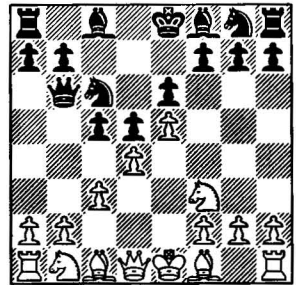


Chapter Three

Advance Variation: 5...♞b6



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

This introduces our alternate system against the Advance Variation. Black immediately attacks the centre and will tend to play more direct moves than with 5...♙d7. The systems have some overlap, since the line 5...♙d7 6 ♙d3 cxd4 7 cxd4 ♚b6 transposes to 5...♚b6 6 ♙d3 cxd4 7 cxd4 ♙d7 below.

Material divides into:

- 3.1 6 a3 (36)
- 3.2 6 ♙e2 (45)
- 3.3 6 ♙d3 (50)

Others:

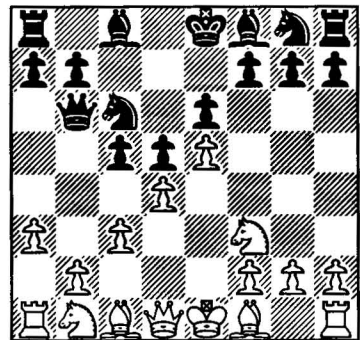
(a) 6 dxc5?! ♙xc5 7 ♚c2 f6 destroys White's centre, e.g., 8 b4 (8 exf6 ♘xf6 9 ♙f4 0-0 10 ♙d3 e5!) 8...♙e7 9 ♙d3? fxe5 10 ♙xh7 e4 11 ♙g6+ ♗f8 12 ♘g5 ♙xg5 13 ♙xg5 ♘e5+;

(b) 6 g3?! f6! 7 ♙g2 (7 ♘h4 g6!) 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 ♙b4+ 9 ♗f1 (9 ♘c3 fxe5 intending ...d4) 9...fxe5 10 dxe5 ♘ge7 11 ♚e2 ♙f5+.

3.1 6 a3

Over the past 15 years or so, this

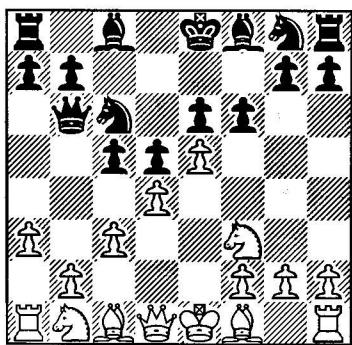
move has been the hottest line in the Advance Variation and used heavily at the top levels of international play. In fact, my most comprehensive database has over 7000 games with 6 a3, considerably more than the traditional 6 ♙e2. Since most French players still use 5...♚b6, one could say that 6 a3 is the most critical line for modern Advance Variation theory.



6...♘h6!?

There is an undeniable logic to developing rapidly versus the slow 6 a3. Black intends ...cxd4 and ...♙f5, winning a pawn. The main idea is to follow up with straightforward development (...♙d7, ...♙e7, ...♞c8, and an

eventual ...f6). In the second edition, I called the main move 6...♘h6 below a 'slightly irregular answer which I believe has been underestimated'. Now there are some 1250 games in my database, and practically every top French player has used it. Black has of course a wide variety of alternatives. 6...c4 is the oldest move and is holding up well, but it is also less flexible. And I have the impression that the enormously popular line with 6...♙d7 7 b4 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♖c8 is falling a little short against some precise move orders by White. Of course that could change, but it seems to me that 6...♘h6 isn't as dependent upon special tactics as 6...♙d7 is. However, I do think that Black has an excellent weapon that has only been lightly explored, i.e. 6...f6!?. This, a suggestion from the first edition, still strikes me as sound and worthwhile.



Black can (like his opponent) play on both wings here: on the queenside with ...0-0-0, ...♗b8, ...♘a5 and ...♖c8 or on the kingside with ideas like ...fxe5, ...♘h6-f7, ...g6 and ...♙g7. Let's look at the briefest of overviews: 7 ♙d3 (the most common reply; 7 b4 has been answered by 7...c4 and 7...cxb4 8 cxb4 fxe5, but the most interesting alternative was 7...fxe5!? 8

dxe5!? ♘h6! 9 ♙xh6 gxh6 10 ♙d3 ♙g7 11 0-0 0-0 ♗ Guignonis-Renaudin, Paris 2000) 7...c4 (also noteworthy are 7...f6!?, 8 b4 [8 exf6 ♘xf6 9 ♖c2 ♖c7] 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 ♙g7; and 7...fxe5, e.g., 8 dxe5 ♘h6!? 9 0-0 c4 10 ♙c2 ♘f7, Afek-Murey, St Quentin 1999) 8 ♙c2 g6!? (or 8...♙d7 9 0-0 0-0) 9 0-0 fxe5 (9...♙g7 is also reasonable) 10 ♘xe5 (10 dxe5?! ♘h6 11 ♖e2 ♘f7?) 10...♘xe5 11 dxe5 ♘h6 12 ♖e2 ♙g7 13 ♙e3 ♖c7 14 f4 0-0 and the play is balanced. Perhaps the 6...f6 variation should be seen more often.

7 b4

(a) 7 ♙xh6? ♖xb2 8 ♙c1 ♖xa1 9 ♖c2 is interesting: 9...c4! intending ...♘a5, ...♙d7, and ...♘b3;

(b) 7 ♙d3 doesn't go well with a3: 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 ♙d7 9 0-0?! (a strange form of Milner-Barry Attack, trading a3 for ...♘h6; this should favour Black) 9...♘xd4 10 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 11 ♘c3 a6 12 ♖e2 ♖g4!? 13 f3? ♙c5+ 14 ♘h1 ♖h4? 15 g3 ♖h3 16 ♖e1 ♙c6 17 ♙f4 0-0 with an extra pawn and active pieces, Dvoirys-Lputian, Istanbul 2003.

7...cxd4

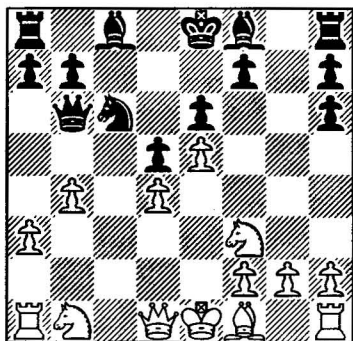
Here two moves have been tested for White:

3.11 8 ♙xh6

3.12 8 cxd4

3.11 8 ♙xh6 gxh6 9 cxd4

This is a fascinating line with which White trades off his important c1 bishop to damage Black's pawn structure and secure his d4 pawn. Black gets two bishops and has good development in return for the broken pawn structure on his kingside. The plan is to play the moves ...♙g7, ...0-0, and ...f6.

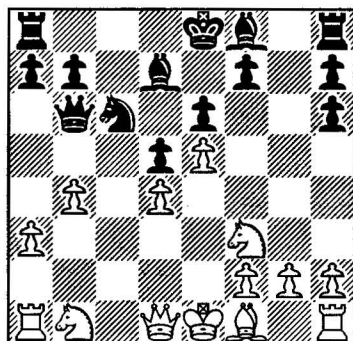


9...♙d7

I like the fact that this move prevents 10 ♙d3 (due to 10...♗xd4) and it probably needs to be played anyway. 9...♙d7 also clears the c-file, so that a move like 10 ♗c3 can be met by 10...♗xb4 11 axb4 ♙xb4 (see below, and note that the bishop hasn't gone to g7 in this case).

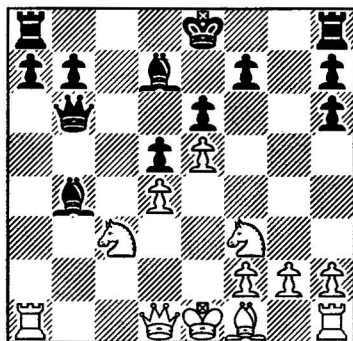
I recommended 9...♙g8!? in the last edition; but now we know that it gives White the advantage for positional reasons, which for completeness I should specify: 10 ♗c3! (10 b5 ♗a5 11 ♗c3 is not very convincing in view of White's queenside weaknesses; for example, 11...♙d7 12 ♗a4 ♗c7! is strong) 10...♙d7 (my main move in the second edition 10...♙g4? looks bad for several reasons, one of them being 11 h3 ♙f4 12 ♙b5 a5 13 0-0! axb4 14 axb4 ♙xa1 15 ♗xa1 ♙xf3 16 gxf3 ♗xd4 17 ♗a8± ♗d7? 18 ♗a4 ♙xb4 19 ♙c1 ♗c7 20 ♙xc6 1-0 Keitlinghaus-Blauert, Budapest 1998) 11 ♗a4! (11 ♙c1?! ♗xb4 12 axb4 ♙xb4 gave plenty of compensation in Kretschmer-Wrba, corr 1993; 11 g3? ♙g4! 12 ♙h3 ♙xd4 13 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 14 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 15 0-0-0 ♗f3 16 ♙g2 ♙c8 17 ♗b2 ♗xe5 18 ♙xd5 ♗g4!≠ Hakuc-Djabri, email 1999) 11...♗d8 12 g3! (12 ♗c5 ♙xc5 13 bxc5

f6 14 exf6 ♗xf6 15 ♙b1 ♙b8! 16 ♗d3 ♙g4 17 ♙d1 b6! with mutual chances) 12...♙g4? (12...f6; 12...f5!?) 13 ♙e2 (or 13 h3! ♙e4+ 14 ♙e2±) 13...a5 14 b5 ♗a7 15 ♗b3 ♙e4 16 ♗c3 a4 17 ♗b2 ♗a5 18 0-0± D.Olafsson-A.Karlsson, Reykjavik 2000.



