

attacking with 1 d4



EVERYMAN CHESS

Angus Dunnington

First published in 2001 by Everyman Publishers plc, formerly Cadogan Books plc,
Gloucester Mansions, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HD

Reprinted 2002

Copyright © 2001 Angus Dunnington

The right of Angus Dunnington to be identified as the author of this work has been
asserted in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a
retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic,
magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the
publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 85744 258 X

Distributed in North America by The Globe Pequot Press, P.O. Box 480,
246 Goose Lane, Guilford, CT 06437-0480.

All other sales enquiries should be directed to Everyman Chess, Gloucester Man-
sions, 140A Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8HD

tel: 020 7539 7600 fax: 020 7379 4060

email: chess@everymanbooks.com

website: www.everymanbooks.com

The Everyman Chess Opening Guides were designed and developed by First Rank
Publishing.

EVERYMAN CHESS SERIES (formerly Cadogan Chess)

Chief advisor: Garry Kasparov

Commissioning editor: Byron Jacobs

Typeset and edited by First Rank Publishing, Brighton.

Production by Book Production Services.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by The Cromwell Press Ltd., Trowbridge,
Wiltshire.

CONTENTS



Bibliography	4
Preface	5
1 Queen's Gambit Accepted with 3 e4	7
2 Queen's Gambit Declined and Slav Defences	41
3 1 d4 d5 2 c4: Black's Second Move Alternatives	67
4 King's Indian and Benoni: The Four Pawns Attack	80
5 Grünfeld Defence with 4 ♗f4	101
6 Nimzo-Indian Defence with 4 f3	113
7 Dutch Defence	130
8 Other Defences	139
Index of Complete Games	160

Niridha's Chess Links

http://www.geocities.com/chess_sharewith_us

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

The Modern Benoni, Kinsman (Everyman 2000)

The Queen's Gambit Accepted, Ward (Batsford 1999)

Beating the King's Indian and Benoni, Vaiser (Batsford 1997)

Queen's Gambit Declined, Sadler (Everyman 2000)

Modern Defence, Speelman and McDonald (Everyman 2000)

English Defence, King (Everyman 1999)

Periodicals

Informator

ChessBase Magazine

The Week in Chess

Chess

British Chess Magazine

PREFACE



It is significant that a definition of 'attack' is as follows: 'to take the initiative in a game'. I had this in mind when selecting the opening systems recommended in these pages, because the very nature of 1 d4 openings is such that the kingside is by no means the only sector of the board in which either side is able to engineer attacking prospects. It is a common misconception – usually with young players – that to attack is to pressure only the opponent's king (or the king's defences), but a weakness is a weakness, and by concentrating on this or that vulnerable square or pawn in the enemy camp it is possible to win a game.

Nevertheless, you will notice anyway that throughout the book the lines tend to be quite aggressive, mostly with an emphasis on space, fluid development, inducing weaknesses in the enemy camp, generating an initiative etc. Above all, however, it is important that a system is sound and that specific plans and features are relatively easy to un-

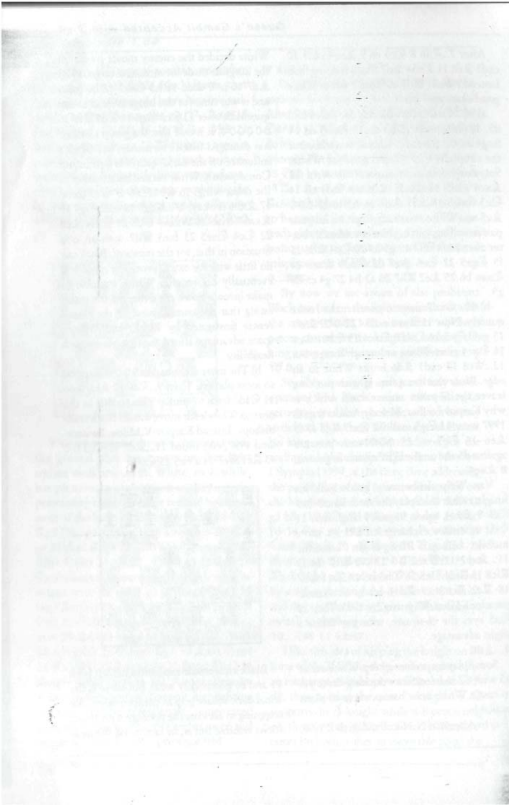
derstand.

In order to facilitate familiarisation with major characteristics (structures, areas of attack etc.) several of the systems involve similar plans from White, and I have deliberately chosen variations that require certain moves (and move orders) to be employed. Additionally, for the sake of convenience, and to avoid confusion, I have altered the move orders of several games.

I must stress that this is not intended to be a watertight repertoire book, rather a tool with which to help the reader open 1 d4 with confidence.

For their thoughts and advice I would like to thank fellow Yorkshireman Richard Palliser and IM Andrew Kinsman (an honorary Yorkshireman since winning the 2nd White Rose Masters in 2000).

IM Angus Dunnington,
Castleford,
June 2001



CHAPTER ONE

Queen's Gambit Accepted with 3 e4

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4

Natural and popular, the QGA can be a very solid system to face. Black simply accepts the c4-pawn and reacts accordingly to White's chosen set up in the centre. Rather than allow Black restriction tactics after 3 ♖f3 ♗f6 4 e3 c5, for example, when White can easily see his attacking chances fade away only to be left with an isolated d-pawn, we will concentrate exclusively on the nonsense 3 e4. This immediately erects a potentially troublesome pawn centre that Black must contest early or drift into passivity. Games 1-2 see Black use knights to challenge d4 and e4 respectively, while Games 3-4 feature two contrasting approaches beginning with 3...c5. In Games 5-6 Black adopts the traditional 3...e5.

Game 1 Van Wely-V. Milov French League 1999

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 ♗c6

Obstructing the c-pawn can be justified here because White no longer has e2-e3 to protect the d4-pawn. The immediate pressure is designed to induce a concession from White, while a further challenge in the centre with ...e7-e5 is planned.



4 ♗f3

The knee-jerk 4 d5 is also possible, when 4...♗e5 5 ♗f4 ♗g6 6 ♗g3 e5 7 ♗xc4 ♗f6 8 ♗c3 ♗d6 9 ♗b5+ ♗f8 is not unlike the main game. 4 ♗e3 is natural, when 4...♗f6 5 f3 e5 6 d5 ♗d4! 7 ♗xd4 exd4 8 ♗xd4 c6 9 ♗c3 exd5 10 0-0-0 ♗b4 11 ♗xc4 ♗xc3 12 bxc3 0-0 has been assessed as unclear. The variation 5 ♗c3 e5 6 d5 ♗a5 7 ♗f3 ♗d6! 8 ♗a4+ ♗d7 9 ♗xa5 a6 pays very close attention to White's queen. Illescas-Sadler, Linares Z 1995 did much for the popularity of 3...♗c6 when Black won after 10 ♗b1? ♗xe4 11 ♗d1 c3!, preventing the queen's escape. Instead of 10 ♗b1 White has 10 ♗a4 ♗xe4 11 ♗xc4 b5 with chances for both sides. With 4 ♗f3 White avoids these complications in

favour of simple development, hoping to be the one who benefits most from Black's plan.

4...♠g4 5 d5

This forcing advance seems to hold more promise of an advantage than the alternative 5 ♠xc4.

5...♟e5 6 ♠f4

Again White selects the most direct continuation. 6 ♠d4 ♟xf3+ 7 gxf3 ♠xf3 8 ♠xc4 e5! is another line that typifies the attraction to 3...♟c6. 6 ♟c3 tends to transpose to the main line after 6...♟f6, but it also invites Black to challenge the d5-pawn. After 6...e6 White can escape the pin and create one of his own with 7 ♠a4+ ♟d7 8 ♟e5, while Kasparov-Deep Thought, New York 1989 went 6...c6 7 ♠f4 ♟g6 8 ♠e3 cxd5 9 exd5 ♟e5 (9...a6 has been suggested) 10 ♠d4! ♟xf3+ 11 gxf3 ♠xf3 12 ♠xc4 with the threat of ♠b5+. Now 12...♟f6 and 12...a6 make sense, rather than Deep Thought's 12...♠d6, which met with 13 ♟b5 ♠f6 14 ♠c5 ♠b6 15 ♠a3 e6 16 ♟c7+! etc.

6...♟g6

The most sensible move, putting the question to the bishop. 6...♟d3+ 7 ♠xd3 cxd3 8 ♠xd3 and 6...♟xf3+ 7 gxf3 ♠d7 8 ♠xc4 simply speed up White's development. After 6...♠xf3 White should avoid 7 ♠a4+? b5! 8 ♠xb5+ c6 9 ♠a4 ♠xe4 with advantage to Black and instead follow the course of Z.Varga-Fochtler, Agria 1992, where White was happy to trade: 7 gxf3 ♟d3+ 8 ♠xd3 cxd3 9 ♠xd3 c6 10 ♟c3 ♟f6 11 0-0-0 cxd5 12 ♠b5+!? ♠d7 13 ♟xd5! ♟xd5 (13...♠c8+ 14 ♟c7+ ♠xc7+ 15 ♠xc7 ♠xb5? 16 ♠d8 mate, or 13...♠xb5? 14 ♟c7 mate) 14 ♠xd7+ ♟xd7 15 ♠xd5+ with a clear lead.

7 ♠e3

Also seen is 7 ♠g3, after which Black can push his e-pawn either one or two squares:

a) 7...♟f6 8 ♟c3 e6 9 ♠xc4 exd5 was the course of Xu Jun-N.Nikolic, Belgrade 1988. After 10 ♠xd5!? c6 (10...♠xd5 11 ♟xd5 retains White's pull) 11 ♠a4! ♠:f3 12 gxf3 ♠e7 13 ♠b3 0-0 14 e5 ♟d7 15 ♠d1 ♠c8

White essayed 16 ♠xf7+.



The game continued 16...♠xf7 17 e6 ♠xf3 18 exd7 ♠f8 19 ♠b3+ ♠f7 20 0-0 and Black had to worry about the d7-pawn, although this does seem preferable to the bizarre 16...♠xf7 17 e6+ ♠xe6 18 ♠c4+ (18 ♠g4+ ♠f7 19 ♠xd7 slightly favours White) 18...♠f6 19 ♟e4+ ♠f5 20 ♟d6+ ♠xd6 21 ♠xd6, e.g. 21...♟f6 22 h4.

b) 7...e5 is a more natural approach, hoping to leave the g3-bishop closed out of the game. 8 ♠xc4 and now:

b1) 8...a6 defends the often useful (for White) b5-square but presents White with the opportunity to activate his other bishop with 9 d6!?, e.g. 9...cxd6 (to defend the b7-pawn next move) 10 ♠b3 ♠c7 (or 10...♠d7 11 ♟g5 ♟h6 12 f3 ♠h5 13 ♟c3 with good play for the pawn) 11 ♟c3.

b2) 8...♠d6 keeps the position closed. 9 ♠b5+ ♠d7 (Costa suggests preserving the light-squared bishop with 9...♠f8!?) 10 ♠xd7+ ♠xd7 11 ♟c3 ♟f6 12 0-0 was played in Timman-Lautier, Wijk aan Zee 1994. Now the aggressive 12...h5 can be comfortably handled with 13 ♟h4, so the game continued 12...0-0 13 ♠c1 b5 14 ♠c2 ♠f8 15 ♟d1! b4 16 ♟e3 ♠b5 17 ♟c4 with an advantage to White.

With 7 ♠e3 White is able to monitor the f4-square as well as the queenside, and the bishop is free to change location.

7...e5

After 7...d6 8 c3 e6 9 xc4 exd5 10 exd5 d6 11 b5+ d7 Black is doing fine. Instead 9 a4 d7 10 xxd7+ offers White good chances.

a) 10...xd7 takes Black's eye off e4 and d5. 11 d4 exd5 12 h3 c5 13 db5 d4 14 hxe4 0-0-0 has been evaluated as unclear but the simple 14 c7+ looks good for White. Smyslov-Fontaine, Cannes 1996 went 11 xc4 exd5 12 exd5 d6 13 d4 c6 14 c3 dxe5 15 f1 d7 16 h3 f6 17 0-0-0 c5 and White was ready to get his kingside pawns rolling, leaving him considerably better after 18 f4 d7 19 g3 h5 20 a4 d6 21 f5 dge5 22 e6 c7 23 ac5 xxe6 24 xxc6 b6 25 e2 h7 26 a3 h4 27 g4 c5 28 g5.

b) 10...xd7 aims to connect the rooks quickly. Now 11 xc4 exd5 12 0-0-0! xxf3 13 gxf3 e5 14 exd5! xc4 15 b6+ c6 16 xc4 gives White a clear advantage, but 12...c8 13 exd5 d6 limits White to an edge. Note that recapturing with the king leaves the f7-pawn unprotected, which is why Karpov-Lautier, Melody Amber (rapid) 1997 went 11 d5 exd5 12 exf7 g8 13 f3 e6 14 d5 c6 15 0-0-0 with pressure against d5 and on the light squares in general. 8 xc4

Van Wely deliberately holds back his knight rather than play the automatic 8 c3 f6 9 xc4, when 9...a6 10 e2 d6 11 d2 offers an exchange of Black's more mobile bishop. Play might continue 11...xe2 12 xe2 0-0 13 0-0 d7 14 f3 f6 15 fd1 e8 16 b3 h6 17 a1 h7 18 c2 cb8 19 dcl b5 as in Azmaiparashvili-Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1993. Then 20 a5 eyes the c6-square, securing White a slight advantage.

8...d6

Some players prefer to keep White out of b5 with 8...a6 here. Since the kings have yet to castle White now has a couple of plans available.

a) In Alterman-N.Nikolic, Zagreb Z 1993,

White decided the enemy minor pieces on the kingside made for attractive targets: 9 h3 d7 10 h4! d6 11 h5 d6e7 12 h6 gxh6 and it was time for the kings to head to the queenside after 13 c3 d6 14 d2 e7 15 0-0-0 0-0-0. It is true that the pawn sacrifice has damaged Black's structure, but Black's influence on the dark squares is significant. Consequently White turned his attention to the other wing: 16 b1 f6 17 e2 (now 17 xh6 is okay) 17...d8 18 d2 d4 19 xa6! bxa6 20 xa6+ d8 21 a8+ c8 22 c4 xe3 23 fxe3 d7 with an odd situation in that, for the moment, Black can do little with his extra piece. The game was eventually drawn after White was able to make inroads down the c-file, but it is interesting that the combination of the closed centre (instigated by Black) and White's space advantage afford the first player such flexibility.

b) The more circumspect 9 0-0 will appeal to most players. Then 9...f6 10 e2 d6 11 d2 leads to similar play to that in the note to White's 8th move should Black trade bishops. Instead Karpov-V.Milov, Switzerland 1997, continued 11...d7 12 c3 0-0 13 c1 e7 14 a3 b5 15 b3



Black's queenside expansion has left both c5 and c6 potentially weak but there is the usual dark-square grip in compensation. Attempting to alleviate the pressure with 15...c6 looks sensible but is, in fact, what White is

hoping for in this type of position, since after 16 dxc6 ♖xc6 17 ♔a5! Black learns that opening the position can leave him too vulnerable on the light squares, e.g. 17...♙xe4 18 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 19 ♙f3 f5 20 ♖d5+ ♖h8 21 ♙xe4 fxe4, and now 22 ♙fd1 poses serious problems. No doubt aware of such an eventuality Black stuck with the strategy of concentrating on the dark squares, exploiting the closed centre to launch a kingside offensive with 15...♖f4 16 ♙f3 ♖h8 (16...g5!?) 17 ♔a2 g5



This no-nonsense thrust is consistent with the general plan but creates another light square weakness on f5. White, meanwhile, has yet to make a concession on the kingside, permitting him to further remind his opponent of the holes on the other flank: 18 ♖c5 ♙g8 (18...g4 19 ♙e2) 19 ♖b4 ♙g6 20 ♖c2 g4 21 ♙e2 ♙ag8 22 ♙fd1 (22 ♖bxa6 ♙c8 23 ♖b4 ♖h5 24 g3) 22...♖h5 23 g3 ♙c8 24 ♖c6! (there is no need to give Black what he wants with 24 gxf4? g3 25 hxg3 ♖xg3 26 fxg3 ♙xg3+) 24...♖g5 25 ♙f1 ♙h6 26 ♖c3! ♖f6 27 ♖d3! (again 27 gxf4?! ♖h4 28 ♙g2 exf4 29 ♙d4 f3 helps only Black) 27...♖h5 28 h4! gxh3 29 ♖dxe5 ♙g7 30 ♙xf4 ♖xe4 31 ♖e3 ♖f5 32 ♙xh6 h2+ 33 ♙xh2 ♖xf2 34 ♙xg7+ ♖xg7 35 ♙d4 1-0. An excellent instructive display from Karpov, highlighting the power of the traditionally under-rated queenside attack. White's knights on c5 and c6 certainly make their presence felt!

9 ♙b5+

In Smyslov-Semkov, Rome 1990, the former world champion was in fighting mood. After 9 h3 ♙d7 10 ♙h4 h6 11 h5 ♖f8 12 ♖h4 ♖e7 13 g4 White was in danger of clamping down on both sides of the board. Consequently Black hit out with 13...b5 14 ♙b3 c6 15 ♖c3 b4 but 16 dxc6 ♙xc6 17 ♖d5 ♖e6 18 ♙c1 ♙xd5 19 exd5 ♖f8 20 ♙a4+ ♖d7 21 ♙c6! highlighted yet again how Black needs to be careful on the light squares. The text leads either to an exchange of light-squared bishops that is favourable to White or a misplacement of Black's king.

9...♖f8

By now we are aware of the problems Black can face on the light squares and, with the centre closed and a number of black pieces posted on the kingside, tucking the king away on f8 is not too inconvenient.

10 0-0

Sensibly opting for quick and easy development. With Black's rooks still waiting to get acquainted the queenside will not be easy to defend. However, White successfully left his king in the centre in readiness for the ending in I.Nikolaidis-Valkesalmi, Moscow Olympiad 1994, at the same time addressing the possibility of any future counterplay on the kingside: 10 ♙e2 ♖f6 11 ♖fd2 ♙d7 12 g3 h5 13 h4 ♖g4 14 ♙xg4! ♙xg4 15 ♖b3 b6 16 ♖c3 a6 17 f3 ♙d7 18 ♖c4 ♖e7 19 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 20 a4! ♖g8 21 ♖a3 ♙b8 22 ♖xd6 cxd6 23 ♖e2 f6 24 ♙h1 ♖f7 25 b4 ♙hc8 26 b5 a5, and now 27 ♖d1! followed by sending the knight to c4 to attack both b6 and d6 kept Black busy, giving White time to switch to the kingside.

10...♖f6 11 ♖bd2

I like this idea of keeping the knight on b1 for a while. If White does not intend to offer an exchange of bishops with ♙e2 and ♖f3-d2, then posting the queen's knight on d2 supports the f3-knight while still protecting e4, thus freeing White's queen. If Black retreats his bishop after an inevitable h2-h3 the

knight already has access to c4 while, in the event of ...b7-b5, there is Qd2-b3-a5-c6 etc.



11...h5

A logical follow-up to the play thus far, the closed centre setting the scene for flank attacks. However, White need not worry about the coming offensive since he has enough pieces either on or near the kingside. The same cannot be said of Black's defensive resources on the other wing.

12 ♖c2 a6 13 ♔d3 h4 14 h3 ♙xf3 15 ♙xf3 ♙h5 16 ♙fc1! ♙g4 17 ♙f1

This is why White sent his king's rook to the c-file, vacating f1 for the bishop in order to provide the g2-pawn with necessary extra protection. There is a temptation in this kind of situation to leave a rook near the king for defensive purposes, but here the f2-pawn is not a target.

17...♙h6 18 ♙b3 b6 19 ♙c6 ♙g8 20 ♙ac1 ♙e7 21 a4 a5 22 ♙h1!

A prophylactic measure worth remembering. An unwelcome major piece is sure to come to the g-file soon, when the h3-pawn will come under attack, so White takes time out to unpin his g-pawn in advance. Over on the queenside Black is powerless on the light squares and, as we will soon see, rather precariously placed on the dark squares.

22...♙g6 23 ♔d2 ♙h7 24 ♔c4

With his kingside quite safe White has been able to conduct his queenside assault with little difficulty, culminating in consider-

able pressure against b6, c7 and d6. It is interesting that White's rooks, queen, knight and dark-squared bishop combine to attack these weaknesses, while the remaining bishop plays an equally vital role in defending the kingside.



24...♙b4 25 d6!

Ironically it is the blockade of this pawn upon which Black's strategy is based in this line. Now the c7-b6-a5 pawn chain is about to be seriously undermined, and the opening of the a2-g8 diagonal for the white queen causes Black further trouble.

25...cxd6

Black's queenside also falls apart after 25...♙xd6 26 ♔xd6 cxd6 27 ♙xb6.

26 ♔xb6 ♙d8 27 ♙c7 ♙e6 28 ♙xe6?

There is no doubt that White stands very well after the queen exchange, but 28 ♙c4 looks much stronger, e.g. 28...d5 29 ♔xd5 ♔xg3 30 ♔f4. Nevertheless with an attack no longer a realistic prospect Black's pieces – particularly his rook – look out of place on the kingside.

28...fxe6 29 ♙7c4

29 ♔d7 followed by ♙a7 and ♙b6 is not easy to meet, but White has another plan in mind.

29...♙f6

The rook rushes to re-enter the game.

30 ♙xb4!?

Despite this exchange sacrifice working out well for White it would have been sim-

pler to try and exploit the existing advantage.
30...axb4 31 a5



Each one of White's pieces points to the queenside, while three of Black's – two of them notoriously slow knights – are far away.

31...d5 32 a6 f7 33 a1 a7 34 dxd5
xa6 35 xa6 exd5 36 exd5 xd5

36...dxd5 37 g5.

37 c4 d1+ 38 h2

The smoke has cleared and White's bishops are enough to give him a potentially decisive lead.

38...f6 39 a5 g6 40 b5 e4 41
xb4 e5 42 b3 d8 43 g5?!

White should be winning without looking for a second pawn. A more incisive way to use the bishops and passed pawn is 43 d4 e8 44 b7 g6 45 a4 e6 (45...a8 46 d2) 46 b4 etc.

43...g6 44 xh4 d2 45 b5 d3 46
e6 dxf2 47 f5+ h6 48 b8 g6 49
b6?!

49 xg6 parts with the other bishop and looks preferable, e.g. 49...d6g4+ 50 hxg4 xg6 51 b6+ g7 52 g3 e3 53 d1 b4 and White has passed pawns on both flanks.

49...h5 50 xxf6 xh4 51 xg6 e3 52
g4?!

It is time for 52 b4 since the e-pawn is going no further after 52...e2 53 e6.

52...d3 53 h6+ g5 54 e6 f4 55
f6+ e5 56 f8 e1 57 e8+ f4 58

f8+ e5 59 f5+ e4 60 f1 xg2+
61 h1 xg4! 62 hxg4 f3 63 g2 e2
64 h1 e1 65 xe1+ dxe1+ 66 g3
½-½

Game 2

Miton-Sadvakasov

Continental Open 2000

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 f6



This time Black hits the e4-pawn, practically forcing its advance as 4 d3 e5 promises White little.

4 e5 d5 5 xxc4 b6

The most obvious and the most popular, putting the question to the bishop. It is also possible to insert 5...d6 6 d3 and now:

a) 6...e6 has the nasty threat of 7...dxc3 8 bxc3 xc4. Hauchard Collas, Cappelle la Grande 1997 continued 7 b3 dxc3 8 bxc3 d5 when, instead of the natural 9 d3 White tried the provocative 9 d2 with a view to an early eviction of Black's bishop. After 9...xg2 10 g1 d5 11 e4 e6 12 d5 dxe5 13 dxe6 d3+ 14 f1 fxd1+ 15 dxd1 d3 16 a4+ c6 17 xg1 fxe6 White had two good pieces for a rook but was running short of pawns. Obviously such lines require careful handling from both sides, although I'm not convinced 6...e6 is worth the trouble in any case.

b) 6...d6 7 b5 d7 8 d3 with a further branch:

b1) 8...a6 9 d3 g4 10 e4 e6 and Black had developed his light-squared bishop outside his pawn centre in Glek-Kozlov, Frunze 1988. However, White's bishop stands very well on e4, monitoring squares that its counterpart can no longer defend. After 11 0-0 e7 12 e3 h5 White's control of the centre gave him an edge, which remained in place after 13 d5 e5 14 dxe6 exd1 15 fxd1 exf3+ 16 gxf3 fxe6 17 exb7 Bb8 18 e6+ f7 19 b3 thanks to his more active pieces and superior pawn structure.

b2) 8...e6 9 0-0 b4 (9...e7 10 e3 e6 11 g5 h6 12 Bb5 g6 13 e4! e7 14 Bg4 gave White something to aim at in Beliavsky-Portisch, Thessaloniki 1984) 10 e2 e6 11 a3 d4 12 e4



There is no denying Black has a firm grip on the d5-square! How useful this will prove is another matter, particularly if White is able to lessen the influence of a central knight by playing 'around' it and exploiting his extra territory. Korneev-Arakelian, Kstovo 1994 continued 12...Bd7 13 e5 ex5 14 dxc5 Qa4 15 Bc2 0-0-0 16 e3!? (White wants to prove that the knight on the rim is indeed 'dim') 16...Qxe3 17 fxe3 Bb5 18 Bb1 Bb4 19 Bxe4 ex4 20 b3 b2 21 d4 with a clear advantage to White. More testing is 12...f4 13 exf4 ex4, removing White's annoying knight. After 14 g5 e6! 15 h5! g6 16 f3 exf3 17 Bxf3 e7 18

e4, or 16...d5 17 e2 e7 18 e4, the holes in Black's kingside will be a constant worry. This leaves the alternative retreat 14...e6 15 f3, when 15...d5 16 e2 e7 17 e4 0-0 18 Bb3 Bb8 19 Bb1 is a shade better for White according to Huzman, while Korchnoi-Sadler, Arnhem 1999, went 15...Bb8 16 Bc1 e7 (16...e6? limits White to the usual space advantage) 17 exb7. Now 17...Bxb7 18 Bc6+ d7 19 Bxb7 exg5 20 exg5 Bxg5 21 Bxa7 e4 22 f3 is poor for Black after either 22...d5 23 Bxc7 or 22...e3 23 Bc1 Bc3+ 24 h1 0-0 25 Bxc7 etc. Instead the game went 17...0-0 18 e6 Bxd4 19 f3 and White stood better. 6 d3

I prefer this to the alternative 6 Bb3 because without the f5-square available Black must still solve the problem of where to develop his light-squared bishop. Nonetheless dropping back to b3 is a viable option. After 6...e6 play might develop as follows: 7 e3 e5 8 Qc3 e6 (8...b4 9 Bf3! d3+ 10 f1 rebounds on Black according to Atalik) 9 e2 and now:

a) 9...e7 10 0-0 Bb7 11 Qg3 e6 12 f4



Gormally-Law, British League 1997. Launching the f-pawn looks like an effective plan in this line, reminding Black who has more space and endeavouring to open the position for the light-squared bishop with d4-d5 or f4-f5. Consequently Black chose to remove this bishop - 12...a5 13 d5 exb3

14 ♖xb3! ♔d3 (taking on d5 invites f4-f5, trapping the bishop) 15 ♚fd1 ♔c4 16 dxe6 ♖xe6 17 ♖c2 0-0 18 ♖e4! and White is doing well.

b) Black immediately went for the bishop in Giorgadze-Narciso Dublan, Linares 1999. After 9...♔a5 10 ♔c2 ♔xc2 11 ♖xc2 ♔e7 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♚ad1 ♚e8 White again pushed his f-pawn: 14 f4 ♔d5 15 ♔xd5 ♖xd5 16 ♔c3 ♖c6 17 f5 ♔c4 18 ♔c1 exf5 19 ♖xf5 ♖e6 20 ♖f3 c6 21 ♔e4 with a slight pull.

If these lines are to your liking it is worth taking a closer look at 6 ♔b3, but make sure Black's control of the d5-square does not become a long-term plus. To be avoided is 6 e6? ♔xc4 7 ♖a4+ ♔c6 8 exf7+ ♔xf7 9 ♖xc4+ ♔e6 etc.

Returning to the popular 6 ♔d3, Black's task of achieving smooth development is more problematic.

6...♔c6

Don't expect too many opponents to oblige with 6...♖xd4?? 7 ♔b5+ and the queen is lost.

7 ♔e3

It is a little unusual to see bishops finding posts before knights, but here the idea is to deny the c8-bishop an outing. The helpful 7 ♔e2, for example, permits 7...♔g4, whereas now both f5 and g4 remain unavailable, hence the suggestion in the note to Black's next move.

7...♔b4

This natural move is seen the most often. Black aims to punish White's uncompromising bishop. Two other strategies have also been tried:

a) 7...♔e6 rather stubbornly addresses the problem of the queen's bishop. After 8 ♔c3 Black has played a number of moves:

a1) 8...♖d7 9 ♔f3 ♔g4 10 h3 ♔xf3 11 ♖xf3 e6 12 ♚d1 0-0-0 13 0-0 ♔b4 14 ♔e4 was clearly better for White in Korchnoi-Hübner, Tilburg 1987. Later, in Karpov-Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 1991, Black improved with 9...0-0-0 10 h3 ♔b4 11 ♔e2 f5

12 0-0 h6 13 a3 ♔d5, and now 14 ♔e1 (heading for c5) gave White an edge.

a2) 8...♔b4 9 ♔e4 ♔d5 10 ♔ge2 f5 11 exf6 exf6 12 ♔f4 was seen in Shaked-Ibragimov, Berlin 1997. White has an isolated d-pawn that does seem well blockaded but 10...f5 has led to a positional concession involving a weakening of the light squares in Black's camp. After 12...♔xf4 13 ♔xf4 Black's attempt to reduce his opponent's piece activity with: 13...♔d6 14 ♔xd6 ♖xd6 15 ♔xb7 ♚d8 met with 16 ♖h5+ ♔f7 17 ♖b5+ ♔d7 18 ♖e2+ and White was a safe pawn up.

a3) 8...♔c4 9 ♔e4 ♔c8 is the odd course chosen by Black in Furman-Noskov, Moscow 1991. White is happy to allow the capture on e3 in these positions because fxe3 both supports the d4-pawn and opens the f-file, so Black has achieved less than nothing. In fact White struck immediately with 10 e6, which looks like a nice alternative to the comfortable advantage that results from simple development (e.g. 10 ♔ge2).

a4) 8...♔d5 is a consistent follow-up to 7...♔e6. Then 9 ♔f3 e6 10 0-0 slightly favoured White in Salov-Hübner, European Team Ch. 1989. Again White can 'ignore' the central bishop until such time that an exchange on d5 can be carried out in favourable circumstances. With Black so involved with the d5-square he has less influence in other areas and less room in which to manoeuvre.

b) With 7...g6 Black waits to determine the future of his queen's bishop. However, I don't believe the fianchetto is appropriate here. After 8 ♔c3 ♔g7 (8...♔b4 9 ♔e4 ♔f5 10 ♔xf5 gxf5 is an interesting way to use 7...g6, although I doubt the damage to Black's kingside structure is worth the d5-square) 9 ♔ge2 0-0 White has two avenues to explore.

b1) 10 h4 is a blunt yet effective means with which to demonstrate that ...g7-g6 is simply too risky. Faced with h4-h5 Black

must seek counterplay in the centre: 10...♖b4 11 ♙e4 when Portisch-Spraggett, Wijk aan Zee 1985 continued 11...♘d4? 12 h5 ♙e6 (12...♙e3 13 fxe3 serves only to strengthen White's centre, while 12...c5 13 hxe6 hxe6 14 ♙h6! ♙xh6 15 ♙xh6 ♙g7 16 ♙h2 maintains White's initiative) 13 ♖c1 ♙e3 (13...c5 14 hxe6 fxe6 15 ♙h6 is dangerous) 14 ♖xe3 (14 fxe3!?) 14...c5 (14...♘d5 15 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 16 hxe6 hxe6 17 ♘f4 e6 is uncomfortable for Black but at least avoids the following) 15 d5!



Now 15...♙xd5 runs into 16 hxe6 hxe6 17 ♖h3 ♙e8 18 ♘d5 ♘d5 19 e6!, e.g. 19...♘f6 20 exf7+ ♙xf7 21 ♙xg6+! ♙xg6 22 ♘f4+, or the lesser evil 19...♖d6 20 ♘d1 fxe6 21 ♙xg6. Instead the game went 15...♘d5 16 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 17 0-0 e6 18 ♘f4 ♙e8 (18...♖c7 19 hxe6 hxe6 20 ♘cd5 exd5 21 ♘d5 and White dominates) and now 19 h6! ♙h8 20 ♘fxd5 exd5 21 ♙xd5 ♖e7 22 f4 would have given White a clear lead, e.g. 22...f6 23 f5! etc.

Returning to Black's 11th move, 11...c5 has been suggested as an improvement. After 12 d5 ♙f5 Black seems to be doing fine, so best is 12 dxc5. Then 12...♖xd1+ 13 ♘xd1 ♘c4 14 f4 ♙f5 15 ♙xf5 gxf5 16 ♙f2 ♘d3+ 17 ♙f3 favours White, so this leaves 12...♘c4 13 ♖b3 ♙xe3 14 ♖xb4 a5 when both 15 ♖d4 ♘f5 16 ♖xd8 ♙xd8 17 ♘d5 (e.g. 17...♙xe5 18 g4) and 15 ♖a4 ♘g4 16 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 17 ♖xg4 ♙xe5 look promising

for White.

b2) 10 ♙e4 expresses an interest in the centre rather than a kingside attack. In Timman-Korchnoi, European Team Ch. 1997, 10...♖b4 11 ♖b3 a5 12 ♘f4! placed a fourth white piece within range of the crucial d5-square and consequently left Black struggling. After 12...e6 13 a3 ♘d4 13...♘c6 14 ♙d1 is very pleasant for White) 14 ♘fxd5 exd5 15 ♙xd5 (15 ♘xd5?? ♙e6) 15...a4 16 ♖a2 ♙a5 (16...♘xd5 17 ♖xd5) 17 ♙c4 ♘xc4 18 ♖xc4 Black did not have enough for a pawn.

8 ♙e4 f5



This is the thrust upon which Black's opening strategy is based in this particular line. Black will not allow the bishop to remain in such a commanding position in the middle of the board and, in order to fight for this outpost, White must give up his advanced e5-pawn. 8...♘d4 9 ♘c3 c6 10 ♖f3! provides White with a menacing set up, while after 8...c6 the game Sadler-Shaw, Isle of Man 1994, continued 9 ♘d2? ♙e6 10 ♘gf3 ♖d7 11 ♘b3 ♙xb3 12 ♖xb3 e6 13 0-0 ♙e7 14 ♙fd1 ♘d4 15 ♙d2 a5 16 a3 and Black was missing his bishop.

9 exf6

Of course White refuses to give way, and taking the pawn retains the advantage of the move.

9...exf6 10 a3

The beginning of a complex and practically forced sequence that Miton treats with

some skill. The chief alternative is 10 ♖c3 f5 when the second pawn to land on f5 puts the question to the bishop.

a) Karpov-Short, Linares match (3) 1992, went 11 ♖f3 (keeping an eye on d5 and tying the bishop down to the b7-pawn) 11... ♖d4d5 12 ♖d2 ♖e6 13 ♖ge2 ♖d7 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♖e1 with an edge for White. Surprisingly Black's blockade on d5 is not as secure as it first appears, as the logical 15... ♖g8 16 ♖g5 ♖e8 17 ♖f4 ♖xf4 18 ♖xf4 g5 19 ♖e5 ♖g7 meets with Curt Hansen's 20 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 21 d5 and White stands better. The solid 11...c6 merits attention. In Zaja-Ganguly, Istanbul Olympiad 2000 White managed to remove his opponent's light-squared bishop after 12 ♖h3 ♖e6 13 0-0 ♖d6 14 ♖e1 0-0 15 ♖g5 ♖c4 16 b3 ♖f7 17 ♖xf7 ♖xf7, but then 18 a3 ♖d4d5 19 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 20 ♖xd5 cxd5 21 ♖f3 ♖h4 was fine for Black.

b) Dropping back to b1 is more popular. In fact 11 ♖b1 only temporarily ignores the d5-square, as a later a2-a3 will offer the a2-square as an active long-range post for the bishop. After 11... ♖d4d5 12 ♖f3 it is Black's turn to decide where is best for his king's bishop.

b1) Timman-Salov, FIDE Candidates match, Sanghi Nagar 1994, continued 12... ♖d6 13 ♖g5 ♖d7 14 ♖e2+ ♖e6 15 ♖e5, highlighting one of the potential problems for Black caused by an early push of the f-pawn(s) – the weakness of the e5-square. After 15...0-0 16 0-0 ♖xc3 17 bxc3 ♖xe5 18 dxe5 ♖c6 19 ♖d3 ♖e6 Black could do with a bit of help on the dark squares but must only be a shade worse.

b2) 12... ♖b4 13 ♖d2 ♖e7 is designed to reduce White's support of the d4-pawn and is better than 13...0-0 14 ♖xd5 ♖xd2+ 15 ♖xd2 ♖xd5 16 0-0 when the hole on e5 is significant. The we have 14 0-0 0-0 15 ♖e1 ♖f6 16 a3! ♖h8 17 ♖a2 f4 18 ♖e5 Hübner-Sulskis, European Team Ch, Pula 1997. Black's occupation of d5 is looking less secure and the e5-square is a genuine problem.

Consequently he now sought to generate complications with a further advance: 18...f3, the point being that 19 ♖xf3 ♖g4 20 ♖e4 ♖xf3 21 ♖xf3 ♖xd4 22 ♖d3 ♖f6 is about even. Instead the game went 19 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 20 ♖f7+ ♖xf7 21 ♖xd5 ♖f8 22 ♖xf3 ♖xd4 (22... ♖xd4 23 ♖b4 c5 24 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 25 ♖c3 and e7 beckons) 23 ♖c3! ♖xc3 24 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 25 bxc3 ♖b8 26 ♖e7 and White's lead was still intact.

Incidentally the immediate 12... ♖e7 was agreed drawn in Hebden-Drasko, Vrnjacka Banja 1991. Of course there is still everything to play for. Note that with the bishop still on e3 it is tempting to hit it with ...f5-f4 at some point, but then White's other bishop comes to life on the b1-h7 diagonal.

10...f5

Another one! In fact Black's uncompromising response is called for as 10... ♖d4d5?! 11 ♖h5+ g6 12 ♖xg6+ hxg6 13 ♖xh8 nets White too much material for insufficient compensation, while 11... ♖e7 is hardly an attractive move.

11 axb4



11...fxe4

Huzman gives this move a 'T' and it does look better than the tempting 11... ♖xb4+ 12 ♖c3 fxe4 13 ♖h5+ when Black can spend so much time checking out 13...g6 14 ♖e5+ that he overlooks 14 ♖b5+ picking up the bishop. After 13... ♖f8 14 ♖ge2 Black tends to bring his queen to e8 soon.

a) 14...♙e6 15 0-0 and now:

a1) 15...♙g8 16 ♖xe4 ♗e8 17 ♗xe8+! ♙xe8 18 ♜fc1 (18 ♜xa7 ♙c4 19 ♖g3 ♙a6 looks risky but might be good for White) 18...a5 19 ♜xc7 ♖d5 20 ♜cc1! leaves White with an extra pawn, e.g. 20...♙f5 21 ♖g3 ♙g4 22 h3 ♙xe2 23 ♖xe2 ♖xe3 24 ♙xe3 ♙d2 (24...♜xe3? 25 ♜c8+ ♙f8 26 ♜f1) 25 ♜c7 ♙xe3+ 26 ♖f1 b6 27 ♜b7. Dreev-Svidler, Elista 1997, went instead 18...♙c4 19 ♖g3 ♙d5 (19...a5 20 ♖c5 ♙d5 21 ♙f4 and Black's queenside is still under pressure) 20 ♙d2! ♙d2 (20...a5 21 ♙xb4 ♙xb4 22 ♖c5 limits White's advantage) 21 ♖xd2 ♙c6 22 ♜xa7 ♖f7 23 ♖f3! ♖d7 24 d5! ♙xd5 25 ♜xc7 with excellent winning chances for White.

a2) 15...♗e8 intends to recapture on e8 with the king, so this time White does best to decline the offer with 16 ♗h4, as played in A.Ziegler-Brynnel, Sweden 1998. Then 16...♙c4 17 f3?! ♙xc3 18 ♙xe4+ ♖g8 19 ♖xc3 ♙xf1 20 ♜xf1 ♗d7 21 d5 h6 sav: Black wriggle out, so rather than sacrifice the exchange White should have played 17 ♜fc1 ♙d3 18 ♖g3, when Black's problem king is compensation for the pawn.

b) 14...♗e8 15 ♗h4 ♖g8! improves on 15...♙f5 16 0-0 ♙xc3? 17 ♖xc3 ♖c4 18 ♗f4 ♖d6 19 ♜a5, Tregubov-Stajcic, Harkany 1992. After 16 0-0 ♙f5 White can try 17 d5 ♙g6 18 ♖f4 ♙d6 19 ♙xb6 ♙xf4 20 ♗xf4 ♙xb6 21 ♜fe1 ♗f7 22 ♗d2 h6 23 ♖xe4, which offered decent prospects of an advantage in Bezgodov-Nikitin, Tomsk 1998, or 17 ♖g3 ♙g6 18 ♖gxe4 h6 19 d5 ♙xe4 20 ♖xe4 ♖xd5 21 ♙c5 ♙xc5 22 ♖xc5 b6 23 ♗d4 which has been assessed as slightly better for White despite the pawn deficit. Tregubov-Nikitin, St Petersburg 1995 illustrates what White is looking for: 23...♗f7 24 ♖d3 c5 25 ♗e4 ♜e8 26 ♖e5 ♗e6 27 ♜ae1! h5 28 ♗b1! and Black was struggling. Perhaps 23...♖f6 is better, although White's compensation is obvious.
12 ♖c3!

Here White should refrain from 12 ♗h5+ g6 13 ♗e5+ ♖f7, first because 14 ♗xh8? loses to 14...♙b4+, but really because 14 ♖c3 ♙xb4 15 ♗xe4 ♜e8 16 ♗f3+ ♖g8 17 ♖ge2 ♗d5 and 15 ♙g5 ♙d6! 16 ♙xd8 ♙xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♙xd8 18 ♖xe4 ♙f5 are both preferable for Black.

12...♙e6

12...♙xb4 13 ♗h5+ ♖f8 14 ♖ge2 leads us back to the note to Black's eleventh move.

13 ♖h3 ♙d6 14 ♖g5 ♙c4

Part of the grand plan.

15 ♗g4

15 ♖gxe4, on the other hand, inconveniences White more than Black, e.g. 15...0-0 16 b3 ♙d5 17 b5 ♙xe4! 18 ♖xe4 ♙b4+ 19 ♖d2 ♗d5 20 0-0 ♙xd2 21 ♗xd2 ♗xb5 and this time the knight will be fantastic on d5, Ibragimov-Yakovich, St. Petersburg 1998.

15...♙xb4 16 ♖xh7!



The point. This is the position both players have been aiming for since 8...f5. Neither king sits comfortably in the centre, but the e4-pawn is a sitting duck, and White hopes to emerge from the complications with a material lead that will provide realistic winning chances as the game moves into the ending. 16...♗d7 17 ♗g6+ ♖d8 18 ♖g5 ♜e8 19 ♖gxe4 ♖d5 20 ♙d2!?

This remarkable move escapes the pins on the e-file yet calmly retains the pin on the a5-e1 diagonal, not forgetting walking into potential hazards on the d-file! However, young

Miton's contribution to opening theory is in fact quite logical, as the king is heading for the relatively safe haven on c1. Black's king is no better, and Black is a pawn down. Before 20 ♔d2 had been played, when 20... ♙xc3 21 bxc3 ♝c6 ! highlighted the problem on the e-file and saw White happy to make the draw in Ehlvest-Volzhin, Koszalin 1998.

20...c5

With White's centre in danger of becoming sufficiently solid Black strikes before White has time to bring his king's rook to the middle of the board.

21 ♙c1

As per plan. 21 ♔d6? cxd4 is going a little too far and backfires on White.

21... ♔xe3 22 fxe3 cxd4 23 exd4



23... ♙d3

Introducing another pin. 23... ♝xd4 is critical – should Black be afraid of 24 ♙d1 ♙d3 or will he hang on to see his bishops devour the knights? Well, after 25 ♝g3 ♙xc3 26 ♔xc3! ♙e3 White has 27 ♙a4 .

24 ♝g5+ ♗e7

24... ♙c8 25 ♔c5 does not help Black.

25 ♙a5+?

It is difficult to criticise White since his whole strategy has been wonderful thus far, but the simple 25 ♝xg7 might well leave Black with nothing to show for a two pawn deficit. In such a complex position, with uncomfortable kings, awkward pins and the presence of queens, White can be forgiven

for 'playing safe'.

25... ♙c8

25...b6 26 ♝xb6+! axb6 27 ♙xa8+ ♙c7 28 ♙a7+ picks up a second pawn.

26 ♙d1 b6

Again the d-pawn is safe: 26... ♝xd4? 27 ♝f5+ ♙b8 28 ♝f4+ ♙c8 29 ♝g4+ ♙b8 30 ♝g3+ .

27 ♙a4

No doubt⁷ forcing the exchange of queens is what White had in mind when turning down the g7-pawn earlier and, under the circumstances, this is understandable. However, Black now proceeds to defend the ending very well indeed, a situation that could have been avoided with 25 ♝xg7 .

27... ♙xe4 28 ♝xd7+ ♙xd7 29 ♔xe4 ♙b4 30 ♔c3 a5 31 ♙d2



White has an extra pawn and decent prospects of converting it, but with the clock ticking and a strong opponent the task can be rather difficult. The game continued:

31... ♙d6 32 g3

32 h3 ♙f4+ 33 ♙d3 ♙e3+ 34 ♙c4 is nothing for White to be afraid of.

32... ♙h8 33 ♙h1 ♙h3 34 ♙af1?

34 ♙d5 ♙c6 35 ♙e3 .

34...g5 35 ♙e4 ♙e7 36 ♙d3 a4 37 ♙a1 b5 38 ♙f2 ♙h6 39 ♙g4 ♙ha6! 40 ♙hc1 b4 41 ♙e5+ ♙e8 42 ♙c6

42 ♙c7 is more ambitious, e.g. 42...a3 43 ♙e1! axb2 44 ♙b1 ♙a3+ 45 ♙c2 , or 43...a2 44 ♙f3 ♙f8 45 ♙cxe7 g4 (45...a1 ♙46 ♙xa1

♠xa1 47 ♠b7) 46 ♠g5 a1♠ 47 ♠h7+ ♠g8
48 ♠xa1 ♠xa1 49 ♠f6+ ♠f8 50 ♠d7.

42...a3 43 ♠xa6 ♠xa6 44 bxa3 bxa3 45
♠c4 ♠d7 46 ♠c3 ½-½

Black's long-range bishop carries out a game-saving dual-purpose role.

Game 3

Atalik-Gyimesi

Yugoslav Team Ch. 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5

While it is quite logical to exploit Black's early queenside pawn majority immediately, 3...c5 invites White to continue with his territorial claim in the centre.

4 d5

4 ♠f3 exd4 5 ♠xd4 is a risk-free variation, but we are concerned with the less compromising push of the d-pawn. Quite simply White hopes to regain his sacrificed pawn with an advanced centre, leaving his opponent cramped.

4...e6

Black sets about dealing with the important d5-square head on. The next main game features the wild 4...♠f6 5 ♠c3 b5.

5 ♠c3

5 ♠xc4 tends to transpose after 5...♠f6 6 ♠c3 exd5 7 ♠xd5 ♠xd5 as 7...♠xe4? walks into 8 ♠xe2. Alternatively 5...exd5?! 6 ♠xd5 is already difficult for Black, since 6...♠f6? permits 7 ♠xf7+!, and blocking the d-file with 6...♠d6 runs into 7 c5!, e.g. 7...♠xe5? 8 ♠xf7+ etc.

5...exd5 6 ♠xd5

Maintaining a piece on d5 is a key part of our strategy here, for the square ceases to be a weakness for Black once White captures with his pawn (unless this gives him a powerful passed pawn, of course).

6...♠e7

Black does best to avoid 6...♠f6 7 ♠xc4 ♠c6 8 ♠b3.

7 ♠xc4 ♠xd5 8 ♠xd5



8...♠e7

By far the most popular response to White's threatened 9 ♠xf7+. Petrosian-Radulov, Plovdiv 1983 went 8...♠d6 9 ♠h5 ♠f6 10 ♠f3 ♠g6 and the exchange of queens did nothing to diminish White's presence in the centre. After 8...♠c6 9 ♠xc6+ bxc6 Black's poor queenside pawns are worth parting with the bishop.

9 ♠f3

It is a matter of choice whether White selects f3 or e2 for his knight. The difference between Atalik's choice and 9 ♠e2 is that the latter seeks to maintain maximum control over the d5-square. Using e2 also rules out a pin after ...♠g4 since now White has f2-f3. Let us look at a few examples of how play can go after 9 ♠e2.

a) 9...♠d7 10 0-0 ♠b6 11 ♠c3 0-0 12 ♠f4



This is typical. White is ready to meet the challenge to his bishop with the supporting knight. Black has tried a number of moves in the diagram position.

a1) 12...g5 harasses the other bishop but presents white with the cheeky response 13 d6, the point being that the bishop is safe in view of 13...xd6? 14 xf7+ etc. However, Black can persevere with 13...e7 when White has 14 e5! with the prospect of having at least one rather large bishop right in the heart of Black's position. After 14...xd6 15 exd6 the new passed pawn can prove equally unwelcome, the bishop over-seees both halves of the board and 15...xd5 16 xd5 merely adds to Black's problems.

a2) 12...h8 rules out any funny business with xf7+ and frees the f-pawn in case Black elects to challenge the remaining centre pawn. I like 13 f3 here, intending to meet 13...xd5 with 14 d1 to stay in charge of the d5-square. Comas Fabrego-Cifuentes Parada, Platja d'Aro Barcino 1994, went 13 h5 xd5 14 xd5 d6 15 e5 b8 16 d1 and Black was being pushed back. After 16...e8 17 h4 e6 18 fe1 e8 19 h3 d7 White struck with 20 f6! gxf6 21 dxd7 xe5 (21...xd7 22 xf6+ g8 23 h6) 22 xe5 fxe5 23 ed1, but after 23...f5 24 xb7 g8 walked into 25 c7? f3!. This is a pity because with by far the better pawn structure White is clearly better, e.g. 25 ddd7 g7 26 xa7 ag8 27 g3.

a3) 12...f6 13 d6 e7 14 e5 transposes to 'a1', while White also has 13 e5!. Then 13...xd5 14 xd5 g5 (14...e7 15 e6) 15 xg5 xg5 16 f4! is precisely what White is looking for. In Khalifman-Vulfson, St Petersburg 1995, Black retreated: 13...e7 14 e4! xd5 15 fxd1 and White's authority in the centre was still present after the exchange of queens. After 15...g5 (undermining the support of the e5-pawn) 16 e3 b8 (16...d4? 17 d5) 17 b3 e6 18 b5 Black's queenside was starting to creak.

a4) 12...xd5 13 xd5 d6 14 e5 e7

15 c1 b6 16 f3 e6 17 fd1 xd5 was agreed drawn in Rausis-Lev, Eupen 1997. White went for more in Kacheishvili-Spangenberg, World U26 Team Ch., Roque Saenz Pena 1997, finding himself on the way to a modest material lead after 15 e6! xf4 16 e7 xh2+ 17 h1 xd6 18 exf8+ xf8 19 g3. There followed 19...h6 20 c1! c6 21 g5 e6 22 d1 h6 23 e5 d8 24 xh2 xd5 25 xd5 xd5 26 b8+ e7 27 xa7 f6 28 b6 g6, and now 29 c1 would have caused Black the most problems.

b) 9...0-0 and now:

b1) 10 0-0 d7 11 c3 f6 12 e3 xc3 13 bxc3 c7 14 c4 f6



Zontakh-Mirkovic, Novak Nikolic Mem. 1998. White's bishop is too strong to be allowed to survive in this kind of position, but after 15 xd2 xd5 16 cxd5 d7 17 f4 xd8 18 fe1 e8 19 eac1 e8 20 ec3 White was ready to swing his rook over to the kingside, leaving Black with the standard dilemma of being unable to contest the dark squares.

b2) 10 e3 b6 11 0-0 d6 12 d2 e6 13 f4 e5 14 b4! xb4 (14...d4 15 xc4 xc4 16 fcl) 15 xb4 cxb4 16 xe6 fxe6 17 xe6+ h8 18 f4 d3 19 d1 d8 20 d5 and the bishop pair favoured White in Granda Zuniga-Gendjer, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

c) 9...d6 10 0-0 d7 11 d3 0-0 12 f4

and now 12...♖xd5 13 ♖xd5 transposes to 'a4', while in Hertneck-Kallai, European Cup, Strasbourg 1994, the knight travelled further with 12...♗e6. Then 13 ♖e3 ♗b8 14 a4 a6 15 a5 b5 16 axb6 ♗xb6 17 b4! ♗c7 18 bxc5 ♗xc5 19 ♗d2 was enough to provide White with something to build on in the form of his supremacy in the centre. For the moment the a-pawn is irrelevant, while White's grip on d5 and his kingside pawn majority are relevant indeed.

Incidentally 9 ♗h5 looks ambitious but soon peters out to equality. Ward-J.Howell, British League 1996, continued 9...0-0 10 ♖f3 ♖d7 11 ♖g5 ♗xg5 12 ♗xg5 ♖f6 13 ♗xf6 (Ward gives 13 ♗h4 ♗a5+! 14 ♗d2 ♗a4) 13...♗xf6 14 0-0, and now instead of 14...♗xb2 15 ♗ab1 ♗f6 16 ♗fc1 Black chose the safer 14...♗b8! 15 ♗ac1 b6.

With 9 ♖f3 White intends to let the d5-square look after itself, in some cases dropping the bishop back to c4 or b3, or trading on e6 after ...♗e6. Meanwhile White's knight protects d4, monitors e5 and is ready to transfer to c4 (via d2 or e5) should an opposing piece need to be removed (or attacked) or the d-pawn – after a recapture on d5 – advanced.

9...0-0 10 0-0



10...a6

Occasionally starting on the edge of the board can be the most flexible way to develop a piece, and here the knight is able to

drop back to c7 to contest the d5-square or continue to e6 (-d4), or advance to b4. Of course the b4-square can be reached via c6, but in 'a', below, White puts a stop to this after 10...♖c6. Here are examples of alternatives to Gyimesi's speciality.

a) 10...♖c6 looks fine until one considers that White might well part with his excellent bishop if it means causing serious and permanent damage to Black's queenside pawns. Romero Holmes-Estremera Panos, Salamanca 1998, is typical of how White should patiently go about addressing his opponent's new weaknesses after 11 ♗xc6 bxc6. The game continued 12 ♗e3 ♗e6 13 ♗c2 ♗a5 14 ♗fc1 ♗fd8 and now White avoided 15 ♗xc5? ♗xc5 16 ♗xc5? ♗d1+ and exploited the position of his knight with 15 ♖e5!



Notice that since doubling Black's pawns White has directed his forces against c4, c5 and, now, c6! Additionally White is also ready to mobilise his kingside pawn majority with f2-f4.

b) 10...♖d7 11 ♗e2 ♗c7 met with 12 e5! in Beim-Wagman, Aosta 1990. With his knight on f3 this centre/kingside expansion is available to White. After 12...♖b6 13 ♗e4 ♗e6 (13...♗g4 14 ♗xh7+ ♗xh7 15 ♗e4+) 14 ♗e1 Black might consider placing his rooks on d8 and e8, although White's pieces point to the kingside and the e-pawn provides White with much room for manoeuvre. Black played 14...♗ae8 15 ♖g5 ♗xg5 16

♙xg5 ♙d5 in order to further alleviate his defensive task with another trade of minor pieces. White's response, however, serves to remind us how a space advantage can soon grow to decisive proportions after ostensibly logical moves from the defender: 17 ♙xh7+! ♙h7 18 ♙h5+ ♙g8 19 ♙f6!



A fitting culmination of White's strategy – Black has taken over the d5-square but g7 is the new focus of attention. After 19...gxf6 20 ♙g4+ ♙h7 21 exf6 ♙h6 22 f4 Black will soon be mated.

c) 10...♙b6 11 ♙e3!

We have already seen that Black's queen can be embarrassed when it shares the a7-g1 diagonal with White's bishop. Here the b2-pawn is safe because 11...♙xb2 12 ♙b1 and 13 ♙xb7 opens the queenside in White's favour. Now Yusupov-Ehlvest, Belfort 1988 saw the automatic 11...♙e6? allow White's intended 12 b4! with a clear advantage to White, since 12...♙xb4 13 ♙b1 is even worse for Black than before. Meanwhile the c5-pawn is pinned, and White threatens to open the b-file anyway. Black came up with a perfectly sound continuation in Ibragimov-Estrada Nieto, Ubeda 1997: 11...♙c6 12 ♙c1 ♙g4 13 h3 ♙e6 14 ♙xe6 fxe6 15 ♙c2 and now Chris Ward justifiably recommends 15...♙b4, when Black must be only slightly worse. Instead there followed 15...♙a6? 16 ♙xc5 ♙xc5 17 ♙xc5 ♙xa2 18 ♙b5! and White threatened both 19 ♙a1 and 19 ♙xb7.

In fact the game was over after only ten more moves: 18...a6 19 ♙xb7 ♙a5 20 ♙c7 ♙f7 21 ♙e5 ♙b7 22 ♙g5 ♙e7 23 ♙c7 ♙xc7 24 ♙xc7 ♙xb2 25 e5 ♙b3 26 ♙f7+ ♙h8 27 ♙xc6 ♙g8 28 ♙d8! 1-0.

Finally if Black maintains the pin with 13...♙h5 White has 14 g4! ♙g6 15 ♙d2, heading for the attractive c4-square and toying with the idea of trapping Black's bishop with f2-f4-f5 etc. Again this is a key difference between posting the knight on f3 and e2.

11 ♙b3!?

As if expecting a future ...♙c7/b4 to be too inconvenient White elects to retreat his bishop anyway. Otherwise why not just get on with normal development? After 11 ♙f4 ♙b6, 12 ♙e5 again hopes to justify 9 ♙f3 by teaming up with the queen's bishop to cover the d6-square after landing on c4. Now 12...♙xb2? 13 ♙xf7+! is final, e.g. 13...♙xf7 (or 13...♙h8 14 ♙h5 etc.) 14 ♙d5. Alternatively 12...♙e6 13 ♙c4 ♙d8 14 ♙xe6 leaves White with both superior pieces and pawn structure.

The logical continuation is 11...♙c7



From c7 the knight hits d5 and supports ...♙e6 without voluntarily accepting an isolated pawn on e6 after the bishop trade we just considered. Now 12 ♙xc7 ♙xc7 13 h3 ♙b6 14 ♙c2 ♙e6 15 ♙ad1 ♙ad8 16 b3 ♙xd5 17 exd5 ♙f6 is approximately equal as it is not clear how White can successfully

infiltrate with his knight. However, in Z.Varga-Afek, Budapest 1991, White provided us with an interesting plan which involves a 'positive' retreat, namely 12 ♖c4 ♗e6 13 ♗e2!?. The idea is to eventually exploit White's kingside pawn majority and extra space to generate play in the centre and on the kingside. Should Black seek to avoid an unpleasant offensive with 13...♞xd1 14 ♜fxd1, White will already have the d-file and Black's knight will be misplaced on c7. The game went 13...♙e8 14 ♞c2 h6 15 ♞fd1 ♞b6 16 ♗e5! ♙d6 17 ♗e3 ♞ac8 18 f4 with the by now familiar plan of ♙f3-e5 and f2-f4. White's bishops perform a dual-purpose task in that they support the thematic advance of the kingside pawns while simultaneously monitoring the queenside in order to slow down Black's counterplay. It is surprising how quickly White's kingside pawns can trouble Black's minor pieces and kingside in general, and awareness of this fact makes White's game so much easier to play. Here the tempo of the game soon changed: 18...♞c7 19 ♗f2 g6 20 g4! ♗f6 21 ♙xg6! fxg6 22 e5 and Black's third rank was beginning to look a little suspect.



11...♙c7

Keeping an eye on d5 and preparing to challenge the bishop anyway by bringing his own to e6. Against 11...♙b4 it has been suggested that White follow up 12 ♞xd8 ♞xd8 with 13 ♗g5!?, which looks enough for a tiny

pull. Black experiences some discomfort but with queens off he has reasonable chances to secure a level game. 11...♞b6 again meets with 12 ♙e5 when, as well as the usual outpost on c4, White has the f7-pawn in his sights. After 12...♗f6 13 ♙c4 ♞c7 14 ♞f3 the prospect of the tempo-gaining ♗f4 augments White's lead. White should respond to 12...♗e6 with 13 ♙d7 ♗xd7 14 ♞x47, e.g. 14...♗f6 15 ♞f5 g6 16 ♞f3 ♗g7 when both 17 ♞d1 ♞ad8 18 ♗g5 and 17 ♗g5! favour White thanks mainly to the poor knight.

12 ♞xd8

A queen trade does not necessarily mean an end to uncompromising or aggressive play. In this case White judges that his development advantage is sufficiently significant to permit him to keep the momentum going, and there is an important factor to consider here in that the 'natural' recapture on d8 is the inferior choice. Moreover White's kingside pawn majority is no less mobile without a queen on the board, and while other pieces remain the plan of a kingside offensive will be effective.

12...♞xd8

Gyimesi proposes the ostensibly less active 12...♗xd8 as an improvement. The reasoning behind this is that in the game Black's knight proves awkwardly placed on e6, whereas on c7 at least the d5-square is protected. Therefore by recapturing with the bishop Black defends the knight and earns time to get his queenside in order, no longer having to worry about 13 ♗f4. Consequently 13 ♗e3 b6 14 ♞ad1 ♗f6 15 e5 ♗e7 16 ♗g5! has been suggested as White's best try, and it is true that the onus is still on Black to keep his opponent's advantage to a minimum. However, this looks preferable to the greedy 14...♗b7 15 ♙e5 ♗xe4 16 ♞d7 ♗g6 17 ♙xg6 hxg6 18 ♞fd1, e.g. 18...♙e6 19 ♗d5, or 18...♞c8 19 ♗xf7+ etc. Perhaps Black might consider 14...♗e6 15 ♗xe6 ♙xe6 with the intention of evicting White's rook after 16 ♞d7 ♞e8 17 ♞fd1 ♙f8.

13 ♠f4

Now White is happy to lure the knight to e6, where it will be a target – eventually – for the f-pawn. Forcing it from c7 also hands the d5-square back to White.

13...♙e6

Note that 13...♙d6? walks into a pin after 14 ♖ad1, when both 14...♙b5 15 ♙g5 (exploiting another pin) and 14...♙e8 15 ♙g5 ♖d7 16 ♙a4 practically win for White.

14 ♙g3!



White has a development lead, the better pieces and the d5-square holds more promise than does the d4-square for Black. Add to this his potentially more dangerous pawn majority, and the exchange of queens becomes irrelevant.

14...♙f6!?

Black provokes the e5-pawn. Others:

14...♙d7 15 ♙d5 ♙c6 16 ♖ad1 ♙f6 17 ♙xc6 bxc6 18 ♙e5 ♙xe5 19 ♙xe5 ♙d4 20 ♙3 ♖ab8 (20...♙f6 21 ♙c4) 21 b3 is typical, with Black's queenside weaknesses too big a price to pay for the outpost on d4.

The immediate 14...♙d4 15 ♙xd4 favours White after both 15...♖xd4 16 ♙d5 and 15...cxd4 16 ♙d5.

Finally the attempt to pretend normal development is enough with 14...b6?! 15 ♖fd1! ♙b7 invites White to cement his grip on d5 with 16 ♙d5!, when the bishop is wonderfully positioned on g3 to facilitate the advance of the d-pawn in the event of an ex-

change on d5. Worse for Black is 15...♙a6? 16 ♙e5 ♙f6 17 ♙d5.

15 ♙e5! ♙f8

At first glance an odd looking move, but now Black can land his knight on d4 without ♙xf7 being check. After the hasty 15...♙d4?, for example, White has 16 ♙xf7+ ♙f8 17 ♙d5 and now 17...♙e2+ 18 ♙h1 ♙xg3+ 19 ♙g3 pins the bishop! 15...♖d2? needs to be investigated. 16 ♙c4 16...♖e2 17 e5 ♙e7 18 ♙d1 ♖e4 19 ♙d6 leaves the rook punching air, and 16 ♖ab1? also looks good for White. First 16...♙d4? 17 ♙xf7+ ♙f8 18 ♙d5 ♙e2+ 19 ♙h1 ♙xg3+ 20 ♙g3 again backfires, while 16...♙xe5 17 ♙xe5 ♙d4 18 ♙d5 reminds Black that half of his queenside is still at home.

16 ♙f4!

After seeing the black king move away from the a2-g8 diagonal and on to the f-file White is more than willing to permit the doubling of his pawns if this means clearing the way for his rook.

16...♖d2?!

After this act of aggression White's pawns dominate. Black should try testing his opponent's plan regardless of the subsequent attention to his f-pawn: 16...♙xe5 17 ♙xe5 ♖d2 (17...♖d4 18 ♙d5) 18 ♖f3! ♙g5 (18...♖xb2 19 ♖af1 ♙g5 20 ♖xf7+ ♙xd7 21 e6) 19 ♖xf7+! ♙xf7 20 ♖f1



If White can keep Black under pressure after taking on f7 the sacrifice will have been

worthwhile. After 20...♖e8 21 ♙xf7+ (21 ♜xf7? b5!) 21...♗d8 22 ♙h4+ ♜c7 23 ♙d5!? ♜xb2 24 ♙f7+ ♗b6 25 e6 Black's rook and bishop are still shut out of the game, White's e-pawn is close to glory and Black's kingside pawns are doomed. Black does have the c-pawn, but it lacks support. The other try is 20...b5 21 ♙xf7, when 21...♞d1 22 ♜xd1 ♗xf7 23 ♞d5 is good for White, as is 21...♜b8 22 ♙f4!? ♗xf7 (22...♞e2 23 e6 ♜b6 24 ♙h5; 22...♜xb2 23 e6 ♜b6 24 ♙g5) 23 ♙xd2+ ♗e6 (23...♗e7 24 ♙e3) 24 ♙f8, e.g. 24...♞a8 (24...♗xe5 25 ♙f4+) 25 ♞e8+ ♗f7 26 ♞d8 ♗e6 27 ♙f4 c4 28 ♗f2 b4 29 ♗e3 c3 30 bxc3 bxc3 31 ♗d4 ♙b7 (31...c2 32 ♞d6+ ♗e7 33 ♞c6) 32 ♞d6+ ♗e7 33 ♙g5+ ♗e8 34 ♙e6+ ♗f8 35 ♞e7 ♞d8+ 36 ♗xc3 ♙xe4 37 ♜xa7 etc.

17 ♖f3!

Better than 17 ♖c4 ♙d4+ 18 ♗h1 ♞e2 19 ♙d1 ♞xe4 20 ♙f3 ♜xf4 21 ♙xf4 ♖xf4 which might give White an edge.

17...♜xb2 18 e5 ♙d8 19 f5 ♖g5

19...♖d4 20 ♖xd4 cxd4 21 e6 fxe6 22 fxe6+ ♙f6 23 ♙d6+ ♗e8 24 ♙ae1 and White brings his final piece into play.

20 e6



20...♖xf3+

O- 20...♖e4 21 ♙e5 ♞e2 22 ♙ae1 ♞xe1 23 ♞xe1 ♖f6 24 exf7 ♙e7 25 g4 b5 (25...♙d7 26 ♖g5; 25...♖xg4 26 ♙d6!) 26 g5 c4 (26...♙b7 27 gxf6 gxf6 28 ♙f4 c4 29 ♙d1!) 27 ♙c2!, and now 27...♖g4 28 ♙xg7+

♗xf7 29 g6+ hxg6 30 fxg6+ ♗xg7 31 ♞xe7+ ♗f6 (31...♗g8 32 ♙e4 ♜b8 33 ♙d5+) 32 ♙f7+ ♗e6 33 ♙f8 and 27...♙b7 28 ♖d4 ♖d5 29 g6 hxg6 30 fxg6 ♙c5 31 ♗f1 win for White.

21 ♜xf3 ♞d2 22 ♙f4 ♞d4 23 ♙e5 ♙f6

Black's rook is in danger of running out of steam, e.g. 23...♞d2 24 ♙c3 ♞e2 25 ♞d1.

24 ♙f6 gxf6 25 ♞e1 fxe6

Not 25...c4? 26 e7+ ♗e8 27 ♙a4+ ♙d7 28 ♙g3 ♙xa4 29 ♞g8+ ♗d7 30 ♙xa8 etc.

26 fxe6 ♗e7



The king is not an ideal blockader.

27 ♞g3!?

27 ♞h3 is more logical, e.g. 27...♗d6 (27...c4 28 ♜xh7+ ♗d6 29 ♞h8 cxb3 30 e7) 28 ♜xh7 c4 29 ♞h8! ♗e7 30 ♙c2.

