

BATSFORD CHESS OPENINGS



**THE CLASSICAL
FRENCH**


**EDUARD GUFELD AND
OLEG STETSKO**

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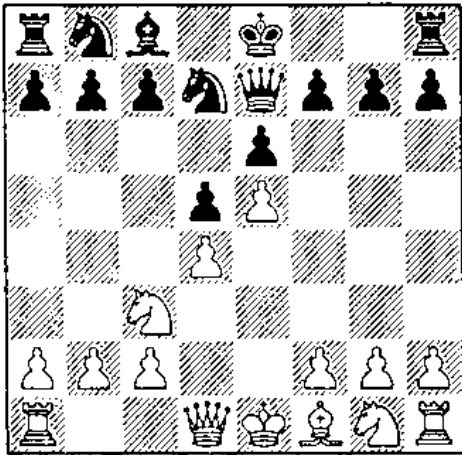
A BATSFORD CHESS BOOK

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Preface

Part One of this book examines the current state of the Classical French with 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♞f6 4.♙g5 ♚e7 5.e5 ♞fd7 6.♙xe7 ♚xe7.



This system was firmly established in tournament practice by the end of the nineteenth century and enjoyed a solid reputation. It is no accident that one of the best-known “defensive” players, the Hungarian Grandmaster Maroczy, who invariably played the French, was sincerely convinced that if Black withstands White’s kingside pressure during the first 20 moves he can count on eventual success. At the beginning of our century the Classical System also featured in the arsenal of active players such as Spielmann and Reti.

It occurred in games by the World Champions Lasker and Euwe. Later it was employed for many years by the Swedish Grandmaster Stahlberg. Popular until the 1930s, it was nonetheless gradually overshadowed by the 3...♙b4 systems that were developed with such enthusiasm.

But fashion is known to be changeable, and after nearly half a century of oblivion the Classical System is experiencing a renaissance. Moreover, contemporary practice confirms its richness in ideas and creative scope. Thanks to the sturdiness of its basic structures, the system fully lends itself to the present-day approach: Black plays to equalize according to the classical view of his opening strategy which Emanuel Lasker constantly championed. Today’s generation of grandmasters have enriched the Classical System with new ideas, new methods of working up counterplay; they have thus emphasized its viability. At present this opening is a favourite of Grandmasters Bareev, Chernin, Dolmatov and Korchnoi.

By undermining White’s pawn chain with the “levers”, c7-c5 and

f7-f6, which are characteristic of the French Defence, Black can expect to get his full share of the play. The very first practical tests with this plan demonstrated its "poison". For instance, the game Gottschall-Blackburne, Hamburg 1885, continued 7.♖d3 0-0 8.♗ce2 f6 9.f4 c5 10.c3 cxd4 11.cxd4 fxe5 12.fxe5 ♜b4+ 13.♜d2 ♝f1+, and White resigned. Of course White's play here makes a naive impression. Subsequent improvements by the leading players of that time, including such authorities as Steinitz, Lasker and Tarrasch, laid the foundations for White's present-day handling of this opening. White can opt for a plan of supporting his centre with pawns, or else employ a strategy that is held to be more modern: after exchanging away from the centre he occupies the vacated squares d4 and e5 with his pieces, blockading the black pawn-couple d5/e6 which can prove a liability especially in the endgame.

White's most natural, and best, continuation is to bolster his centre with 7.f4 (see chapters 1-4). The old lines 7.♜d2 and 7.♗b5 (chapters 5-6), in which White plans to

support his pawn chain with c2-c3, are seen more rarely.

Part Two of this monograph is devoted to the Chatard-Alekhine Attack: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♖g5 ♖e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.h4. This pawn sacrifice as a means of combating the Classical System was first analysed by the French player Chatard. It was introduced into serious practice in 1914 by Alekhine, who at that time was becoming a World Championship contender.

By advancing his rook's pawn to protect his bishop, White virtually rules out the possibility of kingside castling by Black. Acceptance of the sacrifice with 6...♖xg5 7.hxg5 ♖xg5 has the effect of opening the h-file, while if Black plays 6...h6 (in an attempt to steer towards the Classical System) White can avoid exchanges and withdraw his bishop with 7.♖e3, keeping the h6-pawn in his sights. Black has, however, some constructive lines at his disposal, based on undermining the centre by f7-f6 or c7-c5, either at once or after a preparatory 6...a6. These continuations lead to a sharp fight.

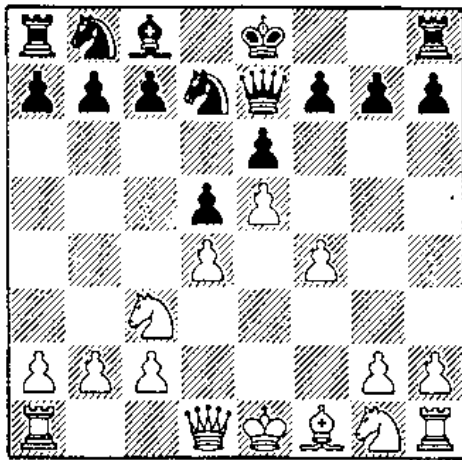
Part One:
The Classical System (6.👑xe7 🏰xe7)

Symbols used in this book

+	check
++	double check
+-	winning advantage for White
+/-	large advantage for White
+/=	slight advantage for White
--	winning advantage for Black
-/+	large advantage for Black
=/+	slight advantage for Black
=	level position
!	good move
!!	outstanding move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
½-½	the game ends in a draw
(ch)	championship
(zt)	zonal tournament
(izt)	interzonal tournament
(ol)	Olympiad

1 Main Line with 7.f4 0-0: Introduction

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7
 ♚xe7 7.f4



With this pawn advance, which was advocated by the first World Champion Wilhelm Steinitz, White fortifies his pawn on e5 but also reserves the option of clearing the pawns from the centre and controlling it with his pieces. Black has two different methods of organizing counterplay. With the natural 7...0-0 he intends to attack White's pawn centre from both wings; this is examined in chapters 1-3. Chapter 4 is devoted to 7...a6.

In the early stages of investigation into the Classical System these continuations were considered about equal in strength, especially as Black's plans had much in common

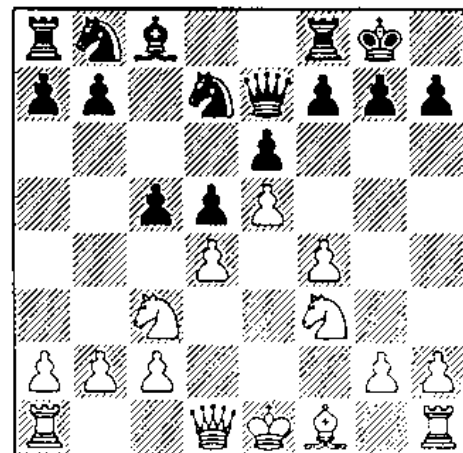
in the two cases. Just recently, however, some problems Black faces in the 7...0-0 line have caused 7...a6 to be seen in a new light. Today Black often conceals his plans and leaves castling until a more suitable moment; he first tries to gain as much ground as possible on the queenside, while waiting for White to reveal his intentions.

To understand why Black is turning to the second method of defence, we must examine the problems of the first method.

7...0-0

This natural continuation leaves Black with a wide range of possibilities.

8.♘f3 c5



A key position in the Classical System. White has a space advantage and Black's game is cramped. The development of his light-squared bishop remains a particular problem for Black. In particular, the continued presence of the immobile pawn-couple d5/e6 usually makes the bishop a weaker piece than White's blockading knight; this is especially noticeable in the endgame. Ever since "classical" times, therefore, one of White's ideals has been to aim for an ending where these advantages will stand out.

But as the classical players said, between the opening and the endgame the gods have placed the middlegame. With his opening set-up White has presented Black with a clear-cut object of counter-attack. Black aims to assault the pawn centre with the levers c7-c5 and f7-f6, acquiring possibilities of counterplay along the c- and f-files which will be opened. For White, the basic plans involve an attack against the kingside or occupation of d4 and e5 with his pieces, after these squares have been cleared by d4xc5 and e5xf6. His choice of plans will depend on where he puts his king; in chapter 2 White continues 9.♔d3 and aims to castle short, while in Chapter 3 he plays 9.♖d2 and aims to castle long.

The sortie 9.♗b5 is rarely seen. Threatening ♗b5-c7, White seeks to bolster his pawn chain and establish

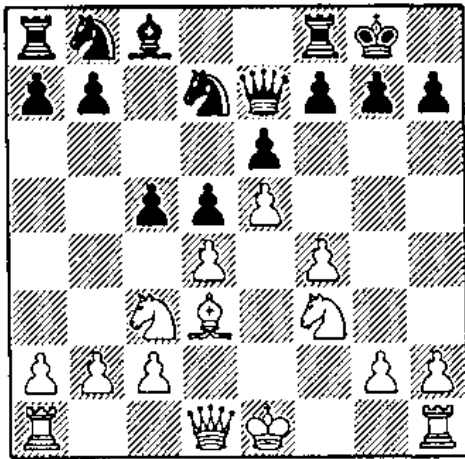
the knight on d6. However, Black can calmly continue developing with 9...♘c6 10.c3 (note the tactical device that works if White plays 10.♗d6? before fortifying his centre: 10...cxd4 11.♗xd4 ♗dxe5! 12.fxe5 ♖h4+ 13.g3 ♖xd4) 10...f6 11.♔d3 fxe5 12.fxe5 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖b4+ 14.♖d2 ♗b6. White has carried out his idea, but with his king uncastled his pawn chain is shaky. On 15.♗d6? he has to reckon with 15...♙xf3! 16.gxf3 ♖xd4 17.0-0-0 ♖xe5, when Black has more than enough for the exchange; see Folk-Thrum, Berlin 1980 (Illustrative Game 1). Evidently White must make do with 15.a3 ♖a4 16.0-0 ♔d7, which is about equal. But then, Black also has a more radical solution: he can simply disregard White's knight excursion and cold-bloodedly play 9...a6!. Then 10.♗c7? ♙a7 leaves the knight trapped, while after 10.♗d6 cxd4 11.♔d3 f6 12.0-0 ♗c6, nothing but memories remain of White's centre. An idea of Bronstein's, which has yet to be tested in serious practice, is also worthy of note: 9...cxd4! 10.♗c7 ♗xe5 11.♗xa8 ♗xf3+ 12.♖xf3 ♖b4+, and after picking up the knight on a8 Black will emerge with a material plus.

This plan is characterized by rapid completion of White's kingside development with the incidental threat of a standard bishop sacrifice on h7.

2 White Plans Kingside Castling

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7
♚xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.♙d3

Alternatively, White often develops his bishop a move later: 9.dxc5 ♘c6 10.♙d3. Usually this makes no difference.



The threat of 10.♙xh7+ normally compels Black to take concrete defensive measures by advancing his f-pawn. The sharp continuation 9...cxd4, ignoring the threat and forcing White to give up three pieces for the queen, is considered dangerous. However, since the playability of 9.♙d3 ultimately depends on the outcome of this sacrifice, it makes sense to begin by examining 9...cxd4 and then proceed to Black's main replies 9...f5 and 9...f6—not that the first of these has much

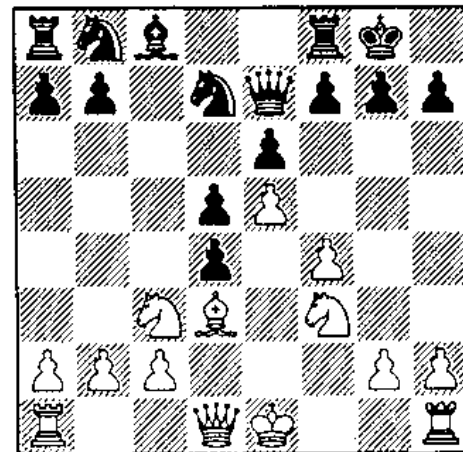
independent significance, since in either case White can take the opportunity to unload his pawns from the central squares e5 and d4 and free them for his pieces.

From the diagram we examine:

- A 9...cxd4
- B 9...f5
- C 9...f6

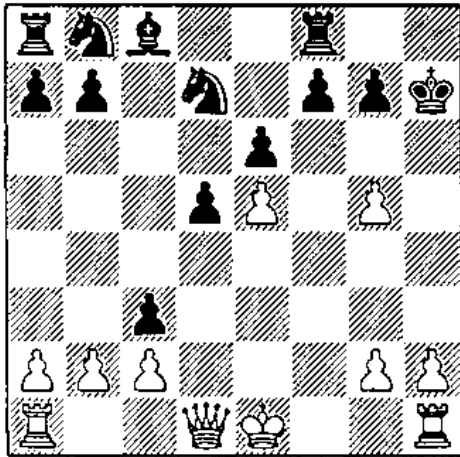
A

9...cxd4



By this capture Black provokes White into taking on h7, since 10.♘xd4 or 10.♘e2 would be strongly answered by 10...♘c6 with the f7-f6 break to follow; while after 10.♘b5 f6! 11.♘c7 fxe5 12.fxe5 ♘xe5 13.♘xa8 ♘xf3+ 14.gxf3 ♚h4+ Black has a strong attack (Keres).

10. ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 11. ♘g5+ ♚xg5
12. fxg5 dxc3



This materially unbalanced position was examined by Paul Keres in his book *The French Defence* which came out in 1958. From the material viewpoint the recent transaction favours Black, who has “sacrificed” his queen for three minor pieces. At the moment, however, Black is undeveloped, and Keres warns of White’s attacking possibilities—though he wrongly links them to the manoeuvre 13. ♚d3+ ♔g8 14. ♚xc3.

13. ♚h5+!

Practice has shown that White can only count on success by attacking on the h-file.

Keres’s 13. ♚d3+ ♔g8 14. ♚xc3 allows Black to develop with 14... ♘c6 and pick up the e5-pawn with impunity. In the following examples he beats off White’s threats:

a) 15. 0-0 ♘dxе5 16. ♚ael ♘g6 17. ♚g3 e5 with advantage; Pochla-Schadurskis, corr. 1965.

b) 15. 0-0-0 ♘dxе5 16. h4 ♘g4 17. ♚g3 e5 18. ♚xd5 ♚e6 19. ♚d2 f5 (another good line is 19... ♚fd8 20. ♚hd1 ♚xd2 21. ♚xd2 ♚e8 22. c3 e4 -/+ F.Lanka-Gauens, corr. 1983) 20. gxf6 ♚xf6, and all Black’s pieces are in play; Zaidel-Schadurskis, Riga 1967.

Another possibility is 13. 0-0 ♘dxе5 14. ♚h5+, transposing. On the other hand after 14. ♚e2 ♘g6, with e6-e5 to follow, Black parries the threats to his king.

13... ♔g8 14. 0-0 ♘dxе5 15. ♚ael

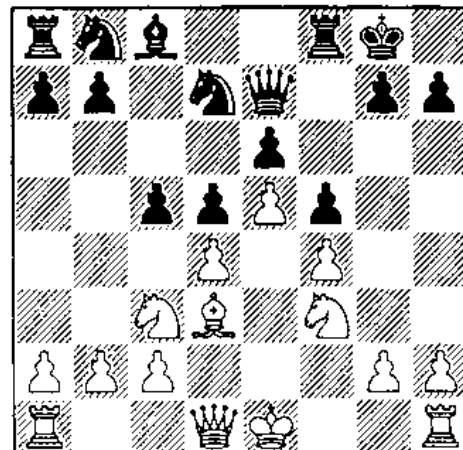
This rook heads for h3 with tempo. The other one is needed on the f-file, so White would be wasting time with 15. ♚f4?! ♘g6 16. ♚f3 e5 17. bxc3 ♘c6—when Black had the better chances in Durao-Heidenfeld, 1951.

15... ♘g6 16. ♚e3 e5 17. g4

This occurred in Bernard-Dermann, Dortmund 1989 (Illustrative Game 2); White has a powerful attack.

B

9...f5



Black shuts off the White bishop's diagonal to h7. In principle this line has no independent significance, since by capturing en passant White transposes to variation C. However, students of the Classical System will find it useful to acquaint themselves with Black's possibilities when White declines to take on f6. An important feature of the resulting position is Black's control of the e4 point, which his knight endeavours to reach; this balances the chances that White may acquire by occupying d6.

10.0-0

White may also delay castling and play 10.dxc5 ♖c6 11.♖d2 ♗xc5 12.♗e2 ♙d7 13.♗fd4 ♜ac8, when a complex, double-edged position arises; White's control of d4 is balanced by Black's control of e4. After 14.0-0 ♙e8 (aiming for h5) 15.♗xc6 bxc6 16.♖h1, Black can play 16...♗xd3 17.cxd3 c5 18.♜fc1 ♙b5 19.♜c3 d4 20.♜c2 ♖b7 21.♜ac1 ♖d5 with equal chances; Sliva-Stahlberg, Leipzig 1960. If instead 14.0-0-0, Black has 14...♗e4 or 14...♗xd3 15.♖xd3 ♗a5, intending 16...♗c4. A slightly more accurate line is 13.0-0-0 ♜ac8, but again Black appears to have adequate counter-chances. For instance on 14.♖b1 he has 14...♙e8 15.♗fd4 ♙h5, exchanging the "bad" bishop.

10...♗c6 11.dxc5

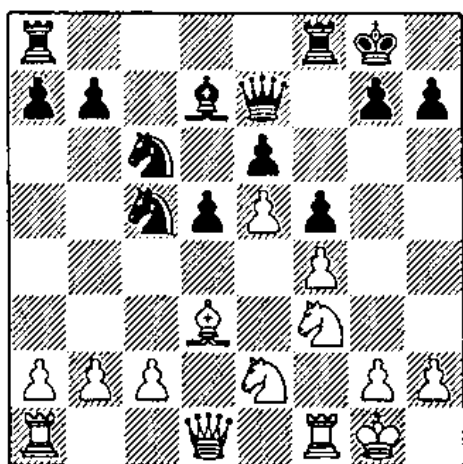
Best. White vacates d4 for a knight. He can't compel his opponent to exchange on this square. Other continuations allow Black a mounting queenside initiative, for example: 11.♖h1 a6 12.♖d2 b5 13.a3 ♜b8, and now after 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 15.♗e2 ♙d7 16.♗ed4 ♗e4 Black stands well; Aseev-Psakhis, Klaipeda 1988.

If White tries to penetrate to d6 with his knight, Black can work up counterplay by utilizing his opponent's temporary loss of control over the d4 point: 11.♗b5 a6! 12.♗d6 cxd4 13.♖d2 ♗c5 14.b4 ♗a4! (at this point 15...♗e4 is bad because of 15...♙xe4 dxe4 16.♗xd4, and Black is unable to post his bishop on c6: 16...♙d7 17.c4! ♗xd4 18.♖xd4 ♙c6 19.a4 and b4-b5 +/-) 15.♜fc1 b5 16.♙fl, and now in Volkovsky-Tsereteli, Severomorsk 1966, Black could have gained the advantage with 16...♖a7! followed by ♗a4-b2-c4.

11...♗xc5 12.♗e2

"Prodding" the black knight to go to e4 promises nothing good for White. For example, Zaitsev-Estrin, Moscow 1960, went 12.a3 h6 13.b4 ♗e4 14.♙xe4 dxe4 15.♗d4 ♗xd4 16.♖xd4 ♜d8 17.♖e3 b6 18.♜fd1 ♙a6! 19.b5 ♙b7 20.♗e2 ♜ac8 21.♜xd8+ ♖xd8 22.♖d4 ♙d5 23.♜d1? ♜xc2 24.♗c3 e3! 25.♗xd5 ♖xd5 0-1.

12...♙d7



13. ♖ed4

With the kingside blocked, White needs to play actively on the queenside to avoid losing the initiative. After the “clinical” 13.c3, Black can use his knight outpost on e4 as a basis for attacking with g7-g5:

a) 13...a6 14. ♖ed4 ♜ac8 15. ♙c2 ♖e4 16. ♜e2 ♜h8 17. ♜h1 ♖xd4 18. ♖xd4 g5 19. ♜e3 (19.g3 is more circumspect) 19...gxf4 20. ♜xf4 ♜g8 21. ♙d1 ♙b5! 22. ♖xb5 axb5 23. ♙e2 b4 with an obvious plus for Black; Bondarevsky-Liliental, Stockholm (izt) 1948.

b) 13...h6 14. ♖ed4 g5 15. ♙e2 ♖e4 16.g3 ♜f7 17. ♜h1 ♜g7 18. ♖d2 gxf4 19. ♖xe4 dxe4 20.gxf4 ♖xd4 21. ♜xd4 ♙c6 22. ♜e3 ♜d8 23. ♜ad1 ♜d3! and Black has a won position; Lyublinsky-Gusev, Moscow 1952.

13... ♙e8

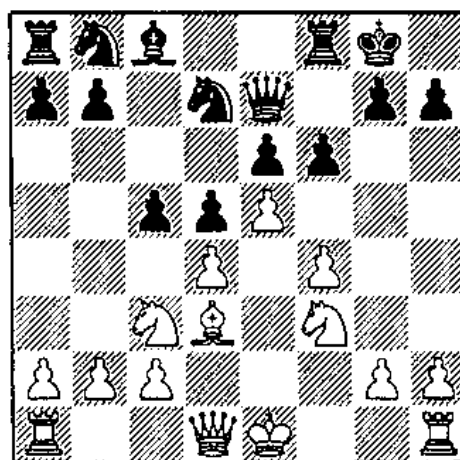
A stock manoeuvre in such positions. Black transfers his “bad” bishop to h5 with the aim of exchanging it for a knight. However, it is worth considering 13...h6

followed by g7-g5, attacking on the same lines as in the last note.

Now after 14. ♜d2 ♖e4 15. ♜e3 ♙h5 16.a3 ♙xf3 17. ♖xf3 a5 18.c4! White’s chances are slightly better; Plachetka-Bareev, Trnava 1989 (Illustrative Game 3).

C

9...f6



10.exf6

Not 10.0-0 fxe5 11. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 12.dxe5, because of 12...c4 13. ♙e2 ♖c6 14. ♜d2 ♜c5+ 15. ♜h1 ♙d7 and Black’s chances are to be preferred; Aseev-Orlov, Leningrad 1989.

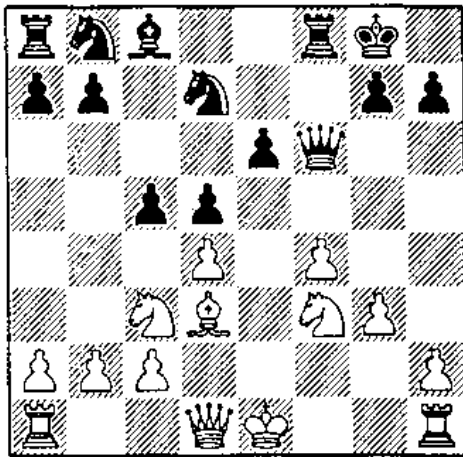
If 10.dxc5, Black can again play 10...fxe5 (10...♖c6 11.exf6 would transpose to the main line) 11.fxe5 ♖c6 12. ♜e2 ♖xc5 13.0-0-0 ♙d7 14. ♜b1 ♙e8, bringing about a situation that has scarcely been investigated. In Libens-Jurkovic, Cannes 1997, White played the unfortunate 15.h4?! and was in difficulties after 15...♖xd3 16.cxd3 ♙h5 17. ♜df1. It seems that 13.0-0 is preferable.

10... ♜xf6

Strange though it may seem, for a long time the theoretical manuals treated 10...♖xf6 as the main line. It was David Bronstein, renowned for his original ideas, who caused the confusion. As long ago as 1948 he maintained that the natural recapture with the queen was dangerous on account of 11.♘g5 g6 12.♗g4. But this is an illusion, as we shall presently see. On the other hand, after 10...♖xf6 11.♗d2 ♘c6 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.0-0 ♘xd3 14.cxd3! White has a small but secure advantage; Bronstein-Yanofsky, Stockholm (izt) 1948.

11.g3

Here 11.♘g5 calls for attention.



In recommending this move, Bronstein merely gives 11...g6 12.♗g4!, which he evaluates quite correctly; for instance after 12...c4 13.♗h4 h5 14.♙e2 ♘c6 15.0-0! the attack is very unpleasant for Black to meet.

However, Black has no need to go onto the defensive. He can counter-

attack at once with 11...♗xf4! 12.♙xh7+ ♔h8 13.♗h5 (if 13.♗d2?!, White obtains the better ending from 13...♗xd4 14.♗xd4 cxd4 15.♘b5 +/- as in Ravinsky-Orlov, Moscow 1964; but after the simple 13...♗xd2+ 14.♙xd2 ♖f2+ 15.♘e2 ♘f8! 16.♙d3 c4 the advantage is with Black, Kostakiev-Strelkov, corr. 1988) 13...♗f2+ 14.♙d1 ♘f6 15.♗h3 ♗xd4+ 16.♙d3+ ♙g8 17.♘xe6 (after 17.♖f1? e5! 18.♘e6 e4 Black is on top) 17...♗e5! 18.♙f5 g6 19.♗h6 ♙xe6 20.♗xg6+ with perpetual check (Stetsko).

11...♘c6 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.0-0

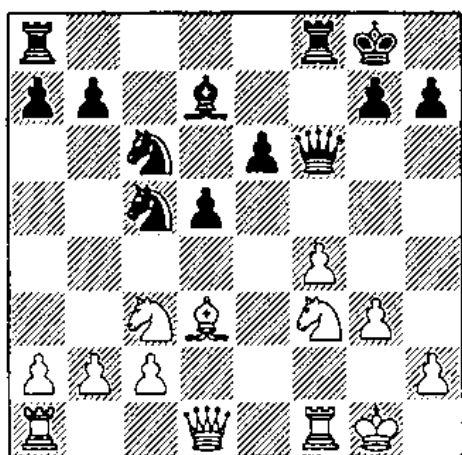
This move-order gives White the most options. On 13.♗d2, Alekhine recommended 13...♘xd3+ 14.cxd3 e5! 15.0-0 (or 15.♘d5 ♗d6 with full equality) 15...♙h3 16.♖fel ♖ae8, with a good game for Black.

In this line a more constructive idea for White is to play 14.♗xd3 and follow with queenside castling: 14...♙d7 15.0-0-0 ♙e8 16.♖hel, aiming to blockade the backward e-pawn. To escape from the pressure Black has to weaken White's hold on e5; this is accomplished by exchanging a white knight with 16...♙h5 17.♖d2 ♙xf3!. In Gufeld-Stetsko, Moscow 1975 (Illustrative Game 4), Black instead played the routine 17...♖ac8?. After 18.♘e5! ♘xe5 19.♖xe5 ♙g4 20.♗e3! his bishop manoeuvre to h5 turned out to have been a waste of time, and White acquired a large positional plus. Black made better use of his resources in Borkowski-

Lada, Polanica Zdroj 1992, which went 16...♔g6 17.♖e3 ♕h5 18.♞d2 ♕xf3! 19.♗xf3 ♞ac8 20.♗g4 ♜d4 21.♞e5 ♞c4, and Black organized counterplay on the queenside.

13...♔d7

The bishop would be passively placed if fianchettoed: 13...b6 14.♔b5! ♔b7 15.♞e1 (more accurate than 15.♔xc6 ♕xc6 16.♜e5 ♞ac8 17.♗d4, as in Am. Rodriguez-Drasko, Sochi 1988, when Black managed to transfer his bishop to g6 after 17...♔e8! 18.♞ad1 ♜d7 19.♞fe1 ♜xe5; even so, White could have retained somewhat the better chances with 20.♗xe5) 15...♞ad8 16.♔xc6 ♕xc6 17.♗d4! with the better game for White. In Ciocaltea-Joffe, Skopje 1969, Black tried the futile manoeuvre 17...♗f5, and after 18.♞e5 ♗xc2? 19.♞g5, he resigned.



A fundamental position for the line with kingside castling. Both sides have finished their development. White plans to occupy the central squares and blockade the

pawn-couple d5/e6. Black strives for active piece play and aims to free himself with e6-e5 if the opportunity arises.

14.♗d2

White's main continuation. On 14 ♗e2, Black has a more or less forcing manoeuvre: 14...♜d4 15.♜xd4 ♗xd4+ 16.♗f2 ♗b4 17.a3 ♗b6 18.b4 ♜xd3 19.cxd3 d4 20.♜e4 e5, and having liberated the "French" bishop, Black obtains good counterplay:

a) 21.♜c5 ♔h3 22.♞fe1 exf4 23.♗xd4 fxg3 24.hxg3 ♗g6, and Black's chances are preferable; Simagin-Lyublinsky, Sochi 1952.

b) 21.♜g5 ♗g6 (21...♗f6 is more precise) 22.♜f3! exf4?! (better 22...♞ae8) 23.♗xd4 ♔h3 24.♜e5 ♗h5 25.♗d5+ ♔h8 26.♞xf4 with the better prospects for White; Khachaturov-Stetsko, Moscow 1976.

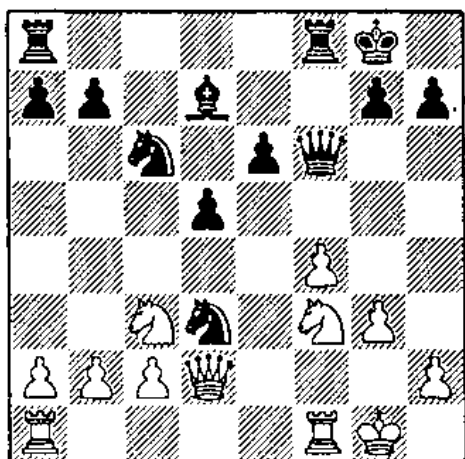
14...♜xd3

An important exchange that goes together with Black's next move. After 14...♔e8 15.♞ae1 it is too late for 15...♜xd3, since after 16 cxd3! White succeeds in blockading the backward pawn on e6 and acquires a solid positional plus. Here are some examples:

a) 15...♞d8 (with the idea of ♜c5-e4 at a suitable moment) 16.♜e5 ♜xe5 17.♞xe5 (stronger than 17.fxe5 ♗e7 18.♞xf8+ ♗xf8 19.♞f1 ♗e7 20.♗f4 ♔c6 21.♜e2 ♜xd3! 22.cxd3 d4!, with a good game for Black, Bangiev-

Kharlamov, corr. 1988) 17...♔f7?! (17...♞d7 18.♞e1 ♞c5 is more active, though even so White is better) 18.♞d1 ♞d7 19.♞e1 ♞d4+ 20.♞e3 ♞xe3+ 21.♞xe3 and White has attained his ideal—transition to an ending where his control of the key point e5 secures him a positional plus; Keres-Liliental, USSR (ch) 1949.

b) 15...♔g6 16.♔xg6 ♞xg6 17.♞e5 ♞xe5 18.♞xe5, and with his firm grip on e5 White's chances are better; Castillo-De Meyer, Tunja 1989.



15.exd3

One of White's key resources in various branches of the Classical System, helping him in his fight for the e5 point. On 15.♞xd3, Black brings his bishop to an active post with tempo: 15...♔e8 16.♞ae1 ♔g6 17.♞d2 ♞ac8 (or 17...♞ae8), with a fully viable game.

Now, however, after 15...♔e8 16.♞fe1 ♔g6 17.♞e5! the pawn-couple d5/e6 remains immobile and White obtains the advantage. (In

Capablanca-Reti, New York 1924, White played the weaker 17.♞b5?! and Black freed his bishop with 17...e5. See Illustrative Game 5.)

15...e5!

Cutting the Gordian knot—Black rids himself of the weak e6-pawn.

The first time this break was employed, in a game Starikov-Stetsko (Nikolaev 1960), White simply chose to clear up the position with 16.♞xe5 ♞xe5 17.fxe5 ♞xe5 18.d4 ♞h5; but after the inferior 19.♞e2?! (he should have settled for exchanges with 19.♞xf8+ ♞xf8 20.♞f1) 19...♔f5 20.♞f4 ♞h6! 21.♞ac1 ♔e4 22.♞d1, the game turned in Black's favour; Black could have gained the advantage after the bold 22...g5! 23.♞d3 (or 23.♞h5 ♞xh5 24.♞xh5 ♔f3) 23...♞xf1+ 24.♞xf1 ♞f8 25.♞e2.

Later analyses have shown that the matter is not quite so simple, but at this point we should note that the tactical justification for Black's central break is his queen sacrifice in the forcing line 16 ♞ae1 ♔h3 17.♞f2 d4 18.♞e4 ♞f5 19.♞xe5 ♞xe5 20.fxe5 ♞xe5 21.♞f6+ ♞xf6! 22.♞xf6 ♞xf6. With 23...♞af8 coming, White's queen will be tied to the defence of f1, and Black will be guaranteed a draw.

16.♞ae1!

This move, aiming to answer 16...exf4 with 17.♞xd5, looks very convincing; presumably for that reason, Black's 15...e5 was neglected

by analysts for a long time. After the straightforward 16. ♖xd5 ♕d6, Black wins his pawn back with a sound position.

Now there are two continuations:

C1 16... ♖h3

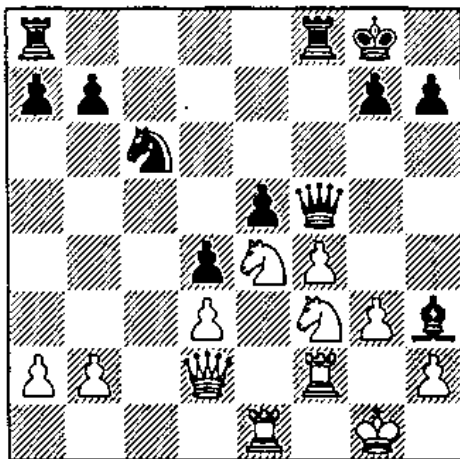
C2 16... exf4

C1

16... ♖h3

The whole idea of Black's e6-e5 break is bound up with this zwischenzug.

17. ♖f2 d4 18. ♖e4 ♕f5



A critical position, which has been the object of diligent investigations. White has:

C11 19. ♖xe5

C12 19. ♖fg5

C13 19. ♖h4

We should also note White's other possibilities of capturing on e5:

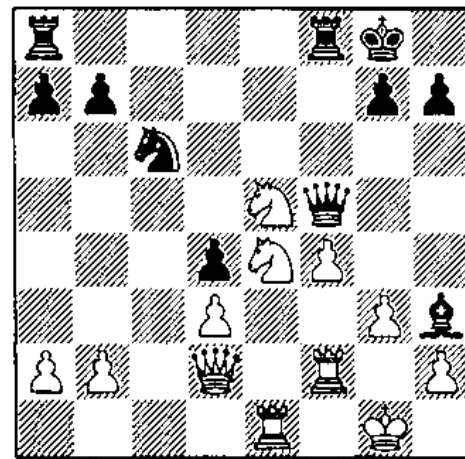
a) White can win a pawn with 19. fx e5 ♖xe5 20. ♖xd4. Then 20... ♕h5 is not bad, with plenty of activity by way of compensation;

but of course 20... ♕d7 21. ♕e3 ♖ad8 is also good.

b) On 19. ♖d6 ♕d7 20. fx e5, Black can play 20... ♖xe5 21. ♖xe5 ♕xd6 22. ♖e4 ♕d5 with a good game. Another possibility is 19... ♕f6 20. ♖e4 ♕f5.

C11

19. ♖xe5



19... ♖xe5 20. fx e5 ♕xe5
21. ♖xf8+

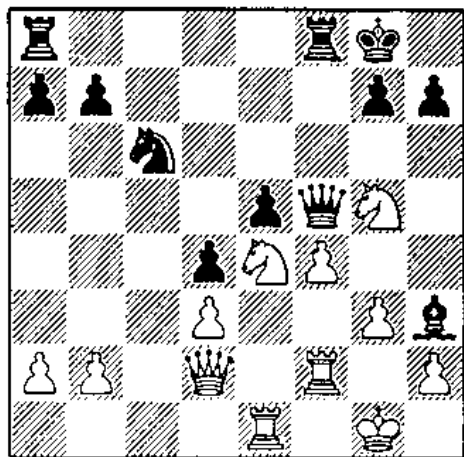
As we pointed out in the notes to 15... e5, this very line supplies the tactical justification of that move. Black need not fear the loss of his queen with 21. ♖f6+ ♕xf6! 22. ♖xf6 ♖xf6, since after the doubling of rooks on the f-file the white queen will be fettered to the defence of f1, guaranteeing Black a draw.

21... ♖xf8 22. ♖f2 ♕h5!

Black has equalized; De Firmian-Chernin, New York 1988. See Illustrative Game 6.

C12

19. ♖fg5



White tries to exploit the overloading of the black queen, which is tied to the defence of the bishop.

19... ♙g4

In A.Sokolov-Jurkovic, Belfort 1991, Black played 19... ♙g4 and ran into serious difficulties.

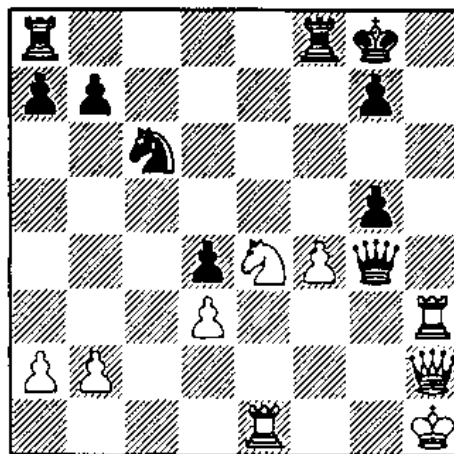
Sokolov recommends 19... ♗xf4 20. ♖xf4 ♗d7 21. ♖xh3 (stronger than 21. ♖c5 ♗d5) 21... ♙xh3 22. ♖ef1. White stands better, but Black has defensive resources after 22... ♗e6 23. a3 ♗e7.

20. h3 ♙xh3 21. ♖h2 ♗xf4
22. ♖xh3!

In the case of 22. ♖xh3 ♖e5! 23. ♖f1 ♗g4, Black exploits what is perhaps the only vulnerable spot in White's position: the f3 square. After 24. ♖xf4 ♖xf4 25. ♗xf4 ♖f3+ 26. ♖h1 ♖xh2 he reaches a materially unbalanced position in which his active rook can count on

holding its own against the knight pair.

22... h6 23. gxf4 ♖xg5 24. ♗h2!
♗g4+ 25. ♖h1



25... ♗xf4

The counter-attacking try 25... ♖xf4 26. ♖h8+ ♖f7 27. ♖xa8 ♗f3+ 28. ♗g2 ♗h5+ (on 28... ♖h4+ 29. ♖g1 ♖g4, White has 30. ♖xg5+) 29. ♖g1 ♖g4 fails to 30. ♖g3 ♗h4 31. ♗d5+ ♖g6 32. ♗f5+ ♖h6 33. ♖h8 mate (Am. Rodriguez).

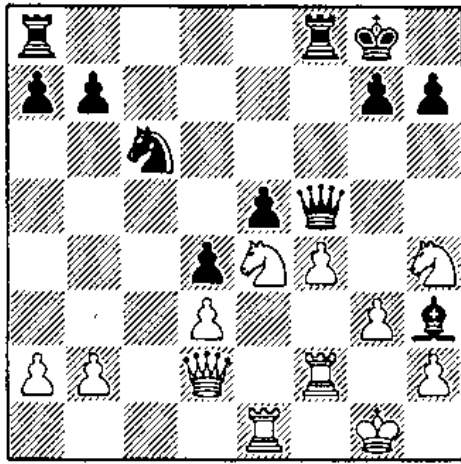
26. ♖h8+ ♖f7 27. ♖d6+ ♗xd6
28. ♗xd6

Black has inadequate compensation for the queen. See Am. Rodriguez-Stojanovic, Linares 1997 (Illustrative Game 7).

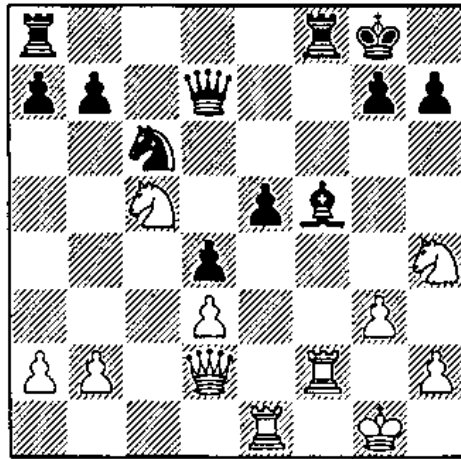
C13

19. ♖h4

With the help of a temporary pawn sacrifice White plans to exploit the e4 square and create lasting pressure against the backward e5-pawn.



19...Qd7 20.f5 Qxf5 21.Qc5



21...Qc8

After 21...Qd5? 22.Qxf5 Qxc5 23.Qg5, White works up a dangerous attack: 23...g6 24.Qc1! Qb4 (not 24...Qd5? 25.Qxc6!; objectively the strongest reply is 24...Qa5 25.Qcf1 Qd8 26.Qh6+ Qg7 27.Qf7+ Qxf7 28.Qxf7+ Qh8, though this too fails to save Black) 25.Qcf1 Qh8 26.a3 Qa5 27.Qd6 Qxf2 28.Qxf2 Qc7 29.Qf7+ 1-0 Sax-Jurkovic, Croatia 1996.

22.Qxf5 Qxf5 23.Qxf5 Qxf5 24.Qf1

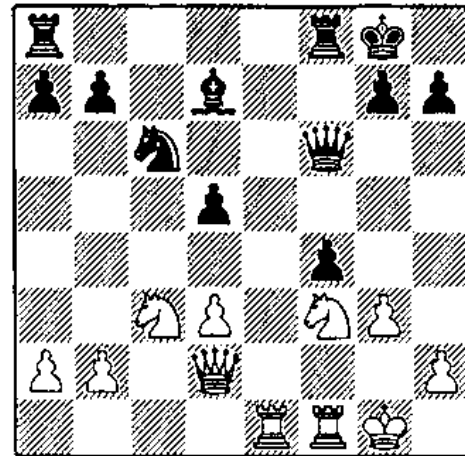
If 24.Qxb7, then 24...Qf8 is good, with a view to 25.Qc5?! e4! 26.Qxe4 Qe5. On 25.Qd6, Black has 25...Qe6 26.Qe4 Qxa2.

24...Qg6 25.Qxb7 Qf8 26.Qxf8+ Qxf8 26.Qc5

White has somewhat the better endgame, though the weakening of his kingside gives his opponent counter-chances (Stetsko).

C2

16...exf4



A pawn sacrifice for the sake of active piece play.

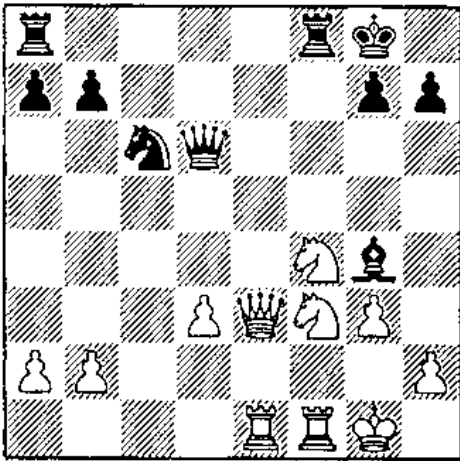
17.Qxd5 Qd6!

Stronger than 17...Qf7?! 18.Qxf4 Qxa2 19.d4 Qa5 20.Qxa5 Qxa5 21.Qe7, when White has clearly the better ending. See Am. Rodriguez-Chernin, Subotica (izt) 1987 (Illustrative Game 8).

18.Qxf4 Qg4!

Black not only has the immediate threat of 19...♙xf3 20.♖xf3 g5; above all, he exerts pressure on d4.

19.♚e3



19...♖ad8

Black pressurizes the d3-pawn and acquires the excellent blocking square in front of it, but it is rather early to be occupying that square. The exchange 19...♙xf3 is only justified after 20.♖xf3 ♗d4

21.♖f2 ♖ad8, when the knight on d4 cramps White (Mokry-Zuger, Geneva 1988); whereas after 20.♚xf3! ♚d4+ (20...g5 21.♚g4 would expose the black king without justification) 21.♖f2 ♖ad8 22.♗e4 ♚c5 23.♚e3 ♗d4 24.♙g2 ♚c6 25.h4 White succeeds in activating his pieces and Black's compensation for the pawn is insufficient; Brunner-Zuger, Prague 1989.

20.♖f2

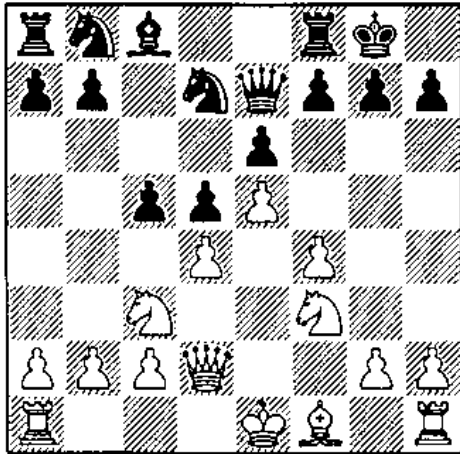
Or 20.♗g5 h6 21.♗e4 ♚b4 22.h3 ♙c8 23.♖f2 ♗d4 24.♗ef1 ♙f5, and the black pieces are all actively placed; Kovalevskaya-Ulybin, St Petersburg 1995.

20...h6! 21.h4 ♖f7 22.♗d2 ♚b4!
23.♗e4 ♗d4

The activity of Black's pieces fully compensates for the sacrificed pawn; Arnason-Bareev, Sochi 1988. See Illustrative Game 9.

3 White Plans Queenside Castling

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.♙xe7
♚xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♗f3 c5 9.♚d2



White prepares to castle queenside, after which the placing of his rooks on the central d- and e-files will fit in excellently with his strategy of exchanging away from the centre with his pawns. His light-squared bishop will be developed according to circumstances: either on g2, from where it attacks the d5-pawn, or on d3 with ideas like those examined in chapter 2.

9...♗c6

This is one of the fundamental positions in the Classical French.

White can maintain the pawn tension, or resolve it before doing anything else. We examine:

A 10.0-0-0

B 10.dxc5

At one time 10.g3 used to be played, but it was abandoned because of Black's active central counter-attack with 10...f6 11.exf6 ♗xf6! (11...♚xf6 12.0-0-0 would transpose to variation A3), and now:

a) 12.♙g2 cxd4 13.♗xd4 e5! 14.♗xd5 ♗xd5 15.♙xd5+ ♖h8 16.♗e2 (after 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♙xc6, White faces a dangerous attack: 17...♙g4! 18.♙xa8 exf4+ 19.♖f1 ♖xa8 20.♗e1 ♚b7 21.♖f2 fxg3+) 16...♙g4! 17.0-0-0 (the verdict is the same after 17.♙xc6 exf4! 18.0-0 ♙xe2 19.♗f2 fxg3 20.♗xe2 ♚c5+, or 18.0-0-0 bxc6 20.♗de1 ♗ad8 20.♗c3 ♚b4 21.♚f2 ♗b8) ♗ad8 18.c4 ♗b4 19.a3 ♗xd5 20.cxd5 ♙f3 with advantage to Black; Steiner-Stahlberg, Ujpest 1934.

b) 12.0-0-0 cxd4 13.♗xd4 e5! 14.fxe5 ♚xe5 15.♙g2 (better than 15.♙b5 ♙d7 16.♗f3 ♚h5 17.♗xd5 ♙g4 18.♙xc6 bxc6 19.♗f4 ♚f7 20.♚c3 ♚xa2 21.b3 ♗d5 22.♗xd5

...cxd5 23. ♖e5 ♙f5 24. ♖xd5 ♙xc2! with a plus for Black; Zaitsev-Gusev, Moscow 1963) 15... ♙g4 16. ♖f3 ♜h5 17. ♜df1 ♜ad8 18. h3 ♙xf3 19. ♙xf3 ♜e5 20. g4 d4 and Black has a good game.

A

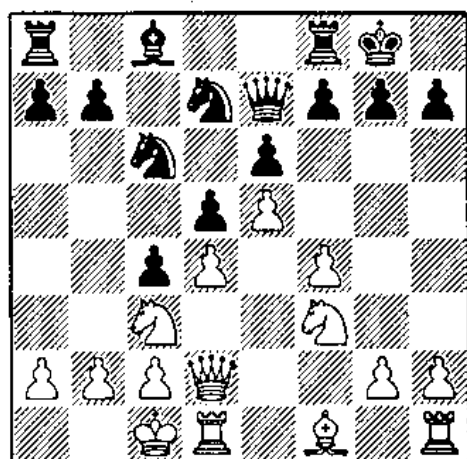
10.0-0-0

Now Black can relieve the tension (variations A1 and A2), or continue to "fight for the tempo". The choices are:

- A1 10...c4
- A2 10...cxd4
- A3 10...f6
- A4 10...♖b6
- A5 10...a6

A1

10...c4



This uncompromising pawn advance leads to extreme complications with attacks on opposite

wings. There has been little practical exploration of it. Black intends to push his b-pawn, hitting the white knight. However, he must bear in mind that in the race between pawn attacks, White's thrust with the f-pawn has better support from his pieces and may prove more significant. Therefore to avoid the risk of "suffocating", Black needs to counter his opponent's advance with a timely f7-f6. This motif is seen most strikingly, for example, in the Knezevic-Stamenkovic, Yugoslavia (ch) 1992, which went 11 f5 f6!, leading to rapid simplification: 12. fxe6 ♜xe6 13. ♙xc4 dxc4 14. d5 ♜f5 15. dxc6 ♖xe5 16. ♖xe5 ♜xe5 17. ♜he1 ♜c5.

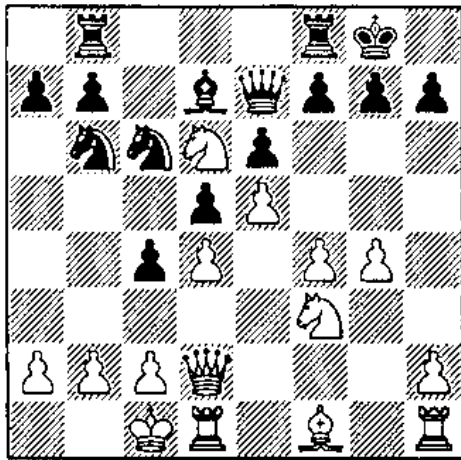
11.g4

On 11. ♖b5 Black can continue developing by 11... ♖b6 12. g4 ♙d7, since in reply to 13. ♖d6 he can offer his b-pawn with 13... f6 (or 13... ♖c8). Accepting the sacrifice would be risky, but after 14. ♙g2 fxe5 15. dxe5 c3! 16. bxc3 ♖a5 Black seizes the initiative and again has full compensation for the pawn; Ott-Hartlieb, Bad Woerishofen 1992.

11... ♜b8 12. ♖b5

A blocking and attacking move. The knight impedes the b-pawn and heads for d6. If instead 12. ♙h3 b5 13. f5 b4 14. ♖e2 b3, Black is ahead in the attacking race; Bezruchko-Stahlberg, Kemerli 1939.

12...♖b6 13.♘d6 ♔d7



14.c3

Once again 14.f5 is well answered by 14...f6! 15.♗f4 ♘c8, when Black has the better game after either 16.fxe6 ♘xd6 or 16.g5 fxg5 17.♘g5 ♘xd6 18.exd6 ♗f6.

