Yuri Yakovich



SICILIAN ATTACKS

Powerful Charges & Typical Tactics

NEW IN CHESS

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New In Chess 2010

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Published by New In Chess, Alkmaar, The Netherlands
www.newinchess.com

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Cover design: Steven Boland
Translation: Steve Giddins
Supervisor: Peter Boel
Proofreading: René Olthof
Production: Anton Schermer

ISBN: 978-90-5691-332-8

Contents

Preface by Sergey Rublevsky 7
Introduction – A Fight to the Death 8

PART 1 – Scheveningen Structure
Black Pawns on d6 and e6, White Pawn on e4 11

CHAPTER 1.1 – THE KNIGHT SACRIFICE ON D5 12
CHAPTER 1.2 – WHITE PAWNS ON E4 AND F4 27
1.2.1 The pawn storm on the kingside 27
1.2.2 The sacrifice of the g-pawn 32
1.2.3 The conflict in the centre 38
A. Black prepares e6-e5 with a white bishop on e3 or d4 . 38
B. The central battle with the white bishop on g5 42
CHAPTER 1.3 – WHITE PAWNS ON E4 AND F3 58
CHAPTER 1.4 – WHITE G-PAWN ADVANCES TO G5, WITHOUT SUPPORT OF OTHER PAWNS 76

PART 2 – Taimanov Structure
Black Pawns on d7 and e6, White Pawns on e4 and f3 95

PART 3 – Rauzer Structure
Black Pawns on c6, d5 and e6, White Pawn on e4 105

PART 4 – d6/e5 Structure
Black Pawns on d6 and e5, White Pawn on e4 111

CHAPTER 4.1 – WHITE PAWNS ON E4 AND F3 113
4.1.1 Black creates piece pressure on the queenside, without advancing his a- and b-pawns 113
4.1.2 Exploiting the weaknesses, resulting from the advance of Black's queenside pawns 116
4.1.3 Mutual pawn storms on the flanks 119
CHAPTER 4.2 – WHITE PAWNS ON E4 AND F4 127
4.2.1 Black allows the white pawn to advance to f5 127
4.2.2 Black exchanges on f4 131

PART 5 – Dragon Structure
Black Fianchettoes his Bishop to g7 137

CHAPTER 5.1– THE PROPHYLACTIC ADVANCE OF THE WHITE G-PAWN 140
CHAPTER 5.2 – WHITE CASTLES LONG WITH HIS BISHOP STILL ON F1 143
5.2.1 Mutual attacks on the flanks 143
5.2.2. Black counterattacks in the centre 152
CHAPTER 5.3 – WHITE BRINGS OUT HIS BISHOP TO C4 BEFORE CASTLING LONG. . 168
5.3.1 Black does not play ...h7-h5 169
5.3.2 Positions with fixed h-pawns 187

Index of Players 203
List of Games 207
Bibliography 208

Preface by Sergey Rublevsky

Amongst the enormous library of opening books, volumes on the Sicilian Defence occupy a special place, due to the fantastic popularity of the opening.

Some writers devote whole volumes to particular systems, others try to explain how to obtain the advantage as White against every Sicilian variation. For some, all their recommendations as to how to get the advantage are summarised in a single volume, whilst others have produced multi-volume works.

But opening books devoted to such a dynamic and constantly developing opening (every month, numerous theoretically important games are played in the opening) quickly date, and their pages of variations lose their significance. The knowledge of specific systems, if not supported by an understanding of the general principles of play in a wide spectrum of positions, brings little benefit.

But how can one formulate principles of play, in what appear to be widely differing positions? It is to the solution of this difficult task that the book of my friend, Grandmaster Yuri Yakovich, is devoted. The erudition and talent of the author, who in my view turned primarily to training work rather too early in his career, has enabled him to write a brilliant middlegame textbook. Mind you, everybody knows how difficult it is nowadays to define precise boundaries between different stages of the game, and in this book you will also find numerous interesting and hitherto unpublished analyses and ideas, in the opening itself.

Ever since my childhood, I have played the Sicilian Defence for both colours, but unfortunately, in my day, nobody attempted to classify the different, highly complicated positions which can arise out of the opening, nor to give recommendations as to how they should be played, backed up with concrete variations. Nobody even thought of attempting such an 'impossible' task, and I was forced to do the job bit by bit, by studying many different books, magazines and tournament books, to collect together the necessary information.

I am delighted for the reader, whatever his playing strength, in whose hands this book finds itself, because I myself have read it through from cover to cover with enormous interest, discovering along the way many interesting ideas to which I had never previously paid attention. One only has to think of the analysis of the key moments in the famous game Tal-Larsen, which forces one to re-evaluate the battle which occurred in this great game. For 30 years, the most brilliant analysts, backed up in recent years by powerful computers, have claimed that Tal was bluffing, and should have lost against correct defence. However, Yuri shows that the genius' intuition frequently counts for more than the forest of variations, unfathomably deep for the human player, and that belief in his strengths and abilities, founded on an understanding of general strategic and tactical ideas, can work miracles.

I hope that this book will give you great pleasure!

Sergey Rublevsky
May 2010

Introduction – A Fight to the Death

You have before you the most popular opening of the second half of the 20th, and start of the 21st century – the Sicilian Defence. The 11th and 13th world champions, Robert Fischer and Garry Kasparov, made an enormous contribution to the growth in popularity of this opening, winning brilliant games on both sides of the Sicilian. Nowadays, too, it is difficult to name a strong player, including both the current world champion Vishy Anand and his challenger Veselin Topalov, who does not include the Sicilian Defence in his opening repertoire.

I will try to summarise Black's main ideas: to avoid symmetry, fight actively in the centre, and to attempt subsequently to seize the initiative and space on the queenside and in the centre.

In my opinion, the strongest – or at least, the most interesting – response to 1.e4 c5 is 2.♘f3 followed by d2-d4, which is also the most popular system for White. Of course there are other lines, which lead to less tense positions and require less knowledge, but, in the words of Alexander Khalifman, that is the extent of their merits.

After White plays d2-d4, a situation arises with a wide choice of subsequent plans. Both sides have a very great number of playable set-ups, which is why the Sicilian is so popular – every player can find here variations which suit his style and tastes.

Even so, the great mass of white approaches can be divided into two main categories, depending on which side White castles – short or long.

Whilst in the early days of the Sicilian, White castled kingside in a clear majority of games, in more recent decades he has tended to prefer queenside castling. This is thanks to the efforts of Rauzer, Keres, and Velimirovic, and especially to the development of the white set-up involving ♗e3, ♕d2, 0-0-0, f2-f3 and g2-g4.

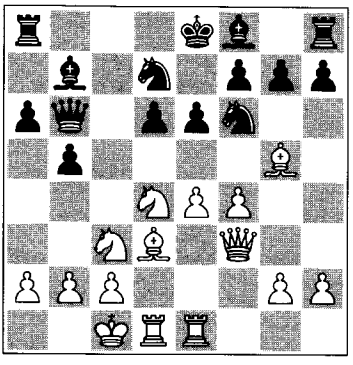
Of course, in such variations as the Sveshnikov (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 e5), the Sicilian Counter-Attack (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♗b4 etc.) it is wrong for White to castle queenside, for concrete reasons. But in the fight against the Dragon and Najdorf Variations, the Scheveningen set-up, the Taimanov System (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6 5.♘c3 ♕c7) and the Richter-Rauzer Attack, long castling is objectively the strongest choice for White.

When White castles queenside, Black almost always has two principal means of creating counterplay:

1. **Leave the king in the centre (until later, or even for good) and create a counterattack on the queenside as quickly as possible, hoping to get at the opponent's king first.**

The game Alexei Shirov-Viswanathan Anand, Morelia/Linares 2008, provided a striking example of the success of such a strategy:

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5 e6 7.f4 ♘bd7 8.♕f3 ♕c7 9.0-0-0 b5 10.♗d3 ♗b7 11.♖he1 ♕b6

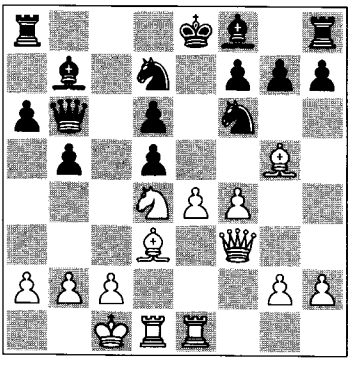


12.♘b3 ♖c8!? 13.♕h3 ♖xc3!

Black's play reminds one of the game Movsesian-Kasparov, Sarajevo 2000 – there too, we see a rapid development of Black's initiative on the queenside, an exchange sacrifice on c3, and a beautiful mating attack on the king.

14.bxc3 ♕c7 15.♔b1 ♗e7 16.e5 dxe5 17.f5?! ♘d5 18.♗xe7 ♔xe7 19.fxe6 fxe6?! 20.♕g3 g6 21.♖d2 ♖c8 22.♕g5+? ♔e8 23.♕g4? ♘xc3+ 24.♔a1 ♗d5 25.♖e3 ♘f6 26.♕h4 ♕e7 27.♗f1 ♗xb3 28.cxb3 ♘ce4! 29.♖b2 ♖c1+ 30.♖b1 ♕c5 0-1

On the other hand, as is well-known even from textbooks for beginners, the king in the centre faces many dangers. For example, in the game Maia Chiburdanidze-Semen Dvoirys, Tallin 1980, the black king did not enjoy a rosy future. In the position of the diagram, instead of 12.♘b3, White played **12.♘d5!?**, which was a novelty at the time. Black immediately went wrong with **12...exd5?** (12...♕xd4 13.♗xf6 gxf6 14.♗xb5 ♕c5, with sharp play, was essential), and the 6th women's world champion conducted a brilliant attack:



13.♘c6!! ♗xc6 14.exd5+ ♗e7 15.dxc6 ♘c5 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♗f5 ♕c7 18.b4! ♘e6 19.♕h5 ♘g7 20.♗d7+ ♔f8 21.♕h6 d5 22.♖xe7! ♔xe7 23.♖e1+ ♔f8 24.♕xf6 ♔g8 25.♖e7 ♖f8 26.♗e6 ♕xe7 27.♕xe7 fxe6 28.c7 h5 29.♕xf8+ 1-0

2. Castle kingside and obtain sufficient chances by combining counterplay in the centre with an attack on the queenside.

This book discusses means of play in the Sicilian with castling on opposite sides.

How can one learn to play such positions well? One could take up an opening book, and try to pick out and remember the relevant variations. But little reward comes from such a method of study. Viktor Kortchnoi once said that 'a chessplayer should develop his tactical and strategical intuition, and combine that with variations, in an attempt to replace the method of calculating everything. Experience is needed to achieve this balance in a tournament game'.

More than 30 years of study and practice of the Sicilian Defence, together with training work with both grandmasters and junior champions of Russia, Europe and the world, have helped me work out the following scheme for studying openings, which, in my view, is significantly more effective.

First of all, using clear illustrative games, we analyse the typical methods of attack in all of the different pawn structures which can arise from the opening. Often, detailed descriptions of the two sides' plans and typical attacking and defensive ideas teaches one more than concrete variations. In my opinion, such a method enables a player to take correct decisions at the board, even in cases where one has forgotten (or never known) the concrete variations.

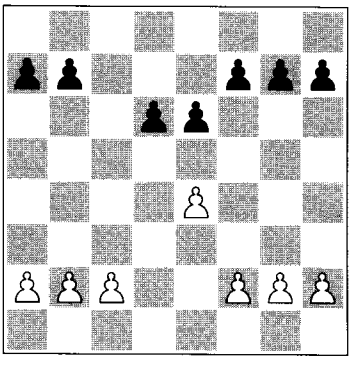
In the majority of cases, it is impossible to calculate all the way to mate in a Sicilian position with opposite-side castling. In a battle with mutual chances, the advantage goes to the player who is better acquainted with the strategic and tactical ideas of the system. Analysing the games in this book can help you improve your mastery in conducting a complicated struggle, and teach you to assess accurately obscure complications, and to choose the most effective methods of attack and defence in different Sicilian set-ups, even if you are insufficiently well-acquainted with concrete variations.

The author has reserved the right in certain cases to ignore move transpositions.

Yuri Yakovich
October 2010

Typical devices
- Piece sacrifices on d5, f5, or g7
- Whether the move a2-a3 is useful
- The prophylactic ♔b1
- The prophylactic ...♖e8
- The central break e4-e5
- Black counterplay in the centre by ...e6-e5
- Black counterplay in the centre by ...d6-d5
- Sacrificing the g-pawn; on g5, with g5-g6 or by g2-g4 with a black pawn on h5
- The sacrifice of the h-pawn in the Dragon Variation
- Exploiting pawn weaknesses
- Going into a better endgame

Part 1 – Scheveningen Structure: Black Pawns on d6 and e6, White Pawn on e4



Most often, the structure with black pawns on d6 and e6 is associated with the Scheveningen Variation of the Sicilian Defence. The computer databases suggest that this variation was first seen at the tournament at Scheveningen in 1923. But now we can say with certainty that Anderssen and Paulsen liked to place their pawns in this fashion as far back as the 19th century.

Nowadays, the structure with pawns on d6 and e6 can be seen not only in the Scheveningen proper and the related Paulsen and Taimanov lines, but also in the Najdorf System, the Velimirovic Attack, the Rauzer Attack, and other set-ups, of which Anderssen and Paulsen never even dreamed.

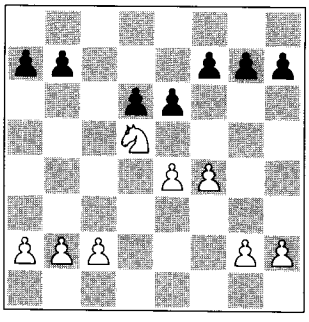
In striving to castle long as quickly as possible, **White first of all develops his queenside pieces** – the dark-squared bishop and the queen. The bishop on f1 leaves its base significantly later, and sometimes even remains on its starting square, emerging only when it needs to eliminate a black knight arriving on c4. The main exception is the Velimirovic Attack (Chapter 1.4) in which the bishop takes up an active position very early on.

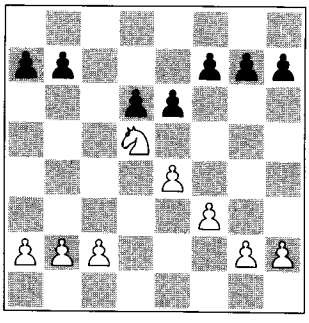
In the vast majority of cases, the bishop on c1 goes to either e3 or g5.

To strengthen his control of the centre and create a basis for his attack on the king, **White can advance his f-pawn either to the fourth** (Chapter 1.2) **or the third rank** (Chapter 1.3). Sometimes (if the opponent allows) White manages to get his pawn to g5, driving away the knight on f6, the principal defender of the black king, without the support of the f-pawn (Chapter 1.4).

We will begin our examination of White's attacking methods with a device which is common to all such pawn structures – **the sacrifice of the knight on d5** (Chapter 1.1), and will then go on to look at the specific characteristics of different positions of the white pawns.

Chapter 1.1 – The Knight Sacrifice on d5





The sacrifice of the knight on d5 is a typical attacking device in the Sicilian Defence. It is seen especially often when the black king is in the centre (see the game in the introduction), but can also be effective when the king has castled.

The following game has been analysed over the course of almost 40 years, in the pages of chess publications the world over, even by such great analysts as Garry Kasparov, Alexander Khalifman and Mark Dvoretsky. Even so, I think it is essential to include it in the present book, for the following reasons.

Firstly, it is a brilliant game, which illustrates the importance of being able to change the character of the battle by means of a positional sacrifice, without necessarily disturbing the objective equality. Its analysis will help to teach us how to play very sharp positions, in which any inaccuracy can have the most tragic consequences. Developing such qualities is essential to anybody who wants to be able to play the Sicilian successfully.

Secondly, in my view, the majority of commentators, despite the help of computer programs, have not assessed completely correctly the critical position arising after the piece sacrifice, and as a result the play of the two players in this magnificent game.

Game 1
Mikhail Tal
Bent Larsen
Bled m 1965 (10)

Before going over to the analysis, I would like to remind the reader of the circumstances in which the game was played. The match score was 4,5-4,5. In the event of a draw in this final game of 'normal time', the players would have had to continue the battle until the first victory. The interest in the game was enormous, and the playing hall was packed.

Mikhail Nekhemievich considered that he had the advantage before this final game: 'I had the white pieces and was in a good mood. In addition, I had faith in my ability to play crucial decisive games.'

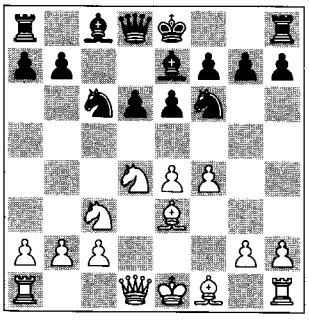
1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 e7-e6
5. ♘b1-c3 d7-d6

With this move-order, Larsen avoids the Keres Attack, which is discussed in Chapter 1.4, hoping to reach a Scheveningen position, where both sides castle kingside. But Tal has other ideas.

6. ♗c1-e3!?

I would point out that, notwithstanding the absence of the black knight from f6, the move 6.g4!? (see Chapter 1.4) deserves the most serious attention even in this position.

6. ... ♘g8-f6
7. f2-f4 ♗f8-e7



8. ♕d1-f3!

At that time this was a practically unknown set-up. Nowadays, however, it is hard to imagine a more natural plan, i.e. to castle long as rapidly as possible, and begin a pawn storm against the black kingside. The popularity of the line increased sharply after the present game.

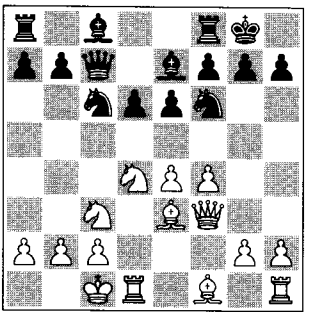
8. ... 0-0

Larsen has no doubt that Black's chances will be no worse, after opposite-side castling.

9. 0-0-0 ♕d8-c7

(There was a threat of 10.e5)

Which attacking plan should White select now? The advance of the pawn to g5 is tempting, driving away the black king's principal defender, the knight on f6, followed by including the f-pawn in the attack, by means of f4-f5 and g5-g6 or f5-f6.



But Tal did not like the fact that the immediate 10.g4 would be met by the typical central counterplay introduced by the exchange 10...♘xd4 followed by ...e6-e5.

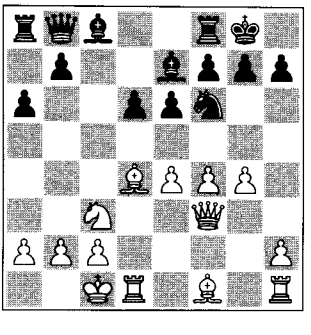
Even so, Kasparov, annotating the game in the second volume of his series *My Great Predecessors*, gives the move 10.g4 an exclamation mark. In my opinion, in the position in the diagram White does better to prepare the pawn storm by means of 10.♖g1!, but we will speak more about this when analysing Games 3 and 5.

Tal played instead

10. ♘d4-b5?!

with the idea of 'starting the attack, after first worsening the position of the black queen' (Tal).

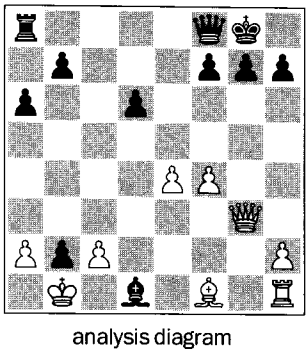
10. ... ♕c7-b8
11. g2-g4 a7-a6
12. ♘b5-d4 ♘c6xd4
13. ♗e3xd4



One of the key moments of the game. In reply to the kingside pawn storm, Black usually chooses one of two possible means of counterplay: a counterblow in the centre, or his own attack on the queenside (a 'race'). Chess lovers are fortunate that the ever-optimistic Larsen, having no doubts about the resources of his position, chose the second method, playing

13. ... b7-b5!?

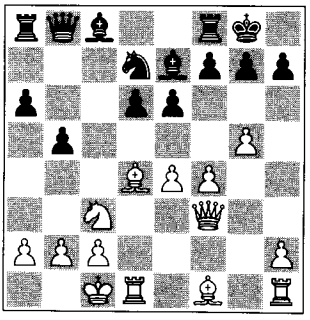
A more cautious player would have answered 13...e5, which leads to a relatively quiet position after **14.g5** ♗**g4** 14...exd4?! is worse, because of 15.gxf6 dxc3 (15...♗xf6 16.♘d5!) 16.fxe7 cxb2+ 17.♔b1 ♖e8 18.f5 **15.**♕**g3 exd4!** But not 15...♗xd1? 16.gxf6 ♗xf6 17.♘d5 ♕d8 (17...exd4 18.♘xf6+ ♔h8 19.♖g1) 18.♗b6 with a decisive advantage (Tal). **16.gxf6 dxc3 17.fxe7 cxb2+ 18.♔b1 ♗xd1 19.exf8**♕**+** ♕**xf8**



analysis diagram

'with good chances of a successful defence, since the position has simplified markedly' (Tal). In the correspondence game Waerstad-Jelen, IECG email 1997, there followed 20.♖g1 g6 21.♕d3 ♗h5 22.♕d5 ♕h6 and here 23.♗c4 ♖f8 24.♕xd6 led to a roughly equal position.

14. g4-g5 ♘f6-d7

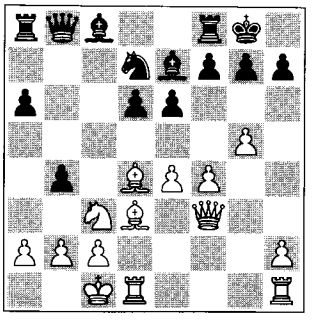


Black's idea is understandable: by means of ...b5-b4 he will keep the knight from d5, and then ...e6-e5 will shut out the enemy dark-squared bishop from participating in the kingside attack. White cannot secure his knight's position by 15.a3? because Black immediately opens the b-file with 15...b4! and after 16.axb4 ♕xb4 17.♕h5 ♘c5! gets to the enemy king more quickly than White.

15. ♗**f1-d3!? b5-b4**

A) Of course, the immediate 15...e5? is bad because of 16.♘d5;

B) In the game Suetin-Jimenez Zerquera, Havana 1969, Black tried to cover the d5-point by means of **15...**♗**b7?**, but after **16.**♕**h3!** ♖**d8** (16...b4? is bad because of 17.♘d5! but 16...♘c5!? should have been preferred) **17.**♖**hg1! e5** (17...b4 is now too late, since White can start a decisive attack by 18.♘d5! in significantly more comfortable conditions than in the game – 18...exd5 19.exd5 ♘f8 (19...g6 20.♖de1! ♗f8 21.♗xg6 fxg6 22.♕e6#) 20.♗xh7+ ♘xh7 21.g6) **18.**♘**d5!** ♗**xd5 19.exd5 g6 20.f5! exd4 21.fxg6 hxg6 22.**♗**xg6!** ♘**f8?** (losing at once, but even after the superior 22...fxg6 23.♕e6+ ♔g7 24.♕xe7+ ♔g8 25.♕e6+ ♔g7 26.♖de1 Black's position is not to be envied) **23.**♗**xf7+** ♔**xf7 24.g6+** ♔**g7 25.**♖**df1** ♗**f6 26.**♖**xf6** White won.

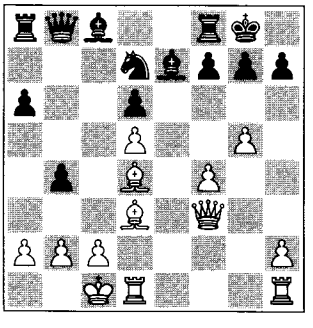


16. ♘c3-d5!?

Of course, Tal did not go in for this entire variation in order to give Black a comfortable game after 16.♘e2 e5. 'I did not have much trouble persuading myself to play this tempting, if not entirely riskless, move... "Misha, I told myself, if at the end of the day you are going to lose this match, it should not be through cowardice".' (Tal)

16. ... e6xd5

17. e4xd5



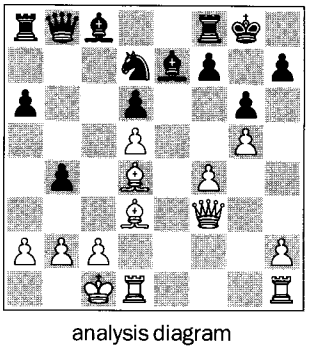
Let us try to summarise what White has for the knight. Tal wrote: 'The piece sacrifice is of a positional character. Black's pieces are bunched up on the queenside and it is not so easy for them to come to the aid of their king. The open e-file is a barrier. In addition, both white bishops are pointing at the enemy king's shelter'. I would add that the disappearance of his e-pawn has deprived Black of a valuable defensive resource, namely the advance ...e6-e5, neutralising the actions of White's bishops. Now there is a threat of the standard combination 18.♗xh7+!+ ♔xh7 19.♕h5+ ♔g8 20.♗xg7! ♔xg7 21.♕h6+ ♔g8 22.g6.

When this position was offered as the basis of a consultation game at a session of the Togliatti grandmasters school, a clear majority of the young players involved (who included several Russian and European champions at different age-groups – Ivan Bukavshin, Arseny and Andrey Shurunov, etc.) chose the defence 17...f5, believing that this weakened the kingside less than 17...g6. Larsen also played this move.

In one of the games played at the same training session, Black tried to cut off the white attack at the roots with the counter-sacrifice 17...♘e5, a possibility that had escaped the attention of all of the commentators. However, after the precise response 18.fxe5 dxe5 (in the event of 18....♗xg5+ 19.♔b1 dxe5 20.♕h5! h6 21.♖hg1 White has a very strong attack) 19.h4! exd4 20.♕e4 White obtained the advantage.

17. ... f7-f5!?

All the commentators are agreed that this move is a mistake, and that only **17...g6!** could have put in doubt the correctness of White's ideas.



analysis diagram

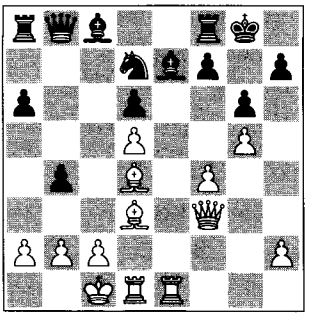
Garry Kasparov, in the second volume of *My Great Predecessors*, writes that the key variation, refuting White's idea, was only found in the year 2000, fully 35 years after the game was played!
We set out below the main variations quoted by Kasparov.

A) **18.♕h3?** ♘f6! 19.f5 (19.♕h6? ♘h5 20.♗e2 ♖e8 21.♗xh5 ♗f8–+) 19...♘h5 20.♕h4 ♖e8 with a decisive advantage to Black;

B) **18.h4?** ♘c5! 19.h5 ♘xd3+ 20.♖xd3 ♗f5 21.hxg6 fxg6! 22.♖xh7 ♔xh7 23.♖e3 ♕d8! 24.♕e2 ♗xg5–+;

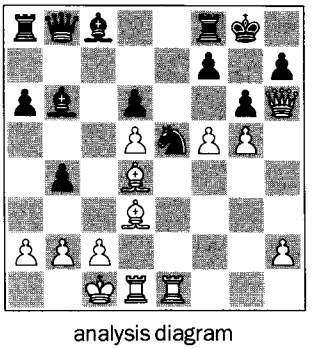
C) **18.♖de1!?** 'the most threatening', according to Kasparov. **18...♗d8 19.♕h3** 19.h4 ♘c5. **19...♘e5! 20.♕h6 ♗b6! 21.fxe5 ♗xd4 22.♖e4!** Or 22.h4 ♗xe5 23.♖xe5 dxe5 24.h5 ♖a7!? 25.hxg6 fxg6 26.♗xg6 hxg6!. **22...♗f2!** Burgess showed that the variation 22...♕a7!? 23.♖h4 f5 24.exf6 ♗e3+ 25.♔b1 ♖xf6! 26.♖e1 ♗f5 27.♖xe3 ♖f7 28.♖e1 ♕f2 also leads to an advantage for Black. **23.e6!** 23.♖f1? loses quickly because of 23...♕a7 24.e6 fxe6! 25.dxe6 ♗e3+ 26.♔d1 ♖xf1+ 27.♗xf1 ♗b7. **23...fxe6 24.dxe6 d5! 25.♖e2 ♕a7 26.♗xg6 hxg6 27.♕xg6+ ♕g7 28.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 29.e7 ♖e8 30.♖xf2 ♖xe7**, with good winning chances.

D) Even though powerful computers have been employed in the analysis of the diagram position, we do not believe that after 17...g6! Black obtains a decisive advantage – visually, it seems as though White has enough compensation for the piece. In the variations given above, White does not manage to open the h-file, and the rook on h1 remains a passive onlooker in an unequal struggle, in which the black forces outnumber the white. This gives rise to the idea of using the other rook to exploit the e-file: **18.♖he1!?**



analysis diagram

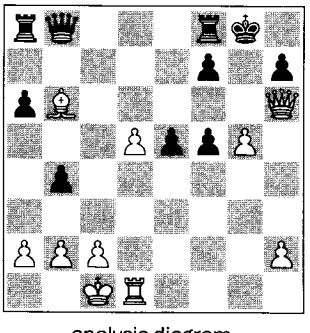
After **18...♗d8** (on 18...♖e8 there follows 19.♗f6) **19.♕h3** ♘**e5!** (19...♗b6? loses to 20.♗xg6! fxg6 21.♖e7 ♘f6 22.♕h6 ♖f7 23.gxf6) **20.♕h6** ♗**b6** White also includes the f-pawn in the attack – **21.f5!** (if 21.fxe5? Black gets the advantage by 21...♗xd4 22.♖e4 ♗f2 23.e6 ♖a7)



analysis diagram

Now, to continue the fight, Black should play **21...♗xf5!?**, since 21...gxf5 (not 21...♘xd3+?? 22.♖xd3 ♗xd4 23.f6, and mate) 22.♗xb6 ♘g4 (bad is 22...♕xb6? because of 23.♖xe5) 23.♗d4!! ♘xh6 24.gxh6 leads to a position where, despite his extra queen, Black must force a draw by means of 24...f6 25.♖e7 (with the threat of

26.♖g1+ ♔h8 27.♗xf6+) 25...♖f7 (the only move) 26.♖e8+ (if 26.♖g1+ ♔f8 27.♖xf7+ ♔xf7 28.♖g7+ ♔f8 White does not have sufficient resources to keep his initiative going) 26...♖f8 27.♖e7. **22.♗xf5!?** White is worse after 22.♗xe5?! dxe5 23.♗xf5 gxf5 24.♖d3 ♖a7! 25.♖h3 f6. **22...gxf5 23.♖xe5!** Exactly! Unfortunately, 23.♗xb6? ♘g4 24.♗d4 ♘xh6 25.gxh6 f6 26.♖e7 does not work because of 26...♖f7, and White has no check on the 8th rank, whilst after 23.♗xe5 dxe5 24.♖d3 Black gets the advantage by playing 24...♖a7! 25.♖h3 f6 26.gxf6 ♖ff7 27.♕g5+ ♔h8 28.♕xf5 ♗d4. **23...dxe5** Black cannot exchange bishops – 23...♗xd4? 24.♖xd4 ♕a7 25.♖h4 with advantage to White. **24.♗xb6**



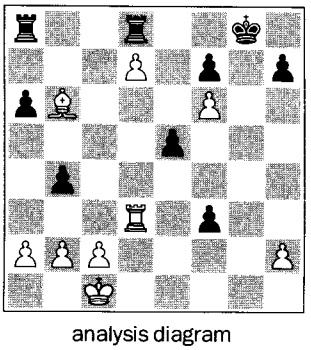
analysis diagram

We have reached a position in which, in my opinion, the passed d-pawn, better coordination of the white pieces, and the weakened position of the black king provide sufficient compensation for the exchange. After the immediate advance of the black pawn by **24...f4?!** there follows 25.h4! ♕c8 26.d6! ♕f5?! 27.♕f6! ♕xf6 28.gxf6 with advantage to White, so Black needs to coordinate his heavy pieces. We can look at some sample variations, although these do not pretend to constitute the final truth.

D1) **24...♕c8 25.d6!** (25.♕f6 ♖e8 26.h4 ♕c4; 25.h4 ♕c4 26.h5 ♖ac8) and now:

D11) A draw results from **25...♕e6 26.d7 ♕xa2** 26...♕xh6? is bad because of 27.gxh6 ♖fd8 28.♖g1+ ♔h8 29.♗c7! f6 30.♗xd8 ♖xd8 31.♖g7; an equal endgame is reached after 26...♖fd8 27.♗c7! (with the idea of 28.♕f6) 27...f4 (27...♖xd7?! 28.♖xd7 ♕xd7 29.♗xe5 with a strong initiative for White) 28.♕f6 ♕xf6 29.gxf6 f3 30.♗xd8 ♖xd8 31.♖d2. **27.♖d3 ♕a1+ 28.♔d2 ♕f1 29.♖h3 ♕g2+** with perpetual check;

D12) **25...♕d7 26.♖d3** With the threat of 27.♖h3. **26...f4 27.♖h3 ♕f5** 27...f5? is bad because of 28.g6. **28.d7 ♖fd8!** The incautious attempt to advance his passed pawns ends in a catastrophe for Black – 28...e4? 29.♗c5! ♖fd8 (29...♕g6 30.♗xf8 ♖xf8 31.♕xf8+) 30.g6! ♕xg6 31.♕xf4 with a decisive attack; or 28...f3? 29.g6! ♕xg6 30.♖g3+–. **29.♖d3 f3** 29...e4? loses to 30.♖d6! followed by ♗d4. **30.♕f6 ♕xf6 31.gxf6**

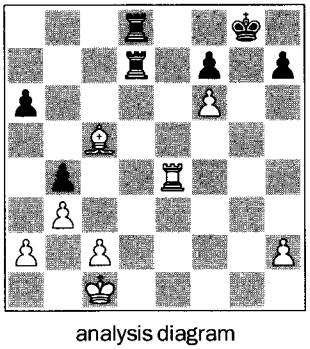


analysis diagram

D121) An interesting draw is reached after **31...e4 32.♖d6!** with the positional threat of ♔d2-e3,

which follows, for example, on 32...♖ab8. As we will see from that follows, it is important to wait for the advance of the Black a-pawn, and only then to play ♖b5: **32...a5!** Both 32...f2 33.♗xf2 a5 34.♗b6 ♖a6 35.♖c6!, winning, and 32...♖ab8? 33.♔d2 are bad for Black. **33.♖d5!?** 33.♗xd8!? f2 34.♖d1 ♖xd8 35.♖f1 e3 36.♔d1 ♖xd7+ 37.♔e2 is also sufficient for a draw, but not 33.♔d2? because of 33...♖a6! 34.♔e3 h5! followed by ♖xb6. **33...f2** In the event of 33...e3 34.♔d1, the white king blocks the black passed pawns. **34.♗xf2 ♖ab8** 34...♖a6 35.♗c5. **35.♗c5 ♖b7 36.♗e7 ♖dxd7 37.♖g5+ ♔h8 38.♗f8!** with perpetual check. I would point out that, if the black pawn stood on a6 (see note to White's 32nd move), then in the final position, Black would have the strong move 38...♖b5!;

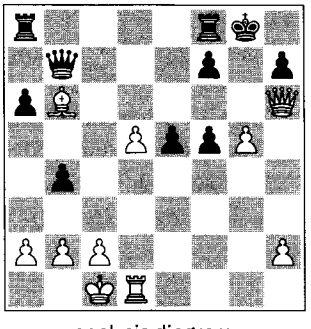
D122) **31...f2!** The only possibility of complicating White's task. **32.♗xf2 ♖ab8 33.♗c5! e4!** White reaches a well-known drawing mechanism after 33...♖b7 34.♖g3+ ♔h8 35.♗e7! ♖dxd7 36.♗f8 h5 (it is still not too late to lose – 36...h6? 37.♖h3 ♔g8 38.♖xh6! with the unstoppable threat of 39.♗g7) 37.♖g5 ♔h7 38.♖g7+=. **34.♖d4 ♖b7 35.♖xe4 ♖bxd7 36.b3**



analysis diagram

In my opinion, this endgame has a drawish character. The white pawn and better king position represent sufficient compensation for the exchange. Play could continue: 36...♖d1+ (36...a5 37.♗b6) 37.♔b2 ♖1d2 38.♖xb4 ♖xh2 39.♖g4+ ♔h8 40.♖g7 ♖d7 41.b4 h5 42.a4 h4 43.♖g5 ♖dd2 44.♖h5+ ♔g8 45.♖g5+ ♔h7 46.♖g7+ ♔h8 47.♖xf7 h3 48.♖c7=.

D2) **24...♕b7**



analysis diagram

Here White has a choice.

D21) To seek chances in a sharp middlegame after **25.h4!? ♖fb8** 25...♖ab8 offers White additional possibilities, in the form of the manoeuvre 26.♗c5 ♖fc8 (26...♖fe8 27.h5) 27.♗d6, whilst 25...a5 (with the idea of 26...♖a6) suddenly leads to a draw – 26.h5 ♖a6 27.d6! ♕xb6 (in the event of 27...♖xb6 28.♕f6! Black can only defend against the mate threat (29.h6) at the cost of a rook) 28.g6 fxg6 29.hxg6 ♖a7 30.gxh7+ ♖xh7 31.♕e6+ with perpetual check. **26.♗c5 ♖c8 27.♗d6 ♕b6 28.g6! fxg6 29.♗xe5 ♖a7 30.♗d4** and the weakness of the dark squares means that there are chances for both sides;

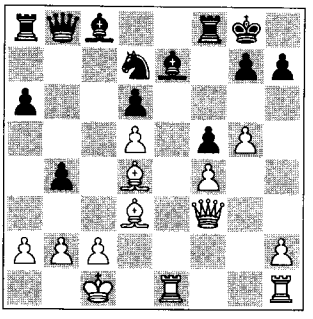
D22) To go into an exotic endgame (yes, indeed – an endgame): **25.♖d3!?**

f4! Taking the square g3 from the white rook. After the careless 25...♖ac8? there follows 26.♖h3 f6 27.gxf6 ♖f7 (27...♔h8 28.♖g3 ♖g8 29.♖g7 comes to the same thing) 28.♖g3+! (now we feel the lack of a black pawn on f4!) 28...♔h8 29.♖g7 ♖xg7 30.fxg7+ ♕xg7 31.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 32.d6 and White wins. **26.♗c5** The line 26.♖h3?! f6! 27.g6 (after 27.gxf6? ♖f7 White's attack grinds to a halt) 27...♖ac8 28.♕xh7+ ♕xh7 29.♖xh7 is insufficient for equality, in view of 29...♖c4! (29...e4 30.h4 e3 31.h5 e2 32.♗f2 ♖fd8 33.h6 ♖xd5 34.♖g7+ ♔h8 leads to a draw) 30.d6 (also losing is 30.♖c7 ♖e4! 31.d6 ♖d8 32.d7 ♔g7! 33.♖a7 f3! 34.♔d2 ♔xg6) 30...♖c6 31.♗c7 f3 32.♔d2 ♖xc2+. **26...♖fc8 27.♖h3 f6 28.♗xb4** Not 28.♕xf6? because of 28...♕xd5 29.g6 ♕h1+ 30.♔d2 ♖d8+. **28...♖c4 29.c3 ♕g7 30.♕xf6 ♕xf6 31.gxf6**.

The two pawns, plus the white king's proximity to the enemy passed pawns, together compensate for Black's extra exchange. There could follow 31...♖d8 32.b3 ♖cc8 (32...♖e4 33.c4) 33.d6 a5 34.♗a3 ♔f7 35.♔c2 ♔xf6 36.♔d3 ♖g8 37.♖h6+! ♖g6 (37...♔f5 38.♖h5+=) 38.♖xh7 with approximately equal chances (analysis).

So, even after 35 years, and with the help of computer programs, we cannot say that 17...g6! gives Black the advantage. In the final game of a difficult match, with the clock ticking, Larsen could not bring himself to play this dangerous-looking move. However, in my opinion, despite what the commentators have said, the move chosen by him is not worse.

18. ♖d1-e1!



This time, however, it is this rook which needs to go to the e-file. The other can take part in the attack, via the h- and g-files.

18. ... ♖f8-f7?

Strangely enough, it is this natural move which is the decisive mistake. He should have played the manoeuvre we have already seen in the preceding variations: **18...♗d8!**. For a long time, it has been considered that White now has two ways to win:

A) In 1984, in their monograph on the Scheveningen, Kasparov and Nikitin gave a win by **19.♗xg7 ♔xg7 20.♕h5** with the unstoppable threat of 21.♕h6+ ♔g8 22.g6. However, in Volume Two of *My Great Predecessors*, published in 2003, Kasparov wrote that the computer had succeeded in defending the black position, by continuing 20...♖g8! 21.♗xf5 ♘f8 22.♗d3 ♔h8! 23.♖e8 ♕c7 24.g6 ♘xg6 25.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 26.♗xg6 ♕g7 27.♗xh7+ ♔f8 28.♖e1 ♗d7 29.♗f5 ♗b5;

B) Tal offered the following variation: **19.♕h5! ♘c5 20.♗xg7! ♘xd3+ 21.♔b1!** But not 21.cxd3? because of 21...♕c7+. **21...♘xe1?** White also wins after 21...♘xf4? 22.♕h6+–, and 21...♔xg7? 22.♕h6+ ♔g8 23.g6+–. **22.g6! ♔xg7 23.♕xh7+ ♔f6 24.g7**. Surprisingly, the consultation game Matveev and Denisov v Bukavshin and Trubitsina,

played at the aforementioned training session, repeated Tal's variation exactly, to this point. However, instead of Tal's 24...♖f7, Black, not wishing to be mated by the under-promotion 25.g8♘#!!, played 24...♖e8 and resigned after 25.♕h6+ ♔f7 26.♕h5+ ♔f6 27.♕xe8 ♕c7 28.g8♘+.

However, in 2003, Kasparov also pointed out that the computer had managed to defend in this line as well, continuing **21...♕c7!** (instead of 21...♘xe1?) **22.♗xf8 ♘xe1 23.♖xe1 ♕f7! 24.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 25.♗xd6 a5**, and an endgame is reached in which Black's chances are, at a minimum, not worse.

So, 17...f5, even on an objective judgement (not to mention the simpler variations to calculate) is not significantly weaker than the move 17...g6!?, which is recommended by all commentators as the refutation of Tal's play. Even so, Larsen slipped off the narrow path of correct variations. As a rule, at the board, the defender's task in such situations is very difficult, especially when it is Mikhail Tal who is attacking. Once again we can quote the words of the eighth world champion: 'Years of analysis and minutes of play are far from the same thing'.

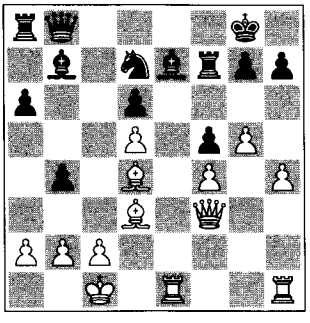
Even in the consultation games between our youngsters, all rated around 2200, White achieved a significant plus, although at the initial stage of the exercise the majority of them assessed the position as better for Black..

19. h2-h4!

This is the whole point. The rook on f7 serves as an excellent target for the white kingside pawn storm.

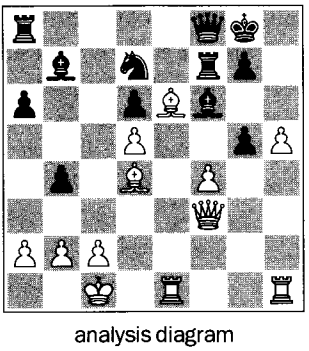
19. ... ♗c8-b7

In a clock simul (Togliatti 2009), nine-year old Semen Elistratov mated international master Boris Abrashkin after 19...♘f8 20.h5 g6? 21.hxg6 ♘xg6 22.♖e6!! (threatening 23.♖xg6+ hxg6 24.♖h8#) 22...♗xe6 23.dxe6 ♖g7 (23...♖f8 24.♕h5) 24.♗xg7 ♔xg7 25.♖xh7+! ♔xh7 26.♕h5+ ♔g8 27.♕xg6+ ♔h8 28.♗xf5.



20. ♗d3xf5

'The result of sporting considerations. Had this position not arisen in the final game of the match, I would undoubtedly have played the sharper **20.g6! hxg6 21.h5 g5 22.♗xf5!**. Now, for example, Black cannot play 22...♖xf5 (22...♘f8 also loses, because of 23.h6 g6 24.h7++–) 23.♖xe7 ♘e5 because of 24.h6! ♘xf3 25.h7+ ♔f8 26.♖xg7 mating in 5. However, at this moment, I did not want to take any chances, and I could not see a forced win after **22...♗f6! 23.♗e6** (23.fxg5!?) **23...♕f8**.



analysis diagram

That there was one I was sure, but experience has taught me that one should not waste time on calculating long, complicated variations, as one can fall into time-trouble. Besides, the move played by me in the game ensures a clear advantage.' (Tal)

Tal's reaction to the sporting element of this game is very interesting. When it is a question of battling for the initiative, he does not hesitate to decide on the positional piece sacrifice 16.♘d5!?. However, when it comes to realizing his advantage, he remembers that it is the decisive game of the match, and that he should choose the most economical path to victory. Of course, Tal's intuition was not wrong, and in the diagram position, White has more than one path to victory. For example, **24.fxg5!** 24.♗xf6!? also wins. **24...♗xg5+** On 24...♗xd4 25.g6 ♔h8 26.gxf7 followed by h5-h6 decides, for example: 26...♘c5 27.h6 g6 (or 27...gxh6 28.♕f4 ♗g7 29.♖xh6+ ♗xh6 30.♖h1) 28.♕g4 ♗e5 29.♖xe5 dxe5 30.♕xg6 ♘xe6 31.dxe6 ♗xh1 32.e7. **25.♔b1 ♘e5 26.♗xe5 dxe5 27.h6 gxh6** Or 27...g6 28.♖xe5 ♗xh6 29.♖f1+–. **28.♖xe5 ♔g7 29.♗xf7 ♕xf7 30.♖xg5+ hxg5 31.♖h7+.**

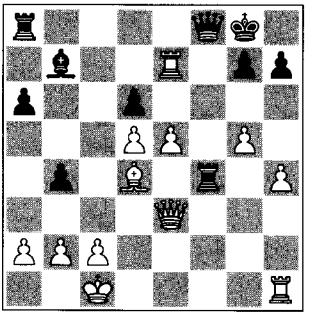
20. ... ♖f7xf5

Kasparov considers that **20...♘f8!?** deserves attention. In my opinion, in this variation White achieves a decisive advantage after **21.♗xh7+!** 21.♕e4!? Kasparov. **21...♘xh7** Or 21...♔xh7 22.h5 ♔g8 (22...♗xg5 23.♕e4+ ♔g8 24.fxg5) 23.g6 ♕e8 24.gxf7+ ♕xf7 25.♖xe7 ♕xe7 26.♖g1 ♖e8 27.♖xg7+ ♕xg7 28.♗xg7 ♔xg7 29.♕g4+ ♔h8 30.♕g5 and the white queen easily deals with the uncoordinated black pieces. **22.g6 ♘f6 23.♗xf6 ♖xf6** 23...♗xf6 24.♕h5. **24.♖xe7 ♖xg6 25.h5 ♖f6** Or 25...♖h6 26.♖g1 ♖h7 27.h6+–. 26.h6 g6 27.♖g7+ ♔h8 28.♖e1 with a decisive doubling of rooks on the seventh rank (analysis).

21. ♖e1xe7 ♘d7-e5!

After 21...♖f7? Tal points out 22.♖xf7 ♔xf7 23.g6+! hxg6 24.h5! with a rout.

22. ♕f3-e4 ♕b8-f8!
23. f4xe5 ♖f5-f4
24. ♕e4-e3



24. ... ♖f4-f3?!

Larsen's final time-trouble inaccuracy in this game.

A) In the event of 24...♖xd4? White decides things with 25.♖xb7 ♖xd5 26.♕b3 ♕f4+ 27.♔b1 ♕d2 28.♖f1 ♔h8 29.♕f3;

B) More stubborn is 24...♗xd5!?, although after Tal's 25.exd6! ♖xd4 (25...♗xh1 26.♖xg7+) 26.♕xd4! ♗xh1 27.b3! ♗f3 (27...♖e8? loses at once to 28.♕xg7+! ♕xg7 29.♖xe8+ ♔f7 (29...♕f8 30.d7) 30.♖e7+) 28.♕c4+ ♔h8 29.♖f7 ♕xd6 30.♖xf3, White should realise his extra pawn.

25. ♕e3-e2 ♕f8xe7

No better are:

A) 25...♕f4+ 26.♕d2 ♖f1+ 27.♖xf1 ♕xf1+ 28.♕d1;

B) 25...♗xd5 26.exd6 ♕f4+ 27.♕d2.

26. ♕e2xf3 d6xe5
27. ♖h1-e1 ♖a8-d8

In the opposite-coloured bishops ending, reached after 27...♖f8 28.♖xe5 ♕xe5 29.♕xf8+ ♔xf8 30.♗xe5 ♗xd5 31.♗d6+ ♔f7 32.♗xb4, White's two extra pawns promise him an easy win.

28. ♖e1xe5 ♕e7-d6
29. ♕f3-f4!

With the threat of 30.♖e8+.

29. ... ♖d8-f8
30. ♕f4-e4 b4-b3
31. a2xb3 ♖f8-f1+
32. ♔c1-d2 ♕d6-b4+
33. c2-c3! ♕b4-d6
34. ♗d4-c5!

'Not a very necessary concluding combination, but a nice one anyway.' (Tal)

34. ... ♕d6xc5
35. ♖e5-e8+ ♖f1-f8
36. ♕e4-e6+ ♔g8-h8
37. ♕e6-f7 1-0

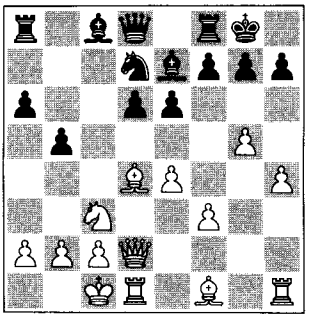
A brilliant victory, which put Tal into the Candidates' Final, where he met Boris Spassky.

Game 2
Vasily Ivanchuk
Loek van Wely
Monaco (blindfold) 2006 (3)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 a7-a6
6. ♗c1-e3 e7-e6
7. f2-f3 ♗f8-e7
8. ♕d1-d2 ♘b8-c6
9. 0-0-0 0-0
10. g2-g4 ♘c6xd4
11. ♗e3xd4 b7-b5
12. g4-g5

Of course, White should not go in for pawn-grabbing at the cost of the initiative with 12.♗xf6? ♗xf6 13.♕xd6 ♕a5.

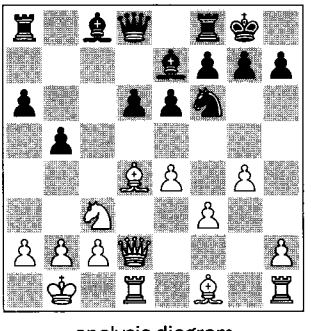
12. ... ♘f6-d7
13. h2-h4



13. ... ♗c8-b7

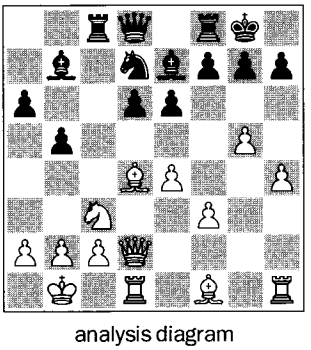
What could be more natural than this developing move? In 1995, in Amsterdam, Kasparov crushed Topalov with the same plan.

In that game, **12.♔b1** was played (instead of 12.g5)



analysis diagram

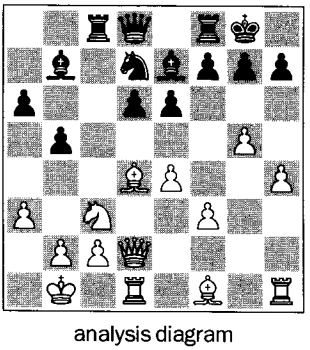
And after **12...♗b7 13.h4 ♖c8 14.g5 ♘d7**...



analysis diagram

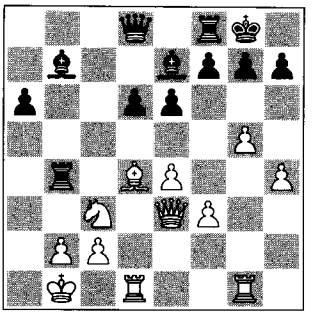
White, completely ignoring his opponent's plans, began to prepare an attack on the kingside, and played in the position of the second diagram the move **15.♖g1?**. The punishment followed immediately: **15...b4! 16.♘e2** 16.♘a4 is also bad, because of 16...♗c6 17.♕xb4 d5. **16...♘e5! 17.♖g3?! ♘c4! 18.♕c1?! e5! 19.♗f2 a5 20.♗g2 ♗a6! 21.♖e1 a4 22.♗h3 ♖c6 23.♕d1 d5 24.exd5** 24.♕xd5 loses to 24...♖d6 25.♕c5 ♖d1+. **24...♖d6 25.f4 ♖xd5 26.♖d3 ♘a3+ 27.bxa3 ♗xd3 28.cxd3 ♖xd3 29.♕xa4 ♖xh3** and White resigned. A striking crush!

Even so, 13...♗b7 is a committal decision (alternatives to consider include 13...♕c7 or 13...b4, which is examined in Game 10), because, in distinction from Game 1 (see note to White's 15th move in that game), here White can secure his knight's position on c3 by means of **15.a3!**.



analysis diagram

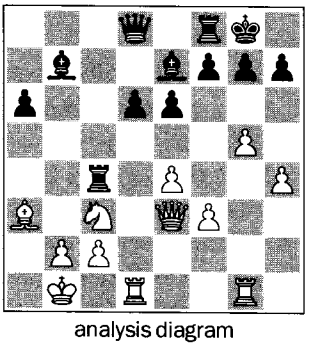
Then it will not be easy for Black to open the b-file, as the 13th world champion pointed out when annotating the game. Topalov followed this recommendation when facing the same opponent a few months later in Novgorod (1995). Now there followed **15...♘e5 16.♕e3 ♘c4 17.♗xc4 ♖xc4 18.♖hg1! b4** On 18...♕c7 19.♗f6! is strong. **19.axb4 ♖xb4**



analysis diagram

20.♖g2 Kasparov rated this move highly, its point being to prepare the combination 21.♗c5 ♖c4 22.♗xd6! ♗xd6 23.♖gd2 (20.♗c5 ♖c4 21.♗xd6? loses to 21...♗xd6 22.e5 ♗c5!). There followed **20...♗a8 21.b3?!** Kasparov showed that 21.♗c5! ♖b7 22.♖gd2 ♖d7 23.♗a3 leads to White's advantage. **21...a5 22.h5 ♕c7 23.♗f6 ♖fb8 24.♗xe7 ♕xe7 25.♖d4 e5 26.♖xb4 axb4** with complicated play, in which Black prevailed and again won the game.

But if, in the previous diagram position, White plays **20.♗c5!** anyway, and after **20...♖c4** refrains from taking on d6, but simply retreats the bishop with **21.♗a3!**, following the same plan indicated by Kasparov in the notes to White's 21st, then it turns out that Black's position is difficult.



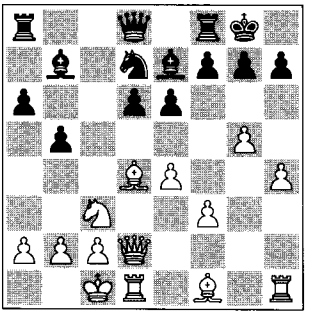
analysis diagram

White has defended his queenside, and by combining the attack on the d6

pawn with activity on the kingside, he obtains the advantage.

In the game Vokarev-Lastin, Moscow 1999, there followed **21...♕c7 22.♖d3 ♗a8** Pogorelov against Korneev, San Sebastian 2000, sacrificed a pawn with 22...♖b8 23.♖gd1 ♗c6 24.♗xd6 ♗xd6 25.♖xd6 ♗e8, but after 26.♖6d3 a5 27.♖1d2 ♖cb4 28.♘d1 a4 29.♖d4 ♖4b7 30.h5 he did not obtain compensation. **23.h5 ♖b8 24.♖gd1 ♖c6** and now, in the opinion of Vokarev, White obtains the advantage by continuing **25.♕d2! ♖d8** (25...♖cb6 26.♘a4) **26.f4**.

Back to the game Ivanchuk-Van Wely.



Ivanchuk proceeds more energetically, postponing for the time being the prophylactic king retreat to b1.

14. a2-a3! ♖a8-c8

15. ♖h1-g1!?

Preparing 16.h5.

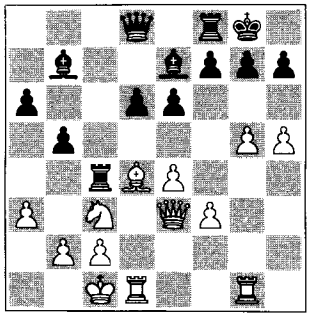
15. ... ♘d7-e5

Annotating the game, Vasily writes that 15...d5 16.exd5 e5 deserved attention, but after 17.♗e3 b4 18.♘a2! ♘c5 (on 18...bxa3 there follows 19.d6! with advantage to White) 19.♔b1 b3 20.♘c3, it is difficult to see sufficient compensation for Black's sacrificed pawn.

16. ♕d2-e3! ♘e5-c4

17. ♗f1xc4 ♖c8xc4

18. h4-h5!



Comparing this position with that in the analysis diagram after 15.a3, instead of ♔b1 White has played the more useful move h4-h5, and Black's task has become even more difficult.

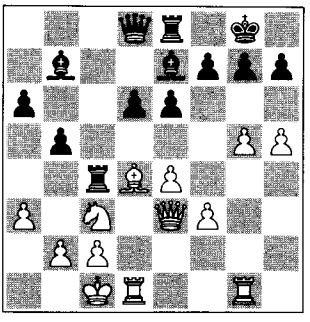
A) After **18...b4?! 19.axb4 ♖xb4** White has the strong manoeuvre **20.♗f6! ♗xf6** Or 20...♖e8 21.♗xe7 ♕xe7 22.h6! ♕c7 (22...g6 loses to 23.♘d5! exd5 24.♕c3) 23.hxg7 ♖c8 24.♖h1 with advantage to White. **21.gxf6 ♕xf6 22.♖xd6** with advantage to White. Now 22...h6 is bad, because of 23.♖d2 followed by doubling rooks on the g-file;

B) After **18...♕c7** the move **19.♗f6!** is again strong, and after **19...♖c8 20.♗xe7 ♕xe7 21.h6! g6 22.♖d4** Black's position is clearly worse, because of the weakness of the d6 pawn and his king position. Play goes into positional channels, and Black is completely deprived of active counterplay. In general, in sharp Sicilian positions, White should always be ready to switch to manoeuvring play at the right moment, in order to exploit weaknesses which the defender has created, in responding to the threats against his king.

Black chose the prophylactic

18. ... ♖f8-e8

freeing the square f8 for the retreat of his bishop.



19. ♔c1-b1!?

Now White can think of prophylaxis, at the same time setting a cunning trap...

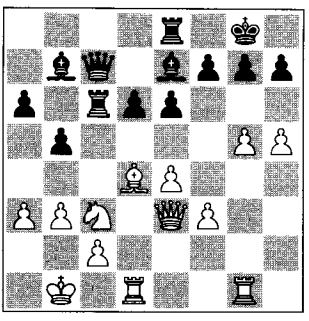
19. ... ♕d8-c7?

... into which Van Wely duly falls. Black is ready to answer 20.♗f6 with 20...♗f8, but he runs into an unpleasant surprise.

A) Again it was bad to play **19...b4?! 20.axb4 ♖xb4 21.g6** The immediate 21.♗c5!? ♖c4 22.♗a3 is also possible. **21...fxg6 22.hxg6 h6**, because of the manoeuvre known to us from the previous notes: **23.♗c5! ♖c4** And here, not the line 24.♗xd6?! ♗xd6 25.e5, given by Ivanchuk, because of 25...♗c5! 26.♖xd8 ♖xd8 27.♕e1 (but not 27.♕e2? because of 27...♖xc3) 27...♗xg1 with unclear play, but **24.♗a3!** followed by doubling rooks on the d-file. Even after Black's best bet **24...d5!** White's chances are superior, e.g.: **25.♗xe7 ♖xe7** Or 25...♕xe7 26.exd5 ♗xd5 27.♘xd5 exd5 28.♕xe7 ♖xe7 29.♖xd5 with an extra pawn for White. **26.♕d3!? ♖d7 27.exd5 ♗xd5** Or 27...exd5 28.♘e2!? and 29.♘d4. **28.♘xd5 ♖xd5 29.♕e2! ♖c6 30.c4** and the passed pawn and exposed black king allow us to assess the position as better for White;

B) It was best to settle for the waiting move **19...♗f8**.

20. b2-b3! ♖c4-c6



21. ♘c3-d5!!

Lightning from a clear sky.

21. ... e6xd5

Otherwise the knight will be sacrificed even closer to the black king – on f6: 21...♕d8 22.♘f6+.

22. e4xd5

The idea of the sacrifice is practically the same as in Tal-Larsen. The disappearance of the pawn from e6 means that Black can never play ...e6-e5 to neutralise White's powerful dark-squared bishop. On his next move, White will start a pawn storm on the kingside, and the open e-file serves as a jumping-off point for the transfer of White's heavy pieces to the kingside.

But there also great differences between the two examples.

Ivanchuk's 21.♘d5!! was an accurately-calculated, beautiful combination, leading to a forced win for White.

Tal's 16.♘d5!? was an intuitive positional sacrifice, totally changing the character of the struggle, but not wrenching the assessment of the position out of the realms of equality. Lovers of the Sicilian Defence need to be able to master both methods of play.

22. ... ♖c6xc2

Also after 22...♖c5 there follows 23.g6 with a winning attack.

23. g5-g6 h7xg6

On 23...fxg6 the game is decided by 24.♕e6+ ♔f8 25.hxg6 ♗f6 26.gxh7.

24. h5xg6 ♖e8-f8
25. g6xf7+ ♖f8xf7
26. ♗d4xg7! ♖f7xg7
27. ♕e3-e6+ ♔g8-h8
28. ♖g1xg7 ♔h8xg7
29. ♖d1-g1+ 1-0

Conclusions

1. Regardless of the pawn structure, the knight sacrifice on d5 usually serves the following functions:

A) to remove the black pawn from e6 and so deprive the opponent of the possibility of neutralising the white bishops on d4 and d3 (Game 1), or just on d4 (Game 2), by means of ...e6-e5;

B) to organise a pawn storm on the kingside, with the support of these bishops;

C) to exploit the open e-file to include the heavy pieces in the attack on Black's king.

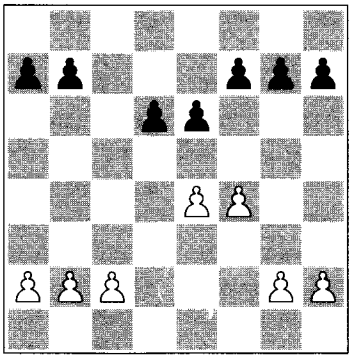
2. The knight sacrifice on d5 may be:

A) calculated exactly to the end (as in Game 2) and a means of forcing the required result (a win in a better position, a draw in a worse one); or

B) intuitive, positional, and played with the intention of changing the character of the game, and, at the cost of material, to force the opponent to defend (Game 1).

3. In this chapter, we have dealt with a very important problem in the Sicilian Defence – in which circumstances White should secure his knight's position on c3 by advancing his pawn to a3, and in which he should not. The decision depends on the concrete features of the position, but in general, White should not play a2-a3 if Black can quickly open the b-file and attack the white king (Game 1), whilst he should do so when it is hard for Black to advance b5-b4 (Game 2).

Chapter 1.2 – White Pawns on e4 and f4



This aggressive treatment of the Sicilian Defence, where the players castle on opposite sides, and Black's pawns on d6 and e6 are opposed by white pawns on e4 and f4, was introduced into grandmaster practice in the 1930s by the great theoretician Vsevolod Rauzer. After the moves **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6**, he suggested the attacking system beginning with **6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2**, followed by long castling. I would point out that the active bishop move itself had been seen before, but in conjunction with the Richter Attack **6.♗g5 e6 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5**.

Significantly later (in the 1960s), mainly thanks to Tal's brilliant victory over Larsen (Game 1), people realised that with the bishop on e3 instead of g5 the plan with long castling in this pawn structure was also dangerous for Black.

White's plan is obvious: depending on Black's actions, he prepares a pawn storm on the kingside, including the march of the g-pawn (as already seen in Game 1, as well as Games 3 and 4), and the central break e4-e5 (Games 6 and 7).

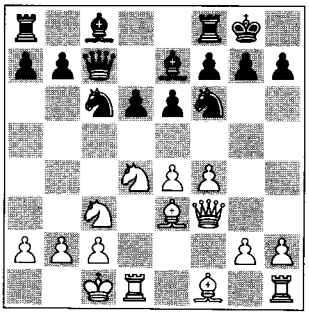
Black, in his turn, by advancing his queenside pawns, can try to break through to the enemy king first (Games 1 and 3), or counterattack in the centre (Games 5 and 8).

1.2.1 The pawn storm on the kingside

Game 3
Gennady Kuzmin
An Airapetian
Yerevan 1981 (11)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**♘b8-c6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**e7-e6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**d7-d6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♘g8-f6**
7.	**f2-f4**	**♗f8-e7**
8.	**♕d1-f3**	**0-0**
9.	**0-0-0**	**♕d8-c7**

The diagram position is familiar to us from Game 1.



Fearing that Black would meet the immediate 10.g4 with 10...♘xd4, followed by ...e6-e5, Tal played 10.♘db5?! ♕b8 11.g4 and won a brilliant game, although not entirely because of the results of the opening. Instead, Kuzmin prepares the advance of the g-pawn by playing:

10. ♖h1-g1!

In the analysis of Game 5, we will discuss why I consider this move stronger than Kasparov's recommendation 10.g4, and we will also examine in detail Black's attempt to create counterplay in the centre by means of 10...♘xd4 11.♗xd4 e5, in response to both 10.g4 and 10.♖g1.

10. ... a7-a6

Like Larsen, Black believes that his pawn storm on the queenside will not be any slower than White's attack on the other flank, and he prepares ...b7-b5.

11. g2-g4 ♘c6xd4?!

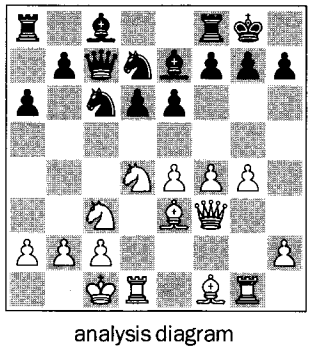
A standard decision, but dubious in this position. After 12.♗xd4 it is impossible to drive White's bishop from its dominating position on d4 by 12...e5, since after 12...e5 13.♗e3 exf4 14.g5! ♘d7 (or 14...♘e8 15.♘d5 ♕d8 16.♗b6 ♕d7 17.♕xf4 with a great advantage to White, Kamp-Beckmann, Germany tt 1986/87; 14...fxe3? 15.gxf6+–) 15.♘d5 ♕d8 16.♗xf4 Black is in a bad way. And, as we will see below, the white bishop on d4 plays a decisive role in the attack on the black king.

Evidently, Black was afraid to play the immediate **11...b5** because of **12.e5!?**.

Of course, in this case too, White can begin a pawn storm with 12.g5 ♘d7 13.f5, but here, compared with the game, Black can win a tempo by playing 13...♘de5 and after 14.♕f2 can try to strengthen his king position somewhat by 14...♖e8 (White has a large advantage after 14...♘xd4 15.♗xd4 b4 16.♘a4) 15.f6 ♗f8. Even so, after 16.♖g3 White's chances are preferable. Maliangkay-Tirabassi, ICCF corr 1995.

However, the consequences of the exchange sacrifice **12...♘xd4 13.♕xa8 dxe5 14.fxe5 ♗b7 15.♕a7** (after 15.♕xb7 ♕xb7 16.exf6 ♗xf6 17.♗xd4 ♗xd4 18.♖xd4 ♕b6! 19.♘e2 ♖d8 20.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 chances are about equal) 15...♘c6 16.♕b6 ♕xb6 17.♗xb6 ♘xe5 18.g5 ♘fd7 19.♗e3 are not completely clear, although White's prospects in the endgame look somewhat preferable (analysis).

Black also has the standard manoeuvre **11...♘d7**.



analysis diagram

The idea is after 12.g5 b5 13.f5 ♘de5 to go into positions looked at above, whilst

avoiding the exchange sacrifice. However, here I would like to draw the reader's attention to the hitherto untried sacrifice **12.♘f5!?** (the knight sacrifice on f5 will be examined in more detail in the analysis of Game 13). In order not to fall into a passive position without counterplay, Black must take the knight, opening the d5-square for White's other knight: **12...exf5 13.♘d5!** with the following possibilities:

A) Transferring the queen to a counterattack, without the support of other pieces, fails as follows: **13...♕a5?! 14.gxf5 ♕xa2 15.♗c4! ♕a1+** 15...♕xc4 loses at once after 16.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 17.♕g2+ ♔h8 18.♖g1. **16.♔d2 ♕a5+** On 16...♕xb2 the game is decided by 17.♖b1 ♕a3 18.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 19.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 20.♖g1+ ♘g6 21.♗d4+ f6 22.♕xa3. **17.c3 ♕d8** In the event of 17...♘f6 Black is mated after 18.♕g2 g6 19.fxg6 hxg6 20.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 21.♕xg6+. Too much time has been wasted on the queen's wanderings, and after **18.♕g3 ♗f6 19.♔c2!** Black has no satisfactory defence against the threat 20.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 21.♖xd6, for example, 19...g6 20.fxg6 hxg6 21.f5 ♘de5 22.♗b6.

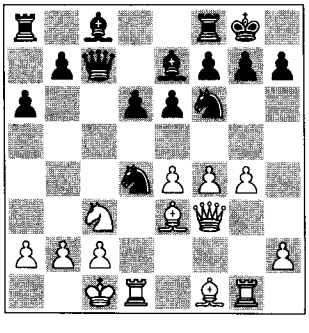
B) **13...♕d8** Forced. **14.gxf5 ♔h8** Black cannot eliminate the dreaded knight on d5, since after 14...♘f6 15.♗b6 ♕d7 16.♘c7 ♖b8 17.e5 White regains the sacrificed material and retains a positional advantage. **15.♗c4** and now:

B1) After **15...♘a5** White decides by 16.♗d4 ♗f6 17.♘xf6 ♘xf6 18.♖xg7! ♔xg7 19.♕g3+ ♔h8 20.♖g1 ♖g8 21.♗xf6+ ♕xf6 22.♕xg8#;

B2) In the event of **15...b5** 16.♘xe7 ♕xe7 17.♗d5 (17.e5!?) 17...♗b7 18.e5 White's attack is very strong, e.g. 18...♖ac8 19.f6! gxf6 20.exd6 ♕xd6 21.♗e4 ♕e7 22.♖xd7! ♕xd7 23.♕h5 winning.

B3) **15...♗f6** Black's problem is that, notwithstanding his extra piece, it is hard for him to complete his development, whilst White can slowly increase the pressure in the centre and on the kingside, e.g. **16.♖g2!? ♖g8** 16...b5 is again bad, because of 17.♘xf6 ♘xf6 18.e5 bxc4 19.exf6 ♕xf6 20.♕xc6 ♖b8 21.♗d4. **17.♘xf6 ♘xf6** On 17...♕xf6 the reply 18.♗d2! is strong – the bishop transfers to the long diagonal: 18...♕e7 19.♗c3 ♘f6 20.♖e1 with the highly unpleasant threat of e4-e5. **18.♗xf7 ♖f8 19.♗d5!? ♘xd5 20.♖xd5 ♖f7 21.♗d2!** and it will soon be difficult for Black to defend the kingside: 21...b5 22.♕h5 ♖aa7 (on 22...♕e7? 23.♖xd6! is decisive) 23.♗c3 ♕e7 (23...b4 loses to 24.♖xd6 ♕xd6 25.♗xg7+) 24.f6! ♕xe4 (or 24...gxf6 25.♖dg5 ♖f8 26.♕h6+–) 25.♖e2 ♕xf4+ 26.♔b1 with a winning attack (analysis).

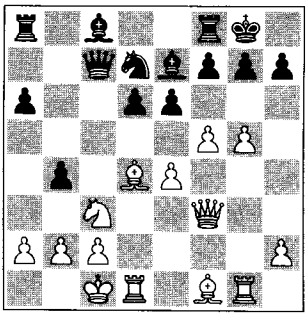
Returning to the game:



12. ♗e3xd4 b7-b5
13. g4-g5 ♘f6-d7
14. f4-f5 b5-b4

Unlike the situation described in the notes to Black's 11th move, here 14...♘e5 leads to a large advantage for

White, after 15.♗xe5! dxe5 16.f6 ♗c5 17.fxg7 ♖d8 18.♖g3 ♖xd1+ 19.♘xd1 ♗b7 20.♗d3 U. Andersson-Espig, Raach zt 1969.



It is as plain as a pikestaff that White has outstripped his opponent in the attack, and it is time to switch to decisive operations. There followed

15. ♗d4xg7!

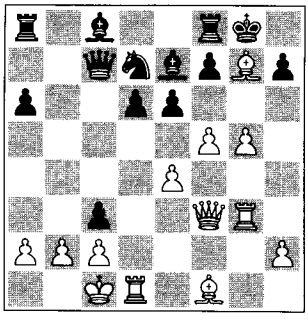
Offering Black a choice of taking bishop or knight. Weaker is 15.f6?! bxc3 16.fxe7 cxb2+ 17.♗xb2 ♖e8. Black took the knight:

15. ... b4xc3

Since 15...♔xg7 loses at once – 16.f6+ ♔g8 17.♕h5! (with the threat of 18.♕h6) 17...♖e8 18.g6! fxg6 19.f7+! ♔xf7 20.♕xh7+ ♔f8 21.♕h6+ ♔f7 22.♕xg6+ ♔f8 23.♕g8#.

16. ♗g7xc3!

At the time this game was played there were no databases, and Kuzmin would not have been aware of the correspondence game Petrzelka-Mikhailov (1972), played before the present encounter, in which White continued the attack by means of **16.♖g3!?**. This is a very beautiful move. Ignoring possible material loss, White prepares to transfer his heavy pieces to the h-file. However, in my view there was no need for such an extreme approach. Moreover, despite the correctness of the further sacrifice, Kuzmin's move 16.♗xc3! is objectively stronger. Even so, in order to get a more complete picture of White's possibilities, we will also analyse this correspondence game. Black has the following possibilities:



analysis diagram

A) on **16...♘e5** there is the strong reply **17.♕h5! ♕b7** 17...♔xg7 loses to 18.f6+ ♔g8 19.♕h6. **18.b3 ♕xe4 19.♗g2 ♕xf5** Or 19...♕f4+ 20.♔b1 ♔xg7 21.f6++–. **20.♗xf8** with advantage to White;

B) **16...♔xg7!? 17.f6+ ♔g8** Black also loses after both 17...♔h8 18.fxe7 and 17...♘xf6 18.gxf6+ ♔h8 19.♖h3! (with the threat of 20.♖xh7+!) 19...♕c5 20.♖d5! cxb2+ 21.♔b1 exd5 22.♖xh7+. **18.♕h5 ♕b8!** On 18...cxb2+ there is 19.♔b1 ♖e8 20.g6! fxg6 (20...hxg6 21.♖xg6++–) 21.f7+! ♔f8 22.♕h6+ ♔xf7 23.♕xh7+ ♔f8 24.♕h6+ ♔f7 25.♕xg6+ ♔f8 26.♕g8 with the same mate we saw in the note to Black's 15th move. **19.bxc3 d5! 20.fxe7 ♕f4+ 21.♔b2 dxe4!** Or 21...♖e8 22.♖h3! ♘f8 23.exf8♕+ ♔xf8 24.♖f3 ♕b8+ 25.♔a1 ♖a7 26.g6! hxg6 27.♕h8+ ♔e7 28.♕f6+ ♔f8 29.♖h3. **22.exf8♕+** 22.♖h3 ♕f5. **22...♘xf8** and White's advantage is indisputable, although the game is not yet over (analysis).

C) Mikhailov played **16...♗b7** and after **17.♗xc3** blundered with **17...♖fc8?**.

It was essential to play 17...♘e5 18.♕h5 ♗xe4 19.f6 ♖fc8 20.fxe7 ♕xe7 when White has the advantage, but the battle is still ahead. **18.fxe6** ♘**e5** 18...fxe6 19.g6+–. **19.exf7+** ♘**xf7 20.g6** ♘**e5 21.gxh7+** ♔**h8 22.**♗**xe5+ dxe5 23.**♖**g8+** ♖**xg8 24.hxg8**♕**+** ♖**xg8 25.**♕**h3+** ♔**g7 26.**♖**d7** ♕**c5 27.**♖**xb7+–.**

16. ... ♘d7-e5

Now after 16...♗b7 Black has no time: 17.f6 ♗d8 18.♕h5 ♔h8 19.♗d3! (aiming at h7) 19...♖g8 20.e5 ♘f8 21.exd6 ♕c5 22.♗xh7 ♘xh7 23.♕xf7 winning.

17. ♗c3xe5 d6xe5

18. f5-f6 ♗e7-c5

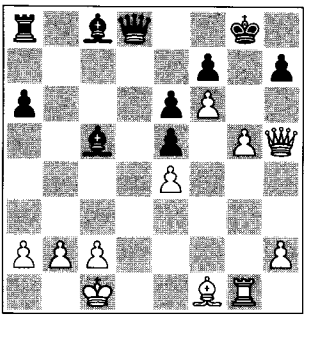
The attempt to take control of the square d2 at all costs, by 18...♗b4, does not save the game: 19.♕h5 ♖d8 20.♗d3! ♖a7 (on 20...♗b7 21.♖g4 decides) 21.♖g3 ♔f8 22.♕xh7 ♔e8 23.♖f3! (very strong. White threatens 24.g6 fxg6 25.f7+) 23...♖d7 24.g6 fxg6 25.♕xg6+ ♖f7 26.♗e2! and Black has no defence against 27.♖gd3 followed by 28.♗h5 (analysis).

19. ♕f3-h5 ♖f8-d8

A) 19...♗e3+ 20.♔b1 ♖d8 21.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 22.g6+–;

B) 19...♔h8 20.♖g3 ♖d8 21.♗d3! ♗f8 22.♖h3 h6 23.gxh6 ♕c5 24.♕g5 (threatening 25.♕g7+) 24...♔h7 25.♖g1+–.

20. ♖d1xd8+ ♕c7xd8



Now White could have ended the game in beautiful style by 21.g6! hxg6 (after 21...fxg6 22.♖xg6+ ♔h8 23.f7! is decisive) 22.♖xg6+ fxg6 23.♕xg6+ ♔f8 24.♕g7+ ♔e8 25.f7+ (if the square d8 were free, Black could beat off the attack, but now his king has to walk into a discovered check) 25...♔d7 26.f8♕++–. Instead of this, White, thinking he could win how he pleased, played

21. ♖g1-g3??

Even such a brilliant attacking player as Gennady Kuzmin relaxes, and commits a terrible blunder in a winning position. It is essential to maintain concentration to the very end of the game! Starting from this moment, the players, as if by agreement, start swapping mistakes.

21. ... ♗c8-b7?

By inverting moves and playing 21...♕d4! at once, Black wins! 22.g6 (or 22.♗d3 ♕f2) 22...fxg6 23.♖xg6+ hxg6 24.♕xg6+ ♔f8 25.♕g7+ ♔e8 26.f7+ ♔d8! and because the white pawn now promotes without discovered check 27.f8♕+, after 27...♗xf8 Black has an extra rook and a winning position.

22. ♗f1-d3?

Still 22.g6! was necessary, although now Black can draw after 22...fxg6 23.♖xg6+ ♔h8 24.♗d3! (24.f7? no longer works, because after 24...♕d4! 25.♗d3 ♗xe4! Black wins) 24...♕a5 (mate is threatened on e1) 25.c3 ♗e3+ 26.♔b1 ♕d8! 27.♔c2 ♗xe4! (the only move, else 28.♖g7 or 28.f7 wins, e.g. 27...♕e8 28.f7) 28.♗xe4 ♕d2+ 29.♔b3 ♖b8+ 30.♔c4 ♖c8+ (unclear play results from 30...♕d7 31.a4 or 31.b4) 31.♔b3.

22. ... ♕d8-d4!

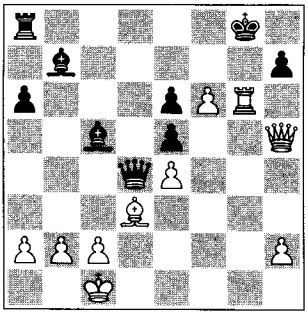
Finally!

23. g5-g6

Better late than never?!

23. ... f7xg6

24. ♖g3xg6+



24. ... ♔g8-h8??

Completing the comedy of errors. He could win by 24...hxg6! 25.♕xg6+ ♔f8 26.♕g7+ ♔e8 27.♕xb7 ♖a7–+.

25. ♖g6-g7 ♕d4-e3+

26. ♔c1-d1

Black has relied upon

26. ... h7-h6

but in time-trouble, he overlooked

27. ♖g7-h7+!

and resigned, since after 27...♔xh7 he is mated by 28.♕f7+ ♔h8 29.♕g7#.

Despite the mutual mistakes at the end of the game, White's handling of the middlegame position was excellent.

Preparing the advance of the g-pawn with 10.♖g1!, the energetic pawn storm against the black kingside, the combinational blow 15.♗xg7!, destroying the Black king's cover – all of these devices are typical for the conduct of the attack in the pawn structure under discussion.