10 ♙e2

This solid move is best. 10 ♗c3 allows 10...♗xb4! 11 axb4 ♙xb4

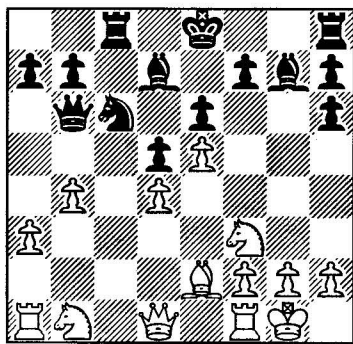


when Black's attack on c3 has no adequate answer, showing the value of delaying the f8 bishop's development. One line goes 12 ♗b3 ♙c8 13 ♙c1 0-0 (with the idea of doubling on the c-file, but also of ...f6) 14 ♗e2 ♗a6+ 15 ♗d2 (15 ♗e3? ♗a3) 15...♗a5 16 ♙d3 ♙c7 (or 16...♙a4 17 ♗b2 ♙c6) 17 ♗g1 ♙a4 18 ♗b2 f6! 19 exf6 ♗xf6 20 f3 e5! 21 ♗ge2 ♙fc6-+.

10...♞c8

Black again retains the ...♜xb4 idea while making a useful move. But 10...♙g7 is also fine, since 11 ♘c3?! (11 0-0 ♞c8 transposes) 11...f6 12 ♘a4 ♜d8 13 0-0 of Pisa-De la Villa Garcia, Spanish Ch 1993 should have been met by the simple capture 13...fxe5! 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 dxe5 ♙xe5 16 ♙h5+ ♚e7 etc.

11 0-0 ♙g7



12 ♜d2!?

Surprisingly, this runs into trouble. Since moves by the b1 knight lose the d-pawn, here are the alternatives:

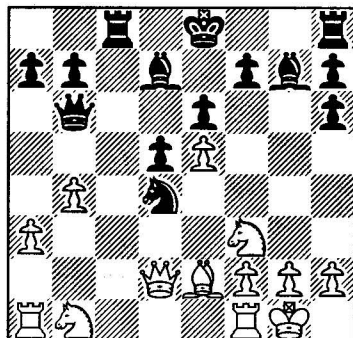
(a) 12 ♜d3 isn't really satisfactory after 12...f6! 13 b5? (13 exf6 ♙xf6 14 ♞d1 0-0?) Degraeve-C.Bauer, Montpellier 1993, and now 13...♘xe5! 14 dxe5 fxe5, since the advance ...e4 is next;

(b) 12 b5 is probably best, although Black stood well after 12...♘e7 13 a4 f6 14 ♜d2!? fxe5 15 ♘xe5 ♘f5 16 ♙h5+ ♚e7 17 ♜b4+ ♜d6 18 ♜xd6+ ♘d6 with a discernible advantage, Halwick-Barlow, corr 1998.

12...♘xd4!?

12...0-0 has been played quite a few times (e.g., by both Korchnoi and Lputian) and is also good, planning ...f6 and reserving the ...♘xd4 move (13 ♘c3? ♘xd4!). The text is perhaps

objectively no better, but doesn't give White any respite.



13 ♘xd4!

Better than 13 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 14 ♘xd4 ♙xe5 15 ♘b3 ♙xa1 16 ♘xa1 ♙a4 17 ♘d2 ♚e7. After 13 ♘xd4, the play might go 13...♙xe5 14 ♞d1 ♙a4 15 ♜e3! ♙xd1 16 ♜xe5 ♙xe2! 17 ♘xe2 (17 ♜xh8+ ♚d7 18 ♜xc8+ ♚xc8 19 ♘xe2 a5 gives Black a bit too much material) 17...0-0, when Black's mobile centre and activity outweigh White's rather ineffective knights.

In general, the 8 ♙xh6 variation allows Black too much counterplay. White has to play carefully just to maintain the balance and can easily fall victim to tactical blows.

3.12 8 cxd4 ♘f5

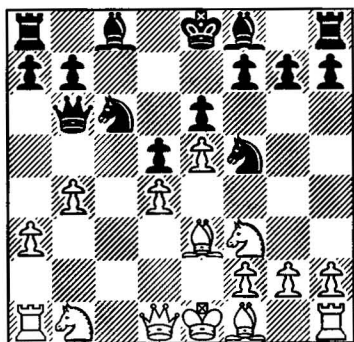
and now:

3.121 9 ♙e3

3.122 9 ♙b2

3.121 9 ♙e3

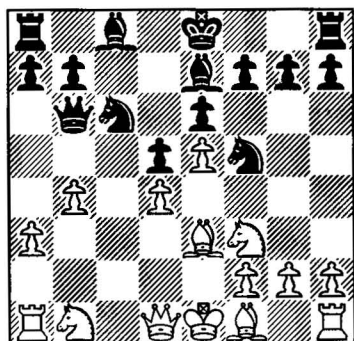
This move was previously thought to frustrate winning attempts on Black's part. Current theory, however, indicates that he has several ways to create double-edged and promising play.



9...f6!

Right now this older line looks promising to me. It turns out that Black doesn't have to accede to a likely drawing line but can try for more, whereas White (in order to avoid that line), risks being left at a disadvantage.

(a) To enter into a closed manoeuvring game, Black may want to try to block the kingside. One way would begin with 9...e7:



Play here has gone 10 e3 (10 e2 0-0 11 c3 f6 12 a4 d8 13 exf6 xf6 14 0-0 e5= Prang-Boehle, 1993; 10 bd2 xe3 11 fxe3 f5 12 exf6 xf6 13 d3 e5!; 10 g4 xe3 11 fxe3 f6!; 10 b5 a5 intending a quick ...d7 and ...c8) 10...xe3 11 fxe3, and now 11...f5! tries to set up a com-

plex manoeuvring struggle after 12 0-0 0-0 (threatening ...f4) 13 c3 d8! 14 e2 d7 15 f4 a5! 16 b5 a7 17 a4 c8 intending ...b6, ...c8, ...c4. The two bishops are temporarily passive but where is White's play coming from?

Alternatively White could keep the position open: 12 exf6 xf6 13 c3 (13 g5 xd4!, e.g., 14 exd4 xd4 15 Wh5+ e7! 16 Wf7+ d6-+; 13 0-0 0-0 14 c3 d7) 13...0-0 14 0-0 (14 c2 g6 with the idea 15 xg6! hxg6 16 Wxg6+ g7 17 g5 f6 18 Wh7+ f8 19 Wh5 e7 20 Wh7 f8=) 14...g6 15 c2 g7?! (15...e7 followed by ...d7 and ...ac8 looks fine) 16 a4 d8 17 c5± Carlsen-Lahlum, Gausdal 2001.

(b) Another blocking strategy is seen in 9...d7 10 bd2 (10 d3 could be answered by 10...xe3 11 fxe3 f5) 10...xe3 11 fxe3 f5 12 d3 (12 exf6 gxf6 13 d3 e5! 14 b5 a5!) H.Akopian-J.Watson, Los Angeles 1998; and Black's simplest course was something like 12...e7 13 0-0 0-0 14 b3 d8 with the idea 15 c5 b6 16 xd7 xd7 17 c1 (17 b5 a6) 17...a6 18 b5 b8 19 bxa6 xa6=;

(c) 9...xe3 10 fxe3 g6 11 d3 h6 12 We2 0-0 has been played a fair number of times; one idea for White might be 13 g4! (13 0-0 f6 or 13...d7) 13...d7 14 h4 with ideas like 14...ac8 15 bd2 e7 (15...g7 16 h5 e7 17 Wh2) 16 h5 g5 17 b3 etc.

10 d3

Interesting and tactical. White may have difficulties in what used to be a drawing line:

(a) 10 b5 xe5! 11 dx5 xe3 12 fxe3 Wxe3+ 13 We2 (13 e2? fxe5 is bad, leaving Black with two bishops and the centre) 13...Wc1+! ½-½ Ro-

manishin-Lputian, Yerevan 1988, in view of 14 ♖d1 ♖e3+ 15 ♖e2 ♖c1+ etc. This verdict has been unchallenged but there are other possibilities. First, 14... ♗b2!? 15 ♗bd2 fxe5 16 ♖b1 ♗xa3 17 ♗xe5 ♖e3+ 18 ♖e2 is analysis by Paul Cumbers, when Neil McDonald suggests 18... ♗c5, 'though I still prefer White'. This should be looked at; perhaps White's grip on e5 slightly outweighs the two bishops.

