

Batsford Chess Library

Positional Play

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Introduction

Mark Dvoretsky

It gives me great pleasure to present you with the fourth book in the series based upon material from the Dvoretsky-Yusupov school for gifted young chess players. For those who are not familiar with our previous publications (*Training for the Tournament Player*, *Opening Preparation* and *Technique for the Tournament Player*), I would like to make it clear that we have carried out various thematic sessions at the school, devoted to important areas of chess development. We have not had enough time to publish the whole necessary sum of specific knowledge, and it was probably also impossible – the process of development in chess is practically infinite. We have set up for ourselves the task of revealing the weaknesses in our pupils' play, helping them get rid of these weaknesses, demonstrating more effective ways of studying chess, and making our students familiar with the most general laws, ideas and methods of conducting battles. Precisely this approach forms the basis of all the books in this series.

The one before you now is no exception. It is devoted to improving positional play.

Even adults at times naively believe there is a secret route to quick success. The authors of many books willingly use this delusion, claiming that they know the single correct route – new, original, and furthermore still a secret. In fact there are a great number of roads to this aim, but none of them is easy. You have to master various ways of working on your chess, and know how to combine them, depending on your tastes and individual peculiarities, strengths and style of play. I hope that this book, like the others, will help you to do this.

In the first and second parts of the book the authors will familiarise the reader with various facets of positional battles, approaches to developing positional play, and ways of finding solutions to positional problems. You will see that it sometimes makes sense to consider (even one and the same problem) in various different ways – for example, the concept of playing on

different flanks in Yusupov's and Kosikov's lectures.

Amongst the ideas which I develop in my own lectures, I advise you to pay particular attention to the theme of 'Prophylactic Thinking'. You will see why this theme is so important to the chess player when you have read the lecture about it.

Chess is practically an art. A single theory here is not enough, and single-minded training is necessary (this is the most important principle for effective work on chess!). The programme of every session of the school consists not only of lectures, but also training exercises. You will find descriptions of these exercises in the first and third parts of the book.

In the session described in this book, which took place at the beginning of 1992, two very talented young masters (who soon became grandmasters), Vladimir Kramnik and Igor Khenkin, took part. They not only attended many classes, but also gave a lecture themselves. At first glance their lecture is purely about opening theory. However, by setting out the theory of some variations of the Dutch Defence, Kramnik and Khenkin simultaneously showed their understanding of the situations which are inherent in their ideas. With precisely these

means contemporary chess players usually master typical positions which are characteristic of the openings in their repertoire. Another approach to studying typical positions in the middlegame is suggested in my lecture, also in part 3 of the book.

The fourth part is devoted purely to the practical incarnation of various principles of positional play. In it we look into the complex strategic relations of games played at competitions of the very highest level. Here as well it is interesting to compare the ways of thinking, and the different approaches to taking a decision of such notable grandmasters as Artur Yusupov and Evgeny Bareev. Incidentally, I should point out that Yusupov, having taken up residence in Germany in 1991, unfortunately did not take part in the final sessions of our school. His lectures were written later, while the book was being prepared for publication. This allowed Yusupov to make use of games played two to three years later, in particular Anand's brilliant win over Kamsky in the final of the Candidates, and a very impressive game played by Yusupov himself at a tournament in Switzerland in 1994.

Then we have Bareev's material, which really was given as a

lecture at the school. He made a very strong impression on our pupils, not purely because of his rank, but because of his distinctive intonation, which was ironic, and at times even snide. In my opinion, his delivery was quite in keeping with his character, and improved the lecture. It could only be seen as offensive by someone with no sense of humour. Barcev's irony is not at all malicious, and furthermore it is not directed towards his opponents or the reader, but to himself.

Many years ago I saw a clever cartoon in which a grandmother was saying to a little boy, 'Now, grandson, let's repeat the word which you should never say.' I recalled it when I was familiarising myself with Yusupov's traditional concluding material, analysing fragments of games played by pupils at the school. On this occasion the grandmaster concentrated on instructive positional errors made by the young chess players. In chess training this approach is quite appropriate. Not for nothing

do they say, 'you learn from your mistakes'.

In conclusion I will give you some quotes by the classic players, which will emphasise the exceptional importance for any chess player of the problems which are examined in the book:

'A good plan turns us all into heroes, and the lack of one makes us faint-hearted idiots.' (Em. Lasker)

'Despite the universal opinion, resulting from ignorance, Morphy's main strength lay not in his combinational gifts, but in his positional play and general style. Combinations can only be carried out when the position allows.' (Capablanca)

'The ability to evaluate a position is just as important as the ability to calculate variations.' (Botvinnik)

'Try to memorise as few variations as possible! Positional sense should free you from the slavery of "variations". Therefore, try to develop your positional sense.' (Nimzowitsch)

1 Improving one's positional skill

Mark Dvoretsky

'While combinations call for an unexpected reappraisal of values, positional play, on the other hand, emphasises and strengthens them' — Emanuel Lasker.

'He has a fine understanding of the game' — that is how we usually characterise strong positional players. It is very flattering to hear such a judgement of your own work but, alas, not all of us can boast of this. In fact, positional understanding is the most important ingredient in the recipe for sporting success. What do players have to study if they wish to make serious progress in their field? What should be the basic forms and directions of their work? This chapter is devoted to answering these questions.

GM Yusupov is renowned as an experienced strategist. I will illustrate ideas with examples from his games.

Some General Recommendations

Many books have been written about positional play. Not all of

them are worth looking at, but some of them should be studied, above all *My System* — Aron Nimzowitsch's excellent book.

Recently I looked through the games I played in my youth and I was astounded at the abundance of dreadful positional errors I found.

But at the time I had not appreciated them. On the contrary, I was convinced that I was playing the strongest possible moves. For some time I made no progress whatsoever, and then my trainer suggested that I read *My System*. I did not just read it, but really studied it, and even copied out the most important ideas and examples. The work I accomplished quickly made itself felt, both in the quality of my games and in my results — I won some first category tournaments, became a candidate master, and then made a master norm.

I recommend that you also study collections of games played by outstanding positional players, not forgetting to investigate their commentaries. Of course, different

people play differently – no one universal positional style exists.

Some grandmasters (the strategists) are characterised by the logical way in which they think (Rubinstein, Botvinnik, Portisch), while others are intuitive (Capablanca, Smyslov, Karpov). There are many other differences – they can adhere to an attacking or defensive plan, aim for a classical setup (by seizing space) or for a less orthodox structure, etc. Choose for your study either those players whose style is closest to your own, or those who are especially experienced in areas in which you are not yet accomplished.

I will remind you of the method you can use to help you determine the episodes which are most interesting and useful – ‘positional illustrations’. We recommended this in the first session of our school (*Training for the Tournament Player*). Draw a diagram and make a note of the commentary which describes the position in question, and the minimum number of moves and variations needed to understand it. As a result of the ideas and evaluations connected with a given case, you should be able to engrave it firmly on your memory. You should also precisely copy out instructive examples of our own work.

Positional Operations

In assessing a position the experienced player never tries to take into account its peculiarities immediately, and he does not consciously weigh up its pluses and minuses (although this is precisely what certain manuals tell you to do). Such work, if it is to be performed, should be subconscious. Blumenfeld, in a deep exploration of the problems of chess thinking, wrote, ‘assessment is linked with the perception of a position and is a fundamentally subconscious act in the sense that its intermediate links, to a considerable, if not the whole extent, do not work through the consciousness’.

The art of evaluation consists of the ability to define the essence of a position – those characteristics (and only those) which have to be taken into consideration in the quest for the strongest move. In training it is useful to put into words your perception of the essence of the position, in order to pinpoint – and subsequently correct – errors in your positional understanding.

Having defined a more essential grasp of assessment (which is most frequently subconscious), and having tested variations, we will find the move which corresponds to our

perception of the specific situation. This move will usually have a definite aim, a specific operation.

It stands to reason that our discoveries will frequently turn out to be complicated and based on calculating long variations, with a number of different ideas each requiring assessment. However, at the heart of any strategic decision there lies a very simple positional operation, and it is important to be able to find it quickly and confidently. You can master this by studying commentaries by grandmasters, and it is also useful to solve special exercises (for example, in the form of training games for developing intuition).

These are the basic types of positional operations:

- a) Improving the position of the pieces;
- b) Manoeuvring;
- c) Re-grouping.

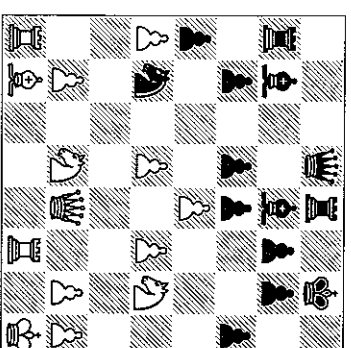
White has excellent prospects on the kingside. His attack will be irresistible if only he can bring his queen's rook into the game.

21 ♖a3! ♗h8

22 ♖g3

Threatening 23 ♖xh6 gxh6 24 ♖h5. If 22...♗f8, then 23 ♖xh6 gxh6 24 ♖g4, 22...♗a6 is useless in view of 23 ♖e4.

22 ... ♖g8



W

Yusupov – Kengis

Moscow 1983

23 ♖c4 ♗d5

23...♗a6 24 ♖e4.

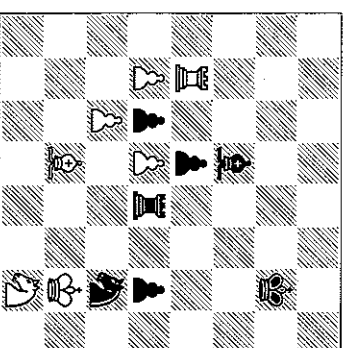
24 ♖h3 ♗f8

25 b3 ♗xc4?!

26 hxc4 dxe5

27 ♖xe5

Black resigned



B

Djuric – Yusupov

Sarajevo 1984

It is not easy to assess this situation at first. Black has more activity, but his d5-pawn is under attack. Both sides' pieces are somewhat disorganised.

Yusupov finds a way of regrouping which improves the coordination of his forces and creates definite threats.

- 36 ... ♖e8!
37 ♙xd5

If 37 ♙b7+, then not 37... ♖f6?
38 ♙b6, but 37... ♖g8! 38 ♙h6 ♗f5
39 ♙g5 ♙a8.

- 37 ... ♗e4
38 ♙e1 ♙h8

Black's operation ensures him a comfortable advantage. His minor pieces are effectively employed and his rook is ready to invade.

39 ♖f1

Hübner's suggested piece sacrifice gives White better practical chances of saving himself: 39 ♗f3!?
gx f3+ 40 ♖x f3 ♙e8 41 b5.

- 39 ... ♙h2
40 b5 ♙b2

A standard procedure – the rook is placed behind the passed pawn.

- 41 ♗e2 ♙b1!

Zugzwang! If 42 ♙f5, then the reply is 42... ♖g6.

- 42 b6 ♙xb6
43 ♙h4 ♙b1+
44 ♖g2 ♙b2

The rook again returns to the best post.

- 45 ♖f1 ♖g6
46 ♙a5 g3
47 ♙a8 ♖h5
48 ♙xg3 ♗xg3+
49 ♗xg3 ♙xg3
50 ♙c8 ♖g4
51 ♙xc4 ♖f3
52 ♙b4 ♙h2
53 ♖g1 ♙h8
54 ♙b2 ♙e8

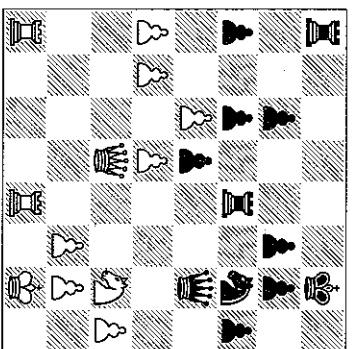
White resigned in view of 55 ♙b1 ♙f2+ 56 ♖f1 ♙h8.

Playing with pawns; forming useful pawn structures

Many years ago, when Yusupov was still a candidate master, I noted in his exercise book that 'Artur finds it difficult to decide upon a sudden change in the character of a struggle, in particular when it involves sharp pawn moves and a change in the pawn structure'. To concentrate on correcting this fault, we carefully examined these instances in his games:

- 24 ♙xe6 ♗f4?!

The dubious sign in this case refers not to the objective strength of Black's move, but to the assessment upon which the move is based. After 25 ♙e3 Artur had intended 25... ♗xe6 (not altering the pawn structure), but in fact after 26 ♙xg5 hxg5 27 ♗e2 the position



W

Gabdrakmanov – Yusupov

Podolsk 1976

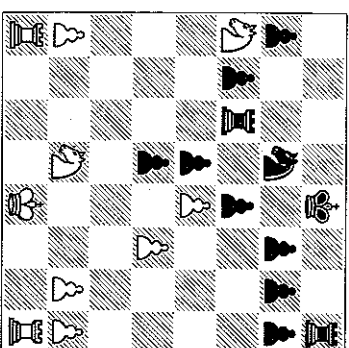
is roughly even. However, Black could have fought for an advantage with 24... ♗xe6! (introducing the possibility of a later ...e6-e5), or 24... ♗f4 25 ♙e3 ♗xe6! with the threat of 26... h5.

There is another (tactical) idea behind 24... ♗f4, which is absolutely correct. It was precisely this which baited Gabdrakmanov. He was tempted by the possibility of winning a pawn.

- 25 ♙e8+? ♙xe8
26 ♙xa6 h5!

Yusupov has correctly calculated that Black's attack is very dangerous.

- 27 ♙xc6 ♙e6
28 h4 ♙xh4
29 ♙a8+ ♖h7
30 b5?! ♙g5
White resigned



B

Timman – Yusupov

Tilburg C1 (4) 1986

How would you assess this position? Although Black has three pawns for the knight, which should be enough, he must be careful. If White can consolidate (♗f3, 0-0, etc.) he will have a clear positional advantage.

As is often the case, Black must undertake some sort of action without delay.

- 19 ... g5!

An excellent move! After 20 g3 gx f4 21 gx f4 ♙g8 both black rooks become very active, and the undermining move ...f7-f6 is in the air.

- 20 0-0 gx f4
21 ♙xf4 ♗xe5

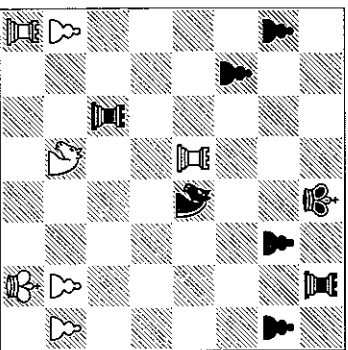
White's centre is decimated.

- 22 ♖xd4 ♖g8
23 ♟b4 ♖c3

Now 24 ♖e1 f6 favours Black.

In the endgame the knight frequently turns out to be weaker than the pawns. Therefore Timman hurriedly returns the piece.

- 24 ♟xd5!? exd5
25 ♖xd5 (D)



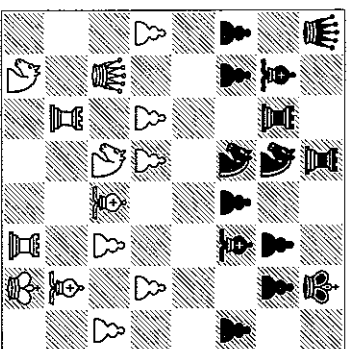
B

- 25 ... ♖c5?

A disappointing error. By playing 25...♖e3! Black could have kept the extra pawn, for example 26 ♟f1 ♟f3+! 27 ♟f2 ♖e5 28 ♖ad1 (28 ♟e3 ♖gg5!) 28...♖xd5 29 ♖xd5 ♖g5!, or 26 ♖c1 ♟e7 27 ♟f1 ♖e2 28 ♟g3 ♟e6! 29 ♖cd1 ♖e1+!

- 26 ♖xc5 ♖xc5
27 ♟e4 ♟e7
28 ♟xc5

And the game quickly concluded in a draw.



B

Spraggett – Yusupov
Saint John Ct (9) 1989

- 25 ... b5!

A typical reaction to the hanging pawns in the centre. After the c4-pawn has been removed, Yusupov's pieces will rule the light squares.

- 26 axb5 axb5
27 c5

After 27 cxb5 Black has a pleasant choice between 27...♗d5 and 27...♖xc2 28 ♖xc2 ♟xb5.

- 27 ... ♟c4
28 ♖a2
Or 28 ♗f2 ♗xf3.

- 28 ... ♖xa2!!
29 ♖xa2 ♟xe3

A positional queen sacrifice to destroy White's centre. Now if 30 ♖a5 Black has 30...♗xd4!

- 30 ♖fc1 ♗xd4
31 ♟h1 ♟xc5
32 ♟xc5 ♖xc5

- 33 ♖xc5 ♗xc5

Things are looking bad on the board for White, and Spraggett was soon forced to give up his defence. Winning this game led Yusupov to overall victory in this Candidates Match.

Exchanges

In analysing the preceding examples we came across some elementary methods of exchanging. Even the positional queen sacrifice which Yusupov played against Spraggett is also in essence an exchange, although not a standard one.

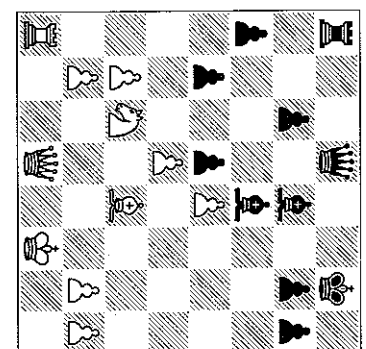
♟a2 or 18 ♖d2 are better defensive choices.

- 18 ... ♗xc3!
19 ♖xc3 a5

What has Black achieved by exchanging his bishop for his opponent's knight?

In the first place, the backward a6-pawn is transformed into a dangerous passed pawn. At the same time the problem of the backward c7-pawn is solved – the c-file is now closed.

Secondly, the remaining black bishop is clearly stronger than its white colleague. It will quickly come to e4 and can create threats against the white king (in the presence of opposite-coloured bishops playing for an attack is the correct strategy). Meanwhile White's own bishop is hampered by its pawns and cannot attack anything.



B

Ghinda – Yusupov
Dubai OL 1986

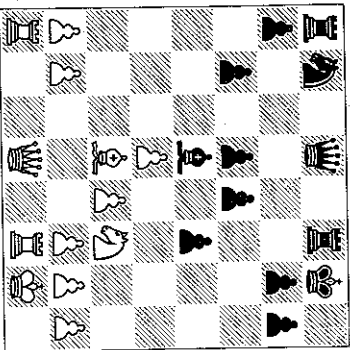
- 17 ... ♗b4!
18 ♟g1?!
18 ♟e2 ♖h4 19 ♟g1 ♖e4 is unpleasant for White. However 18

Black has a clear advantage. Unfortunately, after 24 ♖f1 Yusupov committed a serious inaccuracy with 24...♖g6? (24...♗e4!, and only then ...♖g6). His opponent exchanged rooks straight away: 25 ♖f3! ♗e4 26 ♖g3 ♖xc3 27 hxg3 and essentially improved

This just loses time.

- 20 ... ♖d7
21 ♗c1 ♗f5
22 ♖d2 h6
23 ♗a3 ♖a6!

his chances of saving himself (although White finally went wrong in the ending and lost).



Yusupov - Spasov
Skara Echi 1980

Yusupov was planning to exchange off the d5-bishop, it being the only black piece which is well-placed. He did not find the best way of carrying out this exchange. He had to open a file in the centre in order to broaden the battle front and squeeze the vulnerable e6-pawn. The strongest continuation would have been:

- 13 ♖e2! ♟d7
After 13...♟xf3 14 ♖xf3 d5 15 ♜fc1 the white pieces are in control.
- 14 e4! ♟e4
15 ♟xe4 ♟xe4

Black has little to be happy about after 15...♟f6 16 ♟xd5 exd5

- 17 ♖e6+ ♟h8 18 ♟g5 ♖d7 19 ♜fc1.
- 16 ♖xe4 ♜e8
17 ♜ac1

In this manner Yusupov would have obtained a distinct positional advantage.

Unfortunately Yusupov did not play so dynamically and failed to alter the pawn structure (perhaps a recurrence of his childhood fault mentioned above).

- 13 ♜c1?! ♟d7
14 ♟c4 ♟f6
15 ♟xd5 ♟xd5
16 ♖a4 a6
17 ♜c2 h6?

Now White's plan is justifying itself; he has secured complete control over the c-file. It was necessary, without losing time, for Black to prepare an exchange of the major pieces: 17...b5! 18 ♖b3 ♖d7 19 ♜fc1 ♜fc8. In this case Black could have counted on equality.

18 ♜fc1 b5
19 ♖b3

19 ♖a3!? deserves consideration too.

19 ... ♜f7
19...♖d7 20 ♟d2! ♜fc8 21 e4 is bad for Black.

20 ♟e1!

This elegant manoeuvre underlines White's superiority. The

knight is going, via d3, to either b4 or f4, in order to exchange off the d5-knight – a key part of Black's defence. Eventually White secured victory.

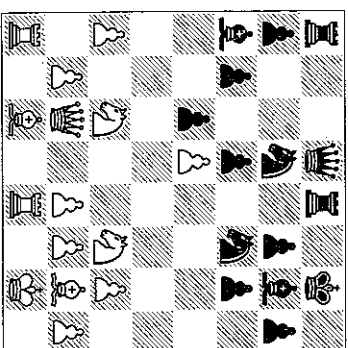
We should note that the inaccurate on move 13 was revealed in home analysis by Yusupov himself. It is important to train yourself to have a critical approach even to games you win, carefully analysing them and not flattering yourself with successful results. Always seek out errors in your own play. This can help in avoiding similar mistakes in the future.

Prophylactic Measures

I have already underlined more than once the important role of preventative measures and prophylactic thinking in a positional battle. Moves can be directed not only towards implementing your own ideas (manoeuvres, exchanges, etc.), but also towards thwarting those of your opponent.

Yusupov is planning a pawn offensive in the centre. However, he can see that his opponent has planned to meet e2-e4 with the manoeuvre ...♟f6-g4-e5, when the knight has control over d3 and c4. This must be prevented.

- 13 h3! ♟e5
14 ♟xe5 ♜xe5



Yusupov - Timman
Tilburg Ct (5) 1986

Again the knight is hoping to get to e5.

15 e4 ♜e8
16 ♟c3 ♟d7

17 f4! c4
18 e5!

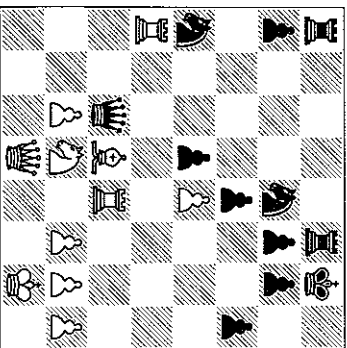
A typical positional pawn sacrifice. Otherwise Black would have a pleasant game with ...♖c7 and ...♟c5.

- 18 ... dxe5
19 d6 ♜c8
20 f5

20 ♖a4? is a mistake in view of 20...exf4! 21 gx14 (21 ♟x14 ♟c5) 21...♜xe3!, while 20 ♟d5?! ♟c5 21 ♟e7+ ♜xe7 is also unsuccessful, although 20 ♜ad1!? deserves attention.

- 20 ... ♟c5
21 ♟xe5! ♟c5
- Of course, he must stop ...♟d3.

21 ... ♖xc5
 22 ♖c4
 22 ♖ad1 is also possible. By knowing how to unite offensive action and prophylaxis, White secured a very promising position.



B

Nunn - Yusupov

Linares 1988

Black has an extra pawn, although his opponent's pieces are aimed menacingly at his kingside. White's rooks could find themselves there instantly. 19 ♖h7+ is threatened.

Black's first impulse is to remove the queen from the danger zone with 18... ♖c7, but then her white counterpart joins in the attack on the king with 19 ♖h5 (threatening 20 ♖g3 or 20 ♖g4). Then 19... f5? 20 ♖g3 ♖xc5 21 ♖f3 ♖c3 22 ♖xb6 is dangerous, so Black must return the pawn with

19... ♖f5 20 ♖xf5 exf5 21 ♖xf5 ♖c4 with advantage to White.

18 ... ♖h8!

Despite looking rather awkward on c3 the queen at least attacks the d2-knight and so limits the movement of the white queen. Indeed this unwelcome guest is enough to divert White's forces from aggressive operations on the kingside. Remember: this mode of defence – restraining your opponent's activity by maintaining your queen in an advanced position – was recommended in Shereshevsky's essay 'Studying the Classics' in the first session of this school (*Training for the Tournament Player*).

19 g4?!

19 ♖f3 is better.

19 ...

♖ac6

By attacking the e5-pawn Black prevents White from opening a file on the kingside by means of g4-g5.

20 ♖f3

♖ab8!

Another prophylactic, this time directed against the threat of 21 ♖c4 ♖b2 22 ♖b3. Black answers 21 g5 with 21... ♖b4!

21 ♖c4!

♖b2

22 ♖b3

♖g6!

23 ♖a2

The black queen is trapped, but there will nonetheless be more than enough compensation for it.

23 ...

♖xb3

24 ♖xb2

♖xb2

25 ♖c1?!

25 ♖b3 is better.

25 ...

♖b4!

Yusupov saw through the trap set by the English grandmaster: the natural 25... ♖f8? runs into 26 ♖b3! ♖2xb3 (forced) 27 cxb3, and the white queen has the c-file at her disposal.

26 h3

♖f8

Now 27 ♖b3 is useless – the black rook is defended, and he can simply gobble up the e5-pawn.

27 ♖h2!

a5

28 ♖g3

What does White want to do now? Obviously h3-h4-h5.

28 ...

♖c4!

Not 29 h4? yet, because of the reply 29... ♖bb4.

29 c3

Yet another trap: the tempting 29... d4 is refuted by 30 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 31 ♖f1. 29 ♖d2 would have been more stubborn.

29 ...

a4!

30 ♖d2

♖cxe5!!

31 ♖a1

31 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 32 ♖e2 a3 is terrible.

31 ...

♖c7

32 ♖xa4

♖bc8

33 ♖a5

♖c4

34 ♖xc4

♖xc4

Black's large advantage is not in doubt and he eventually realised it successfully.

Typical Positions

In our games, positions are constantly arising with the same pawn structure, the same correlation of material and roughly the same placing of pieces as in a great number of games we have played previously. It is useful to know how strong players treat these situations, which plans they prefer, and what ideas they have.

There are many rules – relating to one typical position or another – which are well-known and constitute clear-cut formulas. For example, 'in open positions bishops are stronger than knights'; 'opposite-coloured bishops in the middle-game favour the attacker'; 'the side fighting against an isolated pawn in the centre should try to simplify to an endgame'.

However, in grandmasters' and masters' arsenals there are also several finer, less formal evaluations. We understand that 'in certain positions you have to act in a certain way', but at times it is difficult to formulate exactly what that 'certain position' is.

The problem of working on typical positions in the middle-game has already been addressed in the second session of our school (see *Opening Preparation*). An important principle is emphasised

there: these days such work is inconceivable outside the context of the theory of the opening from which the typical position has arisen. The reverse is also true: opening work can only be effective if one has a deep knowledge of the positions which lie ahead.

Taimanov – Yusupov
Leningrad v Moscow 1982
English Opening

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 1 | d4 | ♟f6 |
| 2 | c4 | e5 |
| 3 | ♟f3 | exd4 |
| 4 | ♟xd4 | b6 |
| 5 | ♟c3 | ♟b7 |
| 6 | f3 | e6 |
| 7 | e4 | d6 |
| 8 | ♟e2 | a6 |
| 9 | ♟e3 | ♟bd7 |
| 10 | 0-0 | ♟e7 |
| 11 | ♞d2 | 0-0 |
| 12 | ♞f1 | ♞c8 |
| 13 | ♞a1 | ♞c7 |
| 14 | ♟f1 | ♞fe8 |
| 15 | ♟h1 | ♞b8 |

The opening has developed logically. White has constructed a mighty pawn and piece centre, and in response Yusupov has chosen the flexible structure known as the Hedgehog. There are no weaknesses in his position, and his opponent must constantly watch out for the pawns breaks ...d6-d5 and

...b6-b5. Chances are roughly even, and the outcome of the game depends upon the strategic technique of the players.

A year earlier Yusupov had this exact position as White against Teshkovsky, USSR Ch (Frunze) 1981. Events developed quite instructively: 16 ♟g1 ♟f8 17 b4! ♟e5! 18 ♟a4 ♟fd7 19 a3 ♟a8 20 ♟b3 (20 ♞e3!?). Now Teshkovsky should have chosen between 20...♟c6 and 20...♟xc4! 21 ♟xc4 b5. But he was tempted by the automatic continuation 20...b5?, which in this situation turns out to be unsuccessful and leads to a clear advantage for White after 21 cxb5 axb5 22 ♟c3 ♟c4 23 ♞a2! (threatening 24 ♟xb5!) 23...♟de5 24 ♟d4. Yusupov's success in that game was mainly due to the fact that he carefully monitored the breakthroughs ...d6-d5 and ...b6-b5, and consequently was ready with a satisfactory answer.

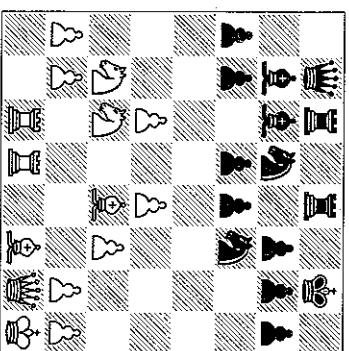
16 ♞f2 ♟d8!?
An unusual bishop manoeuvre. More often in these positions it is brought to f8, and then after ...g7-g6 to g7.

17 ♟b3?
A passive move which makes it difficult for White to carry out his normal plan of playing on the queenside with b2-b4, ♟b3, and at some point c4-c5. The immediate

17 b4?! is premature in view of 17...♟e5 18 ♟a4 d5!.

However, there is the possibility of 17 ♞g1 ♟e5 (17...♟c7 18 b4) 18 b3 h6 19 ♟a4, still reserving b3-b4 for the right time. In Anikaev-Merkulov, USSR 1982, in which all these moves were played, Black lashed out in the centre with 19...d5? (Anikaev recommends 19...♟fd7 20 b4 g5! 21 a3 ♟g7). Alas, as with Teshkovsky's queenside thrust, it is untimely. After 20 exd5 exd5 21 c5 b5 22 ♟b6 ♟xb6 23 cxb6 ♞d6 24 ♞f2 ♞xb6 25 ♟xb5 ♞xc1 26 ♞xc1 ♞d8 27 ♟b6! White is better.

- 17 ... ♟c7
18 ♞g1 (D)



B

- 18 ... ♟h8!!
Beginning a deep plan of attack on the kingside.
19 ♞c2 ♞g8!

20 ♞cd2 ♟g1
21 ♟d4 ♞g6
21...h5 is probably more accurate.

22 ♟c1!?
White underestimates the danger posed by Black's threats. He should have played 22 g4!.

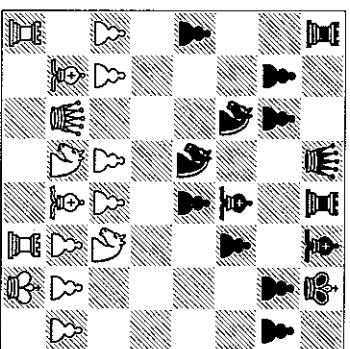
- 22 ... ♞cg8
23 ♟d3
23 g4 h5! 24 gxh5 ♞h6.
23 ... ♞f8
24 ♞e1 g4!
25 fxg4 e5
26 ♟e3 ♟xg4
27 ♟d5?

This natural move merely loses a tempo, as it helps Black to return his dark-squared bishop into play. 27 ♟f2, trying to simplify, was correct.

27 ... ♟d8
28 ♟f2 ♟h4!
29 ♞e2
After 29 ♟xb6 ♟xb6 30 ♟xb6, Black plays 30...♟xh2!.

- 29 ... ♟xe3
30 ♟xe3 ♟g5.
30 ... ♟xf2
31 ♞xf2 ♟xe4
The game is decided – Black has an extra pawn and an attack.
32 ♟f5 ♟c5
33 ♟g3 ♟a8
34 ♞d1 ♟e6!
35 ♞xb6 ♟f4

- 36 ♖f2 ♖h6
 - 37 ♖g1 ♖h4!
 - 38 ♗b3 ♖h6
 - 39 ♗xf4 exf4
 - 40 ♗c3+ f6
 - 41 ♖f5 ♖xg2+!
 - 42 ♗xg2 ♗xh2+
- White resigned



Is it easy to think up a plan like this, involving ...♖h8, ...♖g8 and ...g7-g5, at the board? Of course it is not easy, but in this case it was also unnecessary, as Yusupov knew the following game of Bobby Fischer's, in which a similar plan was apparently used for the first time.

Fischer – Andersson
Siegen OL 1970
 Nimzovitsch-Larsen Opening

- 1 b3 e5 2 ♖b2 ♖c6 3 c4 ♖f6 4 e3
- ♗e7 5 a3 0-0 6 ♗c2 ♖e8 7 d3 ♗f8
- 8 ♖f3 a5 9 ♗e2 d5 10 cxd5 ♖xd5
- 11 ♖bd2 f6 12 0-0 ♗e6 (D)

With experimental play in the opening, Fischer has (with colours reversed) the same structure as in the Hedgehog. Incidentally, this is a good illustration of the universal nature of many strategic ideas – having studied them, you can use them in different openings.

- 13 ♖h1! ♗d7 14 ♖g1! ♖ad8
- 15 ♖e4 ♗f7? 16 g4! g6 17 ♖g3
- ♗g7 18 ♖ag1 ♖b6 19 ♖c5 ♗c8

- 20 ♖h4 ♖d7 21 ♖e4 ♖f8 22 ♖f5!
- ♗e6 23 ♖c5 ♖e7 24 ♖xg7 ♖xg7
- 25 g5! ♖f5 26 ♖f3 b6 27 gxf6+
- ♖h8 28 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 29 d4! exd4
- 30 ♗c4 d3 31 ♗xd3 ♖xd3 32
- ♗xd3 ♖d6 33 ♗c4, and Black quickly resigned.

Typical Situations

By 'typical positions', as just discussed, we mean ones which are characterised by particular arrangements and distributions of pieces on the board, and as we have seen, a study of these positions will help greatly in general assessments of the position. For example, you can study the rules governing attack and defence, realising an advantage or manoeuvring in a roughly even position, dealing with a blockade or fighting for an initiative, etc.

A similar analysis of the sporting side is also interesting, such as playing for a win or a draw, time trouble, adjourned games, running into something unexpected in the opening, or how to play after you have overlooked something. In previous sessions we have already discussed many situations like these, and some we have studied very thoroughly – for example, the problem of realising an advantage.

The rules and regulations we have established for ourselves with this sort of analysis are not exclusively to do with chess, but are partly psychological, relating to our behaviour. For example, at a critical moment in a game when it is necessary to find a specific continuation in order to press home an advantage, remember the seemingly contradictory recommendation, 'do not hurry'. Principles like this do not tell us straight away which move we should make, but they do suggest the correct direction for our search, and help create an approach which best corresponds to the situation which has arisen.

This game was played in the USSR Team Championship, and the first problematic decision – the choice of opening for White – was settled before the game had even started.

Having seen in his preparation how his opponent replied to the English Opening, Yusupov noted that it was possible to transpose into the Caro-Kann Defence. Sergei Dolmatov, playing on the same team as Yusupov, had always fought successfully against this opening. He had done some work of his own in the Panov Attack, and was ready to share it with his friend. Unfortunately Yusupov had practically never played 1 e4, and consequently had no experience of the related opening and middlegame positions.

But he had studied chess as a whole very deeply, and had analysed games from all openings. As he possesses a high degree of chess culture, he can (and now and again it is even useful!) allow himself this risk in the opening.

- Yusupov – Timoshchenko**
USSR Chf (Kislovodsk) 1982
 Caro-Kann Defence
- 1 c4 c6
 - 2 e4
- 2 ... d5
 - 3 exd5 cxd5
 - 4 d4 ♖f6
 - 5 ♖c3 ♖c6
 - 6 ♖f3 ♗g4
 - 7 cxd5 ♖xd5
 - 8 ♗b3 ♗xf3
 - 9 gxf3 ♖b6

Another possibility for Black is the endgame that is reached after 9...e6 10 ♖xb7 ♘xd4 11 ♠b5+ ♘xb5 12 ♗c6+! ♖e7 13 ♖xb5 ♗d7 14 ♘xd5+ ♗xd5.

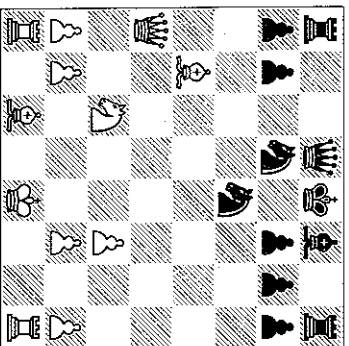
10 d5 ♘d4

11 ♠b5+ ♘d7

12 ♗a4 e5?

In his preparation Yusupov had only considered 12...♘xf3+ and 12...♘xb5 13 ♖xb5 g6. Now we have a new situation – the search for the correct reply to Black's novelty.

13 dxex6 ♘xe6 (D)



W

14 ♠e3?

This is a normal developing move which almost everyone would play without thinking. But now Black has time, by attacking the b5-bishop, to force a favourable exchange.

Castling an unbiased eye over the position, does it remind you of

anything? Isn't it a bit like posi-

tions we saw in old games by Paul Morphy and Adolf Anderssen? The centre is open, the black king is stuck in the centre (true, the white king is still there as well), and there is a pin on the a4-e8 diagonal – as in the famous Morphy consultation game. But do you remember what you have to do in situations like this? Without fear of sacrificing, you have to strive to hinder your opponent's development while simultaneously concluding your own as quickly as possible, bring the rooks on to open files in the centre and generate a mating attack.

Alas, we have already half-forgotten such opening strategies, in as much as in modern systems the fight is usually carried out in quite a different style. I have no doubt that Morphy would have played 14 ♠g5!! without hesitation, in order to place his rook on d1 as quickly as possible. Black's position quickly becomes hopeless:

a) 14...♘xg5 15 0-0-0.

b) 14...♠e7 15 ♠xe7 ♗xe7 16 0-0-0 ♗d8 17 ♘d5.

c) 14...♘c5 15 ♠xd8 ♘xa4 16 ♠xa4 ♗xxd8 17 0-0-0 ♠e7 18 ♗hel.

d) 14...♗xg5 15 ♠xd7+ ♖e7.

Now 16 ♘e4 is not bad, but if White wants to try castling quickly

a more effective move can be suggested: 16 f4! ♘xf4 17 0-0-0!

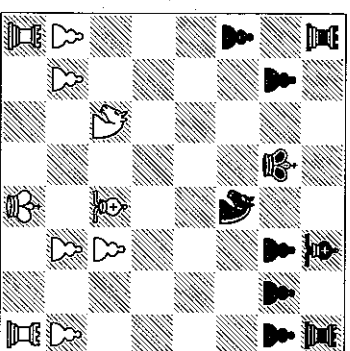
14 ... a6

15 ♠xd7+

15 ♠e2 would be answered by 15...♠c5.

15 ... ♗xd7

16 ♗xd7+ ♠xd7 (D)



W

Another new situation, which is quite difficult to play. Yusupov had a superior understanding of it.

17 0-0!

The favourable factors at work in a position, as is well-known, can be divided into the permanent (long-term) and the temporary. Obviously White has no permanent advantage – on the contrary, his pawn structure is worse than his opponent's. His only chance lies in the vulnerable position of the enemy king, which is about to fall victim to an attack by the white

rooks. This is a temporary advantage, and if Black manages to consolidate, it will evaporate. You must skilfully fan the flames of the initiative – it can be put out at any moment, so utmost precision and dynamic play is demanded.

In the endgame you are supposed to bring your king closer to the centre, and therefore 17 0-0+ or 17 ♖e2 appear to be more logical. However, at the moment we have to approach this position not as we would an endgame. White's king has withdrawn to the kingside in order to leave the c-, d- and e-files – on which the enemy king will take shelter – open for the rooks.

17 ... ♠d6

The next move seems obvious – 18 ♗fd1. Yusupov asked himself what his opponent would do in reply. After some consideration he found a strong defensive manoeuvre: ...♗a8-c8-c6, followed by ...♖c8. For example, after 18 ♗fd1? ♗ac8 19 ♘e4 ♗c6 20 ♗ac1 ♗d8! Black has successfully completed his development.

18 ♘d5!

The grandmaster spoils Black's ideal piece arrangement. As you can see, even in a struggle for the initiative a prophylactic operation sometimes takes precedence over attack.

18 ... ♖ad8

What should White do now? After 19 ♖b6 ♗c8 Black gets his rook to c6 anyway, while after 19 ♗fd1 ♖c8 (there is also 19... ♖e8) 20 ♖b6 (20 ♖a7 b5!) 20... ♗de8! (not 20... ♗d7? 21 ♖a7 or 21 ♖a5), 21 ♖a7 b5! 22 ♗b6+ ♖b7 23 ♗xd6 ♖xa7 yields only complete equality. Instead of 21 ♖a7 White would be better off playing 21 ♗ff6! gxf6 22 ♗xd6 with some pressure, but it is evident that little of this appealed to Yusupov.

19 ♗ac1!

Another prophylactic! White prevents the king retreat. If now 19... ♖e8 White has 20 ♖b6.

19 ... ♗c7

20 ♗b6+ ♖e6

Perhaps now it is finally time to put the rook on d1? No, it is still too early – Black could then strengthen his position by means of 21... g5! followed by ... f7-f6 and ... ♖e5.

21 ♗fe1!

21 f4!?

21 ... ♖f5

22 ♗ed1

Threatening 23 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 24 ♗xc7. 22... ♖e6 is no good in view of 23 ♗xd6+! ♖xd6 24 ♖f4+.

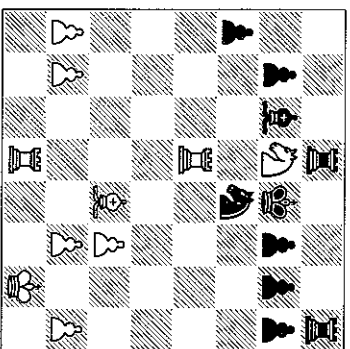
22 ... ♗e6

23 ♗d5+ ♖f6

23... ♖g6!?

24 ♗cd1 ♖c7

25 ♗d7+ ♖e7 (D)



W

White has succeeded in holding on to the initiative. With a series of sharp prophylactic moves Yusupov has inhibited his opponent's pieces and obtained a definite space advantage.

Now the character of the game is about to change – there lies ahead a lot of manoeuvring designed to accumulate positional advantages and gradually break through the defensive lines.

Note that White's advantage is not yet decisive, and to be successful he will need a little 'co-operation' from his opponent. Naturally, Black will not make any mistakes out of good will – he will need some help!

26 b4!

The plan is clear: a2-a4 and at the right moment b4-b5-b6. Of course this is not decisive, but it is unpleasant enough. Incidentally,

the attempt to win a pawn does not work: 26 ♖c5+? ♗xc5 27 ♗xc5 ♗xd5 28 ♗xd5 ♗d8 29 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 30 ♗xb7 ♖b6.

26 ... f6

27 a4 g5?!?

By increasing his control over f4 Timoshchenko is searching for counterplay on the kingside. After 28 b5 he had prepared 28... axb5 29 axb5 ♗a8 30 b6 ♖f4. However, the cure turns out to be worse than the ailment – a real weakness has appeared in the black camp – the f6-pawn. Therefore the restrained 27... ♗h8 followed by ... ♖f7 was preferable.

28 ♖c1!?

The threat of 29 ♖b2 is very unpleasant (♖a3 may also come in the future). However, 28 ♖d4! is also deserved serious attention, as it forces an exchange of minor pieces that is good for White (28... ♗xd7? fails to 29 ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 30 ♖xf6+ and 31 ♖xh8).

28 ... ♗f4?

Yet another mistake, provoked by Yusupov's last move. Black should have played 28... ♗hg8!, preparing to defend the f6-pawn with ... ♗g6.

29 ♖xf4 ♖xf4?!

Now Black is losing a pawn. After 29... gxf4 White's positional superiority is not in doubt.

30 ♗xf6!

We have now entered the concluding phase of the game. Yusupov presses home his advantage.

30 ... ♗c8

31 ♗h5

31 ♗xh7!? was also quite possible.

31 ... ♖c7

32 ♗e1+ ♖f7

33 ♗d7+ ♖g6

34 ♗g7!?

34 ♗g3.

34 ... ♖d8

Black loses immediately after 34... ♗h8 35 ♗e6+ ♗f6 36 ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 37 ♗xc7 ♗xc7 38 ♗e8+.

35 ♗xb7 ♖f6

36 ♗e6 ♗hf8

36... ♗b8 37 ♗xb8 ♗xb8 38 ♗e8 ♖f7 39 ♗xf6+ ♖xe8 40 ♗xa6 is also hopeless.

37 ♗xa6

And White won easily.

The Plan

There is a popular opinion that the highest strategic art is the ability to envelop nearly the whole game in a profound plan, and that this is precisely how leading grandmasters think. This is a delusion. It is nonsensical to map out an overly long plan – the very next move could totally change the situation on the board and give it a completely different direction.

The positions that you reach from the opening are minutely studied in chess theory, and we know very well what you have to do in them. Similarly, in the endgame a complex plan can be implemented if we have carefully analysed the position after an adjournment, or if we know how theoretical manuals recommend playing it. But finding and implementing a multi-staged plan at the board is a great rarity.

So how do chess players plan in their games? Usually they make only a general plan, noting the area and character of the approaching action. For example, we might realise that a position demands an attack on the queenside, and estimate the approximate form of such an attack.

Separate strategic operations (which as a rule are quite small) can be planned in more detail. If all the operations you carry out are well-timed and successful, and produce ultimate success, then in a survey of the game they will merge into a consistent plan. This is what GM Kotov said on the subject in his book *Think Like a Grandmaster*.

'The plan in a chess game is the sum total of one strategic operation after another, each fulfilling an independent idea which results from the demands of the position.'

The following game gives the impression of being shaped as a single plan. White blocked up play on the queenside and in the centre, and then successfully carried out an attack on the king. I will attempt to show in the notes how this plan was formulated.

Yusupov – Rubineti

Toluca IZ 1982

Old Indian Defence

- | | | |
|---|-----|------|
| 1 | d4 | ♟f6 |
| 2 | c4 | d6 |
| 3 | ♗c3 | ♞bd7 |
| 4 | ♞f3 | c6 |

Black intends to develop with ...e7-e5, ...♗e7 and ...0-0. In executing his ideas the chess player usually tries to discover and, if

possible, anticipate his opponent's most dangerous plans. Rubineti did not play 4...e5 immediately because he wanted to avoid this well-known development of the white pieces: 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 ♜c2, followed by e2-e3 and ♗d3.

Now (after 4...c6), 5 ♗g5 h6 6 ♗h4 g5 7 ♗g3 ♞h5 is OK for

- Black.
- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 5 | e4 | e5 |
| 6 | ♗e2 | ♗e7 |
| 7 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 8 | h3 | |

The first little strategic idea – if you do not count the choice of

where to place the pieces in the opening. White is preparing ♗e3, so that when he pushes d4-d5 the reply ...♗c5 can be met with ♗d2. Any experienced player can plan his game with precisely such operations.

According to theory the immediate 8 d5 is also strong.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 8 | ... | a6 |
|---|-----|----|

Black wants to play 9...b5 to threaten 10...b4. Should White try to forestall this offensive by means of 9 a4, or is the simple 9 ♗e3 b5 10 a3 better? I do not know the correct answer to this question. Chess is a complex game with no single, easy solution, and choices frequently depend on the style and taste of the player.

- | | | |
|---|----|----|
| 9 | a4 | a5 |
|---|----|----|

Otherwise White would have seized space on the queenside with 10 a5.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 10 | ♗e3 |
|----|-----|

In the event of 10 d5 ♗c5 11 ♜c2 Black would reply 11...♜c7 with the threat of 12...cxd5, with the point that 13 cxd5? fails to 13...♗cxe4.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 10 | ... | ♞e8 |
|----|-----|-----|

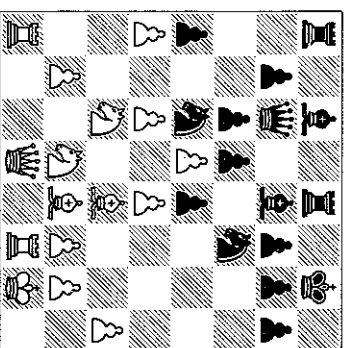
A debatable move. When Black has already played the pawn capture ...exd4, the move ...♞e8 is obviously useful because it puts the white e4-pawn under pressure. Here White still has the option of

pushing with d4-d5, so the rook would have been better left on f8. 10...exd4 11 ♗xxd4 ♗c5 looks more logical, attacking the e4-pawn (defending it by means of ♗f3 looks ugly now that h2-h3 has been played). Yusupov would have replied 12 ♜c2 followed by 13 ♞ad1 (with the threat of 14 ♗xc6 bxc6 15 ♗xc5) and then either 12-f4 followed by ♗f3, or ♗f5. Again I will not try to assess which is the more important, White's space advantage or his opponent's control over the dark squares.

- | | |
|----|----|
| 11 | d5 |
|----|----|

Consistent (White has been preparing this move) and – no less important – fully in Yusupov's style; he loves positions where he has a territorial advantage.

- | | | |
|----|-----|---------|
| 11 | ... | ♜c7 |
| 12 | ♗d2 | ♗c5 (D) |



W

White has almost finished developing his pieces; it is time to decide what to do next.

With the pawn on a2 the usual plan for White is to attack on the queenside with ♖b1, b2-b3, a2-a3 and b3-b4. The advance of the a-pawn has ruled out this standard strategy, so White must look for activity somewhere else. White's other natural advance, f2-f4, further weakens the dark squares and presents Black with the useful e5-square.

Yusupov probably found the only promising plan (or, to be more accurate, the next strategic operation). Previous operations on both sides have been fairly standard, the only difficulty involving the choice between different possibilities. However, the idea found by Yusupov is very unusual and had apparently not been seen in similar situations before – this is what gives the game its distinctive look.

13 ♖h2! ♗d8

14 ♖g1!

White is preparing g2-g3 and f2-f4 (after the immediate 14 g3 there is the reply 14...♞d7, but now it is possible to defend the h3-pawn with ♗f1). An exchange on f4 would increase White's space advantage without giving up any of the central squares, and his rook would be superbly placed on the

newly opened g-file. If, on the other hand, White is allowed to play f4-f5 and g3-g4-g5, then again the g1-rook is where it needs to be.

This is the basic plan, but Yusupov has also foreseen another possible development of events. White could also play g2-g4 and organise a pawn storm on the kingside with g4-g5 and h3-h4-h5 (the rook will support this from g1), or bring the knight, via the vacated f1-square, to f5. Again after ♗f5 ♗xf5, gxf5 the rook finds itself on an open file.

We can see that we are not talking about a clear-cut plan in so far as White, depending on the reaction of his opponent, can choose one or another line of play. Yusupov's plan is useful, however events may develop.

Black has not been able to oppose the superior play of his rival in any way. However, the transfer of the bishop to b6 is quite logical. After both 13...♗f8 14 ♖g1! and 13...h6 14 ♖g1! ♗h7 15 g3 White would have been better.

14 ... ♞b6

Black has mistakenly decided that a7 is the best square for the queen. Kramnik's suggested move 14...♞d7! is much stronger, as it not only frees the path for the bishop to come to b6, but also prevents the immediate g2-g3 and

intends to meet 15 g4 with the reply 15...♗h5!

15 ♞b1

White must position his pieces accurately.

15 ♞c2 is weaker, for from d1 the queen still has designs on the d6-pawn, as well as access to the kingside on the d1-h5 diagonal.

15 ... ♞a7

In order to carry out his plan, Black is forced to exclude his queen from the game, a sign that his idea is not correct.

16 g4!

Taking into account the miserable position of Black's pieces, Yusupov chooses the more aggressive of the two lines of attack he had planned.

16 ... ♖f8

Too passive (Black wants to defend the d6-pawn with ...♗e8). 16...♗b6 17 g5 ♗fd7 would have been more consistent. After 18 ♗f1 ♗f8 19 dxc6 bxc6 20 ♞xd6 Black obtains counterchances with the simple 20...♗b7!? followed by ...♞ad8, ...♗ce6 and ...♗g6. An improvement for White is 18 h4! ♗f8 19 h5 ♗a6 20 ♖g3, preparing an attack on the kingside and intending to recapture on e3 with the f-pawn.

17 ♗f1!

Not 17 g5?! ♗e8, when Black will advance the f-pawn.

Once again we see how flexibly White can vary his plans.

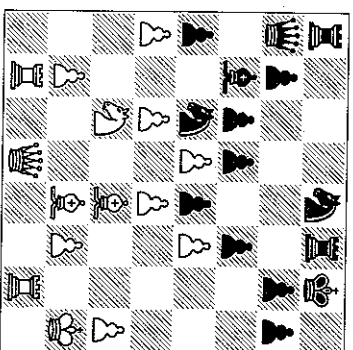
17 ... ♗e8

18 ♗g3 f6

19 ♗f5 ♗xf5

Positional capitulation, but by now Black's position is already difficult.

20 gxf5 ♗b6 (D)



W

21 ♗h5!

Rubinietti has only just managed to complete his planned bishop manoeuvre, whilst Yusupov has already begun his final attack.

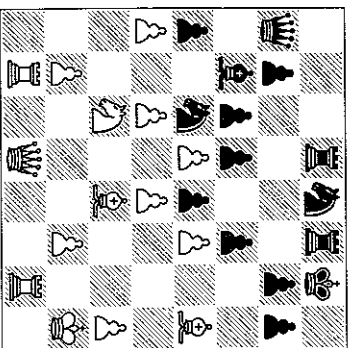
21 ... ♖d8 (D)

The time has come for White to search for a successful conclusion to the intensifying kingside attack.

22 ♗g6 hxg6 23 fxg6 does not work because of 23...f5. White can prepare this sacrifice by means of 22 ♞g4 ♖d7 23 ♞h4, when Yusupov feared 23...♗d3 24 ♗g6 hxg6

25 fxg6 ♖f7 would hold. However, as GM Wolff pointed out, White has a forced win by 26 ♖xf7 29 ♖xg7+! ♜xg7 30 ♖gl.

Yusupov chose another winning method, which is no worse.



W

22 ♖h6! ♖d7
23 ♖xe8 ♖xe8
24 ♖h5

It was not necessary to rely on an immediate sacrifice on g7, as the queen joins the attack by hitting the e8-rook.

24 ... ♖b8

25 ♖xf7!

Black resigned

The entire game is an outstanding example on the theme of 'strategy'. Events were explained not in terms of variations but of the plans for both sides. White's rapid success was determined partly by the profound plan Yusupov found on his 13th move, and partly by the mistaken strategic idea which his opponent had at that point begun to carry out.

2 Manoeuvring

Artur Yusupov

One of the most complicated elements of positional play is transferring the battle from one part of the board to another. The fact is, you can rarely manage to win a game by breaking through your opponent's defences in just one place. As a rule you have to try to create new weaknesses and then set about manoeuvring against them. This method is closely linked with the principle of two weaknesses, which we have mentioned many times – it is one of the most important components in the technical business of realising an advantage.

The following game, if it had been played by Nimzowitsch, would certainly have found a place in the chapter 'Manoeuvring against enemy weaknesses in the presence of a space advantage' in his book *My System*.

Anand constantly changed the direction of his attack, creating more and more fresh problems for his opponent and skilfully combining aggressive and prophylactic play. Kamsky experienced difficulties because it was necessary to

defend his position on different fronts.

The following thought from *My System* is instructive: 'The process of manoeuvring against two enemy weaknesses can be characterised like this: two weaknesses, which in themselves are quite defensible, are put under fire in turn, while the attacking side is helped chiefly by his territorial advantage and his communicating files. A game can be lost because for the defending side a moment will come when he cannot keep up with the speed with which his opponent regroups his forces.'

Anand – Kamsky

Las Palmas PCA Ct (9) 1995

Spanish

1 ♖e4	e5
2 ♜f3	♜c6
3 ♖h5	a6
4 ♖a4	♜f6
5 0-0	♖e7
6 ♖e1	b5
7 ♖b3	d6
8 c3	0-0

9 h3 ♖b7
10 d4 ♜e8

In this game Kamsky gambled on the Zaitsev System of the Ruy Lopez. In my opinion this game practically decided the fate of the match – victory in it gave Anand extra confidence, while Kamsky reacted to defeat by changing his opening (in the 11th game he took a risk and played the Sicilian, leading to catastrophe).

11 ♖bd2 ♗f8
12 a4 h6
13 ♖c2 exd4
14 cxd4 ♖b4
15 ♖b1 ♜d7

Kamsky constantly varied his treatment of the Zaitsev System. Apart from connecting the rooks, this move has another idea: after 16 axb5 Black can take the pawn with the queen, creating the threat of ...♗d3. The standard 16 e5 dxe5 17 dxex ♖h5 18 axb5 ♜xb5 19 ♜b3 ♜ad8 led to a double-edged game in Beliavsky-Smejkal, Sarajevo 1982. Theory recommends 16 ♜a3, but in this case Black continues 16...bxa4, gaining an extra tempo in comparison with the variation 15...bxa4 16 ♜xa4 a5 17 ♜a3 ♜d7.

16 b3?!
Anand himself avoids well-studied lines, instead using less popular but solid, logical continuations. White is in no hurry to fix

the situation either in the centre or on the kingside, preferring first to complete his development.

16 ... g6

16...c5?! is premature, as after 17 ♖b2 the white bishop begins to threaten the f6-knight. True, in the variation 17...cxd4 18 ♖xd4 ♜d8 (Anand) Black holds after 19 axb5 axb5 20 ♜xa8 ♖xa8 21 ♜e2 ♖c6, but the simple 18 ♖xd4 presents the second player with more unpleasant problems.

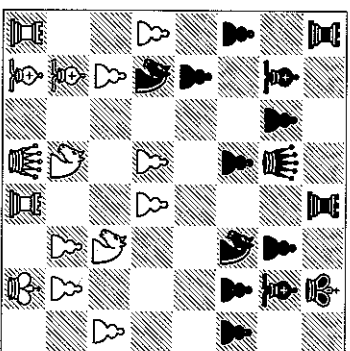
17 ♖b2

This natural move seems to be a novelty. In the only game I know where this position can be found, Van der Wiel-Karpov, Amsterdam 1991, White continued 17 axb5 (in fact the players used a typical repetition of moves, 11 ♖g5 ♜f8 12 ♖f3 ♜e8, but we have retained the numbering of the main line; the move order was also changed – instead of 13...exd4 the game continued 13...♜d7 14 b3 exd4 15 cxd4 ♖b4 16 ♖b1 g6) 17...♜xb5!? 18 d5, but after 18...c6 19 ♖b2 ♖h5 Black created central counterplay.

17 ... ♖g7 (D)
18 ♜c1!

This fine prophylactic move is significantly stronger than 18 d5, after which Van der Wiel's suggestion 18...c6 can be played.

White defends the bishop and prepares to strengthen the long



W

diagonal with ♖c3 and ♜b2. The f4-square is also under his control, allowing White to meet 18...♖h5 with the simple 19 ♖f1. On the queenside White's pieces can effectively begin to by-pass the b4 knight, which with every move is gradually turning into a mere observer.

18 ... ♜ac8?!

Black is preparing the advance ...c7-c5, but in some variations White will have extra possibilities along the a-file, which will be opened sooner or later. The immediate 18...c5 looks stronger, when 19 dxc5 can be met by 19...♜ac8 (19...dxc5 is weaker because of 20 ♜xc5 ♖xe4 21 ♖xe4 ♖xb2 22 ♖xb7, shown by Anand).

19 ♖c3 c5
20 d5 ♜e7?!

An interesting assessment of the position was given by Anand:

'It is not difficult to see where White's advantage lies. He has two "bad pieces", the b1-bishop and the a1-rook, but both possess considerable potential energy. It will be easy for me to open the a-file at my leisure, while the bishop is restraining the breakthrough...f7-f5. Black's b4-knight and b7-bishop are simply bad – that is the main difference.'

Because of the constant threat of invasion down the a-file it is difficult for Black to carry out what is practically his only plan – blocking the dark squares with ...♜e7 and ...♖d7. Therefore 20...♖h5 21 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 (21...♖xg7 22 ♖f1 with an advantage) 22 ♜b2+ f6 deserves consideration, although this position still seems to be in White's favour.

I prefer another defensive manoeuvre, 20...♜d8!?, maintaining the possibility of protecting the queenside with the queen. After 21 ♖f1 Black can choose between 21...♜c7 followed by ...♖c8, or 21...♖d7 22 ♖xg7 ♖xg7.

21 ♖f1

On d2 the knight is deprived of any kind of prospects, so White sends it over to the kingside. The c1-h6 diagonal is also cleared.

21 ... ♖h7

On h7 the knight is out of the game. 21...♖h5 22 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 is

also dubious – both 23 ♖e3 followed by ♖g4, and Pachman's recommendation 23 g4 ♖f6 24 ♖g3 are possible.

21...♖d7 looks better: 22 ♠xg7 ♠xg7 23 axb5 axb5 24 ♖a7 ♖b8 25 ♖e3 h5, although in this case as well White has the initiative.

22 ♠xg7 ♠xg7
23 ♖e3

This knight causes Black serious anxiety. The threat is 24 ♖g4. Consequently Black must further weaken his kingside.

23 ... h5
Anand also analyses other possibilities for Black:

1) 23...♣f6 24 ♖g4! ♣xa1 25 ♣xb6+ ♠g8 26 e5! ♣xe5 (26...♣c3 is weaker: 27 ♠xg6 fxg6 28 ♖f6+ ♖xf6 29 ♣xg6+ ♠f8 30 ♣xf6+ ♠g8 31 ♣e4!) 27 ♖gxe5 dxe5 28 ♠xg6 ♣xe1+ 29 ♖xe1 fxg6 30 ♣xg6+ with an advantage.

2) 23...♖g5 24 ♖xg5 hxg5 (or 24...♣xg5 25 axb5 axb5 26 f4! 'with superior prospects on both flanks' – Anand) 25 axb5 axb5 26 ♖a5! ♣c7 27 ♖a7 ♖a8 (27...♣b6 28 ♖f5+ gxf5 29 ♣xg5+ ♠f8 30 ♣h6+ ♠e7 31 e5!) 28 ♖f5+! gxf5 (28...♠f6 29 ♖xb7 ♣xb7 30 ♖xd6) 29 ♣xg5+ ♠f8 30 ♣h6+ ♠e7 31 e5! with a powerful attack.

24 ♣d2

This is just one of many fine positional moves in this game. White

methodically strengthens his position, making use of the fact that his opponent is deprived of active counterplay.

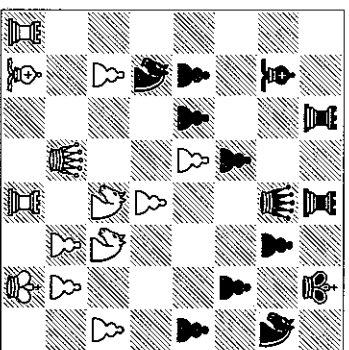
24 ... ♠g8

24...♖f6 is dangerous in view of 25 ♖h4, and 24...♣f6 achieves nothing after 25 ♖a3. Had Black foreseen his opponent's coming manoeuvre he would have chosen the lesser evil 24...bx4!?, even though this does give the white knight the wonderful c4-square.

25 axb5!

White has waited a long time to open the a-file and, while his opponent is concentrating on the kingside, now is the right moment to switch to the queenside.

25 ... axb5 (D)



26 ♖d1!

A beautiful and timely multipurpose manoeuvre, increasing

White's advantage and preventing a move (...♖g5) which would ease Black's defence.

The next part of the game is an illustration of how to manoeuvre against enemy weaknesses.

26 ... ♖a6

Black is forced into passive defence: 26...♖a8 27 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 28 ♖c3 ♣d7 29 e5 is unpleasant for Black.

27 ♖c3 b4

28 ♖b5

28 ♖a4 with the idea of ♖b6-c4 also looks reasonable.

28 ... ♖c7

29 ♠d3 ♖xb5

30 ♠xb5

White has a favourable structure which is characteristic of some variations in the Benoni.

30 ... ♖ed8

31 ♠c4

After this apparently modest move, the powerful threat of a breakthrough in the centre is created.

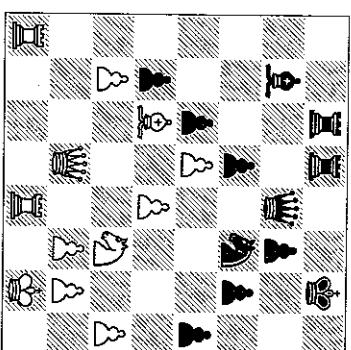
31 ... ♖f6 (D)

31...f6 32 e5! fxe5 33 ♖xe5 ♣f6 (or 33...dxe5 34 d6+ ♠g7 35 dxe7 ♖xd2 36 ♖xd2 ♠c6 37 ♖a7 ♠e8 38 ♖e4) 34 ♖e1 ♖e8 35 ♖a7 – Pachman.

32 ♣h6!

Now the threat is 33 e5 dxe5 34 d6 and 35 ♣xg6+.

32 ... ♣f8



A natural reply: 32...♖xc4? 33 ♖a2, threatening 34 ♖a2.

33 ♣g5

33 ♣f4 is also good.

33 ... ♣g7

33...♖h7 34 ♣f4. 33...♣e7 is no better in view of 34 ♖a7!

34 ♖a7

Again White switches flanks.

34 ... ♖c7

After 34...♖d7 White has the strong 35 e5! ♖e8 (35...♖xd5 36 ♠xd5 wins a piece, or 35...dxe5 36 ♖xe5 ♖dc7 37 d6 winning) 36 e6 ♖dc7 37 exf7+ ♣xf7 38 ♖e6 – Anand.

35 ♠a6 ♖b8

35...♖dd7 also loses: 36 ♠xb7 ♖xb7 37 ♖a8+! ♠h7 38 ♣f4 ♖g8 39 e5 dxe5 40 ♖xe5 with complete domination.

36 e5!

Perfect timing. Black is too tied up to cope with this thrust.

36 ... ♖e8
36...dxe5 is bad because of 37
d6 ♖d7 38 ♗xe5.

37 ♖xb7 ♖xc7
38 ♖xb7 ♖xb7
39 ♖d8 ♖f8
40 ♖a1!

The simplest continuation, guaranteeing White decisive material gains. 40 e6 fxe6 41 ♖xe6 ♗g7 is less clear.

40 ... ♗c7
40...♖e7 41 ♖a8 loses.
41 ♖d7 ♖b8
After 41...♖e8, White replies 42 ♖c6!

Kamsky finds the best practical chance, but his opponent is careful to the end.

44 ♖b1 c4!?
44 ♗g5 also wins: 44...b2 45 ♖b1 ♖a7 46 ♖h2! (not 46 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 47 ♖d8+ ♗e8! 48 ♖xe8+ ♖g7) 46...♖a1 47 ♖xb2 ♖xb2 48 ♖d8+ ♖g7 49 ♖f6+ ♖h6 50 ♗xf7+ ♖h7 51 ♖h8 mate.

44 ... b2
45 ♖c5! ♖b3
46 ♖d4 ♖b4
47 ♗g5

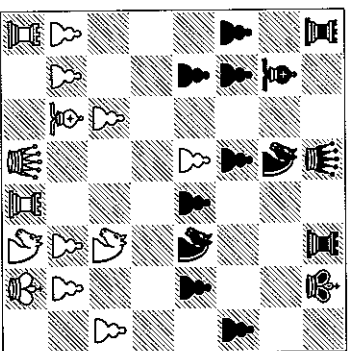
The weakness of the f7-pawn decides. As Anand showed, there was still an opportunity for White to go wrong: 47 e6 ♖c3 48 exf7+ ♖xf7 49 ♗g5+ ♖e7 50 ♖e1+ ♖d7

51 ♖g7+ ♖c8 52 d6 ♖xc4! 53 ♖e8+ ♖b7. ♖c3

47 ... ♖c3
48 ♖f4
The final stroke, underlining the need to combine defence and attack.

48 ... f6
49 exf6 ♗xd5
50 f7+
Black resigned

The next example, from the same match, illustrates the significance of the 'second front'.

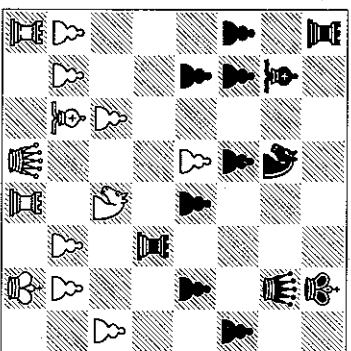


W
Anand - Kamsky
Las Palmas PCA Ct (3) 1995

Black's castled position has been weakened, and Anand immediately endeavours to profit from this. He begins a cunning knight manoeuvre, the aim of which is to gain control of the f5-square.

20 ♗3h2!
Threatening 21 ♖h5 followed by ♗g4.

20 ... ♖f6
21 ♗g4 ♖g7
22 ♗ge3 ♗xe3
23 ♗xe3 ♖f4 (D)



W

Although White has successfully carried out his plans, he has not yet managed to gain full control of f5. 24 ♗f5 ♖f6, 24 g3 ♖f7 and 24 ♖f5 ♖af8 promise little. He would like to exchange off a pair of rooks and bring his a1-rook into the game. A 'second front' is necessary!

24 a4!
This move guarantees White a definite advantage. Since neither 24...b4 25 g3, nor the more natural 24...bxa4 25 ♖xa4 ♖af8 26 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 (26...exf4? 27 ♗f5 ♖f6 28 ♖e6, or 26...gxf4 27 ♗f5 ♖f6 28

♖h5) 27 ♖f5! (Anand) would have helped Black, he decided to sacrifice a pawn.

24 ... ♖af8
25 axb5 a5
25...axb5 is terrible in view of 26 ♖a7.

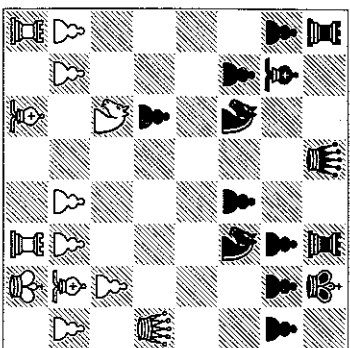
26 ♖f1 ♖c8
27 g3 ♖f7
27...♗f6 28 gxf4 gxf4+ 29 ♖h2 fxe3 30 fxe3! (30 ♖g1? ♗g4+!) 30...♖g5 31 ♖a4! (Anand).

28 b4
Emphasising White's advantage, although it is possible that the variation demonstrated by Anand – 28 ♖e4! ♗c5 29 ♖g2 e4 30 ♗c4 – is more precise. Despite resourceful play by Kamsky, Anand managed to win the game:

28...e4! 29 ♖xe4 ♗e5 30 ♖g2 axb4 31 cxb4 ♗f3+ 32 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 33 ♖a8 ♖xh3 34 ♖xf3 ♖xa8 35 ♖c1 ♖f8 36 ♖e2 ♖d7 37 ♖c7 ♖f7 38 ♖b7 ♖a1+ 39 ♗f1 ♖g7 40 ♖xb6 ♖d4 41 ♖b8 ♖xb4 42 ♗e3 h5 43 b6! h4 44 g4 ♖b5 45 ♖d1 ♖b2 46 ♗f5+ ♖xf5 47 gxf5 ♖e2 48 ♖a4 (48 ♖e1!) 48...♖f3! 49 ♖d7+ ♖h6 50 ♖e6+ ♖h5 51 ♖e8+! ♖g4 52 ♖e1 ♖xd5 53 ♖e8 ♖f3 54 f6!! ♖h5 55 f7 ♖d4 56 ♖e4! ♖f6 57 b7 ♖xe4 58 ♖xe4 Black resigned.

Anand's play has strong associations with the games of Alexander Alekhine, the unsurpassed

master of changing the direction of an attack. Alekhine's play was characterised by an ability to find hidden tactical resources to support his strategic plans. The following three examples are typical of Alekhine's style of play.



W

Alekhine – Bogoljubow

Triberg 1921

Winning back the pawn leads only to simplification after 12 ♖xc4 ♫a5. Alekhine finds a less obvious way to generate an initiative, supported by the bishop pair.

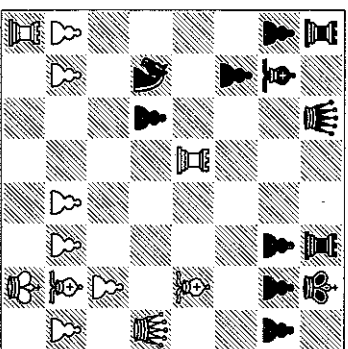
12 ♖d1! ♖c8

After 12...♗e7 Alekhine would have played 13 ♖g5 h6 14 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15 ♖xf6 gxh6 16 ♖d7 with an advantage (the source for this and later Alekhine analysis is the book *Alexander Alekhine's Best Games*). 12...♗e8 is a worthy alternative.

13 ♖g5! ♫d5
14 ♫xd5 exd5
15 ♖xd5!

A precisely calculated operation – the rook will be sent over to the kingside. We have already seen examples of introducing rooks into an attack along the ranks. Rooks are often difficult to activate since they are hampered by pawns, but when they do manage to take part in an attack the defender's task is all the more arduous.

15 ... ♫b4 (D)



W

After White has diverted his opponent's forces from the kingside with an operation in the centre, an unexpected attack follows.

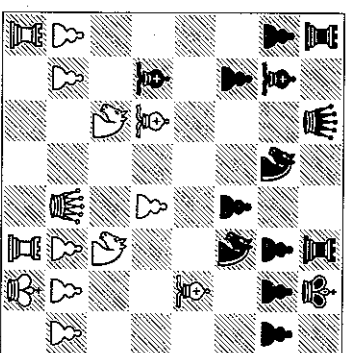
16 ♖e4! f5

As Alekhine showed, Black can be saved by neither 16...h6 17 ♖xh6 f5 18 ♖g5 ♖c7 19 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 20 ♖xg7+ ♫xg7 21 ♖d7+ followed

by ♖xb7, nor 16...g6 17 ♖f6 ♫xd5 18 ♖xd5. Black's choice loses material.

17 ♖xf5 ♖xf5
18 ♖d8+ ♖xd8
19 ♖xd8 ♖c8
20 ♖d1 ♖f7
21 ♖g4 ♫d3
22 exd3 ♖xd8
23 dxc4 ♖df8
24 f4 ♖e7
25 ♫f2 h6
26 ♖e1 ♖c8
27 ♖f3 ♖e7
28 ♖d5 g5
29 ♖e7 gxf4
30 gxf4

Black resigned



W

Alekhine – Sterk

Budapest 1921

The critical point of the game. Black has developed considerable pressure in the centre, but Alekhine

finds a way of preserving approximate equality.

16 ♖d3

16 e5 was weaker in view of the reply 16...♫g4. Or 16 ♖ac1 ♖xc3 17 ♖d3 ♫c5 18 ♖xc3 ♖xe4! 19 ♖xf6 ♖xd3 (Alekhine). 16 ♖fc1! ♖xc3 17 ♖d3 is just a transposition of moves.

16 ... ♖xc3

17 ♖fc1 ♫xe4?

Correct is 17...♫c5 18 ♖xc3 ♖xe4 19 ♖xf6 ♖xd3, whereupon 20 ♖e3! (now it is clear why it was the f1-rook which had to go to c1) 20...gxf6 21 b4 ♖g6 22 bxc5 bxc5 23 ♖xc5 ♖d7 24 h4 gives White good compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

In the game Black also wins a pawn, but runs into an unpleasant pin on the c-file.

18 ♖xe4 ♖xe4

19 ♖xe4 ♫c5

20 ♖e2

Alekhine mistakenly avoided the continuation 20 ♖b1! ♖b4 21 a3 in view of 21...♖b7, e.g. 22 axb4 ♫b3, or 22 ♖c2 ♖d5. However, White wins a piece with the simple 22 ♖a2! ♫d3 (22...♖d5 23 axb4 ♫b3 24 ♖d1) 23 ♖d1.

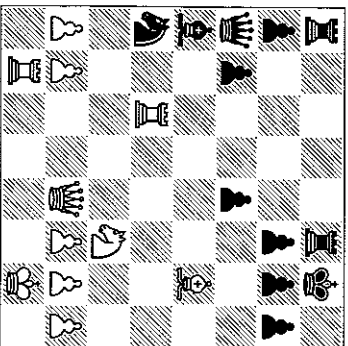
20 ... ♖a5

21 ♖ab1 ♖a6

22 ♖c4 ♫a4 (D)

After 22...♖ac8 White could continue 23 b4 ♫a4 (23...♫d7 24

♞e4) 24 b5. The move played replies this threat (after 23 b4 there is 23... ♖c3), but now, when his opponent's pieces are stuck on the queenside, Alekhine unexpectedly transfers play to the kingside.



W

23 ♖f6!!

White threatens 24 ♖g4. Thus, after 23...h5 24 ♖g4! ♜xc2 25 ♞xg7+ ♜h8 26 ♖g5 there is no defence against 27 ♞h7+ and 28 ♞h8 mate (Alekhine). 23...h6 will not save Black because of 24 ♖e5, threatening 25 ♜g4.

23 ...

♞f8!

24 ♜e5!

The essence of White's plan. According to Alekhine's analysis, he wins in all variations:

- 1) 24... ♜xc4 25 ♜g5 ♜f8 26 ♜xg7+ ♜e8 27 ♜g8+ ♜d7 28 ♖c5+ ♜c7 29 ♜xf7+ and 30 ♖xc4.
- 2) 24... ♞xc4 25 ♜g5 ♞g4 26 ♜xg4 g6 27 ♜xa4.

3) 24...gxh6 25 ♖g4+ with mate in two.

24 ...

♞c5

Hoping for 25 ♞xc5 gxh6, but White decides the game very simply.

