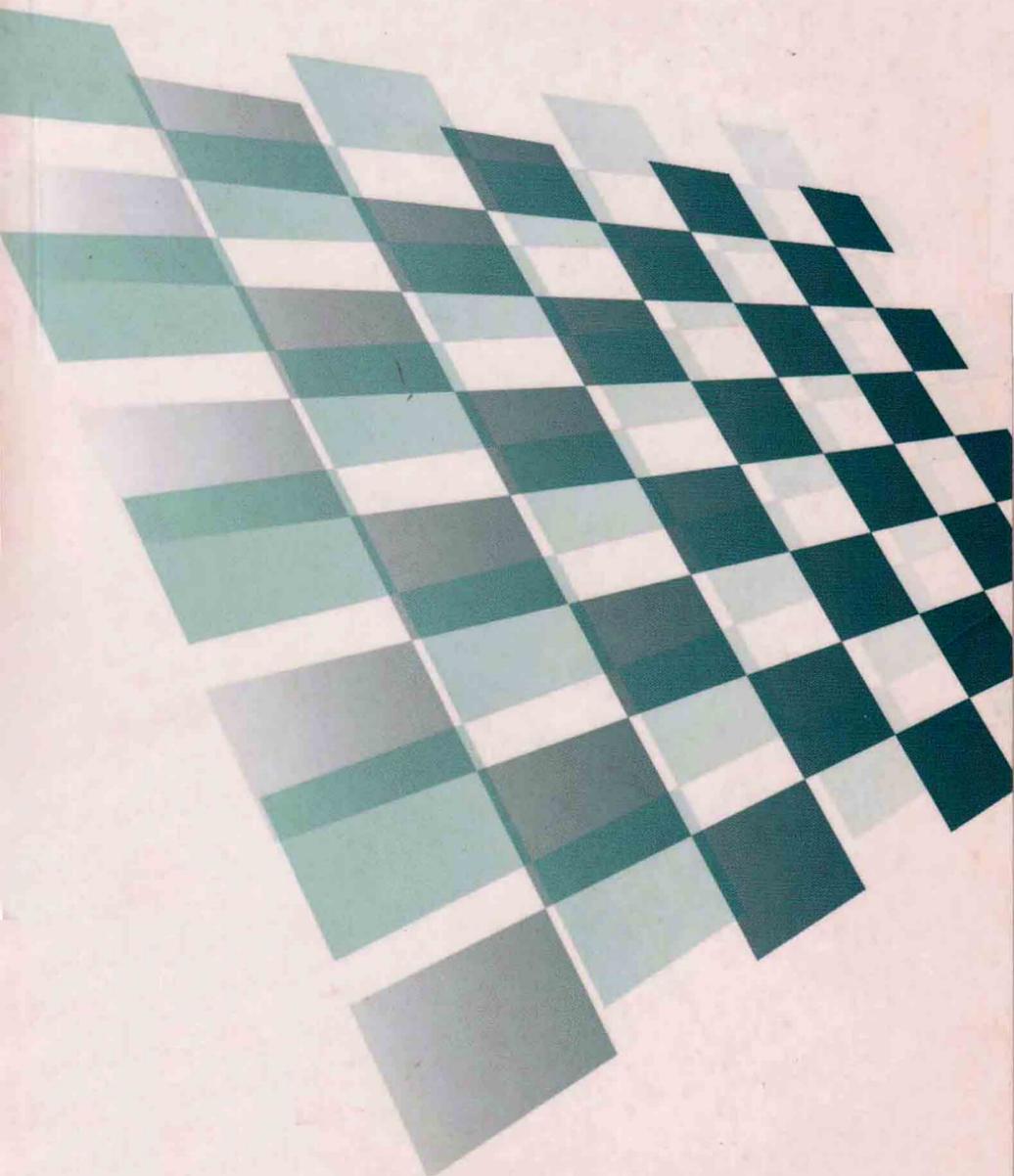


BEATING THE  
PETROFF



VASSILIOS KOTRONIAS  
ANDREAS TZERMIADIANOS



# Beating the Petroff

Vassilios Kotronias  
Andreas Tzermiadianos



BATSFORD

First published 2004

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**A BATSFORD CHESS BOOK**

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED SISTER KIRIAKI

VASSILIOS

TO MY FAMILY, WHO HAVE SUPPORTED ME THROUGHOUT

ANDREAS

# Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
±	slight advantage for White
∓	slight advantage for Black
±	clear advantage for White
∓	clear advantage for Black
+−	decisive advantage for White
−+	decisive advantage for Black
=	equal game
!	good move
!!	excellent move
!?	move deserving attention
?!	dubious move
?	weak move
??	blunder
⚖	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
Δ	with the idea of
□	only move
↑	with initiative
→	with an attack
x	with an attack on
ch	Championship
tch	Team Championship
corr.	correspondence game
zt	Zonal Tournament
izt	Interzonal Tournament
ct	Candidates Tournament
ol	Olympiad
m	match
⊕	time trouble

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# Foreword and Short Introduction

At the highest level, the Petroff Defence is one of the most popular openings and following its adoption by players such as Karpov, Anand, Shirov, Kramnik and others, many lesser mortals, including club players, have included it in their repertoire with the aim of countering White's aggressive first move (1 e4) in a solid and sound manner.

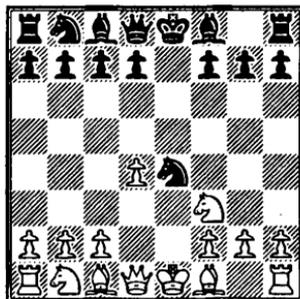
Therefore the authors, considering that a book presenting a complete arsenal of weapons against the Petroff did not exist, decided it was time to fill this gap in chess literature. However, writing such a book can be extremely tricky as this opening is very solid and hardly loses by force, and indeed, in the period of the last two years that we were occupied with our writing, we thought at certain points that we were bashing our head against a brick wall. New ideas were cropping up all the time, requiring a remedy or refutation, and this cost us a great deal of energy.

Nevertheless, we finally managed to provide readers with what we think is an up to date and well laid out work on the opening. The reader can first consult the ideas governing the various structures and then

proceed with the Illustrative Games, showing these ideas at work.

The 3  $\text{Qxe5}$  Variation of the Petroff Defence is characterised by the moves featured below:

1 e4 e5 2  $\text{Qf3}$   $\text{Qf6}$  3  $\text{Qxe5}$  d6 4  
 $\text{Qf3}$   $\text{Qxe4}$  5 d4



In this position Black can choose from the following two plans: The first one accepts a disadvantage in space by retreating the e4 knight to f6 and is relatively harmless for White, provided that he takes care not to overextend thoughtlessly; the second and most ambitious one, involves maintaining the proud knight outpost for as long as possible, with the aim of surrendering it only when Black has gained something tangible in return, such as a weakening of the enemy pawn formation. Indeed, in his

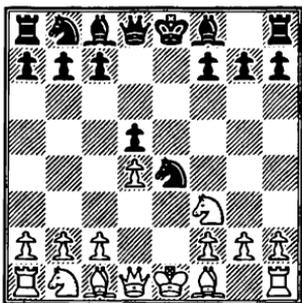
attempt to challenge control of the centre White often makes use of the move c2-c4, which often leads to the creation of three pawn islands in his pawn structure. White's position then gains in dynamism, but the risk of losing becomes higher, as is the case when one handles structures including isolated or hanging pawns in the centre. It is particularly in the

latter case that White should be on the alert, as any slight mishandling of the hanging pawns may result in an unfavourable blockade for him in the centre.

Having briefly outlined the main ideas of the opening we would now like to wish our readers happy reading followed by happy hunting!

# Typical Ideas and Manoeuvres in the Petroff

When, some time ago, we told one of our friends who is an international master that we were writing a repertoire book on the Petroff, he was interested in knowing the line we were recommending to our readers. To our reply "Of course the 3 ♘xe5 main line!" he responded with a smile and in order to tease us he said: "So, you are suggesting that White plays a French Exchange with a tempo less!" And indeed, this is not far from the truth: If we cast a glance at the position resulting after the basic introductory moves of the opening, namely 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♗xe4 5 d4 d5



...we can easily notice that it could arise from an Exchange French if after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 ♘f3 the move

4...♗g8-e4 was legal!! However, this is exactly where Black's real problem lies: White will develop by putting the knight on e4 under constant pressure; The deployment of the White pieces will involve such natural moves as ♗f1-d3, 0-0, c2-c4, ♗f1-e1, ♘b1-c3. In this way White will not only manage to develop harmoniously whilst creating problems for his opponent, but he will also succeed in conquering important central space. It is for this reason that Black often chooses to abandon the outpost on e4 by refraining from ...d6-d5 and instead retreats his knight to f6.

This remark practically leads us to the first major distinction arising from Black's central strategy which, in its turn, has an impact on the central structure and Black's way of development.

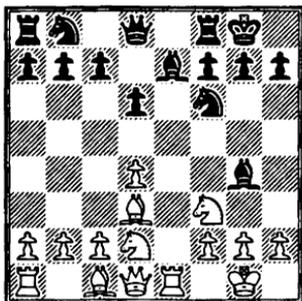
## A) Black does not make an effort to maintain his knight on e4

The policy of a quick retreat of the knight to f6 was introduced into tournament praxis by the former World Champion Vassily Smyslov who was its main supporter and practitioner. After 5...♗f6 6 ♗d3

Black already faces a dilemma: should he continue with 6...♗e7, leaving White the option of impeding the development of the ♗c8 by h2-h3, or should he play ...♗c8-g4 while he still has the chance?

### A1) Black continues with 6...♗g4

After 7 0-0 ♗e7 8 ♞e1 0-0 9 ♖bd2 the first crucial position arises:



Black must decide on the configuration he is going to adopt; the natural development of the queen's knight by 9...♖c6 is not so good because after 10 c3 the difference in mobility between the two sides' pieces is more than evident. For this reason Black usually continues with moves like ...♖b8-d7, ...♞f8-e8 maintaining a passive but solid stance in the centre and waiting for White to declare his intentions. White's best idea is then to continue simply by ♖d2-f1-g3 and h2-h3, gaining the two bishops and thus obtaining a small but stable advantage. The game Schlechter-

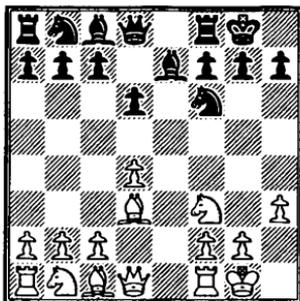
**Mason, London 1899** (see *Illustrative Games*) is an excellent example of the exploitation of this kind of asset.

If Black wishes to prevent such a development of events he can do so only by carrying out an immediate ...♗g4-h5-g6 manoeuvre. The point of doing this quickly is to avoid having to surrender the bishop pair which is inevitable after 9...♖bd7 10 ♖f1 ♗h5 (Otherwise there follows ♖f1-g3 and h2-h3) 11 ♖g3 ♗g6 12 ♖f5 when White will hold a small but persistent edge. However, even after 9...♗h5 White can keep the upper hand by continuing 10 ♖f1 ♗g6 11 ♗xg6 hxg6 12 ♖g3 ♖bd7 13 c4! (planning 14 ♞b3 or 14 d5 when the bishop on e7 will suffer from lack of space) 13...d5 14 c5! c6 15 ♗f4 when White obtains a solid space advantage and easy plan of attack on the queen's wing (b2-b4, a2-a4, b4-b5 followed by an opening of the b-file which White should potentially control, aided by the powerful ♗f4).

### A2) Black continues with 6...♗e7

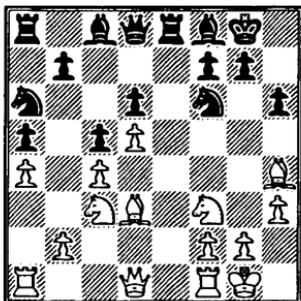
In this case White should go on with 7 h3!; this is a very useful move, preventing the development of the Black bishop on g4. In addition, the ♗c1 can now be developed freely on e3 where it can no longer be harassed by ...♖f6-g4, or on f4 where it has at its disposal an additional refuge square on h2 in reply to ...♖f6-h5. After 7...0-0 8

0-0 the basic position of the Smyslov System arises:

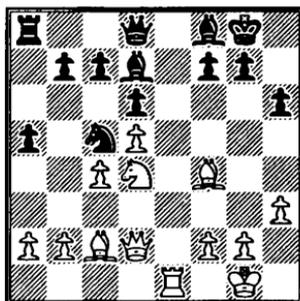


a) Again, Black shouldn't really develop with 8...♘c6 as the reply 9 c3! reduces the knight to the role of a mere spectator.

b) If Black tries to contest the centre with ...c7-c5 in reply to White's logical c2-c4, then, after d4-d5, a Benoni skeleton will arise; this type of central formation gives White a solid advantage as Black experiences severe difficulties with the development of the ♗c8 and the rest of his queenside forces. A classical example of handling such a position from White's point of view is the game Fedorowicz-Smyslov, Dortmund 1986.



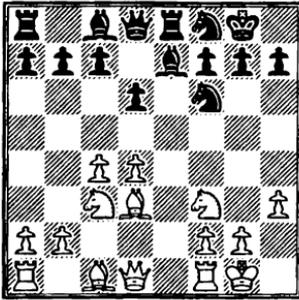
In the diagrammed position White played 15 ♖c1! and after 15...♗b4 16 ♗b1 all his pieces were soon participating in a kingside attack. However, even if that option wasn't available White could have contemplated bringing his rook into play via a3 after such moves as ♗d3-b1 and ♘c3-b5. In fact, the attacking combination of a bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal and a rook on the 3<sup>rd</sup> rank can prove very scary as shown by the famous Fischer-Gheorghiu game (Buenos Aires 1970) which arose also from a slightly different version of the Smyslov System:



White continued here with 21 ♖e3! and after 21...b6 22 ♗g3 ♗h8 23 ♘f3 ♗e7 24 ♗d4 the potential of the coming attack looked so great that Black resigned himself to playing a hopeless endgame with 24...♞f6 (See Illustrative Games).

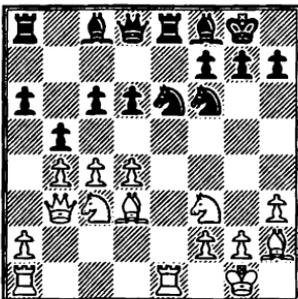
c) Usually Black continues with ...♗bd7, ...♞f8-e8, ...c7-c6 and ...♗d7-f8. In that case White should still play c2-c4, followed by developing his pieces in a natural manner. The key to an advantage is the advance d4-d5! at an

appropriate moment. Let's take a look at two characteristic examples where this idea was employed:



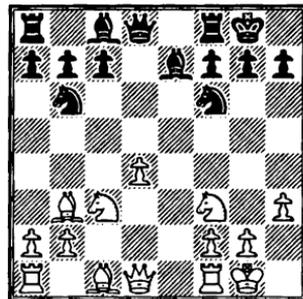
In the position of the diagram Black has delayed ...c7-c6, concentrating instead on the transfer of his queen's knight to f8 in order to support his king. White should take advantage of the opportunity to gain space in the centre by 11 d5! Qg6 12 Re1 which is in fact what he did in the game Tal-Smyslov, USSR 1971; after Smyslov's reply 12...e7-d7 White could have made best use of his space advantage by 13 Qd4!, obtaining a clearly better position.

Our second example comes from the game Polgar-Toth, Budapest 1971:



Black has just played 15...b5, seeking to contest control of the light squares in the centre and White replies with the typical positional counter-stroke 16 d5!; after 16...bxc4 17 e4xc4 cxd5 18 Qxd5 e7-b7 19 Re1-d1 White enjoys a small but steady advantage as the d-pawn is vulnerable while he also has a valuable asset in his queenside pawn majority.

It is just because the idea d4-d5 has proven extremely annoying for Black on a number of occasions that he has often decided to play ...d6-d5 himself. In the ensuing positions White quite often gets an isolated pawn on d4, but also very good development and actively placed pieces. For example, in the following typical position...



...White will continue with Re1-e1, e4-c1-g5, Qf3-e5, activating his pieces to the utmost while Black will try to bolster d5 with ...c7-c6, ...Qb(f)d5, ...e8-e6. Our conclusion after studying many examples is that here too White maintains an edge as the space

advantage offers him possibilities of freer manoeuvring in his interior lines. Typical examples of such manoeuvring involve the **doubling of rooks on the e-line**, the dangerous attacking set-up  $\text{♙c2-♜d3}$ , the positional manoeuvre  $\text{♜c3-a4(e4)-c5}$ , designed to suffocate Black on the queenside, manoeuvres aiming at reaching slightly favourable **symmetrical pawn structures** after **timely exchanges on f6 and d5**, etc. The Illustrative Games' section provides several very instructive examples on how to handle such a position with White.

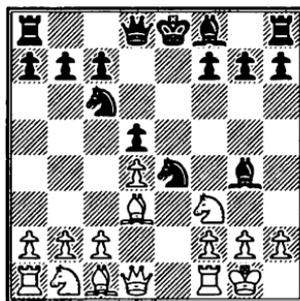
### B) Black tries to maintain his knight on e4

This is Black's main and most principled choice. To make it more easy to understand the underlying ideas governing the play here we thought it was imperative to divide the examples into groups with common characteristics deriving from the central pawn structure. However, before proceeding with that we will examine some general ideas that arise quite often in the Petroff and which should be part and parcel of any player's arsenal.

#### B1) The sacrifice of the pawn on d4

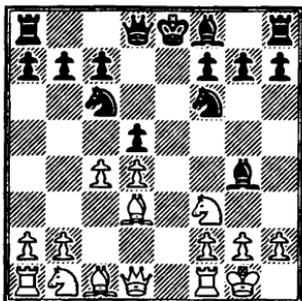
There are quite a few instances in the Petroff where Black sets his sights on the **d4 pawn** by ... $\text{♙c8-g4}$

and ... $\text{♘b8-c6}$ ; in many of these cases White should not hesitate to continue with his development even at the cost of sacrificing the pawn, as he gets a dangerous initiative in return.



The diagrammed position is from the game **Psakhis-Martinovsky, Philadelphia 1989**: White quite rightly ignored the pin on the  $\text{♗f3}$  and continued with **8 c4!**. After this energetic move it turns out that Black cannot capture the pawn on d4 immediately because after **8...♘d4?** **9 ♙xe4 dxe4** **10 ♜xd4 exf3** **11 ♜xg4** he loses a piece, so he chose instead **8...♙xf3** **9 ♜xf3 ♘d4**. However, after **10 ♜e3!**  $\text{♗f5}$  **11 ♜e1!** Black must return the pawn due to the dangerous pin on the e-file: **11...♘e7** **12 ♙xe4 dxe4** **13 ♜xe4** and White's advantage is indisputable.

A different version of the d4-pawn sacrifice can be found in the following example, from the game **Ponomariov-Turov, 3<sup>rd</sup> Rector Cup 2001**.



White continued his development with 9  $\text{Qc3}$ , sacrificing the pawn on d4. If Black accepts the challenge by 9... $\text{Qxd4}$  then White obtains an edge by means of 10  $\text{We1+!}$   $\text{Qe6}$  11  $\text{Qe5}$  d4 12  $\text{Qd5}$  as his pieces dominate the board (for a complete analysis of this position the Illustrative Games section should be consulted). In the game Black chose to interpose the capture on f3 before taking on d4, yet after 9... $\text{Qxf3}$  10  $\text{Wxf3}$   $\text{Qxd4}$  11  $\text{Wh3!}$  White's compensation for the pawn was excellent; Black had to spend some time on safeguarding his king, allowing White to recover his pawn with slightly the better chances.

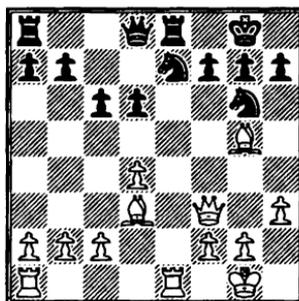
### B2) The doubling of rooks on the e-file

The e-file is of great importance in the Petroff, because it is usually the only one that is open and therefore, inevitably, a great deal of the action takes place on it. Bearing this in mind it often makes sense for White to double rooks there rather than deploy them on d1 and e1, for

example. The doubling of rooks can, as we shall see, be achieved in many different ways.

#### a) The simple way of doubling rooks on the e-file

A typical example of it can be seen in the game Schlechter-Mason, London 1899.

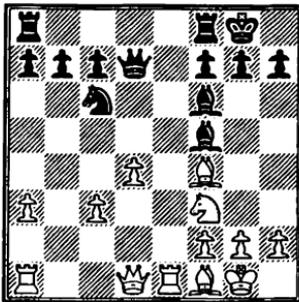


White has the two bishops and a solid space advantage; a logical step towards increasing the pressure is to double the rooks on the e-file:

After 17  $\text{Re2!}$  f6 18  $\text{Qd2}$   $\text{Wd7}$  19  $\text{Qc4!}?$ + d5 20  $\text{Qd3}$   $\text{Qf8}$  21  $\text{Rae1}$  White had achieved his object and was well on the way to victory as Black could not successfully oppose the adversary's major pieces on the file.

#### b) The doubling of rooks via the second horizontal

This manoeuvre is very common in the Petroff, as for example in the game Korneev-R.Perez, Albacete 2000 ...

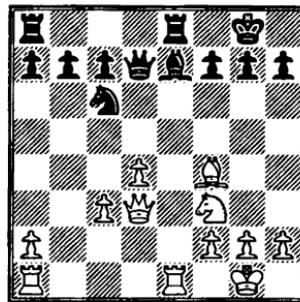


...where White continued 16 ♖a2!  
 ♖ae8 17 ♖ae2 ♖xe2 18 ♜xe2,  
 conquering the e-file and at the  
 same time gaining a significant  
 advantage.

### c) The multi-purpose doubling with ♖e1-e3

This is the most virulent way of  
 doubling rooks on the e-file; besides  
 the traditional idea of simply  
 increasing White's firepower along  
 the file or the relatively more  
 refined one of **switching the rook  
 over to g3 or h3 for attacking  
 purposes**, it also conceals a deeper,  
 positional aim; if Black tries to  
 relieve the pressure by **exchanging  
 the rook on e3**, White recaptures  
 with the f-pawn, fortifying his  
 centre and opening up the f-file  
 for an attack.

In the game Yagupov-Sorokin,  
 St. Petersburg 2001 White had the  
 opportunity to carry out this idea:  
 from the following diagrammed  
 position...



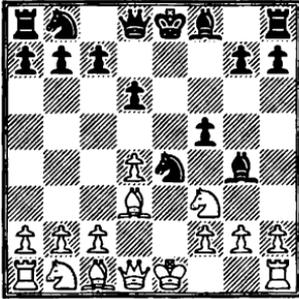
Yagupov continued with 15 ♖e3!  
 ♖f6 16 ♖ae1 ♖e7 17 ♖g5 ♖xe3 18  
 fxe3! ♖xg5 19 ♜xg5 g6 20 e4,  
 gaining a solid advantage.

### B3) The queen's sortie to b3 after Black has played ...♗c8-g4

As we have already witnessed,  
 Black quite often tries to neutralise  
 the pressure White exerts on the  
 centre by developing his bishop on  
 g4. Then, however, the queenside  
 and the b7 pawn in particular, are  
 left without sufficient protection,  
 albeit temporarily. This fact  
 encourages White to seriously  
 consider the idea of playing  
 ♜d1-b3, since in this way he gets  
 the queen out of the annoying pin  
 with gain of time. An important  
 remark to be made here is that in  
 most cases the pressure exerted by  
 the queen from b3 is so serious that  
 despite all the disadvantages this  
 sortie may entail (such as a  
 weakening of the kingside if, for  
 example, White is forced to  
 recapture on f3 with a pawn after

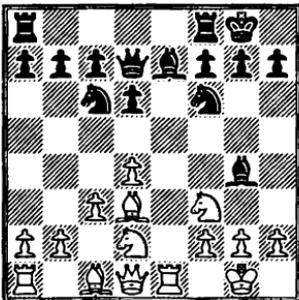
...♙g4xf3) it has a positive effect overall on White's position.

In the game **Timman-Van der Wiel, Tilburg 1984**, a typical case of the ♖d1-b3 sortie occurred as early as on move 7:



In the diagrammed position **Timman** continued with 7 c3! ♘d7 8 ♖b3!, highlighting the weaknesses created by the absence of the light-squared bishop from the queenside. After 8...♗e7 9 0-0 0-0-0 10 ♘e1! (threatening f2-f3) Black had to lose the pawn on f5 after which he stood clearly worse.

Another example of the same theme comes from **Kr.Georgiev-Popchev, Bulgaria 1987**:



White continued with 11 ♖b3! ♙ab8 12 d5!, utilizing the queen sortie to achieve positional gains. After 12...♘e5 13 ♘xe5 dx5 14 ♘c4! ♖xd5 15 ♘xe5 ♖xb3 16 axb3 ♙c5 the correct follow up 17 b4! ♙b6 18 ♘c4 would have left him with two bishops and a lasting advantage in the resulting ending.

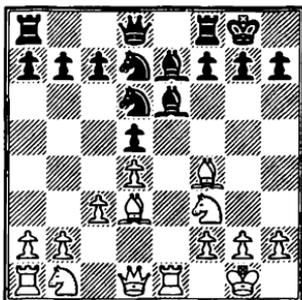
**B4) Provoking a weakening in the enemy castled position by employing the configuration ♙d3-♖c2**

This idea is a recurring theme in many opening systems and in the Petroff as well. There is a wide variety of cases where White's queen and light-squared bishop line-up to attack h7 in the hope of forcing a weakness that can be exploited later on and so White will formulate an appropriate strategy according to Black's reply.

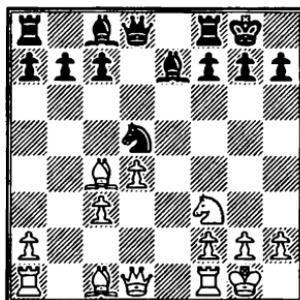
If, for example Black chooses to defend his h-pawn by ...g7-g6, then a whole dark-square complex around his king becomes weak (f6, g7, h6). In case Black chooses ...h7-h6, then it is the light squares that become weak (f5 in particular) whilst Black will have to watch out for sacrifices on h6.

It is not possible to say which way of defence is better for Black as his choice should depend upon the specific elements of each position and the calculation of certain variations.

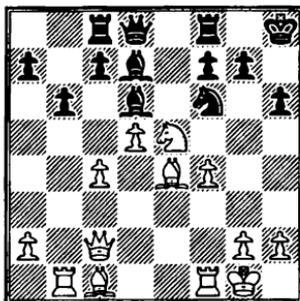
In the game Timman-Skembris,  
Corfu (m/2) 1993...



...White continued with 11 ♖c2!, forcing a weakening of the protective cover shielding the Black king. Black's choice is then severely limited. If he plays 11...♟f6? there comes 12 ♘g5, winning. On 11...g6? White unleashes a sacrificial cascade with 12 ♙h6 ♞e8 13 ♜xe6! fxe6 14 ♙xg6!, also winning. The only solution lies in 11...h6! 12 ♝bd2 ♞e8 13 ♟f1 ♟f8 (the knight is needed on this square, to support the ♙e6 and the weakened light squares h7 and g6) 14 ♘g3! (after 11...h6 the square f5 has been indirectly weakened too, so White sets his sights on it) 14...♙g5! (Black seeks refuge in simplification in an effort to reduce the pressure) and we have reached a critical position that should be better for White as the analysis included in the Illustrative Games section demonstrates.



...White continued with 13 ♜c2!? ♙e6 14 ♙d3, trying to force a weakness on the kingside. Black replied with 14...h6! (After 14...g6 15 ♜b1 ♜b8 16 ♞e1 ♙f6 17 c4 ♟e7 18 d5 White had an obvious advantage in the game Sumaneev-Grechkin, Orel 1996) in an effort to avoid a weakening on the long diagonal which might easily have been felt after a subsequent advance of White's mobile pawn centre; Still, after 15 ♜b1 b6 16 ♙h7+!? ♟h8 17 ♙e4 ♞c8 18 c4 ♟f6 White could have obtained a dangerous initiative by 19 d5! ♙d7 20 ♟e5 ♙d6 21 f4



In the game Grischuk-Pavasovic,  
4th IECC, Istanbul 2003...

...as his pieces are ideally placed  
for an attack against the Black

monarch. A further comment we would like to make here is that the more the position opens up the more likely it is that a weakness inflicted upon Black's kingside will be exploited. This is because White will then have the opportunity to access that sector far more easily and with a greater number of forces.

### B5) The pawn structure in the centre after an exchange on e5

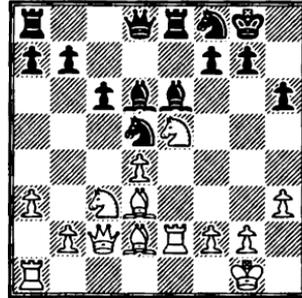
Black's strategic choice of supporting the knight on e4 at all costs involves the move ...d6-d5 which unavoidably weakens e5. At first sight this is not a great price to pay, but if Black's strategy of maintaining the knight fails and he has to retreat it to f6 or even exchange it for a White knight on c3 or d2, White has good chances of obtaining control of the e-file and the square e5 in particular. Then, a White knight is likely to settle on e5, exerting unpleasant pressure on Black's position.

Black quite often decides to exchange this knight whereupon White may have the option of taking back on e5 with a piece or the d-pawn. The first idea that comes to mind is taking back with the pawn in order to break the symmetry of the respective pawn structures on the kingside. If the resulting majority is sufficiently mobile it may cause Black a lot of distress, especially with the advance f2-f4-f5. Such an advance creates the prospect of a dangerous passed

e-pawn or a strong attack by e5-e6 or f5-f6 at some point.

Let's now take a look at a practical example:

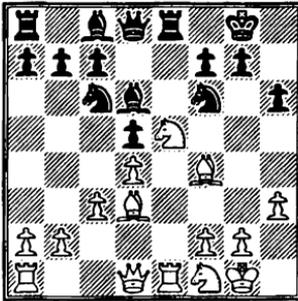
In the game **Kuczynski-Appel, Bundesliga 1996...**



...Black made a rash decision with 18...♙xe5?!, granting White a dangerously mobile kingside pawn majority. The game continued 19 dxe5 ♘xc3 20 ♙xc3 a5 21 ♖e3! (The rook now gains access to the Black kingside) 21...♙d5 22 f4! (It is high time to mobilize the pawns) 22...b5 23 ♗f2 ♗b6 24 ♖ae1 and White was in full control as Black's counterplay on the queenside could be easily contained. In the continuation of the game White methodically prepared and carried out the advance f4-f5, which in conjunction with a rook on g3 gave him a strong attack. An eventual e5-e6 push left Black powerless to resist (the whole game can be found fully analysed in the Illustrative Games section).

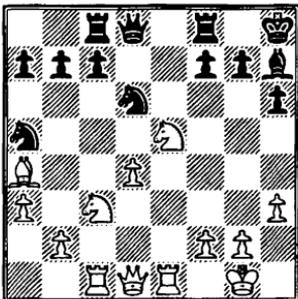
In certain cases the pawn on e5 just serves the function of cramping Black and depriving him of the important defensive square f6 for

his pieces. Instead of attacking with pawns, White may then choose to exploit the influence of the pawn to launch an assault with his pieces. In the game **King-Barua, Lloyds Bank open 1982** this different type of function of the e5 pawn was more than evident:



14...Qxe5?! 15 dxe5 Qd7 16 Wh5! Qc5 17 Qc2 Qe6 (looks ugly, but White was threatening to sacrifice the bishop on h6) 18 Qad1 and Black's position gradually became hopeless.

For a final example let's move on to the game **Zagrebelny-Rodriguez, World tch, Luzern, 1993**:



In this position, White forced his opponent to exchange on e5 by

22 b4! Qac4 23 Qb3. After 23...Qxe5 24 dxe5 Qf5 White nipped in the bud his opponent's intended ...Qf5-d4 with 25 Qb5!, confronting him with a difficult dilemma: either to enter a worse ending (due to the pressure on a7, c7) or avoid the exchange of queens by 22...We7. Black chose the second option, but after 23 e6! another utility value of the e5 pawn came to the fore: **It can be used from time to time to open up more lines, which can be exploited by White's better placed pieces.** White had a clear advantage which he went on to convert in masterly fashion as the reader can see by consulting the Illustrative Games section.

Around here we feel it's time to proceed with a categorization of some typical pawn structures in the centre arising from the d4/d5 original structure.

#### The centre with White pawns c3, d4 vs Black pawn c7

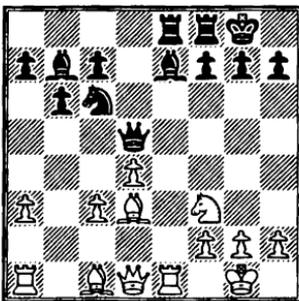
This type of centre occurs after an exchange of knights on c3, followed (or preceded) by ...d5xc4. It is associated with many different typical ideas and manoeuvres.

##### A) The central advance c3-c4, d4-d5

By advancing c3-c4 and d4-d5 in the centre White pushes his opponent back with gain of time and secures a **space advantage** for himself. Once the Qc6 is forced to

abandon its position White can settle with his knight on e5 (supported, if required, by a White pawn on f4). In addition, the dark squared bishop (if still on its original square) can be developed on b2, from where, besides supporting the knight, it focuses on the sensitive g7 square in front of the Black king. The central advance is even more effective if Black has already developed his queen's bishop on b7 as the pawn on d5 interferes with its radius of action, whilst the bishop's absence from the defence of the kingside will be felt. It is not an exaggeration to say that in such cases the d5 practically cuts the Black position in two.

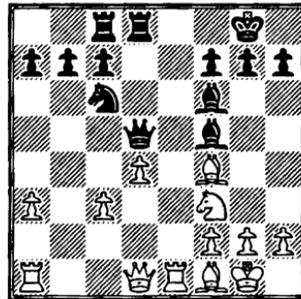
A very instructive example with this type of central structure is provided by the game **Kasparov-Olafsson, Kopavogur (rapid) 2000:**



In this position **Kasparov** continued with 16 c4! ♖d8 17 d5 ♘b8 19 ♗e5! ♙f6 20 ♙b2 g6 21 ♚d2!, obtaining a clear advantage as he had reached the optimal formation, granting him excellent

attacking chances. An analysis of the details of this game can be found in the Illustrative Games section.

The advance c3-c4, d4-d5 can sometimes be carried out regardless of material considerations. In **Anand-Ivanchuk, Monaco blind-fold 1999...**



...White could have continued with 17 c4!? ♚a5 18 d5! ♙xa1 19 ♚xa1 ♘b8 20 ♙e5 f6 21 ♙c3 ♚a4 22 ♘d4, obtaining fine attacking chances in return for the exchange. In a normal game the consequences of such a sacrifice would have been easier to evaluate, of course.

### B) Central Prophylaxis

White's centre can easily become the object of an attack by the Black pieces. It is for this reason that from time to time White has to rely on prophylactic measures to safeguard it from attacks whilst preserving its flexibility. Such typical measures are featured below:

### B1) The move ♖a1-a2

With this move White plans to defend his d-pawn from d2 and at the same time gets the rook out of the firing line of a bishop placed on f6, thus facilitating a subsequent d4-d5 advance. It also has another merit as it prevents the often annoying intrusion ...♜e4-c2, exchanging queens.

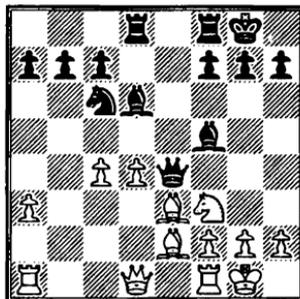
### B2) The move ♕d1-c1

With this move White protects the lonely a3 pawn so as to allow the queen's rook to join the fight from the centre via the second rank. It also vacates d1 for the other rook and gets the queen out of the firing line of a Black rook on d8. Finally, from c1, the White queen can be useful in supporting the thematic c4-c5 advance.

However, despite all these significant advantages, White should always consider whether it is possible to skip ♕d1-c1 and play ♖a2-d2 immediately. The point is that this type of position is very dynamic and so time can be of far greater importance than a mere pawn. Besides, as the example featured below shows, Black rarely has time to capture the pawn and at the same time meet satisfactorily White's threats in the centre.

Both ♖a1-a2-d2 and ♕d1-c1 are prophylactic measures, supporting the White centre. A natural question arising is, what next? The reply is not so easy as White's play in these

complicated positions is hardly one-sided, but a useful tool for creating play can be the above mentioned c4-c5 advance which is rather more justifiable against a ...b7-b6, ...♞d6 configuration. Let's see how these ideas work out in practice:

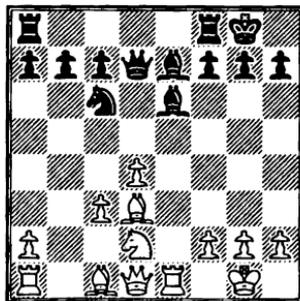


The above diagrammed position arose in the game **Kamsky-Yusupov, Moscow 1992**. White played 17 ♖a2! and after 17...b6 18 ♞e1 ♞g6 19 ♕c1 obtained a small advantage.

Stronger, however, is 18 ♞d2! as the pawn on a3 is poisoned: 18...♞xa3? is answered by 19 ♞d3 ♕g4 20 ♞xf5 ♜xf5 21 ♕a4 and White wins. After 18...♞fe8 (18...♞g6 19 ♞e1! ♞xa3 20 ♕a4! ♞b4 21 d5 also leads to a clear advantage for White) 19 ♞e1! ♞g6 (19...♞xa3 20 ♞d3 ♕g4 21 h3 ♕h5 22 ♞xf5 ♜xf5 23 ♕a4 ♞b4 24 ♕xc6 is much better for White) White carries out the thematic thrust 20 c5!, leading after 20...bxc5 21 dxc5 ♞e7 22 ♞b5 a6 23 ♞a4 to a highly advantageous position for him.

### C) Manoeuvring with the ♖f3

The king's knight is a very flexible piece in this type of central structure and White can manoeuvre it around in many different ways, making Black's life difficult. Some of the typical manoeuvres with this knight are categorized below:



#### C1) Manoeuvres starting with the move ♖f3-d2

The move ♖f3-d2 occurs quite often in the type of positions we are examining. From d2 the knight can jump to e4 and participate to a kingside attack, or manoeuvre to e3 (via c4 or f1) from where it controls the important squares c4, d5 and can assist a subsequent central advance. Finally, in a few instances the knight can visit b3 (en route to c5) thus provoking Black to weaken himself by playing ...b7-b6. Normally this move is not considered a weakening in the Petroff but it can prove so if Black has earlier on placed his queen and rook on d7 and e8 respectively. Then ...b7-b6 can be met by ♙b5, pinning the ♖c6 and creating awkward threats on the diagonal a4-e8.

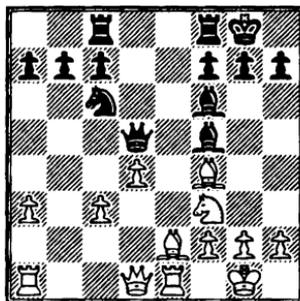
Let's now take a look at some examples with the knight on d2:

In the game **Sadvakasov-Aliev, 4th Asian ch, Doha 2003...**

...White continued with 14 ♖e4!? ♜ad8 15 ♜h5! with an attack.

In this particular position the very fine coordination of queen and knight is noticeable as they both control the important squares c5 and g5, a fact rendering the gain of the bishop pair very likely. The rest of the game can be found in the Illustrative Games section.

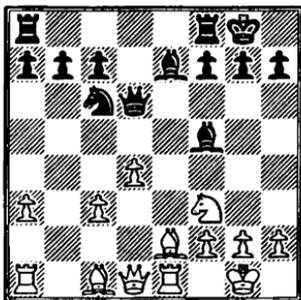
The game **Kasparov-Dao Thien Hai, Batumi (rapid) 2001** revealed another typical idea of the manoeuvre ♖d2-e4.



In the diagrammed position Kasparov continued with 16 ♖d2! and after 16...♖a5 (a typical reaction to ♖f3-d2) 17 ♙f3 ♜d7 18 ♖e4 ♙e7 went on to provoke

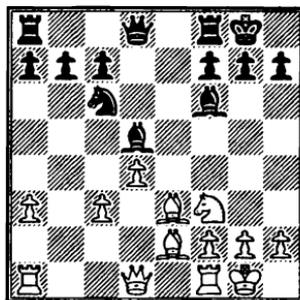
weaknesses in the Black camp with 19 ♖g3 ♗g6 20 ♜g4!; after 20...f5 21 ♜f3 ♜d6 22 ♜e5 Black failed to find the best move 22...♞ce8! which would have reduced White's advantage to a minimum (as the reader can see by consulting the relevant Illustrative Game) and later on with his usual expertise Kasparov managed to exploit Black's kingside weaknesses.

In one of the main variations of this opening Black can employ Schandorff's idea 14...♞d6 when the following position arises:



With 14...♞d6 Black prevents the natural developing move ♜c1-f4, which exerts annoying pressure on c7. The above position is considered by theory to be satisfactory for Black but we disagree and suggest instead 15 ♖d2! (the authors' idea) which is very much in the spirit of manoeuvring the knight to e3. White will take advantage of the queen's position on d6 to set up with gain of tempo the pleasant formation ♖c4, ♜f3, ♜f4 after which we believe that Black can no longer equalise.

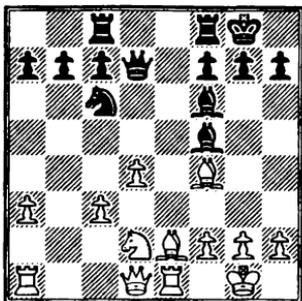
In the game Wang Zili - Ye Rongguang, Copenhagen 1995 ...



...White still employed the move 15 ♖d2!, planning to attack on the kingside with ♜e2-d3 and ♞d1-c2. The continuation 15...♞e7!? 16 ♞c2 g6 17 ♜d3 ♜c6 18 ♞e4 (this square again) 18...♜g7 19 ♞ae1 (followed by a doubling of the rooks on the e-file) left White a little better as Black's position was solid but passive.

In fact, a little later in the game Black tried to activate his knight on f5 when another advantage of the manoeuvre ♖f3-d2-e4 became apparent: White simply offered an exchange of knights with ♖e4-g3, nipping in the bud any counterplay Black might have devised.

Our last example comes from the game Jasinski-Taksrud, EU ch corr. 1994 where in the following diagram position White detected a temporary weakness on c5 and on the diagonal a4-e8 and continued with the clever...

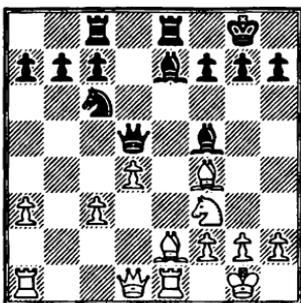


17 ♖b3!; after the natural 17...b6 White replied with 18 ♗b5! and his idea became evident, Black had great problems with his pinned knight.

### C2) The manoeuvre starting with the move h2-h3!

This original idea of Kramnik appears for the time being extremely worrying for Black: White wants to play ♖h2-g4-e3!; this route may well be better than the usual one ♖f1-e3 since the knight on g4 gains a tempo by hitting the ♗f6 while in case the bishop retreats on e7 White has an extra possibility in ♖g4-e5.

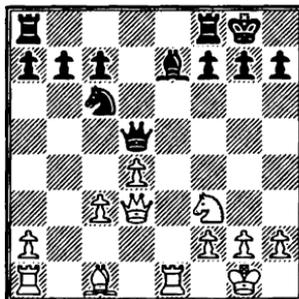
In the game Kramnik-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2003...



...after 16 h3! ♗f6 17 ♖h2! ♗a5 18 ♗d2 ♗cd8 19 ♗f3! h6 20 ♖g4 ♗xg4 21 hxg4 White had a slightly better position in view of the bishop pair and possibilities to attack later on via the h-file.

### C3) Manoeuvres starting with the move ♖f3-g5

This move usually comes to mind when the White queen is already on d3 (For example after an exchange of light squared bishops has taken place there). Its point is to force Black to weaken the pawns that protect his king, whilst from d3 the queen is ready to switch over to h3 to induce a further weakening. The game Abramovic-Radulov, Vrnjacka Banja 1983 provides us with a perfect example of what White expects to achieve:



In the diagrammed position Black wrongly continued with 13...b5?! thinking that he had all the time in the world to set up a light square blockade on the queenside; but after 14 ♗f4 ♗d6 15 ♖g5! g6 16 ♗h3! h5 17 ♖e4 ♗g7 18 ♗e3! White's plus was indisputable as Black's

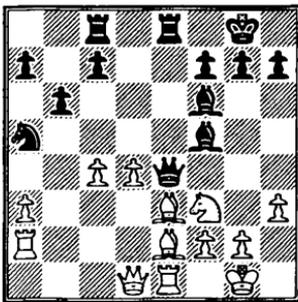
castled position was riddled with weaknesses.

#### D) The advance g2-g4

In one of the main lines of this opening, namely the one where Black configures his bishops on f5 and f6, White, by playing the move h2-h3, has often another dangerous idea in mind: **To expand by g2-g4** (and even g4-g5 if the position demands).

In this way he grasps a temporary initiative since the Black pieces are forced to retreat, but if in due course White fails to convert this initiative into something tangible he risks ending up with a position full of holes on the kingside.

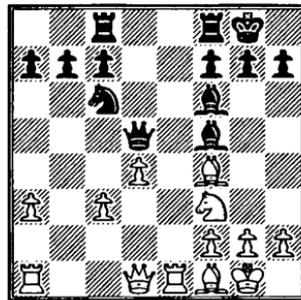
In **Kasparov-Adams, Linares 2002...**



...White continued from the diagrammed position in the following energetic manner: **20 g4** ♖g6! (20...♗d7? 21 ♗d3 ♜b7 22 ♗g5 ♗e7 23 ♗e5 would have led to a clear White advantage) **21 g5** ♗e7 **22** ♗e5 ♗d6 **23** ♗xg6 hxg6 **24 c5** with some initiative; subsequent analysis and games revealed a way

for Black to equalize, yet we should in no way undervalue the practical strength of White's idea because of this.

In the game **Anand-Karpov, Siemens Giants (rapid), Frankfurt 1999...**



...White showed that a combination of **g2-g4** and fianchetto of the light-squared bishop can be possible: **16 ♗c1!?** ♗fd8 **17 h3 h6 18 g4! ♗g6 19 ♗g2 ♜d7 20 d5 ♗a5 21 c4!** (Revealing the point behind the slightly mysterious 16 ♗c1!?) and White had the advantage as the reader may find out by consulting the game continuation featured under the Illustrative Games section.

Someone might remark that Anand simply improved on a well known idea that had made its first outing several years ago but this is in no way striking if we take into account the recent evolution in chess theory due to the appearance of computers. In fact, the idea of **g2-g4** followed by fianchettoing the ♗f1 belongs to **M. Tal** who in his game versus **Garcia Gonzales,**

**Jurmala 1983** had continued from the very same position with 16 ♖e3 ♘a5 17 ♘e5 c5 18 g4! showing to the chess world that the bishop on f5 is lacking good retreat squares.

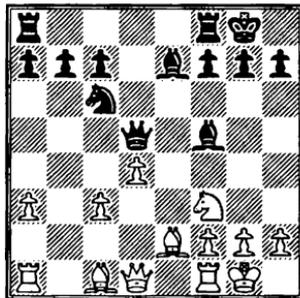
After 18...♙g6 19 ♙g2 ♖d8, White went on to win in great style by 20 dxc5 ♙xe5 21 ♖xe5 ♖f6 22 ♙g3 ♘c4 23 g5! ♖a6 24 ♖e7 ♖xc5 25 ♖d4! ♖xg5 26 h4! ♖a5 27 ♖ae1 h6 28 ♙f1 b5 29 ♖e8 1-0

### E) The pawn on c7

As we have already witnessed White likes to lure the enemy queen to d5 so that the central advance c3-c4, d4-d5 can be achieved with gain of time. This is not however the only reasoning behind White's choice: with the queen on d5 White thinks he can gain some time by developing his bishop on f4 and **hitting the unprotected pawn on c7**. This is one of the key ideas in the position, for if Black meets the threat to c7 with the 'natural' ...♙e7-d6 then White will retreat his bishop to e3 and all Black has done is to ruin his chances of putting the enemy centre under pressure by means of ...♙e7-f6 and ...♖a8-d8. For this reason Black usually replies to the attack with ♖a-c8 but in this way he essentially reconciles himself to a slightly worse position as the rook is passively placed on c8.

However, to achieve this concession on Black's part White must be careful with the move order; in the following diagrammed position which can be considered a

tabia for the whole Petroff, only one move seems to offer chances of an advantage.

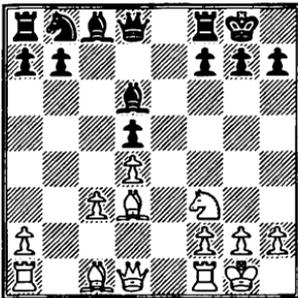


White should prefer Kasparov's flexible 14 ♖e1! ♖e8 15 ♙f4! which for tactical reasons that have to do with the presence of the rook on e8 (these can be found in the Illustrative Games section) prevents Black from utilizing the idea that is applicable against the natural and also logical 14 ♙f4: Indeed on this move there follows Kramnik's star positional reply of 14...♘a5!, sacrificing the c-pawn with the aim of actively deploying the pieces and applying strong pressure on White's hanging pawns. If White refuses the offer Black hopes that he will be able to set up a blockade on the light squares – which is probably true. Thus, after 15 ♙xc7 ♖ac8 16 ♙xa5 ♖xa5 17 c4 we reach a critical position for the assessment of 14 ♙f4. In **Zhang Zhong - Karpov, Cap d'Agde 2000** the continuation 17...♙f6! 18 ♙d3!? ♙g4! allowed Black to hold the position after a series of very fine moves and apparently destroy White's last illusions that he can be better; for this to become clear, however, it

took no less a player than Anatoly Karpov, the best defender in the world. Black's inspired defence in this encounter can be found in the Illustrative Games section too.

**The centre with White pawns c3, d4 vs Black pawn d5**

This type of centre can be encountered in the old main line which arises after the moves 1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♟f6 3 ♟xe5 d6 4 ♟f3 ♟xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♟d3 ♟d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 c6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♟c3 ♟xc3 11 bxc3



This is Black's most consistent continuation in the Petroff as he does not concede the centre to White and at the same time continues developing in a most natural manner. The ensuing positions are rich in tactical and positional content but do not differ greatly so we will make an attempt to categorise the various recurring themes by starting from the most primitive ones (which are likely to arise in almost all positions) and gradually move on to more specific ones that may appear at later stages of the struggle.

**A) The weakness of the square g5**

By developing his bishop on d6 Black counts on dynamic play with attacking chances but at the same time **abandons control of the important g5 square to White.**

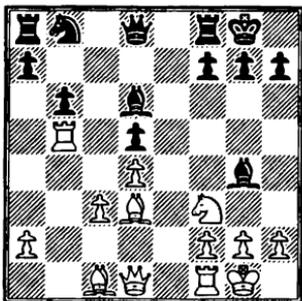
If Black does nothing to stop him White will use this square to attack the Black king with the direct ♟f3-g5 or to disturb the Black pieces and provoke the creation of weaknesses with ♟g5.

For example, in the basic position presented above, after 11...♟c6 White has the option of continuing 12 ♟g5! g6 13 ♟f3 with attacking chances, whilst in the case of 11...♟d7! (to bring the knight closer to the threatened sector) it is best to play 12 ♟g5! (trying to provoke weaknesses) 12...♟c7 (Black politely declines) 13 ♟c2 h6 14 ♟h4 ♟b6 15 ♟g3! with a slight positional advantage. In this particular variation we witness the typical theme of an exchange of dark-squared bishops which should be favourable to White as his remaining bishop is more mobile than its Black counterpart.

**B) The manoeuvre ♟a1-b1-b5, (h2-h3), c3-c4 as a way to combat ...♟c8-g4**

Black's best continuation is 11...♟g4, apparently creating an annoying pin on the ♟f3 and also planning ...♟g4-h5-g6. However, after 12 ♟b1! the bishop's absence from the queenside starts to make itself felt.

In reply to 12...b6 White continues with the imaginative 13 ♖b5! (which does threaten to capture on d5 as ...♗d6xh2+ is met by ♜f3xh2!).

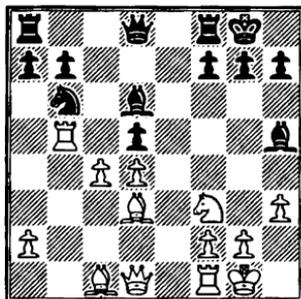


Black must protect his pawn by 13...♗c7 but after 14 h3! he cannot continue with 14...♗h5 in view of 15 c4!, exploiting an x-ray along the 5<sup>th</sup> horizontal. This is a typical idea in the old main line and it would be no exaggeration to say that in all these lines Black's queen bishop attracts White's queen rook like a magnet.

Black's best is to continue with 14...a6, yet after 15 hxg4! axb5 16 ♛c2! g6 17 ♗h6 ♖e8 18 ♗xb5 White had excellent compensation for the sacrificed exchange in the game **Kotronias-Rozentalis, Debrecen 1992** (See Illustrative Game No 33).

It is mainly for this reason that Black usually prefers to continue his development by 12...♜d7. This logical move invites White to capture on b7, having in mind to trap the rook after 13 ♖xb7 ♜b6!. Although this is not a losing position for White it takes him time

and energy to avoid material losses, allowing Black in the meantime to generate good counterplay. Therefore White continues 13 h3 ♗h5 14 ♖b5! ♜b6 15 c4!, increasing the pressure and posing Black some difficult problems.

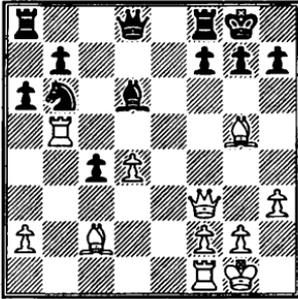


In practice Black has almost universally chosen to win a pawn, at the cost of surrendering the two bishops by 15...♗xf3, as the alternative 15...♜xc4 (15...a6? 16 ♖xb6 ♛xb6 17 c5 wins for White) 16 ♖xd5! ♗h2+ 17 ♜xh2 ♛xd5 18 ♗xc4 ♛xc4 19 ♛xh5 allows White to come out of the complications with two pieces for rook + pawn and significant chances to attack the Black king with his queen and minor pieces.

### C) Bishop sacrifices to prise open Black's kingside

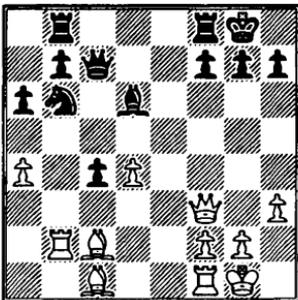
After 15...♗xf3! 16 ♛xf3 dxc4 17 ♗c2! White has lost a pawn but keeps his king's bishop dangerously placed on the diagonal b1-h7, whilst the ♖b5 has obtained access to the kingside. Also, White has possibilities to compress Black on the other wing by a2-a4-a5; if

Black tries to force the rook back by 17...a6?!, then after 18 ♖g5! the weakness of the square g5 once more creates insoluble problems for Black, as in **Beliavsky-Petursson, Reykjavik (World Cup) 1988:**



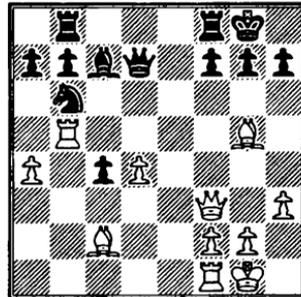
After 18...♞c7? there follows 19 ♖xh7+! ♜xh7 20 ♞h5+ ♜g8 21 ♖f6!! with an irresistible attack; nor is 18...f6? any good on account of 19 ♞h5 h6 20 ♖xh6! and White should win. Therefore Black reconciled himself to sacrificing the queen with 18...axb5, which leads to a position with few chances of survival (See Illustrative Game No 35).

In the old main line, even in positions where one hardly expects it to...



...the sacrifice of the dark-squared bishop on f6 or h6 quite often makes its appearance. In this position from the game **Dolmatov-Skatchkov, Russia 2000** White continued with the outrageous 20 ♖h6!? when extreme accuracy is required from Black in order to hold the position (See Illustrative Game No 36).

Finally, in the game **Gavrilov-Frog, corr. 1989/90 ...**



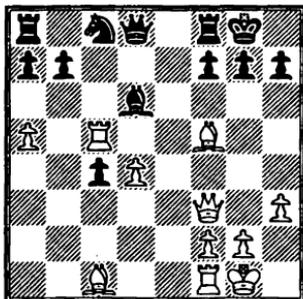
White, encouraged by Black's last feeble move (19...♖c7?!), started a fierce attack with the typical 20 ♖f6!; after 20...♞d6 21 ♖e5 ♞e7 22 a5 ♜a8 White uncorked the double bishop sacrifice 23 ♖xh7+! ♜xh7 24 ♞h5+ ♜g8 25 ♖xg7!, which led to a clear advantage after 25...f6! 26 ♞h8+ ♜f7 27 ♖xf8 ♜xf8 28 ♞h5+ ♜g8 29 ♞d5+. This example shows how closely linked are the sacrifices of the two bishops and it is noticeable how often White has to sacrifice both of them in order to achieve the desired result. Without doubt, Emanuel Lasker who was the first to introduce this theme in one of his games would

have been proud to see it become so widespread nowadays.

### D) Attacking the Black knight with a2-a4-a5 and the importance of the square d5

After 17 ♖c2 White is ready for a2-a4-a5, evicting the Black knight from its fine defensive position. As long as the knight remains on b6 it shields the attack on the b7 pawn and supports the one on c4. After a2-a4 the threat of a4-a5 forces Black to make a concrete decision regarding the future of his knight: Praxis has shown that if he does not have at his disposal the squares c4 or d5 for it then White will obtain a significant advantage.

This happens because on a4 the knight is cut off from the rest of its army whilst on c8 it temporarily cuts the Black position in two. In this particular case the motif a5-a6 makes its appearance, exploiting the fact that the b7 pawn is pinned along the diagonal h1-a8 due to the presence of the White queen on f3; this idea became visible in the game Timman-Anand, Tilburg 1991:

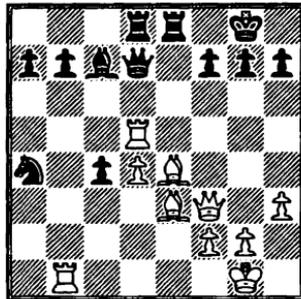


Here, the continuation 22 a6! ♘e7 23 axb7 ♚b8 24 ♙g5! left White clearly on top. To avert such a development of events Black should try to establish the knight on d5 with preparatory moves such as ...♗d8-d7, ...g7-g6, ...♞a-d8, ...♙d6-c7, or rely on the alternative strategy of jumping with the knight to c4 after ...c4-c3. We think that this second scheme is more promising.

### E) The pressure on the b7 pawn

Probably the most sensitive point in the Black camp is b7; with the queen on f3, a rook on b5 and the advance a4-a5 always on the cards it is obvious that White only needs to double rooks on the b-file to ensure the recovery of his pawn. The basic question is not whether Black will be able to hold on to the pawn (he almost certainly cannot) but whether he will be able to fully mobilise his pieces in order to obtain satisfactory counterplay.

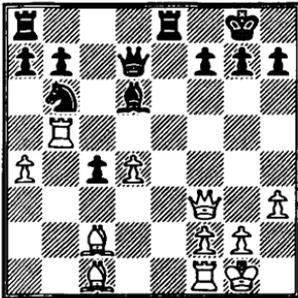
The game Khalifman-Leko, New Delhi 2000 is an excellent example of this theme:



Instead of trying to hold on to the pawn with 22...♔d6?, which led to a bad position for Black in the afore-mentioned game, Leko had to sacrifice it with 22...♖e7!; after 23 ♖xb7 ♘c3! 24 ♖xd8 Black must continue with 24...♖xd8! 25 ♔c6 ♚b8! with at least equality as White cannot avoid the exchange of his active rook.

**F) The transfer of a rook to the kingside via the 5<sup>th</sup> rank**

Once the d5-pawn no longer stands in the way, White should always keep in mind that the ♚b5 can be easily transferred to g5 or h5, to assist the combined assault of White's pieces. In the old main line for example, after 18...♖fe8 ...



...we propose the interesting novelty 19 ♖g5!; the rook's entry into the attack is associated with some concrete sacrificial ideas which are now hanging in the air, so Black must be very careful; after 19...♘xa4?? there follows 20 ♔xh7+! ♘xh7 21 ♖h5+ ♘g8 22 ♖xg7+! ♘xg7 23 ♔h6+ with a winning position for White, whilst

after 19...♔e7?!, White also wins by 20 ♖xg7+! ♘xg7 21 ♖h5 ♚h8 22 ♔h6+ ♘g8 23 ♖e5 f6 24 ♖g3+ ♘f7 25 ♖g7+ ♘e6 26 ♔f5+!.

Better moves for Black are 19...g6 and 19...♔f8, which are both extensively analysed within Illustrative Game No 38.

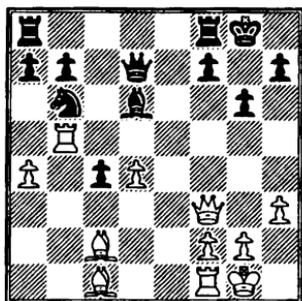
Before proceeding, we would like to note that in the game Khalifman-Leko mentioned above, after Black's mistake 22...♔d6?, the attacking rook along the 5<sup>th</sup> rank once again played a major role, this time by switching between h5 and d5:

23 ♚h5! g6 24 ♖xb7 ♔c7 25 ♔d5! ♖c8 26 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 27 ♔d5 and White had a very strong attack.

**G) The advance ...c4-c3 followed by the manoeuvre ...♘b6-c4-(d2)**

Despite the fact that Black has surrendered to White the bishop pair and, apparently, the initiative, things are not as simple as they look: Black has a powerful asset in the shape of the passed c-pawn which should always be taken into account. In several cases the pawn can even be sacrificed to open lines for the Black pieces (c4 for the knight and the c-file for Black's queen and rooks).

For example, if after 17 ♔c2! ♖d7 18 a4 g6 in the main line, White chooses...



19  $\text{♙d2}$ , Black's best possibility appears to be 19...c3!, freeing his play; after 19  $\text{♙e3!}$ ? Black can rely on the slower 19... $\text{♜ac8}$  20  $\text{♞fb1 c3}$  21 a5  $\text{♞c4}$  which leads to complicated play as the knight can jump to d2, disrupting the communication of White's forces, or take the bishop on e3.

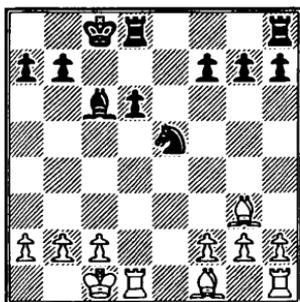
# Typical Endings that arise in the Petroff

In the Petroff, not many typical endgames are to be encountered; There are, however, concrete variations where Black chooses to enter a slightly worse endgame with the sole aim of drawing.

Such a variation is the following:

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗xe5  
 ♗xe4?! 4 ♕e2 ♕e7 5 ♖xe4 d6 6  
 d4 dxe5 7 dxe5 ♘c6 8 ♘c3! ♕xe5  
 9 ♖xe5+ ♗xe5 10 ♙f4 ♙d6 11  
 ♙g3 ♙d7 12 0-0-0 0-0-0 13 ♗e4  
 ♙c6 14 ♗xd6+ cxd6.

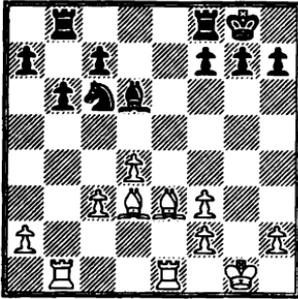
The type of endgame that has arisen here is characteristic for this variation: Black has been saddled with a **weakness on d6** and has conceded the **bishop pair** to White with the sole purpose of playing a position without queens. White has very good chances to win the game by combining play on both flanks. In the game **Vasiukov-Chekhov, Kishniev 1975...**



...White continued with 15 ♔f3 ♕he8 16 ♗d4! (A very important switch to the 4<sup>th</sup> rank, allowing the rook to force and attack weaknesses on both sides of the board) 16...♖c7 17 a4 ♔f5 18 h4 g6 19 ♙f4 ♗d7 20 b4! ♗de7 21 ♖b2 a6 22 a5 d5 23 h5 ♖c8 24 hxg6 hxg6 25 ♗h6 ♗g7 26 ♙xe5 ♗xe5 27 ♙d3 ♖c7 28 g4! obtaining an obvious advantage (See Illustrative Game No 2).

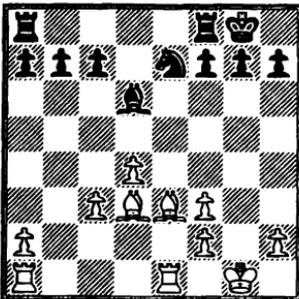
Another typical endgame arises in some positions after ...♙g4xf3 followed by the **exchange of queens on f3**; White gets **doubled f-pawns** but without queens on the board this does not jeopardize his king's safety. In this endgame White's **two bishops** can become an asset if he manages to **open lines on the queenside**, but even if he fails to do so he is never in danger of losing as Black's position is too passive. In the game **Kotronias-Langrock, Wichern open 2001** (See Illustrative Game No 16) such an ending arose.

In the following diagrammed position White rushed to bring his king to f3 by 18 ♔f3?!, and although he still remained a little better Black managed to gradually solve his problems...



Instead, he should have given priority to **18 a4!** with a clear advantage, since Black is lacking useful moves: If the knight moves from c6, then c3-c4-c5 will come, whilst on **18...♖bd8** the reply **19 ♔g5!**, tempting Black to weaken himself with ...f7-f6 is annoying. Finally on **18...h6** the move **19 f4!** has much more point than in the game as the further f4-f5 will fix some weaknesses.

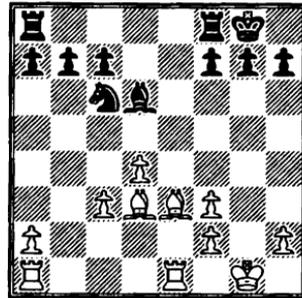
In the game **Timman-Yusupov, Belfort 1988** (See Illustrative Game No 19) ...



...a slightly modified version of the same ending arose: Here the Black knight had already retreated on e7 so White continued unhindered with the usual plan of

opening lines on the queenside by **16 c4 c6 17 ♖ab1 b6** and now the standard **18 a4!**: After **18...♖ab8 19 ♖b3! h6 20 ♖eb1** the preparations for a4-a5 were complete and White went on to open the a-file and infiltrate with his rooks.

In the game **Ehlvest-Yusupov, Saint John 1988** (See Illustrative game No 19 too)...

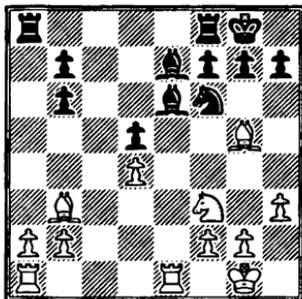


...Black tried (as in the note to **Kotronias-Langrock**) to keep the knight firm on c6 for a while with **15...♖ad8 16 ♖ad1!? b6** in an effort to discourage White from mobilizing his central pawns, yet after the typical **17 ♔g5! f6 18 ♔e3** White had provoked an important weakness in the Black camp.

The further course of the game was **18...♗e7 19 c4 c6! 20 ♔c2!?** **♗g6 21 c5 ♔c7 22 ♔c1! bxc5 23 dxc5 ♗e5 24 ♖g2** with White maintaining a small but annoying edge.

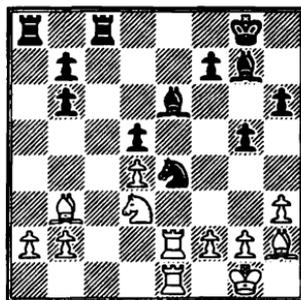
Finally, a relatively popular variation where Black is willing to accept a slightly worse endgame in the hope of avoiding complications is the following:

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4 ♗f3 ♗xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♖d3 ♖e7 7 0-0 ♗c6 8 c4!? ♗f6 9 ♗c3 0-0 10 h3! ♗b4 11 ♖e2 dxc4 12 ♖xc4 ♗bd5 13 ♜e1 c6 14 ♖g5! ♖e6 15 ♜b3 ♜b6!? when White has nothing better than 16 ♗xd5 cxd5 17 ♜xb6 axb6 18 ♖b3, reaching the following position:



White should be slightly better here as he has the more elastic pawn structure and more active pieces. In

the game Leko-Adams, Dortmund 2002, the sequel 18...h6 19 ♖f4 ♜fc8 20 ♗e5 g5? 21 ♖h2 ♖b4 22 ♜e2 ♗e4 23 ♗d3! ♖f8 24 ♜ael ♖g7



25 ♖e5!

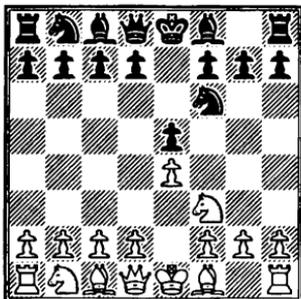
...allowed White to trade dark-squared bishops, obtaining a superb outpost on b4 for his knight and at the same time a considerable advantage (See Illustrative game No 30).

# Illustrative Games

1

Kuczynski – Appel  
Bundesliga 1996

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6

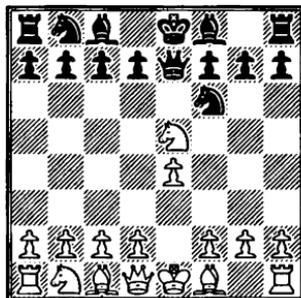


The Petroff Defence. Black resorts to a symmetrical development, aspiring to liquidate the e-pawns and obtain a free and comfortable game. These words sound nice, but in practice things are not so easy.

3 ♘xe5

White decides to allow the above mentioned liquidation, trusting that the advantage of the first move will be sufficient to maintain an edge, even in the symmetrical positions that will now occur.

3... ♖e7



A move without much point, as the e-pawn could be recovered simply by 3...d6. The only logical explanation is that Black wishes to avoid the knight sacrifice 4 ♘xf7?!? in reply to the above mentioned continuation, but that sacrifice is merely a dubious attempt to complicate the issue, enjoying few chances of success.

4 ♘f3!

It is best for White to refrain from 4 d4 as that move would allow Black chances to mix things up by 4...d6 5 ♘f3 ♗xe4+ 6 ♙e2 ♙f5!?.

4... ♘xe4

Relatively best, but at the same time an admission that Black's last move will have to be retracted.

4... ♗xe4+ is a logical try to develop the kingside, yet after 5

♙e2 d5 (On 5...♙e7 White should still play 6 0-0 as 6...0-0 7 ♖e1± leaves Black exposed on the e-line) 6 0-0 the exposed position of the queen seriously jeopardizes Black's chances. For example:

A) 6...♙g4 7 ♖e1± leads to a clear advantage for White (while 7 ♙b5+!? ♘d8□ 8 ♙e2± is also interesting).

B) 6...♗g6 7 ♙b5+ c6 8 ♖e1+ ♙e6 9 ♙d3 ♘e4 (Eximeno-Venturas, IECG Email 2000) 10 ♙xe4! dxe4 11 ♘h4 ♗f6 12 ♖xe4±;

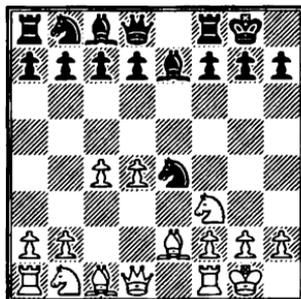
C) 6...♙e7 7 ♖e1 0-0 8 d4!?± and Black must lose even more time to extricate the queen from its difficulties (8 ♘c3?! instead, is inferior as then 8...♗b4 offers Black a chance to coordinate his pieces more harmoniously)

5 ♙e2 ♗d8

5...d5 6 0-0 ♙e6 [6...g6?! 7 ♖e1 ♙g7 8 ♙b5+! (8 c4!? 0-0 9 cxd5 ♗c5 10 d4 ♗xd5 11 ♘c3 ♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♘c6 13 ♙f4 ♗a5 14 ♗d2 ♙d7 15 ♖ab1 ♘d8 16 ♘e5± Virumbrales-Ortiz, Monzon, tch, Spain 1987) 8...c6 9 d3 cxb5 10 dxe4 dxe4 11 ♙g5! ♗c7 (11...f6 12 ♘c3±) 12 ♘c3 ♙xc3 13 ♖xe4+ ♙e6 14 bxc3 0-0 15 ♘d4± ♙c4? 16 ♘f5! f6! 17 ♖e7 ♗c6 18 ♘h6+ ♘h8 19 ♘g4!+-] is an attempt to quickly develop the queenside, yet after 7 ♖e1 it is not easy to carry out this plan without concessions: 7...♘c6 (7...♗f6 8 d3 ♘d6 9 ♘g5 ♙e7 10 ♘xe6 fxe6 11 ♙h5+ g6 12 ♙g4 ♘f5 13 ♙f4 ♘d7 14 ♙xc7 ♖c8 15 ♙xf5 gxf5 16 ♙f4 ♗xb2 17

♗h5+ ♘d8 18 ♘d2± Boricsev-Mooi Kok Onn, Singapore 2002) 8 d3 (8 ♙b5 ♗c5!) 8...♘f6 9 ♘g5 0-0-0 10 ♙f1 is at least ± since White's idea of taking on e6 and following up with g2-g3, ♘b1-d2-f3, ♙f1-h3 will apply unpleasant pressure on the weakened light squares in the Black camp. However, White may vary his strategy according to Black's reply, e.g. 10...h6 11 ♘xe6 fxe6 12 d4 ♗d6 13 c3 (intending b2-b4) and White suddenly attacks on the queenside; 13...e5?! fails to 14 dxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♙f4 ♘fd7 16 ♗d4 (16 ♙g3!?) c5 17 ♙xe5 cxd4 18 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 19 cxd4±

6 0-0 ♙e7 7 d4 0-0 8 c4



8...d5!?

The most logical move, wishing to transpose to an isolated QP position, where the bishop on e2 is not so well placed.

After 8...c6 9 ♗c2 White's advantage is undisputed according to Forintos and Haag; a logical continuation is 9...d5 10 cxd5 cxd5 11 ♘c3 when we have the first parting of the ways:

A) 11...♙f5 12 ♖b3! ♜xc3 13 bxc3 b6 (13...♗c7 14 ♗xd5 ♙e6 15 ♗e4 ♗xc3 16 ♙d3 g6 17 ♚b1±) 14 ♜e5! f6 15 ♙f3 ♙e6 16 ♜d3±;

B) 11...♜f6 12 ♙g5 ♜c6 13 ♙b5! (13 ♚ad1?! ♙e6 14 ♜e5 ♚c8 15 f4 ♗b6 16 ♜xc6 ♚xc6 17 f5 ♙d7) is also better for White after either of the following replies:

B1) 13...♙d7 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15 ♜xd5 ♙xd4 (15...♜xd4! 16 ♜xf6+ ♗xf6 17 ♜xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♚fd1 ♗xd1+ 19 ♚xd1 ♙xb5±) 16 ♚ad1±;

B2) 13...h6 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15 ♙xc6 bxc6 16 ♚fe1 ♚b8 17 b3±;

C) 11...♜xc3 (Probably best) 12 bxc3 and at this point Black should rather seek simplification to minimize the potential of White's better developed position:

C1) 12...♜c6 13 ♚b1 b6 (13...♗c7 14 h3 ♙e6 15 ♙d3 h6 16 ♚e1↑) 14 ♚e1 ♗d6 (14...♙g4! 15 h3 ♙h5 16 ♜e5 ♜xe5 17 ♙xh5± transposes to 12...♙g4!?) 15 ♙d3 h6 16 ♜e5 ♜xe5 17 dxe5! ♗c6 18 ♙e3±;

C2) 12...♜d7 13 ♙d3 ♜f6 14 ♚b1 ♗c7 15 ♚e1±;

C3) 12...♙g4!? 13 ♚b1 b6 (13...♗c7 14 ♗b3) 14 ♚e1 ♜c6 15 h3 ♙h5 (15...♙e6 16 ♙b5↑) 16 ♜e5 ♜xe5 17 ♙xh5 ♜g6± is the best choice as it yields a position where the White bishop on f3 will face the annoying ...♜g6-h4 and the ♙c1 hasn't good squares; all this doesn't mean, however, that White's advantage should be underestimated (17...♜c4?! instead, is only aesthetically pleasing as after

18 ♙f3± the bishop on f3 is unchallenged and the pressure on the c-pawn blocked).

### 9 cxd5

9 ♜c3!? is interesting, avoiding the isolani and furthering development.

### 9...♜f6!

9...♗xd5 10 ♜c3 ♜xc3 11 bxc3 is clearly better for White.

### 10 ♜c3 ♜xd5

It is a bit surprising that this position may arise from a far different move order: 1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜xe5 d6 4 ♜f3 ♜xe4 5 ♙d3 ♜c5 6 ♙e2 d5 7 d4 ♜e4 8 0-0 ke7 9 c4 0-0 10 cxd5 ♜f6 11 ♜c3 ♜xd5.

### 11 h3

11 ♜xd5!? ♗xd5 12 ♜e5 violates the rule that the side with the isolani should refrain from exchanges, but here is an exceptional case as White will gain more time by hitting the queen. Some sample lines follow.

A) 12...♜c6 13 ♙f3 ♗d6 14 ♜xc6 bxc6 15 ♗c2±;

B) 12...♙e6 13 ♙f3 ♗b5 14 a4! is also better for White as the following variations show:

B1) 14...♗a6 15 b4 c6 (15...♙xb4 16 ♚b1 ♗b6 17 a5+) 16 ♚b1 ♜d7 17 b5 cxb5 18 ♙xb5 ♚ab8 19 ♙f4↑;

B2) 14...♗b4 15 ♜d3 ♗b6 16 ♜f4±;

C) 12...♜d7! (This reserved choice is best as it doesn't tempt fate) 13 ♙c4 (13 ♙f3 ♗e6! (13...♗b5 14 a4 ♗b4 15 ♜xd7 ♙xd7 16 b3±) 14 ♚e1 ♜xe5 15

♞xe5 ♖d6 looks OK for Black) ♖d6 14 ♙f4 (14 ♜xf7?! is proven harmless after 14...♞xf7 15 ♖b3 ♖g6 16 ♞e1 ♙f8 17 ♞e3 b5! 18 ♖xb5 ♜b6) ♜b6 (14...♜xe5 15 ♙xe5 ♖d8 (15...♖b6 16 ♞e1 ♙d6 17 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 18 ♖b3↑) 16 ♖f3 ♙d6 17 ♞fe1±) 15 ♙b3 (15 ♙d3 ♜d5=) 15...♜d5 (15...♖f6 16 ♙g3 ♙e6 17 ♞e1±) 16 ♙g3 ♖d8 and although Black should be able to hold, White maintains some initiative with 17 ♞e1↑: After, for example, something easy going like 17...♙e6 18 a3 c6 19 ♖d3 ♙f6 (19...♞e8 20 ♙c2 ♜f6 21 ♙h4! g6 22 ♜xg6! hxg6 23 ♞xe6 fxe6 24 ♖xg6+ ♜f8 25 ♙g5+-) 20 ♙c2 g6 Black discovers, to his regret, one of the chief attacking motifs White employs in the Petroff: 21 ♜xg6! hxg6 22 ♞xe6!±.

11 ♖b3!? ♜b6 12 ♞d1± is another way to maintain a slight initiative.

11...♙e6 12 ♙d3 ♜d7 13 ♞e1

13 ♖e2?! is a pointless move in this type of position, yet after 13...♞e8? (13...c6) 14 ♙xh7+! ♜xh7 15 ♖e4+ ♜h8 16 ♜xd5 ♜c5 17 dxc5 ♖xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 19 ♙c3 ♙f6 20 ♞fd1 ♞ad8 21 ♞d2± White was rewarded with an extra pawn and went on to win in Ni Hua-Zhu Chen, Tianjing 2003.

13...c6

It is a tribute to the richness and the variety of our ancient game that this position may arise from the Alekhine defence as well. In fact, our present game and two more

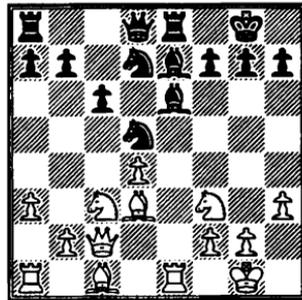
have been reached from the Alekhine move order:

1 e4 ♜f6 2 e5 ♜d5 3 d4 d6 4 c4 ♜b6 5 exd6 exd6 6 ♜c3 ♙e7 7 h3 0-0 8 ♜f3 c6 9 ♙d3 d5 10 cxd5 ♜xd5 11 0-0 ♙e6 12 ♞e1 ♜d7. Pretty amazing, isn't it?

14 a3

14 ♖c2!? h6 15 a3± is the accurate move-order as it ensures that the game position will be reached (while 15 ♞xe6!? fxe6 16 ♖e2, in the style of the famous game Topalov-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2003, is very interesting).

14...♞e8 15 ♖c2



15...♜f8!

15...h6 16 ♙d2 ♜xc3 17 bxc3 ♙d5 (T.Paetz-Baburin, Austria tch 2003) 18 ♜h2!± gives White a dangerous initiative on the centre and the kingside in view of the threatened manoeuvre ♜h2-g4(f1)-e3, possibly combined with a well timed c3-c4, d4-d5. After 18...b5 19 ♜g4 ♜b6 20 ♖c1↑ (Instead, the immediate 20 ♙xh6!? gxh6 21 ♜xh6+ is merely unclear after the best defence 21...♜g7! (21...♜h8?

22 ♖e2±, with the idea ♗d1-h5 is good for White) 22 ♘f5+ ♕f8! (22...♔g8? 23 ♗d2 ♙f6 24 ♗h6 ♜e6 25 ♜e3 ♞xe3 26 fxe3↑) it seems that Black has no easy way to meet the ♙xh6 threat.

16 ♙d2 h6

Now in the prophylactic sense this is rather an over-reaction; Black had certainly better ways of playing the position.

17 ♜e2 ♙d6 18 ♘e5 ♙xe5?!

It is in Black's interest to relieve his constricted position by exchanges but this is not the proper way; he had to try 18...♘d7, at least making use of the fact that now the h7 pawn is not hanging. The text move allows White to launch a dangerous kingside pawn storm.

19 dxex5 ♘xc3 20 ♙xc3 a5

Initiating something on the queenside is, in principle, Black's only chance for counterplay. In this particular position the attempt to exchange bishops by 20...♙b3 was also worth considering, however 21 ♗xb3 ♗xd3 22 ♜d2 ♗a6 23 ♜ad1 ♘e6 24 ♗b4 ♜ad8 25 ♜d6! intending ♗b4-g4, f2-f4 leaves White with a very strong initiative.

21 ♜e3!

Now White squelches this opportunity for good and, at the same time, furthers his attacking plans on the kingside.

21...♙d5 22 f4!

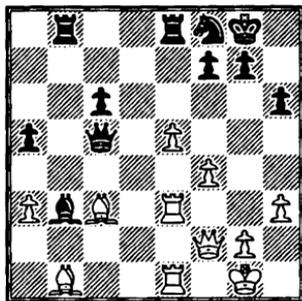
The kingside pawn mass is set in motion; White is not afraid of tactics on the diagonal g1-a7 as his

queen can neutralise everything by simply moving to f2.

22...b5 23 ♗f2 ♗b6 24 ♜ae1 b4 25 ♙d2 ♗d4 26 ♙c1 bxa3

Opening up the b-file releases the tension and gives White a valuable square on c3 for his dark-squared bishop, yet Black had to somehow seek counterplay. Nothing is offered by 26...♘e6 27 f5 ♘c5 due to 28 ♙c2 b3 29 ♙b1 and White has all his pieces poised for attack.

27 bxa3 ♜ab8 28 ♙c2 ♙a2 29 ♙d2 ♗c5 30 ♙c3 ♙b3 31 ♙b1



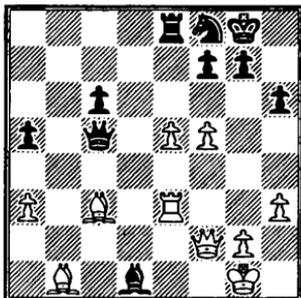
A wonderful position from White's point of view; the exchange of light-squared bishops has been prevented, all his pieces are ideally placed for attacking purposes and his king is secure. It would not be premature to say that White is strategically winning here.

31...♜bd8

31...♗xa3 32 ♜g3 ♙d5 33 f5 ♜b3 can be met with the brilliant and deadly sacrifice 34 ♜xg7+!!; after 34...♔xg7 35 f6+ ♔g8 (35...♔h8 36 ♗f4+-) 36 ♗g3+ ♘g6 37 ♙xg6 ♗f8 38 ♙c2+ ♔h8 39 ♙xb3 ♙xb3 the typical rook switch 40 ♜e4! +-

decides the game, e.g. 40...♙c2 41 ♖h4 ♙g6 42 ♗h2 ♗h7 43 ♙d2 h5 44 ♗g5 and there is no way to stop ♖h4xh5+.

32 f5 ♖d1 33 ♖xd1 ♙xd1



34 ♗g3!

A fine move, demonstrating the helplessness of Black's position; White is not afraid to exchange queens as the attack persists even in the endgame.

34...♗xf2+ 35 ♗xf2 ♘h7

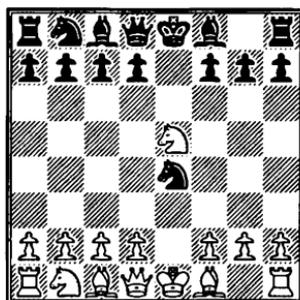
Desperation; 35...a4 would have been better, yet 36 ♙e4! yields a decisive advantage as it wins a pawn and maintains the attacking momentum.

36 e6 f6 37 h4 a4 38 ♖d3 ♙b3 39 ♖d7 h5 40 ♙e4 ♖c8 41 ♙xc6 ♘f8 42 ♖d6 1-0

2

Vasiukov – Chekhov  
Kishniev 1975

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘xe4?!



After this, a pawn will be lost, but Black hopes that by developing fast he will acquire some compensation for it. Nowadays, this line has been eclipsed from tournament play because Black fails to obtain substantial compensation.

4 ♗e2 ♗e7

4...d5 5 d3 ♗e7 6 dxe4 ♗xe5 7 exd5± is obviously bad for Black.

5 ♗xe4 d6 6 d4

White reinforces the pinned knight and is by now ready to start developing the rest of his army. Black has tried several continuations in an effort to equalise the chances, but to no avail.

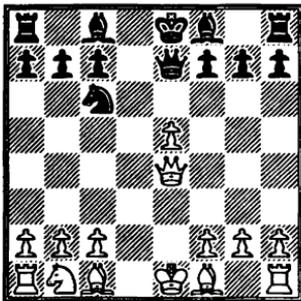
6...dxe5

6...♘d7?! is an attempt to intensify the pressure on e5. After 7 f4! (7 ♘c3!? dxe5 8 ♘d5 ♗d8!? (8...♘f6 9 ♘xf6+ gxf6 10 ♙b5+! ♙d7 11 ♙xd7+ ♗xd7 12 0-0±) 9 dxe5 ♘c5 10 ♗f3 c6± allows Black some practical chances) 7...f6 (7...dxe5 8 fxe5±) 8 ♙c4! dxe5 9 fxe5 fxe5 10 0-0± White's advantage is more than evident, however.

6...f6?! decisively weakens the Black position. The variation 7 ♘c3 dxe5 8 ♘d5 ♖d6 9 dxe5 fxe5 10 ♙f4! c6 11 0-0-0!± provides a convincing refutation, pointed out by Steinitz.

6...♘c6?! is definitely inferior to 6...dxe5, because it fails to clarify the situation in the centre. White can exploit this by 7 ♙b5 ♙d7 8 0-0! dxe5 9 d5! when the advance of his d-pawn brings panic to the enemy ranks, e.g. 9...♘b8 (9...f5?! is hardly an improvement on account of 10 ♖e2 ♘b8 (10...♘d4 11 ♙xd7+ ♗xd7 12 ♖d3± Horak-Petraz, Czech 2000) 11 ♖e1 ♙xb5?! (11...e4) 12 ♖xb5+ c6 13 ♖b3 cxd5 14 ♙g5! +- and Black had to bite the dust in Speelman-Koegh, Amsterdam 1978) 10 d6! cxd6 11 ♖xb7 ♙xb5 12 ♖xa8 (12 ♖xb5+!?) 12...♖c7 13 ♙e3± and Black is badly tied up according to Ugrinovic.

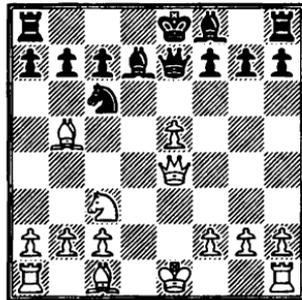
7 dxe5 ♘c6



8 ♘c3!

Knights before bishops! This old move by Vasiukov is the easiest and objectively best way of obtaining a safe plus.

8 ♙b5!? ♙d7 9 ♘c3 is the other try for an advantage; White is threatening ♘c3-d5, so Black is given no respite to capture the e-pawn. For the sake of completeness, and due to the fact that the line seems to be playable again for Black after a long period of abandonment we felt obliged to review the situation here.