In general, in the e4-f4 pawn structure, if White develops his pieces according to the scheme ♗e3, ♕f3 and 0-0-0 without loss of time, then, in my opinion, once Black has castled short, his queenside counterattack is too slow. He should examine instead the possibility of countering in the centre (Game 5), or else defer castling and develop activity on the queenside, as happens in the variation **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.f4 e6 7.♕f3!?** 7.♗e3 b5! 8.♕f3 ♗b7 9.♗d3 ♘bd7. **7...♕b6! 8.♘b3 ♕c7 9.g4!? b5 10.♗d3 ♗b7 11.g5 ♘fd7 12.♗e3 ♘c5!?**, the examination of which falls outside the scope of the present book.

Now we will go on to look at a method of attack, which became typical after the following game was played.

1.2.2 The sacrifice of the g-pawn

In analysing Games 1 and 3, we have seen that the advance of the g-pawn significantly strengthens the white attack. Does this advance need to be prepared? In what circumstances can the pawn be sacrificed, and compensation obtained in the form of the opening of lines on the kingside?

The following game helps to provide answers to these questions.

Game 4

Boris Spassky

Tigran Petrosian

Moscow Wch m 1969 (19)

At the start of the final quarter of the match, Spassky led by 9½ – 8½. In order to retain his world title, Petrosian needed to win the remaining part of the match by a point. The majority of experts, including Spassky's trainer Igor Bondarevsky, expected Petrosian to avoid any risks in the opening as Black,

and try to make up his deficit with the white pieces. However, after

1. e2-e4

Black replied

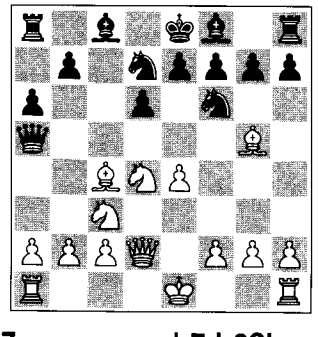
1. ... c7-c5

According to Petrosian's second, grandmaster Boleslavsky, the world champion believed that his challenger would not be ready for a full-blown, uncompromising battle, and would hesitate, in which case it would be Black who could go over to the attack. But the 1969 edition of Spassky was an exceptionally universal player, and if given the chance, was happy to conduct an attack regardless of the match situation. And as we will see, Petrosian's expectations proved unfounded.

2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 a7-a6
6. ♗c1-g5 ♘b8-d7

In my view, this early development of the knight is at least no better than the standard 6...e6. But Petrosian, who rarely played the Najdorf, preferred the text.

7. ♗f1-c4 ♕d8-a5
8. ♕d1-d2



7. ... h7-h6?!

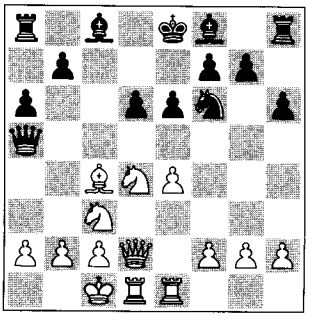
Petrosian departs from the game Spassky-Polugaevsky, Riga ch-URS 1958, in which White developed a strong initiative after 8...e6 9.0-0-0 b5 10.♗b3 ♗b7 11.♖he1 ♘c5 12.f4 ♗e7 13.e5?! (stronger is 13.♗xf6! ♗xf6 14.e5) 13...dxe5 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6? (14...gxf6! 15.fxe5 0-0-0!) 15.fxe5 ♗h4 16.g3 ♗e7 17.♗xe6! and scored a beautiful victory.

9. ♗g5xf6!

A characteristically concrete approach to the position by Spassky. In this situation, the advantage of the two bishops is less important than rapid development.

9. ... ♘d7xf6
10. 0-0-0 e7-e6
11. ♖h1-e1!?

Bondarevsky preferred the move 11.♗b3!?, 'since it is far from clear where the rook on h1 will be best placed.' It seems to me that Spassky did not wish to waste time on prophylaxis, and aimed in the first instance to prepare an attack in the centre, in order to be able to answer Black's queenside activity with the breaks e4-e5 or f4-f5. Of course, if Black castles short, the white rook will seek a better post than e1. But as a rule, which will be confirmed by the present game and Game 6, Black does not usually castle kingside in the 6.♗g5 Najdorf, as there is too great a danger of being mated.

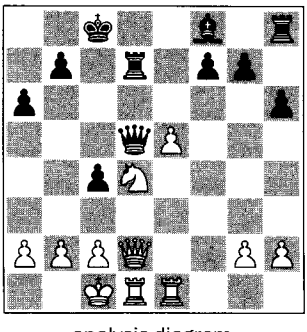


11. ... ♗f8-e7?

'This move has a fatal imprint on the rest of the game. Black intends, and indeed carries out, short castling, but it

soon becomes clear that the position of his king, weakened by the move ...h7-h6, cannot withstand a mass attack by the white pieces', writes Isaac Boleslavsky. But all of Black's previous play was directed towards short castling. Only after suffering several noticeable defeats (see also Game 6) did Najdorf practitioners start to defer castling to better times, when facing the variation with 6.♗g5.

Boleslavsky recommended **11...♗d7** followed by queenside castling, and gave the following variations: **12.f4 0-0-0 13.f5!** After 13.e5?! d5! Black achieves satisfactory play. **13...d5** 13...e5? 14.♘b3 loses a pawn, whilst taking on f5 would amount to positional capitulation. **14.fxe6!** After 14.exd5 exf5 15.♕f4 Black can hold the position by continuing 15...♕c7!. **14...dxc4 15.exd7+ ♖xd7 16.e5! ♘d5 17.♘xd5 ♕xd5**



analysis diagram

Here Boleslavsky only considered 18.♕e2 c3!, whilst after 18.e6 fxe6 19.♕c3 ♗e7! 20.♘xe6 ♗g5+! 21.♘xg5 ♕xg5+ 22.♔b1 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♕xg2 Black achieved equality in the correspondence game Toro Solis de Ovando-Kofidis, corr Argentina 1996.

However, in my opinion White can pose his opponent serious problems in the position of the analysis diagram by continuing **18.♕c3!**. Now neither 18...♕xg2 19.e6! fxe6 20.♕xc4+ ♔b8 21.♘xe6, nor 18...♗e7 19.♘f3!? ♕e6 20.♖xd7 ♔xd7 21.♘d4 ♕d5 22.e6+ fxe6 23.♘xe6 ♗g5+ 24.♘xg5 ♕xg5+ 25.♔b1 promise Black an easy life.

It is quite possible that, had Petrosian castled long and gone on to lose, the move 11...♗d7 would have been adorned with a question mark, and the world champion criticised for indecisiveness, for changing his plan, and for going over to passive defence, when the 'doubled-edged' 11...♗e7 promised possibilities of counterplay!

12. f2-f4

Boleslavsky considered 12.♔b1 to be more accurate, with the idea of meeting 12...0-0? with 13.♘d5. But I repeat, Spassky is waiting for his opponent to castle kingside. Probably, in this case, he would have been more put off by 12...♗d7!?.

12. ... 0-0

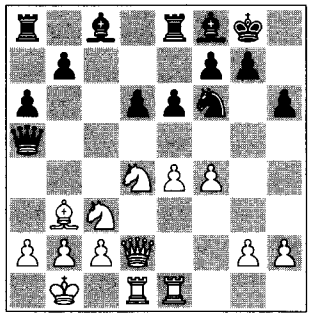
13. ♗c4-b3

The last preparation for the pawn storm.

13. ... ♖f8-e8

Black is afraid of the standard attack by f4-f5 after the preliminary ♔b1 and so he takes measures to defend the e6 pawn. After 13...♗d7 there would have followed 14.♔b1, with threats of 14.♘d5 and 14.f5.

14. ♔c1-b1 ♗e7-f8

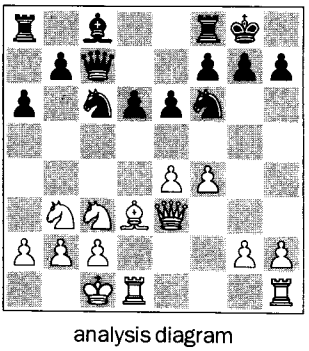


After retreating the bishop to f8 and defending the point e6, Black is ready to play ...b7-b5, but White starts first.

15. g2-g4!!

Even after long thought, the computer programs do not elevate this continuation to first place in their list of moves! The machines' difficulty is understandable: after the capture of the g-pawn, White does not create immediate threats, since the square g7 is solidly defended. Even so, the open lines in front of the black king, the activity of White's pieces, and the lack of black counterplay in the centre and on the queenside more than compensate for White's small material investment. Thanks to Spassky, similar sacrifices of the g-pawn have become a stock device in such positions. Look at the following examples:.

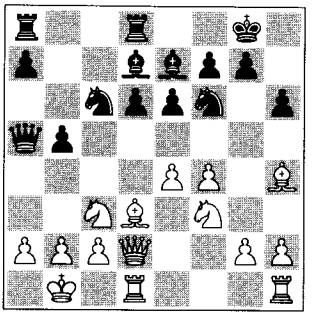
A) Short-Velikov, Solingen-Slavija 1987: **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♗d3 ♗c5 6.♘b3 ♗a7 7.♕e2 ♘c6 8.♗e3 ♗xe3 9.♕xe3 ♘f6 10.♘c3 d6 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.f4 ♕c7**



analysis diagram

13.g4! ♘xg4 14.♕g3 ♘f6 15.♖hg1 with a strong attack for White;

B) Tiviakov-Shmuter, St Petersburg 1993: **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 ♗e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.f4 h6 10.♗h4 ♗d7 11.♘f3 ♕a5 12.♔b1 ♖fd8 13.♗d3 b5**



analysis diagram

14.g4!

In this book, too, we will return to the 'Spassky sacrifice' more than once (Game 7...).

15. ... ♘f6xg4

Petrosian accepts the bait, as the g-pawn threatens to march forward.

A) On **15...b5** there could follow 16.g5 hxg5 17.fxg5 ♘h5 18.g6! fxg6 19.♕g5 ♕d8 20.♕xd8 ♖xd8 21.♘d5 exd5 (or 21...♖a7 22.♘b6) 22.♗xd5+ ♔h7 23.♗xa8 ♗g4 24.♗b7 ♗xd1 25.♖xd1 with a winning endgame for White;

B) Boleslavsky considers that Black should defend against the direct threats with **15...e5!?**, but after **16.fxe5** (also worthy of attention is 16.♘f5!? ♗xf5 17.gxf5 exf4 18.♘d5! ♕d8 19.♕xf4 with advantage to White) **16...dxe5** (16...♕xe5? is bad because of 17.♘f3 ♕c5 18.g5 hxg5 19.♘xg5) **17.♘f5 ♗xf5 18.gxf5 ♖ad8 19.♕g2 ♕c7 20.♖xd8 ♖xd8 21.♖g1 ♔h8 22.♘d5** Black faces a difficult fight for a draw (Boleslavsky).

16. ♕d2-g2 ♘g4-f6

Now after 16...e5 there follows 17.♘f5 ♗xf5 18.exf5 ♘f6 19.♕xb7 with advantage to White.

17. ♖e1-g1!

'The battery of white pieces is openly taking aim at the black king, and al-

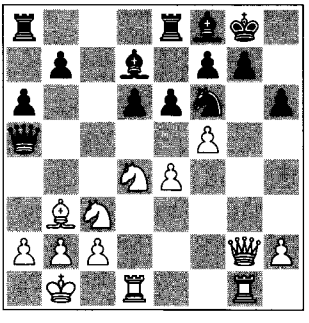
though no direct threats are yet apparent, these will soon appear, as soon as White opens one more lines or breaks through to the f7-square', writes Boleslasvky. Petrosian played:

17. ... ♗c8-d7

Preventing the manoeuvre 18.♘f3, threatening e4-e5, which would now be met by 18...♗c6.

Averbakh recommended tying the rook at d1 to the defence of the knight by means of 17...♕c5!?, which would make the break f4-f5 less dangerous. But after 18.♘f3! White switches to the advance e4-e5. Then Black cannot play 18...♗d7 because of 19.e5.

18. f4-f5



18.... ♔g8-h8

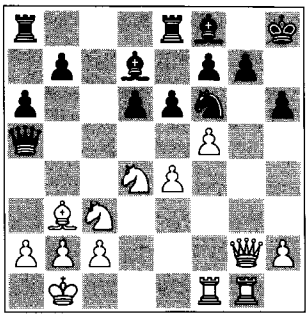
After allowing the opening of the f-file Black quickly perishes, but his position is extremely difficult to defend.

A) He cannot create counterplay with the help of the standard sacrifice on c3, since after **18...♖ac8** there follows **19.fxe6 fxe6** Or 19...♗xe6 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♖df1! ♕e5 22.♖f5! winning. **20.♘f5!** with a decisive attack;

B) After **18...e5 19.♘de2** nothing can save Black's king from the attack. There is already a threat of ♕g6 and the rook transfer ♖d3-g3;

C) Boleslavsky suggested **18...exf5**, considering that after **19.♕g6?** (Boleslavsky's punctuation) **19...♔h8 20.♗xf7 fxe4**, Black emerges in one piece. But if we continue the variation – 21.♖df1! (threatening 22.♖xf6) 21...♕e5 22.♘f5 ♗xf5 23.♖xf5 ♕e7 24.♗xe8, we see that Black loses at least a piece: 24...♘xe8 (24...♖xe8 25.♖xf6) 25.♘d5.

19. ♖d1-f1



With the threat 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.♖xf6.

19. ... ♕a5-d8?

This allows a nice concluding attack, but it is hard to give Black any good advice.

A) After **19...e5** Geller gives 20.♘e6! (his punctuation) 20...fxe6 21.fxe6, 'winning', but it is not clear what he had in mind after 21...♖xe6 (21...♗xe6 22.♖xf6+–). There appears to be nothing better than 22.♗xe6 ♗xe6 23.♖xf6 gxf6 24.♕g6, but then after 24...♗c4 25.♕xf6+ ♔h7 White only has perpetual check. In my view, the simple **20.♘de2** is much stronger, and after 20...♖e7 21.♘d5 ♘xd5 22.♗xd5 f6 23.♖f3 Black cannot hold the position;

B) Boleslavsky considers the most tenacious defence to be **19...exf5 20.♘xf5 ♗xf5 21.♖xf5 ♕d8**. But here, instead of his move 22.♗xf7 ♖e5, White can decide things with **22.♘d5! ♖e5** If 22...♘xd5 23.♗xd5 Black cannot defend against the mating attack,

e.g. 23...♖e7 24.♖h5! g6 25.♗xf7 (or 25.♕g5!) 25...♖xf7 26.♕xg6. **23.♖xf6! ♖g5 24.♕xg5! hxg5 25.♖xf7** followed by ♖g3 and despite the extra queen Black cannot hold;

C) Maybe Black should centralise his queen by **19...♕e5!?**, a recommendation of Geller and Bondarevsky. But even here, after Bondarevsky's suggestion **20.♘f3!?** White has a strong attack, e.g. **20...♕c5** 20...♕f4 21.♕h3 with the threat of 22.♘g5. **21.h4!?** and now:

C1) **21...♖ac8** 22.♘g5 ♖e7 (or 22...hxg5 23.hxg5 ♘h7 24.♖h1; 22...♔g8 23.fxe6 fxe6 24.♘xe6 winning) 23.♘xf7+ ♖xf7 24.fxe6 with a decisive attack;

C2) **21...exf5** 22.♘g5 hxg5 23.hxg5 ♘h7 24.♖h1 +–;

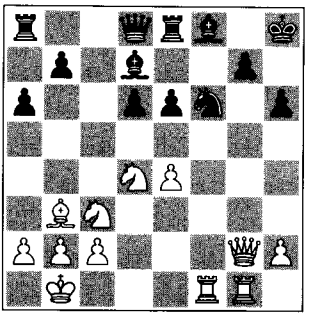
C3) **21...b5** 22.♘g5 hxg5 23.hxg5 with a mating attack.

20. f5xe6 f7xe6

After 20...♗xe6 21.♘xe6 fxe6 Smyslov's suggestion 22.♘e2 gives a decisive advantage. The threat is 23.♘f4, against which the only defence is 22...e5, whereupon White wins the exchange by 23.♗f7.

Geller and Boleslavsky give a more complicated, but also more spectacular way of winning, beginning with the move 22.e5! dxe5 23.♘e4! ♘h5 24.♕g6 ♘f4 25.♖xf4! exf4 26.c3! and Black cannot defend against the attack on the light squares, for example: 26...♕b6 27.♗c2 ♖ed8 28.a3 ♖d5 29.♘g5 ♕xg1+ 30.♔a2.

White now includes the knight on c3 in the attack with:



21. e4-e5! d6xe5

22. ♘c3-e4 ♘f6-h5

Or 22...♘xe4 23.♖xf8++–; 22...exd4 23.♖xf6 g5 24.♕h3.

23. ♕g2-g6! e5xd4

Losing at once. After **23...♘f4 24.♖xf4! exf4** White can choose how to finish the game:

A) The idea we have already seen: **25.c3** with the irresistible threat of 26.♗c2 and 27.♘f6;

B) With the help of the striking **25.♘f3**, threatening 26.♘g5, and now:

B1) **25...♕a5** 26.♘f6 ♕f5 27.♕xh6+!;

B2) **25...e5** 26.♕f7+–;

B3) **25...♖e7** 26.♘f6;

B4) White's task is more complicated after **25...♕b6** with the idea of meeting 26.♘f6 with 26...♕xg1+. Now 26.♖g2? is bad because of 26...♕b5! (threatening mate on f1) 27.a3 ♕f5.

White would have had to find Geller's move **26.♖g5!!** The rook cannot be taken because of mate, and in view of the threat 27.♘f6, Black must return the queen to d8, after which 27.♘e5 decides.

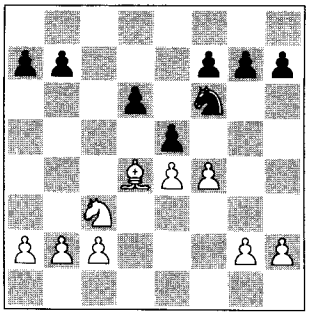
24. ♘e4-g5 1-0

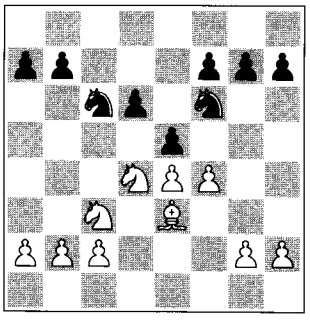
After 24...hxg5 there follows 25.♕xh5+ ♔g8 26.♕f7+ ♔h7 27.♖f3+–.

From the attack on the king we now go on to look at typical Sicilian central conflicts, which themselves often lead to mutual kingside attacks.

1.2.3 The conflict in the centre

A. Black prepares e6-e5 with a white bishop on e3 or d4



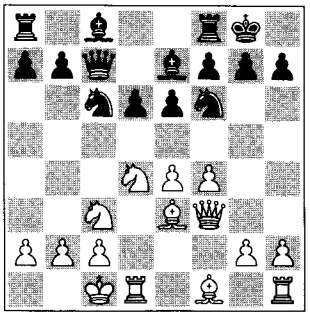


In analysing Games 1 and 3, we noted that in the structure with pawns on e4 and f4, the black queenside counterattack is too slow if White succeeds in deploying his pieces according to the scheme ♗e3, ♕f3, 0-0-0, without loss of time. So what happens if Black meets this set-up with counterplay in the centre?

Game 5
Yuri Yakovich
Sergey Kamshonkov
Yeysk 1984

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**e7-e6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘b8-c6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**d7-d6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♘g8-f6**
7.	**f2-f4**	**♗f8-e7**
8.	**♕d1-f3**	**0-0**
9.	**0-0-0**	**♕d8-c7**

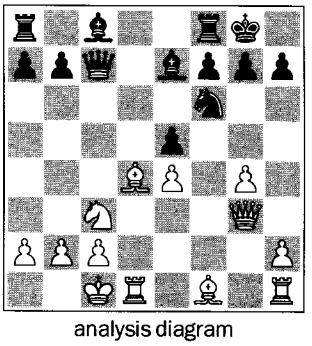
In their aforementioned 1984 monograph on the Scheveningen, Kasparov and Nikitin consider it reasonable to prepare the advance ...d6-d5 with the help of a bishop on c6: **9...♗d7 10.♖g1!** Here again, this apparently slow move is stronger than the sharp 10.g4?!, after which the reply 10...♘xd4! 11.♗xd4 e5! is very unpleasant. **10...♘xd4 11.♗xd4 ♗c6 12.g4 d5**. But here, instead of the move 13.e5?! given in their book, the game Hartman-Nickoloff, Ottawa ch-CAN 1984, continued 13.g5! and after 13...♘xe4 14.♗xg7! ♔xg7 15.♘xe4 ♕a5 (15...dxe4 16.♕c3+) 16.♘f6! White obtained a clear advantage.



Now it is time to decide how best to begin the white attack – with 10.♖g1 (Game 3) or with 10.g4 (Game 1 is interesting chiefly for the fantastic middlegame ideas, since 10.♘db5 does not have great significance from the viewpoint of the opening).

As we have pointed out earlier, Kasparov awards 10.g4 an exclama-

tion mark. Undoubtedly, **10.g4!?** seems more energetic, but what happens after **10...♘xd4! 11.♗xd4** A completely unclear situation arises after 11.♖xd4 e5 12.♖c4 ♗xg4 13.♕g3. White, as in Game 4, has sacrificed the g-pawn for the open file. But the rook on c4 is not a great help in the attack on the king, and Black's pieces are better placed than those of Petrosian. **11...e5** ? We continue: **12.fxe5 dxe5** Of course not 12...♗xg4? 13.♕g3 ♗xd1 14.exf6 winning. **13.♕g3!**



analysis diagram

The critical position for the assessment of 10.g4!?.

A) The standard Scheveningen reaction for Black **13...♗d6?!** (hoping for 14.♘b5 exd4 with roughly equal chances) fails to **14.♗e3! ♗b4 15.g5 ♘h5 16.♘d5! ♘xg3 17.♘xc7**, which allowed Yehuda Gruenfeld to win two games: after **17...♘xf1** 18.♖hxf1 ♗h3 19.♘xa8 ♗xf1 20.♖xf1 ♖xa8 21.♖d1 Y.Gruenfeld-Dür, Graz tt 1981, and after **17...♘xh1** 18.♘xa8 ♗g4 19.♘c7 ♗xd1 20.♔xd1 Y.Gruenfeld-Liberzon, Tel Aviv 1988;

B) Kasparov, against Sax, Niksic 1983, stuck with his own recommendation in the monograph, and played **13...♘xg4 14.♘d5 ♕d8 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.♗c3 ♕c5 17.♖g1 ♕e3+**. But if instead of the game's 18.♔b1?!, after which 18...♕xg3 could follow, with a satisfactory game for Black, Sax had played **18.♖d2!**, then Black would have had to defend a depressing endgame after **18...♗e6 19.h3 ♕xg3 20.♖xg3 ♘h6 21.♖d6!** followed by 22.♗xe5 (21.♗xe5?! is weaker because of 21...f6, preparing the transfer of the knight to f7).

C) I do not like the immediate 10.g4 because of the interesting pawn sacrifice **13...♕a5!? 14.♗xe5 ♗e6** with the following possible variations:

C1) **15.a3** 15.g5?? loses at once to 15...♘h5 **15...♖fd8!?**, preparing a bishop sacrifice on a3, which would follow in reply to 16.♗e2 – 16...♗xa3! 17.♗xf6 (17.bxa3? loses after 17...♕xa3+ 18.♔b1 ♘xe4!) 17...♗xb2+ 18.♔xb2 ♕b4+ with perpetual check.
After the exchange of rooks **16.♖xd8+ ♖xd8**, neither 17.♗c7?, nor 17.♔b1? work, because of 17...♘xe4!, whilst after 16.♗d3 ♖ac8 Black has a sufficient initiative for the pawn.

C2) On **15.♗e2 ♖ac8 16.g5 ♘d7 17.♖xd7 ♗xd7 18.♘d5 ♖fe8 19.♗xg7!** Black has the possibility **19...♕xa2!** (19...♔xg7?? loses to 20.♕e5+) with a dangerous counterattack. Now how should White play?

C21) After **20.♗d4** there is the strong reply 20...♗f5! 21.♗f3 ♖xc2+! 22.♔xc2 ♕xd5;

C22) if **20.♖f1** ♗e6! 21.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 22.♗f6 (22.♗d4?? ♕a4) 22...♖ec7 Black's attack is the more dangerous;

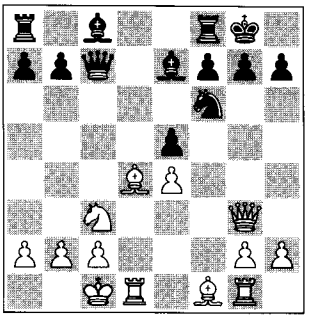
C23) That leaves **20.♗c3!**, but after 20...♖xc3! 21.♘xc3 ♕a1+ 22.♘b1 ♗e6 Black's chances are not worse.

C3) Therefore Timman, against Salov at Wijk aan Zee 1997, chose the quiet **15.♗c7**, which after **15...b6 16.g5 ♘h5 17.♕e5 ♗xg5+ 18.♔b1 ♕xe5 19.♗xe5 ♗f4** led to an equal ending.
On the basis of the above variations, I prefer:

10. ♖h1-g1! ♘c6xd4
11. ♗e3xd4 e6-e5

The last moment for the central counterblow. After 11...a6 12.g4 it would already be too late, since after 12...e5 there follows 13.♗e3 exf4 14.g5! with a large advantage for White (see the note to Black's 11th move in Game 3).

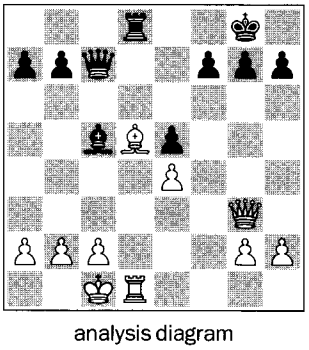
12. f4xe5 d6xe5
13. ♕f3-g3!



Comparing this position with the analysis diagram on the previous page, it seems to me that the white pawn is better placed on g2 than g4.

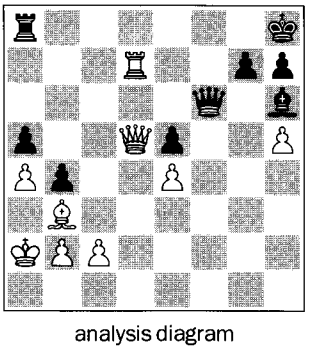
13. ... ♗e7-d6?!

A recommendation of Kasparov and Nikitin in 1984, and often met in practice. Stronger is 13...♖d8! 14.♗e2 ♖xd4 15.♖xd4 ♗c5!, although after 16.♖c4 ♗e6 17.♖d1 ♗xc4 18.♗xc4 ♖d8 19.♘d5 ♘xd5 20.♗xd5



analysis diagram

Black faces an unpleasant fight for a draw. White's strong bishop has an excellent secure outpost in the centre, which allows it to exert pressure on both flanks, whilst the black bishop can only work as a defender. The presence of opposite-coloured bishops only strengthens White's initiative. We will present in full the moves of the game Leko-Ivanchuk, Nice (blindfold) 2009, in which Black was unable to cope with the problems, although for a long time his position was defensible: 20...♔h8 21.♖f1 f6 22.♔b1 b5 23.♕f3 b4 24.g4 ♕b6 25.h4 ♗e3 26.g5 ♗f4 27.gxf6 ♕xf6 28.h5 a5 29.a4 ♕g5 30.♕e2 ♖f8 31.♖h1 ♕e7 32.♕a6 ♕c5 33.♗b3 ♖d8 34.♔a2 ♗g5 35.♖f1 ♗f4 36.♖d1 ♕f8 37.♗d5 ♕c5 38.♗b3 ♕f8 39.♖h1 ♖a8 40.♕b6 ♕d8 41.♕e6 ♕e8 42.♕d5 ♕d8 43.♕b5 ♕e8 44.♕e2 ♖d8 45.♕a6 ♖a8 46.♕b7 ♖b8 47.♕c7 ♕d8 48.♕c4 ♕d6 49.♖h3 ♖d8 50.♖d3 ♕f8 51.♖d5 ♖a8 52.♖d7 ♖d8 53.♖a7 ♖a8 54.♖f7 ♕d6 55.♕b5 ♗h6 56.♖d7 ♕f6 57.♕d5



analysis diagram

Black resigned. This analysis diagram graphically illustrates the difference in strength between the two bishops.

14. ♘c3-b5! ♕c7-a5

The absence of the pawn from g4 shows to White's advantage in the variation 14...exd4 15.♘xc7 ♗xg3 16.hxg3 ♗g4 17.♖xd4, with a clear advantage in the ending.

15. ♘b5xd6 e5xd4

16. e4-e5!

It is precisely this important resource that was overlooked in the 1984 monograph, and which allowed me to win the present game, and Ehlvest to beat Salov.

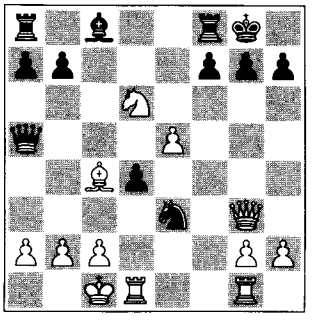
16. ... ♘f6-d5

Salov tried to attack the e5 pawn with 16...♘d7, but after 17.e6! fxe6 18.♗c4! ♘b6 (18...♘e5 loses a piece because of 19.b4) 19.♗b3 Black could hardly breathe, and was forced to part with material: 19...♗d7 20.♘xb7 ♕h5 21.♖xd4 ♖ab8 22.♘d6 ♕h6+ 23.♔b1 a5 24.c3 ♕f6 25.♘e4 ♕f5 26.♗c2 ♘d5 27.♘c5 ♕f7 28.♕h3 and Black resigned, Ehlvest-Salov, Lvov ch-URS 1984.

17. ♗f1-c4!

Ehlvest recommended 17.a3, but the text move is stronger.

17. ... ♘d5-e3



18. ♗c4xf7+!

This is the whole point. The white rook will be master of the open board.

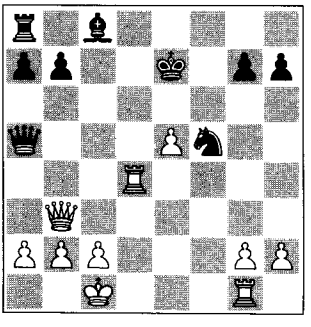
18. ... ♖f8xf7

19. ♘d6xf7 ♔g8xf7

After 19...♕xa2 the game is decided by 20.♘h6+ ♔h8 21.♖xd4!, and on 19...♘xd1, by 20.♕b3!

20. ♖d1xd4 ♘e3-f5

21. ♕g3-b3+ ♔f7-e7



22. ♖d4-f4!?

This game, like many others played in the former USSR, did not make it into the databases, and as a result, ten years later, the same position was reached in the game Kaminski-Markowski, Gdansk ch-POL 1994. There White played the weaker 22.♖d3, but eventually won after a far from error-free battle.

22. ... ♕a5xe5

Losing quickly, but it is hard for Black to maintain the balance, for example: 22...b6 23.g4 ♗e6 24.♕f3, or 22...♖b8 23.e6! ♕e5 24.♕b4+! ♕d6 25.♕e4.

23. ♕b3-b4+!

White takes control of the square e1.

23. ... ♔e7-f7

24. ♖g1-e1 ♕e5-c7

25. g2-g4

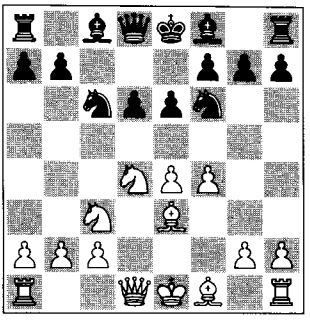
Black resigned.

It would seem that in the battle in the centre, White is the better prepared. So, does that mean that with black pawns on d6 and e6, White only has to place his pawns on e4 and f4, develop his bishop on e3, queen on f3 and castle long, in order to claim the point? Has a large section of the Sicilian Defence been closed?

Of course not!

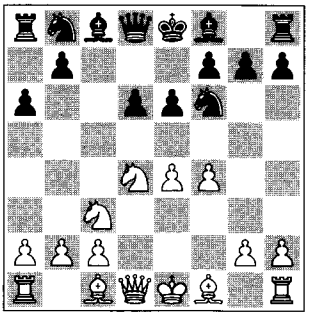
In my opinion, in the pawn structure under examination, with the white bishop on e3, Black needs to undertake active counter-measures before castling:

1) in the centre, for example: **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.f4**



7...e5!? or **7...♗e7 8.♕f3 e5!?**; or

2) on the queenside, for example: **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.f4 e6**



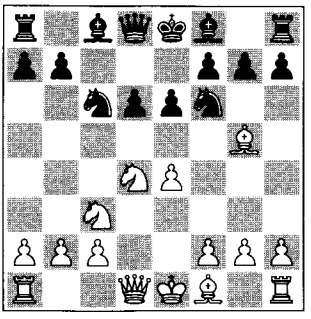
7.♕f3!? 7.♗e3 b5! 8.♕f3 ♗b7 9.♗d3 ♘bd7. **7...♕b6! 8.♘b3 ♕c7 9.g4!? b5 10.♗d3 ♗b7 11.g5 ♘fd7 12.♗e3 ♘c5!?**.

But the analysis of the resulting positions is a subject for another book.

Now let us see how the battle may develop if the white bishop is on g5.

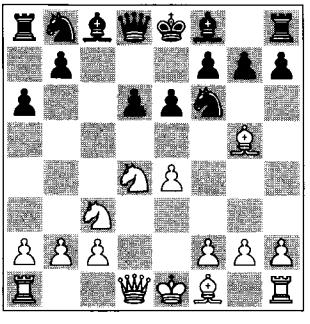
B. The central battle with the white bishop on g5

In the pawn structure we are concerned with, the bishop can end up on g5 both via the Rauzer System **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5 e6**,



analysis diagram

and the Najdorf System **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5 e6**.



analysis diagram

The difference between the positions in the two diagrams looks fairly insignificant. In one case, the pawn is on a6, whilst in the other, the knight is on c6. But in reality, Black has already marked out his priorities.

In the Rauzer System, (first analysis diagram) Black aims to develop his pieces quickly, attack the white knight on d4, prepare short castling and start action in the centre (Games 7 and 8).

Of course, in the Rauzer System there are set-ups where Black starts queenside action before castling, but before advancing his b-pawn, after the moves 7.♕d2 a6 8.0-0-0, he must first solve the problems of the 'hanging' knight on c6. This means either spending time on its defence by means of 8...♗d7 9.f4 b5, or exchanging in the centre with 8...♗e7 9.f4 ♘xd4 10.♕xd4 b5. In either case, Black must be prepared to answer ♗xf6 with ...gxf6. The resulting pawn structure is not to everybody's taste, although Botvinnik was one who liked to play such positions, in his day.

In the Najdorf System, it is easier for Black to start an attack on the queenside, since he is well prepared to play ...b7-b5. On the other hand, he is not able to put much pressure on the white knight on d4, and his opponent can develop his pieces aggressively, immediately advancing his pawn to f4 and playing the queen to f3. Purely intuitively, it seems that in the event of short castling by Black, White's attack in the centre or on the kingside should develop very quickly. This is shown by Game 4, and also Game 6, examined below.

Game 6
Archeo
Dzwonek
corr. 2002

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**a7-a6**
6.	**♗c1-g5**	**e7-e6**
7.	**f2-f4**	**♗f8-e7**

One of the oldest continuations. Later, thanks to Fischer, pride of place was taken by the so-called Poisoned Pawn Variation, 7...♕b6. Polugaevsky developed 7...b5 8.e5 dxe5 9.fxe5 ♕c7, and this variation now bears his name. Nowadays, 7...♘bd7 8.♕f3 ♕c7 9.0-0-0 b5, 7...♕c7 8.♗xf6 gxf6 and even the rather risky 7...♘c6 are all popular.

As we see, in these lines Black tries to start play on the queenside as quickly as possible, saving a tempo by not immediately developing the king's bishop.

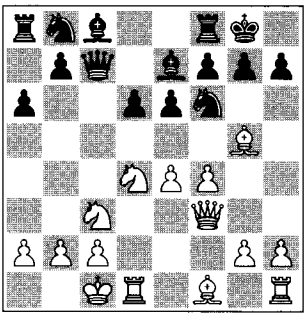
8. ♕d1-f3 0-0?

Combining the moves 5...a7-a6 and 8...0-0 is hard to trust. He should concentrate on the queenside with 8...♕c7.

9. 0-0-0!

Threatening 10.e5.

9. ... ♕d8-c7



How should White develop his initiative? In order to turn his development advantage into something real, he needs to create threats in the centre and on the kingside, before Black gets active on the queen's wing.

It would appear that **10.♗d3** fits ideally into White's plans. The only minus of this move is that it weakens control of the central square d4, which Black can exploit at once.

10...♘c6 11.♘xc6 bxc6

A) White cannot prepare the advance e4-e5 by **12.♖he1** since Black himself plays **12...e5!** Dückstein-Matanovic, Moscow ol 1956;

B) The move **12.♕g3!?** is associated with one of Fischer's most surprising mistakes. Against Unzicker, he played **12...h5??** and after 13.e5! dxe5 14.fxe5 ♘g4 15.♗xe7 ♕xe7 16.♘e4! ♕c7 17.h3! ♘xe5 18.♘f6+ ♔h8 19.♕g5 ♘xd3+ 20.♖xd3 gxf6 21.♕xh5+ ♔g7 22.♕g4+ suffered the shortest defeat of his career (Unzicker-Fischer, Buenos Aires 1960). We leave the explanation to Edmar Mednis: 'Many commentators tried to explain the move 12...h5 in normal ways, but this is what really happened – Fischer picked up his h-pawn, intending to play it to h6, then noticed to his horror that White can simply reply 13.♗xh6. He had no choice but to play 12...h5?? which is horrible, but 12...h6 would be even worse.' Instead of 12...h5?? Black could neutralise the activity of the bishop on d3 by the move 12...e5! with the idea of 13...♘h5, with an acceptable game;

C) **12.e5!? dxe5 13.♕h3 h6** Of course, not 13...g6? because of 14.♕h4. **14.♗xh6! gxh6 15.♕xh6** For a long time, this position was copied from one opening guide to another, always with a very negative assessment from Black's viewpoint. But with the

help of the computer, Black can fight off the attack! **15...♖d8!** and now:

C1) After **16.g4**, a good reply is 16...e4! 17.♘xe4 ♘d5 and White is forced to take perpetual check with 18.♘d6 ♗xd6 19.♗h7+ ♔h8 (Gavey-Tabba, Skopje ol 1972), since after 18.♖hf1 ♗f8 19.♕g5+ ♗g7 Black's chances are superior, Sax-Stean, Groningen Ech-jr 1971/72;

C2) On **16.♕g5+ ♔f8 17.fxe5** instead of 17...♘d5 (Natalucci-Stean, Groningen Ech-jr 1971/72) the move **17...♘g8!** looks good.

C3) **16.♖hf1!?** A recommendation of Parma. **16...e4! 17.♗xe4** 17.♘xe4 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♖xd1+ 19.♖xd1 f5 20.♕g6+ (20.♖d3? ♗f8) ½-½ Wostyn-J. Littlewood, Skopje ol 1972. **17...♖xd1+ 18.♖xd1,** and now the computer's **18...e5!** solves Black's problems. White should give perpetual check by 19.♕g5+ ♔f8 20.♕h6+ ♔g8 21.♕g5+ Grinwis-Munoz Sanchez, corr 2006.

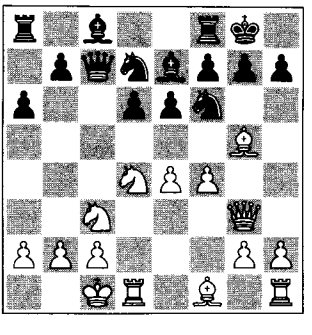
The analysis of 10.♗d3 gave rise to the idea of playing

10. ♕f3-g3!?

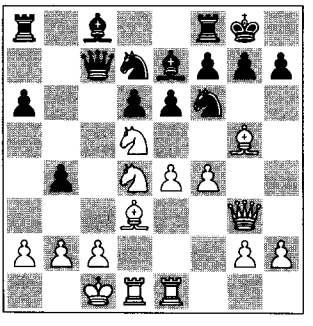
Not allowing the black knight to c6, after which there would follow 11.e5 dxe5 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.fxe5.

10. ... ♘b8-d7

The white breakthrough in the centre must be prevented – after 10...b5?, 11.e5 is strong.



Again, it is natural to bring out the bishop with **11.♗d3**, but I could not find anything decisive after **11...b5! 12.♖he1 b4! 13.♘d5**



analysis diagram

Tal-style, else Black will seize the initiative. **13...exd5!** After 13...♘xd5 14.exd5 White has a clear initiative. **14.♘f5! ♗d8!** Both 14...♘c5 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.e5! with advantage to White (Hartston-Holloway, Eastbourne ch-GBR 1973) and 14...dxe4 15.♘xe7+ ♔h8 16.♖xe4! ♘xe4 17.♗xe4 ♗b7 18.♗xh7 with a mating attack, are bad. **15.♘xg7!** It seems as though Black cannot possibly survive, but he can do so with the cold-blooded **15...♔h8!** (he loses at once after 15...♔xg7 16.♗h6+ ♔xh6 17.♕g5#), with the following variations:

A) **16.e5?** dxe5 17.fxe5 ♘e4 with advantage to Black, Wittmann-Leow, Thessaloniki ol 1984;

B) **16.♘f5 ♘h5 17.♕h4 ♗xg5 18.♕xg5** 18.fxg5 ♘c5. **18...♘df6 19.e5 ♖g8 20.♕h6** The same position is reached after 20.♕h4 dxe5 21.fxe5 ♖g4 22.exf6 ♗xf5 23.♕xh5 ♗xd3 24.♖xd3 ♖xg2. **20...dxe5 21.fxe5 ♖g6 22.exf6 ♗xf5 23.♕xh5 ♗xd3 24.♖xd3 ♖xg2 25.♕d1 ♖c8 26.♖e2** with unclear play (analysis);

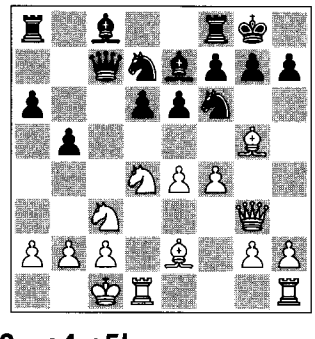
C) **16.exd5!?** is the most dangerous, but here too, **16...♘c5!** (in the game Koziak-Buturin, Lvov 1997, Black was mated after 16...♖g8? 17.♘f5 ♘c5 (or 17...♘h5 18.♕h4 ♘xf4 19.♘e7! ♘xd3+ 18.♖xd3 ♗xe7 19.♖xe7 with a decisive attack) 18.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 19.♕xg8+), in my opinion, allows the attack to be beaten off with accurate moves: **17.♕h4 ♘fe4! 18.♗xe4** Or 18.♖xe4 ♗xg5 19.fxg5 ♔xg7. 18...f5!, and White has nothing better than to go into a roughly level endgame: **19.♗xd8 ♕xd8 20.♕xd8 ♖xd8 21.♘xf5 ♘xe4 22.♖xe4 ♗xf5 23.♖xb4 ♖ac8** (analysis). Therefore, instead of 11.♗d3, it is worth considering

11. ♗f1-e2!?

Continuing development and taking control of the square h5.

11. ... b7-b5

Black does not have time for the prophylactic 11...♔h8 12.♗f3 ♖b8 – 13.♖he1 b5 14.e5! (White begins his attack in the centre more quickly than Black can achieve anything on the queenside) 14...dxe5 15.fxe5 ♘g8 and now 16.♘e4! (instead of 16.♗f4, as seen in the game L.Milov-Seyb, Nuremberg 2006) gave White a large advantage – 16...♗b7 (or 16...♗xg5+ 17.♘xg5 ♗b7 18.♘gxe6) 17.♘d6 ♗xf3 18.gxf3.



12. e4-e5!

Once again, the central breakthrough!

12. ... d6xe5

13. f4xe5 ♘d7xe5

After **13...♘d5** White obtains the advantage with 14.♗h6 ♕xe5 15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♘c6! ♕xg3 17.♘xe7+ ♔h8 18.hxg3, and now in the game Shamkovich-Kremenietsky, Moscow 1963, Black played 18...♖e8 and after 19.♗g5 remained a piece down, since after 19...f6 the move 20.♖xh7+! decides. But even 18...gxh6 19.♗g4 leads to a thankless endgame for Black.

After **13...♕xe5** White gets the advantage by 14.♘c6 ♕c5 15.♗f3!.

14. ♗e2-f3!

Only thus! 14.♗f4 gives nothing because of 14...♗d6, Van Riemsdijk-Martinez, Sao Paulo 1996.

14. ... ♖a8-a7

15. ♗g5-f4 ♗e7-d6

16. ♘d4-e2!

Black has no simple way to meet the threat of 17.♖xd6, and is forced to enter an exchange of blows that favours White.

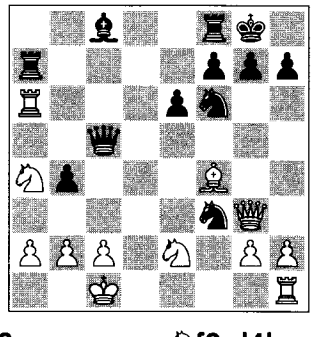
16. ... b5-b4

17. ♖d1xd6 ♘e5xf3

18. ♖d6xa6 ♕c7-c5

Also after 18...♕d7 19.♖d1! ♖xa6 20.♖xd7 ♗xd7 21.♗h6 ♘e8 22.♘e4, Black's life is no treat.

19. ♘c3-a4!



19. ... ♘f3-d4!

Ingenious, but insufficient for equality.

20. ♘e2xd4 ♕c5xd4
21. ♗f4-e5! ♕d4xe5
22. ♕g3xe5 ♖a7xa6
23. ♕e5-b5

White has a material advantage, which, with the help of the computer, he succeeded in realising in this correspondence game: **23...♘d5 24.♖d1 ♖a7 25.♘b6 ♖b7 26.♖xd5 exd5 27.♕xb4 ♗h3 28.gxh3 ♖fb8 29.♕d4 ♖xb6 30.b3 ♖a6 31.a4 ♖a5 32.♕e5 ♖c8 33.c3 ♔f8 34.♔d2 ♖ac5 35.b4 ♖c4 36.a5 ♔g8 37.b5 d4 38.b6 dxc3+ 39.♔c1 ♖b4 40.♕f5 ♖d8 41.♕c5 ♖b2 42.♕xc3 ♖b5 43.♕c7 ♖e8 44.b7 g5 45.♕c8 ♔f8 46.a6** Black resigned.

Now let us examine the consequences of the break e4-e5 in the Rauzer System.

Game 7
Alisa Galliamova
Alexey Lugovoi
Togliatti tt 2003 (3)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 ♘b8-c6
6. ♗c1-g5 e7-e6
7. ♕d1-d2

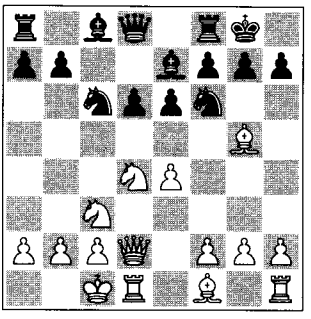
The first difference from the previous game – since the knight on d4 is attacked, White cannot adopt the development scheme f4, ♕f3.

7. ... ♗f8-e7

Of course, Black could delay castling with 7...a6 8.0-0-0 ♗d7, or 7...♕b6, but this is already another story.

8. 0-0-0 0-0

Here too, the king could be left in the centre, and Black could head into the currently popular line 8...a6 9.f4 ♘xd4 10.♕xd4 b5 11.♗xf6 gxf6.



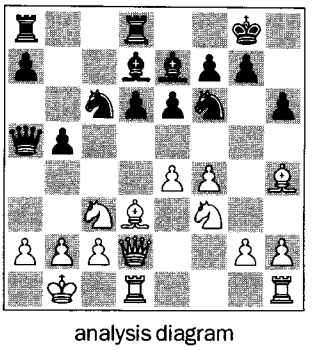
9. f2-f4!

I believe that this active move is the strongest in the diagram position. Set-ups with f2-f3 will be examined in the next chapter. White prepares to exchange on c6 and advance e4-e5.

A) The typical Sicilian move **9...a6?** fails, since after 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.e5! White breaks up the central position;

B) The attempt first to defend the c6 knight by means of **9...♗d7?!** leads to a difficult position after 10.♘db5;

C) Black could first kick the white bishop by **9...h6 10.♗h4** and only then play **10...♗d7**, preparing to meet the knight jump 11.♘db5?! with the typical blow 11...♘xe4!. However, with opposite-side castling, the position of the pawn on h6 frequently leads to catastrophe in the Sicilian. White should remember the device we saw in Game 4, and employ it here: **11.♘f3! ♕a5 12.♔b1 ♖fd8 13.♗d3 b5**

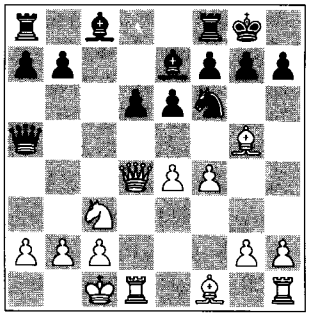


analysis diagram

14.g4!? The 'Spassky sacrifice' in action. **14...b4** The immediate 14...♘xg4 does not change the assessment: 15.♖hg1 ♗xh4 16.♘xh4 ♘f6 17.f5 with a very strong attack for White. **15.♘e2!? ♘xg4 16.♖hg1 ♗xh4 17.♘xh4 ♕h5** Black tries to include his queen in the defence of the kingside. In a training game Dolmatov-Beliavsky, Otepää 1980, there occurred 17...♘f6 18.f5 ♔f8 19.♖xg7! ♔xg7 20.♖g1+ ♔h7 (nor does 20...♔f8 save Black, because of 21.♕xh6+ ♔e7 22.♘g6+ fxg6 23.♕g7+ ♔e8 24.♕xg6+ ♔e7 25.♕g7+) 21.fxe6 ♘e5 22.♖g7+ ♔xg7 23.♘f5+ ♔g8 24.♕xh6 and here Black resigned, although, as Mark Dvoretsky showed, he could still prolong his resistance by 24...♕xa2+! 25.♔xa2 ♗xe6+ 26.♗c4! ♗xf5 27.exf5 ♘xc4 28.♕xf6, although the result of the game should not change. **18.♕e1 ♘f6 19.f5** Threatening 20.♘f4. **19...e5 20.♕g3 ♘e8** Maybe he should try 20...♕g5!?. **21.♕f2 ♔h8?** The decisive mistake. 21...♘f6!? was essential, when 22.♘f4? is bad because of 22...exf4 23.♗e2 ♘xe4 24.♕e1 ♕g5 25.♖xg5 hxg5 with advantage to Black. But after 22.♕g2! Black must play 22...♕g5, since after 22...♘e8? the move 23.♘f3 is strong, threatening 24.♘g3. **22.♘f4!** White wins the queen. **22...exf4 23.♗e2 ♕g5 24.♖xg5 hxg5 25.♘f3 f6 26.♕g2** and Black is defenceless. Depending on circumstances, White can continue the attack with the help of 27.♕h3 or 27.h4. **26...♘e7 27.h4 g4 28.♕xg4 d5 29.♕xf4 ♖ac8 30.♘d4 a5** Or 30...dxe4 31.♕xe4+–. **31.h5 dxe4 32.h6 g6 33.fxg6 ♘xg6 34.♕g3 ♘e7 35.♗h5 ♘f5 36.♘xf5 ♗xf5 37.♖g1** and Black resigned, Sadvakasov-S. Ivanov, Moscow 2005.

These variations show that Black should try to reduce the force of e4-e5 by exchanges, or else himself counterattack in the centre, as seen in Game 8.

9. ... ♘c6xd4
10. ♕d2xd4 ♕d8-a5!



11. ♗f1-c4!

Since the immediate 11.e5 does not promise White any advantage after 11...dxe5 12.♕xe5 (after 12.fxe5?! there follows 12...♖d8!) 12...♕xe5 13.fxe5 ♘d5 14.♗xe7 ♘xe7 15.♗d3 b6! 16.♗e4 ♖b8 17.♖he1 ♘g6, with an approximately equal endgame, White completes his development, strengthening the threat of the breakthrough.

11. ... ♗c8-d7!

The most popular continuation, first played by Geller against Keres at the 1962 Candidates' tournament in Curaçao. Black exploits the undefended bishop on g5 to complete his development.

12. e4-e5 d6xe5
13. f4xe5 ♗d7-c6!
14. ♗g5-d2!

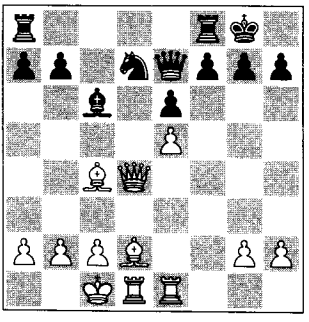
Utilising the position of the black queen on a5, White gains the two bishops.

14. ... ♘f6-d7

14...♖fd8? is bad because of 15.♘d5 ♖xd5 (or 15...♕c5 16.♘xe7+ ♕xe7

17.♕h4! ♘d5 18.♗g5 with a large advantage to White, Allesnehmer-Michael_Schenk, corr. 2001) 16.♗xa5 ♖xd4 17.♖xd4 ♗c5 18.♖d3, and White should realise his extra exchange, Radulov-Kuzev, Elenite ch-BUL 1987.

15. ♘c3-d5 ♕a5-d8
16. ♘d5xe7+ ♕d8xe7
17. ♖h1-e1



The smoke has cleared, and we can draw some preliminary conclusions. Thanks to the pawn on e5, White has a space advantage, and he has a pair of strong bishops, one of which may be able to get to the square d6, which would promise him a lasting initiative. Black should strive to reduce White's attacking potential by means of exchanges, and later on to exploit the potential weakness of the e5 pawn.

Where should Black put his knight?

A tempting choice is **17...♘b6**, with the small positional trap 18.♗d3?! ♖fd8 19.♕g4 ♖xd3! 20.cxd3 ♗a4 with excellent play for Black. But after the accurate **18.♗f1! ♖fd8 19.♕g4**, it is not easy for Black to defend against the unpleasant bishop moves to h6, g5 and b4. For example:

A) Trying to attack the e5 pawn by **19...♕c5** leads after **20.♕b4!?** (20.♗h6!? ♖xd1+ 21.♔xd1 g6 22.♕h4 ♘d7 23.♔c1 also deserves attention, when the weakness of the dark squares gives White the advantage, although Black retains certain counterplay) **20...♕f2 21.♕f4 ♕xf4** (21...♕c5?! is bad because of 22.♗b4 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♕g1 24.c4 ♘d7 25.♗d6 and, having got his bishop to d6, White retains strong pressure in the middlegame, Efimenko-Muir, Hastings 2003/04) **22.♗xf4 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1** to an ending in which White's two bishops and queenside pawn majority make Black's defence rather difficult. White's plan will involve the advance of his queenside pawns, whilst neither the exchange of rooks, nor the break ...f7-f6 (which gives the white bishops more scope) eases Black's task, Tseshkovsky-Yudasin, Kiev ch-URS 1986;

B) After **19...♖ac8** there could follow **20.♗h6!?** Also good is 20.♔b1. **20...♖xd1+ 21.♖xd1 f5 22.exf6 ♕xf6 23.♗g5 ♕e5** and here, instead of the repetition of moves with 24.♗f4 ♕f6 25.♗g5, which occurred in Tsereteli-Melia, Tbilisi ch-GEO 2007, White has **24.♕f4!** (a recommendation of Alexander Khalifman) **24...♕xf4+ 25.♗xf4 ♗e4 26.c3 ♘d5 27.♖d4!** and White will either keep the advantage of the two bishops, or obtain a bishop versus knight endgame, where his pawn advantage on the queenside will give him excellent winning chances.

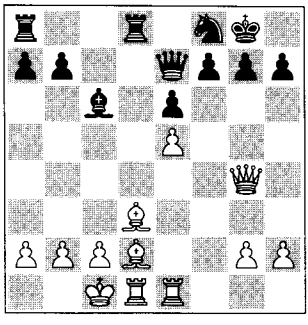
Analysing the above variations, one can conclude that the black knight is best posted on f8, from where it will combine the defence of the kingside with the possibility of activation via g6 and h4. To implement this plan, Black needs to move the rook from f8. But where should it go, to c8 or d8?

17. ... ♖f8-d8!?

The best square for the rook, from where it may be used for active opera-

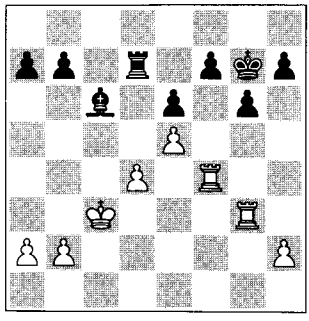
tions on the d-file. Evidently, 17...♖fc8?! is weaker, because of 18.♕g4 ♘f8 19.♗d3! and Black has no way to oppose the bishop transfer to d6. In the game Berkes-Kotronias, Greece tt 2004, there followed 19...♘g6 20.♗b4 ♕h4 21.♕xh4 ♘xh4 22.g3 with a clear advantage for White in the endgame.

18. ♕d4-g4 ♘d7-f8
19. ♗c4-d3!



19. ... ♖d8-d5!?

The modern continuation. In the 1990s, the exchange sacrifice **19...♖xd3 20.cxd3** became popular in the diagram position. Compared with the variation 17...♘b6 18.♗d3?! ♖fd8 19.♕g4 ♖xd3 20.cxd3, in this situation Black does not have the possibility of 20...♗a4, and therefore the sacrifice assumes a more positional character. **20...♕d7 21.♗b4!** If Black manages to get his queen to d5 and his knight to g6, then his activity will fully compensate for the material deficit. But in order that the white bishop on d6 does not cut off the queen from the main theatre of operations, he must immediately play **21...♕d5** and allow White to exchange bishop for knight, which increases his chances of exploiting the extra exchange: **22.♗xf8! ♖xf8 23.♔b1 ♕xg2 24.♕xg2 ♗xg2 25.♖g1 ♗c6 26.♔c2 ♖d8 27.♔c3 g6 28.♖df1 ♖d5 29.d4 ♔g7 30.♖f4 ♖d7 31.♖g3**



analysis diagram

The diagram position arose in the game Tiviakov-Atalik, Beijing 1997. Black has a solid position and a strongpoint in the centre, but is totally deprived of active play, and can only try to hold off the white attack. The latter can combine pressure on the f7 pawn with activity on the queenside. Such a method of play eventually enabled Tiviakov to win the game in question.

20. ♗d2-b4!?

Black's defence is also not easy in the forced endgame which can arise after 20.♗e4!? ♖d7 21.♗b4! ♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♕c7 23.♗d6 ♕b6 24.♗xc6 ♕xc6 25.♕f3! ♕xf3 26.gxf3. This has been seen a number of times, and the active bishop on d6 and queenside pawn majority ensure White the advantage.

20. ... ♕e7-d8
21. ♕g4-g3!?

A) Black's hopes of counterplay are primarily connected with the variation **21.♗d6 ♘g6 22.g3** (or 22.♕g3 ♕h4!?) **22...♕a5**, where White has to exchange the light-squared bishops (here the weakness of the e5 pawn has its say), which leads to equal chances: **23.♗xg6 hxg6 24.a3 ♖c8 25.♕b4 ♗a4 26.♖xd5 ♕xb4 27.axb4 exd5**

28.c3 ♗d7= Herrera-Kharlov, Ubeda 1999;

B) After **21.g3** ♘**g6**, if White wishes to retain the advantage of the two bishops, he must retreat the bishop to a somewhat passive position: **22.♗c3**, since 22.♗d6 ♕a5 leads to the variation seen above.

21. ... ♘f8-g6

In the game Smikovsky-Shakenov, St Petersburg 2004, Black tried to secure the rook's position in the centre by playing **21...b5**. In reply, White created pressure against f7: **22.♖d2** 22.♖f1 ♘g6 23.♗d6 also deserves attention. **22...♘g6 23.♖f2 ♖c8** Black's problem is that as soon as his f7 pawn moves to f5, White can play c2-c4 with considerable effect, e.g. 23...a5 24.♗d6 f5 25.c4±. **24.♔b1 ♗e8 25.♗d6 f5 26.♕e3** Now White is prepared, at the appropriate moment to strike a blow on the other flank with g2-g4, so Black played **26...♕b6**, but after **27.♕xb6** White's advantage in the endgame is indisputable.

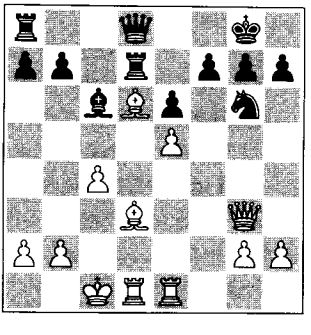
22. c2-c4

Before posting his bishop on d6, White drives the active black rook from its central position.

22. ... ♖d5-d7

22...♖d4 23.♗c5 ♖d7 24.♗d6 changes nothing.

23. ♗b4-d6



23. ... ♕d8-h4

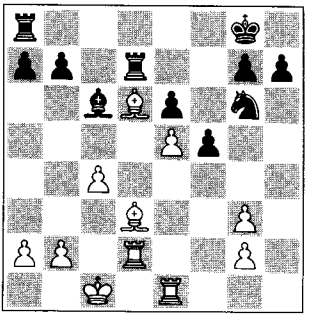
Black strives for exchanges. The move **23...f5?** leads to unfortunate consequences after **24.exf6! ♖xd6 25.f7+! ♔h8** 25...♔xf7?? loses immediately because of 26.♗xg6+. **26.♗xg6 ♖xd1+ 27.♖xd1 ♕f6** and now instead of 28.♗d3?!, as seen in the game Klimov-Sareen, Moscow 2006, the computer's **28.♖d3!** leads to a large advantage for White. The bishop on g6 is untouchable, and White calmly transfers his queen to the h-file, forcing ...h7-h6, after which the well-defended f7 pawn promises him a decisive advantage: **28...e5 29.♕g4! ♖f8** 29...♕f1+ leads to a hopeless ending for Black after 30.♔c2 ♕xg2+ 31.♕xg2 ♗xg2 32.♖g3! hxg6 33.♖xg2 ♖f8 34.♖f2 g5 35.♔d3 g6 36.♔e4. **30.♕h5 ♕f1+ 31.♔c2** with a large advantage for White.

24. ♖d1-d2!

There is no reason for White himself to exchange on h4, activating the black knight: 24.♕xh4?! ♘xh4 25.g3 ♘f3.

24. ... ♕h4xg3

25. h2xg3 f7-f5



Black has managed to stablilise the position, but White's chances are superior, thanks to his pair of strong bishops and the possibility of active play on both flanks.

26. b2-b4 b7-b6
27. c4-c5 b6xc5
28. ♗d3-c4! ♔g8-f7
29. b4xc5 ♘g6-e7

Black tries to occupy the square d5, but White lands a blow on the other flank.

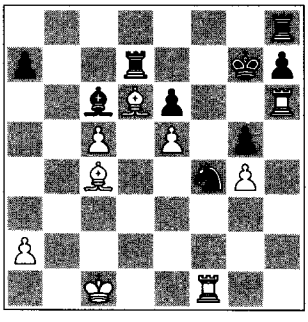
30. g3-g4! f5-f4

After 30...fxg4? 31.♖f2+ decides.

31. ♖e1-f1 g7-g5
32. g2-g3 ♘e7-g6
33. ♖d2-h2 ♖a8-h8
34. g3xf4 ♘g6xf4
35. ♖h2-h6!

The white pieces are able to transfer powerfully around the whole board, and it is becoming harder and harder for Black to meet the constant threats.

35. ... ♔f7-g7



36. ♖h6-f6?!

An inaccuracy, which squanders the greater part of White's advantage. By continuing 36.♖xe6! ♘xe6 37.♗xe6 White could remove the barriers to the advance of the e-pawn. Strictly speaking, Black has an extra exchange, but his rooks are passive, and the white bishops control the whole board. By combining the advance of the e-pawn with an attack on the black king, White would have excellent winning chances. Now Black manages to exchange a pair of rooks and ease his defence.

36. ... ♖d7-f7!
37. ♗c4xe6 ♖f7xf6
38. e5xf6+ ♔g7xf6
39. ♗e6-b3 h7-h5!

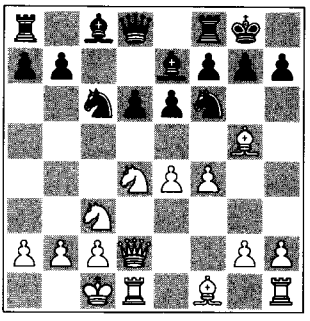
Less and less material remains on the board, and the game heads towards a draw: **40.gxh5 ♖xh5 41.♗xf4 gxf4 42.♖xf4+ ♔e5 43.♖g4 ♔f6 44.♖c4 ♔e7 45.♔b2 ♗d5 46.♖c3 ♔d7 47.♗c2 ♗c6 48.♔b3 a5 49.♗d1 ♖d5 50.♗e2 ♖e5 51.♗f1 ♔c7 52.♔b2 ♖f5 53.♗d3 ♗d5 54.♔a3** draw.

In the game just examined, the central break was not the start of a mating attack and did not win material as in Game 6. Castling early with the bishop on g5 is much less dangerous for Black in the Rauzer than in the Najdorf. However, by allowing the central break, Black cannot hope for more than a battle for equality, even with accurate play, and a draw is the limit of his ambitions.

Naturally, black players began to ask themselves, is it not possible to counter in the centre first? And when, in the mid-1980s, the Rauzer System entered Garry Kasparov's sphere of interest, more active variations for Black became the focus.

Game 8
Ivan Smikovsky
Almas Ermekov
Omsk 1996 (5)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 ♘b8-c6
6. ♗c1-g5 e7-e6
7. ♕d1-d2 ♗f8-e7
8. 0-0-0 0-0
9. f2-f4!



After the first Karpov-Kasparov match (Moscow 1984-85), there was a boom in interest in the following variation:

9. ... h7-h6

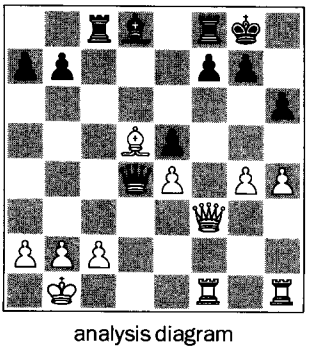
The immediate 9...e5?! is less good, since after 10.♘f5! ♗xf5 11.exf5 it is bad to play 11...exf4?! because of 12.♗xf4 with a clear advantage to White.

10. ♗g5-h4 e6-e5!?

This was introduced into practice in 1955 by Efim Geller.

Previously, the advance of the e-pawn was more popular after the moves **10...♘xd4 11.♕xd4 ♕a5 12.♗c4! e5**, first seen in the game Canal-Barcza, Venice 1948. In recent times, this move-order has been played quite successfully by Boris Gulko. The pluses of the variation are evident – Black gets convenient squares for the development of his pieces, and no white attack can be seen in the immediate future, either in the centre or on the kingside. But after the unavoidable exchange of bishop for knight on f6, White will obtain complete use of d5 for his pieces, which assures him a lasting initiative.

13.fxe5 dxe5 14.♕d3 ♗g4 15.♖df1 ♖ac8 16.♗xf6! Just in time. After the incautious 16.♗b3? there follows the typical blow 16...♖xc3! 17.♕xc3 ♕xc3 18.bxc3 ♗a3+ 19.♔b1 ♘xe4 with excellent play for Black. **16...♗xf6 17.♔b1** 17.♖xf6 gxf6 18.♘d5 does not give White any advantage because of 18...♕c5! 19.♗b3 ♕f2! Gabor Papp-Gulko, Cappelle la Grande 2008. **17...♗h4!?** This puzzling bishop manoeuvre has the idea of slowing up the advance of the white kingside pawns, but gradually White manages to get them moving. **18.♗b3!?** A useful prophylactic move, but also possible was the immediate 18.g3!? ♗e7 19.♘d5 ♕c5 20.♗b3 a6 21.h3 ♗e6 22.♕e2 b5 23.♖f3! (preventing 23...b5, after which there would follow 24.♖c3! winning material) 23...♕a7 24.♖hf1 ♕b7 25.a3 ♗d8 26.g4 ♗h4 27.♕h2 ♕b8 28.♘e3 and after the inevitable exchange of light-squared bishops, White obtains a small, but lasting advantage, Sutovsky-Gulko, Montreal 2006. **18...♕c5 19.g3 ♗g5 20.h3 ♗e6 21.h4 ♗e7 22.♘d5** 22.♗xe6?! fxe6 23.♕d7 does not promise any advantage because of 23...♕c4!. **22...♔h8** The incautious 22...♗d8? allows White to start a pawn storm: 23.g4! ♕d4 (White has a very strong initiative after 23...♗xg4 24.♕g3 ♗e6 25.♖hg1 g6 26.h5) 24.♕f3 ♗xd5 25.♗xd5

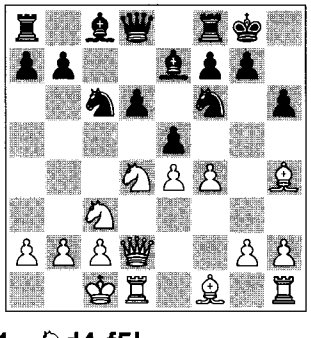


analysis diagram

Compare this position with that in the analysis diagram after 13...♗e7-d6?! from Game 5. Different openings and different tactical ideas have resulted in

the same prospectless structure for Black. The light-squared bishop dominates the board, and the presence of an extra pair of rooks makes Black's defence hopeless. There followed 25...♕c5 26.c3 ♖c7 27.g5 ♕d6 28.♕h5 ♔h7 (threatening 29.g6+) 29.♗xf7 ♖c6 30.♗d5 and Black resigned, Kriksciunas-Alekberovas, corr. 2005. **23.♕e2!** Now the immediate 23.g4 is not dangerous, since after 23...♗xg4 24.♕g3 ♗e6 25.♖hg1 Black can defend the square g7, without weakening his king's pawn cover – 25...♖g8!) **23...a5** Perhaps he should have played 23...f5, after which Leko indicated 24.♘xe7 ♕xe7 25.♗xe6 ♕xe6 26.exf5 ♖xf5 27.♖xf5 ♕xf5 28.g4! (28.♖f1? ♖xc2) 28...♕f4 29.g5 with the better prospects for White. **24.g4** 24.a4!?. **24...b5** Otherwise Black is simply mated. **25.♘xe7 ♕xe7 26.♕xb5 ♖c5** 26...♗xg4 27.♕xa5±. **27.♕b6! ♗c4** 27...♗xg4 28.♖xf7!. **28.♖f2** Leko-Khalifman, New Delhi (m/2) 2000. White has an extra pawn, but he failed to overcome the technical problems in realising his advantage.

In this variation, despite its apparent attractiveness, Black's position is relatively passive, and it is not to everybody's taste to defend it. Therefore, Kasparov advances his e-pawn in a different way.



11. ♘d4-f5!

Geller himself showed that Black has no problems in the ending arising after 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.fxe5 dxe5 13.♕xd8 ♖xd8 14.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 15.♗c4 ♔f8. It is difficult for White to attack Black's queenside weaknesses, whilst the white pawn on e4 is also in need of defence.

11. ... ♗c8xf5
12. e4xf5 e5xf4
13. ♔c1-b1!

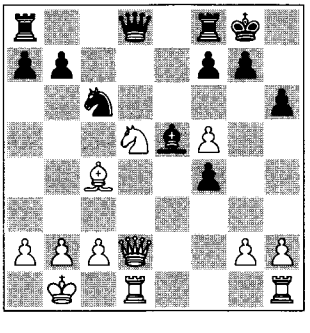
Stepping out of any possible pin in advance. White cannot take the pawn on f4, since after 13.♕xf4 there is the strong reply 13...d5! 14.♔b1 d4 15.♗xf6 ♗xf6 16.♘e4 ♗e5 with sharp play.

13. ... d6-d5!

The basis of Black's idea. This move was first seen in Unzicker-Kestler, Bamberg 1968. In 1975, it was played by Kasparov's second Iosif Dorfman against Gufeld (Kishinev 1975), and with his help the variation made its debut in the world championship match Karpov-Kasparov, Moscow 1984.

14. ♗h4xf6 ♗e7xf6
15. ♘c3xd5 ♗f6-e5
16. ♗f1-c4!

White has also placed his minor pieces in the most effective possible way. Karpov played the weaker 16.g3?!, which allowed Black to exchange off both his weak pawn and the active white knight: 16...fxg3 17.hxg3 ♘e7!= Karpov-Kasparov, Moscow Wch (m/31) 1984.



16. ... b7-b5!

Black's chances lie with an attack on the white king, since otherwise the better pawn structure and control of the centre will tilt the balance in White's favour.

A) If **16...♘e7?** White gets a winning endgame after 17.♖he1! ♘xd5 18.♕xd5 ♕xd5 19.♗xd5 ♗f6 20.♗xb7 ♖ab8 21.♖d7;

B) In the stem game, Black played **16...♕g5** and after 17.♕d3 ♖fe8 obtained satisfactory play, Unzicker--Kestler, Bamberg 1968.

However, a typical and very strong response to the queen excursion to g5 is **17.g3!** with the following possible variations: **17...fxg3** 17...♕xf5 18.gxf4±. **18.♕xg5 hxg5 19.hxg3 ♗xg3 20.f6!** Despite the exchange of queens, White's initiative is very strong. **20...♗e5** 20...♖fd8 21.♖df1!±. **21.♘e7+!? ♘xe7 22.fxe7 ♖fe8 23.♖h8+!?** A small combination which wins material. In the game Böhme-Osterman, playchess.com 2005, White continued 23.♖d7!? and despite his extra material, Black had to experience many unpleasant moments in the endgame. **23...♔xh8 24.♗xf7 g6 25.♗xe8 ♗f6 26.♗xg6 ♗xe7 27.♗e4** Black loses the pawn on b7, and he faces a cheerless fight for a draw.

17. ♗c4-b3!

It makes no sense for White to accept the sacrifice with 17.♗xb5, since after 17...♖b8 18.c4 ♘d4 Black obtains sufficient counterplay against the white king.

17. ... a7-a5

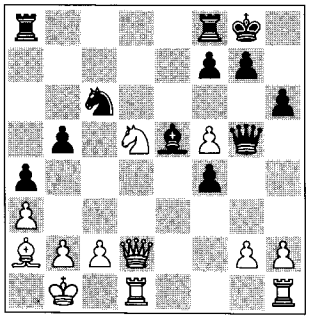
18. a2-a3!

Keeping the bishop on the dangerous diagonal. During his match against Karpov in 1985, Kasparov was more afraid of 18.c3 a4 19.♗c2 a3 20.♕d3 axb2 21.f6 g6 22.♕xb5 with a clear advantage to White, but later he came to the conclusion that after 18...♕g5!? 19.g3 fxg3 20.hxg3! 'White is no more than +='.

18. ... a5-a4

19. ♗b3-a2 ♕d8-g5?

Black's problem is that the splendidly-placed white pieces do not allow him to develop sufficient initiative on the queenside after **19...b4 20.♘xb4 ♕f6 21.♘xc6! ♕xc6 22.♗d5! ♕b6 23.♕b4! ♕c7** In the ending arising after 23...♖ab8 24.♕xb6 ♖xb6 25.b4 White has a decisive advantage. 24.♗xa8 ♖b8 25.c3! (this is stronger than what was seen in the game Vuckovic-Todorovic, Vrnjacka Banja tt 2005: 25.♖d4 ♕a7 26.♕xa4 ♕xd4 27.♕xd4 ♗xd4 with a small advantage in the endgame. 25...♖xb4 26.cxb4 ♕a7 27.♖d8+ ♔h7 28.♖c1 and there is no doubt as to White's advantage (analysis).



20. g2-g3!

The standard reaction to the appearance of the black queen on g5. Analysing this same queen raid in the notes to Black's 16th move, we pointed out that White retains a dangerous initiative even in the endgame.

20. ... f4xg3

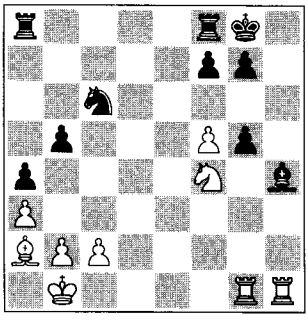
21. ♕d2xg5 h6xg5

22. h2xg3

Black's extra pawn does not protect him from the combined attack of the white pieces.

22. ... ♗e5xg3
23. ♖d1-g1 ♗g3-h4
24. ♘d5-f4!

The white knight is going to g6.



24. ... ♘c6-d4?

A) Black also has a hopeless position after **24...♘e7** 25.♘g6 ♘xg6 26.fxg6 ♖fd8 27.♖f1±;

B) The computer defends more tenaciously, but this fails to change the result of the game: **24...♖fd8 25.♘g6 ♖d6** 25...♖a7 26.♖xg5 ♖d1+ 27.♖xd1 ♗xg5 28.♖h1 ♗h6 29.♖e1+–. **26.♖xg5 ♖d1+ 27.♖xd1 ♗xg5 28.♗d5 ♖c8 29.♖h1 ♗h6 30.♖e1 ♔h7 31.♗xf7 ♗d2 32.♖h1+ ♗h6 33.♖d1 ♖b8 34.♗e6 ♗g5 35.♗d7 ♘a7 36.♘e5 g6 37.♖g1 ♗f6 38.♘xg6+–** 1-0 FRITZ-PARSOS, 2004.

25. ♘f4-g6 ♘d4-f3

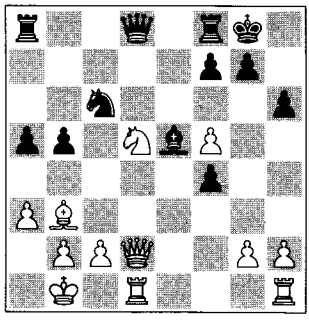
After 25...♘xf5? 26.♖xg5!+– decides.

26. ♖g1-g3! ♘f3-d2+
27. ♔b1-c1 ♖f8-d8
28. ♘g6xh4 g5xh4
29. ♖h1xh4 ♘d2-c4

After 29...♔f8 White wins by 30.f6! gxf6 31.♖h8+ ♔e7 32.♖e3+ ♔d7 33.♖d3+ ♔c7 34.♖dxd8 ♖xd8 35.♖xd8 ♔xd8 36.♔xd2+–.

30. ♗a2xc4 b5xc4
31. f5-f6 1-0

Whilst commentating on the above game, it occurred to me that, in the position of the last diagram, if the white bishop stood on b3 instead of a2, the black knight jump to d4 would be considerably more effective. Maybe, therefore, Black should not include the move 18...a4 19.♗a2,



analysis diagram

but should immediately play **18...♕g5** ? Then after **19.g3! fxg3 20.♕xg5 hxg5 21.hxg3 ♗xg3** 22.♖dg1? ♗h4 23.♘f4 the white attack does not achieve its aim, because of 23...♘d4 24.♘g6 ♖fe8 25.♖xg5 ♘xb3.

However, even in this case, White has a path to victory. By playing **22.c4!!** (instead of 22.♖dg1?), he undermines the only defender of the key square e7, the black knight at c6. After **22...♖ab8** (or 22...bxc4 23.♗a4+–) **23.cxb5 ♖xb5 24.♗a4** he obtains a decisive advantage.

Conclusions

1. In the pawn structure we have examined, with the white pieces in the set-up ♗e3, ♕f3, 0-0-0, the pawn storm of the black kingside with the help of the g- and f-pawns is very effective. Often White can strengthen the attack by using the typical sacrifices (positional or calculated to the end) of a knight on d5 or f5, or a bishop on g7 (Games 1 and 3).

2. Before starting a flank attack, one must assess the consequences of Black's counterblows in the centre with ...d6-d5 and ...e6-e5, after which the pawn on g4 may be hanging. Therefore, in many cases, the advance of the g-pawn should be prepared with the help of a rook on g1, from where it can support the attack in the future (Games 3 and 5).

3. In some cases, White should sacrifice the g-pawn, obtaining in compensation open lines on the kingside. Such sacrifices are especially effective in situations when the pawn cover of the black king has been weakened by the advance of the h-pawn (Game 4 and the notes to Black's 9th move in Game 7).

4. White should constantly be ready for action in the centre in the event of Black's counterblow ...e6-e5 (in the structure under examination, the advance d6-d5 is often ineffective because of e4-e5). Often White manages to exploit the weakened square d5 and, in the end, to go over to an attack on the black king, in which one of the main roles is played by a white knight or bishop, comfortably ensconced in the centre of the board (Games 5 and 8).