It seems to me that Black has a better winning try than Cumbers' by playing 13... ♖xe2+ 14 ♗xe2 fxe5 15 ♗xe5 ♗d6, since then he gets the centre but prevents the bind on e5. Something like 16 ♗f3 0-0 17 0-0 ♗d7 18 ♗bd2 ♖ac8 might follow, intending ...e5. Black only has two pawns for the piece but they are mobile passed central pawns and his bishop pair is powerful. There's also the immediate problem that White can't yet challenge the c-file. I think that this is worth playing and that therefore 10 b5 doesn't even necessarily secure a draw;

(b) 10 exf6 keeps the pieces on, although it has scored poorly after 10... gxf6 11 ♗c3 (11 ♗d3 ♗xe3 12 fxe3 e5 [or 12... ♗d7] 13 ♗c3 ♗e6 14 ♖b3 0-0-0 15 ♗a4 ♖c7 16 0-0 ♖b8 17 ♗b5 e4 18 ♗d2 ♗d6? G. West-Barlow, CAPA email 1997) 11... ♗xe3 12 fxe3 ♗h6 and:

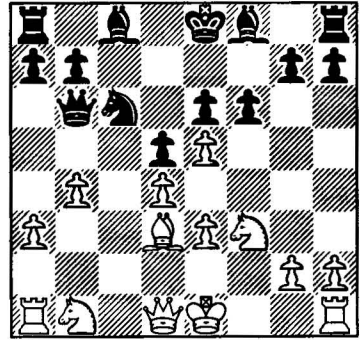
(b1) 13 ♖d2 0-0 14 ♗d3 ♖h8 15 ♖d1 (15 0-0 ♗xd4!) 15... ♗d7 16 0-0 ♗e8 17 ♖h1 ♗e7;

(b2) 13 ♖f2 0-0 14 ♗d3?! ♗e5 15 h3 ♗d7 16 ♖e1 ♖ac8 17 ♖c1 ♗xd3+ 18 ♖xd3 a6 19 ♖g1 ♖c7? Nilsson-Fernandez Romero, Dos Hermanas 2002;

(b3) 13 ♖d3 0-0 14 ♗e2 ♗d7 15 0-0 (15 ♗a4 ♗e5! 16 ♗xb6 ♗xd3+ 17 ♗xd3 axb6 18 ♖e2 Gruic-Arkhipov, Belgrade 1990, and simplest looks

18... e5?) 15... ♗e8!? (15... ♗e7!) 16 ♖h1 (16 ♗a4 ♖d8 17 ♗c5 ♖e7=) 16... ♗g6 17 ♖d2 ♗e7 18 ♗h4 ♗g5 19 ♗xg6 hxg6= Petrov-Fernandez Romero, Linares 2002.

10... ♗xe3 11 fxe3



11... fxe3

Or 11... ♗d7!?, e.g., 12 exf6 gxf6 13 ♗c3 ♗h6 14 ♖e2 ♗e7 (simpler seems 14... 0-0 15 0-0 ♖f7 and ... ♖h8 next) 15 0-0 (15 ♗e5 fxe5 16 ♖h5+ ♖d8 17 ♖xh6 ♖c8 was unclear in Jonkman-San Segundo Carrillo, Mondariz 2000) 15... 0-0 16 ♖h1 ♖ac8 17 ♗d1?! ♗g7!? 18 ♗f2 e5 19 dxe5 fxe5 20 e4 d4? Morozevich-Bareev, Monaco 2002.

12 b5 ♗xd4!

Not 12... exd4!? 13 exd4! and White stands much better, nor 12... e4?! 13 bxc6 exd3? 14 ♗e5± Prie-De la Villa Garcia, Leon 1991.

13 exd4

13 ♗xe5? ♗f5 hits e3 and favours Black.

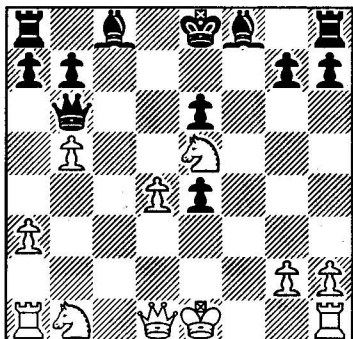
13... e4

This has become a well-known position: I think that Black is distinctly better.

14 ♗xe4!

Weak is 14 ♗e5? ♖xd4, and 14 0-0? exf3 leads to 15 ♖xf3 ♖xd4+ or 15 ♖f2 ♗d6 with a winning position.

14...dxe4 15 ♖e5



15...g6

This is good, but apparently simpler is the recent 15...♗d7! of Potkin-Filippov, Togliatti 2003, which intends 16 ♜h5+ g6 17 ♘xg6 hxg6 18 ♜xh8 0-0-0 with excellent play. So the game went 16 0-0 0-0-0 with Black better. This needs analysis and tests.

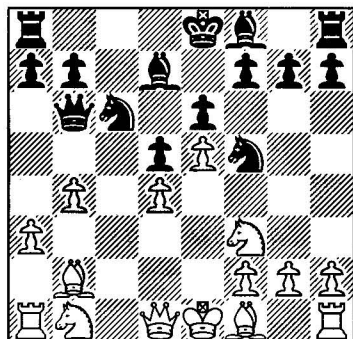
16 0-0

16 ♘c3 ♗g7 17 ♘e4 0-0 and White can't castle, whereas 18 ♘f3 ♜xb5 is also bad.

16...♗g7 17 ♖h1 ♗xe5 18 dxe5 ♜xb5 19 ♘c3 ♜xe5 20 ♜b3 b6

Or perhaps 20...e3!?. After 20...b6, Hurley-T.Clarke, Ireland 1996 went 21 ♗ad1, and now Cumbers and McDonald have combined to produce the sample line 21...♗b7 22 ♘b5 (22 ♜a4+ b5 23 ♘xb5 ♗c6) 22...♗d8 23 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 24 ♘xa7 ♜c5 25 ♜xe6 ♖c7 26 ♜f6 ♗e8 27 ♜f4+ ♜e5 28 ♜c1+ ♖b8 29 ♘c6+ ♗xc6 30 ♜xc6 ♜e6, a pawn up. This is all up for grabs, but it's hard to believe that Black isn't in general able to use his extra pawns to consolidate. And White has to contend with the newer 15...♗d7 as well.

3.122 9 ♗b2 ♗d7



There are several move order issues here. The text prevents 10 ♗d3 in view of the hanging d-pawn. Although 9...♗e7 is played consistently as well (e.g., by Lputian), it doesn't prevent that move, and I also prefer to have the e7 square to retreat the knight to after White's g4. Still, 9...♗e7 has its own advantages and my choice here is as much a matter of taste as an objective assessment.

10 g4

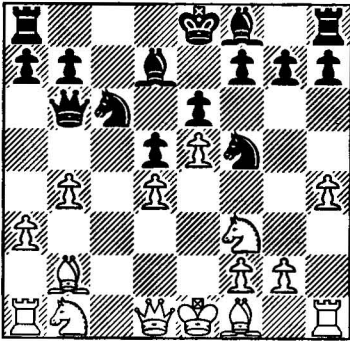
Whether or not this is the best move, it is the most critical, and the most frequent except for 10 ♗e2. White's space-gaining ideas like h4 and g4 are the most dangerous ones, and several of the alternatives show that White cannot develop slowly without affording his opponent good chances:

(a) 10 b5?! ♘a5 gives up the c4 square too easily: 11 ♘c3 (11 a4 a6 12 ♘c3 ♗b4 13 bxa6 bxa6 14 ♗e2 ♗c8? Hitzker-Kaland, Pinneberg 1992) 11...♗c8 12 ♘a4 ♜d8 13 ♗c1 ♗xc1 14 ♜xc1 a6 (14...♘c4! 15 ♗xc4 ♜a5+?) 15 ♘c5? (15 ♘c3?) 15...♗xb5 16 ♗xb5+ axb5 17 0-0 ♘c4? Marszalek-Beyen, Leningrad 1960;

(b) 10 ♜d3 ♗c8! threatens ...♗xb4, so a sample line might go 11 ♗c3 a5!? (best is probably 11...♗e7 12 ♗e2 0-0

13 0-0 f6) 12 b5 ♖a7 13 a4 ♗b4 with mutual chances;

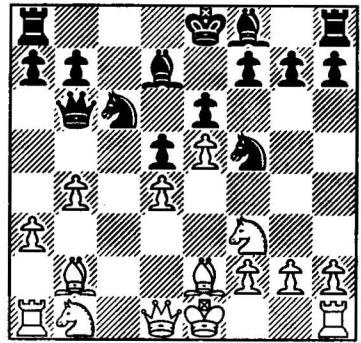
(c) 10 h4 is a modern treatment, the idea being to play h5 and g4 to establish a large space advantage on the kingside. In the meantime, the Black knight is denied access to g6 after a retreat to e7. Nevertheless, Black has well-placed pieces and two options:



Sveshnikov-Dizdar, Dubai 2002, and 20...♗e7! 21 ♖c1 b5 was good, intending moves like ...♗d5 and ...♗a6 with ...♗c6.

(c22) 11...♗fe7!? 12 ♗c3 ♖a5! 13 ♖a4 ♗c6 14 ♗c5 ♗c4 15 ♗c1 h5! 16 gxf5 ♗f5 17 ♗h3 was Movsesian-Haimovich, Panormo 2001. Here Movsesian suggests 17...b6 'and Black shouldn't be worried about the future at all'.

(d) 10 ♗e2



(c1) 10...h5 11 g3 ♗e7!? (11...♖c8 intending ...♖a5 may be even better, e.g., 12 ♗d2 ♗e7 13 ♗h3 ♗b5!? 14 ♗c3 ♗c4 with good play) 12 ♗h3 ♖c8 (12...a5!?) 13 ♗d2 (13 0-0 ♖a5) 13...a5 14 ♗xf5 exf5 15 ♗c3 ♖a7! 16 0-0 (16 ♗xd5? ♗c6) 16...♗e6 with approximate equality. Notice that in these lines all 7 White pawns are on the colour of his 'bad' bishop, but that this is more of an advantage than a problem for him!