25 ♜g3!

g6

26 ♞xa4

♜d3

27 ♞f1

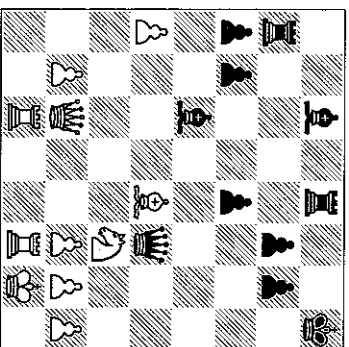
♜f5

28 ♜f4

♜c2

29 ♜h6

Black resigned



W

Alekhine – Rubinstein

Karlsbad 1923

Black has two vulnerable spots:

- 1) with the loss of the h7-pawn the castled position has obviously been weakened
- 2) the queenside pieces are awkwardly placed and could be subjected to an attack.

With energetic action on the queenside Alekhine forces his opponent to defend in that sector;

then he begins an attack on the king.

21 b4!

♖f8

The only reply, as after any other bishop retreat 22 ♜xc8 is decisive.

22 ♜c6

♞d7

23 g3!

♜b8

After 23...♜d6 White could have won in two ways:

- 1) 24 ♞f1 ♜xd1+ (24... ♜xc6 25 ♖xc6 ♞xd1+ 26 ♞xd1 ♞e7 27 ♞d8) 25 ♞xd1 ♞xd1+ 26 ♜g2 ♖d7 27 ♜xb6 ♖xa4 28 ♜xa6 ♖d7 29 ♖g5 ♜g8 30 ♜e2.

2) 24 ♜c4 ♜g8 (24... ♜e7 25 ♖e5 ♞d6 26 ♖g6!) 25 ♖c6 ♞c7 26 ♞f1 ♜e7 [Editor's note: In the new edition of *Alexander Alekhine's Best Games*, John Nunn indicated 26...♞xc6 as a far more stubborn defence.] 27 ♜d3!

24 ♖g5

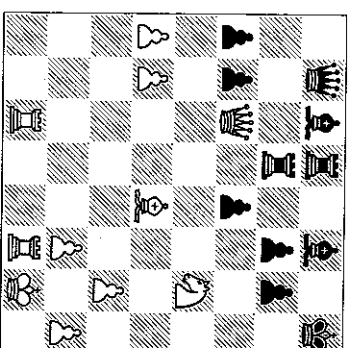
White does not give his opponent a moment's respite. 25 ♖xf7+ is threatened.

24 ...

♞d8 (D)

25 ♖g6!

White frees a path to the kingside for his queen. Meanwhile the black pieces, tied to the defence of the other flank, cannot come to the aid of their king. If 25...fxg6 (25...♖b7 26 ♜c4), White forces the win by the continuation 26 ♜e4 ♖xb4 27 ♜h4+ ♜g8 28 ♜h7+ ♜f8 29 ♜h8+ ♜e7 30 ♜xg7+ ♜e8 31 ♜g8+ ♖f8 32 ♜xg6+ ♜e7 33



W

♜x6 mate (Alekhine). In order to avoid immediate mate Black must give up material.

25 ...

♜e5

26 ♖xf7+

♞xf7

27 ♖xf7

♜f5

28 ♞f1

♞xd1+

29 ♞d1

♜xf7

30 ♜xc8

♜h7

31 ♜xa6

♜f3

32 ♜d3+

Black resigned

In the following game White managed to win a roughly even endgame through the use of the principle of two weaknesses. Having formed his objectives for attack on different flanks, White set about manoeuvring. Perhaps in this example the process of creating weaknesses in the enemy's position is more interesting than manoeuvring against them.

Yusupov – Wirthensohn*Hamburg 1991*

Torre Attack

- 1 **d4** **♟f6**
 2 **♟f3** **d5**
 3 **♙g5** **♟e4**

A good move, putting the accuracy of the early bishop thrust in doubt.

- 4 **♙h4** **♙d6**

There is another tempting plan linked with the standard ...c7-c5 followed by developing the queen to b6.

- 5 **♟bd2** **♙h6**

If I am not mistaken, this manoeuvre was first used by Hort. Black now has the unpleasant threat of ...g7-g5. With the queen on h6, retreating the bishop to g3 looks unattractive, as after a capture on g3 White is forced to play fxg3, spoiling his pawn structure.

- 6 **♙c1!**? **♟xd2**

6...♟c6 7 c3 ♙h5 deserves attention, as in Loginov-Karpeshov, Volgodosk 1983.

- 7 **♙xd2** **♙xd2+**
 8 **♙xd2**

Already we have an endgame of sorts in which White's advantage is symbolic in nature. He is slightly ahead in development, but there are no weaknesses in Black's position. White's first problem is to transform a small initiative into

something more concrete, creating an object for attack.

- 8 ... **♙f5**
 9 **e3**

After 9 ♙g3! Black does not reply 9...♟d7? owing to 10 ♟h4, but 9...c6 10 e3 e6, or 10...♟d7, with a solid position.

- 9 ... **e6**
 10 **♙e2** **♙d6**

10...♙e7 11 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 12 ♟h4 and White will emerge with a bishop against a knight (a small but definite achievement). With this in mind 10...h6 is a worthy alternative, when White should continue 11 ♙h1 followed by c2-c4.

- 11 **♙g3**

12 ♟h4 is threatened.

- 11 ... **h6**

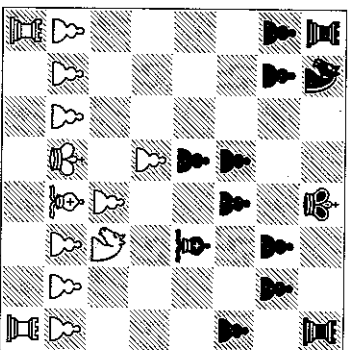
What should White do now?

Simply carrying out the break c2-c4 is not enough, as after an exchange on c4 Black can defend the queenside easily with ...♙c4. After a long think, White found a way of holding on to the initiative.

- 12 **♙xd6** **cxd6 (D)**
 13 **a4!**

White intends to pressure the queenside by bringing the rook out via a3 to b3 at some point. For the time being he is content to accumulate small advantages; he has a more flexible pawn structure and a potentially better bishop.

- 13 ... **♙e7**



W

- 14 **a5** **♟d7**

White still has a minimal initiative after 14...♙c8! 15 ♙h1 ♟c6 16 ♙a4 b6 17 axb6 axb6 18 ♙cal.

- 15 **♙h1** **♙h8?**!

15...♟f6 would have been more logical, driving White's king to e1.

- 16 **♟e1!**

Active prophylaxis! On f3 the knight had no prospects, so White plans to transfer it to b4. Now 16...♟f6 can be met by 17 f3.

- 16 ... **♙c7**

- 17 **♟d3** **♙xd3**

This exchange is practically forced – the position would be too unpleasant if the knight occupied b4. Although the resulting position is still closed, White's bishop is stronger than his opponent's knight as it can take an active part in the struggle on both flanks.

- 18 **♙xd3** **♙b8?**!

- 19 **♙a3** **b6**

The consistent follow-up to Black's previous move, but it leads only to the creation of a weakness on the queenside.

- 20 **♙cal!**

20 axb6 is weaker in view of 20...♙xb6 21 b3 ♟b8!, when White has a minimal advantage.

- 20 ... **b5**

- 21 **a6**

So, White has finally managed to create his first real object of attack – the b-pawn.

- 21 ... **b4**

- 22 **♙a5** **♙c6**

- 23 **f3**

To win a game, attacking a single weakness is generally not enough. Therefore, White's next aim is to start play on the kingside to make use of the long-range bishop.

- 23 ... **♙cb6**

- 24 **h4** **♟f6**

- 25 **g4** **♙h8**

Black has sensed the danger, and undertakes prophylactic measures on the kingside. White decides to exchange off a pair of rooks, after which the lonely b-pawn will make Black's position even more uncomfortable.

- 26 **♙b5** **♙hb8**

- 27 **♙xb6** **♙xb6**

- 28 **g5**

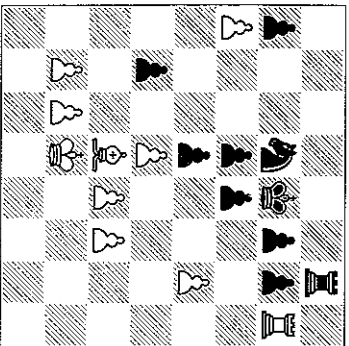
Employing the principle of two weaknesses, White changes the

direction of the attack, getting to work on the kingside.

- 28 ... **hxg5**
 29 **hxg5** **g7d7**
 29...**e8** 30 **g7h1** **g7c7** is bad because of 31 **g7h7!** **f8** 32 **g7h8+** **g7c7** 33 **g7c1!**, intending 33...**gxa6** 34 **g7a8**.

- 30 **g7h1** **g7b8**
 31 **g7h7** **g7g8** (D)

31...**f8** would have been better.



W

32 c3!

With the black rook occupying a passive position on the kingside, White again switches wings to activate his king. The fact that this allows Black to rid himself of the weak b-pawn is not important – another weakness has emerged on the kingside (g7).

White's plan is to send the king down the board in order to harass

the a7-pawn. 32 **g7c1** (with the idea of moving the king to b3) is less precise, as Black rocks the boat with 32...**g7b6** 33 **g7b1** **g7c4**.

- 32 ... **bxc3+**
 33 **g7xc3** **g7d8**
 34 **g7b4** **g7c7**
 35 **g7a5** **g7b6**

35...**g7b8** 36 **g7b5!** is strong (e.g. 36...**g7c6+** 37 **g7xc6** **g7xc6** 38 **b4** with a winning rook endgame).

36 g7h2!

The immediate 36 **b3** allows Black's knight to reach c6 via c8-e7.

- 36 ... **g7c8**
 37 **b3** **g7d7**
 38 **g7h7** **g7g8**
 39 **f4**

A useful move which keeps Black on his toes. The thrust f4-f5 is a new possibility.

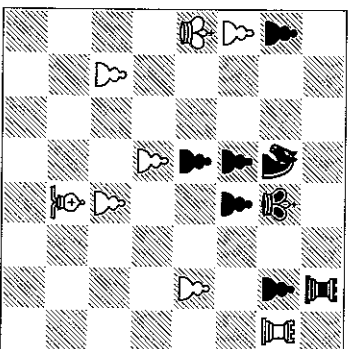
- 39 ... **g7e7**
 40 **g7b5**

The tempting 40 **g7b5** does not promise any immediate advantages in view of the unexpected resource 40...**g7a8!** (not 41 **g7c6??** **g7b8** and White will be mated).

- 40 ... **f6**

Fearing a transfer of the bishop to b7, Black tries to drum up counterplay on the kingside. White parries this by returning to his first plan – invading with the king.

- 41 **g7e2** **fxg5**
 42 **fxg5** **g7d7?!** (D)



W

42...**g7a8!**? was probably a better defensive move.

- 43 **g7b5** **g7f8**
 44 **g7h2** **g7d7**
 45 **g7c6** **g7c8+**
 46 **g7b7** **g7b8+**
 47 **g7xa7** **g7xb3**

Black seems to have generated some counterplay, but White had another attacking resource prepared.

48 g7h8!

Even with his small remaining army White can generate deadly threats! It is clear that 48...**g7xc3** is bad because of 49 **g7h5** **g7f8** 50 **g7g8** 66 51 **g7g7+** **g7d8** 52 **g7xg6**. Black is being torn apart; he has to keep an eye on the dangerous passed a-pawn while simultaneously warding off a sudden kingside attack by White.

- 48 ... **g7f8**

49 g7d1 g7b4

49...**g7xc3** is more stubborn, when after 50 **g7b7** Black has a defence in 50...**g7e1!**, with chances for a draw after both 51 a7?! **g7xd1** 52 a8 **g7b1+** 53 **g7c7** **g7c1+**, and 51 **g7g8!** **g7xd1** 52 **g7xg7+** **g7e8** 53 a7 **g7b1+** (or 53...**g7a1** 54 a8 **g7xa8** 55 **g7xa8** e5) 54 **g7c6** **g7a1**. However, instead of 50 **g7b7**, White has the more cunning 50 **g7b6!**, with the idea of blockading the a-file with 51 **g7b5** and 52 **g7a4**.

- 50 **g7c2** **g7c4**
 51 **g7d3**

By winning an important tempo, White prepares to once again shift his attack.

- 51 ... **g7b4**
 52 **g6** **e5**

After 52...**g7b3** White would have continued 53 **g7c2** **g7xc3** 54 **g7b7** **g7e2** 55 **g7xf8!**.

- 53 **g7f5!** **exd4**
 54 **exd4** **g7xd4**
 55 **g7b6** **g7a4**

Or 55...**g7b4+** 56 **g7a5** **g7b2** 57 **g7h4!** and the advance of the a-pawn is decisive.

56 g7g8!

A final illustration of the efficacy of playing against two weaknesses.

- 56 ... **g7e6**
 57 **a7**

Black resigned

3 A competition in solving positional exercises

Mark Dvoretzky

You will now face 10 problems which involve various aspects of positional play (manoeuvring, exchanges, preventative measures, etc.).

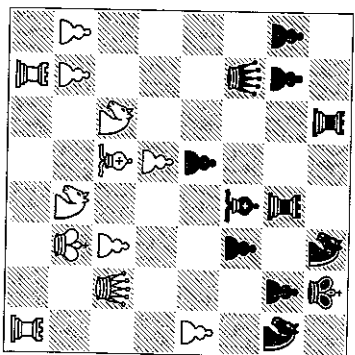
The time for you to find each solution will be limited, from 5 to 15 minutes. In my opinion this is quite sufficient – you do not have to calculate long and complicated variations; you have only to approach the position correctly. Try to get a feeling for its spirit, understand the basic problem you are facing, and quickly point out the promising possibilities for yourself and your opponent.

When you solve a study or try to find a forcing combination, with tests it should not be difficult to satisfy yourself (if, of course, the problem is sound) that what you have discovered is the right continuation

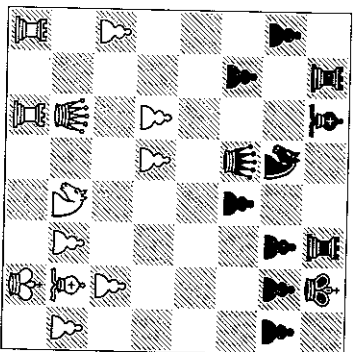
and that all other possibilities are significantly weaker.

With positional examples things are more complicated – here the situation occasionally allows for various approaches. By comparing their strength we are looking not for precise variations but for general assessments, about which we could argue. All the same, I hope that not too many arguments will arise in your suggestions for the exercises – they have been carefully tested, and many of my former students have already solved them.

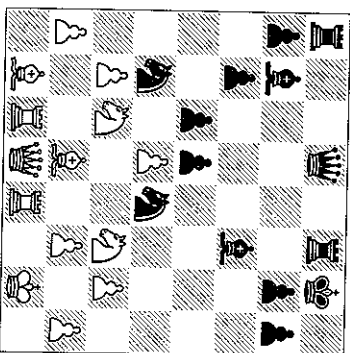
For each correct reply you will receive two marks, with no points for an incorrect one. If your reply is only partly correct and misses some important variation, then you will get one mark. In certain cases I will also have to use intermediate marks, half and one and a half.



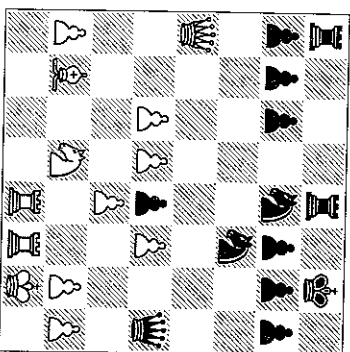
1 White to move (10 minutes)



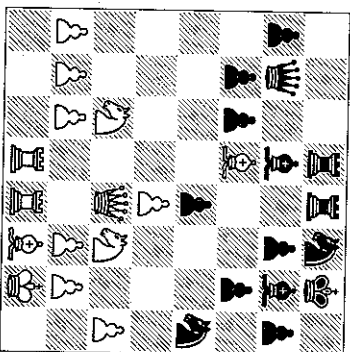
2 Black to move (5 minutes)



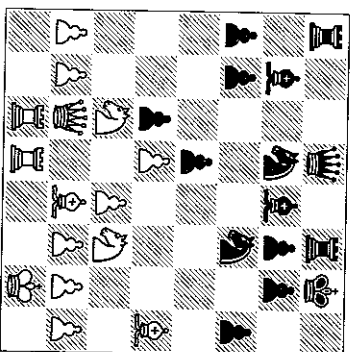
3 White to move (10 minutes)



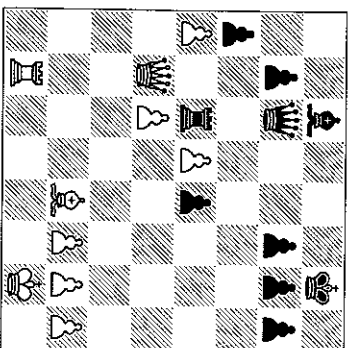
4 Black to move (10 minutes)



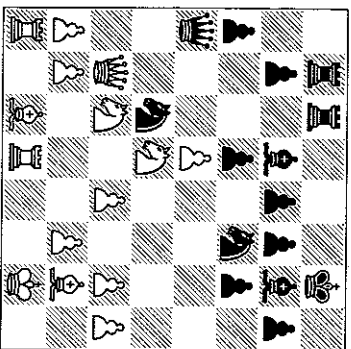
5 White to move (10 minutes)



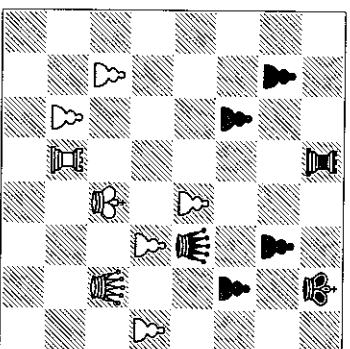
6 White to move (5 minutes)



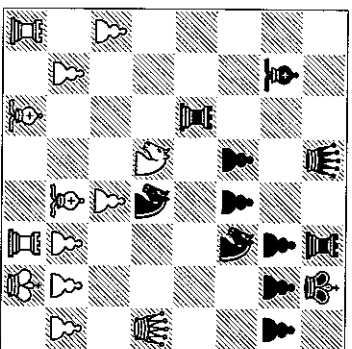
7 White to move (15 minutes)



9 White to move (10 minutes)



8 Black to move (15 minutes)



10 Black to move (10 minutes)

Solutions

1. Knaak-Geller, Moscow 1982

White has good prospects for an attack but, for the moment, some of his pieces cannot take part in the activity on the kingside. First he must consolidate.

22 ♖c2!

Black does not have the power to oppose this plan, e.g. 22...♞c4 23 ♞h4! followed by 24 ♖b3.

22 ... ♖f7
23 ♖b3 ♞ce8
24 ♞bd1 ♖g5

After 24...♞e3 25 ♖f4 ♞d6 the continuation 26 ♖fxd5! ♞e2+ 27 ♖xe2 ♞xe2+ 28 ♖xe2 ♞xg3 29 ♖e7+ ♖h8 30 ♖xf7 is decisive.

25 ♖f4 ♞d6
25...♞c3 26 ♖fxd5!
26 ♞d3!

Intending to play ♞g4 followed by ♖cxd5.

26 ... ♞b5
27 ♞g4 ♞d7
28 ♞b6

28 ♖cxd5 ♞c6 29 ♖e3 is simpler.

28 ... ♞g6
29 ♖cxd5 a5?
29...♖h7 is more stubborn.
30 ♞h7+ ♖gxh7
31 ♖xg6

Here Black lost on time. His position is totally hopeless, as can be seen from the line 31...♖xg6 32 ♖e7+ ♞xe7 33 ♞xg6+ ♖f8 34 ♞h6+ ♖e8 35 ♞xh7 ♖d8 36 ♖xf7 ♞xf7 37 ♞f5.

2. Zilberman-Taimanov, Moscow 1979

White is threatening to get the upper hand by advancing his c-pawn.

Black must prevent this advance.
17 ... ♖a6!

A good prophylactic move – suggested by practically everyone who took the test (18 c5? bxc5 19 dxc5 ♖xc5!). But you also have to consider White's ensuing attack; those who did not see it got only half marks.

18 ♞a4

Now the natural 18...b5? is bad because of 19 ♞b4! with a big advantage. Those who wished to play that move lose a point. Yova Baklan earned one and a half points – he saw the refutation of ...b6-b5, but he did not manage to find the correct path, which only Sasha Chernosvitov pointed out.

18 ... ♖b7!

Taking the a7-pawn is dangerous – the queen would risk getting lost in the enemy camp. Now White should resign himself to the roughly equal position which is reached after 19 ♞b4 ♞c7 20 d5 (20 ♖f4? ♖xg2 21 ♖xg2 ♞b7+ 22 ♖g1 e5!) 20...♖c5 21 ♞d1.

The game continued:

19 ♞xa7? ♖xg2
20 ♖xg2 ♞c6+
21 d5
21 ♖g1 ♞a8.

21 ... exd5
22 ♖d4 ♞d6

White is in serious difficulties, for example 23 ♞a4! ♖e5! 24

cx d5 ♖xd5+ 25 f3 (25 ♖g1 ♖xd4!)
25...b5. He probably should have
sought salvation in the variation 23
♗b5 ♖e6! 24 ♖e1 ♖c6 25 ♗d4
♖xc4 26 ♗e6! (26 ♖xd7 ♖xd4 27
♖ad1 ♖c5 is worse) 26...fxe6 27
♖xd7.

23 ♖d1? ♗c5!

Black threatens ...♖b7 or ...♖a8.

24 ♗f5

24 ♗b5 ♖g6 25 ♖e7 dxc4 does

not help.

24 ... ♖e5!

25 ♗e7+ ♖h8

26 ♖e1

Or 26 ♗c6 ♖e4+ 27 ♖g1 ♖b7.

26 ... ♖d6

27 ♗f5 ♖f6

White resigned

3. Pinter-Adorjan, Prague 1985

17 ♗xe4! dx e4

18 ♖xb4!

18 ♖xe4? ♖xe4 19 ♖xe4 is far
weaker. Black can then choose be-
tween 19...♖d5 20 ♖e2 ♗xa2 and
19...♗d3 20 ♖c3 ♗xf2 21 ♖xf2
♖xd4+.

18 ... exf3

18...cxb4 19 ♖xe4 loses a pawn
with no compensation whatsoever.

The game in fact continued
18...e3 19 ♖xe3 ♖xf3 20 ♖c2! g6
21 dxc5 ♖g5 22 ♖d3 ♖c8 23 ♖c4+
♖g7 24 ♖c3+ ♖h6 (24...♖f6 25
♖d2) 25 h4 and **Black resigned**.

We shall instead take the critical
variation as our main line.

19 dxc5 ♖c8

19...bxc5 20 ♖xc5.

20 c6

This is the variation White had
to analyse when he embarked on
his plan. He has a won position, for
example, after 20...♖xc6 (20...♖h3
21 ♖xf3) 21 ♖c2 ♖h3 22 ♖xh7+
♖xh7 23 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 24 ♖xf8.

Josze! Pinter found a clear way
of achieving an advantage, al-
though we are now stretching the
boundaries by including this ex-
ample in the 'positional' category
(White made a series of favourable
exchanges). It can hardly be called
a combination either – nothing has
been sacrificed. It is probably best
called 'tactical'.

Tactics form a much more ex-
tensive concept than combina-
tions. When we say that Emanuel
Lasker was a great tactician, we do
not mean that he was always sacri-
ficing something. No, the World
Champion was simply outstand-
ing at seeking out the strongest re-
sources for both sides – exact
moves and precise variations.

The art of tactics plays a huge
role in chess, and it is by no means
limited to sharp, combinational
situations. With the help of tactics
a player can stubbornly hold out in
difficult positions, erecting all

kinds of obstacles for the opponent
to overcome, or, on the other hand,
find the shortest route to realising
his own advantage. Even solving a
clearly strategic problem in a quiet
position cannot be done without an
element of tactics – specific se-
quences of moves have to be found
and calculated.

4. Lisitsyn-Tolush, Leningrad 1938

What does White want to do? Ab-
solutely every participant in the
exam correctly pointed out that
Black must not think about defend-
ing the c7-pawn, but must instead
meet the threat to exchange queens
(by ♖g5). 18...c6? (or 18...b6?) is
wrong: 19 ♖g5 ♗g6 (19...♖xg5
20 fxg5 ♗d7 21 ♗xe4) 20 ♖xh4
♗xh4 21 f3!

Unfortunately the majority of
you chose a witty but not too suc-
cessful means of parrying White's
main idea – 18...b5?! (for this you
only get a half-point). After 19
cxb5! Black does not have enough
compensation for the sacrificed
pawn. It is also worth looking at 19
♖xb5!?, e.g. 19...♖ab8 20 ♖g5
♖xg5 21 fxg5 ♖xb2 22 gxf6 ♖xd2
23 fxe7 ♖xe7 (or 23...♖xa2 24 ♖a1)
24 ♖f2, and the rook ending is
drawn, ending Black's dream; or
19...♗g4 20 h3 ♖abb8 (20...♖eb8

21 ♖g5 ♖xg5 22 fxg5 ♖xb2 23
♗xe4) 21 ♖a4! (21 ♖a5).

The strongest continuation is a
cold-blooded prophylactic.

18 ... h6!

There followed:

19 ♖xc7?! ♗f5

Now there does not appear to be
a satisfactory defence to the threat
of 20...♗g4. For example, 20 ♖e2
♗g4 21 g3 ♖h3 (this is stronger
than the immediate 21...♗xg3) 22
♖f1 ♗xg3 (22...h5 is also good)
23 hxg3 ♖xg3+ 24 ♖f1 ♗h2+ 25
♖xh2 ♖xh2 and Black is about to
win.

After 20 h3 ♗g3 Lisitsyn had to
resign himself to losing the ex-
change, as 21 ♖f2 is impossible
because of 21...♗g4.

Remember – the combination of
queen and knight (and more so,
two knights) in the vicinity of the
enemy king form a deadly team!

5. Beliavsky-Herzog, Mexico 1977

White has a superior position. He
can reinforce it with the quiet 18
g3, or by means of 18 ♗e2 or 18
♗h2 (h1), preparing g2-g4. All this
is reasonable, but rather slow. The
position affords White a more en-
ergetic continuation.

Only Ilya Makariev found the
correct route:

18 g4! ♗f4

19 ♖xe5 ♗xe5
 20 ♗xe5 ♖xh3+
 21 ♗xh3 ♗xe5
 22 ♜f4 ♗e8
 23 ♜f5

These exchanges have given White the possibility of beginning a very dangerous pawn storm. The

f5-pawn limits the movement of Black's bishop and knight. Things are looking bad for Black – both 24 f6 and 24 e5 followed by ♖e4 are threatened.

23 ... ♜f6
 24 ♗d6 ♗c8
 25 ♗xc8

25 ♗xf6?! is weaker in view of 25...♖d7 and 26...♗e5.

25 ... ♗xc8
 26 e5 ♗xe5
 27 ♗xe5 ♗f7
 28 ♖e4 ♖d7
 29 ♗c3 ♗f5
 30 ♖g5 ♗d5
 31 ♖e6 ♖f6
 32 ♗xf6
 Black resigned

Why did this example turn out to be so difficult? The sudden transformation of the position carried out by Alexander Beliavsky is not really in keeping with our usual approach to similar favourable situations – we prefer quiet manoeuvring and gradually improving the position of our pieces. The

result is that now and then we miss a definite advantageous possibility. In general, transforming an advantage is a psychologically difficult act, which simultaneously demands very dynamic thinking and an exact assessment of the position.

Later the American IM Maurice Ashley suggested another, also very concrete way of playing for White: 18 ♗c4!?. The pressure on f7 is quite unpleasant, and there remains the strategic threat 19 g4 ♖f4 20 ♖xe5. The consistent answer is 18...♗e6. There then follows the unexpected continuation 19 ♗xf8! ♗xd1 20 ♗xd1, e.g. 20...♗xc4 (20...♗xf8 21 ♖xe5 is no better) 21 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 22 ♖xe5! ♗xe5 23 ♗d4. However, this clever idea is put in doubt by 20...♗xf8! 21 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 22 ♖g5 (22 ♗d8+ is met by 22...♗e7!, but not 22...♗e8? 23 ♗d2) 22...♗e8 23 ♖xh7+ ♗g8 24 ♖g5 ♗h6, and the position remains unclear.

6. Hort-Karpov, Amsterdam 1981

Black clearly wants to play ...b6-b5, supporting the e4-pawn and preparing ...♖e4 or ...♖b6. The reply 14...b5! will follow attempts to undermine the pawn chain with 14 b3, or the tempting 14 ♖e5.

14 a4!

This is an important prophylactic move. Now both 15 b3 and 15 ♖e5 will create dangerous positional threats.

Karpov reacted unsuccessfully and quickly found himself in serious trouble:

14 ... ♗c6?!
 Black's idea is to answer 15 b3 with 15...b5.

15 ♖e5 ♗c7
 16 ♖xc6 ♗xc6
 17 ♗f3

After the exchange of bishops the d5-pawn has become weak. 18 ♖xd5 is threatened. If 17...♗f8, then 18 e4 is strong, and 17...♗a8 can be met by 18 b3! b5 19 axb5 20 ♗f5!

17 ... ♗b4?
 18 ♖xd5! ♖xd5
 19 ♗f5

Not 19 ♗xc4? ♗xc4 20 ♗xc4 due to 20...b5 followed by ...♖7b6.

19 ... ♗xa4
 20 ♗xd5 ♗a8
 21 b3! ♗b3
 22 ♗xc8 ♗xc8
 23 ♗xf7+ ♗h8
 24 ♗xb3 ♗b5
 25 ♗e6 ♗f8
 26 ♗xd7!

26 ♗xd7?! is not so strong due to 26...♗h5!

Black resigned

The solution you are looking for does not always have to lead to

immediate victory. If your opponent also rises to the occasion and finds the very best retreat, then the outcome of the struggle frequently remains unclear. That is how it was here. 14 a4! was undoubtedly correct, but if Black had replied 14...♖e8! he would still have had a defensible position. Incidentally, 14...♖e4?! 15 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 16 ♖xc4 dxc4 17 ♖d2 b5 18 b3! is weaker.

7. Geller-Fischer, Curaçao Ct 1962

White has to consider the threat of 29...♗xa5. He does not want to put his rook on a1 as it is too passive. There is nothing to be gained from 29 ♗b6 ♗xb6 30 ♗xb6 (30 axb6 ♗f8) 30...♗f8! (not 30...♗xa5? 31 ♗d6) 31 d6 ♗xa5 32 h3 ♗c5. Nor does 29 ♗d1 ♗xa5 30 ♗xa5 ♗xa5 31 d6 ♗d7 32 ♗b1 b5 lead to success.

If only he could manage to get the rook to b6. This would immediately solve the problem of the a5-pawn, and Black's structure in the centre would turn out to be unreliable.

29 ♗a4! ♗d7
 29...♗f8 30 ♗b6.
 30 ♗a3!

Threatening 31 ♗xb7, whilst if 30...♗c8 White has 31 ♗b6 with a

decisive positional advantage. Black should take the a5-pawn with the rook, allowing the counterblow on b7, as 30... ♖xa5 31 ♖xa5 32 ♖xb7 is no good at all.

30 ... ♖xa5

31 ♖xb7!

Diana Darchia and Sergei Movsesian suggested 31 ♖e7?, which is much weaker, so they lost a half-point. Yova Baklan and Vadim Zviagintsev found the correct solution in full.

31 ... ♖xb7

31... ♖xa3 32 ♖xc7 ♖a1+ 33 ♠f1 ♠f5 34 f3 ♠f8 (35 g4 was threatened) 35 ♠f2 is hopeless.

32 ♖xa5

The fight against the connected passed pawns in the centre is possible only by blocking them on the dark squares. Here the blockade has not been established, so the outcome of the game is predetermined.

32 ... ♖g6

33 h3 ♖b1+

34 ♖h2 ♠f5

If 34... ♖c2, then 35 ♖d8+ ♠g7 36 ♖xd7 ♖xe2 37 ♖c7! a5 38 f4! a4 (38... exf4 39 ♖xf4 and the white pawns move into action) 39 fxe5 a3 40 e6 a2 41 ♖xf7+ ♖h6 42 ♖f6.

35 ♖c3! ♖e4

36 ♠f3 ♖d4

37 ♖xd4 exd4

38 g4! ♠c8

39 c5 a5

Or 39... ♠f8 40 d6.

40 c6 ♠f8

and Black resigned.

8. Karpov-Lerner, Moscow 1983

Black is a pawn down. Should he exchange rooks? The very first glance shows that his counter-chances are based on organising an attack on the white king, holding him in the centre of the board, which means that Black shouldn't exchange rooks. This is what prompted Lerner to play:

41 ... ♠e8?

However, Karpov replied:

42 ♠g2!

42 ♠h2?! f6! is less exact. After the text, the frightening threat of exchanging queens arose (43 ♖g4!). In the rook ending the extra pawn and centralised king will bring White an easy victory.

The game continued:

42 ... ♖d7

43 h5 ♠d8

44 hxg6 ♖d4+

45 ♠f3 ♖d1+

46 ♠e2 ♖f1+

47 ♠e3 f5

48 ♠e1 ♖b5

49 ♖h3 ♖c5+

50 ♠f3

Black resigned

We also get a similar picture after 41... ♠a8? 42 ♠h2! (42 ♠g2 ♠a2 is worse).

We conclude that Black should have exchanged rooks:

41 ... ♠xd2!

41... ♠d5? is much weaker in view of 42 ♠xd5 cxd5 43 ♖g2! d4+ 44 ♠xd4 ♖xf4+ 45 ♖e4 and White should win the queen ending. All his pawns are reliably defended by the queen, whilst the black b7-pawn is weak and will soon be conquered.

42 ♠xd2 ♖e4

43 ♖e3

43 h5 ♖d4+ 44 ♠e2 ♖e4+.

43 ... ♖h1

After 44 ♖f2 ♖e4 (or 44... ♠h7) White's material advantage cannot make itself felt in view of the activity of the black queen and the vulnerability of the white pawns. Black maintains excellent chances for a draw.

9. Korchnoi-Geller, Moscow Ct (7) 1971

Black is more active. First of all we must consider an attack on the queenside with... b7-b5-b4. What can White do to oppose this? Maxim Boguslavsky and Vadim Zviagintsev found the correct solu-

17 a3!

A precise prophylactic move. If

17... b5?! White can now reply 18 ♖a2! and then ♖b4, making use of the weakness of c6. Meanwhile White is also planning to drive back the menacing knight on c4 by means of ♖a2, ♖ce2 and b2-b3.

Geller did not come up with an effective counter-plan, with the result that White quickly finished developing his pieces and seized the initiative.

17 ... ♖c5

Shabalov's move 17... e6!? deserves serious attention.

18 ♖a2 ♠c7

19 ♖ce2! ♠bc8

Not 19... ♖xd5? 20 ♖b3.

20... ♖b6 21 e4 gives White an

obvious advantage.

21 ♠d2!

When attacking the opponent's pieces you must be extremely careful. Now 21 e4 comes up against the reply 21... ♠b5. 21 f4 is also premature: 21... ♖b6(a7) 22 ♠b1

(22 fxe5 dxe5, threatening to invade with the rook on c2) 22... ♖h5 23 fxe5 dxe5 24 ♖f3 ♠c2 25 ♖xb2 ♠xc1!

21 ... ♠e8

Black must avoid 21... ♖xd5? 22 b4.

22 ♠a1 ♖b6

23 ♠xc7 ♠xc7

24 ♖c3 ♖b5
 25 ♗d2 ♖xe2
 26 ♙a5! ♗a7
 27 ♗xe2 ♖c8
 28 ♖c1 ♗b8
 29 ♖c2

White is clearly better – he has two bishops and more space.

This example is quite characteristic of Korchnoi's style. He always strives for positions with a spatial advantage, even if this involves taking a certain risk. With cold-blooded activity he usually manages to extinguish his opponent's counterplay and, by using his strategic trump card, gains the initiative.

10. Gavrikov-Vitolinš, Severo-donetsk 1982

Black does not have sufficient pawns, and his opponent is planning f2-f3. He must act with the utmost energy. With resourceful play Vitolinš manages to emphasise the unfortunate position of the white queen.

17 ... g5!
 18 ♗h3

18 ♗h6 is terrible: 18...g4 with the threat of 19...♗h5 20 ♗f4 e5.

18 ... g4!
 19 ♖xg4 ♗xg4
 20 ♗xg4+ ♖g5

At the price of yet another pawn, the bishop and rook have established an effective level of cooperation – jointly attacking g2. But the calculation of the variation must be prolonged for another couple of moves.

21 ♗h3 ♖h8
 22 f3 ♖g8!

After 23 fxe4 ♖xg2+ Black maintains a dangerous attack. Earlier it was impossible to count on its consequences, but it is clear that there is practically no risk of losing, while a win is a definite possibility (although you might not find it). Incidentally, I didn't see it. Here is a sample variation: 24 ♗xg2 ♖xe4 (24...♖xg2+!) 25 ♗f3 (25 ♗f2) 25...♖xg2+ 26 ♖xg2 ♗g5+ 27 ♖f2 ♗f5 28 ♖g3!

The game concluded thus:
 23 g4?! ♖5g6
 Black threatens 24...♗g5.

24 ♗h5 ♗f6
 25 ♗b5 ♗xg4
 26 fxe4 ♗h4

White resigned in view of 27 ♗xb7 ♖xg4+ 28 ♖h1 ♗xh2+!

Now let us add up the scores. The test turned out to be far more

difficult than expected. Only Vadim Zviaginsev solved more than half the problems correctly. He took first place by a large margin (12½ points). Petia Kirriakov came second, three points behind, and Vova Baklan was third.

As you can see, finding a positionally correct solution in a limited amount of time is in no way easier than finding a combination

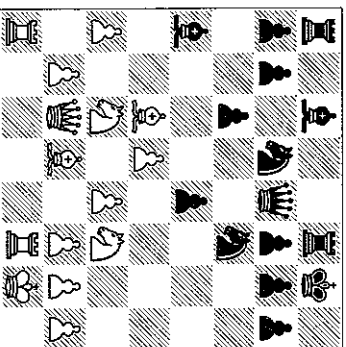
or precisely calculating a long variation. This is probably because here you have to display both the ability to make a precise evaluation of the position as well as an exact view of tactical resources. The slightest shortcoming in either of these two factors impedes the search, demands an additional outlay of time and generally leads us far from the right path.

4 Prophylactic thinking

Mark Dvoretsky

The idea of prophylaxis was put forward by Nimzowitsch. He defined a prophylactic as 'a measure which is taken with the aim of preventing something which is undesirable from a positional point of view'. In his renowned book *My System*, Nimzowitsch examined in detail such preventative measures as over-protection of strategically important points, pawn chains and thwarting the opponent's freeing pawn moves.

The role of prophylaxis in chess is, according to Nimzowitsch, exceptionally important. He wrote, 'neither attack nor defence is in our opinion a matter of positional play; the essence of which lies in the energetic and planned execution of prophylactic measures'. This pronouncement certainly seems paradoxical. There are so many different facets to positional play – is it fair to reduce it to only one element, even if it is a very important one? Nimzowitsch's idea became more comprehensible after I studied the following example.



W

Many years ago, when I was still at school, GM Simagin set up this position and asked me to find the winning move for White. After thinking, I announced that there was no solution. Simagin moved the bishop to a2.

'Can a move like that really be winning?' I wondered.

'Go ahead, try to find a satisfactory reply.'

I tried and could not. I remember that this episode made a very strong impression on me – for the first time I could sense the power and beauty of quiet positional moves.

Some years later, while I was leafing through Keres's book on the 1948 World Championship match tournament I came across a familiar position. It occurred in two games. The opening moves were: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 c6 5 e3 ♘bd7 6 ♗d3 ♗b4 7 a3 ♗a5 8 ♞c2 ♞e7 9 ♗d2 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 e5 11 0-0-0.

Reshevsky-Euwe: 12 d5 c5? 13 d6! with an advantage to White, since 13...♞xd6? is no good (14 ♘b5 ♞b6 15 b4). However, as Keres showed, Black could have achieved an acceptable game in at least three ways:

- a) 12...♗c7 13 dxc6 bxc6.
- b) 12...♗xc3 13 ♗xc3 cxd5 14 ♗b4 ♘c5 15 ♗xd5 ♘xd5 16 ♗xc5 ♞c7.
- c) 12...♘b6 13 ♗a2 ♗xc3 14 ♗xc3 ♘bxd5 15 ♗xe5 ♗g4.

Botvinnik-Euwe: 12 ♞ae1. A logical move, preparing an advance of the e- and f-pawns (after an exchange on e5) which is typical in positions like this. His opponent replied 12...♗c7, threatening 13...e4.

Now White could continue his plan by means of 13 ♗d3 ♞e8 14 dxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♘xe5 ♞xe5 16 f4, but then Black plays 16...♞h5, and now Black is quite comfortable. The prophylactic move 13 h3!?, parrying the threat of 13...e4 14

♘g5 ♗xh2+ deserved serious attention.

Botvinnik chose 13 ♘e4 ♘xe4 14 ♞xe4, and after 14...a5?! 15 ♗a2 ♘f6 16 ♞h4 e4 17 ♘e5! seized the initiative. Both 14...♗d6 15 ♗c3 exd4 16 ♞xd4 ♘f6, and 14...♘f6 15 ♞h4 e4 16 ♘c5 ♗e6, with roughly even chances, were more reliable.

Thus in neither game did White demonstrate a convincing way to gain an advantage. Keres showed the strongest continuation.

12 ♗a2!:

How is it possible to arrive at the conclusion that this is the best move? Ask yourself what Black wants, what he would most like to play now. Obviously not 12...e4? 13 ♘xe4. 12...♗xc3? is also unsuccessful: 13 ♗xc3 e4 14 ♘e5 with the threats of 15 ♗b4 and 15 f3. Opening a file in the centre favours White: 12...exd4? 13 exd4!, and White can quickly develop pressure in the centre by ♞fe1 and ♘e5 (or ♘g5). After 12...♞e8? the f7-square is weakened, whilst in the event of 12...h6? the reply 13 ♘h4 is unpleasant – the knight is going to f5 or g6.

Black's only reasonable move appears to be 12...♗c7, preparing the advance 13...e4 and thus provoking White to ease the tension in the centre.

Now we can assess the merits of the modest retreat by the bishop. On a2 it cannot be attacked, with tempo, by ... ♖b6, and at an opportune moment it can move to b1 to find new life on another diagonal. But the main thing is that now, after 12... ♙c7, White can continue with the annoying 13 ♖b5!, for example, 13... ♙b8 14 ♙b4 c5 15 ♙xc5! with an extra pawn. At the same time, 12 ♙a2 introduces the positional threat of gaining the bishop pair with 13 ♖d5 and 14 ♙xa5. If Black avoids this by playing, for instance, 12... ♙b6, then White can strengthen his position with 13 ♙a1, and it is not clear what Black is supposed to do.

Of course, by announcing that 12 ♙a2 wins the game, Simagin was exaggerating somewhat (probably out of educational considerations). This move is indeed the strongest, and gives Black a problem which is not easy to solve under the practical conditions of a game, but objectively there should be a defence of some sort. Black should accept a slightly inferior position and play 12... ♙c7! 13 ♖b5 ♙b6! 14 ♙b4 c5.

This instructive example stimulated me to make a detailed study of the subject of prophylactic measures. Soon I switched my attention to the actual process of

finding prophylactic moves, as this seemed more important from a practical point of view.

It became clear that it was necessary to find a logical approach to a position. I call this 'prophylactic thinking' – the habit of constantly asking yourself what your opponent is going to do and what he would play if it were his move, and then taking the answers to these questions into account in the decision-making process.

Developing experience of prophylactic thinking allows the chess player to take a huge step forward, lifting the level of his game considerably. Why? Here are two basic reasons:

1) The number of situations in which you can make use of prophylactic thinking is immeasurable. Any interesting positional decision has to combine your own plans with those of your opponent (this is precisely how I understand Nimzowitsch's assertion about the role of prophylaxis). One basic principle of realising an advance involves limiting your opponent's possibilities – clearly this cannot be done without prophylactic thinking. By developing this quality you will become tactically stronger as well, and consequently you will miss fewer opportunities.

When you are defending a difficult position, you constantly have to look out for threats, and in carrying out an attack you have to bear in mind your opponent's defensive resources. It follows that gaining experience of prophylactic thinking can have a beneficial influence on practically all areas of your game.

2) In chess two players compete with each other, and your opponent's ideas may turn out to be in no way worse than your own. Logically, it is clear that the optimal strategy should be to implement your own plans while at the same time interfering with those of your opponent. Remaining purely passive and merely employing 'spoiling' tactics is not good enough, and the other extreme is also very dangerous and fraught with frustration.

Moreover, players quite often forget to think about their opponent's plans. This is perfectly understandable – a characteristic of human nature, in fact (in real life we also, unfortunately, pay too little attention to other people's feelings and ideas).

In conclusion it is evident that we all fail to take full advantage of the very important skill of prophylactic thinking. By making our thinking more harmonious and

balanced, we will certainly significantly improve the general level of our play.

From my own games on the theme of prophylaxis, the following clash with Teshkovsky in the USSR People's Spartakiad, 1975, had the most impact.

This was a celebrated match in which the Moscow team lost to Russia by a score of 1½-8¼! Even some folklore arose from this. 'We are giving up Moscow but saving Russia', quoted one spectator, Kuntzov, after the end of the match. GM Gurgendize spread his hands in astonishment: 'Is eight and a half possible – did they do it on purpose? You know there is a film of that name by Fellini.' Smyslov, the captain of the Moscow team, playing White against Polugaevsky, made the opening moves 1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5. Having lost the game, Smyslov was distressed: 'I played 3 d5 for no reason, got worked up and overestimated the position. 3 ♖f3 was needed!' But at a team meeting after the match Smyslov reassured everyone, 'It doesn't matter, the main thing is, we're still alive.'

I also made my 'contribution' to the defeat of the Moscow team, when the strength of prophylactic thinking was demonstrated, alas, by my opponent.

Treshkovsky – Dvoretzky

Riga 1975

French Defence

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 ♘d2	c5
4 ♗f3	♗c6
5 exd5	exd5
6 ♖b5	♗d6
7 dxc5	♖xc5
8 ♗b3	♗d6
9 0-0	♗ge7

In 1974 I spent several days training with Korchnoi as he prepared for his World Championship Candidates final against Karpov. I recall that we were investigating a similar position from the same opening variation, and I asked Korchnoi why he developed the knight to f6 rather than e7. He looked at me in surprise.

'Let's have a look at it. How should you place your pieces when you have an isolated pawn? The place for the knight is on f6, and later, on e4. It's best to keep the bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal – where it exerts pressure on f2. In the main variation Black plays 8...♗d6 and 9...♗ge7, simply because of specific circumstances (if 9...♗f6, then 10 ♖e1 + is unpleasant, whilst in the event of 8...♗b6 White can offer an exchange of bishops which is favourable to him

with 9 ♖e1 + and 10 ♗e3). But if I have time to put my pieces on their rightful squares without being punished, that is what I must do.'

Assessments like this can be heard from the lips (or read in the commentaries) of great chess players, who at times can help you to grasp the finesse of an opening strategy far better than articles and books.

10 ♖e1	0-0
11 ♗g5	♗g4

Many years later this was also played by Yusupov in his Candidates match against Ivanchuk, Brussels 1991. Ivanchuk replied 12 ♗h4, preparing 13 ♗g3. After the game Korchnoi asked Yusupov, 'Why did you let bishops be exchanged? Even in 1974 I already had the sense to play 11...♗c7!'

However, during game 18 of the Karpov-Korchnoi match, Moscow, 1974, White demonstrated a plan – which I thought was convincing – to achieve an advantage after 11...♗c7: 12 c3 (12 ♗h4? ♗f5) 12...♗g4 13 h3 ♗h5 14 ♗e2 h6 15 ♗xc7! ♗xe7 (showing up the drawback of the queen's position on e7 – you have to place the knight on a passive square; with the queen on d8, Black could have captured with the bishop, and the d5-pawn would have been defended) 16 ♗fd4 ♗xe2 17 ♗xe2

a6 18 ♗f3 ♖ad8 19 ♖ad1. By carrying out some advantageous exchanges Karpov has emphasised the weakness of the d5-pawn. He is planning to increase the pressure on it further by doubling rooks on the d-file and bringing his knight to e3.

12 h3	♗h5
13 ♗xc6	

Treshkovsky takes the bull by the horns – he is trying to refute his opponent's opening immediately. Other, more restrained, possibilities are 12 ♗e2 and 12 ♗h4 (without including the preliminary 12 h3).

13 ...	bxc6
14 ♗b4d4	♗c8
15 c4	♗e8

Black is preparing ...f7-f6. In a later game Gulko played 15...h6 against Treshkovsky (Sochi 1975), and after 16 ♗h4 g5 (16...♗c7!?) 17 ♗g3 ♗xc6 achieved a good position. White acted more forcefully in Peters-Irvine, Lone Pine 1978: 16 ♗xc7! ♗xe7 17 g4 ♗g6 18 ♗e5.

16 ♖c1?!

It is probably better to exchange pawns on d5 immediately, not giving Black's queen's bishop any chance to use d5 as an outpost.

16 ...	f6
17 ♗e3	♗d7
18 ♗a4	♗f7

18...dxc4! followed by ...♗h5-f7-d5 also deserved attention.

19 c5	♗b8
20 b4	♗h5!?(D)

In the event of 20...♗g6 (with the idea of ...♗e5), the reply 21 b5 would have troubled me.

B

I evaluated this position optimistically. Black intends, having played 21...♗f5, to exert pressure on his opponent's kingside. If 22 ♗x5, then he can choose between 22...♗f3 23 ♗d4 ♗e4 (planning 24...♗c7), and 22...♗xf5 23 ♗d4 ♗e5 24 g3 (24 f4 ♗c7 with the threat of 25...♗xc3) 24...♗g6! 25 ♗xc6 ♗h5.

I was slightly distracted. I had a great deal of respect for my opponent Treshkovsky. He is a profound, creative chess player, and our initial duels in our national championships had not turned out

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at all in my favour. Teshkovsky played better, saw more, and constantly outplayed me. But our previous meeting in the Top League of the USSR Championship 1974 developed into a totally different scenario. I was sharing fifth place, but could move up to third if I beat Teshkovsky with Black in the last round. And, I must say, I was close to success – in a complex strategic struggle he was outplayed. Only my recklessness, linked with an error in an overwhelming position when my opponent was in serious time trouble, stopped me from achieving my aim (see Chapter 8, 'Positional Transformations').

After this game I decided that the era of his advantage over me was at an end and now we would fight as equals. At the Spartakiad I was not even frightened of my opponent. Having solved the problems of the opening, and seeing how badly things were standing on the other boards, I confidently decided to go for a win.

I thought that Teshkovsky's main strengths lay in the fight for the initiative, dynamics and attack, but in positional play he felt less secure. However, Teshkovsky demonstrated that he can handle all the chess player's weapons beautifully.

21 ♠d2!!

White finds an excellent prophylactic move. Now 21...♟f5? is bad because of 22 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 23 ♗xc6. Black's idea is ruined, he has to rebuild and work out a new plan. In situations like this the probability of errors cropping up usually increases sharply.

I should probably have played 21...♠g6! followed by ...♠e4. However, I thought of another plan, linked with transferring the knight to c4. Unfortunately, I frequently carried out my ideas hastily, without the necessary analytical investigation.

21 ... ♠xf3?!

22 ♗xf3 ♟g6

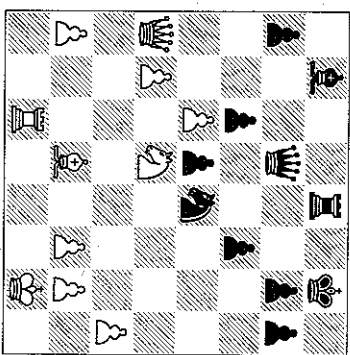
22...♟f5!? could be considered.

23 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8

24 ♗d4 ♟e5? (D)

The decisive mistake. The correct move-order was 24...♞c8! first, and only then ...♟e5-c4 followed by ...♠e5, or, if this knight transfer seems to be impracticable, then 25...♠e5.

However, it is not obvious how White can hinder Black after the text move. 25 ♠f4 fails against 25...♗d3. 25 ♞c2 has a pretty refutation – 25...♗c4! 26 ♗xc6 ♗xd2! and ...♞e1 mate is threatened. If 25 ♠e1, then 25...♞c8, though here White probably maintains better chances after 26 ♗a6! (26 ♠f4? ♗d3) 26...♗f7 (26...♗c4? 27 ♞e7!)



27 ♠f4 ♗f3+ 28 ♗xf3 ♠xf4. However, the continuation Teshkovsky found was far more convincing.

25 ♞d1!!

A second brilliant prophylactic move. The bishop is defended, and 25...♗c4 can this time be answered by 26 ♗xc6. Nevertheless, perhaps it would have been worth my going into the rook ending which comes about after 26...♗xc6 27 ♗xc6 ♗xd2 28 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 29 ♖xd2 ♖xb4 30 ♖xd5 ♞c4.

25 ... ♞c8

26 ♠f4!

Now 26...♗c4 is bad in view of 27 ♠xb8 and 28 ♗xc6. 26...♗f3+ 27 ♗xf3 ♠xf4 28 b5! is also bad for Black. So my plan is no longer possible, while White can quietly improve his position. Apart from objective difficulties, you should not forget about the psychological effect of the failure of one's own

ideas. It is not surprising that Black lost without a struggle.

- 26 ... ♗b7
- 26...♠g5!? 27 ♠g3 f5.
- 27 ♗b3 a6
- 28 ♞e1 g6
- 29 ♠g3 ♗f7
- 30 ♗e3

There is no defence against penetration down the e-file.

The game continued:

- 30 ... ♗d7
 - 31 f4 ♗c4
 - 32 ♗e6+ ♗xc6
 - 33 ♖xc6 ♗b2
 - 34 ♖xc6 ♖xc6
 - 35 ♗xc6 ♠c7
 - 36 ♗f2 a5
 - 37 hxa5 ♗d3+
 - 38 ♗e3 ♗xc5
 - 39 ♗d4 ♗e4
 - 40 ♗xd5 ♗xc3
 - 41 a6 ♠b6
 - 42 a4 ♗e8
 - 43 a5 ♠f2
 - 44 ♗d4
- Black resigned

How do you develop prophylactic thinking? Above all, it is important simply to pay attention to this subject. Study instructive episodes from your games or from other players, and look for them in books and magazines. Try to think prophylactically in tournament games.

Concentrating your attention on a particular matter and dealing with it gradually will help you make serious progress in your studies. I remember that having attended my lecture on prophylaxis, Boris Gelfand became interested in the theme, and later he proudly showed me a fine prophylactic move which he had managed to find at the board.

In 1988, Simbat Lupituan won second prize in the incredibly strong international tournament at Saint John. He recognised that in the process of playing he more than once used the idea of prophylaxis, about which we had talked before the competition.

Clearly, it is extremely useful to study games and commentaries by top players, especially those who are skilful in prophylactic play. Tigran Petrosian and Anatoly Karpov differed from most of their colleagues in that they seem to have been naturally endowed with highly developed prophylactic thinking.

The following game by Anatoly Karpov (and to a greater degree his commentary on it) graphically demonstrates the FIDE World Champion's style of play and the way he thinks. It must be said that when I saw it for the first time it did not create much of an impression,

since Black lost without a fight. It was only later, when I became familiar with Karpov's notes (in *italic* when quoted here), that I understood the true nature and depth of what is hidden beneath the 'simplicity'.

Karpov – Timman

Montreal 1979

Pirc Defence

1	e4	d6
2	d4	♟f6
3	♟c3	g6
4	g3	♗g7
5	♗g2	0-0
6	♟ge2	e5
7	0-0	♟a6?!

Usually Black plays 7...♟c6 or 7...c6.

8	♗e1	c6
9	h3	

'A typical prophylactic in situations like this. By limiting the scope of his opponent's bishop, White is creating a no-go area on the kingside for the remaining minor pieces.'

By 'the remaining pieces' he most likely means the f6-knight. White's queen's bishop wants to go to e3, and it has to be protected from the troublesome ...♟g4. Here we are dealing with a prophylactic move, but not yet with a prophylactic way of thinking. Advancing

the h-pawn is typical in similar positions, and it was played without even considering the opposition's possibilities.

9 ... ♗e8

'All Black's hopes of gaining counterplay are linked with pressure on the e4-pawn.'

This is prophylactic thinking. Karpov immediately defines his opponent's main idea, which he will carefully follow for the entire course of the game.

10 ♗g5

A standard method of development – White is trying to provoke ...h7-h6 so that when the queen comes to d2 the h6-pawn will be attacked.

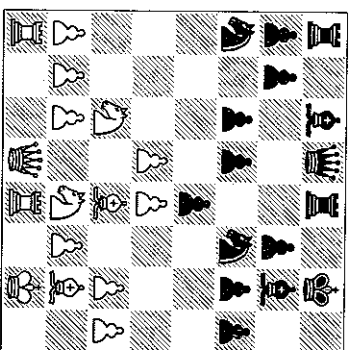
10 ... h6

If 10...♗b6, then the simple 11 ♗b1, not fearing 11...exd4 12 ♟xd4 ♟c5 as 13 b4 ♟xc4 14 ♗xe4! ♟xe4 15 ♟xe4 ♗xd4 16 ♟f6+ leaves the black king in trouble.

10...exd4 11 ♟xd4 h6 is tempting on account of 12 ♗e3 ♟c5, when defending the e4-pawn is awkward (13 ♗f4 ♟h5). However, White can reply 12 ♗f4! g5 13 ♗c1, and the weak f5-square will make itself felt in the future.

11 ♗e3 (D)

White obviously wants to finish his development by means of 12 ♗d2 (with tempo!) 12...♟h7 13 ♗ad1. Can this plan be prevented?



B

In the event of 11...exd4, 12 ♗xd4 ♟c5?! (12...♟c7 is better), 13 e5! is unpleasant for Black: 13...♟h7 14 exd6 ♗xd6 15 b4 (or 15 ♗xg7 ♗xd1 16 ♗axd1 ♟xg7 17 b4 ♟a6 18 b5) 15...♟a6 16 b5 cxb5 17 ♟xb5 with advantage to White.

The strongest move seems to be the prophylactic idea suggested by Karpov, 11...♟h7!, defending the h6-pawn in good time. The point is that after 12 ♗d2 exd4 13 ♗xd4 (13 ♟xd4 ♟c5 14 f3 d5! 15 ♟xc6 ♟xc4) 13...♟c5, 14 e5? is then impossible because of the pin on the bishop that results after 14...dx5.

Then it is with 12 g4 (instead of 12 ♗d2) that White should maintain a slightly better position, although Black still loses nothing with 11...♟h7 – by making a useful move he has prevented the most

natural distribution of the opponent's pieces. It is clear that this is how he should play, and this is a good example of solving strategic problems in the opening on the basis of prophylactic thinking.

11 ... ♖c7?

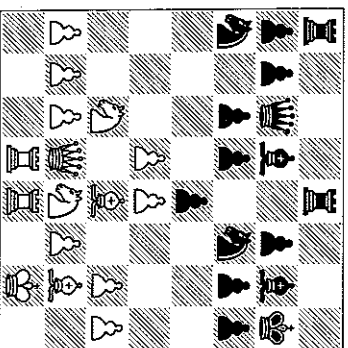
Timman is not even trying to hinder the execution of his opponent's plan. Moreover, the black queen has taken a potentially useful square away from the knight, which is now stuck on the side of the board.

12 ♖d2 ♖h7

After 12...exd4 13 ♖xd4 White has the threat of 14 ♗xh6.

13 ♖ad1 ♗d7 (D)

13...♗e6 14 g4 ♖ad8 15 f4 ♗c4 16 ♖g3 is also pleasant for White.



W

White has successfully consolidated his position. Now 14 f4 and 14 g4 are candidate moves. How

did Karpov make his choice? *'On the threshold of the middlegame it is always useful to consider the resources available to both sides and reconsider your original plans.'*

'Here I had a think, and quickly came to the conclusion that straightforward play in the centre promises nothing. Now, with the aim of seizing new territory, it will be necessary to move the kingside pawns. However, I didn't want to play 14 f4 straight away. It is illogical to increase the pressure immediately as I will have to play g3-g4 later anyway, so why not use such resources as g3-g4 and ♖g3 in order to strengthen my position first? At the same time White solves his basic strategic problem — strengthening the e4-pawn in case the centre is opened up.'

Incidentally, the game is very good illustration of Nimzowitsch's idea of overprotection of strategically important areas. Karpov is constantly doing just this, trying to support the e4-pawn as much as possible.

14 g4 ♖ad8

15 ♖g3 ♗c8

16 f4 b5

If you know his style, it is very easy to guess Karpov's next move.

17 a3! b4?!

Timman is an active player, sometimes excessively so. It is not

a good idea to weaken the queen-side pawns.

18 axb4 ♖xb4

19 ♖ce2

'Black's idea consisted ...' Excuse me, but what idea can Black still have? A brief examination of the position clearly suggests that White has achieved a solid positional advantage. We would probably have thought about how to make use of it as quickly as possible — with f4-f5, preparing g4-g5, etc. But Karpov was thinking of something completely different — even in situations like this he first of all deals with (and tries to keep under control) his opponent's possible counterplay.

Again: *'Black's idea consisted — by playing ...a5, ...♗a6, ...exd4 and ...c6-c5 — of somehow co-ordinating his pieces more harmoniously. But this is a long process, and White has time to prevent his opponent's plan.'*

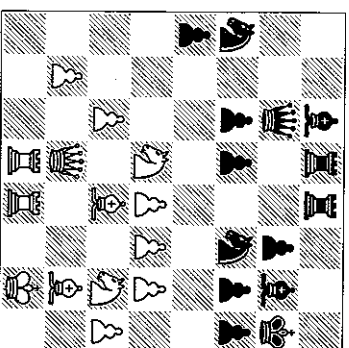
Now if 19...a5, then 20 c3 drives away the knight and adds support to the centre. Black also has a bad position after 19...c5 20 fxe5 dxe5 21 d5.

19 ... exd4

20 ♖xd4 a5

'White's future play effectively revolves around not allowing his opponent's pieces to enter the game.'

21 c3 ♖a6 (D)



W

Karpov's next move is probably the best in the game. How did he find it? Obviously, he asked himself what his opponent wanted to do. The answer is clear: bring the queen's knight into the game via c5. How is it possible to prevent that?

22 ♖c2!

'A fine move, which in the first place does not allow the a6-knight to jump to c5 (in view of the reply b2-b4!), and in the second place continues on the primary strategic course — strengthening the e4-pawn.'

As you can see, it combines both of Nimzowitsch's observations on prophylaxis — hindering your opponent's plan and overprotection.

22 ... ♗d7

Again Black wants to play ... ♖c5 (23... ♖c5 24 b4 axb4 25 cxb4 ♖e6, and the c6-pawn is defended), and again White prevents it.

23 ♖f3 ♖e7

After 23... ♖c5 Karpov had prepared 24 e5. Timman takes his opponent at his word, and, apparently, in vain. In a tournament situation you always have to check any possibility of sharpening the struggle. I cannot see how White can win after 24... ♖d5. If 25 exd6 ♖xd6 26 ♖f2 (26 c4 ♖xe3), then 26... ♙xc3! 27 ♙xc3 ♖xf4 28 ♙e1 ♖e6 and Black has clear compensation for the sacrificed exchange (Typesetter's Note: 25 ♙xc5 dxc5 26 ♖c1, followed by ♖e4, seems promising for White). Even 23... c5 would have been better than the move in the game.

24 ♙f2!

'One of the final prophylactic moves. Before the decisive attacking operation White has arranged his forces more harmoniously, and once again strengthened his central fortress by defending the e-pawn with another piece. 24 ♖d3 is premature in view of 24... ♙c8.'

For me this is perhaps the most informative of Karpov's comments. I will try, by using it, to reconstruct his train of thought:

'The fork 24 ♖d3 is tempting, but after 24... ♙c8 25 e5 ♖d5 26

exd6 ♙xd6 27 c4 there is 27... ♖xe3 28 ♖xd6 ♖xd1 when the unclear complications give me no advantage. (Typesetter's Note: Here 29 ♖xe7 probably favours White, but earlier 27... ♙xc3! 28 ♙xc3 ♖xe3 wins material for Black.)

'What does Timman want to play? Why did he make his last move? 24... ♙de8 is hardly his intention – after the simple 25 ♖d3 he loses a pawn. Perhaps 24... ♙e8, to give the weak d6-pawn extra defence and free d7 for the knight or the rook. But then 25 ♖d3, and the bishop can no longer defend the knight, which leaves 25... ♖b7, when the a5-pawn is suddenly without support. 'Well, all right, this means that for the time being I simply wait. What would be a useful move to make? 24 ♙f2 seems feasible – it won't do the e4-pawn any harm to be defended again, and the threat of the breakthrough e4-e5 (after 25 ♖d3) will become more valid.'

As you can see, prophylactic thinking is in no way synonymous with passivity, rather it is linked with a simultaneous estimation of both your own and your enemy's resources, and with precise calculation of short variations. Opposing a style of play like this is not at all easy – you must not let your opponent be the only one who can

guess the other's ideas. In this respect Timman was not a worthy opponent for Karpov here.

24 ... ♙e8?!

25 ♖d3 ♖b7

25... ♖b8 is answered by 26 e5!

26 ♙a1!

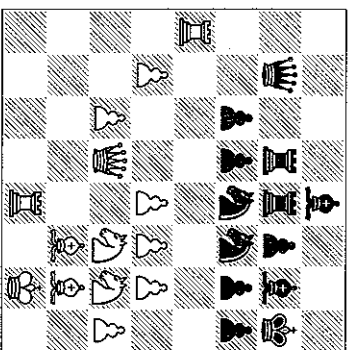
Modest manoeuvring by White's pieces has led to material gains – the a5-pawn is impossible to defend.

26 ... ♖c7

27 ♙xa5 ♙8d7

Not 27... ♖xb2? 28 ♙b1.

28 b4 ♖e6 (D)



W

Now, of course, 29 f5? ♖f4 helps Black. The f4-pawn must be defended, but how? Karpov is vigilant to the end.

'The position is totally winning for White, but certainly demands a degree of accuracy. Thus, after 29 ♖d2 d5!? Black could have

achieved some sort of counterplay: 30 e5 ♖e4 31 ♖xe4 dxe4 32 ♖d4 c5, and things are more complicated.'

29 ♙e3! c5

30 f5 ♖d8

31 b5

Preventing... ♖c6.

31 ... ♖h8

32 ♙f2

The bishop has done its work on e3 and retreats again to strengthen e4.

32 ... ♖c7

33 ♙a4 ♖b8

34 c4

White has (apart from an extra pawn) a huge positional advantage – his opponent's forces are totally deprived of oxygen. The decisive breakthrough is not far off.

34 ... ♙a7

35 ♙xa7 ♙xa7

36 e5 dxe5

37 ♖xe5 ♙a2

38 ♙xc5

Black resigned

I will repeat once more: at first glance this game does not grip our attention because it creates the impression (which is basically justified) of playing into an open goal. Only with serious study of it do you begin to appreciate the skill (hidden by White's apparently modest moves), which is in many ways part of prophylactic thinking.

Next we will examine a game by another great exponent in the field of preventative measures – Tigran Petrosian. Karpov's and Petrosian's styles of play have a great deal in common, although I think that Karpov is the more aggressive player. For him prophylactic thinking is always a reliable weapon in the fight for victory, whilst for Petrosian it was usually a means of trying to avoid defeat, and his prophylaxis was occasionally surplus to requirements.

Petrosian – Gufeld
USSR Ch (Moscow) 1961
King's Indian Defence

1	e4	g6
2	d4	♗g7
3	♖c3	♘f6
4	e4	0-0
5	♗g5	d6
6	♞d2	

White has chosen an unusual move order in the opening.

Once I supervised Petrosian and Gufeld's joint analysis. The ex-World Champion was constantly outplaying his opponent.

'How is it,' Gufeld wondered, 'that my position isn't better?'

'Because my head is better,' explained Petrosian.

Petrosian did not place any great significance on opening theory and

quite often took liberties in order to take his opponent off the beaten track and subsequently make use of his 'better head'. In fact, why did he allow the young Gufeld, who considered himself an expert on the King's Indian, to demonstrate his knowledge? Wouldn't it have been more sensible to test his (weaker) understanding of positional aspects? Petrosian himself had a superior appreciation of such positions: as he once said, he fed his family from the proceeds of the King's Indian for many years.

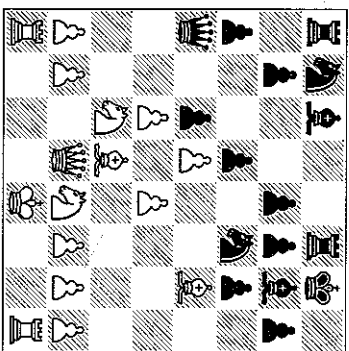
6	...	c5
7	d5	♞a5

The position which has arisen could also be treated in other ways: 7...e6 (against which Petrosian had planned 8 dxex6 followed by ♗d3 and ♘ge2); 7...b5!; 8 cxb5 a6; or 7...a6 8 a4 ♞a5.

8	♗d3	a6
9	♘ge2 (D)	
9	...	e5?

A grave strategic error. By closing the long diagonal for his bishop Black has deprived himself of counterplay, and now White's space advantage guarantees him a long-term initiative. Petrosian's assessment of the position is instructive:

'Superficially the position looks quite promising for Black. Having closed the centre he has moved the



B

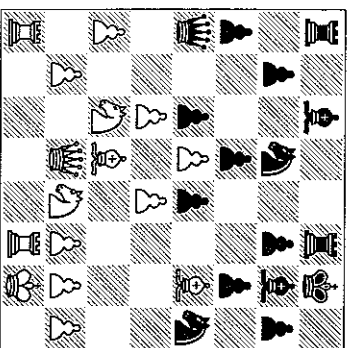
action to the flanks. The possibility of the breakthroughs ...b7-b5 and ...f7-f5 seems to make his chances considerable. However, Black should not overlook the fact that White's forces are significantly better placed for when the game opens up.'

In other words, carrying out the thrust ...b7-b5 or ...f7-f5 at the right moment will hardly be successful. White, on the other hand, can easily prepare queenside expansion with a2-a3 and b2-b4.

How should Black have continued? The logical consequence of Black's previous moves would seem to be the active advance 9...b5!. After 10 cxb5 it is quite possible to treat the position in the spirit of the Benko Gambit with 10...♗bd7!?, but the more forcing 10...axb5!? 11 ♗xb5 ♘xe4 also deserves attention. Petrosian examined the

variation 12 ♘xe4 ♞xb5 13 ♗xe7 ♞e8 14 ♘xd6 ♞xb2 15 ♞xb2 ♗xb2 16 ♞b1 (16 ♘xe8! ♗xa1 17 ♘c1) 16...♞xe7 17 ♘xc8 ♞b7 18 ♘d6 ♞b4 19 ♘c4, and he thought that Black would be able to hold out for a draw. In fact after 19...♞xa2 Black has excellent prospects.

10	0-0	♗bd7
11	a3	♗h5 (D)



W

Black is preparing 12...f5. Of course, he is not afraid of 12 ♗e7! ♞e8 13 ♗xd6 ♞b6. After 12 g4 Black should continue with the standard pawn sacrifice 12...♘f4 13 ♘xf4 exf4 14 ♗xf4 ♘e5 15 ♗e2 and then 15...f5 or 15...♗d7 followed by ...b7-b5. In general, though, sharp solutions like that are not in Petrosian's style.

12 f3!

'A good prophylactic, directed mainly against ...f7-f5. It becomes

clear that 12...f5 is no good: 13 exf5 gxf5 14 ♖c2!, and there is no reasonable way of defending the f5-pawn.'

White's move not only hampers his opponent's counterplay, but is useful in itself – now Black has to give more serious consideration to g2-g4 from White.

12 ... ♠f6
13 ♖h6 ♘g7

It would probably have been better to retreat the bishop to g7, when White has a choice:

- a) 14 ♖e3;
- b) 14 ♖g5 ♖f6 15 ♖e3;
- c) exchanging bishops (in one order or another).

Since White can repeat moves as he wishes, he does not need to make a decision in advance – this is demanded only when (and if) the position arises on the board. This is typical, important reasoning for the chess player in practice, allowing him to economise on thinking time. I am sure that Petrosian played 13 ♖h6 fairly quickly. Perhaps (as also happened in the game) this little problem does not have to be solved, or he managed to do it in his opponent's time, while Black was deciding upon which piece to retreat to g7.

14 g3!?

Probably only Petrosian could play like this. The idea of this move

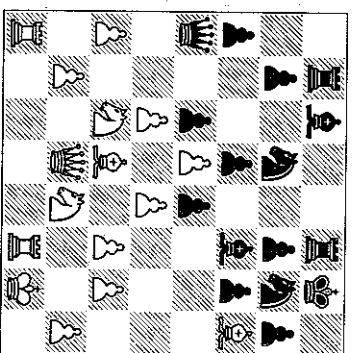
is not easy to understand without his explanation.

'White's position is so much better that he can vary between different plans. Moving the g-pawn two squares is for the time being replaced by the more modest g2-g3, but now Black has to bear in mind the possibility of the advance f3-f4. In situations where one side has no possibility of organising counterplay, while the other with a significant spatial advantage, has several ways of improving his position, such ways of playing are at times less pleasant for the opposition, and more dangerous than straightforward action. It is difficult for the defending side to guess where the strike will come.'

With Black's bishop on g7, White would not even think about playing f3-f4, inviting the opening of the long diagonal with ...exf4. But now the bishop may be planning to retreat to e7, so this advance must be considered as an option if Black were to do just that.

14 ... ♞b8 (D)

What does Black want to do? Probably 15...b5. But is he prepared to open up the game? Let us check: 15...b5 16 cxb5 axb5 17 b4! cxb4 (17... ♖a6 18 ♘xb5! ♞xb5 19 a4) 18 axb4, and 18... ♖xb4 is bad because of 19 ♖e3 followed by 20 ♞fb1.



W

Thus 15...b5 is not a threat. But does Black understand this? Petrosian has to help him make a mistake by playing a neutral move – let's say 15 ♖h1, which is particularly useful if the game (and the g1-a7 diagonal) opens up.

Pay close attention: prophylactic thinking implies constant control of your opponent's ideas, but this does not necessarily mean that you have to destroy them. On the contrary, at times (as in this case) it makes sense to provoke activity if you have calculated that its consequences are in your favour.

15 ♖h1! ♖c7

Now he has to think seriously about 16...b5 17 cxb5 c4.

16 b3!

'A continuation of the same unhurried strategy. Before playing his pawn to b4, White prepares to double rooks on the b-file, which

sooner or later will be opened. Incidentally, another problem is also solved: there is no longer a necessity to watch out for the possibility of ...b7-b5.'

In studying this game (and the previous one) there is no point giving individual moves too much significance, or trying to establish whether they are objectively the strongest – that is not our main concern here. It is more important to investigate how the great players approach the subject of finding a favourable solution, how they have fully developed their prophylactic thinking (in the case of Petrosian, perhaps more so than is necessary!).

16 ... ♖e7
17 ♞ab1 ♖h8
18 ♞b2 ♘g6

'Black is undertaking a new plan of regrouping his forces, which in the end will allow him to push with...f5. If he tried to do that now (or earlier) White would exchange on f5 and then create unpleasant pressure on the b1-h7 diagonal with ♖c2. In combination with g3-g4 and opening (after b3-b4) a 'second front' on the queenside, this would lead to a difficult situation for Black. It would have been more sensible for him to stick to passive tactics, awaiting White's intentions. Moves such as

18...b6 followed by 19...♞b7 would to some extent have increased his defensive resources.'

How should White fight against the standard plan in such positions (...♟g8 and ...f7-f5)? He could, of course, settle for g3-g4.

Let us remember the typical way of searching for a solution – the critical question to ask in situations like this is: 'what are the defects of my opponent's move?' (apparently the first to recommend this was the renowned trainer from Moldova, Chebanenko). By sending the knight over to the kingside, Black has weakened his defence of the important c5- and b6-squares. It follows that White should take advantage of this circumstance immediately by striving to open up the queenside.

19 b4! ♟g8

20 ♠e3 f5

20...b6 21 bxc5 bxc5 22 ♞xb8 ♞xb8 is a lesser evil, although after 23 ♞b1 and 24 ♞b2 White's advantage is not in doubt.

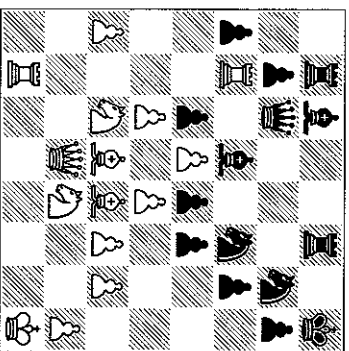
21 bxc5 dxc5

22 ♞b1 ♟f6

'He should not allow the white rook to reach b6. Of course, 22...b6 would present White with new possibilities linked with the advance of the a-pawn, but he should have played it all the same.'

23 ♞b6 ♠d6 (D)

23...♟d7? does not work in view of 24 d6! ♠xd6 25 ♟d5. However, 23...fxe4!? would have been more stubborn, trying to gain the f5- or g4-squares for his pieces, depending on how White recaptures.



W

24 ♠h6!

'In spite of the strong pressure he is under, Black still preserves hopes of gaining counterchances by means of an exchange on e4, which after a capture by the pawn will give him the possibility of ...♟g4, whilst in the event of ♟xe4 or ♠xe4, the move ...♟f5 becomes available. We should note that as he has an overwhelming positional superiority, White, even if the indicated threats were carried out, would maintain an obvious advantage; but there is no point in Black giving up unnecessarily,

even with his small share of positional achievements.'

Now if 24...fxe4, then 25 ♟xe4 ♟xe4 26 ♠xe4 ♞f7 27 g4! limits the scope of both the ♠c8 and the ♟g7.

24 ... ♞f7

25 ♟g1

Another pure Petrosian move. The grandmaster does not hurry with specific action, electing to first strengthen f3. After 25...fxe4 he intended 26 ♠xg7+! (after 26 ♟xe4 ♟f5 27 ♟xd6 ♟xd6 Black has counterchances) 26...♠xg7 27 ♟xe4 ♟xe4 28 ♠xe4 and then g3-g4 and ♟h3.

