6$ 19 $\text{f}\text{f}ae1$ $\text{f}\text{f}f8$ with a small edge due to the bishops.



10 $\text{w}\text{w}e2$

White needs take more care than

Black due to the latter's central majority and in fact he has few desirable moves:

(a) 10 ♖c7?! is speculative after 10...♗xf2+ 11 ♔d1 ♕d7! 12 ♜f1 ♞c8 13 ♗xb7 ♗xg2♞;

(b) 10 ♕f4 ♕d4!? 11 ♖b5+ ♔f7 12 ♗c7+ ♕e7 13 c3 ♖b6♞;

(c) 10 ♖b5+ ♕d7!? (or 10...♔f7 and 11 ♗g3 ♕e7 or 11 ♗c7+ ♗e7 12 ♗g3?! ♕f6 13 0-0 e5 or 13...♕d6, but White can doubtless play better) 11 ♕xd7+ ♔xd7 12 ♕f4?! (12 ♗e2! ♕e7 13 0-0 ♕c6 is unclear but Black has more activity) 12...♞c8 13 0-0 ♕e7 14 ♕d2 ♕g6 15 ♗xf6 gxf6♞. Thus the move 10 ♖b5+ yields approximate equality but the play remains complex in any case;

(d) 10 ♗g3 ♕e7 11 ♕c3 0-0 12 0-0 ♕f5 13 ♗h3 Heidsiek-T.Schmidt, corr 1988; and 13...♕d7 was solid and good;

(e) 10 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 threatens ...♕g4 and ...e5, e.g., 11 0-0 0-0 (or 11...♕g4 12 ♕f4 0-0 13 ♕g3 e5 14 h3 e4♞) 12 h3 e5♞.

10...♕e7 11 ♕d2

11 ♖b5+ ♕c6 runs into similar problems after ...0-0 with an early ...e5.

11...0-0 12 0-0

12 ♕f3 ♖b4+.

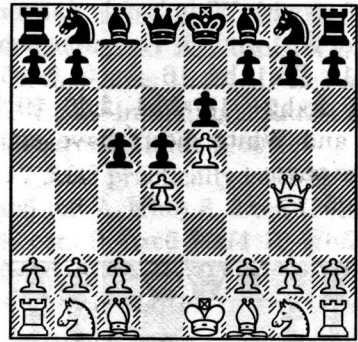
12...♕c6 13 c3 e5 14 ♕c2 ♕e6 15 ♕b3 ♖b6.

Silman's suggestion 15...♕d6!? is quite good.

16 ♕e3 d4 17 ♕d2 ♞ad8

and Black was slightly better Zubarev-Grigoriev, Moscow 1923. It's enjoyable to see such an old game having relevance. Whether White even truly equalises after 4 dxc5 is not clear, which says a lot about the nature of central pawn play in the French.

1.2 4 ♗g4

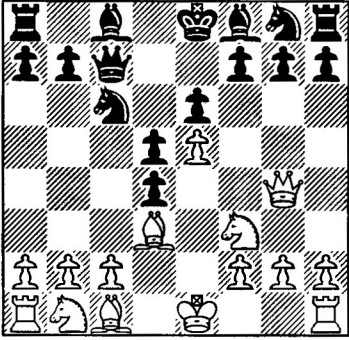


Nimzowitsch's radical idea. White abandons d4 and intends to overprotect e5 by means of ♕f3, ♗g3, and later ♕f4 and/or ♞e1. 4 ♗g4 is in some ways less of a challenge for Black than 4 dxc5. Bringing the queen out before the other pieces is not necessarily bad; but if she loses more time and fails to create weaknesses in the enemy camp such a foray can hardly be justified. In the previous edition I gave 4...♕c6 5 ♕f3 cxd4 6 ♕d3 ♗c7 (see the next note). Another popular and successful line is 4...cxd4 (or 4...f5 5 ♗g3 cxd4 6 ♕f3 ♕c6, often transposing) 5 ♕f3 f5 6 ♗g3 and 6...♕c6 or 6...♕e7 intending ...♕d7-c5. Here as my main line I will show a less tested and generally simpler response that solves Black's problems and creates ones for White. It was played by Botvinnik as far back as 1937 and has been revived to good effect in recent times:

4...♗a5+

Meeting a queen move with a queen move! Black's idea is to be sure that White's queen will lose time to ...♕h6 by diverting the c1 bishop from a potential capture on h6. At the right moment ...f5 can also be useful. The line 4...♕c6 5 ♕f3 cxd4 (note that

here 5...♖a5+ 6 ♔d2 ♗b6 attacks b2, and otherwise 7 c3 cxd4 transposes to our 4...♖a5+ main line) 6 ♔d3 ♗c7 was analysed in detail in the second edition.



