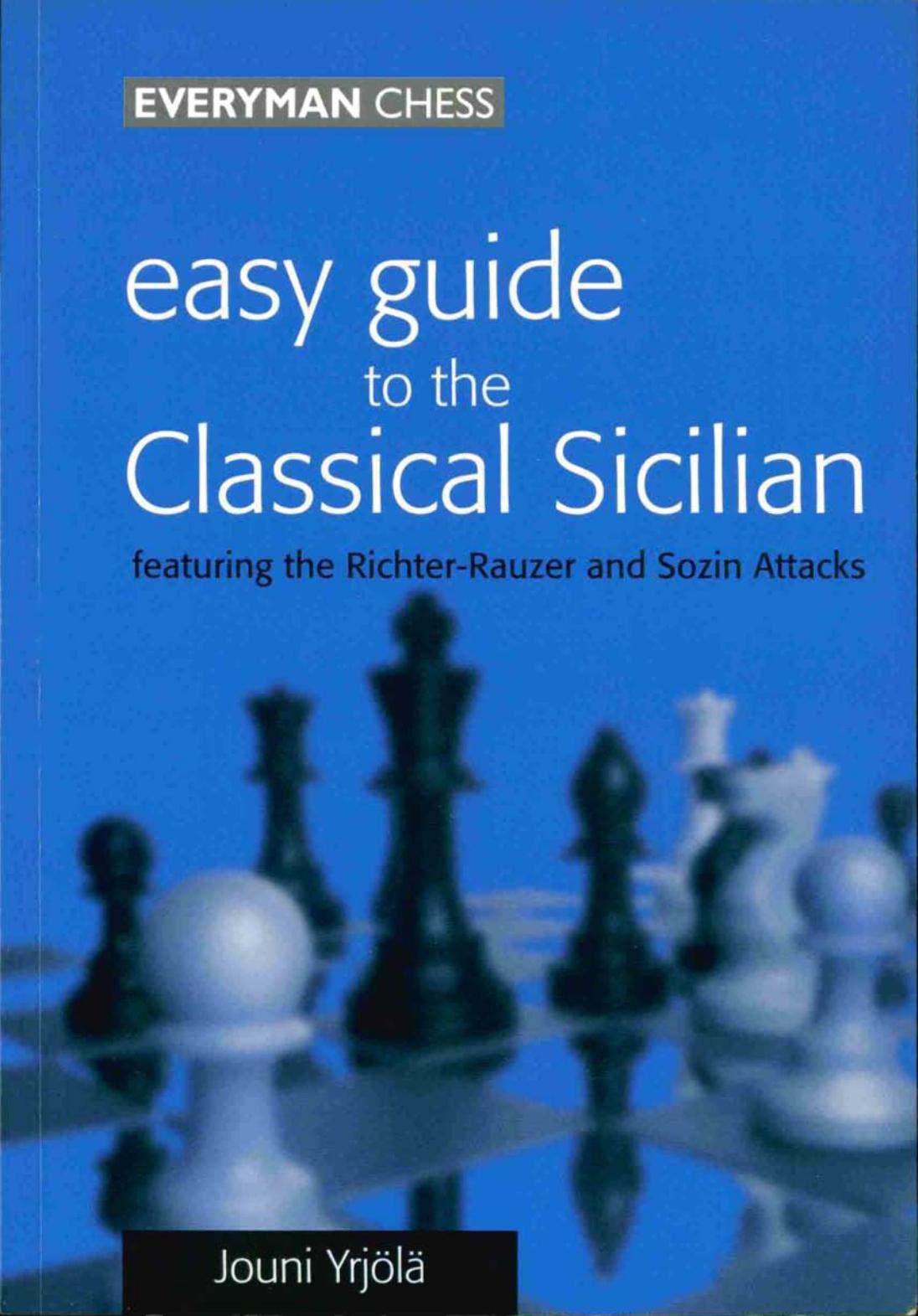


EVERYMAN CHESS

easy guide
to the
Classical Sicilian

featuring the Richter-Rauzer and Sozin Attacks



Jouni Yrjölä

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!?	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
+—	White is winning
±	White is much better
±±	White is slightly better
=	equal position
〒	Black is slightly better
〒〒	Black is much better
-+	Black is winning
Ch	championship
Cht	team championship
Wch	world championship
Ct	candidates event
IZ	interzonal event
Z	zonal event
OL	olympiad
Ech	European championship
ECC	European Clubs Cup
qual	qualifying event
tt	team tournament
jr	junior event
wom	women's event
mem	memorial event
rpd	rapidplay game
corr.	correspondence game
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
½-½	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(n)	nth match game
(D)	see next diagram

Foreword

The Classical is one of the most interesting, traditional and reliable of Open Sicilians. I have aimed in this book to give the black-player a solid grounding in the theory and ideas behind the Classical. In these pages you will also find some valuable ideas for the white side, since the suggestions for Black are mostly the hardest nuts to beat.

I have sought to provide at least one sound and interesting line for Black against each of White's responses to the Classical Sicilian. The basic aim of this book is to cover the Classical Sicilian from Black's point of view, giving him a complete repertoire. In the most important lines, such as the Rauzer and the Velimirović Attack, I have offered a wider choice of systems for Black. However, I have not covered every important option for Black – in any case it would not be possible to cover the whole of such a large subject in only 128 pages.

This is my first book, and as a true Classical Sicilian adherent it has been a most pleasant task, even though it was unbelievably laborious. I shudder to think how difficult it must have been to write an opening theory book before the time of computer programs. Their assistance with checking the lines, finding sources and storing analysis seem irreplaceable. The Classical Sicilian is an especially pleasant and instructive subject because of the rich set of different position-types to be discussed. Many of the typical Sicilian position-types are covered: Boleslavsky, Dragon, Sozin/Velimirović and the Rauzer.

Most chapters begin with a long introductory section in which the main ideas for both sides are discussed, using schematic diagrams with arrows and highlighted squares, etc. I like this kind of format for modern opening theory books, as these features make the book more readable and more interesting. I feel that without innovations of this kind, the popularity of opening theory books might have suffered in favour of studying from databases.

I received valuable help in my work from several people. I would like to thank Jussi Tella, Veijo Mäki and Ville Lehto for invaluable help with analysing and checking ideas. Without my employer's flexibility, it might have been impossible to keep to the tight schedule. I would also like to thank the Gambit editorial team for the painstaking job of hunting down mistakes and improving what might otherwise have been clumsy sentences.

Jouni Yrjölä
Helsinki, Finland
May 2000

1 Introduction

The Classical Sicilian starts with the moves 1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 (or 2... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 d4 exd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6) 3 d4 exd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (D).

W



The reason for the name is the fact that Black develops his knights in classical fashion, distinguishing it from 5...a6 (Najdorf), 5...g6 (Dragon) and 5...e6 (Scheveningen).

A Little History

The line was already known at the end of 19th century, with the leading American masters Paulsen and Pillsbury often employing ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$. However, the play was very monotonous until the 1930s since the only reply taken seriously was 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$. Even that usually transposed to the Dragon or Scheveningen as Paulsen was the only one who liked the formation with 6...e5, later to be named after Boleslavsky. The move 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ was seriously investigated at the

start of the 1930s by Sozin. The most popular move 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ started to attract top players like Alekhine and Keres later in the 1930s but the line was named the Richter-Rauzer Attack (generally abbreviated to Rauzer in this book). The line was developed by these two gentlemen themselves. However, on my database there are few games involving either of these players. Nevertheless, it was Rauzer (in his analysis and writings) who proposed the white set-up that has been the foundation of the line's enduring popularity.

The Classical was the height of fashion in the 1950s and the 1960s. At that time, many of the world's top players at least occasionally employed the system; one may mention Taimanov, Geller, Tal, Euwe, Botvinnik, Smyslov, Stein, Bronstein, Petrosian and Spassky. Its popularity has remained steady since then, although it seems that Kasparov's favourite, the Najdorf Variation, has replaced the Classical as the 'normal' Sicilian.

The games of the modern players are the most interesting from the theoretical point of view, because they know largest amount of theory and plans. Among the super-grandmasters of today, the greatest adherents are Kramnik, Anand, Khalifman, Svidler and Ivanchuk. There are also many specialists at lower levels from which we can learn a great deal; in particular,

Tukmakov, Lerner, Aseev, Csom, Groszpeter, Yermolinsky, Van der Wiel and many GMs from the former Yugoslav area like Kožul, Damljanović and Popović. In addition, you will see many examples in this book of players even at lower levels with great understanding of the Classical.

The Variations

The Rauzer is by far the most important. You can expect to meet that in 40-50 percent of your games. It has a reputation as a sound line by which White can play for a win. The Sozin is also quite popular (about 25% of games), especially in the hands of attacking players, who usually aim for the hyper-aggressive line known as the Velimirović Attack. The common choice of a cautious player is 6 ♜e2, where a classical Classical player chooses the Boleslavsky. The importance of the other lines is rather marginal though, like in Najdorf, there is a growing tendency from White to strive for positions akin to the English Attack with 6 f3 or 6 ♜e3. The same attacking plan of f3, g4, h4 and g5 is also getting more popular in the Rauzer.

Below is a table of variations, where the numbers are from a database with 20,794 games from the position on the previous page.

What can we conclude from this table? We should note that among the less common lines, the move 6 f3 should be taken seriously; moreover, it is getting more and more popular. The line 6 ♜e2 is far more venomous than it looks: the rather innocuous sub-variation 6...e5 7 ♜b3 is the reason for the bad statistics. With the line 7 ♜f3, White scores positively.

If we take statistics only from the last few years, things change a little bit. The move 6 ♜c4 is scoring extremely poorly. Maybe the Velimirović Attack is not perfectly sound and Black is learning how to meet it. The moves 6 f3 and 6 f4 are scoring even better but, fortunately, they are still rare.

Transpositions

Transpositions from one line to another are very common between Sicilian lines, and are an important part of the arsenal of many Sicilian players. This is especially true with the Classical. You can often move into another line, if the independent Classical line doesn't inspire you. Especially at higher levels, it is a good policy to be unpredictable. The closest cousin is the Dragon and often the Scheveningen is at Black's disposal, too. For example, after 6 ♜e2, 6 f4, 6 ♜e3 and

Variation	Games	W's score (%)	W's rating	Performance
6 ♜g5	8444	53	2411	2439
6 ♜c4	5437	50	2361	2388
6 ♜e2	3898	47	2340	2350
6 ♜e3	1104	48	2338	2345
6 g3	693	51	2378	2413
6 f4	434	52	2379	2403
6 f3	349	59	2376	2453

6 f3, Black can play 6...g6, and even after 6 ♜c4 the idea 6...♝d7, with 7...g6 to follow, is not unplayable. After 6 f3 or 6 ♜e2 Black can even play 6...♝xd4 7 ♞xd4 g6 to avoid the theoretical Dragon lines. Only the Rauzer stops such transpositions.

In some cases, you can also transpose to the Classical from other variations. In particular, the Sozin lines discussed in this book are available after 5...a6 6 ♜c4 or 5...e6 6 ♜c4. Also, one can also try to transpose from the 6 ♜g5 Najdorf to the Rauzer.

Why Play the Classical Sicilian?

First you have to ask yourself why one should play the Sicilian. The Sicilian is a good opening for everyone who wants to play for a win with Black. You should not be afraid of your king coming under attack and you should love the word counterplay. If you meet this description, then the Classical is suitable for you. It is the soundest of all the Sicilian lines – look up in your database the position before the move 5...♝c6. This is the move with the best score.

About 15 years ago I played three Sicilian lines: the Najdorf, Classical and Dragon. I found that was too much – there was too much theory to study. Later I employed the others only occasionally when I had a particular target in mind, and the Classical became my main weapon. I found many Najdorf variations too obscure in nature, and the risk to the black king is even greater. On the other hand, the Dragon is very concrete. Sometimes you have to study 25-move-long variations move by move. The Classical is

the golden middle course. You can more often play with general principles and plans in mind without being afraid of losing in one move. Besides, in many games I could still transpose to those Dragon lines I liked.

As you will see from many examples in this book, counterplay in the centre with the move ...d5 is a regular weapon in most lines to free Black's game. Also, many times when White castles queenside, as in the Rauzer or in the Velimirović Attack, there are good chances to develop counterplay against the white king by advancing the a- and b-pawns or via the semi-open c-file. In those lines, you also have to decide carefully what to do with your own king. The timing of castling is very important; in particular, before castling kingside, one should have secured enough counterplay on the queenside or in the centre.

The Specialists

I believe in specialists. It is a very good idea to start learning a new opening or variation by getting acquainted with the ideas of a specialist of the line. They are usually devoted to their favourite lines and put a lot of effort into keeping them alive. Good examples of specialists are Polugaevsky or Kveinys in their respected Sicilian variations, or Malaniuk in the Lenigrad Dutch. In the Classical, we have a number of them, the greatest example being Kožul in the Rauzer line 8...♝d7, 9...b5. Also, Aseev is doing a good job in the Boleslavsky, Damjanović in the 6...♝b6 Sozin and Rauzers with doubled f-pawns, Mäki in the 8...♝d7, 9...♝e7 Rauzer and

Lerner in the 8...h6 Rauzer. Personally, I have learned a lot from the games of those players.

How this book has been organized

The lines have been arranged according to position-types. In the Classical, we encounter the following basic position-types: Boleslavsky, Dragon, Velimirović, Sozin, Rauzer without doubled f-pawns and Rauzer with doubled f-pawns. This is also the order they are introduced in this book. In every

section, there is a strategic introduction to that position-type before the theoretical lines are discussed in detail. The lines are organized around base games, which usually represent a main line in this book. The main lines do not always coincide with those accepted by theory as the principal variation, but are those that I regard as important and playable. For example, the main line I have selected against the Velimirović is the one that is doing best in practice, but is not the most popular by any means.

2 The Boleslavsky Position-Type

Strategic Introduction to the Boleslavsky Position-Type

From the Classical, the Boleslavsky position-type can arise after the moves 6 $\mathbb{A}e2$, 6 $\mathbb{B}e3$, 6 f3 and 6 f4 following the characteristic reply 6...e5.

Type-1 pawn-formation

Here is a typical Boleslavsky position with the most characteristic pawn-structure.

W



Black has good piece development. He can freely develop his light-squared bishop, which is often a problem in various Sicilian lines. The pawn on e5 controls the squares d4 and f4, which restrains White from activity in the centre and on the kingside. On the

other hand, Black has a potentially weak pawn on d6 and more importantly, the weak d5-square is at White's disposal. Sometimes White can also make use of the f5-square. The biggest potential nightmare for Black is that White will get an eternal, dominating piece on d5, especially a knight. Fortunately for Black, that nightmare rarely comes true, but here is a position-type with a strong knight against a bad bishop to avoid:

B



Valenta – Meissner

Passau 1995

The need to keep a close guard on the d5-square always exists. Even if the white piece on d5 can be exchanged, some other deficiencies might follow, as in the following diagram:

B



W



C.Bauer – Degraeve
French Ch (Auxerre) 1996

In this position things have gone terribly wrong for Black because the d5-knight is just too dominant, and exchanging it off would allow White to activate his rooks with a subsequent f4 advance.

On the other hand, if Black manages to play the freeing move ...d5 himself, he has got rid of his main problem and the central pawn on e5 might support Black's activity. In Game 2, you will see an excellent example, though things were not so clear in that case. Still, there are cases where the freeing move should be considered carefully. If White is better developed, the opening of the position might be to his advantage. In addition, the move ...d5 weakens the e-pawn and the square c5. If ...d5 would land Black in trouble due to these weaknesses, he should wait for a better opportunity. There might also be some other weaknesses.

In the following diagram, Black has just played ...d5, but he still has problems with the weak a4-pawn and the

Lastin – Zontakh
Yugoslav Cht 1999

b6-square. If the pawn were on a7, Black would be fine.

Type-2 pawn-formation

Quite often, if White plays $\mathbb{Q}d5$ to stop ...d5, Black will exchange on d5. If White has to take with the e-pawn, the pawn-formation and nature of play will change. The diagram below features a typical position, though in this case Black has exchanged his light-squared bishop. The result is that the light squares in Black's camp are weak. It follows that it is generally preferable to use a knight to make the exchange on d5.

B



White has majority of pawns on the queenside and will naturally try to push them. Black should make White's plan more difficult with moves like ...a5 and ...b6. He should also prepare counterplay on the other wing with ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ and ...f5. In Game 1, we will see a position where activation of the knight with ...e4 and ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is a stronger plan:

B



Typical Methods for White

1. Occupy the d5-square (sometimes f5)

W



Here White can get some advantage by eliminating one defender of the

d5-square: $\mathbb{Q}g5$, $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ and $\mathbb{Q}d5$. This is not fatal as Black can still exchange the knight with ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, but this brings the white queen or bishop to the outpost.

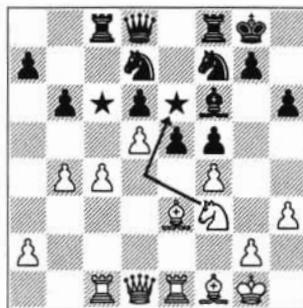
2. Attack on the queenside with the pawns

See the above type-2 pawn-formation and position 8 of Black's methods.

3. Play on the light squares

See Barua-Khalifman (Game 1), where White forced light-square weaknesses in the black camp to crawl into.

W



Geller – Am. Rodriguez
Amsterdam 1987

Here, the light squares in the black position look terribly weak. White benefited from this by 21 $fxe5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (21... $dxe5$ 22 $c5$) 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ \pm .

4. Manoeuvre the knight from f3 to e3

The aim is to control the squares d5 and f5 to stop Black's counterplay. See Game 2, where this was White's basic aim.

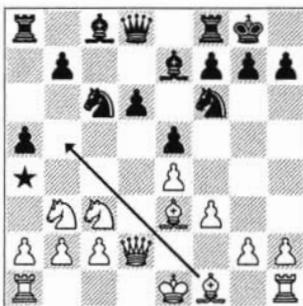
5. Advance the f-pawn

This might be combined with the advance of the g-pawn, though in many cases Black's central counter ...d5 is even stronger than usual.

B



W



Typical Methods for Black

1. Advance the d-pawn if an opportunity presents itself

B



Sznapik – Hort Lucerne OL 1982

White would be fine if he had time for the moves h3 and g4, but Black struck immediately by 14...d5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (15 exd5 e4!) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 16 h3 $\mathbb{A}c5!$, with a strong attack. In this type of position Black might also get into trouble if White had time for $\mathbb{Q}g5$, $\mathbb{A}xf6$ and $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

6. Keep the pawn-formation solid and watertight

White will try to benefit from Black's weaknesses (d5, d6, f5 and sometimes b5) and to prevent all counterplay. This is in fact the biggest danger for Black in Boleslavsky. There is some danger of drifting into a lifeless position with some fatally weak squares.

In the following diagram, White avoids weakening his pawn-formation with a2-a4 and stops the a-pawn with 10 $\mathbb{A}b5$ instead.

Molvig – Thorsteins Copenhagen 1989

Here, the well-prepared 14...d5 came with great effect. Black is well developed and the white queen is on the same file as the black rook.

2. Fight against the white outpost d5

In the diagram overleaf, after 13... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ (13... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d3$) 14 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ White will, either here or next move, have to recapture with the pawn on d5.

B



Lengyel – Feher
Budapest 1995

3. Exchange of the dark-squared bishop

This is often logical in the position-type after exchanges on d5 since the e7-bishop is passive and the d6-pawn is not so weak any more. The plan is even more tempting if White has the bishop-pair but he has weakened the dark squares in his camp.

B



Malinin – Golovin
Voronezh 1991

Here the plan 18... $\mathbb{A}d8$ 19 a3 $\mathbb{A}b6$ was strong. The most typical way to try for exchanges is via g5, for example

with the manoeuvre ...h6, ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ and ... $\mathbb{A}g5$.

4. Advance the a-pawn if a white piece is on b3

B



This is a strong plan if White has played the knight to b3. If White replies a4, the black knight can sit securely on b4 to support the move ...d5 and to bind White to protecting the c2-pawn. If White allows ...a4-a3, his queenside pawn-structure breaks into pieces. Sometimes White plays a3. Then Black can gain space with ...a4, but he should watch out that the pawn doesn't become weak.

5. Play on the c-file

W



In this position, the pressure against c2 is the main motif to hamper White's play. If White plays the awkward move $\mathbb{E}c1$, he must take into consideration the exchange sacrifice on c3, as there is a nice hook on a2.

6. Take space on the queenside with ...b5

This is not as common in the Boleslavsky as in many other Classical lines, because White often is quicker with a2-a4. However, it is sometimes the only way to get counterchances.

B



Rantanen – Mäki
Helsinki 1990

Here ...d5 has been firmly prevented and White is about to tighten the grip with $\mathbb{Q}e3$. Black gained counterplay by 15... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ b5! 17 a3 a5.

7. Occupy the e5-square with the knight

This is effective if White has no f-pawn left.

In the theoretical position in the following diagram, Black should play 8... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$. Because 9 exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ is too dangerous in view of the threatened

B



... $\mathbb{W}h4+$, White can only concentrate on developing pieces. After 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, Black has a dominant piece on e5. If White exchanged his dark-squared bishop for this knight, he would be left with terribly weak dark squares.

8. Play on the kingside with ...f5

This is quite a typical counterplay idea in the above type-2 formation or in a Pelikan position-type.

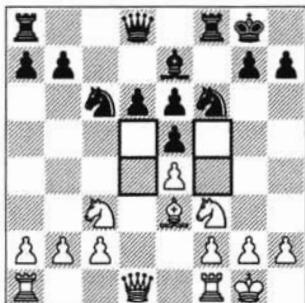
B



In this position, ...f5-f4 is a natural plan, though Black must take into account White's counterplay with c5. After 16...f5!?, 17 c5 f4! 18 cxd6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$!? the position is unclear according to Lagunov.

9. If White plays $\mathbb{A}c4$, Black can usually reply with ... $\mathbb{A}e6$

Normally there is no need to fear the doubled e-pawns that result if White exchanges on e6.



The black pawns control the central squares and Black can make use of the f-file. The exchange $\mathbb{A}xe6$ is justified only if White can immediately benefit from the weaknesses.

Boleslavsky 6 $\mathbb{A}e2$ e5 7 $\mathbb{A}f3$: White plays $\mathbb{A}d5$

Game 1
Barua – Khalifman
Las Vegas FIDE KO 1999

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{A}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{A}xd4$
 $\mathbb{A}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{A}c3$ $\mathbb{A}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{A}e2$ e5

Instead of this move, the Boleslavsky Variation, Black can choose a Dragon (6...g6) or a Scheveningen (6...e6). Also, the new idea 6... $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ g6 is an interesting way to turn the game into an untheoretical type of Dragon. See Chapter 3 for details.

7 $\mathbb{A}f3$ (D)
7...h6

B



In this case, when the knight is on f3, Black gets a somewhat cramped position if he allows $\mathbb{A}g5$, $\mathbb{A}xf6$ and $\mathbb{A}d5$. After 7... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{A}g5$ 0-0 9 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ $\mathbb{A}xf6$ 11 $\mathbb{A}d5$ White is slightly better, due to the d5 outpost. Examples:

a) 11... $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 14 axb3 $\mathbb{A}d4$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xd4$ exd4 16 $\mathbb{A}c4$ ± Galkin-Vydeslaver, Groningen open 1997.

b) 11... $\mathbb{A}c8$ 12 c3 $\mathbb{A}g5$ 13 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 14 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{A}e7??$ 15 $\mathbb{W}g3$ 1-0 King-Frias, London WFW 1990.

c) 11... $\mathbb{A}g5$!? (maybe Black's best is to play like in the Sveshnikov Variation) 12 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{A}h6$ 13 $\mathbb{A}fd1$ $\mathbb{A}c8$ 14 c3 f5 15 $\mathbb{A}d2$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xe7+$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 17 exf5 $\mathbb{A}xf5$ 18 $\mathbb{A}e4$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 19 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{A}cd8$ 20 $\mathbb{A}d5$ ± Seret-Gulko, Cannes 1987.

d) 11... $\mathbb{A}d4$ 12 $\mathbb{A}xf6+$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 13 $\mathbb{A}xd4$ exd4 14 f4 $\mathbb{A}ac8$ 15 b3 ± Illescas-Zaltsman, New York Open 1987.

8 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{A}e1$

This move became popular in the 1980s and increased the popularity of 7 $\mathbb{A}f3$ compared to 7 $\mathbb{A}b3$. The older move 9 b3, these days a favourite of Vasily Emelin, often leads to the main line, but White has some ways to try to avoid this. In particular, he can try to

do without the h3 move. 9...0-0 10 $\mathbb{A}b2$ a6 (or 10... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{A}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{A}f1$ $\mathbb{A}g4$!?) 11 a4 $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{A}e1$ $\mathbb{A}c8$ 13 $\mathbb{A}f1$ (13 h3 $\mathbb{A}b8$ 14 $\mathbb{A}f1$ leads to the main line) 13... $\mathbb{W}d7$!? (the idea is to activate the bishop with ... $\mathbb{A}d8-a5$) 14 $\mathbb{A}d2$ $\mathbb{A}a5$! 15 $\mathbb{A}cb1$ $\mathbb{A}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{A}a3$ $\mathbb{A}b6$ 17 h3 $\mathbb{A}c6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}ac4$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ and Black was fine in Drozdov-Sakaev, Kazan 1995.

9...0-0 (D)



W

10 h3

Black would be happy after 10 $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ if White didn't have the move experimented with mostly by G.Kuzmin: 11 $\mathbb{A}d5$!. For example, 11... $\mathbb{A}c8$ 12 c3 $\mathbb{A}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ + $\mathbb{A}xf6$ 14 $\mathbb{A}d5$ and now:

- a) 14... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 b3!?
- b) 14... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 b3!?

(19... $\mathbb{W}d7$?? (19 $\mathbb{A}ac1$) 19... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 20 $\mathbb{A}b2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ and Black's active piece-play more than compensates for the doubled pawns, Yakovich-Khasin, Kursk 1987.

b) 14... $\mathbb{A}c4$ (fighting against the d5 outpost) 15 h3 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{A}h2$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}fd8$ (threatening to push the d-pawn after ... $\mathbb{A}b6$) 18 $\mathbb{W}d1$ b5 19 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{A}g5$! (getting rid of the bad bishop) 20 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ hxg5 21 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22

$\mathbb{A}g4$ (22 $\mathbb{A}d1$! would have made the freeing move more difficult) 22...d5 23 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ = G.Kuzmin-Kosten, Bratislava ECC 1997.

Allowing the nasty pin after 10 $\mathbb{A}f1$ $\mathbb{A}g4$ gives Black more chances than the main line, since the compromising move g4 is more or less obligatory: 11 h3 $\mathbb{A}h5$ 12 g4 (12 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}g6$ 13 $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{A}c8$ is good for Black) 12... $\mathbb{A}g6$. White has now tried:

a) 13 $\mathbb{A}h4$!?

$\mathbb{A}xe4$ (13... $\mathbb{A}h7$ 14 $\mathbb{A}f5$ $\mathbb{A}xf5$ 15 exf5 $\mathbb{A}g5$ 16 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{A}xe3$ 17 $\mathbb{A}xe3$ $\mathbb{A}c8$ 18 $\mathbb{A}g2$ ±) 14 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 15 $\mathbb{A}f5$ with some positional compensation for the pawn.

b) 13 $\mathbb{A}c4$!?

$\mathbb{A}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{A}b3$ $\mathbb{A}xb3$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xb3$ a6 and White's light squares are weak, Hölzl-Lobron, Graz Z 1993.

c) 13 $\mathbb{A}g2$ $\mathbb{A}c8$ 14 a3 $\mathbb{A}a5$ 15 $\mathbb{A}d2$ a6 16 $\mathbb{A}f1$ $\mathbb{A}c4$ and Black is active, Vazquez-Aguilar, Santiago Z 1989

10... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{A}f1$ $\mathbb{A}b8$ (D)

This prophylactic move is Black's most popular way to play for a win. Black is prepared to take with the knight after White plays $\mathbb{A}d5$, which is a strong answer to natural moves like 11... $\mathbb{A}c8$ or 11...a6.

The following is a nice example of the dangers for Black arising from the queenside pawns and weakness of the light squares: 11... $\mathbb{A}c8$!?

12 $\mathbb{A}d5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 13 exd5 $\mathbb{A}b8$ 14 c4 $\mathbb{A}bd7$ 15 $\mathbb{A}e3$ b6 16 b4 $\mathbb{A}h7$ 17 $\mathbb{A}c1$ $\mathbb{A}g5$ 18 $\mathbb{A}d2$! f5 19 f4 $\mathbb{A}f7$ 20 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 21 fxe5 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ (21...dxe5 22 c5) 22 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 23 $\mathbb{A}e6$ ± Geller-Am.Rodriguez, Amsterdam 1987.

The other popular line is 11... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{A}d2$ (12 $\mathbb{A}b5$!?) intends a bind with c4: 12...a6 13 $\mathbb{A}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ (13... $\mathbb{A}fd8$?) 14 $\mathbb{A}xb7$ $\mathbb{A}xd1$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xa5$ $\mathbb{A}xe1$ 16

$\mathbb{Q}xc6 +-$ } 14 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ {14 $\mathbb{Q}xb7?$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ } 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 16 $exf5$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 17 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ with an unclear position that might slightly favour White, Xie Jun-Chiburdanidze, Kuala Lumpur 1994) 12... $\mathbb{W}d8$. Now:

a) 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ is a draw offer which doesn't guarantee the draw, because White still has the option of 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$, as in the Xie Jun game above.

b) Another way for White to play for a win is 13 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ d5 (13... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 14 c4 {the bind again}) 14... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}ad1 \pm$, which is another game Barua-Khalifman, Las Vegas FIDE KO 1999) 14 exd5 and now:

b1) 14... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 15 c4 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ causes more trouble for Black) 16...e4 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with counterplay was a suggestion of Psakhis.

b2) 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}el$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}cl$ and Black's compensation was not convincing in Psakhis-Greenfeld, Israeli Ch 1996.

W



12 a4

This is today the main line, but there are also many other possibilities for White:

a) 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ seems to be too straightforward. Practice favours Black, who continues 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 14 c4 weakens the light squares and gives away the bishop-pair too easily, though Black has a logical plan: 14...a5 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$) 13 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 c4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and now:

a1) 15 b4 would be answered by 15...a5.

a2) 15 a3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (15...a5) 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ a6 17 b4 e4! 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ 21 c5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ exd3 23 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (23 c6? $\mathbb{Q}xd4$) 23... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g5!$, Illescas-Yudasin, Groningen PCA qual 1993, is a beautiful example of Black's general plan in action.

a3) 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (in this case ...f5-f4 looks like a more promising plan, as in the main line; also, White must take into account the move $\mathbb{Q}h5$ – a good idea might be first to prevent White's queenside counterplay: 15...a5!? 16 b3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17 a3 f5 18 b4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ f4 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e4 with serious counterplay, Lopez-Garcia Ilundain, Leon 1998) 16 b4 a5 (16...f5!? 17 c5 f4! 18 cxd6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$! 19 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ was given by Lagunov as an unclear possibility) 17 a3 f5 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ axb4 19 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20 c5 f4 21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e4 22 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$, as in Mencinger-Kožul, Ptuj 1989, where Black had played 15... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ instead of the more logical 15... $\mathbb{Q}g6$. The position is complicated, but I like Black. In fact Black won easily after 23 c6? $\mathbb{Q}xf2+!$.

b) 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$? is a natural developing move but still rather pointless, because e4 is protected only by the knight and thus White doesn't have the $\mathbb{Q}d5$ option for a while. 12...a6 13

a4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 14 g3 $\mathbb{B}c8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2?!$ (15 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 18 $\mathbb{B}eb1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ is more unclear but still good for Black, Garcia Gomez-Zarnicki, Linares open 1995) 15...d5! 16 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19 a5 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ and Black won quickly with active piece-play in Rhodin-Vässer, Bern 1992.

c) There is a lot more point in the following plan to manoeuvre the knight towards e3 via f1: 12 g3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2?!$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ b5! 17 a3 a5 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}ed5$ (19 $\mathbb{Q}f5?!$) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xd5?!$ (21 exd5) 21... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ 23 f4 exf4 24 gx f4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ though Black could equalize with his queenside counterplay in Rantanen-Mäki, Helsinki 1990.

d) There is also the very surprising retreat – even more surprising than Black's previous move: 12 $\mathbb{Q}b1?!$ with the idea of setting up a bind with c4. After 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 b3, the following possibilities are most critical:

d1) 13... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}e2$ and now if Black allows White to create the bind with c4, he is likely to suffer a little bit, as in Zelčić-Kožul, Zadar 1995: 14... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 15 c4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d5$. The line was later improved by an active counterplay idea: 14... $\mathbb{B}c8!$ 15 c4 b5! 16 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ (16 cx b5 $\mathbb{W}xe4$; 16 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ bxc4 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ =) 16...bxc4 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dx e5 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ = Zelčić-Gabriel, Makarska 1996.

d2) The tempting but unclear pawn sacrifice 13...d5? has some practical value even though at this moment it doesn't look perfectly correct: 14 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ and after

16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ Black's compensation is not quite convincing, Eismont-Aseev, Russian Cht 1995. In spite of his passive pieces, White's solid pawn-formation makes attacking difficult. The other possibility is 16... $\mathbb{B}d8$ 17 c4 (17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}cb4?!$ is unclear, but after 17 $\mathbb{W}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ White seems to have chances to freeze Black's activity) 17... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}d7?!$ Galkin-Grigoriants, Serpukhov 1999) 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{B}xd8$ 20 cxd5 $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ with an equal position (analysis by Galkin).

12... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13 a5 a6 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$

14 b3 leads to a different position-type, covered in Game 2.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16 c4 (D)



16... $\mathbb{Q}g6!?$

In this position the plan ...e4 and ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ -d3 is much more effective than pushing ...f5. The text-move is also a preparation for ...e4, since it avoids the bishop being hit by the reply $\mathbb{Q}d4$. 16... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 17 b4 e4 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ with the same plan (... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ -d3) is logical. Of course moves like 16... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ and 16... $\mathbb{B}c8$ are sensible as well.

17 ♜d2!?

This move makes Black's standard plan more difficult to realize. It must be noted that Barua himself considers this move suspicious, but very often moves like this have a psychological effect. The normal plan studied from earlier games doesn't work any more. More popular in practice is 17 b4, which Black can answer with the active 17...e4!?:

- a) 18 ♜d4 ♜e5 (18...♜f6 19 ♜b2 ♜e5 20 ♜wb3 ♜c8 21 ♜ac1 ♜e8 Kosashvili-Kotronias, Rishon le Zion 1996) 19 ♜e3 ♜c8 20 ♜c1 ♜e8 with equality.
- b) 18 ♜d2 ♜f6 19 ♜a3 ♜e8 with an unclear position.

17...♜f6!?

17...♜e8, intending ...♜g5 and ...e4, looks better; for example, 18 ♜a3 (18 b4 ♜g5) 18...♜g5 19 b4 e4. In addition, the move 17...♜c8 is very often useful in this type of position. Barua's recommendation is the immediate 17...♜g5. Indeed, the exchange of the dark-squared bishops is almost always favourable for Black.

18 ♜a3! ♜e8 19 ♜e4 ♜xe4 20 ♜xe4 ♜g5

Usually this exchange is in Black's favour, but in this position White's rooks are ideally placed to put pressure on the kingside. 20...♜c5 was an option, but b4 will come later with gain of tempo.

21 ♜xg5 hxg5 22 ♜g4! f5 23 ♜gg3 ♜g6 24 ♜d2 f4

Now the weak light squares leave open paths for the bishop.

25 ♜gb3 ♜b8 26 ♜e2! ♜g7 27 ♜g4 ♜e7 28 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 29 ♜b6 ♜c8 30 ♜d3 ♜f6 31 ♜ab3 ♜f7 32 ♜c3 ♜f5

33 ♜d1 ♜e4 34 ♜g4 ♜f5 35 ♜d1 ♜e4 36 b3 ♜cc7 37 f3 ♜f5 38 ♜e1 ♜h6 39 ♜e4 ♜xe4 40 ♜xe4 ♜g4 41 ♜xg4 ♜g5 42 ♜f2 ♜xg4 43 c5 ♜g5 44 c6 ♜h7 45 b4 ♜cf7 46 ♜f3 ♜c3 47 ♜b3 ♜bc6 48 ♜xc6 ♜h1 49 ♜c3 ♜b1 50 ♜c2 ♜b3 51 b5 ♜xb5 52 ♜b7 ♜c8 53 c7 f3 54 ♜xf3+ ♜xf3+ 55 ♜e2 ♜h3 56 a6 b4 57 ♜b8 ♜h2+ 58 ♜f1 ♜h1+ 59 ♜g2 b3 60 ♜c3 1-0

Conclusion: Even though White won this game, with accurate moves Black should get enough counterplay against the ♜d5 ideas in the line 11...♜b8. Black can play 11...♜a5 if he is happy with a draw, but this move doesn't guarantee a draw.

Boleslavsky 6 ♜e2 e5 7 ♜f3: White plays b3

Game 2
Golod – Aseev
Beersheba – St Petersburg 1998

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 ♜c6 6 ♜e2 e5 7 ♜f3 h6 8 0-0 ♜e7 9 ♜e1 0-0 10 h3 ♜e6 11 ♜f1 ♜b8 12 b3 (D)



This is a very positional plan. White aims to prevent all counterplay and manoeuvre the knight from f3 to e3 via d2 and c4 to control the light squares and to prevent the standard ...d5 break. This plan is probably the toughest nut for Black to crack in the Boleslavsky.

12...a6 13 a4 ♜bd7 14 ♜b2 ♜c7

The other popular move is 14...♜c8.

Now:

a) White can lead the game along an independent route only with 15 ♜d2!? (a direct attempt to interfere with the white plan) 16 ♜c4 ♜xc4 17 ♜xc4 ♜b6 18 ♜f1 ♜xc3!? (18...♜fd8 19 ♜f3 is not a draw, as in Cigan-Grosar, Maribor 1990, because White was slightly better in Spasov-Damljanović, Yugoslav Ch 1996 after 19...d5 20 ♜xd5 ♜bx d5 21 exd5 ♜xc2 22 ♜xe5 ♜xd5 23 ♜f5) 19 ♜d2 ♜fc8 20 ♜e3 ♜xe4!? (20...♜3c5 21 b4 ♜xc2 22 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 23 bxa5 ♜xb2 24 axb6 ♜xb6 25 ♜c1±) 21 ♜xe4 ♜d5 22 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 23 ♜xc3 ♜xc3 24 ♜c4 ♜xc4 25 bxc4, Drozdov-Kožul, Groningen 1994. This position should be a draw with the knight coming to stay on c5.