5. If White, in the pawn structure e4-f4, manages without loss of time to develop his pieces in the set-up ♗e3, ♕f3, 0-0-0, then as a rule, Black's attack on the queenside or in the centre is too slow, once he has castled. In my opinion, he needs to delay castling and immediately start active operations:

A) in the centre, e.g.: **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.f4 e5!?** or **7...♗e7 8.♕f3 e5!?**, or:

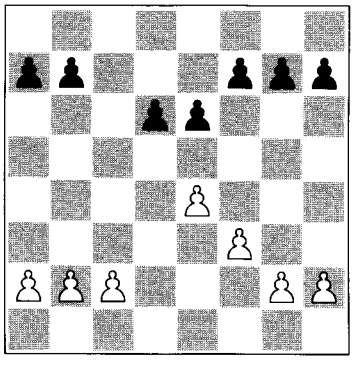
B) on the queenside, e.g.: **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.f4 e6 7.♕f3!?** 7.♗e3 b5! 8.♕f3 ♗b7 9.♗d3 ♘bd7. **7...♕b6! 8.♘b3 ♕c7 9.g4!? b5 10.♗d3 ♗b7 11.g5 ♘fd7 12.♗e3 ♘c5!?.**

6. In this pawn structure, the white bishop can end up on g5 in both the Najdorf (**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗g5**) and Rauzer System (**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗g5**). The position of the bishop on g5 significantly affects the strength of the break e4-e5.

Early castling by Black in the Najdorf allows White to develop without hindrance by f4, ♕f3, 0-0-0, after which it is extremely difficult, if possible at all, to defend against White's attack in the centre or on the kingside (Game 6). Consequently, nowadays the popular schemes of development for Black involve his immediately organising counterplay on the queenside, whilst leaving his king in the centre.

In the Rauzer System, Black immediately takes aim at the knight on d4, forcing White to develop his queen to d2. In this variation, early castling by Black is one of the most popular methods of play, but a purposeful attack in the centre by White gives him good chances of fighting for an advantage (Game 7).

Chapter 1.3 – White Pawns on e4 and f3



The set-up with white pawns on e4 and f3, with opposite-side castling, became popular mainly thanks to some beautiful victories by Mikhail Tal, over Koblencs (Riga 1957), Stoltz (telegraph game 1960) and Mohrlok (Varna ol 1962), in the Rauzer System. Being a great master of the attack, the 8th World Champion created textbook examples in practically every type of pawn structure, one of which we saw at the very start of this book.

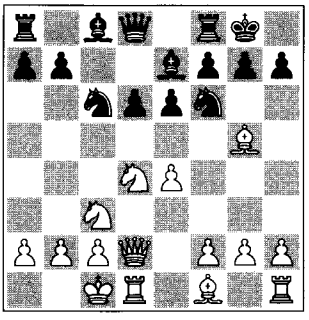
In the 1980s, the English Attack, **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 e6 7.f3**, entered tournament practice, in which White's dark-squared bishop is developed to e3.

The pawn on f3 fulfils the valuable functions of defending the e4 pawn and preparing the advance g2-g4. Naturally, a pawn storm on the kingside, with the g- and h-pawns, is a major part of White's plans.

We have already met several of the typical devices in this structure in our analysis of Game 2, and in Games 9 and 10 we will continue our study of the methods of attacking the black kingside, with the bishop either on g5 (Game 9) or e3 (Game 10). In Game 11, we will look at Black's possibilities for counterplay in the centre.

Game 9
Mikhail Tal
Dieter Mohrlok
Varna ol prel 1962 (4)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**♘b8-c6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**d7-d6**
6.	**♗c1-g5**	**e7-e6**
7.	**♕d1-d2**	**♗f8-e7**
8.	**0-0-0**	**0-0**

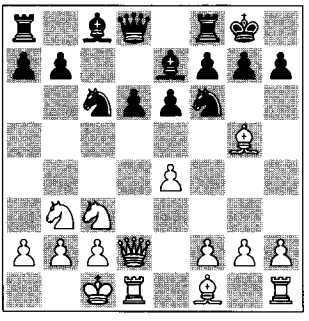


9. ♘d4-b3

This continuation was introduced into practice by Alexander Alekhine at Podebrady in 1936.

As I have already pointed out, in my opinion the strongest move here is 9.f4!. But at the time of this game, Tal preferred structures with a pawn on f3, in which he had already beaten Koblencs (1957) and Stoltz (1960).

So why did the 8th World Champion not play **9.f3** immediately? The reason is that Black then has the typical central counter in such positions, **9...d5!**, which is especially effective when he has not lost time on the move ...a7-a6. We will deal with a similar example in Game 10, with the bishop on e3. With his pawn on f4, White would answer this advance with 10.e5, going into a structure typical of the French Defence, where he has the advantage, thanks to his extra space. Now, however, White has to release the tension in the centre by playing **10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♗xe7 ♘cxe7 12.♗c4 ♘xc3 13.♕xc3 ♘d5 14.♕d2 ♘b6 15.♗b3 ♗d7**. Black has completed his development and equalised. In the game Bodnaruk-Kryakvin, St Petersburg 2009, there followed **16.♕f4 ♕b8!** There is no reason for Black to incur pawn weaknesses after 16...♕f6?! 17.♕xf6 gxf6 18.f4 with advantage to White, Inarkiev-Czarnota, Cappelle la Grande 2004. **17.♕e4 a5!? 18.c3?! a4 19.♗c2 f5! 20.♕h4 e5** with excellent play for Black.



9. ... ♕d8-b6!

This same position could be reached with a transposition of moves, by 8...♕b6 (instead of 8...0-0) 9.♘b3 (9.♘db5!? seems stronger) 9...0-0.

A) In the position of the diagram, White has created the positional threat 10.♗xf6, which would follow, for example, after **9...a6?!**: **10.♗xf6 gxf6** Black does not have fully adequate compensation after 10...♗xf6 11.♕xd6 ♕b6 12.♕c5. Now both **11.h4** and **11.♕h6** promise White a lasting initiative.

B) Now **9...d5** is not so good as after 9.f3, because after **10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.exd5 ♗xc3** Black does not obtain sufficient compensation for the pawn after 11...♘b4?! 12.d6 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♘d5 14.c4, Yudasin-Rotman, Ramat Gan ch-ISR 1994. **12.♕xc3 exd5**, White obtains a small, but lasting advantage.

C) Black should react energetically. As well as the move in the game, **9...a5!?** deserved attention (the stem game is Alexander-Gligoric, Birmingham 1951), which became popular after the 37th game of the Karpov-Kasparov match, Moscow 1985. After the practically forced **10.a4**, Black intends to cre-

ate a situation in which the weakness of the square b5 will be offset by the less than solid position of the white king. Therefore he plays 10...d5!? and now:

C1) Karpov, caught by surprise, allowed Black to equalise after **11.exd5** ♘xd5 12.♗xe7 ♘cxe7;

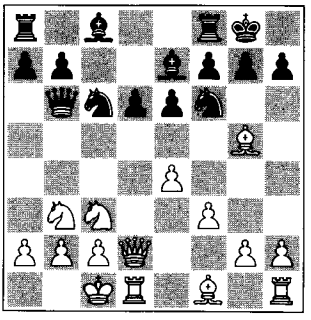
C2) If **11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.exd5 ♗xc3** (Kasparov also looked at 12...♘b4!? 13.d6 ♗d7 with compensation for the pawn) **13.♕xc3 exd5** we reach a much more favourable position for Black than after the immediate 9...d5, since the white king position has been significantly weakened;

C3) But that same year, with the move **11.♗b5!** Tal won the ending both against Sisniega – **11...♘xe4** 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♕xd8 ♗xd8 14.♗xd8 ♘xd8 15.♘c5 f5 16.♖d6 ♔f7 17.♖hd1 ♔e7 18.♗d7 ♖f7 19.♘xe6 ♗xd7 20.♘c7 ♗xa4 21.♘xa8 ♘e6 22.♘b6 ♗e8 23.♖6d5 ♗c6 24.♖xa5 ♔f6 25.♘d5+ ♔g6 26.♘e3 1-0 Tal-Sisniega, Taxco izt 1985, and against Kortchnoi – **11...dxe4** 12.♕xd8 ♗xd8 13.♖he1 ♘a7 14.♗c4 h6 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♘xe4 f5 17.♘d6 ♗c7 18.g3 b6 19.♘xf5 exf5 20.♗d5 ♗e6 21.♗xa8 ♖xa8 22.♘d4 ♗d5 23.♖e7 ♖c8 24.♘b5 1-0 Tal-Kortchnoi, Montpellier ct 1985.

In reply to **11...♘b4** the move 12.♖he1! is strong, and it is not easy for Black to complete his development, without making material or positional concessions.

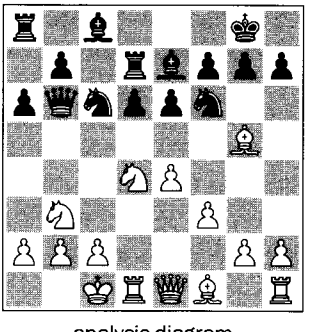
Kasparov considered the most acceptable line to be **11...♘a7**, but here too, after 12.exd5 ♘xb5 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♘xb5 exd5 15.♕xd5 White's chances are superior, Molnar-Kveinys, Rimavska Sobota 1990.

10. f2-f3



10. ... a7-a6!?

In the diagram position another popular move is **10...♖d8!?** with the clear idea of advancing ...d6-d5. However, the paradoxical manoeuvre **11.♘b5!**, in my opinion, gives Black problems in maintaining the balance. The threat is 12.♗e3, winning the queen, so Black must play **11...♖d7,** and now **12.♕e1!**, in order after d6-d5 to be able to answer e4-e5. **12...a6 13.♘5d4**



analysis diagram

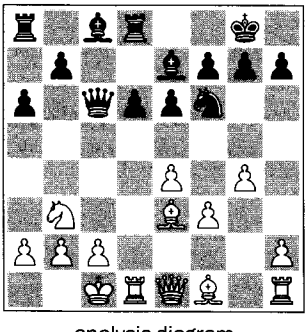
By placing his knights in such an original way, White has deprived his opponent of the usual targets for a pawn attack on the queenside.

A) **13...♖d8 14.♗e3 ♕c7 15.♘xc6!?** A highly interesting idea of Svidler's.

A1) It seems that after **15...bxc6** Black obtains a strong centre and prospects of an attack on the white king, but **16.♕a5!** restores everything to its place: **16...♕b7** Black cannot go into

the ending by 16...♕xa5? because of 17.♘xa5 ♗d7 18.♘b7. **17.g4 e5** In the event of 17...d5 18.g5 ♘d7 19.h4 White's attack is clearly faster. **18.♕b6!** Now Black does not manage to develop his bishop to e6 without creating further weaknesses. **18...♕xb6 19.♗xb6 ♖d7 20.♘a5 c5?!** It was better to play 20...♗b7, although here too, White's advantage is obvious. **21.♘c4 ♘e8 22.h4 ♖b7 23.♗a5 ♗e6 24.b3 f6 25.♖h2 ♔f7 26.♖hd2** with a large advantage to White, whose plans include moving the knight to e3, the exchange of bishops on c4, and the further exploitation of the weakness of the light squares and the pawn on d6, Perunovic-Stojanovic, Belgrade 2009.

A2) **15...♕xc6** Now White gains time to transfer his knight to d4. **16.g4**



analysis diagram

A21) After the immediate 16...d5 there would follow 17.e5, of course, so Peter Wells twice played **16...e5!?**, trying to advance ...d6-d5 after developing the bishop to e6: **17.♘a5! ♕a4 18.♔b1 ♗e6 19.b3 ♕d7 20.g5 ♘h5 21.♘c4 ♕c6** and now:

A211) **22.h4!? d5** White also keeps the advantage after 22...b5 23.♘b6 ♖ab8 24.♘d5. **23.exd5!** 23.♘xe5 is weaker in view of 23...♕c7 24.f4 ♖ac8 25.♖h2 dxe4 Korneev-Wells, Warsaw Ech 2005, with equality. **23...♖xd5** Nor does 23...♗xd5 24.♘xe5 ♕c7 25.♗d4 equalise. **24.♖xd5 ♕xd5** Or 24...♗xd5 25.♘xe5 ♕c7 26.♗d4 with advantage to White. **25.♗d3! ♖e8 26.♗e4 ♕b5 27.a4 ♕d7 28.♘xe5** and Black does not have full compensation for the pawn;

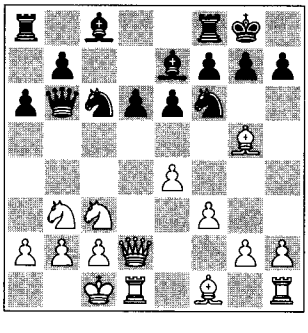
A212) In a later game Efimenko-Wells, Port Erin 2007, White continued **22.♘b6**, trying after 22...♖ab8 23.♕a5!? (23.♘d5!?) to hold Black down completely. The central break 23...♘f4 24.h4 d5 does not bring Black the desired freedom because of 25.♗xf4! dxe4 (25...exf4 26.♘xd5) 26.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 (26...♗xd8?? 27.♕xe5+–) 27.♗xe5 ♖d1+ 28.♔b2 exf3 29.♗b5! ♕c5 30.♖xd1 ♕xe5+ 31.♕c3! ♕xb5 32.♘c8 ♗f8 33.♖d8 ♗xc8 34.♕xc8 ♕e5+ 35.♕c3 with advantage to White. But after **22...♗xg5!** (which was Wells' idea) **23.♘xa8 ♗xe3 24.♕xe3 ♖xa8**, Black obtained good compensation for the exchange in the form of a pawn and the powerful knight, which can later establish itself comfortably on f4.

A22) **16...b5 17.♘d4 ♕c7 18.♗d2!** By transferring the bishop to a5, White significantly slows down the development of Black's initiative on the queenside. **18...♘d7 19.♗a5 ♘b6 20.h4 ♗d7** White has a clear advantage in the event of 20...d5 21.e5 ♗b7 22.f4. **21.g5 ♖dc8 22.♔b1 ♖ab8** 22...e5 is bad because of 23.♗xb6 ♕xb6 24.♘f5 ♗xf5 25.exf5. **23.♗h3! ♕b7** Now too, after 23...e5? there follows 24.♗xd7 ♕xd7 25.♗xb6 ♖xb6 26.♘f5 ♖bc6 27.♖h2 with a clear advantage to White. **24.♗xb6** Black is finally prepared for the knight jump into c4, therefore it is the right time to exchange the knight off. **24...♕xb6 25.♕d2 ♖c4 26.h5**

♖bc8 Of course, not 26...♗xg5?? 27.♕xg5 ♖xd4 because of 28.♖dg1 g6 29.hxg6 fxg6 30.♕f6, winning. **27.f4** White has clearly outdone his opponent in creating an attack on the king, Svidler-Korotylev, Moscow ch-RUS 2004.

B) Another line which has been seen is **13...♕c7 14.♔b1 b5 15.h4 ♘e5** Kramnik against Svidler (Internet blitz 1999) decided to exchange a pair of knights with 15...♘xd4 16.♘xd4 ♗b7, but in this case too, White's attack develops the more rapidly: 17.h5 h6 18.♗c1 ♖c8 19.♗d3 ♕b6 20.♗e3 ♕d8 21.g4 ♖dc7 22.g5 with a strong initiative for White. **16.g4 d5 17.♗xf6! gxf6** On 17...♗xf6 18.g5 ♗e7 19.f4 is strong, and White markedly outstrips Black in the attack. **18.f4 ♘g6** and here, instead of the artificial 19.f5?! ♘f4 20.g5 e5 21.♕g3 ♔h8 22.g6 (Anand-Avrukh, Haifa rapid 2000), which after the correct reply 22...fxg6! 23.fxg6 ♗f8 would have given Black a good game, White should have played **19.exd5! ♘xf4 20.dxe6 fxe6 21.♗d3**, and the insecure position of the black king makes White's advantage obvious, although a great deal of fight remains ahead.

To return to the game:



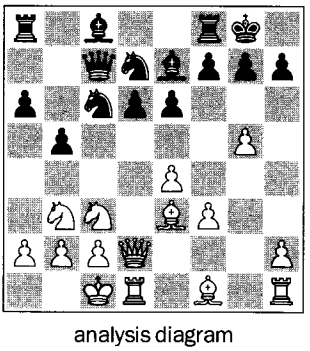
11. g2-g4

The most natural, but maybe not the best. White starts a pawn storm on the kingside.

11. ... ♖f8-d8?

A serious inaccuracy! The waste of even one tempo in such a sharp position can have a catastrophic effect on the result of the game. Black should immediately play **11...♕c7!**, preparing counterplay against the enemy king. After the weakening of the kingside with the move g2-g4, winning a pawn by 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♕xd6 does not promise White any advantage, since after 13...♕xd6 14.♖xd6 ♗e7 15.♖d1 g5 (or 15...♘e5 16.♗e2 g5 P.Smirnov-Ovseevich, St Petersburg 2002) 16.♘a4 b5 17.♘b6 ♖a7 18.♘xc8 ♖xc8 19.♔b1 ♘e5, Black has excellent play on the dark squares and against the weak kingside pawns, Genova-Ovseevich, Dresden 2009.

After **12.♗e3 b5 13.g5 ♘d7** Black practically has an extra tempo over the game, since he has no need to play the virtually useless rook move to d8.

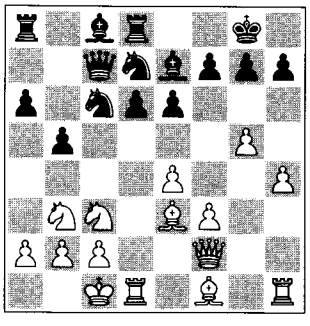


analysis diagram

It is this tempo that allows Black to organise successful counterplay, e.g. **14.h4** Or 14.♔b1 ♘ce5 15.♕f2 b4 16.♘e2 a5 17.♘ed4 a4 with sharp play, Kanovsky-Plachetka, Stare Mesto 2005. **14...♘ce5 15.f4** Or 15.♕g2 b4 16.♘e2

♘c4 17.♗g1 ♗b7 18.♔b1 d5 with excellent play for Black, Gaponenko-Roser, Condom 2003. **15...b4! 16.♘a4 ♘c4 17.♗xc4 ♕xc4** A. Ivanov-Brodsky, St Petersburg 2006.

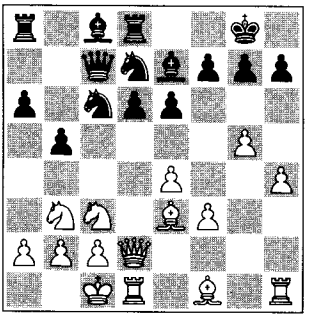
In view of the variations examined above, **11.h4!?** (instead of 11.g4) looks like a more accurate continuation. Now 11...♕c7?! is bad because of 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♕xd6 and Black does not have compensation for the pawn in the form of a weakened white kingside, so he is practically forced to play **11...♖d8**, preparing a possible ...d6-d5. **12.♗e3 ♕c7 13.♕f2** On 13.g4?! there follows 13...d5!. **13...♘d7 14.g4 b5 15.g5**.



analysis diagram

If you jump down the text some way and look at the diagram after Black's 14th move, you will see that by comparison with the game, instead of g5-g6! White has played the much less active move of the queen to f2. Once again, this seemingly insignificant delay by White gives Black the possibility of obtaining sufficient counterplay by **15...♘ce5! 16.♔b1** Or 16.h5 b4! 17.♘e2 a5 18.♔b1 ♘c4!? (or 18...a4!? 19.♘bd4 ♘c5 20.g6 b3 with a very sharp struggle, Ganguly-Svidler, Bled ol 2002) 19.♗c1 a4 20.♘bd4 a3 21.b3 ♘b2 with mutual chances, Z. Andriasian-N. Mamedov, Kavala 2009. **16...b4 17.♘e2 ♗b7 18.h5 d5 19.g6 dxe4** In reply to the flank attack, Black has successfully opened the centre. The game Efimenko-Brodsky, Sochi tt 2006, ended in perpetual check after a very sharp battle: 20.♘ed4 ♘f8 21.h6 ♘exg6 22.hxg7 ♔xg7 23.fxe4 ♗xe4 24.♗g2 ♗xg2 25.♕xg2 ♖ac8 26.♖df1 ♖d5 27.♕f3 ♗d6 28.♕f6+ ♔g8 29.♘c6 ♕xc6 30.♕xf7+ ♔h8 31.♕f6+ ½-½.

12. ♗g5-e3 ♕b6-c7
13. g4-g5 ♘f6-d7
14. h2-h4 b7-b5



15. g5-g6!

Tal's patent! If White has decided to sacrifice a pawn, then it is important to do it now, before h4-h5.

If Black does not take the pawn (in the game Tal-Stoltz, telegraph 1960, 15...♘c5 was played), then the h-pawn can remain where it is and White can play 16.gxf7+ ♔xf7 17.♗h3 with a very strong attack.

'The pawn sacrifice is fairly routine, since it is obvious that White needs open lines to attack the black king, which has temporarily been deserted by some of his defenders, such as the knight f6 and the rook f8. The truth is, I had played this pawn sacrifice twice before... Unfortunately, after the game with Mohrlok, nobody else has given this pleasure...', wrote Mikhail Tal.

The idea has something in common with Game 4, Spassky-Petrosian. Again, the computer programs cannot assess properly the depth of the World Champion's play, as again White does not immediately create concrete threats after the sacrifice is accepted. Again, too, the open lines against the enemy king and the active White pieces compensate for the small material investment. By chance, the first player to follow in Tal's footsteps was Spassky, who one year later employed the same sacrifice against Boleslavsky.

15. ... f7xg6

In the stem game Tal-Koblencs, Riga 1957, Black eliminated the fearless enemy soldier the other way, by 15...hxg6, but after 16.h5 gxh5 17.♖xh5 ♘f6 18.♖h1 (threat 19.♕h2) 18...d5 White could have obtained a decisive attack by playing 19.♗f4! ♗d6 20.♗xd6 ♕xd6 21.f4± with the threats of 22.e5 and 22.♕h2.

16. h4-h5 g6xh5

After 16...b4? the game is decided by the knight sacrifice with which we are familiar from Games 1 and 2: 17.♘d5! exd5 18.♕xd5+ ♔h8 19.hxg6 ♘f6 (or 19...h6 20.♖xh6+ gxh6 21.♕f7 mating) 20.♖xh7+ ♘xh7 21.♕h5+–.

17. ♖h1xh5 ♘d7-f6

Again 17...b4? is not playable because of 18.♘d5! exd5 19.♕xd5+ ♔h8 20.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 21.♕h5+ ♔g8 22.♗c4+ ♔f8 23.♕f7#.

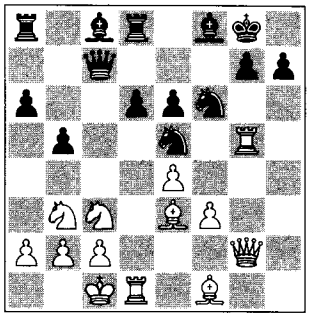
18. ♖h5-g5

In later games, White has often chosen 18.♖h1, which does not greatly change the character of the struggle – White has a lasting initiative for the sacrificed pawn. In the game Short-Muir, Gibraltar 2004, Black was mated after 18...b4 19.♘a4 ♖b8 20.♕f2 ♖f8 21.♕g1 ♘e5 22.♗e2 ♗d7 23.♘b6 ♖f7 24.f4 ♘g6 25.♘xd7 ♘xd7 26.♕h2 ♘gf8 27.♘d4 ♘c5 28.♗c4 ♖f6 29.f5 ♘xe4 30.♗xe6+ ♔h8 31.♖dg1 ♗d8 32.♗d5 ♘c5 33.♗g5 ♖c8 34.♗xf6 ♗xf6 35.♕xh7+ ♘xh7 36.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 37.♖h1+.

18. ... ♘c6-e5

Maybe he should try to start active operations in the centre with 18...d5!?, although after 19.♕g2!? ♘e8 20.exd5 ♗xg5 21.♗xg5 White's initiative looks threatening.

19. ♕d2-g2 ♗e7-f8



20. ♗f1-e2!?

Maintaining his firm bastions in the centre and freeing the back rank to allow the transfer of the rook on d1 to the kingside. Spassky played 20.f4, but this weakens the e4 pawn, and Black can create counterplay by 20...♘f7!? (instead of 20...♘c4?! as occurred in the game Spassky-Boleslavsky, Riga ch-URS 1958) 21.♖g3 b4 22.♘a4 (22.♘e2 a5) 22...♖b8, with the threat of 23...♕c6.

20. ... ♘e5-c4

Now on 20...♘f7 21.♖g3 b4 22.♘a4 ♖b8 there follows 23.♖g1.

20...♗b7 weakens the square e6, and White should play 21.♘d4 ♖e8 22.a3!, a manoeuvre known to us from Game 2. Because it is difficult for Black to advance ...b5-b4, White secures the position of the knight on c3 and frees his hands for

operations on the kingside, where his initiative has a lasting character.

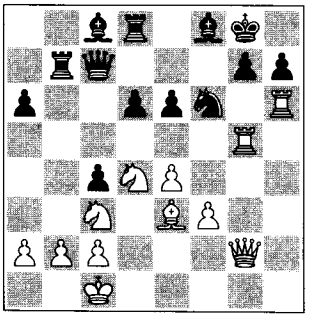
21. ♗e2xc4 b5xc4
22. ♘b3-d4 ♖a8-b8
23. ♖d1-h1!?

Tal uses both open lines on the kingside for his attack. But perhaps he should have played 23.♖g1!?, creating the unpleasant threat 24.♘c6, against which 23...g6?? is no defence because of 24.♖xg6+ hxg6 25.♕xg6+ ♗g7 26.♕xf6 ♖f8 27.♕h6 with a very strong attack for White, whilst after 23...♖b7 24.f4!? is possible, with the idea of the further advance of the e- and f-pawns.

23. ... ♖b8-b7

Including the moves 23...♕b7 24.b3 does not change anything, but maybe he should have decided on 23...g6.

24. ♖h1-h6!



White attacks the knight, which can be defended only by the king.

24. ... ♔g8-f7

After 24...g6? Tal showed the following beautiful variation: 25.♖hxg6+! hxg6 26.♖xg6+ ♔f7 (26...♕g7 27.♗h6+–) 27.♕g5! ♘h7 (or 27...♘e8 28.♖xe6 ♗xe6 29.♘xe6 ♔xe6 30.♕f5+ ♔e7 31.♗g5+) 28.♕h5! ♘f6 29.♖xf6+! ♔xf6 30.♘f5! exf5 31.♘d5+ ♔g7 32.♗d4+ ♔g8 33.♘f6+ ♔g7 34.♕h7#.

After 24...♕f7? a strong reply is 25.e5 ♘e8 (or 25...dxe5 26.♘c6 ♖e8 27.♘xe5 ♕e7 28.♗d4 with a very strong attack for White) 26.♘c6 ♖dd7 27.♖gh5.

25. ♖h6-h4 ♕c7-b6?

It is hard to retain one's cool, when one constantly has to fight off the opponent's threats. It was essential to retreat the king with 25...♔g8! and see how White will strengthen his position. After 26.♖f4 it is possible to reply 26...♘e8, whilst the pawn advance 26.f4 does not work at the moment, because of 26...♕b6! 27.♘d1 d5! 28.♘f5 d4.

26. ♘c3-d1

Threatening 27.♘xe6, so Black must return the queen to c7.

26. ... ♕b6-c7
27. f3-f4!

Threatening 28.e5.

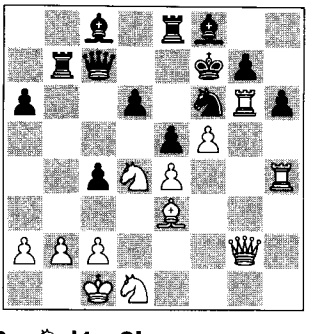
27. ... h7-h6?

The decisive weakening of the position. After 27...e5 28.♘f5 playing Black is pretty terrifying, but there is no forced win apparent after 28...♔g8!.

28. ♖g5-g6 ♖d8-e8

Now 28...e5 is already no help, since after 29.♘f5 Black has to play 29...♗xf5 30.exf5, and the inclusion of the white knight in the attack via c3 should decide the game in White's favour.

29. f4-f5 e6-e5



30. ♘d1-c3!

The concluding combination. Black cannot defend against 31.♖xf6+.

30. ... ♕c7-d8

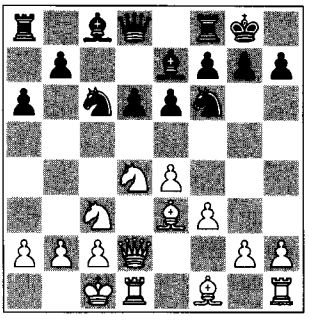
Or 30...exd4 31.♖xf6+ gxf6 32.♘d5 winning.

31. ♘d4-c6 1-0

Thanks to Tal, the sacrifice of the g-pawn in this pawn structure became a typical attacking idea.

Game 10
Sergey Karjakin
Salvador Gabriel Del Rio Angelis
Warsaw Ech 2005 (1)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 a7-a6
6. ♗c1-e3 ♘b8-c6
7. f2-f3 e7-e6
8. ♕d1-d2 ♗f8-e7
9. 0-0-0 0-0



If we compare this position with that arising after White's 9th move in Game 9, we see the following differences:

1. Black has already played ...a7-a6, and after 10.g4 he cannot break in the centre with 10...d5 because of 11.g5 ♘h5 12.f4 g6 13.♗e2 with a large advantage to White.

If Black has saved a tempo on the move of the a-pawn, which is possible, for example, in the move-order 5...e6 6.♗e3 ♘c6 7.f3 ♗e7 8.♕d2 0-0 9.0-0-0, then in this case, 9...d5! is the simplest solution to his problems, and we will say more about this in our analysis of Game 11.

2. The white knight is secure on d4, and in order to begin his pawn storm on the queenside with ...b7-b5 Black will either have to exchange on d4, allowing the white bishop to take up a strong position, or else spend a tempo defending his knight on c6.

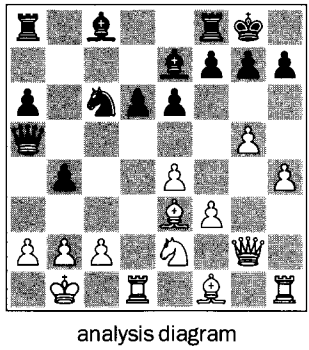
These differences make the position in the present game better for White than that reached in Game 9.

10. g2-g4

White's plan has not changed – a pawn storm on the kingside.

10. ... ♘c6xd4

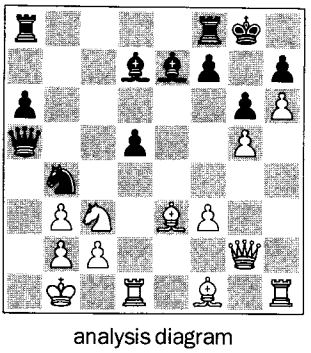
Thanks to Morozevich, Kasparov's manoeuvre **10...♘d7 11.h4 ♘de5** has become popular. Black defends his knight on c6 with tempo, and is ready to play ...b7-b5 without an exchange on d4. How should White defend the pawn on f3? A tempting move is **12.♕g2!?** since from this position, the queen can later support the pawn storm on the kingside. 12.♕f2!? also deserves consideration, with the aim of exploiting the weakness of the square b6. **12...b5 13.♘xc6 ♘xc6 14.g5 ♕a5 15.♔b1 b4 16.♘e2**



analysis diagram

It seems that Black's counterplay on the queenside has run into a brick wall, and that nothing can hold up White's attack. However, Morozevich's unique talent breathed new life into this position. **16...d5!** 16...b3? 17.cxb3 d5 is bad because of 18.♘d4 ♘xd4 19.♗xd4 with advantage to White. **17.h5!?** After 17.exd5!? b3! – the key idea! – 18.cxb3 ♘b4 Morozevich as Black won beautiful games against Quezada Perez (Beer-Sheva Wch-tt 2005) and Wege (Mainz rapid 2006). In my view, White's chances are not worse in this extremely sharp position, but 17.h5 (instead of 17.exd5) would change the character of the fight, and force Black to think first of all about the safety of his own king.

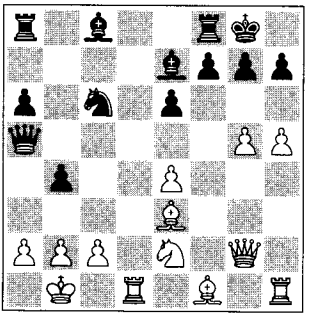
A) Now **17...b3** is not so attractive because of **18.axb3 ♘b4 19.♘c3! ♗d7** The bishop does not feel very comfortable on b7, since after 19...♗b7 20.h6! g6 21.♕g3 White defends against the enemy queen coming to e5, as 21...dxe4? is met by 22.♖d7 ♖ac8 23.♗c4 winning a piece. **20.h6!?** It seems to me that 20.g6 is stronger, as in the game Sprenger-A. Rotstein, Germany Bundesliga B 2006/07. **20...g6 21.exd5** Now 21.♕g3 is not so good, since after 21...♖ac8 22.♕e5?! Black can reply 22...f6!. **21...exd5** 21...♖fc8 is bad because of 22.d6 ♗f8 23.♗c4.



analysis diagram

22.♖h4! The key move! White exchanges the passive rook on h1 for Black's active knight, winning the d5 pawn in the process. **22...♗f5** On 22...♗e6 23.♕g3! is strong. **23.♖xb4! ♗xb4 24.♘xd5**. Two pawns for the exchange and a very strong attack on the weakened black king position give White a large advantage;

B) **17...dxe4 18.fxe4** and now:



analysis diagram

B1) In the event of 18...♘**e5**, White develops a very strong attack on the enemy king with the help of the familiar pawn sacrifice **19.g6! fxg6** After 19...h6 there follows 20.gxf7+ ♘xf7 (or 20...♖xf7 21.♗xh6) 21.♘f4 with advantage to White. **20.hxg6 ♘xg6** After 20...h6?! a strong reply is 21.♖h5! ♕c7 22.♕h2! ♗d6 23.♗xh6! ♘xg6 24.♕g1 with a superior position for White. **21.♕h3 ♘h4** After 21...h6 the standard 22.♗xh6! decides. **22.♘d4 e5 23.♗c4+ ♔h8 24.♘e6** and despite his pawn minus, White has a clear advantage, thanks to his active pieces and the attack on the king.

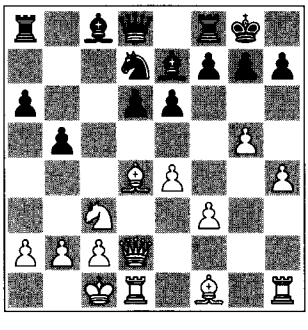
B2) **18...♖d8** Black strives to simplify the position. **19.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 20.g6 fxg6 21.hxg6 h6 22.♘f4 ♘e5 23.♗e2 ♗g5 24.♕g3 ♕e7 25.♘d3 ♘xg6 26.♗h5 ♗xe3 27.♕xe3** We are following the game Cubas-Milos, Santos 2008. For the sacrificed pawn, White

has obtained a very strong initiative. **27...♘h8** Black prevents the future appearance of a white piece on f7, but Doctor Tarrasch would have been horrified to see the knight on h8. After 27...♘f8 there would again follow 28.♖g1. **28.♖g1 ♔h7 29.e5 ♗b7 30.♘f4 ♖f8 31.♗e2!** The bishop transfers to the diagonal b1-h7. **31...g5 32.♗d3+ ♔g8** and here, instead of the move 33.♘h5?! which happened in the game, White should have first got the maximum from his knight's position on f4 by including the moves **33.♗c4! ♗c8** and only now **34.♘h5** with the following possible variations: **34...♘g6** Now after 34...♘f7? White wins with 35.♕e4. **35.♘f6+ ♔g7 36.♗d3 ♕f7** 36...♗b7? loses to 37.♗xg6 ♔xg6 38.♕d3+. **37.♕e4! a5 38.♘h5+ ♔h7 39.♘f4! gxf4 40.♖xg6 ♕f5 41.♕c4 ♔xg6** 41...♕xg6?? 42.♕c7+-+-. **42.♕xf4** with advantage to White.

11. ♗e3xd4

It is also possible to take with the queen, but I prefer the bishop on d4.

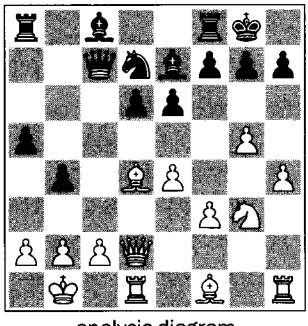
11. ... b7-b5
12. g4-g5 ♘f6-d7
13. h2-h4



13. ... ♕d8-c7

When analysing Game 2, we saw that after 13...♗b7 14.a3! it is hard for Black to equalize. Therefore Black plays a useful move, not closing the b-file.

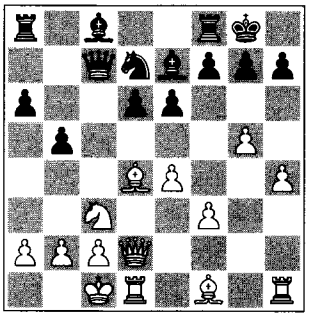
Practice has also seen the immediate **13...b4 14.♘e2** 14.♘a4 is risky because of 14...♕a5! 15.b3 ♘c5! 16.a3 ♘xa4 17.axb4 ♕c7 18.bxa4 e5 19.♗e3 ♗e6 with the initiative for the sacrificed pawn. **14...a5 15.♔b1!? ♕c7 16.♘g3**



analysis diagram

Having completed his preparations, White is ready to advance his kingside pawns, so Black counterattacks in the centre. **16...d5 17.f4 dxe4 18.♗g2!** Attacking the point g7 by 18.♘h5?! does not bring success because of 18...e5! 19.fxe5 ♘xe5 and Black easily repulses the attack after 20.♕f4?! ♗d6 21.♘f6+ gxf6 22.gxf6 ♔h8 23.♕h6 ♖g8. **18...♖d8** The immediate 18...♗b7? is bad because of 19.♗xg7! ♔xg7 20.♕xd7, so Black first defends the knight. **19.♗xe4 ♗b7 20.♗xb7!** Adams against Rowson, Southend 2000, played less energetically and chances were equalised after 20.♕g2 ♘c5 21.♗xc5 ♗xe4 22.♘xe4. **20...♕xb7 21.f5! e5 22.♕e2! ♗f8 23.♗f2 a4** We are following the game Timofeev-Alexeev, Noiabrsk ch-RUS jr 2005. White's energetic play has seized space on the kingside, and by continuing **24.g6!** (Timofeev placed his queen in the centre with 24.♕e4?!, where it came under the blows of the black pieces, and after 24...♕c7 25.g6 is already less good because of 25...♘f6! 26.gxf7+ ♔xf7 with

good play for Black. In the game, White played 25.f6 and eventually won after a tense struggle) **24...b3** (or 24...fxg6 25.fxg6 hxg6 26.h5 with a strong attack) **25.gxf7+ ♔h8 26.cxb3 axb3 27.a3**, he retains the better chances.



14. ♔c1-b1!

A typical prophylactic move, which we have already come across in the analysis of Games 2,4,8, and will see again in the future... Of course, here it is not good to play 14.a3?! because of 14...♖b8!, and after ...b5-b4 Black will be the first to break through to the opponent's king, whilst after 14.h5?! there follows 14...b4 15.♘a4 (or 15.♘e2 ♕a5 16.♔b1 ♗xg5) 15...♕a5.

14. ... ♖a8-b8

Now after **14...b4** White takes his knight to a4, **15.♘a4!**, and the manoeuvre 15...♕a5 16.b3 ♘c5 loses its point because of 17.♘b2! followed by ♘c4. Therefore Black has to play **15...♗b7 16.b3 ♗c6 17.♘b2** and White, having fortified his queenside, is ready to launch a storm of the other flank. This position was first seen in practice in the game Leko-Kasparov, Linares 2003. There followed **17...a5** After 17...d5 in the game Khairullin-Grigoriants, Sochi tt 2006, there followed 18.g6!? – Tal's recipe! – 18...♘e5 19.gxh7+ ♔h8 20.♖g1 f5 21.f4 ♘g4 22.exf5 exf5 23.♘d3 ♗d6 24.♗h3 ♗d7 25.♘xb4 ♗e6 26.♘d3 with the better position for White. **18.h5 ♘e5** Kasparov pointed out that 18...a4?! is dubious because of 19.h6 g6 20.♘d3 axb3 21.cxb3 d5 22.♕b2 f6 23.♗h3 with advantage to White. **19.♗e2 a4** Svidler attempted to strengthen Black's play. His game against Leko (Morelia/Linares 2006) ended in a draw after 19...f5!? 20.gxf6 ♗xf6 21.♘c4 d5 22.♘b6 ♖ad8 23.exd5 ♗xd5 24.♕e3 ♘g4 25.♘xd5 ♘xe3 26.♘xc7 ♗xd4 27.♘xe6 ♘xd1 28.♖xd1 ♗f6 29.♘xd8 ♖xd8 30.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 ½-½. However, if White had first taken on d5 at move 22, 22.exd5!?, then Black would have had to take with the pawn 22...exd5 since after 22...♗xd5?! there is the strong 23.♕f4! with a large advantage to White. In this case, after 23.♘e3 White's position seems to be the more comfortable. **20.♘c4 ♗b5 21.♘b6 ♖ab8** 21...♖a5!?. **22.h6 ♗xe2 23.♕xe2 g6** 23...♖xb6? 24.hxg7 ♖c8 25.♗xb6 ♕xb6 26.♕h2!+–. **24.f4 ♘c6** Kasparov recommends 24...axb3!? 25.cxb3 ♘c6, but after 26.♘c4 White's chances are preferable, in my view. **25.♘xa4 ♘xd4 26.♖xd4** with better play for White, Leko-Kasparov, Linares 2003. Probably both sides' play in this very sharp position can be improved, but it speaks volumes for White's chances that Kasparov never repeated this line as Black.

15. h4-h5!

With the black rook on f8, it makes no sense to play a la Tal with 15.g6, opening the f-file for the enemy rook.

15. ... b5-b4
16. ♘c3-a4 ♕c7-a5
17. b2-b3 ♗e7xg5

17...♕xg5 18.♕f2 does not change the character of the battle.

18. ♕d2-g2! f7-f6

18...♖d8? is bad because of 19.♖g1 f6 20.♗e3 ♕c7 21.f4 ♗h6 22.f5 ♗g5 23.♗xg5 fxg5 24.♕xg5+–.

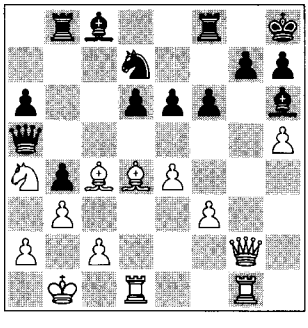
19. ♖h1-g1 ♗g5-h6

In his game against Köpke (Nuremberg 2007) Del Rio Angelis strengthened the defence by playing 19...♕c7, which brought him success after 20.f4 ♗h6 21.♗e3? etc. But if White had played 21.♗c4! ♘c5 22.♘xc5 dxc5 23.♗e3, then it would not have been easy for Black to find a useful move, e.g.: 23...♔h8 24.♕f2 ♖e8 (or 24...♗b7 25.♗xc5) 25.e5! fxe5 26.fxe5 ♗xe3 27.♕xe3 with the advantage to White.

20. ♗f1-c4

As in Game 4, Black has no counterplay at all in the centre or on the queenside, so despite his extra pawn he cannot defend against the white attack.

20. ... ♔g8-h8



21. ♗d4-e3! ♕a5xh5
22. ♗e3xh6! ♕h5xh6
23. ♖g1-h1

White has sacrificed another pawn and opened another line along which to attack the king. An excellent bargain!

23. ... ♕h6-f4

After 23...♕g5 there comes 24.♕h2 h6 25.♖dg1 ♕e3 26.f4 and Black cannot defend against 27.♕xh6+: 26...♕xe4 (or 26...♔h7 27.♗xe6 ♘c5 28.♖xg7+) 27.♗d3 ♕d4 28.♕xh6+.

24. ♖d1-g1 g7-g5

There is no defence: 24...♖g8 25.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 26.♕g6+ ♔h8 27.♖h1++–; or 24...♖f7 25.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 26.♕g6+ ♔g8 27.♗xe6+–.

25. ♕g2-h3 ♖f8-f7

After 25...♕h4 there comes 26.♕xe6 ♘e5 27.♕xd6 ♗h3 28.♗e6 g4 29.♗xg4 ♘xg4 30.♖xg4 ♕h5 31.♖g3.

26. ♕h3xe6 ♘d7-e5
27. ♕e6-e8+ ♔h8-g7
28. ♗c4xf7 ♘e5xf7

And now we get a small concluding combination.

29. ♖h1xh7+!♔g7xh7
30. ♕e8xf7+ ♔h7-h6
31. ♖g1-h1+ ♕f4-h4
32. ♕f7xf6+ 1-0

Analysis of Games 2 and 10 shows the difficult problems that confront Black in the position of the diagram after White's 9th move. Garry Kasparov wrote: 'The pawn on f3 fulfils the important function of defending the e4 pawn, which makes it more difficult for Black to obtain counterplay in the traditional way. In addition, White's kingside attack generally develops more quickly than Black's counterattack on the other wing'.

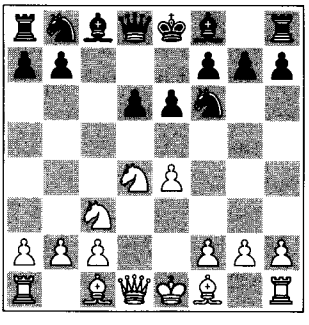
Therefore in the move-order seen in Game 10 – **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3** – Black has recently often chosen **6...b5!?**, immediately starting play on the queenside, and delaying short castling until a better time.

It is tempting to conclude that with black knights on f6 and c6 and pawns on e6 and d6, if White manages to develop along the lines of ♘c3, ♘d4, ♗e3, pawns e4, f3, he is ensured a lasting initiative. But no! These considerations are accurate only

when Black has spent time on the move ...a7-a6. If he has not, then Black, as a rule, is able with the help of the break ...d6-d5 to solve most of his opening problems, as shown by Game 11 below, and also in the note to White's 9th move in Game 9.

Game 11
Oleg Korneev
Artyom Timofeev
Montreal 2006 (1)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 e7-e6



6. ♗c1-e3

I much prefer the move 6.g4!, which will be discussed in Chapter 1.4.

6. ... ♘b8-c6

As already noted above, a complicated battle arises after 6...a6!? 7.f3 b5, but Black also has other plans.

7. ♕d1-d2 ♗f8-e7
8. f2-f3 0-0
9. 0-0-0

White has tried to prevent the central break by means of **9.g4!?**, hoping after 9...a6 10.0-0-0 to transpose into Games 2 and 10. However, **9...d5!** is also possible in this position. **10.g5 ♘xd4 11.♕xd4** After 11.♗xd4 a strong reply is 11...♘d7! 12.h4 e5 13.♗f2 d4 with splendid play for Black. **11...♘h5 12.0-0-0 ♗xg5 13.♔b1!?** Black has no problems after either 13.♖g1 ♗xe3+ 14.♕xe3 ♕f6 15.exd5 ♕f4 16.♕xf4 ♘xf4 17.♗c4 (17.d6 ♗d7=) 17...♗d7 18.dxe6 ♗xe6 19.♗xe6 ♘xe6= Luther-A. Sokolov, Germany Bundesliga 2007/08, or 13.exd5 exd5 14.♘xd5 ♗e6 15.♕e5 ♗xe3+ 16.♘xe3 ♕b6 Nedev-A. Sokolov, St Vincent tt 2005.

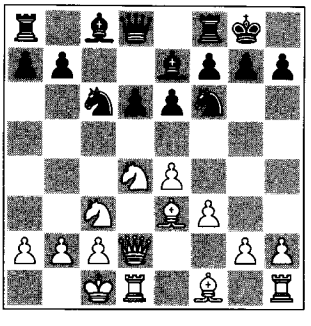
13...♔h8!? A good prophylactic move. White has a wide choice of possible continuations, but none of them promises any advantage:

A) **14.♖g1** e5! 15.♕xd5 ♕xd5 16.♘xd5 ♗xe3 17.♘xe3 ♘f4 18.♘c4 f6 19.♘d6 g6 20.c3 ♖b8 21.♔c2 ♗e6= Z. Almasi-Cs. Balogh, Moscow 2007;

B) **14.♗b5** a6 15.♗xg5 ♕xg5 16.♕c5 ♖g8 17.♗c4= Ivanchuk-Rublevsky, Sochi tt 2007;

C) **14.exd5** exd5 15.♗xg5 ♕xg5 16.♖g1 ♕f4= Short-Arakhamia Grant, Liverpool 2008;

D) **14.♗xg5 ♕xg5 15.♖g1 ♕f4! 16.♕c5** Or 16.exd5 ♕xd4 17.♖xd4 ♘f6 18.d6 ♗d7 19.♗b5 ♖fd8. **16...♗d7 17.exd5 ♘f6 18.♗h3 exd5 19.♗xd7 ♘xd7 20.♕xd5** Or 20.♘xd5 ♘xc5 21.♘xf4 ♖fd8=. **20...♘f6 21.♕xb7 ♕xh2 22.♘e4 ♘xe4 23.♕xe4 ♖ad8=** Karjakin-Movsesian, Wijk aan Zee 2009.



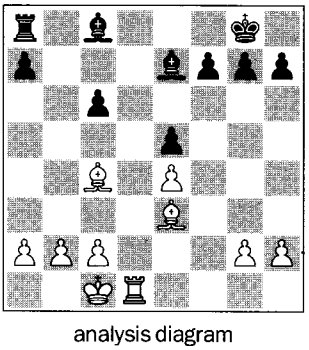
9. ... d6-d5!?
10. ♕d2-e1

The sharpest, but possibly not the best continuation. It became popular after Morozevich's victory over Svidler, at Maikop 1998. Let us examine the other possibilities.

A) White cannot hope for an advantage after **10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘xd5 ♕xd5 12.c4** Or 12.♘xc6 ♕xc6 13.♗d3 ♕c7 14.♗d4 ♗d7 (14...b6!?) 15.♔b1 ♖fd8 16.♕e3 ♗c6 17.h4 (17.♗e5 ♕a5) Jaracz-A. Sokolov, Germany Bundesliga 2007/08, 17...♗d5 with equal chances. **12...♕d6 13.♘xc6 ♕xc6 14.♗d3 e5 15.♕c2 f5 16.♖he1 ♗e6 17.♗f2 ♗d6 18.♔b1** Or 18.c5 ♗c7 19.♗c4 ♖ae8 with equal play. **18...♖ae8 19.g4 e4 20.fxe4 fxg4 21.e5 ♗b4 22.♗xh7+ ♔h8 23.♖e2 ♗xc4 24.♗d3 ♗d5** Black's chances are not worse, B. Socko-Movsesian, Kallithea tt 2008.

B) The relatively new idea **10.♗e2!?** deserves attention.

B1) White hopes to exploit his small advantage in the ending, arising after **10...dxe4 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♕xd8 ♖xd8 13.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 14.♖d1 ♗e7** 14...♗c7 is worse because of 15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.fxe4 ♔f8 17.b4 ♔e8 18.a4 ♗xh2 19.♖h1 ♗d6 20.♖xh7 ♗xb4 21.♖xg7 ♗a3+ 22.♔d2 ♗b7 23.♗h5 ♖d8+ 24.♔c3 ♖d7 25.e5+–, Bologan-Tosic, Rijeka Ech 2010. **15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.fxe4 e5 17.♗c4.**



analysis diagram

The white bishops are more active, and Black's pawn weaknesses are slightly more noticeable. In my opinion, with accurate play, Black should eventually be able to equalise. In order to get a more complete picture of the two sides' possibilities in this ending, we will follow developments in the play-off game Navara-Movsesian, Rijeka Ech 2010: **17...♔f8 18.h3 ♔e8 19.a4 a5 20.♖d3 ♖b8 21.♗d2 ♗b4 22.c3 ♗c5** With his next series of moves, White prepares the advance b2-b4. **23.♖f3 f6 24.♔c2 ♔e7 25.♖f1 ♗d6 26.♖b1 c5** Black decides once and for all to defend against this break and to weaken his light squares in that cause. This should not bring him serious consequences, but all the same, 26...♖a8 was more cautious. **27.♗d5 ♗d7** 27...♗a6!?. **28.b3 h5 29.♗e3 ♗e8** The immediate 29...g6 deserves consideration. **30.♖g1 ♗d7 31.♔d3 g6** Maybe he should have played 31...g5, completely closing the kingside. In that case, it is not obvious how White can strengthen his position. **32.g4 hxg4** Evidently, Black hoped to exploit the open h-file, but soon has to remember the queenside weaknesses created by the move 26...c5. **33.hxg4 ♖h8?!** Now the white king penetrates on the queenside. Here too, Black should have considered 33...g5!?, after which 34.♔c4 is pointless because of 34...♗c8, whilst the consequences of the pawn sacrifice 34.♖h1 ♗xg4 35.♖h7+ ♔d8 36.♖a7 (36.♔c2 ♗d7) 36...♗d1 37.♖xa5 ♗xb3 are not fully clear. **34.♔c4 ♗c8?!** Losing a pawn. In the ending arising after 34...♖h3? 35.♗xc5 ♗xc5 36.♔xc5 ♖xc3+ 37.♔b6 ♗e6 38.♗xe6 ♔xe6

39.♖b1 White has a serious advantage, since his passed pawns are significantly quicker. Black should consider 34...g5!?, fixing the weakness on g4. Then after 35.♗xc5 ♖c8 36.b4 axb4 37.cxb4 ♗xa4 38.♖a1 ♗d7 39.♖a7 ♔d8 the game would most probably end in a draw. **35.♔b5! ♗d7+ 36.♔xa5 ♖h3**

And here, instead of the game move 37.♗d2, White could have obtained a large advantage, by continuing **37.♖e1! ♗xg4 38.♔b6**.

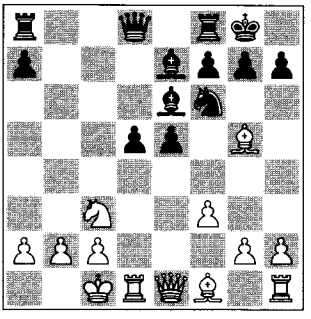
B2) This analysis of the endgame helps to explain the idea of the move **10...a6!?** (instead of 10...dxe4), played by Timofeev against Tatiana Kosintseva, Moscow 2010. After the tempting **11.g4** Black now went into the endgame: **11...dxe4 12.♘xc6 ♕xd2+ 13.♖xd2 bxc6 14.♘xe4 ♘xe4 15.fxe4 e5**, when the white bishop cannot come to c4 (the g4 pawn hangs!). The game quickly ended in a repetition of moves: 16.♖d3 a5 17.a3 ♗a6 18.♖d2 ♗c8 19.♖d3 ♗a6 20.♖d2 ♗c8 21.♖d3.

Maybe Timofeev found an improvement for White, or maybe he was simply seeking new paths, but a few months later against Wang Hao (7th CHN-RUS rapid, Ningbo 2010), instead of 11...dxe4 he played 11...♘xd4. But after 12.♕xd4 dxe4 13.♕e5! ♘d7 14.♕xe4 ♕a5 15.♔b1 ♘f6 16.♕f4 e5 17.♕a4! ♕xa4 18.♘xa4 ♗e6 19.♘c5 ♗xc5 20.♗xc5 ♖fc8 21.♗d6 ♘d7 22.♗d3 White again obtained the advantage in the ending.

10. ... e6-e5!

The most principled reaction.

11. ♘d4xc6 b7xc6
12. e4xd5 c6xd5
13. ♗e3-g5 ♗c8-e6



Black has established a strong and potentially very powerful pawn centre. White's task is to destroy it at all costs.

14. ♗f1-c4!?

The immediate capture on e5 – **14.♕xe5** gives Black a strong initiative after **14...♕a5! 15.♘xd5** Now White can no longer put his bishop on c4 – 15.♗c4? because of 15...♘d7! 16.♕g3 ♗xg5+ 17.♕xg5 h6 18.♕h5 (18.♖xd5? loses at once to 18...♕xc3! Zhang Pengxiang-Cs. Balogh, Taiyuan 2007) 18...g6 19.♕xh6 dxc4 20.h4 ♕h5 with an extra piece for Black. **15...♘xd5 16.♗xe7 ♖fc8 17.♗d3 ♕xa2 18.♗a3 ♘b6** Black's initiative fully compensates for the sacrificed pawn. The incautious **19.♕a5?** (stronger is 19.♖he1) led White to a catastrophe after **19...♗b3! 20.♗b4** After 20.♖he1? the game is decided at once by 20...♗xc2! 21.♗xc2 ♘c4. **20...♘a4 21.♔d2** Nor does 21.♕e5 save the game, in view of 21...♖e8 22.♗e7 f6. **21...♕xb2 22.♖c1 ♕d4 23.♖he1 ♘b2! 24.♔e2 ♖xc2+ 25.♖xc2 ♕xd3+ 26.♔f2 ♕xc2+** 0-1 Flores Rios-Coelho, Villa Martelli 2008.

14. ... ♗e7-b4
15. ♕e1xe5 ♗b4xc3
16. b2xc3

Of course, not 16.♕xc3?? ♖c8 17.♗xf6 gxf6 with an extra piece for Black.

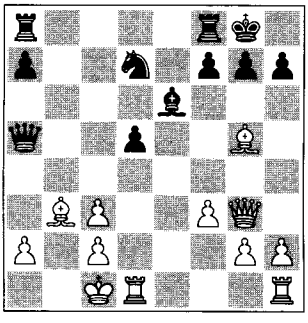
16. ... ♘f6-d7!

17. ♕e5-g3

17.♕e3 ♕a5 18.♗b3 ♖fc8 Zaragatski-Antal, Balatonlelle tt-jr 2003, does not change the character of the battle.

17. ... ♕d8-a5

18. ♗c4-b3



The white king position is weakened, but his two bishops and well-placed pieces compensate for this. The play assumes an extremely sharp character, and any mistake can have fatal consequences.

18. ... ♖f8-c8

Timofeev does not take on c3, because he does not want White to be able to regroup by ♔c1-b1, ♗g5-c1-b2. Even so, the move 18...♕xc3!? is possible, as shown by the game J. Willemze-Van den Doel, Netherlands tt 2007/08, which continued 19.♔b1 ♖fc8 20.♗c1 ♕e5 21.♕xe5 ♘xe5 22.♗xd5 ♗xd5 23.♖xd5 ♖ab8+ 24.♔a1 f6 25.♖d2 ♘c4. The strong knight on c4 fully compensates for Black's pawn minus in the ending, and after 26.♖e2 ♖b7 27.♖d1 ♔f7 28.♖d3 g5 29.♖b3 ♖d7 30.♖d3 ♖xd3 31.cxd3 ♘e5 32.♗a3 ♖c3 the chances were completely equalised.

19. ♗g5-e3 ♕a5-a3+

20. ♔c1-d2?

The wrong way! White hopes to create an attack on the king, but Black's threats turn out to be more dangerous. After 20.♔b1! a5 21.♗h6 g6 22.♕f4! the chances would be balanced. There could follow 22...f6! (22...a4? is bad because of 23.♕d4 f6 24.♗c1 ♕e7 25.♗xd5 with a large advantage to White) 23.♕a4 (after 23.♕d4?! there follows 23...g5!, cutting off the enemy bishop from the queenside, and the threat of 24...a4 becomes real: 24.h4 a4 25.♗xd5 ♖ab8+) 23...♕xa4 24.♗xa4, with an approximately equal ending.

20. ... a7-a5

21. ♗e3-d4 f7-f6

22. ♖h1-e1 ♗e6-f7

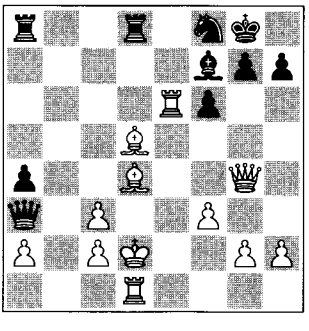
23. ♕g3-g4 ♖c8-d8

After 23...♘f8 24.♗xf6 ♘g6 25.♗d4 a4 26.h4 axb3 27.axb3 ♕d6 28.g3, with three pawns for the piece and pressure on the dark squares, White's chances are not worse.

24. ♖e1-e6! a5-a4

Unclear play results from 24...♗xe6 25.♕xe6+ ♔h8 26.♗xd5.

25. ♗b3xd5 ♘d7-f8



26. ♖e6xf6?

The decisive mistake! The weakness of the black king position will not compensate for the piece deficit. Stronger was 26.♗xa8!, although after 26...♘xe6 27.♗e4 ♕xa2! the dangerous passed a-pawn, in conjunction with the inse-

cure position of the white king, allow one to assess the position as better for Black. An approximately equal position arises after 27...♘xd4 (instead of 27...♕xa2!) 28.cxd4 ♖xd4+ 29.♔e2 ♗c4+! (but not 29...♖xd1?? because of 30.♕c8+ ♕f8 31.♗xh7+, winning for White) 30.♔f2 ♖xd1 31.♕c8+ ♔f7 32.♕xc4+.

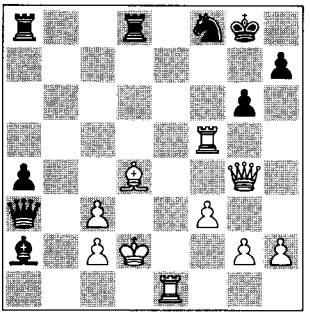
26. ... ♗f7xd5

27. ♖f6-f5

Certainly not 27.♖xf8+? because of 27...♕xf8, whilst 27.♖d6 does not work either because of 27...g6 28.♖xd8 ♖xd8 29.♕h4 ♖d7 30.♕f6 ♕xa2 31.♖e1 (or 31.♕h8+ ♔f7 32.♕g7+ ♔e8 33.♖e1+ ♗e6–+) 31...♗e6 when Black is clearly better.

27. ... g7-g6

28. ♖d1-e1 ♗d5xa2



White has no prospects of an attack. The rest of the game is not of great interest.. **29.♖b5 ♖d7 30.♖b4 ♖c8 31.♖e3 ♗e6! 32.♕f4** 32.♖xe6 ♕xc3+ 33.♔e2 ♕xb4–+. **32...♖xc3! 33.♖b8** 33.♖xc3 ♕xb4. **33...♖xe3 34.♕xe3 ♕d6 35.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 36.c3 a3 37.♔e2 ♕a6+ 38.♔f2 a2 39.♕f4+ ♖f7 40.♕b8+ ♕c8 41.♕d6+ ♔e8 42.c4 ♕xc4 43.♗c5 ♕xc5+ 44.♕xc5 a1♕** 0-1.

Conclusions

1. In the pawn structure we have examined, White basically aims at a pawn storm on the kingside, advancing his g- and h-pawns (Games 2, 9, 10).

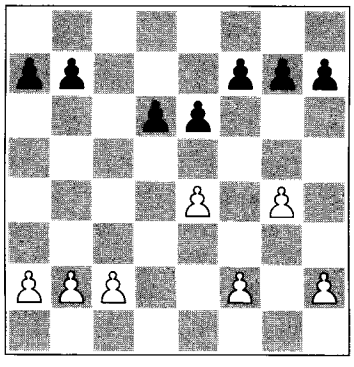
2. Tal introduced into tournament practice the positional sacrifice of the g-pawn (g5-g6! before h4-h5), which often allows White to gain time to organise his attack (Game 9). White's compensation for the small material investment, as in Game 4, is in the form of open lines.

3. In cases where Black does not spend time in the opening moving his a-pawn, he can as a rule successfully counterattack in the centre with ...d6-d5 (Games 9, 11).

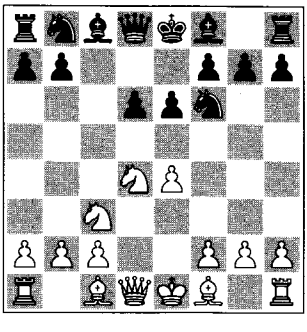
4. With the white knight on b3, energetic means allow Black to create sufficient counterplay by advancing his a- and b-pawns (Game 9). With a white knight on d4, Black needs either to exchange knights on d4, allowing the bishop to occupy a powerful post, or spend time defending his knight on c6, before he can start his queenside pawn storm. In this case, White's initiative on the kingside usually develops the more rapidly (Game 10).

5. In my opinion, if Black manages without the move ...a7-a6, then when the white knight is on d4, the central break promises the second player sufficient counterplay. If for some reason the move ...a7-a6 is played, Black should start active operations on the queenside with ...b7-b5, before castling.

Chapter 1.4 – White g-Pawn Advances to g5, without Support of Other Pawns



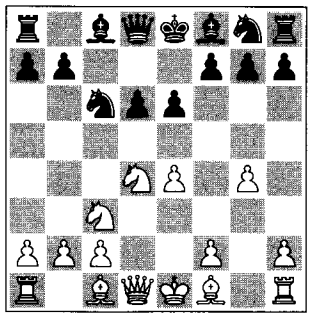
As we have already seen, in the majority of cases, the white attack is launched by the g-pawn, which advances to g5. By driving off the knight on f6, White deprives the enemy king of one of its main defenders, strengthens control over the centre, and seizes space. This gives rise to the question: how early can the g-pawn be launched into the attack? In 1939, Vasily Panov, as far as I know, first introduced into tournament practice, after the moves **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6**



the move **6.g4!**.

Sometime later, Paul Keres began to play it regularly, and the system with 6.g4! entered opening theory under the name of the Keres Attack (Game 12).

White's successes in this variation resulted in Karpov playing **6.g4!?** in Game 14 of his match against Kasparov (Moscow 1985) after the moves **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6**.

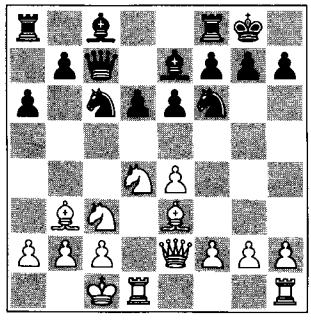


The first to play this was Bozidar Ivanovic, who used it twice, beating Nicevski in 1979 and Cvitan in 1981. Karpov's trainer Igor Zaitsev played the pawn to g4 in a similar position, also without a black knight on f6, in a game against Vogt (Baku 1980).

We will give the next word to Garry Kasparov: 'Of course, the absence of a knight from f6 reduces the effectiveness of the white pawn advance, but even so, this deep idea deserves the fullest consideration. With a solid centre, White intends to advance his pawns on the kingside, the most likely residence of the black king. The g-pawn, when it gets to g5, cramps Black's forces and hampers his normal development.'

And finally, we come to the system developed in the 1960s, in which the white bishop comes to c4. Dragoljub Velimirovic, instead of the standard advance of the f-pawn (standard that is, with a white bishop on c4), began castling long and throwing forward the g-pawn, e.g.:

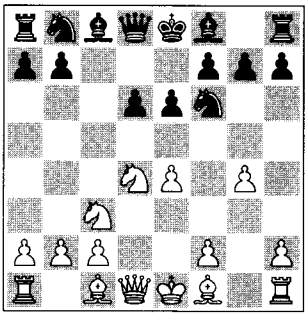
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♗c4 e6 7.♗e3 ♗e7 8.♕e2 0-0 9.0-0-0 ♕c7 10.♗b3 a6



11.g4!?, or **11.♖hg1** followed by g2-g4 (Game 13).

Game 12
Sergei Movsesian
Ognjen Cvitan
Germany Bundesliga 1997/98 (5)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**e7-e6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**d7-d6**
6.	**g2-g4!**	

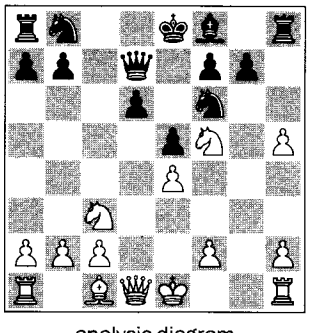


We spoke above about the ideas behind White's last move – to drive away the knight on f6, strengthen control of the centre, seize space, and prepare the basis for an attack on the kingside. However, the realisation of these splendid thoughts may never happen, if Black succeeds in countering successfully in the centre. As we have already remarked in the analysis of Games 1 and 3, before starting a flank advance one must assess the consequences of a reaction in the centre with the black pawns coming to d5 or e5.

A) The assessment of the move **6...d5?** is simple enough. After **7.exd5 ♘xd5 8.♗b5+! ♗d7 9.♘xd5 exd5 10.♕e2+ ♗e7** (after 10...♕e7 11.♗e3! is strong, followed by long castling, with a superior position in Fischer-Reshevsky, New York ch-USA 1966/67) White has the excellent resource **11.♘f5!**, disrupting Black's defensive line-up. In the game Nikitin-Cherepkov, Moscow-Leningrad 1958, there followed 11...♔f8 12.♗xd7 ♘xd7 13.♗f4 with an obvious advantage to White.

B) The consequences of the other central break **6...e5!?** are more difficult to assess. Black weakens the square d5, but hopes to obtain counterplay against White's weakened kingside pawns. The peak of popularity of the line in recent times has been connected with the interesting ideas of the Romanian Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu.[1]

7.♗b5+ Purely on general considerations, White should force the exchange of light-squared bishops, which removes a potential defender of the d5-square. **7...♗d7 8.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 9.♘f5** It seems that Black is in a bad way. The threat is 10.♗g5 with complete domination of the centre. But how does White answer **9...h5!** ? After 10.g5? there follows 10...♘xe4! 11.♘xg7+ ♗xg7 12.♘xe4 d5 with excellent play for Black, so White must play **10.gxh5!** and now:



analysis diagram

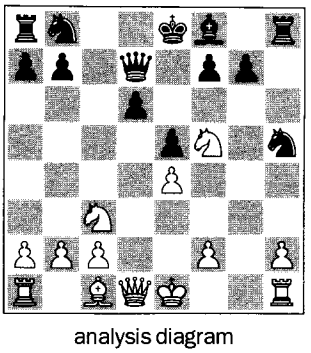
A) **10...♖xh5?** is bad because of 11.♘d5 with a clear advantage for White;

B) In reply to **10...♘xe4? 11.♘xg7+ ♗xg7 12.♘xe4 d5** White, unlike the

1 Translator's note: Whereas 6...e5 was already adopted by several Soviet players in the 1980s, the games of Romanian colleague grandmaster Mihai Suba in the late 1980s and early 1990s presumably influenced Nisipeanu to take up the line.

variation after 10.g5? has the wonderful tactical resource **13.h6!**, and Black is forced to go into a prospectless endgame – **13...dxe4 14.♕xd7+ ♔xd7** 14...♘xd7 is weaker because of 15.hxg7 ♖g8 16.♖g1 ♘c5 17.♗h6 ♖c8 18.h4! f6 19.h5 ♘e6 20.0-0-0 ♖c7 21.♖g6 ♔f7 22.c3 with a winning endgame for White, Aseev-Epishin, Barnaul 1988. **15.hxg7 ♖g8 16.♖g1 ♘c6 17.♗e3 ♘e7 18.0-0-0+ ♔e6** Black threatens to win the g7 pawn with the help of 19...♘f5, but by playing **19.♗c5! ♘f5 20.♗f8** White deprives him of this possibility. Now Black's hopes must rest only on the exchange sacrifice on f8 and the organisation of counterplay based on the strong position of his knight, which aims to reach f3. However, as shown in Bologan-Timofeev, Kazan tt 2001, in a sharp struggle White retains an advantage sufficient for victory: 20...♘d4 21.♔b1! ♔f5 22.c3 ♘f3 23.♖h1! ♖gxf8 24.gxf8♕ ♖xf8 25.h4 ♖h8 26.♖d7 ♖h7 (he also loses after 26...♔e6 27.♖xb7 ♖xh4 28.♖xh4 ♘xh4 29.♖xa7+–) 27.♖xb7 e3 28.fxe3 ♔e4 29.♖xa7 ♔xe3 30.♖e7 e4 31.h5 ♔f2 32.a4 e3 33.a5 e2 34.a6 e1♕+ 35.♖hxe1 ♘xe1 36.a7 ♖h8 37.♖xf7+ ♔e2 38.♖b7 ♖a8 39.h6 and Black resigned.

C) **10...♘xh5**



analysis diagram

11.♗h6! It seems as though this beautiful move buries all Black's hopes of equalising, but Nisipeanu manages to find new resources in the endgame, which arises by force after **11...g6 12.♗xf8 gxf5 13.♗xd6 ♘c6 14.♗c5 ♕xd1+ 15.♖xd1 b6** Black hopes to drive the white bishop to a passive position and create counterplay in the centre, using his active knights, which are aiming for d4 and f4. The following examples from Nisipeanu's practice illustrate Black's ideas:

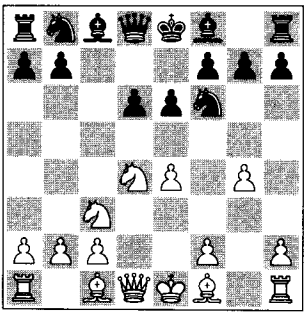
A) 16.♗a3 ♘d4 17.♔d2 ♘f4 (also good is 17...♖c8 18.♔c1 ♘f4 19.♔b1 f6 20.exf5 ♖c6 21.♘e4 ♘xf5 Kokarev-Kurnosov, Ulan Ude 2009) 18.♔c1 ♖d8 19.♖d2 f6 20.exf5 ♔f7 21.♘e4 ♘xf5 22.♖xd8 ♖xd8 23.c3 ♔e6 24.♔c2 ♘h3 25.b3 ♘h4 26.♗c1 ♘f3 27.♖f1 f5 28.♘d2 ♘xd2 29.♗xd2 f4 30.c4 ♖g8 31.♔d3 ♖g2 with excellent play for Black, Simacek-Nisipeanu, Kemer tt 2007;

B) 16.♗e3 f4 17.♗c1 ♘d4 18.♘d5 ♖c8 19.c3 ♘e6 20.♔e2 ♘g5 21.♖hg1 ♘xe4 Holzke-Nisipeanu, Germany Bundesliga 2007/08.

In my view, **16.♗d6!?** deserves consideration. By taking aim at the pawn on e5, White strives to tie the knight on c6 to its place. **16...0-0-0** After the immediate 16...♘d4 there follows 17.♘d5! ♔d7 (or 17...0-0-0 18.♘e7+ ♔b7 19.♘xf5 with advantage to White) 18.♗xe5 ♘f3+ 19.♔e2 ♘xe5 20.♘xb6+ ♔e6 21.♘xa8 ♖xa8 22.exf5+. **17.exf5 ♘f4 18.♘e4 ♖h4 19.♔f1!?** In the play-off game Kurnosov-Nisipeanu, Budva Ech 2009 White obtained a large advantage after 19.f3 ♘d4? 20.♖xd4! exd4 21.♗e7, but stronger was 19...♖g8! 20.c3 ♖h3 with compensation for the sacrificed

pawn. **19...♘h5 20.♘g5!?** In the game Vuckovic-Szabo, Pleven 2010, White played 20.♘c3, but after 20...f6! followed by 21...♘d4 Black obtained excellent play. **20...♖d7** Now after 20...f6?! there follows 21.♘e6 ♖d7 22.c3 with advantage to White. **21.♖g1!?** By returning one of the pawns, White activates his pieces. **21...♖xh2 22.♔e2** White's position is preferable. Now 22...♘d4+?? is not possible, because of 23.♖xd4 exd4 24.♗xh2 (analysis).

An interesting battle, in which the play of both sides can probably be strengthened, and the continuation 6...e5!? deserves further study. But now we return to the game.



6. ... ♘b8-c6

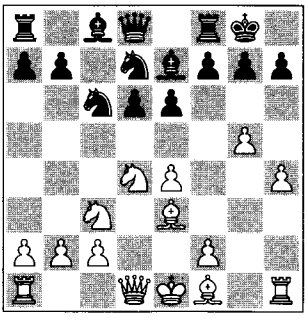
It is interesting to follow how the greatest of all Scheveningen players in recent times, the 13th World Champion Garry Kasparov, has changed his opinion of this plan of defence. In his opening monograph on the Scheveningen, co-written with Alexander Nikitin in 1984, the continuation 6...♘c6 was awarded an exclamation mark, and described thus: 'The most natural answer to White's flank attack. By continuing the natural development of his pieces, Black creates pressure in the centre of the board, forcing his opponent to solve the problem of the knight on d4'.

In general, the Keres Attack is assessed in this monograph as an interesting, doubled-edged variation, which offers Black a wide choice of reasonable continuations. But in *Revolution in the 70s*, published in 2007, Kasparov wrote: '(In the Keres Attack) the age-old problem of whether to play h7-h6 or to allow g4-g5, has been decided in favour of the restraining 6...h6! "The Last of Mohicans", who still allow the Keres Attack, play this way, since the position after 6...♘c6 7.g5 ♘d7 8.♗e3 is regarded as too dangerous for Black'.

Let us try together to work out what has brought about this change of assessment. The advantages of the move 6...h6!? include the fact that Black maintains the knight on f6 on its best square. But the position of the pawn on h6 practically excludes forever the possibility of Black's castling short, which takes the analysis of such positions outside the scope of this book.

We should also note that the 'race between attacks' by 6...a6 7.g5 ♘fd7 8.♗e3 b5 is not effective at this moment – White can quickly organise an attack on the black monarch, which is still in the centre of the board. But this too is the topic for another work.

7. g4-g5 ♘f6-d7
8. ♗c1-e3 ♗f8-e7
9. h2-h4 0-0



Thus, Black has made a series of developing moves and castled kingside, But these achievements are rather less than in the previous chapter. White has managed to drive away the enemy knight from f6 without losing any time moving his f-pawn, and now there is no threat of a counterattack in the centre. After 10.♕d2!? White has practically gained an extra tempo compared with the positions examined in the previous chapter, and the time he has saved by not having moved his f-pawn can be utilised more effectively. For example: **10.♕d2 a6 11.0-0-0 ♘xd4 12.♕xd4!? b5 13.h5 ♗xg5 14.h6 ♗f6** Or 14...♗xe3+ 15.♕xe3 g6 16.♖xd6 ♕e7 17.♕d2 ♖b8 18.f4 f6 19.♕d4 ♖f7 20.♗h3 with the better position for White, Rowson-Kitte, Duisburg jr 1992. **15.♕xd6 g6 16.f4 ♕a5** After 16...♗xc3 17.bxc3 ♕a5 18.♔b2 Black has nothing. **17.e5 b4 18.♗g2!** This is stronger than 18.♘e4, which was seen in Holmes-G. Buckley, Swansea ch-GBR 1987. **18...♖b8** Or 18...bxc3 19.♗xa8 ♕xa2 20.bxc3 ♗d8 21.♗c6 and Black has no compensation for the exchange. **19.♘e4 ♗d8 20.♔b1** White's advantage is not in doubt (analysis).

It seems to me that the assessment of the positions examined in Games 2 and 10, as being dangerous for Black, has had a considerable influence on Black's reluctance to castle early in the Keres Attack. Going into a dangerous position, a tempo down, is just too much!

In this game, we see another promising continuation for White.

10. ♕d1-h5!?

The queen approaches closer to the enemy king, hoping to provoke the move ...g7-g6, after which it will be impossible to resist the white attack when the h-file is opened by h4-h5.

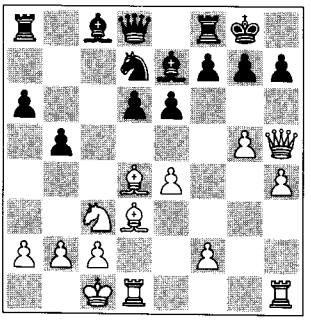
10. ... a7-a6

11. 0-0-0 ♘c6xd4

Once again, in order to advance ...b7-b5, Black has to exchange on d4, bringing the white bishop to a threatening position.

12. ♗e3xd4 b7-b5

13. ♗f1-d3



13. ... ♘d7-e5

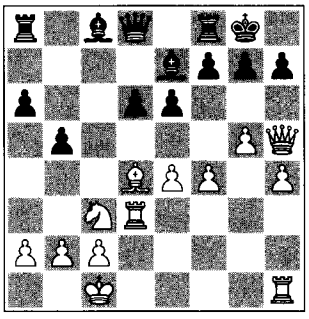
Black would like first to drive away the c3 knight by ...b5-b4, and then shut out the white bishop by means of ...e6-e5. If he does these two things the other way round, then the white knight will get the d5-square, after which the black position will hardly bear looking at. Unfortunately for Black, though, after 13...b4? there follows **14.♗xg7!** Remember Game 3! **14...♔xg7** 14...bxc3 15.e5! cxb2+ 16.♔b1 f5 17.gxf6 also loses. **15.♕h6+ ♔g8 16.e5 f5 17.gxf6 ♖f7** Or 17...♘xf6 18.♖hg1+ 1-0 D. Mastrovasilis-Savic, Litohoro jr 1999. **18.♖hg1+ ♔h8 19.♖g7+–** with a rout.

14. f2-f4!

Of course not 14.♗xe5? dxe5 15.♗xb5 ♕b6 with advantage to Black.

14. ... ♘e5xd3+

15. ♖d1xd3!



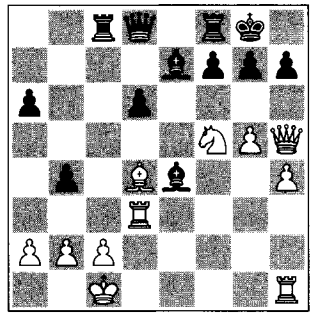
15. ... ♗c8-b7?