A) 9...♖xe5?? 10 ♙xc6+- is, of course, out of the question;

B) 9...♘xe5? is punished by 10 ♘d5 ♖d6 11 ♙f4 f6 12 ♙xd7+ ♖xd7 13 ♙xe5+- (13 0-0-0+-);

C) On 9...0-0-0?! there comes 10 ♙f4 with the dual purpose of guarding the extra pawn and preparing to castle long. Black's results from this position have been quite unsatisfactory:

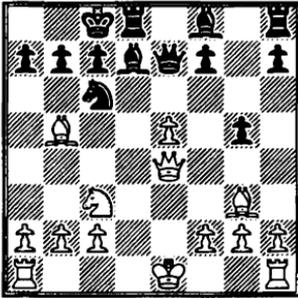
C1) 10...a6 11 ♙c4! ♙e6? (11...g5? 12 ♙d5 is also bad) turned out a most unfortunate choice for Black after (11...g6 12 0-0-0 ♙g7 13 ♘d5±) 12 ♙xa6! ♗b8 13 ♙b5 ♖d4 14 ♖e3 ♘b4 15 ♙a4+- in Sax-Hulak, Budapest 1975, as he was left two pawns down without the slightest compensation;

C2) Black would like to play 10...g6, initiating pressure on the e5

pawn, but this move has defects too as it fails to control the g5 square: 11 0-0-0 ♖g7 (Langheld-Wegelin, West Germany corr. 1980) 12 ♗e3!±, hitting a7 and threatening ♖f4-g5;

C3) 10...♗b4?! has no point now as White simply plays 11 0-0-0 ♗xe4 12 ♘xe4 ♘xe5 13 ♖xd7+ ♘xd7 14 ♘g5± as in Hotting-Mes, Holland ch corr. 1987;

C4) 10...g5!? (A harmonious method of initiating pressure on the e-pawn, but it doesn't quite succeed in the end; nevertheless, it is by far the best possibility available to Black) 11 ♖g3 leads to a major parting of the ways:



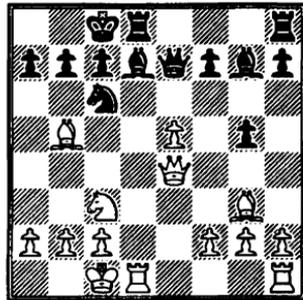
C4a) After 11...f5 12 exf6 ♗xf6 13 0-0± White maintains an extra pawn and a better position;

C4b) 11...a6 should now be met by 12 ♖a4 with a position that is not too different from the ones reached below; for example: 12...♖g7 13 0-0-0 ♖he8 14 ♖he1 ♘xe5 15 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 16 ♗xh7 ♖xd1+ 17 ♖xd1 ♗f6 18 ♘d5 ♗h6 19 ♗xh6 ♖xh6 20 ♘f6 ♖e6 21 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 22 ♘g4+-;

C4c) 11...h5 is inadequate because of 12 h4! ♖h6 (12...♖g7 is

also bad: 13 0-0-0 g4 14 ♖he1 ♗b8 15 ♘d5 ♗e6 16 ♗b1 ♖c8 17 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 18 e6! ♖xd5 19 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 20 ♖xd5 ♖xe6 21 ♖c5 ♖d4 22 ♖xc7 ♖xf2 23 ♖xf7+! ♖xg3 24 ♖xe6 ♖xh4 25 a3 1-0 Atienza-Teijeira, UECC email 1999) 13 hxg5 ♖xg5 14 f4 h4 15 ♖f2 h3? (a mistake in a losing position) 16 fxg5 hxg2 17 ♖xh8 ♖xh8 18 0-0-0 ♗xg5+ 19 ♖e3+- Rizouk-Brahim, Algeria 2001;

C4d) 11...♖g7 12 0-0-0 and White has managed to complete his development and should be able to capitalize on the extra pawn. The following analysis provides a method of taming Black's counter-play:



C4d1) 12...f5? 13 exf6 ♗xf6 allows the tactical shot 14 ♖xc7!+-;

C4d2) 12...♘xe5? should be met by 13 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 14 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 15 ♖xe5 ♖e8 16 ♖d1!+- winning a piece and the game;

C4d3) 12...h6? is too slow, e.g. 13 ♗a4 ♗b8? (Better was 13...a6 even though after 14 e6! fxe6 15 ♖xa6! ♖xc3 (15...bxa6 16 ♗xa6+ ♗b8 17 ♖xc7+! ♗xc7 18 ♘b5+ ♗b8 19 ♗b6+ ♗a8 20 ♘c7#) 16

bxc3 ♘b8 (16...bxa6 17 ♚xa6+ ♘b8 18 ♚d3±) 17 ♙b5 ♙xb5 18 ♚xb5 ♘c6 19 ♘b2± White is clearly better) 14 ♘d5 ♚e6 15 ♘xc7! ♘xc7 16 ♚d6 ♚e8 17 e6 1-0 Kwong-Teijeira, UECC email 1998;

**C4d4)** 12...♚he8 (the widely accepted choice) 13 ♚he1 (13 ♚xh7!?) 13...♘xe5 (13...f5 is best met by 14 exf6 ♚xf6 15 ♚xd7!! ♘xd7 16 ♚g4+ ♚e6 17 ♙c4+-) 14 ♚xh7!? (14 ♙xd7+ ♚xd7 15 ♚xh7 ♚xd1+ 16 ♚xd1 ♚f6 17 ♘d5 ♚h6 18 ♚xh6 ♙xh6 19 ♘f6 ♚e6 20 ♙xe5 ♚xe5 21 ♘g4+- may be even better) 14...♙xb5 15 ♘xb5 ♚xd1+ 16 ♚xd1 ♚f6 17 ♘d4!± and it appears that White has consolidated his advantage, as 17...♘c4 can be met by 18 ♚h3+! ♘b8 19 ♚d7 ♚c8 20 ♚b5! and the White queen returns to the theatre of action at the most appropriate moment.

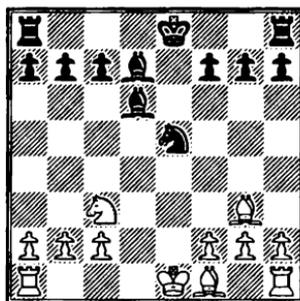
**D)** 9...♚b4! (The best move; Other tries simply leave Black a pawn down without compensation; the idea of 9...♚b4 is to reach an endgame where Black will present his opponent with severe technical difficulties in the realisation of the pawn. It is important of course to play this move before White is able to castle long) 10 ♙c4?! (10 ♚f4!?!± is probably the most harmonious and, as yet, untried. White acquiesces to the exchange but only on his own terms; we think White has a slight plus here) 10...0-0-0 11 a3 ♚a5 12 ♙xf7 ♘xe5 13 b4 ♙xb4 14 ♚xb4 ♚xb4 15 axb4 ♘xf7 16 ♚xa7 ♙f5 (a recent game confirmed that Black has other ways too of playing the position: 16...♘b8 17

♙e3 b6 18 ♚a1 ♙f5 19 0-0 ♙xc2 20 ♚fc1 ♙d3 21 ♙f4 ♚d7= Shaw-Volkman, Plovdiv 2003) 17 ♚a2 ♚d4! 18 0-0 ♚hd8♚ (Solak-Volkman, Istanbul 2003) is quite playable for Black and obviously not the kind of position White would like to obtain in such an inferior variation.

**8...♚xe5 9 ♚xe5+ ♘xe5 10 ♙f4 ♙d6**

10...f6 can be met with 11 0-0-0 ♙c5 (11...♙e7 12 ♙xe5 fxe5 13 ♙c4±) 12 ♘e4 ♙e7 13 ♙b5+! ♘f7 (Garbarino-Grushka, Pehuaj 1983; 13...c6 14 ♙xe5 fxe5 15 ♙c4 b5 16 ♙b3 a5 17 a4±) 14 ♙xe5 fxe5 15 ♙d7!±

**11 ♙g3 ♙d7**



**12 0-0-0**

12 ♘e4! is a better move order, to avoid the next note. After 12...0-0-0 13 ♘xd6+ cxd6 14 0-0-0 ♙c6 we transpose to the game continuation.

**12...0-0-0**

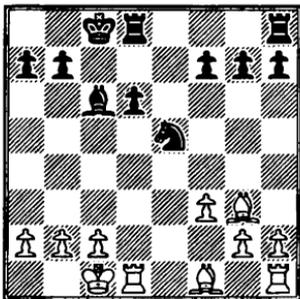
12...f6!? is an interesting idea, to answer 13 ♘e4 with 13...♙e7. In this way Black tries to exploit the omission of 12 ♘e4. After 13 ♘b5

♖xb5 14 ♖xb5+ ♔f7 15 ♖a4 g6 16  
 ♖b3+ ♔g7 17 ♜he1 ♜he8 18 ♖d5  
 ♜ab8 19 f3 b6 20 ♜d2 ♔f7 21 ♜xe8  
 ♜xe8 22 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 23 ♖xd6 ♜e1+  
 a draw was agreed in Luhrig-  
 Wolochowicz, EU ch corr. 1988. A  
 model way of defending a difficult  
 position.

13 ♔e4 ♖c6 14 ♔xd6+ cxd6

This is how Black usually ends up  
 in this variation: a weakness on d6  
 and having to face White's two  
 mighty bishops. We think that by  
 generating play on both sides of the  
 board, as Vasiukov did, White has  
 very good winning chances.

15 f3



15...♜he8

15...f6!? 16 ♜d4 d5! (to keep  
 under control a potential expansion  
 on the queenside) 17 a4! a6 18 b3!  
 ♜he8 19 h3 g6, completes the  
 alternative defensive formation,  
 with pawns on f6 and d5 (instead of  
 f5 and d6). Still, after 20 ♔d2!±  
 White should be able to boast a  
 slight plus: 20...♔d7 (A logical  
 escape with the king to the kingside  
 sector) 21 ♖e2 ♔e7 22 c3?!

(Weakens the structure a bit without  
 particular reason. The sophisticated  
 22 ♜h4! is a better way to continue,  
 trying to provoke more weaknesses  
 in Black's camp: 22...h5 23 ♜e1 (23  
 f4? ♔f7 24 f5 ♔g5±) 23...♔f8 24  
 ♖f2↑ and White may use ...h7-h5 to  
 open up the kingside later on) 22...♔f8 23 ♜d1 ♜d7 24 ♖f2 ♔g7  
 25 ♜b4 g5 26 h4 h6 27 ♖f1 ♔g6 28  
 ♔c2 ♜de7 29 ♔b2 ♔d7 30 ♔a3  
 ♔f8 31 f4?! (right idea, wrong  
 execution; 31 ♖d3+! ♔g7 32 f4±  
 would have justified White's  
 previous play, tearing apart the  
 barricades on the kingside) 31...f5  
 32 g4 fxg4 33 ♖d3+ ♜e4! (with this  
 miraculous exchange sacrifice Black  
 turns the tables, obtaining a slight  
 advantage) 34 fxg5 hxg5 35 hxg5  
 ♔e6 36 ♜b6 ♔f4 37 ♖xa6 bxa6 38  
 ♜xc6+ ♜8e6 39 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 40  
 ♔b4 ♔xg5 41 ♔a5 ♔e2 42 ♜xd5+  
 ♔f4 43 c4 g3 44 ♖b6 g2 45 ♜d1  
 ♜g6 46 c5 ♔c3?! (46...♜h6!) 47  
 ♜a1 ♔xa4 48 ♖c7+ ♔e4 49 ♔xa4  
 g1=♚ 50 ♜xg1 ♜xg1 51 ♔a5 ♜a1+  
 52 ♔b6 ♔d4 53 b4 ♜a4 54 ♖d6  
 ½-½, Kotka-Mollekens, (ol) corr.  
 1977. A very interesting fight,  
 illustrating the subtleties of this  
 ending.

16 ♜d4!

A rook on the 4th rank is, as we  
 have already witnessed, very useful  
 in this type of position as it can help  
 in provoking weaknesses on both  
 flanks.

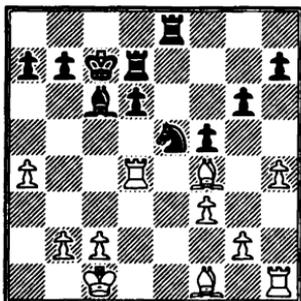
16...♔c7 17 a4 f5 18 h4

The immediate 18 b4 was also  
 playable, but Vasiukov wants to  
 prevent an expansion by ...g7-g5.  
 Undoubtedly, a prudent course.

18...g6

18...h6? 19 h5± would have allowed White to fix g7 as a weakness.

19 ♙f4! ♜d7



20 b4!

Finally, White is ready for this thematic advance, preparing to evict the bishop from its good post at c6. As we shall see, this soon leads to a favourable fixing of the pawns on the queenside.

20...♞de7 21 ♚b2 a6 22 a5

Once more Vasiukov prefers the most solid way of playing, seeking long-term advantages. The more dynamic 22 b5!? was, however, also playable, e.g. 22...axb5 23 axb5 ♙d7 24 c4 (Threatening 25 h5 as then 25...♟f7 fails to 26 hxg6 hxg6 27 c5!) 24...b6 25 ♙d3! and White has a solid edge as both pawns at d6 and b6 are considerably weak.

22...d5

This move makes a difficult position lost, but at the same time it is difficult to offer good advice. It is understandable that Black wanted to keep White from playing c2-c4, but now he gets a very bad bishop on c6

which, after the inevitable exchange of minor pieces on e5, will render all bishop endgames lost. 22...h5 is also ugly-looking, but keeps the kingside closed, and restricts the fighting to one wing. Whether this would have saved Black in the long run is, however, certainly debatable, as White's queenside pawns are dangerous looking after 23 c4 ♞e6 24 b5.

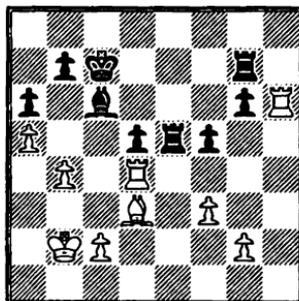
23 h5!

Of course! bishops and rooks need an open board to operate.

23...♚c8 24 hxg6 hxg6 25 ♞h6 ♞g7 26 ♙xe5

The advantage of having two bishops in a semi-open or open position is that almost always it is possible to part with one of them at the right moment; here the right moment has come, securing White a hegemony on the dark squares in view of the inability of the ♙c6 to contest them.

26...♞xe5 27 ♙d3 ♚c7



28 g4!±

Now White goes on to win by utilising his better bishop and superior pawn structure, albeit not

without mistakes. His last move ensures the creation of a second weakness in the enemy camp.

28...♠e3 29 gxf5 gxf5 30 f4! ♠f7  
31 ♠h5

By piling up on the newly created target White forces his opponent to resort to desperate measures.

31...♠e4! 32 ♖xe4?

32 ♜c3! looks better, the rook cannot run away; now it is a game again.

32...fxe4 33 f5?

But this looks terrible, allowing Black to get to e5 with the king. 33 ♠h4!?± is stronger but Black has counterplay, a sample line being 33...e3 34 ♜c1 ♠g7 35 ♠h1 ♠g3 36 ♠e1 b6! 37 ♠d3 bxa5 38 bxa5 ♠f3 39 ♠dxe3 ♠xf4 and Black has practical chances to hold as he threatens to transfer the king to c5 and the bishop to c4 holding everything together. Still, the position should be objectively won as White needs only to change the rooks to achieve his goal.

33...♜d6⇒ 34 c4!

Black has gained counterplay and the position is no longer easy; White does best to break up the central pawn duo to avoid unpleasant surprises.

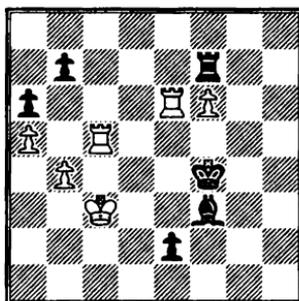
34...♜e5 35 ♜c3 dxc4 36 ♠xc4 ♜f4!

Black's exchange sacrifice has offered him good activity; White needs to untangle his rooks to have chances of winning.

37 ♠c5 e3

37...♠f6!?

38 ♠h6! e2 39 ♠e6 ♖f3 40 f6



40...♠d7?

40...♖g4! would have saved the half-point. Black's move should probably be attributed to time-pressure. The only try is 41 ♠c4+ ♜g5 42 ♠xg4+ ♜xg4 43 ♠xe2 ♠xf6 44 b5! but objectively the position is a draw.

41 ♠ce5!

Missed by Black. The threat of ♠e7 forces the Black rook to return to f7 allowing White to win easily by effectively using the tempi gained.

41...♠f7 42 ♜d4 ♜g3 43 ♠g5+ ♜f4 44 ♠g7 ♠f8 45 ♠ge7 ♜g5 46 f7 ♖g4 47 ♠e4 ♜f6 48 ♠7e5 ♠d8+ 49 ♜c5 ♖f3 50 ♠xe2 ♠c8+ 51 ♜b6 1-0

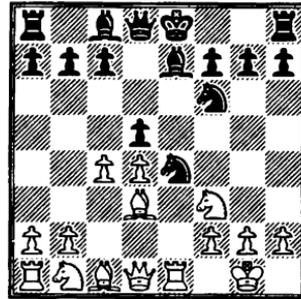
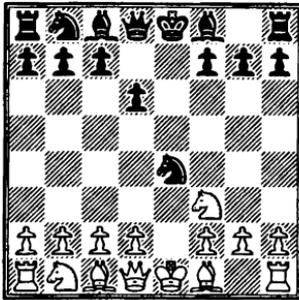
3

Honfi – Toth  
Budapest 1971

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♖xe5 d6

The best move, ensuring the recovery of the pawn and keeping intact Black's chances.

4 ♖f3 ♗xe4



It looks as though Black has made more moves than White, but the fact is that the knight on e4 may become an object of attack at a later stage. It is exactly for this reason that White refrains from evicting the knight by d2-d3, preferring instead the more testing d2-d4.

5 d4

Now White is ready to follow up with ♗f1-d3, 0-0; it is high time for Black to choose his defensive setup.

5...♗d7

This move is rarely met in practice; Black wishes to support his centralised knight on e4 by ...♗d7-f6 and ...d6-d5, but in doing so he unavoidably ends up neglecting control of another important square, namely e5.

6 ♗d3 ♗df6 7 0-0 ♗e7

The immediate 7...d5 should be met with 8 c4 c6 (8...dxc4? 9 ♗xc4 ♗xe4 10 ♖e1 f5 11 ♗e5+-) 9 ♗c3 when play will most likely transpose to 9...c6 below.

8 ♖e1 d5 9 c4

This move is part and parcel of White's strategy in the Petroff as it helps him challenge Black's control over e4 and open more lines for his pieces.

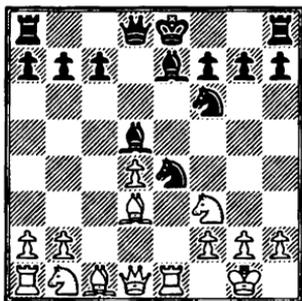
9...♗e6

Black tries to maintain his stance in the centre by relying solely on piece play; however, such a strategy does not fully meet the requirements of the position in the present situation.

9...c6 is possibly the best way of continuing; then 10 ♗c3! ♗xc3 (10...♗f5 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♖a4+ ♗d7 13 ♖b3±) 11 bxc3 0-0 12 ♗e5 ♗e6 [On 12...dxc4 13 ♗xc4 ♗d5 (13...♗d7?? 14 ♗xf7! ♖xf7 15 ♖b3+-) the reply 14 ♖b1! preserves an initiative for White as 14...♗xc3? (14...♖c7 15 ♖b3! ♗f5 (15...♖b8? 16 ♗xc6!+-; 15...♗d8 16 a4±) 16 ♖b2 ♖ab8 17 ♖be2 with an initiative for White is the lesser evil) is met by 15 ♗xf7! +-] 13 ♖b1± guarantees an edge for White as the threat to b7 is slightly awkward to meet [Meanwhile 13 c5!? looks like a worthy alternative, e.g. 13...♗d7 14 ♗f4 ♗xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♗f6? (15...b6 16 f4!↑ (16

♠e3!? g6)) 16 ♖b1!± Husnullin-Mecit, Izmir 2002]. If Black ignores the threat and continues with 13...dxc4?! (13...♗c7 14 c5!? (14 cxd5 cxd5 15 ♖b3 b6 16 ♔g5±) 14...b6 15 ♔f4± is a line verifying the above mentioned assessment) 14 ♠xb7 cxd3 15 ♘xc6 ♗d6 16 ♘xe7+ ♖h8 17 ♗xd3 ♜fe8 in the hope of exploiting the insecure position of the invaders, he will have to cope with the consolidating 18 ♗g3! when he doesn't seem to have sufficient compensation for the sacrificed material.

10 cxd5 ♔xd5



11 ♗c2

This is slightly inaccurate because it permits the Black knight to retreat, leaving White with an isolani in the centre.

Better is 11 ♘c3! as it looks most appropriate for White to exploit the situation in the centre in order to reinforce d4. For example, after 11...♘xc3 12 bxc3 0-0, 13 c4!? is a very interesting move as Black has to accept the pawn and White seems to be better in all variations (13 ♘e5! is also possible and White has the initiative because of his mobile

pawn centre, open b-file and strongly centralised pieces. In addition, the ♔d5 is not so well placed and might become the object of an attack in the near future).

Below follows the authors' lengthy analysis after 13 c4!?

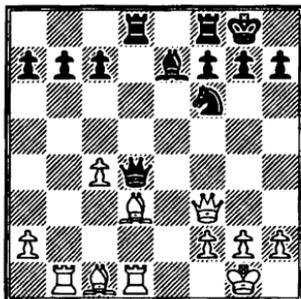
A) 13...♔c6 14 ♘e5± (14 d5 ♔d7 15 ♖b1±)

B) 13...♔e6 14 ♠b1 (14 d5) 14...♠b8 15 ♗c2 h6 16 d5 ♔g4 17 ♘e5±

C) 13...♔xf3! (Most natural and best) 14 ♗xf3 ♗xd4 15 ♠b1 and now Black already has to be very careful:

C1) 15...♗d7 16 ♔f5 ♗d6 17 ♔f4±;

C2) 15...♠ad8 16 ♠d1! (every tempo counts in the fight for the initiative) leads to a wider, yet still unpleasant choice for Black:



C2a) 16...♗e5 17 ♔f4 ♗c5 18 ♠xb7 ♔d6 19 ♠b5 ♗a3 20 ♔g5±

C2b) 16...♗h4 17 g3! (17 ♠xb7 ♘g4 18 ♔f4 ♔d6 19 ♔xd6 ♠xd6 20 ♗f4 g5 21 ♗g3 ♗xg3 22 hxg3 ♠fd8 23 ♠b5 ♖h8 24 ♠xg5 f5++) 17...♗g4 (17...♗h5 18 ♗xh5 ♘xh5 19 ♠xb7 ♔d6 20 ♔e3±; 17...♗h3

18 ♖g5 ♘g4 19 ♗xe7 ♜xh2+ 20 ♜f1 ♜xd3 21 ♜xd3 ♘e5 22 ♜g2 ♜xg2+ 23 ♜xg2 ♘xd3 24 ♗xf8+-)

18 ♜xg4 ♘xg4 19 ♗e2 ♜xd1+ 20 ♗xd1 ♘e5 21 ♜xb7 ♗d6 22 ♗e2 ♘c6 23 ♗e3±

C2c) 16...♜c5 17 ♜xb7±

C2d) 16...♜h8 17 ♜xb7 ♗d6 18 ♗b2↑

C2e) 16...♜g4 17 ♜xb7 ♜xf3 18 gxf3±

C3) 15...♗d6! (Best) 16 ♗b2 ♜h4 (16...♜c5 17 ♗xf6 gxf6 18 ♜h3 f5 19 ♗xf5 h6 20 ♜e4+-) 17 g3 and we are at the final crossroads:



C3a) 17...♜h5? 18 ♜xh5 ♘xh5 19 c5! ♗xc5 20 ♜e5 ♗xf2+ 21 ♜xf2 ♘f6 22 ♜c5 is bad for Black:

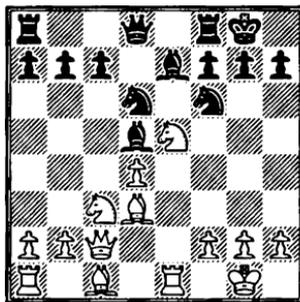
C3a1) 22...♘g4+ 23 ♜g1 ♜ad8 (23...c6 24 ♗g5+-) 24 ♗e2+-;

C3a2) 22...♜fd8 23 ♗xf6 ♜xd3 24 ♗c3 b6 25 ♜xc7+-;

C3b) 17...♜g4! is a better try: 18 ♜xb7 (18 ♗e2? ♜xf3 19 ♗xf3 ♜fe8!±) 18...♘d7 (18...♜ab8!? may be a better chance to hold, for example 19 ♜xa7 ♜a8 20 ♜d4 ♜xa2 21 c5 ♜xb2 22 ♜xb2 ♗xc5 23 ♜c2 ♗d6!± although, of course,

White can press in this position for ages!) and now White has several ways to continue the pressure: One of them is 19 ♜e4! (19 f3 ♜h5!±; 19...♜g5 20 ♜e4±; 19...♜h3 20 ♜d5!?) is rather second-best) 19...♜g5 20 ♜h4→ with a dangerous looking kingside attack.

11...♘d6 12 ♘e5 0-0 13 ♘c3



13...c6?!

This allows White to get rid of his weakness and come out on top; after 13...♗e6!? 14 d5 the position is not so clear as the Black bishop can retreat to d7 or even c8 while the knight on d6 is a stout defender. Still, White probably retains a slight pull because of his space advantage.

14 ♗g5 h6 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♘d5 cxd5 17 ♜b3!±

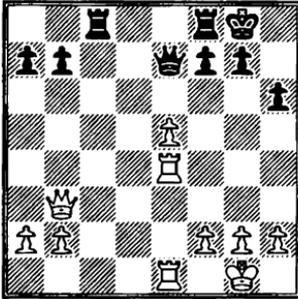
With this simple move White wins a pawn. Despite the ensuing simplification this advantage should be decisive as he will be able to combine play on both flanks.

17...♘e4?!

17...♘c4! was the right way to give up the pawn as, in comparison to the game, the White rook does not land on the fine square e4: 18

♙xc4 dxc4 19 ♖xc4 ♜c8 20 ♖a4  
♙xe5 21 ♜xe5 ♖b6 and Black has,  
at least, fully mobilised his pieces.

18 ♙xe4 dxe4 19 ♜xe4 ♙xe5 20  
dxe5 ♖e7 21 ♜ae1 ♜ac8



22 h4!

A good way to increase the pressure. Once the pawn reaches h5 Black, besides being a pawn down, will have fresh headaches because of the weakness of g7. Also, it will be easier now for White to play the thematic e5-e6 as he no longer has to worry about the first rank.

22...♜fd8?!

22...♜c6 23 e6! fxe6 24 ♜xe6  
♖f7 25 f3±

23 ♜g4?

23 e6! fxe6 24 ♜xe6 ♖f7 25  
♖e3+- was a clear-cut way of  
exploiting White's pluses as White  
threatens ♜e6-e7.

23...♜c6

Now Black can breath again.

24 ♖g3 ♖f8 25 ♜f4 ♖e7

25...♜e6!?

26 h5 ♜d5?

Disorganising his defence while  
threatening nothing in return;

counterattacking by 26...♜d2!  
would have confirmed the motto:  
"Attack is the best defence". After  
27 ♜g4 ♖f8 White seems to have  
nothing concrete.

27 ♜g4 ♖f8 28 ♖b3 ♜d7 29  
♜g6! ♖c5 30 e6!

Finally reverting to the right idea  
after a lot of hesitation.

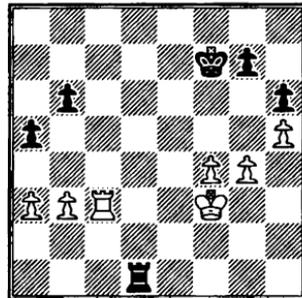
30...fxe6 31 ♜gxe6 ♜xe6 32  
♖xe6+ ♜f7 33 ♜e3

White has opened the position to  
his benefit and Black has to  
transpose to a lost rook ending.

33...♖f5 34 ♖xf5 ♜xf5 35 g4  
♜a5 36 ♜a3! ♜b5 37 ♜b3! ♜a5 38  
a3 b6 39 ♖g2

39 ♜f3 ♜a4!

39...♙f7 40 ♜c3 ♜b5 41 b3 a5 42  
f4 ♜d5 43 ♙f3 ♜d1



44 ♙e4!

The game has been decided; king  
activity is of utmost importance in  
this type of ending.

44...b5 45 ♜c5 ♜a1 46 ♜xb5  
♜xa3 47 ♙f5 a4 48 ♜b7+ ♙f8 49  
b4! +- ♜f3 50 ♜a7 a3 51 b5 ♜b3 52  
♙g6 ♜xb5 53 ♜a8+! ♙e7 54 ♜xa3  
♜b4 55 ♙xg7 ♜xf4 56 ♜e3+ ♙d8  
57 ♜g3! 1-0

Good technique by White, which makes up for the inaccuracies in the first part of the game.

4

**Timman – Van der Wiel**  
Tilburg 1984

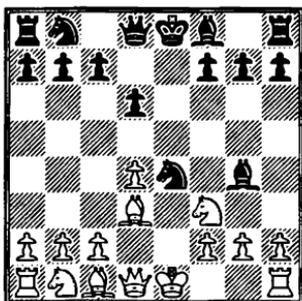
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4

Here and in subsequent Illustrative Games we will examine systems of development where Black delays or completely omits the move ...d6-d5. In these systems Black's winning chances are almost nil due to the lack of space and the symmetric nature of the position, but, on the other hand, Black's defensive fortress is very hard to crack.

5...♙g4

This move, in conjunction with the next one, is a risky attempt to play for an attack that cannot be justified at such an early stage.

6 ♙d3



6...f5?!

The alternatives are of no independent significance and

transpose to, more or less, normal play featured under subsequent games. The text is weakening (6...♘f6; 6...d5).

7 c3!

An important move, allowing the White queen access to b3, with a view to exploiting the weakening of e6 and b7.

7...♘d7 8 ♖b3 ♜e7 9 0-0 0-0

9...♙xf3 10 gx3 ♘g5 11 ♜xb7 ♜b8 12 ♜d5 leaves Black without compensation for the pawn loss.

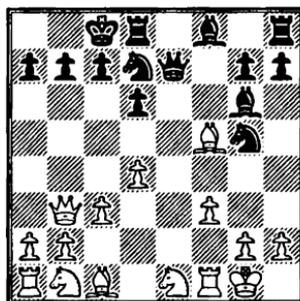
10 ♘e1!

Exposing the awkward placement of the ♙g4 and the hanging nature of the pawn on f5 gives Black enormous headaches.

10...♙h5 11 f3

Thus White wins a pawn, without making any positional or other type of concession.

11...♘g5 12 ♙xf5 ♙g6



13 ♙xg6

13 ♜d5!± would have deprived Black of counterplay down the h-file.

13...hxg6 14 ♘d3 ♜f6 15 ♘a3 ♜h4 16 ♙e3 ♜f5 17 ♜c2?!

This move is a step backwards in the winning process; the attacking 17 ♖b5! was preferable by far as there is simply no reason to lose time: 17...♗b8 18 d5! ♖c5 (18...♗h3+ 19 gxh3 ♜xd3 20 ♙xa7+ ♗c8 21 ♙f2 ♖c5 22 ♗a7+ ♗d7 23 ♙xc5 dxc5 24 ♜xb7++) 19 ♖xc5 dxc5 20 ♙f2! (The bishop has done its job on the g1-a7 diagonal and now switches to a better one!) 20...♞h6 (20...♞h3 21 ♙g3 ♞xg3 22 hxg3 ♜e5 23 ♜a4 a6 24 ♜f4!) 21 ♙g3 ♙d6 22 ♖xd6 cxd6 23 ♞ae1+- and Black's position is about to collapse.

17...♙e7

Now Black suddenly obtains some practical chances by generating play on the h-file.

18 ♖b4?

It is easy to criticise this move on the basis of what happens later on, yet even Fritz considers it good! The 'human' way proves to be better in this case: 18 ♙f2! ♞h6 19 ♞ae1 ♞dh8 20 ♙g3+- leaves Black without a trace of counterplay as the White kingside is unassailable.

18...♞dh8 19 ♜xf5 gxf5 20 ♖d5 ♙d8



21 h3?!

And ... White wins as most people would think, but in fact this move essentially throws the win away! The simple 21 ♙xg5! ♙xg5 22 f4 ♙d8 23 h3 c6 24 ♖b4! ♖f6 25 ♖d3 ♖e4 26 ♞ae1 would have maintained some advantage for White. Now the game starts again.

21...♖xh3+!!

A bolt from the blue! It is astounding that Black obtains an attack despite the absence of queens, all the more so as White's kingside is not completely bare of defenders.

22 gxh3 ♞xh3 23 ♖f2

23 ♙d2! was surely the best move for White as it removes the bishop from the e-line, vacating the e3 square for the knight; in the variation 23...♞h1+ 24 ♖f2 ♞1h2+ 25 ♖e1! (But not 25 ♖e3? c6! 26 ♖b4 ♙g5+ 27 f4 ♞8h3+ 28 ♞f3 ♙xf4+ 29 ♖xf4 g5+ 30 ♖xg5 (30 ♖e3 f4+ 31 ♖e4 d5+) 30...♞xf3+-) 25...♞e8+ 26 ♖d1 ♞e2 27 ♖b1 g5 28 ♖e3!± this is apparent, but of course the line is not forced.

23...c6 24 ♖f4 ♞h2+ 25 ♖e1 ♞e8!

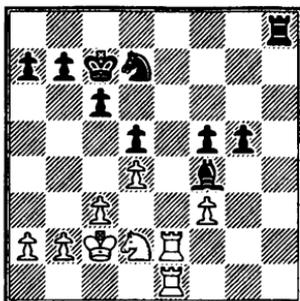
All of a sudden a nasty pin has arisen on the e-file, yielding Black strong counterplay.

26 ♖c4 ♙c7 27 ♖d1 d5 28 ♙g1 ♙xf4 29 ♙xh2 ♙xh2 30 ♖d2

By returning part of the material White has kept some plus but comparing it to the position he had a few moves ago it looks infinitesimal. From now on Timman

makes the most out of the position and slowly outplays his opponent.

30...♙f4 31 ♖f2 ♗h8 32 ♖c2 g5  
33 ♗e2 ♖c7 34 ♗ae1



34...♗h3?

Probably the decisive mistake. 34...g4! is best, trying to tie down White's forces by pushing the pawn to g3. When Black decides on the pawn push later on, without rooks, it is much less effective. The point is that with rooks on the board the g-pawn is much more dangerous.

35 ♗e7!±

A good move; White is not afraid to lose his f-pawn as then his rooks penetrate with decisive effect.

35...♗h2

35...♙xd2 36 ♖xd2 ♗xf3 37 ♗g7+-

36 ♗1e2 ♗xe2 37 ♗xe2 ♖d6 38 ♖f1 g4?

Now this simply loses the pawn and the game.

38...♖f6 39 ♖e3!±, 38...b6 39 ♖e3 ♙xe3 40 ♗xe3± and 38...♖f8 39 ♖e3 ♙xe3 40 ♗xe3±, were all better than the game continuation.

39 f×g4 f×g4 40 ♗f2! ♙h6 41 ♗g2 ♖f6 42 ♖h2+-

The g-pawn, Black's only asset, disappears and with it his last hope. The rest is child's play for Timman.

42...b5 43 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 44 ♗xg4 ♖c7 45 ♗g6 ♙f8 46 ♗f6 ♙d6 47 ♖b3 a5 48 a4! ♙e7 49 ♗h6 ♙f8 50 ♗h7+ ♖b6 51 ♗h5 b×a4+ 52 ♖xa4 ♙d6 53 ♗f5 ♙e7 54 b3 ♙h4 55 c4 d×c4 56 b×c4 ♙e1 57 ♗f7 ♙c3 58 ♗d7 ♖a6 59 c5 ♙a1 60 ♖b3 ♖b5 61 ♗b7+ ♖a6 62 ♗b6+ ♖a7 63 ♖c4 1-0

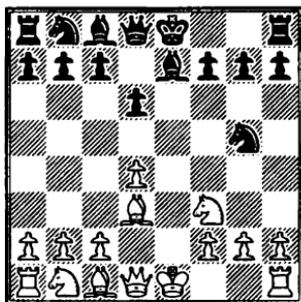
5

Velimirovic – Murey  
Moscow (izt) 1982

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♖xe5 d6 4 ♖f3 ♖xe4 5 d4 ♙e7

This move will probably transpose to the variation 5...♖f6 6 ♙d3 ♙e7 (Smyslov System) or to 5...d5 6 ♙d3 ♙e7; in any case, it is not one of the most ambitious continuations available to Black.

6 ♙d3 ♖g5?!

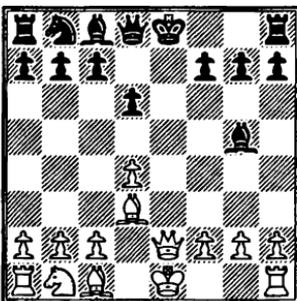


An attempt to achieve some simplification and at the same time the only move with independent significance.

7 ♖xg5

Interesting is 7 0-0!? 0-0 8 ♖xg5 ♗xg5 9 ♜h5! h6 10 ♗xg5 ♜xg5 11 ♜xg5 hxg5 12 ♖c3 with an initiative in the ending in view of White's lead in development and weakness of the g5 pawn; a recent example follows: 12...♗e6 13 ♜f1 a5 14 ♖e4 ♗f5 15 ♖f6+ gxf6 16 ♗xf5 ♖c6 17 c3 ♜fe8 18 g3 ♜f8 19 ♜f1 ♜xe1+ 20 ♜xe1 ♖e7 21 ♗d3 d5 22 ♜g2 ♜d8 23 ♜f3 ♜d6 24 ♜g4! ♜e6 25 ♜e2 ♜g7 26 h4! (After activating his king to the utmost White resorts to the logical follow-up, the creation of an outside passed pawn) 26...gxf4?! (26...♜xe2 27 ♗xe2 ♜g6 is a better attempt to hold the position.) 27 gxf4 f5+ 28 ♜f4 ♜f6 29 h5 ♜b6 30 f3 a4 31 a3 c5 32 dxc5 ♜c6 33 ♜h2 ♜xc5 34 h6 ♜c8 35 ♜e3 ♜h8 36 ♗c2 ♜g5 37 f4+ ♜g4 38 ♜g2+ ♜h3 39 ♜g7 ♜xh6 40 ♜xf7 ♜e6+ 41 ♜f3 ♜h2 42 ♜f2 ♜h3 43 ♜f3 ♜h2 44 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 45 ♜xf5 ♜b6 46 ♜h5+ ♜g1 47 ♜g5+ ♜f1 48 f5 d4 49 cxd4 ♜b3+ 50 ♜e4 ♜xb2 51 f6 ♜e2+ 52 ♜d5 1-0 Fressinet-Murey, Paris 2002.

7...♗xg5 8 ♜e2+!



By interpolating this check White attempts to prevent his opponent from achieving further exchanges.

8...♜f8

The move employed by the champion of the variation Yaakov Murey. It seems, however, that forfeiting the right to castle cannot offer Black any relief in his constricted position.

8...♗e6?! is dubious on account of 9 f4! ♗h4+ 10 g3 ♗e7 11 f5 ♗d5 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖c3± and in Koc-Zamikhovsky, USSR 1962, White's space advantage gave him a strong initiative;

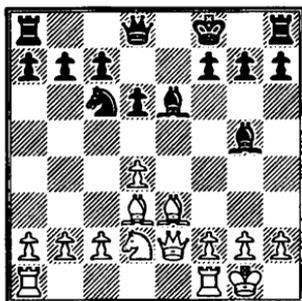
8...♗e7 is the conservative course: 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♜e4! [A strong move, exploiting the absence of defenders on Black's kingside to force a weakness; 10 ♜e1!? is another interesting variation, e.g. 10...♜e8 (10...♗h4 11 g3; 10...♗f6 11 ♜e4 g6 12 ♗h6±) 11 ♖c3! c6 (11...♖c6 12 ♖d5±) 12 d5±] 10...f5 (Black wishes to avoid a weakening on the dark squares, but in doing so weakens e6; if 10...g6 however, there comes 11 ♖c3! and the threat of a knight invasion on d5 gives Black a lot of problems. Relatively best is then 11...c6 (11...♗f6?! 12 ♖d5 ♗g7 13 ♖e7+! ♜h8 14 ♗g5! gives White a strong attack; 11...♖c6?! 12 ♗h6! is also very threatening, e.g. 12...♜e8 13 ♖d5! ♗f5 14 ♜f4! ♗xd3 15 cxd3 and White's structural weaknesses are unimportant as Black is paralysed) 12 ♜e1 ♗f6 13 ♗h6 d5! (13...♗g7?! 14 ♗xg7 ♜xg7 15 d5! ♜f6 16 ♜ad1 is highly advantageous for White) 14 ♜f4 ♗g7 15 ♖e2! ♖d7 16 c3 and White's pressure persists despite the symmetry) 11 ♜f3 ♖c6 12 c3 ♗g5

(12...♖h8!? is worth examining) 13 ♖d5+! ♖h8 14 ♖xg5 ♗xg5 15 f4 ♗e7 16 ♗f3 ♖d7 17 d5!± and White had a solid space advantage in Makarichev-Bronstein, USSR 1978.

9 ♖e3! ♘c6 10 ♘d2

Here 10 0-0!? looks like a good improvement.

A) On 10...♖e6, 11 ♘d2! gives White a clear edge. For example:



A1) 11...♘b4 12 ♖c4!, when both...

A1a) 12...♘xc2? 13 ♖xe6 fxe6 (13...♘xa1 14 ♖f5+-) 14 ♘e4! ♘xe3 15 fxe3+ ♖f6 (15...♖g8? 16 ♗g4 ♖xe3+ 17 ♖h1+-) 16 ♗h5!+- and...

A1b) 12...♘d5 13 ♖xd5! ♖xd5 14 ♗h5! h6 [14...♖xe3?! 15 fxe3 c6 16 c4 ♖e6 17 ♗f4→ (17 d5!? cxd5 18 cxd5 ♗a5 19 e4 f6□) ] 15 f4!? (15 c4±) 15...g6 16 ♗e2! ♖f6 17 f5 g5 18 c4 ♖c6 19 d5 ♖d7 20 ♘e4± lead to bad positions for Black,

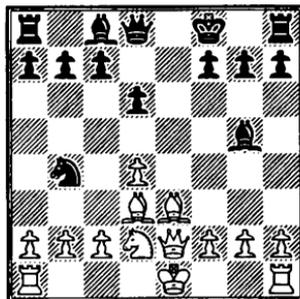
or...

A2) 11...d5 12 f4 ♖f6 13 c3±.

B) 10...♘b4!? 11 ♖c4! d5 12 ♖b3 leads to a position where

White's development advantage is the important factor: 12...c6 (12...♖f5? 13 a3+-) 13 a3 ♘a6 14 c4 ♘c7 15 cxd5! ♘xd5 16 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 17 ♘c3 ♗d8 18 ♗ad1 ♖e6 19 d5! ♖xd5 20 ♘xd5 cxd5 21 ♖xg5 ♗xg5 22 ♗b5± and it looks impossible for Black to survive.

10...♘b4



11 ♖e4! ♖xe3 12 fxe3

12 ♗xe3!?

12...d5 13 a3 ♘c6 14 ♖d3 ♗h4+! 15 ♗f2! ♗xf2+ 16 ♖xf2

White has an endgame initiative in view of his central pawn mass.

16...♘e7 17 e4!

17 c4!? is also possible but more risky since after 17...dxc4 18 ♖xc4 White gets three pawn islands.

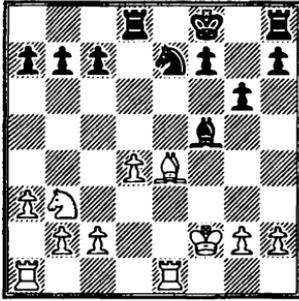
17...dxe4 18 ♖xe4!

18 ♘xe4 ♖f5 19 ♗he1±

18...♖f5 19 ♗he1 g6?

19...c6 was the natural way of defending a slightly worse position; Black is in a hurry to escape with the king to g7 but this should have rebounded on him.

20 ♘b3 ♗d8



21 ♖xb7!

A correct decision, taking the bull by the horns.

21...♙xc2 22 ♘a5 ♖f5

22...♙xd4? 23 ♙xe7 +- or 22...♖d5 23 ♙ac1±, both fail to help Black.

23 ♙ac1?

But this amounts to a blunder, throwing away the fruits of his labour; White becomes over-enthusiastic in thinking that "everything wins".

23 d5± is the clear-cut way to a huge advantage as Black seems to have no defence against the coming 24 ♙ac1.

23...♖xd4 24 ♖c6 ♖xc6 25 ♙xc2 ♖d4 26 ♙xc7 ♖e6 27 ♙c3 ♖g7

Black has avoided the worst and the game should be drawn; 27...♙b8 28 ♙c8+ ♙xc8 29 ♙xc8 ♖e7 was another way.

28 b4 ♙d7 29 ♙c6 ♙c7 30 ♙c4 ♙d8 31 b5 ♙d2+ 32 ♙e2 ♙d6 33 ♙ec2 ♖d4 34 ♙2c3 ♖f8 35 ♙d5 ♖xb5 36 ♙xc7 ♖xc3 37 ♙c4 ♙f6+ 38 ♖e3 a6 39 ♙a7 ♖b5 40 ♙a8+ ♖e7 41 ♙xb5 axb5 42 a4 bxa4 43 ♙xa4

White has even managed to lose a pawn but fortunately for him the position is a trivial draw.

43...♙f5 44 ♙a6 ♖f8 45 ♙a4 ♖g7 46 ♙b4 ♖h6 47 ♙b7 ♖g5 48 ♙b4 ♙f1 49 ♙b5+ f5 50 ♙b7 h6 51 ♙b6 ♖h5 52 ♖e2 ♙f4 53 ♖e3 g5 54 ♙f6 ♙e4+ 55 ♖f2 ♙e5 56 h3 ♙a5 57 ♖g3 f4+ 58 ♖f2 ♙a2+ ½-½

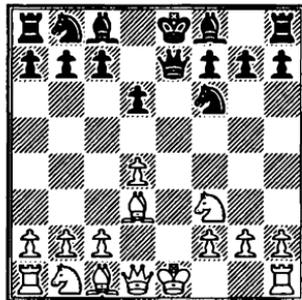
6

Mestel – Lev  
Beersheba 1988

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♖xe5 d6 4 ♖f3 ♖xe4 5 d4 ♖f6

This retreat characterises the Smyslov System of the Petroff; Black is willing to accept a space disadvantage, trusting that his position is solid enough to repel White's attacking efforts.

6 ♙d3 ♙e7+?!

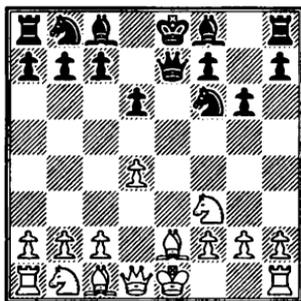


A deviation from the Smyslov proper that does not have a sufficiently logical background; the light-squared bishop is forced to retreat to the less appealing square e2, but at the same time the Black queen is exposed on e7 and

interferes with the development of her kingside.

7 ♖e2 g6

Black tries to justify his previous move by fianchettoing his king's bishop, but it may not be too late to retreat the queen on d8, followed by ...♗f8-e7.



8 ♘c3

Possibly better is 8 0-0 ♗g7 9 ♗b5+!; with this cunning check White ensures that the ♗c8 will be lured to e6, providing his pieces with an object of attack: 9...c6 10 ♗e1 ♗e6 11 ♗f1 and Black seems to have a rather unattractive choice:

A) 11...h6 12 c4 d5 13 b3!± (13 ♘c3 0-0 14 ♗f4±)

B) 11...0-0 12 ♘g5± and White obtains the advantage of the two bishops and with it a comfortable plus.

8...♗g7 9 ♗g5 c6 10 ♗d2

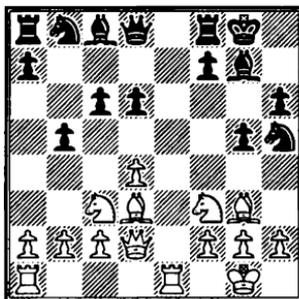
Maintaining for the moment the option of castling long.

10...h6 11 ♗h4 b5

Black wishes to scare his opponent and force him to renounce his queenside castling idea, but in

doing so he weakens his own queenside.

12 0-0 g5 13 ♗g3 0-0 14 ♗fe1 ♗d8 15 ♗d3 ♘h5



16 d5! ♘xg3 17 hxg3 b4 18 ♘d1 c5 19 a3! a5 20 axb4 cxb4 21 c3!± ♘a6 22 ♗c2 bxc3 23 bxc3 f5

To shield the hole on f5, but a new weakness arises on e6.

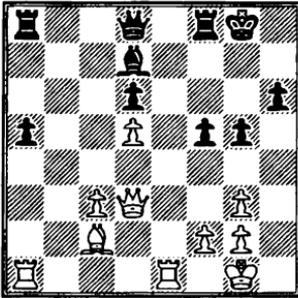
24 ♘d4 ♗xd4 25 ♗xd4 ♘c5 26 ♘b2 ♗d7 27 ♘d3!

Exchanging Black's best piece will highlight all the weaknesses.

27...♘xd3

27...♗e4 deserved attention, trying to keep the knights on. Still, after 28 c4 (intending c4-c5 at some point) 28...♗f6 (28...♗c8!? 29 ♗a4! ♗xa4 30 ♗xa4 ♗f6 31 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 32 ♗c1! ♘c5 33 ♘xc5 ♗xc5 34 ♗b1!±) 29 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 (29...♘xf6 30 c5±) White makes use of a key-idea (exchange of bishops) by 30 ♗a4!± to weaken the whole complex of light squares and gain access for his rook to the important a4 square. In this way he will succeed in piling up with his major pieces on the weak a-pawn.

28 ♗xd3



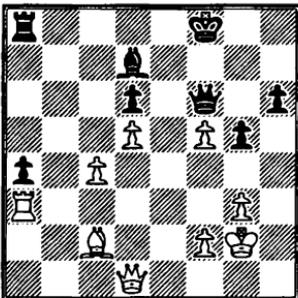
28...Nc8?

The space-gaining 28...a4! averts the exchange of bishops and ties the White rooks to the a-file whilst freeing a5 for use by the Black pieces. Still, the presence of the g3-g4 break is sufficient for a small advantage after 29 Na3 Wf6 (29...Ne8 30 Neal Ne4 31 Whf1±) 30 Neal Na5 31 c4 g4! (31...Nfa8 32 g4±) 32 Qxa4 (or 32 Nb1±) 32...Qxa4 33 Nxa4 Wxa1+ 34 Nxa1 Nxa1+ 35 Ch2±

29 g4!±

Now White's advantage assumes great proportions as he wins a pawn without making any concessions.

29...Whf6 30 Nxe8+ Qxe8 31 gxf5 Qd7 32 Na3 Qf8 33 c4 a4 34 g3 Qg7 35 Qg2 Qf8 36 Wd1!



36...Qg7?

The last mistake; Forced was 36...Wb2! after which White would have had to find an amazing queen triangulation starting with 37 Wh5!! in order to win (37 f6 instead is not clear due to 37...g4!). After 37 Wh5!! the following entertaining variations are possible:

A) 37...Wxa3 38 f6!! Qg4 39 Wxh6+ Qe8 40 Wh8+ Qd7 41 Wg7+ Qc8 42 f7 Wf3+ 43 Qg1+-

B) 37...Wxc2 38 Wxh6+ Qg8 39 Wxg5+ leads to a lost position for Black after either...

B1) 39...Qf8 40 Ne3 Wxf5 (40...Qxf5 41 Whf6+ Qg8 42 Ne7) 41 Nf3 Wxf3+ 42 Qxf3 a3 43 Whf6+ Qg8 44 Wg6+ Qh8 45 Wxd6 a2 46 Wf6+ Qg8 47 Wa1+-

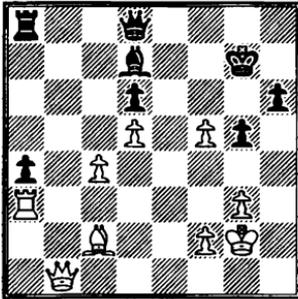
or...

B2) 39...Qh8 40 Nf3! We4 41 Wh6+ Qg8 42 f6+-;

C) 37...Wf6! (the toughest) 38 Wh1! (threatening to catch the b-file) 38...Nb8 (what else?) 39 Wd1! and it suddenly transpires that the threat to the a-pawn cannot be met without consequences: 39...Wb2 (39...Na8 40 Wb1!; 39...Nb4 40 Qxa4 Qxf5 41 We2□+-) 40 f6!! g4 (The only defence, but now that the rook is not on a8 there is a big difference!; 40...Wxa3 41 Wh5+- loses, as usual) 41 Ne3 Wxf6 42 Qxa4 (the point becomes now clear, the dangerous pawn falls, but most importantly more avenues towards the Black king are opened) 42...Nb2 43 Qc2

♙f5 44 ♙xf5 ♚xf5 45 ♚e1 and White finally wins!

37 ♚b1 +- ♚d8



38 ♚b4!

The culminating point of White's strategy; now Black's position crumbles as he cannot defend all his weaknesses.

38...♚c7 39 f6+ ♚f7 40 ♚b1 ♜g8 41 ♙h7 1-0

7

**Schlechter – Mason**  
London 1899

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 ♘f6 6 ♙d3 ♙g4

Besides 6...♙e7, this is the only continuation with a concrete logical background: Black wishes to deploy his bishop to an active position before White denies him the chance to do so by simply playing h2-h3.

7 0-0 ♙e7 8 ♜e1 0-0 9 ♘bd2

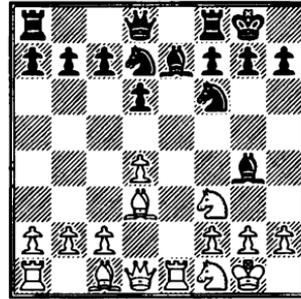
The knight eyes f5.

9...♘bd7!?

By developing his knight to d7 Black thinks in terms of supporting his kingside; this can be

accomplished after the further moves ...♜f8-e8, ...♘d7-f8.

10 ♘f1



White wants to cut off the retreat of the bishop by ♘f1-g3 before resorting to h2-h3.

10...♜e8

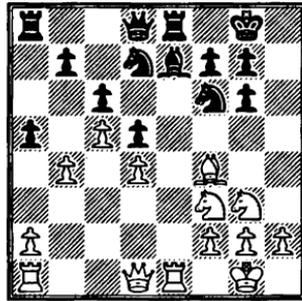
This should have probably been prefaced with the manoeuvre ...♙g4-h5-g6.

10...♙h5!/? initiates the manoeuvre in question, which is typical for so many openings; Black plans to exchange White's good bishop by ...♙h5-g6. After 11 ♘g3 ♙g6 Black achieves his aim of opposing bishops, but at a considerable amount of time.

A possible line of play is 12 ♙xg6!/? [It seems that White can afford to fortify Black's kingside because of his preponderance in space; However 12 ♘f5 is probably also good enough for a slight edge: 12...♙xf5?! (12...♜e8! 13 ♙g5±. Δ ♘f3-h4, is obviously the critical test) 13 ♙xf5 ♜e8 14 c3 h6 15 ♚b3 ♘b6 16 c4 ♙f8 17 ♙d2 ♜xe1+ 18 ♜xe1 g6 19 ♙d3 ♚d7 (Rovid-Koszorus, Hungary 1993) and now

White could have gained a considerable advantage with the energetic 20 c5! dxc5 21 dxc5 ♖xc5 22 ♖xg6±] 12...hxg6 13 c4, reaching a characteristic position for the typically unambitious system chosen by Black; White's last declares his intention of building a space advantage by d4-d5 and is only a first step in the space-gaining strategy that should dictate his efforts: 13...d5 (After 13...c6 14 ♖b3!↑ White obtains some initiative thanks to the pressure on b7) 14 c5! (Putting his pawns on dark squares is committal, but at the same time consistent with White's space-gaining policy; the alternative 14 ♖b3 dxc4!? 15 ♖xb7± leads to a position deserving analysis) 14...c6 15 ♖f4 ♜e8 (The strategy for both sides is clearly outlined: White will attack on the queenside by means of b2-b4-b5, while Black will pursue the plan of simplification with the aim of reaching a better endgame; for the time being he prepares to improve the position of his knight by ...♞d7-f8-e6) 16 b4 (16 ♖c2!? is a worthwhile alternative, the point being to keep an eye on c6 so that Black cannot play ...b7-b6 easily and wait for the ♞ to go to f8, thus losing control of b6, before White gets in b2-b4. A possible line runs 16...♞f8 17 b4± ♞e6? 18 ♜xe6! fxe6 19 ♖xg6→ with a powerful attack) 16...a5 (On 16...♞f8 17 ♖d3! ♞e6, there follows 18 ♜xe6!? fxe6 19 ♖xg6→ with a strong attacking position for White; 16...♖f8 is met by 17 ♖d3± preserving annoying pressure on

Black's position; On 16...a6, the reply 17 a4±, intending b4-b5, promises White a powerful initiative; 16...b5 should probably be met by 17 a4 a6 18 ♜e3! intending e3-a3, with dangerous queenside pressure) and here the path splits:



A) The tempting 17 b5?! cxb5! is not so promising as the following lines prove.

A1) 18 ♖b1?! b4 19 a3 b6 20 axb4 (20 c6 ♞f8 21 axb4 ♖xb4) 20...axb4 21 c6 ♜xa1 22 ♖xa1 ♞f8 23 c7 (23 ♜c1 ♞e6) 23...♞d7 24 ♜c1 ♞e6 25 ♞e5 ♖c8+ is a line showing that White can easily become worse;

A2) 18 ♜b1 b4 19 a3 b6 20 axb4 axb4 21 c6 ♞f8 22 ♖d2 b5 23 ♖xb4 (23 ♖c2 ♜a4 24 c7 ♖c8) 23...♖xb4 24 ♜xb4 ♖d6 25 ♜xb5 ♜xe1+ 26 ♖xe1 ♖xc6= is dead equal;

A3) 18 ♖d3 b4 19 ♖b5 is more testing, but Black can hold his own with accurate play:

A3a) 19...♖c8?! is not so good because after 20 a3 ♖c6 (20...bxa3 21 ♜xa3 b6 22 ♜ae3±) 21 ♖xc6

bxc6 22 axb4 White can secure a slight plus no matter how Black plays, e.g.

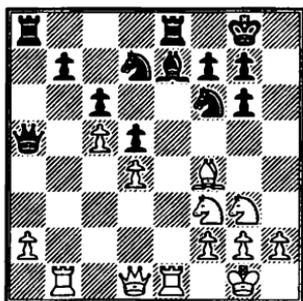
**A3a1)** 22...a4 23 b5 (23 ♖c7 ♘h5 24 ♘xh5 gxh5 25 ♖a5 ♖f6 26 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 27 ♖f1 g5) 23...cxb5 24 ♜eb1 a3 25 ♜xb5 ♜a6 26 ♜a2±, or...

**A3a2)** 22...♖d8 23 ♜eb1±;

However,

**A3b)** 19...♜a7! 20 ♜e2!? (20 a3 bxa3 21 ♜xa3 b6♞) 20...♘f8 21 a3 (21 ♘g5 ♜d7 22 ♜xd7 ♘8xd7 23 ♜a1 ♖f8 24 ♖d6 ♖xd6 25 ♘h7+ ♖g8 26 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 27 ♜xe8+ ♘xe8 28 ♜xe8+ ♖f8♞) 21...bxa3 22 ♜xa3= only allows White enough compensation to draw.

**B)** 17 bxa5! is the right move; After 17...♜xa5 (17...♜xa5 18 ♜b1±) 18 ♜b1! White has strong queenside pressure that may combine beautifully with alternating threats all over the board:

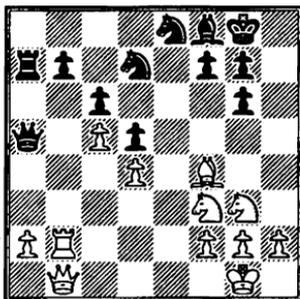


**B1)** 18...b5? 19 cxb6 ♘xb6 20 ♖c7 ♖d8 21 ♜xe8+ ♘xe8 22 ♖xd8 ♜xd8 23 ♘e5±;

**B2)** 18...♜xa2 19 ♜xb7 ♖f8 20 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 21 h3 ♜a6 22 ♜b1! (In this position White should be

aiming to trade the queens in order to highlight the weakness on c6) 22...♘e4 23 ♜a1! ♜b5 (23...♜b7 24 ♜b1!±) 24 ♜a4! ♜xa4 25 ♜xa4±;

**B3)** 18...♜a7! 19 ♜b2! (a multi-purpose move, guarding a2 and preparing to double on the b- or e-line) 19...♖f8 (19...♘f8 20 ♜b1! ♘e6 21 ♜xe6 fxe6 22 ♜xg6±; 19...b5 20 cxb6 ♘xb6 21 ♜be2↑) 20 ♜xe8 ♘xe8 21 ♜b1! and the position looks very dangerous for Black after either...



**B2a)** 21...b5 22 cxb6 ♜b7 23 ♘e5! ♘xe5 24 dxe5! (24 ♖xe5?! ♘d6 25 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 26 ♘f1 ♖e7 27 ♘d2 ♖a3!)=) 24...♖c5 (24...c5 25 h4±) 25 ♖d2 ♜a6 (25...♜a4!?) 26 ♖e3! d4 27 ♘e4! ♖a3 28 ♖xd4 ♖xb2 29 ♜xb2 ♜d3 30 f3±

or...

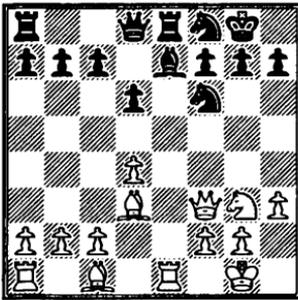
**B2b)** 21...♜a6 22 h4! b6 (22...♘ef6 23 ♘g5±) 23 ♘g5! bxc5 24 h5 when the centre of developments has suddenly been switched over to the kingside, presenting Black with highly unwelcome pressure. For example: 24...♖e7 (24...cxd4 25 hxg6 fxg6 26 ♜xg6+; 24...f6 25 ♘e6! g5 26 ♜g6! gx f4 27 ♘f5+)-) 25 hxg6

♙xg5 26 ♙xg5 ♘f8 (26...f6 27 ♚e1+-) 27 ♜b8 ♜a8 28 gxf7+ ♚xf7 29 ♚f5+ ♚g8 30 ♜xa8 ♚xa8 31 ♙e7±.

11 ♘g3

Now the bishop's retreat to h5 has been cut off, allowing White to obtain the two bishops smoothly and effortlessly.

11...♘f8 12 h3 ♙xf3 13 ♚xf3±



This position, albeit symmetrical, can be evaluated as clearly better for White. Black is lacking counterplay and the f5 square is vulnerable to invasion by the White knight.

13...c6 14 ♘f5

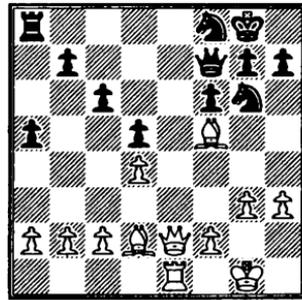
More bishops! White must obviously have been overjoyed to win a second "minor exchange" as such a development of events reduces Black to complete passivity.

14...♘g6 15 ♙g5 ♘d5 16 ♘xe7+ ♘dx7 17 ♜e2 f6 18 ♙d2 ♚d7 19 ♙c4+!?

An interesting moment; White deliberately provokes ...d6-d5 so as to be able to open up the position for his bishops by a subsequent c2-c4. Although this never occurs in the game, the move is nevertheless

commendable as it creates new possibilities for White that could have been helpful at some point.

19...d5 20 ♙d3 ♘f8 21 ♜ael ♘eg6 22 ♙f5 ♚f7 23 g3 ♜xe2 24 ♚xe2 a5



25 h4!

A typical squeezing operation starts; the difference in strength between the bishops and the knights is more than apparent, and the advance of the h-pawn will help the bishops obtain objects of attack.

25...b6 26 h5 ♘h8 27 h6 ♘hg6

A sad necessity, allowing the ruining of the pawn structure. After 27...g6 28 ♙e6 ♘xe6 29 ♚xe6 ♚xe6 30 ♜xe6 ♜c8 31 ♜xf6 ♘f7 32 ♜c6+- Black not only loses a pawn but also ends up in complete paralysis.

28 hxg7 ♚xg7 29 ♚g2 ♜a7 30 ♚e8!

The exchange of queens does not relieve Black of his troubles since the White rook's penetration in the heart of the enemy camp ties him up completely. Strictly speaking, the position is won for White and his last move signifies the beginning of the technical phase.

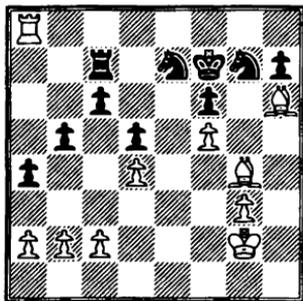
30...♖xe8 31 ♖xe8 ♔f7 32 ♖b8  
b5 33 ♙h6 ♚c7 34 ♖a8 a4 35 ♙g4!

35 b3!? axb3 36 cxb3 ♘e6 37  
♙e3 ♘e7 38 ♙d3± intending to get  
an outside passed pawn with a2-a4  
was also good, but the text is more  
direct.

35...♘e6 36 f4! ♘g7?

Black crumbles under the  
inexorable pressure. 36...♘xd4?! 37  
f5 ♘e5 38 ♙h5+ ♔e7?? 39 ♙f8+  
♔d7 40 ♙e8# would have led to a  
picturesque mate, but 36...f5! 37  
♙xf5 ♘xd4 38 ♙d3± would have  
slowed down the winning process.  
Now it's all over.

37 f5 ♘e7



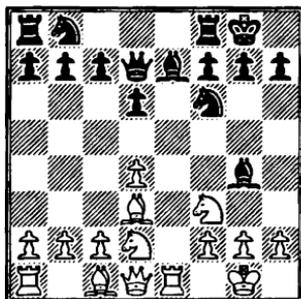
38 ♙h5+!

Black resigns. After 38 ♙h5+  
♘xh5 39 ♖f8# White has parted  
with one of his bishops for a noble  
cause, as the enemy monarch ends  
up trapped amidst his very own  
knights. 1-0

## 8

Stein – Nezhmetdinov  
Kislovodsk 1972

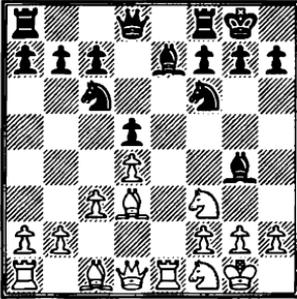
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4  
♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 ♘f6 6 ♙d3 ♙g4 7  
0-0 ♙e7 8 ♚e1 0-0 9 ♘bd2 ♗d7



A move that makes a strange  
impression at first sight, and indeed,  
it is too artificial to enjoy real  
chances of success. In reality, it is  
nothing more than a tricky move  
order to enter the 9...♘c6 line, to  
which it is closely related; in the  
present game Black almost manages  
to achieve his aim and equalise, but  
if White reacts accurately it would  
seem that it has no independent  
significance.

9...♘c6 is the usual introduction  
to the ♘c6, ♗d7 set-up and at first  
sight a natural developing move; the  
intention is obvious, to follow up  
with ...♗d8-d7 and ...♖a8-e8,  
hoping to offset White's advantage  
with exchanges along the e-file.  
However, it seems to us that the  
knight is awkwardly placed on c6  
because after the simple reply c2-c3  
it has nowhere to go. After 10 c3 the  
difference in mobility and prospects  
is more than evident if we compare  
the placing of the queen's knights  
and this affects the play in White's  
favour.

A) 10...d5 11 ♘f1 is better for  
White as the following variations  
show:



A1) 11...♔h5 12 ♖g3 ♗g6 13 ♗g5↑ yields a strong initiative for White.

A2) 11...♖e8 12 h3 ♗h5 13 ♖g3 ♗g6 occurred in Powles-Del Pozo, email 1998. After 14 ♗xg6!? (14 ♗b5! ♗d6 15 ♗g5 ♖xe1+ 16 ♗xe1 h6 17 ♗h4 ♗h7 18 ♗e3! ♗e8 (18...♗e7 19 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 20 ♖e1 ♖f8 21 ♗xc6 bxc6 22 ♖h5±) 19 ♗xf6 ♗xe3 20 fxe3 ♗xg3 21 ♗xc6 bxc6 22 ♗e5 ♗xe5 23 ♖xe5 c5 24 ♖f2± looks like a good alternative) 14...hxg6 15 ♗g5 ♗d7?! (better was 15...♗d6 16 ♗d2! (16 ♗d3 ♖d7!)=) 16...♗f8 17 ♗f4 ♗d7 18 ♖e5 ♖xe5 19 ♗xe5±) 16 ♖e5± White obtained a strong kingside initiative as Black had to take on e5: 16...♖xe5 17 dxe5 ♖h7 18 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 19 h4! (an important tool in White's scheme as he should play h4-h5 in order to destroy Black's compact kingside structure) 19...♖f8 20 f4 ♖e6 21 ♗f3 ♗b5 22 h5! gxh5 23 ♖xh5 (White has attained his objective and now the pawn mass looks threatening) 23...♖f8 24 b3 ♖d8 25 ♖ad1 ♖g6 26 ♗d3 (Playing it safe when he could attack directly by ♗f3-g4; However, even in the endgame

Black will suffer) 26...♗xd3 27 ♗xd3 c6 28 ♖ed1 ♖ed7 29 ♖f2 ♖f8 30 g4 b5 31 ♖e3 a5 32 c4! bxc4 33 bxc4 ♖e7 34 ♖g3 (34 f5!) 34...c5 35 ♖e4!± d4+ 36 ♖f3 ♖c7 37 ♖b3 a4 38 ♖b5 ♖dc8 39 ♖a5 ♖g6 40 ♖xa4+- ♖e7 41 ♖a6 ♖c6 42 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 43 a4 ♖f8 44 ♖b1 ♖d7 45 ♖b7 1-0.

An instructive game, showing that White can also transpose to the ending in analogous positions since such endings are not automatic draws as many people tend to believe;

A3) 11...♗d7 12 ♖g3 ♗d6 13 h3! ♗xf3 14 ♗xf3 ♗xg3 15 fxc3± left White with an imposing bishop pair in Tarrasch-Marshall, Nuremberg (m) 1905

B) 10...♗d7 (Continuing with the plan) 11 ♗b3! (Initiating a forced sequence that leads to a better endgame) 11...♖ab8 12 d5! (Allowing the ♖c6 to be exchanged for its counterpart on f3 does not look like the best idea but here there is a concrete point behind it) 12...♖e5 13 ♖xe5 dxe5 14 ♖c4! ♗xd5 15 ♖xe5 ♗xb3 16 axb3 ♗c5 17 b4! (It is important to get the bishop pair; after 17 ♗c4?! (Kr.Georgiev-Popchev, Bulgaria 1987) 17...♖be8! White has nothing) 17...♗b6 18 ♖c4↑ and despite the simplification that has occurred White possesses at least a slight advantage because the bishop pair will be a valuable asset on an open board.

10 ♖f1

A slightly inaccurate move order that almost allows Black to equalise; but only almost! 10 c3! will probably transpose to the line with 9...♟c6 after 10...♟c6 since an attempt to attack the centre by 10...c5?! is met by 11 dxc5 dxc5 12 ♟c4± with a clear advantage for White who threatens ♟c4-e5 followed by ♟d1-c2.

10...♟c6 11 c3 ♟f5!?

A logical follow up to 9...♟d7; Black tries to profit from the queen's placement on d7 to exchange White's dangerous king's bishop. However, after the natural 11...♟ae8! 12 ♟g3 ♟d8± the position is only slightly worse for Black according to Stein as he has managed to coordinate his pieces.

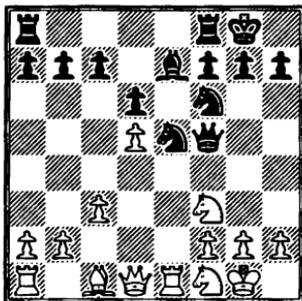
12 d5!

White now obtains an initiative, leading by force to a slightly better ending.

12...♟e5

12...♟xd5?? 13 ♟xf5 ♟xf5 14 ♟g3+-

13 ♟xf5 ♟xf5

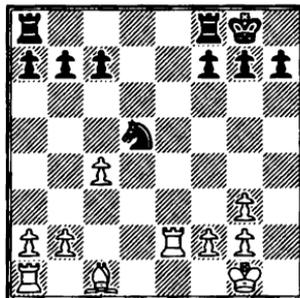


14 ♟xe5

14 ♟d4 ♟d7 15 ♟g3!? is worth looking at.

The pawn on d5 is taboo: 15...♟xd5? (15...♟ae8! 16 ♟df5 ♟d8 17 ♟g5±) 16 ♟df5 and White wins material.

14...dxe5 15 ♟g3 ♟d7 16 ♟xe5 ♟d6 17 ♟e2! ♟xg3 18 hxg3 ♟xd5 19 ♟xd5 ♟xd5 20 c4



An important moment; during the last few moves White allowed simplification to take place in return for a bishop vs knight advantage and prospects of invading the 7th rank. His last move poses a critical question to the Black knight: Should it move forwards or choose a more restrained course?

20...♟b4?

As it so often happens, the player with the slightly inferior position chooses to play 'actively' when solid defence would have been successful.

20...♟b6!? looks clumsy but would have been only slightly better for White after either 21 b3± or 21 ♟f4!? ♟xc4! (21...♟fe8?! 22 ♟ae1 ♟f8 23 ♟xc7 ♟xc4 24 b3 ♟xe2 25 ♟xe2 ♟c8 26 ♟f4 ♟a5 27 ♟d6+-

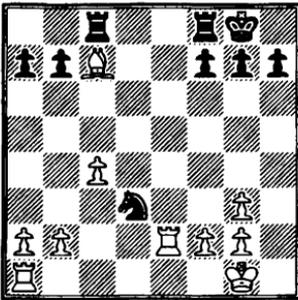
♙g8 28 ♖e7±) 22 ♜c1 b5! 23 b3  
(23 ♙xc7 ♜ac8 24 ♙f4±) 23...♚b6  
24 ♜xc7 ♚d5 25 ♜b7 a6±;

20...♚f6 is the best move available to Black as the knight is secure on f6. After 21 ♙f4 ♜fe8! (21...c6?! 22 ♜e7↑) 22 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 (22...♚xe8? 23 ♜d1±) 23 ♙xc7 ♜e2 (23...♜c8? 24 ♜d1±) 24 ♙b8! a6 25 b3 h5± White would have had only a symbolic plus since the active Black rook makes it difficult for him to undertake anything concrete.

21 ♙f4

Now White's initiative increases at a dramatic pace.

21...♚d3 22 ♙xc7 ♜ac8



23 ♜e7!

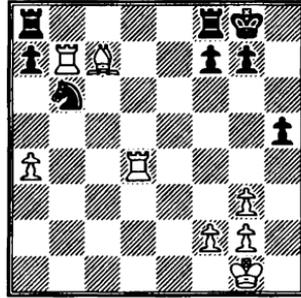
The kind of move one can easily overlook! White gives away the pawn on b2 in order to settle with his rooks on the 7th rank.

23...♚xb2 24 ♜b1 ♚xc4 25 ♜xb7 h5 26 ♜e4!±

Most people would have captured on a7, but Stein is not in a hurry; the pawn cannot escape in the long run, so he prefers instead to focus on restricting the poor knight's

movements; fine technique by a very fine player.

26...♚b6 27 ♜d4! ♜a8 28 a4



A beautiful picture of coordination; The White pieces have taken up the best positions, so it's time for the pawn to come up and cause distress to Black.

28...♚c8 29 ♙f4!

Keeping the knight hemmed in!

29...a5

A sign of desperation but there was really nothing Black could do to get himself out of the tangle. The text at least gives his a8 rook some breathing space.

30 ♜d5 ♜a6 31 ♙c7 ♚e7 32 ♜xh5 ♜c8?

32...♚c6 was slightly more tenacious, yet after 33 ♜c5!/? (...♜b7-b6; 33 ♜d5 ♜e8± is another possibility) Black would not be able to escape:

A) 33...♚d8 34 ♜b6 ♜a8 35 ♙d6 ♜e8 loses to 36 ♜c4! +- Δ f2-f4, g3-g4 (Instead, 36 ♜bb5?! messes up a little as Black has 36...f6!± and it becomes obvious that White cannot take the pawn as 37 ♜xa5? ♚b7! is a draw).

B) After 33...♞c8 34 ♖b6 ♜h7 35 g4 ♘d8 36 ♞d7+- the outcome is also not in doubt.

33 ♞xa5

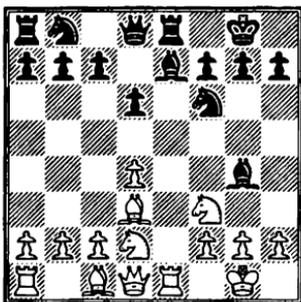
A second pawn is lost, making the rest of the game elementary. The remaining moves require no commentary.

33...♞xa5 34 ♖xa5 ♞c1+ 35 ♜h2 ♘d5 36 ♞d7 ♘f6 37 ♞d4 ♞c2 38 f3 ♞a2 39 g4! ♜h7 40 ♖d8 ♘e8 41 a5 ♜g6 42 ♞d5 ♞c2 43 a6 1-0

9

Felgaer – Pierrot  
South American zt 2003

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 ♘f6 6 ♖d3 ♖g4 7 0-0 ♖e7 8 ♞e1 0-0 9 ♘bd2 ♞e8



The objective of this move is to quickly drop the bishop back to f8, achieving the exchange of a pair of rooks.

10 ♘f1 ♖f8

The alternative 10...♖h5!? 11 ♘g3 ♖g6 can be met in several ways. For example:

A) 12 ♖xg6 hxg6 13 c4 c6! 14 ♜b3 ♜b6! 15 ♜a3!? (15 ♜c3)

B) 12 d5!±;

C) 12 ♖g5!? ♘bd7 (12...♘h5?! 13 ♖xe7 ♞xe7 14 ♞xe7 ♜xe7 15 ♖xg6 hxg6 16 ♘xh5 gxh5 17 ♜d3±) 13 ♘f5 ♖xf5 (13...♖f8?! 14 ♜d2±) 14 ♖xf5±;

White should be careful in the ensuing positions to avoid an exchange of dark-squared bishops if he doesn't get anything concrete in return, as that significantly reduces his chances on both sides of the board, allowing Black to improve his drawing prospects.

11 ♖e3!?

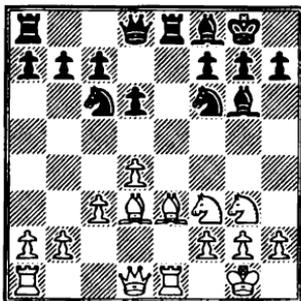
A very principled move, denying Black the much wanted rook swap; still, 11 ♞xe8 ♜xe8 as in Huebner-Petrosian, Tilburg 1981, is not out of the question. White could have maintained an edge in that game by 12 h3 ♖h5 13 ♘g3± as 13...♖xf3 (13...♖g6 14 ♖g5↑ intending ♜d1-d2, ♞a1-e1, d4-d5, is the usual space advantage for White) 14 ♜xf3 ♜e1+ 15 ♘f1 ♘c6 16 c3! (16 b3!?) ♞e8 17 ♞b1! allows White to restore the coordination of his pieces, consolidating the advantage of the two bishops. For example, 17...♜e6 18 ♖g5 ♘e4 19 ♖f4 f5?! (19...♘f6± is better), can be met by 20 ♘e3! (20 ♘g3 d5!)...20...d5 (20...♘d2? 21 ♜d1! ♘xb1 22 ♖c4+-) 21 ♖xc7! ♘d2 22 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 23 ♖xf5 ♘xb1 24 ♖xb1±, xd5.

11...♘c6?!

11...♖h5!? had to be preferred here: after 12 ♘g3 ♖g6 13 d5± White has only a slight edge. The

text merely misplaces the Black knight.

12 c3 ♖h5 13 ♖g3 ♖g6



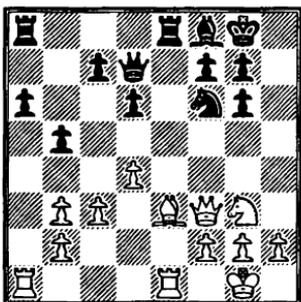
14 ♖b5!

If the bishop must be exchanged, it will at least be permitted only after the bishop itself has induced weaknesses in the enemy camp. The threat is d4-d5, exploiting the awkward placement of the ♖c6; 14 ♖xg6 hxg6 15 ♜b3!? is another continuation deserving attention.

14...a6 15 ♖a4 b5!

15...♖d5?! 16 c4! ♖xe3 17 fxex3± looks bad for Black as his bishops are inactive and White's massive pawn centre looks threatening.

16 ♖b3 ♜d7 17 ♖h4 ♖a5 18 ♖xg6 hxg6 19 ♜f3 ♖xb3 20 axb3

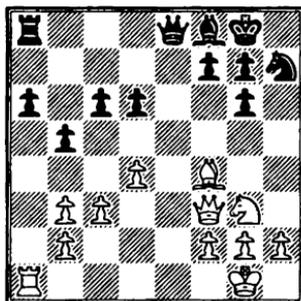


The result of White's bishop manoeuvre can now be evaluated; although Black's kingside has been fortified and he therefore runs no great danger of falling under a direct attack, his queenside pawn formation gives ground for serious concern as the a-pawn is backward and the light squares weak. In the next few moves Black tries to patch the holes and he succeeds to a certain extent.

20...c6 21 ♖g5! ♖h7! 22 ♜xe8 ♜xe8

22...♖xg5? 23 ♜xa8 ♖xf3+ 24 gxf3+- is simply bad.

23 ♖f4



23...a5!?

A double edged move; Black is afraid of being left with an organic weakness on a6 after 23...♖f6 24 b4. White is now given the chance to fix d6 as a long term weakness, however that may not be enough for a considerable advantage.

24 d5!

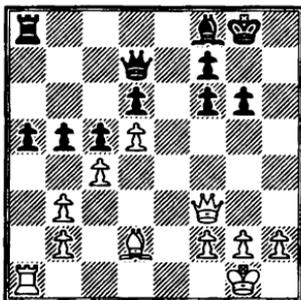
No need to be asked twice!

24...c5 25 ♖e4 ♜d7 26 c4 ♖f6

Black's position is passive, so understandably he opts for piece

exchanges. After 26...b4!? 27 ♖g3 Black's prospects look bleak as 27...♞a6?!± misplaces the rook; however, 27...♟f6! 28 ♟xf6+ gxf6 29 h4 in spite of being positionally unattractive, would certainly have been a tough nut to crack as White cannot post his bishop on the long diagonal and opening up the kingside will not be an easy process.

27 ♟xf6+ gxf6 28 ♠d2



28...♠g7?!

A slight error of judgement; Black had conducted the defence well so far but now 28...b4! was more accurate, in the spirit of the previous note. The point is to fix b2 as a weakness and prevent the bishop's placement on c3. After 29 h4! (29 ♖xf6?! ♠g7 30 ♖f3 a4!± is dangerous for White) 29...♠g7 30 h5 f5 31 hxg6 fxg6 32 ♖g3 ♟f7± the position is only slightly better for White.

29 ♠c3! f5 30 ♠xg7 ♟xg7 31 ♖c3+ ♟g8!

The anti-positional 31...f6 was less good. After 32 cxb5 ♖xb5 33 h4↑ Black's king would certainly

have been the more exposed of the two.

32 h4!

White has no other way to improve the position; after 32 ♞xa5?! ♞xa5 33 ♖xa5 b4 White has no real winning chances as he has no passed pawns and the b2 pawn is weak.

32...b4?

A bad move, leading to the deterioration of Black's chances; it throws away the fruits of hard defensive work, when the draw was so near. The simple 32...♖e7!± would have seized control of the dark squares, allowing Black to make a fight of it. Now White's advantage increases to serious proportions.

33 ♖f6 ♞a7?

Black had a choice of evils, but 33...♖d8 34 ♖xd8+ ♞xd8 35 ♞xa5± was the lesser one as anything is better than being mated.

34 ♞e1!+-

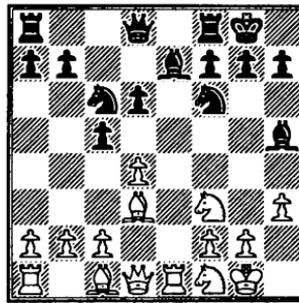
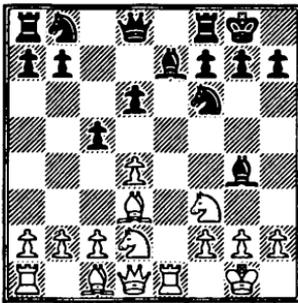
Delivering the knock-out blow; Black has no useful moves, he can only sit back and watch the end coming.

34...♟h7 35 f4 a4 36 h5 gxh5 37 ♞e3 1-0

## 10

Ljubojevic – Smyslov  
USSR v World, Belgrade 1984

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♟f6 3 ♟xe5 d6 4 ♟f3 ♟xe4 5 d4 ♟f6 6 ♠d3 ♠g4 7 0-0 ♠e7 8 ♞e1 0-0 9 ♟bd2 c5!?



A thematic continuation, putting pressure on d4, but White can, nevertheless, emerge on top with proper manoeuvring.

9...d5 is certainly worth mentioning. After 10 ♖f1 we have a parting of the ways:

A) 10...♙h5!? 11 ♖g3 ♙g6 is not mentioned anywhere, but deserves attention; White should probably play 12 ♘e5 with a slight but solid advantage. The idea of capturing on g6 with the knight followed by h2-h4-h5 will result in a favourable opening of the position.

B) 10...c5 11 ♘e3 ♙e6 (11...♙xf3? 12 ♜xf3 cxd4 13 ♘f5 ♙c5 14 ♙h6!+- Kiefer-Vatter, Baden ch 1986) 12 ♘f5 ♙xf5 13 ♙xf5± is better for White because of the two bishops.

C) 10...♞e8 11 ♖g3 ♘bd7 12 h3 also leads to a slight advantage for White according to Euwe.

10 h3 ♙h5 11 ♘f1!

White ignores the pressure on d4, concentrating on obtaining the pair of bishops.

11...♘c6

12 ♖g3!

The sacrifice of a pawn is only temporary, as White's activity will enable its easy recovery.

A very interesting alternative is 12 g4!? ♙g6 13 ♖g3 (13 ♙xg6 hxg6 14 d5↑) 13...♞e8 14 c3 ♜c7 15 ♘f5 ♙f8 16 ♞xe8 ♞xe8 17 ♙f4 cxd4 18 ♘3xd4 a6 19 ♜a4 ♘d5 20 ♙g3 ♘b6 21 ♜c2 ♘e5 22 ♙e2 ♜c5 23 ♘d1± with just an edge for White in Stefansson-Kholmov, Czech open, Pardubice 2001.

12...♙xf3

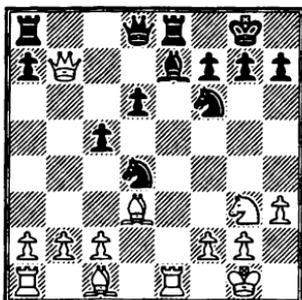
After 12...♙g6?! White can solidify his stance in the centre by 13 c3! threatening d4-d5 (while Ljubojevic's suggestion of 13 d5 ♙xd3 14 ♜xd3 ♘b4 15 ♜e2 ♞e8 16 c4± should also be taken into account). Then 13...cxd4 14 ♘xd4! ♘xd4 15 ♙xg6 hxg6 16 ♜xd4 d5 17 ♙g5 ♜d6 18 ♞e5± led to a clear White advantage in Beliavsky-Barua, London 1985, as Black had a typically weak isolated QP with zero chances of counter-play.

13 ♜xf3 ♘xd4

Black tries to confuse the issue by activating his pieces to the utmost.

After 13...cxd4?! 14 ♘f5± White's positional superiority is evident.

14 ♜xb7 ♞e8



15 ♘f5!

With this exchange White's plus crystallizes as he gets rid of the annoying ♘d4 while maintaining all the advantages of his position (better pawn structure, pair of bishops).

15...♘xf5 16 ♙xf5 ♙f8 17 ♞xe8 ♜xe8

17...♘xe8?! would have been no better. After 18 ♙g5! ♜b8 19 ♜c6 ♜xb2 20 ♞e1 Ljubojevic gives a modest evaluation of ±, but the position deserves more than that: 20...♜b8 21 c4! d5 (21...h6 22 ♞b1! hxg5 23 ♞xb8 ♞xb8 24 ♜a4+-) 22 ♜xd5 and now both

A) 22...♘d6 23 ♙f4 a5 (23...♜d8 24 ♞d1+-) 24 ♞b1 ♜d8 25 ♞d1 ♞a6 26 ♜xc5+- and

B) 22...♘c7 23 ♜d7! +-

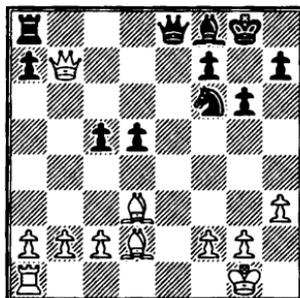
lose for Black.

18 ♙d2 g6!

Smyslov knows the best policy and it is none other than trying to harass the bishops in an effort to

decrease their mobility; 18...♜b8?! 19 ♜f3 ♜xb2 20 ♙c3 ♜b8 21 ♞e1+- would have once more been untenable as the ♘f6 cannot move, and its capture leads to a decisive attack.

