Neil McDonald

The King's Indian attack

move by move



EVERYMAN CHESS

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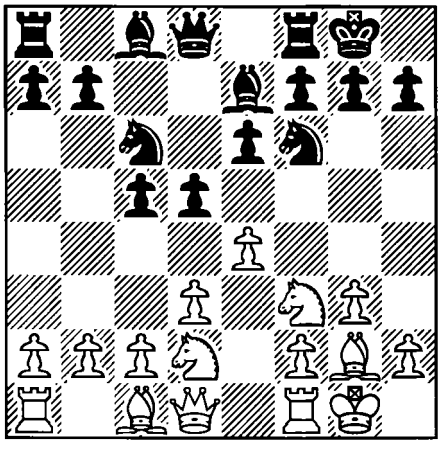
Introduction

The King's Indian Attack (or KIA) is a flexible opening system that can be employed by White after 1 ♘f3 or against the French, Sicilian, and Caro-Kann if he chooses to begin with 1 e4. A typical opening sequence is 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 e6 4 0-0 c5 5 d3 ♘c6 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 e4 0-0, while the same position could be reached via a Sicilian or French move order after for example 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 g3 d5 5 ♘bd2 ♘f6 6 ♗g2 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0.



The characteristic features of the King's Indian Attack are the fianchetto of the bishop on g2 and the setting up of a d3 and e4 pawn chain. White will develop his pieces in support of the strongpoint on e4.

In the King's Indian Attack there is no immediate clash between the two armies. Both sides are on the whole left undisturbed during the opening phase: only when White threatens to encroach on space in the centre does the game begin to develop its individual character. For this reason it is possible to describe the typical piece and pawn deployments by White and Black without becoming bogged down in detail or having to point out too many exceptions.

As we see in the example above, the two sequences that begin with 1 ♘f3 or 1 e4 could well transpose into each other. However, this isn't always the case. Whether to start 1 e4 or 1 ♘f3 is the eternal dilemma of the King's Indian Attack player. If you play 1 e4 you aren't guaranteed to get a KIA opening system: for example, after 1 e4 d5 there's no good way to

maintain a pawn on e4. This lack of universality might make you veer towards 1 ♘f3. Here a possible drawback compared to 1 e4 is that you have to face the solid Slav line after 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c6 in which Black puts his bishop on f5 or g4 in the near future. Facing the Dutch after 1 ♘f3 f5 might also not appeal to some players.

I have standardized the move order in the games for the sake of clarity. However, I should mention that there are other ways besides 1 e4 and 1 ♘f3 to reach the familiar KIA set-up. For example, Nakamura played 1 g3!? in his game with Navara in this book. That's probably the ultimate in flexibility, though of course if he chooses Black can avoid the KIA with 1...e5.

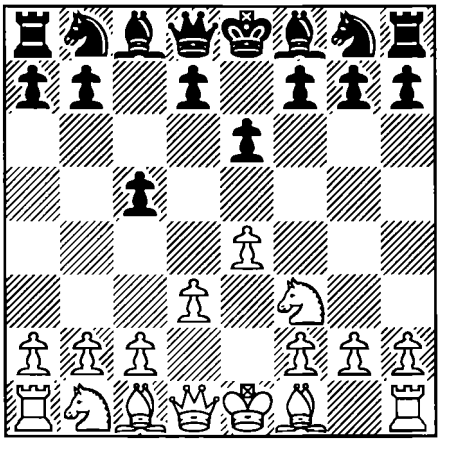
The power to force the opponent into an opening scheme that you have carefully worked out is an advantageous use of the white pieces, even if objectively speaking it is about equal. I hope this book helps you understand the King's Indian Attack and that you win many games with it.

Neil McDonald,
Gravesend,
May 2014

Chapter One
KIA Versus the French

Fischer's old favourite

The King's Indian Attack (KIA) has the honour of being the first game in Bobby Fischer's *My 60 Memorable Games*. The US Maestro remarks of the position after 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d3:



"This used to be my favourite at the time [of his game with James Sherwin, New Jersey 1957]. I thought it led to a favourable variation of the King's Indian reversed, particularly after Black has committed himself with ...e7-e6."

Of course, Fischer went on to become a massive openings expert after 3 d4 in the Sicilian and the rest is history. However, for those of us with less time (not to mention originality and genius), when it comes to the study of the opening phase, the King's Indian Attack remains an especially effective choice once Black has played ...e7-e6. In fact, some very strong players only have the KIA in their repertoire after 1 e4 e6 or 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6.

Black's committal ...e7-e6 move

Question: Why is 1 e4 e6 2 ♘f3 c5 or 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 so committal?

Answer: We need only compare the situation with that after 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d3. The move ...e6 is committal in that firstly it shuts in the bishop on c8, thereby limiting the chances of generating counterplay with ...♗g4. As a consequence there will be less pressure on White's centre. In fact developing the bishop to any reasonable square will take time and effort.

Secondly, if Black responds to the KIA by building a centre with ...d6 and ...e5 he has lost a tempo by having to move the e-pawn twice. And, thirdly, the move ...e6 has loosened Black's centre somewhat. After the alternative 2...d6 3 d3 he can just get on with developing his kingside with ...♘f6, ...g7-g6, and ...♗g7, thereby not weakening his dark squares.

Black doesn't fianchetto on g7 in this chapter

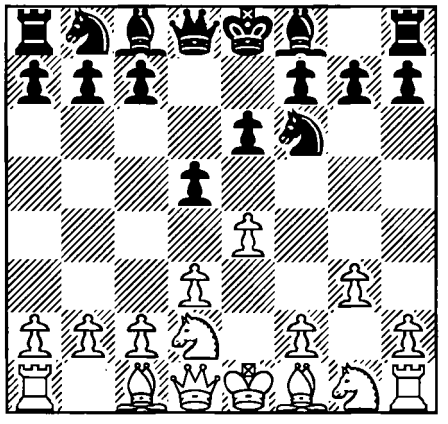
Whether Black answers 1 e4 with 1...e6 or 1...c5 there is a strong possibility that an identical position will be reached after a few moves. Technically speaking, we might say something like "the game started as a French, but transposed into a Sicilian set-up" or vice versa. For the sake of clarity, in this chapter we look at lines in which Black plays his pawns to e6 and d5 versus the King's Indian Attack (KIA), and puts his dark-squared bishop on e7, d6 or even c5 according to circumstances. In the next chapter we look at all variations in which Black puts a pawn on c5 and fianchettoes the bishop on g7 – he may play the French ...e6 move as part of the process or he may avoid it, preferring ...d6 for example.

This means that if Black begins the game with the moves 1 e4 e6 2 ♘f3 c5 (or 1...c5 2 ♘f3 e6) 3 d3 ♘c6 4 g3 g6 5 ♗g2 ♗g7 6 0-0 ♘ge7 you need to look for this set-up in Chapter Two.

An important note on move order

If variety is the spice of life, then the King's Indian Attack is very rich in experiences. Its basic structure can be reached through all sorts of move orders, with 1 g3, for example, being the way the first game in this chapter started.

Black has more flexibility in the French specific move order than in the Sicilian move order. For example, after 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 if White plays the natural 4 ♘gf3 the reply 4...♗c5 is a real nuisance if you want to fianchetto on g2. The reason why this is so will be explained in the analysis to 3 ♕e2 in Game 6. Suffice to say here that I've tweaked the move order in the French line so that after 3...♘f6 White plays 4 g3 straightaway.



Then 4...c5 5 ♗g2 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 ♗e7 reaches the standard position.

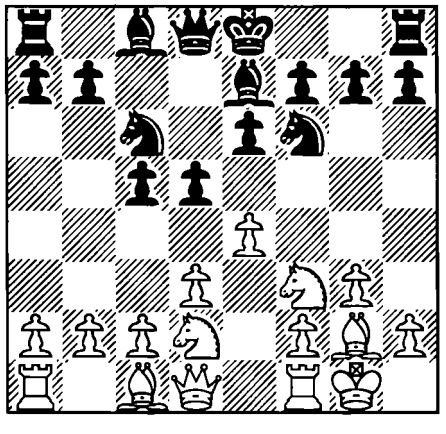
Of course if the game has started with 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d3 then the idea of ...♗c5 is never an issue – there is a pawn on c5 stopping the bishop going to the square.

White's choice between ♘d2 and ♕e2

After 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 White can support his pawn on e4 with either 3 ♘d2 or 3 ♕e2. Both are equally good moves, with advantages and drawbacks relative to each other. Thus putting the knight on d2 is a valuable developing move, while leaving it on b1 for a while gives an additional attacking option in the main line if Black castles queenside. On e2 the queen not only defends e4, she supports an e4-e5 thrust, but she might also become a target of a ...♗a6 move in the future (that is, if Black plays ...d5xe4; d3xe4 b6 and ...♗a6 as in Game 7).

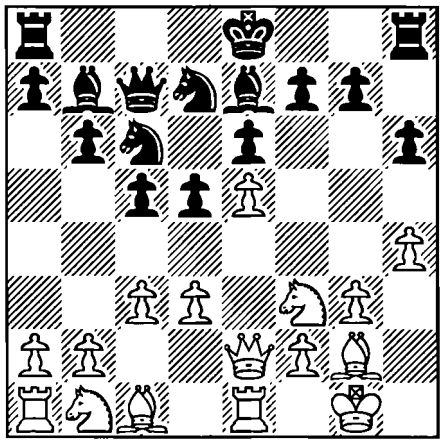
How this chapter is divided up

In Part One we examine the main line with 3 ♘d2, when after 3...♘f6 4 g3 c5 5 ♗g2 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 ♗e7 7 0-0 Black has a big choice to make.



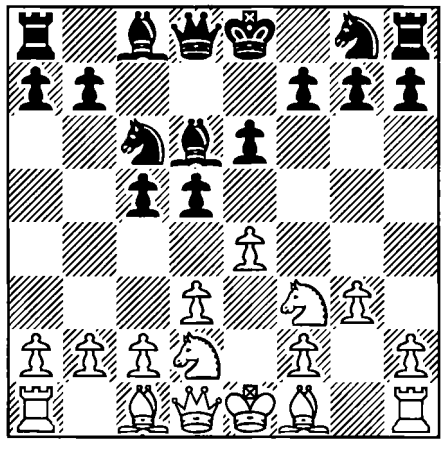
Should he castle kingside or play 7...b6 to fianchetto his queen's bishop, which is normally followed by queenside castling?

The subject of Part Two is White's important alternative 3 ♕e2. The main line is similar to that in Part One, with a key moment being reached in Game Four after 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♕e2 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 g3 c5 6 ♗g2 ♘c6 7 0-0 b6 8 e5 ♘d7 9 h4 ♗b7 10 c3 ♕c7 11 ♖e1 h6.



Here White can try to benefit from the delayed development of his knight with 12 ♘a3!.

In Part Three we investigate the alternative deployment of Black's bishop to d6 in the sequence 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 c5 4 ♘gf3 ♘c6 5 g3 ♗d6.



Rather than straightforward development with 5...♘f6 and 6...♗e7, Black uses the bishop to oppose White's space gaining e4-e5 advance.

Part Four features variations in which Black plays (in either order as appropriate) ...d5xe4 and ...e6-e5 to equalize the space balance. This approach is possible against both the 3 ♘d2 and 3 ♕e2 scenarios, and so they are discussed together in Game 6 which begins

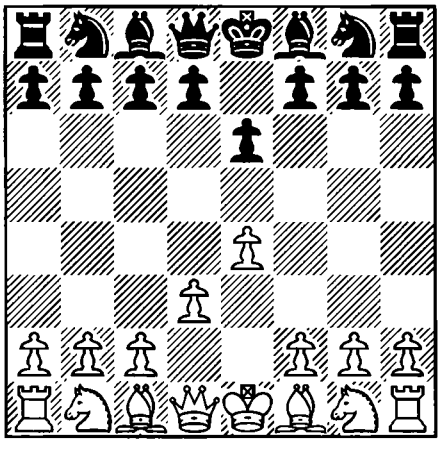
1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♕e2 ♘c6 4 ♘f3 e5 5 g3 dxe4 6 dxe4 ♘f6 7 ♗g2 ♗c5.

Finally, in Part Five we look at 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♕e2 dxe4 4 dxe4 b6 in which Black hopes to profit by harassing the white queen with ...♗a6.

Part One: The main line with 3 ♘d2

Game 1
T.Hillarp Persson-P.Vas
Oslo 2011

1 e4 e6 2 d3



Question: **is it necessary to play this quiet pawn move so early?**

Answer: We have to take measures against an attack on the e4 point at once if we wish to play the main line of the King's Indian Attack against the French move order. After 2 ♘f3 d5, for example, it's too late to revert to 3 d3 as 3...dxe4 4 dxe4 ♕xd1+ is an unwelcome exchange of queens. The only real alternative is 2 ♕e2 which is mentioned in the notes to Game 7 below.

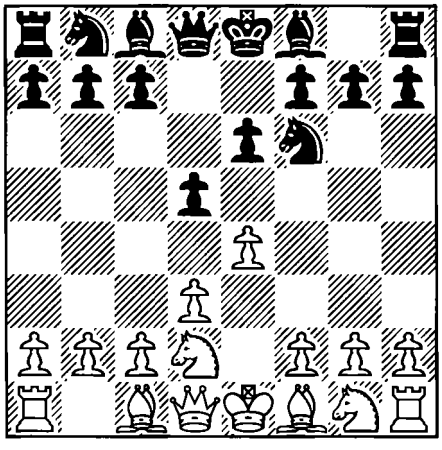
2...d5 3 ♘d2

Question: **I guess everyone plays this move? White develops a piece and avoids the queen exchange after 3...dxe4.**

Answer: Yes, 3 ♘d2 is very natural. But as a matter of fact, lots of players prefer 3 ♕e2. The knight move has the drawback that it shuts in the bishop on c1 and deprives White of cer-

tain attacking ideas that are discussed in Part Two.

3...♘f6



4 g3

Now White clears the way to develop his bishop to g2. A kingside fianchetto is the trademark of the King's Indian Attack. It is more promising than putting the bishop on e2 where it would be shut in by its own pawn on d3. As we shall see, the bishop has an important aggressive/defensive role on g2.

Question: But isn't 4 ♘gf3 more normal first?

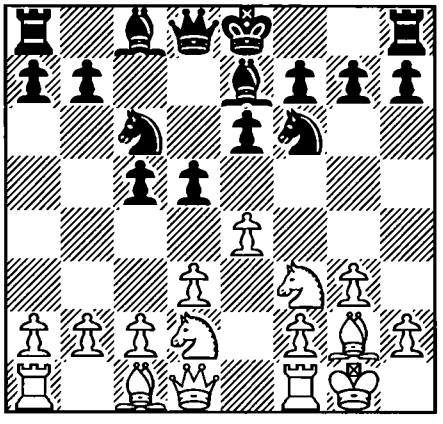
Answer: As explained in the introduction above, White is keen to avoid 4 ♘gf3 ♗c5!? when the fianchetto on g2 becomes problematical. Hence he starts with 4 g3 – a completely valid move order.

4...c5

Black gains space and increases his influence over the d4-square which White has declined to occupy with a pawn. He could instead play 4...♗c5 which is analysed in the notes to 3 ♕e2 in Game 6.

5 ♗g2 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 ♗e7 7 0-0

White now has his basic King's Indian Attack deployment, which he will adopt against various Black set-ups. It's fair to say you can't go too far wrong if you stick to these moves as White.



7...0-0

A critical moment which will define the middlegame strategy. Black has a major alternative in 7...b6 which could well lead to him castling queenside – see Game Three.

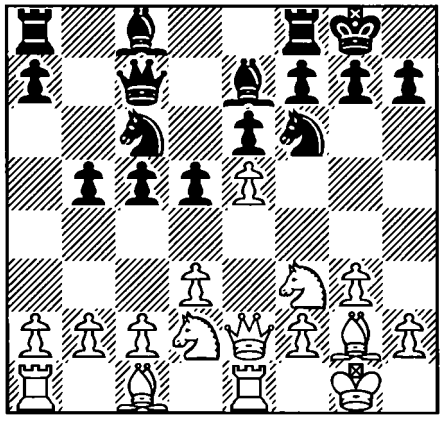
8 ♖e1

Putting the rook on e1 immediately seems slightly more flexible than 8 e5. The move order in the game was actually 1 g3 d5 2 ♗g2 ♘f6 3 ♘f3 e6 4 0-0 ♗e7 5 d3 0-0 6 ♘bd2 c5 7 e4 ♘c6 8 ♖e1.

8...♕c7

Trying to oppose the e4-e5 advance only loses time. He should have advanced his queenside pawns immediately, as occurs in Game 2.

9 ♕e2 b5 10 e5



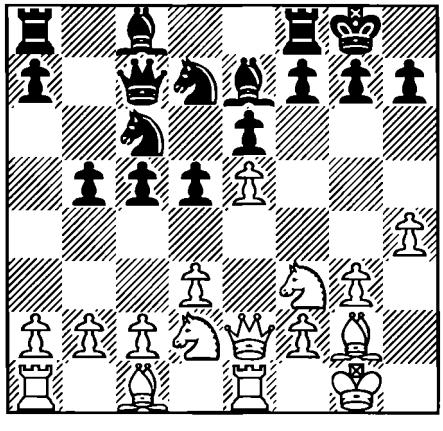
Question: What are the advantages and possible dangers for White in advancing the pawn to e5?

Answer: White's pawn is very well protected on e4, whereas it will have many enemies on e5 – after Black's reply his queen and two knights are eyeing it malevolently. The black pawns might also play a part in the demise of the e5-pawn. For example, White has to be certain that the pawn can't be dissolved in a way unfavourable to him by a future ...f7-f6, or that the knight on f3, the staunch defender of the pawn, can't be undermined by a ...g5-g4 pawn lunge.

Here Hillarp Persson has taken adequate precautions to ensure that the pawn won't get eaten on e5 by the black pieces: his queen, rook and knight on f3 are all defending it, and as we shall see, the bishop on c1 will also soon play a part in guarding it. Thanks to 11 h4 next move, and the fact that the black king is on g8, a plan to undermine the knight on f3 with ...g5-g4 would not be feasible. Nor could Black realistically hope to arrange ..f7-f6 in a way that didn't leave him with a weak pawn on e6.

So much for the safety of the pawn. Its value in advancing to e5 is that it drives the black knight away from f6, its best square, and fixes White's space advantage on the kingside. Having more space basically means that your pieces have more room to manoeuvre than the opponent's pieces, as your pawns don't get in the way so much. White is able to use the extra squares to bunch all his minor pieces together on the f-file and g-files, where they become a formidable attacking force. Once the energy of the white pieces reaches a certain level, we see another role for the e-pawn: a support for possible sacrifices on f6.

10...♘d7 11 h4



Exercise: Can you think of a couple of reasons why this is a good move?

Answer: White is planning a kingside attack. With 11 h4 he:

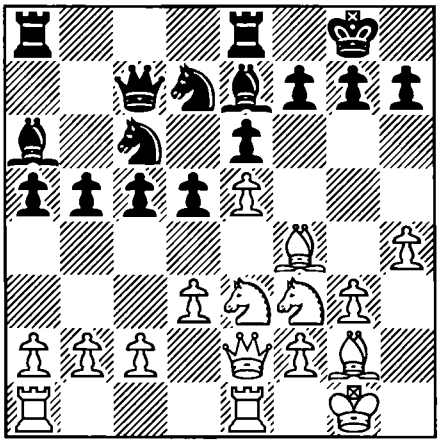
1) Clears the h2-square for the knight on d2, allowing it to join in the assault with the sequence ♘f1, ♘h2 and ♘g4.

2) Creates a base on g5 for his other knight on f3, making possible an attack with ♘g5 and ♕h5.

3) Prepares the further advance h5-h6, when ...g7-g6 leaves Black with weak dark squares around his king.

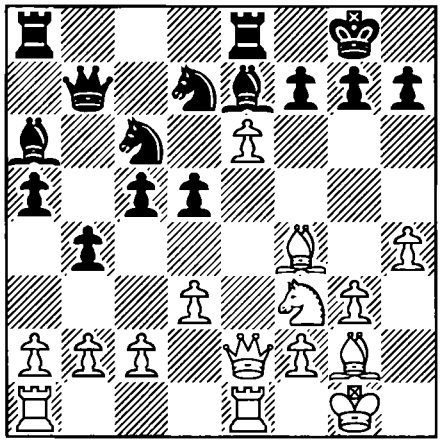
In scenarios where Black has left his king in the centre, or castled queenside, the move h2-h4 is often useful to restrain a possible ...g7-g5 flank attack by Black, especially if White has a bishop on f4 which can be hit by the advancing black pawn. You will see examples of this in Games 3 and 4. Of course, having castled with 7...0-0 in this game it is doubtful that the plan of ...g7-g5 would do anything other than wreck the black king's defences.

11...a5 12 ♘f1 ♖e8 13 ♗f4 ♗a6 14 ♘e3



Question: What happens now if Black plays 14...b4 to continue his queenside advance? And, secondly, can he capture the pawn that's hanging on e5?

Answer: On his last move White could have played 14 ♘1h2 and then 15 ♘g4, but it's better to combine the implementation of a strategic plan with a tactical threat. This is because the opponent has to lose time dealing with the threat – or even better, he might miss it. After 14 ♘e3, let's see about 14...b4: 15 ♘xd5! exd5 16 e6 (uncovering an attack on the black queen) 16...♕b7 and now we have to avoid the routine recapture on d7.



Instead, 17 exf7+! ♔xf7 18 ♕e6+ ♔f8 19 ♘g5! (threatening mate on both f7 and h7) 19...♗xg5 20 ♗d6+ and Black is obliterated whichever minor piece he interposes on e7: 20...♗e7 21 ♗xd5 and mate follows on f7 or g8, or 20...♘e7 21 ♗xd5 when the black queen is lost to the mate threat, or 20...♖e7 21 ♗xd5 ♔e8 22 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 (if 22...♘xe7 23 ♗xb7) 23 ♗xc6, threatening the queen as well as mate on e7 (or g8, due to the double pin on d7 and e7). In these variations we see the triumph of White's light-squared bishop.

We also have to consider what happens if Black grabs the pawn on e5: 14...♘dxe5 15 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16 ♘xd5! exd5 17 ♕xe5 ♕xe5 18 ♗xe5 and Black has no good way to defend the d5-pawn. If 18...♖ed8 19 ♗xg7 wins a pawn as e7 hangs, while if 18...♖ad8 19 ♗c7 ♖c8 20 ♗xa5 picks up a pawn. That leaves 18...♗b7 when 19 c4 bxc4 20 dxc4 ♖ad8 21 ♖ad1 exploits the pin on d5 to win a pawn. It's curious that in this sequence Black has the choice of losing a pawn on the queenside, in the centre or on the kingside. Such is the global nature of White's pressure.

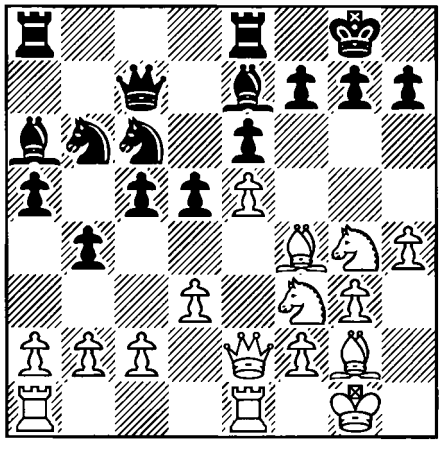
Question: Well, those variations would have taken me a lot of effort to work out during the game. I don't like leaving the e5-pawn hanging. And in any case, Black didn't fall for the traps, did he? I might have settled for the simple 14 ♘1h2.

Answer: But if you want to be a good player you can't duck calculating variations. There won't always be a safe move like 14 ♘1h2 available; you need to get into the calculating habit. And besides, Black didn't fall for either traps, but look what he played to prevent them.

14...♘b6

The black knight has been dragged over to b6 to defend d5, but now it is unavailable to defend the kingside. That means that our knight manoeuvre to g4 becomes more powerful. If we had played 14 ♘1h2 the knight could have stayed on d7 and helped defend the king with ...♘f8 in the future.

15 ♘g4 b4



Exercise: What's the way to add energy to our kingside attack?

16 ♕d2!?

Sometimes an elegant little sideways shuffle by the queen can be more effective than overtly aggressive moves. Here she takes up position on the dark-squared diagonal. On the other hand, good old fashioned aggression is still effective.

Answer: 16 ♘f6+! when if 16...gxf6? 17 exf6 ♗d6 18 ♘g5!! is decisive: for example 18...♗xf4 (or 18...♘d7 19 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 20 ♕h5 ♘f8 21 ♕xf7+ and mate next move) 19 ♕h5! when the threat of mate with 20 ♕xh7+ and 21 ♕h8 can only be stopped by 19...♗xg5 allowing 20 ♕xg5+ and 21 ♕g7 mate. So after 16 ♘f6+ Black has to make do with the highly unpleasant 16...♗xf6 17 exf6 ♕d8 18 fxg7.

These variations indicate Black should have played 15...♗f8, when 16 ♕d2! would be the best reply.

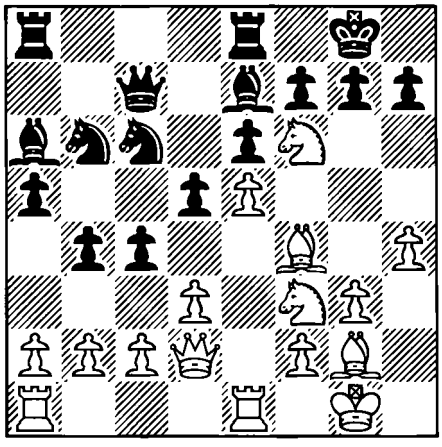
16...c4

Upon 16...♕b7, getting the queen off her unfortunate square, we see the strength of the h-pawn in ramming the black kingside: 17 h5 h6? (a remedy worse than the disease, though otherwise 18 h6 will be strong: for example, 18...g6 19 ♗g5 ♘d7 20 ♕f4 and the dark squares around the black king are shaky) 18 ♗xh6! (beginning a decisive tactical sequence) 18...gxh6 19 ♕xh6 ♘d7 20 ♘g5 ♗xg5 21 ♕xg5+ and if now 21...♔f8 22 h6 when the passed h-pawn marches through, or 21...♔h7 22 ♕h6+ ♔g8 23 ♘f6+ ♘xf6 24 exf6 with a standard mating device of queen and pawn on f6.

The best defensive move was 16...♗f8, though 17 h5 keeps up White's initiative.

17 ♘f6+!

Better late than never. Hillarp Persson continues to exploit Black's unwise queen move.



17...♗xf6

If 17...gxf6 18 exf6 attacks the black queen. Then 19 fxe7 recovers the piece with a big attack, seeing that 18...♗d6? 19 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 allows mate in two.

18 exf6 e5 19 ♗g5 ♕d6

Of course, if 19...h6 20 ♗xh6! gxh6? 21 ♕xh6 mates on g7. Material stays equal, but White has a powerful dark-squared bishop and a strong initiative on the kingside – and no wonder when Black has a queen, rook and all three minor pieces on the other side of the board.

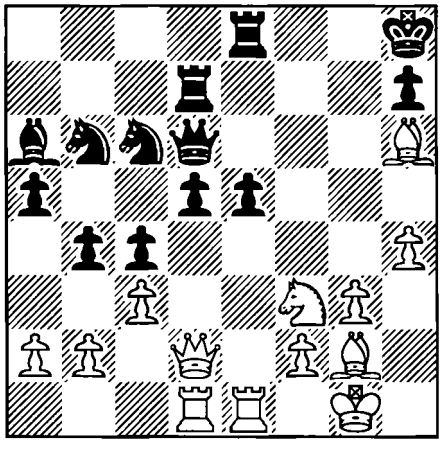
20 fxg7 ♔xg7 21 d4

Continuing the procedure of softening up Black on the dark squares.

21...f6

21...e4 22 ♗f4 then 23 ♘e5 is horrible for Black.

22 ♗h6+ ♔h8 23 dxe5 fxe5 24 c3 ♖ad8 25 ♖ad1 ♖d7



White has developed all his pieces and is now ready to exploit Black's dark-square weakness and denuded king.

26 ♗e3! bxc3 27 bxc3 ♘a4 28 ♘xe5! ♘xe5

Or 28...♖xe5 29 ♗d4. The pin on e5 is murderous because f2-f4 is looming.

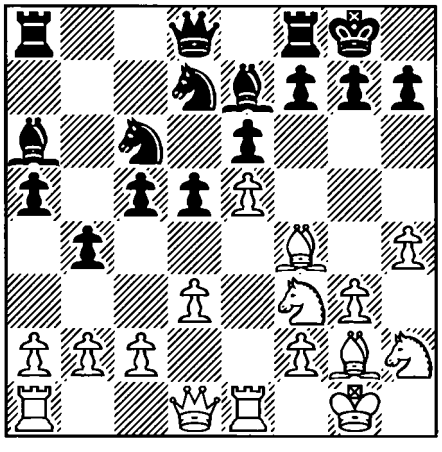
29 ♗d4 ♘c5 30 ♕g5 ♖de7 31 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 32 f4 ♘d3 33 fxe5 ♕e6 34 ♖f1 1-0

Game 2
A.Naiditsch-D.Brandenburg
German League 2012

1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 g3 c5 5 ♗g2 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 e5 ♘d7 9 ♖e1 b5

No frivolous 9...♕c7 moves. Black gets his queenside counterplay going straightaway.

10 ♘f1 a5 11 h4 b4 12 ♘1h2 ♗a6 13 ♗f4



I hope you are starting to see a pattern in White's play. His queenside minor pieces have reached the kingside and are ready to take part in a concerted attack on the black king.

Whilst objectively speaking Black might be OK, it's not much fun for him to watch his opponent lining up all his pieces against his king, with only some queenside play as compensation.

13...♖c8 14 ♗h3

Question: **What is the purpose of this move?**

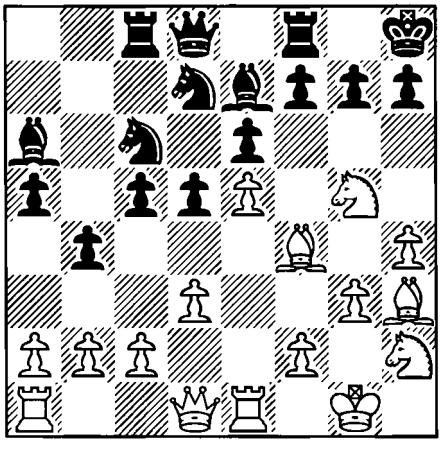
Answer: After 14 ♘g5 ♘d4 Black has nothing to fear. For example, if 15 ♕h5? h6 16 ♘g4 hxg5 17 hxg5 White might hope to strike a decisive blow with ideas of ♘f6+ or ♗e4, ♔g2 and ♖h1. But this is all a mirage as 17...g6! kills off the attack.

The general idea behind 14 ♗h3 is to put pressure on e6 and introduce the motif of

♘g5 and ♘xe6 to destroy Black's centre. Here there is also a more concrete reason for the bishop move: for example, if Black continues pushing queenside pawns with 14...a4 then 15 ♘g5 suddenly has more potency as 15...♘d4 16 c3 ♘f5? 17 ♗xf5 exf5 18 e6! fxe6 19 ♘xe6 wins the exchange.

Brandenburg therefore decides on a different defensive plan against White's attacking idea. First of all he puts his king on h8 to avoid any ♘g5, ♘xe6 and ♗xe6 idea coming with check. It is also good to rule out any sacrifice of a knight on f6 being with check.

14...♔h8 15 ♘g5



Exercise: What's the best defensive move for Black?

Answer: **15...♕e8!**

A well-known idea in this type of centre which takes advantage of a quirk in one of the rules of chess. Thus after 16 ♕h5 ♗xg5 17 hxg5 Black can play 17...f5! to gain space and challenge the white queen. The point is that White can only capture en passant straight-away with 18 exf6, which would normally be great for him as the black centre collapses, but here 18...♕xh5 pockets the queen. But if White plays 18 ♕xe8 first, he can't take with 19 exf6 on the next move, the chance for an en passant capture having lapsed.

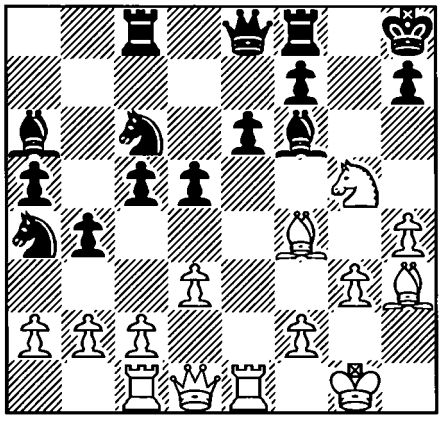
16 ♖c1 ♘b6 17 ♘g4 ♘a4?

Too optimistic. The knight should have defended his king with 17...♘d7 rather than gone off hunting the b-pawn.

18 ♖b1

Missing his chance.

Exercise: After 18 ♘f6!! gxf6 19 exf6 ♗xf6 can you see how White clinches the win?

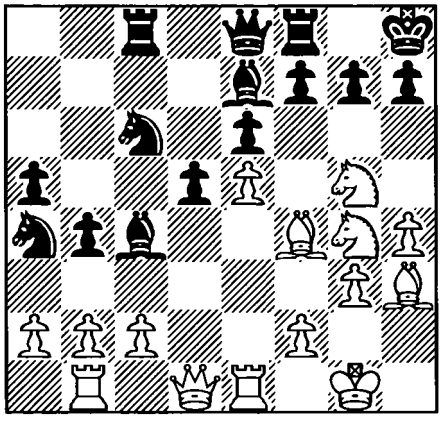


Answer: Continuing the combination, White could win with 20 ♕h5 ♗xg5 21 ♗f5!! (the point; the threat of mate costs Black the queen) 21...exf5 22 ♗xg5! ♕e6 (if 22...♕d7 23 ♗f6+ and mate next move) 23 ♖xe6 fxe6 24 ♖e1. Materially speaking Black has more than enough for the queen, but the weak dark squares around his king can be exploited by the white queen and bishop: for example, 24...♘d4 25 ♕h6 ♖ce8 26 ♗f6+ ♖xf6 27 ♕xf6+ ♔g8 28 h5.

Going back to move 18, also inadequate for Black is 18...♗xf6 19 exf6 gxf6 20 ♕h5 fxg5 21 ♗f5 exf5 22 ♖xe8 ♖cxe8 23 ♗d6 ♖g8 (if 23...♘e7 24 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 25 ♕h6 attacks a6 and f8, and has ideas of 26 ♕f6+ winning the rook on e7) 24 ♕xf7 ♘d4 25 ♕f6+ ♖g7 26 ♗f8 and White wins.

Of course, it would have been extraordinarily difficult to have seen this combination. Even if White had spotted the tactic 21 ♗f5!! he would have had to convince himself that Black was in trouble despite having a rook and two minor pieces for the queen.

18...c4 19 dxc4 ♗xc4



20 ♘e3

Here was the last chance for 20 ♘f6! which is similar to 18 ♘f6. The rest of the game isn't so interesting. White gains the initiative thanks to his bishop-pair, but Black holds on for a draw in the endgame. The remaining moves were:

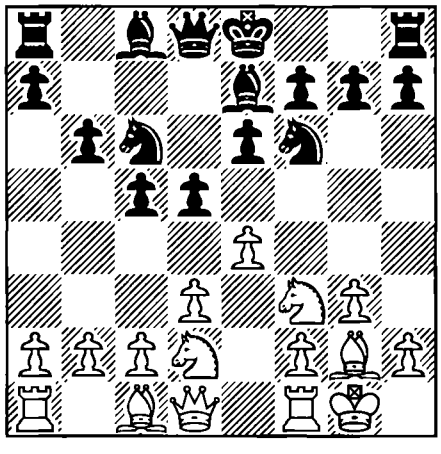
20...♘c5 21 ♘xc4 dxc4 22 ♕h5 ♗xg5 23 ♗xg5 ♘d4 24 ♕d1 ♕d7 25 c3 ♘c6 26 ♕d6 ♕xd6 27 exd6 h6 28 cxb4 axb4 29 ♗e3 ♘d3 30 ♖ed1 ♖fd8 31 b3 ♖xd6 32 bxc4 ♘ce5 33 c5 ♖d7 34 ♗f1 ♘xc5 35 ♖dc1 ♖dc7 36 ♖xb4 ♘ed3 37 ♗xd3 ♘xd3 38 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 39 ♖b8+ ♔h7 40 a4 ♖c4 41 ♖b3 ♘b4 42 a5 ♘c2 43 ♗d2 ♖a4 44 ♔g2 ♖a2 45 ♖b7 ♔g8 46 ♖a7 ♘d4 47 ♗c3 ♘b5 48 ♖a8+ ♔h7 49 ♗e1 ♔g6 50 g4 h5 51 ♖b8 ♘d4 52 ♗c3 e5 53 g5 f6 54 gxf6 gxf6 55 ♗xd4 ½-½

Game 3
M.Chigaev-L.Rindlisbacher
Al-Ain 2013

1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 g3 c5

At the end of this game we'll return to this moment and look at 4...b6 (it's similar to the game, and I don't want to give away the answers to some of the questions that follow).

5 ♗g2 ♘c6 6 ♘gf3 ♗e7 7 0-0 b6



The move order in the game was 1 ♘f3 c5 2 e4 e6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 g3 d5 5 ♘bd2 ♘f6 6 ♗g2 ♗e7 7 0-0 b6. In contrast to the games above, Black neither commits himself to castling kingside nor gets his queenside pawns rolling.

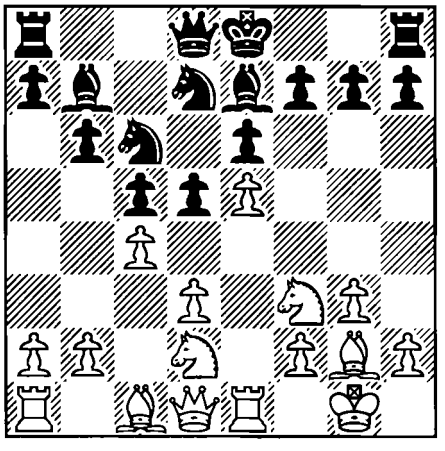
Exercise: Can you see the idea behind pushing the pawn to b6?

8 ♖e1

The most flexible move. White keeps his opponent guessing for one more move about his intentions with the e-pawn.

Answer: With 7...b6 Black cleared the way to develop his bishop and kept his queenside pawns in a compact mass as he is planning to castle queenside. He reasons that White's build-up is designed for an assault on the kingside, so by whisking the king off to c8 he will be denying White the main object of his attack. He also hopes that he might obtain counterattacking chances against the white king.

8...♗b7 9 e5 ♘d7 10 c4!?

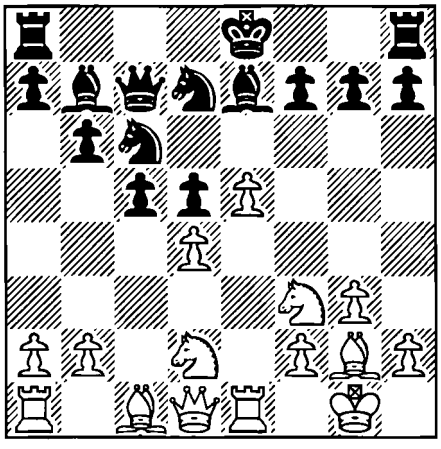


Question: Can you suggest some of the ideas behind this move?

Answer: White could continue his build-up in support of the e5 strong point in the style of the previous games with 10 ♘f1, but it looks slow. For example, after 10...♕c7 11 ♗f4 h6 12 h4 0-0-0 Black has a solid game and the chance to prepare ...g7-g5 to loosen the white kingside. With the game move Chigaev seeks immediate action in the centre.

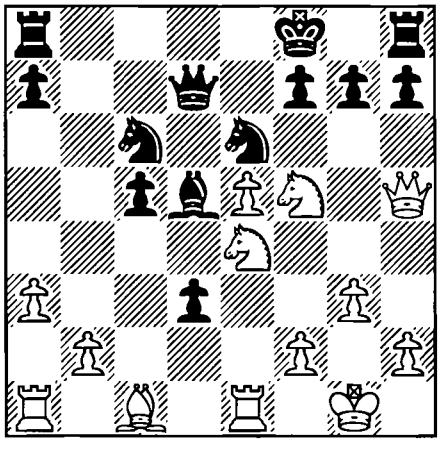
If Black replies 10...dxc4 then after 11 ♘xc4 the plan of castling queenside is much less attractive as the white knight is eyeing the hole on d6. In fact White already has tactical ideas of 12 ♗g5 so that if 12...♗xg5 13 ♘d6+. Besides, a further opening of lines on the queenside might be possible with d3-d4. So play might continue 11...0-0 when White can adopt his usual kingside deployment with moves like 12 h4 and 13 ♗f4.

If Black plays 10...♕c7 then 11 cxd5 exd5 12 d4! more or less knocks the idea of castling queenside on the head.



If 12...cxd4?! 13 ♘b3 it would be very risky for Black to grab the pawn on e5 as White has ♗f4 with a huge initiative (just ask the king on e8 what it thinks of the opening of lines in front of him). So White would regain the pawn on d4 with a good game.

After other 12th moves White has a good game due to the strong pawn on e5. I can't resist showing you the game A.Adly-V.Laznicka, Yerevan 2007, if only for its lovely finish: 12...♘f8 13 ♘f1 ♘e6 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 ♘e3 d4 16 ♘d5 (the white knights run rings around the enemy pieces) 16...♕d7 17 ♘d2 ♘b4 18 ♘xe7 ♗xg2 (bad for Black is 18...♕xe7 19 ♘e4) 19 ♘f5 ♗d5 20 ♘e4 ♔f8 21 a3 ♘c6 22 ♕h5 (Adly suggests 22 ♘xg7!? as an interesting sacrifice: for example, 22...♘xg7 23 ♘f6 ♕e6 24 ♗h6 with an unpleasant pin on g7) 22...d3 (Black missed his chance to escape with 22...♗xe4 23 ♖xe4 g6 24 ♕h6+ ♔g8).



Now comes a brilliant attack: 23 ♘f6! gxf6 24 ♕h6+ ♔g8 (ghastly for Black is 24...♔e8 25 ♕xf6 ♖g8 26 ♘d6+ ♔f8 27 ♗h6+) 25 exf6 ♖e8 26 ♗f4! (the bishop heads for d6 to cut off the black king's escape square on f8) 26...♖c8 27 ♗d6 ♘cd4 28 ♕g7+!! and it's mate

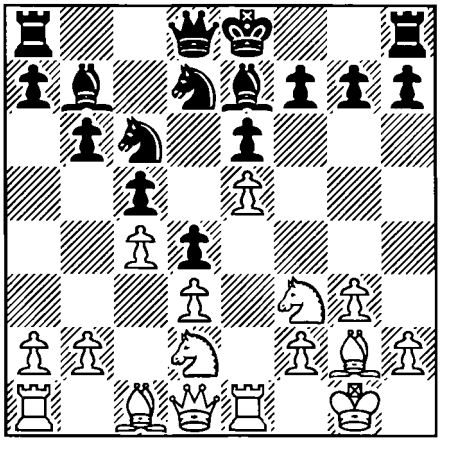
next move on h6.

Finally, Black could try 10...♘b4 to attack the undefended pawn on d3. After 11 cxd5?! ♘xd3? 12 ♖e3! (a real computer move; in the good, old days Alekhine would take one look at the position and conclude that after 12 d6 White has good compensation for the exchange after 12...♘xe1 13 ♕xe1 ♗f8, but a program tells us that 12...♗g5! unexpectedly holds on) 12...♘xc1 13 d6 (only now) 13...♗f8 14 ♖xc1 with very good chances for White. However, back at the beginning Black could avoid all this with 11...♘xd5. Then 12 ♘c4 puts the white knight on a good post, but what has Black done to deserve having his own horse on the fine d5-square?

So, I think the quiet 11 ♘f1 should be preferred, leaving the knight looking a bit silly on b4, as an attempt to invade with 11...dxc4 12 dxc4 ♘b8 13 ♗d2 ♘d3 ends in fiasco after 14 ♖e3 ♘xb2 15 ♕b3 when the knight is trapped.

Exercise: In the game Black pushed the pawn to d4, which is the obvious reply as it keeps the centre closed. But why is the white knight on d2 delighted?

10...d4



Answer: In contrast to the lines of the first two games in which the knight was sent on a convoluted manoeuvre via f1 and h2 or e3 to g4, here it already has an excellent centre post on e4 in its sights. Of course, White has to make sure its occupation of e4 is compatible with the safety of the e5-pawn, but as we shall see, Chigaev will soon solve that problem.

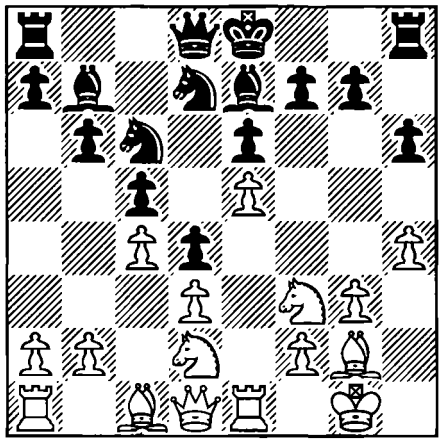
Question: Does White now have a useful move?

11 h4!

Answer: At first glance it might look somewhat odd to play this pawn advance when there

is no black king on g8 to attack. However, it is a more of a preventive move than an aggressive thrust. Now that the centre is blocked, if allowed Black might have essayed 11...g5, a positionally well-motivated sally as it threatens 12...g4, embarrassing the knight which is the defender of the key e5 point. White therefore puts the g5-square under lock and key, as 11...g5?! would now be feeble after 12 hxg5, removing the battering ram.

11...h6



Exercise: Black renews the threat of 12...g5. How should White respond and what is the reasoning behind the move?

12 h5!

With the white pawn on h4 Black would in some scenarios be prepared to play ...g7-g5 to open lines against the white king even if he lost a pawn in the process (of course, Black would call it 'a sacrifice' not losing a pawn). However, if 12...g6 now then after 13 hxg6 fxg6 there would be no open g-file or h-file for the black rooks and the pawn on e6 would be sickly. If White attacked it with ♗h3 the response ...♘f8 would interfere with the coordination of the black pieces. Black doesn't want to weaken his centre in this fashion.

The only way for Black to revive the idea of the pawn thrust is to play ...0-0-0, ...♖dg8 and then ...g7-g6, so that h5xg6 could be answered by ...♖xg6 (note that if Black played ...g7-g5, rather than ...g7-g6, White would probably leave the pawn on h5 and try to get in the blockading move ♘g4).

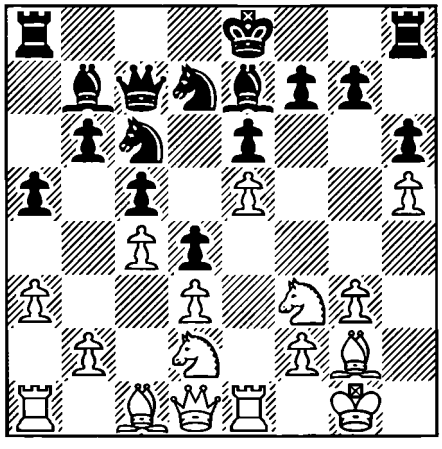
Another feature in White's favour about the h5 and ...h6 pawn configuration is that it makes it less appealing for Black to change his mind and castle kingside. With the black king on g8, White could revert to the manoeuvre ♘f1, ♘h2 and ♘g4 when options to sacrifice on h6 would appear. Black therefore has fewer strategic options after 11...h6 and 12 h5.

12...♕c7 13 a3

White always has to make full use of his wing pawns in the King's Indian Attack. He is anticipating a future ...0-0-0 by Black and so limbering up for a b2-b4 pawn stab.

13...a5

Judging from his vigorous play in the rest of the game, it is likely Maksim Chigaev would have sacrificed a pawn to open lines straightaway after 13...0-0-0 with 14 b4!?.



14 b3

Question: **What's this? You've just told me White is an aggressive player and now he plays this passive move.**

Answer: You can't play chess well unless you can combine energy with patience. Don't forget that Black hasn't castled queenside yet, and if permitted could have clamped down on White's queenside pawns with 14...a4! in the same way that White has stopped Black's kingside advance with h4-h5. Then any attempt to break open lines with b2-b4 could have been neutralized with ...a4xb3 en passant, depriving White of the b-pawn battering ram.

In contrast, after 14 b3, White could answer 14...a4? with 15 b4!, keeping his pawns alive as there is no en passant capture.

14...0-0-0

At last Rindlisbacher commits his king to the queenside.

15 ♘e4 f5

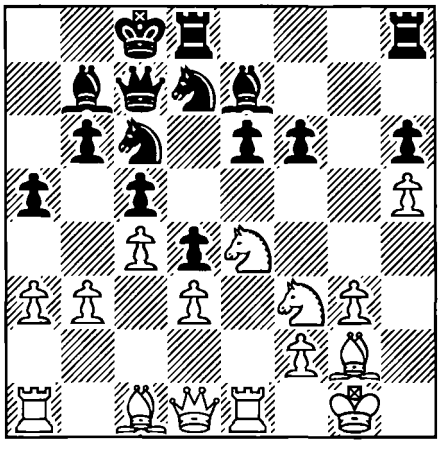
Black decides to get rid of the knight from e4 as quickly as possible. He must have feared ideas such as 16 ♗f4 and a well-timed ♘d6+, perhaps in conjunction with a b3-b4 breakthrough.

White would get strong pressure on the light squares after 15...♘dxe5 16 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 17 ♗f4 f6 18 ♗h3! (this move is often a star in the KIA) 18...♕d7 19 ♗xe5 fxe5 20 ♕g4, etc. In this sequence the computer suggests an interesting queen sacrifice after 16...♕xe5 (instead of 16...♘xe5) 17 ♘c3!? ♕f6 (after 17...♕f5 18 ♘b5 both the black king and queen are

awkwardly placed) 17...♕xe1+ 18 ♕xe1 dxc3 19 ♗f4 ♖xd3 with unclear play.

In reality, Black would have to be a top player to have any chance of finding the queen sacrifice. The move 16...♕xe5 looks incredibly risky and White has other ideas like 17 ♗f4 to dissuade Black from chancing it.

16 exf6 gxf6



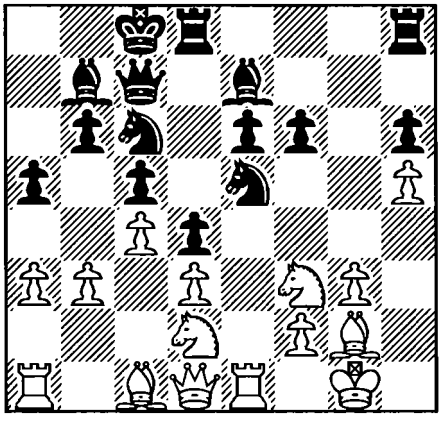
Question: How should White handle the changed centre structure? What's the best move?

Answer: **17 ♘ed2!**

A fine retreat. If Black responds with 17...e5 then his pawns have no way to expand any further as the light squares e4 and f5 would be in White's hands after 18 ♘h4 or 18 ♗h3. As Nimzowitsch has taught us, a pawn structure that has no capacity to expand becomes a target, with the squares it cannot expand to (here e4 and f5) becoming especially strong posts for the enemy pieces. Any strong player would fight his utmost to avoid having to play 17...e5 in this position. Hence Rindlisbacher decides to retreat his own knight to f8.

17...♘f8

Question: Would Black have better luck with 17...♘de5 playing more dynamically?



Answer: The problem is that after 17...♘de5 White can snuffle out Black's activity when the fragility of his centre tells after 18 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 19 ♘f3 (White is happy to swap off pieces if it exposes e6 and f6 to attack) 19...♗d6 20 ♘xe5 and now 20...fxe5 21 ♕g4 leaves the black centre horribly inert, whilst after 20...♗xe5 21 ♕g4! (tying down a rook to the defence of e6) 21...♖de8 22 b4 (opening a second front to undermine the black queenside pawns) 22...♖hg8 23 ♗xb7+ ♕xb7 24 ♕e4 ♕xe4 25 ♖xe4 the endgame is very awkward for Black due to his vulnerable pawns.

18 b4!?

With the black knight passive on f8, Chigaev decides that this clearance pawn sacrifice is justified from a strategical perspective.

18...cxb4 19 axb4 ♗xb4 20 ♗a3 ♗c3 21 ♖b1 ♘b4 22 ♗xb4

White removes the obstacles that stand in the way of his rooks breaking through on the queenside.

22...♗xb4 23 ♖e2 e5

Black decides he needs to free his knight from defensive duty to help his king, but handing over the light squares is too great a price. He should have tried to bring his passive rook on h8 into the fray with 23...♖h7.

24 c5!?

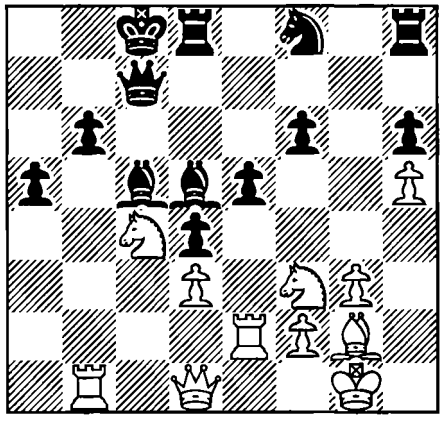
Played with the enterprise of youth. Being old and tired I would probably play 24 ♘e4 and then 25 ♘h4 and 26 ♘f5 if possible to take the light squares, but the 17-year-old Chigaev quite naturally wants to checkmate his opponent as soon as possible, and does so splendidly.

24...♗xc5

After 24...bxc5 one method of attack is 25 ♘e4 intending 26 ♘h4, 27 ♖c2 and 28 ♖xb4.

25 ♘c4 ♗d5?

It is human nature to collapse in the face of a big attack. A computer might defend successfully after 25...♘d7, but 26 ♖c2 and 27 ♕c1, limbering up for a 28 ♘xb6 sacrifice, would be scary.

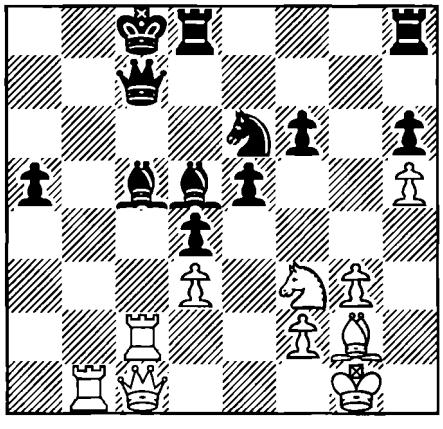


Question: After the game move it's White to play and win, but how?

Answer: **26 ♘xb6+! ♗xb6 27 ♖c2**

The pin on the c-file will soon be decisive.

27...♗c5 28 ♕c1 ♘e6



Question: How does White add power to his attack?

Answer: **29 ♗h3!**

A startling entrance by the KIA bishop. The pin on e6 ensures that c5 falls.

29...♔d7 30 ♖xc5 ♕d6 31 ♘h4!

Every white piece joins in the attack. The knight threatens to go to f5 when the black queen is driven away from the defence of d5.

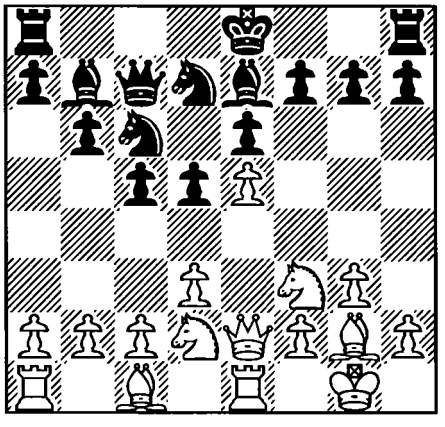
31...♖c8 32 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 33 ♕xh6

Black is suddenly enveloped by an attack on both wings.

33...♕f8 34 ♕h7+ ♕e7 35 ♗xe6+ 1-0

There is no good way to recapture. The queen is lost after 35...♗xe6 36 ♖b7+ ♖c7 37 ♖xc7+, while 35...♔xe6 36 ♕f5+ and 37 ♕xc8 costs Black a rook. A very impressive blend of attacking and strategic play by White.

Black can fianchetto early with 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 g3 b6 5 ♗g2 ♗b7. Now after 6 ♕e2 if Black enters the main line with 6...c5 7 ♘gf3 ♗e7 8 0-0 ♘c6 9 ♖e1 ♕c7 10 e5 ♘d7...



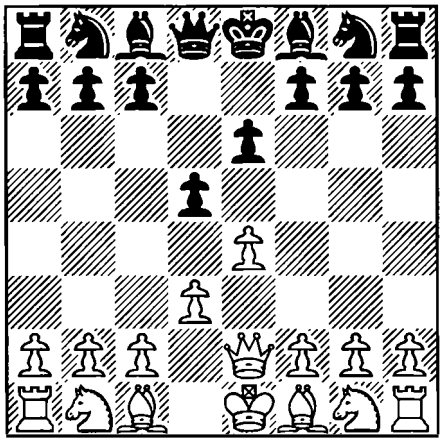
...White can't play the system with ♕e2 and ♘a3 as seen in Game 4 because the knight is already on d2. Nor can we play the ♖e1 system that avoids ♕e2 as in the present because our queen is already sitting on e2.

Fortunately we still have a string in our bow: 11 c4!?. The difference with the present game is that White already has his queen on e2, and Black the queen on c7, so we are playing the pawn thrust one move latter than Chigaev's 10 c4. It is still potent. For example, S.Brunello-V.Sarandos, Greek Team Championship 2013, went 11...d4 and now 12 h4 worked out fine for White, but I still like the look of 12 ♘e4!?. Taking the pawn on e5 still looks very risky, but if it isn't captured White can play ♗f4 with ideas of ♘d6+ or simply h4-h5 as in the present game.

Part Two: Main line with 3 ♕e2

Game 4
V.Bologan-P.Kotsur
Moscow 2011

1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♕e2



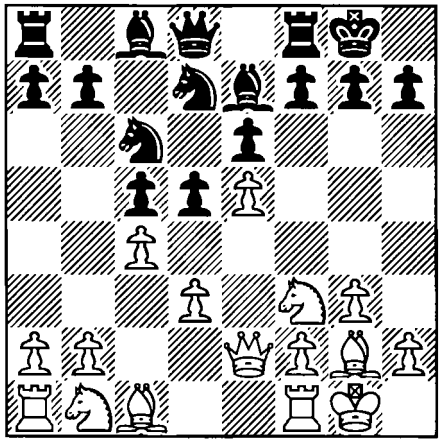
3...♘f6

Here play develops as in Game 3 above, but with White having played ♕e2 rather than ♘bd2. As we shall see, tarrying with the knight on b1 gives White a potent extra attacking resource if he chooses to avoid the c2-c4 strike on Black's centre.

It is rather unappealing for Black to fianchetto on g7 when White hasn't committed his knight to d2. Firstly, this is because it is slightly awkward to arrange when White has the option of e4xd5 and, secondly, because White's dark-squared bishop has open access to the c1-h6 diagonal where it is worryingly near the dark square holes created by g7-g6. For example, 3...c5 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 g3 ♘ge7 6 ♗g2 g6 7 0-0 ♗g7 8 c3 0-0 (after 8...b6 9 e5 ♕c7 10 ♖e1 h6 11 h4 play is similar to the game Navara-Zilka in Chapter Two) 9 e5 b6 10 ♗f4 and White can build up his attack with moves like ♘bd2, h2-h4, ♖fe1 etc.

4 ♘f3 ♗e7 5 g3 c5 6 ♗g2 ♘c6 7 0-0 b6

Instead, Black could castle kingside, hoping to prove that White's 3 ♕e2 move is slower than 3 ♘d2 when it comes to the type of build-up we saw in Games 1 and 2 above. However, 7...0-0 8 e5 ♘d7 9 c4! is a strong reply.



The attack on d5 comes at an awkward time for Black who has a bishop shut in on c8 and a knight blocking the queen's defence of the pawn. White wants to win control of the e4-square for his knight and, by strengthening the c4 point with b2-b3 if necessary, block any attempt by Black at queenside counterplay. Meanwhile White can play his standard moves to overprotect e5 and gain space on the kingside with h2-h4, etc. Here are some variations that show the difficulties Black faces:

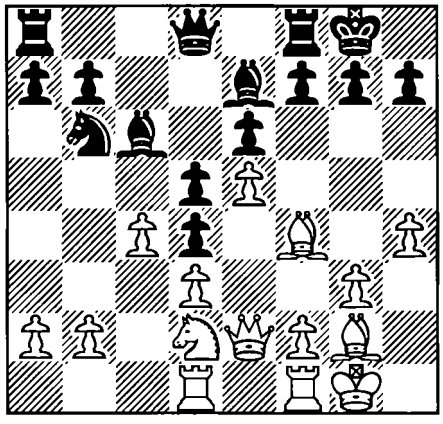
a) If he decides to develop his bishop with 9...b6 then 10 ♘c3 d4 11 ♘e4 builds up White's kingside attack, as 11...♘dxe5? fails to 12 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘d2!, winning a piece.

b) Opening the centre is no more promising: for example, 9...dxc4 10 dxc4 ♕c7 11 ♗f4 ♖d8 12 ♘c3 when it is White's pieces who will benefit most from the d-file.

c) 9...d4 blocks the centre. After 10 h4 h6 11 ♖e1 a6 12 b3 ♖b8 White is solid on the queenside, and so can focus on his typical knight manoeuvre as seen in Games 1 and 2: for example, 13 ♘bd2 ♕c7 14 ♘f1 ♖e8 15 ♘1h2 ♗f8 16 h5 b5 17 ♘g4 with a typical white initiative on the kingside in A.Fedorov-G.Ajrapetian, Voronezh 2008.

d) Black could try 9...b5!? which is a valiant attempt to obtain counterplay à la the Benko Gambit, but White can build up on the kingside after 10 cxb5 ♘a5 11 ♘c3 a6 12 bxa6 ♗xa6 12 ♗f4, as in M.Paragua-W.Medina, Jakarta 2012.

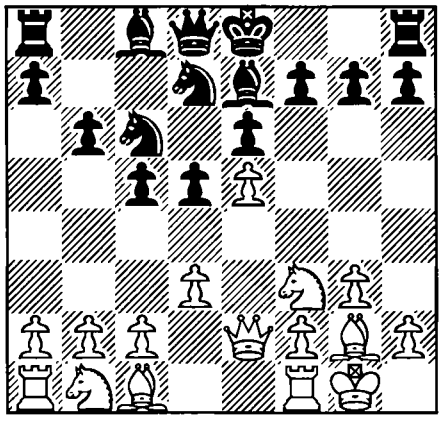
e) Finally, here is how a great chess genius crushed Black after he defended d5 with 9...♘b6 in D.Bronstein-R.Dzindzichashvili, Baku 1972: 10 ♗f4 ♗d7 11 h4 ♘d4 (Black is impatient for counterplay, but merely ends up giving himself a weak pawn on d4) 12 ♘xd4 cxd4 13 ♘d2 ♗c6 14 ♖ad1 and already the white pieces are closing in on the d4-pawn.



Play continued 14...♘a4? (he had to play 14...♕c7, though 15 ♘f3 ♗c5 16 b4!? ♗xb4 17 ♘xd4 would at least give White the initiative in the centre and the chance to seize the bishop-pair with ♘xc6) 15 ♘b3 dxc4 (Black is left with ugly doubled pawns after 15...♕b6 16 cxd5 ♗xd5 17 ♗xd5 exd5, but that was the lesser evil as the d4-pawn is now doomed) 16 dxc4 ♗c5 17 ♗xc6 bxc6 18 ♘xc5 ♘xc5 19 ♗e3! (forcing the pawn to d3 when the knight on c5 is left hanging) 20 ♕g4 (threatening both 21 ♗xc6 and 21 ♗h6) ♕e7?! 21 ♗g5 1-0. After 21...♕d7 22 ♗f6 g6 23 ♕g5 Black is soon mated.

We can now return to Kotsur's 7...b6:

8 e5 ♘d7



9 h4

A restraining move we have already seen in the games above.

Question: Is the pawn strike 9 c4 a reasonable idea here, in the style of 10 c4!? in Game 3?

Answer: Yes it is and you might choose to give it a go. Victor Bologan himself has also tried 9 c4!? when play went 9...d4 10 h4 h6 11 h5 ♕c7 12 ♗f4 ♗b7 13 ♘bd2 0-0-0 14 ♖fe1 ♖dg8 15 ♘e4 (all familiar moves by White) 15...g5 16 hxg6 ♖xg6 (note how Black prepared the ...g7-g5 advance with ...♖dg8 so that he could capture back on g6 with his rook) 17 a3 h5 18 b4 with a hard fight in which White triumphed in V.Bologan-D.Dvirnyy, Gibraltar 2012.

9...♗b7 10 c3

Besides guarding the d4-square, this move has another important function that becomes apparent at move 12.

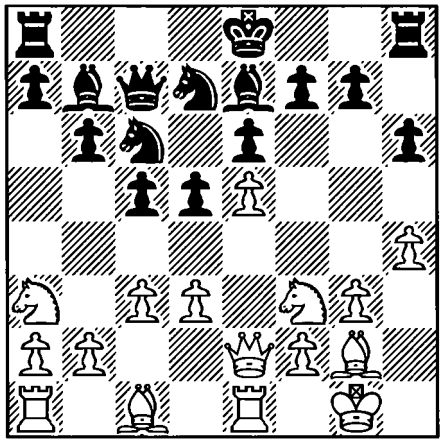
10...♕c7

Removing the queen from the back rank with gain of time by attacking e5. This normally indicates Black is planning to castle queenside.

11 ♖e1 h6

Black could castle kingside, when White could play 12 ♗f4 and 13 ♘d2 then 14 ♘df1, with our standard 3 ♘d2-style build-up on the kingside. Instead he reveals that he is considering a counterattack with ...g7-g5, which is more evidence he is going to castle long. And so, quick as a flash, Bologan replies:

12 ♘a3!



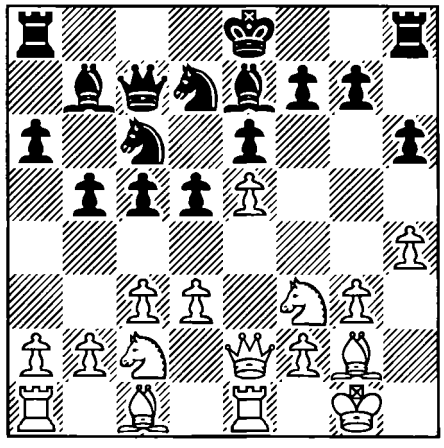
Here we see the value of 3 ♕e2 if Black adopts the aggressive plan of castling on opposite wings. White hasn't rushed to play ♗f4: he doesn't want the bishop to become a target for a counterattack with ...g7-g5. Not that White is necessarily scared of this pawn advance. He keeps the bishop observing the g5-square from a distance, meaning that if appropriate he can lop the pawn off it goes to g5.

Compared to 3 ♘d2, where the white knight ends up on f1, here the horse is still in touch with the queenside. It goes to a3, forcing Black to think about the danger from the ♘b5 thrust. The knight can also drop back from a3 to c2 (hence the value of 10 c3), and support a pawn advance with b2-b4 which will endanger the black king once he has castled queenside.

12...a6

Ruling out 13 ♘b5, but now the black king's future residence is a little more shaky. However, it was a bit late to turn back, as after 12...0-0 while the knight may have been somewhat wrong-footed in going to a3, the weakness created by 11...h6 is troubling for Black. You could imagine 13 ♗f4 being followed by the manoeuvre ♘c2, ♘e3 and ♘g4. White would have to ensure that Black couldn't respond ...♘xe5 in a favourable way when the white knight reached e3, but this shouldn't be at all difficult because the black knight would be pinned on e5 against his queen.

13 ♘c2 b5



Exercise: How do we make the kingside a bit more inhospitable for the black king and make the ...g7-g5 advance harder to arrange?

Answer: **14 h5!**

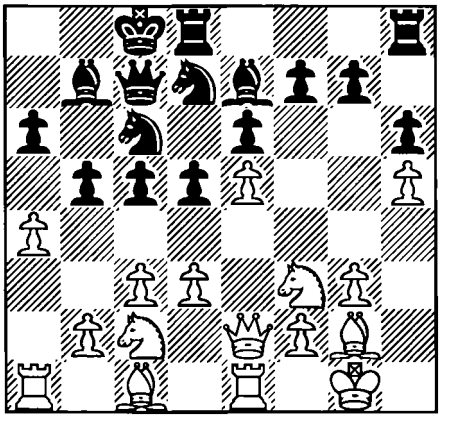
We have already seen this idea in Game 3. If Black ever plays ...g7-g5 now then after h5xg6 and the recapture ...f7xg6 he won't get to open the g-file or h-file, and the e6-pawn is left severely weak.

Question: How might White pursue his attack on the black king after 14...0-0?

Answer: Black is between a rock and a hard place (or Scylla and Charybdis as they say in old chess books). If he castles kingside then White can quickly feed pieces over to the attack: for example, 15 ♗f4 a5 16 ♘e3!, which is even better than 16 ♘h2 and 17 ♘g4. Why shouldn't the queen's knight be allowed to join in the fun as well? Besides in some cases the sacrifice ♘xd5, to answer ...exd5 with e5-e6 and a discovered attack on the black queen, might be on. White will be able to play 17 ♘g4 next move when sacrifices on h6 or even with ♘f6+ will be in the air.

By the way, don't believe the assessment of a computer program in positions of this kind. It might tell you that Black is doing fine, but a human player is more than likely to crumble when he sees his kingside denuded of defenders and sacrifices looming on h6. Note too that if Black tries to grab the e5-pawn with 16...♘dxe5, he loses a piece after 17 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 18 d4.

14...0-0-0 15 a4

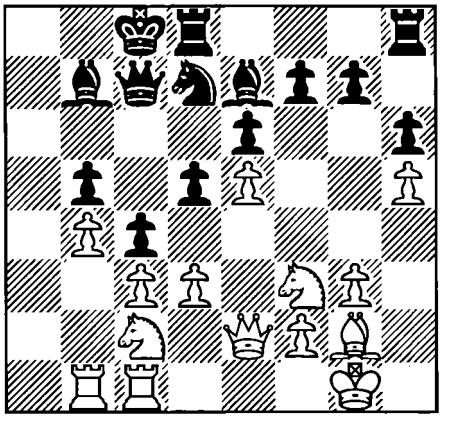


Notice how White uses his h-pawn and then his a-pawn to cause trouble for the black king. In the King's Indian Attack the centre is often blocked or static for a long time. Therefore you need to have complete mastery over the wing pawns, whether it's supporting the advance of the b-pawn with a2-a3, denying the black knight or bishop the g4-square with h2-h3, or advancing the pawns aggressively as here.

15...♘a5

Black tries to defend by forming a barricade on the light squares.

16 axb5 axb5 17 b4 ♘b3 18 ♖b1 ♘xc1 19 ♖exc1 c4



Exercise: What is the best strategy for White? a) Play 20 d4 to block the centre so that Black doesn't get play with ...c4xd3, and then attack with the rooks down the a-file. b) 20 dxc4 so that after 20...dxc4 21 ♖a1 the g2-bishop will have a say in the attack. c) 20 ♘cd4 at once, taking up the centre post and attacking b5.

Answer: **20 ♘cd4!**

White's knight takes up a beautiful central post from which it can never be dislodged by an enemy pawn. Instead 20 d4? would be a fundamental mistake. Black wouldn't achieve any counterplay with ...c4xd3, rather it would just lead to a faster collapse of his queenside, so blocking the centre is unnecessary. White wants to keep the d4-square open for his knights and also the g1-a7 diagonal for a possible infiltration by his queen.

Instead, 20 dxc4 dxc4 would open the h1-a8 diagonal and so bring the bishop on g2 into the attack, which would be to White's benefit if his rooks break through to the a7-square. However, Black can avoid all this with the recapture 20...bxc4!. White is still probably winning, but it has eased Black's defensive task a little bit that he no longer has to worry about the defence of the b5-pawn – see White's 22nd move below.

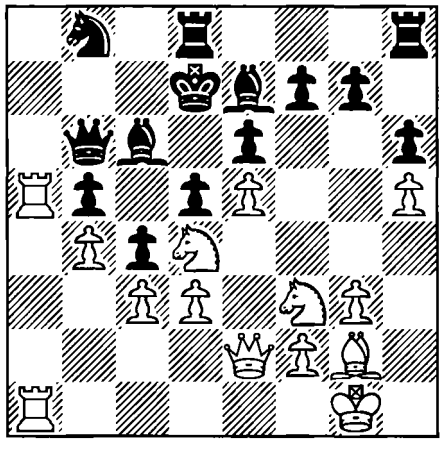
20...♕b6 21 ♖a1

Assuming control of the only open file on the board.

21...♘b8 22 ♖a5

And now White gains time to double rooks by attacking the b5-pawn.

22...♗c6 23 ♖ca1 ♔d7



Exercise: In his classic book *Think Like a Grandmaster*, Kotov talks about 'creeping moves' that seem to change the position imperceptibly, but have a big impact on a player's chances. Can you see a 'creeping' move for White here?

Answer: **24 ♕e3!**

Bologan increases his control of the dark squares. The opposition of queens along the g1-a7 diagonal is very unpleasant for Black. Already he must watch out for tricks such as 25 ♖a7+ ♔e8? (he has to block on d7) 26 ♖xe7+! ♔xe7 27 ♘f5+, winning the queen by discovered attack.

24...♔e8 25 ♘e1!

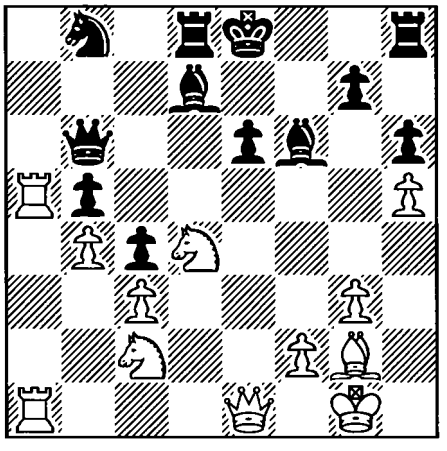
White intends to manoeuvre this knight to a3 and then win the b5-pawn with ♘axb5. He would then win a pawn whilst not giving his opponent the ghost of counterplay.

25...♗d7 26 ♘ec2 f6

Rather than await his fate passively, Black makes a bid for counterplay in the centre. With his position in such a weakened state, it's no wonder that it speeds up his destruction.

27 dxc4 fxe5 28 ♕xe5 ♗f6 29 ♕e1 dxc4

After 29...bxc4 the d-pawn drops to 30 ♗xd5.



Question: How does White breakthrough?

Answer: **30 ♖a7**

With the h1-a8 diagonal cleared, White's bishop is able to support an invasion by a white rook on b7. This quickly leads to the collapse of Black's resistance on the queenside as the b5-pawn becomes indefensible.

30...♔f7 31 ♖b7 ♕d6 32 ♘xb5 ♕e5 33 ♘e3

The c4-pawn is next in line for the chop.

33...♖hf8 34 ♘xc4 ♕xh5 35 ♘bd6+ ♔g8

It's been quite an adventure for the black king, who finally arrives at a square he could have gone to on move five.

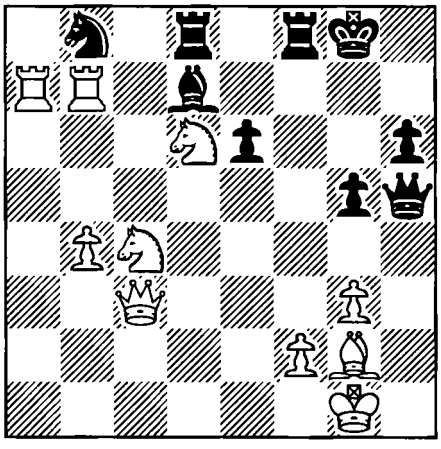
36 ♖a5

The rook stops off on its journey to a7 to persuade Black to weaken his kingside.

36...g5 37 ♖aa7

White has achieved the famous advantage of doubled rooks on the seventh rank. Two pawns down and with his position in ruins, Kotsur tries one last tactical shot in time pressure.

37...♗xc3!? 38 ♕xc3 ♕d1+ 39 ♔h2 ♕h5+ 40 ♔g1



Question: Is there going to be a draw after all?

Answer: No, Bologan repeats moves to make the time control on move 40.

40...♕d1+ 41 ♗f1 ♖xf2 42 ♘e3

It's never too late to lose a game of chess. Naturally White has to avoid 42 ♔xf2?? ♖f8+ when Black enjoys a magnificent triumph down the f-file after 43 ♔g2 ♕xf1+ with mate to follow, or 43 ♔e3 ♖f3+ 44 ♔e4 ♕d5 mate.

42...♕f3

Threatening both 43...♕xg3+ and 43...♖xf1+! 44 ♘xf1 ♕xc3.

43 ♘e4!

An awesome all-purpose move. The knight protects g3, defends the queen to rule out 43...♖xf1+, and attacks the black rook.

43...♖f8 44 ♗g2 1-0

Fittingly the game ends with White's trademark King's Indian Attack move. A fine example of sustained positional pressure.

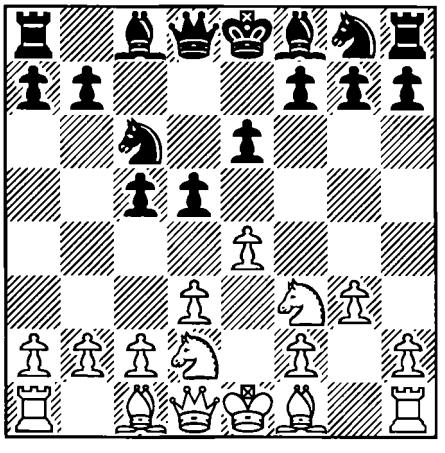
Part Three: Main line 3 ♘d2 with ...♗d6 by Black

Game 5
M.Sadler- Peng Zhaoqin
Haarlem 2013

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d3!

Grandmaster Matthew Sadler was one of England's most promising young chess stars, but he ceased being a professional player in 1999. His last ever game as a professional was for your author's team, Invicta Knights, in a European Club Cup match. It was a fine hurrah as Sadler beat Alexander Morozevich with Black in a sharp Sicilian Najdorf. Matthew returned to chess after a long hiatus in 2010 and continued to perform way over 2600 level. But when chess is only your 'hobby' you can't keep up with all the sharpest opening theory. When it comes to ducking main lines, the King's Indian Attack is just what is needed.

3...♘c6 4 g3 d5 5 ♘bd2



The standard move order for this chapter is 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 c5 4 ♘gf3 ♘c6 5 g3.

5...♗d6

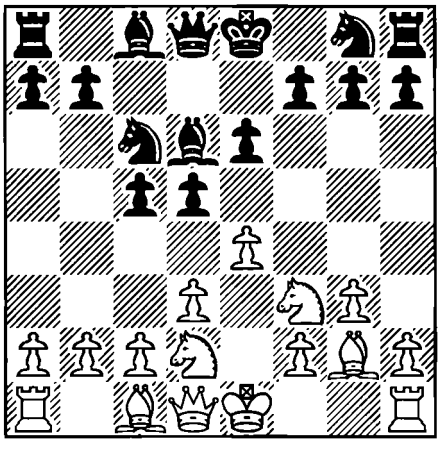
Note that this move would be difficult to arrange against the 3 ♕e2 move order, as White would be in a position to play e4-e5 more quickly, or else the fact that ...♗d6 could be answered by e4xd5, winning a pawn due to the pin on the e-file, would scupper the plan. Former World Champion Anatoly Karpov was a fan of this bishop deployment (just imagine the diagram position being contested in a match between Fischer, a fan of the KIA, and Karpov in 1975).

Exercise: Would you like to weigh up the pros and cons of having the bishop on d6 compared to after, say, 5...g6 6 ♗g2 ♗g7 7 0-0 ♘ge7? Hopefully you'll be able to weigh up these options better after you've read Chapter Two, but have a go here.

Answer: With 5...♗d6 the bishop is brought to the centre fight in one move (5...♗d6), rather than two (5...g6 and 6...♗g7). Black avoids loosening his kingside dark squares with ...g7-g6 and keeps the bishop in contact with the c5-square and the queenside in general. A bishop on g7, especially if shut in by e4-e5, can lose touch with events on the queenside.

On the other hand, the bishop will be less safe on d6 than on g7 and is only contesting control of one square on the a1-h8 diagonal rather than the whole of it. Furthermore, White might gain time for his e4-e5 advance by hitting the bishop.

6 ♗g2



Question: Now what square should the black knight on g8 be developed to: e7 or f6?

Answer: **6...♘ge7**

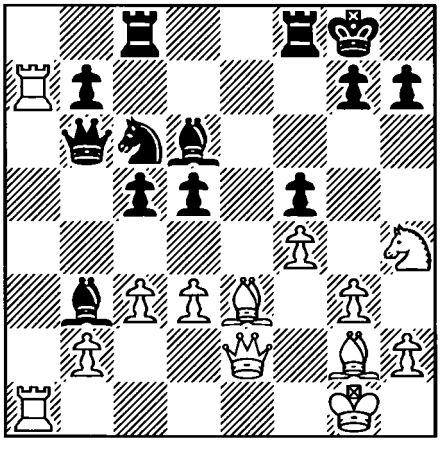
After 6...♘f6 Black would risk having both his knight and bishop on d6 driven back by an e4-e5 advance (and he wouldn't have the option of stabilising the centre with ...f7-f6 with the knight on that square). Therefore he chooses a safer and more permanent address for the horse.

7 0-0 0-0 8 ♖e1

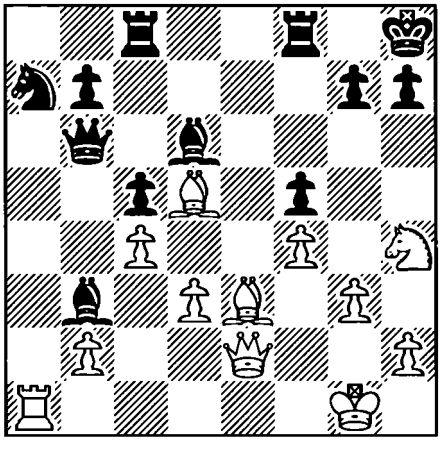
Sadler's development is simple and straightforward. Having established a pawn on e4 he wants to push it one square further.

Also possible is 8 ♘h4 ♗d7 (or 8...♗c7!?) 9 f4, when Black is well fortified on the kingside after 9...f6. I'd like to show you quickly the finish of a game in which Black, a near

2600-player, was destroyed by someone rated 2335 in V.Kulkarni-D.Sengupta, Bhopal 2013, after he chose the less solid 9...f5: 10 c3 ♖c8 11 ♘b3 ♘a5 12 ♗e3 ♗a4 13 ♕e2 ♘xb3 14 axb3 ♗xb3 15 exf5 exf5 16 ♖xa7 ♕b6 17 ♖fa1 ♘c6.



18 c4!! (winning control of the d5-square for the bishop is more important than a rook) 18...♘xa7? (Black had to forget about the rook and guard d5 with 18...♘b4, though 19 ♗d2! keeps White's initiative) 19 ♗xd5+ ♔h8.



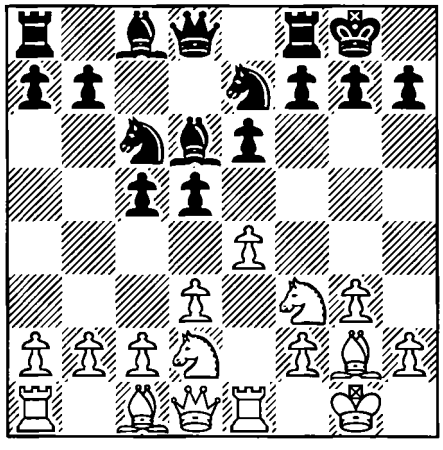
Exercise: **Can you see the finish after this move?**

Answer: 20 ♘g6+! (I wonder if Black missed this move or just couldn't believe it would work) 20...hxg6 21 ♕g2 1-0. Black still has an extra rook but it will be mate on the h-file.

Black is also defenceless after 19...♖f7 20 ♘xf5 (even stronger is the calm computer move 20 ♗d2!), when the threats of 21 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 22 ♖xa7 and ♖xa7 combined with

♘h6+! gxh6; ♕g4+ picking up an undefended rook on c8, are decisive. For example, 20...♗f8 tries to deal with both of these threats, but allows 21 ♖xa7! ♕xa7 22 ♘h6+! gxh6 23 ♕g4+ ♔h8 and now 24 ♗xf7 threatens both c8 and 24 ♕g8 mate. But actually the computer wants to play an insane looking move here: 24 ♗d4+!. The point is to cut out any defence by Black based on ...♕a1+ and ...♕xb2+, bringing the queen back to g7 to meet the threat of ♕g8 mate. After 24...cxd4 23 ♗xf7, the black queen's route to g7 is blocked by her own pawn. The twin threats of ♕xc8 and ♕g8 are therefore decisive.

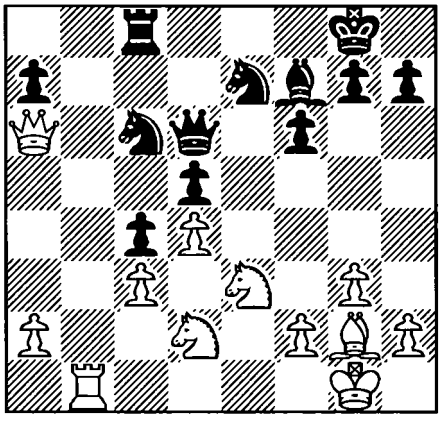
We should return to the main game where Peng Zhaoqin faced 8 ♖e1:



8...♗c7

Question: What if instead of retreating the bishop Black strengthened her hold on the e5-square with 8...f6 to rule out e4-e5 once and for all?

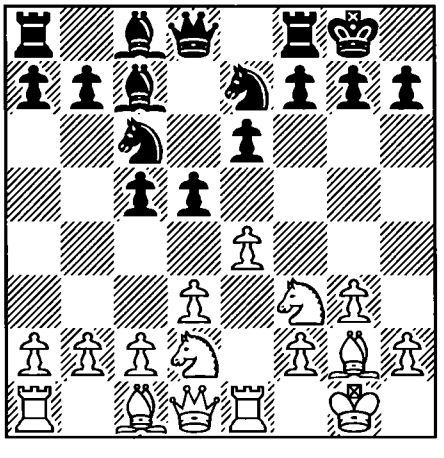
Answer: Let's see what happened in V.Meijers-P.Lindborg, Altenkirchen 2012 after 8...f6. White decided it was a good moment to change the centre structure: 9 exd5 exd5 10 d4 c4 (after 10...cxd4 11 ♘b3 and 12 ♘bxd4 White regains his pawn, leaving Black with a weakness on d5 and a hole on e6) 11 c3 ♗g4 12 b3 (Black has kept his centre intact, but White maintains an edge by opening lines on the queenside) 12...b5 13 ♘f1 (White wants his knight on e3 to attack d5) 13...♕d7 14 ♘e3 ♗e6 15 ♘d2 ♗f7 16 bxc4 bxc4 17 ♕a4 (the pressure begins to build on the queenside) 17...♕c7 18 ♗a3 ♖ab8 19 ♖ab1 ♖xb1 20 ♖xb1 ♖d8 21 ♗xd6 ♕xd6 22 ♕a6 ♖c8? (he had to play 22...♕d7 with a minimal advantage to White).



Exercise: How can White exploit his pressure on the centre?

Answer: After 23 ♘dxc4! dxc4 24 d5 White will regain his piece with an extra pawn due to the pin on c6 – note that c4 is also hanging. If Black plays 24...♗xd5 25 ♗xd5+ ♘xd5?? he drops his rook to 26 ♕xc8+. Instead, the game ended 23 ♖b5? ♖c7? (losing at once, but if 23...♖d8 White has 24 ♘dxc4! dxc4 25 d5 as in the last note) 24 ♖b8+ 1-0.

After 8...♗c7, Sadler has to decide how best to utilize his pawns. This is always a key point in White's build-up in the King's Indian Attack.



Exercise: What do you think is the best/worst of these four possible plans?
1) 9 b3 to complete development with 10 ♗b2. 2) 9 e5 to seize space in the centre.
3) 9 c3 to prepare e4-e5 or b2-b4. 4) 9 exd5 exd5 10 d4 to ram the black centre.

Answer: There's more to development than getting the pieces off the first rank. Indeed, after 9 b3 d4! you have to ask yourself if you are planning to develop or entomb the bishop on b2. So we can reject Idea One.

Idea Four would radically change the nature of the pawn structure. It is not entirely logical as White's strategy beginning with 3 d3 has been to hamper Black's light-squared bishop, whereas here he is granting it freedom. After 9 exd5 exd5 10 d4 c4!? (avoiding the isolated pawn that will appear after 10...cxd4 11 ♘b3 and 12 ♘bxd4, which would at least be a moral victory for White) 11 ♘f1 ♗f5 Black's bishop is actively placed. Alternatively, after 11 b3 cxb3!? 12 axb3 ♖e8 Black has little to fear. Besides, after 9 exd5 Black can avoid exposing his pawn structure with 9...♘xd5, though after 10 ♘b3 b6 11 c4 ♘de7 12 d4 ♗a6! 13 dxc5 ♗xc4 or 10 ♘e4 b6 11 d4 White retains a small initiative.