The alternative 14.h4 transposes into Kapengut-Westerinen, Vilnius 1969, which continued 14...♘c8 (14...f6 is more thematic) 15.f5, and now, instead of the obligatory 15...f6! with good prospects, Black allowed the further advance of the f-pawn: 15...♘xd6? 16.f6! gxf6 17.exd6 ♗xd6 18.♗h6 ♗e7 19.g5 f5 20.h5, with a strong attack for White.

14...♘c8

The immediate 14...f6 is not bad either: 15.♔e2 ♘c8 16.♘xc8 ♖bxc8 17.♞df1 b5 18.exf6 ♞xf6 19.♘e5 b4 20.♙b1 ♞b8 with chances for both sides; Campora-Gomez Baillo, Buenos Aires 1990.

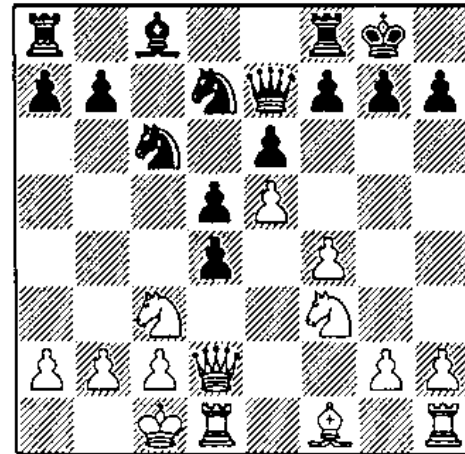
15.♘xc8 ♞fxc8 16.♗c2 f6 17.h4 b5

Black's attack is the more dangerous. See Gallagher-Crouch, Krumbach 1991 (Illustrative Game 10).

A2

10...cxd4

A logical intermediate exchange, allowing Black to choose between developing his knight on c5 or b6.



11.♘xd4

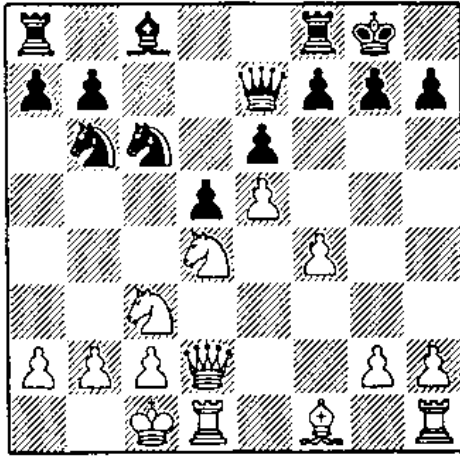
After 11.♘b5 f6 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.g3 ♘c5! 14.♘bxd4 ♘e4 15.♗e3 e5! the game is level.

11...♘b6

Putting pressure on the c4 point, Black seeks active counterplay.

After the queen exchange with 11...♘xd4 12.♗xd4 ♗c5, the dominant position of White's knight on d4 will secure him a sizable end-game plus.

11...f6 will transpose to A3.



12. ♖e3

Recently this manoeuvre has been standard in positions with this kind of pawn structure. The queen not only widens its sphere of dark-square control, it also protects the important e5 point, which is useful when Black breaks with f7-f6.

After the modest 12. ♖b1, Black can continue developing with 12... ♘d7 and needn't be afraid of a white knight intruding on d6. For example: 13. ♘cb5 a6 14. ♘d6 f6 15. ♖e3 fxe5 16. fxe5 ♖ab8 17. ♘d3 ♘c8 18. ♘xc8 ♖bxc8 19. c3 ♖h4 20. ♘f3 ♖f4 21. ♖e2 ♘e8 22. ♖hf1 ♘h5, and Black was equal in Arapovic-V.Kovacevic, Sarajevo 1988.

On the other hand White may well consider 12. ♘f3 ♘d7 13. ♘d3, with the idea of a kingside attack after 13... ♖ac8 14. ♘g5 h6 15. h4!. Bangiev-Stetsko, Liepaja 1971, continued 15... ♘a5 16. ♖h3 ♘ac4 17. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 18. ♖d3, and White retained somewhat the better chances. However, with 13...f6 14. exf6 ♖xf6 Black can transpose to variation A3.

12... ♘xd4

The pinning move 12... ♖c5?! can backfire, as it allows White to offer a queen exchange that would suit him, or to force the black queen to retreat: 13. h4 ♘d7 14. ♖h3 ♖ac8 15. ♖g3 ♘xd4 16. ♖xd4 ♖e7 17. h5 f5 18. exf6 ♖xf6 19. ♖g5 ♘c6 20. ♘d3 ♖ce8 21. ♘e2 ♘d7 22. ♖g3 e5 23. fxe5 ♖xe5?! 24. ♖xg7+! and White gained the advantage in Short-Gulko, Hastings 1988/89. Interpolating 12... ♘d7 13. ♖b1 makes no difference: 13... ♖c5 (better 13... ♘xd4 14. ♖xd4 ♖fc8) 14. h4 ♖ac8 15. ♖h3 ♘a5 16. ♘b3 ♖xe3 17. ♖xe3, and having brought about the desired simplification, White achieved the better ending in Larsen-Bareev, Hastings 1990/91; see Illustrative Game 11.

13. ♖xd4 ♘d7 14. ♖b1

If White straightforwardly plays to occupy d4 with his knight, Black has time to organize pressure along the c-file: 14. ♘d3 ♖fc8 15. ♘e2 ♘c4 16. ♘xc4 ♖xc4 17. ♖d2 ♖ac8. The game Nemet-Zuger, Suhr 1991, continued 18. ♘d4 ♖xc2+! 19. ♘xc2 ♘a4 20. b3 ♘xb3 21. axb3 ♖a3+ 22. ♖b1 ♖xb3+ 23. ♖c1 ♖a3+ with a draw.

14... ♖fc8 15. h4 ♘c4 16. ♘d3 a5 17. ♘e2 a4 18. a3 ♘a5

Preparing to exchange the "bad" bishop.

19. h5 ♖c5 20. ♖h3 ♘b5

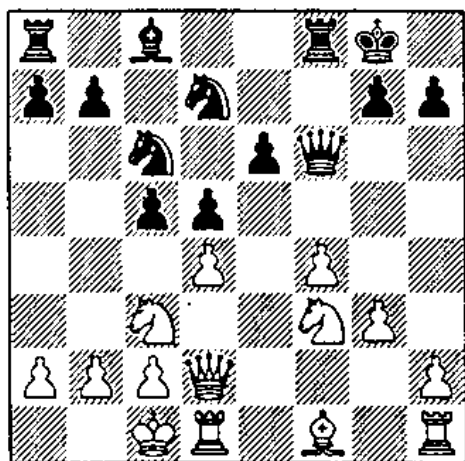
Black has equalized; Z.Varga-Zuger, Brno 1991.

A3

10...f6

The f7-f6 break is one of Black's chief resources in the Classical System, but in this position it is less effective. White develops his pieces according to a scheme suggested by Akiba Rubinstein.

11.exf6 ♖xf6 12.g3

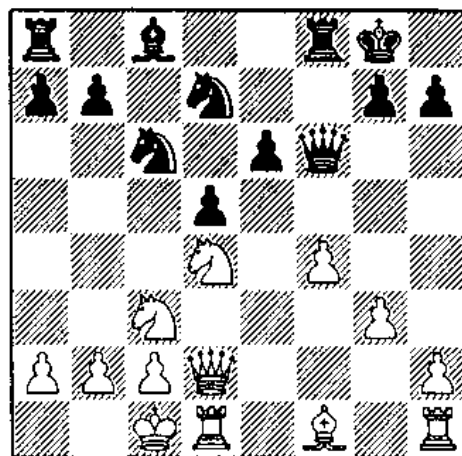


White plans to fianchetto his bishop with ♗f1-g2 and exert very strong pressure on the centre after ♖h1-e1. Black has to take energetic measures to avoid being left without counterplay.

12...cxd4!

The classic game Rubinstein-Levenfish, Carlsbad 1911 (Illustrative Game 12) continued 12...a6?! 13.♗g2 ♘b6 14.♖h1 ♘c4 15.♖f2 b5 16.dxc5 ♘xb2?! 17.♙xb2 b4 18.♘d4 with a clear plus for White. Afterwards Levenfish recommended 16...b4 17.♘a4 ♗d7 as best, with some counterplay for Black.

13.♘d4



13...♘b6

By attacking the c4-point Black stops White from fianchettoing his bishop. If instead 13...♘c5 14.♗g2 ♗d7 15.♖h1, White succeeds in carrying out Rubinstein's idea and obtains the better prospects. For example: 15...♖ac8 16.♘xc6! (stronger than 16.♘b3 ♘xb3+ 17.axb3 ♖fd8 18.♘b5 ♗e8, and after his bishop goes to g6 Black's counter-attack is highly unpleasant; Shahmaliev-Shagalovich, USSR 1953) 16...♖xc6? (it was essential to play 16...♗xc6 17.♖d4 +/-) 17.♗xd5! exd5 18.♘xd5 ♖h6 19.♘e7+ ♙h8 20.♘xc6 ♗xc6 21.♖a5, with a plus for White; Stahlberg-Keres, Kemerli 1937.

Exchanges here are anti-positional; after 13...♘d4 14.♖xd4 ♖xd4 15.♖xd4 ♘f6 16.♗g2, White has a solid plus in the ending. In Bologan-Volkov, Krasnodar 1997, White preferred 16.♘b1?! (aiming to bring the knight to e5), and Black managed to "trade in" his backward pawn on e6 for an isolated one on d5, considerably easing his

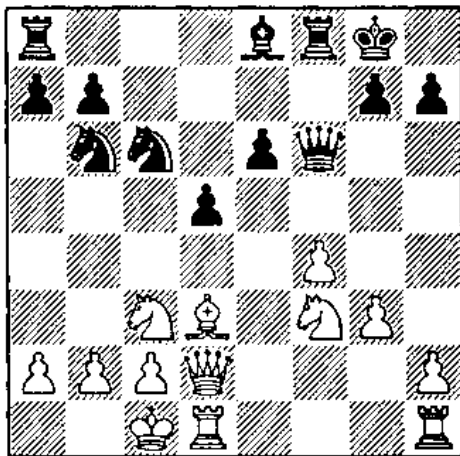
defensive task: 16...♖e8 17.♔g2 e5
18.fxe5 ♜xe5 19.♘c3 ♙e6 20.♞hd1
♞d8.

14.♘f3!

With this retreat White takes control of e5.

14...♙d7 15.♙d3 ♙e8

A game Gheorghiu-Mittelu, Romania 1964, went 15...♞ac8 16.♞he1 h6 17.h4, and White had the initiative.



16.♞he1

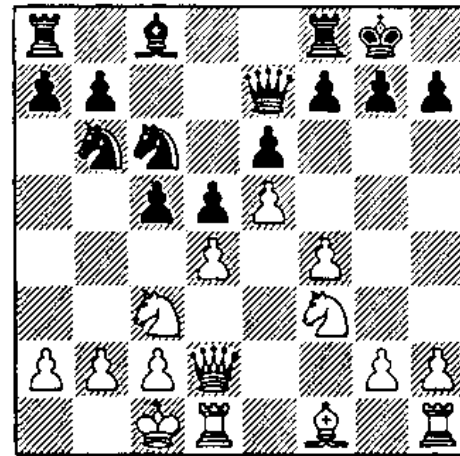
Tactics in the service of strategy! In answer to 16...♙h5, White has 17.♘g5! ♙xd1 18.♙xh7+ ♚h8 19.♞xe6 ♛d8 20.♛xd1 with a winning attack. The natural 16.♞de1, by contrast, would weaken White's central control and allow Black to free himself by 16...♙g6 17.♘e5 ♙xd3 18.cxd3 ♘xe5 19.♞xe5 ♘d7 20.♞ee1 e5! with excellent counterplay (Stetsko).

16...♙g6 17.♙xg6 ♛xg6 18.♘b5

Having gained control of d4 and e5 (restraining the pawn-couple d5/e6), White obtains the better game. See Klovans-Stetsko, Erevan 1980 (Illustrative Game 13). Black is practically forced to go over to passive defence with 18...♞ae8.

A4

10...♘b6



A logical move, initiating pressure against c4.

11.h4

White makes a useful waiting move.

11...♙d7 12.h5

On 12.♞h3, Black can play 12...♘xd4 13.♘xd4 cxd4 14.♘e2 f6 15.♘xd4 fxe5 16.fxe5 ♞ac8 with equal chances; Wade-Eliskases, Stockholm (izt) 1952. Alternatives worth considering are the immediate 12...f6, undermining the centre all according to plan, and also 12...♘a5.

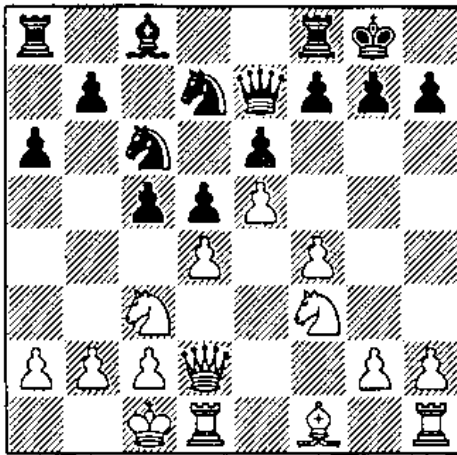
The exchange 12.dxc5 ♖xc5 leads to variation B23.

12...cxd4 13.♗xd4 ♗xd4
14.♖xd4 ♖ac8 15.♕d3 f6 16.h6 g6
17.exf6 ♖xf6 18.♖xf6 ♖xf6 19.g3
♗c4 20.♖de1.

In this ending White's chances are preferable; Gallagher-Zuger, Bern 1991.

A5

10...a6



Black continues the fight for the tempo.

11.dxc5

If White insists on maintaining the tension, Black will get in first with his queenside play, for example: 11.h4 b5 12.♖h3 f6 13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14.♖g3 ♗b6 15.♕d3 f5! 16.♗e2 b4 17.♗b1 a5 18.♗fd4 ♗xd4 20.♖e3 b3! and Black seizes the initiative; De Firmian-Dreev, New York 1989.

The capture on c5 is justified in the present situation because in a sense White has gained a development tempo: the resulting position resembles one that we shall examine

later (see variation B2), except that Black has played the "redundant" a7-a6 in place of ♗d7-b6. This difference benefits White.

11...♖xc5

For 11...♗xc5, see variation B1.

12.♕d3

Practice has also seen 12.♗b1 ♗b6 13.♕d3 ♕d7, and at this point the attack with 14.♕xh7+ is not dangerous: 14...♗xh7 15.♗g5+ ♗g8 16.♖d3 ♖fe8 17.♖h7+ ♗f8 18.♖h4 (or 18.♖h5 ♗e7 19.♗xf7 ♗a5 20.♗d6 ♗d8) 18...♖ec8, and Black frees an escape route for his king; Sieiro-Gonzalez-Paneque, Cuba (ch) 1989.

The prophylactic 12.♗e2 deserves attention, for instance: 12...b5 13.♗ed4 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 ♗b6 15.♕d3 ♗c4 16.♖e2 ♖a7 17.♖hf1 g6 18.♖f2 f6 19.♕xc4 bxc4 20.♗f3, and White's positional gains are obvious; Wedberg-Upmark, Stockholm, Rilton Cup 1995.

12...f6

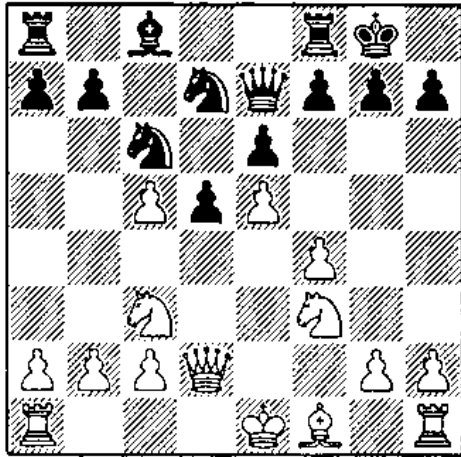
Here Black does need to take measures against the threatened capture on h7. The game Chandler-Agnos, London 1989, is instructive: 12...b5? 13.♕xh7+! ♗xh7 14.♗g5+ ♗g8 15.♖d3 ♖e8 16.♖h7+ ♗f8 17.♖h5! ♗d8 18.♗h7+ ♗g8 19.♖d3! ♖e7 20.♖h3 f6 21.♗xf6+! ♗xf6 22.exf6 1-0.

13.exf6 ♗xf6 14.♖he1

White is better, thanks to his control of e5 and d4.

B

10.dxc5



An important link in White's strategy. The exchange on c5 frees d4 for a knight, and is obviously the simplest way to approach the positional struggle for the dark squares.

The same plan is often initiated a move earlier, with 9.dxc5. Then the natural 9...Qc6 10.Wd2 simply transposes. Black usually makes the developing move with his knight automatically, leaving himself with the choice of recapturing on c5 with the d7-knight or the queen. The immediate 9...Wxc5 is dubious, since apart from 10.Wd2 White has 10.Wd4!, proposing to go into an advantageous ending. If 10...We7 11.0-0-0 Qc6 12.Wd2 f6 13.exf6 Wxf6 14.g3, White has an important extra tempo compared with some lines we are going to examine. The ending resulting from 10...Qc6 11.Wxc5 Qxc5 is also in his favour; for example after 12.a3 f6 13.exf6 Wxf6 14.g3 Qd7, White can take the offensive with 15.b4 Qe4 16.Qxe4 dxe4 17.Qg5 e5 18.Qc4+ Wh8

19.Qxe4, coming out with a material plus; Vera-Klinger, Havana 1986.

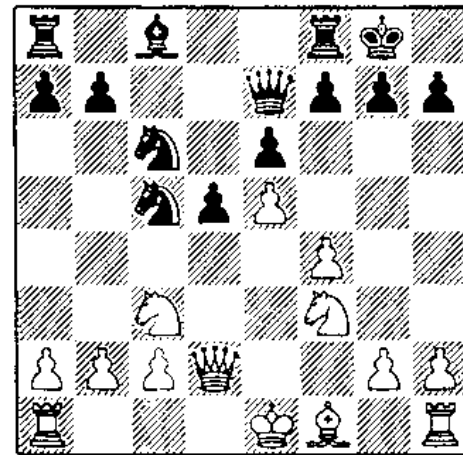
Now Black's principal choices are:

B1 10...Qxc5

B2 10...Wxc5

B1

10...Qxc5



Black activates his knight and counts on utilizing his queen on e7 to support the f7-f6 break. On the other hand it must be said that this plan has some positional snags. After the exchange on f6 Black is left with a largely immobile central pawn couple and the dark-square weaknesses (d4/e5) that go with it. If White succeeds in pressurizing the weak squares (especially e5) with his pieces, Black will not find it simple to create counterplay.

11.0-0-0

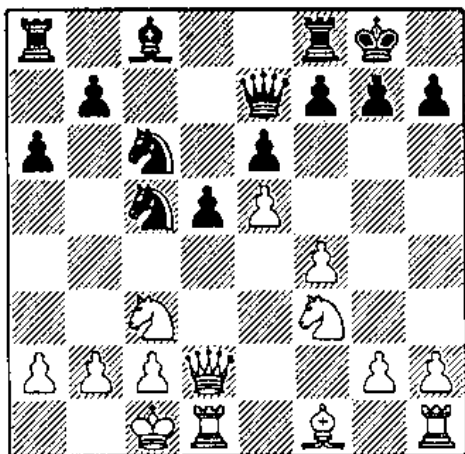
11.Qd3 can be answered by 11...f6 12.exf6 Wxf6; then 13.g3 leads to a position from chapter 2

The Classical French

(variation C, note to White's 13th move).

11...a6

The main continuation here, not only ruling out a knight excursion to d6 but also preparing to attack with the queenside pawns. However, the immediate break with 11...f6 is also quite in keeping with the position; after 12.exf6 ♖xf6 13.g3 ♜d8 (not yet 13...♙d7? because of 14.♘xd5! exd5 15.♖xd5+ ♗e6 16.♘g5! ♕h8 17.♖xd7 with a material advantage; Klovans-Landenbergue, Geneva 1992), Black will finish his development with 14...♙d7 and obtain adequate counterplay:



a) 14.♙d3 ♙d7 15.♞de1 ♙e8 16.♗e5 ♞ac8 17.♝b1 a6 18.♞hf1 b5 with double-edged play, Fridman-Bornchesser, Graz 1972.

b) 14.♘d4 ♙d7 15.♖e3 ♞ac8 16.h4 ♕h8 17.♘xc6 (17.♞h2 is worth considering) 17...♙xc6 18.♞d4 ♗e4! 19.♘xe4 de 20.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 21.♖xa7 e5 and Black's chances are no worse, Klovans-Nei, Tallinn 1979.

c) 14.♖e1 ♙d7 15.♙g2 (In Nezhmetdinov-Lein, Sochi 1965, White played the illogical 15.♙b5 ♞ac8 16.♙xc6 ♙xc6 17.♘d4 b5! 18.♖e5 b4 19.♘ce2 ♙e8, and Black had quite good counterplay) 15...♙e8 16.♖f2 b6 17.♘d4 ♘xd4 18.♖xd4 ♞ac8 19.♞he1 and White has the better position, Machulsky-Stetsko, Moscow 1981. Instead of the stereotyped 14...♙d7, Black should have considered 14...b6!? 15.♙g2 (on 15.♙d3 Black has 15...♘xd3+ 16.cxd3 d4 17.♗e4 ♖f5) 15...♙b7, followed by ♞ac8 and then, if appropriate, d5-d4 or ♘c5-e4.

If 11...♙d7, a good reply is 12.♖e3, planning f4-f5 and aiming to make Black recapture on f6 with his rook if he breaks with f7-f6.

After 11...a6, the following continuations have been tried:

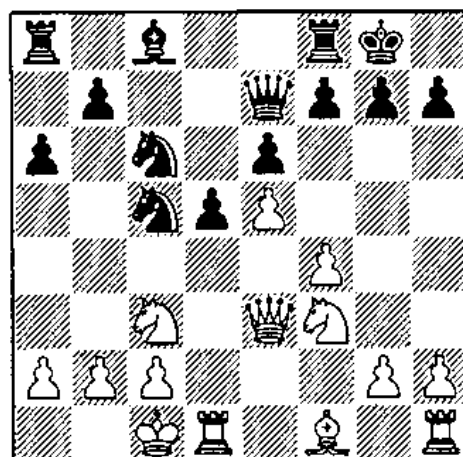
B11 12.♖e3

B12 12.♙d3

B13 12.♝b1

B11

12 ♖e3



The standard multi-purpose manoeuvre in this type of situation. White brings his queen to a convenient square where it over-protects e5 (à la Nimzowitsch), which is important in the variation 12...f6 13.exf6 ♖xf6 14.♔d3 and 15.♚he1; at the same time he forestalls 12...♔d7, which would be met by 13.♖xd5!

12...b5

A game Aseev-Bareev, USSR (zt) 1990, went 12...♔d8 13.♗e2 ♔d7 14.♗ed4 ♖ac8 15.♝b1 ♗a5 16.♔d3 (playing to win a piece with 16.b4?! would be risky: 16...♗a4 17.bxa5 ♗c3+ 18.♝c1 ♚a3+ 19.♝d2 ♗e4+ 20.♝e2 ♖c3 21.♔d3 ♖dc8 and White is hard put to complete his development while Black threatens to bring his bishop into the attack with ♔d7-a4; however, 16.g4!? looks promising: 16...♗a4 17.♚e1 ♗c4 18.♔xc4 dxc4 19.c3 b5 20.f5 b4 21.f6 gxf6 22.♚h4 —Bareev) 16...♗c4 17.♔xc4 dxc4 18.g4 ♗a4 19.c3 b5 20.f5 b4 21.f6 gxf6 22.exf6 ♚xf6, and now instead of 23.g5 ♚g7, which enabled Black to defend, White could have continued the attack with 23.♖hf1! threatening 24.♗e5.

13.♔d3

At the moment 13.f5?! is premature on account of 13...♚a7! 14.♗d4 (the threat was 14...♗b3+) 14...♗xd4 15.♚xd4 exf5 16.♗xd5

♔e6 17.♔e2 ♔xd5 18.♚xd5 ♗e4, and Black's position is preferable. See Labutin-Ulybin, Kstovo 1997 (Illustrative Game 14).

On 13.♝b1, Black drives the knight away from c3 and seizes the e4-point: 13...b4 14.♗e2 ♗e4 15.♗g3 ♚c5 16.♚xc5 ♗xc5 17.♔d3 a5 18.♚he1 ♔a6, and the problem of the bad "French" bishop is conveniently solved; Short-Korchnoi, Thessaloniki (ol) 1988.

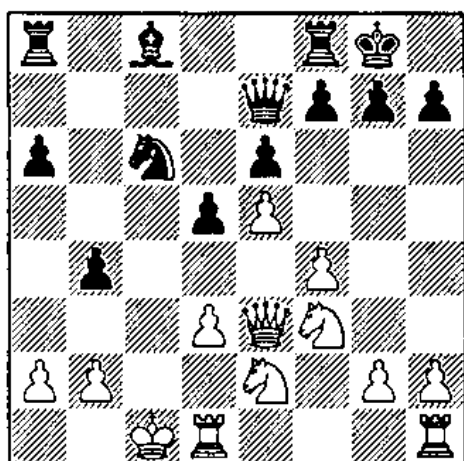
13...♗xd3+

Parrying the threat of 14.♔xh7+. Sometimes Black plays 13...f6 at once, though since his queen is tied to the defence of the knight on c5, he has to beware of the exchange on f6 and consequent weakening of e5. Khalifman-Stojanovic, Ubeda 1997, continued 14.♗e2 b4 15.♝b1 a5 16.exf6 ♖xf6 17.♖de1 ♚d6 18.♗e5 ♔a6 with about equal chances.

14.cxd3 b4

Black can also proceed on traditional lines with 14...f6 15.♖hf1 ♔d7 (when Black breaks with f7-f6 the bishop is best placed on this square, defending the e6-pawn) 16.♗e2 fxe5 17.♗xe5 ♗xe5 18.♚xe5 ♖f5 19.♚e3 ♖af8 20.♗d4 ♖5f7 21.♖f3 ♚d6 22.♖af1 a5 23.♚e5, Arnason-Dolmatov, Sochi 1988. White's chances are a little better here, but Black obviously maintains a defensible position.

15.♗e2



15...♔d7

The idea of 15...a5 16.♖b1 ♔a6 is illusory here, since the bishop is stymied by the d3-pawn while a white knight on d4 will dominate. An example is the quickplay game J.Polgar-Seirawan, Roquebrune 1992, which continued 17.♖c1 ♖fc8 (Black aims to exchange queens, but this does not suit the nature of the position; he should have considered 17...♖ac8 with a view to f7-f6) 18.♖hd1 ♗a7?! 19.♗xa7 ♘xa7 20.♘fd4 ♕f8 21.g4 ♕e7 22.f5 and White went over to the offensive.

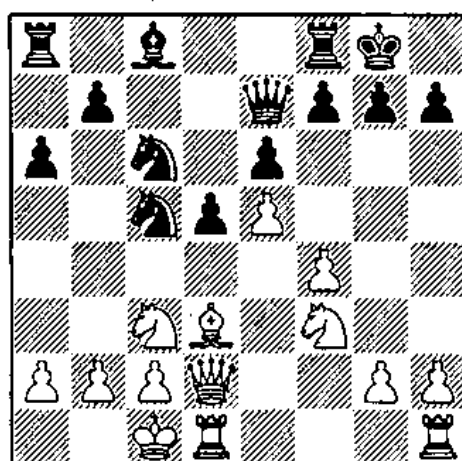
16.♖b1 f6 17.♘ed4

White's chances are slightly better; M.Popovic-Miljanic, Yugoslavia 1996.

B12

12.♔d3

White continues his development, aiming at the h7-pawn.



12...♔d7

After 12...b5 13.♖b1 ♘xd3! 14.cxd3 ♔d7 Black mobilizes his forces successfully: 15.♖c1 ♖ac8 16.♘e2 ♗b4 17.♗xb4 ♘xb4 18.♖hd1 ♖xc1+ 19.♘xc1 ♖c8, and an equal endgame arose in Lein-Glaser, Berlin 1993. However, White can play more energetically with 13.♗e3, transposing into variation B11.

If 12...f6 13.exf6 ♗xf6 14.g3 ♔d7, Black is an important tempo down on the analogous situation in chapter 2 (he has wasted a move on a7-a6). White can exploit this circumstance to simplify with 15.♘g5 ♘xd3+ 16.♗xd3 ♗f5 17.♗xf5 ♖xf5 18.♖he1 ♖e8 19.♘e4 ♖ff8 20.♘c5, maintaining a substantial endgame initiative; S.Polgar-Gulko, Aruba 1992.

13.♘e2

Here too White should consider the typical manoeuvre 13.♗e3!?, threatening a bishop sacrifice on h7. Black hardly has anything better

than 13...♞xd3+ 14.cxd3, after which White's position is superior. His knight will have a dominating post on d4, while Black is unable to utilize the c-file.

13...♞ac8 14.♞b1 ♞xd3 15.cxd3 f6 16.♞ed4

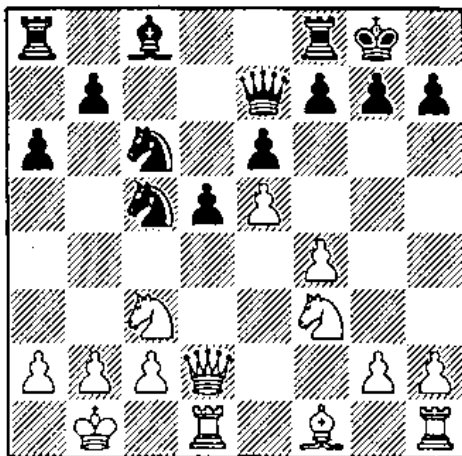
Black also equalizes easily after 16.exf6 ♞xf6, with exchanges on e5 coming.

16...♞xd4 17.♞xd4 fxe5 18.fxe5 ♞h4 19.♞f3 ♞g4 20.♞c1 ♞c6 21.♞g5 ♞xg5 22.♞xg5 ♞ce8

Black maintained the balance in Dolmatov-Barceev, Sochi 1988. See Illustrative Game 15.

B13

12.♞b1



A useful prophylactic move. Anticipating an exchange on d3, White immediately removes his king from the c-file which is going to be opened.

12...♞d7

Here 12...b5 looks more logical.

13.♞e3

Once again this multi-purpose move not only controls the important e5-point (in the event of 13...f6 14.exf6 ♞xf6 15.g3! White has a stable plus) but sets up the threat of f4-f5—which could be the reply to the routine 13...♞ac8.

13...♞fd8

Note that in some ways, strangely enough, Black is definitely inconvenienced by having his bishop on d7. Thus, if he tries to anticipate the advance of the white f-pawn by playing 13...b5 (with a view to 14.f5 ♞a4!), White has the tactical possibility of an exchange sacrifice for two pawns: 14.♞xd5!? exd5 15.♞xd5 and 16.♞xc5 (Dolmatov). Unfortunately this recommendation has yet to be tried in practice. In Degerman-Brynell, Swedish Championship 1991, White contented himself with 14.♞d3, which allows Black to organize the f7-f6 lever: 14...♞xd3 15.cxd3 f6 16.♞he1 b4 17.♞e2 fxe5 18.♞xe5 ♞xe5 19.♞xe5 ♞f5 20.♞e3 ♞d6, with approximate equality.

14.♞d3

At this point the consequences of 14.f5 exf5 15.♞xd5 ♞f8 16.♞b6 ♞e6 are unclear.

14...♞xd3 15.cxd3

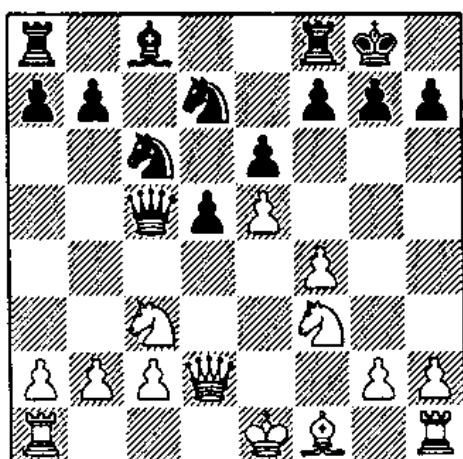
White should also consider 15.♖xd3.

15...f6 16.♘e2 fxe5 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5 18.♙xe5 ♙f6 19.♘d4 ♙xe5 20.fxe5 ♖f8 21.♖hf1

The ending is somewhat pleasanter for White, as his knight is stronger than the bishop; Dolmatov-Drasko, Sochi 1988.

B2

10...♙xc5



Black develops his queen actively, and is once again ready to organize an attack against White's castled position on the queenside. He needn't be afraid of a white knight coming to d6; its position will be shaky, thanks to the f7-f6 lever.

11.0-0-0

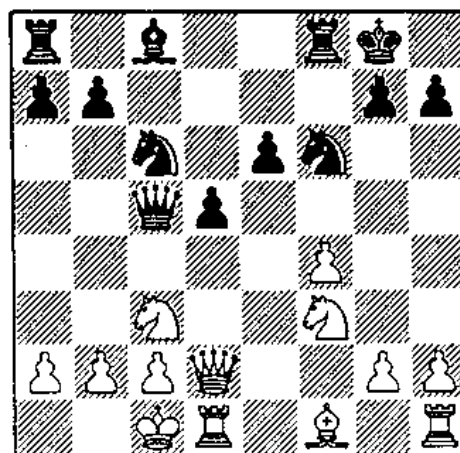
The most popular continuation. White also, incidentally, has 11.a3. Then a good answer to 11...♘b6 is 12.b4!, securing control of the important points d4 and c5. In Smyslov-Nikolenko, Cappelle la

Grande 1995, there followed: 12...♙e7 13.♙d3 ♙d7 14.0-0 ♖ac8 15.♘b5 f6 16.♙e3! (threatening to capture on a7) 16...♙d8 17.exf6 ♖xf6 18.♘d6 ♖b8 19.♘g5 g6 20.c4 and White acquired a plus. Black can avoid this turn of events by playing 11...f6.

11...♘b6

Black pursues a plan of pressurizing the queenside with his pieces. His knight will go to c4 or a4 according to circumstances.

Breaking with 11...f6 12.exf6 ♘xf6 looks tempting, but in that case the weakening of d4 and e5 is sorely felt.



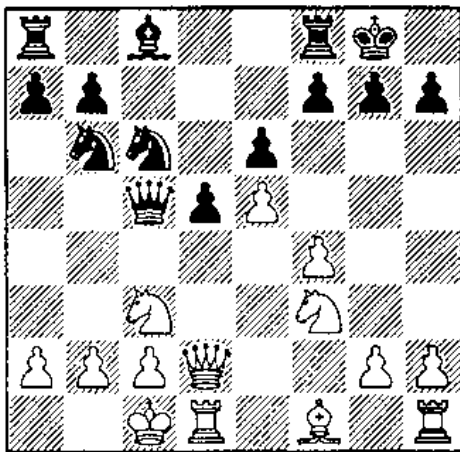
White's principal plans are:

a) 13.g3 ♙d7 14.♙g2 (recommended by Rubinstein; if White tries to attack the e6-pawn, as in Jagupov-Nikolenko, Czestochowa 1992, Black reacts with a queenside counter-offensive: 14.♙h3 b5 15.♙e2 b4 16.♘xd5 exd5 17.♙xd7 ♘xd7 18.♙e6+ ♖h8 19.♙xd7 ♖ad8

20. ♖h3 b3! 21. axb3 ♜e3+ 22. ♔d2 ♔d4 23. ♜h1, and now Black can force perpetual check with 23... ♔b3+!) 14... b5 15. ♔d4 b4 16. ♔ce2.

2) 13. ♖d3 ♖d7 (better than 13... ♜b8?! 14. ♜h1 b5 15. ♔e5 ♔xe5 16. ♜xe5 with some advantage to White, as in Kupreichik-Bareev, USSR Championship 1987, Illustrative Game 16; as Bareev points out, 15. ♔e2!, intending 16. ♜c3, was even stronger) 14. ♜h1 ♜ac8 15. ♖b1 a6 16. ♔e5 ♔xe5 17. ♜xe5 b5 18. h3 ♜b6 (avoiding 18... b4?! 19. ♔e4) 19. ♔e2 ♖e8 20. ♔d4 and White's chances should be preferred; V. Ivanov-Nikolenko, Moscow 1995.

3) 13. ♔d4!? ♜b8 14. g3 b5 15. ♔xc6 ♜xc6 16. ♖g2 b4 17. ♔e2, and White retains control of the important d4-point.



After 11... ♔b6, White has:

- B21 12. ♖d3
- B22 12. ♖b1
- B23 12. h4

B21

12. ♖d3

White blatantly threatens a king-side attack.

12... ♖d7

Black completes his development without being afraid of the bishop sacrifice on h7.

Instead, 12... ♔c4 would be premature: 13. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 14. ♖b1, and now after 14... f6 15. exf6 ♜xf6 16. g3 ♖d7 17. ♜h1 ♖e8 18. ♔e5 ♔xe5 19. ♜xe5 ♖g6 20. ♜d1 White is in firm possession of the initiative; Toth-Hoang, Budapest 1995.

After 12... ♖d7 White's main choice is between an attack with 13. ♖xh7+ and prophylaxis with 13. ♖b1 (intending 14. ♔b5):

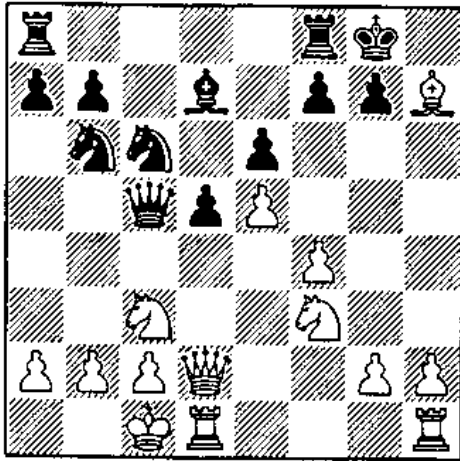
B211 13. ♖xh7+

B212 13. ♖b1

The immediate 13. ♔b5 is premature on account of 13... ♔c4 14. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 and the knight has to retreat. However, in Z. Polgar-Binham, Vienna 1991, Black tried to refute White's sortie by 13... ♔b4 14. ♔d6 ♔c8, and came under attack with 15. ♔g5! ♔xd6 16. ♖xh7+ ♖h8 17. exd6 g6 18. a3 ♔xc2 (18... ♔c6 19. ♜d3) 19. ♜xc2 ♜xd6 20. ♜c3+ f6 21. ♖b1 ♜xf4 22. ♖xg6 ♖g7 23. ♔h3 1-0.

B211

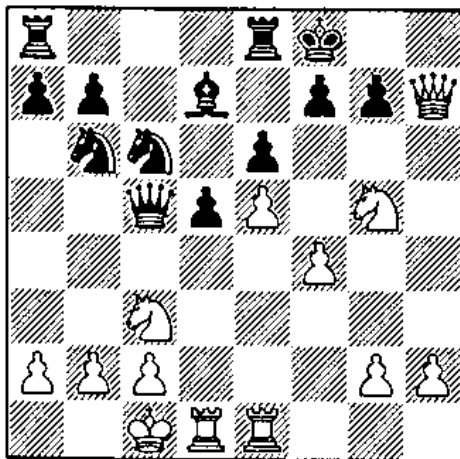
13. ♖xh7+



The thematic bishop sacrifice in such situations.

13...♔xh7 14.♘g5+ ♔g8 15.♚d3 ♜fe8 16.♚h7+ ♔f8 17.♞he1

White's attack looks impressive enough, but as we shall see, it isn't so simple to get to grips with the black king.



17...♘c4!

The game Van der Wiel-Korchnoi, Amsterdam 1991, in which this attack was tried out for the first time, went 17...♚b4 18.♚h8+ ♔e7 19.♚h4 ♔d8 20.♘xe6++ ♔c8 21.a3 ♚e7 22.♘g5! with a substantial

initiative for White. See Illustrative Game 17.

18.♚h8+ ♔e7 19.♚h4 ♞h8
20.♘h7+ f6

The retreat 20...♔e8? loses the exchange to 21.♘f6+ gxf6 22.♚xh8+; S.Polgar-Somlai, Budapest 1991.

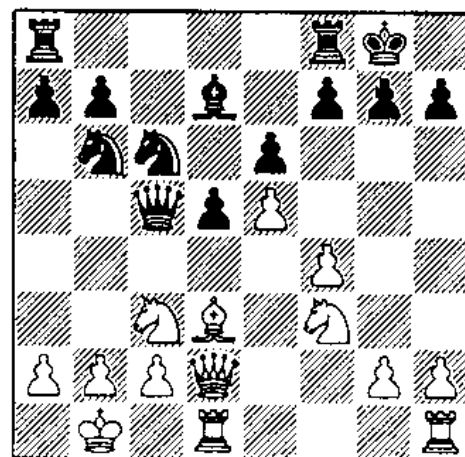
21.exf6+ ♔d8 22.fxg7+ ♔c7
23.gxh8=♚

This occurred in P.Nielsen-Ulybin, Mamaia 1991. White now decided to offer a draw, so as not to have to worry about his knight on h7 and about parrying the threats of 23...♚b4 or 23...♘xb2.

B212

13.♔b1

White threatens to impose a positional bind after 14.♘b5; Black threatens a counter-attack with his pieces on the queenside. Readers studying the variation should acquaint themselves with the resources for both sides.



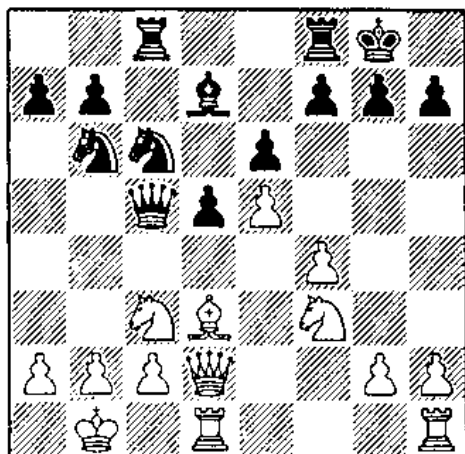
B2121 13...♖ac8

B2122 13...♘b4

B2123 13...♘a5

B2121

13...♖ac8



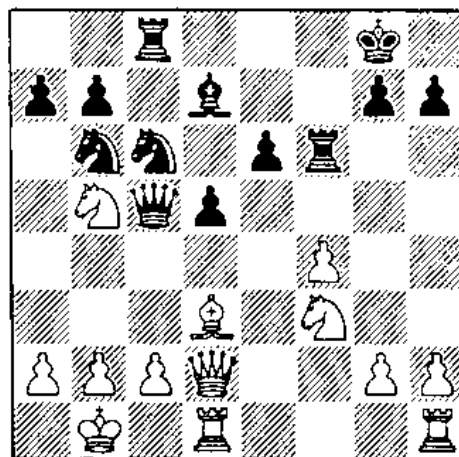
Practice has also seen 13...♖fc8, although this rook may be of use supporting the f7-f6 lever. After 14.♘b5 h6 15.♘d6 ♖c7 16.♘b5! a draw was agreed in Sax-Korchnoi, Rotterdam 1988. In the final position White is supposed to retain a plus, but since that game no one has tried to prove it. Meanwhile Black is threatening to strike out with his knights to b4 or c4.

14.♘b5

To illustrate what was meant in the last note, observe the attacking potential of the black pieces in Borriss-Ulybin, Oakham 1992: 14.h4?! ♘a5 15.♘d4?! ♘ac4 16.♙xc4 ♘xc4 17.♚d3 ♚b4 18.♘b3 a5 19.a3? ♘xa3+, and White came out a pawn down.

We should add that in this situation, once again, the bishop sacrifice gives insufficient attack. It was tried in Sax-Timman, Rotterdam 1989, which went: 14.♙xh7+ ♔xh7 15.♘g5+ ♔g8 16.♚d3 ♜fe8 17.♚h7+ ♔f8 18.♚h5 ♔e7! (the king needs to be evacuated, as 18...♘d8 is met by the unpleasant 19.♚h8+ ♔e7 20.♚h4) 19.♘xf7 ♘a5! 20.♘d6 ½-½. Timman considers that after 20...♔d8 21.f5! exf5 22.♘xe8 ♙xe8 White's chances are uncertain.

14...f6 15.exf6 ♜xf6



16.♘bd4!

Black was ready to go into action in the centre with 16...♜cf8 17.g3 e5!, or on the queenside with ♘b6-a4, ♚c5-b6 and a7-a6. White therefore needs to find the right sequence for taking the centre under control. The game Am. Rodriguez-Zuger, Aosta 1990, went 16.♚h1 ♘a4! 17.b3 (or 17.c3 ♚b6!) 17...a6! 18.bxa4 axb5 19.♙xb5 ♙e8 20.♚c1 ♙g6 21.♔b2, and now Black could

have maintained the balance with 21...♙e4 22.♘g5 ♙g6.

16...♘xd4 17.♘xd4 ♘a4

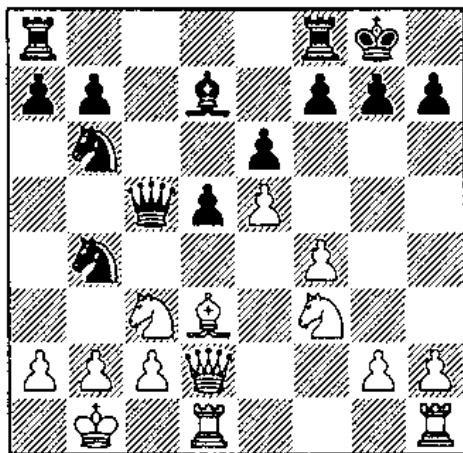
Or 17...♚d6 18.♞hf1 ♘c4 19.♙xc4 dxc4 20.♚e3 ♚b6 21.c3 ♙c6 22.g4 with an attack; Madl-M.Maric, Subotica 1991.

18.♘b3! ♚b6 19.♞he1 ♙b5 20.♙xb5 ♚xb5 21.♞e5

White has clamped down firmly on the pawn-couple d5/e6 and obtained the advantage. Specifically, he threatens to break with f4-f5; Z.Almasi-Sermek, Bukfurdo 1995.

B2122

13...♘b4



Black prevents the sortie ♘c3-b5 and attacks the active bishop.

14.a3

Again the bishop sacrifice falls short of its aim: 14.♙xh7+ ♚xh7 15.a3 ♘c4 16.♚e1 ♞fc8 17.♘g5+

♚g8 18.♘ge4 dxe4 19.♞xd7 ♘d5 20.♘d5 exd5 21.e6 fxe6 22.♚g3 ♚f8 and Black parried the threats while keeping the extra piece; Pineau-Zuger, Manila (ol) 1992.

14...a5! 15.♞hf1 ♞fc8 16.♚f2! ♘xd3 17.cxd3 ♚a4

The ending after 17...♚xf2 18.♞xf2 ♚a4 19.♞c1 ♘xc3+ 20.♞xc3 ♞xc3 21.bxc3 is pleasanter for White; Campora-Zuger, Berne 1992.

18.♘xa4 ♙xa4 19.♚xc5 ♞xc5 20.♞c1 b6! 21.♘d4 ♞ac8 22.b3

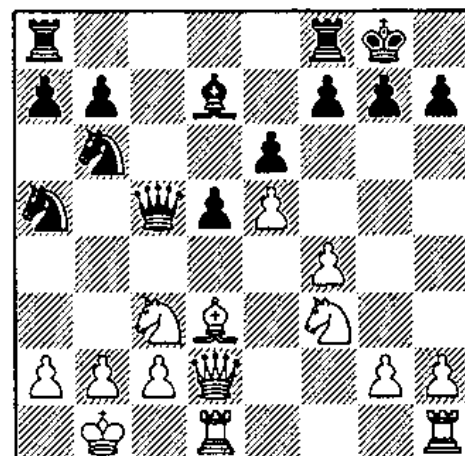
After 22.b4 axb4 23.axb4 ♞xc1+ 24.♞xc1 ♞xc1+ 25.♚xc1 ♙d7 Black has a secure position.

22...♙d7 23.♚b2 ♚f8 24.♞ce1 ♚e7 25.♞e3!

White has a small but persistent advantage, although breaking into Black's position is not simple. See Z.Almasi-Zuger, Illustrative Game 18.

B2123

13...♘a5



By threatening to jump in on c4 with a knight, Black provokes a weakening of the white king's cover.

14.b3

White tries to keep the knight out by radical means, but we shall see that this does not work.

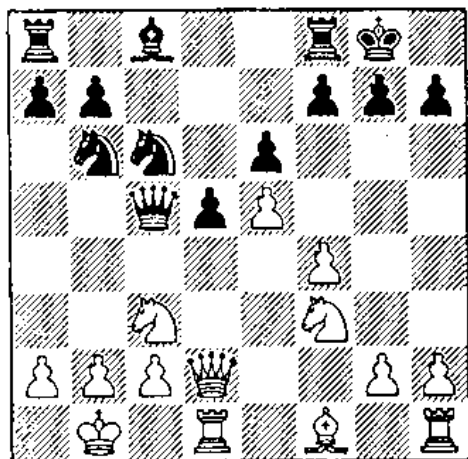
On 14.♖e2 Black has 14...a6 15.♘d4 ♖ac4 16.♙xc4 ♘xc4 17.♘b3 ♖c7 18.♞d3 a5, with the superior chances; Madl-Matveeva, Belgrade 1994.

The sacrificial attack 14.♙xh7+ ♕xh7 15.♘g5+ ♕g8 16.♖d3 is repulsed by 16...♞fc8 17.♖h7+ ♕f8 18.♖h8+ ♕e7 19.♖xg7 ♕d8 20.♘xf7+ ♕c7 21.♘d6 ♖ac4, when Black keeps the extra piece and goes over to the counter-attack; Tong Yuan Ming-Ulybin, Beijing 1996.

14...♞fc8 15.♘e2 ♖ac4 16.♖c3 ♘e3 17.♖xc5 ♞xc5 18.♞dg1 ♘g4 19.♞f1 ♘e3 20.♞fg1 ♘g4 21.♞f1 ½-½ Madl-Matveeva, Erevan (ol) 1996.

B22

12.♕b1



White makes a useful move that retains the possibility of capturing on c4 without loss of tempo.

12...♙d7

Practice has also seen 12...♘c4 13.♙xc4 ♖xc4 14.♘d4 ♙d7 15.b3 ♖c5 with about equal chances; Pasman-Korchnoi, Beer-Sheva 1984.

The classical method 12...f6 should also be considered. A game Lehmann-Jezek, corr. 1992/93, continued 13.exf6 ♞xf6 14.♙d3 ♘c4 15.♙xc4 ♖xc4 16.g3 ♙d7 17.♞h1 ♙e8 18.♘e5 ♘xe5 19.♞xe5 ♙g6 20.♘e2 ♞c8 21.♘d4 a5 22.♞c1 ♖a6! with chances for both sides.

13.♘b5

A purposeful move that gives White the choice of posting his knight on d6 or d4.