Black should force the dangerous rook out from b6 by 25...♟d7. Instead of this, Gufeld tries to introduce complications which, alas, do not turn out in his favour.

25 ... ♠f4?

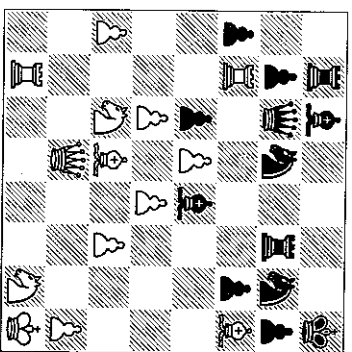
26 gxf4 ♟d7

26...exf4 27 ♞xd6! is winning for White.

27 fxe5 ♠xe5 (D)

27...♟xb6 28 exd6 ♞xd6 29 e5! is hopeless.

'Now if the rook retreats Black should play 28...♟h5!, and the black pieces will find good squares on d6, e5 and f4. If Black's idea can be carried out, then naturally it would put into doubt White's mid-dlegame play, as Black was worse from the very opening.'



W

28 ♞e6!

'Everything is in order! Black is deprived of the possibility of playing 28...♟h5 in view of the possibility of 29 ♞e8+. The text also aims at the bishop on e5 – the only barrier to the passed pawns in the centre. Destroying this obstacle after 28...♟f8 29 ♞xe5! frees White's pawns.'

'The end of the game, which my young opponent carried on in time trouble, resembles a game of "give-away".'

28 ... b5

29 exb5 c4

30 ♞c6 ♞d8

31 ♠xc4 ♞h4

32 ♞c1

Familiar emphasis! White frees the queen from defending the c3-knight and hopes to disturb the c8-bishop along the c-file in the future.

32 ... ♖h5
 33 ♖g5 ♖g3+
 34 ♖g2 ♖xe4
 35 ♖xe4 ♖xh2+
 36 ♖f1 ♖xf3+
 37 ♖xf3 ♖h1+
 38 ♖f2

'Here Black finally remembered that apart from mate, only surrender exists in chess, and thus he did after an overt delay.'

Now we will look at some examples of how prophylactic thinking can help in making decisions in different stages of the game.

The Opening

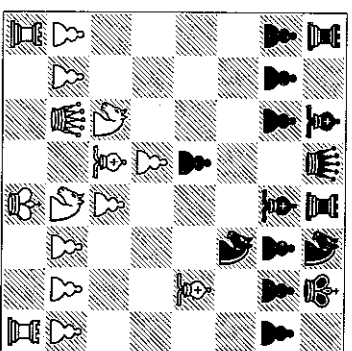
In analysing this game we are drawn to certain strategic ideas which are characteristic of the Exchange Queen's Gambit.

Botvinnik - Keres

USSR Ch (Moscow) 1952

Queen's Gambit

1 d4 ♖f6
 2 c4 e6
 3 ♖c3 d5
 4 exd5 exd5
 5 ♖g5 ♖e7
 6 e3 0-0
 7 ♖d3 ♖bd7
 8 ♖c2 ♖e8
 9 ♖ge2 ♖f8 (D)



W

Why does Keres not hurry to put his pawn on e6? The fact is that White has not yet determined the position of his king. In the event of queenside castling, one of the best plans for Black involves preparing the advance ...c7-c5 (...♖e6, ...a7-a6 and perhaps ...♞c8). If this were to happen, ...c7-c6 would turn out to be a wasted tempo. This is a typical example of prophylactic thinking in the opening - taking into account your opponent's possible plans in order to find a more precise move-order.

10 0-0 e6
 11 ♖ab1

White is planning a standard attack with his queenside pawn minority. Here White has also tried 11 ♖ae1, and recently a somewhat poisonous system with 11 ♖f3? has come into fashion; for example the game Ivanchuk-Yusupov. Brussels

Ct(3) 1991 then continued 11...♖h5 12 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 13 e4 dx4 14 fx4 ♖g4? (14...♖e6!?) 15 e5! ♖ad8 16 ♖e4 and Black found himself in a difficult position, similar to the one we are about to examine. Mikhail Botvinnik, who attended the match, derisively commented: 'Aha! Yusupov does not know the Botvinnik-Keres game. That's no good!' In fact, Yusupov did of course know this game, but at the board he could not find the means of avoiding White's central initiative.

11 ... ♖d6?

Threatening to play 12...♖xh2+ 13 ♖xh2 ♖g4+, but Keres's fundamental idea consists, by playing 12...♖g6 and 13...h6, of forcing an exchange of bishop for knight, and taking on f6 with the queen. Then his pieces will be active and will pressure the enemy kingside. Alas, Botvinnik completely refutes this idea.

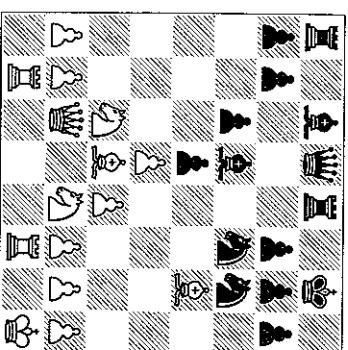
The right move-order is 11...♖g6 (11...♖e6 and 11...♖g4 are also possible) 12 b4?! ♖d6 (threatening 13...♖xh2+ or 13...h6) 13 ♖f4 ♖xf4 14 exf4 ♖d6 15 ♖fe1 ♖d7 16 f5 ♖f4 17 ♖f1 g6, and Black is doing very well, Lazarev-Fedorenko, 1964.

White needs to remember prophylaxis in good time, and ruin the indicated plan by means of 12

♖xf6! ♖xf6 13 b4 with a slight edge.

12 ♖h1! ♖g6 (D)

After 12...h6 13 ♖h4 (or 13 ♖f4) the knight can no longer move to g6.



W

13 f3!!

This move practically wins the game, because it wrecks Black's plans. Now if 13...h6 14 ♖xf6 (the sacrifice 14 ♖xh6 gxh6 15 ♖xg6 fxg6 16 ♖xg6+ ♖h8 17 ♖xh6+ ♖h7 is unconvincing) 14...♖xf6 15 e4 Black's vulnerable forces are too poorly placed to deal with the threat of 16 e5.

13 ... ♖e7

Acknowledging the error of his previous strategy. But what could he do? The threat of e3-e4 was too serious.

14 ♖be1

Botvinnik probably rejected the immediate 14 e4 because of

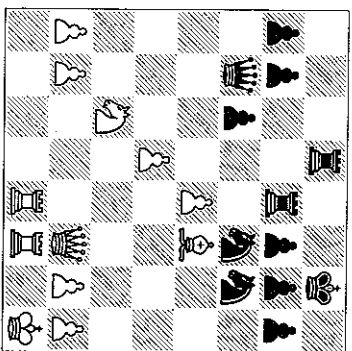
14...dxe4 15 fxe4 ♘g4. Now Black should, with 14...h6, provoke his opponent into the complications that arise after 15 ♖xh6 gxh6 16 ♖xg6 fxg6 17 ♗xg6+ ♖h8 or 15 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16 ♖xg6 fxg6 17 ♗xg6 ♗xc3 18 ♘f4 ♖xd4. Keres selects a more passive path and falls into a terrible positional bind.

- 14 ... ♘d7
15 ♖xe7 ♗xe7
16 ♘g3

'White is in no hurry with the advance e3-e4, remembering Tarasch's dictum that the threat is stronger than its execution. But he is not putting it off for long, only until the very moment when Black has no active response.' As you can see, Botvinnik is achieving the realisation of his positional superiority with prophylactic methods.

- 16 ... ♘f6
17 ♗f2 ♖e6
18 ♘f5 ♖xf5
Otherwise 19 g4.
19 ♖xf5 ♗b6
20 e4 dxe4
21 fxe4 ♗d8
22 e5 (D)
22 ... ♘d5
22...♗e8 covers d6 and is therefore less compromising.
23 ♘e4

It must be pointed out that in his game against Yusupov, Ivanchuk



B

managed to reach a roughly similar position much quicker.

- 23 ... ♘f8
24 ♘d6 ♗c7
25 ♖e4!

White prepares to exchange off his opponent's only decent piece, the d5-knight, and simultaneously frees f5 for his own knight.

- 25 ... ♘e6
26 ♗h4 g6
26...h6 27 ♘f5 ♗ed7 28 ♘xh6+!
gxh6 29 ♗xh6.
27 ♖xd5 cxd5
28 ♗c1!

It is useful to seize the c-file and at the same time prevent an exchange sacrifice on d6.

- 28 ... ♗d7
29 ♗c3 ♗f8
30 ♘f5!

Of course White does not allow the freeing advance 30...f5!. Now 30...gxh6 31 ♗g3+ ♘g7 32 ♗f6

leads to mate, and if 30...♗e8, then 31 ♗f6 h5 32 ♘h6+ ♖h7 33 ♘xf7.

- 30 ... ♗fe8
31 ♘h6+! ♖f8
32 ♗f6 ♘g7
33 ♗c3

The f7-square cannot be defended. The threat is 34 ♗xf7+!

- 33 ... ♗c8
34 ♘xf7 ♗e6
35 ♗g5 ♘f5
36 ♘h6 ♗g7
37 g4

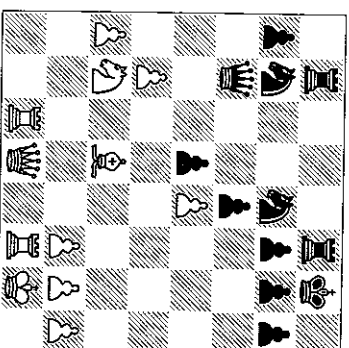
Black resigned

I was impressed by the power of the apparently modest move 13 f3, which totally refuted Keres's strategy. It is useful to mention that in similar positions, play in the centre with e3-e4 is the best reaction to the plan of ...♖d6, ...♘g6, and ...h7-h6. The white knight can also be put on f3 – then f2-f3 is impossible, but there is the alternative plan ♗ae1 (or ♗fe1) followed by e3-e4.

The Middlegame

In improving your play in one or other area of chess it is important to become familiar with the work of those players who have attained the highest level of skill in a given sphere. For that reason I want to draw your attention to two more

fragments from games by Karpov – one of the 'classic' exponents of prophylaxis.



W

Karpov – Bagirov
USSR Ch (Riga) 1970

White's positional superiority is not in doubt. He is controlling more space, and the b7-knight has nowhere to go. If it were Black to move he could play 27...a5!, and after 28 b5 a4 win the c5-square for the knight.

After 27 ♖b1, the move 27...a5?! is less precise: 28 ♗d4! ♗xd4 29 ♘xd4 axb4 30 axb4 and White's advantage has increased. However, his opponent has stronger moves: 27...♗fc8!? (and, when the time comes, ...♗c4) or 27...f6!?

27 ♗d2 looks reasonable, but again 27...f6! has to be considered. Karpov found the optimal solution.

27 ♖g4!

White has established control over the central d4-square and simultaneously created the threat of 28 ♖xh7+ ♗xh7 29 ♖h4+ ♗g8 30 ♖xe7. Now 27...a5 is insufficient for various reasons: 28 ♖xh7+, 28 ♖d4, or even the simple 28 b5, since Black does not have the reply 28...a4. If 27...f6, then 28 ♖h4 ♗g6 (28...h6 29 ♖fe1) 29 ♖xg6 hxg6 30 ♖g3 is strong, while 27...♗g6 28 ♖xg6 gives White an obvious advantage.

27 ... f5

28 ♖d4

28 exf6 ♖xf6 29 ♖g3 ♖b7 8 is not as convincing.

28 ... ♗d8

Black hopes to put the knight on c6.

29 b5!

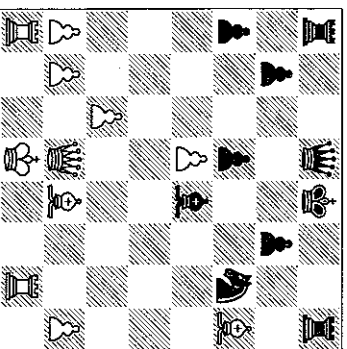
Karpov has his favourite kind of domination on the board – his opponents pieces are deprived of any active possibilities. White can carry out an attack on the queen-side unhindered.

29 ... g5
30 a4 ♗g6
31 ♖a1 ♖b7
32 ♖fe1 ♖g7
33 ♗c5 ♗f7
34 a5 ♖e7
35 ♗a6 ♖a8
36 ♖f1 ♗f7
37 ♗c7 ♖d8

Or 37...♖b8 38 b6 axb6 39 a6.

38 ♖c6 ♗f8
39 b6 axb6
40 a6 ♗h6
41 ♖ecl ♗g4
42 a7 ♗xe5
43 ♖6c2 ♗c4
44 a8 ♖ ♖xa8
45 ♗xa8 b5
46 ♖a2 ♖xa8

Black resigned



W

Karpov – Hort

Moscow 1971

In contrast to the previous example, the situation here is extremely tense. Both kings are stuck in the centre of the board. Black's basic threat is 22...♖h4!. For precisely that reason Karpov rejects the natural move 22 ♗c2. Nor is 22 ♖g5 good enough: after 22...♖b6 23 ♖e3 (23 ♖g2!) 23...♖c7, the h2-pawn is under attack and Black

intends to castle queenside, bringing the queen's rook into the game.

22 ♖g4!!

A move with many ideas! The rook is taking charge of the important h4- and f4-squares, denying the black queen access to h4 and preparing the pawn advance h2-h4. Moreover, the rook can swing over to the queenside via the fourth rank.

Let us have a look at what will happen if Black gobbles up the h2-pawn. After 22...♖xh2! 23 ♗c2 ♗e5 24 ♖b4 ♖f6! the black pieces are fairly active, and the position is unclear. Now we can use prophylactic thinking to try to prevent dangerous counterplay. Instead of 24 ♖b4?! the fine move 24 ♖g5!! is needed. Now Black cannot contemplate 24...♖f6? 25 ♖g7; the h6-bishop is invulnerable, in the meantime White intends 25 ♖h1 or 25 ♖h5.

22 ... ♖f6

23 h4!

Black was hoping for 23 ♗c2? 0-0-0 24 ♖g5 ♖f5+. But now he can play neither 23...0-0-0, nor 23...♗xh4, because of 24 ♖g5.

23 ... ♖f5

24 ♖b4!

Again castling is impossible (24...0-0-0 25 ♖g4), while after 24...♖g8, White plays not 25 ♖xb7? ♗f4, but 25 ♖d3 ♖f3+ 26

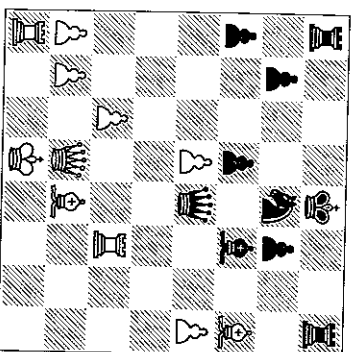
♗c2 and then either 27 ♖e4 or 27 ♖f1.

25 h5 ♗e7

Not 25...♗e5? 26 ♖f4.

26 ♖f4 ♖e5

27 ♖f3! (D)



B

Now 27...♖xh5? is no good: 28 ♖xf6 ♖h1+ 29 ♖f1 ♗g8 30 ♖e1+.

White's threat is 28 ♖f4, for example 27...0-0-0 28 ♖f4 ♖xd5 29 ♖d3 ♖h1+ 30 ♗c2! ♖xa1 31 ♖g4+ (unfortunately, not 31 ♖xd6 because of 31...♖g1) 31...♗b8 32 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 33 ♖xd6+ ♗a8 34 ♖xf6 and White wins. Instead of 28...♖xd5, Black has the stubborn 28...♖c4!?, but then his position is still difficult: 29 ♖d3! ♖h1+ 30 ♖e1 ♖g2 31 c4 ♖xb2 32 ♖b1 followed by ♖b4.

27 ... ♗xd5

28 ♖d3 ♖xh6

28... ♖e7 would be answered by 29 ♖f4.

29 ♖xd5!

Not 29 ♖xh6? due to 29... ♖g5 and 30... ♖e3+.

29 ... ♖e4

30 ♖d3!

A series of brilliant manoeuvres by the white rook has thrown the enemy's defences into complete confusion.

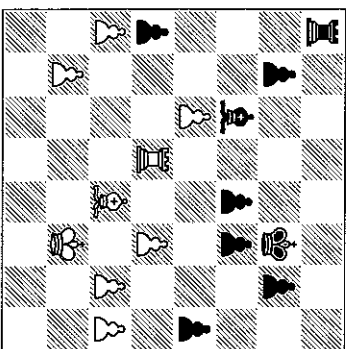
30 ... ♖h1+

31 ♖e2 ♖xa1

32 ♖xh6 ♖e5

33 ♖g5

Black lost on time



Gottschall - Nimzowitsch

Hannover 1926

The Endgame

The following endgame is taken from Nimzowitsch's *My System*. In old books there are a lot of games in which one of the players is not in the same class as the other, and does not show adequate resistance.

In commentaries all the attention is paid to the winner's play, and defensive possibilities are rarely mentioned. As a result such games receive one-sided, unobjective assessment. Probably, at some stage in the study of chess this even had a definite educational point. But when you have reached maturity you should turn to them again, and looking at them through different eyes, it is easy to spot a certain

naïveté in these examples and their book commentaries.

Black to move. How do you assess this position? Nimzowitsch's

chances are probably preferable because of his better pawn structure – his a4-pawn alone is holding back two of White's. Judging by the grandmaster's notes, his win was quite natural. In fact, with correct play the game should have ended in a draw. Material is equal, there are opposite-coloured bishops and White controls the only open file. Every player sometimes has to 'squeeze out' a microscopic advantage or, on the other hand, defend a slightly worse ending. Therefore it is instructive to see how Nimzowitsch managed to completely outplay his opponent,

and to investigate exactly why this happened.

How does Black improve his position? It would be reasonable to move the king over to f5. However, after 28... ♖g6 White has 29 g4! hxg4 30 hxg4 ♖h8 31 ♖g3.

Black has to look out for g3-g4. Is it impossible to prevent it?

28 ... ♖h8!

An excellent prophylactic move.

Now Black is threatening to continue 29... ♖g6 and 30 g4 permits 30... hxg4 31 hxg4 ♖h2+ or (after 29 ♖d2 or 29 ♖b4) 31... ♖h3. Concerning this Nimzowitsch wrote:

'Demanding only direct attacking action from your pieces is the level of the average player. A more flexible understanding of the game concerns prophylactic action, too. This is a typical situation: a planned freeing manoeuvre by your opponent (in the majority of cases a pawn advance) gives us an open file as a result. We will occupy this "future file" (the opening of which is not in our power) ahead of time, to make the opposition's freeing manoeuvre more difficult to carry out. A "stealthy" rook move seems to be a necessary component of this strategy... I will take the liberty of emphasising that preventing the opposition's freeing move is more important than considerations as to whether to move

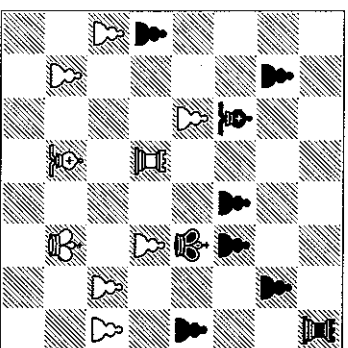
the rook at a given moment, or whether it is occupying a passive position.'

Now we shall discuss moves for White. Black is obviously preparing to move his king to f5. What can you do about this? The simplest way is the prophylactic move 29 ♖d6!. The king is then stuck to the e6-pawn, and after 29... ♖d5 the rook can occupy the seventh rank. It is not apparent how Black can strengthen his position.

29 ♖d1? ♖g6

30 ♖d4 ♖f5

31 ♖d2 (D)



B

Nimzowitsch had been planning ...e6-e5. However, if 31...e5, then 32 fxe5 fxe5 33 g4+ hxg4 34 hxg4+ and 35 ♖d6+, pushing back the black king. Therefore Nimzowitsch does not hurry.

31 ... ♖f8!

Yet another 'stealthy move' by Black. The rook is preparing to operate along the f-file, which will be opened in the very near future. In any case, it is useful initially to strengthen your position to the utmost, and only then alter your pawn structure.

Looking at the position from White's point of view we can think about how he can cope with his opponent's plan.

He could move the rook to b4 before he loses a tempo. After 32...e5 he has a pleasant choice between 33 fxe5 fxe5 34 h4, 33 fxe5 fxe5 34 g4+, and the tactical blow 33 g4+!. However, 32 ♖b4 has a serious disadvantage – the rook is abandoning the open d-file.

Black can make use of this fact straight away: 32...♞d8! 33 ♖e3 ♞d1, or 33 ♖e3 ♞d5 34 ♞c4 ♖b5.

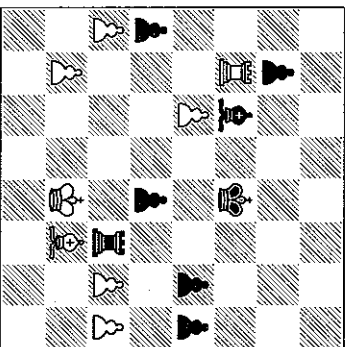
It is interesting to move the king away from the f-file, for example, 32 ♖g1 (after 32 ♖e2 he has to face 32...♖g2) 32...e5 33 fxe5 (33 g4+!) 33...fxe5 34 g4+ hxg4 35 hxg4+ and Black has achieved nothing.

32 ♖e1?! e5
Obviously, 32...g5!? is more precise, as now White has the already familiar tactical blow 33 g4+!

33 fxe5? fxe5
34 ♞h4? g5!

The move 31...♞f8! is now telling – 35 ♞xh5? is impossible due to 35...♖g6+.

35 ♞b4 ♖e6+
36 ♖e2 e4
36...♞f3? 37 ♞xa4.
37 ♖f2 ♞f3
38 ♞b6 (D)



B

Nimzowitsch has made a great deal of progress, and defending will not be an easy task for White. 'The black passed pawn combined with the rook invasion and the slight weakness of the c5-pawn will lead in the end to defeat for White.'

How can he improve the position? It is difficult to prepare for ...e4-e3 at a moment when all possible replies – ♞xc6, ♖x3 and ♖e1 – turn out to be unsatisfactory. He would like to place his king on d5, but what then? When the

opportunity arises, he has the push ...h5-h4, although exchanging off all the kingside pawns should help only White.

We would suggest that with the king on d5 and the rook on b4, White would be a move behind. If ♞d4+, then the simple ...♖xc5, not fearing the discovered check. And after ♞b6, he can reply ...h5-h4, calculating that if White takes on h4 with the bishop, Black can remove the c5-pawn with tempo.

Of course, winning pawns in a position with opposite-coloured bishops by no means guarantees victory. But all the same, Black has nothing better, and by taking on c5, he creates the unpleasant threat of a bishop check from b5.

38 ... ♖e5!
39 ♞b4 ♖d5
Zugzwang is created.
40 h4 gxh4
41 gxh4 ♞h3!

New prospects have surfaced for the black rook.

42 ♞d4+ ♖e5
43 ♞d8 ♖d5
44 ♞e8+ ♖e6
Threatening 45...♞h3.

45 ♞d8 ♖f4!
The noose around the white king closes ever tighter. His position is now hopeless.

46 ♞f8+ ♖f5
47 ♞f7 ♞h2

Not 47...e3 48 ♖g1.

48 ♞e7
Black is winning after 48 ♖e1 e3 49 ♖xc3+ ♖xc3 50 ♞xf5 ♞h1+ 51 ♞f1 ♞xf1+ 52 ♖xf1 ♖d2! (but not 52...♖f3? 53 ♖e1 ♖g3 54 ♖d2 ♖xh4 55 b4! axb4 56 ad).

48 ... ♖g4+
49 ♖e1 ♖f3
50 ♞f7+ ♖g2
51 ♖d2 ♖f1
52 ♖e3 ♖f3
53 ♖g3 ♞xb2
54 ♖d6 ♞b3+
55 ♖d4 ♖f2
56 ♞g7 e3
57 ♖g3+ ♖f1
58 ♞f7 e2
59 ♞e7 ♖c6

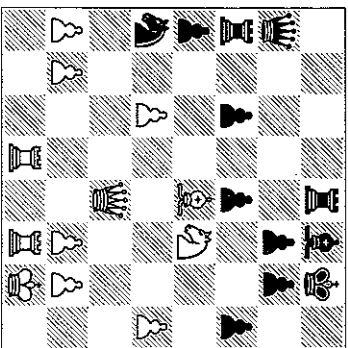
White resigned

Nimzowitsch made exceptional use of all his chances. Note that at the board (as opposed to in his notes) he reasoned in a prophylactic way, evaluating his opponent's resources and subsequently endeavouring to contain them. This guaranteed the grandmaster a huge practical advantage over his opponent, who never even considered prophylaxis and, as a result, let Black carry out his plans in full.

Combinations

Here it seems that there is no place for prophylactic thinking, and that

combinations are solved by fantasy and concrete calculation. But look at the following example:



W

Fischer - Donner

Varna OL 1962

Exchanging queens on a7 leads to a roughly even endgame. What alternative does White have?

Only sacrificing the knight on h6. We shall try to calculate its consequences:

24 ♖xh6+!? g3h6

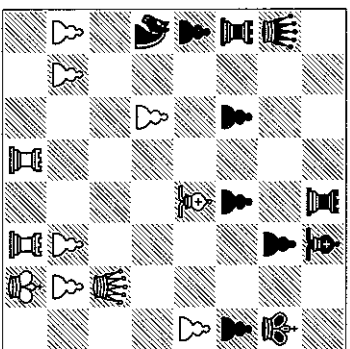
A direct route to mate is not visible, although White could add his rook to the attack via d4. Before we consider the variations, ask yourself how Black will defend himself. It is evident that it is very important to advance his f-pawn so that his queen can defend along the rank.

Alas, Fischer underestimated this fact, and played 25 ♖d4?, and

after 25...f5! Black repulsed his attack. The game continued 26 ♖fd1 ♘c5 27 ♖d8 ♗f7 28 ♖xe8 ♗xe8 29 ♠d4 ♘e4 30 f3 e5! 31 fxе4 (31 ♠b6 ♖xb6) 31...exd4 32 ♗g3+ ♠g7 33 exf5. Now 33...c5! would probably have decided everything, but exchanging queens by means of 33...♗e3+ also turned out to be sufficient for victory.

The key which decides the success of White's attack lies in prophylaxis - it is necessary to stop ...f7-f5.

25 ♗g3+ ♠h7



B

26 h5!! (D)

Now 26...f5? allows 27 ♗g6 mate. Black's pieces are bunched up on the queenside, and White is intending ♖d4 followed by ♖fd1 or ♖g4. 26...♘c5(b6) 27 ♖d4 ♘d7? 28 ♗d3+ for example, is no good for Black. If 26...c5, then 27 ♖d3

♗e7 28 f4! ♖d8 29 ♖f3, or 29 ♖a3, preparing to play ♗g4 and ♖g3.

26 ... ♗e7
27 ♖d4 ♘c5

28 ♖f4!

28 ♖fd1?! is imprecise in view of 28...♖a7 29 ♖f4 ♘d7! 30 ♠d6 ♗g5, while 28 ♖g4? walks into 28...f6.

28 ... ♖a7

28...♘d7 is hopeless: 29 ♠d6! ♗g5 (29...♗xd6 30 ♖xf7+ ♠h8 31 ♗g6) 30 ♖xf7+ ♠g8 31 ♗xg5+ hxg5 32 ♖xd7.

29 ♠f6 ♗d6

30 ♗g4!

Having parried the threat of 30...e5 (31 ♗f5+), White is preparing ♖d1 or ♖f4-f3-g3. If 30...♘d7, then 31 ♠d4! is decisive. There is no convincing defence.

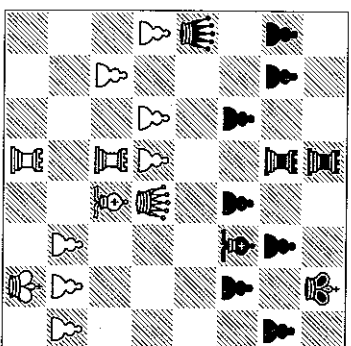
Typesetter's Note: I see no win after 30...♗d3!, defending the important square g6. Neither 31 ♖f3 ♗c4 nor 31 ♖d1 ♗c2 (intending ...♖d7) offers White a convincing continuation.

We could continue examining interesting examples of prophylaxis, but to master prophylactic thinking (or any practical skill) theory alone is insufficient - you need independent training.

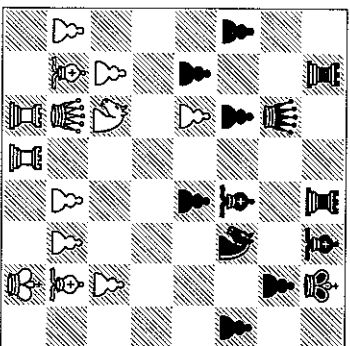
I suggest you solve some exercises of different types - some easy

and some more difficult. They are united by only one factor - every time the key to the solution lies in the same questions: 'What does my opponent want to do? What would he play if it were his move?'

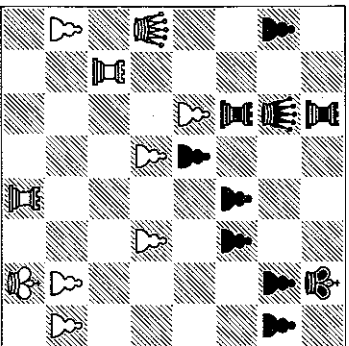
Exercises



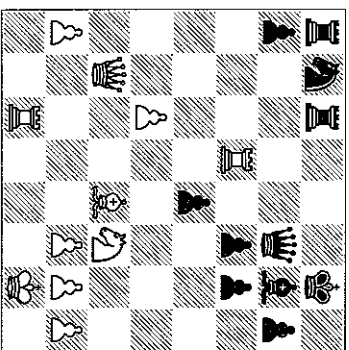
1 White to move



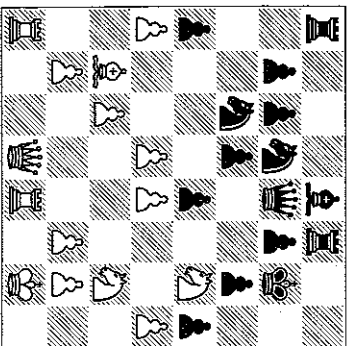
2 Black to move



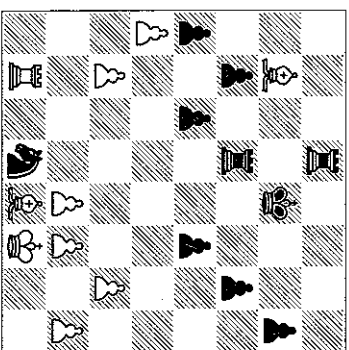
3 White to move



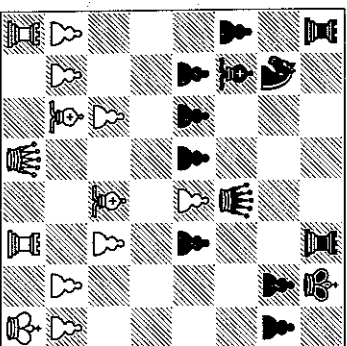
4 White to move



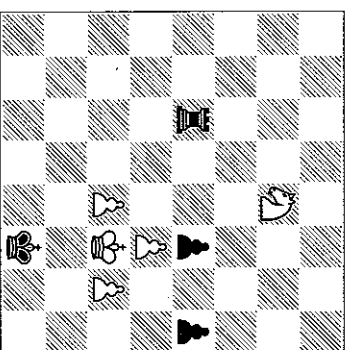
5 White to move



6 Black to move



7 White to move



8 Black to move

Solutions

1. Kholmov-Geller, Vilnius 1957

White needs an escape square, apart from which it is necessary to prevent an exchange of queens that would favour Black: 21...♞f5! 22 ♞xf5 gxf5.

21 g4!

This move solves both problems and preserves somewhat better chances for White.

21 ... ♞b4

22 ♖g2 ♞e7

Now Kholmov must consider 23...♙g5(g7) and 24...f5. Therefore he opens up the centre.

23 d5! exd5?

23...cxd5 24 cxd5 b6 was necessary.

24 ♞xe7 ♞xe7

25 g5!

25 ♙xa7? is weaker: 25...♞a8 26 ♙c5 ♞e4 with equality.

25 ... ♙e5

26 ♙xa7 ♙c7

27 cxd5 ♞ed7

28 h4

White stands much better.

2. Timman-Larsen, Mar del Plata 1982

23...♙xc5 is not to be recommended: 24 ♖e4 ♖xe4 25 ♙xe4. If White seizes e4 by playing 24

♖e4 he will be doing well. A simple prophylactic comes to Black's aid.

23 ... ♖h8!

24 e3

Now 24 ♖e4?! ♙f5 is unpleasant for White.

24 ... ♞bc8

25 ♖e2 ♞f7

A double-edged position has arisen.

3. Hort-Mestel, London 1982

In finding a way to defend the f4 pawn White must think about the freeing move ...e6-e5!

25 ♞f1? is wrong due to the reply 25...e5.

25 g3!? suggests itself, but in this case Black can again reply 25...e5!?:

1) 26 fxe5 fxe5 27 ♞xe5 ♞f8! (not 27...♞xc5? 28 ♞e8+ ♖f7 29 ♞f3+ ♖g6 30 ♞e6+, nor 27...♞f7? 28 ♞xc6!). Now, though, 28...♞xc5 is threatened, as is 28...♞f7, with dangerous pressure on the f-file. White is justified in going into this variation if he can find a set-up for his pieces that will allow him to parry his opponent's immediate threats, for which purpose 28 ♞b5! ♞f7 29 ♞e2 ♞f6 30 ♞b2 is most suitable. But even here Black has definite counterchances by continuing 30...♞g6 31 ♖g2 (31

♠g2 ♠d3!; 31 ♠d2!?) 31...h5!?) 32 ♠h5?!) (32 h4) 32...♠d3.

2) 26 ♠b3!?) is a very interesting idea suggested by GM Sadler: 26...exd4 (after 26...e4 27 ♠b3!?)

the position is good for White) 27 ♠e7 ♠b8 (27...♠d8 28 ♠e8+) 28 ♠d1! (threatening 29 ♠g4 or 29 ♠h5) 28...♠h8 29 ♠h5 ♠g8 30 ♠xg7!!; Now after 30...♠xg7 31 ♠e8+ ♠g8 32 ♠xb8 ♠xb8 33 ♠xd5 ♠bc8 34 ♠xd4 ♠g7 White's advantage is unarguable, but is it sufficient for victory?

Hort preferred a prophylactic move which would allow him to avoid troublesome complications.

25 ♠f3!?

From a practical point of view a decision like this is quite intelligent – White holds on to his positional advantage, but does not risk miscalculating complex variations.

There followed:

25 ... ♠b7

26 ♠d1!

White's idea is to play ♠fe3 and ♠e2. Black should now have played 26...f5!, defending against the threatened breakthrough along the e-file.

Instead the game continued:

26 ... ♠a6?

27 ♠fe3 ♠d7

28 ♠e2 ♠a4

Or 28...♠a4 29 ♠xe6 ♠xd4+ 30

♠h1 ♠a4 31 ♠e7.

29 ♠xe6 ♠xd4

30 c6! ♠f7

31 ♠e8+ ♠xe8

32 ♠xe8+ ♠f8

33 ♠xf8+

Black resigned due to 33...♠xf8 34 ♠c1.

4. Tal-Ribbi, Skara Echt 1980

23 ♠b5!

Not 23 ♠a4? ♠f8.

23 ... ♠a6

23...♠f8 would be met by 24 ♠xf6! ♠xf6 25 ♠d5+ and 26 ♠xa8.

24 ♠d5 ♠xd5

25 exd5

By hampering the b8-knight's development, White achieves a winning position.

23 ♠d1? is much weaker due to 23...♠c6 24 ♠d7 ♠d8!. In the game the following was also unsuccessful: 23 ♠d2? ♠c6 24 ♠e4? (24 ♠a4 ♠e8 25 ♠e4 f5 26 ♠g5 is stronger) 24...♠a5 25 ♠b5 ♠xc4 (could the knight have dreamed of such a fate three moves earlier?) 26 ♠c6 (26 ♠d7? ♠xe3!) 26...♠xc6 27 ♠xc6 ♠d8 and Black equalised.

5. Makarychev-Beljin, Hastings 1979/80

Black would like to play 18...♠d8 followed by 19...f6, driving back the menacing g5-knight. He can

also contemplate the manoeuvre ...♠d7-f6-h7 and 18...♠f6. 18 ♠f1 ♠d8 19 f4 f6 20 ♠h3 is not bad, but here Black can defend himself successfully. 18 ♠e3 (threatening 19 ♠xh5+) gives nothing in view of 18...♠h8.

It is desirable to find the most active means of playing so that Black cannot engineer his intended defensive construction.

18 f4! exf4

18...♠d8 19 f5.

19 ♠e2 ♠d8

19...f3 is no improvement: 20 gxf3 ♠f6 21 ♠f4 ♠h7 22 ♠d5 with a clear advantage.

20 ♠xf4

By taking control of e6 in time, Makarychev has prevented the important defensive move ...f7-f6. White's attack now develops on its own.

20 ... c6

21 ♠d3 ♠h8

Or 21...♠f6 22 e5!.

22 ♠e2! f6

23 ♠ge6+ ♠xe6

24 ♠xe6+ ♠h7

25 ♠f1 ♠f8

26 e5!

and White won.

It would be strange to call the attacking move 18 f4! a prophylactic measure, but it was nonetheless found with the help of prophylactic thinking, and it served to prevent

the opponent improving his position.

6. Psakhis-Speelman, Hastings 1987/8

Black is an exchange up, but his knight is in danger. The threat is ♠b7-a6-d3.

29 ... g5!!

30 ♠a6 f4

31 ♠d3

The waiting move 31 ♠c4 deserved attention.

31 ... ♠xd3

32 exd3 ♠xd3

33 ♠e2 ♠d5

It should have become clear by now why Black advanced the kingside pawns: after 34 ♠xd1? Black has 34...f3+. 34 ♠d2? does not work either due to 34...♠xf2!. Incidentally, after 33...♠d4? (instead of 33...♠d5) White would have won material by means of 34 gxf4 gxf4 35 ♠d2! ♠xf2 36 ♠c3 ♠d3 37 ♠e1.

Perhaps White should have played 34 ♠f3 – if 34...♠d4, then 35 ♠e2 is possible, with the threat of 36 gxf4 gxf4 37 ♠d2!; or 35 ♠c1, intending ♠c2, ♠d2 and then ♠e2. Black would probably have replied 34...♠c3, which after 35 ♠xc3 ♠d3+ 36 ♠g4 ♠xc3 37 ♠xg5 would have led to an unclear rook ending.

Psakhis chose 34 gxf4?1 gxf4 35
 ♖c1? (again 35 ♖f3 was neces-
 sary). After 35...♗b2 36 ♖c3 ♗d3
 Black gained an advantage.

7. Stein-Keres, Moscow 1967

Initially it seems that the e5-pawn
 must be defended with 19 f4. But
 ask yourself what Black will do
 then ... we can establish that he is
 planning to defend the d5-pawn by
 means of 19...♖ad8 and then play
 20...c4!, bringing the knight in via
 c5 and hopping at some point to
 carry out...d5-d4.

Stein found a way of foiling his
 opponent's plan.

19 a4!:

Now 19...♖ad8 invites the strong
 20 axb5 axb5 21 ♖d6. If 19...♗xe5,
 then 20 ♖e1! ♗d6 (20...♖c7 21
 ♖g1) 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♖xxa8 ♖xxa8
 23 ♖xf5, and White is clearly
 happy with the open game as he
 has the bishop pair. 19...f4 20 ♖f2
 ♗xe5 21 axb5 axb5 22 ♗d3! is no
 improvement.

The game continued thus:

19 ... ♗a5

20 ♖f2! ♖h8

Alternatively, 20...f4 21 b4; or
 20...♗c4 21 b3! ♗xe5 22 ♖e1 or
 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♖xxa8 ♖xxa8 24
 ♖e1.

21 ♖e1 ♖a7
 22 ♗e2! b4

23 cxb4 cxb4
 24 ♖xb6 ♗xb6
 25 ♖ad1 ♗c5
 26 ♖d3

White quickly realised his ad-
 vantage.

8. Kozul-Marijanović, Yugoslav Ch 1985 (variation)

Black has to play for zugzwang.
 White must sacrifice the knight on
 f5, since if it retreats, the enemy
 rook will invade.

After 2 ♗xf5 ♖xf5, White will
 have two possibilities: 3 e4 and 3
 g4. Before you go into calcula-
 tions, have a guess as to whether
 it is possible to prevent even one of
 these moves, so as to deprive
 White of a choice.

1 ... ♖g1!:

2 ♗xf5 ♖xf5

Now not 3 g4 because of 3...h4!
 4 gxf5 h3.

It stands to reason that this is
 not yet sufficient consideration for
 making a decision – we cannot
 manage without precise calcula-
 tion. It turns out that 3 e4 leads to a
 draw, whilst after 3 g4 hxg4+ 4
 ♖xxg4 Black is winning. Thus it is
 better not to prevent g3-g4, but on
 the contrary to provoke it.

First we shall test 1...♖a5 2
 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 3 g4 hxg4+ 4 ♖xxg4. In
 the variation 4...♖f8 5 f5 ♖e2 6

♖f4! ♖d3 7 ♖e5! ♖xe3 8 f6 a
 draw results. We can see that Black
 had the idea, by playing 1...♖g1!,,
 of depriving his opponent of a rela-
 tively easy route to salvation.

Now we shall investigate the
 consequences of 3 e4.

3 e4 ♖a5
 4 f5 ♖a3+
 5 ♖f4 ♖f2
 6 f6

Other continuations do not help
 either:

1) 6 ♖g5 ♖e3 7 e5 ♖e4 8 e6
 ♖xg3+ 9 ♖h4 ♖g4+ 10 ♖xh5
 ♖xf5!.

2) 6 c5 ♖f3+ 7 ♖e4 (7 ♖g5 ♖e3
 8 e6 ♖e4 9 f6 ♖f5+! leads back
 into the main variation) 7...♖xxg3 8
 e6 (8 f6 ♖f3!) 8...♖f3 (8...h4 9 f6
 h3 10 f7 ♖f3 11 e7 h2 followed by
 12...h1♗ also wins) 9 ♖e5 h4 10
 e7 h3 11 ♖d6 h2 12 e8♗ h1♗.
 ♖f3+ 6 ... ♖f3+

7 ♖g5 ♖e3!
 7...♖xxg3? is a mistake: 8 e5!
 (not 8 ♖xh5? ♖f4!) 8...h4 9 e6 h3
 10 e7 h2 11 e8♗ h1♗ 12 ♗e5+
 with a draw.

8 e5 ♖e4
 9 e6 ♖f5+!
 10 ♖g6 ♖e5
 11 e7 ♖xf6+
 12 ♖g7 ♖e6
 13 ♖f7 ♖f5

and Black is victorious.

Typesetter's Note: I found this
 explanation confusing and unnec-
 essarily complicated. The simplest
 way to look at it is that in the dia-
 gram White is threatening to draw
 by means of 1 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 2 g4.
 The move 1...♖g1! is effective pre-
 cisely because it prevents this de-
 fence. White is then forced to fall
 back on the e4 defence, which
 loses whether Black's king is on f1
 or g1.

5 The key to a position

Artur Yusupov

One day, while discussing chess with former World Champion Boris Spassky, the author heard of a very interesting characteristic of the play of another great chess player, Bobby Fischer. Spassky could pick out only one possible flaw in Fischer's game – he did not always manage to recognise the critical turning points in a game.

So what about us ordinary mortals? How often do we have a long think and seek a solution to a position where only a simple move is needed? And how often do we rush past situations without discovering the best course? The ability to concentrate at a vital moment, to understand or sense when the fate of the game may be decided – this is the distinctive quality of a great chess player.

How many times have we made a mess of a game through a failure to understand the position? In almost every game we can find some moves which will influence the result, but when a player manages to grasp the essence of a position, whether it be a hidden tactical

nance or a positional idea, it is by holding on to this 'thread' that he will profit most.

Wang Zhi – Yusupov

Novi Sad OL 1990

Ruy Lopez

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 1 | e4 | e5 |
| 2 | ♟f3 | ♞c6 |
| 3 | ♙b5 | a6 |
| 4 | ♙a4 | ♟f6 |
| 5 | 0-0 | ♞xe4 |
| 6 | d4 | b5 |
| 7 | ♙b3 | d5 |
| 8 | dxе5 | ♙e6 |
| 9 | ♞bd2 | ♞c5 |
| 10 | c3 | |

We have reached a well-known position from the Open Variation of the Ruy Lopez. Black has a choice between 10...d4 and the game continuation.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 10 | ... | ♙e7 |
| 11 | ♙c2 | |

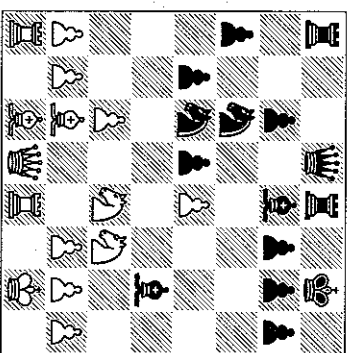
The standard idea of sacrificing a pawn with 11 ♟d4 is clearly premature here because of 11...♞xe5 12 f4 ♞c4 13 ♞c6 ♞d6 14 ♞xe7 ♞e3!

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 11 | ... | ♙g4 |
|----|-----|-----|
- Forced, for after 11...0-0 12 ♟d4 ♞xe5 13 ♞h5 ♞g6 14 f4 f5 15 b4 Black is in trouble.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 12 | ♙e1 | 0-0 |
|----|-----|-----|
- 12...♞d7 13 ♟f1 ♞d8 is also possible, supporting the d5-pawn.

- | | | |
|----|---------|------|
| 13 | ♟f1 | |
| 13 | ♞b3? | |
| 13 | ... | ♙e8? |
| 14 | ♞e3 (D) | |

White goes for tactics. There are plenty of alternatives: 14 h3, 14 ♙f4, 14 b4? and 14 ♞g3.



B

- | | | |
|----|-----|------|
| 14 | ... | ♞xe5 |
|----|-----|------|

After a deep think Black decided to indulge his opponent, correctly assuming the complications would result in his having at least equal chances. The alternative 14...♙xf3 15 ♞xf3 ♞xe5 16 ♞xd5 is also acceptable for Black after 16...♙f8, but not 16...♞cd3 17 ♞d1.

- | | | |
|----|--------|------|
| 15 | ♙xh7+! | ♞xh7 |
| 16 | ♞c2+ | ♙g8 |

Or 16...♞e3 17 ♞xg4 f5 and then 18 ♞d1 fxg4 19 ♞e5, or 18 ♞ge5 ♞xe1 19 ♞xf5+ when White has a guaranteed draw.

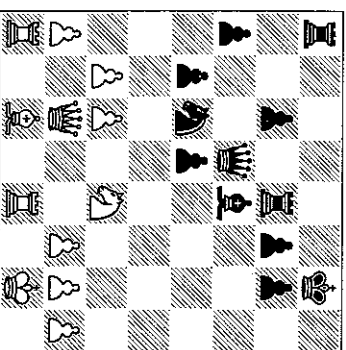
- | | | |
|----|------|-----|
| 17 | ♞xe5 | ♙e6 |
| 18 | ♞c6 | |

It is important to deprive Black of the advantage of the bishop pair.

- | | | |
|----|-------|-----|
| 18 | ... | ♞d6 |
| 19 | ♞xe7+ | ♙e7 |

White has not achieved any kind of advantage.

- | | | |
|----|---------|--|
| 20 | b3! (D) | |
|----|---------|--|



B

A fine move, creating the threat of an unpleasant pin with 21 ♙a3.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 20 | ... | ♞d7 |
|----|-----|-----|

One of the most difficult moves in the game. Retreating is always unpleasant, but the natural reply 20...♞e4 is weaker since Black's centre comes under fire after 21

♠b2 ♖a8 (21...c5 22 c4) 22 ♖ad1 – c3-c4 is threatened, and 22...c6 loses to 23 ♖xe4.

21 ♠b2?!

White cannot carry out c3-c4 because of the reply ...d5-d4, so on b2 the bishop will be obstructed. 21 a4 is a logical option, leading to a roughly equal position after 21...♖b8 22 axb5 axb5. Perhaps Black should reconnect his rooks with 21...♖e8!? (22 ♠a3 c5).

21 ...

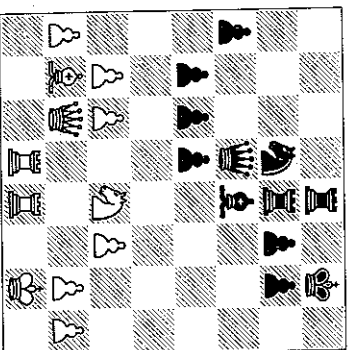
♖a8

22 ♖ad1

c5

23 ♖3?! (D)

White made this move after considerable thought. However, if he had paid sufficient attention to Black's potential activity he would probably have settled for the reliable 23 ♖d2.



B

At this – perhaps decisive – moment in the game I sat thinking for

over half an hour. My thoughts went roughly like this:

What does my opponent want to do? It would appear that he has

an interesting plan: he wants to move the queen to g3, force an exchange of queens and, in doing so, reach a good endgame in view of the weakness of the d5- and c5-pawns.

How can I prevent this plan? I am not tempted by the straightforward move 23...f5 because of the simple 24 ♖d2 (but not 24 ♖xf5? ♠xf5), and it turns out that Black has merely weakened his position.

How can I improve my position? The black pieces are reasonably placed, although the knight is rather passive.

What are the disadvantages of White's set-up? By thinking about similar structures I managed to discover the weak spot in my opponent's position – the d3-square! In fact, an invasion there by my knight (after ...c5-c4 combined with activity on the e-file and the a7-g1 diagonal) could determine the result of the game. That means 23...♗e5 followed by ...c5-c4 and ...♗d3 is tempting.

All the same, it was not easy for me to evaluate the consequences of this plan until I found a strong possibility for my 26th move. General considerations could turn out to

be mistaken, so I had to reinforce them with specific calculations.

23 ... ♗e5!

24 ♖f2

After 24 c4!? Black has the reply 24...d4 (not 24...bxc4 because of 25 ♠xe5!), and after 25 cxb5 (25 b4 ♖c7!) not 25...axb5 in view of 26 b4! ♖c7 (or 26...♖b8) 27 ♖xc5, but the fine 25...♖c7! 26 ♗f1 (26 ♗c4? ♠xc4 27 bxc4 ♖xf3+) 26...♠d5 with a dangerous initiative.

24 ... c4!

25 ♖g3?!

Deciding on an exchange sacrifice in a situation like this is difficult, but 25 ♗c2! ♗d3 26 ♠a3 ♖xf2 (26...♖c7 27 ♖d2 ♖xe1 28 ♠xe1 ♖d7 29 ♗d4 with compensation) 27 ♠xd6 ♖xd1 28 ♠xd1 ♖d7 29 ♠b4 is perhaps White's best hope of making a draw thanks to the closed nature of the position. 29...♠a8 30 ♠a5 cxb3 31 axb3 d4? is not dangerous due to 32 ♠xd4.

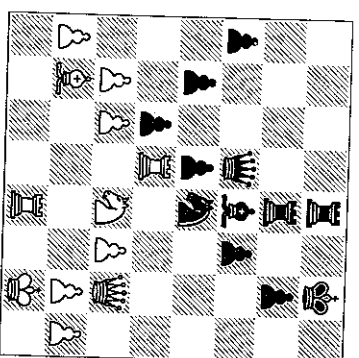
25 ... f6

26 ♠d4?! (D)

Black had to assess this position when he elected to transfer the knight to d3. However, 26 ♗c2 ♖b6+ 27 ♗d4 ♗d3 28 ♠e2 is better, although after 28...a5!? Black's advantage is not in question.

26 ... ♖c5!

After this key move the strategic battle is won, despite White's



B

stubborn resistance (26...♖b6 was less precise because of 27 ♠a3). Now Black has restored the threat of ...♗d3 and simultaneously prevented the white pieces from developing any activity. One possible continuation is 27 ♗c2 cxb3! 28 axb3 ♠f5 29 ♠a3 (or 29 ♠e2 ♠xc2 30 ♠xc2 ♗d3) 29...♖xc3 30 ♠xe7 ♠xc2 31 ♠xf6 ♖xf3+! 32 gxh3 ♖xe1+ 33 ♖xe1 ♠xe1+ 34 ♖f2 ♠e6 35 ♠g5 ♠xb3 winning.

27 bxc4 dxc4

28 ♗c2 a5!

Black intends to undermine White's grip on the centre. Unnecessary complications would follow 28...♠f5 29 ♠a3 ♖xf3+ 30 ♖xf3 (30 ♖f2 ♖xe1 31 ♠xc5 ♠e2+ 32 ♖f1 ♠xc2 with an advantage to Black) 30...♠xe1+ 31 ♖xe1 ♖xa3 32 ♖xf5 ♠xe1+ 33 ♖f2. The quiet continuation 28...♠d7 29 ♠a3 ♖a7 is not bad, but piercing a hole in the

enemy defence here is still not easy.

29 ♖a3 b4!
30 cxb4 ♖a7

The rook remains pinned and deprived of support. Now 31... ♗c6 is threatened.

31 b5 ♖d7
31... ♠f5 32 ♠xe7 ♠xc2 33 ♠xf6! is less clear.
32 ♖e4

Wang Zili was in severe time trouble, but White's position cannot be defended anyway. Black would win after either 32 ♖d1 ♗d3 or 32 ♖xc5 ♖xd4.

32 ... ♠f5
33 ♖f2 ♠xe4
34 ♖xd7 ♖xd7
35 fxe4 ♖d1+
36 ♗e1 ♗d3

Finally the knight lands on d3 – a total of 13 moves after it began its journey!

White resigned

In this game Black managed to concentrate at the critical moments and on the 14th, 20th and 23rd moves found effective solutions. Indeed, from the 23rd move the game passed into Black's control, as he was able to find and carry out the powerful plan of transferring the knight to d3. This positional idea also turned out to be the 'thread' that led Black to victory.

Yusupov – Gavrikov
Zurich 1994

Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 ♗f6
2 c4 g6
3 ♗c3 d5
4 ♠f4 ♠g7
5 ♖c1 0-0
6 ♗f3 c6

This quiet system of development does not fully correspond to the spirit of the Grünfeld Defence. In contrast to the standard variations Black does not immediately make a challenge in the centre, instead limiting himself to a solid, albeit rather passive position.

7 e3 ♠e6
8 ♗g5 ♠f5
9 ♠e2 ♖b6

The modest 9... h6 10 ♗f3 ♠e6 is an alternative. White can count on a small advantage after both 11 cxd5 ♗xd5 12 ♠e5 f6 13 ♠g3, and 11 b3 ♗bd7 12 h3.

10 ♖d2!?

A new idea, the point of which can be seen in the line 10... ♗bd7 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♗a4! ♖d8 13 ♖b4 with an advantage.

10 ... h6
11 ♗f3 ♗e4

Again, after 11... ♗bd7 White can exchange on d5 with advantage: 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 ♗a4 ♖d8 14 ♖b4 or 12... ♗xd5 13 ♗xd5 cxd5

14 ♠c7 ♖e6 15 ♖b4 ♗b6 16 0-0 ♖f8 17 ♖c5. In fact, in these positions it is normal for White to refrain from exchanging c-pawns while the knight remains on b8, in order to prevent Black from playing a subsequent ... ♗c6.

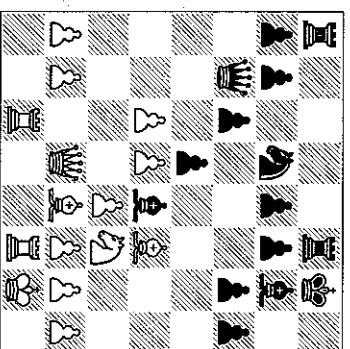
12 ♗xe4 ♠xe4

Capturing with the pawn is less natural. Both 13 c5 ♖d8 14 ♗e5, and the immediate 13 ♗e5 are good for White.

13 0-0

13 c5 ♖d8 14 ♖b4 is weaker in view of 14... b6 (as my opponent pointed out, the simple 14... ♖c8 is also good enough for equality) 15 cxb6 axb6 16 ♠xb8 c5!. However, 13 ♗e5!? is interesting, with promising complications.

13 ... ♗d7 (D)



W

An important moment in the game. White is at a cross-roads: he

can either close the queenside or exchange on d5. However, for the time being neither continuation promises him a clear advantage. After 14 c5 ♖d8 15 ♖b4 there is the possibility 15... ♠xf3 (the simple 15... ♖c8 is also good enough) 16 ♠xf3 e5 17 dxe5 ♗xe5 18 ♠xe5 ♠xe5 19 ♖xb7 ♖f6. In answer to 14 cxd5 Black has 14... ♠xd5 15 e4 ♠xe4 16 ♠xb6 ♠xb6 17 ♖xb6 ♠xf3 18 ♠xf3 ♗f6 19 ♖fd1 ♖ad8 when White has more weaknesses than his opponent.

What does Black want to do? The most natural plan is to exchange on f3 and c4 and then break in the centre with ... e7-e5, considerably simplifying the game. With a simple developing move White can parry this threat and simultaneously prepare 15 cxd5.

14 ♖fd1

Prophy/lactic moves like this are always unpleasant for your opponent, all the more so when – as is the case here – Black cannot reply in kind (the careless 14... ♖ad8?? loses to 15 c5).

14 ... dxc4

Now after 14... a5 15 cxd5 ♠xd5 16 e4 ♠xe4 17 ♠xb6 ♠xb6 18 ♖xb6 ♠xf3 19 ♠xf3 White's d-pawn is defended so if Black continues 19... ♗f6 he is ready to start an attack with 20 h4. This is also a possibility after 19... ♖xb2, one

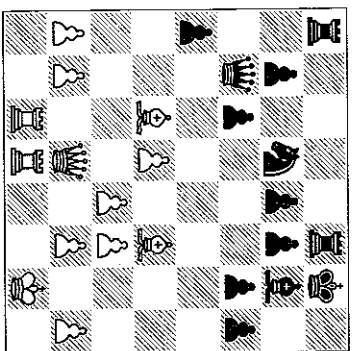
variation being 20 h4 ♖xa2 21 h5 ♖e6 22 d5 ♜f6 23 hxg6 fxg6 24 dxc6 ♗e5 25 cxb7 ♜ab8 26 ♞c7 ♗x13+ 27 gxf3 with an advantage to White. 14... ♠xf3 15 ♠xf3 dxc4 16 ♞xc4 e5 is no better in view of 17 ♠g3 exd4 18 exd4 with the threat of 19 ♞b4, and then if 18... a5 White pushes with 19 d5. Black's choice in the game gives up the centre but maintains a solid position.

15 ♠xc4 ♠xf3
16 gxf3 a5 (D)

The point of White's idea can be seen in the variation 16... e5 17 dxe5 18 ♠xe5 ♠xe5 19 ♞c2! with an advantage. For example, 19... ♗g7 20 ♞d7 ♞xb2 (20... ♞ad8 21 ♞cd1 ♞xd7 22 ♞xd7 ♠xb2 23 ♠b3) 21 ♞xb2 ♠xb2 22 ♞c2! (and not 22 ♞b1? in view of 22... b5!) 22... ♠a1 (22... b5 23 ♠b3) 23 ♞xb7 a5 24 ♞d2 ♞ab8 25 ♞a7 ♞a8 26 ♞dd7 ♞xa7 27 ♞xa7 ♠c3, and now the best move of all is 28 h4! in order after 28... g5 to have the reply 29 h5.

Perhaps 16... ♞ad8 is more precise, intending 17 e4 g5 18 ♠e3 ♗e5 19 ♠e2 ♗g6, although 20 d5 still keeps White on top. 17 ♞c2 ♗h7 18 ♗h1 e5 19 dxe5 ♗xe5 20 ♠xe5 ♠xe5 21 f4 is also not bad, leading to a minimal advantage for White.

17 ♞c2



W

White avoided the logical 17 e4 ♗h7 18 ♠e3 ♞b4 19 ♞e2 e5, but then both 20 dxe5 ♗xe5 21 ♠b3 ♞e7 22 f4 ♗d7 23 e5 and 20 d5 are strong. Now the struggle takes on a closed, manoeuvring character, and it is more difficult for White to discover weak points in his opponent's defence.

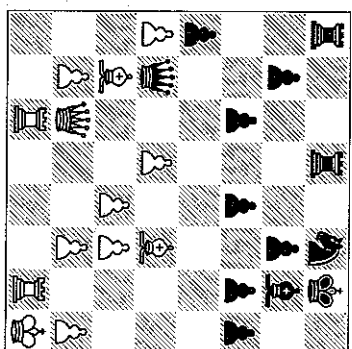
17 ... e6
18 ♗h1 ♞fd8
19 ♞g1

With the primitive threat of 20 ♠xe6.

19 ... ♗f8
20 ♠b3!?
White makes a prophylactic move, which prevents 20... a4 followed by ... ♞a5.

20 ... ♞b5
21 a4 ♞b4 (D)

The break ... c6-c5 is now the key to the position. If Black manages to carry it out, not a trace of



W

my advantage will be left, so White must fight against this. What will look like an attack on the kingside is essentially a defence for the queenside.

22 ♞g4! ♞ac8

22... c5 23 ♠c7 h5!? 24 ♞e4 (or 24 ♠xd8 ♞xd8) 24... cxd4 25 ♠xd8 ♞xd8 seems to favour White but still may give Black chances to hold on (26 ♞d1 f5). The modest 22... ♞d7!? 23 ♠g3 ♞e7 leaves White slightly better.

23 ♠g3 ♞b6

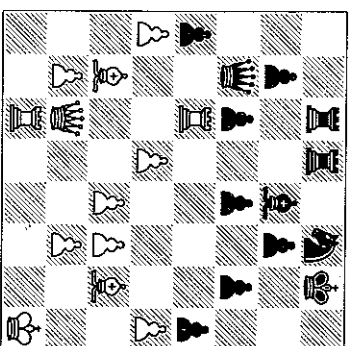
In reply to 23... h5 I would not have continued 24 ♞g5 in view of 24... c5 25 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 26 dxc5 ♞d2. 24 ♞e4 is stronger, when both 24... c5 25 d5 (25 dxc5 ♞d2 26 ♞c4 ♠xb2 is unclear) 25... c4 26 ♞xc4 ♞xc4 27 ♞xc4 ♞xc4 28 ♠xc4, and 24... ♞b6 25 ♠e5 retain a small advantage.

24 h4 h5

25 ♞g5 ♠f6
White is still well-prepared for the breakthrough 25... c5: 26 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 27 dxc5 ♞b4 28 ♞c4 and then 28... ♠xb2 29 ♞xb4 axb4 30 ♞c4 or 28... ♞xc4 29 ♞xc4 ♠xb2 30 c6 bxc6 31 ♞xc6.

26 ♞c5 ♠e7? (D)

Falling into a trap. By getting carried away with the fight to free himself with ... c6-c5, Black has momentarily weakened his kingside. 26... ♞d7 would have been more circumspect.



W

27 ♞h5!
An unexpected tactical blow. In this game, which would also be quite appropriate to the theme of manoeuvring, I managed to win by actively using my rook.

27 ... ♠h5?

The startling change in the situation has an effect on my opponent,

prompting him to choose an unfortunate continuation. White would have had to act precisely in reply to 27...c5: 28 ♖e5! (28 dxc5 ♖c6 and ♡d7 are unconvincing) 28...f6 29 ♖g1 cxd4 (29...fxe5 30 ♖xg6+ ♡f7 31 ♖f5+ ♡e8 32 ♖xe6 ♡xe6 33 ♖xe6 offers no hope for Black) 30 ♖xd4! ♖xd4 (30...♖xc2 31 ♖xb6) 31 ♖xc8 ♖xb3 32 ♖e8 ♖d1 33 ♖h6! with a clear plus.

28 ♖g1

Threatening 29 ♖c7+.

28 ... ♡g6

28...♡h8 loses to 29 ♖e5+ f6 30 ♖xe6 ♡xe6 31 ♖g6.

29 ♖xe6!

All the white pieces will be involved in the attack.

29 ... ♡h7

Otherwise: 29...fxe6 30 ♖xg6+ ♡f8 31 ♖c7 is decisive; 29...♡g7 30 ♖e5+ wins; and after 29...♡f8 there is 30 ♖f5.

30 ♖f5

30...fxe6 31 ♖f7+ ♡h6 32 ♖f4+.

31 ♖e5 ♡h6

32 ♖f4+ ♡h7

32...♡x14 33 ♖xf4+ ♖g5 34 hxg5+ ♡h7 35 ♖xf7+ ♡h8 36 ♖xb5+, or 32...♡g7 33 ♖xf7+ ♡h8 34 ♖e5+ ♡xe5 35 ♖xb5 mate.

33 ♖xb5+ ♡g7

34 ♖h6+

Black resigned

Yusupov – Lautier

Amsterdam 1994

Queen's Gambit Declined

1	d4	d5
2	c4	e6
3	♡c3	♖b4

Lautier plays originally in the opening, using a hybrid of the Queen's Gambit Declined and the Nimzo-Indian. White should play simply rather than take up the challenge to refute Black's set-up.

4 e3

♡e7

Here the knight is more passively situated than on f6, and it gives White the advantage of the bishop pair without any particular compensation. Another original continuation is 4...c5, when 5 exd5 exd5 6 dxc5 (in the game Psakhtis-Korzubov, USSR Ch First League 1983, Black equalised after 6 ♖b5+ ♡c6 7 ♡e2 ♡e7 8 0-0-0 9 dxc5 ♖xc5 10 b3 ♖g4! 11 h3 ♖h5 12 ♖b2 ♖c8) 6...♡f6 7 ♖b5+ ♖d7 8 ♖xd7+ ♡bxd7 9 ♡e2 with advantage for White. Bandzha-Alexandrov, Frunze 1989.

5 ♖d2!? 0-0

5...c5 6 a3 ♖xc3 7 ♖xc3 cxd4 8 ♖xd4 f6 deserves attention, as in Psakhtis-Kimpreichik, USSR 1984.

6 a3

♖xc3

7 ♖xc3

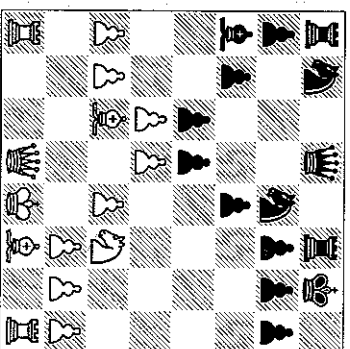
b6

8 ♡f3

♖a6

9 b3

c5 (D)



W

The first cross-roads for White. He has to decide which pawn structure he prefers, and his opponent's potential counterplay will influence his decision, as the following variations emphasise:

1) 10 ♖d3 cxd4 11 exd4 ♡d7 12 0-0 ♖c8 13 ♖e2 ♡g6! 14 g3 ♖c7 15 ♡d2 e5.

2) 10 ♖c1 dxc4 11 bxc4 cxd4 12 exd4 ♡d7 13 ♖d3 ♖c8 14 ♖b2 ♡g6! 15 ♖d2 ♖b7 16 ♖e3 ♖f6.

Usually with the bishop pair you do not have to fear hanging pawns, but in this case the black knight has good prospects on g6. Bearing in mind this peculiarity of the position, White preferred a reliable route which guarantees him a small but stable advantage.

10 dxc5! dxc4

This alternative pawn capture is Black's best. 10...bxc5 gives White a better pawn structure by means

of 11 ♖c1!? (the simple 11 ♖d3 is also good). If 11...♡b6 White has 12 cxd5 ♖xf1 13 dxc6. The same reply should also follow 11...♡bd7, since after 12 cxd5 ♖xf1 13 dxe6 White has a big advantage. Against 11...♖b6, 12 ♖d3 is sufficient.

It remains for us to look at the most consistent reply for Black, 11...dxc4. After 12 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 13 ♖a5 White's idea becomes clear – he has brought the game to an ending where Black is burdened by his weak pawns. Here are three possible variations:

1) 13...♖d5 14 bxc4 (14 ♖xc4 is also reasonable) 14...♖d6 15 ♡e5 ♖b7 16 ♖c7 ♖a6 17 ♖b1, with an obvious advantage for White.

2) 13...♖c8 14 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 15 ♖xc4 ♡d7 16 ♡e2 ♡b6 17 ♖c2 c4 18 ♖xb6 axb6 19 bxc4 ♖xa3 20 ♖b1 ♖a6 21 ♡e5 with an advantage.

3) 13...♖d6 14 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 15 ♖xc4 ♡d7 16 ♡e2 ♖a6 17 ♖d1 ♖xa5!?! (17...♡d5 18 b4) 18 ♖xd7 ♡d5 19 ♖b7 ♖xa3 20 ♡e5.

11 ♖xc4

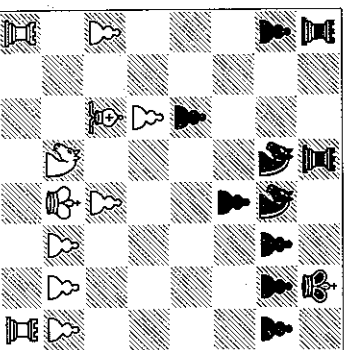
I made this natural move without any hesitation. After 11 cxb6 my opponent would not have replied 11...cxb3 in view of 12 ♖b4, but 11...♡d5! is strong. However, 11 bxc4 is a worthy alternative. After 11...♖xd1+(11...bxc5 is weaker because of 12 ♖d3) 12 ♖xd1 bxc5

13 ♖e2 ♖bxc6! 14 ♖d2 ♖ab8 15 ♖c1 (15 0-0 has the same value) 15... ♖d8! (15...f5 16 f4! followed by g2-g4) 16 ♖a4 ♖b7 White has only a small advantage.

- 11 ... ♖xc4
12 bxc4 bxc5
13 ♖xxd8 ♖xd8
14 ♖e2

Of course, in the endgame the king should remain in the centre.

- 14 ... ♖d7
15 ♖d2 (D)



B

Now it is Black's turn to make a crucial decision and find himself a viable plan. Black has few opportunities to influence the long-term character of the game. His only possibility is to exert some sort of pressure on his opponent by using his knights to their full potential. My opponent did not sense the significance of this particular moment

in the game, and without much thought made a somewhat superficial move.

- 15 ... ♖c6?

The c6-square does seem like a good post, but on closer inspection the knight attacks nothing, prevents nothing and is severely limited by the enemy bishop. When I was discussing and analysing this game with Dvoretsky, I came to the conclusion that it was precisely this planless move which clearly indicated that Black did not understand the position, and it conceals one of the fundamental reasons for Black's defeat in this game.

Black should have positioned the knight more actively, trying to exert pressure on the c4-pawn. Therefore 15... ♖c8!? was correct, intending to place one knight on d6 and the other on b6. As the variations below demonstrate, White has only a small advantage at best:

- a) 16 a4 ♖d6 17 a5 f6 18 g4 ♖ab8 19 h4 e5 (with the idea of ...e5-e4, but 19... ♖f7 20 f4 h5!?) is also reasonable) 20 f3 ♖f7 and, by bringing the knight via f8 to e6, Black should equalise.
b) 16 g4 ♖d6 17 ♖ac1 f6 (if 17... ♖b6 18 ♖e5 f6, then 19 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 20 ♖c4 ±) 18 h4 ♖b6 19 ♖a1 e5 20 g5 ♖f7 21 ♖hg1 h5 22 gxh6 gxh6 23 h5 ♖g8 24 f4 exf4 25 exf4 ♖ae8+ 26 ♖d3 (26 ♖f3

♖bxc4! 27 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 28 ♖xxg8 ♖d2+) 26... ♖d8 27 ♖xxg8 ♖xxg8 28 ♖c4 ♖xc4 29 ♖xc4 ♖e8+ 30 ♖f5 ♖c8 31 ♖d1 ♖e7+ 32 ♖g4 ♖g8+ 33 ♖f3 ♖e6 with equality.

c) 16 ♖hb1 ♖d6 17 ♖a5 ♖dc8 18 ♖b3 ♖f8 19 f4 (19 ♖d3 ♖e7 20 ♖d1 promises less in view of 20... ♖b6 21 ♖c1 ♖a4=) 19... ♖e7 20 e4 f6! 21 ♖ab1 ♖ab8 with a minimal advantage to White.

16 ♖hb1

White would have been guaranteed a small advantage after 16 g4 ♖b6 17 ♖ab1 f6 18 h4 (18 ♖b5 ♖a4) 18... ♖f7 19 h5 ♖d7 20 ♖hc1 ♖ad8 21 ♖c2.

16 ... ♖ab8

16... ♖b6 17 a4.

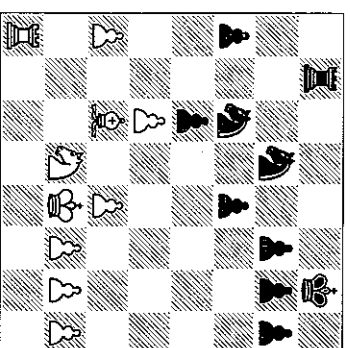
17 ♖b5!

In principle it is to White's advantage to exchange off one pair of rooks because he has the initiative and it will be easier for him to invade if Black is unable to generate any counterplay. However, every little thing has significance, and before an exchange of rooks it is logical to provoke Black into making a weakness on b6.

17 ... ♖a6

18 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 (D)

What should White do now? The straightforward 19 ♖b1 promises nothing, since exchanging off all the rooks will only ease Black's defence. White needs something



W

extra to attack. At the moment the superiority of the bishop over the knight is not evident, but a pawn storm on the kingside may bring White's long-range piece to life, as well as putting Black on the defensive.

- 19 g4! f6
20 h4 ♖f7
21 h5 ♖b6
22 ♖d1 ♖a4

Disturbed by developments on the kingside, Black seeks counterplay on the queenside, but he has not timed this well. Contesting the d-file with 22... ♖d8!? is better, but White is still well ahead.

23 ♖a1 ♖a5??

Black's previous move merely prepared this mistake. Of course, 23... ♖b2 24 ♖b1 (or 24 ♖g1!?) ± straight away) 24... ♖a4 is not too appealing in view of 25 ♖g1 ± followed by f2-f4 and g4-g5. White

also has a large advantage after 23...♖d8 24 f4 e5 25 fxe5 ♘xc5 (25...fxe5? allows the rook to invade down the b-file) 26 ♖xe5 fxe5 27 ♖f1+ ♖e7 28 ♘e4. However, the move in the game leads Black to rapid defeat.

24 ♘e4 ♘b6

24...♘xc4 25 ♖d7+ ♖f8 26 h6 is hopeless, as is 24...♖e7 25 h6, destroying Black's kingside pawn mass.

25 g5

White has successfully realised his strategic aim, creating a serious kingside weakness he can attack.

25 ...

f5

25...♘xc4 also loses because of 26 gxf6 gxf6 27 ♘xf6 h6 28 ♘g4.

26 ♘xc5

♘axc4

27 ♘d7

♖c8

The point of White's manoeuvre is that the pin resulting from 27...♖b7 28 ♘xb6 ♘xb6 29 ♖b1 is decisive: 29...♖b8 30 ♖e5.

28 ♘xb6

♘xb6

29 ♖d6

The final stroke. There is no way of keeping the rook away from the seventh rank, as after 29...♖b8 there is 30 ♖d4+—.

29 ...

♖c2+

30 ♖f3

♖a2

31 ♖xg7

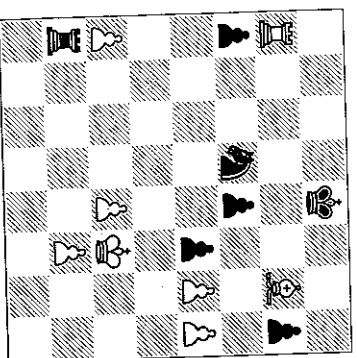
♘c4

32 ♖d7+

♖e8

33 ♖a7

♘d6!? (D)



W

Black defends inventively, but he does not have enough resources for a counterattack.

34 g6

hxg6

35 h6

♘e4

36 ♖g2

♖xf2+

Or 36...♘g5 37 ♖f6+—.

37 ♖g1

♖d2

38 h7

♖d1+

39 ♖g2

♖d2+

40 ♖f1

Black resigned

A casual glance will show that Black lost because of the terrible mistake he made on his 23rd move. I think the reader will agree with the author, that the real reason for his defeat in this game lay in the fact that my young opponent could not find the 'clues' to this game, and did not manage to discover the correct defensive plan (involving a more active positioning of the knights).

An analogous problem faced Black in the next example. By finding the correct position for the knight Black not only successfully solved the opening problems which he faced but, by making use of his opponent's mistakes, seized the initiative.

b) 16...♖xd3 17 ♖xd3 ♘bc6 18 ♖e3 ♖f8! =.

Now Black has to determine the position of his second knight.

16 ...

♘d7!

A precise move! 16...♘bc6? would have been significantly inferior, as in this case the c5-pawn would have been left without any defence. We can see the point of Black's idea in the variation 17 ♖d1 ♖c7 = 18 ♖d6? ♘f5 19 ♖c6? ♖b7 20 ♖b1 ♘b6 and Black is better.

17 ♖b1?

After this mistake Black seizes the initiative.

17 ...

♖a5!

17...♖b8 would only have led to an equal game.

18 ♖d1?!

Mistakes rarely come on their own. 18 ♖a1! with the idea of ♖d2 ♖ is stronger.

18 ...

♖ad8!

18...♖xa4?! 19 ♖xb6! (19 ♖g5 ♖c6) 19...gxb6 20 ♖a1 ♖c6 21 ♖xc6 ♘xc6 22 ♖xd7 a5 =.

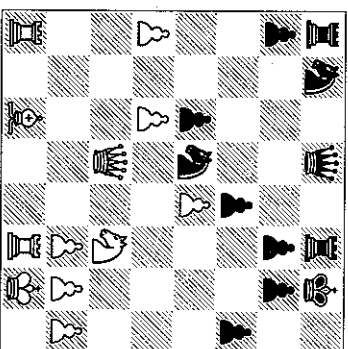
18...♘b6 would have preserved only a minimal advantage.