The move that is most natural in this type of KIA set-up is 9 e5 (Idea Two). But this is precisely the move that Black's strategy is designed to prevent: after 9 e5 ♘g6 the impetuous pawn is attacked three times and cannot be defended.

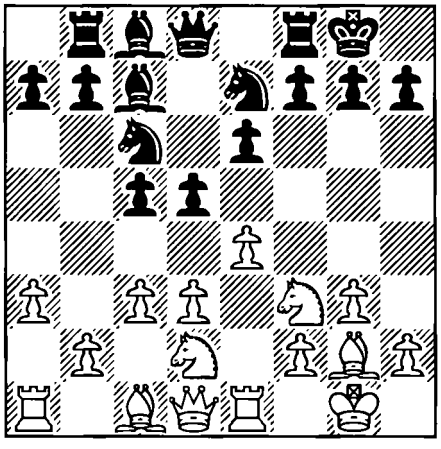
9 c3!

White is now ready for the advance e4-e5 as it can now be supported by d3-d4 in the event of Black attacking it with ...♘g6.

9...♖b8

The rook not only supports a pawn thrust against c3 with ...b5-b4, but is also evacuated from the a8-h1 diagonal where it could be exposed to attack after Black's 11th move.

10 a3



Question: What is the purpose of this move?

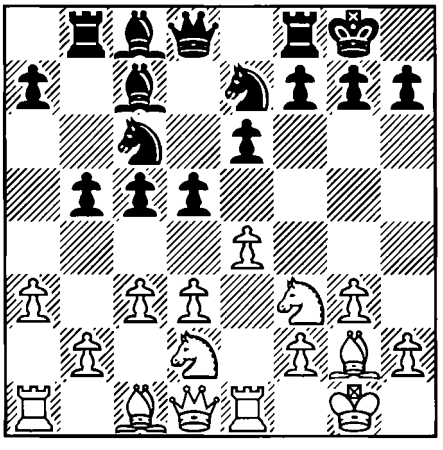
Answer: After the immediate 10 e5 Black can consolidate on the queenside with 10...b6: for example, 11 d4 ♗a6 when the bishop enjoys an open diagonal. White therefore needs another string to his bow besides the e4-e5 advance.

The alternative is to undermine Black's c5 point with b2-b4 and b4xc5. The pawn exchange e4xd5, with Black recapturing ...e6xd5, would be part of this plan. Black would be left with vulnerable hanging pawns on c5 and d5. For example, imagine if Black after the game move 10 a3 plays 10...b6, the move that was effective against 10 e5 in the variation above. Play might go 11 b4 ♗a6?! (safer is 11...♗b7) 12 exd5 exd5 13 ♕c2 ♖e8 14 ♖b1. Rather than enjoying an open diagonal, as was the case in the 10 e5 variation above, the bishop on a6 finds itself under threat of 15 b5. Following 14...♗b7 15 bxc5 bxc5 16 ♘b3 ♗d6 17 ♗e3 Black has problems defending the c5-pawn.

To counter the plan of 11 b4 with pressure on c5, Zhaoqin now plays 10...b5, but this move is less effective if White switches to the alternative 11 e5.

In other words, Black is able to counter both 10 e5 and the plan of attacking c5 with b2-b4, but can't use the same pawn move against plans. White manages to exploit this by first feinting to play 11 b4 and then switching to 11 e5.

10...b5



11 e5

Question: **Why shouldn't White attack c5 with 11 b4 as he did against 11...b6 in the variation above?**

Answer: Black could answer 11 b4 with 11...c4!, avoiding weaknesses on the queenside. As explained above, the drawback to 10...b5 is that Black can no longer activate the bishop with ...♗a6 in response to 11 e5.

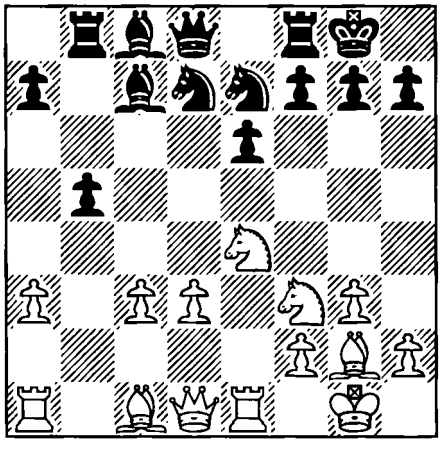
11...d4

Black cuts off the potential support of the e5-pawn with d3-d4, but now the c5-pawn becomes a target once again. The bishop on g2 is also pleased to see the barrier on d5 vanish.

12 ♘e4 dxc3 13 bxc3 ♘xe5 14 ♘xc5 ♘d7

Black prefers to exchange off the active knight on c5 rather than the one on f3. White's advantage is minimal. He has a little queenside pressure because Black's pawn on b5 is a target, but that is all.

15 ♘e4



15...♗b7

Exercise: Peng Zhaoqin develops her last piece to an open diagonal, but is this natural move also the best one?

Answer: Chess is also about stopping your opponent playing good moves. I like the way Emanuel Lasker describes the purpose of a chess move in his book *Common Sense in Chess.* A move either:

a) Develops something or brings new forces into the game.

b) Makes your own pieces do something, such as attacking something.

c) Serves a defensive purpose, that is, undoing the work of the opponent's pieces.

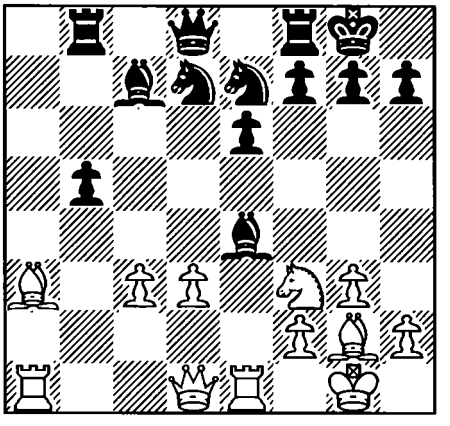
As we shall see, White is planning 16 a4 which will clear a diagonal for his bishop on a3 and leave Black with a pawn on b5 that can be attacked by the white rook. That's a lot of added work or power for the white pieces. Thus 15...a5! would prepare to answer 16 a4 with 16...b4, keeping the white bishop from a3 and denying the white rook an easy target. After the exchange 17 cxb4 axb4 the pawn on b4 is much more easily defended than the pawn that results in the game on b5. If necessary it can be supported by ...♘d5, etc.

16 a4 a6 17 axb5 axb5 18 ♗a3

White's bishop is now exerting formidable pressure along the dark-squared diagonal.

18...♗xe4

Giving up the light-squared bishop doesn't help at all, but even after the cold-blooded 18...♖e8 White can attack b5 with 19 ♖b1 then ♘d4, with a strong initiative. Note there's no reason to hurry to play ♘d6 to get the bishop-pair.



Exercise: "What is the right move now – the move which adds most to the power of our pieces?" (Emanuel Lasker, *Common Sense in Chess*, 1896).

Answer: **19 dxe4!**

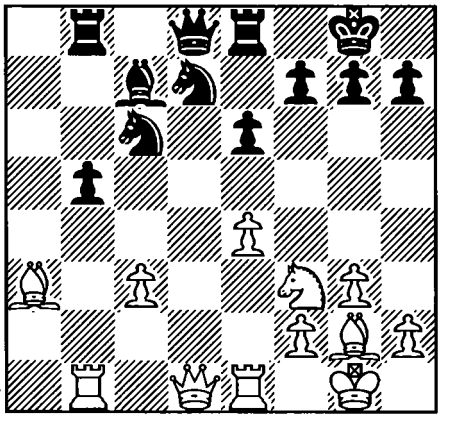
Much better than the pseudo-active 19 ♖xe4 when Black can reply 19...♘d5! putting the knight on a fine square and threatening a fork on c3. After 20 ♗xf8 (20 ♖h4! keeps some initiative for White) 20...♘xc3 and 21...♘xe4 Black isn't worse.

By recapturing with the pawn, White:

1) Keeps the black knight out of the d5-square (undoing the work of an enemy piece in Lasker's phrase).

2) Opens the way for a further attack on the b5-pawn (increasing the work of his own pieces).

19...♖e8 20 ♖b1 ♘c6



Exercise: Suddenly it's White to play and win. What's the move?

Answer: **21 ♗f1!**

Deciding the game with the quietest of moves as Black can't defend b5.

21...♘de5 22 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 23 ♗xb5 ♕f6

As Tarrasch would say: "The beginning of Black's attack..."

24 ♔g2

"...and the end of Black's attack".

24...♖ed8 25 ♕e2 g5 26 h3 ♗b6 27 ♖f1 h6 28 ♗a6 ♘d7 29 ♗d6 1-0

After 29...♖a8 30 e5 ♕g7 31 ♖fd1 Black is a pawn down with her queen shut away and her pieces under terrible pressure from the white rooks and bishops. Rather than wait for the c-pawn to be pushed through, Peng Zhaoqin resigned.

Sadler didn't unleash any great novelty, make any sacrifices or calculate long variations, but nevertheless won easily against a strong opponent. He kept a slight edge and forced Black to make some difficult strategic decisions.

Part Four: Black plays ...d5xe4 and fixes the centre with ...e6-e5

After both the 3 ♘d2 or 3 ♕e2 move order Black has the option to capture on e4 and then equalize the space balance in the centre with e6-e5. Here are two scenarios:

Via 3 ♕e2: 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♕e2 ♘c6 4 ♘f3 e5 5 g3 dxe4 6 dxe4 ♘f6 7 ♗g2 ♗c5 8 0-0 0-0 9 c3.

Via 3 ♘d2: 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 g3 ♘c6 5 ♗g2 dxe4 6 dxe4 e5 7 ♘gf3 ♗c5 8 0-0 0-0 9 c3.

Well investigate these variations in the game below, with the 3 ♘d2 option appearing in the analysis to 9...a5.

Game 6
V.Bologan-A.Morozevich
Astana (blitz) 2012

1 e4 e6

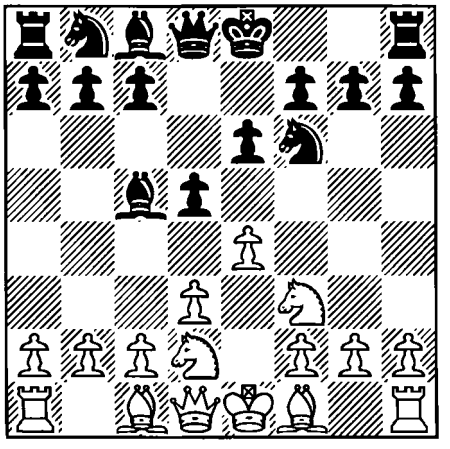
Viktor Bologan and Alexander Morozevich are two of the greatest KIA players of all time. Therefore it's intriguing to see what happened when they clashed in their favourite opening.

The present game was played at blitz but it was also part of a World Championship, with large cash prizes as well as pride being an incentive to win. Therefore I doubt that either player would have purposely played a second-rate opening to hide their best ideas in the King's Indian Attack. In fact, Morozevich might have prepared the pawn sacrifice with 13...♘e7 at home – perhaps he feared facing it as White. Play inevitably deteriorates in the

middle game with a lot of tactics missed and some gross errors, but it's a highly interesting struggle.

2 d3 d5 3 ♕e2

After 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 ♘gf3 the move 4...♗c5 was mentioned earlier.



White has options such as 5 e5 ♘fd7 6 d4 ♗e7 7 ♗d3 c5 8 c3 ♘c6 9 0-0 which has transposed to the French Tarrasch 'Universal System' which does well for White. Note that the normal French move order would be 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘fd7 5 ♘gf3 c5 6 c3 ♘c6 7 ♗d3 ♘c6 8 0-0. In the line above, White took two moves to get his pawn to d4, and Black two moves to get his bishop to e7. Also in the KIA version Black could try 6...♗b6!? to keep pressure on d4 with ...c7-c5, but then the bishop is a long way from defending the kingside. But none of this is to do with the KIA, of course.

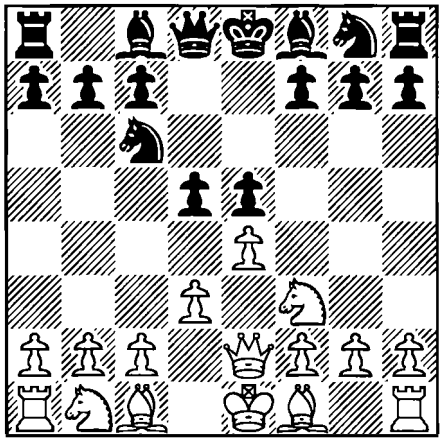
A way to keep it more in the style of a flank opening is 5 c3, which looks like a mistake at first glance as Black can play 5...dxe4 when 6 dxe4? ♘g4 hits f2, while after 6 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 it seems like White is going to lose a pawn after 7 dxe4? ♗xf2+. But unexpectedly White has 7 ♕a4+! ♗d7 8 ♕xe4 regaining the piece with a pretty good game as he will get in d3-d4 and ♗d3. But Black doesn't have to go into this, and again it's not really our territory.
I gave up in exasperation and recommended the move order 4 g3 (rather than 4 ♘gf3) in the Introduction to guarantee that White will be able to fianchetto. Then after 4...♗c5 5 ♗g2 0-0 6 ♘gf3 ♘c6 7 0-0 dxe4 8 dxe4 e5 we have the pawn centre examined in the present game.

3...♘c6!?

It looks odd to block the c-pawn, but Black has a specific plan in mind.

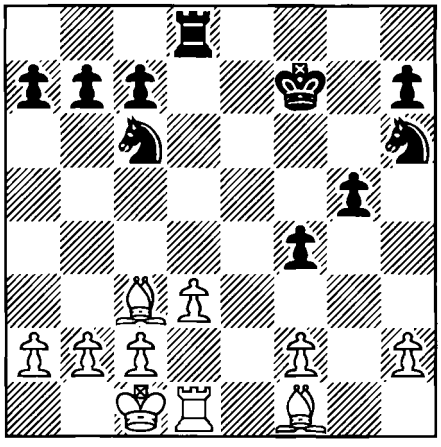
4 ♘f3 e5!

In view of his many stunning successes with White after 3 ♕e2, it's no surprise that Morozevich knows a good line against it. Black increases his share of the centre, frees the bishop on c8 and prevents White's clamping e4-e5 advance. What more could you ask from a pawn move?



Question: **But isn't Black going to lose time with his queen and be left with a shaky pawn on e5 after White captures on d5?**

Answer: If only it were that simple. Certainly 5 exd5 looks logical, when after 5...♕xd5 6 ♘c3 ♗b4 7 ♗d2 ♗xc3 8 ♗xc3 White has gained the bishop-pair and is attacking e5 three times. Unfortunately 8...♗g4! now spoils things somewhat as White's kingside pawns are going to be broken up: for example, 9 ♕e4 ♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 ♕xf3 11 gxf3 f6 12 ♖g1 ♔f7 13 0-0-0 ♖d8 14 f4 (White finds a way to be rid of his doubled pawns) 14...exf4 15 ♖g4 g5 16 ♖xg5 fxg5 17 ♗xh8 ♘h6 18 ♗c3 when White has two bishops against two knights, but his kingside remains fragile.



So far this is G.Jones-M.Broomfield, Street 2003, when if Black had played 18...♘d4! his knight would be on a strong centre post and cramping the activity of the bishops. The

game remains unclear after, say, 19 h3, but it's nothing for White to write home about.

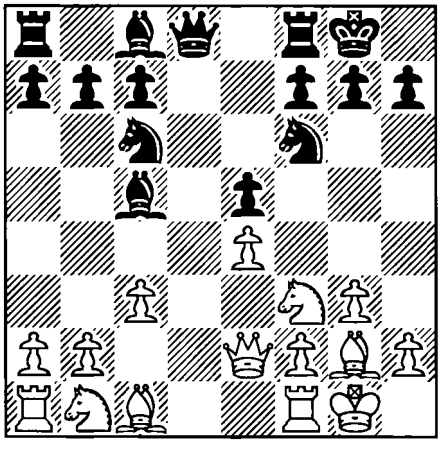
Instead, in the game cited Black blundered with 18...♘g4? when after 19 ♗e2! ♘f6 (Broomfield realized too late that 19...♘xf2 loses a piece to 20 ♖f1 ♘h3 21 ♗g4) 20 ♖g1 ♔g6 21 ♗f3 h5 22 h3 White had activated his bishops and rook, and restrained the black kingside pawns. Black made a second oversight with 22...♘d5? and lost the g5-pawn to 23 ♗e4+ ♔h6 24 ♗g7+! ♔xg7 25 ♖xg5+ ♔f6 26 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 27 ♗xd5 when White ground out a win.

Bologan prefers to keep the strong point on e4.

5 g3 dxe4

Black is happy to exchange on e4 as White's bishop won't be going to b5 or c4 in the future.

6 dxe4 ♘f6 7 ♗g2 ♗c5 8 0-0 0-0 9 c3

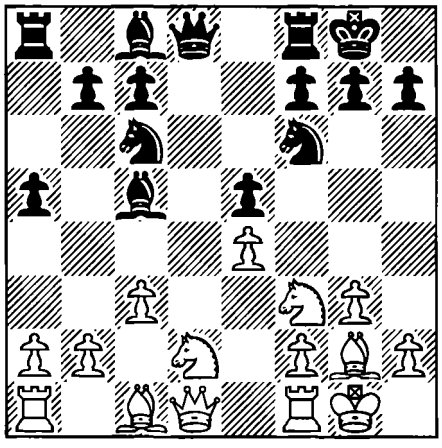


Exercise: **Can you think of two reasons for this move, and how Black should respond to it?**

Answer: **9...a5!**

With 9 c3 White guarded the d4-square and threatened to expand on the queenside with 10 b4. Gaining space in this manner would be pleasant for White in any case, but here it would have the added bonus of hampering the defence of the e5-pawn after a further b4-b5. Therefore Black very sensibly prevents it.

Here I wish to pause and consider the similar scenario reached after the alternative 3 ♘d2 move order by White. We'll refer to another game by the Moldovan Grandmaster, V.Bologan-K.Maslak, Budva 2009, which went (with the move order amended for consistency): 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 g3 ♘c6 5 ♗g2 dxe4 6 dxe4 e5 7 ♘gf3 ♗c5 8 0-0 0-0 9 c3 a5.



The only possible sharp alternative I'd like to point out is that if instead of 9...a5, Black tries to stifle White with 9...♕d3, the queen can be evicted by 10 ♘e1 and then 11 b4, when White gains space on the queenside to make up for the inconvenience caused by the white knight going back to e1.

Maslak has adopted the same plan as Morozevich did versus 3 ♕e2 and the game has flowed in similar style.

Exercise: **Perhaps you would like to compare the two positions from Bologan's games and consider what difference it makes that White has his queen on e2 in the first, and his knight on d2 in the second?**

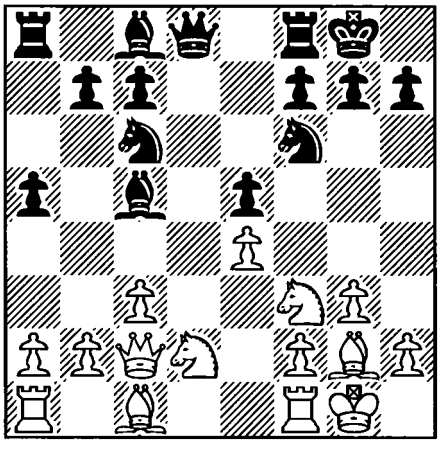
Answer: Generally speaking we can say that in both scenarios Black's king is completely safe and he has been able to develop his pieces to active centre squares. There are no obvious weaknesses in his pawn structure. Meanwhile White has been restrained from advancing on the queenside and there are no entry points for his pieces along the d-file. It would be reckless to try to 'take Black whole' on the kingside by preparing f2-f4, as the most likely outcome would be the collapse of the white centre: the black pieces are just too active.

Question: **So what is Bologan to do? Is it time to offer a draw?**

Answer: Actually, there is a glimmer of hope for White: he has managed to guard the d4-square with his c3-pawn, whereas Black is unable to respond with ...c7-c6 to cover the d5-square. Therefore, in both scenarios a plan suggests itself: get a knight to a splendid post on d5.

Let's see how Bologan utilized the d5-square in the Maslak game (from the diagram above with the white queen on d1):

10 ♕c2



We might say that c2 is a somewhat superior square to e2 for the white queen, as there is no chance of being attacked by ...b7-b6 and ...♗a6. Though it also has to be said the white queen never comes under any such pressure in Bologan's game with Morozevich.

10...b6 11 ♘b3

The knight drives back the bishop from c5 and clears the way for his own dark-squared bishop to enter the game. The one drawback to the b3 post is that it is much further away from d5 than the knight would be after ♘c4.

11...♗e7

After 11...♗d6 the knight on f6 can be pinned with ♗g5.

12 ♖d1

The first white piece to get into contact with the d5-square.

12...♕e8 13 a4

Stopping his knight being driven back by 13...a4.

13...♗a6

After 13...♗e6 White would probably continue as in the game, since 14 ♘g5 ♗d7 leaves the horse no one near d5.

14 ♘h4!

The knight heads for a strong outpost on f5 (though not as good as d5).

14...♖d8

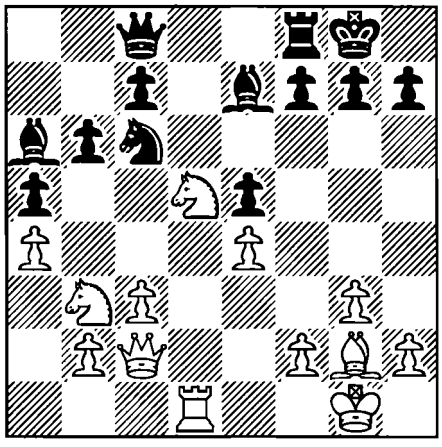
If 14...g6? to guard f5 then 15 ♗h6 wins the exchange.

15 ♗e3

White dangles the prize of the bishop-pair before Black's eyes as he sees it will facilitate getting the horse to d5.

15...♘g4 16 ♘f5 ♘xe3 17 ♘xe3 ♖xd1+ 18 ♖xd1 ♕c8 19 ♘d5

The knight finally makes it to the dream square. Now Black rather helpfully allows the other knight to get to the c4-square from where it can also get in contact with d5:



19...♗d8 20 ♘d2 ♗e2 21 ♖e1 ♗g4 22 ♘c4 ♗e6 23 ♕e2 f6 24 h4 ♗e7 25 ♘ce3 ♗c5 26 ♕b5!

A clever probing move. The black queen goes to b7, after which White retreats his queen back to f1, with ideas of ♗h3.

26...♕b7 27 ♕f1 ♘d8 28 ♘c2

Instead, 28 b4 looks the way to keep the initiative.

28...c6

The white knight is evicted from d5. However, White hopes to exploit the fragility of Black's queenside after the loosening move ...c7-c6.

29 ♘de3 ♕c8

Black misses his one chance to obstruct White's attack with 29...♗b3!. This possibility is why White should have preferred 28 b4.

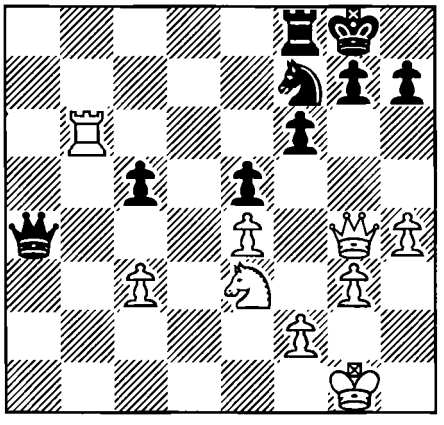
30 b4!

Now all is well again for White's plan as he can open lines to exploit the vulnerable black queenside.

30...♗xe3 31 ♘xe3 ♘f7 32 ♖b1 ♕a8

The pressure on the black queenside, which can be traced back to the plan of ♘d5, distracts the black queen so that White can seize the light squares with his next move.

33 ♗h3! ♗xh3 34 ♕xh3 axb4 35 ♖xb4 c5 36 ♖xb6 ♕xa4 37 ♕g4



Black has avoided material loss but now there are threats to his king with ♘f5 looming.

37...♘h6

The knight guards f5, but it is left passive on h6 meaning that Black lacks the defensive resources to protect the c5-pawn.

38 ♕e6+ ♔h8 39 ♕c4

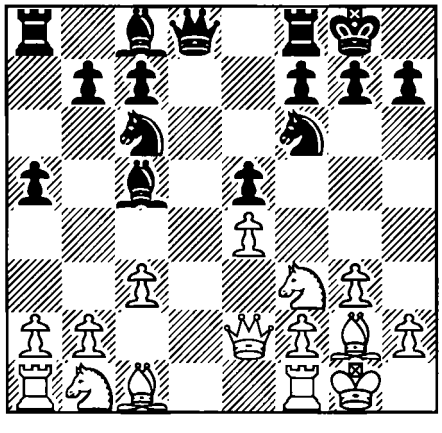
The c5-pawn would soon be picked off after the queen exchange.

40...♕a1+ 40 ♔g2 ♕a8 41 ♖b5 f5 42 ♕d5 ♕e8 43 ♖xc5

White wins his pawn. The endgame proves heavy weather but Bologan gets there.

43...f4 44 ♘f5 ♘xf5 45 exf5 fxg3 46 ♕xe5 gxf2 47 ♕xe8 ♖xe8 48 ♔xf2 ♔g8 49 ♔f3 ♔f7 50 c4 ♖e1 51 ♔f4 g6 52 ♖c7+ ♔f6 53 ♖c6+ ♔f7 54 fxg6+ hxg6 55 c5 ♔g7 56 ♖d6 ♔h6 57 c6 ♔h5 58 c7 ♖c1 59 ♖d7 ♖c4+ 60 ♔e5 ♖c1 61 ♖h7+ ♔g4 62 ♔d6 ♖d1+ 63 ♔e7 ♖c1 64 ♔d8 ♖d1+ 65 ♖d7 ♖c1 66 ♖d4+ 1-0

We can now return to Bologan-Morozevich where White's queen was on e2 and Black has just played 9...a5.



10 ♖d1

Exercise: Having seen the Maslak game, can you explain why White plays this move? What is his plan?

10...♕e7

Answer: White played 10 ♖d1 to take the queen, of course. A more strategical response is that the rook will be well stationed on the only open file on the board. We also know from the Maslak game that White is beginning to fight for the d5-square. Finally, if you answered "Why, in six moves' time the rook is going to take the pawn on a5" then either you have cheated or you have psychic powers.

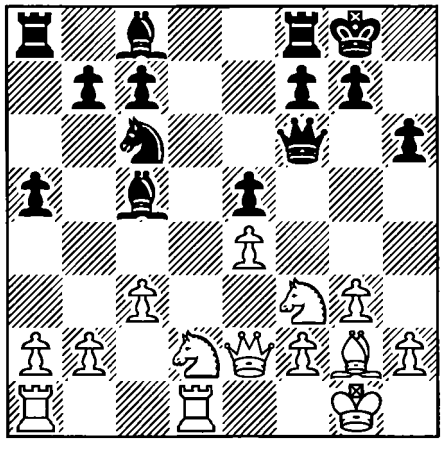
11 ♗g5

Bologan decides to exchange off the piece defending the d5-square. As we saw in the Maslak game, he is willing to invest the bishop-pair to achieve his aim: something of a risk against an attacking player like Morozevich.

11...h6 12 ♗xf6 ♕xf6

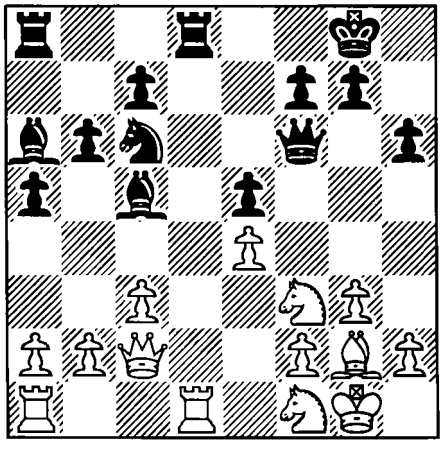
The next step in White's plan will be to get his knight to c4.

13 ♘bd2



13...♘e7

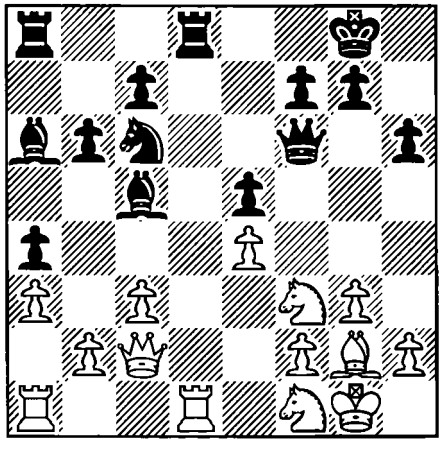
A solid alternative is 13...b6. If 14 ♘c4 the pin with 14...♗a6 is unpleasant, so the knight must seek a different route to d5. The game C.Bauer-E.Fernandez Romero, Elgoibar 2005, continued 14 ♘f1 ♗a6 15 ♕c2 ♖fd8.



Exercise: If now 16 ♘e3 Black can lop off the knight with the bishop and double White's pawns. See if you can find a good way to prepare the knight move.

Answer: 16 a3!!. Success in the King's Indian Attack often depends on little pawn moves. The plan is 17 b4, chasing the bishop from c5 when 18 ♘e3 heads for the fine post on d5.

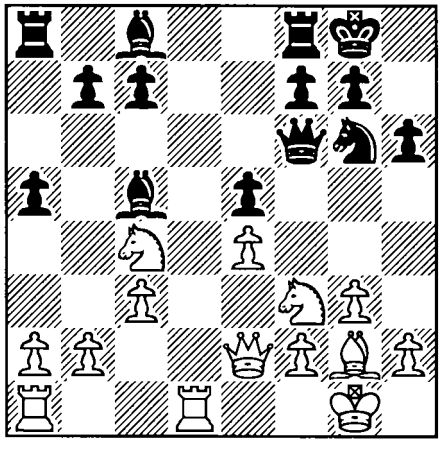
If now 16...b5? clearing a retreat for the bishop back to b6, 17 b4 leaves the other bishop on a6 is shut in. Therefore Black can only maintain the bishop on c5 with 16...a4.



At first glance this seems an attractive idea, but the pawn became vulnerable after White swapped everything off into an endgame with 17 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 18 ♖d1 ♗xf1 19 ♔xf1 ♖xd1+ 20 ♕xd1 ♕d6 21 ♕d5 ♘e7 22 ♕xd6 ♗xd6. Now Bauer was able to probe the black queenside with 23 ♗h3! (you should always keep your eyes open for this move in the KIA) 23...c6 24 ♗d7. After 24...g6 25 ♔e2 ♔g7 26 ♘e1 White had a couple of small advantages:

his king is nearer the centre, the black pawns on a4 and c6 are loose, and White's bishop has more scope than Black's which is impeded by the pawn on e5. Are these enough to win? Objectively no, but Bauer managed to grind out a win thanks to excellent technique, persistence and his opponent's impatience. Here, for example, Black needlessly weakened his pawns further with 26...f5 when 27 f3 ♔f6 28 ♘d3 was uncomfortable for him.

14 ♘c4 ♘g6



Having transferred his own horse to g6 where it guards the e5-pawn, Morozevich plans to keep the white knight out of d5 by answering 15 ♘e3 with 15...c6. Therefore Bologan has to act fast or any advantage will evaporate.

Exercise: Can you guess what he might have played?

Answer: **15 ♖d5!**

As in the Maslak game, Black's manoeuvre to fortify the d5-square has left something vulnerable in his queenside pawn structure. The rook invades just in time before Black slams the door shut with 15...c6. Now either a5 or e5 is going to drop, but Morozevich hopes to cause problems for White's rook.

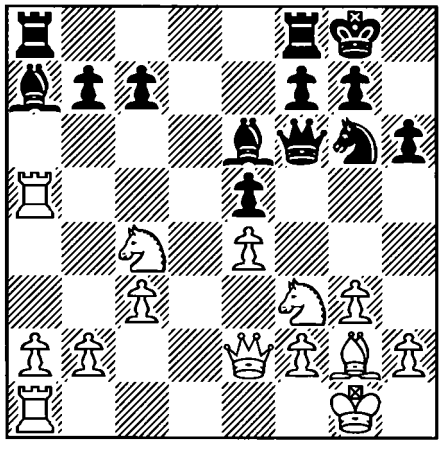
15...♗a7

Black removes the bishop from the c5-square as after 15...b6 16 ♘cxe5 ♘xe5 17 ♘xe5 c6 White has the defence 18 ♘d7 ♕e7 19 ♖xc5 ♗xd7 (and not 19...bxc5 20 ♘xf8) 20 ♖h5 when White is a pawn up and his errant rook looks safe.

16 ♖xa5

Or 16 ♖ad1 ♗e6 17 ♖b5 ♖fd8! with counterplay along the d-file.

16...♗e6



Question: Is there a threat?

17 ♖a3?

Answer: The threat was 17...♗xc4 18 ♕xc4 ♗xf2+ 19 ♔xf2 ♖xa5, winning the exchange. However, White should defend his rook with 17 b4 when after 17...b6 18 ♖a6 b5 (reopening the idea of ...♗xf2+) 19 ♘e3 ♗xe3 20 ♖xa8 ♗xf2+! 21 ♔xf2 ♖xa8 22 ♕xb5 he is better with his extra pawn, but it won't be at all easy to win.

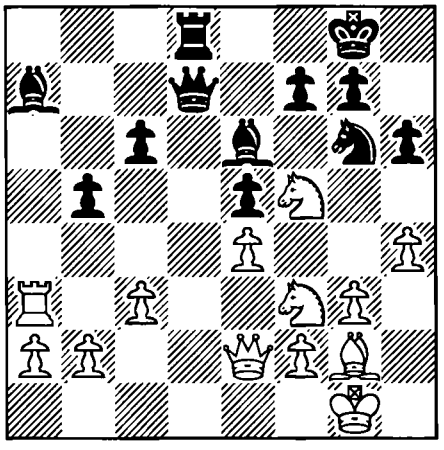
Exercise: We should remember this was only a blitz game. After 17 ♖a3 give yourself more time to find a combination for Black based on the ...♗xf2+ theme.

17...b5?

Answer: Black should play 17...♗xc4 18 ♕xc4 ♗xf2+!! when White must reply 19 ♔f1 with the worse game, as 19 ♔xf2? loses to 19...♕b6+ 20 ♔f1 ♕xb2! and although Black is a piece down, he'll pick up a rook for nothing after 21 ♖xa8 ♕xa1+ and 22...♖xa8 with a simple win.

As it's a blitz game we won't look too critically at the rest of the game.

18 ♘cd2 c6 19 h3 ♕e7 20 ♘f1 ♖ad8 21 ♘e3 ♕b7 22 ♘f5 ♖d7 23 ♖d1 ♖fd8 24 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 25 h4



25...♗c5

After 25...f6 (securing the e5-pawn) 26 h5 or 26 ♗h3 White is a sound pawn up, but he still faces enormous technical difficulties due to his misplaced rook.

26 b4 ♗b6 27 h5 ♘f8

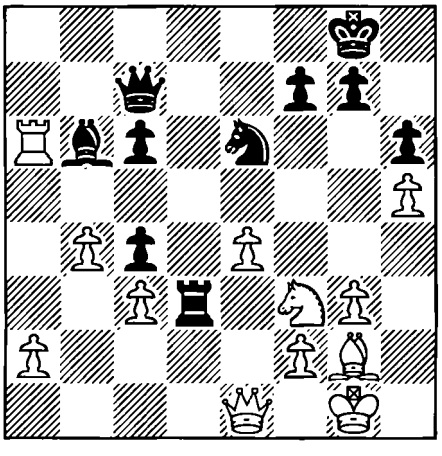
If 27...♗xf5 28 exf5 ♘f8 29 c4! and White's rook will be working with the other pieces again.

28 ♘xe5 ♕c7 29 ♘f3

White could have exploited a potential fork on c6 with 29 ♘xc6! as if 29...♗xf5 30 exf5 and the knight on c6 is defended. Or if 29...♗c4, then in contrast to the game, White's queen still has access to g4, so 30 ♕g4 wins at once.

29...♗c4 30 ♕e1 ♘e6 31 ♘e3 ♖d3 32 ♘xc4 bxc4 33 ♖a6

The way to quell Black's initiative was 33 ♖a8+ when if 33...♔h7 34 e5 ♕d7 35 ♕e4+ is decisive.



33...♕b7

Black makes the proverbial second to last mistake that wins him the game. He should play 33...♖xf3! when if 34 ♗xf3? ♕xg3+ 35 ♔f1 ♕xf3 36 ♖xb6 ♘f4 he has a mating attack, so White has to make do with 34 ♖xb6 ♖xg3! (a desperado move) 35 fxg3 ♕xb6+ when Black might survive.

34 ♘e5??

After 34 ♖a4, ready to answer 34...♕d7 with 35 ♘e5, the two extra pawns should prevail despite White's discomfort. I wonder if Bologan anticipated 34...♕d7, and when Morozevich picked up his queen he bashed out 34 ♘e5 without noticing it had gone to b7 rather than d7.

34...♕xa6 35 ♘xd3 cxd3 36 ♕d2 ♕c4 37 ♗f1 ♕xe4 38 ♕xd3 ♕e5 39 ♗g2 ♕e1+ 40 ♕f1 ♗xf2+ 41 ♔h2 ♗xg3+ 0-1

Part Five: Black plays a quick ...b7-b6

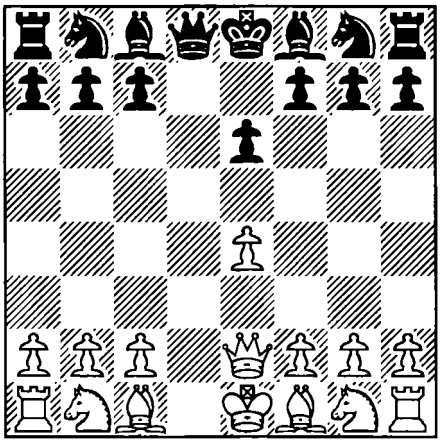
Game 7
A.Rodriguez Vila-D.Lemos
Santos 2007

1 e4 e6 2 d3

Also possible is 2 ♕e2 at once. One of the reasons behind this move is to deter 2...d5, but in fact 3 exd5 ♕xd5 leaves White will only a minimal advantage: for example, 4 ♘f3 c5 (not letting White play d2-d4 with impunity) 5 ♘c3 ♕d8 6 g3 ♘c6 7 ♗g2 ♘f6 8 0-0 ♗e7, as in E. Miroshnichenko-A.Anastasian, Dubai 2011. That said, now 9 b3 0-0 10 ♗b2 looks somewhat better for White as Black struggles to develop his bishop on c8 to an active square. Of course, White could simply play 3 d3 and head for the main line. The main game actually started with this move order.

Another possibility for Black is 2...♗e7, when 3 ♘f3 d5 4 d3 ♘f6 5 e5 will transpose to the main lines.

2...d5 3 ♕e2 dxe4 4 dxe4



4...b6

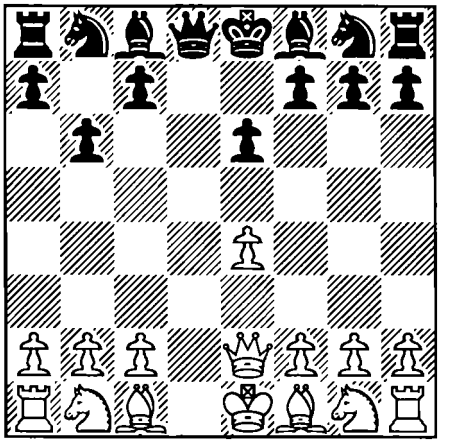
The purpose of this move is to try to embarrass the white queen with ...♗a6.

Exercise: After 4...e5 which of these comments best assesses the position? 1) Black has equalized because the white queen is blocking in the bishop on f1. 2) White keeps some initiative as e5 is harder to defend than e4. 3) White can finish the game in three moves with 5 ♕h5 (attacking e5) 5...♘c6 6 ♗c4 ♘f6 7 ♕xf7 mate.

Answer: I sympathise with the attempt to recreate Morphy against the Duke of Brunswick and Count Isouard with 5 ♕h5 ♘c6 6 ♗c4, but after 6...♕e7 (stopping mate!) 7 ♗g5 ♘f6 8 ♕h4 the position is not quite in the KIA ethos. Maybe 7 c3!? ♘f6 8 ♕e2 is the way to justify it, when suddenly White's bishop is on c4 and it's the black queen who is boxing in her bishop.

After 4...e5 Black has equalized space in the centre, but as so often in the KIA, the pawn on e5 is easier to attack than the pawn on e4. Even though the white queen is on an awkward square it is at least defending e4, whereas the black queen offers no similar aid to its pawn. Also it is possible for White to arrange the manoeuvre ♘d2 and ♘c4 to assail e5. Play might continue 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 c3 (making a hole for the queen on c2 and guarding the d4-square, as well as introducing the idea of a later advance with b2-b4) 6...♘c6 and White can choose between the immediate 7 ♕c2 and 7 ♘bd2 ♗d6 8 ♘c4 0-0 9 ♕c2. Therefore comment '2' seems the most accurate.

Exercise: After 4...b6 you can borrow an idea from the paragraph above to best counter Black's intention of 5...♗a6. Can you see it?

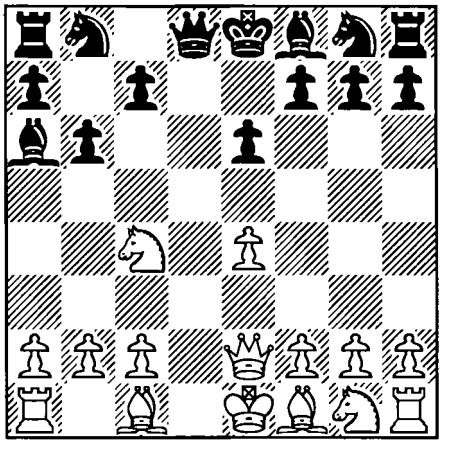


Answer: **5 ♘d2!**

Black was hoping to oblige White to weaken his centre in reply to 5...♗a6 with 6 c4, or give up the right to castle after, say, 5 c3 ♗a6 6 ♕c2 ♗xf1 7 ♔xf1. But some years ago Morozevich demonstrated that blocking the attack on the queen with the knight is an effective idea.

5...♗a6 6 ♘c4

The white knight will be pinned for a long time, but rather surprisingly there is no way for Black to exploit it. This is an example of how moves in the opening phase of a game have to be examined without any prejudice: it doesn't matter how pleasing or logical they are, the only thing that matters is whether or not they work. Computers have, of course, played a major part in helping humans discover strong 'unnatural' moves and ideas.



6...♘f6

Question: **If Black makes a beeline to exploit the pin with 6...♘c6 7 ♘f3 ♘a5 how should White respond?**

Answer: After 6...♘c6 7 ♘f3 ♘a5?! 8 ♘d6+! and 9 ♕xa6 White has the two bishops and an initiative.

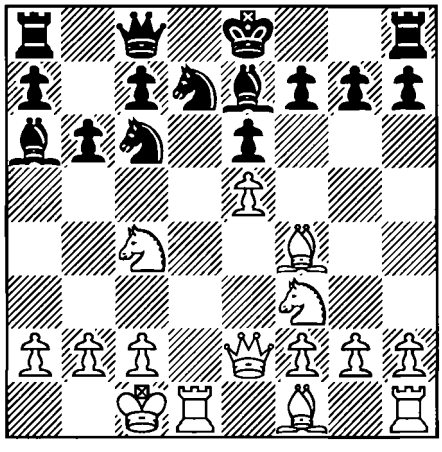
7 ♘f3 ♘c6 8 e5 ♘d7

The solid 8...♘d5 might have been preferable. With the game move Black threatens 9...♗xc4 10 ♕xc4 ♘cxe5, but White is able to guard the e5-pawn again.

9 ♗f4 ♗e7

If here 9...♘a5 10 ♘fd2!? followed by 11 0-0-0 keeps the advantage.

10 0-0-0 ♕c8



White has consolidated his control of the centre. His next task is to break the pin on the knight and clear the way for his bishop on f1 to enter the fray. He achieves this with his next two moves.

11 c3! 0-0

It was Black's last chance to try to profit from the pin with 11...♘a5, but White still has the resource 12 ♘d6+! cxd6 13 ♕xa6 gaining the bishop-pair.

12 ♕c2

Finally the white queen moves out of range of the bishop on a6. She is now looking with relish at the under defended h7-square.

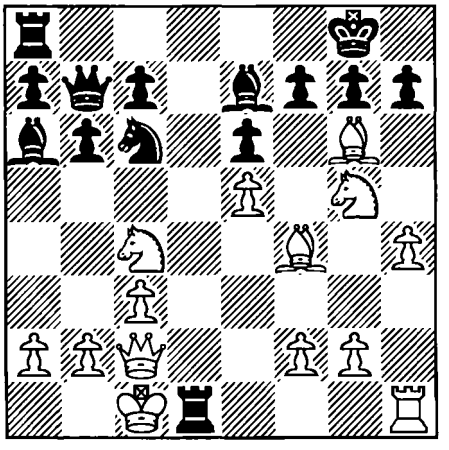
12...♖d8 13 h4

Savour what follows as it is very rare in the King's Indian Attack for White to get to castle queenside and launch a direct attack on the black kingside.

13...♘f8 14 ♗d3

Perhaps 14 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 15 h5 was a more vigorous way to continue the attack.

14...♕b7 15 ♘g5 ♘g6 16 ♗xg6 ♖xd1+



Exercise: **How should White recapture the rook?**

Answer: **17 ♕xd1!**

Obvious was 17 ♖xd1 to take the open file, but White wants to keep the rook on the h-file and infiltrate down the d-file with his queen.

17...fxg6?

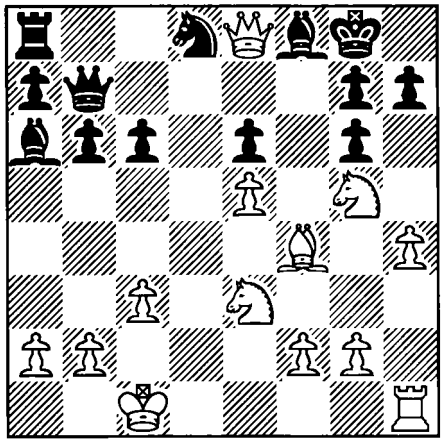
It's easy to criticise this move when you have a computer program telling you that Black won't be mated down the h-file after 17...hxg6. During a game it feels a whole lot different and it is understandable why Black panics and makes this anti-positional move that weakens his e6-pawn.

After 17...hxg6 18 ♘d2 ♘a5! 19 ♕g4 ♕d5! he would have enough counterplay against the white king to hold the balance. A sharp finish would be 20 h5 ♗xg5 21 ♗xg5 ♕xa2 22 hxg6 fxg6 23 ♕e4 ♖f8 24 ♕xg6 ♕a1+ 25 ♘b1 ♘b3+ 26 ♔d1 ♕xb2 and White has to give perpetual check with 27 ♕xe6+ ♖f7 28 ♕e8+ ♖f8 29 ♕e6+, etc. For this reason 14 ♖xd8 is recommended at move 14.

18 ♘e3 ♘d8 19 ♕d7!

It is apparent that 17...fxg6 has led to a fatal weakness in the black centre. In order to prevent immediate disaster Black has to allow the white queen to invade on the eighth rank.

19...c6 20 ♕e8+ ♗f8



Exercise: **How should White capitalize on his advantage: 21 ♘xh7, 21 ♖d1, or 21 ♘xe6?**

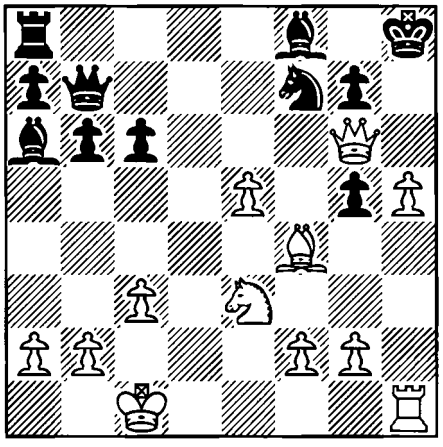
Answer: **21 ♘xh7!**

And why not sacrifice when you have worked everything out to a win? It is ironic but deeply logical that Black's anti-positional recapture 17...fxg6 has led to exactly the sort of disaster on the h-file that it was meant to prevent. Now 21...♔xh7 22 ♕xf8 is simple for White, so Black asks his opponent to show the attacking win he has prepared.

Instead, 21 ♘xe6?? would be embarrassing for everyone after 21...♘f7 when White's queen can only be extricated at the cost of the knight. However, 21 ♖d1! is a risk-free choice, attacking the knight, when 21...♕e7 22 ♕xe7 ♗xe7 23 ♖d7 leaves Black tied up. The plan for White would be ♘e4 and ♘d6.

21...♘f7 22 ♕xe6 ♔xh7 23 h5 g5 24 ♕g6+ ♔h8

Or 24...♔g8 25 h6 gxf4 26 ♘g4! when there's no good defence against 27 ♘f6+ ♔h8 28 hxg7 or 28 ♕h7 mate.



Exercise: Now what is the most forceful way to finish off Black?

Answer: **25 h6! ♘xh6**

Alternatively, 25...gxh6 26 e6 gxf4 27 exf7 ♗g7 28 ♖xh6+ ♗xh6 29 ♕xh6 mate.

26 ♗xg5 ♕d7

There was no good defence against 27 ♘f5 with a quick massacre on h6.

27 e6 ♗d3 28 ♕xh6+ 1-0

After 28...gxh6 29 exd7 the passed pawn costs Black his rook.

Chapter Two
KIA Versus the Sicilian

"Almost everyone plays 3 d4. But isn't that a positional error? I am not joking. I like my centre pawns, and I like a d-pawn better than a c-pawn. Well then, isn't 3 d4 something like a cheap trap? I know it can be combined with purely strategical ideas, but I find it easier to discuss strategy when I have an extra centre pawn!"

Bent Larsen, *How to Open a Chess Game*

I think the great Danish Grandmaster would have approved of the King's Indian Attack. White doesn't try to exploit the advantage of moving first by launching an immediate assault on the black position. Instead he builds up his centre position carefully. When violence is inflicted on Black (and there is a lot of it in the KIA), it is all the more devastating because it comes from a solid positional base.

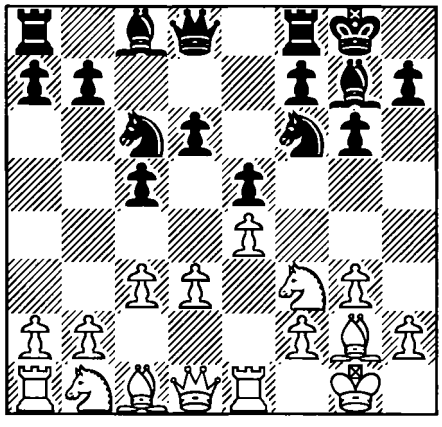
In this chapter we are going to examine games in which after 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 Black plays 2...♘c6, 2...d6, or 2...e6 and combines it with ...g7-g6 and ♗g7. Games in which Black develops his king's bishop to e7, d6 or even c5 usually occur after 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 and these have been subsumed into Chapter One under move orders such as 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 g3 c5 or 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 c5 4 ♘gf3 ♘c6 5 g3 ♗d6, etc. For Black's fianchetto when White has played an early ♕e2 rather than ♘bd2, see the notes in Game 4 in Chapter One.

Black's fundamental choice

Black has two ways of gaining space in the centre, or more precisely of preventing his opponent from seizing more territory. He can either prepare a pawn advance to e5 or else to d5. His choice mainly depends whether he has committed himself to 2...d6 or 2...e6. With the pawn on d6, ...e7-e5 suggests itself; with the pawn on e6, the advance ...d7-d5 is natural. These two ideas are looked at in Part One and Part Two respectively. The alternative 2...♘c6 doesn't commit Black to either advance, and so can be used as part of either set-up.

Part One: Black arranges a pawn advance to e5

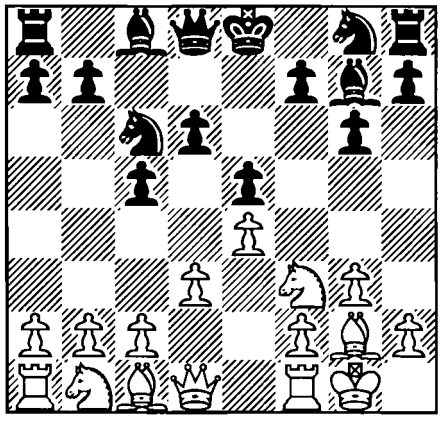
In Game 8 after 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 g3 ♘c6 4 ♗g2 ♘f6 5 d3 g6 6 0-0 ♗g7 7 c3 0-0 8 ♖e1 Black opposes White's plan of d3-d4 with 8...e5.



This gives him a solid centre position, but White can build up a space advantage on the queenside with the plan of a2-a3 and b2-b4.

In Game 9 Black tries a different way to restrain d3-d4, namely 8...♗g4. He hopes that giving up the bishop-pair after 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 is a price worth paying to restrain the white centre.

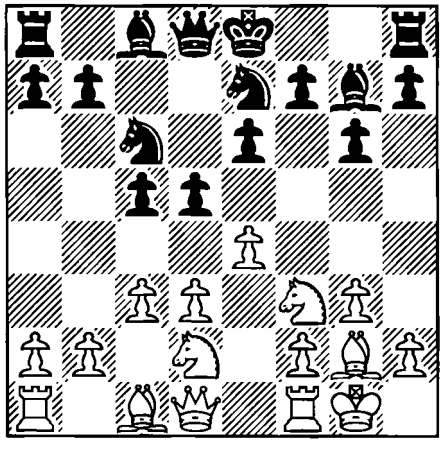
If Black has played a move order with 2...♘c6, he can avoid putting his knight on f6 with the precise move order 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 0-0 d6 6 c3 e5.



This is an effective approach by Black as he will get in the solid ...♘ge7 deployment that is characteristic of the 2...e6 set-ups, but with the e-pawn going to e5 in one go. This leaves him a tempo up on the system after 2...e6 in which Black plays ...e6-e5. Still, as Game 9 shows, it is not all easy for Black.

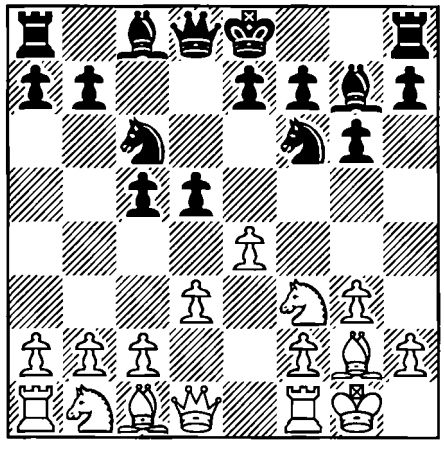
Part Two: Black arranges a pawn advance to d5

A typical scenario here is 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 g3 g6 5 ♗g2 ♗g7 6 0-0 ♘ge7 7 c3 d5 8 ♘bd2.



The position is akin to lines examined in Chapter One, the difference being that Black has played ...♘ge7, ...g7-g6 and ...♗g7 rather than ...♘f6 and ...♗e7. As we see, White has chances for the initiative whether Black whisks his king off to the queenside (Game 10) or settles for 8...0-0 (Game 11).

Finally, if Black has played 2...♘c6 he can advance ...d7-d5 without the preparatory e7-e6: 3 d3 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 ♘f6 6 0-0 d5.



After a subsequent ...d5xe4 and d3xe4 exchange, Black got active play along the d-file, but White's pawns did their job on both wings in Game 12.

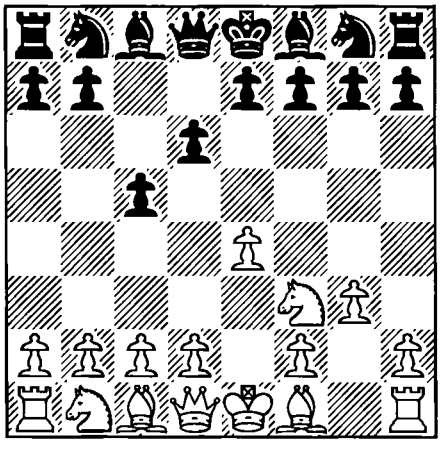
Part One: Black arranges a pawn advance to e5

Game 8
B.Amin-G.Gajewski
Reykjavik 2013

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6

It looks like it's going to be a Sicilian main line, but now White swerves aside.

3 g3!



Question: Why is this rather than 3 d3 the best way to start White's build-up?

Answer: A key idea for White is to build a centre with c2-c3 and then d2-d4. So committing the pawn to d3 lessens White's options and takes the pressure off Black somewhat. On the other hand, if 2...e6, then 3 d3 to strengthen e4 in anticipation of ...d7-d5 seems best. Likewise if 2...♘c6, I would suggest 3 d3 to fend off future ...d7-d5 ideas. OK, I know that Black could then revert to a ...d7-d6 style opening line, but I'd prefer that to having to learn what to do after 2...♘c6 3 g3 d5 – it might not be that wonderful for Black, but it would take us out of our repertoire.

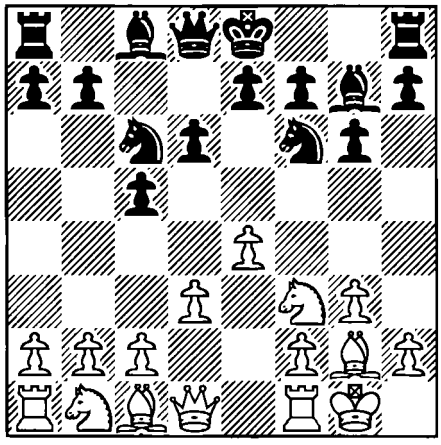
3...♘c6 4 ♗g2 ♘f6 5 d3

Only now that the e-pawn is attacked does White commit his pawn to d3.

5...g6!

Not seeing any future for his bishop other than on g7, Black prepares to develop it to an excellent diagonal.

6 0-0 ♗g7



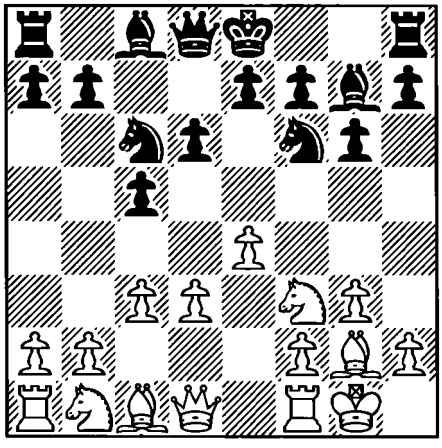
Black has chosen a 'Dragon' set-up with his pieces and pawns well entrenched in the centre and controlling some useful dark squares.

7 c3

Exercise: This little pawn move is preferred in the King's Indian Attack to the developing 7 ♘c3, which would bring us into Closed Sicilian territory. Can you think of some reasons for choosing the pawn move?

Answer: If you have read the introduction above and the note to 3 g3 you will understand the value of 7 c3. White reduces the range of the bishop on g7 and takes away the d4-square as an operational base for the black knight on c6. As an exaggerated example of the value of this preventive idea, if we play 7 ♘c3 0-0 and then let White make the careless move 8 ♕e2?! after 8...♗g4, intending 9...♘d4, things are already somewhat awkward for him.

However, the strategic crux of the matter is that 7 c3 can support a space-gaining pawn advance, either in the centre with d3-d4 or on the queenside with a2-a3 and b2-b4. If White can advance d3-d4 without being punished he will have built a pawn centre of the kind he never achieves in the Sicilian main line, where after 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 his centre is permanently kept half size by 3...cxd4 – see the Larsen quotation that began this chapter.



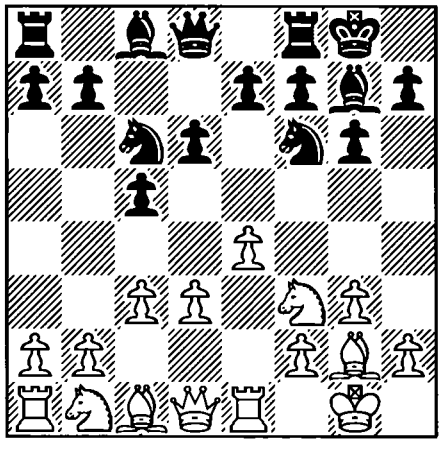
7...0-0

Question: Why not 7...c4 to break up White's pawns?

Answer: The pawns don't remain broken up for long after 7...c4 8 dxc4 ♘xe4 9 ♘d4! when the knight dare not move from e4 because of 10 ♘xc6. After 9...♘xd4 10 cxd4 ♘f6 White has a good game due to the open diagonal for his bishop and potential pressure down the e-file.

Note that 7...c4 fails for tactical reasons: if it wasn't for White's vigorous response it might have been a good strategic idea. So don't allow your opponent to play a ...c5-c4-style move if it can't be punished.

8 ♖e1

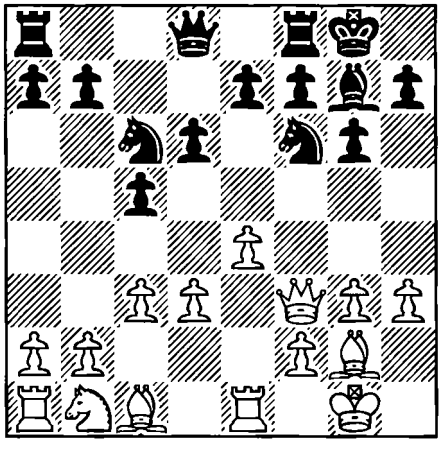


Now there won't be any ...c5-c4 move as e4 is defended.

Exercise: So far Black has been able to make straightforward developing moves, but now he has to come up with a counter to White's positional threat of seizing a pleasant space advantage with 9 d4. Consider these three responses by Black. 8...♗g4, 8...e6, and 8...e5. What is the purpose of each of these moves? How effective are they? Which do you think is the most annoying for White?

Answer: First of all, 8...♗g4!? pins the knight, so that White's immediate centre expansion is no longer attractive as 9 d4? cxd4 10 cxd4 ♕b6!, threatening to take on f3 and then on d4, is very awkward for him: 11 ♗e3 drops a pawn to 11...♕xb2 while 11 d5 ♘e5 leaves him in an awkward pin.

White, of course, has no need to rush things in the centre. After 8...♗g4 9 h3! he acquires the bishop-pair. Not that this particularly troubles Black as he remains solid after 9...♗xf3 (to retreat would allow White 10 d4 after all) 10 ♕xf3!?.



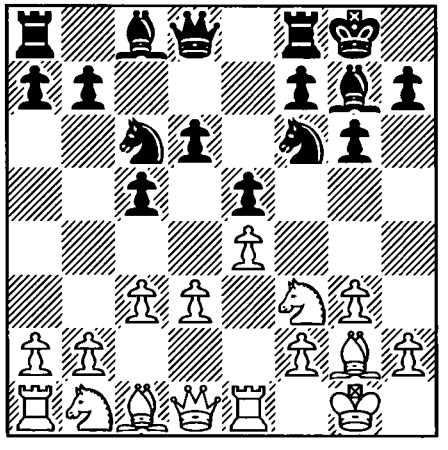
Now in B.Amin-L.Nisipeanu, Khanty-Mansiysk, 2007, Black played 10...b5!?, sacrificing the exchange when White perhaps had a slight edge after 11 e5 ♘xe5 12 ♕xa8 ♕xa8 13 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 14 ♖d1 ♘d5 (if 14...c4 15 a4! looks a good reply, as 15...bxa4 16 dxc4 or 15...♘xd3 16 axb5 gives White a definite plus) 15 a3 a5 16 ♔f1, etc. Back at move 11, White could decline the exchange and just build up in the centre with natural moves: for example, 11 ♕e2 ♖b8 12 a3 a5 13 ♘d2 a4 14 ♘f3 ♘d7 15 ♗e3 ♕b6 16 ♖ad1. He could play in similar style if Black didn't offer the exchange. For example, another Amin game went 10...♖b8 11 ♗e3 ♘d7 12 ♖d1 ♕c7 13 a4 a6 14 ♕e2 b5 15 axb5 axb5 16 d4 b4 17 h4 with some edge for White in B.Amin-S.Bogner, Cappelle la Grande 2010.

In summary, after 8...♗g4 Black has taken the sting out of d3-d4 by exchanging off his only minor piece that can't fight for the dark squares. On the other hand, White has the two bishops and the chance to improve his position. A small advantage of this kind is all we're looking for in the King's Indian Attack.

Black's second option is 8...e6. The idea is to allow White to advance d3-d4, but block the centre in the style of the French Defence, when Black is well entrenched on the light squares. Nonetheless, this strategy looks unattractive, as White gets to seize space on the kingside and drive the black knight from f6. The white rook is well placed on e1 to support the spearhead on e5. A possible sequence is 9 d4 cxd4 10 cxd4 d5 11 e5 ♘e4 12 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 13 ♗xd2 ♕b6 14 ♗c3 ♗d7 15 h4 f6 16 exf6 ♗xf6 17 ♕d2 ♖ae8 18 ♖ad1 ♕c7 19 ♘g5! and White had the initiative in E.Vorobiov-G.Nigalidze, Rijeka 2010.

So, 8...♗g4 looks a good idea, 8...e6 a poor one, and as for 8...e5, well, that occurred in our main game.

8...e5!?

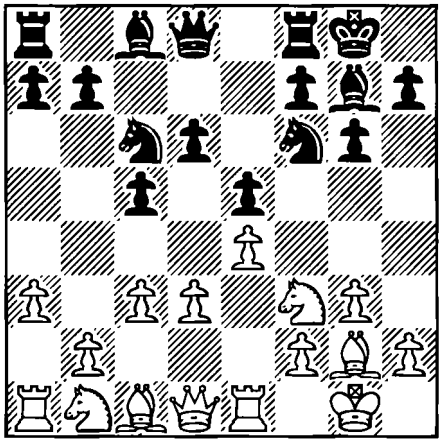


The critical response. Black equalizes space on the e-file, and has more advanced pawns in the centre as a whole. In the Ruy Lopez, Black often increases the size of his centre with ...c7-c5: for example, with the laboured manoeuvre ...♘a5 and ...c7-c5 in the Chigorin. Here he has already achieved ...c7-c5.

Black has no weaknesses on the kingside, which is heavily fortified. The preparation of the advance f2-f4 is unappealing for White; besides his rook would be better for this task on f1. Nor is d3-d4 a promising option – it would bring Black's bishop on g7 back into the game after the response ...e5xd4 and ...♗g4.

Question: **It seems Black's pieces are poised to take advantage of loosening moves such as d3-d4 or f2-f4. How can White launch an attack without waking the beast on g7?**

Answer: **9 a3!**



White prepares b2-b4.

Question: Why would this be a strong pawn advance?

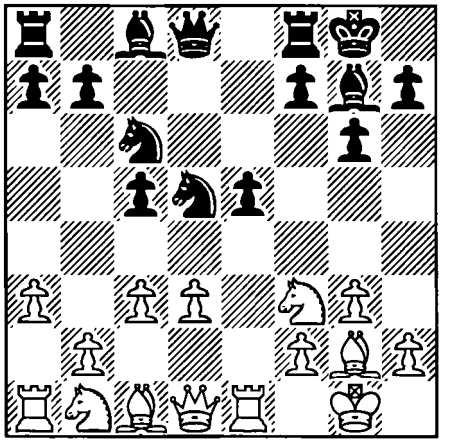
Answer: The value of b2-b4 is:

1) The b2-square is cleared for the white bishop, whence it can support the strategically desirable d3-d4 advance and oppose the black bishop on g7.

2) After b2-b4, the exchange ...c5xb4 and a3xb4 is unattractive for Black as it reduces the size of his centre and opens up files and diagonals for the white pieces on the queenside. However, if Black avoids this exchange, he won't be able to arrange a freeing ...d6-d5 advance without leaving the c5-pawn hanging.

3) The pawn advance opens up the option of b4-b5, driving the black knight from its strong central square. It would be offside on a5 and with few options on e7. The removal of the black knight facilitates the plan of d3-d4, as the knight would no longer have influence over this square. There would also be extra pressure on the e5-pawn if it was no longer defended by the black horse.

Exercise: Assess the pros and cons of the position for both sides if Black plays the immediate 9...d5 to conquer more space in the centre and the game continues 10 exd5 ♘xd5.

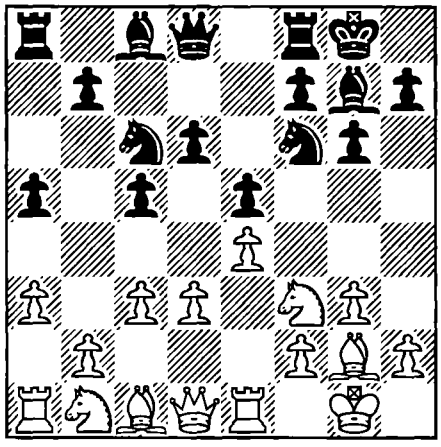


Answer: After 9...d5 10 exd5 ♘xd5 the features associated with advantage for Black are: the greater space afforded by having pawns on c5 and e5, the excellently placed knight on d5, and the chance to attack White's backward pawn on d3, say with ...♗f5.

On the other hand, 10 exd5 would open up the h1-a8 diagonal for White's bishop, his rook on e1 and knight on f3 get to attack e5, and the pressure can be increased with ♘d2 and ♘c4. Moreover, the white queen could even add to the pressure on d5 from b3. The black knight is well placed on d5, but is also an object of attack.

White also has the chance to activate his dark-squared bishop after the loosening of the dark square barrier: for example, he could play ♗g5, to provoke the weakening ...f7-f6, followed by a retreat back to d2; or, in some cases instead of ♗g5, he could try ♗e3, attacking c5, if Black no longer has the option of ...♘xe3. Black's bishop on g7 is doing a great job bolstering the kingside, but its absence from the defence of the queenside makes the c5-pawn slight vulnerable.

Question: What happens if Black stops the queenside expansion with 9...a5?

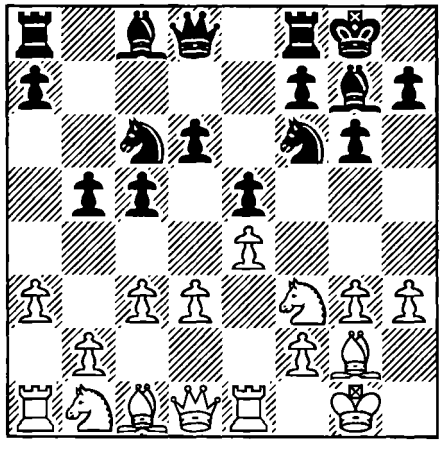


Answer: White can respond to 9...a5 with 10 a4!. He is certainly getting full value out of the a-pawn as it now incapacitates the black queenside pawns as an attacking force by stopping ...b7-b5. It also secures a post at c4 or even b5 (not quite so good, however, as that's further from the centre) for the knight on b1, either of which can be accessed with ♘a3.

9...b5!?

Black mobilizes his queenside pawns at once. He prevents a future b4-b5 by blocking the b5-square, so that 10 b4 is now well answered by 10...a5! when White can't maintain a pawn on b4. Then 11 bxc5 dxc5 12 ♗e3 ♕e7 looks at least OK for Black.

10 h3



Question: Why does White make a puny looking pawn move on the kingside when the battle is raging on the queenside?

Answer: White wants to advance d3-d4. He secures his knight's role in this plan by ruling out ...♗g4, and he ensures that ♗e3 is possible without being attacked by ...♘g4 – an exchange with ...♘xe3 would be unwelcome. Sometimes little moves are vital links in the chain of a chess strategy.

10...♖b8 11 ♗e3

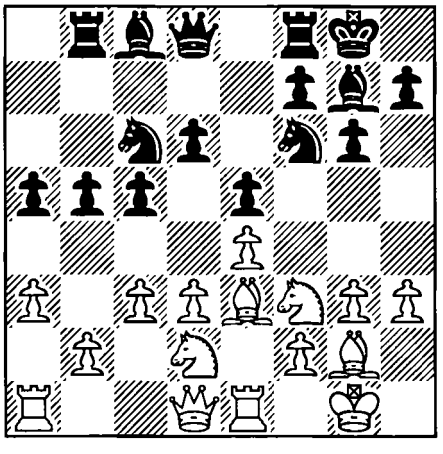
So White's bishop never got to b2 after all. On the other hand, 9...b5 means that the pawn on c5 can't be defended by ...b7-b6 any longer. Without the moves 9 a3 and 9...b5 thrown in, Black would be able to respond 11...b6 and then 12...d5, gaining space in the centre when 13 exd5 ♘xd5, planning to exchange the bishop on e3, looks good for him.

Notice how the inconsequential looking wing moves of the pawns – 9 a3 and 10 h3 – are essential parts of White's plan.

11...a5

Before White played ♗e3, the move b2-b4 could always be answered by ...a7-a5, not conceding any ground on the queenside; but with the bishop on e3, this would lose a pawn to bxc5. Not wishing to be forced to defend the c5-pawn by ...♕e7, Black rules out the b2-b4 move. Besides, he is happy to gain more space.

12 ♘bd2



Exercise: White is limbering up for d3-d4. Any suggestions about the best way for Black to reduce the impact of this move?

12...♗e6

Putting the bishop on e6 is hardly discouraging a white advance in the centre.

Answer: Black might have stabilized his queenside structure with 12...a4!? 13 d4 c4. If now 14 d5?! Black has either 14...♘a5, with the idea of invading on b3 with the knight, or else 14...♘e7, followed by ...f7-f5 (after clearing the f6-square of course and suitable preparation, such as ...h7-h6 to prevent ♘g5 which would otherwise threaten to invade on e6 after

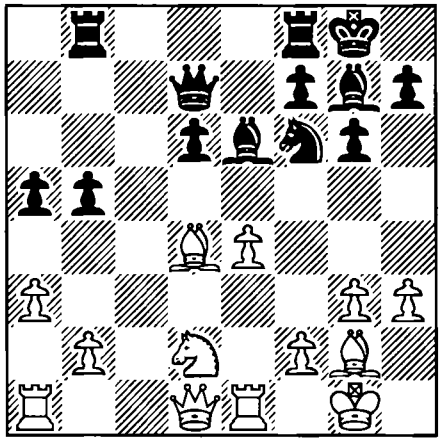
...f7-f5 has weakened the square). Things could then get unpleasant for White's bishop on e3 with ...f5-f4 looming. So White should keep the centre dynamic with, say, 14 ♕c2 and 14 ♖ad1. Perhaps he could prepare to advance his own f-pawn at some point to increase the size of his centre with say ♘h2 and f2-f4.

I guess that psychologically speaking, Black found it hard to block up the queenside, especially as he has played his rook to b8 only a couple of moves earlier.

13 d4

Thanks to his opponent's over routine 10th move White achieves the d4 advance in a favourable way. The threat of 14 d5, not to mention the twice-attacked pawn on c5, persuades Black to liquidate on d4, when he is left with the worse pawn structure in the shape of the backward and isolated pawn on d6.

13...cxd4 14 cxd4 exd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 16 ♗xd4 ♕d7



Question: how should White deal with the threat to his h-pawn?

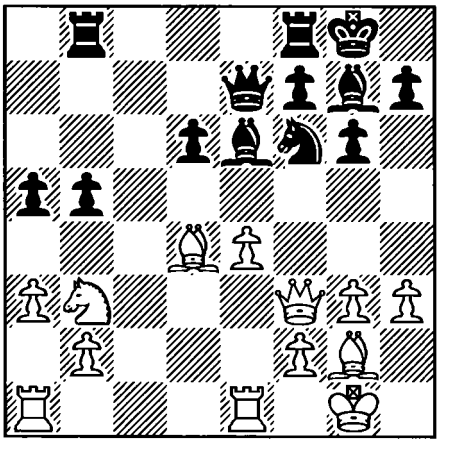
Answer: **17 ♕f3!**

Ruinous is 17 ♔h2? ♘g4+ 18 hxg4 ♗xd4 depriving him of his vital dark-squared bishop and leaving both b2 and g4 hanging. Weakening are both 17 g4 and 17 h4; in the latter case Black has acquired the g4-square for his knight and could try for counterplay with 17...♗h3.

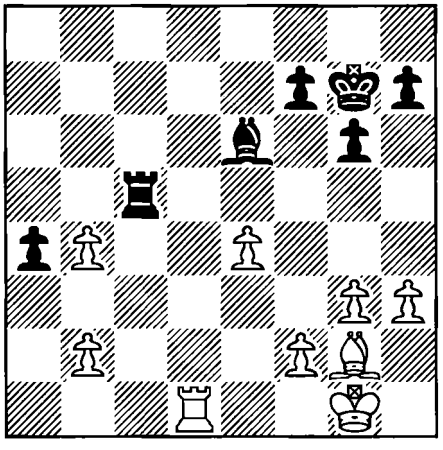
Black may have overlooked the strength of 17 ♕f3! when he allowed 13 d4. He stays on the defensive as f6 hangs and the exchange of dark-squared bishops after 17...♘h5 or 17...♘e8 would leave his kingside weak.

Note that White is happy to swap his important dark-squared bishop for its black counterpart, whereas exchanging it for the black knight in the variation above with 17 ♔h2? ♘g4+ would be anathema to him. In King's Indian style set-ups there is a clear hierarchy of minor pieces: Black's bishop on g7 is at the top, White's dark-squared bishop is a little be-

low it, and neither of these pieces wants to be exchanged for a 'lower order' knight.
17...♕e7 18 ♘b3!



White finds a clever way to simplify the position and so emphasise the superiority of his pawn structure.
18...a4 19 ♘a5 ♕c7
After 19...♖bc8 20 ♖ac1 the threat of 21 ♘c6, driving the black queen from the defence of f6, is renewed.
20 ♗xf6 ♕xa5 21 ♖ed1 ♖b6 22 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 23 ♖d4
White plans to combine pressure against d6 with threats to the black king, as there are a lot of loose dark squares in his defences and the piece best able to protect him (the black queen) is far away trying to drum up queenside counterplay.
23...♖c8 24 ♖ad1 ♖c2 25 ♕f4 b4
Black gets his queen back in touch with events in the centre, as there's no time for 25...♖xb2 because White gets a winning attack on his king after 26 e5! dxe5 27 ♕xe5+ or 26...d5 27 ♗xd5.
26 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 27 ♕xd6 ♕c5
Instead, after 27...♖xb2 White wouldn't need to try to mate, a queen check on d4 picks up the black rook.
28 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 29 axb4
White should win easily enough, but he gets a bit careless and at one point Black could even have established a book draw.



29...♖c2 30 ♖a1 ♗b3 31 e5 ♖xb2 32 ♗c6 f6 33 ♗xa4 ♗e6 34 ♗c6 ♖xb4 35 ♖a7+ ♔f8 36 exf6 ♖b6 37 ♗e4 ♗xh3 38 ♖xh7 ♗f5 39 ♗xf5 gxf5 40 f7 ♖g6 41 ♔h2 f4 42 ♔h3 fxg3 43 fxg3 ♖a6 44 g4 ♖a1 45 ♔g2 ♖a3

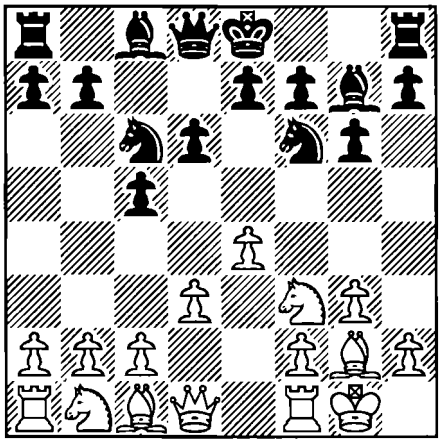
As analysing rook and pawn endgames isn't the purpose of this book, suffice to say that 45...♖e1! holds after 46 ♔g3 ♖f1, intending 47...♖xf7 drawing, unless White plays 47 ♔h4?? when 47...♖h1+ wins the rook. Or if instead 46 ♔f3 ♖f1+ 47 ♔e4 ♖xf7? loses the pawn endgame, but waiting with 47...♖f2! is sufficient. Now 48 g5 ♖xf7 is a draw, while if 48 ♔e5 ♖f1 both 49 g5 ♖xf7 and 49 ♔e6 ♖f6+! (exploiting a stalemate trap to drive the white king back) 50 ♔e5 ♖f1 are draws.

The remaining moves were:

46 ♔f2 ♖a4 47 ♔g3 ♖a5 48 ♔h4 ♖a4 49 ♔h5 ♔e7 50 g5 ♖a1 51 ♔g6 ♖f1 52 ♖h8 1-0

Game 9
M.Venkatesh-M.Parligras
Golden Sands 2013

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d3 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 d6 6 0-0 ♘f6



7 c3

Instead, 7 h3 would prevent the pin with ...♗g4 that follows. White got some advantage after 7...0-0 8 c3 ♖b8 9 ♖e1 b5 10 d4 cxd4 11 cxd4 d5 12 e5 ♘e4 13 ♘bd2 ♘xd2 14 ♗xd2 ♕b6 15 ♗e3 in L.Galego-N.Vyskocil, Pardubice 2013.

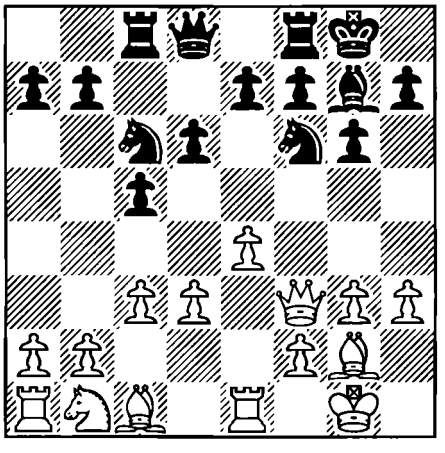
7...0-0 8 ♖e1

The actual move order in the game featured a flank opening: 1 ♘f3 c5 2 g3 ♘c6 3 ♗g2 g6 4 d3 ♗g7 5 e4 d6 6 0-0 ♘f6 7 ♖e1 0-0 8 c3. Note that I've also swapped the order of White's seventh and eighth moves, so that the move order is consistent with Game 8.

8...♗g4

Diverging from the 8...e5 of the aforementioned game. Black gives up the bishops to make it harder for White to advance d3-d4 in a satisfactory way. He hopes to gain pressure along the h8-a1 diagonal which will culminate in an attack with ...b7-b5 on White's queenside.

9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♕xf3 ♖c8



Question: **What is the point of this move?**

Answer: Black wants to obtain counterplay with ...b7-b5, but if immediately 10...b5 he might have feared the sharp 11 e5!? ♘xe5 12 ♕xa8 ♕xa8 13 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 when he is the exchange down. Nonetheless, due to Black's active pieces and solid structure, White would only have a minimal advantage after 14 ♖d1.

Putting the rook on c8 avoids that variation and also makes a future d3-d4 advance a little less attractive for White as the black rook would control the open c-file after the exchange ...c5xd4 and recapture c3xd4.

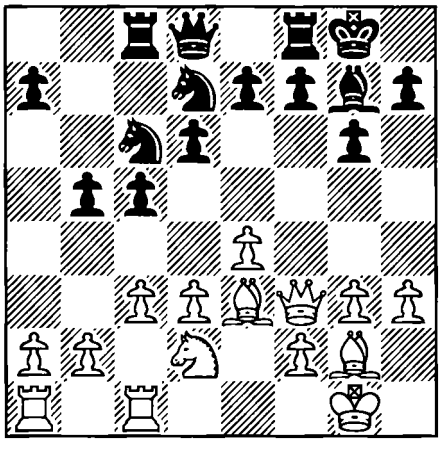
11 ♗e3 ♘d7

The fight continues over the d4-square with Black unleashing the bishop on g7 to help restrain d3-d4.

12 ♘d2

White has to develop his queenside, but now the c3 point is less well defended, which provokes the b7-pawn into rushing forward.

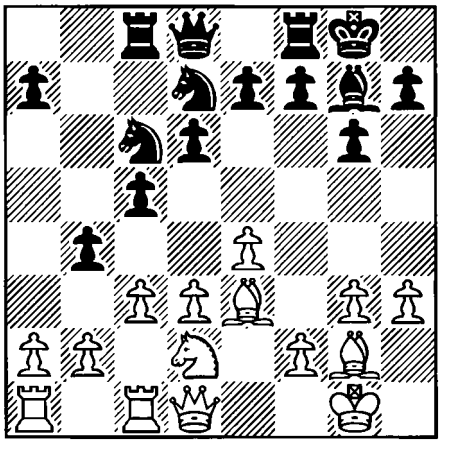
12...b5 13 ♖ec1



Question: **The white rook goes to a passive square. What is White trying to do? Has he given up on preparing the pawn advance d3-d4?**

Answer: White's plan for the moment is simply to survive his opponent's blitzkrieg along the h8-a1 diagonal without making any big concession in position or dropping material. He still plans to expand with d3-d4 after very careful preparation, when he hopes that his long term advantage of the two bishops will be of more importance than Black's (temporary) activity.

13...b4 14 ♕d1



Exercise: Can you see a couple of reasons why this queen retreat is a good idea?

Answer: In general it's good to have the queen back in touch with the queenside as that is the scene of action. On d1 she is also well placed to support a future d3-d4 advance. More specifically, with his next move Black was intending to infiltrate with ...♘a4, when both b2 and c3 would be under attack. The queen retreat has pre-empted that very dangerous idea by controlling a4.

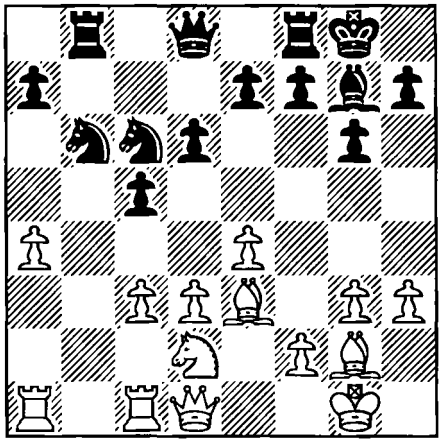
14...♘b6 15 a3!

Another prophylactic move. White undermines the b4-pawn before Black could start another wave of attack with ...a7-a5, planning to advance the pawn all the way to a3 if allowed to wreck the white defences on the long diagonal.

15...bxc3?

Black doesn't want to open the a-file for the white rook, but 15...a5 was nonetheless the natural move, keeping the black pawn chain intact after 16 axb4 axb4.

16 bxc3 ♖b8 17 a4!



Question: Why is this a good move for White?

Answer: Nimzowitsch once said that a move on the wings with thoughts on the centre was the highest nature of positional chess. Parligras is now in a dilemma, as he doesn't want his knight kicked back by 18 a5, but nor does he want to play 17...a5 as the pawn could become a liability on a5.

17...♘a5

Black therefore elects to block the pawn's path with his knight. Here, however, it no longer helps restrain the d3-d4 move. The tide is gradually turning in White's favour.

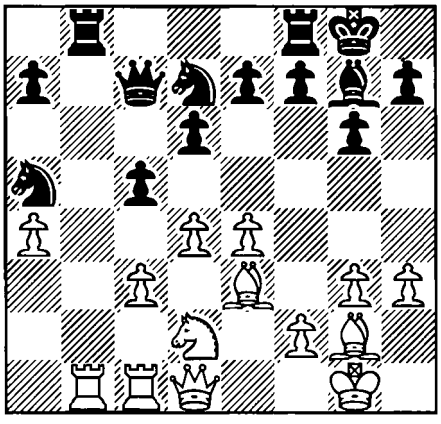
18 ♖ab1

There should be no hurry to play d3-d4 as the black knights can then invade on c4. So first of all White plays the rook to b1 with ideas of a future queenside expansion with 19 ♖b5 ♘c6 20 a5, etc.

18...♘d7

The knight runs away after which White finally achieves his long desired advance in the centre.

19 d4 ♕c7



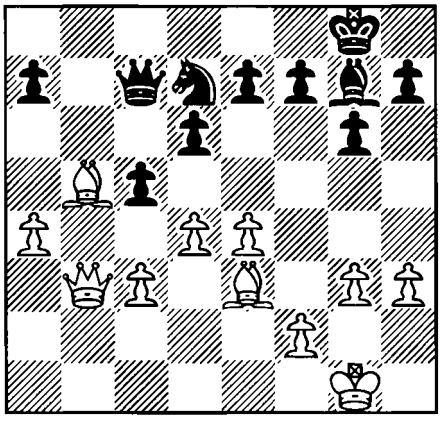
Exercise: How does White tip the energy balance on the queenside in his favour?

Answer: **20 ♗f1!**

Note that if Black had kept his knight on 6 at move 18 then White would have played 19 ♗f1! as a prelude to 20 d4, when the black knights would have been kept out of c4.

The bishop retreat to f1 is often game-changing in the King's Indian Attack. Here it gets involved in the queenside action, turning the battle in White's favour. It rules out any invasion by a black knight with ...♘c4 in the future and prepares to go to b5 to increase the queenside pressure. Meanwhile the celebrated 'Dragon' bishop on g7 remains mute.

20...♖xb1 21 ♖xb1 ♖b8 22 ♖xb8+ ♕xb8 23 ♗b5 ♕c7 24 ♘b3 ♘xb3 25 ♕xb3



Exercise: Who has benefited most from the exchanges?
How do you assess the position and what is White's best plan?