27...b5 28 ♞g7+ ♗d6 29 ♞g8 ♗e7

White wins after both 29...c4 30 e7 and 29...♙b7 30 ♙xa8 ♙xa8 31 e7 ♙c6 32 ♞e6+. 30 ♙c2! ♞d5 31 ♞g7+??

Whoops. White can get another passed pawn rolling after 31 ♙xh7 ♞e5 32 ♞xe5 fxe5 33 ♙e4 ♜b8 34 h4, e.g. 34...c4 35 h5 b4 36 h6 b3 37 axb3 cxb3 38 h7, or 34...♗xe6 35 h5 ♗f7 36 ♙d5+ ♗e7 37 h6.

31...♗d6 32 e7 ♙e6 33 ♙e4 ♞e8! 34 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 35 ♞e2?

Again White ignores the h7-pawn: 35 ♜xh7! ♙xa2 36 ♞d1+ ♗e6 37 ♞e1+! draws. Now Black is in the driving seat...

35...c4 36 ♜xh7 c3! 37 ♗f2 b4?

Another in a series of mistakes that fea-

ture in the rest of the game – understandable in such a complex ending. Correct is 37...♙c4!! 38 ♖e3 b4 39 ♖h6 c2 40 ♖xf6+ ♗d7 41 ♖e1 ♙xa2 42 ♖a6 b3 43 ♖xa7+ ♗c6 44 ♖c1 ♗d6.

38 ♗e3!

Excellent. White faces facts and is prepared to part with his once mighty e-pawn. 38...♗c5?!

38...♖xe7+ 39 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 40 ♗d4+ ♗d6 41 h4 a5 42 h5 ♙xa2! 43 ♖xa2 b3 44 ♗xc3 bxa2 45 ♗b2 ♗e7 46 g4 ♗f7 +7 ♗xa2 ♗g7 48 ♗b3 ♗h6 49 ♗a4 f5 with a draw. 39 ♖f2 ♙xa2!

A good try. Instead 39...a5 40 ♖xf6 ♙xa2 41 ♖f8 wins for White.

40 ♖xa2 b3 41 ♖h5+?

Wrong rook! 41 ♖a5+ wins: 41...♗d6 (+1...♗b4 42 ♖xa7 c2 43 ♗d2 ♖c8 44 ♖b7+ ♗a3 45 ♗c1; 41...♗b6 42 ♖a3 b2 43 ♖b3+ ♗a5 44 ♗d3; 41...♗c6 42 ♖a3 c2 43 ♗d2; 41...♗c4 42 ♖h4 mate) 42 ♖a6+ ♗d7 43 ♖xa7+ ♗e6 44 ♖b7 b2 45 ♗d3 ♖c8 46 e8 ♖+.

41...♗d6 42 ♖a6+?

42 ♖a1! b2 43 ♖d1+ ♗xe7 44 ♖c5 ♗f8+ 45 ♗f4 ♖b8 46 ♖b1 ♖b3 47 ♗e4 ♖a3 48 ♗d3.

42...♗xe7 43 ♖h7+ ♗f8+??

The final blunder. White still has work to do after 43...♗d8+! 44 ♗d3 c2 since here after 45 ♖xa7 Black can queen his pawn. I have a feeling that White should have a win somewhere, but there is always the simplifying 45 ♖d6+ ♗c8 46 ♖c6+ ♗b8 47 ♖cc7 ♖e1! 48 ♖b7+ ♗c8 49 ♖xa7 ♗b8 50 ♖ab7+ ♗c8 51 ♖xb3 c1 ♖ 52 ♖c3+ ♖xc3+ 53 ♖xc3. 44 ♗d3 c2 45 ♖xa7 1-0

After 45...♗g8 46 ♖ag7+ ♗f8 47 ♖b7 ♗g8 48 ♖hc7 and 45...♖e7 46 ♖a8+ ♖e8 47 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 48 ♖c7 (or 48 ♗d2) are fairly simple, while the other try 45...♖d8+ is met by 46 ♗e4 ♖e8+ (46...♗g8 47 ♖ag7+ ♗f8 48 ♖b7 ♗g8 49 ♖hc7) 47 ♗f5 ♖e7 48 ♖a8+ ♖e8 49 ♗xf6! ♗g8 50 ♖g7+ ♗f8 51 ♖f7+ mates.

Game 4

Sakaev-Ibragimov

Russian Ch. 1999

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 c5 4 d5 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 b5



Bizarre but entirely logical! Black protects his extra pawn and threatens to undermine the defence of White's e4-pawn by attacking the knight with ...b5-b4. Of course the b5-pawn itself is not defended, but White should refrain from taking it, e.g. 6 ♗xb5?! ♖a5+ 7 ♗c3 ♗xe4 8 ♖d2 ♗xd2 9 ♖xd2 ♙a6 10 ♗f3 ♗d7 11 ♖e2 g6 and Black was better, Korchnoi-Lindinger, Wicher 1997.

6 ♙f4

6 e5 has the right look but is less effective than Sakaev's choice. After 6...b4 7 exf6 bxc3 8 bxc3 Black should play 8...♗d7! when 9 ♖a4 (9 fxe7 ♖xe7 10 ♙xc4 ♗b6 11 ♙b5+ ♖d7 is fine for Black) 9...exf6 10 ♙f4 ♖b6 11 ♙xc4 ♖d6 is equal. Instead 8...exf6?! 9 ♙xc4 ♖d6 10 ♖e2+ invites Black into an ending in which White's superior pawn structure counts for something, while Bacrot-Peric, Corsica (rapid) 1997, continued 8...♖a5 9 ♖d2 gxf6 10 ♙xc4 ♗d7 11 ♗f3 ♗b6 12 ♖c2 c4 13 0-0 ♖b7 14 ♖d1 ♖d8 15 ♖f4 with a development lead for White worth a pawn (or two). Black chose 15...♗xd5? rather than the better 15...♙xd5, and soon paid the price: 16 ♖xc4 ♗xc3 17

♙xd8+ ♜xd8 18 ♙f1 ♙xf3 19 ♙d2! ♞c7 20 ♞d3+ ♜d5 21 ♙c1 ♞b6 22 ♙b1! ♞c7 23 ♙b5 ♜e8 24 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 25 ♞xd5.

With 6 ♙f4 White simply brings a piece to a good square and prepares to add weight to ♜b5 in the event of ...b5-b4 by hitting the c7-square. Consequently Black has three ways of defending b5 before attacking the knight.

6...♙a6

As a6 may well be the best square for the bishop – especially as from here the c4-pawn is given added protection as well as the b5-pawn – this relatively recent idea is a promising alternative to the outwardly more aggressive pin (see below).

Others:

a) 6...♞a5 is popular.

a1) 7 a4 is better than its reputation, although after 7...♜xe4 White should ignore 8 axb5 ♜xc3 9 ♙xa5 ♜xd1 10 ♙xd1 ♜d7 11 ♙xc4 ♜b6 12 b3 ♙b7 13 ♜f3 ♙xd5 in favour of 8 ♜ge2 ♜d6 9 axb5 ♞b6 10 ♙xd6, e.g. 10...exd6 11 ♜g3 ♙e7 12 ♙xc4 0-0 13 0-0 ♙f6 14 ♞c2, Beliavsky-Kamsky, Linares 1993, or 10...♞xd6 11 ♜g3 g6 12 ♙xc4 ♙g7 13 0-0-0 14 ♜ge4, with a slight edge for White in both cases despite the absence of his dark-squared bishop.

a2) Again 7 e5 cries out to be played but should be avoided. After 7...♜e4 8 ♜ge2 ♜a6 9 f3 ♜b4! 10 fxe4 ♜d3+ 11 ♙d2 g6!! Black was having all the fun in Gelfand-Anand, Linares 1993.

see following diagram

There followed 12 b3 ♙g7 13 bxc4 ♜xf4 14 ♜xf4 ♙xe5 15 ♜fe2 b4 16 ♞a4+ (16 ♜a4 ♙d7) 16...♞xa4 17 ♜xa4 ♙xa1 18 ♜xe5 0-0 and by now Black was winning. Later, in Beliavsky-Comp Fritz 4, Slovenia (rapid) 1996, White tried 12 c6 ♜f2 13 ♞e1 ♜xh1 14 a4 fxe6 15 axb5 ♞b6 16 ♙c1. This does look like an improvement and is worth further investigation, but White has to be at least as careful as Black in this line, so it

makes more sense to settle for 'a3' or 'a4', both of which seem superior anyway.



a3) 7 f3 sensibly bolsters the centre and denies Black use of the g4-square. Now 7...g5?! has been seen occasionally but the pawn is too much to pay for Black's subsequent Benko-style activity after 8 ♙xg5. Over on the queenside 7...b4 is well met by 8 ♞a4+. The main line is 7...♜h5 8 ♙d2 ♜d7 9 f4



Vyzmanavin-Azmaiparashvili, Burgas 1994. After the forced 9...g6 (9...♜hf6? 10 e5) Vyzmanavin proposes 10 e5 ♙h6 11 ♜ge2 with the threat of snaring a piece by launching the g-pawn. Black's best is the obvious 11...b4, e.g. 12 ♜e4! ♙b7, so Ward suggests 12 ♞a4 with an evaluation of unclear. Instead the game went 10 ♙e2 ♙g7 (10...b4 11 ♞a4! is a reply given by Ftacnik) 11 e5 b4



and now White preferred the thematic 12 ♖a4 to 12 ♗e4 ♕b7 13 ♕xc4 ♖b6 14 ♖b3 in view of 14...♞d8. Then the retreat 12...♖b6 works out well for White after 13 ♗e4 ♕a6? 14 e6! fxe6 15 dxe6 ♖xe6 16 ♖xc5, or the lesser evil 13...♕b7 14 ♕xc4. However, Black might consider 12...♞d8 13 ♗e4 0-0 when the consistent 14 g4 means parting with a couple of pawns for the piece after either 14...♖xf4! 15 ♕xf4 ♖b6 or 15...♗xe5. Nevertheless in these complex positions the extra piece tends to be more useful than pawns. If this is not to Black's liking Ward's clever 12...♖a6! is a realistic possibility, forcing the exchange of queens on Black's terms. The game itself continued 12...♖xa4 13 ♖xa4 ♕a6 14 g4 ♖xf4 15 ♕xf4 ♕b5 16 b3 ♕xa4 (16...♗xe5) 17 bxa4 ♖xe5 18 0-0 c3 19 ♕b5+ ♖f8 20 h3 ♞d8 21 ♞h2 and both sides had chances of making something of their respective material 'gain'.

a4) 7 ♕d2 is most successful in the line 7...b4 8 e5 bxc3 9 ♕xc3, e.g. 9...♖a6 10 exf6 exf6 11 b3 ♕e7 12 ♕xc4 ♖d6 13 ♗e2 0-0 14 0-0 with a pleasant position for White in Shirov-Kramnik, Linares 1993. However, 8...♗g4? 9 e6 ♖f6 is stronger for Black than it first appears and will be just as inconvenient to White as e5-e6 has been for Black. Another possibility to consider is 7...e5 8 f4 ♖bd7 9 ♖f3 ♕d6 with a view to establishing a grip on the dark squares. All in all I prefer 7

f3.

b) 6...a6 guards b5 with a lowly pawn rather than bringing out a piece. After 7 e5 b4 8 exf6 bxc3 9 bxc3 Black has tried three moves:

b1) 9...♖a5 10 ♞c1 gxf6 11 ♕xc4 h5 12 ♖f3 ♗d7 13 0-0 ♖b6 14 ♗c7



Legky-Peric, Martinez 2000. The diagram position is hardly any better for Peric than his game against Bacrot, above. The fact that an IM can find himself in trouble so early illustrates how Black's game-plan can so easily fall apart in the 5...b5 variation. In fact after 14...♞a7 15 d6 exd6 16 ♞e1+ ♕e6 17 ♕xb6 ♖xb6 18 ♞b1 ♖d8 19 ♕xe6 fxe6 20 ♞xc6+ ♖f7 21 ♖d5 ♖g7 22 ♖h4 Black's situation was embarrassing enough to resign at once.

b2) 9...♗d7 10 ♖a4 ♖b6 11 fxe7 ♕xe7 12 ♕xc4 ♖b2 13 ♞c1 ♕d6 14 ♕e3 ♞b8 15 ♖f3 0-0 16 ♕d3 f5 17 0-0 and Black – faced with the prospect of ♖f3-d2-c4 – was much worse in Markeluk-Juarez, Buenos Aires 1989.

b3) The same players reached the same position in a tournament in Acasusso 1991. Then Black tried 9...gxf6 10 ♕xc4 ♗d7 11 ♖a4 ♕g7 and White endeavoured to justify his early queen sortie with 12 ♖c6! ♞a7 13 ♞b1 0-0 14 d6! exd6 15 ♕xd6 ♗e5 16 ♕xe5 ♞c8 17 ♗e2 fxe5. White's light-square control is enough to leave him comfortably better after 18 0-0, but he decided to take the

strategy further by sacrificing the exchange – and bagging a couple of pawns in the process! > after 18 ♖xc5 ♜c7 19 ♖d5 ♖e7 20 ♖e4 ♜d8 21 0-0 ♙b7 22 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 23 ♙xa6 ♜a7 24 ♙c4 ♖d7 25 ♙g3.

7 e5



With the e4-square not available to Black this thrust makes more sense. Now Black must decide whether to retreat or make a counter.

7...b4

The alternative is 7...♙f7!? and now:

a) 8 e6 ♙b6 (8...♙f6 9 ♙xc4! bxc4 10 ♖a4+ ♙fd7 11 ♙xb8) 9 exf7+ ♖xf7 10 ♖f3 is complex indeed. White should complete his development as quickly as possible.

b) 8 a4 b4 9 ♙b5 ♙xb5 10 axb5 ♙b6 11 e6!? f6 12 ♙g3 g6 13 ♙e2 a5 14 ♙f3 ♜a7



Chess should be fun, and both sides can claim to be having a good time in this strange

position.

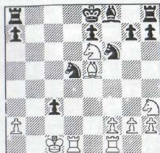
c) 8 ♙f3. This looks a bit too sensible compared with 'a' and 'b'! After 8...b4 9 ♙e4 ♙b6 10 d6 ♙d8d7 11 ♖e2 followed by castling queenside White has compensation for the pawn.

8 e6!?

Pawns certainly have a lot to do in this variation! Amazingly White doesn't bother capturing the knight on f6 and – despite his own knight coming under fire – instead elects to play his positional card by disrupting Black's kingside development. Before investigating the implications of this thrust let us consider what happens after 8 exf6 bxc3 9 bxc3. Instead of 9...exf6 10 d6 Black's best is 9...gxf6 10 ♜b1. Then 10...♙d7 11 ♖a4 ♖c8 12 ♙xc4 ♙xc4 13 ♖xc4 ♙b6 14 ♖e4 ♖d7 15 ♜d1 ♜d8 16 ♙f3 gives White a slight pull as the d5-pawn is (for the moment) safe, e.g. 16...♙xd5 (16...f5 17 ♖c2 ♙xd5? 18 ♙e5) 17 e4 ♙c3 18 ♜xd7 ♙xe4 19 ♜xa7. Khalifman-Ponomarev, European Cup 2000, saw a more interesting course: 10...♙g7 11 ♖g4 (11 ♙xc4 ♙xc4 12 ♖a4+ ♙d7 13 ♖xc4 ♙b6) 11...♖xd5 12 ♙e2 ♖e4 13 ♜xb8+ ♜xb8 14 ♙xb8 ♖b1+ 15 ♙d1 0-0 16 ♙c7 ♜c8 17 ♖f4, and now after 17...♖b7 (17...e5 18 ♖d2 ♜xc7?? 19 ♖d8+) 18 ♙a5 ♖b5 19 ♙c7 ♖b2! 20 ♙e2 e5 21 ♙xe5 fxe5 22 ♖g4 ♜f8 23 0-0 f5 and White was in a degree of trouble.

8...fxe6?!

8...♖a5!? carries on as normal and forces the exchange of queens with 9 ♖a4+ as 9 exf7+ ♖xf7 10 ♙e4 ♙xe4 11 ♖f3 ♙f6 12 d6 c3 is good for Black, e.g. 13 bxc3 b3, or 13 ♖xa8 cxb2 14 ♜d1 b3+ 15 ♙d2 bxa2 16 ♙xa5 a1 ♖ 17 ♖xb8 ♖xa5+ 18 ♜d2 ♙xf1. After (9 ♖a4+) 9...♖xa4 10 ♙xa4 ♙xd5 White should leave his pawn on e6, 11 ♙h3 c3 12 bxc? ♙xf1 13 ♜xf1 bxc3 14 ♙xc5 offering compensation for the pawn in the form of Black's problems with development. A typical continuation might be 14...fxe6 15 ♙xe6 ♙d7 16 0-0 ♙d7f6 17 ♙e5.



Black still needs to sort out his kingside but White is running out of pieces to make his bind pay, and this general factor makes 8...a5 Black's most attractive option as long as he can hold his position together. 8...bxc3 on the other hand, cannot be recommended, as 9 a4+ b7 10 xa6 d5 (10...cxb2 11 b1 fxe6 12 dxe6) 11 exd7+ xd7 12 0-0-0 is decisive, e.g. 12...cxb2+ 13 xb2 c3+ 14 c1 c2 15 d5! (15 b5?? cxd1+ 16 dxd1 c3+) 15...xd5 16 b5+. 9 a4+ d7?

A mistake is understandable in such a complex situation (and so early in the game). After 9...d7? 10 dxe6 bxc3 11 xa6 cxb2 12 d1 Black is in trouble, while 9...d7 10 dxe6 bxc3 11 bxc3 b6 12 xc4 xc4 13 exd7+ d7 14 xc4 gives White a definite advantage thanks to the fewer pawn islands and more secure king position (after 0-0). Instead of blocking the check Black's best is 9...f7! 10 dxe6+ g8 (10...xe6? 11 xb8) 11 b5 e8 12 xc4 b7 with a very messy position indeed. In the main game Black has nothing to show for the unwelcome visitor on e6.

10 dxe6 a4 11 xa4

Black cannot hang on to the extra pawn and, unlike the variation with 9...f7! in the previous note, his pieces lack harmony.

11...b5

I suspect that Black's best chance lies in returning the pawn as follows: 11...c3 12

bxc3 xf1 13 xf1 d5. The sequence 11...e4 12 f3 b5 13 fxe4 xa4 14 xc4 c6 works out very well for White, who can maintain the queenside pressure with 15 b3! a5 16 d5 c6 17 c1.

12 xc5 c6

Unfortunately for Black the attempt to relieve some of the pressure with 12...d5 13 e3 a6 fails to 14 b3!, with the nasty threat of d4. After the text Black must lose the second c-pawn.

13 c1 d5 14 xc4! xc4 15 xc4 xf4 16 xf4



The diagram position is a good advert for the disruptive plan with e5-e6, regardless of Black's possible improvements earlier. White has a points lead to add to the e6-pawn, and both sides need to get their kingside pieces into the game.

16...g5 17 c4 g7 18 f3

18 h4! g4 19 e2 is another way to keep White well in control, although with such a good position it is difficult to avoid a very good ending.

18...e5

18...g4 fails to avoid a clearly worse position after either 19 a6 gxf3 20 xc6 fxe2 21 g1 d8 22 xg2 xb2 23 b4 or 19 xg4 xb2 20 e2, while 18...xb2? 19 a4! e5 20 b2 xc4 21 xc4 gives White two great knights for a rook.

19 xe5 xe5 20 d3 d6 21 h4!

A nice way of connecting the rooks.

21...gxh4 22 ♖cxh4

The h7-pawn makes a far more attractive trophy than the one on b4.

22...a5 23 ♖xh7 ♖g8 24 g3 0-0-0 25 ♖e2 ♖b7 26 ♖7h4 ♖g6 27 ♖e4 ♖g5 28 g4 ♖d5 29 ♖d1 ♖b6 30 b3 ♖c8 31 ♖d2 ♖b5 32 ♖b2 ♖xd2+ 33 ♖xf2 ♖c5 34 ♖d3 ♖d6 35 f4 a4 36 g5 a3 37 f5 ♖f8 38 f6 1-0

Game 5

Sakaev-Rublevsky

Yugoslav Team Ch. 1999

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♖f3 exd4

The immediate check has had less success than the main game. White's easiest route to advantage is as follows: 4...♖b4+ 5 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 6 ♖xd2 exd4 7 ♖xd4 when White intends to win back the (c4-) pawn with more space. After 7...♖f6 8 ♖c3 ♖e7 9 f3 ♖e6 10 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 11 ♖d4 ♖c6 12 ♖xc4 White has the added bonus of a potentially useful bishop. Instead Black usually plays 7...♖e7 8 f3 ♖f6 9 ♖xc4 0-0 10 ♖c3.



White is slightly better thanks to his secure e4-pawn – which affords him more room for manoeuvre and keeps Black on his toes with the constant menace of an advance – and centrally located pieces. Groszpeter-Zsu. Polgar, Hungarian Ch. 1991, went 10...♖bd7 11 0-0 (11 ♖f5 ♖c5 12 ♖g5? g6 is fine for Black) 11...♖d8 and now instead of 12 ♖e3?!

♖b6! 13 ♖b3 c5! 14 ♖de2 c4 when White loses his grip on d5, best is 12 ♖e2! ♖e5 13 ♖e3 and White maintains the lead.

With 10...c5 Black addresses the centre on his own terms, concentrating on d4. In Andersson-Seirawan, Tilburg 1990, Black came up with an interesting way of defending d5: after 11 ♖de2 ♖d8 12 ♖e3 ♖e6 13 ♖xe6 fxe6 14 0-0 ♖c6 15 ♖ad1 b6 Black had pawns covering both d4 and d5. In fact White resorted to the same method to maintain a slight lead, replying with 16 e5 ♖d5 17 ♖e4 ♖f7 18 f4 ♖xc3 19 bxc3!, when the d6-square became more significant now that d5 could be protected with the move c3-c4 if necessary.

5 ♖xc4 ♖b4+ 6 ♖bd2 ♖c6

The stubborn 6...c5 spends valuable time protecting the d4-pawn and also cuts off the bishop on b4. Sulypa-Hollerbuhl, Berlin 1998 continued 7 ♖e5 ♖h6 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♖b3 ♖f6 10 ♖h5 ♖e8 11 f4 ♖e6 12 a3 ♖xc4 13 ♖xc4 b5 14 e5 ♖e6 15 ♖d6 ♖f8 16 ♖f3 and White was winning. I'm sure there are improvements but this is not the way for Black to play.

7 0-0 ♖f6

a) 7...♖e7 is one of two tries with the queen. After 8 ♖b3 ♖g4 9 ♖bxd4 ♖e5 White is given the opportunity for a nice – albeit temporary – queen sacrifice: 10 ♖xe5! ♖xd1 11 ♖xf7+



Tukmakov-Avner, World U26 Team Ch.

1966. Now 11...♘d8 12 ♖xd1 will soon see Black down on points, so Avner played 11...♘f8 12 ♙e6+ ♖xe6 13 ♙xe6 ♙e2, but 14 ♙f7 ♙xf1 15 ♘xf1 ♙e7 16 ♙b3 ♙f6 17 ♙xh8 ♖xh8 18 f3 left White with an extra pawn and the bishop pair.

b) 7...♖f6 borrows an idea from another position (after 6 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 7 ♙bxd2 ♙c6 8 0-0) but looks too risky here. As Ward points out White can already secure a safe lead by steering the game to an ending with 8 ♙b3 ♙g4 9 ♙bxd4 ♙xd4 10 ♖xd4 ♙xf3 11 ♖xf6 ♙xf6 12 gxf3 etc. However, 8 e5 is crying out to be played, e.g. 8...♖g6 9 ♙h4 ♖g4 10 ♙df3 ♙e6 11 h3 ♖e4 12 ♙d3 ♖d5 13 ♙g5



Now 13...♖xe5! 14 ♙h3 ♖d5 15 ♙e4 ♖d7 16 ♙xc6 bxc6 17 ♙xe6 fxe6 18 ♙xd4 0-0-0 19 ♖a4! ♖xd4 20 ♙e3 was complicated in Bonsch-Chekhov, Halle 1987, while 18 ♖xd4 leaves White with much the healthier pawn structure that outweighs the pawn deficit. From the diagram position Timman-Tal, Candidates playoff 1985, went 13...♙e7 14 ♙e4 ♖d7 15 ♙xe6 ♖xe6 16 ♙xc6+ bxc6 17 ♖xd4 ♖d8 18 ♖a4 ♙c5 19 ♖c2 and now 19...♙b6 20 ♙g5 ♙e7 21 ♙xe7 ♙e7 22 ♙f5+ ♙d7 looks fun only from White's side of the board. Tal tried 19...♙d5 20 b4! ♙d4 21 ♙f5 ♙xe5 22 ♙e1 (threatening 23 ♙xg7+) 22...♙f8 23 ♙b2 ♖xf5 24 ♖xf5 ♙h2+ 25 ♙xh2 ♖xf5 26 ♙ad1 ♙d5 27 ♖xd5 cxd5 28 ♙c1 and Black's yet to be developed

pieces were the decisive factor. Incidentally 20...♙b6 21 ♙f5 ♖g6 22 ♙g5! highlights Black's problem, e.g. 22...♖xg5 (22...h6 23 e6 fxe6 24 ♙d6+ - Timman) 23 ♖xc6+ ♙d7 24 e6 (M.Trauth) 24...fxe6 25 ♙ad1 ♖xf5 (25...♙f6 26 ♖xe6+ ♙d8 27 ♖xd7+ ♙xd7 28 ♙d1) 26 ♖xd7 ♙e7 27 ♙d8 28 ♙f8 29 ♙a4! a5 28 bxa5 ♙xa5 (28...♙a7 29 ♖d8+ ♙f7 30 ♖xc7+) 29 ♖d8+ ♙f7 30 ♙d7+ ♙g6 31 g4 ♖e5 32 ♖e8+ ♙h6 33 h4 etc.

c) No better is 7...♙h6 8 ♙b3 ♙g4 9 ♙d5, e.g. 9...♙e5 10 ♖xd4! ♙xf3+ 11 gxf3 ♙xf3 12 ♙xh6 ♖d7 13 ♖e5+ 1-0 Korchnoi-Mestrovic, Sarajevo 1969.

d) 7...♙xd2 voluntarily surrenders the bishop and facilitates White's development. 8 ♙xd2 ♙ge7 9 ♙g5 ♙e5 10 ♙b3 h6 11 f4 hxf5 12 fxe5 0-0 13 ♙xg5 ♙e6 14 ♙xe6 fxe6 15 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 16 ♖g4 ♖f7 17 ♖f1 ♖g6 18 h4 is not untypical, e.g. 18...♙c6 19 h5 ♙xe5 20 ♖f4 ♖xh5 21 ♖xe5 and Black soon resigned in Xu Jun-Ardiansyah, Jakarta 1987.

e) The main alternative to Rublevsky's choice is 7...♙e6 8 ♙xe6 fxe6 when 9 ♙b3 has been seen a number of times and leads to a better game for White but I prefer the thematic 9 ♖b3 with pressure against e6 and b7. Then Touzane-Pinkus, Geneva 1996 should serve as a warning to Black of the danger of hanging on to pawns at the cost of development: 9...♙xd2?! 10 ♙xd2 e5? 11 ♙ac1 ♙b8 12 ♙g5 ♖d7 13 ♙xc6! ♖xc6 14 ♖f7+ ♙d8 15 ♙e6+ ♙c8 16 ♙c1 1-0.

Returning to 9 ♖b3, Black quickly sent his king to the queenside in Amado-H.Garcia, Zarate 1972: 9...♖d7 10 ♙c4 0-0-0 11 ♙g5 ♙f8 12 ♙fe5! ♙xe5 13 ♖xb4 (hitting f8) 13...♙g6 14 ♙ac1. With most of his pieces over on the kingside Black has obvious defensive problems. The game continued 14...♙b8 (hoping to improve on 14...c6 15 ♙e5! ♖e8 16 ♙xg6 hxf6 17 ♖xd4, Florian-Sliwa, Gyula 1965) 15 ♙a5 ♖c8 16 ♙c5 ♙a8 17 ♙fc1 c6 18 ♖xd4 e5 19 ♖a4 ♙f4 20 ♙xf4 exf4 21 ♙xc6! bxc6 22 ♙xc6 ♖d7

(22...♖b7 23 ♜c7 ♖b6 24 ♜c8+ ♜xc8 25 ♜xc8+ ♗b7 26 ♖d7+ ♗a6 27 ♜c6) 23 ♖a6 ♗b8 24 ♖b5+ (24 ♜c7 ♖xc7 25 ♜xc7 ♗xc7 26 ♖xa7+ ♗d8 27 ♖xg7 favours the queen) 24...♖b7? 25 ♖e5+ ♗a8 26 ♜c7 ♖b6 27 ♜c8+ ♜xc8 28 ♜xc8+ 1-0.

With 7...♟f6 Black anticipates the aggressive advance of the enemy e-pawn, after which the d5-square becomes available. White, for his part, finds himself with the e4-square after e4-e5, so he should be happy to carry on with the plan.

8 e5 ♟d5 9 ♟b3

Seeking to establish an imposing knight on d4 with the capture of Black's extra pawn. Also possible is 9 a3, when 9...♟xd2 10 ♟xd2 ♟e6 11 ♟b5 ♟de7 12 ♟g5 has been considered good for White since Forintos-Golz, Rubinstein Memorial 1968: 12...♖d5 13 ♟xd4 ♟d7 14 ♟xc6 ♖xd1 15 ♜axd1 ♟xc6 16 ♟c4 and the two bishops were enough for an advantage. More recently Black has kept his bishop. After 9...♟e7 10 ♖b3 ♟e6 11 ♖xb7 ♟a5 12 ♟b5+ ♗f8 13 ♖a6 Black has been more inconvenienced than White. Therefore the most popular choice is 10...♟a5, when 11 ♖a4+ is slightly worse for Black after either 11...♟c6 12 ♟xd4 (12 ♟b5!? ♟b6 13 ♟xc6+ bxc6 14 ♖xd4) 12...♟b6 13 ♟xc6 ♟xa4 14 ♟xd8 ♟xd8 15 f4, or 11...c6 12 ♟a2 b5 13 ♖xd4. 9...♟b6

9...0-0 10 ♟bxd4 10...♟xd4 11 ♖xd4 (11...♟b6/e7? 12 ♟xf7+) helps White, while 10...♟b6 11 ♟xc6 ♖xd1 12 ♜xd1 bxc6 13 ♟b3 merely saddled Black with weak queen-side pawns in B.Ahlander-Wahlstrom, Rodeby 1997.

10 ♟g5 ♟e7 11 ♟xe7 ♖xe7

It might be more accurate to recapture with the knight here: 11...♟xe7 12 ♟d3 and now:

a) 12...♟f5 13 ♟fxd4 ♟xd3 14 ♖xd3 accelerates White's development.

b) 12...0-0 13 ♟bxd4 ♟g6 14 ♜e1 ♟g4 15 h3 ♟xf3 16 ♟xf3 ♟f4 17 ♟e4 illustrates a

key difference between the two sides, namely White's unchallenged bishop. Whether Black trades queens (17...♖xd1 18 ♜axd1 c6) or allows his opponent more space, the bishop makes life difficult. C.Hansen-Lautier, Groningen 1995 continued 17...c6 18 ♖c2 h6 19 ♜ad1 ♟bd5 20 h4! ♖b6 21 a3 and White was gradually creeping forward.

c) 12...♟g4 13 ♟bxd4 ♟d5 makes sense. Then 14 h3 can be met with 14...♟h5, maintaining the pin. G.Timoshenko-Matulovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1990, was agreed drawn after 15 ♖b3 0-0 16 ♟e4 but there is obviously much to play for. The pin on the d1-h5 diagonal hinders White after a rook comes to the natural post on d1, but White has more space and the better bishop.

d) Curt Hansen's experience of this line with Black saw him play 12...♟g6. Then 13 ♟fxd4 gives Black three choices, one of which he should avoid:

d1) Not surprisingly 13...♟xe5? runs into trouble with Black's king still in the centre. The simple 14 ♜e1 ♖f6 15 ♖e2 ♟bd7 16 ♟f3 nets White a piece.

d2) 13...0-0 14 f4 ♟d5 15 ♖d2 adds to White's territorial superiority.

d3) 13...♟f4 puts the question to the bishop. Now Ward proposes 14 ♟e4 with the opinion that White's central supremacy is worth something. He does seem to have a point as the bishop is excellent in the middle of the board. Instead Ftacnik-C.Hansen, Yerevan Olympiad 1996 followed a more complex course: 14 ♟b5+!? c6 (14...♟d7 15 ♖g4! is not an uncommon theme) 15 ♖f3 (15 ♟xc6 bxc6 16 ♟xc6+ ♟d7 17 ♟xa8 ♖xa8 18 f3 0-0 brings about an unclear situation in which White has a rook and two pawns for two pieces), and now rather than letting himself be drawn into complications that favoured White after 15...♟h3+? 16 gxf3 cxb5 17 ♖g3 (17 ♟xb5 0-0 18 ♟d6 ♖g5+ 19 ♖g3 ♖xg3+ 20 hxf3 ♟xh3 21 ♜fc1 is preferable for White according to Ftacnik) 17...0-0 18 ♜ad1, Black should have played

15...♖g5 when it is not clear whether White has anything substantial. Of course it would be simpler to opt for Ward's sensible 14 ♖e4.

12 ♖b5 ♖d7

Black did nothing to prevent the doubling of his pawns in Wilder-Lazic, Belgrade 1988, the idea being, perhaps, that after 12...0-0 13 ♖xc6 bxc6 14 ♖xd4 ♖e6 15 ♖fe1 ♖d5 the new c6-pawn supports the bishop. However, after 16 ♖f4 ♖fe8 17 ♖ac1! (keeping an eye on both c5 and c6) 17...a5 18 ♖fd4 a4 19 ♖f5 ♖e6 20 ♖bd4 ♖g6 21 ♖e3 ♖ad8 22 ♖xd5 this inevitable capture on d5 left Black with significant weaknesses after all.

13 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 14 ♖fxd4

Freeing the f4-pawn, opening the d1-h5 diagonal and denying Black an immediate exchange of minor pieces on f3.

14...♖d5 15 ♖g4



This is the kind of position White should be more than happy to play in this variation. With Black about to castle short White's kingside pawn majority takes on more significance, and the e5-pawn serves to highlight Black's potential problems on the dark squares. The first matter for Black to address is the attack on his g7-pawn.

15...0-0

Black prefers to commit his king before his g-pawn. After 15...g6 16 ♖fe1 0-0 17 ♖f5 ♖d7 18 ♖h6+ ♖g7 19 ♖g5! Black was already under pressure on the dark squares in

Kasparov-Hübner, Skelleftea (World Cup) 1989. The game continued 19...f6 20 exf6+ ♖xf6 21 ♖e7+!? (21 ♖d4!? ♖f7 22 ♖ad1 also looks good) 21...♖xe7 22 ♖f5+ ♖xf5 23 ♖xe7+ ♖f7 24 ♖e5+ ♖g8 25 ♖c5 c6 and now 26 ♖e4 again homes in on f6.

16 f4

White's strength lies in his general menacing presence on the kingside. From a psychological point of view Black tends to feel a little ill at ease when his king – already lacking in defensive options – faces advancing enemy pawns. 16 ♖xg7+?!, on the other hand, looks nice but leads to an ending that is better for Black, if anyone, after 16...♖xg7 17 ♖f5+ ♖h8 18 ♖xe7 ♖xb3 19 axb3 ♖fe8 etc.

16...g6

16...♖xb3 17 ♖f5 ♖c5+ 18 ♖h1 g6 19 axb3 ♖d5 is given as unclear by Beliavsky. Certainly it makes sense to improve Black's knight, which makes no valid contribution to the game over on b6. Then 20 ♖ac1 ♖b4 21 ♖cd1 tempts Black into 21...♖xb3? 22 ♖xd5, when 22...♖xd5 drops the queen to 23 ♖e7+. 21...♖ad8 22 ♖d3 and 21...c6 22 ♖d3 (22...♖c4 23 ♖g3) keep the game rolling, when White's obvious pull on the kingside is offset by structural weaknesses on the other flank.

17 ♖ae1

17 ♖f5 ♖d7 18 ♖h6+ ♖g7 19 ♖g5 ♖xb3 20 axb3 ♖d8 21 ♖f5+ ♖h8 22 ♖e7 ♖d5 was okay for Black in I.Sokolov-Hübner, European Team Ch. 1989. In Michaelsen-Putzbach, Hamburg 1991, 19...f6 20 exf6+ ♖xf6 soon turned sour for Black: 21 ♖d4 ♖e8 22 ♖g4 ♖ff8 23 f5 c5 24 fxg6 cxd4 25 ♖f7+! and White won.

17...♖c4 18 f5!?

From a practical point of view this is a decent choice in view of White's far superior presence on the kingside.

18...♖xf1 19 f6 ♖b4

19...♖d7 20 ♖g5 ♖d5 21 ♖xf1 ♖h8 22 ♖f4 and the net closes in on Black's king, e.g.

22...♖g8 23 ♖h6.

20 ♖h4 ♜fe8

Here or on the next move Black might exploit the extra rook to give up his queen, thus lifting some of the pressure from his king, e.g. 20...♙c4 21 a3 ♖xe1+ 22 ♖xe1 ♜fe8. Nonetheless, after 23 ♖e3 the prospect of a mate threat on g7 is a constant worry for Black.

21 a3 ♖f8 22 e6! ♙c4

Not 22...fxe6? 23 ♜xf1 ♖f7 24 ♙f3 etc. However, 22...♙xe6 23 ♙xe6 fxe6 24 ♜xf1 ♖f7 is not clear.

23 e7 ♙xe7 24 fxe7 ♖e8 25 ♙c5 ♙d5 26 ♖f6

For the price of a pawn it is safe to say that White has ample compensation in the form of the dark squares and the protected passed pawn on the seventh rank, behind which White enjoys much space.



26...♙d7

If Black sits back White has h2-h4, either threatening to advance further or inducing the concession ...h7-h5.

27 ♙xd7 ♖xd7 28 ♙f5!

This thematic turn of events deserves more than a draw.

28...gxh5 29 ♖g5+ ♙h8 30 ♖f6+ ♙g8 31 ♜e3! ♙f3!

After the alternative effort White forces a decisive ending: 31...f4 32 ♖g5+ ♙h8 33 ♖e5+ ♙g8 34 e8 ♖+ ♙xe8 35 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 36 ♙xe8+.

32 ♖g5+ ♙h8 33 ♖f6+ ♙g8 34 gxh3?

34 ♜xf3! is imperative, when 34...♖d1+ 35 ♙f2 ♖d2+ 36 ♙g3 ♖d6+ 37 ♖xd6 cxd6 38 ♙c3 allows White to retain winning chances. Now White has nothing better than perpetual.

34...♜e8 35 ♖g5+

35 f4 ♖d1+ 36 ♙f2 ♖d2+ draws.

35...♙h8 36 ♖f6+ ♙g8 37 ♖g5+ ♙h8 ½-½

Game 6

Kasparov-Anand

Linares 1999

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 ♙f3 exd4 5 ♙xc4 ♙c6

Not entirely satisfied with the ...♙b4+ lines, QGA specialists have turned to the more flexible text.

6 0-0

After 6 ♖b3 Black should return to 6...♙b4+, when 7 ♙d2 ♖e7 8 ♙xb4 ♖xb4+ 9 ♖xb4 ♙xb4 10 ♙xd4 c5 11 a3 cxd4 12 axb4 ♙f6 13 ♙d2 ♙e6 was probably a shade better for Black in Kramer-Szabo, Hamburg 1965.

6...♙e6

The main line. Others:

a) 6...♙e7?! 7 ♖b3 is not easy for Black to meet, and three moves have been tried:

a1) 7...♙e6 8 ♙xe6 fxe6 9 ♖xb7 ♙b4 10 ♖b5+ ♖d7 11 ♙a3 can't be right for Black. Berezovsky-Prestel, Boblingen 1998, saw White's queen continue to cause Black problems after 11...c6 12 ♖h5+ g6 13 ♖e5 0-0-0 14 ♙g5! ♙xg5 15 ♙xg5 ♙h6 16 ♖a5 ♖e7 17 ♙ac1 ♙b7 18 ♙c4 ♙a6 19 ♙a4 etc.

a2) Black did no better in Volkov-Sukhorukov, Smolensk 1997: 7...♙f6 8 ♙xf7+ ♙f8 9 ♙g5 ♖d6 10 f4 d3 11 e5 ♖c5+ 12 ♙h1 ♙g4 13 ♙h5 ♙f2+ 14 ♜xf2 ♖xc1+ 15 ♙d1 ♙e8 16 ♜f1 ♙xg5 (16...♖c5 17 ♖f7+ ♙d8 18 ♖xg7 ♙f8 19 ♙xh7) 17 ♙h5+ 1-0.

a3) 7...♙a5 is best, when 8 ♙xf7+ ♙f8 9

♞a4 c5 10 ♙xg8 ♚xg8 11 ♜e5 ♜c6 12 f4 ♙e6 13 ♜d2 was uncomfortable for Black in Jakab-Nguyen Thi Thanh An, Budapest 1998. On the whole 6...♙e7 looks suspect.

b) Nenashev's 6...♜f6 has some strong followers so it must be taken seriously. After 7 e5 the attacked knight has used both d5 and e4:

b1) 7...♜d5 8 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 9 ♞xd4 ♙e6 10 ♜c3 ♜xc3 11 ♞xc3 ♙xc4 12 ♞xc4 trades a few pieces but leaves Black lagging behind in the development stakes. In fact Lewandowska-Byczynska, Konin 1990 demonstrated how quickly this factor can become decisive, as 12...♞d7 13 ♙g5 c6? 14 e6! fxe6 15 ♙ad1 ♞c8 16 ♙fe1 already produced a win for White.

b2) Less compromising and more convincing is 7...♜e4 8 ♙e1 ♜c5



The eagle-eyed might notice that the diagram position resembles the Open variation of the Ruy Lopez! Remember that White is still a pawn down here, so attacking play is called for. Consequently 9 ♙g5 is a good way to start the next phase. 9...♙e7 10 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 11 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 12 ♞xd4 ♙e6 13 ♙f1! ♙d8 14 ♞e3 0-0 15 ♜c3 a5 16 h3 was slightly advantageous to White in Sherbakov-Skripchenko Lautier, MK Cafe Cup 1999, his extra space and kingside pawn majority affording him an easier game.

9...♞d7 is more popular. Then Ward-Nenashev, Metz 1995, went 10 ♜a3 ♙e6 11

♜b5 ♙e5 12 ♙c1 ♙b6 13 ♙e4! 0-0 14 ♙h4 ♜xg5 15 ♜xg5 ♜xe5 16 ♜xh7 ♞f5 (16...♜xc4? 17 ♜f6+ gxf6 18 ♞h5) 17 ♜xf8 with complications that favoured White. However, Ward himself has said that there is 'room for improvement' here, and perhaps inserting 11...h6 is worth considering.

With 10 ♜bd2 White intends to send the knight to the kingside, and this looks like a logical plan, while 10 b4 is different again. 10...♜xb4? is rather greedy, e.g. 11 e6! ♜xe6 12 ♜e5 ♞d6 13 ♞h5 g6 14 ♞f3, and 10...♜e6 11 b5 ♜cd8 12 ♜bd2 gave White a significant development lead in Notkin-Nenashev, Cappelle la Grande 1995. However, Ward's proposed 11...♜a5 deserves further tests.

7 ♙b5

The major alternative is 7 ♙xe6 fxe6 8 ♞b3 ♞d7, when 9 ♜g5 0-0! 10 ♜xe6 ♙e8 11 ♜xf8 ♙xf8 12 ♜a3 ♜f6 13 f3 ♙hg8 14 ♙d2 g5 15 ♙ae1, which gave White a pull in Hertneck-Sermek, Austrian League 1999, deserves further tests, but the main line involves 9 ♞xb7 ♙b8 10 ♙a6 ♜f6. Black has a passed pawn but it can be easily handled, while a closer look at the diagram position reveals weaknesses on a7, c6, c7 e6 and e5. To compensate for the structural shortcomings Black has active pieces and open files for his rooks (after ...0-0). 11 ♜bd2 and now:

a) 11...♙b4 12 ♞d3 ♙xd2 (12...0-0 13 ♜c4 ♙e5 14 ♙d2 e5 15 ♙ac1 ♞e6 16 ♜a5! ♜xa5 17 ♙xc5 was poor for Black in Najer-Gazarian, Krasnodar 1997) 13 ♙xd2 ♙xb2 14 ♙ac1, when White has succeeded in creating an initiative.

a1) Bykhovsky-Lev, Herzliya 1998, continued 14...0-0 15 ♙c5 ♜g4 16 h3! ♞d6! (16...♙xf3 17 ♞xf3 ♜h2 met with 18 ♞a3 ♙xd2 19 ♙fc1 ♞d6 20 ♞g3 in Karpov-Xu Jun, Beijing [rapidplay] 1998) 17 ♙xc6 ♞xc6 18 ♙xd4 ♙xa2 (18...♙b6 19 ♙c3 ♙xd4 20 ♙xd4 ♙xa2 21 hxg4 favours the three pieces) 19 hxg4 ♙a4 20 ♞d3 ♞xe4 21 ♞xe4 ♙xe4 22 g5 ♙a4 (22...♙c4 23 ♙a1 ♙a8 24

23 ♖c1 ♙c8 24 ♙c6 and White was able to contain Black's pawns: 24...♙a1+ 25 ♖h2 a5 26 ♙xc6 a4? (26...♖f7 27 ♙a6 a4 is better) 27 ♙e7 a3 (or 27...♙a3 28 ♙f4) 28 ♙c3 ♙c1 (28...♖f8 29 ♙xg7 ♙c1 30 ♙xh7) 29 ♙xg7+ ♖h8 30 ♙e5 and White won.

a2) 14...♙d6! keeps the rook out of c5 but the price is to leave the king in the centre. After 15 ♙c4 ♙e5 16 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 17 ♙a4+! ♙b5 18 ♙a3! ♙xd2? 19 ♙xc7 the cost has increased (e.g. 19...♙g8 20 ♙d6). A lesser evil is 17...♙d7 18 ♙a4 ♙b5, although White has a clear advantage after both 19 ♙xd4 and 19 ♙xb5 ♙xb5 20 ♙xc7.

b) With 11...♙d6 Black concentrates on e5 rather than removing the d2-knight. Again White returns the queen with 12 ♙d3, after which 12...0-0 13 h3 e5 (13...♙b4? 14 ♙c4) 14 ♙c4 leads to the following position:



Black's centre pawns are blocked and the e5-pawn is under pressure. The contrasting roles of White's knight (c4) and Black's bishop suggest that White benefits most from their continued involvement.

b1) C.Hansen-Schandorff, Danish Ch. 1999, witnessed a brief skirmish in the centre from which White emerged with a clear lead: 14...♙b4 15 ♙b3 ♙bd5 16 ♙d1! ♙xe4 17 ♙fxe5 ♙xe5 18 ♙xe5 ♙e6 19 ♙xd4 ♙b4 20 ♙c4 ♙b6 21 b3 ♙xc4 22 ♙e1! ♙e8 23 bxc4 ♙xc4 (both 23...♙xc4 24 ♙xa7 and 23...c5 24 ♙d5 ♙xd5 25 cxd5 ♙d4 26 f3 ♙d6 27 ♙xe8+ ♙xe8 28 ♙e3 ♙xd5 29 ♙c1

are very good for White) and now 24 ♙d1 ♙bb8 25 ♙e3 left Black with the inferior minor piece and an isolated, albeit passed, c-pawn.

b2) 14...♖h8 15 ♙d2 ♙e6 both supports the e5-pawn and avoids any trouble on the a2-g8 diagonal. However, both c6 and c7 no longer have the protection of the queen. Consequently in Notkin-Makarov, Russian Club Cup 1998, White quickly turned to the c-file: 16 ♙ac1 ♙b4 17 a3 ♙xd2 18 ♙cxd2! ♙xb2 19 ♙c4! ♙d8 (19...♙xc4 20 ♙xc4 ♙d8 21 ♙xc7) 20 ♙xc7 ♙f7 21 ♙xa7 and White had the upper hand (e.g. 21...♙d6 22 ♙c5).

Let us return to the position after 7 ♙b5:



For his pawn deficit White has easier development and pressure against the d4-pawn. The kingside pawn majority might prove extra troublesome for Black in the event of ♙xc6 ...b7xc6, inflicting doubled pawns on Black and - by subsequently establishing a knight outpost on c4 - effectively immobilising the defender's queenside.

7...♙c5

7...♙d7 is a somewhat negative response to the pin. After 8 ♙xd4 ♙ge7 9 ♙c3 ♙xd4 10 ♙xd4 ♙c6 11 ♙d1 ♙d6 12 ♙e3 0-0 13 f4 White's unfettered pawns gave him the advantage in Caiapas-Ruefenacht, World Team Ch. Lucerne 1985.

8 ♙bd2

White is spoilt for choice here. Others:

a) 8 b4!? keeps up the momentum. Black should be content with his one pawn lead, as 8...xb4?! 9 dxd4 d7 10 dxc6 bxc6 11 Bc2 and 10...dxc6 11 dxc6 Bxd1 12 Bxd1 bxc6 are both pleasant for White according to Ward.

After the more sensible 8...b6 White can continue his harassment of the bishop or immediately occupy the long diagonal with his own.

a1) 9 b2 dge7 10 dxd4 0-0 11 dxc6 dxc6 12 dxc6 Bxd1 13 Bxd1 bxc6 14 d2 a5 15 a3 was agreed drawn in Van Wely-Sermek, Mitropa Cup 1995, White's b4-pawn giving Black a convenient target. Instead 10 dxd4 0-0 11 d5 was tried more recently in Beliavsky-Sherbakov, Niksic 1996. The point is that after 11...dxc5 12 bxc5 a6 13 dxc6 dxc6 14 d3 White is looking to post his knight on d5 and a rook on b1, although Black's position is perfectly fine. In the game Black parted with his bishop a little too freely with 14...Bc7 15 d5 Bxc5 16 dxc7 Bxd8 17 dxe6 fxe6 18 Bb3, when the new weakness on e6 had certainly not improved Black's prospects.

a2) 9 a4 a6 10 dxc6+ bxc6 11 b2 Bb6 is unclear, whereas 9...a5 10 bxa5 Bxa5 11 d5 seems to suit White more. Then 11...Bd7 (11...d7 12 d3 d5 13 d4 c6 14 dxe5 Bxg5 15 f4 Bg6 16 d4!? cxb5 17 dxb6 Bxb6 18 d5 12 d2 dge7 13 dxe6 is probably best met with 13...fxe6 14 d4 Bb8, and now a draw results from 15 d5 Bb6 16 d4 Bd7, or White can try 15 d3 with obvious compensation for the pawn. After 13...Bxe6 14 d4 Bxb5 (14...Bb8 15 dxb6 cxb6 16 Bxd4) 15 axb5 Bxc4 16 bxc6 dxc6 17 Bg4! Black is under pressure, e.g. 17...0-0 18 d5 h6 g6 19 dxf8 Bxf8 20 Bc8+ Bg7 21 Bb8.

b) With 8 d5 White clearly intends to remove the bishop on e6, but Black must be careful as 8...d7?? 9 dxe6 fxe6 10 Bb5+ picks up the other bishop. 8...Bd6 serves only to help White augment his desired initia-

tive after 9 e5 Bxe5 10 Bb1, while 8...d6 9 e5 d5 10 dxe6 fxe6 11 Bg4 Bc7 12 d2 has been suggested as favourable for White. This leaves 8...Bc7, when 9 f4 looks logical, mobilising White's kingside pawn majority before Black has completed development.

c) 8 Bc2 d6 9 a4 a5 10 dxc6+ bxc6 11 Bxc6+ d7 evens the score. Now 12 Bc4 d6 13 Bc6+ d7 and so on is a way to end the game peacefully. Otherwise 12 Bc2 keeps the game going, although 12...d7 13 d3 0-0 14 d4 d6 15 d5 d6 16 Bb3 c5 was approximately equal in Van Wely-Anand, Monaco (blindfold) 1997.

Of these three alternatives to 8 d2 I prefer 8 d5.

8...Bd6

A theoretical novelty at the time, bringing the queen into the game supports the pinned knight and prepares to quickly castle queenside, thus presenting Black with an opportunity to use his passed d-pawn to the full. 8...d7 9 d5 Bb7 (9...d7? 10 dxf7 Bxf7 11 Bh5+) 10 dxe6 Bxe6 11 d3 and now 11...d6 12 dxd4 dxd4 13 Bxd4 gave White a pull (bishops v. knights) in Piket-Anand, Wijk aan Zee 1999, while 11...Bd6 12 d4! Bxf4 13 dxc5 has been evaluated as slightly better for White. Then the kingside offers Black's king the better protection as 13...0-0 14 Bb3 favours White, so 13...0-0 14 Bc1 is normal when, in return for the pawn, White has a pull on the queenside and the makings of an assault with his kingside pawn majority.

9 e5!

Consistent with White's game-plan. A natural reaction to the queen's arrival on d6 is 9 d4 dxc4 10 dxc4 d7 11 Bb1 with the idea of softening Black up on the light squares by pushing the e-pawn. In Tunik-Nachev, Aratovsky Memorial 1999, Black addressed this possibility by anyway compromising his light squares with 11...f6, only to see White carry out the advance regardless. After 12 e5! dxe5 (12...fxe5 13 d5 leaves

White two pawns down but with obvious compensation on the light squares) 13 ♙f4 0-0-0 (13... ♟g6 14 ♜xe5 fxe5 runs into 15 ♙xe5 ♟xe5 16 ♞h5+) 14 ♜xe5 fxe5 15 ♞g4+ ♖b8 16 ♙xe5 ♞g6 17 ♞xg6 ♟xg6 18 ♙xg7 ♞he8 19 g3 White had won back his gambit pawn(s) with interest thanks to his potentially powerful bishop pair. With the text White decides to actually use his e-pawn on the board – rather than sacrifice it immediately – in order to create a space advantage and control two key squares in Black's half of the board.

9... ♞d5 10 ♟g5 !

Homing in on Black's 'good' bishop, which surveys both halves of the board from e6.

10...0-0-0

Black's king comes under fire on the queenside but, with his kingside still lagging behind, the centre is hardly an ideal place in which to remain for too long, e.g. 10... ♞d8 11 ♙c4 when 11... ♞xe5 12 ♜xe6 fxe6 13 ♞e1 is typical of the kind of breakthrough White is looking for. The more circumspect 11... ♞d7 12 ♜xe6 fxe6 13 ♟e4 improves but the problem remains of what to do with the king, as castling short is out of the question now that White looks so menacing on this side of the board.

11 ♙c4 ♞d7 12 ♜xe6 fxe6 13 b4 !



Openings involving a gambit – usually a pawn – tend to require further offers in order

to exert maximum pressure on the opponent. Apart from affording the aggressor the luxury of remaining in the driving seat it is also important, from a psychological perspective, not to allow the opponent to feel he has successfully weathered the storm.

13... ♟xb4

Black hopes to bolster the king's defences with his bishop on b6. Taking the second pawn with the bishop looks less desirable after 13... ♟xb4 14 ♞b3 ♞e8 15 ♞b1 etc. 13... ♙b6 gives the game a different feel after 14 ♞b3 ♞e7 ! 15 ♙xe6+ ♖b8 16 ♟f3 ♞xb4 17 ♞xb4 ♟xb4 18 ♙g5 .

14 ♞b3 ♟d5 15 ♟e4 ♙b6

After 15... ♞c6 16 ♞b1 ♟b6 17 ♙xe6+ ♖b8 18 ♜xc5 ♞xc5 19 ♞e1 ! White's long-range pieces are well worth the invested pawn, whether Black seeks to relieve some of the pressure with 19... ♞c3 20 ♙g5 ♞e8 21 ♙f7 or retreats – 19... ♞e7 20 a4 etc.

16 a4 !

If White is to make a breakthrough it is imperative that he forces a structural concession from Black.

16... a5

16... a6 17 a5 ♙a7 18 ♙g5 ♞f8 19 ♞fc1 puts Black under considerable pressure on both the b- and c-files.

17 ♟d6+ !

Now we see the main point behind White's previous move – the c7-pawn is now the sole defender of the bishop, permitting White to land his knight on d6.

17... ♖b8

17... cxd6 18 ♙xd5 exd5 19 ♞xb6 dxe5 20 ♙d2 transposes to the main game after 20... ♖b8 , while 20... ♟e7 21 ♞a7! ♟c6 22 ♞fc1 is unclear. Anand prefers to keep the enemy queen out of a7.

18 ♙xd5 exd5 19 ♙d2

Threatening 20 ♙xa5 etc.

19... cxd6 20 ♞xb6 dxe5

Black's collection of extra pawns has now grown to three, and if he can survive the attack on his king there will be no stopping

the cluster in the centre.



21 14

Another thematic attempt to make the most of both White's development advantage and his potentially decisive command of the dark squares. As well as holding the centre pawns together the e5-pawn prevents the bishop from coming to the sensitive h2-b8 diagonal. Kasparov offers an alternative means to deal with the e5-pawn in the equally direct 21 ♞f1 , which has the bonus of simultaneously threatening to bring the rook into the game with the capture of the pawn. Then 21... ♞e8 fails to 22 ♞xe5! ♞xe5 23 ♙f4 etc. Sending over the cavalry with 21... ♞e7 22 ♞xe5 ♞c6 is sensible, when 23 ♙f4! ♞a8 24 ♞b1 ♞he8! 25 ♞xd5 ♞e1+ 26 ♞xe1 ♞xd5 still leaves Black defending but at least a pair of rooks has left the arena.

21... ♞f6

Active defence. 21...e4? closes out the bishop only temporarily, since 22 f5 e3 23 ♙e1 succeeds in getting the bishop to the appropriate diagonal anyway. 21... ♞e7 22 fxe5 ♞c6 23 e6 (23 ♞ab1 and 23 ♙xa5 can be considered) 23... ♞xe6 24 ♞ab1 ♞d7 25 ♙f4+ ♞a8 26 ♙e7 looks practically winning for White at first glance, but after 26... ♞d8 27 ♞xa5+ ♞a6 or 27 ♙xd8 ♞e3+ Black is holding on.

22 fxe5 ♞e4 23 ♙xa5

23 ♙f4 ♞c6! 24 e6+ ♞a8 25 ♞xa5+ ♞a6 is equal.

23...d3 24 e6?!

Kasparov offers 24 ♞b4! as the best winning try, with the following position:

Here he gives the following variation: 24... ♞de8 (24... ♞c8 25 ♙b6 d2 26 a5! ♞e7 (26... ♞xe5 27 a6 ♞e7 29 axb7 , when 29... $\text{♞xb7 30 ♞f8+ ♞xf8 31 ♞a8+ ♞xa8 32 ♞a3+ ♞b8 33 ♞xf8+}$ is a good advert for chess.

24... ♞d6 25 ♞xd6+ ♞xd6 26 e7 ♞f6 27 ♞xf6 ♞xf6 28 ♞d1 ♞e8 29 ♙b4 ½-½

After 29... ♞g8 30 ♞xd3 ♞e7 31 ♞xd5 ♞xe7 32 ♞h5 h6 33 ♙c3 White has an edge.

Conclusion

Holding back the queen's knight is a flexible way to answer the provocative 3... ♞c6 (Game 1), but in general it is important to remember that White's kingside is quite solid in this line, providing sufficient confidence to enable White to get to work on the queenside. The light squares in particular can be a problem for Black. In Game 2 young Miton's experimental treatment of 3... ♞f6 looks promising since White's king is equally comfortable on the queenside in the trendy, forcing sequence that might well leave Black simply a pawn down. Game 3 serves to demonstrate that the d5-square and White's kingside pawn majority continue to be key contributors to White's desired initiative even when the queens have left the board, while the complexities of 5...b5 in Game 4 will be better understood with time – and a few dozen blitz games. What is evident from Game 4 is the crippling effect of White's e6-pawn. White's kingside pawn majority also plays a vital role in Game 5, this time the dark squares offering White something to bite on after the trade of the relevant bishops. Finally I prefer Kasparov's energetic play in Game 6 to 7 ♙e6 as the latter option involves a certain amount of containment before White is able to exploit Black's more static pawn structure.

CHAPTER TWO

Queen's Gambit Declined and Slav Defences

1 d4 d5 2 c4

Whether Black supports the d5-pawn with 2...e6 or 2...c6, I am recommending that White continues consistently with 3 Qc3 . The Queen's Gambit Declined can be a tough nut to crack and Black has a number of versatile systems designed to steer the game to an old-style equality. In recent years the Exchange Variation has become an attack oriented weapon, particularly the more versatile version characterised by White's holding back the g1-knight. Consequently 3 Qc3 fits in well here, and Game 7 illustrates how both the use of the e2-square for the knight and the f3-square for the pawn combine to pose Black more problems than the automatic Qf3 . The Tarrasch Defence, featured in Game 8, requires White to adopt a kingside fianchetto in the quest for an advantage, after which Black's isolated d5-pawn becomes the focus of attention. Black's best results in the uncompromising Marshall Gambit (Game 9) tend to come against the less well prepared, and with uninhibited play White has no shortage of activity for his pieces. Finally, for the super-solid Slav (Game 10) it is worth delving into the past for a line that is sound and offers White chances to reach positions in which Black is not without certain problems.



Game 7 Lautier-Oll Tallinn/Parnu 1998

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Qc3 Qf6

An alternative here is 3... Qe7 .



This was reasonably popular for a while. Clearly Black wants to prevent Qg5 , but the f4-square is also fine for the bishop. 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Qf4 and now Black's options involve the c-pawn.

a) 5... Qf6 6 e3

a1) 6... Qf5 7 Qge2 0-0 8 Qg3 Qe6 (8... Qg6 9 h4 h6 10 h5 Qh7 11 Qd3 Qxd3 12 Qxd3 c5 13 0-0-0 with an edge for White in Chekhov-Zaitsev, Protvino 1988) 9 Qd3

c5 10 dxc5 ♖xc5 11 0-0 ♜c6 12 ♖c1 d4 13 ♜b5 ♖b6 14 e4 was a shade better for White in Lautier-Marciano, French League 1999.

a2) 6...0-0-7 ♖d3 c5 8 ♜f3 ♜c6 9 0-0



a21) 9...♖g4 10 dxc5 ♖xc5 11 h3 and now two games of V.Milov show how to handle the white pieces. 11...♖xf3 12 ♖xf3 d4 13 ♜e4 ♖e7 14 ♖fd1 ♖b6 15 ♜g3 ♖fe8 16 ♜f5 dxe3 17 ♖xe3 ♖c5? 18 ♜xg7! ♖xe3 (18...♜xg7 19 ♖h6+) 19 ♖xf6 ♖e5 20 ♜f5 ♖xf2+ 21 ♜h1 ♖xf5 22 ♖xf5 ♖d4 23 ♖f1 ♖c7 24 ♖xh7+ ♜f8 25 ♖c4 ♜d8 1-0, V.Milov-Toth, Liechtenstein 1996. In V.Milov-Knoppert, Tilburg 1994, Black instead played 11...♖h5?, but after 12 g4! ♖g6 13 ♖xg6 hxg6 14 g5 d4 White could have played 15 ♜a4! for a safe win of the d4 pawn.

a22) 9...c4 10 ♖c2 ♖g4 (10...♜h5 11 ♖e5 f6 12 ♜g5! g6 13 ♜xh7 fxe5 14 ♜xf8 ♖xf8 15 dxe5 ♖e6 16 ♖xg6 ♜g7 17 f4 with a 5-0 kingside pawn majority, H.Olafsson-Einarsson, Reykjavik 1988) 11 h3 ♖h5 12 g4 ♖g6 13 ♜e5 looked nice for White in Vyzmanavin-G.Timoshenko, Irkutsk 1986.

b) 5...c6 6 e3 ♖f5 7 g4. Here we see a typical battle of wills, as Black is ready for the advance of White's pawn(s) yet White is eager to push, too. Theory prefers White, as the following examples suggest.

b1) 7...♖g6 8 h4!

b11) 8...♖xh4?! allows 9 ♖b3 b6 10 ♖xh4! ♖xh4 11 ♜xd5, e.g. 11...♜a6 12 ♖a4.

b12) 8...h5 9 g5 ♖d6 10 ♜ge2 ♜a6 11 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 soon cleared off into an ending in Karpov-Portisch, Linares 1989: 12 ♜f4 ♜c7 13 ♖e2 ♖b4 14 ♖d2 ♜e7 15 ♖f3 ♜e6 16 ♜ce2 ♜xf4 17 ♜xf4 ♖xd2+ 18 ♖xd2 ♖e4 19 ♖xe4 dxe4 20 ♖ac1 0-0-0 21 ♖c5! ♜d5 22 ♜xd5 ♖xd5 23 ♖hc1 ♖hd8 24 b4 ♜c7 25 ♖e2! a6 26 f3 exf3+ 27 ♖xf3 and White had an edge which was eventually converted.

b13) 8...h6 9 ♜f3 ♜d7 10 ♖d3 ♖xd3 11 ♖xd3 ♜g6 12 ♖g1 ♖a5 was played in Knaak-Raicevic, Athens 1992. After shadow-boxing with 13 ♜d2 ♜f8 14 f3 ♜e6 15 ♖e5 ♖d8 16 ♖h1 ♖d6 White finally castled: 17 0-0-0 ♖xe5 18 dxe5 ♜d7 19 f4 ♜dc5 20 ♖c2 with an interesting game in prospect.

b2) 7...♖e6 8 h4!?

b21) 8...♖xh4 9 ♖b3 b6 (9...g5 10 ♖h2! ♖xg4? 11 ♖xb7 ♖e7 12 ♖xa8 ♖xe3+ 13 ♖e2 ♖xf2+ 14 ♖d2 and Black soon ran out of steam in Vaiser-Diaz, Havana 1985) 10 ♜f3 ♖e7 11 ♜e5 ♜f6?! (11...♜d6! 12 ♖d3 ♜e7 with a pawn to compensate for Black's passive position) 12 g5 ♜fd7 13 g6 ♜xe5 14 ♖xe5 ♖f6! (14...fxg6 15 ♖xg7 ♖g8 16 ♖xh7) 15 ♖xh7 0-0!



We are following Gulko-Lputian, Glendale 1994. It is not often that we see castling when an enemy piece is so close to g8! 16 ♖g3 fxg6 (after 16...♖f5 17 0-0-0 ♖xg6 18 ♖h2 White is ready to double on the h-file) 17 ♖h2 ♜f7! 18 0-0-0, and now 18...♜d7! 19

e4 ♖e7 would have left Black only slightly worse. Instead 18...♙h8? 19 ♙xh8 ♙xh8 20 e4! was clearly better for White.

b22) 8...♙d6. White has gained a tempo here compared with the Exchange Variation in which the bishop arrives on f4 via g5. 9 ♖h3 ♖e7 10 ♙d3 h6 11 ♙f3! ♖g6 12 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 13 ♖f4! ♖xf4 14 exf4 f6 15 0-0-0 was a demonstration of direct, aggressive play from White in Yakovich-Arlandi, Valle d'Aosta 2000.

b23) 8...c5 is a thematic central strike to counter the flank attack. Then Dautov-Lputian, Istanbul Olympiad 2000, saw a new idea from White: 9 ♙e5! ♙f6 10 ♙xb8 ♙xb8 11 g5 ♙e7 12 ♙g2 h6 13 ♖ge2 hxg5 14 hxg5 ♙xh1+ 15 ♙xh1 ♙xg5 16 ♙a4+ and White emerged from the experiment with the superior position.

4 cxd5 exd5

4...♖xd5 leads to the Semi-Tarrasch after 5 e4 ♖xc3 6 bxc3 c5 7 ♖f3. Black has two moves after 7...cxd4 8 cxd4



a) 8...♖c6 9 ♙c4 and now 9...b5 (hoping for 10 ♙xb5? ♙a5+; 9...♙b4+ leads to 'b', below) 10 ♙e2 ♙b4+ 11 ♙d2 leaves the b5-pawn looking oddly placed. Bacrot-Korchnoi, Albert (match) 1997, is a good illustration of how White should use the d-pawn: 11...♙xd2+ 12 ♙xd2 ♙b8 13 d5! exd5 14 exd5 ♖e7 (14...♖a5 15 ♙e3+ ♙e7 16 ♙e3 ♙f6 17 ♙xb5+!) 15 d6 ♖f5 16 ♙d1. Now 15...♙d7 17 g4! piles on the pressure,

with 17...♖h4 18 ♙e3+ winning for White after either 18...♙e6 19 d7+ ♖f8 (19...♙xd7 20 ♖xh4) 20 ♙c5+ ♖g8 21 ♙xa7 (threatening 22 ♙xb8!), or 18...♖f8 19 ♙e7+, when White picks up the knight. The alternative 17...♖h6 leaves Black's forces embarrassingly situated after 18 ♙e3+ ♖f8 19 h3 etc.

Korchnoi tried 16...0-0, when 17 d7! ♙b7 (17...♙a6 18 0-0) 18 0-0 ♙f6 19 ♙f4 a6 20 g4! prepared to take the game into the next phase with a crippling exchange on f6.

b) 8...♙b4+ 9 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ (9...♙a5 10 ♙b1 ♙xd2+ 11 ♙xd2 ♙xd2+ 12 ♖xd2 helps White) 10 ♙xd2 0-0 11 ♙c4 ♖c6 12 0-0 with a couple of sample lines:

b1) 12...b6 13 ♙ad1 ♙b7 14 ♙fe1 ♙c8 15 d5 ♖a5 16 ♙d3 exd5 17 e5!