(c2) 10...♖c8 (quick development is the cure for Black's problems here) 11 g4 and:

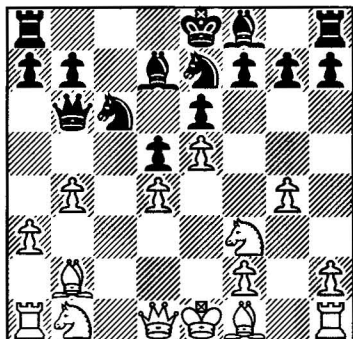
(c21) 11...♗h6 12 ♖g1 ♗e7 (12...♖a5!? 13 ♗fd2?! ♗e7 14 ♗c3 ♗c4 15 ♗xc4 dxc4 16 ♗d2 0-0! unclear, Kozak-Antonio, Las Vegas 1999, due to 17 ♗xc4? ♖xc4! 18 ♗xc4 ♗c7?) 13 ♗c3 ♖a5 14 ♖a4 ♗c6 15 ♗c5 ♗c4 16 ♗c1 ♗g8! 17 ♗d3 ♗xc5 18 dxc5 b6 19 ♗xc4 dxc4 20 ♗e3

(d1) 10...♗e2 11 0-0 0-0 12 g4! (12 ♗d2?! f6 13 exf6 ♗xf6 14 ♗e5 ♗e8? S.Lalic-N.Berry, Birmingham 2001) 12...♗h4 (or 12...♗h6 13 h3 f6) 13 ♗xh4 ♗xh4 14 f4 f6!? unclear;

(d2) 10...♖c8!? (with the idea ...♖a5) 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♗d2 h5 13 ♖d1?! g5! 14 ♗c3! (14 ♗xg5 ♗cxd4 15 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 17 ♖xd4 ♗xg5 18 f4 ♗d8! 'threatening ♗b6 when Black has the two bishops and control of the c-file' – McDonald) 14...g4 15 ♗e1 Grosar-Tukmakov, Bled 2001; and now simply 15...♗cxd4! (15...♗d8!? 16 ♗c2 ♗g5 17 ♗e1 ♗ce7 was played) 16 ♗xd5 ♗xe2+ 17 ♗xe2 exd5 was very strong, since White nearly has to enter the variation 18 e6 ♗xe6 19 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 20 ♗xh8 f6 21 ♖ac1 ♖b8! followed by ...♗f7 trapping the bishop.

10...♠h6

Also playable is 10...♠f7



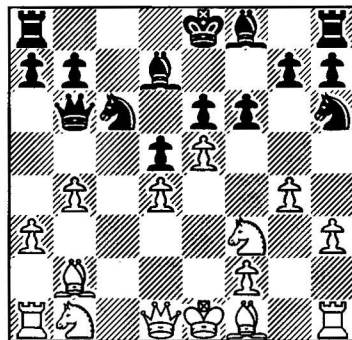
11 ♖c3! (11 ♔d3 h5 12 g5 g6 13 h4 ♗f5 14 ♔xf5 gxf5 15 ♖c3 ♗e7! 16 0-0 ♗g6♣ Ancheyta-Nogueiras, Santa Clara 2001; 11 h3 ♗a5 [or 11...h5] 12 ♖bd2 ♗g6 13 ♔c1 ♖c4! Novikova-Matlavkov, St Petersburg 2002, intending 14 ♖xc4 dxc4 15 ♔xc4 ♖c8 16 ♔d3 ♔c6) 11...♗a5! 12 ♖d2 (12 ♗a4 ♖c6 13 b5 ♖c7 14 ♖d2 [14 ♖c1 ♖c4 15 ♖b3 ♖a5+♣] 14...♖c4 15 ♖xc4 dxc4 16 ♖c3 ♖d5♣ Lindfelt-P.H.Nielsen, Nyborg 2001) 12...♖c8 13 ♖c1 ♗g6 14 h4 ♔e7 15 g5 (15 h5 ♗f4 16 ♖f3 ♔g5= Grischuk-Kruppa, Elista 2000) 15...h6 (or simply 15...0-0! intending 16 h5 ♗f4 or even 16...♖xd4! 17 hxg6 fxc6, so Potkin-Hug, Istanbul 2003 continued 16 ♖g1!? ♗xh4 17 ♔d3, when 17...♗g6 18 ♖g4 ♖c7! 19 ♖h1 ♖fc8 20 ♖h5 ♗f8 21 ♖xh7 intending 21...♔xg5 would have been strong) 16 gxh6 Grischuk-Radjabov, Wijk aan Zee 2003, and here McDonald (and later Grischuk!) mentions 16...gxh6!? 17 h5 ♖h4 18 ♖g4 ♗f5, which looks okay.

11 h3

White loses a pawn after 11 ♔h3? a5!; and 11 ♖g1 allows 11...f6 (or 11...♔e7 and ...♖c8) 12 exf6 gxf6 13 ♖c3 ♗f7 (13...♔d6) 14 ♗a4 (14 ♖c1

♔h6! 15 ♖c2 ♗e7♣ Lautier-Bauer, Val d'Isere 2002) 14...♖c7 15 ♖c1 ♖f4! 16 ♖c5 ♔xc5 17 dxc5 ♗ce5 18 ♖xe5 Short-Lputian, Batumi 1999; and McDonald notes that 18...fxc5! is quite strong.

11...f6



Shirov-Sadvakasov, Astana 2001 continued 11...♖c8 12 ♖c3 ♗a5 13 ♗a4 ♖c6 14 ♖c1 ♖c4=.

12 ♖c3

12 ♔d3 can as usual be met by 12...fxc5 13 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 14 dxe5 ♗f7: 15 0-0 g5!? (or 15...a5 16 b5 ♔c5) 16 ♖c3 ♔g7 17 ♖e1 0-0 18 ♖d2 ♖h8?! (18...♖ac8♣) 19 ♖d1 ♖f3 20 ♔d4 ♖d8± ½-½ Hollrigl-Van der Weide, Liechtenstein 1999.

12...fxc5 13 dxe5

13 ♗a4 is counterproductive after 13...♖d8 14 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 15 dxe5 ♔e7 with dark square control.

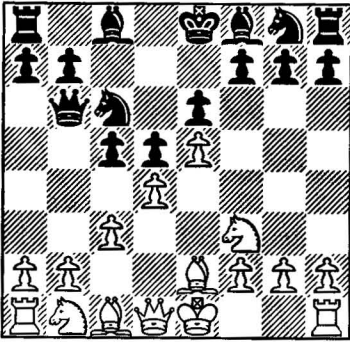
13...♔e7

Or 13...♗f7. After 13...♔e7, Sveshnikov-Lputian, Sochi 1993 continued 14 ♗a4 ♖d8 15 ♖c1 0-0 16 ♖c5 ♔xc5 17 ♖xc5. Apart from 17...♗f7, as played, Black had 17...♖e7! intending ...a5, when the second player has a slight edge, a risky line going 18 ♖c1?! (better is 18 ♖c3 ♗f7 19 ♖e3 ♗g5♣) 18...♖xb4! 19 g5! (19 axb4 ♖xb4+ 20 ♖d2 ♖e4+) 19...♗f5 20

axb4 ♖h4! 21 ♖xh4 ♗xb4+ 22 ♗d2 ♗e4+ 23 ♗e3 ♗xh1♞.

This has been lot of detail on one variation, but it has been the most important line of the Advance Variation for many years now.

3.2 6 ♖e2



The traditional main line, somewhat superseded by 6 a3 but still very important and extremely complicated.

6...♖h6

After this flexible move, White must attend to the threat of ...cxd4 and ...♗f5. He can do so by:

3.21 7 b3

3.32 7 ♖xh6

Others:

(a) 7 dxc5? ♖xc5 8 0-0 ♖g4♞;

(b) 7 ♖a3? cxd4 8 ♖xh6 gxf6 9 cxd4 ♗xb2 10 ♖b5 ♗b4+ 11 ♖f1 ♗a5♞ Kestler-Uhlmann, Bundesliga 1991;

(c) 7 0-0? cxd4 8 cxd4 ♗f5♞.

(d) 7 ♖f1? cxd4 8 cxd4 ♗f5 9 ♖c3 and now Black can capture the pawn by 9...♗fxd4! 10 ♖a4 (10 ♖e3 ♗xb2 11 ♖xd5 exd5! 12 ♖xd4 ♖e7♞) 10...♗b4 11 ♖d2 ♗e7 12 ♖g5 f6 13 exf6 gxf6 14 ♖xd4 fxf5 15 ♖h5+ ♖d8

16 ♖c1 ♖xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♖g7 and Black is better – Boey;

(e) 7 ♖d3 tries to prove that in a Milner-Barry sort of position, the extra move ...♖h6 actually hurts Black: 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 ♖d7 (or 8...♗f5 9 ♖xf5 exf5 10 ♖c3 ♖e6 11 ♖e2 h6 12 h4 0-0-0= Benjamin-Shaked, Kona 1998) 9 ♖c2 (in view of the threat ...♖xd4) and Black can play simply 9...♖b4=, or more interestingly:

(e1) 9...f6 exploits Black's considerable lead in development to break down White's centre: 10 ♖c3 (10 ♖xh6? gxf6 11 b3 ♖b4+ 12 ♖f1 fxe5+) 10...♗f7 11 exf6 gxf6 12 a3 ♖d6 13 b4 0-0-0 14 ♖e3 ♖b8 15 ♗d3 ♖e7♞ 16 ♖e2? ♖c8 17 ♖hc1 ♗f5 18 ♖d2 ♖c4 19 ♖e3 ♖hc8 with irresistible pressure, Levin-J.Watson, Philadelphia 1997;

(e2) 9...♗f5! is the most straightforward. Then 10 ♖xf5 exf5 is the standard position from Benjamin-Shaked above (8...♗f5). White has played four moves with his bishop as opposed to the usual two (♖d3 and ♖xf5), whereas Black (potentially) loses one tempo when he plays ...♖e6. Thus he is a tempo up on normal lines and must stand satisfactorily.

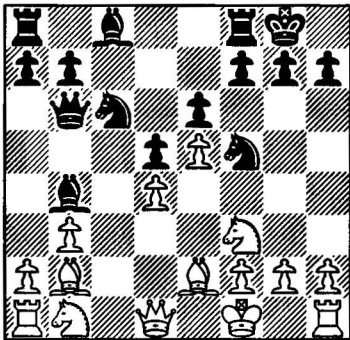
3.21 7 b3 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♗f5

To my knowledge, my suggestion after 8...♖b4+ 9 ♖f1, 9...0-0!?, is still untried. This would preserve the option of playing the move ...♖g4 at some point.