Answer: White is more than happy to have swapped off both pairs of rooks and the knight on a5. After the clearance the energy missing from Black's game due to the passive bishop on g7 becomes more significant. Meanwhile obstacles facing the white pawn on a4 have been removed. It isn't a passed pawn, but abetted by the two bishops it will become a major queening threat. The bishop on e3 points ominously at the a7-pawn through the flimsy cover of c5. If White could get his pawn to a6 and play ♕b7 he would be close to a win.

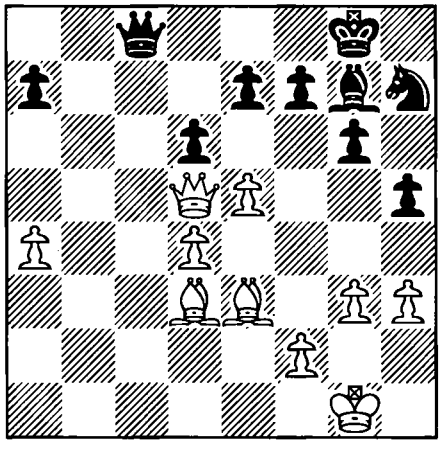
25...♘f6 26 ♗d3 h5 27 ♕b5 cxd4 28 cxd4 ♕c8

After 28...♘d7 White could continue advancing his pawn with 29 a5, but now he has an even more incisive plan.

29 e5!

If now 29...dxe5 30 dxe5 exposes an attack on the a- pawn, while Black's kingside is fractured after 29...♘e8 30 e6! fxe6 (not 30...♕xe6 as e8 hangs) 31 ♗xg6, or equally 29...♘d7 30 e6! fxe6 31 ♗xg6. Therefore the black knight goes to a passive square.

29...♘h7 30 ♕d5!



Question: Is this a high-class move?

Answer: Putting the queen on d5 threatens 31 ♗xg6 which buys time for White to play ♔g2 without being bothered by ♕a8+. It also brings the queen into an attack on d6.

30...♘f8 31 exd6 exd6 32 ♔g2!

At last we defend the pawn on h3 – Black is denied any counterplay after 32 ♕xd6 ♕xh3. As always, the golden rule is 'do not hurry!'.

32...♕d7 33 a5

With the bishop on g7 inert and White's a-pawn about to reach a6, the writing is on the wall for Black's position.

33...♘e6 34 a6 ♗f6 35 ♕b7 ♕e7 36 ♗c4!

If Black does nothing then White can play 37 ♗xe6 when after 37...fxe6 38 d5 the bishop

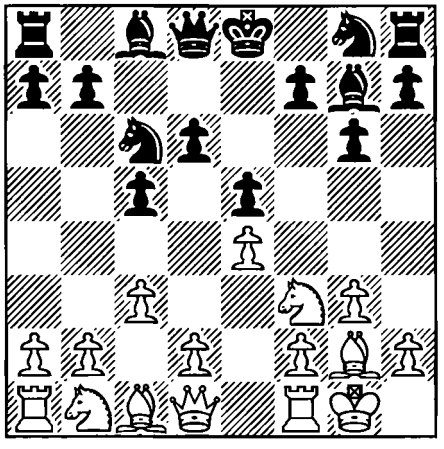
will capture on a7, or if 37...♕xe6 38 ♕xa7 and Black will only have a check or two before the a-pawn decides the game.

36...♘c7 37 ♕xa7 h4 38 g4 d5 39 ♗d3 ♔g7 40 ♕b7 ♕a3 41 ♗e2 ♕c3 42 a7 1-0

A great technical display by Venkatesh.

Game 10
B.Amin-E.Safarli
Tromso (rapid) 2013

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d3 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 d6 6 c3 e5!



Question: Why does this move get an exclamation mark?

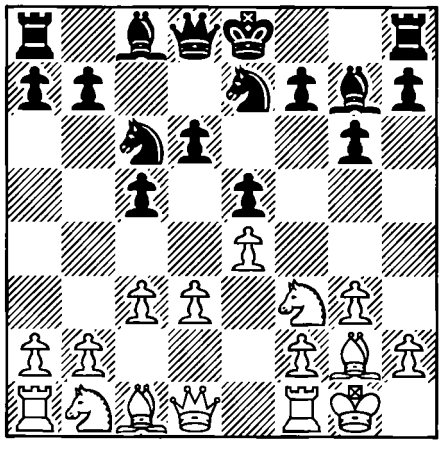
Answer: Firstly, it is in praise of the move itself which stops White gaining space in the centre with 7 d4. And, secondly, I'm showing my admiration for Black's very precise move order. Thanks to the fact that he has played 2...♘c6 rather than 2...e6, he is able to advance ...e7-e5 in 'one go' to stop White from playing d2-d4. He has also avoided ...♘f6, so that his knight can slip into the e7-square where it doesn't interfere with the restraining influence of the bishop on g7 against d4.

7 0-0

The move order in the game was actually 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 0-0 d6 6 c3 e5 7 d3 ♘ge7 which made 6...e5! all the more critical to stop 7 d4 'in one go'.

7...♘ge7

Well, it's disappointing for White to be a tempo down on a 'French move' order, but the good news is that it is a quiet, manoeuvring game.



Exercise: We've been stopped from advancing in the centre, so how do we add some pawn power to our set-up?

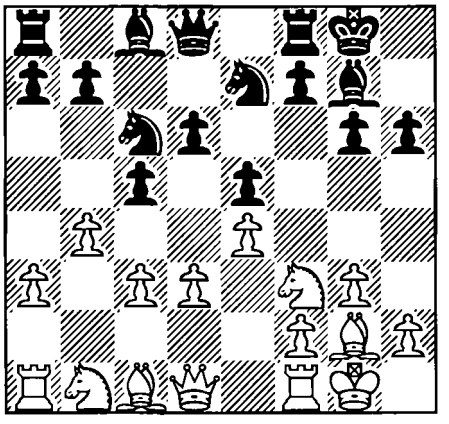
Answer: **8 a3**

Our standard plan of gaining space on the queenside. Our queenside pawns can laugh fearlessly at the bishop on g7 that is stuck behind the pawn on e5, which shows not everything is perfect about Black's set-up.

The other way to inject some dynamism into our pawns was 8 ♗e3, so that after 8...0-0 White can make a beeline for an attack on the kingside with 9 ♘h4. However, I don't really believe in White's initiative and after 9...b6 10 f4 exf4 11 gxf4 d5, as played in the earlier B.Amin-E.Safarli,Tromso (rapid) 2013, I think Black is already at least equal due to White's fragile centre. Besides, this type of rapid action (dare we say scrappy play?) isn't part of the usual King's Indian Attack strategy. Like Bent Larsen in the quotation at the start of the chapter, I feel that we should leave all the tactical tricks to players who like 3 d4 versus the Sicilian.

Incidentally, both the main game and this excerpt were played between Bassem Amin and Eltaj Safarli in their match in the FIDE World Cup in 2013. The main game was their sixth encounter, the excerpt their third. Although Amin managed to win with 8 ♗e3, it is perhaps significant that he later returned to 8 a3.

8...0-0 9 b4 h6

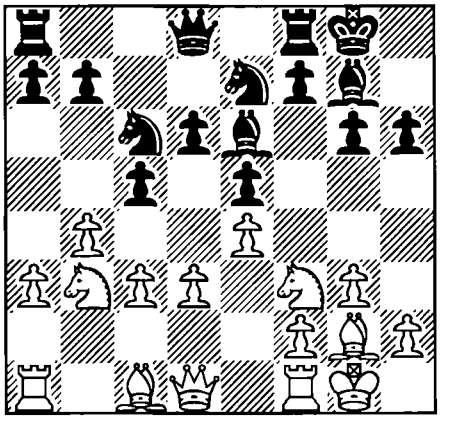


Question: Why does Black plays this move?

Answer: Black wants to put his bishop on e6 without risk of it being attacked by ♘g5, as to allow ♘xe6 would be a very poor swap of his important light-squared bishop for a knight.

As mentioned above, players of Black are prepared to reach this position a tempo down after starting the game with an ...e7-e6 set-up: for example, 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 g3 g6 5 ♗g2 ♗g7 6 0-0 ♘ge7 7 ♖e1 0-0 8 c3 e5 9 a3 d6.

10 ♘bd2 ♗e6 11 ♘b3!?



A speciality of the Egyptian Grandmaster.

Exercise: What is Black's best response? a) Defend the pawn with 11...b6. b) Advance it with 11...c4. c) Play 11...♕d7 as 12 bxc5 ♗xb3 13 ♕xb3 dxc5 leaves d3 weak.

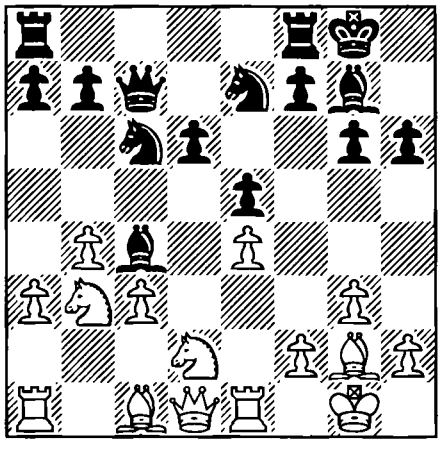
Answer: Black tried 11...♕d7? in B.Amin-E.Nekrasova, Dubai 2013. After 12 bxc5 ♗xb3 13 ♕xb3 dxc5 the white d3-pawn may need to be defended, but why should White care about that minor inconvenience when he has got the positional prize of exchanging his knight for Black's light-squared bishop (see the note to 9...h6 above). After the moves 14 ♖d1 ♖ac8 15 ♗e3 b6 16 h4! with ideas of 17 h5, and perhaps 17 ♔h2 and 18 ♗h3, Black's light squares were already looking shaky.

Instead, 11...b6 is a solid response. Then B.Amin-S.Khader, Dubai 2005, went 12 ♗b2 (it was also possible to close the queenside at once with 12 b5 ♘b8 13 c4) 12...a5 (Black decides to rule out any future white a-pawn advances on the queenside) 13 b5 ♘b8 14 c4 ♖a7 15 ♘fd2 and here an interesting line would be 15...♘d7 16 ♘c1 (bringing the passive knight over to the kingside) 16...f5 17 exf5 gxf5 18 ♘e2 f4. Black might be overpressing as after 19 ♘c3 he has a formidable dark-square pawn chain, but there are also light-square holes in his centre.

After 11..b6 12 ♗b2 Black could prevent 13 b5 with 12..a6 but then a slight weakness is created on b6 which White could play against in the future with a regrouping such as ♘bd2, ♕e2, ♖ab1, and ♘c4 when appropriate. It is worth mentioning that despite White having his bishop on b2 and two knights aimed at d4, the pawn advance d3-d4 is very seldom a good idea for White – in fact most of the time it's terrible.

The third option is seen in the game. I think it is the best response, whereas 11...b6 isn't far behind, and 11...♕d7? is wheezing in the distance.

11...c4 12 dxc4 ♗xc4 13 ♖e1 ♕c7 14 ♘fd2



Exercise: The knight attacks the bishop, but can you see any other reason for this move?

Answer: The knight on d2 would like to get into contact with the hole in Black's centre on d5, which would make a good outpost square for it. It can get there via f1 and e3.

14...♗e6

Question: **What is the best way to activate the sleepy bishop on c1?**

Answer: **15 a4**

Amin clears the a3-square for the bishop.

15...a5

Meanwhile Black wants to create a strong point on c5 for his knights and so forces the white pawn forwards.

16 b5 ♘b8 17 ♗a3

White gets his bishop to an active square. Now 17...♕xc3? would be crazy for Black as 18 ♗xd6 would be a good swap for White and the immediate 18 ♖c1 looks much stronger.

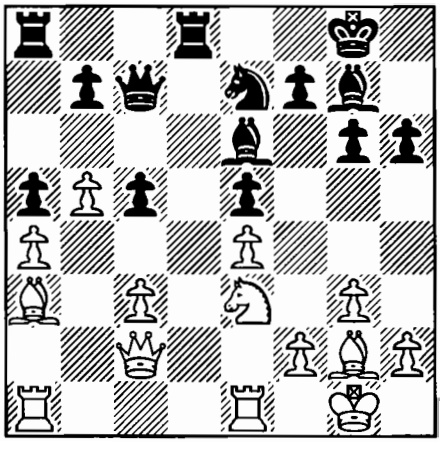
17...♘d7 18 ♘f1

Both sides pursue their manoeuvres with knights. White's horse heads towards the d5-square, the black one to c5 to block the attack on d6.

18...♘c5 19 ♘xc5 dxc5 20 ♘e3

White has emerged with a small but lasting positional advantage due to the gap in the black pawn structure on d5.

20...♖fd8 21 ♕c2



Question: **Is there a good regrouping manoeuvre available to Black?**

Answer: **21...♘c8!**

The knight heads for b6 where it will fight for control of c4 and also attack the a4-pawn – this will be a nuisance for White as one of his rooks or queen will have to keep an eye on the pawn.

Exercise: How can White now try to increase his grip on the centre light squares, and what should be Black's response?

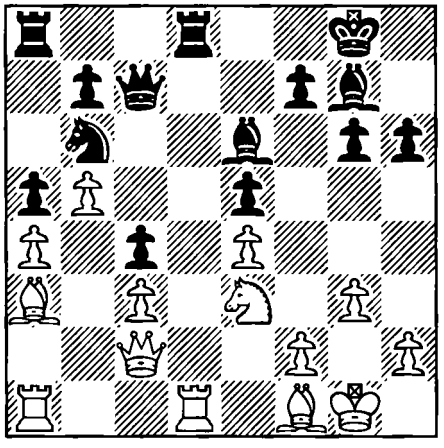
Answer: **22 ♗f1!**

As so often in the KIA, the bishop finds its best chances through retreating back to f1. Given the chance White will play 23 ♗c4 to more or less force the exchange of light-squared bishops. Black doesn't want to be left with only a bishop shut in by its own pawns on g7, and so he played:

22...c4!

A vital move that reclaims the c4-square and clears the way for ...♗f8 to exchange off the inactive bishop.

23 ♖ed1 ♘b6



Exercise: Now Black is ready to exchange off his bishop with ...♗f8, how can White return the compliment?

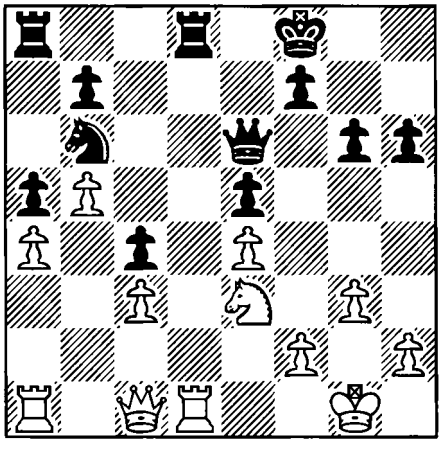
Answer: **24 ♗e2**

The bishop heads for g4. Black might have stopped it with 24...h5, but either he thought the slight weakening of his kingside was unnecessary as there was no longer anything to fear in the exchange, or he considered that White's bishop would be quite useful in any case after 25 ♗f3 where it might support a future ♘d5.

24...♗f8 25 ♗xf8 ♔xf8 26 ♗g4 ♕e7 27 ♗xe6 ♕xe6

The position looks fairly equal, especially as the a4-pawn needs to be kept defended, but here Amin came up with a neat little move.

28 ♕c1!



Even Karpov, the master par excellence of first-rank manoeuvres with the queen, would be proud of finding this retreat. White plans to swing his rook via a2 to the centre, while the indirect attack on h6-pawn through the white knight makes Safarli uncomfortable.

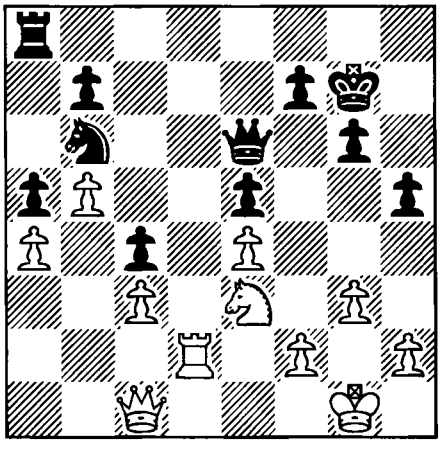
28...h5

So Black does play ...h6-h5 after all – see the comment to 24 ♗e2 above.

29 ♖a2! ♔g7 30 ♖ad2!

Cleverly done: it turns out the white pieces don't have to stay defending the a4-pawn.

30...♖xd2 31 ♖xd2



Question: **So what does happen if the knight takes the pawn on a4?**

Answer: The neat point is that 31...♘xa4 loss the knight to 32 ♕a3! ♘b6 33 ♖d6.

31...♕e7 32 ♕d1

Now the white queen defends a4 and empowers the rook along the d-file.

32...♕a3?

It was better to go into heavy defence with 32...♖f8, when if 33 ♖d6 ♘xa4! is suddenly a good move. Of course, White could keep up the pressure with a slower move, or even 33 ♘d5 ♘xd5 34 ♖xd5.

33 ♖d6! ♘xa4 34 ♘xc4 ♕a2

After 34...♕xc3 35 ♕d5! dominates the centre with ideas of 36 ♖d7 or 36 ♘xe5, not to mention taking the pawn on b7.

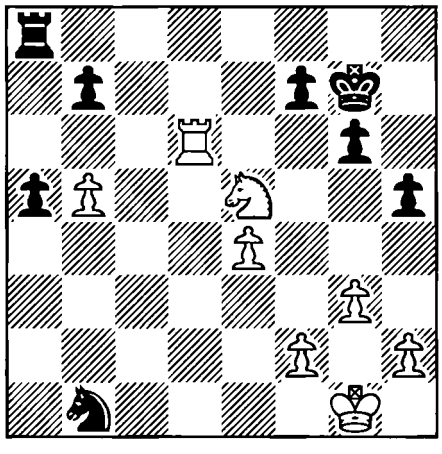
35 ♘xe5?

Here 35 ♕d5! still looked very powerful: for example, 35...♕a1+ 36 ♔g2 ♕xc3 37 ♘xe5 ♖f8 38 ♖d7 when f7 drops or 35...♖f8 36 ♕xe5+ ♔g8 37 ♘xa5 and White is two pawns up.

35...♘xc3 36 ♕d3

Unfortunately for White, 36 ♕d4 loses the queen to a fork on e2.

36...♕b1+ 37 ♕xb1 ♘xb1



After the exchange of queens Black has a close to winning advantage due to his well-supported passed pawn.

38 ♖d1

White had a wonderful method of drawing worthy of a study: 38 ♖d7! a4 39 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 40 ♖xb7 a3 41 ♘d7 a2 42 ♘f6+ ♔f8 43 ♘h7+ ♔e8 44 ♘f6+ ♔d8. It seems like White's attempt at perpetual has failed, but 45 ♖d7+ ♔c8 46 b6!! saves him as after 46...a1♕ 47 ♖c7+ Black has to agree a draw with 47...♔d8 48 ♖d7+ etc, as 47...♔b8 48 ♘d7 is mate.

38...♘c3 39 ♖d7 a4 40 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 ½-½

This game was played in a FIDE World Cup knock-out event. I assume a draw suited Safarli because the passed pawn gives him a winning advantage.

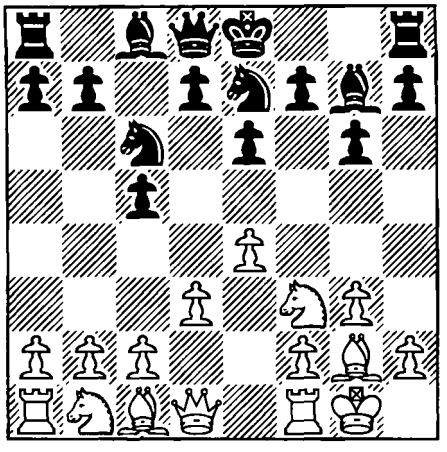
Part Two: Black arranges a pawn advance to d5

Game 11
D.Navara-S.Zilka
Czech Championship, Ledec nad Sazavou 2013

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 g3

In Chapter One we saw Black build up from this structure with moves like ...d7-d5, ...♘f6 and ...♗e7. Here we'll look at an alternative development of the bishop to g7. A fianchetto is eminently logical for Black in this set-up. The pawn on c5 is likely to remain on the board a long time, so it makes sense to invest a tempo in getting the bishop to a more active diagonal. On g7 it will be safe from attack and influencing central squares.

4...g6 5 ♗g2 ♗g7 6 0-0 ♘ge7



Exercise: A secondary consequence of the fianchetto on g7 is that Black's knight is often developed to e7 Any idea why this should be so?

Answer: It is a secure square safe from attack by e4-e5. The knight also avoids blocking the view of the bishop on g7 down the long diagonal as it would do on f6. In games without a fianchetto the e7-square will either be taken by the bishop, or putting the knight on that square would box in the bishop on f8. Hence the ...♗g7 and ...♘ge7 deployment go together in this type of 'French structure' with ...e7-e6.

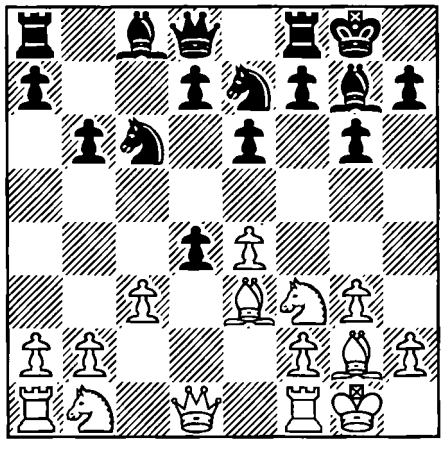
7 c3

You'll already be aware of the importance of this move in White's deployment from Part One. He blunts the power of the bishop on g7 and puts a support for a d3-d4 advance in place. Not that he would necessarily play d3-d4 if allowed.

7...d5

In Part One Black mostly used the alternative pawn advance to e5 to claim an equal share of space in the centre. Here 7...e5 is still possible, and you might like to consult Game Three to see how to handle it. In this version White has an extra tempo, because Black moves the e-pawn twice. Therefore it is more natural for Black to lead with ...d7-d5 here.

After the alternative 7...0-0 White could gain space with 8 d4, but delaying the advance with the probing 8 ♗e3!? is interesting. The game G.Kamsky-M.Bartel, Istanbul Olympiad 2012, continued 8...b6 9 d4 cxd4.



Exercise: Now the US Grandmaster played 10 ♘xd4. Try to work out why he preferred this to 10 cxd4. It might help to examine Black's pawn structure.

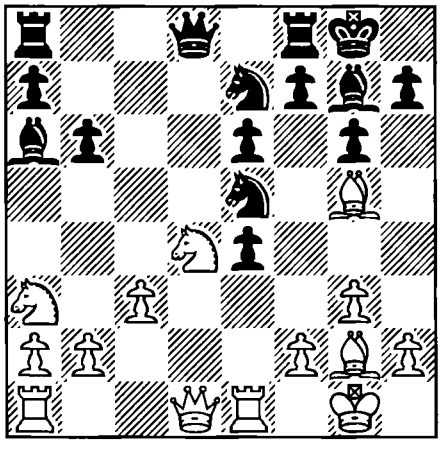
Answer: The positive points of 10 cxd4 are that White would establish a full pawn centre, his queen's knight would gain a post on c3, and he would maintain control over the e5-square. The drawback is that Black could reply 10...d5, blocking the centre when after 11 e5 ♘f5 he has ideas of both 12...♘xe3, gaining the bishop-pair, and 12...f6 with counterplay against the white centre. It might also be useful to throw in ...♗a6 at some point.

Kamsky's choice 10 ♘xd4 leads to a different type of centre structure. It puts the spotlight on Black's pawn on d7. It is reminiscent of a Sicilian Hedgehog set-up, but with Black's bishop committed at an early stage to g7 rather than sitting on e7. It is well placed on g7 to be sure, but it means that the d6-square is weaker than it would be in the Hedgehog with the bishop on e7. Here, for example, Black can't play d7-d6 and maintain the pawn on that square, as it would be besieged by moves like ♘b5, perhaps combined with a frontal assault by ♕d2 and ♖ad1. If the pawn stays on d7, the d6-square remains a hole in the black pawn structure: White could aim to put a knight on that square, perhaps with a manoeuvre such as ♘a3, ♘b5 and ♘d6.

So the natural riposte by Black is to engineer the 'freeing' advance ...d7-d5. If he could

carry this out safely he would be rid of his potentially weak pawn on d7 and square on d6, and he would dissolve the white centre by liquidating the e4-pawn. In that case Black would be perfectly fine – he could soon get the advantage.

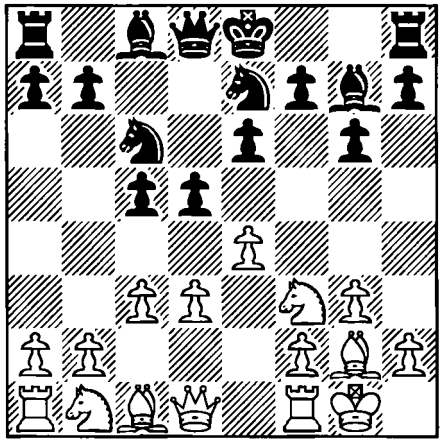
Therefore Kamsky has to ensure that ...d7-d5 can't be played by Black without incurring a structural disadvantage. The game continued 10 ♘xd4 ♗a6 11 ♖e1 ♘e5 12 ♘a3 d5 13 ♗g5! (putting pressure on the defence of d5 by pinning the knight) 13...dxe4.



Rather than Kamsky's 14 ♗xe4 which lead to complications after 14...♕d7 offering the exchange, I think 14 ♖xe4! is stronger. For example, if now 14...♕d7 White can keep up the pressure with 15 ♘dc2! (yes, this knight as White wants to exchange queens; the threat is to take on d7 and then e7) 15...♖ae8 16 ♘b4 ♗b7 17 ♕xd7 ♘xd7 18 ♖e2 ♗xg2 19 ♔xg2 and White intends 20 ♘b5 with an initiative.

The tactical justification for 14 ♖xe4 is that if 14...♗b7? there follows 15 ♖xe5 ♗xg2 (taking on e5 drops b7) 16 ♔xg2 ♗xe5 and now 17 ♘c6!! is the sting in the tail. Black would drop material after 17...♕xd1 18 ♘xe7+ and then 19 ♖xd1. Yes, a computer showed me the 17 ♘c6 move. There was no way that Kamsky was going to find this line during the game, unless he had prepared it.

We should return to the main game where Zilka has played 7...d5.



8 ♘bd2 ♕c7

As we shall see Black is planning to castle queenside. He removes his queen from the back rank and puts her on her useful square where she fights against the e4-e5 advance.

Instead, 8...0-0 is examined below in Game 12.

9 ♖e1

The main strategic theme for White here is engineer e4-e5 to gain space on the kingside.

Question: In Chapter One, Black had his knight on f6 and bishop on e7 in this type of set-up, whereas here he has the knight on e7, a pawn on g6 and bishop on g7. How does that affect White's preparations for the e4-e5 advance?

Answer: The different layout of the black pieces on the kingside doesn't affect White's basic aim, but it does complicate it somewhat. In Chapter One when he advanced e4-e5 he gained time by attacking the knight on f6. With the knight safely on e7 here, e4-e5 attacks nothing. Furthermore, if White plays e4-e5 too fast the pawn will come under heavy attack from the bishop on g7 and his cronies, and might even be lost.

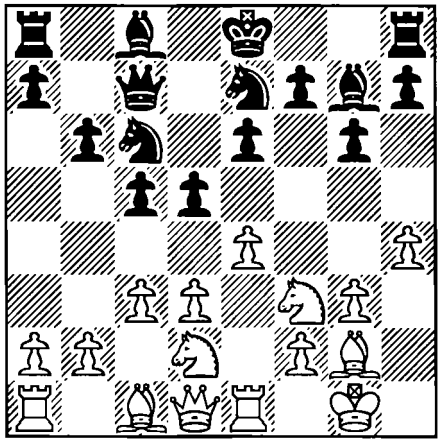
On the bonus side for White, in the present scenario if he can establish and maintain the pawn on e5 then it will shut in the bishop on g7 and give him the chance to try to exploit the holes in Black's structure on f6 and h6 created by ...g7-g6. White had no such spur from a loosened black pawn structure in Chapter One.

I think Black's defence in all the e4-e5 scenarios is difficult, but perhaps harder here than in Chapter One.

9...b6

The most active square for Black's light-squared bishop is b7. Black avoids ...b7-b5 as he doesn't want to open up his king's future residence.

10 h4



Question: **What are the good points of this move?**

Answer: White has the following ideas in mind after 10 h4:

1) A plan of attack with h4-h5. This would be particularly effective after 10...0-0 11 h5, when the looming 12 hxg6 already looks awkward for Black: the recapture 12...♘xg6 leaves his kingside pawns split up, 12...fxg6 weakens the centre and after 12...hxg6 the king is vulnerable to attack on the h-file: White can play 13 ♘g5, intending ♕g4, ♕h4 and ♕h7 mate, when if Black drove away the knight with 13...f6 he would weaken his centre squares. In reality White wouldn't necessarily rush to play 12 hxg6 or 13 ♘g5, the above moves are merely to demonstrate the ideas available.

2) Clearance of the h2-square. This will allow the knight to journey from d2 via f1 and h2 to g4, where it is in touch with Black's sensitive dark square holes on f6 and h6. As with the h4-h5 attack, the knight will be more menacing for Black if he has castled kingside.

3) Deterrence of a black kingside expansion. This is all the more important as White plans to advance e4-e5. The defence of the pawn would become problematical if Black is allowed to play ...h7-h6 and ...g6-g5, when he has the options of ...♘g6 (attacking the pawn directly) or ...g5-g4 (driving the knight away from f3).

4) Waiting to see what Black does. If, for example, Black is tempted into 10...♗a6 then 11 exd5 radically changes the nature of the centre. After 11...exd5 12 ♘b3 plans 13 ♗f4, whereupon the pawn onslaught a4-a5, if Black castles queenside, or h4-h5, if he castles kingside, will give White the initiative. Similarly if Black recaptures 11...♘xd5 then after 12 ♘c4 0-0-0 (if 12...0-0 we again have the idea of h4-h5) 13 ♕e2 (only now), and White is ready to attack with a4-a5 – a plan made stronger by the black bishop being on a6.

10...♗b7

Black avoids provoking a crisis by aiming at d3 with 10...♗a6 – see the note above. Navara therefore puts his queen on e2 to support the e4-e5 thrust.

11 ♕e2

It's rather unusual for White to play both ♖e1 and ♕e2 in this system, but needs must: the white pawn on e5 will require three defenders.

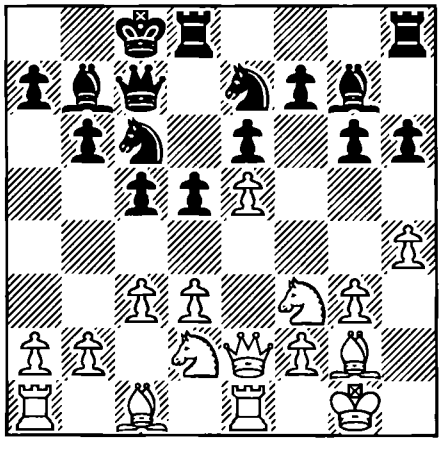
11...0-0-0

White would have good attacking chances against the black king after 11...0-0. He would probably begin with 12 e5, then the pawn stab h4-h5, and finally the knight manoeuvre ♘f1, ♘h2, ♘g4 eyeing the dark square holes on f6 and h6.

12 e5

Finally the moment is ripe to seize the e5-square.

12...h6



Black is already thinking about 13...g5!? as a means to undermine the pawn on e5.

Question: **What is the best way for White to prevent this?**

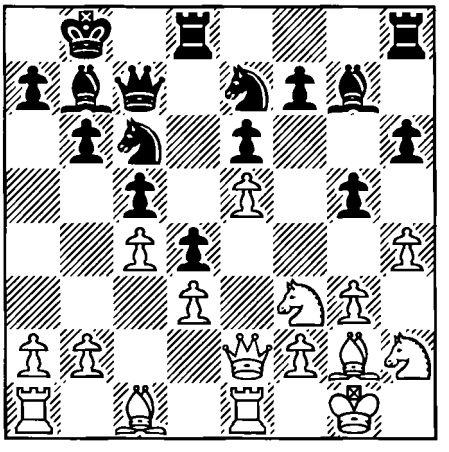
Answer: **13 ♘f1!**

Now the bishop on c1 has an eye on the g5-square, but Black hasn't given up on the pawn thrust yet.

13...♔b8 14 ♘1h2 d4

As a prelude to his next move, Black cuts off any support of e5 with d3-d4.

15 c4 g5



Exercise: **How should White respond to Black's pawn offer?**

Answer: **16 h5!**

If you are a computer you probably grabbed the pawn with 16 hxg5, whereupon play might go 16...♘g6 17 ♘g4 h5 18 ♘h6 (so that the h-file remains blocked even after Black's next move) 18...h4!? 20 ♘xh4 ♘xh4 21 gxh4 ♗xe5. White is a pawn up which makes the program *Houdini* happy, but are you? Black will have an enormous amount of counterplay against the dislocated white kingside.

Navara prefers to keep control. The game move blocks the kingside, allowing White to focus on his queenside build-up.

16...♘f5 17 a3 ♗f8

The bishop rejoins the centre and will play a useful defensive role in helping to block White's b2-b4 advance.

18 ♖b1

At last White's attack on the queenside is getting into gear.

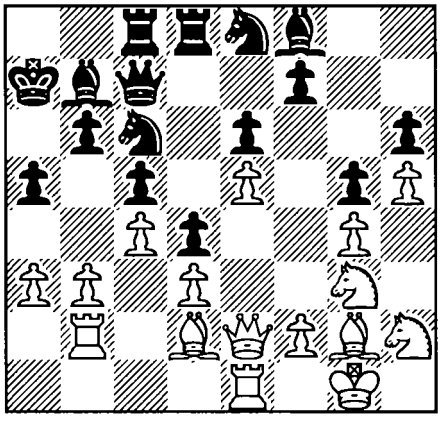
18...♘g7 19 ♘d2

A little dance by the black and white knights as the h5-pawn has to be protected.

19...♗e7 20 ♘df1 a5

Black reinforces his control over the b4-square to hinder White's pawn break.

21 ♗d2 ♖c8 22 b3 ♖hd8 23 ♖b2 ♗f8 24 g4 ♘e8 25 ♘g3 ♔a7



Exercise: **What do you think is White's best plan? What move should he start with?**

Answer: White has two pawn breaks. On the kingside he could play f2-f4 at a suitable moment. Then after ...g5xf4 and the recapture ♗xf4 he could target the h6-pawn with ♕d2 or else create a passed h-pawn with g4-g5, etc. This scheme would require careful preparation, for example White might place his rooks on e1 and f1 if that can be arranged without dropping the e5-pawn. Since the mass of black pieces are on the queenside, a long way from the h6-pawn which is targeted, it is a plausible plan. Naturally Black would have a lot of counter resources – he still has every piece and pawn on the board – and opening up lines in front of your king is not to be undertaken lightly.

On the queenside White would love to advance b3-b4, but Black has four units guarding the square: the knight, bishop and pawns on a5 and c5. White needs a fifth unit to empower b3-b4. It has to be the knight, but it is hard to see how White can manoeuvre it to c2 to support the advance. If the rook leaves the e1-square to clear a way via f3, e1 and c2, the e5-pawn drops.

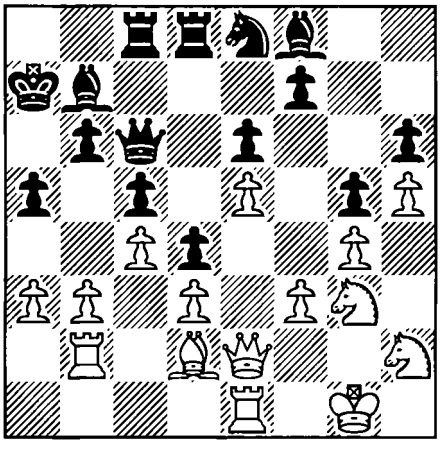
In the game Navara made a brave and creative decision.

26 ♗xc6!?

This tips the balance of forces engaged in the fight over the b4-square in White's favour. But the cost seems very high: we have exchanged off the minor piece we are most loathe to part with in the King's Indian Attack. And look, after Black's reply he is threatening mate on g2.

26...♕xc6 27 f3

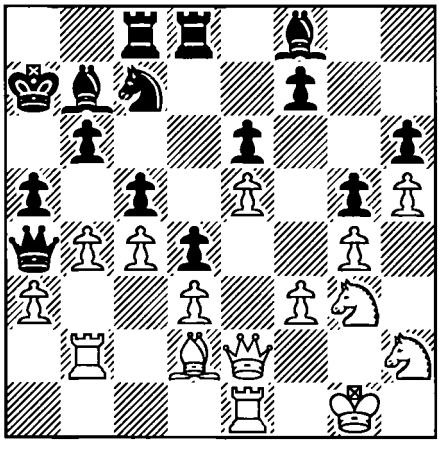
White's bishop has gone, but he remains very solid on the light squares. It will be a long time before Black can arrange an attack on the white king, if it can be done at all. Meanwhile White's attack with b3-b4 is coming very fast – next move, in fact. The white rooks will then enjoy an open file against the black king. To cap it all, the white knight is going to be a great piece on e4.



Nonetheless, it is difficult to make a move like 26 ♗xc6, even if the blocked nature of the pawn structure favours knights rather than bishops. It is important that Black has no counterplay whereas White's attack is already in full swing.

27...♘c7 28 b4 ♕a4

Seeing that he will be pulverised after 28...cxb4 29 axb4 ♗xb4 30 ♗xb4 axb4 31 ♖xb4 followed by 32 ♖eb1 and 33 ♕b2, Black tries to hold things together by defending a5 and attacking a3 with his queen.



Exercise: **What is the best plan for White now?**

Answer: **29 b5!**

Another important decision. Top players are very flexible in their thinking and are ready to change track the instant that the position requires it. White abandons his plan of attack

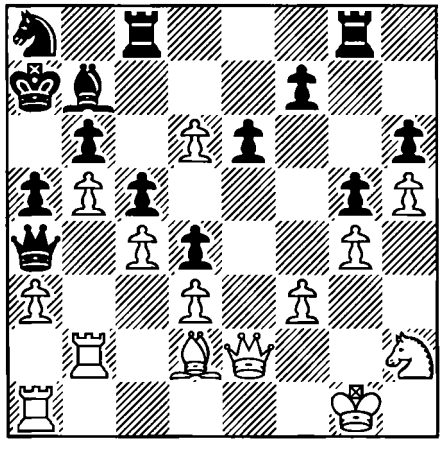
on the queenside in order to shut Black's queen out of the game. Even without calculation it is obvious that after 29...♕xa3 the queen is going to be trapped sooner or later.

So now White has to switch to 'plan B' as discussed in the notes to 25...♔a7: a breakthrough with f3-f4. It will be all the stronger with the black queen out of action. Notice the patience of the Czech Grandmaster: spurning the chance for a quick knock-out blow on the queenside, he is willing to play a long positional attack on the kingside.

29...♗e7 30 ♘e4 ♖g8

Black braces himself for the f3-f4 advance, but in leaving d8 the rook allows a different invasion.

31 ♘d6! ♗xd6 32 exd6 ♘a8 33 ♖a1



A clinical move. White wants to invade with ♕e5 without allowing ...♕xa3 in reply.

Question: What do you think of the activity of the black pieces?

Answer: The black queen has no safe move. The same is true for his bishop and knight. I think that about sums it up. More than half of Black's army is stalemated.

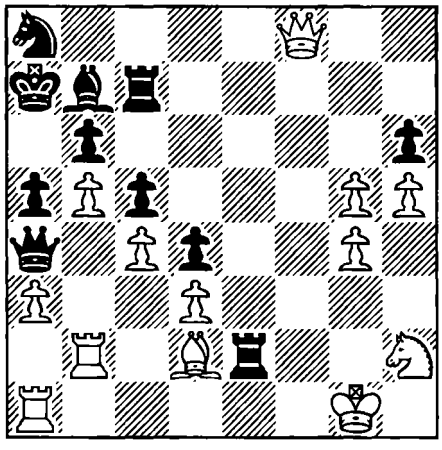
33...e5

Black tries a sacrifice or else ♕e5, then f3-f4 will destroy him.

34 ♕xe5 ♖ge8 35 ♕f5 ♖e6 36 ♕xf7 ♖xd6 37 f4

At last it is time for the thematic breakthrough. If Black plays 37...gxf4 White will create a passed pawn with g4-g5 at the right moment.

37...♖c7 38 ♕f8 ♖e6 39 fxg5 ♖e2



Exercise: It looks as if Black has suddenly gained counterplay. How would you kill it off?

Answer: **40 ♕f1!**

Exactly. White gives up his queen for a rook and bishop knowing that his kingside pawns are going to win the day.

40...♖g2+ 41 ♕xg2 ♗xg2 42 ♔xg2 hxg5 43 ♘f3 ♖c8 44 h6 ♘c7 45 ♗xg5 ♘xb5

Black can't just sit and watch as his opponent pawns march through. He therefore makes a desperate sacrifice to free his beleaguered queen.

46 cxb5 c4 47 dxc4 d3 48 ♔h3!

Defending g4 as a prelude to his next move.

48...♕xc4 49 ♖c1 ♕d5 50 ♖xc8 ♕xf3+ 51 ♔h4 1-0

The white king will escape the checks, such as with 51...♕h1+ 52 ♔g3 ♕e1+ 53 ♔h3 ♕h1+ 54 ♖h2 ♕f1+ 55 ♔h4 ♕e1+ 56 ♔h5.

Game 12
V.Bryndin-V.Matrosov
St Petersburg 2011

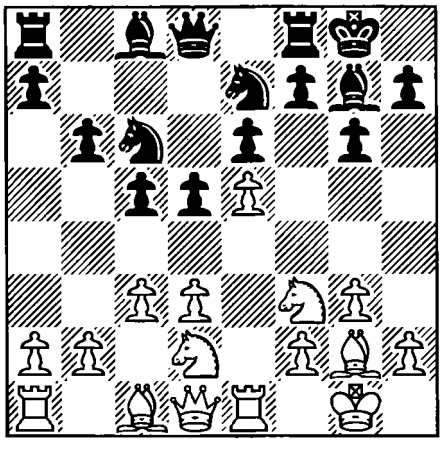
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 g3 g6 5 ♗g2 ♗g7 6 0-0 ♘ge7 7 c3 d5 8 ♘bd2 0-0

Black diverges from the 8...♕c7 of Game 11. We have already seen White's system of attack against the black kingside in the previous game, in which Black had castled queenside. The build-up is even more potent with the black king sitting on g8.

One of the great things about the KIA is that you get the chance to win games without needing to calculate a lot of variations. White's path to victory in the present game can be

described in a series of simple verbal statements after each move.

9 ♖e1 b6 10 e5



Step One: White advance his pawn to e5 to cement his space advantage on the kingside and support a future invasion of the vulnerable f6-square by a knight or his dark-squared bishop.

10...♕c7 11 ♕e2

Step Two: Defend the pawn from capture.

11...♗a6 12 ♘f1

Step Three: Unleash the dark-squared bishop and prepare a manoeuvre of the knight on f1 to the kingside.

12...d4 13 c4

Step Four: Prevent Black from gaining counterplay in the centre with 13...dxc3 14 bxc3 ♖ad8 hitting d3.

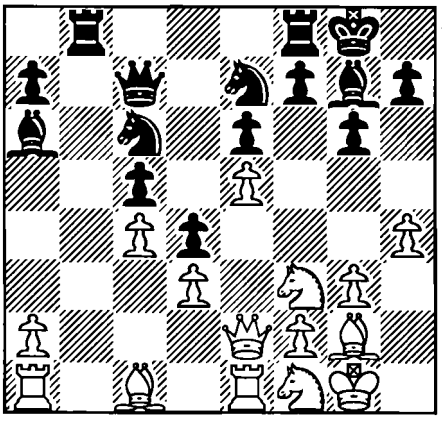
13...b5 14 b3

Step Five: Solidify the c4 point to blunt the power of Black's bishop.

14...bxc4 15 bxc4

Step Six: Take back on c4 with the b-pawn as we don't want to give Black any counterplay in the centre after 15 dxc4 ♖ad8.

15...♖ab8 16 h4



Step Seven: Clear the h2-square for the knight and threaten to use the h-pawn as a battering ram.

16...h5 17 ♘1h2

Step Eight: Use the h2-square as a stopping off post for the knight on its way to join the attack.

17...♘f5 18 g4

Step Nine: Use the g-pawn to cut a way through Black's defences.

18...hxg4 19 ♘xg4

Step Ten: Recapture the pawn and bring the knight to a strong attacking square.

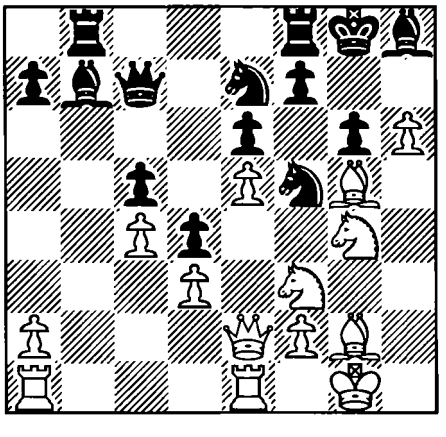
19...♘ce7 20 h5

Step Eleven: Finally use the h-pawn to disrupt the black defences.

20...♗b7 21 h6

Step Twelve: Force Black's bishop to retreat to h8 so that his kingside becomes cramped.

21...♗h8 22 ♗g5



Step Thirteen: Bring the bishop into contact with the dark-square hole on f6.

22...♗xf3 23 h7+

Step Fourteen: Use the black king's lack of space to force open the h-file.

23...♔xh7 24 ♕xf3

Step Fifteen: Recapture the piece and bring the queen into contact with the h-file.

24...♗g7 25 ♕h3+

Step Sixteen: Bring the queen to the h-file to set up a mating finish.

25...♔g8 26 ♘f6+

Step Seventeen: Force the exchange of Black's vital defensive bishop.

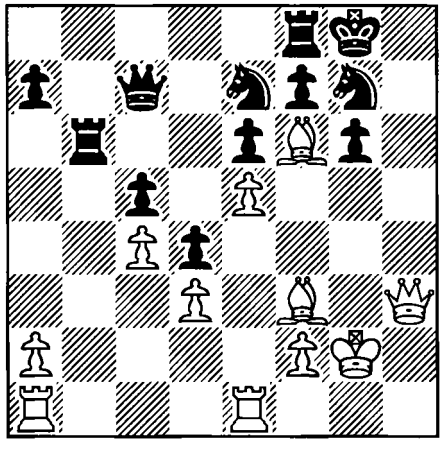
26...♗xf6 27 ♗xf6

Step Eighteen: Recapture with the bishop to threaten mate on h8.

27...♘g7 28 ♗f3

Step Nineteen: Clear the g2-square for the king as part of a mating finish.

28...♖b6 29 ♔g2



Step Twenty: Move the king out of the way to allow the rook to go to h1.

29...g5 30 ♖h1 1-0

Step Twenty-One: Create an unstoppable threat of mate on h8.

Only at the end was a bit of foresight need in order to clear the h-file square for the rook with ♗f3 and ♔g2. I should point out that 12...d4 looks inferior as it lets White block things up. A better way for Black to gain counterplay was 12...b5 13 ♗f4 b4, but I still like White's attacking chances.

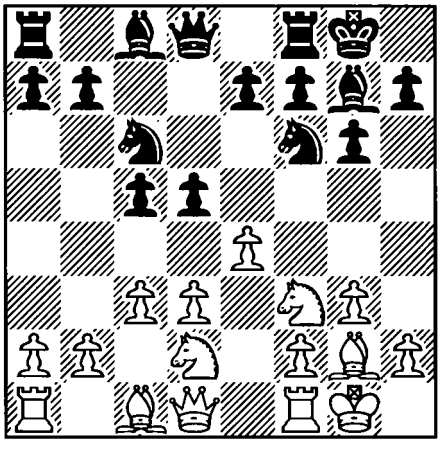
It won't always be this easy, but this game shows the clear logical progression of White's general plan once he gets a grip on the e5-square. It's no wonder that Zilka in the previous game and others have taken their chance with their king on the queenside.

Game 13
B.Amin-D.Bocharov
Abu Dhabi 2009

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d3 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 ♘f6 6 0-0 d5

Thanks to the 2...♘c6 move order Black has been able to gain space with ...d7-d5 without being obliged to play ...e7-e6. The question is whether he can profit through keeping the pawn on e7 or advancing it to e5.

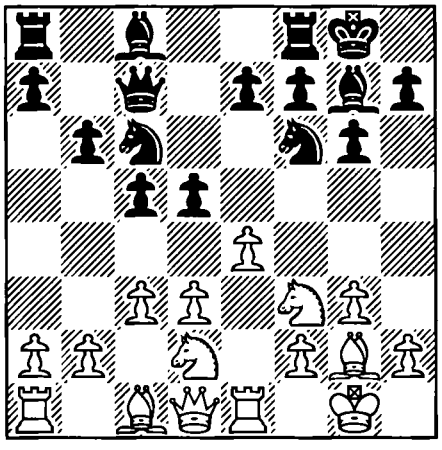
7 ♘bd2 0-0 8 c3



8...♕c7

Here Black could take all the space on offer with 8...e5, transposing to a Reversed King's Indian with ...g7-g6. For example, 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♖e1 ♖e8 11 a4 h6 12 ♘c4 ♕c7?! (probably inaccurate; instead, 12...♗f5 13 ♘h4 ♗e6 14 a5 intending ♕a4 gives White just a little pressure on the queenside) 13 a5 ♗f5 14 ♘fd2! (the point; because d5 is hanging after ...♕c7, White has time to get his knight to the excellent e4-square) 14...♖ad8 15 ♘e4 ♗f8 16 a6 b6 17 ♘e3 ♗xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♘xe3 19 ♗xe3 ♘e7 20 ♕a4 when White's two bishops and large space advantage gave him excellent chances in K.Movsziszian-A.Cabrera, San Sebastian 2010.

9 ♖e1 b6



Exercise: **Which of these options is the best idea for White: 1) Maintain the central tension with 10 ♘f1. 2) Concede the centre with 10 exd5. 3) Gain space with 10 e5.**

Answer: After 10 exd5 ♘xd5 White has the c4-square for his knight, but Black has more space, active pieces and no potentially vulnerable pawn on e5 as occurs in the King's Indian Reversed scenarios of this type. Instead, 10 e5 seems very natural, but after 10...♘d7 11 d4 cxd4 12 cxd4 White has to reckon with 12...♘b4 which looks awkward. Whatever the verdict, Black is in any case fine after 11 d4 if he plays the solid 11...e6.

I think Amin chose the best of the moves in the game.

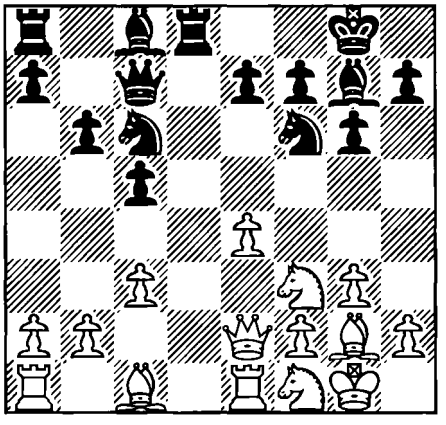
10 ♘f1!

One good point of this move is discussed in the note to 12...h6 below.

10...dxe4 11 dxe4 ♖d8

As we shall see, Bocharov is willing to concede White space with e4-e5 as he trusts he will gain counterplay along the d-file and on the queenside in general.

12 ♕e2



12...h6

Question: **What's White's best response to 12...e5, blocking the advance of White's e-pawn?**

Answer: After 12...e5 I like the idea of 13 ♗g5, planning ♗xf6 to help the knight fight for control of the hole in Black's centre on d5 after ♘e3, etc.

Black could also have tried 12...♘g4 to obtain influence over the e5 point, but 13 h3 ♘ge5 14 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 15 ♗f4 keeps a slight edge for White.

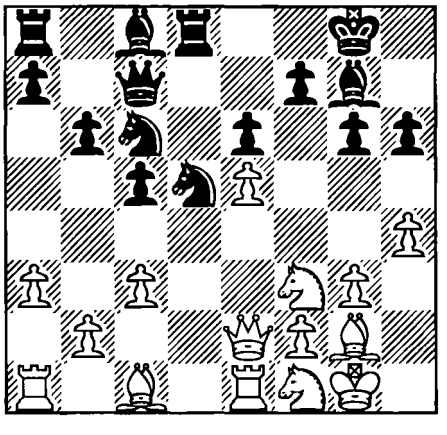
13 e5 ♘d5 14 a3

White threatens to trap the knight on d5 with 15 c4.

14...e6

Here we see a good point of 12...h6: it has stopped White playing 15 ♗g5.

15 h4



Question: **Why did Amin wait until this moment to play White's standard wing pawn thrust?**

Answer: Because Black has played 14...e6, his light-squared bishop can no longer interfere with White's build-up with ...♗g4, so the h2-h4 advance is more potent.

15...♘a5

Nonetheless, Black has serious-looking counterplay.

16 ♘1d2

The knight has to return to d2 to guard the b3-square, but no matter: once the black knight have been pushed back the e4-square beckons the white horse, from which it can jump to d6 or f6.

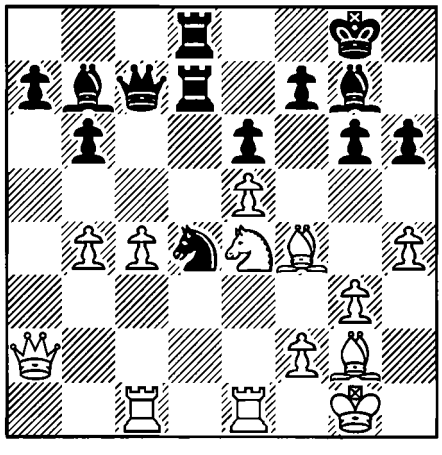
16...♗b7 17 ♖b1 ♖d7 18 c4 ♘e7 19 b4 cxb4 20 axb4

White's pawns are working hard to give him space on both wings, but the black pieces are very well organised.

20...♘ac6 21 ♘e4 ♘f5

After 21...♘xe5 22 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 23 ♗f4 ♕f5 24 ♘d6 with a fork or equally 22...♗xe5 23 ♗f4! ♔g7 (if 23...♗xf4 24 ♘f6+ and d7 drops) 24 ♘f6! ♗xf4 25 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 26 ♘xd7 Black will lose material.

22 ♗f4 ♘cd4 23 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 24 ♕a2 ♖ad8 25 ♖bc1



25...♗xe4?

Black's dynamism begins to fade after the exchange. White is left with the two bishops and the chance to create a passed pawn on the c-file. Instead, 25...♘c6, attacking both b4 and e5, forces a level endgame after 26 ♕a4 ♘xe5 27 ♕xa7 ♖a8 (it seems like the white queen is trapped, but...) 28 ♘f6+ ♗xf6 29 ♕xb7 ♕xb7 30 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 31 ♗xe5 ♔g7.

26 ♖xe4 ♗f8 27 c5 bxc5 28 bxc5 ♖d5 29 c6 ♖a5

White maintains a strong initiative after 29...♖c5 30 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 31 h5.

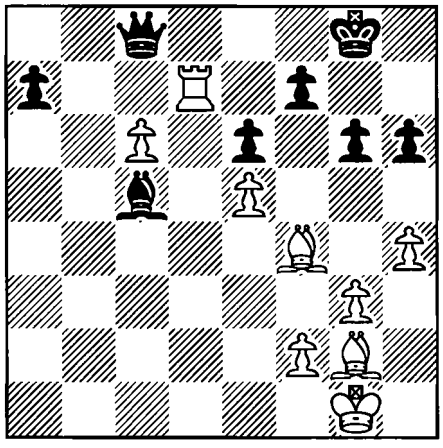
30 ♕b2

Not only attacking the black knight, but also intending 31 ♕b7 to clear the way for the passed pawn.

30...♖b5 31 ♕xd4!

A queen sacrifice is required to break the blockade.

31...♖xd4 32 ♖xd4 ♖c5 33 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 34 ♖d7 ♕c8



Exercise: What is the best way for White to continue his build-up?

***Answer:* 35 ♗xh6!**

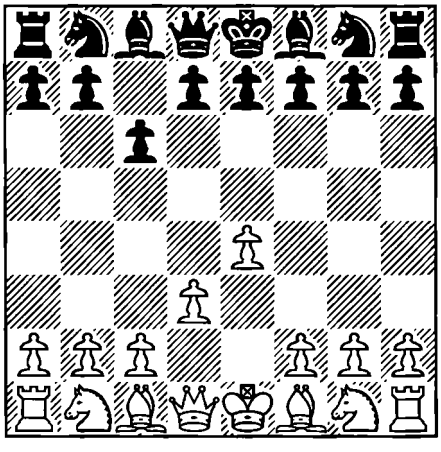
By removing the h6-pawn White clears the way for his bishop to invade on the g5-square, after which it can combine its power with the rook to force through the passed pawn.

35...♗b6 36 ♗g5 ♗c7 37 ♗e7 ♗b6 38 ♖b7 ♗c7 39 ♗d6 1-0

Black is overwhelmed after 39...♗xd6 40 exd6 or loses his queen upon 39...♗a5 40 ♖b8.

Chapter Three
KIA Versus the Caro-Kann

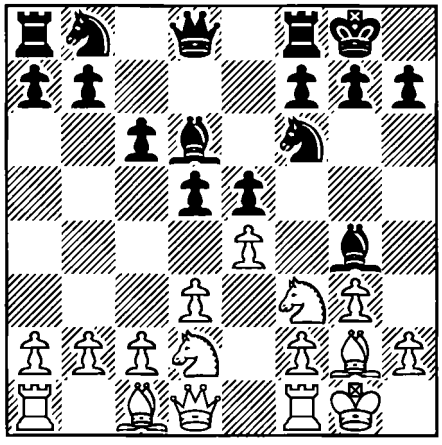
In this chapter we'll investigate the King's Indian against the Caro-Kann, beginning with the moves 1 e4 c6 2 d3.



Though as we shall see, the typical black centre structure with pawns on c6, d5, and e5 can arise via other opening systems, including those after 1 ♘f3. In a game given here, Nakamura actually began with 1 g3. Therefore, even if you play 1 ♘f3 or have a different opening line prepared against the Caro-Kann, it would be a good idea to study the games in this chapter.

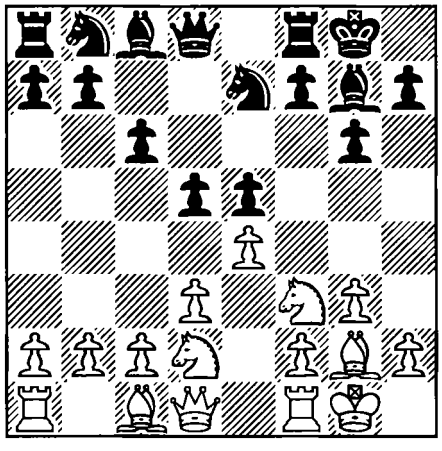
Black's choice of pawn centres

After 1 e4 c6 2 d3 Black virtually always puts a pawn on d5 or e5 at some point – often he builds a full pawn centre with both these moves. Thus in Game 14 we see the sequence 1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 e5 4 ♘gf3 ♗d6 5 g3 ♘f6 6 ♗g2 0-0 7 0-0 ♗g4.



Black has borrowed an idea from the Slav ...♗g4 System of Chapter Six. His position is a tough nut to crack. His king is safe, his development is smooth, and his pawns have more than their fair share of the centre. Nonetheless, White maintains some minuscule advantages. His bishop is more comfortable on g2 than Black's bishop on g4, which might find itself shut out of the action. White has the f4-square securely defended, whilst the f5-square could be a base for his knight. Black's pawns do, indeed, have more than their share of the centre, but the pawns on both d5 and e5 are potential targets. It's easier for White to arrange an attack on them than it is for Black to organise counterplay against the e4- or d3-pawns.

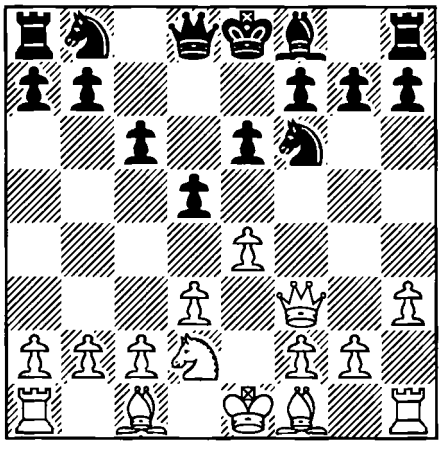
Alternatively Black can combine building a big centre with the fianchetto of his bishop on g7 with the moves 1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 e5 6 ♘gf3 ♘e7 7 0-0 0-0.



Black suffers somewhat from the fact that to keep e5 defended the knight has had to go to the inferior e7-square rather than f6. As in Game 14 the black centre is a target, and af-

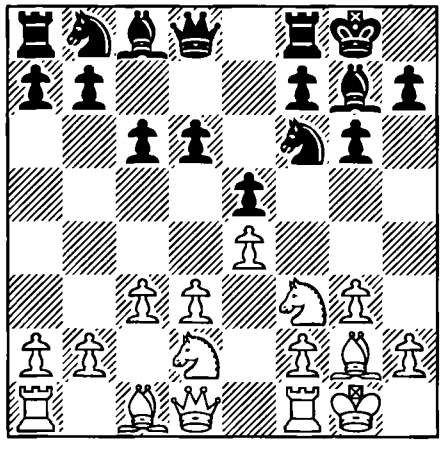
ter 8 ♖e1 d4 White can besiege the d4 point with either 9 ♘c4 and 10 c3 (Game 15) or the immediate 9 c3 (Game 16).

A third option for Black is to renounce the chance to build a full centre and settle for a solid 'Slav' triangle of pawns with 1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 ♘gf3 ♗g4 5 h3 ♗xf3 6 ♕xf3 e6.



In this sequence Black put his bishop on g4 to avoid having it shut in after ...e7-e6. Its subsequent exchange has given White the fabled advantage of the two bishops, though he will have to work hard to make them count for anything. Still, White can be pleased that he has the chance to expand with moves like f2-f4 and e4-e5 in the future, a strategy that came out tops in Game 17.

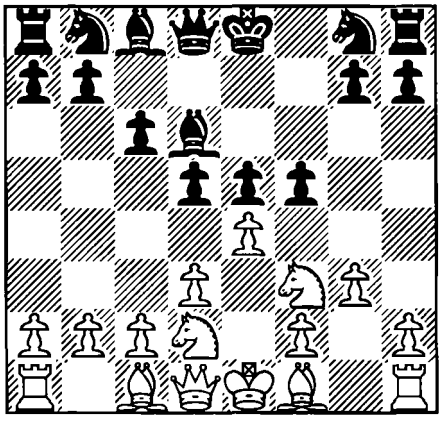
Alternatively, Black can choose a 'Philidor' centre with the moves ...e7-e5 and ...d7-d6: for example, 1 e4 c6 2 d3 e5 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘bd2 d6 5 g3 g6 6 ♗g2 ♗g7 7 0-0 0-0 8 c3.



This structure might also arise if Black plays a King's Indian Defence (KID) versus the

KIA: for example, see Game 41 in Chapter Eight. Here Black is already committed to ...c7-c6, while in the KID version he might prefer ...♘c6. White has a small edge as he is moving first in a symmetrical position. It is OK for Black, but perhaps the Philidor pawn centre is a little too passive for modern taste. Tiviakov outplays his opponent in exemplary style in Game 18.

In Game 19 I've gathered together three rather sharp and offbeat approaches for Black built around 1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 e5 4 ♘gf3 ♗d6 5 g3 f5!?.



White has played slowly, blocking in both the bishops on f1 and c1, and spending a tempo on the leisurely g2-g3. Therefore Black feels justified in trying to overrun the centre with his pawns. This is a tricky idea for White to meet. Still, it would be strange if he was overwhelmed, as Black only has one piece developed himself.

Two other lines examined in the notes to Game 19 are the alternatives 3...dxe4 and 4...♘d7 in the above sequence.

The chapter ends with a splurge of analysis that must look rather unappealing to someone who plays the KIA looking for a quiet life on the theoretical front. Well, needs must and you'll find a critical line after 5...f5.

Part One: Black plays ...♗d6 and builds a big pawn centre

Game 14
H.Nakamura-D.Navara
Spanish Team Championship 2010

1 e4 c6 2 d3

White doesn't try for a space advantage. Instead he supports the e4 point in anticipation of Black's next move. The game will be decided by the quality of manoeuvring in the middlegame, not by any immediate attack.

2...d5

The most natural move as it utilizes the c6-pawn to support a gain of space in the centre.

3 ♘d2

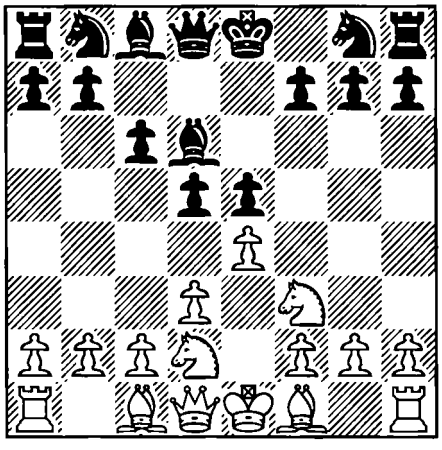
White hurries to defend the e4-pawn again as the queen exchange after 3 ♘f3 dxe4 4 dxe4 ♕xd1+ 5 ♔xd1 gives little hope for advantage.

3...e5

Premature is 3...dxe4 – see the analysis to Game 19.

4 ♘gf3 ♗d6

More accurate than 4...♘d7 which, as also discussed in Game 19, gives White the chance for the initiative with 5 d4!.



5 g3

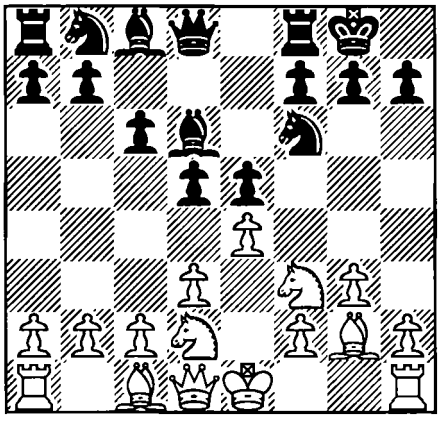
The point of White's set-up isn't to grab pawns. White shouldn't go hunting the e5-pawn with 5 ♕e2 as 5...♘f6! is a strong riposte. For example, 6 exd5 cxd5 7 ♘xe5 0-0! with a horrible pin on the white knight, queen and king looming along the e-file after ...♖e8. Even worse for White would be 6 d4 exd4 7 e5 0-0! 8 exd6 ♖e8 9 ♘e5 ♗g4! 10 f3 ♗h5 when there is no defence against ...♘bd7 as 11 g4 ♘bd7 12 f4 ♘xg4 leads to a complete collapse.

However, 5 d4 is a perfectly decent way to play it as White. Then 5...dxe4 6 ♘xe4 is bad for Black, so he has to enter an isolated queen's pawn (IQP) position with 5...exd4 6 exd5 ♘f6 (another IQP centre arises after 6...cxd5 7 ♘xd4 ♘c6 8 ♘2f3 ♘f6 9 ♗e2 0-0 10 0-0, etc) 7 dxc6 ♘xc6 8 ♗e2 0-0 9 0-0 ♖e8 10 ♘b3, as in N.Chadaev-V.Bologan, Astana (blitz) 2012. Of course, here we are concentrating on KIA-style responses, but it's worth knowing about this option.

5...♘f6

Here the sharp 5...f5 is the main subject of Game 19.

6 ♗g2 0-0

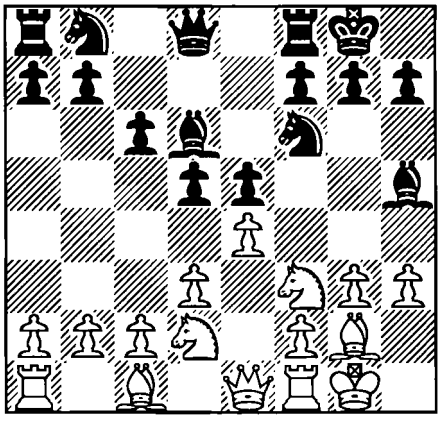


Both players complete their development, ignoring each other for the moment.

7 0-0 ♗g4 8 h3 ♗h5

Flank openings are rich in transpositions. The present game actually began with the move order 1 g3 d5 2 ♗g2 e5 3 d3 ♘f6 4 ♘f3 ♗d6 5 0-0 0-0 6 ♘bd2 c6 7 e4 ♗g4 8 h3 ♗h5. You might like to reread the comments above relating to this position. Play has transposed to a pawn structure reached in the Slav ...♗g4 System, which we'll encounter in Chapter Six. Here Black is somewhat more flexible as he isn't committed to playing ...♘bd7.

9 ♕e1



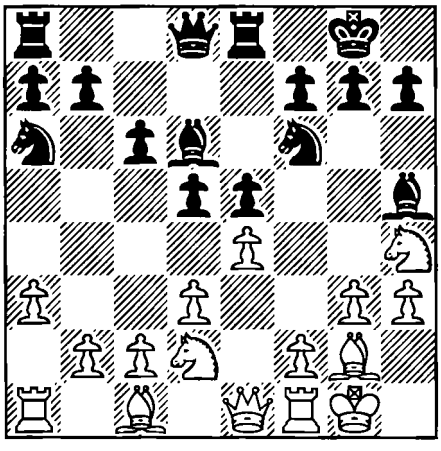
Question: **What is the purpose of this move?**

Answer: Nakamura breaks the pin on f3, thereby clearing the way for his next move. He also bolsters the e4-pawn, which allows the knight on d2 more freedom of action, and, finally, Black is forced to respond to a possible threat of 10 exd5 and 11 ♘xe5.

9...♖e8

Navara bolsters the e5 point with the rook rather than with 9...♘bd7 as he has a more active move with his knight in mind.

10 ♘h4 ♘a6 11 a3



Exercise: Why do you think White plays this feeble-looking pawn move?

Answer: Nakamura has to stop 11...♘b4 with the threat of 12...♘xc2, not only winning a pawn, but also trapping the queen. If instead he plays 11 c3, he weakens his defence of d3; 11...♘c5 would then contain the awkward threat of 12...♘xd3.

11...♘c5 12 b3

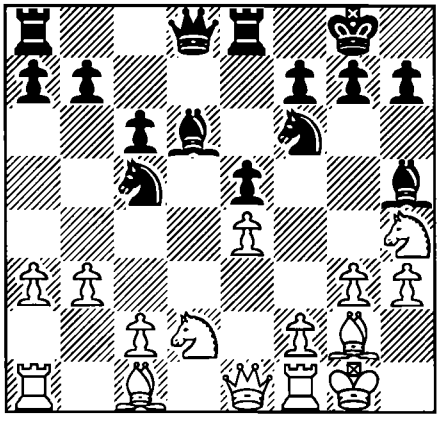
Finally White attends to the development of his queen's bishop. He intends to have one bishop aiming at the d5-pawn, the other at e5.

12...dxe4

If you ask David Navara why he played 12...dxe4, he would probably just shrug and say that in his judgement it felt right to stabilize the centre so that his pieces have more freedom of action.

If we are looking for a concrete reason, we might mention that White is planning ♗b2 and then ♘f5. The bishop on d6 would like to retreat to f8 in response, but then the e5-pawn could be a target after e4xd5. Note also that the Czech Grandmaster plans ...♘e6. This contains ideas of ...♘d4 and is also a deterrence against White advancing f2-f4. The ...♘e6 move would, however, be problematical if White had the option of e4xd5 in conjunction with the moves ♘f5 and ♗b2.

13 dxe4

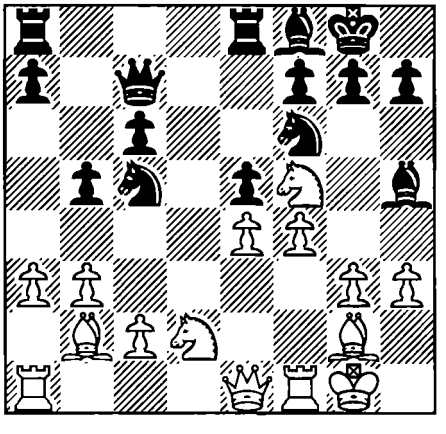


Question: If it were White's turn to move now, can you suggest a good positional idea for him?

Answer: Nakamura would jump at the chance to play 14 ♘c4, activating the knight with the positional threat of 15 ♘xd6. Even if the knight was kicked back from c4 by a subsequent ...b7-b5 after Black has evaded the ♘xd6 exchange, it could return to e3, a better square for the knight than d2 as it is further up the board and in contact with the f5-square.

13...b5 14 ♗b2 ♘e6

Black could also wait with 14...♕c7, when after 15 ♘f5 ♗f8 White can play sharply with 16 f4.



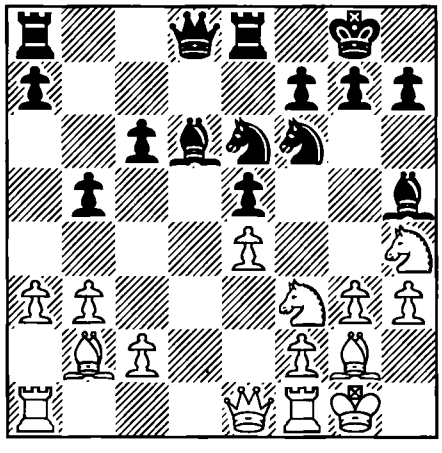
Question: How to assess this position?

Answer: This pawn stab is a fundamental idea, suggested by both the pawn structure and more specifically White's deployment of the bishop to b2. On the other hand, it happens in the full fury of the black pieces. After 16...exf4 17 gxf4 the e4-pawn is attacked by both black knights and the rook on e8. It is a fine pawn and mobile, but if it collapses it's all over for White. After the cold-blooded 17...♖ad8, adding more dynamism to the black pieces, the exchange 18 ♗xf6 gxf6 doesn't achieve anything for White. Then 19 ♘g3 ♗g6 20 f5, trapping the bishop, fails to 20...♗d6! 21 fxg6 ♗xg3 22 gxh7+ ♔h8 or 21 ♖f3 ♗xg3 22 ♖xg3 ♖xd2!, overloading the white queen who has to defend g3.

Nonetheless, the e4-pawn lives despite all the pressure. White can continue after 17...♖ad8 with 18 e5, for example. The position remains double-edged, but you can understand why human players at least would like to avoid this as Black. I think most (human) players would wilt in the face of ideas such as ♗xf6 or the apparent trapping of their bishop, or indeed the advance 18 e5. A computer likes Black's activity, but then they aren't programmed to feel fear.

Navara's knight move is both active minded – it aims for an invasion on d4 – and defensive minded – it prevents the f2-f4 advance.

15 ♘df3



It is White's turn to spoil the dreams of a black knight by preventing 15...♘d4. At the same time e5 is attacked.

15...♗xf3

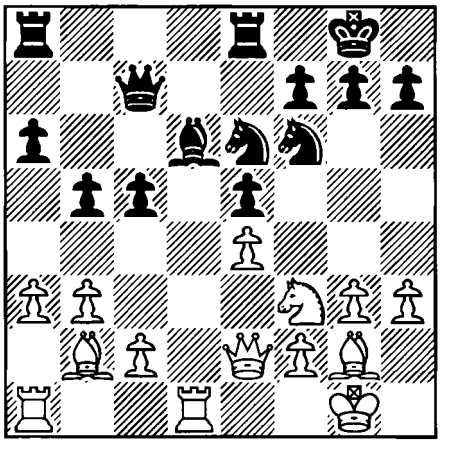
Black concedes the bishop-pair, but on the other hand, he is well entrenched on the dark squares.

16 ♘xf3 ♕c7

The idea of arranging f2-f4 is pretty much dead as Black has four pieces trained on the f4 point and besides White's knight is needed on f3 to watch over the d4-square. Nakamura therefore focuses on the queenside and the open d-file. Once lines open up in the distant future White's light-squared bishop might become a powerful piece.

17 ♕e2 a6 18 ♖fd1 c5

Black gains space on the queenside.



Exercise: The move 19...♘d4 is on the cards, when Black's knight finally gets to utilize the d4-square. What is the best way to anticipate it? a) Prevention with 19 c3. b) Preparation of c2-c3 with ♖ac1. c) The immediate attack on b5 with 19 a4.

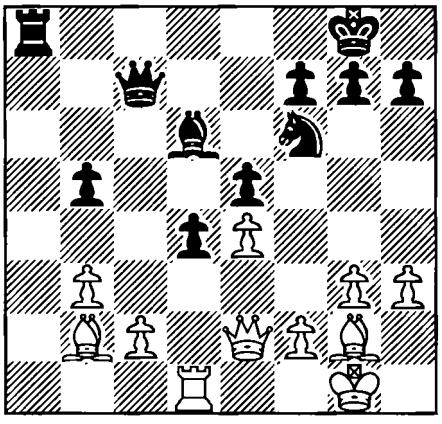
19 c3

Answer: Nakamura chooses to keep the knight put of d4. At the same time he vacates the c2-square as a stopping off post for his knight in a manoeuvre to d5. Nevertheless, the drawback is obvious: the bishop on b2 is shut in and the pawn on b3 is left loose. As we shall see below, these factors could have been exploited by Black.

A better idea is 19 ♖ac1 which deters Black from playing 19...♘d4 as 20 ♘xd4 cxd4 21 c3! opens up the c-file and d-file to the joy of White's rooks and the distress of the black queen and bishop. After the alternative recapture 20...exd4, 21 c3! is still strong – White's bishop on b2 will have an open diagonal aiming at f6, and White's f2-pawn can become mobile with f2-f4 now that the barrier on e5 is removed. Therefore after 19 ♖ac1 Black should avoid 19...♘d4, after which it's not that exciting for White.

Finally, that brings us to 19 a4. If then 19...b4 the d4-square is secured for the knight, but the black queenside pawns are mouldy, especially as he doesn't have a light-squared bishop to defend the hole on c4. White could reply 20 ♕c4 when the queen is nicely placed – an attempt to evict her with 20...♘d7, intending 21...♘b6, could be met with 21 a5!.

The key variation after 19 a4 is 19...♘d4 20 ♘xd4 cxd4 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♖xa8 ♖xa8.

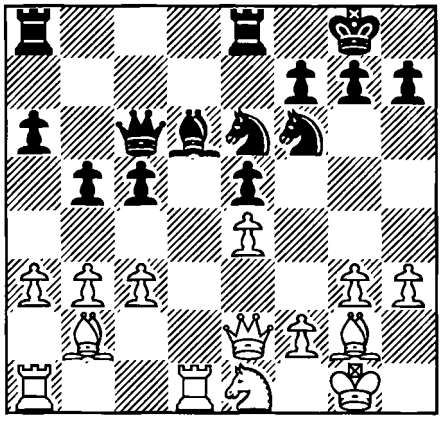


Exercise: It appears that White has achieved nothing, but a combination appears in this seemingly tactically dead position. Can you see it?

Answer: Of course, not 23 ♕xb5? ♕xc2 when White can resign, but he can play 23 ♗xd4! winning a pawn, for if 23...exd4 24 e5 (uncovering an attack on a8), the pin with 24...♖e8 fails to 25 exd6 attacking the black queen, when 25...♕xd6 26 ♕xb5 is winning for White.

Therefore the best move was 19 a4, which is both attacking and deals with the threat of 19...♘d4.

19...♕c6 20 ♘e1



20...♗c7

Question: Do you think Black should have tried 20...h5 to exploit the white knight's absence from f3?

Answer: With the text Black plays too passively in the face of White's plan of ♘c2, ♘e3, and ♘d5. It seems that Navara was so wrapped up in his plan of controlling the dark squares that he missed some good light-square moves. As the knight has left f3, 20...h5!? would threaten to undermine White's pawns with 21...h4. After 21 h4 Black can push on the queenside with 21...c4! shutting in the white bishop on b2. White's pawns would have lost a lot of their dynamism on both wings. If Black didn't like 20...h5, he should at least have played 20...c4 to frustrate White on the queenside.

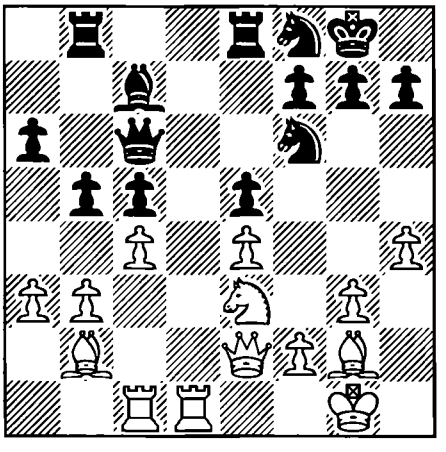
21 ♘c2 ♘g5

Here was the last chance for 21...c4, though now White has the option of 22 ♘b4!?.

22 h4 ♘e6 23 ♘e3 ♘f8

If 23...♘xe4? 24 ♕c2 wins the knight.

24 c4! ♖ab8 25 ♖ac1



Exercise: In what ways has White improved his position over the last few moves?

Answer: Whilst Black has been floundering with his pieces, Nakamura has made great strides forward. He has brought his knight into contact with the key d5-square; his bishop on b2 has been reactivated by c3-c4; and his rook on c1 is making life uncomfortable for the pawn on c5 and the queen hiding behind it. It's no wonder that Black's position quickly fragments on the queenside.

25...♘e6 26 ♘d5 ♘d4

An attempt at counterplay before b2-b4 shatters the queenside.

27 ♗xd4 exd4 28 b4! cxb4 29 ♘xb4!

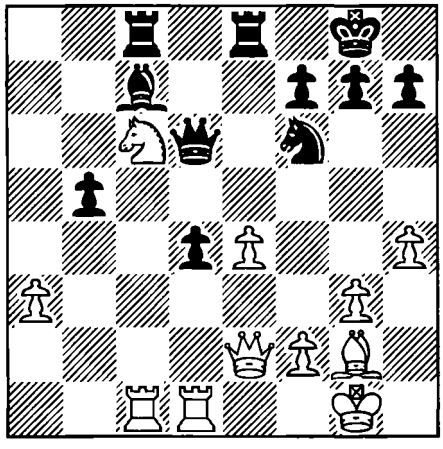
Even stronger than 29 axb4 as the knight causes havoc on c6.

29...♕d6

After 29...♕b6 30 cxb5 axb5 31 ♘c6 ♖a8 the pawn stab 32 e5! not only hits f6, but also uncovers a defence of the knight on c6 by the bishop on g2. Then after both 32...♘d7 33

♘xd4 or 32...♖a6 33 ♖b1 and then 34 ♖xb5 White is winning.

30 cxb5 axb5 31 ♘c6 ♖bc8



32 ♘xd4

As in the previous note, 32 e5 is also a killer move: for example, after 32...♕xa3 33 ♘xd4 with the threats of 34 ♗b7 or 34 ♘xb5 wins, as 33...♖xe5 34 ♕xe5! ♗xe5 35 ♖xc8+ is decisive.

32...♕xa3 33 ♗h3!

Now 34 ♗xc8 will win the exchange for nothing, so Black decided to go out in a blaze of glory:

33...♖xe4 34 ♕c2 ♗xg3 35 ♕xc8+ ♖e8 36 ♕f5 ♗xh4 37 ♕f3 ♕b4 38 ♕f4 1-0

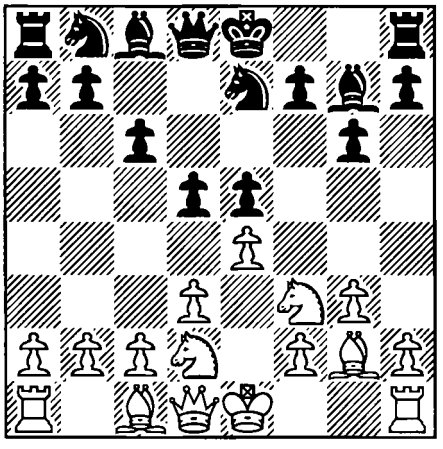
Part Two: Black builds a big pawn centre with ...♗g7

Game 15
S.Movsesian-M.Panarin
Russian Team Championship 2010

1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 g6

Black finds a different way to support his pawn centre with the bishop.

4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 e5 6 ♘gf3 ♘e7

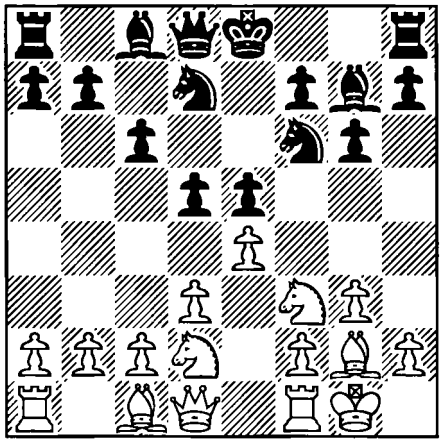


Question: **Are there any drawbacks to Black's opening system?**

Answer: You can't have everything you want in an opening, especially if you are playing Black against an alert opponent. In a perfect world Black would build a pawn centre with ...d7-d5 and ...e7-e5, get to fianchetto his bishop with ...g7-g6 and ...♗g7, and play ...♘f6 and ...♘bd7. However, one of these moves always proves impossible due to White's pressure or lack of time. Here, for example, the black knight goes to e7, so that the bishop on g7 keeps e5 defended, but this means that the 'ideal' move ...♘f6 won't be part of his deployment.

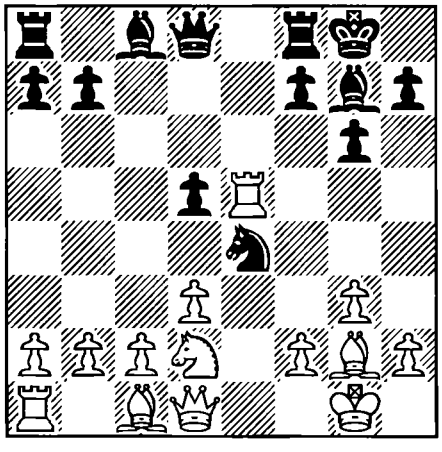
We might also add that fianchetto on g7 has removed the bishop from contact with the queenside. Therefore an attack on a black pawn on d4 with c2-c3, which results in the opening of the c-file, has more power. This is especially seen in Game 16, below, in which White's dark-squared bishop proves of far more worth than the bishop on g7 because it has influence over the queenside struggle.

Question: **Couldn't Black try 6...♘d7 7 0-0 ♘gf6 when he has his knight on the 'best' square f6?**



Answer: Well, White can respond 8 ♖e1, when we should investigate what happens if Black ignores the latent threat to e5 with 8...0-0 9 exd5 cxd5 10 ♘xe5. Every time this has been tried Black has recaptured with 9...♘xd5, when 10 ♘c4 and moves like 11 a4, to stabilize the knight on c4 against a ...b7-b5 lunge, and 12 h4, intending h4-h5, gives White good play.

Question: But what, indeed, happens if 9...cxd5, keeping the centre intact, when 10 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 11 ♖xe5 ♘e4 traps the white rook?



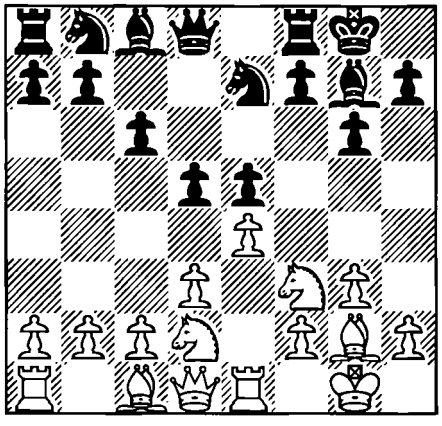
Answer: It is true the rook is trapped, but there is a strong exchange sacrifice with 12 ♖xd5! ♕xd5 13 ♘xe4 ♕d8 14 c3 ♗f5 15 ♗f4. White has a knight and two pawns for the exchange and the chance to pressure the black queenside with ♘c5 or ♘d6. He can also advance the passed d-pawn in the future.

Instead of 11...♘e4, 11...♗g4 12 ♗f3 ♕d7 gives Black some play for the pawn, but no

longer 12...♘e4? as 13 dxe4 ♗xf3 14 ♘xf3 just costs material.

We should now return to the main game, where Black chose 6...♘e7.

7 0-0 0-0 8 ♖e1



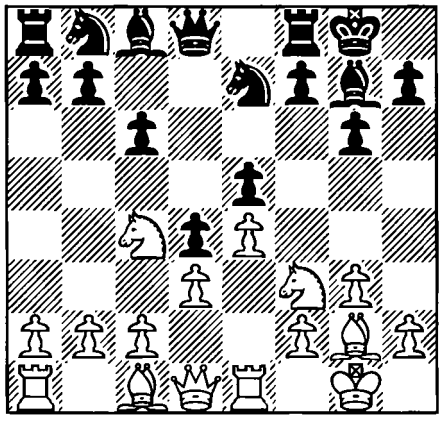
First of all White provokes Black into advancing his d-pawn with the threat of 9 exd5 followed by 10 ♘xe5.