After the straightforward 13.♘d4, play may continue 13...♞ac8 14.♙e2 ♘xd4 15.♖xd4 ♖xd4 16.♞xd4, and in Korchnoi's view the ending offers too little scope to play for an advantage. In Wedberg-Korchnoi, Haninge 1988, Black declined the queen exchange: 15...♖a5 16.♞hf1 ♘c4 (the exchange sacrifice 16...♞xc3 17.♖xc3 ♖xc3 18.bxc3 ♖a4 is inadequate on account of 19.♞f3 ♞c8 20.c4) 17.♞f3 b5 18.♙xc4 ♞xc4 19.♖d2 b4 20.♘e2 ♞fc8 21.♘d4, and White's chances proved slightly better.

The attacking idea 13.h4 ♞ac8 14.h5 is too slow in view of Black's control of c4: 14...♖a5! 15.♖d4 ♖ac4 16.♖xc5 ♞xc5 17.h6 g6

18. ♖xc4 ♜xc4, and Black's resources include a queenside pawn storm as well as ♜f8-c8 with a threat to capture on b2; Magem Badals-Korchnoi, Barcelona 1992.

13... ♞a4!

Black puts his finger on the weakest point in White's structure—the b2-pawn. Of course 13... ♞xe5? 14. fxe5 ♖xb5 fails to 15. b4 winning a piece.

The routine 13... ♜ac8?! is well answered by 14. ♞d6! ♜c7 15. ♖b5 f6 16. ♖xc6! ♜xc6 (or 16... ♜xc6 17. ♞xb7 ♜e7 18. ♞a5 +/-) 17. ♞d4 ♜a4 18. ♜he1 and White firmly consolidates his knight on d6; Groszpeter-I. Almasi, Magyarorszag 1995.

After 13... f6 (Almasi's recommendation), White gains control of e5 and retains the better chances by 14. ♞bd4 fxe5 15. ♞xc6 bxc6 (15... e4 can be met by 16. ♞ce5 exf3 17. ♞xf3 +/-) 16. ♖e5, or 14. exf6 ♜xf6 15. ♞bd4 followed by an exchange on c6.

14. ♞bd4

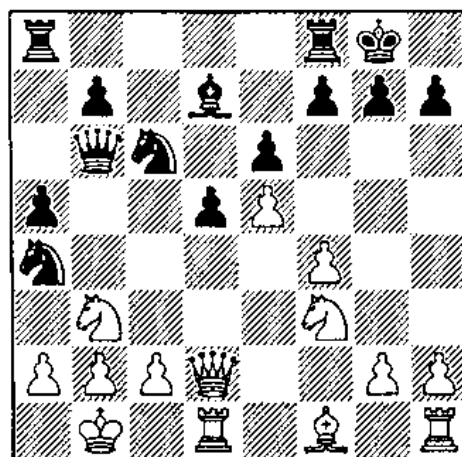
After 14. ♞d6 f6 White has to part with his e5-pawn. If, for example, 15. ♖d3, Black has an exchange sacrifice typical of this type of position: 15... fxe5 16. fxe5 ♜xf3 17. gxf3 ♞xe5. If instead 15. ♖b5, he has 15... ♞xe5 16. fxe5 ♖xb5. Hjartarson-Brynell, Rilton Cup 1996, went 15. ♖e2 fxe5 16. fxe5 ♞xe5 17. ♞xe5 ♜xd6 18. ♞xd7 ♜xd7 19. ♜he1 ♜d6 (it was worth

bringing his knight to the defence of the centre with 19... ♞b6, aiming to meet 20. c4 with 20... ♜c6) 20. ♖g4 ♜f6 21. c4 ♞b6 22. ♜d4! and White had enough compensation for the pawn. See Illustrative Game 19.

14... ♜b6 15. ♞b3

A more accurate line is 15. c3 ♞c5 16. ♖d3 f6 with chances for both sides.

15... a5



16. ♖d3

On 16. c3, which looks more natural, Black can begin active play in the centre: 16... f6! 17. exf6 ♜xf6 18. ♖d3 ♜af8 19. g3 e5! 20. ♞xe5 ♞xe5 21. fxe5 ♜f2 22. ♖e2 ♖g4 23. ♜he1 (not 23. ♜xd5+ ♖h8 24. ♖g4 ♜xb2+ 25. ♖c1 ♜e3+) 23... ♜xh2 24. ♜xd5+ ♖h8 25. ♖xg4 (25. ♜d2 ♜f2 26. ♜f1? ♜xf1+!) 25... ♜xb2+ 26. ♖c1 ♜f2, and Black's threats more than compensate for the piece sacrificed (Ulybin).

16...♖xb2! 17.♔xb2 a4
 18.♙xh7+ ♔xh7 19.♘g5+ ♔g8
 20.♚d3 ♜fe8 21.♚h7+ ♔f8 22.♘e4

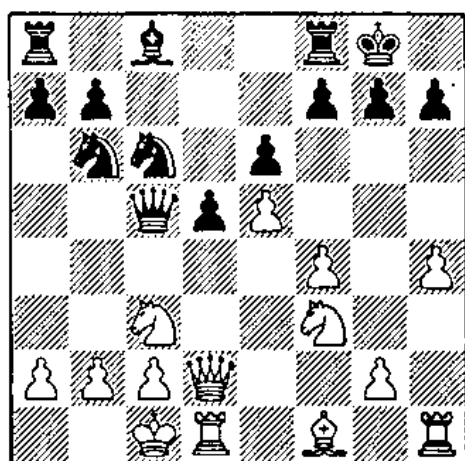
After 22.♚h8+ ♔e7 23.♚xg7 ♔d8 the king escapes from pursuit.

22...axb3

In the sharp struggle ahead Black's chances look preferable. See Illustrative Game 20: Lindberg-Ulybin, Rilton Cup 1996.

B23

12.h4



By pushing his h-pawn White tries to bring about a further weakening of Black's dark squares on the kingside. This takes time, however, and Black succeeds in working up play on the queenside.

12...♙d7

Black's chances lie in attacking the king. Note that with the knight on b6, the f7-f6 lever doesn't quite fit in with the position. Black will need to exchange this knight for the

white bishop, which means a loss of tempo compared with lines where the knight is on c5. Then, as the position simplifies, the weakness of d4 and e5 will be more palpable than usual. Thus, Kruppa-Ulybin, Minsk 1997, went 12...f6 13.exf6 ♜xf6 14.♙d3 ♙d7 15.♜he1 ♘c4 16.♙xc4 ♚xc4 17.g3 ♙e8 18.♘e5 ♘xe5 19.♜xe5 ♙g6 20.b3 ♚b4 21.♔b2 ♜c8 22.a3 ♚c5 23.♜c1 h6 24.♘e2 ♚f2 25.♚d4 ♚xd4+ 25.♘xd4 with the better endgame for White.

13.h5

The advance of this pawn will force the weakening move g7-g6, after which a knight will head towards f6.

After the slower 13.g4 ♜fc8 14.♜h3 ♘a5 15.♘d4 ♘ac4, Black is already creating serious threats. For example Carlier-Zuger, Budapest 1991, continued 16.♚f2? ♘xb2! and White came out a pawn down.

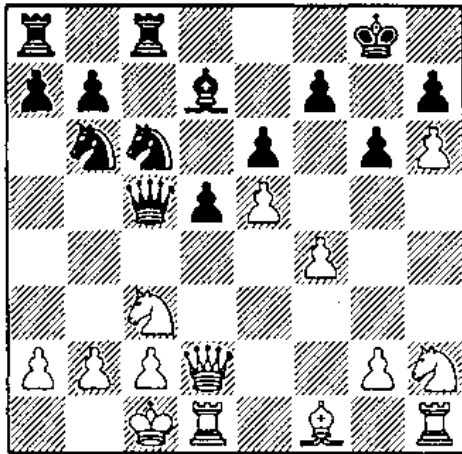
13...♜fc8

The alternative is 13...♜ac8 14.h6 (Ochoa-Ferrer, Spanish Championship 1991, went 14.♙d3 ♘b4 15.♔b1 ♘a4 16.♘xa4 ♙xa4 17.b3 ♘xd3 18.cxd3 ♚b6 19.♚b2 ♙b5 and Black invaded the weak c3-point) 14...g6 15.♘h2 ♘b4! (stronger than 15...♘a5 16.♘g4 ♘bc4 17.♙xc4 ♘c4 18.♚d4, which practically forces a queen exchange—since 18...♚b4? loses to 19.♘xd5! exd5 20.e6 1-0, Glek-Nikolenko, Moscow 1995) 16.a3 ♚a5!

17. axb4 ♖a1+ 18. ♘b1 ♙a4 19. ♙d3 (19. c3 is met by 19... ♙xd1 20. ♖xd1 ♜fd8, threatening d5-d4) 19... ♙b3 (on 19... ♘c4, White defends with 20. ♖c3! ♘e3 21. ♖a3) 20. ♖f2 ♘a4! 21. ♚d2 ½-½ Jakobetz-Frilli, corr. 1995/96. As Jakobetz shows, 21. ♖h4?! can be answered by 21... f6! 22. ♚d2 ♙xc2! 23. ♙xc2 ♜xc2+ 24. ♚xc2 ♖xb2+ 25. ♚d3 ♖xg2!.

14. h6 g6 15. ♘h2

The knight heads for f6. After the mechanical 15. ♜h3 ♘a5 16. ♖d4 ♖f8! (of course not 16... ♖xd4? 17. ♜xd4, and with ♘h2-g4-f6 coming, Black has a difficult ending) 17. ♚b1 ♘bc4, Black has adequate counterplay; Przewoznik-Welin, corr. 1990.



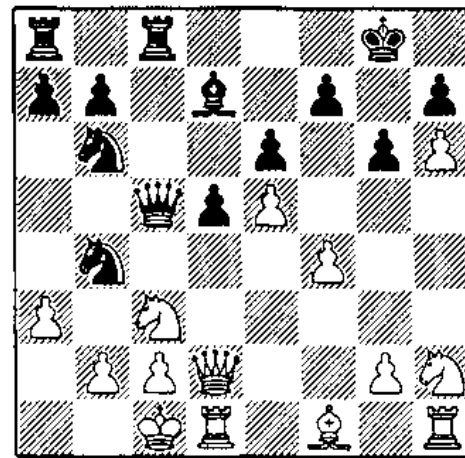
15... ♘b4!

This is more energetic than 15... ♘a5 16. ♖d4 ♖e7 (after a queen exchange Black is condemned to passive defence, as in Anka-Zuger, Budapest 1994, which

went: 16... ♖xd4 17. ♜xd4 ♜c7 18. ♘g4 ♜ac8 19. ♘f6+ ♚h8 20. ♜h3 with a spatial advantage) 17. ♘g4 ♜c7? (missing White's threat on the long diagonal; he had to drive the queen away with 17... ♘c6!, aiming for the counter-strokes ♘c6-b4 and ♘b6-a4) 18. ♘f6+ ♚h8 19. ♘fxd5! ♘xd5 20. ♘xd5 exd5 21. e6+ f6 22. exd7, and the position opened up to White's advantage in Z. Almasi-Zuger, Altensteig 1993.

Black is now threatening d5-d4, so White's reply is practically forced—since on 13. ♚b1 Black has the unpleasant 13... ♘a4.

16. a3



16... a5!

If White now accepts the piece sacrifice he faces a tremendous attack: 17. axb4 axb4 18. ♘b1 ♙a4 19. ♙d3 ♙xc2! 20. ♙xc2 b3 21. ♘c3 ♜a1+! 22. ♙b1 ♘c4 23. ♖d4 ♖a5, threatening 24... ♘xb2 (Zuger).

17. ♘g4 ♙a4! 18. ♙d3

Again 18.axb4 is unplayable:
18...axb4 19.♖xa4 ♜xa4 20.♗b1
♜a5. White is also defenceless after
18.♖xa4 ♜xc2+ 19.♜xc2 ♜xc2+
20.♗b1 ♖xa4.

18...♖c4!

The energy of Black's pieces is
simply astounding. Again White
can't take either of the pieces that
are en prise.

19.♙xc4 ♜xc4 20.♖f6+

On 20.♖xa4, Black wins with
20...♜a2!

20...♗h8 21.axb4 axb4
22.♖xa4?

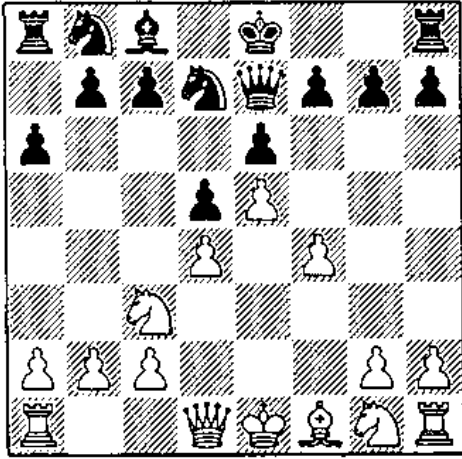
It was essential to play 22.♜h3.
Now White loses quickly.

22...♜xa4 23.♜d3 ♜xf4+ 24.♗b1
♜ca8 25.c4 ♜f2 26.♜d2 b3 0-1

Vogt-Zuger, Switzerland 1994.

4 The Variation 7...a6

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7
♚xe7 7.f4 a6



In the early days of the system, this line was rated on a par with 7...0-0; both moves often led to similar situations. Recently, however, Black has encountered certain problems with the "natural" scheme of development; hence 7...a6 has been re-evaluated. Today Black often conceals his plans and postpones castling until a more suitable moment.

8.♘f3 c5 9.dxc5

Compared with the variations examined earlier, White's choice here is more limited; 9.♙d3 is vir-

tually unplayable, since it commits him to sacrificing his b-pawn as in Lasker-Levenfish, Moscow 1925: 9...cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♚b4 11.♘de2 ♚xb2 12.0-0 ♚b6+ 13.♙h1 ♘c6. Since that game, the pawn sacrifice has been considered unsound.

White can, however, put off the exchange on c5 by playing 9.♚d2 ♘c6 10.0-0-0. We should note that in this situation, 10...c4 is ill-advised; after 11.f5, White's attack against the king in the centre is the more effective. For example: 11...b5 12.♙e1 b4 13.♘xd5 exd5 14.e6 ♙d8 15.exd7 ♚xd7 16.♘e5 ♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♙e8 18.♚xb4 ♙a7 19.♙xc4 ♙c7 20.♙xd5 ♚xf5 21.♙b3 ♙e6 22.♙hf1 ♚g5+ 23.♙b1 ♚xg2 24.♙d1+ ♙d7 25.♙xe6 1-0 Arsovic-Radosevic, Belgrade 1993.

9...♘c6

Here 9...♚xc5 is inferior, since with 10.♚d4! White can immediately invite an ending in which Black faces significant problems (10...♘c6 11.♚xc5 ♘xc5 12.♙d3 ♙e7 13.♙d2 etc.). The classic example is Konstantinopolsky-Liliental, Moscow 1936; see Illustrative Game 21. Demonstrating this game at a chess club, Emanuel Lasker predicted:

“Practical endgames are where the future lies.”

10. ♖d2

This is a characteristic position in the 7...a6 variation. The difference from the 7...0-0 line is that Black will later have to spend time bringing his king to safety, but for the moment he uses the tempo to make specific gains on the queenside. White, from his own point of view, can be said to acquire an extra tempo in the struggle for the important central squares.

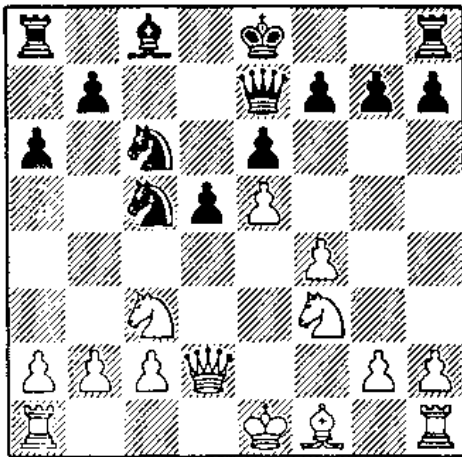
Black's main continuations here are:

A 10... ♗xc5

B 10... ♜xc5

A

10... ♗xc5



11.0-0-0

The most popular plan, but 11. ♗d3 is also sometimes seen. If then 11...0-0, White can switch

plans with 12.0-0!, since after 12...f6 13.exf6 ♜xf6 14.g3 ♗d7 he has an important tempo in hand for seizing control of e5. Stefansson-Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1995, continued 15. ♖a1 ♗e8 (or 15... ♖ac8 16. ♗e5+/-) 16. ♗e5 ♖c8 17. ♖f2 ♗xe5 18. ♖xe5 ♖c6 19. ♗f1 ♗d7 20. ♖e1 ♗b6 21. ♗d1 ♗g6 22. ♜b4 ♗e4 23. ♗e3 ♗c8 24. c4 ♜f7 25. ♗g4 ♜c7 26. ♗e5 ♖d6 27. c5, with a big positional plus.

White also should consider 12. ♜e3!?, threatening 13. ♗xh7+ and thus forcing Black to commit himself. Then 12... ♗xd3+ or 12...f6 will lead to familiar situations. An example is Ljubojevic-Seirawan, Reykjavik 1991, which went 12...f6 13.exf6 ♗xd3+ 14. ♜xd3 ♜xf6 15.g3 ♗d7 (15...h6 16.0-0-0 ♗d7 17. ♖he1 ♗e8 18. ♗e5 favours White) 16. ♗g5! ♜f5 17. ♜xf5 ♖xf5 18.0-0-0 (a position from S.Polgar-Gulko, Aruba 1992, has arisen, though with the other side to move; that game was examined under in chapter 3, variation B12) 18... ♖d8 19. ♗e2! (19. ♖he1 d4 =) 19... ♖f6 20.h4 ♗e8 21.h5 h6 22. ♗f3; White retains control of e5 and has the superior position. The play arising from 12...h6 13.0-0-0 b5 14.g4, with g4-g5 to follow, has yet to be investigated (Seirawan).

Black therefore does better to delay castling for the moment and play 11...b5 as in the main line. He can then meet 12.0-0 either with 12...b4 13. ♗e2 a5 followed by ♗c8-a6, or else by playing 12... ♗b7 13. ♖a1 b4 14. ♗e2 0-0 15. ♗ed4 ♗xd4 16. ♗xd4 ♗e4 17. ♜e3 f6!

with counterplay; Messing-V.Kovacevic, Croatia 1996.

11...b5

For 7...0-0, see chapter 3, variation B1.

12.♔d3

After the passive 12.♔b1 b4 13.♘e2 0-0 14.♘ed4 ♘xd4 15.♘xd4 a5 16.♞e3 ♔d7 17.♔d3 a4 Black easily develops counterplay; Collas-Caruso, Geneva 1996.

In the case of 12.♞e3 b4 13.♔e2 0-0 (Black can also carry on consistently with 13...a5) 14.♘ed4 (or 14.g4 ♔b7 15.♞g1 ♘e4 16.♘g3 f6 17.exf6 ♞xf6 with double-edged play; Rogers-Soffer, Biel 1990) 14...♘xd4 15.♘xd4 ♘e4 Black maintains equality; Palac-Stucl, Bled 1996.

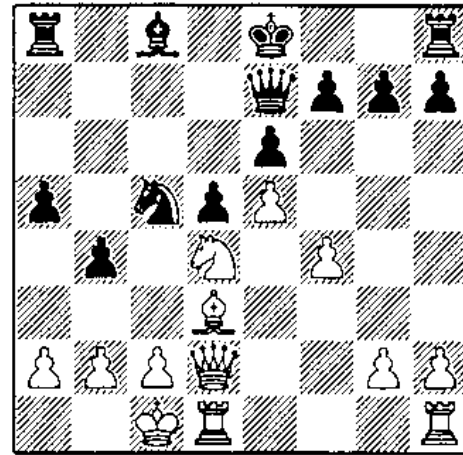
12...b4 13.♘e2 a5

For 13...0-0 14.♞e3, compare chapter 3, variation B11.

14.♘ed4

14.f5?! is premature on account of 14...♘xd3+ 15.♞xd3 (here White doesn't have 15.cxd3, a useful recapture in many cases) 15...♔a6 16.♞e3 ♔xe2 17.♞xe2 0-0, and Black's position is preferable owing to the weakness of the e5-pawn; Chandler-Seirawan, Reykjavik 1991. Also 14.♔b5 gives White nothing after 14...♔d7 followed by 0-0 and ♞f8-b8.

14...♘xd4 15.♘xd4



15...♔d7!?

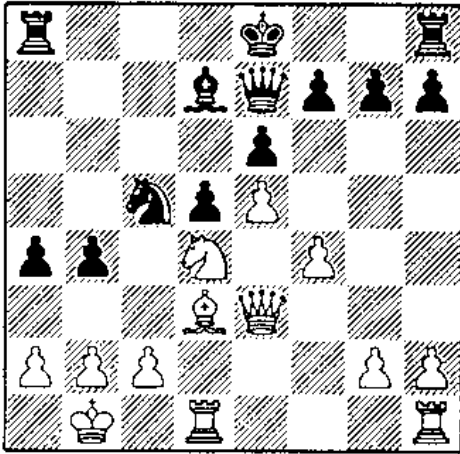
Assuming that White's attack will involve f4-f5, this bishop will be useful to defend the kingside, while the knight on c5 can take care of the white bishop on d3. If instead 15...♔a6 16.♔b1 (alternatively 16.♔xa6 ♞xa6 17.f5 with the initiative) 16...0-0 17.♞e3, White has everything ready for the attack while Black's counterplay lags behind:

a) 17...♞fc8 18.f5 a4 19.f6 and White's attack is quicker; Sideif-Zade-Shaboian, Kirovobad 1983.

b) 17...♞ac8 18.f5 ♔xd3 19.cxd3 exf5 20.♘xf5 ♞d7 21.♞hf1 and White exerts unpleasant pressure; J.Polgar-Filep, Hungary 1990.

Black should also consider 15...0-0 16.♔b1 ♔b7 17.♞he1 ♘e4 18.♞e3 a4 with a double-edged game; Brajovic-Miljanic, Cetinje 1996.

16.♔b1 a4 17.♞e3



17...0-0

Having made as much progress as possible on the queenside, Black can now castle.

18.♖he1 ♜fb8 19.f5

If White wastes time on 19.g4, Black's attack comes first. See Vujosevic-Miljanic, Tivot 1997 (Illustrative Game 22), which went 19...b3 20.cxb3 axb3, and now if 21.axb3 ♕e8 Black would continue the attack by bringing his queen to a7.

19...♗xd3 20.♕xd3

20.f6 proves inadequate after 20...gxf6 21.♖xd3 ♕h8.

20...exf5 21.♗xf5 ♕xf5

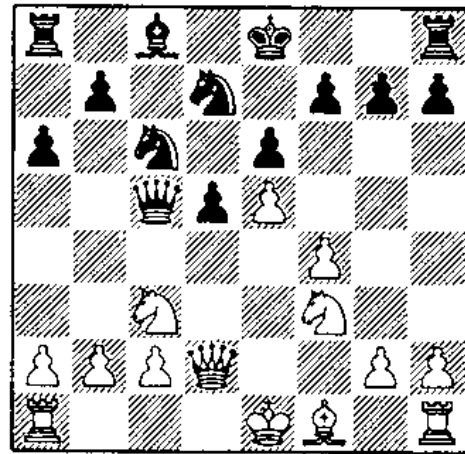
This is where the bishop on d7 comes in useful!

22.♕xf5 ♕e6

Black has maintained the balance.

B

10...♕xc5



In answer to this more active deployment of the queen, White's plans may be geared to the middle-game (with 11.0-0-0) or the ending (with 11.a3). Recently 11.♗d3 has also been seen. In all these variations, occupation of d4 by a white knight is characteristic. We consider:

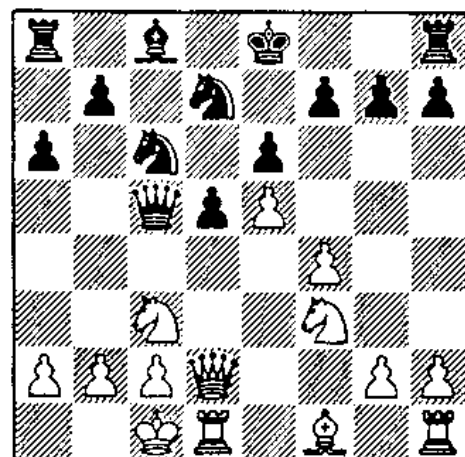
B1 11.0-0-0

B2 11.a3

B3 11.♗d3

B1

11.0-0-0



As in most lines where White exchanges on c5, the plan of queen-side castling is perfectly natural. White quickly occupies d4.

11...b5

After 11...♖b6 12.♔d3 ♔d7 13.♕b1 ♘a5 14.b3 ♚c8 15.♗e2 ♗c6 16.c3 Black's play comes to a dead end. For example, a game Kindermann-Franke, Germany 1988, continued 16...♚c7 (if 16...f6 at once, then 17.exf6 gxf6 18.♖c2) 17.g4 f6 18.exf6 gxf6 19.♗ed4 0-0 20.♚hg1 ♗xd4 21.cxd4 ♖c3 22.♗e2 ♚fc8 23.f5 and White's attack was quicker. An alternative that looks quite good is 12.h4 ♔d7 13.♚h3 ♚c8 14.♚g3 g6 15.♗g5 ♕f8 16.h5 h6 17.♗f3 gxh5 18.♚h3 ♘a5 19.♖d4 ♖xd4 20.♗xd4, reducing to a favourable ending; Borkowski-Moskalenko, Moscow 1991.

12.♗e2!

With this prophylactic knight retreat, White limits his opponent's options. On 12.♗d4, Black has 12...♔b7 13.♗ce2 b4 14.♗xc6 ♔xc6 15.♗d4 a5, and now the active continuation 16.f5 exf5 17.e6, as in Tatai-Schmittziel, Mitropa Cup 1995, led to the better ending for Black after 17...♗e5 18.♗xc6 ♖xc6 19.♖xd5 ♖xd5 20.♚xd5 f6.

Nor does 12.♔d3 fit in with White's set-up; it fails to prevent Black from organizing play on the queenside. For example: 12...♗b6 13.h4 b4 14.♗e2 ♔d7 15.♕b1 h6 16.♗g3 ♘a4 17.♕a1 ♗c3! and

White is forced onto the defensive; Savanovic-Raicevic, Niksic 1996.

12...b4

Black clears a diagonal for his "bad" bishop. If instead 12...0-0 13.♗ed4 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 ♗b6 15.♔d3 ♗c4 16.♖e2 ♚a7 17.♚hf1 g6 18.♖f2 f6 19.♔xc4 bxc4 20.♗f3, White's positional gains are obvious; Wedberg-Upmark, Stockholm 1995.

13.♗ed4 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 0-0

It is time to take care of the king, since on 14...a5 White could attack with 15.f5!?

15.♕b1

White can hardly do without this prophylactic move. After 15.♔e2 a5 16.♚he1 a4 17.♕b1 ♗b6 18.g4 ♔a6 19.f5 ♔xe2 20.♚xe2 ♗c4 21.♖g5 h6 22.♖f4 a3 Black has quite good counterplay; Knezevic-Miljanic, Yugoslav Championship 1992.

15...a5 16.h4 ♖b6

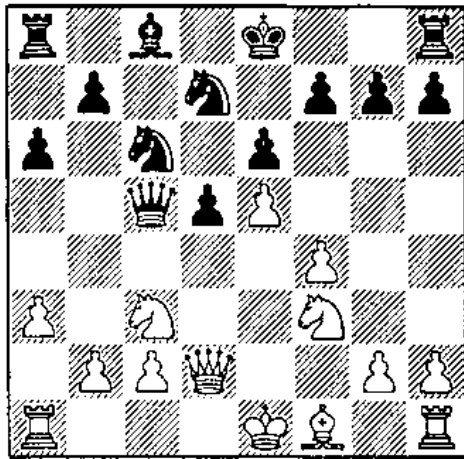
Delaying ♔c8-a6 until after ♔f1-d3, i.e. "fighting for the tempo". The black queen not only protects e6 in the event of 17.♚h3 f6! 18.exf6 ♗xf6, it also makes way for the knight to go to e4 after the anticipated bishop exchange.

17.♔d3 ♔a6 18.♖e3! ♔xd3 19.cxd3 b3 20.a3 ♚fc8 21.♚he1!

White stands better, as the centralization of his pieces allows him to control the game on both flanks. See Am. Rodriguez-Moskalenko, Holguin 1989 (Illustrative Game 23).

B2

11.a3



This was the basic plan in the early days of the variation. White refrains from queenside castling and intends ♖d2-f2 in order to exchange queens. To this end he deprives the black queen of the b4-square. Sometimes he initiates the same manoeuvre with 11.♔d3, but after 11...b5 12.a3 this merely amounts to a transposition.

11...b5 12.♔d3

Another line to have been played is 12.♜f2 ♔b7 13.♜xc5 ♘xc5, and if now 14.♞e2, a good answer is 14...f6! 15.♞ed4 ♘xd4 16.♞xd4 fxe5 17.fxe5 ♚e7 with a level endgame; Boleslavsky-Guimard, Groningen 1946. Instead, 14.0-0-0 ♚e7 15.♔d3 is considered more

accurate, but again after 15...♞ad8, with f7-f6 to follow, Black obtains adequate counterplay.

We should note that in the main line too, a timely break with f7-f6 will be an important factor in Black's counterplay.

12...♔b7

Here this unassuming move leads to difficulties; 12...b4 looks more resolute, preventing the following blow.

13.b4!

An important intermediate move, securing control of the d4 and c5 squares. After 13.♜f2 ♜c8 14.♞e2 ♜xf2+ 15.♚xf2, which occurred in Rauzer-Liliental, USSR (ch) 1937, Black could have kept on even terms with 15...f6!, instead of 15...♞c5?! 16.♞ed4 with the better ending for White.

13...♜b6 14.♜f2 ♜c8

Another stereotyped move. Black could have forestalled White's occupation of d4 with the bold 14...f6.

15.♞e2 ♜xf2+ 16.♚xf2 ♚e7
17.♞ed4 ♞b6

If now 17...f6, White has the choice between 18.♞he1 and 18.exf6+ gxf6 19.♞he1.

18.h4 ♞a4 19.h5 h6 20.f5 ♞c3
21.g4

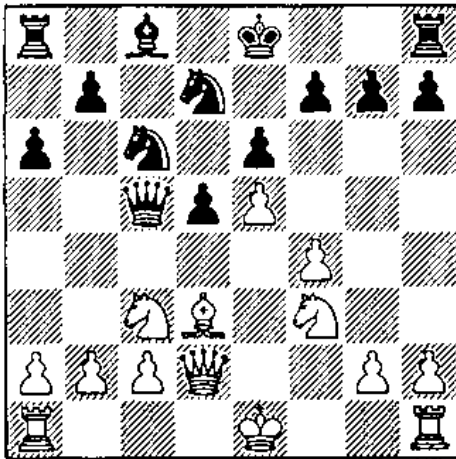
With his kingside attack, White is making quicker progress; King-Landenbergue, Lucerne 1989

19.♘d6 with an obvious advantage; Morovic-Alvarado, Las Palmas 1995.

B3

11.♙d3

12.♘e2



White pursues his development without committing his king for the moment.

If 12.♚f2, then apart from 12...♚b4, Black can continue developing with 12...♙b7. On 13.♚xc5 ♘xc5 14.♘e2, he has the resource 14...d4! 15.♘exd4 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 0-0-0 with excellent compensation for the pawn; Stalberg-Alekhine, Warsaw (ol) 1935.

12...♘b6 13.b3 ♙d7

The tempting 13...♘c4?! 14.bxc4 bxc4 comes up against the awkward retort 15.♚c3! ♚e3 16.♙xc4 ♚xc3+ 17.♘xc3 dxc4 18.♘e4 ♘b4 19.♘d6+ ♚e7 20.♘d4, and the White cavalry dominates the Black position; Prasad-Ravi, India 1988.

11...b5

On 11...♘b6 White has 12.a3, stopping ♘c6-b4 and not fearing 12...♘c4 in view of 13.♙xc4 ♚xc4 14.b3 ♚c5 15.♘a4 ♚e7 16.c4! dxc4 17.♘b6 ♚b8 18.♘xc4 0-0

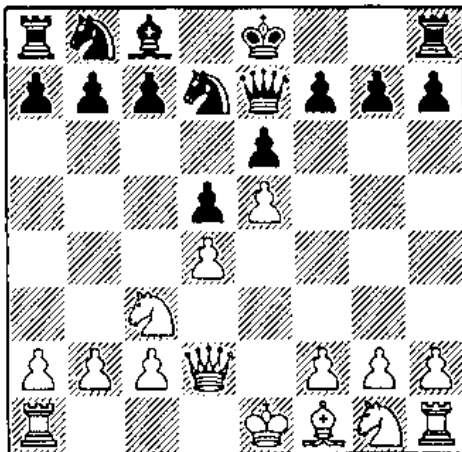
14.a3 f6 15.♘ed4 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 fxe5 17.fxe5 0-0

The chances are about equal; Tal-Lahav, Tel Aviv 1990.

5 Old Plans with 7.♔d2

In this chapter and the next, we shall examine lines in which White isn't concerned to clear away the pawns from the central squares. On the contrary, he seeks to fortify his pawn chain with c2-c3. In the early years of the Classical System, this was the standard strategy. The moves most suited to it were 7.♔d2 (followed by a move of the queen's knight) and 7.♞b5.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♞c3 ♞f6
4.♞g5 ♞e7 5.e5 ♞fd7 6.♞xe7
♔xe7 7.♔d2



This continuation acquires independent status if White combines it with the plan of supporting his pawn centre by c2-c3. Otherwise it can transpose into the main lines

examined above; Black has to take this into account in his choice of plans.

7...0-0

Castling leaves Black with more choice, but 7...a6 is also played, to rule out White's ♞c3-b5. For example, Walbrodt-Maroczy, Nuremberg 1896, continued 9.♞d1 c5 10.c3 ♞c6 11.♞f3 f6 12.♞e2 b5 13.0-0 ♞b6 14.b3 ♞d7 15.♞e3 c4 with a good game for Black. On the other hand 7...c5 is risky on account of 8.♞b5 0-0 9.♞c7 cxd4 10.♞xa8 ♞c6 11.0-0-0, and although Black will pick up the knight on a8 he will hardly obtain enough for the exchange.

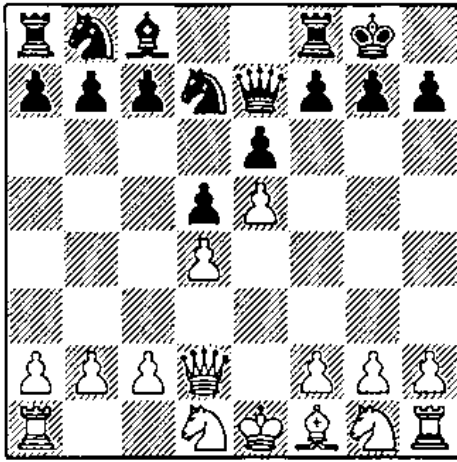
At this point two independent plans for White have been seen: he can prop up his pawn chain with c2-c3 after retreating with his knight, or try to achieve the same end by 8.f4 c5 9.♞b5 (when in some cases the knight establishes itself on d6). We consider:

A 8.♞d1 (or 8.♞ce2)

B 8.f4

A

8.♞d1



In the Classical System, retreating the knight to bolster the pawn chain with c2-c3 scarcely promises White any advantage, as it loses time and lets Black carry out the c7-c5 and f7-f6 levers with no difficulty. After White's other possible knight retreat, 8 Nce2 , Black's plan of action is much the same: 8...c5 9.c3 f6 10.f4 Nc6 11. Nf3 cxd4 12.cxd4 fxe5 13.fxe5 Nb6 14. Ng3 Qd7 or 14... Wb4 , with an easy game.

8...c5

8...f6 is also playable. Then 9.f4 c5 10.c3 transposes, while 9.exf6 Nxf6! 10. Qd3 Nc6 11. Nf3 e5! 12.dxe5 Nxe5 13. Nxe5 Wxe5+ gives Black an excellent game. See Lasker-Eliskases, Moscow 1936 (Illustrative Game 24).

9.c3 Nc6 10.f4 f6 11. Nf3 cxd4

This resolving of the tension is bound up with the exchange sacrifice in the next note. Other continuations are also possible, however. For example 11...fxe5 12.fxe5 c4 13. Qe2 b5 14. Nf2 a5 15. Qd1 Nb6

16. Qc2 Qd7 , and with b5-b4 coming, Black has the initiative on the queenside; Gottschall-Mason, Hamburg 1885.

12.cxd4 fxe5 13.dxe5

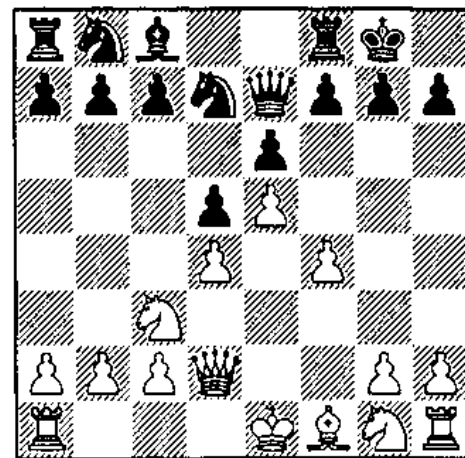
On 13.fxe5, Black can continue quietly by 13... Nb6 14. Qe2 Qd7 15.0-0 Qe8 16. Qd3 Qh5 with a good game; Mattison-Spielmann, Carlsbad 1929. However, an exchange sacrifice suggested by Tarasch is also playable: 13... Nxf3! 14.gxf3 Wxh4+ , and now Black is clearly on top after either 15. Nf2 Nxd4 or 15. Wf2 Nxd4 16. Wxh4 Nxf3+ 17. Qf2 Nhx4 18. Nc1 Nxe5 19. Nc7 Qd7 .

13... Wb4 14.g3 Nc5 15. Wxb4 Nxb4

The chances are equal; Thomas-Liliental, Budapest 1934.

B

8.f4



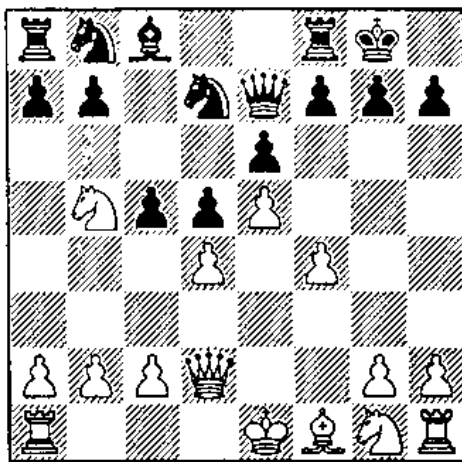
We now examine this move in conjunction with 8...c5 9. Nb5 .

Instead, 9. ♘f3 would transpose into the main lines considered earlier.

8...c5

It is also worth considering 8...f6, since if White continues 9. ♘f3 fxe5 10. fxe5 c5 11. ♘b5, the exchange sacrifice 11...cxd4!? gains in strength compared with the variations given below. Thus, 12. ♘c7 ♘c5! 13. ♘xa8 ♘e4 14. ♖xd4 (or 14. ♖a5 ♖xf3 15. gxf3 ♖h4+ 16. ♔d1 ♘f2+) 14...♘c6 15. ♖e3 ♖b4+ 16. c3 ♖xb2 17. ♖c1 d4! with an excellent game for Black (G.Orlov).

9. ♘b5



9...a6

White's knight excursion justifies itself in the case of 9...♘c6?! 10. c3

f6 11. ♘f3 (Wolf-Spielmann, Maehrish-Ostrau 1923), since Tarasch's idea (as in Variation A) no longer works: 11...fxe5 12. fxe5 a6 13. ♘d6 cxd4 14. cxd4 ♖xf3?! 15. gxf3 ♖h4+ 16. ♖f2! ♘xd4 17. ♖xh4 ♘xf3+ 18. ♔f2 ♘xh4 19. ♖c1 and the advantage is with White.

Similarly the exchange sacrifice with 9...cxd4 is not effective enough at this point: 10. ♘c7 ♘c5 11. ♘xa8 ♘e4! 12. ♖a5 (12. ♖xd4 can be met by 12...♘c6 13. ♖a4 ♖c5 14. 0-0-0 ♘f2) 12...♘c6 (in Rowley-G.Orlov, USA 1991, White obtained the better game after 12...♖h4+?! 13. g3 ♘xg3 14. hxg3 ♖xh1 15. ♘e2 ♘c6 16. ♖a3! ♖e4 17. 0-0-0) 13. ♖a3 ♖d8 14. ♘f3 ♘d7 15. ♘d3 ♖xa8 16. 0-0, and White's chances are superior (G.Orlov).

10. ♘d6 cxd4 11. ♘f3 ♘c6 12. ♘d3

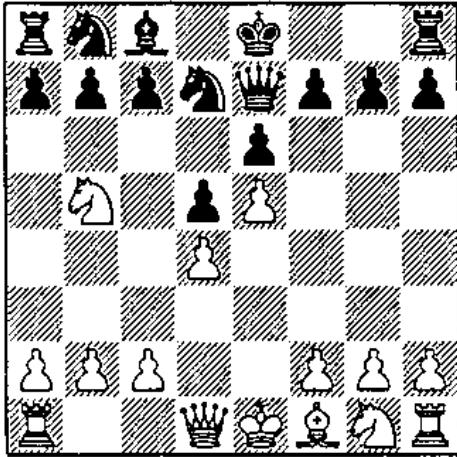
If 12. ♘xd4, there follows 12...♘dx5! 13. fxe5 ♖h4+ winning the knight back.

12...f6 13. 0-0 fxe5 14. fxe5 ♘dx5

Black has a clear plus; Asztalos-Spielmann, Bled 1931.

6 Alapin's Variation 7.♞b5

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7
♚xe7 7.♘b5



This knight sortie is named after Alapin who championed it at the end of the 19th century. It enables White to bolster his pawn chain with c2-c3. In doing so, however, he loses time and holds up the development of his pieces. This allows Black to undermine the centre in favourable circumstances and obtain good play.

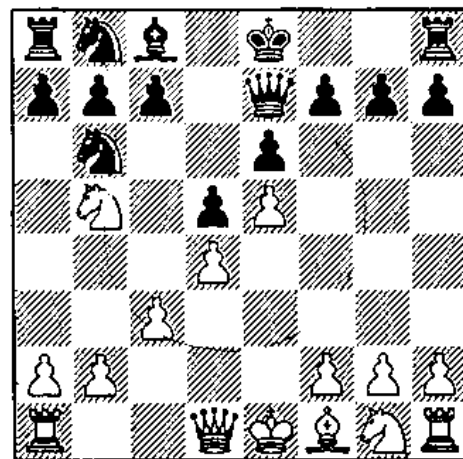
7...♘b6

After the passive 7...♚d8 8.c3 a6 9.♘a3 c5 10.f4, Black appears to have nothing better than going into

an ending with 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 ♚a5+ 12.♚d2 ♚xd2+ 13.♙xd2 ♘c6 14.♘f3, when White has the superior chances; Pazo-Pilnik, Buenos Aires 1942.

8.c3

Continuing according to plan. However, a flank attack that occurs in contemporary practice is also of interest: 8.a4 a6 9 a5 axb5 (Black should also consider 9...♘c4 10.♙xc4 dxc4 11.♘c3 0-0 12.♘f3 ♞d8 13.♘e4 b5 14.axb6 cxb6 15.♘d6 ♞xd6! 16.exd6 ♚xd6 17.0-0 ♙b7 18.♘d2 ♚d5 19.♚f3 ♚xf3 20.♘xf3 ♙xf3 21.gxf3 ♘c6 with sufficient compensation for the exchange; Aronian-Lempert, Erevan 1996) 10.axb6 ♞xa1 11.♚xa1.



In the old days the books considered Geza Maroczy's recommendation to be best: 11...0-0 12.bxc7 ♖xc7 13.♔d3 ♘c6 14.c3 b4, guaranteeing Black an equal game. Then the piece sacrifice 11...c6! was discovered. It occurred in Browne-Taha, Skopje Olympiad 1972; in that game the unknown player from Iraq defeated the experienced grandmaster. It is true that after 12.♖a8 0-0 13.♖xb8 ♖b4+, White could have repulsed the attack by 14.♔d1 (instead of 14.c3 as played) 14...♖xd4+ 15.♔c1 ♖xf2 16.♘f3 ♖xb6 17.♔d3! (Florian). However, with the improvement 12...♖b4+, as in Ljubojevic-Korchnoi, Belgrade 1987 (Illustrative Game 25), Taha's idea was rehabilitated: 13.c3 ♖xb2 14.♘e2 b4 15.♖xb8 0-0 16.cxb4 (the attempt to bring the queen to the defence with 16.♖d6 bxc3 17.f4 ♖d2+ 18.♔f2 is thwarted by 18...c5! 19.♖xc5 c2 20.g3 ♔d7, and Black's reserves join in the attack) 16...♖xb4+ 17.♔d1 c5 (Browne-Taha went 17...♖b3+ 18.♔d2 ♖b4+, whereupon White risked 19.♔d3? and faced an irresistible attack after 19...c5 20.♖c7 c4+ 21.♔e3 ♖b3+ 22.♔f4 ♖d3) 18.♖c7 ♖a4+ 19.♔d2 ♔d7 20.♔e3 ♖c8 21.♖xb7 cxd4+ 22.♘xd4 ♖c3+ 23.♔d3 g5, and it is White who has to think about saving himself.

8...a6 9.♘a3

The knight is driven back to a passive position, and Black has two continuations which practically force White onto the defensive:

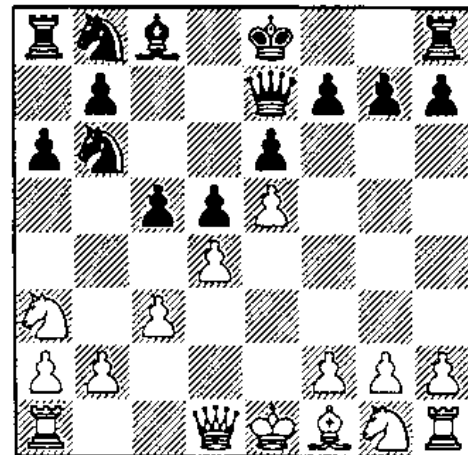
A 9...c5

B 9...f6

Alapin's idea of directing the queen's knight along the route b8-c6-d8-f7, to prepare g7-g5, is also interesting. The game Spielmann-Alapin, Carlsbad 1911, went 9...♘c6 10.f4 ♔d7 11.♘f3 ♘d8 12.♔d3 f5 13.exf6 gxf6 14.♖d2 ♘f7 15.0-0-0 0-0-0, with approximately equal chances.

A

9...c5



10.f4

After 10.♘f3 ♘c6 11.♘c2 0-0 Black similarly has an easy game: 12.♔d3 ♘a4 13.♖b1 c4 14.♔e2 b5 15.♖d2 ♔d7 16.0-0 ♖ab8 17.b3 ♖b6 18.♘e3 ♖fc8 19.h4 a5 20.h5 ♘d8 21.h6 f5! with the superior position; Shpilker-Stetsko, Moscow 1978.

10...♘c6

In Bernstein-Tarrasch, San Sebastian 1911, Black played the hasty 10...cxd4, and after 11.♖xd4! ♗c7 12.♘f3 ♘d7 13.♙d3 White proceeded to pressurize the centre with his pieces.

11.♘c2

Another possibility is 11.♘f3 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘d7 (12...♗b4+ is premature; 13.♗d2 ♘a4 14.♗xb4 ♘xb4 15.♙d2, and the ending is a little better for White) 13.♙e2 ♗b4+ 14.♗d2 ♘a4 15.♗xb4 ♘xb4 16.♙d2 ♖c8 17.♖hc1 ♖xc1 18.♖xc1 ♙e7 19.b3 ♘b6 20.♘c2 ½-½, Romanovsky-Bogoljubow, Moscow 1925.

11...♘a4

Black steps up his pressure on the queenside. Early experience with the variation showed that by releasing the tension with 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 he is merely untying White's hands. For example Tarrasch-Schiffers, Vienna 1898, continued 12...♙d7 13.b3 ♖c8 14.♗d2 0-0 15.♘f3 f5 16.♙d3 ♖c7 17.0-0 ♙h8 18.♙h1 ♙e8 19.h3 ♘a7 20.a4 ♘c6 21.g4, and White was attacking on both wings.

12.♖b1 b5 13.♘f3 ♙d7 14.♗d2

A weaker line is 14.♘e3 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖c8 16.a3 ♘a5, and Black seized the initiative in Steiner-Liliental, Budapest 1934.

14...♖c8

It was worth considering 14...♖b8!?

15.♙d3 c4

Or 15...♘b6 16.0-0 ♘c4 17.♗e1 with complex play; Lasker-Liliental, Moscow 1936. It looked more logical to play 16...c4 with 17...a5 to follow.

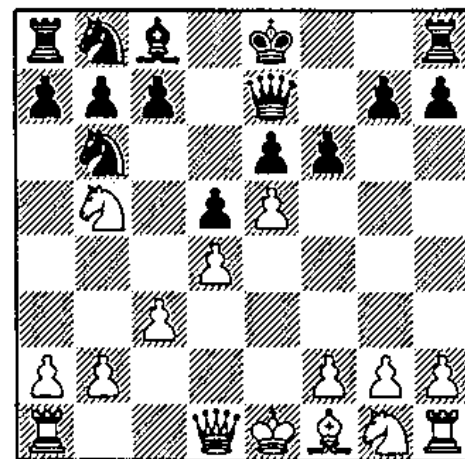
It was also worth considering 15...f5.

16.♙e2 a5

The position offers chances to both sides.

B

9...f6



The direct attack against the vanguard of his pawn chain sets White more problems than the 9...c5 lever, since it forces him to exchange with e5xf6 or make a doubtful pawn sacrifice.

10.♘f3

On 10.f4 fxe5, the recapture 11.fxe5?! is bad for White in view of 11...♖h4+ 12.♔d2 c5 13.♟f3 ♗h6+ 14.♕e2 ♝c6, while 11.dxe5 0-0 12.♗d2 c5 also favours Black. Sharp play results from 11.♗h5+ ♔d8 12.fxe5 (better than 12.dxe5 ♖a4 13.0-0-0 ♝xc3 14.bxc3 ♗xa3+ 15.♕b1 ♙d7 with advantage to Black; Ilyin-Zhenevsky-Spielmann, Moscow 1925) 12...♖a4 13.♝c2 ♝xb2 14.♟f3 c5 15.♙e2 ♙d7 16.0-0 with some compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

Black's chances are again better after 10.♙d3 fxe5 11.dxe5 c5, but then sacrificial lines like 11.♗h5+

♔d8 12.dxe5 ♖a4 also turn out in his favour. For example: 13.♖b1 ♝xb2 14.♗xb2 ♗xa3, Thomas-Spielmann, Marianske Lazne 1925.

10...♝d7 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.c4

After 12.♙d3 0-0?! 13.♗e2 ♙e8 14.♝e5 White is better, but with 12...e5! 13.dxe5 ♝xe5 14.♝xe5 ♗xe5+ 15.♗e2 ♝d7 Black equalizes.