White has good attacking prospects. 17...♖c4 18 ♙f4 ♖b2? fails to 19 ♙xh7+! ♖xh7 20 ♖g5+ ♖g6 (20...♖g8 21 ♙n+ ♙e8 22 ♙h7+ ♖f8 23 e6 is final) 21 h4 ♙c4 22 h5+ ♖xh5 23 g4+ ♖h6 24 ♙h2+ 1-0 Avrukh-Donk, Lost Boys 1998, or 21...♖xd1 22 h5+ ♖h6 23 ♖e6+ ♖h7 24 ♖xd8 ♙exd8 25 ♙xd1 ♙de8 26 ♙f5+ ♖g8 27 ♙d7 ♙a8 28 f4 ♙d8 29 ♙xa7 d4 30 ♙xb6 d3 31 ♙e3 1-0 D.Gurevich-Massana, New York 1985. In Khenkin-Straeter, Recklinghausen 1996, White set his kingside pawns rolling after 17...♙c6 18 ♖d4 ♙h6, when 19 f4 ♖c6 20 ♖f5 ♙e6 21 ♖d6 ♙xd6 22 exd6 ♙xd6 23 ♖h1 ♙d8 24 ♙e3 g6 25 f5! ♖g7 26 ♙f1 kept up the pressure.

b2) 12...e5 13 d5 ♖a5 alters the pawn structure. Then 14 ♖xe5 ♜e8 15 ♖d4 ♜xe5 16 ♖xe5 ♖xc4 17 ♖d4 b5!? 18 a4 ♖d6 is far from clear. I prefer 14 ♖ac1 f6 15 ♖b4 b6 16 ♖e2 ♖b7 17 ♖d2 ♖c5 18 ♖b3 a5 19 ♖c4 ♖a6 20 ♖c2 (White's queen is busy but it is the d5-pawn that counts here) 20...♖xb3 21 axb3 ♜c8 22 ♖d2 ♖xe2 23 ♖xe2 with an advantage to White according to Alterman. 5 ♖g5 c6

5...♖b4 6 e3 h6 7 ♖h4 0-0 8 ♖d3 c5 9 ♖ge2 highlights an advantage of keeping the knight on g1, as now its partner is offered useful support. The same can be said after the insistent 7...g5 8 ♖g3 ♖e4, e.g. 9 ♖ge2 ♖c6 10 a3 ♖xc3+ 11 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 12 bxc3 ♖f5 13 h4 g4 14 c4 ♖d7 15 ♖e2 h5 16 0-0, Mirzoev-Bayramov, Baku Cup 1999.

6 ♖c2

Preventing ...♖f5.

6...♖e7

Also seen are the following:

a) 6...g6 7 e3 ♖f5 8 ♖b3 b6 9 f3 ♖e7 10 g4 ♖e6 11 ♖h6 ♖f8 12 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 13 ♖ge2 ♖d6 14 ♖f4 ♖bd7 15 0-0-0, Alterman-Parker, London Lloyds Bank 1994, is exactly what White is looking for.

b) 6...♖a6 7 a3 ♖c7 8 e3 ♖e6 9 ♖h4 ♖e7 10 ♖d3 g6 11 ♖ge2 ♖g7 12 f3! 0-0 13 0-0 with the usual pull for White in view of the constant threat of e3-e4, Kruppa-Faibisovich, Chigorin Memorial 1999.

7 e3 ♖bd7 8 ♖d3 0-0

Black has also traded bishops here: 8...♖h5 9 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 10 ♖ge2 g6 11 0-0-0 ♖b6 12 ♖g3 ♖g7!. Kasparov-Andersson, Reykjavik 1988, continued 13 ♖b1 ♖d7 14 ♜c1 0-0-0 15 ♖a4 ♖xa4 16 ♖xa4 ♖b8 17 ♜c3 b6 18 ♖a6, while Timman-Short, FIDE Candidates (match) 1993, saw 18 ♜a3, with an interesting struggle ahead in both cases.

9 ♖ge2 ♜e8 10 0-0

Natural and the most popular, but not the only choice.

a) Even if castling short is the plan it is possible to keep Black guessing here with 10

f3.

a1) With 10...e5 Black immediately challenges the centre now that e3 is less secure, although the advance of the c-pawn does leave d5 weaker. After 11 0-0 Black can either take on d4 or maintain the tension. 11...cxd4 12 ♖xd4 ♖f8 13 ♜ad1 h6 14 ♖h4 a6 15 ♖h1 gave White a pleasant edge in P.Varga-Remling, Budapest 1994. The isolated d-pawn and White's more harmonious development more than make up for the c3-pawn.

Reinderman-Van der Sterren, Dutch Ch. 1998, continued 11...b6 12 ♜ad1 ♖b7 and now White elected to play against the hanging pawns after 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 ♖b5



White's bishops attack the defending knights and therefore exert considerable pressure on Black's centre pawns. Black traded in one target for another: 14...♖h5 15 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 16 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 17 ♜xd5 ♖xe3+ 18 ♜f2 ♖hf6, and now 19 ♜xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♖xd7 ♜ed8 21 ♖a4 ♜d2 22 ♖e4 ♖xe4 23 ♖xe4 ♜xb2 24 ♖c3 ♜ab8 25 ♖b3 ♜xf2 26 ♖xf2 c4 27 ♖d1 ♜b2+ 28 ♖f3 offers the better chances to the two pieces. Instead White played 19 ♜d3! ♖e6 (19...♖e7 20 ♖g3) 20 ♖g3 ♜ab8 21 ♖xd7! ♖xd7 22 ♜e2 ♖co 23 ♖f5!, when after 23...♜xe2 24 ♖xe2 ♖b5 25 ♖d2! ♖f6 (25...♖f8 26 ♖e7+ ♖h8 27 ♜d8 c4 28 ♖c8!) 26 ♖g5 (26 ♖b3 ♖e8 27 ♖xg7!! ♖xg7 28 ♖g5+ ♖f8 29 ♖xc5+ ♖g8 30 ♖g5+ ♖f8 31 ♜xb8 ♖xb8 32 ♖xf6 is

strong) 26...♖e8 27 ♖b3 ♗e2 White should have secured a near decisive lead with 28 ♖h6+ ♗h8 (28...♗f8 29 ♗xc5+) 29 ♖xf7+ ♗g8 30 ♗e5! etc.

Returning to the diagram position Black might try 14...a6 15 ♖a4 ♗f8!, withdrawing the rook from the e-file – and in doing so taking his eye off the e3-pawn – in order to unpin the d7-knight. The point of attacking White's bishop first is to hit it again after 16 ♖f4 ♖b6. However, 17 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 18 ♖fxd5! ♖xd5 (18...♖xd5 19 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 20 ♗xc5) 19 ♖xd5 ♖a4 20 ♗xa4 ♖xb2 21 ♗c2 is clearly better for White.

a2) 10...b5 convinces White that queenside castling involves some risk, but of course this is not a problem, and Black's rigid pawn structure is a ready-made target. Cruz Lopez-Garcia Gomez, Spanish Ch. 1994 is typical, 11 0-0 ♗b6 12 h3 a6 13 a4 b4 14 a5 ♗d8 15 ♖a4 resulting in weaknesses for Black on b6, c6 and c5.

a3) 10...♗a5 11 0-0 h6 12 ♖h4 c5 looked rather loose in Urdy-Suarez, Merida 1997. After 13 ♖ad1 cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♖e5 15 ♖xf6! ♖xf6 16 ♖b3 ♗d8 17 ♖b5 the d5-pawn was about to drop.

a4) 10...♖f8 transposes to the main game after 11 0-0, but White can also play 11 ♖h4. Then:

a41) 11...♖h5 12 ♖f2 ♖h4 13 g3 ♖e7 14 g4 ♖f6 15 g5 ♖6d7 16 h4 gives the game a slightly different flavour to 10 0-0. Byshkovsky-Murugan, Gausdal 1991, saw Black get to work on the queenside, 16...b5 17 ♖g3 ♖b6 18 ♗f1! ♖d6 19 ♖f5 ♖xf5 20 ♖xf5 ♖c4 21 ♖e1 producing a situation in which both sides have chances. Note that White's king is not poorly placed, with g2 a decent square. Meanwhile Black, despite the fact that his king is faced with two advancing enemy pawns, still has a pretty solid position and prospects of counterplay on the queenside.

a42) In P.Varga-Gogniat, Ambassador 1998, White did soon castle, following up

with an instructive deployment of his dark-squared bishop: 11...♖g6 12 ♖f2 ♖d6 13 0-0 a6 14 ♖ad1 ♗c7 15 ♗h1! ♖e6 (15...♖xh2 16 g3) 16 ♖g1



It is tempting, albeit occasionally unwise, to spend time sending a piece to an unconventional square. However, in this case g1 is quite useful – and safe! – because h2 is protected and, as we shall see, the extra cover offered to the d4-pawn affords White the thematically desirable plan of central expansion. There followed 16...♖ad8 17 e4! dxe4 18 fxe4 and here the hanging pawns are extremely well supported and consequently troublesome for Black, who is denied the use of the squares c5, d5, e5 and f5.

b) White can also play 10 0-0-0



The minor problem here is that Black is not slow in generating an attack, so White tends to switch to positional play on the

queenside! After 10...♖a5 11 ♖b1 b5 12 ♖g3 Black quickly goes on the offensive but the price is the hole on c5.

b1) 12...♞b8 13 ♖ce2! (the beginning of an important knight manoeuvre) 13...♞b6 14 ♖c1 ♞a6 15 ♖f5 ♖f8 16 g4!. Now 16...♙xg4 17 ♙hg1 puts Black in trouble. For example 17...♙xh2 runs into 18 ♖h6+ g×h6 (18...♖h8 19 ♖xf7+ ♖g8 20 ♖.h7+ ♖xf7 21 ♖g6 mate) 17 ♖d8+, as does 17...♖gf6 - 18 ♖h6+ ♖h8 19 ♖.x7+ ♖g8 20 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 21 ♖g5. Finally 17...♖df6 18 h3 h6 19 ♖f4 g5 20 ♖g3 leaves the knight stranded on g4. Consequently Ward-Fant, Gausdal 1993, continued 16...c5 17 ♖xf6! gxf6 18 dxc5 ♖xc5 19 ♖d4 ♖xd3 20 ♖xd3 b4 21 ♞hg1 ♖b7 22 ♖b5! ♖xb5 23 ♖xb5 ♞c8 24 ♖d4 ♞b6 25 ♖d3 and Black was severely hampered by the four pawn islands.

b2) 12...h6 13 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 14 ♖ce2 ♖d7 15 ♖c1 ♞ac8 16 ♖b3 ♖b6 17 ♞c1 ♖e6 18 ♖c5 favoured White in Ward-Parker, Guildford 1991. After 18...♖d7 19 ♖xe6 fxe6 20 ♖e2 ♖f6 21 ♖h5 b4 22 h4 c5 23 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 24 g4 c4 25 ♖g6 ♞ed8 26 g5 White's attack had gained the most momentum.

b3) 12...♖f8 takes Black's eye off the c5-square. Shirov-Wedberg, Stockholm 1990, witnessed a wonderful knight manoeuvre: 13 ♖ce2! ♖b6 14 ♞c1 ♖d7 15 ♖f5 ♖d8 (15...♖xf5 16 ♖xf5 g6 17 ♖h3 ♖e4 18 ♖xe7 ♞xe7 19 ♖f4 is good for White) 16 ♖eg3 a5 17 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 18 ♖h5 ♖d8 (18...♖xf5 19 ♖xf6+ gxf6 20 ♖xf5 ♞a6 21 h4) 19 ♖d6! ♞e6 20 ♖b7 ♖c7 21 ♖c5 (very nice) 21...♞d6 22 ♖xf6+ ♞xf6 23 f3 ♖e8 24 e4 and White, having assumed control of the queenside, pressed forward in the centre.

10...♖f8

Black adopts the standard set up with the knight dropping back to defend the h7-pawn. Now White can play on the queenside with 12 ♞ab1 (preparing b2-b4), for example, but we are going to concentrate on the theme of expansion in the centre (threatened or executed) involving an early f2-f3, the possibility

that is a key difference when developing the knight on e2 instead of f3.

10...h6 removes the pawn from the firing line of the queen and bishop but restricts Black slightly in that the g6-square is no longer available after 11 ♖f4 ♖f8. White can continue as per plan with 12 f3, when 12...♖e6 13 ♖c5 c5?! is an attempt to justify Black's play that is best replaced with the more solid 13...♖d6. S.Ivanov-Ignatiev, Chigorin Memorial 1997, continued 14 ♞ad1. Then 14...b6 15 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16 dxc5 ♖xc5 17 ♖h7+ ♖h8 18 b4 ♖a6 19 ♖xd5 is good for White, e.g. 19...g6 20 ♖xg6 f×g6 21 ♖xg6 ♖g7 (21...♖g5 22 ♖c7) 22 ♖xb6! etc. Instead Black played 14...c4 15 ♖f5 ♖f8?! (15...a6 16 e4 dxe4 17 fxe4 b5 had to be played, although with 18 ♖g3 White assumes a menacing stance) 16 ♖f4 ♖e6 17 ♖xe6 fxe6 18 ♖h3 ♖6d7 (18...♖b6 19 e4 ♖8d7 20 ♖g3 ♖b4 21 exd5 ♖xc3 22 bxc3 exd5 23 ♞fe1 and White's raking bishops dominate), and now 19 ♖g3 ♖a5 20 e4 would have left White clearly better.

11 f3



11...♖e6

One of several possibilities.

a) After 11...♖h5 12 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 13 e4 dxe4 14 fxe4 ♖g4 15 e5! ♞ad8 (15...c5? 16 ♖d5) 16 ♖e4 White had the advantage in Ivanchuk-Yusupov, Candidates match, Brussels 1991. If 16...♖e6 White has 17 ♖d6, e.g. 17...♞xd6 (17...♖xe2 18 ♖xh7+) 18 exd6

♞xd6 19 ♙xh7+. Instead the game went 16...♟g6 17 ♚ad1! ♚f8 (17...♙xe2 18 ♙xe2 ♟hf4 19 ♙c4) 18 h3 ♙xe2 19 ♙xe2 ♟hf4 20 ♙c4, and now Black should have played 20...♟d5. 14...♙e6 is an improvement – Bareev-Ahlander, Naestved 1988 gave chances to both sides after 15 ♚f2 ♟f6 (15...c5 16 ♟d5 ♙xd5 17 exd5 cxd4 18 ♟xd4) 16 h3 ♚ad8 17 ♚af1 ♟g6!.

b) 11...g6 12 ♙h1 ♟e6 13 ♙h4 b6 is better than 13...♟g7?! 14 ♙f2 c5? 15 dxc5 ♙xc5 16 ♙h4! when Yakovich-Baburin, Voronezh 1988 ended 16...♙xe3 17 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 18 ♟xd5 ♞g5 19 ♟c7 ♙h3 20 ♟c3 1-0. Sakae-Nikitin, Smolensk 2000 continued (13...b6) 14 ♚ad1 ♙b7 15 ♙c1!, the point being that apart from defending the e3-pawn White also protects the e3-square, in anticipation of e3-e4 dxe4, fxe4 ♟g4. Then, with the queen on c1 instead of c2, White will not have to worry about the knight fork on e3. There followed 15...♟h5 16 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 17 e4 dxe4 18 fxe4 ♚ad8 19 ♙c4 with a clear advantage to White according to Baburin. The plan is e4-e5 followed by sending a knight to d6.

c) 11...♙a5 just loses time, e.g. 12 a3 h6 (12...♟g4? 13 b4 ♞d8 14 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 15 fxe4) 13 b4 ♞b6 14 ♟a4 ♞c7 15 ♙f4 ♙d6 16 ♙xd6 ♞xd6 17 e4 dxe4 18 fxe4 and again White has succeeded in launching the e-pawn.

d) 11...c5 is premature. 12 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13 dxc5 ♚xc3 14 ♚ad1 ♙e6 15 ♙e4 d4 16 ♟b5 d3 17 ♙xd3 ♞e7 18 ♟d6 b6 19 c6!, Mozetic-Abramovic, Yugoslav Ch. 1995 is one example of how White can exploit the weakened d5-pawn. 12 ♙b5 ♙d7 13 ♙xd7 ♞xd7 14 ♚ad1 c4 15 ♙xf6! ♙xf6 16 e4 dxe4 17 ♟xe4, Vaisser-C.Flear, French Team Ch. 1998, is another.

e) 11...♟g6 12 ♚ad1 and now the following are possible:

e1) 12...h6 13 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 14 ♙xg6 fxe6 15 e4 g5 16 c5 ♙e7 17 f4 gxf4 18 ♟xf4 ♚f8 19 ♟g6 ♚xf1+ 20 ♚xf1 ♙e6 21 ♟e2



Kasparov-Barua, Kasparov Grand Prix 2000. Black has the bishops but White has a knight firmly ensconced in enemy territory, another ready to support it and the f-file. After 21...♞d7 22 h4 ♚e8 23 ♟g3 Baburin recommends 23...♙d8 in case this bishop comes in handy. Barua played 23...♙f7! 24 ♟xe7+ ♚xe7 when 25 ♟f5 ♙e6 26 ♟d6 ♙g6 27 ♞c3 ♚xd6 28 exd6 ♞xd6 29 ♞a3 ♙b8 30 ♞e7 was very good for White.

e2) 12...♟h5 13 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 14 e4 dxe4 15 fxe4 ♙e6 16 e5 brings about another situation in which White threatens to use d6 as a juicy outpost for a knight. In Yakovich-Ahlander, Stockholm 1999 Black tried to undermine this plan with 16...c5?, but 17 d5! ♙g4 18 c6! was strong, e.g. 18...fxe6 19 ♙xg6 hxg6 20 ♞xg6 ♞h4 (20...♙xe2 21 d6) 21 ♞f7+ ♟h8 22 d6. After 18...♟f6 19 ♟e4 ♚f8 (19...fxe6 20 d6! ♞f7 21 ♟g5 ♞d7 22 ♟xh7) the simplest route is 20 exf7+ ♚xf7 21 d6 ♞e5 22 ♟xf6+ ♙xf6 23 ♚xf6 ♞xf6 24 ♞xc5 etc.

12 ♚ad1 ♚c8 13 ♙h1 h6

The idea behind White's previous move can be seen after 13...c5 14 dxc5. First 14...♙xc5?! no longer pins the e-pawn, so White is able to play 15 e4 dxe4 16 fxe4 with advantage. This leaves 14...♙xc5 when both 15 ♙b5 ♙d7 (15...♟d8d7 16 ♟d4) 16 ♙xd7 ♟x8d7 (16...♞xd7 17 e4) 17 ♞b3 (followed by ♟f4) and 15 ♞a4 a6 16 ♙b1 favour White. Best seems Lautie's own suggestion,

namely 13...Qg6. Then 14 e4 dxe4 15 fxe4 Qg4 16 Qc1 c5! is a thematic strike at White's centre that seems to secure Black a decent game, e.g. 17 Qb5 Qc7 18 Qf4 cxd4 19 Qxe8 dxc3 20 Qb5 cxb2 21 Qxb2 Qxf4 22 Qxf4 Qc2 23 Qxc2 Qxc2 24 Qd2 Qxd2 25 Qxd2 Qc5, which was nice for Black in Gulko-Sturua, Elista Olympiad 1998, or 17 e5 cxd4 18 Qxd4 Qxd4 19 Qxg6 Qxe5 20 Qf4 Qxc5 21 Qxh7+ Qh8 22 Qe4 Qxd8 23 Qc1 Qd6 24 Qd2 Qxf4 25 Qxf4 Qe5 with equality in Sadler-Asrian, Las Vegas 1999. Finally 17 d5 gives away the e5-square.

14 Qh4 a6



Black wants to rule out Qb5 before pushing his c-pawn.

15 Qf4

Note that the arrival of the pawn on a6 introduces the possibility of 15 Qxf6? Qxf6 16 e4 because 16...dxe4 17 fxe4 Qxd4 can be met with 18 Qxa6 bxa6 19 Qxd4, when 19...Qa5 20 Qxe6 gives White an edge after 20...Qxe6 21 Qf5 or 20...Qxe6 21 Qd7. If the manoeuvring in the main game is not to your liking then this forcing line is promising.

15...Qd7

Now 16...g5 is a genuine threat. After 15...c5 16 dxc5 Qxc5 17 Qb1 Black will have problems with the newly isolated d-pawn.

16 Qf2

Remember that the g1-a7 diagonal is a useful home for this bishop in the f3-variation. From f2, for example, the bishop

supports the d4-pawn (after e3-e4) and is also safe from harassment, whereas 16 Qg3 Qe6 17 Qxe6 Qxe6 18 e4 Qh5 either gives Black time, in the case of 19 Qf2 Qf4, or gives him counterplay on the dark squares after 19 e5 Qxg3+ 20 hxg3 c5 etc.

16...Qd6

16...Qe6 17 Qxe6 Qxe6 18 e4 is standard.



White threatens to march on with e4-e5 and f3-f4-f5 etc. Consequently Black has two ways of addressing matters in the centre:

a) 18...dxe4 19 fxe4 Qg4 20 d5! cxd5 (20...Qxf2+? 21 Qxf2 hits f7, while 20...Qd7 21 Qg1 is a shade better for White) 21 exd5 Qd7 22 Qh7+ Qh8 23 Qd4 is an interesting transformation, the position now having a much more open nature. Then the crafty 23...Qc7 runs into 24 Qxg7+! Qxg7 25 Qxf7+! Qh8 26 d6! Qxd6 27 Qg6 Qe5 28 Qg8 etc.

b) 18...c5 19 dxc5 Qxc5 (19...d4 20 e5) 20 e5 Qd7 21 f4 and White's mobile majority is under way.

17 Qd2

Toying with the idea of e3-e4 by protecting the knight.

17...Qc7

Doubling the guard on f4. 17...Qxf4 18 Qxf4 does not damage White's pawns, rather increases their attacking potential, since f4-f5 followed by supporting and advancing the g-pawn could soon unsettle Black's king. Note that in the meantime the f3-pawn covers e4.

18 ♖g1!



This time White takes time out to protect h2 in order to free the f4-knight.

18...b5?!

It is significant that White's calm manoeuvring has induced a dubious reaction from Black. This queenside expansion is designed to provide Black with some activity when White finally gets round to pushing his e-pawn, but the creation of a fresh weakness on c5 means that White can now change plans. Others:

a) Again 18...♗xf4?! 19 exf4 is incorrect, e.g. 19...♞e6 20 f5 ♞f4 21 ♖b1 and ♖e3 is coming.

b) 18...♞e6 19 ♞xe6 ♖xe6 20 e4 is also what White is waiting for, e.g. 20...♗f4 21 ♞c2 (21 ♞f2?) 21...dxe4 22 fxe4 ♖g4 23 ♞de1 etc.

c) After 18...♞e7 19 ♞fe2 White is ready to execute the desired push:

c1) 19...b5 is slightly different to the main game in that White has already dropped his knight back to e2. Moreover 20 e4 b4 21 e5 ♖xe5 22 dxe5 bxc3 23 ♞xc3 demonstrates that ...♞e7 does not mix well with advancing the b-pawn, as both 23...♞xe5 24 ♖d4 ♞e6 25 ♖xa6 and 23...♞xe5 24 ♖c5 ♞ee8 25 ♖xa6 see the rook moving again.

c2) 19...♞ce8 is consistent with the previous move. Then 20 e4 dxe4 21 fxe4 ♞xe4 22 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 23 ♖xe4 ♞xe4 is an interesting exchange sacrifice that should be dealt with

energetically by White – 24 d5! ♖g4 25 ♞c3 ♞e7 26 ♞de1 concentrating on open lines to give White an edge.

c3) 19...c5?! does not hold White back: 20 e4! and now 20...cxd4 21 ♖xd4 ♞h7 22 exd5 wins a pawn as 22...♖xh2? loses, e.g. 23 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 (23...♞xh7 24 f4) 24 ♖xf6 gxf6 25 d6. Then we have 20...dxe4 21 fxe4 cxd4 22 ♖xd4, e.g. 22...♖e5 23 ♞xf6! gxf6 24 ♞d5 ♞d8 25 ♞xe7+ ♞xe7 26 ♞xh6 etc.

19 ♖b1!

Highlighting the flexibility of the system. Black has had to watch out for e3-e4 for much of the game but his latest attempt to undermine White's control of the e4-square presents White with a second option. Consequently the text frees the d3-square for the knight in order to closely monitor Black's weakness on c5. Meanwhile the f3-pawn, ostensibly there to add weight to an eventual e3-e4, provides valuable protection to e4 – particularly useful now in the event of ...b5-b4.

19...♞cd8

Lautier suggests 19...♞e6 20 ♞d3 ♞g5, pointing out that with 20 ♞xe6 White retains a slight edge.

20 ♞c1!

Remember that 18...b5 neglected the c6-pawn as well as the c5-square, so White improves a rook before relocating his knight. 20 ♞d3 walks into 20...♖f5.

20...♞b8

20...♞b6 keeps an eye on the c-pawn but places the queen on a more vulnerable square, e.g. 21 e4!? b4 22 ♞a4 ♞b5 23 e5 ♞xa4 24 exf6 and our attention is brought to Black's kingside.

21 ♞ce2

Again White is in no rush, the text keeping an eye on c6. Instead 21 ♞d3?! ♖f5! makes life a little easier for Black.

21...b4

Part of the plan, perhaps, but Lautier's 21...♞e7 is preferable.

22 ♞d3 ♞e6

Sensibly contributing to the struggle for c5.
23 ♖f2!



Excellent play from White. Having served its purpose on g1 the bishop is ready to challenge its opposite number in White's quest to take control of the key c5-square, after which thoughts can return to more aggressive matters.

23...a5

The only logical way to avoid the coming trade of dark-squared bishops is to vacate the h2-b8 diagonal: 23...♖b6 24 ♖g3 ♖f8 and Black continues to hold c5. However, the backward c6-pawn and the hole in front of it are long-term weaknesses and, in evading capture, Black's bishop has had to retreat, whereas White's now enjoys more freedom. 23...♖xh2? is too desperate. White stands much better after either 24 ♖xb4 ♖d6 25 ♖xa6 or 24 f4 ♖g4 25 ♖e5.

24 ♖g3 ♖c8 25 ♖c5!

White has a nice idea in mind. 25 ♖c5! is another wise suggestion of Lautier. The plan is to transfer the knight from e2 to f5. After 25...♖xe5 26 dxe5! ♖h7 27 f4 White does, finally, manage to release the kingside pawns. Black's best is then 27...♖hf8 28 ♖d4 when White has the makings of an initiative. An example of how quickly things can go wrong for Black is 27...♖b6 28 f5 ♖eg5 29 ♖c5 ♖cd8 30 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 31 h4.
28...♖xe5 29 ♖xc5



White is able to keep a piece on c5 rather than a pawn thanks to the 'pin' on the h2-b8 diagonal. It is true that he has given up the flexible knight in the process, but in doing so a key defender has also been eliminated. As long as White makes sure to have more pieces controlling c5 it is necessary to face facts and be willing to part with one or two hitherto loyal servants.

26...♖e7

Ignoring the attack on the a5-pawn in order to apply pressure to White's usual weakness in the f3-system, the c3-pawn.

27 ♖xd6

27 ♖xa5? ♖ce8 and then 28 ♖f2? withdraws from the h2-b8 diagonal to permit 28...♖b6 29 ♖a4 c5 etc.

27...♖xd6 28 ♖g3

So far so good for White, who has succeeded in winning the c5-square. Black's only counterplay lies in hitting the e3-pawn.

28...♖c8 29 ♖e1

With an undisputed advantage on the queenside White need not be obsessed with achieving e3-e4. Lautier gives 29 e4 dxe4 30 fxe4 ♖xe4 31 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 32 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 as steering the game to equality. This exchange sacrifice should be borne in mind when engineering the central push.

29...♖f4?

Black initiates complications that are clearly to White's advantage. Once again Black appears to lose patience, overestimat-

ing his chances in the complications. More circumspect is 29...♖c7 which keeps White's lead to a minimum.

30 ♖e4!



White is happy to go along for the ride. 30 ♖f1! (Lautier) is also good, e.g. 30...♖c7 31 ♖ec1 h5 32 ♖c2! h4 33 ♖a4 ♖e6 34 ♖c2 ♖c8 35 ♖f2!

30...♖xe4

30...♖h4 is clearly better for White after 31 ♖xf6+ (31 ♖d6) 31...♖xf6 32 ♖xa5 when 32...♖f4 33 ♖a8! introduces a new and important pin.

31 ♖xe4 ♖d6 32 ♖xa5

Not 32 e5? ♖xe5, but 32 exd5! cxd5 33 ♖xa5 is a decent option (again 33...♖f4 runs into 34 ♖a8!).

32...dxe4 33 ♖c5

Returning to the strongpoint to cut the communication between Black's queen and the b4-pawn.

33...♖e5

After the sensible 33...♖b8 White improves his bishop with 34 ♖c2 followed by 35 ♖b3.

34 ♖ec1!

34 ♖xb4? lifts the pin on the d-file only to walk into a new one on the a3-f8 diagonal, thus leaving Black free to play 34...♖h5! The b4-pawn is not going anywhere so if White is to convert the hard-earned positional advantage he must make the most of the c5-square while keeping an eye on the kingside.

34...♖xc5 35 ♖xc5 f5



Notice that Black concentrates on the kingside, the area in which White is more vulnerable.

36 g3

Again 36 ♖xb4 is somewhat careless, as then 36...f4 gives Black chances of at least making his presence felt near White's king, e.g. 37 ♖c3 f3.

36...g5?

Too ambitious, although indicative of Black's game-plan since surrendering the c5-square. 36...♖b8 37 ♖c2 ♖e6 38 ♖b3 ♖xb3 39 axb3 ♖b5! is the most uncompromising continuation, fighting for the square that Black neglected more than twenty moves earlier! Incidentally after 36...f4? 37 gxf4 ♖g4 the calm 38 ♖g1! leaves Black with little to show for the pawn, and there is still the matter of the weak b4-pawn.

37 ♖xb4 ♖e6

Now 37...f4?? loses to 38 ♖xg5+.

38 ♖c2

Tricky play. The tricky 38 ♖xe4? works if Black falls for 38...f4 39 ♖xg5+, but 38...♖f7! 39 ♖xf5 ♖xc3 offers Black unnecessary counterplay.

38...♖d5 39 ♖b3 f4 40 ♖b6

Threatening 41 ♖xd5.

40...♖xb3 41 ♖xc6! ♖f8

Or 41...♖d5 42 ♖g6+ ♖f8 43 axb3 ♖xe4 44 ♖xh6 etc.

42 ♖xb3+ ♖h8 43 ♖b6 1-0

43...♖h7 44 ♜c7+ ♜e7 45 ♜d6, or
44...♖h8 45 ♜g6.

Game 8
Pelletier-Chandler
Mermaid Beach Club 1999

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c5



4 cxd5 exd5

Before continuing with the main line it is worth investigating the tricky 4...cxd4. In this system Black sacrifices a pawn for rapid development and the prospect of an attack against White's king, since the main line sees the kings settling on opposite sides of the board. The following sequence is practically forced: 5 ♜xd4 ♘c6 6 ♜d1 exd5 7 ♜xd5 ♗d7 8 e3 ♘f6 9 ♜d1! (placing the queen where it is least exposed) 9...♗c5 10 ♘f3 ♜e7 11 ♗e2 0-0-0 12 ♘c3 g5! 13 b4!



Having already sacrificed a pawn Black has wasted no time with 12...g5. With this in mind White replies in kind, distracting Black, opening the b-file and making way for the bishop to come to the a1-h8 diagonal. 13...♗xb4 14 ♗b2 g4 (14...♗b8 15 ♘d5 ♘xd5 16 ♗xh8 ♘xe3 17 ♜xe3 ♜xh8 18 ♜d3 does not give Black enough for the exchange) 15 ♘d4. Black has three moves in this position.

a) 15...♘xd4? 16 ♜xd4 helps White, e.g. 16...♗c5 (16...♗b5? 17 ♜xa7! ♗xc3 18 ♗xb5 ♗xb? 19 ♜fc1+ ♗xc1 20 ♜xc1+ mates, while 16...♗b8 17 ♘d1 ♘e4 18 ♜e5+ nets White material) 17 ♘d5! ♘xd5 18 ♜fc1! with the following lines:

a1) 18...b6 19 ♜xd5 ♗b5 20 ♗xg4+ ♗b8 21 ♗e5+ ♗d6 22 ♜c8+! ♜xc8 23 ♗xd6+.

a2) 18...♘c7 19 ♜xc5 (19 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 20 ♜xc5 ♜hg8 21 ♗d3) 19...♗e6 20 ♜e5 ♜he8 21 ♜xc7+ ♜xc7 22 ♜c1.

a3) Best is 18...♜hg8 19 ♜xc5+ ♗c6 20 ♗xg4+ ♗b8 21 ♜e5+ ♜xe5 (21...♗a8? 22 ♜xd5) 22 ♗xe5+ ♗a8 (22...♘c7 23 ♜xc6 bxc6 24 ♜b1+ ♗a8 25 ♗xc7) 23 ♗f3, when White has an extra pawn and the bishop pair.

b) 15...♗b8 16 ♘cb5 a6 (16...♘e5? 17 ♜b3 ♜hg8 18 ♜ab1 ♗c8 19 ♘xa7! ♘e4 20 ♘dc6+ 1-0 Illescas-Rodriguez Vargas, Catalunya 1996) 17 ♘xc6+ ♗xc6 18 ♘d4 ♗d5 19 ♗d3 ♜hg8 20 ♜a4 ♘e4 21 ♘f5 ♜e6 22 ♜xb4 ♜xf5 and now in Vlasin-Cech, Czech League 1992, White could have safely played 23 ♗xa6.

c) 15...h5 and now:

c1) 16 ♘cb5 ♗b8 17 ♜a4 a6 18 ♘xc6+ ♗xc6 19 ♗xf6 ♜e4!! is very dangerous for White, e.g. 20 f3 ♜xe3+ 21 ♗h1 ♜xe2 22 ♜xb4 gxf3 23 ♜f4+ ♗a8 24 ♘c7+ ♗a7 25 gxf3, when Krush-Kapnis, World U18 Ch. Oropesa del Mar 1999, went 25...♜hg8 26 ♗g5 ♜d3 27 ♜ab1 ♜xf3 28 ♜d4+ ♗b8 29 ♜xb7+ ♗xb7 30 ♜b1+ ♜b3+ 0-1. 26 ♗d4+ does not help in view of 26...b6 27 ♜f2 ♜xd4 28 ♘b5+ ♗a8!

c2) 16 ♜b1! looks to be the best move for

White if there are no decent improvements in 'c1'. For example 16...dxd4 17 ♖xd4 ♙f5? rebounds on Black after 18 ♖c4+ ♖c5 (18...♙b8?? 19 ♖f4+) 19 ♖xc5+ ♙xc5 20 ♙bc1, as now both 20...♙d7 21 ♙fd1+ ♙e7 (21...♙e6 22 ♙c4+) 22 ♙d5+! ♙xd5 23 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 24 ♙xh8 and 20...♙b8 21 ♙b5 ♙e7 22 ♙e5+ win for White, while 20...♙d2 meets with 21 ♙a4. Meanwhile the standard 16...♙b8 17 ♙cb5 is 'b', above, with White having ♙b1 and Black ...h7-h5.

5 ♙f3 ♙c6 6 g3



Thanks to the fianchetto White is able to exert constant pressure on the d5-pawn, whether or not the d4-square becomes available.

6...♙f6

The main line. Black can also close the centre with 6...c4 when White should play the thematic 7 ♙g2 ♙b4 8 0-0 ♙ge7 9 e4. Reintroducing tension in the centre puts Black on the defensive. In fact there is a good chance that the centre will soon open up, leaving the g2-bishop very powerful on the long diagonal. Whereas in the main game White blockades the d5-pawn with a knight on d4, here it is Black who tends to block White's (passed) d4-pawn.

a) 9...dxe4 10 ♙xe4 0-0 (10...♙g4 11 a3 ♙a5 12 ♙f4 0-0 13 ♙d6 ♙c7 14 ♙xb7 ♖b8 was played in Semkov-Nogueiras, Varna 1982, White gaining clear advantage with 15 d5 ♖xb7 16 dxc6 ♖xc6 17 ♙e5 ♖xg2+ 18

♙xg2 ♙xd1 19 ♙fxd1 ♙fc8 20 ♙d7) 11 ♖c2!

a1) 11...♙g4 12 ♖xc4 ♙xf3 13 ♙xf3 ♙xd4 (13...♖xd4 14 ♖b3) 14 ♙g2 is very good for White due to the light-squared bishop. Gual Pascual-Moskalenko, Paretana 2000 saw an instructive mistake from Black: 14...♙c8? 15 ♖xb4 ♙c2 16 ♙f6+! gxf6 17 ♖g4+ ♙g6 18 ♙b1 and the bishop pair alone is decisive.

a2) 11...♙xd4 12 ♙xd4 ♖xd4 13 ♙d1 ♖e5 14 ♖xc4 gives White a pull.

a3) 11...♙f5 12 ♙h4! attacks one light-squared bishop and unleashes another.

a31) 12...♖xd4?! 13 ♙xf5 ♙xf5 14 ♙d1 ♖e5 15 ♙d5! ♖e6 16 ♙f4 is clearly better for White.

a32) 12...♙xe4 13 ♙xe4 ♖xd4 (13...g6 14 ♙h6 ♙e8 15 ♖xc4) 14 ♙d1 and White is active.

a33) The fun soon peters out for Black after 12...♙xd4 13 ♖xc4 ♙e6 14 ♖xb4 ♙c2 15 ♖a4 ♙xa1 16 ♙g5 f6 (16...b5 17 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 18 ♖d1) 17 ♙e3 b5 18 ♖a6! ♙c8 19 ♖xb5 etc.

a34) 12...♙g4 13 ♙g5 ♙g6 (13...g6 14 ♖xc4 ♖xd4 15 ♖xd4 ♙xd4 16 ♙xb7) 14 d5! ♙ce5 15 h3! ♙d7 16 ♙xg6 hxg6 17 ♖e4!



Moskalenko-Semenov, Alushta 1994. White threatens 13 ♖h4. There followed 17...f6 18 ♙e6 ♖c8! and now 19 ♙xf8 ♙f5 has been assessed as unclear but looks good

for White after 20 ♖d4, while 19 ♕e3 ♜e8 20 ♚ad1! would have led to a clear advantage.

a3) After 12...♞c8 13 ♔f6+ ♗xf6 the best Black can expect is to be considerably worse following 14 ♔xf5 ♔xd4 15 ♔xd4 ♞xd4 16 ♕xb7 ♞b8 17 ♔d1 as 14...♔xf5? loses, e.g. 15 ♞xf5 ♔xd4 (15...♞xd4 16 ♕e4) 16 ♞g4+ ♔h8 17 ♔d1 ♕c5 18 ♕e3. Therefore 13...♔h8 is forced, after which 14 ♔xf5 ♔xf5 15 ♞xf5 ♞xf6 16 ♞xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♕e3 ♚fd8! 18 ♚fd1! is very good for White.

b) With 9...0-0 10 exd5 ♔xd5 Black hopes to maintain a hold on the d5-square. Then, instead of the automatic 11 ♔xd5 White has 11 ♕g5 ♞a5 (11...f6?! 12 ♔xd5 ♞xd5 13 ♔e5 ♞b5 14 a4 ♞a6 15 ♔xc6 bxc6 16 ♕d2 was unpleasant for Black in Tregubov-Moskalenko, Alushta 1994) and only then 12 ♔xd5 ♞xd5 13 a3 ♕a5 14 ♔e5 ♞b5 15 a4 ♞a6 16 ♔xc6 bxc6, when Timoshchenko-Tseitlin, Palma de Majorca 1989 saw White turn his superior forces into something more tangible after 17 ♞c2?! ♕e6 18 ♚fc1 ♞ab8 19 ♕f1 ♞b6 20 ♕xc4 ♞xd4 21 ♕xe6 ♞xb2 22 ♕e3 ♞xc2 23 ♕xd4 ♞xc1+ 24 ♞xc1 fxe6 25 ♞xc6 etc.

7 ♕g2 ♕e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♕g5



Concentrating on the d5-pawn by monitoring a key defender.

9...cxd4

Alternatives are inferior. 9...c4 10 ♔e5 ♕e6 11 ♔xc6 bxc6 12 b3 ♞a5 13 ♔a4 ♚fd8

14 e3 c5 15 dxc5 ♕xc5 16 ♕xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♔xc5 ♞xc5 18 ♞h5 gives White a clear advantage according to NCO. In reply to 9...♕e6 White instigates a forcing line that leads to a superior ending: 10 dxc5 ♕xc5 11 ♕xf6 ♞xf6 12 ♔xd5 ♞xb2 13 ♔c7 ♚ad8 14 ♞c1!



Black has no time to prevent ♔xe6, after which the weaknesses on the light squares give White something to aim at: 14...♞xc1 15 ♞axc1 ♕e7 (defending the g5-square) 16 ♔xe6 fxe6 17 ♚c4 with a difficult defensive task ahead for Black.

10 ♔xd4 h6

Taking the pressure off the f6-knight and lifting the 'pin' in anticipation of ...♕f8 to clear the e-file for the rook. Also seen is 10...♜e8 when 11 ♞a4 ♕d7 12 ♚ad1 requires careful play from Black. 12...a5? 13 ♞c2 ♞c8 14 ♞d2 ♕h3 15 ♔db5 ♕xg2 16 ♕xg2 ♔e4 17 ♔xe4 dxe4 18 ♕xe7 ♞xe7 19 ♞f4 led to the kind of advantage White enjoys in the Catalan in A.Shneider-Leski, Corsica (rapidplay) 1997. Flear-J.Cooper, British Ch. 1988 was also poor for Black after 12...h6 13 ♕f4 ♕c5 14 ♔xc6 bxc6?! 15 e4!, but the lesser evil 14...♕xc6 would have reduced White to a slight but enduring edge.

11 ♕e3

At first f4 might seem like a more suitable square, but White needs to pay attention to d4 in order to exert maximum pressure on the isolated pawn.

11...♗e8

Preparing to drop the bishop back to f8, when the rook is well placed on the e-file. Of course 11...♗g4 is almost identical to the main game, but after 12 ♖a4! White has a little more flexibility in that he has not yet committed his rook(s). Then:

a) 12...♗d7 and now 13 ♗xd5! has been questioned for giving up the traditionally important bishop, but in this case 13...♙xd5 14 ♙xd5 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 16 ♖xg4 15 ♗xc6 bxc6 16 ♙c3 ♗b6 17 ♗fd1 ♖c8 18 ♗xb6 axb6 19 ♖f4 just seemed like a free pawn in A.Lastin-Potkin, Moscow 1999.

b) 12...♙a5 13 ♗ad1! ♗c8 14 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 15 ♙f5 ♗c4



Tal-Zhidkov, USSR Ch. 1972. Another skirmish surrounding the d5-pawn. In fact it is not untypical of the Tarrasch to see White win (or Black lose/sacrifice) the d5-pawn at the cost of the light-squared bishop or a period of inconvenience. While it is necessary to properly analyse these sequences over the board it is useful to remember where certain pieces are at their most vulnerable (here the 'dim' a5-knight and the g4-bishop). Tal continued 16 ♖b5 ♗xf5 17 ♗xd5 a6 18 ♖xa5 ♖xa5 19 ♗xa5 ♗c8 and then tidied up nicely with 20 ♗d5 ♗e6 21 ♗d2 ♗b4 22 ♗dd1 ♗c2 23 a3 ♗e7 24 ♗d4 b5 25 e3 a5 26 ♗e4 etc. 12 ♗c1

Rooks belong on open files.

12...♗e6

Highlighting a fundamental problem with Black's d-pawn in that this form of protection both obstructs the rook and leaves Black open to a well timed ♙xe6 in turn introducing fresh problems on the light squares. However, as we have already seen, failing to provide d5 with sufficient support can easily lead to the pawn falling. Nevertheless I prefer the consistent 12...♗f8, when Karpov's 13 a3 is a sensible move that is the first step of a reliable route to a plus for White. Play might continue 13...♗g4 14 h3 ♗e6 15 ♙xc6! bxc6 16 ♗d4



We are following Karpov-Illescas, Leon 1993. The capture on c6 leaves Black with a backward pawn and a weak c5-square and is therefore another common feature of the main line Tarrasch. Karpov's latest is directed against 16...c5 (see below) but in any case the bishop stands well on d4 and now the e-pawn is free. In fact Black can try 16...c5 because 17 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 18 ♙xd5 ♖xb2 drops the b-pawn, but then 19 ♙c7 ♗ad8 20 ♖e1 ♗e7 21 ♖a5! has been evaluated as giving White a clear lead. Anand considers 16...♙d7 17 b4 to be excellent for White, and 16...♙c4 17 ♙xe4 dxe4 18 ♗c5 ♗xc5 19 ♗xc5 ♗d5 20 b4 clamps down on the c5-square. This leaves 16...♗d7 17 ♖d3 ♙h7 18 ♗e3! (shadowing the knight rather than getting careless with 18 e4? c5), when 18...♙g5 19 ♗xg5 hxg5 (19...♖xg5 20 e4! ♖g6 21

♙f1) 20 ♜f1 (not 20 e4 dxe4 21 ♙xe4 ♙xh3) 20... ♜b8 21 ♜c2 gives White a long-term structural lead. Instead Illescas stood worse after 18... ♙d6?! 19 ♜f1 ♙e6 20 b4!. One to remember is 19... ♙e7 20 ♙xd5! cxd5 21 ♙xd5, as is 19... ♙f8 20 ♙xd5! cxd5 21 ♙xd5 ♙e5 22 ♙xa8 ♙xa8 23 ♙xa8 ♜xa8 24 ♙d4 ♙xd4 25 ♜xd4 ♙xh3 26 g4 h5 27 gxh5, when White has good rooks and too many pawns.

13 ♙e4 ♙d7 14 ♜f1



Both sides have completed development and the game continues to revolve around the d5-pawn and surrounding squares. We have another example here of how attacking play is not exclusive to crushing sacrificial mating combinations or kingside pawn storms. A look at the diagram position shows that the squares c5, c6 and d5 are covered by every single one of White's pieces except the king! It is this form of attacking chess that tends to be overlooked and, consequently, underestimated at club level. From a theoretical viewpoint Black is only slightly worse but practically it is another matter, particularly at club level. Black's next tucks the king away in case White takes on e6 and seeks to open up the light squares.

14... ♙h8 15 ♙b3 ♜ad8

Black has d5 well protected now, but the same cannot be said of the neighbouring square.

16 ♙e5 ♙xc5 17 ♙xc5 ♙g4 18 ♜d2

Earlier in Sadler-Chandler, British League 1997, White decided it was time to clear away a few pieces: 18 ♙xd5 ♙xe2 19 ♙xc6 ♙xd1 20 ♙xd7 ♙e1+ 21 ♙g2 ♙xa4



22 ♜xe1 ♙xd7 23 ♙xa7 ♙c6+ 24 ♙g1 ♜d2 25 ♜e2 ♜d3 26 ♜c3 ♜d2 27 ♜e2 ♜d3 28 ♙e3 ♙c4 29 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 30 ♜d2 ♜xd2 31 ♙xd2 and Sadler went on to convert the ending, although at this point White's lead is not great. It is understandable that Pelletier prefers to avoid wholesale exchanges until the time is right. Thus far White has been increasing the pressure on Black's centre and, during the last few moves, on the dark squares, so there is no reason to believe that White cannot try for more than an edge in the ending.

18... ♙f5

In view of what happens next this must be wrong. Black could try his luck defending a typically unpleasant Tarrasch ending after 18... b6 19 ♙e3 ♙e5 20 ♙xd7 ♜xd7 21 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 22 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 23 ♙xd5 ♙xe2, but 24 ♜c7 looks strong. Perhaps, now that circumstances have changed slightly, Black should simply put the king back on g8. At least this adds protection to the f7-pawn for later possibilities such as the one mentioned above.

19 ♙f3!

A move for which Black is prepared, of course, but White calculates that the ensuing complications are in his favour.

19...d4 20 ♖xd4 ♘xd4 21 ♙xd4 ♜e5



This is the point of Black's play. For the price of a pawn Black has eliminated a powerful bishop in the hope of exploiting White's newly vulnerable dark squares, and the remaining bishop is locked out of the game on g2. Unfortunately for Black White is otherwise free of structural weaknesses and inevitable exchanges reduce Black's attacking potential.

22 ♙cd1 b5

Throwing more fuel on the fire since both a7 and g4 were attacked as well as the rook.
23 ♙xa7 ♜e3+ 24 ♖h1 b4

Refusing to back down. White needs only to weather the storm to emerge with a decisive advantage.

25 ♘b5 ♙a8 26 ♜xf7



Here is another reason why the king could have come back to g8. Again Black can now

bounce off the queen, but the pawns are adding up and White's forces are hardly passive.

26...♙e6

After 26...♙h5 27 ♜c4 ♜xe2 28 a3! bxa3 29 ♜xe2 ♙xe2 30 bxa3 the dust settles to reveal a safe two pawn lead for White, e.g.

30...♙c8 31 ♘c3 ♙c2 32 ♘b1 etc.
27 ♜g6 ♙xa2 28 ♙f1 ♙xb2 29 ♘c7!
♙g8 30 ♘xe6 ♜xe6 31 ♙b1

31 ♙d6 looks good, e.g. 31...♜e5 32 ♙b6.
31...♙xb1

31...♜b3 puts up more resistance.

32 ♜xb1 ♘d5 33 ♜b3 ♙d8

33...♘c7 34 ♙xb4 does not alter the result.

34 e4 ♙b6 35 ♙xd5 ♙c8 36 ♙d3 ♙f2
37 e5 b3 1-0

38 ♙d8+ ♙xd8 39 ♜xd8+ ♖h7 40 ♙d3+
g6 41 ♜c7+ ♖g8 42 ♙c4+ is coming.

Game 9 Wells-Korneev Ubeda 1996

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c6 4 e4 dxe4 5
♘xe4 ♙b4+ 6 ♙d2 ♜xd4 7 ♙xb4
♜xe4+ 8 ♘e2

Less common than 8 ♙e2 but equally playable, the text is also not as generous because White gets to keep the g-pawn. In fact in this line it is the g7-pawn that tends to drop, after which White aims to make his presence felt on the dark squares. Meanwhile Black's queen can be difficult to evict and White's kingside difficult to develop. After 8 ♘e2 Black has a number of moves.

8...♘d7

Others.

a) 8...c5 parts with a pawn in order to provide Black with some breathing space and facilitate the development of the queenside. After 9 ♙xc5 ♘c6 10 ♙d6 ♘ge7 11 ♙f4! ♜xf4 12 ♘xf4 b6 13 ♙a3 e5 14 ♘d5 White's bishop pair guarantees an advantage. The untouchable dark-squared bishop is a

strong piece.

b) 8...e5 9 ♖d2 ♖a6 10 ♙f8!



This move – which is by no means rare in the Marshall – highlights Black's vulnerability on the dark squares. The bishop is safe as 10...♙xf8?? allows mate on d8. Already a pawn up, mobilisation with 10...♙e7 is preferable to material as 10...♙g6 is passive and gives White time to mobilise. The position after 11 ♙xg7 ♙g8 12 ♙f6 ♙e6 has been assessed as giving Black counterplay. It is true that the second player enjoys a development advantage but he is still susceptible on the dark squares, and with 13 ♙d6! ♙f5 (13...♙g6? 14 ♙d1) 14 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 15 ♙xe5 ♙xc4 16 ♙g3 White enters the next phase of the game with the superior prospects thanks to his majestic bishop and Black's weak kingside pawns.

c) 8...♙e7 9 ♙d2! and now:

c1) 9...e5 10 0-0-0! 0-0 11 ♙xc5 worked out well for White in Georgadze-Cruz Lopez, San Sebastian 1991. If now 11...♙xc4+ 12 ♙c3 ♙xc3+ 13 ♙xc3 ♙bc6 White wins material in view of 14 ♙b5! ♙e8 15 ♙xe7 etc. Instead Black tried 11...♙bc6 12 ♙d4 ♙xd4 13 ♙xe7 e5 14 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 15 ♙c6 16 ♙d3 ♙e6 but after 17 ♙b1 White was an exchange up for no compensation.

c2) 9...♙d7 10 ♙ ♙h+ 11 g3 ♙f6 12 ♙c3 c5 13 ♙e4 ♙xf3 14 ♙g2, Lputian-Pavasovic, Cannes 1996 gives White a clear advantage according to NCO.

d) 8...♙a6 is the most popular move. Then 9 ♙c3 ♙e7 10 ♙xg7 presents Black with the choice of saving his rook or threatening to win the one in the opposite corner.

d1) 10...♙b4



This is certainly in the spirit of this line. Thanks to White's backwardly developed kingside Black can entertain the possibility of checking on d3 instead of c2 and, consequently, White might have to suffer some discomfort in order to hang on to any booty. Ironically the situation soon became rather peaceful in Hauchard-Neves, World U26 Team Ch. 1993 – 11 ♙d6 ♙d3+ 12 ♙d2 ♙f5 13 ♙xd3 ♙xd3+ 14 ♙xd3 ♙xg7 leaving White with the more active king to go with his better pawns. I would seriously consider calling Black's bluff with 11 ♙xh8 when the recommended 11...e5 closes the bishop out of the game and renews the threatened check(s). Two moves spring to mind for White. The direct 12 ♙xe5 (intending 12...♙d3+ 13 ♙d2 ♙xf2 14 ♙b3 ♙xh1 15 ♙f4 ♙f5 [15...♙g4 16 ♙c7] 16 ♙xb7 ♙d8+ 17 ♙e1) is thought to favour Black after 12...♙f5!, one line offered being 13 ♙c3 ♙c2+ 14 ♙xc2 ♙xc2, with Black's activity tipping the balance in his favour, albeit temporarily if White can wake the remaining pieces. However White seems to be able to throw a small but annoying spanner in the works by ruling out ...♙d8(+), namely 13 ♙c7. For example 13...♙c2+ (13...♙d3+ 14

♟d2 ♞xf2 15 ♟b3) 14 ♟d2 ♞xa1 15 ♟xa1 sees White maintain a decisive material lead and – more importantly – Black's forces drastically reduced. An improvement is 14...♟d3+ 15 ♟c1 ♞xa1 16 ♟xd3 ♟xd3 17 ♞c3 ♟g6 18 ♟e2, but then White has an extra pawn plus the better position. Sometimes an opponent's sacrifice puts us under so much pressure that we forget how much can be returned in order to successfully weather the storm and stay ahead on 'points', and here is a good example of how a whole rook can be too much a price to pay.

12 ♟d6 is best according to Chekhov, although 12...♞c2+ 13 ♟d2 ♟f5 1; ♟d1 ♟d8 15 ♟xd8+ ♟xd8 16 ♟c1+ (16 ♞g3 ♟f4+ 17 ♟c3+ ♞d5+) 16...♞d4? 17 ♞xd4 ♟b1+ 18 ♟d2 ♟xb2+ 19 ♟e1 ♟c3+ 20 ♟e2 ♟xc4+ 21 ♟e1 ends in a draw, as does 14 ♞g3 ♟f4+ 15 ♟c3 ♞d5+! 16 ♞d5 ♟d4+ 17 ♟b3 ♞xa1+ 18 ♟a3 ♞c2+ 19 ♟b3 ♞a1+ ½-½ Gomez Esteban-Illasca, Lisbon Zonal 1993.

d2) 10...♟g8 is normal, when 11 ♟d4 leads to a very slight edge for White in the ending, e.g. 11...♟xd4 12 ♟xd4 c5 13 ♟c3 ♞b4 14 ♟xb4 cxb4 15 g3 ♟d7 16 ♟g2 ♟c6 17 0-0 0-0-0 18 ♟fd1 ♟xg2 19 ♟xg2 ♞c6 20 f4 and White's more compact pawns gave him some chances in Reinderman-Kharlov, Leeuwarden 1994. Wells-Knaak, Bundesliga 1996, saw the Marshall expert try 11 ♟c3. There followed 11...c5 12 ♟d6 ♟f5 13 ♟d1? ♞g6 14 ♟f6 ♟e6 15 f3 ♟h4+ 16 ♟hx4 ♞hx4 17 ♞g3 f6 18 ♟f2 ♟f7 19 ♞e4 ♟ad8 20 ♟xd8 ♟xd8 21 ♟e2 c5 22 f4. It is important to remember that the absence of Black's dark-squared bishop affords White promising long-term prospects, and the position is a good illustration of how a well timed thematic strike can open the game for the 'extra' bishop. There is more to attacking chess than going for mate or decisive material gain – here White simply concentrates on a colour complex with which his opponent will have problems de-

fending, and the subsequent advantage gradually takes on decisive proportions. The game continued 22...♟f5 23 ♞g3 ♞xf4 24 ♞h5 f3 25 gxf3 ♟d6 26 ♟d1! ♟xd1 27 ♟xd1 ♟e6 28 ♟xf6 ♞f5 29 ♟c3 ♟xc4 30 ♟c2 ♞d4 31 ♟xh7 ♟xa2 22 ♟e3 ♞b5 33 ♟e5 ♞b4 34 ♞f4 ♞c6 35 ♟g6+ ♟e7 36 ♟g7! ♟f7 37 ♟e4 ♞bd4 38 h4 ♞e6 39 ♞xe6 ♟xe6 40 f4 a5 41 f5+ ♟d7 42 ♟f3 ♞e7 43 ♟f4 1-0. The power of the dark-squared bishop in this example is not untypical of endings in the Marshall.

9 ♟d6 a5

Not surprisingly Black wants to know where the bishop will reside. 9...c5 10 ♟c3 and Black's next move determines the placement of the king.

a) 10...♞e7 11 0-0-0 ♞f5 12 ♟d2 0-0 13 ♞g3 with another branch:

a1) 13...♟h4 14 ♞xf5 ♞xf5 15 g3 ♟g4 (15...♟e7) 16 h3 ♟g6 (16...♟f3 17 ♟g1) 17 g4 and White had succeeded in opening lines for his pieces in Grigore-Danilov, Bucharest 1998.

a2) 13...♟c6 14 ♞xf5 ♞xf5 15 ♟e2 ♞f6 16 ♟g5 ♞e8 17 ♟d8 f6 18 ♟d2 (18 ♟g3 ♟c7? 19 ♟xe8) 18...♟xg2 19 ♟e1!



Flear-Bryson, Hastings 1993/94. Black's sole developed piece is the queen and there is an unwelcome visitor on Black's back rank. In these situations the fact that White trails by two pawns has little relevance because this is more than compensated for by other fac-

tors. Note also that White's play thus far is based on finding optimum posts for his pieces, in so doing – hopefully – restricting Black's forces. After 19...b5 (19...c6 20 d1! and f3 is coming) 20 f1 b7 21 exex8 exex8 22 exex8+ f7 23 d8 h1 White finished off nicely with 24 ex7+ g6 25 ex7+! 1-0. Again Black came unstuck on the dark squares.

b) 10...d6 11 0-0-0 c5 12 g3 g8 13 f3 e7 is another try, the reasoning being that the king might be as safe on e7 as it is on g8. Giorgadze-Matlak, Naleczow 1989 saw the usual patient build up from White: 14 f4 b6 15 d3 a6 16 e5 dxe5 17 ex5 exd8 18 e2 and Black had problems guarding d6 and g7. After 18...a4 White could have played 19 exd8 exd8 20 exg7 e8 (20...d7 21 g5+ e8 22 d1) 21 exh7 exa2 22 e2 a4+ 23 b3 a2+ 24 b2 with a near winning position.

10 a3 e5

Consistent with the plan of dealing with the mighty bishop. Instead the greedy 10...xc4 grabs a second pawn at the cost of more time after 11 d3 h4 12 e2/d3 followed by 0-0, exd1 etc. Alternatively 11 g3 practically forces 11...g6, when Black's dark squares could hardly be any uglier.

11 d2

White has obvious compensation for the pawn in the event of 11 0-0-0 exd6 12 exd6 g6 13 d3, but it seems more logical to leave the queens in play since Black is the one who is looking to relieve the pressure. Moreover there is still time to be gained by hitting Black's exposed queen.

11...c5

Closing the door for now, but White's ambitious bishop will have its day. 11...d6 meets with the same response.

12 f4 e4 13 0-0-0 d6

Again Black is not tempted into doubling his spoils. This time 13...xc4+ runs into 14 d3 d4 15 exd4 cxd4 16 d5 d8 17 exd4, when f8 is threatened and the com-

ing d6 is strong.

14 d3 c6 15 e2 0-0

Black can finally feel a bit more relaxed now that his king has found a safe haven, which would not be the case were the queen to return to enemy territory with 15...exg2, when 16 h1 exh2 17 exg7 softens Black up on the dark squares and leaves Black's king in the centre.

16 f3 b6 17 g4 d8

With little in the way of legal moves Black offers the c5-pawn in return for some freedom of movement. However, White prefers to continue turning the screw in order to keep Black in a defensive, negative mode.

18 a4 e7 19 d6

19 ex5 d7 20 d6 ex5 21 exa8 is also good for White.

19...exd6 20 exd6 d7

20...e8 21 d2 d7 22 dxc5 is decisive.

21 exd1

Now it is White's turn to refuse a pawn, albeit for different reasons! 21 dxc5 dxc5 22 ex5 restores material equilibrium but otherwise White stands much better.

21...a6 22 dxc5

Finally.

22...exd6 23 exd6 dxc5 24 ex5 ex8 25 b6 a4 26 d2



White dominates.

26...f6

Or 26...d7 27 e3 and exb7 is in the

air.

27 ♖c3 ♜f7 28 h4 ♜e7 29 ♙c5 ♞d7?

A mistake in a poor position. Imperative is 29...♜f7, although Black can do little but wait for matters to get worse.

30 ♙xe6+! ♜d8

30...♜xe6 31 ♙d5 mate.

31 ♙xe8+ ♜xe8 32 ♙d4 ♞b8 33 g5 fxg5 34 fxg5 g6 35 ♙d5 ♞c6 36 ♙f6 ♙d7 37 ♙g8 ♙g4 38 ♙d5

38 ♙xh7 ♜f7 39 b4.

38...♙d7 39 ♙e4 ♜e6 40 ♙c2 a3 41 b4 ♙e5 42 c5 ♙f3 43 ♙e4 ♞xh4 44 ♙xb7 h5 45 b5 ♜d7

45...♙f3 46 ♙c8+ ♜d5 47 ♜b4.

46 ♙c6+ ♜c8 47 b6 ♙f3

47...♙f3 48 b7+ ♜c7 49 ♙e5+.

48 ♙e7 1-0

Game 10

B. Vladimirov-Fuchs

Sochi 1966

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♞c3



The solid Slav Defence, like almost all openings, features both interesting and dull variations. The problem for White in choosing how to meet the Slav is the incredibly lengthy process of getting acquainted with the tactical, positional and structural intricacies of the main lines. Then there is the matter of transposing to other openings such as the Semi-Slav (e.g. 3 ♙f3 ♙f6 4 ♞c3 c6),

when we find ourselves back to the drawing board. I recommend bypassing the ridiculous amount of theory required to learn just one line in favour of 3 ♞c3 ♙f6) 4 ♙g5. This is one of those perfectly natural moves that one is surprised not to see more often. Despite being used from time to time by strong players, 4 ♙g5 lacks the historical clout and theoretical clout to find a place in a super-GM's repertoire, but for mere mortals – particularly club players – it has a number of attractions. 3...♙f6

3...c6 4 e4 enters the Marshall Gambit (Game 9). Black also has other alternatives:

a) With 3...e5 Black takes the opportunity to strike at d4. Best is 4 dxe5 d4 5 ♙e4 ♙a5+ 6 ♙d2 ♙xe5 7 ♞g3. Beginners are urged to avoid exposing the queen to attack so early in the game, so what is Black aiming to achieve here? To learn this we need only look at the d4-pawn, which is waiting for e2-e3, after which Black will clear the centre of pawns and exploit the open position with easy development. Note that White, too, is losing time with the queen's knight. Now 7...c5 8 ♞f3 ♙c7 9 e3 dxe3 10 ♙xe3 ♙f6 11 ♙d3 ♙e7 12 0-0 0-0 left Black in the unenviable situation of being a couple of moves behind in an open, symmetrical position in Sturua-Minasian, Panormo 1998. Black hung on to d4 in Agrest-Hector, Malmo 1993: 9...♙c6 10 exd4 cxd4 (10...♙xd4 11 ♙xd4 cxd4 12 ♙d3) 11 ♙d3



Black must already be careful. For example 11...d4 12. xxb4 xxb4+ 13. cf1 and White threatens 14. ♖a4+ and 14. dxd4 (13...xc5 14. b4!), while 11...d6 12. 0-0. e7 13. d5! 0-0?! (13...h6 14. d5e4 0-0 15. dxf6+ xxf6 16. d5h5 followed by launching the f-pawn is good for White) 14. d5h5! g6 (14...h6? 15. dxf6+ xxf6 16. d5h7) 15. dxf6+ xxf6! f4 is awkward for Black to deal with. Instead the game went 11...d6 12. 0-0. d7 13. ♖c2. e6 14. d5! h6 15. d5e4. b4 (15...0-0? 16. d5h6!, or 15...d4 16. h3! d7 17. d5h5! xxd2 18. ♖xd2 0-0? 19. d5e6!) 16. h3 (16. c5!?) 16...d7 17. c5! and Black's king was a problem in view of 17...0-0 18. d5h6! f5 (18...gxh6 19. d5f6+ ♖h8 20. ♖c1. d8 21. d5xg8. xg8 22. ♖xh6 f5 23. d4+) 19. d5d6 gxh6 20. a3 etc.

The most reliable continuation for Black is 7...d6 8. d3 ♖d6 9. ♖c2, when 9...c5 10. e3 d6 11. 0-0-0 should be avoided, e.g. 11...d4 12. d3. d3 (12...0-0-0 13. d5+ xxf5 14. dxf5 ♖d7 15. exd4 was a clear lead for White in Herraiz-Rios, Spain 1995) 13. gxf3 0-0-0 14. d4 with a grip on the light squares, or 11...d6 12. exd4 dxd4 13. dxd4 cxd4 14. d3 ♖a6 15. c5 ♖xa2 16. d5+ d7 17. dxd4 0-0-0 18. b4, P.Varga-Kovacova, Balatonbereny 1993. Theory favours 9...d7, and now I believe the sensible 10. d5. d5 11. ♖xf5 will grow in popularity, particularly since the main line, 10. 0-0-0 0-0 11. e3 dxe3 12. fxe3 ♖c7 13. d3, has not been doing badly for Black after 13...c5. In Schandorff-Mah, Politiken Cup 1999 Black simply missed his light-squared bishop: 11...d6 12. g3 g6 13. ♖c2 d5 14. d4 ♖d8 15. 0-0-0 d6 16. d5 ♖a5 17. ♖b1 c5 18. e3 dxe3 19. fxe3 0-0 20. d3 ♖ad8 21. d3 ♖c7 22. d5 and White had the initiative.

b) 3...dxc4 also seeks to profit from the fact that White has brought the queen's knight out first, the point being that in certain lines Black can win a tempo after ...b7-b5-b4. White's most aggressive response is 4. e4 when the game can take one of two paths.

b1) 4...b5 5. a4 b4 (5...♖a5 6. d2 b4 7. d2 e6 8. dxc4 d6 9. ♖c2 d6d7 10. d4! d6 11. d3 with an edge for White, Lengyel-Rukavina, Sombor 1974) is quite common, when 6. d2 d6 7. e5 d5 8. dxc4 tends to lead to a balanced position after 8...e6 9. d3 d7 10. 0-0 d7 11. d2 a5 etc. However, a relatively recent fashion is the more attack minded 6. d2e2! e6 7. d3 d6 8. d3 d6 a6 9. d5! It is true that White is yet to win back the gambit pawn, but by transferring the knight over to g3 immediately White has been able to establish a menacing space advantage on the kingside and a decent centre.

b11) 9...d7 10. e5 d5 11. d7 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 12. d4 0-0 13. d5 c3 14. dxa6 cxb2 15. ♖b1 has been evaluated as clearly better for White, e.g. 15...d3 16. ♖c2 dxb1 17. ♖xb1 dxa6 18. dxa6. Also good for White was 10. dxf6! dxf6 11. ♖c1 in Halkias-Groffen, Vliissingen 2000: 11...c3 12. bxc3 dxf1 13. dxf1 c5 14. d5 0-0! 15. dxf6+ ♖xf6 16. dxc5 bxc3 17. e5 ♖f4 18. ♖xc3 d6 19. g3 ♖b4 20. ♖c2 ♖d8 21. d7g2.

b12) 9...♖a5 is more double-edged. After 10. d2 d6d7 (10...b3+ 11. d2 d4 12. 0-0 0-0 13. ♖c1 is interesting, while Hübner proposes 10...c3) 11. 0-0 c3 12. dxa6 cxb2 13. d7! bxa1 ♖ 14. ♖xa1 ♖d8 15. dxc6 h6 16. dxf6 gxf6 17. d5 White seems to have enough for the exchange, and 11...d7 12. ♖c1 c5? (Hübner's 12...d6 13. d5 ♖c8 is unclear) 13. d5 exd5 14. e5 went wrong for Black in Ovsejevitch-P.Varga, Hungary 1999. Gelfand-Huzman, Ramat Aviv 2000 saw the difference between the two pawn structures grow after 11...h6! 12. dxf6 gxf6 (12...dxf6 13. ♖c1 clearly favours White according to Gelfand) 13. ♖c1 d6 14. d2, when 14...0-0-0 (14...d8 15. dxc4 dxc4 16. dxc4 ♖c7 17. ♖d1 h5 [Hübner] improves for Black) 15. dxc4! dxc4 16. dxc4 ♖c7 17. ♖d1 was complex. Black's bishops should compensate for the structural shortcomings on both sides of the board.

b2) 4...e5 leads to a queenless middlegame that benefits White thanks to the extra presence in the centre resulting from the sequence 5 d3 exd4 6 ♖xd4 ♜xd4 7 ♜xd4 and now:

b21) 7...b5 8 a4 b4 9 ♞d1 ♞f6 10 f3 ♙a6 11 ♙f4 ♙c5 12 ♞f5 0-0



White has more than enough pieces to attack the c4-pawn so Black will be left with a potential weakness in the shape of the remaining c-pawn. Two recent examples are 13 ♙c1 g6 14 ♞g3 c3 15 bxc3 ♞fd7 16 cxb4 ♙xb4+ 17 ♙d2 ♙xf1 18 ♜xf1 a5 19 ♞fe3 ♞b6 20 ♞b2 c5 21 ♞ec4, Gomez Esteban-Granados Gomez, Barcelona 2000, and 13 ♙d6 ♙xd6 14 ♞xd6 c3 15 bxc3 ♙xf1 16 ♙xf1 ♙a6 17 cxb4 ♞xb4 18 ♞e3 ♙fd8 19 ♞dc4 ♞d7 20 ♞e2, Bernal Moro-Avila Jimenez, Barcelona 2000, with an enduring pull for White in both cases. This kind of advantage requires patience from White and confidence in technique from Black.

b22) 7...♙c5 is played with a view to completing development rather than hanging on to the pawn. Portisch-Saidy, San Antonio 1972 is typical, with White having the more active pieces to accompany the extra space that the e4-pawn provides: 8 ♙e3 ♞f6 9 f3 ♞bd7 10 ♙xc4 0-0 11 ♞f2 ♞b6 12 ♙b3 ♙e8 13 ♙hd1 ♙d7 14 ♙ac1 etc.