8...d4

It's all about the bishops. If 8...♘d7 or 8...f6 a bishop is shut in on c8 or g7 respectively. Meanwhile 8...♗g4 9 h3 forces Black to give up the bishop-pair. Black could have stood his ground with 8...♕c7, though. In that case a methodical build-up on the queenside followed by a break in the centre gave White the edge after 9 c3 a5 10 b3 b6 11 ♕c2 ♖d8 12 ♗b2 ♗a6 13 d4 in L.Oll-P.Wells, Antwerp 1996.

9 ♘c4

The knight makes use of the c4-square to renew the attack on e5. Also possible is the immediate 9 c3 as in Game 16.



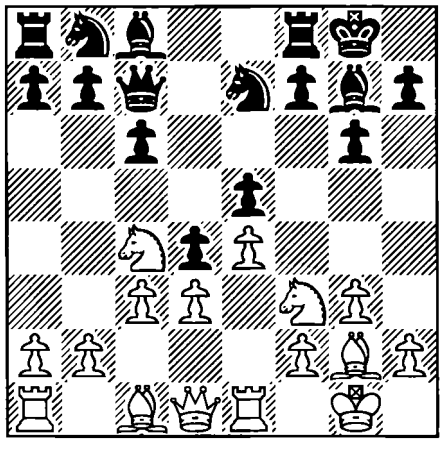
9...♕c7

Exercise: What would you do after 9...b5 with the knight on c4?
a) Take the pawn on e5. b) Go back to d2. c) Retreat to a3.

Answer: Black has a neat tactical possibility after 9...b5!? as 10 ♘cxe5? f6 traps the knight. White could retreat the knight to a3 in the style of the game. On the other hand, Black hasn't wasted a move by defending the e5-pawn with ♕c7. He could use this tempo to strengthen his queenside pawns: for example, with 10 ♘a3 a6!? 11 c3 c5 12 ♘c2 ♘bc6. So after 9...b5 it looks better for White to change track with 10 ♘cd2! and then continue a2-a4, ♘b3, ♗d2, etc, when the black queenside pawns look shaky. The white knight also spies a hole on c5. So I would give option 'b' preference. It takes advantage of the fact that pieces can go backwards, whereas pawns can't.

10 c3

Having cajoled the pawn to d4, Movsesian begins to undermine it.



10...b5

Question: How should White continue if Black plays 10...c5 standing his ground in the centre?

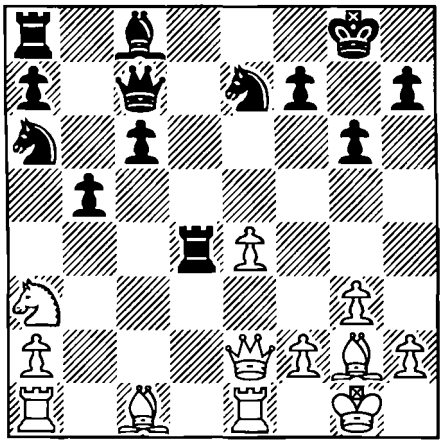
Answer: If Black bolsters d4 with 10...c5 then 11 cxd4 cxd4 12 ♗d2 ♘bc6 13 ♖c1 or 13 a4 give White pressure on the queenside. He will try to advance b4-b5.

11 ♘a3 dxc3 12 bxc3 ♖d8

Panarin plays in the style of the Grünfeld. He hopes that his piece activity will restrain White from conquering the centre with d3-d4, but Movsesian will cut across his plans with a fine exchange sacrifice.

13 ♕e2 ♘a6 14 d4 ♗g4

Exercise: How do you assess the position after the pawn grab 14...exd4 15 cxd4 ♗xd4 16 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 and what would be White's best continuation?

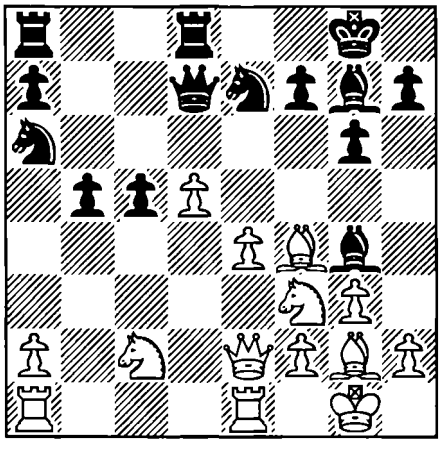


Answer: This line would be suicidal for Black as the dark squares on his kingside become indefensible. White would surely win after 17 ♗b2, but the most convincing way is actually to fianchetto the queen: 17 ♕b2! ♖d8 (if 17...c5 18 ♘xb5) 18 ♗h6 with bedlam on g7.

15 ♘c2 exd4 16 cxd4 c5

Black has done everything he can to put pressure on the white centre, but it springs forwards after White's next two moves:

17 ♗f4! ♕d7 18 d5!



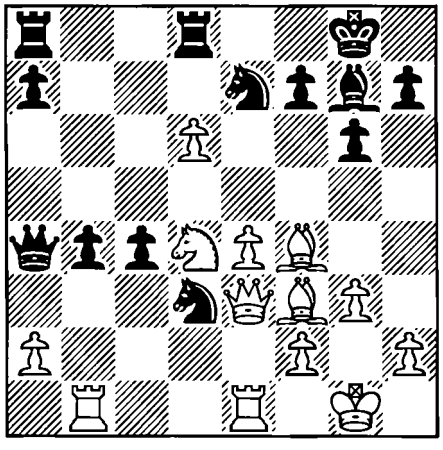
18...c4

Exercise: After 18...♗xa1 19 ♖xa1 in your judgement how much compensation does White have for the exchange?

Answer: Black would perish sooner or later on the dark squares after 18...♗xa1 19 ♖xa1, especially as his knights aren't able to defend the dark squares in the centre. There would already be the idea of 20 ♗e5, 21 ♕e3 and 22 ♕h6 to mate on g7. After 19...f6, White could build up towards a centre breakthrough with e4-e5 with 20 ♘e3 or put pressure on the queenside with 20 a4!?.

In the game keeping the bishop doesn't do him much good either as White's pawns roll forwards.

19 ♕e3 ♗xf3 20 ♗xf3 b4 21 ♖ab1 ♕a4 22 ♘d4 ♘c5 23 d6 ♘d3



Exercise: Should White take the knight with 24 dxe7, sacrifice the exchange with 24 e5, or save his rook with 24 ♖ed1?

Answer: **24 e5!**

The solid 24 ♖ed1 gives White good winning chances, though Black can fight on with 24...♗xd4 25 ♕xd4 ♘c6 26 ♕xc4 ♘ce5. Instead, Movsesian insists on sacrificing an exchange in this game, and rightly so. He shuts out the bishop on g7 whilst activating his own light-squared bishop. The black knight on e7 is now really hanging, whereas Black would suddenly be winning after the hasty 24 dxe7? ♗xd4! 25 exd8♕+ ♖xd8 26 ♕e2 ♗xf2+.

24...♘xe1 25 ♖xe1 ♘f5

There's nothing to be done. Black avoids material loss, but will obliterated by the advance of White's centre pawns.

26 ♘xf5 gxf5 27 ♗xa8 ♖xa8 28 e6 ♕e8

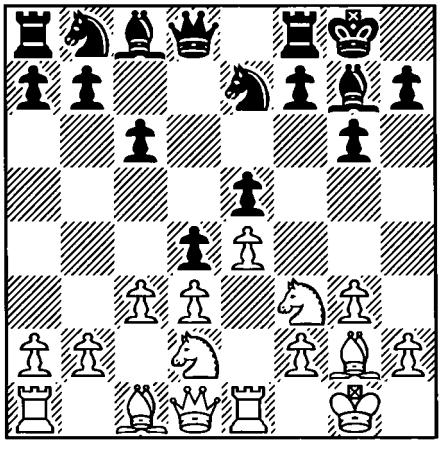
The game soon ends after 28...fxe6 29 ♕xe6+ ♔h8 30 d7, threatening 31 ♕e8+ winning a rook.

29 d7 ♕xe6 30 ♕d2 1-0

Black can't stop the pawn queening and save his own queen.

Game 16
D.Andreikin-D.Lintchevski
Dagomys 2010

1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 e5 6 ♘gf3 ♘e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♖e1 d4 9 c3!?



In contrast to Game 15, White attacks d4 at once.

Question: But can't Black play 9...dxc3 10 bxc3 ♕xd3, winning a pawn?

Answer: After 9...dxc3 10 bxc3 ♕xd3 White has a strong initiative with 11 ♗a3! when there are three possibilities:

a) 11...♕d8 12 ♘c4! planning to invade on d6.

b) 11...♖e8 12 ♕b3 with ideas of either 13 ♘g5, hitting f7, or 13 ♗f1 followed by 14 ♘c4 and 15 ♘d6.

c) 11...c5, handing back the pawn, is best for Black, though White is on top after 12 ♗xc5 ♘bc6 13 ♕a4.

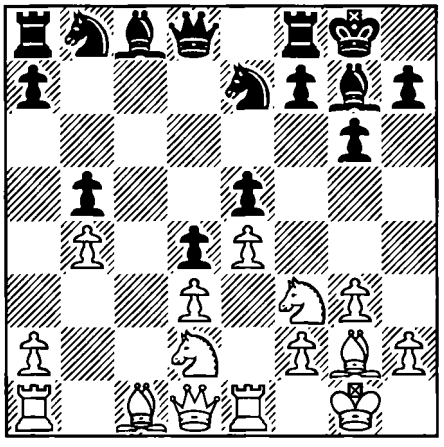
9...c5

Black declines to capture on c3, preferring to strengthen his hold on d4.

10 cxd4 cxd4 11 b4 b5?

Evidently the aim is to stop White expanding further on the queenside with moves like a2-a4, b4-b5 and ♗a3. The pawn move also keeps the white knight out of c4. But Black is

breaking two important principles.



Question: What are those principles?

Answer: Firstly, you shouldn't gratuitously move pawns on the side of the board where you are weakest. And, secondly, if you try to prevent a breakthrough that is going to happen anyway, your efforts to delay it normally only make matters worse.

12 a4!

Exactly, Now Black isn't able to maintain the queenside blockade.

12...bxa4 13 ♘c4 ♘d7 14 ♕xa4 ♘b6 15 ♘xb6 ♕xb6 16 ♘d2!

White's queenside attack is flowing smoothly as the other knight joins in the battle.

16...♕e6

The queen runs away from being attacked by 17 ♘c4, but in fact there are even more attractive squares for the white knight on the queenside.

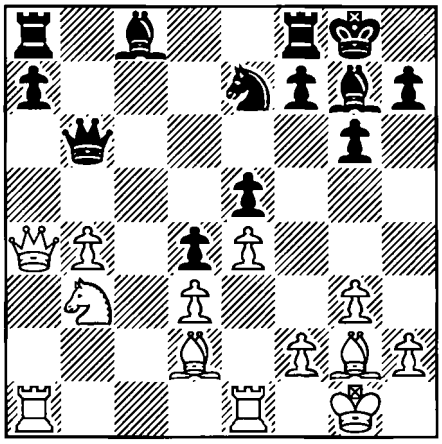
17 ♘b3!

An outpost on c5 will be more valuable to the horse than one on c4 as it is deeper in the enemy's camp.

17...♕b6

Black tries again with his queen on b6.

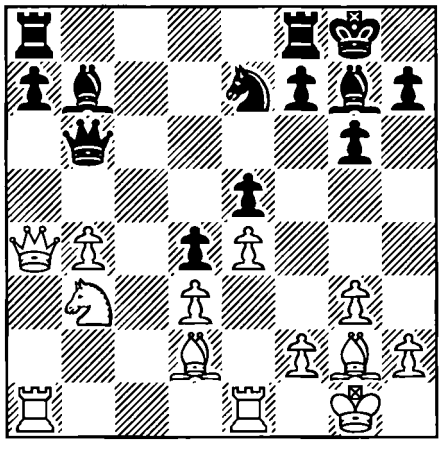
18 ♗d2!



Exercise: White is always looking for in the King's Indian Attack? Why is this a good quiet move of the kind

Answer: Firstly, the bishop move is good in its own right as it defends b4 against attack by ...♖b8 and deters a breakout with ...a7-a5 in the event that White has played ♘c5 or otherwise weakened his grip on that square. Secondly, the bishop move improves the overall coordination of the white pieces as it clears the way for the rook on e1 to join in the queenside action down the c-file. And, finally, it has value as a waiting move – White wants to see what Black does with his bishop on c8 before committing his knight to an advanced square.

18...♗b7



Question: Black has chosen b7 for his bishop.
Do we want a5 or c5 as a post for our knight?

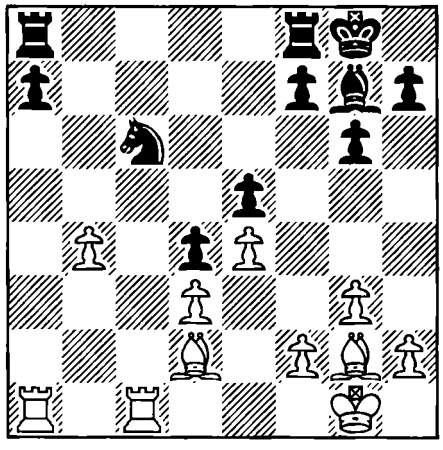
19 ♘a5!

Answer: After the routine 19 ♘c5? Black can blockade the queenside after all with 19...♗c6 and 20...♗b5. After the game move White threatens 20 ♕d7, winning a piece. Black would probably do best to go into heavy defensive mode with 19...♖fb8, when 20 ♖ec1 intending 21 ♖c5 keeps up White's strategic onslaught. Note how in that case both the white knight and rook would be supported by the pawn on b4 and making use of dark squares weakened by Black's thoughtless 11...b5 move. In the game Black collapses quickly:

19...♗c6? 20 ♘xc6 ♕xc6

After 20...♘xc6 21 ♖ec1 ♘e7 22 ♖c5 Black is completely dominated on the queenside, but he should have tried to tough it out that way.

21 ♕xc6 ♘xc6 22 ♖ec1



22...♘d8

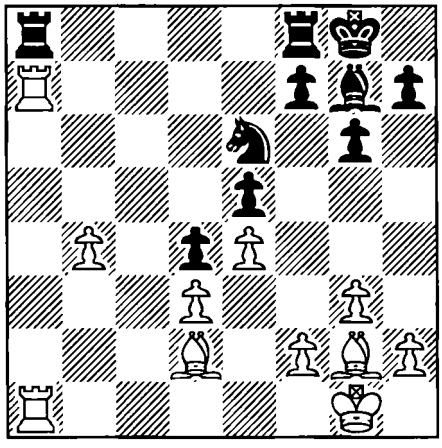
Question: What happens after 22...♖fc8 which looks very natural?

Answer: Bobby Fischer once write a puzzle book and I remember he kept telling the reader to "look at the whole board". After 22...♖fc8 23 ♗h3! Black can resign as 23...♖c7 24 b5 is a fatal pin, and 23...f5 24 exf5 is hopeless as well.

23 ♖c7 ♘e6

After 23...a6, 24 b5? is premature because of 24...♘e6! breaking the pin on a8, but first 24 ♗h3! then 25 b5 would do the trick.

24 ♖cxa7



White wins a pawn. A discussion of a long technical endgame isn't really the theme of this book, so we'll end the analysis here. Suffice to say that Black puts up a determined show and can only regret that he didn't put the same energy into the early opening phase. Here are the remaining moves:

24...♘c7 25 ♗h3 ♖fb8 26 ♖7a5 ♗f8 27 ♗d7 ♖d8 28 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 29 ♖c1 ♘a6 30 ♖a1 ♘c7 31 ♖a5 ♗d6 32 ♔f1 ♔f8 33 ♔e2 f6 34 ♗c6 ♖b8 35 ♖a7 ♔g8 36 h4 ♖b6 37 ♗d7 ♔f8 38 ♗a4 ♖a6 39 ♖xa6 ♘xa6 40 b5 ♘c5 41 ♗c2 ♔e7 42 ♔f3 h5 43 ♔e2 ♔e8 44 ♗c1 ♔e7 45 ♗d1 ♔d7 46 ♗d2 ♔e7 47 ♗h6 ♗c7 48 ♗c2 ♗d6 49 ♔d1 ♗c7 50 ♗d2 ♗d6 51 ♗e1 ♗c7 52 ♔c1 ♗d6 53 ♗b1 ♘a4 54 ♗a2 ♘c3 55 ♗c4 g5 56 ♔c2 gxh4 57 gxh4 ♘e2 58 f3 ♘g1 59 b6 ♘xf3 60 ♗g3 ♘g1 61 ♔d1 ♘h3 62 ♔e2 ♘f4+ 63 ♗xf4 exf4 64 ♔f3 ♔d8 65 ♗f7 ♗b4 66 ♗xh5 ♗e1 67 ♔g4 f3 68 ♔h3 f2 69 ♗e2 ♗b4 70 h5 ♗f8 71 ♔g4 ♔e8 72 ♔f5 ♔f7 73 e5 fxe5 74 ♔xe5 ♗g7+ 75 ♔e4 ♗f8 76 ♔d5 ♗h6 77 ♔d6 f1B 78 ♗xf1 1-0

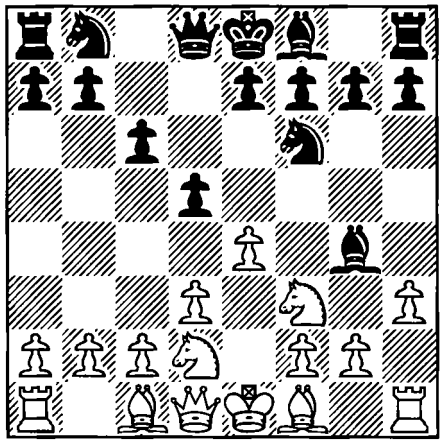
Part Three: Black's solid centre with ...e7-e6

Game 17
E.Safarli-M.Van Delft
Essent 2008

1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 ♘f6 4 ♘gf3 ♗g4

Black gets his bishop outside his pawn chain before closing the door with ...e7-e6.

5 h3

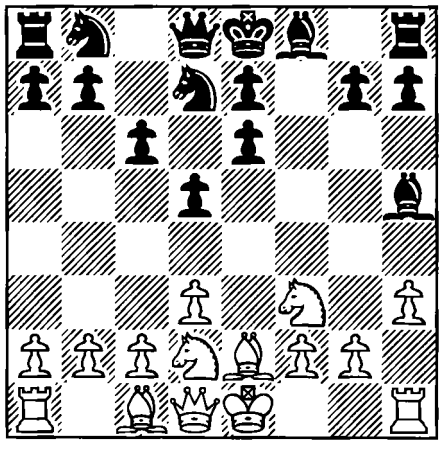


5...♗xf3

Question: After 5...♗h5 is it OK for White continue with 6 g3 to fianchetto on g2?

Answer: The King's Indian Attack is rock solid once it has reached maturity, a bit like a sea turtle, but like a baby turtle crossing the sand for the first time towards the water it can be fragile at its inception. If you play 6 g3 'because that's what White always plays' then disillusion descends as swiftly as a golden eagle with 6...dxe4 7 dxe4 ♘xe4! when 8 ♘xe4?? ♕xd1+ 9 ♔xd1 ♗xf3+ is a catastrophe. White has tried to turn it into a pawn sacrifice with 8 ♕e2, but I don't believe it as 8...♘d6 or 8...♘f6 leaves him with little for the pawn.

Therefore after 5...♗h5 White usually plays 6 ♗e2 or 6 g4. However, I would suggest a more promising pawn sacrifice for White: 6 e5 ♘fd7 7 e6!? fxe6 8 ♗e2!.



Black's bishop on f8 is shut in, which means Black is a long way from castling kingside

and the rook on h8 remains passive. Meanwhile the e6-pawn and the square it stands on are very weak. Already White plans 9 ♘g5! when the threat to e6 is highly awkward for Black. If 8...h6 White can choose between 9 ♘h4 ♗f7 10 ♗h5 ♘f6 11 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 12 ♕e2 and 9 ♘e5!? ♗xe2 10 ♕xe2 ♘xe5 11 ♕xe5 ♕d6 12 ♕h5+ ♔d8 13 ♘f3 ♘d7 14 0-0, etc. The discomfort of the black king is obvious in both cases. If instead 8...♕c7, to answer 9 ♘g5 with 9...♕e5, the simple reply 9 0-0 intending 10 ♘g5 next move looks strong.

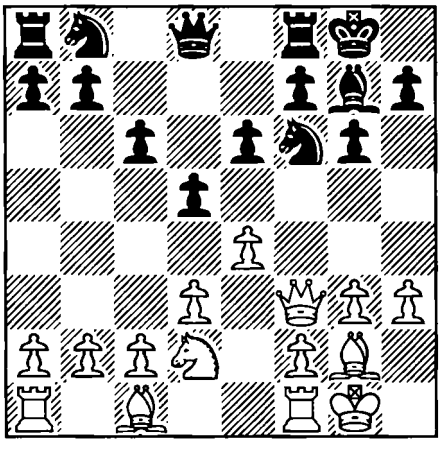
6 ♕xf3 e6

Having exchanged off his light-squared bishop Black decides to build the typical 'Slav' triangle of pawns. Nonetheless, White can be pleased to gain space with f2-f4 in a painless manner. This strategically desirable pawn advance is something that normally costs him a lot of time and self-inflicted weaknesses in other variations in this book.

7 g3 g6

Spending a tempo just to put the bishop on a square where it is likely to be shut in. Development with 7...♘bd7 and 8...c5 or 8...♗d6 was sensible.

8 ♗g2 ♗g7 9 0-0 0-0



Exercise: How should White continue his build-up?

Answer: **10 ♕e2!**

Sometimes the strongest moves don't make the greatest impression. Retreating the queen one square adds dynamism to White's set-up by clearing the way for the f-pawn.

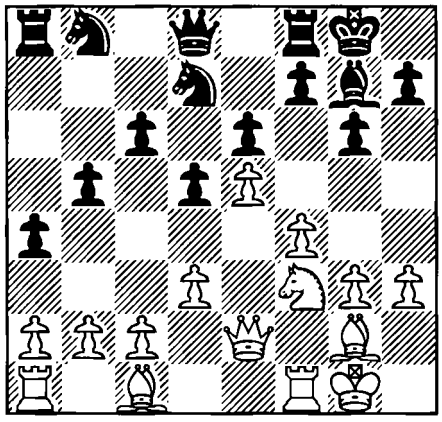
10...a5 11 f4 a4 12 e5

See the comment to move seven. Black's bishop on g7 is boxed in and White has a significant space advantage on the kingside.

12...♘fd7

Now the black knight on b8 is deprived of a good square as both c6 and d7 are blocked.

13 ♘f3 b5



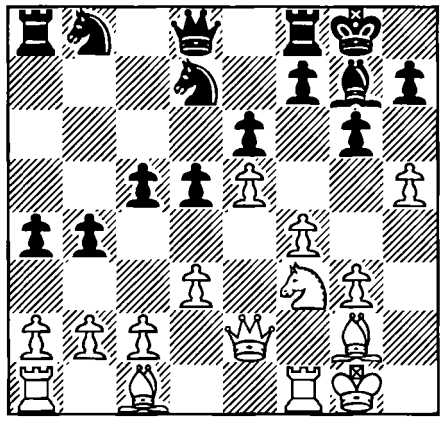
Question: What now is the next stage in White's kingside build-up?

Answer: **14 h4!**

In the King's Indian Attack you always have to look out for ways to strengthen your game using the wing pawns. This can be for the purposes of defence or attack, or just to mark time while you wait for your opponent to commit himself to a certain line of play. Here White's bind in the centre is unchallenged and the black knight has been driven from f6, so he is justified in starting a direct kingside assault.

14...b4 15 h5 c5

The fact that Black has to move the c-pawn twice is enough to condemn his plan of advancing pawns on the queenside.



Exercise: What is the best response to Black's queenside pawn advances?

Answer: **16 c4!**

This pawn stab against the d5-square also frequently occurs in the KIA versus the French lines. Safarli sees that the direct 16 ♘g5 can be answered by 16...♘c6, intending 17...♘d4 with counterplay in view of the attack on c2 as well as the threat to the white queen. Therefore he prefers to take time out from his kingside assault to consolidate in the centre. With the game move he virtually compels Black to capture on c3 as 16...dxc4 17 dxc4 opens the long diagonal for White's bishop on g2 and gives his knight the e4-square, from where it could attack the c5-pawn in conjunction with ♗e3 and ♕f2.

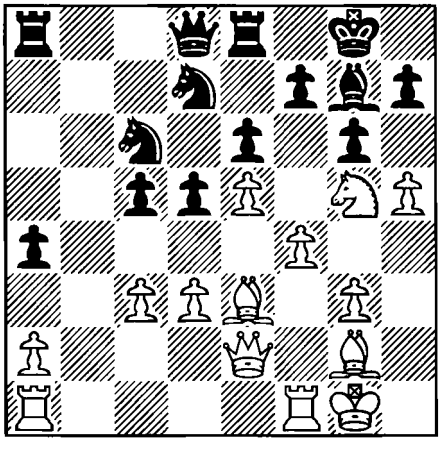
Question: Why would White switch from an attack on the black king to targeting the c5-pawn?

Answer: Certainly if he were presented with a target such as the pawn on c5. Leaving the black bishop shut in on g7 and exploiting its absence from the queenside struggle would be a 'clean' way to exploit White's stranglehold on the e5-square.

16...bxc3

After this exchange the black knight no longer has access to the d4-square and so White can carry out his kingside attack in peace.

17 bxc3 ♘c6 18 ♘g5 ♖e8 19 ♗e3

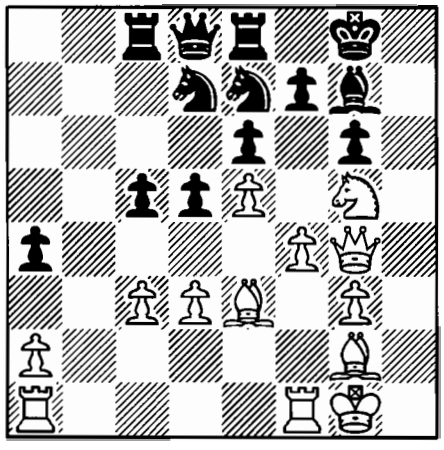


Not only developing, but taking away energy from the black pieces, as the good defensive move 19...♘f8 would drop the c5-pawn.

19...♖c8 20 ♕g4

It seems like the queen is heading to the h-file, but there are other threats as we shall see.

20...♘e7 21 hxg6 hxg6



Exercise: Black is hoping to defend after 22 ♕h3 ♘f8.
Can you see a winning breakthrough for White?

Answer: **22 ♘xe6! fxe6 23 ♕xe6+ ♔f8**

If 23...♔h7, 24 ♔f2! clears the way for the rooks to go to the h-file: for example, 24...♘f8 25 ♖h1+ ♗h6 26 ♕f7+ followed by 27 ♖xh6+ or 24...♘f5 25 ♖h1+ ♘h6 26 ♖xh6+! ♗xh6 27 ♕f7+ ♔h8 28 ♖h1 and there's no good way to stop 29 ♖xh6+.

24 f5 gxf5 25 ♗g5! 1-0

The threat is 26 ♖xf5+, picking up the queen with ♗xd8 on the next move or two, whilst keeping a decisive attack. Black could try 25...♕c7, but after 26 ♖xf5+ ♘xf5 27 ♕xf5+ ♔g8 28 ♗xd5+ ♔h8 29 ♕h3+ he will be mated.

Part Four: Black constructs a Philidor centre

The following game should be compared with Sepp-Bravo in Chapter Eight where Black was able to play ...♘c6 as he wasn't committed to ...c7-c6.

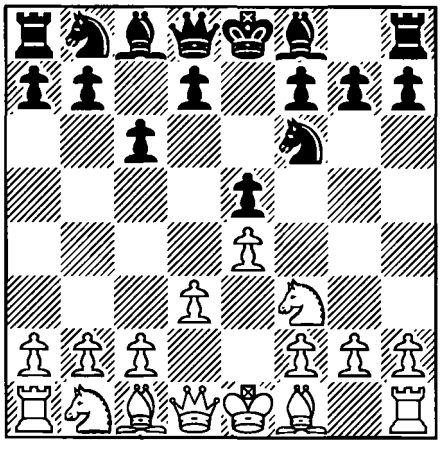
Game 18
S.Tiviakov-D.Fridman
Dutch League 2005

1 e4 c6 2 d3 e5

A sensible move, but the Philidor style pawn centre that arises is perhaps a little too passive for modern taste.

3 ♘f3 ♘f6

Instead 3...d6 should transpose.



Question: What happens if White grabs the pawn with 4 ♘xe5?

Answer: Once upon a time I wrote a book on miniature chess games. By far the most common way for an experienced player to lose quickly was to miss a double attack by the enemy queen. Here 4 ♘xe5+?? ♕a5+ wins the knight.

4 ♘bd2

Now Black really must defend his e5-pawn.

4...d6 5 g3 g6

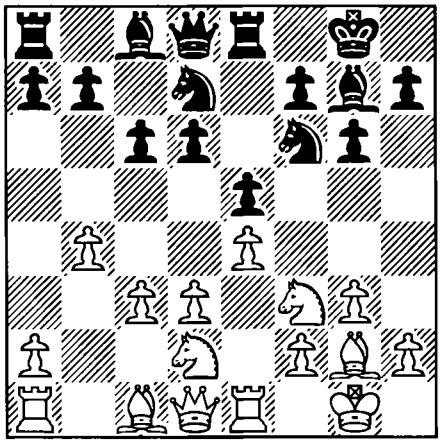
Black decides to copy his opponent, leading to a symmetrical position. Since the time factor isn't critical here, he might as well put his bishop on the more active square g7 rather than develop it one move sooner to a more passive square with 5...♗e7.

6 ♗g2 ♗g7 7 0-0 0-0 8 c3

White 'returns the compliment' by copying his opponent's Caro-Kann move. As we shall see, he needs this little pawn move to support his plan.

8...♖e8 9 ♖e1 ♘bd7 10 b4

This space grab on the queenside is the first aggressive gesture by either player.



Question: Is continuing to copy with 10...b5 a good idea for Black?

10...d5

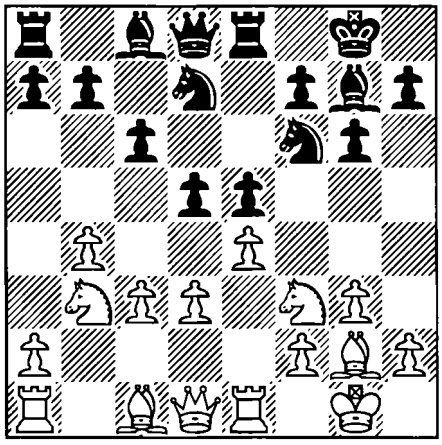
Answer: It would be foolish for Black to carry on copying as 10...b5 11 a4! would be awkward: 11...a5 12 axb5 just wins a pawn for White, whilst 11...a6 leaves White in the ascendancy on the queenside; he can prepare c3-c4 with moves like ♗b2 and ♕c2 to add to the pressure on b5.

It's interesting that 10 b4 is applauded as a space-gaining move on the queenside, whilst Black's identical move 10...b5 is condemned as a needless weakening. You might recall the old rule that you shouldn't move pawns on the side of the board where you are weakest. Here White has the initiative on the queenside because of his extra move, so Black shouldn't present him with a target on b5. White should be made to work to open lines or create a weakness, he shouldn't be presented with one for free.

With 10...d5 Black follows a traditional recipe: an attack on the wing is met with a counterattack in the centre. Fortunately for White his centre is so heavily fortified in the King's Indian Attack that Black can seldom strike a strong blow against it. On the other hand, this strength comes from the white centre being held back in a compact mass. In the early stages of the game at least White's pawns can't cause the opponent much trouble in the centre. Therefore he has to try to gradually outplay him with little moves on the wings.

11 ♘b3

Fridman needs to develop his bishop. One option is to clear the way for ...♗g4 with ...♘f8, but he doesn't want to retreat his knight from d7 where it well centralized and supporting the e5-pawn. So he plays:



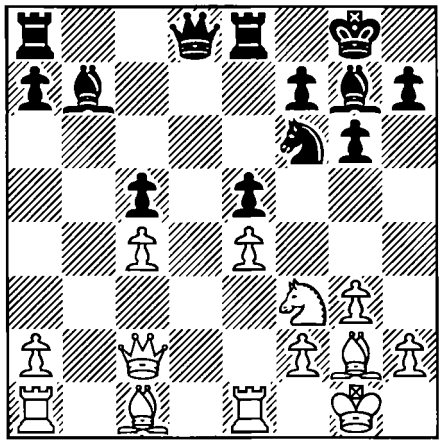
11...b6

But now the black queenside pawns are more fragile; a fact not lost on Tiviakov who prepares to ram them with c3-c4. Furthermore, if he can play the further pawn advance c4-c5, Black's bishop would be rather shut in on b7.

12 ♕c2 ♗b7 13 c4 dxe4

Black activates his bishop before White is able to clamp down on the queenside with c4-c5.

14 dxe4 c5 15 bxc5 ♘xc5 16 ♘xc5 bxc5



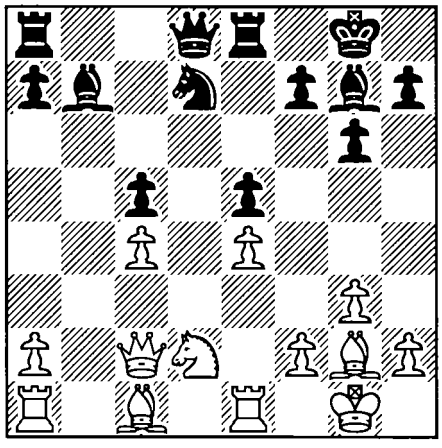
Question: How would you assess the position?

Answer: At first glance it looks pretty equal. However, it is easier for White to attack the c5-pawn than it is for Black to launch a similar assault on c4. Besides White's pawn on c4 is

already defended by the queen, and he has what David Bronstein called the most powerful weapon in chess – the next move.

17 ♘d2 ♘d7

You might have noticed that both players have an idea outpost for a knight along the d-file. If White's head for the d5-square with 18 ♘f1 then 18...♘f8 19 ♘e3 ♘e6 20 ♘d5 gets his knight to the ideal post first, but 20...♘d4, which also happens to hit the white queen, leaves Black fully equal.



Exercise: Tiviakov finds a much better plan. Can you see it?

Answer: **18 ♘b3!**

White's knight chooses the b3-square so in combination with the bishop on e3 it can assail the c5-pawn. The black knight's journey to Nirvana on d4 has to be delayed until the pawn is sufficiently defended. Hence his next two moves.

18...♕c7 19 ♗e3 ♗f8

The c5-pawn is OK for the moment, but how annoying for the knight that the f8-square is now blocked by the bishop.

20 ♖ab1 ♗c6 21 ♕c3!

A little move, but very poisonous. As we shall see, the white queen is preparing to invade on a5.

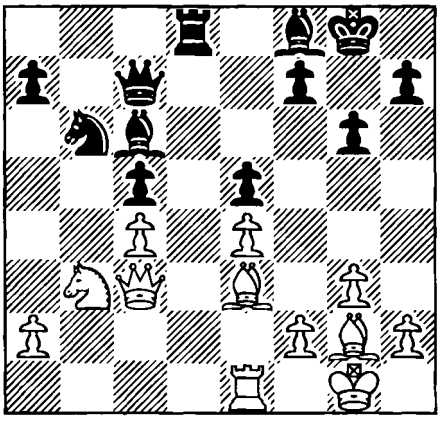
21...♖ab8 22 ♖bd1 ♖bd8

Cat and mouse. White sees there is nothing to be gained on the b-file and so prepares to double rooks along the d-file. Black responds in kind by switching his rook to d8.

23 ♖d2 ♘b6!?

Fridman offers the c5-pawn as he has calculated that he will obtain sufficient counterplay.

24 ♖xd8 ♖xd8

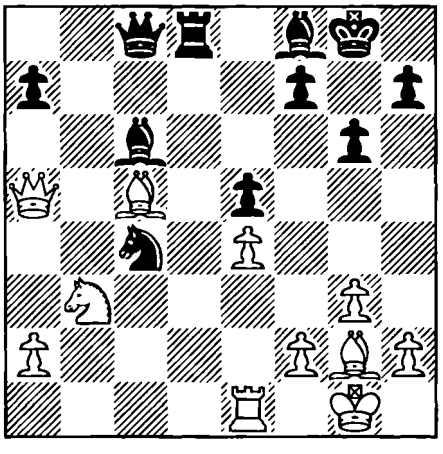


Exercise: Try to work out how Black might justify his sacrifice after 25 ♘xc5 (look for positional compensation rather than a tactical blow).

Answer: **25 ♕a5!**

White avoids grabbing the pawn as after 25 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 26 ♗xc5 ♘a4 27 ♕a3 ♘xc5 28 ♕xc5 ♖d2 the (very slightly dubious) adage that a rook on the seventh rank is worth a pawn is fully justified because of White's passive bishop. For example, 29 a3 ♕b6 30 ♕xb6 axb6 31 ♖b1 ♖c2 32 f3 ♖xc4 33 ♖xb6 ♖c1+ 34 ♗f1 ♗a4 and White can't make any progress due to the awkward position of his king and bishop.

25...♕c8 26 ♗xc5 ♘xc4



Exercise: Can you see what would happen after 27 ♕xa7?

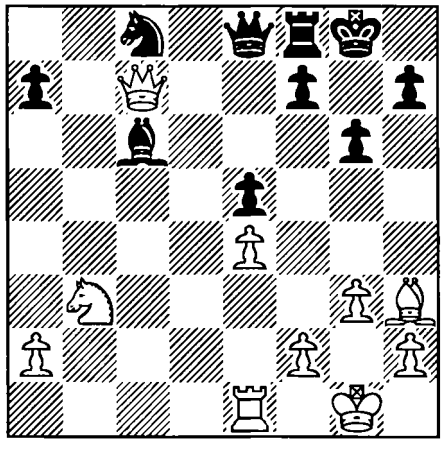
27 ♕b4!

Answer: I hope you aren't deep in a rook and pawn endgame as after 27 ♕xa7? ♖d7 traps the white queen, for if 28 ♗h3 f5, etc.

27...♘b6 28 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 29 ♕d6

Black is almost equal, but not quite, and in this type of position that means he is losing! The difference in activity between the two sides' major pieces means that the a7- and e5-pawns can't both be held.

29...♕e8 30 ♕c7 ♘c8 31 ♗h3!



An important strengthening of White's pressure. If you play the King's Indian Attack you have to remember that g2 is not the only square along the short f1 to h3 diagonal on which the bishop can be placed with great effect. There are many examples in this book of not only ♗h3, but also ♗f1 being a powerful relocation of the bishop.

31...♗a8 32 ♖c1 ♕a4 33 ♘c5

Not falling for 33 ♗xc8? ♕xe4 when White's king is suddenly in terrible trouble.

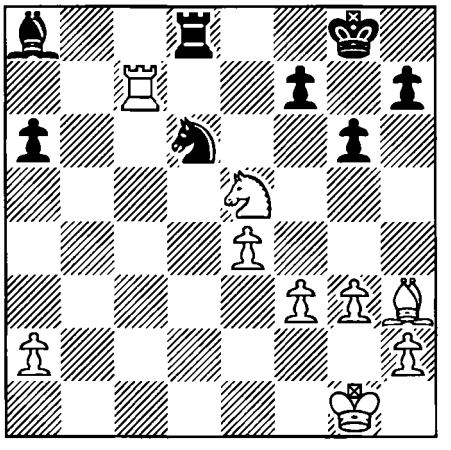
33...♕c6 34 ♘d7! ♕xc7

Now, however, Black is forced into a gruesome endgame as 34...♕xe4 loses to 35 ♘f6+.

35 ♖xc7 ♖d8 36 ♘xe5

At last Tiviakov cashes in after his great positional play.

36...♘d6 37 f3 a6



Question: What is the move that underlines Black's helplessness?

38 ♖d7?

Answer: Perhaps White was in time pressure after having to find a long series of precise moves. Exchanging off his dominant rook gives up a large part of his advantage. Instead after 39 a4! stopping any counterplay with 39...♘b5, Black would be very near to defeat.

38...♖xd7 39 ♗xd7 f6 40 ♘d3 ♔f7 41 ♔f2 ♔e7 42 ♗a4 g5 43 g4 ♘c4 44 ♘c5

The best way to consolidate the extra pawn was probably 44 ♗b3.

44...a5 45 ♘b3?

And here 45 ♗b5 or 45 ♔e2 would keep winning chances. The game move allows the exchange of the a-pawns when White's extra pawn on the kingside isn't enough to win. For the record the remaining moves were:

45...♘b2 46 ♗b5 ♘d1+ 47 ♔e1 ♘c3 48 ♗c4 ♘xa2 49 ♘xa5 ♘b4 50 ♘b3 ♗c6 51 ♔d2 ♗d7 52 ♔e3 ♘c2+ 53 ♔d3 ♘e1+ 54 ♔e2 ♘g2 55 ♘d4 ♔d6 56 ♔f2 ♘f4 57 ♗g8 h5 58 gxh5 ♘xh5 59 ♔e2 ♔e5 60 ♗f7 ½-½

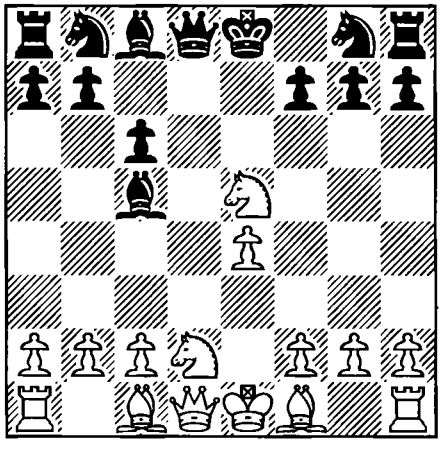
A rather disappointing conclusion after Tiviakov's fine play in the middlegame.

Part Five: Black builds a broad centre with ...f7-f5 and early alternatives

Game 19
N.Escuer Sanchez-A.Chueca Forcen
Spanish Team Championship 2006

1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 e5

Premature is 3...dxe4. As a general rule Black should wait until White has committed himself to g2-g3 before exchanging on e4. Play might go 4 dxe4 e5 5 ♘gf3 ♗c5 (safer is 5...♘d7, but 6 ♗c4 ♗e7 7 c3 ♕c7 8 0-0 ♘b6 9 ♗b3 ♘f6 10 a4 a5 11 ♕e2 was a slight but pleasant edge for White in L.Galego-A.Fernandes, Canecas 2002) 6 ♘xe5! ruining Black's opening play.



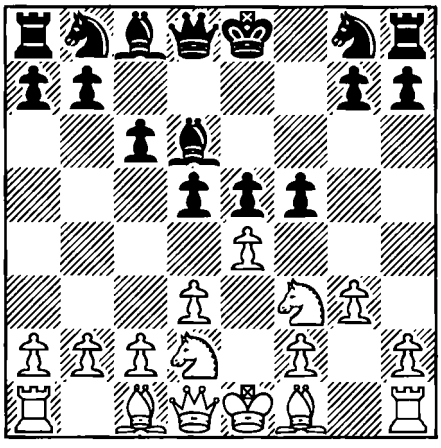
It looks as if White has fallen into a trap, but after 6...♗xf2+ 7 ♔xf2 ♕d4+ 8 ♔e1 ♕xe5 White's counterattack with 9 ♘c4! is very strong: 9...♕xe4+ 10 ♗e2. If now 10...♕xg2 11 ♘d6+ ♔f8 12 ♗f3 ♕g6 13 ♘xc8 wins, while after the best defence 10...♕h4+ 11 g3 ♕d8 White gets a very nice endgame with 12 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 13 ♘d6 ♗e6 (the only good way to defend f7) 14 ♘xb7+ ♔c7 15 ♘c5 followed by 16 ♘xe6+ or 16 ♗f4+.

4 ♘gf3 ♗d6

If instead 4...♘d7?! we can go on our merry way with 5 g3, but 5 d4!? changing the nature of the centre is a good idea. Black has shut in his bishop on c8 so isn't well equipped for an opening of lines. Meanwhile we haven't committed ourselves to a fianchetto with g2-g3 yet, so our king's bishop can be developed more actively. After 5...exd4 6 exd5 cxd5 7 ♘xd4 the black knight is misplaced on d7, while if 5...dxe4 6 ♘xe4 exd4 7 ♕xd4 ♘gf6 White would have the pleasant choice between 8 ♗g5 with a continuing initiative or 8 ♘d6+!? ♗xd6 9 ♕xd6 grabbing the bishop-pair.

5 g3 f5

We have to analyse Black's fifth move carefully as it requires a sharp, tactical response from White.



6 exd5!

If instead 6 ♗g2 ♘f6 7 0-0 0-0 looks very comfortable for Black. White does best to target the e5-pawn immediately:

6...cxd5 7 c4! dxc4?

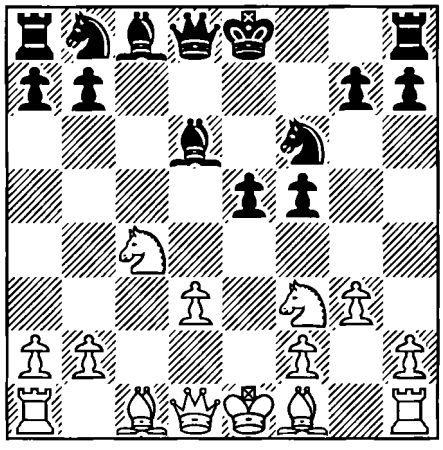
White seems to have a pleasant advantage after 7...♘f6 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♗g2 ♘c6 10 0-0 ♘b6 11 ♖e1 0-0 12 b4!, an important space gaining move on the queenside. It plans both b4-b5 and ♗b2 to increase the pressure on e5. If now 12...♗xb4 13 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 14 ♕b3+ ♔h8 15 ♖xe5 or 12...♘xb4 13 ♕b3+ ♔h8 14 ♗b2 and e5 will fall. In both cases White will have exchanged a wing pawn for the more important e5-pawn, with lasting pressure.

It seems that Black is taking on too many central commitments after 7...d4: for example, 8 ♗g2 ♘c6 (wing play to undermine e5 is also the theme after 8...♘f6 9 0-0 0-0 10 b4!) 9 0-0 ♘f6 10 c5! ♗xc5 (10...♗c7 11 b4! ♘xb4 12 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 13 ♘c4! and White regains the piece with the attack as if 13...♗c7 14 ♕e1+ ♔f7 15 ♕xb4) 11 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 12 ♖e1 ♘fg4 13 ♘c4 0-0 14 ♘xe5 and again White stands better in the centre.

Therefore Black must continue his bold strategy with 7...e4!. This move will be examined in the analytical extract after this game.

With the game move Black makes things very easy for his opponent. He hands over the c4-square to the white knight where it can besiege the e5-pawn. He also opens up the a2-g8 diagonal for the white queen and facilitates the development of the bishop on c1. Meanwhile it is wrong to talk about the weakness of the backward d3-pawn as no black pieces can attack it.

8 ♘xc4 ♘f6



Question: Can't White now nab the pawn on e5?

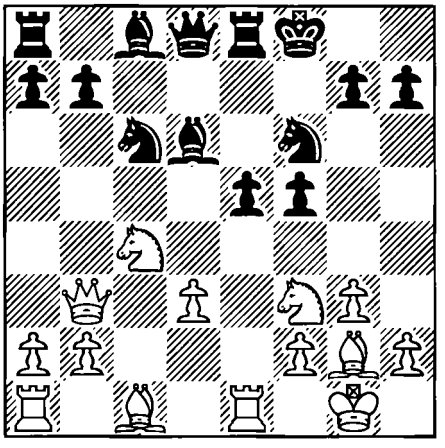
Answer: If White takes on e5 he would end up losing a piece after 9 ♘fxe5? ♗xe5 10 ♘xe5 ♕a5+. We have already seen a variant of this cheapo in the notes to Game 18 above.

Question: OK, the pawn on e5 is immune, but why not 9 ♘xd6+ to grab the bishop-pair?

Answer: White could play ♘xd6 at various points in the opening, but he wants to put pressure on the e5-pawn. After 9 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 the number of defenders of e5 hasn't declined, whereas the number of attackers has gone down by one.

9 ♗g2! ♘c6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 ♕b3! ♔f8

A series of natural moves by Black has led him into terrible trouble. If 12...♔h8 he gets hit by 13 ♘g5 with a fork on f7. He had to try 12...♗e6, though both 13 ♕xb7 and 13 ♘g5 must be good for White.



Exercise: **What is now the best way for White to build up pressure on the black centre?**

13 ♗e3?

Answer: White doesn't realise how generous his opponent has been to him. Instead of this routine move, which blocks the attack on e5 and shows too much concern for the d4-square, 13 ♗d2! is practically winning. White's basic plan is 14 ♗c3, to put so much pressure on e5 that the pawn will either drop off or be forced to advance to e4, when Black's position will fall apart.

White also isn't averse to using any combination that might arise due to the unfortunate position of the black king: for example, 13...♖b8 14 ♘fxe5! ♗xe5 (if 14...♘xe5 15 ♘xd6 ♕xd6 16 ♗b4 spikes the queen) 15 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 (or 15...♘xe5 16 ♗b4+ ♖e7 17 ♖xe5)

16 ♖xe5 ♘xe5 17 ♗b4+ ♔e8 18 ♖e1 and White will regain the piece on e5 due to the pin with a quick win.

13...♘a5 14 ♕c2 ♕c7

Starting to play with fire again. Simply 14...♘xc4 15 dxc4 e4 looks satisfactory for Black.

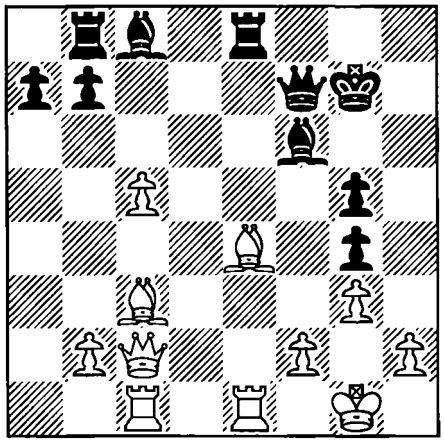
15 ♖ac1 ♘xc4 16 dxc4 ♘g4 17 c5 ♗e7 18 ♗d2 e4 19 ♗f4 ♕a5 20 ♘e5 g5?

A horrible weakening of the kingside. Black would still be OK after 20...♘xe5 21 ♗xe5 ♗e6.

21 ♗d2 ♕xa2 22 ♘xg4 fxg4 23 ♗xe4 ♕f7 24 ♗xh7

White has various ways to press home his advantage, the most straightforward being 24 c6!.

24...♔g7 25 ♗e4 ♖b8 26 ♗c3+ ♗f6



Exercise: **What is the simplest way for White to win?**

27 ♗xf6+

Answer: 27 ♕d2 with the threat of 28 ♕xg5+ is decisive. If 27...♔h6 28 ♕d6 with a double attack on b8 and f6.

27...♕xf6 28 ♕c3

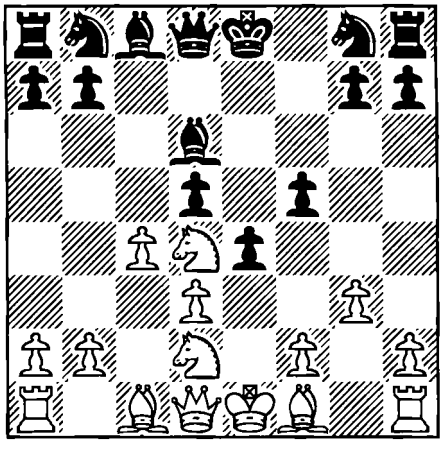
White is a pawn up and so decides to force an endgame. However, with the black king so exposed to attack, 28 ♖cd1, keeping up the pressure, looked simpler. In the end it burns out to a draw after further inaccuracies. The remaining moves were:

28...♗d7 29 ♕xf6+ ♔xf6 30 ♖cd1 ♗c6 31 ♗xc6 ♖xe1+ 32 ♖xe1 bxc6 33 ♖d1 ♖xb2 34 ♖d6+ ♔e5 35 ♖xc6 ♖c2 36 ♖a6 ♖xc5 37 ♖xa7 ♖c1+ 38 ♔g2 ♔f5 39 ♖a5+ ♔f6 40 h3 gxh3+ 41 ♔xh3 ♖c4 42 f3 ♔g6 43 ♖a6+ ♔g7 44 ♖e6 ♖a4 45 ♖e4 ♖a6 46 ♔g4 ♔g6 47 ♖b4 ♖c6 48 ♖b5 ♖c4+ 49 f4 gxf4 50 gxf4 ♖c6 51 ♖g5+ ♔f6 52 ♖h5 ♖c1 53 ♖h6+ ♔g7 54 ♖a6 ♖c5 55 f5 ♖c1 56 ♖e6 ♔f7 57 ♖a6 ½-½

The critical move 7...e4 in the analysis to Game 19 above has never been played in a tournament game, but we must analyse it.

1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 e5 4 ♘gf3 ♗d6 5 g3 f5 6 exd5 exd5 7 c4 e4!? 8 ♘d4

If White is allowed to play ♗g2 and 0-0 he will have a good game in view of the over-stretched black centre. So:



8...♕e7 9 ♗g2!?

Not so clear is 9 dxe4 dxe4. Now the simple 10 ♘2b3 looks OK for White, but critical must be the sacrifice 10 c5!? ♗xc5 11 ♗b5+ when it is the black king under fire:

a) 11...♗d7 12 ♘xf5 looks good for White seeing that the counterattack 12...♗xf2+ fails to 13 ♔xf2 ♕c5+ 14 ♘e3 ♕xb5 15 ♘xe4 when Black is overwhelmed by the white knights: for example, 15...♕b6 16 ♘d6+ ♔f8 (going to d8 allows a fork on f7, while if 16...♔e7 17 ♘dc4 with a winning attack) 17 ♕d5 and there's no good way to stop disaster on f7. Black could also try 12...♕f7, pinning the knight on f5 against a mate on f2, but then 13 ♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 14 ♕g4 keeps up the attack.

b) So Black should play 11...♔f7!. Now I don't see a convincing attacking line for White: for instance, 12 ♗c4+ ♔g6! (not getting the king in the way of the development of the rook on h8 with 12...♔f8) 13 ♘e2 h6 14 ♘f4+ ♔h7 and having found refuge on h7, Black is fine.

If you play this line, I think you should seek your chances with 10 ♘2b3, but the main move 9 ♗g2!? looks promising.

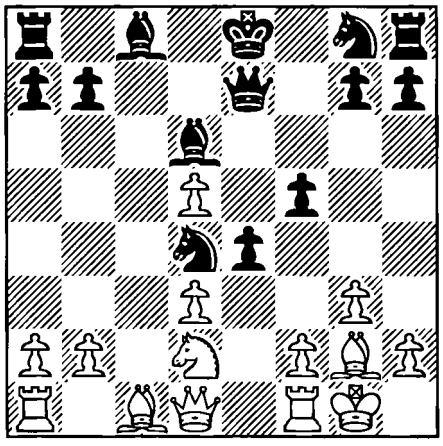
9...♘c6

Or 9...exd3+ 10 ♔f1 and despite his displaced king, White will gain the advantage as his pieces take control of the centre, such as after 10...♘f6 11 cxd5 0-0 12 ♘c4.

10 cxd5! ♘xd4

If 10...exd3+ 11 ♘e6! ♗xe6 12 0-0! (no hurry; the fork on d5 means that White regains his piece) 12...♘f6 13 dxc6 and Black is facing ruin along the h1-a8 diagonal.

11 0-0!



White whisks his king from the centre, thereby avoiding Black's counterattack with ...e4xd3+.

Question: **What is White's positional justification for the sacrifice?**

Answer: Multipurpose:

Firstly, the awkward position of the black king in the centre. He is still two moves from castling kingside. The knight still being on g8 is horrible for Black with the centre opening.

Secondly, the black queen is on an awkward square where she can be pinned against her king.

Thirdly, Black doesn't have time to stabilize the centre with 11...♘f6 as the other knight drops to 12 ♕a4+ and 13 ♕xd4.

Fourthly, White's rook can quickly get to e1 to embarrass the black king and queen. Meanwhile both of Black's rooks are passive.

And, finally, and most important of all, Black is going to have to lose further time or position in safeguarding the hanging knight on d4. If White is allowed to capture it with 12 ♕a4+ and 13 ♕xd4 he will have an easily winning position.

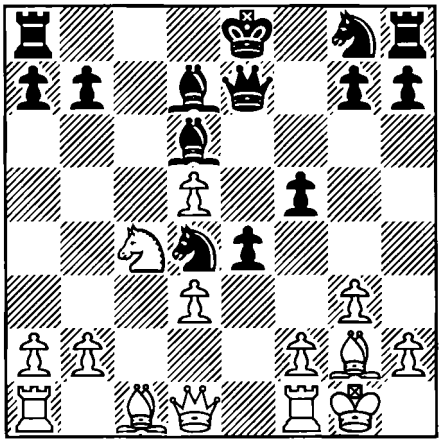
11...♗d7

If the knight runs away with 11...♘b5, there follows 12 dxe4 ♘f6 13 a4! ♘c7 14 e5! ♗xe5 15 ♘c4 when the threat of 16 d6 or 16 ♖e1 recovers the piece with a big advantage.

The game move prevents the check on a4. Other moves also give White huge play: for example, if 11...♗c5, 11...♔f8, or 11...♗e5 then 12 dxe4 plans to roll the pawns with 13 f4. In these cases White has two pawns for the piece and a mobile centre that causes Black's disorganised pieces a lot of discomfort.

12 ♘c4

Threatening to uncover an attack on the knight with 13 dxe4. 12 ♖e1 also looks good.



12...♘b5 13 a4 ♘c7 14 dxe4 fxe4 15 ♖e1 ♘f6 16 ♗xe4! ♘xe4?

A mistake, but White had a big initiative anyway.

17 ♖xe4 ♕xe4 18 ♘xd6+

Black has lost his queen.

Chapter Four
KIA Versus the Reversed King's Indian Defence

I probably shouldn't shout it too loudly, but objectively speaking the King's Indian Reversed is the biggest enemy of the King's Indian Attack. Black gets to seize more than his fair share of the centre while developing his pieces to good squares and avoiding weaknesses. Against a strong player – Kramnik springs to mind for some reason – White could easily end up worse due to his space deficit.

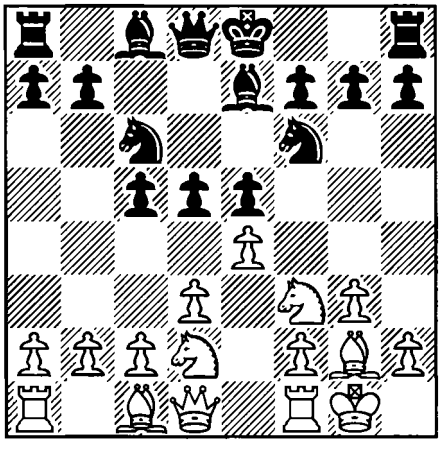
On the other hand, you aren't playing Kramnik (if you are then thanks for buying my book and can I have your autograph?). If you like the KIA set-up as White you won't worry about any 'objective' assessment that claims you're '0.21' of a pawn down. You get the chance to play the sort of chess you love, striking at the opponent's centre from a solid, albeit slight cramped base. And being true to your style is what matters in chess.

There's another reason not to worry too much about the King's Indian Reversed: it isn't a very popular choice for Black. Partly it's psychological. It is hard for Black to overcome the reasoning 'The King's Indian Defence is a dangerous opening to face as White. To play into the King's Indian main line structure a tempo down as Black must be very risky'. In reality Black is in no danger of being smashed by a sharp line in the King's Indian Reversed as long as he plays steadily, not trying to refute the opponent's set-up, but developing his pieces and consolidating his centre.

Furthermore, a player below elite level is unlikely to have the King's Indian Reversed in his repertoire as it is a lot of effort to learn when the chances of getting it in a tournament game are small. Even one move before it is reached after 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c5 3 ♗g2 ♘c6, White can diverge with 4 d4, making it a Reversed Grünfeld. And in the Sicilian move order after 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 there are a whole lot of other opening lines a player will want to spend his limited time looking at.

Move order

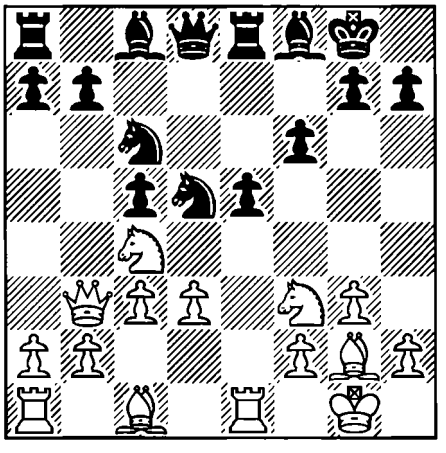
The 'traditional' move order is 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c5 3 ♗g2 ♘c6 4 d3 e5 5 0-0 ♘f6 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 e4, but in practice this is not too common. The game is more likely to begin 1 ♘f3 c5 2 g3 ♘c6 3 ♗g2 e5 (to avoid the Reversed Grünfeld after 3...d5 4 d4) 4 d3 d5 5 0-0 ♘f6 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 e4 or via a Sicilian with 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d3 ♘f6 4 g3 d5 5 ♘bd2 e5 6 ♗g2 ♗e7 7 0-0.



This is the critical position in the Reversed King's Indian. If Black plays the immediate 7...d4 then I like White's straightforward build-up in Game 20. More problematical for White as far as finding a good strategic plan is 7...0-0, keeping the tension.

Why I don't like White's plan of c2-c3

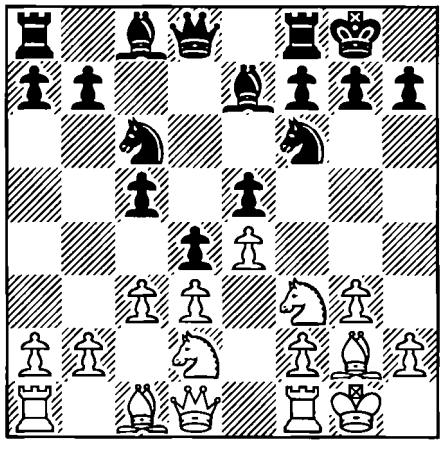
After 7...0-0 White can wait with 8 c3 when the Armenian Grandmaster Sergei Movsesian has achieved good results after 8...♖e8?! 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♖e1 ♗f8 11 ♘c4 f6 12 ♕b3!.



The threat is 13 ♘fxe5! fxe5 14 ♘e3 and White emerges a pawn up because of the pin on d5 after 14...♗e6 15 ♗xd5. In S.Movsesian-O.Gritsak, Warsaw (rapid) 2010, White was a safe pawn up after 12...♗e6 13 ♕xb7 ♖c8 14 ♕b5, while in S.Movsesian-B.Gelfand, Moscow (blitz) 2008, 12...♔h8 13 ♘cxe5! also picked up a pawn upon 13...♘xe5 14 ♘xe5, intending 14...fxe5 15 ♗xd5. Note in this sequence that if 13...fxe5, White has 14 ♘g5 with the double threat of 15 ♘f7+ winning the queen and 15 ♗xd5.

So far so good for White: Black doesn't have time to consolidate along the a2-g8 diagonal after 12 ♕b3 (best might be the decidedly odd-looking 12...♖e6, but then White has at least 13 a4 and 14 a5 with a good game).

Unfortunately the gravy train came to an end for Movsesian when he played Magnus Carlsen in the 2008 Tal Memorial blitz tournament. Returning to the position at move eight, the Norwegian superstar played 8...d4! blocking the centre.



There followed 9 ♘c4 ♕c7 10 cxd4 cxd4 11 a4 ♗e6 12 b3 and after 12...a6?! 13 a5!? ♗xc4 14 bxc4 ♘xa5 15 ♘h4 g6 16 f4 ♘c6 17 f5 White had an attack for his pawn, though he lost. Like the Gelfand game above, this was a blitz game, so we can't trust the middlegame decisions, but we do get an insight into what the top players think are the strongest opening variations.

At move 12, I can't see any decent plan for White after 12...♘d7: for example, grabbing the bishop-pair with 13 ♘g5 ♗xg5 14 ♗xg5 leaves Black's knights dominant on the dark squares after 13...♘c5 15 ♖e1 ♘b4 16 ♗f1, while a kingside pawn advance looks too slow, as shown by 13 ♘e1 ♘c5 14 f4 f6 15 f5 ♗f7 16 g4 ♖fb8 17 h4 and now 17...b5 18 axb5 ♖xb5 breaks through on the queenside before the white attack hits home.

I can't see a good way to strengthen White's play. This makes me inclined to think that 8 c3 is strategically faulty if Black replies 8...d4. After all, why weaken the queenside pawns with c2-c3 when it is Black who is likely to gain the initiative there?

To avoid ...d5-d4, White could try taking on d5 a move earlier. From the first diagram above, 7...0-0 8 exd5 ♘xd5 9 ♖e1 f6 10 c3 tries to recreate Movsesian's happy moments

versus Gritsak and Gelfand all over again, but Black can immediately evacuate his knight from the danger diagonal with 10...♘c7! (also not bad is 10...♔h8). White no longer has any ♕b3 tricks and needs to attend to his hanging pawn on d3. Meanwhile Black is looking very solid.

Naturally chess theory evolves and some big name player might rehabilitate 8 c3 or 8 exd5, but for the reasons above, I have given Game 21 in which White avoids the c2-c3 move, and mostly maintains a pawn on e4 rather than concedes the centre with exd5.

Part One: Black commits himself to a blocked centre

Game 20
S.B.Hansen-D.Akdag
Danish Championship, Helsingor 2013

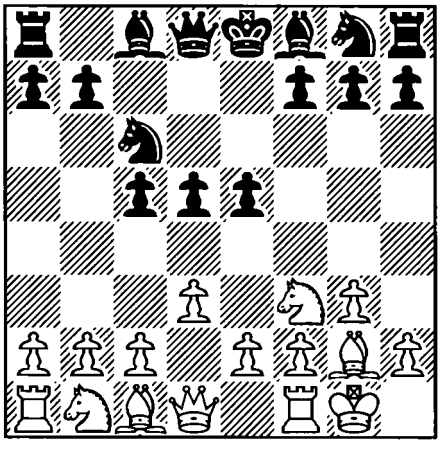
1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c5 3 ♗g2 ♘c6 4 d3

After 4 d4 it would be risky for Black to enter the Grünfeld Defence a tempo down with 4...cxd4 5 ♘xd4. However, he can reply 4...e6 (or 4...♘f6 which should transpose) 5 0-0 ♘f6 when 6 c4 is the Tarrasch Defence.

4...e5

Instead, 4...♘f6 5 0-0 g6 6 ♘bd2 ♗g7 7 e4 0-0 8 c3 e5 reaches a Reversed King's Indian with ...g7-g6, as was mentioned in the notes to Amin-Bocharov in Chapter Two.

5 0-0



5...♘f6

5...f6 gives us a Reversed Sämisch Variation of the King's Indian Defence. White could build up on the kingside in typical fashion with 6 e4 d4 7 ♘h4 ♗e6 8 f4 ♕d7 9 ♘d2 0-0-0 10 f5 ♗f7 11 ♗f3 (a notable manoeuvre to activate the bishop via h5) 11...♘ge7 12 ♗h5

♗g8 (naturally Black avoids exchanging the bishop that defends the light-square gaps left in the wake of his pawn advances) 13 b3 and in T.Petrosian-B.Spassky, USSR Championship, Moscow 1957, White followed up with ♖f2, ♖g2, and then, after preparation, g3-g4, h2-h4, and g4-g5. Alternatively, White could try a completely different plan of advancing on the queenside: 6 c3!? ♗e6 7 ♘bd2 ♕d7 8 a3 ♘h6 9 b4 ♘f7 10 ♖b1 with pressure against the c5 point in D.Roos-B.Taddei, French League 2009. Playing like this also helps deter Black from castling queenside.

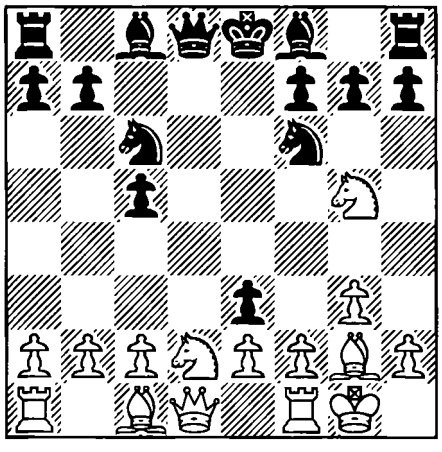
6 ♘bd2

White plays all his standard King's Indian Attack moves. The hard thinking will come later.

6...♗e7

After 6...♗d6 White could follow the same basic plan as with the bishop on e7.

Question: What if Black plays 6...e4 7 dxe4 dxe4 8 ♘g5 e3 to break up our pawns?



Answer: There's nothing to fear from the onrush of Black's e-pawn: for example, consider 9 fxe3 ♗e7 10 ♘de4 0-0 11 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 12 ♘e4 ♗e7 13 ♘c3! when White intends to build up in the centre with ♘d5, e3-e4, ♗f4, e2-e3, etc, as in M.Todorcevic-T.Izeta, Geneva 1988. The doubled e-pawns aren't pretty, but they can be put to work guarding important squares such as d5 and d4. Meanwhile Black has no pawns on the d-file or e-file to fight for the centre.

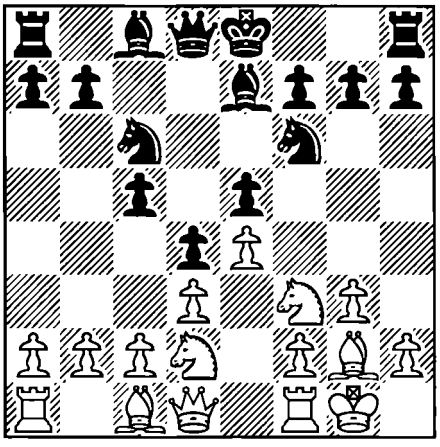
If this doesn't appeal you could always arrange e2-e4 a move earlier, say, with 5 ♘bd2 (instead of 5 0-0), and then after 5...♘f6, 6 e4 rules out Black's pawn break.

7 e4

The two armies finally clash, with White leaving it to his opponent to decide the central pawn structure.

7...d4

Immediately clamping down on the centre. The important alternative 7...0-0 is seen in the next game.



Exercise: Can you see any downside to Black's plan of seizing a space advantage? What are the most important squares that White can try to utilize?

Answer: The advance of Black's pawns has left some of his centre squares under defended. Thus White has:

1) The c4-square for the queen's knight, from where it attacks e5.

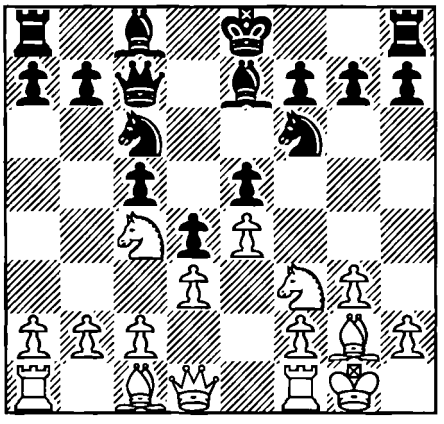
2) The f5-square for the other horse. Because Black has played 6...♗e7, he can't defend this square with ...g7-g6 without weakening his kingside dark squares.

3) The e5-square as a hook on which he can latch a clear and logical plan: the preparation of the advance f2-f4 to gain space on the kingside.

8 ♘c4

Sune Berg Hansen moved the knight from the passive square d2 to activity on c4. Well, actually only part of that is true. His horse was actually sitting on a3, as I took quite a liberty with the move order in this game, which began 1 ♘f3 c5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 ♘c6 4 0-0 d5 5 d3 e5 6 ♘a3 ♗e7 7 e4 d4 8 ♘c4.

8...♕c7



Question: Now ...b5 is threatened. What does White do about the knight on c4?

Answer: **9 a4!**

White prevents his knight being driven away with 9...b5 and makes it harder for Black to engineer his general strategic plan of ...b7-b5 and ...c5-c4.

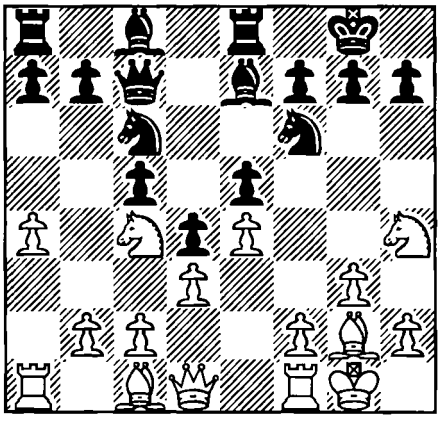
9...0-0

We'll return to this position at the end of the game to consider the immediate 9...♘d7.

10 ♘h4!

All according to plan. The knight clears the way for the f-pawn and eyes the f5-square.

10...♖e8



Exercise: Do you think it's a good idea for White to put the knight on f5, or is there a better means of developing an initiative on the kingside?

11 f4!

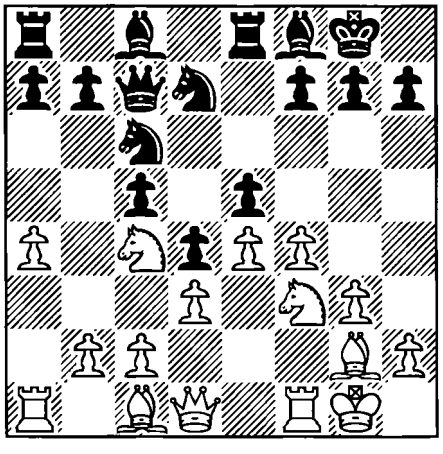
Answer: As we shall see, Hansen has renounced the plan of ♘f5. On the face of it, 11 ♘f5 looks like a strong attacking move. However, after 11...♗f8 12 ♗g5 ♘fd7 White has impressive-looking pieces, but where is the follow-up? If, for example, 13 a5 (to stop 13...♘b6 challenging the knight on c4) 13...h6 14 ♗d2 ♘f6 and White hasn't achieved much as 15 f4 ♗xf5 16 exf5 e4! looks like good counterplay for Black. We don't want the e4 point overrun.

The Danish Grandmaster tries a different approach that looks slower, but promises more chance of long-term success. Instead of a knight and a bishop on f5 and g5, he wants pawns on those squares.

11...♘d7 12 ♘f3

Again after 12 ♘f5 ♗f8 there would be no convincing continuation for White. The 18th century French Master Philidor said that the pieces are the servants of the pawns. In this spirit the White's knight deferentially retreats now that it has cleared the way for the f-pawn to advance.

12...♗f8



13 f5

Question: Why is this preferable to 13 fxe5, which opens the f-file for a possible attack and might allow the white bishop to cause discomfort to the queen with ♗f4?

Answer: Black has four units guarding the e5-square, and if necessary after 13 fxe5 ♘dxe5 it could be bolstered further with ...f7-f6. Therefore, the possibility of a ♗f4 pin doesn't really alarm Black.

Let's analyse: 13 fxe5 ♘dxe5 14 ♘cxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 16 ♕f3 ♕e6! (natural is 16...♗e6, but then 17 ♗f4 really would be awkward for the black queen, who has to retreat to the vulnerable f6-square) 17 ♗h3!? (hoping to mate in three moves if the black queen takes the bishop) 17...♕g6! and White's advantage is vanishing.

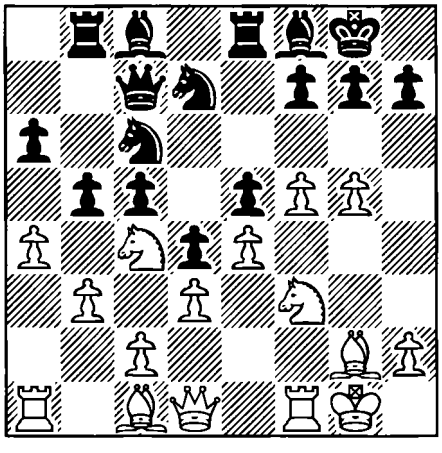
Notice that the exchanges have cleared the way for the bishop on c8 to enter into the game. One of the good things about the KIA is that you get the chance to keep small but permanent advantages. More direct openings often lead to a rapid burnout of the kind in this note: White has an open file, sets one or two traps, Black has to find a couple of precis but not too difficult moves, and a draw is agreed.

Instead, after 13 f5 White has no direct threats, but the f5-pawn looms balefully over the black kingside. All the minor pieces remain on the board, giving Black some problems to solve: how to develop his bishop on c8, how to generate queenside counterplay and ho to meet White's potential kingside pressure. The more problems you set an opponent, the more likely he is to go wrong.

13...b6

Black shows his hand: he will slowly prepare the advance ...b6-b5 as a prelude to ...c5-c He is copying the standard plan for White versus the King's Indian Defence.

14 g4 a6 15 g5 ♖b8 16 b3 b5



Exercise: How should White respond to the threat? a) Retreat the knight to b2. b) Retreat the knight to d2. c) Retreat the knight to a3. d) Exchange with 17 axb5 and only then decide.

Answer: First of all, we should decide whether we should exchange pawns on b5. The capture 17 axb5 is one of those 'automatic' moves that the hand is itching to play. It reduces the pawn front on the side of the board where White is weaker, which is typically a good thing, as it means there are fewer things to come under attack. And here it leaves White i possession of the a-file after the recapture 17...axb5.

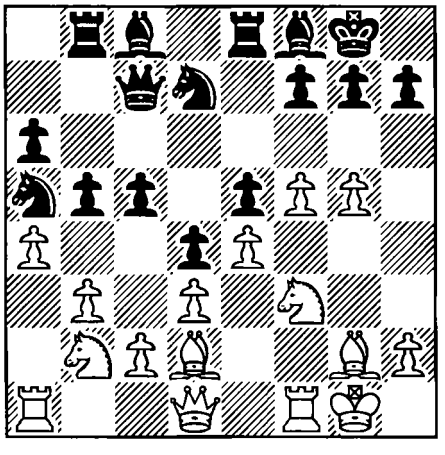
So why is 17 axb5 actually a bad move? After 17...axb5 White indeed has control of the a-file, but it would soon disappear after Black plays ...♗b7 and ...♖a8. This would at best amount to a distraction from White's plan of kingside action, at worst trouble for him if

Black managed to break through along the a-file. Therefore White should avoid 17 axb5?! and immediately retreat the knight. But where?

We can dismiss option 'c'. Upon 17 ♘a3? bxa4! 18 bxa4 Black not only has the open b-file, but even worse for White after 18...♘b6! the defence of the a4-pawn is a serious liability.

Very sensible seems to be 17 ♘cd2 as it keeps the knight in the centre and in touch with the kingside. A quick attack involving moves like the pawn ram g5-g6, ♘h4, ♘df3, and ♘g5 looks threatening. But while this is being arranged Black has instant counterplay on the queenside with 17...♘a5! intending 18...c4. As we know chess strategy involves preventive as well as aggressive play. Sometimes safety can be thrown to the winds, with everything staked on an all-out attack. But Hansen has seen a way of defeating Black's queenside counterplay, so why take risks? With this in mind he played:

17 ♘b2! ♘a5 18 ♗d2!



This is the idea. The threat is 19 axb5, uncovering an attack on the black knight. It wouldn't have been possible if White had blocked the d2-square with 17 ♘cd2.

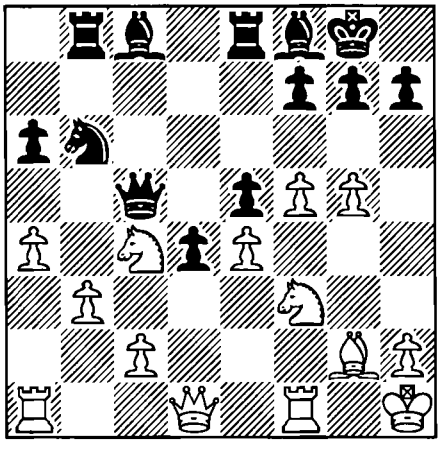
18...c4

The only consistent move. Instead, 18...b4?? would be an appalling positional blunder as Black would deny himself any chance of a breakthrough on the queenside, leaving White will a free hand on the kingside.

19 dxc4 bxc4 20 ♗xa5 ♕xa5 21 ♘xc4 ♕c5

White has won a pawn, but the black pieces will enjoy a lot of open lines on the queenside.

22 ♔h1 ♘b6



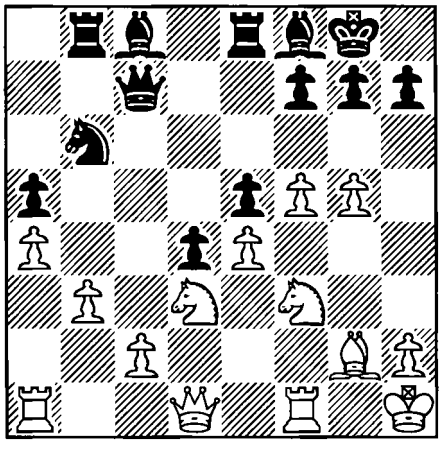
Exercise: How should White respond to the attack on his knight? a) Exchange it with 23 ♘xb6. b) Retreat it with 23 ♘b2. c) Support it with 23 ♘fd2.

23 ♘b2

Answer: The exchange 23 ♘xb6 ♖xb6 helps Black unclutter his pieces: for example, next move he can play 24...♖c6 to put pressure on c2. However, 23 ♘fd2!? was an interesting alternative, as White not only bolsters his queenside, but also clears the way for a quick attack on the kingside with moves like ♖f3, ♖h3, and ♕h5.

In the game Hansen reroutes his knight to the blockade square on d3 – also a fine plan.

23...a5 24 ♘d3 ♕c7



25 g6!

Exercise: Was the alternative pawn thrust 25 f6 just as good? And thinking generally, why do you think White chooses to play for an attack on the kingside when he has an extra pawn which he could try to exploit on the queenside?

Answer: After 25 f6 g6 it's hard to see how White could carry an attack on the kingside: it's too blocked up.

White has an extra pawn on the queenside. The usual technique in such situations is to create a passed pawn and force Black to give up material to prevent it from queening. But looking more closely, we see that the advantage the extra pawn confers in this particular instance is that it is part of an impenetrable light-square wall that stretches from the pawn on a4 to the pawn on e4, with the knight on d3 part of this unbreakable barrier.

Question: Why is being super solid good for White?

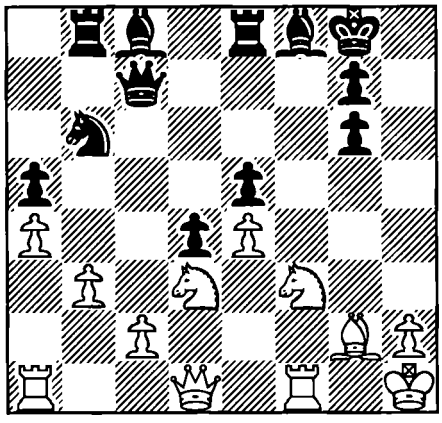
Answer: Because it deprives Black of any activity on the side of the board where, strategically speaking, he should be attacking due to the space advantage conferred by the pawn on d4.

Thus the c2 point would be easy to defend with ♖f2 if ever assaulted. This means that the black rooks and queen have nothing to attack. The bishop on f8 is also powerless, and the light-squared bishop can only attack e4 (easily defended), or be exchanged with ...♗a6 and ...♗xd3, which would be a strategically poor decision as Black is already weak on the light squares.

Whereas Black is stymied, White is free to push forwards on the side of the board where he is meant to be attacking. He has no distractions to worry about on the queenside or in the centre, so he can focus all his pieces on a kingside attack.

Let's imagine for a moment that White decided the right plan was to create a passed pawn with a well prepared c2-c3 pawn advance, followed by b3-b4 in due course. It's easy to see how this unravelling of the queenside fortress would play into Black's hands. Once c2-c3 had been played, the black rooks and queen would come alive along the b-file and the c-file, and the black bishops would be able to snipe at the advancing pawns. It's far better for White that everything stays quiet on the queenside. You'll see how easily Black is overwhelmed by White's pieces once they get to grips with the open lines presented by the pawn sacrifice 25 g6. The pawn cannot be tolerated on this square, and if 25...f6 26 gxh7+ ♔xh7 27 ♘h4 then 28 ♘g6 with ideas like 29 ♕h5+ looks horrible for Black. So in the game he accepted the sacrifice:

25...hxg6 26 fxg6 fxg6



Question: **What has White gained through sacrificing a pawn on g6?**

Answer: We can list the benefits of the sacrifice to the white pieces:

1) The rooks get the open f-file and in some cases the g-file too.

2) The knight gets to assail g6 (see the next move).

3) The queen is able to journey to g3 to increase the pressure on g6.

4) The bishop acquires an open diagonal stretching from h3 to c8.

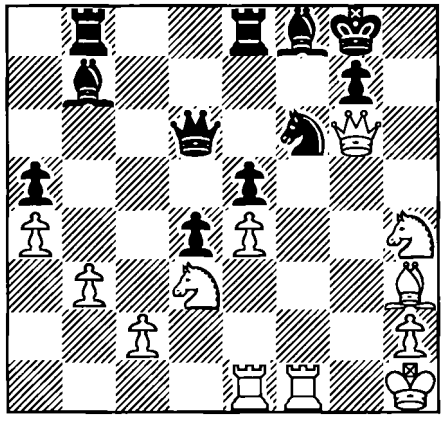
27 ♘h4! ♔h7 28 ♕f3

The white pieces take up their best posts.

28...♕d6 29 ♕g3 ♘d7 30 ♗h3 ♗b7 31 ♖ae1

White consolidates his hold on the e4-square. There are already horrible threats: for example, 32 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 33 ♘xg6 ♗d6 (or else f8 or e5 drops) 34 ♕h4+! ♔xg6 35 ♖f3! and 36 ♖g1+ will soon mate. Black therefore gives up the g6-pawn, but it's to no avail:

31...♘f6 32 ♕xg6+ ♔g8



Exercise: White wants to finish off his opponent with 33 ♘f5, threatening the black queen as well 34 ♘h6+ with a winning attack. Well, is it time for this move?

33 ♗g2!?

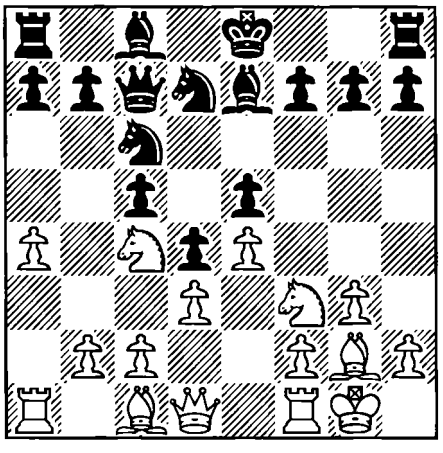
Answer: After 33 ♘f5 Black has the resource 33...♘xe4!. Then there is the heart attack-inducing variation 34 ♘xd6? ♘f2+ 35 ♔g1 ♘xh3 mate.

We need a concrete winning variation if we're going to give up the e4-point – most players would shy away from the very idea. As a matter of fact, after 33 ♘f5 ♘xe4 White wins after all with 34 ♕f7+! when 34...♔xf7 35 ♘xd6+ ♔g8 36 ♘xe4 leaves White a piece up, as will 34...♔h8 35 ♗g2! when Black can't defend both his queen and the knight on e4.

Hansen prefers to play the simple bishop retreat, after which his attack is going to be unstoppable. For example, 33...♗c8, to keep the knight out of f5, can be answered simply by 34 ♖f3 and 35 ♖ef1, threatening 36 ♖xf6, with a decisive assault. In the game, though, Black blundered at once:

33...♕c7?! 34 ♖xf6 1-0

Question: Since 10 ♘h4 received an exclamation mark, might Black try 9...♘d7 to deter it?

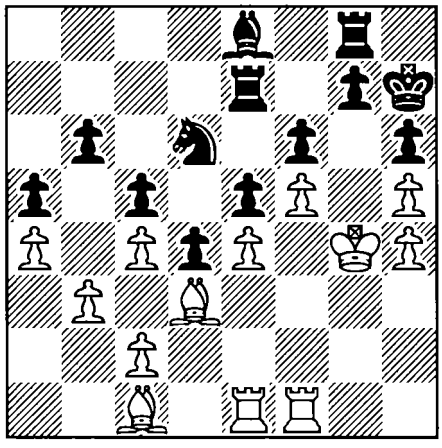


White could respond 10 ♘g5 when after 10...♗xg5 11 ♗xg5 he has the two bishops. Not that this is much to shout about: it's Black's light-squared bishop he'd like to exchange off – the dark-squared bishop is hardly better than a knight in view of the blocked centre. Still, if White continues ♗d2 (to avoid the bishop being hemmed in) and f2-f4 at the appropriate moment, he can hope that the opening of lines will eventually prove the value of his bishops.

More radical is the reply 10 ♘h4 'anyway', though this is not very aesthetic as White's

pawns end up fragmented. Still, Nimzowitsch talked about the triumph of ugly and bizarre moves in chess, so we should suspend judgement and see what might happen. White gets a certain initiative after 10...♗xh4 11 gxh4 ♘b6 12 f4, but this was soon neutralized in D.Bronstein-L.Alburt, Odessa 1976, after 12...♘xc4 13 dxc4 ♕e7 14 ♕h5 ♕e6 (the threat to c4 buys time to force the exchange of queens) 15 b3 ♕g4 16 ♕xg4 ♗xg4 17 h3 ♗d7 18 f5 f6. The position had stodged up, with all bets on a draw.