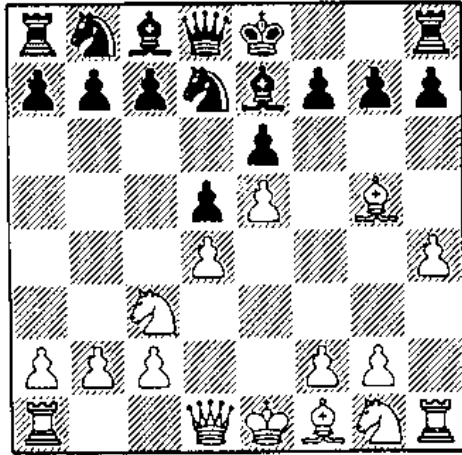
12...c5 13.exd5 exd5 14.♙e2 0-0

The chances are equal; Bernstein-Spielmann, San Sebastian 1911.

Part Two:
The Chatard-Alekhine Attack (6.h4)

7 Introduction, 6...0-0 and 6...h6

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4



This pawn sacrifice was first suggested and analysed by the French player Chatard, but aroused genuine interest only after the well-known game Alekhine-Fahrni (Mannheim, 1914). The effect of that game was so great that the variation was christened the Chatard-Alekhine Attack. In the inter-war years numerous analyses were devoted to it—the deepest being those carried out by the Russian masters Belavenets and Yudovich—and at present the line is quite a frequent weapon against the Classical System.

With the move of his rook's pawn White makes it practically impossible for Black to solve the problem

of kingside castling by natural means. Thus, if Black tries to reach a "classical" set-up with 6...h6, White can decline the bishop exchange by playing 7.♙e3, keeping the h6-pawn in his sights and inducing further kingside weaknesses. The immediate 6...0-0 looks too optimistic, since with his pawn on h4 White has very dangerous attacking chances against the inadequately defended king; after ♙f1-d3 and ♘g1-h3 Black has to deal with the threat of a bishop sacrifice on h7. And if Black accepts the pawn sacrifice with 6...♙xg5 (see chapter 8), the open h-file makes kingside castling appear downright suicidal.

The analysts have therefore chiefly focused their attention on the thematic lines in which Black undermines the centre with 6...f6 or 6...c5 (see chapters 9 and 10). Since the latter move usually entails losing the right to castle (because of White's threat to penetrate with a knight to c7 or d6), Black often prefaces it with 6...a6 to keep the knight out of b5. (For this, see chapter 11.)

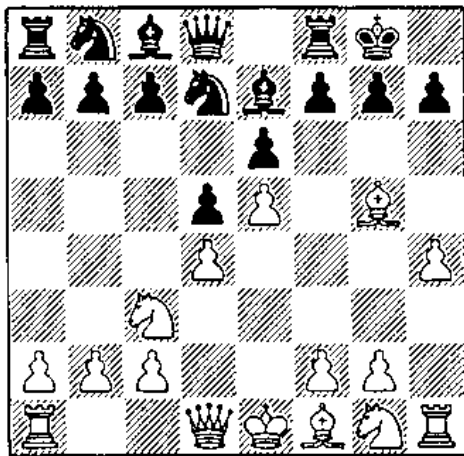
In the present chapter we examine two of the lines in which Black attempts to disregard the h2-h4 thrust:

A 6...0-0
B 6...h6

A

6...0-0

Black castles into an attack by white pieces that are directed at the kingside. Obviously this is dangerous; White's h2-h4 can be followed up by a pawn attack or by quickly bringing his rook into play at the required moment.



Black castles into an attack by white pieces that are directed at the kingside. Obviously this is dangerous; White's h2-h4 can be followed up by a pawn attack or by quickly bringing his rook into play at the required moment.

7.♔d3

Now after ♖g1-h3 White will be threatening the stock sacrifice ♔d3xh7+, so Black is compelled to block the aggressive diagonal. Instead, 7.♗g4 presents Black with a tempo for the defence: 7...f5 8.exf6 ♘xf6 9.♗g3 c5 10.dxc5 ♘bd7 11.0-0-0 ♘xc5 12.♔d3 b5 13.♘f3

b4 14.♔xf6 ♔xf6 15.♘e2 a5 16.♚b1 ♔a6 and Black's position is superior; Kupreichik-Moskalenko, Pinsk 1986.

7...f5

Black cannot do without this move, so in contemporary practice he prefers to play it at once.

A risky alternative is 7...c5?!. If then 8.♗h5, Black has 8...g6 9.♗h6 ♚c6! (to meet 10.♘f3 with 10...♘d4), and White has to continue 10.f4 with unclear play. However, after 8.♘h3 Black is forced to defend against the threatened bishop sacrifice—which is not simple:

a) The naive 8...h6? fails to 9.♔xh6! gxf6 10.♗g4+ ♚h8 11.♘g5! with an overwhelming attack.

b) In Bogoljubow-Spielmann, Vienna 1922, Black tried to avoid weakening his position, but after 8...♔e8?! 9.♘b5 f5 10.♘d6 cxd4 11.♘xe8 ♗xe8 12.♔b5 ♔b4+ 13.♔d2 ♗e7 14.f4 he failed to obtain compensation for the exchange.

c) The radical 8...g6 9.f4 cxd4 10.♘e2 also leaves Black in serious difficulties. In Hector-Moskalenko, Copenhagen 1995, White played the weaker 10.♘b1?! ♘c6 11.♘d2 ♘c5 12.♘f2 f6 13.exf6 ♔xf6 14.♔h6 ♔g7 15.♔xg7 ♚xg7 16.h5 g5, and Black repelled the attack with the better game.

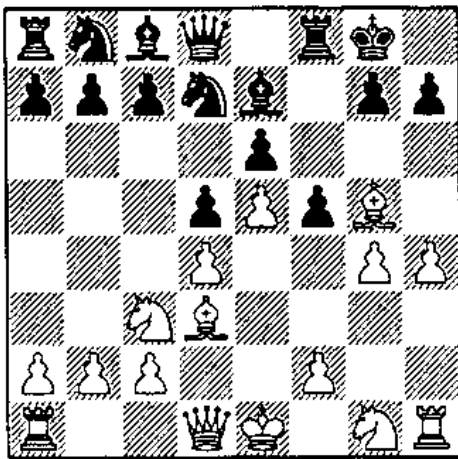
White now has three main choices. In variations A1 and A2 he clears the b1-h7 diagonal, while in A3 he pursues a blockading strategy.

A1 8.g4
 A2 8.exf6
 A3 8.♘h3

The passive 8.♘ce2?! allows Black to start active counterplay in the centre: 8...c5 9.c3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♙xg5 11.hxg5 ♖xg5 12.♘f3 ♗e7 13.g4 ♘c6 14.gxf5 exf5 15.♘f4 ♖b6 16.♙f1 ♘d8 17.♞h3 ♘e6 and White has insufficient compensation for the pawn; Lengyel-Lempert, Budapest 1991.

A1

8.g4



Faced with this battering ram, Black has to create energetic counterplay. Otherwise White's attack can become irresistible.

8...c5 9.gxf5 cxd4 10.f6 ♙xf6!

It's important for Black to preserve his knight. The game Sax-Donner, Amsterdam 1976, went 10...♘xf6? 11.exf6 ♙xf6 12.♗h5 g6 13.♙xg6 ♗e7 14.♖b5 ♘c6 15.♙d3 e5 16.♘e2 ♙h8 17.♘c7 ♗xc7 18.♙xf6+ 1-0.

11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♘ce2 e5 13.f3 ♗b6 14.b3

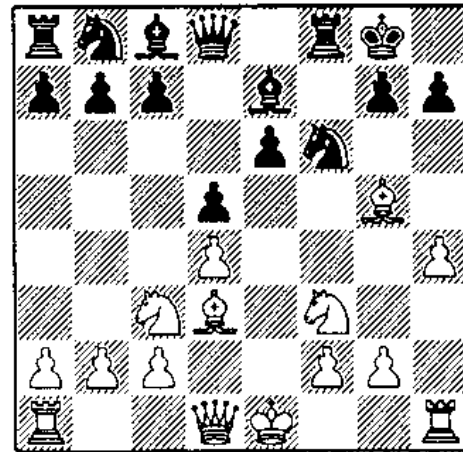
Opening the position is dangerous: 14.c3?! ♗xb2 15.cxd4 ♘c6 16.♗b1 ♖b4, and Black obtained a dangerous initiative in Shabalov-Supatashvili, USSR 1985.

14...♘c6

Black's position looks very active, but he has only two pawns for the sacrificed piece and the prospects are unclear. Without any serious practical tests it is hard to give a definite judgement on this variation.

A2

8.exf6 ♘xf6 9.♘f3



This radical approach to the position also gives White the better chances.

9...c5 10.dxc5 ♘c6 11.♗e2 ♙xc5

After 11...♗a5 12.0-0-0 d4?! 13.♙xf6 gxf6 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.♙xh7+! ♙xh7 16.♞xd4 White

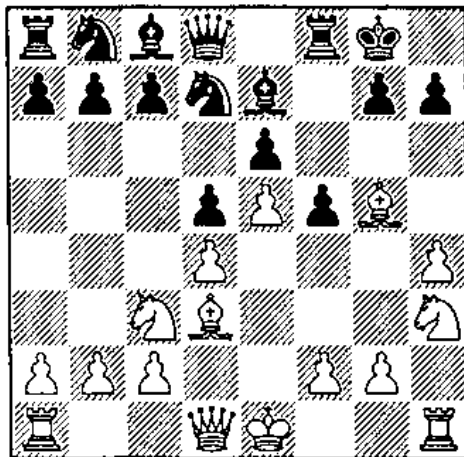
worked up a dangerous attack in A.Sokolov-Shemyakin, Simferopol 1989.

12.0-0-0 ♖d7 13.♗b1 a6 14.h5 ♜e7 15.♘h4 ♜f7 16.♙g6! ♜e7 17.h6 gxf6 18.♙xh6 hxg6 19.♘xg6

White has a strong attack; Shabalov-Budnikov, Leningrad 1989.

A3

8.♘h3



White transfers his knight to the strong blockading square f4, where it will attack the e6-pawn and support an attack on the king. The dangers to Black are well illustrated by the miniature Riegler-Zugaj, Slovenia (ch) 1994: 8...c5? 9.♘f4 cxd4 10.♘xe6 ♜a5 11.♙xe7 ♜f7 12.♙d8 ♜b4 13.a3 ♜xb2 14.♘a4 1-0.

8...♘a6

On 8...♘c6, White can play 9.♘e2 ♘b4 10.♘ef4 ♘xd3+ 11.♜xd3 ♘b6 12.0-0-0 with advantage; Zezulkin-Lempert, Czestochowa 1991.

9.♙xa6!

A positional solution. The answer to 9.♘f4 would be 9...♘db8, while in the case of 9.g4 ♘b4 10.♙xe7 ♜xe7 11.gxf5 ♘xd3+ 12.♜xd3 ♜xf5 13.♘b5 ♘f8 14.0-0-0 b6 the position is simplified and Black has defensive resources.

9...bxa6 10.♘a4 ♜e8 11.0-0

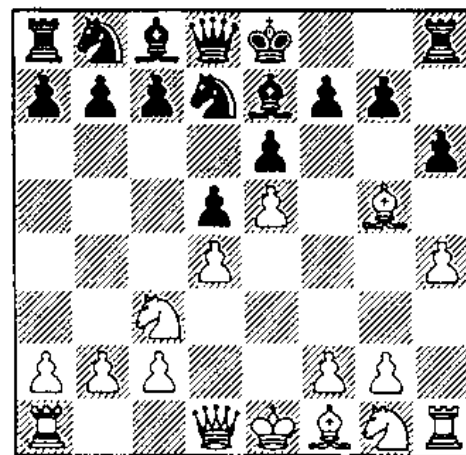
11.c3 is also good.

11...c5 12.♘f4 ♜f7 13.c4 dc4 14.d5

White has a powerful initiative; Khalifman-Ulybin, Sochi 1989.

B

6...h6



By attacking the bishop, Black hopes to continue on the lines of the Classical System after an exchange on e7. This obvious-looking move is rarely seen, however. The reason is that White can withdraw the bishop with 7.♙e3 or attack with 7.♜h5, making it virtually impossible for Black to castle kingside.

But then that is impossible in most variations of the Chatard-Alekhine Attack, where the king often feels quite comfortable on f8. We feel that 6...h6 has been underestimated; the move is sounder than its reputation.

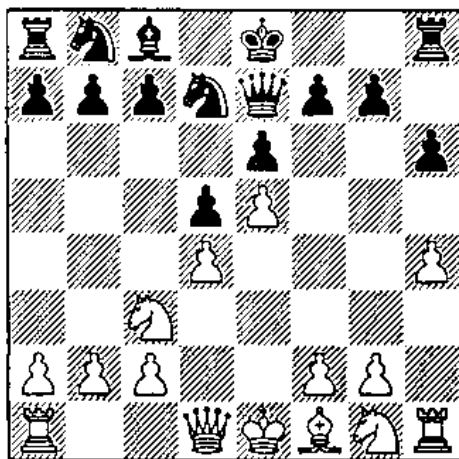
From the diagram, White has:

B1 7.♙xe7

B2 7.♙e3

B3 7.♚h5

B1
7.♙xe7 ♚xe7



8.f4

With the transition to a Classical set-up, the insertion of h2-h4 and h7-h6 objectively benefits Black, since White's options are considerably narrowed and in a number of lines the weakening of g4 and g3 can make itself felt.

Apart from the main line, White sometimes plays 8.♚g4. However, after 8...0-0 the position of the

queen creates favourable conditions for Black's f7-f5:

a) 9.♘f3 f5 10.♚f4 c5 11.0-0-0 ♘c6 (Black must counter-attack vigorously in the centre; if he delays, e.g. with 12...a6?! 12.♘e2 ♚e8 13.g4 fxe4 14.♚xe4 c4 15.♙g1, White's attack may come first; Trajkovic-Malesevic, Novi Sad 1988) 12.♙b5 a6 13.♙d6 cd4 =/+.

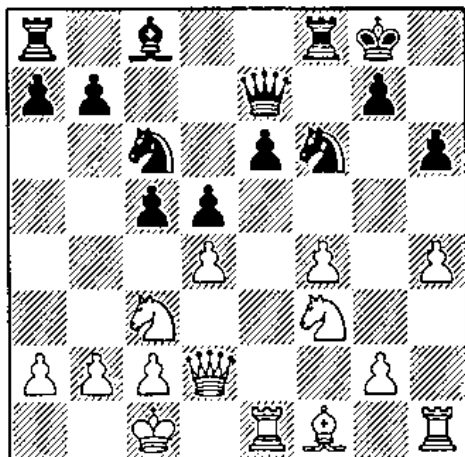
b) 9.0-0-0 c5 10.f4 ♘c6 11.♘f3 f5! = (Stetsko).

8...0-0

Black also sometimes plays 8...a6 9.♘f3 (the simplest answer to 9.♚g4 is 9...0-0, since 10.f5 exf5 11.♚xf5 ♘f6! is not good for White; in Belamaric-Kodric, Portoroz 1996, Black incautiously weakened his kingside with 9...g6 10.♙d3 h5?! 11.♚h3 c5 12.dxc5 ♚xc5 13.♙xg6! ♘xe5 14.fxe5 fxe6 15.♚d3 and was left with a shattered position) 9...c5 10.♚d2 ♘c6 11.dxc5 ♘xc5 12.0-0-0 b5 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.♚xd4 b4 15.♘e2 a5 with approximate equality; Yurtaev-V.Kozlov, USSR 1988.

A plan with queenside castling also deserves attention: 8...♘c6 9.♚d2 ♘b6 10.0-0-0 ♙d7 11.♘f3 0-0-0 12.♙d3 h5 13.♙he1 ♙b8 14.♙b1, with somewhat the better chances for White; Kondratiev-Karasev, Leningrad 1966.

9.♘f3 c5 10.♚d2 ♘c6 11.0-0-0 f6 12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.♙e1



13...d5!?

Black utilizes the weakening of g3.

14.dxd5

The retreat 14.cce2 works in the case of 13...f6 14.dxc5, but after the resolute 14...cxd4! 14.dfxd4 f6 15.gxc6 (or 15.g3 dxd4 +/-) 15...bxc6 16.g3 a6 Black gains the upper hand.

14...d8 15.c3 dg3!

This is stronger than 15...dxd4 16.dxd4 cxd4 17.de2! with equal chances.

16.g1

16.h3 is weaker: 16...xf1 17.fxf1 cxd4 with advantage to Black.

16...dxd4 17.c4

Or 17.dxd4 cxd4 +/-.

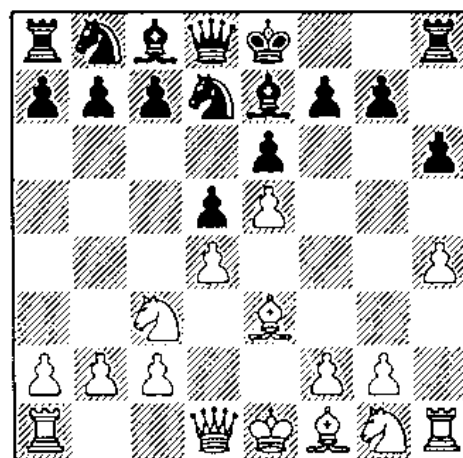
17...gf5 18.dxd4 cxd4 19.de2 b5! 20.b3 a5

Black's chances should be preferred (Stetsko).

B2

7.e3

A logical retreat which virtually rules out kingside castling for Black, in view of the h6 weakness.



7...c5

Black has to hit back actively in the centre. In Yudovich-Nikolsky, Moscow 1930, he played the suicidal 7...0-0?. After 8.h5 c5 9.xh6! cxd4 10.xg7 xg7 11.h3 White had a winning attack.

In the event of 7...a6 8.g4 f8 9.h5 c5 10.f4 cxd4 11.dxd4 dc6 12.f3 dxd4 13.dxd4 dc5 14.0-0-0 d7 15.e2 c7 16.f3 0-0-0 17.he1, White has the more active position; Minasian-Shalnev, Erevan 1988.

8.g4

The thematic continuation, compelling Black to defend his g-pawn.

8...f8

8...g6 is risky: 9.♘f3 (on 9.h5 g5 10.f4, Black has 10...cxd4 11.♙xd4 ♘c6) 9...♘c6 10.dxc5 (10.0-0-0 c4, with b7-b5 to follow, is unclear) 10...♘xc5 (if 10...♘dx5 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5, Black has to reckon with 12.♚g3 ♘c6 13.0-0-0 threatening ♘c3-e4 or ♘c3-b5—Hellers) 11.0-0-0, and now the game Hellers-Bareev, Gausdal 1986, continued 11...a6 12.♙xc5 ♙xc5 13.♘e4 ♙e7 14.♚f4 b5 (if 14...♚a5, then 15.♘f6+ is unpleasant) 15.♘d6+ ♙xd6 16.exd6 ♖a7? (it was essential to play 16...f6! +/-) 17.♘d4! ♘d7 18.♙xb5 axb5 19.♚xf7+ 1-0. Hellers recommends 11...♙d7 12.♘b5 ♘e4, but White still has the better chances after 13.♚f4.

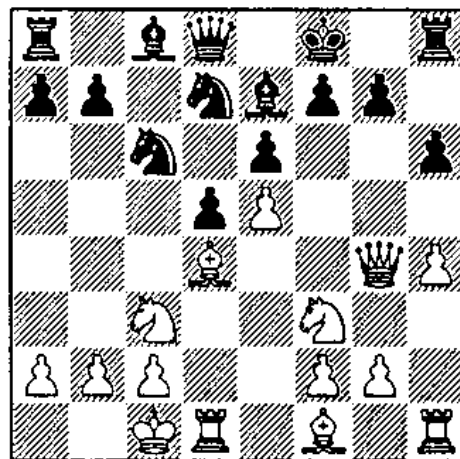
9.♘f3

After 9.f4 ♘c6, Black successfully attacks the centre: 10.♘f3 cxd4 (10...h5!? is not bad either: 11.♚g3 cxd4 12.♙xd4 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♙b4 =/+) 10...11.♙xd4 ♚a5 12.a3 (12.h5? is met by 12...♙a3; Black also benefits from 12.♖h3 h5 13.♚g3 g6 14.0-0-0 ♘c5, or 12.0-0-0 ♙b4 13.♘b1 h5! 14.♚h3 ♚xa2) 12...a6 13.♖h3 h5 14.♚g3 b5 (14...g6!? was worth considering) 15.♖d1 (15.f5! is correct) 15...b4 16.axb4 ♚xb4 17.b3 ♘c5, and Black obtained the advantage in Osipenko-Stetsko, USSR 1962.

9...♘c6 10.0-0-0 cxd4

Sokolsky recommended 10...f5!?, attempting to make Black's king position secure.

11.♙xd4



11...♘xd4

An important exchange, gaining a tempo to bring his bishop out. An inferior line is 11...♚a5 12.♖h3 ♘c5 13.♖g3; Black is forced to make the weakening move g7-g6, with favourable consequences for White; Dubinin-Rabinovich, USSR (ch) 1934/35.

12.♖xd4!

This is stronger than 12.♚xd4 ♙c5 13.♚d2 ♚a5 with equal chances.

12...b5!?

A pawn sacrifice for the sake of queenside initiative.

13.♙xb5

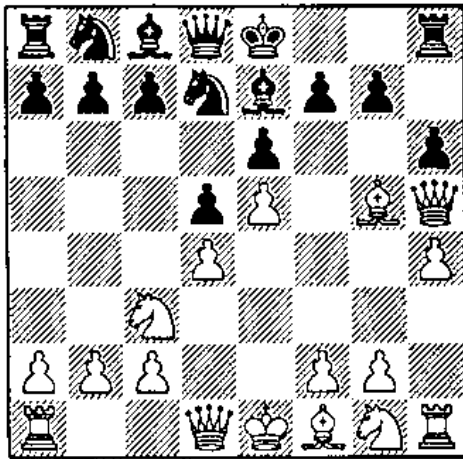
Black also has adequate counter-play after 13. ♖xb5 ♜b6.

13... ♜b8

With ♜d8-b6 coming, Black's counter-attack compensates for the pawn sacrificed (Stetsko).

B3

7. ♖h5



This attacking move was recommended in 1937 in the analyses by Belavenets and Yudovich.

7... a6

This follows the analyses mentioned. With 7... g6 Black forces a bishop exchange, but the weakening of the kingside gives White an enduring plus: 8. ♗xe7 ♜xe7 9. ♖g4

h5 10. ♖f4 a6 11. ♖f3 c5 12. 0-0-0 ♖c6 13. ♗d3 cxd4 14. ♖ce2 ♖c5 15. a3 ♗d7 16. ♖exd4 with the superior chances, Abramson-Stetsko, Simferopol 1960.

However, it is worth considering 7... ♜g8!? 8. ♗xe7 ♜xe7 9. 0-0-0 ♖c6 10. f4 ♖b6 11. ♖f3 ♗d7 12. a3 0-0-0 13. ♗d3 ♜b8 14. ♖g4 ♖a5 15. ♜b1 ♖ac4 16. ♗xc4 ♖xc4, and Black obtained his share of the play in Riegler-Zorman, Bled 1992.

8. ♖f3

Belavenets and Yudovich recommended the sacrifice 8. ♗d3?! c5 9. ♖xd5 exd5 10. e6, but this gives Black the better game after 10... ♖e5! 11. dxe5 ♗xe6.

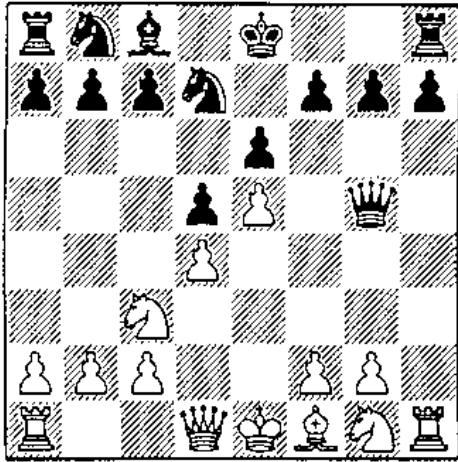
In the event of 8. ♖h3 g6 9. ♗xe7 ♜xe7 10. ♖e2 c5 11. dxc5 ♖c6, the knight on h3 isn't in a position to defend the centre; after 12. 0-0-0 ♖de5 13. f4 ♖d7 14. h5 ♖xc5 15. hxg6 fxg6 16. ♖f2 ♗d7 17. ♜e1 ♖d6 18. ♖h4 ♖e7 19. ♖f2 0-0-0 Black gained the advantage in Dubinsky-Gusev, Moscow 1964.

8... c5 9. dxc5 ♖c6 10. 0-0-0 ♖xc5 11. ♜h3 ♗d7 12. ♗xe7 ♜xe7 13. ♜g3 g6 14. ♖g4 ♜c8 15. ♜b1 b5

The chances are level; Nikitin-Gusev, Moscow 1960.

8 6...♙xg5

1.c4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4 ♙xg5
7.hxg5 ♚xg5



Acceptance of the pawn is an uncompromising answer to the Chertard Attack. In return for the sacrifice White quickly develops his pieces and gains a significant territorial advantage. For a long time, therefore, the general view was that the difficulties Black experiences were not worth the pawn. In the last few years, however, Black has been risking the capture more and more often. He thereby puts White under psychological pressure to demonstrate that he has real compensation.

8.♘h3

Transferring the knight to f4 in conjunction with the ♚d1-g4 sortie is White's standard manoeuvre in this position. After the simple 8.♘f3 ♚e7 9.♙d3 a6 10.♚e2 c5 11.0-0-0 ♘c6 Black has no particular problems, although if he tries for more, for example with 11...c4?!, he comes under a dangerous attack: 12.♙xc4! dxc4 13.d5, Ondok-Sheneman, Solnok 1987.

Among the unorthodox plans for White, the one carried out in a game Velimirovic-V.Kovacevic, Yugoslavia 1989, is worth mentioning: 8.♙h5 ♚e7 9.♚g4 f5! 10.♚h3 ♘f8 11.0-0-0 ♙d7 (on 11...♘c6, the positional solution with 12.♙b5 ♙d7 13.♙xc6! ♙xc6 14.♘ge2 gives White a good game) 12.g4 fxg4 13.♚xg4 ♘c6 14.♙g5 (if 14.♙b5, then 14...♘a5 is good; 14.f4?! is dubious, as after 14...0-0-0 15.♘f3 ♙e8 Black transfers his bishop to g6 with the better position) 14...♙g8 (14...g6 is not bad either: Kovacevic gives 15.♚g2 ♘d8 16.f4 ♘f7 17.♙g3 ♘h6 18.♙d3 =) 15.♘ge2 0-0-0, and Black's chances should be preferred.

8...♚e7

After 8... ♖h6?! the queen will be shut out of the action by a pawn or knight on f4, e.g.: 9.g3 c6 (after 9...a6, Black faces an unpleasant attack with 10.f4 g6 11.♖f3 ♖f8 12.0-0-0 ♗c6 13.f5; Khalifman-Heyken, Germany 1993) 10.♖f3 (also after 10.♗d3 g6 11.f4 b6 12.♖e2 a5 13.0-0-0 ♖g7 14.g4 ♗a6 15.f5 White has a clear plus, Riumin-Makogonov, USSR Championship 1934) 10...g6 11.♗f4 ♖f8 12.0-0-0, and White has an attacking position; Velimirovic-V.Kovacevic, Stara Pazova 1988. Another move to have been played is 9.♗d3; for example after 9...a6 10.♖g4 c5 11.f4 cxd4 12.♗e2 White gained the advantage in Yurtaev-Levin, USSR 1988. Paul Keres's recommendation 9.♗b5!? ♗a6 10.f4 is also worthy of attention.

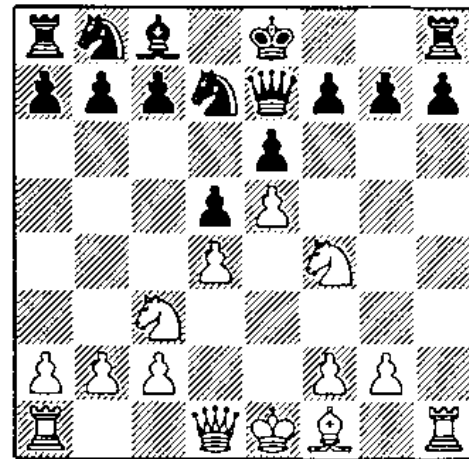
After 8... ♖e7, the main continuations are:

- A 9 ♗f4
- B 9 ♖g4

9.♖d2 can lead to a transposition after 9...♗c6 10.♗f4 ♗c6 (see variation A22), But Black should also consider 9...♗f8!? 10.0-0-0 ♗bd7 11.♗f4 ♗b6 with a view to 12.a4 ♖b4!. Then 13.♗d3? is bad on account of 13...♖xd4 14.♗b5 ♖xa4 with advantage to Black (Stetsko).

9 ♗f4

A



The arrival of this knight at f4 means that while carrying on with his development Black will have to cope with White's threats to sacrifice the knight on d5 or penetrate with it to f6. This very line occurred in the famous game Alekhine-Fahrni, Mannheim 1914, which introduced the Chatard-Alekhine attack into tournament practice. There followed: 9...♗f8?! 10.♖g4! (with the dual threat of 11.♖xg7 and 11.♗xd5; the latter threat persists in the subsequent play) 10...f5 11.exf6 gxf6 12.0-0-0 c6 13.♗e1 ♗d8 14.♗h6! e5 15.♖h4 ♗bd7 16.♗d3 e4 17.♖g3! ♖f7 (not 17...♖d6 because of 18.♗xe4! dxe4 19.♗xe4! with the decisive threat of 20.♖g7) 18.♗xe4! dxe4 19.♗xe4 ♗g8 (or 19...♖xa2 20.♗xf6! ♗xf6 21.♖g7!) 20.♖a3! ♖g7 21.♗d6 ♗b6 22.♗e8! ♖f7 23.♖d6+ 1-0.

At present, Black's main continuations are:

- A1 9...g6
- A2 9...♗c6

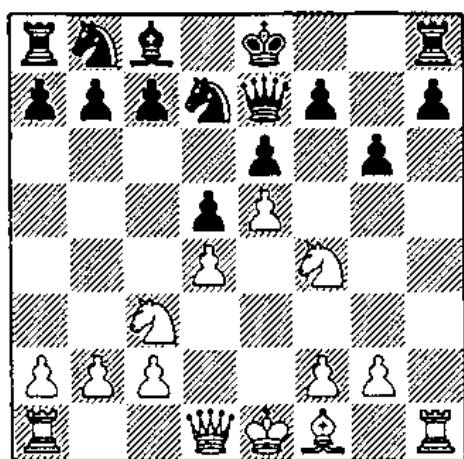
In Variation A2 Black tries to avoid weakening his kingside. The

The Classical French

alternative 9...c5!? has hardly been investigated, but provides food for thought after the game Stefansson-Ostenstad, Gausdal 1991: 10.♖b5 cxd4 (10...♗d8?! 11.c3 +/-) 11.♗d3 (if White wins the exchange, the consequences are unclear after 11.♗c7+ ♔d8 12.♗xa8 ♗c6; however, 12...♕e5?! is risky on account of 13.♗xd4 ♗bc6 14.♗a4 +/-) 11...♔d8 12.♗g4 g6 13.♗xd4 ♗c6 14.♗f3 b6 15.♗f4 ♔a6 16.0-0-0 ♕c7 17.♞h6 ♕b7 and Black defended successfully.

A1

9...g6



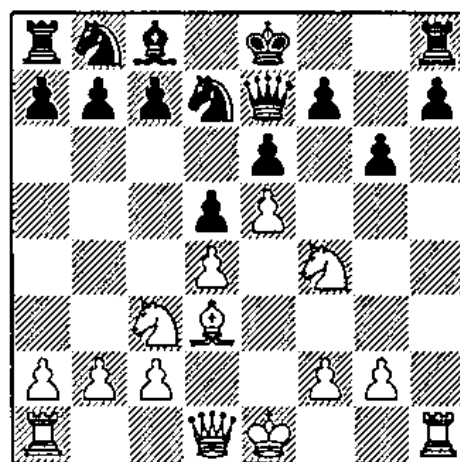
Black puts a stop to the manoeuvre ♗f4-h5.

10.♗g4

White brings his queen out to an attacking position and prepares to castle long. Another possibility with the same ends in view is 10.♗d2 c6 11.0-0-0 b6 12.♔d3 ♗f8 13.♞h6 ♔a6 14.♞dh1 ♔xd3 15.♗xd3, and

White's space advantage, combined with pressure against the h-pawn, provides adequate compensation for the pawn sacrificed; Gullaksen-Nei, Debrecen 1992.

Quite a cunning move is 10.♔d3, threatening a bishop sacrifice on g6.



a) 10...♗f8?! 11.♗fxd5! (a positional solution is also possible: 11.♗g4 ♗c6 12.♔b5 ♔d7 13.♔xc6 ♔xc6 14.♞h6 f6 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.0-0-0 0-0-0 17.♗d3 +/- Ivanovic-Drasko, Yugoslav Championship 1991) 11...exd5 12.♗xd5 ♗d8 13.♗f6+ ♕e7 14.♗f3 c6 15.0-0-0 ♔e6 16.d5 cxd5 17.♔e4! with a dangerous attack, Ageichenko-Estrin, Moscow 1967.

b) 10...♗b6 11.♔xg6! ♗c6 (after 11...fxg6 12.♗xg6 ♗g7 13.♗xh8 White has the advantage) 12.♗ce2 (on 12.♔xh7, White has to reckon with 12...♗g5) 12...♔d7 13.♔d3 0-0-0 14.♗d2 f6! 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.c3 e5 and Black maintained the balance in Sax-Bareev, Moscow (GMA) 1990.

c) 10...♗g5!? 11.g3 (11.♗cxd5? fails to 11...exd5 12.♗xd5 ♗xg2,

while after 11.♖d2 ♖b6 12.0-0-0 ♗d7 the pin on the h6-c1 diagonal benefits Black) 11...♖b6 12.♖b5 ♖a6 with complex play (Stetsko).

10...♖c6

10...a6 is rather slow; after 11.0-0-0 (Keres considers 11.♖g3 stronger, so as to answer 11...c5? with 12.♖fxd5!), Black's backward development makes things difficult for him:

a) 11...c5?! 12.♖g3 (12.♗d3? is inadequate: 12...cxd4 13.♖cxd5 exd5 14.♖xd5 ♖b6 15.e6 ♖xd5 16.exf7+ ♖xf7 17.♖xd4 ♖f6 and Black parries the direct threats, Reti-Spielmann, Stockholm 1919; or 15.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 15.♖xe7 ♖xe7) 12...♖b6 (the sacrifice on d5 could also be met by 12...cxd4 13.♖cxd5 exd5 14.♖xd5 ♖c5, but after 15.c4!, threatening 16.e6 and 16.b4, the advantage is with White) 13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14.♗d3 ♖f8 15.♗e4! dxe4 16.♖xe4 ♖8d7, and in Bogoljubow-Spielmann, Stockholm 1919, White worked up a decisive attack with 17.♖c3!.

b) 11...♖b6 12.♗d3 ♖8d7 13.♖h6 ♖f8 14.♖dh1 ♗d7 15.♖h3 ♗b5 16.♖xb5 (after 16.♖g5 ♗xd3 17.cxd3 ♖bd7 Black holds his own; Reuder-Mueller, Vienna 1931) 16...axb5 17.♗xb5+ c6 18.♗d3 ♖xa2 19.♖b1 ♖a4 20.c3, and White's kingside pressure compensates for the pawn. However, there may be more promise in 14.♖b1!? ♗d7 15.♖h5!, aiming to gain the advantage after 15...gxh5 16.♖g7

♖g6 17.♗xg6 0-0-0 18.♗xh7 (Nogueiras, M.Gonzales).

11.0-0-0 ♖b6

Not 11...♖f8?! 12.♖g3 ♖b4 (the passive 12...♖d8 is answered by 13.♗b5! a6 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.♖a4 with a clear positional advantage; Heinats-Hoang Nam, Odessa 1990) 13.♖cxd5! exd5 14.♖xd5 ♖a5 15.♖f6+ ♖d8 16.♗c4 with a powerful attack; Strikovic-Nemirovsky, Val Maubuee 1990.

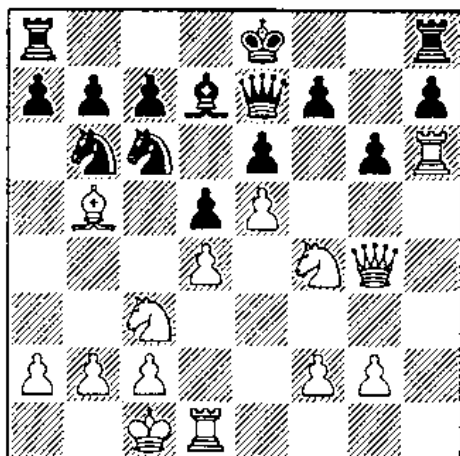
However, it is worth considering 11...h5!? 12.♖g3 (after 12.♖cxd5 exd5 13.♖xd5 hxg4 14.♖xh8+ ♖f8 15.♖xe7 ♖xe7 or 12.♖f3 ♖b6 13.g4 h4 14.♖h3 ♗d7 15.g5 0-0-0, Black has sufficient counterplay—Sax) 12...♖b6 13.♗d3 ♗d7 14.♗xg6 h4 15.♗d3 ♖xd4 16.♖g7 0-0-0 17.♖g6 ♖g5 18.f4 ♖h6 with equal chances; Kuijf-Peelen, Netherlands 1987.

12.♖h6

An important blockading move; 12.♗b5 is answered by 12...h5!, for example 13.♖g3 ♗d7 14.♖h3 ♖a5 15.♖g5 ♗xb5 16.♖xb5 a6 17.♖c3 0-0-0, and Black has the better chances; Cifuentes-Agdestein, Tilburg 1993.

12...♗d7 13.♗b5

After 13.♗d3?! 0-0-0 14.♖dh1 ♖b4 15.♖fe2 ♖xe5! the advantage is with Black; Westman-Westerinen, Helsinki 1961.



Although Black's position is cramped and he will have to give up the h-pawn, his lack of weaknesses means that he can count on defending successfully.

13...0-0-0

An alternative worth considering is 13...Qa5!? 14. Qxd7+ Qxd7 15. Rdh1 0-0-0 16. Rxf7 Rxf7 17. Rxf7 Qc4 18. a3 Qf8 with a minimal plus for White; V.Kovacevic-Stamenkovic, Yugoslav Championship 1992.

14. Qxc6! Qxc6 15. Rdh1 Qc4

Carrying out the c7-c5 break is not simple: 15...Qe8 16. Qd3 +/- Goldberg-Knaak, Nordhausen 1986.

16. a3

White parries the threat to capture on b2, but Sax has shown that after 16. Rxf7 Rxf7 17. Rxf7 Qxb2 18. Qxe6+ Qxe6 19. Qxe6 fxe6 20. Qxb2 Rf8 21. f3 the endgame is rather more pleasant for White. Another possibility is 16. Qd3 Qe8

17. Rxf7 Rxf7 18. Rxf7 with somewhat the better chances; Sawatzki-Vigh, Budapest 1994.

16...b6

It was also worth considering 16...b5!?

17. Rxf7 Rxf7 18. Rxf7 Qb7 19. Qxg6 Rg8

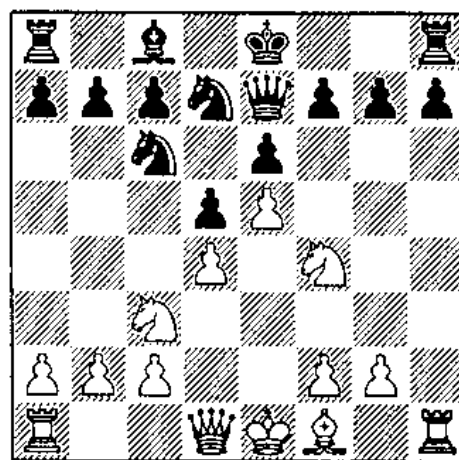
Black activates his pieces at the cost of a pawn.

20. Qxe7 Rg4 21. Qxc6 Qxc6 22. g3 Rxd4

The game is level; Sax- V.Kovacevic, Vinkovci 1993. As Sax has shown, White could have kept some advantage by returning the pawn: 22. b3 Qxa3 23. Rxf7 Rxd4! 24. Qb2 Qb5 25. Qxb5 Qxb5 26. f4!

A2

9...Qc6



A logical continuation. Black makes haste to finish his development, and incidentally attacks the

d4-pawn in the event of 10. ♖g4. We now consider the following moves which prepare queenside castling:

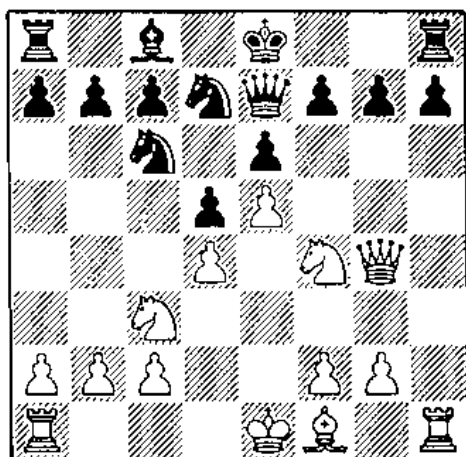
A21 10. ♖g4
A22 10. ♖d2

After 10. ♖d3 g6 11. 0-0-0 ♖b6 12. ♖g3 h5 13. ♗d3 ♗d7 14. ♜ce2 0-0-0 15. c3 ♖a5 Black obtains counterplay; Sorin-Jurkovic, Cannes 1997.

If White plays 10. ♗b5?!, attempting to gain some positional trumps by exchanging on c6, Black replies 10... ♖b4! 11. ♗xc6 bxc6 12. a3 ♖c4 with the superior chances. For example: 13. ♖h3 c5 14. ♖g4 ♗a6 15. 0-0-0 cxd4, and White's attack with 16. ♜xe6 fxe6 17. ♖xe6+ ♗d8 18. b3 ♖c5 19. ♖xa6 dxc3 20. b4 ♖b6 proved illusory in Makropoulou-Thorhallsson, Katerini 1993.

A21

10. ♖g4



Another pawn sacrifice (though this time a temporary one) which is wholly in the spirit of the Chatard-Alekhine Attack. White is

intent on profiting from his obvious lead in development.

10... ♜xd4

Black can't drive the queen away with 10... f5? on account of 11. ♖h5+! ♖f7 (11... ♗d8 12. ♜g6) 12. ♜xe6. If he wishes, however, he can decline the sacrifice with 10... g6, transposing to variation A1.

11. 0-0-0

11. ♖xg7? ♖f8 is not good for White.

11... ♜f5 12. ♜fxd5!

Black is better after 12. ♜cxd5? exd5 13. ♖xf5 ♜b6! 14. ♖h5 ♗e6.

12... exd5

Black should also consider 12... ♜xe5 13. ♖a4+ ♗d7 14. ♜xc7+ ♖f8 15. ♖e4 f6 16. ♜xa8 ♗c6 17. ♖e1 ♖f7 18. ♖g1 ♖a8 with compensation for the exchange; Garner-Harding, Dublin 1991.

13. ♜xd5

White gains nothing from 13. ♖xf5 ♜b6.

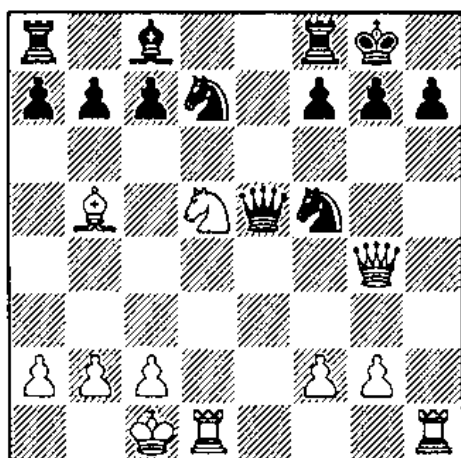
13... ♖xe5

In this case 13... ♜xe5? fails against 14. ♖e2! ♖d6 15. f4 winning a piece.

14. ♗b5

There is no danger to Black in 14.f4 ♖f6 15.♙b5+ (not 15.fxe5 ♖xg4 16.♗c7+ ♚e7 17.♗xa8 ♖f2, winning the exchange back) 15...♚f8 (15...c6? 16.♜f3 is bad for Black) 16.♜f3 ♜d6 with unclear play (Gulko).

14...0-0



A rare case when castling king-side is not dangerous in spite of the open h-file.

15.♙xd7 ♖h6

Another possibility was 15...♙xd7 16.♜h5 ♖f6 17.♜xh7+ ♚f7 18.♜h5+ ♚g8, and White appears to have nothing concrete (Gulko).

16.♜g3

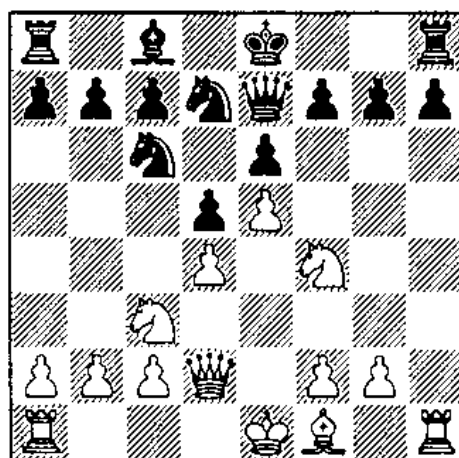
With 16.♜h4 ♙xd7 17.♞he1 White can win the queen, but he is hardly winning the game after 17...♖f5 18.♜h5 ♜d6 19.♗e7+ ♖xe7 20.♞xd6 cxd6 21.♞xe7 ♙c6.

16...♜xg3 17.♗e7+ ♚h8 18.fxg3 ♙xd7 19.♞xd7 ♗g4!

By bringing his knight to f6, Black holds the balance. See Khalifman-Gulko, Reykjavik 1991 (Illustrative Game 26).

A22

10.♜d2



10...♗b6

Black can't stop ♖f4-h5, since 10...g6?! can be met by 11.♖fxd5! exd5 12.♗xd5. The game Filipenko-Shur, Naberezhnye Chelny 1993, continued 12...♜d8 13.♙b5 a6 14.♙a4 h5 15.0-0-0 ♚f8 16.♙b3 ♗b6 17.♗f6 with an attack.

11.♗h5

It was worth thinking about 11.0-0-0!?, and if 11...g6, then 12.♗b5 a6 13.♗a3 ♙d7 14.♚b1 h5 15.g4 h4 16.♗h3 0-0-0 17.g5 with advantage. However, after 11...♙d7 12.♗h5 ♞g8 Black has an acceptable game (Stetsko).

11...♞g8

Black could also consider 11...f5!?

12.♔d3 ♔d7 13.♙xh7 ♖h8
14.♜xg7+ ♚d8 15.♞e2

After 15.♞h6? ♞b4 16.♞f6+ ♚c8 17.♞f5 ♖d8 White's demonstration comes to a dead end; Filipenko-Lempert, Naberezhnye Chelny 1993.

15...♞c4

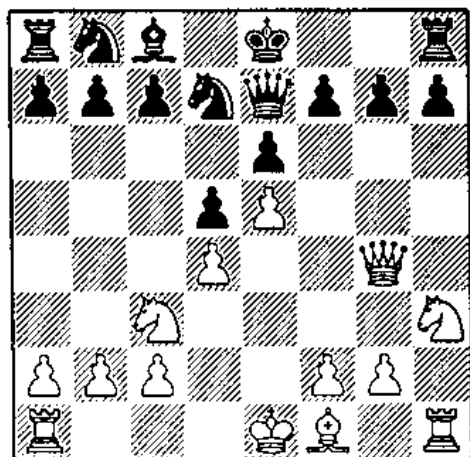
In this case, after 15...f6? 16.exf6 ♞xf6 17.♞h6 the game goes White's way; Unzicker-Donner, Lenzerheide 1964.

16.♞f4 ♞xb2

This position has yet to be investigated.

B

9.♞g4



White attacks the g-pawn at once, aiming to bring his knight into the attack via g5. However, in this line

Black has more latitude, since in addition to the natural 9...g6 he can play 9...f5 10.♞h5+ g6 (if the queens are exchanged with 10...♞f7 11.♞xf7+ ♚xf7 12.♞g5+ ♚e7 13.♖xh7 ♖xh7 14.♞xh7 a6 15.♞e2 c5 16.f4 ♞c6 17.0-0-0, White has the superior ending; Schuermans-Gomez Baillo, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988) 11.♞h6 ♞f8! (11...♞c6?! is weaker: 12.0-0-0 ♞d8 13.♞f4 ♞f8 14.♞fxd5! with a winning attack, Paoli-Sacconi, Florence 1948) 12.♞f4 c6 13.0-0-0 b6 with a double-edged game in which White cannot attack the kingside without sacrificing: 14.g4?! fxg4 15.♔d3 ♖g8 16.♖dg1 ♙a6, and Black completes his development while keeping a material plus (Stetsko).

9...g6 10.0-0-0

10.♞f4 would transpose into variation A1.

Another interesting line is 10.♔d3 ♞c6 11.0-0-0 (the threat against the d4-pawn means that White cannot effectively attack f7 with 11.♞b5 ♞b6 12.♞g5 h5 13.♞f4 a6 14.♞c3 ♞xd4 15.g4 h4 16.♖h3 ♞c6, which turns out in Black's favour) 11...♞b6 12.♞g5 ♔d7 13.♖xh7 (13.♖h6!?, maintaining the kingside initiative, is also worth considering; H.Rodriguez-Hoang Nam, Odessa 1990) 13...♖xh7 14.♞xh7 0-0-0, and Black has a solid position.

10...♞c6 11.♞f4

Once again 11.♞b5 is premature: 11...♞b6 12.♞g5 h5 (12...h6!?)

13. ♖f4 a6 14. ♘a3 ♙d7 15. ♗h3 0-0-0 16. ♙e2 ♜df8 17. ♞f3 ♙e8 18. c3 ♞d8 19. ♚b1 ♘e7 20. ♗h1 ♘f5 21. ♞fh3 ♙d7, and having regrouped his forces, Black kept his extra pawn with a good position in Volkov-Stetsko, USSR 1971.

However, 11. ♘g5, attacking the h7-pawn, deserves attention and requires accurate defence from Black:

a) After 11...h5?! 12. ♖f4 ♘b6 13. g4 ♙d7 14. ♙e2 h4 15. ♘f3 and 16. g5, White wins the pawn on h4.

b) 11...♘f8 is passive: 12. ♗h6 ♙d7 13. ♙e2 0-0-0 14. ♞dh1 with strong pressure.

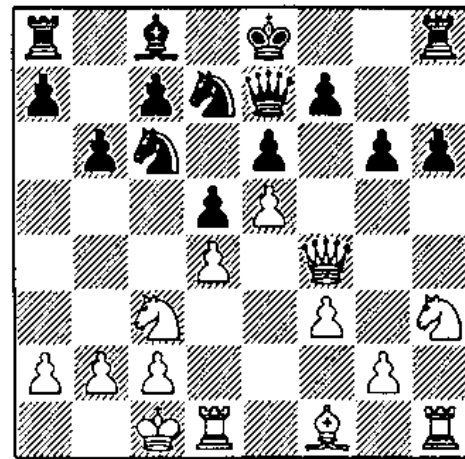
c) 11...h6!? looks best: 12. ♙d3 (12. ♖f4 is also well answered by 12...♘f8, and if 13. ♖f6? then 13...♞xf6 14. exf6 ♘d8! -/+) 12...♘f8 13. ♞h4 ♙d7! (it's important for Black to complete his development; 13...f5? 14. exf6 ♞xf6 15. ♘b5! ♞d8 16. ♖g3 ♖g7 17. ♘f3 gives White a plus) 14. ♞dh1 f5! (here again, after 14...h5? 15. ♖f4 White carries out g2-g4 to his advantage) 15. exf6 ♞xf6 16. ♞xh6 (or 16. ♘b5 0-0-0 17. ♖g3 e5=) 16...♞xh6 17. ♞xh6 ♞xf2 18. ♙xg6+ ♘xg6 19. ♞xg6 0-0-0 with about equal chances (Stetsko).