This apparently natural move turns out to be the decisive mistake. It appears that Black already threatens to win the e4 pawn after ...b5-b4, and on 16.a3 there follows 16...♖c8 with the idea of 17...♖xc3 and 18...♗xe4, taking over the initiative. But Black does not have enough time to carry out these ideas, and he should have continued **15...b4!** and now:

A) Here playing along the lines of Game 3 with **16.f5 bxc3 17.♗xg7** does not bring the desired result. Black has only one, but nevertheless sufficient defence: **17...♔xg7!** 17...exf5 loses to 18.♗xc3 ♖e8 19.♖g1! with the unstoppable threat of g5-g6. In the game Manik-Kraai, Pardubice 1997 White won after 19...♕c7 20.g6 ♗g5+ 21.♖xg5 fxg6 22.♖xg6+ hxg6 23.♕h8+. **18.♕h6+ ♔h8 19.g6 fxg6 20.fxg6 ♗g5+!** Only so! If Black had already flicked in the moves ...cxb2+ and ♔b1, then he would now have to resign. 20...♖f7 loses to 21.gxf7 ♗f8 22.♕h5 and Black has no defence to the doubling of rooks on the g-file, so in the game Malakhov-Gabrielian, Moscow ch-city 2002, he resigned. **21.hxg5 ♖a7 22.♖xc3 ♖g7** and Black's chances are not worse, Chadaev-Gabrielian, Smolensk tt-2 2005;

B) **16.♘e2!** and now:

B1) Again Black has no time for **16...♗b7?** because after **17.♘g3** the white knight takes an active part in the attack, e.g.: **17...♖c8 18.f5! exf5** On 18...♕c7 19.♖h2 e5, a strong reply is 20.f6! exd4 (20...gxf6 loses immediately because of 21.♕h6! ♖fe8 22.♘h5) 21.♘f5! ♗d8 22.♖xd4 ♖e8 (the rook cannot remain on f8 – after 22...♕a5 23.fxg7 ♖e8 24.♘h6+ is decisive) 23.♘h6+! ♔f8 24.fxg7+ ♔xg7 25.♖f2 ♖f8 26.♘f5+ ♔h8 27.♕h6 ♖g8 28.♘xd6 and Black's defences are wrecked: 28...♖g7 29.♖c4 ♕b6 (or 29...♕d7 30.♘xc8 ♗xc8 31.♖d2) 30.♘xf7+ ♖xf7 31.♕xb6 ♗xb6 32.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 33.♖xf7 with a decisive advantage in the endgame (analysis). **19.♘xf5! ♗xe4**



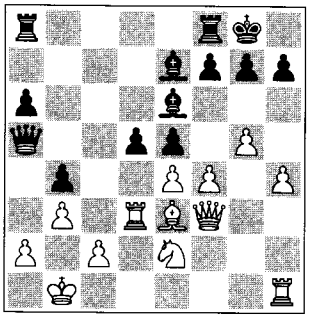
analysis diagram

20.♕h6!! ♗**f6** The only defence. **21.♗xf6 ♕xf6 22.gxf6 gxh6 23.♘e7+!** Also good is 23.♘xh6+ ♔h8 24.♖g1 ♗g6 (24...♗xd3?? 25.♖g8+ ♖xg8 26.♘xf7#) 25.♖g2. **23...♔h8 24.♘xc8 ♖xc8 25.♖hh3 ♗xd3 26.♖xd3** with a large advantage in the ending, since the enemy king will be out of play for a long time (analysis);

B2) **16...♕a5! 17.♔b1 e5 18.♗e3 ♗e6 19.b3** Black must find some activity, else after 20.f5 he will be in trouble. **19...d5** After the exchange on f4 19...exf4 20.♘xf4 White will dominate the entire board. In the game Lu-

ther-Brod, Oberwart 2005, Black played 19...♖fc8, hoping for 20.f5? ♖xc2! 21.♔xc2 ♕xa2+ 22.♔d1 ♗xb3+ with advantage to Black, but after 20.♖d2! it turned out that 20...d5 is met by 21.f5 g6 22.♕g4 with a clear advantage for White, whilst the exchange sacrifice seen in the game, 20...♖c3, does not promise Black adequate compensation after 21.♘xc3 bxc3 22.♖f2 exf4 23.♖xf4 ♖c8 24.♖hf1.

Now 20.f5? is bad because of 20...dxe4, therefore **20.♕f3!**, now really threatening 21.f5.



analysis diagram

We consider the possible variations:

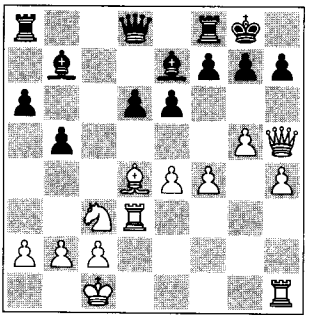
B21) **20...f5** 21.gxf6 ♗xf6 22.f5 dxe4 23.♕xe4 ♗f7 24.♗g5 ♖ad8 25.♗xf6! (stronger than 25.♖g1 ♗xg5, as seen in Z. Almasi-Cvitan, Budapest 1991) 25...gxf6 26.♖g1+ ♔h8 27.♖xd8 ♕xd8 (27...♖xd8? 28.♕c6+–) 28.♕xb4 with advantage to White (analysis);

B22) **20...d4** 21.♗f2 f5 22.gxf6 ♗xf6 23.fxe5 ♗xe5 24.♕g2 and White keeps an extra pawn;

B23) **20...dxe4** 21.♕xe4 exf4 22.♘xf4 ♕f5 23.♕b7 with advantage to White;

B24) **20...♖ac8 21.f5 ♕c7** 21...♖xc2! was essential, although after 22.♔xc2 ♕xa2+ 23.♔d1 dxe4 24.♕xe4 ♗xb3+ 25.♖xb3 ♕xb3+ 26.♔e1 ♗d6 27.♔f2 White's chances are better (analysis). **22.♖c1 dxe4 23.♕xe4 ♗d7 24.f6 gxf6 25.gxf6 ♗xf6 26.♘g3 ♔h8 27.♘h5 ♗e7 28.♗b6** and White won, Movsesian-Orsag, Czech tt 1995/96.

So, even with best defence, it is difficult for Black to solve his problems. Now we return to the game.



16. ♖h1-g1!!

A fantastic idea, found independently of one another by Movsesian's trainer, David Dzhanoev, and the future grandmaster Alexander Volzhin.

16. ... b5-b4

17. ♘c3-d5!

The ideas behind this sacrifice are the same as those seen in Games 1 and 2. The bishop on b7 can no longer come to the aid of his king from the e4-square, and the disappearance of the e6 pawn deprives Black of the chance to shut out the enemy bishop by mean of ...e6-e5.

17. ... e6xd5

Only one question remains – how to create a mating attack?

18. ♖d3-g3!

That is how! White prepares 19.♕h6!. The immediate sacrifice 18.♕h6 does not work after 18...gxh6 19.gxh6+ ♗g5.

18. ... ♕d8-c7

After 18...♖e8 it turns out that the move 18.♖dg3 is multi-functional, and

that another mating set-up was also prepared – 19.g6! fxg6 20.♖xg6! hxg6 21.♕xg6+– ♗f6 22.♗xf6 ♕d7 23.♗xg7 ♕f7 24.♕h6 1-0 Bruned-Gosio, Porto San Giorgio 2002.

19. ♕h5-h6! ♕c7xc2+

The only defence.

20. ♔c1xc2 ♖f8-c8+
21. ♔c2-d2 g7xh6
22. g5xh6+ ♗e7-g5
23. ♖g3xg5+ ♔g8-f8
24. e4xd5

The smoke clears. White has an extra pawn, but significantly more important is the total domination by his pieces.

24. ... ♔f8-e7
25. ♖g5-f5!

White places his rooks on the best squares – f5 and g7.

25. ... ♖c8-c4
26. ♔d2-d3 ♖a8-c8
27. ♖g1-g7

Black resigned.

Brilliant analytical work by Dzhanoev, which brought White victory in this game. The formula for success is the ability to combine typical attacking devices (♘d5, ♗xg7, g5-g6 etc.) + great imagination + accurate calculation.

After analysing this game, one can understand why 'The Last of the Mohicans', who still allow the Keres Attack, choose 6...h6.

Now we will proceed to look at positions arising from the Velimirovic Attack. To this day, despite the help of computers, the assessments of many of the very sharp positions arising from this variation are not clear. It is no accident that Garry Kasparov, in his book *Revolution in the 70s*, included a discussion of this very sharp system in the chapter entitled 'The Sicilian Forest'.

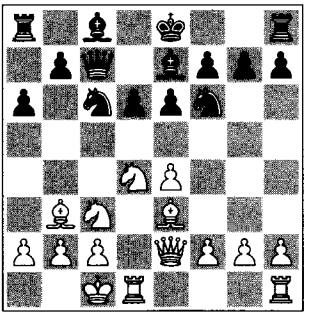
Game 13
Alexey Fedorov
Mihail Kobalia
Maikop tt 1998 (1)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 ♘b8-c6
6. ♗f1-c4 e7-e6

Those who do not wish to tempt fate in the resulting sharp positions, can be recommended to adopt the more pragmatic 6...♕b6!?.

7. ♗c1-e3 a7-a6
8. ♕d1-e2 ♕d8-c7
9. 0-0-0 ♗f8-e7
10. ♗c4-b3

In my own practice, I have played this position many times, with both colours. As Black I prefer to keep the king in the centre and start immediate counterplay on the queenside, as follows:



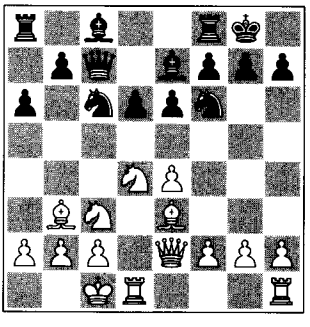
10...♘a5!? and after the logical **11.g4 b5 12.g5 ♘xb3+ 13.axb3 ♘d7**, White has a choice:

A) play Velimirovic's piece sacrifice **14.♘f5 exf5 15.♘d5 ♕d8 16.exf5** with

an attack against the enemy king in the centre. Unfortunately, this position has been shorn of its romance. Numerous games and analyses have now established an exact verdict – a draw with correct play on both sides;

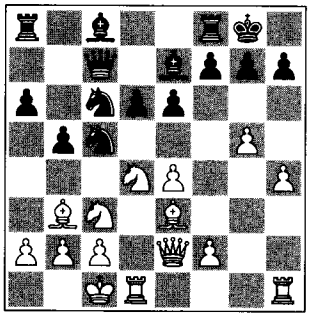
B) from the standpoint of searching for new ideas, the pawn sacrifice after **14.h4 b4 15.♘a4 ♘c5 16.h5** is more interesting. In my opinion, in the resulting sharp position, both sides have their chances.

10. ... 0-0



11. ♖h1-g1!?

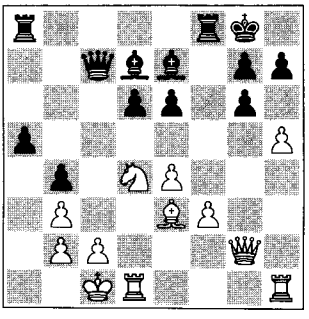
Playing White, I used to play **11.g4!?**, counting on **11...♘d7!?** which was first played by Larsen against Fischer in the Palma de Mallorca Interzonal in 1970. At that point, Fischer led with the remarkable score of 6,5 out of 8, so one has to admire Larsen's self-confidence, since the choice of such a sharp variation attests to his desire to play for a win with the black pieces. One is involuntarily reminded of Tartakower's aphorism: 'In chess, there is only one mistake – over-rating the opponent. Everything else is either bad luck or weakness'. Larsen played very quickly, using only two minutes for the first 11 moves, and Fischer realised that he was facing home preparation. The knight heads for c5, without waiting for g4-g5. Fischer played **12.h4?!**, hoping to carry out the standard pawn storm on the kingside. **12...♘c5 13.g5 b5**



analysis diagram

14.f3? Compare this position with that in the diagram after White's 13th move in Game 10. The pawn structure is the same, but White has spent time transferring his bishop to b3, where it is an object of attack and helps Black develop his initiative on the queenside. I agree with Mednis, who considers the text the decisive mistake. White has not played very energetically, and losing more time on the defence of the pawn is just not on. With h2-h4 already played, he must follow up with 14.h5, not fearing the loss of a pawn after 14...b4 15.♘a4 ♘xe4?! after which there follows 16.♕c4! ♘c5 (16...♗d7 17.♘xe6!) 17.♘xc6 ♕xc6 18.♘xc5 dxc5 19.g6 with an attack (Kasparov). Stronger is 15...♘xd4!? 16.♖xd4 ♗d7 with sharp play. **14...♗d7!** The right square, taking control of a4. **15.♕g2** Freeing e2 for the knight. **15...b4 16.♘ce2 ♘xb3+ 17.axb3 a5** Black is clearly well ahead of White with his attack. **18.g6!?** In this situation, this well-known device does not bring success. Black has the initiative, and Larsen shows very clearly how he feels in his fingertips the way to play such unbal-

anced positions, perfectly combining attack and defence. **18...fxg6 19.h5 ♘xd4 20.♘xd4**

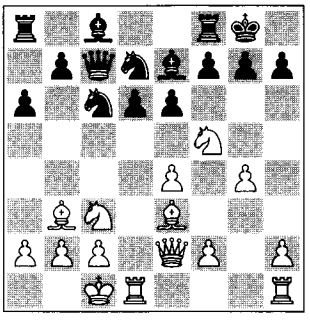


analysis diagram

20...g5!!, not allowing the opening of lines on the kingside, and confirmation of the fact that open lines are more important than pawns here. **21.♗xg5 ♗xg5+ 22.♕xg5 h6! 23.♕g4** 23.♕e7? ♖f7 24.♘xe6 fails to 24...♕c8; after 23.♕g3 a strong reply is 23...e5. **23...♖f7** The last prophylaxis before the storm. Now 23...e5? was bad because of 24.♘e6. **24.♖hg1** 24.♘xe6 loses to 24...♕c8 25.♖xd6 ♖e7 26.♖xd7 ♕xd7 27.♘c5 ♕xg4 28.fxg4 ♖c8. **24...a4!** Let's go! **25.bxa4** Now after 25.♘xe6? the game is decided by 25...♕c8 26.♖xd6 axb3!–+. **25...e5! 26.♘e6** Fischer sacrifices a piece, since after 26.♘f5 ♗xf5 27.exf5 ♖xa4 he cannot defend against the attack on his king. **26...♕c4 27.b3!?** After 27.♖xd6 the reply 27...b3! 28.c3 ♖xa4 29.♔d2 ♖a6 is decisive. **27...♕xe6 28.♕xe6 ♗xe6 29.♖xd6 ♖e8 30.♖b6 ♖xf3 31.♖xb4 ♖c8** Black's position is winning, since White's connected passed pawns do not compensate for the piece deficit, and Larsen conducts the rest with good technique: **32.♔b2 ♖f2 33.♖c1 ♗f7 34.a5 ♖a8–+ 35.♖b5 ♗xh5 36.♖xe5 ♗e2 37.♖c5 h5 38.e5 ♗f3 39.♔c3 h4 40.♔d3 ♖e2 41.♖f1 ♖d8+ 42.♔c3 ♗e4 43.♔b4 ♖b8+ 44.♔a3 h3 45.e6 ♗xc2 46.b4 ♖e3+ 47.♔b2 ♗d3 48.♖a1 ♗a6 49.♖c6 ♖xb4+ 50.♔c2 ♗b7 51.♖c3 ♖e2+ 52.♔d1 ♖g2** and White resigned.

This game shows that with the bishop on b3, White usually cannot carry out a pawn storm on the kingside, because of the loss of time with his bishop. Fischer did not play the Velimirovic Attack again. In the Candidates' semifinal match against Larsen in 1971, Fischer twice castled short and won both games.

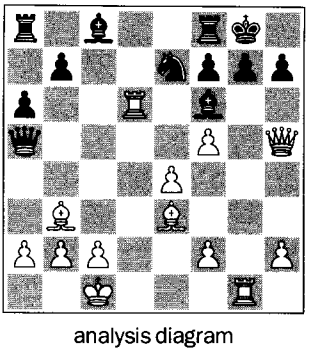
Therefore, in response to **11...♘d7** I used to play **12.♘f5!**.



analysis diagram

This is a fundamental idea of Velimirovic's in this system (see also the note to Black's 10th move)! With the bishop on b3, the knight on c3 and the black queen on c7, it is especially good. Accepting the sacrifice opens the bishop's diagonal, allows the knight into d5 with tempo, and opens the g-file. All that for just a piece! This line, with some help from my opponent, of course, enabled me to win a striking miniature against Leonid Yudasin. **12...exf5** Taking the knight is dangerous, but after 12...♘c5 the path to equality is not strewn with roses either,

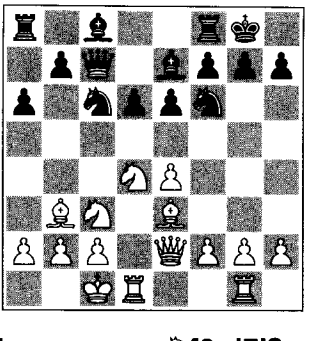
e.g. 13.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 (13...♕xe7!?) 14.♕d2 ♖d8 15.♗f4 ♘g6 16.♗xd6 ♕c6 17.f4! b5 18.e5 b4 19.♘e2 a5 20.♘d4 with a large advantage to White, Anand-Salov, Dos Hermanas 1997. **13.♘d5 ♕d8 14.gxf5 ♘f6 15.♖hg1!?** A small novelty. At this moment, it seemed to me that including the moves 15.♗b6 ♕d7 favoured Black. **15...♘xd5 16.♗xd5 ♗f6 17.♕h5** White's play is very simple – ♖g3, ♖dg1, ♖h3 and mate. **17...♘e7** Later, attempts were made to drive the bishop from its dominating position by 17...♘b4, but also without great success: 18.♗b3 ♕a5? (18...♕e7!?) 19.♗d4! ♗xd4 20.♖xd4 (the point g7 is indefensible) 20...♘xa2+ (or 20...♘c6 21.♕h6 ♕e5 22.f6) 21.♔b1 ♕e5 22.♖d3! (threat 23.♖h3) 22...♕xe4 23.♖xg7+! and Black resigned in Parligras-Vioreanu, Eforie Nord 2000, in view of the variation 23...♔xg7 24.♕g5+ ♔h8 25.♕f6+ ♔g8 26.♖g3+. **18.♗b3 ♕a5** It was possible to return the piece with 18...♗xf5 19.exf5 ♕a5, but the endgame arising after 20.♗d4!? ♗xd4 21.♖xd4 ♕xf5 22.♕xf5 ♘xf5 23.♖d5! is difficult for Black – all of White's pieces are active, and his bishop is stronger than the knight, Kramer-Pitters, Denmark corr. 1993. **19.♖xd6**



analysis diagram

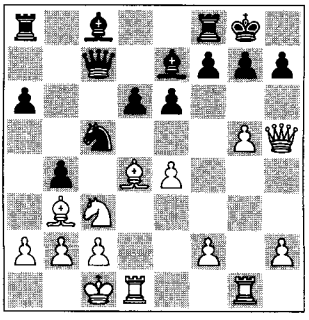
19...♕e5?? A blackout. The only defence against the capture on f6 was 19...♗e6!. Then there could follow 20.♕g4 ♗xb3 (20...♕c7?! 21.♗f4) 21.♖xf6 g6 22.fxg6 hxg6 23.axb3! (not 23.cxb3 ♕xa2 24.♗d4 ♖ac8+ 25.♗c3 and Black has a draw in any event: 25...♖xc3+ 26.bxc3 ♕a1+) 23...♕a1+ 24.♔d2 ♖ad8+ (24...♕xb2 25.♖d6 ♖ac8 26.♖c1) 25.♔e2 ♕xb2 26.♕h4 ♕xc2+ 27.♔f3 and the white king, wandering about the board, feels quite comfortable, whilst the black king has to resolve a difficult problem to fight off the attack along the h-file with ♖g1-g3-h3. **20.♕xf7+** 1-0 Yakovich-Yudasin, Leipzig 1986.

Unfortunately, I could not find any promising resources after **11...♘xd4! 12.♖xd4** Forced – 12.♗xd4? e5. **12...b5** Now after 12...e5 there follows 13.♖c4!. **13.g5 ♘d7**, and I like a rook on d4 much less than a bishop. The attempt to include it in the kingside attack by playing e4-e5 at the right moment was always solidly rebuffed. Practice confirmed the reliability of Black's position and therefore, under the influence of Andrey Sokolov and his trainer, Vladimir Yurkov, the continuation 11.♖hg1!? became the main line.



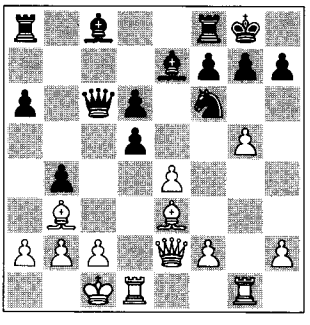
11. ... ♘f6-d7!?

Following Larsen. The natural **11...b5** seems a good alternative: **12.g4 b4** In this changed situation, Black should not take on d4, because of 12...♘xd4? 13.♗xd4! and the white bishop contributes actively to the attack, e.g. 13...♘d7 14.g5 ♘c5 15.♕h5 b4



analysis diagram

16.♕h6! (an idea already familiar to us from Game 12. The preliminary 16.♗f6!? also deserves consideration) 16...e5 (the only move) 17.♘d5! (both sides have several pieces under attack – as we will see below, this is a typical situation for the Velimirovic Attack. The deadly 18.♘f6+ is threatened, so Black must play 17...gxh6 18.♘xc7 ♖a7 19.gxh6+ ♔h8 20.♗xc5 dxc5 21.♘d5 and White extra pawn and more active pieces give him the advantage. **13.♘xc6 ♕xc6 14.♘d5! exd5 15.g5** and now:



analysis diagram

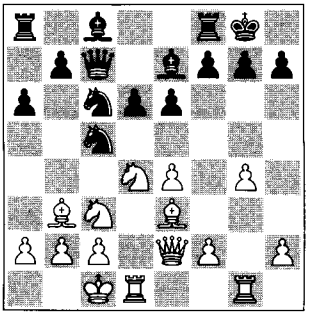
A) The attempt to organise counterplay by **15...dxe4 16.gxf6 ♗xf6 17.♗d5 ♕a4** (hoping for 18.♗xa8 ♗e6 19.♗xe4 ♗xb2+ 20.♔xb2 ♕a3+) is refuted by the brilliant **18.♕h5! ♗e6 19.♖xg7+!!**. Now it is the rook which is sacrificed on g7. **19...♗xg7** 19...♔xg7? 20.♕h6++–. **20.♖g1 ♖fc8** Freeing room for the king to run. 20...♖ac8? loses to 21.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 22.♕g5+ ♔h8 23.♗d4+ f6 24.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 25.♕xf6+ ♔g8 26.♗xe6#. **21.♖xg7+ ♔xg7** 21...♔f8 22.♖xf7+. **22.♕h6+ ♔g8 23.♗xe4** White has only a bishop for two rooks, but nothing can help the black king: **23...b3** Ostapenko analyses the following possibilities: 23...♖xc2+ 24.♗xc2 ♖c8 25.♕xh7+ ♔f8 26.♕h8+ ♔e7 27.♗g5+ ♔d7 28.♕xc8+ ♔xc8 29.♗xa4+–; 23...♕xc2+ 24.♗xc2 ♗f5 25.♗d4 ♖xc2+ 26.♔d1 f6 27.♕xf6+–; 23...♖c4 24.♗xh7+ ♔h8 25.♗g5 ♖f4 26.♗f5++–; 23...♖c5! (the best defence) 24.♗xh7+ ♔h8 25.♗f5+ ♔g8 26.♗d4 ♖e5 27.♗xe5 dxe5 28.♕h7+ ♔f8 29.♗xe6 fxe6 30.♕h8+ ♔f7 31.♕xa8 ♕xa2 32.♕b7+ ♔f6 33.♕xb4±. **24.♗xh7+ ♔h8 25.♗f5+ ♔g8 26.♕h7+ ♔f8 27.♗h6+ ♔e8 28.♕g8+ ♔e7 29.♗g5+ ♔d7 30.♕xf7+ ♔c6** Running around the board, the king tries his luck on the queenside, but does not find shelter there either. **31.♗xe6+– ♔b6** 31...♕xa2 32.♗d5+ ♔c5 33.♗e3+ ♔b4 34.♕b7+ ♔a5 35.♗d2+; 31...♖c7 32.♗d5+ ♔b6 33.♗e3+ ♖c5 34.♕b7+ ♔a5 35.♗d2++–. **32.♗e3+ ♔a5** 32...♖c5 33.♗xb3 ♕e8 34.♕f4+–. **33.♗xc8 ♖xc8 34.♕f5+ ♖c5** 34...♕b5 35.♕xc8 bxa2 36.♕c7+ ♔a4 37.b3+ ♔a3 38.♕xd6+ ♕b4 39.♕xb4+ ♔xb4 40.♔b2+–. **35.♗xc5 ♕b5** 35...bxa2 36.b4+ ♔b5 37.♕d7++–. 36.♗b4+

♔xb4 37.a3+ ♔c4 38.♕xb5+ axb5 39.cxb3+ ♔d3 40.♔d1 1-0 A magnificent game, Ostapenko-Yartsev, corr. USSR 1969;

B) **15...♘xe4! 16.♗xd5 ♕a4** Again, taking the rook gives Black the chance to create an attack sufficient for a draw: 17.♗xa8 ♘c3! 18.bxc3 ♗e6! e.g.: 19.♗d4 bxc3 20.♗xc3 ♖xa8 21.g6 hxg6 22.♖xg6 ♕f4+ 23.♖d2 fxg6 24.♕xe6+ ♕f7 ½-½ Wagner-Clemens, Bad Pyrmont 1976. White can fight for a small advantage by continuing **17.♗xe4!? ♗e6 18.♗d4 g6!** Stean-Dueball, Nice ol 1974 or **17.♗d4!? ♗f5 18.♗xe4 ♗xe4 19.♕xe4 ♖fe8** Rublevsky-Zakharstov, Smolensk 1991, although in both cases it seems to me that Black's resources should suffice to hold the balance.

11...♘d7 is a significantly more ambitious move than 11...b5. Following Larsen's example, Black fights to take over the initiative.

12. g2-g4 ♘d7-c5



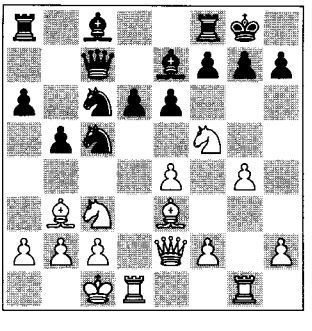
13. ♘d4-f5!

A manoeuvre, typical for the Velimirovic Attack. As we have already remarked during our analysis of the game Fischer-Larsen, the kingside pawn storm is too slow, when combined with the time spent on transferring the bishop to b3.

13. ... b7-b5!

It is too late for caution. The exchange 13...♘xb3+ 14.axb3 b5 gives White the chance to go into more positional channels by organising pressure against the pawn on d6: 15.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 16.♕d3!. In the game Ulibin-Yermolinsky, Simferopol 1988, White obtained a clear advantage after 16...b4 17.♘a4 d5 18.♗c5 (18.♘b6!?) 18...dxe4 19.♕g3! e5 20.♗d6 ♕a7 21.♕xe5.

Now it is even more dangerous to accept the piece than in the line 11.g4 ♘d7 12.♘f5, since White has brought his rook into an attacking position, whilst the fact that the black knight is already on c5 means that it cannot exchange off its opposite number when the latter arrives on d5. Black's various attempts to refute these considerations have not brought him success. 13...exf5? 14.gxf5 ♘e5 (or 14...♗d7 15.♘d5 ♕d8 16.♕h5 ♔h8 17.♖xg7! ♔xg7 18.f6+ S. Sokolov-K. Grigorian, USSR 1978, and Black resigned in view of 18...♗xf6 19.♕h6+ ♔h8 20.♘xf6 ♘xb3+ 21.axb3 ♗f5 22.exf5 ♕xf6 23.♕xf6+ ♔g8 24.♖g1#) 15.♘d5 ♕d8 (Lanc-Bönsch, Rostock 1984) and now the simplest way to decide things is 16.♗xc5 dxc5 17.f4 ♗f6 (or 17...♘d7 18.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 19.♕g2 ♕f6 20.♖d6) 18.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 19.fxe5 ♕xe5 20.♕g4 followed by 21.♖d5.



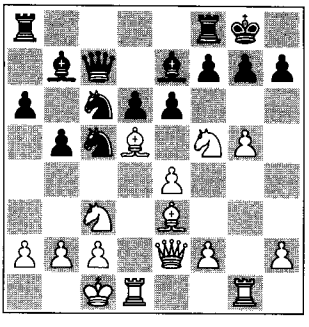
14. ♗b3-d5!

As if failing to notice the pawn on e6, White places his bishop in the centre. He threatens 15.♗xc6, and taking the bishop is extremely dangerous because of 14...exd5 15.♘xd5 ♕b7 16.e5! ♘e6 17.exd6 ♗d8 18.f4 and, despite the extra piece, Black is dead, A. Kogan-Roser, Port Barcares 2005.

14. ... ♗c8-b7

Black calmly completes his development, and threatens after ...b5-b4 to win one of the white minor pieces.

15. g4-g5!



Opening the queen's path to h5.

15. ... ♖f8-c8!

The only move.

A) In the game A. Sokolov-Salov, Nikolaev 1983, which gave birth to a new period of popularity for the Velimirovic Attack, Black decided that, since the white pawn has gone from g4, and taking the knight no longer results in the opening of the g-file, he could play **15...exf5?**. There followed a blazing attack: **16.g6! hxg6 17.♖xg6 ♘e5 18.♖xg7+!! ♔xg7 19.♖g1+** Black has an extra rook and knight, but White has a clear superiority in forces attacking the black king. **19...♘g6 20.exf5 ♖h8 21.♗d4+ ♗f6 22.fxg6 fxg6 23.♕g4! ♖h6 24.♗xf6+ ♔h7** After 24...♔xf6 the game is decided by 25.♕d4+ ♔e7 26.♕g7+ ♔d8 27.♕xh6. **25.♖e1! ♗xd5 26.♘xd5 ♕c8 27.♖e7+ ♔g8 28.♖g7+ ♔f8 29.♖g8+! ♔xg8 30.♘e7+** and Black resigned.

B) The capture of the bishop also loses: **15...exd5?** 16.♘xd5 ♕d8 17.♗xc5;

C) But why not **15...b4** ? It turns out that, after this natural move, Black is again lost: **16.♕h5!** Now the various piece captures all lose:

C1) **16...exd5** 17.♘xd5 ♕d8 18.♖g3+−;

C2) **16...exf5** 17.g6! hxg6 18.♕xg6 ♗f6 19.♕xf6+−;

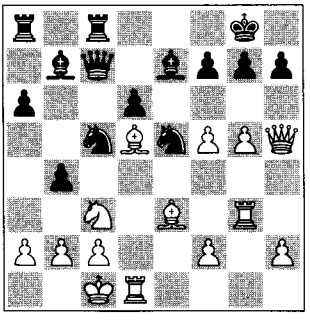
C3) **16...bxc3 17.♖g3 ♖fb8** 17...g6 18.♕h6 gxf5 19.♖h3+−; 17...exf5 18.♖h3 h6 19.gxh6 g6 20.♕xg6++−; 17...exd5 18.♖h3 h6 19.♘xh6++−; 17...cxb2+ 18.♔b1 doesn't change anything. **18.♖h3 ♔f8 19.♕xh7 ♔e8 20.♗xc5 exd5 21.♘xg7+ ♔d8** And now the simplest way was 22.♕g8+ (22.♖xc3?! Michalek-Pravec, Czech Republic corr. 1999) 22...♔d7 23.♕xf7! ♖f8 (the threat was 24.♕e6+ ♔d8 25.♖h8+) 24.♕e6+ ♔d8 25.♖xd5 with a decisive attack;

C4) There is no time for **16...♖fc8** because of 17.♗xc5! dxc5 18.g6!! hxg6 19.♖xg6 exf5 20.♗xf7+ ♔f8 21.♕h8+ ♔xf7 22.♕xg7+ ♔e8 23.♕g8+ ♗f8 24.♖e6+ ♘e7 25.♕g6#;

C5) White has an irresistible attack after **16...g6** 17.♕h6 exf5 18.exf5 gxf5 19.g6;

C6) White has a more difficult task after **16...♘e5!? 17.♖g3 exf5!** He cannot take the other knight because of 17...bxc3? 18.♖h3 h6 19.♘xh6+!. **18.exf5!** Now 18.♖h3? does not work because of 18...h6 19.gxh6 g6. **18...♖fc8** Again, Black cannot take the knight on c3 because of 18...bxc3? 19.g6! cxb2+ 20.♔b1 hxg6 (or 20...h6

21.gxf7+ ♖xf7 22.♖xg7+ and Black resigned, Zambrana-Pina Vega, Havana 2002) 21.fxg6 ♘xg6 22.♕xg6 ♘e6 23.♗xe6 ♗f6 24.♕xf6 fxe6 25.♕xe6+ ♕f7 26.♖xg7+ (Sion Castro-Rivera Kuzawka, Cordoba 1991) and Black resigned in view of the variation 26...♔xg7 27.♖g1+ ♔h8 28.♕h6+ ♕h7 29.♗d4+ ♖f6 30.♗xf6#.

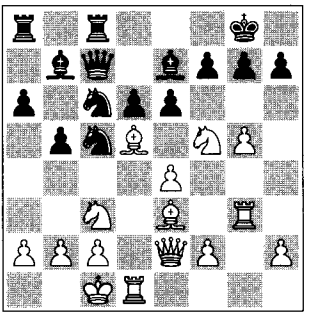


analysis diagram

19.g6!? It seems to me that this is stronger than the frequently-played 19.♖h3 ♔f8 with unclear play. **19...hxg6** The immediate 19...♗f6 does not change the general picture: 20.♕xh7+ ♔f8 21.gxf7 bxc3 (or 21...♘cd3+ 22.♖xd3 ♘xd3+ 23.♔b1 bxc3 24.♖xg7! ♗xg7 25.♕g8+ ♔e7 26.♗g5+! ♔d7 27.f8♘+ ♖xf8 28.♕e6#) 22.♖xg7! ♗xg7 23.f6! ♗xf6 24.♗h6+ ♔e7 25.f8♕#. **20.fxg6 ♗f6 21.♕h7+ ♔f8 22.gxf7 ♘xf7** After 22...bxc3 again decisive is 23.♖xg7 ♗xg7 24.♕g8+ ♔e7 25.♕xg7. **23.♗d4!** Black cannot defend g7. **23...♕e7 24.♖xg7! ♗xg7 25.♕xg7+ ♔e8 26.♗f6 ♕f8 27.♖e1+ ♔d7 28.♕g4+ ♔c7 29.♖e7+ ♔b8 30.♖xf7** with a large advantage to White (analysis).

16. ♖g1-g3

Now 16.♕h5? is bad because of 16...g6 17.♘h6+ ♔g7 with advantage to Black, Benderac-Mijovic, Cetinje 2009.



16. ... b5-b4!?

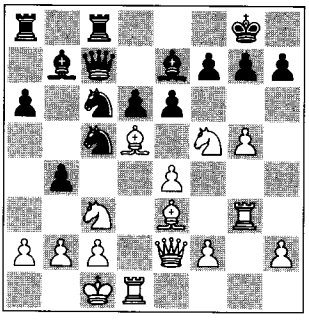
Kasparov, in *Revolution in the 70s*, considers this move strongest, and without giving any variations writes 'as practice has shown, Black holds'. Maybe some games were subsequently played in which Black beat off White's attack after 16...b4, but there are none in my database.

Again, after **16...exf5? 17.g6!** White's attack is irresistible.

In recent times, Black has preferred the prophylactic **16...♗f8!?** in the diagram position, and in most cases, the game has ended in a perpetual check known ever since the game Rogers-Lanka, Linz 1997: **17.♕h5** 17.♖h3? is bad because of 17...g6 18.♘h6+ ♗xh6 19.♖xh6 b4 with advantage to Black, Benderac-Popovic, Yugoslavia tt-2 2000. **17...g6 18.♘h6+ ♔h8** But not 18...♔g7? because of 19.♕f3. **19.♕h4 b4 20.♖h3 bxc3 21.♘g4 f5** 21...h5? loses to 22.♘f6 ♗g7 23.♕g4! (threatening 24.♖xh5+) 23...♗xf6 24.♖xh5+! (even so) 24...♔g8 25.gxf6 ♘e5 (or 25...cxb2+ 26.♔b1 ♘a4 27.♕h3; 25...♘d3+ 26.♔b1!+–) 26.♖h8+! ♔xh8 27.♕h3+ ♔g8 28.♕h6, mating. **22.♘f6 h6! 23.♕xh6+! ♗xh6 24.♖xh6+ ♔g7 25.♖h7+ ♔f8 26.♖h8+** ½-½ Rogers-Lanka, Linz 1997.

I would like to draw the reader's attention to the continuation **17.♘h6+!?** instead of 17.♕h5: **17...♔h8** Black cannot

open the g-file: 17...gxh6? 18.gxh6+ ♔h8 19.♗xc6 ♗xc6 20.♕g4 winning. **18.♗xc6** In Palciauskas-Andriulaitis, USA-LIT corr. 1999, White played 18.♘g4!? and also won after 18...b4 19.♘f6! h6! 20.gxh6 g6 21.♗xc6 bxc3 22.♗xb7 cxb2+ 23.♔b1 ♕xb7 24.♗d4 e5 ♗xc5 ♖xc5 26.♘d5±. **18...♗xc6 19.♕f3! ♗e8** Again 19...gxh6? is bad because of 20.gxh6 f5 21.♖dg1 ♗e7 22.♕xf5! (also good is 22.♖g7 ♘xe4 23.♕h5) 22...♖f8 (22...exf5? 23.♗d4+) 23.♕g4 ♗f6 24.e5! ♗xe5 (24...dxe5 25.♗xc5 ♖fe8 26.♘e4+–) 25.♗d4! ♗xd4 26.♕xd4+ e5 27.♕g4 and Black has no defence to 28.♕g7+, e.g. 27...♖fe8 28.♕f5! ♖f8 29.♖g8+! ♖xg8 30.♕f6+ ♖g7 31.♖xg7. **20.♗d4 b4 21.♖h3! e5** Forced. Black has no time for 21...bxc3? because of 22.g6! winning, e.g. 22...♘d3+ (22...♘b3+ 23.♔b1) 23.♔b1 ♘e5 24.♗xe5 dxe5 25.♘xf7+ ♗xf7 26.♖xh7+ ♔g8 27.♖h8+ ♔xh8 28.♕h5+ ♔g8 29.♕h7#. **22.♘d5 ♕c6 23.♗xc5 ♕xc5 24.♖d2 ♖a7 25.♘g4!** Black has no good defence against 26.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 27.♘gf6+ gxf6 28.♕h5+ ♔g7 29.♕h6+ ♔g8 30.♘xf6#. **25...f6 26.♘gxf6! gxf6 27.♕xf6+ ♔g8 28.♕e6+ ♔h8 29.♕f5! ♗g6** 29...♗a4 30.♘f6. **30.♕xg6+–** Polakovic-Elburg, ICCF corr. 2000.



17. ♘f5xg7!

This standard sacrifice for this variation and in this pawn structure generally (see Games 3 and 12) came as an unpleasant surprise for Kobalia.

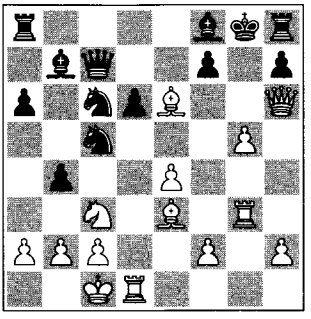
A year earlier, he had himself played White in this position against Prokopchuk, but soon found himself material down and with no attack – 17.♖h3? g6 18.♗xc6 ♗xc6 19.♘h6+ ♔g7 20.♕f3 ♗e8 21.♘g4 bxc3 22.♘f6 ♗xf6 23.gxf6+ ♔g8–+ Kobalia-Prokopchuk, Kolontaevo ch-RUS jr 1997. Not having found a convincing improvement for White, Kobalia decided to try the line as Black, but his curiosity was soon punished.

17. ... ♔g8xg7

I have not found a decisive continuation of the attack for White after **17...bxc3!?**, for example: **18.♕h5! ♗f8!** 18...cxb2+ 19.♔b1 ♘a4? 20.♖h3 ♘c3+ 21.♔xb2 ♘xd1+ 22.♔a1 with a mating attack. **19.♘xe6! ♘xe6** 19...fxe6 is bad because of the standard 20.g6! ♔h8 21.♖dg1 exd5 22.gxh7 ♗g7 23.♖xg7 ♕xg7 24.♖xg7 ♔xg7 25.exd5 with an attack for White. **20.g6! hxg6 21.♖xg6+ ♘g7 22.♖dg1! ♘e5** and in this case, the attack on the g-file leads only to a draw – **23.♖xg7+ ♗xg7 24.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 25.♗h6+ ♔h7 26.♗e3+=** (analysis). But of course, it would be difficult to decide upon such a variation over the board.

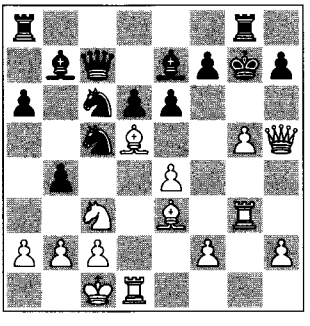
18. ♕e2-h5 ♖c8-g8!

An accurate reply. Black would also lose beautifully after the alternative **18...♖h8? 19.♕h6+ ♔g8 20.♗xe6! ♗f8** 20...bxc3 21.g6!+–; 20...♘xe6 21.♘d5+–.



analysis diagram

21.g6!! ♗xh6 22.gxf7+ ♔f8 23.♗xh6+ ♔e7 24.♘d5+ ♔xe6 25.♘xc7+ ♔e7 25...♔xf7 26.♖g7+ ♔f6 27.♖xd6+ ♔e5 28.♖d5+ ♔xe4 29.♖f7. **26.♘xa8 ♗xa8 27.♖g8** (analysis).



19. ♗d5xe6!!

Another beautiful blow, which shakes Mikhail out of his complacency.

19. ... b4xc3?

The decisive mistake. Of course, 19...fxe6? loses to the standard 20.g6+–. But it was essential to play **19...♘xe6! 20.♘d5 ♕d8!** The outwardly more active 20...♕a5? loses to 21.♘f6! ♘f8 22.♖d5! ♕d8 23.♘xh7! ♘xh7 24.g6! ♘g5 (or 24...fxg6 25.♕xg6+ ♔h8 (25...♔f8 26.♕xg8#) 26.♕xh7+ ♔xh7 27.♖h5#) 25.♖dxg5 ♖h8 26.gxf7+ ♗xg5 27.♖xg5+ ♕xg5 28.♕xg5+ ♔xf7 (28...♔f8 29.♕f6) 29.♕f5+ ♔e8 30.♕g6+ ♔e7 (30...♔d7 31.♕g4+ ♔c7 32.♕g7+) 31.♕g7++–.

Now after 21.♘f6 ♘f8 22.♘xh7 ♘xh7 23.g6 gives nothing after 23...fxg6 24.♕xg6+ ♔h8 and there is no 25.♕xh7+ because the white rook is not taking part in the attack from the square d5. Of course, White has a powerful initiative after **21.f4!**, but Black has two extra pieces, and the outcome of the battle is completely unclear.

20. ♗e6xf7

There was an even quicker win with 20.♖f3! ♖af8 (or 20...♖gf8 21.♖h3!) 21.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 22.♕xf7+ ♔h8 23.♕xg8#.

20. ... ♕c7-a5

Other continuations do not save the game either:

A) 20...♔h8 21.♖h3 ♖g7 22.g6;

B) 20...cxb2+ 21.♔b1 ♔h8 22.g6 ♖g7 23.♖h3.

21. ♖g3-h3! ♔g7-f8
22. ♖h3-f3! ♘c6-e5
23. ♗f7-d5+ ♔f8-g7
24. ♖f3-f7+ ♘e5xf7
25. ♕h5xf7+ ♔g7-h8
26. ♗e3-d4+

Black resigned.

A brilliant game, demonstrating how important strong nerves and optimism (by which we mean imagination, deep analysis and accurate calculation) are to players of the Velimirovic Attack. White should not worry about the fact that 2-3 pieces are regularly hanging – all of his forces are involved in the attack on the king. Black must be able to assess the danger to his king calmly, and, without being diverted by taking the offered pieces, must create counterplay all over the board. In my opinion, his play in this game can be improved significantly (see the notes to Black's 17th and 19th moves).

Conclusions

1. In the Keres Attack, castling short is extremely dangerous for Black, and he should listen to Garry Kasparov's advice and play 6...h7-h6. In many lines, White ends up with an extra tempo compared with the positions we have seen in Games 2 and 10, which gives him greater chances of success both with the standard advance of the g- and h-pawns (see the note to White's 10th move in Game 12), and with the combined piece and pawn attack, with the queen coming to h5 (Game 12).

2. In Game 12, White demonstrated a whole complex of the attacking devices seen earlier – a pawn storm, the sacrifices on d5 and g7, and the attack with heavy pieces as a result of a sacrifice to open lines.

3. White's successes in the Keres Attack have popularised the advance 6.g2-g4 after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6**. Although there is no black knight on f6, in this position the pawn push is positionally well-founded. White seizes space on the kingside and only then completes his development. Here, too, Black should not hurry to castle, but should first start activity on the queenside.

4. In the Velimirovic Attack, White first brings out his light-squared bishop, and only then commences an attack on the king. In this situation, rapid castling by Black is perfectly correct and leads to very sharp positions, which have still not been accurately assessed, despite the intensive use of computers.

5. Because of White's delay in development, the pawn storm on the kingside is not so effective if Black hasn't castled kingside. As shown in Fischer-Larsen (Palma de Mallorca 1970), Black's queenside counterattack develops more rapidly. In order to break through to his opponent's king, White should sacrifice pieces on the squares f5, d5 and g7, and always bear in mind the advance g5-g6 (Game 13). Such a game requires from both players great calmness, accurate calculation, imagination and intuitive judgement of the resulting complications.

6. The sacrifice on f5 (Games 3 and 13) serves the following purposes:

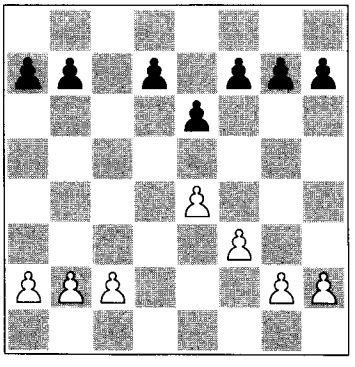
A) if the sacrifice is accepted, White obtains use of the square d5, to which the knight on c3 can often jump with tempo, and the open g-file, along which his heavy pieces can attack the point g7;

B) if Black does not accept the sacrifice, then the knight is able to sacrifice itself closer to the black king, on g7, or can exchange the bishop on e7 and take the game into positional channels. In the latter case, after exchanging the bishop on e7, White can try to bring pressure to bear on the pawn on d6.

7. As in Games 1, 3, 4 and 5, White in the Velimirovic Attack faces a question: should he advance the g-pawn as quickly as possible – 11.g2-g4, or prepare this advance with 11.♖h1-g1 ? In the first case, White's standard attack develops more quickly, but the accurate 11...♘xd4! forces him to take with the rook and Black's chances of a successful defence improve. Therefore White often prefers 11.♖hg1, after which the exchange on d4 is ineffective, since the knight is replaced by the no less effective bishop. But Black can organise sufficient counterplay on the queenside by continuing either 11...b5 or 11...♘d7.

8. Black's hopes of success are connected with his elastic pawn structure and purposeful counterplay on the queen's wing.

Part 2 – Taimanov Structure
Black Pawns on d7 and e6, White Pawns on e4 and f3



The set-up with black pawns on d7 and e6 is characteristic of the Taimanov System **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♕c7**.

In recent times, White has achieved excellent results with the variation **6.♗e3 a6 7.♕d2 ♘f6 8.0-0-0!** followed by f2-f3.

The pawn on d7 often later advances to d6, giving rise to positions examined in the previous Chapter 1.3.

In this section, we will analyse cases where Black quickly castles, leaving the d-pawn in its initial position. He may develop his dark-squared bishop either to e7 (Game 14) or b4 (Game 15).

In the first case, Black can save a tempo on Games 2 and 10 by dispensing with the move ...d7-d6 and start immediate play on the queenside with ...b7-b5. In the second case, he can try to exploit the pin on the knight on c3.

Utilising the fact that the e6 pawn is solidly defended in the present structure, Black is ready at a convenient moment to play ...f7-f5, weakening White's pressure on the kingside, and including the rook on f8 in the game.

The existence of these additional possibilities resulted in the set-up **♗e3**, **♕d2**, **0-0-0**, **f3** achieving popularity in the Taimanov System rather later than in the Scheveningen and Najdorf Systems. But practice in recent years has shown that White has considerable chances of developing a dangerous initiative in this variation as well.

White's main weapon is a kingside pawn storm with the g- and h-pawns. In addition, at an appropriate moment he can try to exploit the drawbacks of the pawn's position on d7, by going into a superior endgame where it will not be easy for Black to defend his weaknesses.

Game 14
Sergey Karjakin
Alexander Morozevich
Wijk aan Zee 2009 (1)

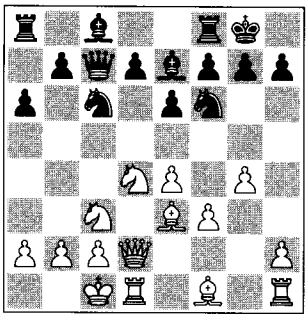
1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 e7-e6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘b8-c6
5. ♘b1-c3 ♕d8-c7
6. ♗c1-e3 a7-a6
7. ♕d1-d2 ♘g8-f6
8. 0-0-0!

There is no point in White's playing 8.f3, presenting Black with the additional possibility 8...♘e5!? 9.0-0-0 b5!?.

8. ... ♗f8-e7

The development of the bishop to b4 will be considered in the next game. Now 8...♘e5?! would be met by 9.f4! with a big lead in development for White.

9. f2-f3 0-0
10. g2-g4



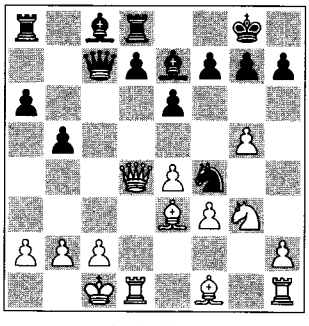
Compared with the position in Game 10 after White's 10th move, here Black has played ...♕c7 instead of ...d7-d6. Black hopes to save time on the advance of his d-pawn and because the c6 knight is defended he can immediately start play on the queenside.

10. ... b7-b5
11. g4-g5

White's plan is the same – a pawn storm on the kingside. But there is one additional nuance. The black pawn remains on d7, which may give White a plus in the endgame.

11. ... ♘f6-e8

The most common move, although after the present game the number of its supporters diminished noticeably. Lately, thanks to the efforts of Rafael Leitao, Black has had good results with **11...♘h5!?**. The knight moves to the edge of the board, slowing up the white attack. **12.♘ce2!? ♖d8 13.♘g3 ♘xd4!** Of course, Black should not open up the h-file by 13...♘xg3?. **14.♕xd4 ♘f4**



analysis diagram

Leitao's idea is based on a tactical point – 15.h4 ♗b7 16.♕b6 ♕b8! 17.♔b1 d5!! and it turns out that after 18.♗xf4 ♕xf4 19.♕xb7 (19.♘e2?! ♕d6) 19...♗c5! the white queen cannot hide from the attentions of the enemy rook: 20.♗d3 (20.♘e2 ♕d6=; 20.♖h3 ♖db8 21.♕d7 ♖d8 22.♕c6 ♖dc8=) 20...♕xg3 21.exd5 ♖db8 22.♕c6 ♖c8 23.♕b7 ♖cb8= Oliveira-Leitao, Brasil 2009.

It seems to me that in the position of the analysis diagram the move **15.♔b1!?** deserves attention:

A) The pawn cannot be taken: **15...♗xg5 16.e5** winning a piece;

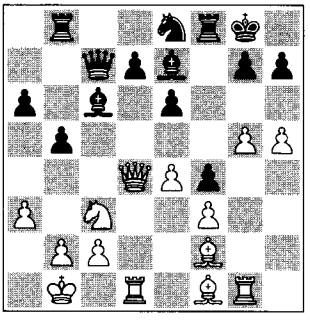
B) If **15...♗b7** 16.♗xf4 ♕xf4 17.♘h5 e5 (the only move, as in Quezada Perez-Fier, Sabadell 2010) 18.♘xf4 exd4 19.h4 White's chances are better in the ending;

C) There remains **15...♘g6!?** after which White can fight for an advantage in the ending: **16.♕b6** Or 16.♘h5 ♗f8 17.♕b6 ♕xb6 18.♗xb6. **16...♕xb6 17.♗xb6**.

12. h2-h4 ♘c6-e5

The exchange of knights also fails to promise an easy life: **12...♗b7 13.h5! ♘xd4** On 13...♖c8 (13...♘e5 transposes into the game) White himself captures on c6 – 14.♘xc6, and forces the opponent to close the c-file temporarily anyway. 14...♗xc6 15.♘e2 (15.♔b1!?). The second knight transfers to a strong position in the centre. Soon Black will have no way to oppose the white attack on the kingside. In the game Dvoinikov-Fielding, corr. 2006, White obtained a decisive advantage after 15...f5. Because his e6 pawn is solidly defended, Black has the possibility of fighting for space on the kingside and trying to get his rook on f8 into the game along the f-file. We will see this idea plenty more times with the pawn on d7, but in this particular position, it does not give good results. The reason is simple – White is significantly ahead of Black in organising an attack on the kingside: 16.gxf6 ♘xf6 17.♘d4 ♗b7 18.♗d3 ♗c5 19.♖dg1 ♕b6 20.e5! ♗xf3 21.exf6 ♖xf6 22.♖h3.

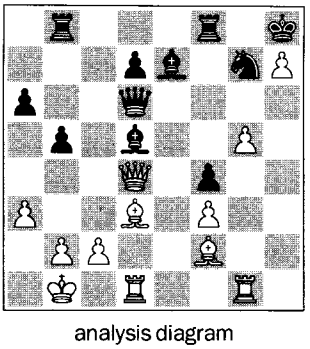
14.♕xd4! Attacking the pawn on d7. **14...♗c6** In the game Motylev-Korneev, Dresden Ech 2007, White obtained a positional advantage after 14...b4 15.♘a4 ♖c8 16.♗d3 ♕a5 17.♕b6!? ♕xa4 18.♕xb7. **15.♔b1 f5 16.♖g1!?** With the queen on d4 it makes no sense to play 16.gxf6?! because of 16...♗xf6. **16...♖c8 17.a3 f4 18.♗f2** Black has defended against the direct threats to his king, but his forces are uncoordinated and it is difficult for him to find a good plan. He tries to organise counterplay on the queenside: **18...♖b8**



analysis diagram

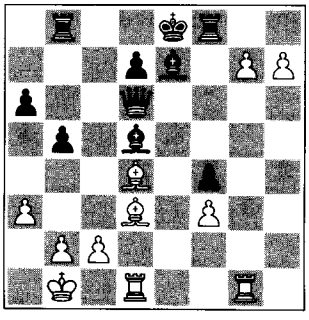
With the idea of 19...b4, but walking into a combinative refutation, familiar to us from Games 1 and 2.

19.♘d5! exd5 20.exd5 ♗b7 21.♗d3! Once again, White's bishops and queen attack the enemy king along the a1-h8 and b1-h7 diagonals, supported by the pawn pair on g5 and h5. Here, as in Game 2, the sacrifice on d5 is exactly calculated, leading to a forced win. **21...♕d6 22.♕e4 g6 23.hxg6 ♗xd5 24.gxh7+ ♔h8 25.♕d4+ ♘g7**



analysis diagram

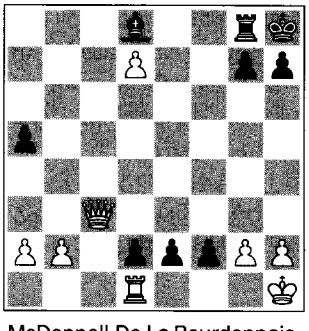
26.♕xg7+!! Destroying the last barrier on the a1-h8 diagonal. **26...♔xg7 27.♗d4+ ♔f7** He cannot save himself by 27...♗f6 28.gxf6+ ♔f7 29.♗g6+ ♔e6 30.♖ge1+ either. **28.g6+ ♔e8 29.g7**



analysis diagram

White is a whole queen down, but his pawns are unstoppable.

One is involuntarily reminded of the final position from one of the McDonnell-De La Bourdonnais match games:



McDonnell-De La Bourdonnais, London 1834 (62), after 37...e2

The game Parligras-Vehi Bach, Dresden Ech 2007 ended in a victory for White after **29...♗f6 30.♗g6+ ♔d8 31.♗xf6+ ♕xf6 32.gxf8♕+ ♕xf8 33.♖xd5 ♔c7 34.♗f5 d6 35.♖g8**.

13. ♔c1-b1!?

In this situation, why does White need this prophylactic move, which we have seen many times before and will do again? Karjakin, when preparing for this game, had analysed the encounter Dominguez Perez-Morozevich, Sarajevo 2008, in which White pressed on with his kingside attack straightaway: 13.h5 ♗b7 14.g6 ♖c8 and only then turned to prophylaxis with 15.♔b1. In reply, Morozevich found a raft of tactical blows: 15...b4 16.♘a4 ♘xf3!? 17.♘xf3 ♗xe4, and after a lively battle the game ended in a draw: 18.♘b6 ♗xf3 19.♘xc8 ♕xc8 20.♕xd7 ♕xd7 21.♖xd7 ♗xh1 22.gxh7+ ♔xh7 23.♗d3+ ♔g8 24.♖xe7 ♘f6 ½-½.

Karjakin does not allow such activity.

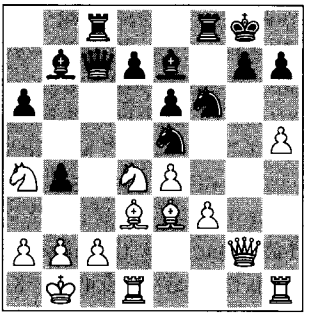
13. ... ♗c8-b7
14. h4-h5 ♖a8-c8
15. ♕d2-g2!

So as to eliminate the above-mentioned tactics. White is preparing for the storm, and Black simply has to undertake active operations.

15. ... b5-b4
16. ♘c3-a4 f7-f5!

Opening the centre, since otherwise White's threat of g5-g6 is quite unpleasant.

17. g5xf6! ♘e8xf6
18. ♗f1-d3



'Here I was satisfied with the results of the opening. White has prospects of an attack on the g-file, and it is not clear

where Black's counterplay is coming from', writes Sergey Karjakin. The need to permanently defend the squares g7 and g6 (White can at any moment play h5-h6, forcing ...g7-g6) deprives Black of the possibility of organising an attack on the queenside, and so he doubles rooks on the g-file.

18. ... ♖f8-f7

19. b2-b3!

Preparing the transfer of the knight from a4 to the centre of the board, a well-known device that we saw in Game 10 (see note to Black's 14th move).

19. ... ♖c8-f8

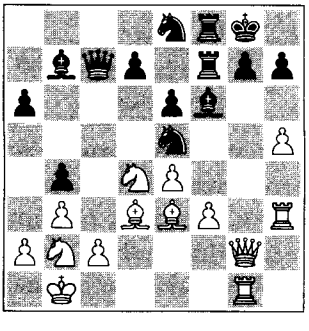
20. ♖d1-g1 ♘f6-e8

21. ♖h1-h3

More accurate was 21.♗e2!?, preserving the potentially strong light-squared bishop from exchange, but as Karjakin said, he did not want to move the bishop from its strong position.

21. ... ♗e7-f6

22. ♘a4-b2



22. ... ♘e5-c6??

'Up to here, the game has proceeded normally, but now Black makes an inexplicable blunder, after which to all intents and purposes, the game is over', writes Sergey. Black's hopes of creating counterplay along the a1-h8 diagonal prove futile. Morozevich underestimated the potential strength of the bishop on d3. After 22...♘xd3 23.cxd3 ♘d6 or the immediate 22...♘d6, White has a small advantage, but the whole battle lies ahead.

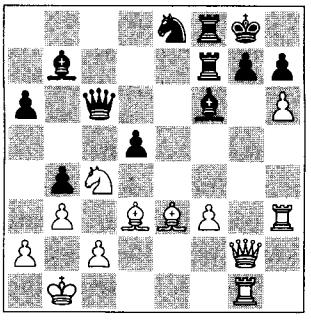
23. ♘d4xc6 ♕c7xc6

Nothing is changed by **23...♗xc6 24.♘c4** With the threat of 25.e5 ♗xe5 26.h6 g6 27.♗xg6. **24...d5** Or 24...♗c3 25.e5! ♖xf3 26.♖xf3 ♗xf3 27.♕g5! and Black has no defence against 28.h6 g6 29.♗xg6. **25.exd5 exd5 26.h6! ♔h8** Neither 26...dxc4 27.♗xh7+ nor 26...g6 27.♗xg6 saves Black. **27.♗xh7! g5** After 27...g6 28.♗xg6! dxc4 29.♗xf7 ♕xf7 30.♕g7+ decides. **28.♗xg5 ♗d4** Or 28...♗c3 29.♗d3 dxc4 30.♗f6+; 28...dxc4 29.♗f5 ♕e7 30.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 (30...♕xf6 31.♕g7+) 31.♖g3 winning. **29.♗e3!! ♗xe3 30.♘xe3 ♖xh7 31.♖g3 ♕f7 32.♘g4 ♕e6 33.♘e5** with a decisive attack for White (analysis).

24. ♘b2-c4 d7-d5

25. e4xd5 e6xd5

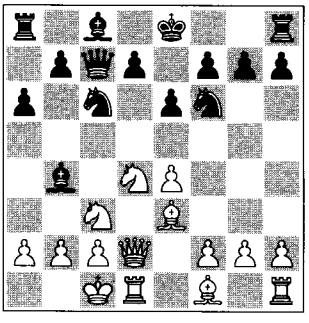
26. h5-h6!



Black resigned, since after 26...g6 (26...dxc4 also loses because of 27.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 28.hxg7+) the well-known combination 27.♗xg6! hxg6 28.♕xg6+ ♔h8 29.♕g7+! ♖xg7 30.hxg7+ ♔g8 31.♖h8+ ♔f7 32.gxf8♕+ decides the game.

Game 15
Vladimir Belov
Björn Holzhauer
Biel 2009 (1)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**e7-e6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘b8-c6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**♕d8-c7**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**a7-a6**
7.	**♕d1-d2**	**♘g8-f6**
8.	**0-0-0**	**♗f8-b4**

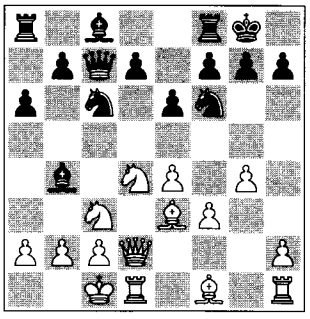


This appears to be the most logical continuation in this pawn structure. Black pins the knight on c3, creating pressure on the centre, and at a convenient moment prepares to spoil the white pawn structure on the queenside.

9. f2-f3 0-0

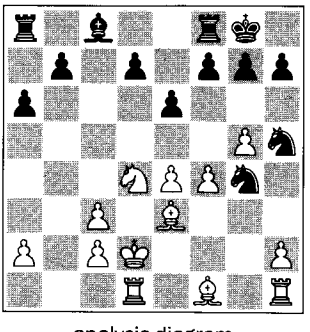
It is also possible to delay castling and play 9...♘e5 or 9...♘e7, creating extra pressure with the queen against the knight on c3. However, the problems that Black has recently been experiencing in the variations 9...♘e5 10.♘b3 b5 11.♕e1! (threatening 12.♘xb5) 11...♗e7 12.f4 and 9...♘e7 10.♘de2, have turned the interest of Taimanov followers to the move 9...0-0.

10. g2-g4



10. ... b7-b5

Practice shows that going into the endgame, despite the defects in the white pawn structure, does not promise Black an easy life: **10...♘e5 11.g5 ♘h5** 11...♘xf3? is bad because of 12.♕g2!±. **12.f4!? ♗xc3 13.♕xc3!? ♕xc3 14.bxc3 ♘g4 15.♔d2!**



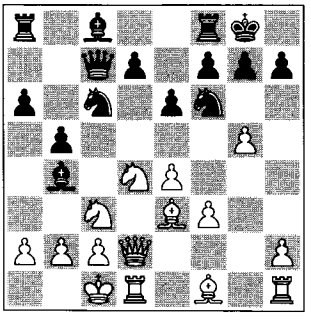
analysis diagram

The weakness of the c-pawns is not really felt, whereas White's full control of the centre, the strong position of his knight, and the badly-placed enemy minor pieces make the defence difficult. In the game Aagaard-Andersen, Hillerod ch-DEN 2010, there followed **15...d6** Equality is not to be seen after other continuations either: 15...b5 16.♗e2 f5 17.exf5 exf5 18.♖hf1; 15...e5 16.fxe5 ♘xe5 17.♘f5; 15...f6 16.♗e2 ♘xe3 17.♔xe3 ♘xf4 18.♔xf4 e5+ 19.♔e3 exd4+ 20.cxd4. **16.♘b3 ♘xe3 17.♔xe3 e5 18.f5 ♖d8 19.♘a5**

g6 and now **20.c4!?** underlines White's advantage. The pawns on b7 and d6 are weak, and Black's minor pieces are struggling to get into the game.

11. g4-g5!

In order to choose the subsequent plan of play, it is important to determine the position of the black knight.



11. ... ♘f6-e8?!

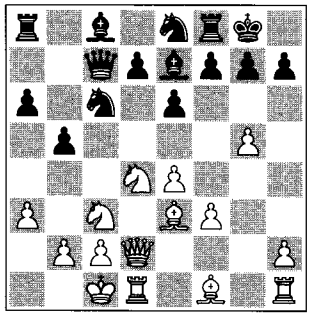
Evidently, **11...♘h5** is safer in this position, although Black's reluctance to place the knight on the edge of the board is understandable. Play could continue: **12.♔b1!?** Preventing 12...♘e5? after which there follows 13.♘cxb5!. As in the previous game (see note to Black's 11th move), 12.♘de2!? with the idea of 13.♘g3 deserves consideration. Now:

A) J. Polgar, in a game against Anand (Canada de Calatrava rapid 2007) managed to hold the ending after **12...♘xd4 13.♕xd4** 13.♗xd4 is also worth consideration, after which 13...e5? is bad because of 14.♘d5. **13...♗xc3 14.♕xc3 ♕xc3 15.bxc3 d5 16.♗e2**, but no other volunteers have yet been found, wishing to defend this prospectless endgame;

B) If **12...♗b7 13.a3 ♗e7 14.♘b3!** Black has difficulties with the defence of the pawn on d7 – **14...♘e5** On 14...♖fd8 15.♕f2! is unpleasant. **15.f4 ♘c4 16.♗xc4 bxc4 17.♕xd7±**;

C) **12...♖b8!?** Preparing 13...♘e5. **13.♘xc6 dxc6 14.f4 e5 15.f5 ♗b7** (Short-Satyapragyan, Kolkata 2009) and now **16.a3!?** (instead of 16.♗e2 as in the game) **16...♖fd8 17.♗d3 ♗f8 18.♕f2 c5 19.h4 ♘f4 20.f6 g6 21.♗xf4 exf4 22.h5** promised White the advantage.

12. a2-a3 ♗b4-e7

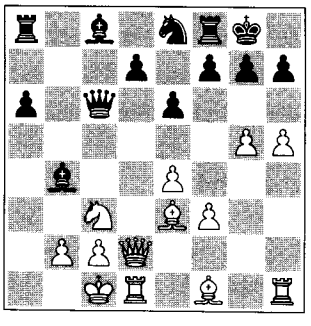


13. h2-h4

The piece sacrifice **13.♘f5!? exf5 14.♘d5**, first played by Tseshkovsky against Kruszynski (Katowice 1991), is tempting. The ideas are well-known to us from Game 13, but after **14...♕b7! 15.exf5 ♘c7!** Weaker is 15...f6? 16.g6 d6 17.♗d3 with the better position for White. The game Negi-Sadorra, Subic 2009, ended in a victory for White after 17...♘e5 18.♗e4 ♖b8 19.♕g2 ♗d8 20.♘f4 ♗b6 21.♗d2 ♕c7 22.♗d5+ ♘f7 23.♕h3 h6 24.♘e6 ♗xe6 25.fxe6 1-0. **16.f6 ♗d8 17.fxg7** 17.♗f4 was tried in Sjugirov-De de Riva Aguado, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010, but White did not continue strongly and Black won. **17...♖e8** White has not yet found a path to a winning attack. **18.♘f6+** After 18.♘b6 ♖b8 19.♗d3 ♘e5 20.♗f5 ♕xf3 21.♘xc8 ♖xc8 22.♖hf1 ♘d3+! Black had the advantage, Vachier

Lagrave-A. Sokolov, France tt 2009. **18...♗xf6 19.gxf6 ♘e5 20.♗d4 ♘xf3 21.♕h6 ♕d5 22.♗d3 ♕g5+ 23.♕xg5 ♘xg5 24.♖hg1** Nepomniachtchi-Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son, Moscow Aeroflot 2010, and now instead of the game choice 24...♘e4?! 25.♗b6! ♘xf6 26.♗xc7 with advantage to White, Black should prefer 24...♘f3 25.♖g3 ♗b7, and White still has to prove that he has sufficient compensation for the piece.

13. ... b5-b4
14. ♘d4xc6 ♕c7xc6
15. a3xb4 ♗e7xb4
16. h4-h5



As in the previous game, White is well ahead of his opponent in the development of his initiative. The pin on the knight on c3 has not brought real results.

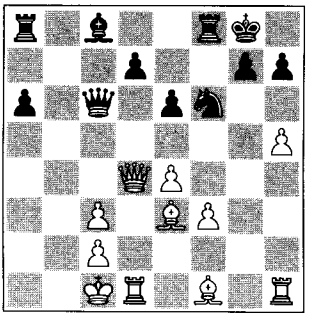
16. ... f7-f5

A defensive manoeuvre which is known to us. Black can also try to complete his development by 16...d6. In the game Kovalenko-Vorobiov, Moscow Open 2010, there followed 17.♕d4 ♗c5 18.♕d3 ♖b8, and now by playing 19.f4! (in the game, 19.♗xc5?! was played) 19...♕b6 (now 19...f5 is ineffective because of 20.♗g2 with a positional advantage to White) 20.♗xc5 ♕xc5 (20...♕xb2+? 21.♔d2 dxc5 22.♖b1+–) 21.h6 g6 22.♕d4 White obtained a solid positional advantage.

17. g5xf6 ♘e8xf6
18. ♕d2-d4 ♗b4xc3?!

Black hurries to spoil his opponent's pawn structure (after 18...♖b8, 19.♗c4 is possible), but this does not bring the desired results.

19. b2xc3



It seems that the white king is in danger, but thanks to his superiority in the centre and on the dark squares, White retains full control of the situation.

19. ... d7-d5?!

This activity is out of place and only exacerbates Black's problems, but it is very difficult to suggest any constructive ideas. After 19...♖b8 a strong reply is 20.♕e5 ♕b7 21.h6! g6 22.♗c5 ♖f7 23.♖h4! and there is no defence against 24.♖f4.

20. e4-e5 ♘f6-e8
21. ♗f1-d3 ♗c8-d7

21...♖xf3? loses at once to 22.♖hf1 ♖xf1 23.♖xf1, and Black cannot defend against the threats along the f-file. After 21...♖b8 22.♖dg1! ♕b7 23.♕g4! with the unstoppable threat of 23.h6 g6 24.♗xg6! is decisive.

22. c3-c4! ♕c6-a4

22...dxc4 23.♗e4+–.

23. c4xd5 ♕a4xd4
24. ♗e3xd4 e6xd5

25. h5-h6 g7-g6
26. ♗d3xg6!

Even in the endgame, White develops a decisive attack.

26. ... ♘e8-c7
27. ♗g6-d3 ♘c7-e6
28. ♖d1-g1+ ♔g8-h8
29. ♖g1-g7 ♘e6xg7
30. h6xg7+ ♔h8xg7
31. ♖h1xh7+ ♔g7-g8
32. e5-e6 ♗d7xe6
33. ♗d3-g6

Black resigned in view of the unavoidable mate.

Conclusions

1. Despite the fact that Black saves a tempo by dispensing with the move ...d7-d6, compared with Games 2 and 10, and thus starts his queenside play more rapidly, White's kingside pawn storm proves more effective in the majority of cases.

2. After White attacks the knight on f6 by means of g4-g5 Black can choose to retreat to e8 or h5.

In the first case, the knight has more chances of returning to play quickly, but the white attack on the kingside becomes very dangerous (Games 15 and 16).

In the second case, the black knight slows up the advance of the white h-pawn, but remains out of play for a long time, and White should consider going into a better endgame (see note to Black's 11th move in Games 15 and 16).

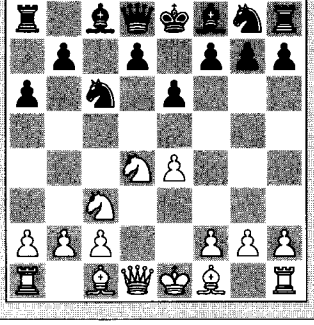
3. The threat of doubling the c-pawns after an exchange on c3 often proves illusory. Thanks to his superiority in the centre and on the dark squares, White retains the initiative both in the endgame and the middlegame (Game 16).

4. Utilising the fact that the pawn on e6 is solidly defended, Black is ready at a convenient moment to play ...f7-f5, opening the centre, bringing the rook on f8 into play and weakening White's pressure on the kingside.

5. At a suitable moment, White can try to exploit the weakness of the pawn on d7, to go into a superior endgame, where Black will not find it easy to defend his pawn weaknesses.

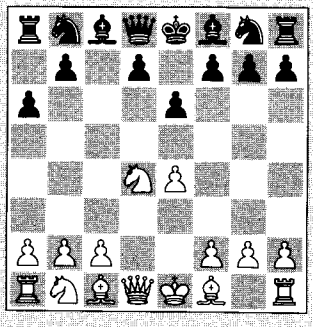
In set-ups with long castling, White these days tends to achieve excellent results, which has persuaded many Taimanov practitioners to turn to the following move-orders:

A) 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 a6,



hoping in the event of **6.♗e3** to save a tempo on placing the queen on c7, and to continue instead with **6...♘f6 7.♕d2 ♗b4**.

B) 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6

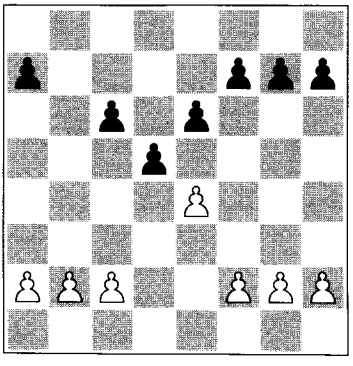


5.♘c3 ♕c7 In this case, White should not strive for long castling, since after **6.♗e3?! ♗b4!** Black takes the initiative.

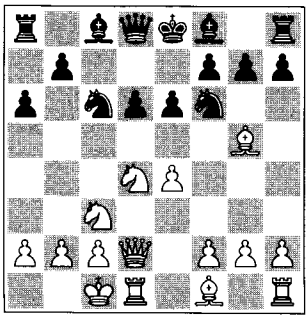
However, as is usually the case, there is no such thing as a free lunch – what one gains in one respect, one loses somewhere else. In the position of the first analysis diagram White can play 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♗d3, aiming to exploit his advantage in development.

And in the position of the second analysis diagram there is the popular 5.♗d3!? (or even the immediate 5.c4), which in certain cases forces Black to play the Hedgehog set-up, which is not to everybody's taste.

Part 3 – Rauzer Structure: Black Pawns on c6, d5 and e6, White Pawn on e4



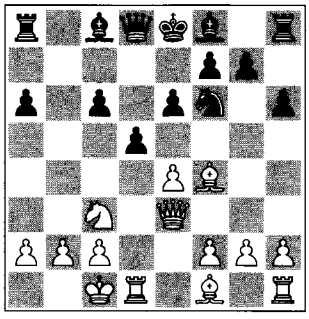
This pawn formation arises most often in one of the variations of the Rauzer System, which has become popular thanks to the ideas of grandmaster Sergey Makarichev. In the position which arises after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗g5 e6 7.♕d2 a6 8.0-0-0**,



he began with great success to play **8...h6** and after **9.♗e3** to exchange on d4 immediately: **9...♘xd4**, followed by ...b7-b5!.

'Of course, Black can play the positions in which his f-pawns are doubled (after ♗xf6 and ...gxf6), which I did many times, but somehow I did not like the positions. But the discovery of the new method of playing 8...h6 9.♗e3, and then immediately exchanging 9...♘xd4 and ...b7-b5, was preceded by a long "philosophical" consideration of the situation. I stubbornly tried the exchange of knights later, in an inferior version, until it finally dawned on me that it could be played immediately after the retreat of the enemy bishop to e3', recalls Sergey Makarychev.

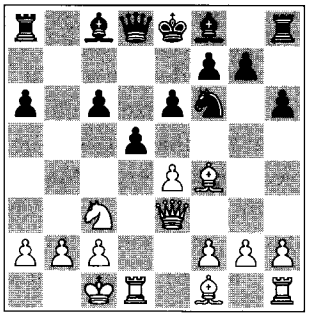
Black's results in the variation were simply brilliant, and the line 8...h6 took pride of place in the Rauzer System, until Yaakov Murey, at the end of the 1990s, proposed the paradoxical decision **9.♘xc6!** (in reply to **8...h6**) **9...bxc6 10.♗f4! d5** 10...e5?? 11.♗xe5. **11.♕e3!**



White voluntarily gives Black a pawn superiority in the centre, obtaining in return an advantage in development and the possibility of an attack in the centre and on the kingside. Black will sooner or later be forced to castle (a number of games have shown that the black king cannot survive in the centre), and then (as in Game 4) the pawn on h6 assumes a key role. White will be able to create an attack, either sacrificing his bishop on h6, or carrying out the standard pawn storm with the help of the g-pawn, and it is so difficult for Black to find something with which to oppose this clear plan, that supporters of 8...h6 have nowadays become virtually extinct.

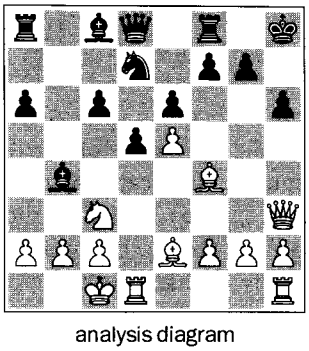
Game 16
Rashit Ziatdinov
Alexander Zabotin
Vladimir 2008 (3)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**♘b8-c6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**d7-d6**
6.	**♗c1-g5**	**e7-e6**
7.	**♕d1-d2**	**a7-a6**
8.	**0-0-0**	**h7-h6**
9.	**♘d4xc6!**	**b7xc6**
10.	**♗g5-f4!**	**d6-d5**
11.	**♕d2-e3!**	



11. ... ♗f8-e7

It is also possible to evacuate the king by means of **11...♗b4 12.♗e2! 0-0** but, by exploiting the remote position of the enemy dark-squared bishop, White can start to fasten his attention on the h6 pawn – **13.e5 ♘d7 14.♕g3 ♔h8 15.♕h3!**

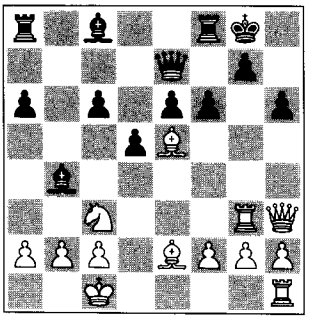


analysis diagram

A) The bishop is not able to return to the defence: **15...♗e7** After 15...♕e7 16.♗xh6 gxh6 17.♕xh6+ ♔g8 18.♖d3 decides. **16.♗xh6! gxh6 17.♕xh6+ ♔g8 18.h4 ♘xe5 19.♘e4!**

A key part of the programme! It turns out that White's last move not only prepared the inclusion of the rook via h3, but also secured the strongpoint g5 for the knight. **19...f5 20.♖h3** And now the rook comes in. **20...f4** On 20...♗f6 there is 21.♖g3+ ♔f7 22.♗h5+ ♔e7 23.♘xf6 ♖xf6 24.♖g7+ ♔d6 25.♕f4! with a deadly pin on the knight: 25...♕a5 (Holzke-Sher, Samnaun 2008) and the simplest was 26.c3! followed by 27.♖e1. **21.♘g5 ♖f7 22.♘xf7 ♘xf7 23.♕g6+ ♔f8 24.♗h5 ♕e8 25.♖f3!? ♗d6** There is no other way to defend the pawn – 25...e5 26.♖e1! ♖b8 27.♖xe5 Klima-Zawadzki, Czech tt 2004/05. **26.g3 ♕e7 27.gxf4** And despite the rough material equality, Black's position is very difficult, since it is hard for him to coordinate his forces and secure his king: **27...♘h8 28.♕g5 ♗d7** Or 28...♖a7 29.♖e1 ♖c7 30.♗g4 ♘f7 31.♕g6 ♘h8 32.♕h6+ ♕g7 33.♕xg7+ ♖xg7 34.♗xe6 ♗xe6 35.♖xe6 with a decisive advantage in the endgame, Fagerström-Vecek, corr. 2007. **29.♖e1 ♖b8** 29...♕g7 is also met by 30.♗g4 ♖e8 31.f5. **30.♗g4 ♘f7 31.♕g6 ♕xh4 32.♗h5 ♘h8 33.♕h6+ ♔e7 34.f5 e5 35.f6+ ♔d8 36.♖b3 ♖xb3 37.♕xh8+ ♔c7 38.axb3 ♗f5 39.♔b1 ♕xf2 40.♖c1 1-0**, Branding-Blanco Gramajo, corr. 2001;

B) **15...♔g8 16.♖d3** White's heavy pieces on the g- and h-files take direct aim at the black king. **16...♕e7 17.♖g3!?** The preliminary 17.♘a4!? deserves consideration. In the game Bennedik-Hagström, corr. 2004, White created a strong attack and won after 17...f6 18.♖g3 ♔h7 19.a3 ♗a5 20.♗d3+ f5 21.♗e2 ♖h8 22.♗g5 ♕f8 23.f4 ♗d8 24.♗h5 ♗xg5 25.♖xg5 ♕e7 26.g4 ♘xe5 27.gxf5 exf5 28.♘b6 ♘f3 29.♗xf3 ♕e3+ 30.♔b1 ♕xb6 31.♕h5 ♖g8 32.♕g6+ ♔h8 33.♖h5 ♕c7 34.♖g1 ♗b7 35.♖xf5 ♖af8 36.♗e2 ♖xf5 37.♕xf5 ♕c8 38.♕f7 ♕e8 39.♖xg7 1-0. **17...♘xe5!?** Ingenious, but insufficient for equality. Both 17...f6?! 18.♗xh6 ♖f7 19.♗h5 and 17...♗xc3?! 18.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 19.♗xh6+ lose at once. **18.♗xe5** 18.♖xg7+? is weak because of 18...♔xg7 19.♕xh6+ ♔g8 20.♗xe5 f6. **18...f6**



analysis diagram

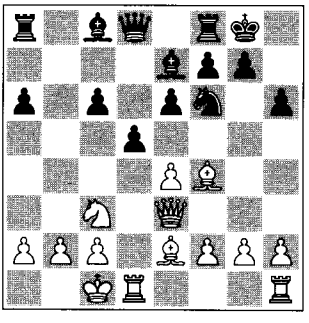
19.♕xh6! Of course not 19.♗d4 because of 19...e5 20.♕xh6 exd4 21.♗d3 f5. **19...fxe5 20.♗d3 e4 21.♘xe4! dxe4 22.♗xe4 ♖f5** The only move. **23.♗xf5 exf5 24.♕xc6** White has a rook and three pawns against two bishops, which would give Black good chances of counterplay in the middlegame. However, the weak position of his king obliges Black to go into the endgame, where White's advantage is obvious. He cannot retain the queens:

A) **24...♗b7?** 25.♕c4+ ♔f8 26.♖h3! ♕e4 27.♖h8+ ♔e7 28.♕c7+ ♔f6 29.♕b6+ ♔f7 (29...♔g5? 30.h4+ ♔f4 31.♕c7+ ♕e5 32.g3++–) 30.♖xa8 ♗xa8 31.f3 with a decisive advantage;

B) **24...♖b8** 25.♖e3 ♕f7 26.♖e8+ ♔h7 27.♖xc8 ♕xa2 28.c3 ♖xc8 29.♕xc8 ♕a1+ 30.♔c2 ♕xh1 31.♕xf5+ winning;

C) **24...♕e4** 25.♕xe4 fxe4 26.♖d1 ♗f5 27.♖d5! ♖f8 28.♖e3 ♗c8 29.c3 ♗e7 30.♖e2 ♗h4 31.g3 ♗b7 32.♖d7 ♗g5+ 33.♔c2 ♗c8 34.♖d4 ♗f5 35.♔b3 ♗f6 36.♖dxe4 ♗xe4 37.♖xe4 and the four pawns are clearly stronger than the bishop in this ending, as was confirmed by the game Santana-Azpiri Medina, corr. 2005.