Here let me present a brief update for Black covering the main continuations:

(a) 7 ♔f4 ♕ge7 is fine for Black, but 7...♗b4 has scored 80% in my database! Of course things aren't really so bad for White, but Black is certainly content after 8 0-0 (8 ♗a3 ♗xd3+ 9 cxd3 ♗b6 10 ♔c1 ♖h6! 11 ♗xd4? ♔c5 is extremely strong, e.g., 12 ♗a4+ ♔d7 13 ♗c2 ♔b4+!? 14 ♔d2 ♗c8 15 ♗d1 ♔c5 16 ♔e3? ♔xe3 0-1, in view of 17 fxe3 ♗xb2, Cornelison-Dirr, email 1994; a well-known trick is 8 ♗xd4?! ♗xd3+ 9 cxd3 ♗b6 10 ♗b3 ♗b4+ 11 ♗d2?? g5 winning a piece) 8...♗xd3 9 cxd3 ♗c2 10 ♗xd4 ♗xd3!? (10...♗xb2 is more likely to yield an advantage, when 11 ♗b3 h5! chases the queen to a square from which Black's development is not so hindered, for example, 12 ♗f3 ♔d7 13 ♗d2 ♔a3!) 11 ♗d1! (if 11 ♗b3 h5! and the queen has no good square) 11...♗g6 (11...♗a6!?) 12 ♗e2 M.Pruess-Kummerow, Dortmund 1991; and now Black's best course was 12...♔d7! = with the idea 13 ♗b5 ♗c8;

(b) 7 ♗g3 f6 with:

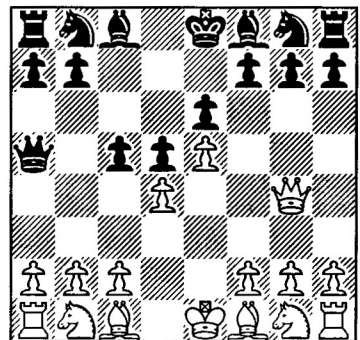
(b1) 8 ♔xh7?! ♗xe5 9 ♔g6+ ♗d8 (9...♗d7! is even better) 10 ♗xd4 (10 ♗xe5 ♗xe5+ 11 ♗xe5 fxe5 ♖ with an extra pawn and huge centre) 10...♗e7 11 ♔d3 ♗xd3+ 12 ♗xd3 ♗xh2 13 0-0 ♗h8 ♖ Toth-Maillard, corr 1990;

(b2) 8 exf6 ♗xg3 9 f7+ ♗f7 10 hxg3 ♗f6 11 ♗g5+ ♗g8 12 f4 ♗b4 (or 12...h6 13 ♗f3 ♗e4) 13 ♗d2 ♗xd3+ 14 cxd3 Linskens-Munoz Izcuca, Montevideo 1954; and best was 14...♗g4! 15 ♗b3 e5! ♖;

(c) 7 0-0 f6!? (7...♔d7 8 ♗e1 0-0-0 has also been successful) and:

(c1) 8 ♔xh7 ♗xe5 9 ♗xe5 fxe5 10 ♔g6+ (10 ♗e1 ♗f6 11 ♔g6+ ♗d7!) 10...♗d8 11 h3 (11 ♗g3 ♔d6) 11...♗f6 12 ♗d1 Smyslov-Lisitsin, Moscow 1942; 12...♔c5! ♖ and Black will soon mobilise with ...e4;

(c2) 8 ♔f4 fxe5 9 ♗xe5?! (9 ♗h5+ ♗f7 10 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 11 ♗xe5+ ♗xe5 12 ♔xe5 ♗e7! ♖ intending ...♗c6 and ...♔c5) 9...♗f6! 10 ♔g6+ (10 ♗xc6 ♗xg4 11 ♔xc7 bxc6; 10 ♗g3 ♔d6) 10...hxg6 (or 10...♗d8 11 ♗g3 hxg6 12 ♗xg6 e5 etc.) 11 ♗xg6+ ♗e7 ♖.