19 ♖c2 (D)

White has not seen his opponent's idea. By making use of the weakness of his back rank, Black inflicts a tactical blow and wins a pawn.

19 ...

♘xe5!:



B

A.Sokolov - Yusupov
Riga Ct (3) 1986

The first problem - where to retreat the attacked knight - is solved relatively easily: after 15...♘b4? 16 ♖e4 the black knight is out of the game, and White can freely develop an attack on the kingside.

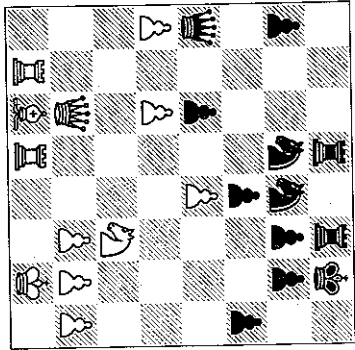
15 ...

♘e7!

16 ♖e4

After 16 ♖d1 Black has two candidate moves:

a) 16...♘bc6?! 17 ♖e3 (17 ♖d6 ♘f5!) 17...♖a5 18 ♖d6 ♖f8 19 ♖xc5 ♖xd1+ 20 ♖xd1 ♖xa4.



B

- 20 ♖xe5
 20 ♖xd8 ♖xf3+.
 20 ... ♗c3!
 21 ♗e2
 21 ♗xd8 ♗xc2 22 ♗xf8+ ♖xf8
 23 ♗b8+ loses after 23... ♖c8.
 21 ... ♗xe5

Although Black still faced some difficult technical work, the extra

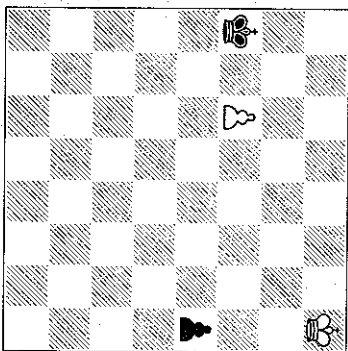
pawn eventually led him to victory:

- 22 ♔e3 ♖f5
 23 ♗f3 ♗xd1+
 24 ♗xd1 ♖d4
 25 ♔xd4? cxd4--+
 26 ♗d3 ♗d8
 27 g3 ♗c5
 28 f4?! ♗b4!
 29 ♗a1 a5
 30 h4 h5
 31 ♗b1 ♗xa4
 32 ♗b5 g6
 33 ♖f2 ♗a2+
 34 ♖f3 a4
 35 ♗b6 ♖g7
 36 ♗b1 ♖g8
 37 ♗b6 ♗a1
 38 ♖e2 a3
 39 ♗a6 ♗b2+
 40 ♗d2 d3+
 White resigned

6 Planning in chess

Alexei Kosikov

When we create simple threats our opponent is able to parry them without any particular difficulty. The secret of success frequently lies in knowing how to create several threats at once. I will illustrate this idea with a very well known study by Réti.



W

After 1 ♖g7 h4 2 ♖f6 ♖b6 (or 2...h3 3 ♖e7) 3 ♖e5! White is saved only because he has two threats at once: stopping the enemy pawn with 4 ♖f4, and supporting his own with 4 ♖d6. Black could parry either of these threats easily, but not both at once.

The idea of creating two simultaneous threats will serve as a starting point for us in understanding the process of forming a plan.

The plans we have in mind pursue the aim of creating threats. Not simple, tactical ones, like the one we have just examined, but long-term strategic threats.

In assimilating the technique required to realise an advantage, you will certainly have got to know the 'principle of two weaknesses'. I think this is a very useful principle for creating a strategic plan in the middlegame. A long-term strategic threat serves as a weakness in the wider sense of the word. So, for example, not only is your opponent's pawn vulnerable, but there is also the threat of queening your own, of invading along an open file, or of weaving a mating net, etc.

Botvinnik – Zagoriansky

Sverdlovsk 1943

Réti Opening

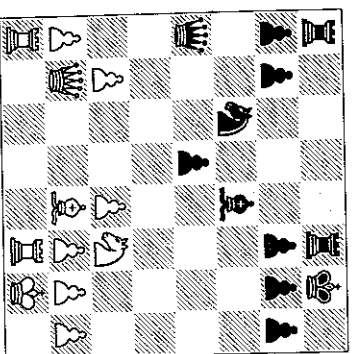
- 1 ♖f3 d5
 2 c4 e6

- 3 b3 ♖f6
 4 ♖b2 ♖e7
 5 e3 0-0
 6 ♗c3 c5
 7 cxd5 ♗xd5

If Black wants a pawn on d5 he should play 7...exd5.

- 8 ♗xd5 exd5
 Now 8...♗xd5 is better.

- 9 d4 cxd4
 10 ♗xd4 ♖f6
 11 ♗d2 ♗c6
 12 ♖e2 ♖e6
 Black is playing too passively. I would have preferred developing the bishop on g4.
 13 0-0 ♖xb2
 14 ♗xb2 ♗a5 (D)



W

Earlier it would have been too early to talk about creating a plan, but now the position is ripe for it. Of course, it is impossible to foresee the outcome of everything that

is going to happen, nor is it even necessary. You only have to imagine the character of the battle that lies ahead, and decide what has to be done now.

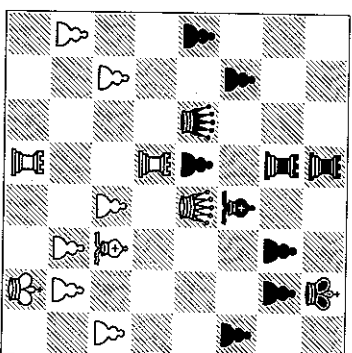
White is obviously better. He has something to attack – the weak d5-pawn – whilst Black has been deprived of counterplay and has a passive bishop.

First Botvinnik concentrates his forces on the enemy's principal weakness.

- 15 ♖fd1 ♖fd8
 16 ♗d2 ♗d7
 17 ♗ad1 ♗ad8
 18 h3 h6
 19 ♗e5!

Black's knight was maintaining guard over the potentially useful d4-square and limiting the scope of the white queen, so Botvinnik offers to exchange it off. At the same time he is freeing f3 for his bishop, allowing another piece to bring pressure to bear on the d5-pawn.

- 19 ... ♗xe5
 19...♗d6 20 ♗c4!
 20 ♗xe5 ♗c5
 21 ♖f3 b6
 22 e4 was threatened.
 22 ♗b2 ♖e8
 23 ♗c5 ♗ed8
 By repeating moves White has gained time to think.
 24 ♗d4 a5 (D)



W

The first part of the plan, attacking the enemy's weakness, is concluded. All the white pieces are perfectly placed, while his opponent's pieces are passive and tied down. White has not managed to win the d5-pawn, which is not surprising – attacking a single weakness rarely leads to victory. A new target for attack is needed, and Botvinnik finds it on the kingside.

25 g4!

'At the cost of weakening the position of his own king (which is possible only thanks to the constrained situation of the enemy pieces) White opens up the game on the kingside. It will soon become clear that Black cannot simultaneously defend his kingside fortress and the ill-fated d5-pawn' – Botvinnik.

- 25 ... ♗c6
 26 g5 hxg5

27 ♗xg5 f6
 In principle it is better in positions like this to keep the pawns on their original squares, but because of an horrific attack along the h-file (♗h4 and ♗h5) Black has no choice.

- 28 ♗g6 ♖f7
 29 ♗g3 f5

'An ill-considered move which aids the development of White's initiative, although the inevitable transfer of the rook from d1 to g1 would have faced Black with some insoluble problems all the same' – Botvinnik.

All the dark squares in Black's camp are hopelessly weak.

- 30 ♗g5 ♗e6
 31 ♖h1 ♗e5
 32 ♖g1 ♖f8
 33 ♗h6 ♖b8

Both 34 ♗h4 and 34 ♗xb6 were threatened. If 33...♗d6, then 34 ♗xg7+, and after 33...g6, the advance h3-h4-h5 is decisive.

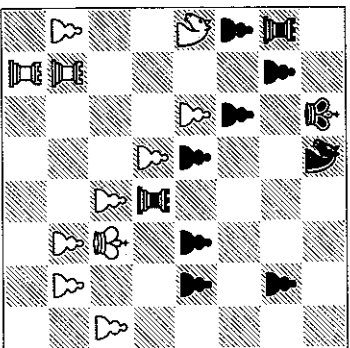
- 34 ♗h4 ♖f8
 35 ♗h8+ ♖g8 (D)
 36 ♗f4

As the attack has developed, new weaknesses have appeared in the black defences. White now switches his attention to one of these weaknesses – the f5-pawn.

- 36 ... ♗b67
 37 ♖g5 ♖f7
 38 ♗h5 ♗a1+

it and subsequently reduce Black to passivity.

- 30 ... ♖e7
 31 ♚b2 ♖d7
 32 ♚e1 ♖c8
 33 ♖e2 ♗e7
 34 ♖f3 ♗e4 (D)



W

White has strengthened his position to the utmost. Now, according to the principle of two weaknesses, he should open a 'second front' on the kingside.

- 35 g4! g6
 36 ♗g1 ♟f7
 37 h4!

Opening a file accentuates the unfortunate position of the rook on a7, which is unable to take part in the struggle.

- 37 ... gxf4
 38 gxf5 gxf5
 Or 38...g5 39 ♖c4!
 39 ♗g7

Strategically the game is decided. White has created a second weakness in the enemy camp – the g-file – which can be invaded with decisive results.

- 39 ... ♟d8
 40 ♗g8 f4
 41 ♗h8

I do not think that Rubinstein even seriously examined winning the b-pawn by means of 41 ♟xb7 ♗xb7 42 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 43 ♗xb7 – why exchange off the miserable a7-rook?

- 41 ... fxe3
 42 fxe3 ♖d7
 43 ♗g2 ♗e8
 44 ♗xh4 ♗e7
 45 ♗h8 ♖c7
 46 ♗gg8 ♗d7
 47 ♟b3!

The knight has done its job on a5 and now heads to a more active position on e5.

- 47 ... a5
 48 ♟c1 ♗a8
 49 ♟d3 b5

In the face of passive defence White could place his rook on e8 and his knight on e5, then move his king to f6.

- 50 cxb6+ ♖xb6
 51 ♟c5 ♗d6
 52 a4!

There is no hurry! Black has no moves at all on the queenside, and his king is even in a mating net.

- 52 ... ♗c8
 53 ♖g4!

Black resigned

The king is threatening to march to e5, and if 53...♖c7, then 54 ♗g7+ ♖b6 (54...♖b8 55 ♗hh7) 55 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 56 ♗b7 mate.

A beautiful positional game!

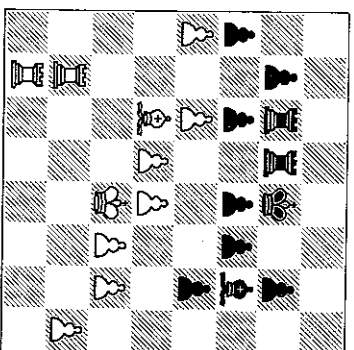
Once again, remember the sequence in which our strategy develops in situations like this:

- 1) Creating an initial weakness. This is probably the most difficult – you have to 'catch' your opponent at some point.
- 2) Attacking the weakness (not necessarily with the aim of destroying it, but in order to tie the enemy pieces to its defence).
- 3) Creating a second weakness in another part of the board.
- 4) Breaching your opponent's defence.

The games we have examined so far were played quite a long time ago. Modern players have mastered the lessons of the past, and today make successful use of the same strategy.

White, to move, has an obvious advantage. How can he profit from it?

The first part of our standard plan has already been carried out. In his commentary to the game Shirov wrote:



W

Shirov – Kinsman
 Paris 1992

'One weakness, the b7-pawn, has been securely fixed. It is of more than a little importance that the black rooks are prevented from obtaining activity. But as a child I learned that for victory I will need at least one more weakness. And it turns out to be the g7-pawn.'

30 h4 gxf4

After 30...♗f7 31 hxg5 fxg5 White at some point plays f3-f4 (not immediately 32 f4? gxf4+ 33 gxf4 e5!).

31 gxf4 ♗f7
 32 e5!

'The point of my idea. When White begins to attack g7, the b7-pawn will no longer be in need of defence – which means the e6-pawn should be another weakness' – Shirov.

32 ... f5?

This significantly eases White's task. 32...fxe5 33 dxe5 ♖f8 would have been stronger, but here as well after 34 ♖g2 Black's position remains difficult. For example, 34...♙e7 35 ♖d1 ♙g8 (35...♙cd7 36 ♖d6) 36 ♖gd2 (note that White suddenly switches over to the new weakness – the d-file) 36...♙e8 37 ♖f4 and then ♙g5 and f3-f4-f5 with an easy win; or 34...♙g8 35 ♖bg1, intending h4-h5-h6, and the weakness of the e6-pawn prevents Black from moving his bishop to f5.

- 33 ♖g2 g6
- 34 ♖bg1 ♙c8
- 35 ♖xg6 f4+
- 36 ♙d3 ♙cd8
- 37 ♖f6 ♖xd4+
- 38 ♙c3 ♙d1
- 39 ♖g7 ♖c1+
- 40 ♙b3 ♖b1+
- 41 ♙c2

Black resigned

In positions where the opponent has no counterplay (similar to the ones we have been examining) we all feel very comfortable. But in practice matters are usually much more complicated, and such a simplistic embodiment of the principle of two weaknesses rarely works. To construct a plan in a more intricate position you must be guided by different principles. One of

these is by no means well-known, so we will now familiarise ourselves with it.

Kalkstein – Vysochin

CIS Youth Ch (Jurmala) 1992

Slav Defence

- 1 c4 ♘f6
- 2 ♘c3 c6
- 3 d4 d5
- 4 ♘f3 dxc4
- 5 e3 b5
- 6 a4 b4
- 7 ♘b1

The knight more often retreats to a2, so that after the c4-pawn has been captured White can continue ♙d2 and ♘c1-b3. White obviously has no intention of gaining an opening advantage, and is preparing for the middlegame.

- 7 ... ♙a6
- 8 ♘bd2 e6?!

Theory recommends 8...c3 with equality, but the game continuation is also quite possible.

- 9 ♘xc4 ♙e7
- 10 ♙d3 0-0
- 11 0-0 ♘bd7
- 12 b3?!

A superficial move. 12 ♘ce5 is more logical, when after 12...♙c8 White's position remains slightly preferable.

- 12 ... c5
- 13 ♙b2 ♙c8

- 14 ♙c1 cxd4
- 15 exd4?

Creating an isolated pawn for himself after 15 ♘xd4 ♘c5 followed by ...♘d5 Black would be better as well. The weakness of the c3-square, which White carelessly helped create with his 12th move, makes itself felt.

- 15 ... ♘d5
- 16 ♖d2 ♘7f6
- 17 ♘fe5 ♙b7
- 18 f4?

A further positional error, which serves only to increase White's difficulties. What are the defects of this pawn advance?

First, it weakens the h1-a8 diagonal. With the pawn on f2 the move f2-f3 is possible, placing a barrier in the path of the enemy bishop. This is no longer a possible option.

For the same reason the considerably weakened e4-square will now have to be defended solely by pieces.

Finally, the f-pawn closes the c1-h6 diagonal, a useful route to Black's king. On b2 the bishop has no prospects whatsoever.

It is true that in positions with an isolated d4-pawn f2-f4 is sometimes played, but only when there is some hope of carrying out the further advance f4-f5. Here Black

immediately blocks further movement by the pawn.

- 18 ... g6!
- 19 ♖f2

White has no active moves left and he begins to mark time. Black, on the other hand, has an effective means of further improving his position.

- 19 ... ♘e8
- 20 ♙cf1 ♘d6
- 21 ♙h1 ♘f5
- 22 ♙xf5?

The decisive strategic error. The b7-bishop now has nothing to oppose it.

- 22 ... exf5
- 23 ♙c1

What would you play as Black here?

First, follow the course of the game, and then come back to this position later.

- 23 ... ♘f6

Of course, a very natural move – it is as if the e4-square is itself invading the knight.

- 24 ♙e3 ♘e4
- 25 ♙fc2 ♙d5
- 26 ♘d3 ♙fe8
- 27 ♙e1

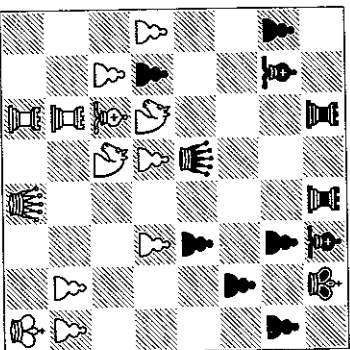
Black seems to have played very well, but in reality he has settled for 'auto' mode, letting his pieces find natural outposts without giving too much thought to the matter. Consequently White,

on the verge of defeat, has gained counterchances. The b4-pawn is under attack, and 27...a5 loses to 28 ♖b6.

27 ... ♘c3

This tactical measure is practically forced.

28 ♖xc3 ♖f8 (D)



W

Black is preparing to transfer the bishop to g7.

A very interesting moment has arrived. Here it is appropriate to recall the method which Dvoretzky constantly uses. In unfavourable situations he recommends seeking a way of fundamentally transforming the character of the position. It is sometimes possible to complicate the game by means of a positional sacrifice (for example, of a pawn or the exchange) or by producing a position with an unusual material balance.

The same is true here: it would

be worth investigating 29 ♘xb4! ♖xe1+ 30 ♖xe1. White has a rook, knight and pawn for the queen – an almost sufficient equivalent. If 30...♖xb4 31 ♖xb4 ♖xd4, then 32 ♖d6!, intending ♖e5 followed by the use of the d-file for an attack (♖d2, ♖cd1). Of course, the reply 32...♖xc4 has to be analysed – this leads to a draw: 33 ♖e8+ ♖g7 34 ♖f8+ ♖f6 35 ♖e7+ ♖e6 (the only attempt to play for a win) 36 ♖h4+ ♖d7 37 ♖d8+ ♖e6 38 ♖e8+.

(Typesetter's note: I don't believe this assessment. After 32 ♖d6 f6! Black prevents ♖e5. The e-file is not dangerous as Black can block it with ...♖e4, and a switch to the d-file is far too slow. Meanwhile b3 and g2 are vulnerable. I see no reason why Black should not win with his material advantage.)

In the game White missed his chance and lost without a fight.

29 ♘de5? ♖xc3

30 ♖xc3 ♖h6

In spite of the extra pawn, White's game is rather uncomfortable. Black's bishops are too powerful and his pieces control the entire board.

31 ♘d3

31 ♖f1 ♖xf4! 32 ♖xf4 ♖xe5! (Typesetter's note: In this line 32 ♘xg6 is a much better chance.)

31 ... ♖d8

32 ♘c5?! ♖a8

33 b4 ♖xf4

34 ♖d1 ♖e8

35 ♖d3 ♖cd8

36 ♖e2 ♖xe2

37 ♖xe2 ♖g7!

Black prepares 38...♖e8.

38 ♘b2 ♖e8

39 ♖f1 ♖c7

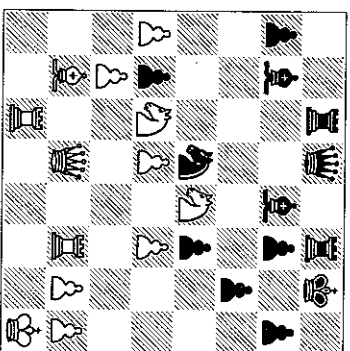
40 b5 ♖d6

41 ♖g1 ♖e2

42 ♘c4 ♖d5

White resigned

Now we can return to the position after White's 23rd move and work out whether Black could have put his advantage to use in more convincing fashion, without giving his opponent counterchances.



B

I have formulated a rule for myself which I call 'the principle of

the worst piece'. In chess literature you will not find such a formula, although leading players use this principle.

Imagine that you are an engineering designer, and that you are faced with perfecting a machine which consists of a dozen components. Almost all of them are working at 90% of their capacity, but one is working at only 10%. It is clear that finding a way to improve the productivity of the weakest component is the best way of improving the entire machine. In chess terms, to obtain optimal performance from your position (your chess machine) you first have to increase the productivity of the pieces which until now have taken little or no part in the game.

In positions of strategic manoeuvring (where time is not of decisive significance) seek the worst-placed piece. Activating that piece is often the most reliable way of improving your position as a whole.

Look at the positioning of the black pieces. The d5-knight and b7-bishop are working very well. The c8-rook is also well-placed, whilst the other rook could in one move occupy an excellent square, either e8 or d8. The versatile queen is ready to move to wherever necessary. We are left with the bishop

on e7, which has made practically no contribution to the game so far. How can it be included in the coming attack? The best method is by means of ... $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{f8-h6}$ (after the preparatory move 23... $\text{\textcircled{e}}\text{8f1}$). This simultaneously clears the way for the queen to use h4 at some point.

Incidentally, by choosing this plan we are also acting in accordance with the principle discussed earlier – the principle of two weaknesses. The first weakness – the d4-pawn – is already fixed, and Black is beginning to look around for new objects of attack – the white king and the f4-pawn. With the bishop on h6 and the queen on h4 he will be able to think about bringing his knight from d5 to g4 or e4, intensifying the attack on the king.

The following game was played in the very same tournament.

Mirumian – Baklan

CIS Youth Ch (Jurmala) 1992

French Defence

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | e4 | e6 |
| 2 | d4 | d5 |
| 3 | $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{c3}$ | $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{b4}$ |
| 4 | e5 | $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{e7}$ |
| 5 | $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d2}$ | b6 |

A relatively rare continuation (the usual move is 6...c5).

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 6 | $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{g4}$ | $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{f5}$ |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

Now if 7 $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d3}$ Black can use the vulnerability of the d4-pawn to force a favourable exchange of queens: 7...h5 8 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{f4}$ $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h4}$.

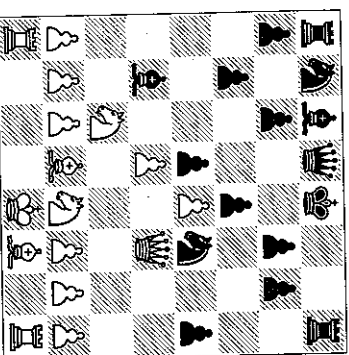
7 $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{ge2}$

Although this looks somewhat clumsy, it is a logical move. White defends the d4-pawn and prevents the threatened exchange of light-squared bishops (... $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{a6}$).

7 ...

8 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{f4}$ (D)

h5



B

If I were playing Black here I would play 8... $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{a6}$ anyway, without much thought. After all, this was the point behind ...b7-b6. The quickest possible development of our pieces is the basic principle of opening play. But Vova Baklan is not a dogmatist; occasionally he forgets general principles and goes his own way.

8 ...

$\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{e7}$?

The second 'developing' move for this piece never crossed my mind, precisely because I tend towards dogmatism. In one case out of ten Vova's infringements of the 'laws' of chess turn out well, in another five he gets away with it, but in the remaining four cases he is punished. However, on this occasion Black's unusual solution is justified. The threat of 9...g5 provokes his opponent into making a sharp reply which turns out to be unsuccessful. I would recommend instead 9 0-0-0 g5 10 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{f3}$ g4 11 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{f4}$, and if 11... $\text{\textcircled{e}}\text{g8}$, then White replies 12 h3.

9 h4?!

$\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{hxh4}$

10 0-0-0

$\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{c6}$

Black is hurrying to bring all his pieces into the game.

11 g4

$\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{g6}$

12 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{e3}$?

An overly optimistic decision. In our analysis of the game we decided that it would have been better to retreat the queen to g3, provoking ...h5-h4. Only then should White play $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{e3}$, with the strategic threat of f2-f4-f5.

12 ...

hxg4

13 $\text{\textcircled{e}}\text{hxh8}+$

$\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{hxh8}$

By pinning the knight Black prevents $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{f4-h5}$.

14 $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{f4}$

$\text{\textcircled{e}}\text{g5}$

15 $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{d3}$

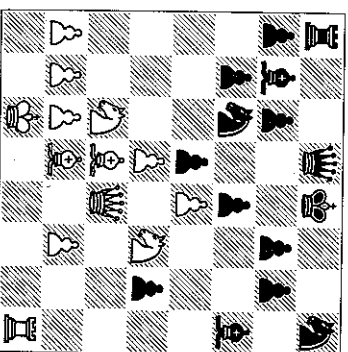
$\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{b7}$

16 $\text{\textcircled{h}}\text{h1}$

The assessment depends iteratively on one tempo. Imagine that Black's queen is already on d7 – then ...0-0-0 would leave White with no compensation whatsoever for the two pawns. But Black does not have this tempo, and the situation remains quite tense.

16 ...

$\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{h6}$ (D)



W

White must strike quickly, otherwise Black will prepare to castle.

17 $\text{\textcircled{e}}\text{hxh6}$?

gxh6

18 $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{fxfd5}$!

18 $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{h5}$ gives Black time for

18... $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h4}$.

18 ...

exd5

19 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{xh6}$

White's attack looks threatening, but don't forget that he has sacrificed a whole rook for it. Usually in situations like this the possibility arises for the defending side to alleviate the pressure by

giving back some of the extra material.

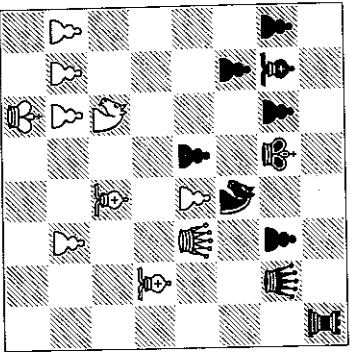
- 19 ... ♖xd4!
20 ♖xh8+

White would have gained nothing from 20 ♖b5 ♖xb5 21 ♖xb5+ c6 22 ♖xc6+ ♖xc6 23 ♖xc6+ ♖f8 24 ♖h6+ ♖g8 25 ♖g5 ♖f8.

- 20 ... ♖d7
21 ♖h5 ♖g8
22 ♖e3 ♖e6

The worst is over for Black, and White's attack should soon be repulsed.

- 23 ♖f5 ♖g7
24 ♖xg4 ♖h8
25 ♖f5 (D)



B

What now?

Using the principle of the worst piece we see that Black's king is in a vulnerable position. With the king on h8 Black would be winning thanks to the extra exchange.

Therefore 25... ♖c8! and 26... ♖b8 should wrap the game up.

Telman (the trainer of Seriozha Oysevich, who was playing in this tournament) suggested another, tactical solution: 25... ♖h4 26 f3 d4! 27 ♖xd4 ♖x13. Not bad, but I prefer the simple king march away from the centre.

It is a pity that Baklan, as a consequence of fatigue and impending time-trouble (this is not a justification, but merely an explanation), did not find either continuation, letting a near-certain victory slip through his fingers.

- 25 ... ♖e7?
26 ♖e2 ♖c8?

A waste of time – the bishop was better placed on b7.

- 27 ♖g3 ♖g6
28 ♖f3 ♖b7
29 c4

The position has become dangerous. Having thought for almost all his remaining time, Black made the right decision – to force a draw.

- 29 ... d4
30 ♖f5+ ♖d8
31 ♖xb7 ♖xg4
32 ♖a8+ ♖d7
33 ♖d5+ ♖e8
34 ♖c6+ ♖d8
35 ♖a8+ Draw

By recalling the crucial moment in this game we have ascertained

that the 'worst' piece can be anything, including the king.

Now I will illustrate the principle of the worst piece with a game which involves not two young candidate masters, but two experienced grandmasters.

Dorfman – Balashov

Tallinn 1983

King's Indian Defence

- 1 ♖f3 ♖f6
2 c4 g6
3 ♖c3 ♖g7
4 e4 d6
5 d4 0-0
6 ♖e2 ♖g4
7 ♖e3 ♖c6
8 d5 ♖xf3
9 ♖xf3 ♖e5
10 ♖e2 c6
11 0-0 ♖e8

A somewhat passive plan. Theory recommends 11... ♖a5.

- 12 ♖c1 e6
13 dx6
13 f4 ♖xc4! 14 ♖xc4 exd5.
13 ... ♖xc6
14 ♖b3 ♖e7
15 ♖f1

White sees a weakness – the d6-pawn – and will concentrate on attacking it.

- 15 ... ♖ed8

- 16 ♖d2 ♖d7
17 ♖cd1 ♖ad8
18 ♖a3 ♖f8?!

The d6-pawn was already well-defended, so it is illogical to put the bishop in a passive position.

- 19 ♖g5

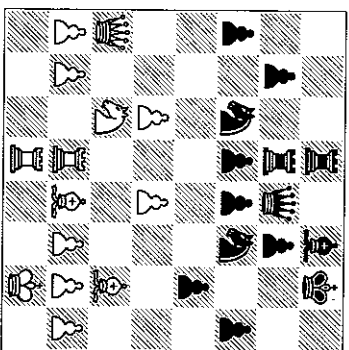
With the bishop on f8 the pin is particularly unpleasant.

- 19 ... h6
20 ♖h4 g5

Or else 21 f4.

- 21 ♖g3 a6 (D)

This is a totally normal move in 'Hedgehog' positions because it takes the b5-square away from the white knight. However, in this case it is not too successful, and Dorfman elegantly highlights its major drawback – the weakening of the b6-square. 21... h6 is preferable.



W

It is time for an appraisal of the position from White's point of

view. The white rooks and bishops are outstandingly placed, but the knight is not being used effectively. A natural response to Black's last move would be to transfer it to the newly created 'hole' on b6; unfortunately this would leave the e4-pawn hanging.

22 f3 does not help White. Not only does the manoeuvre ... $\mathcal{Q}h5$ -f4 look good, the standard central break 22...d5 liberates Black. In fact Balashov was preparing this when he played 21...a6 (21...d5? is premature: 22 $\mathcal{W}xe7$ $\mathcal{Q}xe7$ 23 exd5 exd5 24 $\mathcal{Q}b5$!).

What can you say about the white queen? Now that Black's forces are tied to the defence of the d6-pawn there is no longer a need to leave the queen on a3. An ideal square is e3 – from there the queen defends the e4-pawn (freeing the knight), and if the opportunity presents itself can take part in an attack against the enemy kingside, which has been weakened by the move ...g7-g5.

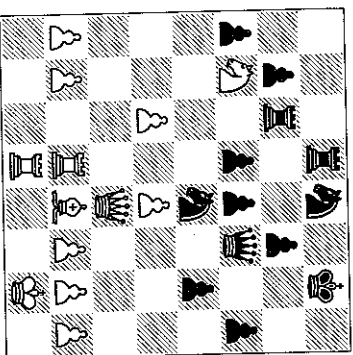
22 $\mathcal{Q}b3$!

Intending the manoeuvre $\mathcal{Q}b6$ -e3, White simultaneously prevents the break ...d6-d5.

22 ... $\mathcal{Q}g7$
 23 $\mathcal{Q}b6$ $\mathcal{Q}e8$
 24 $\mathcal{Q}a4$ $\mathcal{Q}e5$
 25 $\mathcal{W}e3$ $\mathcal{W}f6$
 26 $\mathcal{Q}b6$ $\mathcal{K}c7$

The business is done – White has relocated his queen and knight to more active positions, and now he can tidy up in the centre (Black threatens 27... $\mathcal{Q}f4$).

27 $\mathcal{Q}xc5$ $\mathcal{Q}xc5$ (D)
 27... $\mathcal{W}xe5$ is answered by 28 c5 with the threat of 29 $\mathcal{Q}c4$. Or 27...dxe5 28 $\mathcal{K}xd8$ $\mathcal{Q}xd8$ 29 $\mathcal{Q}d7$ and 30 $\mathcal{Q}xe5$.



28 g3!

'This and – especially – the next move were found with some difficulty. Having investigated the position thoroughly, I understood that allowing the exchange of queens (... $\mathcal{W}f4$ or ... $\mathcal{W}g5$) would have been playing into my opponent's hands, since the b6 knight becomes vulnerable' – Dorfman. The problem of when to exchange pieces is an inherent component of chess strategy.

28 ... g4
 29 h4!

After 29...gxh3 White's advantage would be obvious. 29 h3?! is weaker: 29... $\mathcal{W}g5$! 30 $\mathcal{W}xg5$ hxg5 31 hxg4 $\mathcal{K}c6$ and Black wins back the pawn.

29 ... $\mathcal{K}b8$

What should White do now?

We are not in a position to increase the pressure on the weak d6-pawn. According to the principle of two weaknesses, our attention should be turning to new weak points to attack. Black's kingside pawns have been weakened, in turn making the king rather vulnerable (White does not have a mating attack; the possibility is just an extra worry for Black).

White can make progress on the queenside also, advancing pawns to a5 and b4 with the ideas b4-b5 and c4-c5.

30 b4 $\mathcal{Q}g7$
 31 a4 a5

Balashov does not want to allow the clamping a4-a5.

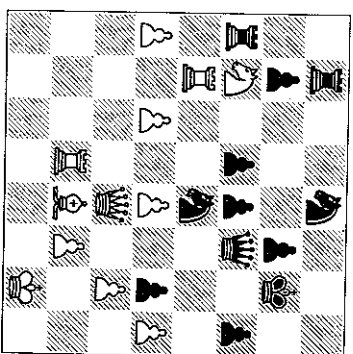
32 bxa5 $\mathcal{K}c5$
 33 $\mathcal{K}b1$

Not 33 $\mathcal{K}xd6$? $\mathcal{Q}xd6$ 34 $\mathcal{W}xc5$ $\mathcal{Q}xe4$.

33 ... $\mathcal{K}xa5$
 34 $\mathcal{K}b5$ $\mathcal{K}a6$ (D)

34... $\mathcal{K}xb5$ gives White a potential passed a-pawn after 35 cxb5!.

35 c5!



The white pieces are very active. As for Black, apart from the e5-knight he has no good pieces. In such circumstances it makes sense to open up the game without delay, entering into direct contact with the opponent before he can reorganise.

35 ... $\mathcal{K}d8$
 35...dxc5 36 $\mathcal{W}xc5$ is also bad for Black.

The finish was 36 $\mathcal{Q}g2$ dxc5 37 $\mathcal{K}xd8$ $\mathcal{W}xd8$ 38 $\mathcal{W}xc5$ $\mathcal{W}d6$ 39 $\mathcal{W}c3$ (39 $\mathcal{W}e3$!) 39... $\mathcal{K}xb6$ 40 $\mathcal{K}xb6$ $\mathcal{W}xb6$ 41 $\mathcal{W}xe5$ + f6 42 $\mathcal{W}h5$ Black resigned

It stands to reason that chess strategy does not consist only of the two principles we have examined, but I hope that if you use them it will become easier for you to plan and make accurate choices at the board.

7 Sensing the tempo

Alexei Kosikov

The assessment of a position is determined by three basic factors: material, the placing of pieces and pawns (the safety of the king, the presence of weaknesses, etc.), and time.

The role of time in chess is a complex one. In tactical positions every tempo can have a decisive significance. In situations of strategic manoeuvring the time factor is often less important.

In many kinds of sport there is a concept known as the 'sense of rhythm'. In their best years the football team Dynamo Kiev played to an uneven tempo, first quietly, dealing with their opponents' vigilance, then sharply increasing their speed. Astute organisation of the game (combined with a high level of individual footballing skills) helped the team become one of the strongest in Europe.

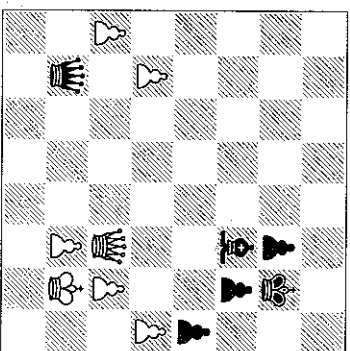
Another example is long-distance running. This requires control of speed – you have to run a little faster, but not too fast, otherwise you will not retain your strength for the duration of the

race. An appreciation of your optimal rhythm is essential.

In chess we can also talk about this sense of rhythm. It can be related just to expenditure of time – knowing when you can make moves quickly, and where you should stop and have a good think. This is a separate, very important theme, but here we will discuss something different, 'sensing the tempo'. This is what I call the ability to feel how important the time factor is at a particular moment, and what tempo you need to act in – quiet, even waiting, or specifically and energetically.

Sensing the tempo, as with other practical chess skills, can be developed by solving specially selected exercises on a tactical theme, each demanding sharp combinational insight. I recommend that in your analysis of games (both your own and those played by others) you pay particular attention to this problem. This will also help in the general development of your refinement and knowledge of chess culture.

We will examine different situations in which the time factor plays a greater or lesser role.



B

Korneev – Kosikov

Smolensk 1991

Black has a won game. However, the simple variation 1... ♖c3 2 b5 ♜xa3 3 b6 ♜b2 4 b7 did not really appeal to me – the passed b7-pawn complicates the winning process. The question is whether or not Black has a more reliable way to achieve his goal.

The white queen is overloaded as it simultaneously has to defend f2 and a3. Therefore thoughts of zugzwang immediately spring to mind – many endings are won this way.

1 ... ♖d4!

Now if 2 ♜f4 ♖c3 3 ♜f3 ♜xa3 4 b5 ♖b2 (or 4... ♖b4) the pawn will not reach b7.

2 ♖g1 ♖c3
2... ♜c3 also wins easily.
3 b5 ♖d4!

The b5-pawn is under attack, and if 4 a4 Black has 4... ♜a1+ and 5... ♜xa4. This is why Black lured the king on to the back rank! White has only one reply.

4 ♜f4 ♖e5
5 ♜c4
Otherwise 5... ♜xb5.

5 ... ♖d4!
The bishop has come to this square three times, each time with more effect!

6 ♜f1 ♜xa3
And White quickly resigned.

Thus, zugzwang is one situation where the time factor plays a crucial, distinctive role.

In the opening stages it is important to develop pieces quickly, and here any loss of tempo can be fatal. Too many games are lost purely because one of the players neglected his development. I will limit myself to one example on this theme.

Petrosian – Suetin

USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1960

Queen's Gambit

1 e4 c5
2 ♖f3 ♖f6
3 ♖c3 ♖c6

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| 4 | e3 | e6 |
| 5 | d4 | d5 |
| 6 | cx d5 | ex d5 |
| 7 | ♠e2 | a6 |
| 8 | 0-0 | c4 |

The Symmetrical Variation of the Tarrasch Defence of the Queen's Gambit. The ideas of various openings from time to time converge. Doesn't the position which has arisen remind you of anything?

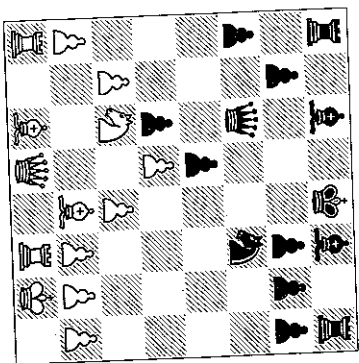
Correct; we have reached the Caro-Panov Attack against the Caro-Kann Defence, but with colours reversed and an extra tempo for White. In that opening, the plan involving c4-c5 is not thought to be too favourable for White. Here, given that Black is a tempo behind, it is certainly not to be recommended.

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 9 | ♠e5 | ♠c7 |
|---|-----|-----|

Now the natural 10 f4 supports the e5-knight but has the positional drawback of weakening e4. Black will complete his development with 10...♠b4 and later on he will take on c3, giving himself control of e4.

- | | | |
|----|--------|------|
| 10 | ♠xc6 | ♠xc6 |
| 11 | b3 (D) | |

The cracks in Black's position are beginning to appear, and he must be careful. His king is still in the centre, and his opponent has the initiative and is creating definite threats.



B

Black should finish his development as quickly as possible with 11...♠b4 (gaining a tempo!), casting at the first opportunity. But what I call 'sensing the tempo' apparently passed Suetin by.

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 11 | ... | b5? |
| 12 | bxc4 | bxc4 |
| 13 | e4! | |

If White wishes to punish his opponent for neglecting his development, then he has to open the position.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-------|
| 13 | ... | dx e4 |
|----|-----|-------|

13...♠xe4 would have been better (exchanges are usually to the advantage of the defending side). After 14 ♠xc4 dx e4 15 d5 ♠g6 16 ♠h5! (Razuvaev's recommendation) 16...♠f5 17 ♗e1 White has an advantage.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 14 | ♠g5 | ♠f5 |
|----|-----|-----|

The middlegame is now in full swing, but Black is still in no hurry

to finish his kingside development. For better or worse, he should have played 14...♠e7.

- | | | |
|----|------|-------|
| 15 | d5 | ♠c7 |
| 16 | ♠xf6 | gx f6 |
| 17 | ♠g4! | |

A final precise move, which rid's Black of his only developed piece (17...♠g6 18 ♠xe4 is decisive: 18...♠xe4 19 ♗e1 ♠e5 20 ♠a4+ mates). The outcome of the battle is no longer in doubt.

- | | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| 17 | ... | ♠xg4 |
| 18 | ♠xg4 | ♠e5 |
| 19 | ♠xe4 | f5 |
| 20 | ♠h5 | 0-0-0 |
| 21 | ♠d2 | c3 |
| 22 | ♠c4 | ♠d4 |
| 23 | ♠xf5+ | ♗d7 |
| 24 | ♠e5 | |

Black resigned

Neglecting your development is not the only reason for failure. Superficial, unintelligent treatment of the opening can have the same results.

Soloviev - Koslikov

Smolensk 1991

French Defence

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1 | e4 | e6 |
| 2 | d4 | d5 |
| 3 | e5 | c5 |
| 4 | c3 | ♠c6 |
| 5 | ♠f3 | ♠b6 |
| 6 | a3 | ♠d7 |

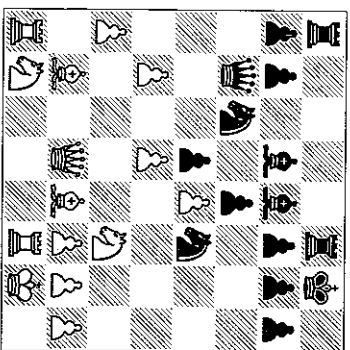
7 ♠e2
Combining the moves 6 a3 and 7 ♠e2 is not good. However, if you are playing White, you can allow yourself some sort of licence. The latest fashion is the immediate 7 b4.

- | | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| 7 | ... | ♠h6 |
| 8 | b4 | cx d4 |
| 9 | cx d4 | ♠f5 |
| 10 | ♠b2 | ♠e7 |
| 11 | 0-0 | 0-0 |

White has a problem finishing his development - he cannot move the queen's knight as this loses the d4-pawn, and 12 b5 severely weakens the queenside.

- | | | |
|----|----------|--|
| 12 | ♠d2? (D) | |
|----|----------|--|

12 ♠d3 and then ♠xf5 was necessary, resulting in roughly even chances.



B

What would you play for Black in this position?

Playing for an exchange of light-squared bishops has been suggested. This is just too slow. After 12... ♖b8? 13 ♖c3, or 12... a6? 13 ♗d1 ♖a7 14 ♖c3, White has an excellent position.

12... g5 is another possibility. I love playing... g7-g5 in the French Defence, but here it is just too sharp!

Finally there is the continuation 12... f6. Have you seen 13 g4 ♖h6 14 exf6 followed by the fork g4-g5? ... I played this anyway.

12 ... f6!

The tactical idea behind this move is quite well-known – it was investigated in Nimzowitsch's famous book *My System*.

13 g4 ♖h6

14 exf6 ♗xf6

15 g5 ♗xf3

16 ♗xf3

After 16 gxf6 Black also has the advantage.

16 ... ♖f5

17 ♗d1

The positional exchange sacrifice has given Black a splendid position. Amusingly, at this point my opponent offered a draw.

17 ... ♗d8!

The g5-pawn is lost. The following moves are forced.

18 ♗g4 ♗xg5

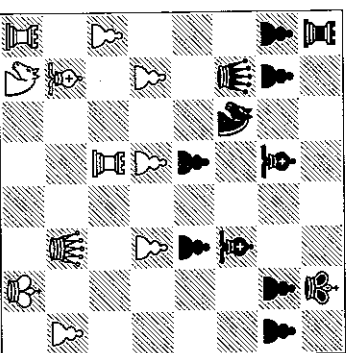
19 f4 ♗f6

20 ♗xf5 exf5

21 ♗f2 ♗b6

White would like to develop the knight, but I am preventing this by threatening the d4-pawn.

22 ♗d3 (D)



B

I have the initiative, but time is a critical factor. If White manages to play ♖d2-f3-e5, or ♖d2-b3-c5, then I will have to forget about my hopes for an advantage. I must divert him from completing his development with specific threats.

22 ... a5!

23 bxa5 ♗xa5

The black rook has joined in the game, but White still cannot move the knight. Not 23... ♖xa5 24 ♖c3.

24 a4

Here I had a think, and found what I would suggest is a successful solution. I was helped by the 'principle of the worst piece'. The d7-bishop is not playing any part

in the game. The standard route for the bishop is via e8 to h5, but from there it will be shooting into thin air. It would be better to use it to attack the a4-pawn, which means moving the knight.

24 ... ♖d8!

The knight is going either to e6 or d6 (via f7). If Black can seize the a4-pawn, he will already have two pawns for the exchange.

25 ♖c3 ♖e6

The d4-pawn is again under attack.

26 ♖d1

Here the knight is not that much better placed than on b1. Now I could simply play 26... ♗xa4 with an advantage, but in such situations it is important not to settle for too little. You have to check whether there is something stronger.

In fact, if you look at Black's last two moves it will immediately become clear what he should do now.

26 ... ♗d6

Attacking the f4-pawn.

27 ♗c1 b5!

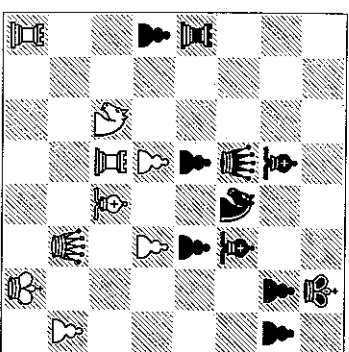
The pawn is won in much more advantageous circumstances for Black. A passed pawn is more dangerous on the a-file than on the b-file.

28 ♗e3 bxa4

29 ♖c3 (D)

A new question: how would you assess the position which has now

arisen (from the point of view of our theme, 'sensing the tempo') and what would you advise playing?



B

I thought that I already had a decisive advantage (two pawns for the exchange, a dangerous passed a-pawn, and White's weaknesses on d4 and f4), and for some time I was looking for a definite way of undermining my opponent's defences. I became more and more convinced that his defensive resources were quite effective, and that my position was not yet ripe for decisive action. I needed some time to manoeuvre. This kind of manoeuvring serves two purposes: I can make all the moves which will be useful for the future, and then choose the best moment to begin the final offensive.

29 ... h6!

The king will now feel safer, and at the right moment I can break with ...g7-g5.

- 30 ♖d2 ♖b4
- 31 ♖a2 ♖d6
- 32 ♖c3 ♖h8

As you can see, in situations without a fast tempo, the principle 'do not hurry' is the prime directive. I wanted to prepare ...g7-g5 (my opponent is doomed to passivity, so why not?): after 33...g5 34 fxg5 hxg5 35 ♖xf5 Black has 35...♗xd4 because 36 ♖g6 is no longer check. In general the king is better placed on h8 than on g8, if only marginally.

You should note that my recent action (...h7-h6, ...♖b4, ...♖h8) involved not the slightest risk. Meanwhile my opponent has had to be constantly on the alert, as it is easy to make a serious mistake. Defending in situations like this is very difficult.

- 33 ♖b2 ♖c7
- 34 ♖d2 ♖a7
- 35 ♖d1 ♖a7

35 ♗e2 is no good as it allows the d7-bishop to enter the game with 35...♗b5.

Defending the d4-pawn with the rook has taken it from the a-file, inviting the advance of the a-pawn. We can see the principle of two weaknesses in action – White is now in no condition to defend the d4-pawn and stop the passed a-pawn at the same time.

- 35 ... a3
- 36 ♖a2 ♗a4

After either a rook retreat or an exchange on a4, the d4-pawn is lost. The struggle is virtually over.

When defeat seems inevitable the defender usually becomes desperate, trying anything to create some sort of counterchances when, in reality, he has to be extremely careful.

- 37 ♖xa3 ♗xd1
- 38 ♗b5

A witty try. But since Black's previous strategy was correct, tactical complications should work out in his favour.

- 38 ... ♖xa3
- 39 ♗xa7 ♖xe3
- 40 ♗c6
- 40 ♖xd1 ♗xd4 is terrible.
- 40 ... ♖e4
- 41 ♖xd1 ♗xf4

41...♗xd4 wins as well, but why exchange off White's knight when it is playing no part in the game?

- 42 ♖a4
- 42 ♖f3 ♖e1+ 43 ♖f2 ♗h4+.
- 42 ... ♗h4

White resigned

We have seen how useful the 'do not hurry' rule is. The next examples will be dedicated to the problem of the initiative.

The previous game did not demand anything particularly imaginative from Black – patience and endurance were all that was required.

However, to seize and hold on to the initiative precise and inventive play is needed, and the value of every move is usually exceptionally high.

Romanishin – Fargo

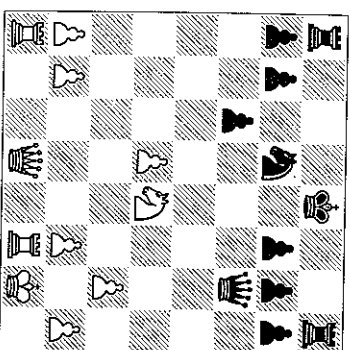
Skara Echit 1980

Réu Opening

- 1 ♗f3 ♗f6
 - 2 g3 d5
 - 3 ♗g2 c6
 - 4 0-0 ♗g4
 - 5 c4 e6
 - 6 d4 ♗bd7
 - 7 ♗e5 ♗f5
 - 8 ♗c3 ♗d6
 - 9 ♗f4 ♖b8
- Black has delayed castling. Romanishin tries to make use of this by opening some lines.
- 10 ♗xd7 ♗xd7

- 11 cxd5 exd5
- Not 11...♗xf4? 12 dxc6.
- 12 e4! dxe4
- 13 ♗xe4 ♗xe4
- 14 ♗xd6 ♖xd6
- 15 ♗xe4 ♖g6 (D)

We are examining this game precisely because of this position. What would you suggest?



W

If White has any kind of advantage it will clearly evaporate with the slightest imprecision. Indeed, Black has no weaknesses, and the only factor from which White can attempt to profit is the extra tempo which Black has to use up in castling. How can White make use of this?

16 ♗c5? is an error in view of 16...0-0-0, when Black is already better.

GM Zaitsev found a stronger idea, 16 ♖b3!:

1) 16... ♖b6 17 ♖c5 0-0-0 18 a4 favours White, which means we have to look at castling.

2) After 16...0-0-0 there is the tactical motif ♜xf7!, even though this does not work immediately because of 17... ♜xe4.

2a) 17 ♜fe1 suggests itself, although Black can reply 17... ♜he8, and if 18 ♜xf7?, then 18... ♜xe4 19 ♜xg6 ♜xe1+.

2b) Therefore we must try 17 ♜ae1!. If then 17... ♜he8 18 ♜xf7 and White has seized an extra pawn. If 17... ♖b6, then 18 ♖c5, intending 19 a4 or 19 ♜e7, for example 18... ♜xd4 19 ♜e7 ♜d6 20 ♜xf7 ♜xc5 21 ♜xg7! winning. Finally, 17... ♖b8 18 ♜c3 (or 18 a4) gives White the better chances.

3) Black can also castle short, e.g. 16...0-0 17 ♜xb7 ♜xe4 18 ♜xd7 ♜fd8 (18... ♜ad8 19 ♜xa7) 19 ♜ae1! is interesting. How can Black defend himself?

3a) 19... ♜xd4? 20 ♜e8+ loses the queen.

3b) 19... ♜xe1 is no good: 20 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 21 ♜xe1 with a healthy extra pawn.

3c) White also has an advantage after 19... ♜f3 20 ♜b7 followed by ♜c3 or ♜e7.

3d) There remains only the line 19... ♜c2 20 ♜b7 ♜db8 (20... ♜abb8 21 ♜xa7 ♜xb2 22 ♜c4) 21 ♜a6 ♜xb2 (21... ♜b6 22 ♜e2; 21... ♜xb2

22 ♜c1 ♜e2 23 ♜xc6 or 22... ♜e4 23 ♜xc6, keeping the extra pawn)

22 ♜xc6 ♜xd4 23 ♜e7. Although material equality has been restored, the initiative unquestionably remains with White.

Romanishin is a player with an original, dynamic style, but he nevertheless missed the possibilities we have discussed. However, the move he made seems very natural.

16 d5?! 0-0!

17 ♜e1?!

17 dxc6 ♜xc6 18 ♜e1 followed by ♜c1 would have been stronger. White would still have some initiative, but less so than after 16 ♜b3!. In chess, mistakes frequently come in twos or threes. Romanishin apparently had a feeling that at some point he had not used all the advantages available to him. In trying to hold on to the vestiges of his rapidly disappearing initiative he lost his objectivity, consequently drifting into difficulties himself.

17 ...

♜ad8

18 d6?

Here he should have taken on c6, although then 18... ♖e5! (with the idea of 19... ♖xc6) is good for Black.

18 ...

f5!

Romanishin either overlooked or underestimated this move. The

d6-pawn has become too weak and will soon be lost.

19 ♜b3+ ♖h8

20 ♖c3 ♖c5

21 ♜c4 ♜xd6

22 ♜ad1 ♖d3

23 ♜e2

Not 23 ♜e3? ♖xb2.

23 ... b5!

24 ♜h4 (D)

d6-pawn has become too weak and will soon be lost.

strikes me as being less convincing.

24 ... ♜c5?!

25 ♜ed2 ♜d4

26 ♜h5 ♖xb2!

27 ♜xd4 ♖xd1

28 ♜xd1 ♜xc3

29 ♜xf5 ♜f6?

Only by keeping queens on the board (29... ♜a3!) can he continue the fight for victory.

30 ♜xf6 gxf6

31 ♜d7

Now White is no worse, considering the active position of his rook.

The game ended as follows:

31 ... c5

32 ♜xa7 ♜c8

33 ♜b7

33 ♖f1!?

33 ... b4

34 ♖g2 ♖g8

35 h4 h5

36 ♖f3 ♜a8

37 ♜b5 ♜a3+

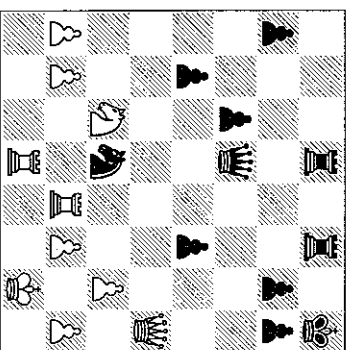
38 ♖e4 ♜xa2

39 ♜xc5 ♜xf2

40 ♜b5 ♖g7

Draw

Black has a clear advantage. However, the pin on the d3-knight brings some tension into the position, forcing the search for a precise, concrete solution. If Black advances the b5-pawn further, he will disrupt the co-ordination of the enemy pieces: 24... b4! 25 ♖a4 ♜d5 and then 26 ♜e3 ♜b5 (but not 26... ♜xa2? 27 ♖c5), or 26 ♜ed2 ♜f3 with the threat of 27... ♖e1!. Farago found another forcing simplification which, however,



From the very start White's initiative was hanging by the finest thread. How easy it is to allow the flames of initiative to die out just because you fail to find the best continuation at a specific point in a game! Sensing the tempo should

help discover these moments when it is vital to concentrate to the maximum.

Ilenchenko – Kosikov

Kiev 1991

English Opening

- 1 d4 ♘f6
2 ♘f3 c5
3 c4 cxd4
4 ♘xd4 e5
5 ♘b5 d5
6 cxd5 ♗c5

The 'Vaganian Gambit'. Black secures a long-term initiative for the pawn.

7 ♘1c3?

The c3-square should have been kept for the other knight.

- 7 ... 0-0
8 e3 a6
9 ♘a3 b5
10 ♘c2 ♗f5

Although Black is a pawn down, he can for the time being play without too much thought, since the development of his pieces is flowing naturally. He should not think about winning back his material, but instead plan ... ♘bd7, ... e5-e4 and ... ♘e5. From e5 the knight will put pressure on both flanks.

11 ♗d3

My opponent is afraid that Black will win the pawn back by 11... ♗xc2 and 12... ♘xd5, which in

fact had not entered my mind at all.

- 11 ... e4
12 ♗e2 ♗g6

I decided to spend time on a prophylactic move, as the immediate 12... ♘bd7 allows White to go on the offensive with 13 g4!?

13 b4?!

The beginning of a faulty plan which is too sharp and may even be the cause of White's eventual defeat.

- 13 ... ♗d6
14 a4

The continuation of the same, totally mistaken strategy. Opening a file on the queenside, with the king still in the centre, is clearly a rather foolhardy idea.

- 14 ... bxa4
15 ♗xa4 ♗c8

I didn't fancy 15... ♘bd7 because of the manoeuvre ♘d4-c6.

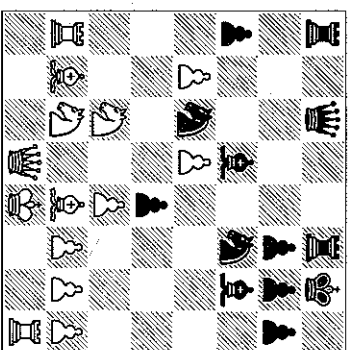
16 ♗b2 ♘bd7

Now if 17 ♘d4, then 17... ♘b6 followed by 18... ♘bxd5, 18... ♘c4 or 18... ♗xb4.

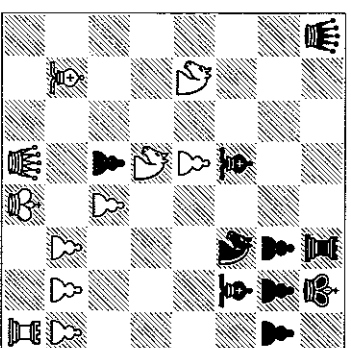
- 17 b5 ♘c5
18 ♗a2 (D)

How should I continue now?

If my opponent could manage to remove his king from the centre he would have an acceptable position. Ironically if White had castled a few moves earlier I could have put my knight on e5 and



B



B

started a kingside attack. Now that my pieces have been distracted by the play on the queenside, White can castle quite safely.

I have to prevent this somehow. 18... ♘d3+ suggests itself, but how do you assess the position which arises after 19 ♗xd3 exd3 20 ♘d4 axb5 21 ♗xa8 ♗xa8 22 ♘dxb5 (or 22 ♘cxb5)? Black maintains the initiative, so it cannot be bad for him, but it is a pity that at the end of the variation White has a choice of taking on b5 with either knight (although 22 ♘dxb5 seems the stronger).

I found a different move-order which deprives White of this luxury.

- 18 ... axb5
19 ♗xa8 ♗xa8
20 ♘xb5 ♘d3+
21 ♗xd3 exd3
22 ♘cd4 (D)

When envisaging this position, I had not seen a specific follow-up, but I felt that I would eventually find something. I have a choice between two checks, and the d3-pawn is very dangerous.

I immersed myself in analysing the position and in the end I found and calculated a forced win.

- 22 ... ♗b4+
23 ♗c3

23 ♗f1 would have been more resilient, but then 23... ♗xd5 gives Black an overwhelming advantage.

- 23 ... ♗a5
24 ♗d2

After 24 ♗xb4 ♗xb4+ 25 ♗d2 I had prepared 25... ♗b1+ 26 ♗d1 d2+! 27 ♗xd2 ♘e4+ 28 ♗e1 (28 ♗e2 ♗b2+) 28... ♗xd1+ 29 ♗xd1 ♘xf2+.

- 24 ... ♗c8

The key move that had to be foreseen. Now after 25 ♗xb4 ♗a1+

26 ♖d1 ♖c1 27 ♗c3 ♖xd1+ 28 ♗xd1 ♗xd5 29 ♖d2 ♖a2 Black's material and positional superiority guarantee him an easy win.

25 ♗c6 ♖xb5

26 ♖xb4

26 ♗xb4 ♗e4 is no good, and even worse is 26 ♗a7 ♖xc3 27 ♗xb5 ♖c1 mate.

26 ... ♗xd5

26... ♗e4 is also strong.

27 ♗a7 ♖xb4

28 ♗xc8

28 ♖xb4 is met by 28... ♖c1+ 29 ♗d2 ♖c2+.

28 ... ♖b1+

29 ♖d1 d2+!

30 ♗xd2 ♖b4+

White resigned

We have talked about developing and using the initiative, but that is only half the matter. First of all you have to know how to seize it. The struggle to wield the initiative (and later to make use of it) is often characterised by the use of tempo play, which demands a certain amount of finesse and inventiveness.

Ilyin-Zhenevsky – Ragozin
Leningrad (3) 1929/30
French Defence

1 e4 e6

2 d4 d5

3 ♗c3 ♖b4
4 ♖d3 c5
4... dxe4 5 ♖xe4 ♗f6 is also good.

5 a3

Many years later Kondratiev brought an interesting gambit into practice: 5 exd5 ♖xd5 6 ♖d2 ♖xc3 7 ♖xc3 exd4 8 ♖xd4 ♖xg2 9 ♖f3 ♖xf3 10 ♗xf3 f6 11 ♖g1 ♗f7 12 0-0-0. For the sacrificed pawn White has an advantage in development and the bishop pair.

5 ... ♖xc3+

6 bxc3 c4

7 ♖e2

7 ♖f1 is stronger, intending 7... dxe4 8 ♖g4.

7 ...

8 ♖xc4

9 ♖e2

10 ♖b2

11 f3

12 ♖b3 (D)

dxe4
♖c7

♗d7

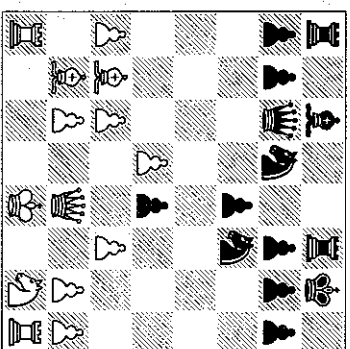
♗gf6

0-0

Have a think about this position. The evaluation of the position has not yet been fixed – this is the precise moment when it will be decided which of the players will seize the initiative. White is threatening not only to take the pawn with 13 fxe4, but also the move 13 c4, which would bring his dark-squared bishop to life.

12 ... b5!

An excellent decision. After 13 ♖xb5 a5! (intending 14... ♖a6 or



B

14... a4! 15 ♖xa4 ♖b8) 14 ♖c4 ♖b6 White's uncastled king may experience problems.

Incidentally, playing the same move earlier is also very good: in the 5th game of the match Ragozin played 11... b5!

13 fxe4

14 e5

♖b7

As he has the bishop pair, White should have been placing his pawns on light squares, in order to give space to the dark-squared bishop (which has no opponent). But the opposite has happened – the pawns are fixed on dark squares and the b2-bishop has turned into a 'tall pawn'.

14 ...

15 ♗f3

♗d5

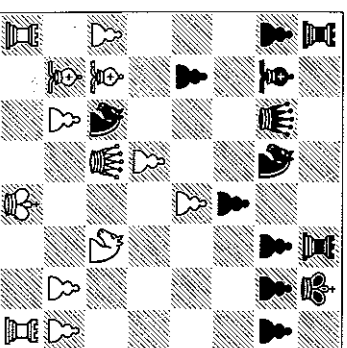
15 ♖xb5 is clearly bad after the reply 15... ♗xc3 (the g2-pawn is under attack) 16 ♖f1 ♖a5.

15 ...

♗xc3

Black has restored material equality and seized the initiative. This happened because Ragozin correctly perceived the moment when it was necessary to investigate the position carefully and find the correct solution (12... b5!).

16 ♖d3 (D)



B

16 ... ♖f3!

The stereotyped continuation 16... ♖a8? would have allowed White to counter with 17 ♗g5! g6 18 0-0 with the threat of 19 ♖h3 (18... h6 19 ♗xe6). Black has to keep alert to keep his initiative.

17 ♖f3

18 0-0

♖a8
♗b6

Black has an advantage. Now he is planning to advance the a-pawn.

19 ♖a1

20 ♖h5

a5

20 ♖g4!? deserved attention, but after 20... ♗bd5! 21 ♖f3 a4 22

♠xd5 ♘xd5 23 ♖g3 g6 24 c3 ♖e7
Black would have preserved his
advantage.

20 ... ♖d7!

Not 20...a4? 21 ♖f3.

21 ♖f4 a4

22 ♖h4 h6

23 ♖e3

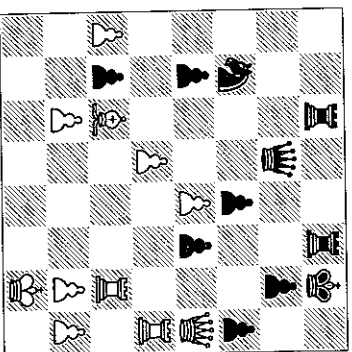
23 ♖g4 axb3 24 ♖xh6 does not
work because of 24...♖xd4+!

23 ... axb3

24 ♖g3 f5

25 ♠xc3 (D)

How can Black make best use of
his advantage?



B

There is no time for 25...bxc2
because of the threat of 26 ♖xh6.
25...f4? 26 ♖xh6! fxg3 27 ♖h8+
♠f7 28 ♖f4+ is also bad. The pro-
phylic 25...♠h8! would have
won. 26 cxb3 f4, breaking the com-
munication between the h4-rook
and the pawn on d4, and preparing

the blow 27...♠xc3; alternatively,

26 ♖g6 ♠xc3 (26...♖f7) 27 ♠xh6+

gxh6 28 ♖xh6+ ♠g8 29 ♖h8+

♠f7 and White soon runs out of

checks. (*Typesetter's note*: This

note contains a flaw. After 26 cxb3

f4 White can play 27 ♖g6. In order

to prevent a deadly sacrifice on h6

{which wins against 27...♠xc3, for

example} Black must defend by

27...♖f7. After the continuation

28 h3! ♘d5 29 ♠d2! White un-

doubtedly has some advantage,

since Black is a pawn down. In

view of the lavish praise bestowed

on Black's moves throughout the

game, it would appear that a reas-

essment is in order.)

Alas, the final stages of the game

were far from free of mistakes.

Black was victorious, but not with-

out his opponent's help.

25 ... ♠xc3?

26 ♠xc3 b2

27 ♖d1?

27 ♠b3 was necessary.

27 ... ♘c4?

27...b4! is better: 28 axb4 ♠a8,

or 28 ♠b3 bxa3 29 ♠xa3 ♘c4.

28 ♠b3 ♖e7

29 ♠h3?

It seems that White could have

saved himself by means of 29 ♠f4!

♠a8 30 ♖b1 followed by ♠xb2.

29 ... ♖g5!

Threatening 30...♖c1.

30 ♠h3 ♘d2

31 h4

31 ♖g3 ♘xb3! 32 ♠xg5 ♘c1.

31 ... ♘xf3+

32 ♠xf3 ♖c1

33 ♖f1 ♖e3+

34 ♖f2 b4!

35 a4 ♠d8

36 ♖b1 ♠xd4

White resigned

Finally a game which is per-
haps most important. Its subject is
changes of rhythm.

Many players note that it is most

difficult for them to orientate

themselves in a rapidly changing

situation: the transfer from attack

to defence or defence to attack,

from a position being played ac-

cording to the principle 'do not

hurry' to one full of tempo play,

etc. Even for leading grandmasters

this is sometimes a serious prob-

lem. In order to make progress in

this area you have to develop and

train your sense of the tempo.

Tukmakov – Vitoliņš

Erevan 1980

Bogo-Indian

1 d4 ♘f6

2 c4 e6

3 ♘f3 ♠b4+

4 ♠d2 c5

5 ♠xb4 cxb4

6 g3 b6

7 ♠g2 ♠b7

8 0-0

A slight imprecision! If White
had challenged immediately with
8 a3 his opponent would have had
to find a less effective plan.

8 ... a5

9 a3 ♘a6

10 ♘bd2 0-0

11 ♖b3 d6

12 ♖fd1 ♖e7

13 ♠a1 ♠ac8

14 e3 e5

15 ♘e1

White wants to bring more pres-
sure to bear on the b4-pawn with
the knight, in order to clear up
matters on the queenside. As a re-
sult of this manoeuvre the immi-
nent exchange of bishops weakens
White's king position, although
this appears academic at the mo-
ment.

15 ... ♠xg2

16 ♠xg2 ♖b7+

17 ♠g1 e4

18 ♘c2

Let us dwell on this position for
a moment. Tukmakov has carried
out his plan, and after 18...bxa3 19
bxa3 followed by ♖b1 he can start
to hit Black's weak points.

Vitoliņš is quite an unusual
player who is incredibly imagina-
tive and full of invention. He has a
fine sense of the rhythms of a game,
and knows how to change them.

Here, too, he emerged from a difficult situation with honour.

18 ... ♖d7!?

Brave. If Black does not deliver mate, then, of course, he will lose. He hardly seems to have sufficient forces to mate his opponent. If ... ♖h3 and ... ♖g4 White has ♖f1, and then what does Black do?

19 axb4

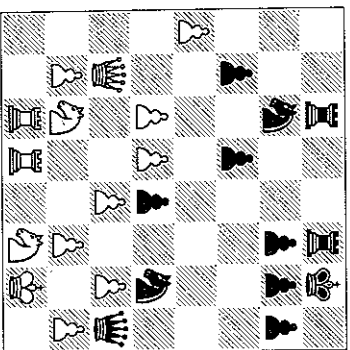
There is no time to take h3 away from the queen – 19 ♖g2 a4.

19 ... ♖h3

20 bxa5 ♖g4

21 ♖f1 ♖c7!? (D)

This was the ideal! Black intends to transfer the distant knight across the board to the kingside where it can participate in the attack (an effective use of the principle of the worst piece).



W

It is obvious that if the knight reaches g5 Black's threats will have

become too dangerous. White has to do something about this journey.

22 ♖e1! ♖e6 23 f3 is best. Then

23... ♖xh2 24 ♖xh2 ♖xg3+ 25 ♖h1 ♖g5 (as Tukmakov feared) does not work in view of 26 ♖c2 exf3 27 ♖exf3! ♖xf3 28 e4, and the pin along the third rank is decisive. After 23... exf3 24 ♖xf3 bxa5 White is left with an extra pawn for which his opponent does not have enough compensation.

22 d5?!

By mechanically preventing the manoeuvre ... ♖e6-g5 White weakens the important e5-square.

22 ... ♖e8!

23 ♖d4 ♖ef6

At this point it was vital to prevent ... ♖e5 by playing 24 f4! exf3 25 ♖xf3. However, after 25... bxa5 the position remains quite unclear.

24 axb6? ♖e5

Threatening 25... ♖f3+ 26 ♖h1 ♖g4 (or 26... ♖xh2 27 ♖xh2 ♖g4).

25 f4 exf3

26 e4? ♖g2 mate

White's final move shows how he was totally unprepared for the sudden change in the situation. However, his position was already difficult. 26 ♖d2 runs into 26... ♖e4. This leaves 26 ♖c2: 26... ♖xc4 27 ♖f2 (27 b7 ♖xc2 28 ♖xc2 ♖fg4) 27... ♖e4 28 ♖xf3 ♖xf2 29 ♖xe5 dxе5 30 ♖xf2 ♖f5+ followed by 31... ♖c2.

8 Positional transformations

Mark Dvoretsky

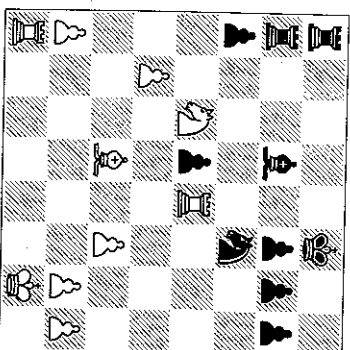
We shall now move on to a very complex problem which we have to face in one form or another in every game – the problem of transforming our position.

By a transformation we mean a sharp alteration in the position which leads to a change in the character of the struggle, and usually occurs after an exchange of pieces (quite often several pieces at once), and/or an alteration to the pawn structure.

In the course of a game the position changes more than once, but we do not consider every change to be a transformation. Sometimes such changes do not depend on us, but exclusively on our opponent, while at times it is so natural and obvious that it is not a specific chess device.

In my analysis of various cases of positional transformations, I wish to start with a classic example.

White's positional superiority is obvious. He has many tempting continuations at his disposal. He could put the a1-rook on an open



W

Fischer – Petrosian
Buenos Aires C1 (7) 1971

file, move his king up towards the centre with 22 ♖f2, or play 22 g4, creating a threat to the d5-pawn.

But if we employ prophylactic thinking, and pose the question about the opponent's intentions (which is exactly how you should think in situations such as this), White's range of choice is immediately narrowed.

Clearly, if it were his move, Black would play 22... ♖b5. It is not difficult to prevent an exchange of bishops with 22 a4, but then Black has 22... ♖c6, threatening to

exchange knights with 23... ♖d7. After this exchange the possibility materialises for Black to attack the b4-pawn with the rook. Fischer found a magnificent solution which was totally unexpected by all the experts in the press centre.

22 ♖xd7+!! ♙xd7

23 ♙c1

In his commentary on this event Polugaevsky noted, 'This is abso-lutely characteristic of Fischer's current work. He often falls back on the possibility of transforming one type of advantage into another.'

Why has White given up his beautiful knight for the passive d7-bishop? Above all, it liquidates all his opponent's hopes of counter-play. White's rooks are controlling open files, while his opponent's have nothing to attack. The b-pawn is invulnerable: a2-a3 will always follow... ♙b7, and if... a6-a5, then b4-b5. The remaining white bishop is much stronger than the black knight. All these advantages are quite sufficient for victory.

Now both 24 ♙xa6 and 24 ♙c6 are threatened. If 23... g6, then 24 ♙c6 attacks f6 and a6.

23 ... ♙d6
24 ♙c7 ♖d7
25 ♙e2

If the knight retreats from d7, there is the unpleasant reply ♙e7.

Black literally is unable to move his pieces.

25 ... g6
26 ♖f2 h5
27 f4 h4

27... ♖b6 28 ♙e7 ♙f6 was more stubborn.

28 ♖f3! f5

The threat was 28 ♖g4.

29 ♖e3 d4+
30 ♖d2 ♖b6
31 ♙e7 ♖d5
32 ♙f7+ ♖e8
33 ♙b7 ♖xb4
34 ♙c4

Black resigned

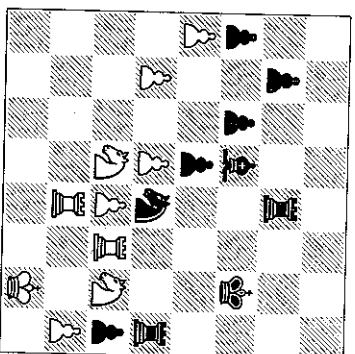
A transformation is one way of realising an advantage. The previous example (and some of the next ones) illustrates precisely this fact. However, a transformation works in different situations, for example in defending a difficult position.

White is in a difficult position, since both 39... ♙g4 and 39... ♖xg3 40 hxg3 ♙xd4 are threatened. 39 ♖f4+? ♖g5 40 ♖d3 ♖xg3 41 hxg3 ♙xd4, for example, is no good.

39 ♖f5! ♙g4+
40 ♖h1!

Not 40 ♖f1? ♙f7.

40 ... ♙f7
41 ♖xd6 ♙xf3
42 ♖e5+ ♖h5
43 ♖xf3 ♖xd6



W

Charushin - Franke

European corr. Ch 1979-83

44 ♖g1!

This move must have been foreseen at the beginning of the whole sequence of exchanges. Otherwise, by playing 44... ♙e4 and 45... ♖f5 Black would have gained a decisive advantage. Now he cannot comfortably defend the h3-pawn: 44... ♖h4 45 ♖f3+, or 44... ♙h4 45 ♙f2 ♖e4 46 ♙f3 ♖g4 47 ♙f4+ ♖h5 48 ♙f3.

44 ... ♙e4
45 ♖xh3 ♖f5

46 ♖f2!

46 ♖f4+? ♖g4 47 ♙g2+ ♖f3 48 ♙g5 ♙xe3! would have lost.

46 ... ♙xe3
47 ♙xe3 ♖xe3
48 ♖g1 ♖c2
49 ♖d3

The knight ending seems to be drawn.

49 ... ♖g4
50 ♖f2 ♖xd4
51 ♖c5 ♖f4
52 ♖xb7 ♖e6!
After 52... ♖c2 53 ♖e2 ♖xb4 54 ♖c5 ♖e5 55 ♖d2 Black is in danger, for if 55... ♖d4, then 56 h4!

53 ♖e2 ♖e4
54 ♖c5+!

Yet another transformation!

54 ... ♖xc5
55 ♙xc5 ♖d4
56 h4 ♖e4
57 ♖d2 ♖f4
58 ♖d3 ♖g4
59 ♖d4 ♖xh4
60 ♖e5 ♖g5
61 ♖d6 d4
62 ♖xc6 d3
63 ♖b7 d2
64 c6 d1♙
65 c7 ♙d5+
66 ♖a7 ♙c5+
67 ♖b7 ♙xa5
68 c8♙

Draw

In both examples we have looked at it has not been at all easy for White to make the correct decision, but the difficulties faced by the players were of different characters. In Fischer's game it was a question of overcoming a psychological prejudice ('good' knight, 'bad' bishop) and correctly

calculating the expediency of an unexpected exchange. On the other hand, in the second example a very precise calculation of the variations was demanded, and the final evaluation of the position was made more difficult by the fact that after calculating, the position was hard to imagine – it was already so different from the starting position (although here this particular problem would not have arisen as the game was played by correspondence).

It is evident that the idea of unusual exchanges – in both actual and psychological terms – has to be developed to such an extent that you know how to favourably transform the position when the time arises.

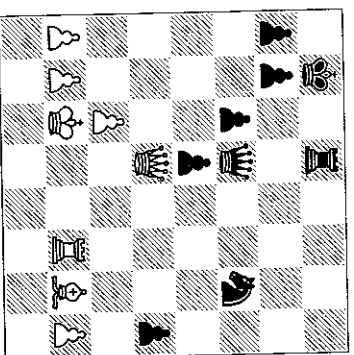
Here is an example of an unsuccessful transformation:

Black has a healthy extra pawn and excellent chances for victory after the simple 35...♖f8 or 35...♗e5 36 ♖xf6 ♗e2+1.

Marshall made a different decision, and played a complex combination involving a piece sacrifice, through which he had counted on reaching a winning ending.