Now it is time to turn to 3...♞f6.
4 ♙g5!



A glance at the diagram position reveal a completely normal set up from White, 4 ♙g5 introducing the possibility of doubling Black's pawns and occupying the same diagonal as the black queen while ignoring the stand-off in the centre in good old Queen's Gambit style. One of the most important factors in chess is thwarting the opponent's plans, and White's choice here has the psychological plus of ruling out Black's main lines as early as the fourth move.

4...♞e4

It is interesting that the majority of club players I tested with 4 ♙g5 also proposed this 'knee-jerk' reaction to the bishop's arrival, yet theory's albeit half-hearted recommendation is 4...♙xc4 Perhaps the logic behind 4...♞e4 is based on the belief that White's sudden change of direction requires the same 'flexibility' from Black, while the fact that ♙g5 is an active move could be sufficient to distract Black from the game plan on the queenside. After 4...♙xc4 5 a4 Black has a number of choices.

a) After 5...♙f5 the Trompovsky treatment with 6 ♙xf6 exf6 7 e4 looks okay for White, but 6 f3!? has a lot going for it. Borrowing an idea from one of the main lines, White prepares to erect a solid pawn centre and subsequently exploit a space advantage. After 6...e5 7 dxe5 ♙xd1+ 8 ♙xd1 ♞fd7 9 e4 ♙e6 10 f4 White is considerably better, while 6...e6 7 e4 ♙g6 8 ♙xc4 followed by 9 ♞ge2

and 10 0-0 is passive for Black. A key difference between this specific move order and the main line with 4 ♘f3 is that there is no need to lose time vacating the f3-square since here the knight is still on e1.

b) 5...e6 6 e4 h6 7 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 8 ♜f3 ♖b4
9 ♖xc4 0-0 10 0-0



P. Cramling-Ekstrom, Katrineholm 1995. White has more space, more fluid development and the superior centre. Black has the bishop pair but is slightly cramped. Passive play by Black will see White advance e4-e5 and then use the e4-square for general purposes and the b1-h7 diagonal to threaten mate. Consequently the game continued 10...c5 11 e5 ♖d8 12 d5 (12 ♔a2?) 12...exd5 13 ♙xd5 (13 ♙xd5 ♙e6 14 ♚c1 ♙c6 gives White an advantage akin to the QGA) 13...♙c6 14 h3 with chances for both sides. Black must decide what to do with the b4-bishop, which at the moment plays little part in the game other than to threaten ...♙xc3.

c) 5...♖a5 is the 'book' move, threatening the bishop and pinning the knight.

c1) 6 2 f3

c11) 6...♔f5 7 ♖d2! ♗e6 8 ♔h4 ♖b6 9 e3 was played in Fyllingen-Gausel, Oslo 2000. After 9...♖xb2 10 ♗c1 ♖b1 11 ♖c2 ♖bd7 12 ♗b1 ♖a5 13 ♔xc4 ♔xc4 14 ♖xc4 ♖a6 15 ♖b3 ♖b6 16 ♖xb6 axb6 17 ♖xb6 ♖xb6 18 ♔xb6 ♗a7 19 ♔xf6 exf6 20 ♔e2 ♔d7 21 ♔h1 ♔c7 Black had returned the pawn(s) but now stood slightly worse in view

of White's more mobile kingside pawns.

c12) 6...♖e4! does appear to be Black's safest treatment of 4 ♕g5, as long as 7 ♕d2 is not answered by 7...♖xc3?! 8 ♕xc3 ♣d4 when Vanheste-Dekker, Dieren 1990 continued 9 ♕d2 b5 (9...♕f5 10 f3) 10 b3! cxb3 11 e4 and Black was walking on very thin ice in terms of the light squares and was lagging behind in development. The accurate 7...♖xd2 8 ♖xd2 produces a balanced game after 8...e5! 9 ♕xc4 ♣b4 10 ♕xe5 ♣xb2 11 ♜c1 ♕b4 12 ♣d2 ♣xd2+ 13 ♕xd2 0-0 14 e3, when White (who eventually ground out a win) had good pawns, a well placed king and a central presence, and Black the bishop pair.

Since 8...e5 is not exactly obvious Black has also tried 8...d7 9...xc4 ♖g5, but then 10 g3 e6 11 ♗g2 ♙b4 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♖b3 ♗e7 14 a5 gave White a pleasant position that has numerous similarities with the Catalan in Tran-Doppel, Nuremberg 1999.

 $c^2) \leq \frac{1}{2} d^2$

c21) 6...e5 7 Qe4! Qb4 8 Qd6+ Qe7 9 dxe5 Qxd2+ 10 Qxd2 Qxd2+ 11 Qxd2 Qg4 12 Qf3 Qd7 13 e3 Qd8 14 Qe1 Qdxe5 was agreed drawn in Vladimirov-Saskiran, Goodricke 2000. Otherwise White has the sober 7 Qf3 exd4 8 Qxd4 Qe5 9 e3 Qc5 10 Qf3 Qe7 11 Qxc4 0-0 with an even game, Christiansen-Donaldson, Philadelphia 1987.

c22) 6... ♖b6 7 e3 (7 ♘f3 ♕f5 8 e3 ♖xb2 9 ♙xc4 ♕c2 10 ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 11 ♙xc1 ♙g6 left White with less than a pawn's worth of compensation in Taimanov-Sveshnikov, 41st USSR Ch. 1973) 7... ♖xb2 8 ♖b1 ♖a3 9 ♙xc4 e6 10 e4 ♖d6 11 ♘f3 ♖c7 12 0-0 and Black had invested a lot of time for the pawn in Hall-Erast, Swedish Ch. 1998.

5. $\Delta x = 4$

Introducing an imbalance in the pawn structure.

5...dxe4 6 ♖d2

And absolutely *not* 6 e3?? ♖a5+ when the bishop is about to drop.

6...f5

Others.

a) 6...♞d7 7 e3 h5!? is typical 'make it up as you go' chess – an approach with which we have all been too well acquainted at one time or another! To be fair Black does threaten to trap the bishop with 8...f6 etc. 8 ♙h4 g6 9 f4!? c5 10 ♞e2 ♙g7 11 d5 ♞b6 12 ♞c3 ♙f5, Tosic-Misailovic, Kladovo 1994. Both players, in fact, have coped well with this line, as can be seen from the strategic look of the respective pawn structures. The game continued 13 ♙e2 ♞c8! 14 h3 ♞d6 (just in time) 15 ♙f2 ♙a5 16 ♞ac1 a6 17 ♙c2 and the prospect of Black either losing touch with the e4-pawn or having to part with his dark-squared bishop is enough to keep White on top. Notice that the f4-pawn fits in well in this example.

b) 6...g6 7 f3!? ♙g7 8 ♞d1 ♙f5 9 e3 0-0 10 ♞e2 c5 11 fxe4 ♙xe4 12 ♞c3 ♙f5 was approximately even in Ramon-Sieiro Gonzalez, Garcia Memorial 1998. Instead of 8 ♞d1 White can consider 8 0-0-0 (or 7 0-0-0) followed by marching the kingside pawns.

7 e3

White opts to simply send the knight to c3 to keep an eye on the potentially weak e4-pawn. The alternatives are certainly food for thought.

a) 7 0-0-0!? is interesting, e.g. 7...♞d7 8 e3 f6 9 ♙h4 e5 10 f3



Nei-Mnatsakanian, Yerevan 1965. White is not worried about opening the b1-h7 diago-

nal for Black's bishop because this piece can be comfortably dealt with, after which Black's king should come under pressure. 10...exf3 11 gxf3 exd4 12 exd4 ♙e7 13 ♙h3! and the e6-square was a cause for concern to Black.

b) 7 f4!? is ostensibly illogical but in actual fact positionally desirable, this Bönsch speciality is designed to surround the e4-pawn and clamp down on the e5-square. The f5-bishop, too, plays a part in the justification of f2-f4, as a future retreat to g6 might allow f4-f5.

b1) Bönsch-Kuczynski, Rubinstein Memorial 1987 saw the centre pawns coming into contact: 7...f6 8 ♙h4 e6 9 e3 c5 10 d5 ♞a6 11 ♞e2 ♞c7 12 ♞g3 ♙g6 13 0-0-0 (13 dxe6 ♙xd2+ 14 ♙xd2 f5) 13...♙d6 and White had a pull. Another plan for White is 12 ♞c3 followed by ♙e2 and the threat of g2-g4.

b2) In Bönsch-J. Horvath, Budapest 1987, Black sensed that stereotyped play would lead to a disadvantage and hit out with 7...♞d7 8 e3 h6 9 ♙h4 g5?! 10 fxe5 e5, but after 11 ♞e2 hxg5 12 ♙g3 ♙g7 13 0-0-0 ♙g4 White could have punished this with 14 ♙c2!

7...♞d7 8 ♞e2

8 f3 ♙c7 9 ♞e2 h6 10 ♙h4 exf3 11 gxf3 had the desired effect in Vanheste-Finegold, Dieren 1990. After 11...e5?! (11...0-0-0) 12 e4 ♙g6 13 0-0-0 f6 14 ♙h3! White was well ahead.

8...h6 9 ♙h4 g5

This is a popular move because with the pawn on g6 the f5-bishop (which protects e4) lacks a retreat square, and White's bishop on the h4-d8 diagonal restricts Black's development. The downside to ...g7-g5 is that it presents White with a target, making a well timed ♙h2-h4 a problem for Black.

10 ♙g3 ♙g7 11 ♞c3 0-0

11...e5 can lead to similar play to the main game but Stanec-Lungu, Moscow Olympiad 1994 took a different course when White

pushed: 12 d5 0-0 13 h4! ♖f6 14 hxg5 hxg5 15 0-0-0 ♜fd8, and now White forced a near decisive queen trade with 16 dxc6 bxc6 17 ♖d6! when Black's weak pawns were his downfall.

12 ♙e2 e5 13 ♚d1 exd4 14 exd4 c5 15 d5 ♙e5 16 0-0 ♜e8 17 d6!

Now Black is too busy weighing up the implications of a well protected passed pawn right in the heart of his position to consider anything else. Add to this the new potential base on d5, and White is back in charge.

17...♖d7 18 h4

It is always worth keeping an eye on all sectors of the board as it is often easier to make progress in one area by temporarily opening a new front of attack in another. In this case White returns to Black's 9th move for a fresh target. Also possible is 18 ♖d5 b6 19 ♙b5, e.g. 19...♙e6 20 ♖xc4 ♙f5 21 ♖d5 ♙e6 22 ♖d2 ♙xc4 23 ♙xc4 ♙xc4 24 ♙c7 ♙xf1 25 ♜xf1 and the d6-pawn is no less of a problem.

18...g4 19 ♜fe1 ♙h7

Note that 19...♙d3 20 ♙xd3 exd3 21 ♙d5 creates a second protected passed d-pawn but favours White because Black's f5-bishop is unable to help in the defence of the dark squares.

20 ♖e3! b6 21 ♙xe4



21...♙g6

21...♙xc4 22 ♙xc4 ♜xc4 23 ♖b3 clears the e-file for White's gain, e.g. 23...♜xe1+ (or

23...♜f8 24 ♙b5) 24 ♜xe1 ♙g6 25 ♜e7.

22 ♙d3 ♙xe4

22...♙e5 does not help: 23 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 (23...♜xe5 24 ♖f4) 24 ♙g3! etc.

23 ♙xe4 f5 24 ♙xa8! ♜xe3 25 ♜xe3 ♙d4

25...f4 26 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 27 ♜e7 ♖d8 28 ♙e4+ ♙g8 29 d7! is winning for White.

26 h5! ♙xe3 27 hxg6+ ♙xg6 28 fxe3 1-0

Conclusion

The Exchange Variation of the QGD (Game 7) is a useful system that is also easy to play. With pieces posted on – and pointing at – the kingside, White's set up with f2-f3 keeps Black busy by introducing the possibility of central expansion with e3-e4-e5 etc. The f3-pawn also rules out the simplifying ...♙e4 and defends the g4-square, too. As for the weakened e3-pawn, White can drop the bishop back to f2 where, while defending (on g1 if appropriate), it contributes to the e3-e4 push by offering additional protection to the d4-pawn. White's attacking play against the Tarrasch (Game 8) may not be directed at the king, but the pressure against the d5-pawn and Black's queenside in general is such that White has a fluid game from the moment the target is created after 4 cxd5. In Game 9, as long as White does not worry about the odd pawn or two there is much fun to be had in the Marshall Gambit, thanks in no small part to the early absence of Black's much missed dark-squared bishop. Rapid development is paramount, and it is not unusual to see White's grip on the dark squares turn into a long-term positional bind as the game progresses. The anti-Slav 4 ♙g5 outlined in Game 10 is primarily aimed at steering the game into little chartered territory in order to present Black with practical problems from the word go. I doubt that the popular 4...♙e4 is Black's most precise answer, but the system itself is perfectly playable however Black reacts.

CHAPTER THREE

1 d4 d5 2 c4: Black's Second Move Alternatives



1 d4 d5 2 c4

This chapter deals with the less popular alternatives to 2...e6 and 2...c6. While not enjoying the same kind of reputation, these defences can, however, be difficult to cope with for the unwary. In Game 11 we see a recipe against the Albin Counter-Gambit (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5) that offers an interesting alternative to the automatic early kingside fianchetto, while Game 12 features a simple and effective idea that somehow managed to go decades without being discovered. Finally in Game 13 we come to 2...f5, with which Black hopes to either confuse White or enter a QGD without the traditional problem piece on c8.

Game 11 **Goldin-Mengarini** *New York 1991*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e5

The problem with the Albin Counter-Gambit is that accurate play gives White a good game however he reacts.

3 dxe5 d4 4 f3 e6 5 b3

I prefer this to the traditional 5 g3, which is also good for White. With the flexible text White refrains from making the fianchetto in case an alternative development of the

bishop becomes more appropriate or, alternatively, it might be possible to post the bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal with the more aggressive g2-g4. Another interesting option is 5 a3 which tends to transpose to the main game but can also have independent significance. Apart from defending b4 White toys with the simple idea of expanding with b2-b4 in anticipation of Black castling queenside.

a) 5...a5 seems rather automatic. Now three moves have been tried.

a1) 6 e3 stakes an immediate claim for the centre, e.g. 6...g4 7 e2 d3 8 xd3 xd3 9 xd3 0-0-0 10 e2 xf3 11 gxf3 xe5 12 d2 c6 13 e3 left Black a pawn down for nothing in Polak-Galeev, Vienna 1995.

a2) 6 g5 e7 7 h4!? was seen in Karpov-Stoma, Koszalin (simul) 1997. White should not be able to get away with such moves as h2-h4 after accepting a gambit pawn in the opening, but this illustrates the general nature of the game in the Albin Counter-Gambit, namely that White suffers insufficient inconvenience for his booty. After 7...g4 8 b3 e6 9 f4 d7 10 e3 dxe3 11 fxe3 the usually desirable option to castle queenside is no longer a realistic possibility with the pawn on a5 since White would then be able to open lines for attack with b2-b4. This is one of the reasons behind 5 a3.

Consequently Black played 11...♖d8 12 ♖b3 b6 and now White castled long: 13 0-0-0 f6 14 exf6 ♖xf6 15 c5!? ♗e6 16 ♖c4 ♗xc4 17 ♖xc4 and White was close to winning.

a3) 6 ♖bd2 ♗g4 (note that this position can arise in the main game after 6...a5). Pachman-Plachetka, Luhacovice 1968 continued 7 h3 ♗e6 8 g3 ♖d7 9 ♗g2 ♗c5 10 ♖g5! ♖ge7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♗h2 ♗ad8 13 f4 ♖f5 14 ♖de4 ♗a7



White has good prospects even without the extra pawn, his kingside being excellent. After 15 g4 ♖h4 (15...♖c3 16 ♗xe3 dxe3 17 ♖c2 and Black has similar problems with h7 and the light squares in general) 16 ♖d3! the deadly threat of 17 ♖f6+ forced a further concession from Black, and the sequence 16...f5 17 ♖xe6 fxe4 (17...♖xe6 18 ♖g5 and 19 ♗d5+) 18 ♖xf8 exd3 19 ♖xd7 dxe2 20 ♗d5+ ♗h8 21 ♖e1 resulted in a decisive advantage for White, the game ending 21...d3 22 e6 ♗f2 23 ♗d2 ♖d4 24 ♖e5 ♖e8 25 ♖xd3 ♗xe1 26 ♗xe1 1-0.

b) 5...♗e6 6 ♖bd2 (again this position can be reached via the main game after 5 ♖bd2 ♗c6 6 a3) and Black must decide whether or not to allow b2-b4:

b1) 6...a5 7 b3 ♖d7 8 ♗b2 0-0-0 9 b4! (Karr-Jossien, Bethune 1999). White's thrust is an important idea to remember. By exerting more pressure on the d4-pawn with the queenside fianchetto White induced ...0-0-0 from Black, facilitating the creation of a

queenside attack with what is essentially an obvious pawn break. There followed 9...a5-b4 10 g3 (10 axb4 is more to the point) 10...♗h3 11 axb4 ♗xf1 12 ♖a8+ ♖b8 13 ♖a1! (the simple 13 ♖xf1 is enough to keep White firmly in the driving seat) 13...c6 and now White got a bit excited and pushed with 14 c5 ♗g2 15 ♖c4 ♖e8 (15...♖e6 16 ♖b6+ ♗c7 17 ♖a5 ♗xh1 18 ♖d5+ ♗d7 19 ♖xb8! ♖xb8 20 ♖c7+ ♗e8 21 ♖xb8+ ♗d7 22 ♖b6+ ♗c7 23 ♖xd4) 16 ♖a7 ♗c7 (16...♗d7 17 ♖xd4) 17 ♖a5 ♗d7 18 ♖xb7 ♖c8 19 ♖xb8 ♗xh1 20 ♖d6+ ♖c7 21 ♖a8 ♗e7 22 ♖e8 1-0. I am sure there is room for improvement from both sides in this game, but it does demonstrate that White's attacking chances are as good as Black's in this opening.

b2) 6...♖d7 accepts the inevitable. After 7 b4 ♖ge7 we have a further branch: 8 b5 ♖a5 9 ♖a4 b6 10 ♗b2 a6 11 ♖xd4 axb5 12 cxb5 ♖g6 13 ♖xc6 ♖xe6 14 e3 was already winning for White in I.Farago-Berczy, Budapest 1968 (Black resigned after 14...♖xe5?? 15 ♖c4). More recently White played 8 ♖b3 in Volzhin-Rewitz, Skolernes 1997. After 8...♖g6 9 ♖bxd4 ♗xc4 10 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 Black had insufficient compensation for the pawn.

5...♗g4

The most aggressive move. Others:

a) 5...♗e6 is the major alternative. Then 6 a3 transposes to 'b' in the note to White's fifth move. Instead White can elect to sort out matters in the centre with 6 ♖b3 ♗xc4 7 ♖bxd4. White still has a material lead and the d4-pawn has been eliminated. Here are two sample continuations:

a1) 7...♖xd4 8 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 9 ♖xd4 ♖d8 10 ♖c2 ♖e7 11 e3 ♗xf1 12 ♗xf1 ♖c6 13 f4 and White followed up with ♗e2, ♗d2-c3 and then contested the d-file to begin the ending with a valuable extra pawn in Guimard-Piazzini, Argentina 1938.

a2) 7...♗c5 8 e3 ♗xf1 9 ♗xf1 ♖d7 10 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 11 ♗d2 ♗b6 12 ♗c1 ♖g6 13

♖c2! Dzevian-Furhoff, Rilton Cup 1992. Now 13...♖xg2 14 ♖a4+ ♕f8 (14...c6 15 ♜xc6) 15 ♖e4 ♜d8 16 ♖b4+ ♕e7 17 ♜g1 ♖h3 18 ♕g5 ♖h5 19 e6 was winning for White.

b) 5...f6 is the kind of gambit inspired move you are sure to come up against in this type of opening. After 6 exf6 Black can recapture with either piece.

b1) 6...♖xf6 prepares to castle queenside. 7 g3 ♖g4 8 ♖g2 0-0-0 9 h3 ♖f5 10 0-0 is Teichmann-Mieses, Berlin 1910, but the course of the game is still relevant today. The queen is no better on f6 than d7 or e7. Moreover Black must also take into account the possibility of ♖g5 in these positions. In the game Black threw his kingside pawns forward, but to no avail, 10...g5 11 ♖a4 h5 12 ♕e1! successfully side-stepping ...g5-g4 as well as unleashing the g2-bishop. After 12...♕ge7 13 ♕d3 g4 (13...♖e6 14 ♕e4! ♖xe4 15 ♕c5) 14 h4 ♖xd3 15 exd3 ♖f5 16 ♕e4 ♖b8 White's undisputed advantage had little to do with his extra pawn.

b2) 6...♕xf6 7 a3 a5 8 ♕b3!. Yet again we see this idea of homing in on the d4-pawn, a theme that is responsible for the recent popularity of 5 ♕bd2. Burmakin-Halser, Graz 1997 went 8...♖e6 9 ♖d3 ♖f7 10 ♕bx4 ♕xd4 11 ♕xd4 ♖c5 12 ♕b3! ♖b6 13 ♖e3 0-0 14 ♖xd8 ♜axd8 15 ♖xb6 cxb6 16 e3, and White's points lead had doubled to two pawns.

c) 5...♖f5 6 ♕b3 (6 g3? ♕b4) 6...♖b4+ 7 ♖d2 and Black has the familiar problem of the insecure d4-pawn.

d) 5...♖b4 6 a3 ♖xd2+ 7 ♖xd2 helps only White, e.g. 7...♖g4 8 ♖b3!? ♜b8 9 ♖g5 ♕ge7 10 0-0-0 Marshall-Showalter, USA Ch. 1909. A number of players are yet to learn this lesson nearly a century later.

6 a3

By now we are well aware that nudging the a-pawn forward comes in very handy for later.

6...♖e7

Putting the e5-pawn in Black's sights and clearing the way for the king to castle. When White has not deployed his bishop on g2 Black's queen does not have to reside on the h3-c8 diagonal.

7 h3



Without the traditional threat of (after g2-g3 and ♖g2) ...♖g4, ...♖d7 and ...♖h3 Black's bishop struggles for a worthy role. White already knows that his opponent's queenside provides him with a target in the shape of the b7-pawn (not forgetting more serious attacking options should Black castle queenside), so delaying the commitment of the king's bishop with the useful 5 ♕bd2 and 6 a3 is quite logical.

7...♖h5

7...♖xf3 8 ♕xf3 0-0-0 has also been played, after which White is guaranteed an advantage with 9 ♖d3 (9...♕xe5 10 ♖f5+), 9 ♖f4 and 9 ♖g5, e.g. 9...f6 10 exf6 gxf6 11 ♖f4 ♖e4 12 ♖d2 d3 13 ♖e3 ♖xc4 14 exd3 ♖f7 15 ♖e2 ♕ge7 16 0-0 etc.

8 ♖a4

Threatening 9 ♕xd4.

8...0-0-0 9 b4

Ironically Black has sacrificed a pawn to then find himself coming under attack, and herein lies the problem. It is true that White is yet to get his kingside in order but, for the moment, his king is safer than Black's.

9...♖b8

Defending the a7-pawn before b4-b5

comes. 9...♖xe5 10 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 11 g4 is very good for White according to Ftacnik. He gives the line 11...♗g6 12 ♖f3 ♗e4 13 ♗xa7 d3 14 ♖e3 to support this reasonable assessment but does not mention 11...d3. However, once White addresses the attack on his rook and the subsequent ...dxe2 his dual threats against h5 and a7 put him back in the driving seat, e.g. 12 ♖a2 dxe2 13 ♖g2! ♖g6 14 ♗xa7 c6 15 ♖b2 ♗d6 16 ♗a8+ ♖c7 17 ♗a5+ b6 (17...♖b8?? 18 ♖c5) 18 ♗a7+ ♖c8 19 ♗a6+ ♖c7 20 ♖c3 and, with the knight defended, White's next will be ♗a7+ followed by ♗xb6.

10 g4



Another feature of this particular system. White is afforded the luxury of being able to play with a more cavalier style on the kingside because his attack is already under way on the other flank.

10...♗g6 11 ♖b2 ♖xe5

Re-establishing material equilibrium, albeit temporarily thanks to Black's vulnerable back rank.

12 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 13 ♖f3 ♗e4 14 ♖xd4!

The point, since after 14...♖xd4 15 ♖xd4 Black cannot take on either d4 or h1 in view of the mate on e8. Consequently White remains with his extra pawn intact as well as enjoying play against Black's king.

14...c5

Opting to tuck the king away in the corner rather than weaken a6, c6 and the h1-a8 di-

agonal with 14...b6, when 15 ♖d1 is very good for White.

15 ♖e5+ ♖a8



16 ♖g2

Of course there is nothing wrong with the simple plan of lining up the bishop on the same, clear diagonal upon which Black's king stands, and the text prepares – finally – to castle. However, 16 ♖d1 is another reminder that Black's back rank is cause for concern, e.g. 16...♖xd1+ 17 ♗xd1 and Black's king is alone on the queenside!

16...♖f6 17 0-0 ♗xc4

After 17...♗xe2 18 ♗b5 Black's queen stands on an awkward square because the threatened 19 ♖d4 clears the way for ♗xb7 mate. Blocking the diagonal does not help, e.g. 18...♖e4 19 ♖ae1 ♗d3 20 ♖c3 ♗c2 (20...♗d7 21 ♖xf6) 21 ♖xf6 gxf6 22 ♖e1, or 18...♖e4 19 ♖ae1 ♗d3 20 ♖h4. Nevertheless the text hardly contributes to Black's chances of fending off the attack.

18 ♖f1 ♗e6 19 bxc5

With his king under fire – and seriously lacking in the defence department – Black cannot expect to survive much longer.

19...♖d7 20 ♖d4

A nice win results from 20 ♖d4! ♗xe5 21 ♖c6 (21...bxc6 22 ♗xc6+ mates).

20...♗e4

20...♖b8 21 c6.

21 ♖e5!

The beginning of the end.

21...Qxc5 22 Nxc5 Qxc5 23 Qxe4 Qxd4
24 Qxb7+! Qxb7 25 Qc6+ Qb8 26
Qxc5 1-0

Game 12
San Segundo-Gallego
Linares 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 Qc6 3 cxd5 Qxd5 4 e3 e5
5 Qc3 Qb4 6 Qd2 Qxc3 7 Qxc3!?

In the good old days 7 bxc3 was universally played. The text exploits the coming pin on the d-file to ensure that a piece lands on d4, after which White should stand better due to his bishop pair (Black will miss his dark-squared bishop).

7...exd4

In Matamoros-Insua Mellado, Seville 2000, Black side-stepped the issue with 7...e4, keeping the centre closed. Unfortunately for Black after the ambitious 8 Qe2 g5 9 h4 f6 10 Qg3 g4 11 b3! f5 12 Qc4 Qd6 13 d5 Qe5 14 Qd4 Qd7 15 Qb5+ the bishops had taken over nonetheless.

8 Qe2



The point. Thanks to the pin Black is in danger of surrendering his bishop for nothing.

8...Qg4!?

Introducing an uncompromising reaction that is typical of Chigorin fans. Black enjoys more space and development and already has an extra pawn, so this attempt at disruption is

logical. The major alternative is to develop the other knight on f6 or e7.

a) 8...Qf6 9 Qxd4 and now:

a1) 9...Qe4?! 10 Qb5! gives White a clear advantage. A sample line is 10...Qxd1+ 11 Qxd1 Q-0 12 Qxc7 Qxc3 13 bxc3 Qg4 14 Qxa8 Qxd1 15 Qxd1 Qxa8 and Black was a pawn down in Costa-Baumhus, Gelsenkirchen 1991.

a2) 9...Qg4 10 Qa4 Qd7 11 Qb5 also drew attention to the c7-pawn in Riemersma-Heisel, Germany 1998. After 11...Q-0-0 White could have played 12 Qxa7+ but instead continued the theme with 12 Qf4! Qe8 13 Qxg7 Qg8 14 Qc3 Qg4 15 Qf3 etc.

a3) Even 9...Q-0 runs into 10 Qb5! e.g. 10...Qg5 11 Qxc7 (11 h4! is popular but committal) 11...Qg4 12 Qb3 Qad8



Black has a development lead in return for the pawn but White's position is quite sound. Now 13 Qxb7 Qc5 14 h3 Qe4 seems risky for White but 15 Qb5! Qd6 16 Qd5! throws a spanner in the works. Not surprisingly it took a computer to discover this tidying resource, which leads to an ending in which White's points lead is decisive after 16...Qxd5 (16...Qe6 17 Qxc6!, or 16...Qd7 17 Qd1) 17 Qxd5 Qxd5 18 hxg4 Qxc3 19 bxc3.

a4) 9...Qxd4 10 Qxd4 Qxd4 11 Qxd4 Q-0 12 Qc1 c6 is typical of how Black's willingness to trade is too accommodating when White is in possession of the bishop pair.

T.Christensen-Charles, Suncoast 1999 continued 13 ♖e2 ♕e6 14 a3 ♖b3 15 ♖c3 ♕e6 16 f3 ♗d5 17 ♖c1 ♖fc8 18 ♗f2 ♗e7 19 e4 b6 20 b4 and White's advantage was beginning to take shape.

b) 8...♗ge7 9 ♗xd4 with a further branch:

b1) 9...♗xd4 10 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 11 ♖xd4 0-0 12 ♖c4 ♖e8 13 0-0-0 ♗c6 14 ♖c3 ♖f5 15 ♖he1 ♗e5 16 ♖f1 f6 17 e4 ♖e6 18 f4, Biriukov-Sepman, Chigorin Memorial 1998. Black has the same problem as in 'a4'.

b2) 9...0-0. Now the safest route to a definite edge is 10 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 11 ♖d4 ♖g6 12 ♖b3 ♖f5 13 ♖xf5 ♗xf5 14 ♖f4 ♗d6 15 0-0, when White enjoyed the superior minor piece in K.Nikolaïdis-Miladinovic, Aegina 1996. However, I'm sure you're wondering what happens if White hits the c7-pawn! Certainly 10 ♗b5! ♖g5 leaves the knight less actively placed on e7 than f6 (e4 is unavailable, for example), and in Hertneck-Hermann, Munich 1998, White exploited this difference: 11 h4 ♖h6 12 ♗xc7 ♖b8 13 ♗d5! ♖e6 14 ♗f4 ♖d8 15 ♖h5! forcing the exchange of queens.

Returning to 8...♖g4, by introducing a pin of his own Black refuses to give way in the centre and threatens to reinforce his grip by castling queenside. Therefore White is practically forced into complications that require careful handling from both players.

9 f3 ♖xf3

By far the most exciting continuation, and one that we are happy to go along with. There are several alternatives, each leading to varying degrees of difficulty for Black.

a) 9...♖e6 lacks consistency. Black is hardly poised to exploit f2-f3 here. After 10 ♗xd4 the line 10...0-0-0 11 ♖a4! ♗e7 12 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 13 ♖b5 is good for White, Mastrokoukos and And. Pzermiadanos offering the variation 13...a6? 14 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 15 ♖xc6 bxc6 16 ♖xg7 ♖hg8 17 ♖f6 ♖d3 18 ♖g1 ♖xe3+? 19 ♗d2, trapping the rook. Instead 10...♗xd4 11 ♖xd4 results in the now familiar ending in which Black will find his

opponent's bishops difficult to handle. However, the more testing 11 ♖xd4! ♗f6 12 ♖a4+! looks interesting, e.g. 12...♖d7 13 ♖c2 ♖c6 14 ♖d2 ♖d6 15 ♖c1 ♖c8 16 b4 ♗e7 17 ♖d3 with a promising lead, when 17...♖f5 18 e4! ♖d8 19 ♖d1 helps White increase his advantage in view of 19...♖xd4 20 ♖b5+.

b) 9...♖d7 also makes little sense, e.g. 10 ♗xd4 f6 11 ♖b3! ♖xb3 12 ♗xb3 b6 13 0-0-0 0-0-0 14 ♖a6+ ♗b8 15 ♖d2 ♗e7 16 ♖hd1 ♖e6 17 e4 with long-term prospects that White converted in Tunik-Sepman, Russia 1996.

c) 9...♗f6 10 ♗xd4 0-0-0



It almost appears that Black can get away with this cavalier play, but White has a very strong move in 11 ♖a4! Then 11...♗xd4 12 ♖xd4 ♖xf3 13 gxf3 ♖xf3 14 ♖g1 ♗g4 15 ♖xg4! ♖xg4 16 ♖xa7 ♖h4+ 17 ♗d2 ♖xh2+ 18 ♗c3 sends White's king to c3 but leaves Black's in more danger, while 11...♖d7 12 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 13 ♖xa7 nets White a safe pawn. This leaves 11...♖g5 12 ♗xc6 ♖xe3+ 13 ♖e2 ♖he8, when Schandorff-Kjeldsen, Danish Team Ch. 2000 saw White comfortably deal with the threat under the e-file: 14 ♖c2! ♗e4 (both the lines 14...bxc6 15 ♖xf6 gxf6 16 fxe4, and 14...♖xf3 15 ♖f5+ are winning easily for White) 15 fxe4 ♖xe4 16 ♗xd8 ♖xe2 17 ♖d2! ♖c5 18 ♗xf7 ♖h5+ 19 ♗f1 ♖xf7 20 ♖f2 ♖d6 21 ♖f5+ ♖e6 22 ♖e1 1-0.

d) 9...♖d8 10 ♗xd4 ♗xd4?? 11 ♖xd4



Black has been punished for leaving the bishop on g4 with the loss of material, the lesser evil being 11...xd4 12 exd4 exd4 13 exd4.

e) 9...g5 10 exd4 d7 11 d5! unleashes the bishop and targets the g7-pawn. S.Pedersen-J.Andersen, Aarhus 1999 went 11...dce7 12 h4 g6 13 h5 g5 14 c1! with a clear advantage to White.
10 gxf3 gxf3 11 dxd4!

For the moment at least White is best advised to keep his dark-squared bishop in play. 11 exd4! is justified after 11...gxf3 12 exg7, e.g. 12...gxf3 13 a4! f6 14 exh8 0-0-0 15 g4+ b8 16 d1 etc. However, after the sensible 11...dxd4! 12 gxd4 gxf3 13 gxf3 0-0-0! 14 gxf3 gxf3 15 gxf3 White must be careful. For instance 15 d4? fails to 15...gxf3 16 e2 d6 17 g7 (17 exh3+ d4) 17...d4! when Black is on the war-path. The only move is 15 g7, e.g. 15...gxf3 16 g3 (16 d3? d4!) 16...b4+ 17 d2 gxf3 18 c1 b6 with a position that favours White but is less promising than in the main game.

11...gxf3 12 dxc6 d6

Ruling out exg7. It might be more accurate to first play 12...gxf3! as 13...exg7? loses to the fork on g3. Therefore 13 g4 d6! is best, when 14 exf6 gxf6 15 e4+ f8 16 b4+ g7 17 g4+ f8 18 b4+ draws, while 17 gxf3 leaves White's queen too far from the vulnerable king for my lik-

ing. Instead 14 gxf3 gxf3 15 d1 g8 16 gxf6 gxf6 17 exf6 bxc6 18 c1 pits the rook and bishops against two rooks. Black's extra pawns are weak but the h-pawn is passed, and White has only three left. Nevertheless White effectively has an extra piece, which should tip the balance in his favour. Another possibility is 12...bxc6 13 exg7 gxf3 14 d1 g8 15 exh8 d8 16 c3 has proved successful, e.g. 16...d5 17 e4 gxf3 18 e2 d6 19 exh3 g5 20 f1 g6 21 f5 dxf5 22 gxf5 e6 23 gxf6 hxf6 24 f3 c5 25 e5 a6 26 a3 and White eventually won in Krallmann-Heisel, Bundesliga 1997. I prefer Baburin's 14 g4 with the idea of meeting 14...d8 with 15 d1



In Baburin-J.Cobb, British Ch. 1999 exchanges led to a winning ending for White after 15...dxd4 16 exd1 d6+ 17 d4 f6 18 exh8 e7 19 d3 gxd4 20 exd4 h5 21 e2 d6 22 g6 h4 23 g7 d7 24 exf7 gxf7 25 h6 e6 26 f4 etc.

13 a5

Also good is 13 d5 with a view to trading queens and relying on the two bishops in the subsequent ending. Here are two typical examples:

a) 13...c4 14 d4 0-0 15 0-0 gxd4 16 exd4! c5 17 c3 a8 18 exd8 exd8 19 c4, Lugovoi-Terasti, Finland 1998. Not surprisingly Black turned down the passivity

that follows 19...♖f8, but 19...♙d5? 20 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 21 e4 b5 22 ♙xd5+ ♖f8 23 ♙e5 saw the bishops dominate the entire board.

b) 13...0-0 14 ♖f3 ♖xf3 15 ♙xf3 ♙d5 16 ♙d4 ♙fe8 17 ♖f2 was played in Ehlvest-Mertanen in the same event. The problem for Black in these endings is the rather ineffective knight, which combines with the rooks less well than its opposite number works with the rook and bishops.

13...♖xh2

Others:

a) 13...0-0 14 ♙xf6 gxf6 15 ♖g4+ ♖h8 16 0-0-0 ♙f8 17 ♙d3 didn't do Black's king any favours in Galinsky-Prihotko, Pocztowy 1999.

b) 13...♖e4 might be best, 14 ♖d4 0-0 15 0-0-0 b6 16 ♙c4 ♖xd4 17 ♙x4 giving White the usual bonus of superior fire power.

14 ♖a4+ c6



15 0-0-0!

Improving both king and rook makes more sense than 15 ♙xc6 ♖g3+ 16 ♙e2 ♖h2+ (16...0-0 17 ♙e5 ♖g4+ 18 ♖xg4 ♙xg4 19 ♙e7+ ♖h8 20 ♙d4) 17 ♙d3 0-0 even if White's king is safe on d3.

15...0-0

Black preferred 15...♖c7 in Averkin-Batikants, Krasnodar 1998. White immediately made sure that his opponent's king was to stay in the centre for the time being: 16 ♖b4 and now 16...♙d5? (Black still has problems with his king after 16...♖e7 17

♖xe7+ ♖xe7 18 ♙xb7) met with 17 ♙xd5! cxd5 18 ♙b5+ ♖d8 19 ♙xb7+! ♖c8 (19...♖xb7 20 ♖d6+ ♖c8 21 ♙a6 ♖xa6 22 ♖xa6+ ♖d7 23 ♖b7+ and the queen and bishop have fun while the rooks have yet to stir) 20 ♙d6+ ♖b8 (20...♖d8 21 ♙xf7+! ♖x7 22 ♖d6+ ♖c8 23 ♙a6+) 21 ♙a6+ ♖b6 22 ♙c4! 1-0



The deadly check on e5 will be a fitting testament to the power of the bishop pair.

15...♖h6 worked out okay for Black in Koniushev-Dubinsky, Russia 1997. After 16 ♙xb7 0-0 17 ♙d6 ♙d5 18 ♙f5 ♖g5 19 ♙xd5! cxd5 20 ♖d4 ♙fe8 White was forced into 21 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 22 ♙xg7 ♙xe3 23 ♙xe3 ♖xg7 24 ♙xd5 h5 25 ♙f4 h4 26 ♖d2 and a draw was agreed. Borrowing Averkin's idea, 16 ♖b4! looks good, e.g. 16...♖xe3+? 17 ♙d2 ♖b6 (17...♙d5 18 ♖d6) 18 ♙e1+ ♖d8 19 ♖e7+ ♖c8 20 ♙h3+ etc. This time 16...♙d5 is even worse for Black: 17 ♙xd5 cxd5 18 ♙b5+ ♖d8 19 ♙xb7+ ♖c7 20 ♖c5+ ♖xb7 21 ♖xd5+ ♖c7 22 ♙e5+ ♖b6 23 ♙d4+ ♖c7 24 ♙d7+ and mate.

16 ♙xf6!

Parting with the good bishop is worth it here if it means damaging the pawn cover in front of Black's king.

16...gxf6 17 ♙xb7

Opening the b-file is not a problem for White. Another option is 17 ♙d3 ♙fe8 18 ♖g4+ ♖h8 19 ♖f3 ♖h4 20 ♙c4 as in Pereyra-Myc, World Junior Ch. 1997. This looks

rather promising in view of the weaknesses on f6 and h7. The game went 20...♞g8 21 ♖d6 ♞g3 22 ♜f2 ♞g4 23 ♜xh4 ♞xh4 24 ♞g1! ♞f8 25 ♙c4 ♞xc4+ 26 ♖xc4 and the extra knight eventually proved too much for Black.

17...♞ab8 18 ♙a6! ♜e5 19 ♜a3!

Defending b2 and e3 and supporting both c5 and d6. Note that Black's extra pawns – split into four groups! – are irrelevant at the moment, three of them busy keeping the king company.

19...♞fe8?

Neglecting the f7-pawn. The lesser evil is 19...♞be8 20 ♞d3.

20 ♞g1+! ♜h8 21 ♖d6



21...♞e7

21...♜xe3+?? 22 ♜xe3 ♞xc3 23 ♖xf7 mate.

22 ♙c4 ♞g8?

22...♞f8 is necessary. Then White switches to the h-file: 23 ♞h1! e.g. 23...♞d7 (after 23...♜xe3+ 24 ♜xe3 ♞xc3 25 ♖xf7+ Black must take the knight as 25...♜g7 26 ♞g1+ mates) 24 ♜d3 f5 25 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 26 ♖xf5 and the three pieces will have the upper hand.

23 ♖xf7+! ♞xf7 24 ♞xg8+ ♜xg8 25 ♜xa7 ♜e8 26 ♙a4

Thanks to the pin White wins the race.

26...h5 27 ♜d2! h4 28 ♜e2 h3 1-0

and Black resigned rather than wait for 29 ♜f2.

Game 13

V.Ivanov-Rausis

Moscow 1994

1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♙f5

a) Less popular and less sound is 2...♖f6. Then 3 cxd5 ♖xd5 4 e4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 e5 is what Black is waiting for and should therefore be avoided, so the patient 4 ♖f3 is the best way to make something of White's extra centre pawn. After 4...♙f5 5 ♜b3 Black has tried two moves:

a1) 5...♖c6 6 ♖c3 ♖xc3 7 bxc3 b6 and now in Muhtarov-Ilin, Sevastopol 2000 White sought an immediate decision with 8 e4!



Then the lesser evil is 8...♙d7 with a sizeable advantage for White, but Il'in's 8...♙xe4? at least serves to illustrate what can befall Black if an unorthodox defence is mishandled: 9 ♙b5 (threatening 10 ♖e5) 9...f6 10 ♜e6 ♜d5 11 ♜xd5 ♙xd5 12 c4 ♙xf3 13 gxf3 0-0-0 14 ♙xc6 ♙xd4 15 ♙d5 and the piece by far outweighed the pawns.

a2) 5...e6 6 ♖c3 ♖c6 7 e4! ♖xc3 8 exf5! is clearly better for White thanks to the bishop pair and subsequent play on the light squares.

b) Another quite rare attempt to muddy the waters is 2...c5. Then 3 cxd5 and now:

b1) 3...♜xd5 4 ♖f3 ♖c6? 5 ♖c3 ♜d8 6 d5 and Black's experiment had been rightly punished in Izeta-Martinez Vildosola, Pam-

plona 2000. 4...cxd4 5 Qc3 Wa5 6 Qxd4 Qf6 improves, although 7 Qb3 Wc7 8 g3, for example, is pleasant for White.

b2) 3...Qf6 4 dxc5 Wxd5 5 Qd2! White's plan is to gain an advantage by developing at the expense of the queen with Qf3, Qc3 and Wc1 etc. The attempt to avoid this with 5...Qe4 leads to a clear plus for White after 6 Qf3 e5 (or 6...Wxc5 7 e3 Qc6 8 Qc3 Qxd2 9 Qxd2!) 7 Qc3 Qxc3 8 Qxc3 Wxd1+ 9 Wxd1 f6 10 b4 (Podgorny).

2...Qf5 is designed to develop the bishop actively before supporting d5 with ...e7-e6, the c6-square often left free for the queen's knight. Instead of allowing such a set up by meeting Black's second move with routine play, this game features an uncompromising treatment by White.

3 cxd5

Now 3...Wxd5?! breaks a golden rule and deservedly loses time and space after 4 Qc3, so Black first eliminates the knight before recapturing on d5.

3...Qxb1 4 Wd4+!



By no means an obvious possibility, this check throws a small spanner in the works.

4...c6

Now that Black has already parted with his bishop (and the d5-pawn) the exchange of queens is sure to benefit White. 4...Wd7 5 Wxd7+ Qxd7 6 Qxb1 Qg6 7 Qf3 Qb6 8 e3 Qbxd5 regains the pawn but does not alter the fact that White has a 2-1 pawn majority

on the centre files to add to the definite advantage of the bishop pair. Inkiov-Trzaska, Sweden 2000 is a good example of how patient play helps White nurture his pluses: 9 a3 e6 10 Qd3 Qe7 11 e4 Qb6 12 O-O O-O 13 Qc3 Qfd8 14 Qfc1



Black should settle for a cramped but solid position here with 14...c6, when White continues to build up the pressure. Instead Black struck out with 14...c5, but after 15 dxc5 Qxd3 16 cxb6 axb6 17 Qc7 Qad8 18 Qe1 soon found himself a pawn down. 4...c6 also invites 5 dxc6, when 5...Qxc6 6 Qxb1 gives White an edge. However, the treatment adopted in the main game can lead to complex play that is near winning for White should Black be tempted into mixing it early on.

5 Qxb1 Wxd5 6 f3

I like this move. It is perfectly natural to want to erect a good centre around which White can mobilise his superior forces (two bishops). Passive play from Black will inevitably allow White to generate a healthy initiative, challenging the centre will open lines for the bishop pair and - as we will see - trying to justify the queen's early central posting with tactics backfires on Black.

6...Qd7

One of a number of moves available.

a) 6...f5 is a dubious attempt to keep White's e-pawn at bay. However, with his light-squared bishop no longer around to

help the cause Black is poorly prepared for a battle on the light squares. Consequently White should carry on anyway: 7 e4!



7...fxe4 8 ♖c4 b5 (8...♞f5 9 ♞c2 ♟f6 10 ♟e2 looks uncomfortable for Black, while 10 g4 and 11 g5 is worth a try) 9 ♜xd5 bxa4 10 ♜xe4 ♟f6 11 ♜c2 a3 12 bxa3 and White's bishops are just as effective without queens on the board.

b) 6...b5 also meets with 7 e4. Then:

b1) 7...bxa4 8 exd5 cxd5 9 ♜b5+ ♟d7 10 ♜c6 ♞c8 11 ♜xd5 as in Barsov-Rausis, Untergrombach 1995, again favours the bishops.

b2) 7...♞d8 ♞♞d1 sees both queens return to base but, whereas White has a proud centre, Black has an odd queenside and no light-squared bishop. After 8...e6 9 a3 ♟f6 10 ♜c3 White has more space, better pawns, better centre and the bishop pair.

c) Belov's 6...e5!? is sensible. After 7 dxe5 Black has tried two moves:

c1) 7...♟d7 8 ♜f4 and now Black should be only slightly worse after 8...♟xe5 9 ♞d1 or 9 e4. Instead S.Ivanov-Skatchkov, Chigorin Memorial 1997, went 8...♟c5 9 e4! ♞d8 (9...♟xa4 10 exd5, and 10...cxd5?? loses to 11 ♜b5+) 10 ♞c4 ♟e6 11 ♜g3 ♜c5 12 ♟h3 and Black had insufficient compensation for the pawn. Black did manage to disrupt White's king, but only at the cost of subjecting his own to a similar fate: 12...b5 13 ♞c3 a5 14 a3 b4 15 ♞c4 bxa3 16 bxa3 ♜xa3

17 ♞xc6+ ♟f8 18 ♜c4 ♟e7 19 ♞a4 ♜b4+ 20 ♟f1 and White had just managed to keep his advantage intact.

c2) 7...♞xe5 8 ♜f4 ♞f5 9 ♞d1 ♟a6 requires patience from White, who has an edge after 10 e3 ♟c5 11 ♞c4 ♟e6 12 ♜g3, when the kingside forces are ready for action.

d) Now we come to the tempting 6...♟f6 7 e4 ♟xe4?!



With White's rook standing alone on b1 7...♟xe4 is understandable, but rather than the automatic 8 fxe4 White should first make a point of highlighting his undisputed supremacy on the light squares with 8 ♜c4!. This gains a vital tempo on the queen and introduces dangerous possibilities involving the potentially vulnerable f7-pawn after 8...♞f5 (8...♞xd4?? 9 ♜xf7+) 9 fxe4 ♞xe4+ 10 ♟e2, when three important moves must be addressed:

d1) 10...b5 11 ♞b3! bxc4 12 ♞b7 e6 13 0-0 turns out well for White after either 13...♞xe2 14 ♞xf7+ ♟d8 15 ♞b7, Lorscheid-Van der Raaf, Ostend 1992, or 13...♜e7 14 ♞xa8 0-0 15 ♞xa7, Lorscheid-Stromer, Bundesliga 1992.

d2) Umanskaya-Poliakova, Russian Women's Ch. 1996, continued 10...♞xg2 11 ♞g1 ♞c4 12 ♞b3 ♟d7 (12...♞xb1 13 ♞xb7, e.g. 13...♞f5 14 ♜xf7+! ♟d8 15 ♜f4) 13 ♜xf7+ ♟d8 14 ♞a1 e5 15 ♞e3 ♜b4+ 16 ♟d1 ♞xe3 17 ♜xe3 g6 18 ♟c2 ♟c7 19 ♞ad1 and the piece was more effective than

the pawns.

d3) 10...♖xb1 is even more fun after 11 ♖b3!



Now Kishnev-Pronold, Munich 1992 went 11...♖f5 12 ♖xb7 ♖a5+ 13 ♔d2 ♖b6 14 ♖c8+ 1-0 in view of 14...♖d8 15 ♔xf7+. Instead 11...b5 keeps White's queen out of b7 but after 12 ♔d3 ♖a1 13 0-0 Black's queen is trapped and White might anyway infiltrate with his queen on f7. Finally 11...♔d7 12 ♔d3 ♖a1 13 0-0 is an irrelevant improvement on 11...b5.

With the sober 6...♔d7 Black grants White his wish with a view to challenging with a timely ...e7-e5.

7 e4 ♖d6

Despite its recommendation by a couple of commentators I would steer clear of 7...♔b6 8 exd5 ♔xa4 9 dxc6 bxc6 because 10 d5! again exploits Black's vulnerability on the light squares. White has a definite plus after 10...♔d7 11 ♔c4, and 10...e6 11 dxc6 ♔b4+ 12 ♔d2 ♔xd2+ 13 ♔xd2 0-0-0+ is too generous.

8 ♔e2

8 ♔e3 e5 9 ♔e2 transposes. However, if White is not in the mood to see Black plant a pawn on e5 he can do so himself, e.g. 8 e5! ♖g6 9 ♔a1 e6 10 ♔e2 and the price for White's extra space and the two bishops is Black's knight outpost on d5.

8...e5

The idea behind playing 8 ♔e2 rather than

8 ♔e3 is to be ready to meet the modest 8...e6 with 9 ♔f4, when 9...♖b4+ 10 ♖xb4 ♔xb4+ 11 ♔c3 ♔gf6 gives Black the traditional 'passive but solid' set up. Eventually – after bringing his kingside pieces into the game – White might consider pushing his b-pawn in order to open the queenside for his pieces, thus reminding Black who rules the light squares. In this kind of position Black should refrain from trading his remaining for the knight, as then White's bishops would dominate.

9 ♔e3



9...♖b4+

9...♔gf6 10 ♔d1 ♖b4+ 11 ♖xb4 ♔xb4+ 12 ♔f2 0-0-0 13 g3! was the course of Kishnev-Rausis, Moscow 1987. Even with such a sound structure Black finds himself under pressure on the light squares, this time the h3-c8 diagonal the source of activity for White's uncontested bishop. After 13...exd4 14 ♔xd4 ♔e5 15 ♔h3+ ♔c7 16 ♔f4 ♔he8 17 ♔e6+ fxe6 18 ♔xe5+ White was well on top. This example and White's undeniable lead in the main game suggest that perhaps Black should not exchange queens. In fact Belov proposes (9...♔gf6 10 ♔d1) 10...♖c7 as an improvement on Kishnev-Rausis, above, and there seems nothing wrong with this plan. Of course it does not alter the assessment of the game being in White's favour, but Black's queen can contribute to play on the dark squares in an effort to make

up for the deficiency on the other colour complex.

10 ♖xb4 ♙xb4+ 11 ♔f2

11 ♖c3 ♖g6 12 ♙c4 0-0 13 ♙e2 followed by bringing the king's rook to d1 is equally good, guaranteeing White the better chances as the ending approaches.

11...♙e7 12 dxe5

Avoiding 12 ♙d1 f5 13 ♖c3 0-0 14 ♙c4+ ♙h8 when Black enjoys too much activity.

12...♙e5 13 ♖d4



13...0-0

Black prefers to keep his king in front of White's kingside pawn majority, and Denev's proposed 13...0-0 runs the risk of walking into an attack should White launch his minority.

14 g4?!

White plans to use the f5-square but this is dealt with quite comfortably by Black, who gets the time to draw the sting out of White's bishops. Belov's 14 ♙e2 deserves a try. Combining 15 ♙hd1 with f3-f4 and posting the bishop on f3 will pose Black problems, and the pre-emptive strike 14...f5 does not diminish White's pull after 15 exf5 ♖xf5 16 ♖xf5 ♙xf5 17 h3 according to Belov. The advantage of the bishop pair requires patience in that the scope of the bishops tends to gradually increase during the course of the game. As long as there pawns on both flanks the defender will not have an easy task.

14...♙fd8 15 ♙e2

White must defend the d3-square before moving his knight. Consequently Black wastes no time improving his pieces.

15...♙e5 16 ♙hd1 ♙d7

That White's strategy beginning with 14 g4 is indeed faulty is demonstrated by the fact that here Black has the option of accentuating his influence on the dark squares with 16...g5?!. Then 17 b4 ♙b6 18 ♖f5 ♖g6 is not clear, while 17 ♖f5 ♙xe3+ 18 ♙xe3 ♖g6 looks even. Note that the rash g2-g4 practically invited this idea by creating a hole on f4. Of course the text is sensible, too, preparing to make his presence felt on the d-file.

17 b4

17 ♖f5 ♙xe3+ 18 ♙xe3 ♖xf5+ 19 gxf5 ♙ad8 20 ♙xd7 ♖xd7 offers Black good drawing chances.

17...♙b6 18 ♖f5 ♖xf5!

Better than 18...♖g6?! 19 ♙xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♙d1 ♖d8 21 a4! when Black is too passive. 19 gxf5 ♙ad8 20 ♙xd7 ♖xd7?

Whoops! Forced is 20...♖xd7 21 ♙d1 ♙xe3+ 22 ♙xe3 ♙e7 with an edge to White.

21 ♙xb6 ♙xb6 22 f4 1-0

Unfortunately for Black after 22...♖d3+ 23 ♙e3 the knight has nowhere to hide.

Conclusion

Game 11 suggests that the Albin Counter-Gambit's bark is considerably worse than its bite. Moreover White seems to have the most fun engineering an attack against the king, and Black's rather transparent opening sequence makes White's task easier! In Game 12, like the secret of a magician's trick finally revealed, recapturing on c3 with the bishop is obvious after the pin on the d-file has been pointed out. Routine play leaves Black with nothing to show for the removal of the dark-squared bishop, yet White is better prepared for the complications. Rausis and friends no longer have the success they once enjoyed with 2...♙f5 (Game 13) because the less orthodox lines are simply unsound.

CHAPTER FOUR

King's Indian and Benoni: The Four Pawns Attack



1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟c3 ♟g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4

It is virtually impossible to deny Black some sort of counterplay in both the KID and the Benoni, even if White is not intent on choosing an attacking system. My initial selection of the Four Pawns Attack was not, in fact, based upon the fact that it has a reputation for being very aggressive, and nor was it because the same line can be adopted against both defences – although this is convenient for all of us! I was attracted to it because it is possible to approach the opening actively without having to go overboard, the very presence of White's imposing centre providing enough for Black to worry about.

In the KID move order Black's safest line is undoubtedly the main line with 9...♟g4 (and 9...♟e8), which is dealt with in Game 14. Due to the respective pawn structures much of the game revolves around White's ever-present advance e4-e5, which White is often happy to make even at the cost of a pawn. This thrust is also a major characteristic in the line with 9...b5 (Game 15). The equally ambitious but more reliable 7...b5 of Game 16 aims for Benko-type play, while in Game 17 Black holds back the c-pawn to give the game a different feel altogether. Game 18 is a pure Benoni, Black allowing a

most annoying check on b5.

Game 14 Banikas-Minasian Yerevan Zonal 2000

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟c3 ♟g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0

5...♟g4 speeds White's development, e.g. 6 ♟e2 ♟xe2 7 ♟xe2 and now:

a) 7...0-0 8 ♟f3 c5 9 dxc5 dxc5 10 e5 ♟fd7 11 0-0 ♟c6 12 ♟d1 favours White. Note that 9...♟a5? does not work here: 10 cxd6 ♟xe4 11 ♟xe4 ♟xc3+ 12 ♟f1 and White is winning after 12...♟f6 13 dxe7 ♟e8 14 ♟xb7 ♟a6 15 ♟d2 etc. Vaisner assesses 9 d5 e6 10 e5 exd5 11 exf6 ♟e8 12 fxg7 ♟xe2+ 13 ♟xe2 as unclear.

b) 7...♟c6 8 ♟f3 e5 (8...♟d7 9 e5!) 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♟xe5 ♟g4 11 ♟g5 is good for White since 11...♟c8 12 ♟d5 ♟cxe5? runs into 13 h3!, e.g. 13...h6 14 ♟f4 g5 15 ♟g3 ♟xf3+ 16 ♟xf3 ♟e5 17 ♟c3, or 13...♟xf3+ 14 ♟xf3 ♟e5 15 ♟c3. Black's lesser evil is 12...0-0 13 0-0 ♟e8 14 ♟f6! ♟cxe5 15 ♟e7+ ♟xe7 16 ♟xe7 ♟e6 but there is certainly not enough for the exchange.

6 ♟f3 c5

a) 6...e5?! 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 ♟xd8 ♟xd8 9 ♟xe5 is poor for Black, e.g. 9...♟xe4 10

Qxe4 f6 11 Qxf6+ Qxf6 12 Qf3 (or 12 Qd2), or 9...Qa6 10 Qe3!

b) 6...Qbd7?! 7 e5 Qe8 8 c5! uses White's formidable centre pawns to the full. Skermbis-Kalesis, Greece 1994 continued 8...c6 9 Qe3 b6 (9...dxc5 10 dxc5 Qa5 11 a3!) 10 cxd6 exd6 11 Qc4 b5 12 Qb3 Qb6 13 0-0 with a significant space advantage and grip on the centre.

c) 6...Qg4 7 Qe3 Qfd7 8 h3! Qxf3 9 Qxf3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 f5 Qc6 12 0-0-0 Qd4 13 Qf2 c6 14 g4 Qa5 15 g5 Qfd8 16 h4 was more fun from White's side of the board in Glek-Damljanovic, Belgrade 1988.

7 d5 e6 8 Qe2 exd5 9 cxd5 Qg4

The major alternative is 9...Qe8, tempting White into the wild 10 e5. We will concentrate on the more sober – but no less compromising – 10 Qd2.

a) 10...a6?! 11 a4 weakens the b6-square.

a1) 11...Qbd7 12 0-0 c4 is best met with the sensible 13 Qh1, e.g. 13...Qc5 14 e5! dxe5 15 fxe5 Qxe5 16 Qxc4 Qe8 (16...Qf5 17 Qf4) 17 Qg5 h6 18 Qh4 Qce4 19 Qxe4 Qxe4 20 Qg3, Yrjola-Vaiser, Sochi 1984, when 20...Qxd5? (20...h5 – Yrjola) 21 Qxf7! turned out well for White.

a2) 11...Qg4 looks too blunt, 12 Qc4! being enough to keep White on top:

a21) 12...f5 13 Qxg4 fxe4 14 e5 (14 0-0! Qxc3 15 bxc3 Qxe4 16 Qb3 is interesting) 14...dxe5 15 0-0 exf4 16 Qxf4 Qd4+ 17 Qh1 Qd7 18 Qd6 Qf8 19 Qd2 Qf6 20 Qac1, Schmidt-Aepfler, Germany 1994.

a22) 12...Qxc3+? 13 bxc3 Qxe4 14 0-0 and now the recommended line is 14...f5 15 a5 Qf6 16 Qb1 (16 Qb6! Qa7 17 Qd3 Qe8 18 c4 followed by lining the queen and bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal is another good plan) 16...Qxc4 (16...Qc7 17 Qd3 Qe7 18 Qb6 Qa7 19 c4) 17 Qxc4 Qxa5 18 Qe2 Qxc3 19 Qb2! Qe3+ 20 Qh1 Qe4 21 Qe1 when White's more active pieces get the vote. The game Penzias-Mashian, Tel Aviv 1993 is a good illustration of the problems Black might experience after parting with the dark-

squared bishop: 1...Qh6 15 a5 Qf5 16 Qd3 Qe8 17 Qb6 Qa7 18 Qe1 Qd7?! 19 Qxc5 gxf5 20 c4 Qxb6 21 axb6 Qa8 22 Qb2 Qd7 23 Qh5 f6 24 Qh4 Qf8 25 Qa3! Qf7 26 Qg3+ Qh8 27 Qg6 Qe8 28 Qxe8+ Qxe8 29 Qxf6+ 1-0.

b) 10...Qbd7 11 0-0 c4 is similar to 'a1' but without the weakness on b6. 12 a4 Qc5 13 Qf3 b6 14 e5 dxe5 15 fxe5 Qxe5 16 Qxc4 Qe8 (16...Qf5 17 d6 Qb8 18 Qb5 Qe6 19 Qe3 Qb3 20 Qxf5! Qxd1 21 Qe7+ Qh8 22 Qxd1 and the pieces do more than the queen according to Gleiz-rov) 17 d6 Qe6, Chermín-Granda Zuniga, Buenos Aires 1992, when 18 Qd5 is promising.

c) 10...Qa6 11 0-0 Qc7 is the main line, finding a decent home for the knight rather than automatically playing ...a7-a6. After 12 a4 a6 13 Qf3 Qb8 14 a5! Qd7 15 Qe1 Qb5 Vaiser's 16 Qdb1! secures White a plus. Consequently 12...b6 is favoured, with a choice for Black after 13 Qe1 Qb8 14 Qf3.



c1) 14...a6 15 Qc4 b5 achieves the desired expansion but gives White two promising options.

c11) 16 axb5 axb5 17 Qa5 Qd7 18 e5 b4 19 exf6 bxc3 20 fxe7 cxb2 was the entertaining course taken in Barrett-Povah, British League 1999. Unfortunately the game was agreed drawn after 21 Qxb2 Qxb2 22 Qc4 Qb4 23 Qxd6 Qxc1+ 24 Qxc1 Qxf4 25 Qe5 Qb4 26 Qe4 Qe8 27 h3 c4, but Kinsman suggests 26 Qe1 with the nice idea of 27

Qxf7! Qxf7 28 Wc7+!

c12) 16 Qxd6 is the other good move. Kozul-Marovic, Toronto 1990 went 16...Wxd6 17 e5 Wd8 18 d6 Qe6 19 axb5 axb5 20 exf6 Qxf6 21 Qd5 and White enjoyed an initiative.

c2) The solid 14...Qa6 makes more sense, when White has to decide where to put the d2-knight.

c21) Both Kinsman and Vaiser prefer 15 Qdb1, and this impressive regrouping looks good for White, e.g. 15...Qd7 16 Qa3 c4 17 Qcb5! Qxb5 18 axb5 c3 19 Bb1 cxb2 20 Qxb2 Qxb2 21 Wxb2 as in Malich-Tringov, Sarajevo 1965, when 21...Wf6 could have been met with 22 Wd2 (22...Qxd5? 23 e5!) followed by returning the knight to the fold, Qc4, and preparing e4-e5.

c22) Recently attention has returned to 15 Qf1. Savchenko-Sicherl, Bundesliga 2000, continued 15...Qxf1 16 Qxf1! a6 17 Bb1 Qd7 18 Qe2 b5 19 b4 bxa4 20 Wxa4 Bb5 21 Qd2 cxb4 22 Bxb4 Qc5 23 Wc2 We7 24 Bb1 and White's knight eventually lodged on c6 (via d4).

Let us return to 9...Qg4.



With this and (usually) 10...Qb7 Black just about completes development while observing the often critical e5-square.

10 0-0 Qb7

Others:

a) 10...Qxf3 is premature. 11 Qxf3 Qdb7 12 g4! h6 13 h4 Qh7 14 g5 is typical, when

Arencibia-Baron, Manresa 1996 continued 14...a6 15 Qe3 b5 16 Wd2 Qb6 17 b3 b4 18 Qe2 Qxa1 19 Bxa1 a5 20 Qg3 a4 21 Bb1 Qd7 22 e5 dxe5 23 f5 and White had ample compensation for the exchange.

b) 10...Qe8 asks for trouble according to Vaiser, who proposes 11 e5!



b1) 11...Qd7? 12 e6 fxe6 13 Qg5 Qxe2 14 Qxe2 Qf8 15 dxe6 Qc6 (15...Qxe6? 16 Wd5 Wd7 17 f5 gxf5 18 Qf4) 16 f5 and White is chipping away on the kingside.

b2) 11...dxe5 12 fxe5 Qxf3 (12...Qfd7 13 Qg5 f6 14 exf6 Qxf6 15 Wd2 favours White) 13 Qxf3 Qxe5 14 Qf4 Qe8 15 Wb3 Wb6 16 Wxb6 axb6 is Vaiser-Guyard, Aubervilliers (rapidplay) 1993. Now 17 Qc7! Qfd7 18 Bfe1! wraps up a clear advantage, e.g. 18...Qa6 19 d6 Qxe1+ 20 Qxe1 Qxc3 21 bxc3 Qxc7 22 dxc7 Qc8 23 Qe7 Qxc7 24 Qd5 etc.

c) Black gets no time for queenside expansion after 10...a6? because White charges down the middle of the board: 11 e5! dxe5 12 fxe5 Qfd7 13 e6 fxe6 14 Qg5! Qxe2 15 Wxe2, Vegh-Dambacher, Haarlem 1994. After 15...e5 16 Qe3 Qxf1+ 17 Bxf1 Qf6 18 Qe6 White was well on top.

d) 10...Qfd7 avoids the g2-g4-g5 plan seen in 'a' and unleashes the g7-bishop. Vaiser offers the interesting 11 Qb5! with the following possibilities:

d1) After 11...Qb6 12 a4 a6 13 Qc3 White benefits most from the shadow-

boxing.

d2) 11...♖b6 12 a4 c4+ 13 ♖h1 ♕xf3 14 ♕xf3 ♖c5 15 ♖e2 favours White, e.g. 15...♝xa4 16 ♖xa4 ♖xb5 17 ♖xc4 with a grip on the light squares.

d3) In reply to 11...♝f6 Vaiser suggests 12 e5! without going any further. In fact he appears to be on the right track once again, since the natural 12...dxe5 13 fxe5 ♖xd5 (13...♞e8 14 ♕g5) 14 ♕c4 ♖b6 walks into 15 ♕xf7+!