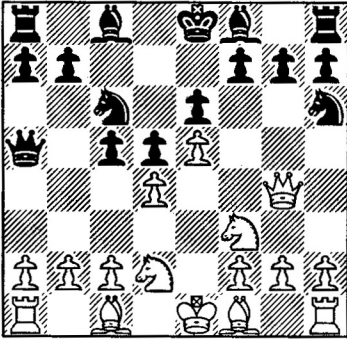


5 c3

The most popular reply. 4...♖a5+ is a pragmatic move that counts upon the drawbacks of each response. Much of what follows is analysis

without examples, but the main ideas should be clear:

(a) 5 ♖d2 ♖c6 (5...♗h6 is also fine) 6 ♗g3 (6 dxc5 ♗h6 7 ♖f4 ♕e7! 8 c3 [8 h4 f6! 9 exf6 ♗xf6 and ...0-0] 8...g5! 9 ♖e3 ♗f5 10 ♖e2 ♖xc5 with superior development) 6...♗h6



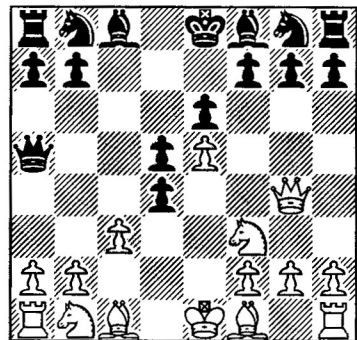
Here's the drawback to 5 ♖d2. Black exploits the fact that the c1 bishop no longer covers h6: 7 ♖f4 ♗b4 (forcing the king to move) 8 ♖d1 (8 ♗b3? ♖a4) 8...c4 9 a3 (after 9 ♗b1?! ♗xa2, there is no way to exploit the pin and Black threatens to play ...♖c3+; 9 c3 ♖a4+ 10 b3 cxb3 11 ♗xb3 ♗xa2 12 ♖c2 ♗d7 13 ♗fd2 ♖c8 14 ♗b2 ♗b4 15 ♖b1 ♗xc3 16 ♖xa2 ♗xd2 0-1 Nei-Gleizerov, Osterskars 1995; Black ends up with a couple of extra pawns, although White could have played on) 9...♗d7 10 b3 ♖c8! 11 ♗b2? (yet 11 bxc4 dxc4 12 ♗xc4 ♖a4 is also good for Black: 13 ♖d2 ♗g4! 14 ♗e1 ♗d5 15 ♗b2 – forced thus far – 15...♗xf2+! 16 ♖xf2 ♗c3+ 17 ♖d2 ♗e4+ 18 ♖e3 ♗xf2 19 ♗xa4 ♗xh1 20 ♗b2 g6-+) 11...♗xc2 12 ♖xc2 c3? 13 ♖b1? cxb2 0-1 Pusch-Kern, Recklinghausen 2000;

(b) 5 ♗d2 ♗h6! (5...♖b6 is less clear but still promising after 6 ♗c3 ♗h6 7 ♖f4 ♗f5 8 ♗f3 ♗c6 or 6 ♗c3 ♗h6, e.g., 7 ♗b5+ ♖xb5 8 ♗xb5 ♗xg4

9 ♗c7+ ♖d7 10 ♗xa8 cxd4 11 ♗f3 ♗c6 and ...b6; or, finally, 6 b3 cxd4 7 ♗f3 ♗c6 8 ♗d3 f5 9 exf6? ♗xf6 10 ♖g3 ♗d7 11 a4 ♗e4? Kaarne-Sisatto, Finland 1998) 6 ♖g3 (6 ♗xa5 ♗xg4 presents White the double problem of ...♗c6 and defending his centre, so 7 h3 ♗h6 8 ♗f3 ♗c6 9 ♗c3 ♗f5? could follow) 6...♖b6 (hitting b2 and d4) 7 ♖b3 ♖xb3 8 axb3 ♗c6 9 ♗f3 (9 ♗xh6?! gxh6 10 dxc5 ♗xc5!? 11 ♗f3 ♗d4!; here 10...♗xe5 or a move earlier 9...♗xd4! was also strong) 9...♗f5 10 dxc5 ♗xc5 with the freer play. Black is somewhat better.