I can't resist showing you the end of this game, in which David Bronstein was for once the victim of a magical tactical blow. The following position was reached after 77 moves.



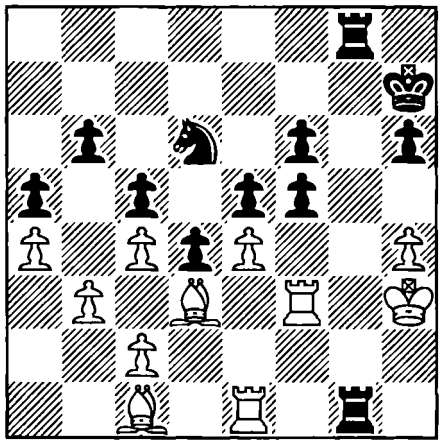
White has just played 77 ♔g4 to defend his pawn on h5. It looks hopelessly blocked, but Alburt unleashed:

77...♗xh5+!? 78 ♔xh5 g6+

If now 79 fxg6+ ♖xg6 the white king finds itself trapped on h5 and facing the threat of 80...♘e8 and 81...♘g7 mate! Therefore after 80 ♖g1 ♖eg7 81 ♖xg6 ♖xg6 White would have to give up his bishop with ♗xh6 on one of the next two moves, which leaves him with the worse game.

So Bronstein retreated his king, after which Black had two pawns and the initiative for the piece:

79 ♔g4 gxf5+ 80 ♔h3 ♖eg7 81 ♖f3 ♖g1



82 ♖ef1?

After this White loses as his bishop will be hanging on c1 at the end of the tactical sequence. He might have held on with 82 ♖xg1 ♖xg1 83 ♗f1 ♘xe4 when a repetition with 84 ♔h2 ♖g4 85 ♔h3 ♖g1 86 ♔h2 is a likely finish.

82...fxe4 83 ♖xf6 ♖8g3+ 84 ♔h2 ♖3g2+ 85 ♔h3 exd3 86 ♖xh6+ ♔g8 87 ♖xd6 ♖g3+ 88 ♔h2 ♖xf1 89 ♔xg3 dxc2!

A vital improvement on 89...♖xc1, when 90 cxd3 just about survives for White. If now 90 ♗d2 e4 and the pawns roll through.

90 ♗h6 ♖f4! 0-1

Part Two: Black keeps the tension with 7...0-0

Game 21
D.Bogdan-T.Leviczki
Hungarian League 2005

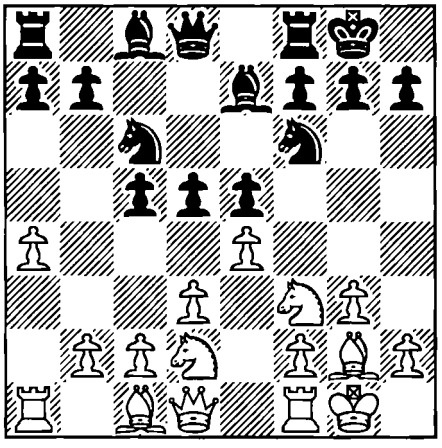
1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c5 3 ♗g2 ♘c6 4 0-0 e5 5 d3 ♘f6 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 e4

The move order in the actual game was 1 e4 c5 2 d3 ♘c6 3 g3 d5 4 ♘d2 ♘f6 5 ♗g2 e5 6 ♘gf3 ♗e7 7 0-0. To recap, the suggested Sicilian move order given in this book is 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d3 ♘f6 4 g3 d5 5 ♘bd2 e5 6 ♗g2 ♗e7 7 0-0.

7...0-0

Black diverges from the 7...d4 advance of the previous game.

8 a4!?



Question: What is the purpose of this move?

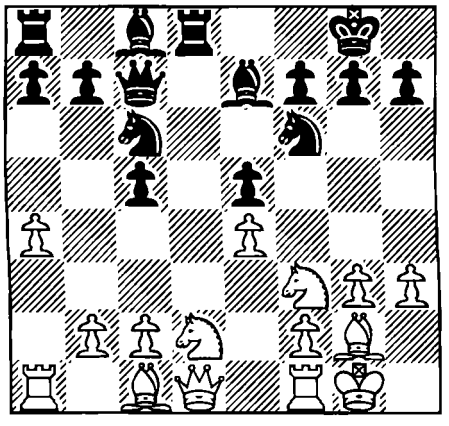
Answer: If you have read the introduction to the chapter you'll be aware that I don't like 8 c3 as it feels like an unnecessary weakening of the centre. With the game move White is waiting for Black to clarify the centre pawn structure with either ...d5-d4 or ...dxe4 (when White recaptures d3xe4). In either case it likely to be useful to be able to play ♘c4 without the knight being in danger of being pushed back by ...b7-b5.

Another way of waiting is with 8 h3 when after 8...♖e8 9 ♘h2 White's play is justified if Black plays 9...d4 as then 10 f4 can follow, but 9...dxe4! cuts across his plan: the knight looks lousy on h2 in the fixed centre position after 10 dxe4.

8...♖e8

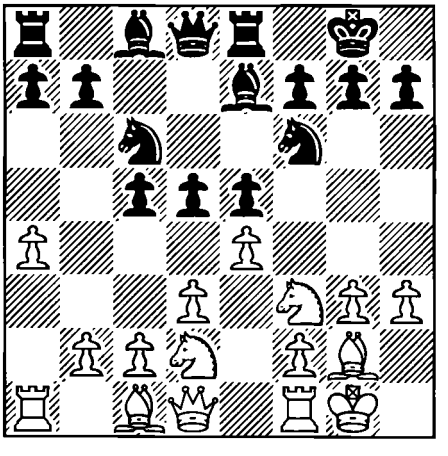
A natural reply that centralizes the rook, overprotects e5 and refuses to declare his intentions in the centre.

Question: Can't Black take advantage of White's slow wing pawn moves with action in the centre: for example, 8...♕c7 when 9 h3 dxe4 10 dxe4 ♖d8 looks very active for him?



Yes, I agree a quick ...d5xe4 and ...♖d8 for Black is awkward for White if he persists in playing slowly after 8...♕c7. Therefore I think White should concede the centre with 9 exd5 ♘xd5 10 ♘c4. Compared to the line discussed in the chapter introduction, Black doesn't have a regrouping with ...♘c7 available to him as his queen blocks the square. Furthermore, the queen's absence from d8 means White's pawn on d3 is safer than usual, whereas the knight on d5 is exposed to a discovered attack by the bishop on g2 with 11 ♘fxe5. Play could continue 10...♗e6 (the game F.Nijboer-L.Oll, New York 1995, went 10...♘f6 and now 11 ♖e1 ♘d7 12 a5 looks pleasant for White) 11 ♖e1 f6 12 c3 ♖ad8 13 ♘fd2 (unleashing the bishop and preparing ♘e4 in some lines) 13...♕d7 (an indication of lost time) 14 a5 when White has pressure on the queenside.

9 h3



Exercise: **What are the good points of this move?**

Answer: White's pieces are working in a cramped environment. For example, if 9 ♕e1?! Black could force the queen back to d1 if he wished with 9...♘b4. So any move that holds the black pieces a little further at bay is welcome.

Playing h2-h3 rules out ...♗g4, which can be an irritating pin on the knight, and guards against a future ...♘g4. This knight move would be especially strong if, in the pawn centre that arises after ...d5-d4, White has played f2-f4 so that ...♘e3 becomes a threat.

Finally, 9 h3 might support a follow-up pawn advance to f2-f4 with g3-g4.

9...♗f8 10 ♖e1

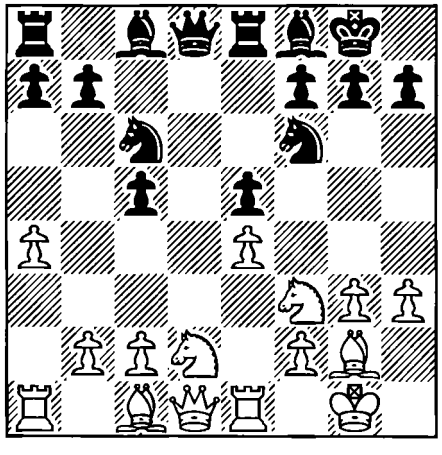
If Black chooses 10...d4, White would rather have the rook on f1 than e1. But never mind: there is no rule in chess that says the rook can't retrace its steps with ♖f1 again in the future. Here, for example, is J.Hernando Pertierra-H.Castano Vanegas, Madrid 2010: 10 ♔h2?! h6 11 ♖e1 g6 12 b3 d4 and with Black having closed the centre, 13 ♖f1! was played to support a future f2-f4. After 13...♕c7 14 ♘c4 ♗e6 (when your opponent is planning to ram your kingside with f2-f4, it is provocative to say the least to put a pawn on g6 and a bishop on e6 which can be rammed by f4-f5) 15 ♗d2 b6 16 ♘h4 ♘d7 17 f4 White's attack eventually broke through.

I don't recommend 10 ♔h2, however, as Black can respond with 10...dxe4 11 dxe4 as he does in the main game. As we shall see, in this structure Bogdan's 10 ♖e1 move is more useful.

10...dxe4

At last Black chooses to play with a fixed pawn centre and an open d-file. After 10...d4 White could even consider 11 ♖f1 straightaway, but 11 ♘c4 looks the best way to start his plan of getting in f2-f4.

11 dxe4



Question: So why is ♖e1 more useful than ♔h2 in this pawn centre?

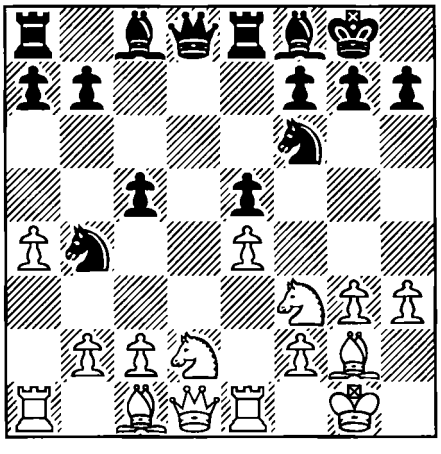
Answer: The rook move has vacated the f1-square for the bishop and added a defender to e4 which facilitates a future ♘c4.

11...♘b4

It's easy to be critical of this lunge with the knight. But let's not forget it was made by someone rated 2324 Elo who must have played a lot of good moves in his life. The idea is that 12 c3? allows 12...♘d3 when no one will be laughing at the knight anymore. Meanwhile White is prevented from playing 12 ♕e2 as a prelude to ♘c4, as 12...♘xc2 wins a pawn. There is another clever point to the knight foray revealed in the note to the next move.

Nonetheless, the knight move fails because White doesn't have to hurry. Black has no strong follow-up, and sooner or later the knight will have to return to defensive duties on c6. We can therefore add this game to the other examples of Black losing his patience against the KIA and starting an aggressive action that isn't justified by the position.

Black might have preferred 11...h6 (stopping ♘g5 from attacking a bishop on e6) intending a solid centralization with ...♗e6, ...♕c7, and ...♖ad8. White could continue with a similar build-up as in the game, but proving an advantage would be much harder.



12 ♗f1!

Question: **What happens if White plays 12 b3, planning to develop his bishop to b2 and attack e5?**

Answer: The move 12 b3?! would allow Black to justify his knight move with 12...c4!. Then 13 ♘xc4 allows 13...♕xd1 14 ♖xd1 ♘xe4 or 14...♘xc2, while 13 bxc4 ♕c7 followed by ...♗e6 leaves White with a fractured queenside and a sickly pawn on c4.

By putting his bishop on f1 Bogdan guards against ...c5-c4, which means he can develop his queenside after all.

12...h6

It's not good for Black's pride, but his best move is probably 12...♘c6.

13 b3 ♘c6!

Finally, Black admits his mistake. In reality not that much damage has been done and the position remains fairly balanced. Nevertheless, Bogdan certainly has the psychological ascendency after his opponent's failed adventure on the queenside, and a player's mood plays a major part in the outcome of a game.

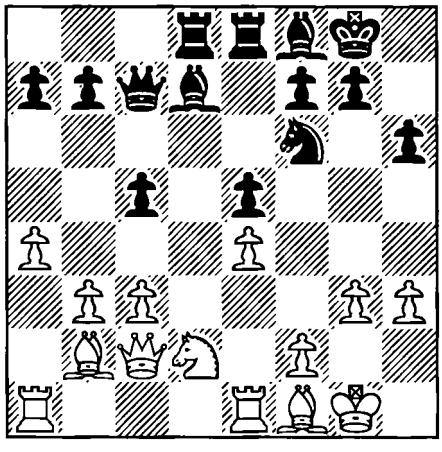
14 ♗b2 ♕c7 15 ♘c4

White completes his development and puts pressure on the e5-pawn.

15...♗d7 16 c3

Defending the d4-square against an invasion by a black knight and clearing c2 for the queen.

16...♖ad8 17 ♕c2 ♘a5 18 ♘xa5 ♕xa5 19 ♘d2 ♕c7



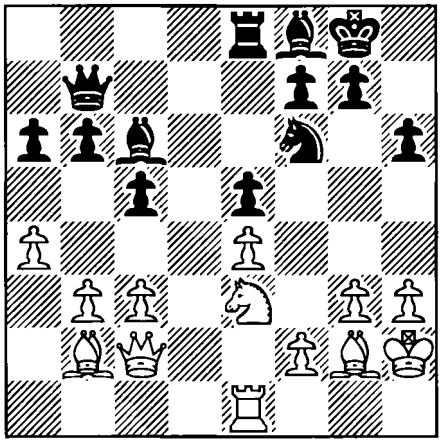
Question: Does the pawn structure favour White?

Answer: The pawn structure in the centre is almost symmetrical, but not quite. Black has a pawn on c5 and White a pawn on c3. This means that the white knight has a potential outpost square on d5 as it can't be kicked away by a pawn, whereas the black knight is denied entry to d4. White's plan is to eventually manoeuvre his horse to d5, but first of all he consolidates his hold on the e4 point.

20 ♘c4 ♗c6 21 ♗g2 b6 22 ♖ad1 ♖xd1 23 ♖xd1 ♕b7 24 ♖e1 ♕c7

It seems that Black is OK because 25 ♘e3 can always be met by 25...♕b7, attacking e4 and guarding the d5-square three times, but Bogdan sees how to get his knight to d5.

25 ♔h2 a6 26 ♘e3 ♕b7



Exercise: Can you see the two pawn moves White needs to make to get his knight to d5?

Answer: **27 f3!**

This might appear a concession, but there's no way Black can hurt White on the dark squares on the kingside.

27...b5 28 axb5 axb5 29 c4!

And now comes a strategically strong pawn move on the queenside. Once again White's dark squares are loosened, but Black is unable to exploit them. If his knight could get to d4, of course the situation would completely change and 29 c4 would get a question mark.

29...b4

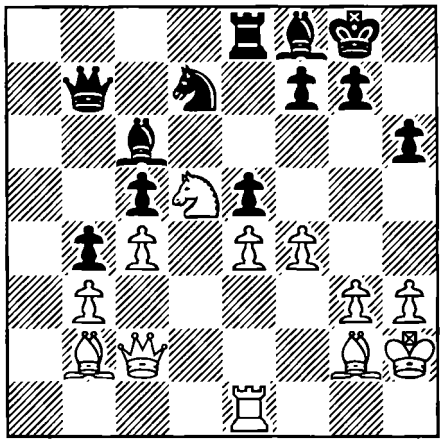
He might try 29...bxc4. When boxed in every pawn exchanges normally helps.

30 ♘d5

At last White achieves his aim. His knight now dominates the centre.

30...♘d7 31 f4

Trying to press home his advantage quickly, as he doesn't want Black to find a way to put his own knight on d4.



31...exf4?

Exercise: **Why is this a terrible mistake? And what should Black have done instead?**

Answer: Maintaining the bulwark on e5 in this set-up is as vital for Black as it is for White in the KIA not to have his e4 strongpoint overrun. White now has mobile centre pawns, a bishop on b2 that is staring menacingly at g7, and an open g-file for his queen and rook.

Black should have stood his ground with 31...♗d6! when White would probably have had to settle for f4-f5 at some point with a space advantage to add to his fantastic knight, but the game would still be a fight.

32 gxf4 ♘b6 33 ♕f2

Stronger was 33 ♖g1 with the threat of 34 ♘f6+! gxf6 35 ♗h1+ ♔h7 36 ♕g2, with mate to follow on g8 or g7 as Black chooses.

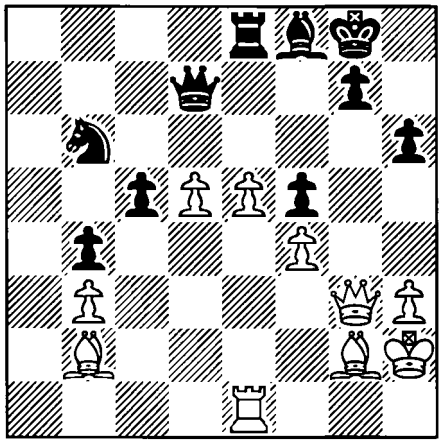
33...f5

A despairing bid for counterplay that could have been refuted by 34 exf5 ♖xe1 35 ♕xe1 ♘xd5 36 ♕e6+ ♔h7 (or 36...♕f7 37 ♗xd5) 37 cxd5, etc.

34 ♕g3 ♗xd5 35 cxd5 ♕d7

The only fighting chance was to give up the exchange for a pawn with 35...fxe4 36 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 37 ♖xe4 ♕xd5.

36 e5



Now the white central pawns are crushing, as 36...♘xd5 loses the knight to 37 ♖d1.

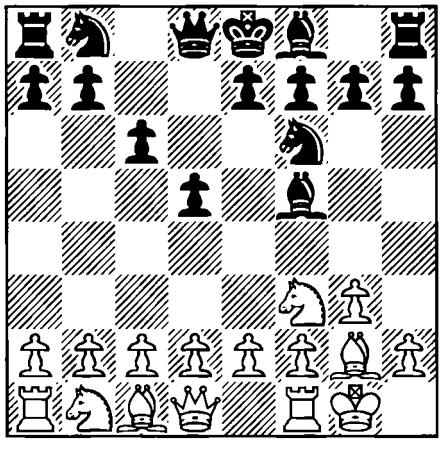
36...c4 37 bxc4 ♘xc4 38 ♗d4 ♘a3 39 ♕d3 g6 40 ♗b2 ♘b5 41 e6 1-0

The pawns run riot after 41...♕b7 42 d6 ♕b8 43 e7.

Chapter Five
KIA Versus the ...♗f5 System

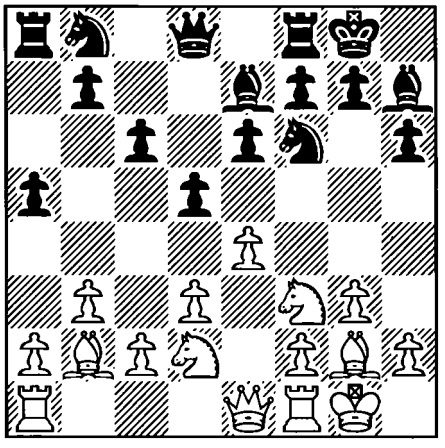
Black might decide to counter 1 ♘f3 by building a 'Slav' triangle of pawns on c6, d5, and e6. This is a very solid centre structure, but it has the drawback that the bishop on c8 finds all roads to activity blocked. Therefore it makes sense to get the bishop out before playing ...e7-e6. This can be done with a quick ...♗g4, which is the subject of Chapter Six, or ...♗f5 which we'll discuss here.

A typical opening sequence is:
1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♗f5



To keep play in the style of the King's Indian Attack, White will engineer an e2-e4 pawn advance beginning with d2-d3 and ♘bd2; if he prefers the c2-c4 pawn advance we are in the territory of the Réti Opening.

From the diagram above play might continue 5 d3 e6 6 ♘bd2 ♗e7 7 b3 0-0 8 ♗b2 h6 9 ♕e1 a5 10 e4 ♗h7.



White has developed his queen's bishop to an open diagonal on b2 and with the help of his queen achieved his aim of advancing e2-e4. For his part, Black has secured a safe spot for his bishop on h7 and has kicked off his queenside activity with 9...a5. The middlegame is about to begin, with both players manoeuvring for advantage. This is the way Game 23 below started.

What are the advantages to Black's set-up?

As we can see in the sequence above, Black gets to develop his pieces quickly to good centre squares without being saddled with weaknesses in his pawn structure. He can also be fairly sure that his king won't come under a big attack in the early stages of the game. Indeed, White has to devote his energy to arranging e2-e4, not to looking for the initiative. On the kingside Black normally remains passive behind his solid defensive perimeter. More positively, he can seek counterplay by utilizing his queenside pawns. A good way to start is with 9...a5, as in the diagram above. Alternatively, Black might play in the centre with ...d5xe4 and, after White's recapture d3xe4, try to exploit the open d-file and put pressure on the e4-pawn. However, this idea is mostly specific to a situation where White plays a quick ♘e5, as in Game 24.

What are the disadvantages to Black's set-up?

Black hardly ever manages to equalize the space balance on the kingside with ...e6-e5. Therefore White can hope in the future to engineer an f2-f4 advance, followed in some cases by f4-f5. This would besiege the e6-pawn and lead to the opening of the f-file as the preliminary to an attack on the black king. Sometimes the alternative advance e4-e5 can be strong, but this is somewhat problematical as it shuts in a bishop posted on b2 and gives the enemy bishop on h7 more daylight. We might say that the e4-e5 advance is either very strong or very weak.

An important part of White's strategy depends on patience. He has to manoeuvre his

pieces and keep them in good shape whilst waiting for the chances that appear when Black, in search of the initiative, loosens his position. In this respect the King's Indian Attack is like a martial art: White often tries to use the opponent's strength or momentum against him. Thus he will let Black advance on the queenside in the hope that he will over extend himself, so that his advancing pawns run out of energy and become hard to defend.

Opportunities for White might also arise in the centre as Black's plan unfolds. For example, the pawn on d5 looks like an immovable barrier to the bishop on g2 as it is guarded by henchmen on c6 and e6. But in the natural course of Black's queenside action he could well play ...c6-c5 to utilize the pawn as a battering ram (he may also want to free the c6-square for his knight). In that case the d5-pawn suddenly becomes a legitimate target.

Or imagine if Black exchanges with ...d5xe4 in order to be the first to get his rooks to the open d-file. If White has coordinated his pieces well he can gradually wrest control of it – Black's own plan is used against him.

What sequence of moves should I choose as White?

The order of moves isn't so critical when the two armies don't begin their hand to hand fighting until the early middlegame. You could even begin with 1 b3 and eventually reach a standard KIA versus Slav position if that's what Black wishes. Of course, he could well answer 1 b3 with 1...e5 or 1...c5 or some other set-up. The move 1 g3 encounters the same repertoire problem: we are fine against 1...d5 or 1...c5, but what to do if 1...e5, stopping the KIA? There are many decent ideas, of course, not least 2 c4 transposing to the English Opening, but it takes us out of the scope of this book.

The good thing about beginning 1 ♘f3 is that it cuts down Black's options – you've stopped 1...e5 and if 1...c5 you could play 2 e4 and then transpose to a KIA versus the Sicilian with 3 d3, etc. Alternatively, you could answer 1...c5 with 2 g3 and 3 ♗g2, and leave it to Black to play a Reversed King's Indian or some other structure. In any case you're keeping play within the bounds of the repertoire in this book.

So that's why 1 ♘f3 is the move of choice in this part of the book, rather than 1 b3 or 1 g3. Having said all this, the first game I wish to show you in this chapter does feature an early b2-b3 by White. It's too good to miss out on.

Do you love your knight more than your bishop?

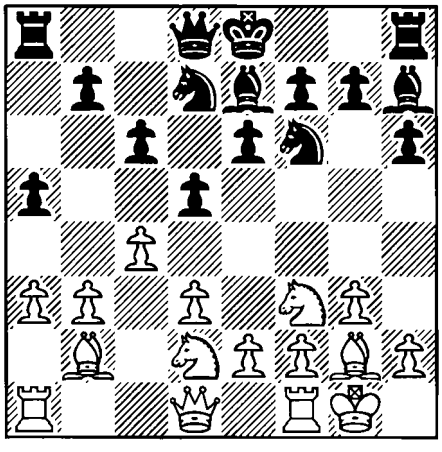
Still thinking of move order, a key question for White in the KIA with ...♗f5 is: 'How quickly do I wish to commit myself to b2-b3 and ♗b2, if at all?'. It's worth remembering that as soon as you play b2-b3, you're closing down your options somewhat.

The alternative is to do something fast with the knight on f3. In Game 24 the horse jumps forwards to e5 to clear the way for f2-f4, in Game 25 it goes to h4 to harass the black bishop on f5, and in Game 26 it powers backwards with ♘fd2 to support the advance e2-e4. I'll leave it up to you to decide how you wish to play after 'seeing the evidence' in this chapter.

A model game

Overcoming a problem in your opening repertoire can have a massive effect on your results, and not just because you do better in the line that you have improved. It lifts your overall mood and makes you play better in general when you're not haunted by the fear 'What if my opponent plays the problem line against me?'. It's even better when the variation you always lose against becomes the line you always win against.

I'd like to show you how a simple change in my opening repertoire boosted my results and helped me get the IM title. Up until 1985 with White I always used to enter into the New York System versus the Réti with moves such as 1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4 c6 3 b3 ♗f5 4 g3 ♘f6 5 ♗g2 h6 6 ♗b2 e6 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 d3 ♗h7 9 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 10 a3 a5.



I wouldn't have the faintest idea what to do. My musings (or rather 'thoughts leading to mental paralysis') were something like: 'If White advances in the centre then the bishop on h7 comes to life. But if I do nothing Black can gain ground on the queenside by preparing ...b7-b5, or in some cases by arranging an advance in the centre himself with ...e5-e4. I already stand badly.' Whether this assessment of the position was objectively true or not is irrelevant – what mattered is that as a young player inexperienced in solving strategic problems I was completely at sea, and suffered some horrible loses as White.

I was perplexed for a long time, but then I came across the game Nimzowitsch-Rubinstein in Ray Keene's book *Nimzowitsch-Larsen Attack*. Yes, here at last was the solution. If White didn't play 2 c4, the bishop on h7 could be shut out of the game because the d3-pawn would act like solid granite (I got that expression from Nimzowitsch via Keene as well). That means the e-pawn can advance without loosening the centre too much.

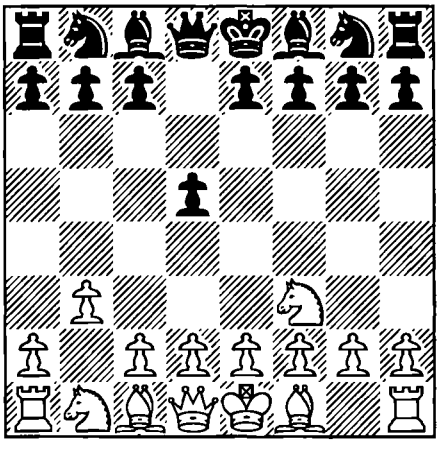
It didn't take much to tweak my opening repertoire, and I won my next six games against Black's set-up. I went from holding my breath out of fear that my opponent would play this set-up to holding my breath out of fear that he wouldn't 'fall into the trap'. It makes you wonder how many players continue to persevere with an opening that they always fail against, putting it down to bad luck when their opponent plays the line they fear,

rather than making the mental effort to learn an opening that they actually understand.

Here then is the Nimzowitsch game. I'm not recommending that you play his move order, but the general plan is easy to understand and the use of the white kingside pawns highly instructive.

Game 22
A.Nimzowitsch-A.Rubinstein
Berlin 1928

1 ♘f3 d5 2 b3

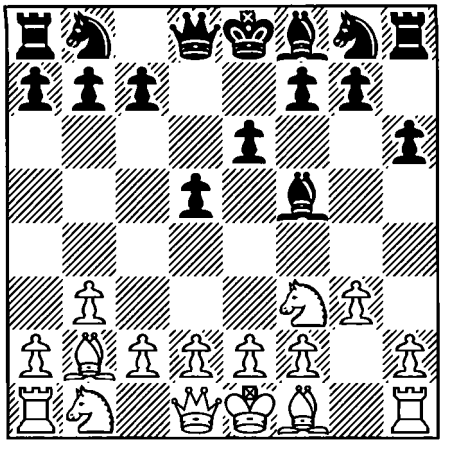


2...♗f5

Question: Why does Rubinstein prefer to develop his bishop straightaway rather than play 2...♘f6, which looks more natural?

Answer: If Black had played 2...♘f6, then he would have to renounce developing his bishop to f5 with 3 ♗b2 e6, or acquiesce to having his pawns doubled after 3...♗f5 4 ♗xf6 exf6 or 4...gxf6. Either recapture looks OK for Black, who has the two bishops to offset his slightly compromised pawns. Nonetheless, the classically-minded Rubinstein doesn't want to give his opponent that option.

3 ♗b2 e6 4 g3 h6



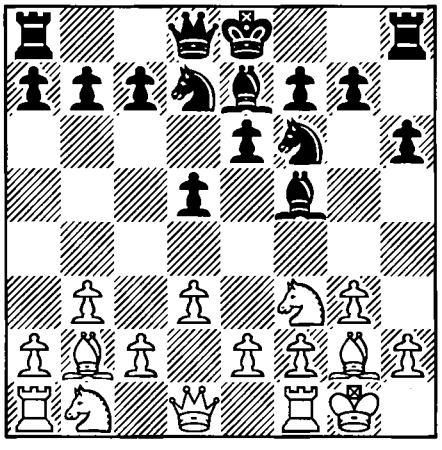
Exercise: **We're told to avoid pawn moves that don't have a clear purpose, especially of the h2-h3 or ...h7-h6 variety when they gratuitously weaken the kingside. Why then does Black, a genius of positional play, spend a tempo pushing his h-pawn instead of developing his queenside?**

Answer: The purpose of 4...h6 is to tuck away the bishop on h7 in the event that White tries to hunt it down with ♘h4 or attacks it by arranging an e2-e4 pawn advance. In the latter event the cleric would continue to exert pressure against e4 and, should White advance e4-e5, further down the diagonal against d3 and c2. It's rather strange to see this prophylactic move played before 4...♘f6, but it has also been used by modern grandmasters.

5 ♗g2 ♘d7

We can object to this move, however. There might be instances where c6 is a better square for the knight. Since Black is definitely going to move his other knight to f6, why not 5...♘f6 straightaway? If you have two options and you can't decide what to play, it's best to play the move you are going to make sooner or later.

6 0-0 ♘gf6 7 d3 ♗e7



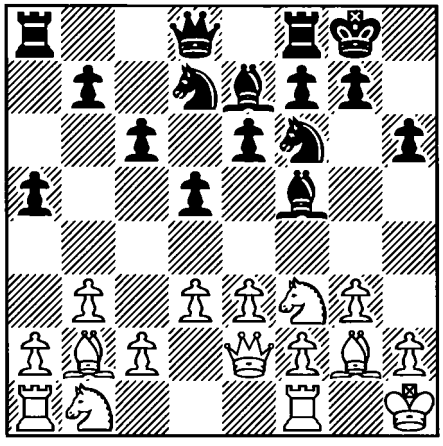
8 e3

Question: **what is the purpose of this move? Why doesn't White get on with the plan of advancing the pawn to e4 with ♘bd2 and ♖e1, instead of messing about with silly little half moves?**

Answer: White is making a cubby-hole for his queen on e2 where she can support the key advance of the pawn to e4. This is of course a vital strategic idea in the King's Indian Attack. However, modern taste would be for 8 ♘bd2, 9 ♕e1, and 10 e4, which is somewhat more flexible. In this alternative sequence the white queen may choose to stay on e1 for a long time, so that ♘bd2, ♕e1, and e2-e4 is in effect saving a tempo over e2-e3, ♕e2, ♘bd2, and e3-e4.

However, note that in either case the queen is utilized to force the pawn advance to e4. The rook is kept on f1 where it will be better placed to support a future kingside action beginning with f2-f4, once the knight on f3 is out of the way of course.

8...0-0 9 ♕e2 c6 10 ♔h1 a5



Exercise: It's your choice. Black is looking to gain space on the queenside. Should White: a) Block the pawn with 11 a4. b) Play 11 a3 to meet 11...a4 with 12 b4. c) Ignore Black's plan with 11 ♘bd2 as the a-pawn is no threat?

Answer: **11 a4!**

It's very important for White to do something about the black a-pawn. After the routine 11 ♘bd2? Black can advance 11...a4 with the initiative on the queenside. He wouldn't have to do anything at once with the pawn, he could just leave ideas of ...a4-a3 or ...a4xb3 hanging over White's head. This would be a permanent distraction for White from his plan of advancing on the kingside: for example, if he played ♖ae1 at any point then ...a4xb3 would clear the way for an invasion of the seventh rank by the black rook with ...♖a2.

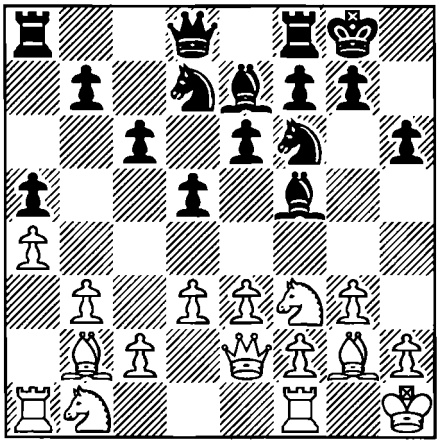
You can't play the King's Indian Attack to a high level unless you play preventive, or prophylactic, moves like 11 a4.

However, option 'b', moving the a-pawn one square, is also worthy of attention. If Black's knight were still on b8, rather than developed to d7, 11 a3 might be preferable to 11 a4 as it would stop the knight being developed to a strong post on the queenside with ...♘a6 and ...♘b4. Incidentally, this justifies our doubt about the move 5...♘d7 – the knight didn't need to be developed straightaway and might have done better lingering for a while on b8. Modern players tend to keep the knight at home until the situation has been resolved on the queenside, playing ...a7-a5 before developing the horse. It might well choose a6 over d7.

After 11 a3, Black could press on with 11...a4 when 12 b4 (it's essential not to let the queenside pawns be broken up by 12...axb3) 12...c5!? is double-edged, but White has kept his centre compact after 13 bxc5 ♗xc5 14 ♘bd2. Alternatively, 11...c5!? at once introduces the positional threat of 12...a4 as White is denied 13 b4 in reply. So play could go 12 a4! when it takes two moves for the pawn to get to a4, but White can claim that 11...c5 has

slightly loosened the black pawn structure.

Since 11 a4 succeeds in keeping things quiet on the queenside, and White is planning a kingside initiative, it is the best move. There will be further discussion of the merits of a2-a4 versus a2-a3 in the notes to Game 23.

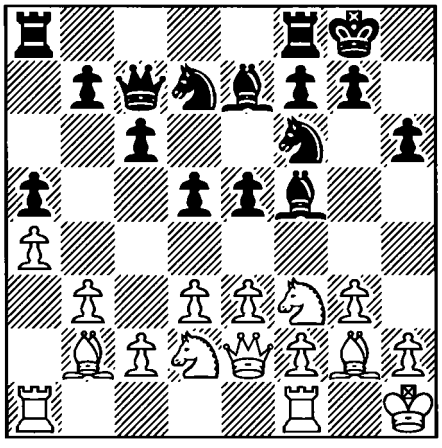


Exercise: What is the best plan for Black? a) Gain space in the centre with 11...♕c7 12 ♘bd2 e5. b) Put the knight on c5 to deter e3-e4 by guarding the e4-square a fourth time. c) Seek counterplay on the queenside with ...b7-b5.

11...♘c5

Answer: First of all, 11...b5? is the sort of blunder that Bill Hartston in his book *How to Cheat at Chess* would say is perpetuated by players whose eyes are too close together. After the reply 12 ♘d4! Black has no good response to the double threat of 13 ♘xc6, destroying his queenside pawns, and 13 ♘xf5, smashing up his central pawn structure and acquiring the bishop-pair. If Black wants to venture ...b7-b5 he should at least prepare it with ...♗h7 to avoid the knight fork. But it still wouldn't be a very good idea – the pawn advance weakens the black queenside pawns more than it inflicts damage on White's queenside pawns. This doesn't mean that ...b7-b5 is never a good plan; it can be a telling blow if Black's pieces are well positioned to support it (for example, a knight on b4 would be nice).

The best idea for Black is to arrange ...e6-e5. It might be worth preparing it with the 'comfort' move 11...♗h7, getting his bishop out of the range of attack by e3-e4 or ♘d4, then ...♖e8 and ...♗d6, but there seems nothing wrong with the direct 11...♕c7! as in option 'a' above: for example, 12 ♘bd2 e5.

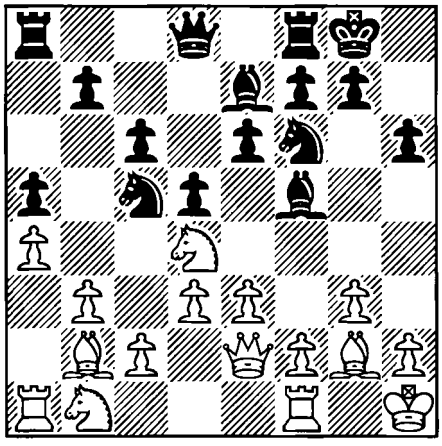


At first it seems like 13 e4 is a strong riposte, as after 13...dxe4 14 dxe4 ♗h7 White gains the option of ♘c4 at a good moment (not immediately as e4 falls, but following 15 ♘h4 for example). Black doesn't want to concede a good central post to the white knight. However, it turns out that instead of 13...dxe4 he can play 13...♗h7! as 14 exd5 cxd5 15 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 16 ♕xe5 ♕xc2 works out well for Black.

So White should forgo trying to win a pawn with 14 exd5 and make do with 14 ♘h4, but Black is very solid. If White had adopted the 'modern' approach with ♕e1 and e2-e4 – see the note to 8 e3 above – it would have been harder for Black to arrange ...e6-e5 as White has an 'extra' move in the battle along the e-file.

The actual game move, 11...♘c5, stops the advance e3-e4 by guarding the square a fourth time, but as it can't be prevented in the long term the whole idea is faulty. The more effort a player makes to prevent a move, the stronger that move becomes if the opponent succeeds in playing it. The threat is often stronger than the execution. Rather than have your pieces engage in a fool's errand, get them doing other useful stuff. Then when the breakthrough you fear occurs, there may be so much going on that it will only be one strategic feature among many on the board, rather than the key strategic feature.

12 ♘d4

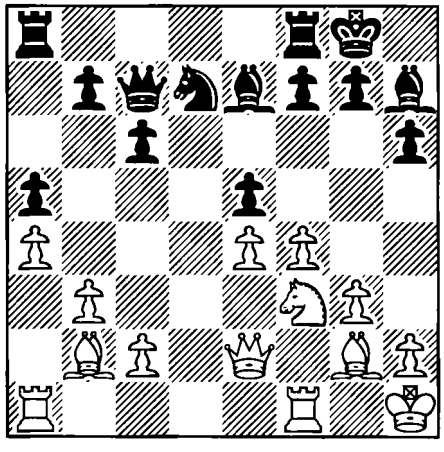


White clears the way for his f-pawn with gain of time by threatening 13 ♘xf5.

12...♗h7 13 f4 ♘fd7 14 ♘d2 ♕c7 15 e4

Note the importance of the pawn on c2. It is the linchpin that holds together White's queenside and centre pawn structure. Without the pawn being in place – i.e. if White had played the 'English' move c2-c4 at an earlier point – his plan of attack would have been impossible as d3 would collapse.

15...dxe4 16 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 17 dxe4 e5 18 ♘f3!



Played according to Philidor's precept that the pieces are the servants of the pawns. Instead of putting his knight on a strong attacking square with 18 ♘f5, when 18...♗f6 maintains the black centre, Nimzowitsch is keen to remove the strongpoint on e5 which is acting as a barrier to the mobility of his kingside pawns.

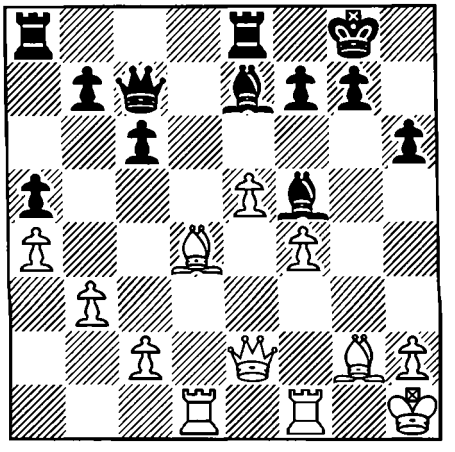
18...exf4 19 gxf4 ♖fe8

Naturally if 19...♕xf4 20 ♘e5 wins a piece, but now the white centre is gathering steam.

20 e5 ♘c5 21 ♘d4 ♘e6 22 ♖ad1!

Developing and supporting the knight on d4. After 22 ♘xe6?! fxe6 the pawn on e6 is a new barrier to the white kingside pawns.

22...♘xd4 23 ♗xd4 ♗f5



Exercise: Knowing that Nimzowitsch wants to remove all the obstacles in the way of his kingside pawns, can you suggest a good move for him?

Answer: **24 ♗e4!**

Exactly. The exchange of light-squared bishops clears the way for a pawn rampage.

24...♗xe4+ 25 ♕xe4 ♖ad8 26 e6 ♗f8 27 ♗e5?!

Too much of a hurry. Simply 27 f5 is strong.

27...♕c8

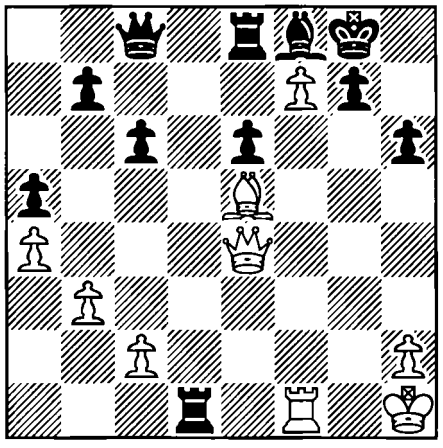
Black could escape with 27...♖xd1 28 ♖xd1 ♕e7! (but not 28...♖xe6? 29 ♗xc7 ♖xe4 30 ♖d8 when there is no good way to stop 31 ♗d6, winning a piece due to the pin). Yes, it's easy to be a tactical god when you have a computer program.

28 f5 fxe6

He had to play 28...♖xd1 at once, when 29 ♖xd1 fxe6 30 f6 is still scary, but 30...♖d8 should hold.

29 f6! ♖xd1 30 f7+!

In similar scenarios the f-pawn is used as a battering ram to shatter Black's defences on the f-file or g-file, but here it is enough for it to take away the g8-square from the black king.



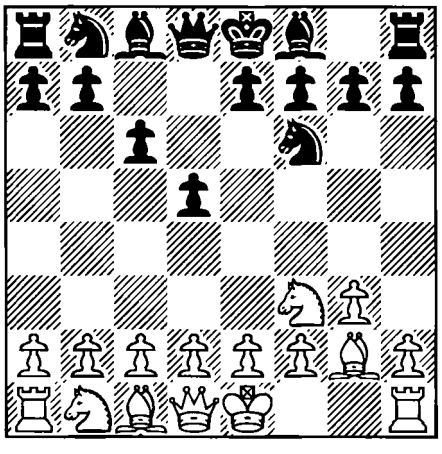
30...♔h8 31 ♖xd1 ♖d8 32 ♕g6! 1-0

For once White's dark-squared bishop rather than its light-squared cousin is the hero in the King's Indian Attack. Black can give a couple of checks, including the big one 32...♖xd1+, but once they run out White will play ♕xh6 mate.

A modern example with a rapid queenside fianchetto

Game 23
V.Malakhov-V.Potkin
Krasnoyarsk 2007

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6



Another move order is 2...c6 3 ♗g2 ♘f6.

Question: Why does Black play 2...c6 or 3...c6 before developing his bishop?

Answer: We know we are playing the King's Indian Attack, but Black can't be too sure. If, for example, 3...♗f5 at once he has to worry about 4 c4, switching to an English. Then White is not only attacking d5, but also clearing the way for a quick ♕b3 to exploit the bishop's absence from c8 to attack the b7-pawn. Therefore Black normally plays 3...c6 (or earlier 2...c6) to strengthen the d5-pawn before committing his bishop to f5. If White then switches to an English set-up with c2-c4 and ♕b3, he can always defend b7 with a move like ...♕b6 or ...♕c7. Besides, after ...c7-c6 Black can also consider answering c2-c4 with ...d5xc4.

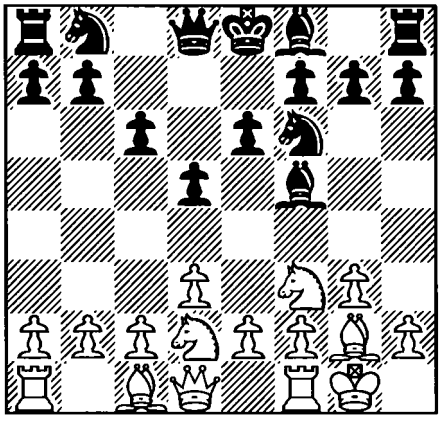
4 0-0 ♗f5

White has developed his kingside and castled in the minimum number of moves. On the other hand, he hasn't put any immediate pressure on the d5-pawn. This means that Black can develop his light-squared bishop to an active square outside his pawn chain. In other queen pawn openings, such as the main line Slav and Queen's Gambit, the bishop is often consigned to remain on c8 shut in by an ...e7-e6 move. So you can understand the attraction of ...♗f5 here for Black and, indeed, ...♗g4 in Chapter Six.

5 d3

There is a comment on 5 b3 in the notes to 6...♗e7 below.

5...e6 6 ♘bd2



All straightforward and simple to understand: White puts his d-pawn and queen's knight into position to support the e2-e4 advance.

6...♗e7

The safest square for the bishop.

Question: Why is 6...♗d6 inadvisable here?

Answer: After 6...♗d6 7 ♕e1 is already awkward for Black as he needs to watch out for a fork. In one game he didn't and resigned after 7...0-0?? 8 e4 ♗g6 9 e5.

However, against a slightly different move order by White ...♗d6 might be made to work. For example, 5 b3 (instead of 5 d3) 5...e6 6 ♗b2 ♗d6 7 d3 ♕e7 8 ♘bd2 ♗a3 and Black has managed to evacuate his bishop from the danger square d6 in a not unfavourable way by offering the exchange of bishops. Nonetheless, I think White keeps a slight edge after 9 ♕c1 ♗xb2 10 ♕xb2 0-0 11 ♘e5 ♖d8 12 e4 dxe4 13 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 14 dxe4 ♘bd7 15 ♖ad1, as in T.Seeman-E.Sveshnikov, Tallinn 2002. Naturally this only arises if you play a quick b2-b3 as White.

7 b3

It is very logical to fianchetto. Black has formed his centre pawns into a light-square wedge to shut out the bishop on g2, which means there will be no obstructions blocking White's dark-squared bishop when it is sitting on b2.

The alternative is to renounce the queenside fianchetto, at least temporarily, with 7 ♕e1, which is examined in the next game via a slight transposition – Black having played 6...h6 rather than 6...♗e7.

7...0-0 8 ♗b2 h6!

The familiar move to secure h7 for the bishop.

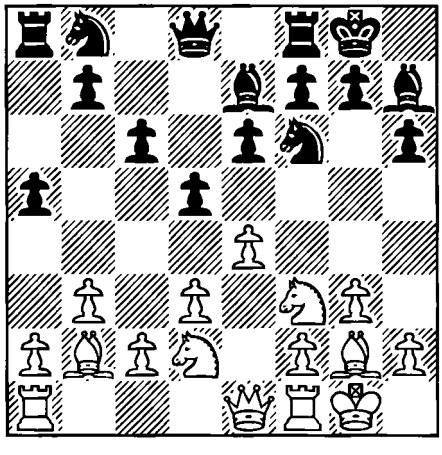
9 ♕e1

Malakhov diverges from the scheme of e2-e3 and ♕e2 which we saw in the Nimzowitsch game above, but the idea is the same: White prepares to strike at the centre with e2-e4 and will gain time by hitting the black bishop. As was discussed in the earlier game, the ♕e1, e2-e4, and ♕e2 approach which we see here is more flexible, as White sometimes delays ♕e2, or might avoid it altogether if something better turns up.

9...a5

A bid for counterplay that is also familiar from the previous game.

10 e4 ♗h7



Exercise: Can you give reasons why 11 e5 would be a bad move here? And also, do you think White should meet the advance of the black queenside pawn with 11 a4, blocking it, or with 11 a3 to meet 11...a4 with 12 b4, 'slipping around' it?

11 a3

Answer: We have to reject 11 e5 as premature at best – or perhaps I should be less kind and call it a serious mistake:

1) It shuts in White's bishop on b2.

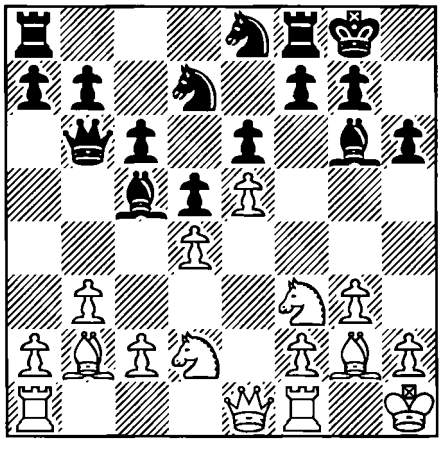
2) It takes the e5-square away from the knight (♘e5 is often a useful preliminary to gaining space with f2-f4).

3) It takes away flexibility from the white centre, as the e4-pawn no longer supports a future f4-f5 advance.

4) It makes Black's bishop on h7 a better piece because it can now see the d3-pawn, which it can help to target in combination with a future ...♘b4 deployment and a possible ...c5-c4 pawn advance.

Here is an exaggerated example of White removing all the barriers to Black's light-squared bishop through adhering to the motto 'seizing space is always right':

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♗f5 5 b3 e6 6 ♗b2 ♘bd7 7 d3 ♗c5 8 ♘bd2 0-0 9 ♕e1 h6 10 e4 ♗g6 11 ♔h1 ♕b6 12 e5? ♘e8 13 d4?



White gains two tempi with these pawn advances, but so what? Time might be of vital importance in the Sicilian and other open games, but here with the centre blocked the harmony of pieces and pawns is paramount. White's dark-squared bishop is reduced to being a 'big pawn' whilst the defences along the b1-h7 diagonal have been systematically removed.

13...♗e7 14 c4 ♗d3 15 c5

Completing a triangle of dead wood in the centre.

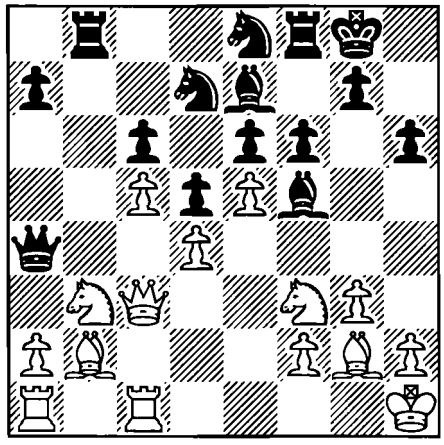
15...♕a6 16 ♖g1 b6

Now White should bail out with 17 cxb6, but instead more light squares are conceded.

17 b4? ♕a4 18 ♕e3

White no longer has any plan and can only await Black's attack.

18...♗c2 19 ♕c3 bxc5 20 ♖gc1 ♗f5 21 bxc5 ♖b8 22 ♘b3 f6!

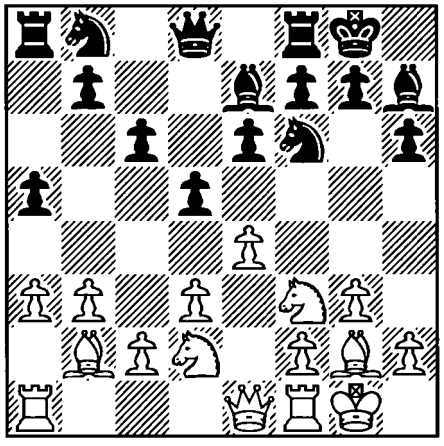


The unwieldy centre is undermined. As David Bronstein remarked, once you have lost control of a complex of squares of a certain colour, your pieces become objects of attack even if they are sitting on squares of the other colour.

23 ♕e3 ♘c7 24 ♗c3 ♘b5 25 ♗e1 ♘a3 26 ♕c3 fxe5 27 dxe5 ♘c4 28 ♘bd4 ♘xc5

White's centre had crumbled away in Luong Phuong Hanh-Pham Thi Thu Hien, Vietnam 2013. The remaining moves were 29 ♘xf5 ♖xf5 30 ♘d4 ♖xe5 31 ♘xc6 ♕xc6 32 ♕xc4 dxc4 33 ♗xc6 ♘d3 34 ♖d1 ♗f6 35 ♗a4 ♖e2 36 ♖ac1 ♘xc1 37 ♖xc1 ♖xa2 38 ♗d7 ♖e2 39 ♔g2 ♖b7 40 ♗c6 ♖bb2 41 ♗f3 ♖ec2 42 ♖d1 c3 43 ♗g4 ♖b6 44 ♖a1 a6 45 ♗f3 ♖cb2 46 ♗e4 c2 47 ♗a5 ♖6b5 0-1.

Returning to the Malakhov game, White's response to the strategic threat of 11...a4 is critical.



In the previous game he chose a2-a4, but in that scenario the black knight was already developed to d7. Here it is still on b8, so after 11 a4 Black has available the strong manoeuvre 11...♘a6 and 12...♘b4 when the black knight is on the equivalent of an outpost square deep in White's territory: ejecting it with c2-c3 would weaken the white queenside and centre too much. With a gigantic horse on b4 and a rock solid ...c6, ...d5, and ...e6 structure, Black would have little to fear. Therefore Malakhov prefers to cover the b4-square against a knight invasion with 11 a3, and answer 11...a4 with 12 b4, keeping the white queenside pawns intact.

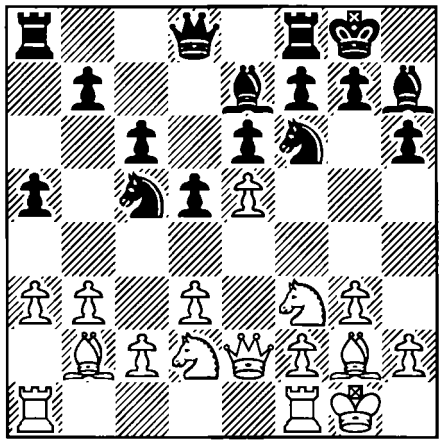
11...c5

As 11 a3 has denied the black knight the b4-square, a popular alternative plan is to put the horse on c5. After 11...♘a6 12 ♕e2 ♘c5 White has two continuations that gain a promising game with pressure in the centre:

Firstly, 13 ♘e5 utilizing the e5-square for the knight. Play might continue 13...♕b6 14 ♔h1 ♖fe8 (after 14...♘a4 White has the riposte 15 ♘dc4! dxc4 16 ♘xc4 and then 17 bxa4, winning a pawn) 15 f4 as in S.Maksimovic-M.Efroimski, Plovdiv 2008. Note that White has no reason to move the rook from f1.

Secondly, 13 e5, gaining space and intending to station the knight on d4 rather than e5: 13...♘fd7 14 ♘d4 ♕b6 15 a4 (avoiding any funny stuff with 15...♘a4) 15...♘a6 16 ♗h3 ♘c7 17 ♔h1 ♕a6 18 f4 as in L.Polugaevsky-K.Langeweg, Amsterdam 1972. As after 13 ♘e5, White has no need or intention of playing ♖fe1: his rook will either stay on f1 to support an advance on the f-file, or be used on the queenside if the action hots up there.

Question: Hold on! You just gave a list of reasons why the e4-e5 advance was bad for White in the note to 11 a3, so why is 13 e5 suddenly a good idea here?

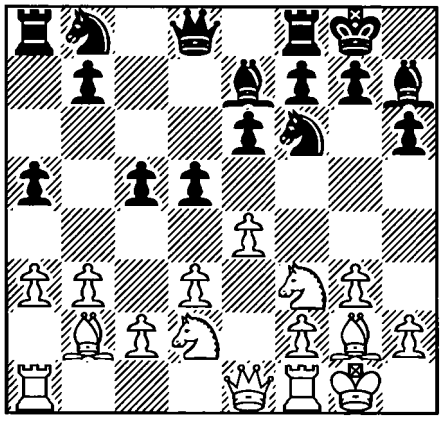


Answer: Well, any move can be good or bad according to the idea or thinking behind it. For example, the pawn move ...h7-h6 can be a stupid waste of time when played by a beginner, but I gave 8...h6 an exclamation mark in this game as it's an important part of Black's opening scheme.

It is vital that you look at the specific position in front of you – the interaction of the pieces and pawns – before committing yourself to e4-e5. It should never be done thoughtlessly, as it permanently changes the nature of the pawn structure. A good question to ask yourself is: 'Does it take the energy away from my pieces and give it to the opponent's pieces?'

Polugaevsky sees that he will have the advance f4-f5 at his disposal, which he can support with a bishop on h3, rook on f1, and knight on d4. He hasn't given up on the light squares or turned his centre into an inert mass – it is still alive, with the potential to expand further.

We should return to the game. With 11...c5 Black has cleared the c6-square for his knight and so threatens the ramming move 12...a4 again, as the response 13 b4 would now simply lose a pawn to 13...cxb4.



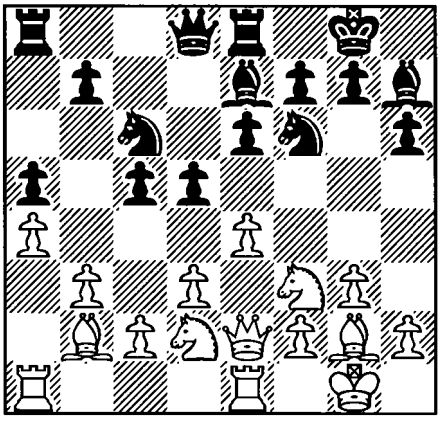
Exercise: How should White prevent Black's plan?

Answer: **12 a4!**

Of course. I hope after the discussion above that this paradoxical double move of the a-pawn is your instinctive reaction to the 11...c5 move. White has in no sense lost a tempo by playing 11 a3 and then 12 a4. If he had played 11 a4 at once, Black wouldn't have replied 11...c5 – he would probably have carried out the plan outlined above of 11...♘a6 and 12...♘b4. So by playing the pawn to a4 in two goes White has dissuaded Black from carrying out the knight manoeuvre.

Pawns can't move backwards, so whereas White can 'change his mind' with 12 a4 Black can't change his mind by putting the pawn back on c6. The consequence is that Black's grip on the d5-pawn is lessened and he remains with a hole on the b5-square.

12...♘c6 13 ♕e2 ♖e8 14 ♖fe1



Question: I don't get it. White plays 9 ♕e1, then 10 e4, then three moves later 13 ♕e2 – that's fair enough, as he wants to keep the rook on f1 to support an f2-f4 advance. But now he puts the rook on e1 after all. Why not play 9 ♖e1, 10 e4, and then put the queen directly on e2, saving a tempo by omitting the ♕e1 move? Black has no way to stop this, right?

Answer: It's true that the game sequence represents a loss of a tempo for White, assuming that play goes exactly the same after 9 ♖e1 as it does after 9 ♕e1. However 'behind the scenes' Malakhov was making sure he kept his rook on f1 in case Black adopted the plan of ...♘a6 and ...♘c5 outlined in the note to 11...c5 above. The move ♖fe1 wouldn't have achieved anything in that scenario – on the contrary, it would be better left on f1 to support f2-f4.

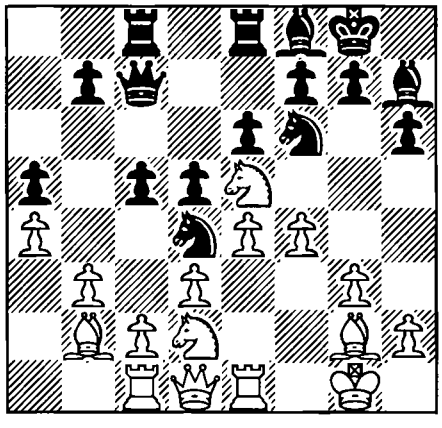
Potkin chose a different approach, so it looks – wrongly – like Malakhov has just squandered a tempo in not committing his rook to e1 at an early stage.

Now circumstances are changed and White decides to play in the centre as clearing the way for an attack with f2-f4 with 14 ♘h4?! leaves Black nicely centralized after 14...♘d4.

14...♖c8 15 ♘e5 ♘d4 16 ♕d1

Retreating pieces is an indignity you have to get used to in the King's Indian Attack. The important thing is your strategic prospects – and here White can be pleased that Black has no ...c5-c4 breakthrough, whilst he himself can hope to expand on the kingside in the future.

16...♕c7 17 f4 ♗f8 18 ♖c1



Another quiet back rank move. The rook defends the c2-square a second time to free his queen for active pursuits.

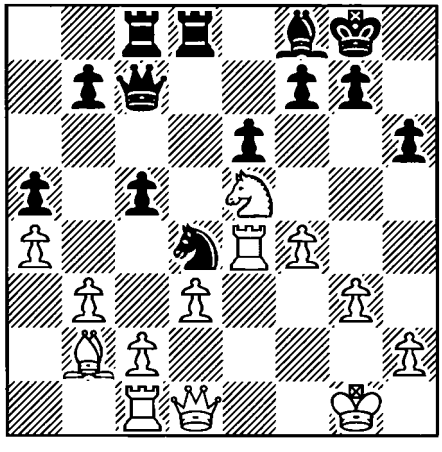
Exercise: Imagine if Black now plays 18...dxe4. How should White respond: 19 dxe4, 19 ♘xe4, or 19 c3?

Answer: After 18...dxe4 19 dxe4? ♖ed8! is highly awkward for the white queen. She has no safe moves and is pinned against her knight. This shows that you can't always judge a move on general principles. At first glance it looks right to maintain a pawn on e4, keeping the bishop on h7 shut out of the game, and denying the black knights access to the d5- and f5-squares. However, the embarrassment caused to the white queen along the d-file is of much greater significance.

A general principle does govern the position after all, but it says: 'Don't open a file if your opponent can exploit it.' As always in chess strategy, it is finding the general principle that is 'top dog' in a specific situation that is the difficulty.

The reply 19 c3 would be something of a concession by White, as he weakens what is otherwise a very solid pawn chance and shuts in his bishop on b2 for at least the time being. However, it can be argued that Black's 18...dxe4 has caused even more damage to Black's structure and that 19 c3, driving back the knight, is the way to exploit it. Possible lines after 18...dxe4 19 c3 are 19...♘c6 20 ♘xc6 e3 (giving up the pawn on e3 to stop White improving his centre with 21 dxe4) 21 ♖xe3 bxc6 22 c4, or 19...♘f3+ 20 ♘dxf3 exf3 21 ♕xf3, or finally 19...e3 20 ♖xe3 ♘f5 21 ♖e1. In these scenarios White's centre has been loosened, but his bishop on g2 has gained scope and Black's pawn structure looks even more mouldy than White's. So we have to regard 19 c3 as an interesting move.

That leaves us 19 ♘xe4, when play might continue 19...♘xe4 20 ♗xe4 (White refuses to open the d-file with the pawn recapture) 20...♗xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♖ed8.



This is the 'cleanest' way for White to play as it avoids any weaknesses in his pawn structure. Black won't be able to gain any initiative on the queenside. On the contrary, there is a hint of light-square fragility on b5 and c4. He therefore has no good plan, and would have to wait to see what White comes up with – this might be a gradual advance of the white kingside pawns after a lot of preparation, of course.

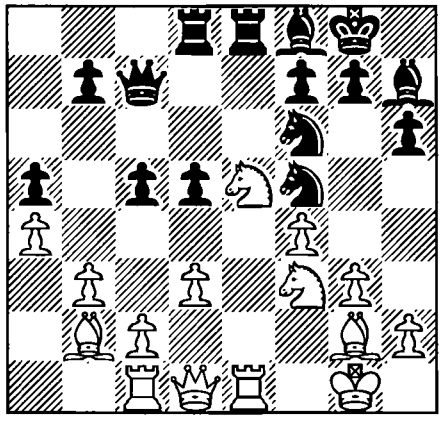
18...♖cd8 19 exd5

Malakhov decides the way to make progress is to ensure the d-file stays closed and evict

the black knight from d4.

19...exd5 20 ♘df3 ♘f5

Safer was 20...♘xf3+ or 20...♘e6.

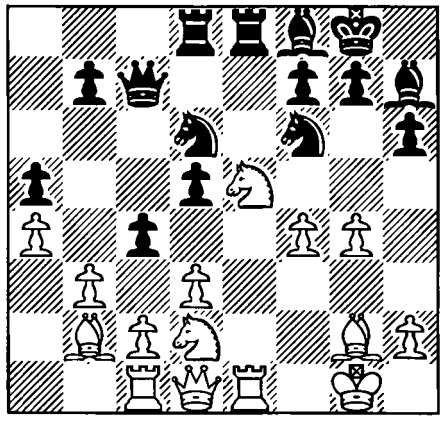


Exercise: How does White now add some oomph to his position?

Answer: **21 g4! ♘d6 22 ♘d2!**

After a quiet start, the game is hotting up. Malakhov's last two moves show what the King's Indian Attack is all about. There is the use of a pawn on the wing to undermine the enemy centre, and there is a seemingly unthreatening retreat in White's own camp that contains a lot of poison. By going back to d2 the knight unleashes the light-squared bishop, forcing Black to consider what to do against a possible 23 g5, driving away the defender of the d5-pawn.

22...c4



Exercise: How should White meet this aggressive bid for queenside counterplay? a) Capture the pawn. b) Carry on with his kingside action with 23 g5. c) Move the bishop from b2.

***Answer:* 23 ♗d4!**

Patience is the watchword in the KIA. The bishop sits in the eye of the storm. There are no pawns that can evict it, and it denies the black queen access to b6 or c5.

Instead, quite lousy for White are 23 bxc4?? dropping a piece to 23...♕b6+ and 23 dxc4? ♘xc4! 24 bxc4 ♕b6+ 25 ♔h1 ♕xb2. Meanwhile the attempt to attack with 23 g5 soon falls apart after 23...hxg5 24 fxg5 c3 25 gxf6 cxb2 26 ♖b1 ♘f5, etc.

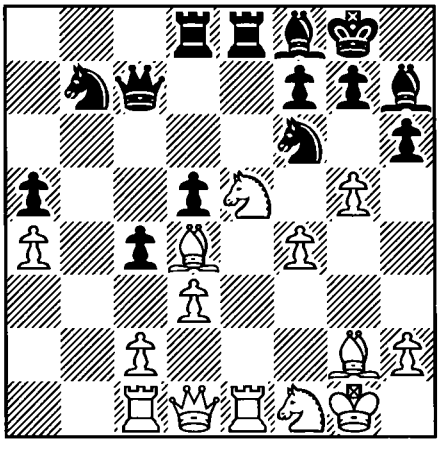
23...b5

Hoping to get at White's bishop after 24 axb5 ♘xb5.

24 ♘f1!

Another powerful retreat. The knight aims to go to e3 when it will add to the pressure on the d5-pawn. It never gets there in the game because the increasing pressure spooks Potkin into a desperate tactical response:

24...bxa4 25 bxa4 ♘b7 26 g5



White's well prepared initiative finally hits home.

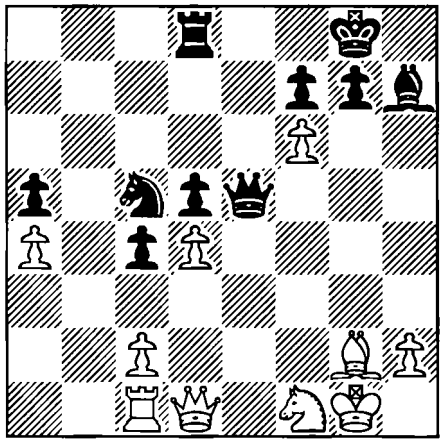
26...hxg5 27 fxg5 ♗c5?

Potkin must have seen 27...♘d7 28 ♘xf7! when his king is soon mated after 28...♖xe1 29 ♕xe1 ♔xf7 30 ♗xd5+ ♔g6 31 ♕e4+ or 28...♔xf7 29 ♗xd5+ ♔g6 30 ♕f3 – a triumph for the King's Indian Attack bishop! However, there was a defence with 28...♕f4! intending to capture the knight safely with 29...♕xf7 or the bishop on d4 with check. Then after the forcing line 29 ♘xd8 ♕xd4+ 30 ♔h1 ♖xd8 31 dxc4 ♕xd1 32 ♖cxd1 ♘bc5 33 ♗xd5+ White has a rook and three pawns for two pieces, but the endgame is by no means easy to win.

28 ♗xc5

Now however Black plays, he will lose material due to a d3-d4 pawn fork: for example, 28...♕xc5+ 29 d4 when both the queen and knight on f6 are hanging.

28...♖xe5 29 ♖xe5 ♕xe5 30 gxf6 ♘xc5 31 d4



Black has managed to stave off the fork for a couple of moves, but the blow finally falls. He will be left a piece down for a couple of pawns, which is hopeless against a 2700 player. The remaining moves were:

31...♕d6 32 dxc5 ♕xc5+ 33 ♔h1 gxf6 34 ♕f3 d4 35 ♕xf6 ♖d6 36 ♕f4 d3 37 cxd3 ♗xd3 38 ♘d2 ♕d4 39 ♕xd4 ♖xd4 40 ♔g1 ♔f8 41 ♔f2 ♔e7 42 ♗c6 ♔d6 43 ♗b5 ♔d5 44 ♔g3 f5 45 ♗xc4+ ♗xc4 46 ♘xc4 ♖g4+ 47 ♔f3 1-0

Black can't recoup his piece as White easily wins the pawn race after 47...♖xc4 48 ♖xc4 ♔xc4: for example, 49 ♔f4 ♔b4 50 h4 ♔xa4 51 h5 ♔b3 52 h6 a4 53 h7 a3 54 h8♕ a2 55 ♕a1.

White prefers direct action in the centre

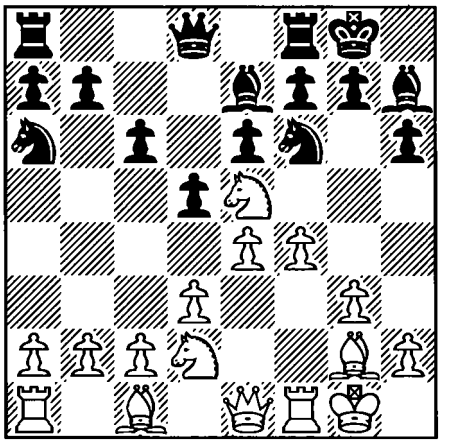
In the next game White avoids the queenside fianchetto with 7 b3 and aims for an immediate pawn expansion on the kingside.

Game 24
K.Movsziszian-J.Lopez Martinez
Salou 2008

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 d5 3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♗f5 5 d3 e6 6 ♘bd2 h6 7 ♕e1 ♗e7 8 e4 ♗h7 9 ♘e5

Again a direct approach rather than 9 b3. The knight clears the way for the advance of the f-pawn.

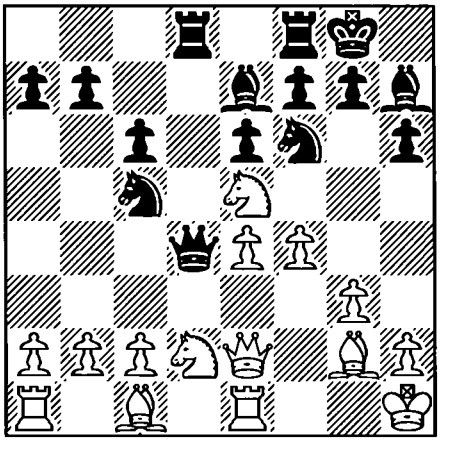
9...0-0 10 f4 ♘a6



Exercise: **Can you see any drawbacks to White's 9 ♘e5 move? Also, what is the plan behind 10...♘a6, and what measures should White take in order to counter it?**

Before discussing the questions above, let's see how play unfolds over the next four moves:

11 ♔h1 dxe4 12 dxe4 ♘c5 13 ♕e2 ♕d4! 14 ♖e1 ♖ad8



Answer: Black avoided ...♘bd7 in response to 9 ♘e5, as it is a little passive. Besides exchanging off the knight on e5 doesn't necessarily favour Black – it is after all blocking the advance of White's e4-pawn. Instead Lopez Martinez has a more ambitious plan: to put strong pressure on the e4-pawn in order to paralyze White's build-up. With this in mind, he puts his queen on d4 and queen's knight on c5, so that, including the other knight on f6 and bishop on h7, he now has four units attacking the key e4 point.

As well as this, the queen on d4 and the rook on d8 exert pressure down the d-file. White can't move the knight from d2 without e4 dropping, which means that for the moment he can't develop his bishop from c1 nor his rook from a1. Thus we see a drawback to 9 ♘e5: if White had played 7 b3 and 8 ♗b2 he would have developed his queenside, and we couldn't call the d4-square weak if White's knight had remained on f3 guarding it.

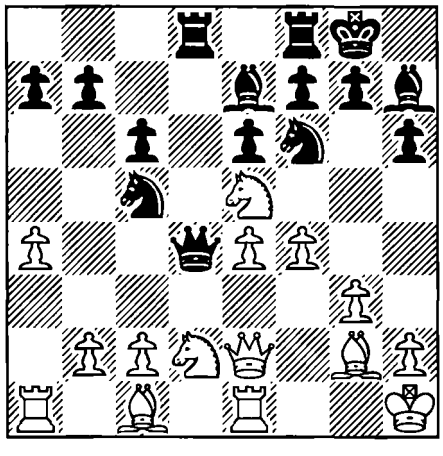
Over the last few moves White has anticipated Black's plan. He has made sure he can defend the pawn on e4 with both queen and rook (♕e2, ♖e1), and evacuated his king from g1 before Black's queen landed on d4 (♔h1).

Exercise: White now needs to find a way to drive back the black queen to ease the pressure on e4. Any suggestions?

Answer: **15 a4!**

Better than 15 c3 ♕a4 16 b3 ♕b5! when Black's queen stays active. The fact that he has doubled pawns after 17 ♕xb5?! (it's better to keep the queens on with 17 ♕e3) 17...cxb5 is irrelevant. Black dominates the d-file and there is no white attack on the kingside.

Now after 15...♘xa4? the simple 16 c3 wins the knight (an even better way to do it is with 16 ♘dc4, threatening to trap the queen with 17 ♗e3).



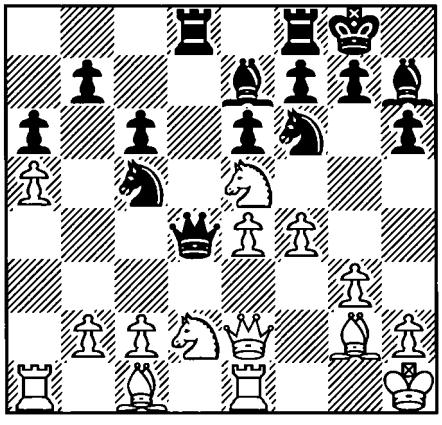
Exercise: Imagine that Black decides his pieces are on their optimum squares and so waits, say, with 15...a6, and then plays passive moves like ...♖fe8, ...♗f8, and then in the absence of direct threats by White keeps moving the bishop backwards and forwards with ...♗e7 and ...♗f8, etc. How would you slowly build up White's game?

Answer: It's often the case that when a player has adopted a strategy that doesn't involve the use of pawns things come to a standstill, because all his big pieces are on good squares, but there is no way to breakthrough to hurt the opponent. In this specific case Black needs

some cannon fodder to rush at the enemy and open lines, but all the black pieces involved in the attack on e4 and along the d-file are too expensive to sacrifice.

In contrast, White's position still has scope for improvement. His pawns on the queenside can add strength to his game, and we shouldn't forget the pawn ram g4-g5 is available on the kingside.

Let's imagine 15...a6 16 a5 is played.

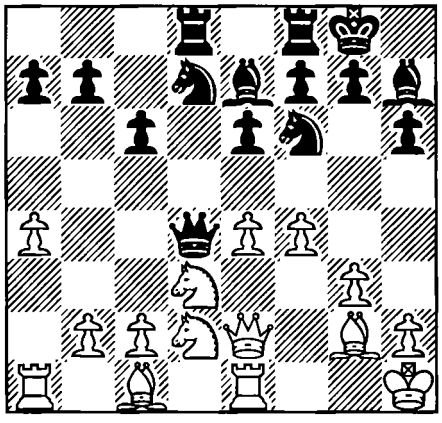


Now if Black leaves his queen on d4 and simply waits, moving his pieces backwards and forwards, here's how White might build up his game until he wins material: 16...♖fe8 17 ♗f3 ♗f8 18 ♔g2 (White takes the chance to improve the position of his king by removing it from the back rank) 18...♗e7 19 ♘ec4 (retreating the knight boxes in the black queen) 19...♗f8 20 ♖a3! (bringing the rook to e3 to strengthen the e4-pawn) 20...♗e7 21 ♖e3 ♗f8 22 b3 (a fianchetto at last) 22...♗e7 23 ♗b2 ♕d7 24 ♗e5! ♖f8 25 ♖a1! (threatening to trap the knight on c5 with b3-b4) 25...♕e8 (thanks to the strong bishop on e5, 25...♕c8 26 ♘b6 is embarrassing for the black queen) 26 b4 ♘cd7 27 ♘d6 ♗xd6 28 ♗xd6 and White wins the exchange.

Alternatively, starting from the analysis diagram above, Black might put his queen on b4 and then wait. A possible line is 16...♕b4 17 ♗f3 ♖fe8 18 ♔g2 ♗f8 19 ♘ec4 (as in the variation above, this retreat constricts the black queen's movement; it also defends the knight on d2 again in preparation for the development of the bishop from c1) 19...♖d7 20 b3 ♖ed8 (or 20...♕c3 21 ♖a2! ♖ed8 22 ♘b1 when the black queen is trapped after 22...♕b4 23 ♗a3 ♕b5 24 ♘c3, so Black would have to speculate with the immediate queen sacrifice 22...♘cxe4 23 ♘xc3 ♘xc3 24 ♕f2 ♘xa2, but White looks better after 25 ♘e5) 21 ♕e3 ♗e7 22 ♖e2. White has bolstered the e4-pawn and his defences along the d-file, despite the enormous pressure from the black pieces. He is ready to play 23 ♗a3 or 23 ♗b2 with the initiative thanks to the awkward position of the black queen.

Seeing that his position will eventually be worn down if he does nothing, Lopez Martinez decides to regroup his pieces. He clears the way for his queen to retreat to b6, but on the other hand he is reducing the pressure on e4.

15...♘cd7 16 ♘d3



White has more space so he avoids the exchange of knights which would unclutter the black position.

16...♕b6 17 b3

A small victory for White who is able to develop his bishop to the long diagonal now that the black queen has left d4.

17...♘c5

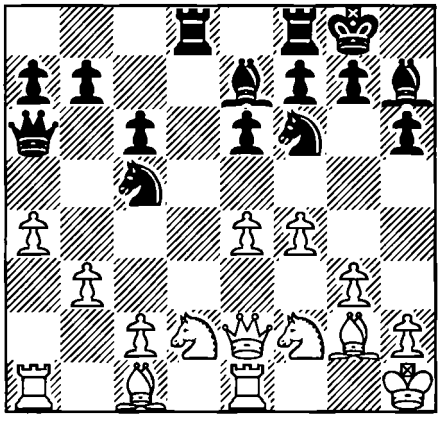
Again Black offers the exchange ofk nights.

18 ♘f2!

Correctly declining. If 18 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 the black bishop gets to a good diagonal. After 18 ♘e5 Black could 18...♘cd7 continuing to hunt the white knight, so that only leaves the f2-square.

18...♕a6

Thwarted in his bid to exchange knights, Black now tries to get the queens off.



Exercise: What is our response?

Answer: **19 ♕e3!**

I hope you are getting the hang of this by now. It is a high class form of cat and mouse. It seems like White is being pushed around, but his position is gradually improving – the bishop gets to b2 next move. On the other hand, it is a frustrating business for Black.

19...♘cd7 20 ♗b2 ♗b4 21 ♖ad1 ♕a5 22 ♘c4 ♕c7 23 ♖f1

White has completed his development. In the meantime the black pieces have been thrashing around trying to land a tactical blow. If Black does nothing active then White could consider advancing on the kingside with the pawn lunge g4-g5. Therefore Lopez Martinez struck out with a pawn thrust of his own:

23...b5!?

Very logical. Black forces a white pawn weakness on a4 and opens the b-file for his rook.

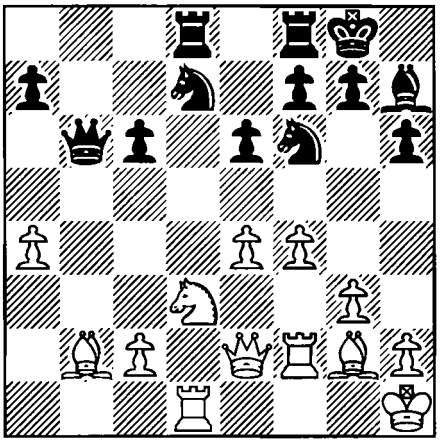
24 ♘e5

Not 24 axb5 cxb5 when White is reduced to 25 ♘a3 to keep c2 guarded.

24...♗c5 25 ♕e2 bxa4 26 bxa4 ♕b6 27 ♘ed3 ♗xf2

Exchanging an active bishop for a knight is not something to be done lightly, but it does ease the congestion in the black camp. The alternative was 27...♗e7 and then a counterattack against the a4-pawn with ...♕a6.

28 ♖xf2



Now 28...♕a6 29 ♖a1 ♖b8 gives Black counterplay. White might then try 30 g4!? with the plan of 31 ♗f3, 32 ♖g2, and 33 g5 to begin his long-awaited kingside attack.

28...♘c5?

When a strong player makes a mistake it is often for psychological reasons. Here Black loses his sense of danger and goes hunting the a4-pawn at the cost of his king's safety. Might we talk of a loss of patience, fear of a white attack on the kingside, or overconfidence

because of White's innocuous play so far? Whatever the cause, Black often suddenly 'cracks' when facing the King's Indian Attack. That is why it is a more promising opening than the assessments of a computer program would suggest. Few human players likes to defend for hours 'treading water' and waiting for the opponent's attack.

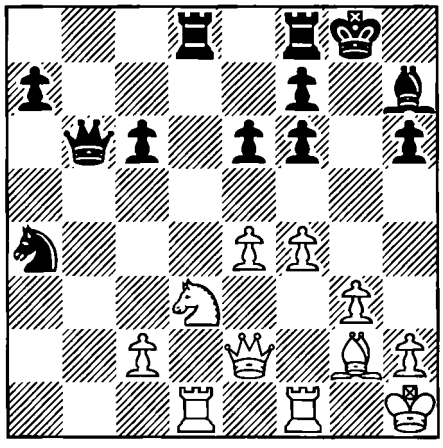
29 ♗xf6

The fracturing of the black kingside is catastrophic, as White's queen, knight and rooks can work together to exploit the weak pawns on f6 and h6, as well as the open g-file.

29...gxf6 30 ♖ff1!

Still refusing to be rushed. White deals with the threat of 30...♘xe4 31 ♗xe4 ♗xe4+ 32 ♕xe4 ♖xd3 33 ♖xd3 ♕xf2 when Black has won a pawn.

30...♘xa4



He might as well grab the pawn as otherwise his travails on the kingside are for nothing.

31 ♕g4+

It was more precise to begin with 31 ♖b1, driving the black queen away from b6 where she might aid in the defence of the f6-pawn after the pawn move ...c6-c5 or by going to d4. For example, 31...♕c7 (instead, 31...♕d4 loses a piece to 32 ♖b4) 32 ♕g4+ ♔h8 33 ♕h4 ♔g7 and now White can fix the kingside with 34 f5! e5 (to stop White's rook joining in the attack with ♖f4 and ♖g4+) 35 ♘f2! followed by 36 ♘g4, hitting both f6 and h6, which is decisive. The white queen and knight will be a deadly attacking duo.

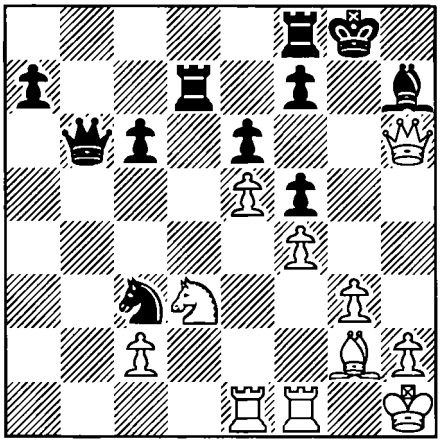
31...♔h8 32 ♕h4 ♔g7 33 e5

As with 31 ♕g4+, this is a very human decision. Black has weakened himself on the dark squares around his king, so 33 e5, putting a pawn on a dark square and winning the queen access to f6, feels right. And with best play it is good enough to win.

However, as at move 31, the more accurate pawn push was still 33 f5! when after 33...e5 (again, he must stop ♖f4) 34 ♖a1 ♘c3 35 ♘f2 Black has no good response to the threat of 36 ♘g4, attacking both f6 and h6, as 35...♕e3, to put the queen on g5, fails to 36

♖a3 and then 37 ♘g4, forcing Black to give up the pinned knight.

33...f5 34 ♕f6+ ♔g8 35 ♕xh6 ♘c3 36 ♖de1 ♖d7



37 h4

Exercise: Is this the best way to pursue the kingside attack? Try to find another way to breakthrough.

Answer: White should have pushed his other pawn. After 37 g4! fxg4 38 ♘f2! there is no good way to stop 39 ♘xg4, for if 38...♗f5 (the alternative 38...f5 has to be tried, but 39 exf6 is ruinous for Black) 39 ♘xg4 ♗xg4 40 ♕g5+ ♔h8 41 ♕h4+ ♔g7 42 ♕xg4+ ♔h8 43 ♕h5+ and Black is soon mated.

37...♕d8 38 ♗xc6 ♖c7 39 ♗f3 f6

Black could have put up a staunch defence with 39...♔h8 40 ♖g1 ♖g8.

40 g4

And now this is too fast. After 40 ♖g1 ♔h8 41 g4 fxg4 42 ♖xg4 White has a winning attack.

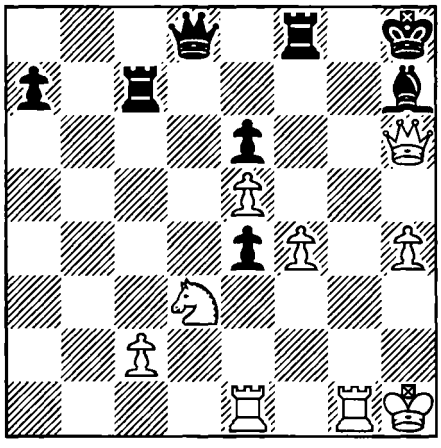
40...fxg4 41 ♗xg4 f5?

Black missed a curious way to force a draw with 41...♗e4+ when 42 ♔h2? loses the white queen to 42...♖h7, so essential is 42 ♖xe4 ♖h7! (not 42...♘xe4 43 ♗xe6+; Black needs the h8-square for his king) 43 ♕g6+ ♔h8 44 ♖e3 (there's nothing better) 44...♖g7 45 ♕h5+ ♖h7 46 ♕g6 ♖g7 with a draw by repetition.

42 ♗f3

White is back on track for a win. Black will have no good answer to the pressure along the g-file as his dark squares are weak and the e6-pawn is deathly weak.

42...♔h8 43 ♖g1 ♘e4 44 ♗xe4 fxe4



Exercise: How can White finish off his attack?

45 ♘c5!

Answer: Fischer gave the advice to 'look at the whole board' when trying to figure out a combination. The killer blow is struck on the queenside as the knight will crash through on the e6-square seeing that 45...♖xc5 allows mate on g7.

45...e3 46 ♘xe6 1-0

Black resigned as he is two pawns down and still facing a deadly assault after 46...♕a8+ 47 ♖g2 ♖cf7 48 ♖xe3.

White plays a quick ♘h4 to hunt the black bishop

Game 25
H.Nakamura-D.Solak
Istanbul Olympiad 2012

1 g3

If you are as versatile as Nakamura, you'll be ready to answer 1...e5 with 2 c4, transposing to an English. Or you might prefer to respond with 2 d3, reaching a Pirc or Modern Reversed. I won't stop you adopting any of these openings; in fact I wish you luck. The key thing is to find a repertoire that works for you, even if it means taking a little something from a couple of different opening systems.

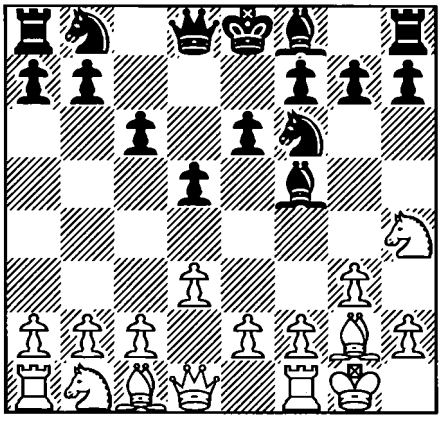
1...d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 4 d3 ♗f5

The familiar features of the Slav-like set-up with ...♗f5 have formed.