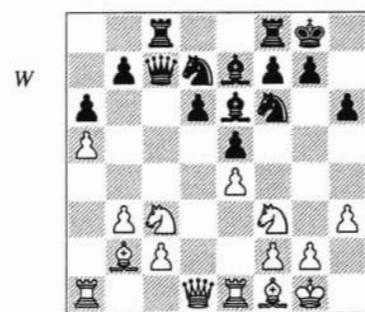
b) After 15 a5 Black can transpose to the main game with 15...♜c7 or try the interesting plan 15...♜e8 16 ♜d2 ♜c5!? 17 b4 (17 ♜a2 ♜xa5 18 ♜c4 ♜c5 19 ♜a3 ♜xc4 20 ♜xc4 ♜c8 21 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 22 ♜xd6 ♜c5 with equality, Apel-Reeh, Bundesliga 1997/8) 17...♜c8 and Black has eliminated the strongpoint c4.

15 a5

Or 15 ♜d2 ♜c6 16 a5 (16 ♜c4!? ♜fe8!? 17 ♜f3 ♜c5, Prada-Rivera, La Coruña 1995, 18 a5 may be a better

attempt to tie Black up) 16...d5 17 exd5 ♜xd5 18 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 19 ♜c4 f6 20 ♜e3 ♜e6 = Sagalchik-Aseev, Kemerovo 1995. Black's pieces stand harmoniously.

15...♜ac8 (D)



16 ♜d2

White is now about to play ♜c4, ♜f3 and ♜e3 to control the vital squares d5 and f5. Rather inoffensive is 16 g3 ♜fd8 17 ♜g2 ♜b8 18 ♜d2 d5 ½-½ Yuldachev-Grosar, Elista OL 1998.

16...d5!

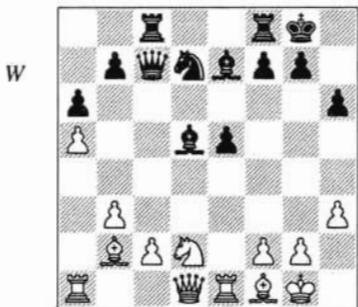
The other way to achieve the ...d5 break, 16...♜fe8 17 ♜c4 ♜c6 18 ♜f3 d5 19 exd5 ♜xd5 20 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 21 ♜g3 ± Apicella-Lutz, Cap d'Agde 1994, is slightly troublesome for Black.

With passive play Black could easily get into a cramped, planless position, as in Galkin-Abashev, Russia Cup (Moscow) 1998: 16...♜b8?! 17 ♜c4 ♜fd8 18 ♜f3 ♜f8 19 ♜ed1 ♜c6 20 ♜d5!? (20 ♜e3) 20...♜h7?! 21 h4 ♜e8 22 ♜ce3 ♜d8 23 g3 g6 24 c4.

17 exd5 ♜xd5 18 ♜xd5

Black had some attacking chances after 18 ♜c4 ♜f4!? 19 ♜xe6 fx6 20 ♜c4 ♜f6 in Payen-Loncar, Cannes 1994.

18... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (D)



19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

After the other natural option, 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$, Aseev made a draw without trouble in Yagupov-Aseev, St Petersburg Chigorin mem 1999 after 19... $\mathbb{Q}c6$? (19... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d6$) looks slightly better for White, Drozdov-Shmuter, Kharkov 1988) 20 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}ce8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$.

19... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ f6 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$!
22 $\mathbb{Q}g4$!?

It seems White has good attacking chances. Still, Black's pieces stand harmoniously behind the protective pawn-chain and White is almost obliged to sacrifice something.

23... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

24 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 26 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ was a suspicious sacrifice in Zagrebely-Aseev, St Petersburg Chigorin mem 1997, which continued 27... $\mathbb{Q}e8$?! 28 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ f5 29 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$, with complications.

24... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 26 $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 30 $\mathbb{W}h5$ f5 31 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 32 $\mathbb{W}h6$! $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

33... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}d1+$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{W}c7+$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}a8$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 39 $\mathbb{W}f6$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}d1+$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 45 $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 47 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 49 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 50 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 51 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 52 $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 53 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}e1+$ 55 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 56 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 57 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 58 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 59 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 60 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 61 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 0-1

Conclusion: Black has good chances to prevent the white knight manoeuvre with activity at the right moment. Even though Aseev seems to have an almost watertight programme for Black, the line is very solid for White, who has hardly said the last word yet.

Boleslavsky 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ and others

Game 3
Sznapiro - L. Schneider
Eksjö 1980

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

This is the old line, which is not very popular nowadays at top level. It is considered rather inoffensive because Black gets good counterplay with the knight on the strong square b4 after forcing White to play a4. From b4 the knight controls the d5-square as well as attacking c2. Quite often Black can carry out the standard ...d5 advance with considerable force. Other possibilities:

a) Rather pointless is 7 $\mathbb{Q}db5$ a6 8 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ b5 9 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$.

b) 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (rarely the choice of a strong player) 7... $bx\mathbb{c}6$ and now:

b1) 8 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{W}g3$ (Black should not panic after this manoeuvre) 9...0-0 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (10... $\mathbb{B}b8$?) 11 f4 (11 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$) 11...exf4 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$! = Lanc-Tischberek, Rostock 1984.

b2) 8 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 9 f4 0-0 (9... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?) 10 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 11 b3 exf4 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ Orlov-Scherbakov, Russian Ch 1994. This is typical: Black often occupies the e5-square without a problem.

7... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 8 0-0 0-0 (D)

W



9 f4

Or:

a) 9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is not so nasty in this variation, because the knight stands poorly at b3 after 9... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$, with a nice Pelikan-type position where Black can try to challenge the d5-knight with ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ or even start the typical Pelikan king-side advance with ...g6 and ...f5.

b) 9 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ a5! (this is an effective plan against almost everything; White is almost obliged to weaken the b4-square, from where the black knight will control d5 and threaten c2) 10 a4

$\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 f4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ transposes to the main line.

c) White's attempts to avoid weakening the b4-square have not been very successful: 9 $\mathbb{A}e3$ a5 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$! (another attempt to avoid a4 is 10 a3 $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 f4 a4 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ exf4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}de5$ but Black is solid and active with the nice knight square, Mangini-Panno, Mar del Plata 1957) 10... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ b5! 12 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (13... $\mathbb{B}b8$?) 14 fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$! $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ Galego-Gulko, Seville 1992) 14 $\mathbb{Q}cxd6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ with active play for the pawn, Westerinen-Hjartarson, Gausdal Z 1986.

9...a5! 10 a4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h1$

After 11 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$?) is a natural move but a big tactical mistake: 12...exf4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$! 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$! (even stronger than the other natural move, 12... $\mathbb{B}c8$) White has not found a very satisfactory way to stop the plan ... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ and ...d5:

a) After 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ Black should play immediately 13...d5 but not 13... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$? 14 f5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c4$.

b) After 13 f5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and 14... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ Black will play ...d5 even more effectively.

c) 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ d5 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}fxd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}g4$ exf4 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ Molvig-Thorsteins, Copenhagen 1989.

d) 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d5 15 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17 c3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 18 fxe5 (Crepan-Pavasović, Portorož 1997) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ is level.

11... $\mathbb{A}e6$

Black could also organize his pieces by means of the moves ...b6, ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, ... $\mathbb{W}c7$, ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, ... $\mathbb{W}b7$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$.

This peaceful but quite playable plan can be started with moves like 11...b6 or 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$. For example, 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ b6 15 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 16 fxe5 dxe5 17 g4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ with a very nice position with Black, Polovodin-Goldin, Russian Cht 1994.

12 f5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

13... $\mathbb{Q}c8$?! avoids the wild positions that we see in the main game, and I have no idea why it is less popular. Black can play ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ on the next move, when $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is not possible. If White protects the c-pawn with 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$, Black should consider 14... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 15 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}a2$. In Brooks-Gabriel, New York 1995, Black was fine after 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (14 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b6 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ h6 17 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ \mp Froeyman-Cherevatenko, Rotterdam 1998) 14... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ d5.

14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

The next move is forced because Black cannot allow the knight to occupy e4.

17...e4 (D)



18 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

White can try 18 c3!?, $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c2$, when after 19... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (19...e3 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ looks better) 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1+22$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ g6 24 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ White is better, Ipavec-Grosar, Slovenian girls Ch 1994.

18... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

What a nice square for the bishop, which is ready to support the a-pawn in its efforts to queen.

20 f6

White needs counterplay on the kingside.

20...gxf6 21 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ f5! 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$

But now he has to be worried about the a-pawn.

24 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ f6 27 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}bh3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 36 h4?

36 g4 a4 37 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ looks good enough for a draw.

36... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 37 g4 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ a4 39 g5 fxg5 40 hxg5 a3 0-1

Conclusion: In this line, White is fighting for equality and Black doesn't usually have to trouble his head with un thematic moves. The ...a5 plan is strong in most cases.

Boleslavsky-type: 6 f3 e5

With the move 6 f3, White aims for positions like in the English Attack. Here again Black has ...a5 ideas, as in the previous game, but White doesn't have to play a4. He can stop the flank attack by playing $\mathbb{Q}b5$, avoiding weakening the b4-square. The white

pawn-formation remains more solid and flexible.

Game 4
Svetushkin – Atalik
Alushta 1999

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♜xd4
 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 ♜c6 6 f3 e5

If someone really dislikes the positions arising in this line, there is an 'advantageous' way to reach a Dragon-type position: 6...d5! 7 ♜xd4 g6. See Chapter 3 for details.

In addition, transposing into the Scheveningen with 6...e6 is not a bad option.

7 ♜b3 (D)

Other moves are just too unnatural. For example:

a) 7 ♜f5 ♜xf5 (7...d5) 8 exf5 d5 has even never been tried.

b) 7 ♜de2 ♜e6 8 ♜e3 ♜a5 (stopping ♜d5) 9 a3 a6 10 g4 ♜d8 11 g5 ♜h5 12 ♜d2 ♜e7! 13 ♜d1 d5 14 ♜xd5 ♜xd2+ 15 ♜xd2 ♜xd5 16 exd5 ♜xd5 and Black is already slightly better, G.Mohr-Lanka, Croatia Cup (Pula) 1993.

B



7...♝e7

Here Black doesn't have to worry about the move 8 ♜g5 because of the dark-squared weaknesses in the white camp.

7...♜e6 8 ♜d5 (better than allowing Black to play ...d5) 8...♜xd5 9 exd5 ♜b8 is rather passive for Black.

8 ♜e3 0-0

The other possibility, 8...♜e6 9 ♜d5 ♜xd5 10 exd5 ♜b4 11 c4 a5, is playable and rather solid, but the weakness of the light squares might count later after long manoeuvring. Here is a logical example: 12 ♜d2 b6 13 ♜e2 0-0 14 0-0 ♜a6 15 ♜ae1 ♜d7 16 ♜d3 ♜ac5 17 ♜c2 ♜h4 18 g3 ♜f6 19 ♜c1 g6 20 ♜e2 ♜g7 21 ♜c3 f5 Seeman-Rötsagov, Helsinki 1996.

9 ♜d2 a5 10 ♜b5

Now White is not forced to weaken the b4-square. As we saw in the previous chapter, Black was very happy to occupy b4 with the knight so Black is just fine after 10 a4?! ♜b4.

10...♜a7

This move has been popular in the last two years. The older line, 10...♜e6, is safe and by no means worse:

a) 11 a3 invites 11...d5!?

b) After the risky 11 0-0-0 the move 11...♜b4?! looks interesting; for example, 12 a3 ♜c7 13 ♜b1 d5 14 axb4 d4 with promising counterplay.

c) 11 ♜d5 ♜xd5 12 exd5 ♜a7 (12...♜b8 13 a4 ♜bd7 is playable but slightly passive) 13 ♜e2 a4 14 ♜c1 ♜c8 15 c4?! (15 0-0 is a more accurate move, but even then the same idea with 15...♜c7 16 c4 b5! looks good) 15...b5! 16 ♜d3 bxc4 17 ♜b4 ♜a5 18 0-0 ♜d8! (activating the passive bishop in an instructive way) 19 a3 ♜b6 Malinin-Golovin, Voronezh 1991.

d) 11 $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}e2$ (12 $\mathbb{A}d3$!?) 12... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (13 a3 is similar to the main line) 13... $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 14 exd5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 c4 a4 16 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ b5! (in this line, we have several examples where Black manages to realize this plan of undermining the d5-pawn) 17 0-0 (after 17 cxb5 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ the dark squares are terribly weak) 17...bxc4 18 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ and Black is fine, Garcia Panizo-Ubilava, Spanish Cht 1993.

e) 11 0-0 (the most natural move) 11... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 12 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (if he is happy with a draw, Black can also play 12... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ a4?! 14 $\mathbb{A}b6$?! {tempting, but White should play 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ } 14... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ d5 $\bar{\tau}$ Salmensuu-Yrjölä, Jyväskylä 1999) 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (13 $\mathbb{H}ad1$ should be compared with the main line) 13... $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 14 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15 c4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 16 $\mathbb{H}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{H}fd1$ b6 Salmensuu-Lugovoi, Jyväskylä 1999, when it is not easy for White to benefit from the light squares.

11 $\mathbb{A}e2$

Or:

a) 11 $\mathbb{A}a4$?! $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{A}xa7$ $\mathbb{H}xa7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{H}a8$ 14 0-0-0 $\mathbb{W}b8$ 15 $\mathbb{A}b5$ $\mathbb{H}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ d5! 17 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ a4 18 $\mathbb{A}xa4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 19 exd5 $\mathbb{A}d8$ was a brave, complicated but not too successful attempt from White in Anand-Kramnik, Monaco Amber blindfold 1999.

b) 11 $\mathbb{A}d3$ has been recommended; then:

b1) 11... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 a3 a4 (in Ivanchuk-Khalifman, Elista 1998, Black quickly got into a lifeless position after 12... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 13 $\mathbb{H}d1$ h6 14 0-0) 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}le2$ is slightly better for White because of the weakness of the a4-pawn. Even 14...d5 doesn't

solve this problem completely: 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 19 0-0 $\mathbb{H}fd8$ \pm Lastin-Zontakh, Yugoslav Cht 1999.

b2) Black can continue with the same plan, viz. activating the knight via c8-b6. 11... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 13 a3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ is in accordance with the standard plan, but it has not yet been tested in practice. A natural continuation is 14 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 15 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{H}fe1$ $\mathbb{A}c8$, when White may still have a small plus.

11... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{H}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (D)



W

13 $\mathbb{A}b5$

13 $\mathbb{W}c1$?! $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}f2$ a4 (16...b5 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$) 17 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ a3 18 b3 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}5a4$ (White could consider 19 $\mathbb{W}d2$ dx5 20 bxc4) 19... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 20 $\mathbb{H}d3$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ doesn't look dangerous for Black, even though White won in Conquest-Sorin, French Cht 1999.

13... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$

14... $\mathbb{Q}c4$?! 15 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 16 $\mathbb{A}b6$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ gives Black compensation according to Atalik.

15 $\mathbb{W}e2$ a4! 16 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ a3 17 b3 $\mathbb{W}c7$

The queenside pawn-formation guarantees counterplay for Black.

18 ♜d5 ♜xd5 19 ♜xd7
 19 exd5?! ♜c3+.
 19...♜xd7 20 ♜xd5 ♜f6 21 ♜d3
 21 ♜b5 ♜a5.
 21...♜fc8

Possible is 21...♜ac8?! 22 c3 ♜fd8
 23 ♜d1.

22 c3 ♜a5 23 b4?!

Better is 23 ♜d2 d5 24 exd5 e4 25
 b4 ♜b5 26 ♜d4 exf3 27 gxf3 ♜d6
 with good compensation.

23...♜b5 24 ♜g5 ♜a6

24...♜xe4 25 ♜xe7 ♜xc3 looks
 promising.

25 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 26 0-0?

26 ♜d2 h6 27 h4 ♜c4 28 ♜e2 =.

26...♜g5 27 ♜b3 h6 28 ♜d1 ♜ac6

† 29 f4 ♜xf4?!

29...exf4! 30 ♜d4 ♜b6 31 ♜ff3
 ♜f6 –.

30 ♜f3 ♜b6+ 31 ♜h1 ♜c7 32 g3
 ♜g5 33 h4?

33 ♜a5 ♜a6 34 ♜d5 †.

33...♜f6 34 ♜c1 ♜c4 35 b5 ♜d7

36 ♜d2 ♜b4 37 cxb4 ♜h3+ 38 ♜g1
 ♜xc1+ 39 ♜f1 ♜d8 40 ♜f2 0-1

Conclusion: White has ‘found’ this line only very recently and the theory is developing rapidly. White has some chances for a slight advantage, but most lines lead to an unclear positional fight. In practice, White has done quite well. The 10th move choices for Black have about equal merit. In fact, both can transpose to note ‘b’ to White’s 11th move, where an equalizer is needed.

Boleslavsky-type: 6 f4 e5

This line is surprisingly unpopular although it is very ambitious and offers

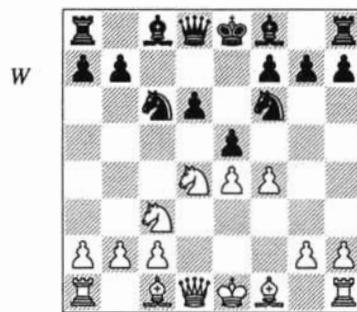
good chances to avoid the best-known theory. Perhaps some white players don’t like the fact that Black has the option of transposing to a very unclear Dragon line (a Levenfish) with 6...g6.

In this line, the position-type is a little different from the standard Boleslavsky since White has already played f4 and develops his king’s bishop to a more active square (c4 or d3). Usually Black wants to punish White for the early f4 and the position becomes rather tactical, and of a unique nature.

Game 5

Pyhälä – Manninen
Finnish Ch 1993

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♜xd4
 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 ♜c6 6 f4 e5 (D)



7 ♜f3

7 ♜b3 can transpose to the 6 ♜e2 e5 7 ♜b3 line, while 7 ♜xc6 bxc6 8 fxе5 (8 ♜c4 ♜e7 9 0-0 ♜e6 10 ♜e2 ♜xc4 11 ♜xc4 ♜b6+ 12 ♜h1 0-0 = Mrva-Epishin, Cappelle la Grande 1997) 8...♜g4! 9 ♜e2 (9 exd6?! ♜xd6 is too brave) 9...♜xe5 10 0-0 ♜e7 gives Black a very solid position-type familiar from the line 6 ♜e2 e5 7 ♜xc6.

7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Dlugy has successfully tried 7... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ a couple of times, which shows how many unexplored possibilities exist in this variation.

8 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ is less ambitious but playable:

a) ...0-0 9 0-0 exf4 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ (10 $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ d5 =) 10... $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{Q}xb2$ leads to complications after 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ or 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

b) 8... $\mathbb{Q}b6!$? is the most testing: 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (10 f5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ d5! 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 13 exf5 e4 Louis-Veingold, Andorra 1994) 10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with a roughly equal position. In both examples from this position Black got soon good counterplay with the ...d5 break:

b1) 12 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ d5!. Now Cabrilo-Am.Rodriguez, Pančevo 1987 continued 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (14 exd5 e4! 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ guarantees a strong attack according to Rodriguez) 14... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ dxе4 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ with a slight advantage for Black.

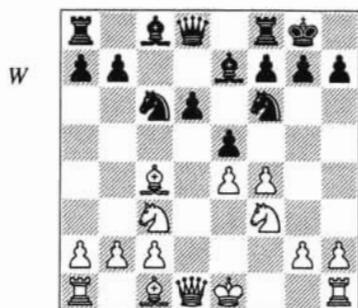
b2) 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 13 f5 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ d5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 16 h3 $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ with a strong attack, Sznapiro-Hort, Lucerne OL 1982.

b3) 12 0-0 is apparently White's best, when Black can play 12...exf4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$, for example, but 13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and exchanging on f3 is hardly a good idea, because it strengthens the e4-pawn and White can sometimes use the g-file.

8...0-0 (D)

8... $\mathbb{Q}b6!$? has been successful in some games, but it is hardly any better than in note 'a' to White's 9th move.

After 9 f5 0-0 we end up at the same position, but 9 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ is more logical.



9 0-0

White has two main alternatives:

a) 9 f5 (this calls for vigorous action by Black) 9... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (9... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ and 9... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ are playable, while the old 9... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ seems too slow) 10 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (the white bishop takes the strongpoint d5 from the knight while the black queen disrupts White's development) 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$) 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$) 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ Kupreichik-Lucko, Belarus Ch 1997. This position is hard to assess, but White can hardly feel comfortable with the king in the centre. On the other hand, he still has d5 under control and the option of advancing the g-pawn.

b) 9 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ a5! 10 0-0 (10 a4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$) 10...a4 11 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$? 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (12 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ a3 gives Black nice compensation) 12... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 14 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 f5 f6 with equality (according to Spasov), Delchev-V.Spasov, Bulgarian Ch 1996.

9...exf4

The thematic $9 \ldots \mathbb{A}e6!?$ $10 \mathbb{B}b3$ $b5!?$ $11 \mathbb{W}d3!$ $b4$ $12 \mathbb{Q}d5 \mathbb{E}c8$ doesn't equalize completely, Yakovich-Oll, St Petersburg 1993.

10 $\mathbb{B}b3$

With this move, White protects the bishop as well as the b2-pawn. It is surprising how unwilling White has been to sacrifice the 'poisoned' pawn, viz. $10 \mathbb{A}xf4$ and now:

a) Moves such as $10 \ldots \mathbb{Q}a5$ and $10 \ldots \mathbb{A}e6$ are more or less playable, but they involve some kind of concession.

b) Instead of taking the pawn, a typical bishop manoeuvre in the corresponding Najdorf variation was shown in Salmensuu-Atalik, Groningen 1999: $10 \ldots \mathbb{Q}g4$ $11 \mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}h5$ $12 \mathbb{E}a1 \mathbb{Q}g6$ $13 \mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{E}e8$ $14 \mathbb{Q}b3$ $a6$ $15 \mathbb{Q}d4 \mathbb{Q}a5$ $16 \mathbb{Q}f5!?$ ($16 \mathbb{Q}d5!?$) $16 \ldots \mathbb{Q}xb3$ $17 axb3 \mathbb{Q}xe4!$ $18 \mathbb{Q}h6+ gxh6$ $19 \mathbb{E}xe4!?$ and White could generate complications that were eventually enough for a draw, but clearly the opening phase was nothing special for him. This implies that $10 \ldots \mathbb{Q}g4$ may be a good move.

c) $10 \ldots \mathbb{W}b6+$ $11 \mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{W}xb2$ (in the only example of this line in my database Black played $11 \ldots \mathbb{W}c5$, which is not a test of White's play: $12 \mathbb{Q}d5 \mathbb{Q}g4$ $13 \mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}ge5$ $14 \mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}g4$ N.Høiberg-Demina, Debrecen wom Echt 1992) $12 \mathbb{Q}d5 \mathbb{Q}xd5$ ($12 \ldots \mathbb{Q}xe4? 13 \mathbb{W}e2 \mathbb{Q}f5$ $14 \mathbb{E}ab1 \mathbb{W}a3$ $15 \mathbb{Q}d3 \pm$) $13 exd5$ and now Black has the following possibilities, none of which is completely satisfactory:

c1) $13 \ldots \mathbb{Q}e5!?$ $14 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ $dxe5$ $15 d6 \mathbb{Q}f6$ $16 d7 e4$ ($16 \ldots \mathbb{W}c3$ $17 \mathbb{Q}xf7+$) $17 \mathbb{E}b1 \mathbb{W}c3$ $18 \mathbb{Q}xf7+!$ and White triumphs.

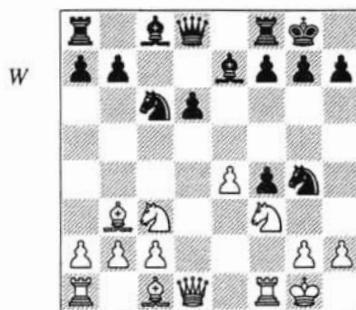
c2) $13 \ldots \mathbb{Q}a5$ $14 \mathbb{Q}d3$ could be tried but the knight is not well placed on a5.

c3) Possibly Black should play $13 \ldots \mathbb{W}c3$, as recommended by Kupreichik, but after $14 \mathbb{W}e2 \mathbb{Q}a5$ $15 \mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{W}c7$ the compensation is obvious since some black pieces will not participate in the game for a while.

c4) Rötšagov's idea $13 \ldots \mathbb{W}b4!?$ $14 \mathbb{W}e2 \mathbb{Q}a5$ $15 \mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{Q}f6$ $16 \mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}xg5$ $17 \mathbb{Q}xg5$ is slightly better for White.

10... $\mathbb{Q}g4!?$ (D)

This is the most critical move. For a tame player, the same options as mentioned in the previous note are available, with $10 \ldots \mathbb{Q}g4$ being a safe one. Another example: $10 \ldots \mathbb{Q}a5$ $11 \mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $12 axb3 \mathbb{Q}e6$ ($12 \ldots \mathbb{E}e8$ $13 \mathbb{W}d4$ $b6$ $14 \mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{Q}b7$) = Sulipa-Kaplun, Yalta 1995) $13 \mathbb{Q}d4$ $a6$ $14 \mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ $15 \mathbb{W}d3 \mathbb{W}b6+$ $16 \mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{E}ad8$ with equality, Lahtinen-Mäki, Finnish Ch 1990.



11 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$

After $11 \mathbb{Q}d5$, $11 \ldots \mathbb{Q}f6$ $12 c3 \mathbb{Q}e5$ is equal as Black secures the e5-square as compensation for the d5-square, while Black can even try the brave $11 \ldots g5!?$ or $12 \ldots g5!?$. Now there follows a series of forced moves.

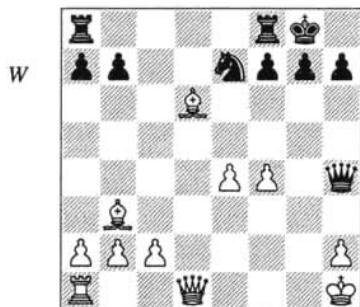
11... $\mathbb{W}b6+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 13 $\mathbb{K}xf2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$

White has enough compensation for the sacrificed exchange but nothing more.

15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16 $gx f3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 19 $f4$

The position is complicated but even the logical 19 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8?$! 20 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ doesn't favour White: 21 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 24 $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xh4+$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$.

19... $\mathbb{W}h4$ (D)



20 $\mathbb{W}e1!$ $\mathbb{W}xe1+$ 21 $\mathbb{K}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$

One might think that in the ending Black can start to play for a win but the two bishops seem to secure enough counter-chances for 'Finland's Tal', who at this point was certainly playing for a win.

22 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23 $e5$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d1$

24 $\mathbb{Q}g1!$? stops Black's attempt to free himself, but after 24... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 26 $b4$ $b5!$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ Black is better.

24... $g5!$? 25 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $f6$ 26 $c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27 $c5$ $fxe5$ 28 $fxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{K}xe8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e1+ \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

Conclusion: This line often leads to quite obscure tactical play. As Black, I would be worried only about the pawn sacrifice (10 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$), which is fortunately condemned by most theory books, so nobody has the courage to try it. The bishop manoeuvre demonstrated by Atalik may be a solid option. Black has many rather unexplored early alternatives.

Boleslavsky-type: 6 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $e5$

Here, the basic difference from the standard Boleslavsky is that White plays the bishop to b3. White has more control over the d5-square but he must often concede the bishop-pair or else Black is able to exploit the c4-square. Black also has the more active but riskier possibility 6... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, introduced in Chapter 8.

Game 6
Eismont – R. Scherbakov
Cappelle la Grande 1996

1 $e4$ $c5$ 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $d6$ 4 $d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $e5$ (D)



7 ♜f3

The alternatives are not critical:

- a) After 7 ♜de2?! ♜e7 8 g3 there is the surprising but thematic strike 8...♜xe4! 9 ♜xe4 d5.

b) 7 ♜b3 and now:

- b1) 7...♜e7 8 f3 transposes to the f3 line (Game 4) and 8 ♜e2 to Game 3.

- b2) 7...♜e6, with ...d5 coming next, is a good chance to equalize.

7...♜e7 8 ♜c4 0-0 9 0-0 ♜e6

This a typical situation where Black doesn't have to worry about the exchange on e6, which is only correct when White quickly gets pressure on the e6-pawn.

Another method, 9...♜a5 10 ♜b3 h6 11 ♜e2 a6 12 ♜fd1 ♜xb3 13 axb3 ♜d7, is also a rather solid way to develop the pieces though the bishop-pair is not a big factor in these positions as long as White doesn't allow Black to open the position with ...d5 or in some cases with ...f5. White usually manoeuvres the f3-knight towards the f5- and d5-squares.

10 ♜b3 ♜a5 11 ♜e2 ♜c8

The knight comes to c4, where it attacks the bishop and the b2-pawn, and is ready to control d5 from b6. It was also a good time to move the queen away from the d-file.

The other line, 11...h6 12 ♜fd1 ♜xb3 13 axb3 ♜b8, seeking to control d5, has an equally good reputation; for example, 14 ♜d2 ♜c8 15 ♜f1 a6 16 f3 b5 17 ♜f2 b4 18 ♜a4 ♜b5! Har-Zvi - Dorfman, Barcelona ECC 1993

12 ♜g5

12 ♜fd1 ♜c4 13 ♜c1 looks passive but the c4-knight must be supported. Black has tried two moves:

a) 13...h6 (stopping ♜g5) 14 ♜h4! ♜c5 15 ♜f3!! was a good example of Tal's ability to do magic apparently from nothing. This time the idea seems perfectly correct: 15...♜g4?!(15...d5!?) 16 ♜g3 ♜xd1 17 ♜f5 ♜g4 18 ♜xe7+ ♜h7 19 ♜h4 ♜b6 20 ♜xh6 gxh6 21 ♜xf6 ♜d7 22 ♜h4 ♜e6 23 ♜cd5 ♜ae8 24 ♜d1 ♜a5 25 ♜f6+ ♜xf6 26 ♜xf6 d5 27 exd5 1-0 Tal-Beliavsky, Aker Brygge 1989.

b) 13...a6!?(deciding to support the knight) 14 ♜g5 b5 15 a4! (15 ♜xe6 fx6 16 a4 ♜a5! 17 axb5 ♜xb3 18 cxb3 axb5 19 ♜xa8 ♜xa8=) 15...♜g4 16 ♜f3! (after 16 f3?!) ♜d7 17 axb5 ♜c5+ 18 ♜h1 axb5, the g5-knight is poorly placed) 16...b4 17 ♜d5 (17 ♜xc4!?) 17...♜xd5 18 ♜xd5 ♜b6 19 ♜d1 was unclear in Sherzer-Sakaev, Budapest ECC 1996. Black should now play 19...a5 20 ♜e3 ♜c7.

Less dangerous is 12 ♜ad1 ♜xb3 13 axb3 h6 =.

12...♜c4 13 ♜ab1 ♜b8

The black knight is trapped after 13...♜xb2? 14 ♜d5.

14 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 15 ♜d3 b5 16 ♜d5 ♜d8!

Black can also ignore the d5 strong-point and attack it later.

17 ♜d2 ♜a5 18 c3 ♜xb3 19 axb3 a5!

Preventing b4, fixing the a6-pawn.

20 ♜bd1 ♜b7 21 b4 axb4 22 ♜xb4 ♜c5 23 ♜a1 ♜b6 24 ♜h1 g6 25 ♜a6 ♜c6 26 ♜b4 ♜c5 27 ♜a6 ♜c6 28 ♜b4 ♜c5 ½-½

Conclusion: The Boleslavsky approach is a rather safe but not very active way to counter 6 ♜e3. There are several ways to strive for equality.

3 The Dragon Position-Type

Strategic Introduction to the Dragon Position- Type

The Dragon position-type introduced in this book will arise after the moves 6 g3 g6. This is a regular choice for a Classical player since there is not much choice after 6 g3. The Boleslavsky-style 6...e5 doesn't look very good when the bishop on g2 already controls the d5-square.



In this Dragon position, reached after 7 $\mathbb{B}g2\ \mathbb{B}g7$, the g7-bishop is strong, while the g2-bishop is blocked by its own pawn. One might think that this is worse for White than the normal Dragon lines but things are not so clear. The g2-bishop has some long-distance effect on the long diagonal since White always has the e5 push at his disposal. Moreover, the e4-pawn is

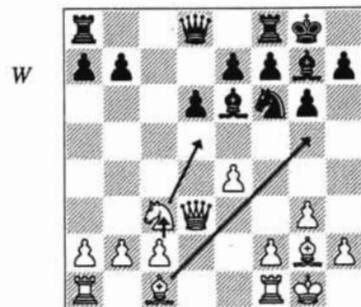
well protected. On the other hand, White's attacking options are minimal. He usually attempts to build some kind of positional grip on the queen-side or with the knight on d5. Therefore, the line has a solid but somewhat passive reputation.

We also have some other recommendations in this book to reach Dragon-style positions in other lines, although we avoid the main theoretical lines of the Dragon. In the section 'Sozin with ... $\mathbb{B}b6$ ' we see several cases where fianchettoing the bishop makes sense. Learning the general principles of the Dragon is really useful for a Classical player.

Typical Methods for White

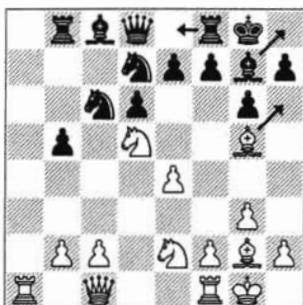
1. Play $\mathbb{N}d5$, $c3$ and $\mathbb{B}g5$

The idea is to create pressure against e7 and to neutralize the pressure of the g7-bishop and the rook on the c-file.



2. Exchange of the dark-squared bishop

B



Here White threatens $\mathbb{Q}h6$ to exchange the bishops, which Black can and should neutralize with ... $\mathbb{B}e8$. The g7-bishop puts strong pressure on the long diagonal and exchanges would expose Black's king position a little bit.

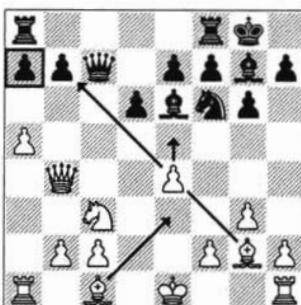
3. Advance on the queenside with a4-a5 and pressurize b7

Sometimes White is able to push e4-e5 advantageously. See the main line of Game 7 and the next position.

4. Push e4-e5 at a suitable moment

In the following diagram, White continued 12 e5!? $dxe5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}ab8$ 15 a6 to attack the a7-pawn with $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and to make a very strong passed pawn but things were not so clear following 15... $\mathbb{Q}c8$! 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{B}fxc8$ 17 0-0 e6 18 $\mathbb{Q}a5$!. After 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?! 19 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{B}xc2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ White's a-pawn decided the game, but 18...e4! is more logical. The additional benefit of the operation is that Black's strong g7-bishop is out of play for a while.

W



Popović – Wirthensohn
Mitropa Cup (Brno) 1991

Later, in the Sozin section, we will see the push with a completely different motif:

W



Here 9 e5!? is most popular. White wants to break up Black's pawns and create a weakness on e7. The problem is that after 9... $dxe5$ 10 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d4$!? White cannot easily regain the pawn.

Typical Methods for Black

1. Advance on the queenside with ...b5-b4

The main idea is to emphasize the power of the g7-bishop.

B



Yakovich – Lerner
Kharkov 1985

Black continued in a typical Dragon way: 13...b5! 14 $\mathbb{E}e1$ a5 15 c3 b4. Also, see Black's plans in Game 8.

2. Activate pieces and drive away the knight on d5 with ...e6

Although the d6-pawn is weakened by this, it is rarely a harmful weakness and Black may be able to push ...d5 later.

B



Sivokho – Sakaev
St Petersburg 1996

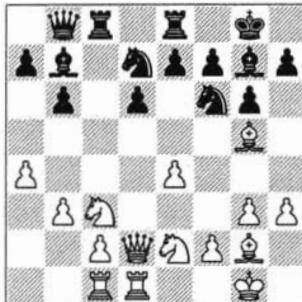
Black got an active position with 14...e6 15 $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$. The same idea is

seen many times in the notes to Game 8.

3. The central advance with ...e6 and ...d5

Or even better, first put pressure on the e4-pawn to force the move f3, which buries the g2-bishop. After this, the central strike ...d5 might be very powerful.

B



Mestel – Kudrin
Hastings 1983/4

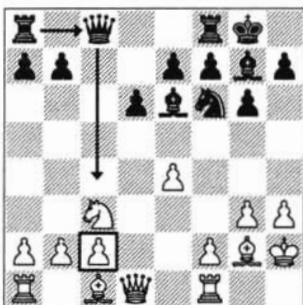
Black had manoeuvred his knight to d7 via e5. Now he got a fine position after 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{W}a8!$ 19 f3.

4. Play on the c-file

The c2-pawn is often a weakness in White's camp. If White has played c3, pushing ...b5-b4 may open the c-file for the black major pieces.

In the following diagram, Black played 12... $\mathbb{W}c4!$ 13 a4 $\mathbb{E}ac8$ to put pressure on the c-file and to stop the move $\mathbb{Q}d5$. After 14 a5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{E}a3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ (17 bxc3 looks awkward) 17... $\mathbb{W}xa5$ White's compensation for the pawn was inadequate.

B

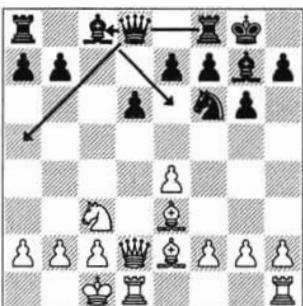


Makarychev – Svidler
Russian Ch 1996

5. Develop the pieces harmoniously with ... $\mathbb{A}e6$, ... $\mathbb{W}a5$ and ... $\mathbb{E}fc8$

This increases the pressure against White's queenside.

B



Holmsten – Makarov
Elista OL 1998

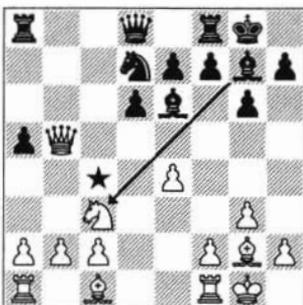
The game continued 10... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11
 $\mathbb{A}h6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12 a3 $\mathbb{E}fc8$ and Black could support ...b5 with ... $\mathbb{E}ab8$.

6. Exchange the g7-bishop for the c3-knight

The aim is to compromise White's pawn-structure, but this is often a

double-edged idea. White's chances to open the position for his bishops, especially the dark-squared one, should be evaluated carefully.

B



In this position, 13... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14 $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ is good since there is the nice square c4 for Black's pieces, the white pawns are weak, White doesn't get much play against the black king and most importantly, White's dark-squared bishop isn't functioning.