9 ♖b2 ♖b4+ 10 ♖f1 0-0

The position after 10 ♖f1 has been outrageously favourable to the Black pieces in practice. Here 10...♖e7 has given Black a 60% winning percentage in my database with about a 100-point performance rating advantage; but 10...♖d7 is another effective alternative, as it has an amazing 500-

point performance rating advantage for Black in 55 games! (Of course, that is by no means proof of objective worth, and the sample sizes are reduced by unrated games, but still...) A typically entertaining line is 11 g3 0-0 12 ♖g2 f6 13 a3 ♙e7 and the white king still isn't safe: 14 b4 fxe5 15 dxe5 ♙c5! 16 g4 ♜fe7 17 ♜c3 ♙xf2! 18 ♜a4 ♚e3 19 ♜f1 ♜g6 20 ♜xf2 ♜f4+ 21 ♜f1 ♜h3! 22 ♚e1 ♜xe5 23 ♙xe5 ♙xa4 24 ♙d4 ♚e4 25 ♚d2 ♚g6? (25...♜xf2! 26 ♜xf2 ♜xf3+ 27 ♙xf3 ♜f8 with the idea 28 ♚e3 ♜xf3+ 29 ♚xf3 ♚xd4+) 26 ♚e3? 0-1 Marti-novic-Pavlovic, Igalo 1994. White is lost after 26...♜xf2.



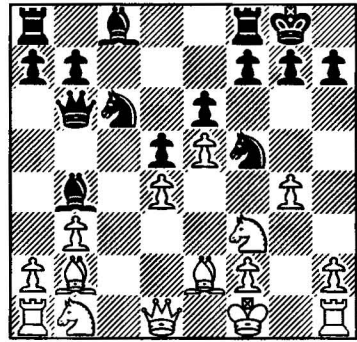
11 ♜c3

This developing move avoids weak-nesses and is best. Alternatives:

(a) 11 ♙d3 f6! 12 ♙xf5 (12 a3 ♙e7 13 ♙xf5 exf5 leaves White with a stranded king and weaknesses) 12...fxe5!? (!! – Tsouros, but objec-tively better is 12...exf5!) 13 ♙c2? (13 ♙h3! e4 14 ♜e1 e5 15 ♙xc8 ♜axc8 – Tsouros; but here 14 ♜g5! im-proves) 13...e4 14 ♜e1 e5 15 a3 ♙d6 16 b4 exd4 17 ♙b3 ♙e6 18 f3 exf3 19 ♜xf3 ♜xf3! – was Nicolieris-Tsouros, Greece 1973;

(b) 11 g4 is the old and most dan-gerous line, which deserves some

study:



11...♜h6 and White has:

(b1) 12 h3?! f6 (or 12...♙d7 13 a3 ♙e7 14 b4 f6! 15 exf6 ♜xf6 16 g5? ♜xf3) 13 exf6 ♜xf6 14 a3 (for 14 g5 ♜xf3, compare 12 ♜g1) 14...♙d6 15 g5 ♜xf3 16 ♙xf3 ♜f5 17 ♜d2 ♙d7! 18 ♙g4 ♜cxd4 19 b4 ♜f8 20 ♙xd4 ♜xd4 21 ♜f3 ♙b5+ 22 ♜e1 ♜f4 23 ♜d2 ♜f5 24 f3 ♚e3+ 0-1 Gutierrez Castillo-Matamoros Franco, Malaga 2001.

(b2) 12 ♜g1 f6 13 exf6 (a beautiful game followed 13 a3 ♙e7 14 exf6 ♜xf6 15 g5 ♜xf3 16 gxh6 ♜f7 17 ♙d3 g5!! 18 ♚h5 ♙d7 19 ♜d2 ♜af8 20 f3 ♚c7 21 ♜e1 ♜h8 22 ♜e2 ♙f6 23 ♜eg2 ♚f4 24 ♜e2 ♙xd4+ Kiselev-Bilokha, Kiev 1999) 13...♜xf6 14 g5 (the move 14 ♜c3 can be met conservatively by 14...♙xc3 15 ♙xc3 ♜f7, or by 14...♜f7 15 g5 ♜f4 16 ♜a4 ♚c7 17 ♙c1 e5! 18 ♙xf4 ♙h3+ 19 ♜g2 exf4) 14...♜xf3 and:

(b21) 15 gxh6?! ♜f7 16 ♙d3 e5 (or 16...g6! – Botterill) 17 ♚h5 e4 18 ♙e2 Botterill-Ligterink, London 1978, and here Botterill gives 18...g6! which in fact looks winning;

(b22) 15 ♙xf3 ♜f5 16 ♜g4 ♙d7 17 ♜c3 ♜f8, e.g., 18 ♜a4 ♚c7?! 19 ♜g1 ♙e8 20 ♜c5! (20 ♚e2 ♙h5! 21 ♚xe6+ ♜h8 22 ♚xd5 ♙xg4 23 ♙xg4 ♚f4 24 ♚g2 ♜cxd4 25 ♜d1 ♜h4) T.Reich-

P.Meister, Bayern 1988, and best was 20...♟fxd4♞;

(c) 11 a3 ♖e7 12 b4 f6 13 g3 fxe5 14 dxe5 a5! 15 b5 ♖c5 16 g4 ♟fd4-+ Campora Perez-Matamoros Franco, Seville 2001;

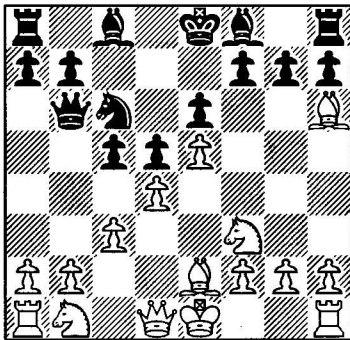
Returning to 11 ♟c3:

11...f6 12 ♟a4

12 g4 ♟h6 (or just 12...♟fe7 aiming at f4) 13 exf6 ♟xg4!? 14 fxg7 ♞f7 with complex play, Gudbrandsen-Lahlum, Oslo 2000.

After 12 ♟a4, the main line goes 12...♞d8 13 h4 (13 a3 ♖e7 14 b4 fxe5 15 dxe5 ♖d7♞ Sorokin-Sokolsky, USSR 1951) 13...fxe5 14 dxe5 ♖e7!? (or 14...♖d7 15 ♖d3 ♖e7! 16 h5 ♞c8) 15 ♖d3 ♖d7! with the idea ...♖e8-h5. This is advantageous, since 16 g4? ♟hx4 only exposes White, and if 16 ♞c1, 16...♖e8 17 h5 ♖g5 activates Black's pieces.

3.22 7 ♖xh6



This is the most critical line after 6 ♖e2 ♟h6. White gives up the bishop pair in order to inflict damage upon Black's pawns.

7...gxh6

Commentators have given a wide variety of conflicting analysis about 7...♞xb2?!; ultimately it seems inferior after 8 ♖e3! ♞xa1 9 ♞c2 cxd4 10

♟xd4! ♖d7! 11 0-0! (11 ♟b3 ♟b4) 11...♟xe5 12 ♟d2 ♞xf1+ 13 ♖xf1+ with the idea ♞b3 and ♟b5.

8 ♞d2

This is better than 8 b3? cxd4 9 cxd4 f6! 10 exf6 ♖b4+ 11 ♟f1 0-0 with attack down the f-file, Karlsson-Helmers, Reykjavik 1982: 12 a3 ♖d6 13 ♟c3 ♞xf6 14 ♟a4 ♞c7 15 b4 ♞f7!? (15...♞g7!♞) 16 ♞c1 e5!? (16...♖f4) 17 ♞xc6! (17 dxe5 ♟xe5 18 ♟c3 ♖e6♞) 17...bxc6 18 dxe5 ♞xf3 19 ♖xf3 ♖xe5♞.

8...♖g7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♟a3

White has no other good way to develop his pieces.

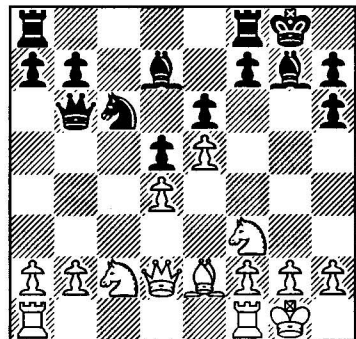
10...cxd4

10...♖d7 11 ♟c2 ♞ac8 12 dxc5!? (12 b4! is the main line) 12...♞c7!♞=.

11 cxd4 ♖d7

Noteworthy is the unique order 11...f6 12 exf6 ♞xf6 13 ♟c2 (13 ♞ad1 ♖d7 14 ♟c2 ♖e8 15 b4 a6 16 a4 ♖g6= Patience-Pye, Eastleigh 2001) 13...a5 (to prevent b4; compare 11...♖d7 12 ♟c2 a5). Here typical play might go 14 ♟e3! (14 ♞ab1 ♖d7 15 b4 axb4 16 ♟xb4 ♞a5=) 14...h5! (my idea in several lines, preventing ♟g4) 15 ♟c2 ♖d7 16 ♞ab1 ♖e8= and ...♖g6.

12 ♟c2



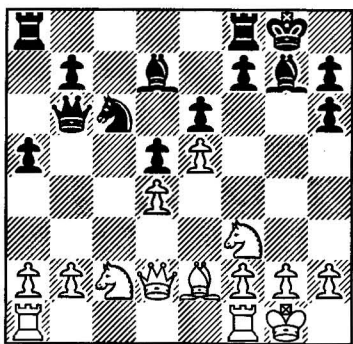
The basic position. White wants to

Play the French

expand on the queenside by b4 and a4, and/or attack Black's kingside (e.g. by ♖e3-g4). Black will play ...f6, after which he hopes that the two bishops, f-file, and/or pressure on d4 will yield good play.