19 ♙d3 d5



20 c4!±

Just when Black was beginning to feel a little happy, a solid positional move comes to shatter his dreams of reaching equality. Now c5 is fixed as a weakness, and one that will torture Black deep into the endgame.

20...♜b8

Seeking relief in the ending, but at the same time renouncing any chance of active counter-play. The active 20...♜b8 21 ♜xa7 ♜e5 was worth considering, although White maintains the upper hand after 22 ♞e1 (22 ♙c3!? d4 23 ♙d2 ♞xb2 24 ♞e1±) 22...♜xb2 23 ♙f4!

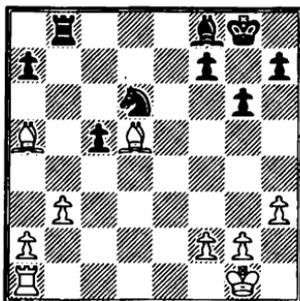
21 ♜xb8 ♞xb8 22 b3!

White correctly decides it's time to calm down and consolidate his structural superiority. 22 cxd5?! ♞xb2 23 ♙c3 ♞b6 offers White nothing.

22...dxc4?!

22...d4 was possible, trying to keep the position semi-open. In that case White would have probably transferred his king over to c2 and tried to gain space on the kingside, keeping in reserve the idea a2-a3, b3-b4 for a suitable moment.

23 ♖xc4 ♜e4 24 ♖a5! ♜d6 25 ♖d5



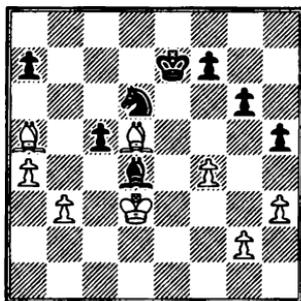
The bishops dominate the board, yet the win, if there is one, is still a long way off. White considers it his priority to reduce his opponent's counter-play and an important step in this direction is to achieve an exchange of rooks.

25...♞e8 26 ♖f1 ♖g7 27 ♞e1! ♞xe1+ 28 ♖xe1 ♖f8 29 ♖e2 ♖e7 30 ♖d3 ♖d4 31 f4 h5

Trying to maintain the space equilibrium on the kingside, but the move has its dark sides too: From now on, a loss of the f7 pawn would mean that its colleague on g6 is vulnerable as well.

32 a4

A good move; White is planning ♖a5-c7-b8, followed by ♖c7xd6, ♖d5xf7, not to mention the immediate b3-b4 (Ljubojevic).



32...♚d7?

Black falters. He shouldn't have allowed White to create an outside passed pawn with his next move, as that is a disadvantage his position can hardly tolerate. This example proves how difficult is to defend this type of position even for the very best.

32...♖g1! was called for, and it would have rendered White's task extremely difficult. He certainly keeps an edge by playing 33 g4 hxg4 34 hxg4± but, at least, one pawn has been exchanged.

33 b4!±

Now the game becomes very one-sided.

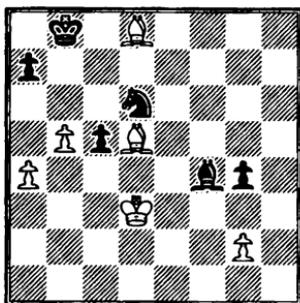
33...♖f2 34 b5 f6 35 ♖c3!

Ljubo mentions 35 ♖e2 with the idea of playing b5-b6 directly; however, we like the text as it opens the position even more for the mighty bishops.

35...♖g3 36 ♖xf6 ♖xf4 37 ♖c3 g5 38 ♖e1 ♖c7

38...g4 was possible here but it wouldn't have changed the outcome.

39 ♖a5+ ♖b8 40 ♖d8 g4 41 hxg4 hxg4



42 b6!+-

The time has come for White to reap the fruits of his labour. The creation of an outside passed pawn decides the game.

42...b7

Black played this move but didn't continue the struggle as further resistance is hopeless. Ljubojevic provides the following analysis to confirm this assessment: 42...b7 43 xxb7! xxb7 44 bxa7 xa7 45 cxc4 e3 46 cb5 f2 47 lb6+ cb7 48 lxc5 g3 49 lb4 and the follow up cb5-c4-d3-e2, lb4-e1 decides. For example, 49...e3 50 cxc4 lf4 (50...xa6 51 cd3 lb6 52 ce2 lf2 53 el1 ld4 54 cf3 will transpose) 51 cd3 lc7 52 ce2 xa6 53 cf3 ee5 54 ee1+- and White wins because his bishop covers a5 and at the same time it attacks the g3 pawn.

But other moves would have also been hopeless:

42...a6 43 le7+ ce8 44 le6+ cb7 45 lxc4+-;

42...axb6 43 lxb6 c4+ 44 lxc4 cb7 45 ld4 cc6 (45...lf5 46 ce4 ld6+ 47 cxf4 lxc4 48 cxc4+-)

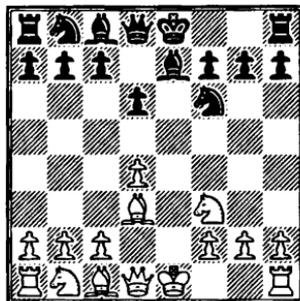
46 ee6 (46 a5? lxc4 47 cxc4 cb7 48 cb5 g3 49 a6+ ca8= is something that should be avoided; this endgame is a theoretical draw as White cannot win the g3 pawn without losing his a-pawn. This happens because his bishop lacks a square from which it could protect the a7 square and at the same time attack the enemy pawn. For example: 50 cc4 ld6 51 cd3 lc7 52 ce4 ld6 53 cf3 lc7 54 ee3 ld6 55 lf4 (What else?) 55...le7 (the safest way) 56 cxc3 ca7 57 cg4 cxa6 58 cf5 cb7 59 g4 cc8 60 ce6 lh4!)= 46...g3 47 ce2 le4 48 cf3 lg5+ 49 cxf4 lxe6+ 50 ce5 lc7 51 cf5 ld5 52 cg4 le7 53 a5+- Δ.ld4-b6.

1-0

## 11

Fedorowicz – Smyslov  
Dortmund 1986

1 e4 e5 2 lf3 lf6 3 lxe5 d6 4 lf3 lxe4 5 d4 lf6 6 ld3 ee7



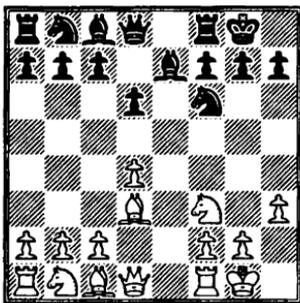
With this move Black enters the main line of the Smyslov Variation. A look at the diagram is sufficient to convince almost anyone that

Black is going to suffer from the lack of space, but on the other hand the symmetric nature of the position could be annoying for a White player who needs desperately to win.

### 7 h3

This is a very useful move, preventing ...♙c8-g4 and safeguarding against back rank mates. In addition, the ♙c1 can now develop freely on e3 or f4 as, in the first case, ...♘f6-g4 is no longer a nuisance, while in the second the bishop enjoys a safe retreat spot on h2.

7...0-0 8 0-0



In this position Black has several ways of trying to complete his development; In the present Illustrative Game we will focus on efforts to contest the centre by means of ...c7-c5.

### 8...♞e8

The immediate 8...c5?! can be met with the simple 9 ♘c3! as Black cannot exert irritating pressure on d4. Then 9...♘c6 10 ♞e1! leads to positions that look unpleasant for Black:

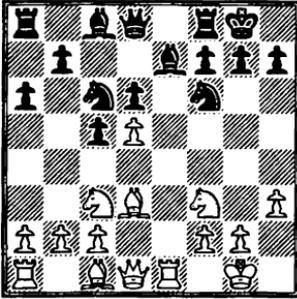
A) 10...d5 is not illogical as Black tries to prevent the shutting in of his e7 bishop after a subsequent d4-d5, yet in the isolated d-pawn position that arises White seems able to preserve an edge: 11 dxc5 ♙xc5 12 a3! (12 ♙g5!?) 12...♙e6 (Better is 12...♞e8 but after 13 ♙g5 ♞xe1+ 14 ♗xe1 ♙e6 15 b4 ♙e7 16 ♞d1±, ...♘e2-f4(d4), combined if necessary with c2-c4, White retains a plus anyway; 12...h6 doesn't change things as White's initiative grows rapidly after 13 b4 ♙b6 14 ♙b2 ♗d6 (Hauptmann-Grajetzky, West German ch corr. 1989) 15 ♘a4! ♙c7 16 b5 ♘d8 17 ♙e5±) 13 b4! and Black is facing a hard choice.

A1) 13...♙b6?! 14 ♘a4 ♘e4 15 ♘xb6 axb6 (15...♗xb6 16 ♙e3 ♗c7 17 c4 ♞ad8 18 cxd5 ♙xd5 19 ♗c2±) 16 ♙b2±;

A2) 13...♙d6 14 ♘b5 ♙b8 15 ♙b2 h6 16 ♗d2 a6 (16...♘e4 17 ♙xe4 dxe4 18 ♗c3 f6 19 ♞xe4 ♗d5 20 ♗e1!±) 17 ♘bd4 ♘xd4 18 ♘d4 (18 ♙xd4±) 18...♗d6 19 ♘f3 ♘d7 (Mechelke-Leckner, West German ch corr. 1989) 20 ♞e2!± ...♞a1-e1.

B) 10...♘b4 11 a3! (11 ♙f1?! as in Fernandez Fornes-Bericat, Arg. corr. 1995 is inferior: After 11...♙f5 12 ♞e2 d5 Black stood well) 11...♘xd3 12 ♗xd3 b6 13 ♙f4± is pleasant for White who has a space advantage and a weakness to pile up on at d6.

C) 10...a6 11 d5



11...Qa7!? (11...Qb4 12 Qf1 Qf5 13 Nc2± leaves the Qb4 exposed.) 12 a4 Qd7 13 a5 Ne8 led to a seriously constricted position for Black in Karpov-Smyslov, USSR 1972, that White could have best taken advantage of with the thematic 14 Qf4!±; a possible line is then 14...Qb5 (14...Qf8 15 Nxe8 Qxe8 16 Qh2!±, intending Qf3-d2 is better for White.) 15 Qa4! Qxd5 16 Qxh7+ Qxh7 17 Qxd5 Qc6 18 Qh5+!? (18 Qd3+ Qg8 19 Qb6 Nb8 20 Nbd1 is also possible.) 18...Qg8 19 Qb6 Nb8 20 Nbd1± with strong pressure for White.

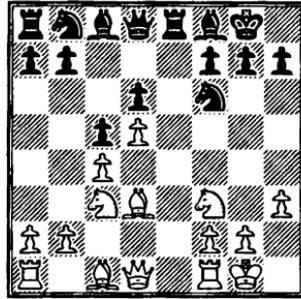
#### 9 c4

This move is thematic in the Smyslov Variation as White gains space in the centre and on the queenside without making any concessions.

#### 9...c5

An attempt to improve on the previous example as White has now thrown in c2-c4, but Black cannot really hope to equalise in the Franco-Sicilian type of position that arises.

10 d5 Qf8 11 Qc3



#### 11...a6?!

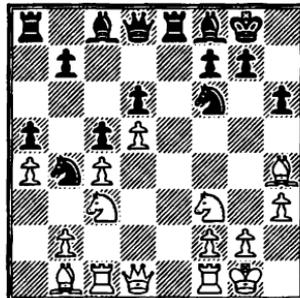
The idea of securing b4 as a base for the queen's knight is simply bad if we consider that a knight on that square would have no prospects at all.

11...Qbd7 looks more topical, yet after 12 Qg5! (It is important to provoke a weakening of the light squares first) 12...h6 13 Qf4 Qe5 14 Qxe5! dxe5 15 Ne1 Qd6 16 Qc2 White enjoys an initiative as he has the plan of Ne1-e3, Na1-e1, combined with a timely Qd3-f5.

12 a4! a5 13 Qg5 h6 14 Qh4 Qa6 15 Nc1!

Making room for the bishop on b1 renders the invasion of the Black knight pointless.

15...Qb4 16 Qb1±



White's space advantage and offside placement of the ♖b4 should decide the outcome in his favour. Still, Black's speedy collapse in this game is rather surprising.

16...♙e7

Lashing out with 16...g5 can be met in both a tactical and a strategic manner, the tactical one being the most convincing:

A) 17 ♙g3!? ♘h5 (17...g4 18 hxg4 ♙xg4 19 ♙h4±) 18 ♙h2 f5 19 ♘h4 ♘g7 20 ♘g6 ♜f6 21 ♘xf8 ♜xf8, though better for White may allow Black to put up a fight;

B) 17 ♘xg5!! hxg5 18 ♙xg5 leaves Black with a depressing choice:

B1) 18...♞e5 19 f4! ♞e3 (19...♞e8 20 ♜f3 ♙g7 21 ♜g3 ♙d7 22 ♜h4 ♞e3 23 ♞ce1+-) 20 ♞f3! (exchanging Black's only active piece or else the rook reaches g3 with decisive effect) 20...♙xf3 21 ♜xf3 ♙g7 (21...♙e7 22 ♞e1+- Δ ♞e1xe7, is obviously unplayable.) 22 ♜g3 ♘a6 (22...♘h5 23 ♜h4+-) 23 ♜h4 ♘c7 24 ♞e1 ♙d7 25 ♞e3!+- reduces the second player to a state of helplessness as he is unable to cope with the threat of ♞e3-g3;

B2) On 18...♙e7 there comes 19 ♜f3! and Black once more has insoluble problems:

B2a) 19...♙g7? loses after 20 ♞fel ♘g8 (20...♘d7 21 ♞xe7 ♞xe7 22 ♜h5+-) 21 ♜g3! ♙xg5 (21...♙f8 22 ♙f4 f5 23 ♜g6!+-) 22 ♞xe8 ♜xe8 23 ♜xg5+ ♙h8

(23...♙f8 24 ♙h7!+-) 24 ♘b5! ♜e5 25 ♜h4+ ♙g7 26 ♞c3+-;

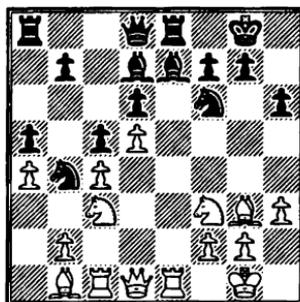
B2b) 19...♘d7!? is slightly more tenacious, yet after the most accurate reply 20 ♙h6! [20 ♙xe7 ♜xe7! (20...♞xe7? 21 ♜g3+ ♙f8 22 ♜h4 ♙e8 23 ♘e4 ♞xe4 24 ♜xe4+ ♜e7 25 ♞fel ♜xe4 26 ♞xe4+ ♙f8 27 ♞h4+-) 21 ♜g3+ ♙f8 22 ♘b5↑ is better for White but will require more work] 20...♙f6 21 ♘e4! White obtains a raging attack: 21...♞xe4 (Forced) 22 ♜xe4 ♘f8 23 ♞c3! ♙xc3 24 bxc3 and Black has again a choice of evils:

B2b1) 24...♘a6 25 ♞e1! ♙d7 26 ♙xf8! ♙xf8 27 ♜f4! +-

B2b2) 24...♜f6 25 ♜e3 ♘a6 26 ♜g3+ ♘g6 27 ♙g5 ♜g7 (27...♜e5 28 f4 ♜g7 29 f5 ♘e5 30 f6+-) 28 ♜xd6-;

B3) 18...♙g7 (Relatively best) 19 ♜f3! ♞e5 20 ♘e4 ♞xg5 21 ♘xg5→ and White has a powerful attacking position; it is worth observing in all these lines how distant the ♖b4 is from the theatre of action.

17 ♞e1 ♙d7 18 ♙g3



18...♜b6

Smyslov intends, as we shall see, to relieve his position by wholesale exchanges along the e-file, but in the present instance this is not a real remedy. However 18...♖h5 19 ♖h2 g6 (19...f5 20 ♖b5 ♖xb5 21 axb5 g6 22 g4±), is also inadequate due to 20 ♖e4! and White dominates:

A) 20...♖f5? 21 ♖xd6! ♖xd6 22 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 23 ♖xd6+;

B) 20...♖f6 21 ♖fd2! (21 ♖xd6? ♖xd6 22 ♖xd6 ♖xa4!)=) 21...♖xe4 22 ♖xe4 ♗c7 23 ♗d2±;

C) 20...♗c7 21 ♗d2±  
19 ♖d2!

A multi-purpose move, eyeing d6 and preparing to bring the queen into the attack via f3.

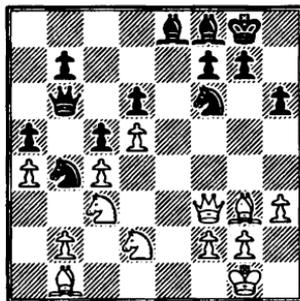
19...♖f8?

A mechanical retreat; Black should have tried to build up some kind of resistance on the long diagonal by 19...g6!: After 20 ♗f3! (Now 20 ♖de4?! is not so good in view of 20...♖xe4 21 ♖xe4 f5! with a respectable position for Black) 20...♖h5!? 21 ♖h2 f5 (Trying to keep the White knights away from e4; 21...♖g5?! 22 ♖ce4+-; 21...♖g7!?!±) 22 ♖f1! (22 g4!? ♖g7 23 gx f5 ♖xf5 24 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 25 ♖de4 ♖f8 26 ♖e2↑) 22...♖g5 23 ♖cd1± White keeps nasty pressure, but at least Black can put up a fight.

20 ♗f3!

Now it's suddenly all over! Black has no way to stop the lethal ♖d2-e4 removing the chief defender of his king.

20...♖xe1+ 21 ♖xe1 ♖e8 22 ♖xe8  
♖xe8



23 ♖de4!+- ♖e7 24 ♗f5 ♖f8

There is no defence; on 24...♖xe4 25 ♗xe4 ♖f8 there comes 26 ♗h7 ♖f6 27 ♖e4 ♖e5 28 ♖xe5 dxe5 29 d6+-

25 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 26 ♖e4 ♖e5

After 26...♖e7 27 ♗h7 f6 28 ♖c3+- Black cannot defend against the multiple threats.

27 ♖xe5 dxe5 28 ♗xe5 ♖xa4 29 ♗b8+ ♖e7 30 d6+ ♖e6 31 ♗f8 1-0

Black resigned as mate is unavoidable. The ease with which White won this game is a confirmation of the ineffectiveness of Black's setup, particularly when the knight is badly misplaced on b4.

## 12

Fischer – Gheorghiu  
Buenos Aires 1970

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♖xe5 d6 4 ♖f3 ♖xe4 5 d4 ♖f6 6 ♖d3 ♖e7 7 h3 0-0 8 0-0 ♖e8

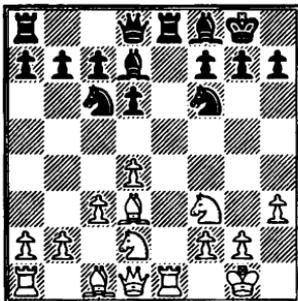
The rook clearly belongs to the open file, so it makes sense to develop it to e8 right away.

8...♘c6?! is less flexible because after 9 c3! the knight's future on c6 looks bleak. Black has nothing better than 9...♞e8 [9...♙e6?! 10 ♖c2 h6 11 ♘bd2 ♗d7 12 ♞e1 ♞ae8 13 ♘f1! (13 ♘e4!?) 13...♙d5 14 ♘h4 ♙d8 (14...♘e4 15 ♘f5! ♗xf5 16 f3 ♗g6 17 fxe4 ♙e6 18 ♞e3!±) 15 ♙d2± is instead worse as White's control of f5 gives him a dangerous initiative] after which White has a choice between the following moves:

A) 10 ♞e1 is the first option, emphasizing his control of the e4 square. Now...

A1) 10...h6?! 11 ♘bd2 ♙f8 12 ♘f1! (with the Black bishop on c8, 12 ♘e4 is pointless: 12 ♘e4?! ♘xe4 13 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 14 ♙xe4 d5 15 ♙c2 ♗d6 16 ♗d3 g6=) 12...d5?! (12...♞xe1±) 13 ♘e5 ♙d6 14 ♙f4 ♙xe5 15 dxe5 ♘d7 16 ♗h5 ♘c5 17 ♙c2 ♞e6 (17...♘e6 18 ♙xh6 gxh6 19 ♞e3→, e.g. 19...♘g7 20 ♗xh6 ♙f5 21 ♞g3 ♙g6 22 f4!±) 18 ♞ad1±, as in King-Barua, Lloyds Bank open 1982, looks suspect, so we will focus on the more resilient...

A2) 10...♙d7 11 ♘bd2 ♙f8, which has been played by Smyslov:



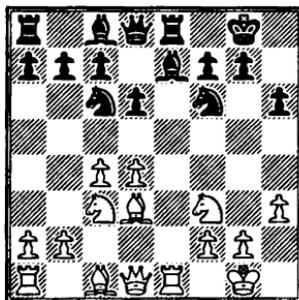
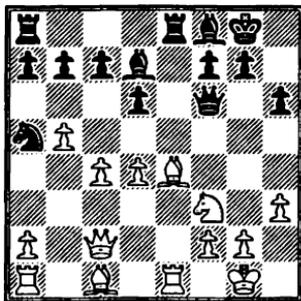
In the diagrammed position, the move 12 ♘e4!? is a typical device to soften up Black's control of d5 and kingside defences; Black has the following choice:

A2a) 12...♙e7?! 13 ♗b3±;

A2b) 12...h6?! 13 ♗b3±;

A2c) 12...d5?! 13 ♘xf6+! [A strong improvement over 13 ♘g3 ♙d6 14 ♞xe8+ ♗xe8 15 ♖c2 h6 16 ♙d2 ♗f8 17 ♘f5± which led to a just an edge for White in Bronstein-Smyslov, USSR ch 1971] 13...♗xf6 14 ♞xe8 ♞xe8 15 ♗b3! ♘d8 (Probably White didn't like 15...♗d6 here but it appears that Black has nothing for the pawn after 16 ♗xb7! ♞b8 17 ♗a6 ♞b6 18 ♗a4 ♘b4 19 ♗d1 ♘d3 20 ♗xd3±) 16 ♙g5! (16 ♗xd5 ♙c6 17 ♗h5 g6 18 ♗g5 ♗e6 19 ♙f4 ♙xf3 20 gxf3 ♙d6±) 16...♗b6 17 ♗xd5 (17 ♙xd8 ♞xd8 18 ♘g5!? ♗xb3 19 ♙xh7+ ♘h8 20 axb3 ♙e7 21 ♘xf7+ ♘xh7 22 ♘xd8 ♙xd8 23 ♞xa7 ♙c6± Δ 24 b4?! ♙g5 25 b5 ♙xb5 26 ♞xb7 c6=) 17...♙c6 18 ♗b3± leads to a position where Black has no compensation for the lost pawn;

A2d) 12...♘e4 (loses the battle for control of d5 but looks like the lesser evil) 13 ♙xe4 h6! (13...g6 14 ♙g5 ♙e7 15 ♙f4 ♙f6 16 ♗d2±) 14 ♗b3 ♘a5 15 ♖c2 ♗f6 and now White should not hurry to press on the queenside with 16 b4?! (16 ♗d3!?± looks like a prudent course) as Black has counter-play: 16...♘c6 17 b5 ♘a5 18 c4



18... Nxe4! 19 Wxe4 N8 20 Wd3  
 Nxe1+ 21 Qxe1 Qe6! 22 Qc2  
 Qxc4 23 Qe3 d5! =;

B) 10 Qf4!? is the second possibility; after 10... Qh5 11 Qh2 g6 12 Ne1 [12 d5!? is also strategically justified, e.g. 12... Qb8 (12... Qe5 13 Qxe5 dxe5 14 Qb5 Qd7 15 Qxd7 Wxd7 16 Qxe5 Qc5 17 Qh2 Qf6 18 c4±) 13 Ne1±] 12... Qf8 (12... Qg7 13 d5!?) 13 Nxe8 Wxe8 14 Qbd2 Qg7 15 Wb3! Qf6 16 Ne1 Wd7 17 Qe4! Qxe4 18 Qxe4↑ White's space advantage combined with control over the critical square d5 gave him a plus in Kavalek-Smyslov, Tilburg 1979. A possible line of play runs 18... Qd8 19 d5! b6 20 Qd3 a6 21 Qd4 Qb7 22 Qg3 Qf6 23 a4± and, once more in the Smyslov system, Black has problem with his knight. Now back to our main game:

9 c4 Qc6

With the White pawn on c4 it is much more logical to develop the knight on c6 as the squares d4, b4 are less securely defended than in the previous examples.

10 Qc3 h6 11 Ne1

11... Oxf8?!

Too passive; White is now allowed to complete his development strongly and efficiently when at the same time Black will not be able to undertake anything constructive. 11... Qb4!? was an attempt to gain some breathing space. Then, after

A) 12 Qb1 c6 13 a3 Qa6 (A structure that may also arise from the Alekhine Defence) 14 d5!±, White's space advantage guarantees him interesting prospects on both sides of the board, whilst

B) 12 Qf1!? Qf5 13 Ne2 also deserves attention, since 13... Qf8 14 a3 Nxe2 15 Qxe2 Qc2 16 Na2 c5 is better for White after either 17 d5 or 17 b3 Qxd4 18 Qxd4 cxd4 19 Wxd4.

12 Nxe8 Wxe8

Black will now have to lose more time with his queen as it has landed on an unfortunate square.

13 Qf4 Qd7 14 Wd2 Wc8?

And this is even more unfortunate; there is no realistic chance of getting in ... Qd7-f5 so

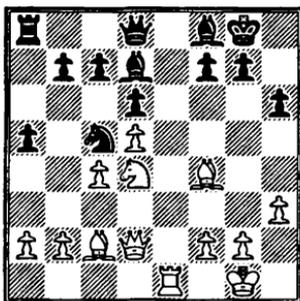
Black had to restrict himself to 14...♚d8.

15 d5 ♖b4 16 ♗e4!

Once more, exchanging the defender of the Black kingside is the key to a big advantage. Gheorghiu has no choice but to fall in with Fischer's plans.

16...♗xe4 17 ♙xe4 ♖a6 18 ♗d4 ♗c5 19 ♙c2± a5 20 ♜e1 ♚d8

Black realises his mistake but it is probably too late.



21 ♜e3!

A strong move, preparing to attack whilst discouraging the Black queen from coming out on f6.

21...b6

21...♚f6 22 ♜g3 ♖h8 23 ♙e3, intending ♗d4-f3(b3), ♙e3-d4, leads to a very strong White attack, as does 23 ♜f3!? ♖g8 24 ♙e3 ♚h4 25 ♙f5→.

22 ♜g3

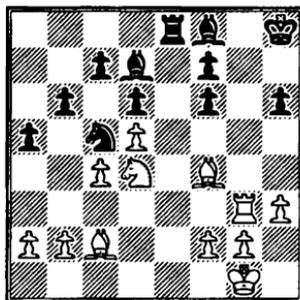
There is no way that someone could escape from such a position against Fischer. White has focused with all his pieces on Black's kingside and the only thing Gheorghiu succeeds in doing in the

next few moves is to avert a mating attack at the cost of drifting into a hopeless endgame.

22...♖h8 23 ♗f3 ♚e7 24 ♚d4 ♚f6

Forced. Now however, White wins with immense ease, exploiting the resulting weakness on f5.

25 ♚xf6 gxf6 26 ♗d4 ♜e8



27 ♜e3! ♜b8

Also hopeless is 27...♜xe3 28 ♙xe3 h5 (otherwise White follows up with ♖g1-h2 and g2-g4, completely shutting the ♙f8 out of the game) 29 b3+- and White will continue with ♖g1-h2-g3, winning.

28 b3 b5?

A desperate try for activity, but Black was lost anyway. Now Fischer wraps the point quickly, as he is given the chance to invade f5 immediately.

29 cxb5 ♙xb5 30 ♗f5 ♙d7 31 ♗xh6 ♜b4 32 ♜g3

Simple and elegant; the mating threat forces Black to surrender more material.

32...♙xh6 33 ♙xh6 ♗e4 34 ♙g7+ ♖h7?

34...♔g8 35 ♖xe4 ♜xe4 36  
 ♜xf6+ ♜f8 37 ♜c3+-  
 35 f3

Facing huge material losses,  
 Black resigned.

1-0

### 13

**I. Polgar – Toth**

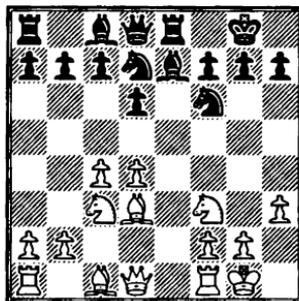
Hungarian ch, Budapest 1971

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4  
 ♗f3 ♗xe4 5 d4 ♖f6 6 ♖d3 ♖e7 7  
 h3 0-0 8 0-0 ♜e8 9 c4 ♗bd7

Played with the intention of  
 switching the knight over to the  
 kingside to help defend the king  
 and, possibly, attack the centre by  
 ...♗f8-e6.

9...c6 leads to play similar to the  
 one witnessed in the main line. The  
 customary queenside advance 10  
 ♗c3 a6 11 b4!? (also possible is 11  
 ♖f4 with similar play to the main  
 line) 11...♗bd7?! [Too passive;  
 Black had to try 11...b5 12 cxb5!  
 (12 d5?! a5!?) 12...cxb5 (12...axb5  
 13 d5! ♖d7 14 dxc6 ♗xc6 15 ♜b1  
 d5 16 a3±) 13 d5! ♖b7 14 a4 bxa4  
 15 ♜xa4 ♗bd7 16 ♜b3± when  
 White is slightly better but has to be  
 very careful as there are always  
 tricks in view of the weakness on  
 d5] 12 ♖e3 ♗f8 13 a4 a5 14 b5  
 ♗g6 15 ♜e1 ♗h5 16 ♜d2± led  
 to a clear White advantage in  
 Tukmakov-Bronstein, Moscow  
 1971.

10 ♗c3



10...c6

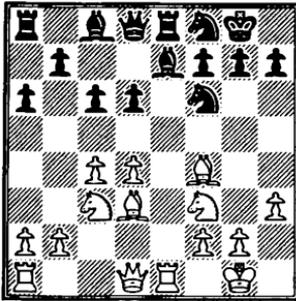
10...♗f8?! is inflexible; after 11  
 d5! ♗g6 [11...c6 12 ♜e1 ♖d7 13  
 ♖f4 ♗h5 14 ♖h2 g6 15 ♜d2 ♗g7  
 (Honkaniemi-Huttunen, Finland,  
 corr. 1976) 16 ♜e2!± Δ ♜ae1] 12  
 ♜e1 ♖d7 (Tal-Smyslov, USSR  
 1971), White should play 13 ♗d4!±  
 with a clear advantage according to  
 Korchnoi. This verdict was verified  
 after 13...♖f8 14 f4 ♜xe1+ 15 ♜xe1  
 a6 16 ♜f2 c6 17 ♖e3 cxd5 18 cxd5  
 b5 19 a3 ♗e7 20 ♜f3± in  
 Noetzold-Thunberg OMT corr.  
 1983.

11 ♜e1 ♗f8 12 ♖f4!

In spite of the above-mentioned  
 game Tukmakov-Bronstein where  
 White gained an edge by developing  
 the dark-squared bishop on e3, it  
 looks more sensible to develop this  
 bishop on the diagonal h2-b8. After  
 a subsequent d4-d5 the d6 pawn  
 may become a concrete target for  
 the ♖f4.

12...a6

An interesting moment, as White  
 has a relatively large choice.



**13 b4**

13 d5!? is a very solid method of acquiring an edge; after 13...cxd5 14 cxd5 ♘g6 (14...b5 15 b4±) 15 ♙h2 ♙d7± the position is slightly better for White as Black's queenside is vulnerable.

Also interesting is 13 ♛d2!±, intending ♙e1-e2, ♙a1-e1, with an edge for White according to Spassky.

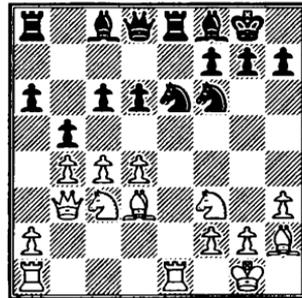
13 ♛b3?! ♘e6 14 ♙h2 ♙f8 15 ♙e2 b5! was unclear in Fischer-Petrosian, Candidates final 1971. In these positions White needs to have his b-pawn unblocked in order to seize space on the queenside with b2-b4.

**13...♘e6**

13...♘g6 is Yusupov's recommendation, which was tested in Pierrot-De las Heras, Najdorf open, Buenos Aires 2002: 14 ♙h2 ♙f8 (14...b5 15 d5!↑) 15 ♛d2 ♙xe1+ (15...♙d7) 16 ♙xe1 a5 17 b5!± a4 18 a3 ♙d7 19 bxc6 bxc6 20 ♙c2 ♙e6 21 ♛d3 ♛a5 22 ♙b1 ♘d7 23 ♙b4 d5 24 c5+- Looking at this game we got the impression that Black could not substantially improve his play;

13...b5 should be met with the typical 14 d5!, which grants White a small but permanent advantage after 14...bxc4 15 ♙xc4 ♘g6 16 ♙h2 ♙b7 17 ♙c1 ♛d7 18 a3.

**14 ♙h2 ♙f8 15 ♛b3 b5**



**16 d5!**

After due preparation White is finally able to carry out this advance, having a certain impact on Black's position as he gets a weak d-pawn.

16...bxc4 17 ♙xc4 cxd5 18 ♘xd5 ♙b7 19 ♙ad1 ♘xd5 20 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 21 ♙xd5

Most natural, but 21 ♛xd5± is also good.

**21...♛b6 22 ♙ed1 ♙ab8?!**

A bad move, giving up the d-pawn for no reason; Black probably assumed that he would have sufficient counter-play in the resulting ending but in fact this is not so. After 22...♘c7! 23 ♙f5 ♘e6 24 ♙f4!± Δ ♘f3-g5, ♙f4-e3, White is slightly better in view of his active pieces and potential outside passed pawn, but Black certainly has counter-chances.

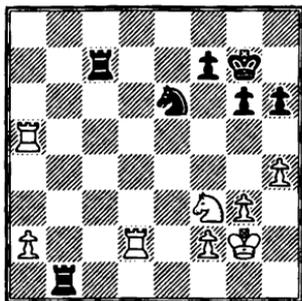
23 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 24 ♜xd6 ♜xb4  
25 ♜xb4 ♜xb4 26 ♜xa6± h6 27  
♜a5?!

Rather incomprehensible; after 27  
♜a7! (intending ♜d1-d7) 27...♖c5  
28 ♜c1± White is much better. In  
comparison to the game he has got  
the c-file.

27...♜c8 28 ♜d2 ♜c7

Now Black has defended his  
second rank; the realisation of  
White's advantage is no longer an  
easy matter.

29 h4! g6 30 g3 ♔g7 31 ♔g2  
♜b1



32 ♖e5

32 h5!± was a good move; White  
needs to force a weakness on the  
Black kingside to win.

32...♜e1 33 ♖f3 ♜a1 34 ♜e2 ♜b1  
35 ♜a3

35 h5!?

35...♜b5 36 ♜a6 ♜d5!

White has played listlessly and  
now Black is ready for counter-play  
with ...g6-g5.

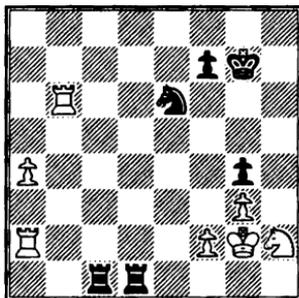
37 a4 ♜c1 38 ♜a2 g5! 39 hxg5

39 a5 ♜dd1 40 hxg5 hxg5 would  
have been similar to the game.

39...hxg5 40 ♜b6 ♜dd1 41 ♖h2

41 ♖e5 can be met in the same  
fashion.

41...g4!!



An interesting tactical motif,  
securing the draw; In fact, it is  
White who has to be careful from now  
on.

42 ♖xg4 ♖g5 43 f4 ♜g1+ 44 ♔f2  
♖e4+ 45 ♔f3 f5! 46 ♜b7+ ♔f8 47  
♜h2! ♜c3+ 48 ♔e2 ♖xg3+ 49 ♖d2  
♖e4+ 50 ♔e2 ♜c2+ 51 ♖d3 ♜c3+  
52 ♔e2

52 ♖d4?? ♜d1+ 53 ♔e5 ♜c5+ 54  
♔e6 ♜d6#!

52...♖g3+ 53 ♖d2 ♖e4+ 54 ♔e2  
♜c2+ 55 ♖d3 ♖xh2 56 ♜b8+

56 ♖xh2?? ♖c5+++

56...♔g7 57 ♖xh2 ♜a1

And the players decided to call it  
a draw as there are no chances left:  
57...♜a1 58 ♜b4 ♜xa4 59 ♜xa4  
♖c5+ 60 ♖d4 ♖xa4= is dead equal.

½-½

## 14

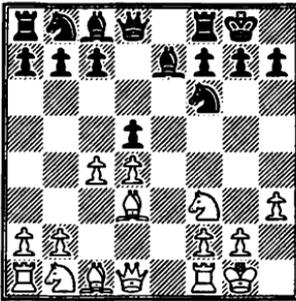
## Karpov – Timman

Euwe memorial, Amsterdam 1991

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♟f6 3 ♟xe5 d6 4  
 ♟f3 ♟xe4 5 d4 ♟f6 6 ♟d3 ♟e7 7  
 h3 0-0 8 0-0 d5

After this move we transpose to a type of Exchange French with a valuable extra move for White in h2-h3.

9 c4!?



It is a most sensible choice for White to opt for an isolated QP position as in the present situation it offers him excellent attacking chances.

9...dxc4

9...♟c6!? is probably best, transposing after 10 ♟c3 to one of the 5...d5 main lines of the Petroff, examined under a subsequent Illustrative Game.

10 ♟xc4

For the sake of consistency we took the liberty of using the normal Petroff move order to reach the diagrammed position. In the actual game it arose from a ... Queen's Gambit Accepted with a saving

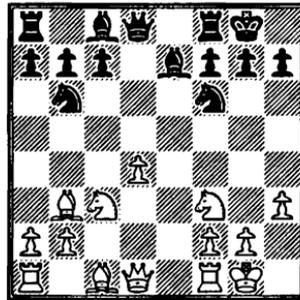
of two tempi!! The proof: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 4 ♟xc4 exd4 5 exd4 ♟f6 6 ♟f3 ♟e7 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3.

10...♟bd7

Black declares his intention of turning d5 into a fortress.

10...c5 is an interesting idea of Salov; after 11 ♟c3! (11 d5 b5 12 ♟xb5 ♟b7± is Salov's analysis; 11 dxc5 ♟xc5 12 ♟xd8 ♟xd8 13 ♟g5 ♟bd7 14 ♟d1 ♟e8 15 ♟c3±) 11...♟c6 12 d5 ♟a5 13 ♟d3 b6 14 ♟f4! ♟d6 15 ♟g5 h6 16 ♟xf6 ♟xf6 17 ♟e1± a dynamic position occurs, requiring accurate handling of the initiative by White.

11 ♟c3 ♟b6 12 ♟b3



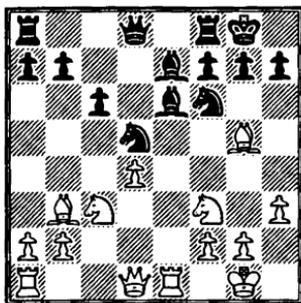
White's moves are so natural that require no particular explanation; Now Black almost invariably chooses...

12...c6

...which is the most elastic move order as it permits the second player the luxury to decide next move which knight is going to settle on d5. Since 12...c6 is used in the present game as a prelude to ...♟f6-d5 we will devote the next

paragraph to the alternative deployment.

After 12...♖bd5 13 ♖e1 (A flexible developing move) Black has a choice between employing or omitting ...c7-c6: Most usual is 13...c6 (13...♗e6 is playable, yet after the natural 14 ♖g5!? ♖xc3 15 bxc3 ♗xb3 16 ♖xb3± White's prospects looked better in Vaganian-Tal Moscow 1982; Potential followers of the Armenian's 14 ♖g5 should disregard the fact that game was shortly agreed drawn as White does have chances to mobilise his central pawn duo in an attempt to cramp his opponent; 13...♗e8 14 ♗g5 has no independent significance and will transpose to the positions analysed below unless Black plays the inaccurate 14...♗e6? which loses to 15 ♗xf6 gxf6 16 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 17 ♖h4+- with an irresistible White attack as ♗b3-c2 will be lethal) 14 ♗g5 ♗e6



...reaching the typical IQP position of the diagram. Now White has a choice:

A) 15 ♖d2!? is an interesting alternative to the most usual 15

♖e5, keeping d4 overprotected for the time being and emphasizing quick development; after 15...♗c8 16 ♖e2! (Demonstrating the main point of White's idea which is none other than to double rooks on the e-file) 16...♗c7 17 ♖ae1 ♖d7 18 ♖c1 ♖c7 19 ♖e5 ♖d6 20 ♗c2 ♖cd5 21 ♖b1 h6 22 ♗c1 ♖c8 23 a3 ♖fd8 24 ♖xd5 cxd5? [Black had to play 24...♖xd5! but he was probably afraid of something like 25 ♗h7+ ♖f8 (25...♖h8? 26 ♖c4 ♖6d7 27 ♖xe6! fxe6 28 ♖e5+-) 26 ♖c4 ♖6d7 27 ♖xe6! (27 ♗f5 ♗xf5 (27...♖c7? 28 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 29 ♖h7+-) 28 ♖xf5 ♖f6± seems to hold for Black) 27...fxe6 28 ♖e5 ♗f6 29 ♖g6+ ♖f7 30 ♖e4 ♗c7 31 b4! (31 ♖f3 c5! 32 ♖h5 cxd4) 31...♖c3 32 ♖f3 ♖b5 33 ♖e5+ ♖e7 34 ♗f4 with a dangerous White initiative] 25 ♗d2! (Now White has a clear advantage) 25...♗e8 26 ♖xf7! ♗xf7 (26...♖xf7 27 ♗g6+-) 27 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 28 ♖xe7 ♖e4 29 ♗xe4 dxe4 30 ♖xe4 ♖d8 31 ♖xb7 ♖f6 32 d5 ♖b6 33 ♖xa7 ♖g6 34 ♖d7 (1-0) White reaped the harvest of his interesting novelty in Protaziuk-Weglarz, Polish tch, Lubniewice 1998.

B) 15 ♖e5 leads to a typical isolated QP position, with White's pieces looking optimally placed. Now, after 15 ♖e5 Black has the following options:

B1) 15...♖a5?! allows White to achieve a favourable clarification of the situation in the centre by 16 ♖xd5! [16 ♖xf7? surprisingly doesn't work in view of 16...♖xc3!

(But not 16...♟xf7? 17 ♚e2!+ e.g. 17...♟f5 18 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 19 ♚xe7+ ♟g6 20 ♚xb7 ♟xg5 21 ♚xg7+ ♟g6 22 ♚e5+ ♚f5 23 ♚xf5+ ♟xf5 24 ♚e5#) 17 ♜h6+ (17 bxc3 ♟xf7 18 ♚xe7 ♚xg5±) 17...♟h8 18 bxc3 ♟xb3 19 ♚xb3 ♚xg5 20 ♜f7+ ♚xf7 21 ♚xf7 ♜d5± and Black comes out on top] 16...cxd5 (16...♟xd5?! 17 ♟xf6 ♟xf6 18 ♜d7±; 16...♜xd5?! 17 ♟xe7 ♜xe7 18 ♟xe6 fxe6 19 ♚b3±) 17 ♟c2 ♚fe8 [17...♚ac8 18 ♚d3 ♟b4! (18...g6? 19 ♜xg6!+-) 19 ♟xf6 ♚xc2 20 ♚g3 g6 21 ♜xg6! fxg6 22 ♚xe6 ♚xb2 23 a3!↑ is a beautiful tactical variation at the end of which White's pressure persists] 18 ♚d3 ♜e4 19 ♟xe7 ♚xe7 20 f3± as his pieces are by far the ones profiting from the static nature of the emerging structure.

B2) 15...♜c7 is logical, but even more so is 16 ♟c2! avoiding exchanges that would be most welcome for Black; the sequel 16...♚e8 17 ♚d3 g6 18 ♚f3! ♜fd5 19 ♟xe7 ♚xe7 20 ♚g3 ♚ad8 21 ♚ad1 ♜f6 (21...♜xc3 22 bxc3 ♜d5 23 c4± is poor for Black.) 22 f4!→ gave White excellent attacking chances in Razuvaev-Bagirov, USSR 1982;

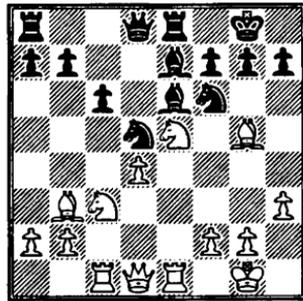
B3) 15...♚e8!? (Considered best as it waits for White to move his queen to f3 and only then resort to ...♜d5-c7) leads to another subdivision:

B3a) 16 ♚f3 ♜c7! 17 ♟xf6 ♟xf6 18 ♜e4 offers nothing after 18...♟d5! [18...♟xe5?! 19 dxe5 ♟xb3 20 ♚xb3 ♚xe5 21 ♚xb7 ♚b8

(21...♚e6!?) 22 ♚xc6 ♟xb2 23 ♚ad1 ♚b8 gives White a strong initiative after 24 ♜d6!±] 19 ♜xf6+ ♚xf6 20 ♚xf6 gxf6 21 ♜g4 ♟g7 22 ♟xd5 ♜xd5 23 ♜e3 ♜xe3= when Black has reached the safe haven of an equal endgame;

B3b) 16 ♚d2! is the typical Polish treatment of the position; after 16...♜c7 17 ♟c2 c5 18 ♟xf6 ♟xf6 19 ♚d3 g6 20 dxc5 ♟f5 21 ♚xd8 ♚axd8 22 ♟xf5 ♟xe5 23 ♟g4 ♚d2 24 ♜e4 ♚xb2 25 ♜d6 ♚e7 26 ♜c4 White won surprisingly quickly in Kruszynski-Weglarz Polish tch, Lubniewice 1994, but Black shouldn't have played ...c6-c5 so early;

B3c) 16 ♚c1! (The star move, intending ♚c1-c2-e2) takes us to the top of the tree:

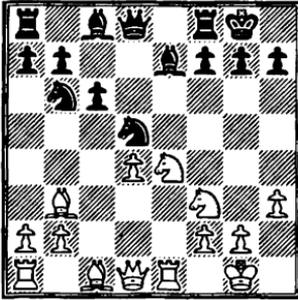


B3c1) After 16...♜d7?!, c5 becomes weak, but Black hopes that exchanges will relieve his position; However, his hopes were not justified in two top-level encounters: 17 ♟xe7 ♚xe7 18 ♜e4 f6 [An attempt at improvement over 18...♜f8 19 ♜c5 ♚e8 20 ♚f3 ♚d8 (Δ 21...♟c8, 22...♜e6 =) 21 ♜xb7! ♚xb7 22 ♜xc6 ♚xb3 23 ♚xb3 ♚d7



18...♖f6] 17...♗d6 18 ♖e3 ♜ad8  
(18...♞d7 19 ♞xg6 ♞xg6 20 ♞e4  
♗c7 21 ♜ae1±) 19 ♜ae1± looks  
very promising for White.

14 ♞e4!



Rightly avoiding piece exchanges as White controls more space; an important remark to be made here is that White ignores d5 and focuses on his own strengths, namely c5, e5 and g5. This is acceptable tactics once Black chooses to post his f-knight on d5.

14...♞f5

14...♞b4?! 15 ♞d2 ♞xd2 16 ♗xd2± is clearly in White's favour as c5 has turned into a wonderful base for his knights;

14...♞e8 15 ♞d2 ♞f5 16 ♞e5↑ leads to similar play to the main line, except that Black has rather needlessly weakened his f7 square.

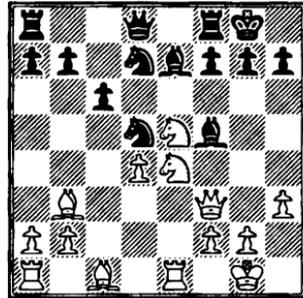
15 ♞e5

Vacating, among others, f3 for the queen; White needs to mass pieces on the king's flank to exploit the absence of the ♞f6 from the defence.

15...♞d7

15...♞b4!? may have had more point now; the idea is that after 16 ♞d2 ♞xd2 17 ♗xd2 Black has 17...♞xe4!? 18 ♜xe4 ♞f6 (18...♗d6 19 ♜ae1±) 19 ♜f4 (19 ♜e3; 19 ♜e2) 19...♞bd5 20 ♜f3± reaching what looks like a tenable position.

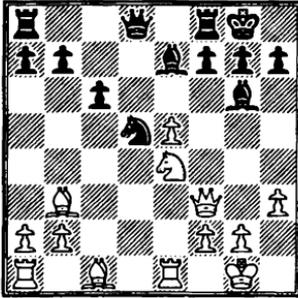
16 ♗f3



16...♞xe5?!

But this is severely compromising Black's defences; as far as we can see from the defender's point of view the move has only negative aspects: White gets rid of the isolani, the d-file is opened up for his rooks and f6 becomes accessible for sacrificial purposes to the remaining White knight. All in all, rather unpleasant scenery for the Black king. 16...♞g6! 17 ♞d2± would have been only slightly better for White. On the other hand, 16...♞e6 17 ♞d2 ♞e8 [17...♞xe5 18 dxe5 ♞c7 19 ♜ad1 ♞d5 (19...♞xb3 20 ♗xb3 ♗c8 21 ♞g5 ♞xg5 22 ♞xg5± xd6) 20 ♞c3!±] 18 ♜ad1! ♗c7 19 ♗g3!↑ is rather awkward to meet. For example: 19...♜ad8 20 ♞xd5! ♞xd5 21 ♞h6 ♞f8 22 ♞g5±

17 dxe5 ♔g6



18 ♔f4

18 ♔d1!?± has been suggested, but the text is more thematic; it is obvious that White would feel much more confident with the a-rook on d1.

18...♚a5?

A questionable decision, removing the queen from the theatre of action;

18...♘xf4 19 ♚xf4 ♔xe4 20 ♜xe4↑ was the best practical chance although in that case too White would have maintained certain attacking chances thanks to the presence of opposite coloured bishops.

19 ♘d6!±

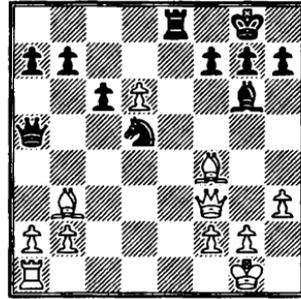
This knight jump must have been underestimated by Timman; it is clear that the knight has to be taken, but the Dutch Grandmaster had probably thought earlier on that the resulting pawn on d6 is not too dangerous.

19...♔xd6 20 exd6 ♜fe8

20...♞ad8 would have hardly saved the game for Black: 21 ♞ad1 ♘xf4 22 ♚xf4 ♔d7 (22...♚f5? 23

♚xf5 ♔xf5 24 ♞e7 ♔d7 25 g4!+-; 22...♜fe8 23 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 24 d7 ♔d8 25 ♚e3+-) 23 ♞e7 ♚d8 24 ♚e5± and White has terrible threats such as h3-h4-h5, or simply ♔d1-e1 in case Black withdraws his king to the corner.

21 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8



22 ♔xd5!

A simple but very effective move, highlighting the strength of the passed pawn and the weakness of Black's back rank.

22...cxd5

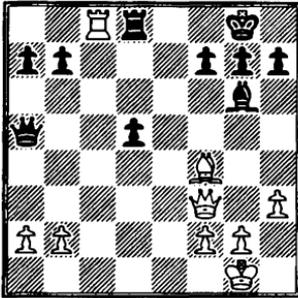
There is no choice; 22...♞e1+ leads to a prosaic finish after 23 ♞xe1 ♚xe1+ 24 ♔h2 cxd5 25 d7 ♚e7 26 ♚xd5 ♚d8 27 ♔g5+-. Also hopeless is 22...♚xd5 23 ♚xd5 cxd5 24 d7 ♔d8 25 ♞e1! f6 26 ♞e7 and ♔f4-c7 is unstoppable, e.g. 26...♔f8 27 ♔d6+-

23 d7 ♞e7

23...♔d8 doesn't save Black either; 24 ♚e3 f6 (24...♚b5 25 ♔c7!+-; 24...h6 25 ♚e8+ ♔h7 26 ♞c1 f6 27 ♚e7 ♔f5 28 b4! ♚b6 29 ♔c7 ♜xd7 30 ♚xd7 ♔xd7 31 ♔xb6 axb6 32 ♞c7 ♔c6 33 ♜xc6 bxc6 34 a4+-) 25 ♞c1 ♚b5 (25...♜xd7 26

♠c8+ ♠d8 27 ♠c7+-) 26 ♠e6+!  
 ♠f7 27 ♠e7+- is a nice line given  
 by Ftacnik.

24 ♠c1 ♠xd7 25 ♠c8+ ♠d8



26 b4!

The finishing touch, and one that had to be calculated in advance. 26 ♠c7?? would have been a beginner's blunder, throwing away the game due to 26...♠e1++

26...♠b6 27 ♠c7+-

Normally Black should be able to put up some resistance with rook and bishop for the queen, but here his bishop is out of play, making White's technical task short and easy.

27...♠xc8 28 ♠xb6 axb6 29 ♠xd5 h6 30 ♠xb7 ♠c1+ 31 ♠h2 ♠c2 32 ♠xb6 ♠xa2 33 ♠d4!

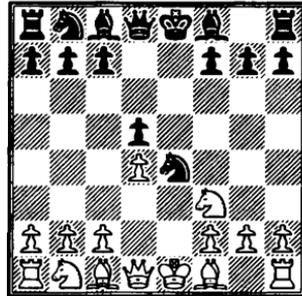
The b-pawn's march will decide the fight, so Black resigned. A possible continuation could have been 33 ♠d4 ♠a4 34 ♠c5 ♠h7 35 b5 ♠a1 (35...♠a5 36 ♠c6+-) 36 b6 ♠b1 37 ♠c7 ♠e4 38 f3 and Black can prevent the pawn from queening only at the cost of his rook.

1-0

15

Psakhis – Martinovsky  
 Philadelphia open 1989

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4  
 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5



With this natural move Black establishes fair control of the centre, giving himself the option of developing his king's bishop on d6. In addition, all other development options for the rest of his minor pieces are kept intact, making possible a variety of opening schemes. We are now in the Petroff main lines, where White's strategy centres on exploiting the double-edged placement of the ♘e4 by means of c2-c4, in an attempt to create unbalanced positions and realistic winning chances.

6 ♠d3 ♘c6

This particular move-order is linked with the ambitious setup involving an early ...♠c8-g4 in anticipation of White's c2-c4. However, as we shall see, Black's configuration should not discourage White from his intended advance.

7 0-0 ♠g4 8 c4!

It turns out that this thematic continuation is possible in view of the shaky placement of Black's minor pieces on e4 and g4.

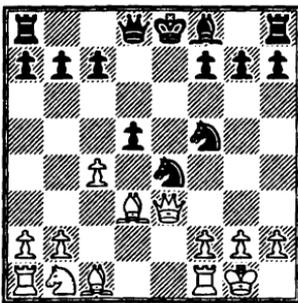
8...♙xf3?!

This move is too easy-going to be of any real value. 8...♘b4?, on the other hand, is simply bad in view of 9 cxd5 ♘xd3 10 ♗xd3 ♗xd5 11 ♖e1± and the pin on the e-file spells trouble for Black.

9 ♗xf3 ♘xd4

The win of a pawn is only temporary because Black's knights are exposed in the middle of the board and his king is uncastled. What matters in the long run is White's powerful pair of bishops.

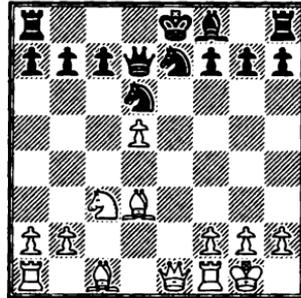
10 ♗e3! ♘f5



11 ♗h3

Not the most exact, but the position, nevertheless, remains dangerous for Black. 11 ♗f4!? is interesting; after 11...♘fd6 (11...♘e7 12 ♙xe4 dxe4 13 ♗xe4 c6 14 ♘c3±) 12 cxd5 ♘f6 13 ♖e1+ ♙e7 14 ♗e5± White recovers his pawn with a lasting initiative; best, however, is 11 ♗e1!: After the obligatory 11...♘e7 [11...♙e7? 12

f3! ♘ed6 (12...♙c5+ 13 ♖h1+-) 13 c5+-] 12 ♙xe4! (12 cxd5 ♘d6 13 ♘c3 ♗d7



14 ♙f4! 0-0-0 15 ♗e3!→ leads to a position similar to the one arising in the game, except for the position of the White queen) 12...dxe4 13 ♗xe4 c6 14 ♘c3± White recovers his pawn whilst keeping the opposing monarch under fire in the middle of the board.

11...♗d7

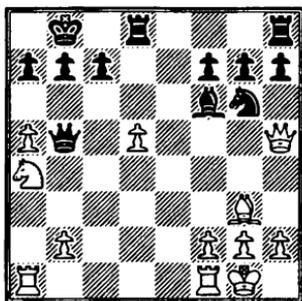
11...♘e7 would have forced White to make a real gambit of it by 12 ♘c3! (But not 12 cxd5? ♗xd5 13 ♖e1 ♖d8!± and the position is suddenly unclear) 12...♘xc3 (12...♘f6 13 ♙g5±; 12...♗d7 13 ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 14 ♘xe4 dxe4 15 ♙xe4 c6 16 ♙e3± is a very unpleasant endgame for Black) 13 bxc3 but this is hardly something he would have disliked since his rooks and bishops would have had plenty of opportunities to exploit the open board for attacking purposes;

11...♘fd6 12 cxd5 ♙e7 13 ♖e1 ♘f6 14 ♘c3 ♗d7 15 ♗f3 0-0 16 ♙g5 ♖fe8 17 h3 h6 18 ♙f4 ♖ac8 19 a4 a6 20 a5 ♘b5 21 ♘xb5 axb5 was the continuation in



**20 ♖fc1?!**

Good enough for a big advantage but it is astounding that Psakhis misses a chance to terminate the game at once by utilising an x-ray along the 5th rank: 20 ♖xb5! ♜xb5



21 ♖xc7+! would have forced resignation as 21...♙xc7 22 d6+ loses the queen.

**20...♜xd5??**

One mistake follows another, but Black's position was already very difficult. 20...♘d6 was the only move, but it would have merely prolonged Black's agony. After 21 ♘c5 ♜e8 (21...♜c8 22 a6 b6 23 ♘b7!+-) both 22 ♜d1 and 22 ♖e1 ♘e7 23 ♖acl leave no lingering doubts about the outcome of the game.

**21 ♖xb5!**

A simple but nevertheless beautiful queen sacrifice. Instead of resigning, Black decides to allow his great opponent demonstrate his point, in the spirit of the 19th century.

**21...♜xh5 22 ♖xc7+ ♙c8**

22...♙a8 23 ♘b6+! axb6 24 axb6#

**23 ♖e5# 1-0**

16

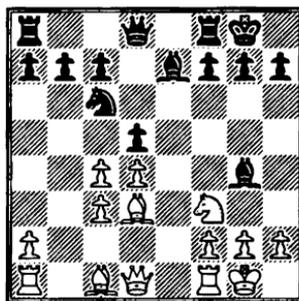
**Kotronias – Langrock**  
Wichern open, Hamburg 2001

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♖d3 ♘c6 7 0-0 ♖g4 8 c4 ♖e7

A modest move, preparing to bring the king into safety; Now, however, White can fortify his centre by simply developing.

**9 ♘c3 ♘xc3**

9...♘f6 10 cxd5 ♘xd5 11 ♖e4! transposes to a subsequent Illustrative Game.

**10 bxc3 0-0**

Thus Black has brought his king into safety at the cost of strengthening the White centre.

**11 ♖e1!**

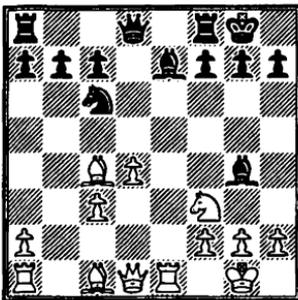
Preparing to play c4xd5, followed by ♖d3-e4; it is in White's interest to stay in a complicated middle-game where the ♖g4 might prove to be a liability, rather than allow an ending which, no matter how pleasant it may be, requires far greater accuracy in order to yield

something tangible. Bearing this in mind, it becomes obvious that 11 cxd5!? ♖xd5 12 ♜e1 is no improvement, because after 12...♙xf3! (12... ♜fe8?! 13 ♙e4! ♖d6 14 ♜b1 ♜ab8 15 h3± gave White an enormous initiative in Matulovic-Kapelan, Vrsac 1981) 13 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 14 gxf3 ♙d6 we reach an unbalanced endgame that will, nevertheless, be the subject of discussion in both the present Illustrative Game, as well as Illustrative Game No 19. However, whilst in the latter case it looks best for White to go into the ending, in the present one this is not altogether forced and therefore, besides analysing the ending itself we will also explore ways of avoiding it.

11...dxc4

Black has no other choice but to clarify the situation in the centre.

12 ♙xc4



12...♙d6

This move, guarding c7, preventing ♙c1-f4 and improving the radius of the Black queen is probably the best in the position.

12...♞a5 is linked with the idea of ...c7-c5, but it looks premature as it

abandons control of the centre. After 13 ♙d3 Black is almost forced to surrender his light squared bishop:

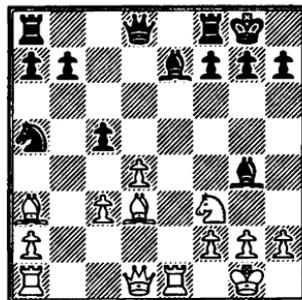
A) On 13...♜e8?! the reply 14 h3!± forces 14...♙xf3 15 ♖xf3±; Others fail :

A1) 14...♙h5? leads to a practically winning position for White after 15 ♜e5!+- as 15...♙xf3 16 ♖xf3 ♞c6 is met strongly with 17 ♜b5 (or 17 ♜h5);

A2) 14...♙e6? 15 ♖c2 h6 (15...g6? 16 ♜xe6 fxe6 17 ♙xg6 hxg6 18 ♖xg6+ ♚h8 19 ♞g5 ♙xg5 20 ♙xg5+-) 16 ♙h7+ ♚f8 17 ♜xe6 fxe6 18 ♙g6+- is also hopeless;

B) 13...♙f6?! is hardly good either. After the customary 14 h3 Black dare not respond with 14...♙h5? (14...♙xf3 15 ♖xf3± is the lesser evil) in view of 15 ♙xh7+! ♚xh7 16 ♞g5+ ♚h6 17 ♞xf7+! ♚g6 18 ♞e5+ ♙xe5 19 ♖d3+ ♚f7 20 ♖f5+ ♚g8 21 ♖xh5+-;

C) 13...c5 (Consistent, but nevertheless inadequate for complete equality) 14 ♙a3!



...and now Black has to be very careful in order to stay in the game

as White's pieces are tremendously active:

C1) 14...♖e8 15 h3± allows White to obtain a strong attack no matter how Black continues, the following lines providing the evidence:

C1a) 15...♙e6 16 ♖c2!→;

C1b) 15...♙h5 16 ♖e5! ♙xf3 17 ♖xf3 ♘c6 (17...cxd4 18 ♖e4 f5 19 ♖xf5 ♙xa3 20 ♖xh7+ ♘f8 21 ♖h8+ ♘f7 22 ♙g6++) 18 ♖d5±;

C1c) 15...♙xf3 16 ♖xf3 and White's centre is untouchable as 16...cxd4? is met with the crushing 17 ♖e4+-. Better is...

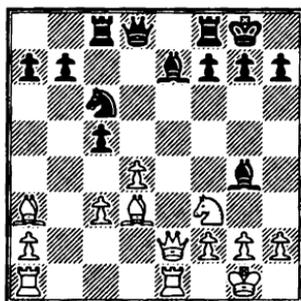
C2) 14...♖c8 15 ♖e2!, and we are at a critical crossroads where Black must play with utmost precision:

C2a) 15...♙e6?! 16 ♖ad1± was visibly superior for White in Ermenkov-Radulov, Vratsa 1975;

C2b) 15...♙d6 is better than 15...♙e6, but probably still insufficient to hold; White should continue 16 ♖e4 f5 17 ♖e6+ ♘h8 18 ♘e5 when Black is hard pressed to find a good defence. After 18...♖c7 [18...♙h5 19 ♙xf5 ♖c7 (Wokurka-Mayer, West German ch corr. 1988) 20 ♙d3! ♖f6 21 ♖h3!± is good for White e.g. 21...♖xf2+? 22 ♘h1 g6 23 ♖f1+-] 19 ♘g4 ♖e7 20 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 21 ♙xc5 ♖xe1+ 22 ♖xe1 ♖d8 23 ♙xf8 ♖xf8 24 ♙xf5! [24 ♙b5?! ♘c6! (24...♘g8? 25 ♖e8 fxg4 26 ♖xf8+ ♘xf8 27 ♘f1+- was clearly lost for Black in Cavajda-Maciejewski, EU ch corr. 1986) 25 ♘e5 g6 26 ♘xc6 bxc6 27 ♙xc6 ♖a3± is close to a draw] g6 25

♙d7! ♖a3 (25...♘g7 26 h4! ♖d8 27 ♖e8 ♖xd7 28 ♖g8+! ♘xg8 29 ♘f6+-) 26 ♖e8+ ♘g7 27 h4!± White has mating threats, e.g. 27...h5 28 ♘e5 ♖c1+ 29 ♘h2 ♖f4+ 30 ♘h3!+- ♖xf2 31 ♖e7+ ♘h6 32 ♘f7+ ♘g7 33 ♘g5+ ♘f8 34 ♖f7+;

C2c) 15...♘c6!



(Best; the positional justification is that it brings the ♘a5 back from exile) 16 ♖ad1 g6! [A very refined defence; 16...♖a5? leads to a practically lost position after 17 d5 ♖xa3 18 dxc6 ♙e6 (18...c4 19 ♙b1 ♙e6 20 cxb7 ♖ce8 21 ♘d4 ♙c5 22 ♘c6 ♙d6 23 ♙e4+- Lane-Deforel, CServe email 1995) 19 cxb7 ♖b8 20 c4! ♖fe8 21 ♙e4 ♙f6 22 ♖c2 h6 23 ♙c6 ♖e7 24 ♘d2 ♖a6 25 ♙f3 ♙g5 26 ♘e4 ♖xc4 27 ♖xc4 ♙xc4 28 ♘xc5 ♙b5 29 ♖xe7 ♙xe7 30 ♘d7 ♙xd7 31 ♖xd7+- Jimenez Alonso-Decorte, IECC email 1997] 17 ♙c4! (After 17 h3?! ♙xf3 18 ♖xf3 cxd4 19 ♙xe7 ♘xe7 20 cxd4 ♘d5 21 ♙e4 ♖c3! (only move) 22 ♖d3 ♖xd3 23 ♙xd3 ♘b4 24 a3 ♘xd3 25 ♖xd3 ♖d6 26 d5 ♖c8 27 ♖d1 ♖d8= the game was agreed drawn in Markus-Markus, DESC email 1999)

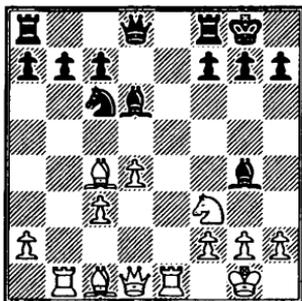
17...♔d6! (17...♚a5?! 18 d5 ♚xa3 19 dxc6±) 18 dxc5! (18 ♔xc5 ♔xc5 19 dxc5 ♚f6!) 18...♔xf3! 19 ♚xf3 ♔xh2+ 20 ♚f1! ♚a5 21 ♔b4! ♚a4! (21...♔xb4 22 ♔d7! ♔c7 23 ♔xc7 ♚xc7 24 cxb4 ♔e5±) and White has a rather pleasant final choice between...

C2c1) 22 g3 a5□ 23 ♚g2 (23 ♔d7 ♔e5 24 ♔xe5 ♚xd7 25 ♔xa5 ♚h3+ 26 ♚g2 ♚h6) 23...axb4 24 ♚xh2 bxc3 25 ♚xc3 ♚a5±, or...

C2c2) 22 ♔b3 ♚b5+ 23 ♚e2 ♚xe2+ 24 ♔xe2 ♔b8 25 ♔d7 ♔c7 26 ♔ed2±; In this final variation, now that the smoke of complications has cleared, it becomes apparent that White enjoys a small but permanent advantage in the endgame;

12...♔f6 is hardly any impressive as it renders c7 be weaker than usual. White should play 13 ♔f4!±, maintaining at least a slight edge by emphasizing this important detail.

13 ♔b1



The rook clearly belongs to the open file, posing Black some problems on how to meet the threat to his b-pawn.

13 h3!? ♔h5 14 ♔b1 is another position requiring analysis; the game Moreno-Al Badani, Istanbul (ol) 2000 was hardly a test of the idea as Black blundered immediately by 14...♚f6?, allowing 15 g4+-winning a piece.

13...♚f6!?

Seeking transition to an endgame, which, however, may be slightly worse for Black despite White's four (!) pawn islands. This move is possible because b7 is not yet hanging due to the ...♔c6-a5 fork.

Another move trying to exploit this fact is 13...♚d7 but after 14 h3 White is better no matter how Black continues:

A) 14...♔h5 15 ♔b5! (15 ♔d3 ♔ae8 16 ♔e3 is slightly better for White according to Yusupov, but in fact after 16...♔d8!? things are not so clear) 15...♔g6 16 ♔h4 allows White to gain the bishop pair and a slight advantage after 16...a6 17 ♔b2 b5 18 ♔xg6 hxg6 19 ♔d3±;

B) 14...♔f5!? 15 ♔d3! (15 ♔b2 ♔a5 16 ♔f1 ♔ae8!) 15...b6 16 ♔g5! (a key move) 16...♔ae8 17 ♔e4 (By blocking the e-file White gains time to double his rooks) 17...♔g6 (17...♔e7 18 ♚f3 ♔fe8 19 ♔g5! f6 20 ♔d2 ♔g6 21 h4!↑) 18 ♔d2 ♔e7 19 ♚f3 c6 20 ♔e2 ♔b8 21 ♔be1±

14 ♔d3?!

This may not be best; 14 ♔d5! is a very interesting move, but didn't enter my mind because I simply didn't choose the 11 ♔e1! move order in actual play; in the game I

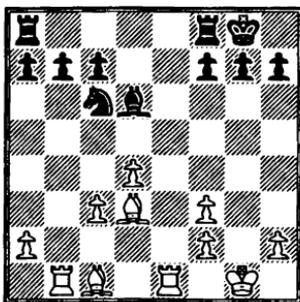
transposed to the 11 cxd5!? move-order which, nevertheless, has an advantage if White has decided to go straight into the ending: The rook on a1 has not moved and this can be of some significance as the note to White's 16th reveals. However, unaware of the difference I moved all the same my rook to b1, getting the worst I could get out of both continuations!

But let's turn our attention back to 14 ♔d5!: 14...♞ab8 (14...♙xh2+? 15 ♚xh2 ♜d6+ fails to 16 ♞e5!±) 15 h3 ♙f5 (15...♙d7 16 ♙g5↑) 16 ♞b2 h6 17 ♞be2 ♚e7 18 ♙b3 ♚g6 19 ♚e5 ♞bd8 20 f4→ and White seems to have a strong initiative as g2-g4 is coming. If this line is good then Black has to switch to 13...♜d7.

14...♙xf3!

It's now or never! 14...♞ae8? proved disastrous for Black after 15 ♙g5! ♜xg5 16 ♚xg5 ♙xd1 17 ♞exd1 g6 18 ♚e4 ♞e7 19 ♞xb7+- in Condie-Nicholson, London 1986.

15 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 16 gxf3



Thus, the endgame in question has been reached; besides a slight

weakness on the light squares Black looks very solid and in this case appearances are not deceptive. To gain something tangible White needs to work very hard, the main tool for effecting a breach in Black's fortress being the advance of the central pawn duo after due preparation. A slight disadvantage for White compared to Game 19 is that here the less useful ♞a1-b1 has been played (instead of ♙c1-e3 in that game) but this is unavoidable if White uses the 11 ♞e1 move order (Which however, as I explained earlier on, I didn't use: The actual starting moves of the present game were 1 e4 e5 2 ♚f3 ♚f6 3 ♚xe5 d6 4 ♚f3 ♚xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♚c6 7 0-0 ♙e7 8 c4 ♙g4 9 cxd5 ♜xd5 10 ♚c3 ♚xc3 11 bxc3 0-0 12 ♞e1 ♙xf3 13 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 14 gxf3 ♙d6 15 ♞b1, reaching the diagrammed position with an economy of one move). The reason why ♞a1-b1 is less good than ♙c1-e3 lies in the fact that Black would have to play ...b7-b6 anyway, so White effectively loses a tempo in the struggle to mobilise his central pawns.

16...♞ab8

Slightly unnatural, when the pawn could have simply been defended with ...b7-b6.

Nevertheless, even after 16...b6 17 ♙e3 ♚e7! (17...♞ad8 18 ♙g5! leads to play analogous to Ehlvest-Yusupov, featured under Illustrative Game No 19; the point of such a move is that if Black wants to avoid weakening his

position by ...f7-f6 he has to play 18...♖b8 and then 19 ♔b5 h6 20 ♔h4 ♖a5 21 ♔e7 ♔xe7 22 ♖xe7 c6 23 ♔d3 ♖b7 24 ♖be1 allows a White rook to penetrate on the 7th rank with some initiative; 17...♖ab8 transposes to the game) 18 c4 ♖ad8 19 ♔e4!? (19 ♔c2 is also possible, but 19 ♔e4 may have a point in tempting Black to weaken himself by ...f7-f5) 19...c6 (19...f5 20 ♔c2 f4 21 ♔d2 leaves Black exposed on the light squares, e.g. 21...♖f5 22 ♔c3 c5 23 ♔xf5 ♖xf5 24 d5± and the plan of advancing by a2-a4-a5 seems to offer White a comfortable plus; 19...♖g6 20 a4± offers White a standard queenside initiative) 20 a4± White seems to have a small initiative with the minimum of risk;

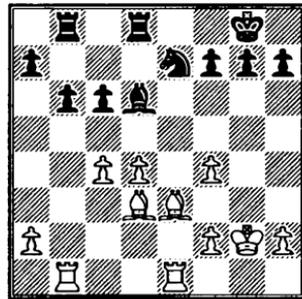
16...♖ae8 17 ♖e4 ♖d8 was played in Cabejek-Valenta, Czech ch 4th e-mail 2000. Now White should have continued with the typical 18 ♔e3± intending to push his c-pawn.

17 ♔e3 b6 18 f4?!

I should not have hurried with this move. Best is 18 a4!, avoiding f3-f4 for the time being as Black has no useful moves. On 18...h6 (intending to place a rook on d8 without being harassed by ♔e3-g5, to be followed by ♔d3-b5 and ♔g5-e7) there follows 19 f4! (with ...h7-h6 played this threatens a cramping f4-f5) 19...♖e7 20 c4 ♖g6 (20...c6 21 f5±) 21 f5 ♖f4 22 ♔e4± with at least a slight edge for White; if, on the other hand, after 18 a4! Black decides on the immediate 18...♖e7, then the pressure on White's centre

is removed and he may advance his c-pawn without fear. In that case, a2-a4 is clearly more useful than f3-f4, since White needs a4-a5 to open lines on the queenside.

18...♖e7 19 c4 c6 20 ♖g2 ♖fd8



21 ♖b3!±

Despite the inaccuracy on the 18th White has kept a tiny edge because of his space advantage and two bishops. 21 ♖b3 is a good move, protecting the ♔d3 and preparing to double on the b-file followed by a2-a4-a5, opening lines on the queenside.

21...♖f8 22 ♖eb1 g6 23 ♔e4 ♖dc8 24 a4 ♖g7

Here or on the next move Black could have considered playing ...f7-f5, but he was understandably reluctant to do so because it weakens e6 and deprives his knight from the f5 square.

25 ♖f3 ♖f6!?

This does not look like a good square for the king but I was unable to prove it; in any case If Black wants to do without f7-f5 he can always do so by posting the king on f8. 25...f5 26 ♔c2 ♖f7 was the

other possibility; in that case White may continue with the direct 27 a5, just as in the game, or start toying with various plans with a move like 27 ♖d3!?

### 26 a5!?

Apparently a rash decision but during the game I thought I should hurry before the Black king reaches d7. The logical alternative 26 ♖d2 ♖e6! 27 a5 bxa5 28 ♖xa5 ♖xb3+ 29 ♖xb3 ♖b8 30 ♖e3 ♖d7 looked equal to me during the game and this assessment is probably very close to the truth because the White rook has failed to reach an active position. Therefore I decided to trust my intuition and played 26 a5!? instinctively.

### 26...bxa5!

Had Black refused the offer and played 26...♖c7? instead, I would have seized the a-file by 27 axb6 axb6 28 ♖a1± (whilst 28 d5!? cxd5 29 cxd5 is also worth considering, especially if we take into account the awkward placement of the Black king).

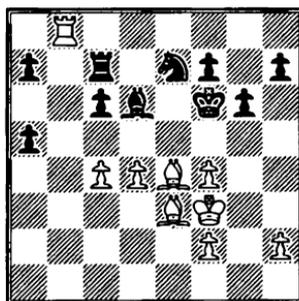
### 27 ♖b7?

A bad mistake, when White was so close to achieving something tangible.

27 c5! would have been simple and strong, locking in the Black bishop before penetrating with ♖b3-b7. In that case the advantage seemed to be in White's hands, but at the last moment I noticed 27...♖xb3! (27...♖c7 28 ♖b7 ♖xb7 29 ♖xb7 ♖b8 30 ♖c2!± was my dream) 28 ♖xb3 ♖b8! contesting

the b-file at the cost of sacrificing two pieces for a rook. I was not sure whether the position resulting from 29 cxd6 ♖xb3 30 dxe7 ♖xe7 31 ♖xc6 ♖d6 32 d5 was winning or not (It probably isn't after 32...f5!) and so played without serious thought the dubious text continuation.

### 27...♖xb7 28 ♖xb7 ♖c7 29 ♖b8



### 29...c5?

Black returns the favour, when he could obtain a slightly better position with accurate defence. 29...♖b4?! was not particularly good because 30 ♖e2! (intending ♖e2-d3, c4-c5, ♖d3-c4) seems to offer White excellent compensation for the pawn; however, I had missed that Black could preface ...♖d6-b4 with 29...♖d7! using the tempo on the ♖b8 to set up annoying pressure on the d-pawn. After 30 ♖a8 ♖b4! (30...a4? 31 c5 a3 32 ♖b1! ♖d5 33 cxd6 ♖c3 34 d5! c5 35 ♖xc5 ♖xb1 36 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 37 ♖xa7 ♖d2+ 38 ♖g2 ♖b3 39 ♖b6! a2 40 d7 a1=♚ 41 d8=♚+ ♖g7 42 ♖c7!+- is a trap that Black should obviously avoid) 31 ♖c2 ♖c3! my failure to contain the enemy bishop would have been

more than glaring and would have forced me to find a series of good moves to secure drawing chances: 32 ♖e4! ♜f5 33 d5 cxd5+ 34 cxd5 ♙b4! 35 ♙a4! ♞

30 ♞b5!

Now White is suddenly able to exploit the position of the Black king on f6; not really surprising however, if we take into consideration that Black's last move opened the position to the benefit of the bishop pair.

30...♜c6

30...cxd4? 31 ♙xd4+ ♖e6 32 c5+- would have cost Black a piece.

31 dxc5 ♙f8 32 ♙d5±

Material equality has been restored and a brief comparison of the pieces' strength is sufficient to convince almost anyone that White is close to winning here. Still, the right plan has to be found, and this is none other than transferring the king over to the queenside.

32...h6

After 32...a4 33 ♞b2!± the a-pawn will not go far. The game move, on the other hand, is an admission of defeat.

33 ♖e4! ♞e7+ 34 ♜d3 ♞c7 35 ♜c3 h5 36 ♜b3 h4 37 ♖a4 ♜f5 38 h3+-

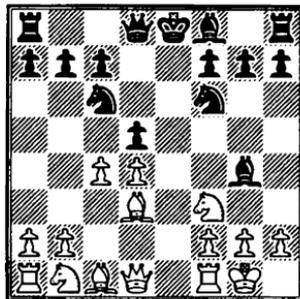
Sealing all entrances and denying Black counter-play. The game has been decided.

38...♙h6 39 ♙xc6 ♞xc6 40 ♞b7! f6 41 ♜b5 ♞c8 42 c6 a6+ 43 ♜b6 a4 44 c7 a3 45 ♞a7 1-0

17

Malakhov – Tihonov  
Minsk 1997

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜xe5 d6 4 ♜f3 ♜xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♜c6 7 0-0 ♙g4 8 c4 ♜f6



A logical continuation, getting the knight out of trouble and intensifying Black's control over d5.

9 ♜c3!

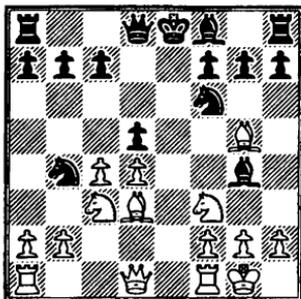
White in his turn plays a logical and strong move, sacrificing the d-pawn for the initiative. In the present Illustrative Game we will examine what happens if Black declines the offer.

9...dxc4

A sensible way of avoiding complications, but now White can obtain a slight edge without risking too much.

9...♜b4?! can be met with 10 ♙g5! which is a strong improvement over existing theory (10 cxd5!? ♜bxd5 11 ♞e1+ ♙e7 12 h3 ♙h5 13 ♙g5 0-0 14 ♞e5! with a White initiative, is also possible).

After 10 ♖g5! Black has several continuations, but none of them is fully satisfactory:



A) 10...♗e7 is easily dismissed in view of 11 ♖xf6±;

B) 10...♗e6 11 cxd5 ♖bxd5 is strongly met by 12 ♗e4! [12 ♖xd5!? ♗xd5 (12...♗xd5 13 ♖e1+ ♗e7 14 ♖xf6 gxf6 15 ♖h4±) 13 ♖e1 (13 ♖xf6 gxf6 14 ♖e1 0-0-0 15 ♗a4 ♖b8) 13...♗e7 14 ♖c1!± also looks good] After 12...♗e7 13 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 14 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 15 ♖e1± Black ends up in a horrible mess;

C) 10...c6 11 ♖e1+ ♗e6 (11...♗e7 12 ♖xf6 gxf6 13 cxd5 ♖xd5 14 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 15 ♗e4±) is a logical way of defending, but White's better development allows him to attack frontally: 12 ♖f5! dxc4 13 ♗xe6 fxe6 14 ♖xe6+ ♖f7 15 ♗e2 ♖d3 16 ♖e5+! ♖xe5 17 dxe5 and further resistance appears hopeless:

C1) 17...♖xe6 18 exf6+ ♖f5 19 fxg7+-;

C2) 17...♗c8 18 ♖xf6+ gxf6 19 ♗h5+ ♖g8 20 ♖xf6 ♗g7 21 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 22 ♗g5+ ♖f8 (22...♖f7 23 ♖e4+-) 23 ♖d1+-;

C3) 17...♗d7 18 ♖xf6+ gxf6 19 ♗h5+ ♖g8 20 ♖e4+-;

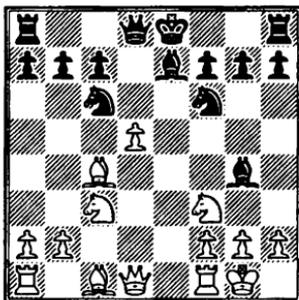
D) 10...♖xd3 (The knight has lost several tempi to capture this bishop but it appears that there is nothing better now) 11 ♖xf6! ♗xf6 (11...♖xf3 12 ♗xf3 ♗xf6 13 ♗xd3±) 12 ♖xd5 ♗d6 13 ♗xd3 0-0-0± and although Black has insufficient compensation for the pawn he is, at least, still in the game.

10 ♖xc4 ♗e7

10...♖xf3? 11 ♗xf3 ♗xd4 12 ♖b5±

11 d5!

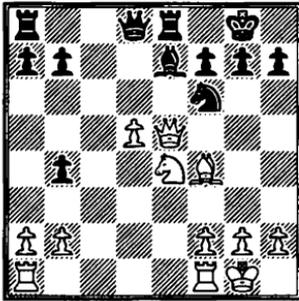
In such situations drastic measures offer the best chance of getting the most out of the opening. 11 ♗e3 0-0 12 h3± is a typical isolated QP position, slightly better for White.



11...♖e5

Given as only slightly better for White in several sources; whilst this evaluation may be true, Black's demise in the present Game sufficed to destroy the reputation of this variation completely.

Also possible is 11...♙xf3!? 12 ♖xf3 ♘e5 13 ♙b5+! c6 14 ♗e2 cxb5 15 ♗xe5 0-0 16 ♙f4! b4 17 ♘e4 ♖e8 reaching a position where White must play very accurately to exploit his passed d-pawn, or else his advantage will evaporate. He has available three candidate rook moves, but only one of them looks really dangerous:



A) 18 ♖ad1 ♘xe4 19 ♗xe4 ♙d6 offers White very little as the d-pawn is safely blocked;

B) 18 ♖fd1!? is slightly more intriguing as it reserves c1 for the queen's rook, yet it doesn't really change the picture after 18...♘xe4 19 ♗xe4 ♙d6! [19...♖c8?! 20 ♗d3! (20 d6? ♙xd6 21 ♗xb7 ♗c7=) 20...♙d6 21 ♗g3! ♙xf4 22 ♗xf4 ♖e2 23 d6 ♖cc2 24 d7± is obviously unacceptable for Black] 20 ♗f3 ♗d7! 21 ♗g3 ♖ad8 22 ♖ac1 ♙xf4 23 ♗xf4 ♗d6!± and Black has good chances to hold the ending;

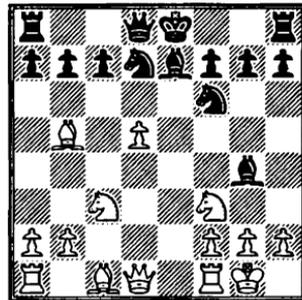
C) 18 ♖fe1! (The best way of backing the valuable passed pawn, giving White a small but lasting advantage; the main idea is that Black cannot blockade the d-pawn

by putting his bishop on d6) 18...♘xe4 (18...♘xd5?? 19 ♖ad1+-) 19 ♗xe4 and Black has problems:

C1) 19...♗d7?! loses at least a pawn after 20 d6!, e.g. 20...♙xd6 21 ♗d3!+- (21 ♗d4? ♖xe1+ 22 ♖xe1 ♖e8! 23 ♖f1 ♖e6) or 20...♙f6 21 ♗xb4±;

C2) After 19...♙f6 20 ♗xe8+ ♗xe8 21 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22 ♖d1!, the b-pawn is untouchable in view of 22...♙xb2? (22...♖d8 23 ♖d2 ♖f8 24 g4!± is best play for both sides, with an interesting technical struggle ahead) 23 d6 ♙f6 24 d7+-, winning.

12 ♙b5+ ♘ed7



12...c6? 13 dxc6 ♘xc6 14 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 15 ♙xc6+ bxc6 16 ♘e5 ♙d7 17 ♙e3± is very unpleasant, if not already lost for Black;

12...♘fd7? 13 ♗d4! ♙xf3 14 ♗xe5 f6 15 ♗e6 ♙h5 16 d6! cxd6 17 ♘e4 ♗c7 18 ♖e1 ♘d8 19 ♙f4 ♘f8 20 ♗d5 led to a complete disaster for Black in Balogh-Keemink, corr. 1930.

13 h3!

A good move that challenges the universally accepted evaluation of ±

for the diagrammed position; it is not surprising that after this game no-one seems to have repeated the line for Black, but in fact things may not be as simple as they appear.

### 13...♙h5?

Now Black's game is bound to collapse into pieces. We can understand someone who dislikes to give up the bishop pair as early as on move 13, but common sense should have warned Black that it was imperative to castle at all costs: 13...♙xf3! 14 ♚xf3 and now:

A) 14...a6!? 15 ♙xd7+!? ♚xd7 16 ♖e1 0-0 17 ♙f4 ♘e8! (17...♖fe8 18 ♙e5!+ leads to a strange position where Black has problems with the mobility of both the ♙e7 and the ♘f6) 18 ♖e2 ♘d6 19 ♖ae1 ♖ae8 20 ♘e4↑ looks tenable for Black although White certainly maintains some pressure;

B) 14...0-0 15 d6! (If White doesn't play this I can't see any advantage) 15...♙xd6 16 ♚xb7 would have yielded an interesting position where White's advantages (two bishops, better pawn structure) are of a permanent nature, but he would still have had to contain the activity of the Black pieces.

Now, on the other hand, the duration of the game is shortened dramatically.

### 14 g4! ♙g6 15 g5!

Black had undoubtedly missed this move, evicting the defender of the pinned ♘d7. Tragicomic as it may be, Black has no defence

against the coming ♘f3-e5 and must lose a piece.

15...♘e4 16 ♘xe4 ♙xe4 17 ♘e5+-

Black's position was already ripe for resignation at this point; he probably dragged it out a bit in an attempt to fight the extremely unwelcome feeling of frustration that overcomes chessplayers on such unfortunate occasions.

### 17...c6

Desperation; 17...♙f5 succumbs to 18 ♚f3!+- with the double threat of ♚f3xf5 and ♙b5xd7+.

18 dxc6 ♘xe5 19 c7+ ♘f8 20 cxd8=♚+ ♖xd8 21 ♚e2 ♘f3+

At least Black has the satisfaction of the last check!