Dragon-type: 6 g3 g6 7 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

Black takes on d4 at the first possible moment, so as to gain a tempo on the queen. White can avoid this line by re-treating his knight on the 7th move, which is discussed in Game 8.

Game 7
Tisdall – Petursson
Gausdal 1987

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 g3 g6

There is no recommendable alternative to this Dragon move, unless

Black is ready to play the Scheveningen (6... $\mathbb{Q}g4$). The line 6... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 7 f3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ has proved unsuccessful in practice.

7 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

It may be possible to play 7... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}de2$) 8... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 9 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2!$ 13 0-0-0+ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$, as in Adams-Dreev, Linares 1997, with compensation for the exchange, but few players want to take the risk, as the exchange of knights is thought safer.

8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ (D)



9 0-0

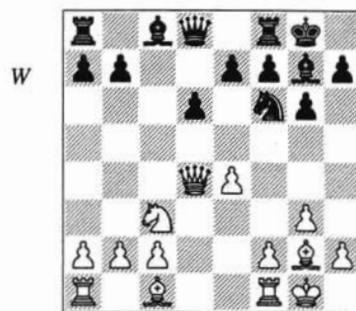
There are several attempts to benefit from a delay in castling:

a) 9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 13 b3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (in a solid position there is no point risking 13... $\mathbb{Q}h3$?! 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$) 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 1/2-1/2 Terentiev-Shirov, Latvia 1990.

b) 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is almost the same as line 'a' after 11 $\mathbb{Q}d4$, but 11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$?! $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 0-0 e6 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ b5 gave Black nice compensation for the pawn in Ivanchuk-Kasparov, Moscow OL 1994.

c) 9 a4 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (10 a5 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$! = Marinković-Tiviakov, Čačak 1996) 10... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (10...a5?! 11 a5 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 e5? $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 15 a6 $\mathbb{Q}c8$! 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}fxc8$ 17 0-0 e6 18 $\mathbb{Q}a5$! (Popović-Wirthensohn, Brno 1991) 18...e4 is unclear.

9...0-0 (D)



10 $\mathbb{Q}b4$

There are some important alternatives:

a) 10 h3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ and now:

a1) 11... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ is playable.

a2) 11... $\mathbb{Q}c8$?! 12 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ is an ingenious way to activate the queen. 13 a4 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 14 a5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ was better for Black in Makarychev-Svidler, Russian Ch (Elista) 1995, but 13 f4 is more critical.

a3) 11... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (this is the normal move) 12 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (or 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 c3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ = Inkiov-B.Ivanović, Skopje 1991) 12... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ with very comfortable equality in a typical Dragon-type ending after the queen exchange, Sanz-Mestel, Marbella Z 1982.

b) 10 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 12 c3 $\mathbb{A}e8$. Black is solid even though White has managed to realize his most basic plan. Black can activate his queen, advance the b-pawn and wait for the right time to eliminate the knight. 13 $\mathbb{A}e3$ (or 13 h3 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 15 exd5 e5! 16 $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ \mp Vuličević-Benjamin, New York 1992) 13... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 14 h3 $\mathbb{W}a4!$? 15 $\mathbb{B}fe1$ b5! and White's queenside soon collapsed in Teschner-Tal, Vienna Echt 1957.

c) Perhaps 10 a4 $\mathbb{A}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b4$ is a more accurate move-order to reach the lines considered in the main game, as 11...a5 12 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ (13... $\mathbb{A}xc3$?! 14 bxc3 $\mathbb{W}c7$) 14 $\mathbb{B}d1$ doesn't seem to give as much compensation as the analogous idea in the main line. Instead, 11... $\mathbb{W}c7$ transposes.

10... $\mathbb{W}c7$

When White chooses this move-order, there is a very notable pawn sacrifice alternative: 10...a5 11 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xb7$. Now:

a) 12... $\mathbb{A}c4$ 13 e5 (13 $\mathbb{B}e1$ is also possible) 13... $\mathbb{A}xf1$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$ 15 $\mathbb{A}xa8$ dxe5 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{B}xa8$ 17 a4 was slightly better for White in Nevostruev-Scherbakov, Russia 1998.

b) 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 13 $\mathbb{B}b5$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 exd5 $\mathbb{A}xb2$ \mp) 13... $\mathbb{A}xc3$ 14 bxc3 $\mathbb{W}c7$ is fine for Black according to Kramnik.

11 a4 $\mathbb{A}e6$ 12 a5

Somewhat troublesome for White is 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 13 $\mathbb{B}fc1$ a5! 14 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ h6, Spangenberg-Leko, Buenos Aires tt 1994.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (D)

This position is worth studying, especially as it can be reached by many different move-orders. White has some

W



pressure on the queenside against b7 and a7 but Black has active pieces, a strong bishop on g7, the c4-square and the c-file.

13 $\mathbb{A}e3$

The other moves have not proved successful for White:

a) 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 14 $\mathbb{B}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 exd5 $\mathbb{W}f5$ with active play, Milošević-Petursson, Lugano 1989.

b) 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$?! $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 14 exd5 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{A}xb2$ 17 $\mathbb{A}xe7$ (17 $\mathbb{B}ab1$) 17... $\mathbb{A}xal$ 18 $\mathbb{B}xal$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$ \mp Reinderman-Wojtkiewicz, Wijk aan Zee 1994.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

More risky is 13... $\mathbb{A}xc3$?! 14 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ f6, Popović-Ki.Georgiev, Sarajevo 1985, because White defends his pawns and weak points easily, while Black has to watch out for the breakthrough with e5.

14 h3 $\mathbb{B}ac8$

14... $\mathbb{B}fc8$!?! 15 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ looks accurate. Now things get sharper.

15 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{A}xa7$ $\mathbb{A}xb2$ 18 $\mathbb{B}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19 f4 $\mathbb{W}d8$!

In this complex position, Black is no worse; the two sides' weaknesses counterbalance each other.

20 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 22 e5?!
 $dxe5$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 24 $\mathbb{E}f2$ $exf4$ 25
 $gxf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xe7$
 $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 0-1

Conclusion: In this line, White has plenty of different set-ups and move-orders to confuse his opponent but none of them promises any advantage. The relative activity of Black's pieces compared with their counterparts and the soundness of his pawn-formation usually count.

Dragon-type: White retreats the knight by 6 g3 g6 7 $\mathbb{Q}de2$

With this retreat, White avoids losing a tempo with his queen. Besides, the old strategy books say that the one with more space should avoid exchanges.

Game 8
Jansa – Thorhallsson
Gausdal Eikrem mem 1996

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 g3 g6 7 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ (D)

B



7... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

Another rather new and interesting plan is to develop the queenside quickly by 7...b6 8 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$. Now:

a) 9 b3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 12 0-0 (12 0-0 looks risky, e.g. 12... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e6, Matulović-Miles, Belgrade 1988, when 14 h3 is met by 14... $\mathbb{Q}b4$). Here the most often adopted plan is ...e6, ... $\mathbb{W}c7$, ... $\mathbb{E}fd8$ (and maybe ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$) to prepare ...d5. Soltis-Yurtayev, Moscow GMA 1989 went on 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{E}fd1$ e6 14 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 15 a4 d5!? (15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$) 16 exd5 exd5 17 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19 axb5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ with about an equal position.

b) After 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10 $\mathbb{E}el$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ both sides have tried a wealth of different plans. White can play a4 and $\mathbb{Q}b5$; h3 and $\mathbb{Q}g5$; or b3, $\mathbb{Q}b2$ and $\mathbb{W}d2$ or $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and $\mathbb{Q}cd5$. After castling, Black can prepare ...e6 and ...d5 or pressurize e4 with the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}e5-d7$, ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ or push ...b5 or play solid regrouping moves like ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-c5$. The bishop often returns to b7 to put pressure on the long diagonal. In this example Black activated his pieces in an instructive way: 11 a4 (11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}cd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 a4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 14 $\mathbb{E}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ = Brenke-Lau, Lippstadt 1993) 11...0-0 12 h3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}db5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f1$!?, $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ a6 17 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ e6! 18 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}de5$! 20 $\mathbb{Q}e3$! $\mathbb{Q}d4$! Innala-Pyhälä, Finnish Cht 1994.

8 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 0-0 9 0-0 $\mathbb{E}b8$

This is much more logical than the old 9... $\mathbb{Q}d7$. Black has a clear-cut plan with the 'minority attack' ...b5-b4, which emphasizes the power of the g7-bishop. The rook is taken away

from the long diagonal dominated by the g2-bishop.

10 a4 a6 11 h3

11 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is natural and thematic but has not been very successful in practice: 11...b5 (11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 c3 b5 13 axb5 axb5 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}de5$ is solid enough) 12 axb5 axb5 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (a less ambitious line is 13 c3 b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ exf6 16 cxd4 f5 17 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 1/2-1/2 I.Kopylov-Nesis, corr 1992-4, while 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ e6 17 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ b3! 18 cxb3 $\mathbb{Q}ge5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ gave Black active play in Ivanchuk-Kramnik, Horgen 1995) 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$? 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 17 b4?! (not a convincing exchange sacrifice, though Black was already fine) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xal$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xal$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}df4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 21 f4 $\mathbb{W}b6+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 23 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{E}ec8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ + A.Ivanov-Ernst, Gausdal 1991.

11...b5 12 axb5 axb5 (D)



13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

a) Again 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 c3 (14 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ e6) is not dangerous because of 14...e6! 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}ec2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ b4 + Sivokho-Sakaev, St Petersburg 1996.

b) There is a more ambitious alternative: 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c1$ b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (I prefer 15... $\mathbb{E}e8$ in order to avoid the exchange of the dark-squared bishops) 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2$ e6 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ ± Kudrin-Ki.Georgiev, Wijk aan Zee 1985.

13...b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a2$

15 $\mathbb{W}c1$ e6! (once again this idea gives activity) 16 $\mathbb{Q}df4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}de5$! 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b3!) 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19 c4! $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 20 b3 (Malakhov-Svidler, Russian Ch 1997) and now 20... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ with unclear complications – Svidler.

15...e6 16 $\mathbb{Q}df4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 b3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$

Black can equalize even more convincingly with 18... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}fe2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$, Jansa-Mäki, Pula Echt 1997.

19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}dc8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 25 f4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 28 c4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ c4 30 b4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ c3 33 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7+$ 34 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 37 h4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ h5 41 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 1/2-1/2

Conclusion: Black has an easy plan to follow. He should be prepared to weaken the d6-pawn with the move ...e6 at the right moment to drive the knight away and to activate his pieces.

Some Dragon-like surprise weapons

Transposing to the Dragon is very common in many Classical lines. In

most cases we end up in a theoretical Dragon line, which demands studying the lines from a database or from a Dragon book. Here I would like to introduce two possibilities to transpose to a rather untheoretical type of Dragon. In fact, the arising position-type resembles more closely some lines of the Accelerated Dragon. In the Dragon line 1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ g6 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ White usually continues 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ to avoid these kind of possibilities.

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$!?

7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ g6 (D)

This is Black's idea.

W



8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

This is the most popular move. Other possibilities:

a) 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ and now White can castle either side:

a1) 9 0-0 0-0 10 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 a4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 a5 d5!? (12... $\mathbb{Q}fc8$) 13 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 c3 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ e6 = Barua-Lopushnoi, Linares open 1998.

a2) 9 $\mathbb{W}d2$ 0-0 10 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12 a3 $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 14 f3 $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$

$\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with easy equality, Holmsten-Makarov, Elista OL 1998.

b) 8 e5 dxe5 9 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ (9 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xb5+$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 14 0-0-0+ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}he8$ = Browne-Robatsch, Amsterdam IBM 1972) 9... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10 0-0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with equality, Glek-Maniovani, Liechtenstein 1998.

c) 8 g4!? h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 11 f3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0 13 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ (13...h5!?) 14 h4 $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 15 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ (15... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 16 g5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ ±; 15... $\mathbb{Q}e8$!?) 16 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 21 c3 e5 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dxe5 23 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ and White is a pawn up but the position is hard to win, Emelin-Makarychev, Russian Ch 1995.

8... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d5$

With this move, White aims to punish Black quickly, but it doesn't seem to succeed. On the other hand, more peaceful approaches let Black develop his pieces harmoniously:

a) 9 0-0 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 c4 h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ a5 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ gives Black a nice position, Ibragimov-Makarov, Russia Cup (Omsk) 1996.

b) 9 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 0-0 a6 12 a4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 14 f3 $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ gives Black an active position, Beshukov-Petrov, Russian Ch 1997.

9...0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ (D)

The bishop-pair and open lines for Black's active pieces compensate for the weakness of the d6-pawn.

11 $\mathbb{W}d2$

After 11 0-0-0 f5 12 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

W



16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ a5! Black had a strong attack in Moskvitin-Lopushnoi, St Petersburg Chigorin mem 1997.

11...f5 12 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 13 c3 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14 0-0 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 15 $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ a5 18 a4 $\mathbb{E}e5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{E}g5$

The activity of Black's pieces compensates for the pawn weaknesses, Yu.Hernandez-Demina, Batumi wom Echt 1999.

The only move that has caused problems for Black is the irritating 8 g4!?. More tests are needed with that move. On the whole, the idea makes a solid impression.

A similar idea is applicable against the dangerous 6 f3 too. It is hard to say which move (6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ or 6 f3) is more useful for White here, but after 6 f3 it makes sense to try to use the bishop with $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ or with $\mathbb{Q}c4$. One thing is sure: there is more need to find alternatives to the Boleslavsky-type response (...e5) after 6 f3.

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 f3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$!? 7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ g6

Now:

a) 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c4$!? 0-0 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12 0-0-0

$\mathbb{H}fc8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$, Salmensuu-Mäki, Finnish Ch 1999, 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ =) 11...fxe6 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}c8$! 14 h4 (14 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$? $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$? $\mathbb{Q}c3$) 14... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 b3 $\mathbb{Q}f7$, with the idea of answering h5 with ...g5, is unclear, Nikitin-Lopushnoi, Russian Cht 1997.

b) 8 b3?! $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a6 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$! 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b5 15 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 16 g4 $\mathbb{H}fc8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$! \mp Thorhallsson-D.Gurevich, New York Open 1997.

c) 8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ and now:

c1) 9 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ exf6 11 0-0-0 f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ fxe4 13 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ = Spangenberg-Sorokin, La Plata 1997.

c2) 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ + $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ + $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ (forced) 12 $\mathbb{W}b4$ e6 13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (after 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ a5 14 $\mathbb{W}d2$ h6 15 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 0-0 I would prefer Black, Wallace-Bagaturov, Linares open 1998) 13...a5! 14 $\mathbb{W}b3$ a4 15 $\mathbb{W}b4$ a3 with good counterplay for Black, Kriventsov-Karklins, USA 1999.

c3) 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 $\mathbb{W}b4$ (10 $\mathbb{e}5$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ dx5 =; 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ is playable of course) 10...h6 11 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ a5 (11... $\mathbb{W}b6$!? may be good enough for equality) 12 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (12...a4 13 e5) 13 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{H}b8$ offers Black some attacking prospects for the pawn, Romero-Cifuentes, Wijk aan Zee 1991. However, in the game it soon became desperate after 14 $\mathbb{W}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$? 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$.

Conclusion: These lines look like solid alternatives to the standard Boleslavsky response, though there are not enough examples to say anything definite. In any case, there is no reason to suppose that White can punish Black directly.

4 The Sozin and Velimirović Attacks

Strategic Introduction to the Velimirović

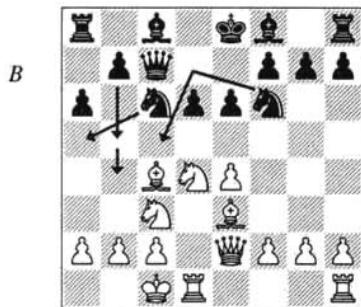
The Velimirović Attack is a subvariation of the Sozin, where after 6 $\mathbb{A}c4$ White develops his queenside with $\mathbb{A}e3$, $\mathbb{W}e2$ and 0-0-0, and strives for an attack against the black king with a pawn-storm on the kingside or with some kind of brutal piece sacrifice in the centre.



Black has two principal strategies. He can quickly develop his kingside, castle and then seek counterplay. The drawback of this strategy is that White then knows exactly where his target lies. When Black has castled, there is no easy way back for the king to the centre, if the king's position becomes too hectic. Of course, the adherents of

this strategy can always claim that the pawn-formation on the kingside is very solid, and not so easy break down. The choice of strategy always remains as a matter of taste, but in this book we concentrate on the other strategy, which is based on quicker counterplay.

When the king stays in the centre, Black can choose a better time to castle, if this ever proves necessary. The time gained can be used to generate counterplay on the queenside.



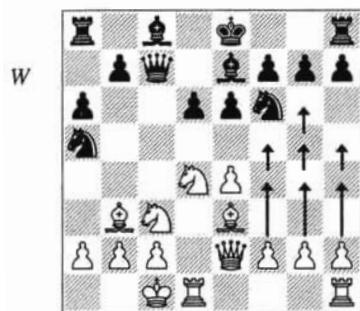
An effective method of counterplay is based on the plan ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$, ... $b5$ and ... $b4$. The subsequent plan depends on White's response, but often moves like ... $\mathbb{B}b8$ and the manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-c5$ are appropriate. The move ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ can be played if there is nothing more useful to do, if the king position in the

centre is becoming vulnerable, or if some tactics are threatened on the e-file. Castling demands even more careful thought. If the continuation of one's own plans demand it, and the white attack doesn't look too threatening, it is a good time to castle. After all, the rooks will then be connected.

Typical Methods for White

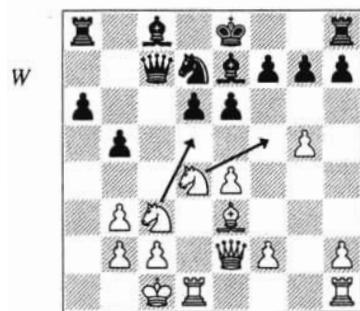
1. Castle queenside and attack on the kingside

White typically plays g4-g5 and f4-f5 or h4-h5.



2. Sacrifice a knight on f5

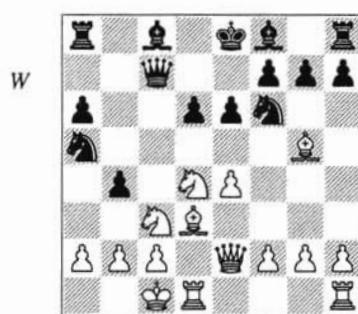
The aim is to open lines for the attack and to secure d5 for the other knight.



This is a theoretical position, where White can sacrifice a piece with 14 $\mathbb{Q}f5!$? $\mathbb{e}xf5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{e}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17 $f6$, obtaining enough compensation.

3. Sacrifice a piece on d5 to open the e-file

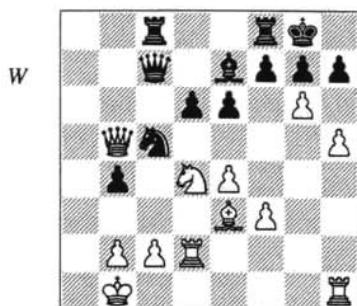
This sometimes happens if Black totally ignores his kingside development.



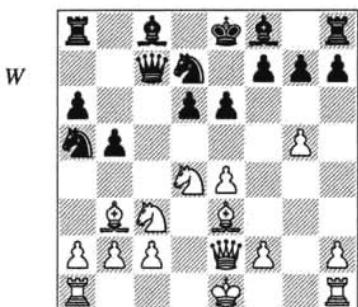
Black has just played 11... $b4$ instead of the safer 11... $\mathbb{A}e7$. White gets definite compensation after 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$? $\mathbb{e}xd5$ 13 $\mathbb{e}xd5+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$. In the resulting position-type, there is no safety anywhere for the black king and it is difficult to neutralize White's initiative.

4. Sacrifice a piece on e6

In the diagram overleaf, Black has forgotten to eliminate the b3-bishop in time and now he will be punished with the sacrifice 13 $\mathbb{A}xe6$ $\mathbb{f}xe6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ (14... $\mathbb{W}b7$? 15 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ gives White three pawns and a decisive attack for the piece) 15 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h5!$ $\mathbb{W}xg7$ 17 $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{A}g8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ with a very strong attack.



However, there are also positions where the sacrifice is more unclear.



In this position, both 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ and 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ are possible, but not even close to lethal. See note 'c' to White's 9th move in Game 9. As compensation, White gets two pawns, the d5-square and some inconvenience to the black king.

5. Break open the black kingside

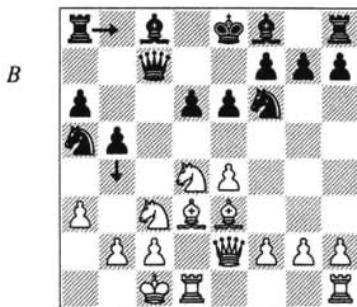
This is achieved by advancing the g- and h-pawns in parallel.

In the following diagram, White wouldn't make even a scratch in the black king position with 24 $gxh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 25 $h6$ $g6$. This is why the only way to continue the attack is 24 $h6!$,

though in this position Black gets good counterplay after 24... $fxg6$ 25 $hxg7$ $\mathbb{E}f7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$.

Typical Methods for Black

1. Strike a balance between queen-side counterplay and securing the black king's defences



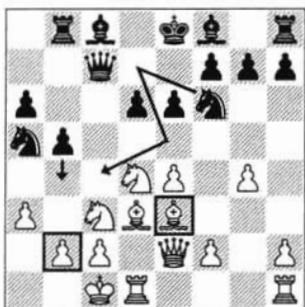
In this position, there is no quick white attack in sight. White's own obstructive bishops stop him opening the position with any piece sacrifice. Black can safely continue his own attack with 11... $\mathbb{E}b8!$ to play ... $b4$ at a suitable moment. It must be noted, however, that playing ... $b4$ too early can sometimes run into $\mathbb{Q}xa6$.

2. Play a knight to the good square

c4

This is often stronger than exchanging the b3-bishop. Sometimes there is even time to manoeuvre both knights towards c4.

B



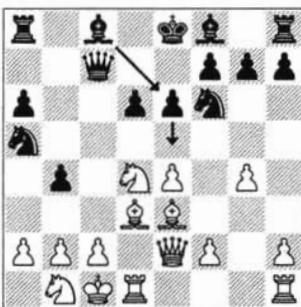
Since the bishop has withdrawn to the inactive square d3, there is time for ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-e5(b6)$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}ec4$ (or ... $\mathbb{Q}bc4$) to threaten White's king position and dark-squared bishop. After that the attack can be continued with ...b4. If Black instead plays the immediate 12... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, White takes on c4 with the bishop and Black's attack will remain solely dependent on his chances on the b-file.

3. Attack in the centre with ...e5 or ...d5

If the white bishop is on d3, ...e5 is often a conceivable move.

In the following diagram, both 12...e5 13 $\mathbb{Q}f5 \mathbb{Q}e6$ and 12... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d5 are good ideas. In the former case the knight can be driven away from f5 with ...g6 and the black king is quite happy in the centre. The latter idea is more risky but also more typical to the Classical Sicilian style.

B



4. If the white knight is on a4, challenge it with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-c5$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

B

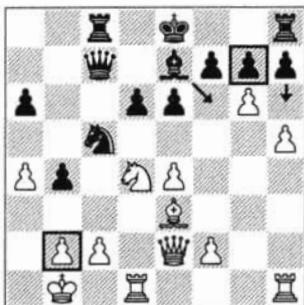


Here, challenging the a4-knight with 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$! is definitely stronger than 16... $\mathbb{Q}b7$. White then faces an unpleasant problem, because 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $dxc5$ is simply bad for him, not least because of the plan ...a5-a4. In addition, Black is immediately threatening 17... $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$. White's best is to give up a pawn with 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ and rely on his own counterplay with g5-g6. Note that taking on e4 is generally very risky.

5. If White plays g6, playing the bishop to f6 is often strong

Here 16... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is the strongest move, both attacking on the long diagonal

B



and defending g7 after the obvious break h5-h6, thus enabling Black to take on g6.

6. Sometimes advancing the a-pawn comes into consideration

B



Zapata – Am. Rodriguez
Cienfuegos Capablanca mem 1997

Here, this was a decisive plan. The advance of the a-pawn is often a good idea if White plays the knight somewhere other than a4 after ...b4.

7. Play on the c-file is typical for most Sicilian lines

Sometimes, this may also be effective in the Velimirović.

W



Wedberg – Yrjölä
Finland – Sweden 1988

White has played his knight to a2, which is generally a worse square than a4. White is already worse, but here he played carelessly 17 $\mathbb{W}e1?$ and was lost after 17... $\mathbb{E}c8!$. 18...e5 is threatened and 18 $\mathbb{H}d2 \mathbb{Q}c5$ doesn't help much.

The Velimirović Attack

Game 9
Kobas – Ivanović
Yugoslav Ch (Novi Sad) 1985

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ a6 8
 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

This move is almost always a firm sign that White wants to play the Velimirović, the most aggressive line against the Classical Sicilian.

8... $\mathbb{W}c7$

Black is ready to create immediate counterplay if White castles queenside, which is now critical. Castling kingside doesn't fit very well with the move 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$. Also, I personally don't like to castle too early as Black, as

White then gets a stationary target for his heavy artillery.

I would like to present as an alternative an interesting surprise weapon underestimated by many theory books. Black can immediately start his queen-side counterplay by 8... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b5 (D), with the following possibilities:

W



a) 10 g4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 13 f5 b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ e5 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}axb3$ 16 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xd3+$ 17 cxd3 g6? 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ and the bishop-pair guarantees Black at least equal chances, Gdanski-Epishin, Warsaw 1990. This line, like the next one, can easily transpose to the main line.

b) 10 0-0-0 b4 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}a4$?) $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 b3 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 13 bxa4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 g4 0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 g5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ + Hainac-Aseev, Dresden 1987) 11... $\mathbb{W}c7$ (11... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 g4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 16 f4 e5! 17 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ exf4 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ = Prié-Kovaliov, Clichy 1991) 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (12...e5!) 13 g4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 g5 0-0 17 f5 $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ and now, instead of 18 fxe6?! (Brunner-Epishin, Maringa 1991), according to Epishin White should play 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ or 18 $\mathbb{Q}2f3$ with chances for both sides.

Note that 18 f6?! $\mathbb{Q}f8$ gives White nothing.

c) 10 a4! b4 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ e5 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 13 cxb3 d5!) 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 13 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ = A.Sokolov-Aseev, USSR Ch (Odessa) 1989.

d) 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 f4 0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}cl$ $\mathbb{W}fd8$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}c4$) and suddenly White got a strong attack in a seemingly level position with 16 e5! dx5 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 18 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 19 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 21 fxg7+ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ in Minasian-Epishin, Minsk 1990. White should now have continued 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ ±.

e) 10 b4! (usually recommended as the best) 10... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ bxc4 gives Black counterplay against e4 and the break with ...d5 can come. If White takes the c-pawn, he has weaknesses on c2, c3, c4 and b4. Now:

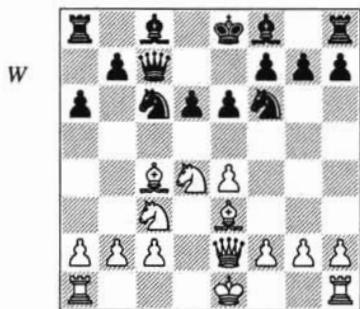
e1) 12 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ (critical of course) 12... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 0-0 (13 f3? d5) 13... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$? d5 15 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}g3$ ± is somewhat unpleasant, but Black has some positional advantages too, de Firmian-Zaltsman, Lone Pine 1997) 14... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (15 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18 f3 d5 =) 15...e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (16... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$?) 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 c4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is unclear, Brodsky-Kovaliov, Bela Crkva 1990.

e2) 12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (considered strong in NCO, which only discusses 13... $\mathbb{Q}c8$? in reply) 13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ (after 14 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d3$ h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ Black has quite acceptable compensation for the pawn in the form of his bishop-pair, active

pieces and superior pawn-structure) 14... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ 0-0 16 f4 h6 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (17 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$! Seitz-Kovaliov, Passau 1995) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 a3 $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Brustkern-Rossmann, Germany 1997/8.

This line has been employed by the strong GMs Epishin and Aseev from time to time as a winning attempt. White can get only a small advantage at best. Many of the lines are very complicated and it is hard to say who is better. The line might be of great practical value for three reasons: it is underestimated, it is not very well known, and, most importantly of all, in the main option (line 'e') Black offers a pawn to take the initiative. This might be poisonous for Velimirović players, who thrive on the initiative themselves. The drawback is that White can very easily by-pass it with the move-order we see in Game 10.

We now return to the position after 8... $\mathbb{W}c7$ (D):



9 0-0-0

If White really wants to keep his bishop on b3, it is better to put it there now to have the option 'c' after 9 $\mathbb{Q}b3$: $\mathbb{Q}a5$:

a) 10 0-0-0 transposes to the note to White's 10th move.

b) The surprising 10 a4!? leads the game along a completely different track: 10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 0-0 0-0 (11... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$?! 12 cxb3 opens the c-file for White) 12 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 15 f4 b5 16 axb5 axb5 17 e5! dxе5 18 $\mathbb{Q}cxb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ and the position was about level in Lukin-Morozevich, Ukrainian Cht 1994.

c) 10 g4! b5 11 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$. Now, among others, there are two slightly suspicious sacrificial possibilities, which give White unclear compensation:

c1) 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxе6 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$! 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$! (14 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 17 fxе3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 a4 b4 19 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 20 0-0-0 $\mp \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Ardeleanu-Wang Lei, Ubeda 1998) 14... $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 20 f5 $\mathbb{Q}de5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}dc7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22 h4 Nijboer-Hellers, Leeuwarden 1994.

c2) 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxе6 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$! (better than 13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$!) 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$! 16 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ gxе6 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ (18 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ \mp) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$) 20 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ fxg5 21 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ \mp Milos-Lima, Brazilian Ch 1995.

c3) 12 a3 (a recommendation of the Kasparov/Nikitin book) 12... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 13 cxb3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ is too passive) 13 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}bc4$ 15 f5 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$! 16 fxе6 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ + 17 cxb3 and now 17...b4 led quickly to a murky position in Velimirović-Ivanović, Yugoslav Ch 1982 but I would be curious about the value of 17...fxе6.

c4) 12 f4 (the most popular move) 12...b4 13 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (safer is 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

14 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d5 16 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}axb3$
 17 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ = Farago-Grabics, Budapest 1997) 13... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and now:

c41) 14 f5?! e5 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+?$! (15 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ fxe6 16 fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ dxc5 18 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is a suggestion of the old Kasparov/Nikitin book which has never been tried in practice) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 17 f6 $\mathbb{W}c4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ is too aggressive, Ardeleanu-Istratescu, Romanian Ch 1996.

c42) 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e5! (this looks risky, but the b3-bishop is about to disappear from the board) 15 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ g6 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ exf4 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 18 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ \mp Gdanski-Istratescu, Manila OL 1992. White's knights are poorly placed.

9... $\mathbb{Q}a5!$

This is more active than the line better known to theory: 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 g4 b5 12 g5 $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ (a common mistake is 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7?$, allowing 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$) 13 axb3 (13 $\mathbb{Q}xb3?$ permits strong counterplay immediately; 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 h4 b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a5 16 f4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ \mp) 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (D).

W



Now White can continue the normal Velimirović plan by advancing his kingside pawns (line 'a') or by sacrificing a piece (line 'b').

a) 14 h4 b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (the a2-square is worse for the knight: 15 $\mathbb{Q}a2?$! a5!, since the critical attempt 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ {16 h5 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ } 16... $\mathbb{W}b8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ {19 $\mathbb{Q}xd6+?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}b5$ 0-0} 19... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ doesn't lead White anywhere) 15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 h5 $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ (safer than 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!?$). Now White has the difficult problem with the knight mentioned earlier in the strategy section. Since exchanging the knights is bad, White has the following options:

a1) The aggressive move 17 g6 leads to crazy complications, which tend to favour Black after 17... $\mathbb{Q}xb3+:$

a11) The craziest of all is the line 18 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ 22 g7 $\mathbb{Q}c8$. Now:

a111) 23 b3?! $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 27 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 28 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 29 g8 \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ $\mathbb{W}xh5$ \dashv de Firmian-D.Gurevich, Chicago 1994.

a112) 23 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (23...b3! may be stronger) 24 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}gd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 27 h6 is harder to assess, N.Rogers-Rao, Philadelphia 1993.

a12) The typical pawn-storm 18 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 19 h6 fxg6 doesn't seem to favour White either:

a121) 20 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+?$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ e5 22 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}c8!$ (22... $\mathbb{W}c6$) 23 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ b3 looks just bad for White.

a122) 20 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ (accurate) 20...e5 21 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}b3!$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (24 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ \mp Brunner-Van der Wiel, Lucerne Wcht 1989) 24... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ dxc5 27 cxb3 c4 \mp Rechlis-Piket, Gausdal jr Wch 1986.

a2) The main line is the more peaceful 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{A}xa4$ 18 $bxa4$ $\mathbb{E}c8!$ (practice has shown this to be better, or at least safer, than the older alternative 18... $\mathbb{W}b7$ but 18... $\mathbb{Q}xa4?$ 19 $g6$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 20 $gxf7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 21 $\mathbb{W}c4$ {21 $h6!?$ }) 21...0-0, Wang Pin-Chiburdanidze, Shanghai wom Ct 1992, is not out of question) 19 $f3$ (19 $g6$ $\mathbb{A}f6!$ 20 $gxf7+$ $\mathbb{W}xf7!?$ 21 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ {21... $\mathbb{E}hd8$ } 22 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}b3!?$, Bellin-Skodvin, Gausdal Troll 1990, and now 23... $d5!$ is strong) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{W}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ {21... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22 $b3$ $e5$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ was also very close to equality in Rötšagov-Veingold, Finnish Cht 1996). Now White has three possibilities, of which the rook moves are risky ways to play for a win and the third one allows Black to force a draw:

a21) 22 $\mathbb{E}h2$ 0-0 23 $g6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 24 $h6$ $fxg6$ 25 $\mathbb{E}dh1$ $\mathbb{E}f7$ 26 $hxg7$ $\mathbb{E}xg7$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ gave Black enough counterplay in Santos-Estremera Panos, Pula Echt 1997.

a22) 22 $\mathbb{E}d2$ 0-0 23 $g6$ (23 $f4!?$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 24 $f5$ $\mathbb{W}a7!?$) 23... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 24 $h6$ $fxg6$ 25 $hxg7$ $\mathbb{E}f7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 27 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $d5!$ 28 $exd5$ $exd5$ 29 $\mathbb{W}a2$ (29 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xb2+!$) 29... $\mathbb{W}b7$ gives Black good play against the white king, Onishchuk-Van der Wiel, Wijk aan Zee 1996.

a23) 22 $g6$ $e5$ (this forces a perpetual check but 22... $fxg6$ 23 $\mathbb{E}h2!$ was less convincing in Hector-Rötšagov, Gothenburg 1997) 23 $gxf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d5+$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}xc2+$ with a draw, Nunn-Estremera Panos, Leon 1997.

b) 14 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $exf5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 16 $exf5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17 $f6$ (D) and now:



b1) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xd5!?$ (this seems to give White considerably more chances than line 'b2') 18 $fxg7$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xg7$ 20 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $h4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ (21... $\mathbb{E}c8!?$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4$) 22 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{E}g6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 25 $\mathbb{W}h5$ with tremendous compensation, Zapata-Leitão, Americana 1997. I wonder how many times this line has occurred because of a memory lapse.

b2) 17... $gxf6$ and then:

b21) 18 $gxf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (18... $\mathbb{Q}xf6!?$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ is also interesting, although three pieces often beat a queen, Hamalainen-Lehto, Finnish Cht 1996) 19 $fxe7!?$ (19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ transposes into line 'b223') 19... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 21 $\mathbb{E}he1$ (Beljajevsky-Radulović, USSR-Yugoslavia (Erevan) 1971) is suspicious after 21... $\mathbb{Q}e6$.

b22) 18 $\mathbb{E}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}g8$. It seems White's initiative is enough for a draw but playing for more is risky. There are many lines where the amount of compensation is hard to evaluate. Typically, Black is theoretically fine, but the practical problems are great. White now has three lines:

b221) 20 $h4!?$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (following 21 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{E}g6$ White's

compensation is less concrete, Ehvest-Tischbierek, Leningrad 1984) 21... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ seems unplayable for White.

b222) 20 $\mathbb{Q}f4?$! $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}h5$ (21 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{B}xg5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $f\times g5$ 23 $h4$ a5!, Hector-Fishbein, Stavanger 1991) 21... $\mathbb{W}a5!$ 22 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (22 $\mathbb{Q}d1?$! $\mathbb{W}a1+23$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 24 $\mathbb{W}h6+$ $\mathbb{B}g7$ 25 $\mathbb{B}xe7$, Kaeser-Polajzer, Baden-Baden 1988, 25... $\mathbb{B}c8!$ →) 22... $\mathbb{Q}e5?$ (22... $\mathbb{W}d8$ repeats) 23 $g\times f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ with 'practical compensation', Silva-Tukmakov, Odessa 1976.

b223) 20 $g\times f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21 $\mathbb{B}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (Black can also take a risk with either 21... $\mathbb{Q}d7?$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ or 21... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 24 c3, Zapata-Becerra Rivelio, Matanzas Capablanca mem 1994, where White's compensation is very real, but not with 21... $\mathbb{B}g6?$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{W}f3)$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4?$ is a risky way to play for a win (White has decided to make a draw in several games with 22 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 24 f4 $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 25 cxd3 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 26 $\mathbb{B}xe2+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27 $\mathbb{B}g5$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 28 h4 =). Now Black has tried:

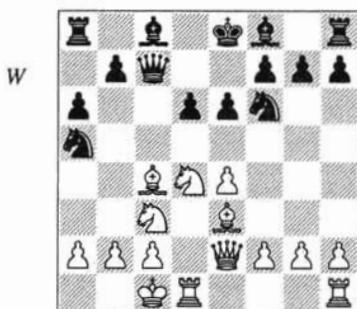
b2231) 22... $\mathbb{B}g6!$? 23 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dxe5 25 $\mathbb{B}xf7$ $\mathbb{B}f6?$ (25... $\mathbb{B}a7$?) 26 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 27 $\mathbb{B}d1$ +- Rogić-Lysenko, Croatian Cht 1994.

b2232) 22... $\mathbb{B}c8$ 23 h3 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 24 $\mathbb{B}h5$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 25 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 27 $\mathbb{B}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ with compensation that is not so easy to neutralize, Seitz-Wells, Regensburg 1996.

Conclusion (to this note): After a careful study of the lines, we may conclude that Black has excellent chances for at least a draw, though in practice the main line, where Black strives for an initiative, has been more favourable.

Still, this line may be a good choice against a stronger player, because White has to take risks to play for a win. There is another good reason to study this line. Black has more options in the normal Sozin (discussed in Game 10), if he doesn't have to worry about the Velimirović with the bishop developed on e7. There are of course many different move-orders to reach this line.