11...h6!?

After 11...♘b6 12. ♘g5 h6 13. ♘f3 h5 14. g4 ♙d7 15. gxf5 gxf5

16. ♙e2 0-0-0 17. ♞dgl ♞df8 18. ♞g7 ♙e8 19. a3 ♞d8 20. ♘g5 ♞fg8 21. ♞xg8 ♞xg8 22. ♘h7! White wins his pawn back and retains somewhat the better chances; Kolobov-Stetsko, Moscow 1973.

12.f3 b6!



13. ♘f2

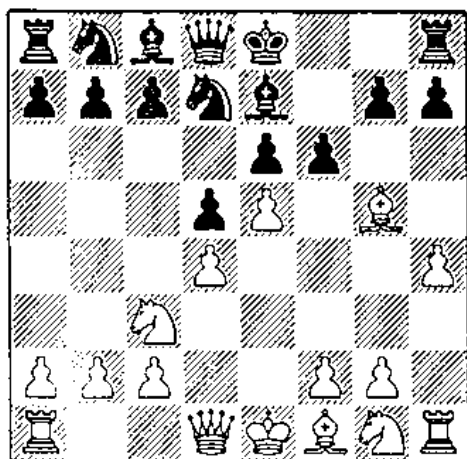
A somewhat weaker line is 13. ♘b5 ♘f8 14. ♘f2 a6 15. ♘c3 h5 16. ♘g4 ♘h7 17. ♘f6 ♘xf6 18. exf6 ♞d6 19. ♖g5 ♙b7, and Black's position is preferable.

13...h5 14. g4 ♙b7 15. gxf5 gxf5 16. ♙e2 0-0-0 17. ♞dgl f6 18. exf6 ♘f6 19. ♞g6 ♞df8

Black maintains the balance (Stetsko).

9 6...f6

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4 f6



A well-motivated move. Black begins counterplay against his opponent's flank attack, making him take a decision about his bishop on g5. The line was first introduced into practice in the game Yates-Maroczy, New York 1924, which was won by Black after the modest 7.exf6 ♘xf6. Annotating this game, Alekhine wrote that "The viability of White's system depends entirely on whether the bishop sacrifice 7.♙d3 is correct." This recommendation set the agenda for further analyses; the most significant were those carried out in 1937 by the Russian masters Belavenets and Yu-

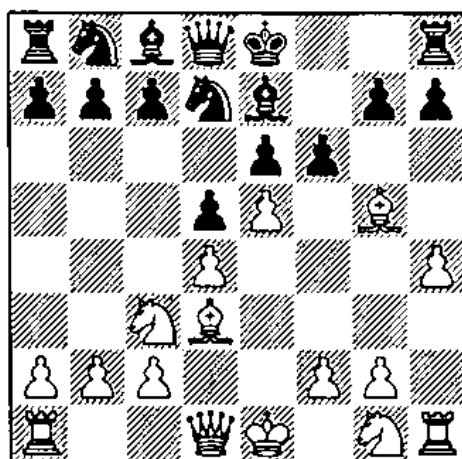
dovich, who supplied grounds for thinking that 6...f6 was virtually the refutation of the Chatard-Alekhine Attack. As a result White turned to 7.♙h5+, which practically forces Black to give up his castling rights.

All these continuations occur in present-day practice. We consider:

- A 7.♙d3
- B 7.♙h5+
- C 7.exf6

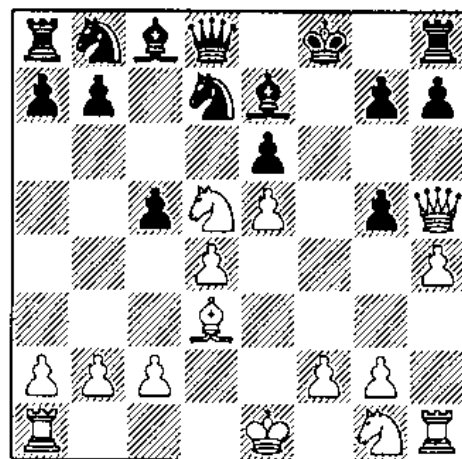
A

7.♙d3



An extremely sharp piece sacrifice. If Black accepts it he has to face a tremendous attack: 7...fxg5? 8.♙h5+ ♔f8 9.♞h3 gxh4 10.♞f3+

♖f6 11. ♖h3! ♔g8 (11... ♗e8
 12. ♗xh4 ♔g8 13. exf6 ♙xf6
 14. ♗xf6! gxf6 15. ♗xf6 is over-
 whelming—Alekhine) 12. exf6 ♙xf6
 13. ♖g5 ♗e7 14. ♙xh7+ ♔f8
 15. ♖xd5! exd5+ 16. ♖f1 ♙e6
 17. ♖xe6+ ♗xe6 18. ♗e1 ♗c6
 19. ♗fe3 ♖a6 20. ♗f5 ♗d8 21. ♗e6
 ♗d6 22. ♙g6 and White should win;
 Schwager-Zysset, corr. 1959.



7...c5!

Black isn't obliged to take the bishop; he continues his attack on the centre.

8. ♗h5+

If 8. ♙h6, Black has 8...0-0 9. ♗g4 ♗f7 10. ♖xd5 cxd4 with counterplay.

The exchange 8. exf6 ♖xf6 leads to variation C.

8...♖f8 9. ♖xd5

A tempting sacrifice, but White too is taking a risk. A simpler line is 9. exf6 ♖xf6 10. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 11. dxc5 ♖d7 (stronger than 11... ♗a5?! 12. 0-0-0 ♙xc3 13. bxc3 ♖d7 14. ♖f3 ♖f6 15. ♗e5 with a clear plus for White; in this line 12... ♖c6 +/- is relatively sounder) 12. ♖ge2 ♖xc5 13. 0-0-0, and White has prospects of working up an initiative (Keres).

9...fxg5

10. hxg5

The game Panov-Yudovich, USSR (ch) 1937, cast doubt on White's sacrificial play: 10. ♗h3 g4! 11. ♖f4 ♖xe5! 12. dxe5 gxh3 13. ♙xh7? ♗xh7 14. ♗xh7 h2, and White was lost.

In their analysis Belavenets and Yudovich showed that White's alternatives on move 13 are also inadequate: 13. 0-0-0 h2 14. ♖gh3 ♖c6 15. ♖g6+ hxg6 16. ♗xh8+ ♖f7 17. ♙xg6+ ♖xg6 18. ♖f4+ ♖f7 19. ♗h5+ ♔g8 20. ♗xd8+ ♖xd8, or 13. ♖gxh3 ♔g8 14. ♙c4 g6 15. ♗g4 ♖c6! 16. ♙xe6+ ♙xe6 17. ♗xe6+ ♖g7. In both cases Black repels the threats and emerges with a material plus.

10...♖xc5!?

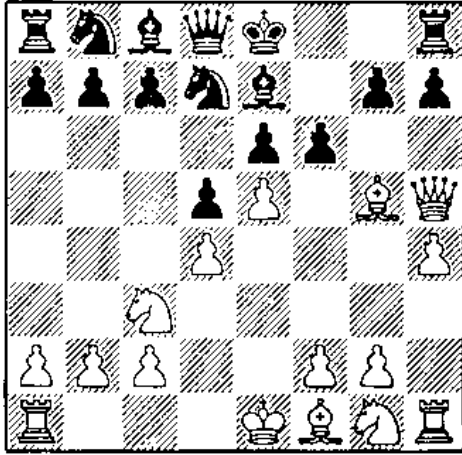
After 10... ♙xg5 11. ♖h3 ♙h6 12. ♖df4 ♖b6 13. g4 White has a dangerous attack.

11. dxe5 ♗xd5

Black has possibilities of defence (Keres).

B

7. ♖h5+



This intermediate check—which relies on the fact that 7...g6 8.exf6 gxh5? 9.fxe7 ♖xe7 10.♔xe7 ♚xe7 11.♘h3 is unfavourable for Black—was first seen in a game Alexander-Milner-Barry, England 1939, and was analysed in detail by the Belorussian master Silich. It is currently thought to be White's best continuation.

7... ♖f8

As already mentioned, Black is compelled to forgo castling, since 7...g6 8.exf6 ♘xf6 weakens his dark squares and concedes the e5-point to White: 9.♖e2 c5 (after 9...h6 10.♔f4 c5 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.♘b5 ♖a5+ 13.c3 cxd4 14.♘fxd4 ♘xd4 15.♘xd4 ♖f7 16.g3 Black has an insecure king position to add to his other positional concessions) 10.dxc5 ♘c6 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.♘f3 (also 12.♘h3 +/- Sanguinetti-Benko, Argentina 1954) 12...♔d7 13.g3 ♔e8 14.♔h3 ♔xc5 15.♘e5.

White's control of the blockading square e5 guarantees him a plus.

8.exf6 ♘xf6

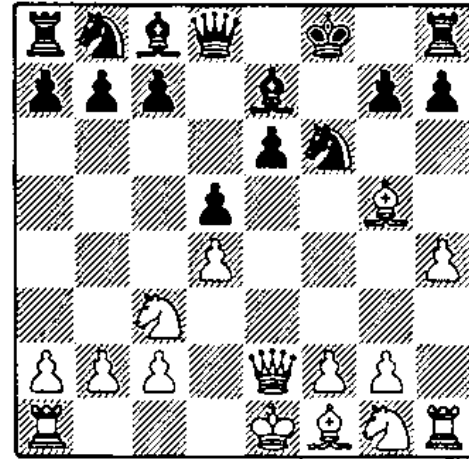
Now White's main continuations are:

B1 9.♖e2

B2 9.♖f3

B1

9.♖e2



White takes the weakened e5-point under control.

9...c5

The natural pawn attack against the centre is Black's best continuation. Silich also analysed some other possibilities:

a) 9... ♖f7?! 10.0-0-0 ♔e8
 11.♔xf6 ♔xf6 12.♖h5+ ♚g8
 13.♔d3 g6 14.♔xg6 hxg6
 15.♖xg6+ ♚h8 16.♘f3 ♖e7
 17.♘g5 ♔f8 18.♔d3 with a powerful attack.

b) 9...♙b4 10.♖h3 c5 11.dxc5 ♗c6 (11...d4 is dangerous; White has a strong attack after 12.0-0-0 e5 13.♖g3 ♙xc3 14.♖xc3 ♗a5 15.♗f3!) 12.0-0-0 ♙xc5 13.♗f3 ♙e7 14.♗e5 with advantage to White.

10.dxc5 ♗a6

The pawn sacrifice 10...b6 is also seen. It is best declined with 11.c6 ♗xc6 12.♗f3 ♗f7 13.♙f4 ♙d6?! (a sounder move is 13...♖f8+/=) 14.♙xd6 ♗xd6 15.0-0-0 ♖e8 16.♗b5 ♗b8 17.h5 h6 18.♗bd4 ♗xd4 19.♗e5+! ♗g8 20.♖xd4, and having achieved total occupation of the central squares, White gained the advantage in Stefansson-Bricard, Iceland-France 1993.

Another inadequate line is 10...♗c6 11.0-0-0 ♗a5 12.♗f3 b6 (12...♙xc5 13.♙xf6 gxf6 14.♖h3) 13.♙f4 ♙xc5 14.♗e5 with advantage to White (Suetin).

11.♗f3 ♗xc5 12.0-0-0

Quite a good alternative is 12.g3 ♗ce4 13.♗xe4 ♗xe4 14.♗e5 +/=.

12...b5 13.♗e3!

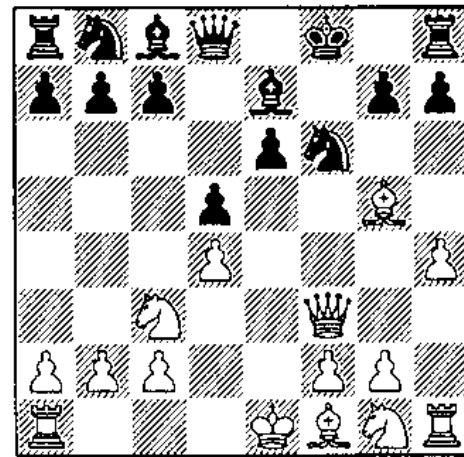
Acceptance of the pawn sacrifice with 13.♗xb5?! gives Black sufficient counterplay after 13...♖b8 14.♗bd4 ♗a5; Spassky-Guimard, Goteborg (izt) 1955.

13...b4 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♗h6+ ♗f7 16.♗b5

White has some advantage (Bondarevsky).

B2

9 ♗f3



With this retreat White pins the black knight but fails to control the important e5-point. This makes it easier for Black to organize counterplay.

9...c5 10.dxc5 b6

The most energetic method. The quiet 10...♗d7 11.0-0-0 ♗xc5 12.♗h3 ♙d7 13.♗e3 gives White a solid positional edge; Alexander-Taylor, Brighton 1938. However, it is worth considering 10...♗c6 11.0-0-0 b6 12.h5 (stronger than 12.♗ge2 bxc5 13.♗f4 ♗d4 14.♗e3 ♖b8, and Black seizes the initiative; Portela-Gomez, Madrid 1992) 12...bxc5 13.h6 ♗d4 with chances for both sides.

11.h5! h6

Forcing the bishop to declare its intentions is useful. After 11...bxc5 12.h6 g6 13.0-0-0 ♗d7 14.♖e1 ♗b6 15.♙b5, the advantage is with White; Unzicker-Stahlberg, Stockholm 1960.

12. ♖xf6

The retreat 12. ♖h4 ♘c6 13. ♗h3 bxc5 14. ♗f4 ♗e5 15. ♖e2 ♖d6 16. ♖g3 ♗f7 17. 0-0-0 ♚e8 18. ♗d3 ♗xd3+ 19. ♗xd3 ♚b8 allows Black his full share of the play; Arnason-Bricard, Iceland-France 1993.

12... ♖xf6 13. ♗h3 ♘c6 14. ♗f4 ♗d4!

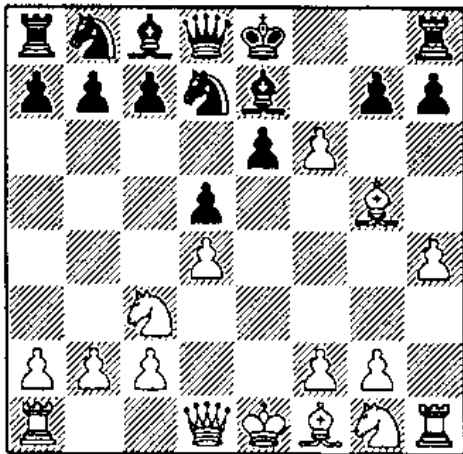
Stronger than 14... bxc5 15. ♖d3 ♗e5 16. ♗g6+ ♗xg6 17. ♖xg6 with an obvious plus for White; Keres-Stahlberg, telex 1960.

15. ♗d1 bxc5 16. ♗g6+ ♗g8 17. ♗xh8 ♗h8 18. ♖d3 e5

Black's mobile pawn centre provides full compensation for the exchange sacrifice (Keres).

C

7. exf6



Clearing the centre, White seeks active piece play. He will try to

profit from the weakening of e5. Black too, however, obtains a free game.

7... ♗xf6 8. ♖d3

The transposition 8. ♗f3 c5 9. dxc5 ♘c6 10. ♖d3 is also seen. There is little point in 10. ♖b5, which merely helps Black's queenside play after the opponents castle on opposite wings: 10... ♖xc5 11. ♗e2 0-0 12. 0-0-0 ♗a5 13. h5?! (13. ♗b1 is more logical) 13... ♖b4 14. ♖d3? (he had to retreat with 14. ♖d2 =/+) 14... ♗e4! and Black gained the upper hand in Chica-Gabrilovich, corr. 1984.

8... c5 9. dxc5 ♘c6 10. ♗f3

With 10. ♗h3 ♗a5 White forfeits control of the centre, facilitating Black's defence:

a) 11. ♖d2 ♗xc5 12. ♗f4 0-0 13. ♗e2 ♗d4 and Black obtained the better game in Yates-Maroczy, New York 1924. See Illustrative Game 27.

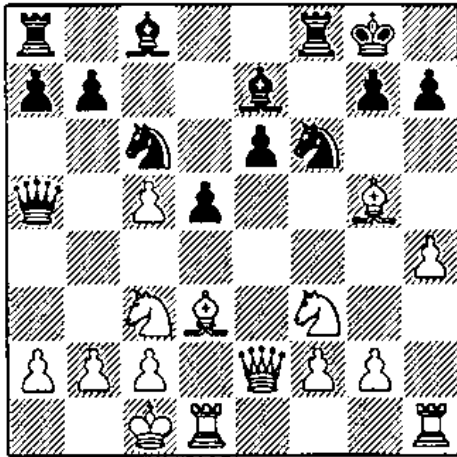
b) 11. ♗d2 ♗xc5 12. 0-0 0-0 13. ♚a1 e5 with an excellent game; Panov-Belavenets, USSR (ch) 1937.

10... 0-0

Queenside castling is also possible: 10... ♖xc5 11. ♗e2 ♗e7 12. 0-0-0 ♖d7 13. h5 0-0-0 with chances for both sides; Estrin-Liliental, Moscow 1952.

11. ♗e2 ♗a5 12. 0-0-0

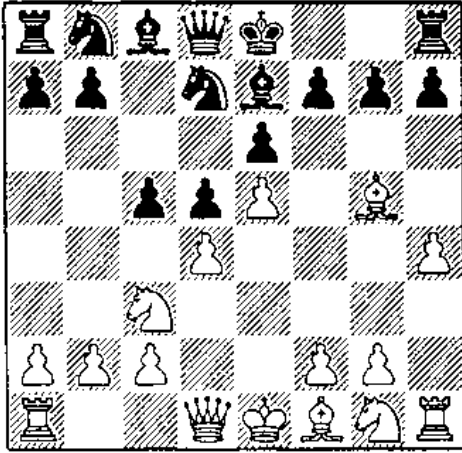
The Classical French



In this double-edged position Black has to proceed with caution. In a game Lejlic-Raicevic, Yugoslavia 1988, he played an over-hasty 12...b6 and came under a dangerous attack after 13. ♖xf6 gxf6 14. ♘g5! fxg5 15. ♗h5 ♜f7 16. hxg5. It was more logical to finish his development with 12...♗d7, which preserves chances of counterplay.

10 6...c5

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4 c5



This sharp continuation is one of the most important replies to the Chatard-Alekhine Attack. Black assaults the d4-pawn but allows White the possibility of a knight sortie to b5; this will practically force Black to choose between keeping his king in the centre and going in for an extremely sharp exchange sacrifice. White's main choices are:

- A 7.♙xe7
- B 7.♘b5

After 7.♙g4 ♔f8! (7...f5 8.♙h5+ g6 9.♙h6 ♙f8 10.♙xd8 ♙xh6 11.♙g5 gives White the superior ending; Liliental-Spielmann, Sitges

1934) 8.♘f3 (after 8.♙xe7+ ♙xe7 Black has a good game) 8...♘c6 9.♙f4 cxd4 10.♘b5 f6 (better than the illogical 10...a6 11.♘bxd4 ♘c5 12.0-0-0 +/- Medina-Guimard, Argentina 1948) 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♘bxd4 ♙d6, Black succeeds in freeing himself.

A

7.♙xe7

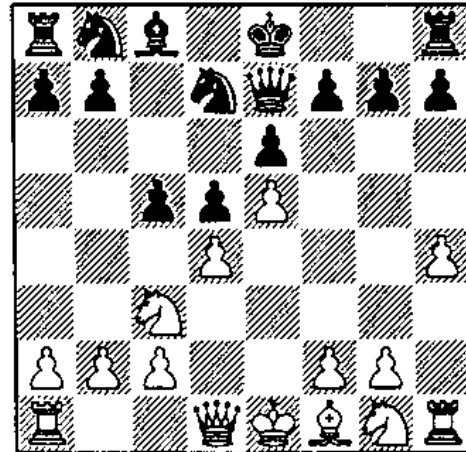
This is considered White's best line, forcing Black to choose between two strategies:

A1 7...♙xe7

A2 7...♙xe7

A1

7...♙xe7



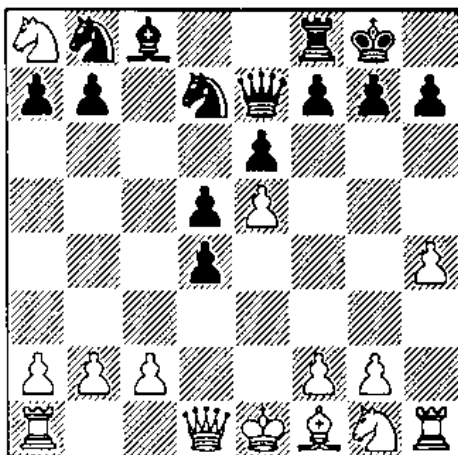
The Classical French

A risky line. In the interests of destroying White's pawn centre Black shows his readiness to sacrifice a rook, hoping to pick up the knight on a8.

8. ♖b5 0-0

Black clearly cannot be content with defensive moves like 8... ♔d8?! 9. f4 cxd4 10. ♖d2 ♘c6 11. ♗f3 ♖b4 12. 0-0-0, or 8... ♖d8?! 9. ♗d6+ ♔e7 10. ♖h5 ♖f8 11. ♖h3. In either case White has a large plus.

9. ♗c7 cxd4 10. ♗xa8



The critical position of the variation. Its logic suggests that Black must strive to hold on to the d4-pawn as the basis for a mobile pawn centre. White will naturally try to prevent this.

10... f6

The most popular continuation. Black tries to conquer the central points without delay. This comes across vividly in the variation

11. ♗c7 fxe5 12. ♗b5 (otherwise 12... a6, and the knight can't be extricated) 12... ♗f6 (12... a6 is weaker in view of 13. ♗xd4 cxd4 14. ♖xd4 or 13. ♗xa7! ♖b4+ 14. ♖d2, and Black has insufficient compensation). Black is aiming at e4. The cost, however, is a rook.

In other lines it is harder for Black to organize his counterplay:

a) White's simplest answer to 10... ♗c6 is 11. ♗f3! f6 12. ♗xd4 fxe5 13. ♗xe6! ♖xe6 14. ♗c7 and 15. ♖xd5+ with a big advantage (Stahlberg).

b) 10... ♖b4+ is also considered inadequate: 11. ♖d2 ♖xb2 12. ♖d1 (12. ♖c1, threatening c2-c3, is also good) 12... ♗c6 13. ♗f3 ♗c5 14. ♗d3 ♗d7 15. ♗c7 ♖c8 16. ♗xd5! (in Christoffel-Guimard, Groningen 1946, Black achieved equality after 16. ♗b5 ♗xd3+ 17. cxd3 ♖xb5) 16... exd5 17. 0-0 with advantage to White.

c) After 10... ♗xe5 11. ♖xd4 ♗bc6 12. ♖d2 Black wins the knight but is deprived of his mobility in the centre:

c1) 12... b6? 13. ♗e2 ♗b7 14. ♗f3 (14. ♗xb6 axb6 15. ♗f3 ♗d7 16. 0-0-0 is even stronger) 14... ♖xa8 15. ♗xe5 ♗xe5 16. 0-0-0 ♖c8 17. ♖h3 ♗c6 18. ♗b1 e5 19. f4! with advantage; Riumin-Liliental, Moscow 1935.

c2) 12... ♖d6 13. ♗e2 (or 13. 0-0-0 ♗d7 14. f4 ♗g4 15. ♗h3 ♖xa8 16. ♗f2 +/- Khalifman) 13... ♗d7 14. h5 f6 15. 0-0-0 ♗f7 16. f4 ♖xa8 17. ♗f3 ♗h6 18. ♗d4 ♗e7 19. g4, and White has an attack in addition

to being the exchange up; Khalifman-Levin, Riga 1988.

11. ♖xd4

Similarly after 11. exf6 ♜xf6 12. ♖xd4, Black doesn't succeed in picking up the knight in favourable circumstances: 12... ♖c6 13. ♖a4 ♜e4 14. ♜h3 e5 15. ♙d3 ♖c5 (15... ♙xh3 16. ♙xe4 ♙e6 17. ♙d3 ♖xa8 looks better, but Black still has nothing to speak of) 16. ♖a3 e4 17. ♙f1 b6 18. 0-0-0 and Black has no compensation for the exchange; Rezan-Basaric, Zagreb 1997.

11... fxe5

Practice has also seen 11... ♖c6 12. ♖d2 fxe5 13. 0-0-0 (13. ♖c7 is dangerous; after 13... ♜f6 14. ♖b5 ♜e4 Black's activity is menacing) 13... ♜f6 14. f3 ♖d6 15. ♜e2 ♙d7 16. ♖c3 ♖xa8 17. ♜e4! ♖e7 (17... ♜xe4 18. dxe4 ♜e7 was a little more precise) 18. ♜xf6+ ♖xf6 19. ♙b5! and Black has insufficient compensation for the exchange; Bronstein-Stahlberg, Budapest (Candidates) 1950.

12. ♖d2

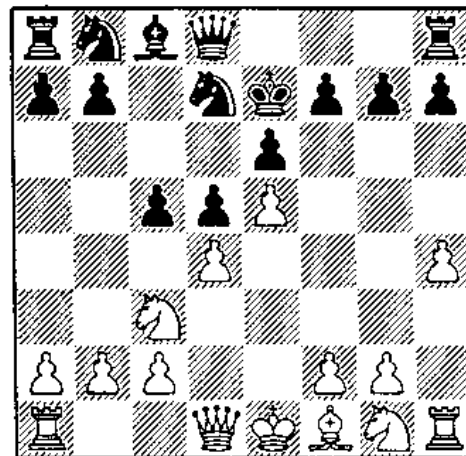
White shouldn't abandon the centre. After 12. ♖xa7?! ♖b4+ 13. ♙d1 ♖xb2, Black's initiative grows: 14. ♖c1 ♖c6 15. ♖e3 ♜f6 16. f3 ♜g4 17. ♖b6 ♖a3, with a view to 18. ♙d3 e4 with advantage. See Planinc-Raicevic, Yugoslav Championship 1978 (Illustrative Game 28).

12... ♖c5 13. f3 ♖c6 14. 0-0-0 ♖d6 15. ♜e2 ♙d7 16. ♖c3 ♖xa8 17. ♜e4 ♖f8 18. ♜xc5 ♖xc5 19. ♙b1

The difference between this and the similar position in Bronstein-Stahlberg is that Black has preserved a knight from exchange. White's chances should nonetheless be preferred; Trapl-Raicevic, Decin 1979.

A2

7... ♙xe7



By renouncing castling Black avoids the exchange sacrifice and makes rapid development possible. The closed nature of the position means that White can't get at the king quickly. All the same Black will be obliged to evacuate it from the centre. This will take time and allow White to maintain the initiative.

8.f4

One of the first games in which this variation was tried went 8. ♙b5

The Classical French

cxd4 9. ♖xd4 ♘c6 10. ♗xc6 bxc6 11. 0-0-0 ♗b6, and Black obtained a comfortable position; Reti-Euwe, Scheveningen 1923.

The pawn move supporting the centre is fully in keeping with the position, and is just as good as in the Classical System proper. Some other lines have also been tried, though. Of these, the following are in accordance with the modern strategy:

a) 8. ♘f3 cxd4 9. ♖xd4 ♘c6 10. ♗f4 (sacrificing a pawn for the initiative) 10... ♗c7 11. 0-0-0 ♘dx5 12. ♖b1 (stronger than 12. ♗g3 ♖f8 =/+ Chigvintsev-Ulybin, Russia Cup 1997) 12... ♗b8 13. ♗b5 ♘xf3 14. ♗xf3 a6 15. ♗a4 ♗d8 16. ♗he1 ♖f8 occurred in Kovalyov-Dreev, Simferopol 1988. White's activity compensates for the sacrificed pawn, but Black's position is free of weaknesses.

b) 8. dxc5 ♘xe5 (another possibility is 8... ♗a5 9. ♗d2 ♘c6 10. ♗g5+ ♖f8, but a curious miniature "deserves" to be mentioned too: 9... h6?? 10. ♘d5+ 1-0 Velimirovic-Ristic, Pozarevac 1995) 9. ♗d2 ♘bc6 10. 0-0-0 ♗e8 11. h5 (there is no danger to Black in 11. ♘b5 ♖f8 12. ♘d6 ♗e7 followed by b7-b6 =) 11... h6 12. f4 ♘d7 13. ♗b5 ♘xc5 14. ♘f3 (not 14. ♗e3? d4 and Black gains the advantage; Hector-Gleizerov, Mariehamn 1997) 14... a6 15. ♗xc6 bxc6 16. ♗d4 ♗d6 17. ♘e5, and White has some compensation for the pawn.

Early raids by the white queen give Black no particular problems:

c) 8. ♗g4 ♖f8! (Black can scarcely avoid this move; if 8... ♘c6, then quite apart from the pleasant ending after 9. ♗g5+ ♖f8 10. ♗xd8+ ♘xd8 11. f4 ♘c6 12. ♘f3 a6 13. 0-0-0 +/- Liliental-Menchik, Moscow 1936, White can also open the position with 9. dxc5 ♘dx5 10. ♗xg7 ♗g8 11. ♗xh7 ♗d7 12. 0-0-0 ♗a5 13. ♗h6 ♗g6 14. ♗e3 ♘g4 15. ♗e1 ♖f8 16. f3 ♘f6 17. ♘h3—when Black's king is the less secure, Benjamin-Seirawan, USA Championship 1991) 9. ♘f3 (White similarly gains nothing from 9. dxc5 ♘c6 10. f4 ♗a5 =) 9... cxd4 10. ♖xd4 (in the event of 10. ♘b5 ♘c6 11. ♗f4 f6 12. exf6 ♗xf6 Black easily equalizes; Loffler-B.Schmidt, Baden-Baden 1987) 10... ♗b6! (in this case the transition to an ending suits Black, whereas after 10... ♘c6 11. ♗f4 ♗c7 12. ♘b5 ♗b8 13. ♘d6 f6 14. ♘xc8 ♗xc8 15. exf6 ♘xf6 16. 0-0-0 he still has problems with his king) 11. ♗xb6 axb6! (on 11... ♘xb6, White manages to protect his e-pawn with 12. ♘d2! ♘c6 13. f4 ♗d7 14. 0-0-0, guaranteeing him a plus) 12. 0-0-0 ♘c6 13. ♗e1 d4 14. ♘b5 ♗xa2, and Black secures equal chances.

d) 8. ♗h5?! ♘c6 9. dxc5 ♘dx5 10. 0-0-0, and now in D.Frolov-Gleizerov, St Petersburg 1995, Black tried 10... g6?! to drive the queen away, but this is not yet possible: 11. ♗h6 f6 12. ♗g7+ ♘f7 13. ♘e4 f5 14. ♘g5+ ♗f8 15. ♗c3. The queen returns after creating serious weaknesses in the black king's cover. Instead Svidler

recommends 10...♖a5!, which is more in the spirit of the variation:

d1) 11.f4 ♘d7 12.f5 ♘f6 13.♗g5 ♗xc5 14.♘f3 h6 and White has to retreat with material loss, since after 15.♗xg7? ♗e3+ 16.♔b1 ♚g8 the queen is trapped, and the same threat persists after 15.♗g3 ♗d6 16.♗xg7? ♘d7.

d2) 11.♗g5+ ♔f8 12.♘f3 ♘xf3 13.gxf3 ♗xc5 14.♚g1 g6 15.♘e4 ♗e7 16.♗h6+ ♔g8, and Black parries the threats while White's wrecked pawn position is beyond repair.

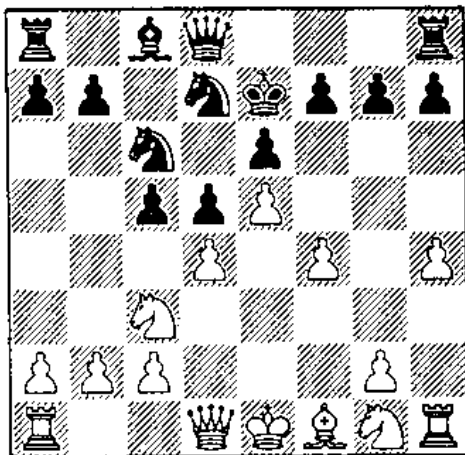
d3) 11.♙b5 d4 12.♙xc6 ♘xc6 13.♘e4 ♗xa2 with advantage to Black.

In answer to 8.f4 Black has tried various methods of striking at the d4-point, but has failed to obtain sufficient compensation for his shaky king position. We consider:

- A21 8...♘c6
- A22 8...♗b6
- A23 8...cxd4

A21

8...♘c6



This natural developing move practically forces White to exchange on c5, but then that fits in with his basic strategy.

9.dxc5

White does best to resolve the tension at once and utilize d4 for his knight. If he tries to hold out with 9.♘f3 a6 10.♗d2 b5, Black is able to work up a queenside initiative. Here are some examples:

a) 11.♗f2 ♗a5 12.♙d3 ♗b4 (12...b4 is also good: 13.♘d1 c4 14.♙f1 b3+ 15.♗d2 ♘b4 16.♘e3 bxc2 17.♙e2 ♚b8 18.0-0 ♘c6 19.♗xc2 ♘b6, or 13...b3+ 14.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 15.♔xd2 bxc2 16.♙xc2 ♘xd4 17.♘xd4 cxd4 18.♔d3, and in both cases Black has his full share of the play—Maigorov) 13.0-0-0 c4 14.♙e2 ♘b6 15.a3 (when the players attack on opposite wings, every tempo is important; after 15.♔b1 ♚b8 16.a3 ♗a5 17.g4 b4 18.axb4 ♗xb4 19.♘a2 ♗a5, Black is ahead with his aggressive plan) 15...♗a5 16.h5 b4 17.axb4 ♗xb4 18.h6 occurred in Maigorov-Korystov, corr. 1996 (Illustrative Game 29). Black should now have blocked the kingside with 18...g6!, when the position would have offered chances to both sides.

b) 11.dxc5 (it is now a little late for this exchange) 11...♘xc5 12.0-0-0 ♗b6 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4 b4 15.♘e2 a5 16.♚h3 ♙a6 17.♔b1 ♚ab8 18.♚f3 ♘e4 19.♗xb6 ♚xb6, and Black has the pleasanter ending; L.Guliev-Vedder, European Junior Championship 1993.

9...♖xc5

After 9...♖a5 Black faces serious difficulties, as White gets in first with an attack against the king:

a) 10.♗f3 ♖xc5 11.♖d2 a6 12.0-0-0 b5 13.♗e2 ♘b7 14.♗ed4 ♜ac8 15.♗xc6 ♖xc6 16.♗d4 ♖b6 17.f5 with a dangerous initiative; Gutop-Meyllard, corr. 1982/84.

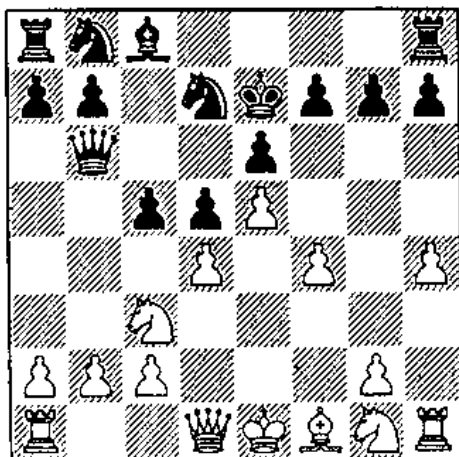
b) 10.♖d2 ♗xc5 11.♗f3 ♜d8 12.♗d4 ♖f8 13.0-0-0 ♘d7 14.♞h3 a6 15.♞g3 b5 16.f5! ♗xd4 17.♖xd4 b4 18.♗xd5! and White shatters the Black defences; von Blow-Vigh, Holland 1996.

10.♖g4 ♖f8 11.0-0-0 ♘d7
12.♗f3 ♜c8 13.♞h3 h5 14.♖g3 g6
15.♖f2

And now in Riumin-Stahlberg, Moscow 1935, Black played the inferior 15...♖b6?, and after 16.♗d4! ♗xd4 17.♖xd4 his counter-attack was clearly lagging behind. However, even after the better 15...♖a5 16.♗d4, White's chances should be preferred.

A22

8...♖b6



The attack on the b2-pawn draws White into a forced variation but is fairly risky, since in chasing after material Black falls behind in development.

9.♗f3

White accepts the challenge. The positional solution with 9.♗a4 ♖c6 10.♗xc5 ♗xc5 11.dxc5 ♖xc5 12.♖d2 ♗c6 13.0-0-0 ♘d7 14.♖b1 also gives White the superior position, but Black retains some counter-attacking resources.

9...♖xb2

Here 9...♗c6 is well answered by 10.♗a4 ♖a5+ 11.c3 cxd4 12.b4 with a significant advantage in space.

10.♗b5 a6

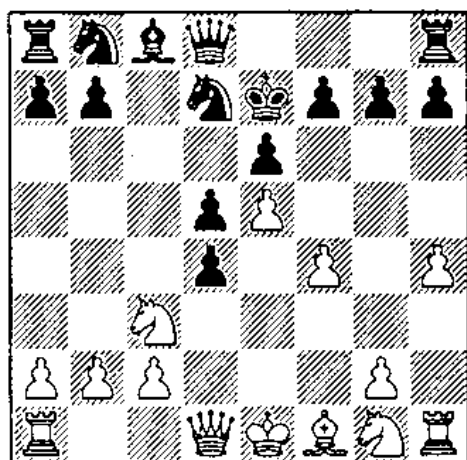
Extremely sharp play, which is almost impossible to assess, results from 10...♖b4+ 11.♖f2 a6 (or 11...♗c6 12.c4 +/-) 12.♗c7 ♜a7 13.c4 ♖d8 (13...♗b6?! 14.cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♗xd5+ exd5 16.dxc5 leaves White with a clear plus) 14.cxd5 ♖xc7 15.d6+. White obtains a dangerous attack for the sacrificed piece (Nogueiras, Gonzales).

11.♞b1 ♖xa2 12.♗d6 ♖a5+
13.♖f2 ♗c6 14.♞h3 cxd4 15.♘d3
♖c7 16.♖c1

White's initiative compensates for the material sacrificed; Matulovic-Zaradic, Zagreb 1955.

A23

8...cxd4



In conjunction with the following queen manoeuvre, this exchange appears to be Black's safest course.

9. ♖xd4 ♜b6

This move has to be played at once, as after 9...♘c6 10. ♖d2 White avoids the queen exchange and preserves the better chances:

a) 10...♖a5 11. ♘f3 ♙d8 12. ♗h3 ♜f8 13. ♙d3 ♘b6 14. ♘b5 and the knight penetrates to d6; Levenfish-Menchik, Moscow 1935.

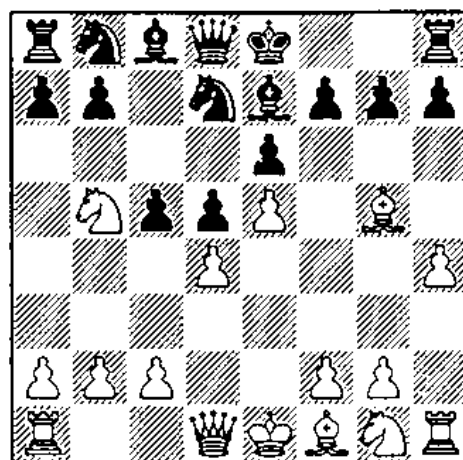
b) 10...♖b6 11. 0-0-0 ♘c5 12. ♘f3 ♙d7 13. f5! with a dangerous attack (Rabinovich).

10. ♖xb6 ♘xb6 11. h5 h6 12. ♘b5 ♘c6 13. ♘f3 ♙d7 14. b3 a6 15. ♘bd4 ♘xd4 16. ♘xd4

White has somewhat the better endgame; Nunn-Seirawan, Cannes (rapid) 1992.

B

7. ♘b5



This excursion is sharp but not very promising, as White's development is somewhat delayed and Black can effectively utilize his resources for undermining the centre.

7...f6!

The most thematic. Other moves allow White to establish his knight on d6 with chances of an attack:

a) 7...♘c6 8. ♘d6+ ♜f8 9. ♙xe7+ ♜xe7 10. f4! ♘xd4 11. c3 ♘c6 12. ♙d3 f6 13. ♘f3 c4 (or 13...fxe5 14. ♘g5! +/-) 14. ♙c2 ♖b6 15. ♖d2! ♖xb2 16. 0-0, and White's attack more than compensates for the pawn; Balogh-Busch, corr. 1932/33.

b) 7...cxd4 8. ♘d6+ ♜f8 9. ♖h5 (it's also worth considering 9. ♙xe7+ ♖xe7 10. ♘xc8 ♖b4+ 11. ♖d2 ♖xb2 12. ♙d1 ♘c6 13. ♘d6 ♘dxe5 14. ♘b5, when White's piece is stronger than Black's pawns) 9...♘e5 10. ♙xe7+ ♖xe7 11. ♖xe5 ♘c6 12. ♖g3 e5 13. ♖a3 ♙e6 14. ♙b5 with the initiative; G.Kuzmin-A.Huzman, Ukrainian Championship 1989.

The Classical French

8.♔d3

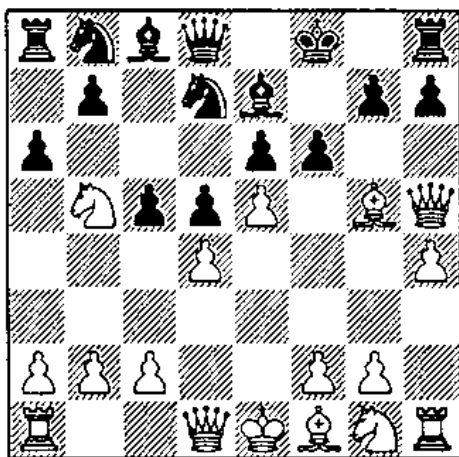
8.exf6 is too tame: 8...♖xf6 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.♙f4 0-0 11.♙c7 ♚d7 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.♙xe5 a6 14.♘c3 b5 15.a3 ♙d6, as in B.Ivanovic-Miljanic, Niksic 1991, with an easy game for Black.

White therefore continues with his attack, having in mind 8...fxg5 9.♚h5+ ♔f8 10.hxg5 ♙xg5 11.♘d6.

8...a6

8...cxd4?! is dubious. A game Guimard-Stahlberg, Mar-del-Plata 1942, continued 9.♚h5+ ♔f8 10.exf6 ♖xf6 11.♚e2 ♙b4+ 12.♔f1 ♘c6 13.♘f3, and now if Black plays the natural 13...♙c5, White develops his initiative with 14.♙f4 ♘e8 15.c3!.

9.♚h5+ ♔f8



10.♞h3

In such situations White wants to bring a knight to f4, but in this case there is no time: after 10.♘h3? cxd4 11.♘f4 ♘xe5 12.♘d4 ♚b6 his

attack comes to a standstill; Ragozin-Yanofsky, Stockholm (izt) 1948. He is therefore committed to a forced variation in which he sacrifices two pieces.

10...axb5

10...cxd4 has hardly been investigated. A curiosity is the miniature Kapnisis-Ulybin, Greece 1997, which went 11.♘f3? axb5 12.♙h6 ♚a5+ 13.♙d2 ♙b4 0-1.

11.♙h6 ♚a5+

Black can also make White force a draw with 11...gxf6 12.♚xh6+ ♔f7 13.♚h5+.

12.♙d2 ♚c7

Black has freed d8 for the king, in case of 13.♙h6 gxf6 14.♚xh6+ ♔e8.

13.♞g3 cxd4 14.♘f3 ♘xe5 15.♞xg7! h6

The only move, as after 15...♘xf3? 16.♔d1! the black king is defenceless, while 15...♔xg7? loses to 16.♙h6+.

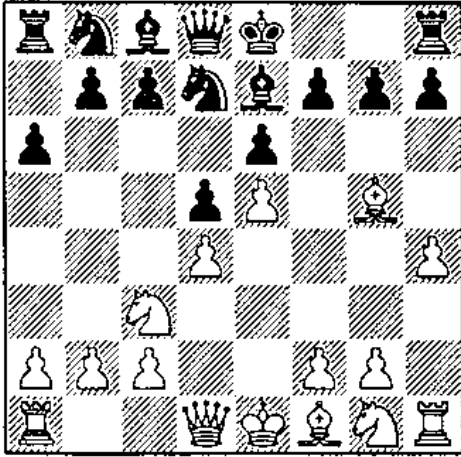
Now, however, 16.♙xh6? is met by 16...♞xh6! 17.♚xh6 ♙b4+.

16.♙h7! ♔xg7 17.♚xh6+ ♔f7 18.♚h5+ ♔g7 19.♚h6+ ½-½

Two games that ended like this were Rossetto-Stahlberg, Vina del Mar 1947, and Schlosser-Stangl, Altensteig 1992.

11 6...a6

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.h4 a6



Recommended by Geza Maroczy. Black prevents the knight sortie to b5 and prepares c7-c5. However, in such a dynamic position the cost of a tempo is too high, and White takes firm possession of the initiative.

7.♚g4

White is obliged to play vigorously. After the colourless 7.♗f3, Black makes use of his chances with 7...c5 8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.♙d3 ♗c6 10.♚d2 ♙d7 11.g4 b5 12.0-0-0 ♚a5 13.♙xe7 ♗xd3+ 14.cxd3 ♗xe7 15.♙b1 b4 16.♗e2 ♚b6 17.♗g3 ♞c8, and the game is level. Kapnisis-Sturm, 1993.

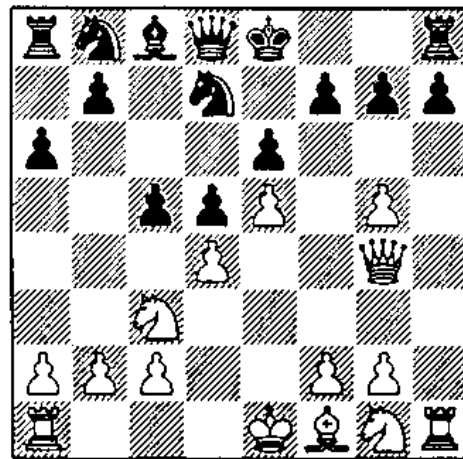
Black can meet the threat to his g-pawn in the following ways:

- A 7...♙xg5
- B 7...f5
- C 7...♙f8

The counter-thrust 7...h5 is justified only if White continues 8.♙xe7?! hxg4 9.♙xd8 ♙xd8 10.♗d1 c5 11.♗e3 ♗c6 12.♗xg4 ♗xd4 13.0-0-0 ♙e7 with equal chances; Krauseneck-Naumann, Germany 1993. By withdrawing with 8.♚g3 White gains the advantage.

A

7...♙xg5 8.hxg5 c5



Black has blocked the g-file and proceeds to attack the centre, permitting White to push his g-pawn on. He has no time to prevent this anyway; a further loss of tempo can have awkward consequences: 8...g6?! 9.♔d3 ♚e7 10.♘f3 c5 11.dxc5 ♚c6 12.0-0-0 ♘xc5 13.♚f4 ♔d7 14.♚h6 0-0-0 5.♚f6 and White had powerful pressure in Bogoljubow-Maroczy, San Remo 1930.

Now White's main continuations are:

A1 9.g6
A2 9.♘f3

The exchange 9.dxc5 has no independent significance if Black replies 9...♘c6; after 10.♘f3 this transposes into variation A2. On the other hand if Black captures with 9...♘xe5, he risks coming under a dangerous attack; 10.♚g3 ♘bc6 11.0-0-0, and now:

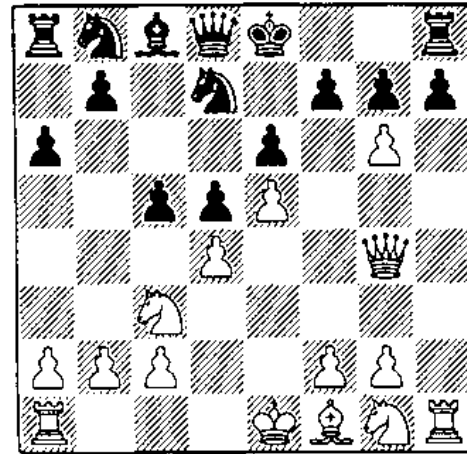
a) 11...♔d7 12.f4 ♘g6 13.f5 ♘ge7 14.fxe6 fxe6 15.♘f3 with unpleasant threats of g5-g6 and ♔f1-d3; Bosboom-Peek, Eindhoven 1986.

b) 11...f5 12.♘f3 ♘xf3 13.gxf3 ♚e7 14.♔d3 g6 15.♚he1 ♚xc5 16.♔xf5! gxf5 17.♘xd5 with decisive threats; Pliester-De Beer, Netherlands 1987.

c) 11...♚e7 12.f4 ♘d7 13.♘xd5! exd5 14.♚e1 and Black's position is ruined; Pliester-Giulian, Edinburgh 1988.

A1

9.g6



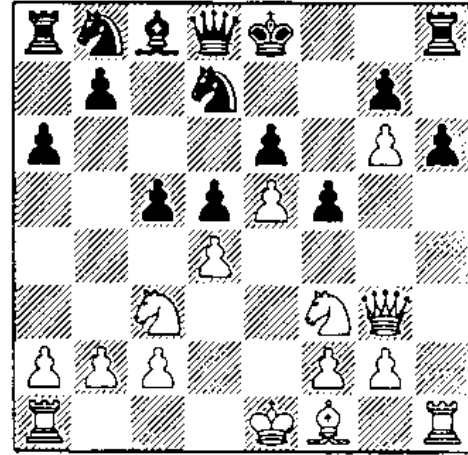
A forthright move, driving a "nail" into the Black position. The one drawback is that White commits himself to a specific pawn structure too early. This allows Black to count on successful defence with accurate play.

9...f5

Black forces the queen to retreat with loss of tempo and plans to block the kingside next move with 10...h6. However, this by no means guarantees security for Black on that part of the board. The presence of the pawn on g6 means that Black constantly has to worry about the threat of a rook sacrifice on h6. From White's point of view, of course, there is no point in opening the position with 10.exf6?! ♘f6 11.♚xh7, since the exposed queen on g4 facilitates Black's development. A game Murey-Gruzman, Moscow 1964, continued: 11...♘xh7 12.gxh7 ♚f8 (not

12...♖f6? because of 13.♗xd5) 13.♗d3 cxd4 14.♗f3 ♗c6 15.♗xd4 ♗e5 16.♖g3 ♗xd3+ 17.♖xd3 ♖h4 18.0-0-0 ♖xh7, and it is Black who has taken over the h-file. However, 11...♖f8 12.♖h3 cxd4 looks even stronger; with e6-e5 threatened, Black gains the advantage.