### 22 ♘g2 ♖d4 23 ♚xf3

White is satisfied with being only a piece ahead, so Black resigned.

1-0

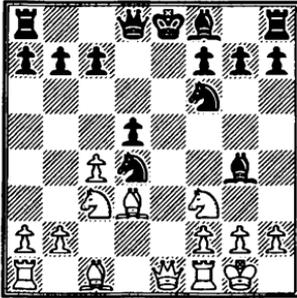
## 18

Ponomarev – Turov  
3rd Rector Cup, Kharkov 2001

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♘c6 7 0-0 ♙g4 8 c4 ♘f6 9 ♘c3 ♙xf3

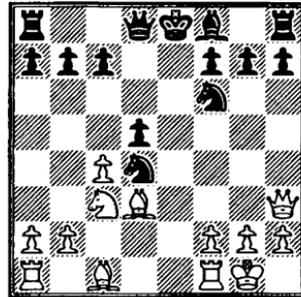
This variation was Yusupov's pet line for quite a while, until he suffered a crushing defeat against Kupreichik; Black plunges in without hesitation, grabbing the important d-pawn, but White's activity guarantees a lasting initiative.

The alternative method of winning a pawn by 9...♖xd4?! is less good on account of 10 ♗e1+!; then Black has serious problems as the following variations show:



♖xf6+ gxf6 15 ♖xc6! bxc6 16 f5 ♙g6 17 fxg6 hxg6 18 ♙xg6!±) 14 ♗h4 ♖xd5 (14...♙g6 15 ♖xe7 ♙xd3 16 ♖xd3 ♗xe7 17 f5±) 15 ♗xh5 g6 16 ♗h3!↑.

10 ♗xf3 ♖xd4 11 ♗h3!



A) 10...♙e7!? 11 ♖xd4 dxc4 should be met by 12 ♖f5! cxd3 13 ♖xg7+, forcing the Black king to abandon safety. Then...

A1) 13...♖f8 14 ♙h6 ♖g8 15 ♗e5! gives White a very strong attack, for example 15...♙f8 16 ♗g5 ♖e8 17 ♗xg4 ♖xg7 (17...♙xg7 18 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 19 ♗f3 c6 20 ♖ad1±) 18 ♖ad1±, while...

A2) 13...♖d7 14 f3! ♙g8 15 ♙h6 leads to a position where Black's exposed king offers White the better chances too;

B) 10...♖e6 prevents the loss of castling but has other minuses: 11 ♖e5 d4 (11...♙b4 12 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 13 ♙f5! ♙xc3 14 bxc3 ♖f6 15 ♙a3! ♗d7 16 ♖d1 c6 17 cxd5 cxd5 18 c4 0-0-0 19 cxd5 ♖xd5 20 ♗e5+- didn't help Black in Beney-Vianin, Crans Montana 2000) 12 ♖d5 (12 ♖e4!?) 12...♙h5 13 f4! and the ♙h5 is exposed, giving Black serious ground for concern. For example: 13...♙e7 (13...c6 14

The queen is excellently placed here, observing the important points e6 and h7. Black is now faced with an arduous defensive task.

11...dxc4

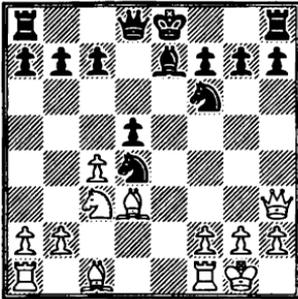
11...♖e6?! is inferior in view of 12 cxd5 ♖xd5 13 ♙b5+! c6 14 ♖d1 and the centralised White forces exert tremendous pressure on Black's position. For example, 14...cxb5 (14...♖ec7?! 15 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 16 ♗b3!→ gives White a strong attack according to Dolmatov and Dvoretzky; this position occurred in Carr-Frostick, England ch corr. 1994-95, and after the further 16...♙e7 17 ♖xd5 ♗c8 White missed a clear way to victory by 18 ♖e5 cxb5 19 ♙d2 ♖f8 20 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 21 ♗b4+! ♖d8 22 ♖d1+-) 15 ♖xd5 ♗c8 16 ♙e3! and it seems that the final countdown has started for Black:

A) 16...a6 17 ♖c1 ♗b8 (17...♗c6? is unacceptable, because

after 18 ♚f5!+- the Black queen's exposure on the c-file is bound to lead to disaster and duly did so after 18...♞d8 19 ♞xd8+ ♜xd8 20 ♞d5 ♞d4 21 ♚g4 ♚xd5 22 ♚g5+ 1-0, in Voyna-Strautins, Lascurain mem-A corr. 1994) 18 ♞e4 ♚e7 19 ♞c5 ♚xc5 20 ♚xc5 ♞xc5 21 ♚e1+! ♜f8 22 ♞xc5 b6 23 ♞c6 g6 24 ♚c3 ♜g8 25 ♞c7± led to a complete bind in Elburg-Della Valle, IECG 2001, while

B) 16...♚b4 17 ♞xb5 0-0 18 ♞c1 (18 ♚h4!?) 18...♚e8 19 ♚g4! ♚e7 20 ♞c7 ♞xc7 21 ♞xc7± allowed White's advantage to crystallise in Pletanek-Dufek, corr. 1992;

11...♚e7



...is possible, but it allows White to divert the ♞f6 from the defence of h7, preventing Black from castling for quite a while; in the meantime White has the chance to develop a strong initiative: 12 cxd5 ♞xd5 13 ♚e1 c6 (13...♞e6 can be met with the brilliant shot 14 ♚g6! ♞df4 15 ♚xf4 ♞xf4 16 ♚xf7+! ♜xf7 17 ♚f5± and White recovers his piece with a strong attack; 13...♚d6 loses an important tempo that White can best make use of by

14 ♞xd5 ♚xd5 15 b3! with many threats as both ♚d3-c4 and ♚c1-b2 (a3) are hanging in the air) 14 ♚g5 ♞e6 15 ♚xe7 and no matter how Black recaptures on d5 he cannot equalise:

A) On 15...♞xe7, best appears the direct 16 ♚c4! (16 ♞ad1 is proven less good after 16...♚a5 17 ♚c4 ♚f5! 18 ♚g3 0-0 19 ♞d7 ♞g6 20 ♞xb7±) 16...♞d4! (16...♞d5 17 ♞ad1±; 16...0-0 17 ♚xe6 fxe6 18 ♚xe6+ ♞f7 19 ♞e4 ♚d5 20 ♞d6 ♚xe6 21 ♞xe6 ♞f6 22 ♞xe7 ♞xd6 23 ♞xb7±) 17 ♞ad1 0-0 18 ♞xe7 ♚xe7 19 ♞xd4± with a clear advantage that nevertheless needs hard work to be turned into a full point;

B) 15...♚xe7 16 ♞xd5 cxd5 17 ♚f5 0-0-0 18 ♚g3! ♚d6 19 ♚xg7 ♜b8 20 ♚xf7 ♞d4 21 ♚e7 is a position reached in J.Horvath-Forintos, Budapest 1987) and here, after 21...♚b6 22 ♚d3 White is better, but due to the activity of the Black pieces it will not be easy to drive this advantage home.

12 ♚xc4 ♚e7

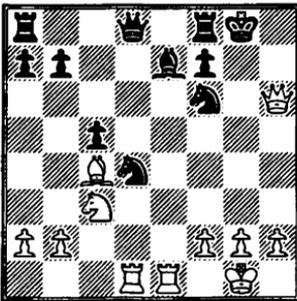
This move is the automatic choice in tournament practice; Black is behind in development and must hurry to castle.

12...♞c2? proved a blow into empty space after 13 ♚g5! ♚d4 (13...♞xa1 14 ♚e1+ ♚e7 15 ♚xf6 gxf6 16 ♞d5 ♚d6 17 ♞xe7+ ♜d8 18 ♞xf7+- is terminal.) 14 ♚xf6 ♚xf6 15 ♞d5 ♚d6 16 ♞ad1 ♞d8 17 ♚f5 and 1-0 in Lucchini-Lausch, EU ch corr. 1996;

If Black is reluctant to enter the complications, then 12...♖d7 13 ♖e1+ ♗e7 14 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 (14...♗xd7? 15 ♗d5 ♗e6 16 ♖xe6!+) 15 ♗xf7± is playable, but certainly White has an edge in view of his two bishops; 15 ♖d1!? c5 16 ♗b5! is another interesting possibility.

13 ♗g5 ♗c8!

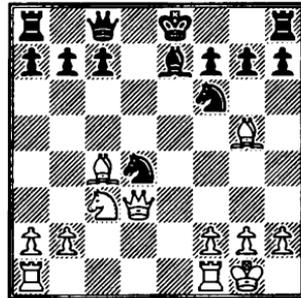
Disturbing the White queen in order to compel her abandon the dominant post on h3; 13...0-0?! 14 ♖ad1 c5 was Yusupov's initial idea, but now it has been concluded that after 15 ♖fe1! h6 (15...♖e8 16 ♗b5!) 16 ♗xh6! gxh6 17 ♗xh6→



...a sacrifice first employed in a Kupreichik-Yusupov encounter, White's attacking potential is so great that Black has zero chances of survival. The full proof is provided by a subsequent game: 17...♗h7 18 ♖d3 ♗g5 19 ♗h5 ♗f6 20 ♖h3! ♗g7 21 f4! (a further sac with the aim of accelerating the attack) 21...♗xf4 22 ♗d5 ♗g5 23 ♗e7+ ♗xe7 24 ♖xe7 24...♗f6 [24...♗c6 25 ♖ee3 ♗f6 26 ♗f5! ♗g4 (26...♗d4 27 ♗f4+-) 27 ♖e4! ♗f6 (27...♗ce5 28 ♖g3+-) 28 ♖eh4+-] 25 ♗xc5+- and it becomes apparent

that despite finding a series of 'only' moves Black cannot save himself (Thesing-Autenrieth, Budapest 1987).

14 ♗d3!



14 ♗e3?! ♗e6!= is equal as 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♗d5 ♗d8! offers White nothing.

14...♗e6

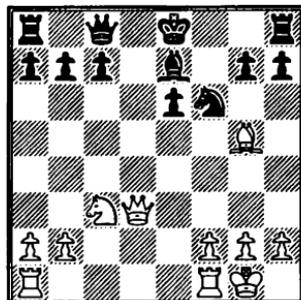
14...♗g4?! 15 ♗xf6 gxf6 looks bad for Black but requires a look;

14...♗f5?! also looks bad in view of 15 ♗xd4 ♗xg5 16 ♖fe1 ♕f8 17 ♖xe7!? ♕xe7 18 ♗d5! and Black comes under a fierce attack.

15 ♗xe6

Dull, but at the same time not as innocent as it looks.

15...fxe6



**16 ♖fe1**

Right idea, wrong move-order; White had to play 16 ♛c4!? first, as he should have as his main priority to prevent long castling. After 16...♛d7 (16...0-0 17 ♖fe1 transposes to a position analysed below) 17 ♖ad1! ♛c6 18 ♛xc6+ bxc6 19 ♖fe1 ♖d8 20 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 21 ♖xe6 ♔d7 22 ♖e2 ♖b8± he would have obtained a pleasant ending due to his better pawn structure and kingside pawn majority.

**16...♛d7!**

Black finds a good way of coordinating his pieces, but will need to find some more accurate moves to reach complete equality.

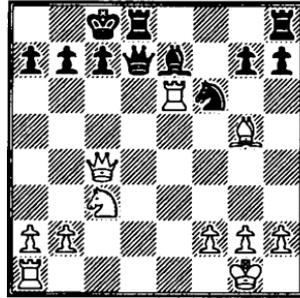
The natural 16...0-0 is met strongly by 17 ♛c4!+ when Black will not be able to avoid some concession with his pawn structure: 17...♔h8 18 ♖xe6 ♛d7 19 ♖d1 ♔d6 and then both

A) 20 ♔xf6!? gxf6!± (20...♖xf6? 21 ♖xf6 gxf6 22 ♛e4! ♖b8 23 ♛d4±) and

B) 20 ♔f4 20...♖fe8 21 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 22 ♔xd6 cxd6 23 ♛d4± offer White an edge.

**17 ♛c4 0-0-0 18 ♖xe6**

White has recovered his pawn, but on first inspection the resulting position seems to be dead drawn; Pono's devotion allows him to detect that little something that keeps the game going.

**18...♔d5**

18...♖he8!? was a trifle more combative, but it would have been illogical to criticize Black for choosing a natural (and probably the best) continuation on the grounds it has a drawish character; after all, Black is playing the Petroff in order to make a draw! A second factor that must have weighed in favour of 18...♔d5 is that on 18...♖he8!? the reply 19 ♔f4 looks threatening and presumably, Black didn't want to get himself into adventures against a young rising star.

**19 ♔xe7! ♛xe6?!**

But here, Black's 'greed' to exchange as many pieces as possible leads him in making a more or less serious inaccuracy, resulting in an awkward pin. Correct was 19...♔xe7! when Black only needs a couple of accurate moves to reach full equality:

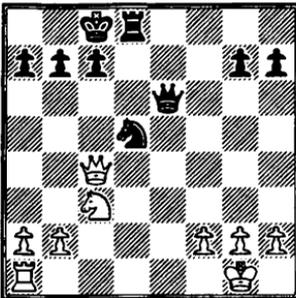
A) 20 ♖ae1 ♔c6 21 ♛e4 (21 ♖6e3 ♖he8 22 ♔e4 ♖e5) 21...♔b8= offers White nothing;

B) 20 h3!? (Threatening ♖a1-d1) is more cunning, as

**B1)** 20...♟c6?! allows White to get a slightly better ending after 21 ♖d1 ♜f7 22 ♜xd8+! (22 ♜xc6 ♜xd1+ 23 ♟xd1 ♜d7! 24 ♜e6 ♜xd1+ 25 ♟h2 ♜d8!)=) 22...♟xd8 23 ♜e4 ♜xc4 24 ♜xc4± since it will be easier for him to advance his kingside pawns thanks to superior piece activity. However,

**B2)** 20...♟d5! 21 ♜ae1 ♜hf8!= is even as the massive exchanges Black was aiming for will take place under favourable circumstances.

20 ♟xd8 ♜xd8



21 g3!?

A very useful move, guarding f4, preventing back rank unpleasanties and keeping Black under pressure; 21 ♖d1 is mentioned by Ponomarev, who gives 21...♟f4!? 22 ♜xd8+ ♟xd8 23 ♜d4+ ♜d6 24 ♜xg7 ♟e2+! 25 ♟f1 ♟xc3 26 ♜xc3 ♜xh2= as equal, a fair verdict.

21...c6 22 ♜d1!

Suddenly Black has been saddled with the task of trying to avoid a lost pawn endgame.

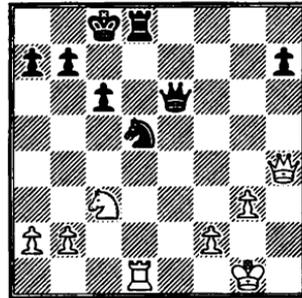
22...g5!

Trying to contain White's kingside pawns before it's too late; after 22...♜d7? 23 ♟xd5 ♜xd5 24 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 25 ♜xd5 cxd5 26 f4! ♟d7 27 ♟f2+- the pawn endgame is won for White because he will obtain an outside passed pawn.

23 h4!

A move revealing true mastery of the game; White exploits the dark sides of 22...g5! to obtain a positional superiority on the kingside.

23...gxh4 24 ♜xh4



The benefits from White's little operation are already evident; He has obtained a passed f-pawn and weakened the enemy's h-pawn. In addition, he still keeps Black pinned, the ♟d5 cannot move.

24...h6 25 ♟g2

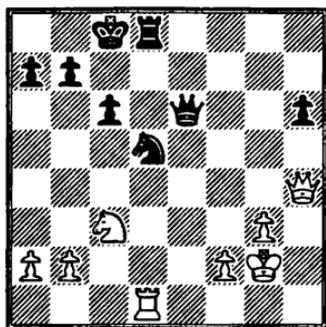
A fine non-committal move, activating the king in anticipation of various types of endgame that may soon arise;

25 ♜e4!?, as suggested by Pono, is also very interesting; For example:

A) 25...♜f7?! 26 ♟xd5 ♜xd5 (26...cxd5 27 ♜c1+ ♟b8 28 ♜e5+

♔a8 29 ♖c7↑) 27 ♜xd5 cxd5 28 ♜d4±, or

B) 25...♜xe4 26 ♘xe4 ♘b4 27 ♜d6! (27 ♜xd8+ ♔xd8 28 a3 ♘d3= offers White nothing.) 27...♜xd6 28 ♘xd6+ ♔c7 29 ♘f5 ♘xa2 30 ♘xh6± when it appears to us that White has an advantage in the forthcoming race as Black has no passed pawns yet.



25...♘e3+!?

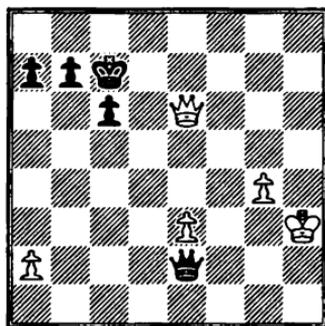
Black cracks under the pressure and plays a double-edged move; objectively speaking, the resulting queen ending holds good promise for White, so he should have settled for a more conservative course. Such a course might have been 25...♜d7 although after 26 ♘xd5 ♜xd5 27 ♜c4!± the draw is still not trivial because White threatens ♜d1xd5 and in reply to a king move may consider either ♜d1-d4 or capturing on d5.

26 fxe3 ♜xd1 27 ♘xd1 ♜d5+ 28 ♔h2 ♜xd1 29 ♜xh6 ♜c2+ 30 ♔h3↑

Whilst Black's next move is going to restore material equality, White has the better chances; His queen and king are more active and he has

two passed pawns compared to Black's one. Turov caves in after a long and arduous defence:

30...♜xb2 31 ♜e6+ ♔c7 32 g4 ♜e2



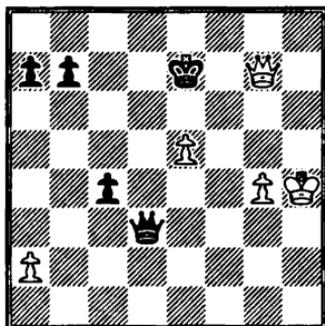
33 e4?

This looks wrong. 33 ♔g3! would have been best, threatening to push the g-pawn and maintaining the e-pawn in its place as sort of cover from the checks. Now it seems to us that Black could have drawn.

33...c5! 34 e5! c4 35 ♜e7+ ♔c8 36 ♔h4 ♜d3?

In queen endgames the initiative is important. After 36...♜h2+ 37 ♔g5 ♜d2+! 38 ♔g6 c3= the position looks equal.

37 ♜e6+ ♔d8 38 ♜g8+ ♔e7 39 ♜g7+



39...♖e6?

And this one is a fatal mistake; in the endgame with new queens that is soon going to arise Black is without chances because he cannot battle efficiently against White's g-pawn. Retreating to the 8th rank was imperative and might have allowed Black to hold.

40 ♖f6+ ♔d5 41 ♜d6+ ♕e4 42 ♜xd3+ ♔xd3 43 e6 c3 44 e7 c2 45 e8=♚ c1=♚ 46 ♜d7+ ♕e2 47 g5 ♜h1+ 48 ♜h3 ♜d5 49 ♜g4+ ♔f2 50 ♜f4+ ♕e1 51 g6!+-

White is winning; The rest is rather easy as the White king can always hide from perpetual behind Black's queenside pawns.

51...♜xa2 52 g7 ♜g8 53 ♜f8 ♜c4+ 54 ♕g5 ♜d5+ 55 ♕f6 ♜c6+ 56 ♕e7 ♜c7+ 57 ♕e6 ♜c6+ 58 ♜d6 ♜c4+ 59 ♕d7 ♜a4+ 60 ♕d8 ♜b3 61 ♜f8 1-0

19

Timman – Yusupov  
World Cup, Belfort 1988

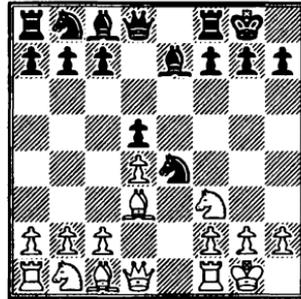
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙e7

A conservative move, intending to bring the king to safety as quickly as possible; Black quite often chooses 6...♙d6 which is a more aggressive version of the same idea.

7 0-0 0-0

Introducing Mason's Defence, a quite solid line having its roots on the previous century; The disadvantage of this line is that

Black cannot answer c2-c4 with ...♘c6-b4, seizing control of d5.

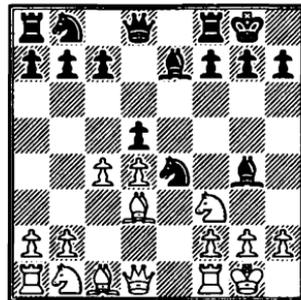


8 c4

The traditional method of fighting for the initiative and at the same time the best one. Now Black has several replies, but none of them seems to offer full equality.

8...♙c6

By threatening ...♘c6-b4 Black tempts his opponent to clarify the situation in the centre. 8...♙g4!?



...is not out of place; White must be accurate:

A) 9 ♜b3!? is viable, yet after the correct 9...dxc4! [Inferior is 9...♙xf3 10 gxf3 ♜c8! (after 10...♘f6?! 11 ♜xb7 ♘bd7, both 12 c5± and 12 cxd5 ♘b6 13 ♘c3± are

good for White) 11 cxd5 ♖f6 12 ♜f4± when White has a pleasant initiative despite his sets of doubled pawns] 10 ♜xb7 ♜xf3 11 ♜xe4! (The greedy 11 gxf3?! cxd3 12 ♜xa8 allows an immediate draw: 12...c6! 13 ♜xa7 ♜d6! 14 fxe4 ♜xh2+ 15 ♔g2 ♜h4=) 11...♜xe4 12 ♜xe4 ♔d7 13 ♔c3 ♜e8!± White's advantage is not too big; Black must of course avoid 13...♔f6? 14 ♜e2! when he loses a pawn without compensation;

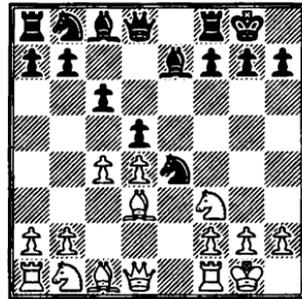
B) 9 cxd5! is best; then 9...♔f6 (9...♜xd5?! 10 ♜e1 f5 11 ♜a4! ♔h8 12 ♔e5± is obviously much better for White) 10 ♔c3 ♔bd7! (10...♔xd5 11 ♜e4 c6 12 ♜b3!± leads to an undisputed advantage for White) 11 h3 ♜h5 leads to a parting of the ways:

B1) 12 g4?! ♜g6 13 g5 permits Black to generate counter-play after the correct 13...♔e8!± (13...♔h5 fails to 14 ♜e2! ♜f5 15 ♔e5±); for example: 14 ♜xg6 fxg6! 15 ♜e2 ♔h8 16 ♜e1 ♜b4! (planning ...♔d7-b6) and Black will recover his pawn with good prospects in view of White's weakened kingside and lack of control over f5;

B2) 12 ♜e1! is the right move; after 12...♔b6 13 ♜e5! [planning ♜c1-g5 and intending to stay on e5!; 13 ♜g5?! does not have any real potential because after 13...♔fxd5 14 ♜xe7 ♔xe7 the sac 15 ♜xh7+?! fails to 15...♔xh7 16 ♔g5+ ♔g6 17 ♜c2+ ♔f5!± (but not 17...♔xg5? 18 ♜h7!+)] 13...♔bd7 (13...♜d6?! 14 ♜g5! ♜xe5 15 dxe5 h6 16 ♜xf6! gxf6 17

♜d2 ♔g7 18 ♔d4+-) 14 g4! (Only now it's time for this move!) 14...♜g6 15 ♜xg6 hxg6 (15...fxg6? 16 ♔g5!) 16 ♜b3 ♜b8 (16...♔xe5?! 17 dxe5 ♔d7 18 ♜xb7 ♔c5 19 ♜b5±) 17 ♜f4! (insisting on the rook offer) 17...♔xe5 (17...♜d6 18 ♜g5±) 18 dxe5 ♔d7 19 ♜c1!+ (planning ♔c3-e4), White gains fantastic compensation for the exchange due to the tremendous pressure on c7; 19 ♜d1± is also possible.

8...c6!?



...should be met by 9 ♜e1! ♜e6 (9...♜f5 10 ♜c2! ♔a6 11 a3 ♜g6 12 ♔e5± is better for White as Black's pieces are uncoordinated; 9...♔f6 may well be the best option, transposing after 10 h3 dxc4 11 ♜xc4 ♔bd7 12 ♔c3 ♔b6 13 ♜b3 to a position featured in Illustrative Game No 14) and now White has two good queen moves:

A) 10 ♜c2! f5 11 ♔c3, with a position where White intends ♜c2-b3, pressurizing d5 and b7 after having forced a further weakness, is interesting. After, for example 11...♔d7?! (11...♔h8?! 12

♞b3 ♞b6 is met with the surprising  
13 ♞xb6 axb6 14 cxd5 cxd5



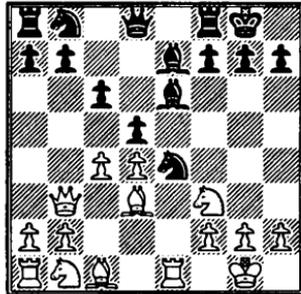
15 ♙xe4! fxe4 16 ♘xe4! dxe4 17 ♙xe4 and White recovers his piece with interest; 11...♘a6!? 12 a3 ♙f6± is probably only slightly better for White; however, his plus is quite solid as e5 is particularly weak, a fact he may try to exploit with the following sequence of moves: c4xd5, ♞c2-b3, ♙c1-f4 and then either ♙f4-e5 or ♘f3-e5, according to circumstance) 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♞b3! Black seems to be experiencing very great opening problems:

A1) 13...♘df6 14 ♞xb7 (14 ♘g5!? ♙f7 15 ♘xf7 ♙xf7 16 f3± may in fact be even better.) 14...♘g4 15 ♙e2 ♙h4 16 g3 ♙f6 17 h3± has not much to offer to Black;

A2) 13...♙h8 14 ♘xe4 fxe4 [14...dxe4 15 ♞xe6 ♙b4 is convincingly met by 16 ♙xe4! ♙f6 17 ♞b3 ♙xe1 18 ♙xb7 ♙b6 (18...♙b8 19 ♙g5±) 19 ♘g5! ♞e7 20 ♞h3!± and White's attack is bound to triumph] 15 ♙xe4 dxe4 16 ♞xe6 exf3 17 ♞xe7 ♘b6 18 ♞xd8 ♙axd8 19 gxf3 ♙xd4 (19...♙xf3 20 ♙e7+-) 20 ♙e3+- leads to a big

endgame advantage for White which he went on to convert into a win easily in Onischuk-Sulskis, Koszalin 1999;

B) 10 ♞b3! (Most thematic as it immediately attacks the weakened spot)



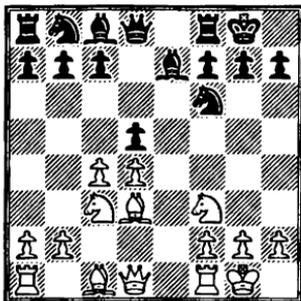
10...♘a6!? (10...♞c7 11 ♙xe4 dxe4 12 ♙xe4±) 11 ♙xe4! [The materialistic approach is best here; After 11 cxd5 cxd5 White should restrict himself to 12 a3!± as 12 ♞xb7? instead, is tempting fate in view of 12...♘b4!+ (But not 12...♘ac5? 13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 ♞b5 ♙b8 15 ♙xh7+ ♙xh7 16 ♞e2± which is at least slightly better for White] 11...dxe4 12 ♙xe4 and it seems that Black cannot exploit the position of the White queen to generate counterplay: 12...♙f5 (On 12...b5 there comes 13 ♙xe6! fxe6 14 cxb5±) and now White only needs to be accurate with the placing of his rook:

B1) 13 ♙f4!? ♙e6 14 ♞xb7 ♘c5! (14...♘b4 is also good) 15 ♞xc6 ♙c8 is surely not what White wants to happen;

B2) 13 ♙e5!? ♙g4! (13...♙g6? 14 ♞xb7) 14 ♞xb7 ♙d6!→ leads to a strong Black attack;

**B3)** 13 ♖e2! (keeping the important c2 square covered) and now best seems 13...♗c7!± when Black is worse but should be able to make a fight of it. Instead, 13...♟b4 proves to be a shot into empty space after 14 a3 ♟d3 15 ♖e3±. Another better option than 13...♟b4 is 13...♟g4!? but it should also be insufficient for equality;

Finally, 8...♟f6 9 ♟c3 has independent significance only if Black continues with 9...dxc4:



**A)** 9...♟g4 10 cxd5 ♟bd7 (10...♟xd5 11 ♖e4± has already been mentioned above) 11 h3 ♖h5 (11...♟xf3?! 12 ♗xf3 ♟b6 succumbs to 13 d6! ♗xd6 14 ♗xb7 ♗xd4 15 ♗f3± with a positional advantage for White) 12 ♖e1! transposes to analysis featured above;

**B)** 9...♟c6 10 h3± transposes to a typical IQP position;

**C)** 9...dxc4 10 ♟xc4 ♟g4 is another attempt to play against the isolated pawn, but White's freedom of movement guarantees a slight edge, e.g. 11 ♖e1 ♟bd7 12 h3 ♖h5 13 ♟g4!? ♟g6 14 ♟e5± and White

got the bishop pair in Ree-Langeweg, Amsterdam 1968.

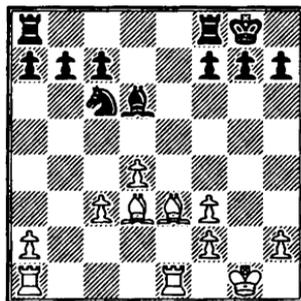
9 cxd5

Now White forces a transposition to a slightly better ending that we are already familiar with from a previous Illustrative Game.

9...♗xd5 10 ♟c3 ♟xc3 11 bxc3 ♟g4 12 ♖e1 ♟xf3!

12...♖fe8?! 13 ♖e4 ♗d6 14 ♗c2 h6 15 h3± is, as we know, clearly better for White.

13 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 14 gxf3 ♖d6 15 ♖e3



The bishop is needed to support d4 so that the central pawns can get moving; 15 ♖b1± is an alternative that has already been dealt with under Illustrative Game No 16.

15...♟e7

15...♖ad8 16 ♖ad1!? b6 should be met with the typical 17 ♟g5! f6 [17...♖b8! 18 ♟b5 h6 19 ♟h4 g5 (Otherwise ♟e7 follows) 20 ♟g3 ♟a5 21 ♟g2!±, intending ♟g3xd6 followed by either ♖e1-e7 or f3-f4 is slightly better for White, but appears like Black's best chance] 18 ♖e3 when White has forced a

valuable weakness in the enemy formation. Then, the further moves 18...♖e7 (18...♘a5 19 c4 c5?! 20 dxc5 ♙xc5 21 ♙xc5 bxc5 22 ♙e4!± unveils the chief merit of White's 17th) 19 c4 c6! 20 ♙c2!? ♘g6 21 c5 ♙c7 22 ♙c1! bxc5 23 dxc5 ♘e5 24 ♖g2± led to an annoying White plus in Ehlvest-Yusupov, Saint John 1988.

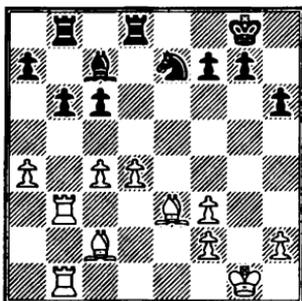
16 c4 c6 17 ♖ab1 b6 18 a4!

Black's position is passive and the a-pawn should be used as a tool for effecting a breach on the queenside at an appropriate moment.

18...♖ab8 19 ♖b3!

We are already familiar with this manoeuvre from the game Kotronias-Langrock; White prepares to double rooks on the b-file so as to carry out a4-a5 with maximum effect.

19...h6 20 ♖eb1 ♖fd8 21 ♙c2 ♙c7!?



Black seems to be doing OK, but a closer look is sufficient to convince us that he can only sit back and wait for White to undertake some action in the hope of becoming active himself. It is not

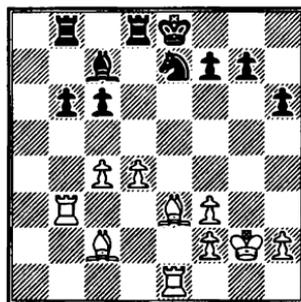
clear whether Black's last move threatens ...a7-a5 or not, but Timman rightly decides that he has spent a fair amount of time in preparations and proceeds to prevent this move once and for all by playing a4-a5 himself.

22 a5! ♖f8 23 ♖g2 ♖e8!?

Marking time; 23...bxa5 24 ♖b7! ♙b6 25 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 26 ♙f4! ± is better for White, e.g. 26...♖c8 27 ♙e5! f6?! 28 ♙d6 ♙c7 29 ♙a3! ♙b6 30 ♙f5! ♖e8 31 ♙g6 (31 d5!? c5 32 ♙c2) 31...♖c8 32 ♙xe7+ ♖xe7 33 c5 ♙c7 34 ♖b7 ♖e6 35 ♙e4 ♙f4 36 ♖xg7± ♖d8?! 37 ♖g4! ♙g5 38 ♙xc6 f5 39 d5+ ♖xd5 40 ♙xd5+ ♖xd5 41 ♖a4 ♙d2 42 ♖a2 ♙b4 43 ♖g3+-

24 axb6 axb6 25 ♖e1!?

Timman wants to force the Black king away from his weak queenside pawns, but it is not entire clear whether this is necessary.

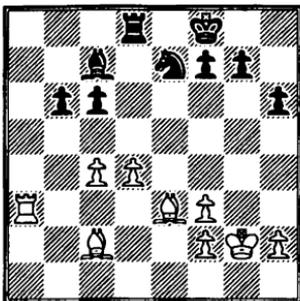


25...♖f8

Black continues with the policy of "come and get me", seeing no reason to indulge himself in dubious adventures. After 25...♖d7 White should regroup his bishops by 26

♔d3! ♖a8 27 ♔d2! when the ideas of ♔b2-b4 or a timely d4-d5 (possibly preceded by ♔d2-c3) question the correctness of the trip of the Black king to d7; 25...f5 is positionally suspect because it weakens the light squares. White can keep his opponent reduced to passivity by 26 f4± intending ♔c2-d1-f3 or play the refined sacrifice 26 h4!? which has the positional idea of fixing f5 and g7 as weaknesses by a subsequent h4-h5. For example: 26...f4 27 ♔c1 ♜xd4 28 ♔a3! (a key move, forcing more light-square weaknesses) 28...c5 29 ♔b2 ♞d2 (29...♜xc4?! 30 ♔d3 ♞b4 31 ♜xb4 cxb4 32 ♔xg7±) 30 ♔h7! ♚f7 31 ♔xg7! ♞c6 (31...♞g6 32 ♔c3±) 32 ♔c3 ♞d7 33 ♔f5 ♞e7 34 ♔e4 ♞d4 35 ♔xd4 cxd4 36 ♞d1± and White has clearly the more pleasant position.

26 ♖a3 ♖a8 27 ♖e1 ♖xa3 28 ♖xa3±



The position has crystallized; White has seized the open a-file and a lasting initiative, but the Black fortress is far from easy to break. In the remainder of the game Yusupov

puts up a stout resistance and manages to save the half-point.

28...♚e8!

28...b5?! just opens more lines for the White pieces; White is simply better after 29 cxb5 cxb5 30 ♖a7±

29 ♖a7 ♞c8 30 f4 ♚d8 31 ♚f3 ♔d6 32 ♔b3?

An unexpected mistake when White had various good ways of maintaining the pressure; 32 ♔d3±, 32 f5!?±, or 32 c5!?± were all far superior to the text.

32 ♔b3? is positionally flawed because it abandons control of f5, an omission that Yusupov is alert to exploit.

32...c5! 33 ♞b7 ♞f5! =

With this brilliant and inspired pawn sacrifice Black completely equalises; a classic example of positional escape based on White's failure to dominate the e7 knight.

34 ♜xf7

34 dxc5 ♔xc5 35 ♜xf7 ♞d4+ 36 ♔xd4 ♔xd4= is obviously pointless.

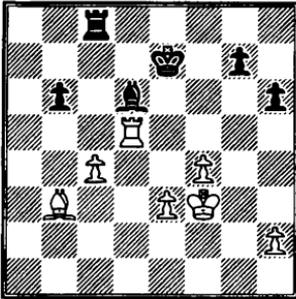
34...cxd4 35 ♜xf5 dxe3 36 ♞d5

On 36 fxe3 the reply 36...♞c5! forces the rook exchange and the position is a dead draw after 37 ♞d5 ♜xd5 38 cxd5 g5! =, preventing White's central pawn mass from becoming dangerous.

36...♚e7?

A strange miss by Yusupov; after 36...e2! = a further continuation of the struggle would have been pointless, the game is dead equal.

37 fxe3



37...g5±

Having missed a clear equaliser on the previous move, Black has to play very exactly from now on. The text is a step in the right direction, neutralising White's intended expansion by e4-e5.

38 h3 gxf4 39 exf4 ♖c5 40 ♜d4 b5!

Each exchange brings Black closer to the draw.

41 ♜e4+ ♜f6 42 cxb5 ♜xb5 43 ♙c4 ♜b6 44 ♜g4 ♙e7 45 ♜e5 ♜d6 46 h4 ♙d8 47 ♜f5+ ♜e7 48 ♜f7+ ♜e8 49 ♜h7 ♙e7 50 ♜h8+ ♜d7 51 ♙b5+ ♜c7 52 h5

52 ♜e8± was the only way to maintain some pressure; now Black is able to coordinate his pieces optimally, rendering his defensive task shorter and easier.

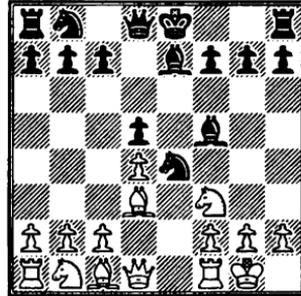
52...♜f6! 53 ♜h7 ♜d8= 54 ♙d3 ♙d6 55 ♙f5 ♙a3 56 ♜d7+ ♜e8 57 ♜a7 ♙d6 58 ♜h7 ♜f8 59 ♜h8+ ♜g7 60 ♜d8 ♙c7 61 ♜d7+ ♜f7 62 ♜d5 ♜f6 63 ♜c5 ♙d6 64 ♜a5 ♜f8 65 ♜f3

Seeing no way to make progress, White acquiesced to the inevitable draw. ½-½

20

Anand – Karpov  
Siemens Giants (rapid),  
Frankfurt 1999

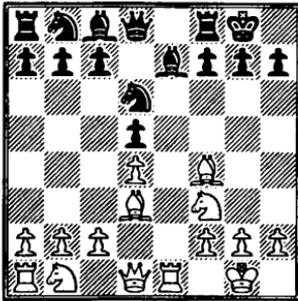
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙e7 7 0-0 ♙f5



A move that prepares to play ...♘e4-d6, carrying out a favourable exchange of bishops; it has occasionally been used by many top players, but its regular practitioner nowadays is the Cuban player Rodney Perez.

7...♘d6!? is another way of refraining from an immediate 0-0. Despite being somewhat artificial, it has a preventive role in stopping c2-c4. White should continue with 8 ♙f4! (Definitely the best move, as it puts an end to ...♙c8-f5 ideas) 8...0-0 [8...♙g4?! is inferior because of the line 9 ♜e1 0-0 (9...♘c6?! 10 c3 0-0 11 ♘bd2 intending ♜d1-b3, looks very artificial for Black; 9...c6 10 h3 ♙h5?! 11 ♜e2! exposes Black to an awkward pin on the e-line) 10 h3!? ♙h5 11 ♜e5! ♙xf3 12 ♜xf3 c6 13 c3 ♘d7 14 ♜e2± when the bishop pair gave White a clear advantage in Lau-Mathe,

Munich 1992] 9 ♖e1 and now the following lines are possible:



A) 9...♖d7?! allows White to ruin his opponent's pawn structure with 10 ♖e2! ♖e8 11 ♕xd6 cxd6, as in Cascudo Pueyo - Rodriguez Solis, Oviedo 2000. White continued in masterly fashion by 12 ♖c3 ♖f6 13 ♕b5! ♕d7 14 ♕xd7 ♖xd7 15 ♖d3 a6 16 ♖g5! h6 17 ♖h3 ♕f8 18 ♖f4, obtaining a big advantage.

B) 9...♖c6?! is also outside the spirit of the position because after 10 c3 the knight does not have access to the kingside and White will obtain strong attacking chances by developing in the same way as in Timman-Skembris below.

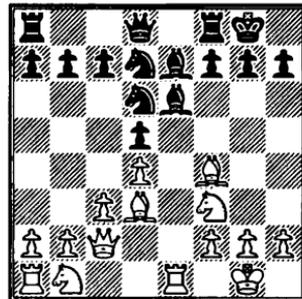
C) 9...♖e8 is not to be dismissed lightly: After 10 ♖e5! (10 ♖bd2?! ♖c6 11 c3 ♕f5! 12 ♕xd6 ♕xd3 13 ♕xe7 ♖xe7 14 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 15 ♖e5 ♕f5=) Black has two possibilities.

C1) 10...♖d7 11 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 12 ♖h5! f5 [12...g6 13 ♖xd5 ♕c6 14 ♖b3! ♕f6 (14...♕g5 15 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 16 ♕e5!±) 15 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 16 ♕e3 ♖d7 17 h3! ♖f5 18 ♕xf5 ♖xf5 19 ♖c3 ♖d8 20 ♖d1±] 13 ♖d2 ♖e4!? [13...g6?! leads after 14 ♖f3 c6 (14...♖e4 15 ♕xe4! fxe4 16

♖b3±) 15 c4! dxc4 16 ♕xc4+! ♖xc4 17 ♖xc4± to a dominant position for White in view of his control of the dark squares; in addition the b3-g8 diagonal offers him attacking chances] 14 ♖xe4 g6! 15 ♖f6+! ♕xf6 16 ♖f3± transposes to a structure where both of White's bishops are superior to their Black counterparts, but nevertheless, Black has good chances to hold;

C2) 10...♕f8! 11 ♖d2 ♖d7 12 ♖f3 ♖xe5 [Inferior is 12...c6 13 ♖e3! ♖f6?! 14 ♕g5 h6 15 ♕h4! (15 ♕xf6 ♖xf6 16 ♖xf6 gxf6 17 ♖ef3 ♖xe3 18 fxe3 f5=) 15...g5 16 ♕g3 g4 17 ♖e2 c5!? 18 c3! (18 dxc5!?) 18...cxd4 19 cxd4 ♖f5 20 ♕xf5 ♕xf5 21 ♕h4±] 13 ♕xe5± leads to a position where White preserves some pressure due to the plan of doubling on the e-file, yet the symmetric nature of the position gives Black drawing hopes;

D) 9...♕e6!? 10 c3 ♖d7 is the other possibility, when White should play 11 ♖c2!

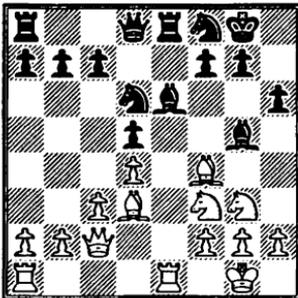


...forcing a weakening on the pawn cover protecting the enemy king; Then Black's choice is restricted.

**D1)** 11...♟f6? is easily dismissed in view of 12 ♘g5+;

**D2)** 11...g6? is bad, because of the following sacrificial cascade: 12 ♙h6 ♜e8 13 ♜xe6! (But not 13 ♙xg6? hxg6 14 ♜xe6 ♟f5 and Black is better!) 13...fxe6 14 ♙xg6! ++;

**D3)** 11...h6□ 12 ♘bd2 ♜e8 13 ♟f1 ♟f8 (The knight here fulfils an important duty as it defends the ♙e6 and the weakened light squares h7 and g6) 14 ♟g3! [14 ♟d2 ♟c4! 15 ♙xc4 dxc4 16 ♟e3 (16 ♟e5 c5) 16...♟g6! (16...c6 17 ♟e5±) 17 ♙g3 c6= is only equal] 14...♙g5! reaches the critical position for this variation, featuring Black's attempt to relieve his congestion by exchanges; White has to play with great accuracy now in order to maintain an advantage:



**D31)** 15 ♟d2?! is the wrong choice in view of 15...♟c4! 16 ♙xc4 ♙xf4! 17 ♟xf4 ♟g6! 18 ♟d2 dxc4±; Black has ideas with ...♟f6, ♟f4 and White has to be careful with the ...♟f4-d3 intrusion all the time;

**D3b)** 15 ♙xg5!? is an interesting new idea from the authors that awaits its first test; after 15...hxg5 16 ♟d2 f6 (16...g4 17 ♟e5↑) 17 h4! Black is facing problems on the kingside:

**D3b1)** On 17...gxh4 there comes 18 ♟xh4 ♟d7 19 ♟f4!±, planning to make use of f5 for attacking purposes. If then 19...g5?! there follows 20 ♟xf6! gxh4 21 ♜e5 ♟f7 22 ♟h5! ♟xe5 23 ♟g5+ ♟eg6 24 ♟f6+ ♟g7 25 ♟xd7 ♙xd7 26 g3! (26 f4 ♜e3 27 ♙xg6 ♟xg6 28 f5 ♜g3±) 26...hxg3 27 f4!± and White's attack looks very menacing;

**D3b2)** 17...g4 18 ♟h2 leads to another sub-division:

**D3b2a)** 18...c6 19 ♟f4 ♟d7 20 h5± (20 ♜e2±)

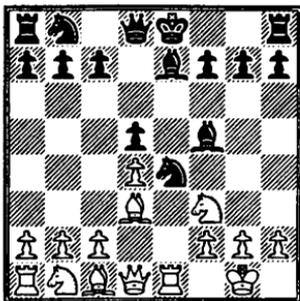
**D3b2b)** 18...♟c4!?! is worth a look;

**D3b2c)** 18...f5! 19 h5 (to isolate the enemy f-pawn) 19...♟e4 20 ♟f4 (20 ♙xe4!?! dxe4 21 d5! c6 22 c4 cxd5 23 cxd5 ♟d6 24 h6↑) 20...♟d6 21 ♟xd6 ♟xd6 (21...cxd6 22 ♟hf1!±) 22 f3! gxf3 23 ♟xf3!± leads to slightly better chances for White because of the weak pawn on f5 and the better bishop. White must immediately try to attack the pawn on f5 with ♟f3-h4, ♜e1-f1;

**D3c)** 15 ♟c1 f6!?! (After 15...♙xf4 16 ♟xf4± the pressure on Black's position persists) 16 h4!?! ♙xf4 17 ♟xf4 ♟d7 18 ♟h2!?! ♟f7 [18...♙f7 is the major alternative, inviting wholesale exchanges along the e-file. However, after 19 ♟f5!?! ♟xf5 20 ♙xf5 ♙e6 (On 20...♟c6

the sequel 21 ♖g4 ♗g6 22 ♖e3 ♗xf5 23 ♖xf5 ♗d7 24 b3!? c6 25 h5!, intending c3-c4, gives Black serious difficulties) 21 ♗c2! ♗f7 (21...♗e7 22 ♗e3 ♗ae8 23 ♗ae1 is slightly better for White) the move 22 ♗g3! maintains a nagging edge] 19 ♖g4!?→ led to a White initiative in Timman-Skembris, Corfu (m/2) 1993. Time to return to our game:

8 ♗e1!



8...♖c6

8...♖d6?! is dubious because after 9 ♗g5! f6 (9...♖c6 10 ♖e5!±) 10 ♗f4 Black's underdevelopment and weakness on the light squares are a telling factor: 10...♗xd3 and now:

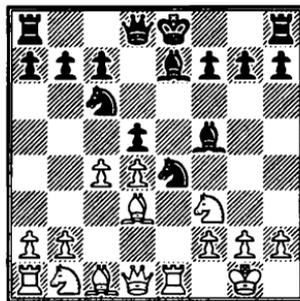
A) 11 ♗xd6!? ♗xd6 12 ♗xd3 0-0 13 c4! ♖a6 (13...dxc4 14 ♗xc4+ ♖h8 15 ♖c3 ♗d7 16 ♗e6 ♖c6 17 ♗ae1 ♗d6 18 ♗e2!±) 14 ♖c3 dxc4 15 ♗xc4+ ♗f7 (15...♖h8±) 16 a3! c6 17 d5 was pleasant for White in Vazquez-R.Perez, La Habana II 2001; after 17...♖c7 18 dxc6 ♗xc6 19 ♗xc6 bxc6 20 ♖d4 c5 21 ♖c6 ♗f8 22 ♗ad1± White's powerful knights ensure a slight edge;

B) 11 ♗xd3! 0-0 (On 11...c6 there follows 12 ♗b3 ♖ 12...b5 13 a4

bx4 14 ♗xa4 0-0 15 ♖c3 ♖h8 16 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 17 ♗b7 ♖d7 18 ♗xa7±) 12 ♗b3 c6 13 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 14 ♗xb7 ♖d7 15 ♗a6± and White was close to winning in Schneider-Jasnikowski, Wroclau 1981 as Black has not only lost a pawn but also suffers from a bad structure;

8...0-0 9 c4 c6 (9...♗b4 10 ♗e3! looks good for White.) 10 ♗c2!± has been considered under Illustrative Game 19.

9 c4!



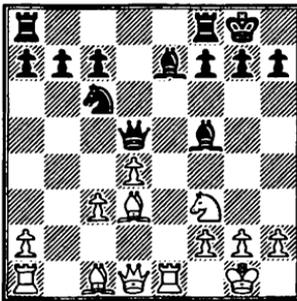
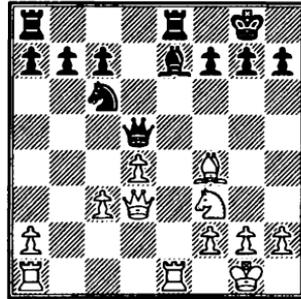
Once more, this typical attack on the centre is by far White's best try.

9...♖b4

We don't like so much this knight sortie.

More logical is 9...0-0!? (maintaining the option of exchanging light squared-bishops) 10 cxd5! (It is important to lure the queen on d5 as there she is exposed to subsequent attacks by c2-c4; on 10 ♖c3?! ♖xc3 11 bxc3 ♗xd3 12 ♗xd3 dxc4 13 ♗xc4, the move 13...♗d6!, intending ...♗d8-f6, as in Polgar-Macieja, Poland (rapid m/8) 2002 leads to equality; Worth

noting here is that Black's regrouping would have not been possible with a White rook already on b1 as then 14 ♖d3!, threatening both ♜b1xb7 and ♖f3-g5, grants him strong pressure) 10...♗xd5 11 ♖c3! (11 ♗c2!? ♖b4 12 ♗xe4 ♖xc2 13 ♗xd5 ♜ae8 14 ♗xb7 ♖b4 15 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 16 ♖c6 ♜b8 17 g4 ♖g6 was just unclear in Shirov-Ivanchuk, Monaco 2002) 11...♖xc3 12 bxc3



12...♜fe8 (12...♗xd3 13 ♗xd3± b5?! 14 ♗f4 ♗d6 15 ♖g5! g6 16 ♗h3 h5 17 ♖e4 ♖g7 18 ♗e3!± ♜fe8 19 ♗h6+ ♖h8 20 ♗g5 ♗f8 21 ♗f6+ ♖g8 22 ♗f3! ♗g7 23 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 24 ♗f6+ ♖g8 25 ♗xg6+! fxg6 26 ♖f6+ ♖f7 27 ♖xd5 ♜xe1+ 28 ♜xe1 ♜d8 29 ♖xc7 b4 30 ♖e6 ♜d6 31 ♖g5+ ♖f8 was the sequel in Abramovic-Radulov, Vrnjacka Banja 1983 and now 32 cxb4+ would have crowned White's excellent play) 13 ♗f4 ♗xd3 (13...♗d6?? is given as equal by Fritz but beware!; after 14 ♜xe8+! ♜xe8 15 c4 ♗a5 16 ♗d2 ♖b4 17 ♗xb4 ♖xb4 18 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 19 ♗a4 ♖c6 20 d5+- it just drops a piece) 14 ♗xd3

...but even here White has good play as the following lines indicate:

A) 14...♗d6 15 ♖g5±;

B) 14...♜ac8 15 ♜ab1 b6 (15...♗d6? 16 ♖g5 f5 17 c4!+-) 16 c4 ♗d7 allows White to carry on with 17 ♜e3!, when he appears to have chances for a solid advantage. For example:

B1) 17...♜cd8! 18 d5 ♗f6 19 ♗g5! (19 ♜be1±) 19...♜xe3 20 fxe3 ♗d6 21 ♜f1↑;

B2) 17...♗f6 18 ♜bel ♜xe3 19 fxe3 ♜e8 20 ♜f1±;

C) 14...♗d7 15 ♜e3! ♗f6 16 ♜ae1 ♜e7 17 ♗g5 (17 ♗b5!?) 17...♜xe3 18 fxe3! ♗xg5 19 ♖xg5 g6 20 e4± and White's central mass deprived Black of counter-play in Yagupov-Sorokin, St. Petersburg 2001. A notable motif in all these lines is that ♜e1-e3 allows White to fortify his centre by f2xe3 in case Black cannot stand the tension along the e-file.

10 ♗f1 0-0

10...dxc4?! should be answered by 11 ♖c3!; then...

A) 11...♖xc3 12 bxc3 ♖d5 (12...♖c2 13 ♜e5 ♖xa1 14 ♜xf5

0-0 15 ♖e3) 13 ♜xc4 ♖e6 14 ♜b3± gives White an excellent position but...

B) 11...♟f6 12 ♜xc4 0-0 13 a3 is more complicated:

B1) 13...♟c2?! 14 ♟h4 has been dismissed by Karpov as completely winning for White but in fact things are not so simple as the following analysis indicates:

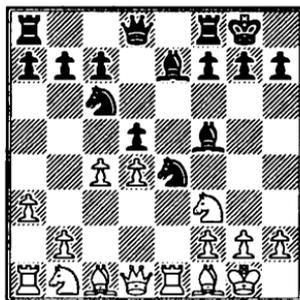
B1a) 14...♖e6 15 ♖xe6 ♟xe1 16 ♖b3 ♜e8! (16...♟xg2 17 ♟xg2±) 17 ♜xe1 ♟g4 18 ♟f3 ♖h4 19 ♜f1 ♖xf2+ 20 ♟h1 ♖xd4 21 ♖xf7+!± is indeed bad, but...

B1b) 14...♖e4! is very complicated: 15 ♟xe4 ♟xe1! (15...♟xa1 16 ♟xf6+ ♖xf6 17 ♟f3±) 16 ♟g3! (the only move to win material; 16 ♜xe1? ♟xe4 17 ♟f5 ♟d6!! 18 ♟xe7+ ♟h8⌘) 16...♜e8 (16...♖d6 17 ♜xe1 ♖xg3 18 hxg3 ♜xd4 19 ♜e2±) 17 ♖e3 c5!? 18 ♜b3! cxd4 19 ♖xf7+ ♟h8 20 ♖d2 ♟xg2 21 ♟xg2 ♜f8 22 ♟f4!± and after all these complications White finally emerges on top;

B2) 13...♟c6 14 d5 ♟a5 15 ♖a2 c5 16 ♖g5 ♜e8 17 ♜a4! ♖d7 18 ♜c2 h6 was the continuation in the famous game Karpov-Portisch, Tilburg 1982. Karpov now failed to find 19 ♖xh6! gxh6 20 d6!, which would have given him a powerful attack. For example 20...♖f8 (20...c4 21 dxg7 ♜xe7 22 ♜d2 ♟g7 23 ♟d5±) 21 ♜g6+ ♟h8 (21...♖g7 22 ♖xf7+ ♟h8 23 ♟h4!±) 22 ♖xf7 ♜xe1+ 23 ♜e1 ♖g7 24 ♟h4! (24 ♟e5 ♟c6!) 24...♜f8 25 ♜e7! (25 ♜d3 ♜xf7 26 ♟g6+ ♟g8=)

25...♟c6□ and now White has two plausible continuations: 26 ♟d5! (26 ♟e4! is also winning after 26...♟xe4 27 ♜xd7 ♟g5 28 f4! ♟xf7 29 ♜xf7 ♜g8 30 ♜f5 ♜e8 31 ♟g6+ ♟g8 32 ♟e7+ ♟xe7 33 ♜xe7 ♜f8 34 ♜e6+ ♟h8 35 d7+-) 26...♟xd5 27 ♜xd7 ♟e5 28 ♜f5 ♟b6 29 ♜e7+- and Black's defences have been neutralised since he is unable to meet the twin threat of ♜e7xe5 and f2-f4.

11 a3 ♟c6



12 cxd5!

The most principled way of playing, luring the Black queen away from the protection of c7;

12 ♟c3!? is however, a viable alternative. After 12...♟xc3 13 bxc3 the path splits:

A) 13...dxc4 14 ♖xc4 ♖f6 allows White to determine later the positioning of his queen's bishop with the flexible 15 ♖a2!?, e.g. 15...b5 (15...♜d7 16 ♖g5 ♖xg5 17 ♟xg5 h6 18 ♟e4±) 16 ♖f4 ♜d7 17 ♖g5 ♜fe8 18 ♖xf6 gxf6 19 ♜d2 ♟e7 (G.Garcia-R.Perez, Xalapa (zt) 1999) 20 ♟h4±;

B) 13...♖f6! is better, yet after 14 ♖f4 dxc4 15 ♖xc4 ♜d7 16 ♖a2!

♠fe8 17 ♖d2 b5 18 ♙g5! ♙g6 19 ♙xf6 gxf6, White gains an edge by 20 ♜e3!?!±; the idea is to meet the capture on e3 by f2xe3 and start pressure along the f-file. The most harmonious piece configuration will then be ♖f2, ♜f1, ♘h4; if Black doesn't take on e3 then White may triple pieces on the e-file to force him do so.

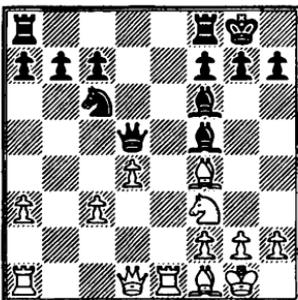
After 20 ♖f4 ♖d6! White has nothing and the same happens after 20 ♘h4 ♙g7 21 f4 ♘e7! 22 ♖f2 ♘f5 23 g4 ♘xh4 24 ♖xh4 f5 25 ♜e5 f6 26 ♜c5 ♜e3 when Black obtained sufficient counter-play in Adams-Karpov, Dortmund 1999.

### 12...♖xd5 13 ♘c3 ♘xc3 14 bxc3

This position should be better for White because it compares favourably with the position after 14 ♜e1 in Illustrative Game No 23. The positions are almost identical, except that here the White bishop stands on f1 instead of e2 which practically amounts to an extra tempo.

### 14...♙f6 15 ♙f4!

Natural and strong, this move poses Black some difficult problems to solve. Now we are at the crossroads.



### 15...♜ac8

It seems that Black should not retreat his queen unless he is really forced to.

15...♖d7 has been the pet line of Rodney Perez, but without bringing him any joy. After 16 ♜a2! ♜ae8 [16...♜ad8 17 ♜b2! ♖c8 18 h3 b6 19 ♜be2 h6 20 ♜e3 ♘a5 21 ♙e5 ♙xe5 22 ♘xe5 c5 23 d5 c4 24 ♖d4± ♙e6? 25 ♘g6! ♘c6 26 ♖h4 ♙xd5 27 ♘xf8 ♙xf8 28 ♙xc4+- led to a Black catastrophe in Anand-J.Polgar, Mainz (rapid) 2003] 17 ♜ae2 ♜xe2 18 ♖xe2 Black has failed to reach equality: 18...♙e6 (18...♘a5 19 ♘e5 ♖a4 20 g4 ♙e6 21 g5 ♙xe5 22 ♖xe5 c6 23 ♖c7 b6 24 ♜xe6 fxe6 25 ♙e5 ♜f7 26 ♖c8+ ♜f8 27 ♖xe6+ ♜f7 28 ♙d6 1-0, was an abrupt finish in Korneev-R.Perez, Albacete 2000) 19 ♘g5 ♙xg5 20 ♙xg5 h6 21 ♙c1 a6 22 ♖f3 b5 23 ♖g3 ♘e7 24 ♙d3! ♘g6 25 ♙xg6 fxxg6 26 ♙xh6 ♙f5 27 ♙f4 ♜e8 28 ♙e5± and White's extra pawn proved decisive in Herrera-Perez, Cuban ch, Las Tunas 2001.

### 16 ♜c1!?

Anand likes to go his own way and this is a perfect chance for doing so.

16 ♜e3 ♘a5 17 ♘e5 c5 18 g4! (This expansion is typical with the bishop on f5, taking advantage of the fact that it usually lacks a good retreat) 18...♙g6 19 ♙g2 ♖d8 20 dxc5 ♙xe5 21 ♜xe5 ♖f6 22 ♙g3 ♘c4 23 g5! ♖a6 24 ♜e7 ♜xc5 25 ♖d4! ♙xg5 26 h4! ♜a5 27 ♜ae1 h6 28 ♙f1 b5 29 ♜e8, 1-0 Tal-Garcia

Gonzales, Jurmala 1983, is another classical White win in this variation.

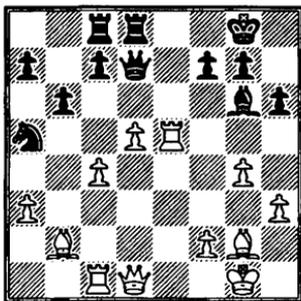
16...♖fd8 17 h3 h6

Karpov's set-up does not inspire much confidence; His rooks look a bit awkward, and his queen and light-squared bishop insecurely placed. White takes advantage of this factor to generate a space gaining effort in the centre.

18 g4! ♙g6 19 ♙g2 ♚d7 20 d5 ♘a5 21 c4!

Now the point behind 16 ♖c1 becomes evident, White is able to support the pride of his position, the advanced d-pawn.

21...b6 22 ♙e5! ♙e7 23 ♙b2 ♙d6 24 ♘e5 ♙xe5 25 ♖xe5±



With masterly play Anand has managed to obtain the bishop pair, yielding attacking chances on the kingside. Karpov, however, is renowned for defending difficult positions.

25...f6 26 ♖e3 ♘b7 27 h4! ♖e8 28 ♖g3 ♘c5 29 g5 hxg5 30 hxg5 f5 31 ♚d4 ♘e4 32 ♖e3! c5!

A good defensive move, forcing the White queen off the dangerous diagonal; this relieves her opposing

number from the burden of defending g7 and allows Black some chances of counter-play.

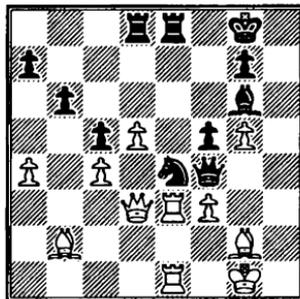
33 ♚d3 ♚d6 34 ♖ce1 ♖cd8

34...♚f4 has been suggested as an improvement over the game, yet it doesn't seem to solve Black's problems: 35 f3! ♘xg5 36 ♖xe8+! (36 ♚c3?! ♚d4! 37 ♚xd4 cxd4 38 ♖xe8+ ♙xe8 39 f4 ♘e4 40 ♙xe4 fxe4 41 ♖xe4 d3=) 36...♖xe8 (36...♙xe8 37 ♖e7±) 37 ♖xe8+ ♙xe8 38 ♚c3 and White maintains strong pressure.

35 a4

White wants to prevent counterplay by ...b6-b5. However, he could have considered the more direct 35 f3!? ♘xg5 36 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 37 ♖xe8+ ♙xe8 38 ♚xf5 ♚g3 39 ♘f1± with promising play.

35...♚f4! 36 f3



36...♘g3!?

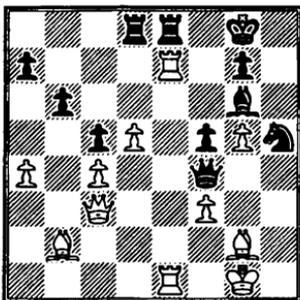
Although this is not really a mistake, it is the prelude to one, if we consider that Black must have been in dire time trouble; 36...♘d6! 37 ♚c3 ♖d7! was the simple way of playing, when the position looks easily defensible, e.g. 38 ♖xe8+

♙xe8! (38...♘xe8? 39 ♖e5 ♗xe5 40 ♙xe5±) 39 ♖e3 (On 39 ♜e6, 39...♗xg5! 40 ♖e5 ♙h5!= is a fine motif, saving Black in the nick of time.) 39...♗xe3+ 40 ♜e3 f4! 41 ♜c3 ♕h7! and the endgame is unclear as White has his weaknesses too.

37 ♗c3

Now Black must be careful because he lacks ways of opposing White on the long diagonal.

37...♘h5 38 ♜e7!



38...♜e7??

A terrible mistake, allowing White to penetrate with decisive effect; he should have played 38...♕f8! when the issue would have still been completely open. Now the ending is short and crisp.

39 ♜e7 ♕f8 40 ♜xg7!+ ♗xg5 41 ♜xa7 ♙f7 42 ♗h8+ ♙g8 43 f4 ♗g6 44 ♙e5 ♜e8 45 ♗xh5! 1-0

21

Sadvakasov – Aliev  
4th Asian ch, Doha 2003

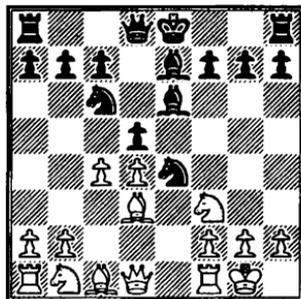
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙e7 7 0-0 ♘c6

Considered best nowadays, the knight's entrance to the game is designed to take the sting out of c2-c4.

8 c4!?

White, nevertheless, resorts to the traditional method of fighting for control of the centre, judging that ...♘c6-b4 is not such a great nuisance.

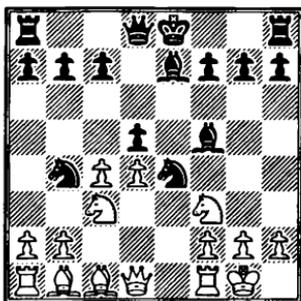
8...♙e6



Supporting the centre in this way is not very popular as now the bishop is bound to end up awkwardly placed on d5. More usual are 8...♘b4 and 8...♘f6, examined under subsequent Illustrative Games. There are, however, two more alternatives.

8...♙g4 9 ♘c3 ♘xc3 10 bxc3± has been the subject of previous Illustrative Games; 8...♙f5 has not been played much and it appears there is a good reason for this. After 9 ♘c3! the tension in the centre favours the better developed side:

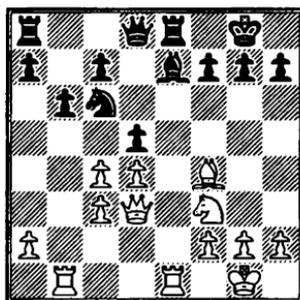
A) 9...♘b4 now is ineffective compared to 8...♘b4, e.g. 10 ♙b1 and the knight is misplaced as the following examples show.



A1) 10...c6?! hardly inspires any confidence after 11 ♖e1 ♙e6 (11...♟xc3?? 12 bxc3 ♙xb1 13 ♖xb1 1-0, Brdicko-Subrt, Prague 1991, is one of the shortest games ever played in the Petroff) 12 c5! as Black cannot justify the placement of the ♟b4; in fact, after 12...f5? (12...♟xc3 13 bxc3 ♟a6± was the lesser evil) 13 ♜b3!+- his position was already beyond repair and could not avoid going quickly downhill after the further 13...♜a5 14 ♟xe4 fxe4 15 ♙d2 1-0, in Krutina-Blatsky, Czech Republic 1999;

A2) 10...0-0! (The only move) 11 a3! ♟xc3 12 bxc3 ♙xb1 13 ♖xb1 ♟c6 14 ♜d3 (14 ♜a4!? ♜b8 15 ♖e1 may well be even better) 14...dxc4 15 ♜xc4 ♖e8! (15...♙d6 16 ♜d3! ♜b8 17 ♟g5 g6 18 ♜h3±) 16 ♖e1 (16 ♙f4!?, as in the similar position arising just below is also viable, except for the small difference that here the a3-pawn is hanging, giving Black an extra possibility in 16...♙xa3) 16...♜d6 17 ♜b2! a6 18 ♜be2 b5 and White obtains a comfortable plus after both 19 ♜a2± and 19 ♜d3±.

B) 9...♟xc3 10 bxc3 ♙xd3 11 ♜xd3 0-0 12 ♜b1 b6!? [After 12...dxc4 13 ♜xc4 ♖e8 (13...♙d6 14 ♜d3±...♟f3-g5) the strongest continuation is 14 ♙f4! ♙d6 15 ♟g5!+ e.g. 15...♜e7 16 ♜d3 g6 17 ♜h3 h5 18 ♜f3±] 13 ♖e1! ♖e8 14 ♙f4



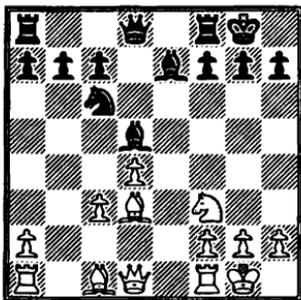
...and Black has great difficulties in regrouping his pieces successfully due to the very annoying pressure on the sensitive spots c7, f7, h7, the following lines being the proof:

B1) 14...dxc4 15 ♜xc4 ♙d6 is met with the customary 16 ♟g5!;

B2) 14...♟a5 15 cxd5 ♜xd5 16 ♙xc7 ♜xa2 (16...♜ac8 17 ♙f4 ♜xa2 18 ♜f5±) allows White to penetrate deep into the heart of the enemy position by 17 ♜f5! (17 d5?! ♙c5) 17...♙f6 (17...♜a4 18 ♟e5 ♙f6 19 ♟d7 ♙h4 20 ♜g4±) 18 ♜d7↑, obtaining a powerful initiative; the presence of the passed d-pawn is a tremendous asset for White and it is the main factor that renders significant the queen's intrusion on d7;

**B3)** 14...♞c8 (Trying to defend in a cool manner) 15 ♞e3! (a traditional rook manoeuvre after which Black cannot really wait too long with ...d5xc4) and White obtains strong pressure; a sample line is 15...dxc4 16 ♞xc4 ♞d7 (16...♞a5 17 ♞a6! ♞d7 18 ♞b1 ♠d6 19 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 20 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 21 ♠xd6 cxd6 22 ♞xa7±) 17 ♞b1 ♠d6 18 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 19 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 20 ♠xd6 cxd6 21 ♞d5! ♞d7 22 ♣g5! (22 ♣e5 ♞f5!) 22...♣d8 23 ♣e4 ♣b7 24 h4 ♞e7 25 h5± with a very passive position for Black.

9 cxd5! ♠xd5 10 ♣c3 ♣xc3 11 bxc3 0-0



Now White should manoeuvre carefully with his knight to e3, in an attempt to exploit the insecure position of the ♠d5.

12 ♣d2!?

Sadvakasov starts with the plan right away and this is a perfectly feasible way of playing; 12 ♠f4?! is premature: After 12...♠d6! 13 ♠xd6 ♞xd6= Black had managed to relieve his position in Loewenthal-Morphy, London (m/13) 1858;

12 ♞e1 is an elastic choice, preparing ♣f3-d2-f1-e3. A possible continuation is 12...♞e8 13 ♠f4 ♠d6 [13...g6?, preparing to secure a retreat for the bishop on f7 by ...f7-f5, is positionally dubious because it weakens the dark squares; after 14 ♣d2! f5 15 ♣c4 ♠f7 16 ♞b1! b6 17 ♞f3 ♞d7 (17...♠d5 18 ♞g3) 18 ♣e3± White obtained a tremendous initiative in Vainerman-Moskalenko, Kiev 1986] 14 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 15 ♠xd6 cxd6 16 ♣d2! with a slightly better position for White.

12...♠e6

Black decides to retreat immediately as there was no point in trying to maintain the bishop on its central post.

12...b5? is bad due to 13 ♞c2! h6 14 ♠xb5± Δ 14...♠xg2 15 ♣xg2 ♞d5+ 16 ♞e4 ♞xb5 17 d5+-;

12...♠d6 should be met by 13 ♞b1! [13 c4?! proves inadequate after 13...♞h4! (13...♣b4? 14 ♠b1 ♞h4 15 g3 ♞xd4 16 cxd5 ♞xa1 17 a3!± is a trap Black must avoid, e.g. 17...♣xd5?? 18 ♞c2! g6 19 ♠b2+-) 14 g3 ♠xg3! 15 fxg3 ♞xd4+ 16 ♞f2 ♣e5 17 ♠e2 ♞xa1 18 cxd5 ♞xa2±] 13...b6 (13...♞h4 14 h3) 14 c4 ♠e6 15 d5 ♣e5 16 ♠xh7+ ♣xh7 17 dxe6 fxe6 18 ♣e4↑ with a promising position for White in view of Black's weakened kingside;

Finally, 12...♞d7 13 ♣c4± is slightly better for White as the knight is well on its way towards e3.

13 ♞e1 ♞d7 14 ♣e4!?

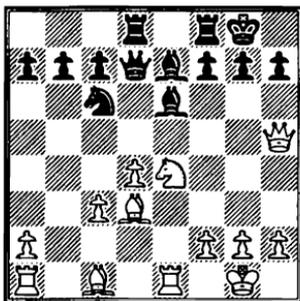
Not the most elastic choice; 14 ♞h5! was somewhat preferable.

After 14...h6 [14...g6 15 ♖h6 ♜fe8 16 ♜e4 f5 (16...♙f5? 17 ♜g5!+) 17 ♜g5 ♙f8 18 ♖h3! ♙xa2!? (18...♙d5 19 ♙f4!± Δ 19...♜xe1+ 20 ♜xe1 ♙xa2 21 ♜e2+-) 19 ♜xe8! (19 ♜e4 ♖f7 20 ♜xa2 ♜xe4! 21 ♙xe4 ♖xa2; 19 ♙e3 ♙d5 20 c4 ♜b4) 19...♜xe8 20 ♙d2 ♙b3 21 ♜b1 ♙a2 22 ♜xb7± is clearly inferior for Black] the reply 15 ♙e4!+ finely demonstrates the point of delaying ♜d2-e4.

#### 14...♜ad8

14...f5!? 15 ♜g5 ♙xg5 16 ♙xg5 ♖f7!± would have been only slightly better for White, who finds it difficult to mobilise his central pawns after ...b7-b6 and ...♜c6-a5, putting c4 under control.

#### 15 ♖h5



#### 15...g6

15...h6! was the most natural and best possibility, avoiding a serious weakening of the king's position. Play might have then proceeded 16 ♜b1 [16 ♜c5!? ♙xc5 17 ♖xc5 (17 ♙xh6!? doesn't quite work in view of 17...f5! (17...gxf6 18 ♜e3 ♙d6 19 ♖xh6 f6 20 ♜xe6 ♖g7 21 ♖h5± offers White dangerous compensation) 18 dxc5 ♙d5!±) 17...♙d5

18 ♙f4 b6 19 ♖b5 ♜e7 20 ♖xd7 ♜xd7 21 a4± is the peaceful solution, with just an edge for White in the endgame] 16...b6 17 ♜g3 [17 h3!? (Δ ♙c1xh6, Δ ♙d3-b5) 17...♖d5! 18 ♖f3 f5 19 ♜d2 ♖xf3 20 ♜xf3 ♙xa2 21 ♜a1 ♙d5 22 ♜e5 ♜xe5 23 ♜xe5± is another slightly advantageous endgame for White] 17...♙g4 18 ♖b5 ♜fe8 19 ♙f4 ♙d6 20 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 21 ♙c2!± and White has a slight initiative because he controls more space and has some attacking chances on the kingside.

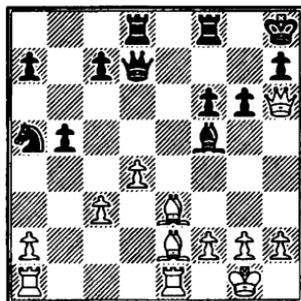
#### 16 ♖h6 ♙f5

16...f6!? would have probably been met with the traditional manoeuvre 17 ♜b1! (17 ♜g5? fxf5 18 ♙xg6 ♙f6±) 17...♜a5 18 ♜b2! ♙d5 19 ♜be2↑ guaranteeing kingside pressure. Nevertheless, this was better than the game continuation.

#### 17 ♜g5!

Now White gets the advantage of the two bishops, and lasting pressure against the enemy monarch.

17...♙xg5 18 ♙xg5 f6 19 ♙c4+ ♙h8 20 ♙e3 ♜a5 21 ♙e2 b5



**22 d5!**

A very important move, granting White a powerful outpost on d4 for his dark-squared bishop.

**22...a6!**

A prudent reaction; 22...♞xd5? 23 ♞ad1! ♞f7 (23...♞c6 24 ♙d4 ♚g8 25 ♙f3 ♞d6 26 ♙xa7+-) 24 ♙xb5+- would have left Black in a hopeless state.

**23 ♞f4!?**

Returning the queen to the theatre of action; keeping the ♞a1 on its original square does not relinquish the idea of opening up the position with a2-a4 at some critical moment later on.

The natural looking 23 ♞ad1 is by no means decisive due to 23...♘c4 24 ♙c5 ♞fe8 25 ♞h4 g5! [25...♚g7?! 26 ♙d4 ♞f7 (26...♞d6? 27 ♙xc4 bxc4 28 ♞e6!! ♞xe6 29 dxe6+- leads to an immediate debacle) 27 g4!± is what White wants] 26 ♞d4 ♚g7 27 ♙xc4 bxc4 and the opposite coloured bishops offer Black good chances of survival.

**23...♘c4**

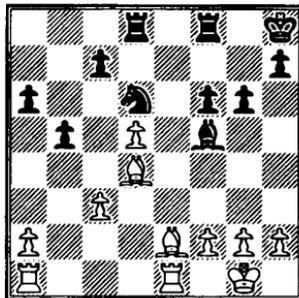
23...♞xd5 24 ♞xc7 ♘c4 25 ♞ad1 ♞d7! was another possibility, but it would have not changed drastically the course of the game; Black tries to keep the position as closed as he can to prevent the White bishops from becoming active.

**24 ♙d4 ♞d6!?**

The best practical chance; 24...♞xd5 25 ♞xc7↑ (Δ a2-a4), was also playable, but Black would have

suffered in the long run from the bad position of his king. The game continuation forces Sadvakasov to go into an ending where more accuracy is required to turn the advantage into a full point.

**25 ♞xd6 ♘d6**



**26 g4!**

A powerful move, exploiting the tremendous power of the bishop on the long diagonal to attack directly the Black king; still, it is not clear whether the advantage deriving from White's consistent play is decisive because Black's better pawn structure offers him possibilities of decent defence even with material less.

**26...♙c8?**

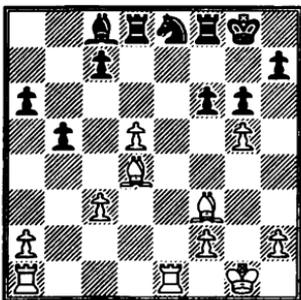
But this is too passive; he should have opted for the active 26...♙e4! 27 g5 ♙xd5 28 ♙xf6+ ♞xf6 29 gxf6 ♞f8 30 a4 ♞xf6 31 axb5 axb5 32 ♞a7 ♞f7 when he would have had certain chances of saving the game. After the move played White is objectively winning.

**27 g5 ♘e8 28 ♙f3?!**

After a finely conducted game Sadvakasov commits a small

inaccuracy; 28 c4! bxc4 29 ♖xc4+ would have been terminal as Black can scarcely move.

28...♔g8



29 d6!

A characteristic of strong players is sensing the right moment for dynamic play. In the present instance 29 d6! opens more lines for the White bishops thus avoiding a deterioration of White's positional superiority.

29...♞xd6 30 ♖c5 ♞d3?

A final mistake, but Black was already running out of really good moves; whilst it is hard to believe that 30...fxg5 31 ♖xd6 ♔xd6 32 ♖d5+ ♔g7 33 ♞e7+ ♔h6 34 ♞xc7± could have been defensible for Black, it nevertheless represented his only hope. Now White is given the chance to conclude the game quickly and efficiently.

31 ♖e4

Good enough, but 31 ♞ad1! ± would have been elegant and more conclusive.

31...♞xc3??

Probably a time pressure blunder; 31...♞d2! 32 ♖xf8 ♔xf8 33 ♖c6

♔d6 34 gxf6 ♔f7 35 ♞e7+ ♔xf6 36 ♞xc7+- would have allowed Black to last out a bit longer, although the result would have certainly not been in doubt.

32 ♖d5+ ♔g7 33 ♞e7+ ♔h8 34 ♖d4

Overpowered by the White bishops, Black resigned.

1-0

22

Zagrebelyn – A.Rodriguez  
World tch, Luzern 1993

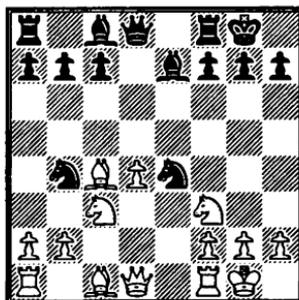
1 e4 e5 2 ♔f3 ♔f6 3 ♔xe5 d6 4 ♔f3 ♔xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♖d3 ♖e7 7 0-0 ♔c6 8 c4!? ♔b4

A strategically well-founded move as the Black uses the tempo on the ♖d3 to improve his control over d5 and, possibly, place his queen's knight there.

9 ♖e2 dxc4

This was Black's original idea, but nowadays this capture is usually postponed.

10 ♖xc4 0-0 11 ♔c3



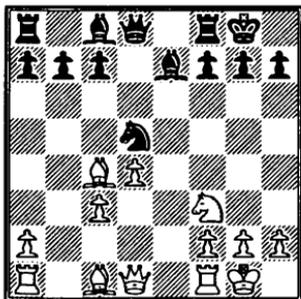
White takes advantage of the unprotected ♔e4 to gain a tempo for

his development. At this point Black has several continuations at his disposal.

### 11...♘d6

An attempt to avoid losing time by counterattacking on the White bishop, but it seems that Black should instead make a concession and retreat his knight to f6 as control of d5 is more important.

11...♗xc3 12 bxc3 ♘d5 can be met in various ways, the most interesting one in our opinion being 13 ♚d3!?. Below follows a survey of the most important possibilities:



A) 13 ♖e1 has been tried on a number of occasions, but after 13...c6 14 ♘d3 ♗e6 15 ♗b3 ♖e8 16 ♗e5 ♗f8 17 ♗d2 the position compares unfavourably with the one arising in Popovic-Capelan below, because the a1 rook is stuck in the corner and cannot assist a kingside attack; also, the king's rook absence from f1 is felt, as, had it stayed there, the advance f2-f4-f5 would have been on the cards;

B) 13 ♚c2!? is a very logical move, preparing to deploy the bishop on d3 in order to force a

weakness in the enemy castled position. After 13...♗e6 14 ♗d3 Black has a choice:

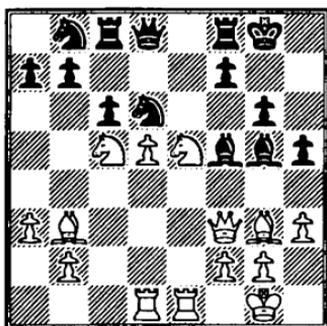
B1) 14...g6?! is inferior as it needlessly creates weaknesses on the kingside, that White might be able to exploit later on; 15 ♖b1! ♖b8 16 ♖e1 ♗f6 17 c4 ♗e7 (a position reached in Sumaneev-Grechkin, Orel 1996; 17...♗b6?! has no point and after the simple and natural 18 d5 ♗d7 19 ♗f4 ♗a4 20 ♗e5 ♗c5 21 ♗xd7 ♗xd3 22 ♚xd3 ♚xd7 23 ♚g3 ♖fc8 24 ♚bd1± Black was doomed to complete passivity in Vodicka-Pliva, Czech Republic 1999) is answered by 18 d5 ♗f5 (18...♗d7 19 ♗b2±) 19 ♗a3! ♗xd3 20 ♚xd3 ♖e8 21 ♚e3!± when the twin threats of ♚e3xa7 and ♚e3-f4 are very hard to meet;

B2) 14...h6 is the best choice. Still, after 15 ♖b1 b6 16 ♗h7+!? ♗h8 17 ♗e4 ♖c8 18 c4 ♗f6 19 d5! (19 ♗b7 ♖b8 20 ♗c6 ♗d6 21 ♖d1 ♚c8 22 ♖b3 ♗f5 23 ♚b2 ♗d7 24 ♗e5 ♗xc6 25 ♗xc6 ♚g4! allowed Black to break free in Grischuk-Pavasovic, 4th IECC, Istanbul 2003; 19 ♗d3 ♗g4 20 ♗e5!? ♚xd4 21 ♗b2 ♚d6 22 ♖fe1 ♖cd8 23 ♖e3± offers White interesting attacking chances in return for the pawn) 19...♗d7 (19...♗xe4 20 ♚xe4 ♗d7 21 ♗b2±) 20 ♗e5 ♗d6 21 f4 ♗xe4 22 ♚xe4 ♗g8 23 ♗b2→ the position seems at least slightly better for White as all his pieces are ideally placed for a kingside attack;

C) 13 ♚d3!? c6 14 ♗b3 ♖e8 15 ♗e5 ♗f8 16 ♗d2 ♗e6 17 ♖ae1+

and White had the upper hand in P.Popovic-Kapelan, Vrsac 1989;

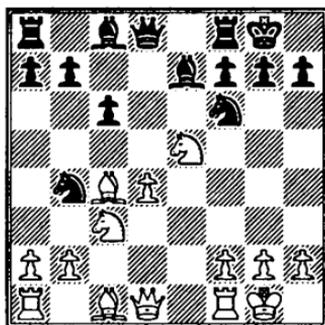
Taimanov's recommendation of 11...♙f5 12 ♘e5 ♘c6 [12...♘d6?! 13 ♙b3 c6 (13...♙f6 14 a3 ♘c6 15 ♖e1±) 14 a3 ♘a6 15 ♖e1 ♙f6 (15...♘c7 16 ♙f4 ♙f6 17 ♗f3 ♙e6 18 d5! ♘xd5 19 ♘xd5 cxd5 20 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 21 ♗xd5± Klundt-Roeder, Augsburg 1987) 16 ♙f4 ♙g5 17 ♙g3 ♖c8 18 ♗f3 g6 19 ♖ad1 h5 20 h3 ♗b6? (20...♘c7 21 d5 c5 22 ♘c4!±) 21 ♘a4 ♗d8 22 ♘c5 ♘b8 23 d5!+-



...left Black completely busted in Nataf - Harkamal Singh, FIDE Wch qual 2001. The problem for Black in these positions is that he has inadequate control of d5 and White is always able to carry out the central breakthrough d4-d5 under very favourable conditions; the effect of such an advance can be easily appreciated from the concluding moves of this game: 23...h4 24 ♙h2 ♗f6 25 dxc6 ♘b5 26 a4 bxc6 27 axb5 cxb5 28 ♘e4 ♙xe4 29 ♗xe4 ♘c6 30 ♘d7 ♗xb2 31 ♗xg6+ ♗g7 32 ♘xf8 ♙xf8 33 ♗f5 and 1-0] 13 ♘c6 bxc6, should be met by 14 ♗f3!± with a slight

advantage for White: 14...♗xd4?! is not good due to 15 ♗xf5 ♘xc3 16 ♙d3! g6 17 bxc3 ♗xc3 18 ♗e4 ♗xa1 19 ♗xe7±;

11...♘f6 is the most natural move; After 12 ♘e5 c6 the following choice is available:



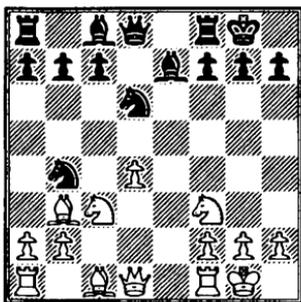
A) 13 ♙g5!? will probably transpose to 13 ♖e1! below: 13...b5? (13...♘fd5!? is our argument for choosing the 13 ♖e1 move order) 14 ♙b3 ♙b7 15 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 16 ♘e4 ♙xe5 17 dxe5 ♗e7 is an anti-positional idea for Black, employed in Kaminski-Weglarz, Polish ch Warsaw 1995, that promises White a huge advantage after either 18 ♗d4± or 18 ♗d6±;

B) 13 ♖e1! is the best move; Then, after 13...♘bd5 (13...♙f5 14 ♙b3) 14 ♙g5± we reach a position similar to the ones we have already examined under the Smyslov System (Illustrative Game No 14). Here however, 14...♙e6 should not be met by a retreat of the White bishop; White should take advantage of the vacant b3 square to post his queen there and exert pressure on d5 in a way similar to Leko-Adams, Dortmund 2002

(Illustrative Game No 30). After 15 ♖b3± the position compares favourably with Leko-Adams because the knight is much more actively placed on e5 (in that game White had played h2-h3 instead of ♖f3-e5). Play may continue 15...♗b6 (15...♗b8 16 ♘xd5 ♙xd5 17 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 18 ♙xd5 cxd5 19 ♖ac1 ♕e8 20 ♖c5 ♙xe5 21 dxe5 d4 22 ♖d5 ♗c7 23 ♗a4 d3 24 ♗b5± is a risk-free extra pawn.) 16 ♘xd5 cxd5 17 ♗xb6 axb6 18 ♙b3± with a pleasant endgame plus.