Now we return to 9... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (D):

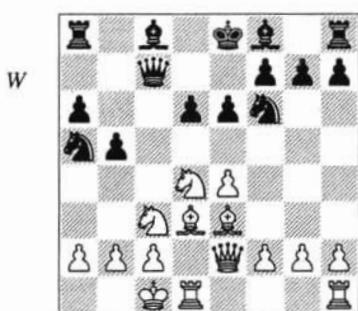


10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Here the bishop is not very well placed with respect to the kingside or central attack but 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3?$ b5 11 g4 (against the slow 11 f3 the most active answer is 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, planning ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and ...b4, and 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 13 axb3 b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is fine for Black) 11...b4 12 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 14 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ gives Black a strong attack after 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ (15 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}b7?$ 16 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 17 bxa4 dxe5 18 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ Hansson-Wahlbom, Swedish Ch 1976) 15...dxc5 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a5 18 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ a4, Zapata-Am.Rodriguez, Cienfuegos Capablanca mem 1997. Otherwise, if White doesn't take on c5, Black threatens the

knight with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ next move. Black has saved the tempo of the move ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ for attack compared with note 'a' to Black's 9th move.

10...b5 (D)



11 a3

Although this move weakens the king position, allowing ...b4 has some drawbacks too:

a) Less critical but quite popular is 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$, with these options:

a1) The solid move 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ usually transposes to the main line after 12 a3 but the independent try 12 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ b4 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ e5! 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 15 axb3 0-0 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a5! 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ gave Black a nice position in A.Sokolov-Popović, Novi Sad 1984.

a2) The riskier 11...b4 allows a piece sacrifice:

a21) 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5$! is certainly a good idea in practice, as it leads to a position-type typical to many Najdorf and some Classical Sicilian lines where White has compensation for the piece. 12...exd5 13 exd5+ and now:

a211) 13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h6$? (17 $\mathbb{Q}f5$! $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ doesn't loosen the

grip) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ — Milu-Nevednichy, Bucharest 1994.

a212) 13... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ with enduring compensation, Milu-Arvinti, Romania 1993.

a22) 12 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e5 14 $\mathbb{Q}f5$?! (14 $\mathbb{Q}4b3$) 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 15 exf5 d5 16 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and Black has a nice pawn-centre, Kiik-Yrjölä, Tallinn 1985.

b) 11 g4 b4 and now:

b1) 12 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and then:

b11) I must warn from my own experiences that the tempting 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?! 13 g5 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ is dangerous after 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (14...b3?!) 15 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ e5? 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$! is even winning for White, Mäki-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1995) 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$.

b12) 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is simplest, with the familiar plan ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$. It is surprising that only one example of this move can be found: 13 b3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ dxc5 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c4 17 bxc4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ e5 is unclear, Kilian-S.Andresen, Bundesliga 1994/5.

b2) 12 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ with two options:

b21) The thematic idea with the central strike similar to some Rauzer lines: 12... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ d5. This looks fairly attractive; for example: 14 f3 dxe4 15 fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (15...g6?!) 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is slightly untypical but interesting, Dunhaupt-Kujala, corr 1991) 16 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}2f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 0-0 21 h4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ looks solid enough, Perović-Kosten, Paris 1988.

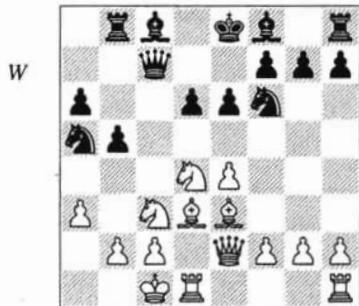
b22) 12...e5 (this move should always be considered seriously in the

Velimirović when White's bishop has gone to d3) 13 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (13...g6?! 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 b3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ gave White some play in Agopov-Veingold, Vantaa 1999) 14 b3 g6 15 g5 (15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ f6 \mp) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17 h4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ = Nunn-Salov, Wijk aan Zee 1992.

11... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (D)

11... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ went out of fashion, perhaps unduly so, after Nunn-Sosonko, Thessaloniki OL 1984: 12 g4 d5 13 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}dxb5$ axb5 (14... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ looks risky) 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4?$ (18... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$! is OK for Black – Nunn) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$.

The text-move is more logical, and gives Black better counter-attacking chances.



12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

The normal plan is 12 g4:

- a) The natural 12... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 13 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ bxc4 15 f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}b7$!?) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$! 18 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$, Ghizdavu-Ghinda, Bucharest 1971, and now White wins on the spot by 19 $\mathbb{Q}a1$! d5 20 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b5$! 16 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 0-0 18

$\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ led to an unclear position with attacking possibilities for both sides in Konguveel-Krokopchuk, Koszalin 1998.

b) The prophylactic 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$! is successful because it is more effective to occupy the c4-square with the knight than to allow its exchange for the bishop. The passive bishop on d3 gives Black time to manoeuvre: 13 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ (even the more natural 13 f4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14 f5 $\mathbb{Q}bc4$ 15 g5 b4 16 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ was fine for Black in Forster-Madl, Portorož 1998) 13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}ec4$ 15 f5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 g5 b4 17 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$ 19 cxb3 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ \mp Reeve-I.Ivanov, Canada 1986. I suspect these lines should not be so bad for White as these examples indicate.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 f4

It is better to try to stop ...b4 though White's game is in any case suspect: 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (Black has a choice of attractive possibilities; e.g., 13...h6 14 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 17 exf5 b4 18 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ Dimitrov-Zviantsev, Barbera del Valles 1996) 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$! (an improvement over 15... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 e5! dx5 18 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ \pm A.Sokolov-Tukmakov, USSR Ch 1984) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ bxc4 17 e5! dx5 18 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 0-0 21 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ \mp Dimitrov-Inkiov, Sofia 1989.

13... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 14 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$

Black also got the upper hand in Ehlvest-Lerner, Tallinn 1986: 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 b3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$! 20 f5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$! 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}de1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ \mp .

15...0-0 (D)

W



W



Black has fine compensation in the form of open files against the white king. It is no surprise the game didn't last long.

16 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 17 ♜db5 ♜c5 18 e5 dxе5 19 fxe5 ♜c4 20 b3 ♜xb5 21 ♜xb5 ♜xb5 22 bxc4 ♜a5 0-1

Conclusion: This is a good way for Black to meet the Velimirović Attack. Black has strong counterplay or at least equality. The sidelines are playable too.

Strategic Introduction to the Sozin Position-Type

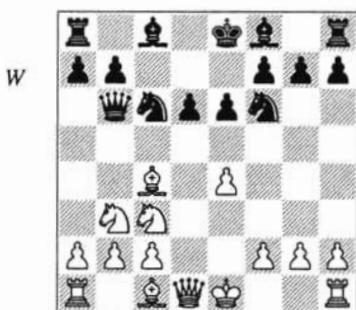
The white bishop development to c4 on the sixth move is characteristic for the Sozin. Usually Black adopts the typical Sicilian small centre set-up with ...d6 and ...e6, when the bishop doesn't look very good. On the other hand, the bishop on c4 or b3 doesn't block White's other pieces, as it might on e2, and White can try to make it look better. After the moves 6 ♜c4 e6 7 ♜e3 a6 (D) the following position arises:

The play takes on quite a different nature if White adopts the aggressive Velimirović approach, which includes the queen development on e2, long castling and usually a pawn-push on the kingside. White can instead play more quietly and positionally with ♜b3, f4 and ♜f3, castle either side and play f5 to attack the e6-pawn. If Black has to play ...e5, there is a potentially weak spot on d5. This plan is discussed in the next game.

White can also castle kingside at an early stage. In that case, Black doesn't have worry about the Velimirović Attack any more and he has more options. In addition, White can experiment with different plans. The options after early castling are considered in Game 11.

The play will take a somewhat different direction if Black plays the disruptive 6...♜b6. The position-type varies depending on how White answers, but usually the game will take more peaceful paths than the Velimirović. The active knight is expelled from d4. Often the positions resemble more closely the variation 1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜b6 or the Scheveningen. Sometimes Black

fianchettoes the bishop in a Dragon style.

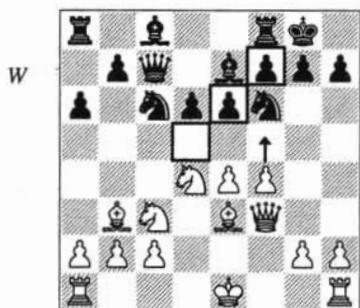


This is a standard position in this type of Sozin.

Typical Methods for White

1. Play f4-f5 to make the bishop look better

After that White can try to make use of the d5-square *à la* Boleslavsky if Black plays ...e5.

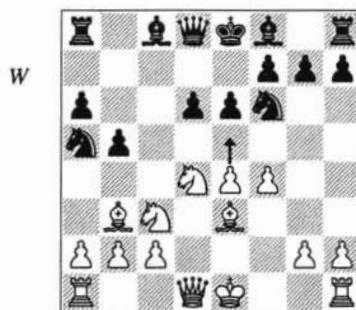


If Black plays ...e5, White can try to use the d5-square by exchanging the f6-knight or sometimes pushing the g-pawn. If White manages to exchange the f6-knight, the f-pawn might be

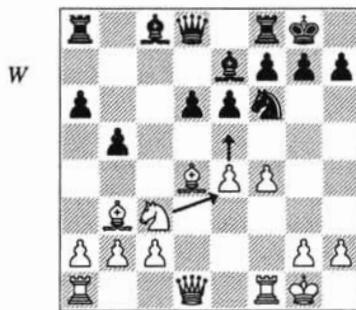
rather dangerous for the black king position and Black is bound to keep an eye on the f5-f6 advance. Besides, f7 becomes more vulnerable

2. Strike in the centre with e5

This needs a tactical justification since it is generally positionally doubtful; a white pawn on e5 might be weak and the b3-bishop might bite on concrete if there are no sacrificial possibilities.



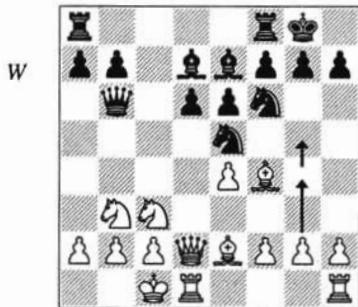
Here the justification is Black's bad piece development. After 10 e5 dx5 11 fxe5 ♜xb3 12 axb3 ♜d5 13 ♜f3 ♜b7 14 0-0 ♜c7 15 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 16 ♜f2 Black has some problems with f7.



In this well-known line, White can activate his knight via e4 after 12 e5. The knight goes to d6 and White gets a passed pawn. There are also cases in the next game where the queen is on f3, with ideas of taking the a8-rook after an e4-e5 thrust. These cases should be evaluated separately. Black's compensation may take the form of a strong minor piece, or else the white queen might get into trouble.

3. Start attacking on the kingside with g2-g4

This is more typical in the 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$ Sozin.

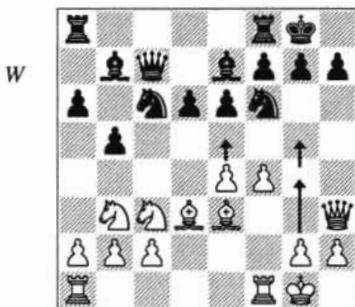


Kupreichik – Lopushnoi
Perm 1998

In this position, the direct 12 g4! was very strong. Black was crushed after 12... $\mathbb{Q}exg4$ 13 $\mathbb{B}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 14 $\mathbb{M}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15 e5!.

Sometimes g4 is possible even if White has castled kingside and the centre is not closed.

In the following diagram, 14 g4!, threatening 15 e5 dx5 16 g5, seems dangerous. After 14...b4? (14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

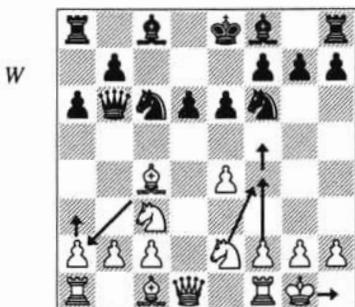


Sax – Movsesian
Bundesliga 1997/8

and 14... $\mathbb{M}fe8$ are better tries) 15 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ White took the upper hand.

4. Keep the bishop on the board with a3 and $\mathbb{A}a2$

After this, Black has no possibility of exchanging the light-squared bishop with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$.



In this position, this has been the only successful plan in practice. White wants to continue with $\mathbb{Q}h1$, f4, f5 and $\mathbb{Q}f4$, or alternatively $\mathbb{Q}h1$, $\mathbb{Q}g3$ and $\mathbb{Q}h5$. White has some hope of making the bishop look good.

Typical Methods for Black

1. Keep the formation with pawns on d6 and e6 as long as possible

Playing ...e5 makes the white bishop better, while playing ...d5, if this is possible at all, usually just creates a weak pawn. If White plays f5, the standard reply is ...e5 if the d5-square doesn't look too painful. Exchanging on f5 wins a tempo but leaves the d4- and f4-squares available to White. Letting White exchange on e6 might lead to a weak pawn.

B



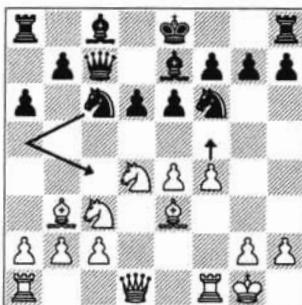
In this position, it is difficult to choose between 14...e5 and 14...exf5. If Black plays the latter, we end up in position-type 3.

2. Attack the white bishop with the knight or pawns

It should be exchanged or blocked with the knight if it's getting too strong.

In the following diagram, Black can and probably should play 10...Nxa5 before White plays f5. Quite often, it is better for Black to let the knight be exchanged on c4 than to exchange on b3. Sometimes the opening of the c-file after the recapture cxb3 is unpleasant

B



for Black. Here after 11 f5 Black should play either 11...Qc4 or 11...e5 12 Qde2 Qc4.

3. Advance the queenside pawns

This is especially urgent if White castles queenside.

B



Istratescu – A. Sokolov

Groningen FIDE KO 1997

16...a5! 17 Qc4 Wd7 18 Wh4 a4 gave Black nice counterplay.

Also, the advance of the b-pawn can be used to drive away the knight from c3 before compromising the d5-square with ...e5. The timing is good if White just played f4-f5 before this operation.

5. If White plays $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (intending $\mathbb{Q}h5$), ...h5 might be a strong answer if Black hasn't castled yet

B



Ehlvest – Yrjölä
Jyväskylä 1998

Black stopped $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and got good play with 15...h5! 16 h3 h4. The plan continued with ...b5, ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ...d5.

Playing ...h5 may involve a sacrifice:

B



Kasparov – Timman
Manila OL 1992

Black got good compensation after 12...h5 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 14 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 0-0-0.

B

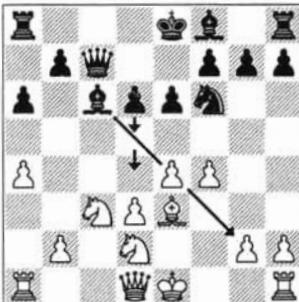


In this position the motif of 13...h5!? is to make a strongpoint for the f6-knight and to stop White playing g4. Of course, Black has no intention of castling kingside after such a move.

6. Make use of the weak light squares in White's camp

This idea becomes relevant when White's light-squared bishop has been exchanged.

B



Macieja – Damjanović
Belgrade 1999

Black got good compensation for a pawn in the form of excellent light-square control after 15...d5! 16 e5 d4! 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$.

7. A central breakthrough with ...d5

This is sometimes effective when White's light-squared bishop has either been exchanged or driven away from the a2-g8 diagonal. Besides the previous example, this is typical:

B



In this position, Black gets at least equality after 14...d5!.

8. Sometimes the move ...g5 can be used to secure a strongpoint on e5

B



Milos – Yermolinsky
Groningen 1996

Play continued 14...g5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ h5!, to stop the f-pawn and to secure e5. This is a rather abnormal version

of the Sozin, where the light-squared bishops were exchanged after $\mathbb{Q}b5+$. If White could advance to f5, Black's light squares would be very weak.

Sozin with 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ and 9 f4

This game introduces a way to play the Sozin more positionally without the aggressive Velimirović ideas. White opts for the plan f4, $\mathbb{W}f3$ and f5.

Game 10
Balashov – Khalifman
Russia Cup (Samara) 1998

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 4 d4 $\text{exd}4$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ a6 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

With this Fischer-like prophylactic move, White sometimes hopes to reach the Velimirović in better circumstances, but in fact he might be forced to abandon the whole plan. However, the alternative plan with f4-f5 doesn't look bad.

8... $\mathbb{W}c7$

If Black plays the normal developing move 8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ he must be prepared to play a sharp line of the Velimirović Attack: 9 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 10 0-0-0 transposes to the note to Black's 9th move in Game 9.

The line 8... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 9 f4 b5 (9... $\mathbb{W}c7$? 10 f5) 10 e5 dxe5 11 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 12 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14 0-0 is riskier due to Black's kingside development problems.

9 f4

With 9 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ we end up in the already familiar Velimirović line.

9 0-0 ♜a5 10 f4 b5! 11 f5 e5 12 ♜de2 ♜b7 seems quite good for Black, who has enough control over the c4- and d5-squares: 13 ♜d5 (13 ♜g3 ♜c4 14 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 15 ♜d3 ♜c8 16 a3 h5! Vavra-Istratescu, Mamaia U-16 Wch 1991) 13...♜xd5 14 ♜xd5 ♜c4 15 ♜c1 (15 ♜c1?! ♜xd5 16 exd5 ♜c8 17 b3 ♜xe3 18 ♜xe3 ♜c5 with a better ending for Black, Scholl-Polugaevsky, Amsterdam 1970) 15...♜c5+ 16 ♜h1 ♜xd5 17 exd5 ♜b6 18 ♜c3 ♜e7 and now A.Kovačević-Popović, Yugoslav Ch (Nikšić) 1997 saw an interesting pawn sacrifice: 19 f6!? (but in de Firmian-Salov, New York 1996, White's tactics failed: 19 ♜e4? ♜xd5 20 ♜f3 ♜c8 21 ♜e3 ♜d7!; 19 ♜f3 is a more standard move recommended by Salov) 19...gxg6!? 20 ♜f3 ♜d7 21 ♜e4 ♜c7 22 ♜e3.

9...♜e7 (D)

W



10 ♜f3

This move, which keeps options open of castling on either side, is most popular. Others:

a) 10 0-0 ♜a5 (not forced but a logical move, since the bishop grows in value after White plays f5) 11 f5 and now:

a1) 11...♜c4 12 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 13 ♜f3 0-0 is quite playable, but the compensation in Kaidanov-Smirin, Groningen PCA qual 1993 wasn't really convincing after 14 ♜ad1 b5?! (better is 14...♜d7?! or 14...e5) 15 e5! dx5 16 ♜xa8 exd4 17 ♜xd4 ♜c5 18 ♜xc5 ♜xc5+ 19 ♜h1 exf5 20 ♜f3.

a2) 11...e5 12 ♜de2 ♜d7?! (after 12...♜xb3?! 13 cxb3 the c-file is opened for White's rooks) 13 ♜g3 (13 ♜g5?! ♜c5+ 14 ♜h1 ♜c6 is certainly critical) 13...♜c4 14 ♜c1?! (I had planned to answer 14 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 15 ♜h5 with 15...♜c6! 16 ♜xg7+ ♜d7, with an unclear position) 14...♜c5+ 15 ♜h1 h5! with promising counterplay, Ehlvest-Yrjölä, Jyväskylä 1998.

b) The ambitious and logical 10 f5 has been very rare for some reason. Black could answer with 10...♜xd4 11 ♜xd4 b5 12 0-0 (12 fxe6?) 12...e5; for example:

b1) 13 ♜e3?! ♜b7 14 ♜g5? (14 ♜d5) 14...♜xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 16 ♜g4 d5 17 ♜xe7 ♜xe7! + Veröci-Liu Shilan, Thessaloniki wom OL 1984.

b2) 13 ♜f2 ♜b7 14 a3 (14 ♜d5 ♜xd5 15 ♜xd5 0-0 16 c3 ♜ab8 17 ♜c1 ♜fc8 18 b3 ♜a5 19 ♜e1 ♜b6+ ½-½ Morović-Serper, Las Vegas 1997) 14...0-0 15 ♜f3 ♜ac8 prepares a sacrifice on c3 if White pushes the g-pawn, Ivanchuk-Anand, Linares (3) 1992.

10...0-0

10...♜xd4?! 11 ♜xd4 b5 can also be played because 12 e5 (12 f5 e5 13 ♜f2 ♜b7 14 0-0-0 b4 15 ♜d5 ♜xd5 16 ♜xd5 0-0 17 h4 a5 gives Black counterplay, Blees-Lanka, Ljubljana 1994) 12...♜b7 13 ♜g3 dx5 14 fxe5 ♜h5 15 ♜g4 g6 is not clear. Both sides have misplaced pieces (the b3-bishop

and the h5-knight). The position is hard to evaluate. In fact, 12 a3 is a practical choice, returning to the main line. With this move-order, Black can however avoid the more complicated variations in the next note.

11 0-0

This is safer than 11 0-0-0 b5!?. Then:

a) 12 g4 b4 13 ♜ce2 ♜xd4 14 ♜xd4 a5 with counterplay.

b) 12 e5!? ♜xd4 13 ♜xa8 (13 ♜xd4 dxe5 14 ♜xe5 ♜b7 is harmless) 13...dxe5 14 fxe5 ♜xb3+ (14...♜b7!?) 15 ♜a7 ♜c6 16 ♜b6 ♜xb6 17 ♜xb6 ♜xe5) 15 axb3 ♜b7 16 ♜a7 ♜d7 or 16...♜g4 with definite compensation.

c) 12 f5 b4 13 ♜ce2 ♜xd4 14 ♜xd4 exf5 (14...e5!?) 15 ♜c4 ♜b8 16 g4 is unclear according to Sokolov, and indeed the obvious 16...d5 17 exd5 ♜b7 can be met by 18 ♜c6!) 15 exf5 ♜b7 16 ♜h3? (16 ♜g3 is more dangerous) 16...a5 ! Istratescu-A.Sokolov, Groningen FIDE KO 1997.

On the other hand, 11 f5 ♜xd4 12 ♜xd4 b5 13 0-0-0!? b4 14 ♜a4 ♜b7 (14...e5!?) remains untried; e.g., 15 ♜f2 ♜b7 16 ♜h1 ♜d7!?, trying to make trouble for the poor a4-knight with ...♜a5 and ...♜c6) 15 fxe6 has been successful for White, the latest example being 15...♜xe4 (15...fxe6 16 ♜h3 {16 ♜g3!}) 16...♜h8 17 ♜xe6 ♜xe4 18 ♜g4 ♜f6 ± Yakovich-Aseev, USSR Ch (Moscow) 1991) 16 exf7+ ♜h8 17 ♜f4 ♜ac8 18 ♜d2 ♜c6 19 ♜b6 ♜cd8 ± Freitag-Loginov, Graz 1998.

11...♜xd4 12 ♜xd4 b5 (D)

13 a3

Alternatively, there is a long forced variation: 13 e5 dxe5 14 fxe5 ♜d7 15 ♜xe6 fxe6 16 ♜xa8 ♜b7 17 ♜xf8+

W



and now perhaps instead of 17...♜xf8 18 ♜e8 ♜c6 19 ♜f2 ♜xg2+ 20 ♜e1± Black should choose 17...♜xf8 18 ♜e8 ♜c5 19 ♜e2 ♜xe5 20 ♜f1 ♜xd4+ 21 ♜xd4 ♜xd4+ 22 ♜h1 ♜xg2+ 23 ♜xg2 ♜d2+, when White can hardly escape the checks.

13...♜b7 14 f5

With this popular plan, White wants to occupy the d5-square with a piece. If he doesn't manage to do so, Black is fine with the c-file and queenside pawn advance. The standard plan is ...♜c6, ...♜b7, ...a5 and ...b4. A strange position-type and complications arose in Gdanski-Yrjölä, Vantaa 1999: 14 ♜h1 a5!? (14...♜c6) 15 ♜xb5 ♜c6 16 a4 ♜xe4 17 ♜h3. In fact the black centre is quite weak and inflexible so I had to go into 17...♜h5 18 ♜ae1 ♜xf4 19 ♜xe4 ♜xh3 20 ♜g4 e5 21 ♜e3 h5!? 22 ♜c4! ♜d5 (almost forced) 23 ♜c7 ♜xb3 24 ♜xe7 ♜c4 25 ♜d1 ♜f4 26 ♜xd6 ♜g6 27 ♜a7 ♜e6=.

14 ♜ae1 is quite a natural move; for example, 14...♜ac8?! (according to Anand the right move is 14...♜c6, with the plan ...a5 and ...b4) 15 ♜g3 ♜h8? 16 ♜h1 ♜c6 17 ♜f3! with good attacking chances, Ljubojević-Anand, Buenos Aires 1994.

14...e5 15 ♜e3 ♜c6

With the threat ...♛b7. Also, Black would like to play ...a5 and ...b4.

16 ♜g5 (D)

B



This is according to plan, but Black has an interesting tactical reply, which is forced on positional grounds. If White can exchange on f6 and play ♜d5, the nightmare discussed in the Boleslavsky chapter comes true.

16...♝xe4! 17 ♜xe7 ♜f6

Not 17...♝d2? 18 ♛g4 ♛xe7 19 f6 ♛a7+ 20 ♜f2 g6 21 ♛g5 +—.

18 ♜d5

18 ♜d5?! ♜xd5 19 ♜xf8 ♜f4 20 ♛g4 ♛xf8 21 g3 ♜d5 is unclear but White's king position looks shaky.

18...♜xd5 19 ♜xf8 ♜f4 20 ♛e3

More aggressive is 20 ♛g4 ♛b6+ 21 ♜f2 ♜xf8 22 f6 g6, with a complicated position.

20...♜xf8 21 ♜xf4 exf4 22 ♛xf4 ♛e7

After the natural 22...♜e8, things can't be so bad for Black

23 ♜f1 ♛f6 24 ♜d1 ± ♛xb2?! 25 ♛xd6 ♜c3 26 ♛e7 ♛f6 27 ♛xf6 gxf6 28 ♜d6 ♜c8 29 ♜xf6 ♜c7 30 ♜d6 ♛g7 31 c4 ♜e4 32 f6+ ♛g6 33 ♜d4 ♜f5 34 cxb5 axb5 35 ♜d5 ♜a7 36

♜xb5 ♜xa3 37 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 38 ♜xf5 ♜a2?

38...♜a6! and 39...♜xf6! draws.

39 h3 h6 40 ♜h2 ♜a3 41 g4 ♜a2+ 42 ♜g3 ♜a3+ 43 ♜h4 ♜b3 44 ♜h5 ♜g6 45 f7 ♜b8 46 ♜b5 ♜a8 47 ♜b6+ 1-0

Conclusion: This is sounder for White than the Velimirović lines introduced earlier in the chapter. White has some chances to fight for a small plus, but Black can try different move-orders to confuse White.

Sozin with 7 0-0

Here we discuss lines resulting from White castling kingside at an early stage in the Sozin.

Game 11

Short – Kasparov

London PCA Wch (14) 1993

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♜c3 d6 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♜xd4 ♜f6 6 ♜c4 e6 7 0-0

After 7 ♜b3 a6 8 f4 ♜e7, the very straightforward attempt 9 f5?! runs into 9...♛b6! ♞ 10 ♜e3? e5, and other sensible moves transpose.

7...♜e7

Now that there is no danger of a Velimirović, those players who meet the Velimirović by avoiding an early ...0-0 can safely opt to castle here.

8 ♜b3

Other systems:

- 8 f4 is premature due to 8...d5.
- Similarly 8 ♜h1 0-0 9 f4 can be met by 9...d5! (good enough for a draw is 9...♝xe4 10 ♜xe4 d5 11 ♜xc6 bxc6 12 ♜d3 dxe4 13 ♜xe4 ♜a6 14

$\text{H}e1 \text{Wxd1} 15 \text{Hxd1} \text{Had8} 16 \text{Ae3 c5}$
 $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Saltaev-Atalik, Katerini 1993)
 $10 \text{Qxc6 bxc6} 11 \text{Aa3 c5} 12 \text{e5 Qd7} 13$
 Axh7+ (almost forced for positional
 reasons) $13 \dots \text{Aa7} 14 \text{Wh5+ Ag8} 15$
 $\text{Hf3 f5} 16 \text{Ah3 Qf6?}$ (no draw!) 17
 $\text{exf6 Axf6} 18 \text{Aa2 d4} 19 \text{Qe2 Ab7}$ is
 a fierce way to play for a win, Jaz-
 binzek-Cebalo, Nova Gorica 1997.

c) White can safeguard the bishop
 with $8 \text{a3 0-0} 9 \text{Aa2}$ but $9 \dots \text{Qxd4} 10$
 Wxd4 b6! is a good, solid answer for
 this rare system. 11Wd3 (or 11Ag5
 $\text{Aa6} 12 \text{Hfe1 Wc7} 13 \text{Had1 Hfd8} 14$
 Ah1 Wc5 , with very comfortable equality,
 Sigurjonsson-Tukmakov, Reykjavík
 1976) $11 \dots \text{Ab7} 12 \text{Af4 Wc8} 13$
 $\text{Hfe1 Hd8} 14 \text{Had1 Wc5}$ ($14 \dots \text{a6} 15 \text{a4}$
 $\text{b5!} =$ Dvoiryss-Zviagintsev, Samara
 1998) $15 \text{Ae3 Wh5} 16 \text{Ad4 Ag4} 17$
 $\text{h3 Af5} =$ Dvoiryss-Scherbakov, St Peters-
 burg 1998.

8...0-0

$8 \dots \text{a6} 9 \text{Ae3 Wc7}$ will transpose to
 lines discussed in Game 10, and is
 probably the preferable course.

9 Ae3

There is yet another attempt based
 on pushing the f-pawn: $9 \text{f4 a6} 10 \text{Ah1}$
 $\text{Qxd4} 11 \text{Wxd4 b5} 12 \text{f5}$. Now:

a) Here $12 \dots \text{e5?} 13 \text{Wd3 Ab7} 14$
 Ag5 simply lets White occupy the
 d5-square.

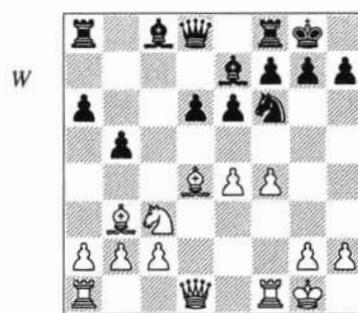
b) Black can try to 'punish' White
 with the very interesting $12 \dots \text{Ag4?}$.
 The critical reply is 13Af4? to keep
 the e5-square. Then $13 \dots \text{b4}$ ($13 \dots \text{e5?} 14 \text{Wd1} 14 \text{Aa4 e5} 15 \text{Wd1 Af6}$ was
 OK for Black in Dekić-Sax, Budapest
 1996 but I have no idea why White
 didn't take the b-pawn).

c) Safer is $12 \dots \text{Hb8} 13 \text{a3}$ (13fxe6
 $\text{Axe6?} 13 \dots \text{a5} 14 \text{Wd3?} (14 \text{fxe6}$

$\text{fxe6} 15 \text{e5? dx5} 16 \text{Wxe5 Ag4!})$
 $14 \dots \text{Ad7} 15 \text{fxe6 fxe6} 16 \text{Af4 b4} 17$
 $\text{axb4 axb4} 18 \text{Ae2 Ah8!} =$ Minasian-
 Serper, Kstovo 1994.

9...a6 10 f4 Qxd4

10...Wc7? 11 f5 is a line to avoid.
 11 Qxd4 b5 (D)



12 e5

Now $12 \text{f5 b4} 13 \text{Aa4 e5}$ is good for
 Black.

$12 \text{a3 Ab7} 13 \text{Wd3 a5!} 14 \text{e5 dx5}$
 $15 \text{fxe5 Ad7} 16 \text{Qxb5 Ac5} 17 \text{Axc5}$
 $(17 \text{We3 Qxb3} 18 \text{Wxb3 a4} 19 \text{Wd3}$
 $\text{Wd5} 20 \text{Hf2 Hfd8} 21 \text{Hd1 Aa6} 22 \text{Qc7}$
 $\text{Qxd3} 23 \text{Qxd5 Hxd5} 24 \text{Hxd3 Had8}$
 $25 \text{Hf4 Ag5} 26 \text{Hg4 Hxd4} 27 \text{Hxg5}$ led to what should have been a level
 ending in Moutousis-Tukmakov, Haifa
 Echt 1989) $17 \dots \text{Axc5+} 18 \text{Ah1 Wg5}$ was
 the famous game Fischer-Spassky,
 Reykjavík Wch (4) 1972, which
 gave Black a strong initiative with the
 bishop-pair.

12...dx5 13 fxe5 Ad7 14 Ae4

14 Wf3 Ac5! is nothing for White,
 but 14 Wg4 is an aggressive move
 which should be taken seriously:
 $14 \dots \text{Ac5}$ ($14 \dots \text{Ab7?} 15 \text{Hxf7} 15$
 $\text{Ae3?} (15 \text{Ae2 Qxb3} 16 \text{axb3 Wd5}$ was equal in Yuneev-Aseev, Daugavpils

1989) 15... $\mathbb{W}c7$?! (maybe 15... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 16 axb3 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xc2$) 16 $\mathbb{E}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 17 $\mathbb{A}h6$! was strong in I.Kuznetsov-Yaludin, Russia 1993.

14... $\mathbb{A}b7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

15 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ offers nothing for White.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 16 $\mathbb{Exd6}$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ (D)

W



This is a well-known position, in which the battle centres around the d6-pawn. Black tries to prove it is a weakness rather than a strongpoint for supporting White's activity and bishop-pair. Naturally, Black is usually happy if he can exchange a pair of bishops, despite the fact that his bishop is a strong piece. Black's most vulnerable spots are e6 and f7, but those pawns are also his most important potential source of counterplay.

17 $\mathbb{W}e2$

The other possibility is 17 $\mathbb{E}f2$ a5!. Now:

a) 18 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{E}a6$! 19 $\mathbb{A}c3$! (19 $\mathbb{A}xe6$?! $\mathbb{E}xd6$) 19...b4 20 $\mathbb{A}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{E}aa8$! (21...e5 22 $\mathbb{A}g5$) 22 $\mathbb{E}d1$ (22 c3?) 22... $\mathbb{A}a6$ 23 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{A}b5$ 24 c3 $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 25 $\mathbb{E}c1$ a4!? (25...e5) 26 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $\mathbb{A}xb3$! 27 $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 28 a3 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (Van der Wiel-Leitão, Wijk aan Zee 1999)

29 $\mathbb{W}e2$! is unclear according to Van der Wiel.

b) 18 a4 b4 (this is the most often tested move; 18... $\mathbb{E}a6$?! is possible but 18...e5?! 19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Exd4}$ 20 $\mathbb{W}e7$ cannot be recommended for Black) with these options:

b1) 19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{E}a6$ (19... $\mathbb{A}d5$ might also be good because of the trick 20 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{E}fb8$!) 20 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{E}xb5$ 21 axb5 $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 22 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{E}a8$ 23 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{E}d4$ 24 $\mathbb{A}e3$ = Winants-Tukmakov, Wijk aan Zee 1993.

b2) 19 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{A}d5$?! 20 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{E}d1$ e5 22 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 23 b3 f5, Österman-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1990, and now White can complicate the issue with 24 $\mathbb{A}g5$! f4 25 $\mathbb{A}e7$.

b3) 19 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 20 $\mathbb{E}xd2$. In this complicated ending Black should try to exchange the light-squared bishops: 20... $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 21 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ 22 c3 $\mathbb{A}c4$ = 23 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ (Black built an ingenious blockade in Bosch-Reeh, Amstelveen 1994 after 23 $\mathbb{A}d1$ b3 24 $\mathbb{A}f3$ f6 25 $\mathbb{A}a7$ $\mathbb{A}f7$ 26 $\mathbb{A}b7$ e5) 23... $\mathbb{E}xc4$ 24 cxb4 $\mathbb{E}xb4$ 25 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}xa4$ 26 $\mathbb{E}c7$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ and White's initiative was enough for a draw in Oll-Loginov, Sverdlovsk 1987.

17...e5

Now this is better than 17...a5?! 18 c3 $\mathbb{E}a6$ 19 $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 20 $\mathbb{A}xg7$! $\mathbb{E}xd1$ 21 $\mathbb{E}xd1$ $\mathbb{A}xg7$ 22 $\mathbb{E}xd7$ $\mathbb{A}c6$ 23 $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}f2$, which was slightly more comfortable for White in de Firmian-Fishbein, Philadelphia 1997.

A new idea is 17... $\mathbb{A}h8$ 18 $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}g6$, so as to start pushing the pawns. In Illescas-J.Polgar, Dos Hermanas 1997, Black got a promising attack after 19 c4 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 20 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ f5 21 $\mathbb{A}c3$?! f4.

18 $\mathbb{A}c3$!

This is probably a better place for the bishop than e3, where it may soon come under attack from the f-pawn; for example, 18 ♜e3 ♜g6 19 ♜ad1 ♜h8 (with the plan ...f5-f4) 20 c3 (20 h4!?) 20...♜e4! 21 ♜f2 f5 Hamann-Gligorić, Skopje OL 1972.

18...♝g6 19 ♜ad1 ♜h8

Preparing counterplay with ...f5. The following move is rather surprising, but otherwise Black's pawn advance supported by the b7-bishop would be highly dangerous.

20 ♜d5! ♜xd5 21 ♜xd5 ♜e6 22 ♜fd1 (D)

B



22...♜fc8

This looks like a rather strange decision, but the natural 22...f5 seems to be premature because of 23 a4 bxa4 24 ♜a5! f4 25 ♜xa4 ♜g6 26 ♜h1 ♜ae8 27 ♜xa6 e4 28 ♜g1, when Black didn't have enough play in A.Pachmann-Jedlicka, Czech Cht 1995.

23 ♜a5 ♜c6

White is somewhat better in this complicated position. He can now create two connected passed pawns, while Black has counter-chances on the kingside with his f- and e-pawns.

24 b3

24 a4!? bxa4 25 ♜e4 should be answered by 25...♝g6!.

24...♜ac8 25 ♜c7 ♜e8?!

Kasparov gives the variation 25...f5 26 c4 bxc4 27 bxc4 e4 28 ♜f1 ♜f8 29 g4! f4! 30 ♜d4 ♜c5 31 d7 ♜xd7 32 ♜xe4 ♜g6 33 ♜xf4 h6, with some unclear counterplay in compensation for the pawn.

26 c4 bxc4 27 bxc4 f5

27...e4!.

28 h3 h6 29 ♜c2

29 a4!?, intending a5 and ♜b6, would have given White a plus.