White has two ways of withdrawing his queen, each of which has its fine points:



A11 10.♖g3

A12 10.♖f4

A11

10.♖g3

After this move the queen is not blockading f4 and is rather decentralized—which can prove significant. In addition to the stock reply 10...h6, Black appears to have the sharp 10...cxd4. For example: 11.♖xh7 ♖g8 12.♗ce2 ♖a5+ 13.♗d1 ♗c6 14.f4 ♖b4 15.b3 ♗f8 and Black has everything in order; Kraft-Schmittziel, Geneva 1997.

10...h6 11.♗f3

11.0-0-0 is a little more flexible: 11...cxd4 12.♗ce2 ♗c6 13.♗f3, and now if Black avoids transposing into the main line with 13...0-0 14.♗exd4 and plays 13...♗c5 instead, there can follow 14.♗fxd4! ♗d7 15.♖e3 ♗xd4 16.♖xd4 ♖c7 17.♗f4 ♖c8 18.c3 0-0 19.♗b1. Having successfully constructed a dark-square blockade, White has the better game; Djurhuus-Kontic, Arnhem 1988.

11...0-0

After 11...♗c6 Black has to reckon with 12.♗g5!. Then 12...♖e7 13.♗f7 ♖f8 14.♗e2! cxd4 15.0-0-0, as in Landa-Gleizerov, Bled 1990, is a forlorn prospect for Black; while the bolder 12...♗xd4 13.♗f7 ♖a5 (hoping to gain the upper hand after 14.♗xh8?! ♗xc2+ 15.♗d1 ♗xa1 16.♗f7 d4) can be answered by 14.0-0-0!. A correspondence game Passos-Dutra Neto, 1993, continued 14...♖g8 15.♗b1 b5 16.♖h4 b4 17.♖xd4 cxd4 18.♗xd5! exd5 19.♗d6+ ♗f8 20.♗xf5 and White worked up a powerful attack.

At this point 11...cxd4 is premature; after 12.♗xd4 Black has to defend his e-pawn, which gives White tactical possibilities after 12...♖e7 13.0-0-0. For example: 13...♗c6? 14.♗xf5! exf5 15.♗xd5 ♖xe5 16.f4, and White obtained a very strong attack in Lukic-Rakic, Yugoslavia 1961.

12.0-0-0 ♗c6 13.♗e2 cxd4
14.♗exd4 f4!

The Classical French

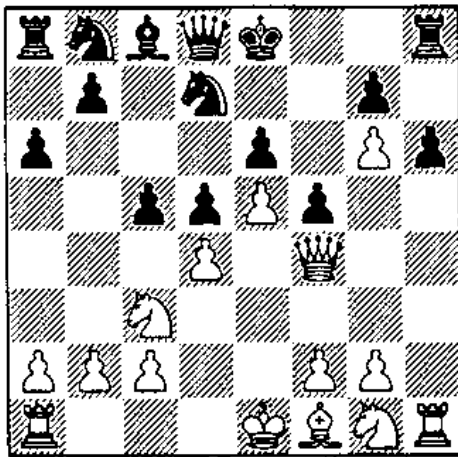
Cutting the queen off from the e-pawn and forcing a knight exchange that is welcome to Black; with the white queen on f4 this would if course be impossible.

15. ♖xc6 bxc6 16. ♕h4 ♕xh4
17. ♖xh4 c5 18. c3 a5 19. c4 ♖b6
20. cxd5 exd5 21. ♗d3 ♗a6

Black maintained the balance in Khalifman-M.Gurevich, Moscow (rapid) 1987.

A12

10 ♕f4 h6



11. ♖f3

The simplest answer to 11.dxc5 is 11... ♖xc5, since after 11...0-0 12.0-0-0 White has a plan for a co-ordinated attack on the king, using the a2-g8 diagonal and the h-file and involving sacrifices on d5 and h6:

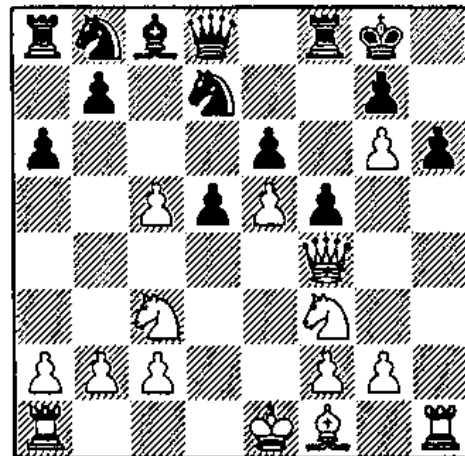
a) 12... ♖xc5?! 13. ♗c4! ♕e8 14. ♖xd5! exd5 (14... ♖e4 15. ♖xe4 fxe4 puts up more resistance, but after 16. ♕g4! ♖c6 17. ♗d6 Black cannot avoid further losses)

15. ♖xh6! gxh6 16. ♕xh6 ♖f7 17. ♖xd5 ♗e6 18. ♖f6+ ♖xf6 19. exf6 1-0 Nisipeanu-Floresan, Romania 1995.

b) 12... ♖c6 13. ♖xd5!? (if White pauses for 13. ♖f3, Black has time to defend: 13... ♖xc5 14. ♗c4 ♕e8 15. ♖xd5 ♖e4) 13... exd5 14. ♖xd5 ♖cxe5 15. ♗d6! (protecting the g-pawn) 15... ♕e7 16. ♖f3, and in view of the threat of ♗f1-c4(+) Black will find it hard to develop (Stoika).

11...0-0 12.dxc5

Or 12.0-0-0 cxd4 13. ♖e2 ♖c6 14. ♖g3 (if 14. ♖exd4, then 14... ♖c5 is good, heading for e4) 14... ♕e7 15. ♗d3 ♖e8 16. ♖h5 ♖f8 17. ♖h4 ♕c7 18. ♖e1 ♖d7 19. ♖f3 ♖f6! and White's attack has come to a dead end; Petrjelka-Marecek, corr. 1985.



12... ♖xc5!

This move has to be made in good time. After 12... ♖c6 13.0-0-0 it is already too late for 13... ♖xc5 in view of White's attack against d5:

14.♔c4! ♖e8 15.♙xd5! ♘e4
 16.♘d4 ♘xd4 17.♙xd4 and White
 has won a pawn, A.Kovacevic-
 Stamenkovic, Yugoslavia 1997. On
 the other hand an attempt to win the
 g-pawn involves definite risk. For
 example, the game Letzelter-As-
 mundsson, Buenos Aires (ol) 1978,
 went 13...♖e8 14.♙xh6 g6
 15.♖xh6 ♖e7 16.g7 ♙e8? (Black
 could have defended with
 16...♖xg7 17.♖xe6+ ♙f7 18.♖xd5
 ♘dx5, but now he loses quickly)
 17.♖h8+ ♖f7 18.♘xd5! exd5
 19.e6+ ♖xe6 20.♙e1+ ♘de5
 21.♘xe5 ♘xe5 22.♙xe5+ 1-0.

13.♙d3

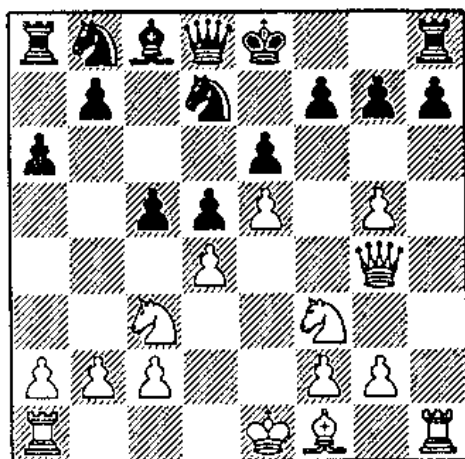
A good reply to 13.0-0-0 is
 13...♘e4.

13...♘c6 14.♘e2 ♖a5+ 15.♖f1
 ♘e4

Double-edged play is in prospect.
 See Van Riemsdijk-Hmadi, Manila
 (izt) 1990 (Illustrative Game 30).

A2

9.♘f3



This developing move leaves
 White with more options, including
 that of playing g5-g6 at a more suit-
 able moment.

9...♘c6

On 9...cxd4, White plays
 10.♖xd4 ♘c6 11.♖f4. Then it is
 risky for Black to win a pawn with
 11...♖b6 12.0-0-0 ♖xf2. The game
 Mirumian-Supatashvili, Ankara (zt)
 1995, went 13.♙d2 ♖c5 14.g6! fxg6
 15.♙d3 ♙f8 (things are no easier
 after 15...♘f8 16.♘g5 ♖e7
 17.♘h7) 16.♖g3 ♖e3 17.♙xh7
 ♘dx5 18.♙xg6+ ♖d8 19.♙e4
 ♙d7 20.♙xd5 exd5 21.♘xd5!, and
 White had a strong attack against
 the black king which was stuck in
 the centre. A somewhat sounder line
 is 11...♖c7 12.0-0-0 ♘dx5
 13.♘xe5 ♖xe5 14.♖xe5 ♘xe5, al-
 though again, after 15.♙e1, White
 regains his pawn with the better
 ending.

10.dxc5

Black can answer 10.g6 with
 10...cxd4 11.♙xh7 ♙g8 12.♘e2
 ♖a5+ 13.♖d1 ♖b4 with active
 counterplay, whereas 10...f5
 11.♖g3 h6 12.♘g5! would give
 white a dangerous initiative; this
 was examined under variation A11.

10...♘dx5 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5
 12.♖g3 ♘g6

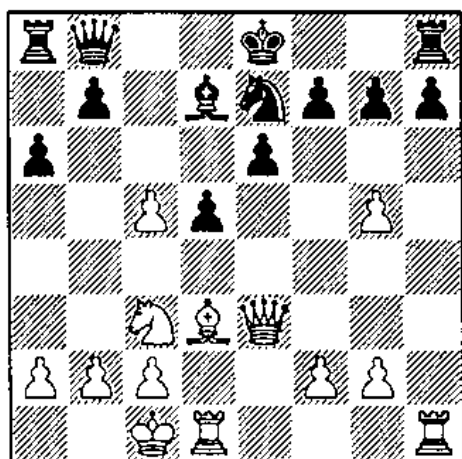
Black may also consider 12...♘d7
 13.0-0-0 ♘xc5. Although White re-
 gains his pawn with 14.g6 fxg6

The Classical French

15. ♖xh7 ♖xh7 16. ♗xg6+ ♔f8
 17. ♗xh7, His advantage is not
 great. For instance, the game Ivano-
 vic-Shaboian, Pula 1990 continued
 17... ♗g5+ 18. ♖d2 ♗h6 19. ♗xh6
 gxh6, and now White's best move
 was 20. f4 +/-.

13. 0-0-0 ♖d7 14. ♖d3 ♗b8
 15. ♗e3 ♘e7

15... ♗e5 is bad on account of
 16. ♘xd5! +/- Hector-J.Hansen,
 Gausdal (zt) 1987.



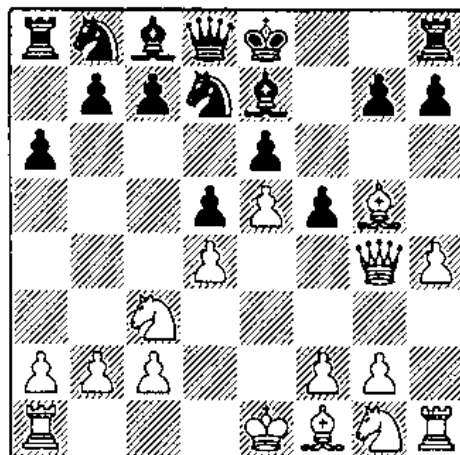
16. ♖xh7!? g6 17. ♖xg6 ♖xh1
 18. ♖xh1 ♘xg6 19. ♘xd5 ♖c6
 20. ♘b6

White's attack compensates for
 the sacrificed piece; Degraeve-
 M.Gurevich, Belfort 1997.

B

7...f5

Black immediately forces the
 queen to move, but this leads to a
 weakening of his kingside dark
 squares.



8. ♗h5+!

Surrendering the centre would as-
 sist Black's development: 8. exf6
 ♘xf6 9. ♗e2 0-0 10. 0-0-0 c5
 11. dxc5 ♖xc5, and Black had an
 easy game in Alexander-Gud-
 mundsson, Hastings 1946/47.

White also gains nothing from
 8. ♗g3 c5 9. dxc5 (or 9. ♖e3 0-0
 10. ♘ge2 ♘c6 =) 9... ♘c6 10. ♖f4
 0-0 11. ♖h6 ♖f7 12. ♘xd5 ♘dx5!
 13. ♘xe7+ ♗xe7, with chances for
 both sides (Keres).

8...g6 9. ♗h6 ♖xg5

A useful exchange. On 9... ♔f7,
 White can continue 10. ♖xe7 ♗xe7
 11. ♘f3 ♗f8 12. ♗e3 h6 13. 0-0-0 c5
 14. ♘xd5 cxd4 15. ♖xd4 ♘c6
 16. ♖d1 with considerable pressure;
 Vatnikov-Ladanyine-Karakas, Biel
 1994. Apart from this, he has the
 unpleasant flank attack 10. h5! ♘f8
 (it's too late for 10... ♖xg5? on ac-
 count of 11. hxg6+ ♔g8 12. gxh7+
 ♔f7 13. ♗h5+ ♔g7 14. ♘f3 ♖e7
 15. ♖e2 +- with the decisive threat
 of 16. ♗h6+ and 17. ♘g5+)

11.hxg6+ ♖xg6 12.♗xe7 ♜xe7
13.♜xh7+, and White emerges a
pawn up.

10.hxg5 ♜f7

Practice has also seen 10...♜e7
11.♗ge2 ♖c6 (11...♜f8 is wholly
passive; after 12.♜h4 c5 13.♗f4
♜f7 14.♖cxd5! White breaks the
position open) 12.0-0-0 ♗d8
13.♗f4 ♗f7 (13...♗f8? fails to
14.♖cxd5!) 14.♜h4 ♗b6 15.♗d3
c6 16.g4 with an attack; Regan-Tun-
galag, Moscow (ol) 1994.

11.♗ge2

White aims to bring this knight to
the blockading square f4. A strategy
of total constriction is also possible:
11.f4 ♗f8 12.♗f3 ♜g8 13.♗d3 ♜g7
14.♗e2 ♜g8 15.0-0-0 with the
better prospects for White, although
breaching the Black position is not
simple; Michalczak-Welker, Ger-
many 1995.

11...♗f8

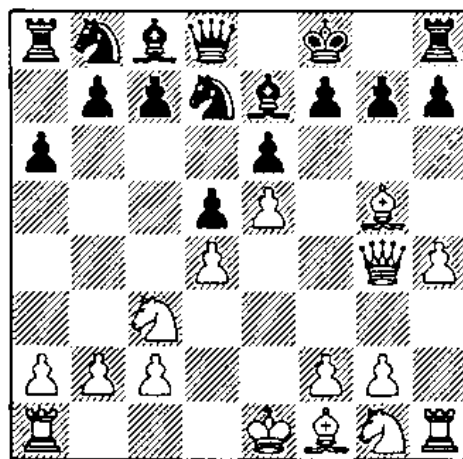
This is stronger than 11...c5?!
12.♗f4 ♗f8 13.dxc5 ♖c6 14.g4
♗xc5 15.♗e2 ♜c7 16.gxf5 ♗f3+
17.♗xf3 ♜xf4 18.f6 with a very
strong attack; Unzicker-Czerniak,
Amsterdam 1954.

12.0-0-0 ♜g8 13.g4

White has an attacking position,
but there have hardly been any seri-
ous practical tests.

7...♜f8

C



This drastic method of defending
the g-pawn leaves Black with a
wholly passive position, and rarely
occurs. White acquires an enduring
plus with no particular problems.

8.♗f3

This recommendation of Keres is
the currently favoured method of
fighting for the central squares in
anticipation of Black's c7-c5. Some
other lines are also of interest,
however:

a) 8.♗xe7+ ♜xe7 9.f4 f5 10.exf6
♗xf6 11.♜e2 c5 12.dxc5 ♖c6
13.♗f3 with the better game for
White; Panov-Belavenets, Moscow
1936.

b) 8.f4 c5 9.♗f3 (controlling d4 is
important; after, for instance,
9.0-0-0 cxd4 10.♗xe7+ ♜xe7
11.♗ce2 ♖c6 12.♗xd4 ♗xd4
13.♜xd4 b5 14.♗d3 ♗b7 15.h5 ♜c8
16.♜e2 ♖c5 17.g4 b4 Black man-
ages to create counterplay; Mazi-
Povse, Bled 1994) 9...♖c6 10.0-0-0

The Classical French

b5 11.dxc5 (White can hardly do without this exchange; on 11.♖h3 Black has 11...h5, while the constricting manoeuvre 11.♙xe7+ ♗xe7 12.h5 can be met by 12...♗f5) 11...♗xc5 12.♙d3, and after bringing a knight to d4 White obtains the better game.

8...c5 9.dxc5 ♗c6 10.♚f4!

By placing his queen opposite the black king, White creates tactical possibilities. He can also play 10.♙xe7+ ♚xe7 11.♚f4, for example: 11...♚xc5 12.0-0-0 ♚xf2?! 13.♖d2 ♚a7 (13...♚c5 can be met by 14.♖xd5! exd5 15.♗g5 ♚e7 16.♗xd5 ♚e8 17.e6 with a fierce attack) 14.♗xd5! ♚b8 (or 14...exd5 15.e6 ♗f6 16.♚d6+ ♗e7 17.♚d8+ ♗e8 18.exf7 etc.) 15.♗b4 ♗xb4 16.♗g5 ♗xe5 17.♚xb4+ ♗e8 18.♗e4 with the unpleasant threat of ♗e4-d6+; A.Ivanov-Werner, Cappelle la Grande 1993. Of course 11...♗xc5, not leaving the king undefended, was sounder.

10...♗xc5

10...♚c7 looks tempting; the idea is 11.b4?! ♙xc5! 12.bxc5 h6, but

after 11.♙xe7+ ♗xe7 (11...♗xe7 12.0-0-0 ♗g6 13.♚g3 ♗dxe5 is inadequate: 14.♖e1 f6 15.b4 +/-) 12.b4! (it's important to support the c5-pawn which controls the weak squares b6 and d6; after the routine 12.0-0-0 ♗dxe5 13.♗xe5 ♚xe5 14.♚xe5 ♗xe5 15.b4 ♗g4 16.♖d2 ♙d7 17.g3 ♖hc8 18.♙h3 ♗f6 19.♗b2 a5 20.a3 axb4 21.axb4 b6 22.cxb6 ♖ab8 Black succeeds in freeing himself; Swan-Crouch, British Championship 1992) 12...♗dxe5 13.♗xe5 ♚xe5+ 14.♚xe5 ♗xe5 15.♗a4 White has the better ending; Czerniak-Trifunovic, Warsaw 1935.

However, 10...h6 deserves attention: 11.♙xe7+ ♚xe7 12.g3 (12.0-0-0!? +/-) 12...♗xc5 13.♙g2 ♙d7 14.0-0 f5 15.exf6 ♚xf6 with a minimal advantage for White; Skytte-Hoi, Copenhagen 1996.

11.0-0-0 b5 12.♖h3 b4 13.♗e2 ♗e4 14.♙xe7+ ♚xe7 15.♗g5 ♗c5 16.♖f3 ♗d8 17.♗d4

White's chances are to be preferred, since Black still has to take time bringing his king's rook into play; Van Riemsdijk-Schnepp, Biel 1994.

Illustrative Games

Game 1 Folk-Thrum Berlin 1980

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.♙xe7
♚xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♗f3 c5 9.♗b5 ♗c6

The alternative is 9...a6 10.♗d6
cxd4 11.♙d3 f6 12.0-0 ♗c6. For
example, a game Bolkovsky-Stets-
ko, Severomorsk 1968, continued
13.♚e1 fxe5 14.♙xh7+ ♚xh7
15.♗g5+ ♚g8 16.♚h4 ♗f6
17.fxe5? ♗xe5 18.♙xf6 gxf6
19.♚g3 ♚g7 0-1.

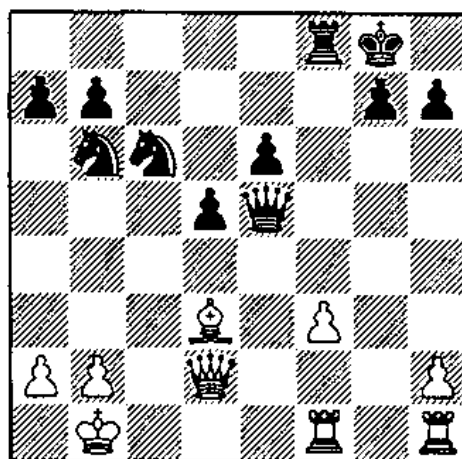
10.♙d3 f6 11.c3 cxd4 12.cxd4
fxe5 13.fxe5 ♚b4+ 14.♚d2 ♗b6
15.♗d6?

White has carried out his idea, but
his central position is brittle as long
as his king is uncastled. The in-
vasion with the knight is premature,
and White should evidently have re-
strained his ambitions with the
modest 15.a3 ♚a4 16.0-0 ♙d7,
when the game is about equal. Inci-
dentally, this game had a precedent
in Tartakower-Czerniak, Helsinki
(ol) 1952, where the moves 15.b3?!
♙d7 were inserted but the effect
was the same: 16.♗d6? ♙xf3!
17.gxf3 ♚xd4 18.0-0-0 ♚xe5.

15...♙xf3! 16.gxf3 ♚xd4
17.0-0-0 ♚xe5

Black clearly has more than
enough for the exchange. Among
other things, White's king cannot
feel secure.

18.♗xc8 ♙xc8 19.♚b1 ♙f8
20.♙df1



20...♗a4!

Black proceeds to the attack, aim-
ing at the weak spot in the white
king's cover: the b2-pawn.

21.♚c2 ♙f4! 22.♙xh7+ ♚h8
23.♙d3 ♗xb2! 24.♚xb2 ♙b4
25.♚xb4 ♗xb4 26.♙c2 d4

Now the central passed pawn decides the issue.

27.♖d1 ♜e2 28.♞c1 d3 29.♙b3 d2 30.♞cd1 ♜d3+ 31.♚b2 ♜d4+ 32.♚b1 ♜c3 0-1

Game 2
Bernard-Dermann
Dortmund 1989

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7 ♜xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.♙d3 cxd4

Black provokes the bishop sacrifice on h7.

10.♙xh7+ ♚xh7 11.♘g5+ ♜xg5 12.fxg5 dxc3

From the material viewpoint, the transaction favours Black: he has three minor pieces for the queen. However, his backward development gives us cause to be suspicious of the whole operation.

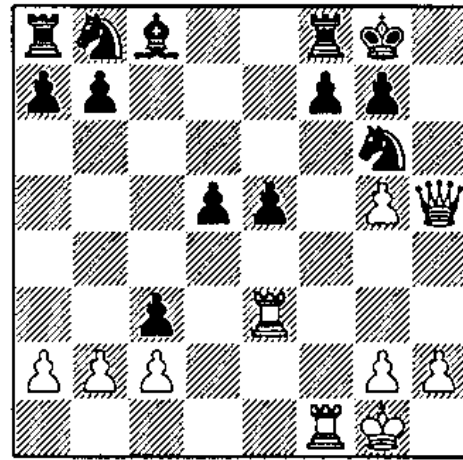
13.♜h5+!

Practice has shown that White can only count on success by attacking in the h-file.

13...♚g8 14.0-0 ♘xe5 15.♞ae1

This rook transfers itself to h3 with tempo. The other one is needed on the f-file.

15...♘g6 16.♞e3 e5



17.g4 ♞d8

On 17...♞e8, White attacks in the same way: 18.♞h3 ♞e6 19.♜h7+ ♚f8 20.♞h6 ♘e7 21.g6 f6 22.♜h8+ ♘g8 23.♞h7 ♞e7 24.♞xg7 1-0 Teichmeister-Kremer, corr. 1989.

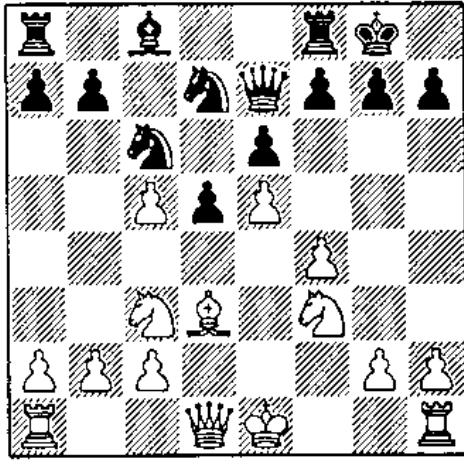
18.♞h3 ♞d6 19.♜h7+ ♚f8 20.♞h6! ♚e8

Or 20...♞f6 21.♞xf6 1-0 Szilagyi-Harding, corr. 1988. If 20...♘e7, then 21.g6 ♙e6 22.♜h8+ ♘g8 23.gxf7 is decisive.

21.♜xg7 ♙e6 22.♞xg6 1-0

Game 3
Plachetka-Bareev
Trnava 1989

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7 ♜xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.dxc5 ♘c6 10.♙d3



10...f5

The radical solution to Black's problem of protecting the b1-h7 diagonal. If White doesn't capture en passant, Black acquires an excellent knight outpost on e4.

11.0-0

A plan with queenside castling deserves consideration: 11.♖d2 ♘xc5 12.0-0-0.

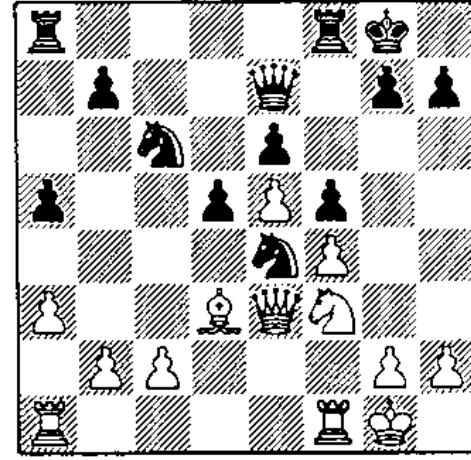
11...♘xc5 12.♖e2

Logical strategy. White immediately sets about occupying the important d4-point.

12...♙d7 13.♖ed4 ♙e8

A standard manoeuvre: Black brings his "bad" bishop to h5 with the aim of exchanging it.

14.♗d2 ♖e4 15.♗e3 ♙h5 16.a3 ♙xf3 17.♖xf3 a5



18.c4!

It is only with this manoeuvre, undermining the support of Black's knight on e4, that White can count on maintaining the initiative.

18...♗c5 19.♗xc5 ♘xc5 20.cxd5!

The idea of the c2-c4 break rests on this move alone, since 20.♙e2 is met by 21...d4. By a temporary pawn sacrifice White clears lines to break through to Black's rear—where the weakness of d6 is especially palpable, and the e6-pawn needs defending.

20...♘d3 21.dxc6 bxc6 22.♖d4 ♗fe8 23.♗f3! ♖xb2 24.♗b1?!

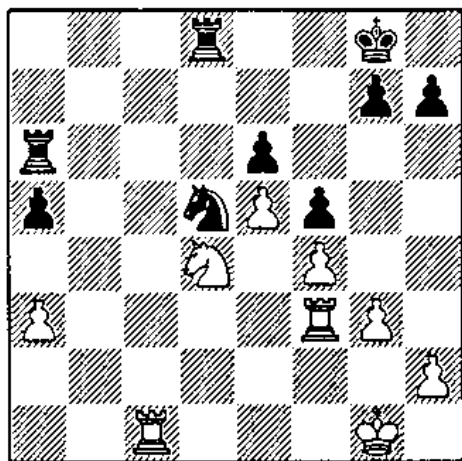
A stronger line was 24.♖xc6 ♗a6 25.♗c1, with ♗f3-b3 to follow.

24...♖a4!

An astute manoeuvre aimed at transferring the knight to d5, where

it will consolidate the Black position. After 24...♖c4? 25.♞c3 ♘d2 26.♞b2 ♘e4 27.♞xc6, the white rooks dominate the open files.

25.♘xc6 ♞a6 26.♞c1 ♘b6 27.g3 ♘d5 28.♘d4 ♞d8!



Defending the knight on d5 at the right moment, since after 28...♞b8 29.♞d3 it isn't simple to parry the twin threats of 30.♘xe6 and 30.♘xf5.

29.♞c6?!

In his efforts to exploit the weakness of the e6-pawn White prematurely exchanges rooks and allows Black to shake off the pressure. As Plachetka has shown, White could have retained the initiative with a temporary piece sacrifice: 29.♘xe6! ♞xe6 30.♞d3 ♞b6 (or 30...♞e7 31.♞cd1 ♞ed7 32.e6 ♞d6 33.e7 +/-) 31.♞c5 ♞b1+ 32.♞f2 ♞b2+ 33.♞f3 a4 34.♞cxd5 ♞xd5 35.♞xd5 ♞b3+ 36.♞f2 ♞xa3 37.e6 ♞f8 38.♞xf5+ ♞e7 39.♞f7+ ♞xe6 40.♞xg7 ♞a2+ 41.♞f3 ♞xh2 42.♞a7.

29...♞xc6 30.♘xc6 ♞c8!

Activity for the rook is more important than a pawn!

31.♘xa5 h6 32.h4 ♞c1+ 33.♞f2 ♘c3

The knight now co-operates with the rook in the fight against the king. White never manages to get at the e6-pawn.

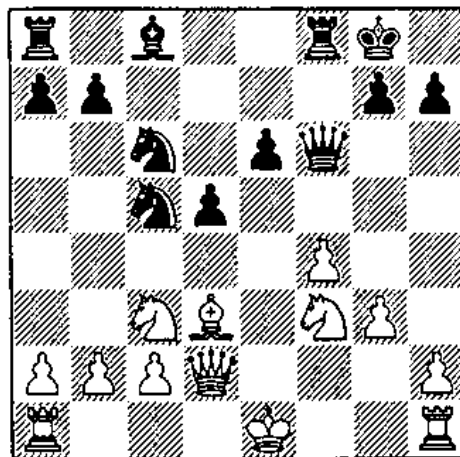
34.♘b3 ♘e4+ 35.♞e2 ♞c2+ 36.♞e1 ♞a2 37.♘d4 ♞a1+ 38.♞e2 ♞a2+ 39.♞e1 ♞a1+ 40.♞e2 1/2-1/2

Game 4
Gufeld-Stetsko
Moscow 1975

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♞g5 ♞e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♞xe7 ♞xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.♞d3 f6 10.dxc5 ♘c6

The alternative 10...fxe5 11.fxe5 ♘c6 12.♞e2 is not good for Black.

11.exf6 ♞xf6 12.g3 ♘xc5 13.♞d2



13 ... ♘xd3+

A timely exchange, since White achieves nothing with 14.cxd3 (which is usually good after castling) on account of 14...e5! 15.0-0 (on 15.♘d5 Black plays 15...♙d6 or 15...♙f7) 15...♙h3 16.♙fe1 ♖ae8 with an excellent game for Black.

14.♙xd3 ♙d7 15.0-0-0 ♙e8
16.♞he1 ♙h5 17.♞d2 ♞ac8?

A strategic error. Black's difficulties largely stem from White's blockading possibilities on e5. Hence it was essential to limit White's scope by exchanging with 17...♙xf3.

18.♘e5! ♘xe5 19.♞xe5 ♙g4
20.♙e3 a6 21.♘e2 g6

Here, by contrast, the exchange 21...♙xe2? loses a pawn to the zwischenzug 22.♞xe6—so Black prepares to bring his bishop to e4, where it will in some measure counterbalance the white knight.

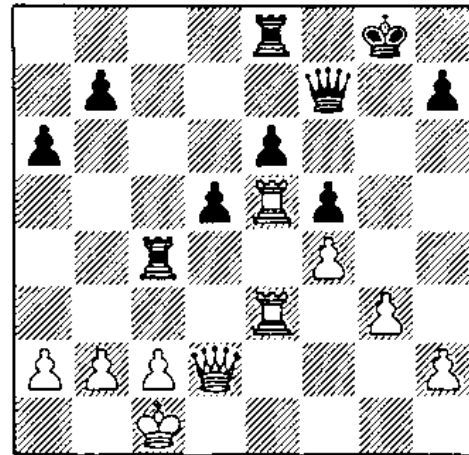
22.♘d4 ♞fe8 23.♞d3

White could have increased his positional advantage by transferring his queen to b6, after which the manoeuvre ♞d2-d3-e3 would have gained in strength.

23...♙f7 24.♙d2 ♙f5 25.♘xf5

25.♞de3 can be met by 25...♙e4.

25...gxf5 26.♞de3 ♞c4



27.♙xd5?!

Pretty, but inadequate to preserve White's advantage. A more logical line was 27.♙a5 ♞e4 28.♙b6 ♞xe5 29.♞xe5, followed by c2-c4.

27...♞xc2+! 28.♙xc2 ♞c8+
29.♙c5 ♞xc5+ 30.♞xc5 ♙d7!
31.b3 ♙d4

Having brought his queen to the scene of action, Black has nothing to fear.

32.♞cc3

A seemingly more active try is 32.♞ec3 ♙f7 (32...♙f2+ 33.♙b1 ♙xh2 would be risky: after 34.♞c7 the king is in danger) 33.♞c7+ ♙g6 34.♞e7, but after 34...♙e4+ 35.♙b2 b5 36.♞cc7 ♙d4+ White cannot escape perpetual check.

32...♙f7 33.♞ed3 ♙e4 34.♞c4
♙h1 35.♞c7+ ♙g6 36.♞d2 ♙a1
37.♞xb7 ♙xa2+ 38.♙c3 ♙a5+
39.♙c2 ♙a2+ 40.♙d3 ½-½

Game 5
Capablanca-Reti
New York 1924

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7
 ♚xe7 7.♚d2 0-0 8.f4 c5 9.♘f3 ♘c6
 10.dxc5 ♘xc5 11.♙d3 f6 12.exf6
 ♚xf6 13.g3 ♙d7

Black misses a good opportunity. He should have played 13...♘xd3+ at once. If then 14.cxd3, Black has 14...e5! 15.0-0 ♙h3 16.♚fe1 (or 16.♚f2) 16...♚ae8!. If 14.♚xd3, then after ♙c8-d7-e8-g6 and ♚a8-c8, Black exerts pressure which fully compensates for the weakness of e6.

14.0-0 ♘xd3 15.cxd3 ♙e8

Now 15...e5 would have led to difficulties after 16.♚ae1!

16.♚fe1 ♙g6 17.♘b5?!

An unsuccessful manoeuvre which allows Black to free himself. After 17.♘e5! White would have had fine prospects of exchanging all the minor pieces and establishing himself on e5 or d4.

17...e5! 18.♘c3!

Not 18.♘e5? which would lose a piece to 18...♘xe5 and 19...♚b6+.

18...d4?!

Leading to unnecessary fuss, when 18...exf4! 19.♘xd5 ♚d6

20.♘xf4 ♙xd3! would have deprived White of any hope of winning. But the move Black plays doesn't spoil anything yet.

19.♘e4 ♙xe4 20.♚xe4 exf4
 21.♚xf4 ♚d6 22.♚e1 ♚xf4 23.♚xf4
 ♚xf4

23...♚d5 24.♚e4! ♚d8 was simpler, as White can now use his pawn on f4 as a support for his knight.

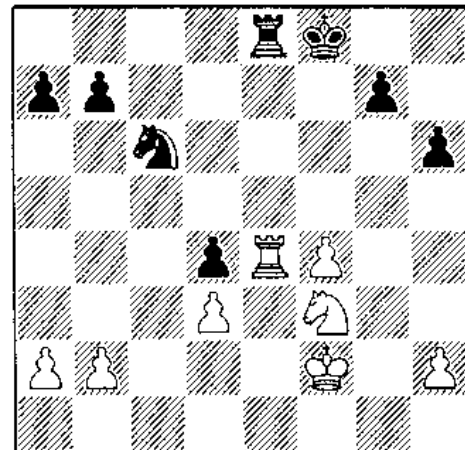
24.gxf4 ♙f8?

Black should have played 24...♚d8 25.♙f2 h6! (preparing 26...♚d5, which would be met by 26.♘g5 if played at once), and if 26.♘e5, then 26...♘xe5 27.fxe5 ♙f7 28.♙f3 ♙e6, threatening ♚d8-d5.

25.♚e4! ♚e8?

Even now, 25...♚d8 was more reasonable (26.♘g5 ♙g8!).

26.♙f2 h6



27.♖e5!

Threatening to obtain a won king-and-pawn ending by 28.♖xc6 ♜xe4 29.dxe4 bxc6 30.b4! ♔e7 31.♗e2 ♕d6 32.♖d3 c5 33.bxc5+ ♜xc5 34.f5!

27...♖xe5

The alternative 27...♞d8 28.♗xc6 bxc6 29.♞e5, followed by ♗f2-f3-e4, was also hopeless for Black.

28.fxe5 ♕f7 29.♗f3 ♞d8 30.♞g4! g5 31.h4! ♖g6 32.hxg5 hxg5 33.♗e4 ♕h5 34.♞g1 ♕h4 35.e6 g4 36.e7 1-0

(We have utilized Alekhine's notes.)

Game 6
De Firmian-Chernin
New York 1988

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♖f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 ♖fd7 6.♗xe7 ♗xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♖f3 c5 9.dxc5 ♖c6 10.♗d3 f6 11.exf6 ♗xf6 12.g3 ♖xc5 13.0-0

The main line; 13.♗d2 is met by 13...♖xd3+, when White's best is 14.♗xd3 (14.cxd3 e5! secures Black an easy game) 14...♗d7 15.0-0-0.

13...♗d7 14.♗d2

On 14.♗e2, Black keeps the balance with 14...♖d4 15.♖xd4 ♗xd4+ 16.♗f2 ♗b4.

14...♖xd3

An important exchange, linked to Black's next move. After 14...♗e8 15.♞ae1, White solidly blockades the pawn-couple d5/e6.

15.cxd3

One of White's key resources in various branches of the Classical System, helping him in his fight for the e5 point.

15...e5

The possibility of capturing on d3 in conjunction with the e6-e5 break was first demonstrated by Oleg Stetsko in an analysis published in 1984 in the Riga journal *Shakhmaty*. However, it was some games by Alexander Chernin that attracted general attention to the idea. This is the second of those games; the first was against Amador Rodriguez in the 1987 Interzonal at Subotica (Illustrative Game 8).

16.♞ae1 ♗h3 17.♞f2

Of course not 17.fxe5? ♖xe5!

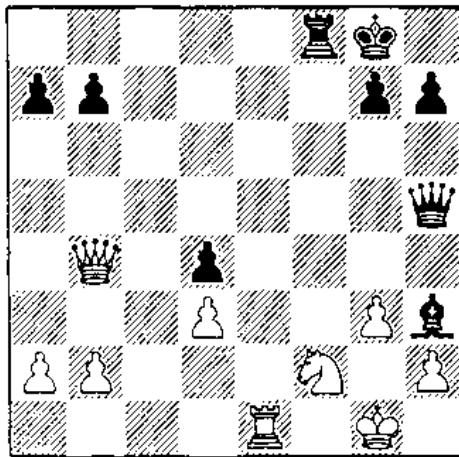
17...d4 18.♗e4 ♗f5 19.♖xe5

On 19.♖d6, Black can play either 19...♗d7 20.fxe5 ♖xe5, or 19...♗f6 20.♖e4 ♗f5, maintaining the balance.

19...♖xe5 20.fxe5 ♖xe5
21.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 22.♗f2 ♖h5!

If 22...♖f5, White activates his queen with 23.♖c2! ♖h8 24.♗xh3 ♖xh3 25.♖c5!, and acquires a plus.

23.♖b4



23...♗g2!

For the price of a pawn, the notorious bad “French” bishop transforms itself into a good one, securing excellent play which compensates Black for the lost material.

24.♖xd4 ♗c6 25.♖e7 ♖g5
26.♖c3

In the endgame too, after 26.♖e3 ♖f5 27.♖e6+ ♖xe6 28.♖xe6 ♗d5 29.♖e5 ♗xa2 30.♖a5 ♗e6 31.♖xa7 ♖c8 32.♗e4 (32.♖xb7?? ♖c1+ 33.♖g2 ♗d5+) 32...♖c1+ 33.♖f2 ♗d5, Black is sustained by his active bishop.

26...♖f5 27.♖e7 ♖g5 28.♖e3
♖f5 29.♖e1 ♖a5 30.♖e7 ½-½

Game 7

Am. Rodriguez-Stojanovic

Linares 1997

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6
4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.♗xe7
♖xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♗f3 c5 9.dxc5
♗c6 10.♗d3 f6 11.exf6 ♖xf6 12.g3
♗xc5 13.0-0 ♗d7 14.♖d2 ♗xd3
15.cxd3 e5 16.♖ae1 ♗h3 17.♖f2 d4
18.♗e4 ♖f5 19.♗fg5 ♗g4

Nor does Black solve his defensive problems with 19...♖g4. The radical solution may lie in Andrei Sokolov’s recommendation: 19...exf4 20.♖xf4 ♖d7 21.♗xh3 ♖xh3, and then if 22.♖ef1, Black has 22...♖e6 23.a3 ♖e7 with a sound defence.

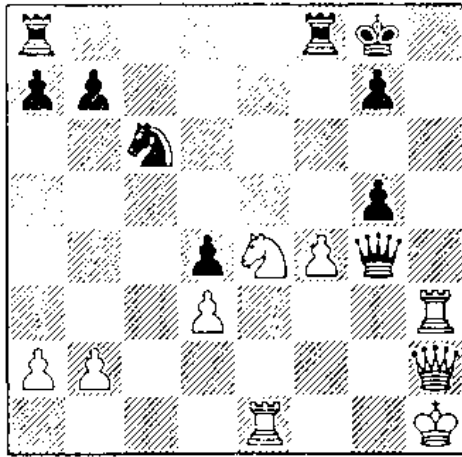
20.h3 ♗xh3 21.♖h2 exf4

Black relies on tactics to hold on, since 21...♗g4? fails to 22.♖xh7 exf4 23.♖h2.

22.♖xh3!

In the case of 22.♗xh3 ♗e5! 23.♖f1 ♖g4, Black exploits what is perhaps the only vulnerable spot in White’s position: the f3 square. After 24.♖xf4 ♖xf4 25.♖xf4 ♗f3+ 26.♖h1 ♗xh2 he reaches a materially unbalanced position in which his active rook can count on holding its own against the knight pair.

22...h6 23.gxf4 hxg5 24.♖h2!
♖g4+ 25.♖h1



25... ♖xf4

The attempt to counter-attack with 25... ♖xf4 26. ♜h8+ ♔f7 27. ♜xa8 ♜f3+ 28. ♜g2 ♜h5+ (on 28... ♜h4+ 29. ♔g1 ♜g4, White has 30. ♘g5+) 29. ♔g1 ♜g4 is refuted by 30. ♘g3 ♜h4 31. ♜d5+ ♔g6 32. ♜f5+ ♔h6 33. ♜h8 mate (Rodriguez).

26. ♜h8+ ♔f7 27. ♘d6+ ♜xd6

Black has to give up his queen, as after 27... ♔f6 28. ♜h6+! g6 29. ♘e4+ ♔e6 30. ♘xg5+ ♔d7 (or 30... ♔d5 31. ♜g2+ ♔d6 32. ♜xg6+ ♔d7 33. ♜h3+) 31. ♜h7+ ♔d6 32. ♘e4+ ♔e6 33. ♜h3+, the combined attack by White's pieces is decisive.

28. ♜xd6 ♜xh8+ 29. ♔g2 ♜h6
30. ♜d5+ ♔f8 31. ♜f1+ ♜f6
32. ♜d6+ ♔e8 33. ♜xf6 gxf6
34. ♜e6+ ♔e7 35. ♜xf6 ♜c8
36. ♜xd4 a6 37. ♔f3?!

Having achieved a won position, White starts to falter. After 33. ♜b6 winning the b-pawn, Black could scarcely have held out against a

white passed pawn on the queen's wing.

37... ♜d8 38. ♜h8+ ♔d7 39. ♜e5?

It makes a difference which way White attacks the g-pawn. Black now succeeds in constructing a "fortress", whereas after 39. ♜f6! ♔e8 40. ♔e4 ♜d5 41. ♜e6 ♔d8 42. d4 the fortress is unattainable because of White's threat to sacrifice his queen.

39... ♜f8+ 40. ♔e2

If 40. ♔g4, Black has 40... ♜f5 and the queen sacrifice doesn't work.

40... ♜f5 41. ♜g7 ♜d5 42. ♔d2 a5
43. b3 b5 44. a3 ♔d6 45. ♜f6+ ♔d7
46. ♔e3 ♘c6 47. ♜f7+ ♔d6 48. ♜b7
♜e5+ 1/2-1/2

Game 8

Am. Rodriguez-Chernin

Subotica (izt) 1987

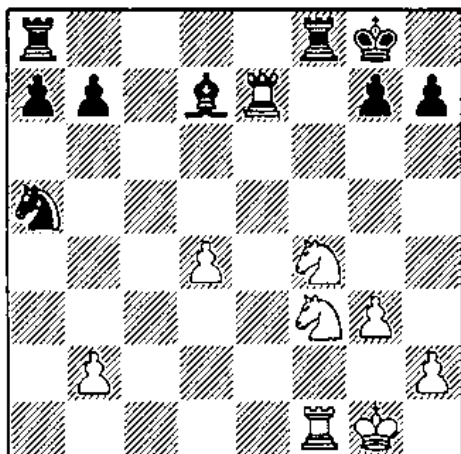
1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♘f6
4. ♘g5 ♘e7 5. e5 ♘fd7 6. ♘xe7
♜xe7 7. f4 0-0 8. ♘f3 c5 9. dxc5 f6
10. exf6 ♜xf6 11. g3 ♘c6 12. ♘d3
♘xc5 13. 0-0 ♘d7 14. ♜d2 ♘xd3
15. cxd3 e5 16. ♜ael exf4

In later games this move was combined with a pawn sacrifice and enjoyed equal status with 16... ♘h3. Chernin, however, hastens to win the pawn back and ends up in a difficult position.

17. ♘xd5 ♜f7

The main line is considered to be 17...♖d6 18.♗xf4 ♔g4! with active play.

18.♗xf4 ♖xa2 19.d4! ♖a5
20.♖xa5 ♗xa5 21.♞e7



21...♔g4

White's rook on the seventh secures him an endgame advantage. He would have answered 21...♔b5 with 22.♞a1, gaining a tempo to increase the pressure with ♗f3-e5 and ♗f4-h5.

22.♗e5 ♗c6 23.♞xb7 ♔c8
24.♞c7 ♗xd4 25.h4?!

Perhaps White was expecting 25...♞e8? 26.♗h5!, but this loss of time allows Black to simplify on favourable terms. With 25.♞d1 ♗f5 (25...♗e6? 26.♞xc8 ♞axc8 27.♗xe6) 26.♗c6 White could have kept the advantage.

25...♗e6! 26.♞e7 ♗xf4 27.gxf4
♔f5 28.♞c1 ♞fe8

28...♞ac8 is weaker in view of 29.♞a1.

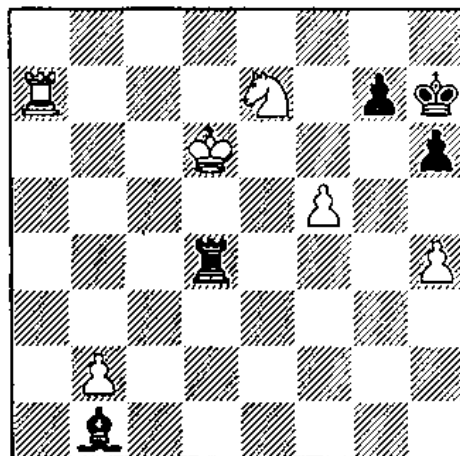
29.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 30.♞c7 h6?!

A more accurate line was 30...a6 31.♞xa7 h6 32.♞a6 g5, reducing the pawns to the minimum.

31.♞xa7 ♞d8

Now 31...g5 doesn't work because of 32.♗f7!.

32.♗c6 ♞d1+ 33.♔f2 ♔e4
34.♗e7+ ♔h7 35.♔e3 ♔b1 36.f5
♞d3+ 37.♔f4 ♞d4+ 38.♔e5 ♞e4+
39.♔d6 ♞d4+!



40.♔c5

After reduction to a rook endgame with 40.♗d5 ♔e4 41.♔e5 ♞xd5+ 42.♔xe4 ♞b5 43.f6 ♞b4+ 44.♔e3 (44.♔e5 ♞b5+) 44...♞xb2 45.♞xg7+ ♔h8, Black would retain defensive chances (Chernin).

40...♞xh4 41.f6! ♞h2!

After the impulsive 41...♞h5+ 42.♗d5 ♔e4 43.♞xg7+ ♔h8 44.♞d7 ♞f5 45.b4, the advance of the b-pawn is decisive.

42. ♖c6

Aiming to answer 42... ♖xb2 with 43. ♖xg7+ ♔h8 44. ♗e5.

42... ♖f2!

A peculiar kind of "fork", restricting the white rook.

43. ♖xg7+ ♔h8 44. ♖g1?!

Once White loses the f-pawn the game is quickly drawn, but 44 ♖f7 could be met by 44...h5.

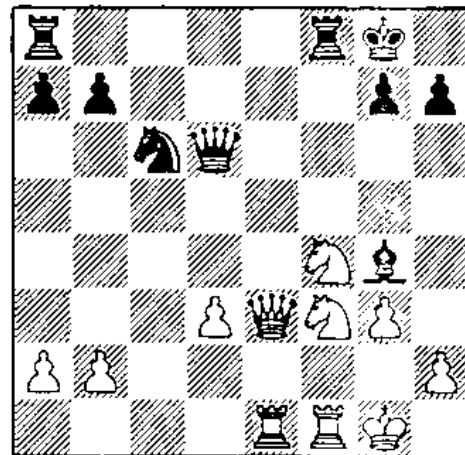
44... ♔e4 45. ♗e5 ♖xf6 46. b4 ♔h7 47. b5 h5 48. b6 ♔h6 49. ♖e1 1/2-1/2

Game 9
 Arnason-Bareev
 Sochi 1988

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗c3 ♗f6
 4. ♗g5 ♗e7 5. e5 ♗fd7 6. ♗xe7
 ♖xe7 7. f4 0-0 8. ♗f3 c5 9. dxc5
 ♗xc5 10. ♗d3 f6 11. exf6 ♖xf6
 12. g3 ♗c6 13. 0-0 ♗d7 14. ♖d2
 ♗xd3 15. cxd3 e5 16. ♖ael exf4
 17. ♗xd5 ♖d6

Black sacrifices a pawn, but all his pieces become very active. The d-pawn and the square f3 are potential objects of attack.

18. ♗xf4 ♗g4! 19. ♖e3



19... ♖ad8!

The important thing is to take control of the central blocking square d4, emphasizing that White's extra d-pawn is purely symbolic. It might seem that 19... ♗xf3 produces the same result, but after 20. ♖xf3! ♖d4+ 21. ♖f2 ♖ad8 22. ♖e4! White's pieces are too active.

20. ♖f2

The sortie 20. ♗g5 h6 21. ♗e4 ♖b4 hands Black control of d4.

20... h6

Threatening to drive the knight back with g7-g5.

21. h4 ♖f7 22. ♗d2 ♖b4! 23. ♗e4 ♗d4

On this square the knight is no weaker than a rook. White's most urgent task is to cover the weakness on f3.