5...cxd4 6 ♗f3!?

It seems odd, but trying to gambit a pawn may be best. The alternative 6 ♖xd4 ♗c6 is easy for Black to play, as in the stem game for 4...♖a5+, Rabinovich-Botvinnik, Moscow 1937: 7 ♖f4 ♗e7 8 ♗d3 (8 ♗f3?! ♗g6 9 ♖g3 ♖c7 10 ♗f4 f6 11 ♗b5 fxe5 12 ♗xe5 ♗gxe5 13 ♖xe5 ♗d6?) 8...♗g6!? (here 8...d4 9 ♗f3 ♗d5 is also interesting) 9 ♗xg6 hxg6 10 ♗f3 ♖a6 11 ♗g5 ♗d8 12 ♗d2 ♖d3! 13 ♗b3 b6 14 ♗d2 ♗d7 15 0-0-0 ♖c8?.



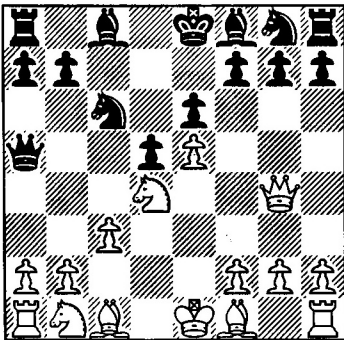
6...♗c6

Black could accept the gambit by 6...dxc3, but that isn't necessary, especially since he also has the option of 6...f5, for example, 7 ♖g3 ♗c6 8 b4

Buchnicek-P.Kucera, Mlada Boleslav 1993; and here 8...♖a4! was strong in view of 9 b5 ♖c2! 10 ♖f4 ♖e4+ 11 ♖xe4 fxe4 (or 11...dxe4 12 bxc6 exf3 13 cxd4 ♗e7!?) 12 bxc6 exf3. Then White has serious difficulties, e.g., 13 cxb7 (13 ♖b5 ♗f7 14 cxb7 fxd2 15 ♖g1 ♖xb7 16 cxd4 ♗e7 17 ♖xg2 ♗f5?) 13...♖xb7 14 cxd4 fxd2 15 ♖xg2 ♗e7 16 ♖h3 (versus ...♗f5) 16...♗c6 17 ♖b2 (17 ♖e3 ♗xe5!) 17...♗b4! 18 ♗d2 ♖c8 19 ♗a3 ♗d7 20 ♖hc1 ♖e7 threatening ...♖g5+ as well as ...♖hf8.

7 ♗xd4

7 ♖d3 would be a poorly-timed sacrifice due to 7...dxc3 8 ♗xc3 (8 bxc3 d4 9 0-0 dxc3 10 ♗a3 and now 10...h5 11 ♖g3 h4 12 ♖g4 h3! or 10...♗h6!?) 11 ♖xh6 gxh6 12 ♗c4 ♖c5 13 ♖ab1 ♗b4! 14 ♖fd1 ♖d7?, Jimenez Villena-Shabalov, Linares 2000) 8...d4!? (or 8...♖b4, since White cannot avoid the exchange of queens due to ...d4) 9 ♗xd4 ♗xe5 10 ♖g3 ♗xd3+ 11 ♖xd3 ♖d7 with a solid extra centre pawn.



7...♗xe5!?

This wins a key central pawn at the risk of some attack by White. Black can also play effectively by 7...♖c7 8 ♖f4? (8 ♗xc6 is best, although 8...bxc6 strengthens Black's centre, e.g., 9 ♖g3 ♗e7 10 ♖d3 ♗g6

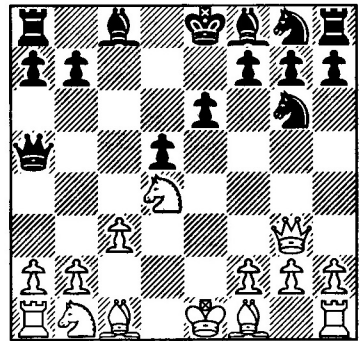
11 f4 ♖b6! preparing ...♖e7 and/or ...♖a6) 8...♗xd4 9 cxd4 ♖b6!, hitting b2 and d4. If 10 ♖c1, 10...♗h6 11 ♖f4 ♗f5 wins the d-pawn.