12. ♗f1-e2 0-0



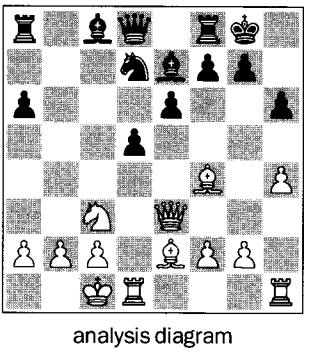
13. h2-h4!

A multi-functional move. White prepares a pawn storm, and also the bishop sacrifice on h6 followed by the inclusion of the rook in the attack via h3.

13. ... ♖f8-e8

Prophylaxis against the sacrifice on h6 14.♗xh6, after which there would follow 14...gxh6 15.♕xh6 ♗f8.

After the immediate **13...♘d7** with the idea of ...e6-e5 White wins by **14.exd5! cxd5**



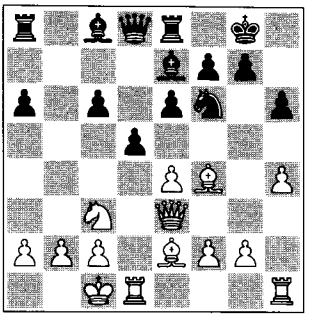
analysis diagram

Black has a depressing position after 14...exd5 15.♕g3 ♔h8 16.♗c7! ♕e8 17.♖he1 Pähtz-Perelshteyn, Bermuda B 2002. **15.♗xh6! gxh6 16.♕xh6 ♘e5** Or 16...♖e8 17.♖d3 ♗d6 18.f4+–; 16...♗f6 17.♗d3+–. **17.♘e4!** The well-known manoeuvre. **17...f5** Or 17...dxe4 18.♖xd8 ♖xd8 19.♖h3+–; 17...♖e8 18.♗h5! ♖b8 19.♖h3+–. **18.♖h3** and Black is lost, as shown by the following variations:

A) **18...f4 19.♘g5 ♖f7 20.♘xf7 ♘xf7 21.♕g6+ ♔f8 22.♗h5 ♕e8** Or 22...♘h8 23.♕h6+ ♔g8 24.♖dd3 ♕c7 (24...♗d6 25.♖d4 e5 26.♖xd5) 25.♖dg3+ fxg3 26.♖xg3+ ♕xg3 27.fxg3 winning. **23.♖f3! ♗d6 24.♖d4! e5 25.♖xd5 ♗c7 26.♖c3**;

B) **18...♗f6** 19.♖g3+ ♔f7 20.♕h7+ ♔e8 21.♗h5+ ♘f7 22.♖g8 ♖a7 23.♘g5;

C) **18...♘g4** 19.♗xg4 fxg4 20.♕g6+ ♔h8 21.♘g5 ♗xg5+ 22.hxg5+ gxh3 23.♖d4! and Black resigned, Jenni-Nabavi, Zurich 2004.



14. g2-g4!

As well as the sacrifice on f6, there is also the pawn storm.

14. ... ♘f6-d7
15. ♕e3-g3 e6-e5
16. ♗f4-d2 ♘d7-c5

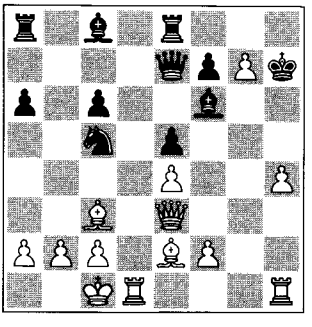
After 16...d4 17.♘a4 Black also has no trace of counterplay.

17. g4-g5! d5-d4
18. g5xh6! ♗e7-f6

On 18...g6 19.♗c4 ♘e6 20.♘e2 decides.

19. h6xg7 d4xc3
20. ♗d2xc3 ♕d8-e7
21. ♕g3-e3 ♔g8-h7!

The only move. He loses by force after 21...♘e6 (21...♗xg7 22.♖hg1 ♘e6 23.♕h6 f6 24.♖g6 transposes) 22.♕h6 ♗xg7 (or 22...♘xg7 23.♖hg1 ♗e6 24.♖d3 winning) 23.♖hg1 f6 24.♖g6 ♔f8 25.♕h7 ♕f7 26.♖dg1 c5 27.♗c4 ♖a7 28.h5+−.



This position first occurred in my game against Zabotin. I started with the move 22.♖dg1?!, and only after 22...♘e6 did I play 23.♗d2, which gave Black additional defensive possibilities: 23...♘f4! 24.♕f3 ♗xg7 25.♗xf4 exf4 26.♕h5+ ♗h6 27.♗d3 ♖d8! and although White's chances are still somewhat better, in time-trouble I even lost, Yakovich-Zabotin, Moscow Open 2008. That evening, I found a strengthening of the attack, but unfortunately I never got the chance to use it in practice.

22. ♗c3-d2!

Before the black knight gets to e6.

22. ... ♗f6xg7
23. ♖d1-g1?!

According to my analysis, 23.♖hg1! is stronger – this rook has nothing to do on the h-file, whereas the other rook already has the open d-file: 23...♕f8 (after 23...♕d6 24.♔b1 decides) 24.♖xg7+! ♕xg7 25.♕xc5 ♗e6 26.f4 with a superior position.

23. ... ♕e7-f8

Here Zabotin should have tried 23...♕d6.

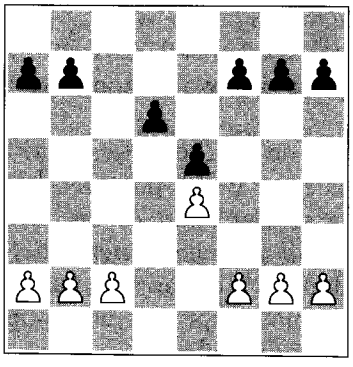
24. ♖g1xg7+ ♕f8xg7
25. ♕e3xc5 ♕g7-g2

And here the position of the rook on h1 allows Black to win a tempo, but White's advantage remains obvious. There followed

26. ♖h1-e1 ♗c8-g4
27. ♗e2-c4 ♗g4-e6
28. ♗c4-d3 ♗e6xa2
29. b2-b3 a6-a5
30. ♔c1-b2 a5-a4
31. ♔b2xa2 a4xb3+
32. ♔a2xb3 ♖a8-b8+
33. ♔b3-c3 ♕g2-g4
34. f2-f4 ♕g4-d7
35. f4xe5 ♕d7-b7
36. ♔c3-d4 ♕b7-d7+
37. ♔d4-c3 ♕d7-b7
38. ♗d2-f4 ♕b7-b2+
39. ♔c3-d2 ♖e8-e6
40. ♖e1-f1 ♖b8-d8
41. ♗f4-g5 ♖d8-d7
42. ♗g5-f6

Black resigned.

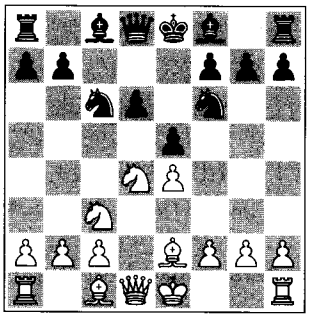
Part 4 – d6/e5 Structure: Black Pawns on d6 and e5, White Pawn on e4



A little history

The advance ...e7-e5 in the Sicilian Defence was first seen in the match McDonnell-De La Bourdonnais, played in London in 1834. At that time there was no theory of weak squares, and after the moves **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e5** McDonnell played **5.♘xc6**, giving Black a strong pawn centre. The final position of one of the games, which we have seen on page 98, still arouses astonishment today. However, the development of Steinitz's teachings reduced the popularity of putting the black pawn on e5. Thus Tarrasch, commentating on his game against Janowski (Vienna 1898), in which the moves **1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♘db5 d6 7.♗f4 e5 8.♗g5 a6 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.♘a3** led to a position from the modern-day Sveshnikov Variation, wrote that the two bishops and temporarily bad position of the knight on a3 were not sufficient compensation for the black weaknesses in the centre and on both wings.

In my opinion, the reappraisal of positions with a weakness on d5 and backward pawn on d6 came about chiefly thanks to the brilliant theoretician and practical player Isaak Boleslavsky. From the early 1940s, he developed the system **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗e2 e5!?**, which bears his name.



So what is the positional basis for creating such weaknesses in one's own camp?

Firstly, Black eliminates White's space advantage, and gains the possibility of freely developing his pieces.

Secondly, with a pawn on e5, it is more difficult for White to develop an initiative on the kingside.

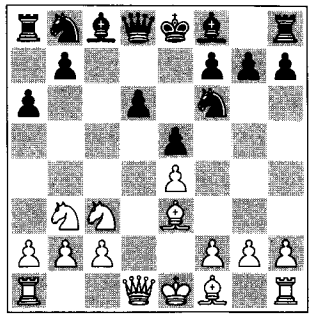
Thirdly, in order to seize the d5-square with his pieces, White will more often than not be obliged to exchange his dark-squared bishop for the knight on f6, giving Black the advantage of the two bishops and the possibility of creating counterplay on both flanks.

In general, Boleslavsky was one of the first to show that dynamic factors could compensate for static weaknesses. It was precisely thanks to Boleslavsky that the advance ...e7-e5 became a standard part of the programme in many Sicilian variations, including the Najdorf, the Scheveningen, the Sveshnikov, etc.

But whereas in the Sveshnikov Variation long castling is usually disastrous for White, in the Najdorf it is nowadays the most popular way to fight for an advantage, via the moves 6.♗g5 and 6.♗e3.

In the first case, White is prepared in advance to fight for the d5-square, which renders the move ...e7-e5 anti-positional. Black usually puts his pawn on e6, and the reader can familiarise himself with the standard methods of play in such positions, by looking at the appropriate chapters of this book.

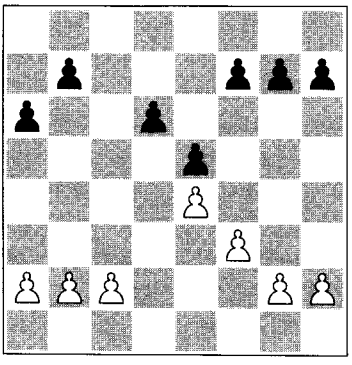
In the case of 6.♗e3, however, the reply 6...e5 is standard for followers of the Najdorf System, and in the absolute majority of cases (more than 8,000, according to my database) where the players castle on opposite sides in this structure, the position arose from this variation. Therefore, we begin our study of the two sides' plans with the position in the diagram, which arises after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3** (7.♘f3 followed by short castling leads to quieter play, where Black usually manages to solve his small positional problems).



White usually develops with f3, ♕d2, 0-0-0, g4, and the structure where black pawns on d6 and e5 face White pawns on e4 and f3, we will examined in Chapter 4.1.

A rarer, but also interesting plan is that involving the advance of the pawn to f4 and then f5 – see Chapter 4.2.

Chapter 4.1 – White Pawns on e4 and f3



White's central formation is solid, and after short castling by Black, the advance of the g- and h-pawns is tempting. What can Black do against this plan? Does he have to advance on the queenside (4.1.2 and 4.1.3), or should he first create the typical Sicilian pressure along the c-file, as seen in the game below (4.1.1)?

4.1.1 Black creates piece pressure on the queenside, without advancing his a- and b-pawns

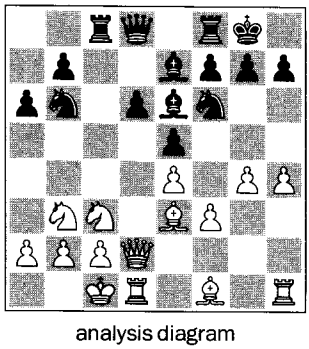
Game 17
Alexander Grischuk
Lubomir Ftacnik
Calvia ol 2004 (5)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**a7-a6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**e7-e5**
7.	**♘d4-b3**	**♗c8-e6**
8.	**♕d1-d2**	**♗f8-e7**
9.	**f2-f3**	**♘b8-d7**

In the event of immediate castling, White has to start with 10.0-0-0!, since after 10.g4? there follows 10...d5! 11.g5 d4 with excellent play for Black.

10. g2-g4 0-0

After **10...♖c8 11.0-0-0 ♘b6 12.h4!** (once the black knight has obstructed its b-pawn, White does not need to hurry with the advance g4-g5) **12...0-0**



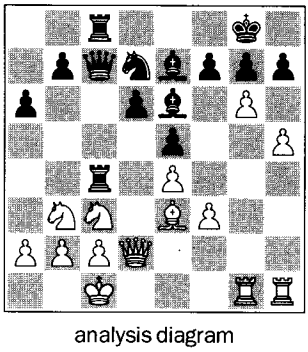
analysis diagram

we have transposed into Adorjan-Ribli, Budapest (m-4) 1979, where White played a new plan, starting with **13.h5!**.

Now after g4-g5 the black knight cannot hold up the enemy attack by jumping to h5.

A) Only the central break **13...d5** can place a question mark over the correctness of White's plan, after which Adorjan's 14.♗xb6? ♕xb6 15.g5 leads to Black's advantage after 15...d4! 16.♘a4 ♕c6 17.gxf6 ♗xf6! (Adorjan only considered 17...gxf6? 18.♘ac5! ♗xc5 19.♖g1+ ♔h8 20.♕h6+–) 18.♘ac5 ♗xb3 19.♘xb3? ♗g5!. But the simple **14.g5!** (Kasparov) **14...d4 15.gxf6 ♗xf6 16.♘xd4** leaves White with an extra pawn;

B) **13...♘c4 14.♗xc4 ♖xc4 15.g5 ♘d7 16.♖dg1!± ♕c7?** Kasparov considers this move the decisive mistake. The only way to complicate White's task was 16...f5!?, although then too, after 17.g6 f4 (or 17...h6 18.♗xh6 gxh6 19.♕xh6) 18.gxh7+ ♔h8 19.♗f2 Black's position is unenviable. **17.g6 ♖c8** Ribli hopes to get counterplay by sacrificing the exchange on c3, but an unpleasant surprise awaits him. Now 17...f5 no longer works, because of 18.♘d5 ♕d8 19.h6, whilst after 17...♘f6 there follows the same blow as in the game: 18.♗h6! ♘e8 19.♗xg7 ♔xg7 (19...♘xg7 20.♕h6+–) 20.h6+ ♔g8 21.g7+–.

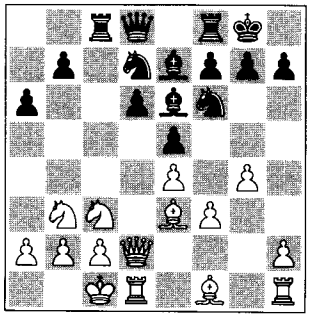


analysis diagram

18.♗h6! Black was hoping for 18.h6? fxg6 19.hxg7 ♖xc3! 20.bxc3 ♕xc3 with excellent play. **18...♗f6 19.gxh7+ ♔xh7 20.♗xg7! ♗xg7 21.h6!+– ♗f6 22.♕g2!** and Black resigned, since there is no defence to 23.♕g7+. An impressive crush.

11. 0-0-0 ♖a8-c8

Black's play is craftier than in the above game. He waits for 12.g5, so as after 12...♘h5 to hold up White's attack on the kingside, whilst not weakening his queenside with the advance ...b7-b5. After 12.h4 there could follow 12...b5 13.g5 b4!? with unclear play. But White finds a cunning waiting move.



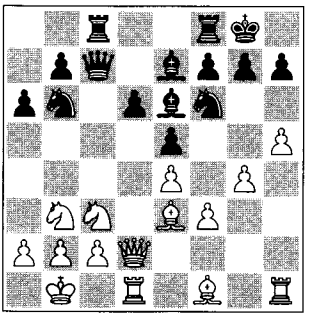
12. ♔c1-b1! ♘d7-b6?!

Ftacnik hopes to exploit the fact that White has lost a tempo on the game Adorjan-Ribli with the king move. Black did not like 12...b5 13.g5! (only after the black queenside has been weakened does White change his plan of attack) 13...♘h5 (not 13...b4? because of 14.gxf6 bxc3 15.fxe7+–) 14.♘d5 ♗xd5 15.exd5 followed by ♘a5-c6 and c2-c4, with a strong initiative on the queenside. This plan with be analysed more deeply in the next game (see the note to White's 17th move there).

13. h2-h4! ♕d8-c7

Again, 13...d5 fails to 14.g5 d4 15.gxf6 ♗xf6 16.♘xd4 exd4 17.♗xd4 with an extra pawn for White.

14. h4-h5!

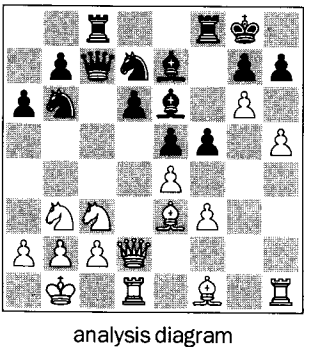


Adorjan's plan in action!

14. ... h7-h6?

Hara-kiri. After the opening of the g-file, Black cannot hold.

A) It was possible to try **14...♘fd7 15.g5 f5**. But after **16.g6!** (in the game Sadvakasov-Alexeev, Skanderborg 2003, White was successful with 16.gxf6, but 16.g6! is stronger, in my view):



analysis diagram

A1) After **16...h6** the standard **17.♗xh6!** is decisive: **17...f4** Neither does 17...gxh6 18.♕xh6 ♘f6 help Black, because of 19.♗d3! f4 20.♘d5 ♘bxd5 21.exd5 ♗xd5 22.g7 ♖fd8 23.♗g6! with inevitable mate. **18.♗xg7! ♔xg7 19.♕h2 ♘c5** The king cannot blockade the white pawns: 19...♔h6 20.♖g1 ♖f6 (or 20...♖g8 21.♘d4! exd4 22.♕xf4+ ♔g7 23.h6+ ♔h8 24.g7+ ♔h7 25.e5 with unavoidable mate) 21.♕g2 ♖g8 22.♕g5+ ♔g7 23.h6+ ♔h8 24.g7+ ♔h7 25.♗d3 ♖xh6 26.♕xe7 with a decisive advantage. **20.♘xc5 dxc5 21.♗h3! ♗xh3 22.♕xh3 ♔h6 23.♖dg1** Threatening 24.g7. 23...♖g8 24.g7 ♖xg7 25.♕e6+ ♔h7 26.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 27.♖g1+ with a mating attack;

A2) **16...f4 17.♗h3!? ♗xh3 18.♗xb6 ♘xb6 19.♖xh3 h6 20.♘d5 ♘xd5 21.♕xd5+ ♔h8 22.c3** with a clear advantage to White.

B) Once again, Black cannot break in the centre: **14...d5 15.♗xb6 ♕xb6 16.g5 d4 17.♘a4 ♕c6 18.gxf6 ♗xf6 19.♘ac5** and since the king stands on b1, not c1, after **19...♗xb3 20.♘xb3 ♗g5** there follows the simple **21.♕g2** (no pin!).

15. g4-g5 h6xg5

16. ♗e3xg5

Black cannot defend against the attack along the g-file.

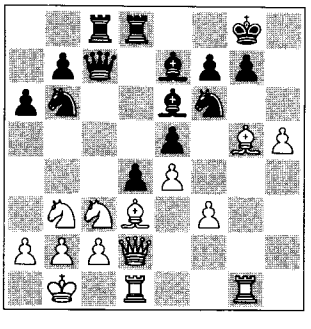
16. ... d6-d5

17. ♖h1-g1 ♖f8-d8

After 17...d4 Ftacnik's 18.♗xf6! ♗xf6 19.♕h6 ♕e7 (19...dxc3 20.♕xf6+–) 20.♖d2! dxc3 21.♖dg2 g6 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.♕xg6+ ♕g7 24.♕xg7+ ♗xg7 25.♖xg7+ ♔h8 26.♖7g6+– is strong.

18. ♗f1-d3 d5-d4

After 18...♘c4, there follows 19.♕g2.



19. ♘c3-d5!

Black cannot tolerate this knight here, but taking it allows the bishop on d3 to take part in the attack.

19. ... ♗e6xd5

Or 19...♘bxd5 20.exd5 ♗xd5 (20...♘xd5 21.♗h6 ♗f6 22.♗xg7 ♗xg7 23.h6) 21.♗h6 ♘xh5 22.♗xg7 ♘xg7 23.♕h6+–.

20. e4xd5 ♘b6xd5

After 20...♘fxd5 there follows 21.♗h6 ♗f6 22.♗xg7! ♗xg7 23.h6 ♘e3 24.♖xg7+ ♔f8 25.♖dg1+–.

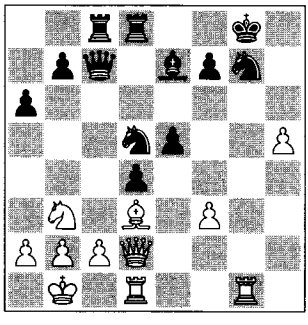
21. ♗g5-h6

Black cannot defend g7.

21. ... ♘f6-e8

After 21...♗f8 there also follows 22.♗xg7 ♗xg7 23.h6.

22. ♗h6xg7 ♘e8xg7



23. h5-h6

There was a quicker win with 23.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 24.♖g1+ ♔f8 (24...♗g5 25.♕xg5+ ♔f8 26.h6) 25.♕h6+ ♔e8 26.♖g8+ ♔d7 27.♗f5#.

23. ... ♗e7-f6

24. h6xg7

The threat is 25.♕h6, and after 24...♘f4 25.♗h7+! decides: 25...♔xh7 26.g8♕+ ♖xg8 27.♕h2++–.

24. ... ♗f6xg7

25. ♕d2-h6 f7-f6

26. ♘b3-c5!

White quietly brings up the reserves, whilst the black king cannot escape from the danger zone.

26. ... ♖d8-d6

27. ♕h6-h7+ ♔g8-f8

28. ♗d3-c4 ♖c8-e8

Or 28...♕xc5 29.♖xg7 ♘c3+ 30.♔a1+–.

29. ♘c5-e4

29.♖g6 ♕f7 30.♖dg1+– was also possible.

29. ... ♖e8-e7

30. ♗c4xd5 1-0

After 30...♖xd5 31.♘xf6 decides.

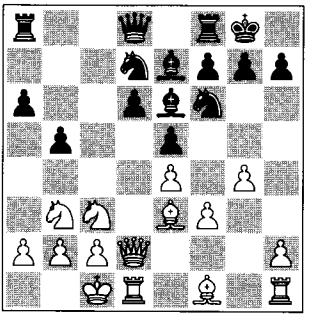
Analysis of the games Adorjan-Ribli and Grischuk-Ftacnik shows that Black cannot manage without a pawn storm on the queenside, else White's attack develops much more quickly. So why did such great experts on the Sicilian as Ribli and Ftacnik not advance the queenside pawns? The answer to this question is seen in the following game.

4.1.2 Exploiting the weaknesses, resulting from the advance of Black's queenside pawns

Game 18
Peter Svidler
Ruslan Ponomariov
Sofia 2006 (2)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 a7-a6
6. f2-f3 e7-e5
7. ♘d4-b3 ♗c8-e6
8. ♗c1-e3 ♘b8-d7
9. ♕d1-d2 ♗f8-e7
10. g2-g4 0-0

11. 0-0-0 b7-b5



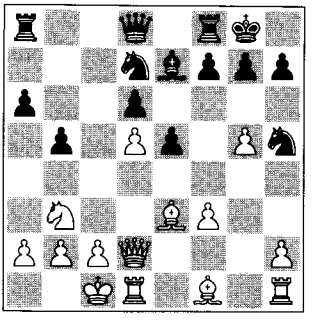
12. g4-g5!

Of course, now Adorjan's plan does not work, since after 12.h4? there follows 12...♘b6! and after 13.h5? b4 (or 13...♘c4 14.♗xc4 bxc4 15.♘a1) 14.♘e2 (14.♘b1 a5) 14...♘c4 with a wonderful game for Black. Therefore White drives the enemy knight from the centre of the board.

12. ... ♘f6-h5

The double-edged 12...b4! will be examined in the following game. With the knight on h5, it is harder for White to pursue his kingside attack, but his eyes are in fact directed at another part of the board.

13. ♘c3-d5! ♗e6xd5
14. e4xd5



The advance of the b-pawn has weakened control of the square c6, and now the white knight is aiming to get there. Then White plays c2-c4 and he will develop an initiative on the queenside, at which both of his bishops are pointing. Thus, the advance of the pawn to g5, after Black has advanced ...b7-b5, does not signal a kingside attack, but the intention to develop an initiative on the queenside.

14. ... f7-f5

Black seeks counterplay. He can prevent the white knight's raid by playing **14...b4**, but the cure turns out to be worse than the disease: **15.♔b1 a5 16.♗b5!** Now the white bishop ends up on c6. **16...a4** No better is 16...♘b6?! 17.♕f2! ♘c8 (17...♖b8 18.♘xa5±) 18.♗c6 ♖b8 19.♖hg1 ♕c7 20.f4!± exf4 21.♗xf4 ♘a7 22.♘d4 ♘xf4 23.♕xf4 and White has a clear advantage, Milos-Kuczynski, Moscow ol 1994. **17.♘c1 a3 18.b3** Also good is 18.♕xb4 axb2 19.♘b3 with advantage to White, Motylev-Odeev, Linares 2001 **18...♖b8 19.♗c6 ♘c5 20.♖hg1 ♕a5 21.♖g4 g6 22.♖c4 ♘g7** Ganguly-Shanava, Dubai 2004, and now after **23.f4! exf4 24.♗xf4 ♘f5 25.♘d3 ♘xd3 26.♕xd3** Black cannot defend the pawn on b4 – **26...♖fd8 27.♗d2 ♗f8 28.♕e4** with a clear advantage to White.

15. g5xf6 ♗e7xf6
16. ♘b3-a5 ♘h5-f4
17. ♘a5-c6

Against Amonatov (Moscow ch-RUS 2007), Grischuk first played **17.c4!?**, which appears more accurate, since it forces Black to take on c4, **17...bxc4**, and only then played **18.♘c6** After 18.♗xc4? there would have followed 18...♘g2! 19.♕xg2 ♕xa5 with excellent play for Black, Zontakh-Purtov, St Petersburg 2005. The game continued **18...♕e8!**. The black queen heads for

the kingside, since that is where he has the stronger forces. After 18...♕c7 19.♗xc4 we reach a position which is examined in the note to Black's 18th move in the main game. **19.♗xc4 ♕h5 20.♖df1 ♘h3 21.♗e2** 21.♔b1 ♗g5. **21...♘f4 22.♗d1!?** 22.♗c4 ♘h3 23.♗e2=. **22...♗g5 23.♔b1 ♔h8 24.h4 ♗h6** 24...♗xh4?! 25.♗c2 with the initiative to White. And here, in Grischuk's opinion, White should have continued **25.♔a1** with the possible variation 25...♘f6 26.♗b3 ♖ac8 27.♗xf4 ♗xf4 28.♕b4, developing the initiative on the queenside.

17. ... ♕d8-c7

Possibly Black should have followed Amonatov's example and played 17...♕e8!?.

18. c2-c4!? ♘d7-b8

Ponomariov tries to exchange the enemy knight. In the game K.Szabo-Nepomniachtchi, Plovdiv Ech 2008, Black chose 18...bxc4 19.♗xc4 ♘b6 and after 20.♕a5 (20.♗b3!?) 20...♗d8 21.♗b3 ♘d7 22.♕d2 ♕b7 (22...a5!?) 23.♘xd8 ♖axd8 24.♔b1 the opponents agreed a draw, although White's position appears preferable – he has the two bishops and a clear plan of pressure on the queenside.

18...♘b6? is weak because of 19.♕a5 with advantage to White.

19. ♕d2-a5! ♖f8-c8?!

In the endgame which results from this, Black's lot is none too happy, but the attempts to keep queens on the board do not bring full equality:

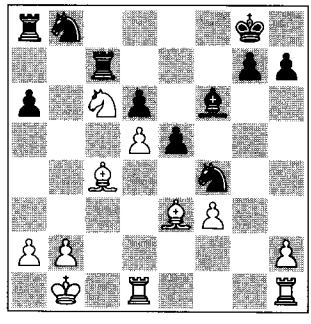
A) **19...♕f7 20.cxb5 ♕h5 21.♖hg1!** But not Svidler's recommendation 21.b6 ♕xf3 22.♕c3 ♕xh1 23.b7 because of 23...♘d7! with unclear play. **21...♕xf3 22.♖g3 ♕e4** 22...♘e2+?! 23.♗xe2 ♕xe2 24.b6 leads to White's advantage, as does 22...♘xc6 23.bxc6 ♕e4 24.♕d2 ♗h4 25.♖g1. **23.♕b4 ♕xb4 24.♘xb4** and again, Black lands in an unpleasant endgame (Svidler);

B) Maybe Ponomariov could have obtained a somewhat more acceptable endgame after **19...♕b7!? 20.cxb5 axb5 21.♕xb5 ♕xb5 22.♗xb5 ♖xa2,** although here, too, White's two bishops and potential passed b-pawn give him the better prospects.

20. ♔c1-b1!? b5xc4

21. ♕a5xc7 ♖c8xc7

22. ♗f1xc4



White has a clear advantage. All of his minor pieces are pointing at Black's weakened queenside, and his rooks are ready to begin a fight for the c-file.

22. ... ♔g8-f8

After 22...♘xc6 23.dxc6+ d5 there follows 24.♖xd5! ♘xd5 25.♗xd5+ ♔f8 26.♗b6 with advantage to White.

23. ♘c6-a5 ♘b8-d7

24. ♖d1-c1! ♗f6-g5

25. h2-h4! ♗g5-h6

Now the black bishop cannot take part in the battle on the queenside.

26. ♗c4-b3 ♖a8-c8

After 26...♖xc1+ 27.♖xc1 ♘f6 28.♖c6 ♘6xd5 29.♗xd5 (29.♗d2!?) 29...♘xd5 30.♗xh6 gxh6 31.♖xd6 White has a technically winning endgame.

27. ♖c1-c6! ♘f4-e2

Ponomariov could institute tactical complications by playing **27...♘xd5!? 28.♗xh6 ♖xc6 29.♘xc6 ♘7f6!** After other moves, White easily obtains a winning advantage:

A) **29...gxh6** 30.♗xd5 ♘f6 31.♘b4! a5 32.♗b7! ♖c7 33.♘d5;

B) **29...♘5f6** 30.♗xg7+! ♔xg7 31.♘e7 ♖d8 32.♘f5+ ♔f8 33.♘xd6±;

C) **29...♖xc6?** 30.♗xd5 ♖c5 31.♗e6. But after **30.♘a5! gxh6 31.♖d1 ♖c5 32.♘b7 ♖b5 33.♘xd6** White's advantage is obvious (variations by Ftacnik and Svidler).

28. ♗e3xh6 g7xh6
29. ♗b3-c4 ♘e2-d4
30. ♗c4xa6 ♘d4xc6
31. d5xc6 ♖c7xc6

31...♖a8 does not save Black because of 32.cxd7 ♔e7 (32...♖xd7 33.♗b5+–) 33.♗c8! ♖xa5 34.♖g1 ♖ac5! (34...♖xd7 35.♖g7+ ♔d8 36.♗xd7 ♖a7 37.♖g8++–) 35.♖g7+ ♔f8 36.d8♕+ ♔xg7 37.a4 ♖xc8 38.♕xd6+– (Svidler).

32. ♘a5xc6 ♖c8xc6
33. ♗a6-b5 ♖c6-c7
34. ♖h1-c1

Despite the material equality, Black's position is completely hopeless – he has no way to fight against the pair of white passed pawns.

34. ... ♘d7-c5
35. ♗b5-c4!

35.b4? would be a terrible mistake because of 35...♖b7! 36.a4? ♘xa4!

35. ... e5-e4?

A time-trouble error, but even after 35...♔e7 36.b4 ♖b7 37.a3 ♘e6 38.♔b2 White's win is not difficult.

36. b2-b4! ♖c7-b7
37. a2-a3 e4xf3
38. ♖c1-f1 ♘c5-a4
39. ♖f1xf3+ ♔f8-g7?!
40. ♗c4-b3 ♘a4-b6
41. ♔b1-b2 ♖b7-e7
42. a3-a4 ♖e7-e4
43. ♔b2-a3 ♖e4xh4
44. a4-a5 ♘b6-c4+
45. ♔a3-a4 ♘c4-d2

Now White finishes off nicely.

46. a5-a6 ♘d2xf3
47. a6-a7 ♖h4-h1
48. ♔a4-a3 ♖h1-a1+
49. ♗b3-a2 1-0

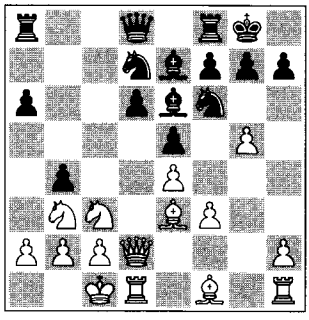
After the advance of the black b-pawn, the square c6 can become a noticeable weakness. In the event of slow play by Black, his opponent, as well as a kingside attack, can undertake active operations on the queenside, and it is not easy for Black to defend his weaknesses. Consequently, lovers of active play have sought chances of an attack against the white king, choosing the continuation 12...b4!, pointed out in the notes to Black's 12th move.

4.1.3 Mutual pawn storms on the flanks

Game 19
Nils Grandelius
Samvel Ter Sahakyan
Herceg Novi jr 2008 (5)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 a7-a6
6. ♗c1-e3 e7-e5
7. ♘d4-b3 ♗f8-e7
8. f2-f3 ♗c8-e6
9. ♕d1-d2 0-0
10. 0-0-0 ♘b8-d7

11. g2-g4 b7-b5
12. g4-g5 b5-b4!



Before moving his knight from f6, Black drives the white knight away from the key square d5. The popularity of this continuation is attested to by the fact that according to my database, the diagram position has been reached in more than 1000(!) games. Now we get a sharp game, with mutual attacks on the kings, which is so characteristic of positions with opposite castling in the Sicilian. How should White play?

Since 13.gxf6 bxc3 14.♕xc3 ♘xf6 does not present Black with any problems, there only remain knight retreats:

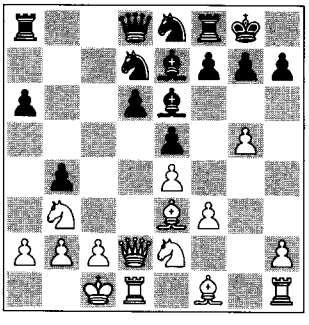
A) After **13.♘d5? ♘xd5! 14.exd5 ♗f5** Black has excellent play, since by comparison with the previous game, instead of having an offside knight on h5, he has a strong bishop on f5;

B) After **13.♘a4? ♘h5** the symmetrical position of the knights is clearly in Black's favour. His knight cannot easily be attacked and completely blockades White's attempts to begin an attack on the kingside, whereas after **14.♔b1** (Black has no problems after 14.♕xb4 d5! 15.♕a5 ♗xg5) **14...♖b8!** followed by ...♕d8-c7-c6, the white knight feels far from comfortable.

Therefore

13. ♘c3-e2! ♘f6-e8!

13...♘h5?! is tempting, but after **14.♘g3** (how useful that the white pawn is still on h2!) **14...♘f4 15.h4 a5 16.♔b1 a4** White has the strong manoeuvre **17.♘d4!**, first seen in a game Topalov-De Firmian. Now the black position in the centre is falling apart at the seams, and after **17...exd4 18.♗xf4** neither **18...♕a5?!** 19.♘f5! ♗xf5 20.exf5 ♕xf5 21.♕xd4± Topalov-De Firmian, Polanica Zdroj 1995, nor **18...b3** 19.cxb3 axb3 20.a3 ♘e5 21.♕xd4 ♕a5 22.♘f5 ♗xf5 23.exf5 P. Smirnov-Rosko, Pardubice 2008, can possibly suit Black.



The pawn structure is symmetrical and the knights on e2 and e8 correspond. How should White continue?

With the pawns on e4 and f3, the typical plan is a pawn storm on the kingside, with the g- and h-pawns. But in the diagram position, it is obvious that after **14.h4 a5** Black's play develops more quickly. In the game Karjakin-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2007, Black seized the initiative after 15.♔b1 ♘b6 16.♘g3 a4 17.♘c1 d5! 18.♗xb6 ♕xb6 19.exd5 ♖d8 20.♗c4 ♘c7 21.dxe6 ♖xd2 22.exf7+ ♔h8 23.♖xd2 ♘b5!.

The prophylactic **14.♔b1** allows Black to drive the white knight away from b3, **14...a5 15.f4 a4 16.♘bc1** and only now that the knight cannot go to d4, to play **16...exf4**. In the endgame arising after

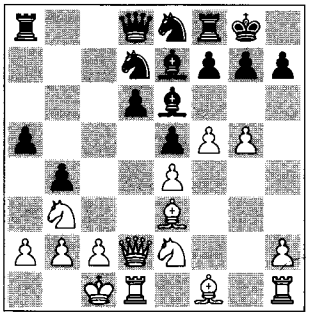
17.♘xf4 ♗xg5 18.♘xe6 ♗xe3 19.♘xd8 ♗xd2 20.♖xd2 ♖xd8 21.♖d4 ♘ef6 22.♖xb4 ♘c5, the two sides' chances are equal, as has been confirmed by a series of games, including Z. Almasi-Anand, Turin ol 2006.

Therefore, White throws his f-pawn into the attack.

14. f3-f4! a6-a5

14...exf4 looks depressing, giving White complete control over the centre: **15.♗xf4!?** White can obtain a somewhat better ending by taking the pawn with the knight: 15.♘xf4 ♗xg5 16.♘xe6 ♗xe3 17.♘xd8 ♗xd2+ 18.♖xd2 ♖xd8 19.♗xa6 ♘e5 20.♗e2, but the bishop capture looks more promising. **15...a5** White's chances also look better after 15...♘c5 16.♕e3!? ♘xb3+ 17.cxb3!. His king is well protected, he has more space, and a clear plan of mobilising his pieces; his knight goes to d4, then perhaps to f5, his bishop has the prospect of going to c4, whilst Black has an unpleasant weakness on d6 and a passive knight on e8. **16.♔b1 ♘c5 17.♘bd4!? ♖c8** After 17...♘xe4 18.♕e3 d5 19.♗g2 ♗c5 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♘d4 White's initiative more than compensates for the sacrificed pawn. **18.♘g3 a4 19.h4 b3 20.cxb3 axb3 21.a3** with the better chances for White, Kryvoruchko-V. Onischuk, Lvov ch-UKR jr 2006.

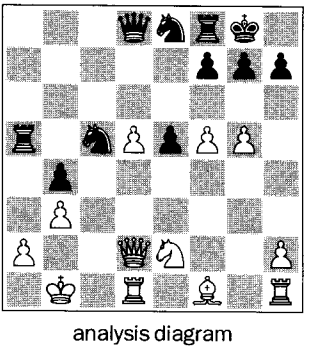
15. f4-f5



15. ... a5-a4!?

The key position for the assessment of the move **15...♗xb3** arises after **16.cxb3 a4 17.bxa4 ♖xa4**:

A) **18.b3?!** weakens the dark squares and the position of the white king, and after **18...♖a5! 19.♔b1** A similar position arises after 19.♘g3 d5 20.exd5 ♕a8 21.♔b1 ♗c5. **19...d5 20.exd5 ♗c5** Black's initiative on the queenside, as a minimum, compensates for the sacrificed material: **21.♗xc5** White came under a crushing attack in the game M. Pavlov-Efimenko, Alushta tt 2008, after 21.♘g3 ♘d6 22.h4 ♕b6 23.♗xc5 ♘xc5 24.♕e3 ♖fa8 25.♖h2 ♕a7 26.♕f2 ♕b7 27.♕e1 ♕a7 28.♕f2 ♕d7 29.♕e1 ♘xb3 30.♖b2 ♕a7 31.♖xb3 ♖xa2 32.♕xe5 ♖a1+ 33.♔c2 ♕c5+ 34.♔d2 ♖8a2+ 35.♖b2 ♕f2+ and White resigned. **21...♘xc5** and now:



analysis diagram

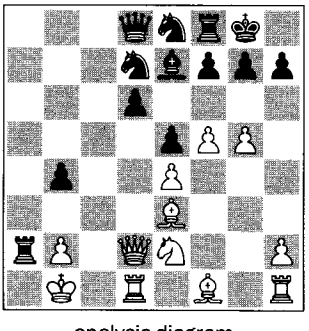
A1) Pawn-grabbing was punished even in a computer game: **22.♕xb4 ♘d6 23.♘c3 ♕a8 24.♗b5 ♖c8** 24...♕a7!? 25.a4 ♘xb5 (25...♖b8) 26.♘xb5 ♖xb5 27.♕xb5 ♖b8 28.♕c6. **25.♗c6 ♕a7 26.a4 ♖b8 27.♗b5 ♘xb5 28.♘xb5 ♖axb5 29.axb5 ♖a8 30.♔c1 ♘d3+ 31.♖xd3 ♕a1+ 32.♔d2 ♕xh1** with an extremely strong attack for Black, Comp

THE KING-Comp LOOP, Amsterdam WCCC 2007;

A2) The pseudo-active **22.f6?!** is just a loss of a tempo in this position – **22...♘d6 23.fxg7 ♖e8 24.♕xb4 ♕a8 25.♘c1 ♖b8** – Black's play is standard and simple. All of his pieces attack the white king. 26.♕d2 ♘xb3 27.♘xb3 ♘e4 28.♗c4 ♘xd2+ and White resigned, Macak-Bobras, Brno 2008;

A3) **22.d6!** is the strongest. White tries to exploit his only trump, the passed d-pawn. **22...♕a8 23.d7 ♘xd7 24.♘g3 ♘c7 25.♗g2 ♕a6 26.♕d6 ♕a7 27.a4 ♘c5 28.♗c6 ♘xb3 29.♕xf8+ ♔xf8** and the players in the game Keller-Pasko, ICCF 2009, agreed a draw in view of perpetual check.

B) **18.♔b1! ♖xa2!** A beautiful discovery of Bobras.

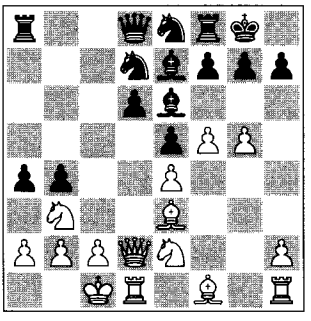


analysis diagram

B1) Accepting the rook sacrifice is extremely dangerous. Black's attack fully compensates for the sacrificed material. **19.♔xa2?! ♕a8+ 20.♔b3 ♗xg5! 21.♕d3** 21.♕d5 ♕xd5+ 22.♖xd5 ♗xe3 led to a difficult ending for White in Motylev-Maslak, Moscow 2008; 21.♗xg5?? loses to 21...♘c5+ 22.♔c2 ♕xe4+. **21...♘ef6 22.♗g2** The game Alvarez Pedraza-Quezada Perez, Santa Clara 2008, ended in perpetual check after 22.♘g3 ♗xe3 23.♕xe3 ♖c8! 24.♗b5 ♘c5+ 25.♔xb4 ♖b8 26.♖a1 ♘a6+ 27.♖xa6 ♕xa6 28.♕d3 ♘d7 29.♖c1 ♘c5 30.♖xc5 dxc5+ 31.♔xc5 ♕a7+= 32.♔b4 ♕e7+ 33.♔b3 ♕b7. **22...♗xe3 23.♕xe3 ♕c6!** Despite his extra rook, it is hard for the white king to find a safe haven. In the source game Szelag-Bobras, Ustron tt 2007 White played **24.♖c1?!** (stronger is 24.♖a1! ♘xe4 25.♗xe4 ♘c5+ 26.♔a2 b3+ 27.♔b1 ♘xe4 28.♖c1 ♘d2+ 29.♕xd2 ♕e4+ 30.♖c2 with sharp play, in which Black's chances are not worse – analysis) and failed to cope with the problems: **24...♘c5+ 25.♖xc5** After 25.♔c2? ♘g4 26.♕f3 ♘xe4+ 27.♔d1 ♕d5+ 28.♔e1 ♕d2+ 29.♔f1 ♘e3+ 30.♔g1 ♘c5! – the extra rook does not help White defend against the threat of e4 and ♘d3. **25...dxc5 26.♖a1 c4+ 27.♔c2 ♘g4! 28.♕g3 ♖d8! 29.♕xg4 ♕d6** Despite a deficit of two pieces, Black's attack is decisive. **30.♘d4 ♕xd4 31.♖d1 b3+ 32.♔c1 ♕e3+ 33.♔b1 ♖d2 34.♕f3 ♕a7 35.♕e2 ♕a2+ 36.♔c1 ♕xb2#** A splendid creative achievement by Bobras!

B2) **19.♘c1! ♖a8 20.♘b3!?** Not allowing the black queen to a5. 20.♗c4!? ♕a5 21.♘a2 also deserves consideration, as seen in Grandelius-Luch, Olomouc 2009. The white bishop comes to c4, and the space advantage, better-placed pieces and the prospects of attack on the black king fully compensates for the pawn minus. After **20...♕b8 21.♗c4** Black could not defend after either **21...♗d8 22.♗d5 ♗b6 23.♗xb6 ♘xb6 24.♗xa8 ♘xa8 25.h4** Nijboer-Nepomniachtchi, Budva Ech 2009, or **21...♘b6 22.♗xb6 ♕xb6** Bjornsson-Gretarsson, Reykjavik 2009,

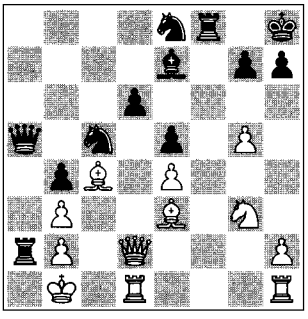
and now **23.f6! gxf6? 24.g6! hxg6 25.♕h6** with a mating attack, looks very strong (analysis).



16. ♘b3-d4!

Forward at all costs! A sharp game with equal chances results from **16.fxe6 axb3 17.cxb3** After 17.exf7+ ♖xf7 18.cxb3 (Black has good play after 18.♔b1 bxc2+ 19.♔xc2 (19.♕xc2 ♗xg5) 19...♘b6 20.♘c1 d5 21.exd5 ♘d6 22.♔b1 ♘bc4 23.♗xc4 ♘xc4) 18...♖xa2 19.♘g3 ♖xf1 20.♖hxf1 ♖a1+ 21.♔c2 ♕c8+ 22.♔d3 ♕a6+ 23.♔c2 ♕c6+ the game D. Mastrovasilis-Mamedyarov, Warsaw Ech 2005, ended in a draw by perpetual check. **17...fxe6 18.♔b1** Black has no problems after 18.♗h3 ♖xa2 19.♗xe6+ ♔h8 20.♘g3 ♘c7 21.♗c4 ♕a8 22.♖hf1 ♖xf1 23.♖xf1 ♖a1+ 24.♔c2 ♖xf1 25.♗xf1 d5 Olszewski-Czakon, Rewal 2007. **18...♖xa2!** A typical blow. **19.♗h3** Or 19.♔xa2 ♕a8+ 20.♔b1 ♕xe4+ 21.♕d3 ♕xh1 with some advantage to White. **19...♕a5 20.♗xe6+ ♔h8 21.♘g3** After 21.♗xd7 Black regains the piece with 21...♖a1+ 22.♔c2 ♕c7+. **21...♘c5 22.♗c4** But not 22.♗xc5? because of 22...♖a1+ 23.♔c2 ♕xc5+ 24.♗c4 ♖f2!–+.

The diagram position was reached in the game Baramidze-P.H. Nielsen, Germany Bundesliga 2005/06.



analysis diagram

In this position, the simplest way for Black to equalise was **22...♗xg5! 23.♗xg5 ♘xb3!** and after this the game should end in perpetual check, see: 24.♗xb3 ♖a1+ 25.♔c2 ♕c5+ 26.♔d3 ♕d4+ 27.♔c2 ♕c5+ (analysis).

16. ... e5xd4

17. ♘e2xd4

White regains the piece, since after 17...♗xa2 18.♘c6 ♕c7 19.♘xe7+ ♔h8 20.♕xb4 his advantage is obvious.

17. ... b4-b3!

Black succeeds in opening lines on the queenside. The threat is 18...bxa2.

18. ♔c1-b1! b3xc2+!

After 18...bxa2+? 19.♔a1 the white king finds a safe haven, and Black has nothing with which to fight White's initiative on the kingside and in the centre.

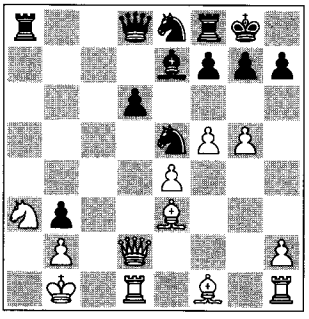
19. ♘d4xc2 ♗e6-b3!

After 19...♗xa2+?! 20.♔xa2 the white king is better protected and his knight can come to d5, via b4, at an appropriate moment.

20. a2xb3 a4xb3

21. ♘c2-a3 ♘d7-e5

The black knight is occupying an excellent position in the centre, and preventing the white bishop coming to c4.

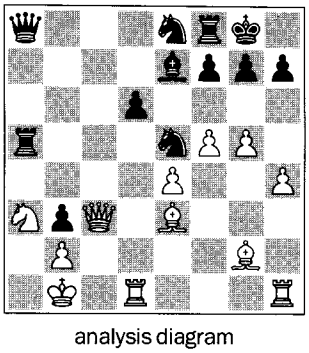


22. h2-h4!?

A multi-functional move. White defends the g5 pawn solidly, freeing his queen and bishop from its defence, and prepares the regrouping ♗d4, ♖h3-b3. The move 22.♕g2!? also deserves consideration, with the childish threat to win a piece by f5-f6.

After the game move Black's minor pieces, apart from the knight on e5, stand badly. If he does not take urgent measures, then he will suffocate for lack of space. Black has two active plans.

The first is to prepare the freeing break ...d6-d5 with **22...♖a5**. This continuation became popular after Anand's brilliant victory over Karjakin at Wijk aan Zee 2006: **23.♕c3?! ♕a8 24.♗g2**



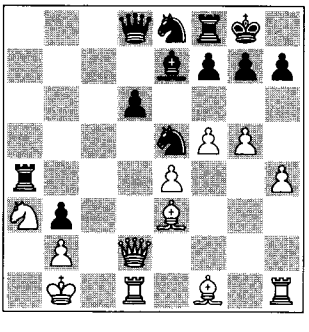
analysis diagram

24...♘c7!! Magnificent! Ignoring the material cost, Black begins an attack on the king. **25.♕xc7 ♖c8 26.♕xe7** 26.♕b6 also fails to save the game because of 26...♘c4 27.♕xb3 ♘xa3+ 28.bxa3 ♖xa3 29.♕b2 ♖b8 30.♗b6 ♖a6 31.e5 ♖a1+ 32.♕xa1 ♖xb6+ 33.♔c2 ♕xg2+ 34.♔c3 dxe5. **26...♘c4!** One white knight is insufficient to resist the attack of all Black's pieces. **27.g6 hxg6 28.fxg6 ♘xa3+ 29.bxa3 ♖xa3 30.gxf7+** Or 30.♕xf7+ ♔h8 31.♗d4 ♖a1+ 32.♗xa1 ♕a2#. **30...♔h7 31.f8♘+ ♖xf8 32.♕xf8 ♖a1+!** Black is a rook and two bishops down, but gives mate! **33.♔b2 ♖a2+ 34.♔c3** 34.♔xb3 ♕a4+ 35.♔c3 ♖c2+ 36.♔d3 ♕c4#. **34...♕a5+ 35.♔d3 ♕b5+ 36.♔d4** 36.♔c3 ♖c2+ 37.♔d4 ♕c4#. **36...♖a4+ 37.♔c3 ♕c4+ 38.♔d2 ♖a2+ 39.♔e1 ♕e2#**

But shortly after, it was discovered that **23.♕b4** (instead of 23.♕c3), with the threat of 24.♗b6, practically forces Black to seek salvation in a rather prospectless ending: **23...♕a8 24.♗b6 ♖a4 25.♕xb3 ♕xe4+ 26.♘c2 ♖a8** 26...♕xh1? is bad because of 27.♕xa4 ♕b7 28.♕a5, and Black's pieces cannot come into play, Swathi-S. Andriasian, Turin ol 2006. **27.♕d5 ♕xd5 28.♖xd5**. The two bishops, the potentially dangerous passed d-pawn and the space advantage give White the better ending, Naer-V. Popov, Moscow 2006.

The second plan is to combine an attack on the white king and on the e4 pawn:

22. ... ♖a8-a4!?



23. ♖h1-h3!

White does not worry about the e4 pawn. After 23...♖xe4 24.♕g2! ♖g4 25.♕b7 ♕d7 26.♕xd7 ♘xd7 27.♘b5! (the poor knight on e8!!) 27...f6 (P. Smirnov-Sjugirov, Moscow 2009) 28.♗e2! ♖a4 (28...♖e4 29.♘c3) 29.♘c3 ♖a8 30.♘d5 ♗d8 31.♗c4 White obtained a large advantage, since Black's pieces again cannot get into play (analysis).

23. ... ♕d8-a8

24. ♕d2-d5

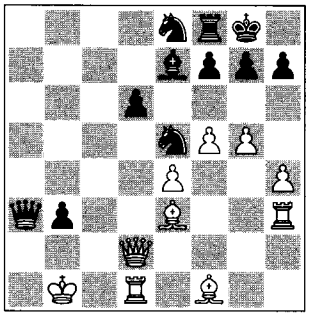
White strives for the endgame. If he succeeds, Black will be condemned to a cheerless defence, as was confirmed by the games Naer-Ftacnik, Philadelphia 2007, 24...♘c7 25.♕xa8 ♖fxa8 26.♗d4 ♖b8 27.♖c3 ♘a6 28.♗b5 ♖a5 29.♗a7 ♖a8 30.♗b6, and Grandelius-S. Ivanov L, Vung Tau jr 2008, 24...♕xd5 25.♖xd5 ♖xe4 26.♘b5 f6 27.♖d4 ♖xd4 28.♘xd4 ♘c7 29.♗d2 g6 30.♖xb3. But the young Armenian player has other plans.

24. ... ♖a4xa3!

25. b2xa3 ♕a8xa3

26. ♕d5-d2

An unclear battle results from 26.♖d2 ♘c7.



26. ... ♘e8-f6!!

Ter Sahakyan's wonderful preparation reminds one of Anand's 24...♘c7!! in the game examined above. By sacrificing his knight, Black achieves excellent coordination of his pieces.

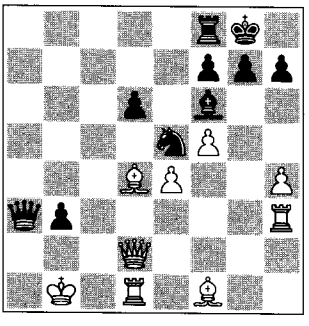
27. g5xf6

Leading to a draw by force. It was possible to continue the double-edged struggle by 27.♗d4!? ♘fd7 28.♕b2 ♕a8 (Inarkiev-Sjugirov, Ulan Ude 2009) 29.♖e3.

27. ... ♗e7xf6

28. ♗e3-d4

After 28.♕b2, the reply 28...♘c4 29.♕xa3 ♘xa3+ 30.♔c1 b2+ is strong.



28. ... ♘e5-f3!

29. ♕d2-b2 ♕a3-a2+

30. ♕b2xa2 b3xa2+

31. ♔b1xa2

And the opponents agreed a **draw**, since after 31...♖a8+ 32.♔b1 ♖b8+ 33.♔c1 ♘xd4 it is impossible to realise the advantage of the exchange for a pawn.

The inspired play of the two opponents in this game illustrates the basic principles of playing such positions: a constant striving for the initiative, backed up by accurate calculation, play on all areas of the board, and a readiness to sacrifice material to improve the coordination of the remaining pieces, and attack the enemy king.

Conclusions

1. In the majority of cases, pure piece play by Black, without the advance of the a- and b-pawns is insufficient. In this case, a pawn storm by the white g- and h-pawns is effective. White usually has enough time to advance his pawn to h5, depriving the black knight of this square, and then to advance his g-pawn to g6 (Adorjan's plan). After this, White is able to destroy completely the enemy king's pawn cover, with the help of the advance of his pawns or the sacrifice of the bishop on h6 (Game 17).

2. The attempt by Black to secure his knight's position on f6 by means of ...h7-h6, after short castling, usually leads to disaster. White opens the g-file and gives mate (Game 17).

3. If Black advances his queenside pawns, then White does not have time to carry out Adorjan's plan, and he must instead drive away the knight with g2-g4-g5, giving the latter the chance to go to h5. Here there are two possible situations:

A) The black knight goes to h5 before White's knight has left c3. In this case, by playing ♘c3-d5! White changes the picture completely, and develops an initiative on the queenside. His e4 pawn goes to d5, the knight on b3 aims for the c6-square, via a5, and with the help of the break c2-c4 White begins a fight for the c-file. In this case, the exchange of queens is almost always favourable for White – the advantage of the two bishops, and the possibility of creating a passed pawn on the queenside in the ending can decide the game (Game 18).

B) Black drives away the c3 knight before his own knight leaves f6. The white knight usually goes to e2 in such cases, and then White chooses his plan, depending on where the black knight retreats to.

If he goes to h5, then it is essential to challenge him with ♘g3 (here, it is good that the white pawn is still on h2). And if the knight jumps to f4, then it is useful for White to remember Topalov's manoeuvre ♘b3-d4! (see the note to Black's 13th move in Game 19), destroying the black central position.

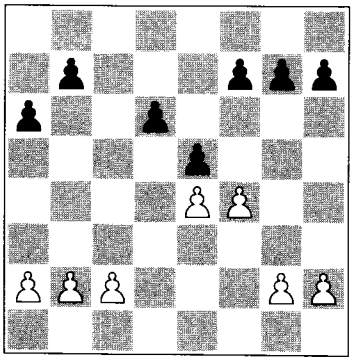
If the black knight goes to e8, then White should bring his f-pawn into action with f3-f4. If Black exchanges on f4 (see the note to Black's 14th move in Game 19) the knight on b3 gets back into play via d4, which assures White the advantage in the centre. More often, Black does not exchange on f4, but continues his attack on the queenside. The f-pawn continues to f5, forcing the exchange of Black's light-squared bishop and creating the preconditions for a kingside pawn storm. In an extremely sharp battle, chances are about equal, and success will go to the more inventive player, who is more familiar with the strategic and tactical ideas of the system (Game 19).

4. As in many other systems of he Sicilian Defence, White should not forget about the prophylactic king move to b1.

In Game 17, 12.♔c1-b1! was a useful waiting move, allowing White to choose the right plan, depending on his opponent's reaction.

In Game 19, with the help of 18.♔b1! White stabilised the situation on the queenside and continued the battle on all areas of the board.

Chapter 4.2 – White Pawns on e4 and f4



This structure, in which the f-pawn advances two squares, in conjunction with long castling, entered tournament practice comparatively recently. The first games on this theme were played in the 1980s.

White's idea is clear. He wishes to seize more space and drive the bishop from e6 by means of f4-f5. If Black exchanges on f4, then White will develop pressure on d6, whilst his knight on b3 can come into the centre to d4, and later to f5.

Black can base his counterplay on the following ideas:

A) to allow f4-f5 and combine an attack on the queenside with pressure against the e4 pawn, which by comparison with the preceding games has been deprived of the defence of the f3-pawn (4.2.1);

B) to exchange on f4, neutralise the pressure against d6 by placing his knight on e5, and then attack on the queenside (4.2.2).

4.2.1 Black allows the white pawn to advance to f5

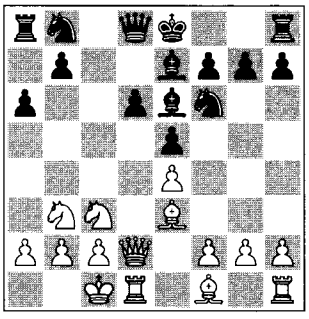
Game 20
Evgeny Naer
Sanan Sjugirov
Ulan-Ude 2009 (8)

Analysis of this game was done in collaboration with Sanan Sjugirov.

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 a7-a6
6. ♗c1-e3 e7-e5
7. ♘d4-b3 ♗c8-e6

In several games, Black continued 7...♗e7 with the idea of meeting 8.♕d2 with 8...♘g4. In this case, after 9.g3! ♘xe3 10.♕xe3 ♗g5 11.f4 exf4 12.gxf4 ♗h4+ 13.♔d2 (Yakovenko-Gashimov, Novi Sad Ech-tt 2009) a complicated position arises, the analysis of which falls outside the scope of this book.

8. ♕d1-d2 ♗f8-e7
9. 0-0-0



9. ... 0-0?!

Surprisingly, in this position, the text move proves to be a serious inaccuracy. Better is **9...♘bd7!**, in order after **10.f4!?** to be able to choose between:

A) **10...exf4 11.♗xf4 ♘e5** with transposition into a position which will be examined in the next game, and

B) **10...b5 11.f5 ♗c4** and now the pawn sacrifice **12.g4! ♘xg4 13.♖g1** does not look so dangerous as after short castling by Black, although in the game Yakovenko-Areschenko, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009, White succeeded in winning brilliantly. But I would remind you that the theme of the present book is positions with opposite-side castling.

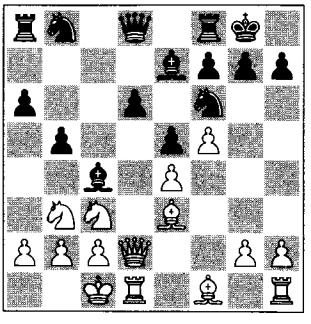
If White plays **10.f3** instead of 10.f4, then after **10...b5 11.g4** Black has a choice – either play **11...0-0** and go into positions examined in the previous games, or try to create play on the queenside before castling, by means of **11...b4 12.♘d5 ♗xd5 13.exd5 ♘b6**.

10. f2-f4 b7-b5

Now after **10...exf4 11.♗xf4** Black cannot put his knight on e5, whilst after **11...♘h5 12.g3! ♘c6 13.♔b1 ♘xf4 14.gxf4** White's position is clearly better, because of his pressure in the centre and on the kingside. In the game Gaponenko-Zhang Jilin, Nalchik Wch 2008, there followed **14...♖c8 15.♕g2!?** 15.♖g1!?. **15...♕b6 16.♖g1 g6** 16...♗f6 17.♖xd6. **17.f5 ♗xb3 18.cxb3** 18.axb3!?. **18...♘e5 19.♘d5 ♕d8 20.♗e2 ♗f6 21.♖df1** with a clear advantage to White.

11. f4-f5 ♗e6-c4

The attempt to go after the e4 pawn fails: **11...♗c8?! 12.g4! ♗b7** After 12...♘xg4 13.♖g1 ♘xe3 14.♕xe3 White develops his attack on the same lines as in the game. **13.g5! ♘xe4 14.♘xe4 ♗xe4 15.♗g2! ♗xg2 16.♕xg2 ♘d7 17.f6** and White wins a piece, Yemelin-Nedilko, Warsaw rapid 2009.



12. g2-g4!

As in Game 4, Spassky-Petrosian, White sacrifices a pawn to open the g-file.

12. ... ♘f6xg4

Accepting the sacrifice is compulsory, since otherwise after 13.g5 Black finds himself in a bad position with equal material.

13. ♖h1-g1 ♘g4xe3

14. ♕d2xe3

How should Black play?

A) Continuing development with **14...♘d7?** does not work, because after 15.♕h6 ♗f6 16.♖xd6 White has a clear advantage;

B) The prophylactic **14...♔h8?** leads to a large advantage for White, after 15.♗xc4 bxc4 16.♘d2 ♕c8 17.♘d5. Therefore Black must part with the light-squared bishop, but by playing

14. ... ♗c4xf1?!

Black failed to assess which white piece would be the bigger threat to him in the future. **14...♗xb3!?** deserved consideration.

A) In the game Ortiz Suarez-P. Carlsson, Burguillos 2009, White played **15.axb3**. There followed **15...♔h8** 15...♘d7? loses to 16.♕h6 ♗f6 17.♖xd6. **16.♘d5 ♘d7 17.♖d3! ♘f6 18.♕g5 ♖g8 19.♖h3 g6** After 19...♘xd5?? 20.♖xh7+ decides. **20.♕h6 ♖g7 21.fxg6** (21.♗d3!? ♘xd5 22.exd5 ♕b6 23.♖hg3 was worth considering) and now instead of the game continuation 21...♘xd5?! 22.exd5 ♕a5 23.c3 ♕a1+ 24.♔c2 ♕e1 25.♕xh7+! ♖xh7 26.♖xh7+ ♔g8 27.gxf7+! ♔xh7 28.♗d3+ with a technically winning endgame for White, Black should have played **21...♘xe4! 22.♖h5 fxg6** Or 22....♗g5+!? 23.♖hxg5 ♘xg5 24.♖xg5 ♖xg6 25.♖xg6 fxg6 with approximately equal chances. **23.♖xg6 ♖f7! 24.♗d3 ♕a5! 25.♘c3! ♗f8 26.♕e3 d5 27.♔b1** with a very sharp position, on which it is much easier to decide in analysis than in a practical game (analysis);

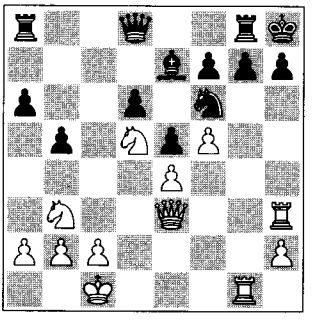
B) **15.♕h6!? ♗f6 16.axb3 ♔h8 17.♕h5 h6** On 17...♘c6 there follows 18.♘d5. **18.♔b1!?** followed by ♖d3 with a very strong initiative for White (analysis).

Black decided that the knight on b3 would not be able to help White in the kingside attack, but as we shall see, he was mistaken.

15. ♖d1xf1 ♔g8-h8
16. ♘c3-d5 ♘b8-d7
17. ♖f1-f3 ♘d7-f6
18. ♖f3-h3!

The threat of 19.♖xg7 would be effected after 18...♘xd5? – 19.♖xg7 ♔xg7 20.♕h6+ ♔g8 21.♕xh7#.

18. ... ♖f8-g8



19. ♘b3-a5!

As in Game 17, the white knight utilises the weakness of the queenside to jump into c6. The positions are completely different, but the devices are the same. If Black had foreseen the brilliant career of the white steed, he would have exchanged it off at move 14.

19. ... ♘f6xd5

Now the knight cannot be taken, in view of 19...♕xa5? 20.♘xf6 ♗xf6 21.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 22.♕h3+ winning.

20. e4xd5

Black is completely deprived of counterplay.

20. ... g7-g5

A desperate attempt to escape. 20...g6 leads after 21.♕h6 ♖g7 22.♘c6 ♕f8 to a position where it is hard for Black to come up with his next move. There could follow 23.c3 ♖e8 24.♔c2 and Black does not have a single active move, since after 24...gxf5? 25.♘xe7 ♖xe7 26.♕f6 decides. Meanwhile White, after improving the position of his king, is ready to undertake active measures on either wing.

21. ♘a5-c6 ♕d8-f8
22. ♔c1-b1 ♗e7-f6
23. ♕e3-e4 a6-a5
24. a2-a3 ♕f8-g7
25. ♖g1-g3

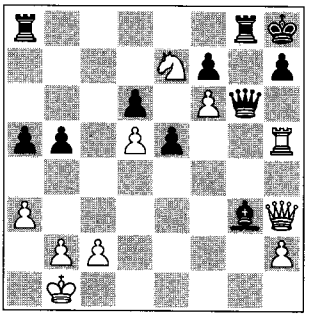
After improving the position of his pieces as much as possible, White is

ready to begin an attack with 26.♖h5 and 27.♖gh3. For example, after 25...♖ac8 there follows 26.♖h5 g4 27.h3 with a decisive attack.

25. ... g5-g4

In mutual time-trouble, Black starts active operations, which usually in such situations will only accelerate his demise, with accurate play. But of course, it is not so easy to find these correct moves when one has too little time.

26. ♖h3-h5 ♗f6-g5
27. ♕e4xg4 ♗g5-f4
28. ♕g4-h3! ♗f4xg3
29. f5-f6! ♕g7-g6
30. ♘c6-e7



It looks as though it is time for Black to resign. After 30...♕e4 the simplest is 31.hxg3 and only then ♘f5 with inevitable mate. But now, like lightning from a clear sky, there followed

30. ... ♖a8-a7!!

This does not save the game. However, in time-trouble, when White has already relaxed and congratulated himself on a job well done, such a surprise is extremely unpleasant. Black has a queen, rook and bishop hanging, yet Black does not move any of them but simply shifts his rook up one square on the far side of the board. However, the point is that there will now be no mate after the queen is taken, since the rook on a7 defends h7!

31. ♘e7xg8?

Of course, the calm 31.♘xg6+! fxg6 32.hxg3 gxh5 33.♕e6 leads to victory – White takes all Black's central pawns and promotes his own passed pawns. But White is determined to give a mate, even though there is not one to give.

31. ... ♖a7-c7!

A cold shower! Black attacks the pawn on c2, at the same time defending the c8-square. Now White should settle for a draw, most simply of all by 32.♕xg3 ♕xc2+ 33.♔a2 ♕c4+ 34.♔a1=.

32. ♖h5-f5 ♗g3-f4

In time-trouble, Black decides against 32...♔xg8 with sharp play, where his chances are not worse. Now a draw results by force.

33. ♘g8-e7 ♕g6-g1+
34. ♔b1-a2 ♖c7xc2
35. ♖f5-h5

Threatening mate, so Black must give perpetual check.

35. ... ♖c2xb2+
36. ♔a2xb2 ♕g1-c1+
37. ♔b2-a2 ♕c1-c2+
38. ♔a2-a1 ♕c2-c1+
39. ♔a1-a2 ♕c1-c2+
40. ♔a2-a1 ♕c2-d1+
41. ♔a1-a2 ♕d1-c2+

Draw agreed.

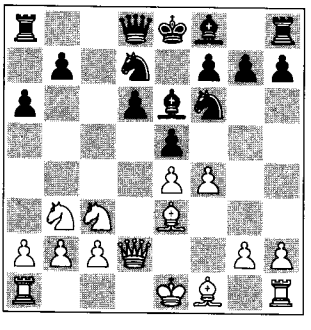
Despite the happy outcome in this game, I would not recommend that Black castle short early, which allows an attack on his king, connected with the advance f4-f5 and the pawn sacrifice g2-g4. Black's counterplay on the queenside and against the e4 pawn is clearly too slow, and he is obliged to go into an endgame where, despite material equality, he has to conduct a passive defence.

Let us see how events may develop after the exchange on f4.

4.2.2 Black exchanges on f4

Game 21
Dmitry Yakovenko
Arkadij Naiditsch
Dortmund 2009 (2)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6
5. ♘b1-c3 a7-a6
6. ♗c1-e3 e7-e5
7. ♘d4-b3 ♗c8-e6
8. ♕d1-d2 ♘b8-d7
9. f2-f4



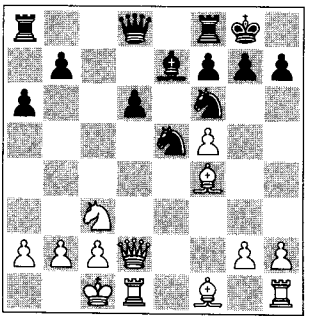
9. ... e5xf4
10. ♗e3xf4 ♘d7-e5

By comparison with the note to Black's 10th move in the preceding game, Black has managed to post his knight on e5 and, in this way, to neutralise White's pressure against the d6 pawn.

11. 0-0-0 ♗f8-e7
12. ♘b3-d4!

Exploiting the absence of the e5 pawn, White activates his knight.

12. ... 0-0
13. ♘d4-f5 ♗e6xf5
14. e4xf5



The bishop pair, the weakness of the d6 pawn and of the light squares in Black's camp means that White has the better long-term chances. Black should seek counterplay energetically, exploiting the c-file and the strong knight on e5. Planless play can quickly land him in a prospectless position, as happened, for example, in the game Grosar-Adianto, Manila ol 1992: 14...♖c8?! 15.♗e2 b5 16.g4! b4 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.♕xd5 ♕b6?! 19.♔b1 ♖fe8 20.♖hf1 ♗f8 21.g5 ♕c7 22.♖d2 a5 23.♗b5.

14. ... b7-b5

Naiditsch immediately starts active play on the queenside.

For a long time, Black did well with the move **14...♕c8**. It appears that White has to defend the pawn with 15.♗d3, weakening his control of the square d5, which Black can exploit immediately, by attacking the knight at c3: 15...b5! 16.♖hf1 ♖b8 17.♔b1 b4 and obtain good counterplay, Grosar-Istratescu, Biel 1993.

But Svidler, against Topalov (Monaco rapid 2006) answered 14...♕c8 with the unexpected **15.h3! ♕xf5** He must take the pawn, else White will continue

g2-g4-g5, when Black will be crushed. **16.g4 ♕g6 17.♗g2** As in Game 4, White obtains long-term compensation for the pawn in the form of control of the light squares and active pieces. Topalov secured the knight's position on f6 by **17...h6** (after 17...♖ab8 18.g5 ♘h5 19.h4 or 19.♘d5 ♖fe8 20.h4 it is hard for Black to coordinate his forces) and now, by continuing **18.♗xb7 ♖ab8 19.♕g2!**, White would re-establish material equality, whilst retaining all the advantages of his position.

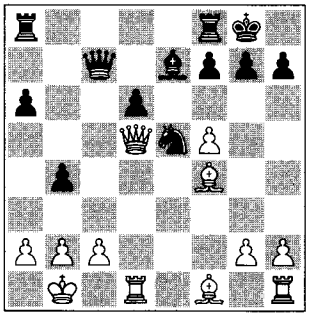
15. ♔c1-b1!

An excellent move!

There is no point in White's spending time preparing the advance of the pawn to g4 by playing 15.♗e2. As we saw in Game 4, this pawn can be sacrificed for the sake of opening the g-file. But after the immediate 15.g4, after 15...b4 16.♘d5 ♘xd5 17.♕xd5 ♗g5 Black had exchanged bishops and was fairly comfortable in Korbut-Gunina, Samara ch-RUS 2005. Therefore Yakovenko plays a typical Sicilian prophylactic move, both securing his king against possible checks on the dark squares and also avoiding the exchange of the f4 bishop.

15. ... b5-b4
16. ♘c3-d5 ♘f6xd5
17. ♕d2xd5 ♕d8-c7

Now on 17...♗g5 there follows 18.g3!.



18. g2-g4!

In this position, this advance does not even involve a pawn sacrifice, since after 18...♘xg4 19.♕g2! ♘e5 20.♗h6 ♗f6 21.♖g1 White wins the exchange.

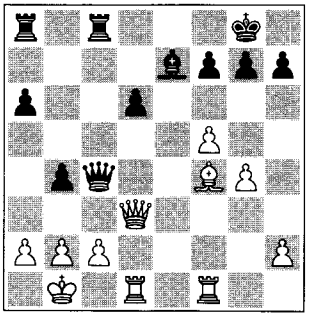
18. ... ♖f8-c8
19. ♗f1-d3!

An improvement on Karjakin-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2009, where Black managed to obtain counterplay after 19.♖d2 a5! 20.g5 a4 21.f6 ♖a5!.

19. ... ♘e5xd3

Now after 19...a5 there follows 20.♗e4! with a positional advantage for White.

20. ♕d5xd3 ♕c7-c4
21. ♖h1-f1



Suddenly, instead of mutual attacks, we have on the board a fairly quiet position with some advantage for White, thanks to his better pawn structure. This is a very important moment for understanding modern methods of play against the Sicilian. After Black, in defending against White's attack, has to a greater or lesser extent compromised his position, White is always ready to take play into quieter channels and set about exploiting the pawn weaknesses. The game Svidler-Ponomariov (Game 17) saw a similar pattern.

21. ... h7-h6
22. h2-h3 d6-d5
23. ♗f4-e5

Yakovenko threatens to totally destroy Black's pawn structure by f5-f6.

The move 23.♗c1!? deserved consideration, with the idea of bringing the f1 rook via f4 to d4. In this case, it would not be easy for Black to defend the weakness on d5.

23. ... ♖c8-c6?!

Now White forces a queen exchange, which is favourable for him. It was possible to meet the threat of f5-f6 by moving the bishop. After **23...♗g5** White relieves the pressure on c2 by continuing 24.c3! bxc3 25.♗xc3, and after 25...♖ab8 26.♕xc4 ♖xc4 (26...dxc4 27.♔c2) 27.♖f3 Black faces an unpleasant defence in the endgame.

Stronger was **23...♗h4!?**, taking under control the square e1, and preparing the transfer of the queen to e4. Yakovenko offers the following variation: **24.f6** 24.b3 ♕e4=; 24.♖f4? ♕xd3 25.♖xd3 ♖e8. **24...♕e4! 25.♗d4 g6 26.♗e3 ♖c6!** But not 26...♔h7? because of 27.♕xe4 dxe4 28.♖d4. **27.♗xh6 ♗xf6** and Black is close to equality.

24. b2-b3! ♕c4xd3

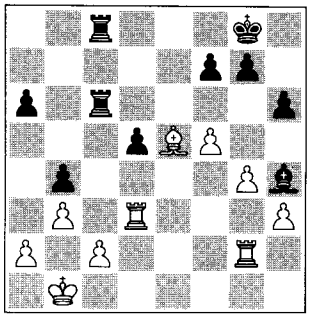
After 24...♕e4 there follows 25.♖fe1.

25. ♖d1xd3 ♖a8-c8

26. ♖f1-f2 ♗e7-h4

27. ♖f2-g2

After 27.♖e2?! Black equalises by means of 27...♖e8! 28.♖dd2 ♗g5 29.♗d4 ♖cc8 30.♖xe8+ ♖xe8.



27. ... f7-f6?

A serious strategic error. Now any bishop endgame will be lost for Black, and in addition, the weakness of the square e6 may become significant. The immediate 27...♖c5 was stronger.

28. ♗e5-b2 ♖c6-c5

29. ♖g2-e2 ♗h4-g5

30. a2-a3?!

It was better first to lure the black pawn to a5, so that after the game continuation, when the white rook takes on d5, it will also attack a second Black pawn. This could have been achieved by the following manoeuvre: 30.♖d1!? (with the idea of 31.♖de1) 30...♗h4 31.♖d4! a5 32.a3 ♖b5 (now after 32...bxa3 33.♗xa3 ♖c3 there follows 34.♖xd5 ♖xh3 35.♖xa5 with a winning endgame) 33.axb4 axb4 34.♖e7 with strong pressure in the ending.