35 ... ♗xh2?!
36 ♖e4! ♗g3!

After 36...♗g1 37 ♖f8! he must give check on h2, since 37...♗xd4? 38 ♖xd8+ ♖c7 39 cxd4 ♖xd8 40



B

Kupchik – Marshall

New York 1915

♖xg6 loses. 36...♗d6 37 ♖f6 leads to a repetition of moves.

37 ♗g2 ♗f4!

38 ♖xg6

The variation 38 ♖xg6 ♗xe4+ 39 ♗xe4 dxc4 40 ♖h6! (40 ♖g4? ♖h8) is sufficient to cast doubt on Marshall's idea. White's chances for a draw here are quite significant in my opinion, and in any case better than they would have been after 35...♖f8 or 35...♗e5.

38 ... ♗xd4
39 cxd4 h3
40 ♗e2!

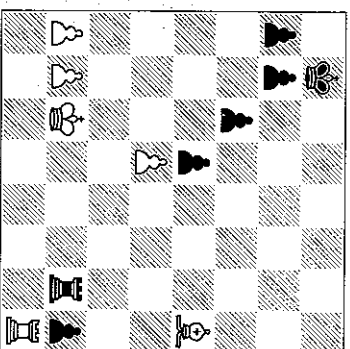
Only this move (or 40 ♖d2!) allows White to keep the extra piece. 40 ♖h2? ♖g8! leads to a difficult rook ending after 41 ♖xh3 ♖xg6. 40 ♖g1(g5)? ♖g8 and 40 ♖g4? ♖h8! 41 ♖g1 ♖g8! lead to the same thing.

40 ... ♖h8
Or 40...♖g8 41 ♖h5 ♖g2 42 ♖f3.

41 ♖e1! h2
42 ♖h1 ♖g8
43 ♖h5!

On d3 the bishop is not well placed: 43 ♖d3? ♖g2+ 44 ♖c3 ♖c7, and the black king is threatening to march down to g3.

43 ... ♖g2+ (D)



W

Marshall was aiming for this position when he began his combination. He obviously thought that it was winning. It was rather too confident an evaluation, especially considering that it had to be made ten moves in advance with a completely different balance of material and placement of pieces. Now 44 ♖c3 suggests itself, followed by moving the queenside pawns off the vulnerable second rank. In his

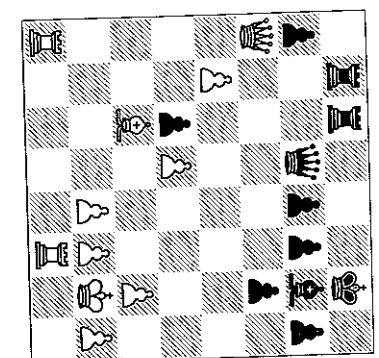
commentary Marshall gives the following variation: 44...♖c7 45 a4 ♖d6 46 b4 ♖e6 47 ♖d3 ♖f5 48 ♖e3 ♖g3+ 49 ♖f2 ♖h3 50 ♖d1 ♖f4 51 ♖g2 ♖h8 52 ♖xh2 ♖xh2+ 53 ♖xh2 ♖e3 54 ♖g2 ♖xd4 55 ♖f3 ♖c4, and Black, according to him, should win. I am not convinced that this is so, but there is no need to study the final position as the variation is unconvincing. Instead of 49 ♖f2, White can play 49 ♖f3! ♖h3 50 ♖b1, and he is out of danger.

Kupchik was apparently too scared of the menacing h2-pawn and rushed his king towards it, condemning his queenside pawns to their grave.

44 ♖d3? ♖xb2
45 ♖e2 ♖xa2
46 ♖xh2

Three pawns here are stronger than the bishop, which means that the transformation White has carried out has worsened his position. Defending will not be easy – he must impede the advance of his opponent's pawns, and at the same time not forget about defending the weak d4-pawn. I do not know how this problem might be solved, but in any case Kupchik did not manage to do so:

46 ... ♖a3+
47 ♖c2 a5
48 ♖b2 ♖e3



B

49 ♖c2 b5
50 ♗d3 ♖c7
51 ♖h8 a4
52 ♖a8 ♖g3
53 ♖a7+ ♖b6
54 ♖a8 ♖b7
55 ♖f8 b4
56 ♖f7+ ♖b6
57 ♖f8 ♖g2+
58 ♖c1 a3
59 ♖b8+ ♖c7
60 ♖a8

60 ♖xb4 ♖g1+ 61 ♖c2 a2.
60 ... ♖g4
61 ♖c2 ♖xd4
62 ♗e2 ♖e4
63 ♗d3 ♖e3
64 ♖a4 c5
65 ♖d2 ♖g3
66 ♖a5 c4
67 ♗f5 ♖d6
68 ♗c8 a2
69 ♗b7 b3

White resigned.

This clever (but not very well-founded) decision of Marshall's can to a certain extent be explained by his Romantic nature – he simply could not resist the temptation to carry out a deep and beautiful idea.

Chess players very frequently make similar mistakes because they are not cold-blooded enough. They try to reap the fruit as quickly as possible, failing to sense that it is not yet quite ripe. Such haste once cost me dearly.

Tseschkovsky – Dvoretzky USSR Ch (Leningrad) 1974

This game was played in the final round and a win would have given me a bronze medal in our national championships. I managed to outplay my rival and acquired a tangible positional advantage. Additionally, Tseschkovsky had a severe shortage of time – he had less than 20 minutes left to make 17 moves.

In the first place I examined 23...♗xd4, when White is simply a pawn down after 24 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 25 ♖xa7 ♖e4+. Nor does he get any play from 24 ♖ad1? e5 25 e3 ♖b6! when, after the queen retreats, Black gives check with the queen from b7.

I was more troubled by the variation 24 ♖fd1 e5 25 ♗xd4 exd4 26 ♖xa7. By continuing 26...♖xa7 27 ♖xa7 c3! Black maintains his

advantage, but it is unclear whether it is enough for victory.

The most unpleasant strategy for an opponent in time trouble is not a forcing game, which allows him to make a series of 'only moves' quickly. It is better to make him work hard after every move, constantly maintaining the pressure and presenting him with more and more new problems.

From this point of view I should have played the simple 23...♖c7!. White, most likely, would reply 24 ♖fb1, but after 24...g5! things would not be so comfortable for him, especially in time trouble. 25 b6 ♖c6+ loses a pawn, and how else can you deal with the threatened ...♖b8-b6-h6? After 25 ♖a4 the idea of a pawn exchange with b5-b6 fades away, and Black can improve his position by means of 25...♖e6, or 25...h5 followed by ...h5-h4.

I saw the correct plan but, unfortunately, was seized not by self-control, but by impatience. I wanted immediately to turn my positional advantage into something more palpable. Alas, an error crept into my calculations, and my chances of victory instantly disappeared.

23 ... ♖xb5?
24 ♖xa7 ♖xa7?

By avoiding a queen exchange with 24...♖b7! 25 ♖a4 ♖d5+ 26

♖g1 h5 Black would still have preserved his advantage, but I continued to play according to my intended plan.

25 ♖xa7 ♖b3
26 ♗d2!

Not 26 ♖c1? ♖xc3! 27 ♖xc3 ♗xd4 with an extra pawn in a rook ending.

26 ... ♖b2
27 ♗e3!

I had overlooked this simple move – or rather, not the move itself, but the fact that I no longer win a pawn (27...♖xc2 28 ♖f3! and 29 ♖xe7).

27 ... e6
28 ♖fa1! ♖bb8
29 ♖c1 ♖c6
30 ♖c3 h5
31 ♖a4 ♖bc8
32 f4!

White has prevented ...e6-e5 and now intends ♗f2, ♖f3, and e2-e4. The initiative is already on his side, and I should have acted carefully to avoid landing myself in a difficult position.

32 ... ♖c7
33 h3 f6!?
34 g4 hxg4
35 hxg4 e5
36 f5 gxf5
37 gxf5 ♖e7!?
38 ♖f3 ♖ce8
39 ♖axc4 exd4
40 ♖xd4 ♖e5

41 ♖f4

An amusing situation. White cannot improve his position, but I do not have a single harmless waiting move – they all involve one concession or another. For example, 41...♠h6? 42 ♖g4+ ♠h7 43 ♖c7+, or 41...♗8e7 42 ♠c5 ♖c7 43 ♠d4.

41 ... ♠h7!

The least of the evils!

42 ♠f2

Leading to an immediate draw, but after 42 ♖h4+ ♠g8 43 ♖h5 ♗5e7 White does not have the power to undertake anything.

42 ... ♠h6!

43 ♖c7+

The variations can be calculated easily: 43 ♖h4 ♗x63 44 ♗x63 ♗x63 45 ♗xh6+ ♠xh6 46 ♠xe3 ♠g5 47 ♠e4 ♠g4, or 43 ♖f3 ♠xe3+ 44 ♗xc3 ♠h6! with a draw.

43 ... ♠h8!

43...♗8e7 44 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 45 ♗f3 is worse.

44 ♖h4 ♗xf5+

Draw

In all the examples we have looked at it has been necessary to answer the question: is it possible to change the character of the struggle, or is it better to keep the situation which already exists on the board?

Sometimes a player can transform the position immediately by

various means. GM Gulko once told me that he considered this issue to be the most complicated in chess, and that it is the most severe test of a master's game, of his ability to calculate and of the depths of his positional assessments.

I will show you how Gulko copes with problems like this:

Gulko – Dvoretzky

Vinius 1978

Slav Defence

1	c4	c6
2	♖c3	d5
3	exd5	exd5
4	d4	♖f6
5	♠f4	♗b6

White preparing for this game I glanced through *ECO* (in the first edition the relevant section was written by GM Suetin) and I saw that the recommended reaction to White's chosen move-order was the thrust 5...♗b6. I thought it was unlikely that my opponent would play that very system, and therefore did not bother to test the book variations.

6 ♗c1!

And I was straight away faced with a novelty (which Gulko found at the board). Opening manuals only examine rather strange variations such as 6 ♗c2? ♖c6 7 c3 ♠f5! or 6 ♗b3 ♗xd4. The rook

move is quite logical – White is developing a piece, defending the knight in advance – in case the b2-pawn is taken – and, incidentally, preventing the immediate 6...♗xb2 because of 7 ♖a4 ♗b4+ 8 ♠d2.

6 ...	♖c6
7 e3	♗xb2?!

Logically, if you are not going to take the pawn, why did you put the queen on b6? All the same, 7...♠f5 or 7...♠g4 8 f3 ♠f5 would have been more circumspect.

8 ♠d3	♠g4
-------	-----

There is no time for quiet development: 8...e6? 9 ♖b5 ♠b4+ 10 ♠f1 0-0 11 ♗c2.

9 ♖ge2	♠xe2
10 ♠xe2!	e5

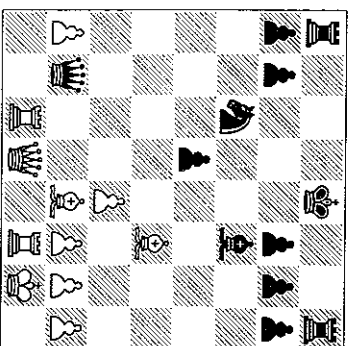
The transformation of the position caused by this move turns out to be in White's favour. 10...e6!? deserved attention, for example 11 ♖b5 ♗b4+ 12 ♠f1 ♠d7, or 11 0-0 ♠e7 12 ♖b5 0-0 13 a4 (threatening 13 ♗b1 ♗a2 14 ♖c3 ♗a3 15 ♗b3) 13...♗b4 14 ♠c7!? ♖e4 15 ♗b1 ♗d2! (15...♖c3 16 ♗xb4 ♖xd1 17 ♗b3 a6 18 ♗xd1 axb5 19 axb5 leads to a difficult position). However, Black's position in these variations looks quite precarious, and I recommend that readers search for an improvement for White – I would not be at all surprised if one were found.

11 dxе5	♠b4
---------	-----

12 0-0!	♠xc3
13 exf6	

13 ♗c2 ♗b4 14 exf6 ♠xf6 15 ♗xd5 is not bad either. Rashkovsky-Arnason, Sochi 1980, continued: 15...0-0 (15...♗d8? 16 ♗f5! 0-0? 17 ♠d3) 16 ♠f3! (16 ♠d6 ♗fd8) 16...♗ad8 17 ♗f5!, with serious difficulties for Black.

13 ...	♠xf6 (D)
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W

White's superiority is now obvious. He has two strong bishops in an open position, and the black king is stuck in the centre. Several attractive possibilities spring to mind, for example the tempting moves ♠d6, or ♗b1 followed by ♗xb7. It is also reasonable simply to eat the d5-pawn, either with the queen after the preparatory move 14 ♗c2, or with the bishop after 14 ♠f3.

There are probably more ways than one to maintain an advantage,

but how can you make the maximum use of the favourable aspects of your position? Gulko thought for a long time; meanwhile I searched for an acceptable defence against my opponent's developing attack. For example, I established that after 14 ♖d6 I must reply 14...♗e7. 14...♘d8? is worse: 15 ♗xd5 ♗e7 16 ♗xc6 0-0 17 ♗d3!, as in Matsula-Filipenko, Krasnodar 1978.

14 ♗f3! ♘d8

After 14...0-0 15 ♗xd5 White has an overwhelming positional advantage, as can be seen in the variation 15...♘d8 16 e4! (16 ♖b1 ♗c3 17 ♗xb7? ♗b4 18 e4 ♗xd5 19 exd5 ♗c4) 16...♗b4? 17 ♖b1 ♗a3 18 ♗c1 ♗a5 19 ♗d2 winning.

15 ♗xd5 ♗e7

16 e4!

I was expecting 16 ♗a4+ b5 17 ♗e4 0-0 (17...♗xd5? 18 ♗c8+) 18 ♗b3 a5!, when it is not clear how White can keep his advantage. My opponent, to my surprise, was not only allowing me to exchange off his strong light-squared bishop, but was even sacrificing the a2-pawn.

16 ... ♗xd5

16...0-0 would be answered by 17 ♗c7!.

17 exd5 0-0

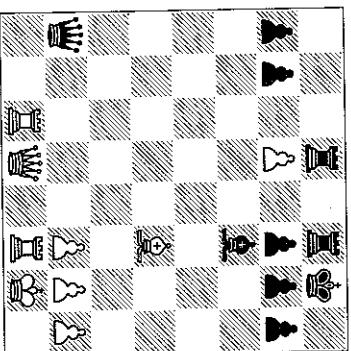
18 d6

18 ♗c7 ♗d7 19 d6 also looks good.

18 ... ♗xa2

If you are already struggling, then you might as well have a pawn!

19 d7 (D)



B

This is the position Gulko was aiming for when he embarked on the continuation at move 14. He made the fine assessment that, by tying up the black pieces, the distant passed d-pawn would more than compensate for all losses and consequently guarantee him excellent chances for victory. Only a player of the highest class could make such a decision under pressure!

The remainder of the game highlights the fact that White made the correct choice – I do not know how Black's defence could be improved.

19 ... ♗e6
20 ♗c7 was threatened.
20 ♗c7 ♗e5
20...a5 21 ♗e1 ♗a6 22 ♗d6, or 21...♗b6 22 ♗d6!.

21 ♗xe5!

The game would be unclear after 21 ♗e1? ♗xf4! (21...f6 is also possible) 22 ♗xe6 ♗xc7.

21 ... ♗xe5

22 ♗xb7 a5

23 g3 h5

24 h4 g6

25 ♗e1 ♗c5

26 ♗a4 ♗h7

27 ♗b5 ♗c3

28 ♗b1

White is gradually regrouping his pieces, bringing them closer to the kingside and preparing a decisive attack. While doing this it is still necessary to keep an eye on the a5-pawn – he must not let it advance, and at the first reasonable opportunity he will capture it.

28 ... ♗b8

29 ♗e4 ♗bd8

30 ♗bd1 ♗b4

31 ♗d4 ♗c3

32 ♗ed1 ♗b3

33 ♗d5 ♗g8

34 ♗1d4 ♗c3

35 ♗d6 ♗h7

36 ♗g2 ♗b3

37 ♗4d5 ♗g7

38 ♗g5

Black resigned

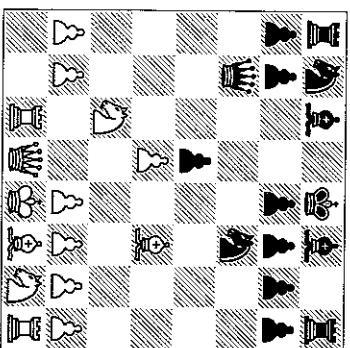
An attempt to rehabilitate the whole variation has been undertaken by Filipenko. He has found new resources for Black, and more than once in practice has successfully defended the position. Other players have also begun to employ this variation, using his analysis. Many years later, Gulko, who knew nothing about the new findings, again had White in the same position, this time against a well-prepared opponent.

Gulko – Scherbakov

Helsinki 1992

Slav Defence

1 d4 d5
2 c4 c6
3 cxd5 cxd5
4 ♗f4 ♗b6
5 ♗c3 ♗f6
6 ♗c1 (D)

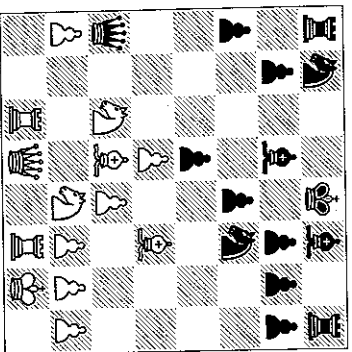


B

6 ... ♠d7!?
 Filipenko's recommendation, considering this to be more relevant to the defence than my move, 6...♟c6. White must sacrifice a pawn, since after 7 ♣d2 both 7...e6 and 7...♟e4 8 ♟xe4 dxe4 (with the threat of 9...e5) are good.

- 7 e3 ♣xb2
 8 ♠d3 e6
 9 ♟ge2
 9 ♟f3? ♠b4.
 9 ... ♣a3!
 10 0-0 ♣xb2
 10 ♟b5 ♣a5+ 11 ♟f1 ♟a6, or
 10 ♠b1 ♠c6 11 ♟b5 ♣a5+.
 10 ... ♠6 (D)
 10 ... ♠6 (D)

This forms the basis of Filipenko's plan.



W

In Gleizerov-Filipenko, Kursk 1987, White did not even try to solve the problem of the position, choosing the passive knight retreat

11 ♟b1?, and after 11...♣b4! 12 a3 ♣b6 13 ♟ec3 ♠d6 he gained no compensation whatsoever for the sacrificed pawn.

After 11 ♠b1 Black can reply 11...b5 12 ♠c7 ♠c6! (of course not 12...♠e7?? 13 ♠b3) 13 ♠b3 ♣e7.

In order to make use of his advantage in development it would be logical for White to open lines. However, after the immediate 11 e4 dxe4 12 ♟xe4 ♟d5! he has achieved nothing.

As in the previous game, Gulko, having weighed up the various possibilities, opts for the most promising of them. He finds a way of playing e3-e4 without giving any of the central squares to his opponent.

11 ♠e5!! ♠e7

Other replies do not bring any relief:

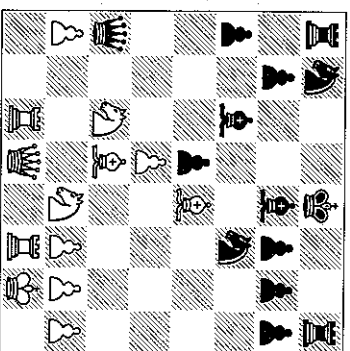
- 1) 11...♠c6 12 ♠xf6 gxf6 13 e4 dxe4 14 ♠xe4.
 2) 11...♟c6 12 ♠xf6 gxf6 13 e4 dxe4 14 ♠xe4 with the threat of 15 d5.

12 e4!

Now after 12...dxe4 13 ♟xe4 the knight cannot go to d5 because this would leave the g7-pawn hanging. If 13...♟c6, then 14 ♠c3 ♣a5 15 ♟d6+ is strong. 12...♟c6 has unpleasant consequences: 13 ♠xf6 ♠xf6 14 exd5 exd5 (14...♟xd4 15

♟e4 ♟xe2+ 16 ♣xe2 ♠e7 17 ♠c7) 15 ♟xd5 ♣d6 16 ♟ec3 0-0 17 ♣h5 g6 18 ♟e4 gxf5 19 ♟dxf6+ and wins.

- 12 ... ♠c6
 13 exd5 exd5 (D)



W

A timely and skilful transformation has allowed Gulko to reach a very attractive position. But now he again finds himself at a crossroads. Which is better, bringing the knight via g3 to f5 or, after exchanging on f6, attacking the d5-pawn with ♟f4? When he showed me the game, Gulko expressed the opinion that the second route was stronger. In fact, after 14 ♠xf6!? ♠xf6 15 ♟f4 0-0 16 ♟cxd5 (16 ♟fxd5?! ♟d7! is weaker) Black has an unenviable decision:

1) He cannot play 16...♟d7?! in view of 17 ♠c3 ♣d6 18 ♠xh7+! ♟xh7 19 ♠h3+ ♟g8 20 ♣h5.

2) 16...♠x5? 17 ♟xd5 ♣d6 18 ♣f3 ♟d7 19 ♣f5! g6 20 ♣xd7 is no good for Black either.

3) There remains only 16...♣d6 17 ♟xf6+ ♣xf6 18 ♣d2 ♠b5!? (18...♟d7 19 d5), but White's advantage is still not in doubt.

However, in my opinion, Gulko's choice in the game is by no means weaker.

14 ♟g3!? ♟bd7!

It is impossible to protect the f5-square: 14...g6? 15 ♟xd5!. If 14...0-0, then 15 ♟f5 ♠e8 16 ♟b1 ♣b4 17 a3 ♣b6 18 ♟xe7+ ♠xe7 19 ♠xf6 gxf6 20 ♣g4+ is decisive.

15 ♟f5 g6

Not 15...0-0? 16 ♟b1.

16 ♟b1 ♣a4

Now White can head for a favourable endgame. Gulko thought the strongest reply was 16...♣a5, and after 17 ♟xe7 ♟xe7 he had intended to play 18 ♠f4 h6! 19 ♟d2 ♟f8 20 ♟f3 ♟g7 21 ♟e5. Here White still has excellent compensation for the pawn but the position is quite unclear. It is this line that caused Gulko to doubt the accuracy of his 14th move.

GM Bologan later suggested intensifying the attack by means of 18 ♣f3!, for example, 18...♠he8 (in the hope that after 19 ♠fe1?! the king can escape by 19...♟f8!) 19 ♣f4!, or 18...♟xe5 19 dxe5 ♟d7 20 ♠fe1 followed by ♣f4, and

Black's position is still very difficult.

17 ♖d6+! ♖f8

After 17...♙xd6 White would play 18 ♙c2!, and only then 19 ♙xd6.

18 ♞xa4 ♙xa4

19 ♖xb7 ♖xe5

20 dxe5 ♖d7

21 f4 ♖a7

Or 21...♗g7 22 ♖c3 ♙c6 23

♖a5.

22 ♖d6 ♗g7

23 ♖c3 ♙c6

24 ♖e2 ♙b5?!

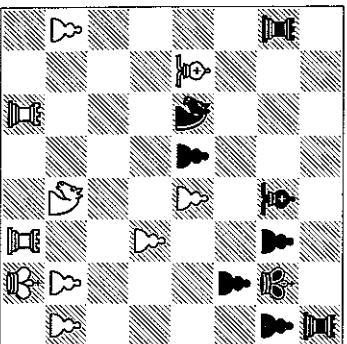
24...♙a4 is more tenacious, but even then White keeps the advantage by 25 ♖dd4 ♗b8 26 ♖c6.

25 ♖xb5 axb5

26 ♙xb5 ♖c5 (D)

Or 26...♞xa2 27 ♖c3 ♖a7 28

♖xd5.



W

27 f5!

The attack on the king continues even in the endgame! The following variation is revealing: 27...♙g5

28 f6+ ♖h6 29 ♞c3 ♙d2 30 ♞h3+

♗g5 31 ♞g3+ ♖h6 32 ♖dd4 ♖ce4

33 ♞h3+ ♗g5 34 ♖f3+.

27 ... gxf5

28 ♖g3 ♗b8

29 ♖xf5+ ♖f8

30 ♖xe7 ♞xb5

31 ♖xd5 ♗g7

31...♖d3 32 ♞c8+ ♗g7 33 ♖f6

♖xe5 34 ♞g8+ ♖h6 35 h4! would

not have helped Black.

32 ♞c4 ♖a4

33 ♖e3! ♞xa2

34 ♖f5+

Having made the move 34...♗g6 in this hopeless position, Black lost on time.

I would like to show you yet another example of Gulko's strategic skill.

Gulko – Kupreichik

USSR Ch (Riga) 1985

King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♖f6

2 c4 g6

3 ♖c3 ♙g7

4 e4 d6

5 f3 a6

6 ♙e3 0-0

7 ♞d2 ♖c6

8 ♖ge2 ♗b8

9 ♗b1

A rarely seen plan. Theory considers 9...b5 10 cxb5 axb5 11 b4 e5! 12 d5 ♖e7 to be the strongest response.

9 ... ♙d7?!

10 b4 ♞c8

Now if 10...b5 White has 11 cxb5 axb5 12 d5 ♖e5 13 ♖dd4 with the better prospects.

11 b5 ♖a5

12 ♖f4! c6!?

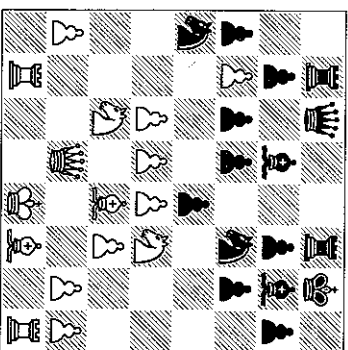
After 12...b6 13 ♞c1! c6 14 bxc6 ♞xc6 15 ♖cd5 Black is under pressure, so Kupreichik undertakes a very risky venture, throwing the a5-knight to the mercy of fate. As we will see, this idea has a clever tactical basis, and it is not easy to refute.

13 b6!

Stronger than 13 e5?! ♖e8 14 b6

♙e6!

13 ... e5 (D)



W

What kind of position should White be aiming for? He clearly has to attack the a5-knight, but in turn it appears that he will have to part with his f4-knight – he does not want to retreat it to h3. 14 ♖d1 exf4 15 ♙xf4 seems sensible, as both the knight and the d6-pawn are under attack. But pay attention: the position has opened up, and White is behind in development. In situations like this you have to be exceptionally careful, especially when as resourceful a tactician as Kupreichik is sitting opposite you. He could play 15...♞e8!, intending to meet 16 ♙xd6 or 16 ♞xa5 with the blow 16...♖xe4!. This leads us to 16 ♖f2, delaying recapture to strengthen e4. The position after 16...♖xc4 17 ♙xc4 favours White, but Black has a brilliant counter: 16...d5! 17 ♙xb8 (17 ♞xa5 meets with the same reply) 17...dxc4! 18 ♙e5 exf3! 19 ♞xa5 (19 gxf3 c5!) 19...♖g4! 20 ♖xg4 ♙xg4, and 21...♞f5 is threatened. In spite of the material imbalance the position is extremely difficult to assess, and any result is quite possible.

The alternative to 14 ♖d1 is the pawn exchange 14 dxe5 dxe5. Perhaps the knight can now retreat to d1? We shall check this: 15 ♖d1 exf4 16 ♙xf4 ♞e8 (or 16...♖xc4 17 ♙xc4 ♞e8) 17 ♖f2 (17 ♞xa5 ♖xe4!) 17...♖xc4 18 ♙xc4 ♞a8

19 0-0 ♖e6. The next move will be 20...♟d7, when White has nothing.

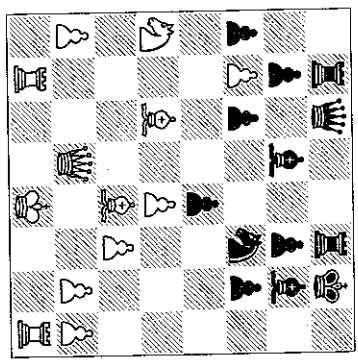
Let us study 15 ♟a4 (instead of 15 ♟d1) 15...exf4 16 ♖xf4. After 16...♞e8? 17 ♟c5 White's knight is much more actively placed on c5 than on f2, but Black can improve upon this with another outstanding tactical resource: 16...c5! 17 ♖xa5 ♖xa4 18 ♖xb8 (18 ♖xa4 ♟xc4! 19 fxe4 ♖g4) 18...♟xe4!? (18...♖xb8 19 ♖xa4 ♟h5!?) is also possible, with rich compensation for the sacrificed exchange) 19 fxe4 ♖g4 and again Black has managed to create tremendous complications.

Finally there is the modest move 15 ♟h3. This allows Black full-blooded counterplay by means of 15...♖e6 16 ♖b4 ♞d8 17 ♖f2 ♞d4!

It often happens that you analyse complex variations and at some point detect the essence of the position (and with it the best continuation). This is what happened here – the solution lies in ‘trying up’ the game, and not letting the black pieces become active, especially the g7-bishop.

- 14 dxе5! dxе5
- 15 ♟xg6!! hxg6
- 16 ♟a4 ♟xc4
- 17 ♖xc4 (D)

White has a space advantage, and his knight will jump into c5.



B

- 17 ... ♖e6
- 18 ♖c2 ♞d8

Trying to intensify the struggle by means of 18...♟d5 fails after 19 exd5 cxd5 20 ♖d3 ♖xc2 21 ♖xc2 d4 22 ♖d2 ♖xa2 23 ♖b2.

- 19 0-0 ♖xc4
- 20 ♖xc4 ♟e8!

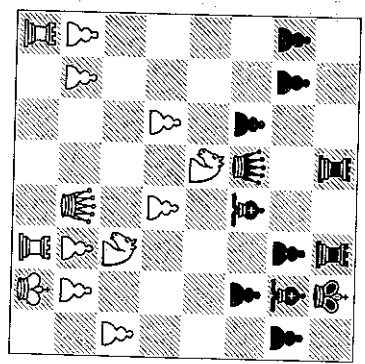
The knight is heading for an outpost on d4 via the route e8-d6-b5.

- 21 ♖b3! ♟d6
- 22 ♖g5! ♞e8
- Not 22...♞d7? 23 ♟c5.

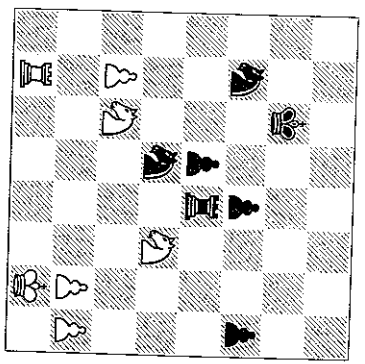
- 23 ♞bd1 ♟b5
- 24 ♟c5 ♟d4
- 25 ♖c4 ♖f8
- 26 ♖c3!

White maintained his positional advantage, and subsequently implemented it quickly.

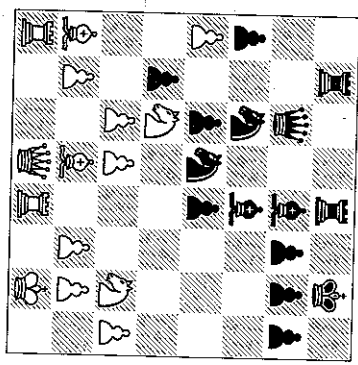
We continue overleaf with a set of six exercises for the reader to solve.



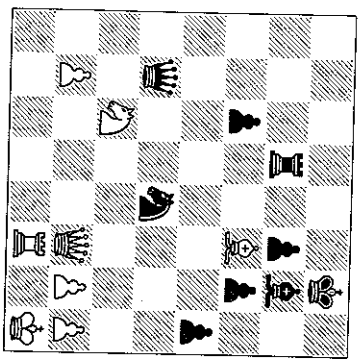
1 White to play



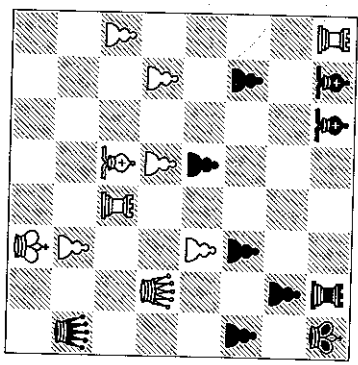
2 White to play



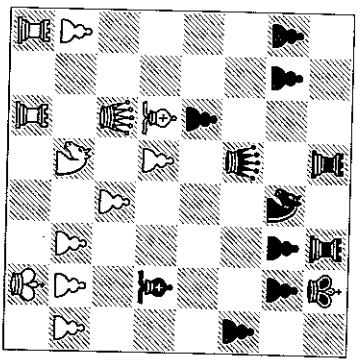
3 White to play



4 White to play



5 White to play



6 White to play

Solutions

1. Marshall-Edd.Lasker, New York 1924

If the knight retreats Black will have a pleasant game thanks to his two strong bishops: 19 ♖c3 ♖d3 (or 19...♙b4), or 19 ♖e3 ♖f4.

19 e5! ♠xe5

19...♙c5 20 b4 is no good, whilst if 19...♙d7 or 19...♙h8, Black will not have enough compensation for the pawn.

20 ♙xe5 cxd5

Not 20...♙xe5? 21 ♖e7+.

21 ♙xd6 ♠xd6

22 c5

By returning the pawn White has made tangible positional gains: control over d4 and a pawn majority on the queenside.

22 ... ♠a6

23 a4!? ♠d7

24 ♠fd1!

24 b3 is worse in view of the reply 24...b6!

24 ... ♠xa4

25 ♠xa4 ♠xa4

26 ♠a1 ♠c6

27 ♠xa7 ♠e8

28 b4

White has a positional advantage, although it is not clear if it is sufficient for victory. In the game Black defended accurately and ultimately secured a draw.

2. Mednis-Keene, Mannheim 1975

White's position is difficult, despite the material equality. The central passed pawn threatens, after the necessary preparation, to advance. The best defensive possibility is to sacrifice a knight for two pawns.

41 ♠d1!! ♖xb3

42 ♖xe6+ ♠xe6

43 ♖xd5+ ♖xd5

44 ♠xd5

There is still no forced draw – White has not managed to exchange off his opponent's final pawn – but the endgame with rook and g- and h-pawns versus rook, knight and h6-pawn does turn out to be drawn. It is useful to remember this conclusion – you might one day have to save a difficult position by taking the game into such an ending.

44...♙c6 45 ♠h5 ♖d4 46 g4

♙g6 47 ♙f2! ♖e6 48 ♙g3 ♙d6 49

h4 ♙e7 50 ♠f5

50 g5? ♖g7! would have lost.

50...♖g7 51 ♠a5 ♠d6 52 ♠a7+

♙f8 53 ♠a8+ ♙f7 54 ♠a7+ ♙g6

55 ♠a3 ♖e6 56 ♠c3 ♖d4 57 ♠a3

♠b6

Black threatens 58...♠b3+.

58 ♠a5! ♖e6 59 ♠a3 ♖c5 60

♠a5 ♠b3+ 61 ♙g2 ♠c3 62 ♠b5

♠c4 63 ♠b6+ ♙g7 64 ♙h3 ♖d7

65 ♠b5 ♠c5 66 ♠b7 ♠d5 67 ♠a7
♠d6 68 ♠a5 ♠d3+ 69 ♙g2 ♠c3 70
♠a7 ♠e7 71 ♙g3 ♙f7 72 ♠a6
♠e6 73 ♠a7 ♠d6 74 ♠a5 ♙g6 75
♙h3!

White does not want to allow the knight onto f6, so he must deprive Black of the possibility of giving check in reply to g4-g5.

75...♠c6 76 ♠d5 ♖c5 77 ♠d4

♠e6 78 ♠c4 ♖d3 79 ♠a4 ♠e3+ 80

♙g2 ♖c5 81 ♠c4 ♖e6 82 ♠a4

♠d3 83 ♠a6 ♙f7 84 ♠a7+ ♙g8 85

♠a8+ ♙f7 86 ♠a7+ ♙f6 87 g5+

hxxg5 88 hxxg5+ ♙xxg5 89 ♠e7 ♙f5

Draw

3. Geller-P.Littlewood, Plovdiv Echt 1983

21 ♖b6! ♖xb6

White's best reply to 21...♠bd8 is 22 ♙f3.

22 ♠xe6 fxe6

23 axb6 ♠xb6

24 ♖e4

Geller's pawn sacrifice has had two beneficial results: Black is left with a 'bad bishop' and pawn weaknesses in his camp.

The game continued 24...♖b8

25 ♙g4 ♖d7 26 ♠h6! g6 (26...♠f8

27 ♠e3 ♙h8 28 ♠f3 gxh6? fails to

29 ♠g3) 27 cxb4 cxb4 28 ♠ac1

♙d8? (28...♙b7! 29 ♙f3 ♠f8 30

♠e3 ♠b5 is better, although after

31 ♠c6! Black is again in serious

difficulties) 29 ♠e3 ♠b5 30 ♙xe6+ ♙h8 31 ♙xa6.

White now has an extra pawn, and he later made good use of it.

4. Miles-Romanishin, Tilburg 1985

White's best chance of saving himself lies in going into a major-piece ending.

36 ♖xe4!

Miles's actual choice, the tempting 36 ♙f4?, is weaker due to the reply 36...♙d6!. Then 37 ♖xe4? loses (37...♙xf4), and 37 ♙xe4? ♠xf6 is also bad, since after 38

♙e8+ ♙g7 39 ♖e4 Black has the

decisive blow 39...♙f4!. There re-

mains only 37 ♙xd6 ♖xd6 38

♠xg7 ♙xg7, as played, but this

ending is significantly more diffi-

cult than the game continuation as

Black can improve the position of

his pieces unhindered. The game

continued 39 ♠d1 ♠e7 40 ♙g1 (40

g4!? ♖c4 41 gxxh5 g5!?) 40...♖f5

41 ♠c1 ♙f6 42 b4 ♠e5 43 ♙f2

♙e6 44 g3 ♖d4, and Black won.

36 ... ♙xe4

37 ♠xg7 ♙xg7

38 ♙f6+ ♙g8 (h7)

39 h3

The white queen is comfortably placed on f6 – defending the b2-pawn and forcing the rook to stick to the f7-pawn, making it more

difficult for Black to organise an attack on the king. If queens are exchanged, he can trust in the renowned maxim 'all rook endings are drawn.'

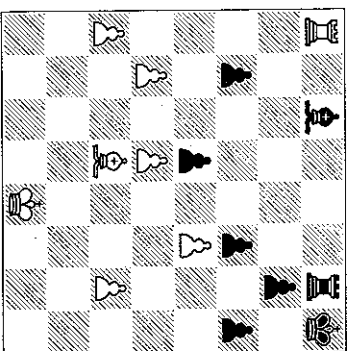
**5. Psakhis-Romanishin, USSR
Ch (Frunze) 1981**

In what way can White make use of his extra exchange? His king is exposed, his pieces are combining poorly (his rook is unfortunately placed on a8) and his opponent's position is fairly stable. For a long time Psakhis could not find a plan of action that offered realistic prospects of victory. Then it suddenly dawned on him - he saw a way of returning the extra material to force the game into an ending where he had a big positional advantage.

- 44 ♖g2! ♖c7!
- 45 ♗g3!! ♖c1+
- 45... ♗xg3 46 fxg3 ♗b7 47 ♖a4 is hopeless for Black.

- 46 ♖e1 ♗xe1+
- 47 ♖xe1 ♗xg3
- 48 fxg3 (D) ♗b7
- 48 ... ♗b7

48... ♗d7 meets with the strong 49 ♖a7. This move would have been reasonable now, but Psakhis decided to exchange rooks, having seen that the bishop ending was winning.



- 49 ♗xg8+ ♖xg8
- 50 a4 ♖f7
- 51 a5 bxa5
- 52 bxa5 ♖e7
- 53 ♖d2 ♖d6
- 54 ♖c3 ♖c6
- 55 ♖b4 ♗c8
- 56 ♖a4! ♗b7
- 56 ... ♗b7
- 57 a6 ♗b7

Black resigned

**6. Grau-Eliskases, Buenos Aires
OL 1939**

Of course, White must avoid 18 dxc5?? ♗xd2, while 18 ♖b3 cxd4 leads to no more than an even game. The only means of fighting for an advantage is the principled move 18 ♖e4. It must be precisely calculated, and its consequences correctly evaluated.

- 18 ♖e4! cxd4
- 19 ♖xd6 dxc3
- 20 ♖xb7 ♖d7

We also need to look at 20... ♖d2 21 ♗xc3 ♗c8. Then White should play 22 ♖d3! ♗c2 23 ♗xf7+, achieving a position with the same favourable balance of forces as in the main variation.

With the text move, by attacking the knight Black refuses White's raid - according to Alekhine. The World Champion produced this variation: 21 ♖a5 ♖d5! 22 f3 ♗e6 23 e4 ♖f4 24 ♗xc3 ♗xc4 25 ♗xc4 ♖d2 with an advantage for Black. However, White has a stronger alternative:

- 21 ♖c5! ♗c7
- 22 ♗xc3 ♗xc5
- Or 22... ♗fc8 23 ♗ac1 ♗xc5 24 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 25 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 26 ♗xc5 changes little.
- 23 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7
- 24 ♗xc5

In endings like this, a rook and two pawns are stronger than two minor pieces; White is justified in counting on victory.

In the game White played a weaker move, and the rest of the game was not free of serious errors either.

- 18 ♖b3?! cxd4
- 19 ♖xd4 ♖f5?

This loses a pawn. Equality could have been maintained by means of 19... a6 or 19... ♖c6.

- 20 ♖xf5 ♗xf5
- 21 ♗a5! ♗e4
- 22 ♗xa7
- 22 f3? b6!.
- 22 ... ♗g6
- 23 ♗f1 ♖d2
- 24 ♗a5 ♖d5
- 24... ♗fd8 25 ♗c8!.
- 25 ♗b4 ♖fd8
- 26 ♗c4? ♖fd8

A blunder which completely overturns the assessment of the position. After 26 g3 followed by ♗g2, White would have held on to his extra pawn.

- 26 ... ♗xg2!
- 27 ♗g4
- 27 ♗xg2 ♖d1+.
- 27 ... ♗ff6
- 28 ♖b1 ♗f3
- 29 ♖g3 ♖d1
- 30 ♖xd1 ♖xd1

Black threatens to continue with 31... ♗a6.

- 31 ♗c4 ♗c6
- 32 ♗xc6 ♗xc6
- 33 f4 ♖a1
- 34 f5 ♖f8
- 35 f6 gxf6
- 36 ♖h3 ♗b5
- 37 ♖f3 ♖e7
- 38 e4 ♖e6

White resigned

9 Opposite-coloured bishops in the middlegame

Mark Dvoretzky

If you wish to examine some kind of typical position from the middlegame or endgame, the most pleasant way of doing this involves reading a good book or article in which everything is carefully explained point by point. Unfortunately, there is not a great deal of such material.

Another option is independent investigation. Choose a few examples on a theme which interests you, preferably ones with good commentaries. Examine these examples, analyse them, try to note their characteristic ideas and make general conclusions which you can then check with new examples.

In practice you usually have to combine both methods. Thus, I had the impulse to study opposite-coloured bishops in the middlegame after reading an article by GM Simagin on the subject, published in *Shakmatny v SSSR* in 1962. The grandmaster's assessments interested me, although not all of the

examples he offered were convincing.

I have chosen extensive material, in particular using games involving Simagin himself, as he was a very skilful player of positions involving opposite-coloured bishops. As a result I managed to understand the problem.

The rules which govern opposite-coloured bishops in the middlegame and in the endgame differ, and are at times even contradictory. In the ending the presence of opposite-coloured bishops usually improves the defending side's drawing chances. In the middlegame opposite-coloured bishops strengthen an attack and increase the chances of its success.

We can now formulate some general principles which will help us to orientate ourselves in a middlegame position with opposite-coloured bishops, and we shall examine illustrations of these principles.

Initiative

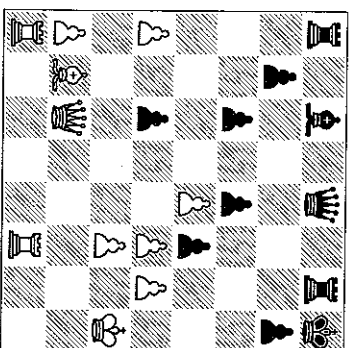
Act with the utmost energy, and endeavour to seize the initiative, which can be even more dangerous with opposite-coloured bishops.

In the first part of my book *Secrets of Chess Training* I showed the ending of the fourth game of the Women's Candidates' March from 1980, Alexandra-Litinskaya. Apart from opposite-coloured bishops there were only rooks on the board. Nevertheless the basis of the paradoxical solution to the position, which White found, lay in the idea of striving to avoid passive defence, and creating counter-threats at any price. I recommend that if you are not familiar with this ending, you should study it.

Now we will look at some examples from the middlegame.

White, to move, is apparently better. His bishop has good prospects, while Black's bishop will not have a significant part to play in the immediate future. However, the white king is in a rather uncomfortable position, and Black has attacking possibilities on both flanks. Therefore White needs to find an energetic and precise plan.

A straightforward attempt to make use of the h-file by playing 26 ♖g3 is not very effective because of the reply 26... ♜g6. What about



W

Simagin – Chistiakov

Moscow Ch 1946

taking the c4-pawn? Simagin did not even analyse this move – a general evaluation was enough for him: 'The position is so sharp that the black pawn is small beer and it is not worth losing time by capturing it.'

26 ♜f2!

The queen is moving over to h4, helping to watch over the white king while preparing to land on f6 to harass the enemy king. In the event of queens being exchanged on f6, the diagonal will be lengthened for the b2-bishop.

26 ... c3!

It is necessary to make room for the rook. Initiative is more important than pawns!

27 ♖xc3 ♜xa4

The f4-pawn is under attack, but this does not affect Simagin.

28 ♖h4!
White prepares ♖f6+, or possibly 29 ♖g3.

Black's position is precarious but even so he could still put up a fight by fanning the flames of counter-initiative and baiting the enemy pieces. The correct move is 28...♞a3!. If the bishop is taken away, then a capture on g4 will follow. In the event of 29 ♞ac1 there is the possibility ...b7-b5-b4 or 29...♞g6 (the queen's rook is tied to the bishop and cannot yet go to d1). White's advantage can only be preserved with the energetic 29 ♖f6+ ♞g7 30 ♞ad1! fxg4+ 31 ♖h4 ♖d7 32 ♖b4.

28 ... ♞xf4?

A decisive error. Now Simagin can set about his attack on the king, and his bishop, which has no opponent, will play a most important role in it. The attack will actually be conducted on the dark squares, which are inaccessible to the enemy bishop.

29 ♖f6+ ♞g7
30 ♖g3 ♞c4
31 ♞ad1

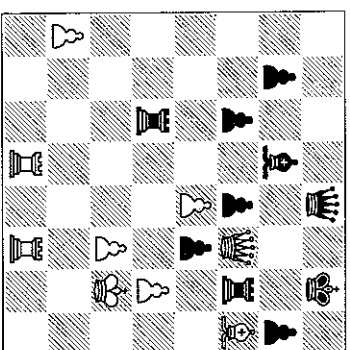
An important tempo!

31 ... ♖d7

32 ♖d2!

With the disappearance of the f4-pawn, the c1-h6 diagonal has opened up, and White is able to profit from this circumstance.

32 ... ♖g8
33 ♖h6 ♞g6 (D)



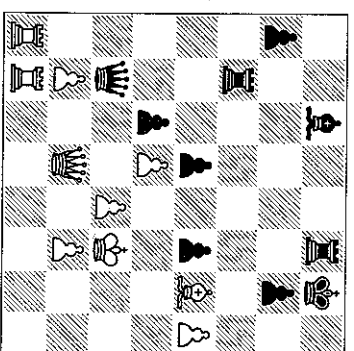
W

34 ♞xd7!
35 ♞g7+ ♖h8
36 exf6 ♖b8+
37 f4 ♞c3+
38 ♖h4 ♖f8

There is no satisfactory defence to the threat of 39 f7.

39 ♞xh7+ ♖xh7
40 ♖xf8 ♖g8
41 ♖e7 fxg4
42 ♞g1 ♞h3+
43 ♖xg4
Black resigned

An instructive example! At first both sides were fighting for the initiative, and were willing to sacrifice pawns. But at some point Black lost his rhythm and became greedy, and for this he was severely punished.



B

Yakubovich - Simagin
Moscow 1936

Who is better? Would you say that Black is better, in that the white king stands in an unreliable position? If I play ♖f4, intending ♞xa7, ♞g1 and ♖e5, whose king turns out to be in danger? The c8-bishop is excluded from the game and White is putting pressure on g7, which can also be attacked by the h5-pawn.

Whose move is it? We should have started with this question. If it were White's move he would have an advantage, however it is Black's move now, and he quickly opens up the files around the enemy king.

34 ... ♠f4!

This pawn sacrifice would be a natural choice based on general considerations, but Simagin uses it as part of a combination which leads to a forced win.

35 ♖xf4 g5!!
It is important to give the rook the g6-square.

36 hxxg6 ♞xf4+!
37 ♖xf4 ♞f6+
38 ♖g3

If 38 ♖g5, then 38...♖b6 39 ♖c2 ♖e6 (this is more precise than 39...♖g7 40 ♞g1!) is decisive, for example, 40 ♞xa7 ♞f5+ 41 ♖h6 ♞h5+ 42 ♖xh5 ♖g4+ with mate next move.

38 ... ♞xg6+
39 ♖f3 ♖g4+
40 ♖g3 ♖e2+
41 ♖h4 ♖b7
42 ♖xe2 ♖e7+!
White resigned

An attractive attack!

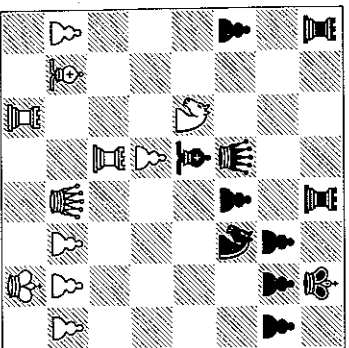
With these examples I am paying tribute to Vladimir Pavlovich Simagin. Many people consider that after Kasparov, Karpov and a few other greats, the remaining players are weak and somehow uninteresting. In fact, amongst grandmasters of the second and third rank, some know how to move their pieces, but do not possess any creative individuality. However, amongst them you do meet true artists with original ideas and profound thoughts, and studying their work is no worse than studying the work of champions. Simagin was one such artist, and I recommend

that you study his selected games. For some time it was a standard reference work for me.

Attack

The correct strategy in a position with opposite-coloured bishops is to attack the king. Material or positional gains count for little if the king is in danger. Any possibility of playing for an attack must be used.

In the episodes we have already examined the game has been decided by a straightforward attack. I want to draw your attention to two more examples of Simagin's art. In both games his opponent was tempted by the opportunity to win a pawn on the queenside, underestimating the threats to his king.



W

Uusi - Simagin

Gorky 1954

Black's position is preferable.

The powerful d5-bishop is attacking the a2-pawn, bearing down on the kingside and, finally, blocking the d4-pawn. However, the real danger for White is not yet visible. He can, for example, play 21 ♖a3, defending the a2-pawn and simultaneously creating the threat of 22 ♖c4. If 21... ♣f4 22 ♣d2 he has chances to simplify.

21 ♖a3?!

a5

22 ♖c3?!

White has decided to win a pawn on the queenside. Black will give this pawn away with pleasure, and by inflicting this minimal material casualty on himself, create a strong attack on the kingside! (Simagin).

22 ...

e5!

At an appropriate moment the pawn will rush through to e4. Until now it has not been easy for Black to organise his attack, since his opponent has always been able to neutralise the menacing d5-bishop with f2-f3. The pawn will cramp White's kingside while enhancing Black's potential to attack. Of course, previously it was difficult to establish whether or not the attack would succeed, but in principle this is exactly the kind of strategy which is needed with opposite-coloured bishops.

23 ♣d2

23 ♖xa5? exd4.

23 ... e4

Black does not achieve anything in particular after 23... ♖e4!? 24 ♣e3. However, it is always worth looking at such incidental tactical ideas before carrying out planned moves.

24 h3

It was necessary to prevent the thrust 24... ♖g4. After 24 ♣g5 Simagin planned 24... e3! 25 fxe3 h6 26 ♣g3 ♣hxg3 27 hxg3 ♖xe3 or 26 ♣f4 ♣xf4 27 exf4 ♖e2, preserving an advantage in the ending.

24 ... ♖h5

As the knight is being kept out of g4, it is going to f4, from where it will combine with the bishop to threaten g2.

25 ♖xa5

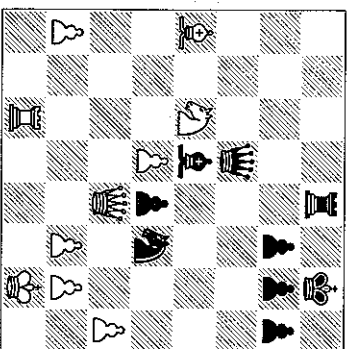
♖xa5

26 ♖xa5

♖f4

Threatening 27... ♖xg2!.

27 ♣e3 (D)



B

White has won a pawn and repulsed the immediate threats. The f4-knight is dangerous, but the other black pieces are not in a position to help it; the queen cannot move to g6, and the bishop is being held up by the e4-pawn. Has Black's strategy turned into a fiasco?

With opposite-coloured bishops you have to believe in the attacking possibilities of a position. Pressure on the kingside is still more important than the opponent's material gains. In order to increase the pressure Black must drive the queen away from its blockading square e3. For this the pawns must take part in the attack.

27 ... f5!

Black threatens 28... ♖xg2! 29 ♖xg2 f4. An immediate piece sacrifice was also worthy of attention: 27... ♖xg2!? 28 ♖xg2 f5, with dangerous threats.

28 ♖b7?!

An interesting response. In the event of 28... ♖xb7 29 ♖c7 and 30 ♖xf4 the attack transfers to White. However, taking the knight is not obligatory.

Uusi had at his disposal another witty resource: 28 ♖c7! ♣xc7 29 ♖d3. However, after 29... ♖xg2!? 30 ♖xc7 ♖xc3 31 ♖f4 (31 ♖b4!?) Black would have retained good endgame chances by continuing 31... ♖f7 32 fxe3 g5.

28 ... ♖h6!

29 ♖d2

29 ♖c7? ♖e2+!

29 ... g5

Typesetter's note: 29... ♖g6 30 ♖xf4 e3 appears to lead to the win of a piece.

30 ♖c5

30 ♖c7? ♖b6.

30 ... ♖g7

31 ♖e1?

White overlooks the decisive combination. But what should he have done? After 31 ♖h2 h6 (not 31... ♖xg2? 32 ♖xg5) 32 g3 ♖g6 his position remains troublesome. On the other hand, 31 h4 gives Black a pleasant choice between 31... gxb4 32 ♖xf4 e3 and 31... ♖xg2 32 ♖xg5 ♖xh4.

31 ... ♖xg2!

The knight sacrifice fittingly crowns the attack.

32 ♖xg2 f4

33 ♖c3 e3+

34 f3

34 ♖h2 g4! 35 fxe3 g3+ 36 ♖g1 f3. (*Typesetter's note:* However, now 37 e4! f2+ 38 ♖g2 fxe1 ♖39 ♖xe1 ♖xe4+ 40 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 41 ♖b3+ draws by forcing the exchange of queens.)

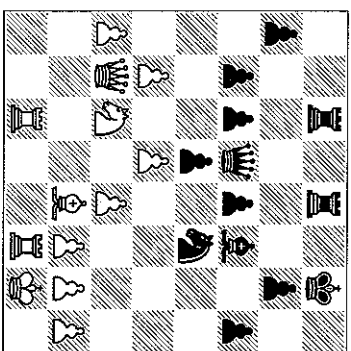
34 ... g4!

35 ♖g1 ♖xf3+

36 ♖f1 g3

37 ♖c1 g2+

White resigned



W

Simagin - Saigin

Vilnius 1958

The position looks roughly equal. Black is counting on preparing ...c6-c5. If his pawn were on h7 instead of h6, everything really would be in order for him.

20 ♖d3!

Simagin notices the only defect in his opponent's set-up - the weak b1-h7 diagonal, along which he can aim his dangerous battery of queen and bishop.

20 ... ♖e7

21 ♖b1 c5

22 dxc5 bxc5

23 bxc5 ♖xc5

24 ♖e2 ♖xc1

25 ♖xc1 ♖b8

It is possible that Black could still hold on to his position if he recognised that his position was worse. It was worth looking, for example, at 25... e5, so that after

26 ♖d3 he could reply 26... e4.

However, he is calmly trying to win a pawn, believing his position is very good. (Simagin)

26 ♖d3 ♖b2

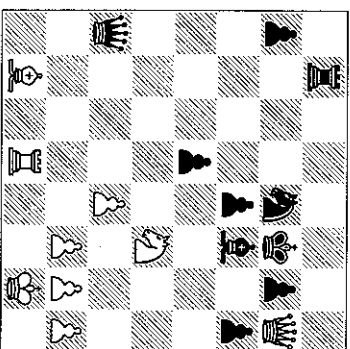
27 ♖d1 ♖xa3

28 ♖h7+ ♖f7

29 ♖f4

Threatening 30 ♖g6+.

29 ... ♖f6 (D)



W

The situation resembles the previous game. White's attack seems to have failed, in that 30 ♖g6+ ♖xg6 31 ♖xg6+ ♖e7 gives him nothing. In fact the attack is more important than a pawn, and it can be intensified in two different ways.

30 g4!

It is clear that after 31 g5 Black will not be able to take the pawn, although the manoeuvre 30 ♖d3! followed by 31 ♖e2 and 32 ♖h5+ is probably just as strong.

30 ... ♖b4

31 g5! ♖xg5

31... hxe5 32 ♖h5+ is no good.

31... ♖xf4 32 exf4 ♖f3 33 ♖d3

♖g4+ 34 ♖g3! also does not help.

32 ♖g6+ ♖f6

After 32... ♖xg6 33 ♖xg6+ the e6-pawn is under attack.

33 ♖h5+ ♖e5

34 ♖xg7+ ♖d6

35 ♖f8 ♖a4

36 ♖c1 ♖b5?

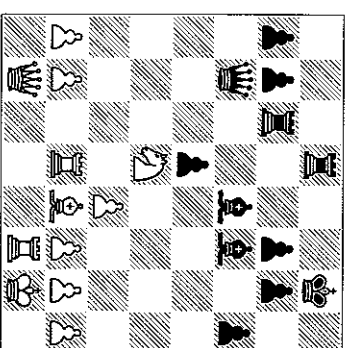
37 ♖e8! ♖d3

38 ♖c6+ ♖e5

39 ♖g7+

Black resigned

It is interesting that many years later a very similar strategic situation arose in game 4 of the 2nd World Championship match between Karpov and Kasparov.



W

Karpov - Kasparov

Moscow Wch (4) 1985

Black could have obtained equality by playing 20...♠xd4! 21 ♠xd4 ♠dc8 (with the threat of 22...♠c2). For example, 22 ♠fd1?! ♠c2 23 ♠d2 ♠f5, or 22 ♠d2 ♠b4 23 ♠fd1 (23 ♠dd1? ♠c1) 23...♠xd2! (23...♠c1!?) 24 ♠xd2 ♠c1+, or, finally, 22 ♠d3!? ♠c5 23 h3 (23 f4 ♠d7!) 23...♠c7 followed by ...♠c1.

20 ... ♠dc8?!
21 ♠xe6!
Now after 21...♠xe6 the d5-pawn is weak, whilst 21...fxc6 leaves us with a familiar structure.

21 ... fxc6
Kasparov certainly did not know the game Simagin-Saigin, and for this reason he underestimated the nature of the attack on his king on the light squares, and exaggerated the significance of the pressure he had on the queenside.

Objectively Black can still expect to draw. In the previous game the white knight played an important role in the attack, but here there is no knight on the board, and therefore defence will be markedly easier.

After the straightforward 22 ♠g6? ♠a5 White loses a pawn and does not create any serious threats in return. Karpov resorts to a more refined strategy.

'Systematic play is necessary, the idea of which can be set forth like this: consolidating the position

on the queenside, transferring the queen to the kingside, opening up the game by means of e3-e4 and only then organising an attack on the light squares using the open e-file. In the game Karpov managed to put all these ideas into practice, but not without my essential help' (Kasparov)

22 ♠g4!
22 ♠fd1? is weaker: 22...♠b4, intending 23...♠xd2.
22 ... ♠c4
23 h3 ♠c6
24 ♠d3 ♠h8?!

It is obvious that Kasparov has no feeling for the position. Indeed, sooner or later White is going to set up a battery along the b1-h7 diagonal, and the king will then have to run from the corner.

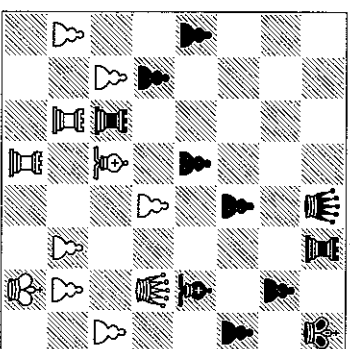
25 ♠fd1 a5
26 b3! ♠c3
27 ♠e2 ♠f8!?
28 ♠h5!

The bishop is finally moving to its 'rightful' diagonal.
28 ... b5
29 ♠g6 ♠d8
30 ♠d3 b4
31 ♠g4 ♠e8
32 e4! ♠g5

This move does not look very logical to me. Having put his rook on f8 and his bishop on d8, Kasparov was planning, in reply to the inevitable blow e3-e4, to play

...♠b6, in order to create counter-pressure on f2. Yet suddenly the bishop is occupying quite a different diagonal! Kasparov was probably tempted by a crude trap: 33 ♠e2?? ♠f4.

33 ♠c2 (D)



33 ... ♠xc2?

A serious positional error. By exchanging his active rook Black is handing his opponent a permanent initiative. He should have exchanged queens, not rooks. Bearing in mind that after 33...♠f7 there is the reply 34 ♠e2!, he should have chosen between 33...♠c6 and 33...♠c8. For example, 33...♠c8! 34 exd5 exd5 (not 34...♠xc2? 35 ♠e4) 35 ♠xc8 ♠fxc8 36 ♠e2 ♠c1 37 ♠xc1 ♠xc1+ 38 ♠h2 ♠c8 39 ♠g6 ♠f6 with a worse but probably defensible ending.

34 ♠xc2 ♠c6

35 ♠e2 ♠c5
36 ♠f1 ♠c3
37 exd5 exd5
38 ♠b1!

The triumph of White's strategy – his queen will now inevitably find the b1-h7 diagonal. I will show the remainder of the game with very brief notes: 38...♠d2 39 ♠e5 ♠d8?! (39...♠f6!? 40 ♠f5 ♠g8) 40 ♠f5 ♠g8 41 ♠e6+ ♠h8 (41...♠f8 42 ♠g6 ♠f4 43 ♠e1) 42 ♠g6 ♠g8 43 ♠e6+ ♠h8 44 ♠f5! (44 ♠e1 ♠f8!) 44...♠c3 45 ♠g6 ♠g8 46 ♠e6+ ♠h8 47 ♠f5 ♠g8 48 g3! ♠f8 49 ♠g2 ♠f6 50 ♠h7 ♠f7 51 h4 ♠d2 (or else 52 ♠e1) 52 ♠d1 ♠c3 53 ♠d3 ♠d6 54 ♠f3! (54 ♠e3? ♠g5) 54...♠e7 (54...♠f6 55 ♠e3 ♠xf5 56 ♠h8+ ♠g8 57 ♠e8+) 55 ♠h8 d4 56 ♠c8 ♠f6 57 ♠c5+ ♠e8 58 ♠f4 ♠b7+ 59 ♠e4+ ♠f7 (59...♠e6!?) does not help in view of 60 ♠c4! ♠xc4 61 ♠g8+ ♠e7 62 ♠xg7+) 60 ♠c4+ ♠f8 61 ♠h7! ♠f7 62 ♠e6 ♠d7 63 ♠e5, and Black resigned.

Pawn Positions

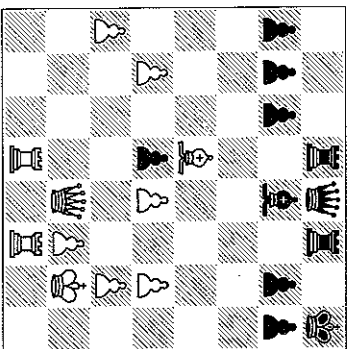
The stronger side should (as in the endgame) position his pawns on the same colour squares as his opponent's bishop. But for the weaker side, the endgame recommendation of putting your pawns on the same coloured squares as

your own bishop does not yet work. Then it is done for the sake of building a fortress. If the bishop and king can defend all their pawns and blockade the enemy passed pawns, then you need not fear penetration of the enemy pieces on the other coloured squares. In the middlegame, of course, this logic does not work. The pawns have to protect the squares which their bishop does not control.

It is clear that if Kasparov's kingside pawns had been on light squares (g6 and h7) he would have had no problems. We should also note that a construction of pawns on the dark squares (g2-g3 and h3-h4) was erected by Karpov.

One more useful observation – the flexibility of the pawn structure and the presence of a mobile pawn chain can influence the assessment of the position decisively. A pawn storm will be more promising if it is supported by an active bishop.

In the following diagram, is it worth taking the b7-pawn? We have already gathered enough experience with opposite-coloured bishops to answer immediately – no, it is not. Taking on b7 only loses time, which Black can use to create counterplay. He could, of course, choose 35...d3! 36 ♖xd3 ♗b5 37 ♖d5 c6, and White can save the piece only by means of 38



W
Botvinnik – Tal
Moscow Wch (3) 1961

a4!. Thus, such complications give him nothing.

35 ♖c4!

'White has to put his bishop on d3, after which his pawns will move into action. Taking the b7-pawn is only a distraction from carrying out this plan.' (Botvinnik). Short and clear! The bishop on d5 looks nice, but that is all. By bringing it round to d3 (from where it will be keeping an eye on h7) and carrying out f2-f4, e4-e5 and g4-g5, White will forcefully inhibit the enemy pieces, and then move straight on to a direct attack on the king, using the open h-file.

35 ... c5
36 b5 ♖f6
37 f4 d3

The two previous moves were made for the sake of this pawn

sacrifice. Tal wants to exchange off a pair of rooks and place his bishop on the safe d4-square. However, it would have been easier if he had never started. From d4 the bishop will be firing into thin air, whilst the white bishop is threatening the kingside.

38 ♖xd3

38 ♖xd3 ♖d4 is worse, when the black rook is active. Botvinnik needs only one rook to attack.

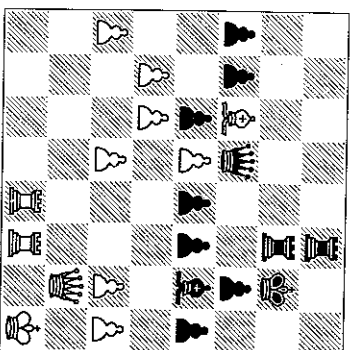
38 ... ♖xd3
39 ♖xd3 ♖d4
40 e5 g6
41 ♖h1 ♖g7
42 ♗e4 b6
43 ♖c4

Threatening to play ♗b7+. After 43...♗d7 matters are decided simplest of all by 44 ♗c6 ♗xc6 45 bxc6 ♖c8 46 e6. If 43...♗e7, then 44 g5 (with the idea of 45 ♗c6 and 46 ♗f6+) 44...♖c8 45 f5 gxf5 46 ♖xh7+1 ♖xh7 47 ♗h4+ and 48 ♗h6 mate. **Black resigned.**

The Bad Bishop

Here the concept of the 'bad bishop' is slightly different than usual. Botvinnik had a good bishop, in that it was attacking the kingside. But Tal's bishop was bad – it created no counter-threats whatsoever. So the main point about a bishop is the prospects it has of

taking part in an attack, and this factor often has a major influence on the assessment of the position. A blockaded pawn which holds up its own bishop is a big drawback.



B
Spassky – Simagin
USSR Ch (Moscow) 1961

How do you evaluate this position? Simagin is playing Black, and the advantage is once again on his side.

In the first place, he has mobile pawns – and his opponent must constantly be on the look-out for the thrusts ...h5-h4 and ...e5-e4. There is also a second, exceptionally important factor: White has a blockaded d5-pawn on the same coloured square as his own bishop. In general it would be better for him if it were not there at all! The bishop on c6 has no prospects. But

if it is moved to g2, it has nothing to do there either.

How can Black strengthen his position? 36...h4? 37 g4 is premature. Simagin discovers an excellent plan: he moves the bishop to c7 and concentrates his efforts on a kingside attack. Then pawn breakthroughs will become more dangerous.

- 36 ... ♖d8!
 37 bxc5 bxc5
 38 ♖b1?! ♖c7
 39 ♖a4

Spassky is trying to add his bishop to his defences. Now is precisely the time – with the bishop still on the way to the kingside and the black pieces already occupying ideal positions for attack – to break through the defensive barrier.

- 39 ... ♙e4!
 40 dxe4 fxe4
 41 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7
 42 ♖d1

42 ♖xe4 ♖xg3 43 ♖g2 ♖e3 is also hopeless – Black effectively has an extra piece, since White's bishop is playing no part in the struggle. For example, 44 ♖g1 ♖h8 45 ♖f1 (defending against 45...♖f2) 45...♖xf1+ 46 ♖xf1 ♖g7 47 ♖d7 ♖d2! 48 ♖g1 ♖e2 and White is completely helpless (Simagin's variation).

- 42 ... ♙e3
 Threatening 43...♖f2.

43 ♖f3 h4!

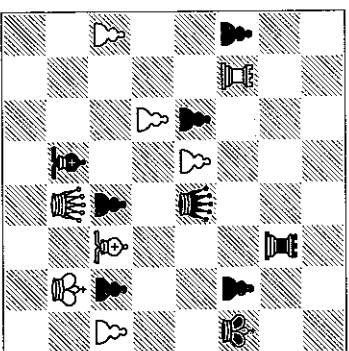
Black has a decisive attack.

White cannot reply 44 g4 or 44 gxf4 because of 44...♖xf3.

- 44 ♖f1 hxg3
 45 ♖e2 ♖e5
 46 ♖g2 ♖a5

Spassky has somehow managed to barricade himself in, but his position is still lost. By bringing the bishop round to d2, Black can attack the weak a3- and c4-pawns. If the white rook comes over to defend, then an exchange sacrifice on f3 is possible.

- 47 ♖b1 ♖h6
 48 ♖b3 ♖d2
 49 ♖b6 (D)



B

- 49 ... ♖xf3!
 50 ♖e6
 50 ♖xf3 ♖h5+; 50 ♖xf3 e2 51 ♖f8+ ♖g7.
 50 ... ♖xe6

51 dxe6 ♖f2+

52 ♖xg3

52 ♖xf2 gxf2 and then 53 e7 e2 or 53 ♖f1 ♖g7.

52 ...

♖xe2

53 e7

♖g2+!

54 ♖xg2

e2

55 e8♖

e1♖

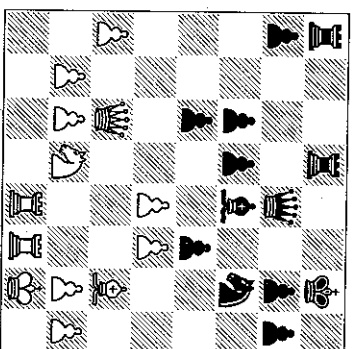
56 ♖f8+

♖h5

57 ♖xc5+

♖g5

White resigned



B

Glushnev – Sakharov
 USSR 1961

Here the position is more difficult to evaluate (Simagin is not playing, so we have to use other considerations!).

The black bishop has more prospects; after a pawn exchange in the centre it can put pressure on either c2 or g2. Black also has resources such as ...h7-h5-h4. Of course, he cannot under any circumstances

allow f4-f5, as this would then bring his opponent's bishop to life.

But it is hardly correct to assess so dynamic a situation with only general considerations – you need to have a proper look.

At the moment the threat is 22 exf5. 21...♖f7 22 ♖f3 forces the reply 22...h6.

21 ... ♖f6!

Certainly not stereotyped play! Black is happy with an exchange of queens on f6, with several useful moves to improve his position: ...♖f7, ...♖b8, ...♖g8, and ...h7-h5-h4. Nevertheless, White should have gone into the endgame – the continuation he chose was much worse.

22 e5? dxe5

23 fxe5 ♖g5!

The weakness on c5 does not have the slightest significance. Of much greater importance for White is the appearance of a dreadful e5-pawn, which holds up its own bishop, knight (after 24 ♖f3) and rook. 'We already know that a blockaded pawn on the same colour square as its bishop promises only unpleasantness.' (Simagin)

Black's plan is obvious: to attack g2. The queen is aimed at it, aided by the bishop, knight, f- and h-pawns. How abruptly the position has altered – only a moment ago it did not seem very clear, but

now there can be no doubt about Black's superiority.

24 ♖f3 ♗g4

25 b3

25 ♗xc5 f4 26 ♠f2 ♠d5. But now White need not fear 25...f4 26 ♠f2 ♠d5?, since the f3-knight is defended, and he can play 27 e6. The bishop has to blockade the pawn for the time being, and it will only move to d5 at an appropriate moment.

25 ... h5!

26 ♗h4!

By tactical means White manages to exchange off a pair of pieces, but it does not bring any real relief.

26 ... ♗xh4

27 ♠f4 ♗g5

28 ♠xh4 ♠d2

Adding the rook to the attack.

The threat is 29...♠d5.

29 ♠f4 ♠ad8

30 ♗xc5?

Going after the pawn only loses time. 30 h4 was obligatory.

30 ... h4!

31 ♠xh4 ♠d1!

31...♠d5 suggested itself, but after 32 e6 the white pieces are revived. Therefore the bishop cannot abandon its blocking post until the end of the game. Thus the threat of ...♠d5 remains – in Bobby Fischer's ironic definition – an 'eventual possibility'.

32 ♗b4

32...♠xe1+ 33 ♠xe1 ♠d1 was threatened.

32 ... ♗c3+

33 ♠f2 ♠8d2!!

In this hopeless position (the black king can hide on g6 from checks by the queen) **White lost on time.**

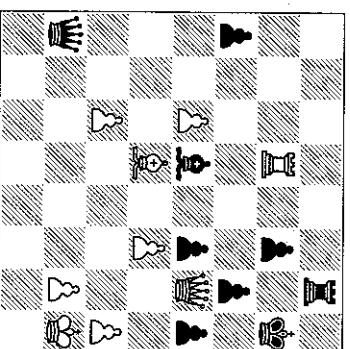
We have probably examined all of the more general principles of playing middlegame positions with opposite-coloured bishops. Having mastered these ideas, and acquired a sense of the spirit of these positions, you will certainly be able to orientate yourselves in them confidently, and successfully solve the specific problems with which you are faced.

In order to master the themes still further it would help to examine a few more practical examples, to check the 'rules' you have already become familiarised with and to look for new ones.

It will also be useful to pick out and look at the most frequently seen patterns of play. The most important of these are: attacking g7 (g2) (as in the last example) – or attacking on the long diagonal in the absence of a pawn on g7 (g2) (as in the first game we examined, Sigmagin-Christakov); attacking f7 (f2); the King's Indian structure.

Attacking along the long diagonal

We will begin with a fairly simple situation.



W

Perls – Marshall

Vienna 1908

Both players are pressing along a long diagonal, but, of course, White has a big advantage. He has an active rook, while the pawns on the c-file can be used to distract the enemy pieces.

1 c4!

As usual, in a position with opposite-coloured bishops, pawns do not matter so much. For the moment it is important to free the queen from defending g2.

1 ... ♗xc4

If 1...♠xc4, then 2 ♠d8 is immediately decisive.

2 ♗f6 ♗a2

3 ♠b2!

Again White threatens 4 ♠d8 followed by 5 ♗h8+, as well as 4 c6. Black can resist only by both-ering his opponent with counter-threats. Initiative is everything, and neither side must lag behind.

3 ... ♗c4

4 ♗e5 ♠e6

5 ♠d8! f6

6 ♗c7+

6 ♗xf6 is also effective. After 6...♗xf4+ you should pay attention to the typical king manoeuvre which deflects the enemy queen from its trajectory and avoids a perpetual check: 7 ♠g1! ♗e3+ 8 ♠h1! ♗e1+ 9 ♠h2.

6 ... ♠g7

After 6...♠f7 the quickest way for White to achieve his aim is with a manoeuvre we already know: 7 ♠g8 ♠xg8 8 ♗d8+ ♠h7 9 ♗xf6 ♗xf4+ 10 ♠g1 ♗e3+ 11 ♠h1 ♗e1+ 12 ♠h2 ♠h6 13 h4.

7 ♠xf6!

Black resigned

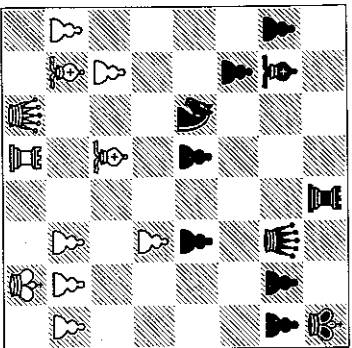
(See diagram on following page)

29 ♠e5!

The ex-World Champion willingly allows his rival to exchange one of his bishops, since the pressure on g7 by the other one can never be opposed.

29 ... ♠c8

30 ♗b2 ♗xd3



W

Petrosian – Polugaevsky

Moscow (4) 1970

As there are opposite-coloured bishops, Black has practically no remaining chances of saving himself, although things would not have been any better after 30...♘e6 (with the hope of playing ...d5-d4 at some point) 31 ♖b1!

- 31 ♖xd3 ♖c6
32 h3 h6
33 ♖e3!

The rook must combine with the other pieces for the attack on g7. This cannot be done on the g-file (33 ♖g3 ♖g6) so Petrosian plans an invasion via the e-file (♙d4, ♗e2 and ♖e7).

- 33 ... ♖g6?

The black bishop is now completely excluded from the game. The pawn sacrifice 33...d4! seems like the best try, for example 34 ♙xd4 ♖g6 35 f3 ♙d5.

- 34 ♙d4! ♖h7
35 ♗c2

In answer to 35 ♗e2 Black has another defence in 35...♗c7!, so Petrosian creates the threat of seizing the c-file with 36 ♖c3.