Then 15...♕xf7 16 ♖g5+ ♖e7 (16...♖g8 17 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 18 ♖g4) 17 ♖xg4 ♖xf1+ 18 ♕xf1 is excellent for White in view of 18...♖d3+ 19 ♖f2, when 19...♖xb5?? loses to 20 ♖e6+ ♖d8 21 ♖f7+ ♖c7 22 ♖d6+.

11 ♖e1 ♖e8

Natural and best, activating the rook and in so doing nipping in the bud (for the moment, at least) any ideas White might have of e4-e5. Again 11...a6? is punished by 12 e5 and, again, 11...♕xf3 is too accommodating. Vaiser-Al Modiakhi, Tunis 1997 turning out good for White after 12 ♕xf3 ♖e8 13 ♖e2! ♖c7 14 a4 a6 15 ♖e1 ♖e8 16 ♕e3 etc. 11...♖e8 is best met with 12 ♖g5! ♕xe2 13 ♖xe2, e.g. 13...a6 14 a4 ♖c7 15 ♖d3 ♖f6 16 b3 b5 17 ♕b2 when White's grip on the position was enough for an advantage in Chabanon-Degraeve, Meribel 1998.

12 h3 ♕xf3 13 ♕xf3 ♖a5

Played to guarantee ...b7-b5 since 14 a4 c4! is fine for Black. Of course Black has

alternatives to the text, the most popular being 13...a6, below.

a) The immediate 13...c4! is not quite right here as White is able to use the d4-square for his bishop, e.g. 14 ♕e3 ♖a5 (14...a6?! 15 ♕d4! b5 16 e5) 15 ♕d4 ♖c5 (15...♖e7 16 b4!) 16 b4!



Now Vaiser analyses 16...cxb3 17 axb3 ♖b4 18 ♖a2! ♖b5 19 ♕e2! ♖xb3 (19...♖d7 20 ♕xc5 dxc5 21 ♕f3) 20 ♕xc5 ♖xd1 21 ♖axd1 dxc5 22 e5 ♖d7 23 ♕b5 ♖e8 24 e6 fxe6 25 dxe6 ♖f6 26 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 27 e7 and White emerges with the better prospects. Komarov-Strowski, Belfort 1992, continued 16...♖xb4 17 ♖b1 ♖a5 18 ♖b5 ♖a6 (Kinsman prefers 18...♖a3) 19 ♕xc5 and now instead of 19...dxc5? 20 e5 ♖d7 21 d6 ♖ab8 22 a4 b6 23 ♖d5 Black should have played 19...♖xe4! 20 ♖xe4 ♖xb5, when after 21 ♕f2! (21 ♕xd6? ♖xe4 22 ♖xe4 ♖b6+) 21...♖a6 22 ♖e2 the minor pieces have more potential.

b) 13...♖e8 14 ♖h1 a6 15 a4 c4 16 ♕e3 favours White after either 16...♖a5 17 ♕d4 ♖c5 18 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 19 e5 dxe5 20 fxe5 ♖d7 21 e6, Cebalo-Zelenika, Pula 1999, or 16...♖c5 17 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 18 e5 dxe5 19 fxe5 ♖d7 20 e6, Vaiser-Berelovich, Groningen 1993.

c) 13...h5 14 ♕e3 h4 15 ♖h1 ♖h7 16 ♖c2 g5?! is a fairly recent attempt by Black to fight for the dark squares on the king-side. Cebalo-Kruppa, Budapest 1999, continued

17 ♖g4! ♗xf4 18 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 19 ♖xf4 b5 20 ♖ad1 ♗f8 and now, with ...♗g6-e5 a threat, White carried out a thematic sacrifice: 21 e5! dxe5 (21...♗xe5 22 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 23 ♖xe5 dxe5 24 ♗f2 is also good for White) 22 ♖g5 with superior pieces and structure.

d) 13...a6 14 a4

d1) 14...♖b8 15 a5 b5 16 axb6 ♗xb6 17 ♖e2 leaves the a-pawn weaker than the b-pawn.

d2) 14...c4 is the main idea, for after 15 ♖e3 ♗a5 White can no longer meet ...♗c5 with the cheeky fork on b4 thanks to the insertion of the moves ...a7-a6 and a2-a4. Consequently I prefer 16 ♗h1 ♗c5 (16...♖e7 17 ♖e2 ♖ac8 18 ♖d4 ♗c5 19 e5! ♗fd7 [19...dxe5? 20 fxe5 ♗fd7 21 d6] 20 e6! favours White according to Vaiser) 17 ♖xc5 ♗xc5 18 e5 dxe5 19 fxe5 ♗d7 20 ♗e4 ♗b4 21 e6.



White's advance in the centre has culminated in one of the pawns coming face to face with one of the king's protectors.

d21) Flear-Drabke, Aosta 2000 went 21...♗e5 22 exf7+ ♗xf7 23 ♖g4 ♖ad8 (23...♗e5 24 ♖e6+ is 'd22', below, with an extra move for both players) 24 ♖c6 ♖xe6 25 dxe6 ♖xd1 26 exf7+ ♗xf7 27 ♖xd1 ♖xb2 28 ♖d7+ and White went on to successfully attack the king.

d22) Black's best is 21...fxe6 22 ♖g4 ♗e5 23 ♖xe6+ ♗h8 with a balanced position.

14 ♖e3 b5

The point (14...c4! is 'a' in the previous note). 14...♖ac8?! is inconsistent. Vaiser-Kindermann, Biel 1991 saw immediate punishment in the shape of kingside expansion: 15 g4! h6 16 h4 b5 17 g5 hxg5 18 hxg5 ♗h7 19 ♖g4 ♖cd8 20 e5! dxe5 21 f5 e4! 22 fxg6 fxg6 23 ♖e6+ etc.

15 a3



15...b4

One of three moves, the best of which is probably 'b', below.

a) 15...♖ac8?! 16 ♖f2 a6 (16...c4?! 17 a4!) 17 ♖g3 ♗b6 18 e5 dxe5 19 fxe5 ♗fd7, and in Elbilia-Grivas, Yerevan Olympiad 1996, the Four Pawns specialist turned down 20 e6!, this familiar push presenting Black with obvious problems on the light squares.

b) 15...♗b6 is the most important move, depending on how Black deals with 16 e5.

b1) 16...dxe5! 17 fxe5 ♖xe5 18 ♖xc5 ♖xe1+ 19 ♗xe1 ♖e8 20 ♗f2 and Black's queen did not look too happy in B.Lalic-Zapata, Elista Olympiad 1998.

b2) 16...♗fd7?! is interesting. Banikas-Kotronias, Korinthos 1998 produced some entertaining play: 17 e6 ♗c4 18 exd7 ♖xe3 19 ♖xe3 ♗xe3 20 ♗e2 ♗d3 21 ♗xb5 ♖b8 22 ♗c6 ♖xb2 23 ♖c1 ♖b6 and now instead of acquiescing to a draw with 24 ♗c8 ♖b8 25 ♗c6 ♖b6 White bravely sacrificed his queen with 24 ♗b5!, but after 24...♖xc6 25 dxc6 Kinsman's 25...♖f6 26 c7 ♗xd7 27 ♖b7 ♗xb5 28 c8 ♖+ ♗g7 looks good for

Black. However, 20 ♖d3 is worth considering, when Banikas-Agnos, Greece 1997 was already very good for White after 20... ♖c4? 21 ♖e1. Agnos offers the following improvement 20...b4 21 ♖b5 ♖xb2 22 ♖e1 bxa3 23 ♖xc3 a2 24 ♖e8+ ♔g7 25 ♖xa8 a1 ♖+ 26 ♔h2 ♖f6



The accompanying assessment is an understandable 'unclear', but despite the fact that Black has two queens I believe White is well on top after 27 ♖xd6. White has a rook and a knight for the second queen and the d7-pawn is one step away from doubling White's tally. Add to this the threat of 28 ♖e8+ and Black's queens seem out in the cold on the queenside.

b3) 16... ♖c4 is the recommended continuation. Then 17 exf6 ♖xf6? should be avoided, e.g. 18 ♖d2 ♖xb2 19 ♖e4! ♖d4+ 20 ♔h2 ♖d8 (20... ♖xd1 21 ♖xa5 ♖xa1 22 ♖xd1 ♖g7 23 ♖xd6 etc.) 21 ♖c2 ♖c4 22 ♖c3 f5 23 ♖g5 ♖xe1 24 ♖xe1 ♖xa3 25 ♖e2! and Black is welcome to the queenside since it is on the other flank that White threatens to decide. Instead Black plays 17... ♖xe3 18 ♖xe3 ♖xe3 19 fxg7, when 19...f5 20 ♖d2 ♖ae8 21 ♔f2 ♖3e7 22 g4! is good for White according to Vaisner, which leaves 19... ♖ae8 20 f5! and the onus is on Black to defend his kingside and tame the minor pieces.

16 axb4 ♖xb4 17 ♖e2

A new alternative to 17 ♖c2 ♖b6 18 ♖f2

♖fd7 19 ♖e2 ♖d4 20 ♔h1 ♖xf2 21 ♖xf2, Lautier-Smirin, Cap d'Agde 1996. There followed 21...c4 22 ♖e2 a5 23 ♖g4 ♖f6 24 ♖d2 ♖xg4 25 hxg4 ♖d7 and now 26 ♖a4! ♖c5 denies Black's knight use of the c5-square and secures White the better chances after 27 g5.

17... ♖b6 18 ♖f2 ♖fd7 19 ♖a3!?



19 ♖c2 transposes to Lautier-Smirin in the previous note. White's deployment of the rooks along the ranks is worth remembering, with the king's rook being particularly flexible in that as well as defending the b2-pawn it can also play a part in aggressive operations on the kingside by facilitating the e4-e5 advance.

19... ♖c4

Embarking on a natural but suspect sequence from which White emerges with a clear lead in the subsequent ending. White's last eyes the b3-square as well as protecting c3, so continuing the theme with 19...c4 must be investigated. Unfortunately for Black pushing the c-pawn frees the d4-square for White in addition to c5 for Black, thus enabling White to plant his bishop in the middle of the board with 20 ♖d4, in so doing challenging its often influential opposite number. The other downside (for Black) of the arrival of the bishop on d4 is White's increased control of the crucial e5-square, and after 20... ♖xd4+ 21 ♖xd4 ♖c5 22 e5 ♖b3 23 ♖c3 White's grip on the centre outweighs

Black's queenside play. Trying to hold back the tide with 21...f6 neglects e6, e.g. 22 ♖g4 ♜c5 23 ♗e6+ ♜g7 24 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 25 ♜b5! 20 ♜b3 ♜a5 21 ♜d3 ♜xb2?

With White's position steadily improving (note that White's forces are creeping forward!) Black looks for simplifying complications.

22 ♜exb2 c4 23 ♜xc4 ♜ec8 24 ♜a2! ♜xc4 25 ♜xa5 ♜xc3 26 ♜xa7 ♜xa7 27 ♜xa7 ♜c5 28 ♜b8+ ♜g7



White has an extra pawn and the bishop pair and should win quite comfortably from here. Black's only hope is to drum up some counterplay on the dark squares while White's bishop is temporarily away from the action on a7. However, a key problem for Black is the d6-pawn, which currently holds the position together and holds back the d5-pawn.

29 ♜c8 ♜d4+ 30 ♜h2 ♜e3 31 g3 ♜c2+ 32 ♜g2 g5!

A good practical decision that eventually has the desired psychological effect on White.

33 fxg5 ♜d4 34 h4?

34 ♜c6 ♜e5 35 ♜b8 ♜b2 36 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 37 ♜xd6 ♜xe4 38 ♜d7 ♜xg5 39 g4 returns the pawn but keeps White in the driving seat. 34...♜c3 35 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 36 ♜h3 ♜d4 37 ♜c6 ♜e5 38 ♜xc3 ♜xc3 39 ♜f1 ♜e5 40 ♜b5 f6 41 gxh6+ ♜xf6 42 ♜d7 h6 43 ♜f5 ♜g7 44 ♜g4 ♜f6 45 ♜f3 ♜g7

46 g4 ♜f6 47 g5 hxg5 ½-½

Game 15

Chernyshov-Semeniuk

Russian League 1999

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 ♜g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 ♜f3 c5 7 d5 e6 8 ♜e2 exd5 9 cxd5 b5



This is another of those moves that looks interesting from Black's point of view but, ultimately, offers only White a pleasant game. Obviously the aim of the provocative thrust is to counter White's formidable looking centre with aggressive play on the queenside. 9...a6?! 10 a4 ♜e8 11 ♜d2 gives White a favourable version of the system with 9...♜e8 (see Game 14), and White can also consider 10 e5 as well as 10 0-0 b5 11 e5.

9...♜bd7 10 e5 dxe5 11 fxe5 ♜g4 is unclear so Vaisner proposes the sensible 10 0-0 ♜e8 11 ♜c2? (11 ♜d2 transposes to 9...♜e8) which leaves the knight on f3 in order to keep Black busy weighing up the consequences of e4-e5.

10 e5!

There is no point getting side-tracked with either capture on b5 – which, of course, is what Black is hoping for – when White can anyway get on with the plan of rolling down the centre. Moreover the b5-pawn is not going anywhere and thus remains a target. 10...dxe5

10...♖f7 is a major alternative that is less risky than the choice in the main game. Then Frolov's 11 exd6 ♗f5 is interesting and by no means inappropriate, but White's most reliable route to an advantage must be to activate the king's bishop. 11 ♖x1:5! dxe5 12 0-0



a) 12...♖b6 13 a4!

a1) 13...♖a6 and now the simplest way to stay on top is 14 fxg5 ♗xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 16 ♖h6 ♖g7 17 ♖xg7 when White was doing well in Peng-Xie Jun, FIDE Candidates (Women) 1997.

a2) 13...exf4 was played in Lautier-Rogers, Yerevan Olympiad 1996. Then White played 14 ♖xf4 but could have caused Black considerable problems with 14 d6. In fact Lautier had prepared this line for Kasparov for the VSB (Amsterdam) tournament earlier in the year, but now automatically recaptured on f4 when faced with the same position! Vaisar gives the following example of play after the strong 14 d6: 14...a6 15 a5 ♖b7 16 ♖c4 ♗c6 17 ♗d5! ♗de5 18 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 19 ♖xf4 ♖xb2 20 ♖b1 ♖f5 21 ♗e7+! ♗xe7 22 dxe7 ♖fe8 23 ♖d5.

b) 12...♖a6 13 a4! ♖xb5 (13...c4 14 d6 gives White a clear advantage and 13...♖b6 is 'a1', above) 14 axb5 ♖e8 15 d6! is quite unpleasant for Black as 15...e4? fails to 16 ♗xe4! (16...♖xe4 17 ♖d5) and 15...exf4 16 ♗d5 makes the most of the d6-pawn. 14...exf4? 15 ♖xf4 ♗b6 16 ♖e1 ♗d7 has

been evaluated as slightly favouring White, while Vaisar recommends 16 ♗e5. Also possible is 16 ♖e5! to eliminate Black's potentially troublesome bishop and perhaps home in on the c6-square (after 16...♖xe5 17 ♗xe5).

c) 12...♖b7 was seen in Papaioannou-Peng Xiaomin, World Under U26 Ch. 1998. The bishop does nothing on b7 to counter White's influence on the light squares, and in the game 13 ♖e1 exf4 14 ♖xf4 ♗f6 15 d6! ♗c6 16 ♖g5 was already difficult for Black. 11 fxg5 ♗g4 12 ♖g5!



Also played is 12 ♖f4 but the attack on the queen packs more punch. Black has three choices here.

12...♖b6

Worse is 12...♖a5?! 13 0-0 ♗xe5 (13...b4 14 ♗e4 h6 15 ♖e7! ♗e3 16 ♖d2 ♗xf1 17 ♖xf1 ♖f5 18 ♗f6+ ♖h8 19 ♗h4 ♖c8 20 ♖d3! and White comes crashing in on g6) 14 d6 ♗bd7 (14...♖b7 15 ♖e7, or 14...♖e6 15 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 16 ♖f3) 15 ♖e7, and now instead of 15...b4? 16 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 17 ♗xe5! ♗xe5 18 ♖d5 ♖b8 19 d7! (19...♖xd7 20 ♖d6+) 1-0 Bronznik-Majzlan, Bratislava 1992, Black can limit his situation to being clearly worse with 15...♖b7.

12...f6 is the other move. Then 13 exf6 ♖xf6 14 ♖d2! guarantees White a very comfortable game, e.g. 14...♖e8 15 0-0 b4 16 ♗d4 ♖xg5 17 ♗xg5 ♗e3 18 ♗f7 ♖h4 (18...♗xf1 19 ♖xf1 ♖e7 20 ♗h6+ ♖h8 21 ♖f3) 19

4xc5, when Black was struggling in Cebalosa-
Aranda, Bled 1999, or 14...f5 15 0-0 b4
16 d1 d7 17 f2! fxf2 18 fxf2 and the
d-pawn was still a problem for Black, Sem-
kov-Tasic, Cannes 1989.

13 0-0 Qxe5?

a) 13...h6?! 14 e7 Qe3 15 Wd2 c4 16
Wh1 f6 17 d6 is poor for Black.

b) 13...d7 14 e6 fxe6 15 dxe6 Wxe6
(15...c4! 16 Wh1 is 'c', below, while
15...d6f6? runs into 16 e7 f6 17 fxb5
f6 18 d5) 16 Qxb5 f6 17 Qc7 fa-
vours White.

c) Best is 13...c4+. 14 Wh1 a6 15 d6 f6
16 d4 Qxe5 17 e7 (e.g. 17...f6 18
Qxe6 fxe6 18 d5f) and 14...f6! 15 exf6
fxf6 16 d6 give White a clear advantage,
while the awful 14...d2+? 15 fxf2 Wxf2 16
Qxb5! will soon see White's material invest-
ment reap rewards. Instead 14...d7 15 e6
fxe6 16 dxe6 d6f6! (16...Wxe6? 17 Qxb5
f6 18 d5f4 Wd5 19 f6g4 Wg5 20 f6e+
Wh8 21 d6) 17 e7 f6 18 f6d! f6d7 is the
recommended continuation that is, in fact,
probably Black's most accurate way of han-
dling the whole variation. Kaidanov offers
the following: 19 Wxb6! axb6 20 d4 h6 21
fxf6 Qxf6 22 Qdxb5 f6 23 f6c+ Wh7



Opinion differs here, with White's lead
ranging from 'slight' to 'clear' depending on
the commentator. White does miss the dark-
squared bishop but there is an extra pawn. In
any case if this is the best that Black can

hope for in the 9...b5 line – and to reach the
diagram position requires a certain degree of
accuracy (from both players, remember) –
then White should be happy.

Returning to the main game, White has all
the fun after 13...Qxe5.

14 Qxc5! fxe5

14...c4+ fails to improve Black's lot after
15 Wh1 f6 16 e7 f6 17 d6, when the
threat of 18 d5 is too much.

15 f6 17 d7

15...f6 16 d6 f6c3 (16...f6 17 f6f3
f6c6 18 d5) 17 bxc3 f6c6 18 f6f3 f6c6



Meszaros-Belaska, Ceske Budejovice
1999. Now after 19 f6 White rules the dark
squares. Instead the game continued 19 f6
c4+ 20 Wh1 Wc5 21 f6 fxe6 22 Wf3
Qxe7 23 Wf7+ Wh8 24 f6+ g8 25 Wxe6+
Wh8 26 Wf6+ g8 27 Wf7+ Wh8 28 Wf6+
g8 29 d7 f6d8 30 Wf7+ Wh8 31 f6e1 f5
(31...f6d7 32 Wf6+ g8 33 Wf6+ 32 f6e+
f6c8 33 dxc8 W+ f6e8 34 Wxe8+ g7 35
Wd7+ and White went on to win.

16 d6 f6b7

16...c4+ 17 Wh1 f6b7 18 f6 f6c3 19
bxc3 f6e5 20 f6b7 Wxb7 21 Wd4, Cobo
Arteaga-Perez Perez, Havana 1965, is typical.
The open f-file means that Black's rook is
tied to f8, and White will take it when the
time is right.

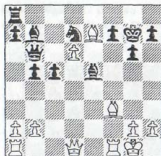
17 d5!

An improvement on 17 f6 f6g7 18
f6b7 Wxb7 19 f6f8+ f6f8 20 Wc2 c4 21

♖ad1 which was good for White in Jimenez-Medina, Malaga 1966.

17...♙xd5

17...♙c6 18 ♙f3 ♖g7 19 ♘c7 ♙b6 20 ♘xa8 ♙xa8



Gorelov-Vasiukov, Moscow 1981. White's superior forces are worth more than the sacrificed pawn, and 21 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 22 ♙e2 keeps White in the driving seat.

18 ♙xd5

The queen is just as powerful on d5 as the knight, with the pressure on the pinned f-pawn beginning to tell. Now the blockading knight can be attacked with ♙g4, so Black frees the e5-square.

18...♙xb2

Grabbing another pawn before cementing the bishop on d4. However, it is on the light squares that the battle will be won. Note that the d-pawn effectively cuts the board in two, and White's bishop is such a nuisance on e7 that there is no question of giving it up for a rook just yet.

19 ♙ab1 ♙d4+ 20 ♖h1 a6 21 a4! b4?!

21...♙e5 22 axb5 a5 23 ♙bd1 (or 23 ♙f4?) and White threatens to take on d4.

22 ♙xf7!

White can get away with this because his forces far outnumber Black's on the kingside.

22...♙xf7

22...♙f8 23 ♙f8+ ♖g7 24 ♙f7+ ♖h6 25 ♙g5+ ♖xg5 26 ♙f4 mate.

23 ♙c4 ♙a7

23...♙e5 24 ♙xa8+ ♖g7 25 ♙xf7 ♖xf7 26 ♙f1+ ♖e6 27 ♙f6+ ♖d7 28 ♙d5 wins for White, while 23...♙c8 24 ♙xf7+ ♖h8 25 ♙e6 is curtains for Black in view of 25...♙b7 26 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 27 ♙f6+.

24 ♙xf7+ ♖h8 25 ♙e1 ♙g7

Or 25...♙b6 26 ♙d5! ♙xd5 (26...♙c8 27 ♙f6+) 27 ♙xd5 and the d-pawn will have its day.

26 ♙d8! 1-0



After 26...♙xd8 27 ♙e7 mate is forced.

Game 16 Lautier-Shirov Belgrade 1997

1 d4 ♙f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♙c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 ♙f3 c5 7 d5 b5

Aggressive, perhaps, but White experiences less inconvenience here than in the Benko proper. Consequently the menace of e4-e5 has more significance.

8 cxb5 a6 9 a4 axb5

Others:

a) Equally popular is 9...e6, adding to the tension. White replies 10 ♙e2 and now:

a1) 10...axb5 11 ♙xb5

a11) 11...♙a6 12 ♙xa6 ♙xa6 13 dxe6 fxe6 14 0-0 is a Benko gone wrong for Black: 14...d5 15 e5 ♙e8 16 ♙g5 ♙e7? 17 ♙xd5! 1-0 Michaelsen-Binzenhoefer, Berlin 1993, is one to remember.

a12) 11...♙a6 12 0-0 ♙b4 13 dxe6 fxe6 14

e5 is clearly better for White, while Cebalo-Rudolf, Nova Gorica 2000, continued 13...♙e6 14 ♖h1 ♗c7 15 f5! gxf5 16 exf5 ♙xf5 17 ♙f4 ♗fd8 18 ♗d2 ♗b6 19 ♖h4 and, by returning the pawn, White was firmly in the driving seat.

a13) After 11...exd5 White ignores the d5-pawn and plays 12 e5! with an excellent game, e.g. 12...♙e8 13 ♖xd5 ♙b7 14 ♙c4 ♖c6 15 ♙e3! dxe5 16 ♙xc5 ♖d6 17 ♖e7+ ♖xe7 18 ♗xd6, Piskov-Savon, USSR Ch. 1987. A lesser evil is 12...dxe5 13 fxe5 ♖e4 (13...♖g4 14 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 15 ♖xd5 is a direct transposition to 'a2', below) 14 ♗xd5 ♖xc3 15 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 16 bxc3 ♙b7 17 ♙g5 ♗e8 18 ♙f4 ♙xf3 19 gxf3 ♖c6 20 ♖f2 ♖xe5 21 ♗he1, Priehoda-Svejkovsky, Michalovce 1989.

a2) 10...exd5 11 e5! dxe5 12 fxe5 ♖g4 (12...♖e4 13 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♖xd5 axb5 15 ♖e7+ ♖h8 16 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 17 ♙d3! f5 18 exf6 ♖xf6 19 ♙xb5 and White had an extra pawn in Sutter-Krahenbuhl, Swiss League 1995.) 13 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♖xd5 axb5 15 ♙xb5



Remember that this position can also be reached from 'a13'. Thanks to his passed a-pawn White is doing very well. After 15...♙xe5 16 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 17 ♙h6 ♙g7 18 ♖e7+ ♖h8 19 ♙xg7+ ♖xg7 20 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 21 ♖d2! ♖c6 22 ♖c3 White was already making his presence felt on the queenside (unlike Black on the other flank) in Flea-

Nevodnichy, Creon 1999. Alternatively 15...♙d7 16 ♖b6 ♗a7 17 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 is another way to snare Black's light-squared bishop. Then 18 e6! fxe6 19 0-0 ♖ge5 20 ♖g5 persists with the theme, Kilpi-Manninen, Tampere 1996 resulting in a near decisive ending - 20...♗e8 21 ♙e3 ♖g4 22 ♗f7 (22 ♙xc5) 22...♖xe3 23 ♙xd7 ♗f8 24 ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 25 ♖xe6+ ♖g8 26 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 27 ♙b5 etc.

a3) 10...♙b7 11 0-0 axb5 12 ♙xb5 exd5 13 exd5 simply leaves Black a pawn down for next to nothing. Typical of what tends to happen are 13...♖bd7 14 f5! ♖e5 15 ♖xe5 dxe5 16 fxg6 fxg6 17 ♙g5, Banikas-Agopov, European Junior Ch. Tallinn 1997, and 14...♖b6 15 fxg6 hxg6 16 ♙g5 ♗c7 17 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 18 ♗d2 ♙a6 19 ♙xa6 ♗xa6 20 ♗f4, as in Piskov-Friedrich, Berlin 1990. More recently Black tried 13...♖a6 in Flea-Lanka, Montpellier 2000, though 14 f5 ♖c7 15 ♙c4 ♙a6 16 ♗d3 ♗c8 17 fxg6 fxg6 18 b3 should have been enough to keep Black struggling.

b) 9...♗a5 is also played. 10 ♖d2! ♗b4 (10...e6! 11 dxe6 ♙xe6 12 ♙e2 axb5 13 ♙xb5 is comfortable for White) 11 ♗c2 c4 (11...axb5 12 ♙xb5 ♙d7 favours White, but Black should avoid 12...♙a6? 13 e5, e.g. 13...♖g4 14 ♖a2) 12 e5! with a further branch:

b1) 12...dxe5? 13 fxe5 ♖g4 (13...♙f5 14 ♖a2!) 14 ♖e4 ♗b3 15 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 16 ♙xc4 ♖xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 18 ♙c3 was a clear pawn in Cifuentes Parada-Van der Weide, Dutch Ch. 1998.

b2) Instead 12...♙f5 13 ♖a2 ♗c5 14 ♗xc4 ♖xd5 15 ♗xc5 dxc5 16 ♙c1 axb5 17 ♙xb5 improves, although I'm sure that this is not what Black is looking for!

10 ♙xb5 ♙a6

Better than 10...♖a6 11 e5 ♖e8 12 0-0 ♖b4 13 ♗e2 ♖c7 14 ♙c4 ♙b7 15 ♗d1, Banikas-Karner, World U18 Ch. 1996. White has had time to support both d5 and e5 and his material lead is intact.

11 ♙d2



11...axb5

Another consistent move typical of the Benko. Black hopes that doubling White's pawns and trading a pair of rooks will ease his defensive task.

a) 11...e6 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 0-0 d5 challenges the centre but again has less punch than is usual in the Benko. Gustafsson-Kapischka, Bundesliga 1999 continued 14 g5 b6 15 e5 e8 16 g4 d7 and Black was too busy defending.

b) 11...b6 12 0-0 c4+ 13 h1 axb5 14 axb5 a1 15 xa1 b7 16 e1 c5 17 e2 d3 18 e3 b7 19 d4 was good for White in Bagaturov-Kuzmin, Enakievo 1997.

12 axb5!

The b5-pawn proves to be stronger than it looks.

12...xa1

Hazai's 12...b7 13 0-0 e6 14 dxe6 fxe6 15 b3 is worse than the game continuation. Mackova-Koys, Czech League 1997, was unpleasant for Black after 15...e8 16 g5 f8 17 xa8 xa8 18 b6 etc.

13 xa1 b6

Or 13...b7 14 0-0 and Black has tried a couple of moves here.

a) In Vaiser-Nataf, French League 1996 White met 14...b8 with 15 e1!, the e1-square being useful in that both e2 and h4 are then available. After 15...e6 16 dxe6 (16 Wh4 exd5 17 e5 is Vaiser's suggestion)

16...fxe6 17 e5 d5 18 exd6 xxd6 19 g3 Black remained a pawn down with nothing to bite on.

b) 14...b6 15 e1! c8 16 e2 (this time White uses the e2-square, anticipating the coming play on the light squares) 16...e6 17 dxe6 xxe6 18 a1 d7 19 d3 b8 20 a7 h6 21 f1 gxf5 22 exf5 f6 23 f4 e5 24 xe5 dxe5 25 a6 and White had the familiar advantage and bonus pawn in Peng-Kachiani Gersinska, Bundesliga (Women) 1998.

14 0-0 b7

14...e8 15 e1! c7 16 Wh4 b5 17 b5 xxb5 18 xe7 was excellent for White in Nogueiras-Sax, Graz 1984.

15 e1!

With such a presence in the centre White does not miss his queen's rook. Apart from the obvious threat to press home the central supremacy with e4-e5 Black must also keep in mind how to defend should White essay a direct kingside offensive beginning with Wh4. 15...a6 looks fine but leads to equality, e.g. 15...b8 16 a1 e8 17 xxb6 b6 18 a7 f8 19 b3 when 19...e8 20 d7 b6 21 a7 was agreed drawn in Banikas-Agnos, Greek Ch. 1996.



15...e1

Keeping an eye on the d5-pawn in order to dissuade White from e4-e5. Dropping back to b7 also vacates the b6-square for a knight (thus adding to Black's concentration

on d5).

16 e5!?

16 f5 works out fine for White after 16...gxf5 17 Qh4 but 16...Qg4! 17 Wh4 Qde5 takes control of the e5-square. However 16 Wh4! looks stronger than the text. Then after 16...Qb6 17 f5 (Haza!) the e5-square is not readily available to Black, and 16...c6 17 dxe6 fxe6 18 Qg5 Ee8 19 e5 dxe5 20 Qce4 is an example of how White can pile on the pressure with just a few aggressive moves, e.g. 20...h6? 21 Qd6 hxg5 22 ffg5 Wd5 23 gxf6 Lxf6 24 Exf6 Qxf6 25 Wxf6 Wxd6 26 Wxg6+ Qf8 27 Lh6+ Qc7 28 Lg5+ Qf8 (28...Qd7 29 Wf7+) 29 Wh7! Eb8 30 Lc7+! Wxe7 31 Wh8+ Qf7 32 Wxb8.

16...Qxd5

16...dxe5 17 fxe5 Qxd5 18 e6 Q7b6 19 exf7+ Exf7 20 We6 Qc7 21 We2 is slightly worse for Black in view of the persistent vulnerability on the light squares.

17 e6

The point. White combines an infiltration on the light squares on the kingside with a plan of steering the game to an ending using his passed pawn on the other wing.

17...Q7b6 18 exf7+

18 f5 gxf5 19 Qg5 f6! 20 Qxh7 Qxh7 21 Wh4+ Qg8 22 E3 is good for only a share of the spoils after 22...We8 - 23 E3 Wxe6 24 Wh7+ Qf7 25 Wh5+ Qg8 26 Wh7+, or 23 E3 Wxe6 24 Efg7+ Qxg7 25 Wh6+ Qf7 26 Wh5+.

18...Exf7 19 Qg5 Ld4+! 20 Qh1 E5!?

Better to keep the queen out of e6 with 20...Ee6, when 21 We4 Wa8 (21...e5 22 f5) 22 Qxd5 Qxd5 keeps Black's head above water. 21 We6+ Qh8

Regardless of where the king goes White's knight will have some fun. After 21...Qg7 22 We4! White sets up a pin on the long diagonal and paves the way for the knight's entry to e6. After 22...e5 23 Qe6+ Qh8 (23...Qf6 24 Qd8) 24 g4 E6 25 f5 White turns the screw on the kingside but must then be careful himself on the h1-a8 diagonal, while

22...Wa8 23 Qe6+ Qg8 24 Qxd4 cxd4 25 Wxd4 is just clearly better for White.

22 Qf7+ Qg7 23 Qd8

An enjoyable move to play!

23...Wa8

23...Wd7?! 24 Qxd5 Wxd8 (24...Exd5? 25 Wf7+ Qh6 26 f5+) 25 Qxe7!.

24 Qc6 Wg8?

A mistake in a difficult position. 24...Wf8? also hands White a decisive advantage: 25 Qxd5 Qxd5 (25...Exd5 26 La5) 26 g4! Qxf4 (26...Qc7 27 Wd7) 27 We4 d5 (27...E7 28 Exf4) 28 Wf3 E6 29 Lxf4 g5 30 Qxd4 cxd4 31 Lc5. The correct course is 24...Lxc3 25 Lxc3+ (25 bxc3!? Wf8) 25...Qxc3 26 bxc3 Wf8 according to Haza!, although 27 We7+ Wxe7 28 Qxe7 E7 29 f5! looks promising for White with the b-pawn loitering on the fifth rank.

25 Wxg8+ Qxg8 26 Qxd5 Qxd5 27 b6!

Fifteen moves after arriving alone in Black's half of the board the pawn performs the ultimate sacrifice in order to lure the knight away from the defence of e7.

27...Qxb6 28 Qxe7+ Qf7 29 Qxf5 gxf5 30 Lc3 Qe6 31 Ee1+!

Helping Black to centralise his king. Haza! suggests tying Black down with 31 g4 ffg4 32 f5+.

31...Qd5 32 g4?! ffg4 33 f5

Now Black can use the knight rather than the king to deal with the passed pawn. With this in mind 33 Ee7 is called for, when White can still entertain hopes of winning.

33...Qd7 34 Ee7 Qf6 35 Qg2 h5 36 Qg3

Preventing 36...h4 but walking into an annoying check.

36...Qe4+! 37 Exe4

After 37 Qf4! Qxc3 38 bxc3 Lxc3 39 Qg5 c4 40 Qxh5 Ld4! 41 Qxg4 c3 42 Ee2 Qc4 Black appears to be quicker, while 40 f6 Lxf6+ 41 Qxf6 h4 should be at least a draw for Black.

37...Qxe4 38 f6

38 Lxd4?! cxd4 39 f6 d3 40 Qf2 h4!

draws: 41 f7 g3+ 42 hxg3 hxg3+ 43 ♖xg3 (43 ♖e1 g2) 43...d2 44 f8 ♖ d1 ♖.

38...♙xf6 39 ♙xf6 d5! 40 ♙h4?!

40 b3! offers better chances, Black's most accurate course being 40...d4 41 ♙f2 ♖d3 42 ♙e7 h4! 43 ♖e1 (43 ♙xh4? ♖c2; 43 ♙xc5 g3+ 44 hxg3 hxg3+ 45 ♖xg3 ♖c3 46 b4 d3) 43...g3! 44 h3 g2! 45 ♙f2 ♖c2 46 ♙xc5 (46 ♙xh4? d3 47 ♙g5 ♖xb3 48 h4 c4 49 h5 c3 50 h6 d2 51 h7 d1 ♖) 46...d3 47 ♙e3 ♖xb3 48 ♖xg2 ♖c2 49 ♙f3 d2 50 ♙xd2 ♖xd2 51 ♖g4 ♖e3 52 ♖xh4 ♖f4.

40...d4! 41 ♙xh5 ♖f3 42 ♙g5 d3 43 ♙c3 c4! 44 ♖f5 ♖e2 45 ♖xg4 ½-½

After 45...d2 46 ♙xd2 ♖xd2 47 h4 ♖c2 48 h5 ♖xb2 49 h6 c3 50 h7 c2 51 h8 ♖+ ♖b1 White cannot make progress, as 52 ♖b8+ ♖a1 53 ♖a7+ ♖b1 54 ♖b6+ ♖a1 55 ♖c5 ♖b1 56 ♖b4+ ♖a1 57 ♖c3+ ♖b1 58 ♖b3+ ♖a1! leaves a repetition or stalemate after 59 ♖xc2.

Game 17

Rausis-McShane

Hastings Premier 1997/98

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 ♖f3 ♖a6



In recent years a number of KID fans have taken to developing the knight in this fashion. In this particular variation the justification is quite logical since Black's bishop is not impeded and both ...c7-c5 and ...e7-e5 are still possible.

are still possible.

7 e5!?

A promising alternative to the more usual 7 ♙d3 and 7 ♙e2 – which opponents will be expecting and thus be best prepared for. Attacking the knight and putting the e5- and d6-pawns face to face also has the advantage of giving Black a few choices to consider over the next few moves, and more than one of these can lead Black into difficulties.

7...♖d1

Best. Others:

a) 7...dxe5? 8 fxe5 and now:

a1) 8...♖h5!? 9 ♙e3 f6 10 ♙e2 ♙g4 gives White an edge and looks like the most appropriate follow-up for Black, although here the a6-knight has a less promising future than Black would have hoped.

a2) 8...♖d7 9 ♙f4 and White is clearly better after both 9...f6 10 e6 ♖b6 11 d5 and 9...c5 10 d5. Even the lesser evil 9...♖b6 10 h3 f6 11 ♖d2 c5 12 exf6 ♙xf6 (12...exf6 13 0-0-0) 13 ♙h6 ♙e8 14 0-0-0 was not too appealing for Black in Vokac-Petrov, Komercni Banka 1997.

a3) 8...♖e8 9 ♙e2 (Vaiser recommends 9 c5!?) 9...f6 10 ♙f4. The problem with 7...dxe5 is that it makes the f4-square available and therefore helps White maintain the healthy centre. Leitao-Ivanovic, Yerevan Olympiad 1996 went 10...c5 (10...fxe5 11 ♙xe5 ♖f6 12 0-0 c5 13 d5) 11 dxc5 ♖a5 (11...♖xd1+ 12 ♙xd1 ♖xc5 13 ♖d5) 12 ♙e3! fxe5 13 0-0 e4 14 ♖d5+ e6 15 ♖xe4 ♖xc5 16 ♖h4 and White enjoyed both superior pawn structure and development.

b) In contrast to 'a', 7...♖h5 targets the f4-pawn. Movsesian gives 8 ♙e2 ♙h6 9 g3! f6 10 0-0 dxe5 11 fxe5 ♙xc1 12 ♙xc1 ♙h3 13 ♙e1 as slightly better for White. In B.Lalic-Hebden, Iona Tech Masters 1998, Black first pushed his c-pawn: 8...c5 9 d5 ♙h6 10 g3 and now, in a bid to justify placing his minor pieces on the edge of the board, Black hit out in the centre with 10...e6, although after 11 dxe6 ♙xe6 12 exd6 ♙g7 13 0-0 ♙h3 14 ♙f2

Qf6 15 Qxf1 Qxf1 16 Qxf1 Qe8 17 Qe5 Qe6 18 Qf3! Qb8 19 Qb5 White's extra pawn was still intact.

c) After 7...Qe8 8 Qe3 Qg4 9 h3 Qxf3 10 Qxf3 White has more space and is ready to castle queenside before launching the h-pawn. However, Vaiser's 8 h3 is good because White already has more than his fair share of the board and now Black has a problem with his queen's bishop.

8 Qe2

This is the most frequent follow-up to 7 e5, but there is an argument for the brutal 8 h4!?. Of course there are no prizes for guessing what White has in mind! Clearly Black must react energetically in the centre in order to avoid being blown away on the kingside.

a) 8...dxe5

a1) 9 dxe5 Qdc5 10 Qe3 keeps White in charge of the centre and Black's knights look a little artificial. Vaiser believes 10...Qf5 11 Qd4 Qd7 12 Qe2 is good for White, e.g. 12...f6 13 Qxf5 Qxd1+! (13...Qxf5? 14 Qxc5 Qxc5 15 Qd5+ Qe6 16 g4) 14 Qxd1 gxf5 15 e6! Qxe6 16 Qd3. Mohamed-Geenen, Elista Olympiad 1998, continued 10...Qg4 11 Qe2 f6



Black has good counterplay according to Vaiser, but this assessment was not borne out in the game: 12 Qd4 fxe5 13 fxe5 Qxe2 14 Qxe2 Qxe5 15 0-0-0 Qe8 16 h5 and White had a dangerous kingside offensive.

a2) Vaiser prefers the more consistent 9

fxe5, unleashing the queen's bishop as well as maintaining a presence in the centre. In fact he backed up this claim over the board against Desbonnes, French League 1998, but failed to get the desired initiative after 9...c5 10 Qf4 cxd4 11 Qxd4 Qb4 12 Qc1 Qa5 13 Qe3 Qc5 14 e6 Qxe3+ 15 Qxe3 fxe6 16 h5 gxf5 17 Qxh5 Qf5 etc. Vaiser's proposed improvement is 12 0-0-0!, although this needs tests and Black is not without chances on the queenside after 12...Qa5, for example. Food for thought, and in the meantime I believe that with 9 dxe5 White is able to hold on to the advantage.

b) 8...c5 is a thematic response, following the rule that a flank attack should be met with a central counter.

b1) 9 e6 fxe6 10 h5 cxd4 11 Qxd4 is messy but Rodriguez Vargas-Magem Badals, Spanish League 1991 was soon over for White after 11 Qe4? Qf6 12 Qeg5 h6 13 hxf6 hxf6 14 Qxg5 e5 15 fxe5 Qa5+ 0-1.

b2) 9 d5 endeavours to keep the centre closed, allowing White to meet 9...dxe5 with 10 h5, e.g. 10...exf4 11 Qxf4 Qf6



Now 12 Qe5!? Qxh5 13 Qxh5 gxf5 leads to what looks like a slight edge to Black after Vaiser's entertaining 14 Qd3 Qxe5 15 Qxh5!? Qxc3+ 16 bxc3 f5 17 Qg5+ Qh8 18 Qe5+ Qf6 19 d6 Qd7 (19...Qg8 20 Qxf6+ exf6 21 Qxf6+ Qg7 22 Qd8+ Qg8 23 Qf6+ Qg7) 20 dxe7 Qxe7 21 Qxf6+ Qxf6 22 Qxf6+ Qg8. Perhaps White should opt for

the simple 14 ♖xh5 with compensation for the exchange in the form of a kingside initiative and better pieces. Instead Vaiser-Petit, French League 1992, continued 12 hxc6 fxc6 13 ♖d2 ♔f5 14 ♔d3 (14 ♔h6?) 14... ♔h5 15 ♔f5 (15 ♔h2) 15... ♔f5 (15... ♔f4 16 ♔g4) 16 ♔e3 and White had compensation for the pawn. More recently in Kahn-G.Horvath, Budapest 1996 Black tried 14... ♔d3 15 ♖xd3 b5 (Vaiser suggests 15...e6 and 15... ♔h5) and now 16 ♔g5 required careful defence. For example 16... ♔b4? 17 ♖e2 bxc4? 18 ♖e6+ ♔h8 19 ♔xh7+! wins for White - 19... ♔xh7 20 ♖h3 ♔d3+ 21 ♔d2 ♔xc3+ 22 bxc3 ♔g7 23 ♖xh7+ ♔f6 24 ♔e4+ ♔f5 25 ♖h3+ ♔x4 (25... ♔xe4 26 ♖f3+ ♔f5 27 ♔c7+ ♔g5 28 ♖c3+) 26 ♔f1+ ♔xe4 27 ♖e6+ ♔e5 28 ♔e1+ ♔f4 29 ♖xe5+ ♔g4 30 ♔e4+. Black played 16... ♖b6 when White's best is 17 cxb5 ♔b4 18 ♖c4 ♔c2+ 19 ♔d2 ♔xa1 20 d6+ ♔h8 (20...e6? 21 ♖xe6+ ♔h8 22 ♔xh7!) 21 dxe7 (Vaiser).

8...c5 9 exd6 exd6

Equally popular is 9...cxd4 10 ♔xd4 (10 dxe7? ♖xe7 11 ♔xd4 ♔b6, e.g. 12 0-0? ♔d8)

a) 10...exd6 11 ♔db5 ♖h4+ 12 g3 ♖h3 13 ♔f1 ♔e8+ 14 ♔f2 ♖f5 was played in Vokac-Spisak, Cappelle la Grande 1995. Now 15 ♔xd6 ♖c5+ 16 ♔g2 is a safe pawn for White, who plans ♖d5.

b) 10... ♔b6? 11 0-0 ♖xd6 12 ♔e3.

White still has a greater influence in the centre and Black's knights are poor.

b1) 12... ♔d8? 13 ♔db5 ♖xd1 14 ♔fxd1 ♔xd1+ 15 ♔xd1 ♔e6 16 b3 accentuates White's lead. Black's queenside is particularly vulnerable.

b2) 12... ♖b4? 13 a3 ♖xb2 is asking for trouble: 14 ♔cb5 ♔d8 15 ♔f2! ♔c5 16 ♔b1 ♖a2 17 ♔d3 and Knaak analyses 17... ♖xf2+ 18 ♔xf2 ♔xd3 19 ♖xd3 ♔f5 20 ♖b3 ♔xb1 21 ♖xb1 ♔xc4 22 ♖b4 and White emerges on top.

b3) After 12... ♖c5 13 ♔e4 ♖c7 14 ♖b3 White threatens ♔d4-b5xa7 when the b6-knight is hanging (a recurring theme in these

positions). A sample line is 14... ♔d8 15 ♔b5 ♖c6 16 ♔xa7 ♖xe4 17 ♔f3 ♖xe3+ (17... ♖xc4 18 ♔xc8) 18 ♖xe3 ♔d4 19 ♖xd4 ♔xd4 20 ♔xc8 ♔xc8 21 ♔xb7.

b4) 12... ♔e6 is sensible and leads to an edge for White, e.g. 13 b3 ♔f8 14 ♔cb5 ♖b8 15 ♖e1 followed by ♔d1. In reply to 14... ♖c5 White has 15 ♖e1 since 15... ♔xd4 16 ♔xd4 ♔xd4 17 ♖f2 and 15... ♔xd4 16 ♖f2 ♔ad8 17 ♔ad1 rebound on Black.

10 0-0

The natural 10 d5 invites Black to make a rare trade of his bishop for a knight, the point being that after 10... ♔xc3+! 11 bxc3 f5 the closed position is more suitable for Black's knights than White's bishops. Moreover a well timed ...b7-b5 could prove uncomfortable for White and ... ♔d7-f6-e4 is not easy to deal with. The text keeps Black guessing.

10... ♔e8

10... ♔b6 prevents White's next. Then 11 d5 ♔xc3 12 bxc3 f5 is still on but at least here Black's knight is further away from the e4-square, a factor that should add weight to an assault on the light squares involving ♔f3-g5-e6 etc. In Summerscale-Sasikiran, British Ch. 1999, Black chose to keep his dark-squared bishop, parting with the other one after 11... ♔g4 12 h3 ♔xf3 13 ♔xf3 f5. Here White has not been saddled with a permanent queenside weakness and the e4-square is not a problem, but Black still has the use of an influential bishop on the long diagonal, so the chances are roughly even. 10... ♔f6 11 d5 ♔e8 transposes to Leitao-J.Polgar in the note to White's next move.

11 f5!

Pushing the f-pawn introduces an interesting way to treat the position that is, in fact, in keeping with the general spirit of the variation. 11 d5 ♔f6 is Leitao-J.Polgar, Sao Paulo 1996, when 12 h3 ♔c7 (12... ♔e4!) 13 a4 ♔a6 14 ♔d3 ♔b4 15 ♔b1 saw Black's knight settle on b4. Meanwhile Black had plans for her other knight, securing the e4-

square with 15...♙f5 16 ♖xf5 gxf5. Now 17 ♖h4 ♗d7 18 ♜a3! with the idea of ♖c3-e2(g3) and swinging the rook across the third rank should have met with the immediate 18...♖e4 with chances for both sides.

11...cxd4

Eventually Black will be left with an isolated d-pawn but 11...gxf5 12 ♙g5 voluntarily damages Black's kingside pawns.

12 ♖d5



12...♖e7

Bringing the knight back into the fold, which Black has no time for after 12...♖e5 13 ♖xd4 due to the weakness of the f6-square.

13 fxg6 hxg6 14 ♙g5 ♖f6

Black seeks to relieve some of the pressure by reducing White's attacking force, rather than further compromise his defences with 14...f6 15 ♖h4.

15 ♖xf6+ ♙xf6 16 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 17 ♖xd4 ♗g5

Mah-S.Bekker Jensen, S&W Masters 1998, went 17...♗e5 18 ♙f3 ♖e6 19 ♖xe6 ♙xe6 20 b3 ♜ab8 21 ♜e1 ♗c5+ 22 ♖h1 and Black had the same structural problem as in the main game but this time was facing a bishop as opposed to a knight.

18 ♙f3 ♖e6 19 ♙d5

White can hit the d6-pawn immediately with 19 ♖b5! because 19...♖f4 20 ♖h1 ♜e2? fails to 21 g3 and 20...♜e3 21 ♗d2 ♜d3 22 ♗f2 merely leaves Black's pieces awkwardly

placed.

19...♜e7!

Not 19...♗c3+? 20 ♖h1 ♗xd4 21 ♙xe6 ♗xd1 22 ♙xf7+ ♖g7 23 ♜axd1 etc.

20 ♖f3 ♗f6 21 ♙xe6

21 ♗d2 ♖f4 should also be better for White.

21...♗xe6 22 ♜e1 ♗f6 23 ♜xe7 ♗xe7 24 ♗d4! ♙e6 25 b3

Sensible play has resulted in Black having to defend a slightly worse position, White's knight enjoying the flexibility that a bishop lacks.

25...a6 26 a4 ♜c8 27 ♗d1 ♙f5

The rook looks passive after 27...♜c6 when it has been suggested that White switch fronts with 28 h4!.

28 ♜e1 ♗c7?

With the d6-pawn the main focus of attention Black takes his eye off the equally sensitive f6-square. With this in mind 28...♗d8! is necessary.

29 ♗f6!

Threatening to infiltrate with ♜e7, hence Black's next.

29...♜f8 30 ♖d4 ♙c8 31 h3 ♗d8 32 ♜e7! ♗b6 33 ♖h2 ♗c5 34 ♜e4!

Now the threat of ♜h4 means that Black's queen must stay within range of e5. Consequently White can toy with the idea of harassing the queen with b3-b4, for example.

34...b5

An error in an anyway difficult position. 35 cxb5 axb5 36 ♖xb5 ♙b7 37 ♗d4 ♗c2 38 ♙g4 ♜e8? 39 ♖xd6 ♗c7 40 ♜h4 ♗xd6+ 41 ♗xd6 1-0

Game 18

I.Sokolov-Topalov

Wijk aan Zee 1996

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 c5 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 e4 g6 7 f4 ♙g7

Others lead to an inferior game for Black.

a) 7...a6! 8 e5 and now 8...♗e7? 9 ♖f3 ♙g4 (9...♙g7 10 h3) 10 ♙e2 ♖fd7 11 exd6

Wxd6 12 Qg5! Kxe2 13 Wxe2+ We7 14 Qe4 (Vaiser) is clearly better for White. Guseinov-Zaichik, Volgodonsk 1983, went 8... Qfd7 9 Qf3 Kg7 10 Qe4 dxe5 11 Qd6+ Qf8 (11... We7 12 Qxc8+ Wxc8 13 Ke2) 12 $\text{Ke2!?$ Wc7 (12... exf4 13 Kxf4 Wf6 14 Kg3 Wxb2 15 Kb1 is bad for Black – Kapengut) 13 Qxc8 Wxc8 14 fxe5 Qxe5 15 Qxe5 Kxe5 16 Kh6+ Kg7 17 Qd2 Wf5 18 Wc3! and Black was in trouble.

b) 7... We7! 8 Qf3! and now 8... Qxe4? drops a piece to 9 Wd4+ .

c) 7... Kg4! 8 Wd4+! Kd7 9 Wb3 Wc7 10 Qf3 and e4-e5 is coming.

8 Kb5+



Now Black will have problems to overcome one way or another.

8... Qbd7!

There was a time when both sides seemed content to try their luck in the following complications but, in recent years, Black has preferred to block with the other knight. After 8... Qfd7 9 a4 Black can throw in the check on h4 or develop normally.

a) 9... Wh4+ 10 g3 and now:

a1) 10... We7 11 Qf3 0-0 12 Q-O Qa6 13 Ke1 Qb4 14 Kf1 puts the bishop on a flexible post. Then 14... Ke8 15 Qb5 Qf6 16 e5 Qfxd5 (16... dxe5 17 d6) 17 Qxd6 is clearly better for White, while 14... b6 15 Ka3 Kb7 16 Kc4 a6 17 h3 Kac8 18 Ke3 Kfd8 19 Kf2 Wf8 left Black too passive, unable to break out with ... b6-b5 , in Yusupov-Pekarek,

Bundesliga 1993.

a2) With 10... Wd8 Black avoids any problems on the e-file but has spent two moves just to force a slight weakening of White's kingside. In Olafsson-Psakhis, Moscow 1989 the extra time proved more significant than g2-g3 after 11 Qf3 0-0 12 Q-O a6 13 $\text{Kc4!?$ Qb6 14 Ke2 Kg4 15 Qg5! Kxe2 16 Wxe2 . Also possible is 13 Ke2 Ke8 14 Qg2! , addressing the potential weak points on the kingside while exploiting the additional space.

b) 9...0-0 10 Qf3 is far more popular.

b1) 10... a6 11 Ke2 is a natural reaction from Black when the bishop stands provocatively on b5, but now Black finds that his queen's knight is a problem and, consequently, the development of his queenside in general. In order for the b8-knight to see light Black has to move his other knight for a third time! 11... Ke8 12 Q-O Qf8 is too artificial. Petursson-Perenyi, St John 1988 went 13 e5! Qbd7 14 Qg5 dxe5 15 f5!



White's thematic sacrifice is designed to hinder Black's forces (particularly the g7-bishop) with his own pawn, in front of which White has an excellent outpost on e4. The game continued 15... Qf6 16 g4 b5 17 axb5 c4 18 Ke3 h6 19 Qge4 Qxe4 20 Qxe4 and Black's queenside exertions had made matters worse. This leaves the more sensible 11... Qf6 12 Q-O , when 12... Kg4 13 Ke1 Ke8 14 e5 Kxf3 15 Kxf3 dxe5 16 fxe5 Qfd7 17 e6 , with a clear advantage to White in Lau-

tier-Sandner, Bad Zwosten 1999, is nevertheless preferable for Black to 12...♖c7? 13 e5 ♘e8 14 e6! fxe6 15 ♙c4 ♗e7 16 dxe6 ♘c6 17 f5 ♘c7 18 ♙g5, which was close to winning for White in Kasparov-Cuipers, World Junior Ch. Dortmund 1980. Black should avoid ...a7-a6 while the knight is still on b8.

b2) 10...♘a6 is a considerable improvement, with a choice of b4 or c7 for the knight after 11 0-0.

b21) 11...♘b4 is given a '?' by Kinsman, who offers the common-sense argument that on b4 the knight not only does nothing to facilitate the desired ...b7-b5 (as it does from c7) but – if and when this can be played – it also obstructs ...b5-b4. White's best is 12 ♙e1! a6 13 ♙f1 in order to have the bishop keeping an eye on b5 from the safe haven on f1, in so doing leaving the e-file clear to support a future e4-e5. After 13...♙e8 14 h3 ♘f6 15 ♙c4 White toys with the e4-e5 push without having to worry about being hit with ...♘b6, while 14...♗c7 15 ♙e3 might leave the queen poorly placed on the c-file. Instead 14...♙b8 15 ♙e3 b6 16 ♙f2 ♙b7 17 ♙c4 ♙a8, Komarov-S.Kovacevic, Massy 1993, is feasible but rather slow. White's e4-e5 is more likely to succeed than is ...b6-b5.

b22) 11...♘c7 hits the bishop and supports ...b7-b5 while still monitoring the d5-pawn in case of e4-e5. 12 ♙d3 (White is advised to keep his bishop for now, and with f1 unavailable this is the most suitable square) and in Aagaard-Reinderman, Groningen 1998, White carried out an instructive reorganisation of his forces after 12...♙e8: 13 ♗h1 ♙b8 14 ♘d2 ♘f6 15 ♘c4 b6 16 ♗f3 ♙a6 17 ♙e3 ♘d7 and now 18 ♙ae1! would have justified leaving the other rook on f1. 12...a6 is more usual, e.g. 13 ♗e1 ♙b8 14 a5 with the better prospects for White, or the tricky 14 e5 ♘b6 15 f5 dxe5 16 fxe6. Gulko-Savon, Lvov Z 1978. This is an appealing line since Black can easily go wrong. Gulko gives 16...hxe6? 17 ♘g5 f6 18 ♘h7! ♗xh7 19 ♗h4+ ♗g8 20 ♙xg6 ♙f7 21 ♗h7+ ♗f8 22

♙h6. Instead the game continued 16...fxg6 17 ♙g5 ♗d6 18 ♗h4 ♘cxd5?! 19 ♙ad1 c4 20 ♘xd5 cxd3 (20...♗xd5 21 ♙xg6 ♗c5+ 22 ♗h1 hxe6 23 ♙e7) 21 ♘c7+ ♗h8 22 ♘xe5! ♙f5 (22...♗xe5 23 ♘xg6+) 23 ♙xf5 ♙xe5 24 ♙xe5 ♙f7 1-0. More recently 18...♙e8 led to an even quicker win in Ovod-Stellwagen, Groningen Young Masters 1999, after 19 ♘e4 ♗xd5 20 ♘f6+ ♙xf6 21 ♙xg6! 1-0. However, with 18...♘bxd5! Black survives, e.g. 19 ♙c4 ♙e6 20 ♙ad1 ♗c6 when the onus is on White to demonstrate enough of an initiative for the two pawns. Of course the position after 14 e5 is rich in possibilities, and there is always the reliable 14 a5.

Finally 8...♙d7 is seen only occasionally because it seems worse than 8...♘bd7. Crying out to be played is 9 e5 when 9...dxe5 10 fxe5 ♘h5 11 ♘f3 0-0 12 ♙xd7 ♘xd7 13 g4 ♘xe5 14 gxf5 ♘xf3+ 15 ♗xf3 ♗h4+ 16 ♗f1 ♙xc3 17 bxc3 ♗c4+ 18 ♗f2 gave Black insufficient compensation for the piece in Ward-Quillan, British League 2000. Alternatively 9...♘h5 10 ♘f3 0-0 11 ♙xd7 ♗xd7 12 0-0 afforded White a wonderful, advanced centre in Hillarp Persson-Valgardsson, Reykjavik 1998.

9 e5

Obvious and best.

9...dxe5

9...♘h5? 10 e6 fxe6 (10...♗h4+ 11 ♗f1 ♙d4 12 ♗e1) 11 dxe6 ♗h4+ 12 g3 ♘xg3 13 ♘f3 ♗h3 14 ♗xd6!.

10 fxe5 ♘h5

10...♗e7? 11 ♗e2 is a backward step for Black.

11 e6 ♗h4+

11...fxe6? 12 dxe6 0-0 13 ♘f3 looks terrible for Black. This time there is another pin on the d7-knight as 13...♘df6 14 ♗xd8 ♙xd8 15 e7 ♙d6 16 ♘g5 ♙e6 17 0-0 a6 18 ♘xe6 axb5 19 ♘c7 ♙c8 20 ♘3xb5 (Nei) wins for White. 13...♙xf3 has been tried. Then 14 ♗xf3 ♘e5 (14...♙xc3+ 15 bxc3 ♘e5 16 ♗e4 ♗f6 17 e7! ♗xe7 18 0-0 is excellent for White) 15 ♗d5 ♗h4+ 16 g3 ♗e7

runs into 17 ♔g5! , e.g. 17... ♙f6 (17... ♞xe6 18 ♜d8+ ♔f8 19 0-0) 18 $\text{♙xf6 ♞xf6 19 ♚f1 ♞xe6 20 ♜d8+ 1-0}$ Wessman-Melgosa, Tunja 1989. Vaiser offers the game Simoncini-Carusio, corr. 1989 as an example of how to deal with 13... ♔d4 . There followed 14 $\text{exd7 ♔xd7 15 ♔g5 ♞e8+ (15...♞b6 16 ♞b3+)} 16 ♔e2 ♔f4 17 ♙xf4 ♚xf4 18 ♔d5 ♚xf3 19 gxf3 ♞e5 20 ♔c3$ and Black certainly did not have a rook's worth of compensation!



12 g3

Believe it or not 12 ♔d2! has been played here and it even seems to give White the better game. However, since the main line is difficult for Black we might have to wait a while before the plan of sending the king to the queenside grows in popularity.

12... ♔xg3 13 hxg3 ♞xh1

13... $\text{♞xg3+? 14 ♔d2 ♔xc3+ 15 bxc3 ♞g2+ 16 ♞e2 ♞xd5+ 17 ♔c2 ♞xe6 18 ♞xc6+ fxe6 19 ♔h6!}$ as in Fecht-Betker, corr. 1989 leaves White with a decisive advantage according to Vaiser.

14 ♔e3!

Keeping the pin is preferable to 14 exd7+ . 14... ♔xc3+

14...0-0 15 $\text{exd7 ♔xd7 16 ♔xd7 ♚ac8 17 ♔xe8 ♚xe8}$ was seen a few times in the early 1980s. Then 18 $\text{♞e2 ♔d4 (18...♔h6 and now Kinsman gives 19 ♔f1 ♚xe3 20 ♞g2) 19 0-0-0 ♚xe3}$ is P.Littlewood-Norwood, Commonwealth Ch. 1985, when 20 ♞c2!

would have put White well in front, e.g. 20... $\text{♚xg3 21 ♔ge2 ♞h6+ 22 ♔b1 ♚g2 23 ♞a4!}$ (Konikowski), or 23 d6 with a clear advantage to White according to NCO. 14... fxe6? is weak on account of 15 $\text{dxe6 0-0 16 exd7 ♔xd7 17 ♔xd7 ♚ad8 18 ♞b3+ ♔h8 19 0-0-0}$.

15 bxc3 a6

15... ♞e4! is an important alternative. After 16 $\text{♞f3 ♞xf3 17 ♔xf3 fxe6 18 dxe6}$ the game Kalinin-Konev, corr. 1991 continued 18...0-0 19 ♔h6!! . Then 19... $\text{♚e8 20 0-0-0 ♚xe6 (20...♔f6 21 ♔xe8 ♔xe6 22 ♔a+ ♔xa2 23 ♔e5! is excellent for White) 21 ♔c+ ♔b6 22 ♔g5! wins for White, while after 19...♚xf3 20 ♚d1! ♚xc3 (20...♔f8 21 e7 ♔d7 22 exf8 ♞+ ♚axf8 23 ♔c4+) 21 exd7 ♔xd7 22 ♚xd7 a6 White has 23 ♔f1!, the bishops being too powerful. Later in K.Urban-Ciemniak, Polish Ch. 1993 Black improved with 18...a6 19 exd7+ ♔xd7 20 ♔xd7+ ♔xd7 21 ♔xc5 ♔c6 22 ♔e3 ♚ae8 23 ♔d2 ♚e4 24 ♔d4+ ♔d5 25 ♔d3 ♚c8 26 ♔c2 ♚ce8 27 ♚b1, although the two pieces gave White a clear advantage.$

16 $\text{exd7+ ♔xd7 17 ♔xd7+ ♔xd7 18 ♞b3!}$



A new move at the time, this is an improvement on 18 ♞f3 and 18 $\text{♞a4+ b5 19 ♞g4+ f5 20 ♞f3}$ with an ending in which Black tends to have decent chances. Sokolov's idea, in contrast, is to keep the queens on the board, castle queenside and then hope

to highlight the plight of Black's king.
18...b5 19 0-0-0

Vaiser prefers this to 19 ♖xc5 ♖g2.
19...♞he8

Natural but perhaps not best. Another suggestion is 19...♞ac8, against which Ftacnik proposes 20 ♖a3 20...♖e4 21 ♖xc5, while Sokolov gives 20 d6 c4 21 ♖c2 ♞he8 22 ♖f2 f5 23 ♖f3. Both these lines are good for White. However, a possible improvement is 19...♞hc8! 20 ♖a3 ♖e4 21 ♖xc5 when Ftacnik believes White is clearly better after 21...♖c4 22 ♖d4 (22 ♖b4!) 22...b4 23 ♖a4 ♖b5 24 ♖xb5+ axb5 25 ♖b2 etc. This reasonable assessment led Kinsman to offer 21...♖g4 with the idea of restricting the knight to g1. Then instead of Kinsman's 22 ♖d6 ♖e4 I prefer 22 ♖f2, e.g. 22...b4 23 ♖a4+ ♖e7 24 ♖e2! (24...♖xe2? 25 ♞e1).
20 ♖xc5 ♞ac8?

This leaves the a6-pawn unprotected and is justifiably criticised by both Kinsman and Vaiser. They suggest 20...♖g2 with the intention of doubling on the e-file after 21 d6 ♞e6 22 ♖b4 ♞ac8 etc.
21 ♖d4 ♖g2

21...♞c4 22 ♖e2 ♖f3 23 ♖f4 and the knight is heading for d3 with both c5 and e5 in its sights. 21...♞c4 threatens to take on d4, so White should lift the pin on the c-file with 22 ♖b1.
22 ♖a3!

Underlining the problem with 20...♞ac8 by hitting the a6-pawn.
22...♖xg3 23 ♖xa6 ♞xc3+

There is nothing else. 23...♖g5+ 24 ♖c2 ♖g2+ 25 ♞d2 ♖f1 fails to 26 ♖e2! since 26...♞xc2? loses to 27 ♖xb5+.
24 ♖b2

Not 24 ♖xc3? ♖xc3+ 25 ♖b1 ♖b4+ 26 ♖c2 ♖c4+ with a draw. However, 24 ♖b1! is simpler, e.g. 24...♞b3+ 25 ♖a1.
24...♞cc8

Black can at least go down with a fight after 24...♖g2+ 25 ♖xc3 (25 ♖a1? ♖xd5) 25...♞c8+ 26 ♖d3 ♖c2+ 27 ♖e3, when Ftac-

nik gives the following: 27...♞e8+ (27...♖xd1 28 ♖xb5+ ♖d6 29 ♖e2) 28 ♖f4 ♖f5+ (28...♖xd1 29 ♖xb5+ ♖d8 30 ♖b6+ ♖e7 31 ♖c5+ ♖d8 32 ♖b8+ ♖d7 33 ♖b7+ ♖d8 34 ♖b6 mate) 29 ♖g3 ♖g5+ 30 ♖f2 ♖h4+ 31 ♖f1 ♖f4+ 32 ♖f2.

25 ♖xb5+ ♖d6

25...♖e7 26 d6! ♖xd6 27 ♞e1+ ♖f8 28 ♞xe8+ ♞xe8 29 ♖c5 (Sokolov).

26 ♖a1! ♖a3

26...♞e1? 27 ♖b4+, or 26...h5 27 ♖c5+! ♞xc5 28 ♖b6+.

27 ♖b2 ♖c5

27...♖a7 28 ♖f3.

28 ♖a6+ ♖d7

28...♖c7 29 d6+.

29 ♖a4+! 1-0

The finale will be 29...♖d8 (29...♖c7 30 d6+) 30 ♖f6+.

Conclusion

Despite the KID's reputation I would recommend that Black stick to lines discussed in Game 14, namely 9...♖g4 and 9...♞e8. Obviously Black has potential of play on the e-file, the a1-h8 diagonal and the queenside in general thanks to a pawn majority there. As for White, the menacing d5-pawn is eager to be unleashed after the often crucial e4-c5 thrust, but the threat of this advance alone is enough to keep Black on his toes. 9...b5 in Game 15 cannot be correct and it is a strange choice when Black is clearly not in a position to make this work when faced with White's rampaging centre pawns. As for 7...b5 (Game 16), Black hopes for Benko-style activity without subjecting White to the usual inconvenience in such positions, while it is up to White to decide how to react to 6...♖a6 (Game 17). The early flank attack can have tabulous results, but be prepared for Black to have chances, too. The pure Modern Benoni gets an outing in Game 18, and serves to remind us why many players opt for the move order with 2...e6 3 ♖f3 c5 in order to avoid this extremely dangerous system.

CHAPTER FIVE

Grünfeld Defence with 4 ♖f4



1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟c3 d5 4 ♖f4

Another counter-punching defence, here Black invites White to build a large centre (after 4 cxd5 ♟xd5 5 e4 etc.) in order to later use it for target practice. Contesting the centre with ...c7-c5 is almost automatic for Grünfeld players of every level, the aim being to add weight to Black's g7-bishop. Therefore our system involves a rapid mobilisation of the queenside forces, beginning with the immediate development of the dark-squared bishop with 4 ♖f4. A major feature in the following games is the delay of White's king's knight, usually with a view to using the e2-square (to support the often pinned c3-knight). In Game 19 Black castles before challenging the centre, while Game 20 sees the immediate 5...c5. In anticipation of the coming central skirmish White follows 4 ♖f4 with 5 ♜c1! in Game 21.