29...e4 30 ♜a4 ♜c5 31 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 32 ♜c6 ♜d7 33 ♜d5 ♜g6 34 ♜d2?!, ♜e5 35 ♜e3 ♜e6 36 ♜c1 ♜e5 37 ♜c2 ♜g8 38 a4 ♜f7 39 ♜f2 e3 ½-½

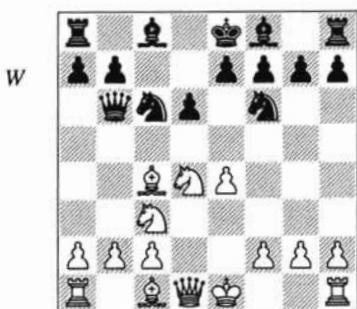
Conclusion: Here too White has some initiative in the main line, though Black is not without counterplay. There are some obscure sidelines.

Sozin with 6...♝b6

This modern and popular move is the safest move that still leads to a fight. It is a regular choice of many leading Classical players, such as Kramnik and Svidler. Black is not as vulnerable to attacks against the king as in the Velimirović. The less pleasant side of the move is that White has a rather wide choice of variations available, making a thorough move-by-move study more difficult. Besides, the variations are generally less concrete than in the Velimirović. On the plus side, chances to lose because of one careless or slow move are smaller, because the game usually takes on a more positional nature.

Game 12
Topalov – Kramnik
Novgorod 1997

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ (D)



7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$?

This unpositional move is becoming more and more popular. Black gets a large pawn-centre, which White tries to break up later with the move e5. Modern chess-players continuously seek to make unorthodox ideas work, and this is one such case.

White has a wide choice of alternatives. The historically most popular move, 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$, is discussed in Game 13. Other ideas:

a) 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$?! is a risky move that can at best be regarded as a good practical try. After the obvious continuation 7... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}db5$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 9 $\mathbb{W}e2$, it is hardly possible to lead the game into peaceful paths. Black should bravely jump into complications:

a1) 9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$?! 10 f3 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}d4$?) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ seems to be fine for Black, e.g. 12 $\mathbb{Q}c7+?$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ — Miserendino-Zarnicki, Villa Martelli 1998.

a2) 9... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$?! is the most critical:
a21) 10 $\mathbb{Q}d4$?! $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (10...f5?! is an idea, while 10... $\mathbb{Q}f5$?! might be better: 11 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$! 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$! 15 $\mathbb{Q}exd6+$ exd6 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$?) 11 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$!
12 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+!$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ + leads to a draw (Pinski).

a22) 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c4+$ e6 13 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ d5! 14 $\mathbb{W}f3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 15 0-0! a6 (15... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e5 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exf4 18 $\mathbb{Q}dc7$ h6 19 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ — Dubinsky-Kiselev, Moscow 1998; 15...d4 16 $\mathbb{Q}e4$) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ axb5 17 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ and the position is still impossible to evaluate.

b) 7 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ is more poisonous than it looks. White's plan is to exchange the defender with $\mathbb{Q}g3-h5$. Black can counter this with ...h5, if he doesn't castle too early. Also, the queen transfer into the attack with $\mathbb{W}d3-g3$ often occurs. Black must try to make White's plans and pieces look clumsy. 7...e6 and now:

b1) 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is rather passive. The main problem for White is that here the bishop bites on concrete. White has the plan 0-0, $\mathbb{Q}h1$ and f4-f5 but in that case Black has a lot of time to exchange the bishop with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$. Reinderman-Svidler, Wijk aan Zee 1999 continued 8...a6 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}d3$ (10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$) 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}g3$ b5 13 a3 0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15 f4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16 f5 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 17 cxb3 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 18 b4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19 fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ ½-½.

b2) 8 0-0 a6. What can White do about Black's 64% score on the database? The answer is the old plan 9 a3!;

the bishop can still be made to look good (the alternatives are not very dangerous: 9 ♜b3 ♜e7 10 ♜g5 ♜c7 11 ♜g3 b5 12 ♜h1 h5! 13 ♜xf6 gxf6 14 ♜xh5 ♜b7 15 ♜g3 0-0-0 16 a4 b4 17 ♜ce2 ♜b8 18 ♜c1 ♜a5 with compensation and later ½-½ in Kasparov-Timman, Manila OL 1992; 9 ♜g5 ♜c5 10 ♜xf6 ♜xc4 11 ♜h4 ♜e5 12 a4 b6 13 f4 ♜g4 14 ♜f3 ♜b7 15 h3 h5 16 ♜d3 ♜c5+ 17 ♜d4 ♜f6 18 ♜h1 ♜e7 19 ♜d3 ♜c8 20 ♜xf6 gxf6 21 b3 h4 22 ♜e1 ♜g8 23 f5 ♜e5 ½-½ Ljubojević-Ribli, Las Palmas 1974). 9...♜e7 and now:

b21) 10 ♜a2 0-0 11 ♜h1 ♜d8 (the alternative 11...♜d7, with the same plan, may be even better; Losev-Belikov, Moscow 1996 went on 12 ♜e3 ♜c7 13 f4 ♜a5 14 ♜d3 b5 15 ♜ad1 ♜c4 16 ♜c1 ♜ad8 17 ♜g3 ♜fe8 with a draw shortly) 12 ♜e3 (12 ♜g3 d5!? 13 exd5 exd5 14 ♜h5 ♜e6 15 ♜f4 = Kasparov-Teplitsky, Israel sim 1994) 12...♜c7 13 f4 b5 14 f5 ♜e5 15 fxe6 fxe6 16 ♜f4 ♜c4 17 ♜d4 is quite unclear though I would be somewhat worried with Black, Losev-Notkin, Moscow 1991.

b22) 10 ♜h1 and then:

b221) 10...♜c7?! (Black should retain the chance of counterplay with ...♜g4) 11 f4 0-0 12 ♜a2 b5 13 f5 ♜d7 14 ♜f4 ♜c8 15 ♜e1 exf5 16 ♜fd5 ♜d8 17 ♜g3 ♜e5 (17...♜xe4 18 ♜xe4 fxe4 19 ♜h6) 18 ♜g5 ♜xe4 19 ♜xe4 fxe4 20 ♜e7 ± Saltaev-Ginting, Singapore 1995.

b222) Preferable is 10...0-0, when 11 ♜a2 transposes to line 'b21' above.

c) 7 ♜db5 (D) and then:

c1) 7...♜g4?! is a rare continuation, which looks very playable.

B



c11) 8 ♜d5 (taking the bishop-pair looks natural but Black is left with a solid and dynamic pawn-formation) 8...♜xd5 9 ♜xg4 ♜f6 10 ♜e2 e6 11 ♜e3 ♜a5+ 12 ♜d2 ♜d8 13 f4?! a6 14 ♜c3 ♜c7 15 ♜d3 g6 16 0-0 ♜g7 with a dynamic Pirc-type position, Velimirović-Goldin, Yugoslavia 1996.

c12) 8 f3 ♜d7 9 ♜e2 a6 10 ♜e3 ♜a5 11 ♜d4, with the following examples:

c121) 11...e6 12 ♜b3 b5 13 a3 ♜e7 14 0-0 ♜c7 15 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 16 ♜ad1 0-0 with a normal sound position, Sax-Csom, Budapest 1976.

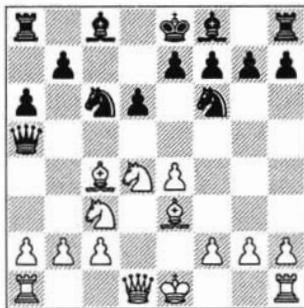
c122) 11...♜c8 12 ♜b3 ♜c7 13 0-0 e6 14 ♜d3 ♜e5 15 ♜ael b5 16 ♜g5 ♜e7 17 f4 ♜xd3 18 cxd3 b4 19 ♜d1 ♜b5 and Black is fine, Reichmann-Rabiega, Bremen 1998.

c123) 11...b5 (the most active) 12 ♜b3 e6 13 0-0-0 b4 14 ♜b1 (there are also two sacrificial possibilities: 14 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 15 ♜d5 exd5 16 exd5 ♜b5 17 ♜e1 ♜e7 18 ♜d4 ♜f8 19 a3 ♜c8 20 axb4 ♜c7 21 ♜c3 ♜e8 22 ♜e3 ♜f6, when White doesn't have enough compensation, Onoprienko-Khasin, Kazan 1995; 14 ♜d5?! exd5 15 exd5 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4+ ♜d8, with unclear play, is an idea of Kramnik's,

though I am not sure how convincing this is) 14... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 g4 (15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (15...0-0-0? 16 g5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}b5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with counter-chances) 16 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ e5 17 $\mathbb{B}dd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (17... $\mathbb{W}c7$? 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a5 is better according to Kramnik) 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$?! $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ (18...0-0 {Azmaiparashvili}) is playable because Black needn't be worried about 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 20 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$) 19 cxb3 d5?! (19... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ is better according to Azmaiparashvili) 20 exd5 $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{B}c8$? (22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$) 23 $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 24 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}xc1+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 26 f4 e4 27 g5 0-0 28 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ ± Topalov-Kramnik, Dos Hermanas 1996, but Black should have done better in the complications.

c2) 7...a6 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (D).

B



Here Black has a very sharp possibility and two solid alternatives:

c21) 9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$?! is very sharp and interesting, but the other options are more reliable. This move is suitable for adventurous players. 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$! (10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}ce5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 13 fxe3 e6 gave Black a dominating knight in Tate-Lugovoi, Budapest 1997) 10...bxc6 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ and now:

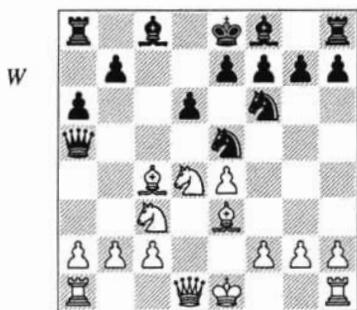
c211) 12 0-0 $\mathbb{W}d4$!? 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$; 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h5) 13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (there is also a possibility based on a typical Paulsen idea: 13... $\mathbb{W}e5$!? 14 f4 $\mathbb{W}h5$ 15 h3 $\mathbb{W}c5$ + 16 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ h5! with a complicated position) 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e1$ g5!? 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 17 f3 (17 a3 $\mathbb{W}a5$!) 17... $\mathbb{Q}h5$! 18 $\mathbb{W}f2$! (18 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 19 f4 h6 20 fxe5 $\mathbb{B}xg5$ is unclear) 18...h6 19 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e6 20 $\mathbb{B}ad1$, Ehlvest-Tella, Jyväskylä 1998, and now 20...c5! with complicated play, would have been critical.

c212) 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$! (12... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ is risky; e.g., 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$!? cxd5 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}a7$ 16 $\mathbb{B}b8$ $\mathbb{B}c7$?! 17 $\mathbb{W}xg4$) 13 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ a5! 14 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e5 is unclear, because White has the break f4; otherwise Black would be just fine) 13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ c5! (14...a5 15 f4 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 c4 ±) 15 f4! $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$! e6 (16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$!? is unclear: White has only one problem, the a4-knight; otherwise his development is superb) 17 f5! e5 18 $\mathbb{W}c4$? (18 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 19 b3 ±) 18...a5 19 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c4$? $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xb4$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{B}xa4$ 25 c3! $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 0-0 27 b3 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{B}a3$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{B}a4$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ ½-½ de Firmian-Tella, Tukholma 1998.

c22) 9...e6 (the normal move but I prefer the next line {'c23'}) 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (10... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 f4 transposes to note 'a' to White's 10th move in Game 10) 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 0-0 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 f5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exf5 15 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (Black has the typical Rauzer bishop though White's bishops are not bad either) 16 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 17 $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 18 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ + 20 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (active pieces compensate

for the pawn) 21 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (21 $\mathbb{Q}d5!?$) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 23 c4 ½-½ Short-Kramnik, Novgorod 1996.

c23) 9... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (*D*) has the best reputation and score in practice:



W

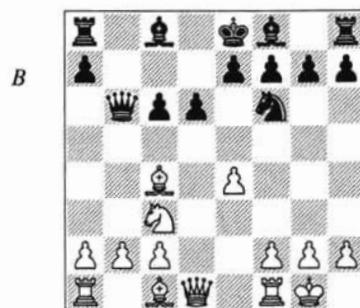
c231) 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e6 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}c6!?$) 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}f3$ is an important position because it can also be reached from the variation 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ e6 8 $\mathbb{Q}f4$. Now Black has the following options:

c2312) 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 0-0-0 $\mathbb{B}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4!?$ (Black was fine after 16 $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{B}hd1$ {17 g4 b5 18 g5 b4} 17...b5 18 e5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ dxе5 20 fxе5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ in Losev-Belikov, Moscow 1998) 16...b5 17 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (there is surely some compensation after 17...e5!?) 18 fxе5 dxе5 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$) 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gx $f6$ 19 f5 h5 20 $\mathbb{W}g3$ b4 21 axb4 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 22 $\mathbb{B}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 23 $\mathbb{B}hd1$ with a Rauzer position-type where White has the initiative, Ivanchuk-Kramnik, Paris 1995.

c2311) The best might be 14... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 0-0-0 (15 g4!?) 15...b5 16 a3 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17 f5 $\mathbb{B}c8$ 18 fxе6 fxе6 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}h3$ e5 21 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{B}xc3$! 22 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ with good compensation, Celakotronias, Ano Liosia 1997.

c232) After 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ Black has an interesting Dragon-type possibility: 10... $\mathbb{Q}eg4!?$ (before this game, the less critical moves 10... $\mathbb{Q}fg4$ and 10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ were popular) 11 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ g6 (11... $\mathbb{W}b6?$ 12 0-0) 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (12 f4 e5 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}e2$ exf4 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ =; 12 h3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 13 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0 =) 12... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ (this move was forced according to Kramnik; Black's play is rather original, and he gets a good position when the clouds disappear) 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$) 15... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e6 17 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 18 g3 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ (19 hxg3 $\mathbb{W}xg3+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ exd5 21 $\mathbb{Q}af1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22 exd5+ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ looks good for Black) 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 hxg3 $\mathbb{W}xg3+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ (23 $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ $\mathbb{W}xf4+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}g3$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ =) 23... $\mathbb{W}xf4+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 25 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 26 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}h2+$ 27 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}e5+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 30 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}b6?$ (31 $\mathbb{B}b1!$ is better) 31...d5 32 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ b5+ 34 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ (35... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xb2!$ is a clearer win) 36 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 37 dxе6+ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}c5?$ $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ 39 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ a5+ 40 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 0-1 Topalov-Kramnik, Belgrade 1995.

7... $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 8 0-0 (*D*)



B

8...g6 (D)

This seems to be theoretically soundest, although White gets some nasty activity. The alternative plan, 8...e6, is easier for White to meet. Black has an impressive centre, but White has an easy plan (b3, ♜b2, ♜e2, f4 and ♜d3) and free hands to develop a kingside attack, as the following lines indicate:

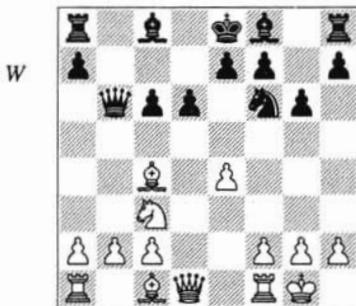
a) 9 ♜e2 and then:

a1) 9...♜e7 10 b3 (maybe White should push in the centre when he has the chance, viz.: 10 e5 dxe5 11 ♜xe5 0-0 12 ♜b3 ♜d5 13 ♜e4 ±) 10...0-0 11 ♜b2 e5! 12 ♜a4 ♜c7 13 f4 (safer is 13 ♜d3) 13...exf4 14 e5 (14 ♜xf4 d5!) 14...♜g4?! (14...dxe5 15 ♜xe5 ♜d6 16 ♜xf6 gxf6 17 ♜h5 ♜h8 18 ♜d3 f5 19 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 20 ♜xf5 ♜e5 21 ♜ae1 f6 ±) 15 ♜e1 ♜h5 (15...dxe5!?) 16 h3! ♜d7 17 exd6! ♜xd6 is unclear, Trygstad-Tella, Stockholm 1998.

a2) 9...♜d7 10 b3 ♜e7 11 ♜b2 0-0 12 ♜a4 ♜c7 13 f4 (13 ♜d3!?) 13...♜b7 (13...♜b6 14 ♜xb6 axb6 15 a4 ±; 13...♜f6?! 14 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 15 e5) 14 ♜ad1 ♜ae8? (14...♜ad8 15 ♜d3 d5!?) 15 ♜d3! c5 (15...d5 16 ♜h3!) 16 ♜b5! ♜c6 17 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 18 c4 with a space advantage, Topalov-Kramnik, Novgorod 1996.

b) 9 b3 ♜e7 (9...d5 10 exd5 cxd5 11 ♜b5+ ♜d7 12 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 13 ♜xd5 exd5 14 ♜e1+±) 10 ♜b2 0-0 11 ♜e2 is a typical position in this line. White has developed harmoniously and he can start a kingside attack by pushing his f-pawn: 11...♜c7 (11...♜d7 12 ♜a4 ♜c7 13 f4 ♜b7 14 ♜ad1 ±; 11...d5? doesn't work because of 12 exd5 cxd5 13 ♜xd5! exd5 14 ♜xe7±) 12 f4 d5 13 ♜d3 ♜b7 14 ♜ae1 ♜fe8

15 ♜h1 c5 (15...g6 16 e5 ♜d7 17 f5!; 15...♜ad8 16 e5 ♜d7 17 ♜d1!) 16 e5 ♜d7 17 f5! exf5 18 e6! +- Shaposhnikov-Lugovoi, St Petersburg 1999.



9 e5!?

Breaking up Black's solid formation. If White regains the pawn, he will be positionally better. Other possibilities:

a) After 9 ♜e3 the safest is 9...♜c7 = 10 f4 ♜g7 11 ♜d4 0-0 12 h3 ♜d7 13 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 14 ♜h1 ♜b8 15 b3 e5 Emms-Garcia Ilundain, Escaldes Z 1998.

b) 9 ♜e2?! is a new try. Black should still carefully stop the move e5: 9...♜g4 (9...♜d7 also seems safe, but not 9...♜g7?! 10 e5 dxe5 11 ♜xe5 ♜h5 {11...0-0 12 ♜xe7} 12 ♜e2 ♜c7 13 ♜e1 e6 14 ♜f3 ± Dervishi-Makarov, Elista OL 1998), e.g. 10 b3 ♜g7 11 ♜b2 ♜a5! 12 ♜d2 ♜e5 13 g3 ♜h5 14 f3 ♜c5+ 15 ♜h1 ♜e3 16 ♜e1 ♜xe1 17 ♜fxe1 ♜e5 with very comfortable equality, Giaccio-Zarnicki, Villa Gisell 1998 or 10 ♜e3 ♜c7 11 ♜d4 e5 12 ♜e3 ♜g7 = De Vreugt-Blehm, Erevan U-20 Wch 1999.

c) The historically most common move, 9 ♜b3, doesn't trouble Black:

9... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}f3$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}g5!?$) 11...0-0= 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ Kindermann-Pelletier, Portorož 1998.

9...dxe5 10 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (D)

B



10... $\mathbb{W}d4!$

This move looks very courageous, but so far it has worked well. Now 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ is clearly bad due to 11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$. Of course, Black can try to protect the pawn in other ways:

a) 10... $\mathbb{W}c7$ is probably not active enough, and gives White some small chances to play for a win: 11 f4 e4 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14 c3 0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}c2$ a5 17 a4 $\mathbb{W}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ h5 20 h3 \pm Morović-Gi.Hernandez, Cienfuegos Capablanca mem 1996) 16 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ h5 18 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ c5 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 22 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ \pm Morović-Kotronias, Buenos Aires 1997.

b) 10... $\mathbb{W}a5!?$ was a novelty in the game Nouro-Mishchenko, St Petersburg Chigorin mem 1999: 11 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e4!?$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ promises Black an easier life) 12... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8!?$ (after 13...exf6 14 $\mathbb{W}xf6$

$\mathbb{Q}g8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ e4 17 f3 $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ Black has several defensive resources, including 18... $\mathbb{W}e7$, 18... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and 18... $\mathbb{Q}f5$) 14 b3 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e4 \pm$. Maybe this idea needs more tests.

11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$

11... $\mathbb{W}h4!?$ is riskier but might also be playable: 12 g3 (12 f4! is strong according to Gofshtein) 12... $\mathbb{W}h5$ 13 f3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 0-0 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 18 g4 $\mathbb{W}h3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h5 20 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ hgx4 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ led to an unclear position after horrible complications in Toloza-Ricardi, Mar del Plata 1997.

12 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$

It is strange that Black can spend so many tempi with his queen, but how can White regain the e-pawn?

13 f4

13 $\mathbb{Q}de1!?$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15 fxe5 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 16 h3 0-0 17 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 19 b3 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ looks like insufficient compensation, although White went on to win in Dervishi-Kotronias, Ano Liosia 1998. Equally insufficient is 13 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 16 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, Kornev-Akhmadeed, Kstovo 1998.

13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}f2$

14 $\mathbb{Q}b5?$ runs into 14... $\mathbb{W}b7!.$

14...e4

Black should not be too greedy. White seems to get very good chances after 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd1!?$ 15 fxe5 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ (16... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}c5$ e5 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ \pm ; 16... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ exf6 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4 \pm$; 16... $\mathbb{W}f5$ 17 $\mathbb{W}e3$ \pm) 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ exf6 18 $\mathbb{Q}e1+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 0-0-0 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}b6+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}h1\pm$.

15 $\mathbb{Q}de1$ (D)

B

**15... $\mathbb{Q}f5$**

Black can play for a win, but only at a considerable risk: 15... $\mathbb{Q}g7$!? 16 h3! (16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 20 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ h6 22 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ +) Borozs-Atalik, Budapest 1998) 16... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17 g4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ ±) 18 hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ f5 is unclear, though White's piece-play should be respected after 20 $\mathbb{Q}c5$.

16 h3 h5 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 18 b3

18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$!?

(19... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$!?) 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 21 b3 h4 is no problem for Black either.

18...0-0 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

White can finally regain the pawn, but Black has defended e7 and there is nothing to play for with opposite-coloured bishops.

21... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 1/2-1/2

Conclusion: This line is sound for Black. If White finds something new, a playable reply for Black is usually found quite quickly by the line's top-level adherents. It is very difficult to assess the relative value of White's

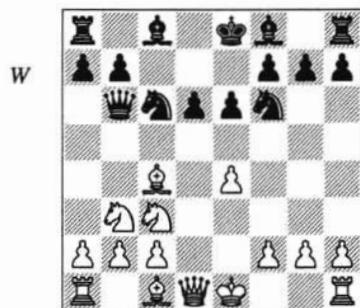
four main options on the 7th move, but in my opinion 7 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ has been underestimated. In the main line (7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$) White needs something new against 8...g6. After 7 $\mathbb{Q}db5$, Black has several playable options.

Sozin with 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

This is historically the most popular 7th move for White and remains the main line. Although in the last few years the other possibilities have gained popularity, there are some new ideas worthy of theoretical discussion in this line too.

Game 13
Ivanović – Damljanović
Yugoslav Cht (Vrnjačka Banja) 1999

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ e6 (D)

**8 $\mathbb{Q}f4$**

This is the modern approach, which became popular in the 1990s. Other possibilities:

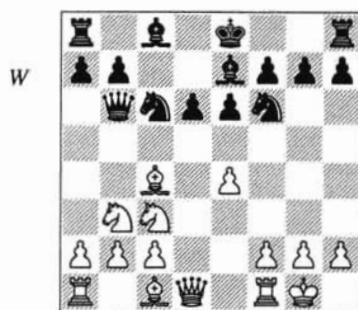
a) 8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$!? (this may lead to a Rauzer position-type or transpose to

line 'c2'; 8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$ is a slightly worse Rauzer type, but 8...a6 is also a good choice) 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf6?$! (9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ transposes to line 'c2') 9... $gxf6$ (Black must start to think he is playing a Rauzer) 10 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ (fortunately, the queen is not the best blockader; 10 0-0 $h5!$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 14 a4 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ was Young-Waitzkin, New York Marshall CC 1993) 10... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ Hmadi-Dlugy, Tunis IZ 1985. These lines look like quite a good form of Rauzer.

b) A rare but rather dangerous plan for White is to castle queenside and start pushing the g-pawn: 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 9 f4 a6 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b5 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (11 $\mathbb{W}f3$ might be a better square for the queen: 11... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5?$! 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ b4 16 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ d5? 17 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ with sharp play, Olivier-Grabics, Portorož 1998) 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (another successful plan was 13...0-0 14 g4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 g5 b4 16 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}a7!$ {trouble for the a4-knight} 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18 b3 $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$, Ilinčić-Kožul, Yugoslav Ch 1990) 14 g4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb5?$! (16 $\mathbb{Q}c1$) 16... $axb5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $dxc5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 0-0 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 21 e5 $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ ♕ R.Leyva-Vera, Cuban Ch (Las Tunas) 1996.

c) 8 0-0 is the old main line, leading to a Scheveningen-type position. Both sides seem to lose tempi but if we compare with the rather popular variation 1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 d4 $cx d4$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$, the bishop stands worse on c4 than on d3, where it usually goes here too. This is why Black is often a tempo

up when he ends up in positions of that type. 8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (D) and now:



c1) The popular choice 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is a natural move, but maybe d2 is a better square for the bishop; look at the line 'c4'. Black has no better plan than ... $\mathbb{W}c7$, ...a6 and ...b5 any case. 9... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 10 f4 a6 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (after 11 a4 b6 Black will put his knight on the weakened b4-square) 11...b5 12 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is a very typical position from this line. Black has to be careful with his king and he should consider exchanging the d3-bishop in time if he is going to castle. Typically White forces ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ by means of $\mathbb{W}h3$ and e5 threats, which strengthens White's pawn-centre. Still, Black will have the bishop-pair... 13 $\mathbb{W}h3$ (the other popular move, 13 $\mathbb{Q}ae1$, is likely to transpose) and now:

c11) 13...h5? is a very serious idea to play with the strong knight on g4; for example, 14 a4 (14 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ g5?!, with the idea 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0-0, looks interesting) 14...b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ Naumann-Gershon, Erevan U-20 Wch 1999.

c12) Of course 13... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ can be played, so as to transpose after 14 $\mathbb{H}ae1$ 0-0, but White can take the c-file with 14 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 15 cxd3 0-0 16 $\mathbb{H}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}d8$. In this case, White does not have much attack left, but Black remains passive.

c13) 13...0-0 involves some risk. Fortunately 14 e5 dxe5 15 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{H}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ doesn't work and 14 a3 can be answered with 14...b4.

c131) 14 g4! is very menacing; for example, 14...b4? (after 14... $\mathbb{H}fe8$ or 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ the position may still be playable) 15 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ exd5 17 exd5 g6 18 dxc6 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is an idea to be afraid of, Sax-Movsesian, Bundesliga 1997/8.

c132) 14 $\mathbb{H}ae1$ is the most natural but maybe not the best. This position can be reached via various move-orders. After 14... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (14... $\mathbb{H}fe8$ 15 g4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 16 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$, Ulybin-Popović, Moscow 1989, is also very natural) 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (15 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 16 cxd3 $\mathbb{H}ac8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{H}fe8$ 20 b4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ ≠ Espig-Hort, Polanica Zdroj 1997) 15... $\mathbb{H}ae8$ 16 g4!? (another familiar but risky attacking plan in these position-types is $\mathbb{H}f3-g3$) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 g5 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 18 cxd3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ Black has good counter-chances, especially on the light squares, Malakhov-Svidler, Elista 1997.

c2) 9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ was popular at the beginning of the 1990s. Black can choose between a pawn sacrifice and a solid continuation:

c21) 9...0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ (or 14 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 16 a3 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17 bxc3 e5 = Brunner-Khalifman, Lucerne Wcht 1993)

14...a5! is an interesting way to seek compensation, Rublevsky-Goldin, St Petersburg 1993.

c22) 9... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ (there are more useful things to do than castling and allowing f4-f5; 10...0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ a6 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13 f5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ is more troublesome for Black, Galdunts-Serper, Kherson 1991) 11 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$! 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (12 f4 h6) 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 f4 0-0 =. Both sides have a solid position without major weaknesses.

c3) 9 a4 0-0 10 a5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (the same plan starting with 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is OK after 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$; following, say, 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Black has tricks with ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and/or ...d5) 11... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ = Hamdouchi-Kramnik, France 1993. Black can play ...e5, put his bishop on c6 and bring his rooks to the central files. He can also exchange on d3 and play on the queenside with ...b5.

c4) The move 9 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ is often called 'the move of an experienced player' in Sicilian positions, as is $\mathbb{Q}b1$ after castling on the other wing. 9... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 10 f4 a6 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b5 (D) and then:

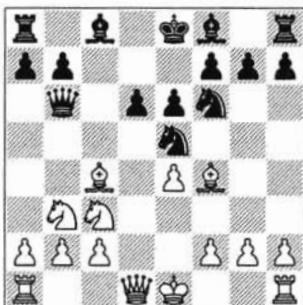


c41) 12 $\mathbb{W}e1$ 0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is now prevented due to 14

$\mathbb{Q}xb5$ but there is the natural 13... $\mathbb{Q}b7$, after which Black was probably afraid of the plan 14 a4!? b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ a5 16 c3) 14 $\mathbb{W}g3$ b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d5! 16 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}h3$ f5 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ a5 with an interesting but rather untypical position, Tošić-Damljanović, Belgrade 1999.

c42) 12 $\mathbb{W}f3$, with the option of playing $\mathbb{W}h3$, is more typical and leads to position-types examined in line 'c1'. 12... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$!? (14... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 15 $\mathbb{W}h3$ b4 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a5 looks like a fairly logical plan) 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ axb5 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 17 $\mathbb{W}h3$ e5 = Klundt-Čabrilo, 2nd Bundesliga 1991/2.

8... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (D)



9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

9 $\mathbb{Q}b5$!+? is a move experimented with mostly by Milos. Black is probably happy to exchange a pair of bishops. 9... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}fxd7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e2$ a6 12 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (Black's plan was impressive in Milos-Yermolinsky, Groningen 1996: 12 0-0 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ g5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ h5! 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 0-0-0 17 f3?! h4) 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ (more critical looks 12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ g5!; Black always seems to have problems when White can freely advance the f-pawn)

13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ b5 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 0-0 g6?! (16... $\mathbb{Q}f6$) 17 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ h5 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19 f5 gxf5 20 exf5 e5 21 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}dx5$! axb5 23 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$? 26 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ f6 27 $\mathbb{W}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ + $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 1-0 Milos-Filgueira, Buenos Aires 1998.

9... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (D)

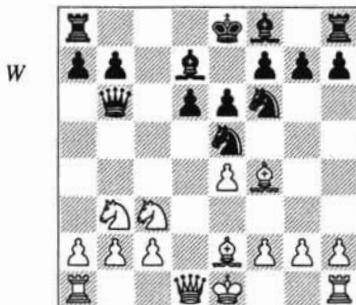
A reasonable but less popular choice is 9...a6, with the following possibilities:

a) 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ =.

b) 10 $\mathbb{Q}g3$! h5! 11 h3 (11 f4

$\mathbb{Q}eg4$; 11 f3 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d4$ h4 13 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ b5 14 a4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$ b4 16 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ d5?) 11... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}f3$ h4! and this dynamic position favoured Black in Ivanchuk-Kramnik, Linares 1993.

c) 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}f3$ (13 $\mathbb{W}d3$ b5 14 a4 is better for White according to Rechlis, but hardly anybody plays in that way; Valerga-Braga, Villa Gesell 1997 went on without big troubles in sight: 14... $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 15 cxd3 b4 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 17 h3 a5 18 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$) 13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ transposes to a solid position discussed in Game 12, note 'c231' to White's 7th move.



10 ♜d2

This is one of the ideas that is currently undergoing a theoretical discussion. White's basic plan is still to advance his kingside pawns after castling queenside. White has a wide range of alternatives:

a) 10 ♜e3 ♜c7 11 f4 (11 ♜b5 ♜xb5 12 ♜xb5+ ♜c6 13 ♜f3 a6 14 ♜d3 d5!?) 11...♜c4 12 ♜xc4 ♜xc4, with the possibilities:

a1) 13 ♜f3 ♜c6 14 ♜d4 (14 ♜d4 ♜e7 15 0-0-0 0-0 16 ♜h1 a5!) Mortensen-Cu.Hansen, Esbjerg 1996 is evaluated as slightly better for White by the players themselves after 17 ♜d3!) 14...d5 (14...♜e7 15 0-0-0 d5 16 e5 ♜e4 might be even better, Saulin-Dragomaretsky, Moscow 1995) 15 e5 ♜d7 = Kolev-Delchev, Sofia 1996.

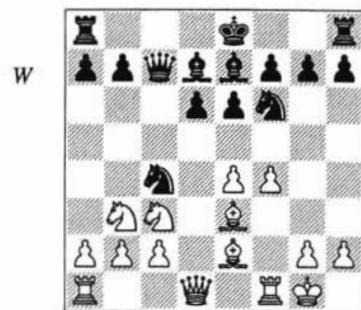
a2) 13 ♜d3 ♜xd3 14 cxd3 h5!? (there is hardly anything wrong with 14...♜e7 15 a4 0-0; in Bruzon-Pupo, Havana Capablanca mem 1998, Black demonstrated a nice plan: 16 h3 h5! 17 ♜d2 h4 18 0-0 ♜h5 19 ♜ac1 ♜fc8, and had no problems at all) 15 a4 h4 (15...a6!) 16 ♜b5 ♜c8! with counterplay (Atalik).

b) The ambitious 10 g4 allows Black an immediate break in the centre: 10...♜c6 and now:

b1) 11 ♜e3!? ♜c7 12 f3 h6 (there is also a tempting sacrifice mentioned by Polgar: 12...d5!?) 13 g5 dxе4 14 gxf6 exf3) 13 ♜d4 a6 14 ♜f2!? d5 (14...g5!?) 15 f4 ♜c4 16 ♜xc4 dxс4 17 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 18 e5 ♜e4+ = Ninov-Chernishov, Djuni 1996.

b2) 11 f3 ♜g6 12 ♜g3 d5 13 exd5 ♜xd5 14 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 15 ♜d4 (J.Polgar-Short, Novgorod 1996) 15...♜b4+! 16 c3 ♜xd4 =.

c) The move 10 0-0 looks rather harmless, but... 10...♜e7 11 ♜e3 ♜c7 12 f4 (12 ♜d2 0-0 13 f4 ♜g6 14 ♜h1 ♜c6 with a very solid position, Smirin-Khalifman, Ischia 1996) 12...♜c4 (D) and now:



c1) 13 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 14 e5 ♜e4 15 exd6 ♜xd6 16 ♜c5 (16 ♜d4! 0-0 is very comfortable for Black, D.Schneider-Yermolinsky, USA 1998) 16...♜f5 17 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 18 ♜d6 ♜f5 19 ♜a3 b5 20 ♜c5 = Velimirović-Damljanović, Vršac 1989.

c2) 13 ♜d4! 0-0 (13...♜xb2? 14 ♜b5) 14 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 15 e5! ♜e8!? (15...dxе5 16 fxе5 ♜d5 17 ♜e4 ♜b5 looks like the best, though Black must take care of the attacking possibilities with ♜g4 and ♜f6) 16 exd6 ♜xd6 17 ♜e4. White has some initiative and Black should choose between the moves 17...♜b5, 17...♜c7 and 17...♜e7 instead of the losing 17...♜c6? 18 ♜xd6, as in Golubev-Lerner, Senden 1996.

10...♜e7

There is an interesting alternative: 10...♜c8!?. Now:

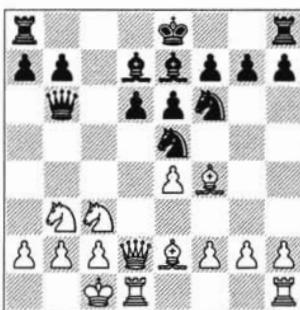
a) 11 ♜e3 ♜c7 12 ♜b5 ♜xb5 13 ♜xb5+ ♜ed7 14 0-0 (14 0-0-0!?)

14... $\mathbb{A}e7$ (14... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$! 15 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}ec5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $dxc5$ 17 $\mathbb{W}g4$) 15 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $d5!$ (this seems to be a regular equalizer in this type of position) 16 $exd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{A}d4$ 0-0 = Onishchuk-Tukmakov, Biel 1996.

b) After 11 0-0-0!? Black shouldn't play the tempting 11... $\mathbb{B}xc3?$! 12 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}d4$ but rather 11... $\mathbb{A}e7$ according to Tukmakov; for example, 12 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 f4 (13 $\mathbb{A}d4?$) 13... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 14 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 15 e5?!! (15 $\mathbb{A}d4?$) 15... $dxe5$ 16 $fxe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $exd5$ 18 $\mathbb{B}hf1$ 0-0 (18...d4?) Agopov-Tella, Helsinki 2000 and after 19 $\mathbb{A}b1$ the position is almost level in spite of Black's bishop-pair.

11 0-0-0 (D)

B



11... $\mathbb{A}c6$

Better than 11...0-0-0! 12 g4! $\mathbb{Q}exg4$ 13 $\mathbb{B}xg4$ $\mathbb{B}xg4$ 14 $\mathbb{B}hg1$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 15 e5! $\mathbb{B}e8$ 16 $exd5$ \pm Kupreichik-Lopushnoi, Perm 1998.

No one has yet dared 11... $\mathbb{W}xf2$ 12 $\mathbb{B}hf1$ $\mathbb{W}xg2$, with the idea 13 $\mathbb{A}xe5?$! $dxe5$ 14 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 0-0-0!.

12 f3

12 $\mathbb{A}e3?$! $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{B}b5$ is worth analysing.

12...a6 13 g4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{B}d4$

After the logical 14 g5!?! $\mathbb{B}fd7$ 15 $\mathbb{A}e3$ b5 16 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $bxc4$ 18 $\mathbb{B}d4$, it is hard to say whether the advance of the f-pawn is more dangerous than Black's chances on the b-file.

14... $b5$ 15 a3 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 16 g5
16 $\mathbb{Q}xc6?$! $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 17 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ $dxe5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{W}c5!$ is fine for Black.

16... $\mathbb{B}fd7$ 17 h4 $\mathbb{A}a8$ 18 h5 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$

19... $bxc4$?! looks good since 20 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$! 22 $\mathbb{Q}ec3$ e5 23 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 25 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 26 $axb4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ loses a pawn.

20 g6 b4 21 axb4 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 22 $\mathbb{B}b3$

22 $gxf7+?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 23 $\mathbb{B}b3$ is possible, as 23... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ can be countered by 24 $\mathbb{A}g5!$.