12 ♙b3

Now Black has to cope with the shortcomings deriving from the neglected d5 square.



12...♙h8

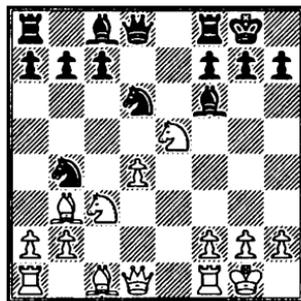
This is the move that revived the line for a while.

12...♙g4?! 13 h3 ♙h5 14 g4! ♙g6 15 ♘e5± is rightly considered by Taimanov as clearly better for White;

On 12...♙f5, 13 ♘e5↑, intending a2-a3, offers White chances of a steady plus;

12...♙f6 is an attempt to counterattack by applying pressure

on d4. By choosing 13 ♘e5! White steps up the pressure on f7, so Black is in urgent need of exchanges that would relieve his position:



A) 13...♙xe5? is simply bad in view of 14 dxe5 ♘f5 15 ♙xf7+!+-;

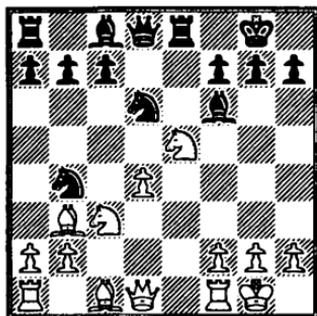
B) 13...♘f5? loses material to 14 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 15 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 16 ♗b3+-;

C) 13...c5?! is an attempt to force massive liquidation in the centre, but after 14 ♙f4! c4 (14...cxd4 15 ♗xd4 ♘c6 16 ♘xc6 ♙xd4 17 ♘xd8 ♖xd8 18 ♖ad1 ♘f5 19 ♘b5± and 1-0, was a premature resignation in Verney-Hudak, World-Cup, corr. 1998, but the Black position was depressing and the second player decided to spare the rest, all the more so because he was facing a much stronger opponent in a correspondence game) 15 ♘xc4 ♘xc4 16 ♙xc4 ♙xd4 (16...♗xd4 17 ♗xd4 ♙xd4 18 ♙d6 ♘c2 19 ♙xf8 ♘xa1 20 ♙d6 ♘c2 21 ♙d3+-) 17 ♘b5! ♘c6 18 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 19 ♗xd4 ♘xd4± the endgame was much better for White in view of his two bishops in Kuznetsov-Matsukevich, corr. 1985;

D) 13...♙f5 leaves Black without a plan after 14 ♖e1± (Or 14 ♙f4±);

E) 13...♞e8! is a very interesting move in a line that desperately needed an improvement. After 14 ♙f4 ♙e6 (Hubley-Joutsu, email 2000) 15 ♙xe6! (luring the rook on e6 so that the push d4-d5 gains in strength in all variations) 15...♞xe6 16 a3 ♘c6 (16...♘a6 17 ♞e1 c6 18 d5!±) 17 ♘xf7! (the point of 15 ♙xe6!) 17...♘xf7 18 d5 ♞e7! 19 dxc6 ♞xd1 20 ♞fxd1 bxc6 21 ♞ac1± White has a slight endgame plus but the position is certainly tenable for Black;

F) 13...♘c6 (This was considered as the main line for a long time, but a recent game featuring the novelty 13...♞e8!



...seems to change this evaluation; the point is that now Black's pawn structure gets ruined rather prematurely, a concession compared to the line 13...♞e8! above where Black succeeds in achieving first a strategically desirable exchange of light-squared bishops) 14 ♙f4 ♘f5 (14...♘a5!? 15 ♙c2 ♙f5 is an interesting conception if Black wants to avoid pawn weaknesses,

based on the correct positional idea of exchanging light-squared bishops employed in Glaser-Cody, ICCF-Cup 6/7, corr. 1990. After, however, 16 ♘d5! ♙xc2 17 ♞xc2 ♘dc4 18 ♘xf6+ ♞xf6 19 ♘xc4! ♘xc4 20 ♙g3± White maintains an edge because he will obtain an initiative in the wide open symmetrical position that arises after the exchange of the d4 for the c7 pawn due to his stronger minor piece) 15 ♘xc6 bxc6 16 d5! leaves Black suffering:

F1) 16...c5 merits analysis: 17 ♞e1! [17 ♘a4!? ♙a6 (17...♙d4!?) 18 ♞e1 c4 (18...♙e7? 19 ♞c1+- was already winning for White in A.Sokolov-G.Agzamov, USSR ch 1985) 19 ♙c2 ♘d6 20 ♞f3± also looks better for White] 17...♘d6 [17...♙d4?! 18 ♘b5±; 17...♙a6?! 18 ♞c1 c4 19 ♙a4 (19 ♙c2 ♘d6 20 ♙b1!?± is a worthwhile alternative) 19...♞b8 20 ♞d2±↑, Δ ♙f4-e5 ] 18 ♞c1 ♙d4 19 ♞d2 ♞f6 20 ♘a4 ♙f5 21 ♙g5 ♞g6 22 ♘xc5 ♙xb2 (22...♙xc5 23 ♞xc5 ♘e4 24 ♞xe4 ♙xe4 25 ♞c6±) 23 ♞xb2 ♞xg5 24 ♙a4!± and White just about manages to keep the position under control;

F2) 16...♙b7 (Best according to Sokolov, but it may not be so) 17 ♞c1! ♘d4 18 ♙e3± and White has at least a slight edge, as the following variations suggest:

F2a) 18...♘xb3 19 ♞xb3 ♙a6 (19...♞c8? 20 ♘e4+-) 20 ♞fd1±;

F2b) 18...c5 19 ♘e4! ♘xb3 20 ♘xf6+ ♞xf6 (20...gxf6 21 ♙h6 ♘h8 22 axb3 ♞g8 23 ♞xc5 ♞d6 24

♖d4±) 21 ♖xb3 ♙a6 (21...♞ab8!?)  
 22 ♜fd1! ♙a8 23 ♖c3 ♖xc3 24  
 ♜xc3 ♞xb2 25 ♜xc5 ♞xa2 26  
 ♜xc7±) 22 ♜fd1 ♞ab8 23 ♖a3 and  
 White wins a pawn for nothing as  
 23...♞xb2? is met by 24 ♙d4!+-

13 a3 ♘c6 14 h3!

White adheres to prophylaxis, preventing ...♙c8-g4 before embarking on the centralisation of his rooks. For the rest of the notes to this game we will mainly rely on Zagrebelny's analysis in the *Chess Informant*.

14...♙f6 15 ♙f4 ♙f5

A logical alternative was 15...♘f5 with the obvious aim of putting the enemy queen's pawn under pressure; it is here however that the absolute lack of control over d5 becomes felt: 16 ♘d5! ♘fxd4 17 ♘xd4 ♙xd4 (On 17...♘xd4 there follows 18 ♙xc7 ♖d7 19 ♘xf6 gxf6 20 ♙g3±) 18 ♘xc7 ♞b8 19 ♘b5 ♙e5 (19...♙xb2? 20 ♙xb8 ♙xa1 21 ♖xd8 ♞xd8 22 ♙c7 ♞d3 23 ♙c4 ♞d7 24 ♞xa1 a6 25 ♞e1! ♘e7 26 ♘d6 ♜xc7 27 ♘xc8+-) 20 ♙xe5 ♘xe5 21 ♘xa7± and Black has lost a pawn for not much.

16 ♜c1 ♜c8 17 ♞e1 h6

Intending ...♘c6-e7, c7-c6±, but White's next impedes this manoeuvre.

18 ♙e5! ♙h7 19 ♙a4!?

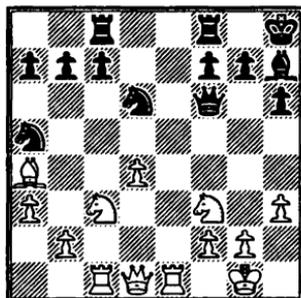
White has achieved wonderful centralisation for his minor pieces and will now try to exploit their superb placement by applying pressure all over the board. The text threatens to ruin Black's pawn

structure, practically leaving him with very little choice.

19...♘a5□ 20 ♙xf6

20 ♘d5? ♘dc4 21 ♘xf6 gxf6-

20...♖xf6



21 ♘e5!

There is no time for experiments; After 21 ♙d7?! ♞b8 22 ♘d5 ♖d8 23 ♜xc7?! ♙e4 24 ♞xe4□ ♘xe4 the position becomes unclear; on 21 ♘d5 the response 21...♖d8 22 ♘e3 b5!± reduces White's advantage to a minimum.

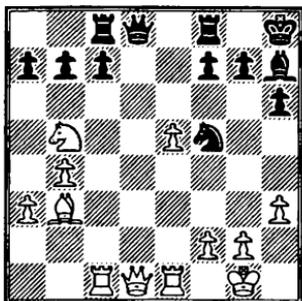
21...♖d8□ 22 b4 ♘ac4 23 ♙b3

An unfortunate situation for Black; his minor pieces are not functioning effectively, and the rest of his army is completely passive. In the next few moves he makes an effort to break free from his entanglement, only to realise a bit later that he has just worsened his position without acquiring any serious counter-play.

23...♘xe5

23...♘xa3? 24 ♞a1 ♘ab5 25 ♘xb5 ♘xb5 26 ♘xf7+-; 23...♘b6 24 a4±

24 dxe5 ♘f5 25 ♘b5!±



A well founded move, preventing Black's counter-play associated with ... $\text{d}5\text{-d}4$  and hitting several vulnerable points in the Black camp. Now White is perfectly poised for the advance  $\text{e}5\text{-e}6$  that will have a devastating effect on Black's position.

25... $\text{W}e7$

25... $\text{c}6$ ?! 26  $\text{d}6$  would have given White a tremendous passed pawn. Now, however, White is allowed to carry out his thematic advance.

26  $\text{e}6!$   $\text{K}c\text{d}8$

26... $\text{f}6$  27  $\text{W}d7!$

27  $\text{W}g4$

27  $\text{exf}7!$   $\text{K}xd1$  28  $\text{K}cx\text{d}1\text{-}$  looks completely winning, but there is nothing wrong with the text move.

27... $\text{c}6$  28  $\text{exf}7$

Such pawns are like a bone in one's throat; no wonder that this one queens after a few moves.

28... $\text{W}f6$  29  $\text{d}c7$   $\text{d}d6$

29... $\text{d}4$  30  $\text{d}c4$   $\text{b}5$  31  $\text{d}a2\pm$  would not have helped Black either.

30  $\text{W}g3$

A calm move, reducing Black to a state of misery.

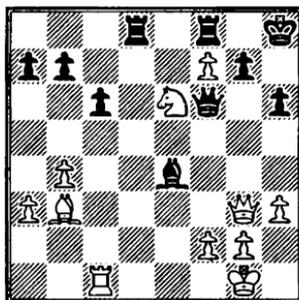
30... $\text{d}e4$

30... $\text{d}f5$ ? loses easily to 31  $\text{d}e6$   $\text{d}xe6$  32  $\text{K}xe6$   $\text{W}b2$  33  $\text{K}c3!$   $\text{d}f5$  (33... $\text{d}xf7$  34  $\text{K}e7\text{-}$ ) 34  $\text{W}e5$   $\text{K}xf7$  35  $\text{K}f3\text{-}$ ; 30... $\text{d}xf7$ ?! 31  $\text{d}e6$   $\text{K}d3$  is given in *Informant* as Black's best chance, yet after 32  $\text{d}xf8$   $\text{K}xg3$  33  $\text{fxg}3\pm$  it appears that Black must succumb to the combined efforts of White's pieces; after all, White is not behind in material and his king is much safer than Black's.

31  $\text{K}xe4!$

The fireworks start!

31... $\text{d}xe4$  32  $\text{d}e6$



32... $\text{K}d3$ ?

A little tougher was 32... $\text{d}g6$  33  $\text{d}xd8$   $\text{K}xd8$  34  $\text{W}c7$   $\text{K}f8$  35  $\text{W}xb7$   $\text{d}xf7$  (35... $\text{W}b2$  36  $\text{W}xc6$   $\text{W}xb3$  37  $\text{W}xg6$   $\text{W}xa3$  38  $\text{K}c4!\text{-}$ ) 36  $\text{d}xf7$   $\text{K}xf7$  37  $\text{W}b8\text{+}$  (37  $\text{W}xc6$ ?!  $\text{W}xf2\text{+}$  38  $\text{d}h1\pm$ ) 37... $\text{d}h7$  38  $\text{W}g3$ , although basically it would only prolong Black's torture since his position is riddled with weaknesses, not to mention the pawn minus and insecure king.

33  $\text{d}xf8\text{-}$

33  $\text{W}xd3$   $\text{d}xd3$  34  $\text{d}xf8\text{-}$  was a similar way to win.

33...♖xg3 34 fxg3 ♗d4+

34...♗b2 35 ♘g6+ ♕h7 36 ♜=♘#! would have been a most fitting conclusion, but Black decided to deny his opponent the joy of mating with two knights.

35 ♕h2 ♗f2 36 ♖g1 ♙f5 37 ♙e6! ♙xe6 38 ♘g6+ ♕h7 39 ♜=♗ ♗a2 40 ♘f4 ♙d5 41 ♗f5+

Black resigned. It is noteworthy that he lost without making any serious mistakes, which speaks volumes about the inefficiency of placing the knight on d6.

1-0

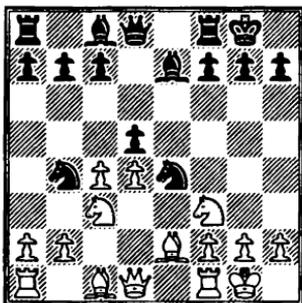
23

Kotronias – S.Marjanovic  
Greek tch, Halkidiki 2003

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙e7 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 c4!? ♘b4 9 ♙e2 0-0

A normal move, but it should have independent significance only if Black continues with 10...♙f5 or 10...b6. Normally it should transpose to 9...♙e6, featured under Illustrative Games 24-27.

10 ♘c3

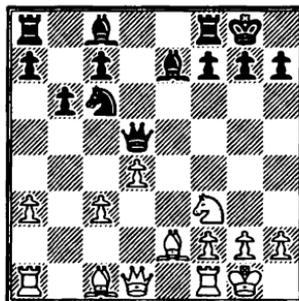


10...♙f5!?

Guarding b1 in anticipation of an opening of the b-file and preventing the return of the ♙e2 to d3. On the other hand, Black's control over d5 is now significantly weakened. 10...♙e6! is the most topical continuation, transposing to 9...♙e6;

10...♙g4?! 11 a3 ♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♘c6 13 ♗b1!± is clearly better for White;

10...b6 is a weird move, introduced into practice by Kramnik. Black intends to arrange an attacking formation by placing his bishops on b7 and d6, pointing at the White kingside. Of course, this is very difficult to achieve if the first player is alert. After 11 a3! [11 ♘e5!? ♙b7 12 ♗e1 is unclear after 12...c5! 13 ♙f3 cxd4 14 ♘xd5 f5! (Baklan-Lipinski, Bundesliga 2000)] 11...♘xc3 12 bxc3 ♘c6 13 cxd5 ♗xd5



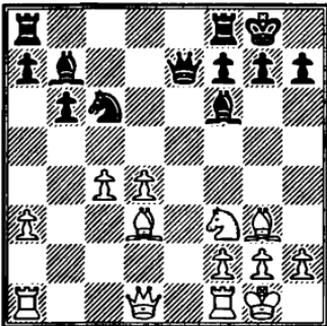
...we reach the critical position for this line; It seems that White has two good continuations (14 ♙f4 and 14 ♗e1) to choose from, with 14 ♗e1 being our favourite:

A) 14 ♔f4!? is a brutal reaction that deserves attention. After 14...♙b7 [14...♙d6 15 c4 ♚e4 16 ♙e3± (Δ c4-c5, ♙e2-d3, d4-d5) is slightly better for White; 14...♚d8!? 15 ♙d3 ♙b7 16 ♜e1 ♙f6 (S.B.Hansen-Meijers, Istanbul (ol) 2000) can be met with the thematic 17 ♚c2 h6 (with the idea ...♙c6-e7) 18 ♙h7+! ♙h8 19 ♙e4↑ preparing to double rooks on the e-file] 15 c4 Black must choose the most appropriate square for his queen:

A1) 15...♚e4!? tempts White to take on c7 in the hope of gaining time to press the White centre; White has a conservative and an aggressive solution:

A1a) 16 ♚d2 ♙d6 (16...♙f6? 17 ♙d3 ♚e7 18 d5±) 17 ♙e3± is the way to avoid risks.

A1b) 16 ♙xc7! (We like this one more) 16...♙f6 (16...♙xd4? 17 ♚xd4 ♚xe2 18 ♜fe1+-) 17 ♙d3 ♚e7 18 ♙g3



18...♜ad8?! (18...♙xd4!? 19 ♙xd4 ♙xd4 20 ♙xh7+ ♙xh7 21 ♚xd4± may be tenable for Black in view of the opposite coloured bishops) 19 d5! ♙xa1 20 ♚xa1 ♙a5 21 ♚b1! leads to a very strong

initiative for White in return for the sacrificed exchange.

A2) 15...♚d8 protects c7 but Black's position becomes passive after 16 d5: 16...♙a5 [16...♙b8 17 ♚c2 ♙d7 18 ♙d3 ♙f6 19 ♙e5 (19 ♙e5!?) 19...♙d6 20 ♜fe1 ♜e8 21 ♜e3± ] 17 ♚c2± and White had a comfortable advantage in view of the displaced minor pieces on a5 and b7 in Savanovic-Pavasovic, Bled 2000;

B) 14 ♜e1! (Kasparov's choice, and a very principled method of improving White's influence in the centre) leads to a position where Black must decide how to protect the ♙e7 from the indirect pressure along the e-file:

B1) 14...♜e8?! is a very dubious move that appeared in Kotronias-Piket, Lisbon 2001. After 15 ♙f4 Black faces a hard choice:

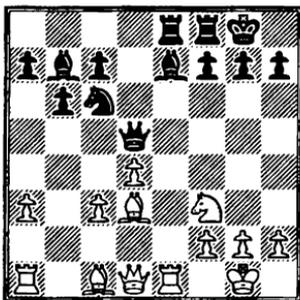
B1a) 15...♙a5? leads to a lost position for Black due to 16 ♙e5! (16 ♙xc7?! ♙b7) 16...♙b7 17 ♙f3 ♚d8 18 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 19 ♚f3! ♚c8 20 ♙xf7! ♙xf7 21 ♙g5+ ♙f6?! (21...♙g8 22 ♙xe7) 22 ♜xe8 ♙xe8 23 ♙xf6 gxf6 24 ♜e1+ ♙d7 (24...♙f7 25 ♚h5+; 24...♙f8 25 ♚xf6+ ♙g8 26 ♜e5+-) 25 c4! ♙d6 26 c5+-;

B1b) 15...♙d6?! 16 c4 ♚a5?! [the game continuation; 16...♚f5 17 ♙xd6 cxd6 18 ♙d3 ♚d7 19 ♚c2! h6 (19...g6 20 ♚d2!±...♚d2-h6, h2-h4-h5) 20 ♜xe8+ ♚xe8 21 ♜e1± Δ ♚c2-e2-e4-f4, h2-h4→, is, however, also good for White] leads to a clear plus after the natural 17 ♙d2 ♚f5 18 ♙d3! ♜xe1+

(18...♖d7 19 ♖c2±) 19 ♖xe1 ♗d7  
(19...♗xd3? 20 ♗e8+ ♔f8 21  
♗xc6+) 20 ♗e4 g6 21 ♔c3±;

B1c) 15...♔b7!? is relatively best;  
then 16 c4!? ♗d8 (On 16...♗f5?!  
the reply 17 ♔xc7 ♗d7 18 ♔f4!  
♔f6 19 ♔e3 ♗ad8 20 ♗d3!± leads  
to the consolidation of the extra  
pawn as 20...♗xd4? 21 ♗xd4 ♔xd4  
22 ♗ad1+- is simply losing) 17 d5  
♗a5 18 ♖c2↑ Δ ♔e2-d3→, is better  
for White.

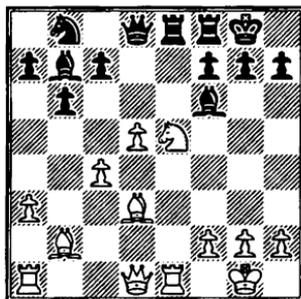
B2) 14...♔b7 (Continuing with  
the plan) 15 ♔d3 ♗ae8



16 c4 (The time has come for  
White to advance his central pawns,  
with the aim of cramping Black's  
fianchettoed queen's bishop)  
16...♗d8 [16...♗h5 17 d5 ♔d6!?  
has been suggested as an alternative;  
after 18 dxc6 ♗xe1+ (18...♔xc6 19  
♔e3±) 19 ♖xe1 ♔xc6 Black,  
indeed, has some compensation for  
the sacrificed piece, but the question  
is whether it is fully adequate after  
20 ♔e2! ♔xf3 21 ♔xf3 ♗xh2+ 22  
♗f1 ♗h1+ 23 ♗e2 ♗h4 24 ♗d1!  
(24 g4!? is also possible)] 17 d5  
♗b8 and we have arrived at a  
position first reached in the game  
Kasparov-Anand, Linares 2000

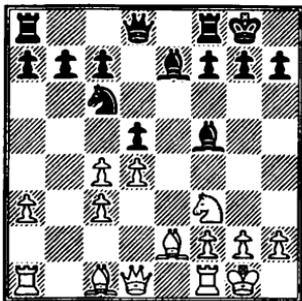
(17...♗a5? is instead simply bad  
due to 18 ♔d2).

White should have now played 18  
♗e5! as he did in a later game  
Kasparov-Olafsson, Kopavogur  
(rapid) 2000. The point lies in the  
fact that on 18...♔f6 [18...♗d7 19  
♗h5!? g6? (19...♗f6 20 ♗h3±) 20  
♗xg6!! fxg6 21 ♔xg6 ♗f6 22  
♗h6± hxg6 23 ♗xg6+ ♗h8 24  
♔b2± leads to a devastating White  
attack; 18...♔d6 19 ♔b2 ♗g5 20  
♗e4 f5 21 ♗f3 ♗h5 22 ♗h4 ♗g6  
was prematurely agreed drawn in  
Stern-Kalinichenko, World ch, corr.  
1999 since after 23 h3! White seems  
to have a strong kingside initiative,  
for example 23...♗e7 24 ♗g4 ♗e8  
25 ♗g5 ♔c8 (25...g6? 26 ♔xf5!) 26  
♗h4±] the simple 19 ♔b2



...makes it very hard for Black to  
develop his queen's knight, e.g.  
19...g6 (19...♗d7 20 ♗xd7 ♗xe1+  
21 ♖xe1 ♔xb2 22 ♗xf8 ♔xa1 23  
♗xh7±) 20 ♗d2! ♗d7 21 ♗xd7!  
♔xb2 22 ♗xf8 ♔xa1 23 ♗xg6!  
♗xe1+ 24 ♖xe1 hxg6 25 ♖xa1±  
and Garry went on to win as he was  
a pawn up for nothing.

11 a3 ♗xc3 12 bxc3 ♗c6



The diagrammed position is one of the most critical in the whole Petroff; White should delicately manoeuvre to achieve something tangible because the Black position is extremely solid. The whole strategy will of course revolve around mobilising White's main asset which is no other than his pawn centre.

### 13 cxd5

We feel that it is in White's interest to lure the queen to d5 although a majority of GMs disagree.

The alternative is 13 ♖e1!? ♜e8 14 ♙f4!? waiting for Black to capture on c4; after the practically forced continuation 14...dxc4 (14...♘a5?! 15 cxd5 ♜xd5 16 ♙xc7 transposes below, to an analysis featured under 14 ♖e1!) 15 ♙xc4 ♙d6 16 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 17 ♙xd6 cxd6 18 ♘g5 ♙g6 19 h4 ♜e7 20 ♜g4 h6 we have reached a critical position that has been the subject of a major theoretical discussion lately. Since this line is not our main suggestion we will restrict ourselves to a small survey of the current theoretical status in the variation: 21

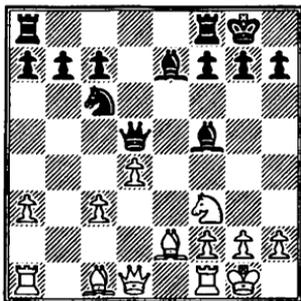
♘h3!? [21 ♘f3 ♜e4 22 ♜g3 ♙d8 23 ♜e1 ♜f5 24 ♙a2 ♜f6 25 ♘h2! ♜f5 26 ♘g4 ♘f8 27 ♙b1 ♜h5 28 ♜f4 ♙xb1 29 ♜xb1 ♙d7 30 ♘e3 ♘e7 (Grischuk-Karpov Wijk aan Zee 2003) 31 c4±] and now Black has:

A) 21...♜f6 22 ♜e1 [22 ♘f4 ♙f5 23 ♜f3 ♜e8 24 ♘h5 ♜g6 25 ♘g3 ♙e6 26 ♜e1 ♜e7 27 ♙xe6 fxe6 28 ♜e4 ♜f7 29 ♜e2 e5= Shirov-Anand, Monaco (rapid) 2003] 22...♙f5 23 ♜f3 (23 ♜g3!?) 23...♘f8!? (23...♜c8 24 ♘f4 ♙d7 25 ♜g3!±) 24 ♘f4 ♙d7 (24...♜xh4!? 25 ♙xf7 ♜g4 26 ♜xg4 ♙xg4 27 ♙d5 ♘e7□ 28 ♙xb7 ♜b8♞) 25 g3±, Anand-Karpov, Prague 2002;

B) 21...♜e4!? 22 ♜g3 [22 ♘f4!? ♘e5 23 dxe5 ♜xc4 24 exd6! ♜xc3 (24...♙d8!?) 25 ♜f1 ♙d8 26 ♘xg6 fxg6 27 d7 ♜c6 28 ♙d1± b5 29 h5 gxh5 30 ♜xh5 a6 31 ♜e5 a5 32 ♜e7 ♜c7 33 ♙d4 ♘h8 34 g3 ♜c1+ 35 ♘h2 ♜c7 36 ♜f4 ♜xd7 37 ♜f8+ ♘h7 38 ♜e4+ g6 39 ♜e8 ♘g7 1-0, Mortensen-Andersson, Sweden 2003, looks like a very important game from the theoretical point of view] 22...♘a5 [22...d5 23 ♙a2!? ♙d8 24 ♘f4 ♘e7 25 ♜f1 ♘f5 26 ♜h2±; 22...♜c8!? 23 ♙f1 ♘e7 24 ♜xd6 ♘f5 25 ♜b4 ♘xh4 26 d5 ♙f5 27 ♜xe4 ♙xe4 28 c4 ♘f5 29 f3 ♙c2 30 ♜c1 ♙a4 31 ♘f2 b6 32 ♙d3 ♘d6 33 ♘e3 ♙b3 34 ♘d4 ♘b5+ 35 ♘e3 ♘d6 36 ♘d4 ♘b5+ 37 ♘e3 ♘d6, ½-½ Topalov-Gelfand, Monaco (rapid) 2003] 23 ♙a2 ♜d3 24 ♜f1! (an important theoretical position) 24...♜xg3?

(24...♠d8!?!; 24...♙f5!?) 25 fxg3 ♚c8? (25...♜f8 26 ♘f4 ♙c2 27 ♚e1 ♚c8 28 ♚e7 ♜xc3 29 ♚e8+ ♖h7 30 ♙xf7↑) 26 h5 ♙d3 (26...♙xh5 27 ♜f5 b6 28 ♜xh5 ♜xc3 29 ♜f5 ♘c4 30 ♘f4±) 27 ♙xf7+ ♖f8 28 ♜f2 ♖e7 (28...♜xc3 29 ♜f3 ♚c1+ 30 ♖h2 ♙e4 31 ♜f4 ♖e7 32 ♙g8±) 29 ♙d5 ♜f8? (29...♜xc3 30 ♜f7+ ♖d8 31 ♜xg7 ♜xa3 32 g4±) 30 ♘f4+- Grischuk-Adams, Halkidiki 2002. Now, back to our game.

### 13...♚xd5



A very important position as White might try to force it by playing 10 a3! after 9...0-0. It is possible that after 10...♘c6 11 cxd5 ♚xd5 12 ♘c3 ♘xc3 13 bxc3 Black has nothing better than 13...♙f5.

### 14 ♙f4!?

Putting his finger on a traditionally weak spot in the Black camp, namely c7; however, it appears that the more flexible 14 ♚e1! is the best move and secures an edge as it avoids Kramnik's line of 14...♘a5!, featured below.

14 ♚e1! appears to transpose to most of the lines analysed under 14 ♙f4 whilst avoiding the Kramnik

stuff. The independent tries are the following:

A) The prophylactic 14...♜fe8 should be met by 15 ♙f4; then the path splits:

A1) 15...♚ac8! transposes to our main game and is the most critical line after 14 ♚e1!;

A2) 15...♙d6?! 16 c4 ♚e4 17 ♙e3 looks bad for Black as the bishop on d6 has no targets. This assessment was confirmed in the game Kasparov-Karpov, New York (rapid m/4) 2002, which went 17...♚ad8 18 ♚a2 ♙g6 19 ♚c1! ♘a5 20 c5 ♙e7 21 ♙b5 (21 ♚b2!?!±) 21...♚d5 22 ♚ae2? (22 ♙xe8! ♚xa2 23 ♙a4 ♘c6 24 ♙f4! would have won.) 22...c6 23 ♙g5 cxb5 24 ♙xe7 ♚c8 25 ♚e5 ♚d7 26 ♙d6 f6 27 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 28 ♜xe8+ ½-½;

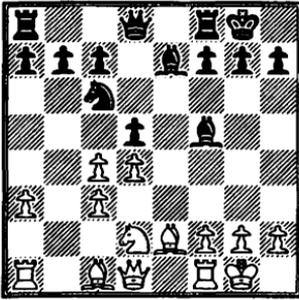
A3) 15...♘a5?! 16 ♙xc7 ♚ac8 is not convincing with the rook on e8 due to 17 ♚a4! b6 18 ♙b5 ♙c2 19 ♚xc2 ♚xb5 20 ♙f4 ♘c4 21 a4±;

B) 14...♙f6 15 ♙f4 ♚d7! (15...♘a5 transposes to 14 ♙f4 after 16 ♘d2; 15...♚ac8 16 ♘d2) 16 ♙d3! ♙g6 17 ♚a2 (This manoeuvre again!) 17...♙xd3 18 ♚xd3 ♜fe8 19 ♚ae2 ♜xe2 20 ♚xe2 b6 (20...♙e7 21 ♚b5↑) 21 ♙xc7! (21 ♙g5±) 21...♙e7 22 ♙g3 ♙xa3 23 ♚e4↑ gives White an initiative;

C) 14...♚ad8?! does not appear thematic: After 15 ♙f4 ♙d6?! (15...♚d7 16 ♙b5! ♙d6 17 ♘e5 ♙xe5 18 ♜xe5↑) 16 c4! ♚e4 17 ♙g5! ♘xd4 (17...f6 18 c5+-; 17...♚d7 18 ♙f1 ♚c2 19 ♚xc2

♙xc2 20 c5 ♙e7 21 d5!+-) 18  
 ♘xd4 ♙c5 19 ♙xd8 ♜xd8 20 ♙f3  
 ♚xd4 21 ♚xd4 ♙xd4 22 ♜ad1±  
 Black is almost lost;

D) 14...♚d6!? (A move found by Schandorff, preventing ♙c1-f4 that may be the principal reason for one to choose 14 ♙f4) 15 ♘d2!± (intending ♘d2-c4, ♙e2-f3, ♙c1-f4), also looks good for White.



The knight heads for e3 to control the centre and this may well be the only way to maintain an edge (For example, after the inferior 15 a4?! ♜fe8 16 ♚b3 ♙f6! 17 ♙a3 ♚d7 18 ♚xb7 ♜ab8 19 ♚a6 ♜b6 20 ♚c4 ♘a5 21 ♚a2 ♙e6 22 c4 ♘b3 23 a5 ♜bb8 24 ♜ad1 ♚a4 25 ♙d3 ♘xa5 26 d5 a draw was agreed in Sutovsky-Schandorff, Esbjerg 2001, but in fact Black is already slightly better). Let us take the position after 15 ♘d2! a bit further:

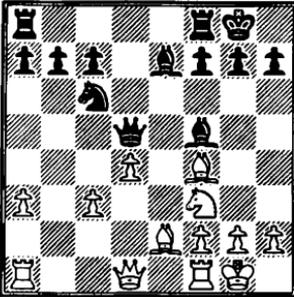
D1) On 15...♜fe8 the sequel 16 ♘c4 ♚f6 (16...♚d7 17 d5; 16...♚g6 17 ♘e3±) 17 ♙f4± underlines the weakness of c7;

D2) 15...♜ad8! 16 ♘c4 ♚d7 (16...♚g6 17 ♙f4±) is best and now White should be careful not to let his advantage slip:

D2a) 17 ♚b3 b6 18 d5? loses beautifully after 18...♚xd5! 19 ♙f3 ♚d7 20 ♙xc6 ♚xc6 21 ♜xe7 ♚b5!!±;

D2b) 17 ♘e3!?! ♙e4 18 ♙g4 f5 19 ♙h3 (Δ 20 f3; 19 f3 ♙d5 20 ♙h3 ♙e6) does not yield anything after the correct 19...♙h4! (19...♙g5?! 20 ♘xf5±; 19...b6?! 20 f3 ♙d5 21 c4 ♙e6 22 d5±) 20 g3 (20 ♚h5 ♙e7 21 f3 ♙d3) 20...♙g5 21 f3 (21 f4 ♙f6±) 21...♙xe3+ 22 ♙xe3 ♙d5 23 ♙f1 ♘a5 24 ♙f4 ♚c6 25 ♜e3 ♘c4= as Black's control over c4 cannot be challenged;

D2c) 17 ♙f4! (once more pointing at c7 proves to be the solution) 17...♜fe8 18 ♙f3! ♙d6! (18...b5 19 ♘e3 ♙g6 20 ♙g4 f5 21 ♙e2±) and we are at a final key-path: 19 ♚d2! (Preparing ♙xd6 followed by ♚f4, putting the queen on its optimal square; it is remarkable that in these positions White should rather keep the knight, since, once landing on e3, it cooperates harmoniously with the central pawns to maintain control of the centre; Instead, 19 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 20 ♘d6 cxd6 Δ ...♙f5-e4, is not so clear; 19 ♘d6 cxd6 20 ♚b3 h6! 21 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 22 ♚d5 g5= is equal because Black's activity compensates for his weaknesses) 19...b5 20 ♙xd6! cxd6 21 ♘e3± and White's edge, based on permanent elements of the position is likely to expand at every opportunity, e.g. 21...♘a5 (21...♙e4 22 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 23 ♚d3±) 22 ♚a2 ♙d3 23 a4! ♙c4 24 ♚a3 ♘b3 25 ♙g4! ♚e7 26 ♜ab1±]



### 14...♠ac8!?

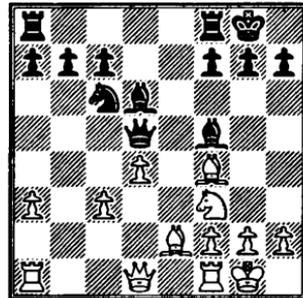
We have chosen this move as the main line not because it is the best one after 14 ♔f4, but in order to transpose back to our Illustrative Game which in fact was reached via the 14 ♠e1! move-order. Best here is considered Kramnik's 14...♘a5! but let's take a look at the alternatives in ascending order of importance:

14...♚a5?! 15 ♚b3! ♔d6 (15...♚b6 16 ♚xb6! cxb6 17 d5 ♘a5 18 ♘d4 ♔d7 19 d6 ♔f6 20 ♘b5! ♔xb5 21 ♔xb5 ♠fd8 22 ♠ad1 a6 23 ♔e2 ♠ac8 24 d7±) 16 ♔xd6 cxd6 17 ♚xb7 ♚xc3 18 ♠fc1 ♘xd4 19 ♠xc3 ♘xe2+ 20 ♘h1 ♘xc3 21 ♘d4±;

14...♚d7 has not been played much but is a logical move, requiring energetic play from White; after 15 d5!? ♘a5 16 ♘e5 ♚d8! (16...♚c8?! was played in the game Moiseenko-Torshin, Russian U18 tch, Orsk 2002. This voluntary retreat allowed White to develop a strong initiative after 17 ♚a4! b6 18 ♘c6!? ♘xc6 19 ♚xc6 ♔d6 20 ♔xd6 cxd6 21 ♚xd6 ♚xc3 22 ♚f4± thanks to the creation of a strong passed pawn. The conclusion

was 22...♚c8 23 ♠ac1 ♚e8 24 ♔f3 ♔d7 25 ♠fe1 ♚d8 26 d6 ♠c8 27 ♠c7! ♚e8 28 ♠xe8+ ♚xe8 29 h3 ♠xc7 30 dxc7 ♚c8 31 ♚d6 g6 32 ♔b7 ♚e8 33 ♚xd7 1-0) 17 ♠e1! ♔d6 18 ♚a4 f6!? (18...b6 19 ♔g3±) 19 ♘f3! ♔xf4 20 ♚xf4 ♚xd5 21 ♘d4! ♔g6 22 ♚xc7 ♠ac8 23 ♚g3 White has good attacking chances because his knight is dominant in the middle of the board. A typical line is 23...♠fe8 24 ♔g4! (provoking weaknesses on the dark squares) 24...f5 25 ♔f3 ♚c4 26 h4! (taking advantage of the induced weakening by threatening h4-h5 and ♘d4xf5) 26...♚xc3 (26...♠xe1+ 27 ♠xe1 ♚xc3 28 ♚e5↑) 27 ♠xe8+ ♔xe8 28 ♠d1 ♔a4! 29 ♔d5+ ♘h8 30 ♠d3↑ with a mounting kingside initiative;

After 14...♔d6



...the weak spot is defended, but the bishop cuts off the retreat of the Black queen, resulting in traffic jams that have a negative impact on Black's position. In addition, Black lacks the possibility of putting the White centre under pressure by ...♔e7-f6, ...♠a8-d8, as a reaction to a subsequent c3-c4. A possible

continuation is 15 c4 ♖e4 16 ♔e3 ♚ad8 (16...♚fe8 17 ♚a2! ♚ad8 18 ♚d2 will just transpose) 17 ♚a2! (A very powerful prophylactic move, preventing ...♖e4-c2 and preparing to switch the rook over to d2 in order to offer the d-pawn sufficient protection) when Black seems to be suffering in all lines:

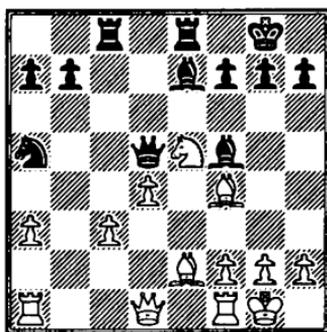
A) 17...♔g6 18 ♚d2! ♔xa3? (18...♚fe8 transposes to 17...♚fe8, 18...♔g6) is met convincingly by 19 d5! ♘e5 20 ♘g5! ♖f5 21 f4+-;

B) 17...♚fe8 18 ♚d2! ♔g6 (18...♔xa3?! 19 d5 ♔b4 20 ♔d3 ♖g4 21 ♖b1! ♔xd3 22 ♚xd3 ♖xc4 23 ♚fd1 a5 24 dxc6 ♚xd3 25 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 26 ♚xd3±) 19 c5! ♔f8 (19...♔e7 20 d5 ♘e5 21 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 22 ♔b5↑) 20 ♚e1↑ is also dangerous for Black, the point being that 20...♖d5 fails to 21 ♘e5!±;

C) 17...b6 (It appears logical to create a base on a5 for the knight, but now c4-c5 ideas gain in strength) 18 ♚d2! (18 ♚e1 ♔g6 19 ♖c1 ♚fe8 20 h3 h6 21 ♚d2± was less incisive in Kamsky-Yusupov, Moscow 1992, although White went on to win.) 18...♚fe8 (18...♔xa3? 19 ♔d3 ♖g4 20 ♔xf5 ♖xf5 21 ♖a4+-; 18...♔g6 19 ♚e1! ♔xa3 20 ♖a4 ♔b4 21 d5±) 19 ♚e1! ♔g6 (19...♘a5? 20 ♔g5! f6 21 ♔d3 ♖g4 22 h3 ♖h5 23 ♔xf5 fxf5 24 ♔e6+-; 19...♔xa3 20 ♔d3 ♖g4 21 h3 ♖h5 22 ♔xf5 ♖xf5 23 ♖a4 ♔b4 24 ♖xc6±) 20 c5! bxc5 21 dxc5 ♔e7 22 ♔b5 a6 23 ♔a4± also looks very bad for Black as the pin on the diagonal a4-e8 is more than annoying. A remark to be made is

that most people tend to defend the a-pawn by ♖d1-c1 before embarking on ♚a2-d2 in this line but we are of the opinion that it should be omitted as it gives Black time to consolidate;

Another possibility is 14...♚fe8! when White can return to the main line with 15 ♚e1, but it seems that he can afford to take the c7 pawn as Black can easily go wrong in the ensuing jungle of variations: 15 ♔xc7 ♚ac8 16 ♔f4! [16 c4?! is not good due to 16...♖e4! (whilst 16...♖d7 17 ♔f4 ♔f6 18 ♔e3 ♚cd8 19 ♚a2 ♔xd4! 20 ♔xd4 (20 ♚d2 ♚xe3 21 ♘xd4 ♚xe2+-) 20...♘xd4 21 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 22 ♖xd4 ♚xd4± is also fine for Black) 17 ♔e5 (17 ♔g3 ♔f6±) 17...♚cd8± when it becomes clear that White's position lacks coordination] 16...♘a5 17 ♘e5 and we have reached a major sub-division:



A) 17...♚xc3 allows White to organise tremendous pressure on f7 after 18 ♔d2 ♚c2 19 ♔xa5 ♖xa5 20 ♔c4 ♚f8 21 ♖f3±;

B) 17...♔d6 18 ♖a4!± is at least slightly better for White, e.g. 18...a6?! 19 ♔f3±;

C) On 17...f6 the typical reply 18 ♘g4! (Δ 19 ♘e3), guarantees a considerable advantage, even after the best retort 18...♙e4!: 19 ♖g3 ♙xc3 20 ♘e3 ♖g6 21 ♖f3 ♙d3 22 ♘d5±;

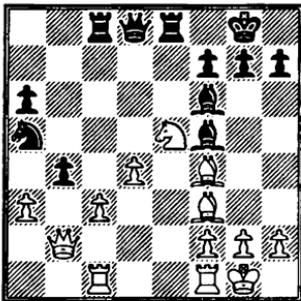
D) 17...a6 should be met by 18 c4! (18 ♙a4 ♙d8! =) 18...♙d8 19 c5 ♖f6 20 ♙e1±;

BE) 17...♖f6! (Trying to get rid of the ♘e5 as quickly as possible in order to set-up a light square blockade) and here White has two good lines:

E1) 18 ♙a4!? a6! 19 ♖f3 is tremendously complicated:

E1a) 19...♖e4? loses to 20 ♖g4!! ♖xg2 21 ♙fd1! ♘c6 (21...♖h1? 22 f3 ♖xe5 23 dxe5+-) 22 ♘xc6 ♙xc6 23 c4! ♙e4 24 ♙e1 ♙xe1+ 25 ♙xe1 ♙xe1+ 26 ♘xg2 ♙e4 27 ♖f3+-;

E1b) 19...♙d8! 20 ♙b4 b5! (20...♖e7 21 ♙b2 ♖d6 22 a4±) 21 a4! ♖e7 (21...♖xe5 22 ♖xe5 ♙c4 23 ♙b2 bxa4 24 ♖e2±) 22 ♙b2 b4! 23 ♙ac1!



...is a long variation that leads to some unexpectedly beautiful lines; it is only in the last of them that

Black manages to defend somehow, yet it is not clear whether he can save himself in the long run:

E1b1) 23...bxc3? 24 ♙xc3 ♙xd4 25 ♙xc8 ♙xb2 26 ♙xe8+ ♖f8 27 ♖d5+-;

E1b2) 23...♙xc3? 24 ♙xc3 ♙xd4 25 ♙c8 ♙xb2 26 ♙xe8+ ♖f8 27 ♖d5+-;

E1b3) 23...b3? 24 c4! f6 25 ♖d5+ ♘f8

E1b3a) 26 ♘f7 ♙d7 (26...♙b6 27 c5+-) 27 ♖d2±;

E1b3b) 26 ♘f3 26...♖d3 27 ♙fe1 ♖c2 28 ♙xc2 bxc2 29 ♙a2 ♖d6 30 ♖xd6+ (30 ♖e3 ♘xc4! 31 ♖xc4 ♙c7) 30...♙xd6 31 ♙xe8+ ♙xe8 32 ♙xc2±;

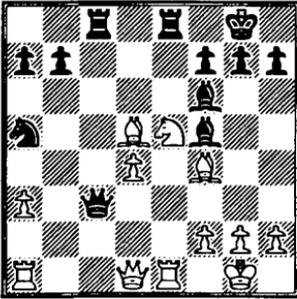
E1b4) 23...f6! 24 ♘g4 bxc3 25 ♙xc3 ♙xd4 26 ♙xc8 ♙xb2 27 ♙xe8+ ♘f7 28 ♙a8 ♙b4

E1b4a) 29 g3?! ♖e4! (29...♖d3 30 ♙b8! ♙xa4 31 ♙e1 ♘g6 32 h4!+-) 30 ♖xe4 ♙xe4 31 ♙xa6 ♘c6 (Δ ...♘d4) 32 h3 h5 33 ♘e3 g5 34 ♖c7 ♘d4±;

E1b4b) 29 ♖c7! ♖d3 (29...♖xg4 30 ♖xa5 ♙xa5 31 ♖xg4 ♙xa4 32 ♖e2 a5 33 ♙a7±) 30 ♙d1 ♖c2 31 ♖d5+ ♘g6 32 ♘e5+! fxe5 33 ♙xa6+ ♖f6 34 ♖xa5 ♙xa4 35 ♖c6 ♙f4 36 ♖e8+ ♘f5 37 ♙e1±; here the rooks look better than the queen, so 18 ♙a4 may well be better than 18 ♖f3 below.

E2) 18 ♖f3 (The most principled, yet, as we have noticed it may not be best) 18...♙b3!? (18...♖e4!? 19 ♙e1 ♖xf3 20 ♙xf3 ♙xf3 21 ♘xf3 ♙ed8± might be tenable, but of

course Black is a pawn down) 19 ♖e1 ♜xc3 (19...♜xd1 20 ♜axd1 b5 21 ♖g4 ♙e7 22 ♖e3±) 20 ♙d5! and although, even here White maintains strong pressure, we have not been able to find a win. The following lines are quite impressive though, and worth quoting:



**E2a)** 20...♙xe5 21 ♙xe5 ♜ed8 should be met with the rook switch 22 ♜e3! [22 ♙a2!? ♖c6! (22...♙c2 23 ♜g4 ♙g6 24 h4 ♖c6 25 h5 ♖xe5 26 dxex ♜d4 27 ♜g5±) 23 ♜e3 ♜c2±] 22...♜b2 23 ♙a2 ♙c2 24 ♜f1! (Δ 25 d5) 24...♜e8 25 ♜g3 which after 25...♙g6 26 f4! ♖c6!± leads to a very interesting position worth analysing; (26...♜c3? is instead bad due to 27 f5 ♜xg3 28 fxg6 ♜xg2+ 29 ♖h1! ♖h8 30 gxf7 ♜f8 31 ♜xg2 ♜xa1+ 32 ♜g1+-);

**E2b)** 20...♙e6! 21 ♙xe6 fxe6 (21...♜xe6? 22 ♜c1+-) 22 ♜c1 ♜b3 (22...♜xa3? 23 ♜a1!+-) 23 ♜h5 ♙xe5 24 ♙xe5 leads to a very interesting attacking position for White:

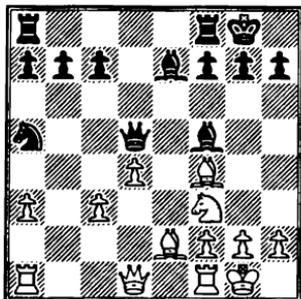
**E2b1)** On 24...♖c4? the beautiful sacrificial continuation 25 ♜b1! ♜xa3 26 ♙xg7!! ♖xg7 27 ♜g5+

♖f7 28 ♜e4 ♜e7 29 d5+- decides the issue;

**E2b2)** Best is 24...♖c6□ and here it appears that the self-suggesting 25 ♙xg7! (25 ♜e3 ♜d5± may objectively be best, but the sacrifice is very tempting) 25...♖xg7 26 ♜g5+ does not win, as the following surprising defence is available: 26...♖f7 27 ♜f4+!? (27 ♜e3? is even losing after 27...♜d5! 28 ♜f3+ ♜xf3 29 gxf3 ♜g8+-; 27 ♜h5+ ♖g7 28 ♜g5+ is a perpetual) 27...♖e7! (27...♖g8? 28 ♜e3 ♖xd4 29 ♜g3+ ♜xg3 30 ♜xg3+-) 28 ♜b1 [28 d5!? is a nice try, but Black nevertheless draws: 28...♜xd5 29 ♜cd1 ♜c5□ 30 ♜h4+ ♖f8 and now all three continuations available to White are incapable of securing anything tangible: On 31 ♜e3, 31...♜c7! beats off the attack; 31 ♜xh7 is refuted by the centralising 31...♜f5! (31...♜c3?! 32 ♜e3 ♜e7! 33 ♜h6+ ♜g7 34 ♜f3+ ♖e8 35 ♜h5+ ♜f7 36 ♜g3 ♜f8 37 ♜g6↑ allows White to build a strong attack.) 32 ♜xb7 e5±; 31 ♜f6+ (Best) 31...♖g8 32 ♜e3 ♖e7! 33 ♜xe6+ ♖h8 34 ♜f6+ ♖g8= and White has nothing better than to acquiesce to the draw] 28...♜d5 29 ♜xb7+ ♖d8 30 ♜f6+! [After 30 ♜c1!? ♜xd4 31 ♜f3 ♜e7 the apparently crushing 32 ♜bb1?! allows Black to uncork the stunning defence 32...♜ec7!! 33 ♜d1 (33 ♜e1 ♖e7±) 33...♖e7!!±; Better in this line is 32 ♜f8+! ♜e8 33 ♜f7 ♜d6 34 ♜h5 e5 35 ♜d1 ♖d4 36 ♜g5+=] 30...♜e7 31 ♜h8+ (31 ♜c1? ♜f5!) 31...♜e8 32 ♜xh7 a6±. In the final position Black still has a few

technical difficulties to overcome but should be able to draw.

14...♖a5!

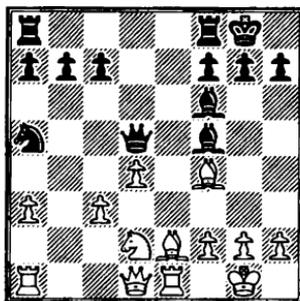


...is a pawn sacrifice that has been adopted by Kramnik and Sakaev, with the purpose of obtaining positional compensation in case of its acceptance. Black judges that he will be able, after White wins the c-pawn, to attack the central pawn duo effectively with the aid of his rooks and bishops. In case White does not accept the offer Black hopes to set-up a light square blockade. It seems to us that Black should equalise in both cases, but in the latter one he has to avoid more pitfalls.

A) 15 ♖e1 has not been very popular; Black has several options, but it looks as though the most radical one (15...♗d6!) leads to complete equality. But let's see all of them in order of importance:

A1) 15...♗f6?! leads to positions unpromising for Black; it is essential for White to know how to handle them as they can arise also from the 14 ♖e1! ♗f6 move-order.

After 16 ♗d2! Black has available the following possibilities:



A1a) If he sits and waits by 16...♗d7?! 17 ♗f3 ♖fe8 he gives his opponent time to build pressure on the kingside by employing the familiar plan of doubling rooks on the e-file: 18 ♗e4 ♗e7 19 ♗g3 ♗g6 20 ♗g4 ♗c6 21 ♗f3 ♗d7 22 ♖a2! ♗f8 23 ♖ae2 ♗xa3 (Surrendering the file by 23... ♖xe2?! allowed White to obtain a crushing superiority after 24 ♗xe2 c6 25 h4! h6 26 h5 ♗h7 27 a4 ♗d8 28 ♗g4! f5 29 ♗h3 ♗f7 30 ♗d3 ♗c4 31 ♗xf5+- in Polgar-Nielsen, Las Vegas 1999) 24 ♗g4 ♗b5 25 ♗xc7 ♗c4 26 h4± and White is better due to his optimally placed pieces and passed d-pawn;

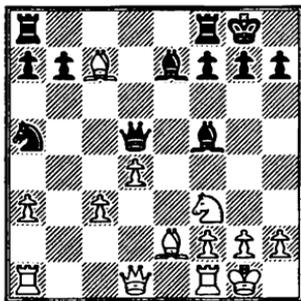
A1b) After 16...c5!? (Trying to work up some action) 17 ♗f3 ♗d8 18 ♗e4 ♗xe4 19 ♖xe4 cxd4 20 cxd4 ♗c6 21 ♗e3 ♗d6 (21... ♗e7?!±) 22 ♖b1 ♖ad8 23 d5! (23 ♗a4?! b5!= instead, was agreed drawn in Short-Lalic, Isle of Man 1999, due to the obvious follow-up 24 ♖xb5 ♗xd4) White seems to be doing quite well:

A1b1) 23...♗xd5 24 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 25 ♖xb7 ♖a5 26 a4± is clearly better for White because his bishops are raking the queenside; it looks as



21 d5 a6 22 ♖xb7 ♘e5 23 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 24 ♜f1 ♖xc3 25 ♖xa6±) 19 ♘h4!? g6! (19...♞ae8 20 ♘f5 ♖f6 21 ♞e3±) 20 ♖e3 ♘c4! (20...♖f6 21 ♘f3 ♘c4 22 ♖h6 ♞ae8 23 ♘g5 ♖g7 24 ♖h4±) 21 ♖g5!? ♞ae8 22 ♘f5 ♖d8 leads to a position where despite the menacing appearance of his pieces the best White can achieve is a draw by 23 ♘e7+ ♔g7 24 ♘f5+ ♔h8 25 ♞e7 gxf5 26 ♖f6+=; all this means that in Kramnik's line White should definitely accept the pawn sacrifice if he wants to maintain chances of an advantage;

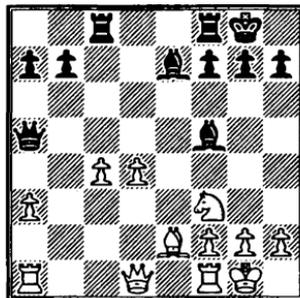
B) 15 ♖xc7 and now:



B1) 15...b6?! is double-edged, yet after the correct 16 ♔g3! [16 ♔f4?! ♞ac8 17 ♔d2 ♔d6 18 ♞e1 h6 19 a4 ♞c7 20 h3 (Krakops-Illescas, European tch, Leon 2001) 20...♔e4!± looks slightly better for Black; The manoeuvre ♔c7-f4-d2 is too passive a way of guarding White's backward c-pawn] 16...♞ac8 17 ♔a6! ♞xc3 18 ♖e1! ♞xf3 19 ♖xe7 ♞c3 20 ♞ac1! (20 ♔d6 ♞a8 21 ♖e5 ♖xe5 22 dxe5 ♘b3!)=) 20...♞c6 21 ♖xa7 ♖xd4 22 ♞xc6 ♘xc6 23 ♖c7± White emerges with

a small but lasting advantage due to his bishop pair;

B2) 15...♞ac8! (With this move Black renounces any chance of playing for a win as the position now becomes too simplified) 16 ♔xa5 ♖xa5 17 c4

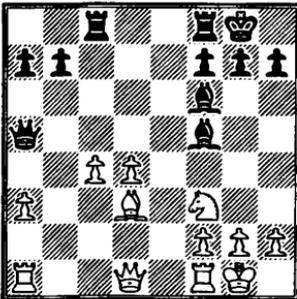


...and we have arrived at a position critical for the evaluation of the 14 ♔f4!? variation; Black has certain compensation for the pawn, but the road to draw is rather narrow:

B2a) 17...♖c3 is a relatively new idea, played in Naumann-Kopylov, Dresden 2000. After, however, 18 ♖a4! [intending c4-c5, ♖a4-b4; 18 ♖c1 ♖a5 19 ♖f4 ♔f6 20 ♘e5 (20 c5 ♔g6 21 ♞a2 ♞fd8 22 ♞d1 b6 23 cxb6 axb6±) 20...♔xe5 (20...g6? 21 ♘d7±; 20...♔e6 21 ♖e4 ♔xe5 22 dxe5 b6 23 ♔d3±) 21 ♖xe5 (21 dxe5 ♔g6! 22 ♞fd1 ♞c5=) 21...♖xe5 22 dxe5 ♞c5 23 f4 ♞fc8 is equal according to Kopylov, but even this evaluation looks debatable] we think that the queen's excursion to c3 merely helps White;

B2b) 17...♔f6! (This move has been the automatic choice here;) 18 ♔d3!? [The most tricky move; 18

♖b3 has failed to secure an advantage on a number of occasions, the most typical one being 18...♖b6 19 ♖xb6 axb6 20 ♜fd1 ♜fd8 ½-½, Wahls-Alterman, Bundesliga 1998; Alterman goes on to remark that after 21 ♜a2 ♙e4 22 d5 it is essential to play 22...b5!= which secures equality by opening up the position for the bishops; 18 ♜a2 is another unfortunate attempt to get the advantage that allowed Black to draw effortlessly after 18...♜fd8 19 ♖b3 ♖b6 20 ♜b2 ♖xb3 21 ♜xb3 b6 22 d5 ♜e8 23 ♜e3 ♙g4 24 ♜d1 ♙xf3 25 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 26 ♙xf3 ♙e5 27 g3 ♙d6 28 a4 a5 29 h4 g6 30 h5 ♙g7 31 ♙f1 ♜e7 32 ♙e2 ♜e8 33 ♙d3 ♙f6 34 ♙g2 ♜e5 35 hxg6 hxg6 36 ♜h1 ♙g7 37 ♙f3 ½-½ in Ponomariov-Sulypa, Donetsk (zt) 1998] leads to a critical position where Black must seek refuge in opposite coloured bishops in order to equalise:



**B2b1)** 18...♜fd8?! 19 ♙xf5! (19 ♜b1? ♙g4 20 h3 ♙xf3 21 ♖xf3 ♜xd4 22 ♜xb7 ♜cd8 23 ♙e2 transposes to a position examined under Zhang Zhong-Karpov below) 19...♖xf5 20 ♖a4 ♙xd4! (20...a6?! 21 c5! g6 22 ♜ab1 ♖d5 23 ♜b4±

allowed White to consolidate his advantage in Palac-Fercec, Croatian ch, Pula 2000) 21 ♙xd4 ♜xd4 22 ♖xa7 ♜dxc4 23 ♖xb7 h6± may be tenable but Black will certainly suffer;

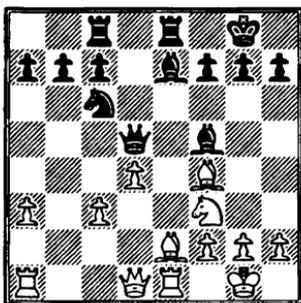
**B2b2)** 18...♙g4! (It is most thematic to opt for opposite-coloured bishops in order to weaken the White centre) 19 h3 ♙xf3! [19...♙h5?! 20 g4 ♙g6 21 ♖b3 ♖c7 22 ♙xg6 fxg6 (22...hxg6 23 g5) 23 c5+ ♙h8 24 ♜ab1 b6 25 ♜fc1 ♖f4 26 ♖e3± is good for White] 20 ♖xf3 ♜cd8! [20...♜fd8 21 ♜ab1 ♜xd4 22 ♜xb7 ♜cd8 23 ♙e2 leads to a position that Black might be able to hold but is in any case pleasant for White who can try for a long time. For example 23...♖e5 (23...♜d2 24 ♖h5±; 23...♜d7 24 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 25 ♜b1↑) 24 ♖xa7! (24 ♖h5 ♖xh5 (24...♖e6 25 ♜xa7 ♜e8 26 ♙d1 ♖xc4 27 ♙c2 g6 28 ♖f3 ♖c5 29 ♜b7±) 25 ♙xh5 g6 26 ♙e2, is less good due to 26...♜e4! (26...♜e8 27 ♙f3±) 27 ♜e1 ♙c3 28 ♜c1 and Black has excellent chances of drawing after either 28...♙d2± or 28...♜xe2?! 29 ♜xc3 ♜d1+ 30 ♙h2 ♙xf2 31 ♜xa7 ♜dd2 32 ♜g3±) 24...♜d2 (24...♜f4 25 ♖h5) 25 ♜e1 ♜e8 26 ♜a8!±] 21 ♜ab1 ♙xd4 22 ♜xb7 g6 23 ♙e4 ♜d6 (Zhang Zhong-Karpov, Cap d'Agde 2000) and now 24 ♙d5!? ♜f6 25 ♖d3 sets the last trap but after the correct 25...♙b6! the game should end in a draw (25...♙c5?! 26 ♜b5 ♖c7 27 ♖c3 ♜b6 28 a4±; or 25...♖c5?! 26 ♖d2 ♜e8 27 ♙h1!± merely jeopardize Black's defensive task). For example, after the best 26

h4! (Otherwise ♖f8-e8-e1 draws) there comes 26...♖xf2! (26...h5? 27 g3± Δ 27...♗e8?? 28 ♙xf7+!+-) 27 ♖xf2 ♗e1+ 28 ♖h2 ♗xf2 29 ♖h3! and White's plus is merely symbolic.

**15 ♗e1!**

This is the best move here; 15 ♘d2 does not promise anything; after 15...♘a5 16 ♙f3 ♗d7 17 ♘e4 b6 18 ♘g3 ♙g6 19 ♙g4 f5 20 ♙h5 ♙d6 21 ♗f3 a draw was agreed in Sax-Haba, Bibinje 2001.

**15...♗fe8!**



In a roundabout way we have transposed to one of the most critical tabias in the whole Petroff; this position can, of course, be reached also via the 14 ♗e1! move order (with 14 ♗e1! ♗fe8 15 ♙f4 ♗ac8), which, as we have already pointed out is the best one. 15...♙f6!? is a logical alternative, yet after 16 ♘d2! White seems able to maintain some pull [whilst 16 h3!? ♗fe8 (16...♘a5 17 ♘e5 ♗b3 18 ♘g4! ♙e7 19 ♘e3±) 17 ♘h2 transposes to Kramnik-Anand below] After 16 ♘d2! Black has to deal with the knight manoeuvres ♘d2-b3-c5, ♘d2-e4-g3 or

♘d2-f1(c4)-e3 as well as with pressure on the diagonals h1-a8 and h3-c8 arising after a redeployment of the ♙e2 to f3 or g4. Below follows a survey of the practical experience from this position:

A) 16...♘xd4?? (Panarin-Afonin, Rybinsk 2001) loses at once to 17 ♙c4! ♗d7 18 cxd4 ♗xd4 19 ♗f3+-;

B) 16...♗d7?! 17 ♘b3! b6 18 ♙b5± was already critical for Black in Jasinski-Taksrud, EU ch, corr. 1994;

C) 16...♗d8! (intending ♘c6xd4 or simply ...♘c6-e7) is the latest word in non ...♘c6-a5 solutions and deserves a closer look; After 17 ♙g4!? (17 ♙f3 ♘xd4! 18 cxd4 ♗xd4 19 ♙e3 ♗xa1 20 ♗xa1 ♙xa1 21 ♖xa1 b6 is just an unclear ending; 17 ♘b3 ♘e7! 18 ♙f3 b6= was equal in Lautier-Beikert, National I, Bordeaux 2003) 17... ♙xg4 18 ♗xg4 ♘e7 19 ♘e4 ♘g6 20 ♙g5 ♙xg5 21 ♘xg5 c5 22 ♗e3 cxd4 23 cxd4 ♗d5 24 ♗ael White maintains some pressure due to the idea h2-h4-h5, but it is quite likely that more improvements are available at an earlier stage;

D) 16...♘a5 (The most natural reply, but now the knight is far from the kingside) 17 ♙f3 ♗d7 18 ♘e4 ♙e7 19 ♘g3 ♙g6 20 ♙g4! f5 21 ♙f3 ♙d6 is a very logical development of events when the weakness inflicted upon Black's castled position gives White something to work on: 22 ♙e5!? ♖h8 (22...♗fe8? 23 ♙xb7! ♘xb7 24 ♗b3+ ♗f7 25 ♗xb7± as in

Konguvel-Suvrajit, Calcutta 2002, is clearly bad for Black; 22...♖ce8!? looks like a possible improvement, e.g. 23 ♖d5+ ♖f7 24 ♖xf7+ ♗xf7 25 f4± with just an edge for White.) 23 h4! ♖f7 24 h5 ♜g8 25 ♗c2 ♖c4 26 ♚ab1 b6 27 ♗c1! ♖ce8 28 ♗f4 and White's kingside initiative was growing to alarming proportions in Kasparov - Dao Thien Hai, Batumi (rapid) 2001. The rest of the game saw Kasparov demonstrate the attacking potential of his position in exemplary fashion: 28...♖xe5 29 ♚xe5 ♚xe5 30 dxe5 ♖e6 31 h6! g6 32 ♜e2! c5 33 ♗g3 ♜c4 34 ♜f4! ♜xe5 35 ♚d1 ♜xf3+ 36 ♗xf3 ♗f7 37 ♗c6! ♖c8 38 ♚e1 g5? (38...♚d8!?) 39 ♜h3!± ♖b7 40 ♗d6 ♗f6? (40...♖c4!?) 41 ♚e6 ♗xc3 42 ♚e7?! (42 ♗e7!+-) 42...♖c8? (42...♗a1+ 43 ♜h2 ♗f6±) 43 ♚g7+ ♗xg7 44 hxg7 ♜xg7 45 ♜xg5 and Black resigned;

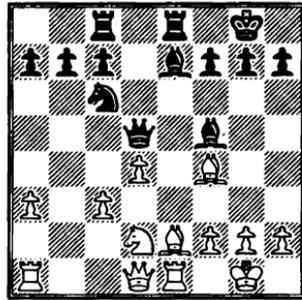
15...♚fd8 on the other hand, does not appeal very much to us because the rook has no targets along the d-file. After 16 h3 [16 ♖f1!? is also interesting as 16...♖f6 (Anand-Ivanchuk, Monaco blindfold 1999) can be met with 17 c4!? ♗a5 18 d5! ♖xa1 19 ♗xa1 ♜b8 20 ♖e5 f6 21 ♖c3 ♗a4 22 ♜d4=] 16...♖f6 17 ♜d2 (17 ♜h2!?)± 17...♗d7 18 ♖f3 ♜a5 (18...♜xd4!?) looks like a better fighting chance, e.g. 19 cxd4 ♗xd4 20 ♖xb7 ♗xf4 21 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 22 ♗e2 ♖e6 23 ♚ad1±) 19 ♜e4 ♖xe4 (19...♖e7? 20 ♜g3 ♖g6 21 ♖g4 f5 22 ♜xf5! ♖xf5 23 ♚xe7 ♗xe7 24 ♖xf5 ♚b8 25 ♗h5 g6 26 ♗g4+-) 20 ♚xe4 (20 ♖xe4!?

c5 21 ♗f3± looks clearly better for White as 21...cxd4? loses to 22 ♗h5+-) 20...♚e8 21 ♚e3 ♚cd8 22 ♖g4 ♗c6 23 ♗f3 (Naiditsch-Lingnau, Senden 2000) 23...♗xf3 24 ♖xf3± the ending is at least slightly better for White because of his powerful bishop pair.

#### 16 c4

Mobilising the pawn centre with gain of time looks like the most thematic continuation, but White avails himself of two alternatives that are not devoid of venom in spite of their slow, preparatory nature:

16 ♜d2! is linked with the usual idea of transferring the knight to e3. Likely follow-ups include:



A) 16...♜a5 17 ♖f3 (17 ♜f1?! ♗b3! 18 ♗c1 ♜c4=) 17...♗d7 18 ♜f1 (18 ♜b3?! ♜xb3 19 ♗xb3 b6 20 a4 ♖d6 21 ♖e3 ♖e4! was dead equal in Acs-Haba, Czech open 2003) 18...♖d6 19 ♚xe8+ ♚xe8 20 ♖xd6 cxd6 21 ♜e3±, which looks promising for White because of his superior minor pieces and

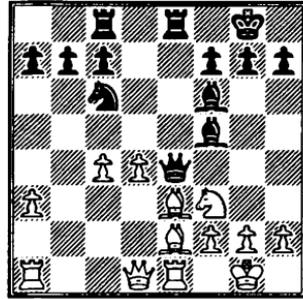
B) 16...♖d6 17 ♖xd6 when we have two choices for Black:

B1) 17...♖xd6 18 ♘c4 ♗f6 19 ♕f3± is slightly better for White, a sample line being 19...♞xe1+ 20 ♗xe1 b6 21 ♗e2!? ♘e7 22 ♞e1 ♘g6 23 ♘e3 ♘f4 24 ♗a6 ♞e8 25 ♗xa7 ♗g6 (25...♗g5 26 ♗xc7 ♘h3+ 27 ♖f1 ♕d3+ 28 ♕e2 ♘xf2 29 ♗g3±) 26 ♖h1 ♘d3 27 ♞f1 ♗g5 28 ♗xc7 ♘xf2+ 29 ♞xf2 ♗xe3 30 ♞f1 ♗f2 31 ♞g1 h6 32 ♗g3 ♗xg3 33 hxg3 ♞e3 34 ♞c1±;

B2) 17...cxd6!? is more interesting, yet 18 ♘c4± offers White chances of an edge;

16 h3!? is a very original idea by Kramnik, creating the possibility ♘h2-g4-e3; this route is better than the usual one ♘d2-f1-e3 because the knight from g4 attacks the bishop on f6 and in case of its withdrawal to e7 has the additional possibility of jumping to e5; the sequel 16...♕f6 17 ♘h2! ♗a5 18 ♕d2 ♞cd8 19 ♕f3! h6 20 ♘g4 ♕xg4 21 hxg4 ♕g5 22 ♕xg5 hxg5 23 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 24 ♗d3 ♘d8! 25 g3 c6 26 ♖g2 ♘e6 27 ♞b1 ♞e7 28 c4 ♗c7 29 ♞h1 ♘f8 30 ♗f5 ♞d7 31 d5 cxd5 32 ♕xd5± left White slightly better in Kramnik-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2003, but Black managed to draw after an arduous and stubborn defence: 32...♗d8 33 a4 b6 34 a5 bxa5 35 ♞a1 ♗f6 36 ♞xa5 ♞c7 37 ♗xf6 gxf6 38 ♖f3 ♘e6 39 ♖e3 ♖f8 40 f4 gxf4+ 41 gxf4 ♘c5 42 ♞b5 a6 43 ♞b8+ ♖e7 44 ♞a8 ♖d6 45 ♖f3 ♖e7 46 ♖g3 ♞d7 47 ♞c8 ♘d3 48 ♕e4 ♘b4 49 c5 ♞d8 50 ♞c7+ ♞d7 51 ♞c8 ♞d8 ½-½

16...♗e4 17 ♕e3 ♕f6



18 ♞a2!

A multi-purpose move, unpinning the d-pawn and preparing to switch over the rook to d2 or e2, according to circumstances.

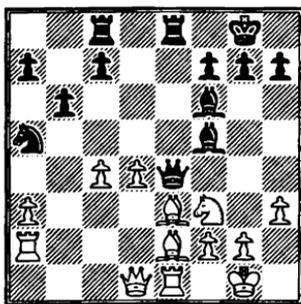
18 ♞c1!? is an alternative method of unpinning the d-pawn; after 18...b6 (18...♘a5 19 ♕d2 b6 20 c5 ♗a8 21 ♗a4 ♕e4 22 ♕xa5 bxa5 23 ♗xa5 ½-½, Goloschapov-Motylev, Dubai 2003, can hardly be considered a test of 18 ♞c1!?) 19 h3 ♕g6 20 c5! ♘e7 21 ♕a6 ♞cd8 22 ♕g5 White's plan became evident in Kasparov-Karpov, New York (rapid m/2) 2002, as Black cannot avoid a ruining of his kingside pawn structure. The remainder of the game allowed the chess world to witness an unexpected turn of events for an encounter of this calibre: 22...♗c6 23 cxb6 ♗xb6 24 ♕xf6 gxf6 25 ♗a4! c6 26 ♕f1 ♖f8 27 ♞e3 ♞b8 28 g3!? ♞ed8 29 ♕g2 ♘f5? 30 ♞xc6! ♗b2 31 ♞ec3 ♖g7 32 ♗xa7 ♗a1+ 33 ♞c1 ♞b1 34 ♞xb1 ♗xb1+ 35 ♖h2+- ♗a2 36 ♗c7?! (36 g4+-) 36...♞e8 37 ♞c2 ♗xa3 38 ♞d2?! ♘d6! and having avoided the worst, Black even plucked up the courage to win: 39 ♗c5 ♗a6 40 ♘h4 ♞c8 41 ♗d5 ♞c1

42 ♖b2 ♙e4!? 43 ♚xe4?? (43 ♙xe4 ♚f1 44 ♘f5+ ♘xf5 45 h4) 43...♙xe4 44 ♘f5+ ♙f8 45 ♙xe4 ♖c8 46 d5 ♚a4 47 ♙f3?? ♚a3 0-1

### 18...b6

Creating a secure base for the knight on a5; 18...♖cd8 19 ♖d2± is Kasparov's evaluation and we have no reason to challenge it.

### 19 h3 ♘a5



### 20 ♙d2!?

A very interesting novelty, to exploit the knight's position on a5.

The other try is 20 g4, but it has failed to secure an advantage in tournament practice so far: After 20 g4 ♙g6! (20...♙d7? 21 ♙d3 ♚b7 22 g5 ♙e7 23 ♘e5±) 21 g5 (21 ♙f1!?) 21...♙e7 22 ♘e5 ♙d6 23 ♘xg6 (23 ♙d3 is harmless due to 23...♚h4 24 ♘xg6 hxg6 25 ♚g4 ♚xg4+ 26 hxg4 ♙f4 27 ♖ae2 ♙xe3 28 fxe3 c5 29 ♙f2 ♘c6 30 ♙g3 cxd4 31 exd4 ♖xe2 32 ♖xe2 ♘xd4 33 ♖e7 ♘c6 34 ♖b7 ♘e5 35 ♙e2 ♘xc4 36 ♖xa7 and 1/2-1/2 Svidler-Gelfand, Moscow 2002) 23...hxg6 24 c5 (24 ♙g4 ♘xc4!?) 24...♙f8! [24...bxc5 25 dxc5 ♙f4 26 ♙g4 ♖cd8 27 ♖d2 ♙xg5 28 ♙d7± (28

♖ee2!?)] 25 ♙g4 ♖cd8 26 ♖ae2 ♚c6! [The most exact; 26...♚d5 27 ♙f4 ♖xe2 28 ♚xe2 c6? (28...♚c6!) 29 ♙c7 ♖a8 30 ♚e5? (30 ♚a6!+-) 30...♚xe5 31 ♖xe5 ♘c4 32 d5 ♘xe5? (32...cxd5! 33 c6 ♘a5!)=) 33 ♙xe5 cxd5 34 c6+- led to a White victory in Kasparov-Adams, Linares 2002] 27 cxb6= an equal position was reached which the players decided to call a draw in Anand-Adams, Linares 2002.

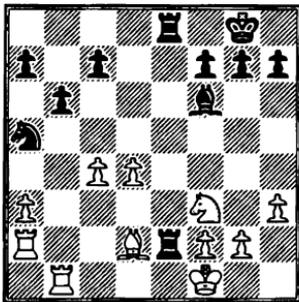
### 20...♚b1!?

After this Black will be slightly worse, which however, seems to be the case no matter how he continues. It must be admitted though, that the 'refutation' of this move was very hard for Black to foresee in over the board play.

20...♙xd4?? is, of course, a blunder due to 21 ♙xa5+-;

20...♘b7?! is not so good because of 21 ♚a4! ♘d6 22 c5! bxc5 (22...♚d5 23 cxd6 ♚xa2 24 d7 ♙xd7 25 ♚xd7±) 23 ♙b5 ♚d5 24 ♙xe8 ♚xa2 25 dxc5↑ and White's initiative looks dangerous; 20...c5! is probably best; the position after 21 ♙f1 ♚c6 22 d5 ♚c7! (Instead, 22...♚d7?! 23 ♙xa5 bxa5 24 ♙d3!± is strategically bad) is rather complicated but it seems to us that with logical play White should be able to maintain a slight edge. For example 23 ♙xa5 bxa5 24 ♖ae2 ♖xe2 25 ♚xe2 ♙d7 26 ♚d2! and Black is suffering, despite his two bishops.

21 ♚xb1 ♙xb1 22 ♖xb1 ♖xe2 23 ♙f1 ♖ce8



This was the position that Black was counting on. It appears that White has completely misplayed the opening, but in a joint analysis of the authors a few months ago we had discover a stunning possibility that turns the tables:

**24 ♖g1!!**

Chess is a weird game. The knight retreats to the 1st rank, creating a pathetic picture for the whole White army, and yet this is only an illusion. The truth is that White's position has accumulated tremendous energy and this will be apparent after only three more moves.

**24...♞2e4?**

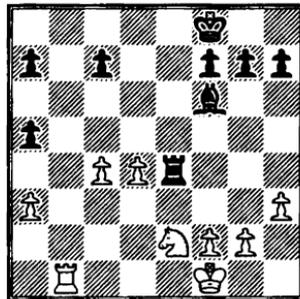
Black's game is probably lost after this. He had to sacrifice the exchange with 24...♞xd2! 25 ♞xd2 ♖xc4 26 ♞d3 ♔e7 although even here White has at least a slight edge after 27 a4± or 27 ♖f3±

Now, all White's sleeping pieces suddenly spring to life:

**25 ♔xa5! bxa5 26 ♞e2!! ♖f8! 27 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 28 ♖e2±**

The picture has changed dramatically: White has the better pawn structure, his rook is supremely placed on the b-file for

invasion purposes and his minor piece ideal for exploiting the weaknesses in the enemy camp, as well as attacking the Black king. Still, the position requires hard work to be won and Marjanovic makes it even harder by a putting up a superb and tenacious defence.



**28...c5!**

To activate rook and bishop; this gives White a pair of double but strong passed c-pawns, but other moves would lose easily.

28...♔xd4?? would certainly be the worst of them, losing prosaically to 29 f3 ♞h4 (29...♞xe2 30 ♖xe2 ♔b6 31 ♞b5 c6 32 ♞e5+-) 30 g3 ♞xh3 31 ♞b8+ ♖e7 32 ♖xd4+-; 28...c6 can be met strongly by either 29 ♞b3!± or 29 a4!±

**29 f3 ♞e3 30 dxc5 ♞xa3 31 ♞b8+ ♖e7 32 ♞b7+ ♖d8 33 ♖g3!**

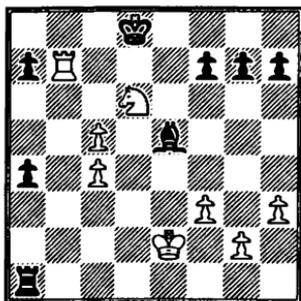
The knight must join the fight and does so in the most flexible way; Material considerations are not important at this stage, it is piece activity, time and direct threats that count.

**33...♞a1+ 34 ♖e2 a4!**

Black tries to make use of his only asset, the passed a-pawn.

After 34...♖a2+!? 35 ♔d3 ♜xg2 White should play the accurate 36 ♘e4! [The plausible alternative 36 ♘f5?! keeps e4 in reserve for the king, but it may not be best since 36...♜g5! gives Black counter-play. For example: (a) 37 ♘d6 ♜xc5 38 ♘xf7+ ♖e8 39 ♘d6+ ♔d8 40 ♜xa7 (40 ♜xg7 ♘xg7 41 ♘b7+ ♖c7 42 ♘xc5 ♔d6 43 ♘b7+ ♖e5=) 40...♜h5 41 c5 ♘e7=; (b) 37 ♖e4!? (to force g6, weakening all kingside pawns, but some time is lost) 37...g6 38 ♘d6 ♜xc5! (38...♜e5+? 39 ♔d3 ♜xc5 40 ♘xf7+ ♖c8 41 ♘d6+ ♔d8 42 ♜xh7 ♜c6 43 c5 ♘e7 44 ♘f7+ ♖c8 (44...♖e8 45 ♘e5 ♜xc5 46 ♜h8+)) 45 ♘e5+- leaves Black unable to cope with so much activity) 39 ♘xf7+ ♖e8 40 ♘d6+ ♔d8 and things are not clear as 41 ♜xh7 is met by 41...♜e5+ 42 ♔d3 ♜e7!] which seems to guarantee a winning position. After 36...♜b2 (what else?) 37 ♜xf7 ♜b3+ 38 ♖e2 ♘e5 (38...a4 39 c6) 39 ♘g5! we have not been able to find a drawing solution for Black.

35 ♘e4 ♘e5 36 ♘d6



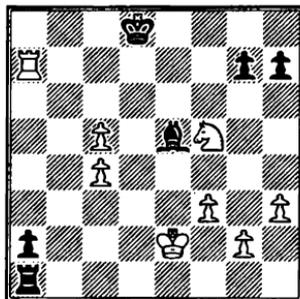
I (V.K.) thought it was over after this, but Marjanko, always resourceful, finds a defence.

36...f5!

Threatening perpetual check! Thus, Black distracts the White knight for a while and gains time to push his passed pawn.

After 36...♘d6? 37 cxd6 a3 38 ♜xa7 a2 (38...♜c1 39 ♔d3! ♜d1+ 40 ♖e4 ♜xd6 41 ♜xa3+-) 39 ♖f2 ♜c1 40 ♜xa2 ♜xc4 41 ♖e3! (41 ♜a7?! ♜f4!) 41...♜c6 (41...♔d7 42 ♜a7+ ♖e6 43 d7 ♖e7 44 d8=♚+ ♖xd8 45 ♜xf7+-) 42 ♜a8+ ♔d7 White wins by the following forced line that requires no commentary: 43 ♜f8! f6 44 ♜f7+ ♖xd6 45 ♜xg7 h5 46 ♖f4! ♖e6 47 ♖g3 ♜c8 48 ♖h4 ♜h8 49 ♜b7 ♖f5 50 ♜b5+ ♖g6 51 ♜a5 ♜h7 52 f4 ♜h6 53 ♜b5 ♜h8 54 f5+ ♖h6 55 ♜b6 ♜f8 56 g3! ♜f7 57 ♜b8 ♜b7 58 ♜g8 ♜b4+ 59 g4 ♖h7 60 ♜g6 hxg4 61 hxg4 ♜b6 62 ♖h5 ♜c6 63 g5+-

37 ♘xf5 a3 38 ♜xa7 a2



39 ♘e3! ♘d4! 40 ♜a8+

Setting a trap in time pressure; the immediate ♘e3-c2 was also possible.

40...♖c7!

40...♔d7? 41 ♘c2 ♜g1 42 c6+! ♖xc6 43 ♜xa2 ♜xg2+ 44 ♔d3+-

loses immediately, as the check on b4 will cost Black material.

41 ♖c2 ♜g1 42 ♠a7+ ♔d8 43 ♜xa2 ♜xg2+ 44 ♔d3 ♙xc5

This endgame looks tenable for Black, but with the following manoeuvre White manages to coordinate his pieces beautifully.

45 ♠a5 ♙g1 46 ♜h5!

A very important move, forcing a hole on g6, that could be exploited by a penetration of the king later on.

46...h6 47 ♜h4

Threatening ♜h4-g4, and thus gaining time to extricate the rook.

47...♜g3 48 ♔e4! ♜g2 49 ♔b4 ♙c5 50 ♔d5+-

The position is won. White has activated his pieces to the utmost.

50...♔e8?!

Hurrying to cover g6, the Black king becomes victim of a tactical melee.

51 ♜g4 ♠e2+ 52 ♔d3! ♜f2 53 ♜xg7! ♔f8

53...♜xf3+ allows the tactical finish 54 ♔e4 ♜xh3 [54...♜f7 55 ♔c7+! (55 ♜xf7 ♔xf7 56 ♔f5+-) 55...♔e7 56 ♜g6+-] 55 ♔c7+! ♔f8 56 ♔e6++-, a classical example of the domination of the knight against the bishop that arises from the presence of attacking chances against the Black king.

54 ♜c7 ♙a3 55 ♔e4

The rest requires no comment; Black continued only because he was in time-pressure.

55...♜h2 56 c5 ♜xh3 57 c6 ♜h1 58 ♠a7 ♙d6 59 c7 ♠e1+ 60 ♔f5 ♠e5+ 61 ♔f6 ♠e8 62 ♠a6 ♙e5+ 63 ♔f5 ♔g7 64 c8=♚ 1-0

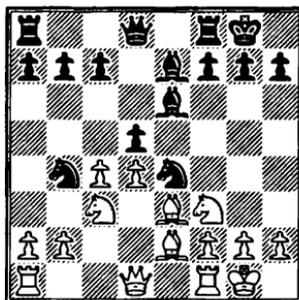
24

Ljubojevic – Beliavsky  
Investbanka, Belgrade 1995

1 e4 e5 2 ♔f3 ♔f6 3 ♔xe5 d6 4 ♔f3 ♔xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙e7 7 0-0 ♔c6 8 c4!? ♔b4 9 ♙e2 ♙e6

Intensifying Black's control over d5; now White must play with great accuracy to maintain chances for an advantage.

10 ♔c3 0-0 11 ♙e3



One of the best moves in the position; White develops his last minor piece and supports d4, waiting for his opponent to make the first attempt at clarification in the centre.

After 11 a3 ♔xc3 12 bxc3 ♔c6 13 cxd5 ♙xd5 Black gets a much improved version of Illustrative Game 21 as White has weakened his pawn formation by playing a2-a3 and his bishop stands less actively on e2. All in all, a fine positional

gain for Black; 11 ♖e5!? is the main alternative to 11 ♖e3 and has been extremely popular lately in top-class tournaments, Peter Leko being its foremost exponent. Since it is rather impossible for us to cover both main lines we will restrict ourselves to a brief survey of the current situation after 11 ♖e5!?, by mainly focusing on two examples from the champion's practice:

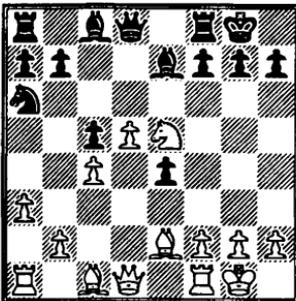
A) After 11...c5 12 ♖xe4 dxe4 13 d5 (A principled line of play) Black has the following choice:

A1) 13...♗d6 14 a3 ♖xe5 15 axb4 and now

A1a) 15...♗d7 16 bxc5 ♖c7 17 ♖e3! ♖xh2+ (17...♖xb2 18 ♜b1±) 18 ♖h1 ♖e5 19 ♗d4 ♜fe8 20 b4 ♖d8 21 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 22 ♜a3! ♖h4+ 23 ♖g1 ♖g5 24 f4! exf3 25 ♜xf3!± was practically winning for White in Wahls-Pavasovic, Dresden (zt) 1998, while

A1b) 15...♗f5 16 bxc5 ♖c7 17 g3! ♖xc5 18 ♖e3 ♖d6 19 c5 ♖f6 20 ♖b3 ♖xb2 21 ♜a4!± was clearly better for White in Baklan-Timman, Neum 2000;

A2) After 13...♗c8 14 a3 ♖a6

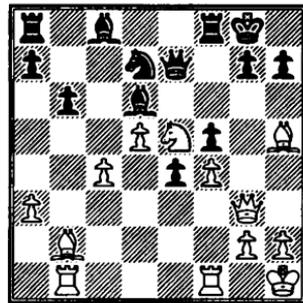


...the novelty 15 f3!? blew new life in the position in Leko-Topalov, Dubai (rapid m/2) 2002:

A2a) 15...♖c7!? 16 ♖f4! ♗d6 (16...exf3 17 ♜xf3 ♗d6 18 ♖d3±) 17 fxe4 ♜e8 (17...f5!?) 18 ♖a4!? (18 ♖d3 ♜xe4 19 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 20 ♖f2±) 18...♜e7 19 ♖d3 ♜xe4 20 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 21 ♖f3± is Motylev's analysis;

A2b) 15...♗f6 16 f4 ♖d6 17 ♖c2!? seems to offer White the better chances, for example 17...♗f5 (17...♖xe5 18 fxe5 ♖xe5 19 ♖f4 ♖d4+ 20 ♖h1±) 18 b3! ♜ae8 19 ♖b2 ♖b8!? 20 ♜ae1± ...♖d7? 21 g4+;

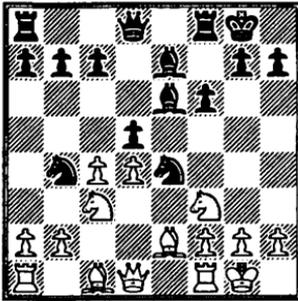
A2c) 15...♗d6 (The game continuation) 16 f4 f6 17 ♖g4 f5 18 ♖e5 ♖b8! 19 b4! ♖d7 20 bxc5 ♖xc5+ 21 ♖h1 ♗d6 22 ♖b2 ♜e8 23 ♜b1!? ♖e7 (23...♖xe5 24 fxe5 ♖xe5 25 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 26 ♖d4±) 24 ♖b3 (24 ♖h5!?) 24...b6 (24...♖xe5!?) 25 c5!±) 25 ♖h5 (25 ♖c6!?) 25...♜f8 26 ♖g3±



...and having consolidated the outpost on e5 White went on to win in convincing fashion: 26...♖b7 27 a4 ♜ac8 28 a5 ♖f6 29 ♖e2 ♖c5 30 ♖g5 ♜ce8 31 ♗d1!? e3! 32 ♖f3

♘e4 33 ♚xe7 ♜xe7 34 ♙xe4 fxe4  
 35 g3 b5? 36 cxb5 ♙xd5 37 ♜fc1!  
 ♙d6 38 ♜d1 ♙xe5 39 ♜xd5 ♙xb2  
 40 ♜xb2 ♜c8 41 ♚g2 ♜ec7 42 ♚f1  
 ♜c2 43 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 44 ♜d8+ ♚f7  
 45 ♜d7+ ♚e6 46 ♜xa7 ♚f5 47 h3  
 e2+ 48 ♚e1 1-0;

B) 11...f6 12 ♘f3 (White has apparently lost two tempi, but the weakening of Black's castled position compensates for the time investment) and here we have a major subdivision:



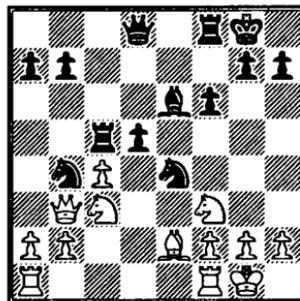
B1) 12...♜e8! is a logical move, with the idea of dropping back the bishops to f8 and f7, in order to activate the rook along the e-file. After 13 ♙e3 ♙f8 14 a3 ♘xc3 15 bxc3 ♘c6 16 cxd5 ♙xd5 17 c4 ♙f7 18 ♚c2 (18 ♜e1 ♘a5 19 ♘d2 has been suggested as an alternative, but 19...f5 seems to be OK for Black.) 18...♘a5 (18...♙g6 19 ♚a4±) 19 ♙d3 g6 20 ♙d2 (20 h4!? c5 21 h5→ looks like an interesting idea while the more elastic 20 ♜fe1 is also worth considering) 20...c5 White has two options:

B1a) 21 ♚a4 ♘c6 22 d5 ♘d4! 23 ♘xd4 cxd4 24 ♙b4 b6! is given as equal in *Informator* but is probably

slightly better for White after 25 ♙xf8 ♚xf8 26 ♚b4+ ♚e7 27 ♜fd1± (or 27 ♚d2± Δ a3-a4-a5)

B1b) After the second-best 21 d5?! b5! 22 ♙xa5 (22 cxb5 c4! 23 ♙xa5 cxd3 24 ♙xd8 dxc2 25 ♙xf6 ♙xd5) 22...♚xa5 23 cxb5 ♙xd5 Black had almost equalised in Adams-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 2001, yet the the correct 24 ♙c4 would have forced him to play accurately to secure the draw;

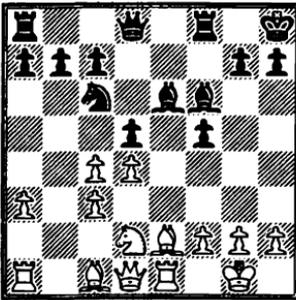
B2) 12...c5 is the second main reply in the position, but White's more harmonious piece development should enable him to gain a slight advantage despite the fluid situation in the centre: 13 ♙e3 ♜c8 14 dxc5 ♙xc5 15 ♙xc5!? [15 ♘d4 ♘xc3 16 bxc3 ♙xd4 17 ♙xd4 ♘c6 18 c5 (18 cxd5 ♚xd5 was agreed drawn in Malakhov-Macieja, Saint-Vincent 2000) 18...♙f7 does not give White anything special] 15...♜xc5 16 ♚b3 and now:



B2a) 16...♘xc3 17 ♚xc3 ♘c6 18 b4 d4! (18...♜xc4? 19 ♙xc4 dxc4 20 b5+- Lutz-Kutuzovic, Pula 2000) 19 ♚d2 ♜h5 20 ♜fc1!± looks like a pleasant plus for White in view of his queenside pawn majority, while...