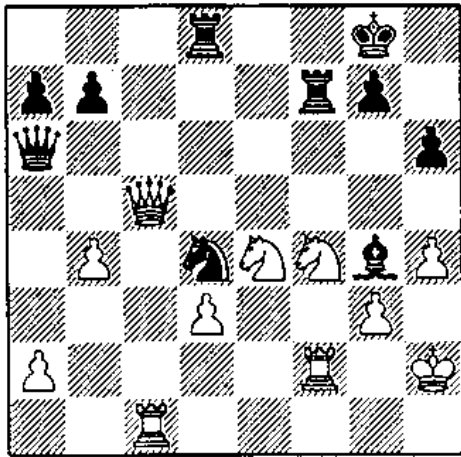
24. ♖ef1 ♖b6

An important pinning motif, as is seen in the variation 25.♖d5? ♜xd5 26.♜xf7 ♘e2+.

25.♔g2 ♜c6 26.♞c1 ♘f5 27.♜c5

It was worth considering 27.♜d2.

27...♜a6 28.♔h2 ♘d4 29.b4



29 ... b6

In Bareev's opinion 29...♞c8 is premature: 30.♜xc8+! - ♔xc8 31.♞xc8+ ♔h7 32.h5! ♜b5 33.♘c5 ♞f5 34.g4 with the initiative.

30.♜c4 ♜b7 31.♞cf1 ♔h7 32.♜c1 ♜e7 33.a3 ♞df8 34.♔g2 ♘f5 35.♜d2 ♜d7 36.♔h2 ♘d4

The game comes full circle. The knight's return to d4 underlines the futility of White's hopes.

37.♜e3 ♘f5 38.♜d2 ♘d4 1/2-1/2

Game 10
Gallagher-Crouch
Krumbach 1991

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♞g5 ♞e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♞xe7 ♜xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.♜d2 ♘c6 10.0-0-0 c4

This uncompromising pawn push leads to extremely complex situations with attacks on opposite wings.

11.g4

The frontal attack 11.f5 is parried by 11...f6.

11...♞b8

This move was first introduced into practice by Gedeon Stahlberg. Black prepares an assault with his b-pawn.

12.♘b5!

An opportune knight manoeuvre, holding up the advance of the b-pawn and heading towards d6.

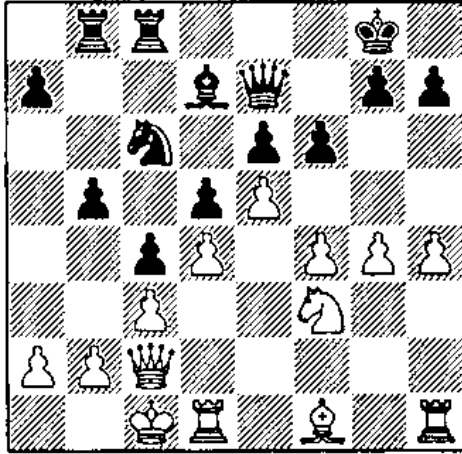
12...♘b6 13.♘d6 ♞d7 14.c3

Once again 14.f5 can be strongly answered by 14...f6! 15.♜f4 ♘c8, with the better game for Black.

14...♘c8

14...f6 is an alternative.

15. ♖xc8 ♜xc8 16. ♚c2 f6 17. h4
b5



Black has more forces concentrated against the enemy king, and his attack looks the more dangerous. White should already be thinking about evacuating his king along the route ♚c1-d2-e1, away from the files that are going to be opened. But he still seems full of optimism.

18. ♘b1 b4 19. cxb4 c3

Black is intent on opening lines, but it was simpler to play 19... ♖xb4, and if 20. ♚c3 then 20... ♖xa2! 21. ♚xa2 ♜b3 22. ♚e1 ♜xf3.

20. exf6 gxf6 21. ♚xc3 ♖xb4
22. ♚a3 ♚d6!

Highlighting the weakness not only of the h6-c1 diagonal, but also of the adjacent one: h7-b1.

23. ♖d3 ♚xf4 24. ♜c1 ♚h8!
25. ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 26. ♜f1 ♖b5!

An elegant solution, based on the deflection theme.

27. ♖xb5 ♚e4+ 28. ♖d3 ♖xd3
29. ♖d2 ♚e2 30. ♚a5 ♚xf1+ 0-1

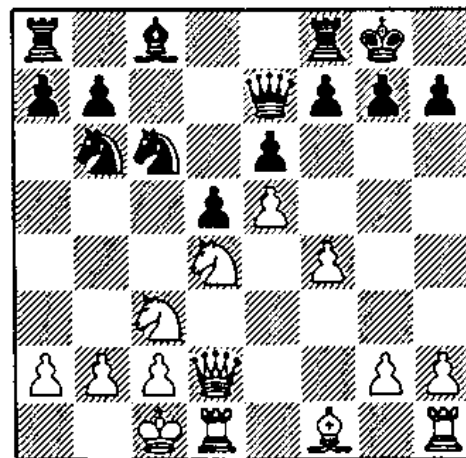
Game 11
Larsen-Bareev
Hastings 1990/91

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♖c3 ♖f6
4. ♖g5 ♖e7 5. e5 ♖fd7 6. ♖xe7
♚xe7 7. f4 0-0 8. ♖f3 c5 9. ♚d2 ♖c6
10. 0-0-0 cxd4

This exchange allows Black the choice of developing his knight on c5 or b6.

11. ♖xd4 ♖b6

After 11... ♖xd4 12. ♚xd4 ♚c5 and a queen exchange, White's dominating knight outpost on d4 guarantees him a substantial end-game plus.



12. ♚e3

A typical manoeuvre that goes with this kind of pawn structure. The queen extends its dark-square control and protects the important e5-point in case Black should break with f7-f6. It's also worth considering 12.♘f3, so as to aim at the king-side after 12...♙d7 13.♙d3.

12...♙d7 13.♙b1

White gains nothing from 13.♘cb5 f6 14.♘d6 ♘c8.

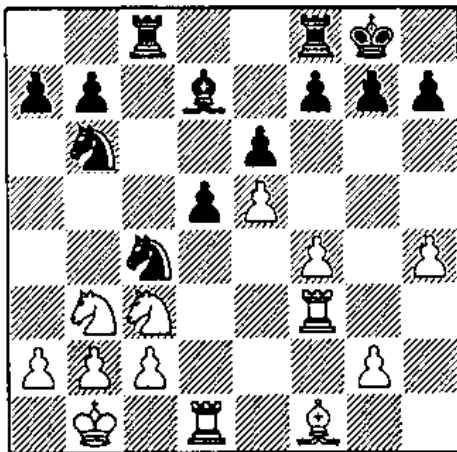
13...♚c5

This only helps White to reach an ending that is structurally in his favour owing to his control of the important d4-point. Therefore 13...♘xd4 14.♚xd4 ♞fc8, with the idea of ♘b6-c4, was more logical.

14.h4

This is not an attack on the king, but a way to reach an ending.

14...♞ac8 15.♞h3 ♘a5 16.♘b3 ♚xe3 17.♞xe3 ♘ac4 18.♞f3



So White has implemented one of the main ideas of the exchange on c5: transition to an ending where a knight on d4 will give the signal for a likely offensive with f4-f5. With this plan in mind, 18.♞e1 looks more logical.

Black's knight on c4 has no future in the endgame, so he cannot stand by passively; his next move is both logical and timely.

18...f6 19. exf6 ♞xf6

Of course not 19...gxf6? because of 20.f5.

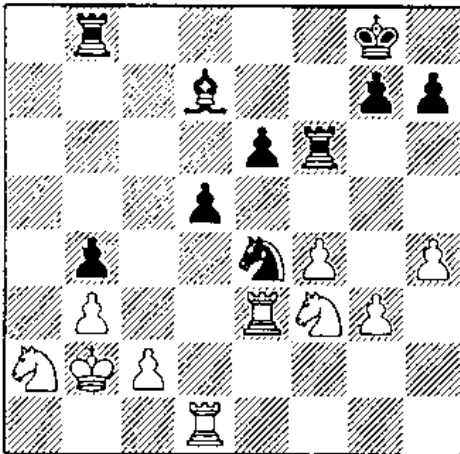
20.♘d4 ♞cf8 21.♙xc4 ♘xc4 22.b3 ♘d6 23.♞e3

And now, as frequently happens when Black has the central pawn couple d5/e6, White aims to convert one form of advantage—the backward e6-pawn—into another: the isolated d5-pawn that will arise after 23...♞xf4 24.♘xe6.

23...b5?! 24.a3 a5?!

It was still not too late to settle for an "IQP"; that way it would be easier to work up some eventual activity. The queenside demonstration merely creates an additional weakness on b4.

25.g3 b4 26.axb4 axb4 27.♘a2 ♞b8 28.♙b2 ♘e4 29.♘f3!



Tactics in the service of strategy —White exchanges the centralized black knight. If now 29...♖xg3? 30.♗e5 ♜f5 31.♗xd7 ♜xe3 32.♞d3, Black loses a piece.

29...♗e8 30.♗g5 ♗h5 31.♗xe4! ♗xd1 32.♗xf6+ gxf6 33.♞xe6

After the loss of this pawn Black is doomed.

32...♕f7 34.♞e3 ♗h5 35.♞d3 ♕e6 36.♞d4 ♞g8 37.♗xb4 ♗f3 38.♞d3 ♗e4 39.♞e3 ♕f5 40.♗c6 1-0

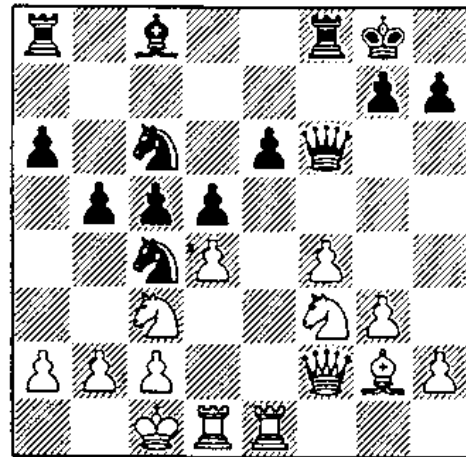
Game 12
Rubinstein-Levenfish
Carlsbad 1911

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.♗xe7 ♗xe7 7.♗d2 0-0 8.f4 c5 9.♗f3 f6 10.exf6 ♗xf6 11.g3 ♗c6 12.0-0-0 a6

Black has more substantial counterplay after 12...cxd4 13.♗xd4 ♗b6 or 13...♗c5, but let us not forget that Levenfish was the first to encounter Rubinstein's new strategic plan and was trying to benefit

from the tension between the pawns on d4 and c5.

13.♗g2 ♗b6 14.♞he1 ♗c4 15.♗f2 b5



16.dxc5!

White is not afraid of phantoms and pursues his strategy of pressurizing the weakened dark squares in the centre.

16...♗xb2?!

It was essential to continue 16...b4 17.♗a4 ♗d7 with counterplay (Levenfish).

17.♕xb2 b4 18.♗d4 bxc3+ 19.♕a1 ♗xd4

Countering the threat of 20.♗xe6 ♗xe6 21.♞xe6.

20.♗xd4 ♞b8 21.♞e3

The pawn duo d5/e6 is firmly blockaded and Black is deprived of any counterplay. His further endeavours are illusory.

21...g5 22.♖xc3 gxf4 23.gxf4
♙d7

If 23...♗xf4, White wins with
24.♖g3+.

24.c6 ♗xd4 25.♖xd4 ♙e8
26.♙h3 ♖f6 27.c7 ♖c8 28.♖xd5!
♖xc7 29.♙xe6+ 1-0

Game 13
Klovans-Stetsko
Erevan 1980

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7
♗xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.♗d2
cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♘c6 11.0-0-0 f6
12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.g3 ♘b6

In the event of 13...♘c5 14.♙g2
♙d7 15.♖he1, Akiba Rubinstein's
plan for pressurizing the centre is
realized in its pure form. By attack-
ing c4 Black stops White from fian-
chettoing his bishop.

14.♘f3!

With this retreat White takes con-
trol of e5.

14...♙d7 15.♙d3 ♙e8 16.♖he1

Showing deep understanding of
the position. Black threatened the
pinning move 16...♙h5. In answer
to the natural 16.♖de1, he was in-
tending 16...♙g6 17.♘e5 ♙xd3
18.cxd3 ♘xe5 19.♖xe5 ♘d7
20.♖ee1 e5!, implementing the stan-
dard defensive resource and

obtaining an excellent game. Now
16...♙h5 is met by 17.♘g5! ♙xd1
18.♙xh7+ ♚h8 19.♖xe6 ♗d8
20.♗xd1 with a winning attack.

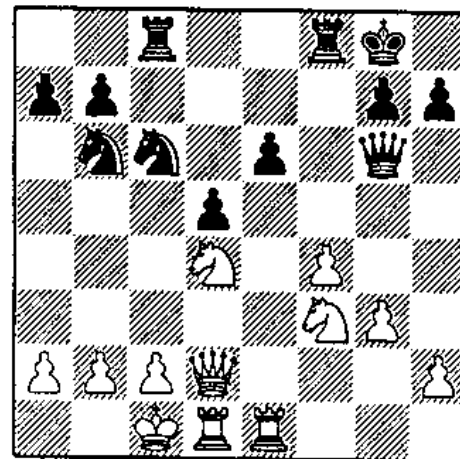
16...♙g6

16...h6 17.♘e5 ♙h5 18.g4 ♙e8,
weakening the f4-pawn, might seem
tempting, but White could simply
reply 19.♘xc6 bxc6 20.♖f1 with the
threat of g4-g5. However, 17...♖c8
is playable.

17.♙xg6 ♗xg6 18.♘b5 ♖ac8?!

Black doesn't sense the danger.
He had to go over to passive de-
fence with 18...♖ae8.

19.♘bd4



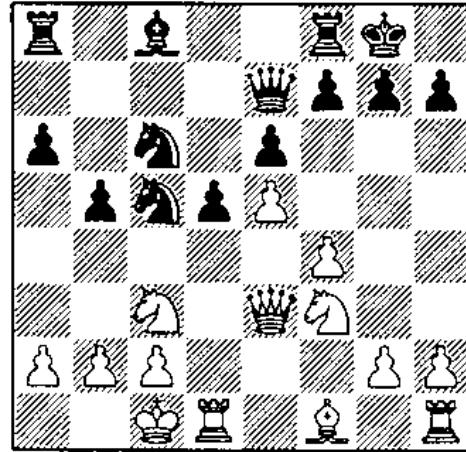
19 ... ♖fe8?

Now 19...♖ce8 is met by 20.♘xc6
bxc6 21.♘e5; while if 19...♘xd4
20.♘xd4 (20.♗xd4 is also good)
20...♖ce8, then 21.♗a5 is
unpleasant.

20.♖xe6! ♖xe6 21.f5 ♗f6

Also 21...♖c4 22.♙f4 ♗f6
23.fxe6 ♗xf4 24.gxf4 favours
White.

22.fxe6 ♖c4 23.♙f4 ♗e7
24.♙g5! ♗xg5+ 25.♖xg5 ♖e3
26.♖xc6 ♖xc6 27.e7 ♖xc2+
28.♚b1 ♖c8 29.♖d3 ♖f5 30.♖xd5
♖xe7 31.♖d7 ♖f5 32.♖xb7 h6
33.♖e6 ♖e8 34.g4 ♖xe6 35.gxf5
♖e1+ 36.♚c2 ♖e2+?



In the race between passed pawns,
the white pair will be ahead. After
36...a5 37.♖xa7 ♖e5 Black's
chances of defence would be much
more realistic.

37.♚c3 ♖xh2 38.♖xa7 h5 39.b4
♖f2 40.b5 ♖xf5 41.a4 ♖f1 42.b6
♖b1 43.a5 h4 44.♖d7 h3 45.♖d2 g5

If 45...♚f7, White has 46.♖h2!

46.♖d5 g4 47.♖g5+ ♚f7 48.♖xg4
♖b5 49.♖h4 ♖xa5 50.♚b4 ♖a6
51.♚b5 ♖a3 52.b7 ♖b3+ 53.♚c6
♖c3+ 54.♚d5 ♖b3 55.♖xh3 1-0

Game 14
Labutin-Ulybin
Kstovo 1997

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♖f6
4.♖g5 ♖e7 5.e5 ♖fd7 6.♖xe7
♗xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♖f3 c5 9.♗d2 ♖c6
10.dxc5 ♖xc5

Black activates his knight in the
hope of using it for a queenside
attack.

11.0-0-0 a6 12.♗e3 b5

13.f5?!

One of the points of moving the
queen to e3, but premature in view
of Black's reply in this game. How-
ever, White already had to reckon
with the thrust b5-b4. After the
passive 13.♚b1 b4 14.♖e2, for
example, Black occupies the
e4-point with his knight and obtains
good play. Therefore 13.♖d3,
threatening a bishop sacrifice, was
more active. Black's simplest
answer would be 13...♖xd3+
14.cxd3 b4 with a double-edged
game.

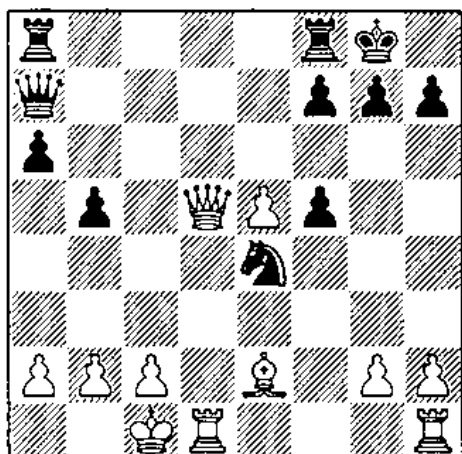
13...♗a7!

Threatening 14...♖b3+.

14.♖d4

If 14.♚b1, then 14...b4 is hazard-
ous on account of 15.f6!, but instead
Black has 14...exf5 15.♖xd5 ♖e4
16.♗xa7 ♖xa7 17.♖e1 ♖e6 with a
good game.

14...♖xd4 15.♗xd4 exf5
16.♖xd5 ♖e6 17.♖e2 ♖xd5
18.♗xd5 ♖e4

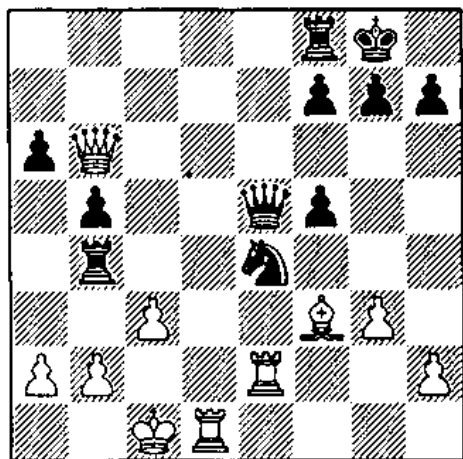


Black has successfully contended for the dark squares and now stands better, since the e5-pawn is weak and the centralized knight—as is often the case—is the equal of a rook.

19. ♖he1 ♜e7 20. ♗f3 ♞ad8
21. ♝c6 ♞c8 22. ♝b6 ♝xe5 23. g3?

White no longer has time for trivial things like the h-pawn. He should be worrying about his king—hence 23. ♞d3.

23... ♞c4 24. ♞e2 ♞b4 25. c3



25... ♞xb2!

The decisive stroke, emphasizing that by now the knight on e4 is stronger than a rook.

26. ♞xb2 ♝xc3+ 27. ♚b1 ♝xf3
28. ♝d4 ♜c3+ 29. ♜c1 ♜xd1
30. ♝xd1 ♞c8+ 0-1

Game 15

Dolmatov-Bareev
Sochi 1988

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♘f6
4. ♗g5 ♗e7 5. e5 ♘fd7 6. ♗xe7
♝xe7 7. f4 0-0 8. ♘f3 c5 9. dxc5
♜c6 10. ♝d2 ♘xc5 11. 0-0-0 a6
12. ♗d3 ♗d7

After 12...b5 13. ♝e3, Black has to cope with the threatened bishop sacrifice on h7.

13. ♘e2

It was worth considering 13. ♝e3 ♘xd3+ (parrying the threat of 14 ♗xh7+) 15. cxd3, and after bringing a knight to d4 White will stand better.

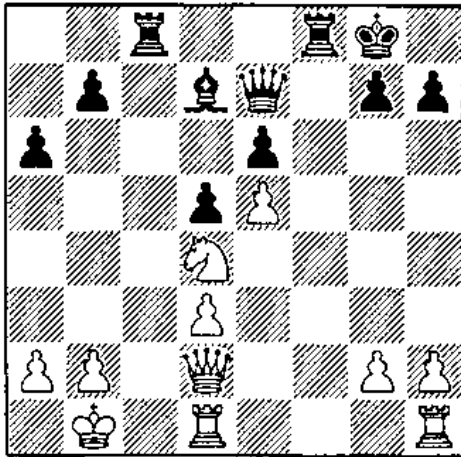
13... ♞ac8 14. ♚b1

After queenside castling it's useful to put the king on a safer square as soon as possible, to avoid tactical tricks such as 14. ♘ed4 ♘b4!.

14... ♘xd3 15. cxd3 f6 16. ♘ed4

Similarly after 16.exf6 ♖xf6 and an eventual exchange on e5, Black easily equalizes.

16...♟xd4 17.♟xd4 fxe5 18.fxe5



18...♜h4!

This active queen sortie is possible thanks to the weak pawn on e5.

19.♟f3 ♜g4 20.♞c1 ♝c6?!

Black removes the protection from the e6-pawn, which allows White to exchange queens. In the light of subsequent events, the immediate 20...d4 was better.

21.♜g5! ♜xg5 22.♟xg5 ♞ce8

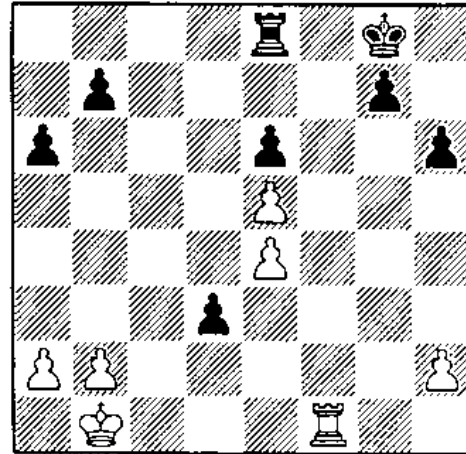
After 22...♞f5 23.♟xe6 ♞xe5 24.♟d4, the knight is clearly stronger than the bishop.

23.♞hf1 ♞xf1 24.♞xf1 d4 25.g3?

In Bareev's view this wastes time and unnecessarily weakens the White pawn structure. An

improvement was 25.♞f2 h6 26.♟e4 ♝xe4 27.dxe4 d3 28.♜c1 ♞c8+ 29.♜d2 ♞c2+ 30.♜e3 with equal chances.

25...h6 26.♟e4 ♝xe4 27.dxe4 d3



28.♜c1!

In a rook endgame the king's activity is sometimes no less important than that of the rook. If White wastes any time, the black rook will pick off the doubled pawns in the centre: 28.♞d1 ♞d8 29.♜c1 ♞d4 30.♜d2 ♞xe4 31.♜xd3 ♞xe5.

28...♞c8+ 29.♜d2 ♞c2+ 30.♜xd3 ♞xh2 31.♜e3!

Otherwise White risks losing the g3-pawn, after which Black's pair of passed pawns on the kingside would decide the game in his favour.

31...♞g2 32.♜f3 ♞xb2 33.♞c1 ♞xa2 34.♞c8+ ♜h7 35.♞e8 ♞c2?

So fickle is the advantage in rook endings. White now obtains saving

chances, whereas 35...♖a5 36.♗xe6 ♗b5!, pointed out by Belyavsky, would have enabled Black to mobilize his queenside pawns more effectively: 37.♗e8 ♖g6 38.♖f4 ♖f7 39.♗a8 a5.

36.♗xe6 ♗c8 37.♗b6 ♗b8

The race with 37...a5 38.♗xb7 ♗a8 39.♖f4! a4 40.e6 ♖g6 41.e7 ♖f7 42.e8=♖+ ♖xe8 43.♗xg7 ♗a6 44.♗c7 a3 45.♗c1 a2 46.♗a1 ♖f7 47.♖f5 would also end in a draw (Bareev).

38.♖f4 a5 39.e6 ♖g8 40.♗b5?

White could hold the position with 40.♖e5, but in time trouble, with both flags dangling, the players exchange favours.

40...b6?

After 40...a4! White could hardly have saved himself, but now his king controls the situation again.

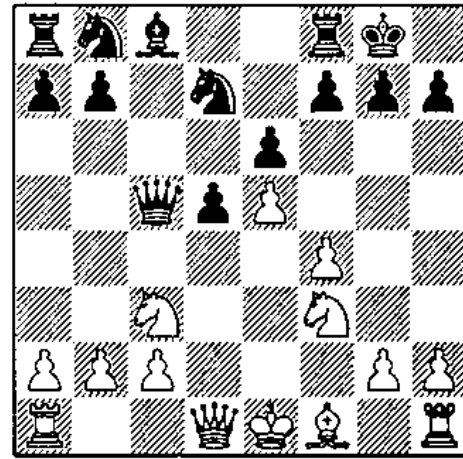
41.♖e5! ♖f8 42.♗b1!

As Dolmatov showed, after 42.♖d6? Black could have won with the manoeuvre 42...♖e8! 43.♗f5 (or 43.♖c7 ♗a8 44.♖b7 ♗d8-/+) 43...b5 44.♗f7 b4! 45.♗e7+ ♖f8 46.♗f7+ ♖g8 47.♗f5 a4 48.e7 a3!! 49.♗b5 ♗a8 50.♗a5 ♗xa5 51.e8Q+ ♖h7.

42...b5 ½-½

Game 16
Kupreichik-Bareev
USSR (ch) 1987

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♗xe7
♗xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.dxc5
♗xc5



10.♗d2

Given this move order, it was worth considering 10.♗d4, proposing to go into a pleasant ending. If Black declines with 10...♗e7, White can play 11.0-0-0 ♘c6 12.♗e3 or 12.♗f2.

10...f6 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♗d3
♘c6 13.0-0-0 ♗b8?!

13...♗d7 is more natural.

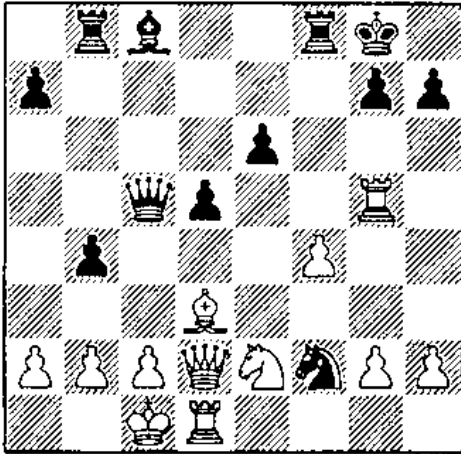
14.♗he1 b5 15.♘e5?!

15.♘e2! is stronger, both anticipating b5-b4 and intending ♘e2-d4. If 15...♖h8, then 16.♗c3 is good.

15...♘xe5 16.♗xe5 b4 17.♘e2
♘g4 18.♗g5

White gains nothing from 18.♖h5 h6 19.♘d4 ♕h8, followed by ♘g4-f6.

18...♘f2



19.♖f1?!

This natural-looking move permits Black to carry out the e6-e5 break. With 19.♖e1 White could keep some pressure in the centre: 19...♖b6 20.♕b1! (20.♖e5 can be met by 20...♘xd3+ 21.♗xd3 ♖a6 22.♗d2 ♗f2 with counterplay) 20...♖a6 21.♘c1! ♘xd3 22.cxd3 with somewhat the better chances (Bareev).

19...h6 20.♖g3

Or 20.♖e5 ♘g4 21.♖h5 e5.

20...e5 21.♖g6

Forestalling not only e5-e4 but also ♘f2xd3+ followed by ♖c8-f5.

21...♖b6! 22.♕b1

22.fxe5? is answered by 22...♖xg6! 23.♖xg6 ♘d3+ 24.♗xd3

♖xf1+, while 22.♖f3 fails to 22...e4! 23.♖g3 e3.

22...♖bf6 23.a3

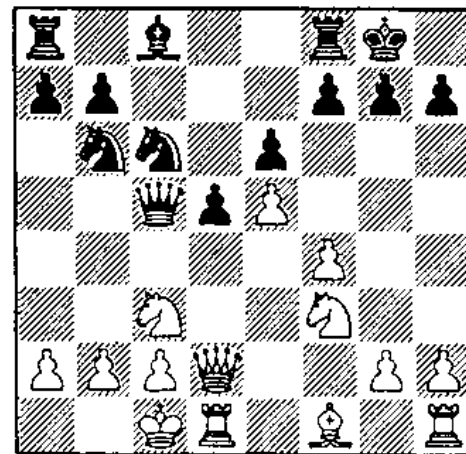
Again if 23.♖f3, then 23...e4 is decisive.

23...a5 24.♖xf2 ♗xf2 25.fxe5 ♖b6 26.♗xh6 gxh6 0-1

Game 17

Van der Wiel-Korchnoi
Amsterdam 1991

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♖g5 ♖e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♖xe7
♗xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.♗d2 ♘c6
10.0-0-0 ♘b6 11.dxc5 ♗xc5



Here the queen takes an active part in organizing the attack against White's castled position. Black needn't worry about the white knight coming to d6.

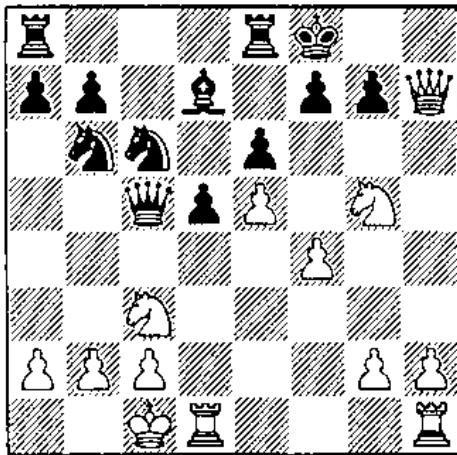
12.♖d3

With an undisguised threat against the kingside.

12...♔d7 13.♙xh7+

The thematic bishop sacrifice had not occurred in this position before the present game.

13...♙xh7 14.♘g5+ ♔g8 15.♚d3 ♜fe8 16.♚h7+ ♙f8



White's attack looks quite impressive, but it turns out that it isn't so simple to get at the king.

17.♞he1!

White has to take some prophylactic measures of his own here, since after 17.♚h8+? ♙e7 18.♚xg7 ♚e3+ 19.♙b1 ♚xf4 Black brings his queen over to the defence. On 17.♙b1 ♚b4 18.♚h5 ♙e7 19.♚h4, Black can defend with 19...f6 20.exf6+ gxf6 21.♘h7 ♜f8 or 21...♙d8 22.♘xf6 ♚e7 (Korchnoi).

17...♚b4

A more active move was 17...♘c4!, with a view to 18.♚h8+ ♙e7 19.♚h4 ♞h8 20.♘h7+ f6.

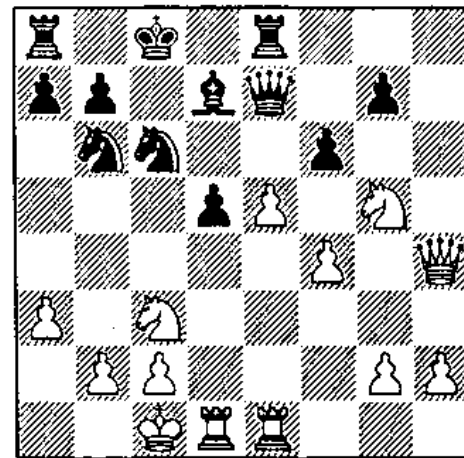
18.♚h8+ ♙e7 19.♚h4 ♙d8

In this case, after 19...f6?! Black has to reckon with 20.exf6+ gxf6 21.♘h7 ♜f8 22.♘xf8 ♜xf8 23.♘d5+ ♘d5 24.♞d5, and White keeps the initiative. However, it was worth considering 19...♞h8!? 20.♘h7+ f6 21.exf6+ ♙f7 22.fxg7 ♞xh7 23.♚xh7 ♞g8, contemplating 24...♚xf4+ or 24...♘c4 and successfully defending (Korchnoi).

20.♘xe6++

Stronger than 20.♘xf7++?! ♙c7 21.♘d6, when Black has 21...♘e5!.

20...♙c8 21.a3 ♚e7 22.♘g5 f6



23.e6?!

With the simple 23.exf6 ♚xf6 24.♞xe8+ ♔xe8 25.♘d5 ♘d5 26.♞xd5 White could have retained the better chances (Korchnoi).

23...fxg5 24.exd7+ ♚xd7 25.♚xg5?!

White is bent on attacking, yet after 25.♞xe8+ ♚xe8 26.♚xg5, with 27.♘d5 to follow, his three

pawns would have been adequate compensation for the piece.

25...♖xe1 26.♖xe1 a6

The moment has come to give the king a “loophole”. At this point it still isn’t too late for White to latch onto the d-pawn with 27 ♖d1, but he prefers to play actively as before.

27.f5? ♔b8 28.♗e6 ♔a7 29.♗g6 ♗e8!

Black goes over to the counter-attack.

30.♗xg7 ♗e1+ 31.♘d1 ♗e8 32.f6 ♗e4

Preventing 33.f7 by threatening 33...♗d4 34.♗d2 ♗xd1+ 35.♔xd1 ♗xg7.

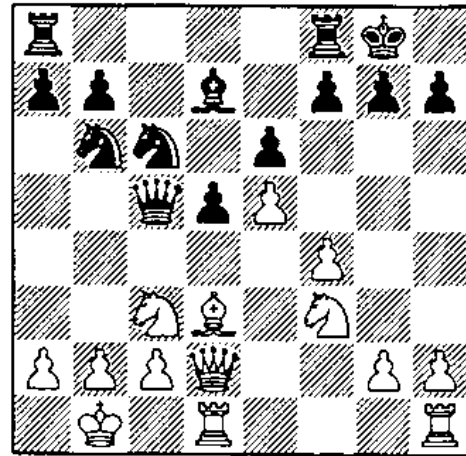
33.♗d2 ♘c4 34.♗f2+ ♘e3 0-1

Game 18
Z.Almasi-Zuger
Horgen 1995

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♗xe7
♗xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.♗d2 ♘c6
10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.0-0-0 ♘b6
12.♔b1

A useful move, reserving the possibility of exchanging on c4 with tempo.

12...♗d7 13.♗d3



13 ... ♘b4

Black forestalls White’s positional threat of ♘d4-b5 followed by bringing the knight to d6 or d4. With this in mind, 13...♘a5!? was playable; the knight heads for c4, while Black need not fear 14.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 15.♘g5+ ♔g8 16.♗d3—because after 16...♗fc8 his king escapes from the attack.

14.a3 a5! 15.♗hf1

Obviously such a knight is not to be captured. Hence White hastens to offer a queen exchange.

15...♗fc8 16.♗f2 ♘xd3 17.cxd3 ♘a4

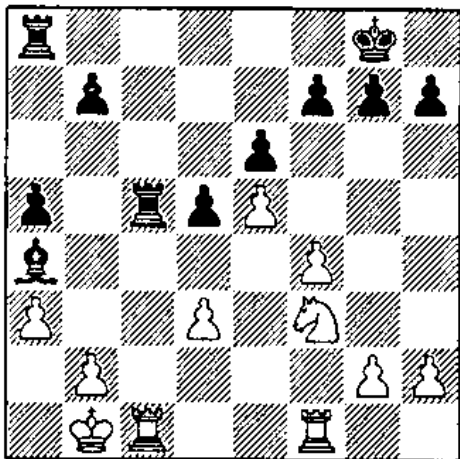
After 17...♗xf2 18.♗xf2 ♘a4 19.♗c1 ♘xc3+ 20.♗xc3 ♗xc3 21.bxc3, White has the more pleasant ending.

18.♘xa4 ♗xa4

After 18...♗xf2 19.♗xf2 ♗xa4 20.♗c1 ♗xc1+ 21.♔c1 ♗c8+ 22.♔d2 ♗c2+ 23.♔e3, the

centralization of White's king would be an endgame asset.

19. ♖xc5 ♜xc5 20. ♞c1



20...b6!

This enables Black to double rooks, as 21. b4? axb4 22. axb4 ♜b5! is unsatisfactory for White.

21. ♘d4 ♞ac8 22. b3

In the event of 22. b4 axb4 23. axb4 ♞xc1+ 24. ♞xc1 ♞xc1+ 25. ♔xc1 ♘d7, Black has a sound position.

22...♘d7 23. ♔b2 ♔f8

There's no point in bringing the white king closer to the centre with 23...♞xc1 24. ♞xc1 ♞xc1 25. ♔xc1. After ♔d2-c3 and b3-b4 White's position would be more active than in the game.

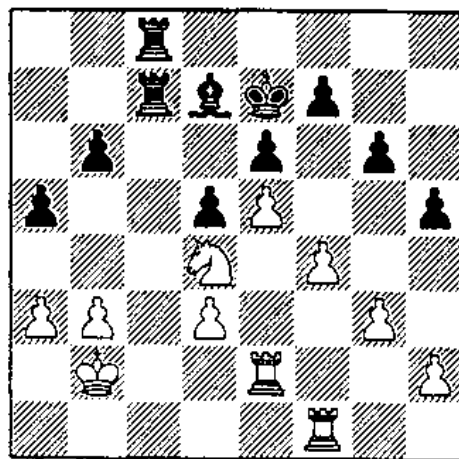
24. ♞ce1 ♔e7 25. ♞e3!

An astute rook manoeuvre, forcing a deterioration of Black's kingside pawn structure.

25...h5 26. ♞h3 g6 27. ♞e3

By forcing the kingside pawns onto the same colour squares as their own bishop, White acquires a slight but lasting advantage—though breaching the Black position is not simple.

27...♞5c7 28. ♞e2 ♞c3 29. ♞d1 ♞3c7 30. g3 ♞g8 31. ♞f1 ♞gc8

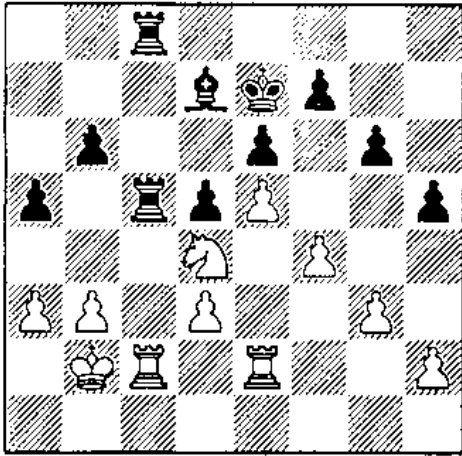


Realizing that the break with 31...g5 would backfire after 32. f5! exf5 33. ♘xf5+ ♘xf5 34. ♞xf5, Black continues with waiting tactics. White has no choice but to exchange rooks.

32. ♞d2 ♔e8 33. ♞c2 ♞c5

After 33...♞xc2+ 34. ♘xc2 ♔b5 35. ♞f3 f6 36. ♘d4 ♘d7 37. exf6+ ♔xf6 38. ♞e3, we have a typical case of the impeded "French" pawn couple on d5 and e6.

34. ♞fc1 ♘d7 35. ♞f1 ♔e8 36. ♞ff2! ♘d7



37.♔c1!

While Black marks time, the white king migrates to the centre.

37...♖8c7 38.♔d2 ♖c8 39.♗f1 ♗a8 40.♗fc1 ♗ac8 41.♘f3!

Freeing d4 for the pawn.

41...♔d8 42.♘g5! ♗xc2+

Black is compelled to exchange rooks, as after 42...♔e7 43.♗xc5! bxc5 44.d4! ♗b8 (things are no easier after 44...c4 45.bxc4 dxc4 46.♘e4, or 44...a4 45.♗xc5!) 45.♗xc5 ♗xb3 46.♗xa5 ♗b2+ 47.♔e3 ♗xh2 48.♗a7! he faces an unpleasant pin (Almasi).

43.♗xc2 ♗xc2+ 44.♔xc2

The game has reduced to an ending in which the knight is clearly stronger than the bishop.

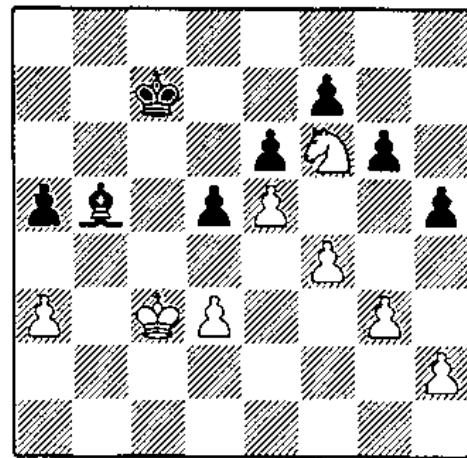
44...♔e7 45.♔c3 ♗b5 46.♘f3 ♔d7 47.♘e1 ♔c6 48.♘c2 ♔c7 49.b4 ♗a4 50.♘d4 ♔d7 51.♘f3

A stronger line was 51.bxa5! bxa5 52.♘f3, threatening to penetrate with the king to c5.

51...♔c7

Better 51...axb4+.

52.♘g5 ♗e8 53.♘h7 ♗a4 54.♘f6 ♗b5 55.bxa5 bxa5



56.f5!

The decisive breakthrough. Black cannot be happy with either 56...exf5 57.♘xd5+ ♔d7 58.h4, or 56...gxf5 57.♘xh5.

56...♔b6 57.fxg6 fxg6 58.♘h7! ♗e8 59.♘f8 ♗f7 60.h4! ♔b5 61.d4!

Having shackled the bishop, White fixes the black pawns. Black is in zugzwang.

61...♔a4 62.♔b2 ♔b5 63.♔b3 ♔b6 64.♘d7+ ♔b5 65.♘c5 ♔b6

If 65...♖g8, White plays 66.♗b7 and 67.♘d6.

66.♖c3 ♖c6 67.♘d3!

White conducts the endgame very precisely. He bars the route to a4 with his knight, then transfers his king to the kingside.

67...♖b5 68.♗b2 ♖c6 69.♗d2
♗d7 70.♗e3 ♖e7 71.♗f4 ♖e8
72.♗g5 ♖f7 73.♘d3 ♖a4 74.♗c5
♖c2 75.♗b7 ♖a4 76.♗h6 ♖f8
77.♗c5 ♖f7 78.♗g5 ♖b3 79.♗f4
♖d1 80.♗e3 1-0

Game 19
Hjartarson-Brynell
Rilton Cup 1996

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6
4.♖g5 ♖e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.♖xe7
♗xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♗f3 c5 9.♗d2 ♗c6
10.dxc5 ♗xc5 11.0-0-0 ♗b6
12.♖b1 ♖d7 13.♗b5

The thematic manoeuvre which leaves White with the option of stationing his knight on d6 or d4.

13...♗a4

Black puts his finger on the Achilles' heel of the White set-up: the b2-pawn. After the stereotyped 13...♞ac8?! 14.♗d6 ♞c7 15.♖b5, the knight would consolidate itself on d6.

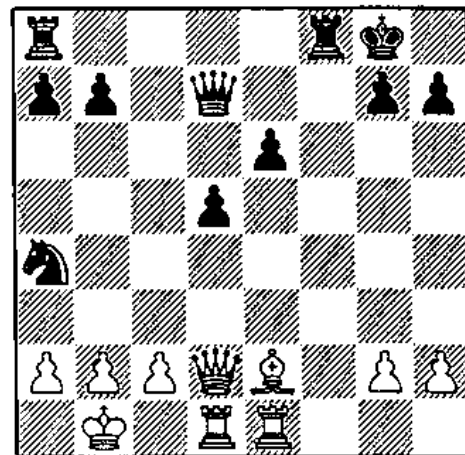
14.♗d6?!

As a result of this active try, White has to give up the e5-pawn; 14.♗bd4 was more to the point and looks stronger.

14...f6! 15.♖e2

On 15.♖d3, Black can play an exchange sacrifice typical of this type of structure: 15...fxe5 16.fxe5 ♞xf3 17.gxf3 ♗xe5.

15...fxe5 16.fxe5 ♗xe5 17.♗xe5
♗xd6 18.♗xd7 ♗xd7 19.♞he1



19...♗d6

It appears that 19...♗b6 was more solid, bringing the knight to the defence of the centre with the idea of answering 20.c4 with 20...♗c6.

20.♖g4 ♞f6 21.c4 ♗b6 22.♗d4
♗c6

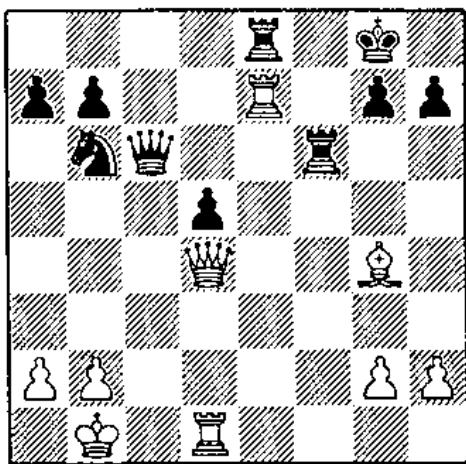
As Hjartarson shows, Black had to play 22...♞c8 23.c5 (or 23.cxd5 ♞c4!?) 23...♞xc5 24.♞xe6 ♞xe6 25.♖xe6+ ♗h8, keeping the pawn,

although after 26.♖f1 White has compensation.

23.cxd5

Wholesale simplification results from 23.♙xe6+ ♖xe6 24.cxd5 ♘xd5 25.♗xe6 ♚xe6 26.♚xd5 ♚xd5 27.♗xd5.

23...exd5 24.♗e7 ♖e8



Leads to loss of the queen, but White was threatening 25.♗c1, penetrating with his second rook.

25.♙d7! ♖xe7 26.♙xc6 bxc6 27.b3 ♗e4

Despite nominal material equality the advantage is with White, since the black pawns on a7 and c6 are weak. Nor would the situation have been improved by 27...♗e2 28.♗d2 c5 29.♚d3 ♖xd2 30.♚xd2 c4. Black should therefore have stuck to waiting tactics with 27...h6.

28.♚d2 ♘d7 29.♚a5 ♗e2 30.♗d2

A more energetic line is 30.♚xa7 ♗ff2 31.♚a8+ ♘f8 32.♚xc6 ♗b2 33.♙c1 ♖xa2 34.♚d5+ ♙h8 35.♚d4, and White is in complete control (Hjartarson).

30...♗xd2 31.♚xd2 ♘c5

A pawn is also lost after 31...♘b6 32.♚a5 ♗f7 33.♚c5 ♗c7 34.♚d6.

32.♚e3 ♘e4 33.♚xa7 ♗f2 34.a4

There is no stopping this pawn.

34...♙f8 35.a5 c5 36.a6 ♙d2+ 37.♙c1 ♘xb3+ 38.♙d1 ♗d2+ 39.♙e1 ♗b2 40.♚b8+ ♙e7 41.♚e5+ 1-0

Game 20

Lindberg-Ulybin

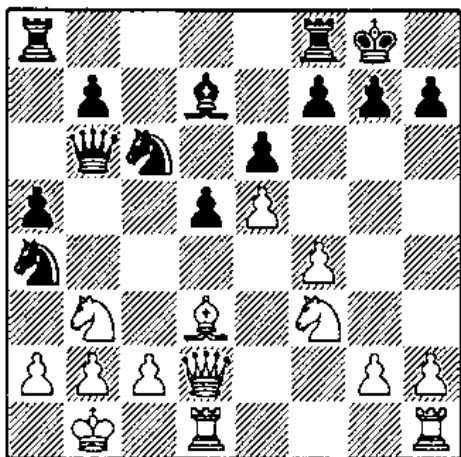
Rilton Cup 1996/97

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7 ♚xe7 7.f4 0-0 8.♘f3 c5 9.♚d2 ♘c6 10.dxc5 ♚xc5 11.0-0-0 ♘b6 12.♙b1 ♙d7 13.♘b5 ♘a4 14.♘bd4 ♚b6 15.♘b3

15.c3 is more exact.

15...a5 16.♙d3?!

Again 16.c3 is more natural, though Black can attack the centre with the active 16...f6! 17.exf6 ♗xf6 18.♙d3 ♗af8 19.g3 e5!.



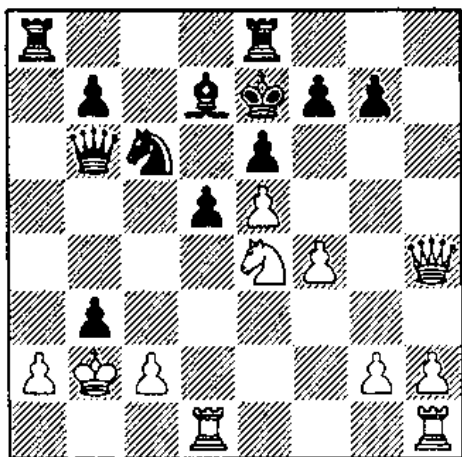
16... ♖xb2! 17. ♔xb2 ♗a4
18. ♕xh7+

White plunges into the attack, but his reserves are too limited.

18... ♔xh7 19. ♖g5+ ♔g8 20. ♗d3 ♗fe8 21. ♗h7+ ♔f8 22. ♖e4

An important resource; after 22. ♗h8+ ♔e7 23. ♗xg7 ♔d8, the king slips away from its pursuers.

22... ♗xb3 23. ♗h8+ ♔e7 24. ♗h4+ ♔f8 25. ♗h8+ ♔e7 26. ♗h4+



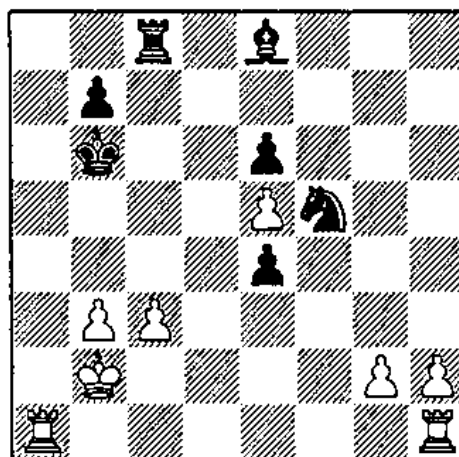
26... ♜f6 27. ♞xf6+ ♔d8 28. ♜f7+ ♔c7
29. ♞xe8=♗+ ♕xe8 30. ♗xb3 ♗b4

The storm has passed over leaving Black unscathed, and he proceeds to the counter-attack while freeing a square for his king. After 30... ♞xe4 31. ♗g5 ♗a3+ 32. ♔c3 ♗a5+ 33. ♔b2 ♗a2+ 34. ♔c3 ♗a5+ 35. ♔b2 ♗a3+ 36. ♔c3 ♞dx4 37. ♗xg7+ ♔b6 38. ♖a1 ♗c5+ 39. ♔b2 ♖d4!

31. ♗g5 ♗a3+ 32. ♔c3 ♗a5+
33. ♔b2 ♗a2+ 34. ♔c3 ♗a5+
35. ♔b2 ♗a3+ 36. ♔c3 ♞dx4
37. ♗xg7+ ♔b6 38. ♖a1 ♗c5+
39. ♔b2 ♖d4!