22... $hxg6$ 23 $hxg6$ $\mathbb{B}xh1$ 24 $gxf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25 $\mathbb{B}xh1$ a5 26 $\mathbb{W}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 27 e5 $dxe5$ 28 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 29 $\mathbb{W}g3$ a4? 30 $\mathbb{B}gl$

30 $\mathbb{B}h4$ is still about equal.

30...g5! 31 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ a3 32 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 33 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 34 $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 35 $\mathbb{W}h3$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 36 $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 37 $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{W}h2$ 38 $\mathbb{B}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 39 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 40 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $axb2$ 41 $\mathbb{W}h7+$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 42 $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{W}xg7$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 44 $\mathbb{B}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 46 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 47 $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 48 c4 $\mathbb{B}b6$ 49 c5 $\mathbb{B}c6$ 50 $\mathbb{B}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 51 $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 53 $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 55 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 56 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 57 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 58 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ e5 59 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e4 60 $fxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 0-1

Conclusion: The theory of the new main line is not yet stable, but Black usually finds playable ways very soon after White has found something new to try. The older lines are not big trouble for Black, though there are plenty of different plans to be prepared for.

Which line to choose in the Sozin?

Black has a basic choice between 6...e6 and 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$. Both of them have achieved a positive score at top level during the last few years, which is highly unusual. 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$ is more solid in nature and Black doesn't have to worry about such violent kingside attacks as in the Velimirović, though there are some quite sharp lines too. In the 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$ lines, Black has better chances to survive without exact theoretical knowledge. On the other hand, there is a greater variety of position-types to study. Black should be ready to play even Dragon position-types in some cases. In the line 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$, this is the best choice. There are still some lines where new theory is rapidly developing. Personally, I have always played 6...e6, but the more I look at 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$, the more I like it.

If Black chooses 6...e6, there are still some choices to be made to build a watertight repertoire. The Velimirović lines and the Sozin lines are closely connected to each other. In the Velimirović, Black can choose between:

- A) The surprise weapon 8... $\mathbb{Q}a5$;
- B) The main line of Game 10 with 9... $\mathbb{Q}a5!$;
- C) The very theoretical line with an early ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$;
- D) The lines with early castling not introduced here.

Option A should be considered only as a surprise weapon, even though it doesn't look bad. White can easily bypass the line with the move-order of

Game 11. Option B has been by far the most successful. It also looks theoretically good. The drawback is that Black has to be careful not to play ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ too early. The choice of Sozin line is usually restricted to the one discussed in Game 11. Option C seems to be theoretically sound, but Black's score practice is much worse here, because White has the initiative. However, C allows Black a wider choice in the Sozin lines, and Black doesn't have to take care about playing ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ too early. C might be a good line against a stronger opponent, because there are very long theoretical lines and White has to take risks to play for a win. I cannot say much about D, but it is no more successful in practice than C.

In the Sozin with 6...e6, White has the choice between the main line of Game 10 and the main line of Game 11. They lead to quite different position-types but seem to be about equal in value. White has some changes to get a small advantage, though in both cases things are not very clear. Black can avoid the line of Game 11 by taking on the lines discussed in the note to Black's 10th move in Game 10. Black has also a chance to avoid the line of Game 10 by taking on Option D in the Velimirović. This is how it happens: 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 0-0 9 f4 (9 $\mathbb{W}e2$ leads to D) 9... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ b5!, which seems to be a good line for Black. Things are very complicated in the Sozin/Velimirović jungle. It is much simpler to choose 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$.

5 The Rauzer with 8...h6

Strategic Introduction to the Rauzer without doubled f-pawns

To be accurate, the move 6 $\mathbb{A}g5$ is called the Richter-Rauzer Attack. If White continues after 6...e6 with the most popular response 7 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (D) followed by castling queenside, we are in the Rauzer. Moves other than 7 $\mathbb{W}d2$ are covered in Chapter 7.

B



In many typical Rauzer lines White intends to exchange the dark-squared bishop on f6 at a moment when it is not good for Black to take back with a piece. This leads to a quite different position-type from a strategic point of view. In the most popular Rauzer line, 7...a6 8 0-0-0 h6, there is not much point in taking on f6 and the bishop must withdraw. One possibility is 9 $\mathbb{A}f4$ (D), exerting some pressure on

B



d6 (9...e5 is impossible owing to 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 11 $\mathbb{A}xe5$).

However, the most natural and flexible reply is 9 $\mathbb{A}e3$ (D).

B

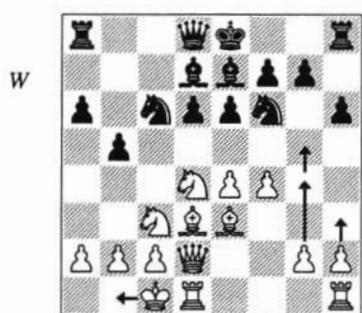


Then the play diverges according to whether White continues with f4 (type 1 below) or the English Attack set-up with f3 (type 2). With f4, White has more chances to strike in the centre, whereas f3 protects the weak point e4 and so gives Black less counterplay.

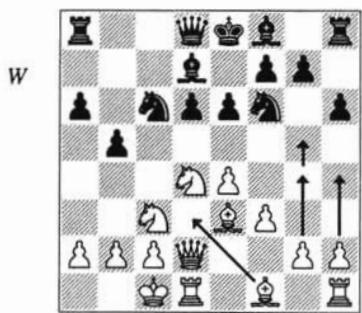
Typical Methods for White

1. Attack on the kingside with h3 and g4-g5 or f3, g4, h4 and g5

Position-type 1:



Position-type 2:



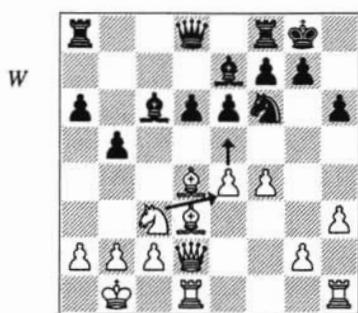
2. Defend the queenside with ♜b1

This protects against tricks based on the weakness of a2 and the c-file. In position-type 1, White's best move is the cautious 12 ♜b1 to protect a2. In almost all Rauzer lines, an early ♜b1 is recommended for White.

3. Play in the centre with e5

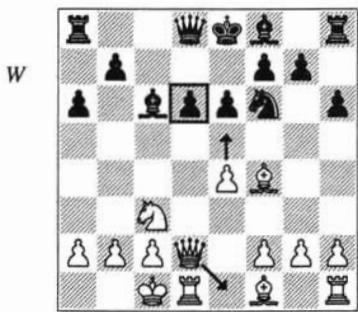
The knight may come into the attack via e4. The f6-square is vulnerable in

Black's king position. This idea is usual in position-type 1.



Black should put pressure on the e5-pawn (...Qd7) or try to exchange some of the attacking pieces (...Qd5-b4). The right counter-method depends on the position, but here the latter option is safer: 15 e5 dx5 16 fx5 Qd5! 17 Qe4 Qb4, exchanging both the d3-bishop and the e4-knight.

4. Try to benefit from the semi-open d-file

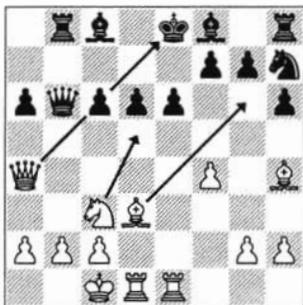


White has some tactical ideas based on the black queen being on the d-file and the weakness of the d-pawn. After 11 We1, White has the threat e5.

5. Watch for tactical ideas based on the move $\mathbb{Q}d5$

In the position above (position-type 4) after 11 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ White has 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5!?$. Look at position 3 of Black's methods too.

B



Here the black king is in big danger because of the idea $\mathbb{Q}d5$, which comes after almost everything. See the note to White's 9th move in Game 14.

6. If Black has castled, watch for a chance to sacrifice on h6

B

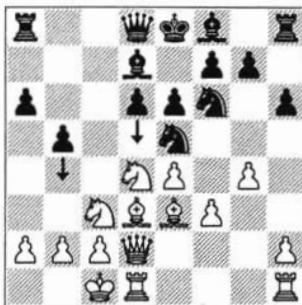


In this position-type, the sacrificial possibility is very real. The $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ idea may well be linked with the moves e5 and $\mathbb{Q}h3$, intending $\mathbb{Q}g3$.

Typical Methods for Black

1. Counter-attack in the centre with ...b4 and ...d5

B



Here Black's standard strike is 12...b4 13 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ d5. It looks double-edged because Black's kingside development is bad, but Black needs counterplay against White's kingside attack.

2. Counter-attack in the centre with ...b4, ...e5 and ...d5

B



Black becomes active with the help of the unprotected a2-pawn after 13...b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$, followed by a later ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and ...d5. It is not possible

to take on e5 because of the a2-pawn: 15 dx5 dx5 16 ♜xe5? ♛xa5 followed by ...♛xa2.

3. Pressurize White's e-pawn with a bishop on c6

This may cause some confusion in the white camp. Look at the positions 3 and 4 of White's methods.

B



W. Watson – Yrjölä
Gijon rpd 1988

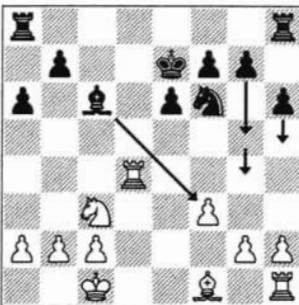
Here White has some problems with the e-pawn after 15...b4 though he could try 16 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 17 ♜d5 instead of losing a pawn after 16 e5 dx5 17 fxe5 ♜d7.

4. Strive for the ending

Reduction to an ending usually favours Black as long as his position is still fundamentally solid.

In the following diagram, the ending is very good for Black, who can push the kingside majority (...g5, ...h5 and ...g4) with the help of the bishop's pressure on the long diagonal. Generally, Black has much better chances to use his pawn-majority than White does.

W



5. Before castling kingside, secure counterplay on the queenside

Or else open lines in the centre with the intention of exchanging pieces to reduce White's attacking power.

B



18...b4 19 ♜e2 ♜b5! eliminates the potential attacker, the d3-bishop. Often exchanging rooks on the open d-file has the same aim.

6. If White advances his kingside pawns, play ...h5 to stop them

In the following diagram, the game continued 11...h5!? 12 ♜b3 b5 13 ♛f2 ♛c7. This idea to stop White's kingside potential is a modern approach and it's getting popular even in some Najdorf lines.

B

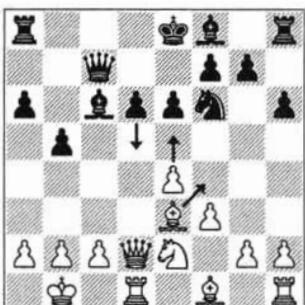


Shirov – Damjanović
Batumi Echt 1999

7. Black can often play in the centre with ...d5 in position-type 2, where White has exchanged on c6

A warning is needed though: there are many examples where this is just bad. If White can answer e4-e5 based on ♜f4 tactics, he might be positionally better.

B



Adams – Bellin
Kilkenny 1999

13...d5 14 e5! ♜d7 15 f4 b4 16 ♜d4 gave White the upper hand. The resulting type of closed position is often better for White, who has the

d4-square and a lot of kingside potential.

Sometimes White gets a lot of pressure on the central lines. The ...d5 idea usually works best when White has weakened his pawn-structure with g4.

B



Leko – Korchnoi
Dortmund 1994

Here Black has a tactical justification (the h1-rook is hanging): 15...d5! 16 ♜b6 ♜b7 17 e5 ♜xg4! 18 ♜d4 ♜xe5, although the position remains unclear.

8. Black plays a knight to e5 in position-type 2

W



This is a dominating square and White rarely wants to play f4, which weakens both e4 and g4. From e5, the knight can jump to c4 if necessary.

9. Place the dark squares under control

There are good examples in Game 17, including the main game itself. This is quite typical for position-type 2, where White creates dark-square weaknesses in his camp.

Rauzer with 8...h6: White plays 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ or 9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$

Here we discuss the less popular alternatives to 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and 9 $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

Game 14
Nisipeanu – Ivanchuk
Las Vegas FIDE KO 1999

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 7 $\mathbb{W}d2$ a6 8
0-0-0

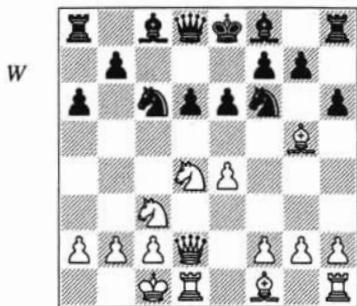
There is not enough reason to give up the bishop-pair: 8 f4?! h6! 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (9 $\mathbb{Q}h4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$) 9... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 11 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ =.

8...h6 (D)

9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

This is a brand new idea and the theory is developing rapidly.

The complicated line 9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ is rather rare but dangerous and should be studied carefully by Black even if the statistics look very favourable for his side: 9... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 10 $\mathbb{W}f4$ (10 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$) 10... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (the alternative is unpopular but playable: 10...g5 11 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6



13 $\mathbb{W}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{B}b8$, though after the manoeuvre 15 $\mathbb{Q}c4$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}b3$, White is slightly better) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 12 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$. Now:

a) There is a dangerous attacking idea first played by Planinc and recently revived by I.Almasi: 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ (14...d5?!) 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 f5 is unclear, Solak-Zontakh, Sabak 1998, while 14... $\mathbb{W}xb2+?$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 16 $\mathbb{B}b1$ is better for White) 15 $\mathbb{Q}he1$. Here the move $\mathbb{Q}d5$ comes after almost everything. White's practical chances should not be underestimated even though Black may be able to equalize. Snapping off the b2-pawn is usually dangerous owing to the b-file. 15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$? (better though very complicated is 15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$?!) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{G}xf6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xb2+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 19 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xb1$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$, which is probably equal, while 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$? 16 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ ± I.Almasi-Cao Sang, Budapest 1997, cannot be recommended due to 16... $\mathbb{W}xb2+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ g5 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{F}xe6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}a5+$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f2$) 16 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{W}xb2+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{F}xe6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ and Black was crushed in T.Hernandez-Pina, Camaguey 1998.

b) 13 f4 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ and now:

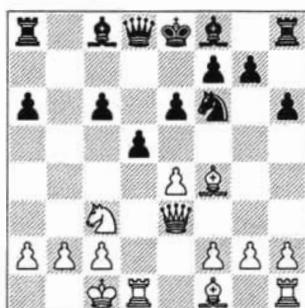
- b1) The obscure line 14 $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{B}b8$ 15 $\mathbb{B}he1$ can be met by 15...g5 (instead of the messy 15... $\mathbb{W}xb2+ 16 \mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{W}b4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc6+ \mathbb{Q}d7 18 \mathbb{W}xa6 \mathbb{B}c8 19 \mathbb{E}e4$ Westerinen-Schüssler, Gjøvik 1985) 16 fxg5 $\mathbb{W}xb2+ 17 \mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}g7 \mp$.

b2) 14 $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{W}c7$ 15 g4 (15 f5!?) 15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 h4 looks less critical. This was tried successfully in Moen-Grønn, Norwegian Ch 1992.

b3) 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ leads to line 'a', giving Black even fewer options than one move earlier.

b4) In what used to be the main line, Black has no problems: 14 f5 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 15 fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{Q}e7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe7 \mathbb{Q}xe7$ 19 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e3+$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}g5!?$) 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{W}hf8$ (or 20... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1 \mathbb{W}e4$ 22 $\mathbb{W}g3 \mathbb{W}e5=$) 21 $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{F}f7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}d4 \mathbb{W}xd4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xd4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ with an equal ending, Ziatdinov-Lerner, Bern 1994.

9... $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d5 11 $\mathbb{W}e3$ (D)



B

The positional factors and plans don't seem so obvious here. White's play is based on the pressure on the kingside. He can disturb Black's development ($\mathbb{W}g3$) or he can attack the king if Black castles. But what are

Black's weapons? Attacking on the b-file doesn't look realistic. Also, there never seems to be time for the obvious ...c5 and ...d4. One plan is to attack the e4-pawn to force it advance or exchange on d5, which both seem to benefit Black.

11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

This is the most popular move and a favourite of strong players. One question is whether it is useful first to play 11... $\mathbb{B}b4$ and only after 12 a3 the move 12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$. This weakens White's king position slightly but the b4-square is not at Black's disposal any more.

On the other hand, 11... $\mathbb{W}a5$ is more active and most interesting:

a) 12 exd5 cxd5 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}b7$ looks positionally fine for Black, who has the central pawns. Still, Black has some problems with his king and development. 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (after 14 $\mathbb{W}g3 \mathbb{B}c8$ White has to take ... $\mathbb{B}xc3$ seriously) 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4 \mathbb{Q}c5$ is comfortable for Black however, Neron de Surgy-Touzane, Paris 1998.

b) 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ and then:

b1) 12...dxe4! is an interesting idea, e.g. 13 $\mathbb{W}g3$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{W}f5!$; 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4!?$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14 $\mathbb{B}xd5$ cxd5 15 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ with compensation, Gershon-Lerner, Graz 1997) 13... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ and White will play f3 soon and Black's problems with his kingside development will give White enough compensation, which is of rather an unpleasant nature in practice.

b2) 12... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e5 \mathbb{B}xc3$ is more natural:

b21) Critical might be the rather untested line 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc3!?$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 15 f3!

(15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 16 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{B}b8\#$) 15...0-0
 (15... $\mathbb{Q}b7?$! 16 $\mathbb{W}b6$) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 17
 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{W}a1+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 19 h4! f5
 (19...dxe4 20 $\mathbb{H}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e1$
 $\mathbb{W}b4+$ 22 c3 $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}xc3+$
 24 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d3+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}g1!$ $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 26
 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}e1$ 27 $\mathbb{H}g3+$ $\mathbb{W}xg3+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$
 +-) 20 exf5 $\mathbb{W}b4+$ (maybe Black
 should take the ending: 20... $\mathbb{W}g7$ 21
 $\mathbb{W}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 22 fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23 g4 \pm
 21 c3 $\mathbb{W}b2+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ $\mathbb{W}b5+$ (22...a5
 23 f6 $\mathbb{Q}a6+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xe2+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}f4$
 +-) 23 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b6+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ exf5 25
 $\mathbb{W}g5+$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}d3 \pm$ $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}d2$
 $\mathbb{W}b2+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}c2$. This analysis of this
 obscure line indicates that White has
 chances for some advantage. I await
 practical tests with interest.

b22) 14 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$
 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ e5 18
 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xg2$ leads to a complex ending
 that is not worse for Black.

12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 13 $\mathbb{W}g3$

Black still faces the problem of finding a strong answer to 13 h4! (note that 13 g4 is nothing because of 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ or 13... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ with a blockade), when White has the sacrifice on h6 against almost everything:

a) The trick 13...d4 is looming but at this moment 14 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ gives White a better ending.

b) 13... $\mathbb{Q}b4?$! 14 e5 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ (after 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ White can play 15 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$) 15 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e3$ f6 17 f3 \pm Gofstein-Khasin, Rishon le Zion 1997.

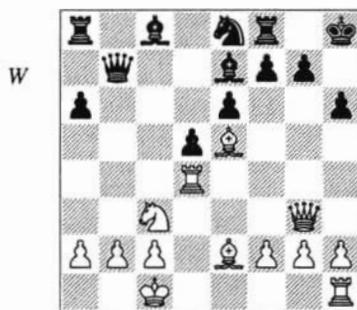
- c) 13... $\mathbb{W}a5?$! 14 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$
- d) 13...c5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$.

e) 13... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ looks to some extent playable, but after 14 g4 or 14 $\mathbb{H}h3$ Black still has problems. On c8, the bishop at least prevents $\mathbb{H}h3$. The

weakness of the king position and the bishop sacrifice on h6 are Black's main worries in this rather untested line. This position demonstrates the dangers of castling kingside in the Rauzer with ...h6.

f) 13... $\mathbb{H}e8$ is a recommendation of Nisipeanu and Stoica. They give the continuation 14 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with a small plus for White.

13... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$
 16 exd5 cxd5 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8!$ (D)



Black is defending successfully with the exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20 $\mathbb{H}g4$

In the following complications White has to do his best to get the draw. According to Nisipeanu and Stoica, 20 a3! a5 21 a4 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is better.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 22 b3
 $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ 23 $\mathbb{W}h4$ f5! 24 $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}b4$
 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 28
 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$
 $\mathbb{Q}cc6$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

The ending is equal.

32 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}f4+$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 35 c4 a5 36 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 37 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 38
 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 39 b4 g5 40 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 41

bxa5 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3+$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 44 g4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 45 h3 $\mathbb{Q}b2+$ 46 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 47 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ 48 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 49 f5+ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 50 c5 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 51 $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 52 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 53 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 54 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 55 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ ½-½

Conclusion: These sidelines are dangerous for Black. There is a novel idea in the old mess 9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ and Black has not yet found a sure equalizer against the new line 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ despite Ivanchuk's fine defence. Fortunately for ...h6 adherents, these lines are not yet very popular.

Rauzer with 8...h6: White plays 9 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Historically, this has been the second most popular move. Its popularity at top level compared with 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ always awakens when there is an important new idea or something to discuss theoretically. At this moment, there is none. White's play is based on piece-play and immediate threats more than attacking potential with pawn advances like in the 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ lines.

Game 15
Karpov – Salov
Buenos Aires 1994

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a6 8 0-0-0 h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

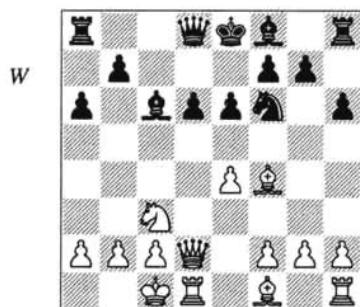
The alternatives are dangerous only as surprises:

a) 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (10...b5!?) 11 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is less sharp) 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b5 12 f4 b4! 13 fxe5 bxc3 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

d5 with complex play, Kosashvili-Rechlis, Israeli Ch 1986.

b) 10 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ b5 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ b4 13 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ = Filipenko-Emelin, Pardubice 1997.

10... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (D)



11 f3

Taking the pawn is not a reliable way to force a draw: 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ g5 = Berend-Jansa, Bonnevole 1999, with a typical ending in this line where Black can generate play with his kingside majority.

The main alternative to the text-move is 11 $\mathbb{Q}e1$, with the idea e4-e5 and sometimes $\mathbb{Q}d5$:

a) The natural move 11... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ usually transposes to 'b', but might lead to a different track after 12 e5 (or 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5$!?) $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 14 c3 e5) 12...dxe5 (12...d5!?) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$) 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$.

b) The main move is 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ believing that e5 is no threat. If White continues with slow moves like $\mathbb{Q}b1$ and f3, etc., Black has time for ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ and ...b5, so the following are critical:

b1) 12 h4 (sometimes the rook can come into play via h3) 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ (Black keeps options open of castling either side) 13 e5 and now:

b11) 13...dxe5 14 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 15 f3 (15 $\mathbb{A}h3!?$) 15...0-0 16 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{A}fd8$ is rather solid but the queen doesn't want to block the b-pawn, Psakhis-Ivanchuk, Moscow 1990.

b12) Black can also opt for a closed position: 13...d5 14 $\mathbb{A}h3$ (14 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 16 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 17 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{A}b5$ 18 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{A}xf1$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xf1$ 0-0-0 = Cuijpers-Tukmakov, Eindhoven 1986) 14... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ 16 h5 0-0-0 17 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}b5!$ = (the exchange of the light-squared bishops is a good policy) Kotronias-Shirov, Khalkidiki 1993. In this case, White managed to gain some space on the kingside. Black is happier, of course, if he has time to play ...h5 himself.

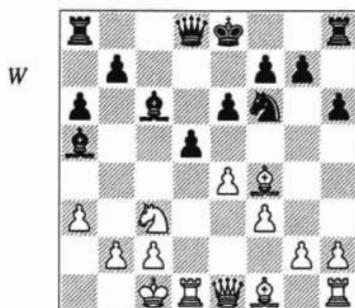
b2) The obvious 12 e5 forces the following continuation: 12... $\mathbb{A}h5$ 13 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 $\mathbb{A}e2$ g6 15 $\mathbb{A}xh5$ (the exchange sacrifice doesn't look justified: 15 g4?! $\mathbb{A}xh1$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xh1$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 17 exd6 $\mathbb{A}xd6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}b5+!?$ $\mathbb{A}f8$ 19 $\mathbb{A}e4$ axb5 20 $\mathbb{A}xd6$ $\mathbb{A}xa2$ Gild.Garcia-Stefansson, Elista OL 1998) 15...gxh5. There is no proof White has any advantage in this position. Although Black's kingside pawn-structure is not perfect, he has active pieces and the famous Rauzer bishop on c6 puts pressure on the diagonal. Quite often Black manages to repair his pawn-structure like Shirov and Timman below. Examples: 16 $\mathbb{A}f4$ (16 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{A}g8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}e3$ 0-0-0!?) 18 $\mathbb{A}b6$ $\mathbb{A}g5$ 19 f4 $\mathbb{A}xf4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xd6$ $\mathbb{A}xg2$ \mathbb{F} Hodgson-Tukmakov, Sochi 1987) 16...0-0-0 17 f3 (17 exd6 $\mathbb{A}xd6$ 18

$\mathbb{A}xd6$ $\mathbb{A}xd6$ doesn't give much in spite of the pin: 19 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{A}g8$ 20 $\mathbb{A}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 21 $\mathbb{A}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xh2$ 22 g3 $\mathbb{A}g2$ \mathbb{F} Thorsteins-Balashov, Reykjavik 1984) 17... $\mathbb{A}g5$ (17... $\mathbb{A}hg8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{A}g5$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ = Adams-Timman, Amsterdam 1994) 18 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ (the pawn-formation is repaired) 19 $\mathbb{W}g3$ dxe5 20 $\mathbb{A}xd8+$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{A}g8$ 22 $\mathbb{A}e4$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{A}d6$ = Karpov-Shirov, Buenos Aires 1994.

11...d5 12 $\mathbb{W}e1$

The ending after 12 exd5 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 13 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ offers Black some chances to play for a win with his kingside majority; nor is it the right time to play 12 e5? $\mathbb{A}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$.

12... $\mathbb{A}b4$ 13 a3 $\mathbb{A}a5$ (D)



14 $\mathbb{A}d2$

There are two major alternatives, a safe one and a risky one:

a) 14 b4 $\mathbb{A}b6$ 15 exd5 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ (not 15... $\mathbb{A}xd5?$ losing to 16 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 17 c4) and now:

a1) A drawish line is 16 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 17 c4 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}e5$ $\mathbb{A}e3+$ (if 18... $\mathbb{A}g5+!?$, then 19 $\mathbb{A}b1$ $\mathbb{A}e3$ 20 f4) 19 $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{A}xe3$ 20 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ $\mathbb{A}xd1$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xg7$ $\mathbb{A}g8$ 22 $\mathbb{A}xh6$ $\mathbb{A}f2$ =.

a2) 16 ♜e5 0-0 17 ♜h4 ♜e3+ (17...a5!?) 18 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 19 ♜xf6 gxf6 20 ♜xd5 exd5 looks good enough for a draw) 18 ♜b2 ♜g5 19 ♜d4 ♜c6 was popular for a couple of years but now everyone seems to agree that there is not much life in the resulting ending. Black has no weaknesses and White is playing only with his queenside majority. 20 a4 (both 20 ♜d3 ♜xd4 21 ♜xd4 ♜fd8 22 ♜e2 ♜d5 23 h4 ♜f6 24 ♜xf6 gxf6, ½-½ Tiviakov-Shirov, Frunze 1989, and 20 ♜xd8 ♜fxd8 21 ♜d3 ♜d5 22 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 23 ♜c3 ♜ad8 24 ♜de1 ♜b5 ±, Tiviakov-Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 1996, are very comfortable for Black) 20...♜xd4 21 ♜xd4 ♜fc8 22 ♜b3 ♜d7 (22...a5!?) 23 b5 ♜d5+ 24 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 25 c4 ♜e3 26 ♜e1 ♜f5 27 ♜b6 ♜d8 = Nijboer-Meins, Bundesliga 1997/8) 23 ♜c4 (23 b5! axb5 24 axb5 ♜d5+) 23...b6 24 ♜h1 a5 25 ♜xe6! (White saves his position with tactics) 25...fxe6 26 ♜xe6+ ♜f8 27 b5 ♜xf3 28 gxf3 ♜c5+ 29 ♜xc5+ ♜xc5 30 ♜d7 ♜d8 31 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 32 ♜d5 ♜xd5 ½-½ Rogers-Greenfeld, Hoogeveen 1997.

b) 14 exd5 ♜xd5 15 b4 ♜xf4! (this queen sacrifice is practically forced, but it has a good reputation) 16 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 17 h4 0-0 and now:

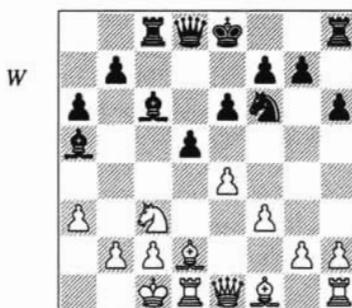
b1) 18 ♜h2!? b5?! (maybe 18...♜c7 19 g3 ♜fd8) 19 ♜e3 ♜f6 20 ♜xf4 ♜xc3 21 ♜e3 ± is the latest idea, Ninov-Zontakh, Lazarevac 1999.

b2) After 18 ♜e3 ♜c7!, Black's active pieces, dark squares and the weakness of White's king position guarantee Black enough compensation; for example: 19 ♜b1 (19 ♜g1 ♜fd8 20 g3 ♜d5 21 ♜xd5 exd5 22 ♜d3 ♜e8 Kaminski-Serper, Wisla 1992)

19...♜fe8!? 20 g4 ♜d5 21 ♜xd5 exd5 22 ♜d2 ♜b6 23 g5 ♜e3 with active play for Black, Sammalvuo-Lehto, Helsinki 1996.

14...♜c8 (D)

There are many playable moves in this position but this natural one has been the most popular in recent years. The main alternative, 14...♜e7 15 e5 ♜d7, usually leads to a closed position reminiscent of some lines of the French Defence. A typical example: 16 ♜b1 ♜b6 17 f4 h5 18 ♜e2 g6 19 g3 ♜c5 20 ♜c3 ♜f2 21 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 22 ♜d4 ♜xd4 23 ♜xd4 ♜c8 Topalov-Salov, Madrid 1993. Another story is 14...d4 15 e5 ♜c7 16 ♜e2 ♜xd2+ 17 ♜xd2 ♜xe5, which should also be OK. Lanka has even played the move 14...♜b6 a couple of times without any problems.



15 ♜g3

Other possibilities:

a) 15 ♜b1 dxe4 (15...d4!?) 16 fxe4 (16 ♜xe4? ♜xe4 17 fxe4 ♜xd2 18 ♜xd2 ♜a5 19 ♜d3 ♜e5 ± M. Müller-Reeh, Bundesliga 1994/5) 16...♜e7 17 e5 ♜d7 18 ♜g3 ♜c7 19 ♜xg7 ♜xe5 20 ♜g4 ♜f6 21 ♜h3 ½-½ Topalov-San Segundo, Madrid 1993. The nice bishops more than compensate for the

slight inconvenience of the black king position.

b) 15 exd5 ♜xd5 16 ♜xd5 ♜xd2+ 17 ♜xd2 ♜xd5 18 ♜d3 0-0 19 ♜e4 ♜c5 20 ♜f2 ♜a5 21 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 22 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 = Thorhallsson-Petursson, Icelandic Ch 1996 should be a draw but surprisingly Black went on to win.

15...d4 16 ♜e3 ♜c7!

17 ♜xg7?? ♜h7 is a typical tactical trick in this line.

17 f4?!

Better is 17 e5 ♜h5 18 ♜g4 ♜xe5 19 ♜xd4=.

17...♜h5 18 ♜g4 ♜f6 19 ♜xd4 ♜xf4 20 ♜xf4 ♜xf4+ 21 ♜xf4 ♜xf4

The result is a typically better ending for Black. He has the e5-square for his knight and potential play with his kingside majority.

22 g3 ♜g6 23 ♜d2 ♜e5 24 ♜e2 ♜e7 25 ♜e3 g5 26 h4 ♜cg8 27 hxg5 ♜xg5 28 ♜h5 ♜xg3+ 29 ♜f4 ♜g1 30 ♜d5+ ♜xd5 31 exd5 ♜g6+ 32 ♜e3 ♜g3+ 33 ♜f2 ♜g5 34 ♜b4 b5 35 a4 ♜c8 36 axb5 axb5 37 dxe6 ♜xh5 38 ♜xh5 ♜xc2+ 39 ♜e3 ♜c5 40 ♜e2 ♜e5+ 41 ♜f2 fxe6 42 ♜xb5 ♜f6 43 ♜d3 h5 44 ♜e4 ♜c5 45 ♜e3 ♜g5 46 ♜f2 ♜f5+ 47 ♜e3 ♜g5 48 ♜f2 ♜f5+ 49 ♜e3 ♜e7 50 ♜h4 ♜e5+ 51 ♜f2 ♜d5 52 ♜c4 ♜f5+ 53 ♜g1 ♜g5+ 54 ♜f2 ♜f5+ 55 ♜g1 ♜g6 56 ♜e4 ♜f4 57 b4 ♜g5+ 58 ♜f1 e5 59 ♜a6 ♜g3 60 ♜c4 ♜b3 61 b5 h4 62 ♜c6+ ♜g5 63 b6 ♜b1+ 64 ♜f2 h3 65 ♜g3 ♜g1+ 66 ♜h2 ♜g2+ 67 ♜h1 ♜h5 0-1

Conclusion: The line now seems totally equal; the proportion of draws at top level is high. The onus is on White to find something new.

Rauzer with 8...h6: White plays 9 ♜e3 and f4

Game 16

Spraggett – Veingold

Saragossa 1995

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 d6 6 ♜g5 e6 7 ♜d2 a6 8 0-0-0 h6 9 ♜e3 ♜d7 10 f4

This is the most natural continuation: White plays in the centre by preparing the e5 push. Also, if Black castles kingside at an early stage, White can start rolling the pawns with h3 and g4.

10...b5 11 ♜d3 (D)



11...♜e7

This is the most popular move and brings about one of the most important positions in the whole ...h6 Rauzer. Black is ready to castle at a suitable moment.

There is a straightforward attempt to carry out the normal trick immediately. It is almost untried, risky but also very interesting: 11...♜xd4?! 12 ♜xd4 b4 13 ♜e2 e5 14 fxe5 (14 ♜e3 ♜a5 will lead to the main line with

Black having avoided the more dangerous 12 ♜b1 lines) 14...dxe5 15 ♜xe5 ♛a5 16 ♜xf6 ♛xa2 17 ♛e3 (the tempting 17 ♛f4 gxf6 18 ♛xf6 ♜g8 is good for Black) 17...gxf6 18 ♜d4 ♛a1+ 19 ♜d2 ♛a5 20 ♛xf6 (20 ♛d5!?) 20...♛g5+ 21 ♛xg5 hxg5. Black has some compensation for the pawn: bishop-pair, dark squares, h-file and counterplay with the a-pawn. This is something that can be analysed as a practical surprise weapon. Many GMs have for sure analysed this idea, but no one has tried it.

12 h3

12 ♜b1 looks slow but also stops the most effective counter-idea by protecting the a-pawn:

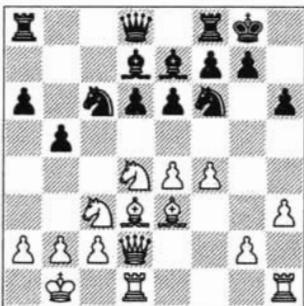
a) 12...♝xd4!? is one of the most solid ideas. 13 ♜xd4 ♜c6 and then:

a1) 14 ♜he1 b4 (14...♜c8!?) 15 g4 b4 16 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 17 ♜d5 ♜h4 J.Polgar-Karpov, Buenos Aires 1994) 15 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 16 ♜d5 a5=.

a2) 14 ♛e3! b4 (14...♛c7 15 e5 dxe5 16 fxe5 ♜d5 17 ♛g3 ± Adams-Garcia Ilundain, Terrassa 1991 leads to a position-type to avoid with Black) 15 ♜xf6 gxf6 16 ♜e2 ♛a5 17 ♜hf1 ♛c5 18 ♛g3 ♜f8 19 f5 e5 with a playable type of doubled f-pawn Rauzer, Kruppa-Shmuter, Kherson 1990. Black is coming with the a-pawn.

b) 12...0-0 13 h3 (D) (the straightforward attacking idea 13 g4 ♜xg4 14 ♜hg1 ♜xe3 15 ♛xe3 ♜h8 is dangerous-looking but hardly justified; after 16 ♜f3 the move 16...e5! has been recommended to stop White's e5 and was tested in Xie Jun-Galliamova, Erevan wom OL 1996: 17 ♜d5 ♜g8 18 ♜df1 ♜f8 19 ♜g3 exf4 20 ♛xf4 ♜e6 ±) and now:

B



b1) The calm 13...♛c7!? should be taken seriously: 14 g4 ♜xd4 15 ♜xd4 b4 16 ♜e2 e5 17 ♜e3 (17 fxe5 dxe5 18 ♜e3 ♜c5 19 ♜g3 ♜xe3 20 ♛xe3 a5 21 ♜df1 ♜h7 was fine for Black in the game Van der Wiel-Gross, Bundesliga 1997/8) 17...♜c6 18 ♜g3 (18 fxe5 ♜xe4!) 18...d5! 19 fxe5 ♜xe4 20 ♜xe4 dxe4 21 ♜f5 ♜fd8 and Black was not worse in Santo-Roman - P.Garcia, Linares Z 1995 after 22 ♛f2 but what about 22 ♜d6!? instead?

b2) After 13...♝xd4 14 ♜xd4 ♜c6, White has two ways to react against the threat ...b4:

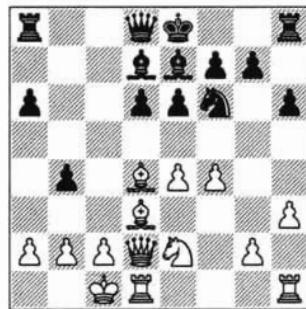
b21) 15 e5 dxe5 16 fxe5 ♜d7 (it is probably better to exchange one attacking piece with 16...♜d5! 17 ♜e4 ♜b4) 17 ♛e3 (more dangerous is 17 ♜e4!?) ♛c7! 18 ♜f6+ ♜h8 19 ♛e3, when it is hard to find constructive moves for Black) 17...♜b8 (Black should prevent ♜e4 followed by ♜f6+ by pressing against the e5-pawn) 18 ♜e2 ♜d8 19 ♜g3 ♜g5 20 ♛f2 ♜h4 eliminates the dangerous knight, Ill-escas-Salov, Oviedo rpd 1993.

b22) 15 ♛e3 (almost invariably played) 15...♛c7 16 e5 dxe5 17 ♜xe5 (17 fxe5 ♜d5 =) 17...♜b7 looks quite equal; still, White can create some

play with f5 or g4, h4 and g5. Black usually attempts to exchange pieces, ...b4 and ... $\mathbb{A}b5$ being a common manoeuvre. 18 $\mathbb{A}hf1$ (or 18 $\mathbb{A}he1$ $\mathbb{A}ad8$ 19 g4 b4 20 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}d5$ 21 $\mathbb{W}g1$ $\mathbb{A}b5$ 22 g5 hxg5 23 fxg5 b3! 24 axb3 $\mathbb{A}b4$ with good counterplay, Yudasin-Oll, Pamplona 1991/2) 18...b4 19 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ (19 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}b5$! 20 f5 $\mathbb{A}xd3$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xd3$ exf5 22 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{A}e4$ 23 $\mathbb{A}xf5$ $\mathbb{A}g5$) is very double-edged, Oll-Yrjölä, Estonia-Finland 1991) 19... $\mathbb{A}xf6$ 20 $\mathbb{A}e4$, Nijboer-Wells, Antwerp 1996, and now 20... $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ would have equalized.