8 ♖g3

8 ♖h5?! ♗d7! 9 ♖d3 (not 9 ♗xe6? ♗gf6 winning a piece) 9...♗gf6 and White has nothing for the pawn.

8...♗g6

There's nothing wrong with 8...♗c4, and 8...f6 is promising. In the latter case Black intends to give the pawn back for development and dark squares after 9 ♖f4 (9 ♖e2 ♗f7 untangles and prepares ...♖d6) 9...♖b6 10 b3 (10 b4 ♖c7 11 ♖b5+ ♗f7 holds on to the extra pawn and mobile centre, for example, 12 0-0 a6 13 ♖e2 ♖d6?) 10...♗f7!, preparing ...♖d6 and giving back the pawn for development and dark squares.



9 h4

White lacks compensation after 9 ♗b5 e5 10 ♖d3 f5! or 9 ♖d3 ♖d7 10 0-0 ♗f6.

9...♗f6 10 h5 ♗e4 11 ♖e3 ♗e7 12 ♗d2

12 ♖d3 e5 13 ♗f3 ♗c6! 14 ♖xe4 dxe4 15 ♖xe4 ♖e6 16 0-0 0-0-0 with space, two bishops and a clear advantage.

12...♗xd2

Or 12...♗d6 with ...♗ef5 in mind.

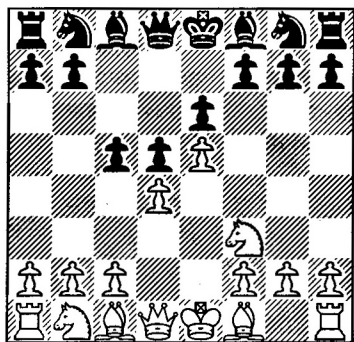
Then 13 ♖d3 ♜b6 14 ♜2f3 f6! ♞ prepares ...e5.

13 ♖xd2 ♖d7 14 ♖d3 ♜c6 15 0-0 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 ♜c5 17 ♜e5 f6 18 ♜g3 ♜d6

and Black has consolidated the extra pawn with insufficient counterplay for White.

Notice the number of good options the second player had along the way. The whole 4...♜a5+ variation is only lightly tested, but appears to offer Black more than adequate chances.

1.3 4 ♜f3



Of White's alternatives to 4 c3, this is the most common.

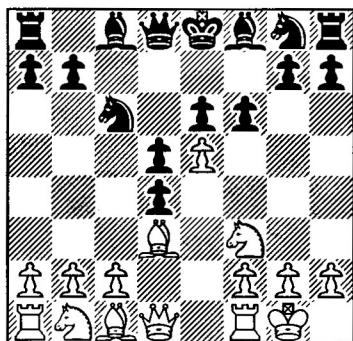
4...♜c6 5 ♖d3

5 dxc5 is 1.1 and 5 c3 is the subject of the next two chapters. The move 5 ♖b5?! has been played in over 200 database games, but loses time after either 5...♖d7 (threatening ...♜xe5), which has scored 73%, or 5...♜b6! which has scored a cool 80% for Black, e.g., 6 ♜c3! (6 ♖xc6+ bxc6 7 0-0 – else ...♖a6 – 7...cxd4 ♞; 6 ♜e2 cxd4 7 0-0 ♖d7 – intending ...♜xe5 – 8 ♖d3 f6! ♞) 6...♖d7 7 ♖xc6 bxc6 8 dxc5 ♖xc5 9 0-0 ♜c7 10 ♜a4 ♖b6 11 b4 ♜e7 12 c3 0-0 13 c4?! c5! 14 bxc5 ♖xa4 15 ♜xa4 (15 cxb6 axb6 16 ♜e2 dxc4 ♞) 15...♖xc5 16 cxd5 ♜xd5 17

♖d2 ♜fc8 18 ♜h1 ♜ab8 ♞ Brans-M.Nikolic, Dresden 2000.