- 35 ... ♗d7

If 35...♖c6 matters are decided by 36 ♗e2 ♗c7 37 ♖e5 ♖c2 38 ♗h5 or 38 ♗e3. Or 35...♖e6 36 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 37 ♗c7.

- 36 ♖h2!

There is no hurry – Black has nowhere to go. Now the threat of 37 ♗e2 gains validity (37...♗c7 38 ♖e5).

- 36 ... ♙c8
37 ♖c3!

At last the rook breaks through to the seventh rank (his opponent cannot reply 37...♖c6). This triumph of flexible manoeuvring is highly characteristic of Tigran Petrosian.

- 37 ... ♙a6
38 ♖c7 ♗e6
39 g4! ♙f1
40 ♗xf5 ♗xf5
41 gxf5 ♖g2+
42 ♖h1

Black resigned, as he has no defence to the threats of 43 f6 and 43 ♖c1.

Now I want to show you two of my own games, played in the same opening variation. Although the

positions which arose in them were almost identical, the nature of the struggles turned out to be quite different. Everything depended on which player managed to seize the initiative.

Vikulov – Dvoretzky

Moscow Ch (Semi-final) 1971

Queen's Indian Defence

- 1 d4 ♘f6
2 ♘f3 e6
3 c4 b6
4 e3 ♙b7
5 ♙d3 ♙b4+

The idea of the check is to lure the knight to d2 so that it does not occupy the better c3-square. Theory nevertheless recommends 5...c5 or 5...c5.

- 6 ♘bd2 0-0
7 0-0 d5
8 a3 ♙d6?!

8...♙e7 is preferable. How do we know this? First, after 9 ♗c2!? ♘bd7 10 e4 dxe4 11 ♘xe4 the bishop on e7 is better placed than on d6. Secondly, after 9 b4!? c5 10 cxd5 Black has 10...♗xd5.

- 9 ♗e2?
Now my opening set-up has been fully vindicated.
9 ... ♘e4!
10 b3
10 b4!?
10 ... ♘d7

- 11 ♙b2 ♗e7

Black should be pleased at the outcome of the opening – he is already somewhat better. He has managed to provoke a2-a3, and consequently White's rook is now tied to its defence. His knight occupies the influential e4-square and will soon be supported by ...f7-f5. Exchanging on e4 is not favourable for White, whereas an exchange on e5 (after ♘e5) is just what Black wants because he still has access to the c5-square. This is precisely what happened in the game.

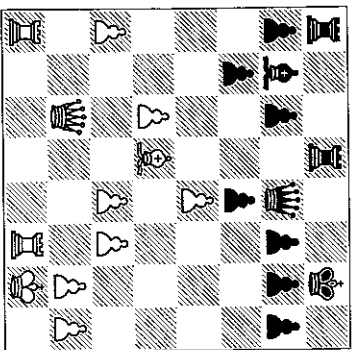
- 12 ♘e5? ♙xe5!
13 dxе5 ♘xd2
14 ♗xd2 ♘c5
15 ♙c2 dxс4
16 bxc4 ♖fd8
17 ♙d4

After 17 ♗e2 ♙e4 the black knight would be more effective than White's passive b2-bishop.

This leads to a middlegame with opposite-coloured bishops which is good for Black.

- 18 ♙xe4 ♙xe4
19 f3 ♙b7
20 ♗c2 (D)

Black effectively has an extra pawn on the queenside, but there is an even more important factor in the position of the bishops. My bishop is putting pressure on the



B

kingside and can also attack the c4-pawn. White's bishop is being held up by the e5-pawn, and has no prospects whatsoever.

Black's first task is to prevent White from ridding himself of his weak c-pawn with c4-c5.

20 ... c5

This also clears the way for Black to line up on the d-file.

21 ♖c3 ♜d7

22 a4

My opponent wants to exchange off his potentially vulnerable a-pawn, and thereby create a weakness for me on b6. But we know that with opposite-coloured bishops play on the queenside is less effective than activity on the other side of the board (assuming this is where the kings are). I would have preferred 22 ♜fd1, although after 22...♜ad8 23 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 Black has an obvious advantage.

22 ... ♜ad8
23 a5 ♜g5!

24 ♙a1

24 f4? ♜d2! loses instantly.

24 ... ♜d3

Giving the impression that it is attacking the pawn. In fact, of course, it isn't; the rook cannot take on e3 because of a pin on the c1-h6 diagonal.

25 axb6 axb6

26 ♜b2

26 ♖d4? doesn't work owing to 26...♜8xd4! 27 exd4 ♜d2. Black would like to include his h-pawn in the attack, but after 26...h5?! 27 ♜xb6 ♜xc3 28 ♜xb7 ♜c2 (or 28...♜xe5) his opponent has a successful defence in 29 f4!

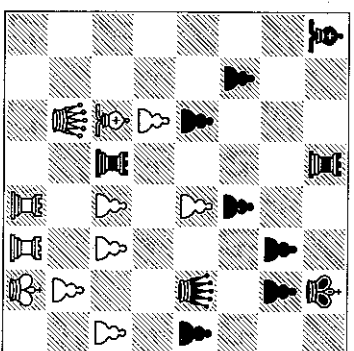
In fact, the prophylactic move 26...♜8d7! was the most precise. I played something less accurate, but it did not change the character of the battle.

26 ... ♖a8?!

27 h3

28 ♜c2 (D)

At the moment there is no direct route to a win, despite the pressure White is under defending his kingside. The principle of two weaknesses comes to my aid. I have to stretch my opponent's defence, creating diversionary threats on the other side of the board. The new object of attack is the c4-pawn.



B

28 ... ♖b7
29 ♜e2 ♜8d7

30 ♖h1

30 ♜b2 ♖a6.

30 ... ♖a6

31 ♜a4

31 ♖b2 ♜h4, or 31...♜d8.

31 ... ♜xc3

32 ♜xa6

32 ♜xd7 ♖xc4 is no better.

32 ... ♜d8!

The queen is defending the b6-pawn and is placed on an open file, positioned 'scientifically' behind the rook. Black has a won position. After 33 ♖h2 I had planned 33...h4 followed by 34...♜d1 (or 34...♜d2).

33 ♜a1 ♜xc4

34 ♜a2 ♜g5

35 ♜a8+ ♖h7

36 ♜b1+ ♜g6

37 g4

37 ♜xb6 ♜c2 38 ♜g1 ♜d1.

37 ... ♜xg4

38 ♜xg4?!

Of course, White also has no chances of saving the game after 38 ♜xg6+.

38 ... ♜c2

39 ♖g1 ♜dd2

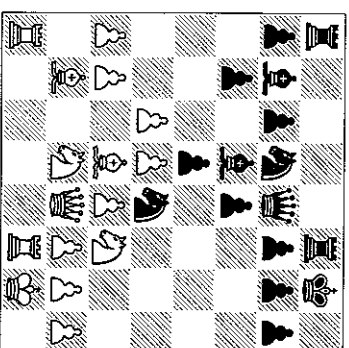
White resigned

Nisman - Dvoretzky

Moscow 1972

Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♖f6
2 c4 e6
3 ♖f3 b6
4 e3 ♖b7
5 ♖d3 ♖b4+
6 ♖bd2 0-0
7 0-0 d5
8 a3 ♖d6?!
9 ♜c2? ♖e4
10 b3 ♖d7
11 ♖b2 ♜e7 (D)



W

I played the same opening moves as in the previous game. This time my opponent did not hurry to put his knight on e5.

12 ♖f1 ♖ad8?

12...f5 is logical. However, I was not sure that the advance of the f-pawn would suit the positions resulting from 13 b4 c5 or 13 cxd5 exd5 14 ♗a6.

Using this logic we arrive at 12...a5!, preventing both possibilities. I, unfortunately, played a less precise move, rendering harmless only the second of these. Evidently, I was basing my actions on an association with the previous game – I recalled that then my rook worked quite well on the d-file, and hurried to occupy it.

13 ♗c2 a5

Again Black postpones ...f7-f5 because of 14 b4.

14 ♗e5 ♗xe5?

Another move made by analogy, but if in the game against Vikulov exchanges led to an advantage for Black, then here the result turned out to be exactly the opposite. This is a convincing example of the numerous consequences of superficially and routine!

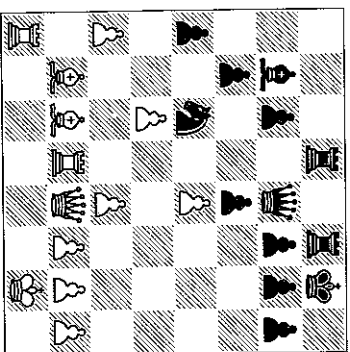
15 dxe5 ♗xd2

16 ♖xd2 dxc4

17 bxc4

17 ♖xc4? ♗xe5!

17 ... ♗c5 (D)



W

I imagined that my opponent would not avoid exchanges that were good for me on e4. White's next strong move quite simply came from outside my field of vision.

18 ♖d4!

The rook takes control of e4, incidentally creating the threat of 19 ♗xh7+! ♗xh7 20 ♖h5+ ♗g8 21 ♖h4. But the main thing is that exchanging rooks is now practically impossible. Indeed, White can take on d4 with the pawn, gaining a mobile pawn chain in the centre and threatening the deadly advance d4-d5.

Vadim Zviagintsev correctly noted that Black's problems cannot be solved by 17...♗b8 (instead of 17...♗c5) with the idea of attacking the d4-rook by continuing with ...♗c6. After 18 ♖d4! g6 (19 ♗xh7+! was threatened) 19 ♖g4!

♖d7 20 h4 ♖fd8 21 ♗c3 White is covering all the invasion points on the d-file, and can thus calmly continue his attack on the kingside.

18 ... g6

19 ♖g4

19 a4!?

19 ... a4!

The only counter-chance! By putting his knight on b3, Black can probably provoke a favourable exchange of the dangerous c2-bishop. Then the distant passed b3-pawn can be used to create tactical counterchances which will at least divert White's attention from the kingside for a while.

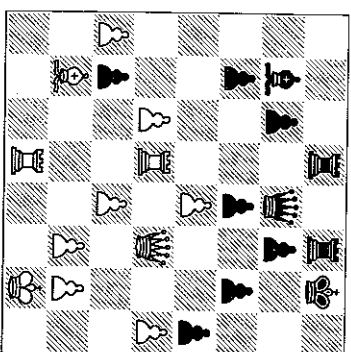
20 ♖ad1 ♗b3

21 ♗xb3 axb3

22 h4

As usual with opposite-coloured bishops, White is attacking on the kingside. It is important to note that his rook cannot be driven from d4 by ...c7-c5, as it will find an even more threatening position on d6. Exchanging it there will turn out to be totally impossible, as this would then open up a fearsome diagonal for the b2-bishop. Incidentally, precisely this kind of structure arose in the very interesting game Taimanov-Averbakh, which I urgently recommend you look at – you will find it in the famous book by Bronstein about the 1953 Candidates tournament.

22 ... h5
23 ♖f4 (D)



B

Whose bishop do you think is better? We could show that the comparison is in Black's favour – indeed his bishop is aimed right at g2, while the white bishop is blocked by the e5-pawn. But let's investigate a little further. Not a single one of my pieces is supporting my bishop, so its activity is purely superficial. Meanwhile my opponent's bishop has chances to force his way through the weakened dark squares on the kingside (when the long diagonal opens up, or via the c1-h6 diagonal), which will not do my king much good.

Black cannot just passively mark time because White will play ♖1d3, take the b3-pawn, and then prepare either e3-e4, or g2-g4. He has to try seizing the initiative, but

how? He has to decide on a very risky operation.

23 ... ♖xd4!?

24 exd4 b5!

24... ♖d8 25 ♖d3.

25 d5!

Nisman has correctly sensed the spirit of the position and, paying no attention to the pawn, tries to open the diagonal for his bishop. The wretched 25 cxb5? would have allowed me to activate by means of 25... ♖d7 26 a4 ♖a8 27 ♖a1 ♖d5 28 f3 c6!?

25 ... ♖c5!

Activity above all else! After 25... bxc4? 26 d6 things are looking bad for Black, as the exchange on d6 is tantamount to suicide and 26... ♖d7 27 ♖xc4 ♖d5 28 ♖f4! leaves Black with a passive game.

26 ♖f6!?

White is planning to shift the bishop over to h6 and he is prepared to part with pawns and even a rook in order to achieve this. A clever idea, but as we shall see, Black finds a defence. However, I cannot see a straightforward route to a win for my opponent. After 26 dxe6 fxe6 27 ♖g3 Black can reply with either 27... ♖e4 or 27... ♖g7 28 ♖d7+ ♖f7.

If 26 d6, then 26... ♖xc4. In the endgame White has nothing: 27 ♖xc4 bxc4 28 d7 ♖d8 followed by 29... ♖c6, or 28 dxc7 ♖c8 29 ♖d8+

♖g7. After 27 ♖d4! ♖c6! (not 27... ♖c2? 28 d7!) 28 ♖g5 ♖d7 and 29... c5. Here, of course, Black's position is not pleasant, but at least his queenside pawns guarantee him some counterchances.

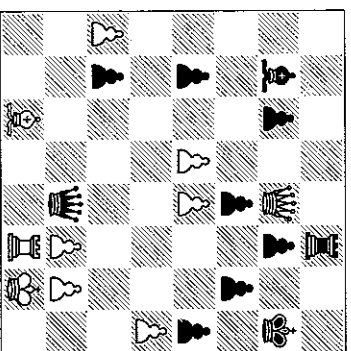
26 ... ♖xc4

27 ♖c1! ♖h7

Of course, not 27... ♖c2? 28 ♖h6! ♖xd1+ 29 ♖h2 with an inevitable mate.

28 ♖e7 ♖e2

29 ♖f1 (D)



B

How can Black defend himself?

Both 29... ♖g7? 30 ♖h6+ and 29... ♖g8? 30 ♖h6 ♖a8 31 ♖f6 are terrible. Only two possibilities remain: 29... ♖g8, and 29... b2 30 ♖xb2 (30 ♖xf8 ♖xf1+) 30... ♖g8.

It is easy to make an only move, but much more difficult when there is a choice. The price of a mistake in such a sharp position is

very high, so it must be very carefully calculated. Alas, I did not manage to do this.

While checking the variation 29... b2 30 ♖xb2 ♖g8, I saw that I did not need to fear the bishop returning to the c1-h6 diagonal: 31 ♖c1 ♖xe5 32 ♖h6 ♖a8, or 31 ♖d4 ♖e4! But I was afraid of the combination 31 dxe6 ♖xb2 32 exf7+ ♖xf7 33 ♖e8+ ♖g7 34 e6 winning, for example 34... ♖f4 35 ♖d7+! ♖h6 36 e7 ♖g4 37 ♖xg4. In fact, Black can save himself by playing 32... ♖g7! (instead of 32... ♖xf7?). Even simpler is 31... ♖xg2! (instead of 31... ♖xb2), which leads to a draw.

29 ... ♖g8?

30 ♖g5! b2

31 ♖f6 ♖xf1+

32 ♖h2

Black has an extra rook and his pawn is on the verge of promoting. Yet there is no satisfactory defence to the threat of mate (a threat created by only two enemy pieces). This shows the awesome strength of an attack supported by opposite-coloured bishops!

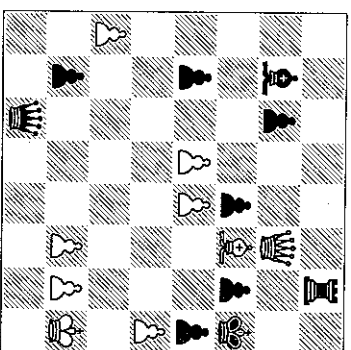
32 ... ♖c1

32... ♖g7 33 ♖f8.

33 ♖xf7+ ♖h6 (D)

34 ♖g5+?

Just when he was on the verge of victory, White makes a hasty move which costs him half a point. 34



W

♖xg8? ♖f4+ would also have led to a draw, but the modest move 34 g3!! with the idea of 35 ♖g5+ ♖xg5 36 hxg5+ ♖xg5 37 ♖f4 mate would have forced immediate capitulation.

34 ... ♖xg5

35 hxg5+ ♖xg5

36 ♖f6+

A win is not yet in sight: 36 g3 ♖h6!; 36 ♖g3 h4+! (not, however, 36... ♖h6?, which would lose to 37 ♖xg8 b1 ♖ 38 ♖h8+ ♖g5 39 f4+ ♖f5 40 ♖f6+ and 41 ♖xg6+); 36 f4+ ♖g4! 37 ♖f6 g5!.

36 ... ♖h6

37 ♖f4+ ♖h7

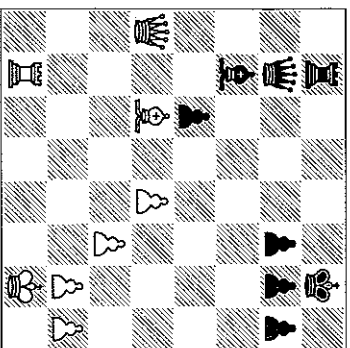
38 ♖b4 ♖xd5

39 ♖xb5 c5

40 ♖xb2 c4

41 ♖g3

White adjourned, but a draw was agreed without the game resuming.

The f7 (f2) Square

W

Boleaslavsky – Sterner
USSR-Sweden 1954

At first glance it seems that a draw is the preordained outcome of this struggle. There is material equality on the board, and all the white pawns are situated on one flank. Practically any endgame will be drawn, for example a 'pure' opposite-coloured bishops ending after the loss of the c5- and f7-pawns.

In fact, White has a big – perhaps even decisive – advantage. By using the position of his bishop and the vulnerability of f7 he will condemn his opponent to passive defence. And we already know that absolute possession of the initiative usually turns out to be the most important factor when making an assessment in an opposite-coloured bishops position.

First White has to increase the pressure on the f7-pawn, in order to tie the enemy pieces to its defence.

38 ♞d1 ♙c7

38... ♞f8 39 ♞d7 is weaker. Now the rook cannot desert the back rank because of the check on b1.

39 ♞d7 ♞f8 40 e5!

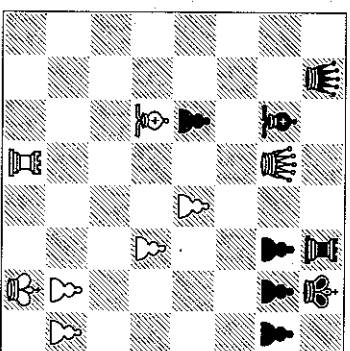
A typical move. Remember, with opposite-coloured bishops on the board, pawns should be placed on the same colour squares as your opponent's bishop. The scope of the c7-bishop is now limited by the e5-pawn which, at the right moment, can advance further to open up the position of the black king.

40 ... ♞b6

Losing time. The bishop has nothing to do on c7 – its place is on d4. He should have concerned himself with this transfer straight away: 40... ♞b8 41 f4 ♙a5 .

41 f4 ♞b8 (D) 42 h4!

A standard attacking resource in situations like this! The pawn wants to reach h6, destroying the enemy king's shelter. If it is met with the move ...h7-h6, then the b1-h7 diagonal is weakened, and the white bishop and queen can move on to it. A pawn on h5 will also prove useful if the opposition plays...g7-g6.



W

Incidentally, after 42...g6, apart from 43 h5, the breakthrough demonstrated by Boleaslavsky is very strong: 43 e6! fxc6 44 f5! ♞d8 (44... gxf5 45 ♙xe6+ ♖h8 46 ♙xf5) 45 ♞xe6+ ♖g7 46 f6+ ♖h8 (or 46... ♖h6 47 ♞xd8) 47 ♞f1! ♞b2 48 ♞e7 ♞d4+ 49 ♞f2 ♞a1+ 50 ♙f1 ♞g8 51 f7 .

42 ... ♙a5 43 h5 ♙c3

43... ♞b4 also deserves examination, after which Boleaslavsky intended 44 e6! . In the event of 44... fxc6 45 ♞xe6+ ♖h8 White will put pressure on g7: 46 ♞e7 ♞b8 (46... ♞b8 47 h6 ♙c3 48 ♞d7 ♙d4+ 49 ♞xd4) 47 h6 ♞c3 48 ♞d7 ♞b1+ (48... ♞c1+ 49 ♙f1) 49 ♖h2 ♞h1+ 50 ♖xh1 ♞c1+ 51 ♖h2 ♞xf4+ 52 ♖g1 ♞c1+ 53 ♙f1 . It is better to give up the exchange with 44... ♞xc4 45 e7 ♞e6 46 exf8 ♞+ ♖xf8 , in the hope, after 47 ♞xc6

fxc6 , of putting up a stubborn defence in the endgame. But exchanging queens is not obligatory – 47 ♞a7! is stronger: 47... ♙b6 (47... ♞b6 48 ♞a8+ ♖e7 49 ♞a1!) 48 ♞b8+ ♖e7 49 ♞b1 ♙d8 50 ♞a7+ and 51 ♞xc5 .

44 ♞d6!

The bishop wanted to go to d4, cutting off the d-file, so the rook rushes forward into an active position. 45 h6 is threatened. If 44...h6, then 45 ♞f5 , intending 46 ♞xh6 , 46 ♞d7 or 46 ♙d3 .

44 ... ♞b1+ 45 ♖h2 h6 46 ♞xf7+! ♞xf7 47 ♞d8+ ♖h7 48 ♙xf7

Black resigned

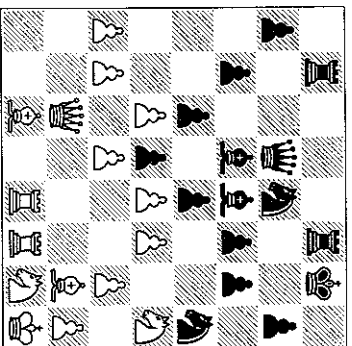
King's Indian Structure

The position on the board (see diagram on next page) is a good illustration of play in the King's Indian Defence (with colours reversed). The positional pawn sacrifice undertaken by Levenfish is very typical and should be in the arsenal of every King's Indian player.

22 $\text{f5!?$ gxf5

The challenge must be taken up: 22... ♙f7 is weaker: 23 fxg6 hxg6 24 ♙h6 ♖g7 25 ♙h3 with an advantage to White.

23 ♙h6 ♖g7



W

Levenfish-Kan
Moscow 1927

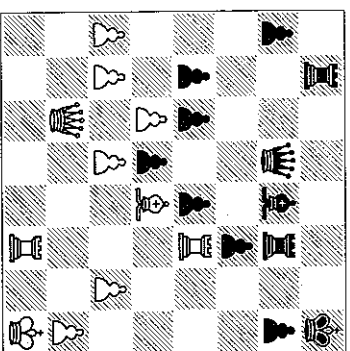
- 24 **exf5** **Qxf5**
 25 **Qxf5** **Qxf5**
 26 **Qf3**

White is planning, by putting his knight on h4, to seize the e4- and f5-squares. How do you frustrate his idea? The answer is clear – you have to prepare ...f6-f5. 26...**Qg6!** 27 **Qh4** **Qbe8** suggests itself.

- 26 ... **Qe6?**!
 27 **Qf2** **Qf7**
 28 **Qh4** **b5?**

Kan has decided to hold on to the f6-pawn, limiting himself to passive defence on the kingside. This is a totally mistaken strategy! It was necessary to play 28...f5! 29 **Qf3** e4 30 **dxe4** **fxe4** 31 **Qxe4** **Qf5** 32 **Qh4** **Qg6** with a sharp battle.

- 29...f5!?
 30 **Qxg7** **Qxg7**



B

- 31 **Qf5+** **Qh8**
 32 **Qe4** **Qxf5**
 33 **Qxf5** (D)

Levenfish has carried out his plan, and despite being a pawn down, has achieved an overwhelming advantage. In order to verify this it is enough to compare the bishops' positions. White can attack h7 or undermine his opponent's pawn chain by advancing the g-pawn. Black has no counterplay.

- 33 ... **Qg7**
 34 **Qd2**

The queen is going to h6 to take part in the attack.

- 34 ... **bxc4**
 35 **bxc4** **Qb6**

It would be madness to hunt down White's a3-pawn: 35...**Qb3** 36 **Qh6** **Qxa3** 37 **Qh5**.

- 36 **Qh6** **Qd8**

- 37 **a4**

Given Black's complete lack of counterchances, White can allow himself this kind of abstract move. 37 **Qxe5?** **fxe5** 38 **Qf8+** **Qg8** 39 **Qxg8+** **Qxg8** 40 **Qd5+** does not work in view of 40...**Qxd5+** 41 **cxd5** **Qxh6**.

- 37 ... **a5**
 38 **Qd5**

Threatening 39 **Qxe5**.

- 38 ... **Qe7**

Now the automatic advance 39 **g4!** is striking (39...**Qxg4** is met by 40 **Qxe5!**). Levenfish apparently found nothing convincing after 39...**Qg6** 40 **Qh5** (40 **Qh3!** is better – 40...**Qg7** 41 **Qh5**) 40...**Qg7** 41 **g5** **Qe7**. He decided not to hurry, preferring to manoeuvre and wait for a more suitable moment for the breakthrough.

- 39 **Qh5** **Qg6**

- 40 **Qf2** **Qd7**

- 41 **Qe4** **Qg5**

- 42 **Qh6** **Qg7**

- 43 **Qh3** **Qc7**

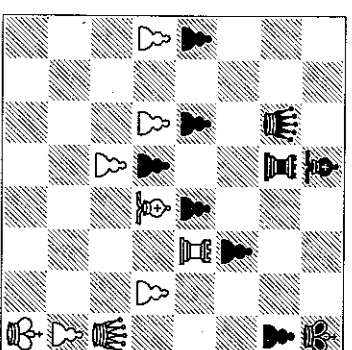
- 44 **Qh6** **Qg7**

- 45 **Qh3** **Qc7**

- 46 **Qf5!** **Qxf5**

In the event of 46...**Qg7** White should probably continue 47 **g4** with the threat of 48 **g5** **Qxg5** 49 **Qxg5** **fxg5** 50 **Qf8+** **Qg7** 51 **Qe8** **Qh6** 52 **Qf5** **Qd6** (or 52...**Qf6**) 53 **Qd5**.

- 47 **Qxf5** **Qd6**



W

- 48 **g4** **Qd7** (D)

Kan thought he could support the position by means of 49...**Qf7** 50 **g6** **Qg7**. Romanovsky objected that the endgame which arises after 51 **Qh5** **Qd7** 52 **Qxh7+** **Qxh7** 53 **Qxh7+** **Qxh7** 54 **gxf7** is totally hopeless. The white king is going via e4 – into the enemy camp, behind the queenside pawns. If the bishop defends them from b4, White can advance the pawn to h6, putting his opponent in zugzwang. This conclusion is not entirely precise – Black can save himself by sacrificing two pawns and changing the roles of his pieces: 54...f5! 55 **Qxf5** e4! 56 **Qxe4** **Qf6** 57 **Qg2** **Qg7** 58 **Qf3** **Qf7** 59 **Qf5** **Qe7** 60 **Qe4** **Qd6** with a draw. Nevertheless White can win back the missing tempo in this variation

by means of 52 ♖xd7 ♙xd7 53 ♖f5!
♙g7 54 ♙xh7+ (or 54 ♖g2 first).

50 ♙xe5??

In his book *Izbrannye Partii i Vospominiya* (Selected Games and Reminiscences) Levenfish la-

mented this serious shortcoming inherent in his play. Having already outplayed his opponent and gained a decisive advantage, he often committed a serious blunder and destroyed the fruits of all his previous labour.

That is what has happened this time. It is difficult even to explain why it was necessary to exchange rooks. Was it really for the sake of winning the e5-pawn? In fact with opposite-coloured bishops on the board you need think only about attack!

After 50 ♙f8+! ♖g7 51 ♙e8 Black should lay down his arms (51...h6 52 ♖f5 or 51...♖f7 52 ♖h5+). But the move in the game leads only to a draw.

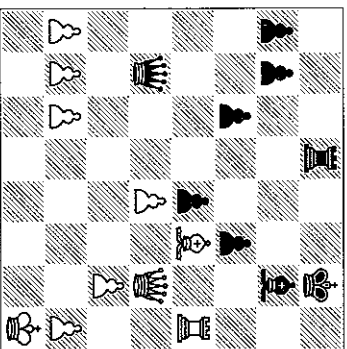
- 50 ... ♖xe5
- 51 ♖xd7 ♖e7
- 52 ♖f5 ♖c7
- 53 ♖g2 ♖d8
- 54 ♖f3 ♖c7
- 55 h3 ♖d8
- 56 ♖g4 ♖g8
- 57 ♖d5+ ♖g7
- 58 ♖e4 ♖g8
- 59 ♖d5+ ♖h8
- 60 ♖f3 ♖e3+

- 61 ♖g4 ♖e2+
- 62 ♖f3 ♖e7
- 63 ♖e4 h5+!?
- 64 ♖xh5 ♖xe4

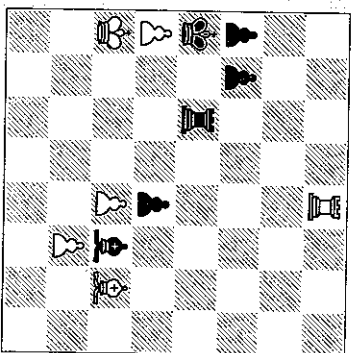
Draw

We have studied the basic strategy of the struggle with opposite-coloured bishops, and now for dessert I suggest you solve some combination exercises. The majority (but not all) of them are elementary, but nevertheless useful, since they demonstrate the characteristic tactical ideas in positions with opposite-coloured bishops.

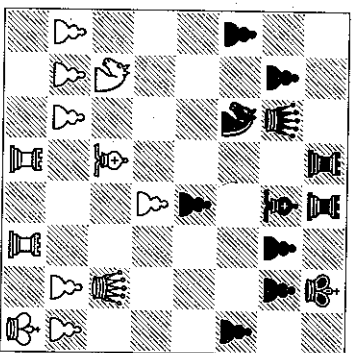
Exercises



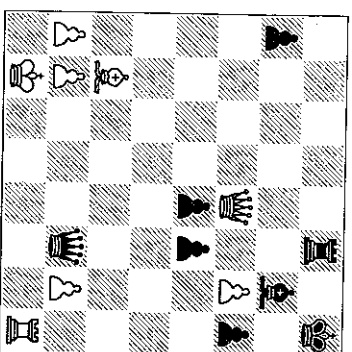
1 White to play



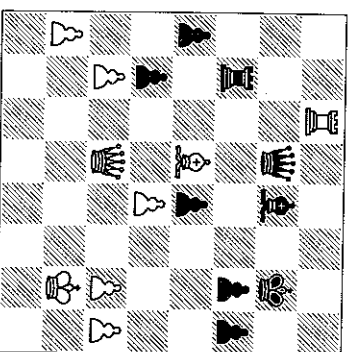
2 White to play



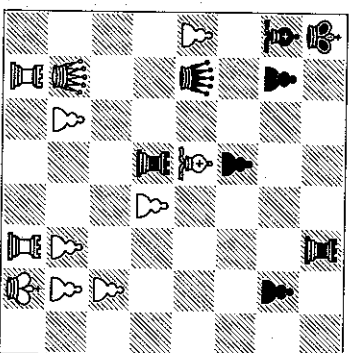
4 White to play



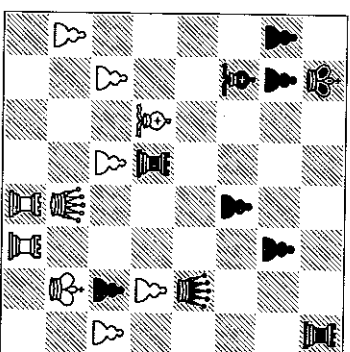
3 White to play



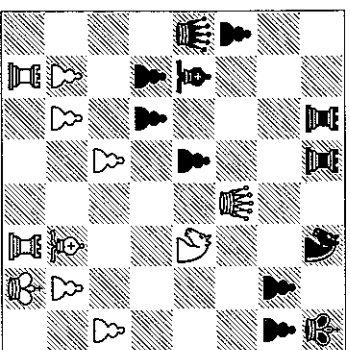
5 White to play (2 lines)



6 Black to play



7 Black to play



8 White to play

Solutions

1. A. Petrosian-Moldagaley, Erivan 1969

- 1 ♖h8+! ♖xh8
- 2 ♜h5+
Black resigned

2. Wachtel-Michel, 1953

1 ♜e5!!
Paradoxically, it is the exchange of rooks that leads to inevitable mate.

3. Wade-Kuijpers, Netherlands-England 1972

- 1 ♖xh6+! ♖xh6
- 2 ♜xe5+

Here Black resigned in view of the continuation 2...♖g7 3 ♜h2+ mating.

4. Hartston-Penrose, London 1963

- 1 ♜xf7! ♖xf7
- 2 ♖c4+ ♖f8
- 3 ♜f1+ ♖f6
- 4 ♜xf6+ gxh6
- 5 ♜g8+ ♖e7
- 6 ♜e6+ ♖f8
- 7 ♜xf6+

Alas, White did not find this combination and offered a draw, which, of course, was accepted.

5. Karpov-Hübner, Montreal 1979

- 1 ♖g8+ ♖h7

Now the two lines 2 ♜xg6! ♜xg6 (2...♜xg6 3 ♖f7+) 3 ♖g8+, and 2 ♜c3! (with the threats of 3 ♜xb6 and 3 ♖h8+) both win.

Karpov played 1 ♜c4?, but after 1...♜f6 2 ♜c7 ♜d6 White's advance did not prove to be sufficient for victory.

6. NN-Rossolino, Paris 1957

Whose attack is stronger – White's on b7 or Black's on f2?

- 1 ... ♜d1!!
- 2 c4

There is nothing else: 2 ♜bxd1 ♜xb2; 2 ♜xb5 (2 ♜fxd1 is the same) 2...♖xf2+ 3 ♖h2 ♖h8 mate; 2 ♖xb7+ ♖b8.

Now the consequences of both 2...♜xf1+ 3 ♖xf1 ♜xf2+ 4 ♜xf2

♜xb1+ 5 ♜e1 and 2...♖xf2+ 3 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 4 ♜fxd1 are unclear.

- 2 ... ♜xf2!
- 3 ♖xb7+ ♖b8
- 4 ♜xb5 ♜xf1+
- 5 ♖h2 ♜h1 mate

7. Kholmov-Geller, USSR Spartakiad 1959

- 1 ... ♜xh3!!

Other continuations of the attack are less convincing, for example 1...♜h6 2 ♜e5+ ♖c7 3 ♜xd4 ♜xh3+ (3...♜d2+? 4 ♖f3 ♜xh3 5 ♜h1!) 4 ♖f3 g2+ 5 ♖e2 gxf1 ♜+6 ♜xf1 and the game is almost level.

- 2 ♖xh3 ♜h6+
- 3 ♖xg3
- 3 ♖g2 ♜h2+ 4 ♖f3 g2.
- 3 ... ♖c7+
- 4 ♖f2

There is nothing to be gained from either 4...♜h2+? 5 ♖e3 or 4...♜f4+? 5 ♖g1! (5 ♜f3? ♜h2+6 ♖e3 ♖b6) 5...♜g5 6 ♖xe6!.

A beautiful quiet move, with the terrible threat of 5...♜f4+ 4...♜h3! 5 ♜d2 (5 ♜f3 ♜f4) 5...♜xg4 would also have been decisive.

- 5 ♖b1
- Freeing e1 for the king.
- 5 ... ♜xg4
- 6 ♖e1 ♜g2

Now if 7 ♜xf7 Black can reply 7...♜xe2+ 8 ♖xe2 b5.

- 7 d4 ♜h4+
- 8 ♖d1 ♜xe2
- 9 ♖xe2 ♜e4+
- 10 ♖d2 ♖a5+
- 11 ♖c1 ♜e3+
- 12 ♖b2 ♜d2+
- 13 ♖a3 ♜b4+

White resigned

8. Blumenthal-Macgonnegal, 1962

- 1 ♜h6!!

This attractive move begins a lethal attack on the g7-square. The queen is invulnerable: 1...gxh6 2 ♖d4+ ♖g8 3 ♖xh6 mate.

- 1 ... ♜d7
- 2 ♖d4
- 2 ♖xg7!? ♜xg7 3 ♖b6! (Bologan) is also strong.
- 2 ... ♜c7
- 3 ♜f3

By doubling rooks on the f-file, White will create the threat of ♖xg7 followed by ♜f7.

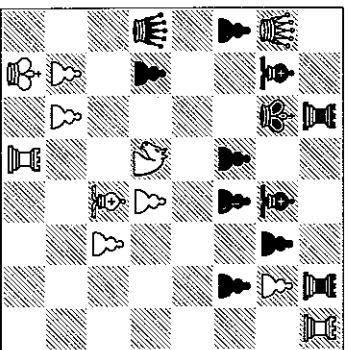
- 3 ... ♖g6
- 4 ♖b1 ♖g8
- 5 ♜xg7+!! ♜xg7
- 6 ♖h6+ ♖h8
- 7 ♜f7 ♜xf7
- 7...♖e5 8 ♜xc7 does not help Black.
- 8 ♜xf7 ♜g8
- 9 ♜d7!

It is important to cut off the bishop's path to e8. Mate with the knight on f7 is then unavoidable.

10 You cannot manage without combinations!

Mark Dvoretsky

While studying *Secrets of Grand-master Play* by John Nunn and Peter Griffiths, I noticed this position, which occurred in Nunn-Van der Wiel, Wijk aan Zee 1982.



W

This position was suggested to students of our school for independent home analysis (over the board) after studying the theme of opposite-coloured bishops in the middlegame.

'But where are the opposite-coloured bishops?' I hear you ask. This will soon become clear.

White's advantage is not in doubt. 28 ♖d1 is logical, although Black has the reply 28... ♗f6. Here, finding nothing more convincing, Nunn decided to keep the bishop out of f6.

29 e5!

Beginning a combination that was calculated 12(!) moves ahead.

29 ... ♖xh8!

The only defence. All other attempts can be refuted without difficulty.

a) 29...d5. Petia Kiriakov and Vova Baklan found the amusing variation 30 ♗g5!? ♗xg5 (30...♖a8 31 ♖xa8) 31 ♖c5+ ♗b8 32 ♖xg8 (32 ♖xc8 also wins) 32...♖xg8 33 ♖f8+ ♖e8 34 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 35 ♖h1. Not bad, but there is no need to play a combination since there is a simple solution – 30 ♖d1 with the threat of 31 ♖xg8 ♖xg8 32 ♖h8.

b) 29...♖xg7 30 ♗xe6+ (Iakhta Kadyanova's continuation is also strong: 30 exd6+ ♗xd6 31 ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 32 ♗f4! ♗xf4 33 ♖c5+) ♖h8.

30...fxc6 31 exd6+ (there is an alternative route to achieve the aim: 31 ♗b6+ ♗c6 32 ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 33 ♖c7+ ♗b5 34 b3, or 34 ♗e3 immediately) 31...♗xd6 32 ♖b6+ ♗b8 33 ♖xd6+ ♖c7 (33...♗a8 34 ♖c5! ♗b8 35 ♗f4+) 34 ♖xc8+ ♗xc8 35 ♗a7+ winning.

c) 29...dxc5 and now:

c1) 30 ♗b3 ♖b5 31 ♗b6+ ♖xb6 32 ♖d7+ ♗c6 (32...♗xd7 33 ♖xb6 ♗d5 34 ♖a7+) 33 ♗a5+ ♖xa5 34 ♖xb7+ ♗c5 35 ♖xg8 ♖xg8 36 ♖c7+.

c2) Many of our students found another, perhaps even more effective, means of attack: 30 ♗xe6+!? fxe6 31 ♗b6+ ♗c6 32 ♖d7! ♗xd7 (32...♗b5 33 b3) 33 ♖xb7+ ♗d6 34 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 35 ♖xc8.

30 exd6+ ♗xd6

31 gxf8♖

Was this move necessary? We will return to this question later.

31 ... ♖xh8

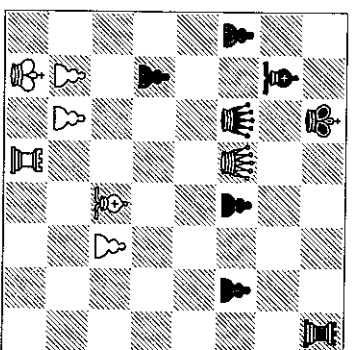
32 ♗xe6+ fxe6

33 ♖b6+ ♗c8

34 ♖xd6 ♖c6 (D)

The only defence to the numerous threats: 34...♗d5 fails to 35 ♗f4 ♗b7 36 ♖c7+ ♗a8 37 ♗e3 ♗b7 38 ♖d8+.

Now 35 ♖d4 ♖e8 36 ♗f4 (with the threat of 37 ♖e5) gives nothing in view of 36...♖d5. Therefore 35 ♖xb4 suggests itself. However, after the continuation 35...♖d8! 36



W

♖xd8+ ♗xd8 Black can successfully hold his defence, for example, 37 ♗g5+ ♗c7 38 ♖a5+ ♗b8 39 ♖d8+ ♗c8, or 37 ♖f8+ ♖e8! (37...♗c7 38 ♗f4+ is weaker).

In a middlegame with opposite-coloured bishops the main thing, as is well-known, is the initiative. Even if relatively few pieces remain on the board, you must think in the first place not about material gains but about creating threats against the enemy king.

35 ♖e5!!

Threatening 36 ♗f4.

35 ... ♖d8

35...♖h5 36 ♗g5 is no good for Black.

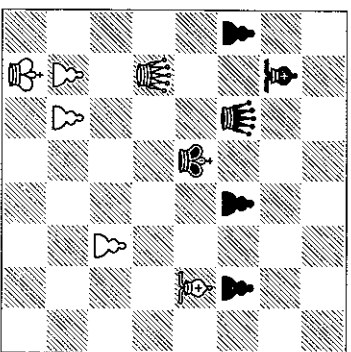
36 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8

37 ♗g5+ ♗d7

Black must avoid 37...♗c8? 38 ♖h8+ and 37...♗e8? 38 ♖h8+ ♗f7 39 ♖h7+ ♗f8 40 ♖e7+ ♗g8 41 ♗f6.

- 38 ♖g7+ ♖d6
 39 ♗f8+ ♖d5
 39... ♖c5 is even worse after 40 ♠f4+ ♖d5 41 ♗xb4.

40 ♗xb4 (D)
 Only now has the appropriate moment come to take the b4-pawn.



B

Nunn was striving for precisely this position when he played his 29th move. He felt that despite the material equality, things are bad for Black. A very deep calculation and an extremely accurate assessment!

Why is White's advantage so tangleble? All the blame lies in the black king's awkward position in the centre of the board, and the presence of opposite-coloured bishops which, as usual, reinforces the attack considerably. Nunn's pieces rule the dark squares. His opponent's bishop does not have the

power to help in any way, whilst the black queen is playing practically no part in the defence, as it is tied to its own bishop. Thus the king stands alone against the superior white forces.

We must also note the useful position of the pawn on f3 (positioned, according to the rule, on the same-coloured square as the enemy bishop) – it guarantees the e4-square for the queen and takes it away from the black king. He is also ready to include his queenside pawns in the attack: b2-b3 followed by c2-c4+. And there is the threat of the immediate 41 c4+ ♖d4 (41... ♖e5 42 ♗c3+ ♖d6 43 ♗d4+) 42 ♗c3+ ♖c5 43 b4+ ♖b6 44 ♗d4+ with inevitable mate. If 40... ♖e5?, then 41 ♠f4+ ♖f5(f6) 42 ♗f8 mates. Or 40... ♗d7 41 ♠f4! with the threat of 42 c4+ ♖c6 43 ♗a4+.

The concluding stages of the game are a convincing illustration of Black's helplessness. We will examine only the basic variations, while you can find a more detailed analysis in the aforementioned book.

- 40 ... e5!
 41 ♗e4+ ♖d6
 41... ♖c5 would be met by 42 ♗xe5+ ♗d5 43 ♗c7+ ♗c6 44 ♗c7+ ♖b5 45 ♠e3! followed by b2-b3 and c2-c4+.

- 42 ♗xg6+ ♖d5?!
 42... ♖c5 43 ♠e3+ ♖d5 is more stubborn, but 44 ♗f7+ ♖d6 45 c4! ♗d7 (45... ♗c7? 46 c5+ ♖c6 47 ♗e6+ ♖b5 48 c6!) 46 ♗f8+ ♖e6 47 ♗h6+ ♖f7 48 ♗h7+ ♖e8 49 ♗g8+ ♖e7 50 ♖c1! would have maintained an awesome attack for White.

- 43 ♗f7+ ♖d4
 44 ♗b3! e4
 45 ♠e3+ ♖e5
 46 f4+

As well as an unceasing attack, White has a new trump card – the passed f-pawn.

- 46 ... ♖f6
 47 ♗g8 ♗d5
 48 ♠d4+! ♖e7
 49 ♗g7+ ♖d6
 50 b3! ♖c6
 51 ♠e5

Threatening not only a fearsome check on e7, but also 52 f5. If Black advances his pawn with 51... ♖b6 52 f5 e3, then after 53 ♠d4+ ♖c6 54 ♗g6+ ♗d6 55 ♗e8+ it will be lost.

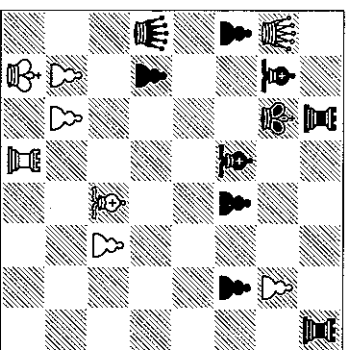
- 51 ... ♗d7
 52 ♗h6+ ♖d5
 53 ♗b6! ♗c6
 54 ♗d8+ ♖e6
 55 ♗f6+ ♖d7
 56 ♗g7+ ♖e6
 Or 56... ♖c8 57 f5 e3 58 f6 e2 59 ♗g4+.
 57 ♗g4+ ♖f7

- 58 f5 ♗h6
 59 f6
 Black resigned

According to the commentary in the book, moving into a position with opposite-coloured bishops is the only correct solution for White. However, in analysis only two of our students took this route (moreover, on move 35 they examined only 35 ♗xb4? instead of 35 ♗e5!!). All the rest immediately tried to use the poor position of the black king and the strength of the g7-pawn. To my surprise, they succeeded, and what is more, in various ways.

Let us return to the position after 29 e5 ♗xh8 30 exd6+ ♠xd6. Besides the move in the game, Nunn also examined:

- 31 ♗xe6+ ♗xe6 (D)



W

His variation is 32 ♖b6+ ♖b8 33 ♗xd6+ ♖a8, and there is no time for the capture on h8 as the white c2-pawn is being attacked.

Kiriakov and Baklan suggested a wonderfully quiet move:

32 ♗d4!!

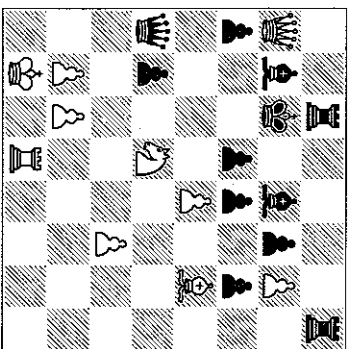
If 32...♗h8, then 33 g8♗ is decisive, while 32...♖b8 is met by 33 b3! ♗c6 (or 33...♗e8 34 ♗xd6+ ♖a8 35 gxf8♗ ♗xfh8 36 ♗b6) 34 gxf8♗ ♗xc2+ 35 ♖a1 ♗xh8 36 ♗xfh8+ ♖c8 37 ♗c1.

Kadyanova's analysis, unfortunately, was not so successful: 32 ♖b6+ ♖c6 33 gxf8♗ ♗xh8 34 ♖d4 ♗c8 35 ♗b6+ ♖d7. She then examined 36 ♗xb7+ ♗c7 37 ♗e4, but this is unconvincing in view of 37...b3! 38 cxb3 ♗xb3, and Black's chances are no worse; instead 36 ♖c5! wins. Furthermore, Black can defend himself more accurately: 34...♗b5 (instead of 34...♗c8?) 35 ♖xh8 ♗c5 36 ♗xc5+ ♖xc5, when the most likely outcome is a draw.

Perhaps the most convincing and effective continuation is that which was later found by Grandmaster Dolmatov during a training game with this position. He hit out with a truly unexpected blow:

31 ♖g5!! (D)

Now Black has no defence, e.g. 31...♗h8 32 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 33 exd6+ ♖xd6 34 ♖b5+ ♖e5 (34...♖c6 35



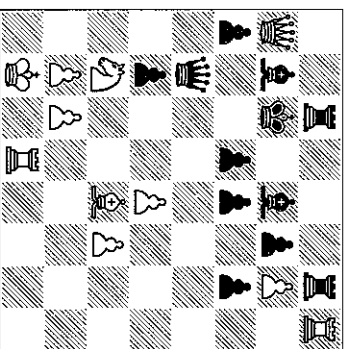
B

32 ♖d6+ ♖xb5 36 ♗b6+) 35 ♗d4+ ♖f5 36 ♖d6+ ♖g5 37 ♗g1+ ♖h6 38 ♗h1+ ♖g5 39 ♗h4 mate.

Now let us return to our starting position. Seriozha Movsesian studied the consequences of:

29 ♖b3!? ♗b5 (D)

Or 29...♗c6 30 ♖a5 ♗b5 31 ♗d4.



W

Incidentally, in the game the knight had only just reached b3, and the queen b5 – the last moves were 28 ♖d4 ♗a4.

30 ♗xg8 ♗xg8

31 e5! d5

Black does not have a wide choice. 31...♗xe5 32 ♖b6+ ♖c8 33 ♖a5 and 31...♗xg7 32 exd6+ ♖xd6 33 ♗d4 ♗e5 34 ♗b6+ both lose immediately. If 31...dxe5, then 32 ♖b6+! is decisive: 32...♗xb6 (32...♖c8 33 ♖a5; 32...♖c6 33 ♖a5+ ♗xa5 34 ♖xa5 ♖c5 35 ♗d8) 33 ♗d7+ ♖c6 34 ♖a5+ ♗xa5 (or 34...♖c5 35 ♗c7+ ♖b5 36 ♗xb7) 35 ♗xb7+ ♖c5 36 ♗c7+.

32 c4!?

This proves to be an effective breakthrough. However, as Kramnik rightly pointed out, the simple 32 ♗h1 is also sufficient.

32 ... hxc3

After 32...dxc4 33 ♖b6+! ♗xb6 (33...♖c8 34 ♖a5) 34 ♗d7+ ♖xd7 35 ♗xb6 cxb3 36 ♗xb7+ ♖e8 37 ♗c6+ ♖d8 38 ♗a8+ Black loses a rook.

33 ♗c1 ♖b4

Black is not helped by 33...♗xb3 34 ♗xc3+ ♗xc3 35 hxc3 ♗xg7 36 ♖c5! (not 36 ♗b6+? ♖e8 37 ♖c5 ♖d8 with chances for both sides).

34 ♖d4

34 ♖c5? ♖xc5 35 ♗xc3 is wrong in view of 35...♗d3+!.

34 ... ♗xg7

Or 34...♗d3+ 35 ♖a1 c2 36 ♗b6+ ♖b8 37 ♗xb4.

35 ♖xc3 ♖xc3

36 ♗xc3+ ♖d7

36...♖d8 37 ♗b8+.

37 ♖c5+

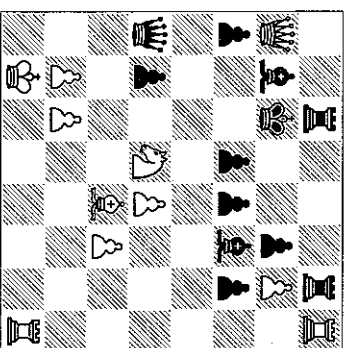
Black has no defence.

In conclusion, we shall test the following move:

29 ♗d1!

The threat is 30 ♗xg8 ♗xg8 31 ♗h8. According to Nunn, it is insufficient because of the reply:

29 ... ♖f6! (D)



W

An interesting way of attacking was later suggested by Yusupov: 30 e5! ♖xe5 (30...dxe5 31 ♖b3) 31 ♗h4 – the rook wants to break through to c4 (after ♖xe6+ or ♖b3). But White has at his disposal another – perhaps even more convincing – route.

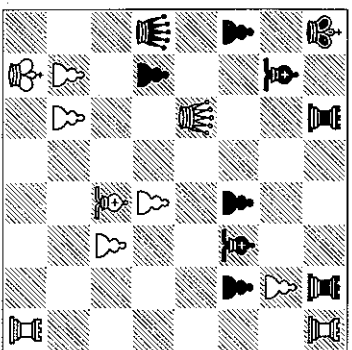
- 30 ♖xc6+! fxe6
 31 ♜b6+ ♗h8

The continuation 31 ♜xcg8 ♜xcg8 32 ♜b6+ ♗c8 33 ♜xd6 (without check!) 33... ♜d7(e8) gives White nothing.

- 31 ... ♗h8
 32 ♜xd6+ ♗a8

Now there is no time for an exchange on g8, as the c2-pawn is under attack.

- 33 ♜c5!! (D)



B

An outstanding move (found by Vadim Zviagintsev and Maxim Boguslavsky) which decides the outcome of the battle in White's favour. If 33... ♗b8, then 34 ♜xcg8 ♜xcg8 35 ♜h8 ♜xh8 36 gxh8 ♜+ ♜xh8 37 ♜d6+ ♗c8 38 ♜b6 with inevitable mate.

- 33 ... ♜xc5
 34 ♜xcg8+ ♜c8
 35 ♜xc5 ♗b7
 36 ♜xc8 ♜xg7
 37 ♜g8

Black is losing.

Thus, the position can be won in various ways, and the route chosen by Nunn is far from being the briefest. But this does not mean that a win can be obtained however you want – achieving success is impossible without finding far from obvious combinational finesse and carrying out the most precise calculation of all the variations.

11 Modern treatments of the Dutch Defence

Igor Khenkin & Vladimir Kramnik

Igor Khenkin

We are going to familiarise you with the basic ideas of the Stonewall structure of the Dutch Defence, and also touch on the Leningrad System.

To be honest, the move 1...f5 has never struck me as being positionally correct. When faced with it I usually avoid the main lines in the opening, and instead prepare some kind of rarely seen distribution of forces which still has a definite strategic foundation.

In both systems mentioned above I aim to develop my king's knight to h3. The f3-square remains free for the other knight.

Let us make the first moves:

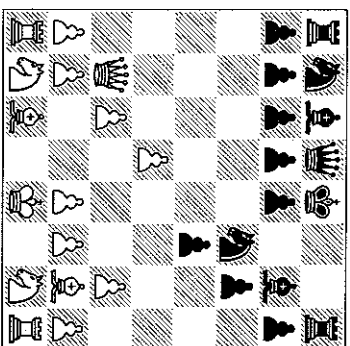
- 1 d4 f5
 2 g3 ♖f6
 3 ♜g2 g6
 4 c3

For many years here I successfully used Gavrikov's idea, viz.:

White wants to play ♜b3 to prevent castling. Because it is not a

popular system, Black is often unprepared for it, although this is understandable considering the fact that the problems Black has in the main variations have always been quite enough for him to deal with.

- 4 ... ♜g7
 5 ♜b3 (D)



B

Here Black has several moves. Often you meet 5...d5 or 5...c6, whilst recently the idea of ...c7-c5 has been seen.

5...d5 gives away important dark squares. The moves 6 ♖d2, 7 ♖h3

and 8 ♖f3 can be made almost automatically. Thereafter, White has ♘f4 (sometimes it goes to g5) followed by h2-h4-h5. If h4-h5 is not possible there is ♘d3, and ♙f4.

[*Kramnik*: It's not that simple – if the knight goes to h3 a reasonable plan for Black is 7...e6, ...♗e4, ...♘c6, ...a7-a5, ...b7-b6 and then ...♙a6. I have played this position a couple of times as Black and, in my opinion, White does not have an advantage here. In reply to 5...d5 I would be more afraid of the simple 6 ♘f3.]

Some years ago, Gorenlov tried 5...c6 against me. The game continued thus: 6 ♘d2 ♖b6 7 ♘c4 ♖c7? 8 ♘h3 and then 9 0-0, and White was better. Later I came to the conclusion that Black should have exchanged queens: 7...♗xb3 8 axb3 ♘a6 with chances to reach equality. Nevertheless, the resulting position suits me.

In a 1990 rapidplay tournament in Belgorod, Glek played 5...c5. The necessary counter is 6 dxc5!, meeting 6...♘a6 with 7 ♖c4. In the game I saw no reason why the b7-pawn could not be captured: after 6 ♙xb7? c4 7 ♖b4 (7 ♖b5? a6 8 ♖b4 ♙xb7 9 ♖xb7 ♘c6 with the unstoppable threat of 10...♙a7) 7...♘a6 8 ♙xa6 ♙xa6 9 ♘d2? ♖b8 10 ♖a4 ♙b5 11 ♖c2 0-0 12 ♘gf3 d6 Black had more than enough

compensation for the pawn – the d2-knight has no prospects, and the light squares are weak. The game continued 13 b3 ♖c7 14 a4? (14 bxc4 would have been better) 14...♙a6 15 b4 ♙b7 16 0-0 e5 with an advantage to Black.

9 ♘a3 is stronger, but after 9...♖b8 10 ♖a4 ♖c8 White will miss his light-squared bishop!

I was ready to try out 6 dxc5 at the next opportunity when I played Stuart Conquest in Gausdal, 1991. He came up with something that seems to spell the death of the plan of c2-c3 followed by ♖b3.

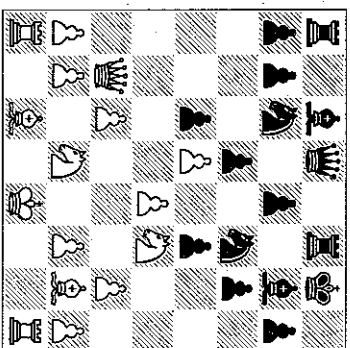
Khenkin – Conquest

Gausdal 1991

5 ... ♘a6!
A very logical move – Black simply prepares ...c7-c5. Unfortunately for White, b2-b4 is not legal.

6 ♘d2	c5
7 d5	♘c7
8 ♘h3	d6
9 ♘f4	0-0
10 e4 (D)	

A normal central pawn break in similar positions. It would probably have been better to pay careful attention to maintaining the balance, but I still did not sense any danger.



B
10 ... b5
11 a4 ♖xa4!

I had not really investigated this – I had only considered attempting to win the d5-pawn after 11...c4 and 12...fxe4.

12 ♖xa4 ♙d7
13 ♖a3

I thought for a long time about where to retreat the rook, but I still chose the wrong square. 13 ♖a2 at least defends the b2-pawn.

13 ... a5
14 c4 ♘a6

Black has an excellent position, and later he won the game.

The arrangement ...♘a6, ...c7-c5, ...d7-d6, ...♘c7 seems to be an excellent antidote to the plan of c2-c3 and ♖b3, and this game prompted me to change my opening arsenal. I admit that when I am playing against the Leningrad

System I do not like putting the pawn on c4, therefore I again had to try to make do without this move.

1 d4	f5
2 g3	♘f6
3 ♙g2	g6
4 ♘h3	

My favourite knight manoeuvre.

4 ...	♙g7
-------	-----

The reason why 4...d6 is rarely played here is probably because White has the reply 5 ♘c3!?. The endgame after 5...c5 6 dxc5 dxc5 7 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 8 e4 is clearly in White's favour, and 5...c6 6 d5!? ♙g7 7 ♘f4 reaches the same situation as after 4...♙g7.

5...d5 has independent significance. White's plan is simple: 6 0-0, ♙g5, ♘f4, e2-e3, ♘ce2, and ♘d3. I cannot guarantee an advantage, but these positions are to my liking.

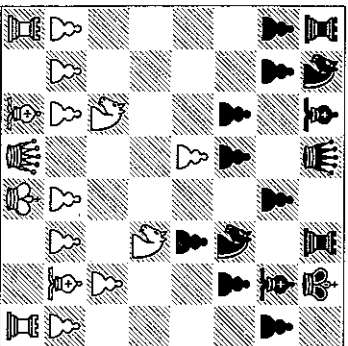
Incidentally 5 ♘c3 was seen in the game Korchnoi-M. Gurevich, Rotterdam 1990, in which White won beautifully: 5...♙g7 6 ♘f4 c6 7 d5! e5! 8 dxe6 d5! (8...♖e7 9 e4!) 9 h4! ♖e7 10 h5 g5 11 h6 ♙f8 12 ♘h5!? ♖g8 13 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 14 ♙xd5!? ♙xe6? (he should have taken up the challenge) 15 ♙xe6 ♖xe6 16 e4! ♙xb6 17 ♖f3! fxe4 18 ♖xe4 ♖g6 19 ♙e3 ♘d7 20 0-0-0

and Black's days were already numbered.

5 ♖f4 d6
5...0-0 invites the menacing 6 h4. Savchenko-Malaniuk, Kherson 1989 continued 6...d6 7 c3!? c6 8 ♗b3+ d5 (8...♗h8 9 h5) 9 h5 g5 10 h6 with initiative for White.

6 d5
White's moves can be transposed: 6 ♖c3 and then d4-d5.

6 ... c6
7 ♖c3 0-0 (D)
7...cxd5 8 ♖fxd5!, intending 8...e6 9 ♖xf6+ ♗xf6 10 e4!.



W

This position arose in Khenkin-Wilson, Gausdal 1992. The theoretical continuation here is 8 e4, but I was not very well prepared for the game (in a Swiss system tournament you only find out who you are playing at the last moment). My opponent's rating (roughly 2300)

was considerably lower than mine, so I decided that it was necessary to create tension immediately – it would not hurt if I first fortified the knight with h2-h4. However, once more this underlined how dangerous it is to underestimate your opponent – he manoeuvred very convincingly.

8 h4?!
Threatening h4-h5-h6.

8 ... ♖g4!
An excellent reaction! After 9 h5 Black can reply 9...♗b6!, and only after 10 e3 or 10 0-0 play 10...g5.

9 0-0 ♖e5
10 e4 ♖a6
11 exf5
11 h5 g5 12 ♖e6 ♗xe6 13 dxex64! is fine for Black.

11 ... ♗f5
12 h5
I had assessed the position optimistically, expecting only 12...g5 13 ♖e6 ♗xe6 14 dxex6 h6 15 ♗e2 d5 16 f4, or 12...♖b4 13 hxg6 hxg6 14 ♖e4.

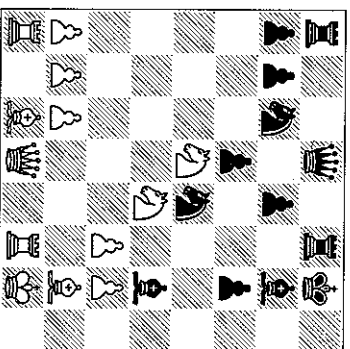
12 ... ♖c7!
A wonderful square for the knight, attacking d5 and defending the only weakness in the black camp – the e6-square. Black's position is perhaps the more promising.

13 hxg6 hxg6
14 ♖e4?

Unjustifiably continuing with the same aggressive plan – the knight is heading for g5. The calm 14 ♗e2 or 14 ♗e1 would be preferable.

14 ... cxd5!
15 ♖xd5 ♗g4
16 f3 (D)

Of course I did not want to play 16 ♗d2 ♖f3+, but the move in the game is no better. Now Black faced a fairly simple problem of calculation.



B

Natural captures lose: 16...♗xf3? 17 ♗xf3! ♖xf3+ 18 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 19 ♖xc7, or 16...♖xf3+? 17 ♗xf3! ♗xf3 18 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 19 ♖xc7.

The correct move is 16...♗xf3!! (I only saw this possibility after the game). The subtlety of this move lies in the fact that subsequent captures by Black on f3 win a tempo, either with a check, or by attacking

the white queen. For example, 17 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 18 ♗xf3 (18 ♗d4 ♗e2 is even worse, as is 18 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 19 ♗xf3 ♖xf3+ 20 ♗xf3 d5!) 18...♖xf3+.

1) After 19 ♖g2 Black can simply retreat the knight: 19...♖d4 20 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 21 c3 ♗c6 22 ♗g4 ♖f5, while 19...♖e1+! is even stronger: 20 ♗xe1 (20 ♖f2 ♖xc2! 21 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 22 ♗d5+ e6! 23 ♗xe6+ ♗f7+) 20...♖xd5, when Black emerges with a healthy extra pawn.

2) 19 ♗xf3 ♖xd5 20 ♖g5 ♗b6+ 21 ♖g2 ♖f6 is no better.

16 ... ♖xf3+?
My opponent, fortunately, did not comprehend how bad this line was, and therefore did not examine the capture with the rook. Incidentally, playing in a Swiss system tournament, I am convinced that less experienced players usually cannot endure the pressure of a tactical battle. More than once I have managed to steal victory at the decisive moment.

17 ♗xf3!
Now everything became clear to my opponent, but it was already impossible to change anything.

17 ... ♗xf3
18 ♗xf3 ♗f5
19 ♖g5
Two minor pieces are significantly stronger than a rook and

pawn, all the more so as the black king is under attack.

- 19 ... ♖xb2
 Losing by force.
 20 ♖xc7 ♖xa1
 21 ♖d5+ ♖h8
 22 ♖g2! ♖xg5
 23 ♖xg5 ♖xc7
 24 ♖h1+ ♖g7
 25 ♖h6 mate

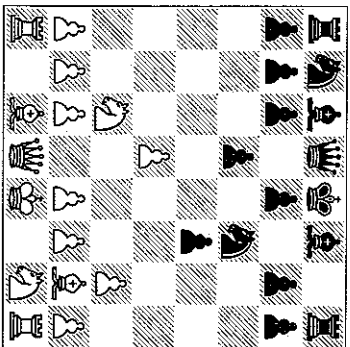
Everything ended favourably, although it could have been otherwise. The next time I played the recommended 8 e4! In the opening you have to fight in the centre, and not on the flank.

After 1 d4 f5 2 g3 ♖f6 3 ♖g2 Black sometimes changes his move order and plays 3...d6. Now it is absurd to put the knight on h3 because of the reply 4...e5.

The simple 4 ♖f3 is possible, transposing to the main variations of the Dutch Defence, but I do not like developing my knight on f3. Two years previously when I was faced with this problem, I had thought up a new plan at the board.

Khenkin – Vasitkov
Voskresensk 1990

- 4 ♖c3!? (D)
 Now 4...e5 5 dxe5 dxe5 6 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 7 e4 gives White a good ending. The reply 4...d5 is interesting.



White continues 5 ♖f3 and 6 0-0, producing an unusual, complex position with chances for both sides.

- 4 ... c6
 5 e4 fxe4
 6 ♖xc4 ♖xc4
 7 ♖xc4 ♖f5
 8 ♖f3
 8 ♖xf5 would be answered by 8...♖a5+.

Here Black offered a draw. Vasitkov is an active player and did not feel comfortable without queens on the board. By continuing the game I was risking nothing, so why accept?

- 11 ♖xd5 cxd5
 12 ♖h3
 12 ♖e2 involves the same plan (♖f4). Later White castled, played

♖e1 and ♖f4, and maintained a small but secure initiative, which led eventually to a win.

I like 4 ♖c3!?, and I was prepared to play it again. In recent years I have come to realise that it is not so important whether White obtains an opening advantage – this is a problem in any opening. The main thing is achieving 'your kind' of position, in which you feel more confident than your opponent.

Now we turn to the main theme of this chapter, the Stonewall.

- 1 d4 f5
 2 g3 ♖f6
 3 ♖g2 e6
 4 c4

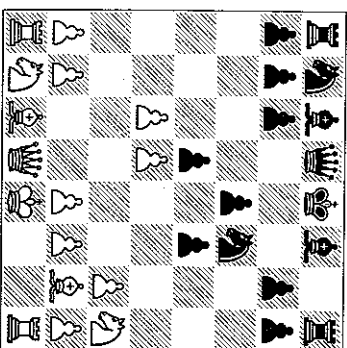
Developing the knight to h3 with the pawn still on e2 has been tried, but I think that after 4 ♖h3 the logical 4...c5!? is unpleasant.

For some reason this is often played against me, although it is considered more accurate to begin the Stonewall with 4...c6!?, waiting to see where the g1-knight goes. After 5 ♖h3 Black places the pawn not on d5, but on d6, preparing ...e6-e5. For White I recommend trying 5 d5!?, which I don't think anyone has used yet.

We must not forget the Ilyin-Zhenevsky System (based upon

4...♖e7, 5...0-0, 6...d6), 4...♖b4+ is also played, with the idea of meeting 5 ♖d2 with the retreat 5...♖e7, when the d2-bishop is awkwardly placed. 5 ♖d2 is stronger – then it is not clear what the bishop is doing on b4.

5 ♖h3! (D)



This is the most dangerous plan as far as Black is concerned. When I achieved my first grandmaster norm I won a very important game in this variation.

Khenkin – Tukmakov
Meiz 1991

- 5 ... ♖e7
 5...♖d6 6 0-0 c6 has also been seen. Then after 7 ♖f4 Black should reply 7...♖e7!, e.g.:
 1) In Bareev-Vaiser, Pula 1988, after 8 ♖b3 0-0 9 ♖a3 (9 ♖c3

♖b6) 9...h6!? 10 ♖ad1 g5 11 ♖d2 a5! 12 f3 b5! Black seized the initiative.

2) White's play was later improved by Kozul against Bareev (Biel 1991): 8 ♖d2 0-0 9 ♖c2 h6 (9...♗b7 10 cxd5 forces 10...cxd5) 10 ♖xb8! ♖xb8 11 ♖f4. White has the better game – he can put his knights on d3 and f3, and then begin an attack on the queenside by advancing the b-pawn.

Another promising set-up is 7 b3 ♖e7 8 ♖b2 0-0 9 ♖d2. The d2-knight moves to e5, while the other knight is reasonably placed on h3 as it controls the f4-square (if it had gone to f3 in the opening, then it would have taken two more moves to achieve an analogous construction: ♖f3-e5-d3, ♖d2-f3-e5). One possible plan for the future is ♖c2, ♖ad1, ♖f4, f2-f3 and e2-e4.

6 0-0 0-0

7 b3

You can also play 7 ♖c2, but I prefer to develop my bishop first – who knows, the queen might come in useful on d1 anyway.

7 ... c6

GM Short, who often plays the Dutch Defence with Black, plays 7...♗c6!? and then ...a7-a5 in positions like this. The knight put pressure on d4 in order to prevent an exchange of dark-squared bishops (8 ♖a3? ♖xa3 9 ♖xa3 dxc4), and

after 8 ♖b2 a5 White must play the normally unnecessary 9 e3 in order to develop the b1-knight. However, I still prefer White's position.

8 ♖b2

Exchanging bishops does not promise White any particular advantages – after 8 ♖a3 ♖xa3 9 ♖xa3 the black queen has a nice square on e7, while the position of the knight on a3 is unfortunate – ♖a3-c2-e1-d3/f3 is the best way back into the game. With the king's knight on f3 this plan would make more sense, but here Black will play ...dxc4 and ...e6-e5 while the queen's knight is *en route*.

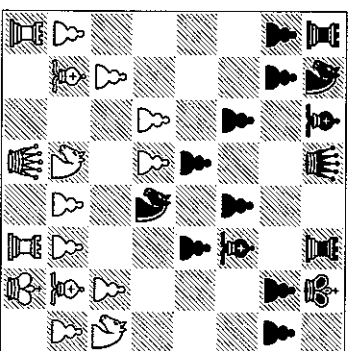
8 ... ♗e4

Black is having trouble developing the b8-knight (8...♗bd7? 9 ♖f4). The weak e6-pawn is also the reason why the normal plan (with the knight on f3) of ...b7-b6 and ...♖b7 does not work.

Tukmakov intends ...♖f6 and ...c6-c5, not fearing 9 f3?! ♖d6 (or 9...♗f6). I managed to find a strategic refutation of his idea.

Theory considers 8...♖e8. After 8...b5 (also theory) I prefer White after 9 ♖d2 or 9 c5.

[*Kramnik* – the advance ...b7-b5 in the Stonewall always seemed suspect to me – it immediately weakens a number of squares, without obtaining any real counterplay.]



9 ♖d2 ♖f6 (D)

W

10 ♖xe4!

I am exchanging off my opponent's only active piece, and will then open up a file in the centre by means of f2-f3 in order to profit from my lead in development.

10 ... dxe4

11 ... ♖c2

For the time being 11 f3 is premature in view of 11...exf3 12 exf3 c5!.

11 ... ♖c7?!

12 ♖ad1 and 13 f3 was threatened. 11...♖c7 12 f3 exf3 13 exf3 e5! would have been more stubborn, but after 14 dxe5 ♖xe5 15 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 16 ♖fe1 White has an obvious advantage. It is very difficult to put the c8-bishop anywhere.

12 f3 c5

12...exf3 13 exf3 c5 14 d5! exd5 15 cxd5.

13 fxe4!

Here 13 d5 is not so good in view of the reply 13...e3!.

13 ... ♖xd4+

14 ♖xd4 cxd4

15 exf5 exf5

16 ♖f4 ♖c6

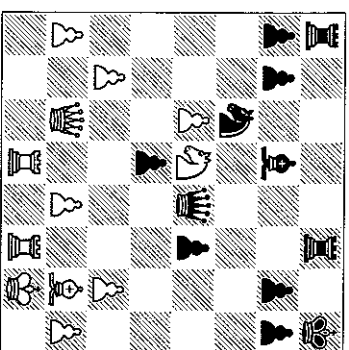
17 ♖ad1 ♖d7

Now White needs to find an energetic continuation. If Black is allowed to play ...♖h8, ...♖ad8 and ...♖c8 White's advantage will evaporate.

18 c5! ♖h8

18...♖ad8 19 b4!.

19 ♖d5 ♖e5 (D)



W

20 e3! dxe3

Black should also have considered 20...♖e6. After this I had planned 21 ♖fe1! ♖xd5 22 exd4 ♖f6 (22...♖xd4 does not help: 23 ♖xe5 ♖xc2 24 ♖dxd5! f4 25 gxf4 ♖xf4 26 ♖d7) 23 ♖xd5 ♖xd4 24

♖f2! ♘c6 25 ♖e6 with a winning position.

21 ♖fe1 f4?!
Tukmakov is an active player, and he is trying to avoid drifting into total passivity. However, even after 21... ♖a8 22 ♖xe3 ♖b8 23 ♖d1 ♖xe3 24 ♖xe3 Black's position remains difficult – his d7-bishop has no prospects, and the threat of the pawn attack b3-b4-b5 is extremely unpleasant.

22 ♖xf4 ♖h5
23 ♖xe3 ♖ad8
24 ♖d1! ♖g4
25 ♖c4

Black would have had compensation for the pawn if he had managed to drive the knight away from d5, but this proves impossible to achieve.

At first I wanted to exchange something and simplify the position, but then I understood that this was not the correct strategy. White should use his active pieces to attack.

25 ... ♖f5
26 b4 ♖h5
27 b5 ♘a5

After 27... ♖f7 28 bxc6, neither 28... ♖xd5 29 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 30 cxb7 ♖xc5 31 ♖b4 ♖b5 32 ♖xf8+! ♖xf8 33 ♖e8 ♖g8 34 ♖l7, nor 28... bxc6 29 ♘e7! ♖xc4 30 ♘xf5 ♖xf5 31 ♖e8+ ♖f8 32 ♖xc6 ♖xa2 33 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 34 ♖d7 works.

28 ♖c3

I could also have protected the knight with 28 ♖d4 followed by ♖e5, but I decided to force events.

28 ... ♖xd5
29 ♖xd5 ♖xc5
30 ♖xa5 ♖xc5
31 ♖c3! ♖xb5
32 ♖e5! a6
33 ♖b3!

Forcing the exchange under the most favourable circumstances.

33 ... ♖xe5
34 fxe5 ♖f7
35 ♖eb1! ♖e7
36 ♖xb7 ♖xe5
37 ♖b8+ ♖e8
38 ♖a8 ♖g8
39 ♖bb8 ♖f7
40 ♖b7+! ♖f6
41 ♖xa6+ ♖f5
42 ♖xg7 ♖g6
43 ♖f2 ♖g4
44 ♖a3 ♖f5+
45 ♖e2 ♖h5
46 h3+!

Black resigned

Vladimir Kramnik

I will introduce you to the fundamental lines of the Stonewall System with White playing ♘f3. First I will give my views on this opening set-up, and then will make a theoretical survey, showing some games.

The Stonewall is one of only a few openings where Black achieves an immediate advantage in space.

Of course, this is not free – it is at the price of weakening the dark squares. However, it is not easy for White to make use of e5 – occupation of this square frequently ends in a simple exchange of pieces.

The main idea of Black's strategy is to limit the range of the g2-bishop. In my opinion it is barely any stronger than the c8-bishop.

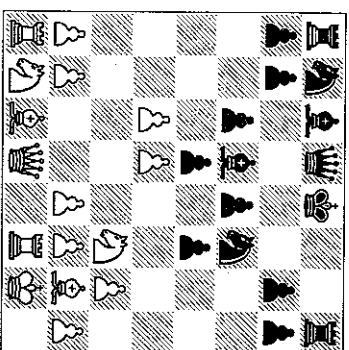
I have had to fight in this opening for both sides, and as a result have formed the conclusion that it is easier for Black to play than White. In any case, White usually has more difficulty in choosing a plan. His activity often has to be varied depending on his opponent's plan; he has to be flexible in arranging his game, which is never easy.

I love using the Stonewall against attacking players who like combinations because here White cannot deliver mate, and the strategic problems can prove to be too complicated for such opponents.

Let us make the first moves in one order or another.

1 d4 f5
2 c4 ♘f6
3 ♘f3 e6
4 g3 d5
5 ♖g2 c6

6 0-0 ♖d6 (D)



After casting Black has a choice between two means of developing his queen's bishop.

Sometimes it goes (via d7) to e8, freeing d7 for the queen's knight. Then it is possible to play ... ♖h5 (with the option of exchanging it) or prepare ... c6-c5.

Black more often plays ... b7-b6, ... ♖c8-b7 and ... ♘bd7, developing his queenside in a similar fashion to the Queen's Indian or the Catalan. The main difference is the position of the pawn on f5. The automatic advance e2-e4 is now very difficult to arrange, especially since after f2-f3 Black counters with ... c6-c5.