Game 19

B. Lalic-J. Polgar

Yerevan Olympiad 1996

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♟c3 d5 4 ♖f4

Rather than build an imposing pawn centre only to see Black seek to undermine it throughout the opening (and middlegame), White gives his own dark-squared bishop an

active role, after which the d4-pawn can be bolstered with e2-e3. As we shall see in this chapter, ♖f4 facilitates an early entry into the game of the queen's rook, which is well placed on the c-file. Moreover, by ignoring the 'knights before bishops' general rule White is free to post his king's knight on either e2 or f3, whichever is the most appropriate when the time comes. This flexibility is an important characteristic of this variation and, I believe, an underestimated advantage over the more popular 4 ♟f3, 5 ♖f4 system.

4...♖g7 5 e3

The actual move order was 5 ♜c1 0-0 6 e3 c5.

5...0-0 6 ♜c1 c5

Again we see the thematic response, fighting fire with fire in the centre despite the presence of White's rook on the soon to be opened c-file. 6...dxc4 7 ♖xc4 ♟bd7 8 ♟f3 ♟b6 9 ♖b3 c6 10 0-0 does nothing to make White pay for the luxury of having his dark-squared bishop in play – as opposed to being walled in on c1 by the e3-pawn. Nor is 6...c6 what Black wants, e.g. 7 ♟f3 ♖g4 8 ♜b3! ♖xf3 9 gxf3 ♜d7 10 h4 e6 11 ♖e5 which was comfortably better for White in Lukacs-Kolbus, Budapest 1996. White can also play in more sober fashion with 8 h3 ♖xf3 9 ♜xf3, enjoying extra protection of the e5-

square and not having to worry about the b2-pawn since 9...♖b6 10 ♜c2 holds nicely.

7 dxc5

7 cxd5? cxd4 8 ♖xd4 (8 exd4 ♙xd5 favours Black) 8...♙xd5! and 9 ♖xd5?? loses to 9...♙xc3+ etc.

7...♙a5



The familiar queen sortie is the most natural choice available to Black but not the most accurate. After 7...dxc4?! 8 ♖xd8 ♜xd8 9 ♙xc4 Black will have problems regaining the pawn, but the slightly odd 7...♙e6! is in fact the move that causes White the most inconvenience. White should avoid opening the long diagonal for his opponent by trading on d5 and instead opt for the mobilisation of his kingside. 8 ♙f3 ♙c6 9 ♙e2 ♙e4 is typical, and now 10 ♙d4 leaves the centre bursting with possibilities:

a) 10...♙xd4 11 exd4 ♙xc3 12 bxc3 dxc4 13 0-0 ♙d5 14 ♙f3 can only be slightly advantageous for White, who can lodge his rooks on b1 and e1. In Kraidman-Moberg, Gausdal 1996, Black challenged the c5-pawn, perhaps prematurely – 14...b6?! 15 c6! ♜c8 16 c7 ♖d7 17 ♙e1 ♙fe8 18 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 19 ♖a4 and Black was under pressure.

b) 10...♙xc3 11 bxc3 ♙a5 12 0-0 ♜ad8 13 ♙xe6 fxe6 is T.Paunovic-Djuric, Liosia 1998. Giving up the light-squared bishop for a knight in this fashion is good only when the added support of the centre helps gener-

ate counterplay for Black. This is not the case here because the central configuration is yet to be decided and, in the meantime, White has a target in the shape of the b7-pawn. 14 ♖b3! ♖xc5 15 cxd5 exd5 16 ♖xb7 and the queen was safe in enemy territory: 16...e5 17 ♙g5 ♜b8 18 ♖d7 ♙f6 19 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 20 c4! (softening Black up on the light squares) 20...d4 21 ♖d5+ ♖xd5 22 cxd5 with an extra pawn.

8 cxd5

White doubles his pawn collection.

8...♜d8

As per plan. The other move to consider is 8...♙e4. Then 9 ♙ge2! shuts in the bishop in favour of cementing White's grip on the pinned knight. After 9...♙a6 White has two promising continuations:

a) 10 f3 ♙exd5 11 a3 and now 11...♙d7 12 ♙d4 ♙f6 13 e4 ♙d7 14 ♙e3 ♙e8 15 ♙e2 ♙d6 16 0-0 left White a clear pawn up in Eslon-Chiburdanidze, Seville 1994. In Eslon-Insua Mellado, Seville 1994 Black at least addressed the pawn deficit by muddying the waters with 11...e5 12 ♙g3 e4 13 ♙d4 exf3 14 gxf3 ♜e8.



On first impressions the plan seems to have worked for Black, but the calm 15 ♙f2 ♙h6 16 f4 ♙c4+ 17 ♙xc4 ♜xe4 18 ♙g2 ♜e8 19 ♜c3! saw White emerge in control, pushing Black back after 19...♙d7 20 b4 ♖d8 21 ♖c2 ♜c8 22 ♜xc8 ♙xc8 23 ♜c1 ♖e7 24 e4 etc.

b) 10 ♖a4 ♖xa4 11 ♜xa4 ♔d7 12 c6 bxc6 13 dxc6 ♜b4 14 ♜d4 was equally effective for White in P.Nikolic-Lautier, Melody Amber (rapid) 1999.

9 ♔c4

Better than 9 ♖d2! ♜xd5 10 ♔c7 (10 ♜xd5 ♖xd2+ 11 ♜xd2 ♔xd5+ favours Black) 10... ♖xc7 11 ♜xd5 ♔xd5! 12 ♖xd5 ♔e6 13 ♖d2 ♜c6 when Black is way ahead in development and certainly not without an initiative in return for the sacrificed exchange. Tolush-Botvinnik, USSR Ch. 1939, went 14 ♔d1 ♔d8 15 ♖c1 ♖a5+ 16 ♔d2 ♔d5! 17 ♜e2 ♔xc5 18 ♜c3 ♔xc3 19 bxc3 ♔xc3 20 ♖b2 ♔a3 21 ♖b5 ♖c3 22 ♖b2 ♖c5 and there was no respite for White, 23 ♖b1 (23 ♖xb7 ♖c1+ 24 ♜e2 ♔c4+ 25 ♜f3 ♖xd2 26 ♔xc4 ♜e5+ 27 ♜g3 ♔xe3+) 23... ♔xa2 24 ♔xa2 ♖a5+ 25 ♔d2 ♔a1 26 ♔d3 ♔xb1+ 27 ♔xb1 ♜e5 soon leading to a decisive advantage for Black.

9... ♖xc5

9... ♔e6 invites 10 e4, the point being that Black has 10... ♜xc4. Then 11 ♜ge2 ♜xc5 12 0-0 ♔d7 13 ♔g5 leads to a position in which White's pieces are more effectively placed, with Black's less co-ordinated. However, this is a lesser evil than 11... ♜xf2! 12 ♖a4! ♖xa4 13 ♜xa4 ♜xh1 14 dxc6 which was the course taken in Pinter-K.Allen, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988. Black's material lead is only temporary, the game continuing 14... ♔xe6 15 ♜f1! ♔f8 16 ♜g1 ♜f2 17 ♔e3 (17 ♜xf2 g5) 17... ♔e5 (17... ♜g4 18 ♔xe6+, or 17... ♜e4 18 ♔xe6+ ♜h8 19 ♔d5) 18 ♔xf2 ♔xh2+ 19 ♜xh2 ♔xf2 20 ♜g3 ♔f6 21 ♜ac3 ♜g7 22 ♜f4 ♜d6 23 ♜xe6+ and White eventually won.

Another option for White is 10 b4! ♖xb4 11 ♖b3 ♖xb3 12 ♔xb3, e.g. 12... ♜xd5 (12... ♔xd5? 13 ♔d1 e6 14 e4) 13 ♜xd5 ♔xd5 (13... ♔xd5? 14 ♔d1 e6 15 e4) 14 ♔xb8! ♔xb8 15 ♔xd5 ♔xd5 16 ♜f3 ♔xa2 17 ♜e2 with a pull for White in Milic-Shaitar, Yugoslavia 1947.

10 ♔b3

Tidy play from Lalic. Also possible is Pinter's 10 ♖b3! a6 11 a4 ♜bd7 12 e4 (12 d6!?) 12... ♖a5 13 ♔d2 ♜c5 14 ♖c2. Both this and the game continuation suggest that Black does not have enough play for the pawn once White establishes his pawns on e4 and d5. Nonetheless ... ♖a5 remains a popular general theme in the Grünfeld at all levels. 10... ♜c6 11 ♜f3 ♔a5 12 0-0



What is the fate of the d-pawn?

12... ♔g4

Unfortunately for Black 12... ♜xb3 13 ♖xb3 ♜xd5? fails to 14 ♔f1 ♔xc3 15 ♔xc3 ♖a5 16 ♔c7!. Consequently Black is left trying to obtain play by exerting pressure on White's centre in order to generate something on the dark squares, relying on the long-range bishop.

13 e4 ♖b4

Thus far Black has made the most of her situation, the text forcing White to address both the threat to take the e4-pawn and the overloaded queen, which defends both b3 and f3 (in the latter case to avoid doubled pawns).

14 ♔c7!

Securing an advantage at the cost of surrendering the dark-squared bishop. In return, of course, White gets to hang on to his extra, healthy pawn.

14... ♜xf3

14... ♜xb3 15 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 16 axb3 ♔d7 17 ♔g3 ♔xf3 18 gxf3 gives Black nothing

for the pawn, White's new f-pawn serving to support the centre.

15 ♖xa5!

Not 15 ♖xf3 ♜xb3 16 axb3 ♞d7 17 ♖g3 ♖xb3.

15...♖xa5

15...♙xd1 16 ♖xb4 ♖xb3 17 axb3.

16 ♖xf3 ♞d7

Black's prospects would be fine were it not for the pawn deficit. White's bishop does not enjoy the same freedom as the one on g7 but his other pieces are fine and, while c5 and e5 might offer Black something, a pawn is a pawn. In fact White's next makes way for the f-pawn to first deny Black use of e5 and subsequently, after e4-e5, to close out Black's bishop.

17 ♖e3! ♞ac8 18 f4 ♖c5 19 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 20 e5

After 20 ♙c2 ♙xc3 21 bxc3 b6 White has a bishop and Black a knight. Instead Lalic prefers to keep his knight and frustrate Black's bishop.

20...♜xb3 21 axb3 f6



White's secure knight protects the d5-pawn, both serving to tame Black's rooks. If Black is going to win freedom for her bishop it is necessary to challenge the e5-pawn, otherwise White will centralise his forces – including the king – and consequently dominate the board.

22 ♞e1

Refusing to be drawn into 22 e6 f5 23

♞fd1 ♞c5 when Black goes on the offensive.

22...♞c5 23 g3 fxe5 24 fxe5 e6

Another attempt to undermine the restrictive e5-pawn, this time using the rook along the rank to meet 25 dxe6 with 25...♙xe5. By now it is clear that the e5-pawn's role in demoting the bishop to spectator status is a key factor in White's winning strategy, hence White's next.

25 b4! ♞c4 26 dxe6 ♞e8

26...♖xb4 27 e7 ♞e8 28 ♞d5 ♖xb2 29 ♞f6+ ♙xf6 30 exf6 ♜f7 31 ♞d1 trades one advantage for another.

27 ♞f7 ♞c6

This time 27...♖xb4 runs into 28 ♞d5 ♖xb2 29 ♞f6+ ♙xf6 30 exf6, e.g. 30...♞b6 31 ♞g7+ ♜h8 32 f7 ♞c8 33 ♞g8+ ♞xg8 34 fxg8 ♖+ ♜xg8 35 e7. Nor does 27...♙xe6 help: 28 ♖xb7 ♙xe5 (28...♙xe5? 29 ♖xg7+) 29 ♜g2 a6 30 b5! a5 31 ♞a7 etc.

28 ♖xb7 ♞cxe6 29 ♞xa7 ♞xe5 30 ♞xe5 ♙xe5 31 ♜g2

Avoiding the fork on d4 and entering the final phase of the game. The exchange of a pair of rooks and the clearance of Black's queenside pawns has brought about an ending in which White's decisive lead should eventually be converted. The game continued:

31...♞b8 32 b5

Again White is content with a clear-cut winning plan.

32...♙xc3 33 bxc3 ♞xb5 34 ♜f3 ♞c5

Or 34...♞b3 35 ♞c7 ♞b2 36 h4 ♞d2 37 ♜e4 ♞g2 38 ♜f4 ♞e2 39 ♜g5 ♞f2 40 g4 etc. 35 ♞a3 ♞c4 36 ♜e3 h5 37 ♜d3 ♞g4 38 ♞b3 ♜f7

38...h4 39 ♞b4!

39 ♞b4 ♞g5 40 ♞e4!

Cutting off Black's king. The game ended as follows:

40...♞d5+ 41 ♜c2 g5 42 c4 ♞a5 43 ♜b3 ♜f6 44 ♞e2 h4 45 ♜b4 ♞a1 46 gxh4 ♞b1+ 47 ♜a5 ♞a1+ 48 ♜b6 ♞b1+ 49 ♜c6 gxh4 50 c5 ♜g5 51 ♞c2 h3 52 ♜d5 ♜f6 53 ♞c3 1-0

Game 20
Inkiov-Konopka
Arco 2000

1 d4 ♟f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♞c3 d5 4 ♜f4 ♜g7 5 e3

The immediate 5 ♜c1 is dealt with in Dreev-Leko (Game 21).

5...c5

Typical of this uncompromising defence. Black is happy to heighten the tension with a stand-off in the centre, the aim being to clear the long diagonal for his bishop. For 5...0-0 see Lalic-Polgar (Game 19).

6 dxc5 ♜a5

The average Grünfeld fan loves to play ...c7-c5 followed by ...♜a5, the pin and the prospect of ...♞d4 (unleashing the bishop) and ...♞d8 quite difficult to resist. For his part, White must also continue with his strategy of queenside development.

7 ♜c1



7...dxc4

7...♞e4 is the major alternative, when White has two choices:

a) 8 cxd5 ♞xc3 9 ♜d2 pins a black knight on c3! Then after 9...♜xa2 10 bxc3 Black decides the fate of the queens. 10...♜a5 11 ♜c4 ♞d7 12 ♞f3! (12 ♞e2 ♞xc5 13 0-0 0-0 14 ♞d4 ♜d7 is level) 12...♞xc5 13 ♜e5 eliminates Black's annoying bishop, 13...♞xe5 14 ♞xe5 f6 15 ♞f3 ♜d7 16 0-0

b5 17 ♜a2 ♞c8 resulting in an unclear position. The battle is on between White's territorial, central supremacy and Black's queenside pawns and pressure on the c-file. As usual with balanced chances familiarity with the position will pay dividends.

Instead of returning the queen to a5 Black can trade: 10...♜xd2+ 11 ♜xd2 ♞d7 12 ♜b5 0-0 13 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 14 e4 and the struggle revolves around White's central pawn mass.



The danger for Black in the diagram position is that the pawns might close out the bishop pair whilst marching down the middle of the board, the semi-closed nature of the game suiting the lone knight. Kasparov offers the following variation, in which Black exploits the fact that White's limited influence on the light squares comes from the pawns on e4 and d5: 14...f5 15 e5 e6 16 c4 ♜fc8 17 c6 bxc6 18 d6 g5 19 ♜xg5 ♜xe5 20 c5 ♜g7 21 f4 h6 22 ♜e7 ♜cb8 23 ♞f3 ♜b2+ 24 ♜c2 ♜b4 25 ♞e5 ♜xe5 26 fxe5 a5. Not surprisingly the assessment is unclear!

b) 8 ♞e2 is sensible, highlighting the significance of holding back the king's knight. The f3-square might cover e5 as well as d4, but from e2 the knight offers valuable support to the pinned and consequently oft troubled c3-knight. Understandably Black is not without options here.

b1) 8...♞xc3 9 ♜d2! and White prepares to post a second knight on c3. After 9...e5 10 ♜g3, followed by ♞xc3, both d5 and e4 are

available, while a sample line such as 9...0-0 10 Qxc3 dxc4 11 Qxc4 Qxc5? 12 Qb5!, when White threatens 13 Qc7 and 13 Qxf7+, illustrates how easily Black can find himself in trouble. The rook's potential on the c-file is a key element in this variation.

b2) The natural 8...e5? backfires after 9 Qxe5! Qxe5 10 Qxd5, e.g. 10...Qxc3+ 11 Qxc3 Qxc3 12 Qe5+ Qd7 13 Qxc3, or 10...Qc6 11 Qxc4 Qf5 12 Qh4 Qb4 13 Qd4 Qxd4 14 exd4 Qc2+ 15 Qd1, when Black has little to show for the two pawn deficit.

b3) 8...Qc6 9 cxd5 Qb4 looks menacing but White's extra protection of c3 is near decisive, e.g. 10 a3 Qa2 11 b4! Qaxc3 12 Qxc3 Qxc3+ (12...Qxc3 13 bxa5 Qxd1 14 Qb5+ keeps White well ahead) 13 Qxc3 Qxc3 14 Qd4 Qxa3 15 Qxh8+ Qd7



Neither king is particularly comfortable, with White's threatened with immediate mate on c1. However, White has the move and, as is often the case in situations with mutual threats, this decides: 16 c6+! bxc6 17 dxc6+ Qxc6 18 Qe8+ Qd5 (18...Qb6 19 Qd8+ Qc6 20 Qc7+ Qd5 21 Qc4+ mate) 19 Qd8+ Qe6 20 Qc4+ Qf5 21 0-0 and now there are no prizes for guessing who has the more vulnerable king!

Returning to 11 b4, Hergott-Kudrin, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988, continued 11...Qxa3 12 Qxa2 Qxa2 13 f3 Qf6 14 e4 0-0 15 Qe5! Qa3 16 Qd4 Qh5 17 Qxg7

Qxg7 18 Qa1 Qb3 19 Qc1 Qc2 20 Qg1! and the threat to trap the queen with 21 Qd3 proved too much for Black.

b4) 8...dxc4 is best. Then 9 Qa4+ Qxa4 10 Qxa4 Qd7 11 Qec3 Qxc3 12 Qxc3 Qa6 13 Qxc4 Qxc5 14 0-0 0-0 offers Black decent prospects of equality, although White's slightly more active pieces do guarantee a persistent pull.

8 Qxc4 0-0

Despite the fact that 8...Qxc5? 9 Qb5! is given in numerous places as giving White a decisive advantage the capture on c5 is not that uncommon – at all levels! Black's immediate problem is his queen, which is being indirectly attacked at the moment in view of the threatened 10 Qxf7+ – which White also has after 9...0-0. Therefore after 9...Qb4+ 10 Qf1! we arrive at the following position:



Now 10...0-0 11 a3 Qa5 12 b4 followed by picking up the rook after 13 Qc7 is easily winning for White, which leaves us with 10...Qa6. This does defend c7 and seems to bring White's menacing play to a standstill but, in fact, Black's queen is not much safer on b4 than c5. Leitaov-Van Wely, Lost Boys 1998 saw 11 a3, when the top GM probably realised that 11...Qa5 runs into 12 Qc7+! Qxc7 13 Qxc7 Qxc7 14 Qxf7+ picking up the queen anyway! Instead after 11...Qxb2 12 Qb1 Qxb1 13 Qxb1 0-0 14 Qf3 Qf5 15 Qa2 Qc5 16 Qe5 e6 17 f3 Qfd8 18 g4 White was soon on his way to victory. I

don't like recommending lines on the strength of possible traps or amusing combinations, but if Van Wely (and other titled players) can walk into this, then I'm sure 8...♙xc5?? will be played again, particularly when we consider that this is a normal idea in this defence.

9 ♖ge2

9 ♖f3 leads directly to the line in which White prefaces 5 ♖f4 with 4 ♖f3. Here, owing to the specific order of moves, we concentrate on using the e2-square. While ♖e2 is not stronger than ♖f3, there are subtle differences in how the game might develop and, from a psychological point of view, the onus is on Black to appreciate this.

9...♙xc5



10 ♖b5

An interesting alternative to the more usual 10 ♙b3 when Black has tried three moves:

a) 10...e5?! tends to be a thrust that Black plays 'because he can'. The problem, of course, is that the consequent weakening of the d5-square plays into White's hands, more so when both knights have access to c3. After 11 ♖g5 ♖c6 12 ♖xf6! ♖xf6 13 ♖e4 ♙e7 14 ♖d2 ♖g7 15 ♙a4 ♖h8 16 0-0 f5 17 ♖d5 ♙d8 18 ♖e5 White was making progress in Hoang Than Trang-Piankov, Budapest 1994.

b) 10...♙a5 11 0-0 and now:

b1) 11...♖bd7 12 ♖fd1 a6 13 a4 ♖e5 14

♖d5! ♖xc4 15 ♖xe7+ ♖h8 16 ♖xc8 ♖xe7 17 ♖xe3 ♖xc8 18 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 19 ♙xb7 netted White a safe pawn in Timoshenko-Pelletier, Ubeda 1998. Instead 12...♖c5 13 ♙b5 ♙xb5 14 ♖xb5 ♖e6 15 ♖e5 ♖xc4 16 ♖xc4 ♖e6 17 f3 a6 18 ♖bd4 ♖fd8 was agreed drawn in Lagunov-Konopka, Bundesliga 1994, but GM Rowson proposes 18 ♖c7 with an advantage to White.

b2) 11...♖c6 12 ♖fd1 e6 13 ♖b5 e5 14 ♖g3 ♖e4 15 ♖d5 ♖d2 16 ♙d3 ♖b4 17 ♙xd2 ♙xb5 18 ♖c4 ♙b6 19 a3 ♖c6 was the interesting course of Hoang Thanh Trang-A.Gara, Hungarian League 1995. Again the d5-square beckons, and with 20 ♖c3 ♖d8 21 ♖d5 ♙c5 22 ♖h4! ♖d7 23 ♙e2 White was able to create an initiative.

c) 10...♖c6 11 ♖b5 ♙h5 12 ♖g3 ♙h4 13 ♖c7 and now there are two ways of dealing with the f4-bishop:

c1) 13...g5!?

c11) 14 ♖xg5 is the simplest, 14...♙xg5 15 ♖xa8 ♖d7 16 ♙xb7 ♖b8 (16...♙a5+ 17 b4 ♖xb4 18 0-0 ♖c6 19 ♙c7 ♙a3 20 ♖f5! ♖xa8 21 ♙xe7 is good for White) 17 ♙c7 ♖xa8 18 ♖a6 having been assessed as unclear, which seems reasonable. Also possible is 17 ♙a6 ♖xa8 18 ♖e2! with the idea of meeting 18...♖c8 with 19 ♖b5 ♙d5 20 0-0 and White's rooks are in control. Perhaps Black should head for the ending with 18...♙a5+ 19 ♙xa5 ♖xa5 20 ♖c7 ♖c6 21 ♖f3 ♖xf3 22 gxf3 e6.

c12) Black experiences more difficulty after 14 ♖f5! This pesky knight looks like a winner, since after 14...♖f5 15 ♖g3 ♙e4 16 f3 ♖d4 (16...♖a5 transposes) 17 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 (17...♖h8 18 fxe4 ♖xb3 19 ♖xb3) 18 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 19 fxe4 and 15...♙g4 16 ♖xa8 ♖a5 17 ♙b5 ♖xc4 18 ♖xc4 ♖d3 19 ♖xg4 ♖xb5 20 ♖xg5 White emerges with a points lead. However, matters are less clear after 15...♖a5 16 ♙b5 ♙e4 17 ♙xa5 ♖ad8, although 18 0-0 is awkward for Black thanks to the rather comical g5-pawn. Finally, the game Gretarsson-Schandorff, Nordic Grand

Prix 1999 went 15...d4! 16 exd4 ♖e4+ 17 ♕f1 ♜ac8, when White was effectively a rook down. The alternative 16 ♖xb7 has been tagged with a '?' and accompanied by 16...♙ab8 17 ♖xa7 ♖e4 18 ♖xd4 ♖xg2 19 ♙f1 ♑e4 (19...d4 20 ♖c5) with an attack for Black, but White seems to be doing better than fine after 20 ♙e5 ♙xe5 21 ♖xe5.

c2) 13...e5 springs to mind more readily. Then 14 ♑f5? ♙xf5 is different because there are no possible attacks on the f5-bishop and g5 is available to Black's queen. In Piskov-Dvoirys, Podolsk 1992, Black had a dangerous initiative after 14 ♙h6? ♙xh6 15 ♑xa8 ♙g4 16 ♑c7 ♑d4! 17 ♖a3 ♑f5 18 ♑d5 ♙gxe3!. Krasenkov believes this to be an endorsement of 13...e5 and goes on to evaluate the position after 14 ♙xe5! ♑xe5 15 ♑xa8 ♙d7 as giving Black compensation for the exchange. However, this appears somewhat optimistic in view of 16 ♑c7 ♜c8 17 ♙e2, when Black cannot extract enough from the pin, e.g. 17...d8 18 ♖xb7 ♖d8 (or 18...d6 19 ♖b3 ♑e8 20 f4! ♙xc7 21 ♖b7! ♖d8 22 fxe5 ♙xe5 23 0-0 and Black is an exchange down for nothing) 19 ♖xa7 ♑xc7 20 0-0.



White has too many pawns and a rook for two pieces.

10...♙e6

Black can be forgiven for steering clear of 10...♖b4+ 11 ♕f1 because the queen is running short of breathing space.



In order to worry the queen White has relinquished the right to castle, in itself a significant concession. Consequently Black looks to be holding his own even after 'losing' the queen.

a) Krasenkov likes 11...d4 12 a3 ♑d2+ 13 ♕g1 ♖xb2 14 ♜c2 ♑xc4 15 ♙xb2 ♑xb2 when Black's knight picks up a rook and bishop for the queen. Meanwhile White's remaining rook is stuck in the corner on the wrong side of the king. De Firmian-Wolff, New York 1987, continued 16 ♖c2 ♑a6 17 ♑bd4 e5 18 ♖xb2 ♑c5 19 h4! ♑d3 20 ♖b5 ♑xf4 21 ♑xf4 exf4 22 h5 fxe3 23 fxe3 with chances for both sides.

b) 11...a6! 12 a3 ♖xb2 13 ♙b1 ♖xb1 14 ♖xb1 axb5 15 ♙xb5 is also feasible, as long as Black finds 15...♙xa3! when 16 ♙xb8? runs into 16...d4 17 ♖e1 ♙a1 18 ♑c1 ♙b2 (Dydyshko). Instead Dydyshko-Begun, USSR 1990 continued 16 ♖b2 16...♙a8 17 ♙e5 ♑c6 18 ♙xc6 bxc6 19 h3 and a draw was agreed.

11 ♖b3

Whether or not White should jump into c7 is a difficult matter to judge. Here, for example, 11 ♑c7?! ♙xc4 12 ♑xa8 ♑a6! rebounds on White.

11...♙xc4 12 ♙xc4 ♖f5 13 ♙g3

13 ♑c7 makes more sense now (and on the next move) but the position is equal after 13...d6 14 ♑xa8 ♑a5 etc.

13...♖d7 14 0-0 ♑c6 15 ♙d1 ♖c8



Thus far the queen is responsible for a third of the fifteen moves played by Black, White having developed with tempo to begin the middlegame with modest but definite pressure thanks to the pin on the c-file and Black's subsequent structural weakness.

16 Qxd4! Bxd8

Black can avoid being saddled with a broken queenside with 16...Qxd4 but after 17 Bxd4! the b7-pawn drops.

17 Qxc6 Bxd1+ 18 Wxd1 bxc6 19 e4 We6 20 b3 a5



In an otherwise level position White has a comfortable advantage in view of the easy target on c6. Black is without counterplay. 21 h4?

An odd move decision. White should clearly be attacking on the queenside – if only to tie Black down before switching flanks. Even if this is White's intention the timing

seems inappropriate, so perhaps the text is designed purely for psychological reasons, reminding Black who holds the lead. Nevertheless 21 h3 is preferable for the time being, defending g4 as well as creating an escape square on h2.

21...Qd7 22 Wc2 c5 23 Be3 Bd8 24 Wd1?

White's approach to this game is hardly straightforward. Here the simple 24 Bxc5 would be the logical culmination of White's queenside play, but the Bulgarian GM prefers to prolong his opponent's discomfort by allowing the liability to remain for the time being. In fact the rest of the game is a continuation of this theme, with White looking to demonstrate that the difference between the queenside pawns is decisive.

24...Wb6 25 Bc2 Bd4 26 Bd2 Qe5

White might begin to regret his casual approach after 26...Bxc3! 27 Bxd7 Bd4 28 Bxd8+ Wxd8 when the advantage is slipping away.

27 Qe2 Qc6 28 Bg5 f6 29 Bf4 e5 30 Be3 Qf7 31 Wc1 Bxe3

Avoiding this exchange puts the onus on White to make progress. Now White's doubled pawns defend and control d4 and d5 respectively.

32 fxe3 Qb4?

Correct square, wrong piece.

33 a3 Qc6 34 Wc4+ Qg7 35 Bxd8!

More to the point is 35 Bd5!, once again focusing on the c-pawn. However, White is able to prove his point anyway thanks to Black's now glaring weaknesses on a5, c5 and d5.

35...Qxd8 36 Qc3 Qe6 37 Qa4 Wd6 38 Wd5 Wa6

38...Wxd5 alters nothing, e.g. 39 exd5 Qc7 40 d6 Qe6 41 d7 Qf7 42 Qxc5 Qd8 43 b4 etc.

39 Qf2 1-0

I suspect that Father Time might have caught up with Black, although in the diagram position Black is almost in zugzwang.

Game 21
Dreev-Leko

Wijk aan Zee 1996

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♙c3 d5 4 ♙f4 ♙g7
5 ♚c1

By activating his queenside as quickly as possible – now doing without e2-e3 as well as ♙f3 – White prepares for a central skirmish.

5...♙h5

With White yet to even disturb his kingside Black sets about denying the bishop its desired outpost. 5...0-0 6 e3 transposes to Lalic-Polgar (Game 19), while an alternative is 5...dxc4. Then White can justify his move order with 6 e4, when 6...c5 is the only way in which Black can challenge the otherwise formidable centre. After 7 dxc5 ♚a5 8 ♙xc4 Black should avoid 8...♙xe4? 9 ♙d5, which leaves 8...0-0.



Now 9 e5! requires precise play from Black. 9...♙g4 10 e6, 9...♙e4 10 ♚a4! ♚xa4 11 ♙xa4 ♙d7 12 ♙d5!; and 9...♙h5 10 ♙d2 ♙xe5 11 ♙f3 are all clearly better for White, so Portisch-Nunn, Interzonal play-off Budapest 1987, continued 9...♙fd7 10 ♙f3 ♙xc5 (10...♙c6 11 e6) 11 0-0 ♙c6 12 ♙d5 ♙e6 13 b4! ♙xb4 14 ♙xe7+ ♙h8 15 ♙d2 ♙ad8 16 ♙xe6 fxe6 (16...♙xe6 17 ♚c4) 17 a3! ♚xa3 18 ♚xc5 ♙a6 19 ♙xg6+ hxg6 20 ♚c2 and White had the better of a complex position.

6 ♙g5 h6 7 ♙h4



It is more appropriate to keep the bishop actively placed rather than drop back to d2. It is true that on f4 the bishop teamed up with the rook to exert pressure on c7, but by chasing it to another diagonal Black's knight no longer protects d5 (and e4).

7...dxc4

Solving the problem of the stand-off in the centre. Before investigating Black's other option in this sector let us look at what happens if Black continues to harass the bishop:

a) 7...g5 is not inconsistent but Black must be careful when contemplating such a committal alteration to his kingside pawn structure, particularly when castling queenside is not a realistic possibility. In fact with 8 e3! Black is practically forced to retreat, since 8...gxh4 9 ♚xh5 is awful. Therefore after 8...♙f6 9 ♙g3 c6 Black has an already inferior version of the Slav (White's dark-squared bishop is usually shut in by the e3-pawn) with the added inconvenience of weaker kingside pawns. Rogozenko-Munteanu, Bucharest 1992 illustrated this well: 10 ♙d3 dxc4 11 ♙xc4 0-0 12 ♙f3 ♙f5 13 0-0 ♙bd7 14 ♚e2 ♙e4 15 ♚fd1 and White – with simple, patient play – had the advantage. In fact after the trade of Black's light-squared bishop for a knight White eventually managed to line up his bishop and queen on the b1-h7 diagonal.

b) 7...c5, as usual in this opening, count-

ers the challenge to Black's d-pawn with an attack on its opposite number. However, 8 e3 cxd4 9 exd4 dxc4 10 ♖xc4 0-0 11 d5! stakes a claim for central territory, reminding Black that his knight on the edge of the board is far less effective than the bishop it set out to nullify. In Dydyshko-Novik, Katowice 1992 Black tried to justify his play thus far by seeing his strategy through, rather than eventually accept a loss of time by returning the knight to f6. Indeed after 11...♖d7 12 ♖f3 g5 13 ♖g3 ♖xg3 14 hxg3 g4 15 ♖b4!? (15 ♖d4 looks sensible) 15...♖e5 16 ♖b3 ♖b6! 17 0-0 ♖d7 Black's kingside frailties were more or less offset by his well placed knight and the bishop pair.

8 e3 ♖e6

Beginning a stubborn campaign which is designed, quite simply, to hang on to the extra pawn. It is often sensible to get on with development in these circumstances, but Black's idea appears to be an effective one. 8...0-0 was the more accommodating approach of Gabriel-Oral, European Team Ch. 1999. After 9 ♖xc4 c6 10 ♖ge2 (in this case 10 ♖f3 is natural) 10...♖d7 11 0-0 ♖b6 12 ♖b3 ♖d5 White went for a modest but long-term edge with 13 ♖xd5 cxd5 14 ♖c3 ♖f6! 15 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16 ♖f3 ♖e6 17 ♖f4 h5 18 ♖b5. It is true that White's game is easier to play thanks to his slightly superior pieces and presence on the e-file, but accuracy is called for in order to maintain any winning chances. Perhaps instead of bringing about a symmetrical pawn structure by taking on d5 White should consider 13 ♖e4 with a view to lodging the knight on e5 and following up with a later e3-e4.

9 ♖e2

More threatening than the routine 9 ♖f3, White puts the knight in his sights. How Black responds is down to choice.

9...♖f6

This is consistent with the overall plan of defending the e4-pawn and refusing to relinquish a hold on the centre. Not surprisingly

Black can again call his opponent's bluff by hitting out with his loyal e-pawn: 9...c5 10 ♖xh5 cxd4. Then 11 ♖f3! dxc3! 12 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 13 ♖xb7 cxb2 14 ♖d1+ ♖c7 15 ♖xd8! is best avoided since Black's passed pawns are worth at least the sacrificed rook, e.g. 16 ♖e4 (16 ♖b1 c3 17 ♖e4 ♖f5) 16...♖f5 17 ♖xf5 gxf5 18 ♖b1 c3 19 ♖f3 c2 20 ♖e2 cxb1 ♖21 ♖xb1 ♖c6 etc. Consequently, Yusupov-Stöhl, Bundesliga 1995 continued 11 exd4 gxf5 12 ♖ge2 ♖g4 13 h3! ♖xe2 14 ♖xe2 ♖c6 15 0-0 ♖xd4 (15...♖xd4 16 ♖xh5 and 17 ♖fe1 with compensation for the pawn) 16 ♖xh5 and now instead of 16...0-0? 17 ♖fe1! ♖d6 18 ♖d5 ♖g6 19 ♖f3 with a clear advantage to White, Black should have played Yusupov's proposed 16...♖e5 17 ♖f3 ♖d4 limiting White, who enjoys the more sound pawn structure, better pieces and a definite initiative for the pawn, to a slight advantage.

10 ♖f3 c6 11 ♖e5

Ftacnik prefers this to 11 0-0 0-0 (11...♖bd7?) 12 ♖e5 b5 13 b3 cxb3 14 axb3 a6 15 ♖c2 which was agreed drawn in J.Horvath-Fogarasi, Zalakaros 1994.

11...b5 12 f4!?



Ftacnik goes as far as to give this blunt looking push a 'T'. Maybe this is optimistic but it is logical to bolster the strongpoint on e5, providing the bishop with a re-route possibility back on f2/g3. Certainly Black's recent efforts have concentrated on the queen-

side, so in this respect White should be looking to the other flank for aggressive ideas.

12...Qd5

12...b4 is tempting but draws unwanted attention to both e4 and c5 (and b4), e.g. 13 Qa4 Qe4 14 Qxc4 Qxc4 15 Qxc4 and the knight on e4 is less useful than it looks.

13 Wd2

Defending the e3-pawn, supporting the f4-pawn and thus preparing e3-e4, hence Black's next.

13...Qxc3 14 bxc3

Further reinforcement of White's centre. However, Leko's suggestion of 14 Wxc3! deserves tests. Then 14...Qd5 15 0-0 Qd7 16 b3! Qxe5 17 fxe5 cxb3 18 axb3 0-0 19 Qf3 reintroduces the threat of e3-e4. Leko offers 19...g5 20 Qg3 Qc8 with the fair opinion that White has compensation for the pawn.



14...Qd5 15 Wc2

The struggle for the e4-square continues. 15 0-0 gives Black time for 15...Qd7.

15...Qf6

Before grabbing the g2-pawn Black sensibly chases away an active piece (unless White makes the mistake of unhinging his own knight after 16 Qxf6? exf6).

16 Qf2!

I have a feeling both players were already aware of the game was to end at this point. Otherwise White has another option in 16 Qg3, intending to meet 16...Qxg2 17 Qg1 Wd5 with 18 Qxc4 bxc4 19 Qxg2 Qd7 20 e4

when White has a menacing pawn centre and good development for the pawn. In view of Black's possibility in the main game on the 19th move this variation should be investigated further.

16...Qxg2 17 Qg1 Wd5

17...Qd5 18 e4 Qe6 is messy and comes down to taste. White is clearly the aggressor and has much the easier game in terms of space and choice, but Black is a pawn up.

18 Qxg2

No doubt the point of the previous selection.

18...Qxg2 19 Qf3 Wb3

Black can try for the win with 19...Qxh2, e.g. 20 Qg4 (20 Qxc6 Qh4!) 20...Wb3 21 Qe2 h5, when 22 Qh1 hxc4 23 Qxh3 gxc3 sees White running out of pieces, while 22 Qxf6+ exf6 23 d5 keeps up the pressure but at what cost?

20 Qg4 Wg2

Denying White's queen the use of the e4-square, although 20...Qxh2 is also possible here.

21 Qf3 Wb3 22 Qg4 Wg2 23 Qf3 ½-½

Conclusion

In Game 19 Black overestimates pressure on both the a5-e1 diagonal and the d-file to find herself entering the middlegame with insufficient compensation for a pawn. The fact that one of the world's leading players can do this explains why 4 Qf4 can be so effective at mere mortal level, since such a course tends to be almost blindly followed according to the general principles of the Grünfeld, and more care is required from Black here. When Black delays castling in order to accelerate the same queenside activity (Game 20) there is a chance that Black's queen can become exposed, although it would appear that this is not such a problem for Black as White would like. Game 21 features an interesting departure in that Black tries to punish White's failure to stir the kingside. I suspect Black does best not to be tempted into ...Qh5.

CHAPTER SIX

Nimzo-Indian Defence with 4 f3



1 d4 2 c4 3 e3 4 f3

With 3...b4 Black is happy to part with a bishop in order to inflict structural damage on White after taking on c3. I recommend that White ignore this threat, calling Black's bluff with the uncompromising 4 f3, the immediate advantage being that the e4-square – often the point around which Black's counterplay revolves – is already out of bounds for Black. If Black is not properly acquainted with the key positional aspects of 4 f3 there is a genuine danger of drifting into a terribly passive position, when White is able to expand in the centre, open lines and let the bishop pair reign.

In Game 22 Black comes out fighting, seeking to exploit the obvious weakening of the dark squares caused by f2-f3 by making way for the queen to come to h4. Game 23 transposes to a line of the Saemisch in which Black tries to disrupt White's queenside pawns, and in Game 24 Black employs the risky policy of luring White's pawns forward before striking on the dark squares.

Game 22
Sakaev-Guseinov
Doha 1993

1 d4 2 c4 3 e3 4 f3 5

d5 2 h5



Black continues to concentrate on his opponent's weakened dark squares. Knights on the rim are not always 'dim', the text releasing the queen and monitoring g3 to add weight to the check on h4.

6 2 h3

For me this is the whole point of the 4 f3 variation. It is true that the alternative 6 g3 denies Black his check, but we are happy to see Black's queen travel around the board at this early stage of the game.

6...2 h4+ 7 2 f2

The knight is well placed on f2, where it does not obstruct the other pieces and is ready to operate on either flank.

7...2 xc4 8 e4 2 xc3+ 9 bxc3 2 xc3+ 10

♙d2



In chess, as in life, everything has a price. Of course we don't necessarily assign the same value to certain factors and, fortunately, this is what makes life interesting. A glance at the diagram position is enough to give us two contrasting approaches – Black puts material ahead of development (and inconvenience), while White is interested only in getting his pieces working together as quickly as possible. Both arguments have their logic, so – as usual – it is a matter of taste and style.

10...♙d4

The most popular choice, leaving the queen in the heart of enemy territory. The central position alone seems justification enough, but d4 does have its problems. Let us have a look at the alternatives.

a) 10...♙e5 is similar to the main line but does not 'pin' the d2-bishop. The point is that 11 ♖c1 exd5 12 ♙c3 meets with 12...d4, so White does better with 11 ♙c1 when Black has two ways to protect c5.

a1) After 11...d6 12 g4 there is a further branch:

a11) 12...♙f6 13 f4 ♙d4 14 ♙c4 ♖b2 15 g5 (with these consistent attacks White hopes to find a way in) 15...♙fd7 16 dxe6 is typical of what might happen. White does seem to be making progress, e.g. 16...♙b6 (16...fxe6 17 ♙c3 ♖a3 18 ♙xd6 ♙b6 19 ♙xc5) 17 ♙c2 ♖a3 (17...♙d4 18 ♙b5+ ♙c6 19 ♙f3 and ♙c3 is coming) 18 ♙c3. ♙xe6 19 ♙xd6

♙8d7 20 ♙xg7 ♙g8 21 ♙f6 ♙xf6 22 gxf6 ♖b4+ (22...♖e3+ 23 ♙e2 ♙c8 24 ♖c7) 23 ♙d2 ♖b1+ 24 ♙e2 ♖b5+ 25 ♙e3 ♙d7 26 ♖xc5 ♙c8 27 ♖a3. Of course such a line needs testing, but Black can easily find himself in trouble.

a12) 12...♙f4 13 ♙c3 ♙g5 14 h4



Now 14...♖g6 15 dxe6 ♙xe6 (15...0-0 16 e7 ♙e8 17 ♙d2! ♙e6 18 ♖xd6 ♙c6 19 ♙b5) 16 ♖xd6 ♙c6 17 f4 and White has formidable kingside pawns. Then 17...♙ed4 18 ♖xc5 b6 19 ♙d5 sees Black lose his material advantage and suffer on the dark squares in the process. 19...♙e6 runs into 20 ♖xc6+! ♙xc6 21 h5 ♖xg4 (21...♖h6 22 g5) 22 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 23 ♙b5 ♙d7 24 h6, and after 19...♖e6 20 ♙xd4 ♖xd5 21 exd5 ♙xd4 22 ♙c4 another piece comes under fire: 22...♙f3+ 23 ♙e2 ♙b7! 24 ♙xf3 ♙xd5+ 25 ♙e4 ♙xc4 26 ♙xc4 with two excellent minor pieces for a rook. 17...♙cd4 keeps the c5-pawn but still leaves f4-f5 looming. After 18 ♙h3! ♙f6 19 f5 ♙g5 20 ♖xf6 ♙g3+ 21 ♙xf3 ♙xf3+ 22 ♙e2 ♙g1+ 23 ♙e3 gxf6 24 ♙xf6 the errant knight will soon drop, while 19...♙d8 20 ♙g3 ♙f8 21 ♙e5+ hits g7.

14...♖h6 is slightly different in that after 15 g5 ♖g6 16 dxe6 (16...♙xe6 17 ♖xd6 ♙c6 18 f4 ♙xg5 19 ♙d3 ♙e6 20 f5 ♖h6 21 ♙d2) 16...0-0 17 e7 ♙e8 18 ♙d2 Black has 18...♙h5. Therefore White should continue 17 ♖xd6, when 17...♙xe6 18 ♖xc5 is unclear and the natural 17...♙xe6 18 f4 is tricky for

Black. 18...d4 19 ♖xc5 ♙f3+ 20 ♔e2 ♖h5 loses to 21 ♖xf8! ♗xf8 22 ♖b4+ ♗e8 23 ♖xc8+ ♗d7 24 ♖h3+, and 18...♗d8 invites 19 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 20 h5). This leaves 18... f5 19 gxf6 ♗d8 (19...gxf6 20 f5) 20 f5 ♖xd6 (20...♖h6 21 f7+! ♗xf7 22 fxe6+ ♖xe6 23 ♖xd8 ♖xc1+ 24 ♙d1) 21 fxe6, e.g. 21...hxe6 22 fxe7 ♙xg7 23 ♖g1 ♙d7 (23...♙c6 24 e5) 24 ♖c4+ with plentiful play for the pawn, or 21...gxf6 22 gxf7+ ♗xf7 23 ♖xf6 and Black's kingside is bare.

a2) 11...b6 meets with the same response, namely kingside expansion. 12 g4 and now:
a21) 12...♙f4 13 ♖c3 ♖g5 14 h4 ♖h6



Here Black does not threaten to close with ...e5. Moreover the e5-square is not defended. Consequently White's kingside prospects are improved. Here is a sample variation: 15 ♖d2! f6 16 g5 fxe6 17 ♙g4 ♖g6 18 h5! and White achieves his goal. Taking on h5 sees the queen and knight continue their troubled relationship after 18...♙xh5 19 ♙e5! (better than the awkward 19 dxe6 ♙c6) 19...♖h6 20 dxe6 dxe6 21 ♙g4 ♖g6, when 22 ♖b5+ is too much for Black (22...♗e7 23 ♖d1). No help is 18...♖f7 19 h6 ♖g8 20 hxe7 ♖xg7 21 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 22 ♖xh7 ♖f8 23 ♖h2 ♙g6 24 ♖h5. Note that Black's doomed queen has taken ten moves to reach f8!

a22) In Khenkin-Kholmov, Voskresensky 1990, Black was less adventurous, choosing 12...♙f6. However, this seems a bit too accommodating since White is free to launch

his kingside pawns. 13 f4 ♖c7 14 g5 ♙g8 15 ♖c3 ♗f8 16 d6 ♖d8



Black's queen, having taken six of the sixteen moves, returns to base. White's powerful dark-squared bishop has no opposition and the space advantage is enormous, but he is two pawns down. Unclear is a fair assessment! After 17 ♖d2 h6 18 ♖b2 ♖h7 Khenkin stepped up a gear: 19 g6! fxe6 20 ♖g1 ♙f6 21 ♖xg6 ♖e8 22 ♖g1 ♖f7 23 ♖d3 and White had succeeded in giving his pieces maximum activity.

b) 10...♖f6 is seen less often. Again Black opts to monitor the kingside, where White plans to make his presence felt. 11 g4 ♙f4 12 g5! is an uncompromising policy, causing the queen further inconvenience. Black will have difficulty on the dark squares whether or not he accepts the latest pawn offer.

b1) 12...♖e5 13 ♖c1 ♙g6 14 ♖c3 ♖d6 15 ♖xg7 ♖g8 16 ♖d4! ♙a6 (16...b6 17 ♙g4) 17 ♖c3 offers White excellent prospects for the pawn, as the following variations illustrate. 17...b6?! looks too slow, e.g. 18 ♙g4 ♗e7 19 ♙h6 ♖f8 (19...♖e8 20 ♖f6+ ♗f8 21 ♖c3 transposes as 21...e5 permits 22 ♖g7+! ♗xg7 23 ♙f5+ etc.) 20 ♖g7 ♖e8 21 ♖c3! ♖f4 (21...e5 22 ♙f5+) 22 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 23 gxf6+ ♗d8 24 ♙xf7+ and Black is struggling. 17...exd5 makes more sense, putting to good use Black's collection of pawns. Then 18 ♙g4 ♗f8 19 ♙f6 d4! (19...♖h8 20 ♙xd5) 20 ♙xg8 ♗xg8! (20...dxc3! 21 ♙f6 ♖e5 22

Qxh7+ ♖g7 23 Qf6) 21 ♔d2 Qe5 22 ♖f2 ♖e7 prepares to bring the bishop and rook into the game. White's king is no better than its counterpart and Black has two pawns for the exchange, but the bishop pair have long-term potential. White can make slow but sure progress with 23 f4 Qc6 24 ♖b1! Qc7 25 ♔d3 d6 26 ♖c2 activating his rooks before advancing either the e- or f-pawn (or even h4-h5).

b2) 12...♖xg5 walks into a pin but at least keeps the knight on f4. With black queen now on the kingside White can turn to the other flank, and after 13 ♖c1 e5 14 ♖xc5 Qa6 15 ♔xa6 bxa6 16 ♖c1 ♖d8 Black still needs to defend accurately. In Fahimi-Gottschlich, Schoeneck 1996, he failed to do so, capitulating after 17 d6 Qg6?? 18 ♔a5. Instead the sober 17...0-0 18 ♖xc5 Qg6 offers Black a decent game. His extra pawn is irrelevant and there are the usual problems on the dark squares (c7 is weak), but White's kingside structure is not ideal. 17 ♔a5 is a worthy alternative to the tricky 17 d6. After 17...d6 18 ♖c6+ ♔d7 19 ♔xd8 ♔xc6 20 ♔c7 ♔d7 21 ♔xd6 f6 22 ♖d2 gives White an edge.

c) The most frequently seen alternative to the game continuation is 10...♖a3, hoping to make a nuisance of the queen on the queenside rather than worry about White's inevitable initiative on the kingside.

c1) 11 e5 'traps' the knight on h5 but 11...♖b2! 12 Qe4 ♖xe5 13 ♔c3 ♖xd5 14 ♖c2 0-0 15 ♔d1 ♖c6 saw Black successfully regroup and in Hochstrasser-Cebalo, Cannes 1996, when the four pawn advantage eventually told.

c2) The immediate and consistent 11 g4 Qf6 12 g5 was seen in Fslon-Bevia, Javea 1992, the point being that 12...Qh5 13 f4 g6 creates further weaknesses on the dark squares. In the game 12...Qg8 13 ♔g1 e5 14 ♔g3! ♖b2 15 ♔b1 ♖d4 16 ♖c1 highlighted the problems Black can run into with his queen.



After 16...a6 (16...d6?? 17 ♔c3 ♖a4 18 ♔b5+) 17 ♔c3 ♖a4 18 ♔xe5 White soon won.

c3) 11 ♖b1 has a stamp of approval from Vadim Milov. White aims to gain more time at the expense of the black queen and he is content to leave the knight on h5. In fact in Sakalauskas-Cebalo, Graz 1994, Black brought the knight back into play: 11...Qf6 12 ♖c2 Qa6 13 ♔b5 c4 14 ♖xc4 exd5 15 exd5 0-0 16 0-0 d6 17 ♔c3 ♔f5 18 ♖b3 and now the lesser evil 18...♖c5 19 ♖f4 (19...♔c2 20 ♔xf6 gxf6 21 ♖c1) was better than Cebalo's 18...♖xa2 i7 ♔a1 ♖c2 20 ♖b2 ♔fc8 21 ♔c6! b5 22 ♖d4 1-0.

11 ♖c1 exd5

Consistent with Black's pawn-grabbing policy. In Steffens-Siegmund, Nettetal 1991 Black added to the tension in the centre with 11...f5 but after 12 ♔c3 ♖a4 13 ♖g5 0-0 14 ♖xh5 ♖c2 15 ♔d2 exd5 16 ♔d3 ♖b2 17 ♔c1 he had much less compensation than in the main line. In fact White's considerable development lead in these positions effectively negates the defender's extra pawns. The game continued 17...c4 18 Qd1 ♖b6 19 Qc3! exd3 20 Qxd5 ♖eb2 21 Qc7 ♖xa2 22 Qxa8 Qc6 23 ♔d1 Qd4 24 0-0 g6 25 ♖h6 d5 26 Qc7 dxe4 27 fxe4 and Black decided enough was enough. Notice from this example that the player with the extra piece tends to enjoy more activity, the onus being on the defender to weather the storm. Many players

on the black side of this variation simply look at the points tally (i.e. 'a piece is worth three pawns') rather than the situation as a whole. 12 ♖c3 ♖a4 13 ♖g5



Now it is White's turn to send his queen into enemy territory, but this time the arrival is less welcome. Black must address the problem of what to do about h5, d5 e5 and g7. Of course it is impossible to defend all the weaknesses.

13...0-0

The most natural, tidy choice, abandoning the knight in favour of concentrating on his pawn mass. Not surprisingly in this already complex position, a couple of alternatives deserve our attention.

a) 13...d4 is premature in view of White's new option along the fifth rank, namely 14 ♖xc5!. An improvement on 14 ♖d2, this change of direction ignores the dim knight and instead announces two fresh threats, forking c8 and d4. Now 14...dxc3 15 ♖xc8+ ♗e7 16 ♖c5+! followed by 17 ♖xh5 is a simple route for White, while 14...♗c6 15 ♖d2 ♗f6 16 ♖b5 b6 17 ♖xc6! is another example of a quick knockout brought about by Black's wayward queen. This leaves 14...♖c6 15 ♖xd4 0-0 when, instead of the automatic 16 g4, White should prepare an effective deployment of his rook with 16 ♖b1!. In V.Milov-Oren, Israel 1993 Black sent his queen over to the kingside with 16...♖g6 in view of 16...d6? 17 ♖b5 ♗f6 (not

17...g6?? 18 ♖h8 mate!) 18 ♖g5 ♗bd7 (18...♗h8?? 19 ♖xf6) 19 ♖b5, when Black is caught in the firing line, or 16...a6? 17 g4 ♗d6 18 ♖b6 ♖c7 19 ♖xf6 etc. In the game Black found himself under great pressure after 17 ♖b5



The immediate threat is 18 ♖xh5, although Black has more than two-movers to worry about. Milov gives the following lines to illustrate this: 17...♗f4 sends the knight to e6 in order to protect g7. However, White's initiative is such that the kingside offensive is easy to conduct: 18 ♖e3 ♗e6 19 h4 f6 (19...h5 20 g4 does not hold back the tide) 20 h5 ♖f7 21 h6 g6 22 ♗g4 ♖e7 23 e5! fxe5 24 ♖xe5 ♗f7 25 ♖b4. With 17...♗f6 Black hopes to alleviate the pressure on the long diagonal with minimal loss of time. Then play might continue 18 ♗d3 ♗c6 19 ♖e3 d6 20 ♖g5 ♖h6 21 ♖f4 and now 21...♗h5 22 ♖h4 g6 23 ♗f4 f6 24 ♗xh5 fxe5 (24...♖xg5 25 ♖c4+, or 25 ♗xf6+) 25 ♖c4+ is a nice reminder of the brute force of the bishop pair. The circumspect 21...♗h8 is necessary, when 22 ♖xd6 ♖e6 23 ♖d2 ♖ad8 sees White emerge with the superior position after 24 ♖a2 or 24 ♖g3, thanks in no small part to his wonderful dark-squared bishop.

Oren found 17...♗c6 18 ♖d2 d5!, correctly avoiding 18...d6 19 ♖g5 ♖h6 20 ♖xg7+, 18...f5 19 g4! fxe4 20 ♖d5+ and 18...h6 19 g4 ♗f6 20 g5, e.g. 20...a6 21 ♖c5 ♗h7 (21...♗e8 22 gxe6 ♖xh6 23 ♖xh6 gxe6

24 ♖h5 f6 25 ♙c4+ ♖h7 26 ♙d2) 22 gxf6
 ♖xh6 (22...gxh6 23 ♙g4) 23 ♖xh6 gxf6 24
 ♙g4 ♖e8 25 ♙xh6+ ♖f8 26 ♖g1, or
 20...hxg5 21 ♖xg5 ♖h6 22 ♖hg1. Unfortunately for Black – now without even a material lead to ease the pain – there was no respite: 19 ♖xd5 h6 20 ♙d3! (threatening 21 g4 ♙f6 22 e5) 20...f5?! (20...♙e6 21 g4 ♙f6 22 ♙h3! ♖ad8 23 ♙f4 ♖h7 24 0-0!?) 21 0-0 (intending 22 exf5 ♙f5 23 ♙xf5 ♖xf5 24 ♖xf5 ♖xf5 25 g4 ♖g6 26 ♖d5+) 21...f4 (21...♙e7 22 ♖e5) 22 ♖d6 ♖f7 23 ♙c2! ♖h7 (23...♖xa2 24 e5) 24 ♙g4 ♙e6 25 e5+ ♖h8 26 ♖d3 ♙f5 27 ♙xh6!. The game ended 27...♙xd3 28 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 29 ♙xd3 ♖c7 30 ♖d1 (30 ♙g6 ♙e7) 30...♙e7 31 ♙b4 ♙c6 32 ♙g6! ♖g8 33 ♙e1 1-0.

b) Returning to the position after 13 ♖g5, another try from Black is 13...d6 14 ♖xh5 d4 15 ♙d2 ♙e6. Black's reasoning for not castling is that the king will be safer on the queenside. In Marin-Vehi Bach, *Roses* 1992 Black did not make the best of this plan. There followed 16 ♙e2 ♙c6 17 0-0 0-0 18 ♖fc1. With Black's extra pawns employed merely as protection for the king it is logical to assume that the piece deficit becomes more important. Planting his rooks on the b- and c-files will facilitate White's quest to exploit his fire-power. Perhaps this had something to do with Black's decision to use his queenside pawns more positively, although 18...c4 19 f4! f6 20 ♙d1 ♖a3? 21 ♙g4 brought an abrupt end to the game anyway (when the c4-pawn goes so does any hope of survival). Of course 20...♖a6 keeps the game going, but 21 f5 ♙g8 22 ♖g4 ♖d7 23 ♙e2 is the first step in the process of halting (or blockading) the pawns in preparation for making an assault on Black's outnumbered army.

14 ♖xh5

14 ♖xd5 ♙f4 15 ♖xc5 d5 16 ♙b5 ♖c2 17 0-0 dxe4 18 ♖ac1 ♙e2+ 19 ♙xe2 ♖xe2 20 ♖e5 f6 21 ♖d5+ ♖h8 22 ♙xe4 turned out well for White in the game Machelett-

Cordes, Germany 1996, but I much prefer to simply take the piece and set about dismantling Black's position.

14...d4 15 ♙d2 d6



It helps Black that he still has all eight pawns because this restricts White's pieces, and establishing the solid cluster of pawns in the centre fits in well with the general plan of frustrating White's strategy of making the extra piece tell. Black also has two connected passed pawns. On the downside there is a danger that White can more or less ignore the pawn mass and generate sufficient activity anyway, or – worse – immobilise the pawns as well as have an initiative!

16 ♙e2 ♙c6 17 0-0 ♙e6 18 ♖fc1

White adopts a patient policy, monitoring the enemy pawns and in some ways even challenging Black to use them for aggressive purposes. Note that at the moment the pawns on c5 and d4 do a good job of penning in the dark-squared bishop. In Simantsev-Shishkin, *Swidnica* 1999 White first gave his opponent something to think about on the kingside: 18 f4 (since White has a kingside majority it is likely that an advance will result in a concession from Black) 18...f6 19 ♖fb1? ♖ab8 20 ♙b5 ♖c2 21 ♖e2 a6 22 ♖c1 ♖b2 23 ♙c4 ♙xc4 24 ♖xc4+ ♖h8 25 ♙e1 ♖b6 26 ♖ab1 ♖d8 27 a4 and White was beginning to take control.

18...f6

Perhaps anticipating f3-f4, although in

general Black should refrain from weakening squares. In this case the text compromises the light squares slightly, as now a challenge on the a2-g8 diagonal cannot be ignored, as was seen in the previous note.

19 ♖d3 ♕e5 20 ♖b2

It is not clear what the knight can achieve on this tour other than lure Black's pawns forward (if so this is a crafty plan!). Otherwise 20 ♖f4 ♙f7 21 ♗f5 actually does something constructive, with d5 in White's sights and the option of chipping away at Black's kingside by pushing the h-pawn.

20. ♖a3 21 ♖d1

21 ♖c4 ♗a6.

21...♙a6 22 ♖h4 d5!

Black's last few moves have been leading up to this change of gear. However, the d6-pawn has been (literally) the foundation of Black's impressive centre, and opening the position even a little improves the prospects of White's pieces. Less ambitious but more precise is to sit tight and leave White to do the work, which should involve either positive action on the kingside or a regrouping on the queenside.

23 ♖f2 d3 24 exd5 ♙xd5 25 ♙f1



Black still has three pawns for the piece but, thanks to the advanced d-pawn, he enjoys less influence on the dark squares than before.

25...b5

After 25...c4 26 ♗d4 ♙f7 27 ♖e4 White

sets about containing the pawns, improving his pieces and concentrating on the dark squares.

26 f4

Evicting the knight and in turn undermining Black's protection of the d3-pawn.

26...♖g6 27 ♖h5! ♙c4 28 ♖d1!

Having reasoned that he can surround the d-pawn White fails to spot the less subtle 28 ♙xd3! ♙xd3 (28...♙d8 29 ♙c3) 29 ♗d5+ ♙h8 30 ♗xd3 ♗xd3 31 ♙xd3 which picks up one pawn and threatens others, e.g. 31...♙d8 32 ♙xg6 ♙xd2 33 ♙e4 c4 34 ♙c6 a6 35 a4 ♙b2 36 ♙b7 etc.

28...♙d8 29 ♙c3 ♗a6 30 ♗f3?

This time there is no excuse for not taking the pawn – 30 ♙xd3 is virtually decisive.

30...♙d4?

30...♙d5 is better because 31 ♗xd3 walks into 31...♙xg2.

31 ♙xd3 ♙d5 32 ♖h3 ♖d6 33 ♙xg6

33 ♙c3!

33...hxg6 34 ♙e3 ♙e6 35 ♗f3 ♙d5 36 ♗g3 ♙c4 37 ♙d3 ♗e6 38 ♙ad1

As so often happens in these situations the player with two or three pawns for a piece easily ends up defending his pawns at the cost of key squares or even sections of the board. Consequently the extra piece becomes more evident. Perfect play is no longer required from White to convert his advantage.

38...♙e4 39 ♙d6 ♗f5 40 ♙xe4 ♗xe4 41 ♙f2 ♗xf4 42 ♗xf4 ♙xf4 43 ♙xc5

White is winning.

43...♙c8 44 ♙d8+ ♙xd8 45 ♙xd8+ ♙h7 46 ♙d4 ♙xd4 47 ♙xd4 a6 48 ♙f2 ♖g8 49 ♖e3 ♙f7 50 ♙c3 g5 51 ♙d4 ♖e6 52 h3 f5 53 ♖c5 g6 54 ♖b6 1-0

Game 23

Yakovich-A.Sokolov

Moscow 1990

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♙b4 4 f3 d5 5 a3 ♙xc3+ 6 bxc3



Rather than waste a tempo by dropping the bishop back (see the next main game) Black steers the game to the Saemisch Variation. Here White is happy to invest a tempo in return for the bishop pair and an extra centre pawn. The attraction for Black is fairly smooth development and the possibility of play against the c3-pawn and the c4-square. **6...c5**

The thematic approach, increasing the tension in the centre safe in the knowledge that dxc5 creates a third c-pawn for White. An interesting alternative is 6...c6! which contradicts the general rule that our pawns should be placed on the opposite colour squares to the bishop. However, now the capture on d5 can be met with ...cxd5 to open the c-file (one of the ideas behind 6...c5) which, combined with ...b7-b6 and challenging bishops on a6, is a desirable positional plan. Add to this the Queen's Gambit policy of ...dxc4 and ...e7-e5, and 6...c6 is by no means illogical. Nevertheless the specific move order affords White some freedom in the centre and, even if the idea proves to be a viable alternative to the usual 6...c5, it is not the most natural option to spring to mind. After 7 ♖c2! Black has tried three moves.

a) 7...dxc4 8 e4 b5 9 a4 ♗bd7 10 ♔a3 ♜c7 11 ♕e2 a6 12 e5 ♕d5 13 ♔d6 and White had pleasant compensation in the form of command of the dark squares and more space in the centre and on the kingside

in Moskalenko-Vehi Bach, Parenta 1999.

b) 7...b6 looks premature if Black is unable to use the a6-square. After 8 cxd5 cxd5 9 e4 ♔b7 (9...♔a6?? 10 ♔xa6 ♕xa6 11 ♖a4+) 10 ♔b5+! ♔c6 11 a4 dxe4 12 fxe4 0-0 13 e5 ♕d5 14 ♕f3 h6 15 0-0 ♜c7 16 ♔e2! ♔b7 17 c4 ♔c8 18 ♜d2 ♕e7 19 ♔a3 things had gone badly wrong for Black in Sakav-Yudasin, St.Petersburg 1997. White has more space on all fronts.

c) 7...0-0 is best, sending the king to safety before choosing a plan. Then 8 cxd5! cxd5 9 e4 dxe4 10 fxe4 e5 11 d5! ♖a5 (11...♕e8!? prepares ...f7-f5) 12 ♔d3 ♕bd7 13 ♕f3, Khenkin-Rozentalis, Bundesliga 2000. Now 13...♕xe4?? loses: 14 ♔xe4 f5 15 ♔xf5 ♔xf5 16 ♜xf5 ♜xc3+ 17 ♔e2 ♜xa1 18 ♜e6+ ♔f8 19 ♕g5 etc. 13...♕e8 is a reasonable continuation, the idea being to use d6 and e5 for Black's blockading knights. After both 14 ♔d2 ♕d5 15 c4 ♜c7 and 14 a4 ♕d6 15 ♔a3 ♜c7 White has more aggressive pieces and only one c-pawn to worry about but Black is quite solid. Instead the game went 13...♔e8 14 0-0 ♕c5 15 c4 ♔g4 16 ♔e3 ♔ac8 17 ♕d2! ♕fd7 18 ♔fb1 ♜c7 19 a4 ♔h5 20 a5 ♔g6 21 ♔e2 ♕f6 22 ♔f3 b6 23 ♔b5 and Black was under pressure. Perhaps Black can consider parting with the second bishop with 16...♔xf3, although it seems that in general after 6...c6 Black's strategy is based on holding back pawns as opposed to seeking counterplay.

7 cxd5 ♕xd5

Without doubt the most common move, but 7...cxd5! is reasonable. 8 e3 and now:

a) 8...♔f5 9 ♕e2 with two versions of the same theme:

a1) In Flear-Dunworth, British Ch. 1989 Black met 9...♕c6 10 g4 with the speculative 10...♕xg4?! 11 fxg4 ♜h4+ 12 ♕d2 ♔e4 13 ♔g1 ♜xh2 but White found an amusing rearrangement to leave Black regretting the sacrifice - 14 ♜e1 ♔a5 15 ♕d1. Black has some pressure plus a couple of pawns for the piece, and White's pieces are yet to see any

(positive) action. However, with a relatively solid wall of pawns in the centre White is now ready to start pushing the enemy forces back, and after 15...0-0 16 ♖g3 ♖h6 17 ♔g2 ♗a6 18 ♔xe4 dxe4 19 ♗e1! ♖b3 20 ♚b1 ♖xc1 21 ♚xc1 cxd4 22 cxd4 ♚ac8 23 ♚xc8 ♚xc8 24 ♗e5 ♗c6 25 ♗f2 the piece was more significant than two pawns.

a2) 9...c4 10 g4 ♔d3 improves, but 11 ♖g3 ♔xf1 12 ♗xf1 ♖c6 13 e4 dxe4 14 fxe4 ♗d7 15 h3 0-0 16 ♗f3 b5 17 ♔f4 a5 18 ♖f5 was clearly better for White in Vladimirov-Szabo, October Revolution 1967.

b) The superior 8...♗c7! is nice and flexible. 9 ♔d3, for example, invites 9...cxd4 with the threat of a nasty check on c3. I like 9 ♖e2!

b1) 9...♖c6 10 ♖f4 0-0 11 ♔d3 ♚e8 12 0-0 ♖e7 13 g4 cxd4 14 cxd4 ♖g6, Gallego-Suba, Spanish League 1994. Then 15 ♖g2 is the logical follow-up to g2-g4, preparing to launch the h-pawn, after which the g6-knight becomes a target. There is also the bonus that the knight protects the e3-pawn.

b2) More recently Moskalenko-N.Mitkov, Sitges 2000 continued 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ♔f5 11 g4 ♔c2 12 ♗d2 h6 13 a4! ♔h7 14 ♔a3 and Black missed his dark-squared bishop. 8 dxc5



8...♗a5

8...f5 is the other move, clearly directed at e2-e4. After 9 ♖h3 Black has three options.

a) 9...♔d7! 10 c4 ♗h4+ 11 ♖f2 ♗f6 12

♔g5! ♗xg5 13 cxd5 exd5 14 ♗xd5 ♗e7 (14...♖c6? 15 ♖e4!; 14...♔c6 15 ♗e6+) 15 e4 ♖c6 16 ♔b5; ♚f8 17 0-0 0-0 18 ♗c4 left White a clear pawn up in D.Bronstein-Dely, Budapest 1961.

b) 9...0-0 10 ♖f4

b1) 10...♖c6! 11 ♖xd5 exd5 12 ♔f4 ♔e6 13 e3 ♗a5 14 ♗d3 ♗xc5 15 ♔e2 ♚ad8 16 ♗f2 was about even in Arencebia-Del Rio Angelis, Guillermo Garcia Premier (II) 2000, but this soon changed after 16...♖e7! 17 ♗d4! ♗xd4 18 cxd4 ♚c8 19 ♚ab1 b6 20 ♚hc1 ♚xc1 21 ♚xc1 ♚c8 22 ♔c7 ♚a8 23 ♔a6 ♔c8 24 ♔d3 ♔d7 25 h3 ♚f8 26 ♗e2 ♚f6 27 g4! etc. Of course Black tends to have problems on the dark squares in this opening, but trading queens does not necessarily help the defender. Moreover if this exchange repairs White's pawns after the recapture c3xd4, then White – with the bishop pair – is the most likely to benefit.

b2) 10...♗e7! 11 ♖xd5 exd5 and White should resist the temptation to take a second pawn in favour of 12 ♔f4 ♗xc5 13 ♗d4 ♗a5 14 e3 ♖c6 15 ♗d2 ♔e6 16 ♔e2 ♚fc8 17 0-0



Toth-Lengyel, Hungarian Ch. 1971. This position is well balanced, White hoping to make something of the dark squares and the bishop pair, Black concentrating on the c-file. With this in mind Black transferred his knight to f7 (still protecting e5, but now d6 is also safe), thus exerting more pressure on

both c4 and c3. White replied with a3-a4 to put his rook on a3, defending the c3-pawn and facilitating White's queenside play.

c) After 9...♖a5 10 e4 fxe4 11 ♖g5! White seeks to open lines for his pieces, e.g. 11...♗xc3+ 12 ♔d2 ♗e5 (12...♗xc5?? 13 ♖c1) 13 ♖xe4, or 11...♖xc3 12 ♗d4 ♖b5+ 13 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 14 ♖xd2 ♖d4 15 ♖c3 ♖bc6 16 ♖xe4. Consequently Yrjola-Rantanen, Helsinki 1986 saw Black frustrate this plan with 11...e3 12 ♗d4 0-0 13 ♔xe3 ♖c6 14 ♗d2 ♔d8, but 15 ♔d3! ♖xc3 16 ♖c1 ♖d5 17 ♔xh7+ ♖f8 18 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 19 ♖f2 ♖xe3 20 ♖xe3 was decisive.