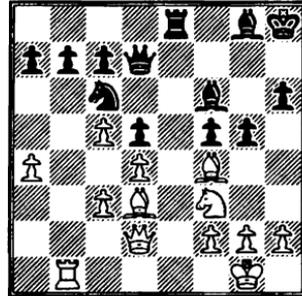
**B2b)** 16...a5 17 ♖ad1 ♜e7 18 ♘a4 (18 ♘xd5!? ♘xd5 19 cxd5 ♙f7 is probably OK for Black but should not be dismissed too lightly) 18...♙f7! 19 ♜e3 (19 ♘xc5? ♘xc5 20 ♜e3 ♜xe3 21 fxe3 dxc4☞ gives Black more than sufficient compensation for the exchange) 19...♜c7 20 a3 ♘a6 21 cxd5 ♘d6 22 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 23 ♙xa6 bxa6 24 ♘d4 ♙xd5 25 ♘f5 ♘xf5 26 ♖xd5 ♜e5 27 ♜xe5 fxe5 28 ♜e1 ♜e8± (Khalifman-Karpov, Sanur 2000) left Black suffering in view of his damaged pawn structure;

**B3)** 12...♚h8 (The main continuation, getting the king out of a perilous diagonal and keeping open several options) 13 a3 ♘xc3 14 bxc3 ♘c6 15 ♘d2 f5 16 ♜e1 ♙f6



17 a4!? (Improving on an earlier Leko-Kramnik game where 17 ♙f3 ♙g8 18 cxd5 ♙xd5 19 ♘b3 b6 20 ♙f4 ♘e7 21 ♙e5 c6 22 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 23 ♘c1 ♘g6 24 ♘d3 h6 was just equal) 17...♙g8 (17...♘d7!?, 17...♘a5 18 ♙f3 ♘d7 19 ♜xe6!☞) 18 c5! ♜e8 (18...h6!?) 19 ♘f3 h6?! (19...♙f7±) 20 ♜b1! ♜b8 (20...b6 21 ♙b5±) 21 ♙d3 ♜xe1+ 22 ♜xe1

♘d7 (22...♙h7 23 ♜e6!) 23 ♙f4± and White had acquired a clear positional advantage in Leko-Grischuk, Wijk aan Zee 2002. The rest of the game saw Leko produce some fireworks: 23...♜e8 24 ♘d2 g5

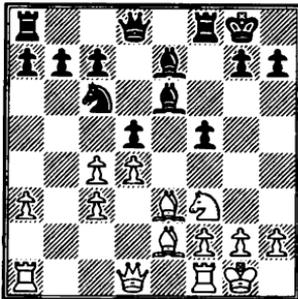


25 ♜xb7!! ♜c8!? [25...gxf4 26 ♜xf4 ♙g5 (26...♙d8 27 ♜xh6+ ♙h7 28 ♙b5+-) 27 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 28 ♜xc7+-] 26 h4!? (26 ♙b5! gxf4 27 ♜xa7+-) 26...gxf4 27 ♜xf4 ♙g7! 28 ♜xf5 ♘d8 (28...♜e8!± Δ 29 ♙b5 ♙e6) 29 ♘g5!! (29 ♙b5!?) 29...hgx5 30 hgx5 ♜f8□ 31 ♜h3+ ♙h6 32 ♙f5!?!⊕ (32 gxh6 ♜e8 33 ♜xc7 ♜e1+ 34 ♙f1 ♘e7 35 ♜xa7+-) 32...♜e8 33 ♜xc7 ♜e1+ 34 ♚h2 ♘e7 35 g4! ♙e6⊕ (35...♜e6!?) 36 ♚g2! ♜a6 37 c6!? ♜xc6 38 ♜xc6 ♘xc6 39 ♜xh6+ ♜xh6 40 gxh6+-) 36 ♜xh6+ ♜xh6+ 37 gxh6 ♘xf5 38 gxf5 ♙xf5 39 ♜f7 ♙g6 40 ♜xa7 ♜c1 41 ♚g3 ♜xc3+ 42 ♚f4 ♙h5 43 ♚e5 ♜f3 44 c6 ♙g4 45 a5 ♜xf2 46 a6 ♜c2 47 ♜c7 1-0.

**11...f5**

An attacking gesture that has gone out of fashion lately; Black overprotects the outpost on e4, but weakens permanently the e5 square.

12 a3 ♖xc3 13 bxc3 ♖c6



14 ♖a4

Instead of releasing the tension by c4xd5, White develops his queen, keeping the ♖e6 as a potential target for his rook on the e-file. Also, with the Black bishop on d5 White would find it much more difficult to mobilise his centre or attack b7.

14 ♖b1 is a different move order to reach our main line; The only divergence seems to be 14...dxc4 (14...♖b8 15 ♖a4 is a direct transposition to 14 ♖a4) but then 15 ♖xb7! (15 ♖a4 ♖e8!? should be OK for Black.) 15...♗d5 16 ♖b1 leaves Black's front c-pawn rather exposed. For example 16...♗d6 (16...f4 17 ♗c1 ♖e8 18 ♖b5!±) 17 ♖a4! ♖xa3 18 ♖b5!± and White emerges with clearly the better game; 14 c5!? is a very interesting move played in Rogers-Solomon, Southcoast open 2000; White's idea is to gain dominance over the dark squares, e5 in particular. After 14...f4 15 ♗d2 b6 16 ♗b5! ♖a5 17 ♖e5! bxc5 18 ♖e1 a6 19 ♗d3 ♖f6 20 ♖c2! (20 c4!? ♖xc4 21 ♗xc4 dxc4 22 ♖c6 ♖d7 as played in the

game, is rather unclear after 23 d5! ♗d6 24 ♗c3 ♗f7 25 ♗xf6 gxf6 26 ♖c1 ♗f8) 20...g6 21 ♖a4 c4 22 ♖xa5 cxd3 23 ♖xd3± White's position looks much better, so, in our opinion, 14 c5!? holds good promise of becoming the main line after 11...f5.

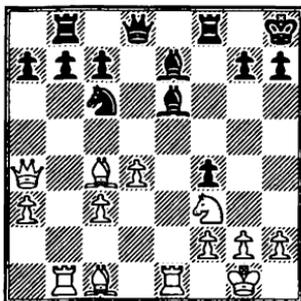
14...♖h8

Getting the king out of the perilous a2-g8 diagonal, but the move has certain drawbacks, too. Below follows a survey of the alternatives.

The extravagant 14...a6?! 15 ♖ab1 b5 should be met by 16 cxb5 axb5 17 ♖xb5 ♖d7 18 ♗f4! ♖xa3 19 ♖b2± and White is better in view of the hole on e5;

14...f4 is more circumspect, preventing once and for all White from occupying the dark squares f4, g5. However, after 15 ♗c1! [15 ♗d2 is inferior, because after 15...♖h8 16 ♖ab1 ♖b8 17 ♖fel dxc4 18 ♗xc4 Black has the strong reply 18...♗g4! 19 d5?! (19 ♗e2 a6!= was equal in Rohde-Seirawan, USA 1986) 19...♗xf3 20 gxf3 ♗c5! exploiting tactically the bishop's awkward placement] 15...♖h8 16 ♖b1 ♖b8 17 ♖e1 Black starts to realise that he has to cope constantly with the positional threat of an exchange of light-squared bishops that would accentuate his weakness on the corresponding squares, e4 in particular. In that case his remaining bishop would run a serious risk of becoming a bad piece, too. These considerations dictate the play from this position;

A) After 17...dxc4 [17...♙f5?! does not solve Black's problems in view of 18 ♖b5 ♙e4 (Antipenko-Korzha, UKR corr. 1995) 19 ♔d2! a6 20 ♖b2 and the bishop on e4 only helps White to push his opponent back] 18 ♙xc4



Black should refrain from

A1) 18...♙g4?, because in comparison to Rohde-Seirawan there is no bishop hanging on d2; after 19 d5! ♙xf3 20 gx3 ♙c5 21 dxc6 ♖g5+ (21...♗h4 22 ♔h1!?) 22 ♔h1 ♗h5 23 ♙f1! ♙xf2 24 ♖e4! ♗xf3+ 25 ♙g2 ♗d3 26 ♖b5! ♗d6 27 ♗e2+- White had won a piece for nothing and went on to convert it into a full point in Kotronias-Vukanovic, Kavala 1997.

Better is...

A2) 18...♙f5!? 19 ♖b2 a6 (Zapata-Garcia Gonzalez, Santa Clara 1990) when White should grab the proffered pawn by 20 ♙xa6!;

Then 20...♖a8 21 ♖xb7 ♔b8 [Relatively best; 21...♗d6? is a blunder on account of 22 ♙xf4!+-; 21...♙d7?! allows White to complete the massacre of his opponent's queenside by 22 ♗c4

♔a5 23 ♗xc7±) 22 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 (22...♗xb8 23 ♖xe7±) 23 ♙b5!± (Instead, 23 ♔e5!? ♙d6!? is not so clear, but nevertheless also appears more pleasant for White in view of his better king. Play might continue 24 ♙xf4! (But not 24 ♔c6?! due to 24...♖e8! 25 ♖f1 ♗d7 26 ♙b5 ♖xb5! 27 ♗xb5 f3+ with a very strong Black attack) 24...♗f6 25 ♙c4↑ and White seems to be dictating events, e.g. 25...♖a8 (25...♙d7? is weak due to 26 ♗xd7 ♗xf4 27 ♔f7+! ♖xf7 28 ♗xf7 ♗xh2+ 29 ♔f1 ♗h1+ 30 ♔e2 ♗xg2 31 ♔d3!+-) 26 ♗d1 ♙e6 27 ♙xe6 ♗xe6! (Or 27...♗xf4 28 f3 ♙xe5 29 dxe5! and the e-pawn is an asset) 28 ♙g3 ♖xa3 29 ♗c1 ♖fa8 30 h3± with a very small White plus, but of a persistent nature. White may later on contemplate c4-c5(d5), as well as a rook switch to the third or fourth horizontal after a preparatory ♔g1-h2) leaves him with a solid two-pawn compensation for the exchange plus excellent control over the light squares;

B) 17...a6 18 ♙d3! is another major option when the siege on the light squares begins: 18...♙g4!? [18...dxc4?! 19 ♙xh7! as in Kajumov-Serper, USSR 1987, is not as bad as it looks but White has an initiative after 19...♙d5 20 ♙e4 ♙xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♗d5 22 ♗c2 ♙d6 23 ♙d2 ♗f5 24 ♖be1↑; 18...♙g8?! was seen in Kotronias-Miralles, Patras 1991; White should have then played 19 cxd5 ♙xd5 20 ♙e4! (Intending 21 ♙d5 ♗d5 22 c4), as 20...b5? 21 ♗c2 g6 can be met with

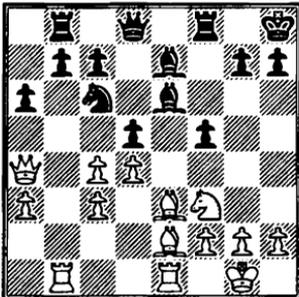
the brilliant 22 c4!!+-] 19 cxd5  
 ♖xf3 20 gxf3 ♜xd5 (Benjamin-  
 Zarnicki, Manila (ol) 1992), and  
 now 21 ♜d1!± intending ♔g1-h1,  
 ♜e1-g1-g4, x f4, g7, appears to  
 secure a small but steady plus for  
 White;

Finally, 14...♜d7!?, threatening  
 ...♜c6xd4, is playable; White  
 should continue with 15 cxd5 ♖xd5  
 16 ♖c4!± obtaining a slight plus.

15 ♖ab1 ♜b8 16 ♜fe1

Carefully preparing a dark-square  
 campaign that Black's next move  
 fails to neutralise.

16...a6?!



Threatening ...d5xc4, but White's  
 next move renders the threat  
 innocuous. 16...f4! was imperative,  
 transposing after 17 ♖c1 a6 18  
 ♖d3!± to 14...f4.

17 ♖f4!

A very strong move, exploiting  
 the presence of tactical ideas to  
 conquer the dark squares.

17...♖d6

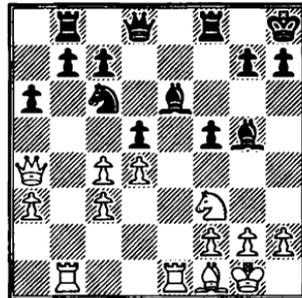
17...dxc4!? 18 ♖xc4 b5  
 (18...♖xc4 19 ♜xc4 ♖xa3 20  
 ♔g5↑) obliges White to sacrifice  
 the queen in two different cases, but

White is clearly better in each of  
 them. The proof: 19 ♜xa6 ♖d7  
 (19...♜b6 20 ♜xb6 cxb6 21 ♖xe6  
 ♖xa3 22 ♜xb5±→) 20 ♖xb5 ♜a8  
 21 ♜b7 ♜a7 22 ♖xc6 ♜xb7 23  
 ♖xb7 ♖xa3 24 ♖g5 ♜b8 25 ♔e5±

18 ♖g5 ♖e7 19 ♖f1!↑

Completing the evacuation of the  
 e-file with gain of time; Seeing that  
 he has lost the strategic battle  
 Beliavsky decides to set a positional  
 trap in which White falls.

19...♖xg5!?



20 ♔xg5?

Failing to change course when the  
 position was calling for it; Ljubo  
 should have settled for 20 ♜xe6!↑  
 suddenly turning his attention to  
 exploiting the opposite-coloured  
 bishops for attacking purposes. Now  
 Black manages to equalise by  
 utilising a nice tactical motif.

20...♖d7 21 ♔e6 ♔xd4! =

The point; White has nothing  
 better than to agree to massive  
 simplification which brings the  
 position down to an elementary  
 drawn ending.

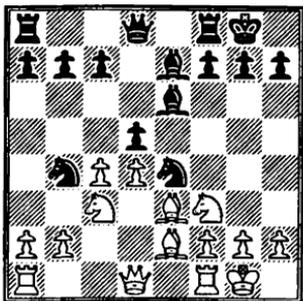
22 ♔xd8 ♖xa4 23 ♜xb7 ♜fxd8  
 24 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 25 cxd4 dxc4

A game short in duration, but rich in positional content. 1/2-1/2

25

Wang Zili – Ye Rongguang  
Copenhagen 1995

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4 ♗f3 ♗xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♖d3 ♖e7 7 0-0 ♘c6 8 c4!? ♗b4 9 ♖e2 ♖e6 10 ♗c3 0-0 11 ♖e3



11...♖f6

Black foresees the kind of structure that will arise after a2-a3, ♗e4xc3, b2xc3, and takes a measure that would help restrain the resulting White pawn centre.

11...♗xc3 12 bxc3 ♗c6 is also possible, but it wastes a tempo in comparison to the game. However, Black may have secret thoughts of deploying his bishop on d6 instead of f6, so White must be careful; after 13 cxd5 ♖xd5 he needs to play with extreme accuracy to ensure that his centre will not be contained by the enemy forces:

A) The plausible 14 ♖c2?!, wishing to initiate preparations for the mobilisation of the central pawns only after bringing the

queen's rook to the centre, runs into 14...♖e8! [14...♖f6?! (14...f5 15 ♖ad1± also hardly worries White) 15 ♗d2! ♖e8 16 ♖ae1 (Intending c3-c4) 16...♖e6 17 ♖d3 g6 18 ♖f4 (18 ♗e4 ♖e7!± (18...♖g7?! 19 ♖g5 f6 20 ♗c5 ♖d5 21 ♖f4±)) 18...♖g7 19 ♗e4 ♖d5 (19...b6 20 ♖g5!±) 20 ♗c5 ♖xe1 21 ♖xe1 ♖b8 led to a passive position for Black in Ehlvest-Yusupov, Saint John (ct/1) 1988; White could have maintained his initiative by 22 ♖g3!, intending h2-h4, according to Ehlvest] and it seems impossible to mobilise the pawns without allowing tactics. For example:

A1) 15 ♗d2 fails to 15...♖d6! (15...♖f8?! 16 c4! ♗xd4 17 ♖xd4 ♖xg2 18 ♖xg2 ♖g5+ 19 ♖h1 ♖xe2 20 ♖e3 ♖h5 21 ♖e4! ♖d6 22 ♗f3 c6 23 ♖g1±; 15...♖g5 16 ♖d3!± is slightly better for White, as we will see later on) 16 ♗c4 (16 c4? ♖xe3! 17 fxe3 ♖h4±) 16...b5!? (16...♖f8 17 ♖f4 b5 18 ♗e3 ♖e4) 17 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 18 ♖d3 h6 19 a4 a6= and Black is entitled to feel safe due to his light square control ;

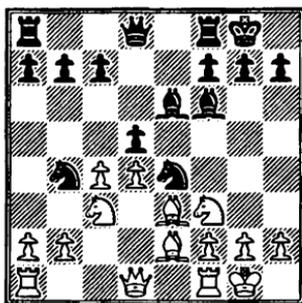
A2) 15 ♖ae1!? can be met by either

A2a) 15...♖f8!?, e.g. 16 ♗d2! (16 ♗g5 g6 17 c4 ♖xg2! 18 ♖xg2 ♖xe3 19 fxe3 ♖xg5+ 20 ♖h1 ♖xe3 21 ♖f3 ♖xd4 22 ♖d5 ♗e5 23 ♖e4 ♖d3!)= 16...♖h4! (16...♖d6 17 ♗c4 b5!? 18 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 19 ♖d3 h6 20 f3±) 17 h3 ♖d6 18 ♖g4 b5! 19 ♖f5! with unclear play or

A2b) 15...♖d6! (the best reply immediately pointing at the enemy kingside) 16 h3 ♖f6! = and the

White central pawns are kept at bay; 16...b5!?= is another way of achieving the same objective;

B) 14  $\text{d}2!$  is best, threatening to mobilise immediately his central pawns. After this move it seems to us that there is no clear path to equality for Black; For example, Ehlvest's suggestion of 14... $\text{e}6$  [14...f5!? 15 f4!? ( $\Delta$   $\text{d}2\text{-c}4\text{-e}5$ ) 15... $\text{e}6$  16  $\text{c}4$   $\text{d}7$  17  $\text{e}5$  c6 18 a4!  $\text{c}7$  19  $\text{d}3\pm$  or 14... $\text{e}6$  15  $\text{b}1\pm$  (15  $\text{c}2!?$ ,  $\Delta$   $\text{a}1\text{-e}1$  transposes to Ehlvest-Yusupov) are both better options but still far away from being equal] leaves Black under serious pressure due to 15  $\text{d}3!$   $\text{d}7$  16  $\text{c}2$  f5 17 f4  $\text{a}e8$  18  $\text{f}3\uparrow$



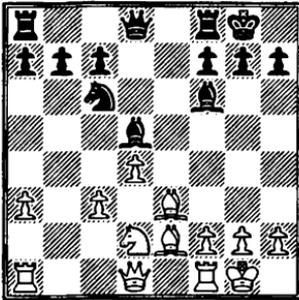
12 a3

Here we feel obliged to mention the interesting alternative 12  $\text{d}xe4!?$  making use of the fact that the f-pawn has been blocked and, consequently, Black can no longer play ...f7-f5-f4. After the logical continuation 12... $\text{d}xe4$  13  $\text{d}e1$  c6 14  $\text{b}3$   $\text{e}7$  15 a3  $\text{d}a6$  16  $\text{d}c2$  White was slowly building pressure on the queenside in Ljubojevic-Karpov, Bugojno 1986, and Black had to defend very accurately:

16... $\text{f}d8$  17  $\text{f}d1$   $\text{a}c8$  18  $\text{a}4!$  (Threatening to stifle Black by b2-b4) 18...c5 19  $\text{a}c1!$  (Renewing the threat) 19... $\text{c}xd4$  20  $\text{d}xd4$   $\text{d}c5!$  21  $\text{a}x7$   $\text{d}d3$  22  $\text{d}xd3!$  [After 22  $\text{d}xe6?!$  Black should avoid 22... $\text{d}xc1!?$  23  $\text{d}xd8$   $\text{d}xe2+$  24  $\text{f}1$   $\text{d}d8$  25  $\text{d}xe2$   $\text{d}xd1$  (25... $\text{c}c8$  26  $\text{d}d4$   $\text{e}6$  27  $\text{d}xf6$   $\text{g}xf6$  28  $\text{a}b7$   $\text{a}c4+$  29  $\text{e}1$ ) 26  $\text{d}xd1$   $\text{a}b2$  27  $\text{b}b8+$   $\text{f}8$  28  $\text{a}b7$   $\text{a}a3$  29  $\text{a}e4\pm$  when he stands worse, in favour of 22... $\text{a}e6!$ ; then 23  $\text{d}xd3$   $\text{e}d3$  24 b3 (with the idea a3-a4!; 24  $\text{b}b6$   $\text{d}2!$ ) allows him to counterattack by 24...b5! 25  $\text{c}xb5$  (25  $\text{b}b6$   $\text{d}2!$  26  $\text{b}b1$   $\text{e}4\mp$ ) 25... $\text{a}xc1$  26  $\text{a}xc1$   $\text{d}2$  27  $\text{d}xd2$   $\text{d}xd2$  28  $\text{e}3$   $\text{d}d7$  29  $\text{e}1$   $\text{g}6\mp$ ] 22... $\text{d}xd4$  [22... $\text{e}d3!?$  is a very interesting alternative to Karpov's choice: 23  $\text{d}xd3$   $\text{d}xc4$  24  $\text{d}dc3$   $\text{a}a8!$  25  $\text{b}b6$   $\text{a}a6$  26  $\text{a}xd8+!?$  (26  $\text{b}b4$   $\text{a}xb4$  27  $\text{a}xb4$   $\text{d}xd4!?$  (27...b5 28 b3  $\text{d}xd4$  29  $\text{d}xd4$   $\text{d}xd4$  30  $\text{b}xc4$   $\text{a}xc4$  31  $\text{a}xc4$   $\text{b}xc4$  32  $\text{f}1\pm$  is too tiny an advantage but may be worth trying against a weaker opponent) 28  $\text{a}xc4$   $\text{d}xb2$  is close to equality) 26... $\text{a}xd8$  27  $\text{a}xc4$   $\text{a}a8$  28  $\text{g}3$   $\text{h}6!?$  and the position looks too solid for Black to be in any risk of losing; the other way of making luft seems to us worse, e.g. 28... $\text{g}6$  29  $\text{h}1c3$   $\text{f}g7$  30  $\text{b}b4$   $\text{d}d7$  31  $\text{a}cb3$   $\text{d}d5$  32  $\text{b}b5\pm$ ] 23  $\text{d}xd4$   $\text{e}d3$  24  $\text{d}xd3$   $\text{a}xc4$  25  $\text{a}xc4$   $\text{d}xc4$  26  $\text{e}3$   $\text{d}d6$  27  $\text{h}3$   $\text{f}6$  28  $\text{c}c5!?$   $\text{a}xc5$  29  $\text{d}xc5$   $\text{b}5$  30  $\text{d}b4$   $\text{h}5$  and by showing his usual endgame expertise Karpov went on to draw in 44 moves; However, had now White chosen the refined 31

♖h2!± (intending h3-h4, f2-f3, ♖h2-g3) he could have tortured the endgame maestro for much longer, as the position is not an automatic draw.

12...♗xc3 13 bxc3 ♘c6 14 cxd5 ♙xd5 15 ♘d2!



Intending the build-up ♙e2-d3, ♗d1-c2; admittedly, it is more difficult here for White to get the advantage than in the analogous position with 11...♗xc3, but the minus tempo is not really relevant, because the bishop on f6 does little to disturb White who can arrange his pieces at his leisure.

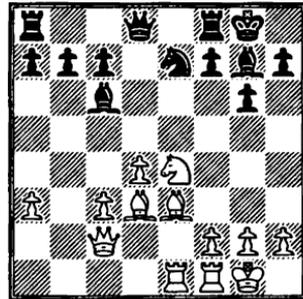
15...♗e7!?

Black starts regrouping, in anticipation of an advance of the enemy centre.

15...♗a5 16 ♗c2 b6 (½-½ Gipslis-Smyslov, Moscow Veterans 1991) 17 ♙d3 g6 18 ♗ae1± looks promising for White who has available as an attacking tool the advance of the f-pawn; 15...♗e8 (Dominguez-Hernandez, Capablanca Memorial Masters I 1998) should be met by 16 ♗c2! preparing ♙e2-d3, ♗a1-e1. Then 16...♙g5 17 ♙d3! ♙xc3 18 fxe3 ♗xe3 19

♙xh7+ ♖h8 is not as great as it looks for Black due to 20 ♙e4! ♗g5 21 ♙xd5 ♗xd5 22 ♗f4!± (x d4,...♗d2-f1-g3) and White is better because the Black king is insecure.

16 ♗c2 g6 17 ♙d3! ♙c6 18 ♗e4 ♙g7 19 ♗ae1±



White has developed in a harmonious way, massing all his troops on the kingside. The next step involves doubling rooks on the e-file, a manoeuvre we are familiar with from many Illustrative Games so far. For Black, on the other hand, there is not much to undertake as he lacks concrete targets; it is best for him to adopt wait and see tactics whilst avoiding a weakening of his kingside pawn structure. For the rest of the comments to this game we will rely on Blatny's notes in *Chessbase*.

19...b6 20 ♗e2 h6

20...f5?! would have weakened Black's castled position without obtaining anything in return: 21 ♗g5 ♗d5 (21...h6?! 22 ♗e6 ♗d5 23 ♗f4±) 22 ♗f3 (Δ ♗e3-f4-e5±, Δ ♙e3-g5±) 22...♗d6 (22...f4 23 ♙c1±) 23 ♙g5 ♗d5 24 ♗e5± and

White's pressure becomes considerable.

21 ♖fe1 ♜f5

Blatny thinks that 21...f5 22 ♜d2 ♜d5± is only slightly better for White, but it was difficult for Black to make such a decision in view of the resulting permanent weakness on e5.

22 ♙f4 ♚d7?!

A bad spot for the queen, provoking White's next; 22...♙xd4? 23 cxd4 ♜xd4 24 ♚c3 ♜xe2+ 25 ♖xe2 ♙xe4□ would have been a blunder due to 26 ♙xh6! f6 27 ♖xe4 ♖e8 (27...♖f7 28 ♙c4+-) 28 ♖xe8+ ♚xe8 29 ♚xc7+- but 22...♖e8 was tenable.

23 ♙e5!

It is in White's interest to exchange dark-squared bishops as then Black's defences would deteriorate. In this particular instance the threat of ♜e4-f6+ makes matters worse for Black who must have been regretting his previous move.

23...♚d8

23...f6 24 ♙f4 was not really an option as it would have weakened both light squared diagonals leading to the Black king.

24 ♜g3!?

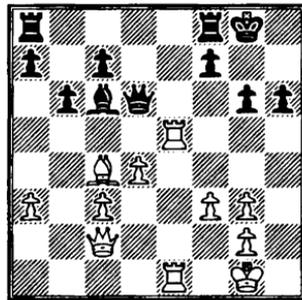
By exchanging knights White clarifies the picture on the king's wing and obtains entrance squares for his rooks along the e-file; the move has also a psychological impact as it makes Black realise the best he can achieve in this game is a

laborious draw. Nevertheless, we feel that White had plenty of good alternatives.

24...♜xg3 25 hxg3 ♚d5!

In his miserable state Black finds the only way to stay alive; 25...♖e8? would have allowed White to win immediately by 26 ♙xg6! fxg6 27 ♚xg6 ♖xe5 28 ♖xe5 ♙a4 29 ♖e7 ♚f8 30 ♖xc7+- Δ ♖e1-e7.

26 f3 ♙xe5 27 ♖xe5 ♚d6 28 ♙c4↑



28...♖ae8??

And now he finds the route to immediate disaster! The reasonable alternatives 28...♜g7 and 28...♖ae8!? would have enabled him to make a fight of it. Blatny gives the lines 28...♜g7 29 ♚a2 (29 ♖e6?? fxe6 30 ♖xe6 ♚xg3 31 ♖xc6 ♖xf3+-) 29...♖ae8 30 f4± or 28...♖fe8!? 29 f4 (29 ♖e6?? ♖xe6 30 ♖xe6 fxe6 31 ♚xg6+ ♜f8 32 ♙xe6 ♜e7 33 ♚f7+ ♜d8 34 ♚f6+ ♚e7 35 ♚h8+ ♙e8 36 ♚xh6 c6+-) 29...♜g7 30 ♚b3± to prove that despite the impressive appearance of White's game there is not a knock-out blow.

29 ♖e6!

Suddenly everything has been decided; Black has no satisfactory defence to the threat of taking on g6.

29...♙a4

29...♖xe6 30 ♖xe6 fxe6 31 ♗xg6+ ♕h8 32 ♗xh6+ ♕g8 33 ♙xe6+ ♖f7 34 ♗g6+-; 29...♕h7 30 ♖xd6 ♖xe1+ 31 ♕f2+-

30 ♗b1!

Even better than 30 ♗d3 ♕h7□ 31 ♖xd6 ♖xe1+ 32 ♕f2 ♖d1! 33 ♗xd1 ♙xd1 34 ♖d7+-

30...♖xe6 31 ♖xe6

Faced with immense material losses, Black resigned.

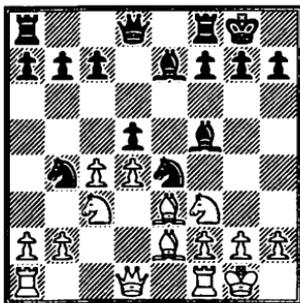
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## 26

### Short – Timman

KRO (m), Hilversum 1989

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♖xe5 d6 4 ♖f3 ♖xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙e7 7 0-0 ♖c6 8 c4!? ♖b4 9 ♙e2 ♙e6 10 ♖c3 0-0 11 ♙e3 ♙f5



A strong move, trying to exploit the placement of the ♙e3 by

creating the possibility of a knight fork on c2...

12 ♖c1

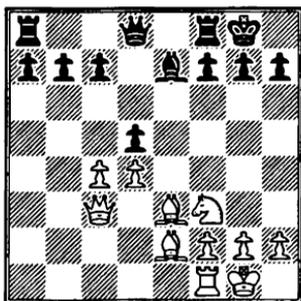
...to which White reacts logically by bringing his queen's rook closer to the centre and preparing to evict the Black knight by a2-a3. Now Black usually plays ...d5xc4, but in the present Illustrative Game we will deal with a rare move that leads to an interesting material imbalance.

Before proceeding, it should be noted that 12 ♗b3 has been the other main line here, with double-edged results. After 12...c6 White has tried practically everything: 13 c5; 13 ♖ac1; 13 cxd5; and even the extravagant 13 g4!?. The main champions of 12 ♗b3 are Topalov and Shirov who had in fact a theoretical discussion on it in their 2001 FIDE knock-out match, but in this book we will refrain from delving deeper into its intricacies as we think that the theory in 12 ♖c1 is already too much to handle. Just for the record, we present our readers with the latest GM game in this variation: 13...♖xc3 14 bxc3 ♖c2 15 ♗xb7 ♖xa1 16 ♖xa1 ♗d7 17 ♗xd7 ♙xd7 18 ♖e5 ♖fd8 19 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♖b1 ♙d8 21 ♙a6 ♙c7 22 ♕fl ♖e7 23 ♖b7 ♖b8 24 ♖xa7 ♙d8 25 ♖xe7 ♙xe7 26 a4 ♕f8 27 ♙f4 ♖b1+ 28 ♕e2 ♕e8 29 ♙e3 ♖a1 30 c4 dxc4 31 ♙xc4 ♖xa4 32 ♕d3 ♖a3+ 33 ♕c2 h6 34 ♕b2 ♖a5 35 ♕b3 ½-½, Topalov-Macieja, Edda rapid, Reykjavik 2003.

12...♖xc3?!

A very dangerous continuation for Black, giving up two pieces in return for rook and two pawns; he trusts that in the resulting positions his passed a-pawn will create strong counter-play, (which, to some extent is true) but on the other hand it is hard to believe that the pieces are not better than the rook as they can combine beautifully with the White queen in both attack and defence.

13 bxc3 ♖xa2 14 ♜c2! ♙xc2 15 ♜xc2 ♜xc3 16 ♜xc3



This position is assessed as unclear by I. Ivanov, but in fact White is better as Black is weak on the light squares and his queenside particularly vulnerable to the appetite of the enemy minor pieces. White should only be careful not to allow the passed a-pawn advance too far if he hasn't something concrete in mind.

16...c6

On 16...dxc4 the best reply is 17 ♜b1! ♜b8 (17...a5 18 ♜xb7 a4 19 ♙xc4 a3 20 ♙a2±) 18 ♙xc4 c6 19 ♜c2!↑ augmenting the pressure on both f7 and h7. If, for example 19...a5? (19...♙d6!?, 19...♜c7!?) there follows 20 ♙f4! ♙d6 21 ♜g5!

g6 22 ♙xf7+! ♜xf7 23 ♜a2+- and White wins.

17 ♜b1?!

Too impulsive; The best move is 17 ♜b3! and there is a good explanation for that: It is most economical for White to keep the rook for the defence of his first rank / restraint of the enemy passed pawn and use his strongest piece to attack the enemy position. An examination of the position confirms the above evaluation:

A) 17...b6? 18 ♜e5± leaves Black tragically exposed on the light squares;

B) 17...♜b8?! 18 c5!? results in a passive position where White's threat of ♙e3-f4 is hard to meet;

C) 17...♜b6 18 ♜xb6 (18 ♜a2!?) 18...axb6 19 cxd5 cxd5 20 ♜b1± is a very annoying endgame to defend, but it may not be as bad as it seems;

D) 17...a5 (The most consistent, but it looks rather insufficient) 18 ♜xb7 a4 [18...♙f6!?, (Preventing ♜f3-e5) 19 ♜xc6 a4± requires further analysis, but it is difficult to believe it can save Black] 19 ♜e5 and White's initiative looks imposing; a possible line runs 19...♙d6 20 ♜xc6 ♜c8 21 ♜xc8 ♜fxc8 22 c5! (22 cxd5!?, a3 23 ♜a1 ♜c7 24 ♙c4±) 22...♜xc6 23 ♙b5! +- and Black can resign with a clear conscience (23 ♙f3 is also good, but after 23...♜d8! 24 ♙g5 ♜d7 25 cxd6 ♜cxd6 26 ♜a1 ♜a6 27 ♙c1 f6 28 ♙a3 ♜f7 29 ♙c5± Black can try to defend for a while).

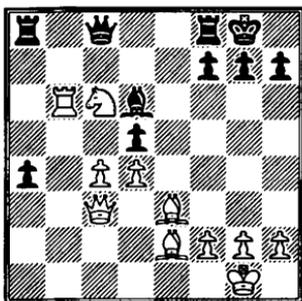
17...a5!

Suddenly, it becomes evident that extreme accuracy is required on White's part to tame the advance of the passed a-pawn. In the next few moves Short does his best to accomplish the task.

18 ♖xb7 a4 19 ♗e5! ♙d6!

19...♗d6? 20 c5! ♗e6 21 ♗a3± deprives Black of serious counterplay.

20 ♗xc6 ♗c8 21 ♖b6!



It appears that Black has no compensation for the lost material but the following brilliant reply by Timman destroys this optical illusion:

21...♖a6!!

A fantastic move, keeping Black into the game.

21...a3? looks dangerous, but after 22 c5 a2 23 ♗a1 ♗c7 24 ♗b4!+- Black is doomed.; 21...♙xh2+? is bad in view of 22 ♖f1!±

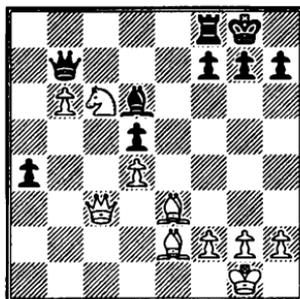
22 c5

There is nothing else.

22...♖xb6 23 cxb6 ♗b7!

The results of 21...♖a6!! can already be appreciated; the active White rook has been exchanged and

one of the White pawns is about to fall. In addition, Black is ready to back up the passed a-pawn with his remaining rook, making up for the pawn's temporary lack of support. All this means that White has lost his chances of an advantage, but his next move shows that he has lost his morale too.



24 ♗a7?!

An incomprehensible move; after 24 ♙f3! ♗xb6 25 ♙xd5 Black would have had to find 25...♗b1+! (25...♗h8!?) 26 ♗c1 ♗xc1+ 27 ♙xc1 ♗c8 28 ♖f1 ♖f8 29 ♖e2 a3! (29...♖e8? 30 ♙c4!±) 30 ♖d3 a2! 31 ♙b2 ♖a8 32 ♙a1 ♖a6!! = and the threat of ...♖a6-b6-b1 forces the draw. Now White's game even takes a turn for the worse.

24...♗xb6 25 ♗b5 ♖a8 26 ♙c1 ♙f8 27 g3 g6 28 ♖g2 ♗e6!± 29 ♙d3 ♗c8 30 ♙b2 a3 31 ♙a1 ♗xc3 32 ♗xc3 ♖d8 33 ♙c2

Better was 33 ♖f3 according to Timman.

33...♙g7

33...♙b4 would have given Black only a slight edge after 34 ♗a2 ♙a5 35 ♖f3!± (35 ♙b3? ♖b8 36 ♙xd5

♖b1 37 ♙c3 ♙xc3 38 ♜xc3 ♖b4⚡  
the point being that 35...♞e8? fails  
to 36 ♙b3! ♞e1 37 ♙c3.

34 ♜a2 ♞c8 35 ♙b3 ♖b8 36 ♙c2  
♞c8 37 ♙b3 ♖b8 38 ♙c2 ½-½

After 38 ♙c2 ♜f8 39 ♙c3 ♜e7 Δ  
...♜e7-e6, ...♙g7-f8 ♚, Black's  
advantage would have merely been  
symbolic, so the players agreed to a  
draw.

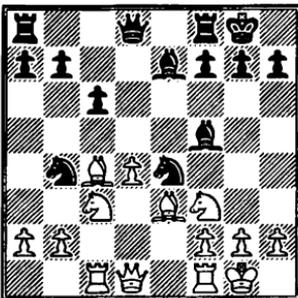
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Topalov– Akopian  
Linares 1995

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜xe5 d6 4  
♜f3 ♜xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙e7 7  
0-0 ♜c6 8 c4!? ♜b4 9 ♙e2 ♙e6 10  
♜c3 0-0 11 ♙e3 ♙f5 12 ♞c1 dxc4

A natural and strong continuation,  
after which White is hard pressed to  
prove an advantage; 12...♙f6?! is  
bad due to 13 ♖b3±

13 ♙xc4 c6!



Ensuring that the ♜b4 will find a  
powerful centralised post on d5; on  
13...♜d6?!, the reply 14 ♙e2!±,  
intending ♖d1-b3 or simply a2-a3 is  
better for White; 14 ♙b3 ♜d3 15  
♞c2 ♜b4 16 ♞d2 ♜e4 17 ♜xe4

♙xe4 18 d5± is also a nagging edge  
as the ♜b4 remains displaced;

13...♜xc3!? is an attempt to do  
without ...c7-c6 that requires  
accurate play from White; After 14  
bxc3 ♜d5 15 ♜e5! ♙e6 16 ♖b3!  
the following possibilities are  
available:

A) 16...f6?! 17 ♜d3 ♜h8 18 ♞fe1  
♖b8 19 ♙f4! ♙f5 (19...♜xf4 20  
♜xf4 ♙xc4 21 ♖xc4± was the  
lesser evil) 20 ♙xd5 ♙xd3 21  
♙xb7± was bad for Black in  
Kundin-Ribshtein, Givataim 1998;

B) After 16...♖b8! (Δ ...b7-b5!)  
17 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 (17...♙xd5 18 c4  
♙e4±) 18 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 19 ♜d7  
♙xa2 20 ♜xb8 ♖xb8 21 ♞a1 ♙c4±  
Black has compensation but it is  
questionable whether it is fully  
adequate.

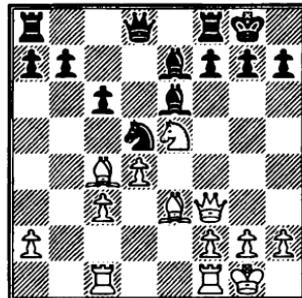
14 ♜e5 ♜xc3 15 bxc3 ♜d5

Now there is the threat of  
...♙e7-a3, so White must react  
accordingly.

16 ♖f3

The best square for the queen; 16  
♖b3?! f6!♚ is slightly better for  
Black.

16...♙e6



As in so many other lines in the Petroff White has been saddled with hanging pawns in the centre. These pawns can become a weakness if the first player fails to mobilise them in a harmonious way and in this particular case his task is made more arduous by the awkward placement of the minor pieces. However, things are not that bleak if White realises the task ahead of him and starts improving the position of his pieces in a meaningful way.

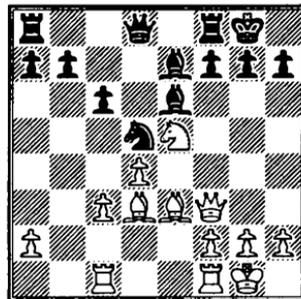
### 17 ♖d2!

A bishop is a bishop, and whilst in this particular case it can be given up for the ♘d5, the text remains the most thematic continuation available to White.

17 ♜fe1 has been considered relatively tame, yet Black has to be careful in order to reach equality as in the ensuing positions it is easier for him to go wrong: 17...♘xe3 18 ♜xe3!? [The principled recapture; 18 ♜xe3 allowed Black to draw comfortably after 18...♙xc4 19 ♘xc4 ♙f6 20 ♜b1 b6 21 ♜f3 ♜c8 22 ♘e3 g6 23 d5 ♙g5 24 dxc6 ♙xe3 25 ♜xe3 ♜d6 26 ♜d1 ♜xc6 27 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 28 ♜d7 ♜fc8 29 ♜ee7 ♜xc3 30 h3 ♜f8 31 ♜xa7 ♜c1+ 32 ♚h2 ♜c6 33 ♜eb7 ♜f6 ½-½, in Kamsky-Anand, Sanghi Nagar (ct) 1994] 18...♙xc4 19 ♘xc4 ♜d5 20 ♜e2 f5 (Black's position looks better but this is only an illusion) 21 ♘e5 ♙d6 22 ♘f3 ♜ae8 23 c4! ♜e4 24 c5 ♙c7 25 ♜c2! (White's chances lie in the ending as his knight and rooks can combine beautifully

there) 25...♜xc2 (25...♜e7 26 ♜b1±) 26 ♜xc2 ♜e7 27 ♜b2 ♜fe8 28 ♚f2 b6! 29 cxb6 ♙xb6 30 ♜c2 f4! 31 ♜xc6!? [31 exf4 ♜xe1 was agreed drawn in S.B.Hansen-P.H.Nielsen, Danish ch (playoff) 1999] 31...♜xe3 32 ♜xe3 ♜xe3 33 ♜c8+ ♚f7 34 g3 ♜a3 35 gxf4 ♚e6!= and Black should eventually draw (35... ♜xa2+?! instead, is inexact due to 36 ♚e3± and the active White pieces in combination with the passed d-pawn offer White an edge);

### 17 ♙d3!?



...is also possible, with the idea of preventing the annoying ...f7-f6, driving away the White knight from his excellent outpost in the centre. Then Black has too wide a choice, especially in the lines arising after 17...♘xe3!, but we have decided to present an analysis of all the logical continuations since we believe it can be extremely beneficiary to our readers from the strategic point of view.

A) 17...♙d6 has been considered an adequate equaliser. However, White may have chances of an edge: 18 ♙d2 and now:

A1) 18...♙xe5 19 dxe5 ♘e7 can be met with 20 ♙g5! ♚c7 (20...h6? 21 ♚e4! g6 22 ♙f6 ♚e8 23 ♚h4+-) 21 ♚h5 h6 (21...♘g6 22 f4 ♚d7 23 ♚cd1± is also better for White) 22 ♙xh6! gxf6 23 ♚xh6 ♘f5 (23...♙f5 24 ♚g5+ ♙g6 25 f4!) 24 ♙xf5!? ♙xf5 25 ♚g5+ ♙g6 26 f4! and White obtained a strong attack in Xie Jianjun-Wu Xibin, Beijing 1996;

A2) 18...♚h4! 19 ♚fe1 ♘f6 20 h3!? (20 a4 allowed the equalising manoeuvre 20...♘g4! 21 ♙f4 ♘xe5 22 ♙xe5 ♙d5= in Huebner-Timman, Sarajevo (m/4) 1991) leads to a further parting of the ways:

A2a) 20...♙d5 21 ♚e3!? b5!? (21...♙xa2?! 22 c4 b5 23 cxb5 cxb5 24 ♚c6!☞ is awkward for Black.) 22 a4! a6 23 ♚a1± is slightly better for White who can open the a-file at his leisure while the move ♙d3-f5 may be employed with cramping effect at some point;

A2b) 20...♙xa2!? (Grabbing the pawn looks dangerous, but is the critical choice) 21 c4!☞ and with the sacrifice of a second pawn White obtains interesting chances, e.g. 21...♚xd4 22 ♙c3 ♚h4! (22...♚c5? 23 ♘g4!→ leads to a tremendous White attack) 23 ♚e2 ♙b3 [23...♙xe5? 24 ♙xe5 ♚ad8 (24...♙b3 25 ♚b1 ♙a4 26 ♚xb7 c5 27 ♚a1! (27 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 28 ♚h5 h6 29 ♚xc5 a5±) 27...♙c6 28 ♚c7 ♚fe8 29 ♚axa7 ♚xc7 30 ♚xc7±) 25 ♚c3±] 24 ♚b2 ♙a4 25 ♚a1 ♙xe5 (After 25...b5 26 ♘xc6☞ White maintains good compensation) 26

♙xe5 b5 with a position that deserves further analysis as the White bishops are raking Black's kingside;

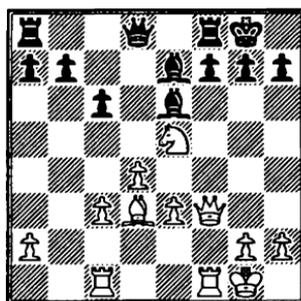
B) 17...c5!? is an interesting attempt to weaken the White centre, worthy of a closer look. White should probably play 18 ♚e4!? f5! (18...g6? 19 ♙h6 ♚e8 20 ♙b5±) 19 ♚f3 with an unclear position as the loss of time is compensated for by the slight weakening of Black's kingside and e-file;

C) 17...♙f6 was played in Nijboer-Fressinet, EU tch, Leon 2001. White won after an arduous struggle: 18 ♙d2 ♚d6 19 ♚fe1 [19 ♚b1 b5 (19...♙xe5 20 dxe5 ♚xe5 21 ♚xb7±; 19...♘b6 20 ♙f4 ♚a3 21 c4 ♚xa2 22 c5±) 20 c4 bxc4 21 ♘xc4± is slightly better for White according to Nijboer in his *Informant* notes. In fact we will rely on those notes for the remainder of the game as they are essential for a proper understanding of the chances] 19...♚ad8 20 h4 [This primitive demonstration is by no means easy to meet; However, 20 c4!? ♘e7 21 ♙a5 ♚c8 (21...♚xd4?! 22 ♙xd8 ♚xd8 23 ♚cd1 ♙xe5 24 ♚h5! g6 25 ♚xe5 ♚xe5 26 ♚xe5±) 22 ♙c3 ♘g6± is slightly better for White according to the Dutch GM] 20...c5 21 h5 [21 c4 ♘e7 22 ♙g5 ♙xg5 23 hxg5 ♘g6 24 ♙xg6 fxg6 25 ♚xb7 (25 dxc5!? ♚xc5 26 ♚e3=) 25...♚xd4 (25...cxd4?! 26 c5 ♚d5 27 ♚xd5 ♙xd5 28 c6±) 26 ♚c2 is another possibility] 21...cxd4 22 cxd4 ♘e7 23 h6 (23 ♙c3 was also possible as 23...♙xa2?! runs

into 24 ♖e4 g6 25 ♜xb7±) 23...♗g6 (23...♙xe5 24 ♜xe5 ♜xd4 25 hxg7 ♜xe5 26 gxf8=♜+↑ gives White a strong initiative, as does 23...♜xd4 24 hxg7 ♙xg7 25 ♜e4 ♜d5 26 ♙b4↑) 24 hxg7 ♙xg7 25 ♜h5 ♙xe5 [25...♜xd4!? would have enabled Black to draw, e.g. 26 ♙c3 (26 ♜e4 ♜d5 27 ♜h4 h6 does not work for White) 26...♜f4 27 ♗xg6 fxg6 28 ♙xg6 ♜xf2+ 29 ♖h1 hxg6 30 ♜xg6 ♜h4+ 31 ♖g1 ♜f2+=] 26 ♜xe5 ♜xd4 27 ♜e3 ♜d5 28 ♜h6 ♜f4 29 ♜xf4 ♗xf4 30 ♜g3+ ♗g6 31 ♙g5!☞ (The two bishops yield White lasting pressure for the pawn in this endgame; The main attacking device is a subsequent advance of the f-pawn. Still, with proper defence Black should be able to draw comfortably) 31...♖g7 (31...f6 32 ♙h6 ♜fd8 33 ♙xg6 hxg6 34 ♜xg6+ ♖h7 35 ♜xf6 ♜d1+ 36 ♖h2 ♜xc1 37 ♙xc1 ♙xa2± should not be too difficult for Black to draw) 32 ♜c7 ♜d7 33 ♜xd7 ♙xd7 34 ♙e4 b6 (34...♙c6?! 35 ♙xc6 bxc6 36 ♜a3 ♜a8 37 ♜a6± is given as only slightly better for White but would have obviously been tough to defend in view of Black's many weaknesses) 35 ♜a3 a5 36 ♙e3 ♜b8 37 ♜c3!?! b5 38 ♜c7 ♙e6 39 f4! ♙xa2 40 f5 ♗f8 (40...♗e5? succumbs to 41 ♙d4 ♜e8 42 ♙c6+-) 41 ♙d4+ ♖g8 42 ♜c3 b4 (42...f6 would have still been equal after 43 ♙xf6 ♖f7 44 ♙d4 ♙c4 45 ♜g3 ♖e7 46 ♙c5+ ♖f7 47 ♙d4=; Black's choice in the game is much more risky) 43 ♜g3+ ♗g6 44 fxg6 fxg6 45 ♙c6 ♜d8 46 ♙c5 ♜d1+ 47 ♖h2 ♙d5 48 ♙a4

♜d2 49 ♜g5 ♜a2 50 ♙d7 ♖f7 51 ♙c7 ♜d2 (51...♙e4!?) 52 ♙a4 ♖f6 53 ♙d8+ ♖e6 54 ♙xa5 h6? [Missing a final chance to draw by 54...♜a2! 55 ♜xd5 ♜xa4 56 ♜b5 (56 ♜g5 h6 57 ♜xg6+ ♖f7 58 ♜a6 b3=; 56 ♜c5 ♖d6 57 ♜g5 ♖c6=) 56...♖d7! 57 ♙xb4 ♖c6 58 ♜b8 ♖c7 59 ♜b5 ♖c6=, a variation pointed out by Iv. Markovic] 55 ♙xb4 ♜b2 56 ♙c3 ♜a2 57 ♜e5+ ♖f7 58 ♙e8+ ♖f8 59 ♙b4+ and 1-0;

D) 17...♗xe3! (It is best for Black to take the precious bishop before it runs away) 18 fxe3



...and we have arrived at a position which at first sight looks better for Black in view of his two bishops and superior pawn structure, but if White can exchange light-squared bishops this impression may easily change as Black's weakness on the corresponding squares will come to the fore. At this point Black has many continuations that we will examine one by one:

D1) 18...♙xa2? is a blunder in view of 19 c4+-;

D2) 18...f5?! allows 19 g4!?! with a White initiative;

D3) 18...♙f6 can be met with 19 ♖e4!? g6 20 ♜b1±, setting the trap 20...♜b8? 21 ♜xc6! bxc6 22 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 23 ♜xf6±;

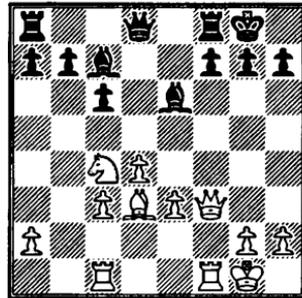
D4) 18...♜c7 allows White to carry out his main strategic aim by 19 ♙f5!? ♙xf5 (19...♜c8!? 20 ♜b1 f6! 21 ♜d3 ♙xf5 22 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 23 ♜xf5 b6±/=) 20 ♜xf5; After 20...g6!? (20...♜ad8 21 e4± gives White a slight edge thanks to his central preponderance) 21 ♜h3! f6 22 ♜f3 f5 23 e4! Black's light-squared weaknesses are beginning to show, yet this may be the best option for Black since after 23...fxe4 24 ♜e6+ ♙g7 25 ♜xe4 ♙f6 26 ♜ce1 ♜ad8!± (x d4), it is hard for White to mobilise the central pawns;

D5) 18...♙g5 configures the bishops in Sveshnikov Sicilian style, pressurising e3. White should switch his attention temporarily to the queenside by 19 ♜b1 ♜b8 (19...♜c7 20 h4!?) 20 a4± preserving a slight space advantage and keeping open several options;

D6) 18...g6!? is designed to discourage sacrificial ideas as well as an exchange of bishops by ♙d3-f5. White's best is 19 ♜b1 ♜c7 20 ♙c4! ♙xc4 21 ♜xc4 ♜ad8 22 a4! f5 23 a5± with a slight advantage due to the possibility of combining pressure on the b-file with a well timed e3-e4;

D7) 18...♙d6! (The strongest reply, cutting across White's

intentions) 19 ♜c4 (Now White must change plans, slightly curbing his ambitions) 19...♙c7

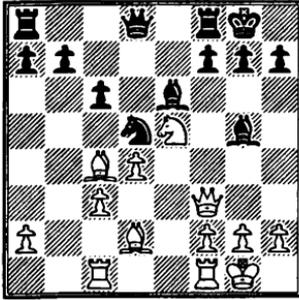


...and we have reached a critical position for the evaluation of 17 ♙d3!?:

Now 20 a4! [Instead, 20 e4!? allows Black to undermine the centre by 20...b5! 21 ♜e3 b4 securing just about enough play to draw, e.g. 22 e5! (22 d5?! ♜d6!! (But not 22...♙b6? 23 dxe6 ♜xd3 24 e7! ♜xe3+ 25 ♙h1±) is unpleasant for White) 22...♙b6 23 ♜e4 g6 24 ♜f4 bxc3 (24...♙xa2?! 25 ♜g4! leads to a strong White attack; inferior are 25 cxb4?! f5!± or 25 ♙c4?! ♙xc4 26 ♜xc4 bxc3 27 ♜d6 ♜d7 28 ♜xc3 f6!± with more than sufficient counter-play for Black in both cases) 25 ♜xc3 ♙d5! 26 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 27 ♜xd5 cxd5=] is a prophylactic and flexible move, leading to an interesting position for White who keeps the options of advancing in the centre or pursuing the plan of exchanging light-squared bishops, depending on Black's play. After something like 20...♜h4 (20...♜g5

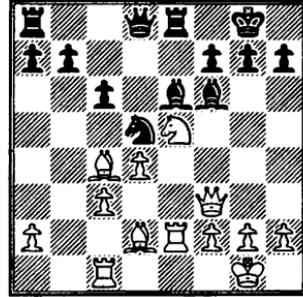
21 e4±) 21 g3 ♖g5 22 ♖b1 ♖ab8 23 e4 b5!? the position is very double-edged as both sides have their assets and weaknesses.

17...♗g5



A most natural move, designed to ease Black's position by exchanging a pair of bishops. However, the alternatives are also important:

After 17...♗f6 White can breathe more easily because his excellently centralised knight remains unchallenged in its place. A possible line is 18 ♖fel ♖e8 [18...g6 is designed to safeguard the king by fianchettoing the bishop, but loses precious time; After 19 ♗b3!? (19 ♖b1!? ♖b8! 20 ♖xc6?! bxc6 21 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 22 ♗xd5 ♗xd4!= as in Kajumov-Barua, Goodricke 1997, is a trap White must avoid) 19...♗g7 (19...♖e8 20 c4 ♖b6 21 ♗h6± is slightly better for White) 20 ♖cd1!± White is ready to advance in the centre by c3-c4, while keeping the ♗d2 flexible] 19 ♖e2! building pressure on the e-file; attempts to neutralise this pressure by offering exchanges do not appear to have the desired effect:



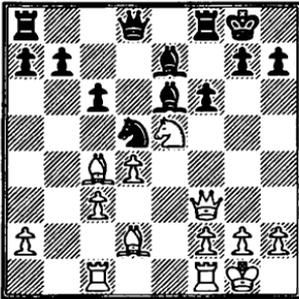
A) 19...♖b6!? should rather be met by 20 ♗d3!?. [Since 20 ♗xe6 ♖xe6 21 ♖xf7!? is answered by the cool 21...♖e7! (21...♖xf7? 22 ♖h5+ ♖e7 23 ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 24 ♖e1+++)) 22 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 23 ♖g5 ♗xg5 24 ♗xg5 ♖xa2 with double-edged play]; then 20... ♗xe5!?. (20...♗xa2?! 21 c4± is extremely dangerous for Black as it leads to the cutting off of the bishop from the rest of his army) 21 ♖xe5 ♗c4 leads to a crucial position where White must take the bull by the horns: 22 ♗g5! (22 ♗xh7+ ♖xh7 23 ♖h5+ ♖g8 24 ♖h3 f6 25 ♖h8+ ♖f7 26 ♖h5+ ♖e7 27 ♖e1+ ♗e6 should be about equal after 28 ♖g4; after 22 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 23 ♖e1 ♖f8 Black should also be able to hold) 22...♖d7 (22...f6!?. 23 ♗xh7+! ♖xh7 24 ♗xf6! ♖xf6 25 ♖e4+ ♖g8 26 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 27 ♖xe8+ leads to a position where we'd rather prefer the rook to the minor pieces, but this may represent Black's best chance) 23 ♗f5 ♗e6 24 ♗c2! f6 (24...♗d5 25 ♖d3±) 25 ♗xf6! ♖f8 (25...gxh6? 26 ♖xf6+-) 26 ♗xh7+! ♖xh7 27 ♖h5+ ♖g8 28 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 29 ♖g5± and it appears that White should be able to press

for a long time thanks to his mass of kingside pawns;

B) 19...♘c7 is best answered in similar fashion: 20 ♔d3! ♚d5!? (20...♔xa2? 21 c4±) 21 ♚g3 ♚xa2 22 c4!? and Black is in danger as his queen is cut off from the rest of his forces;

C) 19...g6 (Acquiescing to less forced play) 20 ♖ce1 ♔g7 21 ♔b3↑ and White has a strong initiative as he has increased his attacking potential by doubling rooks on the e-line;

17...f6!?

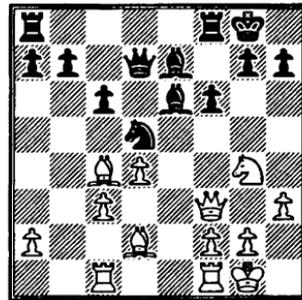


...is a very principled continuation that bears Kramnik's approval, leading to the eviction of the White knight from a fine central square. Now White has to play energetically as otherwise he runs a risk of falling in an inferior position. The key idea is to mobilise the central pawn duo:

A) After 18 ♘d3 ♚d7 19 ♔b3 [to mobilise the central pawns immediately; 19 ♖fe1 ♔d6 (19...♖fe8 20 ♔b3 ♔g4 21 ♚g3 ♚h8 22 c4 ♔d6 23 ♚h4 ♘e7 24 h3

♔e6=) 20 h3 b5 21 ♔b3 ♖fe8 22 c4 bxc4 23 ♔xc4 ♔f7 24 ♘c5 ♔xc5 25 dxc5 ♖ab8= was equal in Shredder 4 – Nimzo 7.32, Computer Chess Match Tournament 2000] 19...♔g4!? 20 ♚g3 ♚h8 21 c4 ♔d6 22 ♘c5 ♔xc5 23 dxc5 ♘e7 24 ♔f4 ♖fe8 25 ♔d6 ♔e2! 26 ♖fe1 ♘f5 27 ♚h3 g6= Black was OK in Shirov-Kramnik, Monaco 2000, but 25 ♖fe1!? (to prevent ...♔g4-e2) would have been a more serious try for an advantage;

B) 18 ♘g4! (Untried, but in our opinion very good; Normally the knight is retreated to d3 where it seems to interfere with the mobilisation of White's central pawns and, in fact, seems to have no future) 18...♚d7 19 h3



...and we have reached what is in our view an important position. After securely defending his knight White now has the choice of retreating his bishop to either b3 or d3, followed by c3-c4. The following analysis demonstrates that Black has difficulties in equalising: 19...♘b6!?! (19...b5 20 ♔d3! ♘b6 can be met by 21 ♖ce1 ♔d5 22

♖g3! ♗d6 23 ♖h4! f5 24 ♗e5↑  
with a White initiative) 20 ♗xe6+  
♖xe6 21 ♜fe1! [21 c4 f5!? requires  
analysis; 21...♗xc4 instead looks  
slightly better for White after 22  
♖b3 b5 23 ♗e3 ♜fd8 24 ♗xc4  
bxc4 25 ♜xc4! (25 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 26  
♜xc4 c5!)=) 25...♞ab8 26 ♖a4 ♞b2  
27 ♗e3±] and we are at a key  
crossroads.

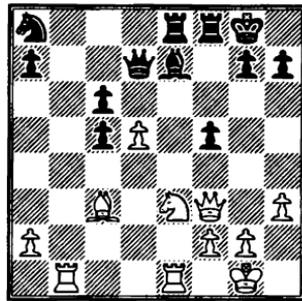
**B1)** 21...♖d7!? is an interesting  
move; White now needs the services  
of his c-pawn to work up some  
action in the centre: After 22 c4!  
Black has the following choice:

**B1a)** 22...♖xd4?! 23 ♜xe7 ♖xd2  
24 ♞d1 ♖g5 (24...♖xa2 25 ♗h6+  
♗h8 26 ♖g3+-) 25 ♜xb7 c5 26  
♖c6±, Δ ♗g4-e3, is clearly better  
for White despite the symmetry in  
view of his piece activity;

**B1b)** 22...f5!? 23 ♗e3 (23 ♗e5  
♖xd4 24 ♞cd1!? is an interesting  
position to analyse) leads to a  
position where Black is tempted to  
capture the pawn on d4, but he also  
disposes of less greedy alternatives:

**B1b1)** 23...♞ad8 24 ♗a5!±;

**B1b2)** On 23...♞ae8 the reply 24  
c5 puts a difficult question to Black  
regarding the placing of his attacked  
knight; after 24...♗a8 [Relatively  
best; 24...♗c8?! 25 d5 (25 ♗c3!? Δ  
♗e3-c4, Δ d4-d5) 25...f4 26 dxc6  
bxc6 27 ♗f1± x ♗c8, x c6→ is  
annoying for Black while 27 ♗c4  
♗xc5 28 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 29 ♗xf4± is  
another way to play] 25 ♞b1!?±  
White maintains certain pressure as  
the following variations show:  
25...♖xd4?! (25...b6!? 26 ♗c3 bxc5  
27 d5!



...and White's initiative more than  
compensates for the pawn) 26 ♗xf5  
♖xc5 (26...♖xd2 27 ♜xe7+;  
26...♜xf5 27 ♖xf5 ♖xd2 28 ♖e6+  
♗f8 29 ♜xb7+-) 27 ♜xe7 (27 g4!?)  
27...♜xe7 28 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 29 ♗b4  
♖xb4 (29...c5 30 ♖d5+ ♖f7 31  
♖xc5+-) 30 ♜xb4 ♗xf3 31 gxf3±;

**B1b3)** 23...♖xd4!? (The brutal  
choice and one that is hard to refute)  
24 ♗c3 ♖d7 (On 24...♖c5, 25 ♞b1!  
maintains the pressure) 25 ♞cd1  
♖c8 26 ♗d5! ♗xd5 27 cxd5 ♜f7 28  
♗b2± (Δ ♖f3-b3, x e6,) and  
White's pressure on the diagonals  
a2-g8, a1-h8 possibly combined  
with a well timed advance of the  
h-pawn seems to amply compensate  
for the missing pawn;

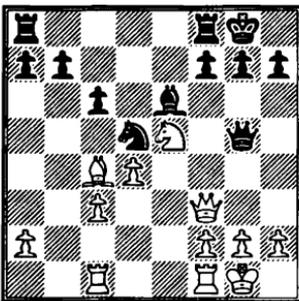
**B1c)** 22...♞ae8 (This non-  
committal move seems to be the  
safest) 23 c5!? ♗d5 24 ♗e3 ♗xe3  
25 ♗xe3 ♜f7 26 ♞ed1 ♗f8 27 d5  
cxd5 28 ♞xd5 ♖c6 29 ♖f5!± and  
White's grip on the d-file gives him  
a slight plus;

**B2)** 21...♖f7 (We have chosen  
this as the main line on the grounds  
that Black keeps the important c4  
square under observation) 22 c4  
♞ad8 (22...♜fe8?! 23 ♖g3! ♗h8 24  
♖c7!↑) leads to a choice for White:

**B2a)** 23 ♖e3!? f5! (23...♙xd4? 24 ♖f5 ♗d7 25 ♗h6!± is out of the question) 24 ♖xf5 ♜xf5 25 ♜xf5 ♙xf5 26 ♙xe7 ♙xd4 27 ♗e3 ♙xc4! 28 ♙xb7 ♙xc1+ 29 ♗xc1 ♙f7! 30 ♙b8+ ♙f8 31 ♙xf8+ (31 ♙b7 ♙f7) 31...♜xf8 32 ♖f1± is a small but pleasant endgame plus;

**B2b)** 23 ♜d3 (Highlighting a difference between the placement of the queens on d7 and f7; now Black cannot really put pressure on White's centre, because after ...♗e7-c5 there always comes ♜d3-g3 and White is winning) 23...♙fe8 24 ♗a5 and now Black should restrict himself to the conservative 24...♗f8± as the alternatives lose: 24...♗c5? 25 ♜g3+-; 24...♗d6? 25 c5! ♙xe1+ 26 ♙xe1 ♗xc5 27 ♜g3! ♜xa2 28 ♖h6+ ♖h8 29 dxc5 gxh6 30 ♜h4+-.

18 ♗xg5 ♜xg5



A critical position; what should White play?

19 ♙fe1

This move, universally adopted, does not seem to be the best in the quest for an advantage. Black's plan is to double rooks on the e-line by

...♙a8-e8-e7, ...♙f8-e8, followed by seeking massive simplification along that file, and White's last move poses few obstacles in the second player's way towards this target.

We think that the best way of disrupting Black's plan is the as yet untried 19 ♙b1! forcing the Black rook to take a passive stance. After 19...♙ab8 (19...f6 20 ♖d3 b6 is met by 21 ♖b4 ♙ac8 22 h4! ♜xh4 23 ♙fe1! ♗f7 24 ♖xc6 ♙xc6 25 ♗xd5 ♙c7 26 ♗xf7+ ♙cxf7 27 ♙b5!± with a clear advantage for White in view of the awkward placement of the Black queen) 20 ♙b2! ♙fe8 (20...f6 21 ♖d3 ♙fe8 22 ♖c5 b6 23 ♖xe6 ♙xe6 24 ♙e2± is clearly better for White in view of Black's weaknesses on the light squares) 21 h4! (21 ♙fb1 ♜f5! 22 ♜g3 ♖f4 23 ♗f1 ♗xa2 24 ♙xb7 ♗xb1 25 ♙xf7 leads to a forced draw after 25...♖h5! 26 ♙xf5 ♖xg3 27 ♗c4+ ♖h8 28 ♖f7+ ♖g8 29 ♖d6+ ♖h8 30 ♖f7+=) 21...♜d8 (21...♜xh4 22 ♙fb1 ♖b6 23 ♗xe6 fxe6 24 ♜f7+ ♖h8 25 a4± leads to fantastic positional compensation for White; On 21...♜f5 the reply 22 ♜g3! ♖b6 23 ♗d3 ♜f6 24 ♙e1 h6 25 ♙be2↑ yields fine attacking chances as the ♖e5 is stable and the rest of the White army harmoniously focusing on the Black monarch) 22 ♙e1 f6 (22...♜a5!?) 23 ♖d3 ♗f7 24 ♙xe8+ ♜xe8 25 ♙e2± White has a nagging edge due to Black's inability to contest immediately the e-file, e.g. 25...♜f8 26 ♖c5 ♜d6 27 h5! and a weakness upon the enemy castled position will be forced.

## 19...♖ae8

Black goes ahead with his plan; since now he will be able to defend his b-pawn from the side, there is no longer any point in attacking it. Thus, White usually concentrates in (a) doubling his rooks on the e-file or (b) an advance of his central pawns or (c) a combination of these plans. It seems to us, however, that the real chance for an advantage existed on the previous move and from now on White can achieve very little, if anything.

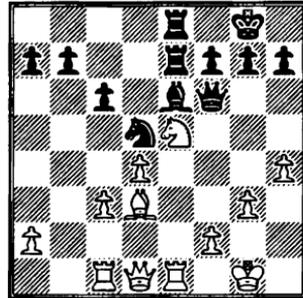
## 20 g3

A move designed to build slowly a space advantage; others have also failed to bring White a significant edge. The game Polgar-Macieja, Budapest (rapid) 2002 saw what is probably the most interesting alternative attempt in the position, namely to mobilise the central pawns immediately by means of 20 ♖b3!?, after 20...♟f6 21 c4 ♜e7! 22 h3 ♜fe8 23 ♜cd1 ♟d7 [23...c5!? looks like an interesting attempt at improvement, e.g. 24 ♖a4 (24 ♜e3 ♜xe3 25 fxe3 ♟e4 looks fine for Black) 24...♟d7 25 ♖xd7 ♟xd7 26 ♟d3! ♜xe1+ 27 ♟xe1!? and White has probably only a tiny edge] 24 ♜e3 ♜f6 25 ♜e2 (25 ♜xf6 ♟xf6 26 f4!?) 25...♟xe5 26 ♜xe5 ♖c8 27 f4! ♟f8 28 ♜e1 ♜d6 29 ♜d3 Black tried to lash out by 29...c5 and now Judith surprisingly refrained from 30 ♜xh7! ♜xd4+ 31 ♟h1 ♜xe5 32 fxe5 which seems to offer White some chances, e.g. 32...♜f2! 33 ♜d1 ♜f5! 34 ♜h8+ ♟e7 35 ♜xg7

♜g6 36 ♜xg6 fxe6 37 ♖c2± (37 ♟h2±).

## 20...♜f5?!

Black tries to extricate his queen immediately from its somewhat precarious position, but it seems there is no point in doing that before White resorts to h2-h4. 20...♜e7!? 21 h4 ♜f5! has been suggested by Topalov, and is in fact the best continuation (21...♜f6? 22 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 23 ♜xf6 gxf6 24 ♟g4± is better for White in view of Black's ruined pawn structure; 21...♜h6!? 22 ♜c2! ♜fe8 23 ♜ce2 ♜f6! 24 ♜d3!± is perhaps only slightly better for White); this suggestion was adopted in the game Sax-Pavasovic, Maribor 1996, which continued with the natural 22 ♜d1 ♜fe8 23 ♖d3 ♜f6

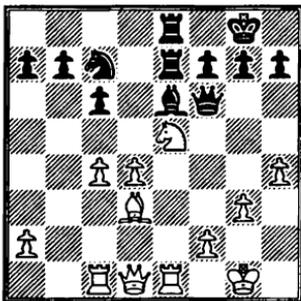


...when Black prepares to evict the White knight from the centre by means of ...♜f6-h6 and ...f7-f6 or ...♖e6-f5 followed by ...♜f6-d6 and ...f7-f6. It seems to us that White could have now fearlessly played 24 c4! finally mobilizing the central pawn majority. Then Black would have faced a difficult choice:

A) 24...♟b6 25 ♖e4!↑ looks good for White who may follow up with ♖c1-c2-e2;

B) 24...♟b4 25 ♖b1 ♖f5 [after 25...c5 26 a3 ♟a6 there is a choice of good lines: 27 d5 ♖xd5 (27...♖h3 28 f4±) 28 ♜xd5 ♜xe5 29 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 30 ♜xb7 ♟c7 31 ♜xa7 ♟e6 32 ♜b7! ♟d4 33 ♖d3± is a pleasant plus, while 27 ♜c3!?! cxd4 28 ♜xd4 ♖f5 29 ♖xf5 ♜xf5 30 ♜ce3↑ is also fine as White's centralisation and superior knight offers him the better chances despite his inferior pawn structure] is strongly met by 26 ♜e3!, intending ♜e3-f3 with an initiative;

C) 24...♟c7! (Looks awkward, but is in fact best as it is linked with the idea of a subsequent ...♟c7-e6, applying pressure on d4) leads to very little for White:



C1) 25 ♜c2 is best answered by 25...g6! (25...♜h6 26 ♜e3 f6 27 ♟f3 ♖g4 28 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 29 ♟h2 ♖e2 30 ♜b1 ♖xd3 31 ♜xd3 looks a bit better for White as the Black queen is cut off from the action) 26 h5 (intending f2-f4, ♜c2-f2) 26...c5! = when Black equalises in the nick of time;

C2) After 25 ♜h5!?! Black should refrain from...

C2a) 25...h6?!, which allows White to obtain a strong initiative after 26 ♜e3! ♖h3□ (26...♖c8? 27 ♜f3 ♜e6 28 ♖f5 ♜d6 29 ♖xc8 ♜xc8 30 ♜xf7±; 26...♖d7? 27 ♜f3 ♜e6 28 ♖f5 ♜d6 29 ♖xd7+-) 27 ♜ce1↑, in favour of...

C2b) 25...g6! (Apparently weakening, but Black should hurry to exchange queens to avoid falling under a strong attack); then, 26 ♜g5 ♜xg5 27 hxg5 leads to an ending that is basically drawish, but Black has to play accurately to achieve the draw:

C2b1) After 27...♜d8 28 ♟f3 ♜ed7 (28...♟f8 29 ♜e4±) 29 ♖e4± White's plan is to continue with ♟g1-g2 followed by ♜e1-h1-h4 and pressure on the h-pawn;

C2b2) 27...♖c8!?! 28 ♟f3! [White's idea is to trade all the major pieces in order to relieve the pressure on d-pawn and then exploit the superiority of his minor pieces, although the advantage is very small; 28 f4 on the other hand offers nothing after 28...♜d8 29 ♜e4 (29 ♟f3 ♜xe1+ 30 ♜xe1 ♖g4 31 ♖e4 ♖xf3 32 ♖xf3 ♜xd4 33 ♜e7 ♟e6 34 ♜xb7 ♜xc4 35 ♜xa7 ♟d4=) 29...♟f8! (29...♖f5 30 ♟xc6 ♜xe4 31 ♟xd8 ♜xd4 32 ♖xf5 ♜xd8 33 ♖e4±) 30 ♟f2 ♖f5 31 ♜e3 ♟e6! = as the weakness of d4 is highlighted] 28...♜xe1+ 29 ♜xe1 ♜xe1+ 30 ♟xe1 f6! 31 gxh6 ♟f7 should be held with proper play by Black after either 32 f4 or 32 ♟c2.

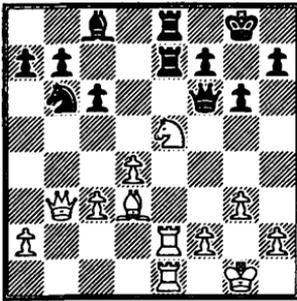
21 ♜d1!

Now White is effectively a tempo up on all the lines mentioned in the previous note as he didn't have to waste time on a quick h2-h4. This fact enables him to build up his position slowly and obtain a strategic plus.

21...♖b6

21...♞e7 22 ♔d3 ♜f6 23 c4 ♖b6 24 ♞e4!± (Topalov) is bad for Black as his queen's position allows White to gain time and space for attacking purposes; 21...f6 22 ♔d3! ♜h3 23 ♔f1 ♜h6 (23...♜f5 24 ♖c4±) may have been worth a try.

22 ♔d3 ♜f6 23 ♜c2 g6 24 ♞b1! ♔c8 25 ♞e2 ♞e7 26 ♞be1 ♞fe8 27 ♜b3↑



Intending a2-a4-a5; the consequences of Black's failure to achieve a quick doubling of the rooks on the e-file are already visible, the knight has settled on e5 and it will be very hard to get rid of it.

27...♔e6 28 ♜a3 ♖c8 29 ♞e3

Now that the Black knight has been forced into passivity White takes his time and improves his position.

29...♜g7 30 ♜b4!

A good move, directed against ...f7-f6. If now 30...f6, Topalov gives 31 ♖c4 ♔xc4 (31... ♔d5? 32 ♜xb7! ♞xb7 33 ♞xe8+ ♖f7 34 ♞c8 ♞d7 35 ♖d6!↑ ♞d6 36 ♞c7+ +-) 32 ♔xc4+ ♖h8 33 ♔e6±

30...♜f8 31 a4?

Topalov later criticized this move, suggesting that it would have been better to play 31 h4 ♞c7 32 ♜b2!, planning h4-h5±

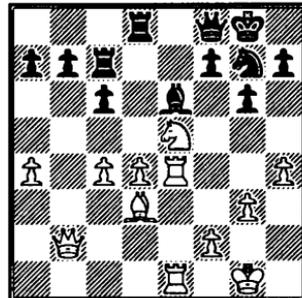
31...♞c7 32 ♜b2 ♖d6 33 c4 ♞d8!

Black is alert and avoids an immediate collapse; after 33...♖f5? 34 ♖g4 ♖xe3 35 ♖f6+ ♖h8 36 ♞xe3 (Δ d4-d5+-, Topalov) White's dark-square pressure would have paid off handsomely.

34 h4!

White realises that he would not be able to achieve something substantial without this attacking gesture. The threat of undermining the king's defences by h4-h5 is sufficient to cause distress to the best of defenders.

34...♖f5 35 ♞e4 ♖g7



36 ♞f4! ♖h5 37 ♞f3

The redeployment of the rook to f3 has breathed new life into White's attacking chances; White has now all his men impressively placed and when something like this happens, it usually has a negative effect on the opponent.

37... ♖d6! 38 g4 ♕xg4?

After dealing successfully with pressure for several moves, Black suddenly caves in; the modest 38... ♖g7 39 ♖f4± is only slightly better for White according to Topalov and would have allowed Black to put up a stiff resistance.

39 ♖xg4 ♖xd4 40 ♖h6+!

White is in no mood to simplify and give his opponent chances of survival; 40 ♖xd4?! ♖xd4 41 ♖e4! ♖d8! (41... ♖xe4 42 ♕xe4 f5?! 43 ♕xf5! gxf5 44 ♖xf5+-) 42 ♖h2 ♖g7 would have not been easy to win in view of White's many weaknesses.

40... ♖g7 41 ♖c1

Threatening ♖c1-g5.

41... f6 42 ♖e4 ♖c5 43 ♖g4 ♖f7 44 ♖fe3!?

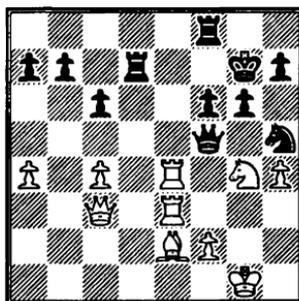
44 ♖h6+ ♖g8 45 ♖fe3 ♖f8 is given by Topalov as still holding for Black, but instead of 46 c5? (which he correctly condemns due to 46... f5! +-) White avails himself of the prosaic 46 ♖e6! which seems to guarantee a winning position, e.g. 46... f5 47 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 48 ♖e5 ♖f6 49 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 50 a5+- and White has obtained a favourable version of the endgame mentioned in the note to White's 40th. Still, it is hard to criticize White's choice in the game

because the presence of queens favours the attacker in such instances.

44... ♖fd7

44... g5 45 ♖b2± (Topalov) hardly helps Black.

45 ♕e2 ♖f8 46 ♖c3 ♖f5



47 ♖h2!+-

Ensuring that the ♖h5 will be captured, after which Black's defences are bound to fall apart.

47... ♖c5 48 ♕g4 ♖dd8 49 ♖f3 ♖h8 50 ♕xh5!

50 ♖g5 ♖g7.

50... ♖xh5 51 ♖f4 ♖g8 52 ♖h2 ♖d6 53 c5 ♖h6 54 ♖g3!

Black resigned, because after the loss of the f6 pawn his position would become hopeless.

1-0

28

Chandler – Hort

Bundesliga, Germany 1988

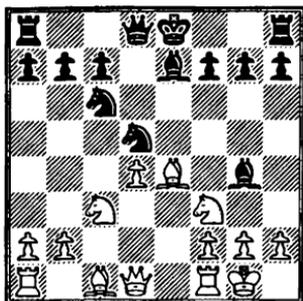
1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♖xe5 d6 4 ♖f3 ♖xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♕d3 ♕e7 7 0-0 ♖c6 8 c4!?

A drastic method of solving the problem with the ♖e4; Black renounces any intentions he might have had of keeping the knight on its centralised outpost and concentrates instead on the fight for the d5 square.

9 ♖c3 ♗g4

This move is not very effective as the pressure on d4 is merely academic.

10 cxd5 ♖xd5 11 ♗e4!



A typical reaction, exploiting the fact that Black's 9... ♗g4 was not consistent with the original conception of intensifying control over d5.

11... ♖f6

11... ♖xc3?! 12 bxc3 0-0 13 ♖b1 ♖a5 (13... ♖b8 14 ♗d3 h6 15 ♗xc6 bxc6 16 ♖xb8 ♗xb8 17 ♖e5+-; 13... ♗c8 14 ♗c2 h6 15 h3 ♗d7 16 d5 ♖a5 17 c4±) 14 h3 ♗e6 15 ♖e1 c6 16 ♗c2± is clearly good for White;

Pulling the bishop back by 11... ♗e6!? would have been an admission that Black's 9th was a failure, but it is nevertheless

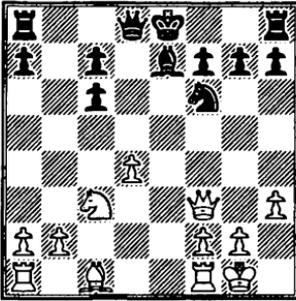
playable. White should continue with 12 a3!? (12 ♗d3 ♖cb4 13 ♗e2± is also good) 12...0-0 13 ♖e1! [13 ♗c2 h6 14 ♗d2 ♗f6 15 ♖ad1!? is best met by 15... ♖xc3! (15... ♖ce7?! 16 ♖fe1 c6 17 ♖e5 ♗c7 (On 17... ♗c8!? the reply 18 ♗h7+! ♖h8 19 ♗d3 intending ♖c3-e4 or ♗c2-c1, yields a White initiative) 18 ♖a4! ♖ad8 19 ♖c5 ♗c8 20 b4± gives White a slightly better position in view of his space advantage) 16 bxc3 ♖a5!, trying to harass White on the weakened light squares c4, b3] 13... ♗f6 [13... ♗d7!? 14 ♗c2 h6 15 ♖e5 (15 b4!?) 15... ♖xe5 16 dxe5 c6 17 ♖xd5 cxd5 18 ♗h7+ ♖h8 19 ♗d3±; 13... ♖xc3 14 bxc3 ♗d5 15 ♖b1± (15 ♗c2!? ±)] 14 ♗d3! h6 when he is a whole tempo up on the game. Movsesian-Yusupov featured under the next Illustrative Game. The best way of exploiting this appears to be 15 ♖e5! ♖ce7 16 ♗g3 ♖h8 17 ♗d2 c6 18 ♖ad1± with a solid slight edge; on 18... ♖f5?! there follows 19 ♗f3! as the d-pawn is immune: 19... ♖xd4? 20 ♗h5!+- and Black is suddenly busted.

Finally, 11... ♖b6!?! is an untried possibility with ideas similar to 11... ♖f6 that shouldn't be too bad for Black.

12 ♗xc6+ bxc6 13 h3 ♗xf3

13... ♗h5? 14 g4 ♗g6 15 ♖e5 0-0 (Della Morte-Coda, Villa Ballester 2003) should be bad for Black after the simple 16 f4! h6 17 ♖xc6 ♗d7 18 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 19 f5+-

14 ♗xf3



A conclusion to be drawn from the diagram is that a quiet, positional struggle is to be expected; White has slightly the better of it because his pawn structure is marginally superior.

14...♚d7?!

We regard this as merely a sign of indecision on Black's part.

14...0-0? is clearly bad for Black due to 15 ♜xc6 ♜xd4 16 ♜xc7 ♙d6 17 ♚b5! ♙xc7 18 ♚xd4 ♙b6 19 ♚f5 ♜fe8 20 ♙e3 ♜e5 21 ♙xb6 ♜xf5 22 ♙d4+- (S.Nikolov-Jovan, Bled 2003).

14...♚d5!? is a better move than the more usual 14...♚d7?! and it is surprising that it has been a rare occurrence in tournament praxis; Black acknowledges that he cannot profit from the weakness on d4 and focuses on covering his own weaknesses. White has several possibilities, but it seems difficult to get a substantial edge:

A) 15 ♙f4 is not very good because of 15...♚xf4 16 ♜xf4 0-0 17 ♜ad1 ♜b8! 18 b3 ♜b4!± and Black gets counter-play;

B) 15 ♙e3!? may well be the best: 15...0-0 16 ♜ac1 ♜b8 17 b3 ♙a3!