On the other hand, after Black has carried out his basic plan of finishing his development, putting his rooks on c8 and d8, and playing

...c6-c5, a pawn exchange will take place in the centre, and this could accentuate the weakness of e5.

White usually chooses one of two continuations: 7 ♖f4 or 7 b3. 7 ♘bd2 (or 7 ♗c2) has no independent significance – b2-b3 cannot be avoided. 7 ♘c3 is not very dangerous for Black, and in general I don't think that the knight is best placed on c3 in this system, as White constantly has to look out for ...dxc4. However, 7 ♘c3 is sometimes played with the idea of 8 ♖g5. Rarely seen is 7 ♘e5.

The most logical move is probably 7 ♖f4. On b2 the bishop is obstructed by the d4-pawn.

Incidentally, I agree with Khenkin – it is more difficult for Black to defend himself if White's knight is on h3 instead of f3.

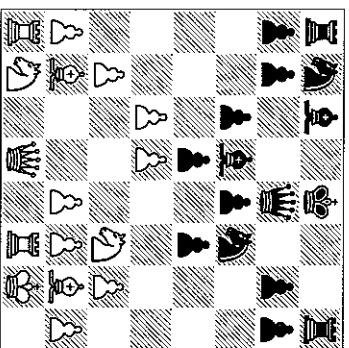
1) White plays b2-b3

7 b3 ♗e7
7...0-0 8 ♖a3 favours White, who has a firmer grip of e5.
8 ♖b2 (D)
8 ♘bd2 is also played.

Black plays ...♖c8-d7-e8

First we shall examine this traditional manoeuvre.

8 ... 0-0
9 ♘bd2 ♖d7



B

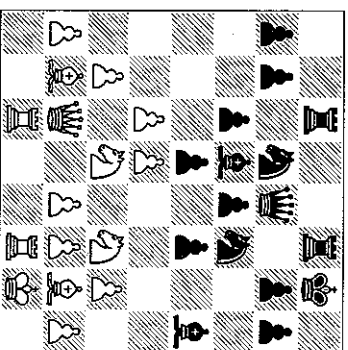
10 ♘e5 ♖e8
11 ♘d3

White's moves are natural, but identifying what the correct plan should be is another matter. He will soon be busy dealing with Black's action.

11 ... ♖h5
12 ♗c2 ♘bd7
13 ♘d3 ♖ac8
14 ♖ac1 (D)
Black prepares ...c6-c5.

One game continued thus:
14 ... ♘e4?!
15 ♘fe5 ♘xe5?
16 dxe5 ♖c7
17 f3 ♘g5
18 h4 ♘f7
19 ♘f4 ♖g6
20 h5

The struggle is over. A curious example, but it graphically demonstrates the dangers of superficial solutions (such as 14...♘e4?!).



B

The correct move is 14...c5! with good chances for equality, although the position does demand accuracy. White can maintain the tension in the centre by playing, for instance, 15 ♗b1!?

In principle I do not really like Black's plan. The bishop may be better placed on h5 than on c8, but even so it is doing practically nothing there, and it is not always possible to exchange it off in favourable circumstances.

Black plays ...b6 and ...♖c8-b7

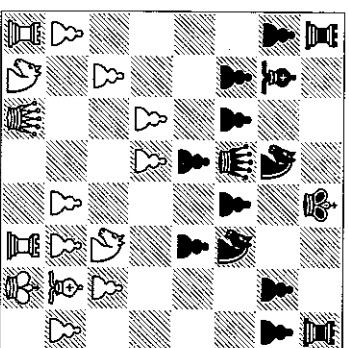
I feel this is more accurate.
8 ... b6

This move is probably more accurate than 8...0-0.
9 ♗c1

White stubbornly insists on exchanging the bishops – a totally

ineffective enterprise as it takes too much time.

9 ... ♖b7
10 ♖a3 ♘bd7
11 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 (D)



W

12 ♗a3?!

Perhaps 12 e3 still maintains the balance, but in several games White has chosen to exchange queens.

12 ... ♗xa3
13 ♘xa3 ♖e7

In my opinion, Black's position is preferable. His king is already in the centre and he is ready to play ...c6-c5.

Incidentally, after 8...0-0 (instead of 8...b6) 9 ♗c1 b6 (9...b5!?) 10 ♖a3 ♖b7 11 ♖xd6 ♗xd6 12 ♗a3 it is possible to play exactly the same endgame without the king on e7 – there is no danger for

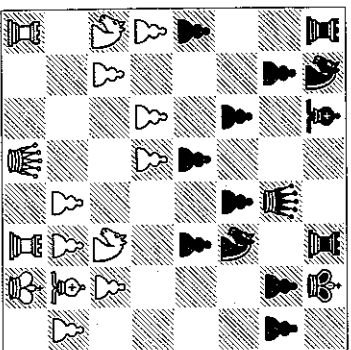
Black in it. If this is not to your liking, 12...c5 is reasonable.

If White wants to exchange dark-squared bishops on a3, then he should achieve it by 8 a4 and 9 ♖a3:

8 a4 a5

8...0-0 9 ♖a3 ♖xa3 10 ♖cxa3 is of equal value provided Black continues 10...a5, but not 10...♗bd7 11 a5! with an advantage to White, as in Kasparov-Short, London rp'd (1) 1987.

9 ♖a3 ♖xa3
10 ♗xa3 0-0 (D)



W

I will show you some examples of how play can continue from this position.

Analysis

11 ♗e5 b6
12 ♗c2 ♖b7

13 ♗e1 ♗a6
14 cxd5 exd5

I think that 14...cxd5 is also enough to maintain the balance, but as the moves a2-a4 and ...a7-a5 have already been made, I would choose ...exd5. Black can then continue ...♗a6-b4 and ...c6-c5.

15 ♗1d3 c5
16 e3 ♖ac8
17 ♖c1 ♗e4

Black is doing well (...♗a6-b4 and ...♖b7-a6 is coming).

**Akopian - Ulybin
Mamaia Jr Wch 1991**

11 ♗e5 b6
12 ♖c2 ♖b7
13 ♖c1

White now threatens 14 c5.

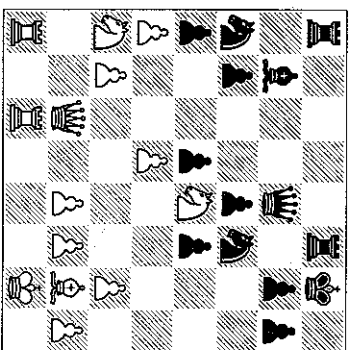
13 ... ♗a6

14 cxd5 cxd5 (D)

This recapture is forced because 14...exd5 is impossible, and 14...♗b4 15 d6! ♖xd6 16 ♖b2 followed by ♗ac4 is good for White.

This position seems harmless, but after analysis I have not yet found a clear route to equality for Black. White has nothing special, but Black faces a long and boring defence in a slightly inferior position. Here are a few more moves:

15 ♗b5 ♖ac8
16 ♖d2 ♗b4
17 h3 ♖e4



W

18 ♖xe4 dxe4
19 ♖xc8 ♖xc8
20 ♖c1 ♖xc1+
21 ♖xc1 ♗d5
22 e3 g5?!
23 ♖d1! ♖a6
24 ♖h5

Black is in difficulties.

During preparation for my game against Akopian in the 1991 USSR Championship, I chose another plan, deciding to fight for the e5-square immediately:

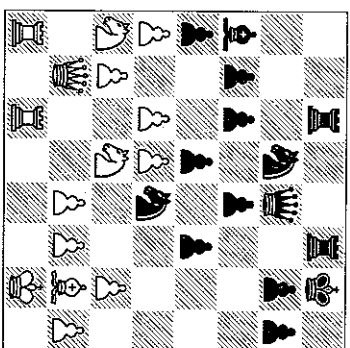
Akopian - Kramnik

USSR Ch (Moscow) 1991

11 ♗e5 ♗bd7

Black challenges White's knight, but the d7-square is not as good an outpost as a6.

12 ♗d3 b6
13 ♖c2 ♖a6



W

14 ♖f1 ♖ac8
15 ♖b2 ♗e4 (D)

Objectively the position is probably level. Black has ...c6-c5 (and perhaps even ...g7-g5), while White should aim to push with b3-b4 at some point. Akopian decided to play this immediately, although the calm 16 ♖c2! and 17 ♖ac1 deserved attention.

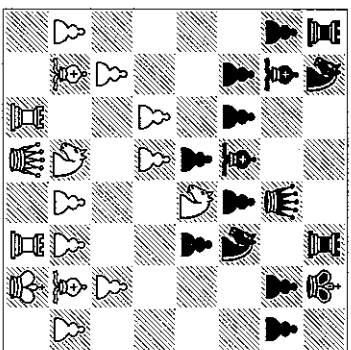
16 b4 axb4
17 ♗xb4 ♖b7
18 e3 c5
19 ♗d3 cxd4

Draw

After the game Akopian and I found a long variation leading to a drawn ending after 15 moves, although it is not within my powers to remember it now.

Let us turn to the set-up with the bishop on b2:

- 8 ♖b2 b6
9 ♗e5 ♠b7
10 ♠b2 0-0
11 ♙c1 (D)



B

Now after 11...♗b2 12 cxd5! exd5 13 ♗d4! White exchanges the knight for Black's dark-squared bishop, leaving him considerably better, as in Tukmakov-Dolmatov, Odessa 1989. This is the point of 9 ♗e5 – Black cannot play ...♗bd7 (if White had played e2-e3 instead of ♗e5, Black could play 11...♗bd7 followed by ...c6-c5 with an easy game).

However, Black finds another reasonable knight outpost.

- 11 ... a5

Black intends 12...♗a6 and at some point ...c6-c5 – a logical plan. 11...♗e4 is another suggestion.

Then 12 ♗xc4 is possible (12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♗xc4 dx4 also needs

checking). After 12...fxe4 13 f3 exf3 14 exf3 (14 ♙xf3 ♙xf3 15 ♠xf3 ♗d7 16 cxd5 ♗xe5!? 17 dxe5 ♠c5+ gives White nothing) the principled reaction for Black is 14...♠xe5 15 dxe5 c5 (threatening 16...d4) 16 cxd5 ♠xd5. If he has time to finish his development he will be doing fine, but on the other hand after 17 f4 he must watch out for f4-f5. This demands further analysis.

The position after 11...a5 has been seen quite a number of times in practice:

Chiburdanidze – Agdestein

Haninge 1988

- 12 ♗d3 ♗a6

12...♗d7 is also entirely possible.

- 13 ♗f3 ♗b4

- 14 c5 bxc5

- 15 dxc5 ♠c7

- 16 a3 (D)

Of course, White was counting on 16...♗xd3 17 exd3, but Agdestein unexpectedly moved his knight back to d7 via a6 and b8. An original and strong manoeuvre!

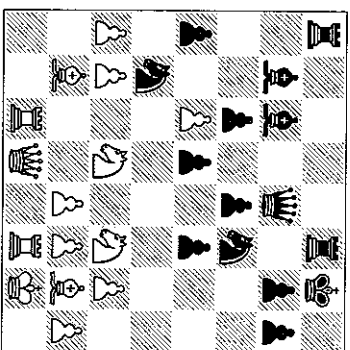
- 16 ... ♗a6!

- 17 ♗fe5 ♗b8

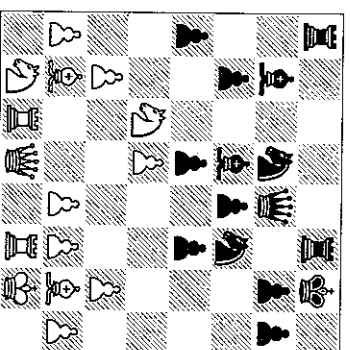
White's position looks good, but in fact she has nothing.

- 18 f3 ♗bd7

- 19 ♗xd7 ♗xd7



B



B

20 c4 fxe4
21 fxe4 ♙xf1+
22 ♗xf1 ♠a6
23 ♗d1 ♠b8

Black has seized the initiative.

Tukmakov – Agdestein

Dortmund 1987

- 20 ♗e3

- a4

In this game White elected to regroup his queen's knight:

- 12 ♗b1

White wants to bring the knight to c3 in order to exchange pawns on d5 and (after ...cxd5) follow with ♗c3-b5. This plan takes time, and Black's b8-knight is no longer obliged to go to a6.

- 12 ... ♗bd7

- 13 cxd5 cxd5

- 14 ♗c4 (D)

- 14 ... b5!

Black agrees to exchange off a pair of minor pieces. Then his

pawn will advance to b4, cramping White's queenside.

- 15 ♗xd6 ♗xd6

- 16 ♗c3 ♠a6

- 17 ♗d2 ♙fc8

- 18 f3 b4

- 19 ♗d1 b4

- 20 ♗e3 a4

After 20 bxa4 the white pawns on the a-file are hopelessly weak and will soon be lost.

- 20 ... a3

Black has an obvious advantage. This is a good illustration of what was mentioned earlier – the unenviable fate of the white bishops in this system. Compare the light-squared bishops on g2 and a6 – which of them is bad?

There is a more solid continuation for White:

- 12 e3 ♗a6

- 13 ♗e2

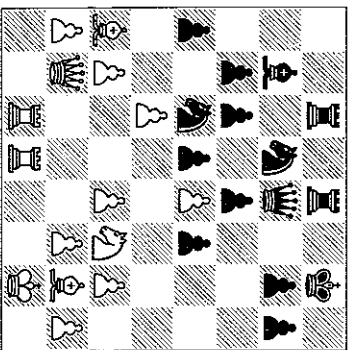
Now Black usually responds 13... ♖e4.

In the following game example, Black chose instead an interesting, albeit strategically risky plan:

Petursson – Dolmatov

Akureyri 1988

- 13 ... ♠xe5?!
 14 dxе5 ♘d7
 15 ♙fd1 ♘ac5
 16 ♘f3 ♙ac8
 17 ♠a3 ♙fe8
 18 ♙b2 (D)



B

18 ... ♗g5!

At first glance this looks like an insane decision. In fact, Black, by advancing the pawn as far as g4, creates a threat to the e5-pawn.

19 ♘e1 ♗g4

Black intends 20... ♙g7. Petursson swiftly simplified the game:

- 20 ♠xc5 ♘xc5
 21 ♘d3 ♘xd3
 22 ♙xd3

The position seems roughly even.

Now we see Nigel Short playing as Black in classic fashion:

Petursson – Short

Reykjavik 1987

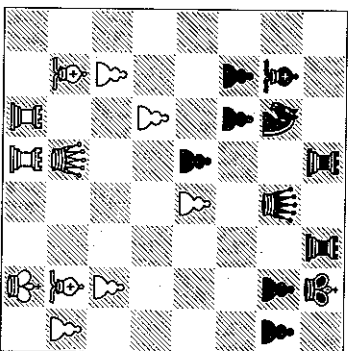
- 13 ... ♘e4
 14 ♙fd1 ♘c7

Recently the provocative idea 14... ♘b4!? 15 a3 ♘a6 has also been tested, and White has problems with the a3-pawn.

- 15 f3 ♘xd2
 16 ♙xd2 a4
 17 e4 fxe4
 18 fxe4 axb3
 19 axb3 ♠xe5
 20 dxе5 ♙ad8
 21 exd5 exd5 (D)

Black's position is preferable. Now he will play ...c6-c5, and prepare ...d5-d4, or force a favourable exchange on d5. One of his pieces will go to e6, blocking the e5-pawn and consequently limiting the mobility of the b2-bishop. The position of the white king is somewhat weakened, and in the future it could fall under attack.

I will show you how the game continued without commentary:



B

- 22 ♙e3 c5 23 ♙e2 ♠a6 24 ♙a1
 d4 25 ♠e1 b5 26 ♠f4 ♙e6 27 ♙h5
 bxc4 28 ♠h3 ♙b6 29 bxc4 ♠xc4
 30 ♙db1 ♙c6 31 ♙a7 ♙e4 32
 ♙ba1 ♠d5 33 ♙xc7 ♙h1+ 34 ♘e1
 ♙xf4+ 35 gxf4 ♙xh2+ 36 ♘e1
 ♙g3+ 37 ♘e2 ♠c4+ 38 ♘d1 ♙d3+
 0-1

As you can see, in all the examples we have examined, nothing special is demanded of Black in the opening stage – he simply finishes his development and prepares to meet his opponent's activity fully armed. The advance e3-e4 promises nothing in particular (and is double-edged), and no other plan for White offers much.

After it had become clear that the set-up with ♠b2 and ♘bd2 promises nothing, a new idea appeared:

8 ♘e5

White wishes to stop the bishop being developed to b7. 8... b6? 9 cxd5! cxd5 allows 10 ♘c4! with advantage. I do not consider the position after 9... exd5 to be favourable for Black. He has a structure which is characteristic of the Queen's Indian Defence, but here the pawn is worse on f5 than on f7. This assessment is only valid with the pawn on b6 – if it is on b7 the capture ...exd5 is good.

- 8 ... 0-0
 9 ♠b2
 9 ♘d3 is also known, but then Black again has the option ...b7-b6.

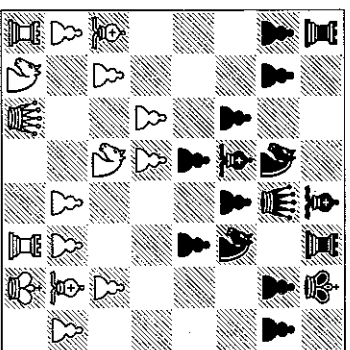
- 9 ... ♠d7
 10 ♙e1 ♠e8
 11 ♠a3 ♘bd7

Having manoeuvred the bishop to e8 the ending that results after 11... ♠xa3 12 ♙xa3 ♙xa3 13 ♘xa3 is no longer pleasant for Black, as there will be no time to carry out ...c6-c5.

12 ♘d3 (D)

In Timman-Short, Brussels 1987, Black now played the rather nonsensical move 12... ♠f7. After 13 ♠xd6 ♙xd6 14 ♙a3 ♙xa3 15 ♘xa3 ♙fe8 (intending to continue 16... e5) 16 f4 Timman gained a better ending and went on to win the game.

In the following game Black acted more logically:



B

Ki.Georgiev – Knaak
E.Germany-Bulgaria 1987

12 ... Ah5
If you wish to place the bishop on f7, then you should only do so after first enticing the knight to f4.

13 Ke1
Or 13 f4 f4 e7 14 e6 d6 e7 15 e3 e7, when Black plans ...dxc4 followed by ...e6-e5.

- 13 ... e8
- 14 e6 d6
- 15 e3 e7
- 16 d2 e4
- 17 e3 dxc4!
- 18 bxc4 c5

A transformation of the centre which is typical of this variation.

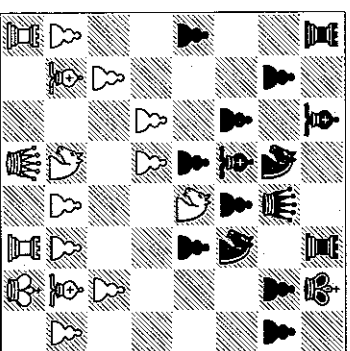
- 19 a6
- 19...cxd4? is an alternative.
- 20 e3 e3f3!

Only now, when White cannot take back with the e-pawn.

- 21 e3 e5
 - 22 e4 fxe4
 - 23 e5 exd4
 - 24 exd4 e5
 - 25 e5 e5
 - 26 dxc5 f5
 - 27 b1 e7
- The ending with four rooks is drawish.

Subsequently a more convincing plan for Black was found:

- 9 ... d7?!
- 10 d2 a5 (D)



W

An amusing situation: it is not easy for Black to continue his development (he can only aim for exchanges with ...e4), but no specific plan is visible for White either. A kind of distinctive mutual zugzwang has appeared straight out of the opening! Here are two examples:

1) Adorjan-Moskalenko, Hungary 1990: 11 a3 e4 12 d3 e5 13 e5 e5 14 dxe5 b6 (with the idea of 15... a6) 1/2-1/2. White has nothing, his bishops are so blunted that it is impossible to talk about the advantage of the bishop pair – in fact, the opposite is true.

2) The game Ruban-Meister, Hungary 1990 continued 11 d3 e4 12 c2 and now 12... e5 13 e5 e5 14 dxe5 b5 15 f3 e5 16 cxb5 cxb5 17 f1 with an advantage to White. However, after the correct 12...a4! 13 e7 (13 bxa4 e5, and the pawns on the a-file are very weak) 13...axb3 14 axb3 e7 White's position is not in the least bit better.

To conclude this section I will show you a game of my own.

Van Wely – Kramnik
Arnhem jr Ech 1990

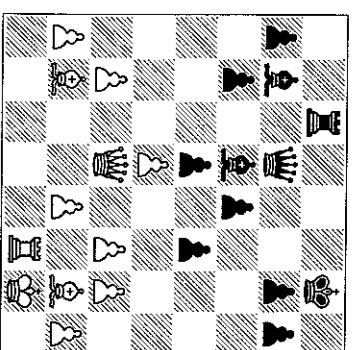
- 7 b3 e7
- 8 b2 b6
- 9 d2 b7
- 10 e5 0-0
- 11 d3

My opponent obviously has no experience in the finesses of the opening – he allows Black to develop his knight to d7 unhindered.

- 11 ... d7

- 12 c2 a8
 - Threatening ...c6-c5.
 - 13 d5 d5
 - 14 d3 e4
 - 15 d7
- Black threatened 15... e5 16 dxe5 a3.

- 15 ... e7
- 16 e5 e7
- 17 f3 f6
- 18 a1 d7
- 19 d7 e7
- 20 e8 e8 (D)



W

White has a choice between the careful 21 e1 and the more active 21 e4. Which line is correct?

- 21 e4?!

Having played this, my opponent offered a draw. If he had done so after 21 e1, I probably would have been forced to accept.

- 21 ... dxe4
- 22 fxe4 e4

23 ♖e4 fxe4
24 ♜xe4 ♖e7!

A very strong manoeuvre, which my opponent had underestimated. Here as well he should have offered an exchange of rooks with 25 ♖c1.

25 ♖e1?! ♖f6

If the e6-pawn is captured, the black rook comes to e2. After 26 ♖c2 I defended the pawn by ...♗c6, carried out...b6-b5-b4, exchanged queens with ...♜d5, placed my rook on a6, my king on f7, and my pawn on h5. Eventually I managed to win an interesting bishop ending.

2) The plan with ♖f4

7 ♖f4 ♖xf4

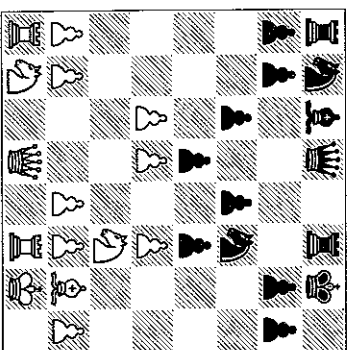
If Black does not capture immediately White will play 8 e3 and later take on f4 with the e-pawn.

8 gxf4 0-0 (D)

No well-balanced theoretical survey of this variation exists. Now White usually plays 9 ♖bd2 or 9 ♖e5, while 9 e3 should transpose.

Since White's kingside has been weakened by the exchange on f4, bringing the bishop to h5 is now more effective than after 7 b3.

Black can also consider opening the g-file by means of ...g7-g5. Indeed the standard strategy is to transfer the bishop to h5, the



W

knights to e4 and d7, tuck the king away to h8 and open the g-file. Obviously White has to oppose this plan.

Let's make these moves:

9 ♖bd2 ♜e7

10 ♖c1

The following move is an error:

10 ... ♖d7?

Why? White continues:

11 ♜b3! ♖e8

12 ♖e5 ♖h5

13 e3

It is difficult for Black to develop his pieces. The b8-knight cannot be brought to d7, and on a6 it is out of place.

13 ... ♖h8

14 ♖c3

14 ♖h1!? is possible too.

14 ... ♖a6

15 ♜a3 ♖b4

16 c5

White is better.

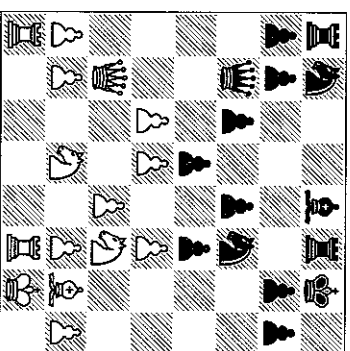
Thus, if we want to develop the bishop on d7 we should do it before ...♜e7. Here are a some examples from grandmaster practice:

P. Nikolić – Salov
Leningrad 1987

9 ♖bd2 ♖d7

10 ♜b3 ♜b6

11 e3 ♖e8 (D)



W

Now Black is ready to develop his queen's knight to d7. White hurries to exchange queens before Black's retreats to c7.

12 ♜xb6 axb6

13 ♖e5 ♖h5

14 ♖f3 ♖xf3

15 ♖dxf3 ♖a6

Although White's position is slightly the more pleasant, there are no real chances for victory. The game ended in a draw.

Kalinichev – Glek
USSR 1987

9 ♖bd2 ♖bd7

This is also a reasonable plan. Black is aiming for an exchange of knights in the centre, after which he should not face any problems.

10 ♖c1

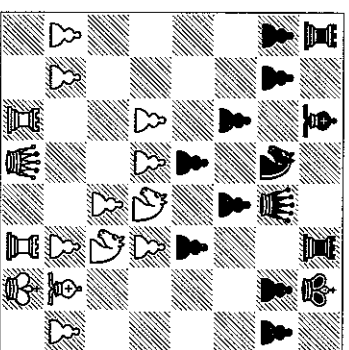
10 e3 followed by 11 ♜c2 is more precise.

10 ... ♖e4

11 e3 ♜e7

After 12 a3 one game continued 12...♖f6 13 ♖e5 ♖d7 14 f3 ♖d6 15 ♖h1 ♖e8 16 ♖g1 ♖h5. Then Black played ...♖h8 and ...♖g8, and after e4-c5, retreated his knight to f7 and prepared ...g7-g5. White, apparently, has no simple way of preventing this. As usual, the g2-bishop is in no way as sensibly placed as Black's on h5.

12 ♖xe4 (D)



B

12 ... **dxex4?!**

An original solution! However, the standard 12...fxe4 is more reliable. Events might then develop thus: 13 Qd2 Qf6 14 f3 exf3 15 Qxf3 Qd7 16 Qe5 Qe8. Black plans to play 17...Qd7 and, after swapping knights, move his bishop via g6 to f5. If he manages this, then White will have to fight for equality.

13 Qd2?!

13 Qe5 is a preferable alternative.

13 ... **c5**

14 Qb3

Anywhere but there!

14 ... **b6**

15 dxex5 Qxc5

16 Qxc5 bxc5

White stands much worse. The advance ...e6-e5 is threatened, the g2-bishop is hemmed in, and if White tries to revive it by means of f2-f3 an eventual exchange of bishops along the long diagonal will weaken his kingside.

The game I want to show you now ended in White being routed in only 23 moves. This is not surprising – looking at it you get the impression that White simply did not know where to put his pieces, or which changes of structure were favourable to him and which were not.

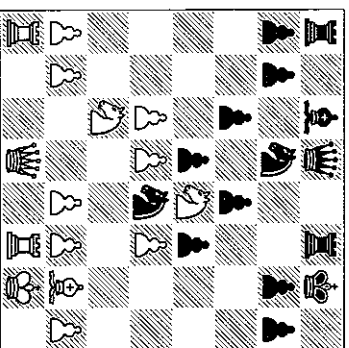
Shabalov – Vyzhmanavin USSR 1987

9 Qc3 Qbd7

9...Qd7? is wrong: 10 Bb3 Bb6

11 Qa4 Bxb3 12 axb3 and Black has a difficult ending.

10 Qe5 Qe4 (D)



W

11 Qxc4? fxe4

Exchanging knights on e4 favours Black. There now follows a second positional error – White allows an exchange on e5. He should have continued with 12 Qxd7 Qxd7 13 e3 Qe8 14 f3, although after 14...exf3 and 15...Qg6 Black has the advantage.

12 e3? Qxc5

13 fxe5

13 dxex5 g5 is even worse.

13 ... Qd7

The lesser evil for White now is 14 f3, when 14...exf3 followed by

posting the bishop on g6 gives Black an edge. For some reason White brought the queen over to the queenside – away from the action.

14 Bb3? b6

15 cxd5 cxd5

16 Bxc1 Qg5

17 Bc7 Qe8

The rook looks pretty on c7, but that is all. Meanwhile Black's attack on the kingside is apparently unstoppable.

18 Qh1 Qh5

19 Bxa3 Qe2

20 Bg1 Bxf2

21 Qxe4 Bf1

22 Bxf1 Qxf1

23 Bb6 Qg4!

White resigned in view of 24 Qxd5 Qg2+!

In the following example it was Black who played the opening inaccurately:

Belavsky – Van der Wiel

Amsterdam 1990

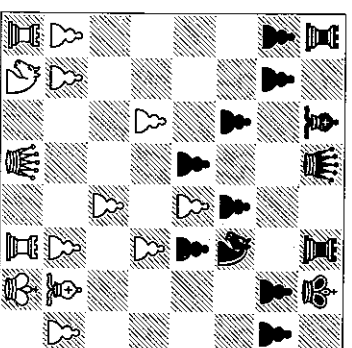
9 e3 Qbd7

10 Qe5 Qxc5?!

10...Qe4 should be played.

11 dxex5! (D)

Previously in positions like this everyone took with the f-pawn, Belavsky included. The second game of his match against Salov, Vilnius



B

1987, continued 11 fxe5?! Qg4 (11...Qd7 12 f4 b6 is also good) 12 Qd2 Qd7 13 h3 Qh6 14 f4 Qe8 15 Qh2 Qh8 16 Bxe2 g5 with excellent prospects for Black.

11 ... Qd7

Belavsky noted that after the moves 11...Qe4 12 b4! (the knight is in danger!) 12...Bb6 13 a3 a5 (13...dxc4 14 Qxe4 fxe4 15 Qd2 with a clear advantage to White) 14 c5 Bxa7 15 f3 axb4 16 fxe4 Bxc5 17 Bb2 White's extra piece counts for more than the pawns.

The conclusion is that Black should not exchange on e5 with the knights on b1 and f6. This sometimes happens – you make just one imprecision, and then it becomes difficult to save yourself.

12 Qd2 Bc7

13 Bc1 Bb8

14 Bxc2 Qf8

15 Qb3 Qg6

Van der Wiel hopes to create threats against the white king, but nothing will come of this because the c8-bishop is too far away from the king-side.

- 16 cxd5 exd5
17 ♖d4 ♘h4
18 ♙h3 g5
19 ♙h1 g4

In the event of 19...gxf4 20 exf4 White will bring a rook to g5.

- 20 ♖g1 h5
21 ♙f1 ♖f8
22 f3 ♖f7
23 ♖f2 ♘g6
24 ♙d3 ♙g7
25 h4!

Black is in a bad way on both flanks. After a few more moves he was put out of his misery.

Novikov – Kramnik

Moscow 1991

9 e3

Novikov later told me that for our meeting he chose the system with 7 ♙f4 and 9 e3 precisely because of the impression the game Belavsky-Van der Wiel made on him – previously he had preferred other set-ups.

- 9 ... ♖e7
9 ... ♖e7
I wanted a fight, so I did not play
9...♙d7 10 ♖b3 ♖b6.

- 10 ♖bd2 ♘bd7
11 ♖c2 ♘e4

12 ♘xe4

It is not clear what else one could suggest for White. I was intending to continue 12...♙h8 or 12...♘d6 13 ♖e5 ♙d7 14 f3 ♘d6, and then carry out the usual plan: ...♙e8-h5, ...♙h8 and ...g7-g5.

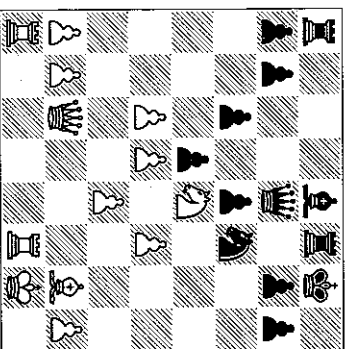
12 ... ♖xe4

Here the capture 12...dx4? would have led to a difficult position after 13 ♖e5 whether Black chooses 13...♘xe5 14 dxe5 or 13...c5 14 ♖c3.

13 ♘d2

Of course, not Shabalov's 13 ♖e5? ♘xe5 with better chances for Black.

- 13 ... ♘f6
14 f3 exf3
15 ♘xf3 ♙d7
16 ♖e5 ♙e8 (D)



W

You already know Black's plan: exchange knights with 17...♘d7,

and move the bishop out to g6. White has to fight against this.

- 17 ♖f3 ♘d7
18 ♙h3! h6
19 ♘g4

Draw

After the obvious 19...♘f6 the knight returns to e5.

We could try to show that by playing 19 ♘xd7 White would have preserved a better position, but, in fact, this is not the case. I would have replied 19...♙xd7 (having 20...e5 in mind). After 20 ♙h5 ♖f5! 21 ♖xf5 exf5 22 cxd5

♖xe3+ 23 ♖f2 ♖d3 White soon has to repeat moves: 24 ♙f1 (24 ♙e1 ♙e8) 24...♖e4 25 ♙g2, etc. [20 ♖g3 c5 21 dxc5! ♖xc5 22 ♖g6 ♖f7 23 cxd5 exd5 24 ♙d1 gives White a clear advantage. Black's play should be improved somewhere earlier, perhaps by doing without 9...♖e7 – Dvoretzky.]

In this game both players played sensibly, and neither of them managed to gain an advantage. This conforms to the state of theory in the Stonewall – and Black can make full use of it!

12 Grandmaster Strategy

Evgeny Barev

I am going to show you several games played at Linares in 1992. Or rather, we are going to look at them together.

When I returned home I analysed my game against Karpov, in which, at first glance, everything seemed so simple and clear (even though I had to spend a great deal of time on it). Of the other games, I am afraid that many of my initial impressions of them will turn out to be false. With your help we will try to understand them, so you will have to work properly, and solve the problems your opponent throws at you in the course of a game.

We will devote our attention to positional problems. However, in modern chess everything is mixed up; even quiet situations usually contain tactical nuances, and in sharp positions you must not forget about strategy. These days you have to be universal, and it is impossible to get decent results on the strength of good knowledge of just one opening, or, let's say, endgame skills. Complex, detailed preparation is required.

The world's leading players know how to wield all sorts of chess weapons equally well, and a crucial role is played by psychological factors such as flexible thinking – switching quickly from solving positional problems to finding tactical finesse, and vice versa.

The game's sporting significance should not be underestimated – your energy reserves and your ability to play at the same high level for the duration of a tournament are of great importance. At Linares the quality of play towards the end dropped noticeably, even amongst the younger players such as Gelfand and Anand (and to a lesser degree, Ivanchuk, who was in indifferent form from the very beginning). And the experienced Grandmasters Yusupov and Beliavsky, whose high class is well-known, were nowhere to be seen at the end. They gave out physically, and were finally unable to solve problems which they would have dealt with easily at the start of the event.

Only Kasparov managed to play throughout the whole tournament evenly. Not only did he calculate variations beautifully, and demonstrate superbly the opening knowledge for which he is renowned, but also his extremely strong nerves at the board at times turned out to be even steeper than the younger players'. Therefore his success was quite natural. Incidentally, in cases where Kasparov has not devoted enough time to special preparation for a tournament, it is possible to fight with him on equal terms, and for this reason in some tournaments around this time he did not take first place.

The points that I have introduced thus far together form a single and very important theme, some aspects of which I will return to. But now it is time to look at the games.

I will begin in chronological order with my game against Valery Salov, from the third round. In the first two I had scored only half a point.

In a situation like that, what should you do, how should you try to play the game? In order to attain some kind of competitive success you have to win quite a lot of games, but if your opponent does not make too many dreadful errors it will be very difficult to overcome

him. So, should you play in your usual fashion, be restrained, and try to make use of each imprecision? Or is it better to try for a quick win and play with the utmost sharpness? I get the impression that players have stopped throwing themselves in despairingly – now everyone prefers to play their own game, and this is probably correct.

Barev – Salov

Linares 1992

Bogo-Indian

1 d4 ♘f6
2 c4 e6
3 ♘f3 ♖b4+

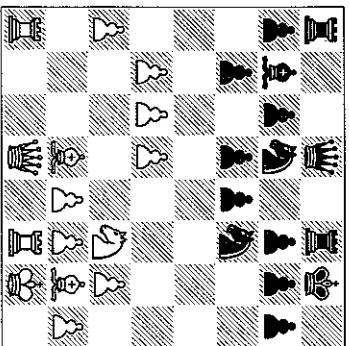
Today the Bogo-Indian is in the arsenal of an enormous number of chess players. Without an intense study of Queen's Indian-type structures it is impossible to play closed openings, just as you cannot play open ones without knowledge of the Ruy Lopez.

4 ♘bd2 b6
Quite different types of position arise after 4...d5 or 4...0-0.

5 a3 ♖xd2+
6 ♖xd2 ♖b7
7 g3
7 ♖g5 is more common, but my move is no weaker.

7 ... d6
8 ♖g2 ♘bd7
9 0-0 0-0

10 b4 (D)



B

Do you know the standard ways of playing positions like this? What plans does Black usually carry out?

We have three reasonable suggestions:

- 1) ... ♖e7 and ... e6-e5.
- 2) ... c7-c5.
- 3) ... a7-a6 and ... b6-b5.

However, first of all you have to put your bishop on e4. Not the knight, but the bishop! Then you can play ... c7-c5. This is how Black operates in the majority of games I know of, and Salov made his next move practically without any thought.

10 ... ♗e4

11 ♖c1

The battle has, for the time being, taken on a quiet, manoeuvring character, and the players are solving purely positional problems.

Thinking time is limited to two hours for forty moves, and although it is not known when the maximum output of time and strength will be required, such a moment will usually come in the late stage of the game. In the meantime you must play relatively quickly, using one or two minutes to play reasonable moves. If you take three, five, or ten minutes for every move, then, when you reach a crisis in the game and it is important that you have a good think (say, for about half an hour), you simply will not have enough reserves of time left. And even if you reach a better position by outplaying your opponent, but only as time trouble approaches, you will become fatigued at that very moment, and because you lack fresh perception errors will be inevitable — you will not be able to finish off the game successfully. This is why White's previous move was played very quickly. On a1 the rook has nothing to do, but on c1 it could prove useful when the opportunity arises. This is a sufficient basis for making a decision.

11 ... ♖e7

Why didn't my opponent play

11... ♖c8, with the idea of putting his queen on b7? I would suggest that the reply 12 c5 is unpleasant for Black.

12 ♖b3

I had to think about this move, and by the time I had played it I had already used up thirty-five minutes, whereas Salov had used only five. This is a tangible advantage in time which could make itself felt in the future! Now my opponent made a serious mistake — he did not sense that one of the key moments in the game had arisen. If you rush past a key moment it will be difficult to make up for it later.

I have set up a positional trap. It looks as though I want to play 13 ♖fd1, but in fact I have a different idea. If Salov had stopped to think for ten minutes, he would have understood that it was already time to advance his c-pawn. Instead he made another, quite unexpected move, although it is sometimes seen in similar positions. It is interesting why this move came to mind. Does it work? What does the expert, Igor Khenkin, say? He suggests 12... c6. Yes, that is a typical and reasonable solution. Ulf Andersson simply adores playing precisely like that. However, I would have preferred 12... c5.

12 ... ♗f8

13 c5!

Now Salov began to catch me up on the clock. By this pawn thrust I had seized some space. Obviously, taking on c5 does not work — Black

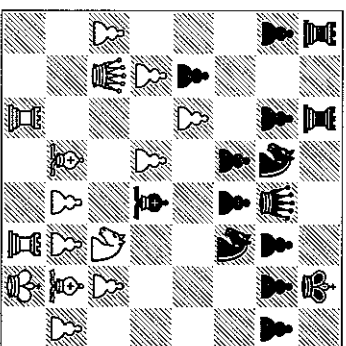
will have serious problems on the a3-f8 diagonal.

How do you think Black should continue?

13 ... b5 (D)

Correct! You must fight for the light squares, and try to exchange off some pieces, so as to leave your opponent with a passive bishop on d2. After 14 c6 Black now has the reply 14... ♖b6.

What plan would you recommend for White? Here it is justifiable to spend some time thinking about how to continue — if we find the correct plan the next series of moves can be played almost automatically.



W

Incidentally, at the moment we are solving strategic problems, but tactics could begin at any minute. It is important to be ready at all times (especially psychologically)

to switch from positional manoeuvring to tactical paths.

I do not like the suggestion 14 ♖h3. Karpov sometimes plays this in similar positions, but the bishop is not well placed on h3. The move is good only when it threatens an attack on the e4-bishop, and that is clearly not going to happen in this case.

14 ♖g5 is a possibility, although I would never give up the bishop.

One feasible plan is ♖a1 followed by ♖f1 and a3-a4. Continuing in this fashion is particularly appropriate with a closed centre. I did not want to begin that now, not because it is a bad idea, but because the centre is not really closed. My opponent has the strong d5-square, so it is wise to challenge him to fix his position somehow in the centre.

Our expert Igor Khenkin found the correct solution: 14 ♖b2. White intends ♖f1, reserving the option of playing ♖a1, and the reply ...♗d5 will be made without winning a tempo. The modest queen retreat conceals another idea, which will become clear later on.

14 ♖b2! h6

15 ♖f1 a6

16 ♖e1 d5

White has quietly improved the position of his pieces. His opponent was finally unable to stand the

pressure, and has fixed the centre. Why did he play that? He wants to move the passive d7-knight via b8 to c6, but with the pawn on d6 the move ...♗b8 would meet with the reply cxd6, when Black's c-pawn is pinned. Now we see why I was in no hurry to remove the rook from c1.

17 ♖f1!

Only now did Salov see the strategic dangers of the position. White's knight is not going to e5, but to a5, via b3 (which the queen has freed for it). The f1-bishop is necessary for a future attack on the b5-pawn after the natural break a3-a4.

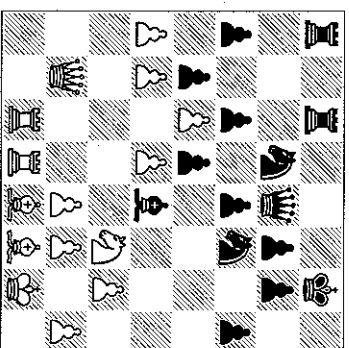
Rather than the immediate 18 ♖d2 ♖b8 19 ♖b3 ♖c6, I will instead play ♖a1 and a3-a4. Only after my opponent has defended the b5-pawn with ...c7-c6 will I move my knight over to a5.

17 ... c6

If Black brings the knight to c6, it is not clear how the b5-pawn can be supported.

18 a4 (D)

Now, as our other expert, Vladimir Kramnik, correctly pointed out, Black should seriously think about exchanging on f3, in order to prevent the unpleasant knight manoeuvre. The position is closed, and in such cases bishops are not any stronger than knights. Thus:



B

18...♗xf3 19 exf3 g6 20 ♖a1. What should Black do now? After 20...h5, besides the manoeuvre ♗d2-g5, he has to bear in mind the pawn attack f3-f4, f2-f3, h2-h3 and g3-g4. Then the bishop will move out to h4 or g3, preparing the powerful thrust f4-f5. Moreover, doing all this immediately is optional – White could first play on the queenside and double rooks on the a-file.

After 18...♗xf3 19 exf3 Khenkin suggests 19...e5. Unfortunately for Black, it is not clear what he wants to do. The bishop is going to h3, the rook will soon land on e1, and ...e5-e4 invites f3xe4.

Therefore exchanging on f3 does not promise Black an easy life. What other defensive plan could he choose?

18...♖a7 has no prospects: 19 ♖a1 ♖b8 (in order to take on b5

with the c-pawn and place the knight on c6) is too passive for the second player – White will not hurry to exchange on b5, and the knight on b8 will be poorly placed.

Dvoretsky's suggestion ...♗f6-e8-c7 looks much better. Why is it that he seems to know everything, whilst his students cannot discover a simple knight manoeuvre?

Salov very quickly made a difficult, and apparently very strong decision – he abandoned his intended manoeuvre and advanced a pawn on the kingside. He should have come across this idea earlier.

18 ... g5!?

At first I did not understand my opponent's idea, and continued down my own line.

19 ♖a1 ♖e8

It is difficult to imagine, but ...g7-g5 and ...♖e8 are links in the same plan. After 20 ♖d2 ♖g6 21 f3 Black will be able to prevent the break e2-e4 by means of 21...f5. And if White tries (by playing g3-g4) to prepare ♗g3, the bishop will meet with the reply ...f5-f4. In general, my e1-bishop is not well-placed for action in the centre. As you can see, Salov not only hopes to support the queenside by putting his knight on c7, but is also making advance measures to contain my future play in the centre and on the kingside.

Consider my dilemma: I was manoeuvring my pieces and sitting comfortably in my chair, thinking about how I could win the game as simply as possible. Strengthen my position here and there and gradually shatter his defence. But now it is clear that an easy route to success cannot be found, and I had to discover something without fail.

However, my next moves were not too much trouble, and I found them easily.

20 axb5

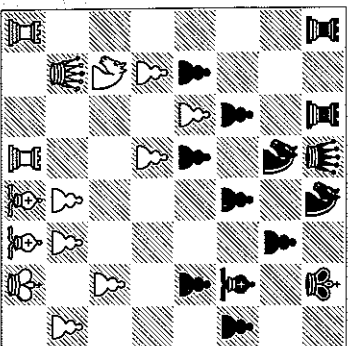
I was in a hurry to exchange pawns before the knight appeared on c7. Unfortunately the knight also has the comfortable g7-square on the opposite flank.

20 ... axb5

21 ♖d2 ♗g6

22 ♖b3 ♗d8 (D)

What should be done now? How can the position be improved?



W

White should seek a way of using the a-file and the weakness on e6. I could not see how exchanging off all the rooks would achieve anything concrete. The bishops have until now not taken part in the game, and it is necessary to find useful diagonals for them.

The solution apparently lies in quickly closing the a-file (hoping when the opportunity arises to open it again in the future) and starting something on the kingside.

23 ♖a5 ♗c7

24 ♖a3 ♖a6

25 ♖d1 ♖c8

What do I do now? Since I am not sure myself that what I was doing was correct, we shall discuss it together.

White would like to play f2-f3 and g3-g4 in order to create an outpost for the bishop on g3. His opponent, obviously, should meet this with ...f7-f5.

It is important to destroy the enemy defences as vigorously as possible. From this point of view it is worth looking at the attempt to hit the g5 and h6-pawns by means of 26 h4. If 26...gxh4 27 gxh4 White's a3-rook can transfer to the kingside.

It would be logical as a preliminary to include the queen in the attack with ♖c1, but then White would be less well prepared to

meet Black's breakthrough ...e6-e5.

Thus I could not find a move which satisfied me fully – always a practical problem. Your time is limited, and your reserves will be needed – after the game is inevitably opened up – to solve purely tactical problems. That is why at times you have to make some sort of quick, logical move, knowing that it is probably not the strongest.

26 ♖c1!?

f6

Black decided not to play ...f7-f5 because of h2-h4, but now the plan of f2-f3, g3-g4 and ♗g3 becomes valid.

27 f3 ♖g7

28 ♗g2

The bishop is no longer needed on f1, while from g2 it will support the advance e2-e4. If White manages to achieve this, Black will be deprived of his only real counter-chance, namely ...e6-e5. Hence Black's next.

28 ... e5

29 dxe5

Strategy concedes to tactics. I was using the fact that 29...fxe5 is no good in view of 30 h4!, when there is no way to support the g5-pawn. When the time is right I can increase the pressure on the c1-h6 diagonal by means of ♗d2 (now it is clear why my queen has gone to c1 and not d2).

29 ... ♖xe5
30 f4

White's action looks logical, although Salov is holding on – he has placed his pieces very skillfully.

30 ... ♖f7

I was only expecting 30...♖d7, protecting the f6-pawn, but as it turns out this is not obligatory. All the same, which is more correct, ...♖d7 or ...♖f7? I do not know, and I fear that it is one of those unanswerable questions.

31 ♗c3 ♖e8

This is the key to Salov's idea. Now I have to begin the tactics.

32 ♗xf6 gxf4

33 ♗xg7

If 33 gxf4, then 33...♖h5 is unpleasant.

33 ... ♖xg7

34 gxf4

I am playing against the f7-knight and the a6-rook, which are not too happily placed, and I hope to swing my pieces over to the kingside.

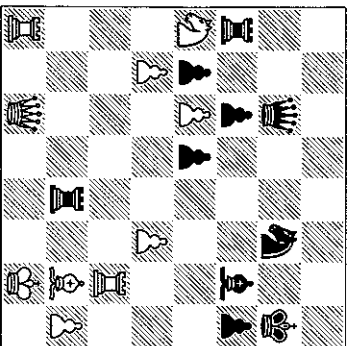
34 ... ♖xe2

35 ♖g3

A natural move, but 35 ♖ff1! (intending f4-f5 and ♖g3+) was probably stronger. Having thought for five minutes, I did not find this possibility, but saw another idea.

35 ... ♖h7 (D)

36 ♗f1



W

Question: why did I play that? Was my flag hanging? Well, in reality, we had less than a minute remaining. Perhaps you don't like my move, but regardless of that, what was my idea? It was to move my rook to g2 – I really wanted to give mate on the g-file!

Black's rook must retreat down the e-file (36...♖c2 37 ♖e3 threats 38 ♗xg6). But to which square – e4, e6, e7 or e8?

The answer is e7, defending the seventh rank. The second rook can defend the eighth rank from a8 (but not the other way round!).

Let's look at the move 36...♗e7. The sacrifice 37 ♗xg6 does not work because the f7-knight reliably covers the king.

37 ♗a2 ♖h8 38 ♗ag2 is the consistent follow-up to White's play, but after 38...♗a8 how should White continue the attack?

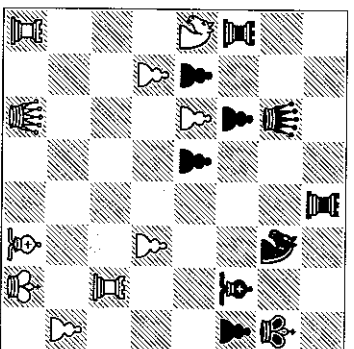
Correct is 39 f5! ♗xf5 40 ♗d3!?, hoping for 40...♗xd3 41 ♗xh6+! ♗xh6 42 ♗h3 mate. However, there is the defence 40...♗h8. If 41 ♗h3 there is 41...♗e6, so White has to try 41 ♗f3!, and if 41...♗ef7? 42 ♗h3! and mate is inevitable. But can you see how to win the game after 41...♗e5?

Kramnik found the clever idea 42 ♗g4 (renewing the threat of 43 ♗xh6+), and if 42...♖g6, then 43 ♗h3 ♗e1+ 44 ♗xc1 ♗xg4 45 ♗g3 with an attack. However, there is an equally elegant refutation – 42...♗xd3, and after 43 ♗xf8, the double blow 43...♗e7!. There is no mate: 44 ♗xh8+ ♗xh8 45 ♗xh6+ ♗h7. Instead of 42 ♗g4 I prefer 42 ♗f1 or 42 ♗b1.

If my opponent had played 36...♗c7!, in time-trouble I certainly would not have thought of the mating idea f4-f5 and ♗xh6+ – this is only within the powers of our expert Kramnik. Moreover, Black can improve on the above defence. Instead of 38...♗a8? Black has 38...♗e4!.

This would all be very well, if I had even half an hour in reserve I could sit and calculate the variations. But for some reason you never have enough time when you really need it – everyone should learn to manage this problem!

36 ... ♗e5? (D)



W

37 ♗a2
The position is probably winning for White – it is difficult to defend g7.

37 ... ♗e4
38 ♗c3 ♖h8

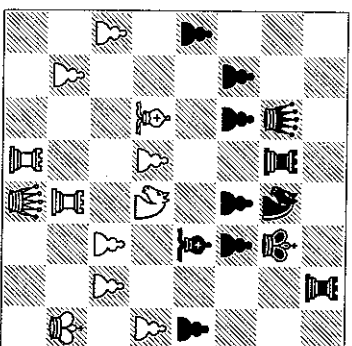
After 38...♗g8 the simple 39 ♗f6 is strong. Salov did have an idea – blocking the g-file with the knight on g6. Grandmasters' ideas occasionally turn out to be unsuccessful, but they rarely play with no idea at all.

39 ♗d3 ♖g6?
39...♗xd3 40 ♗xd3+ ♗e4 41 ♗ag2 ♗a7 was necessary.

40 ♗ag2! ♗xa5
A typical fortieth move in time trouble. In the tournament bulletin it was given two question marks, but that was unmerited – he had no way of saving himself anyway.

41 ♗xg6
Black resigned

If someone tries to tell you that grandmasters never make mistakes, don't believe them! At Linares, a tournament of the highest class (FIDE Category 17), there were many terrible misses, and not only in time trouble. Yusupov, for example, allowed Illescas a chance to take an important pawn. And here is another example of an amazing 40th move:



W

Timman – Karpov
Linares 1992

For a start Timman for some reason surrendered a central pawn in a good position: 39 ♗c1? ♗xd4 40 ♖xf6. And now instead of the easily winning 40...♗h4+ 41 ♗g2 ♗h3+ Karpov chose 40...♗xf6? 41 ♗xe6+ ♗xe6 42 ♗xc6+ ♗g7 43 ♗f7+ ♗h6 44 ♗f6+ ♖g6 (if 44...♗g6, then mate on h8) 45 ♗xd4. Even though he continued

for another ten moves, he was simply an exchange down.

In the seventh round I met the World Champion. At that stage I only had two points, but I wanted to move up amongst the prize-winners. That meant I had to defeat Kasparov. But how do you do that?

Bareev – Kasparov

Linares 1992

King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6
2 c4 g6
3 ♘c3 ♙g7
4 e4 d6
5 ♙e2 0-0
6 ♙g5

The Averbakh Variation. Which of you King's Indian players can say which Black reply is most popular? Exactly what was played:

6 ... ♘a6
7 h4

Is this a novelty? No, as it says in the tournament bulletin, it had already been played in Budnikov-Kruppa, USSR Ch 1991.

What, exactly, is the idea behind h2-h4? Do you think I want to develop the knight to h3? Yes, the knight would be more active there.

No, there is no mate. On the contrary, White is hoping to block up the kingside, so as to deprive his opponent of active possibilities on that flank. Khenkin adds, '...and

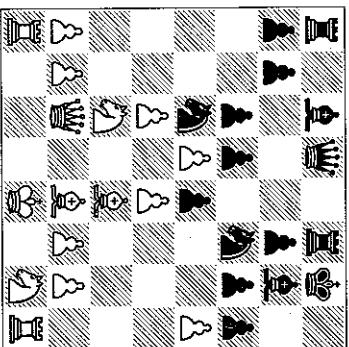
develop the knight to h3'. Here the knight would be more active there.

Here the World Champion fell into deep thought. In principle of course, he knows everything, and usually plays the opening quickly. But if he is faced with some sort of problem, he becomes like other players and begins to think – sometimes for a long time.

7 ... h6

After the game the champion suggested that it would have been better to play 7...c5.

8 ♙e3 e5
9 d5 ♘c5
10 ♖c2 c6
11 h5 (D)



B

When in our post-mortem analysis I mentioned Kruppa's move 11...gxh5?, Kasparov immediately began to wave his hands, condemning (probably justifiably)

this capture. It not only weakens f5, but places the h6-pawn under attack, and it also gives the h1-rook a future. The King's Indian is a very tenacious opening, but it is not worth playing it like this.

11 ... g5

[A year later in the Biel Interzonal (1993), Gelfand tried out Shereshevsky's clever idea against Bareev: 11...cxd5 12 cxd5 ♙d7! 13 hxg6 fxg6. After 14 b4 (taking the h6-pawn would have allowed Black to achieve excellent counter-play along the open h-file: 14 ♙xh6 ♙xh6 15 ♙xh6 ♖g7 16 ♙h1 ♙h8 17 ♙xh8 ♖xh8) 14...♘a6 15 a3 h5 16 f3 a complex position arose, with chances for both sides – Dvoretzky.]

12 f3 a5
13 g4

As was intended, the kingside has been successfully closed up. White has two other candidate moves in 13 0-0-0 and 13 ♙d1. The idea behind both is to make it difficult for Black to develop with ...♙d7, and to force an exchange of pawns on d5. To be more specific: 13 ♙d1 (or 13 0-0-0) 13...cxd5 14 cxd5 ♙d7 15 ♙xc5 dxc5. How can the resulting position be assessed, and have I succeeded in my plan of seizing the light squares?

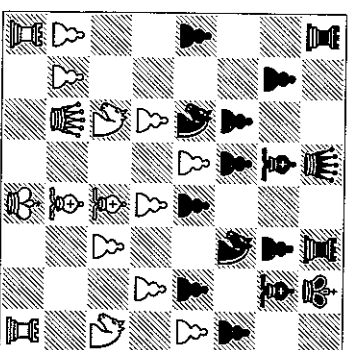
Khenkin thinks that strategically White is better. Perhaps. If White

could make two moves in a row – a2-a4 and ♙c4 – he would be very happy, but after 16 a4 Black has 16...c4! (intending ...♖b6, ...♙c8, ...♙f8 and ...♙c5). Then White's dark squares are very weak, and my king has nowhere safe to hide. White could, of course, play this position, but I would not recommend it. Against anyone it is difficult enough, against Kasparov it is a totally hopeless undertaking – his sense of the initiative is too strong.

I chose a completely different strategy – one of limitation, of trying to prevent him from properly considering the variations or recalling how things went in his matches with Karpov.

13 ... ♙d7
14 ♘h3 (D)

We should try to think up a plan for Black.



B

14... ♖b8 has been suggested. I remember that such a manoeuvre was carried out in Bareev-Khenkin, 1982, and has not been seen since. Khenkin at that point was not yet a King's Indian player.

14... cxd5 15 cxd5 ♜c8 (threatening 16... ♗xh5) 16 ♗f2 ♗a4 is another suggestion. I can tell you that I was dreaming of a means of exchanging the c5-knight.

Finally the correct idea, 14... a4, with the idea of ... ♖a5 followed by ... cxd5, ... ♜fc8 and ... b7-b5. It would cost Black dearly if he delayed a little, as he would fall into a positional clamp, so he should attack quickly on the queenside. If the b7-pawn gets to b4 and drives away the knight, White will not have very much space and consequently will not be able to regroup his pieces effectively.

14 ... a4!

What should I do now? In games there are key moments on which much will depend. You either find the right plan and seize the initiative, or fail to solve the problems and find yourself being trampled on.

Perhaps the move I made was not that great, but something had to be done, and I could not see another way of fighting my opponent's plan. In any case, against the World Champion, my choice was

justified. If you can find it then you know how to play White in the Averbakh System.

What about capturing on c6? Many people do this, and it has not worked well for any of them. Black replies 15... bxc6 and the weakness of the d6-pawn has no significance whatsoever.

You have to put the queen on d2. A difficult move! Don't think that I want to sacrifice a piece on g5 – the idea is to exchange queens.

15 ♖d2! cxd5
16 cxd5 ♖a5

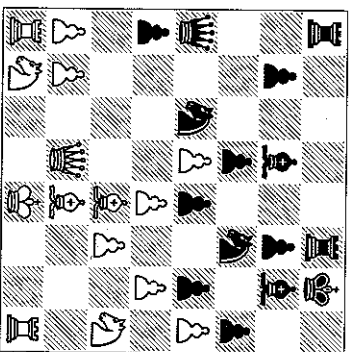
For a total of twenty-five minutes the World Champion sat and calculated the variation 16... ♗xg4 17 fxg4 ♗fxe4 18 ♗xe4 ♗xe4. After the game he regretted that he had not played this continuation, although he agreed that after 19 ♖b4 the piece is worth more than the pawns anyway.

17 ♗b1 (D)

What would you do now as Black?

The first step is to evaluate the position. White appears to be a little better. Apparently Kasparov thought so too, but I was less sure. I think chances are roughly even.

Someone suggested 17... ♜c7?. Why surrender so soon? I would reply 18 ♗a3, then ♜c1, ♗f2 and at some point ♗xc4. Black has no counterplay left at all.



B

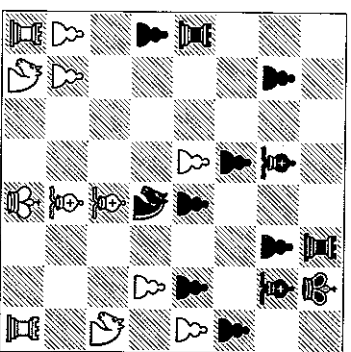
Khenkin suggests 17... ♜xd2+ 18 ♗xd2 (18 ♖xd2 is dangerous because of 18... ♗fxe4+) 18... b5 19 ♗f2 ♜fc8. Correct! You should probably go for this position – it looks fairly level to me. In the fight for the advantage, the white knight should not be on d2, but a3.

Bearing in mind what I have said, you could look at 18 ♗xd2. I would not dare do this as the piece sacrifice 18... ♗xg4 (18... ♗fxe4 19 fxg4 ♗xe4 20 ♗xc3) 19 fxg4 ♗cxc4 (with the idea of ... ♗xd5) could prove unpleasant (20 ♗f3 ♗xd2 followed by 21... e4).

Everyone has his own style; his own distinctive way of playing. In Black's place I would have preferred to resign myself to exchanging queens. But Kasparov does not like positions where he has no counterplay. He did not want to go into a quiet and (as it seemed to

him) slightly worse ending, so he decided upon a fairly dubious piece sacrifice. Moreover, he was thinking of my reputation as a player who was not capable of calculating a single variation, and wanted to make use of that. In the end I did make a mistake, but he was lucky – the position which arose was not the sort in which I usually make mistakes, since here there is in fact practically nothing to calculate.

17 ... ♗fxe4
18 fxg4 ♗xe4
19 ♖xa5 ♜xa5 (D)



W

20 ♗c3!

A simple and very strong solution. If 20... ♗xc3 21 bxc3 ♜xd5, then 22 ♗f2 and White will set up a blockade on the light squares. Three pawns for a knight, but with no counterplay, is not enough for

Black – he needs something dynamic, for example two connected passed pawns.

20 ♖f2 would have almost lost: 20...♗g3 21 ♖g1 ♗xe2 22 ♗xe2 e4, and the g7-bishop comes to life.

Khenkin suggests 20 ♖b6 ♖xd5 21 ♖f3. I don't like this – I want to play normal, sound moves, but here White is scattering his pieces without finishing his development. Besides 21...♖b5, 21...♗f6 22 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 could be considered – White is losing the g4-pawn and possibly the one on h5 as well. Too complicated!

20 ... ♗g3
21 ♖g1

I thought for a long time about 21 ♗f2, attempting – by giving up the exchange – to play for a blockade. Nonetheless, a rook is worth more than a knight.

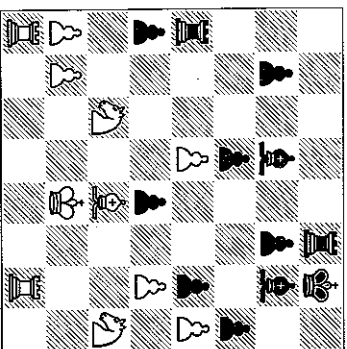
21 ... ♗xe2

21...♗xh5 is an alternative. After 22 ♗xg5 ♗f4 23 ♗ge4 ♗xd5 24 ♗xd5 ♖xd5 25 g5 White has the advantage. 21...f5 22 ♖xg3 f4 23 ♖b6! does not work either.

22 ♗xe2 e4 (D)

Black needed to activate his dark-squared bishop. What should White do now?

He has to watch out for both 23...a3 and 23...♖xc3 24 bxc3 ♖xd5 (threatening ...♖b5+ and ...♖d3). His king is not too safely placed,



and the e4-pawn can never be taken. In general he should have difficulty realising his advantage but, in fact, White's position is close to winning.

23 ♖acl!

Now after 23...a3 there is the reply 24 b4. If 23...♖xc3 then 24 ♖xc3, or alternatively 24 bxc3 ♖xd5 25 c4.

The other natural continuation,

23 ♖ad1, is weaker because of 23...f5! 24 gxf5 a3 25 ♖d4 (25 b4 ♖xc3 26 bxa5 ♖b5+ 27 ♗f2 ♖xf5+ 28 ♗g2 ♖e2!) 25...♖xd4 26 ♖xxd4 axb2 with an unclear game.

White need play only simple, precise moves. One mistake and fortunes will quickly change.

23 ... f5

24 gxf5

One of the critical moments of the game. The Champion thought for a long time here. Good players

can be distinguished from the less good because they can somehow think precisely at the critical, most important moments.

Black is worse. In order to try to save himself he has to find the strongest move at each turn and keep up his counterplay – otherwise White's extra piece will make itself felt.

He has three possibilities: taking on f5 with the rook or bishop, or attacking the h5-pawn.

The third option is the strongest. If he manages to gain have connected passed pawns on the kingside nothing will remain of White's advantage. Kasparov saw the move 24...♖e8!, but rejected it. Why?

Dvoretsky suggested that it was because of 25 ♗f4, but since Kasparov did not mention it in the post-game analysis, I doubt if he considered the move at all. The reply 25...gxf4? 26 ♖d4 is dangerous, but instead there is the simple 25...♖xf5.

The World Champion was confused by the position that appears after 25 ♗xg5 hxg5 26 ♖xg5 ♗h8. Maybe his concern is unjustified; at least material is even. For example, if 27 ♗xe4, then 27...♖e5 (intending ...♖xd5 or ...♖b5) deserves attention.

24 ... ♖xf5?
25 ♗f2 ♖e8

What move did I play, without thinking at all?

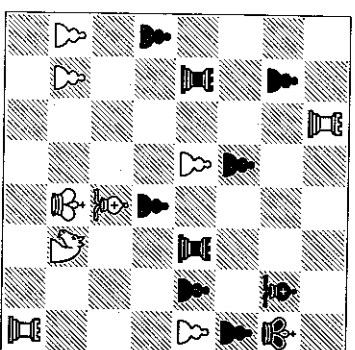
26 ♖h1

Correct. The pawn must be defended at all cost.

26 ... ♖b5+

Here I was sure that I would win. This voluntary exchange of such an important bishop means Black cannot be happy with his position.

27 ♗xb5 ♖xb5
28 ♖c8+ ♗h7 (D)



If you can now find one more correct move, winning the game will not depend on who you are playing.

Since we have already played 26 ♖h1! it is not that difficult to play in the same style again: 29 ♖b1!. At the board after I had only examined 30 ♗xe4 in reply to 29...♖fxd5. However, this is not

the strongest as it opens the fourth rank for a Black rook to come over to h4 and attack the h5-pawn.

30 b4! is much better: 30...axb3 (or else 31 a3) 31 axb3. True, there are not many pawns left on the board, but this is not important. I can generate a dangerous attack by putting my rook on c7 and then invading the enemy camp with my other rook.

Unfortunately, I did not find 30 b4. As a result I turned away from 29 ♖b1! and let victory escape.

- 29 ♖d1? ♖xb2+
30 ♖d2

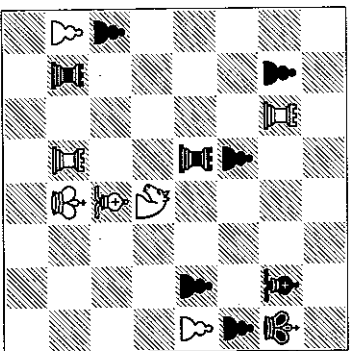
I only considered variations involving captures: 30...♖xd2+ 31 ♗xd2 ♖xd5 32 ♗c3. After the exchange of bishops Black's king runs out of defenders and my attack should be decisive.

- 30 ... a3!
31 ♖c7 ♖xd5
32 ♗xe4 (D)

What does Black need to do?
The correct way is 32...♖xd2+! 33 ♗xd2 ♖g8 and then 34...♖xa2. Kasparov preferred an immediate king retreat.

- 32 ... ♖g8?!
33 ♖cc2!

This move does not alter the assessment of the position, it merely requires Black, in time-trouble, to demonstrate his skill in order to hold on to the game. To the credit



of the World Champion, as he again found himself under threat of defeat, he played with great strength.

White wants to exchange off a pair of rooks: 34 ♖xd5 ♖xc2+ 35 ♖d2 and if 35...♖b2, then 36 ♖d3, intending 37 ♖xb2 axb2 38 ♖c2. The h5-pawn has survived and the black pawns are weak; in general White maintains excellent chances of victory.

- 33 ... b5!
34 ♖xd5 ♖xc2+
35 ♖d2 ♖b2
36 ♖d3
Not 36 ♗xd6? ♗c3.
36 ... d5

Now I have to be cautious. Where should I retreat the knight? Remember that I was also in time trouble.

Why to c5, and not g3 or d6? Do I want to hold on to b3? I do not

really want to (it would have been tempting to head for f5) but I have to – the threat of ...b4-b3 is too serious. 37 ♗d6? d4 38 ♗f2 b4 is no good for White, e.g. 39 ♗c4 b3! or 39 ♖xb2 axb2 40 ♖c2 d3+.

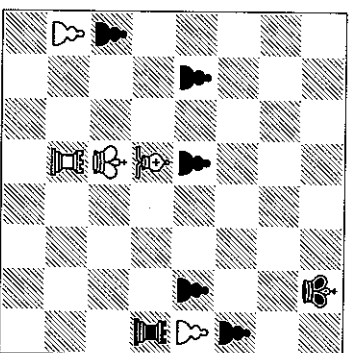
- 37 ♗c5!
What should Black do?
37 ... ♖b4!

The main enemy is the h5-pawn, and it must be attacked as quickly as possible.

- 38 ♗e6 ♖h4
39 ♗xg7 ♖xg7
40 ♗d4+ ♖g8 (D)

A somewhat strange move (not surprisingly – it is the fortieth!). From childhood we are taught that in the endgame the king should be brought towards the centre, so 40...♖f7 suggests itself.

What would you recommend for White now?



Yes, 41 ♖c2 can be played, but why? To let the rook loose? Breaking through with the rook is not a problem, but I cannot manage to include the bishop as well. What if they could join in on an attack against the king!

I had to find 41 ♖c3!, trying to bypass the d5-pawn with the king via the flank. Most likely the position would have remained drawn, but White would not have been risking anything, and could have faced his opponent with some problems.

- 41 ♗e5?!

The same idea: 41...♖xh5? 42 ♖d4. Unfortunately captures are not obligatory.

- 41 ... ♖f7!

Several other moves could have been played, but they would not have changed anything.

- 42 ♖e2

In order not to allow the king on to e6.

- 42 ... ♖xh5
43 ♖d4 ♖e6!
Not fearing phantoms!

- 44 ♗b8+ ♖f5
45 ♖c3 ♖h1
46 ♖f3+ ♖g4
47 ♖g3+ ♖f5
48 ♖f3+
Draw

Who can say what sort of game Kasparov and I played – positional

or combinational? The struggle was sharp and a piece was sacrificed, but at the same time most of the decisions were based on purely strategic considerations.

In conclusion I will show you my game with Karpov.

Karpov – Bareev
Linares 1992
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5
2 c4 c6
3 ♘c3

There is a reason for delaying the development of the king's knight: in the variation 3... ♗f6 4 cxd5 cxd5 5 ♗f4 ♗c6 6 e3 e6 7 ♗d3 ♗d6 White can play 8 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 9 f4!. Nevertheless, as you know, nothing is absolutely free. The move order chosen by Karpov also has its drawbacks. His opponent has at his disposal a sharp gambit continuation which has come into fashion.

3 ... e5!?
4 dxes5 d4
5 ♗e4 ♗as+
6 ♗d2

6 ♗d2!? deserves serious attention. However, I don't want to dwell on opening finesses – it would take up too much time to examine the complex and unusual

positions which can be reached. We will limit ourselves to the game continuation.

6 ... ♗d7

7 ♗f3 ♗xe5 is also played here,

but Black usually succeeds in maintaining equality.

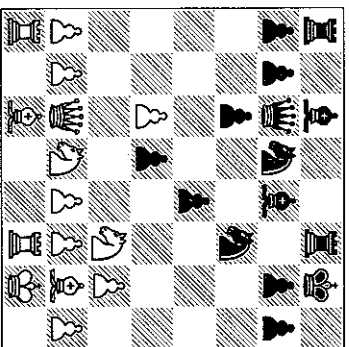
7 ... fxe6
8 g3 e5
9 ♗g2 ♗gf6
10 ♗f3

10 ♗h3 is a reasonable alternative.

10 ... ♗e7
11 0-0 ♗c7
12 ♗c2

A natural, but in my opinion, not a very good move.

12 ... 0-0 (D)



W

We will begin here. I wonder if anyone can come up with the continuation which Karpov chose.

The thrust 13 ♗g5 comes to mind, even if it is not very good. 13... ♗c5 threatens 14... h6, after which all the pieces will be exchanged on e4, leading to a draw.

13 b3

If you think about the move Karpov played, you should also find his idea. First you must understand his train of thought. He does not want to exchange pieces too soon; he wants to complete his development with ♗b2, ♗ae1/d1 and e2-e3, undermining the centre. Then all his pieces will be posted harmoniously.

Black must somehow hinder this plan, and find counterplay of his own. I can see two ideas for Black. Neither is superficial.

The first begins with a move which is not obvious, 13... ♗c5. After 14 ♗b2 best is 14... g6 (another move which is hard to find). The point is that ... ♗f5 will gain a tempo and control the d3-square should White strike with e2-e3.

Also possible is 14... ♗g4 (instead of 14... g6). I must admit I did not see this move: 15 h3 ♗f5 16 ♗d1 ♗f6 17 g4 ♗g6 and everything is in order. Perhaps this is even stronger.

I chose another plan; it is interesting, but I would not use it again (13... ♗c5 is simpler and more reliable).

13 ... ♗e8
14 ♗b2 ♗f8!

Now 15 e3 permits 15... d3!

15 ♗g5 ♗c5

Black cannot afford to give up the key e4-square. My idea is first to exchange a knight, and after that my light-squared bishop, leaving White with only his b2-bishop.

Guessing Karpov's next move does not seem possible.

Dvoretzky's attempt, 16 a3, is close – it was the second move that Karpov suggested after the game.

16 h3

Typical Karpov! By thinking about what he was defending himself against, I eventually understood what I needed to do myself – 16... g6 and 17... ♗f5. To my shame, even after 15... ♗c5 I had still not seen the idea of ... ♗f5. Having mentally thanked my opponent for prompting me, I continued with the game.

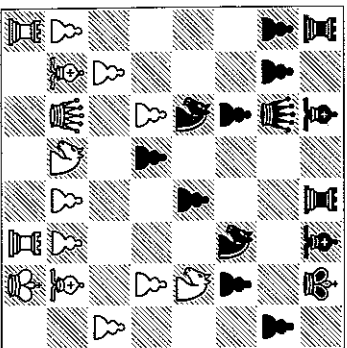
16 ... g6
17 g4 (D)

Karpov takes control of f5 and continues the struggle for supremacy over the light squares.

When you are taking part in such a complicated struggle you must constantly choose between continuations of approximately equal value. One move is slightly stronger, the other slightly weaker – how do you sense it?

By analysing positions which arose later, I came to the conclusion that instead of 16...g6, 16...a5! was more precise. It is a deep move, but I could not understand during the game why it had to be played precisely at this moment. I will explain: it is important to have the reply ...a5-a4 ready in case White plays ♖c4. Black would then be threatening to drive back the bishop with ...a4-a3 or, after ♖a1, prepare a pawn exchange on b3 followed by ...♙a2.

All this is quite complicated and I cannot condemn the move made in the game (16...g6). However, my second imprecise move was far more serious.



B

A complex, important moment for the game. Can you work out what is going on and what you must do?

For some reason you can often instantly find bad moves. However, finding a bad move is easier than actually playing it because as soon as you raise your hand you begin to have doubts.

Here is the first – not terribly successful – continuation which comes to mind: 17...b6. This weakens the c6-square unnecessarily.

What is White's plan? Putting his knight on e4? Nothing of the sort! His main idea is the breakthrough e2-e3!

What about putting your bishop on g7? Many people would have played that, and indeed that is what I did, but you should not do it.

We will discover the correct solution if we try to find out why the apparently natural move 17...♙g7 is in fact so bad. No, it is not because of 18 b4 ♖e6 19 ♖ge4 – indeed here I get in compensation the excellent f4-square.

Incidentally, as we will see, this problem was beyond Karpov's powers as well. He is a mighty exponent of prophylaxis, particularly strong in finding moves such as 16 h3, but this is not simply a question of defence, an active plan must be found.

The key move after 17...♙g7 is the strong 18 e3!. After 18...d3 19 ♖d1 e4 20 ♙xf6 (or first 20 b4) 20...♙xf6 21 ♖gxe4 favours White.

19...h6 20 ♖ge4 leaves the protruding d3-pawn without protection, whilst 19...h5 20 b4 is bad for Black. In all cases, the d3-pawn, unsupported by other pieces or pawns, falls.

Black can turn down 18...d3 in favour of 18...dxe3 19 fxe3. One expert has suggested that the position can be held by a tactic: 19...♙h6. We can check it: 20 ♙xf6 ♙xg5 21 ♙xg6+1 hxxg6 22 ♙xg6+ and who benefits from the tactic now?

Of course, incidental tactical chances can change the assessment of a position, but as a rule, if you have already lost strategically, then everything will collapse, and none of the variations you come across will be in your favour.

18...♙h6 (instead of 18...dxe3) does not help Black. White has a pleasant choice between 19 exd4 and 19 ♖ge4.

So how can Black defend himself?

17...♙h6 may be better than 17...♙g7, although the bishop has nothing to do on h6. After 18 ♖ge4 ♖xe4 19 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 20 ♙xe4 White's position is preferable because of the e2-e3 break.

Black's correct continuation is 17...♖e6!. Now after e2-e3, Black always has ...c6-c5. In the event of 18 ♖ge4 ♖xe4 19 ♖xe4 ♙g7 a

position arises which was reached in the game.

A summary: sometimes in a game a critical moment arises. If you rush by it, and do not find the precise move, the game can alter course and begin to go downhill.

The problems which Karpov and I were trying to solve were purely strategic, but at the same time the game was saturated with tactics and specific variations which demanded discovery and calculation. Sometimes you have to immerse yourself in the position and think about it as a whole, even if it is for only ten minutes. In general you cannot analyse every possibility (before you realise it you will be in time-trouble), but you do need to spend some time on the important, critical moments. The question is, how do you define which moments are critical? Karpov and I both failed to do so in this case.