12... $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{A}xd4$ b4 14 $\mathbb{A}e2$ (D)

B



14...e5!

The standard counter-strike in the centre. Now it is unhealthy for sure to take the pawn because of ... $\mathbb{W}a5$.

15 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{A}b1$ 0-0 17 g4 exf4

If Black doesn't like the variation in the next comment, he can consider a different move-order: 17... $\mathbb{A}e6$ 18 b3 d5! 19 f5 dxe4 20 fxe6 exd3 21 exf7+ $\mathbb{A}xf7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}b5$! = Yudasin-Svidler, Pula Echt 1997.

18 $\mathbb{A}xf4$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 19 $\mathbb{A}c1$

This must be a favourite position of IM Veingold, who has scored several

easy points from it with Black. The less natural 19 b3! d5 20 e5 $\mathbb{A}e4$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ dxe4 22 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{A}c5$! 23 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (what about 23 $\mathbb{A}xe6$! fxe6 24 $\mathbb{A}xh6$! instead?) 23... $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 24 $\mathbb{A}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ a5 permitted Black fair compensation in Yudasin-Rechlis, Israel 1995.

19...d5 20 $\mathbb{A}b3$

20 e5? $\mathbb{A}e4$ 21 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ dxe4 22 $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{A}fd8$ 23 g5 hxg5 24 $\mathbb{A}dg1$ (24 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ $\mathbb{A}xg5$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xg5$ f6) 24... $\mathbb{A}f5$! 25 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ $\mathbb{A}xg5$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ \mp Sorsa-Veingold, Jyväskylä 1997.

20... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 21 $\mathbb{A}e3$

More critical is 21 exd5 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 22 $\mathbb{A}xh6$! a5! 23 $\mathbb{A}g5$ f6 24 $\mathbb{A}h4$ (24 $\mathbb{A}he1$? fxe6 25 $\mathbb{A}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 26 $\mathbb{A}c4$ $\mathbb{A}c3+$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ bxc3 28 $\mathbb{A}xe6+$ \mp Branković-Nevednichy, Yugoslav Ch 1996) 24...a4 25 $\mathbb{A}f2$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}e1$! $\mathbb{A}f7$ 27 $\mathbb{A}d4$, but Black has good attacking chances after, say, 27...a3.

21... $\mathbb{W}b7$

21... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 22 e5 $\mathbb{A}e4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ \mp Lehto-Veingold, Vantaa 1997.

22 exd5 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 23 $\mathbb{A}he1$ $\mathbb{A}e4$ 24 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{A}fe8$ \mp 25 $\mathbb{A}xa6$?! $\mathbb{A}xa6$ 26 $\mathbb{A}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}xa2$ 27 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{W}a8$! 28 $\mathbb{W}xe8+$ $\mathbb{W}xe8$ 29 $\mathbb{A}xa2$ $\mathbb{W}c6$? 30 $\mathbb{A}e5$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 0-1

Conclusion: White is doing better in practice with the cautious 12 $\mathbb{A}b1$ than with 12 h3. Black has many different possibilities that bring him close to equality.

Rauzer with 8...h6: White plays 9 $\mathbb{A}e3$ and f3

This line is important in practice because there is also the transpositional

possibility 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 f3 h6 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$. Usually White aims for English Attack ideas, advancing h4, g4 and g5 on the kingside.

Game 17
Arnason – Yrjölä
Gausdal Z 1987

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a6 8
0-0-0 h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 f3 b5 (D)

W



Like in many other lines, I recommend seeking counterplay before even thinking of castling.

11 g4

Or:

a) As in lines with f4, a sensible move is 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$, after which Black plays 11... $\mathbb{Q}e5$, forcing 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ with the following possibilities:

a1) I don't know why the natural 12...b4?! 13 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ d5 has only been tried in Shabalov-Ashley, New York Open 1997: 14 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fxe6$?! (probably too straightforward though logical since White is better developed; possible is 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ as in the similar position in line 'a22') 17... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

18 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 19 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$.

a2) 12... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ is a useful move, with the following possibilities:

a21) 13 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ b4 (13... $\mathbb{Q}c4$!?) 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ looks solid) 14 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ d5 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}fxe6$! (here the sacrifice works better because White has played $\mathbb{Q}he1$) 18...fxe6 19 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}de3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}g6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ with a draw, Am.Rodriguez-Delchev, Olot 1996.

a22) 13 h4 b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ d5 15 exd5 (15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 16 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$!?) 14... $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ gave Black strong counterplay in Kostin-Grabics, Balatonbereny 1994) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$! (preventing castling for a while and setting a problem for Black: should he be more worried about losing the a-pawn or about his king and piece activity?) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d8$! (18... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h5$) 19 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$! 0-0 20 $\mathbb{Q}b7$! $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ with certain compensation, Pirttimäki-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1989.

a23) After 13 g4 Black should answer in the same manner.

b) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ is quite a different story. White doesn't want to allow Black to strike in the centre with ...d5 and develops his pieces before advancing his h- and g-pawns. This is a favourite plan of Leko and Dolmatov. 11... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (D) and now:

b1) 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (this plan, though not very dangerous-looking, has been difficult to counter even for the most

W



solid Classical player Lerner, who has specialized in the 8...h6 line) 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ (more impressive was Black's plan in Mrdja-Ashley, Cannes 1998: 12... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{A}b7$ 15 g4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 h4 h5! 18 gxh5 $\mathbb{E}xh5$ 19 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{H}hg1$ $\mathbb{A}xg5$ 21 $\mathbb{E}xg5$ $\mathbb{E}xg5$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}c5$! =) 13 $\mathbb{B}b1$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 14 g4 g6!? 15 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ e5 17 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}d3$ d5!, Gipslis-Veingold, USSR Spartakiad 1979, demonstrates an interesting counter-plan with ...d5, but I cannot promise it works against every move-order of White) 13... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 14 h4 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 g4 $\mathbb{A}e5$ 17 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 18 b3 $\mathbb{W}c3$ (maybe 18...d5!? 19 f4 {19 exd5!? $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{A}f4$ } 19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20 e5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 22 $\mathbb{A}xe4$ dxе4) 19 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{E}xc3$ 20 $\mathbb{A}d2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 21 h5 d5 22 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{A}xc6$ 24 e5 with a slightly better ending for White, Lanka-Lerner, Bundesliga 1997/8. These examples demonstrated the three typical counter-ideas for Black in these position-types: pushing ...d5 at a right moment, countering with ...h6-h5 and manoeuvring the knight to e5. Note that there are also many examples of bad timing with ...d5. One cannot give an overall evaluation of these positions,

but practice favours White. I suppose the reason is it is much more difficult to find a concrete plan for Black when White refuses to create weaknesses.

b2) 12 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{A}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and then:

b21) 15 $\mathbb{A}he1$ (Leko's plan: White creates no pawn weaknesses whatsoever) 15... $\mathbb{E}c8$ (15... $\mathbb{A}e5$) 16 $\mathbb{W}g3$ b4 (not 16... $\mathbb{A}f6$? 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$!) 17 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{A}d4$ 0-0 19 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ $\mathbb{A}xf6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{A}b7$ 21 h4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 22 $\mathbb{A}f1$ (Leko-Groszpeter, Hungarian Cht 1995) and now 22... $\mathbb{W}c5$ is equal. Black is ready to start counterplay with ...a5-a4; the exchange of the dark-squared bishops has decreased White's attacking potential and the d6-pawn is not seriously weak.

b22) 15 h4 $\mathbb{A}e5$ 16 $\mathbb{A}b6$!? (16 g4 allows the typical counter 16...b4 17 $\mathbb{A}e2$ d5!) 16... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 17 $\mathbb{A}d4$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 18 g4 0-0-0 19 a3 g5 20 h5 $\mathbb{A}b8$ 21 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{A}d2$ $\mathbb{A}a8$ 23 $\mathbb{A}hd1$ $\mathbb{A}b8$ is roughly level, Dolmatov-Tukmakov, Groningen PCA qual 1993 and Am.Rodriguez-Delchev, Manresa 1996. In this line Black has good dark-square control and some counter-threats on the queenside.

11... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (D)

W



12 ♘d3

This move is usually considered necessary because Black was threatening 12...b4 13 ♘ce2 ♘c4. However, 12 h4 b4 13 ♘b1 d5 14 ♘f4 ♘d6 (the murky 14...♘c4 15 ♖e1 ♖c8 16 b3 ♖a5! is suggested by Wells) 15 exd5 ♖xd5 16 ♘h2 ♘c7 17 ♖e1 ♘g6 18 ♘c4 led to some problems for Black in Lobzhanidze-Bagatuров, Georgian Ch (Tbilisi) 1996.

12...b4!

12...♗c7 13 ♘b1 b4 14 ♘ce2 d5 15 exd5 ♖xd5 16 ♘f4?!. White is not afraid of losing his bishops, because the knights remain active. In particular, a knight on h5 would be nasty. This is why Black prefers exchanging the knight: 16...♘xf4 17 ♘xf4 ♘d6 18 ♘e4 ♘c4 19 ♖e2 ½-½ Oll-Lerner, Podolsk 1993. Indeed, the position is very equal after 19...♗c8.

13 ♘ce2 d5! 14 ♘g3

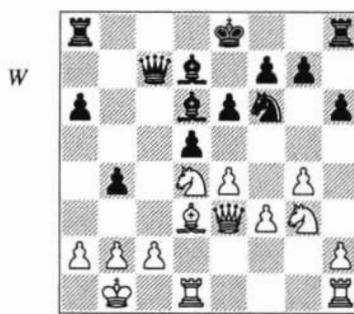
Generally 14 exd5? ♖xd5 15 ♘f4 is a more active and dangerous idea, but 15...♘xe3 16 ♖xe3 ♘d6 17 ♘h5 (17 ♖e4?! should once again trouble Black more) 17...g6 18 ♘g3 ♖g5! was pleasant for Black in Romero-Yrjölä, Gijon rpd 1988.

14...♗c7

14...♘xd3+?! 15 cxd3? (15 ♖xd3 e5 16 ♖he1! exd4 17 exd5 Kupreichik-Tseshkovsky, USSR Ch 1976) 15...e5 16 ♘b3 d4 17 ♘f2 a5 18 ♘b1 a4 19 ♘xd4 exd4 20 ♘xd4 ♖e6 21 ♖e3 ♖a5 with insufficient compensation, Van der Sterren-Van der Wiel, Wijk aan Zee 1981.

15 ♘b1 ♘c4 16 ♖e2

Understandably, 16 ♘xc4 dxс4 doesn't appeal to White.

16...♘xe3 17 ♖xe3 ♘d6 (D)

Black takes advantage of White's dark-square weaknesses, and also stops h4 for a while.

18 ♘de2 ♖c8 19 ♖d2 a5 20 ♖hg1 ♖xe4?!

An unforced but appealing exchange sacrifice. Black gets a pawn and a strong bishop on e5.

21 ♘a6 ♖e7 22 ♘xc8 ♖xc8 23 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 24 fxe4 ♘xh2 25 ♖gf1 ♖e5 26 ♘f4 ♘a4 27 ♖c1 ♖d8 ½-½

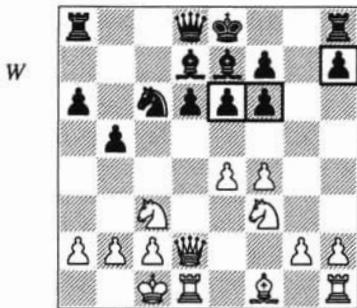
Black's compensation is sufficient to make White's attempts risky.

Conclusion: There are plenty of transpositions to similar position-types where Black strikes in the centre with ...b4 and ...d5. It is worth studying the nuances. In practice, it may be more difficult to counter the positional 11 ♘xc6, which radically changes the position-type.

6 The Rauzer with 8...d7

Strategic Introduction to the Rauzer with doubled f-pawns

In the most characteristic Rauzer lines, White exchanges his bishop for the f6-knight in order to compromise Black's pawn-structure. There is some similarity with the Nimzo-Indian Defence, where Black is often happy to exchange his bishop for the c3-knight to make White's pawn-structure less flexible and weaker. In the Rauzer, the weakest point tends to be e6.

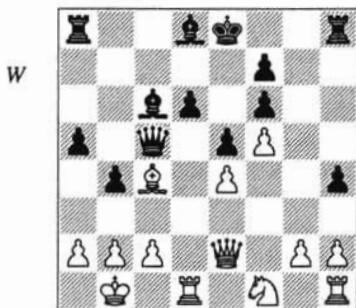


On the contrary to the Nimzo, in the Rauzer Black can in many cases use the pawn-mass to protect his king. It is quite common to leave the king in the centre. Also, castling queenside is not uncommon, but castling kingside with doubled f-pawns is almost always suspicious. This is just a personal opinion

based on some unpleasant experiences. There are some lines, not introduced here, where Black castles kingside and doesn't care if White takes on f6.

Typical Methods for White

1. Try to force weaknesses on the light squares and try to benefit from them



W. Watson – Yrjölä
Kecskemet 1988

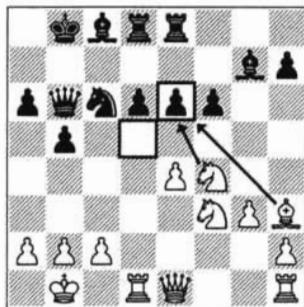
A typical position has arisen, where White has play on the light squares and Black on the dark squares. Here White sacrificed a pawn with 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{E}he1$ $\mathbb{A}xe4$ 23 $\mathbb{A}d5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 24 $\mathbb{E}xd5$ to get excellent light-square control. There are some other similar examples in the game sections. In this type of closed position, White usually strives to get the bishop on the a2-g8

diagonal and to occupy the important d5-square.

2. Attack the pawns, especially e6; sometimes the h-pawn and f6-pawn are also weak

Typically, White advances with his f-pawn to f5, exchanges on e6 and starts pressurizing the black pawns. It must be noted that exchanging the f-pawns makes the black pawn-structure also somehow more flexible and the danger from Black's bishop-pair grows. Black may be able to open up the position with some tactical trick.

W



White's pieces (the h3-bishop and the f4-knight) are on their optimal squares and Black is tied to defending e6.

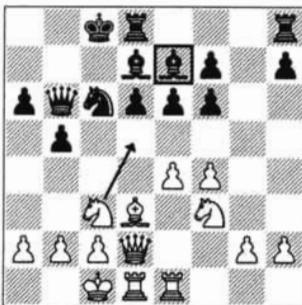
3. Try to restrain Black's activity and especially stop ...d5

Look at the position 2 above: playing ...d5 means getting a weak isolated d-pawn.

4. Watch out for an opportunity for tactics with $\mathbb{Q}d5$ or a break with e5

In the following diagram, 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ is strong as the e7-bishop would hang.

W



A different tactical motif arises in the next diagram:

W

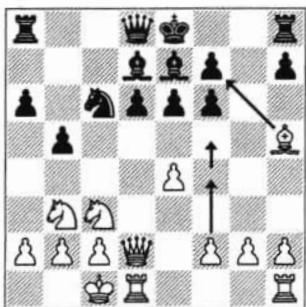


Here White has the tactical device 19 e5! $dxe5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ because of the hanging piece on d7 and because after 20... $fxe5$ White has the move 21 c3.

5. Try to block the h-pawn with a piece

There are some lines where the bishop is nasty on h5, blocking the h-pawn and pressurizing the f7-pawn at the same time. After that, the advance f4-f5 may be strong. A knight may be a good blockading piece too. From the diagram overleaf, 12...b4 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14 f4 a5 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a4 16 $\mathbb{Q}bd4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 17 f5 0-0 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$! $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 19 $fxe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

B



Kivistö – Mäki
Finnish Ch 1985

20 $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{Q}xe6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}d5+$! gave White a big plus. The most important function of the bishop was to stop Black castling queenside.

Typical Methods for Black

1. Play on the dark squares, and try to activate the dark-squared bishop
Look at Oll-Mäki (Game 19) where Black activated the bishop by means of the move ...f6-f5, with devastating effect.

There is also a well-known variation where Black activates his bishop on e5 via f4:

B



11... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xd4 \mathbb{Q}h6+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1 \mathbb{Q}f4!$ and we can reach position-type 4 of White's methods.

2. Watch for a chance to push ...d5, especially when Black has castled queenside

Opening up the position often favours Black, who has the bishop-pair. On the other hand, White may be able to exchange light-squared bishops and Black's king is sometimes vulnerable.

B



Here Black frees his game with the trick 17...d5! 18 exd5 e5.

3. Strive for an ending where Black has the bishop-pair and the king still in the centre

W



This is an excellent type of ending for Black. The king is optimally placed on e7 protecting all the pawns.

4. Attack with the queenside pawns especially if the black king has remained in the centre



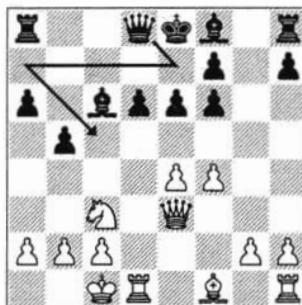
Black has good counterplay; potentially both ...a3 and ...b3 may be dangerous for White. The biggest problem is to make the choice. The former is good, if Black can attack the vulnerable point b2. Sometimes the hook on a3 can be beneficial later in an ending. After ...b3 White usually has to take with the c-pawn and play a3. The points e4, c2 and a3 may be vulnerable but White has the c-file for his rooks.

5. Keep the queen active

b6 and c5 are almost always good squares for the queen. Usually the queen belongs on the g1-a7 diagonal, and leaving it may let the white queen intrude effectively.

Here Black can activate his queen on the a7-g1 diagonal in an instructive way, parrying the threat $\mathbb{Q}d5$ at the same time: 12... $\mathbb{W}e7!$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}h3$ b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$.

B



6. Take some space on the kingside with ...h5

Often ...h4 is also useful, because it takes the g3-square away from the white pieces.

7. Sometimes the pressure of the black major pieces along the c-file ties White down

The following little game demonstrates many of Black's ideas listed here.

Sammalvuo – Yrjölä
Finnish Ch (Helsinki) 1995

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 7 $\mathbb{W}d2$ a6 8 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 f4 b5 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 13 g3 b4!?

Black leaves his king in the centre, and immediately advances his queenside pawns.

14 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ a5 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 17 f5?!

In the resulting closed position, the g2-bishop is not well placed. Better, though somewhat untypical, was 17 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ to push e5.

17...e5 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ (D)



19 $\mathbb{W}d3!$?

The idea is to build a blockade on c4. Against passive play, Black could continue with ...h5, ... $\mathbb{A}e7$ and ... $\mathbb{A}h6$.

19...a4 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{A}h6$ 21 b3 0-0

Now this is safe. Black heads for the resulting ending.

22 $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{A}b5$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xd4$

23 $\mathbb{A}f1$? is more in accordance with the blocking idea.

23... $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{A}xc7$ 25 $bxc4$

$\mathbb{A}e3!$ 26 $\mathbb{B}d6!$

Too passive is 26 $\mathbb{A}f1$ $\mathbb{A}d4$.

26... $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 27 $\mathbb{A}e1?$

The last chance was 27 $\mathbb{A}hd1$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ 28 $\mathbb{B}d8$ $\mathbb{A}xd8$ 29 $\mathbb{B}xd8$ $\mathbb{A}g1$ 30 h3 $\mathbb{A}d4$ 31 $\mathbb{A}f1$ $\mathbb{A}c3$ 32 $\mathbb{A}d3$ b3, when Black has some chances to win.

27... $\mathbb{A}d4$ 28 $\mathbb{A}f1$ $\mathbb{A}c3$ 29 $\mathbb{A}b5$

29 $\mathbb{B}a6$ b3 -+.

29...b3! 30 cxb3 axb3 31 $\mathbb{A}a6$

31 $\mathbb{A}c6$ bxa2+ 32 $\mathbb{B}xa2$ $\mathbb{A}a8+$ 33

$\mathbb{A}a6$ $\mathbb{A}c2+$ -+.

31... $\mathbb{A}fc8$ 0-1

Rauzer with 8... $\mathbb{A}d7$ and 9... $\mathbb{A}e7$: 11 e5 and others

All the sidelines for White following 8... $\mathbb{A}d7$ are covered here. The main

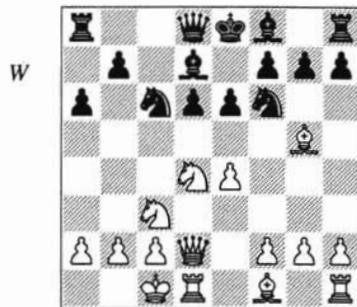
line with 11 $\mathbb{A}xf6$ is featured in Game 19.

Game 18

Adams – Christiansen

Biel 1991

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{A}g5$ e6 7 $\mathbb{W}d2$ a6 8 0-0-0 $\mathbb{A}d7$ (D)



9 f4

Other moves:

a) 9 f3. This move, with English Attack ideas, became very popular a couple of years ago, when everyone saw from their database that White had scored extremely well. The reason seems to be that no one playing Black had any idea how to benefit from the fact that Black has not weakened his kingside with ...h6 and that the bishop on g5 is blocking the g-pawn. My advice is not even to try that and to return to the perfectly playable line in the previous chapter with 9...h6 10 $\mathbb{A}e3$ b5. Another approach has been demonstrated in some of Kožul's and Damljanović's games. Black counters with the move ...h5 either before White plays g4 or even after that: 9... $\mathbb{A}e7$ (a

fresh example with the same theme: 9... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 10 h4 h6 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ h5 12 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ b5 13 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ doesn't look bad, Shirov-Damljanović, Batumi Echt 1999) 10 h4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (Black is ready to take on c6 with the rook) and now:

a) 11 g4 h5! 12 gxh5 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 13 $\mathbb{H}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$ g6 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 17 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$ 20 hxg5 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and in Yilmaz-Kožul, Pula Echt 1997 Black was already better because of the good knight vs bad bishop; the king is often comfortable at e7 after the exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

a2) 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ h5!? 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13 g3 (13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 15 f5 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{W}e5$! Shirov-Kožul, Budapest ECC 1996) 13...b5 14 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a5 and Black is not without play, Lanka-Kožul, Pula Echt 1997.

b) 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ is not a bad move, because it develops a piece, but Black can try to benefit from ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ tactics: 9...h6 (9...b5 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xg5$ dxe5 16 $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18 $\mathbb{H}hg1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ e4 is also playable, Dimitrov-Granda, Gausdal jr Wch 1986) 10 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ b5 doesn't look logical, because the bishop is not usually well placed on e2 in ...h6 lines) 10... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (now ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ is some kind of threat; the immediate 10... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ doesn't work) 11 f4 (11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b5 doesn't look very critical; 11 $\mathbb{Q}he1!$? $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}f4$ g5 13 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ gxh4 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ d5 was complicated in Westerinen-Mäki, Finnish Ch 1986) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{W}e3!$ (14 $\mathbb{Q}xd6+?$

$\mathbb{W}xd6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 a3 g5! with a typical favourable ending for Black, Delchev-Kožul, Pula 1999) 14... $\mathbb{W}d8$ (14... $\mathbb{Q}d5?$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 16 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$) 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ leads to an exciting position, where one thing is sure: Black is no worse. M.Hoffmann-Tukmakov, Biel 1991 continued in spectacular fashion: 16... $\mathbb{Q}b4+?$ (or 16... $\mathbb{W}c7?$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}c5$) 17 c3 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}b6$ (18 $\mathbb{W}d4??$, Gavrikov-Veingold, Jyväskylä 1999, is refuted by 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+!$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xa2+?$ (18... $\mathbb{W}a4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}b5$) =) 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d4$ (20 $\mathbb{Q}a1!$ $\mathbb{W}xf4+21$ $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ ±) 20... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}a1??$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 0-1.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (D)

This is the old line, which has retained a solid reputation for decades.

The more popular line 9...b5 is also more complicated and harder to study, the most critical line currently being 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e1$ – see Game 20.



10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

This move, which threatens both e5 and $\mathbb{Q}xf6$, is generally considered the

only way to fight for the advantage.
Others:

a) 10 f5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ doesn't look positionally right; for example: 11 fxe6 fxe6 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{H}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dxe5 15 $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ g6 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 17 $\mathbb{W}e1$ b5 Hort-Mecking, San Antonio 1972.

b) After 10 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ Black can happily play the normal 10...b5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (12 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 exd5 e5 =) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 14 $\mathbb{H}xd6$ $\mathbb{H}c8$ 15 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$. In this ending, Black has good compensation for the pawn: the dark squares and especially f4 are weak in White's camp.

c) 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ is a bit more dangerous:
c1) The natural 10...b5 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{H}c8$ leaves Black with certain problems after 12 $\mathbb{H}he1$ or 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 14 f5.

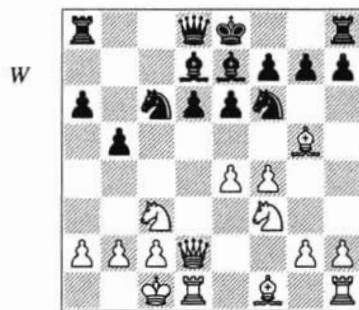
c2) 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is a solid idea here, as it was in line 'b'; a GM example: 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{H}c8$ 13 $\mathbb{H}he1$ 0-0 14 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{H}fd8$ Delchev-Epishin, Nova Gorica 1997.

c3) 10...0-0 and then:
c31) 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ h6 12 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 15 e5 $\mathbb{H}fd8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 17 bxa3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 19 gxf3 = Santo-Roman - Thorsteins, Lyons 1990) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{H}fxd8$ 16 $\mathbb{H}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17 $\mathbb{H}hd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ = Fischer-Spassky, Reykjavik Wch (20) 1972.

c32) 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}a5!$ is strong, because taking the piece gives Black plenty of play: 12 e5 dxe5 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (13 $\mathbb{W}e1$! is untested) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (15 $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$) 15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$! 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{H}ac8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{H}xc3$! 18 $\mathbb{H}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2+$ 20

$\mathbb{Q}xa2$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ + Sanchez Almeyra-Tukmakov, Palma de Mallorca 1992.

10... $\mathbb{b}5$ (D)



11 e5

This straightforward approach leads to a rather unusual position-type compared with other Rauzer lines. Quite popular but less logical is 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$, when White doesn't have pressure on the d-file and Black is always ready to take back with the bishop on f6. Black should advance on the queenside and castle kingside. Here is an example of what could happen: 11...b4 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a5 13 f5?! (13 e5!?) dxe5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ =) 13...0-0 14 $\mathbb{H}hg1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 g4 b3! 16 a3 $\mathbb{B}xc2$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{H}fc8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{H}ab8$ + Nevanlinna-Yrjölä, Finnish Cht 1993.

11...b4 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{g}xf6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}h4$

14 $\mathbb{H}xd6$?? $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is trap number 1, which has given a pleasant gift to me, among many others.

14 f5 e5 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{H}c8$! (15...d5!?) 16 $\mathbb{H}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$? (16 $\mathbb{W}d2$ d5!) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{H}xc3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ + Pakkanen-Yrjölä, Finnish Cht 1991, is trap number 2.

14...d5 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (D)

This is generally considered a necessary safety precaution (though White can transpose by 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$) since 15 f5? $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 18 c3 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 19 cxb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ + is trap number 3, Arnason-Yrjölä, Espoo Z 1989.

B



This is the basic position of the 11 e5 variation. Black naturally strives for counterplay on the open lines on the queenside, but he has an inferior pawn-structure and his king is in the centre.

15... $\mathbb{E}c8$!?

This has been the recent choice of strong players. Interestingly, no one as White has had the courage to snap off the a-pawn. In the most popular line, 15... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$, Black has suffered many defeats though it is maybe not theoretically so bad. The old but unpopular line 15... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16 f5 $\mathbb{E}c8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 18 fxe6 fxe6 19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (19 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$?! $\mathbb{E}a8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ gave Black good compensation on open lines in Kestler-Spassky, Dortmund 1973) 19... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ looks quite playable. The pawn-centre, two bishops and open lines on the

queenside compensate for the inconvenience of having the king in the centre. It is hard for either side to make progress. Tsekhovsky-Lukin, Telavi 1982 continued 21 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ (21...h5!? 22 $\mathbb{E}e3$ a5, Sorri-Svensson, corr 1990, and the position remains level after 23 $\mathbb{E}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a6$) 22 h3 $\mathbb{E}b8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ h5 24 g3 $\mathbb{E}g6$ 25 $\mathbb{E}e3$ a5 26 b3 $\mathbb{W}a6$ (26... $\mathbb{W}c7$) 27 c4 a4 28 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$?! (28... $\mathbb{E}g7$) 29 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ fxe5 30 $\mathbb{E}f1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ axb3? 32 $\mathbb{E}xb3$ $\mathbb{E}xb3$? 33 $\mathbb{Q}f8+$ 1-0.

16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

So far this has always been played. However, 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ is more critical:

a) 16... $\mathbb{E}b8$ (this was recommended by Wells) 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}g3$ ±. It is not obvious to me where the compensation lies.

b) 16... $\mathbb{E}c7$?! looks more interesting. 17 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (it is hard to find a good 'normal' move for White since 17 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}b7$ gives Black very promising pressure on the open lines) 17... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 19 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 20 $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}a3+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ with a very complicated position. Probably White's best move is 23 g3.

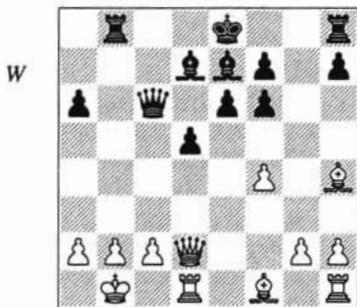
16... $\mathbb{W}b6$

The other approach is 16... $\mathbb{Q}e5$?! 17 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 18 f5 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 19 fxe6 fxe6 20 $\mathbb{W}xh4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}h5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$. Now:

a) 22 g3 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (this position with the nice bishop on e5 should be OK for Black) 25 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ (25... $\mathbb{E}c7$) 26 c3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ and Black got a draw in this ending after slight suffering in Holzke-Tischbirek, Bundesliga 1998/9.

b) 22 ♜e2 ♜a3 23 ♜b3 ♜d6 24 ♜h4 ♜e5 (what a nice bishop again, but White gets enough counterplay with his next move) 25 c4! dxc4 26 ♜xc4 ♜c7 27 ♜g4 ♜e8 28 ♜g7 ♜c8 29 ♜c1 ♜b8 30 ♜xh7 ♜ec8 with compensation, Smikovsky-Lukin, St Petersburg 1995.

17 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 18 ♜d2 ♜b8 (D)



19 ♜a1?!

Now Black gets unpleasant pressure. According to Wells, better is 19 c4! dxc4 20 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 (20...♜c8? 21 ♜c1 ♜b7 looks equal to me) 21 ♜xd7+ ♜f8 22 ♜d4 ♜xd4 23 ♜xd4 f5 24 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 25 ♜c1 ±.

19...♜a4 20 b3 ♜a3 21 ♜d3 a5 22 ♜c3 a4 23 ♜b1 ♜g8 24 g3 e5! 25 ♜b2 ♜xb2+ 26 ♜xb2 a3+ 27 ♜c1 e4 28 ♜e2 d4 29 ♜d1 d3 30 cxd3 e3 31 ♜f1 ♜b4 32 ♜d1 ♜e7 33 f5 ♜g8 34 ♜f4 ♜d2 35 g4 ♜c6 36 ♜d4 ♜g2 37 ♜a4 ♜a8 38 ♜c4 ♜d5 39 ♜c2 ♜xc4 40 dxc4 ♜d8 41 g5 fxg5 42 ♜xg5+ f6 43 ♜f4 ♜a5 44 ♜c7 ♜xf5 45 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 46 ♜d3 ♜f4 ½-½

Conclusion: The 11 e5 line is complex and forces Black to play actively. There are many good traps. It is hard

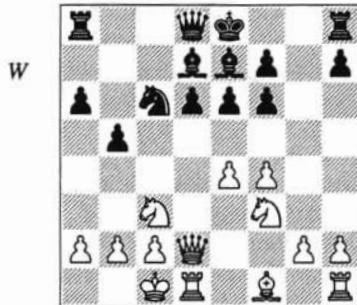
to see any clear advantage for White, so no wonder the focus has turned to 9 f3, which is best met by 9...h6, and a transposition to Game 17.

Rauzer with 8...♜d7 and 9...♜e7: the old main line with 11 ♜xf6

Game 19
Oll – Mäki
Helsinki 1989

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 d6 6 ♜g5 e6 7 ♜d2 a6 8 0-0-0 ♜d7 9 f4 ♜e7 10 ♜f3 b5 11 ♜xf6 gxsf6 (D)

The motif of the pawn sacrifice with 11...♜xf6?! 12 ♜xd6 ♜e7 13 ♜d2 is harder to understand.



Black has a long plan, which works almost against everything: ...♜b6, ...0-0-0, ...♜b8 and ...♜c8, after which he starts to wait for an opportunity for a central break, usually with ...d5, sometimes ...f6-f5. This is an ideal line for players who want to play as many easy moves as possible in the opening to avoid time-trouble later on.

The most natural plan for White involves pressing against the e6-point with f5, g3, $\mathbb{Q}h3$, $\mathbb{Q}e2-f4$ and trying to create light-square weaknesses in the black camp.

12 $\mathbb{Q}b1$

A useful and flexible move played by most strong players. Other possibilities:

a) 12 f5 $\mathbb{W}b6$ is likely to transpose, but there is an independent try: 13 g3?! (13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$) 13...b4 14 fxe6 fxe6 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}f2$! 16 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (or 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}hc8$ 20 b3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ \mp Nokso-Koivisto – Mäki, Tampere 1997 – the king is optimally placed on e7) 16...a5 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (17 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ a4 18 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ is unclear according to Sakaev) 17... $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is a very nice ending for Black, Tiviakov-Sakaev, St Petersburg 1993.

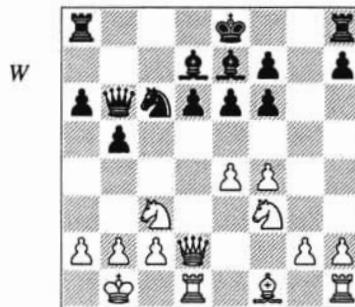
b) 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ (now a different approach is healthy, since 12... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ 0-0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ exd5 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 16 fxe5 fxe5 17 $\mathbb{W}h6!$ leads to trouble) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ b4 (Black opts for queenside counterplay, leaving the king behind the central pawns) 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 15 f5 a5 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ a4 17 $\mathbb{Q}h5$!? (17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18 c3 b3!?) [after this there is no counter-attack but White must always worry about his back rank when lines open up] 19 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ = Fischer-Spassky, Reykjavik Wch (18) 1972) 17...a3! 18 $\mathbb{W}h6$ (18 b3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$) 18...axb2 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}g7$ (20 $\mathbb{Q}g5$? b3!) 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}hg8$ 23 g3 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ with good counterplay, Luther-Tukmakov, Lenk 1992.

c) An example of how the general plan works: 12 g4!?

$\mathbb{W}b6$ 13 h4 h6 14 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 0-0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}he8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2$?! b4 19 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d5 \mp Nikolaidis-Yrjölä, Katerini 1992.

d) The idea of stopping Black's plan with 12 $\mathbb{W}e3$! doesn't succeed very well because of 12... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ b4 (13...0-0-0?! runs into 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$!?) 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ dx5 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ with a level ending, Arnason-Mäki, Nordic Ch (Torshavn) 1987. There is a weakness on c4, however, and this makes the ending acceptable for White.

12... $\mathbb{W}b6$ (D)



13 f5

13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b4 (13...0-0-0 is playable now: 14 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ = Anand-Timman, Amsterdam 1992) 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a5 15 f5 a4 (15... $\mathbb{W}c5$ transposes to note 'b' to White's 12th move) 16 fxe6 fxe6 17 $\mathbb{W}h6$!?

$\mathbb{W}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$!?

19 c3 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ b3?! (Black should probably play 20... $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ a3 23 b3 $\mathbb{W}b6$) 21 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ $\mathbb{Q}bg8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ \pm was interesting in Ye Jiangchuan-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1992.

13...0-0-0 14 g4

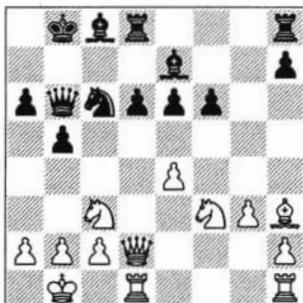
The following variation shows the power of the central breakthrough: 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 16 fxe6 (16 g3?! d5! 17 exd5 e5) 16...fxe6 17 g3 (17 $\mathbb{W}e1$! is likely to transpose to the main line) 17...d5! (17... $\mathbb{Q}he8$?? 18 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ ± Lanka-L.Schneider, Gausdal Peer Gynt 1991) 18 exd5 e5 19 $\mathbb{Q}h3$?? (19 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ =.

14... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15 fxe6

This is the right time to exchange, because 15 $\mathbb{Q}h3$?? b4! 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 leads to a typical closed Rauzer position, where White's pieces (especially the h3-bishop) are not well placed. After 17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ (17 c4?!) $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18 b3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ gives Black a beautiful position, Boleslavsky-Taimanov, USSR Cht 1969) 17... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ d5! 19 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$, Black had a slightly more comfortable position in I.Almasi-Groszpeter, Kecskemet 1993. After 22 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d2$?? he got the opportunity for 23... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 24 cxd3 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$!.

15...fxe6 16 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (D)

W



17 $\mathbb{W}e1$

This was first played by Karpov against Liberzon. White would like to

continue his plan $\mathbb{Q}e2-f4$ but the hasty 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ allows the immediate 17...d5.