(17...♚xe3?! 18 fxe3 c5 19 ♚d5! cxd4 20 ♜xc7±) 18 ♜c2 ♚b4 19 ♜e2 ♚d5 20 ♙c1 ♙b4 21 ♚e4!? (21 ♚xd5 cxd5 as in Lanka-Schulz, Bundesliga 1993, should be better for White after 22 ♙f4! ♜c8 23 ♜c1 c6 24 ♜g4!± as the Black rook is tied to defending the chronic weakness at c6. In the game White tried to seize more space on the kingside by 22 g3, but after 22...♜b6! 23 h4 ♜f6 24 ♜g4 ♜g6 Black could breathe easier) 21...f5 (what else?) 22 ♚g5 ♜d6 23 ♜d3! (a multi-purpose move, opening f3 for the knight and keeping open many options for the queen) and White is better. From d3 the queen facilitates the strategically desirable exchange of bishops as can be seen in the variation 23...h6 24 ♚f3 c5 25 ♙d2! and suddenly the weaknesses in the Black camp are apparent;

C) 15 ♚xd5 (A most clear-cut way of playing) 15...♜xd5 [15...cxd5 allows White to carry out quickly pressure along the c-file by 16 ♙f4 c6! (16...0-0? 17 ♜ac1 ♙d6 (17...♜c8 18 ♜c6±) 18 ♙xd6 ♜xd6 19 ♜c5 c6 20 ♜fc1± is a standard positional advantage for White) 17 ♜ac1 ♜c8 18 ♜c2!? 0-0 19 ♜fc1 but it may nevertheless be Black's best course after the correct 19...♜b6! (19...♚d7?! 20 ♜g4!? accentuates the problem of the backward pawn) 20 ♜e2! ♜b7 (20...♙f6 21 ♙d6 ♜fe8 22 ♜ce1 ♜xe2 23 ♜xe2 h6 24 ♙c5 ♜b7 25 b3±) 21 ♜g4! (Δ ♙f4-e5) 21...♙f6 22 ♜ce1±]

16 ♜e2! (Gaining time for development by keeping the enemy king in the centre for a while; 16

♖xd5? cxd5 17 ♔f4 ♕d7 would now be only equal) 16...♗d8! and here we have a further division:

C1) After 17 b3!? it is imperative for Black to set-up a defence along his third rank by 17...♗d6! (17...♗d7?! 18 ♔a3 0-0 19 ♔xe7 ♗e8 20 ♗fe1± is clearly better for White); Here...

C1a) The immediate 18 ♗a6?! questionably removes the queen from the theatre of action, allowing Black to obtain a strong initiative after 18...0-0! (18...♗g6 19 ♗c8+! ♗d8 20 ♗xd8+ ♕xd8 21 ♔e3 ♕d7 22 ♗fc1 ♗b8 23 ♗c4±) 19 ♗xa7 ♗g6 20 f3 c5↑;

Better is...

C1b) 18 ♔f4! ♗e6 (18...♗g6 19 ♔g3↑) 19 ♗a6 0-0 20 ♗xa7 ♗g6 21 g3± which should be slightly better for White as the ♔f4 provides the White king with sufficient protection;

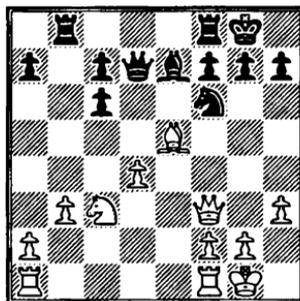
C2) 17 ♔f4 ♗d7 18 ♗ac1 0-0 is the other possibility; although White has certain pressure on Black's weak queenside pawns it is difficult to state that this amounts to a serious edge: 19 ♗c4!? [Opting for the exchange of queens removes any danger of losing but 19 ♗c4 looks also good, e.g. 19...♔d6□ 20 ♔xd6 ♗xd6!± (20...cxd6 21 ♗fc1 ♗c7 22 b3±)] 19...♔f6 20 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 21 ♗xc6 ♗xd4 and now it appears that the passive 22 ♔c1!± is the best way of maintaining a slight edge as 22 ♔e3?! allows 22...♗a4! 23 ♗xc7 ♗xa2 24 b4 a6 25 ♗a7 ♗a4! with a probable draw.

Time to return to the game continuation:

15 ♔f4!

A very important move in White's strategic scheme, the text is a prelude to anchoring the bishop on e5. From there, not only it defends the d-pawn but also keeps an eye on c7 as well as Black's kingside. In addition, it can always be given up for the ♕f6, leaving White with the superior minor piece for exploiting weaknesses.

15...0-0 16 ♔e5! ♗ab8 17 b3



In our opinion Black has already drifted into a passive position without counter-play. The practical examples from the diagram have merely served to verify this fact.

17...♕e8!?

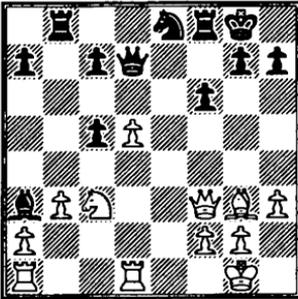
Hort is a great positional player who understands that in situations like this he should try to mix things up in the Laskerian manner. The knight retreat may not be the computer's perfect choice, but it has the advantage of preventing a smooth development of events. Speaking of smooth development of

events, here is a classical example:  
 17...♖b7 18 ♖ac1 ♗d8 19 ♗fd1  
 ♖b4?! (19...♟d5 20 ♟xd5 cxd5 21  
 ♚g3±) 20 d5! c5 21 ♟xf6! ♟xf6 22  
 ♟e4 ♟d4 23 ♟xc5 ♚xd5 24 ♚xd5  
 ♚xd5 25 ♟a6! ♖b7 26 ♟xc7 ♗d8  
 27 ♟d5! +- ♟b2 28 ♟e7+ ♟f8 29  
 ♚xd8+ ♟xe7 30 ♖cc8 g6 31 ♟f1  
 ♟f6 32 ♗d6+ ♟e7 33 ♗dd8 ♟f6 34  
 g3 ♟a3 35 ♖e8 a5 36 ♖c6+ ♟g7 37  
 ♖ec8 ♖b5 38 ♖c4 1-0, Browne-  
 Medina Garcia, Las Palmas 1974.

18 ♗fd1 f6 19 ♟g3 ♟a3 20 d5!±

A typical advance in this type of structure; Black, obviously cannot allow an opening up of the game and must acquiesce to having weaknesses at c7, c5, e6.

20...c5



21 ♟e4?

But this is inexact, failing to capture the full essence of the position; after 21 ♟e2!± planning a trip to e6, Black's situation would have been critical. Now Hort finds a way to stay in the game.

21...♟d6 22 ♟xd6?! cxd6 23  
 ♖ab1 ♟b4! 24 ♚g3 ♖bd8 25  
 ♖bc1±

White has still a slight advantage, but Chandler is an experienced GM who must have felt that Black had escaped the worst and could even become dangerous later on by exploiting White's difficulty in controlling the e-file; thus... ½-½

29

Leko – Motylev  
 Russia v World, (rapid)  
 Moscow 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♟f6 3 ♟xe5 d6 4  
 ♟f3 ♟xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♟d3 ♟e7 7  
 0-0 ♟c6 8 c4!? ♟f6 9 ♟c3 ♟e6

A more logical move than 9...♟g4, introduced into tournament practice by Yusupov; Black develops his last minor piece and at the same time solidifies his stance in the centre.

10 cxd5 ♟xd5 11 ♖e1 0-0 12 a3

Now White is ready to attack by ♚d1-c2 or ♟d3-e4 (c2), ♚d1-d3, so Black does best to take the necessary precautions for the defence of his kingside.

12...♟f6!

Switching the bishop over to f6 helps defend the king and prepares the solidifying ...♟c6-e7, turning d5 into a fortress.

12...♖e8 looks suspect at first sight, but there seems to be no direct refutation. After 13 ♚c2!? (13 ♟c2 and 13 ♟e4 are the alternatives) 13...h6 (13...g6? is bad on account of 14 ♖xe6!±; 13...♟f6?! proved insufficient after 14 ♟e3 ♟g4 15 ♟e5! ♟xd4 16 ♟xd4 ♚xd4 17

♖b5!± in Gonzalez-Perez, Barcelona 2000) 14 ♕h7+!? (14 ♜xe6?! fxe6 is an interesting, but not convincing exchange sacrifice) 14...♖h8 15 ♖e4! [15 ♖f5?! is met with the surprising 15...♖f6! (15...♖xf5? 16 ♜xf5±) 16 ♖xe6 ♖xd4!! 17 ♖xd4 ♖xd4=] 15...♜d7! (15...♜d6?! 16 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 17 ♖f4!± is clearly better for White) 16 ♖d2! (16 ♖e5 ♖xe5 17 dxe5 ♜ad8!= is just equal) 16...♜ad8 (16...♖f6 allows 17 d5!? ♖xd5 18 ♜ad1! ♖xc3 19 ♖xc3 ♖d6 20 b4! with very good attacking chances in return for the pawn) 17 ♜ad1↑ White keeps several valuable options like ♖f3-e5, ♜c2-c1 or ♖d2-c1 at hand, maintaining an initiative.

### 13 ♖e4!

The bishop here serves the useful function of preventing ...♜f8-e8, frees d3 for the queen and at the same time keeps d5 under surveillance. We have reached by now the first critical crossroads.



### 13...h6

Weakening Black's defences along the diagonal b1-h7, but

preventing annoying invasions on g5;

13...♖de7?! is significantly inferior; After 14 ♖g5! ♖xg5 15 ♖xg5 White obtains a very strong attack, a sample line being 15...♖f5 16 d5 ♖xe4 [Kudrin-Wolff, USA (ch) 1985] 17 dxc6! ♖d3 18 cxb7 ♜b8 19 ♜e3 ♖f5 20 ♜xd3 ♜xg5 21 ♜e5 g6 22 ♜a6 ♜d2 23 ♜c5! +-;

13...♖ce7 is a major alternative to 13...h6. A possible line of play runs 14 ♖g5!? (Again, it is thematic to exploit Black's omission of ...h7-h6) 14...♖xg5 15 ♖xg5 f6 16 ♖d2! (16 ♜c2?! ffg5! 17 ♖xh7+ ♖h8 18 ♜xe6 ♖f4± is better for Black) 16...♜d7 17 ♜c2 f5 18 ♖f3 c6 (Geller-Anand, Coimbatore 1987) when 19 ♖xd5! ♖xd5 (19...♖xd5?! 20 ♖b4!±) 20 ♜e5± yields a slight advantage to White, according to Anand;

13...♜b8!? is a recent try by Karpov. The move seems weird at first sight, but there is a simple and basically sound strategic idea behind it: to capture later on c3, followed by ...b7-b5, fixing White's queenside weaknesses. After 14 ♜d3 h6 15 ♖h7+!? ♖h8 16 ♖f5 ♖xc3 (16...♖xf5 17 ♜xf5 ♖de7 18 ♜h5± is annoying for Black as he has to abandon control of d5 in order to stave off the pending sacrifice on h6) 17 bxc3 ♖d5 18 ♖f4 ♖e7 19 ♖g4!? ♖g6 20 ♖g3 b5! (Milos-Karpov, Buenos Aires 2001) it appears that White can maintain a slight edge by essaying the logical 21 ♖h5!±; for example

21...d4!? (On 21...e7, the natural reply 22 e5 augments the pressure on f7 and at the same time threatens e5-g4) 22 d4x4 e4x4 23 e4x4 f4x4 24 e5! c6 25 e3!± and in the ensuing position White's major pieces seem to be more active than their Black counterparts, giving him better chances to exploit the enemy weaknesses.

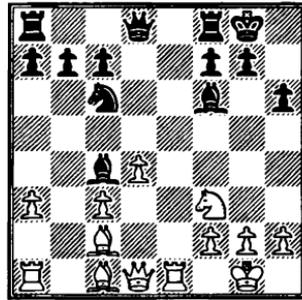
#### 14 e2!?

With the pawn on h6 the threat of d1-d3 acquires flesh and bones. Now a Black knight is forced to retreat.

14 d3 is a worthy alternative, employed in Movsesian-Yusupov, Batumi 1999. After 14...e7 [14...dxc3 15 bxc3 e5 16 e4 (16 e4xd5 f4xd5 17 e4f4±; 16 f4b1±) 16...e7 17 c4 e4xe4 18 f4xe4 g6 (Lutz-Pavasovic, Pula zt 2000) should be met with the simple 19 e3g3± when White's better development and space advantage are likely to be transformed soon to attacking chances on the kingside, e.g. 19...c6 20 f4ab1 d7 21 e5 e4xe5 22 dxe5 f4fe8 23 f4→] 15 e4d2 c6 16 f4ad1 e8c8!? (16...f4c7 17 e5!± is slightly better for White) 17 h3 (17 e2!?) 17...dxc3 18 bxc3 b5 19 e4f4 e4d5 20 d4d2 e8 21 f4g3 h8 White should have played 22 e2! vacating e4 for use by his knight and keeping a slight advantage.

#### 14...e7

The most common move, unveiling an attack on the d-pawn; 14...dxc3?! 15 bxc3 e4c4



...was played in the famous game Anand-Touzane, Moscow 2001, which ended in a loss for the Indian Grandmaster. After 16 d2! e5 17 f4b1 e4g5 18 c4! e4xd2 19 cxd5 e4xe1 20 dxc6 e4a5? (Relatively better was 20...e8!?) 21 cxb7 f4b8 22 e3 e4a5 23 e4a4! e7 24 e4c6 e4b6 25 f4g4 h8 26 f4f4 g8 27 d5± although its purpose seems to be no other than merely prolong Black's suffering for a few moves) Anand, surprisingly, missed the simple win 21 cxb7 f4b8 22 f4h5! f5 (22...e4b6 23 e4xh6+-) 23 e4xh6! f4e8 24 f4g5+-;

14...e7! has been played only once and this is in our opinion strange because retreating the c-knight to e7 looks like the most natural option at Black's disposal. After 15 e5 e4f5! the following moves are available:

A) 16 e4xd5 is possible, e.g. 16...f4xd5 17 e4b3 d8 (17...f4b5?! 18 a4 f4b4 19 a5 intending f4a1-a4, looks dangerous for Black) 18 e4f4± with what, admittedly, is a very slight plus for White;

B) 16 e4xf5!? e4xf5 17 f4f3! is a very interesting idea of the authors, trying to organise pressure quickly

to prevent the second player from consolidating. Black has three options:

**B1)** 17...♖xd4? is the most naive of them, leading after 18 ♜xd5 ♘c2 19 ♙f4 ♜xd5 20 ♖xd5 ♙xe5 21 ♙xe5 ♞ae8 22 ♙c3± to a clear advantage for White;

**B2)** 17...♖fe7 allows White to detect a weakness on d7: 18 ♜g4! ♖h8 19 ♖d7 ♞e8 20 ♙d2!? c6! (20...♙xd4 21 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 22 ♞xe8+ ♜xe8 23 ♞e1 ♜d8 24 ♙xh6! ♙xb2□ 25 ♙xg7+ ♙xg7 26 ♜h5+ ♖g8 27 ♜xd5 c6 28 ♜f5±) 21 ♖e4 ♖g6! 22 ♖d6 ♞e7 23 ♞xe7 ♜xe7 24 ♖xb7± and the complications have netted a key-pawn which even if Black manages to recover he will stand positionally worse;

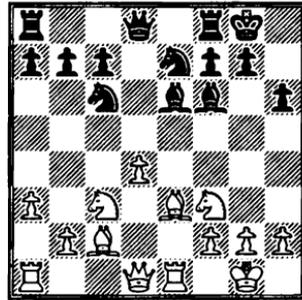
**B3)** 17...♖de7 (Relatively best) 18 ♖e4! ♙xe5 19 dxe5 ♖d4 (19...♜d4 20 ♙f4 ♜xb2 21 ♞ab1±) 20 ♜c3 ♖ef5 21 ♙e3 ♖xe3 22 ♞xe3 ♞e8 23 f4 ♖e6 24 ♞f1± and White is slightly better because of his dangerously mobile kingside majority;

**C)** 16 ♙b3 (The game continuation) 16...♙e6 17 ♖e4! ♙xe5 18 dxe5 b6 19 ♜f3 (19 ♜h5!?) 19...c6 20 ♙c2 (20 ♖g3!?, guarding f5, is worth examining) 20...♖f5 21 ♞d1± [21 ♜d3!? looks like a viable alternative to 21 ♞d1, e.g. 21...♜h4 22 ♖d6 g6 (22...♖de7 23 ♞e4 ♜h5 24 ♞f4!+-) 23 ♞e4 ♜e7 24 ♞e○ and Black's kingside weaknesses should amount to something] and White's two bishops gave him a slight edge in Hracek-

Yusupov, Nussloch 1996; however this position deserves further analysis as it is not easy to make progress in view of Black's extremely solid setup.

15 ♙e3

After this practically forced developing move we have reached a critical crossroads.



15...♖f5!?

A move that is considered to give Black equality, but things are not so simple.

15...♙g4 was Yusupov's original choice; White should play 16 h3 ♙h5 [16...♙xf3 17 ♜xf3 ♖xd4 18 ♙xd4 ♙xd4! (18...♜xd4 19 ♞ad1 ♜c4 20 ♞e4→ leads to a strong White attack according to Huebner) 19 ♖b5!± is at least slightly better for White] 17 ♜d3 ♙g6 18 ♖e4! when Black has to solve difficult problems, e.g. 18...♖d5 (18...♖f5 19 ♜b3! ♖xe3 20 fxe3± is clearly better for White in view of the weakness on b7) 19 ♜b3 ♖a5 (19...b6? 20 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 21 ♙xg6+-) 20 ♜a4!? ♖c6 (20...c6? 21 ♙d2+-; 20...b6?! 21 ♙d2±) 21 ♜b3 ♖a5 22 ♜b5! c6 23 ♜e2 b5 24 ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 25 ♖e5 ♙xc2

(25...♠ad8 26 ♖xg6 fxc6 27 a4!±) 26 ♜xc2↑ and White had a positional advantage in Huebner-Yusupov, Nussloch 1996;

15...♙f5!/? is untried so far; a possible continuation is 16 ♙b3 (16 ♙a4!?) 16...♙g4 17 h3 ♙xf3 18 ♜xf3 ♚xd4 19 ♙xd4 ♜xd4 20 ♚e4 ♚c6 (20...♚g6 21 ♜f5 ♚h8 22 ♚xf6 ♜xf6 23 ♜xf6 gxf6 24 ♠ad1☞) 21 ♚xf6+ ♜xf6 22 ♜xf6 gxf6 23 ♠ac1!/? ♚d4! 24 ♙a2 ♚e6 (24...c6 25 ♠e7↑) 25 ♠ed1!/? c5 [25...♠ad8?! 26 ♠xd8 ♠xd8 27 ♙xe6 fxe6 28 ♠xc7 b5 (28...♠d1+ 29 ♚h2 ♠d2 30 ♠xb7 ♠xf2 31 b4+)- 29 b4!±] 26 ♠d7 b6 27 ♠c3±.

16 ♚e2!

Now that Black's control over d5 has been weakened White can afford to withdraw his knight on e2.

16...♚xe3!/?

We have chosen this game as a main Illustrative Game because of the instructive mistake Black commits here; despite gaining the two bishops the move is positionally flawed, because it allows White to fortify his centre and generate alternating threats on both sides of the board.

Somewhat better is 16...♜d7 17 ♜d3 g6 as in Lutz-Yusupov, Bundesliga 1998. At this point, instead of prematurely committing his rook to the d-file by 18 ♠ad1, White could have played the immediate 18 ♚f4!/? reserving the option of placing the rook on c1; in that case he would have maintained a slight but enduring plus, e.g.

18...♚xe3 19 fxe3 ♙f5 20 ♜b3 ♙xc2 21 ♜xc2 ♚e7!/? (21...♠ad8 22 ♠ac1!) 22 ♠ad1± as White's central superiority gives him freedom of action. But let's return to our game:

17 fxe3 ♙g4

Black's main problem has its roots in his weakened light squares and lack of central pawn thrusts. Huzman gives 17...♠e8 as better, but goes on to remark that 18 ♚f4 ♙g4 19 h3! is best play by White when our evaluation of the position remains at least ±. The 'clever' 19...♙xd4? fails to 20 ♜d3! ♙xf3 21 ♜h7+ ♚f8 22 ♜h8+ ♚e7 23 exd4+ ♚f6 24 ♠xe8 ♜xe8 25 ♚h5+!!+-

18 ♚f4 g6 19 h3!

Leko is well aware of Black's problem and goes on methodically with his light square campaign.

19...♙xf3 20 ♜xf3 ♙g7?

A decisive positional error; Huzman's recommendation of 20...♜d6! 21 ♙e4 ♚d8 22 ♠ac1 c6± would have allowed Black to keep his disadvantage to a minimum. Now Leko obtains a serious plus which he never lets go.

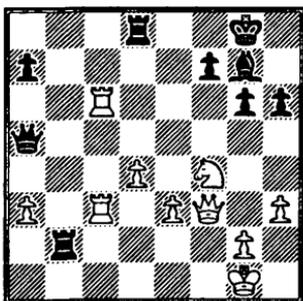
21 ♙e4± ♠b8

Huzman gives the line 21...♜d6 22 ♙xc6 ♜xc6 23 ♜xc6 bxc6 24 ♠ac1 ♠fe8 25 ♚f2 ♠ab8 26 b4 ♠b6 27 ♠e2± to support the evaluation after 21 ♙e4. Black's problem in analogous positions is that it is too late to save the game but also too early to resign.

22 ♠ac1 ♚e7

Surrendering a pawn in the hope of finding some counter-play looks like the best practical decision.

23 ♖xb7 c6 24 ♖xc6 ♜xc6 25 ♜xc6 ♜xb2 26 ♜ec1 ♚a5 27 ♜1c3 ♜d8



28 ♜c7!

Not only is White a clear pawn up, his compact pawn mass in the centre prevents counter-play as well; with his last move he threatens 29 ♜xg6, leaving Black no choice but to enter (at best) a completely lost endgame.

28... ♚f5 29 ♜3c5! ♚b1+

29... ♚f6 30 ♜5c6 ♚f5 31 ♜xg6! fxg6 (31... ♚xf3 32 gx3+-) 32 ♚xf5 gx5 33 ♜g6+- is an interesting line given by Huzman.

30 ♜h2 ♚a2 31 ♜d5

More exact here was the spectacular 31 ♜xa7 ♜f2 32 ♚g3 ♜f1 33 ♜cc7 ♚b1 34 ♚xg6! +- (Huzman) but there is nothing wrong with the text move.

31... ♜xd5 32 ♚xd5 ♚xd5 33 ♜xd5 ♖f8 34 ♜f6+ ♜g7 35 ♜e8+ ♜g8 36 ♜xa7+-

White has a winning advantage. The remaining moves were:

36... ♜b8 37 ♜f6+ ♜g7 38 ♜d7 ♖d6+ 39 ♜e5 ♜g8 40 ♜a6 ♖xe5+ 41 dxe5 ♜b3 42 e4 ♜e3 43 ♜a4 ♜f8 44 ♜g1 ♜e7 45 ♜f2 ♜c3 46 ♜a6 h5 47 h4 ♜b3 48 a4 ♜c3 49 a5 ♜a3 50 g3 ♜f8 51 e6 fxe6 52 ♜xe6 ♜f7 53 ♜e5 ♜f6 54 ♜g5 ♜b3 55 ♜e2 ♜c3 56 ♜d2 ♜a3 57 ♜c2 ♜e3 58 e5+ ♜f7 59 ♜b2 ♜e2+ 60 ♜b3 ♜e1 61 ♜b4 ♜b1+ 62 ♜c5 ♜c1+ 63 ♜b6 ♜b1+ 64 ♜a7 ♜b3 65 a6 ♜e6 66 ♜a8 ♜d5 67 a7 ♜b4 68 ♜xg6 ♜xe5 69 ♜g8 ♜d6 70 ♜b8 ♜a4 71 ♜b7 ♜b4+ 72 ♜a6 ♜a4+ 73 ♜b6 ♜d5 1-0

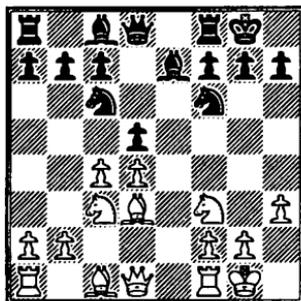
30

Leko – Adams  
Dortmund (ct) 2002

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜xe5 d6 4 ♜f3 ♜xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♖d3 ♖e7 7 0-0 ♜c6 8 c4!? ♜f6 9 ♜c3 0-0

This natural continuation has been established as one of the main lines following its use by players like Karpov, Adams and Khalifman.

10 h3!



A useful move, making life difficult for the ♖c8; It appears to us that Black should now opt for an

IQP position without delay and the best way to do so is by playing 10...♖b4.

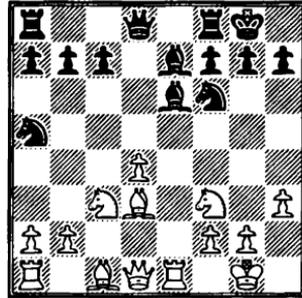
10...♖b4

The most principled move, fighting for control of d5; the alternatives 10...♞e8?! and 10...h6?! are too slow and can both be met by 11 a3!, preventing ...dxc4 or ...♖c6-b4 and intending to answer 11...♞e6 with 12 c5!±.

The immediate 10...♞e6 can, besides the thematic 11 c5! b6 12 ♜b5!±, be met also by 11 ♖g5 dxc4 [11...♖xd4 12 ♜xh7+ ♖xh7 13 ♖xh7 ♗xh7 14 cxd5 ♜xh3! (14...♗g8? 15 ♜xd4 c6 16 ♞d1 ♜f6 17 ♜d3 ♜xc3 18 dxe6 ♜xd3 19 ♞xd3 ♜f6 20 exf7+ ♞xf7 21 ♞b1 c5 22 ♞e3± Escandell-Scarcella, Villa Ballester 2003) 15 ♜xd4 ♜f5 16 ♜f4± is tenable for Black, but White is slightly better because he can transfer his rooks to the third rank and attack the Black king as a consequence of his space advantage] 12 ♖xe6 fxe6 13 ♜xc4 ♖xd4 14 ♖e2! ♜c5 15 ♞e3 ♖xe2+ 16 ♜xe2± and White recovers his pawn with a slight edge in the ensuing bishop vs knight middle-game, according to Nisipeanu; however, this advantage may prove too small in a must-win situation;

10...dxc4 is Karpov's choice, from one of his numerous encounters with Kasparov. After 11 ♜xc4 ♖a5 (Driving away the White bishop enables Black to develop his own bishop to e6) 12 ♜d3 ♞e6 (With the transparent positional

threat 13...♜c4, which, however, White's next move easily parries) 13 ♞e1

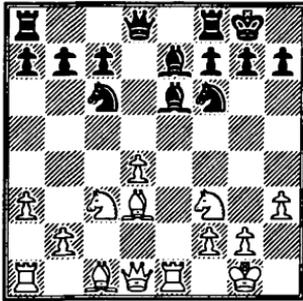


...we are at the crossroads, with Black having to solve the problem with the awkward placement of the ♖a5:

A) 13...♜c4?? is a terrible blunder on account of 14 ♜xc4 ♖xc4 15 ♜e2+-;

B) 13...c5 is an attempt to reach an equal position by liquidating the centre, yet after 14 ♜g5 (14 ♖g5!?! cxd4 15 ♖xe6 fxe6 16 ♖e4± yields good compensation according to Yusupov) 14...h6 15 ♜h4 c4 16 ♜xf6! ♜xf6 17 ♞e4!± White has a slight plus according to Christiansen;

C) 13...♖c6 (The Black knight has fulfilled his task, so there is no more need for it to be at the edge of the board) 14 a3! (Still restricting the knight and at the same time furthering his own plans), leads to a position where White's more carefully built set-up appears to offer him the better game:



C1) 14...♞e8?! is met strongly by 15 ♙b5! ♜d6 16 ♙g5 ♞ed8 17 ♙xf6! ♙xf6 18 ♜e4 ♜f4 19 ♙xc6 bxc6 20 ♜c1!± and White obtains a big plus, as in Lobron-Handoko, Zagreb 1985;

C2) 14...♜d6 looks like a sensible choice; however, after 15 ♙e3 ♜d5 16 ♜c2 ♜h8 17 ♞ad1 [17 ♜e4!? is interesting as 17...♜d7 (17...♜d8 18 ♜g3!?) 18 ♜eg5 ♙xg5 19 ♜xg5 h6 20 ♜xe6 fxe6± looks slightly better for White despite the strong-points available to the Black knights] 17...f5? [17...♜xc3?! 18 bxc3 ♜xa3 is also highly unpromising as 19 ♙xh7! ♙b3 (19...g6 fails to 20 d5! ♙f5 21 ♜d2 ♜xh7 (21...♜a5 22 ♙c5!! ♜xc5 23 ♜h6+-) 22 dxc6 bxc6 23 ♜d4± with a powerful attack) 20 ♜f5 g6 21 ♜f4! ♜xh7 22 ♜h6+ ♜g8 23 ♙g5 ♙xd1 24 ♞xe7! ♜d6 25 ♞d7!± gives White a fantastic attack, but 17...♞ad8!? might have been a better chance] 18 ♙c1 ♞ad8 19 ♞e2! ♙f6 20 ♞de1 ♙c8 21 ♙c4! ♜xc3 22 bxc3± White had obtained a big positional advantage in Gelfand-Adams, Wijk aan Zee (m) 1994 and went on to win.

The main problem with Black's game, as the reader can easily discover from the continuation, is the weakness on the diagonal a2-g8 and the square g5, factors that allowed White to launch a tremendous attack: 22...h6 23 a4 b6 24 h4! ♜a5 25 ♙a2 c5 26 ♜g5! ♙a6 27 ♞e6 ♜d7 28 ♜xf5 ♙xg5 29 ♜g6 ♜f7 30 ♜xf7 ♞xf7 31 hxg5 cxd4 32 cxd4 ♙c4 33 ♞e8+ ♞xe8 34 ♞xe8+ ♜h7 35 ♙b1+ g6 36 gxh6 ♜c6 37 ♙e3 ♞e7 38 ♞c8 ♙d5 39 ♙d3 ♜b4 40 ♙e2 ♙e6 41 ♞d8 ♜d5 42 ♙g5 ♞d7 43 ♞e8 ♙f7 44 ♞b8 ♙e6 45 ♙f3 ♞f7 46 ♞d8 ♞f5 47 ♙d2 ♜f6 48 ♞a8 g5 49 ♞xa7+ ♜xh6 50 ♞a6 ♜d7 51 a5 ♞b5 52 axb6 1-0;

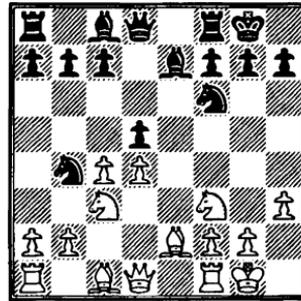
C3) 14...♜d7 15 ♙b5 ♞fd8 16 ♜a4 a6 17 ♙xc6 ♜xc6 18 ♜xc6 bxc6 (A.Sokolov-Koch, Marseilles 2001) is a pleasant endgame advantage for White after 19 ♜g5!±;

C4) 14...a6 (This prophylactic move looks like the lesser evil) 15 ♙f4 ♜d5! [It is imperative for Black to resort to an immediate blockade on d5; 15...♜d7?! allowed White to obtain a strong attack by 16 ♜e5! ♜xe5 17 dxe5 ♜d5 18 ♜xd5 ♙xd5 19 ♜c2 g6 20 ♞ad1→ in Kasparov-Karpov, Moscow (m) 1984-85, as the threat of e5-e6 is very strong: 20...c6 21 ♙h6 ♞fd8 22 e6! fxe6 23 ♙xg6! ♙f8 24 ♙xf8 ♞xf8 25 ♙e4± ♞f7 26 ♞e3! ♞g7 27 ♞dd3! (Now, normally one would have expected the game to finish quickly as Kasparov's attacking

virtues in such positions are well known, yet Black's tenacity allows him to drag it out for another forty moves or so before acquiescing to the inevitable) 27...♖f8 28 ♖g3! ♘h8 29 ♛c3 ♜ff7 30 ♞de3 ♙g8 31 ♛e5! ♛c7 32 ♙xg7+ ♙xg7 33 ♙xd5 ♛xe5 34 ♙xe6+ ♛xe6 35 ♙xe6+ (The pressure has netted a pawn and now it's simply a matter of technique) 35...♞d7 36 b4 ♙f7 37 ♞e3 ♞d1+ 38 ♘h2 ♞c1 39 g4 b5 40 f4 c5 41 bxc5 ♙xc5 42 ♞d3 ♙e7 43 ♙g3 a5 44 ♙f3 b4 45 axb4 axb4 46 ♙e4 ♞b5 47 ♞b3 ♞b8 48 ♙d5 ♙f6 49 ♙c5 ♞e8 50 ♙xb4 ♞e3 51 h4 ♞h3 52 h5 ♞h4 53 f5 ♞h1 54 ♙d5 ♞d1+ 55 ♞d4 ♞e1 56 ♙d6 ♞e8 57 ♙d7 ♞g8 58 h6 ♙f7 59 ♞c4 ♙f6 60 ♞e4 ♙f7 61 ♙d6 ♙f6 62 ♞e6+ ♙f7 63 ♞e7+ ♙f6 64 ♞g7 ♞d8+ 65 ♙c5 ♞d5+ 66 ♙c4 ♞d4+ 67 ♙c3 1-0] 16 ♙g3 ♙f6 (Gufeld-Schussler, Havana 1985) is probably the best Black can get in this line; Nevertheless, by essaying 17 ♛c2! White should be able to obtain an initiative, e.g. 17...g6 18 ♞ad1 ♘ce7!? 19 ♘e4! c6!? 20 ♘xf6+ ♘xf6 21 ♙h4 ♘fd5 22 ♛c1!↑ (Klingenberg-Schwarzmeier, West Germany, corr. 1990); White has the traditional plan of doubling the rooks on the e-file and this should be dangerous enough for Black as his dark squares are weak.

### 11 ♙e2

An important position for the whole opening system; common sense indicates that Black should take on c4 and try to turn d5 into a fortress, but there are other moves as well.



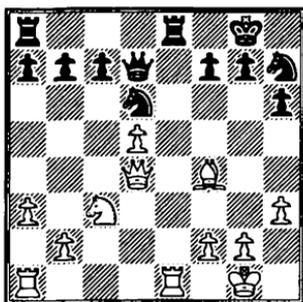
### 11...dxc4

Opting for the IQP position without delay;

11...c5?! is at least slightly better for White after 12 a3 ♘c6 13 dxc5 dxc4 14 ♙e3!↑. This assessment was verified in Velimirovic-Schussler, Smederevska Palanka 1979, which went on 14...♘a5 (14...♙e6 15 ♛a4! ♛a5 16 ♞ac1±) 15 ♛c2 ♙d7 16 ♞ad1 ♛c7 17 ♘g5! g6 18 ♘ge4 ♙f5 19 ♘xf6+ ♙xf6 20 ♛a4 ♙xc3 21 bxc3 ♞fd8 22 ♞d6!± with Black's position becoming extremely perilous.

11...♙f5!? was played in the game Nisipeanu-Khalifman, Las Vegas (m) 1999. This move is well motivated as it fights for control of e4, but on the other hand f7 and d5 become less secure points. After 12 a3 ♘c6 13 ♞e1 (13 ♙f4!? dxc4 14 ♙xc4 ♘e8 15 ♙d5! ♙d6 16 ♘e5 ♘e7? 17 ♙xb7 ♞b8 18 ♛f3!+- c6 19 ♘xc6 ♘xc6 20 ♙xc6 1-0 Dolmatov-Karner, Tallinn 1985) 13...♙e6 [13...h6 is best met by 14 cxd5 ♘xd5 15 ♛b3!± with a slight edge for White; 13...a6 14 ♙g5 (14 ♘e5!?) 14...dxc4 15 ♙xc4 h6 16 ♙h4 b5 17 ♙a2 b4 18 axb4 ♘xb4 (Daamen-Hendriks, corr. 1987) 19

♖e5!↑] 14 ♘g5 ♙f5 15 ♙f1 h6 16  
 ♘f3 dxc4 (On 16...♙e6, the reply  
 17 b3!?! keeping the centre fluid, is  
 good for White according to  
 Nisipeanu) 17 ♙xc4 ♙d6 18 d5!?  
 ♖e7 19 ♘d4 ♙h7 20 ♘db5 ♘f5 21  
 ♙d3 ♖d7 Nisipeanu claims that he  
 could have maintained a slight edge  
 by 22 ♘xd6 ♘xd6 23 ♙xh7+ ♘xh7  
 24 ♙f4 ♙fe8 25 ♖d4±



...which is quite true as White's pieces are excellently centralised.

12 ♙xc4 ♘bd5

12...c6 13 ♙e1 ♘bd5 is just a transposition.

13 ♙e1 c6 14 ♙g5!

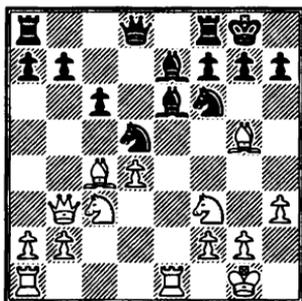
The more circumspect continuation, fighting for control of d5; the other possibility here is 14 ♖b3!? ♘b6 15 ♙d3 ♙e6 16 ♖c2 h6 (16...♙d5 looks like a strange place for the bishop; after 17 ♖e5 h6 18 ♙f4 ♙e8 19 ♙e2! ♙e6 20 ♖d2 ♙f8 21 ♙ael ♘bd5 22 ♙g3 ♙c8?! 23 ♙h4! g5 24 ♙g3 ♘h5 25 ♘xd5! ♘g3 26 fxg3 cxd5 27 ♙b1 ♖f6 28 ♘g4 ♖g7 29 ♙f5!± White had built up an imposing attacking position and went on to win in

Ponomarev-Karpov, Wijk aan Zee 2003) 17 ♙xe6!? fxe6 18 ♖e2♙, as in Topalov-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2003. White has very good light-square compensation and attacking chances in return for the exchange, but the rest of the game was a tribute to the art of defence by the Indian GM: 18...♖d7! 19 ♙d2 ♙d6 20 ♖e4 ♘bd5 21 ♘xd6 ♖xd6 22 ♙e1 ♙ad8! 23 a3 ♙fe8 24 ♙b1 c5! 25 ♖e5! cxd4 26 ♖d3 ♖e3!! 27 ♘f3 ♘ed5 28 ♙xh6! ♘f4! 29 ♙xf4 ♖xf4 30 ♙a2 ♙d6 31 h4!? [31 g3 ♖h6 32 h4 ♖h7! 33 ♖c4 ♖f5 (33...d3 34 ♖f4) 34 ♘xd4 ♖d5!]=] 31...♖h6!! (Black must unblock the d-pawn at all costs as it is his only source of counter-play) 32 ♙c4! ♖h7! 33 ♖b3 d3 34 ♙d1? [A time-pressure error; 34 ♖b4! d2! (34...♙b6 35 ♖d2 ♙d6 36 ♖f4±) 35 ♘xd2 ♙b6 36 ♖a4 ♙xb2 37 ♙xe6 ♙xe6 38 ♙xe6+ ♘h8 39 ♖d4! ♖c2 40 ♖d8+ ♘h7 41 g4! would have been close to equal; now the d-pawn turns into a monster] 34...d2! 35 ♖b4?! (35 ♖xb7!?) 35...♙ed8! 36 ♘g5 ♖c2 37 ♙b3 ♖c6 38 g3 ♖b6!+ 39 ♘xe6 ♖xb4 40 axb4 ♙c8 41 ♘f1 ♘h8 42 ♘g5 ♙d4 43 ♘f7+ ♘h7 44 ♘g5+ ♘h6 45 ♘f7+ ♘g6 46 ♖e5+ ♘h7 47 ♘f3 ♙xb4 48 ♘xd2 ♙d8 49 ♙c2+ ♘h8 50 b3 ♙bd4 51 ♖e1 b5 52 ♘b1 ♙e8+ 53 ♘f1 ♙xd1+ 54 ♙xd1 ♖e4 55 ♙c2 a5 56 ♖a3 ♘d2+ 57 ♘g2 ♙b8 58 g4 b4 59 ♘b1 ♘xb1 60 ♙xb1 ♙c8 61 ♙f5 ♙c3 0-1. A truly spectacular fighting game for which both players deserve praise.

14...♙e6

After 14...♘c7 even the extravagant 15 d5!? (15 ♖b3 is the normal move) 15...cxd5 16 ♘xd5 ♘cx5 17 ♙xd5 ♘xd5 18 ♙xe7 ♘xe7 19 ♗xd8 ♙xd8 20 ♙xe7 seems like offering White a stable endgame advantage. For example, 20...b6 21 ♙c1 ♙e6 22 b3 h6 23 ♙cc7 a6 24 ♘e5 ♙e8 25 ♙xe8+ ♙xe8 26 ♘c6 ♙a8 27 ♘d4 (1/2-1/2 Casser-R.Fischer, IECG 2001) looks like a prematurely agreed drawn game as in the final position White retains a slight edge because of the superior minor piece and the control of the 7th rank.

15 ♖b3±



White has the better development; This position has been the subject of theoretical discussion over the past few years, the verdict being that Black is unable to fully equalise in the ensuing endgame.

15...♗b6!?

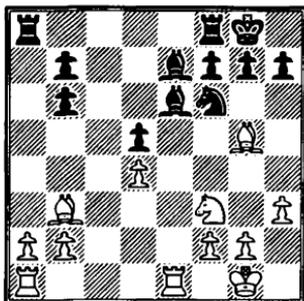
Black will be saddled with doubled pawns after this, but keeping the queens on seems to offer White dangerous attacking chances.

15...♙e8?! allows White to win a pawn for not too much; after 16

♙xf6! ♙xf6 17 ♙xd5! cxd5 (17...♙xd5? 18 ♙xe8+ ♗xe8 19 ♘xd5 cxd5 20 ♗xd5+-) 18 ♗xb7! ♙b8 (18...a6 19 ♗c6 ♙e7 20 ♙ac1 ♙c7 21 ♗a4 ♙c4 22 ♗d1 ♗b6 23 b3± ♙xd4? led to an abrupt finish after 24 ♙xe6! ♙xf2+ 25 ♖f1 fxe6 26 bxc4 ♙e3 27 ♘xd5! 1-0 in Ward-Dartnell, English ch corr. 1995) 19 ♗xa7!? ♙xb2 20 ♙ab1! (the most clear-cut; 20 ♘a4 ♙b8 21 ♘c5 ♙a8 22 ♗b7 ♗d6! 23 ♗b5! ♙eb8 24 ♗d3 ♙b2 25 a4± proved also good in Nataf-Delgado, La Habana 2001) 20...♙xb1 (20...♙c2 21 ♙e3!±) 21 ♙xb1 h6 (21...♙f5?! 22 ♙b5! ♙e4 23 ♘xe4 dxe4 24 ♘e5+-) 22 ♙b5!± White has a clear advantage according to Nataf;

15...♙b8 16 ♘e5 (16 ♙ad1 ♙e8 17 ♙h4!? h6 18 ♘e5 ♗b6 19 ♗xb6 axb6 20 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 21 ♘xd5 cxd5 22 ♙b3± was slightly better for White in Leko-Kramnik, Moscow 2002) 16...♙e8 17 ♙ad1 [In fact this position was agreed drawn in Kasparov-Gelfand, Bled (ol) 2002, but the draw obviously favoured the Russians who were declared Olympiad winners] 17...♗d6?! 18 ♙h4!↑ led to strong pressure for White in Hulak-Toth, Budva 1981; after 18...♗b4 19 ♗c2 ♙bd8 20 ♙d3 h6 21 ♙g3 ♗a5? (21...♘b6□) 22 ♘c4 ♗a6 23 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 White took advantage of the miserable placement of the Black queen to finish the game quickly and efficiently: 24 ♙xe6! ♘b4 25 ♗e2 fxe6 26 ♗xe6+ ♖h8 27 ♙b1! ♙f6 28 ♗f5 ♖g8 29 ♗h7+ ♖f8 30 ♙d6+ ♙e7 31 b3 ♖e8 32 ♗g8+ and Black resigned as he faces mate in two.

16 ♖xd5 cxd5 17 ♗xb6 axb6 18  
♙b3



In the endgame that has arisen Black has difficult problems to solve.

18...h6

More logical is 18...♗fc8, yet after 19 ♖e2! White seems able to maintain a slight plus anyway. A critical line of play is 19...♗f8 [19...h6 20 ♙f4 (Maintaining the pin by 20 ♙h4!? also has its points, e.g. 20...g5 21 ♙g3 ♖e4 22 ♙h2± Δ ♖f3-e5, f2-f3) 20...♖e4 21 ♖e5 ♙g5 22 ♖d3 (22 ♙xg5!?! is interesting according to Huzman, e.g. 22...hxg5 23 ♖ae1 ♖c7 24 ♖d3 ♗f8 25 ♖b4 ♖f6 26 ♖e5±) 22...♙f6 23 ♖b4 ♖a5 24 ♖d1 g5 25 ♙e5 ♙g7 26 f3 ♖f6 27 g4± was a pleasant plus for White in Giaccio-Zarnicki, Pinamar 2002] 20 ♖e5 ♖e4?! and now the splendid combination 21 ♖d7+! ♙xd7 22 ♙xe7+ ♗xe7 23 ♙xd5 ♖d6 24 ♙xe4± won a pawn for nothing in Svidler-Yusupov, Yerevan 2001.

18...♙b4!?! is a refined way of playing; Black unpins the ♖f6 right away so that he can redeploy it to a

better position. However 19 ♖e5! (Preventing the knight from reaching e4) 19...♖d7 20 ♖e2 ♗fc8 (Kasimdzhanov-Fridman, Essex 2002) should still be good for White provided he refrains from 21 ♖e1?! ♖b8!, which gave Black chances for equality in that game. Correct is 21 ♙d2!? ♙xd2 22 ♖xd2±, which leaves Black struggling because of his inferior bishop and pawn structure.

19 ♙f4 ♗fc8 20 ♖e5 g5?

Huzman rightly condemned this move on the ground that it creates a weakness that White will be able to exploit later on. Better choices were 20...♖e8± or 20...♙b4 Δ ...♖f6-e8±

21 ♙h2 ♙b4 22 ♖e2 ♖e4

Black has apparently created some activity for himself, but it proves to be only temporary; the text threatens ...♖e4-d2, but Leko's next move parries it easily.

23 ♖d3!

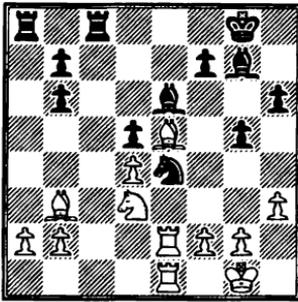
Resisting the temptation to win a pawn by 23 ♖g4 h5 24 ♖e3 ♖a5 25 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 26 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 27 ♖xe4 ♖c2± when Black has enough compensation according to Huzman.

23...♙f8

23...♖d2? is obviously a blunder now due to 24 ♙d1 ♙a5 25 b4+-

24 ♖ae1 ♙g7 25 ♙e5!

It is to White's benefit to exchange dark-squared bishops in this structure as then b4 turns into a wonderful base for his knight. As it turns out, Black cannot avoid the exchange due to tactical reasons.



25...♙xe5

25...♙f8 26 f3 ♘d6 27 ♙xd6  
 ♙xd6 28 ♖xe6!? fxe6 29 ♖xe6± is  
 bad for Black according to Huzman.  
 Let's take this a little further:  
 29...♗d8 30 ♖xh6 ♖g7 31 ♖e6 ♖a5  
 32 ♘e5! ♙xe5 33 ♖xe5 ♖f6 34  
 ♖f2 ♗d6 35 g4! ♖e6 36 ♖f5+ ♖g6  
 37 f4! gxf4 38 h4! and White's  
 passed pawns should be able to  
 carry the day for him; 25...f6? on  
 the other hand is simply a blunder in  
 view of 26 ♖xe4! fxe5 27 ♘xe5+-

26 ♘xe5 ♖g7 27 ♘d3!±

Let's quote Stohl's comments in  
*Chessbase*: "White has a clear  
 positional advantage. His bishop is  
 better than Black's, also his central  
 pawn is less vulnerable than the  
 pawn on d5. Moreover Black has  
 weaknesses on both flanks. Leko  
 first ties down Black's forces by  
 transferring his knight to b4".

27...♖c7 28 ♘b4 ♗d8 29 g4!

The best way of chasing away the  
 ♘e4 is by first depriving it access to  
 f5. At the same time White  
 squelches material considerations  
 involving taking on d5 as they  
 would allow Black to become active  
 and obtain significant drawing  
 chances.

29...♘f6 30 ♖g2 ♗d6

30...♗dc8!? 31 ♖e5!?!± is good for  
 White according to Stohl, e.g.  
 31...♘d7 32 ♖xd5! (32 ♖xe6!?!±)  
 32...♙xd5+ 33 ♘xd5 ♖c1 (33...♖c6  
 34 ♙a4 ♗d6 35 ♘e7±) 34 ♖e7±

31 f3

Now White is ready for ♖g2-g3  
 followed by h3-h4; once he  
 achieves this, more weaknesses will  
 be forced.

31...♙d7 32 ♖g3 ♖f8

Black has no way out from this  
 constricted position. Stohl mentions  
 the variation 32...♙b5 33 ♖e7 ♗dd7  
 34 ♖7e5 ♙c4 35 ♙c2!± (Δ h3-h4,  
 ♗c2-f5) concluding that Black will  
 have a similar fate to the game.

33 h4 ♙b5 34 ♖e5!

Forcing the ruining of Black's  
 kingside pawn structure, after which  
 the game is won for White.

34...gxh4+ 35 ♖xh4 ♙c4 36  
 ♙c2!

There is no point in allowing an  
 exchange of bishops as the White  
 one is by far superior.

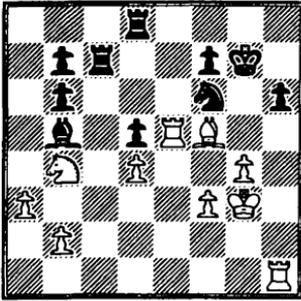
36...♙b5

36...♙xa2 37 b3 ♖xc2 (37...♖c3?  
 38 ♖5e3+-) 38 ♘xc2 ♙xb3 39 ♘e3  
 (39 ♘b4!?) 39...♘d7 40 ♖b1!?! is  
 close to winning for White  
 according to Stohl.

37 a3!

A last prophylactic measure  
 before proceeding with the final  
 kingside operation; Black has been  
 completely deprived of counter-play  
 and can only wait for the end.

37...♖d8 38 ♔g3 ♔g7 39 ♗f5  
♕f8 40 ♖h1 ♔g7



41 ♘c2!

The knight's transfer to f5 leaves Black defenceless. The remaining moves were...

41...♗e8 42 ♘e3 ♖ce7 43 ♕f4!  
♗c6 44 ♗c2 ♗d7 45 g5!

...and Black resigned as 45...hxg5+ 46 ♖xg5+ will lead to mate. A splendid positional achievement by Leko.

1-0

31

Emma – Rossetto  
Buenos Aires 1965

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4  
♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♗d3 ♗d6

This move introduces the most aggressive line available to Black, and at the same time, the riskiest one: the bishop is posted actively on d6, but Black's control over d5 and g5 has become weaker, a fact White will try to exploit.

7 0-0 0-0 8 c4

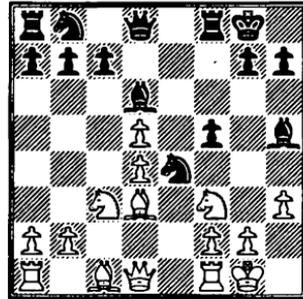
White, of course, follows the traditional plan of challenging the

position of the ♘e4 by attacking its supporter. Here Black almost automatically plays 8...c6 as the options examined below and in the next Illustrative Game are significantly inferior.

8...♗g4?!

An all-out attempt to play for the attack, but it has by now been abandoned as Black does not get sufficient compensation for his material investment. On the other hand, after 8...♘f6?! 9 ♗g5 White develops fast and comfortably, applying strong pressure on Black's position. For example 9...dxc4 10 ♗xc4 ♗g4 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 ♖xf3 ♘c6 13 ♖d1± and White is slightly better according to O'Kelly but in our opinion a bit more than that.

9 cxd5 f5 10 h3 ♗h5 11 ♘c3



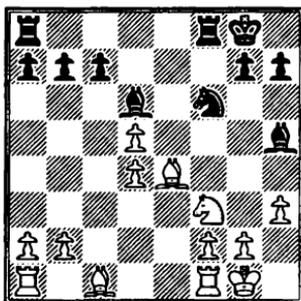
11...♖e8!?

The best practical chance.

On 11...♘d7?! White should fearlessly grab the second pawn by 12 ♘xe4! fxe4 13 ♗xe4 as 13...♘f6 14 ♗f5 ♕h8 (14...♘d5 15 ♗e6+ ♗f7 16 ♘g5!+- is a trap that many players have fallen into) can be met by 15 g4! ♘xd5 (15...♗f7 16 ♗e6!)

16 ♖e6 ♗f7 17 ♜g5! ♖xe6 18 ♜xe6 ♜f6!? (On 18...♜h4 there comes 19 ♜b3!+ and the defence triumphs, Alexander-Mallison, England 1938) 19 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 20 ♜d3 and Black does not seem to have enough compensation for the exchange. For example: 20...b6 (20...♜f4 21 ♜f3 ♜xd4 22 ♖xf4 ♜xf4 23 ♜xb7 h5 24 gxh5 ♜e5 25 ♜fe1 ♜xh5 26 ♜a8+ ♜h7 27 ♜e8 ♜b5 28 ♜h8+ ♜g6 29 ♜e8+± Rodriguez Rey - Casado Garcia, Spain corr. 1984; 20...c6 21 ♖d2 ♜f4 22 ♜f3 ♜g6 23 ♖xf4 ♜xf4 24 ♜g2 h5 25 f3 ♜xd4 26 ♜ad1± Tay-Oestergaard, IECG email 1999) 21 ♖d2 ♜f4 22 ♜f3 ♜xd4 23 ♖xf4 ♜xf4 24 ♜ad1 ♜xf3 25 ♜xd4 ♜xh3 26 ♜g2 ♜h2+ 27 ♜f3± with a solid endgame advantage in Gipslis-Christensen, Gausdal 1992.

12 ♜e2 ♜d7 13 ♜xe4 fxe4 14 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 15 ♖xe4 ♜f6



16 ♜d2!

A key move, and one that allows White's advantage to crystallize; in the ensuing positions Black has very few, if any, drawing chances.

16...♜ae8 17 ♖f3

17 ♖c2! is also possible and probably better than the text as 17...♖e2 18 ♜e1 ♖c4 19 ♜e4± leaves Black with insufficient compensation.

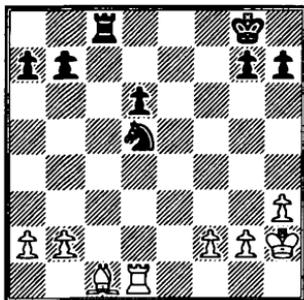
17...♖f7!

The original choice in this position and probably the best one: Black will now recover the lost pawns, but during that process White will be able to acquire new advantages. 17...♖g6 is a more recent effort to keep White at bay by impeding his development, yet White appears able to untangle: 18 ♜c4 ♖d3 19 ♜xd6 cxd6 20 ♜d1 ♖c2 (20...♖e2 21 ♖xe2 ♜xe2 is best met by 22 ♜f1 ♜c2 23 ♜d2! ♜fc8 24 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 25 ♖f4 ♜xd5 26 ♖xd6 ♜xb2 27 a4±) 21 ♜d2 ♜e1+ 22 ♜h2 ♜c8 23 b3! ♖xb3 (23...♖e4 24 ♜d1 ♜xd1 25 ♖xd1 ♜xd5 26 ♖a3 ♜c6 27 ♖g4±) 24 axb3 ♜cxc1 25 ♜xa7 ♜e7 26 ♜d3 ♜b1 27 ♜a8+ ♜f7 28 ♜d8+- ♜d7 29 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 30 ♜c3 b5 31 ♖e2 ♜f6 32 ♖xb5 ♜d1 33 ♜d3 ♜a1 34 ♜d2 ♜b1 35 ♖c4 ♜a1 36 ♜e2 ♜d1 37 ♜a2 ♜xd4 38 ♜a7+ ♜g6 39 ♜a6 ♜e8 40 ♖b5 ♜f6 41 ♜xd6 ♜f5 42 ♖c4 ♜d2 43 ♜e6 ♜xf2 44 ♜e7 g5 45 ♜e2 ♜xe2 46 ♖xe2 h5 47 ♖xh5 ♜xd5 48 ♜g3 1-0, Milos - Garcia Caballero, Las Palmas 1993.

18 ♜c4 ♖xd5 19 ♖xd5+ ♜xd5 20 ♖d2 ♜e4 21 ♜ad1! ♜xd4 22 ♜xd6 cxd6 23 ♖c1

23 ♖g5!?

23...♜xd1 24 ♜xd1 ♜c8 25 ♜h2!±



The transformation of White's advantage has been completed; Black has been able to restore material equality but in the meantime White has obtained the better pawn structure and a small but lasting bishop vs knight advantage in an open position. In the remainder of this game White makes masterly use of these small pluses.

25... ♖b6?

White was now threatening to take on d5, but retreating the knight is an admission of strategic failure on Black's part; he should have maintained his knight in the centre by 25... ♖c5! 26 b3 b5 27 a3 a5± rendering it difficult for White to make progress. Now Black will be pushed back methodically.

26 ♙e3 ♖c6 27 b3!

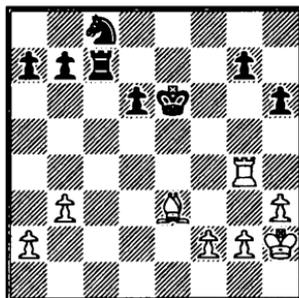
Containing the Black knight; the superiority of the bishop is already evident to the naked eye as it can operate easily on both flanks.

27... ♖f7 28 ♖d4!

A very instructive rook switch onto the 4th rank; from its superlative central position the rook

is able to attack both flanks and create further weaknesses.

28... ♖c8 29 ♖f4+ ♙e6 30 ♖h4! h6 31 ♖g4 ♖c7



32 h4!±

Excellent play! After h4-h5 both g7 and h6 will be fixed as organic weaknesses and there is nothing Black can do about it.

32... ♖f7 33 h5 b6 34 ♙d4! ♖f8 35 ♖g6!

Now Black is completely tied down to defending his weaknesses and can only mark time. White exploits this in the best possible way by mobilising his kingside pawn majority.

35... ♖f7 36 g4 ♖d7 37 ♖g2 d5 38 f4 ♖f7 39 ♖f3 ♖e7 40 ♖d6 ♖e8 41 ♖e3 ♖g8 42 ♙e5! ♖e7 43 ♖c6+-

The game has been decided; Material equality is deceptive here, what counts is the huge difference in the strength of all pieces, including the kings.

43... ♖f6 44 ♖f3

44 ♙xf6+! would have won faster.

44...♖e4 45 b4! b5 46 f5 ♗f6 47  
♙d4 ♗d8 48 ♜c5! a6 49 ♜c6

Black cannot stave off material losses any more; the rest is elementary.

49...♖e4 50 ♜xa6 ♜d7 51 ♜b6  
♗d6 52 ♙xg7 ♗c4 53 ♙f6+ ♗e8  
54 ♜xb5 ♗f7 55 ♙d4 ♜e7 56 ♜xd5  
♗d2+ 57 ♗f2 ♗e4+ 58 ♗g2 ♗g5  
59 ♜a5 ♜e2+ 60 ♗g3 ♜d2 61 ♙e3  
♜d3 62 ♗f4

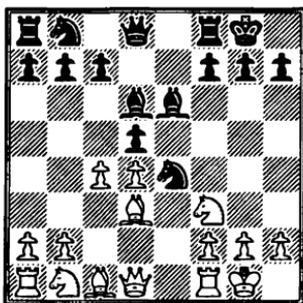
Black resigned; an impressive display of power by Jaime Emma, who, like most of his contemporary Argentinians, was overshadowed by the great Miguel Najdorf.

1-0

32

Kamsky – Yusupov  
Tilburg 1992

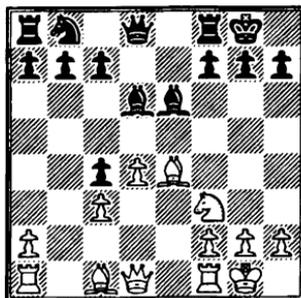
1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4  
♗f3 ♗xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙d6 7  
0-0 0-0 8 c4 ♙e6



This move is another dubious alternative to 8...c6, but admittedly, more combative than the ones featured in the previous Illustrative Game.

9 ♜e1

A solid developing move, but the pawn sacrifice 9 ♗c3!? may contain more poison; 9 ♗c3!? ♗xc3 10 bxc3 dxc4 [10...h6 11 c5 ♙e7 12 ♗e5!? (12 ♜e1±) 12...♗d7 13 f4 ♗xe5 14 fxe5 ♙g5 15 ♙f4 f6 16 ♗e2 ♗d7 17 ♙xg5 fxg5 18 ♗h5 ♙f5 19 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 20 ♗g6+- Felicio-Marmontel, Brazil corr. 1986] 11 ♙e4



...leads to an interesting position, with good compensation for White in view of Black's comparatively bare kingside. The following variations demonstrate White's chances.

A) 11...c6?! is clearly bad on account of 12 ♗g5 h6 (12...g6 13 ♗xe6 fxe6 14 ♗g4!) 13 ♗xe6 fxe6 14 ♗e2! b5 15 a4± and White obtains a tremendous initiative on the light squares;

B) 11...♗d7 is better than 11...c6?!, but still leads to the deterioration of Black's pawn structure for not too much: After 12 ♗g5 ♗f6 13 ♗xe6 fxe6 14 ♙xb7 ♜b8 15 ♙f3 ♗d5 16 ♙d2!? (16 ♗e2? ♗xc3 17 ♗xe6+ ♗h8 18 ♗xc4 ♜xf3! 19 gx f3 ♗h4?)

16...♖b2 17 ♔g4! ♚f6 18 ♚c1 ♖b5  
19 ♖b1 ♗xb1?! (19...c6!?) 20 ♚xb1  
h5! (20...e5 21 ♚b7↑) 21 ♔f3 h4  
22 ♔g4 ♔f4 23 ♔xf4 ♔xf4 24  
♚e4± White had a solid edge in  
Nisipeanu-Hess, Bad Woerishofen  
1995;

C) 11...♚c8 is an attempt to  
defend both wings, but it is rather  
artificial, as shown by the following  
forcing sequence: 12 ♔g5 ♔f5 13  
♚f3! ♔xe4 14 ♚xe4 g6 15 ♚h4 h5  
16 ♔e4 ♔d7 17 ♔f4! ♔xf4 18  
♚xf4 ♚d8 19 ♖ae1± and White has  
excellent compensation for the  
pawn as he is about to double rooks  
on the e-line, obtaining significant  
attacking chances;

D) 11...♔c8 (Passive, but as we  
have already seen the alternatives  
are not appetizing either) 12 ♔g5!?  
(Designed to force a weakness on  
the protective pawn cover of the  
Black king) reaches the critical  
position for 9 ♔c3; now Black has  
available the following options:

D1) 12...♚d7! 13 ♚e2! h6 14  
♔d2 ♖e8 leads to a good attacking  
position for White after both rook  
moves to e1; for example, 15 ♖ae1  
(15 ♖fe1!?) 15...♚b5 16 ♔h4! ♔d7  
17 ♚f3↑;

D2) 12...f6 13 ♔h4! [By keeping  
the enemy f-pawn pinned White  
creates several threats; 13 ♔d2! is  
also interesting, although after  
13...c6 14 ♚e2 b5 15 ♖fe1 a6 16 a4  
(Kotronias-Kalesis, Karditsa 1994)  
the sequel 16...f5! 17 ♔c2 ♚c7!  
renders the situation rather unclear]  
13...♚d7 [Probably the lesser evil;  
13...c6? 14 ♚c2!± is, of course,

highly anti-positional; 13...♔h4  
should be met by 14 ♔d2!  
(intending ♚d1-h5) 14...♚e8 15  
♚f3↑ when White clearly has a  
strong initiative; 13...♔c6 14 ♚a4!±  
is slightly better for White] 14 ♚b1!  
♔h8 (14...f5? 15 ♔d5+ ♔h8 16  
♔xc4±, intending ♖f1-e1, is much  
better for White; if 16...h6, then 17  
♔g3! reveals a positional edge as  
17...f4? 18 ♔h4! g5 19 ♔g6+ ♔g7  
20 ♔xf8 ♔xf8 21 h3! fxg3 22  
fxg3+- loses straightaway) 15  
♔d2!± and after a series of very  
exact moves White is about to  
recover his pawn with the better  
chances. But now it's time to return  
to the actual game:



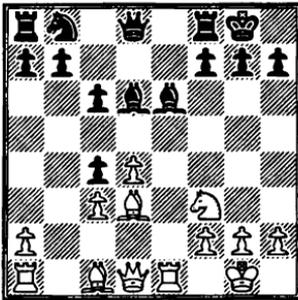
### 9...♖e8

It appears that Black has nothing  
better than this developing move.

9...f5! is dubious on account of  
10 ♚b3 dxc4 11 ♔xc4 ♔xc4 12  
♚xc4+ ♔h8 13 ♔c3± and the Black  
king is rather exposed. After  
13...♔xc3 14 bxc3 h6 15 ♚b3 b6  
16 c4 ♔d7 17 ♔b2 ♚f6 18 ♚c2  
♚f7 White went on to exploit all the  
advantages of his position in  
masterly fashion in Zude-Rissmann,  
Schwaebisch Gmuend 1993: 19 d5!

♖c5 20 ♜d4 ♚h5 21 h3 ♜g8 22  
 ♜e2! ♜f7 23 ♜ae1 ♜af8 24 ♙a1  
 ♚h4 25 ♜c6 ♜e4 26 ♙e5! g5 27  
 ♙xd6 cxd6 28 f3 ♜c5 29 ♜e8 ♚f4  
 30 ♚c3 g4 31 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 32 ♜e7  
 ♜f7 33 ♜e8+ ♜h7 34 ♜h8+ ♜g6 35  
 fxg4 fxg4 36 ♜g8+ ♜f5 37 ♚c2+  
 ♜f6 38 ♚g6#.

9...c6 can be met with the daring  
 10 ♜c3! as 10...♜xc3 11 bxc3  
 dxc4?!



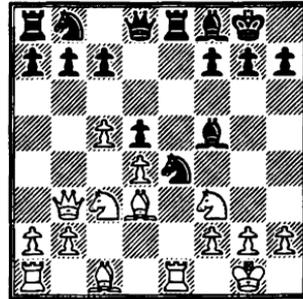
12 ♙xh7+!! ♜xh7 13 ♜g5+ ♜g6  
 (13...♜g8 14 ♚c2) 14 h4! makes it  
 very difficult for Black to survive, a  
 sample line being 14...♜h8  
 (14...♚d7 15 h5+ ♜f6 16 ♜h7+  
 ♜e7 17 ♚g4→) 15 ♜xe6+!! fxe6 16  
 ♚g4 ♚d7 17 h5+ ♜f6 18 ♜e4+  
 ♜f7 19 ♚g6+ ♜f8 20 h6±. A  
 noticeable feature of all these  
 positions is the weakness of g5, a  
 factor that contributes significantly  
 to White's attacking chances.

10 c5!?

Black's piece configuration is not  
 very harmonious, and consequently,  
 gaining space and time in this  
 manner cannot be bad for White.

10...♙e7

10...♙f8 is very passive and fails  
 to cover g5 as well; after 11 ♜c3  
 ♙f5 [11...f5 12 ♚b3! b6 13 ♜g5!  
 looks good for White: 13...♜c6 14  
 ♙xe4! (14 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 15 ♚xd5  
 ♚xd5 16 ♜xd5 ♜xc5! =) 14...fxe4  
 15 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 16 ♚xd5 ♜xd4 17  
 ♚c4±] 12 ♚b3!



Black's situation is critical:

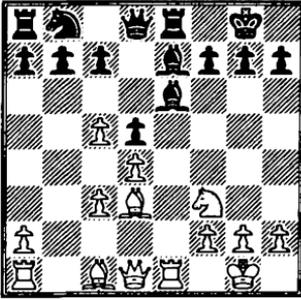
A) 12...♜xc5? 13 dxc5 ♙xd3  
 loses instantly to 14 ♙g5 ♜xe1+ 15  
 ♜xe1! ♚xg5 16 ♚xb7+-;

B) 12...♜c3 13 ♜xe8 (13  
 ♙g5!?±) 13...♚xe8 14 ♙xf5 ♜e2+  
 15 ♜f1 ♜xc1 16 ♜xc1± is very  
 advantageous for White as Black  
 cannot avoid losing an important  
 pawn;

C) 12...♜c6 13 ♚xb7 (13  
 ♚xd5!?±) 13...♜c3 14 ♚xc6  
 ♙xd3 15 bxc3 ♜xe1+ 16 ♜xe1  
 ♙e4 17 ♙f4± left Black a pawn  
 down without any compensation in  
 Kuczynski-Gdanski, Polanica Zdroj  
 1992.

11 ♜c3 ♜xc3 12 bxc3

White has managed to fortify his  
 centre, but must watch out for  
 ...b7-b6, Black's typical freeing  
 move in analogous positions.



12...♞d7!

Trying to get the knight to f8 as quickly as possible in order to avert sacrificial possibilities on e6; after 12...b6? 13 ♚c2 h6 (13...g6 14 ♜xe6 fxe6 15 ♙xg6 ♙f6 16 ♙xh7+ ♚h8 17 ♚g6+- is hopeless) 14 ♜xe6! fxe6 15 ♙h7+ ♚f8 16 ♞e5 ♙f6 17 ♞g6+! ♚f7 18 ♙a3+- Black cannot cope with the lethal threat of ♚c2-d1-h5; 12...♞c6?! fails to transfer the knight to the kingside allowing White significantly more attacking chances than in our main game: 13 ♜b1 ♜b8 14 ♚c2 h6 15 ♙f4 ♙g4 16 ♞e5 (16 ♜e3!?) 16...♙g5 17 ♙h7+!? (17 ♞xg4 ♙xf4 18 ♜xe8+ ♚xe8 19 g3 ♙g5 20 h4±) 17...♚f8 18 ♞xf7! ♜xe1+ 19 ♜xe1 ♚xf7 20 ♚g6+ ♚f8 21 h4! ♚f6 22 hxg5 ♚xf4 23 gxh6 ♚xh6 24 ♚xg4 ♚xh7 25 ♚f3+ ♚g8 26 ♚xd5+ ♚f8 27 ♜e4→ Camper-Burrell, IECC e-mail 1997.

13 ♙f4 b6!

A critical moment; With his last move Black resorts to the right plan which is no other than liquidating the cramping c5 pawn, so White must act energetically in order to transform his temporary assets (better development, slight space

advantage) to something more permanent.

14 ♚c2!

Spotting the correct idea; Black's last created a hole on c6, but in order to exploit it White must be able to play ♞f3-e5. 14 ♚c2! serves exactly this purpose by forcing the Black knight to retreat on f8, relinquishing thus control of the important e5 square which can then be invaded by its White counterpart.

14...♞f8 15 ♞e5! ♙f6

A good defence; 15...bxc5?! 16 ♙b5 ♞d7 17 ♞c6± is bad for Black.

16 ♙b5 ♙xe5 17 ♙xe5 ♙d7 18 c6 ♙c8 19 ♙g3

The position has crystallised; White's two bishops are very strong but his advantage is not decisive as Black will manage with careful play to destroy the annoying wedge on c6. In the rest of this game we will often quote Yusupov's notes from *Chessbase* as they are quite enlightening.

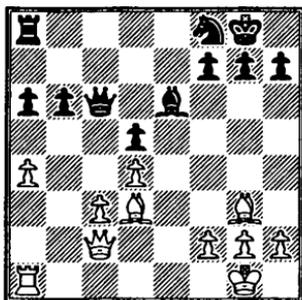
19...a6 20 ♙d3 ♜e6 21 ♜xe6 ♙xe6 22 a4!?

A strong positional move, preventing ...b6-b5 and fixing a6 as a weakness, but the direct 22 f4 might have been even stronger. However, Kamsky's reasoning must have been rather simple: In fact, Black has no other way to free his position than ...♚d8-e8xc6 and that would turn b6 into a weakness as well because the Black c-pawn has to go in the process.

22...♚e8!

There is no time for delay!  
 22...♘g6 23 f4!→ leads to a strong  
 White attack; 22...♞a7 23 f4! ♚e8  
 24 f5 ♙c8 runs into 25 f6→ or 25  
 c4!? ♚xc6 26 cxd5 ♚xd5 27 ♙e5±,  
 in both cases with a tremendous  
 attacking position for White.

23 ♙xc7 ♚xc6 24 ♙g3±



This is the position Kamsky must  
 have been aiming for when he made  
 his 22nd move; White's bishops are  
 very active and there are  
 weaknesses to pile upon at a6, b6.  
 Most importantly, White didn't  
 have to sacrifice anything to achieve  
 this as he managed to make a  
 successful bargain in the trade of the  
 c-pawns. However, the advantages  
 do not amount to an automatic win,  
 especially against a defender of  
 Yusupov's class.

24...h6?!

Dictated by Black's desire to  
 activate the knight, yet it may not be  
 best. Here or on the next move  
 Black should have played ...♞a8-c8  
 in order to advance ...b6-b5 and get  
 rid of one weakness, e.g. 24...♞c8!  
 25 ♞a3 b5 26 axb5 axb5 27 ♚b1  
 (27 ♞b3 b4=; 27 ♚b2!?) 27...♙d7  
 28 ♞b3 ♚e6± and White has only a  
 slight plus according to Yusupov.

25 h3 ♘d7

25...♞c8!?

26 ♙h4!±

Yusupov must have missed this  
 strong reply, preventing his knight  
 from getting to f6. White now has a  
 clear advantage as he has the  
 prospect of pressing on both flanks  
 while Black has failed to secure any  
 counter-play.

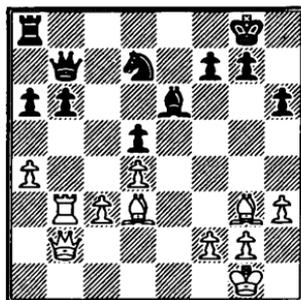
26...♚c7

Trying to prevent f2-f4-f5.

27 ♚d2 ♘f8 28 ♞a3!

28 f4 f5!± would have been  
 only slightly better for White; with  
 the text Kamsky sets about  
 methodically laying siege to Black's  
 weak b-pawn.

28...♘g6 29 ♙g3 ♚b7 30 ♞b3  
 ♘f8 31 ♚b2 ♘d7



32 ♚a3!

Black has defended everything, so  
 White will make progress by  
 penetrating to d6, rendering the  
 exchange of queens unavoidable; In  
 an ending Black's weaknesses are  
 likely to become more felt  
 (especially the one on a6), whilst  
 White's own weakness on a4 will be  
 impossible to attack.

32...♖c6 33 ♗b4 ♠a7 34 ♕h2  
♠a8 35 f3 ♠a7+ 36 ♗d6! ♗xd6

36...♗xa4 37 ♠xb6→

37 ♗xd6 f5?

An instructive mistake, allowing White to open up the kingside to the benefit of his bishops; according to Yusupov 37...h5± was called for.

38 g4! g6 39 ♕g3 ♕f7 40 ♗f4!  
♕g7

40...g5 41 gxf5! gxf4+ 42 ♕xf4+-

41 gxf5 ♗xf5 42 ♗xf5 gxf5

The exchange of light-squared bishops has done nothing to relieve Black, whose position is full of weaknesses. However, in the remainder of the game Kamsky fails to show the best technique and Black comes close to drawing.

43 ♠b1 ♕g6 44 ♠e1 ♕f6 45  
♕h4!

Activating the king to the utmost and threatening ♠e1-e6; Yusupov awards the move 45 ♠e6? two question marks because of 45...♕f7! (Δ ♕f6-h5+). Although White does not lose a piece due to 46 ♠e5 it has to be admitted that the win is practically thrown away in view of the variation 46...♕h5+ 47 ♕f2 ♕xf4 48 ♠xf5+ ♕g6 49 ♠xf4 ♠c7 50 ♠f8 ♠xc3 51 ♠d8 ♠a3=

45...♕f7 46 ♗xh6 ♠c7 47 ♗d2  
♠c8 48 ♕g3

White has won a pawn but he still has some technical difficulties to overcome as his pieces have been pushed back temporarily.

48...♕h5+ 49 ♕f2 ♠e8 50 ♠g1!

White should of course refrain from exchanging rooks.

50 ♠xe8? ♕xe8 51 ♕e2 ♕d7 52  
♕d3 ♕c6 53 c4 dxc4+ 54 ♕xc4  
b5+ 55 axb5+ axb5+ 56 ♕d3 ♕d5= is a variation given by Kamsky in the *Chess Informant*.

50...♕g7! 51 h4?!

This looks a bit inexact; According to Kamsky Black intended the formation ♕e6, ♠h8, so a good reply was 51 ♠b1! ♠e6 (51...♠b8 52 ♗f4 ♠b7 53 ♗e5 ♕e6 54 h4+-) 52 ♗f4! disturbing Black's coordination; White could have then transferred his bishop to e5 and king to d3 followed by ♠b1-g1, winning.

51...♕e6 52 ♠b1

52 ♠e1! would have been better; now Black can improve his position.

52...♠b8 53 ♕e2?! b5! 54 ♕d3  
♕f6 55 axb5 axb5 56 h5 f4

It is no longer easy for White to win. To make progress he must give up his passed h-pawn.

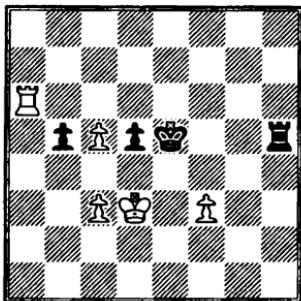
57 ♠a1 ♠h8 58 ♠a6 ♠xh5?

Black has defended well from a very difficult position but now it is his turn to falter. Yusupov gives 58...♕f7! 59 ♠b6 ♠xh5 60 ♠xb5± as the best practical chance.

59 ♗xf4 ♕f5 60 ♗e5 ♕c5+!?

Trying to mix things up by transposing into a rook ending; 60...♠h3 61 ♕e3+- would have been hopeless as the Black king is cut off from the defence of his pawns.

61 dxc5 ♕xe5



62 ♖g6?

Could this be a case of over-confidence? In any case, White was winning simply by 62 f4+! (Yusupov awards two exclamation marks to the move but we think this is an exaggeration) 62...♙xf4 63 ♗d4+-.

62...♞h4!

Suddenly the threat of ...♞h4-c4= has made its appearance.

63 ♞g4 ♞h1 64 ♞d4?!

64 ♞g8!

64...♙e6⊕ 65 ♙c2?!⊕ ♞h5 66 ♗b3 ♗d7

66...♞f5=

67 ♗b4

After a couple of further inaccuracies in time pressure, the game is already impossible to win. Black could have now drawn with the simple 67...♞f5, but due to time shortage produced the following howler:

67...♙c6??

This move is bad because Black will not have time for ...♞xf3xc3 in reply to a rook check from the side followed by ♗b4xb5. 67...♞f5 68 ♗xb5 ♞xf3 69 ♞xd5+ ♙c7= would

have drawn easily as White cannot profit in any way from his doubled c-pawns.

68 ♞g4 ♞h6 69 f4 ♞f6 70 ♞h4+-

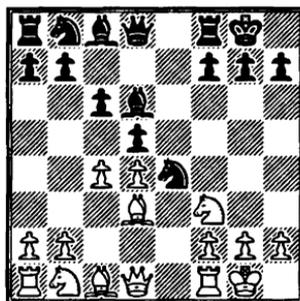
Zugzwang; The Black rook is forced to give way and White wins for the reason described above.

70...♞f7 71 ♞h6+ ♙c7 72 ♙xb5 ♞xf4 73 ♞h7+ ♙c8 74 ♙b6 ♞f1 75 ♞h8+ ♙d7 76 c6+ 1-0

33

Kotronias – Rozentalis  
European tch, Debrecen 1992

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 c6



The most consistent continuation, maintaining Black's stance in the centre.

9 cxd5

9 ♘c3 allows Black an extra possibility in 9...♘xc3 10 bxc3 dxc4!?

9...cxd5 10 ♘c3 ♘xc3

After 10...♞e8?! the natural 11 ♞e1! ♘xc3 [11...♙f5 12 ♗b3 ♘c6 13 ♗xd5 ♘e7 (Brkic-Plenkovic, Pula 2002) 14 ♗xb7 ♞b8! 15 ♗a6!

(15 ♖xa7? ♔xc3 16 ♕xf5 ♔b5!) 15...♚b6 16 ♖xa7 ♔c6 17 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 18 ♕xe4±] 12 ♚xe8+ ♖xe8 13 bxc3 ♕g4 [We are not certain this is the best; the alternatives are more conservative and appear to offer White less opportunities for dynamic play: 13...♔d7 14 ♖b3 ♔b6 15 ♕a3 ♕xa3 16 ♖xa3 ♕e6 17 ♚e1 h6 18 ♔e5 ♖f8 19 ♖b3 ♚c8 20 ♕b1! ♖d8 21 ♖c2 ♖f6 22 ♖h7+ ♔f8 23 ♔d7+ ♔xd7 24 ♖h8+ ♔e7 25 ♖xc8± was bad for Black in Damaso-A.Fernandes, Maia 2003, but 13...♖e7 14 ♖b3 (14 ♕g5 ♖c7 15 ♕h4!±) 14...♕e6 15 ♕g5 ♖c7 (15...f6 16 ♚e1!±) 16 ♚b1 b6 17 ♕h4 ♔c6 18 ♕g3 ♔a5 19 ♖c2 h6 20 ♕h7+ ♔h8 21 ♕f5±, or 13...♔c6!? 14 ♖b3 ♖d7 15 g3 ♕f8 16 ♕a3 ♕xa3 17 ♖xa3 ♖d8 18 ♚e1± Kasparov-Ehlvest, Moscow (rapid) 2002, may well be better possibilities] 14 ♚b1!+ creates awkward problems for Black as the following variations show:

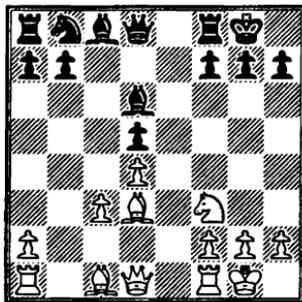
A) 14...♕xf3? 15 ♖xf3 ♖e1+ 16 ♕f1 is simply bad as Black cannot meet the threats to d5 and b7, e.g. 16...♔c6 17 ♚xb7+;

B) On 14...b6, the reply 15 h3! ♕h5 [15...♕d7 16 ♔e5 ♕a4? (16...♕xe5 17 ♖h5±) 17 ♖g4 ♔d7 18 ♕h6 g6 (Lacey-Galvin, IECC e-mail 2000) 19 f4! ♚c8 20 ♕f5! ♚c7 21 ♚e1 ♔f8 22 ♖g3→] 16 ♚b5! introduces a typical motif that we will encounter many times from now on. In this particular instance it is extremely strong as the d5 pawn cannot be defended in a satisfactory manner, e.g. 16...♖e6 (16...♕xf3 17 ♖xf3 ♖e1+ 18 ♕f1 ♖xc1 19

♚xd5+-; 16...♖c6 17 ♖b3! ♕xf3 18 gxf3 ♖c7 19 ♖xd5±) 17 g4! ♕g6 18 ♔g5! ♖e7 (18...♖d7 19 ♕xg6 hxg6 20 ♖f3+-) 19 ♚xd5 ♔c6 (19...♔d7 20 ♕xg6 hxg6 21 ♖f3 ♚f8 22 ♔e4±) 20 ♕xg6 hxg6 21 ♖f3± and Black has no compensation for the loss of his central pawn;

C) 14...♖e7 (After this Black also fails to equalise) 15 h3 ♕h5 16 ♚b5! (Now the queen has to move to d7 after which the stage is set for c3-c4, exploiting the unprotected state of the ♕h5) 16...♖d7 17 c4! dxc4 18 ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 19 ♔g5+! (The most convincing; however, 19 ♚xh5+ ♔g8 20 ♖c2 g6 21 ♚g5± also leads to a fierce attack) 19...♔g6 20 ♖c2+ f5 21 ♖xc4 (Despite the extra piece Black is lost as there are too many tactical threats to cope with) 21...♔c6 (21...♔a6 22 ♚d5 ♚f8 23 ♕f4 ♚f6 24 g4!+-) 22 g4! ♔xd4 [Topalov-Gelfand, Monaco (rapid) 2002] and now 23 ♚d5!+- wins elegantly.

### 11 bxc3



An interesting position, with mutual strengths and weaknesses has arisen. Both sides enjoy free

piece play, which makes the presence of tactics very likely in the ensuing struggle.

### 11...♟g4

The best square for the bishop; now White has to watch out for the ...♟g4-h5-g6 manoeuvre, exchanging his own good bishop.

11...♞c6 looks natural but after 12 ♖g5! (an underrated move; the usual choice is 12 h3) the position is not easy for Black:

A) 12...h6?! 13 ♜h7! ♞e8 14 ♜h5 gives White a strong attack. For example: 14...♞b8 15 ♙d2! (White must first exchange the defending rook on e8 and then the sacrifice on h6 will be lethal) 15...b5 16 ♞ae1 ♞e6 17 ♞xe6 ♙xe6 18 ♙xh6 ♞e7 (18...gxf6 19 ♜xh6 ♙e7 20 f4!+-) 19 f4! 1-0 Lauk-Arreaga, ICCF e-mail 2000;

B) 12...g6! is better, but even then 13 ♜f3! gives White good play on the kingside. For example: 13...♞e7!? (13...h6? 14 ♜h3 ♙xh3 15 ♜xh3 h5 16 f4± is obviously unacceptable for Black) 14 ♙d2!? [14 c4 is also interesting; for example, after 14...b6 (14...dxc4!? 15 ♙xc4 ♞f5 16 ♞xf7! ♞xf7 17 ♙xf7+ ♞xf7 18 g4! ♜h4 19 h3 ♜f6 20 gxf5 ♜xf5±) 15 cxd5 ♙b7?! 16 ♜h3! h5 17 ♞e4 ♞xd5 18 ♙g5 ♙e7 19 ♙h6 ♙c8 20 ♜g3 ♞e8 21 ♜e5! f6 22 ♜g3 g5 23 h4 g4 24 ♙c4 ♞h7 25 ♙d2 ♙f5 26 ♞fe1 ♙g6 27 ♜b3! +- ♞c7 28 ♙f7 ♞f8 29 ♙xg6+ ♞xg6 30 ♞g3 ♞h8 31 ♞ac1 ♞e8 32 ♜e6 ♙a3 33 ♞xh5!! ♙xc1 34 ♜xg4+ ♞f7 35 ♜e6+ ♞g6

36 ♞f4+ ♞h7 37 ♜f7+ ♞g7 38 ♞h5 (1-0), White won nicely in Edwards-Jones, APCT corr. 1993] 14...♙f5 (On other moves White follows up by doubling rooks on the e-file) 15 ♙xf5 ♞xf5 16 g4! ♞g7 17 ♜h3 h5 18 gxf5 ♞xh5 19 f4! and the threatened f4-f5, opening lines for White's pieces cannot be stopped;

11...♞d7!? has the clear-cut aim of reinforcing the kingside. However, after 12 ♙g5! [planning to exchange Black's precious dark-squared bishop by ♙g5-h4-g3; 12 ♞e1!? ♞f6 13 ♞e5 h6? (13...♜c7!?) 14 ♙f4 ♙e6 15 ♞e3!± ♞c8 16 ♞g3 ♞h8 17 ♙xh6! gxf6 18 ♜d2 ♞g8 19 ♞xg8+! ♞xg8 20 ♜xh6 f5 21 ♜xe6+ ♞g7 22 ♜g6+ ♞h8 23 ♞f7+ ♞xf7 24 ♜xf7 ♜h4 25 g3 ♜h6 26 ♜xf5 ♞f8 27 ♜xd5 ♜d2 28 ♜h5+ 1-0, was a spectacular White win in Runge-Assmus, Germany 2000, but Black should rather refrain from putting his knight on f6 in these positions] 12...♜c7 (12...♞f6 13 ♞e5 ♙e7 14 f4 h6 15 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 16 ♞b1 ♜c7 17 ♜f3± Harper-Croes, Bled 2002) 13 ♜c2 h6 14 ♙h4 ♞b6 (Nataf-Rozentalis, Esbjerg 2001) 15 ♙g3!±, intending ♞a1-e1, White has the better game.

### 12 ♞b1

Exploiting the fact that the bishop's entrance to the game has left the b-pawn unprotected to develop the rook with gain of time; Now Black usually chooses to ignore the threat by playing

12...♠d7, but here we will deal with the prosaic 12...b6.

12...b6 13 ♖b5!

With this fine move, intending to meet 13...a6? by 14 ♖xd5! ♙xh2+ 15 ♗xh2+, White manages to justify the rook's presence on the b-file and add fuel to the fight.

13...♙c7 14 h3!

The introduction to a promising exchange sacrifice that Black has no choice but to accept.

14...a6

14...♙h5? 15 c4!+- allows White to demonstrate the usefulness of the rook switch to the fifth rank;

14...♙e6?! 15 ♗g5 h6 16 ♗xe6 fxe6 17 ♖g4 ♗d6 18 g3 ♖f6 19 ♖e1±

15 hxg4! axb5

In this position White has definite compensation for the exchange in view of his bishop pair and Black's weaknesses on the light squares. These factors, coupled with the fact that Black's kingside is a bit bare, contribute to excellent attacking chances for the first player.

16 ♗c2!

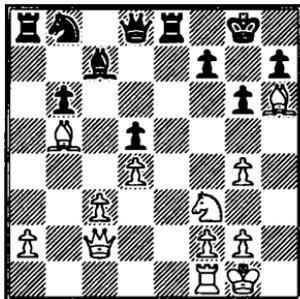
Forcing a weakening in the enemy castled position.