5 0-0 e6

If Black plays 5...♘bd7 first, White can still try 6 ♘h4: for example, 6...♗g4 7 h3 ♗h5 8 g4 ♗g6 9 e3 e6 10 f4 ♗c5 11 ♕e2 with an interesting position.

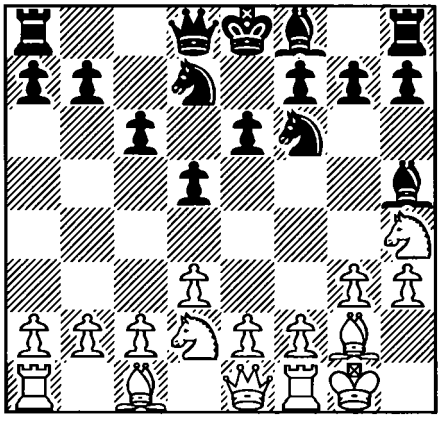
6 ♘h4



Everything else being equal, it is almost always to White's advantage to exchange his knight for Black's light-squared bishop. The proviso 'everything else being equal' basically means: 'How much does White have to loosen his kingside pawns to nab the bishop, and is it worth it?'

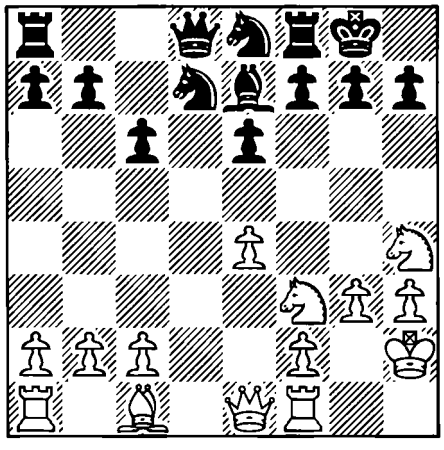
6...♗g6?!

After this passive retreat the answer to the question above is 'White doesn't have to loosen his kingside pawns at all'. Black had to fight with 6...♗g4 when after the direct 7 h3 ♗h5 8 g4 ♘fd7! the abject 9 gxh5? ♕xh4 leaves White's kingside in an awful mess, while after 9 ♘f3 ♗g6 the bishop has escaped being eaten. White has two interesting ways to improve his play in this line, namely after 6...♗g4 7 h3 ♗h5 he can play 8 ♕e1!? or 8 ♘d2 ♘bd7 9 ♕e1!?.



The point of the queen move is to unpin the e-pawn, so that White can play e2-e4. Here ♘h4 serves the purpose of clearing the way for f2-f4, rather than with the express intention of making a favourable exchange for the black bishop.

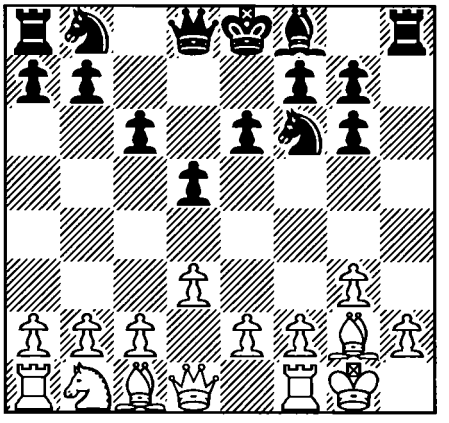
Here's an example of this strategy enjoying a startling success in the game A. Wirig-E.Postny, French League 2013: 9...♗e7 10 e4 dxe4 11 dxe4 0-0 12 ♔h2 ♘e8 (directed against White's central expansion with f2-f4; Black threatens 13...♗xh4, and if the knight retreats to f3, the f-pawn is blocked) 13 ♗f3!? (therefore White decides to exchange off bishops instead) 13...♗xf3 14 ♘dxf3!.



The exchange of bishops has allowed White's other knight to get to f3. He is still unable to advance the f-pawn, but it has facilitated the development of his queenside. Left undisturbed he can develop his bishop, and then play ♖d1. In some cases e4-e5 will increase his space advantage. Not liking any of this, Postny lashed out with 14...g5? 15 ♘g2 ♘g7 16 ♗d2 f5?. It can't be good to lunge forwards with the black kingside pawns when White is better developed and the centre is wide open. Black, the much higher-rated player (2627 Elo versus his opponent's 2490) has lost patience against the King's Indian Attack, and that is always fatal. It soon fell apart for him: 17 exf5 exf5 18 ♗c3 (who needs a light-squared bishop when you can have a dark-squared one cutting into the opponent's kingside?) 18...♕e8 19 ♖d1 ♖d8 20 ♕e3 h6 21 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 22 ♘d4 ♘c5 23 b4 (Black is losing the exchange because of the fork on e6) 23...♘e4 24 ♘e6+ ♔g6 25 ♘xf8+ ♕xf8. Black is now the exchange down for nothing, though he fought on to move 72 before resigning.

We now return to Solak's less critical decision to retreat to g6.

7 ♘xg6 hxg6



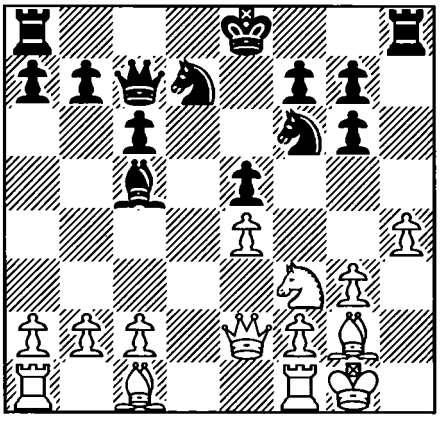
Question: Should White worry about his king being attacked the open h-file?

Answer: As a general rule, you should always worry about your king's safety during a game, but not too much. Here the risk to White is very minimal. The f2-g3-h2 shell around his king is solid and his bishop is taking care of the light squares. His knight will go to f3 via d2, further strengthening his defences. And, crucially, Black's pieces aren't on aggressive squares near the white king, and he has no pawn advances available to open up lines. Whilst I could just about imagine Nakamura conducting a brilliant attack if he were playing Black here, he would need the help of some bad moves by White.

8 ♘d2 ♘bd7 9 e4 dxe4 10 dxe4 e5

Already we see that Black is missing his light-squared bishop. Advancing the pawn to e5 stops White gaining more space and keeps the bishop on g2 shut in, but it exposes the soft underbelly of the black centre along the a2-g8 and h3-c8 diagonals.

11 ♕e2 ♗c5 12 ♘f3 ♕c7 13 h4!



Exercise: **Can you give some reasons why Nakamura chooses to push his h-pawn rather than develop a piece?**

Answer: If the situation in the centre is quiet we don't need to rush our development to hold on to key squares or ward off threats. Here, as is often the case in the KIA, there is a fixed centre pawn structure, with pawns on e4 and e5 blocking each other, and no violent disturbance looming down the d-file. Therefore we are permitted – and required – to use our wing pawns in an imaginative manner.

By playing 13 h4, Nakamura:

1) Secures an open diagonal for his bishop from h3-c8.

2) Creates a base on g5 for his knight.

3) Empowers a future kingside attack with an h4-h5 advance.

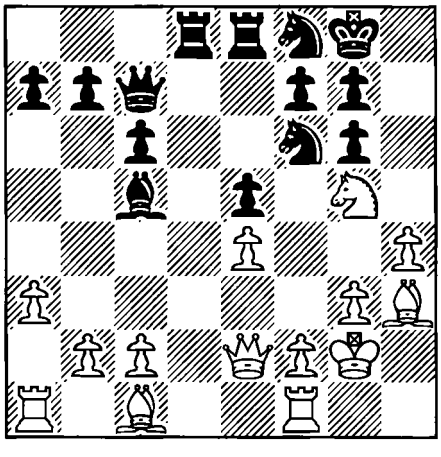
If Black chooses to castle queenside, then the white pawns can quickly become an attacking force with 14 c3 and 15 b4, etc, gaining time by attacking the bishop on c5. In contrast, Black's kingside pawns are static, a fact emphasised by 13 h4. White would therefore have all the aces if it came to a kingside versus queenside attack.

In the game Solak castles short, but his king still ends up in danger.

13...0-0 14 ♗h3 ♖fe8 15 ♔g2 ♘f8 16 ♘g5

Stopping Black from activating his knight with 16...♘e6, as then 17 ♘xe6 fxe6 leaves his pawns smashed up.

16...♖ad8 17 a3!



Question: **Rather than continue his attacking build-up on the kingside with, say, 17 ♖h1, Nakamura makes an irrelevant-looking pawn move on the queenside. Why?**

Answer: Black's position is highly unpleasant, but it will take some effort for White to win

the game. His task would be greatly eased if Black can be cajoled into weakening himself further.

Chess players like to carry out a plan, but anything Black tries to do will make matters worse for him. So Nakamura waits with 17 a3, in effect saying to his opponent: 'How do you propose to free your game?'. As we shall see, Solak decides to get rid of the knight on g5 with ...♘8h7. He might have avoided this idea if White had 'frightened' him with 17 ♖h1. Instead, Nakamura develops his pieces quietly, and waits for Black to play ...♘8h7 and ...♘xg5, when the win becomes easier for him.

If Black had played 17...♘8h7 at once, then 18 ♖h1 threatens 19 ♘xh7 when both 19...♘xh7 20 h5 and 19...♔xh7 20 h5 gxh5 21 ♗g5, intending 22 ♗xf6 or 22 ♗f5+, give White a withering attack along the h-file. As we shall see, the game move, 17...♕e7, as a preliminary to 18...♘8h7 doesn't help Black at all as the ♗g5 pin proves nasty.

The moral is that sometimes it's best to let your opponent stew – he might do your 'work' for you.

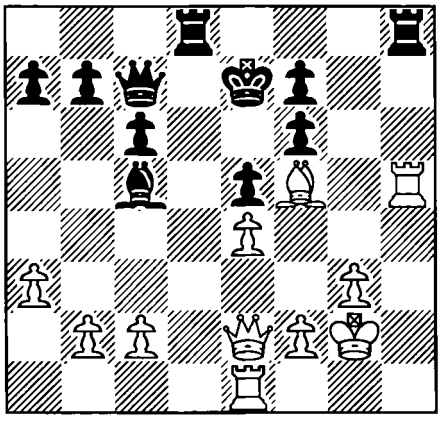
17...♕e7 18 ♗d2 ♘8h7

'Aha! Here is my opponent's freeing attempt. Let's make another quiet move that lets him destroy himself.'

19 ♖ae1 ♘xg5 20 ♗xg5 ♕c7

Black achieved nothing with 17...♕e7. On the contrary, it has aided White's attack. Of course, the black queen would never have left c7 if White hadn't played 17 a3.

21 h5! gxh5 22 ♗xf6 gxf6 23 ♗f5 ♔f8 24 ♖h1 ♔e7 25 ♖xh5 ♖h8



It seems like Black has avoided the worst: he has evacuated his king to the centre, and after 26 ♖eh1 ♖xh5 27 ♖xh5 ♕d6 he can look for counterplay with 28...♕d2, when f2 might end up weak.

Exercise: But this is the King's Indian Attack.
How does pawn power keep White's advantage?

***Answer:* 26 g4!!**

In its own way I regard this move as beautiful as a queen sacrifice. It shows imagination to utilize the g-pawn – I suspect the possibility wouldn't occur to 99% of players. Nakamura defends his rook with the g-pawn, so that he acquires a strong passed pawn after 26...♖xh5 27 gxh5. Solak therefore avoids the exchange on h5, but White's rooks dominate the h-file.

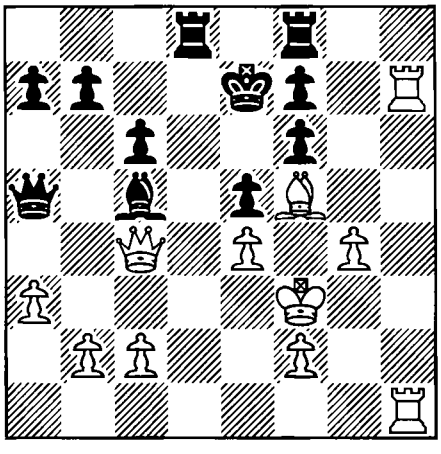
26...♖dg8 27 ♔f3!

Black threatened to win a rook with 27...♖xh5. Nakamura's king may be on a curious square, but his attack against the light squares around the black king will have more poison than his opponent's attempts to attack f2.

27...♖d8 28 ♖eh1 ♖hf8 29 ♖h7 ♕a5

At long last it seems like Black might be getting some counterplay as 30...♖d2 or 30...♕d2 are looming, and 30 b4? drops a3 with check.

30 ♕c4



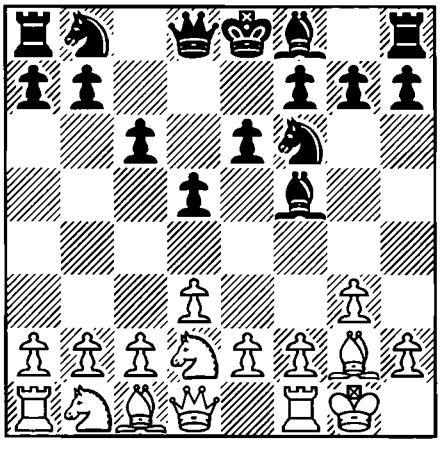
The triumph of the King's Indian Attack: White's light-squared bishop provides more cover of the squares around its own king, and more attacking force against the enemy king, than its counterpart on c5. Black now blunders, but it's already lost as f7 is falling: for example, 30...♔e8 31 ♖xf7! is checkmate in 18 (!) moves according to the computer, but the nicest finish is the streamlined 31...♖xf7 32 ♖h8+ ♖f8 (32...♗f8 meets with the same two white moves, while 32...♔e7 allows mate as in the game) 33 ♕e6+ ♗e7 34 ♗g6 mate. Now that's what I call light-squared domination by the white bishop.

30...♕b5 31 ♕e6# 1-0

White plays 6 ♘fd2

Game 26
E.Vorobiov-P.Tregubov
Rijeka (rapid) 2010

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♗f5 5 d3 e6 6 ♘fd2



Retreating the knight to d2 enables White to advance e2-e4 without having to play the preparatory ♕e1 or e2-e3 and ♕e2. It also clears the way for the f-pawn.

6...e5

A natural response: White has reduced the pressure on Black's centre and so he takes the chance to equalize the space balance.

Question: Maybe I'm a cautious fellow, but the first question I'd want to ask about 6 ♘fd2 is 'do I get mated by 6...h5?'.

Answer: Well, 6...h5 at once looks a little primitive, though it won the only time I've seen it played: 7 e4 ♗g6 8 e5 ♘fd7 9 ♘f3 ♗e7 10 ♘c3?! h4 11 ♘e2 ♗h5 12 d4 g5 and Black had a scary initiative in D.Tocchioni-E.Sveshnikov, Cesenatico 2010. At move 10 I'd prefer to clamp down on the h-pawn with 10 h4 (note how this also stops the annoying ...♗h5 move); for example, if 10...0-0 there's no more attack and we can build up with 11 ♖e1, etc. Or if 10...c5 to clear c6 for the knight then 11 c4 starts to undermine the black centre.

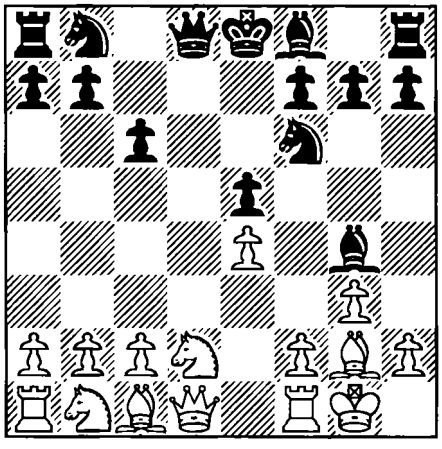
A more sophisticated form of the ...h5-h4 advance was seen in the following game: 6...♗c5 (Black might as well put his bishop on this active square as the white pieces aren't in a position to disturb it) 7 e4 ♗g6 8 ♔h1 (less provocative is 8 ♕e2 then 9 ♘b3, getting out the queenside pieces) 8...dxe4 9 dxe4 h5!? 10 h3 h4 11 g4 e5 12 ♕e1 ♘bd7 13 ♘b3 ♗d6

14 ♘a3 ♗c7 15 ♗g5 with an unclear position in F.Berkes-S.Mareco, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011. White played 10 h3 to slide past the h4-pawn with 11 g4. That might remind you of the a2-a3 measure taken on the queenside to bypass an ...a5-a4 by Black with b3-b4, as seen, for example, in the Malakhov-Potkin game above.

The idea of attacking White's king with ...h7-h5 doesn't occur very often in the KIA Slav. Black often castles kingside fairly quickly so the opportunity doesn't arise as a middlegame plan. In any case, the centre and queenside aren't particularly hospitable for the black king, so even if he has delayed castling, the plan of ...h7-h5 stores up trouble for the future: if his kingside pawns are broken up, where is the black monarch going to live?

7 e4 dxe4 8 dxe4 ♗g4

If 8...♗e6 White could play 9 ♕e2 and 10 ♘c4 then 11 ♖d1, with pressure along the d-file and against e5. Therefore Tregubov tries to keep the queen out of e2 for a while.



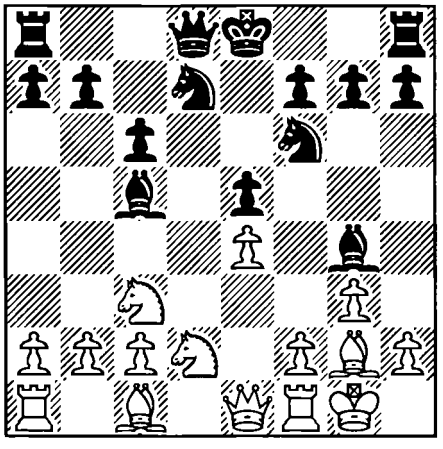
Exercise: How should White meet the attack on his queen? a) Move the queen to e1. b) Offer to exchange bishops with ♗f3. c) Block the attack with f2-f3.

Answer: **9 ♕e1**

After 9 ♗f3?! ♗e6 White will have to lose time with his bishop to get in f2-f4. Meanwhile 9 f3 is a more subtle loss of time. In the game, White drives the bishop back with h2-h3, a useful move as he wants to guard the g4-square and play ♔h2. By playing 9 f3 and later f3-f4 he will have lost the tempi he used for h2-h3. Besides, it could be argued that the white queen is better on e1 than d1 as she defends e4.

9...♘bd7 10 ♘c3 ♗c5

I hope you are starting to get a feel for these type of positions. They appear very balanced, with space being equal and both sides having a more or less trouble-free development. However, when we look more closely we notice some important features that give White, if not the better game, then at least more chances to carry out an effective plan in the future.



Exercise: Going back to basics, can you describe the 'important features' I'm talking about?

Answer: Clearly, I'm not talking about the superficial activity of the players' pieces, because the figures aren't very attractive for White:

Total number of squares the black bishops can move to without being captured: 8.

Total number of squares the white bishops can move to without being captured: 1.

So the black bishops control eight times more squares than the white bishops. But so what? The closed nature of the position means that is better to have pieces on their long-term optimal squares rather than developed quickly.

Looking at the pawn structure, White has the potential to gain space with f2-f4, whilst Black has no equivalent pawn lever. Here we see the value of the pawn on g3 – after a future ...e5xf4 in response to f2-f4, the recapture g3xf4 is possible, keeping the white centre intact and mobile. So we see that the move 2 g3 wasn't just a question of 'get the g-pawn out of the way so that I can play ♗g2' – the g3-pawn is an important strategic asset due to its support of a future f2-f4. Another good point to g2-g3 is that it stops Black ever playing ...♘f4, unless as a sacrifice, of course. In contrast, White can play ♘f5, as in most situations the preventive pawn move ...g7-g6 would loosen the black kingside too much as there's no bishop on g7 equivalent to White's bishop on g2.

The bishop on g2 is shut in, and will stay shut in on g2 until the end of the game. It will have no attacking value at all. But it guards the e4-pawn and, due to its enormous defensive power in shielding the king, gives us the freedom to play moves like f2-f4, knowing that after ...e5xf4 the recapture g3xf4 won't leave the white king exposed to terrible danger. By bolstering the e4-pawn, no frontal attack by a black rook or the queen will endanger the pawn on e4.

Now look at Black's position. Even if he managed to get the knight on f6 out of the way,

the advance ...f7-f5 would after e4xf5 leave him with a weak pawn on e5 and a hole on e4, besides giving the white bishop on e4 more scope. Assuming Black has castled kingside, if he played ...g7-g6 and ...f7-f5, he would be exposing his king to terrible danger – there is no black bishop on g7 to act as bodyguard to the monarch.

So we see that strategically speaking the white bishop on g2 is better placed than the black bishop on c5, despite the latter controlling a lot more squares.

The bishop on c5 is stopping the advance of the f-pawn, but it is only a temporary inconvenience for White, whereas his strategic superiority is permanent. White could play an immediate ♔h1 and then f2-f4, but we aren't in a hurry. The bishop on g2 gives us a licence to utilize all our pawns on the kingside. We want to get the h-pawn involved in our initiative. And so:

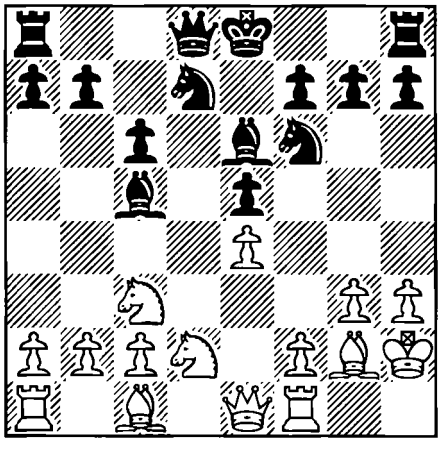
11 h3

It doesn't follow that a piece is on a good square just because it is actively placed. Likewise, a piece can be on a passive square, but strategically well placed. The black bishop on g4 is proving a bit of a liability, allowing White to gain more space on the kingside.

11...♗e6

The bishop decides to retreat to the centre. After 11...♗h5 12 ♔h2 Black would have to reckon with 13 f4 when ideas of 14 g4 ♗g6 15 f5, trapping the bishop, loom. Or even the less direct 14 f5 would leave Black unable to extricate the bishop from the threat of 15 g4.

12 ♔h2



Question: Why would h2 be chosen rather than h1?

Answer: White normally plays ♔h2 in games I've seen with this type of centre. It gets the king off the back rank in case White ever wants to put a rook or the queen on h1, for example, and adds a defender to h3 and g3. The main drawback to ♔h2 is if Black ever finds an effective way to sacrifice his knight with a ...♘xg4+ style sacrifice, which could happen if

White has carelessly pushed his pawn to g4.

12...0-0 13 f4

At last White achieves the desired pawn advance. Black has nothing to match it – he can generate a lot of sound and fury on the queenside with his pieces, but there is no equivalent support from his pawns.

Black is again threatened with the loss of his bishop to 14 f5. Note that the exchange 13...exf4? 14 gxf4 is strategically totally unappealing for Black. It should only be made if Black has a strong tactical follow-up to undermine the white centre pawns. Black would have surrendered his pawn bastion on e5, the strategic linchpin in his centre. White's pawns would already be threatening to overwhelm him by advancing and the pent-up energy of the white pieces would be unleashed. Not that White would have to hurry, there would be no way for Black to re-establish a pawn centre to hold back the white pawns and pieces.

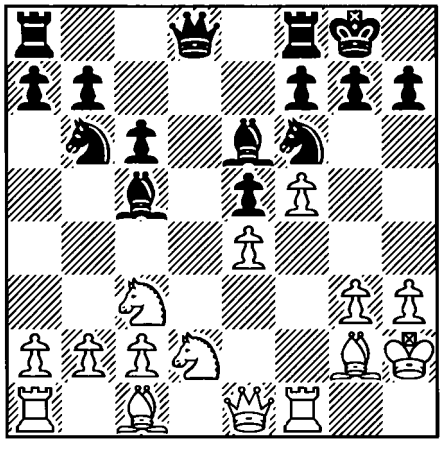
It would be a different story if Black played 13...exf4 and White made the catastrophic recapture 14 ♖xf4??. Then he wouldn't have a pair of mobile pawns in the centre. Black could play 14...♘e5, putting the knight on an ideal central blockade square, or he could target the g3-pawn with moves like ...♗d6, ...♘h5 and ...♕c7. White would be facing a quick defeat. He we see the value of 2 g3 extends far beyond freeing the g2-square for the bishop, or defending the f4-square against invasion by a black knight. The pawn has to be available to go to f4 after ...e5xf4, or White's whole strategy fails.

Notice that after the recapture 14 gxf4 White is strategically winning, but after the recapture 14 ♖xf4 Black is winning.

13...♘b6

Making an escape square for the bishop in anticipation of White's next move, and setting a strategic trap.

14 f5!



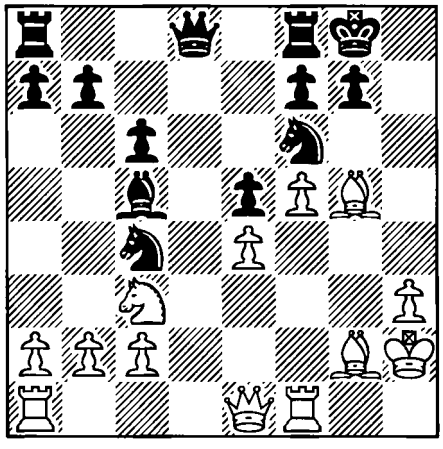
If you've read the note to 13 f4 you'll know why 14 fxe5 would be wrong. After 14...♘fd7

White's centre would be broken, and Black could regain the pawn with ...♕c7 or ...♘c4 as necessary. In fact, Black wouldn't have to regain the pawn to be OK, as sitting on e5 it would be a symbol of his opponent's strategic incompetence.

Instead, White bypasses the e5-pawn and plans a pawn storm on the kingside. As we shall see, the g-pawn will have another role.

14...♗c4 15 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 16 ♕e2

After 16 g4 h6 17 g5 hxg5 18 ♗xg5 White has a pin on f6 and a potential attack along the g-file.



Exercise: What is the best assessment of the position?
a) White has some advantage due to the initiative.
b) White has a big advantage, as Black has no real counterplay.
c) Black can grab the pawn on b2 when he is at least equal.
d) Black is winning due to a tactical trick.

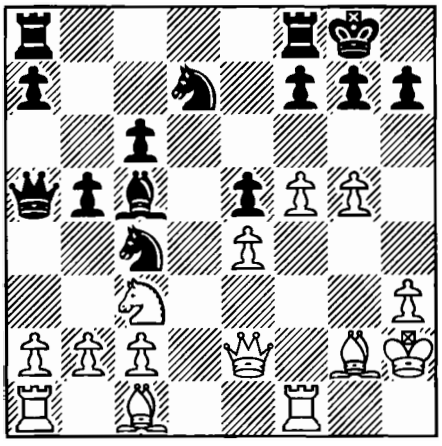
Answer: Black could take on b2, though 18...♘xb2 19 ♕g3 gives White the initiative. But he can do much better with 18...♘g4+! 19 hxg4 ♕xg5. White has exchanged his dark-squared bishop leaving his kingside and centre full of terrible holes, the worst one of all being e3. It is fair to say that White is lost, so 'd' is the correct assessment. Incidentally, this is an example of the danger from a ...♘xg4+ move as we mentioned at move 12 above.

A tactical blunder can ruin an otherwise perfect strategic build-up. So stay alert – combinations aren't forbidden in the King's Indian Attack.

16...b5 17 g4

A familiar theme: the advance of the g-pawn will drive away the knight from its post on f6 as a prelude to an attack on the black king.

17...♕a5 18 g5 ♘d7



Exercise: Now can you suggest a manoeuvre to bring another piece into the attack on the black king?

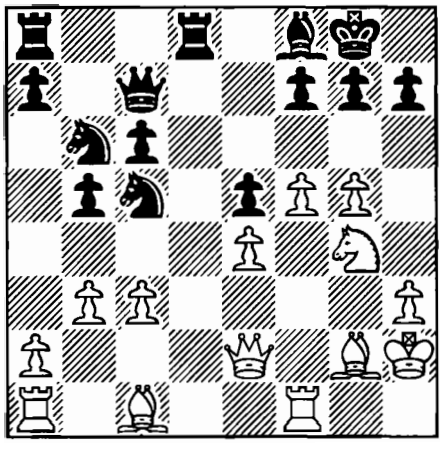
Answer: **19 ♘d1!**

The knight heads for g4. The advance 19 f6 would be too committal: after 19...g6, followed by ...♖fd8 and ...♗f8 as necessary, Black could fend off any mate on g7. White's attack would be less powerful than it should be as he has renounced the chance to play the other breakthrough pawn move g5-g6.

19...♖fd8 20 c3

It's not just about attacking. White puts up some barriers to Black's counterattack on the queenside and along the d-file.

20...♗f8 21 ♘f2 ♕c7 22 ♘g4 ♘c5 23 b3 ♘b6



Exercise: Can you see a move for White that combines defence with attack?

Answer: **24 ♖f3!**

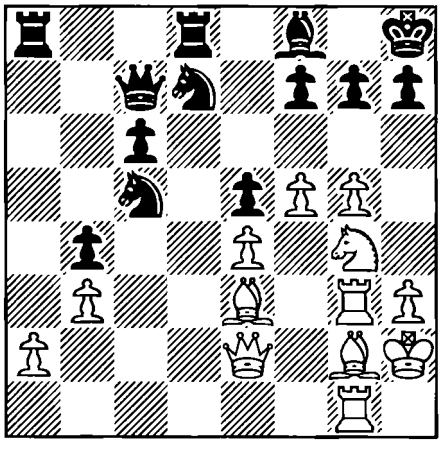
The rook not only stops an invasion by the black knight on d3, but it prepares to go to g3 to create threats in combination with its own knight.

24...a5 25 ♖g3 ♔h8 26 ♗e3

Instead, 26 ♘f6! looks decisive: for example, 26...gxf6 27 gxf6 ♘bd7 28 ♗g5! followed by 29 ♕h5 and 30 ♖g4 when the threat of 31 ♖h4 and then 32 ♕xh7 mate has to be parried with the moves ...♖g8, to guard the g-file against an alternative ♕h6 and ♕g7 mate, and ...♘f8. But then ♗h6 and ♗g7+ will strike along the g-file, forcing Black to play ...♖xg7, when fxg7+ will tear open the black king's defences. If Black plays 28...♕d6 to try to play ...♘xf6, White can drive the queen back with 29 ♖d1. Finally, 26 ♘f6 can't be ignored with 26...♘cd7, as 27 ♘xh7! ♔xh7 28 ♕h5+ ♔g8 29 ♖g4 intending 30 ♖h4 gives White a lethal attack.

This is a complicated win as it not only requires seeing the tactics: White also has to make some quiet preparatory moves, and it can be difficult to convince yourself that the opponent is so helpless he can't do anything to refute your attack.

26...b4 27 cxb4 axb4 28 ♖g1 ♘bd7



29 ♖c1

Here 29 ♘f6 gxf6 30 ♕h5 still looks strong, but it is much easier to win if you let your opponent self-destruct. Tregubov sees no good answer to the threats and so begins a desperate queenside counterattack. The upshot is that he removes his queen from the defence of the second rank, with results that are soon disastrous.

29...♕a5 30 ♖c2

Already after 30 ♕c4 Black would have no good way to defend f7, as 30...♔g8 31 ♘h6+! gxh6 32 gxh6+ ♔h8 33 ♕xf7 ♗xh6 34 ♗xh6 will be mate.

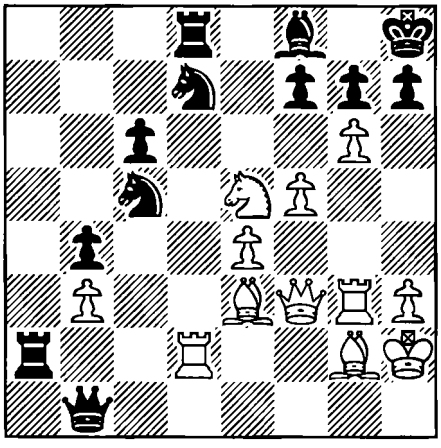
30...♕a6 31 ♕f3 ♕d3

The only hope was to go back to defend with 31...♕b7, but who would want to play like that?

32 ♖d2 ♕b1 33 g6! ♖xa2

Black's king is soon mated along the g-file after 33...fxg6 34 fxg6 hxg6 35 ♘h6! gxh6 36 ♕f7 g5 37 ♗xg5.

34 ♘xe5!



34...fxg6

Upon 34...♘xe5 35 ♕h5! the threat of mate on h7 wins time to answer 35...fxg6 with 36 ♖xd8, threatening mate a second way on f8.

35 ♘f7+ ♔g8 36 ♘xd8 ♖xd2 37 ♗xd2 ♘e5

Black gets a temporary initiative for the rook, but as long as White doesn't fall for any tricks the advantage in material is bound to tell.

38 ♕e2 ♕c2 39 fxg6 hxg6 40 ♖e3 ♗d6 41 ♔h1 ♘cd3 42 ♗e1 ♕xb3 43 ♘xc6 ♕b1 44 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 45 ♕d2 ♗c7 46 ♕d5+ ♔h7 47 ♕b3 ♕c1 48 ♖e2 ♘c4 49 e5 ♗xe5 50 ♖e4 1-0

The bishop on g2 didn't move once it found the g2-square. But it did vital defensive work by guarding the e4-square, and securing the second rank against Black's counterattack, thus winning time for White's initiative on the kingside.

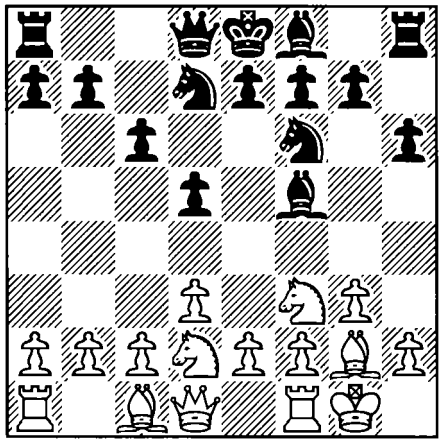
Black plays a quick ...♘bd7

The following game was played when I was a young player and hadn't quite grasped the essence of chess strategy (if indeed I have ever grasped it). It was an unpleasant defeat, but it taught me a valuable lesson which I'd like to share with the reader. The opening actually went quite well for me.

Game 27
N.McDonald-J.Johnson
London 1986

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♗f5 5 d3 h6 6 ♘bd2 ♘bd7

Instead, 6...e6 is the standard move.



Exercise: What do you think of Black's knight move? What is the best response to it?

7 b3?!

A routine move. I always fianchettoed in this type of position, and so didn't look around for anything better.

Answer: 7 ♕e1 is awkward for Black. The point is that the knight on f6 no longer has a retreat square on d7, so that after 7...e6 8 e4 ♗h7 9 e5 it has to return to g8 (White could also play 9 ♕e2!? and leave Black wondering what to do about e4-e5; a case of the threat being stronger than the execution). In this sequence Black could try 8...dxe4 9 dxe4 ♗h7 so that he has the d5-square for his knight in the event of 10 e5, but White can play 10 ♕e2 instead, then b2-b3 and ♗b2 with a pleasant edge: the exchange ...d5xe4 has opened the d-file and given his knight access to c4. White would get a similar edge after 7...e5 8 e4 dxe4 9 dxe4 ♗e6 10 ♕e2 followed by b2-b3 and ♗b2.

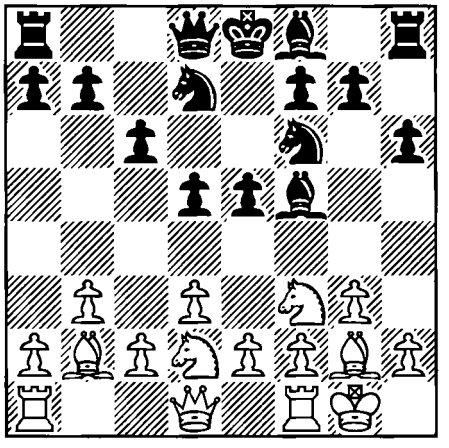
Therefore the verdict on Black's sixth move has to be that 6...♘bd7 is dubious. The great positional master Vasily Smyslov once played it as Black, which is a reminder that the opening phase of the game depends on trial and error, as well as research, to see what works and what doesn't work. Having a fantastic feel for middlegame strategy doesn't mean you will automatically find the best opening moves.

7...e5

After his opponent's feeble last move Black should have breathed a sigh of relief and played 7...e6 here. Trying to seize space in the centre once again puts his game in jeopardy.

8 ♗b2

An 'explosive' response with 8 e4!? might already be good.



8...♗d6

Here's another way the centre might be blasted open to White's advantage: 8...♕c7 9 e4! dxe4 10 dxe4 ♘xe4 (Black doesn't have to grab everything on e4; indeed, it is suicidal, but I want to show the tactical justification behind White's positional edge that he gains after the sensible 10...♗e6 11 ♕e2, intending 12 ♘c4) 11 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♘xe5! ♗xg2 13 ♔xg2 ♘xe5 14 ♗xe5 ♕d7 (if 14...♕xe5 15 ♖e1 costs Black his queen) 15 ♖e1 and Black won't survive with his king trapped in the centre.

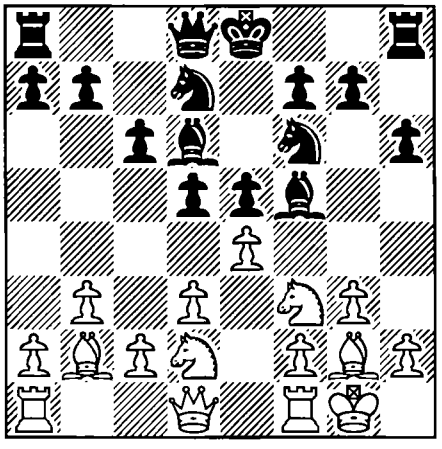
Question: That's a long variation. How can I possibly work it out during a game?

Answer: First of all, you now know the idea of e2-e4 might work if you get a similar situation in your own games – that's a big help. In fact, it's rarely good for Black to combine ...♗f5 with an early ...e7-e5. So your tactical nose should already be sniffing.

Moreover, most of the moves are captures, aren't they? That makes it much easier. It means there are fewer branches of the combination to worry about – it's almost a straight line. Virtually all the action takes place on only two squares, e4 and e5, which further narrows down your focus. As long as you are aware of the potential pin of the black queen and king after a mass of exchanges, the combination can be unravelled.

9 e4!

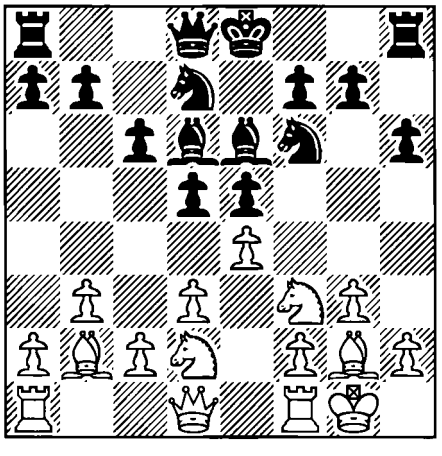
I guess this move isn't exactly a surprise after reading the notes above. It is a fairly typical scenario in the King's Indian Attack below elite level. White's seemingly lackadaisical opening has caused his opponent's tactical radar to switch off. Black wants space and he takes it, only to meet with an unpleasant surprise.



Exercise: A chance to test your calculative powers again.
What does happen if Black takes twice on e4?

Answer: After 9...dxe4 10 dxe4 Black has to bail out with 10...♗e6 because of the potentially hanging bishop on d6, as 10...♘xe4 11 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 12 ♕xd6 drops a piece, while after 10...♗xe4 11 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 12 ♖e1 (also very strong is 12 ♘h4), Black is doomed because of the pressure on d6 and e4: for example, 12...f5 13 ♘h4 ♕f6 14 ♕h5+ ♔d8 15 ♕xf5 and White must win.

9...♗e6



Exercise: Now what is White's strongest continuation?

Answer: **10 d4!**

After his careful King's Indian Attack build-up, White has put pawns on both e4 and d4. The result is that he gains the bishop-pair and a space advantage.

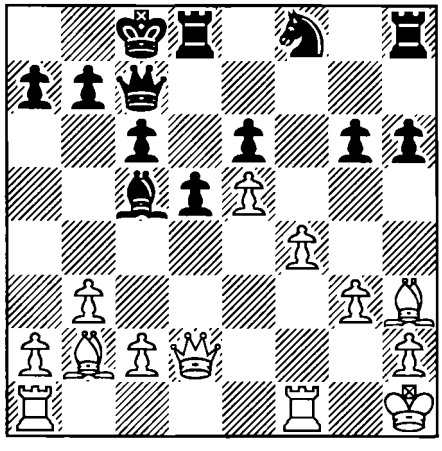
10...♘xe4 11 dxe5 ♘xd2 12 ♕xd2 ♗c5 13 ♘d4 ♕c7 14 ♘xe6 fxe6 15 ♗h3!

The 'Slav' pawn structure is creating a solid barrier to the bishop on d5, but e6 is its soft underbelly.

15...♘f8

White's bishop dominates the black knight. Not only is the horse passively placed itself, but it also shuts in the rook on h8 and rules out castling kingside as an option for Black.

16 ♔h1 0-0-0 17 f4 g6



Exercise: Where should White try to attack?
a) In the centre with 18 ♖ad1 and 19 c4.
b) On the queenside with 18 b4 and ♖ab1.
c) On the kingside with 18 g4 aiming for f4-f5.

18 ♖ad1?

Answer: Speaking from a static viewpoint, White has more space and the two bishops. Dynamically speaking he has better communication between his pieces. Why is this so? Because the knight on f8 hinders the co-operation of the black pieces.

White must advance somewhere if he is to win.

Regarding option 'c' it would be nice to be able to breakthrough with f4-f5, as then the bishop on h3 and the rook on f1 would enjoy open lines and the pawn on e5 could well become a passed pawn. Unfortunately, after the preliminary 18 g4?! Black can nip the plan in the bud with 18...h5! when 19 f5? just loses a pawn to 19...hxg4 and 20...gxf5, while after 19 gxh5?! ♖xh5 it is the black rook that enjoys an open file and White is left with inert and split kingside pawns. Instead, 19 g5 makes the best of a bad job, but it means that White

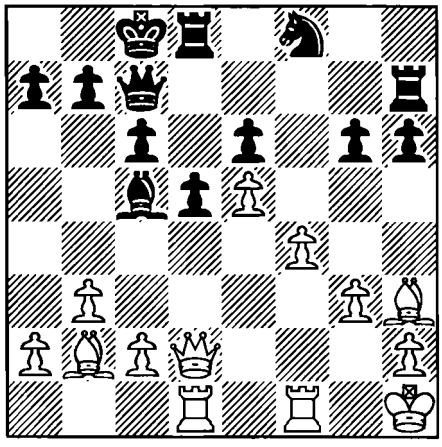
has permanently renounced the plan of f4-f5. A pity, as it might have been useful in the future once White had softened up Black elsewhere on the board.

The best plan was 'b', a direct attack on the black king beginning with 18 b4!. Black has no kingside or central counterplay to deflect White from the plan of putting a rook on b1 and then flinging the a-pawn and b-pawn forwards.

After 18...♗b6?! 19 a4 the pawns are rolling, while upon 18...♗e7 White could begin with 19 ♖ab1, planning an eventual b4-b5 advance. Black's kingside counterplay would be limited as after 19...g5? 20 f5! is suddenly very strong (here we see the disadvantage for White of the moves 18 g4 h5 19 g5 being thrown in as in option 'c').

White has a clear plan (mate!) and an obvious first move (18 b4). Let's see the way the game continued after my inferior 18 ♖ad1:

18...♖h7!



'Don't stop your opponent playing a bad move'. Black sees that his young opponent is bent on carrying out the wrong plan and so prepares to activate his king's rook.

19 c4?

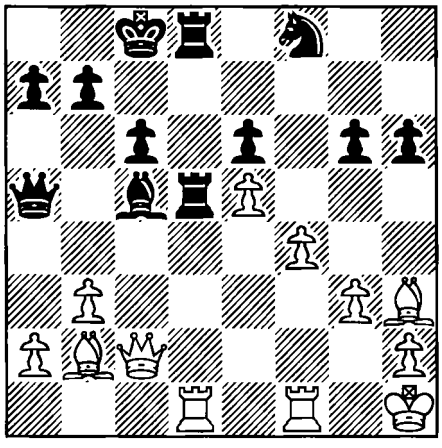
The consistent follow-up to the previous move. This is quite a common positional mistake: a player opens up the position to improve the scope of his pieces, and forgets that the opponent's pieces might be getting even more of an energy kick.

19...♖hd7! 20 cxd5 ♖xd5 21 ♕c2 ♕a5

A couple of moves ago Black would have had little counterplay after 18 b4. Now his queen and both rooks enjoy open lines – and it's all thanks to the generosity of his opponent.

I can still remember that on reaching this position I felt a sense of injustice: I had done nothing wrong, and it was a fault in the logic of chess, not my play, that had made the tide turn against me. It was only when I sat down after the game and calmly examined the position after 17...g6 that I realized that chess was still a logical game, and my mistaken plan had suffered the fate it deserved. The moral is: be angry when you lose, but blame yourself,

not chess – if you look with an open mind at a lost game you can gradually deduce your mistakes.



White's position is still OK, despite the errors that have lost him his advantage. However, I was convinced I was a victim of chess injustice, and so it isn't surprising that my resistance crumbled. For the record, here are the remaining moves:

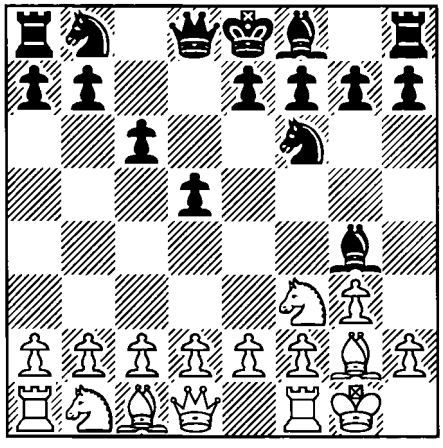
22 ♗c3 ♗b4 23 ♗xb4 ♕xb4 24 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 25 ♖d1 ♖d4 26 ♗f1 g5 27 a3 ♕b6 28 fxg5 hxg5 29 ♗c4 ♕c5 30 ♖f1 b5 31 ♕f2 bxc4 32 ♕xf8+ ♕xf8 33 ♖xf8+ ♔c7 34 bxc4 ♖xc4 35 ♖f6 ♖e4 36 ♖xe6 c5 37 ♖e7+ ♔c6 38 e6 c4 39 ♖xa7 ♖xe6 40 ♖a6+ 0-1

White gave up as the c-pawn will eventually cost him a rook.

Chapter Six
KIA Versus the ...♗g4 System

The 'Slav' method of countering the King's Indian Attack entails Black putting pawns on d5 and c6 to blunt the activity of White's bishop on g2, and quickly developing his own light-squared bishop. In the previous chapter we looked at what happens if the bishop goes to f5. Now it is time to examine ...♗g4.

The bishop can be developed to g4 at any time after Black has played ...d7-d5: for example, 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♗g4, 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 ♗g4, or 1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 d5 3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♗g4.



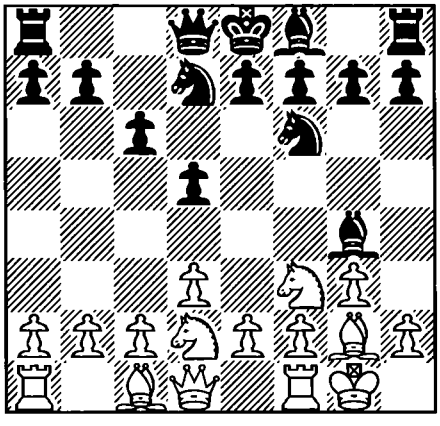
In playing ...♗g4 Black removes the bishop from the defence of the queenside, in particular the b7-pawn. In the Reti Opening, White often responds with a quick c2-c4, perhaps in combination with ♕b3 and ♘e5, to try to exploit this. As this is the King's Indian Attack we won't be examining such lines, but it is worth remembering you have this option if you plan to broaden your opening repertoire or want to play a bit more aggressively. Another approach for White not examined here would be to play d2-d4 rather than d2-d3, leading

to a different type of pawn centre.

In the KIA versus the Caro-Kann, after the moves 1 e4 c6 2 d3 Black often chooses a set-up with ...d7-d5 and, after White's ♘f3, ...♗g4. This makes the game 'Slav-like'. The reader is therefore invited to study Game 14 of Chapter Three when looking at Part Two of the present chapter (...d5xe4 by Black). Game 17 in that chapter might also be worth playing through.

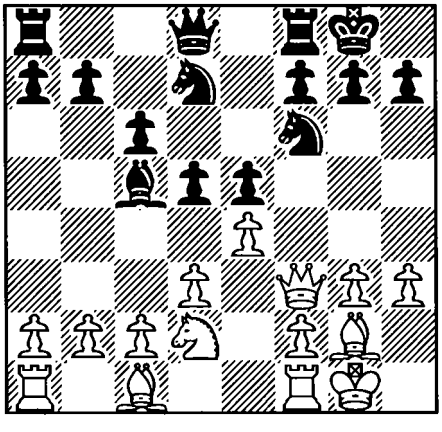
Black has a choice of three pawn centres

From the diagram above, a typical sequence is 5 d3 ♘bd7 6 ♘bd2.



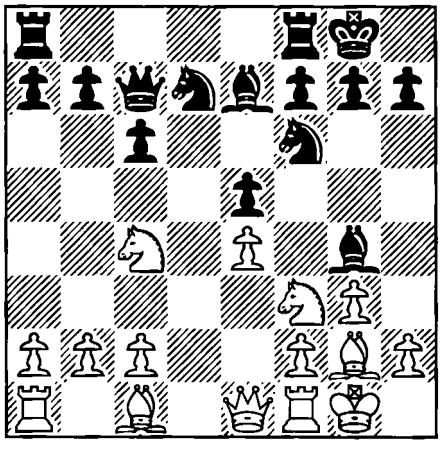
Now Black can arrange his pawn structure in one of three ways.

Firstly, Black can take all the space on offer by playing ...e7-e5 and keeping a broad centre with a pawn on d5. For example, 6...e5 7 e4 ♗c5. If Black can get away with this then White needs a new opening. So we need the precise 8 h3! ♗xf3 (Black would be ill advised to avoid this exchange, as made clear in the analysis to Game 28 below) 9 ♕xf3 0-0.



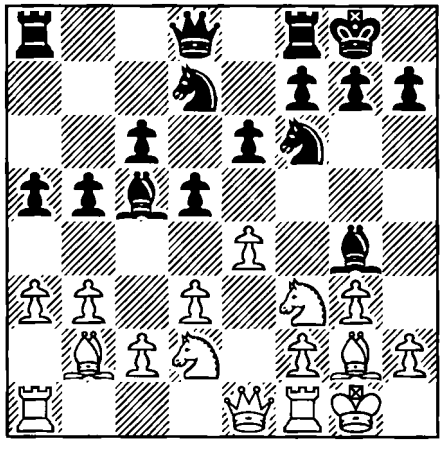
Black has full development and has stood his ground in the centre, but White has the two bishops and pressure on d5. This scenario is examined in Game 28.

The second option for Black is to equalize the space balance in the centre by playing ...e7-e5 as above, but meeting White's e2-e4 pawn advance by exchanging with ...d5xe4. In this way he has fewer commitments in the centre and won't need to give up the bishop-pair. Play could go 6...e5 7 e4 dxe4 8 dxe4 ♗e7 9 ♕e1 0-0 10 ♘c4 ♕c7.



The central pawn structure is symmetrical and Black's pieces are all developed, but he has conceded the c4-square to the white knight and opened the d-file, which allows White to keep a slight edge in Game 29.

The third possibility for Black is to renounce the chance to equalize space in the centre and make do with ...e7-e6, which completes the Slav triangle of pawns. It is the most solid but least ambitious move. From the second diagram above, play might proceed 6...e6 7 b3 ♗c5 8 ♗b2 0-0 9 a3 a5 10 e4 b5 11 ♕e1.



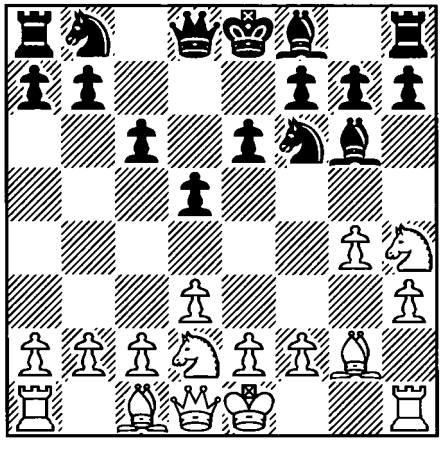
White has achieved e2-e4, completed his development by fianchettoing his bishop on b2, and kept a minimal space advantage on the kingside. Black, for his part, has active pieces and is looking for counterplay on the queenside. This is the beginning of Game 31.

Black is quite close to being equal in these scenarios, but White always retains a plus if he plays precisely. He can use his little space advantage, the two bishops, or better coordinated pieces as the starting point of a plan to slowly grind down his opponent.

White harasses the bishop on g4 with his pawns

Finally White can try to benefit from a rapid advance of his kingside pawns. In Game 32 after 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♗g4 3 ♗g2 ♘d7 4 h3 (very early), Black cut across his opponent's plans with the immediate 4...♗xf3 leading to a unusual Slav/King's Indian Defence hybrid after 5 ♗xf3 ♘gf6 6 d3 c6 7 ♘d2 g6.

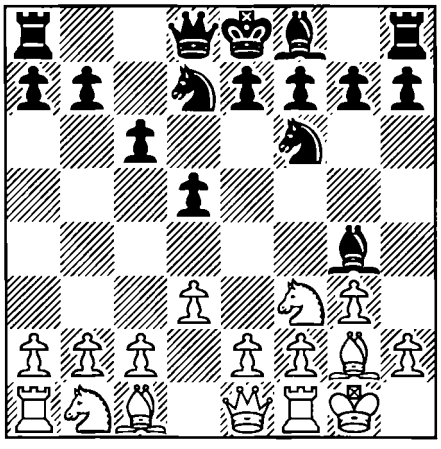
Play is sharper if Black retreats his bishop to h5: for example, 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 ♗g4 4 d3 c6 5 ♘bd2 e6 6 h3 ♗h5 (the move 6...♗xf3 is less attractive now that White can recapture with the knight) 7 g4 ♗g6 8 ♘h4.



This is the way Nakamura plays as white in Game 33. He hopes to use his kingside pawns in a direct attack if Black castles kingside, or to profit from the elimination of Black's light-squared bishop after ♘xg6. White's scheme is, however, double-edged, especially if Black has played a move order with 5...♘bd7 – see Game 34. Such loose play might not appeal to 'purists' who are looking for a steady advantage in the KIA.

A note on move order

After White's standard opening sequence 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 ♗g4 4 0-0 ♘d7 5 d3 ♘gf6 it is usual to play 6 ♘bd2 to support the e2-e4 advance. However, Kramnik has tried the finesse 6 ♕e1 which aims to avoid Black's solid ...e7-e6 system.

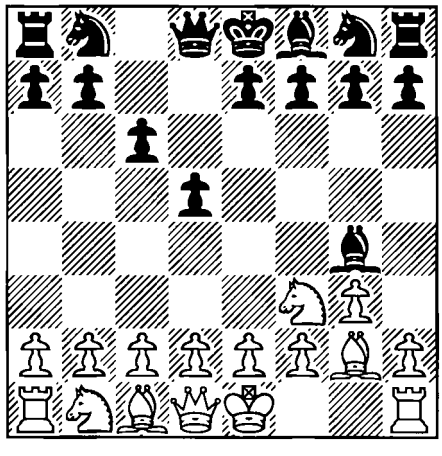


You might like to copy the former World Champion's approach in Game 30.

Part One: Black plays ...e7-e5 and maintains a broad centre

Game 28
L.Pantsulaia-I.Chighladze
Poti 2013

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 ♗g4



4 0-0

White completes his kingside development in the minimal number of moves. 4 d3 ♘f6 usually transposes after 5 0-0, though the alternative plan of 5 ♘bd2 and 6 h3, delayed

castling in favour of a kingside pawn advance, is seen in Games 33 and 34.

Question: Why not play 4 ♘e5 to gain time by attacking the bishop?

Answer: Are you sure White would be gaining time rather than losing time? Black can reply 4...♗f5 and then 5...♘d7, when the exchange of knights eases his game. If White wants to play 4 ♘e5 he would do best to follow up with 5 d4 or try to open lines with 5 c4, but this takes us out of the KIA. In any case, the knight move causes Black no problems.

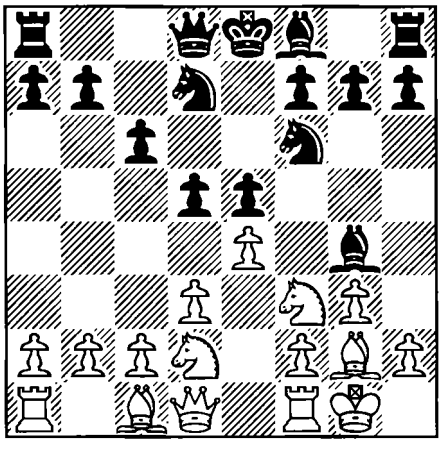
4...♘f6 5 d3 ♘bd7 6 ♘bd2

The battle for space on the fourth and fifth ranks has begun. Both players use their queen's knights to support the advance of their e-pawns.

6...e5

The most ambitious move. Instead, 6...e6 is played by Anand in Game 31.

7 e4



White has played all his 'normal' moves so far, but after Black's next move he has to come up with a concrete plan.

7...♗c5

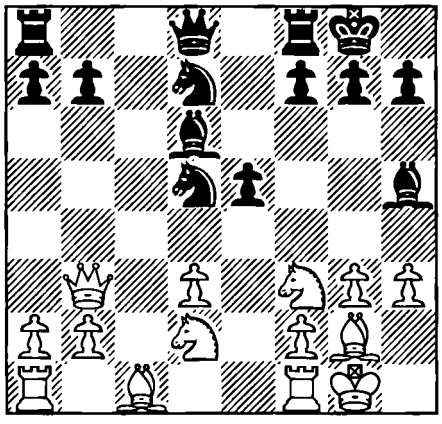
Here 7...dxe4 8 dxe4 would fix the centre. We'll see examples of this type of pawn structure in Part Two of the chapter.

Question: How should we play if Black develops his bishop to d6 to further support the e5-pawn?

Answer: Quite reasonable is the reply 7 b3 and 8 ♗b2. However, on d6 the bishop is a knight's move away from the weakest point in the black centre – the f5-square. Therefore I like the plan of getting a white horse there as quickly as possible: for example, 7...♗d6 8 h3 ♗h5 9 ♕e1 (breaking the pin on f3) 9...0-0 10 ♘h4 ♖e8 11 ♘f5 ♗f8 12 b3 followed by 13

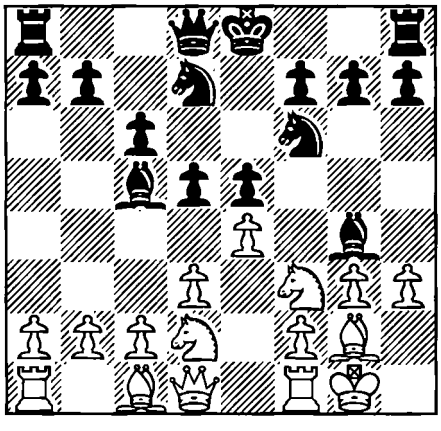
♗b2 with a nice build-up for White.

Finally, White might prefer to clear the h1-a8 diagonal with 9 exd5 cxd5 10 c4 0-0 11 cxd5 ♘xd5 12 ♕b3.



The pressure from the white queen and the chance to utilize the c4- or e4-squares for the knight give White the edge: for example, 12...♘5b6 13 ♘e4 ♗e7 14 a4! aiming to dislodge the black knight with 15 a5, or 12...♘5f6 13 ♘c4 (White can grab a pawn with 13 ♕xb7?!, but after 13...♘c5 14 ♕b5 ♗g6 holding on to the pawn with 15 ♘e1 leaves him tied up) 13...♘c5 14 ♕a3 ♗xf3 15 ♗xf3 ♗e7! (giving up the e5-pawn to push the white queen around and get his knights to squares where they blockade the centre) 16 ♘xe5 a5 17 ♕c3 ♖c8 18 ♕e1 ♖e8 19 ♗e3 ♘d5 20 d4 ♘e6, which was M.Venkatesh-Ni Hua, Kolkata 2012, and now 21 ♕d2 might keep some advantage for White, though the extra pawn remains hard to exploit.

8 h3!



An important move.

Exercise: Imagine if Black responds 8...♗h5. Black has fearlessly established and maintained a pawn centre on d5 and e5, and put both bishops on their most active squares. Can you see a drawback to Black's set-up? How should we try to exploit it?

Answer: If Black, who after all moves second, is able to maintain an optimum centre and activate his pieces on their best squares, we might as well give up on the King's Indian Attack. However, it turns out that the black centre is still somewhat fragile, and the fact that Black hasn't castled tells against him. We have, though, to be prepared to play sharply, to break open the centre. It isn't good enough to play typical 'quiet' King's Indian Attack moves, which support the strongpoint on e4. We need a sharper strategy. After 8...♗h5 9 exd5! there are two variations:

a) 9...♘xd5 10 g4 ♗g6 11 ♘c4 is awkward for Black, for if 11...f6 12 d4! exd4 13 ♘xd4 leaves his king in danger as 13...0-0 loses the exchange to 14 ♘e6, while 11...0-0 is an unconvincing pawn sacrifice after 12 ♘cxe5 ♘xe5 13 ♘xe5.

b) 9...cxd5 10 d4! is unpleasant for the black king: for example, 10...♗xd4 11 g4 ♗g6 12 ♘xd4 exd4 13 ♖e1+ or equally 10...♗xf3 11 ♘xf3 exd4 12 ♖e1+. In both cases the black king loses the right to castle, while White easily regains the pawn on d4 with ♘xd4 at some point.

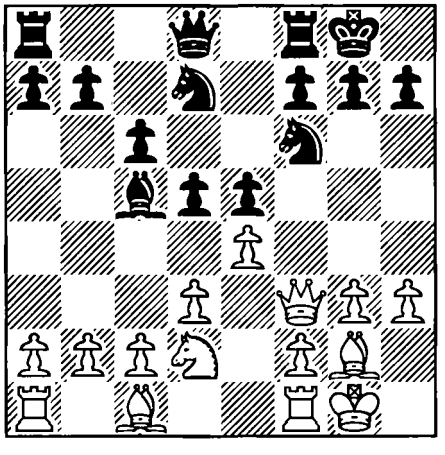
Notice the importance of White having the option of g3-g4 to break the pin on f3. That's why we need the 8 h3 move.

Let's return to the game, where Black wisely avoided these dangerous lines by capturing on f3.

8...♗xf3

The best move as it wins time for Black to castle. Nevertheless, it turns out that Black didn't achieve his space rich and active position 'for free' as White now has the bishop-pair.

9 ♕xf3 0-0



Question: Can we exploit the fact that White's light-squared bishop has no rival?

Answer: **10 exd5! cxd5 11 c4**

A move such as 10 exd5 should never be played lightly. White gives up the strongpoint on e4 which he is so keen to overprotect in similar King's Indian Attack variations.

As a rule, such an idea is only good if White wins material or has a concrete variation planned (as in the notes to 8 h3 above), or, as here (and after 7...♗d6 in the above analysis to 7...♗c5), he wants to open a line for his bishop on g2 in the absence of the opponent's light-squared bishop. Don't forget that the technical expression for a move like 10 exd5 contains a hint of criticism: it is 'conceding the centre'. So be wary before taking the plunge.

11...dxc4

White also keeps up the pressure after 11...♖c8 12 cxd5 ♘b6 13 ♘e4 ♘bxd5 14 ♗g5.

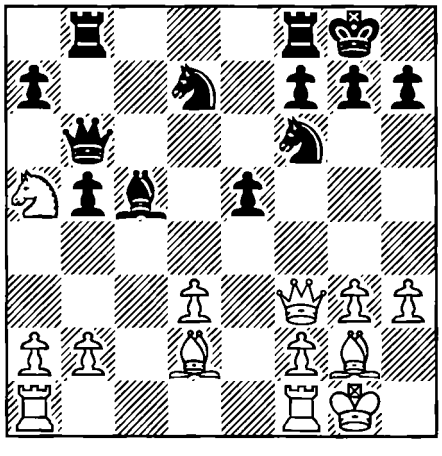
12 ♘xc4

The white pawn on d3, though formally isolated and backward, provides a post for the white horse on c4 where it can attack e5 and cast a malign eye over the black queenside. Meanwhile Black's pawn on e5 supports a potentially excellent outpost square for one of his nags, but unfortunately neither are near to it.

12...♖b8 13 ♗d2 b5

It is easy to criticise this move as it invites the white knight to infiltrate the black queenside as far as c6, but after a quiet sequence such as 13...♗d4 14 ♖fe1 ♖e8 15 ♖ac1 ♘b6 16 ♗a5 Black remains in an unpleasant bind.

14 ♘a5 ♕b6

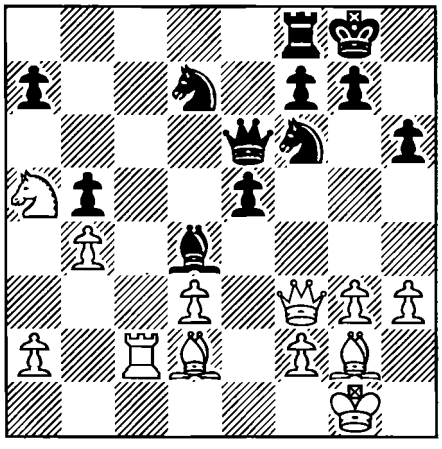


Exercise: With his queen and minor pieces on good squares, what is the next step in increasing White's advantage?

15 b4! ♗d4 16 ♖ac1

White seizes the only open file on the board, for if 16...♖fc8 then 17 ♘c6, threatening both the rook on b8 and 18 ♘e7+ is very awkward for Black. Note how this conforms with the adage that a player with the better minor pieces wins control of an open file.

16...♕e6 17 ♖c2 ♖bc8 18 ♖fc1 ♖xc2 19 ♖xc2 h6



Exercise: Now which piece should White try to exchange off in order to exploit his queenside pressure, and how should he prepare it?

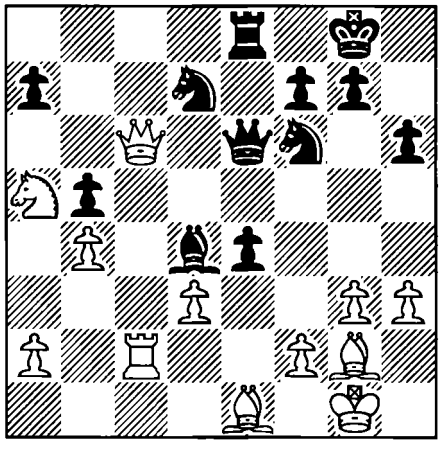
Answer: **20 ♗e1! ♖e8 21 ♕c6!**

One of the hallmarks of a supreme positional understanding is to know which pieces to exchange off and which to keep on the board. Pantsulaia realizes that his queen is only getting in the way of his light-squared bishop, whereas the black queen is well centralized and blocking any progress along the c-file (for example, 21 ♖c6 leaves the a2-pawn hanging).

Note too that a great feel for chess ideas has to be combined with tactical accuracy. If White had played 20 ♕c6 at once then 20...♕f5! hits both d3 and f2, when White would do best to retreat his queen back with 21 ♕f3 and then try something else after 21...♕e6. And so before the queen goes to c6 we have the prelude 20 ♗e1! to guard f2, so that after 20...♖e8 21 ♕c6 ♕f5 White can defend d3 with 22 ♕xb5 and be a pawn up.

You think the bishop looks a bit odd on e1? I agree! But we have to remember that a flexible use of the pieces is important in any opening, and is especially significant in the King's Indian Attack. White often gets no space advantage, so you have to be aware of all possible squares for the pieces. The bishop may look odd retreating to e1, but it is this passive move that allows White to invade enemy territory with 21 ♕c6.

21...e4?



A common scenario in the King's Indian Attack. Black tries for counterplay, but it is easily neutralized, whereupon he ends up a pawn down in the endgame. It often happens that a player loses patience and lashes out when under nagging pressure. In contrast, if the same player is in tactical danger, say facing a big attack on their king, they will rise to the occasion and find great defensive moves. For this reason it is easy to underestimate White's practical winning chances in the King's Indian Attack. A computer program might tell you that a position is equal, but it could be one that is psychologically difficult for a human to play. Incidentally a lot of Magnus Carlsen's wins occur when he plays on and on in positions where he has a slight edge until his opponent 'cracks'.

After 21...♕xc6 22 ♗xc6 ♖c8 23 ♖e2 ♖b8 24 ♘b3 Black would remain under pressure, but he could fight on.

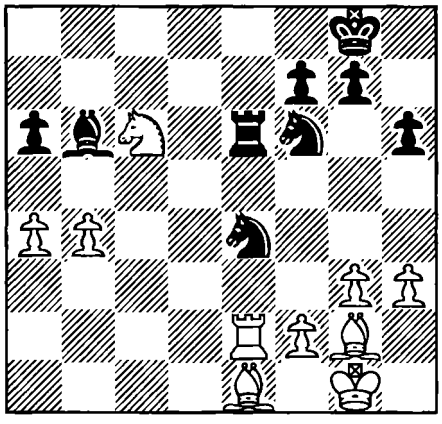
22 dxe4 ♘xe4 23 ♖e2

The pin on the e-file is devastating as Black loses a piece after 23...♕xc6 24 ♘xc6. Therefore he has to give up the b5-pawn.

23...♘df6 24 ♕xb5 a6 25 ♕c6

This queen move to c6 needs less explanation than the previous one. White wants to exchange queens to enter a winning endgame.

25...♕xc6 26 ♘xc6 ♗b6 27 a4 ♖e6



Exercise: Now that the black rook is defended there is a threat of 28...♘xg3 as well as 28...♖xc6. What is the best riposte for White?

Answer: **28 a5!**

The last difficult move of the game. The black bishop is crowded out of the a7-g1 diagonal so that the white knight can return to d4. If 28...♖xc6 29 axb6 and Black won't be able to guard the knight on e4 and stop the passed pawn running through.

28...♗c7 29 ♘d4 ♖e5 30 ♘b3 ♔f8 31 ♘d2 ♘g5 32 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 33 ♘b3 ♘ge4 34 ♗f1!

This little bishop move often picks off a pawn on the queenside.

34...♘d5 35 ♗xa6 ♘ec3 36 ♗b7 ♘c7 1-0

Part Two: Black plays ...e7-e5 and concedes the centre with ...d5xe4

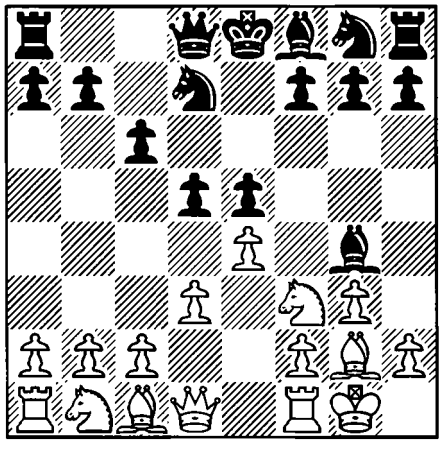
Game 29
I.Khairullin-T.Ringoir
Belgian League 2013

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 ♗g4 4 0-0 ♘d7 5 d3 e5

Move order is a tricky thing, even in so-called 'quiet' openings. As we shall see in the next note, playing ...e7-e5 so early means that Black can be practically compelled to exchange with ...d5xe4 if White desires it.

6 e4

And why not? White can play this advance immediately as there is no black knight on f6 to oppose it. Now if Black continues with 6...♘gf6, White can transpose to Game 28 above with 7 ♘bd2, but he isn't obliged to.



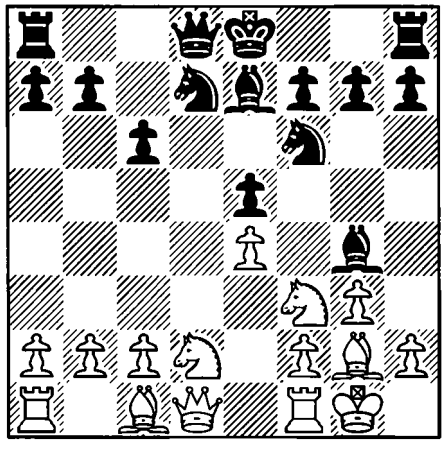
Indeed, 7 ♕e1 reaches Game 30 (which had the move order 5...♘gf6 6 ♕e1 e5 7 e4). Black is then more or less forced to concede the centre with 7...dxe4 8 dxe4 because of White's potential pressure on e5 (why this is so is explained in the notes to Game 30).

The conclusion is therefore that if Black wants to maintain pawns on d5 and e5, he needs to choose a move order as in Game 28, which began 1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 ♗g4 4 0-0 ♘f6 5 d3 ♘bd7 6 ♘bd2 e5 7 e4. That is, he brings out the knight on f6 quickly so that White has to play 6 ♘bd2 to arrange 7 e4, rather than advance e2-e4 at once, and he waits until move six to play ...e7-e5.

6...dxe4 7 dxe4 ♘gf6 8 ♘bd2

It is very rare in the ...♗g4 system for this not to be the right way to start the knight's career. Here it is particularly appetising as the knight has access to the c4-square now that Black has played ...d5xe4.

8...♗e7



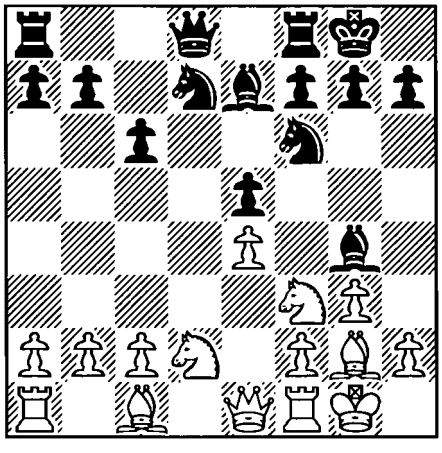
Exercise: Which move adds the most power to the white position?

Answer: **9 ♕e1**

Not bad is 9 h3, but this little queen move frees both her knights for action by breaking the pin on f3 and adding to the defence of the e4-pawn.

9...0-0

The advance ..e7-e5 leaves the f5-square as the least defended in the black camp. In the King's Indian, and some lines of the Closed Ruy Lopez, Black plays ...g7-g6, combined with ...♗g7, to guard the f5-square against an invasion by a white knight. Here Black doesn't have the time or opportunity to play ...g7-g6 and ...♗g7, unless he is prepared to give up the bishop-pair with an early ...♗xf3 (as we shall see in Game 32), and possibly not even then.



Question: From the above assessment it is clear that White wants to put a knight on f5. Which horse should we use, the one on d2 or the one on f3?

Answer: **10 ♘c4**

Generally speaking, the knight on d2 is more passively placed than the one on f3, so giving it preference over the knight on f3 makes sense. Getting it out of the way also facilitates the development of the bishop on c1 and the rook on a1.

If we count the moves, it takes three moves to get the knight from d2 via c4 and e3 to f5, while only two are required to get the knight from f3 via h4 to f5. However, paradoxically, you could argue that the knight gets there from d2 faster as the moves 10 ♘c4 and 11 ♘e3 both come with a threat. Let's see how this works out in the game.

10...♕c7

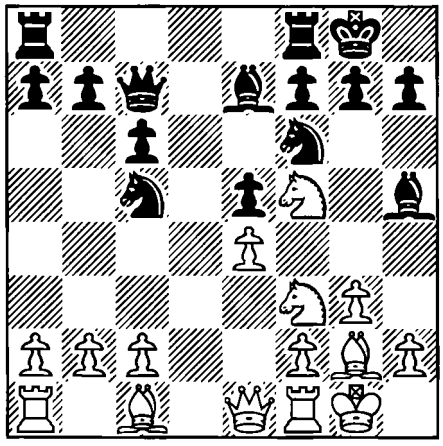
Dealing with the attack on e5.

11 ♘e3

If now 11...♘xe4 the bishop on g4 drops, while 11...♗e6?! 12 ♘g5 intends 13 ♘xe6 to smash up Black's pawns and obtain the bishop-pair. Perhaps he should hand over the bishop-pair at once with 11...♗xf3 11 ♗xf3.

11...♗h5 12 ♘f5 ♘c5

Instead 12...♗c5, keeping the bishop, looks a better try.

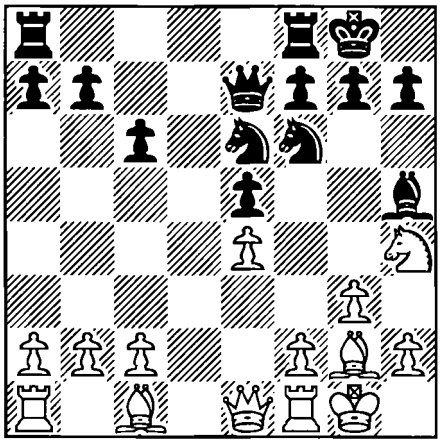


13 ♘xe7+

Question: It's funny how we might spend two or even three moves getting a knight to an excellent square, but then we don't hesitate to exchange it for a bishop that's not doing much. Is this exchange really correct?

Answer: True, it does seem a bit odd. But don't forget the blocked centre is just the first phase of the game. If we want to make progress as White we need to open up lines at some point, and then Black's dark-squared bishop becomes a potent piece. The dark-squared bishop is also a key piece in any plan Black devises, so he'll miss it if it's exchanged. Besides, we have another knight waiting to go to f5 – it's only right it gets its turn as well.

13...♕xe7 14 ♘h4 ♘e6



Exercise: You are invited to weigh up the relative merits of the pawn moves 15 f3 and 15 c3. Which one looks more natural to you at first glance, and does your opinion change as you delve more deeply?

15 f3!

Answer: We've seen a lot of c2-c3 moves in this type of structure, and relatively few f2-f3 moves, but therein lies a trap that is sometimes described as 'stereotyped thinking'. If we're feeling tired or a bit lazy, it's tempting to avoid the mental effort required to assess the actual position in front of us and instead rely on what 'looks right', the type of move we've seen many times before.

We might also be provoked into 15 c3 by fear: namely that the black knight will invade on d4 with 15...♘d4, when there would be the tactical threat of 16...♘xc2, as well as the positional threat of 16...♘e2+ and then 17...♘xc1, depriving us of the strong bishop. Our stereotyped thinking would be reinforced by anxiety.

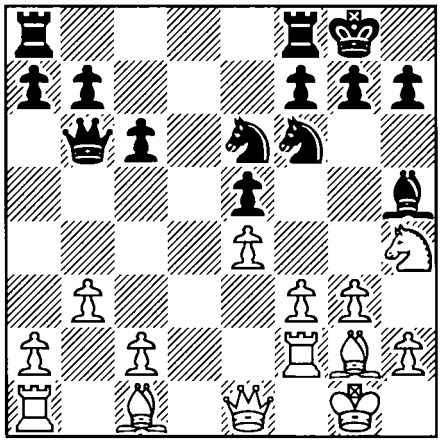
The move 15 f3! has many plusses if we can overcome our sense of a certain ugliness:

1) It prepares a deployment of the bishop to e3 without it being driven back by ...♘g4 – an exchange of the bishop for knight would be unwelcome for White.

2) It blocks the action of the bishop on h5 against d1, forestalling any possible invasion by a black rook with ...♖ad8 and ...♖d1. At the same time a square is opened for the white rook on f2, where as we shall see, it can be used to defend c2 and later is able to join in the struggle for the d-file.

3) The final good point about 15 f3 is something it doesn't do: namely it doesn't weaken the d3-square. In positions with a fixed centre pawn structure a keen positional battle often takes place along the open file adjacent to the pawns. Weakening a square inside his own camp along the key line with 15 c3 is thoughtless, and encourages an invasion with ...♘c5 and ...♘d3, or ...♖ad8 and ...♖d3.

15...♕c5+ 16 ♖f2 ♕b6 17 b3



Paradoxically, this move doesn't show an intent to fianchetto. Instead, White is saving the b-pawn from being captured after he puts his bishop on e3.

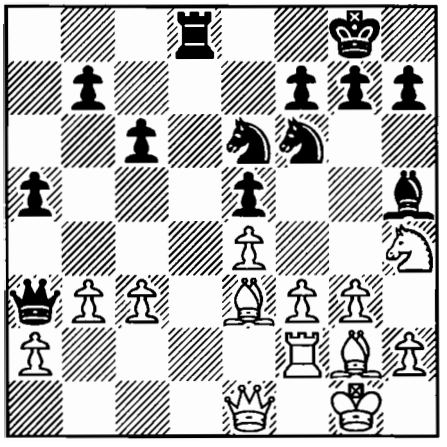
17...a5 18 ♗e3 ♕b4 19 c3

Only now does White avail himself of the chance to play c2-c3, when it drives the black queen away with a gain of tempo. Besides, White's pieces will be the first to get to the d-file, so the hole created on d3 is no longer a relevant positional factor.

19...♕a3

The King's Indian Attack is more effective in practice than the assessment of a computer program would have us believe. Computers don't get bored or frustrated, whereas humans like to be doing something active; it is against our nature to defend passively for many moves without the guidance of a plan. Black often runs out of constructive ideas in this type of centre. Thus both here and in Game 28 in Chapter Five we see a very strong player losing patience and engaging in an adventure with their queen that removes her from the defence of the black camp.

20 ♖d1 ♖fd8 21 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8



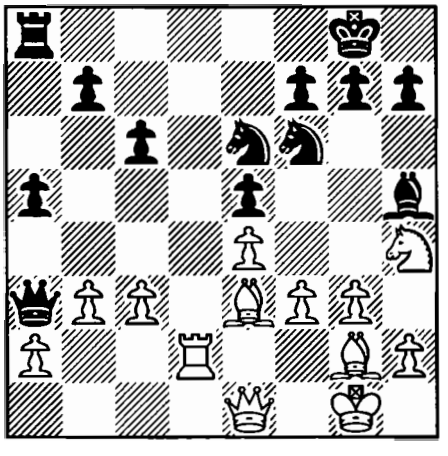
Exercise: Have a good look at the position and try to decide White's best strategy. He will need to rearrange his pieces, but how?

Answer: **22 ♖d2!**

White's plan is simple. He wants to restrain Black's possible counterplay along the d-file or on the kingside. Therefore he first of all contests the open file, driving the black rook away. Then he will manoeuvre his knight to the centre, being careful to keep the black minor pieces at bay. Finally he will try to force Black to weaken his queenside pawns.

22...♖a8

Black gives up the d-file without a fight as he has decided it is the lesser evil to have the white rook controlling it rather than the queen after 22...♖xd2 23 ♕xd2.



Exercise: Should White now play 23 ♕d1 to exert his queen's power along the open file?

23 ♘f5

Answer: The next step in White's plan. I hope you didn't decide on 23 ♕d1? as 23...♘xe4! is an embarrassing reply.

23...b5

White wants to bring his knight to the e3-square, but 24 ♗f2 ♘g5 is annoying as f3 is attacked and 25 ♕d1 still falls for a pin with 25...♘gxe4.

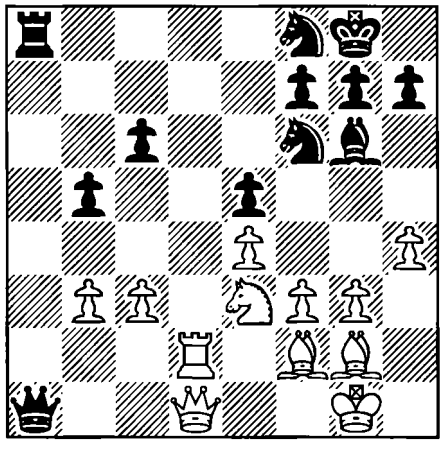
24 h4!

A simple move, but so easy to miss during a game. It's the King's Indian Attack, so our pawns need to work very hard. The g5-square is now guarded, squashing any black counterplay with ...♘g5.

24...♗g6 25 ♗f2 ♘f8

After 25...♗xf5 26 exf5 the e5-pawn drops as the black knight is hanging, but having retreated the horse Black might well be contemplating 26...♗xf5 to be rid of his passive bishop. Khairullin doesn't give him the chance.

26 ♘e3! a4 27 ♕d1 axb3 28 axb3 ♕a1



Exercise: Black is striving hard for counterplay, but how does White complete the plan which he devised on move 22?

Answer: **29 c4!**

Now Black will be left with a weak pawn on b5 or, if he plays 29...bxc4, after 30 ♘xc4 a pawn on e5 that is hard to defend. Basically Black can't hold the line on the queenside because he is in effect a piece down in his operations there due to the entombed g6-bishop.

29...♕xd1+ 30 ♖xd1 ♘6d7 31 cxb5 cxb5 32 ♘d5 f6 33 ♗h3 1-0

Also decisive, and in my view more aesthetic, was 33 ♗f1 ♖b8 34 b4, fixing the pawn on b5, after which 35 ♘c3 or 35 ♘c7 followed by 36 ♘xb5 gobbles it up, unless Black plays 34...♗f7, but then 35 ♘e7+ ♔h8 36 ♘c6 ♖b7? (he has to give up the b5-pawn) 37 ♘d8 is a winning fork of b7 and f7.

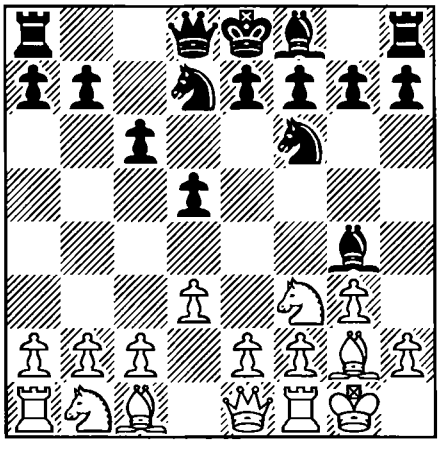
In any case after the game move Black instantly resigned, as the b5-pawn is going to drop sooner or later: for example, if he meets the threat of 34 ♗xd7 ♘xd7 35 ♘e7+ and 36 ♖xd7, winning a piece, with 33...♖e8, then White can always revert to 34 ♗f1, targeting b5 as in the note to 33 ♘f1.

Game 30
V.Kramnik-N.Vitiugov
Paris 2013

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 ♗g2 ♗g4 4 0-0 ♘d7 5 d3 ♘gf6

Not letting White play e2-e4 'for free' as Black did in the previous game which went 5...e5 6 e4.

6 ♕e1



An interesting moment.

Question: **This is an unusual move order by White. Why would Kramnik start by putting his queen on e1?**

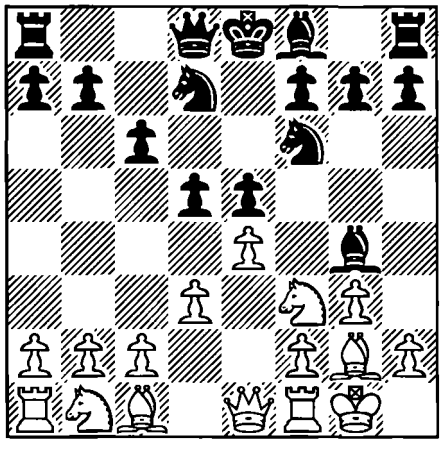
Answer: Normal is 6 ♘bd2 when 6...e5 7 e4 gives us Game 28 above. After 6...e6 7 e4 ♗e7 8 ♕e1 (of course, 8 e5? ♘xe5 wins a pawn) 8...0-0 Black can answer 9 e5 with 9...♘e8, which is perfectly OK for him. Now let's compare 6 ♕e1 e6 7 e4 ♗e7 8 e5. White's pawn

thrust has come one move quicker, so Black hasn't had time to castle, which means the e8-square isn't free and the retreat 8...♘g8 is necessary. This is far from satisfactory for Black, who can't castle and has his knight back at home.

Therefore, with the 'accelerated' 6 ♕e1, Kramnik has dissuaded Black from the solid ...e7-e6 option. He would rather play against ...e7-e5 than ...e7-e6.

Another example of Kramnik delaying putting his knight on d2 is 6 h3 ♗h5 7 ♕e1 e5 8 e4 dxe4 9 dxe4 ♗e7 10 ♘bd2 0-0 11 ♘c4, with a slight advantage to White typical of this variation in V.Kramnik-J.Rowson, London (rapid) 2013.

6...e5 7 e4



7...dxe4

Exercise: **If instead 7...♗d6 8 exd5 cxd5 can you see a strong move for White?**

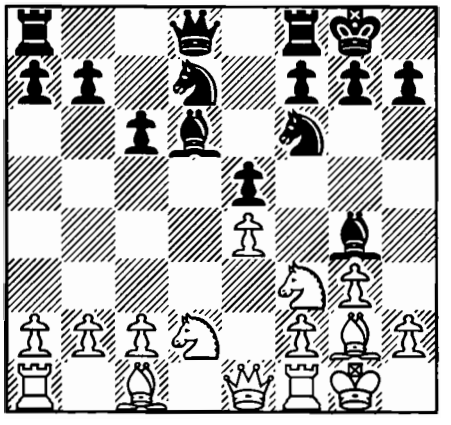
Answer: White can break up the black centre with 9 ♘xe5! ♘xe5 10 d4 when he will regain his piece and at the very least have pressure against the isolated pawn on d5. Black would do best to avoid this with 8...♘xd5, though White could build up against e5 with 9 ♘bd2 and 10 ♘c4.