12...f6

The normal move. But a very important alternative is 12...a5!?, by which Black temporarily prevents b4:



(a) 13 a4 f6 (13...♖b4 14 ♖e3 h5 15 ♖fd1 f6 with good counterplay) 14 exf6 ♖xf6 15 ♖fb1 ♖e8! 16 b4?! ♖g6 17 bxa5 ♗xa5 18 ♗d1 ♖f7 (18...♗a7!?) 19 ♖b5?! Trygstad-Brynell, Gausdal 2001; and now 19...♗a7! leaves White no good defence against ...♖xc2 and/or ...♖af8.

(b) 13 ♖ab1 f6 14 exf6 ♖xf6 15 b4 axb4 16 ♖xb4 ♗a5=, as above;

(c) 13 ♖e3 h5! and:

(c1) 14 g4!? f6! 15 exf6 ♖xf6 16 gxh5 (16 g5? ♖f4 17 ♖g2 ♖f7?) 16...♖af8 (16...♖e8=) 17 ♖e5 ♖e8 18 ♖xc6 (18 ♖ad1 ♖f4!?) 18...bxc6 19 ♖c2 e5 20 dxe5 ♖f4!;

(c2) 14 a4 f6 15 ♖b5 fxe5 16 ♖xc6 bxc6 17 ♖xe5 ♖e8 18 f4 ♖b8 19 ♖f2 c5? D.Fernando-Brynell, Bled 2002;

(c3) 14 ♖ad1 f6 15 exf6 ♖xf6 (15...♖xf6 16 ♖e5 ♖e8 17 ♖xc6 bxc6=) 16 ♖e5 (16 ♖c2 ♖e8 and ...♖g6) Rajlich-J.Watson, Las Vegas

1998, and now the easiest course was 16...♖xe5 17 dxe5 ♖xe5 18 ♖xh5 ♖b5 19 ♖e2 ♖xe2 20 ♗xe2 ♖ae8=.

13 exf6

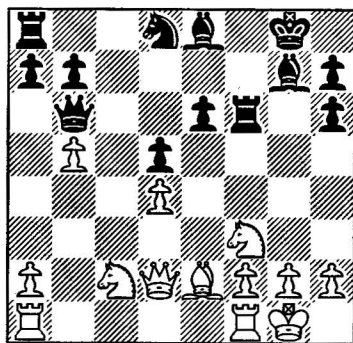
13 ♖d3 fxe5! 14 ♖xe5 (14 dxe5 ♖xf3 15 gxf3 ♖xe5?) 14...♖xe5 15 dxe5 ♖f7? (or 15...♗xb2).

13...♖xf6 14 b4

White shouldn't allow Black to develop uninterrupted by ...♖af8 and ...♖e8-g6. The alternative is 14 ♖e3 ♖af8 15 ♖ad1 ♖f4 16 ♖c2 ♖e8!? Oll-Rohde, New York 1994.

14...♖af8

The standard move, but it leads to positions that are difficult to play. So close attention should be paid to 14...♖e8!?, a promising move that represents a new plan in the position: 15 b5 (15 a4 ♖g6 16 a5 ♗c7 17 ♖fc1 a6=) 15...♖d8! (!? for originality: instead of heading for g6 or f5, Black envisions a knight on f7 that covers e5 and can look for greener pastures via d6).



Now White has:

(a) 16 ♖e5 ♖f7 with these plausible continuations:

(a1) 17 f4? ♖xe5 18 fxe5 ♖xf1+ 19 ♖xf1 ♖xe5 with the idea 20 ♗xh6? ♖xd4+ 21 ♖xd4 ♗xd4+ 22 ♖h1 ♖g6?;

(a2) 17 ♖xf7 ♖xf7! 18 a4 ♖c8 19 a5

♟d6 20 g3 (20 ♟fc1 ♟fc7?) 20...e5=;

(a3) 17 ♟g4 ♟g6 18 a4 ♟c8! 19 ♟fc1 ♟d6! 20 ♟e5 ♟e4! (20...♟xe5 21 dxe5 ♟e4 22 ♟e3!?) 21 ♟e1 (21 ♟e3? ♟c3) 21...♟f6! 22 a5 ♟d6 23 ♟f3 ♟g5=;

(b) 16 a4 ♟f7 17 ♟e3 h5 18 ♟ac1 (18 ♟d3?! ♟xf3! 19 gxf3 ♟xd4) 18...♟d6! 19 ♟b4 (or 19 ♟e5 ♟e4 20 ♟d3 ♟f4! =) 19...♟e4 20 a5 ♟d8!? (20...♟d6! =) 21 b6 ♟f8 22 ♟b2 ♟d6 23 ♟e5 axb6 24 ♟xb6? (better is 24 f3 ♟g5 25 ♟xb6 ♟xb6 26 axb6 ♟f4 =) 24...♟xb6 25 axb6 ♟d2 26 ♟a1 ♟b8 27 ♟fd1 ♟b3 28 ♟a7 ♟xd4 29 ♟xd4 ♟xe5? Fernando-Gdanski, Cappelle la Grande 2002.

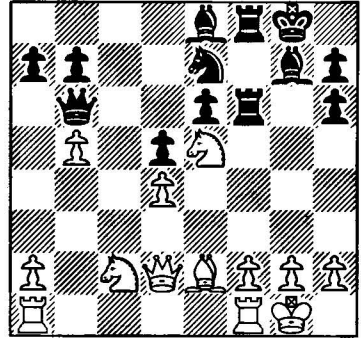
The line with 14...♟e8 and the idea ...♟d8-f7 is a fun and little-investigated way to create counter-chances and avoid the theoretical 14...♟af8.

15 b5 ♟e7

This has been played in many games. Probably White is slightly better in a theoretical sense, but so far Black has more than held his own in terms of results. Another sound option is 15...♟a5!?, my suggestion from the second edition whose main drawback is that it can easily lead to a draw. It has now been tested: 16 ♟e5 (16 ♟ab1 ♟f4! keeps White tied down, and 16 ♟e3 ♟f4 [16...♟c8!?] intending 17 ♟e5 ♟xb5 18 ♟fb1? ♟e4 winning for Black) 16...♟xb5! 17 ♟ab1 (17 ♟g4 ♟f4 18 ♟ab1 ♟c4?; 17 ♟fb1?? ♟xf2; 17 ♟e3 ♟f4!) 17...♟xe2 18 ♟xb6 ♟xf1 19 ♟b1 ♟xf2 20 ♟xf2 ♟xf2 21 ♟xf2 ♟a6 (thus far my analysis of 14...♟a5; Black has two bishops and two pawns to compensate for the exchange and his weak rook pawns) 22 ♟e1 (22 ♟b4 ♟xe5 23 dxe5 ♟c4, about equal and leading correctly to a draw, Jonkman-Tiggelman, Vlissingen 1999) 22...♟b5

23 ♟e3 a6 24 a3 ♟a4 25 ♟e1 Rajlich-Hummel, North Bay 1998; and although 25...♟b3 was still well inside the drawing range, simpler was 25...♟c4 26 ♟xc4 dxc4 27 ♟f3 ♟f7 28 ♟e5+ ♟e7=.

16 ♟e5 ♟e8



17 g3

(a) 17 ♟d3 ♟g6 18 ♟xg6 hxg6 19 a4 Thipsay-Konguvel, London 2001; and Black should try 19...g5! (versus f4, and clearing the way for a future ...♟g6) 20 ♟ae1 a6 21 bxa6 ♟xa6 with excellent play;

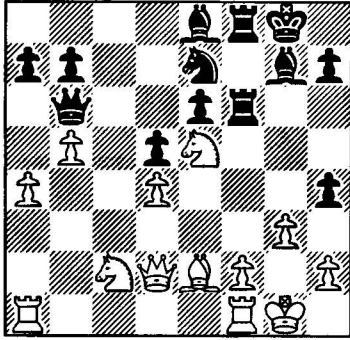
(b) 17 a4 (a popular move with the idea ♟a3-g3, but Black can challenge the centre first) 17...♟g6 18 ♟g4 ♟6f7 19 ♟xh6+?! (19 g3 h5 20 ♟h6+ ♟xh6 21 ♟xh6 ♟f4! 22 ♟xh5? [22 ♟g5+ ♟g7 23 ♟e5 ♟g6 =] 22...♟f6 23 ♟g5+ ♟g6! 24 ♟e5 ♟xh5 0-1 Kun-Szuk, Budapest 2000) 19...♟xh6 20 ♟xh6 ♟f4 21 ♟f3 ♟g7 22 g3 ♟d8! (threatening ...♟g6) 23 ♟h1 ♟g6 24 ♟h4 ♟xh4 25 gxh4 ♟d3? Adams-Lobron, Amsterdam 1994.

17...h5 18 a4

Or 18 ♟e3, e.g., 18...♟f5!? 19 ♟xf5 ♟xf5 20 f4 ♟xb5!? 21 ♟fb1 ♟xe5! 22 fxe5 ♟xe5 23 ♟g2 ♟xd4 24 ♟xd4 ♟xd4 25 ♟xb5 ♟f2+ 26 ♟h3 ♟xa1 27 ♟xa1 ♟g7, perhaps with ...h4 next. Black's two passed central pawns

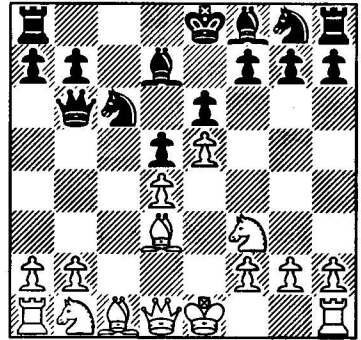
look good enough to hold, but this demonstrates the marginal nature of Black playing this line past his 14th and 15th move options.