30. ... b4xa3

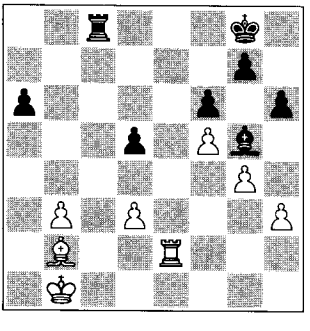
31. ♗b2xa3 ♖c5-c3!

32. ♗a3-b2

The result of the pawn queening race 32.♖xd5 ♖xh3 33.♖a5 ♖g3 is completely unclear.

32. ... ♖c3xd3

33. c2xd3



33. ... ♔g8-f7?

A terrible mistake, the result, according to Naiditsch, of an incorrect assessment of the possible bishop endgame.

Ftacnik showed that a draw results from 33...a5!? 34.♖e7 (34.♖c2 ♖e8) 34...♗d2! (not allowing the white bishop to c3) 35.♖d7 ♗b4 36.♖xd5 ♖e8, as it does also from Yakovenko's 33...♔h7!?, preparing counterplay with ...h6-h5, ...♗f4, ...♔h6, whilst if White continues the same way as in the game, he is lacking a very important tempo.

34. ♖e2-e6 a6-a5

Arkady had planned to play 34...♖e8, but later realised that the endgame arising after 35.♖xe8! ♔xe8 36.♔a2! is hopeless for Black. Yakovenko pointed out the following winning plan. The two kings come to the queenside, after which the white bishop goes to f8. Black defends the g7 pawn by playing h5 and ♗h6, but he perishes due to zugzwang. Dmitry quoted the following illustrative variation: 36...♔d7 37.♔a3 ♔c6 38.♔a4 ♔b6 39.♗d4+ ♔c6 40.♔a5 ♔b7 41.♗c5 ♗d2+ 42.♔a4 h5 43.gxh5 ♗f4 44.♗f8 ♗h6 45.♔b4 ♔b6 46.♔c3 ♔c6 47.♔d4 a5 48.h4 and White wins.

35. ♖e6-d6 ♖c8-e8

36. ♖d6-d7+ ♔f7-g8

36...♖e7 37.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 38.♗c3 again leads to a hopeless bishop endgame for Black.

37. ♗b2-c3!

Not allowing the black bishop into d2 – 37.♖xd5?! ♗d2.

37. ... ♖e8-e3

38. ♖d7xd5 ♖e3xh3

39. ♗c3xa5 ♖h3-h4

40. b3-b4 ♖h4xg4

He cannot hold up the b-pawn: 40...♗d2 41.♔c2 ♖h2 42.♔d1 ♗c3 43.♖c5 ♖d2+ 44.♔c1 ♖xd3 45.♔c2 ♗xb4 46.♖c8+ ♔h7 47.♔xd3 ♗xa5 48.♔e4 with an easy win (Yakovenko).

41. b4-b5 ♗g5-e3

Trying to stop the white pawn on the seventh rank does not solve Black's problems: 41...h5 42.b6 ♗f4 43.b7 ♔h7 (43...h4 loses at once to 44.♖d4!) 44.♖d7 ♗g3 (or 44...♗b8 45.d4! (45.♗c7?? ♖b4+−+) 45...♖e4 46.♖d8 ♗f4 47.d5 winning) 45.d4! (with the threat 46.♗c7) 45...♗b8 46.♗c7 ♗a7 47.♖d8 winning.

42. ♔b1-c2

But not 42.b6? because of 42...♗xb6 43.♗xb6 ♖b4+.

42. ... ♖g4-g2+

43. ♔c2-b3 ♖g2-g1

44. ♔b3-a2 ♖g1-g2+

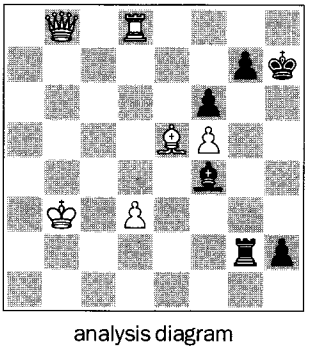
45. ♔a2-a3! ♗e3-c1+

Black can give up the bishop for the b-pawn, but with accurate play White still wins: 45...h5 46.b6 ♗xb6 47.♗xb6 h4 48.♖d8+! ♔h7 49.♖d4 ♖h2 50.♔b3 ♔h6 51.♖g4! h3 52.♗c7 ♖h1 53.♔c2 h2 54.♗f4+ ♔h5 55.♖xg7 ♖g1 56.♖h7+ (Yakovenko).

46. ♔a3-b3 h6-h5

Or 46...♖b2+ 47.♔c3 h5 48.b6 h4 49.♗b4 ♖b1 50.b7 ♗f4 51.♖d8+ ♔h7 52.♖d4 ♗e5 53.♔c4+−.

Yakovenko states that at this moment, he calculated the variation 47.b6 h4 48.♗c3 h3 49.b7 ♗f4 50.♗e5! h2 51.b8♕+ ♔h7 52.♖d8.



analysis diagram

It seems that White wins, but... 52...♖b2+ and Black wins. Dmitry had little time left, but in any event the pawn must be pushed, so he played

47. b5-b6 h5-h4

Despite using almost all of his remaining time, Dmitry did not find the precise winning line starting with 48.♖d8+! – 48...♔h7 49.♖d4 ♖b2+ 50.♔c3 h3 51.♗b4! (51.♖h4+ ♔g8 52.♖xh3 ♖b5=) 51...♖f2 52.♖h4+ ♔g8 53.b7 ♗b2+ 54.♔c4 ♗e5 55.♖xh3 ♖xf5 56.♖e3. Instead, a series of moves were played.

48. ♗a5-c3 h4-h3

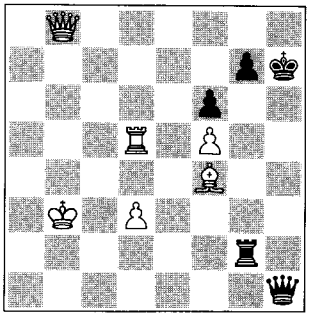
49. b6-b7 ♗c1-f4

50. ♗c3-e5! h3-h2

After 50...♗xe5 51.♖xe5 fxe5 52.b8♕+ ♔h7 the white queen successfully defeats the black passed pawns, e.g. 53.♕b7 ♖f2 54.♕e4 h2 55.f6+ ♔g8 56.♕d5+ ♔h7 57.fxg7 ♔xg7 58.♕xe5++–.

51. b7-b8♕+ ♔g8-h7

52. ♗e5xf4! h2-h1♕



53. ♖d5-d8!

At this moment, Yakovenko had not seen that there is no perpetual check, but his intuition did not deceive the Russian grandmaster. It is most interesting to see how White's king and bishop cope with the pursuit of the enemy queen and rook.

53. ... ♕h1-d1+

Or 53...♕b1+ 54.♔c3 ♕xb8 55.♖xb8 ♖f2 56.♖b4+–

54. ♔b3-c4 ♖g2-c2+

The winning route is longer after 54...♕a4+. This is the computer's main line: 55.♔d5 ♕a2+ 56.♔e4 ♕e2+ 57.♔d4 ♕f2+ 58.♗e3 ♖g4+ 59.♔c3 ♕e1+ 60.♗d2 ♕a1+ 61.♔c2 ♕a2+ 62.♔d1 ♕a1+ 63.♔e2 ♖g2+ 64.♔f3 ♕f1+ 65.♔e4 ♕e2+ 66.♔d4 ♖g4+ 67.♗f4 ♕f2+ 68.♔c3 ♕c5+ 69.♔b3 and that is it – the checks end.

55. ♔c4-d4 ♕d1-a1+

Or 55...♕g1+ 56.♗e3 ♕g4+ 57.♕f4+–.

56. ♔d4-d5 ♕a1-a5+

57. ♔d5-e4! ♕a5-e1+

58. ♗f4-e3 ♕e1-h1+

59. ♔e4-d4 ♕h1-a1+

59...♕h4+ 60.♕f4+–.

60. ♔d4-d5 ♕a1-a5+

Or 60...♕h1+ 61.♔e6 ♕c6+ 62.♔f7 ♕c7+ 63.♕xc7 ♖xc7+ 64.♔e6+–.

61. ♔d5-e4 ♕a5-a4+

62. d3-d4

After 62...♕c6+ 63.♔f4 Black must exchange queens to avoid mate. Therefore he resigned.

Conclusions

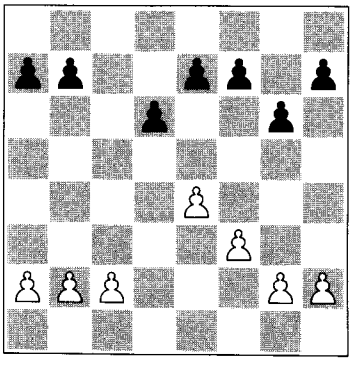
1. The plan with f2-f4 is exceptionally dangerous after short castling by Black.

2. If White succeeds in playing f4-f5, driving the bishop from e6 and seizing space on the kingside, then by analogy with Game 4, he should immediately throw forward the g-pawn. Black must accept this sacrifice, otherwise by playing g4-g5, White develops a very strong attack with equal material. In the resulting position, White's long-term initiative more than compensates for the sacrificed material (Game 20).

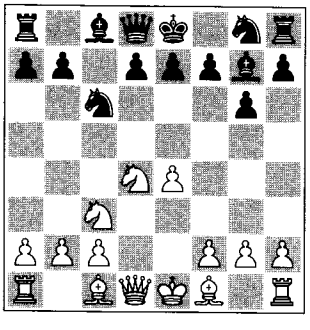
3. If, in order to prevent f4-f5, Black exchanges on f4, then White transfers his knight from b3 to d4 and f5, forcing Black to exchange his light-squared bishop. In this case, with the advance of the g-pawn still threatened, White should play for exchanges and the simplification of the position, to exploit his long-term pluses – the better pawn structure and superiority on the light squares (Game 21).

4. In my view, if White does not hurry to play f2-f3, Black in this structure should in turn not rush to castle short. I would suggest that he direct his attention to the positions which arise after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗e6 8.♕d2 ♗e7 9.0-0-0 ♘bd7! 10.f4 b5** or **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗e7 8.♕d2 ♘g4**.

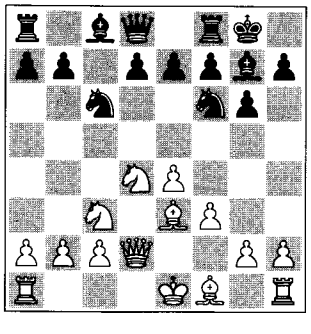
Part 5 – Dragon Structure
Black Fianchettoes his Bishop to g7



Variations of the Sicilian where White plays d2-d4, and Black fianchettoes his king's bishop, are known by the general name of the Dragon. There are countless monographs on this interesting system. In some lines, Black leaves his d-pawn on its original square, playing **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4** 4.♕xd4!?. **4...♗g7 5.♘c3 ♘c6** or **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7**.

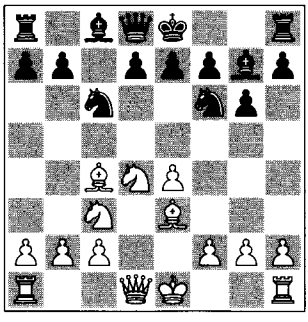


Nowadays, this move-order is known as the Accelerated Dragon. Its advantages for Black are obvious – at the right moment, he is ready to play ...d7-d5, for example after **6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.f3?! 0-0 8.♕d2?!** in the second line:



Black attacks the centre with **8...d5!** before White has finished his development, thereby depriving White of the systems with long castling without the bishop on c4.

In the Accelerated Dragon, White can castle long only after developing his bishop to c4: **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♗c4**.



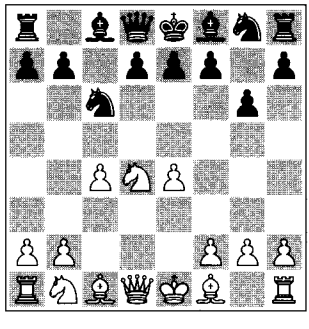
Now **7...0-0 8.♗b3!** 8.f3?! is bad because of 8...♕b6!. **8...d6 9.f3** often leads to positions examined in Chapter 5.3, although Black has some additional options, connected with the early retreat of the bishop to b3, e.g. **9...♗d7 10.♕d2** 10.h4!?. **10...♘xd4 11.♗xd4 b5!**.

Generally speaking, in the Accelerated Dragon Black can even force White to fight for an advantage by castling short (although it remains unclear how successfully this allows Black to solve his opening problems), by choosing in the diagram position:

A) **7...♕a5**, forcing **8.0-0!** since otherwise the e4 pawn is lost – 8.♕d2? ♘xe4! 9.♘xc6 ♕xc3! or 8.f3? ♕b4! 9.♗b3 ♘xe4! 10.♘xc6 ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 12.♔e2 dxc6 13.♗d4?! e5!; or

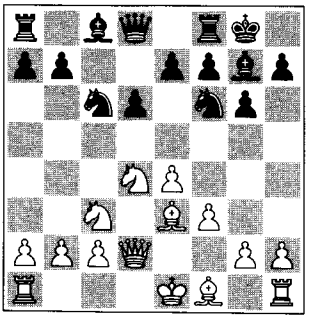
B) **7...0-0 8.♗b3 a5 9.0-0!**.

We have described the pluses of the Accelerated Dragon, but as is so often the case, these come at the cost of some downside, too. For lovers of sharp play, after the moves **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6**, the so-called Maroczy Bind is unpleasant – **5.c4!?**.



Ironically, the move 5.c4 was first seen in a game Swiderski-Maroczy, Monte Carlo 1904. Yes, the great Hungarian was Black! One can only guess how the system has ended up being named after him. Maybe it is because he was the first to describe White's ideas – to seize space and restrict the opponent's active possibilities. Naturally, in such a structure, White castles short and therefore its analysis is outside the scope of this book.

The subject of our analysis will be the position reached after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6!? 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6**, forcing **5.♘c3** and not allowing the Maroczy Bind. **5...g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7** 6...♘g4?? loses a piece – 7.♗b5+. **7.f3 0-0 8.♕d2 ♘c6** 8...d5? is too early because of 9.e5 with a clear advantage to White.



It is this set-up, found by Vsevolod Rauzer (a brilliant theoretician, who enriched many openings with his deep ideas, as part of his thesis of proving that '1.e2-e4! and White wins!'), which has always been associated with a specific plan to 'refute' the Dragon. White's plan was succinctly summed up by Robert Fischer – 'Castle long, open the h-file, check, check, and mate!' However, as we will see below, Black is generally not prepared to agree with the genius' proposals.

White has a choice – to castle at once (Chapter 5.2) or first bring the bishop to c4 (Chapter 5.3).

By analogy with the previous sections, it makes sense to leave the bishop at home and begin an attack on the enemy king as quickly as possible, whilst the bishop may later capture the enemy knight in one move, when it comes to c4. But after **9.0-0-0** White must reckon with the central blow **9...d5!** (Games 25-27).

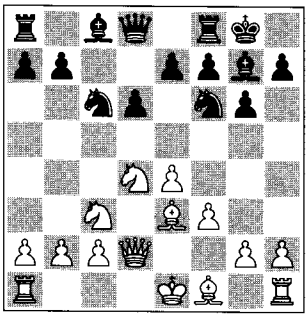
Bringing the bishop to c4 cuts off Black's central activity at the roots, but it involves the loss of time, and in the near future, the bishop will have to move again to b3.

It seems that White can combine both ideas by playing 9.g4 in the diagram position. Now 9...d5 is bad because of 10.g5, and the basis is laid for a kingside attack. We will discuss this continuation in Chapter 5.1.

Chapter 5.1– The Prophylactic Advance of the White g-Pawn

Game 22
Jüri Siigur
Tobias Habermehl
Corr. 2007

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**g7-g6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♗f8-g7**
7.	**♕d1-d2**	**♘b8-c6**
8.	**f2-f3**	**0-0**



9. g2-g4

Convincing victories by Anatoly Karpov, over Mestel and Miles at the London tournament in 1982, resulted in a sharp increase in the popularity of this move during the 1980s. As we said above, White prevents the advance ...d6-d5 and seizes space on the kingside, laying the basis for his attack on the enemy king. What more could one want from one move? However, there is a fly in the ointment. The fact is, the move g2-g4 often proves unnecessary. The key thing in the attack on the black king is to open the h-file, and as we will see later in the analysis of Game 23, White can manage without the advance of the g-pawn. In many cases, g2-g4 turns out to be simply a lost tempo!

9. ... ♗c8-e6!

White has weakened the pawn on f3, therefore Black need not fear 10.♘xe6 fxe6. Play on the f-file and the increased control of the centre provide sufficient compensation for the weakened pawn structure.

In the event of the preliminary exchange 9...♘xd4 10.♗xd4 followed by 10...♗e6, the move 11.h4! deserves consideration, when 11...d5? is not possible because of 12.g5, winning a pawn.

Now after 10.h4 the move 10...d5! 11.g5 ♘h5 is strong, with excellent play for Black, so White has no reason to delay castling any longer.

10. 0-0-0 ♘c6xd4
11. ♗e3xd4 ♕d8-a5!

Exactly! Unlike the positions examined in sections 1-3, in the Dragon the immediate advance of Black's queenside pawns does not give sufficient counterplay (see the note to Black's 11th move in Game 23). After Black finally plays ...b5-b4, the white knight settles comfortably on d5, and unlike Games 1 and 2, in this case, the knight goes there without any sacrifice of material. Consequently, Black first develops piece pressure against White's castled position, forcing a2-a3, and only then goes over to a pawn storm.

12. a2-a3

Nothing significant changes after 12.♔b1 (threatening 13.♘d5)

12...♖fc8 (with the idea of sacrificing the exchange on c3 at a convenient moment) 13.a3 ♖ab8.

12. ... ♖a8-b8

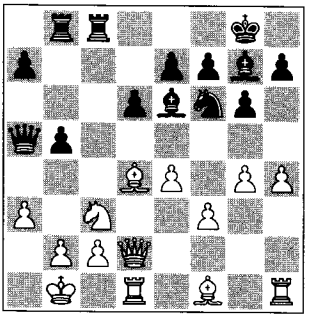
13. ♔c1-b1 ♖f8-c8!

Of course, not 13...b5? because of 14.♘d5.

14. h2-h4

A quick draw results from 14.♘d5 ♕xd2 15.♖xd2 ♘xd5 16.♗xg7 (16.exd5? loses a pawn, since after 16...♗xd5 17.♗xg7 Black has the zwischenzug 17...♗xf3!) 16...♘e3!? ½-½ Anand-Kasparov, New York PCA Championship m-15 1995.

14. ... b7-b5



15. ♘c3-d5

Sad necessity. White must head into an equal endgame, since Black is significantly faster with his attack on the white king. After **15.h5?** there follows **15...b4!** with the following possible variations:

A) **16.♘d5** ♘xd5 17.♗xg7 (17.exd5 ♕xd5) 17...♘c3+ 18.♔a1 bxa3 19.b3 ♔xg7 20.hxg6 fxg6;

B) **16.♘e2** ♕a4 17.h6 bxa3;

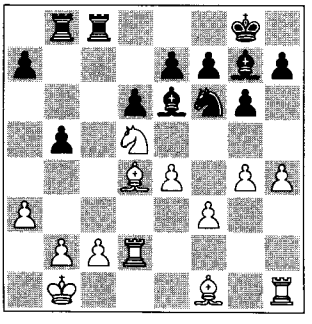
C) **16.♘a2** ♕a4 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.g5 ♗xa2+ 19.♔xa2 ♖xc2 20.gxf6 ♕xa3+;

D) **16.axb4** ♕xb4 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♗xd5 19.♕xb4 ♖xb4 20.♗xg7 ♗xf3.

In all cases, Black has a decisive advantage.

15. ... ♕a5xd2

16. ♖d1xd2



16. ... ♗e6xd5

To those who like to live on their nerves, we can recommend 16...♘xd5 17.exd5 (17.♗xg7 ♘e3 18.♗d4 ♘xf1 19.♖xf1 a5 20.e5 leads to equality, ½-½ J. Polgar-Anand, Dortmund 1997) 17...♗xd5!? (17...♗xd4 18.♖xd4 ♗d7 leads to an inferior, but tenable ending) 18.♗xg7 ♗xf3 19.♖h3 ♗xg4 20.♖g3 ♔xg7 21.♖xg4 ♖c5 with a sharp endgame, Nyzhnyk-Reinderman, Groningen 2009.

17. e4xd5 ♖c8-c7

17...a5 also looks good.

18. h4-h5 ♘f6-d7!

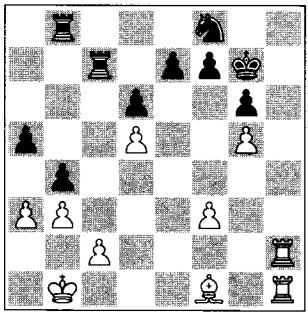
White must part with his bishop pair, otherwise Black's initiative on the queenside will become very dangerous.

19. h5xg6 h7xg6

20. g4-g5!

Taking the square f6 from the black knight. In the game Lhagvasuren-Tiviakov, Cheliabinsk 1990, White immediately doubled rooks on the h-file, 20.♗xg7 ♔xg7 21.♖dh2, but after 21...♘f6! 22.g5 ♘h5 23.f4 ♖c5! 24.♗e2 ♖h8 Black took over the initiative, since after 25.♗f3 there follows 25...♖c4!.

20.	...	a7-a5
21.	b2-b3	b5-b4
22.	♗d4xg7	♔g8xg7
23.	♖d2-h2	♘d7-f8



The chances are equal. The game ended in a draw after

24.	a3-a4	♖c7-c3
25.	♗f1-d3	♖b8-c8
26.	f3-f4	♖c8-c5
27.	♖h2-e2	e7-e5
28.	d5xe6	♘f8xe6
29.	♖h1-f1	♘e6-d4
30.	♖e2-d2	d6-d5
31.	♔b1-b2	♔g7-f8
32.	f4-f5	♘d4xf5
33.	♗d3xf5	g6xf5
34.	♖f1xf5	d5-d4
35.	♖f5xc5	♖c3xc5
36.	♖d2xd4	♖c5xg5
37.	c2-c4	♔f8-e7
38.	♖d4-d2	f7-f5
39.	♖d2-d5	♖g5-g2+
	½-½	

Conclusions

1. The move 9.g2-g4, which seems useful at first glance, actually involves a significant slowing of the attack.

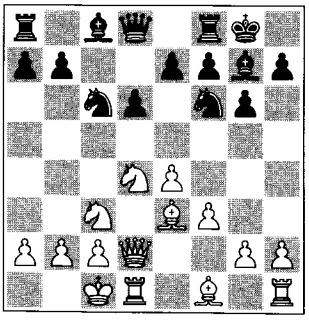
2. Black should first develop piece pressure on the white king position, with the aim of forcing the advance of the pawn to a3, and only then go over to a pawn storm.

3. White's attack, involving the opening of the h-file, is clearly too late, and he is therefore forced to exchange queens by playing ♘d5, which leads to an equal endgame.

In our time, the plan 9.g4 has lost most of its supporters. If White does not wish to develop his bishop to c4, then he usually prefers to castle long at move 9.

Chapter 5.2 – White Castles Long with his Bishop Still on f1

1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.♘g1-f3 d7-d6 3.d2-d4 c5xd4 4.♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6 5.♘b1-c3 g7-g6 6.♗c1-e3 ♗f8-g7 7.f2-f3 0-0 8.♕d1-d2 ♘b8-c6 9.0-0-0!?



Without losing time, White completes the development of his queenside, and as in the previous section, Black faces a choice: to try his luck with a mutual race of opposing attacks (Games 23 and 24), or immediately to take action in the centre (Games 25, 26 and 27). Firstly, let us see how much difference the substitution of 9.0-0-0 for 9.g4 makes, if Black follows the same plan as in Game 22.

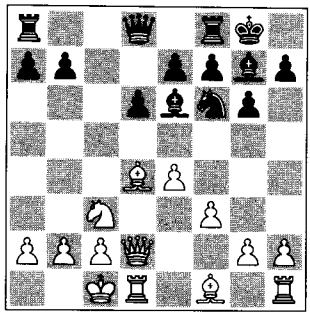
5.2.1 Mutual attacks on the flanks

Game 23
John van der Wiel
Gyula Sax
Plovdiv Ech-tt 1983 (5)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**g7-g6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♗f8-g7**
7.	**f2-f3**	**♘b8-c6**
8.	**♕d1-d2**	**0-0**
9.	**0-0-0**	**♘c6xd4**

Now the immediate 9...♗e6? is bad because of 10.♘xe6 fxe6 11.g3! ♖c8 (11...♕a5 12.♗c4!) 12.♗h3! with a clear advantage to White.

10. ♗e3xd4 ♗c8-e6



11. ♔c1-b1!

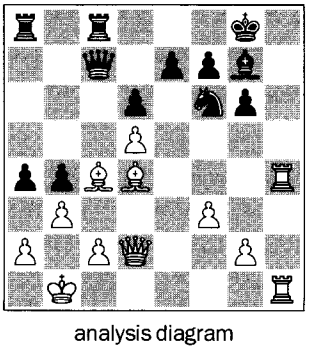
Here, this universal Sicilian prophylactic move is especially useful! White temporarily prevents the black queen taking up her most active post (after 11...♕a5? there follows 12.♘d5 with a large advantage to White). In order to

achieve the same set-up as in Game 22, Black must lose precious time, by playing first

11. ... ♕d8-c7

Then ...♖fc8 – and when the knight jump to d5 is not dangerous, ...♕a5.

Perhaps Black should after all try a queenside pawn storm: **11...a6 12.h4! b5** After 12...h5 there follows the typical reaction 13.g4! hxg4 14.h5! gxh5 15.♕g5! The idea of this attack will be examined in detail in the note to Black's 12th move. **13.h5 b4** And now, by comparison with the positions we saw in Parts 1 and 2, here the white knight can jump into the centre without any sacrifice of material – **14.♘d5!** and it turns out that Black has practically wasted his time. White is already prepared for a direct attack on the king, and Black does not have a trace of counterplay. **14...♗xd5 15.exd5 ♕a5 16.hxg6 hxg6** After 16...fxg6 17.♕e1!? ♖f7 18.a3 ♖b8 19.axb4 ♕xb4 20.♕xb4 ♖xb4 21.♗xa6 ♖f8 22.c3 ♖b3 23.♔c2 White, in the game Navara-Virabian, Oropesa del Mar jr 2000, obtained a technically winning endgame. **17.♗c4 ♖fc8 18.b3!?** This is even stronger than 18.♗b3, seen in Geller-Horowitz, New York USA-USSR 1954. Black is defenceless against the attack along the h-file. The game could continue as follows: **18...♕c7 19.♖h4 a5 20.♖dh1 a4**



analysis diagram

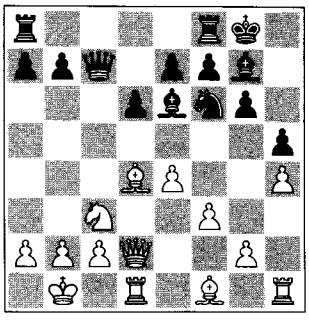
21.♕h6!! ♗xh6 Nor does 21...e5 save Black, because of 22.dxe6 ♗xh6 23.♖xh6 fxe6 24.♗xe6+ ♔f8 25.♗xf6. **22.♖xh6 g5 23.♖h8+ ♔g7 24.♖1h7+ ♔g6 25.♗d3+** with a quick mate (analysis).

Let's return to the text game. With the advance of which pawn should White start the attack?

In the great majority of Dragon positions, he should start with the h-pawn! It is essential to open lines on the kingside as quickly as possible. White starts with the g-pawn in those cases where he does not fear a quick counterattack on the queenside, and does not want to allow Black to answer h2-h4 with ...h7-h5 (see Game 24). Therefore:

12. h2-h4! ♖f8-c8

So what does White intend to play after **12...h5** ?



analysis diagram

In the first instance, one should examine the radical **13.g4! hxg4 14.h5!**.

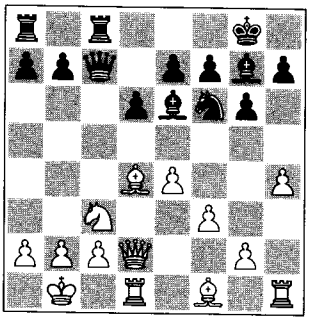
How should Black take?

A) **14...♘xh5** loses immediately because of 15.♗xg7 ♘xg7 16.♕h6 ♘h5 17.♖xh5 gxh5 18.♕g5+ ♔h7 19.♕xh5+ ♔g7 20.♕g5+ ♔h7 21.♗d3 with inevitable mate;

B) Nor does **14...gxh5** help, because of **15.♕g5!**. We have already seen a

similar situation in the note to Black's 11th move. Black has two extra pawns, but White has two open lines. The complete lack of counterplay allows White to involve all his pieces in the attack. In the game Blodstein-Serper, USSR 1982, there followed **15...♖fc8 16.♗d3 b5 17.fxg4 ♗xg4** After 17...hxg4 the beautiful 18.♖h7! ♔xh7 19.e5+ ♔g8 20.exf6 decides. **18.♘d5 ♕d8 19.♖dg1 e5 20.♖xh5 exd4** Or 20...♘xh5 21.♕xg4 exd4 22.♕xh5+–. **21.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 22.♕xg4 ♖c5 23.e5 ♖xe5 24.♖h7 ♔f8 25.♖xg7 ♔e7 26.b3 a5 27.♖f1 a4 28.♖xf7+** and Black resigned. A striking crush!

To return to the game:



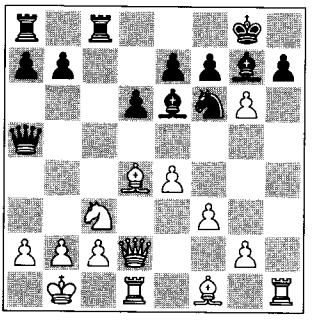
13. h4-h5!

As we see, it is possible to dispense with g2-g4.

13. ... ♕c7-a5

In this position, 13...♘xh5? loses at once: 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.g4 ♘f6 16.♕h6+ ♔g8 17.e5! (opening the diagonal b1-h7) 17...dxe5 18.g5 ♘h5 19.♗d3 e4 20.♖xh5 gxh5 21.♘xe4 ♕f4 22.♘f6+ exf6 23.♗xh7+ ♔h8 24.♗f5+ ♔g8 25.♕h7+ ♔f8 26.♕h8+ 1-0 Evans-Zuckerman, New York ch-USA 1966/67.

14. h5xg6



14. ... h7xg6

Capturing with the f-pawn is also possible: **14...fxg6** White's plan remains the same as in the game, but there are certain nuances, connected with the changed pawn structure. **15.a3 ♖ab8 16.♗d3**

A) Black can try to exploit the absence of the f-pawn by means of **16...♗f7**, with the idea of playing ...c7-c5 at a convenient moment. In my opinion, a strong move in this case is **17.♕e3! b5** Now after 17...e5 there follows 18.♗xa7. **18.♘d5 e5** Now it is time. Black does not last long in the following two lines:

A1) **18...♗xd5** 19.exd5 b4 20.♗xf6 exf6 (20...♗xf6 21.♕e6+ ♔g7 22.♖xh7+) 21.♕e6+ ♔h8 22.♖xh7+ with unavoidable mate;

A2) **18...b4** 19.♘xe7+ ♔f8 20.♘xc8 bxa3 21.♕f4 axb2 (21...♖xc8 22.♗xf6 axb2 23.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 24.♖xh7+) 22.♕xd6+ ♔g8 23.♘e7++–.

A3) **18...e5** Now it is time. **19.♘e7+ ♔f8** After 19...♔h8 20.♗xa7 b4 21.♗xb8 decides. **20.♘xc8 exd4 21.♕xd4 ♖xc8 22.♕xd6+ ♔g8 23.e5 ♖d8!?** The game Ruck-Feletar, Hungary tt-2 2007/08, went 23...♘e8 24.♕d7 ♖d8, and the players unexpectedly agreed a draw, although after 25.♕xb5 or 25.♕h3 White's advantage is obvious. **24.♕c6 ♘d5 25.♗e4!** The white

pieces dominate the board. Possible variations:

A31) **25...b4** 26.e6 ♗e8 27.♖xd5;

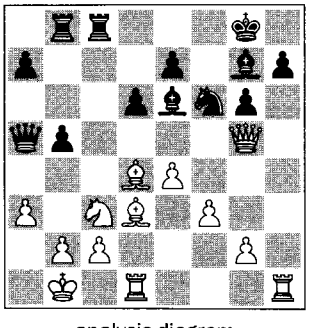
A32) **25...♘f4** 26.g3 ♘e6 27.f4;

A33) **25...♘e7** 26.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 27.♕d6 ♕f8 28.f4;

A34) **25...♘e3** 26.e6 ♗e8 27.e7 ♖xd1+ 28.♖xd1 ♔f7 (28...♗xc6 29.♗xc6) 29.♗d5+ ♘xd5 30.♕xd5+ ♔xe7 31.♕g8.

With a decisive advantage to White in all cases (analysis).

B) **16...b5 17.♕g5** and now:



analysis diagram

B1) If **17...♕c7** 18.e5 dxe5 19.♗xe5 White's attack develops as in the game, whilst:

B2) **17...♗c4** 18.♗xc4+ ♖xc4 19.♘d5 leads to an enormous advantage for White;

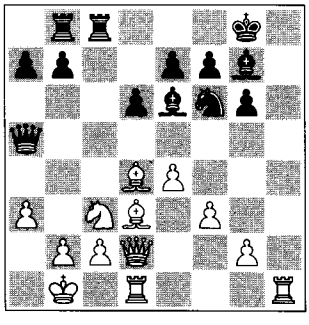
B3) **17...♗f7 18.♘d5 ♗xd5** On 18...♕d8 19.♕h4 is strong. **19.♗xf6 ♗xf6** After the cunning 19...b4 (with the idea of meeting 20.♗xg7 by 20...♗a2+, winning the queen), White has the brilliant retort 20.♗c4!!, destroying the coordination of the black pieces: 20...♖xc4 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 (or 21...♖xc2 22.♖xd5) 22.♕xe7+ ♗f7 23.♖xh7+ ♔xh7 24.♕xf7+ and the black king sets off on a journey from which it will never return, e.g. 24...♔h6 25.♖h1+ ♔g5 26.♕e7+ ♔f4 27.♕xd6+ ♔g5 28.f4+ ♔g4 29.♕xg6+ ♔xf4 30.♕f6+ ♔xe4 31.♖e1+ ♔d5 32.♖e5++–.

20.♕xd5+ ♔g7 21.e5 J. Willemze-Zult, Hengelo jr 1995 and Black resigned because of 21...♗xe5 22.♖xh7+.

15. a2-a3 ♖a8-b8

After 15...♗c4 there follows 16.♗xc4 ♖xc4 17.♕c1! and we reach a position from the note to Black's 16th move, with the sole difference that in this case the black rook is on a8, not b8. This insignificant detail does not influence the assessment of the position, nor White's plan of attack.

16. ♗f1-d3



It is useful to compare this position with that after Black's 14th move in Game 22. Here White has achieved rather more – the h-file is already open, his rooks are connected, and his light-squared bishop has occupied a strong post on d3, where it defends c2 and is ready to come into the attack on the b1-h7 diagonal.

16. ... b7-b5

The attempt to exchange light-squared bishops by **16...♗c4** is refuted by **17.♗xc4 ♖xc4 18.♕c1!** with the terrible threat of 19.♘d5: **18...e6** The only defence. **19.g4 b5** Or 19...♖bc8 20.g5 ♘h5 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 22.♖xd6 with an

extra pawn for White, Korneev-Koch, France tt 2007. **20.g5 ♘h5 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 22.♖xh5! gxh5 23.♕f4! ♕d8** Black cannot save himself. After 23...b4 there follows 24.♕f6+ ♔g8 25.g6. **24.♖xd6 ♕c7** Or 24...♕e7 25.♕e5+ ♔g8 26.♘d5 with a decisive attack. **25.♕f6+ ♔g8 26.g6 b4 27.♘b5! ♕b7 28.♖d8+ ♖xd8 29.♕xd8+ ♔g7 30.♘d6 ♕c6 31.gxf7** and Black resigned, T. Kosintseva-Pogonina, Samara ch-RUS 2005.

17. ♕d2-g5!

A brilliant discovery by Van der Wiel. After the disappearance of the h-pawn, the queen is invulnerable on g5. It prevents Black playing ...b5-b4 and is ready to take a decisive part in the attack on the black king.

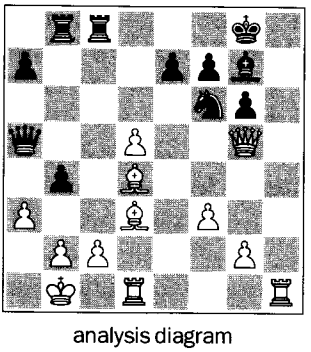
17. ... ♕a5-c7

What else can one recommend for Black?

A) **17...a6** is passive. After 18.f4! Black cannot withstand the white attack;

B) After **17...♗c4** 18.♗xc4 ♖xc4 19.♘d5 ♘xd5 20.♗xg7 ♔xg7 21.♕h6+ ♔f6 22.♖xd5 is decisive, Sharif-Falcon, Lyon 1990;

C) The central counter **17...d5 18.♘xd5! ♗xd5 19.exd5 b4** meets with a beautiful refutation:



analysis diagram

20.♗xg6! fxg6 After 20...♖c4 or 20...bxa3, 21.♖h7! wins. **21.♕xg6 ♕c7 22.d6!** Also possible is 22.♖h7 ♕xc2+ 23.♕xc2 ♖xc2 24.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 25.♔xc2+–. **22...♕xd6** Or 22...♕c6 23.d7!+–. **23.♖h7** with a winning attack.

18. e4-e5!

Including the bishop on d3 in the attack.

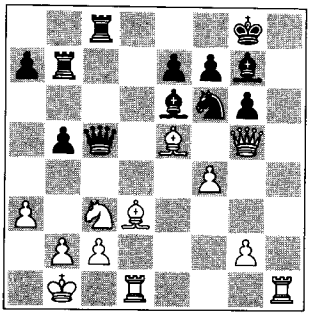
18. ... d6xe5

19. ♗d4xe5 ♕c7-c5

After 19...♕b6 a typical combination decides: 20.♗xg6 fxg6 21.♕xg6 ♘e8 (or 21...♗f7 22.♖h8+ ♔xh8 23.♕xf7+–) and now the interference 22.♖d6!! exd6 23.♕xe6+ ♔f8 24.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 25.♕g4+ with a forced mate (analysis by Van der Wiel).

20. f3-f4 ♖b8-b7

Nor does 20...♖b6 save the game – 21.♗xg6! fxg6 22.♕xg6 (threatening 23.♖h7) 22...♘e8 23.♕h7+ ♔f8 24.♖h5! with a mating attack.



All White's pieces are ready for the storm, so a combinational decision is tempting.

21. ♗d3xg6! f7xg6

After 21...b4 22.♖h7! bxc3 23.♗xf7+ Black is also mated.

22. ♕g5xg6 ♗e6-f7

Or 22...♔f8 23.♖h7! +–.

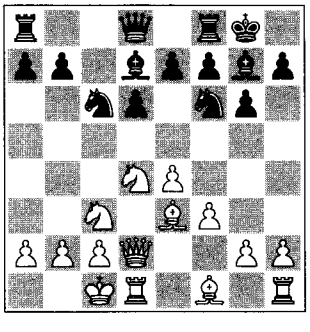
23. ♖h1-h8+!

And Black resigned, in view of the variation 23...♔xh8 24.♕xf7 ♖g8 25.♖h1+ ♘h7 26.♕h5.

White managed to do without the advance of his g-pawn. A terrible crush of one of the leading practitioners of the Dragon in the 1980s. An important role in this game was played by the white bishop on d4. As in the examples we saw in earlier sections of this book, the bishop is highly effective, both in taking part in the kingside attack and in defensive actions. Maybe, therefore, Black should not exchange on d4? We will try to answer this question in the analysis of the next game.

Game 24
Viorel Bologan
Alexey Fedorov
Elista ol 1998 (5)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**g7-g6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♗f8-g7**
7.	**f2-f3**	**0-0**
8.	**♕d1-d2**	**♘b8-c6**
9.	**0-0-0**	**♗c8-d7**



10. g2-g4!

What is going on? In my commentary on the previous game, I emphasised at some length that in the Dragon the move g2-g4 can often turn out to be simply unnecessary. But in the diagram position I consider it the best move, and have even played it myself against Alexey Fedorov (see the note to White's 12th move)! The point is that Black has played the fairly tame move 9...♗d7, which gives White time for the prophylactic (I stress – prophylactic) advance of the g-pawn.

After **10.h4 h5!**, in this situation, the continuation **11.g4 hxg4 12.h5 ♘xh5** leads to completely unclear consequences. White does not have a bishop on d4, so the black bishop on g7 remains alive: **13.♘f5 ♗xf5 14.exf5** with sharp play, Perunovic-Manelidis, Kavala 2004.

The attempt to exchange bishops at once with 11.♗h6?! runs into the typical exchange sacrifice **11...♘xe4!? 12.fxe4** Even worse is 12.♘xe4? ♗xd4 13.♗xf8 ♕b6! Canfell-N. Kagan, Canberra 1995. **12...♗xd4 13.♗xf8 ♕xf8**, and I prefer Black's position. The strong dark-squared bishop, which will be strong in both attack and defence, plus the central pawns will at the very least be no weaker than the rook, which has no open files.

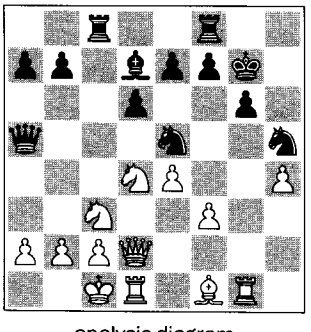
10. ... ♘c6-e5

Fedorov's patent, the Dragon being in those days his only defence against 1.e4. Black prepares to advance the b-pawn, saving time on the transfer of the rook to c8.

Even so, more common is **10...♖c8** 10...♕a5 is too early, in view of 11.♘b3±. **11.h4** and now:

A) With the white pawn on g4, **11...h5?!** looks dubious, at best. White simply opens the g-file: **12.gxh5 ♘xh5 13.♖g1 ♘e5** Black can prevent the

white bishop coming to h6 by 13...♔h7, but then 14.♔b1 ♘e5 15.♘d5 ♘c4 16.♗xc4 ♖xc4 17.♘e2! e6 18.♘df4 (White exchanges off the black knight and opens up the king position) 18...♘xf4 19.♗xf4 ♕b6 20.c3 ♗a4 21.♖c1 ♗b5 22.h5 with a very strong attack, Zeziulkin-Vyskocil, Czech tt 2005. **14.♗h6 ♕a5** After 14...♘c4 15.♗xc4 ♖xc4 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♘f5+! ♗xf5 18.exf5 Black cannot save himself. **15.♗xg7 ♔xg7**



analysis diagram

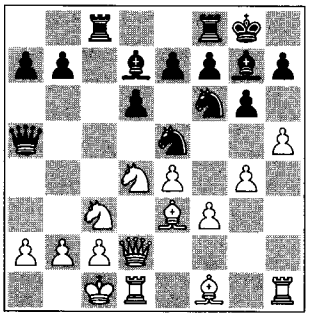
And now 16.♗b5! is very strong, trying to deflect the defender of the square f5, with the following variations:

A1) **16...♗xb5** loses immediately to 17.♘f5+;

A2) White has an enormous advantage after **16...♘xf3** 17.♘xf3 ♗xb5 18.♖g5 ♖c5 (on 18...♖xc3 19.♖xh5 decides) 19.♕d4+ e5 20.♕xd6;

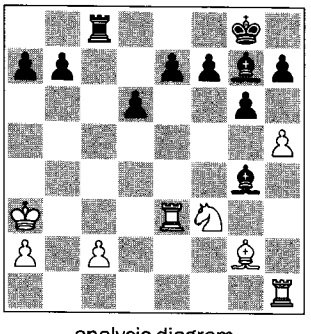
A3) Also after **16...♗e6** 17.f4! Black's position is unenviable. The counterattack 17...♘xf4 18.♕xf4 ♖xc3 19.bxc3 ♕xc3 is refuted by 20.♕f2! (analysis).

B) **11...♘e5 12.h5 ♕a5** Of course, with the bishop on f1 the transfer of the knight to c4 cannot be good. Black makes three moves with his knight in order to exchange it for an undeveloped white piece – 12...♘c4? 13.♗xc4 ♖xc4 14.hxg6 fxg6 15.e5+–.



analysis diagram

B1) Black is ready for the standard exchange sacrifice on c3, whilst after the stereotyped **13.♔b1** fireworks are possible: **13...♘xf3!** It is less good to start with 13...♖xc3 14.♕xc3 ♕xc3 15.bxc3 ♘xf3 because of the zwischenzug 16.h6! and after 16...♗h8 17.♘xf3 ♗xg4 18.♗g2 ♘xe4 19.♖d3 ♘xc3+ 20.♔b2 White retains the advantage. **14.♘xf3 ♖xc3! 15.♕xc3 ♕xc3 16.bxc3 ♗xg4 17.♗g2** Now after 17.h6 there follows 17...♗xf3 18.hxg7 ♖c8 with an unclear endgame. **17...♘xe4 18.♖d3 ♘xc3+ 19.♔b2 ♘d1+ 20.♔a3 ♘xe3 21.♖xe3 ♖c8!**

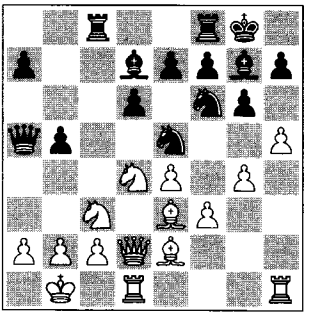


analysis diagram

This endgame is difficult to assess, with Black's active pieces and four (!) passed pawns perhaps constituting good compensation for the sacrificed rook.

B2) Therefore, I consider that in the position of the previous analysis dia-

gram, the strongest is **13.♗e2! b5** If 13...♖xc3 14.♕xc3 ♕xa2, White obtains the advantage by continuing 15.♕b3. Again, 13...♘c4? 14.♗xc4 ♖xc4 is bad because of 15.♘b3! ♕a6 16.♗h6 with a very strong attack for White. **14.♔b1**



14...b4 Young Magnus Carlsen sacrificed the exchange against Smeets in Wijk aan Zee 2004 – 14...♖xc3 15.♕xc3 ♕xc3 16.bxc3 ♖c8, in the hope of obtaining compensation in the form of White's weak pawns. But by continuing 17.♔b2! (in the game, 17.hxg6?! was played) 17...a5 18.♖b1! b4 19.cxb4 axb4 20.h6! ♗h8 21.♔c1 White obtains a large advantage. **15.♘d5! ♘xd5 16.exd5** and it turns out that Black cannot take the pawn with **16...♕xd5**, since after **17.♘f5! ♕xd2 18.♘xe7+ ♔h8 19.♗xd2! ♖ce8 20.h6! ♗f6 21.♘d5 ♗d8 22.♗xb4** White obtains a decisive advantage. And with material equality, White's attack should decide the game in his favour.

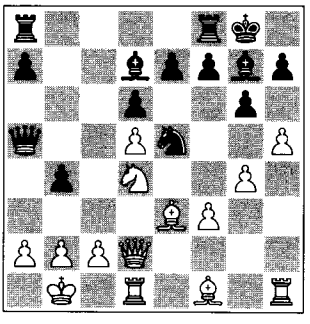
11. h2-h4 b7-b5
12. h4-h5!

Of course, there is no sense in White winning the b5 pawn, opening lines on the queenside. Several months later, against Alexey, I played 12.♗h6 (Yakovich-Fedorov, Samara 1998) and Black managed to hold after a sharp fight. Bologan plays a strong novelty, correctly assessing the consequences of the pawn sacrifice.

12. ... b5-b4

After 12...♘xf3 13.♘xf3 ♗xg4 14.h6!? ♗h8 (or 14...♗xf3 15.hxg7 ♔xg7 16.♗h6+) 15.♕g2 Black does not have sufficient compensation for the piece.

13. ♘c3-d5 ♘f6xd5
14. e4xd5 ♕d8-a5
15. ♔c1-b1



As in line B2 after Black's 10th move, White sacrifices the d5 pawn, obtaining a very strong attack.

15. ... ♕a5xd5
16. h5xg6!

Now 16.♘f5 is not so strong, since after 16...♕xd2 17.♘xe7+ ♔h8 18.♗xd2 Black's rook does not hang on c8. By continuing 18...♖fe8 19.h6 ♗f8 or 19...♗f6 he can fight for equality.

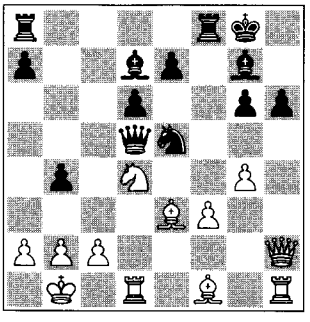
16. ... f7xg6

Forced. After 16...hxg6? 17.♘f5! decides.

17. ♕d2-h2 h7-h6

It is surprising, but the Belgian player Norbert Fleurackers likes this position as Black! In correspondence games, he has at least twice played 17...♔f7 (17...h5 was seen in G.van Beek-Molinari, Leiden jr 1998) 18.♗e2 ♕b7 (18...♘c4 19.♘f5+–). It is difficult to say that Black has nice prospects here. After 19.♕g3! ♖h8 20.f4 ♘c6 21.♗c4+ ♔e8 22.♘e6 ♗xe6 23.♗xe6

♖b8 (Wurschner-Fleurackers, corr. 2001), by continuing 24.♕f3 White obtains an enormous advantage.



18. ♗f1-e2!

The point of White's idea. The h6 pawn is not going anywhere! The immediate 18.♗xh6?! gives Black the opportunity to sharpen the play by 18...♘xf3.

18. ... ♕d5-f7

Nor is 18...♘f7 any better, because of 19.♘f5 ♕e5 (or 19...♕e6 20.♘xh6+ ♘xh6 21.♗xh6 ♕f6 22.♗xg7 ♕xg7 23.♗c4+ e6 24.♖xd6+–) 20.♕xe5 ♗xe5 21.♘xe7+ ♔g7 22.♗d3 g5 23.♗e4 ♖ae8 24.♘g6.

19. ♗e3xh6 ♗g7xh6?

Losing at once, but after 19...♖fc8 Black's position is still not to be envied.

20. ♕h2xh6 ♕f7-g7

21. ♕h6-e3!

Black cannot defend against the combined threats along the a2-g8 diagonal and the h-file.

21. ... ♖a8-c8

22. f3-f4! ♘e5-c4

Or 22...♘xg4 23.♕b3+ ♕f7 (23...♖f7 24.♘e6+–) 24.♕h3+–.

23. ♕e3-b3 d6-d5

24. ♗e2-f3 ♖f8xf4

On 24...e6, 25.f5 decides.

25. ♗f3xd5+ ♔g8-f8

26. ♘d4-e6+ 1-0

(26...♗xe6 27.♗xe6 ♘a5 28.♕d5) Another terrible crush of the Dragon.

Conclusions

1. In positions with mutual flank attacks, White can with accurate play outstrip Black. Adherents of the Dragon should meet 9.0-0-0 with the central counterattack 9...d5!, which will be examined in the next few games.

2. In the great majority of cases, White should start his attack with the march of the h-pawn. In order to open lines on the kingside, it is essential to play h2-h4-h5 as quickly as possible, not fearing the loss of the rook's pawn, and in Game 23 White managed to do without the help of his g-pawn entirely.

3. White begins with the g-pawn in those cases where he does not have to fear a rapid counterattack from his opponent, and does not wish to give Black the chance to meet h2-h4 with ...h7-h5 (Game 24).

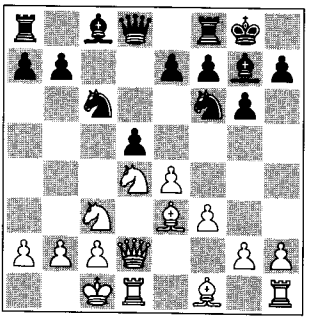
4. If in reply to h2-h4 Black holds up the white attack with ...h7-h5, then he must in the first instance examine the consequences of the energetic pawn sacrifice g2-g4. This is especially good with a bishop on d4.

5. The immediate advance of his queenside pawns does not bring Black success, because after ...b5-b4 the knight on c3 comes to d5. Black should first create piece pressure on the white king's position, force the move a2-a3, and only then advance his b-pawn. In this connection, the universal Sicilian prophylactic move ♔b1 is especially useful in the Dragon – if his queen comes to its most active post on a5, Black must always reckon with the reply ♘d5.

5.2.2. Black counterattacks in the centre

Game 25
Jaan Ehlvest
Mihail Marin
Kolkata 1997 (6)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**g7-g6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♗f8-g7**
7.	**f2-f3**	**♘b8-c6**
8.	**♕d1-d2**	**0-0**
9.	**0-0-0**	**d6-d5!**



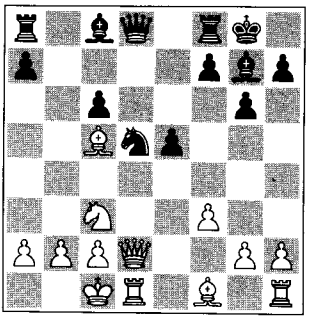
10. e4xd5!

The most natural continuation, although both 10.♔b1 and 10.♕e1 are occasionally seen.

10. ... ♘f6xd5
11. ♘d4xc6 b7xc6
12. ♗e3-d4!

White can win a pawn with 12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♕xd5, but it was established long ago that after 13...♕c7 Black obtains sufficient counterplay, since 14.♕xa8?! is bad because of 14...♗f5. In general, the position reached suits Dragon players, as Black has the initiative for a pawn, and open lines, etc. With the text move, White offers his opponent a choice – start mass exchanges (12...♘xc3 or 12...♗xd4), in which case the weakness of his queenside pawns may have its say, or, as happens in the game, go into a highly complicated line with

12. ... e7-e5
13. ♗d4-c5



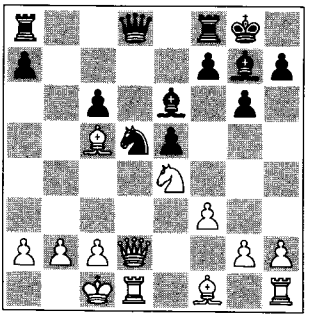
13. ... ♗c8-e6!

Of course, Black does not mind giving up the inactive rook on f8 for the beautiful bishop on c5, especially in view of the fact that after 14.♗xf8?! ♕xf8 there is a threat of 15...♗h6. White must play 15.♔b1 and after 15...♖b8 the white king is not to be envied – absolutely every one of black's pieces is ready for the attack.

For a while, Black tried to manage without the bishop move to e6, playing **13...♖e8**. Dragon lovers hoped to hold the ending reached after **14.♘xd5 cxd5 15.♕xd5 ♕xd5 16.♖xd5 ♗e6 17.♖d6 ♗xa2** (which they did) or to hope for the best from the forcing play after **14.♘e4 f5?** (it was not too late to return to the main line by 14...♗e6) **15.♘d6 ♗f8**. But here their luck ran out. Two accurate moves: **16.♗b5!** (Beliavsky) **16...♗d7** 16...♗xd6 is bad because of 17.♗xc6 ♗xc5 18.♗xd5+ ♗e6 19.♗xe6+ and **17.♗a4!** (Ehlvest) rendered Black's position extremely difficult. He has no com-

pensation for his pawn weaknesses, and after 17...♕h4 (17...e4 18.♗b3) there follows 18.♗b3 ♗h6 19.♗e3! with a large advantage for White.

14. ♘c3-e4!



14. ... ♖f8-e8

The question arises as to why Black moves the rook now, if he is happy to sacrifice the exchange? Why not play **14...♖b8** ? The point is that after **15.♗c4!?** (15.c4?! ♖e8! 16.cxd5?! is bad because of 16...cxd5) Black has nothing better than 15...♖e8 anyway. Then after 16.h4 h6 17.g4 White carries out the same plan as in the game, and the usefulness of the rook on b8 is seriously questionable, since:

A) When analysing the game, we will see that the crucial moments concern the battle for the d-file, and the move ...♖b8 may turn out to be a lost tempo;

B) The best square for the black queen is c7, but now Black constantly has to worry about the enemy bishop coming to d6, winning the exchange at a convenient moment;

C) The attempt to seize queenside space in the future with...a5-a4 can be prevented by the simple ♗b3, e.g. 17...a5 18.g5 h5 19.♗b3!?, and Black does not have the move 19...a4.

After 14...f5 there of course follows 15.♘g5.

15. h2-h4!

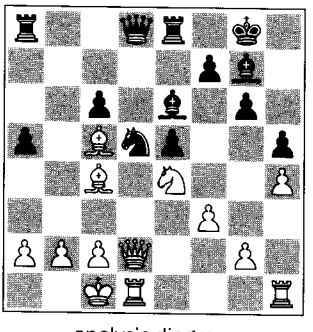
A multi-functional move. White prepares an attack on the king and also assures his knight of a post at g5.

Black cannot allow the h-file to be opened – after the passive 15...♕c7? 16.h5 ♖ad8 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.g3 or 18.g4, the health of the black king causes serious concerns. After 15...f5 the reply 16.♘g5 is again unpleasant.

Therefore, in the game Black played

15. ... h7-h6

A) The radical **15...h5?!** is very risky, since after **16.♗c4!** (after the immediate 16.g4?! there follows 16...♘f4!) **16...a5**



analysis diagram

White has the breakthrough we have already seen in Game 23: **17.g4! hxg4** Now 17...♘f4 does not solve Black's problems: 18.♕e1! ♗d5 19.gxh5 ♘xh5 20.♘d6! ♗f8 21.♗xd5 cxd5 22.♘xe8 ♗xc5 23.♕xe5 ♕xe8 24.♖xd5 and White has the advantage.

18.h5 g5?!

Leads to a hopeless position, but it is difficult to suggest anything better, e.g.:

A1) **18...gxh5** 19.♖xh5 ♘f4 20.♕h2! ♗xc4 21.♖xd8 ♖axd8 22.b3 g3 (Or 22...♘xh5 23.♕xh5 with the threat of 24.♘g5; 22...♗e6 23.♖g5!+–) 23.♘xg3 ♗e6 24.♖h7 a4 25.♕h4 with a decisive attack for

White, Nicklich-Sacchetti, ICCF email 2000;

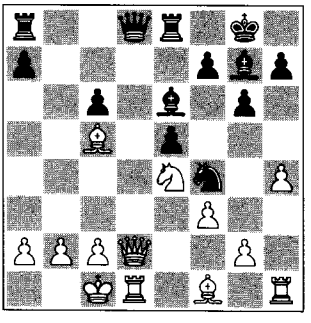
A2) **18...♘f4** 19.♕e1;

A3) **18...f5** 19.♘d6;

And in all cases, White's advantage is not in doubt.

19.h6 ♗f8 20.♗xf8 ♖xf8 21.♘xg5 ♔h8 Or 21...gxf3 22.♖dg1 ♔h8 23.♘xf3 ♕f6 24.♕g2 with the threat of 25.♕g7. **22.♘xe6 fxe6 23.fxg4** with a winning position for White, A. Sokolov-Ljubojevic, Belfort 1988.

B) In the position in the diagram after White's 15th move, **15...♘f4** is often played.



analysis diagram

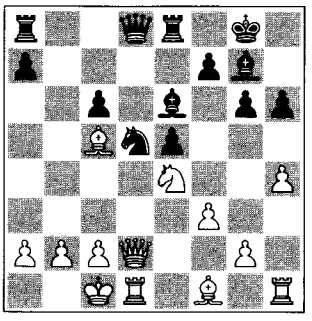
Black chooses a moment when 16.♕c3? is bad because of 16...♗h6! 17.♘g5 ♗xg5 18.hxg5 ♕xg5.

White has two choices, which are completely different in their strategic consequences:

B1) Continue the battle in a complicated middlegame by playing **16.♕e1!? ♗d5 17.h5!** After the tempting 17.c4 Black had prepared 17...♕c7!. White forces lines open and the black king is likely to feel some discomfort. In the game Timmerman-Kangur, corr. 2006, there followed **17...f5 18.hxg6 hxg6 19.♘d6 ♕g5 20.♔b1 ♖ed8 21.c4 ♗e6 22.♖h2!?** A very convenient square for the rook, from where it can in the future transfer to the d-file. **22...♖d7 23.♗e3 ♕e7 24.c5 ♗d5 25.g4! fxg4 26.fxg4 ♕e6 27.g5! ♗xa2+ 28.♔a1 ♗d5** White's play is based on the following variation, hardly capable of being calculated over the board, but relatively ordinary for 'advanced chess': 28...♗b3 29.♗xf4! exf4 30.♖e2 ♕f5! (30...♕g4 is bad because of 31.♖d3 ♗f7 32.♗h3) 31.♕b4! ♗f7 (31...♗xd1? 32.♘xf5+–) 32.♖ed2! ♕xg5 33.♘xf7 ♖xf7 34.♗c4 with advantage to White. **29.♖xd5 ♘xd5 30.♗h3 ♖xd6 31.♗xe6+ ♖xe6 32.♕g3** and White realised his extra queen.

B2) Go into a comfortable endgame: **16.g3!? ♕xd2+ 17.♖xd2 ♘h5 18.g4 ♘f4 19.♗a6 ♗d5 20.c4! ♗xe4 21.fxe4 ♘e6 22.♗d6!?** 22.♗e3 also looks good: 22...♖ad8 (or 22...♖ab8 23.♖d6 ♘d4 24.♖d7! Oll-Macieja, Polanica Zdroj 1998) 23.c5 ♖xd2 24.♔xd2 ♖b8 25.♔c3 ♘d4 26.♖f1 ♔f8 27.b4 and Black faces a prospectless defence, Adams-Al Modiahki, Gibraltar 2007. **22...♖ad8** The piece sacrifice 22...♗h6 23.g5 ♘xg5 24.hxg5 ♗xg5 does not bring Black any joy. In the game Gomez Galan Arense-Hubley, IECG email 2000, White confidently realized his advantage after 25.♗b7 ♖ad8 26.c5 ♖e6 27.♖g1 ♗xd2+ 28.♔xd2 ♖exd6+ 29.cxd6 ♖xd6+ 30.♔e2 ♔g7 31.♖c1 h5 32.♗xc6 h4 33.♗d5 ♖d7 34.♖c8 ♖e7 35.♔f3 1-0. **23.♗b7 ♘d4** After 23...c5, 24.♖hd1 f6 25.g5!? looks good. **24.♗c5 ♘e6 25.♗d6 ♘d4 26.♗c7 ♖d7 27.♗xc6 ♖xc7 28.♗xe8 ♖xc4+ 29.♔b1 ♔f8 30.b3 ♖c3 31.♗a4** and the extra exchange brought White victory in the game Perunovic-Solak, Vrsac ch-SRB 2007.

To return to the game:



16. g2-g4!

Black threatened the unpleasant advance of the f-pawn, which after the text would now be dangerous for Black because of the opening of the g-file: 16...f5 17.gxf5 gxf5 18.♘d6 with a very strong attack for White.

16. ... ♕d8-c7

Now **16...♘f4?!** is less good than one move earlier, because the white queen can take up a strong position on a3 – **17.♕c3!** Now there is no black bishop move to h6! **17...♗d5 18.g5!** Improving on the stem game Szabo-Wade, Solingen 1968, in which the Hungarian grandmaster chose 18.h5 **18...h5** In the game A. Sokolov-Tiviakov, St Petersburg zt 1993, White developed a very strong attack after 18...♘e6?! 19.gxh6 ♗xh6+ 20.♗e3! ♗g7 (or 20...♗xe3+ 21.♕xe3 ♕e7 22.h5±) 21.h5. **19.♕a3** 19.♖h2 followed by doubling rooks on the d-file is also good. **19...♕c7 20.♖h2 ♘e6 21.♗d6 ♕b7 22.♘f6+ ♗xf6 23.gxf6 ♘d4 24.♖f2 ♘f5 25.♗c5 ♔h7 26.♗d3** with the initiative for White, Windebank-Alexander, corr. 2005.

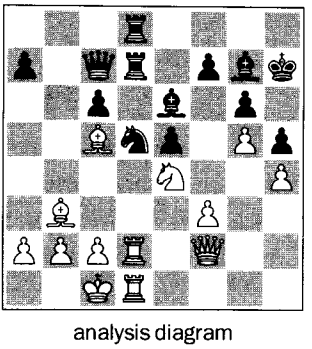
Black has secured his king against attack, so White changes his plan – after completing his development he will turn to the battle for the d-file, and attack the pawn weaknesses on Black's queenside. It should be note that in the majority of endgames White's chances will be superior because of the hopelessly weak a7 pawn. As part of his new priorities, White should once and for all prevent the bishop on g7 from becoming active, and secure the e4-square as an eternal post for his knight. What should he choose, 17.h5 or the move in the game? After 17.h5 g5 White's pawn structure is free of weaknesses, but it would be hard to break into the black kingside. Therefore practice has preferred the double-edged

17. g4-g5!

Retaining the tension over the whole board. White may in future suffer from the weakness of his h4 pawn, but at the same time the black king does not feel too secure, as at any moment there could follow an unpleasant check on f6.

17. ... h6-h5
18. ♗f1-c4 ♖e8-d8
19. ♕d2-f2

Can Black just double on the d-file and wait, trusting in the impenetrability of his central bastions? For example: 19...♔h8?! 20.♖d2 ♖d7 21.♖hd1 ♖ad8 22.♗b3 ♔h7.

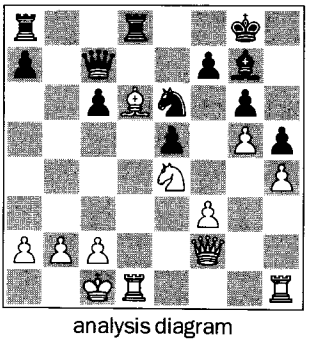


analysis diagram

In this position White has the move 23.♗a3!, freeing the c5-square for his knight and disorganising Black's apparently solid defensive barriers. Then there could follow 23...♘f4 24.♖xd7

♖xd7 25.♖xd7 ♕xd7 26.♘c5 with a large advantage to White.

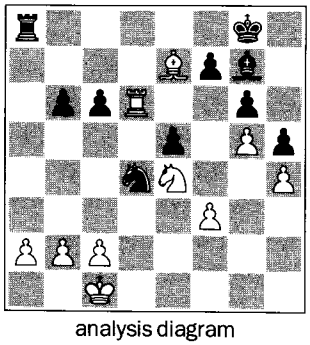
So, simply standing and waiting does not promise Black a bright future. He needs to regroup his pieces, and it is clear that he cannot do without the knight jump to f4, with the idea of a later...♗d5. Should he play the knight move at once, or first play some kind of strengthening move? Firstly, we will examine the most principled move: **19...♘f4 20.♗xe6 ♘xe6 21.♗d6**



analysis diagram

Where should the queen go?

A) The dangers of the endgame arising after **21...♕b6** are illustrated by the game Psakhis-Komljenovic, Andorra 1994: **22.♖d2** 22.c3!?. **22...♖d7 23.♖hd1 ♖ad8** More accurate, it seems, was 23...♕xf2!? 24.♖xf2 ♖ad8 25.♖fd2 (Black's idea is seen in the variation 25.c3 f5! 26.gxf6 ♗f8! 27.♖fd2 ♗h6! winning the exchange, although White retains sufficient compensation to hold the balance) 25...♘d4! (now 25...f5? leads to a hopeless ending for Black – 26.♘c5 ♘xc5 27.♗xc5 and after the exchange of rooks, the white queenside pawns promote) 26.f4! ♘f3 27.♖d3 ♘xh4 28.fxe5. The forcing play has ended, and despite his lack of space, Black has drawing chances. In the correspondence game Talpak-Ljubicic, corr. 2007, there followed 28...♖e8 29.b4 ♘f5 30.♘c5 ♖dd8 31.a4 h4 32.c4 ♗f8 33.♘b7 ♖a8 34.♘a5 ♖ac8 35.c5 ♔g7 36.♖g1 a6 37.♖g4 ♗e7 38.♖h3 ♗d8 39.♘c4 ♖a8 40.♔c2 ♖a7 41.♔b3 ♖b7 42.♔c3 ♖a7 43.♘e3 with unpleasant pressure for White. **24.♕xb6!** White forces mass exchanges. **24...axb6 25.♗e7! ♖xd2 26.♖xd2 ♖a8!** What is this? Why does Black not exploit the weakness of White's kingside pawns, as mentioned above, with 26...♖xd2 27.♔xd2 ♘d4? The answer is that White is not worried about the loss of these pawns! He only needs one passed a-pawn, which after 28.a4! ♘xf3+ 29.♔d3 ♘xh4 30.♗d8 cannot be stopped from promoting. **27.♖d6 ♘d4**



analysis diagram

28.a4!! A well-known motif. The pawn is untouchable because of mate, and White threatens to exchange rooks into the ending mentioned in the previous note. Black tries his last chance: **28...f5!?** 28...♘xf3 29.♖d8+ ♖xd8 30.♗xd8. **29.gxf6 ♗h6+ 30.♔b1 ♖xa4 31.♖d8+ ♔f7**, which should also have led to defeat, if White had chosen **32.♘d6+!** (in the game, 32.b3?! was played) **32...♔e6 33.♖h8+–**.

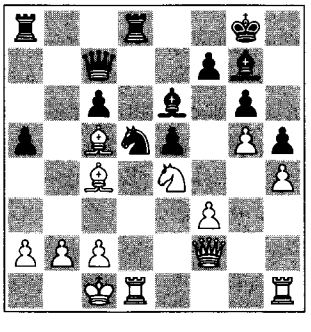
B) Continuing the battle in the middlegame with **21...♕a5** also fails to bring any great joy to Black. **22.♔b1** 22.a3!? also deserved attention, with the idea after 22...♖d7 of playing

23.♗b4. In the game Womacka-Hoffmeyer, Germany tt 2007/08, White won after 23...♖xd1+ 24.♖xd1 ♕c7 25.♖d6 a5 26.♗c3 ♕b7 27.♕e2 ♕b6 28.♔b1 ♖b8 29.♕c4 ♕g1+ 30.♔a2 ♕g2 31.♖xe6! fxe6 32.♕xe6+ ♔h7 33.♗xe5 ♖b7 34.♘f6+ 1-0. **22...♖d7 23.♖d2 ♘d4** After 23...♖ad8 there would follow 24.c3!, restricting the black knight. **24.c3!?** 24.♖hd1!?. **24...♘f5 25.♖hd1 ♖ad8 26.♗c5 ♖xd2 27.♖xd2 ♘xh4??** Black fails to withstand the tension. It was essential to play 27...♖xd2! 28.♕xd2 ♘xh4, although after 29.b3! (only a draw results from 29.♕d7 ♕b5 30.♕e8+ ♔h7 31.♕xf7 ♕d3+) 29...♕c7 (29...♘xf3 loses to 30.♕d7 ♕b5 31.♕d8+ ♔h7 32.c4! ♕b7 33.♗f8! ♕b6 34.♘f6+ ♗xf6 35.♕xf6 and mate) 30.♕f2! ♘f5 31.♗xa7 h4 32.♗b6 ♕d7 33.♔c2 Black's defence is extremely difficult. **28.b4!** and in the game Nisipeanu-Azarov, Eforie Nord tt 2008, Black resigned because of the variation 28...♖xd2 29.bxa5 ♖xf2 30.♗xf2 ♘f5 31.♗xa7 and as we have already seen earlier, the white a-pawn queens.

In the game, Black played

19. ... a7-a5

Moving the a-pawn from under attack and trying to seize space on the queenside.



20. a2-a4!

Splendid! White is the boss on the queenside, and consequently can advance the pawn in front of his king without any danger.

20. ... ♕c7-b7

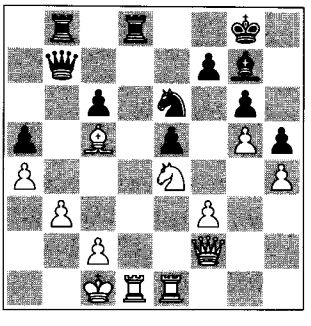
The advance of the a-pawn has weakened the square b6, and before playing ...♘f4 Black moves the queen away from c7.

21. ♖h1-e1! ♖a8-b8

22. b2-b3 ♘d5-f4

In this new situation, waiting tactics still do not save Black – 22...♕c7?! 23.♖d2 ♔h7 24.♖ed1 ♖d7 25.♕g1 ♖e8 26.♗a3! (the well-known manoeuvre) 26...♖dd8 27.♔b1 ♔g8 28.♗b2 ♔h8 29.♘c5 ♗f5 30.♗xd5 cxd5 31.♖xd5 with a decisive advantage to White, Fifi-Bronislaw, corr. 2005.

23. ♗c4xe6 ♘f4xe6



24. ♘e4-f6+!

Now we see why White advanced his pawn to g5.

24. ... ♗g7xf6

25. g5xf6

Black cannot defend the e5 pawn.

25. ... ♖d8-d5!?

Black seeks counterplay. White also has the advantage after other continuations:

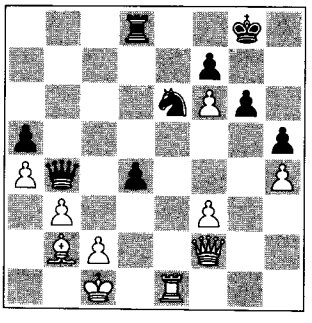
A) 25...♘xc5 26.♕xc5 ♖xd1+ 27.♖xd1 ♕b4 28.♕xe5+–;

B) 25...♕c7 26.♗e7 (also possible is 26.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 27.♕e3 ♕xf6 28.♕xe5 ♕xe5 29.♖xe5 Pott-Grinwis, corr. 2005) 26...♖d5 27.♕e3 Gambit-MENO, corr. 2003.

26. ♗c5-d6 ♖b8-d8?!

Marin recommended 26...♖c8, which was tested in the game Brener-Nagy, Budapest 2006. After 27.♕e3 c5 28.♖xd5 ♕xd5 29.♖d1 ♕c6 30.c4 ♖e8 31.♗xe5 ♔h7 32.♖d6 White obtained a big advantage.

27. ♗d6xe5 ♕b7-b4
28. ♖d1xd5 c6xd5
29. ♗e5-b2! d5-d4



It appears that Black has managed to coordinate his pieces and obtains some counterplay, but an exchange sacrifice restores everything to its rightful place.

30. ♖e1xe6! f7xe6
31. ♕f2-g3 ♔g8-f8

Other retreats are no better:

A) 31...♔f7 32.♕c7+ ♔xf6 33.♕xd8++–;

B) 31...♔h7 32.♕c7+ ♔h6 33.♕g7#;

C) 31...♔h8 32.♔b1 ♕b7 33.♕xg6±.

32. ♔c1-b1!

White wins another pawn for the exchange.

32. ... ♕b4-b7

After 32...d3, 33.♕c7 dxc2+ 34.♔a2 is decisive.

33. ♕g3xg6 ♕b7-f7
34. ♗b2-a3+ ♔f8-e8
35. ♕g6-h6 e6-e5

Now too, 35...d3 does not solve the problems – 36.♗e7 dxc2+ 37.♔xc2 ♖c8+ 38.♔b2 with a large advantage to White.

36. ♕h6-g5 ♖d8-d5
37. ♕g5-f5 ♔e8-d8
38. f3-f4 d4-d3?

This accelerates the end, but even after 38...exf4 39.♗e7+ ♔c7 40.♕xf4+ the result of the game would be the same.

39. c2xd3 ♖d5-d4?
40. ♗a3-e7+ ♔d8-c7
41. ♕f5xe5+

Black resigned.

After this game was played, supporters of the black side directed their attention to **19...♕b7!?** instead of 19...a5. Now Ehlvest's idea of exploiting the weakness of the e5 pawn by **20.♖he1 ♘f4 21.♗xe6 ♘xe6** 22.♘f6+ ♗xf6 23.gxf6 turns out to be ineffective without the inclusion of the moves a4 a5, since Black has the reply 23...♕a6! 24.a3 ♕c4!

But by continuing **22.♗d6!?** (instead of 22.♘f6+), White maintains the initiative – **22...♖d7 23.♘f6+ ♗xf6 24.gxf6 ♖ad8 25.♗xe5 ♖xd1+ 26.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 27.♔xd1 ♕b5 28.♕e2 ♕d5+ 29.♔c1 ♕xa2 30.b3 ♕a3+ 31.♔b1 ♕c5 32.f4**, and Black's defence is not easy.

In addition, in this line, White can dispense with 20.♖he1 and instead return to the plan of doubling rooks on the d-file – **20.♖d2**.

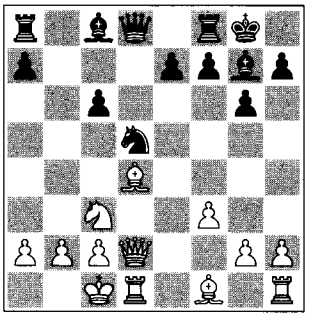
Analysing the above game carefully, one can draw some interesting conclusions. Black chooses the sharpest variation of the Dragon, and White goes to meet his opponent's intentions, castling long

and hoping to take the game into a battle of mutual attacks on the king. Black counterattacks sharply in the centre, as a result of which a sharp and unbalanced position arises, in which each side has his pluses. It appears that victory will go to whoever is the first to get through to the enemy king.

In reality, everything turns out otherwise. Only **threatening** to attack the enemy king, White forces Black to give the position a rather static character, where, despite the many pieces on the board, his main task is to defend pawn weaknesses. In some cases, tactical resources enable Black to hold the position, but quite often White manages to break down the opponent's defences. In this respect, a question arises for supporters of the Dragon – does he need to suffer in a complicated middlegame, if he can by solid play prevent the opponent attacking the king? Maybe he should exchange some pieces earlier on, simplify the position, and make half a point without undue bloodshed? This strategy is the one employed by top-level Dragon players such as Carlsen, Radjabov and Gashimov.

Game 26
Andrey Volokitin
Anastasios Pavlidis
Rijeka Ech 2010 (8)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**♘g8-f6**
4.	**♘b1-c3**	**c5xd4**
5.	**♘f3xd4**	**g7-g6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♗f8-g7**
7.	**f2-f3**	**0-0**
8.	**♕d1-d2**	**♘b8-c6**
9.	**0-0-0**	**d6-d5**
10.	**e4xd5**	**♘f6xd5**
11.	**♘d4xc6**	**b7xc6**
12.	**♗e3-d4**	



12. ... ♘d5xc3

The most radical way of simplifying the position, which came into fashion after Black quickly equalised in the game Tiviakov-Alterman, USSR 1990.

13. ♕d2xc3 ♗g7-h6+
14. ♗d4-e3

Of course, not 14.♔b1?? because of 14...e5.

14. ... ♗h6xe3+
15. ♕c3xe3 ♕d8-b6!

Sacrificing a pawn for the initiative. The passive continuations 15...♕c7? or 15...♕a5? lead after 16.♗c4! to a very difficult position – Black has no way to oppose the march of the white h-pawn.

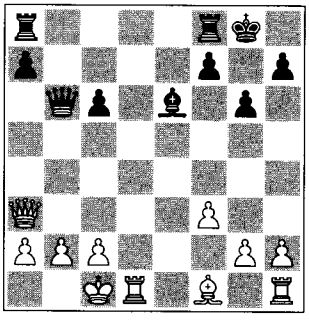
16. ♕e3xe7!

This is the only way to fight for an advantage. In the aforementioned game Tiviakov-Alterman, White decided not to take the pawn, and Black equalised easily.

16. ... ♗c8-e6

Black has brought his queen and bishop to active positions and is prepared for a battle over the d-file. At an appropriate moment, his queen can attack the white kingside pawns by means of ♕f2. On the other hand, if White manages to complete his development without problems, his extra pawn should have its say.

17. ♕e7-a3



17. ... ♖a8-d8

In the game Kasparov-Topalov, Amsterdam 1995, Black played 17...♖fd8, which gave White the additional possibility of 18.♗a6!? with the idea of meeting 18...♕f2 with 19.♗b7.

Since after 18.♗d3 ♖d5 19.b3 ♖ad8, White can obtain the same position as in the game, the text move is more accurate, as there is no sense in presenting the opponent additional options.

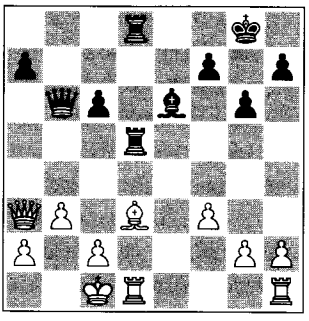
18. ♗f1-d3 ♖d8-d5!

Black's counterplay is based on this tactical resource. Black doubles on the d-file, at the same time threatening to regain his pawn by 19...♖a5.

19. b2-b3!

In order to fight for an advantage, White must at all costs retain his extra pawn. The attempt to develop activity in the centre by 19.♖he1 ♖a5 20.♕c3 ♖xa2 21.b3, threatening 22.♖xe6 fxe6 23.♗c4, is tempting, but after the accurate 23...♖a5! the direct threats are repulsed. Even so, after 22.♗c4 (now 22.♖xe6 fxe6 23.♗c4 does not give any advantage, because of 23...♖d5 or 23...♖e8 24.♖d7?! ♕g1+) 22...♗xc4 23.♕xc4 Alexeev-Caruana, Biel 2009, Black still faces a long fight for a draw.

19. ... ♖f8-d8



Black has achieved a lot. All of his pieces are in play. After the natural 20.♖he1 there follows 20...♗f5! with complete equality, because 21.♗xf5? is not possible in view of 21...♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♕e3+. However, with a series of accurate moves, found with the help of a computer program, White can still fight for the advantage, in my view.