So we see another good point about 6 ♕e1 is that Black can't hope to maintain pawns on both d5 and e5.

8 dxe4 ♗d6

Vitiugov tries to exploit a downside to White's 6 ♕e1: the white queen is absent from the d-file, so the bishop can be safely developed on d6 without any risk of a discovered attack. In contrast after 6 ♘bd2 e5 7 e4 dxe4 8 dxe4 ♗d6, White could play 9 ♘c4 ♗c7 10 ♕e2 (rather than going to e1) 10...0-0 11 b3 with the idea of ♗a3 and ♖ad1 or ♘e3, etc.

9 ♘bd2 0-0



Question: How should White begin his build-up?

Answer: **10 h3!**

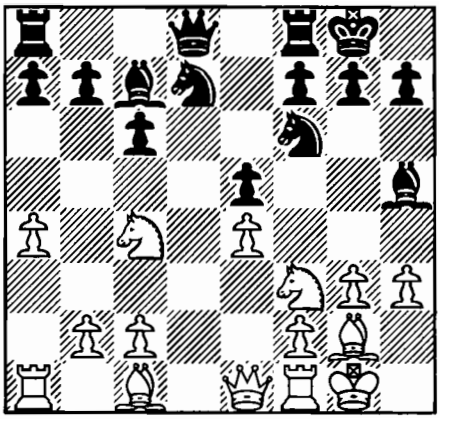
This little move is virtually always a key part of White's opening strategy in the ...♗g4 system. It forces the black bishop to give up its defence of the f5-square and also abandon any idea of retreating along the h3-c8 diagonal in the future. This means that it won't be able to directly influence events on the queenside.

Interesting is 10 ♘c4 ♗c7 11 b3, but then the bishop gets to challenge the white knight with 11...♗e6.

10...♗h5 11 ♘c4

Thanks to his previous move, White knows his knight is never going to be bothered by an attack with ...♗e6.

11...♗c7 12 a4



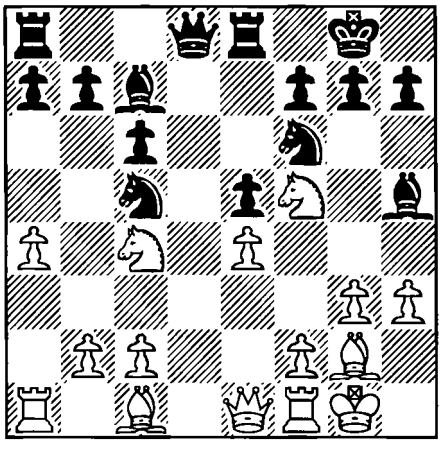
Kramnik secures his knight on c4 and intends to use the other horse to infiltrate the f5-square.

Question: In the previous game White played a knight from c4 via e3 to f5. Why does he use the other knight this time?

Answer: In Game 29 White had got his knight to c4 without playing h2-h3. Therefore the first leg of that knight's journey to f5, that is the retreat to e3, came with gain of time by attacking the bishop which was still on g4. In contrast, after 12 ♘e3 here no bishop is hanging so Black could just grab a pawn with 12...♘xe4.

12...♖e8 13 ♘h4 ♘c5 14 ♘f5

Vitiugov sees that threats are looming along the open d-file: White has only to play a move like f2-f3 or g3-g4 to cut off his bishop's control of the d1-square, followed by ♗g5 (or perhaps ♗e3 after f2-f3), and then ♖d1 makes things hard for his queen. An invasion by a knight on d6 would also be in the air.



Exercise: What do you think is the best way for Black to counter the latent threat down the d-file?

14...♘e6

Answer: The plan of 14...♘e6 and 15...♘d4 might be OK for Black – see the note to 15...♘f4, below. However, I think Black should make a 'knight's move' with his queen: 14...♕d7! 15 ♗g5 ♕e6 when she has been evacuated from the d-file, helps to guard d6 against the white knights, and generally bolsters the black centre. After 16 b3 White has only a small plus.

After 14...♕d7 White could instead try 15 g4 ♗g6 16 ♗g5, but after 16...♕e6 17 b3 h6 Black is safe enough. Note that 15 h4, hoping to embarrass the black queen with ♗h3, can

be easily met by 15...♗g4.

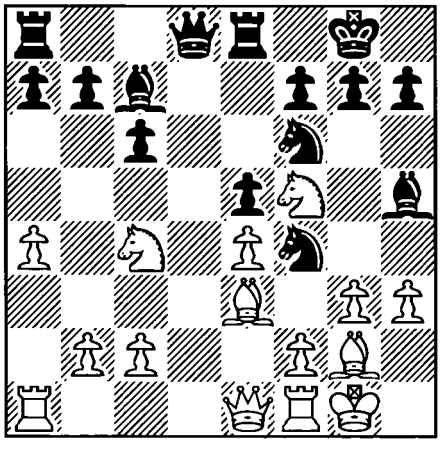
15 ♗e3 ♘f4?!

Vitiugov has planned a tactical solution to his positional dilemma, but it just leaves him in a passive position after White's calm reply.

The knight could also go to d4 when 15...♘d4 16 ♗xd4 exd4 17 e5 ♘d5 18 ♘cd6 at first glance looks excellent for White, but it's not clear as he is a move short of consolidating his hold on the e5-square after, say, 18...♗xd6 19 ♘xd6 ♖e6 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 f4 f6!. Maybe in this sequence 20 c4!? dxc3 21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 ♕xc3 is the best try for White, but the pawn stab 22...f6! is still annoying. White might be a bit better after 23 f4 ♕b6+ 24 ♔h2, but it's getting messy.

It would have been very hard for Vitiugov to have worked this all out during the game. He probably got as far as 18 ♘cd6 in his calculations and then lost heart as the knight invasion looks very strong. It needs a computer program to point out that Black is still OK after 21...f6 or 22...f6 in the lines above. Besides, Black also had to work out the variations after the game move. It was all too much, even for a very strong grandmaster.

We should turn to 15...♘f4.

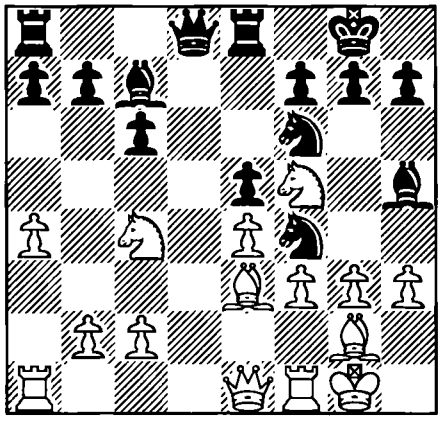


One of the main positional justifications of the KIA is that it guards the f4-square against an invasion by a black knight, so it would be annoying if Black could get away with playing like this.

Question: Well, what does happen if White takes the knight?

Answer: White is annihilated after 16 gxf4? exf4 17 ♗d2 f3: for example, 18 ♗h1 ♖xe4 19 ♘ce3 ♘d5 20 ♕d1 ♘xe3 21 ♗xe3 ♕f6 when 22 ♘d4 ♕g6+ leads to mate, while White's position has collapsed after 22 ♘g3 ♗xg3 23 fxg3 ♖xe3.

16 f3!



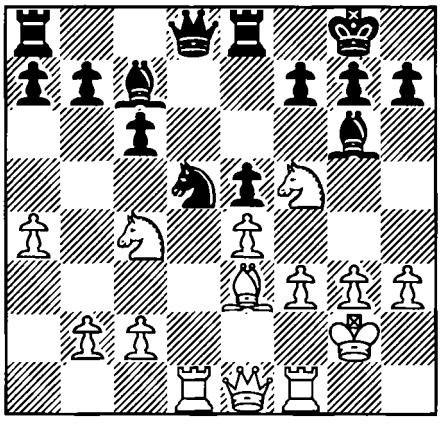
Exercise: **Can you see three ways in which this pawn move helps White?**

Answer: After the simple game move, White really is threatening 17 gxf4 as after 17...exf4 18 ♗f2 Black no longer has the killer pawn thrust ...f4-f3. It therefore forces Black to exchange his attacking knight for the passive white bishop on g2. Of course, in some structures it would be a positional concession, perhaps a serious one, for White to concede the exchange of his 'Indian' bishop for the knight. But here the position is very blocked and static, and White will have a grip on the centre, so the exchange favours him.

That's the first good point about 16 f3. Another is that it defends the e4-pawn, so that 16...♘xg2 and 17...♘xe4 no longer wins a pawn for Black. And, thirdly, it shuts in the bishop on h5 and so allows a white rook to gain access to d1.

16...♘xg2 17 ♔xg2 ♗g6 18 ♖d1 ♘d5

Black has to use tricks to stay alive, as the only reasonable alternative is 18...♕b8 which looks far from cheerful.



Exercise: Should White now win a pawn with 19 exd5 ♗xf5 20 dxc6, create a passed pawn with 19 exd5 ♗xf5 20 d6, or retreat the knight with 19 ♘h4?

Answer: **19 ♘h4!**

Kramnik sticks to the theme that it's a position that suits knights rather than bishops. He refuses to take the bait offered to him to enter a double-edged position, where Black's bishops might become a potent force. For example, after 19 exd5 ♗xf5 20 dxc6 ♕c8 21 cxb7 ♕xb7 White has won a pawn, but Black has enormous dynamic compensation: White's pawn structure is looking flimsy on both sides of the board and in the centre, and the c2-pawn is hanging. Similarly after 19 exd5 ♗xf5 20 d6 ♗b8 21 ♕c3 ♗e6! Black's pieces are boxed in, but the d6-pawn is very loose and could well fall off, when White is suddenly losing.

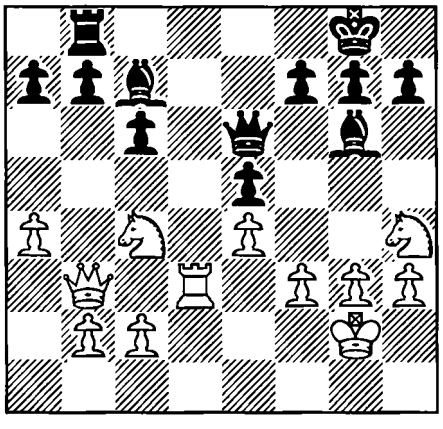
Kramnik has no reason to speculate in these lines when he can keep a bind on the position with the simple retreat of the knight.

19...♘xe3+ 20 ♕xe3 ♕e7 21 ♕b3 ♖ab8 22 ♖f2

Here we see yet another advantage to 16 f3 as it facilitates the doubling of White's rooks along the d-file.

22...♖ed8 23 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 24 ♖d2 ♗c7 25 ♖d3 ♕e6

Black's plan is to edge forwards on the queenside with ...b7-b6, ...a7-a6 and ...b6-b5, driving the white knight from its post, and opening up some lines for the rook and the bishop on c7. Vitiugov is a 2700-rated player, and can only be defeated by incredibly accurate play.



Exercise: We need an active plan for White. Can you see how Kramnik managed to arrange a breakthrough with his rook on d7? It will need the support of the queen on the d-file, of course.

Answer: **26 ♕b4! b6**

After 26...a6, 27 a5 clamps down on the black queenside, whilst if 26...b5 27 axb5 cxb5 28 ♘e3 the white knights can join forces to invade in the centre beginning with 29 ♘hf5 (29 ♘d5 doesn't look bad either).

27 b3 a6 28 ♕d2

Did you discover this sequence by White? He puts his queen on b4, then defends his knight with b2-b3, and finally retreats the queen to d2 to support the rook.

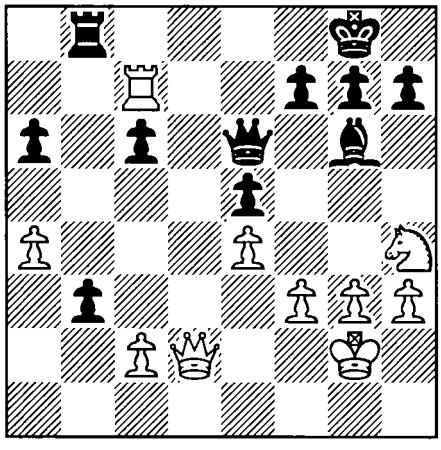
28...b5 29 ♖d7

Strike while the iron is hot! White would only have a tiny edge after the routine 29 axb5 axb5 30 ♘e3, when Black could get his bishop on g6 back into contact with his other pieces after 30...f6.

29...bxc4

There's no choice really, as if 29...♖c8 30 ♖xc7 is still possible.

30 ♖xc7 cxb3



Exercise: It looks at first glance that Black has more than escaped from the pressure as he is a pawn up But can you see the strong move that Kramnik now played to keep control?

Answer: **31 ♖b7!**

White exploits the back rank (for if 31...♖xb7 32 ♕d8+) to regain his pawn.

31...♕c8 32 ♖xb3 ♖xb3

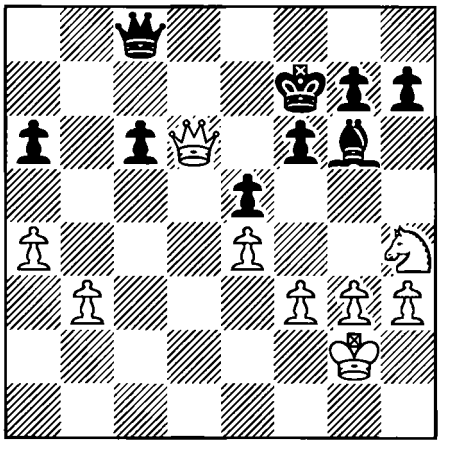
If Black doesn't exchange rooks then White could force his hand with 33 ♕d6.

33 cxb3 f6 34 ♕d6!

The upshot of the sequence that begun with 29 ♖d7 is that White has emerged with a definite advantage. The black queenside pawns are split and vulnerable to attack by the white queen, who dominates her opposite number. Meanwhile the white knight is keeping

the black bishop imprisoned on the passive g6-square, as 34...♗f7 35 ♘f5, threatening a fork on e7, looks unpleasant for Black.

34...♔f7



Exercise: **Black's pieces are tied down, but to increase the pressure White needs to activate his knight. Can you suggest a plan to achieve this?**

Answer: **35 g4!**

Everything is flowing beautifully. Kramnik plans ♔g3, then ♘g2 and ♘e3 to bring his knight to the centre and queenside, when Black's loose queenside pawns will be difficult to defend. The white king will be very safe on g3. Did you consider using the g2-square as a transit post for the knight? If you did then you can be very pleased with yourself, as most players wouldn't have even noticed the square existed.

35...♔e8 36 ♔g3 ♕b7 37 b4 ♕c8 38 a5

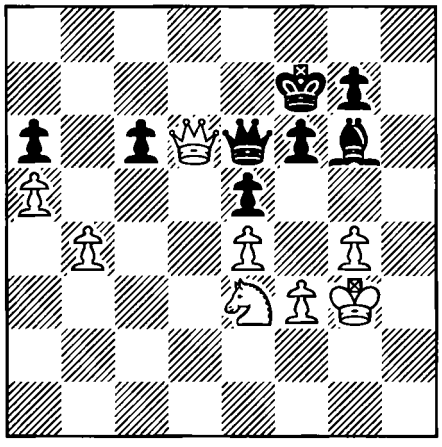
White puts his pawns on dark squares so that the black bishop won't have anything to attack once the white knight leaves h4 (at the moment the cleric is tied to g6, as 38...♗f7 39 ♘f5 would be lethal for his king). The white pawns are also a couple of steps closer to queening, and are fixing the black pawns on a6 and c6 where they are permanent targets for the white queen. Having a pawn on b4 creates a marvellous base for the white knight on c5, where it attacks a6 and dominates the centre.

38...♔f7 39 ♘g2

The knight finally begins its journey.

39...h5 40 ♘e3 hxg4 41 hxg4 ♕e6?

Black might still have held on after 41...♔g8, but it is no wonder he cracks after the endless pressure.



Exercise: White now has a sequence of moves that allows him to arrange a breakthrough on the queenside. Can you figure it out?

Answer: **42 ♕d3!**

First of all the black queen is forced back to c8 to defend the a6-pawn.

42...♕c8 43 ♕c4+

The next step is for the white queen to reach c5 with a couple of checks.

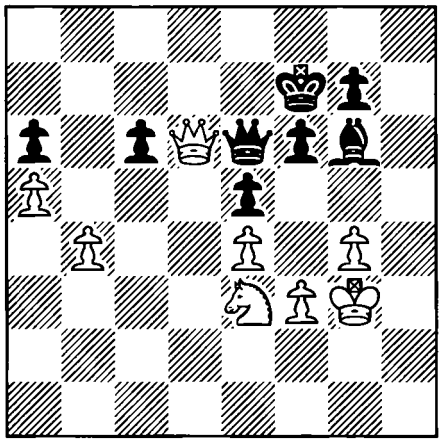
43...♔f8 44 ♕c5+ ♔g8 45 b5!

And, finally, here is the breakthrough. When two experienced players meet, there are essentially only two ways to win a game of chess. The first is to mate the opponent's king with a direct attack, the second is to create a passed pawn and queen it. Kramnik sees that his queen can shepherd home a passed pawn on the a-file, as Black can neither give perpetual check nor use his bishop to help his queen stop the pawn.

45...axb5 46 ♕b6 ♕f8 47 a6 ♕b4 48 a7 ♕e1+ 49 ♔g2 ♕d2+ 50 ♔g1 1-0

After 50...♕e1+ 51 ♘f1 there are no more good checks so the passed pawn decides.

This game represents Black's worst nightmare when he plays the Slay ...♗g4 or ...♗f5 variation. The light-squared bishop was delighted to escape outside the c6/d5/e6 pawn chain, but nothing happened on the kingside and meanwhile it was sorely missed as a defensive piece on the queenside and in the centre.



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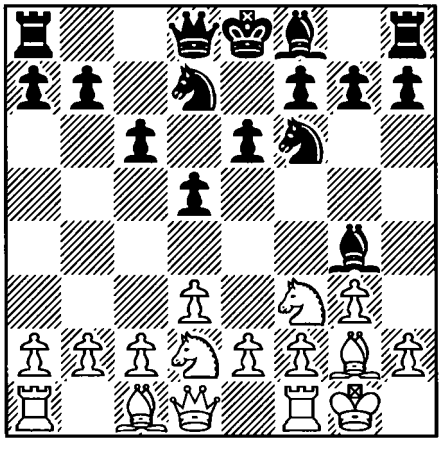
Part Three: Black builds a modest centre with ...e7-e6

Game 31
K.Sasikiran-V.Anand
Hyderabad 2002

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 d5 3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♗g4 5 d3 ♘bd7 6 ♘bd2

It's worth remembering that White can play 6 ♕e1 here to deter 6...e6 – see Game 30.

6...e6



He we investigate what happens if Black prefers 6...e6 to 6...e5. This is a very solid system for Black, used by Anand and Carlsen as Black, and avoided by Kramnik as White.

If now 7 e4 ♗e7 8 ♕e1 (of course, 8 e5? fails to 8...♘xe5) 8...0-0 9 e5 ♘e8 White has a space advantage due to the pawn on e5, but it is by no means obvious how he can exploit this. He can try to arrange f2-f4, for example, beginning with 10 ♘h2, but his centre is unwieldy and can be undermined by a plan such as ...♘c7, adding a defender to e6, then ...f7-f6. Or Black could leave well alone on the kingside and begin a pawn expansion on the queenside. Advancing 9 e5 also leaves the bishop on g2 facing a solid barrier on d5.

Of course, White isn't forced to play e4-e5. I don't want to make a big deal out of a blitz game, albeit one played in a World Championship, but it's morale-boosting to see how our opening beat a modern day superstar in R.Mamedov-M.Carlsen, Moscow (blitz) 2010:

7 e4 ♗e7 8 ♖e1

In preference to the usual 8 ♕e1.

8...0-0 9 h3 ♗h5 10 ♕e2

Normally 10 e5 ♘e8 then 11 ♘f1 or 11 g4 ♗g6 12 ♘f1 is played, but Mamedov prefers not to commit himself to the pawn advance.

10...a5 11 a4 ♕b6 12 g4 ♗g6 13 ♘h4 dxe4 14 ♘xg6 hxg6

White gains the bishop-pair, but Black is solid and the dark squares in the white kingside are left somewhat loose.

15 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♘f6 17 ♗g2 ♖ad8 18 c3 c5 19 ♗f4 ♘d5 20 ♗e5 ♗f6 21 ♗g3 g5 22 ♗e4 ♖d7 23 ♖ab1 ♖fd8 24 ♖a1 g6

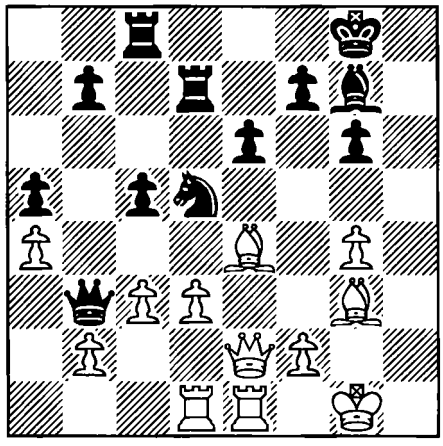
It looks equal after 24...♘f4 25 ♗xf4 gxf4 26 ♖ad1.

25 ♖ad1 ♗g7

Black should still play 25...♘f4, as White now develops an initiative on the kingside by removing the g5-pawn.

26 h4 gxh4 27 ♗xh4 ♖c8 28 ♗g3 ♕b3?

A blunder, though after 28...♖cd8 29 ♔g2 White can build up along the h-file with ♖h1.



29 ♗xg6!

A decisive opening of lines against the black king.

29...♕xa4

It falls apart for Black after 29...fxg6 30 ♕xe6+ ♖f7 31 ♕xc8+.

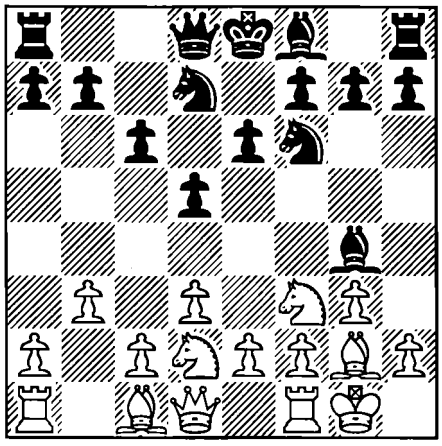
30 g5 ♖cd8 31 ♗e4 ♘e7 32 ♕h5 ♘f5 33 g6 ♘xg3 34 fxg3 f5 35 ♖f1! ♖d5

If 35...fxe4 36 ♕h7 mate, whilst otherwise White is going to open lines with 36 ♕h7+ ♔f8 37 ♗xf5!: for example, 37...exf5 38 ♖xf5+ ♔e8 39 ♖e1+ ♖e7 40 ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 41 ♕xg7+ and wins.

36 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 37 ♖de1 ♕d7 38 g4 f4 39 ♕h7+ ♔f8 40 ♖xf4+ 1-0

Despite the outcome of this game, I think White has more chances if you copy Sasikiran and fianchetto the bishop on b2 straightaway as it keeps White's centre more malleable.

7 b3

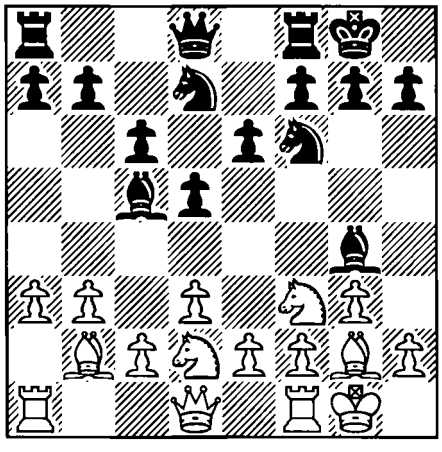


7...♗c5

Anand decides to put the bishop on c5 and keep the solid structure c6-d5-e6.

Instead, after 7...♗d6 8 ♗b2 0-0 9 e4 Black will block the e5-square to prevent a potential e4-e5 fork with 9...e5. Now we have a central structure that was discussed in the notes to 7...♗c5 in Game 28 above, where 10 h3 ♗h5 11 ♕e1 ♖e8 12 ♘h4, intending 13 ♘f5, gives White some advantage. This structure is also see in Game 14 in Chapter Three where it was reached via a Caro-Kann move order.

8 ♗b2 0-0 9 a3



Question: What is the purpose of this move?

Answer: **9...a5**

Anand's reply answers the question above: Black's plan is to gain space on the queen-

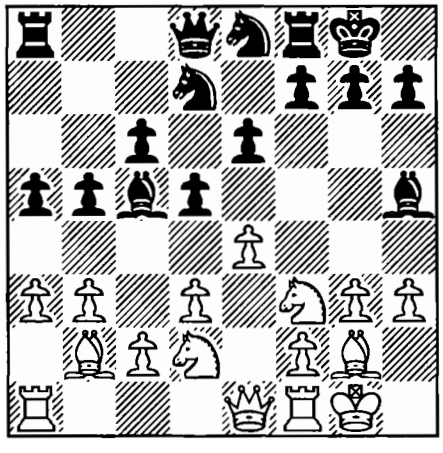
side, and if White omits to play the prophylactic move a2-a3 then he would advance a second time with 10...a4, when he already has pressure along the a-file. Whereas now after 9 a3 a5 10 e4, 10...a4? would be senseless as 11 b4 keeps the white pawns intact and blocks the side of the board where Black wants to exert pressure. Note that 9 e4 a5 10 a3 would also be an acceptable move order for White.

10 e4 b5 11 ♕e1 ♘e8

The knight heads for the queenside to bolster the pawn storm. We see that if White had played 11 e5 he would have chased the horse where it wanted to go; another reason why I regard the plan of e4-e5 as sub-optimal in this type of structure.

12 h3 ♗h5

White has decided he wants to strike at the black queenside pawns with c2-c4. However, if at once 13 c4 there might follow 13...bxc4 14 dxc4 and Black can put his horse on an active square with 14...♘d6! when after 15 exd5 exd5 16 cxd5 cxd5 the black pieces are well centralized.

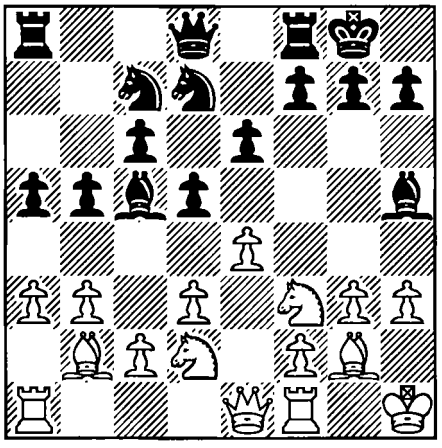


Exercise: Therefore it makes sense for White to delay the c2-c4 thrust for a move. Black will no doubt continue with his plan of bringing the knight to c7, whereupon he will no longer have the ...♘d6 option. We need a good waiting move. Any suggestions?

Answer: **13 ♔h1!**

A good way to disguise your intentions. It seems like White is unpinning the f-pawn as he plans an expansion on the kingside with f2-f4 after, say, ♘h2.

13...♘c7



14 c4!

Only now. We can see another good point in delaying the pawn stab in the variation 14...bxc4 15 bxc4 (Black can ease the pressure on d5 after 15 d4 with the clever zwischenzug 15...c3! when 16 ♗xc3 ♗e7 is very solid for him, as is 15 dxc4 ♖e8) 15...♖b8 and now, because White waited for Black to put his knight on c7, he can gain time with 16 ♗c3, hitting the a5-pawn which is no longer defended by the black queen. After 16...a4 17 d4 ♗b6 18 ♖c1 he has achieved a pleasant build-up.

Question: **I still don't understand what's wrong with the alternative plan of preparing f2-f4. Doesn't it fit the strategic requirements of the position?**

Well, when you see the power of White's f-pawn later in this game it is hard to argue against the plan of advancing the kingside pawns. The trouble is that the King's Indian Attack requires a lot of jockeying for position. At the moment Black's pieces are well coordinated and he has queenside counterplay. A frontal attack with f2-f4 has little chance of working against a world champion unless he has been weakened somehow. That's why Sasikiran tries to force a favourable resolution of the queenside battle before turning his attention to the kingside. He knows he mustn't hurry; that would be fatal against Anand.

In the two previous examples of the position after 13...♘c7, White tried a direct approach, but it just left him compromised on the queenside:

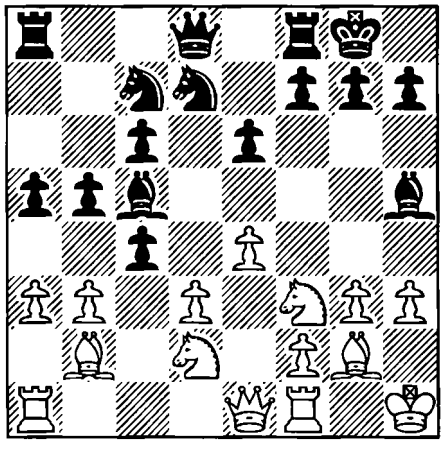
a) 14 ♕e1 (White had previously played ♕e2, so he is a tempo down on Sasikiran's game) 14...♗b6 15 ♖b1 c5 16 ♘g1 (a most laborious process to clear the way for the f-pawn) 16...f6 17 f4 a4! and White's queenside structure was under pressure whilst he had achieved little on the kingside in T.Markowski-A.Chernin, London 1994.

b) 14 e5 ♗b6 15 ♘h2 c5 16 g4 ♗g6 17 f4 f5 18 exf6 ♘xf6 19 ♘hf3 as in M.Bezold-J.Kipper, Münster 1996, and now after 19...a4 20 ♘e5 ♗e8 White can be proud of his knight on e5, but again the queenside situation is unfavourable. Besides, Black can prepare ...d5-

d4 with the threat of invading with ...♘cd5 and ...♘e3.

The moral is that if you are patient and don't hurry to carry out a plan, it might become more effective, even if your opponent doesn't make a mistake. It might simply be because he has to manoeuvre his pieces according to his own plan – he can't hang around waiting to see what you are going to do.

14...dxc4



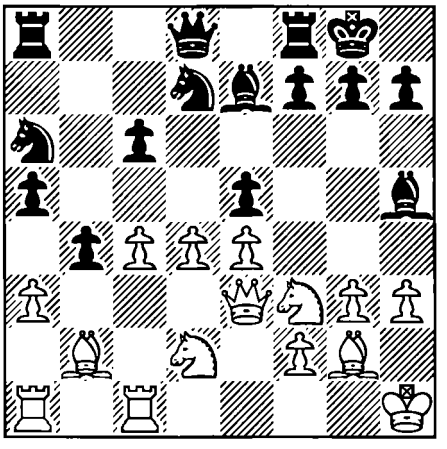
Question: Why does Black capture away from the centre?

Answer: After 14...bxc4 15 bxc4 ♖b8 16 ♗c3 a4 White would only have a minimal advantage. On the other hand, Black is a world-class player many times over, and wants to fight a bit harder against his fellow Indian Grandmaster. Therefore, rather than see his queenside pawns reduced to (fully defensible) potential targets on a4 and c6, he recaptures with the d5-pawn. This creates a mobile 2-1 pawn majority on the queenside. In return White is allowed to create a broad centre, but Black can take measures to undermine it.

15 d4

White takes up the space on offer.

15...♗e7 16 bxc4 b4 17 ♕e3 ♘a6 18 ♖fc1 e5



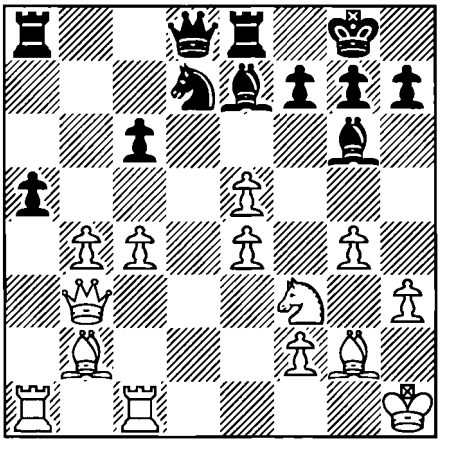
Question: Why does Black give up his e5-pawn?

Answer: If left undisturbed White would increase his bind on the centre with 19 c5 then 20 ♘c4. With his pawn sacrifice Anand fractures the white centre and in particular wins control of the c5-square for his knights.

19 g4 ♗g6

Not 19...dxe4? 20 ♘xd4 when both h5 and c6 are hanging.

20 dxe5 ♖e8 21 ♘b3 ♘ac5 22 axb4 ♘xb3 23 ♕xb3



Exercise: How should Black recapture the pawn?

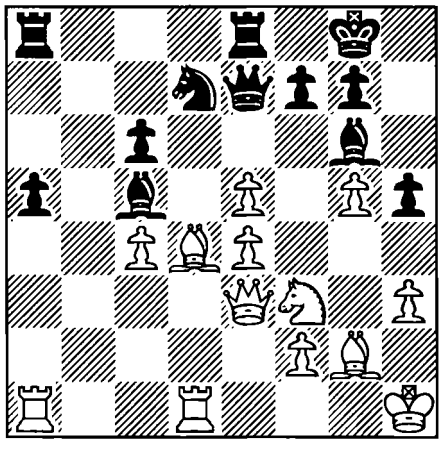
23...♗xb4

Answer: Anand keeps his bishop active, frees the e7-square for his queen and lets his rook on e8 see some daylight. Nonetheless, any change to a pawn structure has to be examined closely as its effect is often felt until the end of a game.

Here 23...axb4!? moves the passed pawn one step closer to queening and opens up the a-file for possible counterplay. A positionally sharp continuation would be 24 ♘d4 ♘c5 25 ♕e3 (not 25 ♕xb4? ♘d3 with a fork) 25...♕d7 26 f4 ♘a4 27 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 28 f5 (White has given up the exchange, but now traps the bishop) 28...c5 29 ♘f3 ♖d8 30 fxg6 hxg6. White has two pieces for a rook, but Black has every piece active and a protected passed pawn. The way for White to try to win would be through a direct attack on the black king, but this would be far from easy.

24 ♕e3 h5 25 g5 ♗c5 26 ♗d4 ♕e7 27 ♖d1?!

An inaccuracy. Instead the immediate 27 e6! fxe6 28 ♖d1 keeps the initiative in the style of the game without giving Black the chance to escape the pressure on the next move.



27...a4?

A critical moment. Anand probably saw that after 27...♗xd4 28 ♘xd4 ♘xe5 29 f4 ♘xc4 30 ♕c1 both his knight and c6-pawn would be hanging, with White having crushing pressure after, say, 30...♘d6 31 ♘xc6 ♕c7 32 ♘e5.

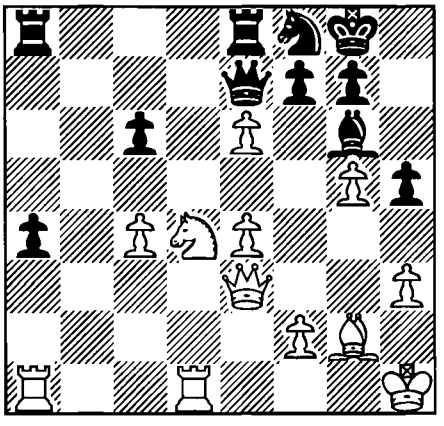
Exercise: Can you find what he missed?

Answer: In this line Black could sacrifice his knight with 30...♗xe4! when after 31 ♕xc4 ♗xg2+ 32 ♔xg2 ♕e4+ 33 ♔g1 ♕xf4 34 ♕xc6 ♕e3+ 35 ♔g2 ♕xg5+ 36 ♔h1 ♕f4 he has three pawns for the piece and is by no means worse.

28 e6!

A powerful clearance sacrifice that leaves Black busted after 28...fxe6? 29 ♗xc5 ♘xc5 30 ♘e5, hitting both c6 and g6.

28...♗xd4 29 ♘xd4 ♘f8



30 f4

Exercise: Sasikiran decides that the most important factor in the position is shutting Black's bishop out of the game. Do you agree with his plan of 30 f4 and 31 f5 or was there a better way of handling it?

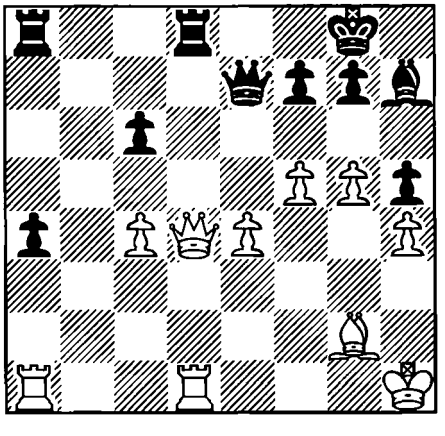
30...♘xe6 31 f5

The black bishop is pushed back to h7 where it will remain more or less entombed. Jumping ahead, the fact that the bishop sits on the h7-square will also be painful for the black king, as its escape square from the back rank is blocked off.

Answer: Nonetheless, to return to the question posed at move 30, White didn't find 30 exf7+ ♗xf7 31 ♘xc6 followed by 32 e5 with an easy win.

31...♘xd4 32 ♕xd4 ♗h7 33 h4 ♖ed8?

After 33...a3 or 33...♖ad8 34 ♕c3 ♖xd1+ 35 ♖xd1 ♖a8 Black's passed pawn is strong enough to make the verdict 'unclear.'



Exercise: **We can only get so far in chess thinking in terms of words and plans. Can you find a strong tactic for White here?**

Answer: **34 ♖xa4!**

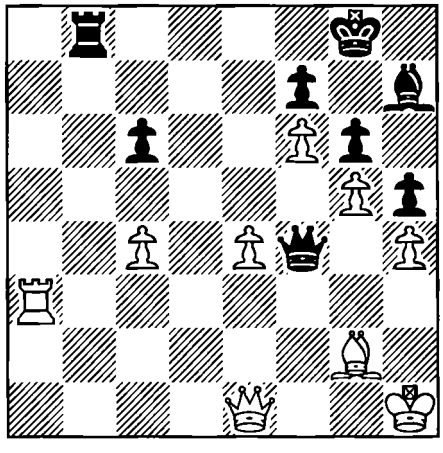
There goes Black's pride and joy. He is mated if he takes on a4, while after 34...♖xd4 35 ♖xa8+ he emerges a rook down.

As always in chess, tactics matter more than strategy. You can make three smallish positional oversights and still save yourself with dogged defence, but tactical blunders are usually far less forgiving.

34...♖ab8 35 ♕a1 ♖xd1+ 36 ♕xd1 ♕e5 37 ♖b4 ♖a8 38 ♖a4 ♖b8 39 ♖a3 ♕f4 40 ♕e1 g6

When a World Champion feels that a move like this is his best chance then clearly something has gone horribly wrong.

41 f6



This position is Black's worst nightmare when he plays ...♗g4 or ...♗f5 in the KIA Slav.

41...♔h8 42 ♕g3 ♕c1+

If the queens are exchanged White will easily pick off the c6-pawn – for endgame purposes we might say he has an extra king as well as an extra bishop. Therefore Black has to try for a counterattack against the white king, but it is to no avail against Sasikiran's careful play.

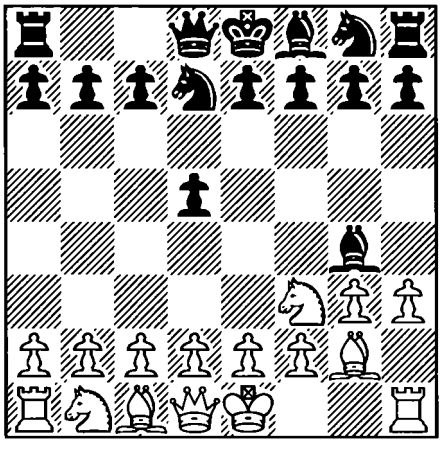
43 ♔h2 ♖b1 44 ♕d6 ♗g8 45 ♔h3 ♖b8 46 ♖g3 ♕b2 47 c5 ♖b3 48 ♖xb3 ♕xb3+ 49 ♔h2 ♕e3 50 ♕f8 ♕f4+ 51 ♔g1 ♕e3+ 52 ♔f1 ♕d3+ 53 ♔f2 1-0

White will escape the perpetual check by advancing his king up the board to e5 and all the way to c8 if necessary. Then Black will be mated on g7.

Part Four: White harasses the bishop on g4 with his pawns

Game 32
A.Morozevich-R.Kasimdzhanov
Zug 2013

1 g3 d5 2 ♘f3 ♗g4 3 ♗g2 ♘d7 4 h3



A very early challenge to the black bishop.

4...♗xf3

At the price of the bishop-pair Black assures himself of easy development and equal space in the centre. After the alternative 4...♗h5 you can play the normal KIA moves: for example, 5 0-0 c6 6 d3 e5 7 e4 ♘gf6 8 ♕e1 dxe4 9 dxe4 ♗d6 10 ♘h4 0-0 11 ♘f5 ♗c5 12 b4 ♗b6 13 ♘a3 ♘e8 (he should try 13...♕e8! to answer 14 ♘c4 with 14...♕e6, with balanced chances) 14 ♘c4 ♗c7 15 a4 when White had a pleasant edge in A.Czebe-J.Lampert, Korbach 2012.

When trying to understand why players choose a certain move, we should remind ourselves that there are more possibilities in the position than are contained in the King's Indian Attack. Thus Kasimdzhanov might have been deterred from playing 4...♗h5 because of White changing track with c2-c4: for example, 5 0-0 c6 6 d3 e5 7 c4 with pressure on d5 which the light-squared bishop can't help counter as it is out of things on h5. It's good to master the KIA, but you will become an even better player if you occasionally add other ideas to your opening repertoire.

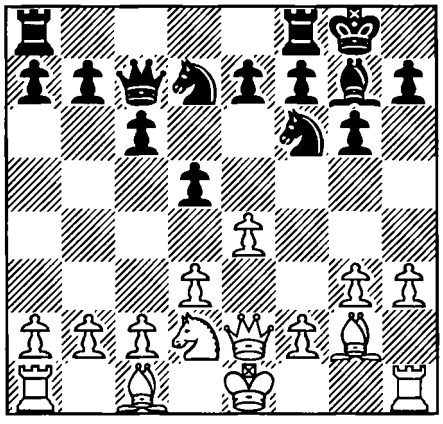
5 ♗xf3 ♘gf6 6 d3 c6 7 ♘d2 g6

The plan of fianchettoing the bishop on g7 wouldn't have been possible if Black had kept his other bishop with 4...♗h5. White would be able to trap it with 8 g4 as 7...g6 would have cut off its escape route.

8 e4 ♗g7 9 ♕e2 ♕c7

Naturally White mustn't be allowed to play 10 e5.

10 ♗g2 0-0



Question: **Is it OK for White to play 11 b3 to fianchetto on b2?**

Answer: No! 11 b3?? ♘xe4 12 dxe4 ♗xa1 wins for Black.

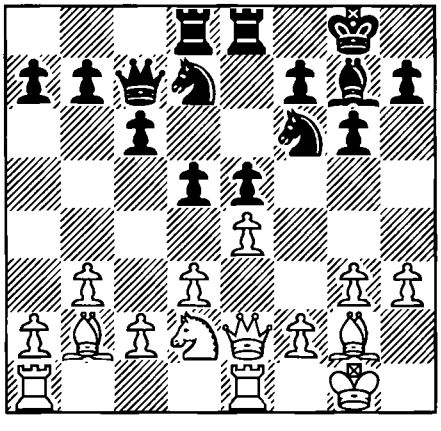
11 0-0 e5

Black builds a full centre. You might like to compare the situation here with Game 17 in Chapter Three where Black fianchettoed on g7 and then satisfied himself with ...e7-e6.

12 b3

Now that the a1-h8 diagonal is closed White can safely fianchetto.

12...♖fe8 13 ♗b2 ♖ad8 14 ♖fe1



White has deployed his pieces in a familiar manner: both bishops are fianchettoed and he has supported his e4 point with no less than five units. He has avoided playing c2-c3 as

this would weaken the d3-pawn and shut in his bishop on b2 – besides, it would be an utterly pointless move.

In reply Black has safeguarded his king and developed all his pieces to good-looking squares. There are no weaknesses in his pawn structure. The only potential target in his camp is the pawn on e5, as it cannot easily be defended by another pawn – arranging ...f7-f6 would be disruptive, too costly in time and involve a weakening of Black's light squares. However the pawn on e5 is well looked after by the black pieces: it is directly defended three times and the bishop on g7 is also ready to come to its aid. Nor is Black suffering from a space disadvantage. White has the bishop-pair, but this is hardly an important factor at the moment.

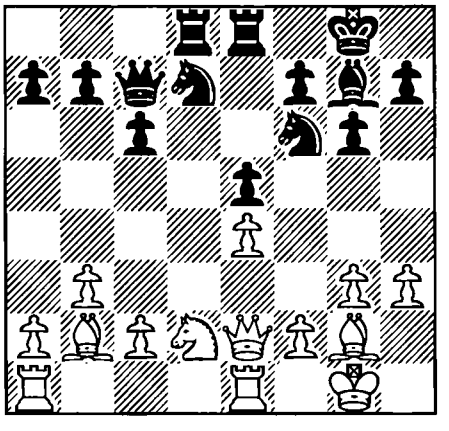
So far Black has been able to make 'easy' developing moves. I hope it isn't being immodest to say that you or I could have made exactly the same moves as the former FIDE World Champion. Black develops, centralizes, and looks after his centre pawns; there is no mystery here.

But now we have reached the early middlegame stage, and Black has to make his first important strategic decision. This is normally the hardest part of any game of chess, and any decision taken is particularly critical in an opening like the King's Indian Attack, where in view of the slow, strategic nature of the play a change in the nature of the pawn structure can reverberate well into the endgame.

Exercise: **So let me ask you to examine the position for a while and decide whether Black should play 14...d4 or 14...dxe4. Which move do you like the most? What are the pros and cons of each move?**

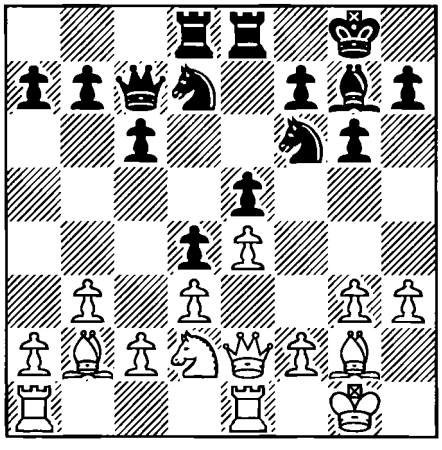
14...d4

Answer: The plus points of 14...dxe4 are that after 15 dxe4 the frontal pressure is off the pawn on e5: if the black knight wanders from d7 there is no chance of being surprised by e4xd5, uncovering the white queen and rook against the e5-pawn followed by ♗xe5.



This means that the black knight on d7 is relieved of its defensive duty: for example, there is now the plan of ...♘c5, perhaps followed by ...♘e6, aiming for ...♘d4. If White responded to ...♘e6 with c2-c3 he shuts in his bishop and weakens the d3-square. Black's rook is the first to sit on the newly opened d-file, and whilst it is hard to imagine that he will ever be able to attack along it, his potential pressure means that White would probably have to allow the exchange of both pairs of rooks along it, after which his winning chances would be rather small.

The drawback to 14...dxe4 15 dxe4 is that White's knight gains access to the c4-square. Because Black has fianchettoed, the d6-square is a potential weakness. For example, White could build up with moves like a2-a4, to deter ...b7-b5, then ♘c4, ♗a3, and ♖ad1, aiming for an invasion with ♘d6. On the kingside, h3-h4 and ♗h3 would increase the scope of the light-squared bishop.



Exercise: After 14...d4, can you see a way to increase the power of the bishop on g2?

Answer: 15 h4!

If you play the King's Indian Attack, you have to be alert to ways of activating your pieces on the wings, as the centre is often clogged up with pawns. Here Morozevich not only clears the h3-square for his bishop, but also introduces the idea of h4-h5, nibbling at Black's kingside, if the black knight leaves f6.

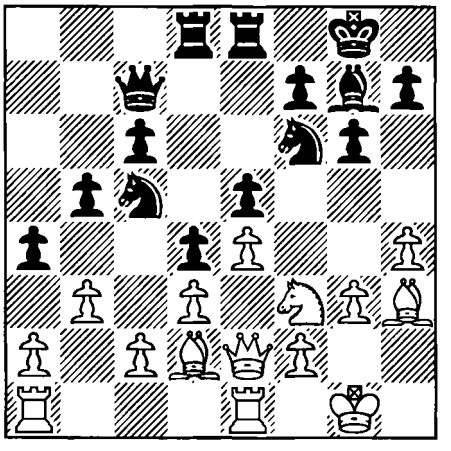
15...♘c5

Black's plan is to gain more space on the queenside with a general advance of his pawns.

16 ♗h3 b5 17 ♘f3

Having improved his light-squared bishop, Morozevich is now concerned with helping his other bishop to escape its blocked diagonal. The knight therefore clears the way for it to go to d2 where it has more scope.

17...a5 18 ♗c1 a4 19 ♗d2



Exercise: Now Black can continue his queenside play with 19...axb3 20 axb3 ♖a8 or the immediate 19...♖a8. Which do you prefer?

19...♖a8

Black is tempted to keep the tension by avoiding the exchange of pawns on b3 – he doesn't want the white rook to 'see daylight' on the a-file. But the game move is actually a serious mistake; in fact it is probably the decisive strategic mistake.

Answer: Instead, after 19...axb3! 20 axb3 ♖a8 Black keeps the balance. White can't play 21 ♖ac1? without allowing an infiltration of his second rank with 21...♖a2.

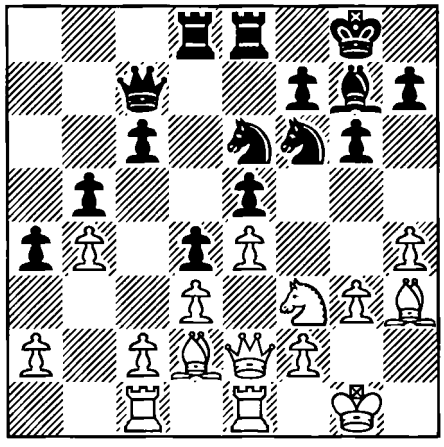
In contrast in the game after...

20 b4!

...the a-file and b-file are blocked. This means that White has time to arrange ♖ac1 and c2-c4 to blast open the c-file.

20...♘e6 21 ♖ac1 ♖ad8

The rook scurries back to the centre, but it is too late.



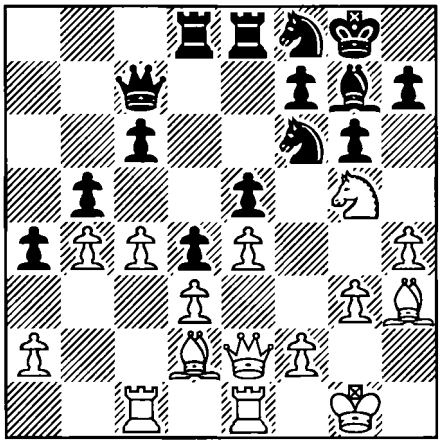
Exercise: **White wants to open a line of attack against the pawn on c6, but if he plays 22 c4 at once Black's knight on e6 will have access to the d4 -quare after 22...dxc3 What preliminary measure should White take to deny the black horse access to this ideal post?**

Answer: **22 ♘g5!**

White could have eliminated the knight on e6 with 22 ♗xe6. I've seen players make an exchange of this nature, so it's by no means always a crazy idea. Black doesn't have a light-squared bishop of his own to exploit the absence of White's bishop, so the white king would remain pretty secure after its exchange. And it could be argued in this semi-blocked position that the black knight is of more value than the white bishop. But such reasoning doesn't stand up in this specific case. White wants to keep his bishop because it is helping to keep Black under pressure.

Moreover, the game move obliges the black knight to retreat due to the positional threat of 23 ♘xe6 when after 23...fxe6 the black central pawn structure is hobbled. See how strong White's light-squared bishop would be in that case. Or if 22...♘xg5 23 hxg5 when White could play to attack down the h-file or prepare the advance f4-f5, with the white pawns becoming a formidable mass.

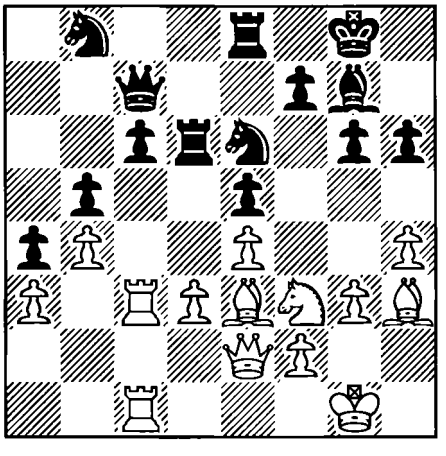
22...♘f8 23 c4!



23...dxc3

If Black avoids exchanging on c3 with 23...♕b7, White can build up with 24 ♖c2 and 25 ♖ec1 followed by 26 cxb5 and either an infiltration down the c-file or a siege of a pawn on c6, according to how Black recaptured. It is thanks to the bishop on h3 controlling the c8-square that Black can't fight this plan with ...♖c8, etc.

24 ♖xc3 ♘6d7 25 ♖ec1 ♘b8 26 a3 h6 27 ♘f3 ♘e6 28 ♗e3 ♖d6



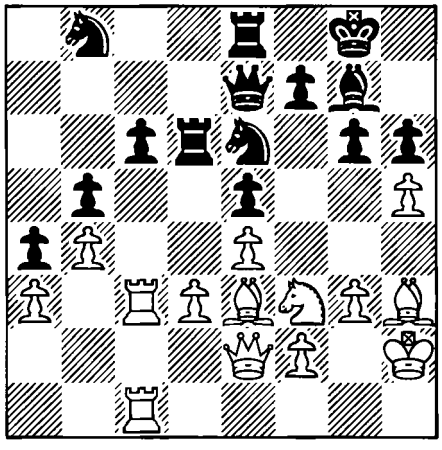
Exercise: **Is there a way to increase White's advantage?**

Answer: Due to the mistake 19...♖a8, Black's queenside pawns have become a dead mass rather than a source of counterplay. The black knight on b8 is tied down to the defence of the c6-pawn, hampering the coordination of the black pieces.

The centre and queenside are fairly blocked, meaning Black can hold on OK there.

Besides, it makes sense to start an attack as far away as possible from the passive knight on b8. Morozevich understands that he should prepare an assault on the kingside based on the pawn stab with h4-h5. However, he realizes he doesn't have to hurry and for the next ten moves he manoeuvres his pieces around, seemingly unable to decide the best squares to have them on when staging the breakthrough. Of course, it is one long nightmare for Kasimdzhanov who can only wait for the axe to fall.

29 ♕d2 ♔h7 30 ♔g2 ♖ed8 31 ♖h1 ♕e7 32 ♗b6 ♖e8 33 ♖hc1 ♕b7 34 ♗e3 ♕e7 35 ♕a2 ♔h8 36 ♕c2 ♔g8 37 ♕e2 ♔h8 38 ♔h2 ♔g8 39 h5!



Morozevich is bored of torturing his opponent and finally carries out his threat. If he is allowed to play 40 hxg6 (the probing 40 ♘h4 might be even stronger), the black kingside will be fractured and White can prepare a future attack with ♖h1, etc. Therefore Kasimdzhanov elects to block things up, but there will be a chink in his armour on f5.

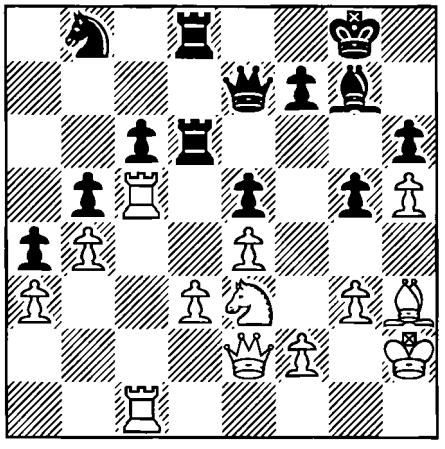
39...g5 40 ♘e1!

The white knight, not the bishop, wants to land on f5. Therefore it begins a long journey via e1, g2, and e3. Such a protracted manoeuvre is possible in a quiet position where the opponent has zero counterplay.

40...♔h8 41 ♘g2 ♔g8 42 ♗c5!

Not only vacating the square, but at the same time forcing the exchange of a knight that might have challenged the dominance of the white steed on f5.

42...♘xc5 43 ♖xc5 ♖ed8 44 ♘e3



44...♕a7

Question: What happens if 44...♖xd3, grabbing a pawn?

Answer: After 44...♖xd3 45 ♘d5! cxd5 46 ♕xd3 wins the exchange. I'd be loathe to give up the great knight for a rook and a pawn, but Black's position is utterly collapsing here, as b5 is hanging and moves like 47 ♖c8 are in the air.

45 ♖5c3 ♖f6 46 ♘f5

Anyone who plays the King's Indian Defence or the Ruy Lopez as Black knows that the end is near is when an immovable white knight appears on f5.

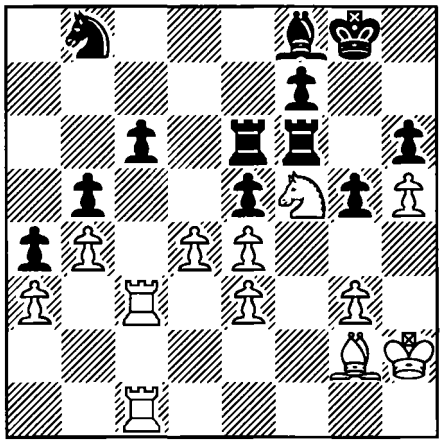
46...♖e8 47 ♕e3 ♕xe3

This exchange makes things somewhat easier for White by giving him the chance to expand in the centre with d3-d4, but it's not surprising that Black would be horribly passive after 47...♕b7.

48 fxe3 ♗f8 49 ♗g2!

Simple, patient and strong, but somehow hard to see. White's bishop returns to its favourite square in order to defend e4 and thus make possible his next move.

49...♖ee6 50 d4



50...exd4

Question: **If Black waited passively with 50...♖e8 how would White break through?**

Answer: Simplest would be 51 g4 to defend the knight and then 52 d5, creating a passed pawn and infiltrating with the rooks along the c-file after 52...cxd5 53 exd5.

51 exd4 g4 52 ♖f1

Threatening 53 e5, trapping the rook on f6.

52...♘d7 53 ♖f4 1-0

Black isn't even given the chance to sacrifice the knight after 53 e5 ♘xe5 54 dxe5 ♖xe5, though that is easily winning for White as well. Here Black gave up as White can play 54 ♖xg4, winning a pawn and keeping a crushing advantage. A fine positional display by Morozevich.

Game 33
H.Nakamura-A.Moen
European Club Cup, Eilat 2012

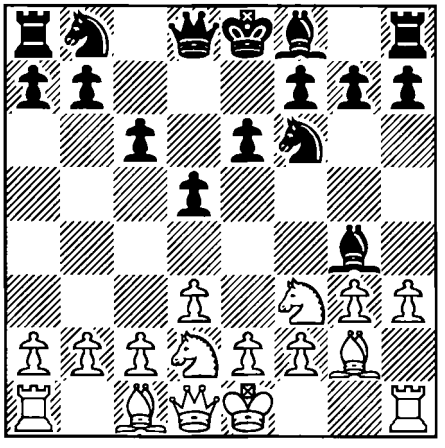
1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 ♗g4 4 d3

The ever ambitious Nakamura delays castling as he wants to get his kingside pawns rolling.

4...c6 5 ♘bd2 e6

The alternative 5...♘bd7 seems a better move order to oppose White's plan, as will be seen in the next game.

6 h3



6...♗h5

Exchanging on f3 gives White a small but definite plus: for example, 6...♗xf3 7 ♘xf3 ♘bd7 8 0-0 ♗d6 9 e4! 0-0 (after 9...dxe4 10 dxe4 ♘xe4 11 ♘g5! ♘xg5 12 ♕xd6 White has a very dangerous initiative for the pawn; note that 13 h4 threatens to win the knight on g5 and 12...♕e7 would drop the poor horse after a queen exchange) 10 ♕e2, as in V.Topalov-R.Svane, Kozloduy (rapid) 2013.

7 g4

The key move. Black's bishop will be pushed back to g6 and then exchanged off.

7...♗g6 8 ♘h4 ♗e7

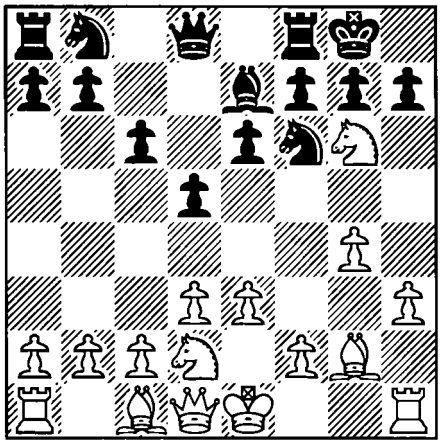
Alternatively, 8...♗d6 9 e3 ♘fd7 is a recommended recipe for forcing White's hand over the capture on g6, but I'm not sure it is a great idea as it wastes time with the knight. For example, 10 ♘xg6 hxg6 11 b3 a5 (Black could oppose the fianchetto with 11...♗e5, but then 12 d4 and 13 c4 might be good for White) 12 ♗b2 0-0 13 a3 ♘a6 14 0-0 e5 15 ♕e2 b5? (Black could do without this weakening move, though White's position is already very pleasant – he has an unopposed 'Indian' bishop and the chance to put pressure on d5) 16 c4!. White was going to play this move anyway but Black's previous move made it all the stronger in G.Keschitz-C. Horvath, Hungarian League 2010. White rated 2210 beat Black, a 2518 GM, in a good game, so it's worth taking notice.

9 e3 0-0?!

Again the knight retreat to d7 doesn't solve Black's problems. After 9...♘fd7 10 ♘xg6 hxg6 11 ♘f3 ♘a6 12 0-0 e5 13 b3 0-0 14 ♗b2 ♗d6 15 c4 White had the familiar double fianchetto with pressure on d5 in J.Ehlvest-T.Thorhallsson, Reykjavik 2010.

Nonetheless Black doesn't have to castle kingside so quickly, indeed if at all. He could try 9...♘bd7: for example, 10 ♕e2 ♕c7 11 ♘df3 0-0-0 12 ♗d2 ♘c5 13 0-0-0 ♕b6 14 ♘xg6 hxg6 with slightly the better chances for White in O.Panno-M. Letelier, Casilda 1984.

10 ♘xg6



Exercise: Which pawn should Black recapture with?

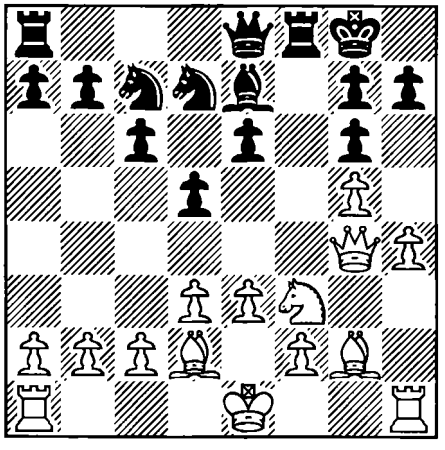
Answer: **10...fxg6?**

Of course if you're being attacked by a player rated 2786, the temptation is to keep as many pawns as possible around your king, but weakening the centre adds to Black's woes. He had to brave 10...hxg6: for example, 11 h4 ♘bd7 12 ♕e2 e5 or 12 g5 ♘h5 and the kingside is blocked.

11 g5 ♘e8

Black wants to use this knight to defend the e6-pawn after ♕g4 with ...♘c7, but he does better to block the kingside with 11...♘h5, then after 12 h4 to develop the other knight to a6. After 12...♘a6 13 ♕g4?! ♘b4! 14 ♕xe6+?! ♔h8 Black suddenly has the initiative in view of the hard-to-meet attack on c2. White should play more conservatively, say, with 13 a3 to guard the b4-square, but then 13...♘c7 defends e6 with the queen's knight – a much more efficient state of affairs than in the game.

12 h4 ♘d7 13 ♕g4 ♘c7 14 ♘f3 ♕e8 15 ♗d2

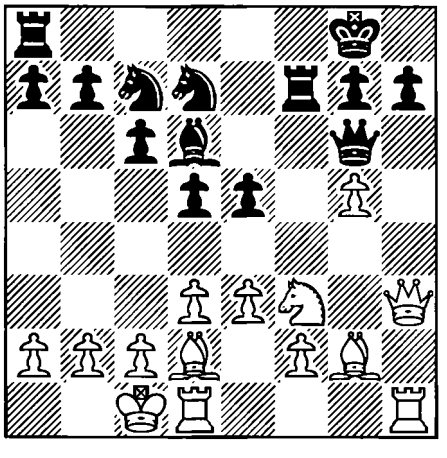


Nakamura is in no hurry as Black can't stop h4-h5. He completes his development and builds up an ideal attacking position.

15...♗d6 16 0-0-0 e5 17 h5 ♕e6 18 ♕h4

Of course White avoids the exchange of queens.

18...gxh5 19 ♕xh5 ♕g6 20 ♕h3 ♖f7



Exercise: White has made a series of fairly obvious developing and attacking moves, but now some finesse is required to strengthen his attack. What did the US no.1 now play?

***Answer:* 21 e4!**

Nakamura creates a base on f5 for his knight. Now 21...dxe4 22 dxe4 ♕xe4 looks suicidal and so it proves after 23 ♘xe5! deflecting the black queen from the defence of h7:

23...♕xe5 24 ♕xh7+ ♔f8 25 ♖de1 and if the queen saves herself it is mate on h8.

21...♘f8 22 ♘h4 ♕e6 23 ♘f5 ♗c5

The next stage in White's plan is to open some more lines. He doesn't waste any time.

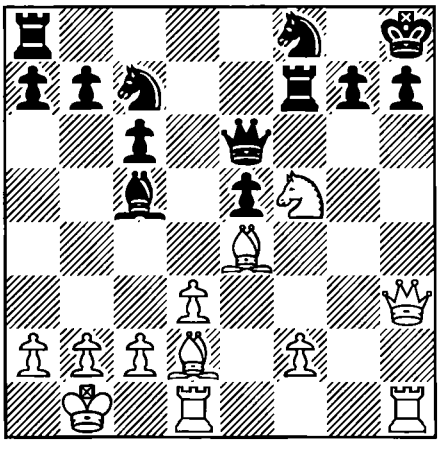
24 g6!? ♕xg6 25 ♗f3 dxe4

Faced with threats of 26 ♖dg1 and 26 ♗h5, Black finds a way to escape with his queen and counterattack against a2, but conceding the e4-square to the white bishop isn't pretty as h7 will come under further attack.

26 ♗xe4 ♕e6 27 ♔b1!

A quick end to Black's counterplay, which lasted exactly one move. Still, at least he got to make a threat – in the King's Indian Attack Black sometimes loses without getting to play a single aggressive move.

27...♔h8



Exercise: How do we start the next wave of White's attack?

***Answer:* 28 f4!**

A nice companion move to 21 e4. The key to White's attack is to break down the barriers obstructing his bishops in the centre.

28...exf4 29 ♕h5

Even stronger would be 29 c4!? to prevent Black playing ...♘d5 and then 30 ♗c3, aiming the bishop at g7, when Black defences would soon crumble. Of course when you give a wild attacking game to a computer program it finds all sorts of outlandish wins and extraordinary defensive moves which are practically impossible to find during a game. Playing a prophylactic pawn move like 29 c4 in the middle of an attack probably comes into that category.

29...♘d5 30 ♘h4 ♔g8

The best hope to defend was 30...♖f6.

31 ♘f3

White has a crushing advantage after 31 ♗xh7+ ♘xh7 32 ♘g6 ♘df6 33 ♕xc5.

31...g6 32 ♕h6 ♗e7 3 ♖dg1 ♗f6 34 c4 ♗g7 35 ♕h2 ♕f6 36 ♗e1 ♘e3 37 ♘g5 ♖e7

Black might have turned the tables with 37...♘f1!, as if 38 ♖xf1 ♕xg5, but that really would be a computer move.

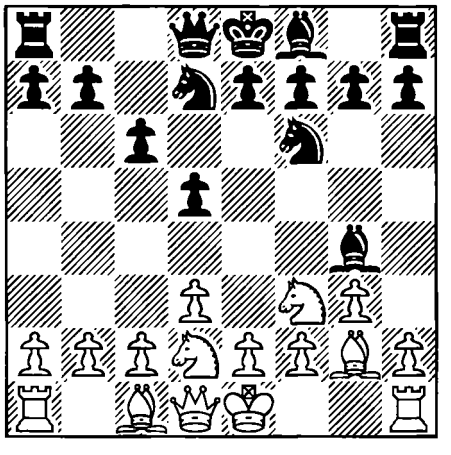
38 ♗b4 ♖ae8 39 ♘xh7 ♕d4 40 ♘xf8 ♖xe4 41 ♕h7+ 1-0

At last the white attack breaks through. Black resigned as he is mated after 41...♔f7 42 ♕xg6+ ♔g8 43 ♖h8+ ♔xh8 44 ♕h7.

Anyone can throw their pieces at the opponent's king, but there were some highly instructive positional moves by Nakamura in the build-up to the final assault.

Game 34
P.Svidler-V.Kramnik
Russian Championship, Moscow 2011

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3 ♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 4 d3 ♗g4 5 ♘bd2 ♘bd7



Exercise: What do you think of White's plan of advancing his kingside pawns?

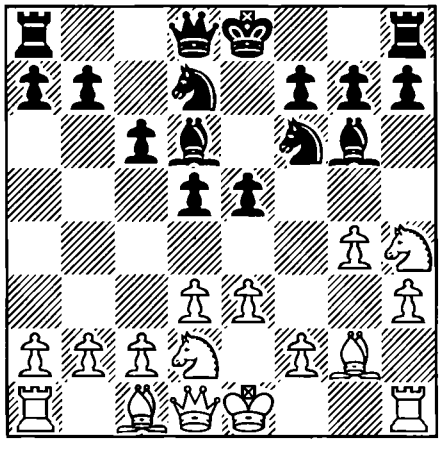
Answer: Here's my opinion. If Black plays 5...e6 as in the previous game, I'm happy with the plan of 6 h3 ♗h5 7 g4. However, after 5...♘bd7 I recommend that you forget about the pawn roller and play 6 0-0 when 6...e5 7 e4 transposes to Game 28 above.

This is because of the 8...e5! advance discussed in the notes to 8...e6 below. If Black has already gone 5...e6, the idea of playing the pawn to e5 is less effective because he is a tempo down, but with the move order 5...♘bd7 it looks formidable. On the other hand, Svidler

Svidler is willing to adopt this line as White, so he must have a trick or two up his sleeve to strengthen White's play.

6 h3 ♗h5 7 g4 ♗g6 8 ♘h4 e6

A critical moment. At first glance Black's modest pawn move seems very logical. He is going to be deprived of his light-squared bishop, so he builds a solid centre with his pawns on light squares. However, space is space and I think 8...e5! is a much better idea for Black. Then White should reply 9 e3 with a restricted centre (he has compromised his dark squares with 7 g4 so arranging e2-e4 would be too loosening). There follows 9...♗d6 with two possibilities:



a) After 10 0-0 0-0 Black has nothing to fear: for example, 11 f4 exf4 12 exf4 h6 13 ♘xg6 fxg6 when the weaknesses created in White's centre and on the kingside by his pawn moves are more important than the bishop-pair or the doubling of Black's pawns.

b) 10 ♕e2 ♕e7 leaves Black very solid indeed. White doesn't seem to have any convincing continuation here. For example, after 11 a3 Black took over the initiative in L.Kritz-V.Erdos, Kaupthing 2007: 11...♘b6 12 c4 0-0-0 13 b3 dxc4 14 dxc4 ♗c7 15 ♘xg6 hxg6 16 ♗b2 ♘fd7! (the knight has spotted a hole in White's centre on d3) 17 0-0-0 ♘c5 18 ♔c2 ♘d3 19 ♗c3 f5 20 ♘b1 e4 and White had been outplayed.

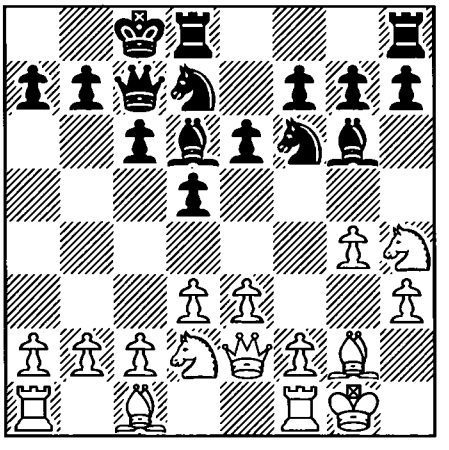
9 e3 ♗d6 10 ♕e2 ♕c7

Kramnik has an ambitious plan in mind which will lead to a situation very unusual in the Slav system: he will castle queenside and then try to create counterplay against the white king.

Grandmaster Marin recommends 10...♕e7!?: for example, 11 0-0 0-0-0 12 ♖b1 e5 13 a3 e4 with counterplay for Black. White could continue his attack with 14 b4 as 14...♕e5?! can be met by 15 f4 exf3 15 ♘dxf3, guarding the h2-square. Note also that after 14...h5?! White can keep the kingside closed with 15 ♘xg6 fxg6 16 g5 with advantage. Or, finally, if 14...♘e5 15 ♘xg6 hxg6 16 ♖d1! (it's vital to vacate the f1-square for the king, as Black threatens 16...♘exg4!), intending 17 b5 looks better for White. Still, this is very double-

edged. Perhaps Black would do best to continue with a consolidating move such as 14...♔b8 or 14...♘b6 with an interesting battle ahead.

11 0-0 0-0-0



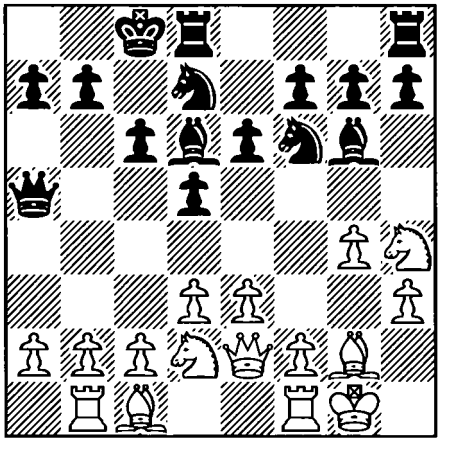
Exercise: What's the best way for White to get the queenside pawns rolling?

Answer: **12 ♖b1!**

White wants to undermine the pawn on c6 as quickly as possible with b4-b5. If he plays 12 b4, Black simply takes the pawn. If he plays 12 a3 and 13 b4, he would still need to arrange a3-a4 to support a subsequent b4-b5.

The rook move is therefore the fastest way to generate play along the b-file.

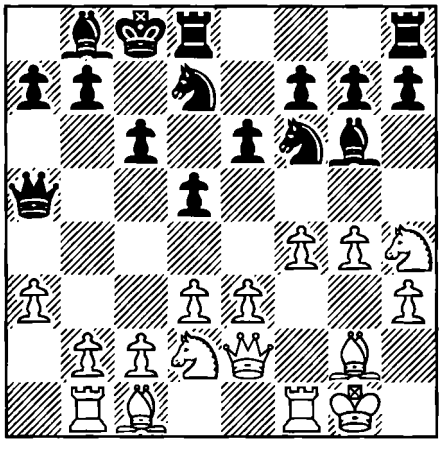
12...♕a5



Question: **What is the purpose of this move? Surely Kramnik doesn't think the queen can hold up White's queenside assault by herself?**

Answer: The former world champion wants to put his queen in front of his dark-squared bishop along the b8-h2 diagonal to create threats against the white king. He therefore moves his queen out of the way of the bishop to a5, where she also slows down the white attack somewhat by guarding the b4-square.

13 a3 ♗b8 14 f4



Question: **What? I thought you said White was going to attack on the queenside?**

Answer: That's right! The game move is designed to prevent Black from gaining counterplay in the centre, as 14...e5 costs a piece after 15 f5. In other words, White is using the unfortunate situation of the bishop on g6 to curtail Black's initiative.

But Kramnik is not to be thwarted:

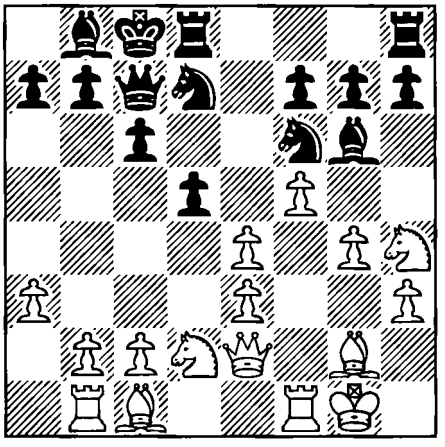
14...e5?!

Anyway. Black jettisons the bishop to open lines against the white king.

15 f5

The Noah's Ark Trap, in which a pawn chain smothers a bishop, is one of the oldest traps in chess. Of course, a player who won a match against Kasparov isn't going to miss such an idea, but anyone can overestimate their chances in a tactical melee.

15...e4 16 dxe4 ♕c7



Exercise: What happens if White takes the bishop on g6 with 17 fxg6?

Answer: 17 fxg6?? ♕h2+ 18 ♔f2 ♗g3+ 19 ♔f3 ♘e5 is mate.

17 ♖f4!

The rook throws itself in the way of the black queen.

17...♖de8 18 fxg6 hxg6 19 ♘hf3 ♕b6

White has to be careful now, as the e3-pawn is pinned so 20...♗xf4 would win a whole rook.

20 e5!

The only move, but good enough to save the rook from capture.

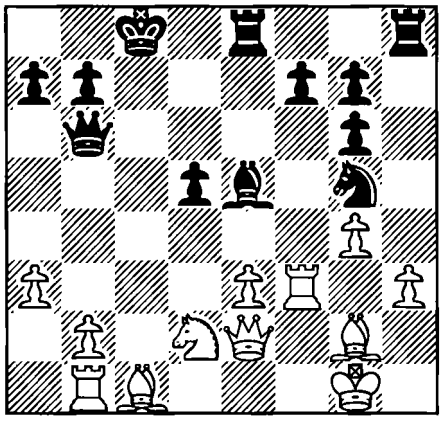
20...♘xe5 21 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 22 ♖f3 ♘h7

The knight heads for g5 to begin the next wave of Black's attack.

23 c4

The first sign of White switching from defence to counterattack. The white rook needs to stand firm on f3 to guard the vulnerable points on e3 and h3.

23...♘g5 24 cxd5 cxd5



25 ♘f1?

Too defensive. 25 b4, intending 26 ♘b3 and 27 ♘c5, White would gain the initiative.

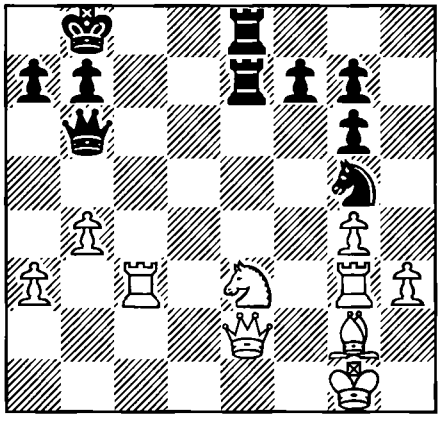
25...♔b8 26 b4 d4 27 ♗d2 ♖e7 28 ♖c1 dxe3?

Black hopes to profit from a pin on the e-file, but it's a mirage. He should either keep the tension with 28...f6 or try 28...d3!? 29 ♕xd3 (perhaps 29 ♕d1!?) 29...♘xf3+ 30 ♗xf3 ♖xh3 31 ♔g2 ♖h8 when there is a lot of fighting ahead.

29 ♗xe3 ♗d4?!

The only remaining chance was 29...♘xf3+ 30 ♕xf3 ♕f6, but after 31 ♕d5! the black king would come under attack from White's raking bishops. One idea for White would be 32 ♖c5 and 33 ♖b5 to pile the pressure on b7.

30 ♖g3 ♗xe3+ 31 ♘xe3 ♖he8 32 ♖c3



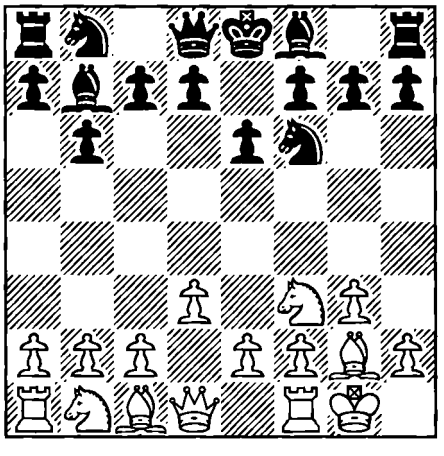
The black attack has come to an end and White is a piece up for a pawn. The rest is a simple consolidation job for Svidler.

32...a6 33 ♕f2 f6 34 ♘c2 ♕xf2+ 35 ♔xf2 ♖e2+ 36 ♔f1 ♖d2 37 ♖gd3 ♖ee2 38 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 39 ♘e3 ♘e6 40 ♘c4 ♖d1+ 41 ♔f2 ♘f4 42 ♗f3 ♖a1 43 h4 g5 44 h5 1-0

Chapter Seven
KIA Versus the Queen's Indian

In this chapter we analyse what happens if Black counters White's kingside fianchetto by putting his bishop quickly on b7. A typical sequence is:
1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 b6 3 ♗g2 ♗b7 4 0-0 e6

Now 5 c4 or 5 d4 are natural moves when we're well on the way to a Queen's Indian main line, but the way to keep it a King's Indian Attack is with:
5 d3!



In the Queen's Indian proper with White committed to the advance 1 d4, Black is well placed to fight for control of the e4-square. He does his best either to prevent White from advancing e2-e4, or else weaken his position in some way to achieve it. Here, however, White still has the option of supporting the e2-e4 advance with 5 d3, so the exertions of the black pieces alone can't prevent White from conquering e4 with a pawn.

Question: **Why should it matter that much if White gets in d2-d3 and e2-e4? Can't Black just develop his pieces like in a Sicilian Hedgehog with 5...♗e7, 6...0-0, 7...d6, 8...c5, and 9...♘bd7?**

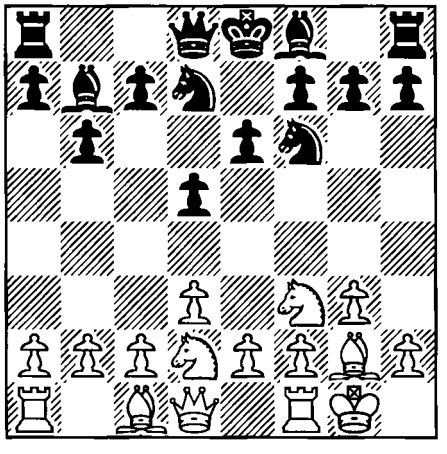
Answer: In the Sicilian Hedgehog Black has already reduced the potential size of the white pawn centre on move three: after 1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 White is deprived of his d-pawn. In the King's Indian Attack he can seek to build a full pawn centre in two waves: firstly with d2-d3 and e2-e4, then, having secured the e4-pawn with moves like ♖e1 or ♘bd2, he can venture d3-d4. If Black has played ...c7-c5, the preliminary c2-c3 will ensure that White can answer...c5xd4 with c3xd4, keeping a full pawn centre.

For this reason, Black can't sit back in the KIA and let White build a pawn centre. He needs to make an immediate counter-thrust to fight for the e4-square.

5...d5! 6 ♘bd2

The knight is developed with a view to supporting an e2-e4 advance.

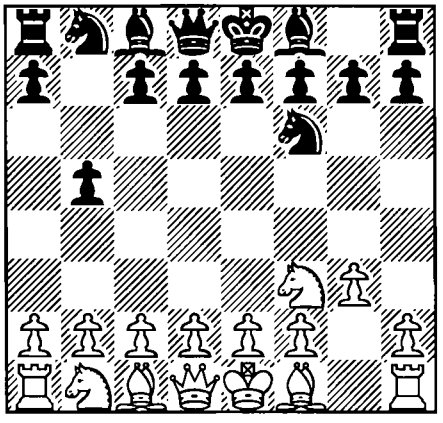
6...♘bd7



Here White has a choice. In Game 35 we look at White's immediate action in the centre with 7 e4 (the slightly slower 7 ♖e1 intending e2-e4 can be found in the notes). This leads to very sharp but in my opinion very promising play for White. However, it won't appeal to all tastes, so in Game 36 we look at the more positional 7 b3.

Finally, after 1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 we examine the bold 2...b5!? – not a bad move despite the drastic nature of the miniature given.

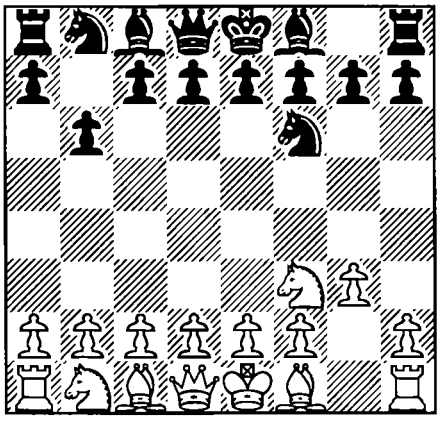
In fact it is positionally well motivated. In contrast to 2...b6, it doesn't allow White to gain space with c2-c4. It is of course committal: the pawn is slightly vulnerable to attack on b5 and limits some of Black's strategic options. For example, looking ahead he won't have the option of castling queenside into a safe structure as he sometimes does in the KIA versus the French scenarios.



After falling for a sneaky trap Black doesn't get much further than the opening in Game 37. It's worth recalling the words of the great strategist Réti: 'The foundation of positional play is tactics'. If you find you make serious oversights, then put this book away and look at some puzzles of the 'White (or Black) to play and win variety'.

Game 35
A.Pitra-W.Koggala
Zurich 2010

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 b6



Question: Is there any reason why Black should play 2...b6 rather than 2...e6 followed by putting the bishop on b7 a bit later?

Answer: Since Black intends to develop his bishop to b7 he might as well arrange it as soon as White commits himself to his own fianchetto on g2. Instead 2...e6 3 ♗g2 b6 still looks OK for Black as if 4 ♘e5 then he has 4...d5, but leaving the fianchetto too long is asking for trouble.

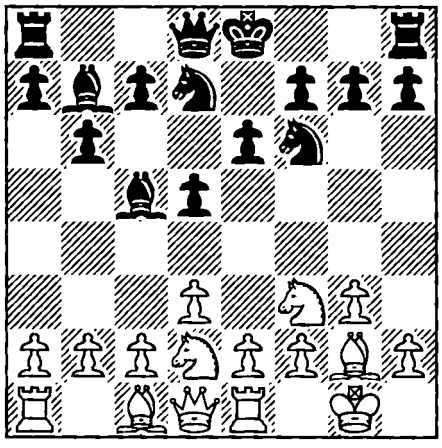
3 ♗g2 ♗b7 4 0-0 e6 5 d3 d5

Black could also play 5...♗e7 when after 6 e4 d5 (notice the 'rule' holds that Black must challenge the white centre quickly with ...d7-d5) 7 e5 ♘fd7 8 ♖e1 c5 play has transposed to a French set-up as seen in Chapter One. Then 9 c4!? d4 10 h4 h6 transposes to Game Three which looked promising for White.

6 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 7 e4!?

I have standardised the move order. The game actually began with the 'French' sequence 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 ♘d2 b6 4 g3 ♗b7 5 ♗g2 ♘d7 6 ♘gf3 dxe4 7 dxe4 ♘gf6 8 0-0.

If White plays like this then I think he should make a positional pawn sacrifice. A more solid alternative is 7 ♖e1 to prepare e2-e4, when after 7...♗c5 I have to ask:



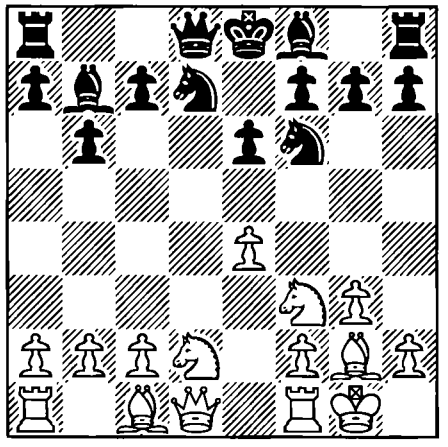
Exercise: Can you spot Black's threat?

Answer: Play might continue 8 h3 (it's a useful precaution to take the g4-square away from the black knight; indeed, Black threatened to win the queen with 7...♗xf2+! 8 ♔xf2 ♘g4+ and 9...♘e3 which would be very embarrassing indeed for White) 8...0-0 9 e4 dxe4 10 dxe4 e5. Black stops the further advance 11 e5 and now we have a fixed centre structure typical of the KIA in which White can try to outplay his opponent with 11 ♘h4, etc.