5...cxd4 6 0-0 f6

An interesting juncture. 6...♖c5 was analysed in the last edition and is in good theoretical shape. 6...f6 immediately challenges e5. An obscure but promising alternative is 6...g6!?, as suggested in the last edition. There are few examples, but play might proceed 7 ♜e1 (7 a3?! ♖g7 8 ♖f4 of Kobelev-Lobach, USSR 1988 invites 8...f6! 9 ♜e1 fxe5 10 ♜xe5 ♜ge7 with an extra pawn and superior activity; 7 ♖f4 ♖g7 8 ♜bd2 f6 probably transposes but here 7...♜b6 is an option) 7...♖g7 8 ♖f4 (8 ♜bd2 f6 9 exf6 ♜xf6 10 ♜b3 0-0 with the idea 11 ♜bxd4 ♜xd4 12 ♜xd4 e5! 13 ♜xe5 ♜g4) 8...f6 9 ♜bd2 (9 ♖b5 ♜ge7 10 ♜xd4 0-0; 9 exf6 ♜xf6 10 ♖b5? 0-0 11 ♖xc6 bxc6 12 ♜xd4 ♜b6 or here 12...♜e4) 9...♜ge7! (or 9...fxe5 10 ♜xe5 ♜f6=) 10 exf6 (10 ♜e2 fxe5 11 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 12 ♜xe5 0-0 13 ♜df3 ♜c6 ♞) 10...♖xf6 11 ♜e5?! (11 ♖h6 ♜d6 and ...e5; 11 ♜b3 0-0 12 ♜d2 ♞) 11...♜xe5 12 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 13 ♜xe5 0-0 14 ♜f3 ♜d6 and White has nothing for the pawn.



7 ♜e2

(a) 7 ♜e1? loses the centre to 7...fxe5 8 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 9 ♜xe5 ♜f6 10

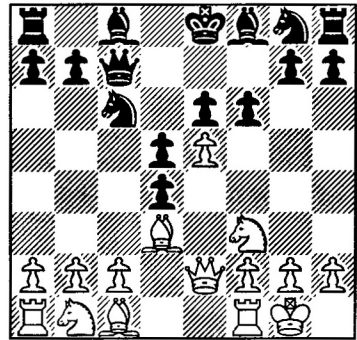
♠b5+ (10 ♠g5 ♠d6 11 ♠b5+ ♠f7 12 ♠e1 h6 13 ♠h4 g5! 14 ♠g3 ♠xg3 15 hxg3 ♠b6♣) 10...♠f7 11 ♠xd4 ♠d6 12 ♠e3 (the best try) Kogan-Perez Garcia, Dos Hermanas 2000; now 12...♠c7! 13 ♠h4 g5! 14 ♠h6 ♠xc2 and White is in bad shape;

(b) 7 ♠f4? g5! (7...fxe5 8 ♠xe5 ♠f6 9 ♠e2 transposes to 7 ♠e2) 8 ♠g3 g4 9 ♠h4 (9 ♠xd4!? ♠xd4 10 ♠xg4 ♠c6 11 ♠h5+ ♠d7 12 ♠c3 ♠e8 and White has some attack, but not enough for a piece) 9...fxe5 10 ♠xg4 ♠f6♣ Black has a pawn and huge centre, and intends moves like ...♠d6, ...♠b6, and ...e4;

(c) 7 ♠b5 ♠d7 8 ♠xc6 bxc6 9 ♠xd4 c5 (or 9...f5 first, e.g., 10 ♠f4 ♠h6 11 ♠g5 ♠e7! 12 ♠g3 ♠f7! 13 ♠xf7 ♠xf7 14 c4 d4 15 ♠d2 c5 16 ♠f3 h6 with two bishops and moves like ...♠b8, ...♠c6, and ...g5 in store, Gamback-Kiriakov, Skelleftea 2001) 10 ♠f4 f5 11 c4 (otherwise Black's two bishops and central majority give him the advantage) 11...d4 12 b4 (12 ♠bd2 a5! 13 b3 ♠e7 14 ♠e1 Arnason-J. Watson, Gausdal 1978; 14...♠h6!♣ and ...♠f7) 12...cxb4 13 ♠xd4 (13 ♠xd4 ♠e7 14 ♠f4 ♠c6 15 ♠e3 ♠b6 with the idea ...♠c5) 13...♠e7 14 ♠e3 ♠g6! (or 14...♠c6 15 ♠b2 ♠xd4 16 ♠xd4 ♠c7) 15 f4 (15 ♠d2 ♠b8 16 ♠2f3 ♠c5 17 ♠b2 0-0) 15...♠c5 16 ♠d2 a5 (16...♠a4!?) 17 ♠2b3 ♠a7 18 a3 a4 19 axb4 axb3 20 c5 0-0 with the idea ...♠e7-d5, among others, Bickford-Pals, corr 1997/8.
7...♠c7