18...h4



6...cxd4 7 cxd4

7 0-0 has been answered by 7...♗d7 in several games, transposing after 8 cxd4 ♖xd4. Also possible is 7...dxc3 8 ♖xc3 ♗d7, 8...♗ge7, 8...f6!?.
7...♗d7



This position was drawn in Magem Badals-Vallejo Pons, Mondariz 2000, but Topalov-Bareev, Novgorod 1997 showed that White was somewhat better: 19 ♗d3 hxg3 20 hxg3 h5? (20...♗g6! with only a small advantage for White and play for both sides) 21 ♖e3 ♗h6?! (21...♖d8 22 ♖ac1 ♗g6±) 22 a5 ♖d8 23 f4±. Overall, 15...♗e7 is playable, but 15...♗a5 should completely equalise.

Looking back over this variation for better winning chances, Black should strongly consider the promising alternatives 12...a5 and 15...♗e8. I think that he can be happy with both of these more ambitious moves. Also interesting is the lesser-known 11...f6.

3.3 6 ♗d3

This normally leads into the Milner-Barry Gambit, in which White gives up a pawn for rapid development. This gambit has now been relegated to a rare sideline, but we must also look at new ideas, e.g., on White's 8th and 9th moves.

Not 7...♖xd4?? 8 ♖xd4 ♖xd4?? 9 ♗b5+.

8 0-0

Gambiting the d-pawn is normal because the options are so dispiriting:

(a) 8 ♗e2?! is a full tempo down on older 6 ♗e2 lines after 8...♖h6! 9 b3 ♖f5 10 ♗b2 ♗b4+? 11 ♖f1 0-0 12 ♖c3 f6 and Black will wreak havoc down the f-file;

(b) 8 ♗c2!? is slow. After 8...♖b4, White has lost any chance for advantage (he has scored 22% in my database, although only weaker players are involved): 9 ♖c3 (9 ♗a4 ♖a6!± – Schwarz, e.g., 10 ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 and ...♖d3+ follows; 9 0-0 ♖xc2 10 ♖xc2 ♖c8 11 ♖c3 transposes; 9 ♗b3? ♗b5) 9...♖xc2+ 10 ♖xc2 ♖c8 (or 10...♗e7 11 ♗e3 ♖c6 12 0-0 ♗e7 intending ...0-0 and ...f6) 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♗e3 (12 ♖d3 ♖c6 13 a3 ♗a5 14 b4 ♖c4± Jonathan-Soln, Szeged 1994) 12...♖c6 (or 12...♖f5!) 13 ♖d2 (13 a3 ♗a5) 13...♗b4! 14 a3 Stadler-Ilchmann, corr 1958-9; 14...♗xc3! 15 bxc3 ♗a5± – Heemsoth;

(c) 8 ♖c3 ♖xd4. Now 9 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 is the main line gambit. White also has:

(c1) 9 ♖g5!? resembles the 9 0-0 ♖xd4 10 ♖g5 gambit line below. But this order may be flawed due to 9...♖c6!, since ♑e1 is not available, e.g. 10 0-0 (10 ♗e2 loses a pawn after 10...d4! 11 ♖b5 [11 ♖d1 ♗a5+ and ...♗xe5] 11...a6 12 ♖d6+ ♖xd6 13 exd6 ♗b4+ 14 ♖d2 ♗xd6?) 10...♖xe5 11 ♑e1 (11 ♖xd5 ♗d6!) 11...♖xd3 12 ♗xd3 ♖f6? with the idea 13 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 14 ♗xd5 ♖b4 15 ♑e2 ♖b5;

(c2) 9 0-0 ♖xf3+ (9...♖c6?) 10 ♗xf3 ♖e7 11 ♗g3 ♖c6! 12 a4 ♖f5 13 ♖xf5 exf5 14 ♗g5 d4? Sobolevsky-Enders, Muelhausen 2000.

8...♖xd4

Now:

3.31 9 ♖g5

3.32 9 ♖xd4

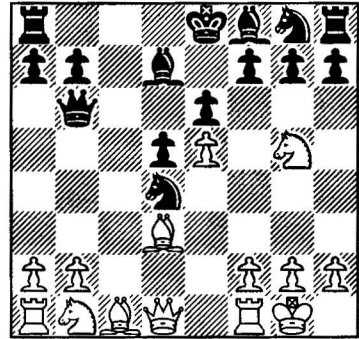
Other ways to gambit the pawn are tricky but insufficient:

(a) 9 ♖b2 ♖c6 (9...♖xf3+ is not bad either) 10 ♖b3 ♖ge7 (or 10...f6!? with the idea 11 ♖f4 fxe5 12 ♖xe5 ♖f6) 11 ♖e3 (11 ♖f4 ♖g6 12 ♖g3 a5 13 a4 f5 14 exf6 gxf6 15 ♑e1 ♖f7) 11...♗c7 12 ♑c1 ♖g6 13 ♖c5!? (13 ♑e1 ♖gxe5!) 13...♖xc5 14 ♖xc5 ♖gxe5 15 ♑e1 ♑c8! 16 ♖a3 ♖xd3 17 ♗xd3 ♖e5!? 18 ♑xc7 (18 ♗e3!? ♖xf3+ 19 gxf3 ♗d8 20 ♑xc8 ♖xc8 21 ♗c5 f6) 18...♖xd3 19 ♑xc8+ ♖xc8 20 ♑d1 ♖f4 21 g3 ♖g6 22 ♑c1 ♖d7 23 ♖g5 f6 and Black was still two pawns up in Nunschmittziel, Prague 1990;

(b) 9 ♖c3!? is mentioned by Bickford as a transpositional device, e.g. 9...a6 10 ♖xd4 ♗xd4. The alternatives are 9...♖c6 and 9...♖xf3+! 10 ♗xf3 ♖e7, e.g., 11 ♗g3 (11 ♖h1 ♖g6 12 ♗e2 ♖c5?) 11...♖c6 12 a3 (12 a4

♖f5 13 ♖xf5 exf5 is Sobolevsky-Enders above; 12 ♑e1?! g6 13 ♖g5 ♖g7) 12...a6 13 b4 ♖g6? Maderna-Najdorf, Mar del Plata 1942.

3.31 9 ♖g5



This is known as Sorensen's Gambit. It has undergone a spurt of popularity and White has enjoyed a number of nice attacking victories, but it is dubious at best if the opponent is prepared.

9...♖c6!

The simplest course, fighting for the initiative by attacking e5.

10 ♑e1

This is thought to be best and has been played almost exclusively. White's other plausible moves are:

(a) 10 ♗e2 ♖b4 (K.Krantz's solution) 11 ♖xh7 ♖b5 12 ♗f3 ♖h6 13 ♑e1 ♖e7 14 a3 ♖c6 15 ♖c2 ♖d4 16 ♗d1 ♖g4! and Black is winning. Black has also gotten a clear advantage after 10...g6 11 ♖c3 ♖g7, as in Wuttke-Lieb, Berlin 1998;

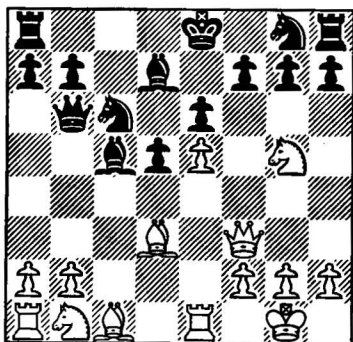
(b) 10 ♖f4? ♗xb2 (or 10...♖e7 11 ♗h5 g6 12 ♗e2 ♖b4!) 11 ♖d2 ♖xe5 12 ♖b1 ♗d4 13 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 14 ♖df3 ♗c7 15 ♗e2 ♖d6+, e.g. 16 ♗b2 (16 ♑fc1 ♖c6 17 ♖d4 ♖e7+ Storey-A.Whiteley, Newcastle 1995) 16...♖f6 17 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 18 ♑xb7 h6 19 ♖h3

g5!-+, winning a piece!

(c) The sacrificial try 10 ♖c3?! ♗xe5 11 ♗xd5 is met by 11...♞d6! (as given Krantz) with Black a clear pawn up after 12 ♗f4 ♗f6. 10...♙c5!

This is not the only solution, but it seems to virtually refute White's gambit. In my database, 10...♙c5 has scored 71% with a 3071 to 2106 Performance Rating advantage! Of course that's silly, but White really doesn't seem to have a thing for his pawn here.

11 ♞f3



11...♗h6

The most common, but 11...0-0-0! looks even stronger: 12 ♗c3 (12 ♗xf7?? ♞f8-+) 12...f6! (12...♗h6 isn't bad either, with 13 ♙f4 ♗d4 or 13 h3 ♙d4) 13 exf6 (White blundered in one game by 13 ♗a4?? ♞a5; also bad is 13 ♗f7 ♗xe5! 14 ♙xe5 fxe5 15 ♗xh8 ♗f6 16 ♗f7 e4! 17 ♙xe4 ♞f8!?) 13...♗xf6 14 ♗f7 ♗g4! (or 14...♗b4) 15 ♞xg4 (15 ♗d1 ♞hf8?) 15...♙xf2+ 16 ♗f1 ♙xe1 17 ♗xe1 ♞g1+ 18 ♙f1 ♗d4-+.

12 ♗c3

12 h3? ♙d4! wins.