If after 7 ♖e1 Black plays 7...♗e7 then 8 e4 dxe4 (here 8...0-0 9 e5 leaves us with a space advantage of the kind we saw in Chapter One) 9 dxe4 0-0 10 e5 ♘d5 11 a3 (threatening 12 c4 trapping the knight) 11...c5 12 c4 ♘c7 13 ♕c2 followed by 14 ♘e4 looks like a nice edge for White.

7...dxe4 8 dxe4

White could get his pawn back with 8 ♘g5, but after 8...♗e7 (he could also try 8...♘c5) 9 ♘gxe4 ♕c8!, defending the bishop on b7 against any discovered attack by the white knight, White doesn't have much.



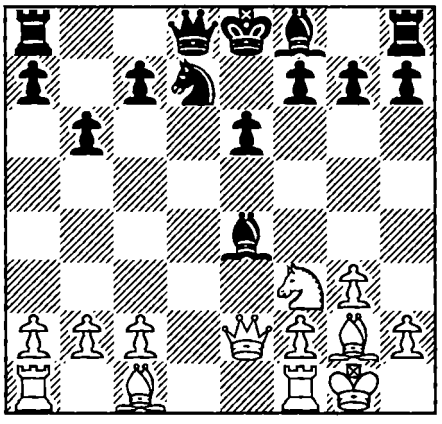
8...♘xe4

Black could decline the pawn with 8...♘c5, but I don't think he equalizes: for example, 9 e5 ♘d5 10 a3! (a standard idea to take the b4-square away from the black knight before pushing it backwards) 10...♕d7 11 c4 ♘e7 12 b4 ♘d3 (12...♘a4 13 ♕c2 leaves the black knight awkwardly placed on a4), as in M.Venkatesh-V.Eingorn, Metz 2011, and here 13 ♕e2! looks good for White. If 13...♘xc1 14 ♖axc1 and White will build up strongly in the centre with 15 ♘e4 and 16 ♖fd1, while after the counterattacking 13...a5 it's likely that it will be Black who is blown away: for instance, 14 ♖d1 axb4 15 ♘e4 ♘xc1 16 ♖axc1 ♕c8 17 ♘d6+! (a sacrifice to create a possible pawn fork on d7) 17...cxd6 18 exd6 ♗xf3 19 ♗xf3 ♖a7 20 axb4 (no need to capture on e7) 20...♘c6 21 c5 bxc5 (or 21...b5 22 ♕xb5) 22 ♖xc5 and Black can resign as c6 drops.

9 ♘xe4

Instead, 9 ♘g5 looks scary for Black, but after 9...♕xg5 10 ♘xe4 ♕f5 11 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 12 ♗xb7 ♖d8 he can develop carefully when his extra pawn compensates for his light-square holes: for example, 13 ♗f4 e5 14 ♕e2 ♗d6 15 ♗d2 0-0.

9...♗xe4 10 ♕e2!?



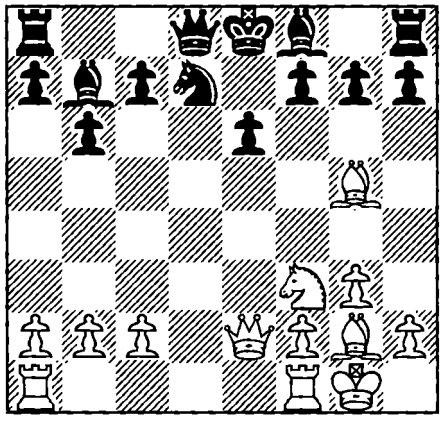
Question: What is White's compensation for the pawn?

Answer: Black's pieces are cramped, his bishop on e4 is under attack ,and he is behind in development, still two moves from castling. It will be difficult for Black to challenge White's control of the d-file after he plays ♖d1. Furthermore, the e6-pawn is vulnerable to sudden attack by ♘d4 when the sacrifice ♘xe6 becomes a possibility.

Black can't solve his problems by exchanging his bishop for the knight with 10...♗xf3 as after 11 ♗xf3 White's ideas of ♗c6 and ♖d1, with ♕b5 added as well if necessary, look decisive. Even if Black could give up the bishop for the knight without an immediate disaster, he would still fall into a light-square stranglehold. The upshot is that he must move his bishop back, when White might gain more time by exposing an attack on it with ♘d4 at some point.

10...♗b7 11 ♖e1

More vigorous was 11 ♗g5!.



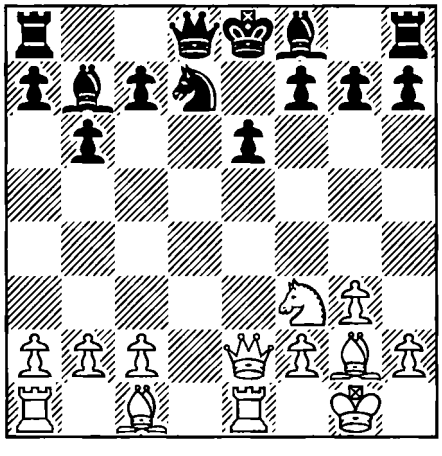
For example:

a) 11...♗e7 12 ♘e5! ♗xg2 (Black can't afford to give up the b7-bishop: 12...♗xg5 13 ♗xb7 and 12...♘xe5 13 ♗xb7 are bad for him, as shown by, after the latter, 13...♗xg5 14 ♕xe5 ♖b8 15 ♗c6+ ♔f8 16 ♖ad1 ♕e7 17 ♖d7 when he is crushed) 13 ♖fd1! (not wasting time on the recapture on g2; the important thing is action down the d-file). Now 13...♗d5 is demolished by 14 ♖xd5 exd5 15 ♘c6 when Black has to give up his queen to avoid mate on e7, so he has to let the rook into d7 with 13...♗xg5 14 ♖xd7, though he gets to castle after 14...♕c8 15 ♔xg2 0-0. White has pressure down the d-file and against f7. With best play we reach a rather arid endgame: 16 ♖ad1 ♕b7+ 17 ♔g1 ♖ad8 18 ♕h5 (now the f7-pawn will fall) 18...♗f6 19 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 20 ♘xf7! ♗f6 21 ♘g5 ♗xg5 22 ♕xg5 ♕f3 23 ♕d2. White has some advantage due to the weakness of the e6-pawn and it won't be much fun for Black to defend. Indeed, Magnus Carlsen would love to have White's position.

b) 11...♕c8 12 ♘d4 ♗xg2 13 ♘xe6! (again White strikes in the centre rather than taking back the bishop). At first glance it looks over as 13...♗xf1 14 ♘xc7 or 14 ♘xg7 are pretty mates, but Black can survive with 13...♘e5! 14 ♕xe5 ♕xe6 when as in variation 'a' we get an endgame after 15 ♕xe6+ fxe6 16 ♔xg2. Again we can point to the weakness of the e6-pawn, which gives White some chances and forces Black into a fairly miserable defence.

I recommend you play 11 ♗g5. If Black doesn't know the theory you might win very quickly; if he does the worst that can happen is an endgame where you can't lose and might win.

Pitra's choice, 11 ♖e1, keeps the tension, but with best play Black can equalize.

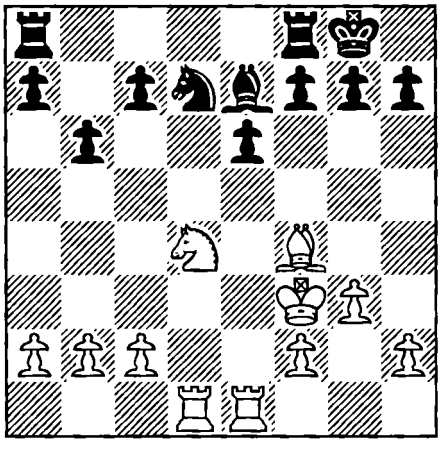


11...♗e7

It is worth remembering that Black isn't out of the woods once he manages to castle. After 11...♗d6 he doesn't have any minor pieces on the kingside, so White can build up a dangerous attack with, say, 12 ♗d2 0-0 13 ♖ad1 ♕c8 14 ♗c3 h6 15 ♕c4, intending 16 ♕g4 hitting g7.

12 ♗f4 0-0 13 ♖ad1 ♕c8 14 ♘d4 ♘c5

Question: Can't Black escape with his extra pawn with 14...♗xg2 15 ♔xg2 ♕b7+ 16 ♕f3 ♕xf3+ 17 ♔xf3, reaching an endgame?



In fact, White has enough pressure for the pawn and it is still up to Black to prove he is equal: for example, 17...♗f6 18 c3 when after 18...e5 19 ♘c6 exf4 20 ♖xd7 fxg3 21 hxg3 ♖fc8 22 ♘e7+ ♗xe7 23 ♖exe7 or 18...♖ac8 19 ♘c6 ♘c5 20 ♗e3 ♘a4 21 ♖e2 intending 22 ♖d7 White's control of the seventh rank is well worth a pawn.

15 ♘c6

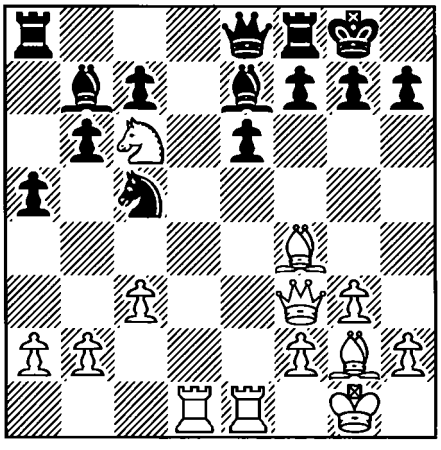
The knight helps White control the d-file by guarding the d8-square and shuts the bishop on b7 out of the game, as Black can't afford the exchange 15...♗xc6 16 ♗xc6 which gives away the light squares.

15...♕e8 16 ♕f3

Nonetheless, it isn't easy for White to maintain the knight on c6. It looks odd for the white queen to pin herself against the knight, but there's no obvious way for Black to take advantage.

16...a5 17 c3

White's plan is to drive the black knight from its strong post on c5 when his dominance of the centre will be increased and Black will have to watch out for discovered attacks on his bishop on b7 with ♘e7+.



17...♗d8

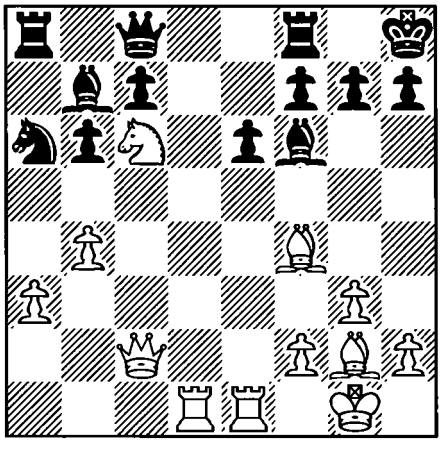
Too passive. 17...♗f6 or 17...♖d8!? would escape some of the pressure.

18 b4 axb4 19 cxb4 ♘a6 20 a3

Black escapes after 20 ♘e7+ ♗xe7 21 ♕xb7 ♗xb4 22 ♖f1 ♕b5.

20...♔h8 21 ♕c3 ♗f6 22 ♕c2 ♕c8

Far too slow. He had to challenge White's grip on c6 with 22...♘b8 or 22...♘c5!?, cutting off the white queen's defence of the knight.



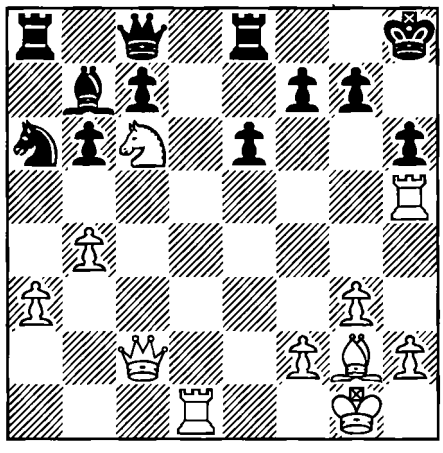
Exercise: What is the best plan now for White?

Answer: **23 ♗e5!**

White has consolidated his grip on the queenside and the d-file. Or rather we might say he has paralyzed the black pieces on that side of the board. Therefore the way to exploit his

advantage is to start an attack on the kingside as most of Black's army are in no position to help defend their king. Pitra begins by exchanging off the only black minor piece left on the kingside, which also allows him to bring a rook quickly to the h-file.

23...♗xe5 24 ♖xe5 ♖e8 25 ♖h5 h6

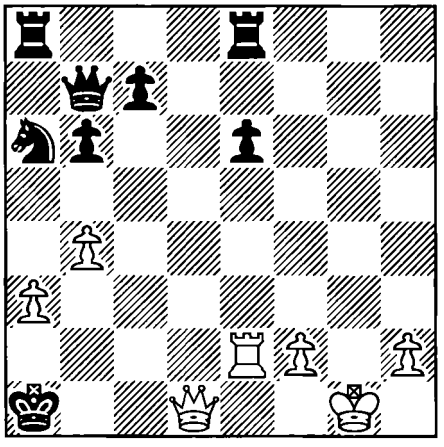


Alekhine often used the strategic device of tying down his opponent's pieces on the queenside and then switching to a kingside attack before they had time to respond.

Exercise: Try to imagine for a moment you share the tactical genius of the great former World Champion. After the moves 26 ♘e5 ♔g8 (guarding f7) can you find a way to conclude the game with sacrifices?

26 ♕c1

Answer: White has a spectacular win with 26 ♘e5 ♔g8 27 ♘xf7! (or 26 ♖xh6! gxh6 27 ♘xf7, but Black has the extra option of 26...f5, declining the sacrifice in this move order) 27...♔xf7 28 ♖xh6! gxh6 29 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 30 ♕h7+ and now if 30...♔f8 31 ♖d7 mates on f7 or g7, while 30...♔f6 leads to a king hunt: 31 ♕xh6+ ♔f5 32 g4+ ♔xg4 33 ♕g6+ ♔f3 34 ♖d3+ ♔e2 35 ♖e3+ ♔d2 36 ♕d3+ ♔c1 37 ♖e1+ ♔b2 38 ♖e2+ ♔a1 39 ♕d1 mate.



It's not every day that the black king ends up on a1.

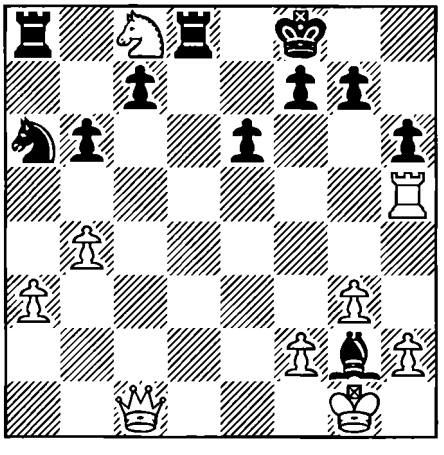
26...♔g8

If instead 26...♘b8 there is another pretty win with 27 ♘e7! (threatening 28 ♖xh6+! and mate next move) 27...♖xe7 28 ♗xb7 and Black loses a rook as if 28...♕xb7 29 ♖d8+ and mates.

27 ♖d8!

Well, White didn't win the king with 26 ♘e5, but he does get to win the queen with this elegant move.

27...♖xd8 28 ♘e7+ ♔f8 29 ♘xc8 ♗xg2



Exercise: Can you see anything better than the 'automatic' recapture of the bishop on g2?

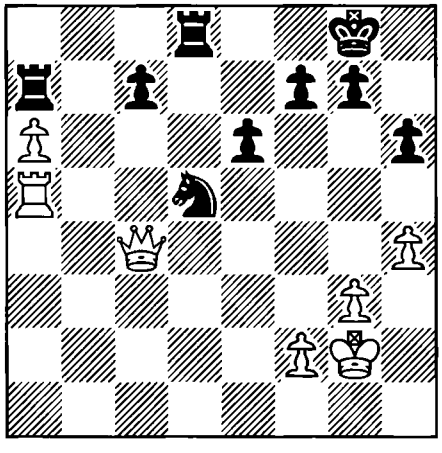
30 ♔xg2

Answer: As Capablanca once said, every move, no matter how obvious, has to be checked. White could have grabbed another pawn with 30 ♘xb6! as 30...♗f3 31 ♘xa8 ♗xh5 32 ♕c6 ♖d6 33 ♕b7 is hopeless for Black due to the trapped knight on a6. After 30...cxb6 31 ♔xg2 White's task would be a bit easier than in the game.

30...♖axc8 31 ♕c4

Once again the theme will be playing on both sides of the board. White will create a passed pawn on the a-file and advance it as far as possible whilst keeping it safely defended. Then, when the black pieces have been drawn to the queenside to stop the pawn, he will strike on the kingside using the potential of the queen to switch quickly from one side of the board to another. To this end he defends the b-pawn with his queen to enable the a-pawn to start its journey.

31...♘b8 32 a4 ♘d7 33 a5 ♘f6 34 ♖e5 bxa5 35 bxa5 ♔g8 36 ♖c5 ♘d5 37 a6 ♖a8 38 ♖a5 ♖a7 39 h4!



White has achieved as much as he can on the queenside and so switches his attention to the other flank.

39...♖b8 40 ♖a3 ♖b6 41 ♖a4

The best square for the rook as it both defends a6 and can swing over to g4 to join in an attack on the black king.

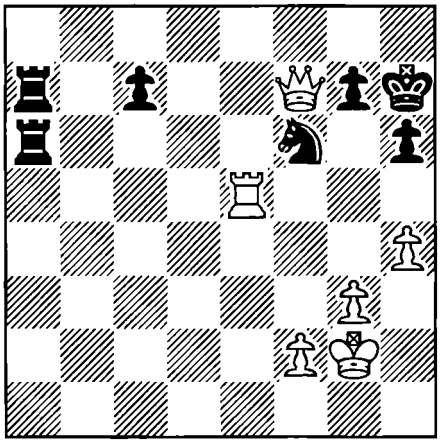
41...♖b2 42 ♕c6 ♖b6

Black gives up the f7-pawn as he sees this will allow him to get rid of the passed pawn, but his e-pawn will soon drop as well. In any case it looks grim for him: for example, 42...g6 43 h5 when his kingside defences begin to creak.

43 ♕e8+ ♔h7 44 ♕xf7 ♘f6 45 ♖f4 e5

If the knight moves away then 46 ♖g4 wins.

46 ♖f5 ♖bxa6 47 ♖xe5



Now in order to prevent 48 ♖e7 Black decides to hand over the c-pawn as well.

47...c5 48 ♕c4 ♖a2 49 ♖xc5 ♖7a4 50 ♕d3+ ♘e4 51 ♖e5

Simplest was 51 ♖c2 as there was no need to give up the f2-pawn.

51...♖xf2+ 52 ♔h3 ♖d2 53 ♕b1 ♖dd4 54 ♖e8 ♖ab4 55 ♕a2 ♘f6 56 ♕c2+ ♖e4 57 ♖c8 ♖b7 58 ♕c5

Threatening a fatal check on f5.

58...g6

He could fight on with 58...♖f7.

59 ♖f8 ♘h5 1-0

After 60 ♕d5 both of the black rooks are hanging and mate on g8 is threatened.

Game 36
A.Minasian-J.Nogueiras Santiago
Linares 1999

1 ♘f3 ♘f6

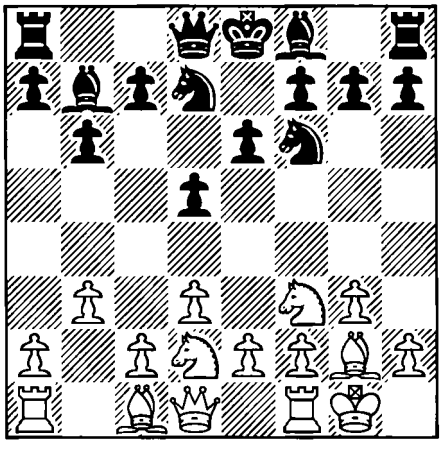
For the sake of clarity I've amended the move order, which was actually 1...d5 2 g3 b6 3 ♗g2 ♗b7 4 0-0 e6 5 d3 ♘f6 6 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 7 b3.

2 g3 b6 3 ♗g2 ♗b7 4 0-0 e6 5 d3 d5 6 ♘bd2

Whichever strategy White chooses, the knight belongs on the d2-square.

6...♘bd7 7 b3

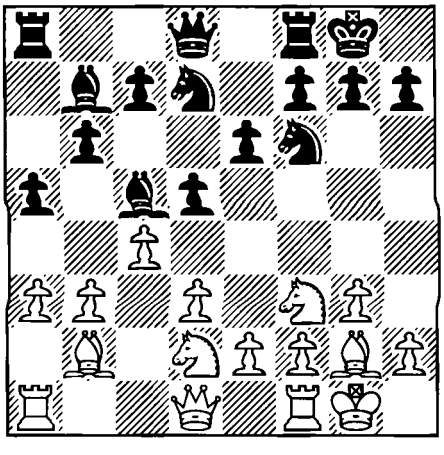
In the previous game we saw White play 7 e4 (and in the notes 7 ♖e1 aiming for e2-e4). The resulting clash of arms in the centre looked promising for White, but it got very sharp and so I want to offer you a solid alternative. A fianchetto on b2 followed by positional manoeuvring is very much in keeping with White's aims in the King's Indian Attack.



7...♗c5

Black can also develop his bishop on e7, when 8 ♗b2 0-0 9 e3 (making a hole on e2 for the queen as a prelude to e3-e4) 9...a5 10 a4 ♘c5 11 ♕e2 ♘fd7 (if Black's knight stands its ground stopping e3-e4, then White could build up with ♘d4 and f2-f4) 12 e4 f5 13 ♘d4 ♗f6 14 f4 ♖e8 15 e5 ♗e7 16 g4 g6 17 h3 gave White a useful space advantage in L.Polugaevsky-A.Pomar, Las Palmas 1974.

8 ♗b2 0-0 9 a3 a5 10 c4

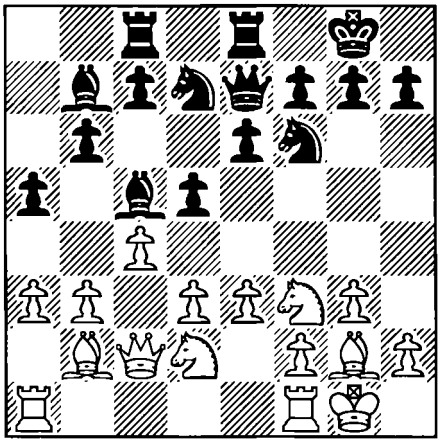


Question: Why doesn't Minasian continue as Polugaevsky did in the note above with e2-e3 and ♕e2 to prepare e3-e4?

Answer: It is important to be flexible when it comes to solving opening problems. White shouldn't slavishly stick to the KIA recipe of preparing e2-e4 if it doesn't fit the require-

ments of the position. For example, after 10 e3 ♖e8 11 ♕e2 e5 Black has managed to build a big centre. Note this is only possible because he has played ...♗c5 rather than ...♗e7 – with no bishop in the way on e7 the black rook on e8 is able to support the ...e7-e5 advance. That's why facing ...♗c5 Minasian rightly prefers to put pressure on d5 with 10 c4. The 'KIA' plan of e2-e4, if needed, can wait until later.

10...♕e7 11 ♕c2 ♖fe8 12 e3 ♖ac8



Exercise: Have a go at assessing the position and see if you can find the best plan for White.

Answer: OK, let's compare notes. We're going to try to agree on a good strategic plan for White. It seems difficult, but we can break it down into some simple steps. Is the white pawn structure the more flexible? Yes. He has four possible ways to change its nature: b3-b4, c4xd5, d3-d4 and e3-e4. Meanwhile Black has ...d5xc4 and ...e6-e5. More flexibility doesn't necessarily mean better chances – at this stage we're just noting that White has more options when it comes to pawn moves to support a possible plan.

Are White's pieces better placed than Black's pieces? If you compare the pieces one by one, there doesn't seem much of a difference: a white bishop on g2 balances a black bishop on b7, and the knights on either side are on similar squares.

The first real difference we notice is the white queen on c2 and rooks on a1 and f1 compared to a queen on e7 and rooks on c8 and e8. This difference implies that the black heavy pieces are better poised for action in the centre, whereas the white pieces would happier if the queenside opened.

But the major contrast is between the white bishop on b2, inconspicuously tucked away on b2, and the black bishop on c5, which is as far advanced as any black pawn. Whenever a piece is on an unusual square, it should stir your imagination to find ways to exploit it. Why aren't pieces normally advanced in front of the pawns? Because they are targets.

We are edging towards a possible plan. The white queen and rook on a1 would be better placed for queenside action, the black rooks and queen would be better placed for action in the centre. And then there is the black bishop on c5, just asking to be kicked back by a white pawn.

After 13 d4 the bishop retreats to d6 when it's hard to see what White has achieved. He has shut in his bishop on b2 and his centre is less flexible. The bishop is better on d6 than c5. Now that it is out of the way, Black might counterattack with ...c7-c5, when the opposition of the white queen on c2 and the black rook on c8 could be awkward for White.

Let's think about 13 e4 dxe4 14 dxe4 and now upon 14...e5 (preventing the encroachment 15 e5), Black is solidly centralized and we haven't been able to prove the bishop is bad on c5. A positive point is that we can improve the bishop on g2 with the neat move ♗h3, indirectly putting more pressure on e5. But how can we progress after that? If we try ♘h4, aiming for ♘f5, Black would keep the knight out of f5 with ...g6 when we have to worry about an invasion of the central dark squares with...♗d4.

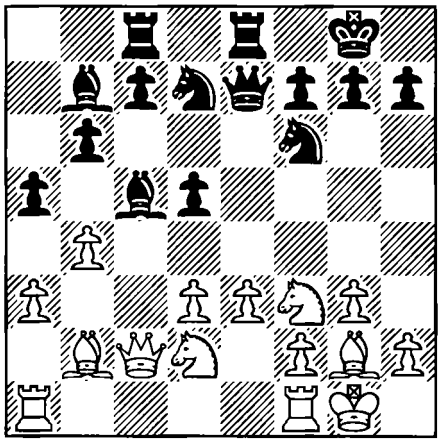
So we should reject 13 e4, at least for the moment. Still, keep the move ♗h3 in mind: it's a way to prove that White's light-squared bishop has more potential than its opposite number on b7.

That brings us to thinking about our queenside pawns, and with a bit of inspiration we might find the sequence in the game. Let's see what happened:

13 cxd5 exd5

Black had no choice. He loses a piece after both 13...♘xd5 14 d4 ♗d6 15 e4 ♘5f6 16 e5 and 13...♗xd5 14 e4 (but not 14 d4 ♗xf3!) 14...♗a8 15 d4 ♗d6 16 e5.

14 b4!



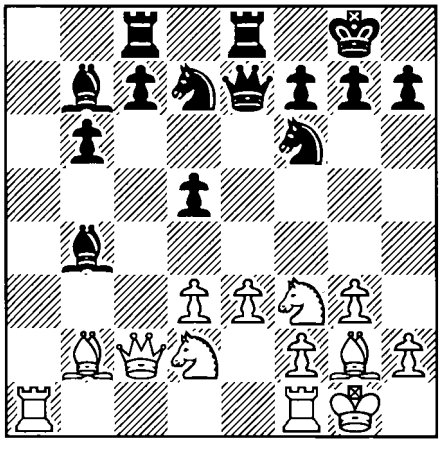
Black is a grandmaster and, realizing that this pawn advance would be a strong move if allowed 'for free', has taken the precaution of guarding the b4-square with three pieces: the pawn on a5, dark-squared bishop, and queen. Unfortunately for him Minasian still manages to make it work as a sacrifice. And even worse for him, one of the unwritten rules

of chess strategy is that the more you try to prevent a breakthrough, the stronger it becomes if it can be safely carried out.

Question: Why does trying to prevent a move make it stronger?

Answer: When a breakthrough occurs the defender's pieces, that might have been used to gain counterplay elsewhere on the board, or just left on safe squares, find themselves part of a scattered force that invested time and energy in a failed plan.

14...axb4 15 axb4 ♗xb4



Exercise: White is a pawn down, but how does he press home his initiative?

Answer: **16 ♖a7!**

In return for the pawn White has gained a rook on the seventh rank which, in combination with the queen, puts pressure on c7, the linchpin that holds together the black queenside.

16...♗a8

Also very unpleasant for Black is 16...♖b8 17 ♕xc7 ♖ec8, as 18 ♗xf6 ♖xc7 19 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 20 ♘d4 leaves him in a pin.

17 ♗h3!

'If you see a good move, look for a better one'. Throughout this book there are examples of White causing his opponent unexpected grief by edging his bishop one square backwards to f1 or forwards to h3. Here rather than take the pawn on c7, White piles on more pressure with the threat of 18 ♗xf6, when Black would have to recapture with the horrible 18...gxf6 to avoid losing material.

17...d4

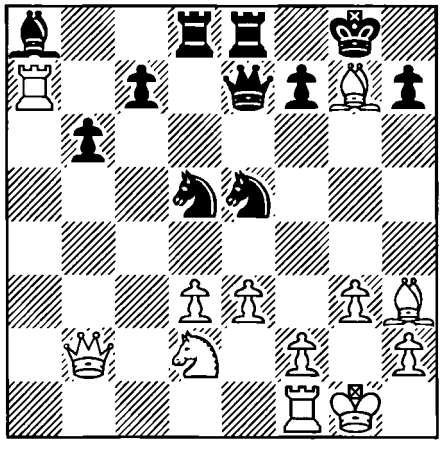
Nogueiras makes a bid for some freedom of movement by clearing the long diagonal

for his bishop and the d5-square for his knight, as after 17...♗d6 18 ♗xf6 gxf6 (better to give up the exchange with 18...♘xf6) 19 ♘d4 ♖ed8 20 ♘f5 ♕f8 21 ♕a4 he is left in a crushing bind.

18 ♗xd4 ♗xd2 19 ♘xd2 ♘d5 20 ♕b2

Perhaps not the most precise. Black's position would soon collapse after 20 ♕a4 ♖ed8 21 ♖c1 and then 22 e4 as c7 will drop.

20...♖cd8 21 ♗xg7 ♘e5



Now White could exchange everything off on e5 and reach an easily winning endgame.

22 ♗h6

Question: A strong retreat?

22...f6??

Answer: No! Rather White's last move was a terrible blunder that also deserves two question marks as it converts a winning position into a losing one. After 22...♕f6! Black would pick up the bishop on h6 due to the threat of 23...♘f3+, winning the white queen.

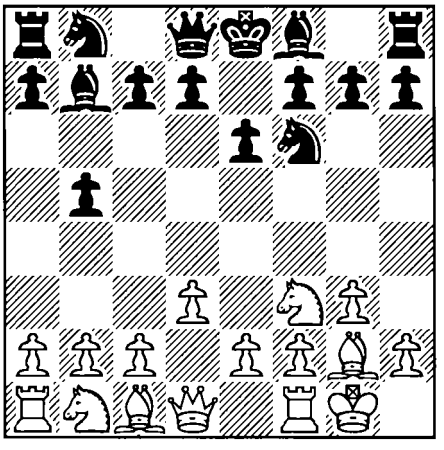
Of course, time pressure might have been a factor here, but that is unlikely after only 22 moves, despite the difficult nature of the game. I suspect that Nogueiras had already resigned himself to defeat, and so wasn't looking for any incredible saving move. Meanwhile Minasian's sense of danger deserted him as he had such a huge advantage. It only goes to show you cannot be too careful in a winning position, and that you should never give up hope in a losing one.

The remainder of the game isn't faultless, but White was always winning and eventually brought home the bacon:

23 e4 ♘xd3 24 ♕c2 ♕f7 25 exd5 ♗xd5 26 ♕a4 ♕h5 27 ♕g4+ ♕xg4 28 ♗xg4 ♖e7 29 ♗f5 ♘b4 30 ♗f4 ♗f7 31 ♘e4 ♘d5 32 ♖d1 ♔g7 33 ♖xc7 ♘xf4 34 ♖xd8 1-0

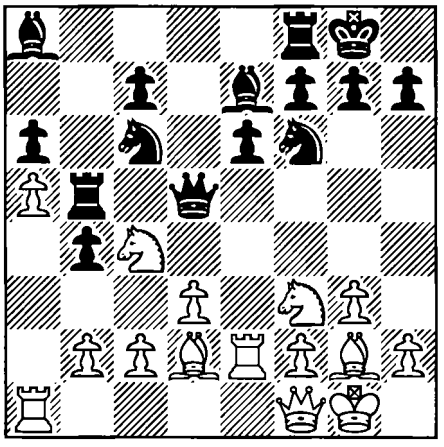
Game 37
V.Erdos-M.Mueller
Deizisau 2013

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 b5 3 ♗g2 ♗b7 4 0-0 e6 5 d3



5...d5

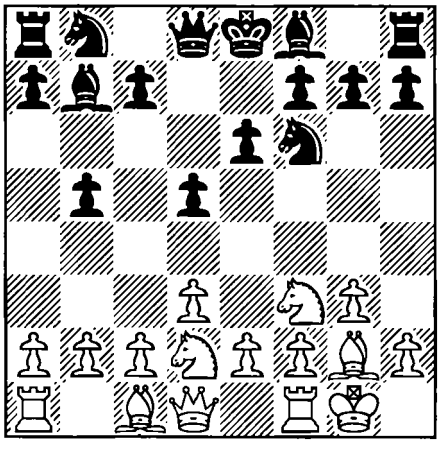
Alternatively, Black can let White advance his pawn to e4 unchallenged. For example, Y.Kuzubov-K.Kulaots, Reykjavik 2010, went 5...♗e7 6 e4 d6 (with the pawn on b6 such Hedgehog play would be suspect for Black, as White could gain more space with c2-c4, but here the b5-pawn is helping to restrain White's plans) 7 a4 (White attacks the b5-pawn in order to win a post at c4 for his knight) 7...b4 8 ♘bd2 0-0 9 ♘c4 ♘c6 10 a5 (preventing the supporting move ...a6-a5 and clearing a4 for the rook in case it ever wants to attack the advanced black pawn) 10...a6 11 ♖e1 ♖b8 12 ♗d2 (White puts pressure on b4 first with the bishop and then the queen) 12...♗a8 13 ♖e2 (another approach would be 13 c3 ♖e8 14 ♕c2 followed in time by d3-d4 to assert himself in the centre; if Black felt compelled to exchange with ...b4xc3 then after b2xc3 White could try to wrest control of the b-file from the black rook) 13...♖b5 14 ♕e1 (the siege of the b4-pawn continues, but Black is able to break out in the centre) 14...d5 15 exd5 ♕xd5 16 ♕f1 (defending g2 to stop any tricks along the a8-h1 diagonal).



After 16...♕h5 (it was better to retreat the queen to safety with 16...♕d8, but then White might finally start edging forwards in the centre with 17 ♖ee1 followed by 18 c3 and 19 d4) 17 h3 ♗d6? (he should make a hole for his queen with, say, 17...h6) 18 g4! ♘xg4 (if 18...♕g6 19 ♘h4 traps the queen, while 18...♕d5 19 ♗e3 threatens to trap her with 20 ♘fd2 or 20 ♘h4 which is unpleasant for Black) 19 hxg4 ♕xg4 20 ♖e4 ♕g6 21 ♕e2 Black didn't have enough for the piece and resigned at move 40.

In this game we see another example of Black losing his nerve against the KIA. Deprived of an active plan by White's rock solid structure he becomes impatient and tries to force matters. The result is the quick decline in Black's position from 'about equal' at move 16 to 'lost' at move 20.

6 ♘bd2



White heads for the same set-up as in Pitra-Koggala above, but with the black pawn on b5 rather than b6.

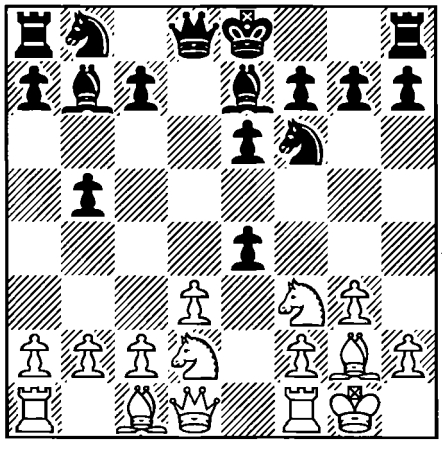
Question: Is this the best plan?

6...♗e7

Black diverges from the Pitra game (where Black's pawn was on b6) by developing his bishop instead of playing 6...♘bd7.

Answer: To respond to the question above, I think White is probably adopting the best plan, as if on the last move he had switched to a direct attack on the pawns with 6 c4, Black could have held his pawn front intact with 6...c6!?.

7 e4 dxe4



Exercise: If White now plays 8 dxe4, can Black play 8...♘xe4 safely?

Answer: After 8 dxe4 ♘xe4? White has the decisive move 9 ♘e5! (he didn't have this in the Pitra game because Black had played 6...♘bd7). Black is crushed after 9...f5 10 ♗xe4 fxe4 11 ♕h5+ g6 12 ♘xg6, 9...♘d6 10 ♗xb7 ♘xb7 11 ♕f3 (hitting both b7 and f7) 11...♘d6 12 ♕xa8, or 9...♘xd2 10 ♗xb7 ♘xf1 11 ♕xd8+ ♗xd8 12 ♔xf1 and 13 ♗xa8.

As Black can't play 8...♘xe4 White will have the chance to consolidate his control of e4 next move with 9 ♕e2 or maybe advance 9 e5, with a good game. Therefore I think White should play 8 dxe4 rather than the game move.

8 ♘g5 ♘bd7 9 dxe4 h6

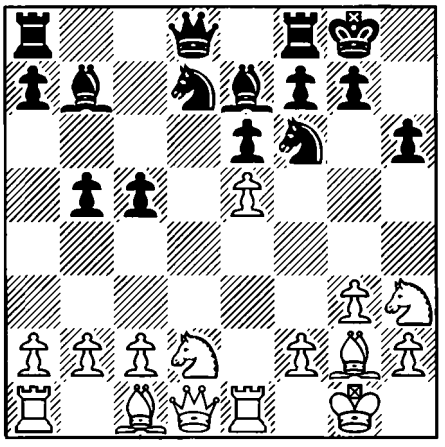
More solid was 9...e5.

10 ♘h3 0-0 11 ♖e1 c5

As at move nine, we have to recommend 11...e5 here, closing the long diagonal and preventing the white knight re-entering the centre with ♘f4. White would then be a long way from getting a horse to its ideal square on f5.

12 e5!

Black isn't given another chance to play ...e6-e5.

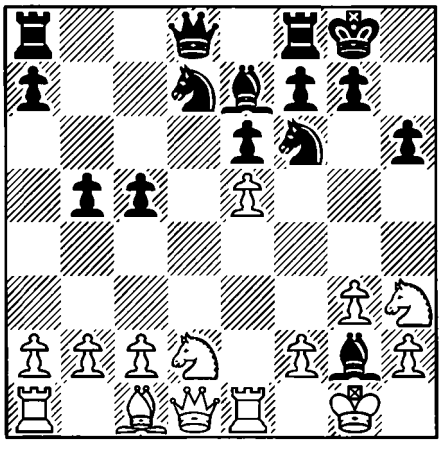


12...♗xg2

Question: What should White do if Black plays 12...♘d5 here?

Answer: After 12...♘d5 any strong player would instantly be thinking about 13 c4!. Black is forced to play 13...bxc4 due to the pin on d5, when after 14 ♘xc4 White has secured a central square for his knight where it can't be attacked by a pawn. But most importantly he has taken the energy out of Black's queenside pawns. If Black had been allowed to play ...c5-c4 himself, he would have freed the c5-square for his knight and bishop, kept his pawns as a dynamic force and made the knight on d5 completely impregnable as no white pawn could get near it.

Still, Black had no choice but to play 12...♘d5, as the game move is a blunder.



Exercise: Can you see the concealed way that White wins a piece?

Answer: **13 exf6! ♗xh3 14 fxe7 ♕xe7 15 ♕h5! 1-0**

The point. Black loses a piece after 15...♗f5 16 ♕xf5 exf5 17 ♖xe7.

Some years ago the Romanian Grandmaster Mihai Suba wrote a fine book called *Dynamic Chess Strategy*. He extolled the virtue of the Hedgehog set-up for Black and argued persuasively that a black bishop on b7 is in no whit inferior to a white bishop on g2. Only one feature did he concede might be in favour of the white bishop on g2: it is defended. "Still" says Suba, "this amounts to nothing if the side with the 'unprotected' bishop avoids some standard blunders such as ♘g5! threatening mate on h7 and the bishop on b7, or e5! winning a piece". Unfortunately for Black in this game he fell for a very sophisticated form of the e4-e5 trap.

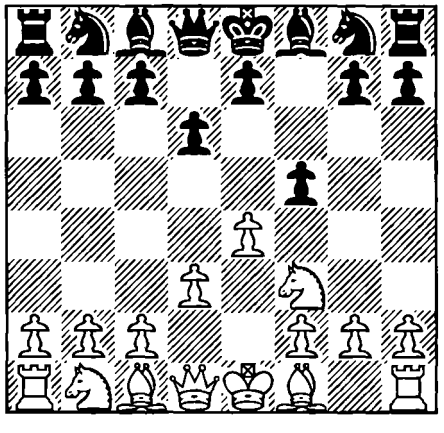
Chapter Eight
KIA Versus the Dutch (and King's Indian)

No pottering around!

It's difficult to find a quiet yet effective approach for White against the Dutch (and I'm not just saying that because I play it myself as Black). The problem is that lines that preserve a King's Indian Attack 'flavour' – restrained pawn play, methodical development, avoiding an immediate clash in the centre – are exactly what the Dutch excels against. Bent Larsen said he always liked to play the Dutch against players who 'potter around', playing tame and inoffensive moves while Black builds up an attack.

The delayed Lisitsin Gambit

So we had better try something active. I recommend the popular delayed form of the Lisitsin Gambit versus the Dutch, namely 1 ♘f3 f5 2 d3 and then against virtually anything, let's say 2...d6, 3 e4 (the Lisitsin proper is 1 ♘f3 f5 2 e4!?).



White challenges Black's f5-pawn. He will try to dissolve the centre in such a way that he profits from his lead in development and the fact that Black's light squares have been loosened. We'll look at three examples in which Black's resistance becoming ever tougher.

You will be obliged to learn a couple of long forcing variations, but you should be well rewarded for your trouble as Black doesn't seem to be able to equalize.

A note about move order

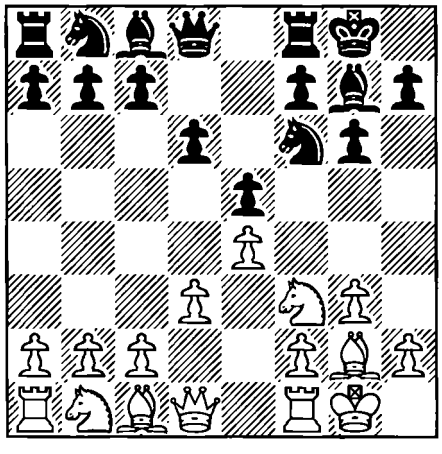
The games below after 1 ♘f3 feature the immediate 1...f5. However, Black could play 1...e6 and after 2 g3 f5, when he has got a Dutch whilst avoiding the 2 d3 and 3 e4 line. Most Dutch players want a Leningrad rather than a Classical Dutch or Stonewall Dutch, so are unlikely to adopt this move order. However, playing the immediate 2 d3 seems a simple way to avoid the whole issue, when 2...f5 3 e4 looks grotty for Black.

Also possible is 1 ♘f3 d6, so that if 2 g3 f5 takes us out of Dutch preparation. So again 2 d3 should be preferred when 2...f5 3 e4 e5 4 ♘c3 is our familiar line. Black might prefer 2...e5 so that after 3 g3 f5 4 c4 he has got in his active ...f7-f5 'Dutch' move whilst we have been 'pottering around' in Larsen's phrase. Instead, after 2...e5 you could reply 3 e4 when if 3..f5 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5 exf5 ♗xf5 6 d4 brings us back into the territory of the delayed Lisitsin – see Game 40, the version with 4...♘f6.

Instead, Black can give up on the Dutch (after 1 ♘f3 d6 2 d3 e5 3 e4), and direct play into a King's Indian Defence with a symmetrical position after 3...♘f6 4 g3 g6 5 ♗g2 ♗g7 6 0-0 0-0, etc – see Game 41.

The King's Indian Attack versus the King's Indian Defence

If White wants the King's Indian Attack, and Black wants the King's Indian Defence, and neither player backs down, then you get 1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 g6 3 ♗g2 ♗g7 4 0-0 0-0 5 d3 d6 6 e4 e5.



This symmetrical position is rather uncommon in tournament play. It is safe enough for

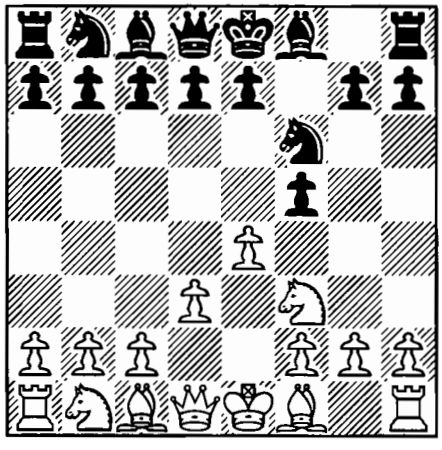
Black, but there's always a danger of a restless King's Indian Defence devotee overpressing as in Game 41.

Game 38
L.Bernal Moro-I.Rebole Arbea
Spanish Team Championship 2002

1 ♘f3 f5 2 d3 ♘f6

After this natural move White can offer a gambit.

3 e4!



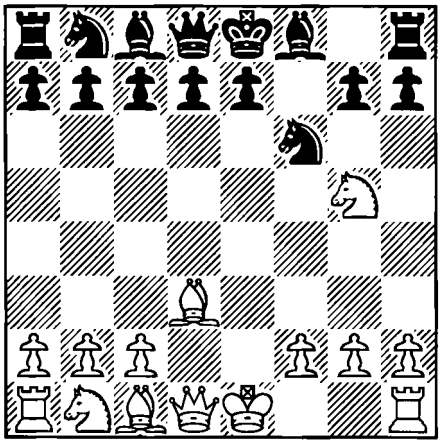
3...fxe4

Capturing the pawn is very risky. Instead, 3...d6 is sensible, when 4 exf5 ♗xf5 5 d4! intending 6 ♗d3 and 7 0-0 gives White a small plus as he can play against Black's rather shaky light squares, especially e6.

4 dxe4 ♘xe4? 5 ♗d3 ♘f6

Black would be left in a miserable endgame after 5...d5 6 ♗xe4 dxe4 7 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 8 ♘g5 ♔e8 9 ♘bc3 once White recaptures the pawn on e4.

6 ♘g5!



Exercise: Already there is a big threat hanging over the black kingside. Can you see it?

6...g6

Answer: White was planning 6 ♘xh7! when 6...♖xh7 7 ♗g6 is mate. Black's move is the best defence as now his rook can be used to block the f7-square after the bishop checks on g6.

The alternatives are dismal for Black: for example, 6...d6 7 ♗xh7! ♘xh7 8 ♕h5+ ♔d7 9 ♘f7! ♕e8 10 ♕h3+ ♔c6 11 ♕f3+ d5 12 ♘xh8 when Black is left the exchange down with a ridiculous king, or similarly 6...e6 7 ♗xh7 ♘xh7 (if 7...♖xh7 ♘xh7 ♘xh7 9 ♕h5+ ♔e7 10 ♕xh7) 8 ♕h5+ ♔e7 9 ♘xh7 threatening 10 ♗g5+ when Black will be obliterated.

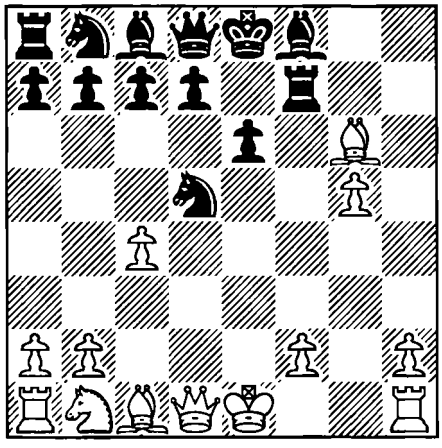
7 ♘xh7! ♖xh7 8 ♗xg6+ ♖f7 9 g4!

White's plan is to drive away the knight from f6 with 10 g5 when his queen will gain access to a strong square on h5. White's advancing kingside pawns are also a formidable attacking force in their own right.

9...e6

After 9...d5 10 g5 ♗g4 11 ♕d3 the white attack is unabated.

10 g5 ♘d5 11 c4



11...♗b4+?

A useless check that merely removes a vital defender from the kingside. He should try 11...♘e7, though 12 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 13 ♕h5+ ♘g6 14 h4!, planning h4-h5 at a good moment, is a fierce onslaught.

12 ♔f1 ♘e7 13 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 14 ♕h5+ ♔f8 15 ♕h6+ 1-0

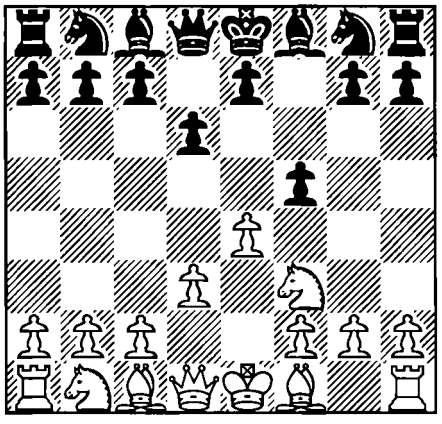
If 15...♔g8 16 g6, threatening mate in two with a check on h7 then to f7 is decisive, or if 15...♔f7 16 ♕h7+ ♔f8 17 g6.

Game 39
L.Fressinet-V.Malaniuk
Bastia 2010

1 ♘f3 f5 2 d3 d6

The point of playing 2...d6 is to occupy the e5-square as quickly as possible. If instead 2...g6 3 e4 d6 4 exf5 ♗xf5 5 d4 intending 6 ♗d3 and 7 0-0 is straightforward way for White to try to exploit the light-square weaknesses in the black camp. However, if you're feeling more ambitious 4 h4!? is a dangerous move: for example, 4...♘f6 5 h5 ♘xh5 6 ♖xh5 gxh5 7 ♘g5 c6 8 ♕xh5+ ♔d7 9 ♕h3 and White has an attack.

3 e4

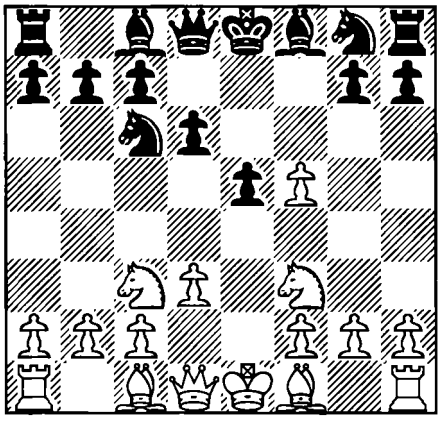


Again White builds up with the moves d2-d3 and e2-e4 which are characteristic of the King's Indian Attack.

3...e5 4 ♘c3 ♘c6

After 4...fxe4? 5 dxe4 White is ready to play 6 ♗c4 when the bishop cuts into the light squares that have been weakened by 1...f5.

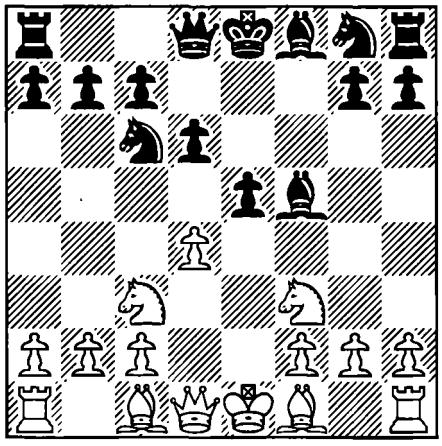
5 exf5



Question: Why does White concede his e4 centre point and facilitate the development of Black's queen's bishop?

Answer: Black's opening play has left his light squares slightly vulnerable. White is therefore willing to invest time and material (the pawn on c2) to open up lines. Moving the d-pawn again might seem paradoxical, but the attack on e5 has to be carried out at once before Black has time to stabilize his centre.

5...♗xf5 6 d4!



Exercise: White needs to be sure that he is in tactical control of the position. Firstly, how should White respond to 6...e4, hitting his knight? And, secondly, what should he do after 6...♘b4, threatening a big fork on c2?

Answer: After 6...e4 we don't want Black to be able to consolidate his centre upon 7 ♘g5 d5. Therefore, White should counterattack against c6 with 7 d5! when 7...exf3 (if the knight moves from c6 then 8 ♘d4 will be very good for White as his knight has a beautiful central post) 8 dxc6 bxc6 9 ♕xf3 ♕d7 10 ♗b5! (a nice move that exploits the pin on c6) 10...♘e7 (the knight defends c6, but leaves the bishop on f8 shut in) 11 ♗a4 leaves White with the better game.

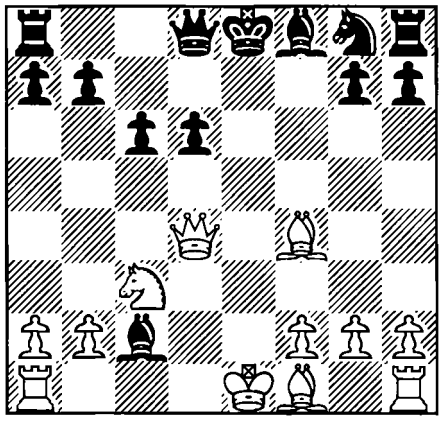
Meanwhile, if 6...♘b4 White can defend c2 without losing much momentum of attack with 7 ♗b5+! c6 8 ♗a4. Play might continue 8...e4 9 ♘g5 d5 and now simplest is 10 a3 to push back the black knight when after 10...♘a6 11 f3! the black centre is inadequately supported: 11...exf3 12 ♕xf3 gives White a strong attacking position, while the attempt to keep things blocked with 11...e3 fails to 12 ♗xe3 h6 13 g4! (securing the retreat of the white knight to h3 without allowing ...♗xh3) 13...♗g6 14 ♘h3 when White is a useful pawn up.

6...♘xd4 7 ♘xd4 exd4 8 ♕xd4 c6

Upon 8...♗xc2 White can build up his assault with the same moves he uses in the game. Malaniuk hopes that the c7-square he has vacated for his king with this move will allow him to survive White's looming attack.

9 ♗f4 ♗xc2

A rather despairing move. If Black doesn't take the pawn then White has an easy build-up with 10 0-0-0, attacking d6, then 11 ♗c4 and 12 ♖he1+ when his attack looks unstoppable. If 9...♕f6 then 10 ♕d2 ♗xc2 11 ♗e2 or 11 g3 will give lasting pressure for the pawn.



Exercise: What is the best way to clear lines for an attack along the e-file?

Answer: **10 ♔d2!**

The king vacates the e1-square for the rook with gain of time.

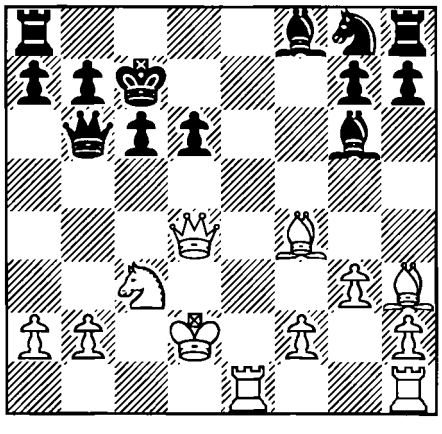
10...♗g6 11 ♖e1+ ♔d7

The king flees as if 11...♗e7 then g7 drops, while after 11...♘e7 the bishop on f8 and rook on h8 are shut in.

12 g3!

Our beloved King's Indian Attack move. Here it has extra venom as the bishop will go to h3, decisively strengthening the white attack.

12...♕b6 13 ♗h3+ ♔c7



Exercise: How does White break through?

Answer: **14 ♗xd6+!**

This ensures the win of at least the exchange.

14...♗xd6 15 ♕xg7+ ♔b8

After 15...♘e7 16 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 17 ♕xe7+ ♔b8 White picks up the rook on h8 with 18 ♕e5+!.

16 ♔c1!

A calm move, guarding b2 and sidestepping a check on f2. Of course, White can afford to take his time as the rook on h8 won't run away.

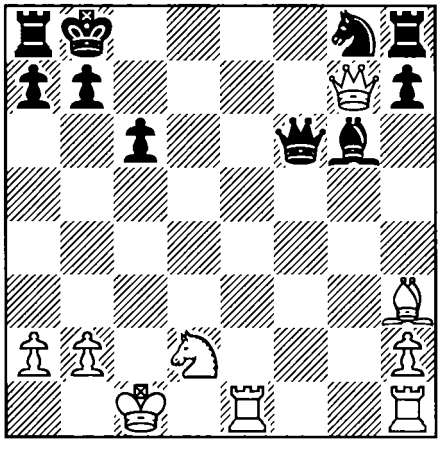
16...♕xf2 17 ♘e4

Another precaution. I hope you saw that Black was threatening mate on c2.

17...♗f4+

He had to try 17...♕f8 18 ♕xh8 ♔c7, though Black remains the exchange down.

18 gxf4 ♕xf4+ 19 ♘d2 ♕f6



20 ♕d7

Exercise: This is completely winning for White, but can you see the forced mate White overlooked?

Answer: Instead of 20 ♕d7, White could have finished matters with 20 ♖e8+! ♗xe8 21 ♕g3+ ♕f4 22 ♕xf4 mate.

20...♕f8

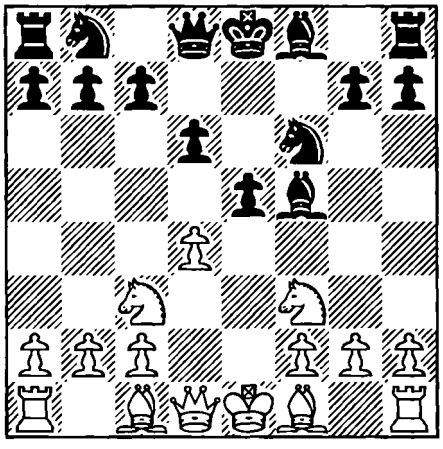
The only chance was 20...a6, but 21 ♖hf1 is crushing.

21 ♖e8+! 1-0

An elegant move with which Fressinet atones for the missed chance last move. It will be mate on d8 or d6 next move.

Game 40
J.Cabrera Trujillo-W.Saumweber
Tenerife 2011

1 ♘f3 f5 2 d3 d6 3 e4 e5 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5 exf5 ♗xf5 6 d4



6...e4

Beginning a long forcing variation in which neither side can afford to back down with a 'slightly inferior, but OK' move. Such occurrences are quite rare in the King's Indian Attack, but when your opponent plays a sharp opening like the Dutch it has to be met with forcefully.

Exercise: Of course, 6...exd4 7 ♘xd4 is just good for White, but 6...♘bd7 is more of a challenge. What would you play against it?

Answer: After 6...♘bd7, 7 ♗c4 looks strong (playing it immediately gives Black less options than after 7 dxe5 dxe5). For example:

Question: Isn't it tremendously risky to castle queenside when Black has the open b-file and ...♗xc3 is going to break up White's pawns?

Answer: If Black managed to tuck his king away safely, catch up in development and safeguard his d5-pawn from collapse, then, yes, White might end up being mated. But that is asking too much of the black pieces, assuming that White plays active and precise moves that keep the initiative.

Question: Should Black play 13...♖b8 or 13...♗xc3 now?

13...♗xc3

Answer: He must take on c3 straightaway as after 13...♖b8 White has time for 14 ♗xf6! when if 14...gxf6 15 ♕xd5 wins a key centre pawn.

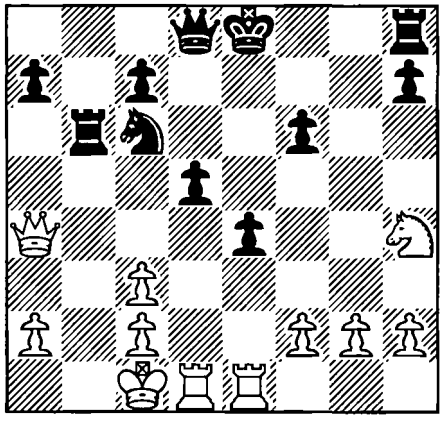
14 bxc3 ♖b8

It is necessary to drive the white queen from b7 as 14...♘e2+ 15 ♔d2 leaves the black knight trapped, while upon 14...♘e6 15 ♗xf6 gxf6 (taking with the queen drops a8) 16 ♖xd5 it's curtains for the d5-pawn.

15 ♗xf6 gxf6 16 ♕a6!

At last White has a choice and this move seems best. Instead, 16 ♕xa7 has been played quite often, but Black seems to be able to hold his own. Putting the queen on a6 seems superior due to the chance to check on c6. For example, if now 16...♘b5 then 17 ♕c6+ ♕d7 18 ♕xf6 ♖f8 19 ♕e5+ ♕e7 20 ♖xd5 demolishes the black centre.

16...♖b6 17 ♕a4+ ♘c6 18 ♖he1!



A simple developing move which is highly awkward for Black.

Exercise: Can you see how White intends to reply if Black castles?

18...0-0

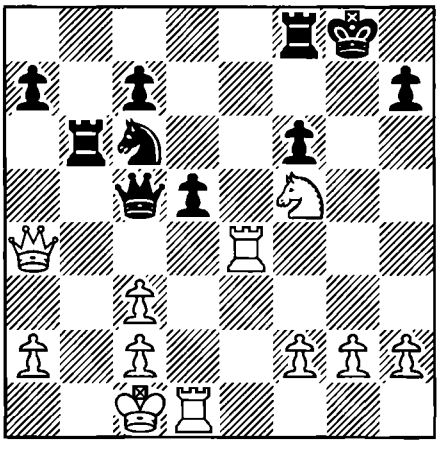
Also unsatisfactory for Black is the sharp line 18...f5 19 ♘xf5 0-0 (or 19...♕g5+ 20 ♘e3) 20 g4! ♕g5+ 21 ♖e3 ♖d8 22 c4! (just in time) 22...d4 23 c5! dxe3 24 ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 (24...♘xd8 25 ♕e8 is mate) 25 fxe3! and despite temporarily having an extra rook, Black is lost: for example, 25...♖b8 26 ♕xc6.

Answer: **19 ♖xe4!**

This is the idea behind 18 ♖he1. White is willing to give up two rooks for the queen, because in the resulting position the white queen and knight will be able to create threats against the poorly defended black king. Besides, the black pawns would prove easy targets for the queen as they are split up. Play might go 19...dxe4 20 ♕c4+ ♔h8 21 ♖xd8, and now 21...♖xd8 22 ♘f5 ♖g8 23 ♕xe4 or 21...♘xd8 22 ♕xc7 ♘e6 23 ♕e7 leave Black's king in danger.

In the game Black decides to keep his queen in an attempt to mate that White has to treat carefully.

19...♕d6 20 ♘f5 ♕c5



Exercise: It looks as if Black might be the one about to win, as the white rook on e4 and pawn on c3 are both hanging and he has the attacking move 21...♖fb8 at his disposal. How do we deal with his threats?

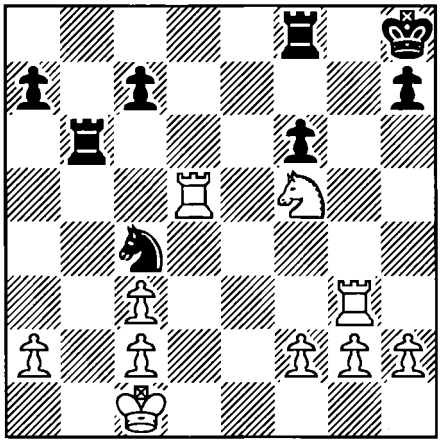
Answer: **21 ♖e3!**

It turns out the black king is in the most danger. Black has no time to double rooks on the b-file as 22 ♕g4+ would mate.

21...♘e5 22 ♖xd5!

Everything flows for White. The rook is immune because of a fork on e7.

22...♕c4 23 ♖g3+ ♔h8 24 ♕xc4 ♘xc4



Exercise: How now do we kill off Black's counterplay based on 25...♖fb8 and mate on b1?

Answer: **25 ♖c5!**

Not only driving away the black knight to stop the back rank mate, but also getting the white rook to the seventh rank with gain of time.

25...♘a3 26 ♖xc7 ♖d8

One last try. Will White miss the mate on b1?

27 ♖d3 ♖xd3 1-0

Black saw that 28 ♖c8+ would mate and so resigned.

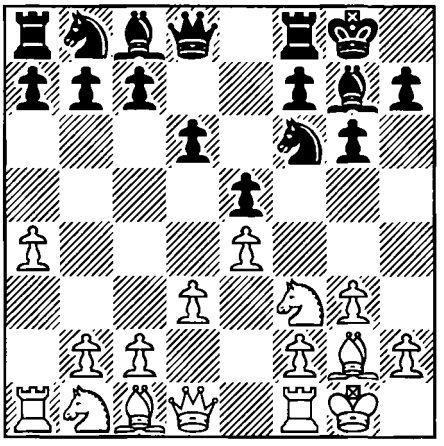
The King's Indian Attack versus the King's Indian Defence

Game 41
O.Sepp-W.Bravo
Dresden Olympiad 2008

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 g6 3 ♗g2 ♗g7 4 0-0 0-0 5 d3 d6 6 e4 e5

Normally Black will prefer 6...c5, transposing to lines we've already seen. Here, however, he decides to copy so White has to decide how to use his extra tempo in a symmetrical position. He has only a very marginal plus, but if you play the King's Indian Attack you have to believe in small (almost non-existent) advantages. Besides, being slightly worse and deprived of the usual King's Indian Defence counterplay often drives Black into making crazy decisions.

7 a4!?



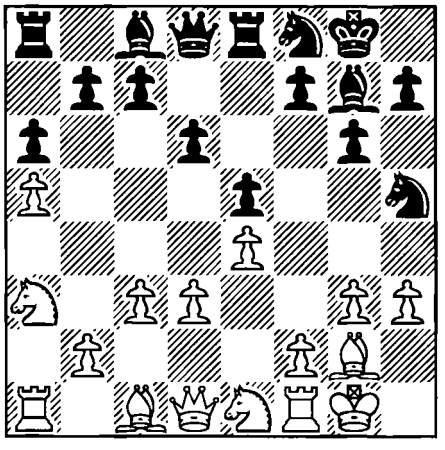
Question: What is the purpose of this move?

Answer: Given the chance White might decide on a plan of gaining space on the queenside with moves like c2-c3 and b2-b4. The a-pawn then comes in useful for supporting the further advance b4-b5, or it might itself be pushed further with a4-a5.

Another good point is that White intends to put a knight on c4 and playing 7 a4 deters Black from driving it away with ...b7-b5.

7...a5

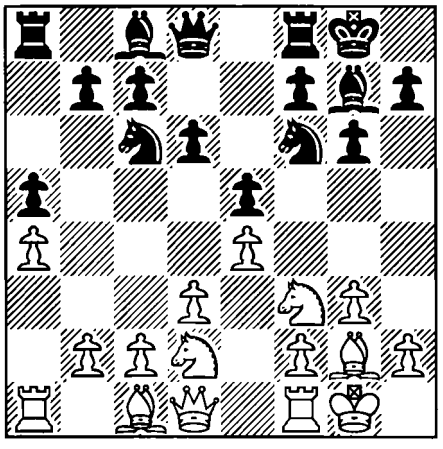
Black continues to copy his opponent and puts a stop to any immediate expansion by the white pawns. Another game went 7...♘bd7 8 a5 (why not take the free space on offer?) 8...a6 9 c3 ♖e8 10 ♘e1!? (a strange looking but interesting prophylactic retreat – see the next note) 10...♘f8 11 h3 ♘h5 12 ♘a3.



With his 10th and 11th moves White has made it harder for Black to arrange ...f7-f5. If 12...f5 13 exf5 and Black can't recapture either with 13...gxf5 as h5 hangs, or with 13...♗xf5 because of 14 g4, to say nothing of the attack on b7.

After 12...♘e6 13 ♘c4 h6 14 ♘c2 ♘g5 (Black is looking for a tactical blow on the king-side, but White defends calmly) 15 ♔h2 ♕d7 16 h4 ♘h7 (more solid was 16...♘e6, but Black is looking for another check) 17 ♘2e3 ♘7f6 18 ♖h1 (White has built up a long-term plus on the queenside, but as so often in the King's Indian Attack the game is decided because Black self-destructs) 18...♘g4+? 19 ♘xg4 ♕xg4 20 ♗f3 (I guess Black missed this simple move) 20...♕e6 21 ♗xh5 gxh5 22 ♕xh5 White had won a pawn safely in G.Vujadinovic-V.Nadj, Vrbas 2011.

8 ♘bd2 ♘c6



Question: Do you think White or Black has benefited most from the breaking of symmetry in the position after Black puts his knight on c6?

Answer: It's a moot point. Black knight is one square further up the board on c6 than it would be on d7, and his bishop on c8 isn't blocked in so it can go quickly to e6.

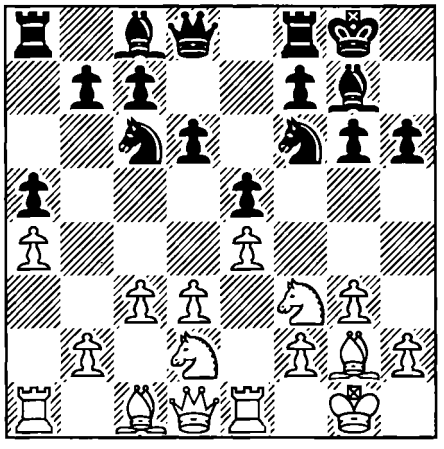
On the other hand, White's pieces and pawns are now in greater harmony as he can use his c-pawn to strengthen his play in the centre, whilst the black pawn on c7 is blocked in by the black knight. And as regards which knight is most actively placed, in the long term the white horse has a post prepared for it on c4, one rank further up the board than the knight on c6.

After 8...♘bd7 White could continue his build-up with moves like 9 c3, 10 ♖e1, 11 ♘c4, etc, as in the main game.

9 c3

To continue the theme of the previous note, we might say that White's pawns are working harder than Black's. The white pawn guards the d4-square and has the potential to

support a d3-d4 advance, whereas the black pawn on c7 can't return the compliment.
9...h6 10 ♖e1



Question: Why does White move his rook to a blocked file?

Answer: Part of the reason for 10 ♖e1 is to support the e4-pawn as a prelude to a future space gaining advance with d3-d4. However, at the moment Sepp is more concerned with the restraint of his opponent's centre. He is keen to deter the freeing move ...d6-d5, all the more so as he intends to put his knight on c4 and doesn't want it be attacked by the pawn advance. The placing of the rook on e1, with its potential attack on e5 after ...d6-d5 and the reply e4xd5, serves this purpose.

Exercise: How should White respond to 10...♗e6:
a) With the space gaining 11 d4.
b) With 11 ♘c4 putting the knight on its best post.
c) With the restrained 11 b3.
Try to assess whether the changes in pawn structures that might arise after each move are favourable to White or Black.

Answer: After 10...♗e6 White can expand in the centre with 11 d4. Then in view of the threat of 12 d5 Black does best to concede the centre with 11...exd4. Now 12 cxd4 allows 12...♘b4! when the black knight is on a strong post, with the irritating 13...♘d3 looming over White. So 12 ♘xd4 is the more precise recapture. Then after 12...♘xd4 13 cxd4 ♖e8 White has his centre, but the black pieces are very active and the position of the knight on d2, blocking in the bishop, is a bit clumsy. So I think the advance 11 d4 is too soon – we want to play it in the future after Black has weakened himself somehow, not when all his pieces are nicely coordinated.

The restrained 11 b3 is a typical King's Indian Attack move. Then the consistent move for Black is 11...d5, seizing more space, when 12 ♗b2 ♖e8 could follow. If White concedes the centre with 13 exd5 ♘xd5 14 ♘c4 attacking e5, then 14...♗f5! seems fine for Black (he doesn't want to play 14...f6 having already gone 9...h6 as it makes the kingside pawn structure flimsy). Then 15 ♘h4 ♗e6 16 ♘f3 would be a repetition. So rather than take on d5, White might continue to play quietly with 13 ♕c2, hoping that Black will be the first to run out of ideas. However, Black has the constructive plan of 13...♕d7 and 14...♖ad8, with a powerful centre deployment of his army.

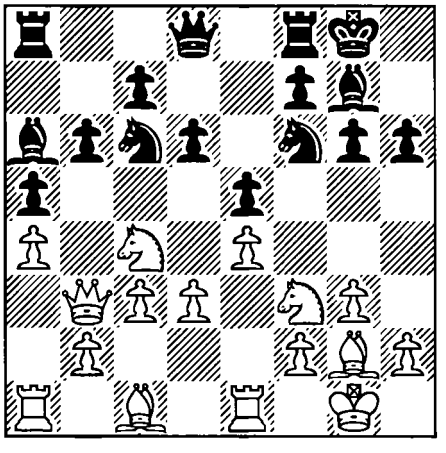
The third option is 11 ♘c4. White puts his knight on its ideal square straightaway and restrains the ...d7-d5 advance through its pressure on e5. If 11...♗xc4 (by no means forced of course) 12 dxc4 White's centre has been dislocated, but he has a grip on the d5-square and should Black ever try to open lines with a future ...f7-f5, his control of the light squares would prove significant. Most importantly of all, Black has no obvious plan whereas White has a nice way to improve his position with a long knight manoeuvre: ♘d2, ♘f1, ♘e3, and ♘d5.

If Black can't 'punish' 11 ♘c4 then it should be played straightaway. If Black avoids ...♗xc4 then White can play his 'slow' moves without having to worry about a break out with ...d6-d5 as occurs after 11 b3 d5.

10...b6

A strange decision to say the least, as with 9...h6 it seemed like Black was preparing to put his bishop on e6 without being disturbed by ♘g5.

11 ♘c4 ♗a6 12 ♕b3



Question: **Why does White put his queen on b3 rather than c2?**

Answer: Perhaps he was afraid of having his pawns doubled after 12 ♕c2 ♗xc4 13 dxc4 (wrongly in my opinion as the exchange seems to favour White – compare the third option

in the previous note). A good point of ♕b3 is that the queen coordinates her action with the bishop on g2 to help restrain the ...d6-d5 freeing move, all the more so now that she can't be pinned by ...♗e6. The queen and bishop would both be ready to pounce after ...d6-d5 and the exchange e4xd5.

As well as this preventive role for the white queen, Sepp is using her to defend the knight as preparation for d3-d4. If Black played passively White could continue h2-h3 (to rule out ...♘g4 after the bishop goes to e3) ♗e3 and ♖ad1, gearing up to advance in the centre. Another way of preparing that would be ♗d2, ♖ad1, and ♗c1. This keeps the black centre a bit more restrained than playing ♗e3, which blocks the action of the rook on e1 against e5 in the event of ...d6-d5.

12...♘d7

Black decides to play his knight to c5 to harass the white queen. Removing the horse from f6 is also the start of a very misconceived plan to advance the f-pawn, as we shall see.

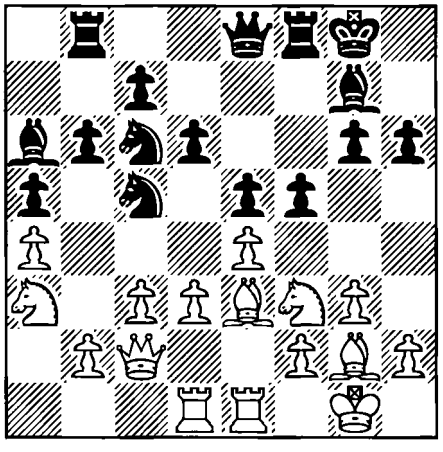
13 ♗e3 ♘c5 14 ♕c2 ♖b8 15 ♖ad1 ♕e8

These last two moves by Black – evacuating the rook from the a8-h1 diagonal and defending the c6 knight – are ominous signs that he is about to play ...f7-f5. Of course, if you think your opponent is about to play a bad move you shouldn't do anything to stop him.

16 ♘a3

The knight retreats with ideas of 17 ♘b5 or possibly 17 d4, but basically White is waiting for...

16...f5?



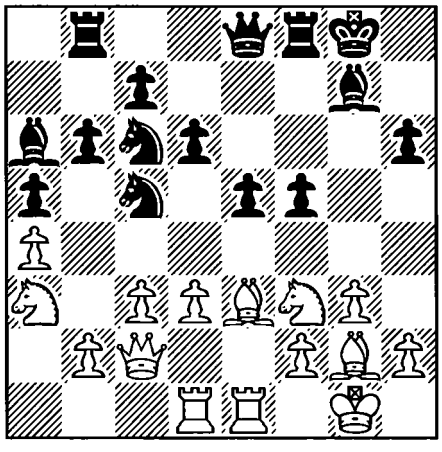
Exercise: A typical King's Indian Defence move, but why is it positionally wrong here?

Answer: There are pawn advances that are characteristic of each structure, but they have to be supported by the pieces. It's not good enough to reason 'It's the King's Indian, and Fisch-

Fischer and Kasparov always advance ...f7-f5 when they play it, so it can't be bad!'.

Here the move 16...f5 is consistent with Black's play over the last couple of moves, but it is a disastrous decision all the same. Black clears the centre files to the benefit of the white rooks and the embarrassment of his own queen which will be a target of the white rook on e1. He also opens up lines on the kingside whilst three of his minor pieces are stuck on the queenside and unable to influence matters.

17 exf5 gxf5



Exercise: How do we refute Black's strategy?

Answer: **18 d4!**

This is all the stronger for being delayed until the opponent has weakened himself. It isn't necessary to calculate many variations, White has such an advantage in firepower in the centre that opening lines must be good for him.

18...♘d7 19 ♘h4

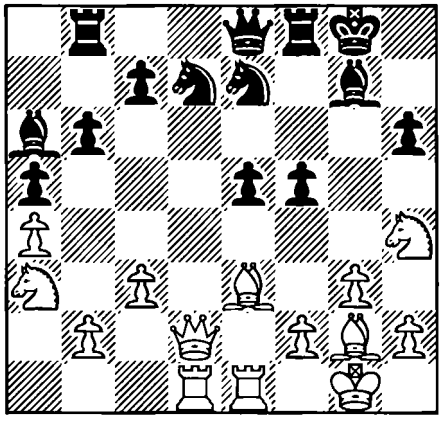
Attacking both c6 and f5.

19...♘e7 20 dxe5 dxe5

A better chance was 20...♘xe5, but after 21 ♗c1!? intending 22 f4 to drive away the knight from e5, Black is in deep trouble. If 21...♕d7, to get the queen away from the pin on the e-file, she falls for a pin on the d-file allowing White to win a pawn with 22 ♗xh6! ♗xh6 23 ♖xe5.

21 ♕d2

The double attack on d7 and h6 wins a pawn and leaves Black's kingside wrecked.



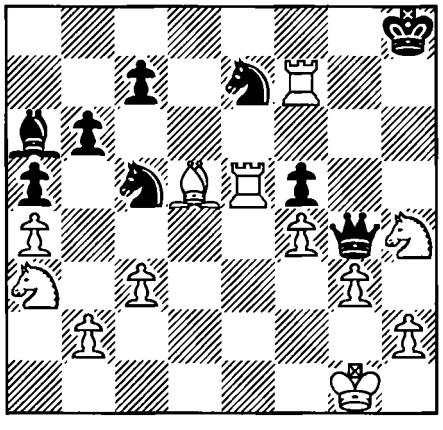
21...♘c5 22 ♗xh6 ♕h5 23 ♗xg7 ♖bd8

Black's position also falls apart after 23...♔xg7 24 ♖xe5.

24 ♕xd8 ♖xd8 25 ♖xd8+ ♔xg7 26 ♖xe5 ♔f6 27 f4

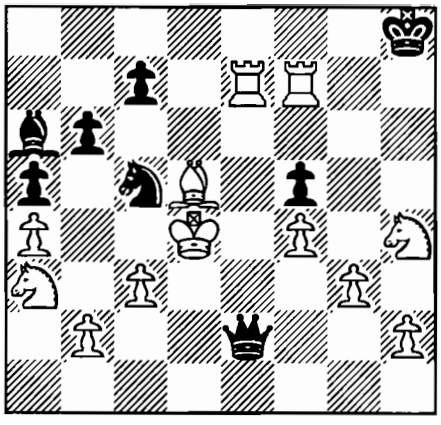
Black is a lot of material down with an exposed king, so the end is going to be horrific, but to be fair to Bravo he did come up with a good swindle idea.

27...♕f7 28 ♗d5 ♕g7 29 ♖e8 ♕g4 30 ♖f8+ ♔g7 31 ♖f7+ ♔h8



32 ♗f3!

After 32 ♖exe7 it would be mate in five moves to the...white king. Here is the rather beautiful finish: 32...♕d1+ 33 ♔f2 ♕f1+ 34 ♔e3 ♕e2+ 35 ♔d4.



Exercise: Can you see how Black wins?

Answer: 35...♘e6+!! combines a clearance move with an interference motif. White is mated after 36 ♗xe6 ♕e4 or 36 ♖xe6 c5.

32...♕h3 33 ♘g2 1-0

The mate on f1 was easier to spot. Black resigned as he has run out of tricks.

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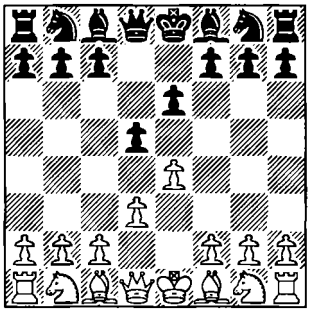
1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5



3 ♘d2

3 ♕e2

3...♘f6 – 31

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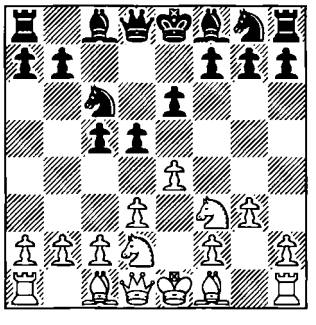
3...dxe4 – 63

3...c5 4 g3 ♘c6 5 ♘gf3



5...♘f6

5...♗d6 – 41

6 ♗g2 ♗e7 7 0-0 0-0

7...b6 – 22
8 e5 ♘d7 9 ♖e1
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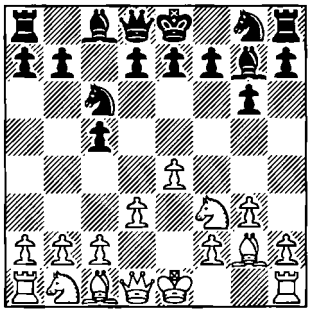
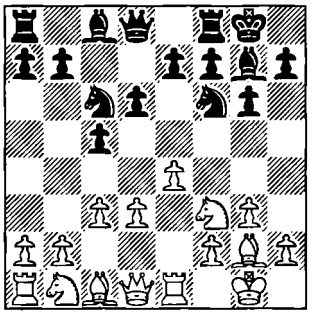
9...b5 – 19

KIA versus the Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6
2...e6 3 d3 ♘c6 4 g3 g6 5 ♗g2 ♗g7 6 0-0 ♘ge7 7 c3 d5 8 ♘bd2
8...♕c7 – 99
8...0-0 – 109
3 g3 g6 4 ♗g2 ♗g7 5 d3



5...d6
5...♘f6 6 0-0 d5 – 113
6 0-0 ♘f6
6...e5 – 91
7 c3 0-0 8 ♖e1



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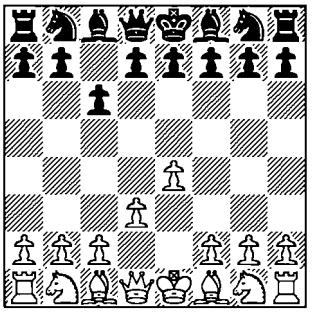
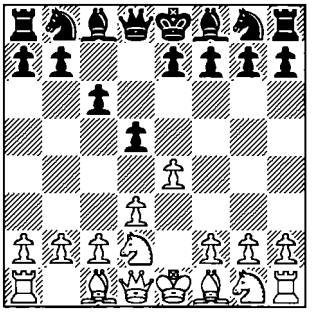
1 e4 c6 2 d3



2...d5

2...e5 – 146

3 ♘d2



3...e5

3...g6 4 g3 ♗g7 5 ♗g2 e5 6 ♘gf3 ♘e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♖e1 d4

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4 ♘gf3 ♗d6 5 g3 f5

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6 exd5 cxd5 7 c4

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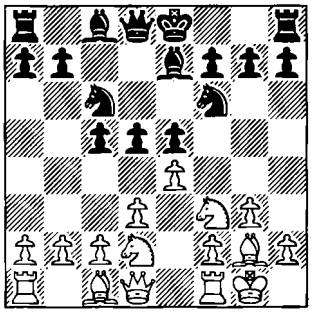
KIA versus the Reversed King's Indian Defence

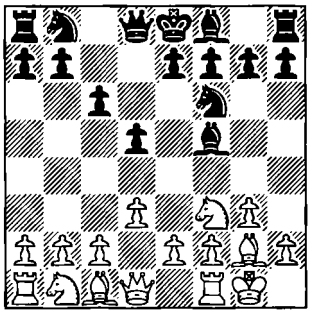
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d3 ♘f6 4 g3 d5 5 ♘bd2 e5 6 ♗g2 ♗e7 7 0-0



7...d4 – 165
7...0-0 – 177

KIA versus the ...♗f5 System

1 ♘f3 d5 2 g3
2 b3 – 190
2...♘f6 3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♗f5 5 d3



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2...♗g4 3 ♗g2
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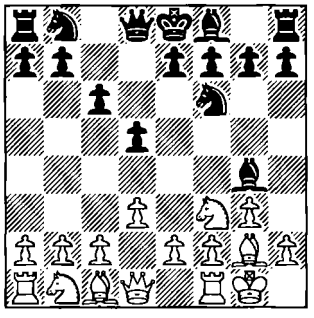
3 ♗g2 c6 4 0-0 ♘f6 5 d3



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5...e6 6 h3 – 288
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6 ♕e1 – 259
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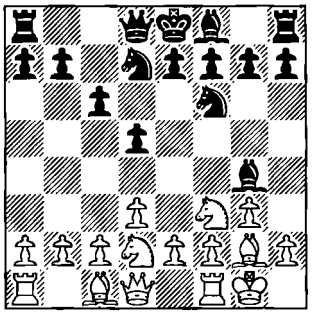

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1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 g3 b6
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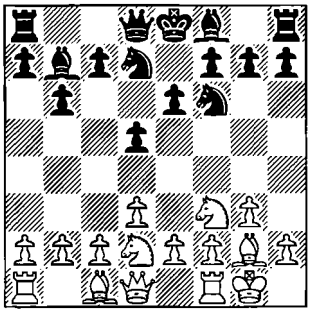
3 ♗g2 ♗b7 4 0-0 e6 5 d3 d5 6 ♘bd2 ♘bd7



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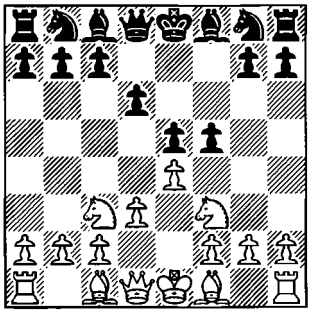
1 ♘f3 f5
1...♘f6 2 g3 g6 3 ♗g2 ♗g7 4 0-0 0-0 5 d3 d6 6 e4 e5 – 335
2 d3 d6
2...♘f6 – 324
3 e4 e5 4 ♘c3



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The King's Indian attack move by move

This series provides an ideal platform to study chess openings. By continually challenging the reader to answer probing questions throughout the book, the **move by move** format greatly encourages the learning and practising of vital skills just as much as the traditional assimilation of opening knowledge. Carefully selected questions and answers are designed to keep you actively involved and allow you to monitor your progress as you learn. This is an excellent way to study any chess opening and at the same time improve your general chess skills and knowledge.

The King's Indian Attack is a very popular system of development for White. It's easy to learn and play, can be used against many defences and is based on understanding ideas rather than memorizing moves. White's plan typically involves a deliberate and sustained attack on the black king, which often proves to be highly effective. In this book, Grandmaster Neil McDonald examines in depth the many variations of the King's Indian Attack. He outlines White's most promising options and Black's best defences, and provides answers to all the key questions.

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- Provides repertoire options for White
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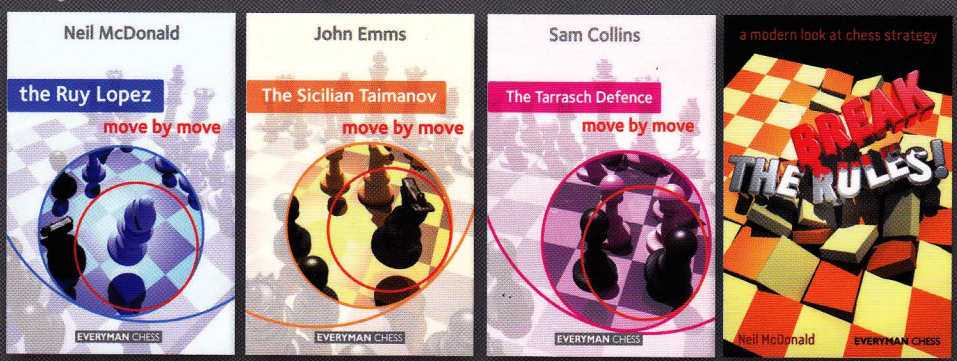

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