9 e4 ♖e7

This knight – not the one on b8 – is heading for a5. Let us have a look at the numerous alternatives:

a) 9...♗xc3+ is the beginning of a journey to the kingside, although this is in White's favour since 10 ♔d2 ♗e5 11 ♖e2 ♖e7 12 ♖c1 ♖bc6 13 ♔c3 ♗g5 14 h4 ♗h6 15 ♖d4 ♖xd4 16 ♔xd4 0-0 17 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 18 ♖xd2 gave White an edge in Damljanovic-Ivanovic, Yugoslav Ch. 1989. Structurally Black is fine but there are the usual worries on the dark squares. It is also important to remember that the c5-pawn accentuates White's grip on the dark squares.

b) 9...♖xc3 initiates a practically forced sequence that leads to an excellent ending for White: 10 ♗d2 ♖c6 11 ♔b2



11...♖a4 12 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 13 ♔xg7 ♗g8 14

♔h6 ♔d7 15 ♖f2 ♖c8 16 ♖e2 ♖xc5 17 ♖d4 ♖e7 18 ♔e3 a6 19 ♔e2 and Black was struggling in Genov-Nikolov, Bulgarian Ch. 1991.

c) 9...♖c7 10 ♗d4 f6 (10...0-0? 11 ♗b4 ♖c6 12 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 13 ♔f4! ♖a6 14 ♔d6 ♖e8 15 ♔b5 ♖c6 16 ♔xc6 bxc6 17 e5 with a massive bishop on d6, Gutman-I.Farago, Hastings 1984/5) 11 ♗b4! ♖c6 12 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 13 ♔b1 ♔d7 14 ♖e2 ♖a6 15 ♔e3, Ulibin-Hulak, Pula 2000. White's queenside pawn majority does not look too healthy and nor do a few squares in this sector. However, in order to restore material equilibrium by winning the c5-pawn Black is required to expend a certain amount of time, during which White should be able to generate some sort of offensive on the queenside. This tends to involve the b-file. In fact in this game White turned the ostensibly weak c-pawns to his advantage with an instructive piece sacrifice: 15...0-0 16 ♖f4 ♖f7 17 ♔b5 (Black's knight seems to be as much of a liability on a5 as it is a menace to White) 17...♖fd8 18 ♖e2 ♖c7 19 ♔d3 ♖ab8 20 ♔b2 ♔c6 21 c4! ♔d7 22 ♖hb1 ♔c8 23 ♖d5! exd5 24 cxd5 ♖a8 (24 ♔f4 and 24 ♔d2 were threatened) 25 ♔d2 b6 26 cxb6 axb6 27 ♖xb6 ♔d7 28 ♖c1 ♖b5 (28...♖e8 29 ♖c5) 29 ♔xb5 ♖b3 30 ♖c7 ♖d4+ 31 ♖f2 ♖xb5 32 ♖xb5 ♖xa3 33 ♖bb7 and White soon won.

d) 9...♖f6! 10 ♔e3 0-0 11 ♗b3 ♖fd7 has been recommended as a good line for Black, the point being to meet 12 a4 ♗c7 13 ♗a3 with the sensible sacrifice 13...b6! 14 cxb6 axb6, when Black's development lead more or less negates the extra pawn. Instead White has two other options which both involve giving back one of the c-pawns.

d1) 10 ♗b3

d11) 10...♖c6 11 ♔b5 ♔d7 12 ♔xc6 ♔xc6 13 ♗b4 ♗a6 14 ♖e2 0-0 15 ♔f4 was pleasant for White in Kataev-Tavadian, USSR 1979. Apart from the d6-square White's bishop keeps a rook off the b-file.

Meanwhile the c3-pawn controls d4 and can later nudge forward to reduce Black's control of the light squares and introduce the possibility of Qe2-c3-b5 (or in some circumstances sacrifice on d5, as in 'c', above).

d12) $10... \text{Wxc5}$ accepts the offer. Then 11Wb5+ Qbd7 12Wxc5 Qxc5 13Le3 Qfd7 secures the c5-square for Black. However, with so many pieces still on the board – two of them being Black's as yet undeveloped rook and bishop on the queenside – it is easy to overestimate this outpost at the expense of other factors. Branicki-Makarczyk, Lodz 1954 continued 14Qe2 Qe7 15Qd4 g6



Black prepares to evict the knight with $...c6-e5$. 16O-O a6 17Qc2! e5 18Qb3 Qe6 19Le4 and White was well on top.

d2) 10Nb1 O-O 11Nb5 Wxc3+ 12Qf2 is an interesting idea, using the queen to accelerate White's development. V. Milov-Magerramov, Berlin 1993 saw White force a queen trade with $12... \text{We5}$ 13Le2 $13... \text{Wc7}$ ($13... \text{Wf4}$ 14Qe2 Wg5 15h4 Wh6 16Le1 Wh5 [$16... \text{Wg6}$ 17h5! Qxh5 18c6] 17g4 We5? 18Le4) 14Wd6 , earning an edge after $14... \text{Qe8}$ 15Wxc7 Qxc7 16Nb3 Qc6 17f4 . 10Le3 O-O

$10... \text{Wxc3+}$ 11Qf2 plays into White's hands, the king quite safe tucked in on f2 (particularly when an exchange of queens is on the cards). Again the c5-pawn is as much a strength as a weakness, one reason being that it restricts Black's b7-pawn, which tends

to be attacked down the b-file. In Golod-Pushkov, Moscow 1991 White first gained time on the queen before offering a trade: $11... \text{Qbc6}$ 12Qe2 Wa5 13We1! (more precise than 13Wd2 Wxd2 when the bishop no longer teams up with the c5-pawn to prevent $...b7-b6$) $13... \text{Wxe1+}$ 14Lxe1 e5 15Qc3 Le6 and now White demonstrated another use of the c5-pawn by homing in the juicy d6-square with 16Qb5 O-O 17Qd6 , in turn hitting b7. There followed $17... \text{Lfb8}$ 18Lb1 and now the attempt to break out rather than remain passive rebounded after $18...b6$ 19Lea6! Qa5 20Lhd1 bxc5 21Lxc5 Lxb1 22Lxb1 with a wonderful position for White despite the symmetry.

11 Wb3 We7

The queen tends to drop back to c7 at some stage and a5 can prove to be an unfortunate square if Black mistimes the capture on c5. Others:

a) $11... \text{Qec6}$ 12Qh3 Qd7 13Le5 a6! 14Lxc6 bxc6 15Wb4 Wc7 16O-O a5 17Wd4 La6 18Lfd1 Lfd8 19Wd6



Sakaev-Ivanov, Thessaloniki 1996. White has a positional lead to add to his not insignificant extra pawn.

b) $11...e5$ is premature and hands over the d5-square on a plate after 12Le4 , e.g. $12... \text{Qa6}$ 13Qe2 Qc6 ($13... \text{Qxc5}$ 14Wb4! and the forced $14... \text{Wxb4}$ repairs White's pawns [in this case 15axb4 looks strong, but usually cxb4 facilitates White's play on the

queenside by opening the c-file, for which Black has no compensation) 14 ♖b1 ♕xc5 15 ♖b5! with another reason why a5 can be a problem square for the queen. Malaniuk-Tolnai, Kecskemet 1989 continued 15...♖xb5 16 ♖xb5 ♕e6 17 ♔d5 ♕ed8 18 c4 ♔e8 19 ♖f2 and White had fantastic bishop.

12 ♕h3 ♕ec6

Black prefers piece play to hunting down the pawn. 12...♕d7!? 13 ♕f2 ♕xc5 14 ♖c4 b6 (14...♔a6 15 ♖xc7 ♕xc7 16 ♔c5 ♔e8 17 ♔d6 ♔a6 favours White whether or not he takes on a6) 15 ♔xc5 ♖xc5 16 ♖xc5 bxc5 alters the pawn structure but benefits White after 17 ♖b1!, although 17 ♕d3?! ♔a6 18 ♕xc5 ♔xf1 19 ♖xf1 ♖fc8 is fine for Black.

13 ♖b1 e5 14 ♕f2 ♔a5 15 ♖a4!

Making way for the rook to come to b5 and tempting Black to play 15...♔d7.

15...♔e6

15...♔d7?! 16 ♔b5 ♔e6 17 0-0 a6 is Black's idea but now the b6-square is too weak. Arencibia-Franco, Havana 1990 was clearly better for White after 18 ♔e2 ♕d7 19 ♖b4 ♔ac8? 20 c6! bxc6 21 ♔xa6 ♖b8 22 ♖e7 ♖be8 23 ♖h4 ♔a8 24 ♔e2, when White found new pastures on the kingside (f3-f4 is effective).

16 ♔e2

With all the action over on the queenside it seems more logical to carry on there before dealing with the kingside, so the immediate 16 ♖b5!? is a worthy candidate.

16...♕d7 17 ♖b5 b6 18 0-0

18 ♖b4!? deserves consideration, again concentrating on more pressing matters before castling.

18...♕b7

Introducing an interesting drawing possibility that White seems content to go along with. Black also has two other reasonable moves.

a) 18...♖fb8 19 ♖fb1 h6 20 g3 bxc5? (20...♕b7! is necessary, when 21 ♕d3 bxc5 22 f4 ♕b6 23 ♖c2 ♔d7 24 ♕xe5 ♔xb5 25

♔xb5 results in a slight material imbalance that gives chances to both sides) 21 ♔xb8+ ♔xb8 22 ♔xb8+ ♕xb8 23 ♖c8+ ♔h7



In Arencibia-Lobron, Manila Interzonal 1990, White opened a new front with 24 f4! when 24...♕c4 (24...♔c4 25 ♔g4 ♖b6 26 h4 25 f5! ♕xe3? (25...♕d6 26 ♖f8 ♕d7 27 ♖e7 ♕c8 28 ♖h4 ♔b3 29 ♕g4 ♖c6 30 f6 ♕xf6 31 ♕xf6+ ♖xf6 32 ♖xf6 gxf6 33 ♔xc5 is a lesser evil, although Black is struggling in this ending) 26 fxe6 loses after 27 ♔h5 g5 28 ♖g6+ ♔h8 29 ♖xh6+ ♖h7 30 ♖f8+ ♖g8 31 ♖f6+ ♖g7 (31...♔h7 32 ♕h3) 32 ♖d8+ ♖g8 33 ♖d3, while the game finished 26...♖b6 27 exf7 ♖b1+ 28 ♔d1 ♕xd1 29 ♖g8+ ♔g6 30 f8N+!).

b) 18...♖fc8!? 19 ♖c1! follows the same logic as the previous line, shadowing Black's rook. Then 19...♕b7 20 cxb6 axb6 21 ♖b4 ♕d6 22 ♔xb6 ♖c6 23 ♔e3 transposes to the note to White's 23rd move, below, while 19...♕c6 20 ♕d3 favours White.

c) 18...a6? is asking for trouble on the dark squares: 19 ♖xb6 ♕xb6 20 cxb6 ♖xc3 21 ♕d1.

19 cxb6 axb6 20 ♖b4 ♕d6! 21 ♔xb6 ♖c6 22 ♔e3 ♖fc8 23 ♔a5

Agreeing to split the point. If White wants to keep pressing for the win then 23 ♖c1 is a sensible way to continue, e.g. 23...♕xb5 24 ♔xb5 ♖b7 25 c4. With excellent pieces and no real weaknesses White has certainly done

okay out of the deal, the pawns being provided with good support and, consequently, Black's rooks relegated to contributing to their blockade.
23...♖xa5 24 ♖xa5 ♖a8 25 ♖b4 ½-½

Game 24

Prudnikova-G.Sakhatova

USSR 1991

1 d4 ♠f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♠c3 ♠b4 4 f3 d5 5 a3 ♠e7

5...♠xc3+ transposes to Game 23. Here Black opts to keep the bishop on the board now that White's dark squares have been slightly compromised by 4 f3. 5...♠d6 transposes to the main game.

6 e4



White erects an impressive looking centre, which Black needs to address one way or another.

6...dxe4

Others:

a) The major alternative is 6...c5 when 7 exd5 exd5 8 dxc5 gives the game a different character. Black has two options.

a1) 8...♠xc5 is the most popular, one reason being that 5...♠d6 might have been played instead of 5...♠e7, thus ruling out 'a2', below. Black has already moved the bishop three times but the current post highlights the downside to the 4 f3 system, namely the potential weakness of the g1-a7 diagonal. In

this case the price Black pays for opening the position is the d-pawn after 9 e5 ♠f7 10 ♖xd5 0-0 11 f4 when the justification of Black's play is to prevent White from castling kingside - 11...♠xg1 12 ♠xg1



a11) 12...♖h4+? 13 g3 ♖xh2 14 ♖g2! ♖xg2 15 ♠xg2! (15 ♠xg2 ♠c5) 15...♠c5 16 ♠e3 is clearly better for White, whose dark-squared bishop dominates. Now 16...b6 17 ♠xc5 bxc5 18 ♠a4 ♠d7 19 ♠c2 ♠b8 20 0-0-0 and 16...♠bd7 17 b4 are poor for Black, so Khenkin-Barle, Voskresensk 1990 continued 16...♠b3 17 ♠d1 ♠h3 (17...♠c6 18 ♠c4 ♠ca5 19 ♠d5) 18 ♠c2 ♠xf1 19 ♠xf1 ♠c6 20 ♠b5! ♠ad8 21 ♠d6!? (21 ♠xd8 ♠xd8 22 ♠xa7 ♠xa7 23 ♠xa7 is a pawn) 21...a6 (21...♠d7 22 ♠d3 ♠ca5 23 ♠xa7) 22 ♠c3 ♠ca5 (22...♠ba5 23 b4) 23 ♠b6 ♠d7 24 ♠d5 1-0. Note that 15 ♠xg2 brings the rook into the game conveniently along the second rank.

a12) 12...♖b6 is consistent. After the forced 13 ♠h1 Gelfand-Spassky, Linares 1990 saw Black come a cropper on the dark squares: 13...♠c5? 14 b4 ♠e6 15 ♠a4 ♖c7 16 ♠e3 ♠c6 17 ♖d6! ♖xd6 18 exd6 ♠e8 19 ♠f2 ♠d7 20 ♠c5 ♠xc5 21 bxc5 and White's extra pawn was both protected and passed! Yakovich-Piza Cortizo, Cor-doba 1991 took a different course when Black managed to drum up albeit temporary compensation: 13...♠c6 14 ♖b5! ♠d4 (14...♖d4 15 ♖c4 ♠b6! [15...♠c5? 16 ♠b5! ♖xc4 17 ♠xc4] 16

♞xd4 ♖xd4 transposes) 15 ♞xb6 ♖xb6 (after 15...axb6 16 ♜b1 ♖c5 17 ♙e3 ♖c2+ 18 ♜f2 ♙f5 19 ♜d1 White's small but near decisive material lead is intact) 16 ♙d3 ♜d8 17 ♙e3!. Unfortunately for Black there is no useful discovered attack on the d-file, which leaves Black a pawn down. In fact the game now ended 17...♖b3 18 ♜d1 ♜xd3 (a nice try from Black that almost deserves to work) 19 ♜xd3 ♙f5 20 ♖e4! ♖a1 21 ♙xb6 axb6 22 ♜e2! ♙xe4 23 ♜d4 1-0. Assuming there are no big improvements for black in these examples it is reasonable to assume that White's discomfort on the g1-a7 diagonal is worth a pawn here.

a2) 8...d4 is the other try, Black relying on the d-pawn to both provide space and hinder White's development. Again the cost is a pawn and, again, this seems like too big a price in the absence of concrete advantages. Of course White must take time out with 9 ♖a4 0-0 10 b4 but 10...b6 11 cxb6 axb6 12 ♙d2? ♙d6 13 ♙d3 ♞c7 14 ♖e2 ♖bd7 15 ♖b2 left White a pawn up with a nice and tidy position in Hauchard-Rodriguez, Santiago 1990. I'm sure there are better ways for Black to play but not to the extent that sufficient compensation can be demonstrated.

b) 6...dxc4 is rather passive but not too bad for Black. After 7 ♙e3! (directed against ...c7-c5) Black has challenged the centre with both pawns.

b1) 7...♖bd7 8 ♙xc4 e5 would be fine were it not for the wasted moves with Black's bishop and the e-pawn. In Gutman-Mandl, Gladenbach 1992 White sensibly exploited his development lead to secure an advantage along the lines of the QGA: 9 ♖ge2 0-0 10 0-0 a6 11 ♙a2 exd4 12 ♙xd4 c5 13 ♙e3 ♖e5 14 ♖f4 b5 15 ♞xd8 ♜xd8 16 ♖cd5 ♖xd5 17 ♖xd5 with a superior version of the traditional edge.

b2) 7...0-0 8 ♙xc4 ♖bd7 9 ♖ge2 c5 10 0-0 a6 11 e5! ♖e8 12 f4 ♖c7 13 dxc5 ♖xc5 14 b4! and, not surprisingly considering the artificial nature of Black's play, White en-

joyed a considerable space advantage in V.Milov-Ricardi, Buenos Aires 1996.

c) Too passive is 6...0-0 7 cxd5 exd5 8 e5 ♖e8 9 f4, although White should then be content with the extra breathing space rather than launch a rash kingside attack.

7 fxе4 е5

The point – White's next is forced and gives away the c5-square.

8 d5



This time Black has succeeded in clearing away the g1-a7 diagonal without having to donate a pawn to the cause. However, White's centre is solid and provides her with more room in which to manoeuvre, and if Black's hoped for activity does not fully materialise the resulting middlegame will be played under cramped conditions. Clearly Black intends to stick a piece on c5 soon (usually the restless bishop), the question is whether this should be prefaced with the precautionary ...a7-a5.

8...а5

Wasting no time. Black plans to strike before White is able to consolidate.

a) The more positional approach is 8...a5 9 ♙d3 0-0 10 ♖f3

a1) 10...♖bd7 11 0-0 ♜e8 12 ♜b1 (12 ♜h1 ♙d6 13 ♜b1 c5?! 14 ♖b5 ♙b8 15 ♙g5 h6 16 ♙h4 ♞e7 17 ♖d2 ♜d8 18 ♙e2 ♜a6 19 ♞c2 g5?! took the dark-square theme a bit too far in Moskalenko-Kholmov, Beigorod 1990) 12...♖f8 13 b4 ♖g6 14 c5 h5 15 ♙c4,

Meissner-Berezovsky, Bundesliga 1999. Black's show of aggression on the kingside lacks the genuine effectiveness of White's flowing play on the queenside.

a2) 10...g4 11 h3 xxf3 12 xf3 b7 13 0-0 e8 14 b1 c5+ 15 c3 e7 16 a4 xc3+ 17 xxe3 c5, Khenkin-Bergstrom, Gausdal 1991. Black's radical lunge for c5 has the advantage of releasing the e8-knight as well as avoiding White's pawn roller after b2-b4, c4-c5 etc. However, with 18 dxc6 bxc6 19 c5 White's majority still had presence, and Black had new worries on b6 and d6.

b) 8...d4 is just as direct as 8...c5.

b1) 9 e2 and Black has two choices.

b11) 9...c5 10 xg4 h4+ 11 g3 xg4 12 xg4 xg4 13 h3 d7 14 f3 f6 15 b4 with a sizeable space advantage in return for giving Black the bishop pair, Lima-Cao Sang, Manila 1992.

b12) 9...h5 10 f3 c5 11 c2 e2+ 12 f1 0-0 13 d1! c5 14 h3



This is typical of the variation. Black rocks the boat with ...e2+ only to be pushed back, after which White's territorial superiority is a major factor. In Moskalenko-Garcia Padron, Fuerteventura 1992 Black refused to yield: 14...f5! 15 hxg4 fxg4 16 e1 gxf3 17 gxf3 h4 18 e3 d4 19 wd2 xe3 20 we3 and White followed with f2 and d2, when the king was perfectly safe behind the imposing wall of pawns. It is important to remem-

ber that, despite the general importance of castling, reliable alternative protection to a dislodged king is usually enough in 'closed' positions where one side has stable, advanced centre pawns.

b2) 9 f3 0-0 (9...c5 transposes to the main game) 10 d3 c5 11 e2 f2+ 12 d1 d4 13 e2 f2 14 dxd4 Qxd3 (14...Qxh1 15 f3) 15 xxd3 exd4 and now in Shirov-Pira, Paris 1990 White decided against 16 xxd4 Qc6 (which gives Black the e5-square but nothing else) in favour of 16 Qb5! c6 (16...c5 17 f4) 17 Qxd4. White is a very healthy pawn to the good, has an excellent centre, well posted queen and knight and his king is doing fine on c2. Consequently Pira tried to muddy the waters but was forced into a poor ending after 17...b5 18 f4 bxc4 19 g3 d7 20 hf1 f6 21 e2 c7 e8 22 e5 cxd5 23 exf6 g6+ 24 xg6 hxg6 25 fxg7 a4+ 26 e3.

9 f3 d4

Homing in on f2 as per plan, which is preferable to 9...g4 10 h3 xxf3 11 xf3 a5 12 d3 Qbd7. The position is not sufficiently closed to justify trading a bishop for a knight, and the queen is well placed on f3. Lerner-Mednis, Copenhagen 1990 continued 13 g5 0-0 14 0-0 e7 15 h4 Qc5 16 e2 a4 with a queenside pawn configuration that is not unusual for this system. Black's knight is secure on c5 and White needs to keep an eye on the b3-square, but there are no effective pawn breaks for Black. Meanwhile White has a simple plan in sending his kingside pawns towards the black king. In Bagirov-Maherranzade, Abu Dhabi 1999 Black made the common mistake of assuming that ...d4 is good in all circumstances: 13 d2 0-0 14 g4 d4 15 0-0-0 Qc5 16 e2 Qe8 17 Qb5! Qd6 18 Qxd4 exd4 19 f4 Qxc4 20 xxd4 b5 21 e5 and the c2-bishop came to life.

10 Qa4

White should avoid getting too excited here, as 10 b4! e2+ 11 e2 c5! adds weight to Black's infiltration by clamping down on

the d4-square whether or not White plays 12 dxc6.

10...♙f2+

Equally popular is 10...♞d7 when Black is content to see the removal of the bishop if this means a good knight can take its place. 11 b4 ♙f2+ 12 ♖e2. Then 12...b5 13 h3 bxa4 14 hxg4 is an inferior version of the game, although the options don't seem any better:

a) 12...f5 13 h3 fxe4 14 hxg4 ♙g3 15 ♙g1! ♙f6 16 ♖d2 ♙xg4 17 ♙h3 and White will soon emerge a piece up, the king well protected as it travels west.

b) 12...♙d4 13 ♙xd4 cxd4 14 ♖xd4



Material is an important factor and White's extra pawn does come in handy, but White also has more space, the bishop pair and, consequently, considerable power on the dark squares. Once White's king finds a more secure resting place these advantages will combine to prove decisive.

b1) Alonso proposes 14...♖h4? 15 ♖xg7 ♖f2+ 16 ♖d3 with an assessment of unclear after both 16...♙de5+ 17 ♖c3 and 16...♙f8 17 ♖d4 f5 18 ♙g5 fxe4+ 19 ♖xe4+ ♙de5+ 20 ♖c3 ♙f5 21 ♖e2!. However, with Black's king doing no better than it's opposite number and White's ability to play on the dark squares at will, I see no concrete evidence of compensation for the two pawns.

b2) 14...0-0 15 ♙b2 (the natural home under the circumstances, but 15 h3!? ♙g6

16 ♙g5 is also good) 15...♖g5 16 h3 ♙g6 (16...♙ge5!? 17 ♙c5) 17 ♙e1! ♙e8 18 ♖d1 and Black has neither the territory nor the fluidity with which to trouble White. Another problem for Black is White's enormous queen, since a trade reduces Black's potential counterplay and does nothing to limit White's dark-square control.

11 ♖e2 b5

It is almost as if this latest instalment is played only because it adds to the bizarre nature of the game! The alternative is 11...♙d4 12 ♙xd4 exd4 13 ♖xd4 0-0 14 h3 ♖h4, Ooi Chern Ec-Parameswaran, Calcutta 1997. After 15 g3! ♖xg3 (15...♖h5 16 ♙g2! and there is no decent discovery for Black) 16 hxg4 ♙xg4+ 17 ♖d2 ♖f3 18 ♙g1 ♙c6 19 ♖e3 ♖d1+ 20 ♖c3 f5 21 b3 White was simply a piece up despite Black's efforts.

12 h3!

There is no need to allow Black hopes of counterplay with 12 cxb5 ♙d7 13 ♖b3 a6. Instead the text guarantees that White's three centre pawns remain intact.

12...bra4 13 hxg4 ♙g3

Best. This time 13...♙d4!? 14 ♙xd4 exd4 15 ♖xd4 ♙xg4+ 16 ♖f2 is clearly better for White. 13...♙c5 on the other hand, requires more precise play from White: 14 ♖xa4+ c6 (14...♙d7 15 ♖a5! ♖e7 16 ♖xc7 or 15...♙b6 16 ♖c3) 15 b4 ♙d4 16 ♙xd4 exd4 and now 17 g5!. This limits the scope of black's queen and keeps White in the driving seat, e.g. 17...♖e7 (17...0-0 18 ♖f2 f5 [18...♖e7 - see below] 19 e5 cxd5 20 ♙f4! ♙c6 21 c5, or 18...f6 19 g6!) 18 ♖f2! ♖xe4? 19 ♖b3 ♙f5 20 ♙d2 0-0 21 ♙e1 ♖c2 (21...♖g4 22 ♙e2) 22 ♖xc2 ♙xc2 23 ♙h4! d3 24 ♙e3 with a clear advantage to White, or 18...0-0 19 ♙d2! ♖e5! 20 ♙e2 (Yakovic-Herrera, Santa Clara 1990) 20...f5! 21 gxf6 ♖xt6+ 22 ♙f3 ♙g4 (22...♖xe4? 23 ♙ae1) 23 ♖b3 when White is slightly better.

14 ♙h3! ♙f4 15 ♙xf4 exf4 16 ♖d4! f6

16...0-0 17 ♙h4 was played in Raicevic-Ruban, Pula 1989, when 17...g5? 18 ♙h6!

♟xg4 19 ♟f2 f6 20 e5! ♟g7 21 ♚h2 ♟xf3
22 gxf3 ♞d7 (22...♞c6? 23 ♟d3) 23 ♟d3
was excellent for White. 17...f6 improves,
with 18 ♟f2 and 18 c5 the candidate moves
for White.

17 ♚h4! 0-0 18 ♟d2 c5!? 19 ♟c3

19 ♟xc5 is also possible, Black's idea be-
ing to gain time with 19...g5 20 ♚h2 ♟xg4 21
♟d3 ♞d7 22 ♟d4 ♟xf3 23 gxf3 ♟a5+ 24
♟e2 ♚ab8 etc.

19...♞d7 20 ♟d3 h6 21 ♚ah1 ♚b8 22
♟c2

The b3-square must be protected.

22...♚e8 23 ♚h5!

Covering e5 and giving us a clue as to why
White has doubled rooks on the h-file even
after 20...h6.

23...♞f8?

23...♚b6 is necessary, defending along the
third rank.

24 g5!

This pawn break guarantees a way into
Black's kingside.

24...fxg5

24...hxg5 25 e5 g4 26 ♞h4 does not keep
White at bay.

25 ♚xh6!!

With all of Black's pieces idling on the
back rank this kind of sacrifice is always go-
ing to be on the cards, particularly with
White's forces so aggressively posted.

25...gxf6 26 ♚xh6



White is winning.

26...♚b6

Others:

a) 26...♟c7 27 ♟h8+ ♟f7 28 e5 ♚b6 29
e6+! ♚xe6 30 dxe6+ ♟xe6 31 ♞e5 mate.

b) 26...♟f5 27 ♟h8+ ♟f7 28 exf5 ♚b6 29
f6!.

c) 26...♚e7 27 ♚h8+ ♟f7 28 ♞xg5+ ♟e8
29 ♚xf8+ ♟xf8 30 ♟h8 mate.

d) 26...♚b7 27 ♟h8+ ♟f7 28 ♚h7+ ♞xh7
29 ♟xh7+ ♟f8 30 ♟h8+ ♟f7 31 ♞e5+.

e) 26...♟f7 27 ♟h8 ♟a5+ 28 ♞d1! ♟e7
29 ♞e5! ♚b6 30 ♟g7+ ♟d8 31 ♚xb6 ♟g4+
32 ♞xg4 ♟xb6 33 ♟xa4.

27 ♟h8+ ♟f7 28 ♚h7+! ♞xh7 29
♟xh7+ ♟f8 30 ♟h8+ ♟f7

30...♟e7 31 ♟g7+ ♟d6 32 e5+ ♚xe5 33
♟xe5+ ♟d7 34 ♟xa4+.

31 ♟h7+ ♟f8 32 ♟h8+ ♟f7 33 ♟h7+??
½-½

Missing 33 ♞e5+!, e.g. 33...♚xe5 (33...♟e7
34 ♟g7+ ♟d6 35 ♞f7+) 34 ♟xd3 ♟g4 35
♟c7+ ♚e7 36 ♟xc5 etc.

Conclusion

The line in Game 22 comes down to taste for
both sides. Tempted by a couple of pawns
Black sends the queen on a shopping spree at
the cost of accelerating White's development
and, ultimately, a piece. The problem for
Black is vulnerability on the dark squares
once the bishop has gone and, while the ex-
tra pawns do a good job of papering over the
cracks in the centre, I get the feeling that
Black is then waiting for White to find a way
of putting the extra fire power to use. The
nature of the variation in Game 23 seems
more difficult for Black to handle than for
White, as an intended positional pawn sacri-
fice on the queenside can easily leave Black a
pawn down. However, White must take care
not to allow Black a drawish bind. Black's
plan falls short in Game 24 – a number of
factors come into play in any game, and what
White loses in a misplaced king is more than
made up for in terms of space and control of
the centre.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Dutch Defence



1 d4 f5

Because the lines in which White opts for an early kingside fianchetto offer Black a certain amount of time and flexibility, I prefer to take on the Dutch on my own terms. Consequently the hyper-aggressive kingside attack characterised by meeting ...g7-g6 by immediately launching the h-pawn is an entertaining yet effective weapon, as can be seen from the examples found in Game 25. Against ...e7-e6 (Game 26) it is logical to attend to the centre with 3 ♘c3, focusing on the key e4-square. This has the advantage of putting the onus on Black to deal with matters in the centre and, while White's advantage might be minimal from a theoretical, fashionable perspective, in practical terms I believe it is equally worthy of a place in any player's armoury as the g3-lines.

Game 25 Zsinka-Timoscenko Budapest 1989

1 d4 f5 2 c4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6

Occasionally Black plays 3...d6 first, perhaps waiting for White's reply before committing to a kingside fianchetto. Note that this position can also be reached via 1 d4 d6 (see Game 29). A good response is 4 ♔g5,

after which Black has a number of moves.

a) 4...g6?! 5 ♔xf6 exf6 gives the game a Trompovsky feel. In Zakharevich-Dukhov, Novgorod 1995, White soon targeted Black's kingside pawns: 6 e3 ♔g7 7 ♔d3 0-0 8 ♘ge2 c6 9 h4! ♔e8 10 h5 ♘d7 (the f6-pawn obstructs both the knight and the bishop) 11 ♖c2 ♘f8 12 hxg6 hxg6 13 g4! fxg4



Black's kingside is falling apart. 14 ♔xg6 ♔e7 15 ♘f4 ♖d7 16 ♔h7+ ♗f7 17 ♘g6 ♔xg6 18 ♔xg6+ ♗f8 19 0-0-0 and White was in the driving seat.

b) 4...e6 5 e4 fxe4 6 ♔xf6 ♖xf6 7 ♘xe4 ♖h6! (7...♖d8 is somewhat passive) 8 ♘f3 ♔e7 9 ♔d3 0-0 10 0-0 ♘c6 11 ♔e1 ♔d7 12 ♔c1 leads to a balanced position, with White having more space and Black the bishop pair.

c) 4...♖b7 5 ♖c2 g6 6 e4 fxe4 7 ♖xe4 ♗g7 8 ♖f3



White has started aggressively and has made a play on the light squares. If Black is afraid of coming under pressure on the kingside he should trade knights immediately, as in 'c2', below.

c1) 8...c6 9 ♖g3! (sensibly avoiding the exchange) 9...♖a5+ 10 ♗d2 ♖c7 11 ♗d3 e5 12 ♖g5! ♖f8 13 dxe5 dxe5 14 0-0-0 with a positional plus to add to the lead in development, Sorin-Saldano, Buenos Aires 1995.

c2) 8...♖xe4 9 ♖xe4 ♖f6 10 ♖c2 c6 11 ♗d3 ♗f5 12 0-0 (12 ♗xf5 ♖a5+) 12...♖d7 13 ♖fe1 0-0 was the more thoughtful continuation in Likavsky-Banas, Bratislava 1993, when White could have taken a slight edge with 14 ♗xf5 gxf5 15 ♖ad1.

c3) 8...c5 9 ♖c3 0-0 10 ♗e2 ♖a5 11 ♗d2 ♖b6 12 d5 ♖g4 13 0-0 ♖de5 14 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 15 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 16 ♗h6 ♖f7 was unclear in Barlov-Topalov, Candas 1992.

4 h4!?

Being able to play in such an audacious fashion and get away with it is a luxury, but this less than subtle thrust is a perfectly playable and dangerous weapon against the would-be Leningrad Dutch. The plan is to break up Black's kingside as quickly as possible – even at the cost of the exchange. Not surprisingly White has good practical chances in this line. Black tends to walk on thin ice in terms of the often crumbling kingside

whereas White has no such problems to overcome.

4...d6

4...♗g7? is seen often, more or less calling White's bluff. As the following examples demonstrate this can be a risky policy.

a) 5 e4!? fxe4 (5...d6) 6 h5 ♖xh5?! 7 ♖xh5 gxh3 8 ♖xh5+ ♗f8 9 ♗h6



White has enough for the exchange.

a1) 9...e6 10 ♖xe4 ♖e7 11 ♖f3 d5, Videki-Lenz, Schneider Memorial 1991. Now 12 ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 13 cxd5 looks difficult for Black. Instead the game went 12 ♖eg5! ♖f6 13 ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 14 ♖e5 h6 (14...♖c6 15 ♖ef7 ♖xd4 16 ♖xh8 ♖c2+ 17 ♖d1 ♖xa1 18 ♖xh7+ ♗f8 19 ♖g6+ ♗e8 20 ♖f7! and White wins, e.g. 20...c5 21 ♖ge5 ♗f8 22 ♖d6 and ♖g6+ is coming) 15 ♖g7 and now 15...♖g8 (not 15...♖f8 16 ♖g4+ ♗h7 17 ♗d3+) would have kept the game going, although White can quickly bring his rook over to the kingside via d3.

a2) In Zsinka-Reinemer, Oberwart 1995, Black's king was in need of company after 9...d6 10 ♖xe4 ♗d7 11 ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 12 ♖g3+ ♗f8 (12...♗f7 13 ♗e2 ♖g8 14 ♖h6) 13 0-0-0 etc.

b) 5 h5 attacks Black's defences as early as the fifth move. Black must weigh up the consequences of White pushing to h6 or landing Black with a backward pawn and vulnerable g5-square after hxg6. Or should Black rule out both possibilities by acc...

the offer?

b1) 5...d4 6 e4 d6 7 e5! dxe4 (7...d5 8 f4 looks ridiculous for Black) 8 dxe4 fxe4 puts Black under a lot of pressure for a mere pawn.

b11) Piket-Onischuk, Biel (blitz): 1999
ended in a quick win for White: 9 ♖h6 ♗xh6
10 ♖xh6



10...c5? 11 d5 ♖c7 12 f4 b5 13 ♕e2 d6 14 e6 (now Black has a weak back rank) 14...♗a6 15 ♕c3 bxc4 (15...♗b7 and ...0-0-0 is imperative) 16 ♖g4! ♗b7 (16...♗f8 17 f5 ♖b6 18 ♗b1) 17 ♖xg6+ ♕d8 18 ♗xh7 1-0. Instead 10...0-0 creates a threat of 11...♗xd2!, but White should play 11 ♖c2 anyway, when 11...e3 12 ♕f3 exf2+ 13 ♖xf2 followed by 0-0-0, ♗d3 and piling the major pieces on the h-file is excellent for White. 10...d6 11 ♖c2 dxe5 12 0-0-0! exd4 13 ♖xe4 is unclear.

b12) 9 f4 adopts a different approach, seeking to round up the e4-pawn and emerge with more space and the h-file. Zsinka-Petro, Sarospatak 1995 continued 9...d5 10 exd5 ♖xd5 11 ♙e3 ♙e6! 12 ♙e2 c6 13 ♙c3 ♖a5 14 a3 ♙d5 15 ♖g4! 0-0 16 ♖h4 ♙f7 17 f5 gxf5 18 ♖h5+ ♙e6 19 ♖xh7 and White was winning. Black has an improvement in 11...♙c6, e.g. 12 ♙e2 ♙g4 13 ♙c3 ♖d7 with chances for both sides.

b2) Black was deservedly punished in Barrett-Tozer, British League 1998, when 5...c6?! 6 h6 ♔f8 7 ♔g5 e6?! 8 d5 ♔c5 9 ♘h3! e5 10 d6 gave him serious development problems.

b3) 5...d6 6 h6 ♔f8 7 ♕g5 e6! (7...♗b7 looks better, when Black is cramped) 8 e4! ♕e7 9 exf5 exf5 10 ♖c2 0-0 11 0-0-0 ♗e4 12 ♔xe7 ♖xe7 13 ♗f3 ♗xc3 14 ♖xc3 ♖f6 15 ♔e1 with a clear advantage to White in Gausel-Vidarsson, Revkjavik 1993.

b4) 5...e6 6 hxxg6 hxxg6 7 ♖xh8+ ♙xh8 and now both 8 ♙g5 ♖e7 9 e4, Aagaard-Winge, Swedish League 1998, and 8 ♖f3 ♙e4 9 ♖d3! ♙xc3 10 bxc3 ♙f6 11 e4, Djurhuus-Silseth, Gausdal 1992 favour White.

b5) 5...0-0? 6 hxxg6 hxxg6 7 f3f3 d6 8 g5
 Qbd7 9 ♗d2 c6, Correa-Rodriguez, Osasco
 1992. This should serve as a good example of
 castling into an attack! 10 ♖h6 Qg4 11
 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 12 Qg5 Qd6f6 13 f3 and Black
 lost material.

b6) 5...gxh5? 6 ♔g5 0-0 7 e3 d6 8 ♖h3 c6 9 ♖f4 with a clear lead in Dao Thien Hai-P. Petran, Hungarian League 1995.

b7) 5... ♖c6 6. h×g6 h×g6 7. ♗xh8+ ♗xh8 8. ♖f3 d6 9. ♗d2!



Schlindwein-Saumweber, Bad Wörishofen 2000. White's queen is coming to either g5 or h6 to attack the g6-pawn and worry Black's king.

Finally there is 4...c5?, providing the king with an escape square. Honestly, Kotronias-Yilmaz, Istanbul 1988 continued 5 d5 d6 6 h5 Qxh5 7 e4 Qf6 8 Qd3 fxe4 9 Qxe4 Qbd7 (9...Qg7 10 Qxf6+ Qxf6 11 Qxh7! Qxh7 12 Qxg6+ Qf7 13 Qh5!) 10 Qxf6+ Qxf6 11 Qxe6+ Qd7 12 Qe2 Qc7 and

White had got what he wanted but was only slightly better thanks to the extra space and superior presence on the light squares.

5 h5

5 e4 is the other consistent follow-up to 4 h4, sticking to the strategy of softening Black up on the light squares. 5...fxe4 6 h5 ♖hx5 7 g4!? (7 ♖hx5 gxh5 8 ♖hx5+ transposes to the main game) 7...♟f6 8 g5 ♟fd7 9 ♖xe4 ♙g7 10 ♖e2 c6 11 ♟f4 ♟f8 12 ♙e3 ♖a5+ 13 ♙d2 ♖c7 14 ♖e2! ♙xd4 15 0-0-0 ♟f7



Piket-Malaniuk, Lvov 1988. White has obvious compensation for the two pawns in the shape of good pieces, more space and Black's severely disrupted development.

5...♟hx5

5...♙g7 leads back to 'b3' in the note to Black's 4th move.

6 ♖hx5!

The point. Again 6 e4 is possible, when 6...fxe4 7 ♖hx5 is the main game. Instead Black has 6...♟f6 7 ♙d3 e5 8 ♙g5 f4 9 ♟f3 ♟bd7 which produced an almost normal position in Summerscale-G.Wall, London MSO 1999. It is not clear that White has enough for the pawn, although Black does lack space and will struggle if White can open lines.

6...gxh5 7 e4

For the exchange White is about to cause Black's king some major inconvenience and, consequently, a serious development problem.

7...fxe4

Others:

a) 7...♙e6 intends to meet 8 ♖hx5+ with 8...♙f7 9 ♖xf5 ♖d7 etc. Therefore White prefers 8 ♙e2.



This way White is guaranteed to unsettle the black king. Black has tried three moves.

a1) 8...♙f7 9 ♙hx5 ♙hx5 10 ♖hx5+ ♟d7 11 ♟f3 c6 12 ♟g5 ♖e8 13 ♖h3 ♟a6 14 exf5! ♟c7 15 ♟e6+ ♟b8 16 ♙f4 with the usual bind in Welling-Nilsen, Taastrup 1997.

a2) 8...fxe4 9 ♙hx5+ ♟d7 10 d5! ♙f5 11 ♙g4 helps White to the light squares but is not as bad for Black as it might look.

a3) 8...♟d7 and now both 9 d5 ♙f7 10 ♙hx5 ♙g6 11 exf5 ♙hx5 12 ♖hx5 ♙g7 13 ♙d2 ♟a6 14 ♟ge2 ♖g8 15 ♖h3 ♙f6 16 ♟f4 ♖e8 17 0-0-0, Welling, G-Ammann, Velden 1995, and 9 ♟h3 ♟c8 10 ♟g5 ♙g8 11 exf5 ♙h6 12 d5 ♙xg5 13 ♙xg5 h6 14 ♙h4 ♙h7 15 ♙d3 ♖f8 16 ♖hx5, Holst-Jessen, Copenhagen 1991, saw the minor pieces enjoy much more activity.

b) 7...♙g7 8 ♖hx5+

b1) 8...♟f8 9 ♟f3 ♖e8 10 ♖h4

b2) 8...♟d7! 9 ♟f3 ♖e8 10 ♖xf5+ ♟d8 looks like the board has been set up incorrectly but is a sensible try from Black to help the struggling kingside. White has a pawn for the exchange and should concentrate on castling queenside and posting his pieces optimally. Even Black's task of actually connecting rooks is an unenviable one.

8 ♖xh5+ ♕d7 9 ♖h3+ e6 10 ♖xe4?

10 d5! is more to the point, e.g. 10...♖c7 (10...♖f6 11 ♖xe4 ♖e5 12 ♔d3) 11 ♖xe4 and Black is yet to stabilise. In the game Black is given time to hold the position steady.

10...♔e7 11 ♔e3 ♖g8! 12 0-0-0 ♕d8



Notwithstanding White's possibility on move ten, the diagram position represents Black's sensible general treatment of the system, with the king 'safely' tucked in behind the centre pawns and no genuine weakness on the light squares. On the downside Black has hardly any space in which to carry out what are awkward manoeuvres, none of the pieces has access to a decent outpost and the rooks are a long way from getting acquainted on the crowded back rank.

13 ♖f3 ♔d7 14 ♔d3 ♕c8 15 ♖h2

The queen cannot share a diagonal with Black's bishop indefinitely so White switches on his own terms.

15...♔c6 16 c5?!

Black still needs to get his rooks into play so White might consider improving (16 a3, for example) before making a commitment in the centre.

16...d5 17 ♔c3 a6 18 ♔f4 ♖d8 19 a3

Since the chief positional justification of White's system is to establish superior piece placement to accompany the significant development lead it makes little sense to then voluntarily walk into a pin with the greedy 19

♔xh7, e.g. 19...♔f6 20 ♔e2 ♖e7 21 ♖h1 ♖g7 and White is having to defend.

19...♔f6 20 ♔c2 ♔e8! 21 ♔a4!? ♔g6 22 ♔xg6 hxg6 23 ♖g3 ♖g8?

23...♖h7! protects c7 and sees Black finally begin to get into the game, the material lead thus growing in significance.

24 ♔xc7!



24...♖xc7 25 ♔b6+ ♕b8

Now after 25...♔d8 26 ♖xa8 ♖xg3 27 fxg3 the d4-pawn is safe.

26 ♔d7+ ♕c8 27 ♔b6+ ♕b8 28 ♔d7+ ♕c8 ½-½

If the precise regrouping that is required from Black in this line can prove difficult for strong players I imagine the club player will be left in dire straits when faced with such an aggressive, no-nonsense attack.

Game 26 Kempinski-Grabarczyk Polish Ch. 2000

1 d4 e6 2 c4 f5

This is a good point at which to have a brief look at Black's alternatives made possible with this particular move order.

a) 2...♔b4+ 3 ♔c3 transposes to the Nimzo after 3...♔f6. Others:

a1) 3...♔xc3+ 4 bxc3 saves White a tempo (a2-a3) on normal lines, and now the Dutch treatment with 4...f5 affords White an interesting possibility in the shape of the aggres-

give 5 e4!? fxe4 6 ♖h5+ g6.



Not very subtle play, I agree, but quite effective nonetheless. White has two moves.

a1) 7 ♖e5 ♘f6 8 ♙g5 ♚f8 9 h4 d6 10 ♖g3 ♖d7 11 ♙e2 ♖f7 12 ♘h3 ♘c6 13 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 14 ♙g5 ♖e7 15 ♘e4 and White's extra space was enough for an edge in L.Sokolov-Romero Holmes, Manila Olympiad 1992.

a12) In Garcia Ilundain-Romero Holmes, Leon 1992 White had compensation after 7 ♖e2 ♘f6 8 ♙f3! exf3 9 ♘xf3 d6 10 ♖c2 ♖e7 11 ♙d3 etc.

a2) 3...c5 4 d5 ♙xc3+ (4...d6 5 e4 ♘f6 6 ♙d3 ♘b7 7 ♙ge2 e5 8 0-0 ♙xc3 9 ♘xc3 and Black did not even have doubled c-pawns to play against in Korchnoi-Barcza, Sochi 1966) 5 bxc3 ♖a5 is another attempt to do without ...♘f6. However, White can safely ignore the threat to the c3-pawn with 6 e4! Best for Black is 6...♘f6 as 6...♖xc3+ loses too much time after 7 ♙d2 ♖e5 8 ♙d3 followed by ♘f3 etc. Then 7 ♙d2! d6 (7...♘xc4? 8 ♖g4 ♘xd2 9 ♖xg7 ♚f8 10 ♘xd2 and White threatens ♘g1-f3-g5xh7) 8 ♙d3 0-0 9 ♘e2 ♚e8, and now 10 ♙g5! exd5 11 ♙xf6 dxe4 12 ♙c2 gxf6 13 ♖xd6 is unclear, while Dorfman suggests that Black avoids the crippling of his kingside pawns with 10...♙g4.

b) Apart from the check Black can also play the English Defence with 2...b6, aimed at unsettling White by employing virtually

any means (usually ...f7-f5) to strike at the broad centre after 3 e4 ♙b7. The game can get very complex very quickly if White overestimates his chances, so I recommend supporting the e-pawn with 4 ♖c2 when Black invariably plays 4...♖h4 5 ♘d2! ♙b4 6 ♙d3 and now:

b1) 6...♖g4 hopes for the weakening 7 g3, but White does better to give up the right to castle. 7 ♖f1! f5 8 f3 ♖h4 9 exf5 and here King, in his excellent book *English Defence*, analyses the following: 9...exf5 10 ♙xf5 ♘c6 11 ♖e4+ ♖xc4 12 ♙xe4 ♘f6 suggesting that Black has some compensation in the form of development. This seems reasonable, but I doubt it is worth a pawn after 13 ♘e2, for example. He also investigates 9...♘c6 10 fxe6 dxe6 11 ♘e2 0-0-0 but does not consider the less compromising 11 d5!, which puts Black on the defensive in view of the menacing check on a4, e.g. 11...exd5 (protecting the bishop along the rank but in so doing opening the e-file) 12 cxd5 ♘e5 13 ♙b5+ ♖d8 14 a3!, or 12...♘ce7 13 ♙b5+ ♖d8 14 ♖e4 with a clear advantage to White in both cases since Black has nothing to show for the pawn and his king is no better than White's.

Levitt-Ehlvest, New York 1994 went 9...♖xd4, when Levitt could have played 10 a3! with much the better game, e.g. 10...♙c5 11 ♘b3 etc.

b2) 6...f5 is the main move, when 7 ♘gf3 presents a further branch.

b21) 7...♖g4 8 0-0 ♙xd2 9 ♘xd2 ♘c6 10 f3 ♖h4 11 ♖c3 gives White an edge after either 11...♖f6 12 e5 ♖h4 13 f4 ♘h6 14 ♘f3 or 11...♘f6 12 b4 (12 d5!)?.

b22) In reply to 7...♖h5 King mentions 8 0-0 ♘f6 9 exf5 ♙xd2 10 ♘xd2 ♖g4, with an accompanying assessment of unclear from Kengis. In fact this looks like an interesting approach for White after the thematic 11 d5! Already a pawn up, White should be prepared to return one in order to frustrate Black on the long diagonal, while any further opening of the position benefits the bishop

pair. After 11...exd5 12 ♖e4+ ♜f6 13 ♙e2! White proceeds with development at the cost of the queen with 14 ♜f3, when Black's kingside attack disappears and it is his own king that is poorly placed. Alternatively 11...♙a6 12 h3! ♜h5 13 fxe6 dxe6 14 ♜a4+ ♜f7 15 ♙e4! and 13...♙b4 14 exd7+ are not to be recommended for Black.

b23) 7...♙xd2+ 8 ♙xd2 ♜g4 is seen most frequently, resulting in a complicated position after 9 ♙e5 ♜g2 10 0-0-0



Then 10...♙xe4? does not work in view of 11 ♜hg1 ♙xd3 12 ♜xd3 ♜e4 (Black's queen is walking on thin ice after 12...♜xf2 13 ♙f3) 13 ♜g3 g6 14 ♙xg6!, when White was already winning in Vujacic-Le Blancq, London Lloyds Bank 1991. Instead Black must play 10...fxe4 11 ♙e2 when there is a decision to make as to which knight to bring out first. 11...♙c6 12 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 13 d5 ♙b7 (13...exd5 14 cxd5 ♙xd5 15 ♜xc7 gives White a clear advantage according to ECO) 14 ♙h5+ g6 was seen in Remlinger-Rogers, Philadelphia 1986, when 15 ♜c3 would have been decisive, e.g. 15...♙f6 16 ♜xf6 ♜f8 17 ♜g7. 11...♙f6 has done reasonably okay for Black. However, 12 ♜hg1 looks more fun for White. First 12...♜xf2 runs into the unlikely 13 ♙h6!, e.g. 13...♜xh2 (13...gxf6?? 14 ♙h5+; 13...g6 14 ♜gf1 ♜xh2 15 ♙g7) 14 ♙xg7 ♜g8 15 ♙xf6 ♜xg1 16 ♙h5+! ♜xh5 17 ♜xg1 (Keene, Plaskett and Tisdall) and Black is in trouble (17...♜h6+ 18 ♙g5 ♜h3

19 ♜f2 ♜f2 20 ♙f6!). This leaves 12...♜xh2 when King offers the following: 13 ♜h1 ♜xf2 14 ♙h6! e3 15 ♙df1 ♜g3 (15...♙xh1 16 ♜xf2 exf2 17 ♙xg7 ♙e4 18 ♜d1 ♜g8 19 ♙xf6 ♜g1 20 ♙f1 favours White, e.g. 20...d6 21 ♙g4 ♙g2 22 ♙e3) 16 ♜hg1 ♜h2 17 ♙xg7 ♜g8 18 ♜d1 ♙e4 19 ♙h5+.



Then 19...♙e7 20 ♙f7+ ♜d6 21 ♙f3 and White is winning. King does not mention 19...♙d8, when White wins with 20 ♙f6+! ♙xf6 21 ♙xg8+ ♙xg8 22 ♙f8+ ♙e7 23 ♙e8+ ♙f6 24 ♙g4+ or 23...♙d6 24 ♙f7+ ♙c6 25 ♜a4+.

3 ♙c3 ♙f6

In reply to 3...♙b4 White has two choices. a) 4 ♜c2 ♙f6 5 ♙d2 0-0 6 e3 is Kempinski's approach, his game against Ostrowski, Frydek Mistek 1997 continuing 6...b6 7 a3 ♙xc3 8 ♙xc3 ♙b7 9 f3 a5 10 ♙d3 a4 11 ♙e2 with a pleasant position for White. Black's problem here is that White's bishops are not properly contained, making it awkward for Black to contest the centre without opening the game too much, and, therefore, easier for White to expand.

b) 4 e4! leads to 'a1' in the note to Black's second move after 4...♙xc3+ 5 bxc3. This leaves 4...fxe4 5 ♜g4 (5 ♜h5+ ♜f8!?) when 5...♙f6 6 ♜xg7 ♜g8 7 ♜h6 ♜g6 8 ♜h4 ♙c6 9 ♙ge2 d5 10 ♙g5 dxc4 11 0-0-0 was unclear in Szabo-Grob, Vienna 1947, while 5...♜e7 6 ♜xe4 ♙f6 is safer and approximately even.

4 f3!?

Again White has a less committal option, namely 4 ♖c2.

a) 4...d5 puts a stop to e2-e4. Then 5 ♙f4 c6 6 e3 gives White a definite edge in the Stonewall set up after either 6...♙e7 7 ♙d3 ♙e4 8 ♙ge2 0-0 9 g4! (the sober 9 0-0 is fine) 9...♙h4 10 ♙g3 ♙h8 11 ♙f4 ♙a6 12 a3 ♙c7 13 0-0-0, when White looked more menacing in Miton-Kruger, World Junior Ch. Yerevan 2000, or 6...♙d6 7 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 8 ♙d3 ♙e4 9 ♙xe4 fxe4 10 f3, as in Ryskin-Dluski, Karvina 1992.

b) 4...b6 looks to monitor the e4-square from a distance. Loginov-Driamin, Aratovsky Memorial 1999 went 5 e3 ♙b7 6 f3 c5 7 d5! when the clearance 7...exd5 8 cxd5 ♙xd5 9 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 10 ♙xf5 favoured White.

Returning to 4 f3, the intention is not to automatically play for e2-e4, rather to cover the e4-square in anticipation of ...♙b4 and/or a queenside fianchetto from Black (when the long diagonal is shortened and White's bishop need no longer protect g2).

4...♙b4 5 ♙d2 0-0 6 a3 ♙xc3

6...♙e7 allows 7 e4.

7 ♙xc3

Taking time to recapture on c3 with the bishop fits in well with f2-f3 because the annoying ...♙e4 is not possible. Additionally, the bishop's presence on c3 dissuades Black from challenging the centre with ...c7-c5 or ...e7-e5, yet these are natural after the exchange of Black's dark-squared bishop.

7...b6

Despite looking perfectly natural the queenside fianchetto has been criticised in this position. The alternative is to concentrate on the centre, e.g. 7...d6 8 e3 ♙e8 9 ♙d2 ♙c6 10 ♙d3 e5 11 ♙e2.

We are following the game Kempinski-Gleizerov, Rilton Cup 2000. Black has succeeded in staking a claim for the centre but must be careful not to unleash his opponent's bishops. White's flexibility is such that

it is possible to castle on either side. The game continued 11...e4 12 ♙c2 b5! 13 cxb5 ♙e7 14 fxe4 ♙xe4 15 ♙xe4 fxe4 16 d5! ♙xb5 17 ♙f4 and White's bishop had come to life as per plan.

8 e3 ♙b7 9 ♙d2 a5 10 ♙h3

From h3 the knight can go to f2 (adding to White's control of e4) as well as f4.

10...a4 11 ♙d3 ♙c6 12 0-0 ♙a5 13 ♙ae1



Having completed his development White is ready to push his e-pawn in order to go on the offensive, a skirmish in the centre likely to result in opening lines for the bishops (which both point toward Black's king). Black's bishop has no positive influence on the game and he is not well placed to face advancing pawns.

13...♙b3

Consistent. Unfortunately for Black it takes too long to generate any effective play on the queenside, whereas White's game is quite easy to conduct.

14 ♙c2

Now 15 e4 will pack more punch since after 15...fxe4 16 fxe4 White threatens to unleash the queen and bishop with e4-e5. Of course, White is going to open up with e3-e4 anyway, and after 14...d5 15 cxd5 Black will still be hit with 16 e4. Faced with an unenviable situation Black seeks counterplay.

14...c5 15 d5!

Closing out Black's bishop and accentuat-

ing the power of his own, the idea being to concentrate on the area of the board where Black is least able to defend himself. White's next will be 16 e4, clamping down on d5 as well as further opening up the position.

15...exd5 16 cxd5 ♖xd5

16...♖xd5 17 ♗c4?! ♖h8 18 ♖xb3 axb3 19 ♖xb3 ♖xc3 is equal but 17 ♖xf5 h6 18 ♖h7+ ♖h8 19 ♖e4 gives White a clear edge. 17 e4!?

A move with which White demonstrates confidence in his position, as the simple 17 ♖xf5 ♖c6 18 ♖g5 ♖xf5 19 ♖xf5 is very good. Instead he puts his faith in the power of the bishop pair.

17...♖c6

After 17...fxc4 18 fxc4 c4 (18...♖e6 19 e5 c4 20 exf6 cxd3 21 ♖xd3 gxf6 22 ♖g3+ ♖h8 23 ♖g5) 19 exd5 cxd3 20 ♖xd3 White's excellent pieces put Black under considerable pressure, e.g. 20...♖c5 21 ♖d4 d6 22 ♖f4.

18 ♖f4

18 e5 ♖d5 19 ♖xf5 wins back the pawn with interest, but after 18 exf5 d5 Black's pawns are rolling. The text simply improves the knight before taking further action.

18...b5

Black's counter is too late. White's bishops dominate.

19 e5



19...♖d5

19...♖e8 20 ♖xf5! g6 does not work in view of 21 ♖xg6 ♖xf4 (21...hxg6 22 ♖xg6+

♖g7 23 ♖h5) 22 ♖xh7+, e.g. 22...♖h8 (22...♖f8 23 ♖g6 ♖f7 24 e6 wins for White) 23 e6+ ♖d4 (23...♖g7 24 e7 ♖e8 25 ♖g6 ♖f7 26 ♖f2) 24 e7 ♖c7 25 ♖g6.

20 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 21 ♖xf5 b4

21...h6 22 ♖d1 ♖c6 23 ♖fe1 and 23 ♖e6+! do not help Black's lot.

22 ♖xh7+

Not 22 axb4 cxb4 23 ♖xb+? ♖b6+.

22...♖h8 23 ♖d2 bxa3 24 bxa3 ♖xd2

24...♖xf3 25 ♖g6.

25 ♖xd2 ♖xf3

25...♖xh7 26 ♖xd5 is equally decisive.

26 ♖b1 ♖h5 27 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 28 ♖g5 ♖e8

28...g6 29 g4.

29 ♖f5 g6 30 ♖f6+ ♖g8 31 ♖a2+ ♖h7 32 g4! ♖xg4 33 ♖f7 ♖f8 34 ♖xg6+ ♖h8 35 ♖e4 1-0

Conclusion

The lines discussed in Game 25 will come as a pleasant surprise to players wishing to punish Black for starting the game with such an ugly move. The material investment needed to break open Black's defences and harass the king is a fair price to pay, and Black's defensive task is far from easy in that there is the general long-term problem of how to actually get the pieces into the game to add to the more pressing matters of king safety. With precise, calm play Black should be able to rebuild, but by then White tends to make the minor pieces perform well.

It is important to get a feel of the lines that delay – or leave out – ...f7-f5 because some players who begin with 1 d4 e6 could well be hoping for 2 e4, for example, with a French, or 2 g3, when 1 d4 f5 2 e4 and 2 ♖g5 have been avoided. As for Game 26 itself, concentrating on the centre is sensible and presents White with a ready-made plan to undermine Black's structure with d4-d5 or to expand with e3-e4 in order to soften Black up on the light squares (particularly the b1-h7 diagonal).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Other Defences



Not all four defences in this chapter enjoy the same level of popularity among top GMs, but the more varied tastes of club, league, and weekend chess, for instance, account for a more level playing field in the real chess world. Moreover, the better an opening's reputation does not necessarily mean that it is more difficult to meet. This is the case with the Benko Gambit, for example, which is the subject of Game 27. Summerscale's 4 f3 is almost unheard of yet it is a perfectly viable alternative to the popular 5 f3. In fact I prefer 4 f3 out of the two. The Budapest (Game 28) has lost much of its spark at international level, and here we look at a line for White that is strong and fun. The Modern has to be taken seriously since it is so closely related to the King's Indian. Consequently in Game 29, where we also investigate Black's alternatives to 2...g6 after 1 d4 d6, we make use of an aggressive approach that comes in handy in a number of situations.

Game 27

Summerscale-Mannion Scottish Ch. Edinburgh 1999

1 d4 f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 f3

Not even mentioned in *Nunn's Chess Openings*, I am sure this move will continue to

grow in popularity over the next few years. The fact that the well prepared Summerscale, amongst others, has worked with 4 f3 is indicative of the variation's soundness. Obviously White plans to erect a centre with pawns on f3, e4 and d5, a strategy very similar to the system with 5 f3. However, the difference here is that by declining the gambit (missing out the moves 4 cxb5 a6) White proceeds with development without permitting Black the traditional queenside counterplay. Of course Black is not put under any immediate pressure, but the a-file is not available and White, by addressing the centre so quickly, is ready to face a challenge involving ...e7-e6.



4...bxc4

The natural response if Black is to generate counterplay by using the f1-a6 diagonal or by contesting the centre. There are two alternatives.

a) 4...b4?! closes the queenside while White still has his pawn on a2, thus leaving Black at the mercy of a well timed a2-a3. Meanwhile White has the makings of a formidable centre. After 5 e4 d6 we have two contrasting examples.

a1) 6 a3 ♖a5 7 ♙e3 g6 8 ♘d2 ♙g7 9 ♘b3 ♖a4 and now in D.Gurevich-Vasto, Chicago 1989 White could have justified his play thus far with 10 axb4! ♖xb4+ 11 ♙d2 ♖b7 12 ♘e2! 0-0 13 ♘c3 etc. White's knights control key squares on the queenside, with a future ♘b3-a5-c6 a possibility that Black must consider.

a2) In Summerscale-D'Costa, British Ch. 1999, White elected to keep his options open on the queenside, exploiting the early grip on the centre and a space advantage by preparing for a kingside offensive: 6 ♙e3 ♘bd7 7 ♘e2 a5 8 ♘g3 g6 9 ♙e2 ♙g7 10 ♖c1!?, when Black chose 10...h5 rather than be subjected to a ready-made kingside attack in the case of 10...0-0 11 ♙h6 followed by the launch of the h-pawn. The game continued (10...h5) 11 0-0 ♖c7 12 ♘d2 ♙b7 13 h3 ♙a6 14 f4! ♙h6 15 ♘f3 ♙g7 16 ♙d3 ♘h7 17 ♖c2 0-0 18 ♙a1 a4 19 ♙c1! and White, almost primed to let loose with e4-e5 and/or f4-f5, was clearly better. Moreover 19...♙b6 20 ♖e2 b3 21 a3 left every one of White's pieces ready for action on the kingside and half of Black's idling on the other wing.

b) 4...e6 has another go at White's centre. 5 e4 exd5 6 cxd5 c4. This thrust is seen in the 5 f3 variation after (1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 f3) 5...e6 ♘c4 c4!?, but the diagram position is significantly different in that White's c-pawn has journeyed to d5, whereas in the main line the pawn is distracted westward: c2-c4xb5 etc. Consequently in the diagram position White has a strong centre, thus making counterplay more difficult for Black

to create. 7 ♙e3 ♙b4+ 8 ♘c3 ♖e7 9 ♖d2 d6 10 ♘ge2 ♙d7 11 ♘d4 0-0 12 ♙e2 ♘a6 13 0-0 was excellent for White in S.Larsen-U.Nielsen, Danish League 1994.

5 e4 d6

Again 5...e6 is possible. 6 ♘c3 and now:

a) 6...d6 7 ♙xc4 e5 wastes a tempo and is too passive. White responded immediately in Summerscale-G.Morris, Wales 2000: 8 f4! ♘bd7 9 ♘f3 exf4 10 ♙xf4 a6 11 0-0 ♘b6



Compared with Game 30 Black is already in dire straits. 12 e5! ♘h5 (12...♙xc4 13 exf6, or 12...dxe5 13 ♘xe5 ♙xc4 14 ♖a4 ♙d7 15 ♖xc4) 13 ♙e1! ♘xf4 14 exd6+ and White is winning. A sample line is 14...♙e6 15 dxe6 fxe6 16 ♙d5! ♙c8 (16...♘fxd5 17 ♘xd5 ♙xd6 18 ♙xe6+ ♘f7 19 ♘xb6 ♘xe6 20 ♖d5+) 17 ♙b7 ♙b8 18 ♙c6+ ♘f7 19 ♘e5+ ♘g8 20 ♖f3 ♖f6 21 ♙ad1 etc. Instead the game ended 14...♙e7 15 ♙xe7+ ♘f8 16 ♘e5 ♖xd6 17 ♙xf7+ ♘g8 18 ♙xf4 ♘xc4 (18...♖xe5 19 ♙e4) 19 ♙xc4 ♖xe5 20 ♙e4 1-0.

b) 6...exd5 7 e5. Bringing about another similarity, this time with the line 4 cxb5 a5 f3 e6 6 e4 exd5 7 e5. Again the key difference is good news for White, since the knight is already on c3 (hitting d5). Consequently the 'usual' 7...♖e7 here meets with 8 ♖e2 ♘g8 9 ♘xd5. After 7...♘h5 8 ♖xd5 ♘c6 White secures a safe advantage with either 9 ♘e4 or 9 f4 (both directed against 9...♖h4+), while 9 e6! looks fun. In Rabinovich-Gershon, Is-

rael 1997 Black tried to turn the move order to his advantage with 7...d4 8 exf6 ♖xf6 9 ♖e2+! ♖e6 10 ♖b5 ♖a6 11 ♖xe6+ fxe6 12 ♖xc4 d5 13 ♖e2 e5 with a wall of pawns for the piece. However, materially speaking Black has only two pawns for the knight, and now 14 b3!, preventing 14...c4, would have been quite promising for White.

c) 6...♖b7 7 ♖xc4 ♖xd5 8 ♖xd5 (8 exd5 ♖h4+) 8...exd5 9 exd5 d6 10 ♖ge2 ♖e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♖g3 g6 was fine for Black in Gabriel-Tagatz, Germany 1997, but 8 ♖xd5 makes more sense, using d5 as an outpost.