16...g6

16...h6? 17 g5± allows White to open quickly lines for attack against the Black king.

17 ♙h6 ♖e8 18 ♙xb5

Thus, White has managed to get a pawn for the exchange, while maintaining a fine attacking momentum in his game.



18...♖e4!?

The only chance to complicate the issue, but it has the disadvantage of deserting the weak back rank.

18...♗d7 turns out to be clearly inferior for Black after 19 ♙g5! ♖f6 (19...♗c8 20 ♗b3) 20 ♙d2± (Ivanchuk's suggestion); for example: 20...♖e6 (20...♖e7 21 ♙c6 ♖c8 22 ♙b7 ♖b8 23 ♙xd5+ ±, Δ c3-c4, g4-g5, x g7) 21 c4 ♗f8 (21...♗c8 22 ♗b3±; 21...♙d6 22 cxd5 ♖e7 23 g5↑) 22 cxd5 ♖e7 23 g5 f5 24 ♙c6 ♖c8 25 ♙b4 ♙d6 (25...♖e4 26 d6 ♙xd6 27 ♗b3±) 26 ♙xd6 (26 ♖b1±) 26...♗xd6 27 ♗e5 (Δ♗c2-b2, x ♗f8) 27...♗d7□ 28 ♗c4 (28 f4±) 28...♗f4 29 d6 ♖g7 30 ♗b3 ♗h8 31 ♙xd7 ♖xd7 32 ♗e5+;

18...♖e6 is also inferior because of the line 19 c4! ♗c6 20 cxd5 ♗b4 (20...♗xd5? 21 ♙c4 ♗e4 22 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 23 ♙d5 and White is practically winning, e.g. 23...♖e6 24 ♙xe6 fxe6 25 ♖c1 ♖c8 26 ♖xc6 ♙h2+ 27 ♗xh2 ♖xc6+-) 21 ♗b3! (21 dxe6 is very impressive but White doesn't have more than a draw: 21...♗xc2 22 exf7+ ♗xf7 23 ♙c4+ ♗e8 24 ♙b5+ ♗f7 25 ♙c4+=) 21...♗xd5 22 ♙c4 ♖d6 23

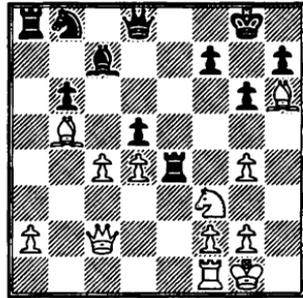
a4!± [23 ♖e5?! instead, is not as good as it seems because it allows the freeing retort 23...♞c8? 24 ♜f3 f6 25 ♘c6+-; 23...♞a5? 24 ♙d2 ♞a7 25 ♙b4±; 23...♞a7 24 ♜f3 ♙b8 25 ♙xd5 ♞xd5 26 ♘c6 ♜c7 27 ♘xb8 ♞d6 28 ♙f4±), giving Black good chances to hold his own: 24 ♙xd5 ♞xd5 25 ♘c6 ♜d6! (25...♙h2+ 26 ♜xh2 ♜d6+ 27 ♘e5 f6 28 f4! fxe5 29 fxe5 ♜d7 (29...♜e6 30 ♞f6+-; 29...♜c6 30 ♜f3+-) 30 ♜f3+-) 26 ♘e7+ ♜xe7! (26...♜h8 27 g3 ♜xe7 (27...♞xd4 28 ♜xf7+-) 28 ♜xd5 ♞d8 29 ♜c5±) 27 ♜xd5 ♞d8! 28 ♜c5 ♙d6 29 ♜g5 ♜xg5 30 ♙xg5 ♞a8 31 ♞a1 b4 32 ♙c1! ± and White has only a tiny plus in the endgame. Although we originally thought that this is an interesting position as White has a pawn more, the activity of the Black pieces makes it difficult to convert it to something tangible and anyway the improvement 23 a4! renders the whole line without theoretical substance] and Black is paralysed. A possible line after 23 a4! is 23...♞c8 24 ♘e5 ♙b8 25 ♞e1!± when it is evident that White's stronghold cannot be shaken.

### 19 c4!

It is Black's fate to have to deal with this move in most lines in the Petroff; here it leads to a very unpleasant opening of the position, leaving the second player with a rather unattractive choice as we are going to witness below.

Instead, 19 g5?! (as played in the Short-Gelfand Candidates match in

1991) is double edged because the bishop on h6 might end up out of play. The continuation of the game revealed that Black is not in real danger: 19...♜d6 20 ♘e5 ♜e6?! [20...♘c6! 21 ♙xc6 ♞xe5 22 dxe5 (22 ♙xa8? ♞e2+) 22...♜xc6] 21 f4 ♘c6!! 22 ♘xc6 (22 ♙xc6 ♙xe5 23 ♙xa8 ♙xf4) 22...♞xf4 23 ♞xf4 ♙xf4 24 ♘e5 ♙xe5 25 dxe5 ♜xe5 26 a4 ♜e1+ 27 ♜h2 ♞c8 28 ♜d3 ♜e5+ 29 ♜g3 ♜xc3 30 ♜f4 ♜c7 31 ♜g3 ♜c3+ 32 ♜h2 ♜c7 33 ♜g3 ♜c3+ 1/2-1/2.



### 19...♞xg4

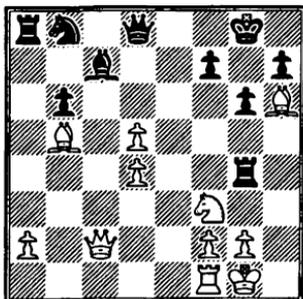
Winning a pawn and removing the rook from attack, but Black's problems, nevertheless, remain.

19...♜c8 is an attempt to get Black out of trouble by activating the queen; however after 20 ♞c1! (a strong novelty by the authors) 20...♞xg4 (what else?) 21 cxd5 ♞xg2+ 22 ♜xg2 ♜g4+ 23 ♜f1 ♜xf3 24 ♜xc7 ♜h1+ 25 ♜e2 ♜xh6 26 a4! ♜h5+ 27 f3 ♜g5! (27...♜xd5 28 ♙c4! ♜d7 29 ♙b3!±) 28 d6 ♜g2+ 29 ♜e3! Black seems to be in deep trouble.

19...♜d6 was played in one of the first games with this line, against

one of the authors. After 20 cxd5 ♖e7 21 ♙g5! f6 22 ♙h4 ♖g7 23 ♜c4 ♜d8 24 g5! f5 25 ♘e5 f4 26 ♖e1 ♙d6 27 a4 ♖aa7 28 ♖e4± (Kotronias-Karkanaque, Xanthi 1991) White had achieved his object of weakening the Black king whilst keeping his knight inactive.

### 20 cxd5



This position is very difficult for Black in view of the disharmony in his camp and particularly the cramp he is experiencing on the queenside.

### 20...♙f4

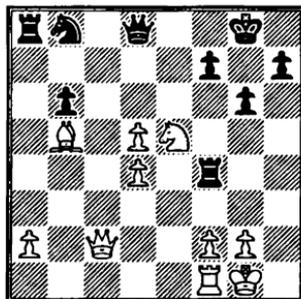
20...♘d7!? may be a better try; Then 21 ♜c6! ♘f8!? [21...♘f6 22 ♘e5± is clearly better for White; This was verified in the game VI.Gurevich-Meijers, Bundesliga-West 1999, after 22...♖xd4? (22...♖c8 23 ♖c1±) 23 ♘xf7! ♖h4 24 g3 ♜xd5 25 gxf4 ♜xc6 26 ♙xc6 ♖xa2 27 ♘g5+- when Black had simply lost a piece] 22 ♖e1! ♙d6 (22...♙f4!?) 23 ♘e5! ♖xd4 24 ♘xf7!? gives White a dangerous initiative, but more analysis is required (24 ♘f3!? for example, is also interesting); possibly after 24...♘xf7 25 ♜b7+ ♙c7 26 ♖c1 ♖c8 the best move is the calm 27

g3!+ keeping in reserve the threat of ♙b5-a6 (27 ♙a6 ♜h4! 28 ♖xc7+ ♖xc7 29 ♜xc7+ ♜e7 30 ♜xb6 ♖d1+ 31 ♙f1 ♘d7 gives Black more chances to hold).

### 21 ♘e5! ♖h4

In view of the problems Black is facing in the game, the alternative 21...♖xg2+ comes into consideration. However, even there things are not rosy for Black, e.g. 22 ♙xg2 ♙xh6 [22...♜xd5+?! 23 ♖g1 ♙xh6 is inferior because of 24 ♜c8+ ♖g7 25 ♙c4! ♜xd4 26 ♘xf7 ♘c6 (26...♘d7 27 ♜xa8 ♜xc4 28 ♘xh6 ♙xh6 29 ♖e1± Matsuo-Barrios, Yerevan (ol) 1996) 27 ♜xc6 ♜g4+ 28 ♜g2 ♜xc4 29 ♘d6!± and White is close to winning] 23 ♜b3↑ and White maintains a strong initiative.

### 22 ♙xf4 ♖xf4



### 23 ♜d2!

The queen's transfer on the dark squares tips the scales in White's favour.

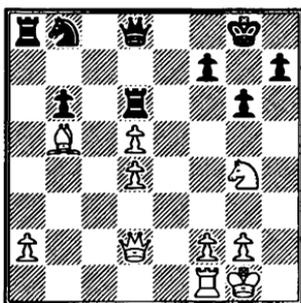
23 ♜c4 failed to achieve something substantial after 23...♖g7 24 ♖c1 ♖a3 25 ♖c2 ♖e4 26 ♜b4 ♖a5 27 a4 ♘a6 28 ♜b1 ♜xd5 29 ♙c6 ♜xd4 30 ♘f3 ♜d3 31 ♜b2+

♔h6 32 ♛c1+ ♔g7 33 ♛b2+ ♔h6  
34 ♛c1+ ♔g7 35 ♛b2+ ♔h6 36  
♛c1+ (½-½) in Wahls-Rozentalis,  
Germany 1992.

23...♞f6

23...♞f5 24 ♞e1! ♛xd5 25 a4  
♔g7 26 ♔g4 ♞h5 27 ♞e5! +- ♛d6  
28 ♞xh5 gxh5 29 ♛g5+ ♛g6 30  
♛e5+ 1-0 Ruch-Tinture, French ch  
corr. 2000.

24 ♔g4 ♞d6



A critical position; White seems to have two good possibilities at his disposal.

25 ♛f4

Trying to prevent the Black knight from getting out via d7; 25 ♞e1!? ♔d7 26 ♛f4 ♔f6 27 ♔h6+ ♔g7 28 ♔xf7! ♔xf7 29 ♞e8± is another interesting continuation, giving White excellent winning chances.

25...♞a7 26 ♞e1 ♞e7 27 ♞e5?

A pity; by playing 27 ♞xe7 ♛xe7 28 ♛e5!± White could have created for his opponent great difficulties, e.g. 28...♛xe5 (28...♛d8? 29 ♔h6+ ♔f8 30 ♛h8+ ♔e7 31 ♛g7!+-) 29 dxe5 ♞d8 30 ♔f6+ ♔g7 31 f4 and

Black will find it very hard to survive as he is almost paralysed.

27...♔d7!

The knight is finally out and Black's problems disappear.

28 ♞xe7 ♛xe7 29 ♔xd7 ♛xd7 30 ♔f6+ ♞xf6 31 ♛xf6 ♛xd5 32 ♛xb6 ♛xa2 33 ♛b8+ ♔g7 34 ♛e5+ f6! 35 ♛e7+ ♛f7 36 ♛c5 ♛e6! =

Neutralising White's slight initiative.

37 d5 ♛e1+ 38 ♔h2 ♛e5+ 39 g3 h5

After this the draw is within sight; White cannot undertake anything, his king is too open.

40 ♛a7+ ♔h6 41 ♛f7 h4 42 ♛f8+ ♔h7 43 ♛f7+ ♔h6 44 ♛f8+

Seeing no point in continuing, the players agreed to a draw.

½-½

34

Mahia – Pla  
Mar del Plata 1988

1 e4 e5 2 ♔f3 ♔f6 3 ♔xe5 d6 4 ♔f3 ♔xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♔d3 ♔d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 c6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♔c3 ♔xc3 11 bxc3 ♔g4 12 ♞b1 ♔d7

Nowadays considered as the best continuation, and not without reason; Black furthers his development and at the same time tempts his opponent to capture on b7, entering unclear complications.

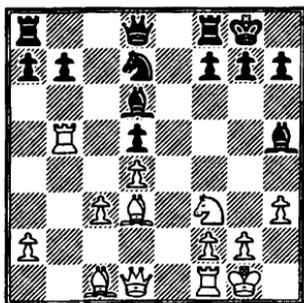
13 h3!

White has a tactical idea in mind, but it can work only with the enemy bishop on h5.

## 13...♙h5

13...♙xf3?! 14 ♖xf3 ♘b6 surrenders the initiative to White without a fight. After 15 g3! ♜c8 16 h4! ♜c7 17 h5 ♞e8 18 ♚g2 g6 19 ♙d2± White had built a solid kingside space advantage, which, in combination with the powerful bishop pair, gave him strong pressure in Dvoiris-Yakovich, Kiev 1986.

## 14 ♜b5!?



The key move in White's system; it may appear opportunistic at first sight, but in fact it conceals many deep ideas.

## 14...♘b6

14...♘f6!/? has sporadically been played, but only once at the highest level. A possible explanation could be lying in 15 ♙g5 ♜c8 16 g4! (16 ♜xb7?! ♜xc3 17 ♖d2 ♖c8!= is only equal) 16...♙g6 17 ♙xg6 when in our opinion the resulting positions are sterile for Black and he only has chances to draw after a laborious defence.

For example:

A) 17...fxg6?! 18 ♖b3 ♚h8 19 ♚e5! (19 ♞e1?! h6! 20 ♙xf6 ♖xf6

21 ♞e3 ♙f4 gives Black compensation) 19...♖e8 20 ♙xf6 gxf6 21 ♜xd5 ♙xe5 22 dxe5 fxe5 23 ♖xb7!± is at least slightly better for White as 23...♜xc3? is answered by 24 ♜d7! ♜xh3 25 ♚g2 ♞h4 26 ♞h1! ♜xh1 (26...♙xf2+? 27 ♚xf2 ♜xh1 28 ♖f3!+-) 27 ♚xh1 ♖a8 28 ♜xh7+ ♚g8 29 ♞g7+ ♚h8 30 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 31 ♜xg6 reaching what is probably a winning endgame for White;

B) 17...hxg6! 18 ♖b3 b6 19 ♞e1 [19 ♚g2 is interesting; we feel that in this position White should refrain from exchanging a pair of rooks as then the c3 pawn is weak and he has fewer attacking chances; after 19...♖c7 (19...♞e8!? 20 ♜xd5 ♖c7 21 ♙xf6 gxf6 22 ♞c1 ♞e2 23 ♚f1!± seems good for White (23 ♞c2 ♜xc2 24 ♖xc2 ♖c6 25 ♖b3 ♙f8± transposes to 19 ♞e1)) 20 ♙xf6 gxf6 21 ♞c1!± White will capture the d5 pawn under favourable circumstances] 19...♞e8 20 ♙xe8+ ♖xe8 21 ♙xf6 gxf6 22 ♜xd5 ♙f8 23 ♚g2! (23 g5?! ♖e6!± was OK for Black in Smirin-Morozevich, Biel 2003) 23...♖c6 24 a4± [24 ♘d2± is also interesting; for example 24...♖xc3 (24...♜d8 25 c4±) 25 ♖xc3 ♜xc3 26 ♘e4 ♞a3 (26...♞c6 27 ♜d7+-) 27 ♘xf6+ ♚g7 28 ♘e8+ ♚g8 29 ♜d7 ♞xa2 30 ♘f6+ ♚g7 31 ♘e4±] tempts Black to enter an endgame where the knight and rook combine better than Black's rook and bishop and may be able to launch an attack on f7 by using the g4-g5 idea.

15 c4!?

Here lies the point; By exploiting the x-ray along the fifth rank White introduces interesting complications.

15...♟xc4

Clearly, the only serious alternative to the almost universally adopted 15...♟xf3.

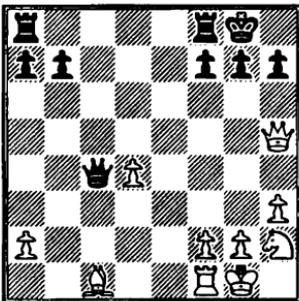
15...a6? is bad, but White has to play accurately: 16 ♞xb6 ♞xb6 17 c5 ♟xc5 18 dxc5 ♞xc5 19 ♟xh7+! (19 ♟e3?! d4! 20 ♟xd4 ♞d5) 19...♟xh7 20 ♟g5+ ♟g6 21 g4 ♟xg4 22 ♞xg4 ♞c4 23 ♟f4+-;

15...dxc4? is refuted by the simple 16 ♟xh7+± (16 ♞xh5!? cxd3 17 ♟g5± is also good, e.g. 17...g6 18 ♞xh7 ♟e7 19 ♞g4! ♟xg5 20 ♟xg5 f6 21 ♞h6 ♞e8 22 ♟xf6! ♞xf6 23 ♞h4+-)

16 ♞xd5!

With this bold capture White wins two pieces for rook and pawn, obtaining thus a material advantage. However, the resulting position is not so simple as Black has a valuable asset in his queenside pawns to compensate for his deficit.

16...♟h2+ 17 ♟xh2 ♞xd5 18 ♟xc4 ♞xc4 19 ♞xh5



The dust has cleared a bit, and by now both sides can pursue concrete plans.

19...♞xa2

19...♞fd8 can be met with 20 ♟g4! as 20...♞xa2?! (On 20...♞d5? there follows 21 ♟e5±; 20...♞xd4 21 ♟e3±, with a slight advantage for White, is the lesser evil) 21 ♟e3! allows White to maintain a dangerous passed pawn after a subsequent d4-d5; Black dare not capture it by 21...♞xd4? in view of 22 ♟f5 ♞dd8 23 ♞g5 ♞a1 24 ♟h6+- with an easy win;

19...♞xd4 20 ♟f3 ♞c4 (20...♞f6 should be met by 21 ♞b5! ♞b6 22 ♞f5!; then 22...♞g6 23 ♞f4± is slightly better for White as the Black queen can no longer chase her opposing number) 21 a3 b6 22 ♟e3 ♞ac8 (22...♞ad8?! 23 ♞c1 ♞d3 24 a4↑ was better for White in Dvoiris-Vladimirov, Barnaul 1988) 23 ♟d4!± is at least slightly better for White as he has dangerous attacking chances on the kingside; 23 ♞f5!± is also possible;

19...♞ad8!? has not been tried in practice, but may be worth analysing.

20 ♞d1

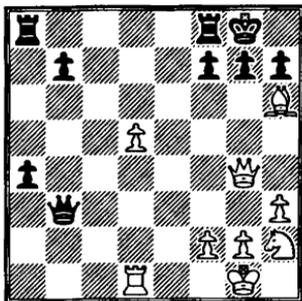
20 d5! ♞fd8 (20...♞ad8 21 ♞d1 ♞c2 22 ♟f1 ♞d7 23 ♟e3 ♞g6 24 ♞h4 b5 25 ♞b4 ♞b6 26 ♟b2 f6 27 d6 ♟h8 28 ♞f4 a5 29 ♟f5 b4 30 ♞g4 ♞a7 31 ♟d4 ♞b7 32 ♟xg7 ♞xg7 33 d7 1-0, was a convincing White win in Fercec-Cepon, Nova Gorica 1996) 21 ♞d1 ♞ac8 22 ♟f1↑ (intending ♟f1-e3), would

have been more exact, but even now the basic characteristics of the position guarantee a slight edge for White: The passed d-pawn is strong enough to keep the Black pieces occupied while the minor pieces and the queen combine beautifully for attacking purposes.

20...♖b3!± 21 d5 a5

Black tries to make use of his own asset; an interesting race has arisen, rich in tactical content.

22 ♖g4! a4 23 ♙h6



23...♖b2

Mahia and Morgado give some analysis in *Chess Informant*, refuting the logical queen sacrifice 23...♖xd1+: 24 ♖xd1 gxh6 and now the key-move is 25 ♘g4! when White seems to obtain an advantage in all variations:

A) 25...a3?? allows White to mate by force after 26 ♘f6+! ♖g7 27 ♖a1 (27 ♘h5+! ♖h8 28 ♖g4 is faster) 27...a2 (27...♙fd8 28 d6 a2 29 ♘h5+ ♖f8 30 ♖h8#) 28 ♘h5+ ♖g6 29 ♖f6+ ♖xh5 30 g4#;

B) 25...f5 should rather be met by 26 ♘xh6+! [Mahia's and Morgado's 26 ♘e3 a3 27 ♘c2 (Δ

♘c2-a1, ♖d1-d4) should also be enough for a big advantage] 26...♖g7 27 ♖h5! +- when Black is defenceless;

C) 25...♖g7 (The toughest) 26 ♖d2 f6! (26...f5 27 ♖d4+! ♖g6 28 ♘e5+-) 27 ♖xh6+ ♖h8 28 ♘xf6 ♙f7 29 ♘e4 a3 30 ♘c3 a2 31 ♘xa2 ♙xa2 32 ♖e3± is clearly better for White, but requires still some work to win.

24 ♙e3

Gaining valuable time in view of the ♙e3-d4 threat.

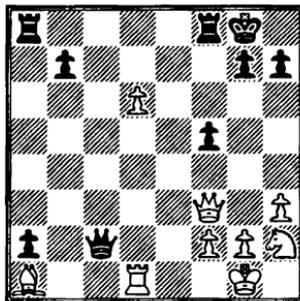
24...f5! 25 ♖f3 a3 26 ♙d4 ♖c2

26...♖xd4?? 27 ♙xd4 a2 28 ♙d1 a1=♖ 29 ♙xa1 ♙xa1+ 30 ♘f1 ♙c8 [30...♙e8 31 ♖xf5 (31 d6+-) 31...♙ee1 32 ♖c8+! Δ ♖b7-b5+-] loses easily to 31 d6+-.

27 d6!

No time to lose; The passed pawn must get as far as it can.

27...a2 28 ♙a1!



28...♖c6?

In reality, the losing move; better chances were offered by 28...♙f7! 29 ♘f1 (29 ♖d5 ♙a5) 29...f4! since it is difficult to see how White

makes progress after 30 h4 (30 ♖d4 ♗c1 31 d7 ♖d8 32 ♜e4 ♜fxd7 33 ♗b3+ ♘h8 34 ♗xa2 ♖d1 35 ♗e2 h6 36 ♜e8+ ♜xe8 37 ♗xe8+ ♘h7 38 ♗e4+=) 30...h6 31 h5 ♖d8 32 ♗d5 ♗b1.

29 ♗b3+ ♘h8 30 ♘f3+-

Now it's all over as White has managed to achieve the best possible piece coordination.

30...♗a4 31 ♗xa4 ♜xa4 32 d7 ♖d8 33 ♖d2?

Overlooking an easy win; 33 ♘g5!+- would have won at once.

33...h6 34 ♘e5 ♘g8 35 ♖b2 ♜a5 36 f4

Fortunately for White the position is still won.

36...g5 37 ♘f2 gxf4 38 ♖xb7 ♖d5 39 ♜a7 ♖d1 40 ♜xa2 ♘f8 41 ♙c3 1-0

### 35

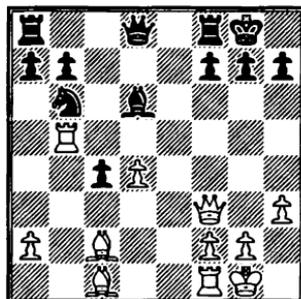
**Beliavsky – Petursson**  
World Cup, Reykjavik 1988

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♘xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 c6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♘c3 ♘xc3 11 bxc3 ♙g4 12 ♖b1 ♘d7 13 h3 ♙h5 14 ♖b5 ♘b6 15 c4!? ♙xf3!

The best move, winning a pawn, but this is only the beginning of a long story.

16 ♗xf3 dxc4 17 ♙c2!

The bishop is finely posted on c2, supporting the advance a2-a4-a5 and at the same time pointing dangerously at the Black kingside.



In the ensuing positions White usually employs (after moving the ♙c1) the plan of doubling rooks on the b-file, which in conjunction with the above mentioned advance has the aim of recovering his pawn with the better game. However, in quite a few cases, White abandons the pawn recovery for the sake of a direct attack against the Black king since his rook, queen and bishops are ideally placed for such a purpose. Black's counter-play, on the other hand, can be based upon:

a) a push of his c-pawn (enabling his knight to become active on c4)

b) transformation of d5 into a secure post for the knight

c) timely threats to the d-pawn, and

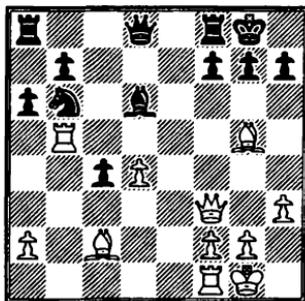
d) attacks on the b8-h2 diagonal or White's back rank.

17...a6?!

After this, Black's position rapidly disintegrates; for a better continuation, the next Illustrative Games should be consulted.

18 ♙g5!

Now Black is practically forced to give up his queen in order to stay alive.

**18...axb5**

18...♖c7? allows White a nice sacrificial attack; after 19 ♔xh7+! ♕xh7 20 ♖h5+ ♕g8 21 ♔f6! there is no way for Black to save himself:

A) 21...♔f4 is met with the crushing 22 ♖g5!+;

B) 21...♔d7 22 ♔xg7! leaves the Black king at the mercy of White's pieces as shown by the following variations:

B1) 22...♔h2+ 23 ♕h1 ♕xg7 only postpones the inevitable for a few moves as shown by the sequel 24 ♖g5+ ♕h7 25 ♖h4+ ♕g6 26 ♖g5+ ♕f6 27 ♖e5+ ♕g6 28 ♖g4+;

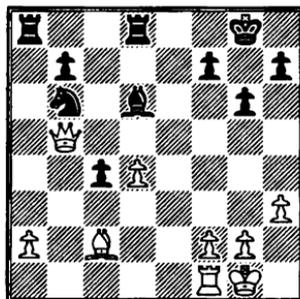
B2) 22...f6 is the lesser evil but can scarcely save Black: 23 ♔h6 ♔h2+ 24 ♕h1 ♔e5 25 ♖c5 ♖f7 26 ♖f5! ♖fe8 27 dxe5 ♖xe5 (27...♔xe5 28 ♖xc4!+) 28 ♖g4+ ♕h7 29 ♖xc4 ♖g8 30 ♖d4 b5 31 ♖c6 ♖g6 32 g4+;

B3) 22...♕xg7 23 ♖g4+ ♕f6 24 ♖g5+ ♕e6 25 d5# is a beautiful mate in the middle of the board!

C) 21...♔h2+ 22 ♕h1 ♖f4 23 ♔xg7! ♕xg7 24 ♖g5+ ♕f6 25 ♖h6+ ♕e7 26 ♖e5+ ♕d7 27 ♖xb6+;

18...f6 is the only other possibility, but here too Black is defenceless if White plays accurately: 19 ♖h5 h6 20 ♔xh6! (20 ♖xb6 fxg5!?) 20...axb5 (20...♖f7 21 ♖xb6! ♖xb6 22 ♔g6!+) 21 ♔xg7 f5 22 ♖h8+ ♕f7 23 ♖h7! (Δ 24 ♖e1) 23...♕e8 [23...♔b4 24 ♔xf5 ♖d5 25 ♖b1!! ♔c3 26 ♖xb5! (diverting the queen from controlling f7) 26...♖xb5 27 ♔e5+ ♕e8 28 ♔g6+ ♕d8 29 ♖c7#] 24 ♖e1+ ♔e7 25 ♔xf8 ♕xf8 26 ♔xf5 ♔g5 27 ♔e6 ♖f6 28 ♖e5+; a difficult, but amply rewarding line.

19 ♔xd8 ♖fxd8 20 ♖h5 g6 21 ♖xb5±



The dust has cleared and it is evident that White's material advantage gives him a clear plus; however, to convert this advantage into a full point is not so easy as an exchange of all queenside pawns would help Black set up a kingside fortress. Beliavsky's way of handling the technical phase is interesting as he gives priority to the dynamic element.

21...♔c7 22 a4

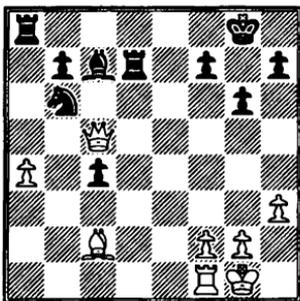
White does not wish to lose time, yet 22 ♖b2!? protecting the

important d4 pawn was worth considering.

22...♞xd4!?

22...♞d5 23 ♖b2 ♞ad8 24 ♞d1± would not have helped Black as White has time to improve his position by ♖b2-c3, g2-g3 and then proceed to attack the vulnerable b- and c-pawns.

23 ♖c5! ♞d7



24 g3!±

Suppressing the opponent's counter-play by extinguishing the possibility of a bank rank mate.

24...♞e8

24...♞xa4?? is dismissed by Beliavsky in view of the simple 25 ♖xa4 ♞xa4 26 ♖b5+-

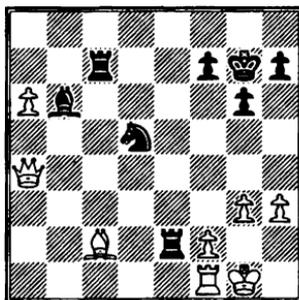
25 a5 ♞e5 26 ♖b4 ♞d5?

After this natural move Black can no longer hold his own; the ugly-looking 26...♞a8! had to be preferred, although even then 27 ♞a1± saddles Black with an awkward defensive task. In any case, it is difficult for a human to resort to a move like 26...♞a8 without feeling a bit ridiculous.

27 ♖xb7

Now White's position is close to winning as his a-pawn has become a tremendous asset. In the next few moves Beliavsky achieves his object by concentrating on destroying the opponent's piece coordination.

27...♞de7 28 a6 ♖b6 29 ♖c8+ ♔g7 30 ♖xc4 ♞c7 31 ♖a4 ♞e2



32 ♖b3 ♞c3 33 ♖b4 ♖a7 34 ♖c4!+- ♞c2 35 ♖d3 ♞d2?

A mistake in a lost position; 35...♞a2 would have forced White to work a bit harder: 36 ♖d6! ♖b8 37 ♖b6 ♞c8 38 ♖b7 ♞f8 39 ♖b3! +- (Beliavsky). Now, an immediate loss of material is unavoidable.

36 ♖f4!

Black is losing one of his rooks, so he resigned.

1-0

36

Dolmatov – Skatchkov  
Russia 2000

1 e4 e5 2 ♞f3 ♞f6 3 ♞xe5 d6 4 ♞f3 ♞xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♖d3 ♖d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 c6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♞c3 ♞xc3 11 bxc3 ♖g4 12 ♞b1 ♞d7 13 h3 ♖h5 14 ♞b5 ♞b6 15 c4!? ♖xf3 16 ♖xf3 dxc4 17 ♖c2! ♖c7!?

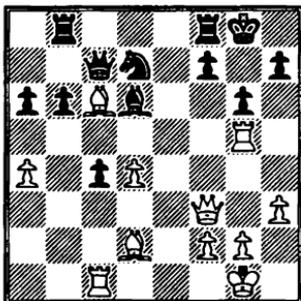


A critical position; the usual choice here has been 18...a6 but it seems to us that this move is weakening.

### 18...a6?!

Designed to force the rook make a decision whether to remain on the 5th rank or not, yet White seems to be better now as he has the possibility to cut off the c4 pawn from the rest of the Black army by a4-a5. The alternative 18...♞ab8!? is better, but even here White has his chances:

19 ♙d2! [19 ♞h5?! seems strong but Black survives after 19...g6! (19...h6 20 ♙xh6!) 20 ♙h6 ♞fe8! (20...f5 21 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 22 a5! ♚a8 23 ♞g5±) 21 ♞f6 ♙f8 22 ♙xf8 ♞xf8 23 ♞c5 ♞d7 24 a5 ♚d5±] 19...♚d7 (19...c3?! 20 ♙xc3 ♞bc8 does not succeed in view of 21 ♞c1! e.g. 21...♙h2+?! 22 ♚h1 ♞f4? 23 ♞d1! ♞xc3 24 ♙xh7+ ♚xh7 25 ♞xc3+-) 20 ♙e4! b6 21 ♞c1 a6 22 ♞g5! g6! (22...b5?? 23 ♞xg7+! ♚xg7 24 ♞g4+ ♚h8 25 ♞f5+-) 23 ♙c6! with a double-edged position.



The rook on g5 is misplaced for positional purposes, but it may

prove a valuable asset in the coming kingside attack. Let's take a closer look at what is going on:

A) 23...h6? is clearly bad as it creates a lot of weaknesses around the king; after 24 ♞g4 h5 25 ♞g5 ♚f6 26 ♞xf6! ♞xc6 27 ♞g3!! [27 ♙f4?! ♙xf4! (27...♞bd8? 28 ♙e5!+-) 28 ♞xc6 ♙xc1 29 ♞xg6+ fxg6 30 ♞xc4+ ♚g7 31 ♞c7+ ♚g8 32 ♞xc1± is not convincing] 27...♚h7 28 ♙f4! ♙xf4 (28...♞bd8 29 ♙e5! ♞g8 30 ♞xf7+ ♚h6 31 ♞xc4+-) 29 ♞xc6 ♙xc1 30 ♞c3+- White obviously has a winning position;

B) 23...f6!? is a better way of weakening Black's kingside; Still, 24 ♞g4! (24 ♞g3!? b5! 25 axb5 axb5 doesn't seem like working for White) 24...f5 25 ♞d5+! (White must take with the queen on c4 in order to pressurise the a6 pawn; 25 ♞h4?! ♚f6 26 ♞xc4 ♞e7!± leads to problems with the ♞h4, with White not having at least a pawn in return for its bad position; 25 ♞g5?! b5! 26 axb5 axb5 27 h4 ♚f6 28 h5 ♞b6 is also hardly inspiring) 25...♚h8 26 ♞h4 ♞bd8 [On 26...♚f6!? 27 ♞xc4 f4! (trying to trap the rook) there comes 28 ♞xa6! g5 29 ♞h6 ♞g7 30 ♞xf6 ♞xf6 31 ♙f3!+ (Δ ♞c1-c6) and White is at least slightly better thanks to his control of the light squares and c-file] 27 ♞xc4 ♚b8 28 ♙c3! leads to a position where Black must be very careful, for example 28...♚xc6?! 29 d5+ ♚e5 [29...♙e5 30 dxc6 ♞fe8 (30...♙xc3 31 ♞xc3+ ♞g7 32 ♞xg7+ ♚xg7 33 ♞b4±) 31 ♙xe5+ ♞xe5 32 ♞xa6±]

30 ♖xe5+ ♖xe5 31 ♜xc7 ♖xc7 32 ♜xc7 h5 33 ♜c6 ♜xd5 34 ♜xg6± and the rook on h4 suddenly comes to life!

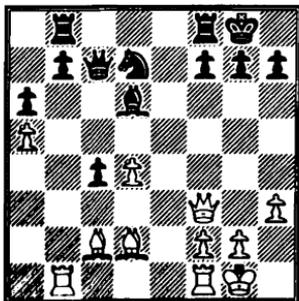
C) 23...♗e7! (Trying to irritate the rook before it's too late) 24 ♜xc4! (24 ♖f4 ♖d6 25 ♖xd6 ♜xd6 26 ♜d5 should lead to a draw) 24...♖xg5 25 ♖xg5± leads to a position where White has obvious compensation for the exchange and perhaps a bit more than that as his bishops are extremely active.

### 19 ♖b2

This artificial move does not look sufficient for an advantage; In fact there are unexplored paths that appear very promising for White.

19 ♖h5 g6 20 ♖h6 ♜fe8 21 ♜f6 ♖f8 22 ♖xf8 ♜xf8 23 ♜c5 ♜d8 24 ♜xd8 ♜axd8 25 ♖b1 (25 a5 ♖d5 26 ♜xc4 b5! 27 axb6 ♖xb6 28 ♜c6 ♖d5=) 25...♜d6 (25...♖xa4! 26 ♖xa4 b5) 26 a5 ♖d7 27 ♜xc4 b5 28 axb6 ♖xb6= led to dull equality in Rebel Tiger 12-Century, Computer Chess Match Tournament 2000;

However, the authors' suggestion of 19 ♖b1! ♖ab8 20 ♖d2! (20 ♖h6!?) 20...♖d7 21 a5±



...leads to excellent compensation for the material as the c-pawn is vulnerable and can be attacked by ♜f1-c1, ♖c2-d3. If Black gets impatient and bursts forth by 21...b5?! then 22 axb6 ♖xb6 23 ♖a5± creates a very awkward pin on the ♖b6.

Finally, another idea is 19 ♜g5! ♖g6 20 a5 ♖d7 21 ♖d2 with play similar to the one we have witnessed under 18...♖ab8!?

### 19...♖ab8 20 ♖h6!?

A shocking idea from Dolmatov that put the whole variation with 17...♜c7 under a cloud for a while, but after some recent improvements by Skatchkov Black seems able to hold the draw.

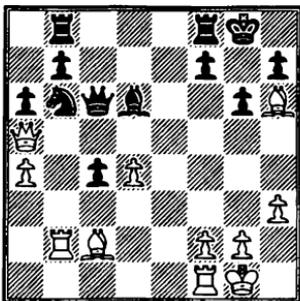
### 20...♜c6!

20...gxf6? is simply bad: 21 ♜f5 ♖g7 (21...f6 22 ♜xb6±) 22 ♜xh7+ ♖f6 23 ♜xh6+ (23 ♜e1? ♜h8) 23...♖e7 24 ♜e1+ ♖d7 (24...♖d8 25 ♜f6+ ♖c8 26 ♜xb6±) 25 ♖f5+ ♖c6 (25...♖d8 26 ♜xb6 ♜xb6 27 ♜f6+ ♖c7 28 ♜e7+ ♖xe7 29 ♜xe7+ ♖c6 30 ♖e4#) 26 ♖e4+ ♖d7 27 ♖eb1± and the attack is irresistible;

20...f5?! 21 ♖fb1 gxf6 22 ♜xb6 ♜f7 23 ♖xf5 ♖h8 24 a5!± leads to a great positional advantage for White.

### 21 ♜f5 g6 22 ♜a5

White now wins the exchange, but as will see this is not so important as Black's mobile queenside pawns offer him counter-play.



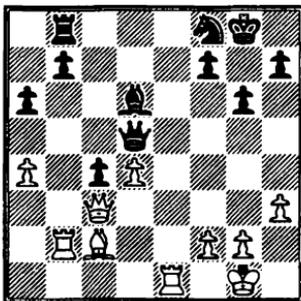
22...d7!

Black should refrain from placing his knight on d5 as that would result in an awkward pin: 22...d5? 23  $\text{xf8}$  (23  $\text{e4!?$  b5 24  $\text{xf8}$   $\text{xf8}$  25  $\text{fb1}\pm$ ) 23... $\text{xf8}$  (23...b6 24  $\text{xd6!}$  bxa5 25  $\text{xb8+}$   $\text{g7}$  26  $\text{f8+}$   $\text{f6}$  27  $\text{d8+-}$ ) 24  $\text{e4}$  b5 25 axb5 (25  $\text{fb1}\pm$ ) 25...axb5 26  $\text{fb1}\pm$  and White wins the important b-pawn.

23  $\text{c3!?$

The only move to keep the game going on; 23  $\text{xf8}$   $\text{xf8}$  24  $\text{fb1}$   $\text{a3}$  25  $\text{a2}$   $\text{d6}$  26  $\text{ab2}$   $\text{a3}$  as in Sunjaikin-Skatchkov, Samara 2002, should lead to a draw by repetition.

23... $\text{d5}$  24  $\text{xf8}$   $\text{xf8}$  25  $\text{e1}$



25...e6?!

Probably too impressed by his illustrious opponent's original idea Black makes a natural move and ...loses! In a subsequent game, however, he managed to improve his play and reach the safe haven of a draw.

25... $\text{c7!}$  (25...b5!? is not as good due to 26  $\text{e4}$   $\text{g5}$  27 axb5 axb5 28  $\text{c6}$   $\text{e6}$  29 g3!±) 26  $\text{e4}$   $\text{a5}$  is best, harassing the White pieces and gaining enough time for counter-play: 27  $\text{f3!?$  (27  $\text{c2}$   $\text{d7}$   $\Delta$  ...b7-b5, ...c4-c3, ... $\text{f8-e6}$  ±) 27... $\text{xd4}$  28  $\text{d5}$  [28  $\text{eb1}$   $\text{e6}$  29  $\text{xb7}$   $\text{xb7}$  30  $\text{xb7}$  (30  $\text{xb7??}$   $\text{d5}$  31  $\text{f4}$   $\text{xe4}$  32  $\text{xg5}$   $\text{xb7}$  33  $\text{xa5}$   $\text{c6+}$ ) 30...c3 is unclear] 28... $\text{e6}$  29  $\text{xe6}$  fxe6 (29... $\text{xb2}$  30  $\text{e7}\rightarrow$ ) 30  $\text{xe6+}$   $\text{g7}$  31  $\text{xb7+}$   $\text{xb7}$  32  $\text{xb7+}$   $\text{h6}$  33  $\text{g8}$  (33  $\text{xa6?}$   $\text{b6+}$ ) 33... $\text{a1+}$  34  $\text{h2}$   $\text{g7}$  35  $\text{xg7+}$   $\text{xg7}$  36  $\text{xc4}$   $\text{c7+}$  and a draw was agreed in Yandarbiev-Skatchkov, Saint Petersburg 2001 as White's extra pawn is meaningless.

However, all this looks pretty unimportant as the improvement mentioned under the note to White's 19th seems to offer White excellent play without any risk.

26  $\text{e4!}$

Now White wins the all-important b7 pawn after which his chances increase considerably.

26... $\text{xd4}$  27  $\text{xd4}$   $\text{xd4}$  28  $\text{xb7}$  c3?

Dolmatov fails to comment on this; 28... $\text{xb7?}$  29  $\text{xb7}$  c3 would have all the same lost to 30  $\text{xa6}$

♙f4 31 ♖d3 c2 32 ♙xc2 ♜xc2 33 ♜b1!+- as the march of the a-pawn will cost Black a piece; however 28...♞e8!?± would have confused the situation a bit, although White should basically win by employing the same strategy, namely trying to secure a passed a-pawn even at the cost of his bishop.

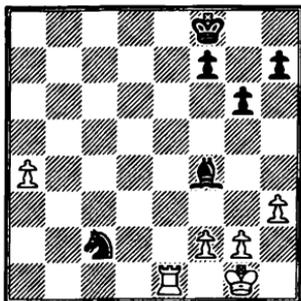
29 ♜xb8+ ♙xb8 30 ♙d3+-

Now everything is clear; the a-pawn goes and with it Black's chances of saving the game.

30...♜f8 31 ♙xa6 c2 32 ♙d3 ♙f4

32...♜e2+ 33 ♙xe2 ♙f4 34 a5 c1=♞ 35 ♜xc1 ♙xc1 36 a6+- is an interesting line given by Dolmatov in *Informator*.

33 ♙xc2 ♜xc2



34 ♜b1!

Making sure that Black will lose one of his pieces for the a-pawn; the game has been practically decided as there are too many pawns on the kingside for Black to have any chances of drawing.

34...♜d4 35 a5 ♜c6 36 a6 ♙e5 37 ♜b7 ♙d4 38 ♜d7 ♙e5 39 a7 ♜xa7 40 ♜xa7 ♜g7 41 g3 h5 42

♜g2 ♙c3 43 ♜f3 ♙b2 44 ♜e4 ♙c3 45 ♜d5 g5?

Accelerating his defeat, but White would have also won after 45...♜g8 46 f4; for example: 46...♜g7 47 ♜b7 and White will win easily by penetrating with his king to e8) 47 ♜e6 ♙d4 48 ♜d7 ♙c3 49 ♜d3 ♙b2 50 g4! fxg4 51 hxg4 hxg4 52 ♜g3+-.

46 ♜a6 f6 47 ♜e6

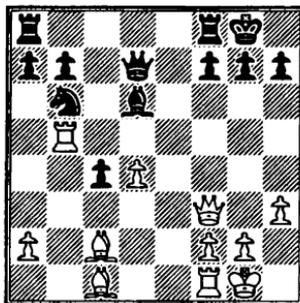
Now it's rather elementary as White can get with his king to f5.

47...♜g6 48 g4 hxg4 49 hxg4 ♙d4 50 f3 ♙c3 51 ♜a8 1-0

37

M.Pavlovic – Raetsky  
Biel 1999

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜xe5 d6 4 ♜f3 ♜xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♙d3 ♙d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 c6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♜c3 ♜xc3 11 bxc3 ♙g4 12 ♜b1 ♜d7 13 h3 ♙h5 14 ♜b5 ♜b6 15 c4!? ♙xf3 16 ♞xf3 dxc4 17 ♙c2! ♞d7



Considered to be best by the majority of the world's top players. Black defends his b-pawn, attacks

the White rook and prepares to support his passed pawn with a rook, if necessary.

### 18 a4 ♖ab8

A rather suspect line, as the game continuation indicates; better are 18...g6 or 18...♖fe8!?, examined under the next Illustrative Game.

Weaker on the other hand is 18...♙c7?!, a move protecting the ♖b6 in preparation of ...a7-a6; after 19 ♙c5! ♙d6 20 a5! ♖c8 (20...♙xc5 21 dxc5 ♖c8 22 a6± was clearly better for White in Zaw - Moun Moun Latt, Yangon 1999) 21 ♙f5 (21 ♙xc4!± is a simple and strong novelty that was employed in Karasek-Kopnický, e-mail 2001. After 21...♖e7 White should have preferred 22 ♙a4! ♖e6 23 d5!↑ as 23...♖xd5? allows 24 ♙b2 ♖f6□ 25 ♙b3 ♖e7 26 ♙g4!! with a massacre on the diagonals) 21...♖d8 [Better is 21...♖a4! 22 ♙d5! (22 ♙xc8 ♙axc8 23 ♙xc8 ♙xc8 24 ♖xb7 ♖c6=) 22...♖b4□ 23 ♙e4 (23 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 (23...♖xd6 24 ♙a3 ♖xa5 25 ♙xd6±) 24 ♙a3 ♖d8 25 ♙xf8 ♖xf8 26 a6 ♖d6 27 axb7 ♙b8 is close to equality) 23...♖e7 24 ♙h5 f5 (24...g6 25 ♖f6!±) 25 ♙xb7 ♙ad8 26 ♙g5 g6 27 ♙h4↑ with some initiative for White, but in a very complicated position] 22 a6 ♖e7 23 axb7 ♙b8 24 ♙g5! f6 25 ♙e6+ ♖h8 26 ♙f4 ♙xf4 27 ♖xf4 ♙xb7 28 d5 ♖g6 29 ♖xc4 ♖b8 30 ♙c1± White's advantage was more than apparent in Timman-Anand, Tilburg 1991.

### 19 ♙e3!?

This move, keeping the fifth horizontal open for the White rook appears best.

19 ♙g5?! is linked with the sacrificial possibility ♙g5-f6 at some point. Black has the following possibilities:

A) 19...♖c8?! 20 ♖fb1! b6 21 ♖h5 f5 (21...g6? 22 ♙f6!+) 22 ♖e2 ♖e7 23 ♖xc4+ ♖h8 24 ♖d3 g6 25 ♖c3 ♙bc8 26 ♖b2± is better for White according to Gavriloŷ;

B) 19...f6?! 20 ♙e3 ♙c7 21 ♖fb1 ♙f7 22 g3 (22 a5!?) 22...♙d6 23 a5 ♖c8 24 ♙e4 (24 ♙f5!?) 24...♙e7 25 ♙xb7± was also clearly better for White in Milu-Stojkovic, Backa open, Palanka 2001;

C) 19...♙c7?! (This one allows White's main idea to come to the fore) 20 ♙f6! ♖d6 21 ♙e5 ♖e7 22 a5 ♖a8 23 ♙xh7+! ♖xh7 24 ♖h5+ ♖g8 25 ♙xg7! f6! 26 ♖h8+ ♖f7 27 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 28 ♖h5+ ♖g8 29 ♖d5+± and White had a clear plus in Gavriloŷ-Frog, corr. 1989/90;

D) 19...♖fe8! (The best move, casting a doubt on 19 ♙g5) 20 ♖fb1 ♖c6! (20...g6 21 ♙e3 ♖c6 22 a5 ♖xf3 23 gxf3 ♖c8 24 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 25 ♙xb7± De Firmian-Kosebay, Copenhagen 1996) 21 ♖g4 (Kopylov-Morozov, Lascurain mem. corr. 1994) 21...a6!? 22 ♙xh7+ ♖xh7 23 ♙f6 ♙h2+ 24 ♖xh2 ♖xf6 25 ♙xb6 ♖xf2̄

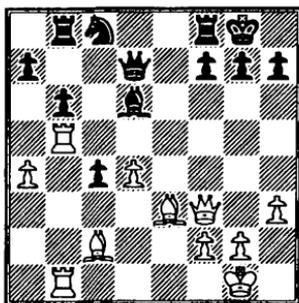
### 19...♖c8

This try at untangling looks natural, in view of the threatened ♙f1-b1, a4-a5→

19...♞c6 is an effort to irritate White by trying to distort his ideal attacking set-up but it appears rather inadequate; After 20 ♖e4 ♞c7 21 a5 ♘a4 22 ♜c1 a6 (Newton-Mascioni, e-mail 1997) 23 ♖h6!? the attack seems strong, e.g. 23...axb5 [23...gxf6? 24 ♞f5 ♘g7□ (24...f6 25 ♜xc4!±) 25 ♞xh7+ ♘f6 26 ♞xh6+ ♘e7 27 ♜d5 ♜bd8 28 ♖f3!±] 24 ♞f5 f6 25 ♞xh7+ ♘f7 26 ♜e1 ♘e8 27 ♖f5+ ♘d8 28 ♖xg7↑;

19...♖c7 is a typical retreat in this structure, but, as usual, it has the disadvantage of removing the bishop from the defence of the kingside; after 20 ♜fb1 ♜fd8 21 a5 (21 g3!±) 21...♘d5 22 ♖g5 f6 (Absolon-Hnilicka, Czech tch corr. 1999) White has the simple 23 ♖d2 ♞d6 24 g3± maintaining dangerous attacking chances because of the weakening of the light squares in front of the Black king.

20 ♜fb1 b6



21 ♜h5!

With this fine move White launches a dangerous onslaught.

21...g6 22 ♖h6! ♜d8

22...f5? is refuted by 23 ♖xf8 ♘xf8 24 ♖xf5± or 24 ♜h4!±.

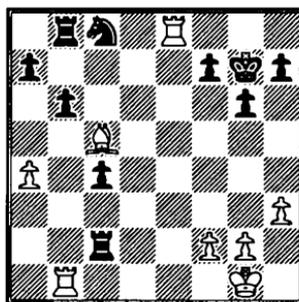
23 ♞f6 ♖f8 24 ♖xf8 ♞xd4!

White has played in great style, leaving his opponent so far with almost no freedom of choice; the text is an excellent attempt to muddy the waters as 24...♜xf8? is met with the brilliant 25 ♜xh7!! ♘xh7 26 ♜b5! when Black can resign; in this particular variation the infiltration of both White rooks via b5 creates a great aesthetic impression.

25 ♞xd4! ♜xd4 26 ♖c5! ♜d2

Thus Black recovers his piece, but White's initiative has lost nothing of its virulence as we shall see.

27 ♜e5 ♜xc2 28 ♜e8+ ♘g7



A critical moment; Black is two pawns up in an endgame, but taking into consideration the pin on the 8th rank and the power of the White bishop we would rather detest the idea of taking up the Black side here.

29 ♖d4+??

A tragedy after White's phenomenal play; by playing 29 ♖f8+! ♘f6 30 ♜d1! he would have

placed his opponent in a very difficult situation, e.g. 30...c3 (On 30...♖a2 the reply 31 ♔d6!!± intending ♔d6-e5+ gives White a strong attack) 31 ♖d3!?

and the Black king is in tremendous danger. Now, however, Black manages to repel the attack and even win the game by exploiting his material advantage.

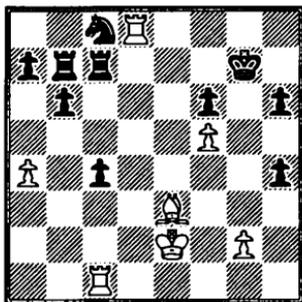
29...f6 30 ♔e3 ♖c3 31 ♖d1 ♖d3  
32 ♖c1 ♖d7 33 ♕f1?

Probably a time pressure blunder; after 33 ♔f4! ♖a8 34 ♖xc4 ♔d6 35 ♖c7!!= White could still have drawn this game.

33...g5!± 34 ♕e2 ♕f7 35 ♖h8  
♕g7 36 ♖e8 ♖e7 37 ♖d8 ♖c7 38 h4  
h6 39 f4?

39 hxg5! hxg5 40 f4.

39...gxh4 40 f5 ♖bb7+—



Now everything is clear; Black is three pawns to the good and having just got rid of the pin can look forward to an easy win. In the remainder of the game White makes a last desperate effort to attack but his opponent parries it in a calm and composed manner.

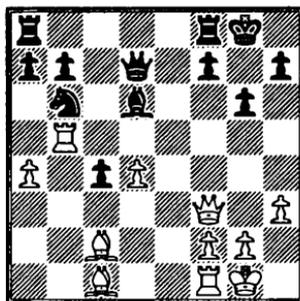
41 ♔f4 ♖c6 42 ♖cd1 a6 43 ♖1d4  
h5!? 44 ♔c1 ♔e7 45 ♖8d7 ♖cc7!  
46 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 47 ♔f4 ♔xf5 48  
♔xc7 ♔xd4+ 49 ♕e3 ♔f5+ 50 ♕f4  
♔e7 51 ♕e4 b5 52 a5 b4 53 ♕d4  
b3 0-1

38

Topalov – Shirov

Amber blindfold, Monaco 2000

1 e4 e5 2 ♔f3 ♔f6 3 ♔xe5 d6 4  
♔f3 ♔xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♔d3 ♔d6 7  
0-0 0-0 8 c4 c6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♔c3  
♔xc3 11 bxc3 ♔g4 12 ♖b1 ♔d7 13  
h3 ♔h5 14 ♖b5 ♔b6 15 c4!? ♔xf3  
16 ♖xf3 dxc4 17 ♔c2! ♖d7 18 a4  
g6



The main line in the *ECO* monograph, written by Yusupov; it is important to take control of f5 away from White and avert sacrificial possibilities on h7.

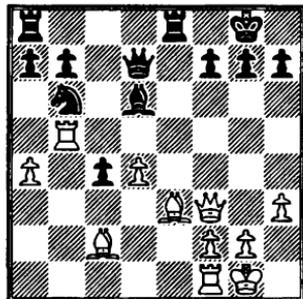
On 18...♖fe8!? White disposes of three interesting possibilities:

A) 19 ♔f5 was the original attempt in this position, trying to exploit the omission of ...g7-g6; it now appears incapable of securing a plus, but Black has to overcome

several pitfalls: 19...♖c7! (19...♖c6?? is one of them: After 20 ♗xh7+! ♗xh7 21 ♖xf7 ♗e5 22 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 23 dxe5+- Black was dead lost in Howell-Barua, British ch 1991; 19...♗e7?! is simply bad, because after 20 a5 the Black knight cannot retreat to d7; after 20...♗c8 21 ♗xb7± White had an obvious advantage in S.Hansen-Gunnarsson, Reykjavik 2000) 20 ♗e4! (Threatening a4-a5; 20 a5 ♖c6!= is OK for Black; the game Nataf-Schandorff, Esbjerg 2001 continued 21 ♖xc6 bxc6 22 ♗b2! c3! 23 ♗c2 ♗d5 24 ♗d7 ♗ed8 25 ♗xc6 ♗b4 26 ♗xc3 ♗ac8 27 d5 ♗xd5 28 ♗c4 ♗b4 and here a draw was agreed) 20...a6 21 ♗b1! (21 ♗g5?! as in Ponomariov-Safin, Yerevan 2001, is dubious in view of 21...♗xe4! 22 ♖xe4 ♗xa4 23 ♗e1 g6 24 h4 ♗c3 25 ♖f3 ♗a2! 26 ♗a3 ♗b4 27 h5 ♗d3↑ and Black is probably better) 21...♗ab8 22 a5 ♗d7! [Time consuming is 22...♗c8?! 23 ♗d2 ♗a7 24 ♗xb7 ♗b5 25 ♗xa6 ♗xd4 26 ♖d5! when White is better: 26...♗e2+ (26...♗b3 is hardly better, e.g. 27 ♗xc4 ♗xd2 28 ♖xd2 ♗a8 29 ♗d5 ♗xa5 30 ♗b7 ♖d8 31 ♗xf7+ ♗f8 32 ♗d1±) 27 ♗h1 ♗xb1 28 ♗xb1 c3 29 ♗xe2 cxd2 30 ♖xd2 ♗f4 31 ♖a2±] 23 ♗d2 [23 ♗xb7!?! is interesting, yet after 23...♗xb7 24 ♗xb7 c3! (24...♖xa5 25 ♗d5 ♗f6 26 ♗xc4±) it is hard to believe that White can get something substantial out of the position: 25 ♗xa6 (Bad is 25 ♗d5? ♗f6 26 ♗c6 ♗b8 27 d5 ♖xa5±, while both 25 ♖c6 ♖xc6 26 ♗xc6 ♗e7 27 ♗e3 ♗b8! 28 ♗d5 ♗c7 29 ♗c1 ♗d7 30 ♗f1 ♗b4 31

♗f4 ♗c8 32 ♗b7 ♗c4 33 ♗xa6 ♗xd4 34 ♗c7 ♗c5± and 25 ♗c6 ♗c8!± seem to offer Black sufficient counter-play) 25...♖xa5 26 ♖c6 and White has nothing due to 26...♗e6!=; instead, 26...♖c7 27 ♗b5 ♖xc6 28 ♗xc6 ♗e7 29 ♗e3 ♗a3 30 ♗a1 ♗b2 31 ♗a8+ ♗f8 32 ♗a4 ♗c1! 33 ♗xc1 ♗e1+ 34 ♗h2 ♗xc1 35 d5 c2 36 ♗c8 ♗d1 37 ♗xc2 ♗xd5 38 ♗xh7+ ♗xh7 39 ♗xf8± leads to an infinitesimal White plus] 23...c3! (Ideas based on ...b7-b5 are obviously inferior) 24 ♗xc3! [24 ♗bc1? cxd2! 25 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 26 ♗c2 (26 ♗d1? ♗f6) 26...♗f6 (26...♗xa5 27 ♖f5) 27 ♖c3 ♗f4 28 g3 ♗bc8 29 ♖b2 ♗h6 30 ♗d1 ♗e1+→ leads to the creation of a monstrous passed pawn that White can hardly get rid of] 24...♗xe4 25 ♖xe4 ♖xc3 26 ♗xb7 [26 ♖d5!?! ♖c6 (26...♖c7 27 ♗fc1 ♗h2+ 28 ♗f1 ♖d6 29 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 30 ♗c2) 27 ♖xc6 bxc6 28 ♗xb8+ ♗xb8 29 ♗b1 h5!=] 26...♗xb7 27 ♖xb7 ♗b8! (27...♖xd4 28 ♖xa6±) 28 ♗b1 g6 29 ♖d5 ♗c7 30 ♗xb8+ ♗xb8 31 ♖d8+ ♗g7 32 ♖xb8 ♖xa5= and the complications have petered out to a draw;

**B) 19 ♗e3!?**



...is another tricky move, but in some lines the bishop is vulnerable on e3, allowing Black to equalise:

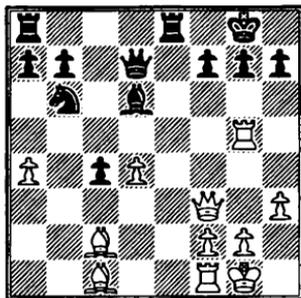
**B1)** 19...♠e7?! 20 ♠fb1 ♠b8 21 a5 ♘c8 22 ♠f5! ♚c7 23 ♠g5! f6 24 ♠d2 a6 25 ♠5b2 ♘a7 26 ♠b6 ♘c6 27 ♚d5+ ♘h8 28 ♚xc4 g6 29 ♠g4! ♠e4 30 ♠c3± was clearly better for White in Kotronias-Arduman, Leon 2001;

**B2)** 19...♠c7?! 20 ♠g5 g6 (Zaw-Handoko, Wisnilak Surabaya 2002) 21 a5! ♘a4 (21...♚d6 22 g3 ♘d7 23 ♠a4!±; 21...♘c8 22 a6 ♚d6 23 ♠e5 ♠xe5 24 axb7±) 22 h4 ♘c3 23 h5 ♚d6 24 g3 b5 25 ♘g2 b4 26 ♠h1+-;

**B3)** 19...♠ad8! 20 ♠fb1 ♠c7 21 ♠e4! (Preventing Black from placing his knight on d5; 21 a5? ♘d5 22 ♠xb7 ♚d6!± is at least slightly better for Black) 21...♘xa4 [21...c3 22 ♠c5! ♠e7? (22...♘xa4! 23 ♠d5 ♚e7 24 ♠xb7 ♠xd5 25 ♠xd5 ♠b8 26 ♠xb8+ ♠xb8 27 ♠b3±) 23 a5 ♘a4 24 ♠d5 ♚e8 (Khilchenko-Borisov, Ljubomirov mem. corr.1993) 25 ♠xd8 ♚xd8 26 ♠xb7± ♠xa5? 27 ♠xe7 ♚xe7 28 ♠c2 ♘b6 29 ♚f5+-] 22 ♠d5 ♚e7! [22...♠d6? 23 ♠h5! g6 24 ♠xb7 ♠c7 25 ♠d5! ♚c8 26 ♠xd8 ♠xd8 27 ♠d5 ♠d7 28 ♚f6 ♚f8 (28...♚d8? (Khalifman-Leko, New Delhi 2000) 29 ♚xd8+ ♠xd8 30 ♠c6+-) 29 ♚c6 ♚e7 30 ♠xc4 ♘b6 31 ♠xa7 ♘xc4 32 ♠a8+ ♘g7 33 ♚xc4±] 23 ♠xb7 ♘c3 24 ♠xd8! (24 ♠e5? ♚d6! fails for White, e.g. 25 ♠xh7+ ♘xh7 26 ♚xf7 ♠xe5 27 ♠xc7 ♘e2+ 28 ♘f1 ♘g3+!! 29 ♘g1 ♚g6!+) 24...♠xd8! [24...

♚xd8 25 ♠c6 ♠e7 26 g3!± e.g. 26...♠b6 (26...♠d6?! 27 ♠g5 f6 28 ♠xf6±) 27 ♠g5 f6 28 ♠xe7 ♚xe7 29 ♚xc3 fxg5 30 ♚xc4+] 25 ♠c6 (25 ♠f4 ♚xe4 26 ♚xe4 ♘xe4±) 25...♠b8! and Black is at least equal as the exchange of rooks is unavoidable;

**C)** 19 ♠g5! (A dynamic idea from the authors that has not been tried yet). Now Black has the following choice:



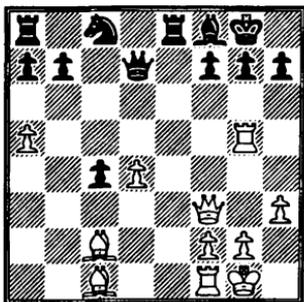
**C1)** 19...♘xa4?? is a blunder on account of 20 ♠xh7+! ♘xh7 21 ♚h5+ ♘g8 22 ♠xg7+! ♘g7 23 ♠h6++;

**C2)** The same can be said of 19...♠e7?? 20 ♠xg7+! ♘g7 21 ♚h5 ♠h8 22 ♠h6+ ♘g8 23 ♚e5 f6 24 ♚g3+ ♘f7 25 ♚g7+ ♘e6 26 ♠f5+!+-;

**C3)** 19...g6!? is interesting; still, after 20 a5 ♘c8 21 ♠e4! (21 a6 ♠b8 22 ♠e4 ♠xe4! 23 ♚xe4 f5! 24 ♚f3 b5 is unclear) 21...♠b8 (21...♘e7 22 a6±; 21...♠xe4!? requires analysis) 22 ♠d5!+ White should be able to apply some pressure. For example, 22...♘g7 (22...♚c7?? 23 ♚f6!+-) 23 ♠xc4 f5?! (23...b5!?) 24 ♠d3! ♘e7 25

♙b2 h6 26 d5+ ♚h7 27 ♖g4!± and the rook is freed from its entanglement, after which White's attack can continue unhindered;

C4) 19...♙f8! (The best try) 20 a5 ♖c8



...and we have arrived at a critical crossroads where White needs to display great accuracy to maintain chances of an advantage:

C4a) 21 ♖d5?! ♖d6 22 ♙f4 ♖ad8± is, if anything, slightly better for Black as White cannot augment the pressure on the pinned knight;

C4b) 21 ♙f4!? ♖d6 22 ♙e5 is interesting, yet after 22...g6!! 23 ♗f6 (23 ♗g3? b5 24 f4 f5!±) 23...♖xe5 24 ♗xe5 b5 Black has tremendous compensation for the exchange. It is best for White to acquiesce to a draw by 25 ♗d5 ♖d8 26 ♙xg6! hxg6 27 ♖xg6+ ♙g7 28 ♖xg7+ ♙xg7 29 ♗g5+ ♚h7 30 ♗h5+=;

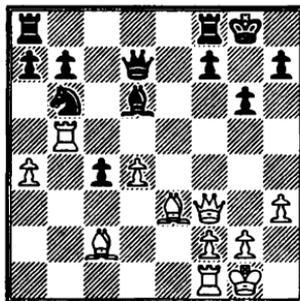
C4c) 21 ♙b2! (Only in this way White can stir up some trouble, but still not too much if Black responds with promptitude) 21...g6! [the right choice, preventing pressure on the long diagonal; 21...♖e7??? 22 ♙xh7+ ♚xh7 23 ♗xf7+-; 21...♖d6

22 d5 ♖ec8 (22...♖ac8?? 23 ♙xg7+-; 22...f5?! 23 ♖xf5! ♖xf5 24 ♙xf5 ♗c7 25 ♗h5 g6 26 ♙xg6±) 23 ♖e1→ leads to a powerful White attack] 22 ♖a1!! [A refinement; 22 ♗c3 ♙g7! (22...♖d6? 23 ♙a4!! ♗xa4 24 d5 f6 25 ♗xf6→; 22...b5? 23 d5 f6 24 ♙xg6! hxg6 25 ♗xf6 ♙g7 26 ♖xg6 ♖e7 27 ♗g5±) 23 ♗xc4 ♖d6 24 ♗b4 b5! 25 axb6 axb6 26 ♖d5 ♙f8 27 ♙d3= is just equal] 22...♖d6 23 ♙a4 ♗d8 24 ♖e5!↑ and White has an initiative the potential of which cannot, however, be easily measured.

19 ♙d2

A modest move, not devoid of venom; of principal importance, however, is the alternative 19 ♙e3.

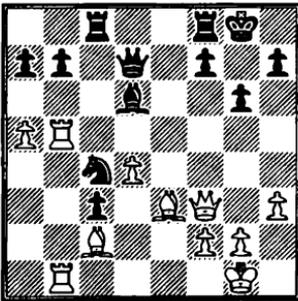
With 19 ♙e3!?



...White opens the way for his f-rook to come to b1 whilst protecting the d-pawn and keeping the e-file shut; this method is nowadays considered the strongest, but it is not entirely clear to us why.

After 19...♖ac8 [19...♖fd8? is pointless; The simple sequel 20 ♖fb1 ♙e7 (20...♙c7 21 a5! wd5 22 ♙g5! is awkward for Black) 21

♖e4! (guarding d5) 21...♞ab8 22  
 ♖f4 ♖d6 23 a5 ♖xf4 24 ♜xf4 ♠a4  
 25 ♞xb7 ♞xb7 26 ♞xb7+- was  
 winning for White, Voickehovski-  
 Kochiev, Chigorin Memorial 1999;  
 19...♞ab8?! does not help Black  
 create counter-play with his knight  
 quickly and White can take  
 advantage of it by 20 ♞fb1 ♜c7  
 (Sharikov-Lacunza, IECG e-mail  
 1998) 21 h4!? (Primitive but  
 effective as it exploits Black's delay  
 in redeploying the knight) 21...c3 22  
 h5→ obtaining a strong attack;  
 19...♞ad8?! has more point, still  
 after 20 ♞fb1 ♖c7 21 a5 ♠d5 22  
 ♖g5 f6 23 ♖h6 ♞fe8 24 ♞xb7 ♜e6  
 25 g3 a6 (Nataf-Solozhenkin tt  
 Montpellier 2001) 26 ♞a7! ♞e7 27  
 ♞bb7 ♜xh3 (27...♞xa5 28 ♜xd5!!  
 ♞xd5 29 ♞xe7+-) 28 ♖e4!± White  
 has a clear advantage according to  
 Nataf's notes in *Informant*] 20 ♞fb1  
 c3 [20...♞c7 21 a5 ♠c8 22 ♞xb7  
 ♞e8 23 ♖e4 ♠e7 24 a6 (Van den  
 Dikkenberg - Van den Bersselaar,  
 Dieren 2000) 24...c3±] 21 a5 ♠c4



White seems to be fighting for very little:

A) The direct 22 ♞xb7 leads to positions where Black should be

more or less able to maintain the equilibrium by tactical means; However, even here, accuracy is required:

A1) 22...♞c7?! 23 ♖h6! ♞e8 is a  
 position that arose in Motylev-  
 Ristic, Novi Sad 2000; by playing  
 24 ♞b8!± White could have  
 obtained a big advantage, for  
 example 24...♞cc8 (24...♠d2 25  
 ♜f6 ♖f8 26 ♖xf8+-) 25 ♜f6 ♖f8  
 26 ♞b7! ♜e6 (26...♞e1+ 27 ♠h2  
 ♜d6+ 28 f4! ♜xf6 29 ♞xc8+;  
 26...♜d5 27 ♖xf8 ♞xf8 28 ♞xc8  
 ♞xc8 29 ♞xa7± ♠xa5? 30 ♜a6!+-)  
 27 ♜xe6 fxe6 28 ♞xc8 ♞xc8 29  
 ♖xf8 ♞xf8 30 ♞xa7! and this  
 endgame is untenable for Black as  
 the following variations show:

A1a) 30...♞c8 fails to 31 a6! [31  
 ♖b3!? ♞b8! 32 ♞c7! (32 ♖xc4?! c2  
 33 ♖xe6+ ♠h8 34 ♞c7 ♞b1+ 35  
 ♠h2 c1=♜ 36 ♞xc1 ♞xc1 37 d5  
 ♞a1 38 d6 ♞xa5 39 d7 ♞a8±)  
 32...♞xb3 33 ♞xc4 ♞a3 34 ♠f1  
 ♞xa5 35 ♞xc3 ♞a4± is less good]  
 31...♠d6 (31...♠a3 32 ♞b7!+-) 32  
 ♞d7 ♠b5 (32...♠c4 33 a7 ♠b6 34  
 ♞b7 ♠a8 35 ♞b8 ♞f8 36 ♠f1+-) 33  
 ♞b7 ♠d6 (33...♠xd4 34 a7 ♠c6 35  
 ♞c7 ♠xa7 36 ♞xa7+-) 34 ♞b6 ♠c4  
 35 ♞b3!+-;

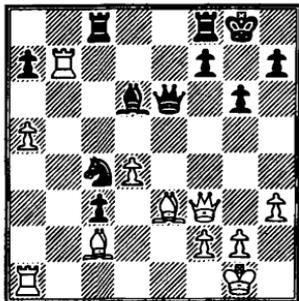
A1b) 30...♠a3 31 ♖b3 c2 32 ♞c7  
 ♠b5 33 ♞c5 ♠xd4 34 ♖xc2 ♠xc2  
 35 ♞xc2+- is also clearly winning  
 for White;

A1c) 30...♞b8 allows a clear cut  
 win by 31 a6! (31 ♞c7 ♠xa5 32  
 ♞xc3 ♞b4 33 ♞c5!±) 31...♞b2 32  
 ♞b7! (32 ♞a8+ ♠g7 33 a7 ♠b6 34  
 ♞b8 ♞xc2 35 ♞xb6 ♞a2 36 ♞b7+  
 ♠h6 37 ♞c7 c2 38 ♞xc2 ♞xa7±)

32...♙xc2 33 a7 ♖a2 34 ♜b8+ ♔g7  
 35 a8=♚ ♜xa8 36 ♜xa8 c2 37 ♖a1  
 ♔d2 38 ♜c1 ♔b3 39 ♜xc2 ♔xd4  
 40 ♜c7++;

A2) 22...♚d8!/? requires analysis;

A3) 22...♚e6! (The best move) 23 ♖a1! [23 ♔b3, as in Grischuk-Shirov, New Delhi 2000, is met with the surprising 23...♚f5!! and Black equalises (Instead, 23...♔b8? (Nijboer-Piket, Holland 2000) could have been met with the brutal 24 ♔xc4! ♚xc4 25 ♔h6! since 25...c2 (the only move making sense) is convincingly answered with 26 ♜c1 ♚xd4 27 g4!! and Black not only loses an exchange, but also both queenside pawns after 27...♔d6 28 ♔xf8 ♜xf8 29 ♜xc2 ♚a1+ 30 ♔g2 ♚xa5 31 ♜c6! ♔e5 32 ♜c8! ♚a2 33 ♜xf8+ ♔xf8 34 ♚e4!±); the point is that after 24 ♚xf5 gxf5 White has to play 25 ♖a1! (25 ♜xa7 ♔d2! 26 ♔xd2 cxd2 27 ♜d1 ♜c1 looks dangerous) when 25...f4 26 ♔c1 ♔d2! (Shirov didn't play this) 27 ♔d5 ♜ce8 28 ♔xd2 cxd2 29 ♔f1 ♔a3!! 30 ♜d1 ♜d8! 31 ♔f3 ♜xd4 32 ♜xa7= forces a dead drawn position] and now Black should be able to equalise:

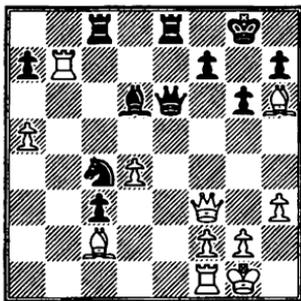


A3a) 23...♔b8?! (23...♜fe8?? is certainly out of the question in view of the simple 24 d5+-) should be met with 24 ♔b3! ♚d6 25 g3 ♔xe3 [25...c2 26 ♔h6 ♚xd4 27 ♜c1 ♔d2 (27...♔xa5 28 ♜xf7) 28 ♔xf7+ ♔h8 29 ♔xd2+-] 26 ♔xf7+ ♔h8 27 ♚xe3 ♚f6 28 ♔e6 ♜ce8 29 d5 ♔e5! as in Anand-Shirov, Linares 2000. Now 30 ♖a1! would have ensured a clear White advantage, for example 30...c2 31 ♜c4 ♔d4 32 ♚f4!± ♚xf4 33 gxf4 ♜xf4 34 ♜xc2 ♜ef8 35 ♜cc7+-

A3b) 23...♔xe3! 24 fxe3 looks like a slight plus for White as the c-pawn is well blockaded and he has pressure on a7, f7, but if Black is accurate the game will nevertheless be drawn. For example 24...♜c7 [24...♔b8 (Nguyen Thai Binh-Tong Thai Hung, Vung Tau 2000) 25 e4! ♚d6 26 ♜d1 f6 27 g3±] 25 a6 ♔g7! 26 e4 f6 27 ♚xc3 ♜ff7 28 ♚b3 (½-½), Topalov-Shirov Wiik aan Zee 2004) 28...♚xb3 29 ♔xb3 ♜xb7 30 axb7 ♜xb7 31 ♔d5 ♜b4! 32 ♜xa7+ ♔h6 and the d-pawn will fall. Let's now return to 22 ♔h6!?:

B) 22 ♔h6!/? ♜fe8! (22...♜fd8 23 ♚f6 ♔f8 24 ♜xb7 ♜c7 25 ♜b8! ♜cc8 26 ♜1b7 ♚e8 27 ♔xf8 ♚xf8 28 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 29 ♜xa7±...29...♔a3 30 ♔b3+-) 23 ♜xb7 (On 23 ♚f6 ♔f8 24 ♜xb7, the move 24...♚d5! is a thematic response for Black, e.g. 25 ♔xf8 ♜xf8 26 ♜xa7 ♔xa5=) 23...♚e6 (23...♚xb7 24 ♚xb7 ♜b8 25 a6 ♜xb7 26 axb7 ♔a3 27 ♔a4!! ♔xb1 28 ♔xe8 ♔a3 29 g3 ♔c4 30 ♔c6±) 24 ♜f1! [After 24 ♚xc3? ♔a3 25 ♔b3 (25 d5 ♚e5 26 ♚xe5

$\text{Kxe5}$  27  $\text{Kd7}$   $\text{Qxb1}$  28  $\text{Kxd6}$   $\text{Qc3}$   $\text{Solodovnichenko-Maly, Kharkov 2002}$  25...  $\text{Qxb1}$  26  $\text{Qxe6}$   $\text{Qxc3}$  27  $\text{Qxf7+}$   $\text{Qh8}$  28  $\text{Qxe8}$   $\text{Kxe8}$  29  $\text{Qd2}$  White is struggling to draw] and we have once more arrived at a critical juncture:

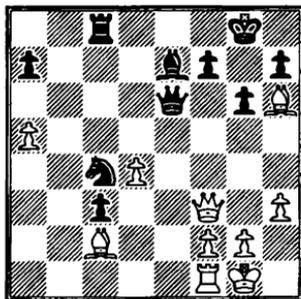


**B1)** 24...  $\text{Qd2}$ ? allows 25  $\text{Qxd2}$   $\text{cxd2}$  26  $\text{Qb3+}$ ;

**B2)** 24...  $\text{Qc7}$ ? should be met with 25  $\text{Qb3}$   $\text{Qxa5}$  (25...  $\text{Wd6}$ ?! 26  $\text{g3}$   $\text{Wxd4}$  27  $\text{Kd1+}$ ) 26  $\text{d5}$   $\text{Wf5}$  27  $\text{Wxf5}$   $\text{gxf5}$  28  $\text{Kxa7}$  with a slight advantage for White in the endgame in view of Black's inferior structure and weaker king: 28...  $\text{Qd2}$ ?! 29  $\text{d6}$   $\text{Qxb3}$  30  $\text{d7}$   $\text{c2}$  31  $\text{Qb7}$   $\text{Qd4}$  32  $\text{g3}$   $\text{Ked8}$  33  $\text{dxc8=W}$   $\text{Kxc8}$  34  $\text{Qg2}$   $\text{f4}$ ! [34...  $\text{Qe2}$  35  $\text{Qa1}$   $\text{f4}$  36  $\text{Kxa5}$ !  $\text{Qh8}$  37  $\text{Kg5}$   $\text{f3+}$  38  $\text{Qxf3}$   $\text{c1=W}$  39  $\text{Qg7+}$   $\text{Qg8}$  40  $\text{Qf6+}$   $\text{Wxg5}$  (40...  $\text{Qf8}$ ? 41  $\text{Qe7+}$   $\text{Qe8}$  42  $\text{Kg8}$ !) 41  $\text{Qxg5}$ !] 35  $\text{Qxf4}$   $\text{Qe2}$  36  $\text{Qh6}$   $\text{c1=W}$  37  $\text{Qxc1}$   $\text{Kxc1}$  (37...  $\text{Qxc1}$  38  $\text{Kd1}$ ) 38  $\text{Kxc1}$   $\text{Qxc1}$  obviously has chance to hold, but Black's pieces look certainly disco-ordinated;

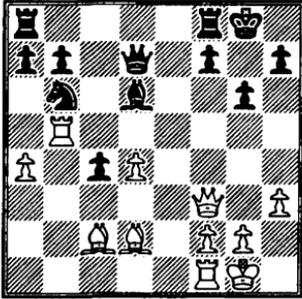
**B3)** 24...  $\text{Ke7}$ ! (This move is best as it solves immediately Black's problems related with f7) 25  $\text{Kxe7}$   $\text{Qxe7}$ ? [25...  $\text{Wxe7}$  26  $\text{Wxc3}$   $\text{Qb4}$

27  $\text{Wd3}$   $\text{Qxa5}$  (27...  $\text{Qxa5}$  28  $\text{Qb3}$   $\text{Qd6}$  29  $\text{Qf4}$   $\text{Kc3}$ ?! (29...  $\text{We4}$ !?) 30  $\text{Wa6}$   $\text{Kxb3}$  31  $\text{Qxd6}$   $\text{We6}$  32  $\text{d5}$   $\text{Wd7}$  33  $\text{Kc1}$ !) 28  $\text{Qa4}$   $\text{Qc4}$  29  $\text{Kc1}$ !  $\text{Qd6}$  30  $\text{Kxc8+}$   $\text{Qxc8}$  31  $\text{Wf3}$   $\text{a5}$  32  $\text{g3}$  looks much better for White as the Black king lacks air] and we have arrived at a double-edged position.



**B3a)** 26  $\text{Kd1}$   $\text{Qd2}$ ! [But not the greedy 26...  $\text{Qxa5}$ ?! 27  $\text{d5}$   $\text{Wd7}$  28  $\text{d6}$ !  $\text{Qf8}$  29  $\text{Qxf8}$   $\text{Qxf8}$  30  $\text{Wf6}$ !  $\text{Qg8}$  31  $\text{Ke1}$   $\text{Qc6}$  32  $\text{Qb3}$   $\text{c2}$  (32...  $\text{Ke8}$  33  $\text{Wxf7+}$ !  $\text{Wxf7}$  34  $\text{Kxe8+}$   $\text{Qg7}$  35  $\text{Qxf7}$   $\text{c2}$  36  $\text{Ke1}$   $\text{Qxf7}$  37  $\text{d7+}$ ) 33  $\text{Qxc2}$   $\text{Wd8}$  (33...  $\text{Kd8}$ ? 34  $\text{Qa4+}$ ) 34  $\text{Wf4}$  and the d-pawn becomes Black's nightmare] 27  $\text{Wb7}$ ?! (27  $\text{Wd3}$   $\text{Qd6}$  28  $\text{a6}$   $\text{Wc4}$  29  $\text{Qxd2}$   $\text{cxd2}$  30  $\text{Wxc4}$   $\text{Kxc4}$  31  $\text{Kxd2}$   $\text{Qb4}$  32  $\text{Qb3}$   $\text{Kc1+}$  33  $\text{Kd1}$   $\text{Kxd1+}$  34  $\text{Qxd1}$  = was dead level in Greenfeld-Alterman, Haifa 2002) 27...  $\text{Ke8}$  28  $\text{Qa4}$  (28  $\text{Wxa7}$   $\text{Qc5}$ ! 29  $\text{Wxc5}$   $\text{We1+}$ ) 28...  $\text{Kd8}$  29  $\text{Wxa7}$  (29  $\text{Wc7}$ ?) 29...  $\text{g5}$ ! [29...  $\text{Qf6}$ ?! 30  $\text{Wc7}$ !  $\text{Wc4}$  (30...  $\text{Kc8}$  31  $\text{Wb6}$ !) 31  $\text{Wxc4}$   $\text{Qxc4}$  32  $\text{a6}$   $\text{Qb2}$  33  $\text{Qa1}$   $\text{Qxa4}$  34  $\text{Kxa4}$   $\text{Kxd4}$  35  $\text{Kxd4}$   $\text{Qxd4}$  36  $\text{Qf1+}$  - wins for White]

**B3b)** 26 d5!? ♖e5 27 ♙f4 ♜f6 28 ♜g4! ♜f8?! 29 ♙h6! ♘e5 30 ♜g3 ♜c8 31 ♜e1! ♙d6 32 ♙g5±



19...c3!

Black gives back the pawn immediately to activate his pieces; a logical idea, since otherwise White might block the advance by posting his bishop on c3.

Indeed, after 19...♜ac8 20 ♙c3!? [20 ♜fb1 c3! 21 ♙h6 ♜fe8 22 ♜f6 ♙f8 23 ♙xf8 ♜xf8 24 a5 ♜c6! (24...♘d5 25 ♜e5±; 24...♘c4!? 25 ♜xb7 ♜d5 26 a6!?) 25 ♜xc6 bxc6 26 ♜c5 ♘d5 27 ♙b7 ♜c7 is close to equal] 20...♙c7 [20...♜fd8 21 ♜fb1 ♙c7 22 d5 ♜d6 23 g3 a6 (Becerra Rivero - Liiva, ICC 2000) looks better for White after the surprising 24 ♜c5!] 21 d5 ♜d6 22 g3 a6 23 ♜bb1 ♘d7 24 ♜xb7 ♜fe8 25 ♜d1 ♜b8 26 ♜xb8 ♙xb8 White was a little better in Kulaots-Liiva, Tallin 2000, in view of the bishop pair;

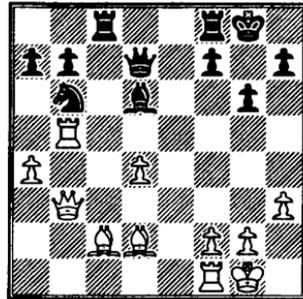
19...♙c7 on the other hand looks rather suspect: 20 ♙h6 ♜fd8 [20...♜d6 21 g3 ♜fc8 22 a5± Aktunc-Ross, IECC e-mail 1997] 21 ♜d1!↑.

20 ♜xc3!

It looks more harmonious to take with the queen, as from b3 she exerts annoying influence on the centre, as well as b7, f7.

20 ♙xc3 ♜ac8 21 ♙e4 ♜c4± allows Black counter-play; the game Kasparov-Shirov, Linares 2000, continued with 22 ♜bb1 (22 ♜b3!?) 22...♜xa4 (22...♜fc8!?) 23 ♙xb7 ♜a3 24 ♜fc1 ♜c7 25 ♜a1 ♜b8 26 ♙e4 ♜b3 27 ♙d2 ♙h2+ 28 ♘h1 ♜xf3 29 ♜xc7 ♜xf2 30 ♘xh2 ♜xd2 31 ♜axa7 and now instead of the colossal blunder 31...♘c8??+ (which lost a piece to 32 ♜ab7!) Black could have drawn with 31...♜xd4 32 ♜xf7 ♜xe4 33 ♜g7+ ♘f8 (33...♘h8 34 ♜xh7+ ♘g8 35 ♜ag7+ ♘f8=) 34 ♜xh7 ♘g8=

20...♜ac8 21 ♜b3



21...♙b8!?

21...♜c7 22 ♙d3 ♜fc8 as in A.Sokolov-Finegold, Reykjavik 1990, looks better for White after 23 a5! ±: This assessment was confirmed after 23...♘c4 24 ♙xc4 ♜xc4 25 ♜xb7 ♜f5 26 ♜xa7 ♜xd4 27 ♙e3 in the game Kopp-Schoppmeyer, German ch corr. 1991.

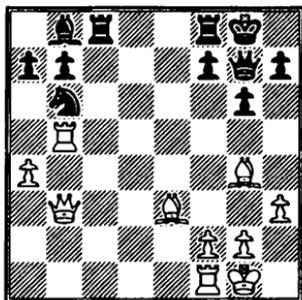
22 ♖d1!?

Trying to deploy the bishop on a better position; White is not afraid of Black capturing on d4 as then his bishops will have plenty of opportunities on an open board.

22... ♗xd4 23 ♙e3 ♗g7

After 23... ♗d6 24 g3 ♘c4 25 ♙h6 ♖fe8 26 ♖xb7± White maintains some initiative.

24 ♙g4!?



White has acquired a slight initiative; the text tempts Black to abandon his back rank, which can easily become surprisingly weak due to the weaknesses on h6 and f6.

24... ♖c7?

An awkward move; Black probably didn't like the look of 24... ♖c3 25 ♗d1 (threatening ♙e3-d4) but should have gone for it as he has 25... ♗f6! with what looks like a tenable position. Now White assumes control.

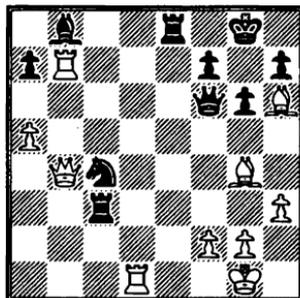
25 ♖d1! ♖e8 26 a5± ♖c3

Now this is obligatory, but in the meantime White's pieces have acquired impressive positions.

27 ♗b4

27 ♗b1!? was also possible as then 27... ♘c4? (27... ♖xe3 28 fxe3 ♘c4 29 ♙d7± is forced) 28 ♙d4 ♗xd4 29 ♖xd4 ♘a3 fails to 30 ♗d1! ♘xb5 31 ♖d8+-; however, there is nothing wrong with the text, which in fact looks like the perfect practical decision.

27... ♘c4 28 ♙h6! ♗f6 29 ♖xb7



29... ♗e5?

This should have lost right away.

Correct was 29... ♖c2 when Black still has chances to survive.

30 f4?

Missing a golden opportunity; The spectacular 30 ♖e7!!+- would have put an abrupt end to the fight, but it is certainly not easy to see such a move when playing blindfold chess. 30... ♗h2+ 31 ♔f1 ♗h1+ 32 ♔e2 ♖c2+ loses to 33 ♔d3! +-

30... ♗e3+ 31 ♔h1 ♙d6! 32 ♗b5 ♙f8!

Now that Black has solved the problem with his king's safety the game can take easily a turn for the worse for White, which explains his preference for exchanges in the moves that follow.

**33 ♖b8! ♜d6! 34 ♖xe8 ♜xe8 35  
♜xf8 ½-½**

The game is dead level, so the two Grandmasters decided to split the point.



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