Black renounces perpetual check to continue the counter-attack. In view of the mate threat, White's next move is forced.

40. ♞c3 ♖f5 41. ♗e5 ♗xe5 42. ♞xe5 ♞c8



The game has finally reduced to an ending where the material is roughly equal but Black's chances are better thanks to his passed pawn on e4. White's endgame play is not error-free.

43. ♞hf1?

This rook should remain on the h-file, since White's counter-chances are obviously bound up with his passed pawns. The immediate 43.h4, however, would be met by 43...♔h5 44.♞ae1 e3. White should therefore have played 43.♞ae1 ♔c6 44.h4 e3 45.♞h2, when Black would need to parry two threats at once: g2-g4 and h4-h5.

43...♔c6 44.♞f2 ♞g8!

It's important to hold up the passed pawns.

45.♞g1 ♔h4 46.♞e2 ♔c5 47.c4 ♖b4 48.♖c2 ♔f5 49.♞d1 e3 50.♖b2 ♞g4 51.♞g1 ♔f3!

The start of the decisive invasion. You only have to look back to the last diagram to realize how much progress Black has made.

52.♞c2 ♔d4 53.♞c3 e2 54.♞e3 ♞e4 55.♞xe4 ♔xe4 56.h4 ♔xg2 57.h5 ♔f1 0-1

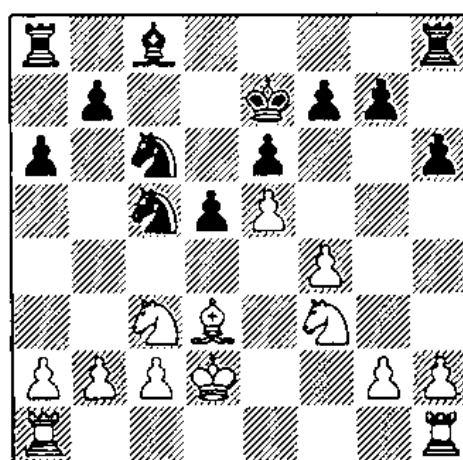
Game 21
Konstantinopolsky-Liliental
Moscow 1936

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♔c3 ♔f6
4.♔g5 ♔e7 5.e5 ♔fd7 6.♔xe7
♞xe7 7.f4 a6 8.♔f3 c5 9.dxc5
♞xc5 10.♞d4 ♔c6

The queen retreat 10...♞e7 also favours White.

11.♞xc5 ♔xc5 12.♔d3 ♔e7
13.♔d2 h6?!

13...f6, challenging the centre, was stronger. A player of colourful combinative style, Liliental handles this ending less than impeccably. But then, at that time, the best plan of defence had yet to be found.



14.♔e2!

It's important to establish a knight on d4 as quickly as possible.

14...♔d7 15.♔ed4 ♞ac8 16.♞ae1
♞c7

Aside from his inaccuracy at move 13, Black has developed his pieces the best way. He does not, however, succeed in utilizing the c-file, whereas White can attack on the kingside.

17.g4 ♔b4

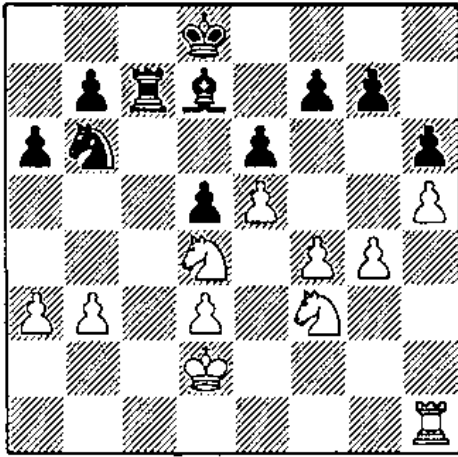
He should have checked White's offensive with 17...h5 18.h3 ♔xd3 19.cxd3 ♔xd4 20.♔xd4 hxg4

21.hxg4 ♖cc8, though White would still be better.

18.a3 ♜bxd3 19.cxd3 ♜hc8
20.♜c1

Completely neutralizing Black's play in the c-file.

20...♔d8 21.h4 ♜a4 22.♜xc7
♜xc7 23.b3 ♜b6 24.h5!



A typical position for White to begin his kingside assault. The pawns on e5 and h5 prevent any active tries on Black's part and compel him to wait passively.

24...♔e7 25.g5

The signal for the attack. White prepares to break through with his rook.

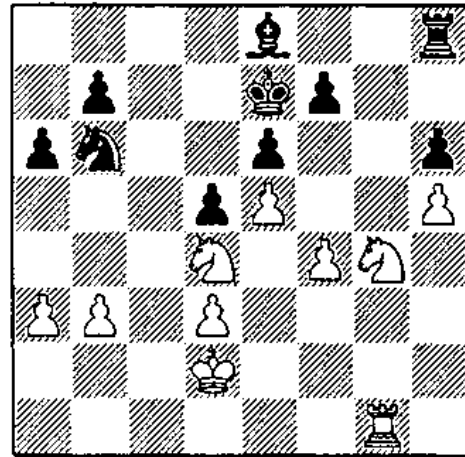
25...♜c8 26.gxh6 gxh6 27.♜g1
♜h8

If 27...♔f8 28.♜h2, the knight penetrates to f6.

28.♜h2 ♔e8

A better idea was 28...♔c8, when the bishop continues to give additional support to the f5-point. Psychologically, though, it isn't easy to "develop" your bishop on its starting square.

29.♜g4?!



White is over-hasty. He should have brought his king closer to the centre of action with 29 ♔e3.

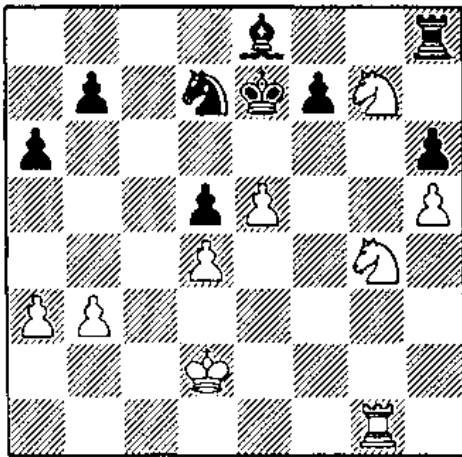
29...♜d7?

As demonstrated by the Moscow master N.Grigoriev, a well-known endgame specialist, it was essential to play 29...♜g8!, forcing White to sacrifice a pawn: 30.f5! ♜g5 31.f6+ ♔d8 32.♔e3 ♜d7 33.♜f3 (not 33.♔f4 on account of 33...♜xf6! 34.ef6 e5+!) 33...♜xh5 34.d4. White could subsequently strengthen his position by bringing his knight from g4 via f2 and d3 to f4, but the win would by no means be simple, as Black's pawn mass is sufficiently compact.

30.f5 exf5

Countering with 30...f6 would not help, in view of 31.♖xf6! ♜xf6 32.♙g7+ ♚f7 (32...♜d8 33.♖xe6+ ♜c8 34.exf6) 33.fxe6 ♜xh5 34.♙xf7+ ♜d8 35.♖f5.

31.♖xf5+ ♜e6 32.♖g7+ ♜e7
33.d4



Black's pieces are virtually stalemated. His attempt to break out merely hastens the end.

33...f6 34.e6 ♜b6 35.♙e1 ♙g8
36.♖f5+ ♜d8

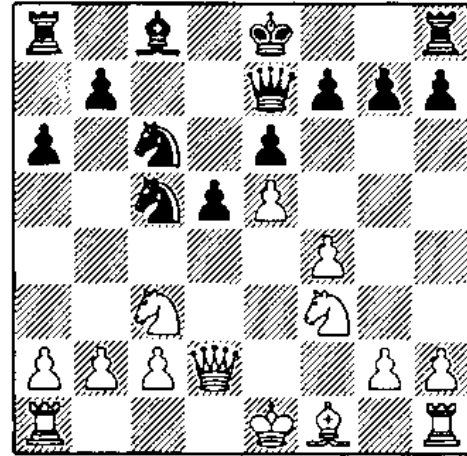
After 36...♜f8 Black would be mated in two moves.

37.e7+ ♜c7 38.♖xf6 ♙g2+ 1-0

Game 22
Vujosevic-Miljanic
Tivot 1997

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♖f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♜fd7 6.♙xe7

♙xe7 7.f4 a6 8.♜f3 c5 9.dxc5 ♜c6
10.♙d2 ♜xc5



11.♙d3 ♙d7

On 11...0-0, White can revert to the plan with kingside castling: 12.0-0 f6 13.exf6 ♙xf6 14.g3 ♙d7 15.♙ae1. In this case he has an important extra tempo for seizing the e5 square.

12.0-0-0 b5

White can answer 12...0-0 or 12...0-0-0 with 13.♙e3, increasing his dark-square control and at the same time threatening the f4-f5 break.

13.♙e3

Here 13.f5 can be countered by 13...b4.

13...b4 14.♜e2 a5 15.♜b1 a4
16.♜ed4 ♜xd4 17.♜xd4 0-0

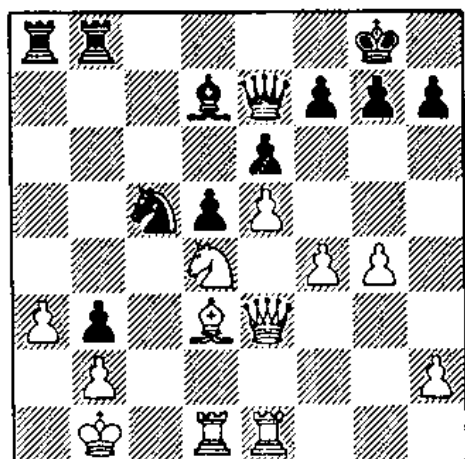
Now that Black has achieved maximum queenside activity, it is just the right moment to castle.

18. ♖he1 ♜fb8 19.g4?!

Of course 19.f5 was more resolute, but even then Black has everything in order after 19... ♖xd3 20. ♗xd3 exf5 21. ♖xf5 ♙xf5 22. ♗xf5 ♜e6 (Miljanic).

19...b3 20.cxb3 axb3 21.a3?

White doesn't succeed in creating a fortress, so 21.axb3 was better—though after 21... ♙e8 Black would carry on the attack by bringing his queen to a7.



21... ♖a4! 22. ♗d2 ♖xb2!

After this sacrifice the Black pieces assemble for the white king's abdication ceremony.

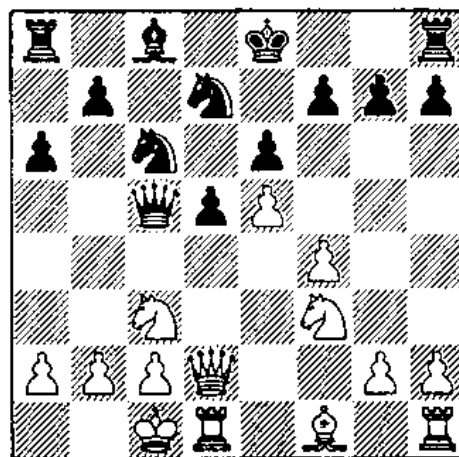
23. ♗xb2 ♜xa3 24. ♖e2 ♜a2
23. ♗c3 ♗a3 26. ♖c1 ♜c8 27. ♗d4
♜cc2 0-1

Game 23

Am. Rodriguez-Moskalenko
Holguin 1989

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖c3 ♖f6
4. ♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♖fd7 6. ♙xe7

♗xe7 7.f4 a6 8. ♖f3 c5 9.dxc5
♗xc5 10. ♗d2 ♖c6 11.0-0-0



In the early days of this variation White's basic plan was initiated by 11.a3, after which he would play ♗d2-f2, aiming to exchange queens and head for an endgame. It was later established, however, that after 11...b5 12. ♗f2 ♙b7 13. ♗xc5 ♖xc5, followed by ♙e8-e7 and f7-f6, Black's position is not easy to breach. White therefore went over to 11.0-0-0, postponing the queen exchange until a more favourable moment. As in most variations where White exchanges on c5, this is indeed the most natural plan; White aims to occupy d4 without delay.

11...b5 12. ♖e2!

With this prophylactic knight retreat White limits Black's options. Instead 12. ♖d4 could be met by 12... ♙b7 13. ♖ce2 b4, with a6-a5 to follow.

12...b4

Black is clearing a diagonal for his "bad" bishop.

13. ♖ed4 ♗xd4 14. ♖xd4 0-0

It was time to look after his king, since if 14...a5, an attack with 15.f5!? is possible.

15. ♔b1

White can hardly do without this prophylactic move.

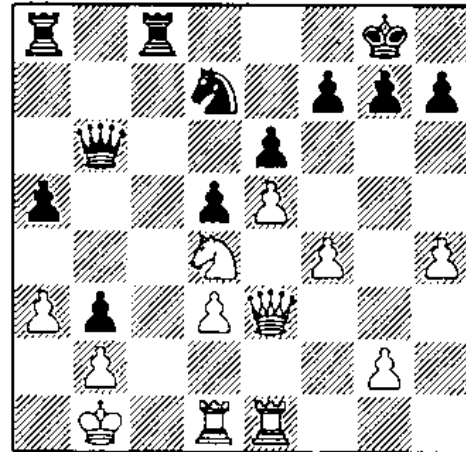
15...a5 16.h4 ♖b6

By putting off moving their bishops, both sides are "fighting for the tempo". The black queen not only defends the e6-pawn in case of 17. ♖h3 f6! 18.exf6 ♗xf6, but clears the knight's path to e4 in anticipation of a bishop exchange.

17. ♗d3 ♗a6 18. ♖e3! ♗xd3
19.cxd3 b3?

A hasty move, after which White's queenside solidifies and his hands are freed for an attack on the opposite wing. It was worth considering 19...a4 with a view to 20...a3, or 19...f6 20.exf6 ♖xf6 21.g4 ♖af8 +/-.

20.a3 ♖fc8 21. ♖he1!

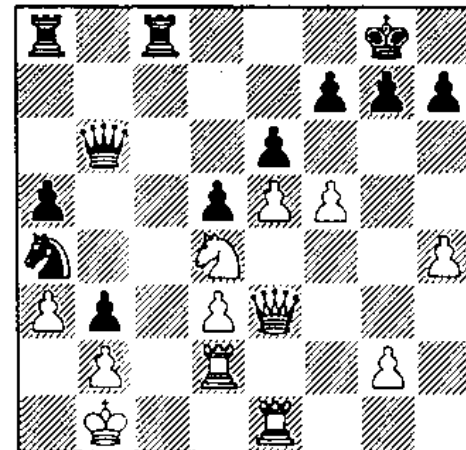


The centralization of White's pieces allows him to control the play on both wings.

21... ♗c5 22.f5 ♖a4?

Black attempts to counter-attack by threatening to invade on c2 with his rook, but neglects the chance to defend with 22... ♖b8 (keeping the e5-pawn under observation) and 23... ♖a7.

23. ♖d2



23...♖ab8

White's attack now becomes irresistible, but even after 23...exf5 24.♗xf5 ♕xe3 25.♖xe3 ♖a7 26.d4! Black is in a poor state.

24.f6! ♕d8 25.♕f4 ♗c5 26.♖e3 ♗d7 27.♖g3 g6 28.♖d1

Combining attack against the black king with defence; Black was threatening ♕d8-c7.

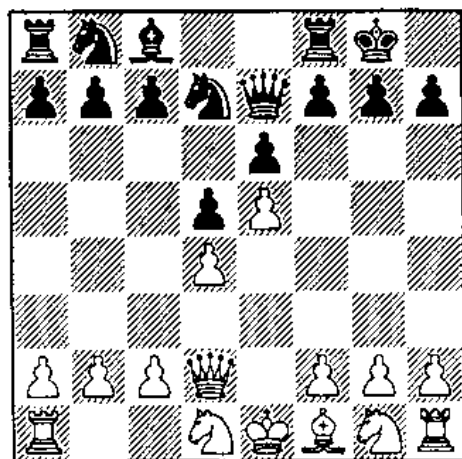
28...♔h8 29.h5 ♕c7 30.♕h6 ♕c2+

On 30...♖g8, White mates with 31.hxg6 fxg6 32.♕xh7+!

31.♗xc2 bxc2+ 32.♔c1 cxd1=♕+ 33.♔xd1 ♖g8 34.hxg6 1-0

Game 24
Lasker-Eliskases
Moscow 1936

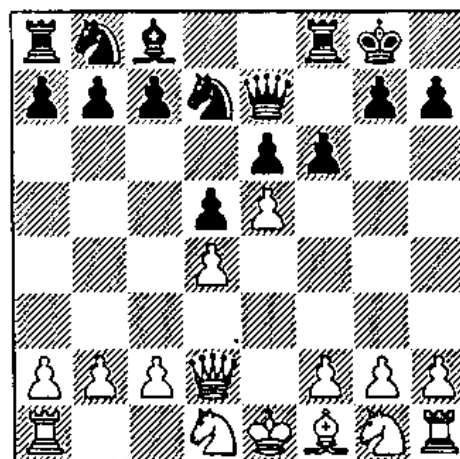
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6
4.♖g5 ♖e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.♖xe7
♕xe7 7.♕d2 0-0 8.♗d1



In his wisdom, Emanuel Lasker could afford to pay little heed to theory (by which we are dominated today). He relied on his philosophical attitude to chess as a fight in which obedience to common sense plays an important role. It is therefore no surprise that near the close of his long chess career he selects an old variation, even though the plan with 8 f4 was already considered best in the 1930s.

8...f6

More often, 8...c5 was played.



9.exf6

A possibility is 9.f4 c5 10.c3 ♗c6 11.♗f3 cxd4 12.cxd4 fxe5, and now if 13.fxe5, White has to reckon with the exchange sacrifice 13...♖xf3! 14.gxf3 ♕h4+ 15.♕f2 (or 15.♗f2 ♗xd4) 15...♗xd4 16.♕xh4 ♗xf3+ 17.♔f2 ♗xh4 with advantage to Black. Hence 13.dxe5 is more circumspect, but after 13...♕b4 Black easily maintains the balance.

9...♖xf6

9...♔xf6 is also good.

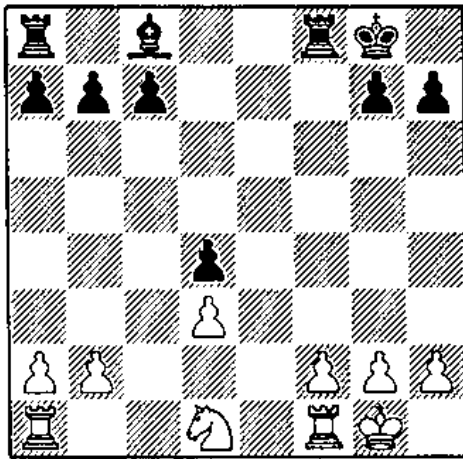
10.♔d3 ♖c6 11.♗f3 e5! 12.dxe5
♗xe5 13.♗xe5 ♔xe5+ 14.♔e3
♗g4?!

A dubious decision to go into an ending. He should have withdrawn his queen (14...♔h5), retaining the better chances.

15.♔xe5 ♗xe5 16.0-0 ♗xd3

He shouldn't have hurried with this exchange. After 16...♔d7 and 17...♗ae8 Black has an easy game.

17.cxd3 d4?



A strategic error. In an attempt to restrict the knight, Black gives himself a weak pawn on d4 which the second World Champion subtly exploits; whereas after 17...♔f5 18.d4 ♗ae8 19.♗e3 c6, White would be the one with worries about a weak d4-pawn.

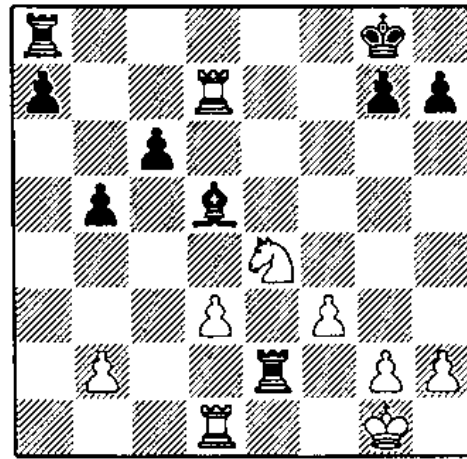
18.f3 ♗e8 19.♗f2 ♗e3

Of course it was tempting to tie the knight to the pawn, but a more active move was 19...♗e2. There was no need to be afraid of the counter-attack 20.♗fe1 ♗xb2 21.♗e8+ ♔f7 22.♗ae1, in view of the resource 22...♗b1! 23.♗8e7+ ♔f6.

20.♗ae1 c6 21.♗c4 ♔e6 22.♗xd4
♔xa2 23.♗d7

Hunting the rook with 23.♗e4 ♗e2 24.♗b4 b5 25.♗c3 a5 26.♗xb5 ♗xb5 27.♗xe2 b4 would give Black the chance to create an outside passed pawn.

23...b5 24.♗e4 ♔d5 25.♗d1 ♗e2



26.♗c3!

A move worthy of the classical school. In the endgame with four rooks, White's absolute control of the seventh rank will compensate for his loss of material.

26...♗xb2 27.♗xd5 cxd5 28.♗c1!

Another refined move, the point of which emerges two moves later.

28...♔h8?

This and the next move show how much lower the standard of defensive technique was half a century ago. Black is wasting time when a modern master, regardless of material losses, would have pushed his outside passed pawn to divert the white rooks: 28...a5 29.♖cc7 a4 30.♖xc7+ ♔f8 31.♖xh7 ♔g8.

29.♖cc7 ♖g8?

It was still not too late to play 29...a5, without worrying about 30.♖a7 on account of 30...♖c8 31.♖dc7 ♖e8 32.h4 a4.

30.♖xa7 h6

If White had mobilized his second rook via the e-file (28.♖e1), the d5-pawn would not now be attacked, and Black could play 30...♖d2.

31.h4 b4 32.♖ab7 b3 33.♔h2 ♖d2

Despair. The b-pawn proves less mobile than its erstwhile colleague on the a-file.

34.♖xb3 ♖e8 35.♖bb7

The same strategy as at move 30.

35...♖xd3 36.♖xg7 ♖d8 37.♖h7+ ♔g8 38.♖xh6 ♖e3 39.♖hh7 d4 40.♖hd7 ♖ee8 41.h5 d3 42.h6

♖xd7 43.♖xd7 ♖e6 44.♖xd3 ♖xh6+ 45.♔g3 1-0

Game 25

Ljubojevic-Korchnoi

Belgrad 1987

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.♙xe7
♚xe7 7.♘b5 ♘b6 8.a4

As long ago as the beginning of the century Geza Maroczy showed that this move promises White nothing. The main, thematic continuation is 8.c3.

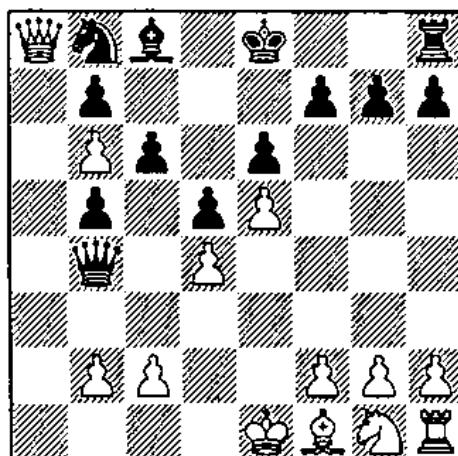
8...a6 9.a5 axb5

9...♘c4 10.♙xc4 dxc4 11.♘c3 favours White.

10.axb6 ♖xa1 11.♚xa1 c6!

An idea of the Iraqi player Taha. Previously 11...0-0 had been considered best.

12.♚a8 ♚b4+



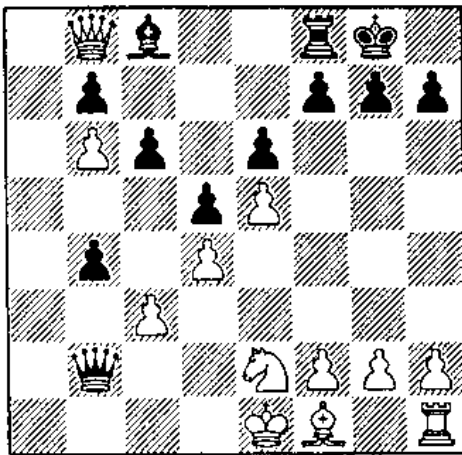
13.c3

Black proves to have enough compensation for the piece he is sacrificing. White's main problem is his exposed king. He can complete his development only at too high a price: 13.♔c2 ♖c4+ 14.♔d1 ♗xd4+ 15.♙d3 ♗xe5 16.♘f3 ♗d6.

13...♗xb2 14.♘e2

After 14.♙d3 ♗xc3+ 15.♔e2 ♗b2+ the king can't hide from the checks.

14...b4 15.♗xb8 0-0



16.cxb4

White can try returning to the defence with his queen, but after 16.♗d6 bxc3 17.f4 ♗d2+ 18.♔f2 Black has 18...c5! 19.♗xc5 c2 20.g3 ♙d7, bringing his reserves into the attack.

16...♗xb4+ 17.♔d1 c5 18.♗c7

Obviously, allowing Black's bishop into the game with tempo (18.dxc5? ♙d7 19.♗xb7 ♙a4+) would be tantamount to surrender.

18...♗a4+ 19.♔d2 ♙d7

In the event of 19...♗b4+ 20.♔e3 ♗a3+ 21.♔f4, the king slips away successfully.

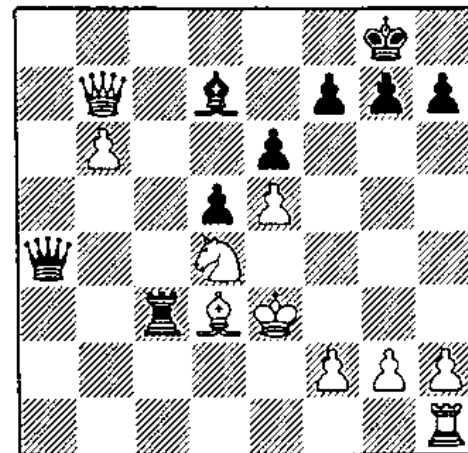
20.♔e3

Black has the same answer to 20.dxc5 or 20.♗xc5.

20...♖c8 21.♗xb7 cxd4+ 22.♘xd4

White mustn't leave this passed pawn on the board—22.♔f3 d3 23.♘f4 d2.

22...♖c3+ 23.♙d3



23...g5

This allows White to set up a drawing mechanism, but after 23...♖xd3+ 24.♔xd3 ♗c4+ 25.♔e3 ♗c3+ 26.♔e2 ♗c4+ 27.♔f3 ♗d3+ 28.♔g4 ♗g6+ it is Black who would need to force the draw.

24.♗b8+

24.♖b1 can be met by 24...♗c4
25.♙d1 ♘b5, when White is lucky
to have the saving resource
26.♗b8+ ♖g7 27.♘xe6+ fxe6
28.♗c7+.

24...♖g7 25.♗d8 ♙xd3+
26.♖xd3 ♗c4+ 27.♖e3 ♗c3+
28.♖e2 ♗b2+ 29.♖d3

Similarly after 29.♖f3 ♗c3+
30.♖g4 ♗xd4+ 31.♖xg5 h6+
32.♖h5 ♗xe5+, there is no escaping
the checks.

29...♙b5+ 30.♘xb5 ♗xb5+
31.♖d2 ½-½

Game 26
Khalifman-Gulko
Reykjavik 1991

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4 ♙xg5!?
7.hxg5 ♗xg5 8.♘h3 ♗e7 9.♘f4
♘c6 10.♗g4

Of course with 10.♗d2 White can
avoid giving up his central pawn.

10...♘xd4

Black refrains from the weaken-
ing 10...g6, which is the alternative
plan.

11.0-0-0

There is no choice, as 11.♗xg7?
♗f8 obviously favours Black.

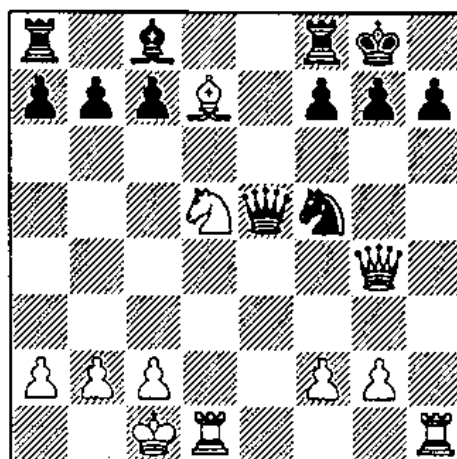
11...♘f5 12.♘fxd5 exd5
13.♘xd5

A necessary sacrifice; 13.♗xf5
♘b6 is weaker.

13...♗xe5 14.♙b5

With 14.f4 ♘f6 15.♙b5+ White
could have deprived Black of his
castling rights, though after 15...♖f8
16.♗f3 ♗d6 17.♘xf6 ♗xf6
18.♙he1 ♘d6 it is unclear whether
this is better than the game
continuation.

14...0-0 15.♙xd7



15...♘h6!?

With this *zwischenzug* Black de-
fends his h7-pawn. He evidently
didn't want to give up his queen
with 15...♙xd7 16.♗h5 h6 17.♙he1
♗d6 18.♘e7+. Actually White can
force this a move later, and yet, as
Gulko, has shown, Black could have
avoided it with 16...f6, since after
17.♗xh7+ (17.♙he1 can now be
met by 17...♘e3!) 17...♖f7
18.♗h5+ ♖g8 White has nothing

tangible. On the other hand if Black tries for more with 18...g6?! 19.♖h7+ ♕g7, White can continue the attack with 20.f4!.

16.♖g3

Observe that White could have returned to the theme of the last note with 16.♖h4 ♖xd7 17.♖he1 ♕f5 18.♖h5 ♖d6 19.♕e7+, though after 19...♕xe7 20.♖xd6 cxd6 21.♖xe7 ♖c6 Black has enough material for the queen.

16...♖xg3 17.♕e7+ ♖h8 18.fxg3 ♖xd7 19.♖xd7 ♕g4!

The knight needs to join in the fight to stop the second rook from penetrating, as it could do after 19...f5?! 20.♖xc7 b5 21.♖d1.

20.♖xc7 b5 21.♖h4 ♕f6

The careless 21...♕e3? would lose a pawn to 22.♖c5, since 23...a6?? fails against 23.♖xh7+!

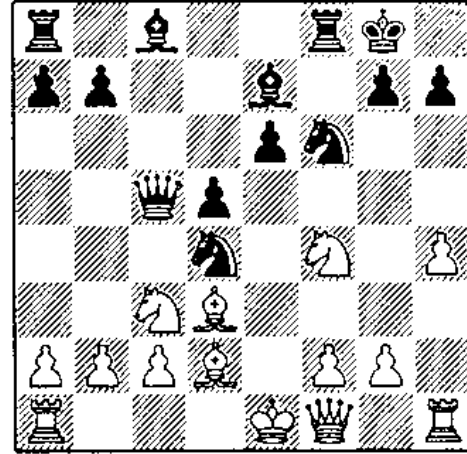
22.♕f5 a6 23.a4 ½-½

Game 27
Yates-Maroczy
New York 1924

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♕c3 ♕f6
4.♖g5 ♖e7 5.e5 ♕fd7 6.h4 f6
7.exf6 ♕xf6 8.♖d3 c5 9.dxc5 ♕c6
10.♕h3 ♖a5 11.♖d2 ♖xc5 12.♕f4
0-0

White would answer 12...e5 with 13.♕h5, but now 13...e5 is a threat.

13.♖e2 ♕d4 14.♖f1



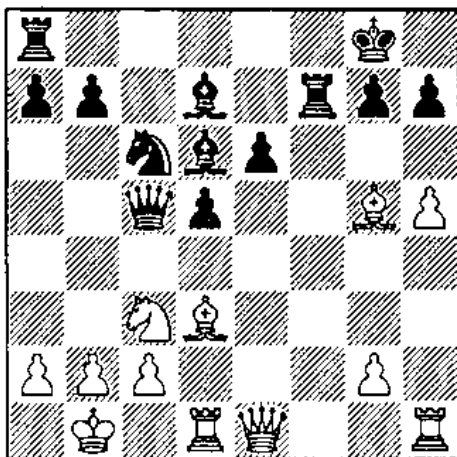
14 ... ♖d6?

Black is playing to win a pawn. In his strong position this is too modest an ambition, and unexpectedly gives his opponent counter-chances. The right move was 14...b5! (simultaneously threatening 15...b4 and 15...e5), for example: 15.♕xb5 ♕xb5 16.♖xb5 ♕xe4, or 15.♕fe2 e5! 16.♕xd4 exd4 17.♕d1 ♕e4, and in either case Black has a winning positional advantage.

15.0-0-0 ♕g4 16.♕h3 ♕xf2
17.♕xf2 ♖xf2 18.♖e1 ♖d7 19.♖b1
♖f6?

It was worth going in for 19...♖xg2 20.♖e3 e5 21.♖f1 ♖g4, when 22.♕xd5 is unplayable owing to 22...♖f8.

20.♖g5 ♖f7 21.h5! ♕c6



22.h6?

White extinguishes his own attack. With 22.♔g6! he could have forced his opponent to sacrifice the exchange by 22...♘e5 23.♔xf7+ ♘xf7 24.♔e3 ♚c7, with some drawing chances. Black would lose at once with 22...hxg6 23.hxg6 threatening 24.♖h8+ while on 22...♖ff8 White has 23.h6! with these possible continuations:

a) 23...hxg6 24.hxg7 ♔xg7 25.♚h4 ♔f7 26.♚h7+ ♔e8 27.♚xg6+ ♖f7 28.♖h8+ ♔f8 29.♘xd5! ♚xd5 30.♖xd5 exd5 31.♚h5! ♘e7 32.♔h6, and White wins.

b) 23...♚f2 24.hxg7 ♔xg7 25.♖xh7+! ♔xg6 26.♚h1! with a mating attack.

c) 23...gxf6 24.♖xf6 hxg6 25.♖xg6+ ♔f7 26.♖f6+ ♔g7 27.♚h4 ♖xf6 28.♔xf6+ ♔f7 29.♖f1 and wins.

22...g6

Closing the dangerous files, after which Black can set about exploiting his extra pawn. This entire strat-

egy fully bears out Maroczy's conviction that if Black has withstood the attack for twenty moves or so, he can count on eventual success.

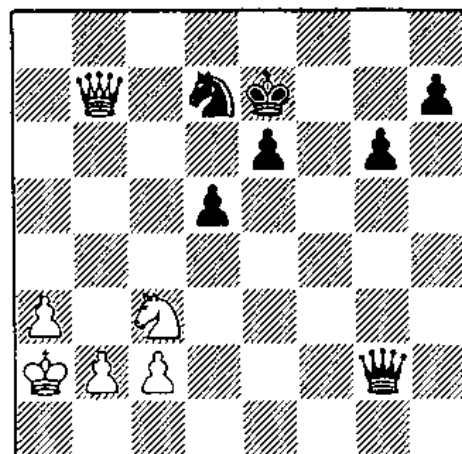
23.♔e3 ♚a5 24.♚h4 ♚d8 25.♔g5 ♔e7 26.♔xe7 ♚xe7 27.♚g3 ♚f6 28.♖df1 ♚e5 29.♚g4 ♖xf1+ 30.♖xf1 ♖f8 31.♖d1

White's position would also be hopeless after a rook exchange, which he cannot avoid in any case.

31...♚f4 32.♚h3 ♘e5 33.♔b5 ♔c8 34.a3 a6 35.♔e2 ♔d7 36.♖f1 ♚g5 37.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 38.♚h2 ♔e7 39.♚g1 ♚xh6 40.♚b6 ♔c6 41.♚c7+ ♘d7?

There was no need at all to sacrifice the queenside pawns. After 41...♔f6 42.♚d8+ ♔g7 43.♚e7+ ♘f7 44.♚xe6 ♚h1+ 45.♔a2 ♚xg2, White could quietly resign.

42.♔xa6 ♚h1+ 43.♔a2 ♚xg2 44.♔xb7 ♔xb7 45.♚xb7



Now the advance of the a-pawn threatens to be highly unpleasant, but Maroczy skilfully combines attack with defence and wins thanks to his extra material.

45...♖g4!

Forestalling a check on b4 and preparing to push the h-pawn.

46.a4 ♖c4+ 47.♔b1 h5 48.♖a8 ♘c5 49.♖a7+ ♔f6 50.♖b8 ♔f5 51.♖f8+ ♔g4 52.♖f6 g5 53.♘d1 ♖f4 54.♖c3 ♘xa4 55.♖c6 ♔f5!

Aiming to answer 56.b3 with 56...♖d2.

56.♖e8 h4 57.b3 ♖d2 58.♖f8+ ♔e5 59.♖g7+ ♔f4 60.♖f6+ ♔g3 61.♖e5+ ♔f3 62.♖f6+ ♔g2!

Not 62...♔e2?, which allows perpetual check by 63.♖f2+ ♔xd1 64.♖f1+ ♖e1 65.♖d3+.

63.bxa4 ♖xd1+ 64.♔b2 ♖g4 65.a5 h3 66.♖c3 ♖e2 67.a6 ♖b5+ 68.♔c1 ♖xa6 69.♖d2+ ♔f3 0-1

(We have utilized Alekhine's notes.)

Game 28
Planinc-Raicevic
Yugoslavia (ch) 1978

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘g5 ♘e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4 c5 7.♘xe7 ♖xe7

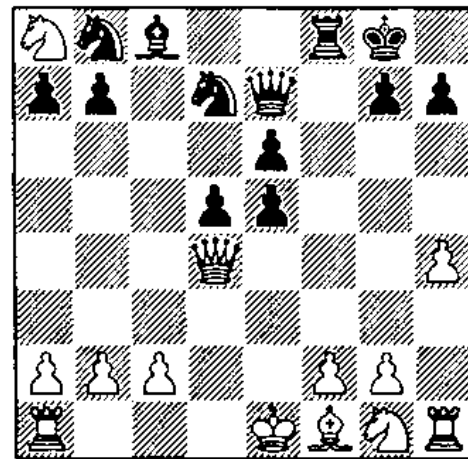
A sharp continuation. In order to gain control of the centre Black

sacrifices a rook, hoping to pick up the knight on a8.

8.♘b5 0-0 9.♘c7 cxd4 10.♘xa8 f6

The line most frequently played, striving to conquer the centre. The alternative 10...♘c6 11.♘f3 f6 is too slow on account of 12.♘xd4 fxe5 13.♘xe6! ♖xe6 14.♘c7 and 15.♖xd5+ with a large plus.

11.♖xd4 fxe5



12.♖xa7?!

It wasn't worth being sidetracked for the sake of a pawn. After 12.♖d2 White would retain chances of an advantage. Now Black develops a menacing initiative based on his mobile pawn centre.

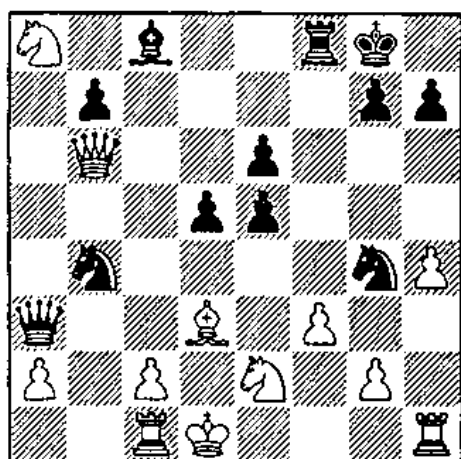
12...♖b4+ 13.♔d1 ♖xb2 14.♙c1 ♘c6 15.♖e3 ♘f6 16.f3 ♘g4!

An unpleasant surprise!

17.♖b6 ♖a3 18.♘d3 ♘b4

Allowing White to fend off his opponent's initiative. Instead, Black could have gained the advantage with an immediate 18...e4! 19.fxg4 exd3 20.♖f3 ♗xa8.

19.♘e2!



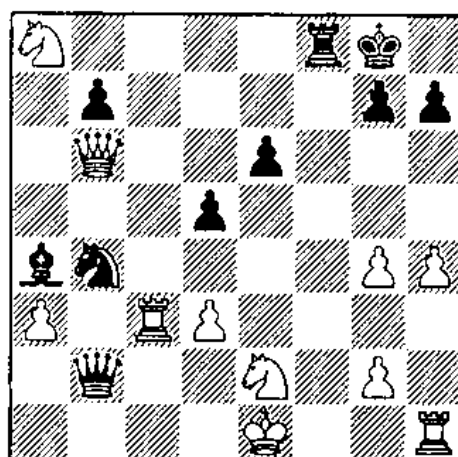
19 ... e4

Having decided that 19...♗xd3 20.cxd3 ♗xd3+ 21.♔e1 ♘e3 22.♞g1 is not dangerous for White, Black returns to the thematic plan, but the loss of a tempo in an attack is likely to reduce its potential.

20.fxg4 exd3 21.cxd3 ♙d7!

Black tries to breathe life into his flagging attack. The threat is 22...♙a4+ 23.♔e1 ♗xd3+.

22.♞c3 ♗b2 23.a3! ♙a4+ 24.♔e1



24...♗a1+?

Black overestimates his chances. It was essential to force the draw with 24...♗c2+ 25.♔d2 ♗b4+ 26.♔e1 (not 26.♔e3? because of 26...d4!+) 26...♗c2+.

25.♞c1 ♗xd3+ 26.♔d2 ♗xc1 27.♗xe6+ ♔h8 28.♞xc1 ♗xa3 29.♞c8

Depriving Black of his last resources, after which White sets about exploiting his extra piece.

29...h6 30.♞xf8+ ♗xf8 31.♗b6 ♗b4+ 32.♔e3 ♙c6 33.♗c8+ ♔h7 34.♗f5+ ♔h8 35.♗c8 ♗c5+ 36.♔d2 ♙b5 37.♗c3 ♗d4+ 38.♔c2 ♙c4 39.♗e7 1-0

Game 29

Maïorov-Korystov
corr. 1996

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.h4 c5 7.♙xe7 ♔xe7 8.f4 ♗c6 9.♗f3

9 dxc5, on the lines of the Classical System, is more in keeping with the variation.

9...a6 10.♖d2 b5 11.♗f2

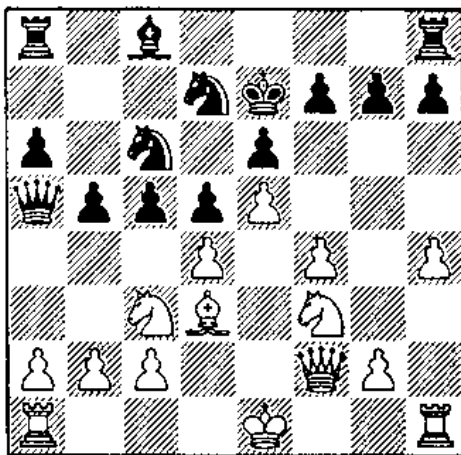
White tries to induce Black to exchange on d4 or block the c-file with c5-c4. In the event of 11.dxc5 ♘xc5 12.0-0-0, Black has 12...♗b6 13.♘d4 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4 b4 15.♘e2 a5, with active play on the queenside.

11...♗a5

After 11...cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4 13.♗xd4 ♗c7 14.0-0-0 ♙b7 15.g4, White has the initiative.

12.♙d3

Now 12.dxc5 can be met by 12...♗b4, and 12.0-0-0 by 12...b4 13.♘b1 ♗xa2.

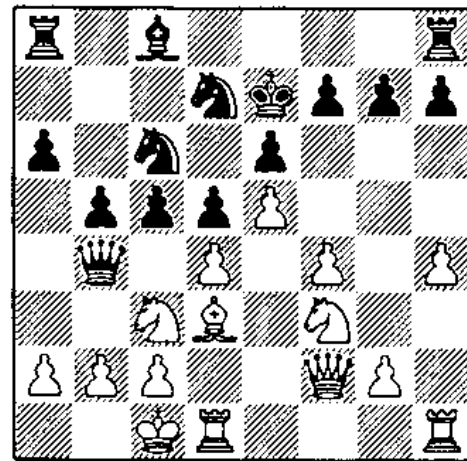


12...♗b4

An interesting alternative is 12...b4 13.♘d1 c4 (13...b3+ leads to a roughly equal ending after 14.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 15.♙xd2 bxc2 16.♙xc2

♘xd4 17.♘xd4 cxd4 18.♙d3) 14.♙f1 b3+ 15.♗d2 ♘b4 16.♘e3 bxc2 17.♙e2 ♗b8 18.0-0 ♘c6 19.♗xc2 ♘b6 with double-edged play (Maierov).

13.0-0-0



13 ... c4

White has achieved his aim; if instead 13...cxd4 14.♘e2 ♗a4 15.♘fxd4 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗xd4 (16...♗xa2?? loses the queen to 17.♗b4+ ♙e8 18.♘c3) 17.♘xd4, he would have a favourable ending. On the other hand, with such a menacing pawn phalanx, the game continuation gives Black good counterplay.

14.♙e2 ♘b6

The answer to 14...♙b7 would be 15.f5.

15.a3

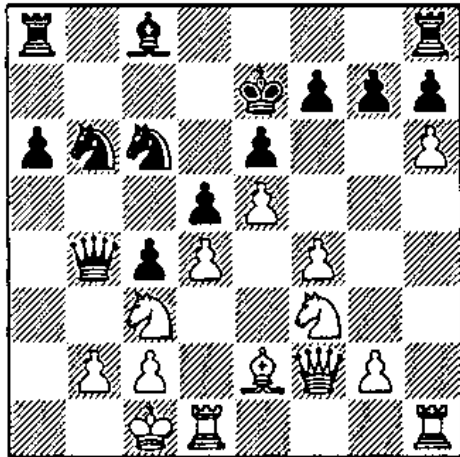
Meeting the threat of 15...♘a4. On 15.♙b1, Black has 15...♗b8, and

White can't do without 16.a3 anyway. Then after 16...♖a5 17.g4 b4 18.axb4 ♖xb4 19.♗a2 ♖a5, Black's rook is in play for good measure. (If instead 16.h5? ♗a4 17.♗xa4, Black replies 17...bxa4.)

15...♖a5 16.h5 b4 17.axb4 ♖xb4

After 17...♖a1+? 18.♔d2 ♖xb2 19.♖b1, the queen is lost.

18.h6



18...gxh6?

Of course Black had to close the kingside with 18...g6, and shouldn't have been afraid of an invasion by the white queen. After 19.♖h4+ ♔e8 20.♖f6 ♖f8 21.♖g7 (or 21.♔d2 ♗d7 22.♖g7 ♖b6 23.♗a4 ♖a5+ 24.♗c3 ♖b6 =>) 21...♗a4 22.♗xa4 ♖xa4 23.♖xh7 ♗b4 24.♗e1 ♖a1+ 25.♔d2 ♖xb2, Black has excellent counterplay (Maiorov).

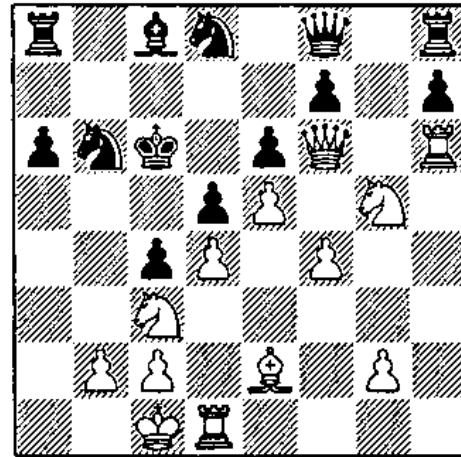
19.♖h4+ ♔d7

If 19...♔e8, White would attack with 20.♖xh6 ♖b8 21.♖g7 ♖f8 22.♖xh7 ♗a4 23.♗xa4 ♖xa4 24.♖h8.

20.♖f6 ♖f8

Black goes over to passive defence, since 20...♖f8 21.♖xh6 ♗a4 22.♗xa4 ♖xa4 23.♖xh7 ♗b4 24.♖xf7+ evidently did not suit him.

21.♖xh6 ♗d8 22.♗g5 ♔c6



23.♔f3!

The h7-pawn will not go away. Meanwhile White increases his threats with a diagonal pin.

23...♗d7

On 23...♖b8, White breaks through by 24.♗xh7 ♖g8 25.♖h4 ♗b7 26.♖e7+ ♔a8 27.♗f6, with decisive threats.

24.♔xd5+ ♔c7 25.♖xh8! ♖xh8 26.♔xa8

The white pieces are so dominant that the queen remains a mere onlooker.

26...♖f8 27.♗dh1 ♕g7 28.♙f3
♜c6 29.♙xc6! ♜xc6 30.♗f6 1-0

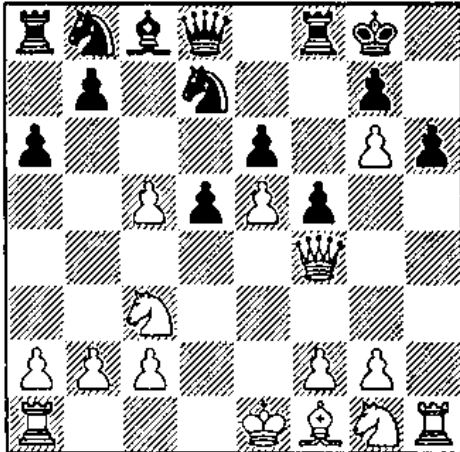
Game 30

Van Riemsdijk-Hmadi
Manila (izt) 1990

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♗f6
4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e5 ♗fd7 6.h4 a6
7.♕g4 ♙xg5 8.hxg5 c5 9.g6 f5
10.♗f4 h6 11.dxc5

More often 11.♗f3 is played.

11...0-0



The immediate 11...♗xc5 was more accurate, since now (after 11...0-0) White could have begun a co-ordinated attack on the king, sacrificing pieces on d5 and h6 to utilize the a2-g8 diagonal and the h-file: 12.0-0-0 ♗c6 (or 12...♗xc5?! 13.♙c4! ♗e8 14.♗xd5! exd5 15.♗xh6! with a tremendous

attack) 13.♗xd5!? exd5 14.♗xd5 ♗cxe5 15.♗d6! ♗e7 16.♗f3, threatening ♙f1-c4+.

12.♗f3 ♗xc5 13.♙d3

If 13.0-0-0, then 13...♗e4! is good.

13...♗c6 14.♗e2 ♗a5+ 15.♙f1 ♗e4 16.c3!?

An ingenious pawn sacrifice. If at once 16.♗fd4, Black has 16...♗c7. If 16.♗ed4, then 16...♗b6 (as in the game) is good.

16...♗b6 17.♗fd4 ♗xb2

It was also worth considering 17...♗c7!?

18.♗b1 ♗d2+

Black decides to take the exchange, as the ending after 18...♗d2?! 19.♙xe4 ♗xf4 20.♗xf4 ♗xd4 21.♙xd5! is better for White. On 18...♗a3, Black would have to face an attack with 19.♗xe6!? ♙xe6 20.♗xb7 ♗g5 21.♗h4 ♗e7 22.f4—even though the consequences are unclear (van Riemsdijk).

19.♙g1 ♗xb1 20.♗xh6 ♗d2

On 20...gxh6 21.♗xh6 ♗f7 22.gxf7+ ♙xf7 23.♗f4, White's threats continue to mount. After the queen exchange he has compensation for the exchange, but no more.