6 ♖xc4

White chose to post a knight on c4 in Chernosvitov-Boehle, Dortmund 1993. After 6 ♖a3 g6 7 ♖e2 ♖g7 8 ♖c3 0-0 9 ♖xc4 ♖a6 Black did not like the look of this piece, although the knight's replacement proved even stronger: 10 ♖e2 ♖xc4 11 ♖xc4 ♖bd7 12 f4 ♖b8 13 0-0



13...♖b4 14 ♖e2 ♖c7 15 a3 ♖bb8 16 ♖a2! ♖b6 17 ♖b5 and White was simply too strong on the light squares, for which Black lacked sufficient play in compensation.

6...g6 7 ♖e2 ♖g7 8 0-0

The automatic 8 ♖bc3 is another possibility. Reshevsky-Ernst, Lugano 1987 continued 8...0-0 9 0-0 ♖a6 10 ♖b5 ♖f6 11 ♖ec3 ♖b6 12 ♖e2 ♖8d7 13 a4 and Black was a little tied up on the queenside. White's sturdy centre rules out an attack on the e4-pawn and Black's pieces are not properly placed to

challenge with ...e7-e6. After 13...♖b8 14 a5 ♖c8 15 ♖a4 ♖b7 16 ♖a3!? (16 ♖xd6? exd6 17 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 18 ♖xd7 ♖d4+) 16...♖b8 17 ♖b3 White had succeeded in more than just taming Black's Benko queenside ambitions.



Notice that the impressive g2-f3-e4-d5 pawn chain needs minimal support and affords White space in which to operate on both sides of the board. Black, meanwhile, does not enjoy the desired play in the more open position that often results from 4 cxb5 a6. There followed 17...♖e5 18 ♖d4 ♖c7 (18...♖x13+ 19 ♖x13 ♖xb3 20 ♖xa6 ♖xc3 21 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 22 bxc3 ♖xc3 23 ♖h6 is not too clear because Black has a rook and two pawns for two bishops, but White's pieces are active) 19 ♖xa6 cxd4 20 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 21 ♖e2 and Black was struggling. Instead of 9...♖a6 Black should consider either knight to d7 followed by evicting the bishop from c4, a logical plan that exploits the 'natural' but in fact artificial placement of White's knights.

8...0-0 9 ♖ec3!?

I like this set up. Clearly White wants a knight on c3, but this does not mean that the role should always go to the queen's knight. The c4-square is also important and White is advised to monitor/occupy it with more than the bishop, and this can be done with ♖a3 (which also covers b5).

9...♖bd7 10 a4

White judges that the b4-square is a price

worth paying in return for the constant menace of a4-a5, after which the often useful b6-square is no longer available to Black.

10...♖b8

Introducing the possibility of ...♖b4 to contest the c4-square. White carries on with his queenside strategy.

11 ♖a3

Note that as well as increasing White's grip on b5 – which Black cannot realistically cover with ...a7-a6 because this creates a target and leaves a potential hole on b6 after a4-a5 – the knight on a3 does not get in the way of the dark-squared bishop, which White is holding back until an appropriate post becomes apparent.

11...♗e8

Preparing a typical Benko manoeuvre aimed at (eventually) sending the knight to b4 or even leaving it on c7. The other advantage, of course, is that the g7-bishop now has more light on the long diagonal.

12 ♖c2 ♗c7 13 ♖g5



Tying Black down to the newly pinned e7-pawn.

13...♗e5?!

Once White retreats his bishop the knight serves no other purpose on e5 than as a tempo-gaining target for the f3-pawn. If Black wants to keep White busy 13...♗b6 14 ♖e2 ♖a6 is okay, when 15 ♗ab5 justifies White's pattern of development on the queenside and results in a pull in the middle-

game after the sensible 15...♗d7.

14 ♖e2 ♖a6 15 f4!

A well timed attack that switches attention to the kingside before Black's advancing knights become a problem. Now retreating with 15...♗d7 gives White time for 16 ♗ab5! (threatening ♗xa7-c6 etc.), so Black keeps going forward.

15...♗g4 16 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 17 f5!?



Having lured the bishop into the heart of his kingside White cuts off the escape route, introducing the threat of h2-h3, when the bishop has nowhere to run.

17...gxh5 18 h3 ♖h5 19 exf5 f6

Not a great way to save the stranded bishop since its partner is now locked away. Being reduced to closing in the traditionally powerful bishop is every Benko player's nightmare, but prefacing ...f7-f6 with 19...♖d4+ runs the risk of leaving Black's king without the necessary protection. For example after 20 ♖h1 f6 21 ♖h6 ♗b4 22 ♖e4 ♖e8 23 ♖h4 White wins as 23...♖f7 24 ♖g4+ is final, while 21...♖e8 22 ♗d3! threatens both 23 ♖xa6 and the deadly check on g3.

20 ♖e3 ♗d7 21 ♗c4

Thanks to White's clever knight deployment both c3 and c4 offer perfect outposts, a factor that Black immediately hopes to address.

21...♖b4 22 ♗d3 ♖fb8 23 ♖ae1 ♗c7 24 ♖c1 ♖f7



With his queenside well protected White is able to enjoy a considerable space advantage that gives him much more than his fair share of freedom both in the centre and on the kingside. Black has weaknesses on e6 and e7 and his once mighty dark-squared bishop is awful (the other bishop is not much better). In order to convert his advantages White needs to step up a gear and find an effective plan.

25 ♖a5!

After 25 ♖a5 followed by doubling on the e-file Black is reduced to passivity. The text is aggressive but perhaps premature.

25...♙d4! 26 ♖g3 ♖h8?

Under the circumstances, of course, Black – a Benko expert – can be forgiven for believing that everything has gone wrong, particularly as White's last move homes in on the pinned, disgraced bishop. However, for better or worse Black has to hit out with 26...♙d4! when White needs to find a breakthrough. 27 ♙h6 ♖e8 28 ♙xd5 ♙xd5, for example, seems to hold for Black.

27 ♙c6

Now White gets what he wants.

27...♙e8 28 ♙xd4 cxd4 29 ♖e2 ♙xa4 30 ♙f4 ♙xd5 31 ♙xd4 ♙b5 32 ♙f2 a5 33 ♙f4 ♙b4

After 33...♙xf4 34 ♙xf4 White is well on top. The problem for Black – apart from material down! – is that he is playing without his g7-bishop.

34 ♖e6 ♙xe6 35 ♙xe6 ♙d3 36 ♙f1

White is winning. The inevitable outcome is a matter of time and technique.

36...♙c5 37 ♙xd3 ♙xc1+ 38 ♙d1 ♙xb2 39 ♙dx6 ♙g8 40 ♙d2 ♙b4 41 ♖h1 ♙f8 42 ♙d4! ♙b7 43 ♙g4 ♙xg4 44 ♙xg4 ♙b1+ 45 ♖h2 ♙b8+ 46 ♙g3 ♙b5 47 ♙f2 ♙b8+ 48 g3

Now that White's king position has been tidied up it is time to use the 'extra' rook.

48...a4 49 ♙a6 ♙b5 50 ♙a8 ♙g7 51 ♙c2!

Threatening 52 ♙xa4.

51...♙b3 52 ♙xb3 axb3 53 ♙b8 ♖f7 54 ♙xb3 ♙h6

The bishop finally enjoys freedom, but now the game is effectively over because the rook is too strong.

55 ♖g2 ♙d2 56 ♖f3 h5 57 ♙d3 ♙c1 58 ♙d4 ♙g5 59 h4 ♙c1 60 g4!

Creating a passed pawn.

60...hxg4+ 61 ♙xg4 e6 62 ♖e4 ♙h6 63 ♙g6 ♙f8 64 h5 exf5+ 65 ♖xf5 1-0

The Budapest Gambit is tricky and designed to bully White from the very beginning. I am recommending 4 ♙f4 because if Black insists on mixing it White – ultimately – has the most fun, whereas Black's most precise line gives White the bishop pair and a comfortable advantage.

Game 28

Stohl-Socko

MK Cafe Cup 1999

1 d4 ♙f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♙g4

Less sound is 3...♙e4, when 4 a3 is one good move.

a) 4...b6 5 ♙f3 ♙b7 6 ♙bd2 a5 (6...f5 7 exf6 ♙xf6 8 g3 ♙c5 9 ♙g2 ♙e7 10 0-0 a5 11 b3 0-0 12 ♙b2 ♙c6 13 ♙c2, Flear-Spinelli, Asti 1997, and 6...♙c5 7 b4 ♙e6 8 ♙b2 g6 9 ♙c2 ♙g7 10 e3 0-0 11 ♙e2 ♙e8 12 0-0, Caposciutti-Toulzac, Montecatini Terme 1998, both left White with an extra

pawn for nothing) 7 ♖xe4 ♙xe4 8 g3 ♖c6 9 ♙g2 ♖xe5 10 ♗d4 ♖xf3+ 11 exf3 ♙c6 12 0-0 ♗e7 13 ♙h6!.



This must have been an unpleasant surprise for Black in Ricardi-Perez Pietronave, Olivos 1993.

b) 4...♖c6 5 ♖f3 d6 6 ♗c2! calls Black's bluff.

b1) 6...d5 7 e3 is clearly better for White after either 7...♙g4 8 cxd5 ♗xd5 9 ♙c4 ♗a5+ 10 b4! ♙xb4+ 11 axb4 ♗xa1 12 ♗xe4 ♙xf3 13 gxf3 ♗xe5 14 ♙b5, or 7...♙e6 8 ♙e2 ♗e7 9 0-0 0-0 10 ♗d1 f5 11 b4 dxc4 12 ♖bd2! as in Yrjola-Hamdouchi, Manila Olympiad 1992.

b2) 6...♙f5 7 ♖c3 and now:

b21) 7...♖g3 8 e4 ♖xh1 9 exf5 dxe5 10 ♙e3 ♙e7 11 ♗e4 0-0 12 ♙d3 and White finally collects the knight after 0-0-0.

b22) 7...♖xf2 8 ♗xf5 ♖xh1 9 e4! fxe6 10 ♗xe6+ ♗e7 11 ♗d5 h6 12 g3 g5 13 ♙g2 also gave White two juicy pieces for a rook in Reshevsky-Bisguier, New York Rosenwald 1955.

c) 4...♗h4 5 g3 ♗h5 6 ♙g2:

c1) 6...♗xe5 7 ♗c2 ♖f6 8 ♖f3 is typical. Black loses too much time. Van Wely-Alburt, New York 1994 was pretty awful for Black after 8...♗h5 9 ♖c3 ♙e7 10 h3 c6 11 e4 d6 12 b4 etc.

c2) In reply to 6...♖c7 7 ♖c3 ♖c6 White got greedy in Gyimesi-Kahn, Budapest 1995, but his opponent resigned four moves later:

8 f4 d6 9 ♖b5 ♖c6 10 ♙f3 ♗g6 11 e4 f5? (to be fair, 'resigns' is an option in any case) 12 ♙h5 1-0.

4 ♙f4 ♙b4+

An indication that we are in for some fireworks.

a) 4...g5 is justified in terms of the Budapest spirit if not for accuracy. Black seeks to regain the pawn with a fianchetto, but the (voluntary) damage to the kingside is too big a price to pay. 5 ♙g3 ♙g7 6 ♖f3 ♖c6 7 ♖c3 (7 h4! is also enough for an advantage, but this is simpler) 7...♖xe5 8 ♖xe5:

a1) 8...♖xe5 9 e3 d6 10 h4 h6 11 ♗b3 0-0 12 hxg5 hxg5 13 ♗d1 ♙e6 14 ♖b5! f5 15 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 16 ♖d4 gave White a nagging edge in Korchnoi-Yukhtman, USSR Ch. 1959.

a2) 8...♙xe5? 9 ♙xe5 ♖xe5 10 ♗d4 d6 11 c5 ♗f6 (11...0-0 12 0-0 ♙e6 13 e3 ♖g4 14 ♗d2!) 12 ♗d1 0-0 13 cxd6 ♗xd6 14 ♗xd6 cxd6 15 e3 ♙e6 16 ♗xd6 ♗fd8 17 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 18 ♙e2 ♙c4 19 ♙xc4 ♖xc4 20 b3 ♖e5 21 ♗e2 and White was on his way to the full point, Bulthaupt-Preuss, Germany 1998.

b) 4...♖c6 5 ♖f3 ♙b4+ is Black's most sensible course, when I prefer to deny Black the satisfaction of creating an unclear situation after 6 ♖c3 ♙xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♗e7 8 ♗d5 ♗a3 etc. Instead 6 ♖bd2 is bad news for Black, who is practically forced into defending a position lacking in counterplay.

b1) 6...f6 7 exf6 ♗xf6 8 e3 ♗xb2 9 ♙e2 d6 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♖b3 ♗f6 and now Gleizerov-Bosch, Cappelle la Grande 1996 saw White earn himself a clear advantage after 12 c5! ♙c3 13 ♗c1 ♙e5 14 ♖xe5 dxe5 15 ♙g3 ♗g6 16 ♗c2 ♙f5 17 ♗c3.

b2) 6...♗e7! 7 e3 ♖xe5 8 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 9 ♙e2. It is a common feature in gambits for one side to return the material for an alternative advantage. In this case Black is slightly behind in development and the b4-bishop is awkwardly placed in the event of a future a2-a3 and subsequent queenside expansion from

White. As we will see in the examples that follow, the c4-pawn has a major role to play in this variation, often used as a battering ram to disrupt Black's pawns. 9...b6 looks premature since after 10 0-0 dxd2 11 Wxd2 White cannot be denied a clear advantage, e.g. 11... b7 12 b4 a5 (12...d6 13 c5! dxc5 14 bxc5, intending 14... Wxc5 15 Bac1 We7 16 Wc3) 13 c5! axb4 14 Wxb4 0-0 15 Bfc1 , Lazarev-Plesce, Berne 1994, or 11...d6 12 e4! b7 13 f3 0-0 14 g3 15 15 exf5 Bxf5 16 f4 Qc6 17 Bae1 as in Fedorowicz-Shain, New York 1991.

9...d6 10 0-0 d7 11 a3 (11 Qb3 a4) 11... dxd2 12 Wxd2 f6 concentrates on the e5-square. In Ivanchuk-Epishin, Terrassa 1991 White went for the thematic queenside push: 13 b4 Bd8 14 h5 + Qf7 15 c5! b5 16 Bfd1 d5 (16...dxc5?? loses a piece to 17 Wxd8 +) and now 17 a4 is the simplest way for White to stay in the driving seat.

The main line runs 9...0-0 10 0-0 with the following possibilities:

b21) 10... Qg6 hopes for the greedy 11 axc7 ?? d6 but after 11 g3 Black's lot has not been improved. The consistent 11... d6 removes White's formidable bishop but 12 axd6 Wxd6 13 Qe4 ! is very pleasant for White, e.g. 13... Wxd1 14 Bfxd1 d6 15 Qc3 Bd8 16 f4 c6 17 Bd2 Qf8 18 Bd1 Qe7 19 Qf2 when White is ready to further increase the territorial advantage by advancing pawns on both flanks. Alternatively, White is also happy to keep the queens on the board: 13... We7 14 Qc3 c6 15 Wd4 d6 16 Bd1 Bd8 17 f4! with several pluses for White in Petursson-Brestian, Moscow Olympiad 1994, when White was invited to demonstrate his idea after 17...f5 18 e4 fxe4 19 f5! Qh4 20 f6 gxf6 21 Qxe4 etc.

b22) 10...d6 11 Qb3 b6 12 a3 c5 13 Qxc5 bxc5 (13...dxc5? 14 Wd5 Qg6 15 Wxa8 Qxf4 16 Wf3) 14 b4 and now both 14... Qd7 15 f3 / g4 and 14...cxb4 15 axb4 b7 16 Wd4 are difficult for Black.

b23) 10...a5 11 Qb3 a4 12 a3 a5 (after

12...axb3 13 axb4 Bxa1 14 Wxa1 the b3-pawn soon drops) 13 Qd4 b6 14 Qb5 d6 15 Qc3 We8 16 Qd5 a5



Rogozenko-Moldovan, Ciocaltea Memorial 2000. 17 Wd4 Qd7 (better is 17... Qc6 18 Wd3 Qe5 19 Wc2 although White is well ahead) 18 d3 Qc5 19 c2 c6 ? (19...f6) and now White missed 20 Qf6 ! gxf6 21 h6 ! d7 22 Wh4 Qe6 23 hxh7 ! Qxh7 24 g5 ! Qg8 25 xf6 Qg7 26 Wh6 and mates.

b24) 10... dxd2 11 Wxd2 d6 is the most popular continuation, when White has a few moves that guarantee a long-term lead. Quite logical is 12 Bfd1 !, e.g. 12...b6 13 b4 b7 14 c5! White's thematic advance exploits his supremacy on the dark squares. Then 14...dxc5 15 bxc5 Wxc5 16 Bac1 We7 17 Wc3 Qg6 18 Wxc7 Wxc7 19 axc7 sees the bishop pair dominate, while 15...bxc5? 16 Wb2 Qg6 17 h6 gxh6 18 Wxb7 leaves Black with awful pawns and a knight that is no match for the bishop. In Rogers-Dreyer, Auckland 1992, Black stood considerably worse in the ending after 15... Qg6 16 Wd7 ! Wxd7 17 Bxd7 Qxf4 18 exf4 Bac8 19 cxb6! axb6 20 Bc1 Ba8 21 c4 . The problem for Black in this line is that White's bishops have too much power, the dark-squared bishop being particularly strong because it cannot be challenged. Consequently any opening of the position is sure to benefit White, hence White's eagerness to break open the queen-

side with c4-c5, even at the cost, albeit temporary, of a pawn. Nevertheless this is really the best that Black can hope for in the 4 ♖f4 variation, as the continuation in the main game, despite being rather exciting, is worse for Black.

5 ♘d2 d6?

The beginning of what seems to be an unreliable line. With 5...♘c6 Black returns to the safer waters of 'b' in the note to Black's fourth move.

6 exd6 ♖f6 7 ♘h3! ♘xf2?

The (dubious) point of the variation, initiating complications that favour only White. The alternative is 7...♖xb2 8 ♖b1 ♖a3 9 ♖b3 ♖a5 10 dxc7 ♘c6 11 a3 ♖e7 when Gleizerov-Ritova, Berlin 1996, saw White build on his lead with 12 e3 ♘f6 13 ♖c1! ♘d7 14 ♖c3 ♖f6 15 ♖xa5 ♘xa5 16 ♖b5 ♖c3 17 ♘d1 a6 18 ♖d5 ♘c6 19 ♘e4 ♖b2 20 ♘d6+ ♘e7 21 ♘f5+ ♘e8 22 ♘d6+ ♘e7 23 ♘xc8+ ♖hxc8 24 ♖d6+ ♘e8 25 ♘c2 ♖e5 26 c5. I'm sure there is an improvement for Black here, but after the tenth move the deficit is two pawns!

8 ♘xf2 ♖xh3



A glance at the diagram position suggests that Black is doing well, with White's king having been flushed out. However, practice has shown that this is not the case, since White is able to consolidate and assume control.

9 g3! ♖xf1

9...♖c5+!? 10 e3 g5 has also been seen. Beikert-Chatalbashev, World U26 Ch. 1994 was soon close to winning for White: 11 ♘e4 ♖xb2+ 12 ♖e2! ♖xa1 (or 12...♖xe2+ 13 ♖xe2 gxf4 14 ♘xc5 fxe3+ 15 ♖xe3 cxd6 16 ♘xb7 ♘d7 17 ♖f3!) 13 ♖xh3! ♖xh1 14 ♖b2! 0-0 15 ♘f6+ ♘h8 16 ♖xg5 c6 17 ♘g4+ 1-0.

10 ♖xf1

10 dxc7!? ♘c6 11 ♖xf1 is also good for White, when Black should avoid 11...♖xd2 12 ♖xd2 g5 13 ♖e3+!, e.g. 13...♘d7 (13...♘f8 14 ♖c5+) 14 ♖ad1+ ♘c8 15 ♖d3 ♖e6 (15...♘e5 16 ♖d8+! ♖xd8 17 cxd8 ♖+ ♖xd8 18 ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 19 ♖xe5) 16 ♖xg5, or 13...♘e7 14 ♖e5 ♖xe5 15 ♖xe5. The lesser evil is 11...0-0! 12 ♘e4 ♖xb2 13 ♖b1! and the c7-pawn will be a problem.

10...♖d4+

10...♖xd2 11 ♖xd2 g5 12 dxc7 ♘c6 13 ♖e3+ transposes to the previous note, while 10...♖c5+ 11 ♘g2 cxd6 12 ♘e4 puts Black on the defensive.

11 ♘g2 ♖xd6 12 ♖b3!



Now it is White's turn to activate his queen. White is no longer a pawn up but development is much better and Black has only two pieces in the game. From b3 the queen attacks b7, but there is also another possibility in the air. In fact Black needs to be very careful here just to earn the right to defend a poor position!

12...♘d7?

In the case of the more circumspect 12... xf4 White has 13 xf4! xb6 (13... xd2?? loses to 14 e4+ and 15 d4) 14 a3! to cut off the king. After 14...c5 15 e3+ xf8 16 xf2! f6 17 e4 d7 18 d1 c7 19 f5 Black is clearly worse.

13 e2 e5

13... g4 14 c5!

14 c5 e7

14... xc5 15 xf7+ xd8 16 xc5 xc5 (16... xc5 17 xc7) 17 f3 xe2+ 18 f2 e6 19 xc7 g8 20 xb7 wins for White. Komarov-Chatalbashev, St Raphael 1998, was even worse for Black after 14... xc5 : 15 xf7+ xd8 16 c4 e4+ (16... e7 17 cxd6 cxd6 18 xc5!) 17 f3 e6 18 cxd6 cxd6 19 d1 1-0.

15 xf7+ xd8 16 f4 xb2

An attempt to improve on Summerscale-Szabolcsi, French League 1996. That game went 16... xe2+ ? 17 f2 wd3 18 e1! and White is already winning – 18... f6 (18... e8 19 xe7! xe7 20 g8+ e8 21 g5+ f6 22 xc7 wd5+ 23 f3) 19 fe2 c8 20 e8+ xe8 21 xe8+ d8 22 e7 wd5+ (22... f6 23 xc7 mate) 23 f3 1-0.

17 ab1 wd4 18 xb7 f8 19 wc4



Offering to trade queens when on the offensive is indicative of the size of White's lead. The c7-pawn and the d-file make life difficult for Black. It is ironic that Black's own king is under pressure after the energetic start which saw White's come to f2.

19... xc4

19... xf4? 20 xf4 xd2 21 d4! .

20 cxc4 cxc5

20... c8 21 c6 fails to alleviate the pressure.

21 d1+ e8 22 xc7 e6 23 xe7+ xe7 24 d6+! f7 25 e5+ g8 26 xf8 xf8

26... xf8 27 d7 .

27 d5 c8 28 a5 c7 29 f3



The series of exchanges has resulted in an ending in which Black is a (passed) pawn down and also quite passive. White's rook and knight are actively posted and the king is already part way up the board. The same cannot be said of Black's forces. Consequently Black tries his luck in a rook ending. 29... d7 30 cxd7 xd7 31 e4 f7 32 h4 e6 33 g4 b7 34 f4 f7+ 35 g5 d6 36 d5+ e6 37 f5 b7 38 f4 c7 39 e5+ d6 40 a5 f7+ 41 e3 e6 42 a3 d7

White can afford to be patient because the ending is winning. The rest is a matter of technique.

43 h5 h6 44 a5 b7 45 h5 d7 46 e5! d1?

46... c7 prolongs the game, White making progress as follows: 47 d4 d7+ 48 e4 e7 49 a6 b7 50 a4 c7 51 a5 b7 52 c6 d7 53 g6 e8 54 a6 c7 55 d5 etc.

47 xa7 xe5 48 xc7 e1+ 49 d3

♖a1 50 ♖a7 ♜f4 51 ♖a4+ ♜g5 52 ♜c2
♜e1 53 ♜d4 ♜e8 54 a4 ♜b8 55 a5
1-0

Game 29
Volzhin-Kakageldyev
Calcutta 1996

1 d4 d6 2 c4 g6

2...f5 3 ♖c3 ♖f6 is covered in Game 25. This leaves two others:

a) 2...e5 is not unusual these days. White has a few choices, the least interesting being to trade queens (3 dxe5 dxe5 4 ♜xd8+), while after 3 ♖f3 e4 4 ♖g5 f5 Black tends to have more fun than White. Consequently many players settle for the space advantage that results from 3 ♖c3:

a1) 3...exd4 4 ♜xd4 ♖c6 5 ♜d1 g6 6 e4 ♖g7 7 ♜d3 leads to 'a21', below.

a2) 3...♖f6 is the Old Indian Defence. Either Black is content with a rather passive game in the lines with ...♜e7 or the intention is to transpose to the KID. 3...e5 4 e4!? and now:

a21) 4...exd4 5 ♜xd4 and thanks to the grip on d5 White enjoys a space advantage. Sample set ups: 5...♖c6 6 ♜d1 g6 7 ♜d3!? ♖g7 8 ♖ge2 0-0 (8...♖e5 9 b3) 9 ♜c2, and 6...♜e6!? 7 ♖f3 g6 (7...♖e5!? 8 ♖d4) 8 h3 ♖g7 9 ♜c3 0-0 10 ♜e2 ♖d7 (10...♖e5 11 ♖d2) 11 0-0



I.Sokolov-Marin, European Team Ch.

1992. After 11... ♖b6 12 ♖d5! ♜xb2 13 ♖g5 f6 14 ♜h6 ♜xa1 (14... ♜e8 15 ♜b1) 15 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 (15... ♜e5 16 ♜h6) 16 ♜xa1 ♜f7 17 ♖d2 ♖d7 18 f4 White had compensation for the pawn. Black can also resist the urge to attack White's queen and instead use d7 for his b8-knight, e.g. 5...g6 6 ♖g5 ♖bd7 (6...♖g7? 7 e5 dxe5 8 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 9 ♖d5 ♖bd7 10 0-0-0 ♜e8 11 ♖xc7+ was embarrassing in Guliev-Filip, Hollabrunn 1998) 7 ♜d2 ♖g7 8 f3 0-0 9 ♖h3 ♜e8 10 ♖f2 ♖c5 11 ♜e2 a6 12 ♜d1 ♜d7 13 0-0 with an edge for White, Douven-Speelman, Dutch League 1994.

a22) 4...♖bd7 f4!?. Once again this aggressive move cuts across Black's plans. Then 5...exd4 does nothing to exploit White's queen after 6 ♜xd4 ♜e7 7 ♖f3 0-0 8 ♜e2 c6 9 ♜e3. Instead Flear-Anic, Montpellier 2000 continued 5...♜e7 6 ♖f3 c6 7 ♜e2 0-0 8 0-0 exd4 9 ♖xd4 ♖c5 10 ♖f3 ♜b6 11 ♜b1 a5 12 ♜e3 ♜e8



It is understandable that Black wants to exert pressure on White's centre, but now White went on the offensive with 13 ♖b3! when Black was the one with problems on the g1-a7 diagonal.

3 ♖c3 ♖g7 4 e4 ♖c6

The most aggressive. Others:

a) 4...♖d7 aims to reach a King's Indian Defence on Black's terms. However, rather than the accommodating 5 ♖f3 e5, when Black can choose e7, f6 or even h6 for the

g8-knight, I recommend the uncompromising 5 f4:

a1) 5...c5 is quite rare. 6 d5 ♖xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♗g6 8 ♖d3 ♖a5 9 ♖b3 b5 10 cxb5 a6 11 b6! ♗xb6 12 ♖a3 ♖xa3 13 ♖xa3 c4 14 ♖c2 ♖d7 15 ♖d2 with an edge for White in Hübner-Spassky, Bundesliga 1981.

a2) 5...e5 6 fxe5 dxe5 7 d5



This is how the game normally continues because Black then has the c5-square at his disposal. Now we have another branch since Black has tried two ways of developing.

a21) 7...♗g6 8 ♖e2 0-0 and now 9 ♖h3! is a nice move. First Black is denied the possibility of sending a knight to f4 as the h5-square is covered, but there is also ♖h3-f2 coming, when White increases the protection of the e4-pawn, defends g4 and prepares to hit the e5-pawn and contest the c5-square with N(f2)-d3. Add to this the unobstructed rook on f1 (after 0-0) and this is an effective way of meeting ...♗g6. Cifuentes-Bosboom, Wijk aan Zee 1991 went 9...♗e8 10 0-0 a5 11 ♖g5 ♖f6 12 ♖e3 ♖e7 13 ♖a4 b6 14 ♖f2 with the better game for White. This improved to a decisive advantage after 14...f5? 15 d6!

a22) 7...♖h6 8 ♖f3 0-0 9 ♖e2 f6 (9...f5?! is too eager, as was demonstrated in Adorjan-J.Kristiansen, Esbjerg 1986: 10 ♖g5 ♖f6 11 0-0 ♖f7 12 ♖h4 ♖e7 13 exf5! gxf5 14 ♖h1 ♖d7 15 ♖b3 and White stood better across the board) 10 h3 ♖f7 and now Vaiser-

Todorcevic, French League 1994 illustrated how White can contain Black on the kingside and expand on the other flank: 11 g4! b6 12 ♖e3 ♖c5 13 b4 ♖b7 14 c5! a5 15 a3



Black is in danger of getting pushed off the board. In the game Black broke out with 15...f5 16 gxf5 gxf5 but White retained his lead after 17 ♖g1! ♖h8 18 ♖c1 axb4 19 axb4 bxc5 20 bxc5 ♖h6 21 ♖d2 ♖xe3 22 ♖xe3 etc.

b) 4...c6 can also be met with 5 f4!?. Then automatic play leaves Black too cramped, so theory's recommendation is to hit the d4-pawn with 5...♖b6, when 6 e5 is interesting.

b1) 6...dxe5 7 c5! ♖d8 8 fxe5 f6 9 exf6 ♗xf6 10 ♖e2 favoured White in Grigorian-Nikolaevsky, USSR Ch. 1971. Black tried 10...e5?! but his situation worsened after 11 dxe5 ♖xd1+ 12 ♖xd1 ♖f7 13 ♖e4 ♖xe5 14 ♖d6+ ♖d7 15 ♖e2.

b2) 6...♖h6 makes sense, when 7 ♖f3 ♖g4 is unclear according to ECO. Instead Koch-Alber, Schoeneck 1988 witnessed an imaginative idea from White: 7 h3! ♖f5 8 ♖f3 ♖g3 9 ♖g1 ♖a6 10 ♖f2! ♖xf1 11 ♖xf1 0-0 12 ♖g1 and White had succeeded in castling 'by hand' with his impressive pawn centre still intact! There followed 12...dxe5 13 fxe5 ♖e6 14 b3 ♖ad8 15 ♖e2 ♖d7 16 ♖e3 ♖a5 17 ♖e4 with a balanced game. If White can maintain the broad pawn centre in this way then 7 h3 gets the nod over the usual 7 ♖f3.

c) 4...e5 is not too popular at any level, mainly because White is able to force an advantageous queenless middlegame in which Black is reduced to defending. Consequently, rather than let Black get away with not having to prepare ...e7-e5, I suggest the spoiler 5 dxe5 dxe5 (5...dxe5?! loses time, e.g. 6 dxf3 dxf3 7 dxe5 etc.) 6 ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 7 f4!



This is the only move to trouble Black, and certainly the move that tends to dissuade most people from actually playing this variation in the first place. It is true that White might end up with an isolated e-pawn, but this is a small price to pay for an effective initiative. Let us briefly investigate how play might proceed from the diagram position.

c1) 7...dxe6 8 dxf3 dxd7 9 dxe2 dxe7 10 0-0 11 0-0 c6?! protects d5 but neglects d6. Cebalo-Marangunic, Croatia 1995 continued 11 dxe3 dxe8 12 ♖ad1 h6 13 h3 exf4 14 dxf4 g5 15 dxd6! dxc8 16 dxe3 dxe7 17 dxd4! dxd4+ 18 ♖xd4 dxe6 19 dxd5!. It is important to remember that the absence of queens does not preclude aggressive play. The diagram position is typical of White's initiative in this line. Black's hopes of dancing around with the knights are dashed. 19...cxd5 20 dxd5 dxd8 21 ♖e4! dxe7 22 c5! (threatening to lodge the bishop on d6) 22...dxf4 23 dxf4 gxf4 24 ♖xf4 ♖c8 25 b4 a5 26 dxe5! ♖h7 26...axb4 27 ♖xf7+ dxd8 28 dxe6 27 dxe6 dxe6 28 a3 and White was winning.

c12) 10...h6 is the 'book' move, after

which 11 ♖d1! causes a few problems. Suba-Azmaiparashvili, Reykjavik 1990 went 11...exf4 12 dxf4 g5 13 dxe3 dxe6 14 ♖d2 c6 15 dxd4 dxd4+ 16 ♖xd4 dxe7 17 dxe6+ dxf6 18 ♖f1+ dxe7 19 c5! b6 20 cxb6 axb6 21 a3 dxe5 22 ♖b4! b5 23 ♖d1 ♖hc8 24 a4 bxa4 25 dxa4 and White was still on top.

c2) 7...dxd7 8 dxf3 c6 9 dxe2 f6 10 0-0 dxe6?! (10...dxe8 11 g3 dxe6 12 dxe2 dxf7 13 dxe3 dxf8 14 ♖ad1 b6 15 a3 dxe7 16 dxe1 dxc5 17 dxc2 dxe3 18 dxe3 h5 19 b4 is slightly better for White according to ECO) 11 fxe5 dxe5 12 dxe5 fxe5 13 b4! dxe6 14 b5 dxf7 (14...dxc7 15 bxc6 bxc6 16 dxa4! and c5 beckons) 15 dxe4!



We are following Crouch-Norwood, British League 1998. Black is in big trouble, e.g. 15...dxc4 16 ♖d1+ dxe7 17 bxc6 bxc6 18 dxa3+ dxf6 (18...c5 19 dxc5+ dxf6 20 ♖f1+! dxf1 21 ♖xf1+ dxe5 22 ♖xf7 dxe4 23 ♖xg7 ♖ac8 24 dxb4 ♖c4 25 a3) 19 ♖f1+ dxf1 (19...dxe5 20 dxe2 dxe2 21 ♖xf7) 20 ♖xf1+ dxe5 21 dxe2! ♖hf8 (21...dxe6 22 dxe7+) 22 dxc1+ dxe4 23 ♖f3 dxe5 24 ♖g3 (Speelman and McDonald). Instead the game went 15...dxe4 16 dxf7 dxf8 17 dxe5+ dxc8 18 dxe7! dxe6 (18...dxe7 19 ♖xe7 and Black is tied up) 19 dxd6 dxe3+ 20 dxe1 dxe6 21 c5 dxe5 22 dxe5 e8 23 dxf6 dxc3 24 dxc3 cxb5 25 ♖xh7 a5 26 dxf1 dxe6 27 dxe5 dxc4 28 c6! bxc6 29 ♖c7+ dxd8 30 ♖d1+ d5 31 dxe3! 1-0 (31...dxe4 32 ♖xc6).

c3) 7...dxc6 8 dxf3

c31) 8...♗g4 9 fxe5 and now Atalik gives 9...♖xe5 10 ♗e2! ♖xf3+ (10...♗e6 11 ♖g5) 11 gxf3 ♗e6 12 ♗f5+! ♗f6 (12...f6 13 0-0-0+ ♗c8 14 ♗c3) 13 0-0-0+ followed by 14 h4 (whichever way the king goes) with the usual pull for White. Against 9...♗xf3 10 gxf3 ♗xe5 Atalik proposes the sensible 11 ♗e3, when after 0-0-0(+) White's bishops guarantee a comfortable game.

c32) 8...♖d4!? 9 ♗f2 when White has the better chances, e.g. 9...♖xf3 10 gxf3 c6 11 ♗e3 f6 12 ♗d1+ ♗e8 13 h4! ♗h6 14 ♖e2 ♖e7 15 fxe5 ♗xe3+ 16 ♗xe3 fxe5 17 ♖c1! ♗f7 18 ♗d6 ♗e8 19 h5, Gorbatow-Nannelli, Porto San Giorgio 2000, or 9...exf4 10 ♗xf4 ♖e6 11 ♗g3!? ♗d7 12 ♗d1 ♗c8 13 ♗d3 ♖e7 14 ♖d5!



Sadler-Ehlvest, FIDE World Ch, Groningen 1997. Now 14...♖xd5 15 cxd5 ♖c5 16 b4 ♖xd3+ 17 ♗xd3 leaves White free to come to the c-file, so Ehlvest played 14...♗e8, when 15 e5 ♖c5 (15...c6 16 ♖f6) 16 ♖f6 ♗xf6 17 exf6 was not easy for Black. 5 d5 ♖d4

The provocative 5...♖e5 loses time and helps White broaden his centre after 6 f4 ♖d7 7 ♖f3 etc.

6 ♗e3 c5

6...e5?! 7 ♖ge2 ♖xe2 8 ♗xe2 wastes valuable time and therefore gives White a souped up KID, e.g. 8...♖f6 9 0-0-0 10 b4! ♖e8 11 c5 f5 12 f3.

7 ♖ge2

By far the most popular and part of the grand plan – if Black gets his way. Both alternatives benefit only White.

7...♗b6

a) 7...e5 8 dxe6 ♖xe6 9 ♗d2 ♖f6 10 f3 0-0 11 0-0-0 and Black lacked the usual KID attacking chances that go with the weaknesses on d5 and d6, Crouch-Ruotanen, Jyväskylä 1991.

b) 7...♖xe2?! is hardly in the spirit of the variation. 8 ♗xe2 ♖f6 9 0-0-0 10 ♗d2 ♗e8 11 ♗g5 a6 12 f4 Shneider-Petran, Cappelle la Grande 1992. White's kingside offensive is already happening.

8 ♗d2



Just as sound as the main line, the text avoids the complexities that Black is hoping for from the offset, namely 8 ♖a4 ♗a5+ 9 ♗d2 ♗a6 (or 8 ♖xd4 cxd4 9 ♖a4 ♗a5+ 10 ♗d2 ♗c7 etc.). Moreover after 8 ♗d2 Black has an unpleasant choice between attempting dubious complications or settling for a rather passive middlegame.

8...♗d7

a) 8...♗g4? 9 f3! is an inferior version of the main game for Black after 9...♗d7 since 9...♗xf3? seems to lose: 10 ♖a4! ♗a6 (10...♗b4 11 ♖xd4 ♗xd2+ 12 ♗d2) 11 ♖xd4 cxd4 12 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 13 ♗xd4 and now Timman-Suttles, Hastings 1973 went 13...♖f6 14 c5 ♗a5+ 15 ♖c3 dxc5 16 ♗e5 ♗g4 17 d6. Speelman gives the following: 13...♗xa4 14 ♗xh8 ♗b4+ 15 ♖f2 ♗xe4 16

♖xg8+ ♔d7 17 ♖g7! ♖b6+ and now 18 ♖e2 f6 19 b3 ♖d4 20 ♖d1 ♖e5 21 ♖d3! is the simplest of his suggestions, when Black is running out of steam.

b) The stubborn 8...e5 meets with 9 dxe6:

b1) 9...♙xe6 10 ♖d1, when 10...♙xe2 11 ♙xe2 ♖d8 12 0-0 ♙e7 13 ♙g5! Sobek-Petran, Czech League 1992 is awkward for Black, while 10...♙c6 11 ♙b5 0-0-0 12 ♙ec3 ♙f6 13 f3 ♙e8 14 ♙d5 was clearly better for White in Ivkov-Suttles, Sousse Interzonal 1967.

b2) 9...fxe6 10 0-0-0 e5 cements the knight on d4 but, unfortunately, leaves a gaping hole on d5. 11 ♙d5 ♖d8 favoured White in Minaya-Suttles, Havana Olympiad 1966.

c) 8...f5! is an interesting, albeit suspect, try for complications. It is quite safe for White to castle long here: 9 0-0-0 ♙xe2+ 10 ♙xe2 ♙f6 11 exf5 ♙xf5 12 ♙h6! ♙xb6 13 ♖xb6 0-0-0 14 ♖he1 ♖hf8



Ivkov-Hübner, West Germany 1975. Now White could have got the most from some accurate play with 15 ♙f1!, denying Black counterplay by keeping the c4-pawn defended. Returning to Black's 10th move, Speelman suggests 10...fxe4 but goes on to point out that after both 11 ♙xe4 ♙f6 12 ♙c3 ♙f5 (12...h6 13 ♙d3) 13 ♙h6 and 11...♙f5 12 ♙c3 ♙f6 13 ♙h6 we find ourselves in Ivkov's position anyway!

d) 8...♙f6 is the best of Black's 8th move options, leaving d7 free for the knight. This

time White should avoid 9 ♙xd4! in favour of the far superior 9 f3 0-0 10 ♖d1 ♙d7 11 b3!. White ungenerously rules out any funny business related to the capture on d4, culminating in forcing Black to acquiesce to 11...♙xe2 12 ♙xe2, when three moves have been tried:

d1) 12...♙e5 13 0-0 ♖a5 (threatening a nasty discovery on the long diagonal) 14 ♖c1 a6 15 a4 ♖b8 16 f4 ♙g4 17 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 18 f5!, Ikonnikov-Emmerich, Wiesbaden 2000 (White's same reaction to the new arrival on g4 can also be seen in Summerscale-Mannion, Game 27). 18...gxf5 19 exf5 f6 20 ♖f2 ♙h5 21 ♖h4 ♙e8 22 ♖f3! ♖f7 23 ♙e2 ♙d7 24 ♖h5 ♖f8 25 ♙f4 b5 26 axb5 axb5 27 ♙e6 bxc4 28 bxc4 1-0.

d2) 12...f5! 13 exf5 gxf5 and now Speelman offers 14 ♙h6 with the line 14...♖f7 15 0-0 ♙e5 16 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 17 f4 ♙g6 18 ♙h5 resulting in a structural superiority for White.

d3) 12...♖a5 is best. 13 ♖c1 a6 14 ♙h6 ♖b8 was played in King-Markgraf, Germany 1997. After 15 h4 ♙xb6 16 ♖xb6 ♙e8 17 h5 ♙f8 18 ♙f2 b5 19 e5! dxe5 20 hxg6 fxg6 21 ♙e4 White's attack looked the more dangerous. Speelman suggests that Black invest a tempo in 13...♖e8 in order to meet 14 ♙h6 with 14...♙h8.

9 ♖b1!?



The simple 9 ♖d1 is also good enough for an advantage. After 9...♙xe2 10 ♙xe2 a6 11 0-0 ♖a5 12 f4! b5 13 e5 Black faced a mighty

pawn roller in A.Ivanov-Kakageldyev, Simferopol 1989.

9...e5

The idea behind 9 ♖b1 was demonstrated in Yakovich-Pinheiro, Santo Antonio 1999. Black hit out with 9...f5 only to see White ignore him and respond with the more powerful 10 b4!. Now 10...f4 11 ♖xf4 cxb4 12 ♖ce2 ♖xe2 13 ♖xb6 ♖c3 14 ♖xe2! ♖xd2 15 ♖d4 wins for White, so Black once again was reduced to parting with the showpiece knight under unfavourable circumstances: 10...♖xe2 11 ♖xe2 ♖f6?! (11...f4 12 ♖xf4 cxb4 13 ♖b5 ♖f6 14 ♖e3 ♖d8 is far from ideal for Black) 12 bxc5 ♖xe4 13 ♖xb6 ♖xd2 14 ♖xb7 ♖xc4 (14...♖c8 15 ♖xe7+! ♖xe7 16 cxd6+ ♖xd6 17 c5+ ♖e7 18 ♖xd2) 15 ♖xc4 ♖xc3+ 16 ♖e2 dxc5 17 ♖xc5 and White soon converted his initiative.

10 ♖d1

White's brief stop on the way to d1 has lured Black's a-pawn forward, thus taking some of the sting out of Black's thematic queenside expansion involving ...a7-a6, ...b7-b5 etc.

10...♖xe2 11 ♖xe2 ♖f6 12 h3 0-0 13 0-0 a4 14 ♖b1

Entertaining the plan of b2-b4 as well as protecting the b2-pawn in preparation for the coming ♖h6. Black is struggling to latch on to a reasonable plan.

14...♖a5 15 ♖h6 ♖e8 16 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 17 f4

White's game is easy to conduct, the king-side pawns begging to be pushed. Meanwhile, Black rushes to generate something on the queenside.

17...♖c7 18 e5 b5

Now both sides are on the offensive, but Black has the traditional problem that, by definition, his queenside attack is less menacing than the charge aimed at his king's defences.

19 cxb5 ♖xb5 20 exd6 exd6 21 ♖xb5 ♖xb5 22 f5!

With White's queen just one step away

from h6 the threat of 23 f6+ is enough to force a concession from Black.

22...f6

Black does not have time for 22...♖b4? in view of 23 f6+ ♖h8 24 ♖h6 ♖g8 25 ♖f4. The text creates a hole on e6, for which White now takes aim.

23 fxc6 hxc6 24 ♖be1 ♖f7

24...♖ae8? 25 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 26 ♖f4.

25 ♖e6?!

25 ♖f4! ♖d4 26 ♖h4 g5 27 ♖he4 looks good.

25...♖af8?!

As is often the case both players are too busy acting out their respective roles of attacker and defender to be on the lookout for positive alternatives for Black. 25...a3! distracts White.

26 ♖d3! ♖xc3 27 bxc3 ♖d7 28 c4 ♖d8 29 ♖a3!



Black's weaknesses on a4, d6, f6 and – ultimately – g6 cannot be adequately protected. 29...♖a7 30 ♖g3 ♖d7 31 h4! ♖e7 32 h5 ♖xe6

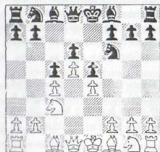
32...g5 33 ♖xf6!

33 ♖xg6+ ♖h8 34 ♖h6+ ♖g8 35 dxe6 1-0

Game 30
Pribyl-Vokac
Lazne Bohdanec 1994

1 d4 c5 2 d5 e5

The Czech Benoni results from 2...d6 3 c4 e5 4 d3 d6 5 e4



a22) 9...h6 10 0-0 g4 11 e3 d7 12 d2 b6



Black's plans involve either ...e7 or a kingside fianchetto.

a) 5...e7 6 g3! with a couple of examples:

a1) 6...a6 7 a4 0-0 8 g2 e8 9 ege2 d7 10 0-0:

a11) 10...b8 11 d2 g6 12 a5! g7 13 a4 h5 14 b4 h4 15 c1 cxb4 16 xxb4 c5 17 dxc5 dxc5 18 c3 h3 19 h1 f6 20 d3 d6 21 f4 with the usual space advantage in Avrukh-Pachtz, Bonnevoie 1998.

a12) 10...g6 11 h6 g7 12 d2 d6 13 h3 h8 14 e3 d7 15 c1! f5 16 d3 d6 17 f3 d7 18 e2 b6 19 h6 d7 20 h2 fxe4 21 fxe4 d6 22 b4, Forintos-Schussler, Gausdal 1981. The theme has already begun to take shape - White gets too much space.

a2) 6...0-0 7 g2 e8 8 ege2 g5 is an approach similar to the one in the main game, but here, too, White is ready: 9 f4! and now:

a21) 9...exf4 10 gxf4 h+ 11 g3 f5 12 0-0 fxe4 13 dxe4 d7 14 d2 d6 15 e5 d7 16 f5 favoured White in Crouch-Cobb, Newport 2000. It is also worth investigating 12 e5! dxe5 13 fxe5 f4 14 0-0 f3 15 fxf8+ xf8 16 h3g3!, when Lacrosse-Luciani, Imperia 1996 continued 16...e7 17 h5 g8 18 e4 g6 19 xg6 hxg6 20 xg6+ d7 21 h6 and Black was in trouble.

Benko-Huguet, Las Palmas 1972. Having tried, unsuccessfully, to trade dark-squared bishops, Black now 'threatens' to challenge the one on g2. White's next is designed to monitor b4, c5, e5 and f4 - four key squares in the Czech Benoni. 13 c1! h3 14 d3 xg2 15 xg2 e7 16 a6! d7 17 e2 g6 18 f5 xxe3 19 xxe3 h8 20 a3 c7 21 b4 and White dominated.

b) Against 5...g6 I recommend restricting Black with an early g2-g4, an approach on the flank that has more justification against the committal Czech Benoni set up than the KID, one reason being that in this case Black cannot counter with ...c7-c6. 6 h3 g7 and now:

b1) 7 g4 a6 8 d3 0-0 9 g5 d7 10 d3 b5 11 d2 bxc4 12 dxc4 b5 13 d2 c7, Mitenkov-Maljutin, Moscow 1996. Black's queenside break has given White the c4-square. 14 0-0 xxc4 15 xxc4 b7 16 b3 b6 17 e2 d7 18 a6! b6 19 e3 d8 20 g2 h4 21 d3 f6 22 e2 g5 and now 23 f4! exf4 24 dxf4 xxf4 25 xxf4 e5 26 xxe5! fxe5 27 fxf8+ xf8 28 f1 d8 29 f2 e7 30 xf6 left Black struggling in view of the weaknesses on a6 and d6.

b2) 7 e3 0-0 8 g4 a6 9 ege2 d7 10 g3. This really does clamp down on the f5-square. In Banikas-Bakhtadze, European Junior Ch. Tallinn 1997, Black sought activity

on the queenside with 10...♔d7 11 a3 b5!?, but after 12 cxb5 ♖b8 13 ♔b1 ♔xb5 14 ♔xb5 ♔xb5 15 b4 White had gained most from the clearing of the b-file.

3 e4 d6 4 ♔c3



4 c4 transposes to the Czech Benoni (where Black has yet to move the king's knight) but, thanks to the omission of ...♔f6, White is able to leave out c2-c4. The point is that d5 does not need extra protection here, ...b7-b5 can be addressed with a2-a4 and White has the c4-square available for a piece. Add to this that White has saved a move and we see why this option is an attractive one.

4...♔e7

A transposition results from 4...♔f6. The text toys with the idea of first trading dark-squared bishops on g5, but the aggressive f2-f4 cuts across this plan. Others:

a) 4...♔e7 sends the knight to g6 to keep an eye on both f4 and e5. The downside for Black is that the knight tends not to be secure on g6 and the f5-square can be a problem. Larsen-Andersen, Danish Ch. 1963 is a good illustration of how White should deal with 4...♔e7. After 5 ♔e2 ♔g6 6 g3! ♔e7 7 h4 ♔a6 8 ♔f3 0-0 9 ♔d2 ♔e7 10 a4 ♔b8 11 ♔c4 b6 White had covered the f4-square, threatened to dislodge the g6-knight and was now ready to offer a thematic exchange of his own with 12 ♔g4! There followed 12...♔e8 13 ♔xc8 ♖xc8 14 ♔e3 h6 15 ♔f5 ♔h7 16 h5 ♔h8 17 ♔e3 ♔f8 18 ♔b5 ♖d7

(18...♔xb5 19 axb5 leaves Black's pawn structure looking particularly unpleasant) 19 ♔xa7 ♔xd5 20 ♖xd5 ♖xa7 and White finally decided to castle, with a clear advantage.

b) With 4...g6 Black hopes to get the best of both worlds with a peaceful route to a King's Indian position. 5 f4! exerts immediate pressure on Black's centre and the dark squares, requiring precise play from the defender just to keep White at bay.

b1) 5...f6 and now 6 ♔f3 followed by ♔e2 and 0-0 gives White a comfortable lead, while the no-nonsense 6 h4 was seen in S.Ernst-Gaprindashvili, Groningen 1999. With more space it is logical for White to launch a quick assault on Black's brittle kingside pawns, the threat of marching on with h4-h5 inducing a reaction from Black: 6...h5. Then 7 f5! (7 ♔f3 is normal) 7...gxh5 8 ♔e2 ♔h6 9 ♔xh5+ ♔e7 10 exf5 ♔xc1 11 ♔xc1 was entertaining, with perhaps the better prospects for White, although familiarity with this variation is important.

b2) 5...♔g7 6 fxe5 ♔xe5 7 ♔f3 is a little awkward for Black, the bishop not an ideal piece to be standing on e5. Vegh-Busch, St Ingbert 1987 continued 7...♔g4 8 ♔b5+ ♔d7 9 0-0 ♔xf3 10 ♖xf3 ♖e7 11 a4



The diagram position illustrates the typical inconvenience Black can experience. The bishop has the unenviable task of securing e5, Black is lagging behind in development and the f-file belongs to White. Moreover

11...Qg6? walks into terrible pins after 12 Qg5, so Black sought to relieve the pressure with 11...a6 12 Qxd7+ Qxd7 when 13 a5! f6 14 Qa4 Qd8 15 Qb6 left White in charge.

b3) 5...exf4 6 Qxf4 Qh6 7 Qg3 Qf6 and now 8 Qb5+ is the most testing move. Then 8...Qf8 9 Qf3 obviously favours White (e4-e5 will be difficult to meet) but is the lesser evil compared to 8...Qd7 9 Qxd6 Qxb5 10 Qxb5 Qa5+ 11 Qc3 Qxe4 12 Qe2 f5, E.Rotshtein-Mosionzhik, World Senior Ch. 1999. This game ended 13 Qf3 Qd7 14 0-0 0-0-0 15 Qxe4 Qhe8? 16 Qe7! Qxe7 17 Qd6+ Qc7 18 Qxe7 Qf8? 19 Qxd8+ 1-0.

c) 4...a6 is also well met with 5 f4, e.g. 5...exf4 6 Qxf4 Qe7 7 Qf3 Qg6 8 Qg3 Qe7 9 e5 dxe5 10 Qxe5 0-0 11 Qxg6 hxg6 12 Qe2 Qh4 13 Qd2 Qe8, Azmaiparashvili-Rashkovsky, Strumica 1995. Now the direct 14 0-0-0 is excellent for White, providing the passed d-pawn with plenty of support and making the otherwise desirable ...Qxg3 less attractive thanks to the open h-file after the recapture hxg3.

5 f4



Chekhov's thrust mounts an early offensive, undermining Black's grip on the e5-square as well as keeping Black's bishop out of g5 (for the moment). It is also possible to throw in the check on b5 to see how Black reacts. 5 Qb5+ and now:

a) 5...Qd7 6 f4 exf4 7 Qxf4 Qg6 8 Qf3 0-0 9 0-0 a6 10 Qxd7 Qxd7 11 e5 was only a

shade better for White in Volkov-Malakhov, Minsk 1997.

b) 5...Qf8 gives up the right to castle but leaves White's bishop punching air on b5. Again White can push his f-pawn: 6 f4 exf4 7 Qxf4 Qg5 8 Qd2 Qxf4 9 Qxf4 a6 10 Qd3 Qf6 11 Qg3 Qd7 12 Qf3 Qe7 13 0-0 Qg6 14 Qa1 and the familiar plan of e4-e5 is enough for an advantage, prompting Black to blockade with 14...Qe5 when 15 Qxe5 Qxe5 (better than 15...dxe5 16 a4!) 16 Qxe5 dxe5 17 Qa4 Qd7 18 c4 Qb8 19 Qc1! (preventing 19...b5) 19...b6 20 a3 a5 21 Qb1 Qa6 22 b4 gave White a queenside initiative in K.Georgiev-Gheorghiu, European Team Ch. 1992.

Interesting, but I prefer the more flexible 5 f4, waiting to see when and where the bishop joins the game.

5...exf4

a) 5...a6 ignores the stand-off in the centre in favour of queenside expansion. Lobron-Ivanovic, Reggio Emilia 1984 went 6 fxe5 dxe5 7 a4 Qf6 8 Qf3 Qg4 9 Qe2 Qxf3 10 Qxf3 0-0 11 0-0 Qe8 12 Qe3 Qd7 13 Qg4! Qd6 14 a5! Qd6 15 Qa4 and White's pawns were easier to maintain than Black's.

b) 5...Qd7 6 Qf3 a6 7 a4 Qg6 8 Qe2 0-0 9 0-0 Qb8 10 a5 b5 11 axb6 Qxb6 and now, instead of inflicting structural damage on Black with 12 fxe5, White opted for a stranglehold in Petursson-Ljubisavljevic, Smederevska Palanka 1984: 12 f5! h6 13 Qd2! This highlights how the availability of the c4-square and the open f1-a6 diagonal gives White a superior version of the ...b7-b5, a5xb6 Qxb6 scenario. 13...Qb4 14 Qxa6 Qxa6 15 Qxa6 c4 16 Qc6 Qc5 17 Qe2 Qfd7 18 Qxc4 Qb8 19 Qxc5 dxc5 20 Qxe5 and Black was being over-run.

6 Qxf4 Qf6

Settling for standard development, although there are alternatives:

a) Black can still seek to trade bishops with 6...Qg5!?, when White has a choice:

a1) 7 Qd2 Qxf4 8 Qxf4 a6 (8...Qf6 9

♖g3) 9 e5! ♖e7 10 ♖f3 ♖d7 11 0-0-0. Now 11...♗xe5! looks like the best way to take the pawn, e.g. 12 ♖g3 ♗f6 13 ♗xe5 dxe5 14 d6 ♖e6 15 ♖xg7 ♖g8 16 ♖h6, or 12...♗f8! 13 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 14 ♖xe5 dxe5 15 ♖a4, with a definite advantage to White in both cases. Shariyadonov-Malakhov, Ekaterinburg 1996 continued 11...dxe5! 12 ♖g3 ♖f6 (12...♗f6 13 d6 ♖e6 14 ♗g5 ♖f5 15 ♖c4 0-0 16 ♖hf1 and 14...♖g4 15 ♖d5 ♖xg3 16 ♗c7+ ♗f8 17 hxg3 ♖b8 18 ♖c4 are poor for Black) 13 d6 ♖g6 14 ♖d5 ♖xg3 15 hxg3 ♗f8 16 ♗g5 h6 17 ♗c7 ♖b8 18 ♖c4, and Black was in dire straits, 18...hxg5 19 ♖xh8 ♖d6 20 ♖d5 ♖g4 21 ♖f1 ♖e8 22 ♗e7 adding to his problems in view of the threat of 23 ♖xf6! gxf6 24 ♖xg8 mate.

a2) 7 ♖xg5 ♖xg5 8 ♖f3 ♖c3+ 9 ♖c2 ♖xc2+ 10 ♖xe2 rids the game of two bishops and queens and leaves each side with a backward pawn. However, White has more space and superior development, which is sufficient for a lead, e.g. 10...♖d7 11 0-0 ♗h6 12 ♖b5 f6 13 a4 ♖f7 14 a5, Pribyl-Schian, Berlin 1995, when 14...♗e7 (14...a6 avoids the following but weakens b6) 15 a6 bxa6 16 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 17 ♖xa6 ♖hb8 18 b3 gave White a target on a7. Black fared worse in Gomez Esteban-J.Gonzales, Barbera 1996: 10...f6 (the e5-square is not the most important factor here) 11 ♖b5! ♗d7 12 ♖d2 a6 13 ♗c4 axb5 14 ♖b6+ ♗d8 15 ♖xa8 ♗d7 16 ♖b6 ♖e8 17 a4 etc.

b) 6...a6! is a luxury Black can ill afford, as White does not necessarily need the b5-square to maintain his lead and there is no time for ...b7-b5 with Black's kingside still at home. 7 ♖f3 ♖g4 8 ♖e2 ♖xf3 9 gxf3 is interesting. Then 9...♖h4+ 10 ♖g3 ♖g5 11 ♖g1 ♖f6 12 ♖d2 ♖xd2+ 13 ♖xd2 ♖xg3 14 hxg3 gives White formidable pawns, so Huzman-Boim, Ramat Aviv 2000, continued 9...♖f6 10 ♖d2 ♗e7 11 ♖g3 0-0 12 ♖d1! ♗g6 13 c3 ♖e5 14 ♖f2 (14 f4? ♗xf4 15 ♖xf4 ♖h4+ 16 ♖g3 ♖xg3+ 17 hxg3 ♖xh1+) 14...h5 15 f4 h4 16 fxe5 hxg3 17 hxg3 ♗xe5

18 0-0-0 and Black – ironically with the e5-square secure – had cause for concern or the b-file.

c) 6...♖f6 7 ♖f3 ♖g4 8 ♖b5+ ♗f8 9 ♖e2 ♖xf3 10 ♖xf3 ♗e7 11 ♖h5 ♖b6 12 0-0 ♖d7 has been evaluated as unclear, although White's extra space, the bishop pair and the f-file should more than compensate Black's control of the e5-square.

7 ♖f3 0-0

If Black wants to use his light-squared bishop he should do so now: 7...♖g4! 8 ♖b5+ ♖bd7 9 h3 ♖xf3 10 ♖xf3 0-0 11 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 12 0-0-0 ♗e8 13 e5 dxe5 14 ♖xe5 ♖d6



Hodgson-Lerner, Moscow 1987. Again the d-pawn is the focus of attention. After 15 ♖he1 ♖xe5 16 ♖xe5 ♖d6 17 ♗e4 ♗xe4 18 ♖xe4 ♖fe8 White could have kept up the pressure with the natural 19 d6.

8 ♖d2! ♖bd7

The idea behind 8 ♖d2 is to meet 8...♖g4 with 9 e5 because after 9...dxe5 10 ♗xe5 is on, while 9...♗h5 10 exd6 is possible since the bishop on f4 is defended. Play might continue 10...♖xd6 11 ♖xd6 ♖e8+ 12 ♖e2 ♖xd6 13 0-0-0 ♖f4 14 ♖c4, or 10...♗xf4 11 ♖xf4 ♖xf3 12 dxe7 ♖xe7+ 13 ♖d2 ♖h5 14 ♖e1 with the better game for White.

9 ♖e2

9 e5! is worth considering, when White can follow up by castling queenside. Pribyl's choice is more patient. White prepares to

castle short, thus providing his rook with a ready-made useful outpost on the f-file. Meanwhile Black is left to weigh up the consequences of the e4-e5 advance, as well the positional significance of blockading with a piece on e5 and the eventual arrival of a pawn after an exchange and the recapture ...d6xe5.

9...a6 10 a4 ♖g4 11 0-0 ♘e5

An important decision. Clamping down on the e5-square with 11...f6 solves one potential problem (weakening e6 to do so) but leaves White free to 'fix' the queenside thanks to the thematic 12 a5!, when a future transfer of a knight to c4 will monitor both the inviting b6-square and the d6-pawn, while ...b7-b5, axb6 leaves Black with an isolated a-pawn.

12 ♖xe5

White forces an alteration in the pawn configuration before Black has time to consolidate with ...♗f6.

12...♖xe5

If Black is to suffer structurally he at least wants to see White's dark-squared bishop out of the game.

13 ♗xe5 dxe5 14 a5!



As soon as the c5-pawn loses its natural protection White prevents support by the b-pawn, in the process creating a new target in the form of the b6-square. With the passed d-pawn to keep an eye on as well as b6 and the newly 'isolated' c5-pawn, Black's game is

not easy.

14...♗g5

14...♗d7? has been suggested, the simple point being to eliminate the knight as soon as it lands on a4, after which the bishops of opposite colour make lifting the blockade or generating play in another sector practically impossible. Obvious and best is 15 d6 ♗g5 with a position that has been assessed as unclear. It is true that Black has the bishop pair and good control of the dark squares, but how these factors can be used either aggressively or to cope with the powerful d-pawn, White's outpost on d5 and the squares b6, c7 and e7 is another matter.

15 ♖e1 b5?!

Black endeavours to drum up some activity at the expense of further damage to his queenside pawns. Again 15...♗d7 might improve, but 15...♗e3+?! 16 ♖h1 ♗d4 17 ♖d1 serves only to put the bishop in trouble.

16 axb6 ♖xb6 17 ♖a4 ♖h6 18 ♖a3?!

18 ♖xc5?? ♗e3+ is one to avoid.

18...♖b8 19 ♖h1 ♗f4 20 g3 ♗d2 21 ♖d1

21 ♖f2 looks sensible. For the moment White seems happy to see his pieces come under attack, confident that Black's divided pawns will eventually prove decisive.

21...♗h3 22 ♖ff3 f5

22...♗b4 is a logical continuation of Black's harassment policy. Then 23 ♖ab3 ♗d7 and 23 ♖ac3 ♗g4 see the bishops come out on top, so White should drop back to either a2 (to defend the b-pawn in anticipation of ♖xc5) or a1, when 23...f5 should be met with 24 exf5 rather than allowing complications with 24 c3 fxe4 25 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 26 cxb4 ♖f2 etc.

23 ♖xc5 ♗b4?

23...♖xb2 24 ♖xa6 g6 has been suggested as giving Black enough for the pawn. However, taking the b2-pawn permits the knight to race over to the kingside for defensive duties with tempo, 25 ♖d3 ♖b7 26 ♖f2 being clearly better for White. Moreover this

might not be necessary, as the calm 25 d6 gives Black something to worry about, e.g. 25...g4 26 d3 xe2 27 we2 etc.

24 xa6 b6

24...f6 25 xf6 gxf6 26 b3 does not help Black's cause, e.g. 26...c8 (26...b6 27 d6) 27 xb4 xc5 28 b8+ and 29 d6.

25 xb6 xb6 26 d7 a7 27 xf8 fxe4

Black has found the best try.



28 e6!?

28 b3 f2 29 g1 we2 30 e6 is another option but, not wanting to be greedy, White prefers to have a say on the light squares.

28...exf3 29 e3f3

Apart from being two pawns up White has three connected passed pawns (Black's e-pawn should pose few problems). All that is now required to convert this advantage into the full point is to deal with Black's light-squared bishop and thus tidy up on the king-side.

29...wf2

29...h6 30 e2.

30 g5 e5 31 e4

31 e4!? we3 32 d3 should be enough to preserve excellent winning chances.

31...h6 32 e5f5 wf5 33 e6 d2?!

33...e4 should be tried, although after 34 c3 d6 35 g2 e3 White can even bale out into a winning queen ending with 36 f4 xf4 37 gxf4 wxf4 38 we2 etc.

34 g2 we4+ 35 wf3 wb4

35...wc2 36 wf8+ wh7 37 wgx7 mate.

36 c3 wd6

Again 36...wb2?? allows mate.

37 wd3

Another possibility is 37 we4 followed by bringing the king round to d3.

37...e1 38 b4 we7 39 wg6

39 h4 covers g5 and threatens 40 d6! etc.

39...wa7 40 h4

40 wc2 we3 41 wf2.

40...e2 41 wd3 e1!? 42 wf3 e4 43 wf8+!

43 we4?! wf2+.

43...wh7 44 wf5+ wg8 45 h5 e3 46

wf8+ wh7 47 wf5+ wg8 48 we4 wb7

49 c5!? wxb4 50 wxb4 e4 51 e4

g6 52 g4! f7 53 f3 gxh5 54 gxh5

e3 55 f4 e2 56 f5 d4 57 d2

e6 58 c4 e4

58...e5 59 d6.

59 e5+ e6 60 e6 1-0

Conclusion

The system with 4 f3 against the Benko (Game 27) is most definitely underrated at all levels. By refusing to be drawn into an early skirmish after 4 cxb5 a6 White denies Black some of the annoying counterplay that attracts players to the Benko, yet with the saved move White wastes no time reinforcing the centre. It is easy for Black to mistakenly play along the lines of the (4 cxb5 a6) 5 f3 variation only to learn of the differences when it is too late. In Game 28 Black pays the price for insisting on complications, but even the more sober line leads to a comfortable lead to White. The psychological advantage of having an uncompromising line ready for Black's more plausible options after 1 d6/g6 (Game 29) is as important as theory itself. Notice how an early f2-f4 can considerably undermine Black's desired development pattern. This is also a major feature of Game 30, where Black's chief game plan involves removing dark-squared bishops.

INDEX OF COMPLETE GAMES

Aalik-Gyimesi, <i>Yugoslav Team Ch. 1998</i>	19
Banikas-Minasian, <i>Yerevan Zonal 2000</i>	80
Chernyshov-Semeniuk, <i>Russian League 1999</i>	86
Dreev-Leko, <i>Wijk aan Zee 1996</i>	110
Goldin-Mengarini, <i>New York 1991</i>	67
Inkirov-Konopka, <i>Arco 2000</i>	105
Ivanov.V-Rausis, <i>Moscow 1994</i>	75
Kasparov-Anand, <i>Linares 1999</i>	35
Kempinski-Grabarczyk, <i>Polish Ch. 2000</i>	134
Lalic.B-Polgar.J, <i>Yerevan Olympiad 1996</i>	101
Lautier-Oll, <i>Tallinn/Parm 1998</i>	41
Lautier-Shirov, <i>Belgrade 1997</i>	89
Miton-Sadvakasov, <i>Continental Open 2000</i>	12
Pelletier-Chandler, <i>Mermaid Beach Club 1999</i>	52
Pribyl-Vokac, <i>Lazne Bohdane 1994</i>	153
Prudnikova-Sakhatova.G, <i>USSR 1991</i>	125
Rausis-McShane, <i>Hastings Premier 1997/98</i>	93
Sakaev-Guseinov, <i>Doha 1993</i>	113
Sakaev-Ibragimov, <i>Russian Ch. 1999</i>	26
Sakaev-Rublevsky, <i>Yugoslav Team Ch. 1999</i>	31
San Segundo-Gallego, <i>Linares 1997</i>	71
Sokolov.I-Topalov, <i>Wijk aan Zee 1996</i>	96
Stohl-Socko, <i>MK Cafe Cap 1999</i>	143
Summerscale-Maunton, <i>Scottish Ch. Edinburgh 1999</i>	139
Van Wely-Milov.V, <i>French League 1999</i>	7
Vladimirov.B-Fuchs, <i>Sochi 1966</i>	61
Volzhin-Kakageldyev, <i>Calcutta 1996</i>	148
Wells-Korneev, <i>Ubeda 1996</i>	57
Yakovich-Sokolov.A, <i>Moscow 1990</i>	119
Zsinka-Timascenko, <i>Budapest 1989</i>	130