12...♗d4

Again 12...♙d4 is good: 13 ♙f4 (13 ♗xd5!? ♞a5! 14 ♗c3 ♗xe5 15 ♞e4 ♞c5?; 13 ♗xh7 0-0-0 14 ♙g5 ♗xe5 15

♙xe5 ♙xe5 16 ♙xd8 ♙xd8-+ Calzolari-Poupar, Clichy 1999) 13...♗e7!? 14 ♗e2 ♗g6 15 ♙xg6 fxc6!? 16 ♗xd4 ♞xd4 17 ♞ad1 ♞xb2! (17...♞b6 18 ♞a3! is given by Sorenson expert Lennart Hansson) 18 ♞b1 ♞xa2 19 ♞xb7 ♗f5?.

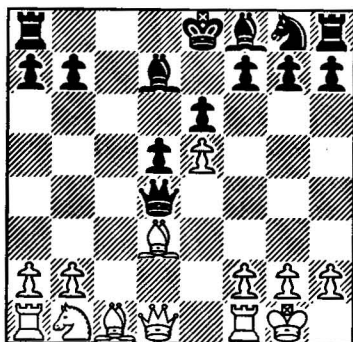
13 ♞f4

13 ♞d1 ♗hf5 14 ♞h5 g6 15 ♞d1 ♞c8? Bailen Canales-Barr, corr 1998, or 15...0-0!

13...♗df5

Or 13...♗hf5 14 g4 h6?. After 13...♗df5, Schmedders-Wilde, Sueder 1996 went 14 ♙d2 0-0 15 b4! ♙e7! 16 ♗xh7!? ♗xh7 17 g4 ♞xb4 18 ♗e4 ♞a3-+.

3.32 9 ♗xd4 ♞xd4



The Milner-Barry proper.

10 ♗c3

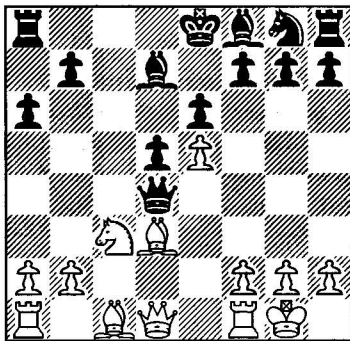
(a) Like most lines in this section, 10 ♞e2 has scored overwhelmingly for Black, e.g., 10...♗e7 (10...f6 is my suggestion; one line is 11 exf6 ♗xf6 12 ♞d1 ♞h4!?, and not much better is 11 ♞h5+ ♗d8 12 ♞f7 ♗e7 13 exf6 ♞xf6 14 ♞h5 g6 15 ♞e2 ♗f5, when two central pawns and development outweigh king position) 11 ♗h1 (11 ♗c3 ♗c6 is normal, intending 12 ♗b5 ♞xe5!; unnecessary but fun was 11...♗g6 12 ♙e3 ♞xe5 13 f4 ♞b8 14

f5 ♔d6! 15 ♔b5 ♔c6 16 fxg6 ♔xh2+ 17 ♖h1 hxg6-+ Lemmers-Pliester, Amsterdam 1993) 11...♘c6 (11...♗h4 is also good) 12 f4 ♔c5!? 13 a3 a6 14 ♖a2 0-0 15 b4 ♔a7 16 ♘d2 ♗e3♠ J.Brown-Hummel, Las Vegas 1997;

(b) 10 ♖e1?! ♘e7 11 ♘c3 a6 12 ♔e3 (12 ♗f3 ♘c6 13 ♗g3 0-0-0 14 ♔f1 ♔e7!♠ Lundquist-Dijkstra, corr 1962) 12...♗xe5 13 ♗f3 ♘g6 (13...d4!♠; 13...♔c6♠) 14 ♔xg6 hxg6 15 ♔f4 ♗h5♠ Parkyani-Anka, Budapest 1990.

10...a6

The main line: it rules out ♘b5 and clears the a7 square for the dark-squared bishop. Given the priority of other subjects I'm going to give only one solution here. I should mention that 10...♗xe5 is doing brilliantly theoretically but it is more difficult in practice than 10...a6.



11 ♗e2

11 ♖e1 ♘e7 transposes to 10 ♖e1 above. Others:

(a) 11 ♖h1?! ♗xe5 12 f4 (12 ♖e1 ♗d6 13 ♗f3 ♔c6♠) 12...♗d6 13 ♔e3 ♔e7 14 ♗f3 ♔c6 15 ♔d4 ♘f6 16 ♖ae1 g6!♠ Eley-Whiteley, Great Britain 1978;

(b) 11 ♗f3 ♗xe5 12 ♔f4 ♗f6 13 ♗g3 ♘e7 and 14 ♔g5 ♘f5 or 14 ♖fe1 ♔c6.

11...♘e7

The traditional move although in fact 11...♗h4! has scored 70% for Black in limited outings, e.g., 12 f4 ♔c5+ 13 ♖h1 h5!? 14 ♔e3 ♔xe3 15 ♗xe3 ♘h6 16 ♖f3 ♘g4 17 ♗g1 ♖c8♠ Duggan-Gunter, St Heliers 1997.

12 ♖h1

The older 12 ♖d1 isn't seen much. Black continues 12...♘c6 (12...♗h4!?) and:

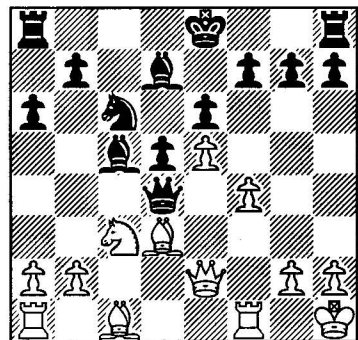
(a) 13 ♔xa6 ♗xe5 14 ♗xe5!? (14 ♔xb7 ♗xe2 15 ♘xe2 ♖a7 16 ♔xc6 ♔xc6 17 ♘d4 ♔d7 18 ♔e3 ♖b7 19 b3 ♔d6♠ McCann-Jestadt, California 1993) 14...♘xe5 15 ♔xb7 ♖a7 16 ♔xd5 exd5 17 ♖e1 f6 18 f4 ♔c5+ 19 ♖h1 d4♠ Mnatsakanian-Monin, USSR 1979 (and several later games).

(b) 13 ♔b5 ♗b6! (or 13...♗h4 14 ♔xc6 ♔xc6 15 ♔e3 ♗c4!) 14 ♔a4 ♔c5!♠.

12...♘c6 13 f4

Unsound looks 13 ♔e3 ♗xe5 (13...♗h4 is good, threatening ...d4, e.g., 14 g3 ♗d8 15 ♔f4 ♔e7♠) 14 f4 ♗d6 15 f5 (15 ♖ad1 ♔e7 16 f5 ♗e5) 15...♗e5! 16 ♖ae1 ♔d6♠.

13...♔c5



Yet another line with an overwhelming score (+350 performance rating points for Black). The reasoning behind ...♔c5 is to develop, prevent ♔e3, and allow ...♗f2 after

White's ♖d1.

14 ♕d2

This both discourages ...♜b4 and prepares 15 ♜f3 with the idea ♕e3 (14 ♜f3?? allows mate on g1). It's slow, but everything seems bad here:

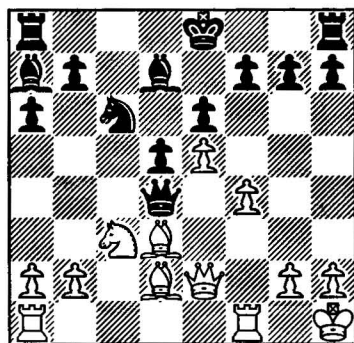
(a) 14 ♖d1 isn't played much. After 14...♜f2 15 ♜g4 (15 ♜h5 ♘b4!), however, no one has tried my 15...0-0-0! with the idea ...h5, e.g., 16 ♕d2 h5 17 ♜h3 g5!. Instead, 15...g6 has led to even results in spite of some Black advantage;

(b) 14 a3 ♘a5! (not the only move; 14...♕a7 15 ♕d2 g6 16 ♜f3 ♜b6 is quite good) 15 ♕d2 (15 b4 ♜xc3! 16 ♕d2 ♜d4 17 bxc5 ♘b3 18 ♕e3 ♜c3 19 ♜ab1 d4!-+ L.Kristensen-Jorgensen, Esbjerg 1996) 15...♘b3 16 ♜ae1 ♕a7 17 ♜f3 ♘xd2 18 ♜xd2 g6 19 ♘e2 ♜b6 20 ♜c1 ♜c8 21 ♜xc8+ ♕xc8♠ Niccoli-Naumkin, Bergamo 2002.

14...♕a7

14...♘b4!? 15 ♕b1 ♕a7 16 a3 ♘c6 17 ♕d3 g6 18 ♜ac1 (18 ♜f3 ♜b6!; 18 b4 ♜b6 19 ♜ab1 ♘d4 20 ♜d1 ♜c8♠ Soyly-Lputian, Manila 1992) 18...♜b6 19 b4 ♘d4 20 ♜d1 ♘f5!? 21 ♘a4 ♜d8

22 ♘c5 ♕c6! 23 ♘xa6 ♘e3 24 ♕xe3 ♕xe3♠ with the bishop pair and queenside pressure, Golod-Barsov, Dieren 1998.



15 ♜ae1

15 ♜f3 ♘b4 16 ♜af1 (16 ♕b1?? ♜g1 mate; 16 a3 ♘xd3 17 ♜xd3 ♜f2) 16...♘xd3 17 ♜xd3 ♜c4♠, e.g., 18 f5 exf5 19 b3 ♜g4!.

15...g6 16 ♜f3 ♜b6 17 ♕e3 ♜a5 18 ♕xa7 ♘xa7 19 ♜f2 ♘c6 20 ♜h4 ♜d8 21 ♜h6 ♜e7♠. This is from the game L.Hansen-Jorgensen, Holbaek 2001. White has little if anything for the pawn.