I use this as the main line because it is probably the best way to play for a win and also because there is less theory than after 7...fxe5 8 ♠xe5, when both 8...♠f6 and 8...♠xe5 were analysed in the second edition of this book. The former keeps more pieces

on the board; its main line goes 8...♠f6 9 ♠f4 (9 ♠g5 ♠xe5 10 ♠xe5 ♠d6 11 ♠b5+ ♠f7 12 ♠xd4 ♠c7♣; 9 f4 ♠d6, e.g., 10 ♠d2 0-0 11 ♠df3 ♠b6) 9...♠d6 10 ♠d2 0-0 11 ♠df3 ♠c7 (11...♠e8!? 12 ♠g3 is complex after Bickford's 12...♠h5= or 12...♠d7 13 ♠xc6 ♠xg3 14 ♠cxd4 ♠d6 15 ♠ae1 ♠h5 Hodgson-Speelman, Brighton 1984) 12 ♠g3 (a cute miniature followed 12 ♠ae1 ♠e4 13 ♠xc6 ♠xf4 14 ♠cxd4 e5 15 ♠b3 ♠g4 16 ♠h1?? ♠g5 0-1 Aagaard-McDonald, Budapest 1996). At this point I suggested 12...g6 unclear, with the idea ...♠h5; in practice, 12...♠d7 has also held the balance.



8 ♠f4!?

8 ♠b5 is safer, but Black has an easy time of it after 8...fxe5 9 ♠xe5 ♠f6 (9...♠d6! 10 ♠h5+ g6 11 ♠xg6 ♠f7=) 10 ♠d2 (10 ♠g5 ♠d6 11 ♠xf6 0-0! is a nice trick; if White tries to win material by 12 ♠xg7 ♠xg7 13 ♠xc6 bxc6 14 ♠xc6, then the bishops and huge centre dominate following 14...♠b8, e.g., 15 ♠b5 ♠b6 16 ♠d2 e5) 10...♠d6 11 ♠df3 (11 f4 0-0 12 ♠df3 ♠e4) 11...0-0 with a pawn and active play; 12 ♠e1 falls short after 12...♠e4 13 ♠xc6 bxc6 14 ♠d3 ♠c5!.

8...g5! 9 ♠g3

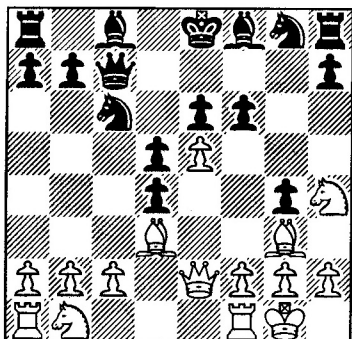
9 ♠xg5!? fxg5 10 ♠xg5 is an enter-

Play the French

prising piece sacrifice that falls short after 10...♖xe5 (or even 10...♖g7 11 ♗h5+ ♘e7 12 f4 h6 13 ♘f3 ♘d8!?) 11 ♗h5+ ♘d7 12 ♘d2 ♘f6 13 ♗f7+ ♙e7 14 ♘df3 ♗d6 and Black's position is safe enough.

9...g4 10 ♘h4

10 ♘fd2 f5 has the idea of ...h5-h4 and/or ...♙h6 and ...f4.



10...fxe5!

This takes over the centre (four pawns to none!). A safe alternative is 10...f5!? 11 ♘d2 (11 f3 ♘h6) 11...♘ge7!? (11...♘h6) 12 f4 ♘g6 13 ♘b3 ♙e7 14 ♘xg6 hxg6 and a well-timed ...g5 (probably after ...0-0-0) will keep the advantage.

11 ♗xg4

11 ♙b5 ♙g7 12 ♗xg4 ♘f6 13 ♗xd4 0-0! 14 ♙xc6 ♘e4! threatens the bishop on c6 and ...♘xg3.

11...♘f6 12 ♗e2 ♙d6 13 ♙b5 0-0 14 ♘d2

and 14...e4 or 14...♘a5!?, with the advantage in both instances. As in so many lines of the Advance Variation, Black's central pawn mass is the most important factor on the board.