20. ♖d1-e1!

The correct rook. White defends against 20...♗f5, and prepares to play h4 or ♗c4 at a convenient moment.

20. ... c6-c5!?

The most active. Lately Black players have tried 20...♖d4.

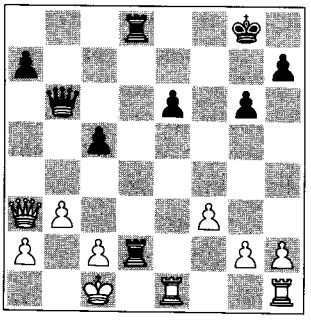
The preliminary **20...♖a5** and only after **21.♕b2** playing **21...c5** does not work because of the more or less forced variation **22.♖e4! c4 23.♗xc4 ♗xc4 24.♖xc4 ♕f2** Also after 24...♕e3+ 25.♔b1 ♖ad5 26.a4 White remains with an extra pawn in a quiet position, Alexeev-Stanojoski, Novi Sad Ech-tt 2009. **25.♕c3! ♖xa2** Or 25...♕xg2 26.♕xa5 ♕xh1+ 27.♔b2. **26.♖c8 ♖xc8 27.♕xc8+ ♔g7 28.♕c3+! ♔h6** After 28...♔g8 there follows 29.♔b1. **29.♕d2+ ♕xd2+ 30.♔xd2** with a technically winning endgame for White, Pavlidis-Xylogiannopoulos, Thessaloniki 2010. Clearly, the defeat against Volokitin made a great impression on Pavlidis, and he started playing the variation with reversed colours!

21. ♗d3-c4!

Only thus! In reply to 21.h4 Black intended 21...c4! 22.♗xc4 (after 22.bxc4 ♖d4 Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn) 22...♖a5! 23.♖xe6 (23.♕b2 ♗xc4 24.bxc4 ♕d6) 23...♖xa3 (of course, not 23...fxe6? because of 24.♗xe6+ ♔h8 25.♕e7 with advantage to White) 24.♖xb6 axb6 with a probable draw in the endgame.

21. ... ♖d5-d2

22. ♗c4xe6 f7xe6



23. g2-g3!

A computer decision. White not only moves the pawn away from the attack, but also takes control of the square f4! After the 'active' 23.g4? there follows 23...c4! 24.bxc4 ♕d4! Now 25.♕b2? is bad because of 25...♕f4. With a white pawn on g3, this variation favours him, since the black queen does not have access to the square f4, and after 25...♕xc4, 26.♕b3 is good.

In the game Rublevsky-Gashimov, Poikovsky 2009, White chose the natural 23.♖d1, and Black forced a draw after 23...♖xd1+ 24.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 25.♔xd1 c4! 26.♕e7 ♕g1+.

23. ... ♖d2-f2

24. ♖e1-d1! ♖d8-d4

Nor does 24...♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♖xf3 equalise, because of 26.♕a4! ♖f7 27.♔b2!?. Despite the material equality, White has a clear advantage – the black pawns are weak, and his king poorly defended. In the game Blom-Simmelink, corr. 2007, White obtained a decisive advantage after 27...♔g7 28.♕e4 ♖e7 29.♕e5+ ♔g8 30.g4 ♕c7 31.♖e1 ♕xe5+ 32.♖xe5 c4 33.b4 ♔f7 34.g5.

25. f3-f4 ♕b6-d6

26. ♕a3-a5!

White takes control of the square d2. Of course, not 26.♕xa7? because of 26...♖dd2.

26. ... ♖f2xh2

27. ♕a5xa7!

Now this capture is possible, because after 27...♖dd2 there is the strong reply 28.♖xh2! ♖xd1+ 29.♔b2 ♕d4+ 30.c3 ♖d2+ 31.♔a3 ♕xc3 32.♕xh7+.

27. ... h7-h5

28. ♕a7-a8+ ♔g8-f7

29. ♕a8-f3 ♖h2xh1

30. ♖d1xh1 c5-c4

31. ♔c1-b2 ♕d6-b6

32. ♕f3-e3 ♕b6-d6

33. ♕e3-c3 c4xb3

34. a2xb3

Volokitin's accurate and computer-like play has led to a heavy-piece ending with an extra pawn, which is easy to realise. Andrey conducts the game to victory in confident style.

34...♕d8 35.♖a1 ♖d7 36.♕e5 ♖c7 37.b4 ♕c8 38.c3 ♖d7 39.♔b3 ♖c7 40.♖d1 ♖d7 41.♖xd7+ ♕xd7 42.b5 ♕d3 43.♔b4 ♕xg3 44.b6 ♕f2 45.♕c7+ ♔f6 46.b7 and Black resigned.

Thus, with the help of computers, White has managed to defeat Black's attempt to force equality, by exchanging off as many minor pieces as possible. But the path to an advantage is a narrow

one, so a change in the assessment of this forcing line could occur at any moment.

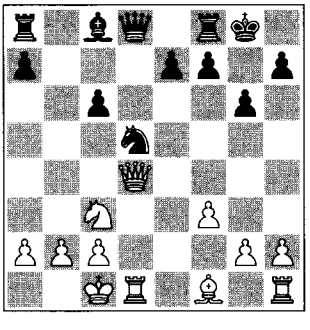
Radjabov and Carlsen prefer to combine simplifying manoeuvres with less forcing play, taking not on c3, but on d4.

Game 27
Alexei Shirov
Alexey Fedorov
Wijk aan Zee 2001 (3)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**g7-g6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♗f8-g7**
7.	**f2-f3**	**♘b8-c6**
8.	**♕d1-d2**	**0-0**
9.	**0-0-0**	**d6-d5**
10.	**e4xd5**	**♘f6xd5**
11.	**♘d4xc6**	**b7xc6**
12.	**♗e3-d4**	

In Game 25 this bishop caused Black much unpleasantness, whilst after 12...e5 the bishop on g7 could not develop much activity. This led Dragon supporters to the heretical thought of playing this variation of the opening without the dark-squared bishops.

12. ... ♗g7xd4!?
13. ♕d2xd4



All that remains of the Dragon set-up is the pawn on g6, and consequently there is a weakness on the dark squares around the king. On the other hand, Black has the open b-file, a pawn majority in the centre, and the chance to complete his development freely. The question of whether White can exploit the queenside pawn weaknesses or organise a kingside attack remains open for the time being.

As distinct from the previous variation, here Black prefers to keep the knight on d5 for the moment, especially as it is now too late to take on c3: after 13...♘xc3 14.♕xc3 ♕b6 (now this move does not attack the white queen!) 15.♗c4, Black has nothing with which to oppose the march of the white h-pawn.

13...♗e6 is also bad, allowing White to transfer his knight to c5 with tempo (♘e4-c5).

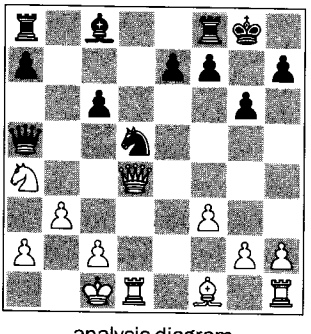
That leaves a queen move to c7 or b6. Strangely, although the two moves appear to amount to virtually the same thing, White's plans against each are radically different. After Fedorov's choice

13. ... ♕d8-c7

... the white knight continues to exert its influence in the centre, and may easily be transferred to the kingside, so it is natural that White's thoughts are bound up with an attack on the king.

In the event of **13...♕b6!?** (I prefer this continuation), Black provokes White into **14.♘a4** Just as in Game 25 and after 13...♕c7, here too after 14.♘xd5 cxd5 15.♕xd5 Black obtains excellent compensation for the pawn with 15...♗e6). On the one hand, the knight comes closer to its ideal post on c5, but on the other hand White weakens his control over the centre. Naturally, White's priorities also change – instead

of an attack on the king, he will strive for an endgame, where he can exploit Black's pawn weaknesses. In my opinion, from Black's perspective the attack on the king is significantly more unpleasant, so it is no surprise that Carlsen and Radjabov both prefer to move the queen to b6. **14...♕a5** The most natural, but maybe, having lured the knight to a4, the black queen should retreat to c7? Ivanchuk could not prove any advantage against Carlsen (Leon rapid 2009) after 14...♕c7!? 15.♗c4 ♖d8 16.♗b3 ♗f5 17.g4 ♘f4 18.♕e3 ♗e6 19.h4 ♗xb3 20.axb3 ♘g2 21.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 22.♕e4 ♕f4+ with a roughly equal endgame. **15.b3**



analysis diagram

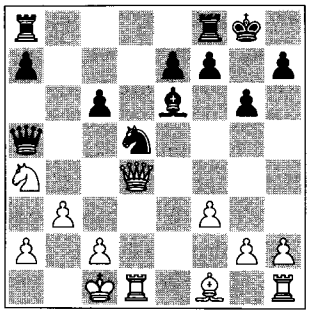
Instead of mutual attacks, in this position (already known from the game Suetin-Vasiukov, Lugansk 1955!) the main discussion is about whether White will succeed in exploiting the pawn weaknesses on the queenside, in one or other of the various endgames that can arise. The way into these endings, and the move-order involved, may vary, but the essence of what is happening remains the same – Black is fighting for equality, and quite often this battle ends successfully. I would repeat once again that my task is not to analyse all the variations of the Sicilian Defence (such a task would be impossible, even if I wrote a multi-volume work), and therefore I am limiting myself only to characteristic examples.

A) Now too, in my view, **15...♕c7!?** looks good. After luring the enemy knight further from the square e4, Black may consider the advance ...e7-e5. It is not easy to exploit the weakness of c5. Leko twice tried unsuccessfully to exploit White's small positional advantage against Radjabov. **16.♖e1** Preventing ...e7-e5. In an earlier game between the two players, 16.h4 was played, but after 16...h5! (the correct decision, because White cannot start an attack with 17.g4?! since 17...♕f4+! leads to an endgame in which the bold pawn advances on the kingside have only created weaknesses in White's position) 17.♖e1 ♘b6 18.♘c3 ♖d8 19.♕e5 ♕d6 20.♔b2 the Black bishop obtained the excellent post f5 – 20...♗f5! and the chances were soon equalised: 21.♗a6 ♕xe5 22.♖xe5 ♖d2 23.♖e2 ♖ad8 Leko-Radjabov, Elista 2008.

16...♘b6 17.♘c3 a5 Now after 17...♖d8 18.♕e5 ♕d6 19.♔b2 ♗f5 there would follow 20.g4!. **18.♕e5 ♕xe5 19.♖xe5 ♗e6 20.a4 ♖fc8** Preparing ...c6-c5. **21.♘e2!?** By threatening 22.♘f4, winning a pawn, White succeeds in preventing the c-pawn's advance, but Black exploits the time spent on the knight manoeuvre to seize space in the centre and completely equalise the game. Maybe White should have continued developing by 21.♗e2!? c5 22.♖d1 c4 23.♔b2, hoping in the future to exploit the slight weakness of the square b5 and the a5 pawn. **21...♔f8! 22.♘f4 ♗d7 23.♘d3 f6 24.♖c5 e5 25.♗e2 ♗e6 26.♖e1 ♔e7 27.♗f1 ♔d6 28.♖c3 ♘d5 29.♖c4 ♘f4 30.♖c3 ♘d5**, and the game ended in a

repetition of moves, Leko-Radjabov, Nanjing 2009.

B) **15...♗e6**



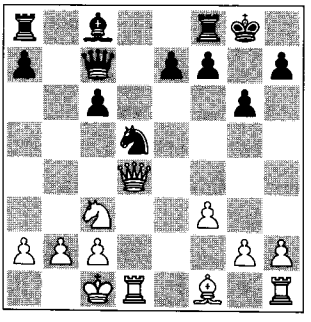
analysis diagram

16.♕d2 Now 16.♕c5 is pointless, because after 16...♕c7 the square c5 should be occupied by the knight rather than the queen. Also interesting is 16.♕e5 ♕b4, after which White has a choice: to go into a slightly better endgame after 17.♔b2 ♖ad8 18.♖d4 ♕d6 19.♕xd6 exd6, the most likely result of which is a draw, Golubev-Köpke, Kharkiv 2006; or to sharpen the play in a complicated middlegame with mutual chances after 17.c4 ♘f6 18.g4 ♖fd8 19.♗e2 Sivokho-Isaev, corr. 2005. **16...♕c7** Here it is dangerous for Black to go into the ending, since the white knight soon occupies a wonderful position on c5, with tempo: 16...♕xd2+? 17.♖xd2 ♖ad8 18.♘c5 ♗c8 19.♗d3 ♘f4 20.g3 ♘xd3+ 21.♘xd3 ♔g7 22.♖hd1 ♗f5 23.g4 ♗e6 24.♘c5 ♖xd2 25.♖xd2 ♗c8 26.♖d4 with advantage to White, Noomen-Stuart, corr. Netherlands 1987. **17.c4** In reply to 17.♘c5 Black has the splendid tactical resource 17...♖ad8! 18.♘xe6 ♕e5! 19.♘d4 c5 20.♖e1 ♕f6 with unclear play, Helbich-Isaev, corr. 2005. **17...♘f4 18.g3 ♘h5 19.♕e3** with complicated play, Turkov-Isaev, corr. 2007.

C) **15...♗f5** Black tries to provoke 16.g4, hoping that this will weaken the white kingside in the endgame. But now **16.♕c5!** is possible, since the c7-square is not available to the black queen. White's idea is revealed in the variation **16...♕xc5 17.♘xc5 ♘c3 18.♖e1! ♘xa2+ 19.♔b2 ♘b4 20.♗c4!** A positional pawn sacrifice in the endgame. The prosaic 20.♖xe7 ♖fe8! 21.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 (Korneev-Summerscale, Groningen 1995) leads to equality. **20...♖fe8** It is considered that after 20...♘xc2!? 21.♖xe7 ♘b4 22.g4 ♗c8? 23.♖d1 White's advantage is obvious. However, in my view, Black should return the pawn with 22...♗e6! (instead of 22...♗c8?), and although after 23.♘xe6 fxe6 24.♖xe6 White is slightly better, the most likely outcome of the game is a draw. **21.g4! ♗c8** Now this is forced, since after 21...♗xc2 22.♘a6!? ♘d3+ 23.♔xc2 ♘xe1+ 24.♖xe1 White has the advantage. **22.♖e5 e6** Neither 22...♔f8 23.c3 f6 24.♖e6! ♘d5 25.♖xc6 ♘f4 26.♖d1 with a superior position for White, Caruana-Frübing, Germany Bundesliga 2009/10, nor 22...♘d5 23.♗xd5 cxd5 24.♖xd5 solve Black's problems. **23.♘e4** Black's extra pawn is not really felt, whilst White develops the initiative on all sectors of the board. **23...♔g7** Van der Wiel pointed out the beautiful variation 23...♖d8 24.♖a5! f5? 25.gxf5 gxf5 26.♖g1+ ♔f8 27.♖xf5+! exf5 28.♖g8+ ♔e7 29.♖g7+ ♔f8 30.♖f7+ ♔e8 31.♘f6#. **24.♖a5! ♘d5** The character of the struggle is not changed by 24...♖e7 25.♖ha1 ♖c7 26.g5 Korneev-Gallego Jimenez, Spain tt-2 2001. **25.♖ha1 ♖e7 26.♘d6 ♘b6 27.♗d3 f5 28.♘xc8** White decides to recover the pawn. Maintaining the ini-

tiative by 28.♖e5!? deserves consideration. **28...♘xc8 29.♖c5** and Black faces an unpleasant fight for a draw, Van der Wiel-Golubev, Germany Bundesliga B 1999/00.

Returning to the game.

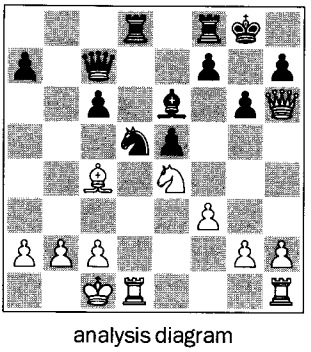


14. ♗f1-c4!

Completing development and strengthening the pressure on Black's position in the centre.

14. ... ♘d5-b6

With the white knight on c3, **14...e5?!** looks risky, since after **15.♕d2 ♗e6 16.♘e4!** White's pressure on the weakened dark squares is very unpleasant: **16...♖ad8** In the game Navara-Evdokimov, Pardubice 2006, Black preferred 16...♘f4, but after 17.♗xe6 ♘xe6 18.♕d6 ♖fd8 19.♘f6+ ♔g7 20.♘d7 ♕xd6 21.♖xd6 ♖ac8 22.♖hd1 ended up in a difficult endgame, which in the end he was unable to save. **17.♕h6**



analysis diagram

17...f5? This activity is completely out of place. He should have preferred 17...f6, although after 18.h4 White's position is better. **18.♘g5 ♗c8 19.♖d3!** Now White attacks the knight on d5 with all his might. In addition, at the right moment the rook can swing along the third rank to attack the weak pawns on a7 and c6, for example after 19...♕g7 20.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 21.♖a3!. **19...♖fe8 20.♖hd1 ♕b7** Or 20...♗b7 21.♖c3! ♕e7 22.♘xh7! ♕xh7 23.♕xh7+ ♔xh7 24.♗xd5 cxd5 ♖c7+. **21.♗b3** Threatening 22.c4. **21...e4 22.♖d4 e3 23.c4 e2 24.♖e1 ♘f6 25.♖xd8 ♖xd8 26.c5+ ♘d5 27.♖xe2** with a decisive advantage to White, Juradowitch-Barnett, CCLA 1999.

15. ♗c4-e2 ♗c8-e6

After 15...c5, 16.♕e3! followed by 17.h4 is unpleasant.

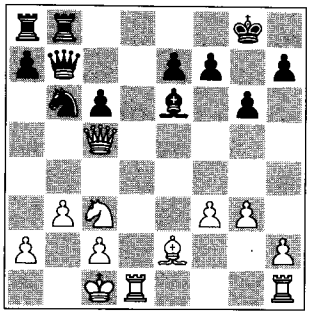
16. ♕d4-c5

And now 16.h4!? was worth considering.

16. ... ♖f8-b8

17. g2-g3 ♕c7-b7

18. b2-b3



It is interesting that hitherto, the players have repeated their game from the European Team Championship at Batumi in 1999. There Fedorov played 18...a5 and after 19.a4 ♘d5 20.♘e4 ♘b4 21.♗c4 ♗d5 22.♖d4 ♕a7 23.♕xa7 ♖xa7 24.f4 he defended a somewhat worse endgame. In my opinion, instead

of 19.a4 the move 19.h4!? deserved consideration, and it seems that White's attack develops the more rapidly: 19...a4 20.h5 axb3 21.cxb3 ♘d5 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.♗c4. Perhaps for this reason, Fedorov tried a new move.

18. ... ♘b6-d5

19. ♖d1-d4?!

To my mind, this prophylaxis is not completely justified. Black's heavy pieces are bunched on the queenside, not looking at the kingside at all, and White could have exploited this by playing 19.♘e4! ♘b4 20.♕e5!. At the cost of a pawn, the c5-square is freed for the knight. 20...♘xa2+ 21.♔b2 ♘b4 (21...♗xb3? fails to 22.♘c5!. Maybe this resource is what escaped the notice of both players) 22.♘c5 ♕c8 23.h4 with a very strong attack for White.

19. ... ♘d5xc3

20. ♕c5xc3 a7-a5

21. h2-h4!?

In a later game, Kurnosov played 21.♖a4 against Fedorov (Istanbul Ech 2003), but after the precise 21...♕a7! 22.h4 ♖b4! 23.♕xb4 axb4 24.♖xa7 ♖xa7 an equal endgame was reached.

21. ... h7-h6?!

Now there follows some unnecessary prophylaxis on Black's part. 21...a4?! is risky because of 22.h5 axb3 23.axb3 g5 24.h6. But Fedorov's suggestion 21...c5! gives Black sufficient counter-chances: 22.♖a4 (22.♕xc5 a4 is dangerous for White) 22...♕c7 23.h5 ♖b4 24.hxg6 fxg6 25.♕e3 ♗d5.

22. ♖d4-a4!

Not allowing ...a5-a4.

22. ... ♕b7-b6

As opposed to the note to White's 21st move, here 22...♕a7 does not solve the problems because of 23.h5 g5 24.f4!.

23. h4-h5 g6-g5

24. f3-f4!

White begins an attack on the king. Since Black cannot boast of any similar achievement, Fedorov decides at least to hang on to his extra material.

24. ... ♕b6-f2

Or 24...g4 25.f5 ♗xf5 26.♗xg4 +–.

25. f4xg5 h6xg5

26. ♗e2-f3 ♕f2xg3

27. h5-h6 f7-f6

28. ♖h1-e1!

Now the white rook breaks through to the 7th rank.

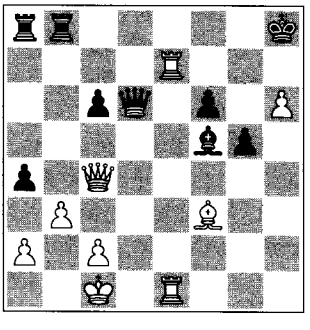
28. ... ♕g3-d6

29. ♖a4-e4 ♗e6-f5

Nor does 29...♗d5 save Black, because of 30.♖xe7 ♕f4+ 31.♖1e3 ♗xf3 32.♕d3.

30. ♖e4xe7 a5-a4

31. ♕c3-c4+ ♔g8-h8



Now the simplest way to decide the game is 32.♕xc6 ♕xc6 33.♗xc6 ♖a6 34.♗xa4. But in mutual time-trouble, the players commit some inaccuracies.

32. ♕c4-f7 ♖b8-g8?

White's task could have been made more difficult by 32...♕a3+ 33.♔b1 (a roughly equal endgame arises after 33.♔d2 ♖d8+ 34.♔e2 ♕xe7+! 35.♕xe7 ♖e8 36.♔d2 ♖xe7) 33...♗xc2+! 34.♔a1 (of course not 34.♔xc2 because of 34...♕xa2+) 34...♕xa2+! 35.♔xa2 ♗xb3+ 36.♔a1 ♗xf7 37.♖xf7 ♖f8, and White would

have to solve many technical problems on the way to the win.

33. ♖e7-e8?

Shirov is the last to err. Both 33.h7 and 33.♗e4 won easily. Now Black carries out the bishop sacrifice seen above, which in this situation leads to perpetual check.

33. ... ♕d6-f4+
34. ♔c1-b1 ♗f5xc2+!
35. ♔b1xc2 a4xb3+
36. ♔c2-c3

Or 36.axb3 ♖a2+ 37.♔b1 ♖b2+! 38.♔a1 ♖a2+ 39.♔xa2 ♕d2+ 40.♔a3 ♕a5+ 41.♔b2 ♕d2+ 42.♔b1 ♕d3+ 43.♔c1 ♕c3+ 44.♔d1 ♕d3+ with perpetual check.

36. ... ♖a8xe8
37. ♖e1xe8 ♕f4xf3+
38. ♔c3-b4 ♕f3-f4+
39. ♔b4xb3 ♕f4-f3+
40. ♔b3-b4 c6-c5+
41. ♔b4-b5 ♕f3-d3+
42. ♔b5-b6 ♕d3-b1+
43. ♔b6-c6 ♕b1-h1+
44. ♔c6-c7 ♕h1-h2+

And the players agreed a draw.

Conclusions

1. After the central counterattack 9...d5!, White should not be tempted to win a pawn, giving Black open lines on the queenside, but should fight for the initiative by neutralising the Dragon bishops by means of 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♗d4!.

2. As the variation was developed, it was believed that by retaining the bishops with 12...e5, Black obtains chances to seize the initiative. However, nowadays the assessment of the resulting complicated position has changed. By advancing the h-pawn and threatening an attack on the king, White forces Black to give the position a static character, where, notwithstanding the abundance of pieces on the board, Black's main task is the defence of his pawn weaknesses. However, in the majority of cases, the endgame resulting after an exchange of queens is better for White, since it is difficult for Black to oppose the pressure in the centre and on the queenside (Game 25).

With correct play on White's part, the bishop on g7 more often than not ends up as a passive defender of the kingside, whilst its opposite number, located on the square c5, takes an active part in the battle, on all sides of the board.

3. Consequently, at the present time it is considered that Black, rather surprisingly for the Dragon, should exchange the dark-squared bishops and seek salvation in simplifications.

4. The attempts to force a draw by exchanging off as many minor pieces as possible (12...♘xc3 13.♕xc3 ♗h6+ 14.♗e3 ♗xe3+) are not considered correct nowadays, thanks to Volokitin's computer-like accurate play (Game 26). However, a reassessment of this forcing line could occur at any moment, as White's path to an advantage is a very narrow one.

5. Probably, Black should only exchange dark-squared bishops, by playing 12...♗xd4. In this case, White should combine an attack on the weakened black kingside with threats to transpose into a superior ending (Game 27).

Chapter 5.3 – White Brings out his Bishop to c4 before Castling Long

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 0-0 8.♕d2 ♘c6 9.♗c4

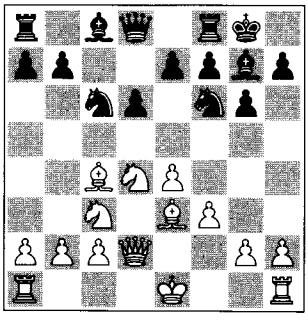


Diagram 1

The emergence of the bishop on c4 cuts off Black's central activity at the roots, but it involves a loss of time, as the bishop will have to move again in the near future, when it is driven to b3.

The great popularity of this system is the result not only of the highly interesting positions which arise in the middlegame, but also of the universality of the white piece set-up. For those lovers of combinative play who are not attracted to the Maroczy Bind against the Accelerated Dragon, the bishop move to c4 offers the possibility of taking play into positions with opposite-side castling in that variation, too:

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7. ♗c4 0-0 7...♕a5, 7...d6 8.f3 ♕b6. **8.♗b3! d6** 8...a5. **9.f3** In the notes, some continuations are pointed out which oblige White to castle short, but these involve some positional concessions or loss of time, and so in our day, the variation of the Accelerated Dragon with the move ♗c4 most often leads to the position of the diagram:

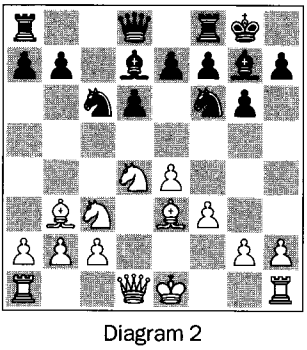


Diagram 2

In many cases, the small difference between diagrams 1 and 2 has no effect, but sometimes Black may try to exploit the white bishop's early retreat to b3 in the Accelerated Dragon, to advance ...b7-b5 as soon as possible in the position of diagram 2 – **9...♗d7 10.♕d2 ♘xd4!? 11.♗xd4 b5**.

The plan with an early ...b7-b5 is also worthy of attention in the position of diagram 1, after the moves **9...♗d7 10.0-0-0 ♖c8** Also interesting is the rather exotic 10...♖b8 11.♗b3 ♘a5 followed by ...b5, as played by Carlsen and Radjabov. **11.♗b3 ♘xd4!? 12.♗xd4 b5!** and, as shown by some games of Shirov and Gashimov, it is far from easy for White to achieve any advantage.

Black's successes in the variation with an early ...b7-b5 have resulted in such attacking masters as Grischuk, Motylev and Areschenko playing h2-h4!? as White, before castling, so as to force Black to commit himself as early as possible – will he allow the opening of the h-file after h4-h5, or does he prefer set-ups with ...h7-h5? Of course, the early h2-h4!? also serves White's purposes, but we will discuss this in more detail when analysing Games 30-32.

In 5.3.1, we will look at set-ups in which Black refrains from ...h7-h5. First of all, we look at how reasonable is the universal Dragon plan of ...♘xd4 and ...♗e6, similar to Games 22 and 23, when the white bishop is on c4 (Game 28). Then we turn our attention to one of the oldest systems of development, in which Black exploits the fact that White has spent time on moving his light-squared bishop, and puts his bishop on d7, his queen on a5, and his king's rook on c8, once and for all parrying the threat of a knight jump to d5 (Game 29). In Game 30, we look at the treatment where Black leaves his queen at home and allows the h-pawn to advance h2-h4-h5.

Chapter 5.3.2 is devoted to the most popular modern method of play for Black, the advance ...h7-h5, to slow up the attack. In Game 31, White advances his h-pawn straightaway, and in Game 32, he prepares it with the prophylactic ♔b1.

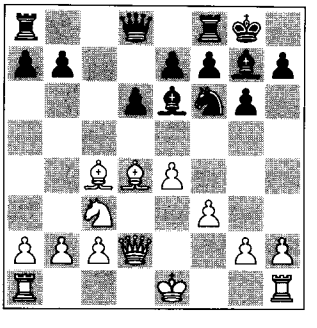
5.3.1 Black does not play ...h7-h5

Game 28
Ivan Bukavshin
Vladimir Belous
Kirishi 2010 (5)

Analysis of this game was done in collaboration with Ivan Bukavshin.

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**g7-g6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♗f8-g7**
7.	**f2-f3**	**0-0**
8.	**♕d1-d2**	**♘b8-c6**
9.	**♗f1-c4**	**♘c6xd4**

10. ♗e3xd4 ♗c8-e6



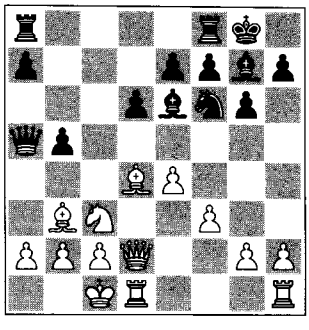
The universal Dragon set-up, played successfully by Black in Game 22, but which came a cropper in Game 23.

11. ♗c4-b3

Now there is no reason to exchange on e6, which merely strengthens Black's position in the centre. As in Game 22, Black now succeeds in placing his queen on a5 and his rook on c8 (here we see the effect of White's having spent time on the manoeuvre ♗f1-c4-b3). On the other hand, the bishop on b3 solidly defends the queenside, and Black does not manage to force the weakening move a2-a3, so the standard advance ...b7-b5-b4 becomes less effective. In addition, the position of the dark-squared bishop on d4 is very strong. It simultaneously supports the attack and cements the defences of its own king. In order not to fall under a crushing attack, as happened in the famous game Fischer-Larsen (see the note to Black's 13th move), Black must act very energetically.

11. ... ♕d8-a5

12. 0-0-0 b7-b5

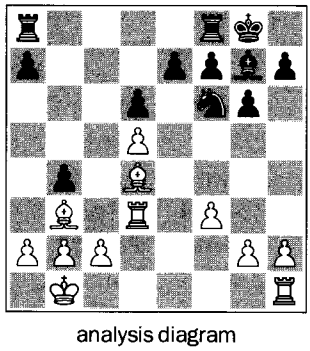


13. ♔c1-b1!

The well-known prophylaxis, threatening the standard 14.♘d5.

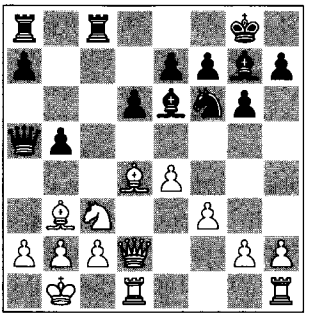
13. ... ♖f8-c8

13...b4 14.♘d5 ♗xd5 15.exd5! Fischer, in his famous game against Larsen (in *My 60 Memorable Games*, he entitled it 'Slaying the Dragon') took on d5 with the bishop – 15.♗xd5, and after Larsen's bad mistake – 15...♖ac8? (Black could equalise with 15...♘xd5 16.♗xg7 ♘c3+! 17.♗xc3 bxc3 18.♕xc3 ♕xc3 19.bxc3 ♖fc8=) kept the bishop – 16.♗b3!. This was the point at which he made his famous comment, which did so much to reduce the number of adherents of the Dragon: 'He won't get another chance to snap off the bishop! Now I thought the game was in the bag, if I didn't botch it. I had won dozens of skittles games in similar positions and had it down to a science – pry open the h-file, sac, sac and mate!' 16...♖c7 17.h4 ♕b5 18.h5 ♖fc8 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.g4 a5 21.g5 ♘h5 22.♖xh5 gxh5 23.g6 e5 24.gxf7+ ♔f8 25.♗e3 d5 26.exd5 ♖xf7 27.d6 ♖f6 28.♗g5 ♕b7 29.♗xf6 ♗xf6 30.d7 ♖d8 31.♕d6+ 1-0 Fischer-Larsen, Portoroz izt 1958. **15...♕b5** With the threat of ...a7-a5-a4, Black practically forces White to go into an endgame with **16.♕d3!** In my view, it does not make sense to waste time on 16.♖he1?! a5 17.♕e2 ♕xe2 18.♖xe2, which allows Black to somewhat compromise the white pawn structure on the queenside with 18...a4! 19.♗c4 ♖fc8 20.b3 ♖c7 and in the end he held in the game Areschenko-Zviagintsev, Sochi tt 2005. **16...♕xd3** After 16...♕b7 17.♖he1 a5 18.♗a4! Black has no counterplay. **17.♖xd3**



analysis diagram

Defending such an ending is not a pleasant task. White will sooner or later open the c-file and, by offering a favourable exchange of rooks, will threaten to realise his queenside pawn majority, supported by the bishop pair. Black's only hope of constructing a defence is to transfer his knight to c5, but he cannot manage this without material or positional concessions. **17...♖fc8 18.♖e1 ♖c7 19.c3! a5 20.cxb4 axb4 21.♖dd1!** On its way to the c-file! **21...♗h6!?** For the moment, Black does not allow the white rook to c1. The submissive 21...♔f8 led to a difficult endgame in the game Anisimov-Belous, Ulan Ude 2009: 22.♖c1 ♖xc1+ 23.♖xc1 ♘d7 24.♗e3! – the bishops should be retained! 24...♘c5 25.♖c4 ♘xb3 26.axb3 ♗e5 27.f4 ♗f6 28.♗b6 ♖b8 29.♖xb4. **22.g3!** Constructing a barrier on the c1-h6 diagonal. **22...♔f8 23.f4 ♘d7 24.♖c1 ♘c5** The knight has reached c5, but after **25.♖c4!** followed by 26.♖e2-c2 Black cannot defend the squares a5 and b4. In the game Timofeev-Uzhva, Sochi tt 2010, there followed **25...♗g7** Worse is 25...♘xb3 because of 26.♖xc7 ♘xd4 27.♖exe7 (but not 27.♖e4? e5!) 27...♔g8 28.♖xf7 ♗f8 29.♖xh7 ♖e8 30.♖hd7 (Motylev). **26.♗e3 ♔e8 27.♖e2! ♖b7 28.♗xc5 dxc5 29.♖xc5 ♔d7 30.♔c2** Black has lost a pawn, and he could not save the game.



14. ♖h1-e1!

At the moment, the various versions of the knight jump to d5 do not promise White an advantage:

A) **14.♗xf6** ♗xf6 15.♘d5 ♕xd2 16.♘xf6+ ♔g7 17.♘h5+ gxh5 18.♖xd2 ♖c5=;

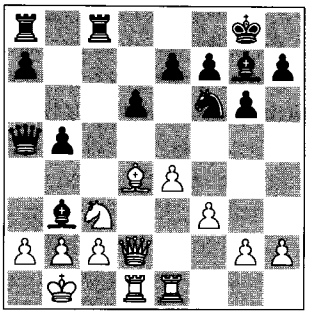
B) **14.♘d5** ♕xd2 15.♖xd2 ♘xd5 (15...♗xd5 16.♗xd5 ♘xd5 17.exd5 ♖c4=) 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♗xd5 ♖ab8=.

14. ... ♗e6xb3

White threatened at the appropriate moment to play e4-e5, so it is difficult for Black to find another useful move:

A) **14...♖ab8? 15.e5 dxe5** 15...♗xb3 16.exf6+–. **16.♗xe6 exd4** 16...fxe6 17.♖xe5±. **17.♗xc8 ♖xc8** 17...dxc3 18.♕d8++–. **18.♕xd4**;

B) **14...b4** 15.♘d5 ♗xd5 16.exd5 ♖c7 17.a4! and, having blockaded the queenside, White has freed his hands for action on the kingside and in the centre.



15. c2xb3!

A typical device. White devalues his queenside pawn structure, but totally deprives Black of attacking ideas.

15. ... b5-b4

Black will soon be forced to undouble White's queenside pawns himself, since otherwise he will not survive into an endgame, e.g. 15...♖d8?! 16.g4 ♖ac8 17.g5 ♘d7 18.♗xg7 ♔xg7 19.h4 ♘e5

20.♕e3 ♖e8 21.f4± Anand-Werner, Bad Mergentheim 1993.

16. ♗d4xf6!

The immediate 16.♘d5? is worse because of 16...♘xd5 17.♗xg7 ♘e3! 18.♕xe3 ♔xg7=.

16. ... b4xc3

Now after 16...♗xf6 there follows 17.♘d5 with a large advantage to White.

17. ♗f6xc3 ♗g7xc3

17...♖xc3 18.♖f1 18.♖e3!?. **18...♖xb3** 18...♖c5 19.b4 ♗c3 20.♕xc3 ♖xc3 21.bxa5±; 18...♖b8 19.bxc3 ♗xc3 20.♕c2 ♗f6 21.f4 ♕a3 22.♖fe1± Gabrielian-Uzhva, Belgorod 2009. **19.axb3 ♕e5 20.♖c1±.**

18. b2xc3 ♖c8xc3

18...♕xc3 19.♕xc3 ♖xc3 20.♖c1 ♖ac8 21.♔b2 leads to a worse version of the endgame we have already seen.

19. ♖e1-e3 ♖a8-c8

19...♖c5 20.♕xa5 ♖xa5 21.♖c3 leads to a position 'with two results', with the draw being more likely than a white win, in my view. But it is hard for Black to stop the advance of the queenside pawns. White controls the only open file, and the exchange of a pair of rooks is practically always in his favour, as his king finds it easier to support the passed pawn.

20. ♖e3xc3 ♕a5xc3

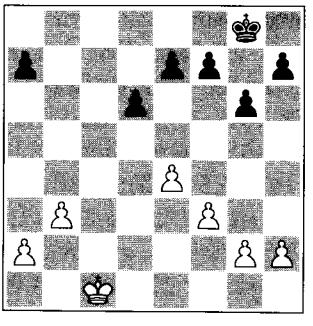
Once again, the rook ending arising after 20...♖xc3 21.♔b2 ♖c5 22.♕xa5 ♖xa5 23.♖d5!? (23.♖c1!?) 23...♖a6 24.♖b5, favours White – all of his pieces are more active, and the prospect of creating a dangerous passed pawn on the queenside will soon become a reality.

21. ♕d2xc3 ♖c8xc3

22. ♖d1-c1 ♖c3xc1+

Maybe this was the point at which Black should go into the rook ending, by playing 22...♖e3!?. By comparison with the previous note, Black's rook is more active. However, his defence is still not easy, as White's passed pawns on the queenside are very dangerous, e.g. 23.b4! f5 24.exf5 gxf5 25.♖c7!? (Sergey Bystrov considers that 25.b5!? ♔f7 26.a4 ♖a3 27.♖c4 ♔e6 28.♔b2 ♔d5 29.♖h4 is also good, although Black's piece activity gives him chances of a draw).

23. ♔b1xc1



Such is the modern Dragon – the assessment of an opening line depends directly on whether Black can save a king and pawn ending (!), first reached in practice 50 years ago, in the game Verica Nedeljkovic-Larisa Volpert, Belgrade tt 1961. In the present game, the white player is a 15-year old player, three-time European and Russian champion at his age group, who did not expect to reach this endgame, had not devoted any analytical attention to it in his preparation, and expected to be able to work it out at the board. Undoubtedly, on general principles (White has an outside passed pawn), it looks very dangerous for Black. However, in correspondence chess it has arisen quite often, and as we will see below, even in the quiet of their homes, with unlimited time to think, players have not always played it perfectly. Nonetheless, it is to correspondence players that

we are indebted for a final answer as to the assessment of the position. I will refer to their analyses, especially those of Sergey Bystrov, below, as well as that of Jeroen Bosch and Karel van der Weide in New In Chess 98/4 and Yearbook 54.

Of course, reaching such an ending as Black is hardly the Dragon player's dream, but in the present game his sporting aims proved justified.

At first, I did not plan to give a detailed analysis of this endgame. However, later I changed my mind, for the following reasons:

- We have before us a striking example of the modern approach to theory, where it is impossible to say where the opening ends, and the endgame begins;
- Not only the amateur, but also the professional must identify the moment at which he can end his home preparation of a certain variation, as there are always more positions that can be analysed. My approach to this line would have been like that of Bukavshin. If I could not predict that my opponent would go into this ending (and that is hardly an easy thing to predict), then I would have stopped my preparation at the diagram position, and relied on working out the details over the board, if necessary.
- The next stage of the analysis comes after the game. Whatever the result, one must find the critical moments and understand where the players committed mistakes, and try to explain their cause. In this case, one is less likely to repeat such mistakes in the future, and the opening variation will also be remembered for a long time.

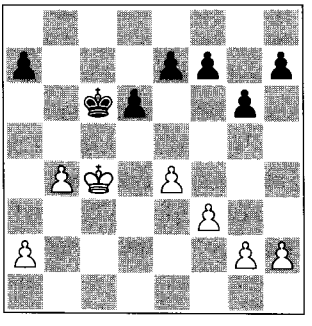
The results of such a joint analysis with Bukavshin are now before you.

23. ... ♔g8-f8

24. ♔c1-c2!

White cannot get his queenside pawns to the 5th rank by 24.b4 ♔e8 25.b5?! ♔d7 26.a4 because of 26...d5! 27.e5 a6!, and already it is White who needs to play accurately to draw, Stoinev-Tsvetkov, Pleven 2006.

24. ... ♔f8-e8
25. ♔c2-d3 ♔e8-d7
26. ♔d3-c4 ♔d7-c6
27. b3-b4



27. ... a7-a6

White would like to establish his pawns on a5 and b5. Black can prevent this by putting his pawn on a6, as happened in the game, or by manoeuvring his king to the squares b6 and a6, preparing to meet the advance b4-b5 with the move ♔a5. Let us look at this idea.

27...♔b6 28.a4 28.b5? ♔a5. **28...e6** Setting up a barrier against the white king. **29.h4!** The start of the winning plan. In anticipation of a later queen ending, White seizes space on the kingside. Black cannot move his own pawns forward, since the white king will be able to march into the kingside, along the opened paths:

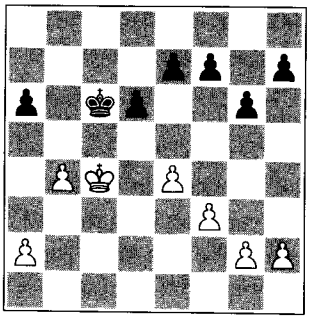
A) All the while White does not put his pawn on g4, Black cannot effect the defensive plan seen in the game: **29...h6 30.f4! a6** After 30...f5, 31.h5! wins at once. **31.b5 axb5+ 32.axb5 ♔b7 33.f5! g5 34.hxg5 hxg5 35.fxe6 fxe6 36.♔b4**

g4 37.g3 ♔b6 38.♔a4 ♔b7 39.♔a5 ♔a7 40.b6+ ♔b7 41.♔b5 e5 42.♔a5 d5 43.exd5 e4 44.♔b4 ♔xb6 45.♔c4 e3 46.♔d3 ♔c5 47.♔xe3 ♔xd5 48.♔f4 and White wins;

B) After **29...♔c6** there naturally follows 30.b5+ ♔b6 31.♔b4.

C) Therefore, **29...♔a6 30.g4!** With the pawn on h7 there is no point in 30.f4, after which there follows 30...f5! and 31.h5 is met simply by 31...fxe4. **30...h6 31.f4 ♔b6 32.a5+! ♔a6** 32...♔c6 33.b5+ ♔b7 34.f5 g5 35.h5 leads to the same thing. **33.f5 g5 34.h5 ♔b7 35.b5 ♔c7 36.♔d4 ♔d7 37.f6 ♔c7 38.e5 d5 39.♔c5!** White breaks through to the f7 pawn in all cases, and despite the fact that Black gets a queen first, White will have a large advantage in the resulting queen ending, because his pawns will stand significantly closer to the promotion square. **39...♔d7** 39...♔b7 is even worse, because of 40.♔d6! d4 41.♔e7 d3 42.♔xf7 d2 43.♔g8 d1♕ 44.f7, and Black cannot prevent the appearance of a new white queen and the consequent disappearance of his kingside pawns. **40.b6 axb6+ 41.♔xb6! ♔c8** The foot-race 41...d4 ends in the black king being mated: 42.a6 d3 43.a7 d2 44.a8♕ d1♕ 45.♕c6+ ♔d8 46.♕c7+ ♔e8 47.♕e7#. **42.♔c5 ♔b7 43.♔d6! d4 44.♔e7 d3 45.♔xf7 d2 46.♔g7 d1♕ 47.f7** Here, Black's drawing chances are better than in the similar ending analysed above, but as shown by the analysis of Bosch and Van der Weide, White still wins by accurate play. **47...♕xg4 48.f8♕ ♕e4** Or 48...♕xh5 49.♕e7+ ♔a8 50.♕d8+ ♔b7 51.♕b6+ ♔a8 52.♕xe6; 48...♕c4 49.♔xh6 g4 50.♔g5 g3 51.♕f3+ and White's passed pawns should decide the outcome of the game in their favour (Bosch/Van der Weide). **49.♕e7+!** In the correspondence game Rittner-Arnlind, 1970-74, White played the inaccurate 49.♕c5? which allowed Black to hold the position after 49...g4!. **49...♔a6** In the event of 49...♔a8 White wins the forced four-queen ending: 50.♕xe6 g4 51.♕a6+ ♔b8 52.♕d6+ ♔a7 53.e6 g3 54.e7 g2 55.♕d7+ ♔a6 56.e8♕ g1♕+ 57.♕g6+. **50.♕c5!** The decisive tempo win, threatening mate on b6. **50...♕b7+ 51.♔xh6 g4 52.♕c4+ ♔xa5 53.♕xg4 ♕f7 54.♕e4!** and White should win (analysis by Bosch and Van der Weide).

To return to the game:



28. a2-a4 e7-e6

29. h2-h4!

So far, Bukavshin is playing very strongly. Of course, 29.g4? is bad because of 29...g5, and White cannot break through.

29. ... h7-h6

29...f5? loses immediately because of 30.exf5 gxf5 31.g4 fxg4 32.fxg4 e5 33.b5+ axb5+ 34.axb5+ ♔b6 35.g5 1-0 Santos-Lima, Loures 1996.

Sergey Bystrov examines **29...♔b7!?**, not allowing White to advance the b-pawn with check, and demonstrates a subtle win: **30.b5 a5 31.g4 h6 32.g5 hxg5 33.hxg5 ♔b6 34.f4 ♔b7 35.♔d4 ♔b6 36.♔e3!** Preparing f4-f5-f6. The

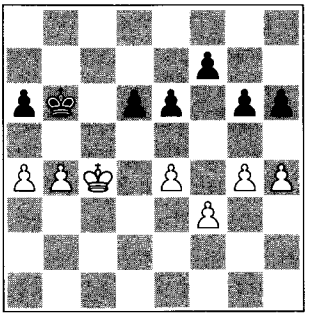
immediate 36.f5? is bad because of 36...exf5 37.exf5 gxf5. **36...♔c5 37.f5 ♔b6** Now after 37...gxf5 38.exf5 exf5 there follows 39.♔f4, winning. **38.f6 ♔c5 39.♔d3 ♔b6 40.♔c4 ♔c7 41.e5! d5+ 42.♔c5** and White wins the queen ending in the same way as in the previously-examined examples: **42...♔b7 43.♔d6 d4 44.♔e7 d3 45.♔xf7 d2 46.♔g7 d1♕ 47.f7**.

30. g2-g4?!

An easier win was shown by Jeroen Bosch and Karel van der Weide: 30.b5+ axb5+ 31.axb5+ ♔b6 32.g4! with the idea of h4-h5, ensuring the white king a corridor into the kingside. A possible development of events then is 32...♔b7 (32...♔a5? 33.e5!) 33.h5 gxh5 34.gxh5 ♔b6 35.♔b4 ♔b7 36.♔a5 d5 37.exd5 exd5 38.♔a4 ♔b6 39.♔b4 d4 40.♔c4 d3 41.♔xd3 ♔xb5 42.♔e4 ♔c6 43.♔f5 ♔d7 44.♔f6 ♔e8 45.♔g7.

30. ... ♔c6-b6!

White had been hoping for 30...g5, which weakens Black's position on the kingside, and had calculated the following variation: 31.h5! f6 (31...♔b6? 32.f4) 32.b5+ axb5+ 33.axb5+ ♔b6 34.♔b4 d5 35.exd5 exd5 36.♔a4 ♔c5 (or 36...d4 37.♔b4 d3 38.♔c3 ♔xb5 39.♔xd3 ♔c5 40.♔e4 ♔d6 41.♔f5 ♔e7 42.♔g6+–) 37.♔a5 d4 38.b6 d3 39.b7 d2 40.b8♕ d1♕ 41.♕c7+, winning.



31. f3-f4?

The decisive mistake! It was essential to play 31.b5! taking play into the variation examined above: 31...a5 (or 31...axb5+ 32.axb5 with a position from the note to White's 30th move) 32.g5 hxg5 33.hxg5 ♔c7 34.f4 ♔b6 35.♔d4 ♔c7 36.♔e3 – see the note to Black's 29th move, the variation with 29...♔b7.

As distinct from the variation starting with 28...♔a6, White does not now create a protected passed pawn, and as we see below, the position of the pawn on f5 prevents him winning the endgame.

31. ... ♔b6-c6

32. f4-f5

Or 32.g5 hxg5 33.hxg5 ♔b6 34.♔d4 ♔c6 35.♔c4 ♔b6 and White cannot get a protected passed pawn on the queenside – 36.b5 axb5+ 37.axb5 ♔c7 38.♔b4 ♔b6=.

The immediate 32.b5+ axb5+ 33.axb5+ ♔b6 34.♔b4 d5 35.exd5 exd5 36.h5 gxh5 37.gxh5 f5! 38.♔a4 d4 39.♔b4 d3= also leads to a draw.

32. ... g6-g5

33. h4xg5

33.h5 does not change anything, because with the pawn on f5 or f6, White cannot win the endgame in the manner shown in the note to his 30th move: 33...♔b6 34.f6 ♔c6 35.b5+ axb5+ 36.axb5+ ♔b6 37.♔b4 d5 38.exd5 exd5 39.♔a4 d4 40.♔b4 d3 41.♔c3 ♔xb5 42.♔xd3 and White cannot approach the black kingside pawns.

33. ... h6xg5
34. f5xe6 f7xe6
35. b4-b5+ a6xb5+
36. a4xb5+ ♔c6-b6
37. ♔c4-b4 ♔b6-b7
38. ♔b4-a5 ♔b7-a7
39. b5-b6+ ♔a7-b7
40. ♔a5-b5 e6-e5!

41. ♔b5-a5 d6-d5
42. e4xd5 e5-e4
43. d5-d6 e4-e3
44. d6-d7 e3-e2
45. d7-d8♕ e2-e1♕+
46. ♔a5-b5 ♕e1-e8+!
47. ♕d8xe8

Draw. In analysing this game, I have tried to speak not only about studying the opening and middlegame, but also how the system of 'working on one's mistakes' is applied to the endgame.

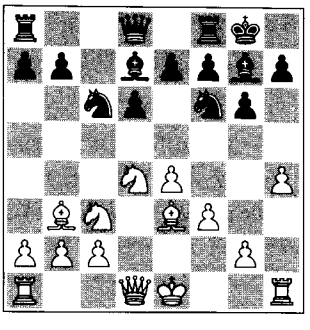
Game 29
Pavel Smirnov
Dmitry Chuprov
Krasnoyarsk 2007 (1)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 ♘b8-c6
3. d2-d4 c5xd4
4. ♘f3xd4 g7-g6
5. ♘b1-c3 ♗f8-g7
6. ♗c1-e3 ♘g8-f6
7. ♗f1-c4 0-0
8. ♗c4-b3 d7-d6
9. f2-f3 ♗c8-d7
10. h2-h4!?

What is the point of this early aggression? Well, in the Accelerated Dragon, after the natural **10.♕d2** Black can try to take advantage of the early move of the bishop to b3 and play **10...♘xd4!? 11.♗xd4 b5!** Now long castling does not give Black any worries after 12.0-0-0 a5!. To avoid worse, White has to simplify the position by 13.e5 dxe5 14.♗xe5 and after both 14...♗c6!?, and 14...a4!? 15.♗d5 ♖a7 the chances are about equal.

White can try to exploit the weakening of the queenside, but games by Ivanchuk, Shirov, Carlsen and a host of other GMs have shown that Black's prospects are not worse. The renaissance of this variation started with the game Shirov-Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 1999, in which White struggled to draw after 12.h4 a5! 13.a4 (now 13.h5 is dubious because of 13...a4 14.♗d5 e5!?) 13...bxa4 14.♘xa4 (with the white pieces against Carlsen (Sofia 2009) Ivanchuk played 14.♗xa4, but after 14...h5! Black successfully solved his opening problems) 14...♗e6!. White has not managed to castle long, and the mutual weaknesses make the chances of the two sides roughly equal. Shirov liked the variation, and successfully included it in his black repertoire. Later Carlsen was also converted, and these three brilliant players have not lost a single game between them in the line!

Anand against Carlsen (Wijk aan Zee 2010) played 12.a4, but the chances soon equalised: 12...b4 13.♘d5 ♘xd5 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.exd5 ♕a5 16.♕d4+ ♔g8 17.0-0 ♖ac8 18.♖fe1 ♖fe8 19.♔h1 ♕c5 20.♕h4 and in view of 20...e5, the players agreed a draw.



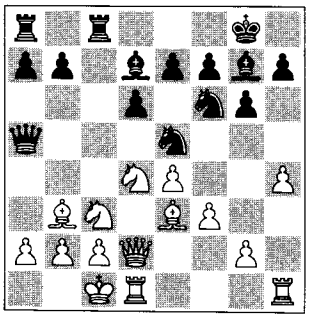
After the game move, Black cannot play by analogy with the previous note with 10...♘xd4?! 11.♗xd4 b5 because by playing 12.h5!, White saves time on the move ♕d2. In the game P. Smirnov-Maletin, Krasnoyarsk 2007, White obtained a large advantage after 12...a5 13.hxg6 hxg6 14.a4! bxa4 15.♘xa4 ♖b8 16.♕d2 ♗e6 17.♗xe6 fxe6 18.0-0 ♖b5 19.b3 ♕b8 20.♘c3 ♖h5 21.♘e2.

10. ... ♕d8-a5

This continuation, worked out independently of one another in the 1950s by the Soviet players Veresov and Dubinin, has nowadays lost its popularity. It has been replaced by 10...♖c8 11.♕d2 ♘e5 12.0-0-0 ♘c4 (Game 30) and 12...h5 (this move can be played here at move 10; Game 31).

11. ♕d1-d2 ♖f8-c8

12. 0-0-0 ♘c6-e5



Black has achieved his intended set-up. His queen has been able to come out to a5, and his king's rook has gone to c8. Now after ♗h6, he has the option of preserving his bishop from exchange with ♗h8, whilst the free square on f8 means that he also no longer has to worry about the jump ♘d5. However, the position of the white queen gives White the possibility after exchanging his light-squared bishop of playing his knight to b3 with tempo, and gaining time for his attack on the king.

13. ♔c1-b1!

Yet again this prophylactic move proves to be the strongest! What is its purpose here? Black has nothing better on his next move than to play ...♘c4. Then after the exchange on c4, Black will threaten the typical exchange sacrifice on c3. White defends the a2 pawn in advance, putting his king in its best position, and wants to drive off the enemy queen with ♘b3 after the exchange on c4. Only then, depending on where the enemy queen goes, will he determine his subsequent plan of attack.

13. ... ♘e5-c4

There is nothing better. Combining the queen development to a5 with 13...h5? is not possible, because after 14.♗g5! Black has no defence to the exchange on f6, followed by ♘d5, e.g.: 14...♘c4 15.♗xc4 ♖xc4 16.♗xf6 ♗xf6? 17.♘d5 ♕xd2 18.♘xf6+ ♔g7 19.♘xh5+.

Previously, 13...b5 was seen quite often, but after 14.♘cxb5 I do not see sufficient compensation for the pawn, e.g.:

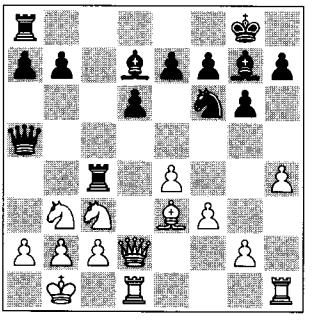
A) 14...♕a6 15.♘c3 ♘c4 16.♕d3 ♖ab8 17.♗c1 Karpov-Garcia Martinez, Portoroz/Ljubljana 1975;

B) 14...♕d8 15.♕e2! Glek-Ward, Copenhagen 1995;

C) 14...♕xd2 15.♗xd2 ♖ab8 16.♘c3 ♘c4 (or 16...h5 17.♖he1 ♗e8 18.♗g5 ♔f8 19.♘d5 ♘xd5 20.exd5 a5 21.a4 with advantage to White, Wakefield-A. Smirnov, corr. 2007) 17.♗xc4!? ♖xc4 18.♘b3 ♗e6 19.♖he1 h5 20.♘e2 ♖bc8 21.c3 ♗d7 22.♗e3 ♖4c7 23.♗d4 Sakai-Horta, corr. 2002. In all cases with advantage to White.

14. ♗b3xc4 ♖c8xc4

15. ♘d4-b3!



In the past, this was one of the key positions of the Dragon. Where should the queen retreat to?

15. ... ♕a5-c7

Analysis has shown that after other moves, Black's problems are even more serious:

A) **15...♕e5** looks completely out of place, and only provokes White into putting his bishop on a better square: 16.♗d4 ♕e6 17.h5! with a very strong attack. As in most cases, White need not fear the capture on h5: 17...♘h5? 18.♗xg7 ♔xg7 19.g4 ♘f6 20.♕h6+ ♔g8 21.♘d5 ♖c8 22.g5 ♘h5 23.♖xh5 gxh5 24.♘f6+ exf6 25.gxf6 with a quick win;

B) After **15...♕a6** 16.e5! ♘e8 (16...dxe5? 17.♘c5) 17.♘d5 is strong;

C) In the event of the solid, but passive **15...♕d8**, White can continue 16.♗h6!?, not fearing the exchange sacrifice on c3. Black has an unpleasant choice: to retreat the bishop to h8, and after 17.h5! come under a very strong attack, or allow the exchange of dark-squared bishops, which in conjunction with the queen position condemns him to a passive defence.

16. ♗e3-d4!?

As in Games 23 and 25-28, the white bishop occupies one of its best positions in the Dragon, from where it exerts pressure on the kingside and defends its own king on the other flank. However, in my opinion, from a theoretical point of view 16.g4! is even stronger, after which new ways of developing the initiative immediately open before White:

A) 17.g5 with the idea of occupying d5 with tempo;

B) 17.h5, opening lines for attack; and

C) the tactical threat 17.e5 with the idea of winning a piece after 17...dxe5 18.g5 or otherwise, after the retreat of the knight from f6, again playing the knight into d5 with tempo.

However, from the viewpoint of examining the mutual ways to develop the initiative, the text move is more interesting, hence my choice of the present game.

16. ... ♗d7-e6

Taking control of the square d5.

17. h4-h5 a7-a5

The suicidal 17...♘xh5? is refuted by 18.♗xg7 ♔xg7 19.g4 ♘f6 20.♕h6+ ♔h8 21.♘d4! ♖xc3 22.g5! ♗xa2+ (if 22...♘h5 Black is mated after 23.♘xe6 fxe6 24.♖xh5 gxh5 25.g6) 23.♔xa2 ♘h5 24.bxc3 with a winning position for White, P. Smirnov-Loskutov, Belgorod 2008.

18. a2-a4 b7-b5!

The only move. There is no time for 18...♖b4? – 19.hxg6 hxg6 (or 19...fxg6 20.♗xf6! ♗xf6 21.♘d5 ♗xd5 22.♕xd5+ ♔g7 23.♖xh7+! ♔xh7 24.♕f7+ mating) 20.♖h4 ♖c8 21.♖dh1 ♗xb3 22.cxb3 e5 23.♗e3 ♖xb3 24.♘b5 ♕e7 25.♗h6 ♘h5 26.♗xg7 ♔xg7 27.♖xh5 gxh5 28.♘xd6 ♕d8 29.♖xh5 and White won, Tiviakov-Phillips, Breda 1998.

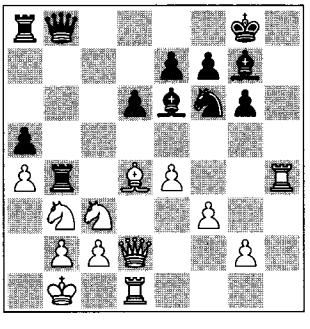
19. ♘c3xb5 ♕c7-b8

Controlling e5. After 19...♕b7 20.hxg6 hxg6 21.e5! dxe5 22.♗xe5 Black has no compensation for the pawn.

20. h5xg6 h7xg6

21. ♘b5-c3 ♖c4-b4

22. ♖h1-h4



22. ... ♗e6xb3?!

In my view, this natural move is a mistake! Black should as quickly as possible increase his control of the square d5. Consequently, the paradoxical **22...♕b7!?** deserves consideration: **23.♖dh1 ♖b8!** Here again, relinquishing control of d5 leads to catastrophe: 23...♗xb3? 24.cxb3 ♖xb3 25.♘d5! ♘h5 (25...e5? loses at once after 26.♖h8+! ♗xh8 27.♖xh8+ ♔xh8 28.♕h6+ ♘h7 29.♘f6; nor does 25...♖b8 save the game, because of 26.♘xf6+ exf6 (26...♗xf6 27.♖h8+ ♗xh8 28.♖xh8#) 27.♖h7) 26.♗xg7 ♔xg7 27.♖xh5! gxh5 28.♖xh5 f6 29.♕h6+ ♔f7 30.♕h7+ ♔e8 31.♕g8+ ♔d7 32.♘xf6+! ♔c7 (or 32...exf6 33.♖h7+ ♔c6 34.♕d5+) 33.♕c4+ ♔b8 34.♘d7+ ♕xd7 35.♕xb3+ with a winning position for White, Seres-Parkanyi, Hungary tt-2 2002/03.

24.♘d5!? Forced, since 24.e5, recommended by Rogozenco and Feher, brings White nothing. Of course, Black cannot play 24...♗xb3? because of 25.exf6! (for some reason, the commentators only consider 25.cxb3?) 25...♗xc2+ 26.♔c1 ♖xb2 27.♖h8+! mating. But 24...♘h5! promises him excellent play, since after 25.exd6 there is 25...♗xb3! 26.cxb3 e5!.

24...♗xd5 25.exd5 ♖xa4 26.g4 ♖xd4! 27.♕xd4 a4! Only these sacrifices maintain the possibility of counterplay for Black. 27...♘xd5?? loses immediately because of 28.♖h8+, whilst after 27...♕xd5 28.♕xd5 ♘xd5 29.g5 Black does not have sufficient compensation for the exchange, Gabor Papp-Gellert Papp, Hungary tt 2007/08. **28.♕xa4 ♘xd5** In my opinion Black has enough compensation for the exchange, e.g. **29.♕e4** After 29.♖h7 there can follow 29...♘b4. **29...♖a8 30.♖h7 e6**, and it seems that White will soon have to return the exchange by trading on g7, which leads to equal chances (analysis).

23. c2xb3 ♖b4xb3

Now the exchange sacrifice 23...♖xd4 does not promise equality because of 24.♕xd4 ♕xb3 25.e5! ♖c8 26.exf6! ♗xf6 27.♕xf6! exf6 28.♖dh1 f5 29.♖h8+ and White remains with extra material, Fercec-Markovic, Bled 2000.

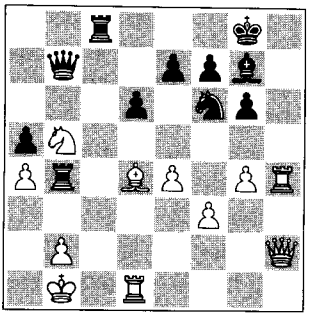
24. ♘c3-b5 ♖b3-b4

25. ♕d2-c2 ♕b8-b7

Here the exchange sacrifice 25...d5 26.e5 ♖xd4 deserves more consideration, but after 27.♖hxd4 ♕xe5 (Madl-Medvegy, Hungary tt 1998/99) 28.♕c7! White has the advantage.

26. g2-g4 ♖a8-c8

27. ♕c2-h2



27. ... ♖b4xb5?

Black sacrifices the rook for the wrong piece. It was essential to play **27...♖xa4! 28.♗xf6** Of course not 28.♖h1? because of 28...♘h5 29.♗xg7 ♕xb5. **28...♗xf6 29.♖h1** and now **29...♖c1+!!** Pointed out by Rogozenco. 29...♗xh4 30.♕xh4 ♖c1+ loses to 31.♖xc1. **30.♖xc1** 30.♔xc1 loses to 30...♖a1+ 31.♔c2 ♖xh1 32.♕xh1 ♕xb5. **30...♖b4 31.♘c3 ♗xh4 32.♘d5 ♕a6 33.♘xb4 axb4** and now 34.♕xh4

b3! leads only to a draw, but **34.♕c2** gives White hopes of realising the extra exchange.

28. a4xb5 ♕b7xb5

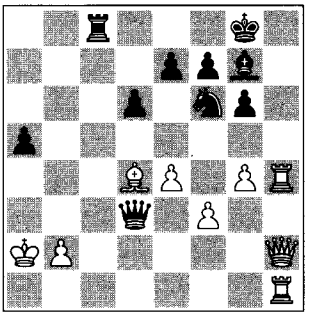
29. ♖d1-h1?

A mistake in reply! White has missed Black's 30th move. Rogozenco gives **29.e5!** with the following variations: **29...dxe5** 29...♕b3 also loses to 30.♖h1 ♕d3+ (or 30...♘h5 31.gxh5) 31.♔a2 ♘h5 32.gxh5. **30.♗xe5** In time-trouble, it was not easy for Pavel to see how important it would be in the future to include the white queen in the game via e5, and the rook via the 4th rank. **30...a4** Or 30...♕b3 31.♖h1 ♘h5 32.♗xg7 ♔xg7 33.♕e5+! (the e5 square!) 33...♔g8 34.gxh5! (the rook on the 4th rank controls a4!). **31.♖h1 ♘h5 32.♗xg7 ♕d3+** Or 32...♔xg7 33.gxh5 (the 4th rank!) 33...♕d3+ 34.♔a2 ♖c2 (34...♕b3+ 35.♔a1 a3 36.hxg6+–) 35.♕e5+ ♔g8 36.hxg6+–) **33.♔a2 ♕b3+ 34.♔a1 a3** Or 34...♔xg7 35.♕e5+ ♔g8 36.♖xh5 gxh5 37.♕xh5+–. **35.♗c3 axb2+ 36.♕xb2**, winning for White.

29. ... ♕b5-d3+

30. ♔b1-a2

Of course, not 30.♔a1? because of 30...♘h5! 31.♗xg7 ♖c4! and it is Black who wins!



30. ... ♘f6-h5!

A brilliant save!

31. ♗d4xg7 ♔g8xg7

Now 31...♖c4? loses on account of 32.♗c3!.

32. ♖h4xh5

After 32.gxh5, a strong reply is 32...♖c2 with advantage to Black.

32. ... g6xh5

33. ♕h2xh5 ♕d3-c4+

The game is equal. White tries to avoid the draw by going into a rook ending, but this has no effect on the assessment of the position, nor on the result.

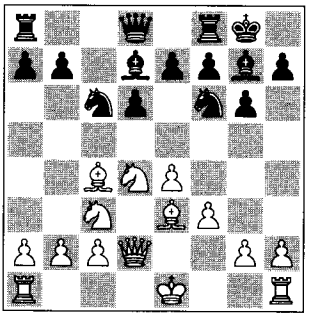
34.b3 ♕c2+ 35.♔a3 ♕c5+ 36.♕xc5 ♖xc5 37.♔a4 ♖c3 38.♖b1 ♖c5 39.♖d1 ♖c3 40.♖b1 ♖c5 41.♖d1 ♖c3 42.f4 ♖e3 43.♖b1 ♖xe4+ 44.♔xa5 ♖xf4 45.b4 ♖xg4 46.b5 ♔f6 47.b6 ♖g8 48.♔a6 ♔e5 49.♔b7 f5 50.♖e1+ ♔d4 51.♖xe7 f4 52.♖f7 draw.

A sharp struggle characteristic of the Dragon, with mutual mistakes, which do nothing to reduce the interest of the game. All the same, Black's position in this variation looks very dangerous, especially taking into account the possible strengthening of White's play in the opening pointed out in the note to move 16. Consequently, in recent times, Black has ceased to develop his queen to the active but unstable square a5, preferring to bring the a8 rook into play more quickly.

Game 30
Pavel Smirnov
Stephane Hautot
Rethymnon tt 2003 (1)

1. e2-e4 c7-c5
2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6
3. d2-d4 ♘g8-f6
4. ♘b1-c3 c5xd4
5. ♘f3xd4 g7-g6
6. ♗c1-e3 ♗f8-g7

7. f2-f3 0-0
8. ♕d1-d2 ♘b8-c6
9. ♗f1-c4 ♗c8-d7



10. h2-h4!?

So why does White delay castling in this position?

The answer is that recently, after **10.0-0-0**, Black has done well with two lines to which he had not previously paid attention.

A) Firstly, there is the continuation **10...♖c8 11.♗b3 ♘xd4!? 12.♗xd4 b5!**. Even in this version, the exchange on d4 followed by ...b7-b5 seems quite good! The white bishop on b3 can become a convenient target for the black queenside pawns, whilst the line previously considered as the refutation of Black's play, **13.♘d5 ♘xd5 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.exd5 a5 16.a3**, was placed under a cloud by Shirov, who in a game against Karjakin (Bilbao 2009) played **16...♔g8!** Black can also make prophylactic king moves! **17.♖he1 ♖c5! 18.g4 b4! 19.axb4 axb4 20.♕xb4 ♕a8!** and to avoid being worse, White forced a draw with **21.♔d2 ♖b8 22.♖a1 ♖xd5+ 23.♔e3 ♖e5+ 24.♔d2** ½-½.

Of course, White has other 13th moves, but so far, no route to an advantage has been found:

A1) **13.♗xa7** b4 14.♘d5 ♘xd5 15.exd5 ♕a5 16.♕e3 ♗a4 and Black probably has sufficient compensation for the pawn to make a draw;

A2) **13.h4 a5!** But not 13...h5? because of 14.e5 dxe5 15.♗xe5 ♗c6? 16.♕g5. **14.h5 a4** with an unclear position.

B) After 10.0-0-0 one must also not forget about the exotic **10...♖b8!?**.

In 2002 in New in Chess Yearbook 62, an article about this variation by Luc Henris appeared which proved the viability of this strange rook move. It received the name 'Chinese Dragon', as the Belgian player was in China at the time he found the main ideas and variations. 'The rook on b8 supports the advance b7-b5, is ready for the opening of the b-file, whilst Black retains the option of including Her Majesty in active operations on the queenside with ♕a5 or ♕b6', wrote Henris. The popularity of the Chinese Dragon rose sharply after the game Carlsen-Radjabov, Bilbao 2008, and six months later Carlsen himself played the line as Black against Dominguez Perez at Linares. And although nowadays the Chinese Dragon is not so popular in elite tournaments, who knows what will be the fate of the variation? In open tournaments, Black continues to notch up the points in this variation.

It is interesting that in his famous second match game against Kortchnoi (Moscow 1974), Karpov chose exactly this move-order. That game, of course, did not 'slay' the Dragon, but it did cause supporters of the opening to search for other methods of defence, and in the 1970s, the system ...h7-h5! appeared, which we will examine in the following game.

10. ... ♖a8-c8
11. ♗c4-b3 ♘c6-e5

Now 11...♘xd4?! 12.♗xd4 b5 is ineffective because of 13.h5! a5 (13...♘xh5??

loses at once after 14.♗xg7 ♔xg7 15.g4 ♘f6 16.♕h6+ ♔g8 17.♘d5) 14.hxg6 hxg6 15.a4! bxa4 16.♘xa4 and by comparison with the variation given in the notes to White's 10th move in Game 29, White has succeeded in opening the h-file, which of course changes the assessment in his favour.

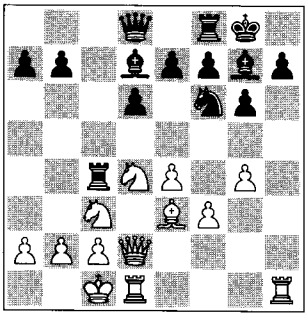
12. 0-0-0

The impatient 12.h5 ♘xh5 13.g4?! fails to the counterattack 13...♖xc3! 14.bxc3 (14.♕xc3? ♘xf3+) 14...♘f6 with excellent compensation for the exchange.

12. ... ♘e5-c4

12...h5!?.

13. ♗b3xc4 ♖c8xc4
14. h4-h5 ♘f6xh5
15. g2-g4 ♘h5-f6

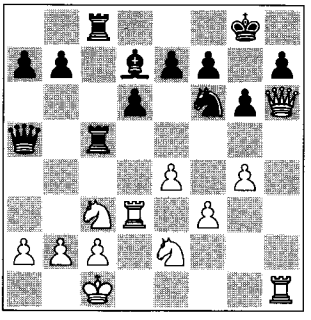


'Although, strictly speaking, this variation has not been refuted, after White's victories in the games Geller-Kortchnoi (Moscow 1971 m-4) and especially Karpov-Kortchnoi (Moscow 1974 m-2), it ceased to be attractive to Black players from a psychological point of view. The terrible crush inflicted by Karpov acted as an unhealed wound for Black players, who wished to avoid a position which looked too dangerous for Black' – G Kasparov, *Revolution in the 70s*. Let us examine this beautiful game.

16.♘de2!? 'A logical explanation for this early knight retreat from the centre runs roughly as follows. The square c3 is the most important point in the white piece set-up, on which Black is concentrating his blows. Here one often sees the exchange sacrifice on c3, when the opponent obtains a strong attack (it is notable too, that after doubling the white pawns on the c-file, Black's position is so rich in possibilities that, even if he has no attack, even in the endgame, he can hold the balance. This was magnificently demonstrated in some of his games by the great grandmaster Leonid Stein). Thus, the basic idea of 16.♘de2 is to strengthen the square c3. In addition, the knight from e2 can easily transfer to a direct attack on the enemy king', wrote Anatoly Karpov.

16...♕a5?! Kortchnoi played this move quickly. Evidently, the plan of allowing the exchange of dark-squared bishops was prepared at home. Later it was established that the typical Dragon prophylaxis 16...♖e8! promises Black sufficient counterchances. In order to justify the retreat of the knight to e2, White should make the breakthrough e4-e5. But both after the immediate 17.e5 ♘xg4! 18.fxg4 ♗xg4 19.exd6 ♕xd6! and after the preliminary 17.♗h6 ♗h8 – 18.e5 ♘xg4 19.fxg4 ♗xe5! (since the white bishop is no longer 'hanging' on e3 after the opening of the e-file, Black does better to take this pawn) 20.♗f4 ♕a5!? or 20...♗g7!? Black obtains sufficient compensation for the piece.

After Kortchnoi's move White can continue **17.♗h6 ♗xh6 18.♕xh6 ♖fc8 19.♖d3!?** A novelty, prepared for the match. Now Kortchnoi's first move of his own proves to be the decisive mistake. **19...♖4c5?** Any other sensible continuation would have been better: 19...♕d8, 19...♗e6, or 19...♖8c5.



analysis diagram

Now two blows along the 5th rank decide the game. **20.g5! ♖xg5 21.♖d5!** Black must take this rook. **21...♖xd5 22.♘xd5 ♖e8 23.♘ef4 ♗c6 24.e5! ♗xd5 25.exf6 exf6 26.♕xh7+ ♔f8 27.♕h8+** and Black resigned in view of the variation 27...♔e7 28.♘xd5+ ♕xd5 29.♖e1+.

In general, one can say that this game came as a serious blow to supporters of the Dragon, especially in the psychological sense, although after 16...♖e8, White did not find a path to a significant advantage.

Even after more energetic 16th moves by White, Black appears to be able to hold:

A) **16.♗h6!?** ♘xe4! 17.♕e3! ♖xc3! 18.bxc3 ♘f6;

B) **16.♘b3** ♖e8! 17.e5 ♘xg4! 18.♖dg1 dxe5!;

C) **16.♘d5** e6 17.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 18.♕h2 ♖fc8! 19.♕xh7+ ♔f8.

Finally, in the 1980s, there appeared on the scene the well-known 'magic formula' we saw in the previous game:

16. ♔c1-b1!?

Black's problem is that it is difficult for him to find an active move. Sacrificing a piece on g4 with **16...♗xg4** 17.fxg4 ♘xg4 18.♕e2 (18.♗g1!?) 18...♘xe3 19.♕xe3 (Anand-Tolnai, Hilversum tt 1993) and **16...♘xg4?** 17.fxg4 ♗xg4 18.♖dg1 ♕d7 19.b3! lead to a clear advantage to White. **16...♕c7?!** runs into **17.g5 ♘h5 18.♘d5**. In Anand-Khalifman, Moscow rapid 1995, White obtained a strong attack after 18...♕d8 19.b3 ♖c8 20.♘e2 e6 21.♘df4 ♘xf4 22.♘xf4 ♕c7 23.♕h2 h5 24.gxh6 ♗e5 25.h7+ ♔h8 26.♗d4.

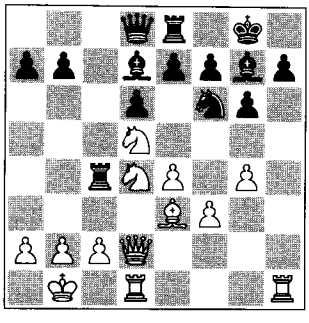
That leaves the prophylactic

16. ... ♖f8-e8!

Black hopes to find a variation in which his prophylaxis proves the more useful, and Pavel Smirnov chose

17. ♘c3-d5!?

White has achieved good results with 17.e5!?, but frankly speaking I cannot understand that is wrong with the natural reply 17...dxe5!, which for some reason has not been seen in practice. Neither 18.♘b3 ♖c6!, with the idea of meeting 19.g5 with 19...♖d6, nor 18.♘f5 gxf5 19.g5 ♘g4! 20.fxg4 ♖d4 21.♗xd4 exd4 promises White the advantage.

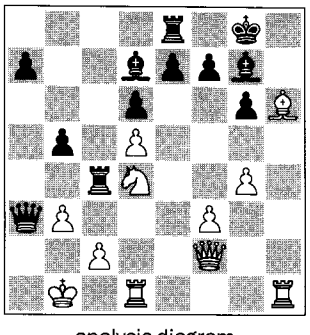


17. ... e7-e6?!

Black plays by analogy with the variation 16.♘d5 e6, seen above, but here the inclusion of the moves 16.♔b1 ♖e8 turns out to be in White's favour. Even so, Black's task is not easy in any event:

A) After the direct **17...♘xd5 18.exd5 ♕b6** White's task is easier after 18...e5 19.dxe6 ♗xe6 20.b3! (relieving the attack on d4) 20...♖c8 21.♕h2 h5 22.gxh5 ♕f6 23.h6 ♗f8 24.♕g3 ♕e5

25.♕xe5 dxe5 26.♘xe6 ♖xe6 27.♖d7 ♖e7 28.h7+ ♔h8 29.♖hd1 ♖ce8 30.♗g5 with a decisive advantage to White, Silva Pereira-Glukhovtsev, corr. 2005. **19.b3!** An excellent idea. At the board it is difficult to decide on the weakening of the diagonal a1-h8, but the extra tempo in the attack turns out to be more important than the weaknesses created. **19...♕b4 20.♕h2! h6 21.♕f2!** Having defended the bishop and knight, White threatens to win the rook with 22.a3. The immediate 21.a3? leads to Black's advantage after 21...♕xa3 22.bxc4 ♕xe3. Black decides to sacrifice the rook (after its retreat, White would simply take on h6, with a very strong attack), obtaining by way of compensation the open b-file. **21...b5 22.a3!** and White's calculation proves the more accurate. **22...♕xa3** Or 22...♕c3 23.♖d3 ♕a5 24.♗xh6 ♖xd4 25.♗xg7 ♖xd3 26.♗b2 ♖d1+ 27.♖xd1+–. **23.♗xh6**



analysis diagram

23...♖a4! The sharpest. After other continuations White's task is simpler:

A1) 23...♗f6 24.♗c1+–;

A2) 23...♕b4 24.♗xg7 ♔xg7 25.♕e3!+–;

A3) 23...♖xd4 24.♖xd4 ♗f6 25.♗c1 ♕c5 26.♕h2 e5 27.♗g5! ♗g7 28.♕h7+ ♔f8 29.♖d2+–.