17 ... ♙g7?
18 ♖de4? ♖fxe4
19 ♖xe4 ♖e6

Now it is time for White to forget about his advantage and think about how to maintain equality. The break 20 e3 is still useless because of 20...c5, when exchanging on d4 would give me the very important f4-square.

20 b4

Besides 20 e3, I had also looked at 20 c5, but the move played in the game never occurred to me. Kar-pov did not hurry to advance his c-pawn because this would leave d5 for my bishop (20 c5 ♖f4 21 e3 ♗xg2 and ...♗e6-♗d5).

20 ... ♖f4
21 e3 ♗xg2
22 ♖xg2

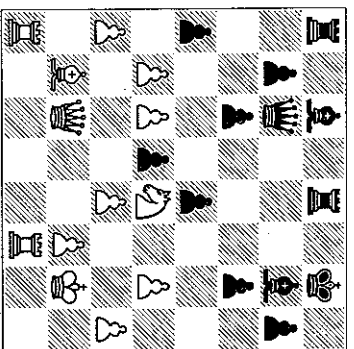
How would you evaluate this position? Is Black better? Simply giving an assessment is not enough – it needs to be supported, and that is not easy. Nothing is to be gained, for example, from 22...♗e6 23 ♗g5.

I occupied myself with a fairly meaningless idea – trying to break through my opponent's defence straight away – and analysed the line 22...c5 23 ♗xc5 b6 24 ♗e4 ♗b7. Eventually I sensed that it would not work, as White's position is sufficiently solid. I also have a useless bishop on g7, and had I appreciated this I would have taken the first opportunity to rid myself of it.

22 ... a5f
23 a3 (D)

I have advanced the a-pawn – not to do so would have shown a lack of self-respect! But what next?

Until now I could not understand why I did not play the natural move 23...♗e7!. On c7 the queen



is doing nothing, whereas from e7 two important diagonals are covered; f6 is defended and the b4-pawn is attacked. 24 c5 is answered with 24...♗e6 25 ♗d6 ♗f8. Perhaps I was instinctively afraid of putting my queen on e7 because of some sort of tactic connected with ♗a1. However, 24 ♗a1 axb4 25 axb4 ♗xb4 26 exd4 ♗e6 or, even better, 26...♗a2, is good for Black. Perhaps White should play 24 exd4 immediately, but then there is 24...axb4!.

23 ... ♗f8
Yet another problem – what is White going to do? This is what it is like in a game – you can never relax; it's one problem after another!

24 c5 is illogical – Black's previous move was directed against it – since now ♗d6 will not win a tempo.

The correct reply is 24 f3!. You have to strengthen your position. If Karpov had found it, he would not have lost. However, he played the sort of move which 'should not be played in chess'.

24 ♗ad1?
He wants to take on d4. But this should be done at the right time. For a start I can open the file which has been conceded to me.

24 ... axb4
25 axb4 dxe3

Now both possibilities for White have roughly the same value and do not give clear-cut equality. After 26 fxe3 ♗xf1 27 ♗xf1 ♗e7 the b4-pawn is hanging. Black will play ...♗e6, and at some point ...h7-h5.

26 f3
If you make two moves in a row for White and take the e3-pawn, he would be better. But who would offer to do that? Can you guess what I played?

26 ... ♗e7
At last! The thrust 26...♗a2 would have been premature – my opponent would have replied 27 ♗d1 and then driven the rook back with 28 ♗b3.

After the text move the b4-pawn is hanging, and 27 c5 ♗e6 gives Black control over a2.

27 ♗c1
'What moves are the candidates now?' Yusupov would have asked

at this point. Both 27...♗h6 and 27...♗xb4 appear sensible. And what did I do?

27 ... ♗h6!
After 27...♗xb4 28 ♗xe3, despite the pawn deficit, White is no worse.

28 ♗d1
Karpov finally understood that the rook had nothing to do on d1. What should Black play now?

28 ... ♗e6
Once again 28...♗xb4 brings no more than equality: 29 g5 ♗g7 30 ♗xe3.

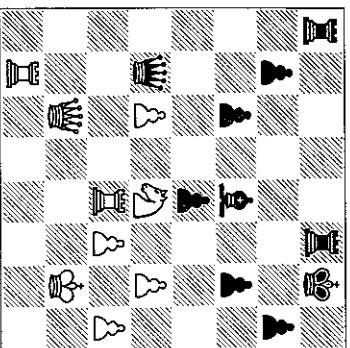
Now White's position is sad – there seems to be nothing better than 29 ♗xe3, but then he will not have enough compensation for the b4-pawn.

We could try playing 29 ♗c5. After 29...♗f7 30 ♗xe3 ♗xe3 31 ♗xe3 b5 how does White defend himself? 32 ♗f1 ♗xc4 33 ♗xe5 ♗f6(f7) leaves the f3-pawn weak and ...♗a2 threatened (...♗d5 is coming, too).

However, there is an improvement for White: 32 ♗c3! (instead of 32 ♗f1) 32...♗xc4 (32...♗a2+ 33 ♗f2) 33 ♗a1, but after 33...♗d5 White stands even worse than in the game. The bishop dominates the knight.

29 ♗xe3 ♗xe3
30 ♗xe3 ♗xb4
31 ♗b1 (D)

Again there are two candidate moves – 31... ♖xc4 and 31... ♗e7. Which would you prefer?



B

In the endgame after 31... ♖xc4 32 ♖xc4 ♗xc4 33 ♗xb7 I would have only a small advantage; Karpov said that it was most probably drawn. You might not believe me, but you should believe Karpov!

31 ... ♗e7!

White's position is apparently holding out, although he has to make exact moves. Karpov now fell short of time.

32 ♗f2

This move did not occur to me – why take the knight away from the centre? I thought it was important for White to capture the b7-pawn, so I was expecting 32 ♗b2! ♗xc4 33 ♖xb7. Then what should I do? Exchange queens with 33... ♖xb7 34 ♗xb7 and try by 34... ♗a2+ 35

♗g3 ♗f1 to deliver mate? That is clearly a fantasy. 33... ♗h4 (threatening ... ♗a2+) and then 34... ♗d5 is probably better, but how to win from here I do not know – White's defence is very difficult to overcome. In the game I broke through an analogous position with an extra exchange.

So why did my opponent put his knight on f2? He wanted to capture on e5 quickly, but he was not able to do this as I found a strong retort. What was it?

No, not 32... ♖c5. Here he had prepared something – I don't recall whether it was 33 ♖c3 or 33 ♗b1. The idea behind ... ♖c5 is right, you have to attack the c4-pawn in order to win control of d5 for the bishop.

32 ... ♖f7!

GM Razuvaev loves moves that serve two or more purposes at once. From f7 the queen is attacking f3 and c4, as well as defending the b7-pawn, which is why he would have praised me for this move. Now 33 ♗d3 runs into 33... e4! 34 fxe4 ♗xc4 35 ♗e5 ♗a2 36 ♖xa2 ♗f1+.

33 ♖b2

'Better late than never!'

33 ... ♗xc4

34 ♖xb7

34 ♖xe5 is hopeless – the b7-pawn survives and White still has

problems with the f3-pawn. Now White would be making some sort of progress were it not for a blow that I had seen in advance.

34 ... ♖f4!

An extremely unpleasant surprise. It is said that Karpov plays very well in time trouble. He emphasised that opinion in this game, chiefly in that he managed to play all his moves, only losing an exchange on the way.

35 ♖xc6!

35 ♗b1 ♗d5 is final. The exchange sacrifice is forced.

35 ... ♖xc3

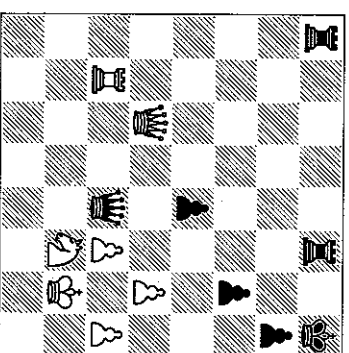
36 ♖xc4+

Now there are two options – 36... ♗h8 and 36... ♗f7.

36... ♗h8 appears best because it avoids walking into a pin (37 ♖d5!).

36 ... ♗h8

37 ♗b3 (D)



B

Curiously enough, White has good drawing chances. Until the time control had passed, I did not appreciate this, and thought that it would be easy for me to win. Fortunately, in the remaining moves before the time control Karpov managed to spoil his position.

Yet the defensive idea is quite simple. White must transfer his queen to e2 and the rook to e3 (to hold the second and third ranks), defend the f3-pawn, and again threaten the e5-pawn by playing ♗d3.

37 ... ♖d2!

I have pulled the wool over my opponent's eyes – and will not let his queen on to e2.

38 ♖c5 ♗a8

39 ♗d3

A draw cannot be ruled out even after an exchange of queens: 39 ♖c3 ♖xc3 40 ♗xc3 and the weakness of the e5-pawn is serious. If the queen retreats White can carry out necessary reorganisation with ♖e2 and ♗e3.

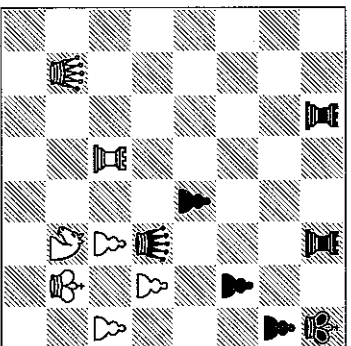
Extra reserves of time would have come in very useful for my opponent, who needs to work out what he should be aiming for and which positions are drawn or lost (for example, after an exchange of queens on f4 Black recaptures with the pawn and emerges with a won ending). With his flag hanging and

no time to think. Karpov did not offer to trade queens.

39 ... ♖f4
40 ♖c3?! ♖f8

He had to play 40 ♖c2! followed by ♖e2 and ♖e3. Perhaps my opponent was (erroneously) afraid of 40...e4.

40 ... ♖c8
41 ♖b2 (D) ♖c8



B

Having learnt from the bitter experience of previous rounds, after the time control I sank into thought for 25 minutes. Try to find a way of playing for a win.

It is tempting to play ...h7-h5; if Black manages to push the pawn to h4 he will be doing well. White must reply h3-h4!

41 ... ♖c4!!

A very strong move. What do you think is the main idea behind it? In fact it consists of three ideas

simultaneously (again Razuvayev would have been very happy).

First it closes off the a2-g8 diagonal, thus permitting the king to come to g8 safely, so that after the moves ...h7-h5 and h3-h4 have been played, the thrust ...e5-e4! is possible. More importantly, this can also be played if White puts his queen on e2 (as happened in the game).

Therefore my move is a prophylactic directed against White's desired regrouping of forces.

Kramnik suggested 41...♖fd8, but White has 42 ♖e2! ♖d4 43 ♖c3. With the text I want to carry out his plan with 42...♖d4 followed by 43...♖fd8.

Finally there remains the rather primitive idea 42...♖fc8 with the threat of...♖c2, and if 43 ♖d2, then 43...♖c3.

However, Karpov did not catch on to my train of thought, and quickly brought his queen to join the rest of his forces. After my reply he thought for 45 minutes, but still failed to save himself.

42 ♖e2 h5!

No doubt Karpov was planning 43 h4, but then saw the refutation: 43...hxg4 44 ♔xg4 (44 fxg4 ♖f6! followed by 45...♖c6+) 44...e4 (this has become possible thanks to the rook on c4) 45 fxe4 ♖xe4 46 ♖b2+ ♔g8 47 ♖a2+ ♖c4. There is

no time to make use of the pin on the rook, as the white king is under threat of mate [48 ♔e5! ♖e4+ 49 ♔g1 ♖f1+! 50 ♔xf1 ♖h1+ winning the queen – *Dvoretsky*].

43 ♔e4 h4

A new and serious weakness has appeared in the white camp – the g3-square. Dvoretsky likes to emphasise the significance of creating a second weakness when realising an advantage. The f3-pawn was easy to defend, but now the need to protect g3 – the second weakness – has upset White's equilibrium.

44 ♖e3 ♖fc8
45 ♖f2 ♖c2
46 ♖e2 ♖xe2
47 ♖xe2 ♔g7!

Karpov set many traps for me in this game, but I also set him a few. Black's last move is not only part of a plan (strengthening g6 and f6, preventing a capture of the h4-pawn with check) but also contains a trap, into which my opponent falls. Things are bad for him anyway – if he had stood his ground, at some point I would have jumped out with my queen to c1, for example, 48 ♖d3 ♖c7 49 ♖e2 ♖c1.

48 ♖f2

A natural move, intending a capture on h4 or a check on a7.

In fact the pawn can be sacrificed in order to pin my opponent's knight and place him in zugzwang.

48 ... ♖c1!
49 ♖xh4 ♖c2+
50 ♔f2 g5
51 ♖g3 ♖e1
52 h4

Which is the more precise king move, ...♔g6 or ...♔h6?

52 ... ♔g6?!
53 ♔g6

In a completely winning position you have to be particularly careful. After my move White has an incidental tactical chance: 53 f4! with the threat of 54 ♖d3+. Fortunately my advantage is too great, and Black can win by playing 53...♖c3 54 ♖h2 ♖e2, but under other circumstances such an oversight could have been catastrophic. However, Karpov was again severely short of time and had to move quickly.

53 hxg5 ♔xg5
54 f4+ exf4
55 ♖f3 ♖d2!
56 ♔h3 ♖f1+!

An important check – I saw it when I played 47...♔g7!. Taking with the queen on f2 would have led to stalemate, and taking with the rook would have allowed him to give a lot of checks. 56...♖e3? is also inadvisable, because of 57 ♔e4+ and 58 ♔xd2.

57 ♖g2 ♖xf2

White resigned

So the game came to an end, as has this part of our training session.

13 Whose strategy will triumph?

Mark Dvoretsky

In the first session of our school Artur Yusupov showed two of his games (against Karpov and Timman), in which a long, intense struggle revolved around some kind of central strategic problem. This essentially determined the ultimate outcome of the battle. It is very important to maintain the tension and not allow the enemy – even for an instant – to create new tactical difficulties.

Here are two duels of my own which have a similar character. The first has a particular sporting significance for me. It was played four rounds from the end of the Moscow Championships, and GM Lein and I had broken away from the rest of the field and were leading with 8½/11. Our meeting could (and indeed did) decide who would win the title.

The opening moves of Lein-Dvoretsky were as follows:

French Defence

- 1 e4 e6
 2 ♟f3 d5
 3 ♟c3 ♟f6

- 4 e5 ♟d7
 5 d4

This position sometimes arises with the 'normal' move order, 2 d4 d5 3 ♟c3 ♟f6 4 e5 ♟fd7 5 ♟f3, although 5 f4 is considered more dangerous for Black.

- 5 ... c5
 6 dxc5 ♟c6
 7 ♟f4 ♟xc5
 8 ♟d3 f6

Black must avoid 8...0-0? 9 ♟xh7+!

- 9 exf6 ♝xf6

Opening books give 9...♟xf6. I didn't like playing theory – often because I didn't know it – and thus made use of the very first opportunity to turn off the main theoretical path and instead follow another course.

Objectively, taking on f6 with the knight is more reliable, while my move is somewhat risky, but I had already tested it in two games not long before the Moscow Championships. Consequently I already had some experience with this position; my opponent, on the other hand, was certainly facing it

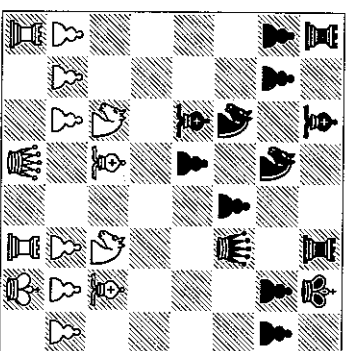
for the first time. Therefore I was able to take a risk in a decisive game without any hesitation.

- 10 ♟g3

The other possible move is 10 ♟g5!?. Valeev-Dvoretsky, Minsk 1972, developed thus: 10...♝f7 11 ♝d2? (beginning an incorrect plan) 11...0-0 12 0-0-0 ♟de5 13 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 14 f3 ♟d7 15 ♝he1 ♟xd3+ 16 ♝xd3 ♝ac8 17 ♟e3 ♟b4 18 ♟d4 ♝c4 19 ♟b1 ♝fc8 20 ♝c3 b5 and Black has the initiative.

Instead of 11 ♝d2?, White could have improved with 11 ♟h4, or 11 0-0-0 12 ♟h4.

- 10 ... 0-0
 11 0-0 (D)



B

We can already spot the strategic patterns around which the battle will develop. Black, by advancing the e-pawn, would like to construct a mighty pawn centre, but this is

not so easy to engineer – he must complete his development, exchange off the most dangerous enemy pieces (the f3-knight and the d3-bishop), and strengthen d5. White, for his part, dreams of maintaining control over d4 and e5 in order to blockade the black pawns and leave Black with a 'bad' queen's bishop.

- 11 ... ♟d4

Not 11...♟de5?, which would have failed because of 12 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 13 ♟xh7+.

- 12 ♟xd4 ♟xd4

Now Lein played 13 ♝d2. Before proceeding to a discussion of the consequences of that move, I shall discuss a game in which Kimelfeld acted more purposefully against me:

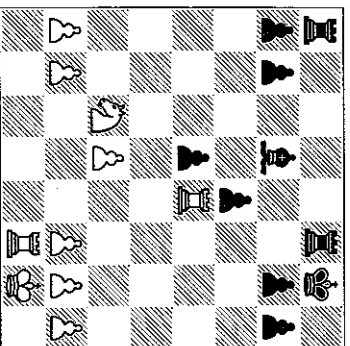
Kimelfeld – Dvoretsky

Moscow 1972

- 13 ♝e2 ♟c5
 14 ♝ae1
 14 ♟b5 ♟xb2 15 ♝ab1 ♟d7
 14 ... ♟xd3
 15 cxd3

Now winning a pawn with 15...♟xc3? 16 bxc3 ♝xc3 is suicidal, as White can take advantage of the remaining 'opposite-coloured' bishops to generate an attack against g7 with 17 ♟e5.

- Play continued:
- 15 ... ♠d7
 16 ♖e5 ♖xe5
 17 ♗xe5 ♗xe5
 18 ♞xe5 (D)



B

At first glance White has done well, seizing the e5-square and emerging with a knight against a 'bad' French bishop. Indeed, imagine if he were to play f2-f4 and bring his knight to d4 – my position would immediately become strategically hopeless. However there is no time to carry out this plan and, moreover, the bishop is not as passive as it seems. Black has at his disposal some dynamic resources, linked with ...d5-d4 and playing down the open c-file. In fact I cannot even see a reliable way for White to achieve equality.

- 18 ... ♞ac8
 19 f4

The following variation is typical of the potential in Black's position: 19 d4 ♞c4 20 ♞d1 b5 21 ♞d2 b4 22 ♗e2 ♞fc8 23 ♖f1 ♞c2 24 ♖e1 ♖f7 (intending 25... ♖b5) 25 ♖d1? ♖a4! 26 b3 ♞xa2!. There's your bad bishop for you!

- 19 ... d4!
 20 ♗e2 ♞c2
 21 f5?!

The simple 21 ♗xd4 ♞xb2 22 ♗xe6 is preferable, when Black must enter a sharp double-rook ending, as 22... ♖c6 23 ♞f2, and 22... ♞c8 23 ♗c5 followed by ♞f2 are both good for the first player.

- 21 ... exf5
 22 ♗xd4 ♞xb2
 Now if 23 ♞e7, then 23... ♞f7 24 ♗xf5 ♖xf5 25 ♞e8+ ♞f8 26 ♞xf8+ ♖xf8 27 ♞f5+ ♖e7 with a better rook ending for Black.
 23 ♞c1 g6!

Black has a tangible advantage.

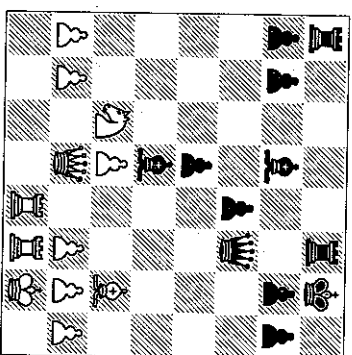
Let us return to the game with Lein, in which he played 13 ♗d2.

Lein – Dvoretzky
 Moscow Ch 1973

- 13 ♗d2 ♗c5
 14 ♞a1 ♗xd3?!

14... ♠d7 is more precise, giving Black a superior position. A hasty exchange simply presents the option with extra possibilities.

- 15 cxd3 ♠d7 (D)



W

From this moment an extremely tense struggle develops for control of the central squares.

- 16 ♗e2 ♖b6

17 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♖e5 was threatened. 16... ♖xb2?! is not good because after 17 ♞b1 and 18 ♞xb7 the rook can penetrate to the seventh rank.

Now White could have played 17 d4, leading to a balanced game after 17... ♖b5. For Lein this was not enough – he wanted to win the contest for the centre and found a very fine idea to help realise this aim.

- 17 ♖h1!

A move with a multitude of plans! A direct positional threat has been created, namely 18 ♖d6 ♞f7 19 f4, followed by ♖e5 and at some point ♗d4. 17... e5? fails to

18 ♗c3 leaving both black central pawns under attack.

- 17 ... ♞a8

Black parries his opponent's threat (18 ♖d6 ♞f7 19 f4 e5!) and prepares to push with ...e6-e5.

- 18 ♗g1!

A logical development of the idea begun on the previous move. Again I have to avoid 18... e5? in view of 19 ♗f3 ♖c7 (or 19... e4 20 dxe4 dxe4 21 ♗xd7) 20 ♗c3! (stronger than 20 d4 e4). At the same time I have to take measures against White seizing the centre by means of 19 ♗f3, or 19 ♖e5 followed by 20 f4 (20 ♗f3).

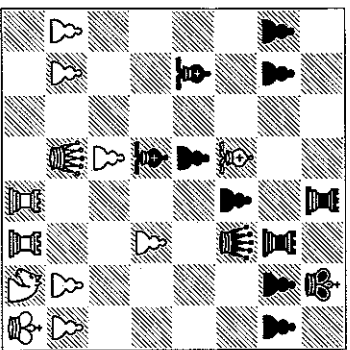
- 18 ... ♖b5!

A counterattack against d3: 19 ♖e5 ♗f5 or 19 ♗f3 ♗f5 20 ♗e5 ♖d4.

Note that both players are participating in a strategic war, but the means of fighting it are purely tactical: concrete, strong moves, short variations, threats, double blows... In chess, tactics and strategy are very closely linked – weaknesses in either area will inevitably influence the result of the game.

- 19 ♖d6 ♞f7
 20 f4 ♖d4! (D)

Black has defended against 21 ♖e5 (after which 21... ♖xe5 22 ♞xe5 ♗xe5 is available). The less precise 20... ♗f5 permits 21 ♞f3 followed by ♖e5 or ♖e5.



W

The bitter struggle for the central squares has gained momentum. By attacking the b2-pawn, I am trying to distract my opponent from the natural knight move to f3. All the same, this move still deserves the most serious attention. True, after 21 ♖f3! ♖xb2 White gains nothing from 22 ♖b1? ♖c3, and 22 d4? ♖xf1 23 ♖xf1 does not work either, as both 23... ♖xd4!? 24 ♖xxd4 (24 ♖xxd4 e5! 25 ♖b5 a6 26 ♖c7 ♖d8) 24... ♖xxd4 25 ♖xxd4 e5! (P. Wolff), and 23... ♖d8! 24 ♖b4 a5! 25 ♖xa5 ♖a8 are strong. However, the simple line 22 ♖e5! ♖xe5 23 ♖xe5 ♖f8 (23... ♖c7 24 ♖a5) 24 ♖b4 or 24 ♖a5 guarantees White excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

21 ♖e2

Not the best place for the knight, but White has a specific idea in mind. Now 21... ♖xb2? 22 ♖b1 is

clearly bad for Black, and 21... ♖b6 22 ♖e5 ♖f5 23 ♖f3 leaves White well in control.

21 ...

♖d8!

An important interpolation. It would have been a mistake to attack the bishop with the other rook: 21... ♖d7? 22 ♖e5! ♖xe5 23 ♖xe5 ♖e5? 24 ♖c3. After the text move, on the other hand, White no longer has the reply 22 ♖e5 (the f1-rook will be left hanging after an exchange on e5), and 22 ♖xxd4 ♖xxd4 23 ♖xe6 ♖xxd3 24 ♖xxd3 ♖xxd3 leads to an ending which is somewhat better for Black.

It was necessary to consider 22 ♖b4. In the event of 22... ♖xd3?! 23 ♖xxd4 ♖xf1 (or 23... ♖xxd6 24 ♖xxd6 ♖xf1 25 ♖xxe6) 24 ♖e5! ♖xxg2+ 25 ♖xxg2 White has the advantage—his pieces are already too strongly placed. However, the cold-blooded 22... ♖xb2! changes the picture, for example 23 ♖b1 ♖xxd3 24 ♖xb2 ♖xxd6, or 23 d4 ♖xxe2 24 ♖e5 ♖e7! 25 ♖xxe7 ♖xxe7 26 ♖xxe2 ♖a3. There is also 23 ♖f3, later analysed by GM Wolff. In the event of 23... ♖c6? White can achieve an advantage by means of 24 d4! a5 25 ♖c5 a4 26 a3!, but two other possible replies, 23... ♖a6! and 23... a5!?, are sufficient to parry the opposition's aggression.

22 ♖a3

♖b6

A sigh of relief. White's pieces have been diverted from their journey to the key e5-square, which means I have won the strategic battle. But, of course, I have not yet won the game.

GM Manulović paid great attention to opening theory. It is said that he studied the outcome of opening duels in his own games, and to his joy found that most often he was successful in them. But as regards his general success in tournaments, things were noticeably worse. For me it is not enough to be winning at the interim stage—I also want to win the whole game. And to do that it is necessary, without weakening, to carry on working.

23 ♖c3

♖c6

24 ♖e2

A new problem. The pawn is under attack, and if it is defended by means of 24... ♖e8, then 25 ♖d6—the bishop returns to e5 and only memories remain of my positional achievements.

24 ...

♖c7!

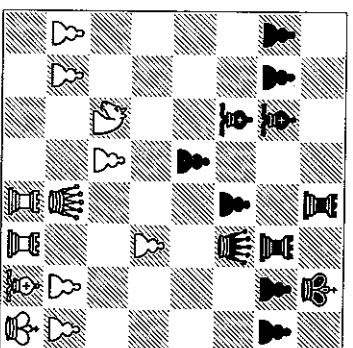
Another important interimmediate move. After 25 ♖xxe6 ♖xxe6 26 ♖xxe6 ♖xf4 or 26... ♖xf4 the ending is in Black's favour as he has the advantage of the two bishops.

25 ♖c5

♖e8

26 ♖g1 (D)

Apparently White is prepared to admit defeat in the crucial battle to



B

dominate the centre with pieces, and is intending to play d3-d4 in order to prevent the breakthrough...e6-e5 once and for all. My opponent did not have much time left at this point, so I decided that it was a good opportunity to move from strategy to tactics. Try to find and calculate Black's combination.

26 ...

♖xf4!?

It did not take long for me to find the variation 27 g3 ♖xc3!! 28 bxc3 d4+ 29 ♖g2! (29 ♖e4 ♖d2 30 ♖xf7 ♖xe1 is weaker) 29... ♖xxg2+ 30 ♖xxg2 ♖d2 31 ♖xf7 ♖xe1 32 ♖xb7 dxc3 when I was relying on the strength of my passed c3-pawn. Note that 33 ♖xa7? loses: 33... ♖c8 34 ♖e3 ♖d2. There are also unpleasant consequences for White after 33 ♖f3? 34 ♖c8! 34 ♖e3 c2 35 ♖c1 ♖c3 36 ♖xa7 (36 ♖e2 ♖d4 37 ♖d2 ♖f8) 36... ♖f8+ 37 ♖e2 ♖d4 38 ♖c7 ♖f2+ 39 ♖e1

♖xh2 or 37 ♖g2 ♖d4 38 ♖c7 ♖f2+ 39 ♖h3 h5! (analysis by Wolff). However, the careful 33 ♖c7! allows him to gain a draw.

Overall, I think that from the practical point of view Black's decision was justified. With time-trouble approaching, my opponent did not have enough time left to calculate variations accurately, and he simply took me on trust.

- 27 ♖xa7?! ♖h4
28 ♖g1 ♖d6
29 ♖xf7 ♖xf7

Black's advantage is not in question. Apart from the strong bishop pair there is the advance ...e6-e5, which I have been dreaming about since the opening stage, and is now impossible to prevent.

- 30 d4 ♖g8
31 ♖f1 h6

The threat is often stronger than its immediate execution! Black does not hurry with his breakthrough in the centre, preferring first to make all the useful moves he needs to improve his position. This tactic is especially effective when your opponent is in time trouble.

- 32 a3 e5!
33 ♖f2?

An error, but White's position is difficult anyway. My light-squared bishop is threatening to enter the game with great force.

- 33 ... ♖xf2

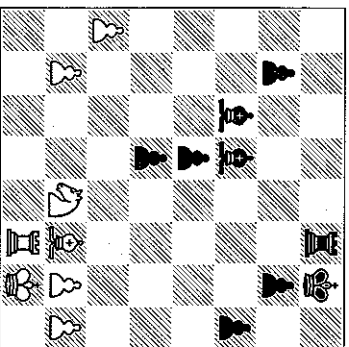
- 34 ♖xf2 ♖f8!
35 ♖g1

In exchanging queens, Lein had been counting on this move. 35 dxe5 ♖xe5 36 ♖g1 d4 is also joyless.

- 35 ... exd4

Only now does my opponent see that he cannot take on d4 due to 36... ♖xh2+.

- 36 ♖e2 (D)



B

Unfortunately, my play was characteristic of a very serious failing which I have never managed to overcome – a tendency towards immediate solutions, especially when the main problems in a game have already been solved. I do not even want to recall how many important points I have lost because of this!

That is what happened here. I understood that the position was

totally won for me, and examined two tempting moves, 36... ♖b5 and 36...d3. I instantly weighed up the variation 36... ♖b5 37 ♖e1 ♖xh2+ 38 ♖xh2 ♖xf2 39 ♖xd4, decided that my opponent would get good positional compensation for the pawn (a strong knight against a passive bishop) – and immediately played ...d4-d3. But a 'calculation' like that will not do. In the first place, after 39... ♖xb2 I have not one, but two extra pawns, and secondly, I can move my bishop via d3 to the excellent e4-square.

- 36 ... d3?

- 37 ♖d4

Here I discovered to my surprise that piercing my opponent's defence would not be at all easy. He wants to play h2-h3 and then ♖d1. What can I do about it? If I play 37... ♖c5, then 38 ♖f3.

- 37 ... ♖a4!?

- 38 b3 ♖d7

The bishop wants to go to g4, and with his flag about to fall this threat seemed so dangerous to Lein that he decided to give up his a-pawn.

- 39 ♖d1 ♖xa3

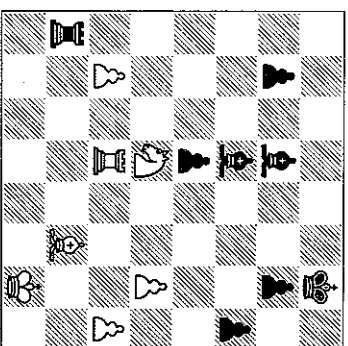
- 40 ♖xd3 ♖d6

- 41 h3 ♖a8

Here the game was adjourned, and White sealed his move. Black has a healthy extra pawn and, furthermore, the advantage of the

bishop pair. It looked as though a win was a simple matter of technique, or so I supposed at the start of the adjournment. Analysis, alas, corrected this assessment – for a long time I could not find a convincing plan which led to a win.

- 42 g4 ♖a2 (D)

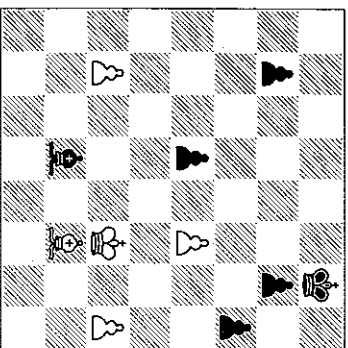


W

43 ♖f3? ♖a1+ 44 ♖g2 ♖b5 is terrible, although one should seriously consider the active move 43 ♖f5!?. In analysing this continuation during my preparation for the resumption of play, I made a serious mistake which could have cost me dearly.

I was intending to exchange into a rook ending, based upon a variation which – so I thought – led to a forced win. Because of this, I did not seriously analyse the bishop ending that arises after 43... ♖h2+!? 44 ♖g2! ♖xf5 45 gxf5 ♖f4 46 ♖f3

(46 ♖xd5?? ♗e3) 46...♞d2 47 ♖xd2 (47 ♞c3 ♗e5 is no good) 47...♗xd2 (D).



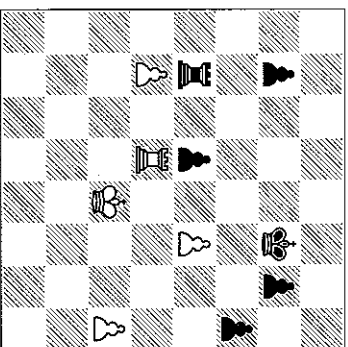
W

In fact it is not obvious how to invade the enemy camp; his bishop, and the pawns which are situated on the opposite coloured squares to it, are creating a barrier in the path of my king which is very difficult to cross.

Many years later (after the 'hole' in the analysis of my rook ending had been found) I examined the bishop ending more carefully and found that it is all the same won.

48 ♗d4 ♖f7 49 ♖e2 ♗g5 50 ♖d3 ♗f6 (not 50...h5 51 ♗e5 ♗f6 52 ♖dd4) 51 ♗f2 ♗e5 52 ♗h4 g6 53 fxg6+ ♖xg6 54 ♗f2 h5 55 ♗e3 (55 ♖e3 ♖g5 56 ♖f3 ♖f5 57 ♗b6 d4, etc., does not help) 55...♖f5 56 ♗d2 ♗f4! 57 ♗e1 ♗c7 58 ♗d2 (58 ♖d4 ♖f4 59 ♖xd5 ♖f3 followed

by ...♗g3 or ...♖g2) 58...♗b6 59 ♗c1 ♗g1 60 ♗d2 d4! 61 ♗c1 ♖e5! (not 61...♗e3? immediately; 62 ♗xe3 dxe3 63 ♖xe3 ♖e5 64 ♖f3! and with the pawn on b7, 64...♖d4 leads to a draw) 62 ♗d2 ♗e3 63 ♗xe3 (or else 63...♖f4) 63...dxe3 64 ♖xe3 b5! Now 65 ♖f3 ♖d4 loses, as do 65 b4 ♖d5 66 ♖d3 h4, and 65 h4 ♖f5 66 ♖f3 b4. Let us turn now to the rook ending. Here is the variation down which I was planning to travel: 43...♗xf5 44 gxf5 (44 ♖xd5? ♞a1+) 44...♞a5 (with the positional threat of 45...♗e5) 45 ♗d4 ♗c5! (this should be played now, before the white king has reached e3) 46 ♖f2 ♗xd4+ 47 ♖xd4 ♞b5 48 b4 ♖f7 49 ♖e3 (D).



B

49...♖f6 50 ♖f4 h5 51 h4 b6. White is in zugzwang and must give up a second pawn.

While studying my book *Secrets of Chess Training*, in which this variation is reproduced, GM Smirin noted that after 52 ♖f3 ♖xf5 53 ♖e3, realising the material advantage is impossible because of the tragicomic position of the rook, shut out on b5. 51...♞b6 (instead of 51...b6) does not lead to success either: 52 ♖xd5 ♞xb4+ 53 ♖g3 b6 54 ♖h3 ♞b3+ 55 ♖g2.

The third session of the Dvoret-sky-Yusupov school (1991), from which came the book *Technique for the Tournament Player*, was devoted to perfecting endgame skills. For a piece of homework we frequently suggested testing my analysis of 43 ♗f5.

I supposed that after the error had been found, the students in their search for a win would have to concentrate their analysis on the bishop ending. However, Vadim Zviagintsev and Maxim Boguslavsky found a simpler solution to the problem – improving Black's play in the rook ending.

Instead of 49...♖f6? they suggested 49...♖e7!. In the event of 50 ♖f4 ♖f6 51 h4 h5 the zugzwang we already know arises, but with the pawn on b7. After 52 ♖f3 ♖xf5 53 ♖e3 ♖e5 the rook joins the game via b6. 50 ♖f3 is met by 50...♖d6 51 ♖f4 (51 ♞g4 ♖e5 52 ♞xg7 ♞xb4 is also hopeless) 51...♞b6, intending the manoeuvre ...♞b6-c6-c4.

As you can see, 43 ♗f5!?, although it should objectively lead to defeat, nevertheless presents Black with some serious problems. But it is in no way easier, it turns out, to find a win after the quiet continuation actually chosen by my opponent.

43 ♖g2!?

In his next moves Lein has a clear plan of action. He wants to bring the king to f3, then, by playing ♗g3 or ♗f2-e3-f4, offer an exchange of dark-squared bishops (which favours him), and if Black turns down the exchange, he will put the bishop on e5. All the white pieces will then be ideally placed, the d5-pawn will remain reliably blocked, and Black will constantly have to bear in mind the threat of ♗f5.

But how can I improve my position? Of course, if I managed to move my bishop to e4, the game would be decided. But can this be achieved when the threat of ♗f5 is a problem for Black?

At first I placed my hopes in the variation 43...h5 44 gxf5 ♗e8 (intending 45...♗xh5, then...♗g6 and...♗e4) 45 ♗e6 (45 ♗f5 ♗c5) 45...♗f7! 46 ♞xd5 ♗e7!. But I could find nothing convincing after 45 ♗g1! ♗xh5 46 ♗f5.

I also examined 43...♠c5 44 ♠f3 ♠e8 (44...♠b5? 45 ♖h2 ♗xh2+ ♠g3) 45 ♠e3 ♠g6, but the rook ending which arises after 46 ♖f5 ♠xf5 47 gxf5 ♠xe3 48 ♠xe3 is most likely drawn.

Having studied these and many other variations, I finally discovered the correct plan.

43 ... ♠c5

44 ♠f3

If 44 ♠g3, then 44...♠e8 45 ♠e3 ♠g6 46 ♖f5 ♠xf5 47 gxf5 ♠xe3 48 ♗xe3 ♠f7 is possible.

44 ... ♠h5!!

Here my opponent thought for a long time. It became clear that he was not prepared for such a turn of events.

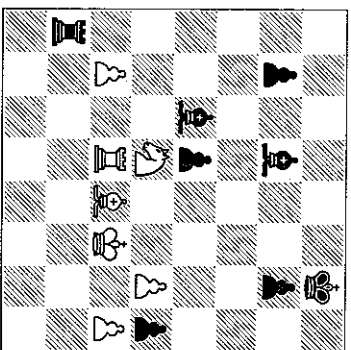
45 ♠e3

45 gxf5 ♠xh3 is excellent for Black. After 45 ♠g3 I had planned the waiting move 45...♠h7, and if 46 ♠f4 or 46 ♠e5, then, as in the game, 46...h4!

45 ... h4! (D)

Black has fixed the h3-pawn, and it remains a real weakness: the threat is 46...♗h2 (the king has had g3 taken away). After retreating the e3-bishop White has to consider the thrust...♠b5!, since taking the bishop is impossible in view of the mate by the rook on f2.

The tactical justification for Black's plan is the variation 46 ♖f5 ♗h2! 47 ♠xc5 ♗xh3+ 48 ♠e2



♠b5 49 ♠e3 (49 ♖e3 is the same) 49...♗h2+.

46 ♗c3 ♠b6

In the event of 46...b6? White would have gained counterplay by means of 47 b4! ♠xb4 48 ♗c7 ♠a4 49 ♖f5 (but not 49 ♖e6? ♠d1+ 50 ♠f4 ♠d6+).

47 ♖f5?!

Lein has overlooked the coming tactical idea. 47 ♖e2 (after which I had planned 47...♠d8) or 47 ♗c2 would have been more stubborn.

47 ... ♗h2!

48 ♖e7+

48 ♠xb6? ♗xh3+.

48 ... ♠f7

49 ♖xd5 ♗xh3+

The game is decided! The position has opened up, and the bishops can finally show their true strength.

50 ♠f4

51 ♗c1

♠d8!
♠c6

52 ♠b6
52 ♗d1 ♠e6!.

52 ... ♗f3+

Of course, 52...♠xb6 53 ♖xb6 ♗xb3 54 ♖c4 ♠f6 55 g5+ ♠g6 56 ♖e5+ ♠h5 is also possible.

53 ♠e5 ♠g5

54 ♗c3?

And White resigned.

What was the strategic basis of Black's winning plan in the endgame? And what positional considerations could have helped prove it at the board?

In defending, the opponent tries to protect his weaknesses. In a wider sense a weakness could turn out to be not only a vulnerable pawn or an unfortunately placed piece, but, for example, a potential invasion square which needs to be covered, or an enemy passed pawn which must be blocked.

When you know how to conduct your defence, supporting one weakness is usually not too difficult. The correct strategy for the stronger side in such situations always consists of the search for or creation of another weakness in the defender's position. By attacking this second weakness (and if the necessity arises by adding further pressure to the first) we will crack and subsequently destroy our opponent's defence.

Look at how the great masters realise their advantage in the endgame. You will see that they nearly always form a 'second front' at some point.

In the endgame we have just examined White solved only the problem of the passed d5-pawn. In the fight for it his pieces were rather well placed, and straightforward play by Black with the passed pawn would not, of course, have led to success. Moving the h-pawn to h4 allowed Black to fix another weakness in his rival's camp – the h3-pawn. White's position immediately became critical.

The next game, played at the start of a tournament in the small Estonian town of Viilandi, was also very memorable for me. Above all it was my first victory over a Grandmaster. Having in the next round overcome another Grandmaster (also with Black!), I was so inspired with my success that I began to win game after game and as a result scored 11/13, finishing in first place ahead of Mikhail Tal himself. It was probably the best tournament of my life, in both sporting and creative terms.

It is useful to think about both your failures and successes in order to define the factors which influence your results. I had only just finished university and gained my

degree, and I put it to one side and switched to chess. Before the competition I had conducted a practice-training session with the Moscow youth team, played football with the kids, and even studied some chess; my mood and physical condition were excellent. And although from the opening I quite frequently found myself with unpleasant positions (for example, in this game) this did not disturb me. If you have enough energy for the forthcoming battle, you will often be able to overcome the consequences of an unfortunate opening strategy.

Shamkovich – Dvoretzky

Viljandi 1972

Nimzo-Indian Defence

- | | | |
|---|-----|------|
| 1 | d4 | ♟f6 |
| 2 | c4 | e6 |
| 3 | ♞c3 | ♠b4 |
| 4 | e3 | b6 |
| 5 | ♞e2 | ♞e4? |

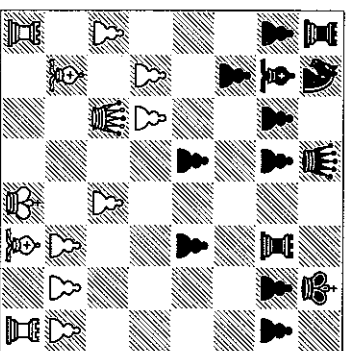
This move does not enjoy a good reputation, and justifiably so. With correct play Black's game should be slightly worse and – more importantly – quite passive.

A dynamic reply. Shamkovich allows his pawns to be doubled in order to rapidly construct a strong pawn centre.

6 ♞c2 is often played. In Gulko-Dvoretzky, Moscow Ch 1972, after 6...♠b7 7 a3 ♠xc3+ 8 ♞xc3 ♞xc3 9 ♞xc3 0-0 10 b3 d6 11 ♠b2 ♞d7 White had obtained a positional advantage (bishop pair and more space). Black's position, on the other hand, has no real weaknesses, and I eventually drew, although defending such a position is not a great pleasure.

Vaiser-Dvoretzky, Kiev 1970, developed more happily: 6...f5 7 a3 ♠xc3+ 8 ♞xc3 ♞xc3 9 ♞xc3 ♠b7 10 d5! 0-0 (10...♞e7 is better, with the idea, after 11 dxex6 dxex6, of playing...♞d7 and then castling queenside) 11 b4! (an exceptional positional pawn sacrifice) 11 exd5 12 ♠b2 ♞f7 (D).

In this position, try to determine how White should increase his initiative.



W

The game continued 13 ♞d1?! dxex4 14 ♠xc4 d5 15 0-0 c6 16 b5 exb5 17 ♠xb5 ♞d7 18 f3 ♞c8 19 ♞d4 ♞f6 with more or less even chances. 13 0-0 is much better: 13...dxc4 (or else 14 cxd5 with a clear advantage) 14 ♠xc4 d5 15 b5! and there is no satisfactory defence against the threat of 16 ♞xd5! ♠xd5 17 ♞d1.

6 ... ♞xc3

Meulders-Winants, Belgian Ch 1983, featured 6...♠xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♞d6 8 ♞g3 ♠a6 9 ♞a4 ♞h4 10 ♠d3 ♞f5 11 ♠xf5 exf5 12 0-0 ♞f6 13 e4 ♞c6 14 ♞a3! ♞xc4 15 ♞e1 and the black king is in grave danger.

7 bxc3 ♠e7

7...♠d6 e4 ♠a6 also deserves attention, tempting the pawn to advance to e5 so that Black can subsequently challenge it by means of ...d7-d6 or ...f7-f6.

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 8 | ♞g3 | ♞c6 |
| 9 | ♠d3 | ♠a6 |
| 10 | e4 | ♞a5 |
| 11 | ♞e2 | |

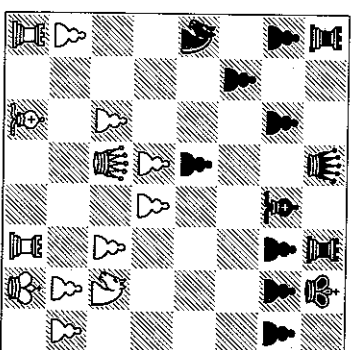
Black has the same pawn structure as in the Sämisch variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defence (4 a3). There Black keeps his knight on f6 (and plays ...♠xc3), whereas here the dark-squared bishop is – generally speaking – the slightly stronger piece. However I have lost some tempi in the opening

(...♞f6-e4xc3, ...♠b4-e7) while my opponent has managed without a2-a3. Moreover Black has not yet organised any real counterplay against the c4-pawn.

11 ... 0-0
12 0-0 d5?!
13 ... d5?!

In the event of 12...c5 13 d5 e5 14 f4 Black is clearly worse. I should probably have continued 12...g6!? 13 ♠h6 ♞e8, later choosing between ...d7-d5 and ...f7-f5.

13 exd5 ♠xd3
14 ♞xd3 exd5 (D)



W

White's plan is obvious: e4-e5 and f3-f4-f5, creating a menacing attack on the kingside. 15 ♞f5 looks reasonable as well. What do you think? Which is stronger? To find an answer to this question you need to take into account Black's possible responses.

15 e5?! ♞d7

16 ♖f5

Practically forced – otherwise I would have played 16...f5!, bringing my opponent's attack to a halt. Now it is clear that he should have started with 15 ♖f5!, since with this the threat of 16 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 17 exd5 arises. I would have had to play some sort of fairly useless move like 15...c6, and then the advance e4-e5 would have become more valid.

16 ... g6!?

White's plan is to play f3-f4, ♖xe7+ and f4-f5, and these pawns will crush me. Therefore I decided to weaken my own kingside in order to chase the knight from f5 and meet my opponent's attack with ...f7-f5!

We can see that, as in the previous game, conflicting plans have emerged: White dreams of having a dominant pair of pawns on e5 and f5, while Black is trying to spoil that by pushing his own f-pawn, after which he will be able to breathe more easily.

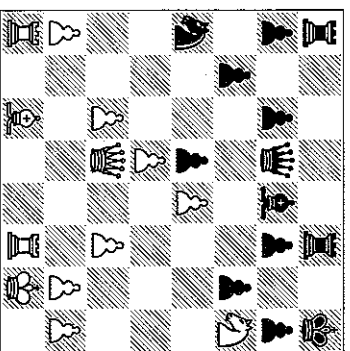
Note that in my duel with Lein I was an equal partner – here my opponent has far more chances for success. However, White does have his problems – on every move he has some tempting possibilities, and it is not at all easy to make the correct choice.

17 ♖h6+

After 17 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 18 ♖h6 ♗e8 19 f4 f5! White gains nothing, but he could play 19 g4!, taking the f5-square under his control, and planning f3-f4-f5.

However, when one's opponent finds himself in difficult circumstances it is natural to keep a few more pieces on the board – hence White's choice. If now 17...♔g7?, then 18 ♖g4 leaves the king awkwardly placed.

17 ... ♔h8 (D)



W

In the event of 18 f4 f5! 19 exf6 ♖xf6 20 f5 I am still worse, but already a little freer than before. A reasonable possibility aimed at preventing f7-f5 is 18 g4!?, but Shamkovich apparently did not want to create holes around his king.

After the game Tal suggested 18 ♖f4!?. Question: how do you assess the reply 18...f5?

In reply to any other move of mine (for example 18...♖c4), White should continue 19 ♖a1 followed by retreating the bishop, thus renewing the threat of f3-f4-f5. The knight on c4 looks nice, but is useless – from there it has not the slightest connection with the defence of the kingside.

In positional terms, 18...f5 is indeed the correct reply, but White has the following amusing combination available: 19 e6! ♗xe6 20 ♖a1 ♗d7 21 ♖xe7! ♗xe7 22 ♖e5+ ♖f6 23 ♖g4! (23 g4? ♖c4 24 g5 ♖xe5) 23...fxg4 24 fxg4 and White should win back the rook and emerge with an advantage.

If your opponent discovers such a continuation, then from the practical point of view it sometimes makes sense to refuse to go along with him and instead opt for another plan; but here the advance ...f7-f5 is too important to Black for it to be abandoned at the first sign of difficulty.

So let us continue testing the combination. There are two options (after 24 fxg4) – 24...♖f8 and 24...♔g8.

After 24...♖f8 25 ♖xf6 (25 g5? ♗xe5!) 25...♖xf6 26 g5 ♔g8 27 gxh6 White is better, but not so much that the strategically obligatory move 18...f5! should be rejected.

Additionally, there is the second possibility, 24...♔g8!?. If 25 ♖xf6, then 25...♖c4? is a mistake owing to 26 ♖xg6+! hxg6 27 ♗xg6+ ♔f8 28 ♗h6+ ♔f7 (28...♔e8 29 ♗c6+) 29 ♗h5+! ♔f8 30 ♗h8+ ♔f7 31 ♗xa8 ♖xe5 32 ♗xd5+. However, before the knight goes to c4, we will put the rook on the safe d8-square, and the position becomes quite unclear.

18 ♖e1

Now not 18...f5? because of 19 e6 and 20 ♖f7+. There is also the threat of 19 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 20 e6 to deal with. All the same White's move has to be questioned as the rook is deserting the f-file – where it might have proved useful.

18 ... ♖a8

Tactics at the service of strategy! I am preparing to play ...♖d8 and then ...f7-f5; in the event of 19 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 20 e6 I will have the saving resource 20...♖h4! 21 ♖g5! ♖xe6.

19 ♖f4 ♖h4!?

20 g3 ♖d8

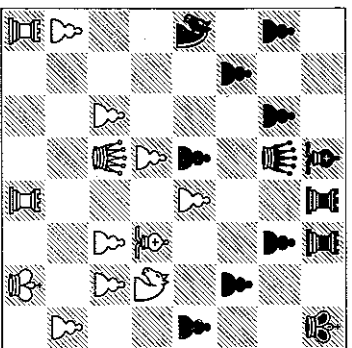
21 ♖g4

21 g4! deserves attention.

21 ... h5!? (D)

It is necessary to weaken the kingside even more – otherwise my opponent will put his bishop on h6, removing any hopes I have of generating counterplay.

22 ♖f6?!



W

Shamkovich has overestimated his attacking possibilities. He was hoping – after exchanging a pair of minor pieces – to post his bishop on e5 so that, having opened up a file on the kingside, the enemy king will make an easy target. However, in reality he will not manage to carry out this plan because Black has enough defensive resources.

In any case, psychologically I felt a lot better. In fact Black now has only one problem – to avoid being mated. In any quiet endgame, his knight will be stronger than his opponent's bishop.

He should have played the simple 22 ♖f2! (but not 22 ♖e3? g5) and ♔g2 to prepare g3-g4.

22 ... ♗xf6
23 exf6 ♖c4

The time has finally come to put the knight on its rightful square.

24 ♖e5 c6
I have to free the queen from protecting the c7-pawn.

25 ♔g2 ♖f5!
26 ♖e2

It is probably better to ignore ambitious plans and swap queens:
26 ♖xf5 gxf5 27 h3! ♖h7 28 g4 with an unclear ending.

26 ... ♗e6

I had already developed an interest in the f6-pawn. Black's plan is to play 27...♗f8 28 f4 ♖xe5 and 29...♖xf6 (or 28...♔g8 with the threat of 29...♖xf6). Consequently White hurries to open up the f-file.

27 g4 ♖g5
28 h4?!

The beginning of a forced variation, at the end of which my opponent had overlooked a tactical finesse. 28 f4 is preferable: for example 28...♖xg4+ 29 ♖xg4 hxg4 30 ♔g3 (if 30 h3, then Black plays 30...gxh3+ 31 ♔xh3 ♔h7! and 32...♗h8).

28 ... ♖xh4
29 f4!

29 ♗h1 ♖g5 does not trouble Black.

29 ... ♗f8
30 ♗h1?

Shamkovich is still under an illusion. Of course, neither 30 gxh5? gxh5, nor 30 f5? ♗xe5 31 dxе5 ♗xe5 is sufficient for White, but 30 ♖f3 hxg4 31 ♖g3 ♖h3+! 32

♖xh3+ (32 ♔f2 ♖d2 33 ♖xh3+ gxh3 34 ♗h1 ♖e4+ and 35...♖xf6) 32...gxh3+ 33 ♔xh3 ♔h7 34 ♔g4 is better – Black's extra pawn in the ending will not make itself felt too much for the time being.

30 ... ♖xg4+!

31 ♖xg4 ♖e3+

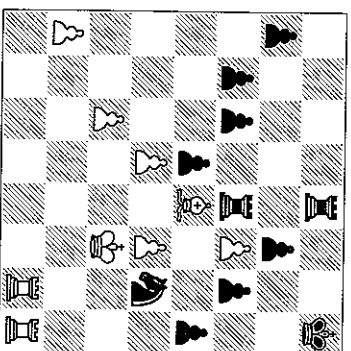
32 ♔f3

32 ♔g3 ♖xg4 33 f5 ♗xe5 34 dxе5 ♗xe5 35 fxg6 fxg6.

32 ... ♖xg4

33 ♗ag1 (D)

What should Black play now?



B

Exchanging minor pieces with 33...♖xe5+? 34 dxе5 is premature, and 33...♖xf6? 34 f5! ♗xe5 35 dxе5 ♗xe5 36 fxg6 helps only White. But after 33...♖h6! 34 ♗g5 ♔h7 White's attack is finished and Black can quietly go about making use of his two extra pawns (...c6-c5, etc.).

Unfortunately, the same thing happened here as in the game against Lein. Having achieved – after a great deal of suffering – a winning position, I faltered and played a superficial king move, underestimating my opponent's readiness to give up the exchange.

33 ... ♔g8?

34 ♗xg4! hxg4+

35 ♔xg4

In a difficult endgame, despite being an exchange and a pawn down, White still maintains his attack! He wants to prepare f4-f5 in order to pursue my king with his rook. Of course, at present 36 f5 is harmless due to 36...♗xe5 (Black is only too happy to return the exchange at the right moment), but soon that threat will become real. Reinforcing defences on the kingside is impossible, so there only remains a counterattack on the queenside.

35 ... c5

36 ♔g5

Now if 36...cxd4 37 cxd4 ♗c6, then 38 f5! (Black no longer has a double capture on e5) 38...♗c2 39 ♗g1! with a totally unclear position. I found another idea – trying to undermine White's pawn chain so as to weaken his defence of the e5-bishop.

36 ... b5!

37 a3

a5

38 ♖b1?

The decisive error, after which Black's plan triumphs. The win would still be a long way off after 38 ♖h6 or 38 ♖e1 (followed by the thrust f4-f5).

38 ... b4
39 axb4 axb4
40 cxb4 cxd4
41 ♖xd4

Variations such as 41 b5 d3 42 b6 d2 43 b7 ♖b6! are easy and pleasant to calculate.

41 ... ♖e1!
42 ♖b3 ♖8e4

Here the game was adjourned. White sealed the move 43 ♖c5 and then resigned without resuming. I had intended 43...♖f1! (but not 43...d4?! 44 ♖a3!) 44 ♖d6 ♖g1+ 45 ♖h4 (45 ♖h6 ♖e2 or 45...♖e1) 45...g5+.

We have examined two extremely tense games. In both cases the players' understanding of the strategic problems with which they were confronted, combined with their resourcefulness and endgame technique, proved to be of paramount importance. Again this emphasises the necessity for chess players to eliminate their significant weaknesses and, subsequently, to

develop and sharpen all aspects of the game.

What other conclusions can we reach from the games we have examined? Remember, in both of them there came a moment when it should have become clear to White that he would not acquire full positional superiority, and that his opponent had sufficient counterchances. In such situations it is essential to display prudence and flexibility, to recognise when it is time to abandon an impractical plan and instead seek a route to an acceptable, relatively safe position. Neither of my opponents managed to deal with this problem.

Finally, winning a strategic battle does not for a moment mean winning the war. Enough possibilities remain for an opponent to complicate matters throughout the course of a game, so you must keep presenting him with new problems.

You must never falter, and you must continue the struggle with maximum effort – otherwise you will risk letting a deserved victory slip through your fingers, which almost happened to me in both games.

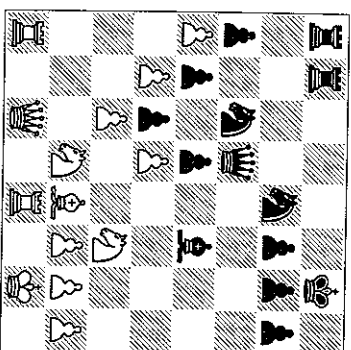
14 From the creative art of our students

Artur Yusupov

Readers who are familiar with our previous books will know that the authors consider one of the main ways of improving your chess is through analysing your own games. Before every session of the school our pupils do their 'homework', commenting on some games. We then discuss the most interesting moments in lessons. In this chapter there are several examples from youngsters' games where we came across instructive positional problems.

Placing pieces

Black has emerged from the opening with a comfortable position. But what should she do now? She could use her advantage in space for a gradual advance on the kingside, where she is 'materially' superior (compare this example with Yusupov-Lautier). After 17...f6 18 ♖f1 ♖f7 19 ♖g3 ♖d7 20 ♖c2 g6 Black should continue ...♖h8, ...♖ag8, ...h5, and ...g5. Of course,



B

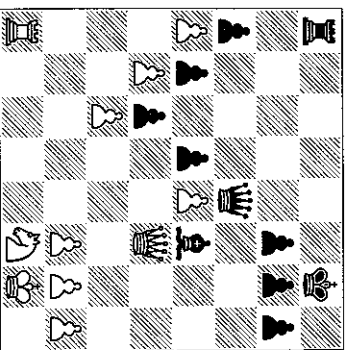
Kovalenskaya – Kadymova
USSR 1990

a plan which consists of advancing your pawns in front of the castled king must be carried out very carefully, but in this case White does not have the possibility of organising counterplay on the open e-file (note that Black has all points of invasion covered).

The piece attack which Kadymova carried out led only to the game being simplified.

17 ... ♖g6?
18 ♖f1 ♖f4

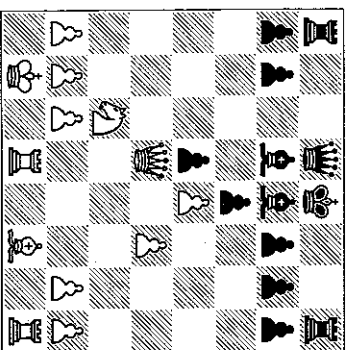
- 19 ♖e5! ♖xe2+
 20 ♖xe2 ♖e8
 21 ♗f4 ♖xe5
 22 ♖xe5 ♖xe5
 23 dxe5 ♗e6 (D)



W

The situation has changed a great deal. Black is left with a 'bad' bishop. White has to activate her knight and transfer it to d4. In the game she chose the wrong route with 24 ♖g3?, and after 24...♗d3 the knight did not reach its destination. 24 ♖d2! ± was correct, and if 24...♖e8 25 ♖e1 f6 26 ♖f3 ♗e4, then 27 exf6 ♗xf6 28 ♗xf6 gxf6 29 ♖d4 ♖f7 30 f3 ♗d3 31 ♖xe8 ♖xe8 32 ♖xb5!

In the following example the players traded mistakes. Black should continue his development by 14...♗a5 followed by 15...♖c8, ...♗c5 and ...♗b4. Instead Baklan



B

Morozov – Baklan (age 12)
 Kiev 1990

offered an exchange of queens that spoiled his pawn structure.

- 14 ... ♗b6?
 15 ♗xb6 axb6
 16 ♗e2

The simple 16 ♖b5 would have led to a healthy advantage for White.

- 16 ... 0-0
 17 ♗f3?

White continues to play imprecisely and without a plan. He clearly did not understand the essence of the position, and was simply making 'solid' moves. On f3 the bishop has nothing to do, and White ought to have prevented the automatic advance ...b6-b5.

17 ... ♖a5?!
 The immediate advance 17...b5! was correct.

- 18 a3 b5

19 ♖a2 ♖a4
 20 g3 f6?!
 As Dvoretzky showed, Black should have played 20...b4!, as after 21 axb4?? there is 21...♖fa8.

21 f5?!
 The preliminary 21 ♖c3! ♖a5 would have been stronger, and only then 22 f5 ±.

- 21 ... d4!
 22 exf6 ♗xf6
 23 fxe6 ♗xe6
 24 ♗xb7?!

A typical error. White is tempted by material gains, underestimating his opponent's counterplay. 24 ♖b4! retains White's edge.

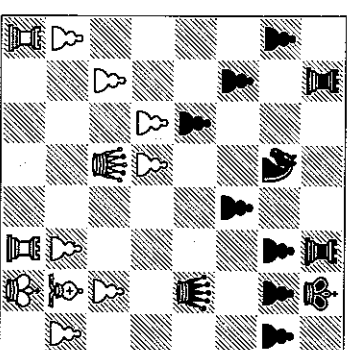
- 24 ... ♖b8
 25 ♗f3 b4!
 26 ♖xb4 ♖bxb4
 27 axb4 ♗a2+
 28 ♖c1 ♗g5+
 29 ♖d2 ♗e6?

He should have retreated to another square – after 29...♗c4 30 b3 ♖a1+ 31 ♖b2 ♖xh1 Black would have had good chances to achieve a draw. However – as often happens – at the moment when Black should have been ready to resign, White offers him the game on a plate!

30 c3??
 30 ♖d1! ♖a1+ (30...♗c4 31 ♖e1 ♖a1+ 32 ♖d1 +–) 31 ♖e2 ♗c4+ 32 ♖d3 would have won.

- 30 ... d3

Or 30...♗b3! 31 ♖b1 ♗xd2.
 31 b3 ♖a2
 32 ♖d1 ♗xb3
 White resigned



B

Arbakov – Boguslavsky (age 16)
 Moscow 1991

Putting a rook on d8 makes sense and is easy to appreciate. Which rook should go there is another matter, and Black chooses the wrong one.

- 16 ... ♖bd8?!

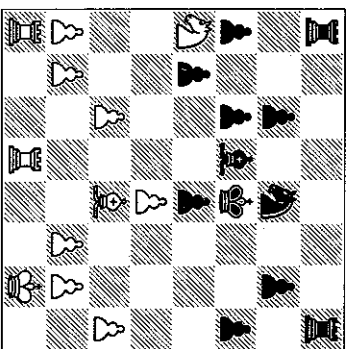
16...♖fd8! was stronger, and if White plays the same as the continuation in the game, 17 ♗e3, then after 17...♗xe3 18 fxe3 ♖f6 19 ♖ad1 e5 (or 19...♖f8), 20 dxc5 bxc5 21 h3 Black has the important move 21...♖f8, consolidating his position.

17 ♗e3! ♗xe3?!
 17...♗f6 is preferable.
 18 fxe3 ♖f6

19 ♖ad1 e5
19...cxd4 20 exd4 ♗d7 deserved attention.

- 20 dxc5! bxc5
21 h3 ♖fe8
22 ♕c6! ♗xd1
23 ♗xd1 ♗c8
24 ♗d6!

White is significantly better because of the threat of retreating the bishop followed by ♗a6.



W

Baklan (age 13) – Shiyanovsky

Kiev 1991

Exchanges are undoubtedly one of the most complex elements of positional play. It was not by chance that an experienced Soviet trainer gave this advice: 'If you are playing against a weaker opponent, exchange off some pieces. He will most certainly not understand which pieces he should exchange, and which he needs to keep on the board.'

Instead of quietly improving his position by continuing 20 b4! and then a2-a3, ♗d3, ♗ad1 and at a suitable moment c3-c4, White hurried to exchange his active knight and almost loses his advantage.

- 20 ♖b7? ♗ab8
21 ♖c5+ ♕xc5
22 ♕xc5 ♖c8
23 f3 ♖d6
24 ♗d3 ♖b7

- 25 ♕f2 ♗hd8
26 ♗ad1 ♗d6
27 ♖f1 ♗bd8
28 ♖e2 c5
29 h3 c4
30 bxc4 bxc4
31 ♗xd6+ ♖xd6
32 ♗d5 ♗b8
33 ♕g3 ♗b5?!

A technical imprecision. It is useful to do the utmost to improve your own position – or to worsen your opponent's – before you alter your structure. He should, as Dvoretzky pointed out, have made all the checks first: 33...♗b2+ 34 ♖f1 ♗b1+ 35 ♖f2 ♗b2+ 36 ♖g1, and only then 36...♗b5 with equality.

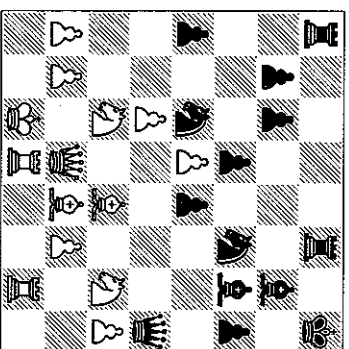
- 34 ♗xb5 axb5
35 ♕f2 ♖b7
36 ♖d2 h5
37 ♕e3 g6

- 38 ♖c2 ♖d6
39 h4 ♖c5?

You should always calculate the variations very accurately before you propose to move into a pawn ending. Unfortunately for Black he failed to do this. 39...♖d8 ± is correct.

- 40 ♕xc5+ ♖xc5
41 g3 ♖b6
42 f4 c5
43 a4! exf4
44 gxf4 bxa4
45 ♖b2

And White soon won.



B

Zviagintsev – Galkin

Kramatorsk 1991

The problem of exchanges was crucial in this game. Now Black should preserve and subsequently make use of his active knights. The natural 19...a4 is best: 20 ♖e1 (20...♖b3+ was threatened, and

in the event of an exchange on c5, whatever Black might have feared was completely unfounded as a weakness has been created on f2) 20...♕h7 with a good game.

- 19 ... ♖fe4?
20 ♖gxe4 ♖xe4
21 ♖xe4

Or 21 ♖c2 ♖xc3 22 ♖xc3, 21 ... ♖xe4 22 ♖c3!

This simple reply had probably fallen outside Black's field of vision. The threat is 23 ♕d3.

- 22 ... ♖b1+
23 ♖d2 ♖f5
With the idea of 24...e4.

- 24 ♕g4 ♖f6
25 ♗g3 h5!

A good plan. Black wants to move the bishop to h7 and then exchange dark-squared bishops, after which he will obtain counterplay on the f-file. After 25...e4 26 ♕e6 ♖e7 Zviagintsev had prepared a queen sacrifice: 27 ♗xg6! ♕xc3+ 28 bxc3 with a winning attack for White.

26 ♕e2
Zviagintsev's analysis proves that the active 26 ♕e6 also deserves attention:

1) 26...♕f7 27 ♕xf7 (27 ♗dgl!?) ♕h6 28 ♕g5 ♖xf2+ 29 ♖c1 is also interesting) 27...♗xf7 (27...♕h6? 28 ♕xh5 ♖f2+ 29 ♕e2) 28 ♗g5! ♖f3 (28...♕h6? is bad in view of

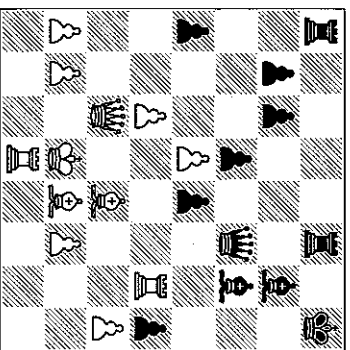
29 ♖xh5 ♜xf2+ 30 ♖c1) 29 ♜g6!
with an advantage for White.

2) 26... ♖h7! 27 ♜dgl ♖h6, and Black successfully maintains his counterplay.

26 ... h4

After 26... ♖h7 White plays 27 ♜g5!, and not 27 ♖xh5 ♖h6.

27 ♜g4! (D)
Not 27 ♜g5? ♖h6.



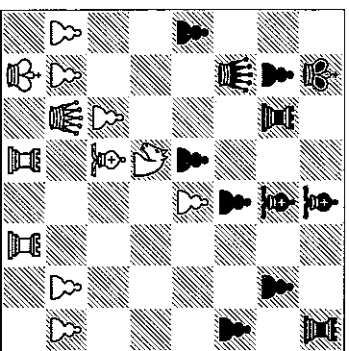
B

The critical moment. 27... ♖h5? fails to 28 ♜xg7! ♖xe2 29 ♜dgl ♖h5 30 ♜xc7+-. In order to hold the position Black should try to exchange his passive dark-squared bishop for his opponent's active one. Therefore the correct route was 27... ♖h7! 28 ♜dgl ♖h6 29 ♖xb6 (29 f4? ♜ae8) 29... ♜xb6+ 30 ♜e3 ♜f6! with a double-edged game.

27 ... ♖f5?
28 ♜g5 ♜f7?!

Black has realised his mistake and is trying to prepare 29... ♖h6 (30 ♜h5 ♜h7). However, he should have resigned himself to losing a tempo, settling for 28... ♖h7 29 ♜h5! ♜g6. Now it is easy for White to prevent an exchange of dark-squared bishops, and he quickly decides the outcome of the game by attacking on the g and h-files.

29 ♜h5+! ♖g8
30 ♜g1 ♖f8
31 ♖g5
Black resigned



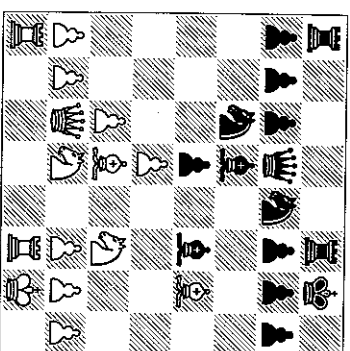
W

Darchia (age 14) – Gediev
Moscow 1991

The assessment of a position often depends on small nuances. Thus, if the black pawn were on a4, he would have a tenable position.

At this point White offered an exchange of bishops with 25 ♖g6?

and, although she won the game, this only happened thanks to a terrible mistake by her opponent. Meanwhile, instead of exchanging light-squared bishops (which in principle is wrong) Darchia could have immediately decided the outcome of the game by exchanging queens, completely disrupting Black's defences: 25 ♜b3! ♜xb3 26 axb3 ♖d7 27 ♜f7 ♖f8 28 ♜d1.



W

Rasted – Kadyмова (age 15)
Duisberg girls U-16 Wch 1992

Even in a completely level position you have to be careful with regard to exchanges, making sure that you are not left with poor pieces.

11 ♖xf5?!

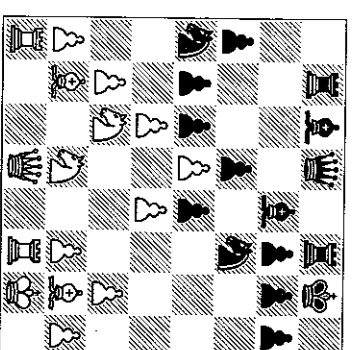
White should have exchanged his 'bad' bishop (the dark-squared bishop will be held up by its own pawn chain) in return for Black's

more active knight. In this case the game would have been totally equal, but now Black can steal an initiative.

11 ... ♗xf5
12 ♜fe1 h6
13 ♖e3 ♜ae8
14 ♗f1 ♗xe3?

Returning the kindness. Of course, Black should have continued 14... ♜e7 followed by doubling rooks, and after 15 ♗g3 take the knight with the bishop, trying to use the greater manoeuvrability of the knight. Now not a trace remains of Black's advantage, and the game quickly ended in a draw.

Pawn Structure

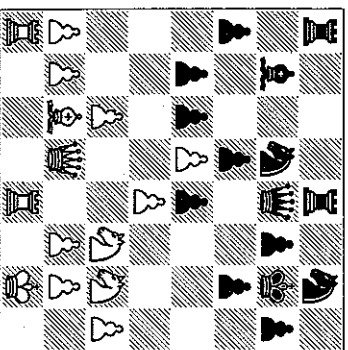


W

Chekaev (age 13) – Goldaev
USSR 1989

White should have repulsed the threat of 13... bxc4 with the simple

13 ♖c2!. He then has a standard plan: ♗e1, ♖d1 and f2-f4 with an advantage. The exchange of pawns carried out by White only increases Black's chances on the queenside. After 13 cxb5? axb5 14 f4 Black could have obtained a more pleasant game by continuing 14...b4! 15 ♖a4 (or 15 ♖e2 ♖g4 16 ♗f3 exf4 17 gx f4 c4!?) with the threat of 18...♗b6+) 15...♖d7 followed by ...♗a6, ...♗f6 and then a timely ...c5-c4.



W

Smirnov – Emmeln
Leningrad 1989

What distinguishes a Grand-master from a master? Chess-lovers often ask questions like that. To many people it seems that Grand-masters simply calculate variations a little deeper. Or that they know their opening theory slightly better. But in fact the real difference is

something else. You can pick out two essential qualities in which those with higher titles are superior to others: the ability to sense the critical moment in a game, and a finer understanding of various positional problems.

The diagram position illustrates the latter quality well. When Dolmatov looked at this game he came up with the following assessment, which is extremely important in structures like this: 'When White has closed the centre like this in the Spanish the position of the a-pawn has vital significance. If White has already played a2-a4, Black obtains counterplay by advancing his pawn to c4 and occupying c5 with the knight, for if the b-pawn is moved an exchange on b3 would be reasonable. However, if the white pawn is still on a2 this plan is weaker because of the break b2-b3, undermining the c4-pawn. As for White, he should prepare to open the file with the preliminary b2-b3 and only then advance with a2-a4.'

Fine assessments like this are gradually accumulated by the chess player, adding to his positional baggage.

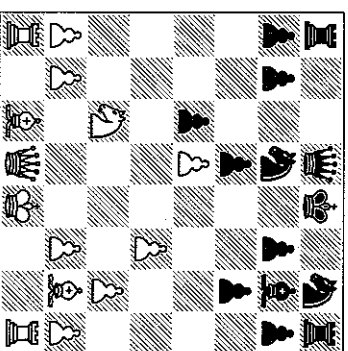
Now the reader can easily understand why the following natural move by White is accompanied by a question mark.

20 a4?

The correct move, of course, was 20 b3, followed by a2-a4 when, according to Dolmatov, White has the better prospects.

20 ... c4!

After this standard reply, Black seized the initiative.



W

Boguslavsky (age 16) –
Cherniak
Moscow 1991

White's pawn structure has been damaged. He should have made use of the opportunity not only to rectify it, but also to open up the game, which would obviously be to the advantage of the side with the bishop pair. After the correct 11 f5 White would have an advantage.

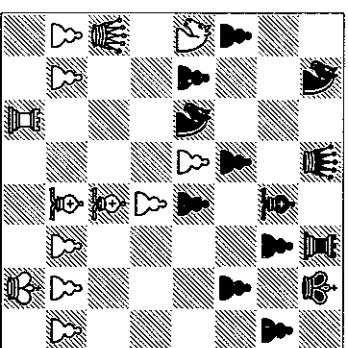
Castling looked natural, but turned out to be a serious mistake, and the situation altered sharply. After 11 0-0? ♖e7 12 ♗e1 0-0 13 ♖e4

♖f6 14 ♖x f6+ ♗x f6 15 g4 ♗e8 White played too aggressively: 16 f5? (16 ♗d2! followed by 17 ♗c3) 16...gx f5 17 gx f5 and now the simple 17...♗d7 followed by ...♗h8 would have placed White in a critical position.

The Passion for Material

This is a common problem. Many young players, when they see a possibility of winning material, fail to appreciate the significance of the opponent's counterplay and consequently neglect the safer alternatives (remember Morozov-Baklan).

Here is one more example on this theme:



W

Darchia (age 11) – Velcheva
Fond du Lac girls Wch 1990

20 ♗xc5?!

1 She should simply have im- losing her advantage. The modest
 2 proved her position by means of 20 move 26 g3 is stronger.
 3 f3, when Black would be unable to
 4 defend against the threat of 21 b4
 5 followed by a knight jumping to
 6 c6. The text gives Black realistic
 7 chances to save herself.

- 20 ... dxc5
 - 21 ♖b7 ♜b6
 - 22 ♗xc5 ♜c8
 - 23 b4 a5
 - 24 ♗d3 ♜xc1+
 - 25 ♜xc1 axb4
 - 26 ♗xe5?! h3!
- 26 ... ♗f6
 27 ♜c8+ ♗g7
 28 ♜e8 ♜a7
 29 ♗xb5?

White repeats the same mistake, and is consequently gradually

Playing for the win was only possible by means of the prophylactic move 29 ♗f1!. White was lucky to get a draw after a strong reply by her opponent.

- 29 ... h3!
- 30 ♗d7! ♗xe5
- 31 ♜xe5+ ♗g8
- 32 ♜e8+ Draw