24.bxa4 bxa4 25.♗xg7 ♔xg7 There is no perpetual check: 25...♕b4+ 26.♔c1 ♕a3+ 27.♔d2 ♔xg7 (27...♕b4+ 28.♔e3 ♕c3+ 29.♖d3+–) 28.♕h2 ♕b2 29.♕h6+ ♔f6 30.♕f4++–. **26.♕d2! ♖b8+** 26...e5 does not save the game because of 27.dxe6 ♖b8+ 28.♘b3 ♗xe6 (28...fxe6 29.♕h6++–) 29.♕d4++–. **27.♘b3 axb3 28.♕h6+ ♔f6 29.g5+** and Black resigned, in view of the following variations, which are not so complicated to find in a correspondence game:

29...♔e5 30.♕g7+ ♔f4 31.♖h4+ ♔g3 32.♖g1+ ♔xf3 33.♕c3+ ♔f2 34.♕e1+ ♔f3 35.♖g3#;

29...♔f5 30.♕h3+ ♔xg5 31.♖dg1+ ♔f6 (31...♔f4 32.♕h4+ ♔e5 33.♕e4+ ♔f6 34.♕d4+ e5 35.♕h4+ ♔g7 36.♖xg6+! fxg6 37.♕e7+ ♔g8 38.♕h7+ ♔f8 39.♕h8+ ♔e7 40.♖h7#) 32.♕h4+ ♔e5 33.♕e4+ ♔f6 34.♕d4+ ♔f5 35.♖h5+ gxh5 36.♕e4+ ♔f6 37.♕f4+ ♗f5 38.♕d4+ e5 39.♕h4#, Toro Solis de Ovando-Haugen, corr. 2002.

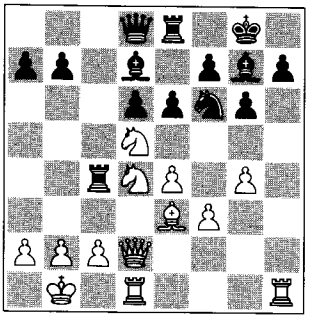
B) **17...e5** In my opinion, this rarely-seen continuation is one of the best in the diagram position.

B1) The tempting **18.♘f5!?** leads to unclear consequences after **18...gxf5 19.gxf5 ♘xd5! 20.♕xd5 ♖d4!** The only move! Others lose: 20...♕c7 21.♖dg1 ♔f8 (21...♔h8 22.♕xf7) 22.♖xh7 +–; 20...♖c7 21.♕xd6 ♔h8 22.♗g5 ♕xg5 23.♕xc7 ♗c6 24.♕xf7+–. **21.♗xd4 ♗c6!** After 21...exd4 22.♖hg1 ♕f6 23.♕xb7 ♗c8 24.♕xa7 White's chances are superior. **22.♗b6!? axb6** with mutual chances.

B2) **18.♘xf6+!? ♕xf6 19.g5 ♕e7 20.♘b3** deserves attention, but after **20...f5!** Black retains sufficient counter-chances, Lindam-Percze, corr. 2003;

B3) **18.♘b3!** The simplest, but also the most promising. **18...♗e6** After 18...♘xd5 19.♕xd5 ♗e6 20.♕xb7 ♖c7 21.♕b4 d5 a strong reply is 22.♕d2! d4 23.♕h2 with the advantage to White. **19.♘xf6+ ♕xf6 20.♕h2!** This is stronger than 20.♖df1, as seen in the game Klings-Uhl, Germany tt 1992. **20...♕xf3** White has a clear advantage after 20...♖ec8 21.♕xh7+ ♔f8 22.♗h6 ♗xh6 23.♕xh6+ ♕g7 24.♕d2 ♖xc2 25.♕xd6+ ♔e8 26.♕a3!. **21.♕xh7+ ♔f8 22.♗h6 ♗xh6 23.♕xh6+ ♔e7 24.♘d2 ♕xg4 25.♘xc4 ♗xc4 26.♕d2** or **26.♕e3**. Material is equal, but the unsafe position of the black king gives White the advantage.

To return to the game:



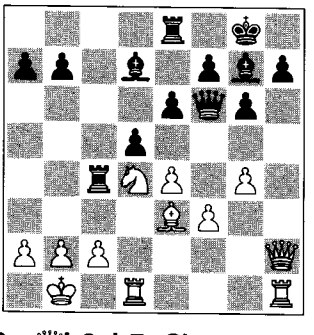
18. ♘d5xf6+ ♕d8xf6
19. ♕d2-h2 d6-d5?

Losing by force, but Black's task was very difficult.

A) After **19...♖ec8** 20.♕xh7+ ♔f8 21.♗h6 ♗xh6 22.♕xh6+ ♔e7 23.♕d2 White's position is better;

B) After **19...e5 20.♕xh7+ ♔f8 21.g5! ♕e7** the move **22.♘f5!** is strong, and after **22...gxf5 23.exf5 ♗xf5** Necessary, since after 23...f6 24.♖h6! decides, when Black has no defence to 25.gxf6 ♗xf6 26.♖xf6+ ♕xf6 27.♗h6+. **24.♕xf5 ♕e6** After 24...e4 25.f4! Black has nothing to do. **25.♕xe6 ♖xe6 26.♗xa7** with an extra pawn for White, Kolasinski-Deszczynski, Warsaw 1994;

C) After **19...h6** White does best to take the centre pawn: **20.♕xd6! ♗c8** After other continuations too, White keeps an extra pawn: 20...♕e7 21.♘b3!?; 20...♖d8 21.b3!? ♖cc8 22.♗xh6 ♗e8 23.♗xg7 ♕xg7 24.♕b4. **21.b3! ♖c3** After 21...♖d8 White wins by 22.e5! ♖xd6 23.exf6 ♖c3 24.♗d2+–; 21...♖c6 22.♕h2 g5? is bad because of 23.e5!. **22.♗xh6 e5 23.♘f5!** The weaker 23.♕xf6 was played in Golubev-Kulagin Katowice 1992. **23...♕xd6** 23...gxf5? loses to 24.♕xf6 ♗xf6 25.gxf5. **24.♘xd6 ♖f8 25.♗xg7+–**.



20. ♕h2xh7+?!

White could finish the game beautifully with 20.e5! ♕xe5 21.♗f4! (Fernandez Aguado-Tasic, Cannes 1990) 21...♕f6 22.♕xh7+ ♔f8 23.♗d6+ ♖e7 24.g5! ♕xg5 25.f4! ♕f6 26.♗e5.

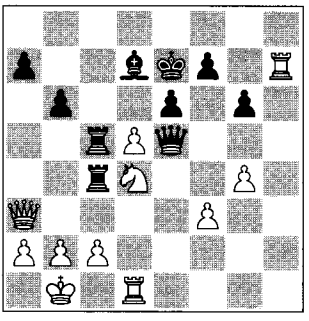
20. ... ♔g8-f8
21. ♗e3-h6 ♗g7xh6
22. ♕h7xh6+♔f8-e7?

Better was 22...♕g7, although after 23.♕e3 Black's position is unenviable.

23. ♕h6-e3 ♕f6-e5
24. ♖h1-h7 ♖e8-c8

White has a large advantage after 24...♖f8 25.♕a3+.

25. ♕e3-a3+ ♖c8-c5
26. e4xd5 b7-b6



27. ♘d4-c6+!

Finishing with a beautiful combination.

27. ... ♗d7xc6
28. ♕a3xa7+ ♗c6-d7
29. d5-d6+ ♔e7-e8
30. ♖h7xf7! ♖c5-c7

Or 30...♔xf7 31.♕xd7+ ♔g8 32.♕e8+ ♔g7 33.♕e7+ ♔g8 34.d7+–.

31. ♖f7-e7+ ♔e8-f8
32. d6xc7 1-0

Conclusions

1. With the white bishop on c4, the plan with the exchange of knights on d4, followed by ...♗e6, again does not promise Black equality. Black's problems revolve mainly around the dominating position of the bishop on d4, which simultaneously supports the kingside attack, defends its queenside, and also threatens to take on f6, followed by ♘d5. After the necessary prophylaxis (♔b1!), White will be prepared for the attack on the king. Also noteworthy is the recapture with the c-pawn, after the exchange of bishops on b3, which deprives Black of targets on the queenside. In the search for a defence against the eventual kingside attack, Black has to seek salvation in a difficult endgame, where even a high level of technique will not guarantee him a draw (Game 28).

2. The classical plan of counterplay with ...♕a5 and ...♖fc8 is too slow. White can exploit the unstable position of the queen, attacking it with the move ♘b3, at the same time freeing the square d4 for his bishop. Depending on where the queen retreats, White chooses the object of his attack – the centre, the kingside, or else he plays on the whole board. With accurate play, it is hard for Black to create sufficient counterplay (Game 29).

3. In Game 30, Black brought his queen's rook out without stopping the opening of the h-file. Although no refutation of this plan has been found, obviously the white attack on the kingside is more dangerous than Black's counterplay. By combining threats on the kingside with play in the centre, White can make the defence difficult for Black.

4. As in Chapter 5.2 (plans without the move ♗c4), White does best in the great majority of cases to begin the attack by advancing his h-pawn, since it is often possible to manage without the help of the g-pawn, whereas without the opening of the h-file there is no mate. After h4-h5, Black in many cases cannot win the h-pawn, because of a mating attack (Game 29). But even in those cases where taking the pawn does not lead to a forced mate, White's long-term pressure along the open h-file compensates for the small material deficit (Game 30).

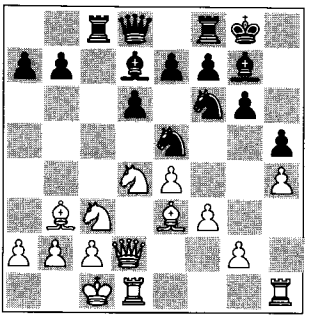
5. It is noteworthy that in all cases, White sooner or later plays the prophylactic move ♔b1, sharply reducing Black's active possibilities on the queenside.

After the 'Dragon-slaying' game Karpov-Kortchnoi there was a sharp surge in the popularity of variations in which Black answers h2-h4 with ...h7-h5.

5.3.2 Positions with fixed h-pawns

Game 31
Alexander Areschenko
Fidel Corrales Jimenez
Khanty-Mansiysk 2009 (1.1)

1.	**e2-e4**	**c7-c5**
2.	**♘g1-f3**	**d7-d6**
3.	**d2-d4**	**c5xd4**
4.	**♘f3xd4**	**♘g8-f6**
5.	**♘b1-c3**	**g7-g6**
6.	**♗c1-e3**	**♗f8-g7**
7.	**f2-f3**	**0-0**
8.	**♕d1-d2**	**♘b8-c6**
9.	**♗f1-c4**	**♗c8-d7**
10.	**h2-h4**	**♘c6-e5**
11.	**♗c4-b3**	**h7-h5!?**
12.	**0-0-0**	**♖a8-c8**



We have already seen several positions in which, with a black pawn on h5, White does not worry about sacrifices, plays g2-g4 at the appropriate moment, and breaks through to the black king. Such a break is especially effective with a white bishop on d4 (Game 22). With the bishop on e3 the advantages of such a break are less obvious, although again, it seems that White will sooner or later break open the lines to the black king's fortress.

Though the years have passed and the assessments of specific variations have changed, set-ups with fixed h-pawns remain the principal black defensive weapon when the white bishop is on c4. This method of defence was first seen in the game Larsen-Westerinen, (Halle zt 1963), and was then played successfully by Andrew Soltis, but the main development of the system came when Anthony Miles, Genna Sosonko and Jonathan Mestel started using it successfully in grandmaster tournaments.

White has tried various methods of attack, but in the end it was general considerations which prevailed: it is hard to pretend to any advantage without the move g2-g4, if it is possible at all. It is a difficult matter, however, to identify the situations in which this break will be effective.

The most radical path **13.g4?!** should be avoided (maybe only temporarily?). After **13...hxg4 14.h5 ♘xh5 15.♗h6** (on 15.♖dg1 there is the strong reply 15...♕a5! 16.♗h6 ♖xc3! 17.♗xg7 ♖xc2+! (it is important to note that if the white king were on b1, this move would not be with check. We will see further nuances in such positions) 18.♔xc2 ♖c8+ 19.♔d1 ♕xd2+ 20.♔xd2 ♔xg7 21.fxg4 ♗xg4 and Black realised his advantage, De Firmian-Kudrin, Gausdal 1982) **15...♔h7!?** (15...e6!? is also good) **16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♖xh5 gxh5 18.♕g5+ ♘g6 19.♘f5+ ♗xf5 20.exf5 e6!** only Black can fight for the win.

Consequently, White's main weapon in the diagram position became the move

13. ♗e3-g5!

An excellent post for the bishop, from where it supports future attacking attempts, whilst escaping from the attack from the enemy knight when it gets to

c4. Now after 13...♘c4?! there follows the simple 14.♕e2!.

We can see how much more dangerous White's attacking actions are with the bishop on g5. Let us assume Black chooses the passive **13...a6**. The punishment for his lack of caution follows at once: **14.g4! hxg4 15.h5 ♘xh5 16.♘d5!** and the bishop on g5 turns out to be very active! **16...♖e8 17.♖xh5! gxh5 18.♕h2**

As planned, all of White's forces, with the exception of the rook on d1, are taking part in the attack on the black king. As soon as this last piece joins the assault along the h-file, Black will be able to stop the clocks with a clear conscience. It is not apparent how he can defend, e.g.

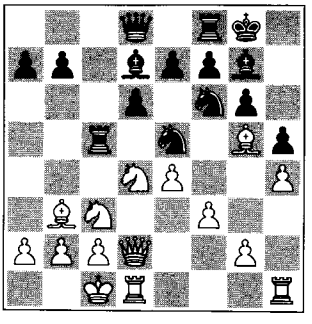
A) **18...gxf3** 19.♕xh5 ♗g4 20.♕h4 ♖c7 21.♖h1 ♘g6 22.♕h7+ ♔f8 23.♗h6 ♗xh6+ 24.♕xh6+ ♔g8 25.♘xe7+ ♖exe7 26.♕xg6+ ♔f8 27.♖h8# Hechler-Masur, corr. 1979;

B) **18...♖c4** 19.♕xh5 f6 20.♗h6 ♖f8 21.f4 e6 22.♗xg7 ♔xg7 23.fxe5 exd5 24.e6 f5 25.♖h1 1-0 Stach-Janos, corr. 1983.

So, the pressure from the bishop on g5 must be opposed. Soltis tried to solve this problem simply: **13...♘h7 14.♗h6 ♗xh6 15.♕xh6 ♖xc3!? 16.bxc3 ♕a5 17.♔b1!** 17.f4? ♕xc3 18.fxe5 ♕a1+. **17...♕xc3** and after 18.♕d2 ♕c5, he obtained excellent play against Barczay (Reggio Emilia 1970/71). However, the storm broke in the game Geller-G. Kuzmin, Tbilisi ch-URS 1978, where White replaced the tame 18.♕d2 with **18.♘e2! ♕c5 19.g4!** and after **19...♘xf3?** (stronger is 19...hxg4 20.f4 ♘f3! with some chances of a successful defence), he worked up an irresistible attack: **20.♖d5! ♕f2 21.gxh5 g5 22.hxg5 ♕e3 23.♖hd1! ♗g4 24.♖1d3 ♕xe2 25.g6 ♘fg5 26.♖xg5 ♕f1+ 27.♔b2 ♘xg5 28.♕xg5 ♕f6+ 29.♕xf6 exf6 30.h6** Black resigned.

Black's position in this variation does not inspire confidence, but even earlier, also against Barczay at Wijk aan Zee 1977, Sosonko employed a continuation which became the basis for developments in this line for years to come.

13. ... ♖c8-c5!



'Exploiting the fact that the bishop has left e3, from where he kept an eye on c5, Black takes control of the 5th rank, prepares b7-b5 and a7-a5, and at the right moment, may double rooks on the c-file. In addition, if the worst comes to the worse, the rook can be sacrificed for a white knight on d5', writes Kasparov in *Revolution in the 70s*.

Once again, **14.g4!?** must be checked. Practice has shown that after **14...hxg4 15.f4** Here, 15.h5 ♘xh5 16.♘d5 ♖e8 (16...♖xd5!? 17.♗xd5 ♕b6) 17.♖xh5 gxh5 18.♕h2 is ineffective because of 18...♖xd5! – now we see the value of the rook on c5! 19.♗xd5 ♕b6 20.♕xh5 e6 21.♗b3 gxf3 and Black takes over the initiative. **15...♘c4 16.♕e2 ♕c8!?** With the idea of taking on b2 at a convenient moment. **17.♗xf6** After 17.f5 the reply 17...♘xb2 18.♔xb2 ♖xc3 19.fxg6

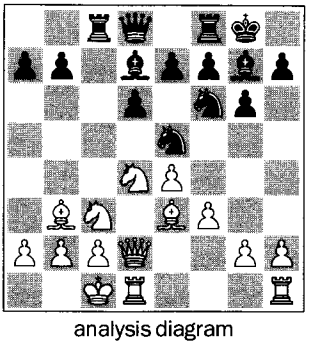
♖xb3+ 20.axb3 fxg6 looks good. **17...♗xf6 18.♘d5** Or 18.♗xc4 ♖xc4 19.♘d5 ♖e8. **18...♖xd5!** Once again this exchange sacrifice! **19.exd5 b5** Black's chances are not worse.

How can White strengthen his position? The answer is obvious – with the help of the magic wand.

14. ♔c1-b1!

'An important prophylactic move, reducing the future effectiveness of Black's actions on the queenside. This is what may be called "advanced prophylaxis" – White reduces the force of threats which have not even appeared! Moving the king to b1 is useful in any event, whilst here, Black has a shortage of similar moves. Depending on his reply, White will choose his own future actions' – Kasparov.

In every game in this section, White does not manage without the move ♔b1! Naturally, this gives rise to the question of whether he should play such a useful prophylactic move earlier? Certainly, instead of 10.h4 White often plays **10.0-0-0** and after **10...♖c8 11.♗b3 ♘e5**



analysis diagram

one of the strongest continuations, according to current theory, is indeed **12.♔b1!?**, which we will discuss when analysing Game 32. There is one 'but', however.

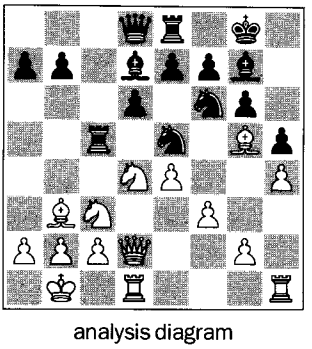
In the introduction to this chapter, we pointed out that White does not always manage to obtain the diagram position. Instead of 11...♘e5, **11...♘xd4!? 12.♗xd4 b5!** deserves attention, with counterplay which current theory considers adequate for equality.

The plan ...♘xd4 followed by ...b5 is even more effective in the Accelerated Dragon, after the moves 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♗b3 d6 9.f3 ♗d7 10.♕d2 – 10...♘xd4!? 11.♗xd4 b5.

White avoids these variations by playing h2-h4!? (See also Games 28 and 29). But if the reader is prepared to meet these lines, then it does probably make sense to look at the early 12.♔b1!?.

14. ... b7-b5!?

Over to the counterattack! The alternative is the well-known 'advanced prophylaxis' by Black, **14...♖e8**



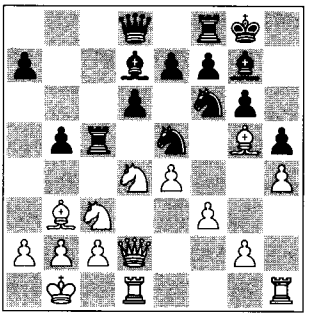
analysis diagram

after which Kasparov recommended 15.♗h6, and if Black risks preserving the bishop from exchange with 15...♗h8?!, then finally 16.g4! gains in strength, as the black monarch is very restricted. However, more solid is 15...♘c4 16.♗xc4 ♖xc4, after which we reach a position from the line 10.0-0-0 (instead of 10.h4) 10...♖c8

11.♗b3 ♘e5 12.♔b1!? ♖e8 13.♗h6 ♘c4 14.♗xc4 ♖xc4, with each side having played one extra move, because of the dance between bishop and rook. The interested reader is invited to see the analysis of this position in Game 32. But one of the world's best anti-Dragon experts, Alexander Motylev, decided that these manoeuvres were not his taste, and against P. Carlsson (Plovdiv Ech 2008) he decided that the time had come for **15.g4!? hxg4 16.f4!** In this situation, the other way of continuing the attack, 16.h5?, is not good, something Radjabov either forgot about or didn't know against Carlsen (Baku 2008): 16...♘xh5 17.♖xh5 gxh5 18.♕h2 ♘g6 19.♕xh5 ♕a5! (this is the point – the control of the 5th rank decides the fate of the game) 20.f4 ♖xg5 21.fxg5 e6 22.♘f5? exf5 23.♕xg6 ♗e6 24.♕h5 fxe4 25.♖f1 ♕e5 26.♖xf7 ♗xb3 27.axb3 g3, and Black won. **16...♘c4 17.♕e2 ♕c8 18.f5 ♘a3+**?!

It would be interesting to know what Motylev had prepared against the standard 18...♘xb2!?. Now after 19.♔xb2 ♖xc3 20.fxg6 ♖xb3+ 21.axb3 fxg6 White obtains the same position as in the game, but without the pawn on a3. Such positions, with the rook on f8, are regarded as satisfactory for Black (see 14.g4). Possibly Alexander wanted to exploit the undefended f7-square and had decided to sacrifice the exchange himself with 19.fxg6 ♘xd1 20.gxf7+, but after 20...♔h7 21.♘xd1 ♖f8 both sides have their chances.

19.bxa3 ♖xc3 20.fxg6 ♖xb3+ 21.axb3 fxg6 Now Black does not have sufficient compensation for the exchange, and Motylev confidently conducts the game to victory: **22.♕d3 ♘h5 23.♖hf1 ♗e5 24.♘e2 g3 25.♘f4 ♗g4 26.♘xg6! ♗xd1 27.♕xd1 g2 28.♖g1 ♗g7 29.♕xh5 ♕c3 30.e5 dxe5 31.♗h6 ♗xh6 32.♖xg2**, and Black resigned.

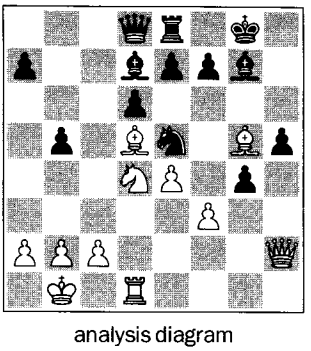


15. g2-g4!

White cannot wait any longer.

15. ... a7-a5!

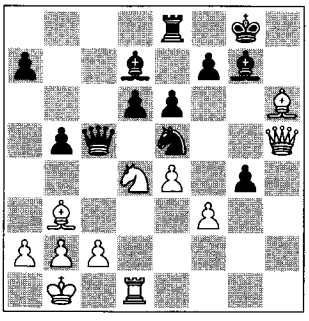
Ever since the well-known game Karpov-Sznapik (Dubai ol 1986), it has been considered very risky for Black to play **15...hxg4?! 16.h5! ♘xh5 17.♘d5 ♖e8 18.♖xh5 gxh5 19.♕h2**. By comparison with the above game Radjabov-Carlsen, the white knight is already on d5, and his attack looks deadly. However, in some correspondence games, devotees of the Dragon have managed to defend the black position: **19...♖xd5! 20.♗xd5**



analysis diagram

A) Gawain Jones, against Daniel Stellwagen at the 39th Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk 2010, played

20...♕c8?!, taking control of the square f5, and after **21.♕xh5 e6 22.♗b3 ♕c5**



analysis diagram

And after 23.fxg4?! ♘g6 24.♘f5 exf5 25.gxf5 ♗xf5 26.exf5 ♕xf5 27.♖h1 ♔f8 28.♗d2 ♕e5 29.c3 ♕xh5 he had solved all his problems. However, as far back as 2003, Vouldis in his notes to his game against Tiviakov (Plovdiv 2003), in which 20...♕c8?! was first seen, showed that Black has a difficult task, if indeed he can defend at all, after **23.♗h6!** instead of 23.fxg4?!. Let us look at some possible variations:

A1) After **23...♗xh6?** 24.♕xh6 Black cannot defend against the attack, e.g.: 24...d5 25.f4!? ♘g6 26.f5 exf5 (26...♕f8 27.♕g5) 27.♗xd5 with a massacre;

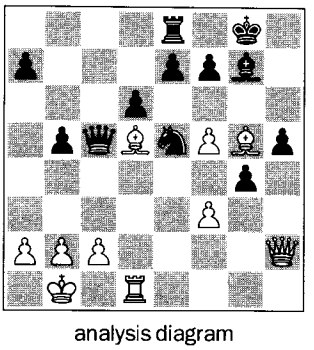
A2) After **23...♗f6** White decides things with **24.♘f5! ♕f2** If 24...exf5? Black is mated: 25.♗xf7+ ♘xf7 26.♕g6+ ♔h8 27.♕xf6+ ♔h7 28.♕g7#. **25.f4 ♘g6** Or 25...♕f3 26.♖g1 ♘g6 (26...♕f2 27.♖h1) 27.♘xd6+–. **26.♘xd6**;

A3) **23...♘g6** 24.♘f5! ♗h8 25.♗e3;

A4) **23...a5** 24.♘f5 exf5 25.♕g5;

A5) **23...♖c8!?** The most tenacious. **24.♘f5! exf5** On 24...♗f6 25.♖h1 decides. **25.♕g5! ♘g6 26.c3!!** But not 26.♕xg6?? because of 26...♕xc2+. **26...d5** Including the queen in the defence. Other continuations lose even more quickly: 26...♔f8 27.♕f6!+–; 26...♗e8 27.♕xg6 ♕e5 28.♗xg7 ♕xg7 29.♕xf5+–; 26...♕e5 27.♕xg6 ♕f6 28.♕xf6 ♗xf6 29.fxg4 (or 29.♖xd6!? ♗e6 30.♖xe6 fxe6 31.♗xe6+ ♔h7 32.♗e3!) 29...♗c6 (29...fxg4 30.♖f1+–) 30.exf5 ♗e5 31.♗d5+–. **27.♗xd5 ♕f8** 27...♕e7 28.♕xg6 ♕f6 29.♗xf7+!+–. **28.♕xg6 ♖c6** Or 28...♗c6 29.♕g5 ♗xd5 30.exd5 with a decisive attack. **29.♕xg7+ ♕xg7 30.♗xg7 ♔xg7 31.♗xc6 ♗xc6 32.♖g1!** and Black cannot save the endgame.

B) **20...♕b6!? 21.♘f5!?** Utilising the fact that Black does not control the square f5. Now after 21.♕xh5 e6 22.♗b3 Black does not spend time relocating his queen, but takes on f3 at once: 22...gxf3 and probably equalises: 23.♘xf3 ♕f2! 24.♘xe5 ♗xe5 25.♕g4 ♕g3! Ribis Colom-De la Pena, Balbuena corr. 2009. **21...♗xf5 22.exf5 ♕c5!**



analysis diagram

The only chance. Black tries to create counterplay on the c-file, and attacks the bishop on d5. The attempt first to to put the rook on the c-file did not bring Black success in Motylev-Mikhalevski, Budva 2009: 22...♖c8?! 23.fxg4! – the e7 pawn

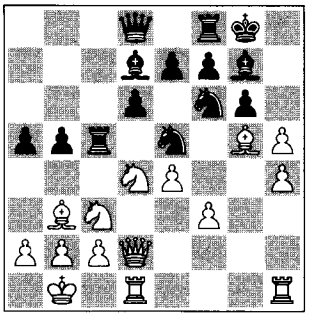
is hanging – 23...♔f8?! 24.gxh5. White has the better position, with material equality. There followed 24...♕c5 25.h6 ♗h8 26.h7 ♔e8 27.♕e2 ♔d7 28.♗e3 ♕b4 29.a3 ♕a5 30.♗d4 b4 31.♗xe5 ♗xe5 32.♕xe5 dxe5 33.♗e6+ ♔c6 34.♗xc8 bxa3 35.h8♕ axb2 36.♕e8+ ♔c5 37.♕xe7+ ♔c4 38.♕xf7+ and Black resigned.

After 22...♕c5, in the correspondence game Vera Ruiz Heraclio-Serrano Salvador Eduardo, corr. 2008 Black achieved equality after 23.♕xh5 ♖c8 24.c3 gxf3 25.♗xe7 f2 26.f6 ♕xd5 27.♖xd5 f1♕+ 28.♖d1 ♕f3 29.♕xf3 draw.

In my opinion, White should try to continue the attack in the same way as Motylev – **23.fxg4!?** (instead of 23.♕xh5), and although the e7 pawn is now defended, Black still faces difficult problems, e.g.: **23...hxg4 24.♗h6! ♖c8 25.♗xg7 ♔xg7 26.♖h1 ♕e3** Defending against 27.♕h6+. **27.♕h4!?** Threatening 28.f6+. **27...♖g8 28.♕xe7** with an unpleasant attack (analysis).

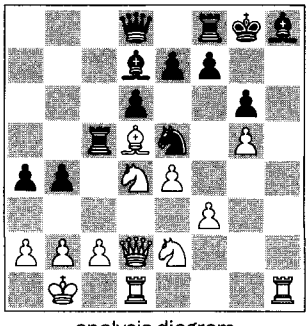
16. g4xh5!

16.♗xf6 ♗xf6 17.gxh5 a4 leads to fantastic complications, but the text move is more logical, if one can speak of logic in such positions.



16. ... ♘f6xh5!

In *Revolution in the 70s*, Kasparov recommended **16...a4**, considering that after **17.h6 ♗h8 18.h7+!** (definitely not 18.♗d5?, since after 18...♔h7! the black king turns out to be safe) **18...♘xh7** (if 18...♔xh7? then 19.h5 is crushing) **19.♗d5** the position of the black king requires accurate defence: **19...b4 20.♘ce2 ♘xg5 21.hxg5**



analysis diagram

A) After the immediate **21...e6** the move **22.♖xh8+!** is strong. This bishop must be eliminated at the first opportunity! **22...♔xh8 23.♘f4 ♔g7** Both 23...♕xg5 24.♖h1+ ♔g8 25.♕h2 ♔g7 26.♗xe6+– (Glotov-Bezotosniy, Moscow 2009) and 23...exd5 24.♕h2+ ♔g7 25.♕h6+ 1-0 (Mirabile-Kessler, corr. 1994) lead to depressing consequences. **24.♗xe6! ♘xf3** Nor does equality come from either 24...♖h8 25.♗xd7 ♕xd7 26.♘d5 ♕d8 27.f4 ♘d7 28.♕xb4 with a superior position for White, Moreira-Brockbank, corr. 2001, or 24...♗c6 25.♗d5 ♗d7 26.♘g2, followed by the advance of the f-pawn. **25.♘xf3 fxe6 26.♕xd6 ♕c7 27.♕d4+ e5 28.♘xe5 ♖xe5 29.♘d3 ♖e8 30.♘xe5 ♖xe5 31.♕xd7+ ♕xd7 32.♖xd7+** with a winning endgame for White, Efimenko-Bromberger, Balatonlelle Ech-tt jr 2000;

B) **21...♗g7!** 'The point of the text is after 22.♘f4 to have a choice between 22...e6 23.♘dxe6! ♗xe6 24.♘xe6 fxe6 25.♗xe6+ ♘f7 and 22...♖e8!? (preparing e7-e6)' (Kasparov).

But the trouble for Black is that White is not obliged to play 22.♘f4. I do not see how Black can hold after the untried, but evidently known to both players, **22.f4!** with the following possible variations:

B1) **22...e6** 23.fxe5 exd5 (on 23...dxe5 24.♘xe6! decides) 24.♘f4! dxe5 25.♕h2 ♖e8 26.♕h7+ ♔f8 27.♘xg6+ +–;

B2) **22...♘c4** 23.♕d3 ♘xb2 (or 23...♘b6 24.f5 ♘xd5 25.♕h3 ♖e8 26.♕h7+ ♔f8 27.fxg6 with a mating attack) 24.♔xb2 e6 25.f5 exd5 26.♕h3;

B3) **22...♘g4** 23.f5! gxf5 24.♘xf5 ♗xf5 25.exf5 ♘f2 26.♘d4! ♖xd5 (or 26...♘xh1 27.♖xh1) 27.♕xf2.

Black cannot defend against the mating attack along the h-file (analysis).

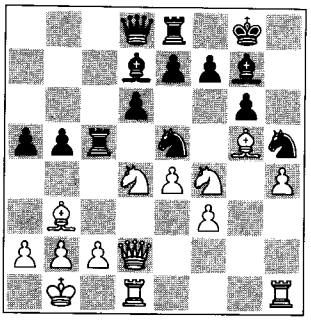
17. ♘c3-d5

The knight gets to f4 with tempo (e7 is attacked), in order to clear the obstruction from the h-file.

17. ... ♖f8-e8

Of course, not 17...f6? because of 18.♘xf6+ ♔h8 19.♘xd7 ♕xd7 20.♘e6+–; 17...a4? also loses because of 18.♘xe7+ ♔h7 19.♘xg6!.

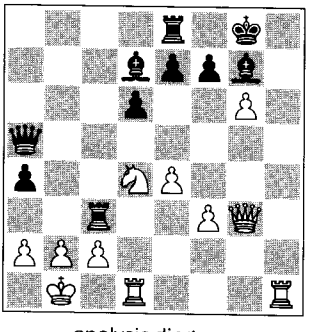
18. ♘d5-f4



One of the critical positions for the assessment of this variation. Black played

18. ... a5-a4!?

Earlier, Feller played **18...♘xf4** against Motylev (Ohrid tt 2009). Weak is 18...♘c4 19.♗xc4 bxc4 20.♘xh5 and White's attack on the g-file quickly decides. **19.♕xf4 ♘c4 20.♕g3! a4** Of course, after 20...♕b6 there follows 21.h5! with a very strong attack. **21.♗xc4 bxc4 22.h5! ♕a5** Both players went in for this position optimistically. Black hoped to repeat Polzin's success against Dragicevic (Pardubice 2008) a year earlier, whilst White trusted in his own analysis. **23.♗d2!** The stem game went 23.♖hg1 ♖b8 24.hxg6 f6 25.♗c1 c3! 26.b3?? axb3 27.cxb3 c2+! 28.♘xc2 ♖xc2! 29.♔xc2 ♕xa2+ 30.♗b2 ♖c8+ 31.♔d2 ♕xb2+, and Black soon won. **23...c3 24.♗xc3 ♖xc3 25.hxg6!**



analysis diagram

Despite Black's extra piece, it is hard for him to defend, if indeed it is possible at all. The diagram position has been analysed in great detail by Vasily Lebedev, and in what follows, I will make use of the variations indicated by him.

What does White threaten? After **25...♕b6?** there is 26.gxf7+ ♔xf7 27.♕f4+! ♔g8 28.♖hg1 and there is no defence against 29.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 30.♖g1+ mating.

The attempt to build a defence along the 5th rank with **25...♖c5** is refuted by the fantastic **26.e5!! ♖xe5** Or 26...dxe5 27.gxf7+ ♔xf7 28.♖dg1 ♖g8 29.♕g6+ ♔f8 30.♖h8!! ♕e1+ (the only way to avoid mate) 31.♖xe1 ♗xh8

32.♘e6+ ♗xe6 33.♕xe6, winning. **27.gxf7+ ♔xf7 28.f4!**, taking the square g5 under control with tempo. This is why 26.e5!! was played. 28...♖f5 29.♖h7 ♖g8 30.♖g1 ♖f6 31.♖xg7+ ♖xg7 32.♕xg7+ ♔e8 33.♖h1 ♖f8 34.♕g6+ ♔d8 35.♕e4±, and Black faces a difficult defence in a worse position a pawn down.

Lebedev considers the most tenacious defence to be **25...♕e5! 26.gxf7+ ♔xf7 27.♕xe5 dxe5 28.bxc3 exd4 29.cxd4**, but even here, White's chances are preferable. In the game, Black chose **25...f5?** and fell under a mating attack: **26.♖h7! ♖b8 27.♕h4** Threatening 28.♖h8+!. **27...♖xb2+ 28.♔xb2! ♕b4+ 29.♔a1 ♗xd4 30.♖h8+! ♔g7** Or 30...♗xh8 31.♕h7+ ♔f8 32.♕f7#. **31.♖g8+!** Mate in two is inevitable! A wonderful game. Motylev's results in the Dragon with h2-h4 are striking – 4 out of 4 against grandmasters, with games of exceptional quality.

19. ♗b3-d5

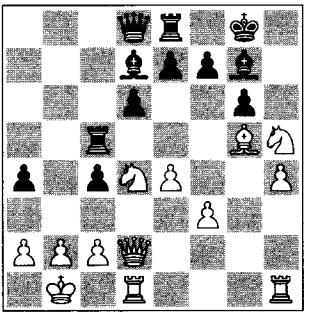
Best. After 19.♘xh5 (McShane-Dunnington, London 1997) there is 19...axb3! 20.♘xb3 ♘c4!.

19. ... ♘e5-c4!

Previously **19...♘f6?** was tried, after which I think **20.h5!** is very strong (in the Email game De Lima Neto-Gavish, ICCF 2000, White played the weaker 20.♗xf6?): **20...e6 21.hxg6!** At the cost of a piece, White completely destroys the pawn protection of the black king. **21...exd5 22.♗xf6!** An important move. Black cannot take with the queen because of 22...♕xf6 23.♘h5 ♕xg6 24.♖dg1, but even after 22...♗xf6 23.♖dg1 he cannot defend against the attack on the open files.

20. ♗d5xc4 b5xc4

21. ♘f4xh5



21. ... c4-c3!

An important tempo gain, prepared at home. After 21...gxh5 22.♖hg1! Black is in trouble.

22. ♕d2-e3!?

After 22.bxc3 gxh5 23.♖hg1 ♕b6+ 24.♔a1 ♔h7 25.♖b1 ♕a5 Black's chances are not worse, since both kings feel unsafe.

22. ... ♕d8-b6

23. b2-b3 g6xh5

24. ♗g5-h6 ♗g7-f6

25. ♗h6-g5 ♗f6-g7

26. ♗g5-h6 ♗g7-f6

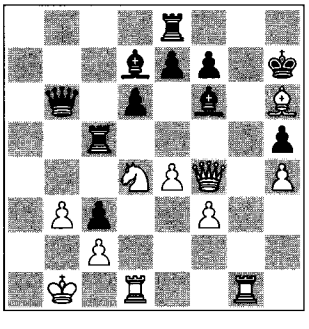
27. ♖h1-g1+ ♔g8-h7

27...♔h8?? loses at once to 28.♗f8!.

28. ♕e3-f4 a4xb3

29. a2xb3

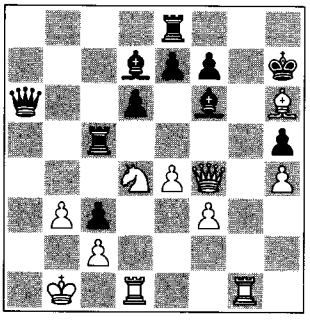
Not 29.cxb3? 29...c2+! 30.♘xc2 ♖xc2! 31.♔xc2 ♖a8 32.♔b1 ♖xa2!–+.



29. ... ♕b6-a6?

Not many independent moves have been made, but already Black commits an irrevocable mistake. Such is the Dragon... It

was essential to retain the x-ray over the square g1 with **29...♖a8! 30.♗g7!** If 30.♘f5, then 30...♕a7 mating. **30...♗xg7 31.♕xf7!** The only way! The attempt to repeat the nice game variation by 31.♖xg7+? ♔xg7 32.♖g1+ ♗g4 33.♘e6+ fxe6 34.fxg4 ends in catastrophe – 34...♖a1+! 35.♔xa1 ♖a5+ 36.♔b1 ♕xg1+!. **31...♗g4!** 31...♖g8 is weak because of 32.♘f5 ♖xf5 (or 32...♗xf5 33.exf5 d5 34.♖g5 ♖c6 35.♖dg1 ♔h8 36.♖xh5+ ♖h6 37.♖g6+–) 33.exf5 ♗e8 34.♕xe7 ♕c5 35.f6 ♗g6! 36.♖xg6! ♔xg6 (after 36...♕a3?? 37.♖xg7+ mates) 37.fxg7 ♔h7 38.♕xd6 with a pile of extra pawns (Lebedev). **32.♘e6!** But now Black has a beautiful computer draw: **32...♕xb3+!! 33.cxb3 c2+ 34.♔c1 cxd1♕+ 35.♔xd1 ♖a1+ 36.♔d2 ♖a2+ 37.♔d1** 37.♔e3? is bad because of 37...♖c3+ 38.♔f4 ♖xf3+ 39.♔g5 ♖xf7–+. **37...♖a1+ 38.♔d2** After 38.♔e2?! there follows 38...♖c2+ 39.♔e3 ♖c3+ 40.♔f2 ♖a2+ 41.♔g3 ♖xf3+ 42.♕xf3 ♗e5+! 43.♘f4 ♗xf3 44.♔xf3 ♖b2 with advantage to Black. **38...♖a2+** with perpetual check. But it is of course pretty tough to find such a variation at the board, with the clock ticking, especially when it is far from obvious what is wrong with the text.



Test: White to play and win.

30. ♗h6-g7! ♗f6xg7

31. ♖g1xg7+!

The only way. 31.♕xf7 ♖g8 32.♘f5 ♖xf5! 33.exf5 ♗e8! 34.♖xg7+ ♖xg7 35.♕xe8 ♕a3 36.♕xh5+ ♔g8 37.♕e8+ only leads to perpetual check.

31. ... ♔h7xg7

32. ♖d1-g1+ ♗d7-g4

It seems that Black has beaten off the attack. After 33.fxg4? there follows 33...e6!, opening an escape route for the king, and White has nothing better than to force a draw by 34.♖f1 ♕a7 35.♕f6+. But the brilliant

33. ♘d4-e6+!!

destroys Black's hopes of successfully evacuating his king.

33. ... ♔g7-g6

After 33...fxe6 34.fxg4 there is no defence against the deadly 35.gxh5+.

34. f3xg4 f7-f6

35. ♘e6xc5 d6xc5

36. g4-g5?!

In mutual time-trouble, both opponents commit inaccuracies, but these do not affect the result of the game. More accurate was 36.♕f5+! ♔f7 37.♕d5+ ♕e6 38.♕xh5+ ♔f8 39.g5!.

36. ... ♕a6-a3?!

More tenacious was 36...♔f7! 37.gxf6 ♕xf6 38.♕g3 (threatening ♕h3 and ♖f1) 38...♖f8 39.e5 ♕c6 40.♕xc3.

37. g5xf6+ ♔g6-f7

38. f6xe7+ 1-0

Game 32

Geetha Narayanan Gopal

Zurab Javakhadze

Balagüer 2009

1. e2-e4 c7-c5

2. ♘g1-f3 d7-d6

3. d2-d4 c5xd4

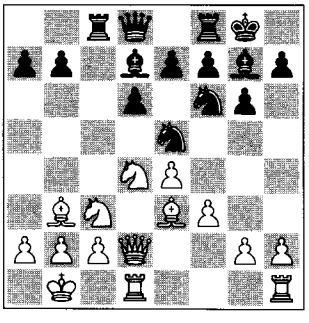
4. ♘f3xd4 ♘g8-f6

5. ♘b1-c3 g7-g6

6. ♗c1-e3 ♗f8-g7

7. f2-f3 ♘b8-c6
8. ♗f1-c4 0-0
9. ♕d1-d2 ♗c8-d7
10. 0-0-0 ♖a8-c8
11. ♗c4-b3 ♘c6-e5
12. ♔c1-b1!?

The ideas behind this prophylactic move were explained in detail in the notes to the previous game. 12.g4 is not good because of 12...b5!, and the weakness of the f3 pawn reveals itself: 13.g5 b4! 14.♘ce2 ♘h5 15.f4 ♘c4 16.♗xc4 ♖xc4 17.b3 ♖c7 18.♘g3 (also after 18.f5 ♕a8 19.♕d3 ♖fc8 Black has the initiative, Chadaev-Azarov, Saratov 2007) 18...♖c3 with advantage to Black, J. Polgar-Carlsen, Mainz rapid 2008.



12. ... a7-a6

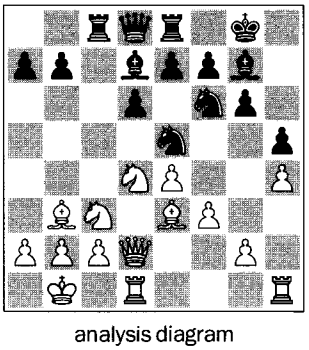
A) After the tempting **12...♘c4 13.♗xc4 ♖xc4** White begins by advancing his g-pawn – **14.g4!**, and it is hard for Black to develop his queen to a convenient square – on 14...♕c7 or 14...♕a5 there is the strong 15.g5 ♘h5 16.♘d5 ♕d8 17.♘e2! and the white knight heads to g3 or f4, in the process creating a threat to the a7 pawn. Practice has shown that White's initiative is very dangerous. More often, Black tries to obtain typical Dragon counterplay with **14...b5!?**, but White plays **15.b3!** and now:

A1) On **15...♖c5?** there follows 16.♘e6!;

A2) Black does not obtain sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange in the event of **15...b4 16.bxc4 bxc3 17.♕xc3 ♕c7 18.h4!? ♖c8** Or 18...h5 19.g5 ♘h7 20.♕d3 ♖c8 21.c3 with advantage to White. **19.h5**. Here in the game Mekhitarian-Martinez Martin, La Roda Albacete 2010, Black launched the hopeless attack 19...d5?, which only accelerated his defeat – 20.h6 ♗h8 21.g5 ♘e8 22.exd5 ♘d6 23.c5 ♘f5 24.c6 and White won;

A3) **15...♖c8 16.♘dxb5 ♕a5 17.a4! a6 18.♘d5! ♕xd2 19.♘xe7+ ♔h8 20.♖xd2 ♖ce8** 20...axb5 is even worse, in view of 21.♘xc8 ♖xc8 22.♖xd6 with the threat of 23.g5. **21.♘xd6 ♖xe7 22.♗c5! ♖e5 23.♗a3 ♗e6 24.♘b7!** Also good is 24.♖hd1!?. **24...♖e8** On 24...♖b8 decisive is 25.♖d8+ ♖xd8 26.♘xd8 ♔g8 27.♗d6 Villanueva-Gonzaga Grego, corr. 2004. **25.♗b2** and White obtained a decisive advantage, Vuillemin-Piantedosi, corr. 2008.

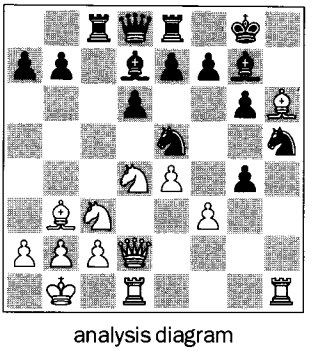
B) Therefore, in the diagram position, Dragon supporters looked for a prophylactic move, which they hoped would be no less useful than the retreat of the white king to b1. Until Carlsen played 12...a6 against Dominguez Perez at Biel 2008, Black automatically played the modest **12...♖e8**. In recent times, White's method of attack has been the same against both moves. We will see the tactical nuances in the analysis. **13.h4 h5**



analysis diagram

Kasparov, in *Revolution in the 70s*, and Khalifman, in Volume 11 of *Opening for White According to Anand 1.e4*, prefer the move 14.♗h6 in the hope of 14...♗h8?! when White can play 15.g4! in more comfortable circumstances. But in this case Black can simplify the position by playing 14...♘c4 15.♗xc4 ♖xc4, which reduces White's attacking resources, although after 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♘d5!? White's chances are still preferable, and this line can be recommended to lovers of positional struggles.

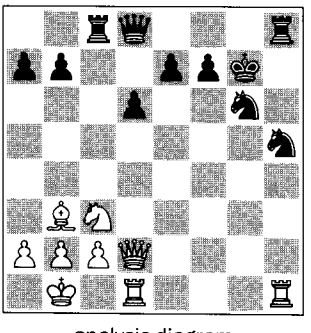
But the truth is that White has already carried out all of his preparations for the attack, and the logical follow-up to his opening system is the aggressive **14.g4!**. As we will see below, White can also play this after 12...a6. **14...hxg4 15.h5!** White attacks exactly as in the previous game, but the inclusion of the moves ♔b1 and ...♖e8 undoubtedly plays into his hands. **15...♘xh5** 15...♖xc3 is scarcely any good, as there can follow 16.♕xc3! gxh5 17.♖dg1. **16.♗h6**



analysis diagram

B2) **16...e6** The most natural reaction. Black shuts the diagonal of the bishop on b3, takes control of the square d5, and opens the queen's path to f6, from where it will take part in the defence of the king.

B2) One can hardly expect more from one move, but even so, Rustam Kasimdzhanov has twice tried **16...♔h7** (interesting is 16...♖c5!? S.Horvat-Vlaic, Kastela 2002, trying to gain a tempo), with the forced **17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.fxg4 ♗xg4 19.♘f5+! ♗xf5** 19...gxf5? loses to 20.♕g5+ ♘g6 21.exf5 and Black cannot take the rook: 21...♗xd1 22.♗xf7!+–. It is easy to see that with the rook on f8, this attack would not work, and so after 12...a6 White should avoid the line 16...♔h7 by starting the attack with 16.♖dg1! instead of 16.♗h6. **20.exf5 ♖h8 21.fxg6 ♘xg6**



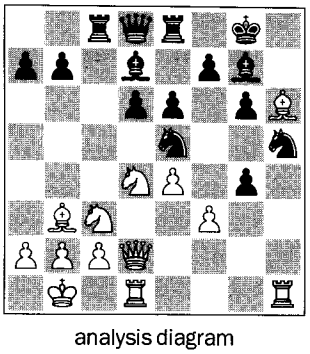
analysis diagram

Although against Dominguez he managed to hold after 22.♘d5 ♘f6 23.♘xf6 (23.♖hg1!?) 23...exf6 24.♖xh8 ♕xh8 (Dominguez Perez-Kasimdzhanov, Dresden ol 2008), a month later against Radjabov, who played **22.♘e4!?**, he did not: **22...♘f6 23.♖df1!? ♖xh1** 23...♘xe4 loses to 24.♖xf7+. **24.♖xh1 d5** Here too, it is easy for Black to lose after 24...♘xe4?? 25.♕h6+ ♔f6 26.♖f1+ ♔e5 27.♕h5++– or 24...e6?? 25.♕h6+ ♔g8 26.♗xe6+–. **25.♘xf6 ♔xf6** 25...exf6?! 26.♗xd5 is also cheerless. **26.♕f2+ ♔g7** 26...♔e6 27.♖d1+–. **27.♖f1 f6 28.♕f5!?** Black has two extra pawns, but his defence is exceptionally

difficult. **28...♖c6?!** Radjabov considers that more chances were offered by 28...♖c5. **29.♖g1! ♕e8 30.♗xd5 ♖c5 31.♕e6!** Black is suffocating – only his rook can move. **31...♖b5 32.c4 ♖b6 33.♕h3! e6 34.♗f3! ♕d8** Teimour considered 34...f5! to be the best chance, but even here, after 35.c5 ♖c6 36.♕g3 ♖xc5 37.♕d6 ♖c4 38.♗h5 White wins. **35.♕g2!** and Black resigned, since after 36...♕d3+ 37.♔a1 there is no defence against 38.♗e4 Radjabov-Kasimdzhanov, Elista 2008.

In my view, the position in the above analysis diagram is exceptionally difficult to defend in practical play. Black's extra pawns are completely irrelevant, whilst the weakness of his king's cover is irreparable. Black spends the whole game trying to repulse his opponent's threats, and if he is lucky he will make a draw. For these reasons, there are no longer any supporters of 16...♔h7 to be found.

Now we return to the continuation **16...e6**.

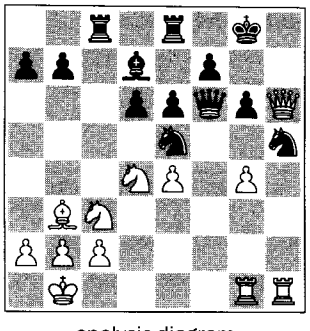


analysis diagram

17.♖dg1! White's play is simple and easy to understand – there are open lines in front of the enemy king, so he puts his heavy pieces on them and endeavours to give mate. And for all this, he has given up just two pawns – a very good bargain.

B21) Kasimdzhanov has played **17...g3!?** here, but again suffered defeat: **18.♖xh5!?** White goes in for forcing play, but 18.♘ce2!?, developing his initiative, also deserves consideration. **18...gxh5 19.♖xg3 ♘g6 20.♘f5 ♗f6** 20...exf5? loses to 21.♖xg6, whilst White has the initiative after 20...♗xh6 21.♕xh6 ♕f6 22.♘xd6, and now 22...h4 23.♖g1 ♕xf3? is not possible because of 24.♘f5, mating. **21.♘xd6 ♖c6** He loses after 21...♗e5?! 22.♖g5! ♗xd6? 23.♕xd6 and Black has no defence to ♕e5. **22.♘xe8 ♗xe8 23.♕h2** and Black did not manage to hold the position, although he retains chances of equalising, Vachier Lagrave-Kasimdzhanov, San Sebastian 2009.

B22) **17...♕f6 18.fxg4** Of course not 18.♗xg7? ♔xg7 19.fxg4 because of 19...♕f4! Stanojoski-Parligras, Budva Ech 2009. **18...♗xh6 19.♕xh6**



analysis diagram

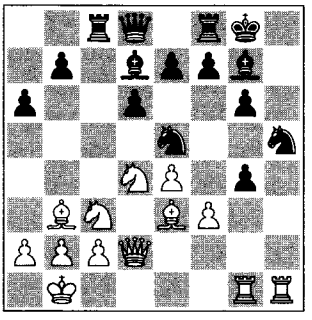
A hymn to the virtues of 'advanced prophylaxis' – with White's king still on c1, Black would now have ♕f4+, exchanging queens! **19...♕g7 20.♕d2! ♘f6 21.g5 ♘h5** It seems as though Black has repulsed the attack and retained an extra pawn, but the weakness of his king's position, in the absence of dark-squared bishops, remains chronic. White just needs to exchange off the knight on h5 and double his major

pieces on the h-file. **22.♘ce2!** Setting about the realisation of this plan. **22...♘c4** In the game Konguvel-Antonio, Delhi Commonwealth Championship 2010, Black undertook activity in the centre, but this did not save him from defeat: 22...♗c6 23.♕e3 d5 24.♘g3 ♘xg3 25.♖xg3 dxe4 26.♘xc6 ♘xc6 27.♖gh3 ♘e7 28.♕xe4 a5 29.♗xe6 fxe6 30.♕xe6+ 1-0. **23.♗xc4 ♖xc4 24.b3 ♖c5 25.♘g3 ♘xg3** On 25...♘f4 26.e5! is strong, and the white knight comes via e4 to f6 – 26...dxe5 (or 26...♕xe5 27.♖e1) 27.♘e4. **26.♖xg3 ♖ec8 27.♖gh3 e5 28.♖h4! exd4** 28...f5 29.♕h2 1-0 Abreu Delgado-Lorenzo de la Riva, Barbera del Valles 2010. **29.♕h2 ♔f8 30.♕xd6+ ♔g8 31.♕xd7 d3** At first glance it seems both sides have their chances, but Judit quickly demonstrates the contrary. **32.c4! ♕c3 33.♖4h2 b5 34.e5! ♕xe5 35.♖h7 ♖5c7 36.♕d6!** and Black resigned, since after 36...♕c3 37.♕f6 decides, J. Polgar-Kaidanov, Hilton Head (m-2) 2010.

13. h2-h4! h7-h5
14. g2-g4! h5xg4
15. h4-h5 ♘f6xh5
16. ♖d1-g1!

As we have already noted above, now after 16.♗h6 the reply 16...♔h7!? is strong. In the variation 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.fxg4 ♗xg4 19.♘f5+ gxf5! 20.♕g5+ ♘g6 21.exf5 ♗xd1 the presence of the rook on f8 becomes the key issue. After 22.♗xf7 ♖xf7 23.♕xg6+ ♔f8 24.♘xd1 ♕b6! Black's position is superior.

If, after the text move, Black chooses 16...e6, then by means of 17.♗h6 White can transpose into the attacking scheme of J. Polgar-Kaidanov. In addition, in this position 17.fxg4!? ♘f6 18.♗g5 also deserves attention.



16. ... ♕d8-a5

A typical Dragon queen manoeuvre, albeit played here with a very worrying situation facing Black on the kingside. **16...♘c4?** is bad because of 17.♗xc4 ♖xc4 18.fxg4 ♘f6 19.♘f5! ♗xf5 20.gxf5 with a winning attack.

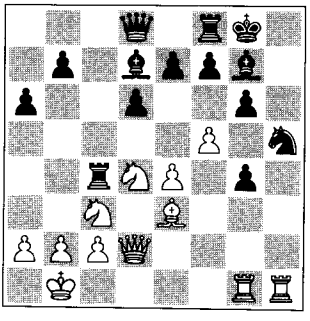
After **16...♖xc3** 17.bxc3 a5 18.♗h6, Black hardly has sufficient compensation for the exchange, since White retains a very threatening attack.

However, Sosonko's idea of using the rook along the 5th rank deserves serious consideration here, as played by Carlsen against Topalov (Bilbao 2008) – **16...♖c5!?**

A) White reacted in the standard way with **17.♗h6,** and Black was able to carry out the manoeuvre **17...♔h7! 18.♗xg7 ♔xg7**, preparing to include the rook in the defence from h8. In the game there followed **19.f4 ♘c4 20.♗xc4 ♖xc4 21.f5 e5! 22.♘de2 ♖h8** Black has constructed a defence, but after **23.b3!?** he erred with **23...♖c6?** Why is such a natural move, defending the d6 pawn, a mistake? The problem is that now he is unable to coordinate his rooks and hold the h-file. Therefore, 23...♖c8! was stronger, and after 24.♖xg4 ♘f6 25.♖gg1 ♕e7 26.♘g3 ♖xh1 27.♖xh1 ♖h8 White retains sufficient compensation for the pawn, but no more than that. In the game, there

followed **24.♖xg4 ♘f6 25.♖gg1!** with a large advantage for White, since Black cannot defend the threat 26.♘g3, followed by ♖xh8, ♖h1 and ♕h6, without serious concessions.

B) Immediately after this game, various commentators suggested an improvement on White's play, namely **17.f4!?** (instead of 17.♗h6), which after **17...♘c4 18.♗xc4 ♖xc4 19.f5** leads to the following position:



analysis diagram

White's attack is very dangerous. An interesting battle ensues after:

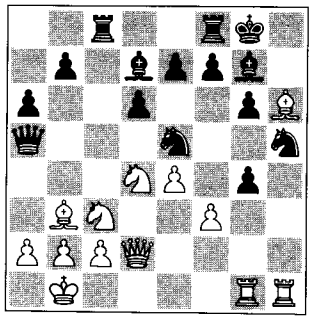
B1) **19...♘f6?** 20.♗h6! and 20...♘xe4 is impossible because of 21.♘xe4 ♖xd4 (21...♗xd4 22.f6!+–) 22.♕h2+–;

B2) The standard black counterplay **19...♕a5 20.♖xg4 ♖xc3 21.bxc3 ♖c8** deserves consideration. Here too, after **22.♖xh5 ♖xc3!** (both 22...gxh5? 23.♖g1+– and 22...♕xc3? 23.♖h2+– lose) **23.♖h1 ♕b6+ 24.♔c1 ♖xe3 25.♕xe3 ♕xd4 26.♕xd4 ♗xd4** we reach a position with an unusual material balance, but in my view White's chances are superior;

B3) Let us see what happens if Black defends along the same lines as the game: **19...e5 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.♕d3!** A suggestion of Khalifman, who considers that after the immediate 21.♖xg4 ♕f6 22.♘de2 e5 the chances are roughly equal. **21...b5 22.♖xg4 ♕f6** On 22...e5 Khalifman gives 23.♖xg6! exd4 24.♗xd4 ♗e8 25.♖xg7+! ♘xg7 26.♕h3! ♖f1+! (the only defence against mate) 27.♖xf1 ♖xd4 28.♕e3 ♘e6 29.♖g1+ ♔f7 30.♘d5 ♖xd5 31.exd5 ♘g7 32.♕a7+ ♗d7 33.♖f1+ ♔g8 34.♕xa6 with advantage to White. **23.e5!** This zwischenzug is the point of Alexander's idea. **23...dxe5 24.♖xg6** with a strong attack.

Returning to the game:

17. ♗e3-h6



Thus far things have been simple for White. By one move-order or another, he fulfils the task of bringing his forces closer to the enemy king. But from the next move on the creative phase begins.

17. ... ♗g7-f6!

An interesting idea of Radjabov's. Of course, the dark-squared bishop is worth more than the rook on f8, as was first demonstrated by Vladimir Simagin.

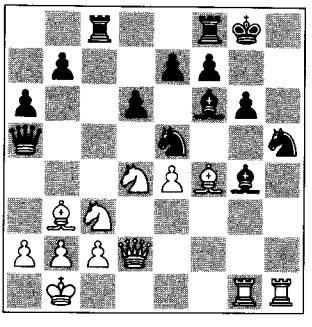
Carlsen committed a surprising lapse against Anand (Mainz rapid 2008) by playing **17...♖xc3??**. This defence only works with the white king on c1 (see Game 31!). After 18.♗xg7 Black realised that he cannot take on c2 with check, and that neither 18...♖xb3 19.♕xa5 ♖xb2+ 20.♔a1, nor the game continuation 18...♔xg7 19.♖xh5

♖xb3 save him. Now as Anand pointed out, the quickest way to win was by 20.♕h6+ ♔f6 21.♕g5+ ♔g7 22.♘xb3 ♕b4 23.♖gh1 ♖g8 24.♖h7+ ♔f8 25.♕h6+ ♔e8 26.♕g7!, but 20.♕xa5?! did not change the result of the game.

18. f3xg4 ♗d7xg4

19. ♗h6-f4!

Of course, Radjabov should be believed when it comes to the strength of the bishops. Karjakin didn't believe him, and after 19.♗xf8 ♔xf8 20.♕e3 ♖xc3! (totally destroying the white pawn structure) 21.♕xc3 ♕xc3 22.bxc3 e6! Black had two pawns for the two exchanges, in a position where it is difficult for the white rooks to develop any activity. Later on, Radjabov managed to develop the initiative and won the game, Karjakin-Radjabov, Sochi 2008.



The text move was suggested by almost all of the online commentators, using Rybka, since it is the computer's first choice. What progress has been made in the assessment of material sacrifices by our silicon friends! In the diagram position, Black has two extra pawns, but it is hard for him to defend against the attack on his king.

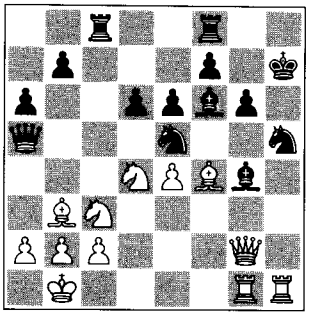
19. ... ♔g8-h7?

The decisive mistake occurs immediately. **19...♘f3?** loses even more quickly, in view of 20.♘xf3 ♗xf3 21.♖xg6+ ♗g7 22.♖h3.

Nor does **19...♘c4** save Black, because of 20.♕h2! ♗xd4 21.♖xg4 ♗g7 22.♘d5 ♖fe8 23.♖g5 b5 24.♖xh5 gxh5 25.♕xh5.

But some hopes of salvation were offered by **19...♘xf4! 20.♕xf4 ♖xc3 21.bxc3 ♕xc3 22.♕h6 ♖e8 23.♖xg4 e6 24.♖f4! ♘d3** After 24...♘c4 25.♗xc4 ♕xd4 as well as 26.♖xf6 ♕xf6, there is also 26.e5 ♕xe5 27.♔c1, in all cases with an advantage to White. **25.cxd3 ♕xd4 26.♖xf6 ♕xf6 27.♕h7+ ♔f8 28.♕h3**. The approximate material equality (three pawns for a piece) should not deceive us. Black must defend against White's attacking ideas, such as seizing the c-file, a queen penetration to the queenside, etc. If players can be found who are willing to defend the black position, then further practice will show how great are White's winning chances.

20. ♕d2-g2! e7-e6



Vainly trying to take the square d5 under control.

21. ♘c3-d5!

The prosaic 21.♗xe5! ♗xe5 (21...♕xe5 22.♕xg4) 22.♘xe6! ♗xe6 23.♗xe6 also wins, but the text move is more striking. White destroys the en-

emy's communications along the vital 5th rank.

21. ... e6xd5
22. ♗f4xe5 ♗f6xe5
23. ♕g2xg4 ♗e5xd4
24. ♕g4xh5+! ♔h7-g7
25. ♕h5-h6+ ♔g7-f6
26. ♕h6-g5+ ♔f6-g7
27. ♖g1-f1!

Closing off the f-file for the black king.

27. ... ♖f8-h8
28. ♖f1xf7+! ♔g7xf7
29. ♗b3xd5+ ♔f7-f8
30. ♖h1-f1+ ♗d4-f2
31. ♕g5-f6+ ♔f8-e8
32. ♕f6xh8+ ♔e8-d7
33. ♕h8-h7+ 1-0

A striking crush.

Conclusions

1. Positions with fixed h-pawns are extremely difficult to play. This is because White's main attacking weapon, the break g2-g4 followed by a kingside attack, does not usually promise a forced win when his bishop is on the c1-h6 diagonal, unlike when it is on d4, as in Game 23. Even so, modern practice confirms that it is this breakthrough, when played at the right moment, with which White's hopes of obtaining an advantage are connected.

2. In the absolute majority of cases, White should move his king to b1 before advancing his g-pawn. 'This may be called "advance prophylaxis": meeting the opponent's threats before they have appeared on the board! Moving the king to b1 is useful in any event, whilst Black lacks equivalent moves. Depending on his reaction, White will construct his further plan of action" (Garry Kasparov). The move is best played before even the advance of the h-pawn, after **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 ♘c6 8.♗c4 0-0 9.♕d2 ♗d7 10.0-0-0 ♖c8 11.♗b3 ♘e5 – 12.♔b1!** (Game 32), but Black can use a cunning move-order to prevent White actually reaching this position.

White's attacking plan is simple – g2-g4, then h4-h5, put the major pieces on the g- and h-files, and at a convenient moment sacrifice the exchange on h5. However, the move-order to reach this set-up is extremely important and changes according to Black's reaction. It is essential to calculate variations constantly!

3. In recent times, White usually advances his h-pawn before castling, forcing the reply ...h7-h5, which reduces Black's choice of plans of counterplay (Game 31). However, White also deprives himself of the chance to employ 'advanced prophylaxis' at an early stage. In this case, as well as the move ♔b1, it is useful to put the bishop on g5, where it supports possible attacking operations, and moves away from the attack from a knight coming to c4. In the changed circumstances, after the pawn sacrifice g4 hxg4, White chooses either f3-f4 or the immediate h4-h5, depending on circumstances.

4. In the attack on the king, the rook is often weaker than the opponent's dark-squared bishop. In Game 31, White is ready at the first opportunity to exchange his rook for the bishop on h8, and in Game 32, Black happily invites White to 'win' the exchange.

Index of Players

Numbers refer to pages.

A

Aagaard 100
Abrashkin 20
Abreu Delgado 199
Adams 68, 154
Adianto 131
Adorjan 113
Airapetian 27
Al Modiahki 154
Alekberovas 54
Alexander 59, 155
Alexeev 68, 115, 160
Allesnehmer 49
Almasi,Z. 71, 83, 121
Alterman 159
Alvarez Pedraza 122
Amonatov 117
Anand 62, 87, 101, 120, 121, 124, 141, 172, 176, 183, 200
Andersen 100
Andersson,U. 30
Andriasian,S. 124
Andriasian,Z. 63
Andriulaitis 92
Anisimov 171
Antal 74
Antonio 199
Arakhamia Grant 71
Archeo 44
Areschenko 128, 170, 187
Arnlind 174
Aseev 79
Atalik 50
Avrukh 62
Azarov 157, 196
Azpiri Medina 108

B

Balogh,Cs. 71, 73
Baramidze 123
Barcza 53
Barczay 188
Barnett 165
Beckmann 28
Beliavsky 48
Belous 169, 171
Belov 100
Benderac 91
Bennedik 107
Berkes 50
Bezotosniy 192
Bjornsson 122
Blanco Gramajo 107
Blodstein 145
Blom 161
Bobras 122
Bodnaruk 59
Böhme 55
Boleslavsky 34, 64
Bologan 72, 79, 148
Bönsch 89
Branding 107
Brener 158
Brockbank 192
Brod 83
Brodsky 63
Bromberger 192
Bronislaw 157
Bruned 84
Buckley,G. 81
Bukavshin 19, 169
Buturin 46

C

Canal 53
Canfell 148
Carlsen 150, 163, 176, 181, 190, 196, 199, 200
Carlsson,P. 129, 190
Caruana 160, 164
Chadaev 82, 196
Cherepkov 78
Chuprov 176
Clemens 89
Coelho 73
Corrales Jimenez 187
Cubas 67
Cvitan 77, 83
Czakon 123
Czarnota 59

D

De de Riva Aguado 101
De Firmian 120, 187
De La Bourdonnais 111
De la Pena 191
De Lima Neto 194
Del Rio Angelis 66, 70
Denisov 19
Deszczynski 185
Dolmatov 48
Dominguez Perez 98, 181, 196, 197
Dorfman 54
Dragicevic 193
Dückstein 44
Dueball 89
Dunnington 194
Dür 39
Dvoinikov 97
Dzwonek 44

E

Efimenko 49, 61, 63, 121, 192
Ehlvest 41, 152
Elburg 92
Elistratov 20
Epishin 79
Ermekov 52
Espig 30
Evans 145
Evdokimov 165

F

Fagerström 107
Falcon 147
Fedorov 84, 148, 150, 162, 165, 166
Feletar 145
Feller 193
Fercec 179
Fernandez Aguado 185
Fielding 97
Fier 97
Fifi 157
Fischer 44, 78, 85, 170
Fleurackers 151
Flores Rios 73

FRITZ 56
Frübing 164
Ftacnik 113, 125

G

Gabrielian 82, 172
Gallego Jimenez 164
Galliamova 47
Gambit 158
Ganguly 63, 117
Gaponenko 63, 128
Gashimov 127, 161
Gavey 45
Gavish 194
Geller 48, 144, 182, 188
Genova 62
Gligoric 59
Glotov 192
Glukhovtsev 184
Golubev 164-165, 185
Gomez Galan Arense 154
Gosio 84
Grandelius 119, 122, 125
Gretarsson 122
Grigorian,K. 89
Grigoriants 69
Grinwis 45, 158
Grischuk 113, 117
Grosar 131
Gruenfeld 39
Gufeld 54
Gulko 53
Gunina 132

H

Habermehl 140
Hagström 107
Hartman 38
Hartston 45
Haugen 184
Hautot 180
Hechler 188
Helbich 164
Herrera 51
Hoffmeyer 157
Holloway 45
Holmes 81
Holzhauer 100
Holzke 79, 107
Horowitz 144
Hubley 154

I

Inarkiev 59, 125
Isaev 164
Istratescu 131
Ivanchuk 22, 40, 71, 163, 176
Ivanov L,S. 125
Ivanov,A. 63
Ivanov,S. 48

J

Janos 188
Janowski 111
Jaracz 72
Javakhadze 195
Jelen 14
Jenni 108
Jimenez Zerquera 14
Jones 190
Juradowitch 165

K

Kagan,N. 148
Kaidanov 199
Kaminski 41
Kamp 28
Kamshonkov 38
Kangur 154
Kanovsky 62
Karjakin 66, 71, 96, 120, 124, 132, 181, 201
Karpov 53, 54, 59, 182, 190
Kasimdzhanov 197-198
Kasparov 22, 23, 39, 53-54, 59, 69, 141, 160
Keller 122
Keres 48
Kessler 192
Kestler 54, 55
Khairullin 69
Khalifman 54, 183
Kharlov 51
Kitte 81
Klima 107
Klimov 51
Klings 185
Kobalia 84, 92
Koblencs 64
Koch 147
Kogan,A 90
Kokarev 79
Kolasinski 185
Komljenovic 156
Konguvel 199
Köpke 70, 164
Korbut 132
Korneev 24, 61, 71, 97, 147, 164
Korotylev 62
Kortchnoi 60, 182
Kosintseva,T. 73, 147
Kotronias 50
Kovalenko 102
Koziak 46
Kraai 82
Kramer 87
Kramnik 62
Kremenietsky 46
Kriksciunas 54
Kruszynski 101
Kryakvin 59
Kryvoruchko 121
Kuczynski 117
Kudrin 187
Kulagin 185
Kurnosov 79, 166
Kuzev 49
Kuzmin,G. 27, 188
Kveinys 60

L

Lanc 89
Lanka 91
Larsen 12, 25, 85, 170, 187
Lastin 24
Leitao 96
Leko 40, 54, 69, 163. 164
Leow 45
Lhagvasuren 141
Liberzon 39
Lima 174
Lindam 184
Littlewood,J. 45
Ljubicic 156
Ljubojevic 154
LOOP 122
Lorenzo de la Riva 199
Loskutov 178
Luch 122
Lugovoi 47
Luther 71, 82

M
Macak 122
Macieja 154
Madl 179
Malakhov 82
Maletin 176
Maliangkay 28
Mamedov,N. 63
Mamedyarov 123
Manelidis 148
Manik 82
Marin 152
Markovic 179
Markowski 41
Maroczy 138
Martinez 46
Maslak 122
Mastrovasilis,D. 81, 123
Masur 188
Matanovic 44
Matveev 19
McDonnell 111
McShane 194
Medvegy 179
Melia 49
MENO 158
Michael_Schenk 49
Michalek 90
Mijovic 91
Mikhailov 30
Mikhalevski 191
Milos 67, 117
Milov,L. 46
Mirabile 192
Mohrlok 58
Molinari 150
Molnar 60
Moreira 192
Morozevich 67, 72, 96, 98
Motylev 97, 117, 122, 190, 191, 193
Movsesian 71, 72, 77, 83
Muir 49, 64
Munoz Sanchez 45

N
Nabavi 108
Naer 124-125, 127
Nagy 158
Naiditsch 131
Narayanan Gopal 195
Natalucci 45
Navara 72, 144, 165
Nedeljkovic,V. 172
Nedev 71
Nedilko 128
Negi 101
Nepomniachtchi 102, 118, 122
Nicklich 154
Nickoloff 38
Nielsen,P.H. 123
Nijboer 122
Nikitin 78
Nisipeanu 79, 157
Noomen 164
Nyzhnyk 141

O
Oliveira 96
Oll 154
Olszewski 123
Onischuk,V. 121
Orsag 83
Ortiz Suarez 129
Ostapenko 89
Osterman 55
Ovseevich 62

P
Pähtz 108
Palciauskas 92
Papp,Gabor 53, 179
Papp,Gellert 179
Parkanyi 179
Parligras 87, 98, 198
PARSOS 56
Pasko 122
Pavlidis 159-160
Pavlov,M. 121
Percze 184
Perelshteyn 108
Perunovic 61, 148, 154
Petrosian 32, 64, 128
Petrzelka 30
Phillips 178
Pina Vega 91
Pitters 87
Plachetka 62
Pogonina 147
Pogorelov 24
Polakovic 92
Polgar,J. 101, 141, 196, 199
Polugaevsky 33
Polzin 193
Ponomariov 116, 132
Popov,V. 124
Popovic 91
Pott 158
Pravec 90
Prokopchuk 92
Psakhis 156
Purtov 117

Q
Quezada Perez 67, 97, 122

R
Radjabov 163, 164, 181, 190, 198, 201
Radulov 49
Reinderman 141
Reshevsky 78
Ribis Colom 191
Ribli 113
Rittner 174
Rivera Kuzawka 91
Rogers 91
Roser 63, 90
Rosko 120
Rotman 59
Rotstein,A. 67
Rowson 68, 81
Rublevsky 71, 89, 161
Ruck 145
Ruiz Heraclio 192

S
Sacchetti 154
Sadorra 101
Sadvakasov 48, 115
Salov 39, 41, 87, 90
Salvador Eduardo 192
Santana 108
Santos 174
Sareen 51
Satyapragyan 101
Savic 81
Sax 39, 45, 143
Seres 179
Serper 145
Seyb 46
Shakenov 51

Shamkovich 46
Shanava 117
Sharif 147
Sher 107
Shirov 162, 165, 176, 181
Shmuter 35
Short 35, 64, 71, 101
Siigur 140
Silva Pereira 184
Simacek 79
Simmelink 161
Sion Castro 91
Sisniega 60
Sivokho 164
Sjugirov 101, 125, 127
Smeets 150
Smikovsky 51-52
Smirnov,P. 62, 120, 125, 176, 178, 180
Socko,B. 72
Sokolov,A. 71, 72, 90, 102, 154, 155
Sokolov,S. 89
Solak 154
Soltis 188
Sosonko 188
Spassky 32-33, 64, 128
Sprenger 67
Stach 188
Stanojoski 160, 198
Stean 45, 89
Stellwagen 190
Stoinev 173
Stojanovic 61
Stoltz 63
Stuart 164
Suetin 14, 163
Summerscale 164
Sutovsky 53
Svidler 62, 63, 69, 72, 116, 131, 132
Swathi 124
Swiderski 138
Szabo 80
Szabo,K. 118
Szabo,L. 155
Szelag 122
Sznapik 190

T

Tabba 45
Tal 12, 25, 58, 60, 63-64
Talpak 156
Tarrasch 111
Tasic 185
Ter Sahakyan 119
THE KING 122
Timman 39
Timmerman 154
Timofeev 68, 71, 73, 79, 171
Tirabassi 28
Tiviakov 35, 50, 141, 155, 159, 178, 191
Todorovic 55
Tolnai 183
Topalov 22-23, 120, 131, 160, 199
Toro Solis de Ovando 34, 184
Tosic 72
Trubitsina 19
Tsereteli 49
Tseshkovsky 49, 101
Tsvetkov 173
Turkov 164

U

Uhl 185
Ulibin 89
Unzicker 44, 54-55
Uzhva 171-172

V

Vachier Lagrave 101, 198
Van Beek, G. 150
Van den Doel 74
Van der Wiel 143, 165
Van Riemsdijk 46
Van Wely 22, 132
Vasiukov 163
Vecek 107
Vehi Bach 98
Velikov 35
Vioreanu 87
Virabian 144
Vokarev 24
Volokitin 159
Volpert 172
Vorobiov 102
Vouldis 191
Vuckovic 55, 80
Vyskocil 149

W

Wade 155
Waerstad 14
Wagner 89
Wege 67
Wells 61
Werner 172
Westerinen 187
Willemze,J. 74, 146
Windebank 155
Wittmann 45
Womacka 157
Wostyn 45
Wurschner 151

X

Xylogiannopoulos 160

Y

Yakovenko 127, 128, 131
Yakovich 38, 87, 109, 150
Yartsev 89
Yemelin 128
Yermolinsky 89
Yudasin 49, 59, 87

Z

Zabotin 106, 109
Zakharstov 89
Zambrana 91
Zaragatski 74
Zawadzki 107
Zeziulkin 149
Zhang Jilin 128
Zhang Pengxiang 73
Ziatdinov 106
Zontakh 117
Zuckerman 145
Zult 146
Zviagintsev 170

List of Games

Numbers refer to pages.

Part 1

1	Tal - Larsen	Bled m 1965	12
2	Ivanchuk - Van Wely	Monaco (blindfold) 2006	22
3	Kuzmin - Airapetian	Yerevan 1981	27
4	Spassky - Petrosian	Moscow Wch m 1969	32
5	Yakovich - Kamshonkov	Yeysk 1984	38
6	Archeo - Dzwonek	corr. 2002	44
7	Galliamova - Lugovoi	Togliatti tt 2003	47
8	Smikovsky - Ermekov	Omsk 1996	52
9	Tal - Mohrlok	Varna ol prel 1962	58
10	Karjakin - Del Rio Angelis	Warsaw Ech 2005	66
11	Korneev - Timofeev	Montreal 2006	71
12	Movsesian - Cvitan	Germany Bundesliga 1997/98	77
13	Fedorov - Kobalia	Maikop tt 1998	84

Part 2

14	Karjakin - Morozevich	Wijk aan Zee 2009	96
15	Belov - Holzhauer	Biel 2009	100

Part 3

16	Ziatdinov - Zabotin	Vladimir 2008	106

Part 4

17	Grischuk - Ftacnik	Calvia ol 2004	113
18	Svidler - Ponomariov	Sofia 2006	116
19	Grandelius - Ter Sahakyan	Herceg Novi jr 2008	119
20	Naer - Sjugirov	Ulan-Ude 2009	127
21	Yakovenko - Naiditsch	Dortmund 2009	131

Part 5

22	Siigur - Habermehl	corr. 2007	140
23	Van der Wiel - Sax	Plovdiv Ech-tt 1983	143
24	Bologan - Fedorov	Elista ol 1998	148
25	Ehlvest - Marin	Kolkata 1997	152
26	Volokitin - Pavlidis	Rijeka Ech 2010	159
27	Shirov - Fedorov	Wijk aan Zee 2001	162
28	Bukavshin - Belous	Kirishi 2010	169
29	Smirnov - Chuprov	Krasnoyarsk 2007	176
30	Smirnov - Hautot	Rethymnon tt 2003	180
31	Areschenko - Corrales Jimenez	Khanty-Mansiysk 2009	187
32	Narayanan Gopal - Javakhadze	Balagüer 2009	195

Bibliography

The below list contains English-language titles. I have read all of them in the Russian version. There may be differences between the various versions of certain books.

In the analysis of the games I have used my own ideas, unless stated otherwise. Games 20 and 28 I have analysed together with my pupils Ṣanan Sjugirov and Ivan Bukavshin respectively.

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Chess Informant
64

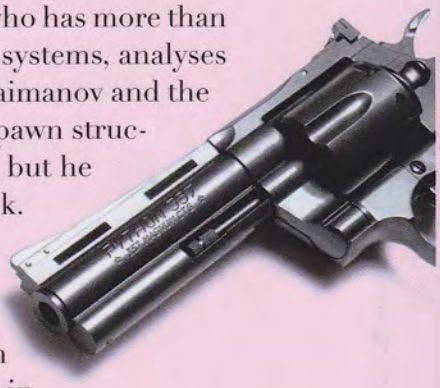
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