The real alternative is 17 $\mathbb{W}h6$??, which is always irritating, but Black should try to benefit from the weakened protection of the white king and the back rank: 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$!. Here White has tried the following moves:

a) 18 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ b4!? 19 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d5 20 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ is unclear.

b) 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d5 19 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24 a3 a5 (24... $\mathbb{W}e4$!) 25 $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}h6$ b4 27 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ ½-½ Jovićić-P.Kovačević, Yugoslav Cht 1990.

c) 18 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ a5 19 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d5!? 20 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}ed4$? (necessary is 21 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 24 a3; in this position, which is almost the same as Jovićić-Kovačević above, Black has active pieces but White is going to snatch the h7-pawn; Black can also get counterplay with the move ...b4) 21... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22 b3 e5 23 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 24 c3 0-1 Beliavsky-Tal, Leningrad 1977.

d) 18 a3 a5 19 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ b4 20 axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 22 b3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (24 $\mathbb{Q}d4$?) 24... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 25 $\mathbb{W}c1$! (25 $\mathbb{Q}d3$?) 25... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ fxe5 27 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}hf8$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ ♫ Dolmatov-Mäki, Sofia 1985.

17... $\mathbb{Q}f8$??

This usually transposes to the same position as the more natural 17... $\mathbb{Q}he8$. The bishop belongs on g7, where it is ready for breakthroughs by ...f5 or ...d5. In addition, the rook is ready to protect e6 from e8.

Instead, 17... $\mathbb{Q}he8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$! (18... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ usually leads to the main

line, but White can try 19 $\mathbb{W}c3!$? $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ ± Mokry-Dežé, Trnava 1982) is a promising idea first played by Arnason. Black is still about to break in the centre and sometimes the knight can come to c4. White has the following possibilities:

a) 19 $\mathbb{H}f1?$! $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20 $\mathbb{H}d3$ d5! 21 exd5 e5 22 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ e4! is complicated but probably better for Black, Lau-Arnason, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

b) 19 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ d5! 20 $\mathbb{Q}f4?$! $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 24 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25 $\mathbb{W}e4$ is unclear, Holzke-Groszpeter, Budapest 1993.

c) 19 $\mathbb{Q}ed4$ hasn't yet been tried, but even then 19...d5 looks OK; for example, 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ fxe5 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22 $\mathbb{H}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$.

d) 19 $\mathbb{W}c3!$? $\mathbb{Q}b7$?! (19... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ f5 looks good enough) 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$! $\mathbb{H}xc3$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and in this position only White can play for the win, Leko-Groszpeter, Bucharest 1993.

So it seems White has trouble getting any advantage against this idea. If Black prefers the main line, 17... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ is the safer move according to Mäki, a specialist in this position-type.

18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

19 $\mathbb{H}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}he8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$?! $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ d5! allowed Black to free himself once again with at least equality in Ernst-Mäki, Sweden-Finland 1988.

Now 19 $\mathbb{W}c3$ could be answered by 19...b4.

19... $\mathbb{Q}he8$ 20 $\mathbb{H}f1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ (D)

21 $\mathbb{W}f2$?

Exchanging queens helps Black, though the queen on c5 is active.

W



21 $\mathbb{W}f2$?! $\mathbb{Q}e7$?! (Black should play 21...b4 22 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$ a5, when it is difficult for either side to do anything constructive without taking a risk) 22 c3! (threatening $\mathbb{Q}d4$) 22...d5 23 $\mathbb{Q}d4$! $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 24 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 25 exd5 exd5 26 $\mathbb{H}e2$ $\mathbb{H}de8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{H}xe2$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$, Leko-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1995, and now White could have gained a definite plus with the manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}c1-b3$.

The question arises: what happens if White plays the untried 21 c3?!, with Leko's plan, but not giving Black time for ...b4?

21... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22 $\mathbb{H}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xf2$ 23 $\mathbb{H}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$! (D)

W



The plan looks risky but works!

25 $\mathbb{B}c3?$

After the dishonourable but wise retreat 25 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$, Black is passive but solid.

25... $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ f5 27 $\mathbb{Q}fe2$ fxe4
28 b3 e5 29 $\mathbb{Q}f5$

29 $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$ axb5 30 $\mathbb{A}xc8$ d5 31
 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ d4 \mp .

29...d5! 30 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ bxc4 \mp 31 g4 $\mathbb{A}e6$
32 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{B}b8+$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 34 h4 $\mathbb{B}f8$
35 $\mathbb{H}f1$ d4 36 $\mathbb{H}h3$ e3 37 g5 $\mathbb{A}xf5$ 38
 $\mathbb{E}xf5$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 0-1

Conclusion: The line is easy to play and study for Black. It is also hard for White to find any definite advantage. There is no good reason why this line is unpopular at the moment. Perhaps the game Leko-Timman (see the note to White's 21st move) is frightening the top players, but Black has alternatives.

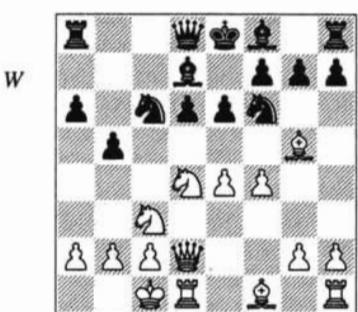
Rauzer with 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and 9...b5

The idea of gaining immediate counterplay on the queenside and leaving the bishop on f8, where it is ready to be activated via h6, has been more popular recently than 9... $\mathbb{A}e7$. There is more space for innovations and the line is ideal for a player who wants to play for a win.

Game 20 Palac - Kožul

Croatian Ch (Medulin) 1997

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 d4 cxd4 4
 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 6 $\mathbb{A}g5$ e6 7 $\mathbb{W}d2$
a6 8 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 f4 b5 (D)
10 $\mathbb{A}xf6$



The lines where White avoids producing doubled f-pawns include some attacking ideas but have not proved very dangerous for Black. Usually the battle concentrates around the question of whether the e-pawn is mainly a weakness after the inevitable advance or if it can support White's pressure on the kingside. We consider:

a) The risky attempt 10 e5?! $\mathbb{d}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{f}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e1$ is best met by 12... $\mathbb{W}b8!$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ b4! 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$, when Black is a pawn up, Vitolinš-R.Scherbakov, USSR Ch (Podolsk) 1990.

b) The very innocuous-looking 10 a3 has been surprisingly popular. Then the most active counter is 10... $\mathbb{W}b6$ (10... $\mathbb{A}e7$ is more solid):

b1) 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (too tame) 11...b4 12 $\mathbb{axb4}$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 13 $\mathbb{A}e2$ (13 e5?! $\mathbb{Q}fd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Caruso-Ghitescu, Cappelle la Grande 1994) 13... $\mathbb{B}b8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{H}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ Kane-Mednis, USA Ch 1972.

b2) The critical-looking 11 e5 is best answered by 11... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ (but not 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$?! 12 exf6! Shabalov-Waitzkin, New York 1993) 12 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ (12 $\mathbb{W}e1$?! $\mathbb{W}a7$ 13 exf6 g6 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is messy, Inarkiev-C.Balogh,

Artek jr OL 1999) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ h6 14 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 15 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is a typical pawn sacrifice to exert pressure on the long diagonal and gain the bishop-pair) 14...dxe5 15 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ with an active position.

c) After 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ there are the following options:

c1) 11 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and now:

c11) 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (12...b4!?) 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ leads to a more typical set-up for this line, but the bishop is passive on e7) 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ = Zaichik-Yermolinsky, Philadelphia 1993.

c12) 12 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ dxe5 15 fxe5 0-0 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (better than 16 $\mathbb{W}g3$ f5! 17 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e5 \mp with a strong passed pawn, Mithrakanth-Scherbakov, Calcutta 1996) 16... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xh4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ with comfortable equality, Leko-Scherbakov, Ljubljana ECC 1995.

c2) 11 e5?! dxe5 12 $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 14 fxe5 h6 is a dream for Black, of a type which can usually only come true in blitz games. The black bishop-pair dominates the board; for example, 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ (15 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 16 exf6 gxh4 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ \mp Spirakopoulos-Atalik, Ikaria 1994) 15...gxf6 16 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ \mp Antoniou-Damljanović, Elista OL 1998.

c3) 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (D) with two lines:

c31) 12 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ 0-0 13 e5 dxe5 14 $\mathbb{W}f2$ h6! has been considered an excellent queen sacrifice: 15 $\mathbb{Q}h7+$ (in fact in the stem game Karpov-Tal, USSR Ch 1976, White continued very cautiously when hit by the surprise: 15

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$\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 16 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 17 g3 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ \mp ; the aggressive try 15 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ hgx5 16 fxg5 $\mathbb{W}d4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7!$ 18 c3 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$ was effectively repulsed in Varavin-Filipenko, Smolensk 1991) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}g5+$. A similar queen sacrifice, based on the domination of the bishop-pair, active rooks and solid pawn-formation, can be found in the 8...h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ line.

c32) 12 e5 dxe5 13 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$! (putting pressure on e5 seems to be the stronger response this time; 13... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 0-0 16 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ f5 {forced because of the f6-square}) 17 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 21 $\mathbb{W}e3$ left White slightly better in J.Polgar-Dreev, Linares 1997, because of her healthier pawn-structure) 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (this seems to be the safest move as 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ f6 18 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}hf1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20 g4 h6 21 h4 gave White enough compensation in Kasparov-A.N.Panchenko, Daugavpils 1978) and the weakness of the e5-pawn seems to trouble White so much that he cannot draw any advantage from the activity of his pieces and better development:

c321) 16 $\mathbb{H}he1$ $\mathbb{B}a7$ (16... $\mathbb{B}c8$!?) 17 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 20 exd6 $\mathbb{B}c6$ 21 a4 bxa4 22 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ e5 23 $\mathbb{B}e3$ ½-½ Delchev-Kutuzović, Bled 1998, this position-type can easily turn out to be good for Black, who will play his king to e6, starting with 23...f5) with two possibilities:

c3211) 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{B}e3$ 0-0-0 Kasparov-Ermolinsky, Leningrad jr qual 1977.

c3212) 17 b4!? $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}g5$ (18 $\mathbb{W}d6$!) 18...0-0 19 $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{W}f2$ 20 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{W}g1+$ = Salov-Ermolinsky, Jurmala 1983.

c322) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}g5$ 0-0 18 $\mathbb{H}he1$ (or 18 $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 19 $\mathbb{B}hd1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ with enough counterplay) 18... $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 19 $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20 $\mathbb{B}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 21 $\mathbb{B}g4$ g6 22 $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 23 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}g1+$ 24 $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ ½-½ Kiss-Balogh, Budapest 1999.

10... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ (D)

The following variation is a good reason not to play 10... $\mathbb{W}xf6$: 11 e5 $\mathbb{dxe5}$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}dx5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{exf4}$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xa6!$ $\mathbb{B}xa6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{B}a7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d4$ and White has a clear advantage.

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11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$

This precautionary move proves good in many Rauzer lines. White has the following main alternatives:

a) The more straightforward 11 f5 is an important line. Now:

a1) The practical but rather rare choice is 11... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13 fxe6 (13 $\mathbb{W}el$ $\mathbb{B}a7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ h5 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ transposes to the main line) 13... fxe6 14 $\mathbb{W}f4$ h5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (15 $\mathbb{W}xf6$!?) $\mathbb{W}e3+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{B}h6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 18 $\mathbb{gxf3}$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ gave Black nice compensation for the pawn in Xie Jun-Galliamova, Groningen wom Ct 1997) 15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (16 g3 b4 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ f5! 18 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ is unclear) 16...0-0-0 17 $\mathbb{H}he1$ (threatening $\mathbb{Q}d5$) 17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Bdg8}$ 21 c3! should cause some problems for Black with the e6-point, Dvoiryš-A.N.Panchenko, Cheliabinsk 1989.

a2) Usually Black likes to activate the dark-squared bishop to the very attractive-looking square e5 by 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$. Then White has a choice:

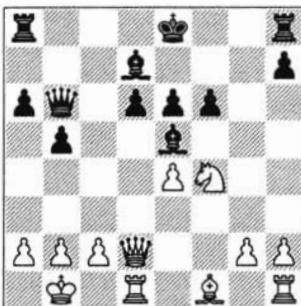
a21) Giving up the f5-pawn might afford Black some kind of relief: 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{exf5}$! 16 $\mathbb{exf5}$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$!?) $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f5 19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$! is at least equal) 17... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 20 $\mathbb{H}he1$ $\mathbb{B}c4$ gives White some compensation for the pawn but no more than that thanks to the strong e5-bishop, Tal-Kožul, Marseilles 1989.

a22) More dangerous for Black is 14 fxe6 fxe6 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$. Now it is important where White places his queen:

a221) 16 $\mathbb{W}d3$ has some disadvantages: it takes the knight's square and

makes the queen less active. For example: 16... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17 g3 a5! 18 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ a4 (18...b4, with the same idea as in the main line, is safer) 19 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$!? ($\mathbb{W}g4$ with $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ was a threat) 21 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ a3 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dx5 23 $\mathbb{H}hf1$ $\mathbb{H}hf8$ 24 bxa3 $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ 25 $\mathbb{H}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and Black had enough counterplay in Hartman-Yrjölä, Stockholm Rilton Cup 1996.

a222) 16 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (D) reaches the basic position of this important subvariation.



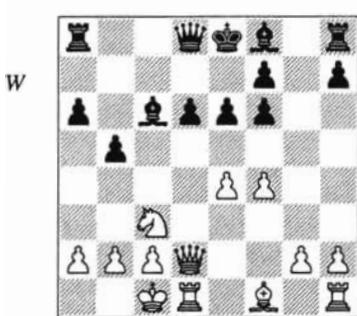
Black has some positional advantages, including the bishop-pair and the pawn-centre, but he has to worry about many tactical issues: the central break with e5, a queen intrusion via h6, the d-file if White can exchange the dark-squared bishop and sometimes tactics with $\mathbb{Q}d5$. There are now two logical options for Black (the move 17... $\mathbb{H}c8$ has also been tried but I don't see the point).

a2221) 17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ puts the king on the best square and connects the rooks. 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ (18... $\mathbb{Q}d4$?! 19 e5! dx5 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ fx5 {20... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ ±}) 21 c3 is a typical tactical strike in this position-type although Black is not

necessarily lost after 21... $\mathbb{H}hf8$; still, this is hardly worth trying) 19 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (19 g3 $\mathbb{H}ab8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ b4 21 $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{H}bg8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 23 $\mathbb{H}d2$ $\mathbb{H}g6$ 24 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{H}c8$ 25 $\mathbb{H}hd1$ $\mathbb{H}c6$ is not so dangerous, Siklosi-Grosar, Austrian Cht 1994) 19... $\mathbb{H}ab8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{H}bg8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b4 22 $\mathbb{H}d2$ $\mathbb{H}g6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ (24... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 25 $\mathbb{H}hd1$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 26 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{H}d8$ 27 $\mathbb{W}d4$ ±) 25 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 26 e5! fx5 27 $\mathbb{W}h4$ + $\mathbb{H}f6$ 28 $\mathbb{H}hd1$ favoured White in Palac-Grosar, Formia 1994.

a2222) 17...a5! is even more logical; Black wants to secure the bishop on the squares e5 and d4. After 18 g3 (Black's position seems to be OK after 18 $\mathbb{Q}d3$?! $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}h6$?! b4 20 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0-0 but this has not yet been tested in top-level practice) 18...b4 (suggested by Bönsch; it is important where to put the king: 18...0-0-0?! 19 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{H}ae8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 21 $\mathbb{H}he1$ b4? {21... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{C}3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ ±} 22 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$! $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 23 $\mathbb{H}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}d5$! was miserable in Hjartarsson-Kožul, Biel IZ 1993; this implies the king belongs in the centre) 19 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{H}hf1$ seems to be quite balanced. Black has to take into consideration the plan $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and queen intrusion via h6, which restricts his own activity. On the other hand, Black has secured the d4-square for the bishop after $\mathbb{Q}d3$, because by stopping the move c3 Black has prevented e5 tactics. In addition, Black should seek an opportunity to gain counterplay with the typical pawn sacrifice ...b3 and ...a4. However, the safest option is 20... $\mathbb{H}ag8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ with the plan ...h5-h4. There is also the possibility 21... $\mathbb{Q}b5$!?

b) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (D) is another possibility.



White can now continue in various ways:

b1) 12 We3?! We7! (parrying Qd5 and coming to the optimal square c5 via a7) 13 Qd3 Wa7 and because the ending is not appealing for White, the main options are:

b11) 14 We1 h5! (14...Wc5?! 15 Qd5!; 14...0-0-0? 15 Qb1 h5 is playable) 15 Qd5! 0-0-0 16 Qb4 (16 Qxf6? Qg7) 16...Qb7 17 c3 d5! 18 Qc2 dxex4 19 Qxe4 Qxd1+ 20 Qxd1 Qc5 Liss-Rechlis, Israeli Ch 1994.

b12) 14 Wh3 and now:

b121) The instructive game Sax-Damljanović, Manila IZ 1990 shows White's basic ideas in this variation: 14...h5 15 Qhe1 Qe7 16 f5 b4 17 Qe2 e5 18 Qc4! Qc8 (18...Qxe4 19 Qg3 Qb7 20 Qe4 gives White domination of the light squares) 19 Wb3 Qf8 20 Qd5 a5 21 Qb1 with domination.

b122) 14...b4! 15 Qe2 Wc5 16 Qb1 a5! is a plan that has been very successful for Black:

b1221) 17 Qhe1 Qb8 (17...h5 18 f5 e5 19 Qg3 h4 20 Qf1 Qe7 21 Qd2 a4 22 Qc4 Qh6 and Black has got everything he wants, Lobzhanidze-Yermolinsky, Bad Zwesten 1997) 18 f5 e5 19 Qc1?! (19 Qg3) 19...h5! 20 c3 Qh6 21

Wc2 b3 ♦ Rogers-Čabril, Manila IZ 1990.

b1222) 17 f5 e5 18 Qhfl (White seems to suffer from a lack of constructive plans; 18 Wh5 a4 19 Qhe1 h6 20 Qc1 Qg8 21 Wf3 h5! 22 c3 Qb8 23 c4 Qh6 24 Qcd1 h4 ♦ Krakops-Becerra Rivero, Elista OL 1998) 18...h5 19 Wh4 Qe7! 20 Qg3 Qh6 Wu Xibin-Ye Jiangchuan, Beijing 1996, is very good for Black since after 21 Qxh5 Qg5 22 Wg4 a4 he has huge compensation.

b2) The routine developing move 12 Qd3 is best met by 12...b4! 13 Qe2 Wb6, when 14 Qb1 transposes to the note to White's 13th move, but White has some independent attempts:

b21) The try 14 Qg3 h5 15 We2 Wc5 16 Qb1 (16 f5?! h4 17 Qh5 Qe7! 18 Qb1 a5 ♦ Prokophchuk-Filipenko, Russia 1999) 16...h4 17 Qf1 a5 does look good for Black at this point, P.Schlosser-Dreev, Frankfurt rpd 1996.

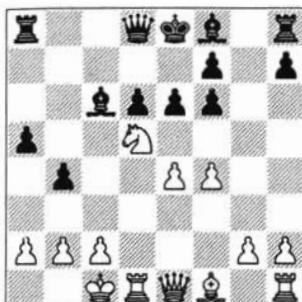
b22) 14 f5 should not be met by 14...e5?!, which gives White excellent light-square control after 15 Qc4! Qxe4 16 Qg3 Qb7 17 Qd5 ±, but 14...h5 15 Qb1 Qh6 16 We1 e5 17 h4 Qe7 18 Qg3 Qf4, Tseskovsky-Damljanović, Vršac 1987, which looks much better.

b3) 12 We1 (this stops ...Wb6 due to the reply Qd5) 12...b4! 13 Qd5 a5 (D).

Now there is also no threat to take the knight but the knight is not yet threatening anything. Both sides have some problems doing anything constructive. White has two options:

b31) 14 Qd4 is a very tactical variation but practice has shown that Black gets a lot of play on the dark

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squares with 14...f5! (14... $\mathbb{R}a7$! is Kožul's favourite here) and now White has tried:

b311) 15 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16 f6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ looks good for Black though White can take the pawn: 19 $\mathbb{R}xd6$! $\mathbb{R}hd8$ (19... $\mathbb{Q}d5$?) 20 $\mathbb{R}xd8$ $\mathbb{R}xd8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{R}d4$ 22 $\mathbb{R}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 23 g3 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 24 cxd3 $\mathbb{W}f5$ and the dominating pieces provide compensation.

b312) 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d5 19 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ a4? (19... $\mathbb{Q}d6$?) 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$! gave White tactical chances in Herrera-Abreu, Havana Capablanca mem 1998.

b313) 15 $\mathbb{R}c4$ (White continues the original rook adventure) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?) 16 exd5 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 17 dxе6 fxе6 18 $\mathbb{R}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19 $\mathbb{R}b7$ (19 $\mathbb{R}c6$! $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 20 $\mathbb{R}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21 $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 22 fxе5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ gave Black a fine ending in Ulfarsson-Waitzkin, Szeged U-18 Wch 1994) 19... $\mathbb{R}c8$ 20 $\mathbb{R}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 21 c3 bxc3 22 $\mathbb{W}e3$ (22 $\mathbb{Q}c4$? has been suggested as unclear) 22... $\mathbb{W}d4$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xe6$ +(23 $\mathbb{W}xc3$) 23... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 24 $\mathbb{R}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ + 25 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ -+ Zontakh-Poluliakhov, Belgrade 1993.

b32) After the natural developing moves 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$, White has the

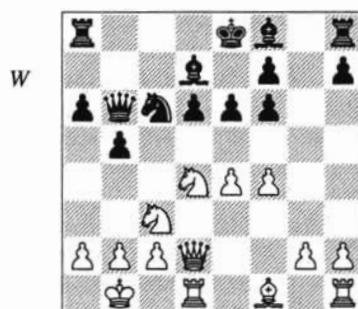
following options:

b321) 15 g4 h5! 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (16 gxh5 f5!) 16...hxg4 17 f5 (17 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ f5 18 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xh1$ gives White some obscure compensation) 17... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xe3$ e5!? 20 $\mathbb{R}dg1$ $\mathbb{R}h3$ 21 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (21 $\mathbb{W}f2$?) 22 $\mathbb{R}h4$) 21... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ was level in Short-Grosar, Manila OL 1992.

b322) 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ f5! 16 exf5 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 17 c3 (17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$) 17...bxс3 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ cxb2+ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 0-0 (19... $\mathbb{R}d8$) 20 $\mathbb{R}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ with a messy position, *MChess Pro-Yermolinsky*, Boston 1994.

b323) 15 f5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 exd5 e5. The black king feels now very comfortable on e7. It is very important who will get more play on the colour of his own bishop. The chances should be assessed as about equal at this point. 17 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ + (White's feeble play in Holmsten-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1995 gave Black the initiative after 17 $\mathbb{R}f1$?) $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{R}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ h5 20 a4 bxa3 21 $\mathbb{R}xa3$ a4 22 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{R}hb8$) 17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{R}b8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{R}he1$ h5 21 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{R}bg8$ 22 $\mathbb{R}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 23 a3 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{R}g4$! and Black was already more active in Short-Damljanović, Manila IZ 1990.

11... $\mathbb{W}b6$ (D)



12 ♜xc6

A couple of decades ago, 12 ♜f3 0-0-0 13 g3 ♜b8 was popular; this resembles the positions of the previous variation, but the bishop is better on f8.

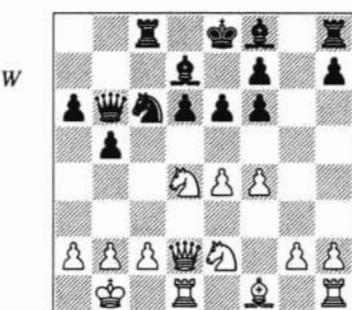
Nobody has dared to experiment with the fierce sacrifice mentioned by Wolff: 12 ♜f5?! exf5 13 ♜d5 ♜d8 14 exf5 ♜g7 15 ♜e1+ ♜f8.

The main alternative is 12 ♜ce2, which was very popular at the beginning of the 1990s. White likes to keep a knight on d4 and develop the bishop at g2 to control the long diagonal. Black now has several possibilities, such as 12...h5, 12...♜a5 and 12...♝c8, but only two basic approaches. He can either start generating weaknesses in White's queenside with knight manoeuvres or he can start pushing his queenside pawns.

a) The following game demonstrates the former aggressive approach for Black: 12...h5 13 g3 ♜a5 14 b3 ♜b8 15 ♜g2 (15 c3) 15...♞c4! 16 ♜d3 ♜a3+ 17 ♜b2 b4 18 c4 ♜g7 19 ♜f3 (19 f5?! e5 20 ♜c2 ♜xc2 21 ♜xc2 ♜e7) 19...0-0 20 ♜xd6 ♜f2! 21 ♜xd7 ♜bd8 22 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 23 ♜xd8+ ♜h7 24 ♜e1 ♜xg2 25 ♜d3 ♜f2 (a funny bind!) 26 ♜c1 ♜f8 27 ♜d2 ♜c5 28 ♜c1 ♜g7 29 h3 ½-½ Nunn-Damljanović, Belgrade 1991.

b) 12...♝c8 (D). The rook move is useful any case since Black is not going to castle queenside with the bishop coming to g2, which is the obvious plan for White. Now:

b1) The line 13 f5 ♜xd4 14 ♜xd4 e5 15 ♜e2 b4 might be better for White than its reputation: 16 ♜g3 h5 17 h4 ♜e7 and now:



b11) Black gets a strong initiative after 18 ♜e2?! ♜h6 19 ♜d5 ♜c5 20 ♜b3 ♜hc8 21 ♜d3? (21 ♜xh5 ♜c4) 21...♜a5 → Petrushin-Tukmakov, Baku 1977.

b12) 18 ♜d3! a5 19 ♜e2 a4 20 ♜c4 (20 ♜xh5 b3) 20...♜h6!? 21 ♜xh5 ♜xc4? (21...♜hg8! is better according to Kožul though 22 g4 ♜xg4, as proposed by him, doesn't look totally convincing because of 23 ♜xf7) 22 ♜xc4 ♜c8 23 ♜d5 ♜b5 24 g4 ♜c4 25 ♜xf6! ♜a6 26 ♜g8+! with complications favouring White, Matulović-Kožul, Yugoslav Ch (Banja Vrucica) 1991.

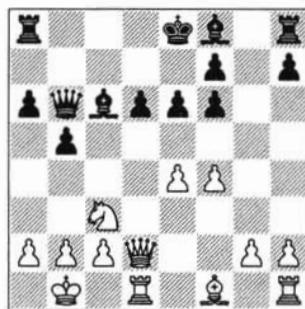
b2) 13 g3 and now:

b21) An example of how to provoke weaknesses on the queenside: 13...♜a5 14 b3 ♜c6 (14...♜b7) 15 ♜g2 ♜e7 16 ♜he1 ♜a5 17 c3 ♜xd4 18 ♜xd4 ♜c7 19 ♜d3 h5 = Waitzkin-Yermolinsky, New York Open 1992.

b22) Here is another example, albeit less correct, to demonstrate the former approach: 13...h5 14 ♜g2 ♜a5 15 b3 ♜c6?! 16 ♜hf1 ♜a5 (this looks strange but at the end the weakness of the c3-pawn will decide) 17 c3 ♜b6?! (17...♜xd4 18 ♜xd4 ♜e7 is about the same as line 'b21') 18 f5 ♜h6 19 ♜e1

$\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ e5 21 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ a5 22 h4 $\mathbb{H}c5$ 23 $\mathbb{H}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24 $\mathbb{H}fd3$ $\mathbb{H}hc8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}f3?$! (25 $\mathbb{Q}b2$) 25...d5! 26 $\mathbb{H}xd5$ 27 $\mathbb{H}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 28 $\mathbb{H}d3$ $\mathbb{H}d8$ 29 $\mathbb{H}xd8$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ with a very instructive way to achieve compensation, Hjartarson-Yermolinsky, Erevan OL 1996. b23) 13...b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ a5 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}c5$. What should White do? The fact that Black has ignored the kingside invites a breakthrough in the centre, but then the dark-squared bishop awakes from the grave. 17 $\mathbb{H}el$ (17 f5?! e5 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ \mp Sammalvuo-Yrjölä, Finnish Ch 1995) 17...a4 18 e5 (untypical, unpositional, but what else?) 18...fxe5 19 fxe5 d5 20 $\mathbb{H}f1$ (20 $\mathbb{W}g5$!?) 20...a3!? 21 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 22 $\mathbb{H}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 0-0 24 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f5! \mp Pulkkinen-Ermolinsky, Moscow ECC 1986.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (D)



13 $\mathbb{W}e1$

Once again playing for the $\mathbb{Q}d5$ trick and trying to provoke Black into playing the passive 13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, which isn't one of Black's (read: Kožul's) favourite moves in this line.

Generally the move 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ here or on the 12th move doesn't pose enough

problems for Black, and allows him to carry out his plans. 13...b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h5 and now:

a) 15 $\mathbb{H}hf1$ a5 16 c4 (16 $\mathbb{H}c1$! Kožul; 16 f5?! e5 17 $\mathbb{Q}gl$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ \mp Short-Kožul, Belgrade 1989) 16... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{H}f3$ $\mathbb{H}g8$ 18 g3 $\mathbb{H}d8$ \mp Enders-Baklan, Bundesliga 1999/00.

b) 15 f5 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e1$ e5 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 b3 $\mathbb{H}ag8$! 19 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h4 20 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 21 g4 $\mathbb{H}c8$ 22 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ axb5 \mp Morović-Kožul, Solana 1999.

c) 15 $\mathbb{W}e1$ h4! (taking the g3-square from the knight, which is an improvement over 15...a5 16 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17 f5 e5 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 0-0-0 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ \pm Adams-Kožul, Wijk aan Zee 1991) 16 $\mathbb{H}f1$ a5 and here White has tried:

c1) 17 f5?! e5 18 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}e3$! 19 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20 exd5 $\mathbb{H}g8$ \mp Am.Rodríguez-Kožul, Lucerne Wcht 1997.

c2) Better is 17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ a4 18 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{H}a5$! 19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ d5 20 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{H}xd5$ 22 f5 e5 (22... $\mathbb{Q}e7$) 23 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ = Holmsten-Veinhold, Helsinki 1998.

13... $\mathbb{Q}a7$?

Black really wants to get his bishop to h6 in the forthcoming almost inevitable closed position-type. Now 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$? is met by 14...exd5 15 exd5+ $\mathbb{H}e7$ of course.

Black has alternatives; the first one is rare but promising, the other one popular but miserable in practice:

a) 13...0-0-0?! is not typical for this variation but after 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$, line 'a2' looks quite promising as an equalizer:

a1) 14...h5 15 $\mathbb{H}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 16 a3! $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17 f5 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 18 fxe6 fxe6 19 $\mathbb{H}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 20 $\mathbb{H}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$?! (20... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ is relatively better, although after 21 $\mathbb{W}e3$! Black

must spend time exchanging all the rooks due to the threat of $\mathbb{W}b6$) 21 a4! \pm with a typical strike on the queen-side, Lalić-Kožul, Croatian Cht 1997.

a2) 14...b4 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d5! (the central strike seems to be close to equalizing even here) 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ dx e 4 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (19 $\mathbb{Q}he1?$) 19... $\mathbb{Q}hg8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$! 21 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ (21 g3) 21... $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xb5+$ ax b 5 and Black is slightly better in this ending, Belotti-Tukmakov, Ticino 1999.

b) 13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is a very natural move that has scored miserably:

b1) 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h5 (14...a5 15 f5 b4 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 17 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19 b3 0-0 20 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ \pm Adams-Kožul, Belgrade 1999, shows all the signs of big trouble: White has the h5-square and a bishop on c4, while Black has castled kingside) 15 f5 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ag8$ 18 fxe6+ fxe6 19 $\mathbb{Q}d5$! $\mathbb{Q}xg2$? (19...exd5 20 b4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 21 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}e6+$ with a strong attack) 20 b4 $\mathbb{W}a7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 22 $\mathbb{W}c3$ demonstrates the dangers in this line, Short-Torre, Manila IZ 1990.

b2) 14 f5 $\mathbb{W}c5$ (in the line 14...b4?!) 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ Black is likely to suffer on the light squares) 15 fxe6 fxe6 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}ag8$ is somewhat playable but doesn't inspire everyone. 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ b4 19 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ a5 20 $\mathbb{Q}df2$, Hraček-Popović, Brno 1992, is equal according to Baburin and Gofshtein.

It is no wonder Kožul is working hard to keep 13... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ alive!

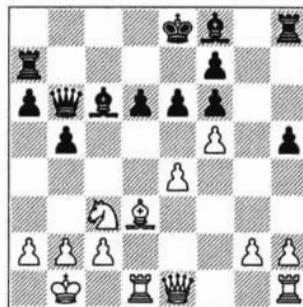
14 f5 h5

14...b4?!, 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 (15... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 16 fxe6 fxe6 17 $\mathbb{Q}g3$) 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h5?! 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$! was another failure for Black in I.Gurevich-Kožul, Biel IZ 1993.

14... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ a5!?, 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (why not 16 fxe6 fxe6 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ instead?) 16... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (another possibility is 17 fxe6 {Gofshtein's recommendation}) 17...fxe6 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ \pm 17...e5 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$! 20 $\mathbb{W}e2$ a4 with good chances, Benjamin-Kožul, Lucerne Wcht 1997, is apparently a better idea.

15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (D)

15 fxe6?!, fxe6 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$! (a justification for ... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ has been found!) 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h4 19 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$! 20 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with a very nice position, Palac-Kožul, Croatian Cht 1999.



B

15... $\mathbb{W}c5$

15...h4? looks like a viable alternative: 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ b4 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ (stopping $\mathbb{Q}c4$ for a while) 19 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ holds on, Miranović-Scherbakov, Novi Sad 1989.

Kožul's latest idea is a genuine sacrifice: 15...b4 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 17 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xh5$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ a5 21 b3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (a surprise, but 21...a4 22 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ doesn't look tempting) 22 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}f1$!?, a4 24 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xh8$ axb3 26 cxb3 (Tiviakov-Kožul, Bugojno ECC 1999) and now

26... $\mathbb{W}c6$, with the idea of ... $\mathbb{R}xa2$, draws.

16 $\mathbb{R}f1$

After 16 $f \times e6$ $f \times e6$, 17 $\mathbb{R}f1$ is no better, although Black has no time to get his rook to g7. 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5!?$ is interesting, though.

16...e5 17 $\mathbb{W}h4$

The idea was to stop $\mathbb{Q}d5$ with the pressure on c2 after 17 $\mathbb{R}e2$ $\mathbb{R}c7$.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e7!?$

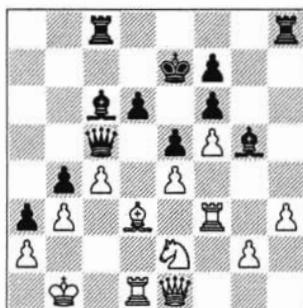
Positionally this move is right but...

18 $\mathbb{Q}e2!?$

Now 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ $\mathbb{R}c7?$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ is winning, because 19... $\mathbb{W}e3$ is met by 20 $\mathbb{R}xd6!$.

18...a5 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xh5$ a4 21 $\mathbb{W}h4$ b4 22 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 23 h3 $\mathbb{R}c7$ 24 c4 a3 25 b3 $\mathbb{R}cc8$ (D)

W



Black's compensation is based on the passivity of White's pieces, weak dark squares and the potentially very unpleasant thorn on a3.

26 $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{R}h4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{R}f4$ 28 g3 $\mathbb{R}xf3$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 30 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{R}h8$ 31 h4 $\mathbb{R}g8$ 32 g4 $\mathbb{R}xg4$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{R}g3$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 35 h5

35 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{R}h3$ 36 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 37 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ is better but doesn't solve the basic problem.

35... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 36 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{R}g2$ 37 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 38 c5 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 39 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{R}dx5$ 40 $\mathbb{R}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 41 $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 42 $\mathbb{R}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 43 $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 44 $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{R}h2$ 45 $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 46 $\mathbb{R}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 47 $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{R}f2$ 48 $\mathbb{R}h1$ $\mathbb{R}g2$ 49 $\mathbb{R}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 50 $\mathbb{R}h1+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 51 $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 52 $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 53 $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 54 $\mathbb{R}d1+$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 55 $\mathbb{R}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 56 $\mathbb{R}d1$ c4! 57 $\mathbb{R}bc4$ b3 58 $\mathbb{R}xb3$ a2+ 59 $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ $\mathbb{R}xc2+$ 0-1

Conclusion: There doesn't seem to be a totally convincing route to equality in the main line, though there are many interesting tries. The other important line, 11 f5 (note 'a' to White's 11th move), looks less awkward for Black, but there are practical problems for both sides. The other lines seem more modest and do not offer any noteworthy advantage for White.

Which line to choose against the Rauzer?

Black has a wide choice of lines in the Rauzer:

- A) The 8...h6 line
- B) 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$
- C) 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with 9...b5
- D) The new fashion line 8... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 9 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 f4 b5
- E) The variations with 7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and 8...0-0

Besides these there are some minor possibilities. Options A-D have scored almost equally well in practice. D is not discussed in this book; it is very interesting but there are some ultra-sharp positions. E leads to quite different position-types, but early castling is not so risky in the Rauzer as in the Velimirović.

Option A has been the most popular. It was extremely popular in the early 1990s. Now there is a sign that Black is seeking alternatives. I feel some crises for A are arising with the new line 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$. Option A is suitable for a player who doesn't like pawn weaknesses but is not afraid of taking some chances with his king. There is not a big chance of getting doubled f-pawns. The line can be described with the words solid and cool. Black's pawn-structure remains solid and many endgames turn out to be good for Black. However, Black has to be prepared to face some attacks and he has to be ready to balance well between defence and counterattack.

In B and C, Black is likely to get doubled f-pawns. They are still quite different lines in nature. In the main line of B, Black castles queenside and has good changes to equalize with the

central break ...d5. Playing for a win might be more difficult. The line is long, systematic and easy to study, and thus suitable for a lazy player. The most important subvariation with 11 e5 is sharper but still long and easy to learn. This was the main line during the golden age of the Classical Sicilian and there is not very much space for innovations any more – but who knows what would happen if the top modern grandmasters became interested in it? The overall score of the line is much worse than within the last five years.

C is sharper, riskier, and more obscure, and there is still a lot of unexplored pasture. Computer programs don't seem to understand the position-type at all. This is an ideal line to play for a win. No wonder C seems to be more popular at top level than B. It is scoring quite well also.

7 The Richter-Rauzer: Others

Richter-Rauzer Attack: White's 7th move alternatives

All the important alternatives to the Rauzer move 7 $\mathbb{W}d2$ are covered here.

Game 21

Yudasin – Khalifman
Tilburg 1994

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 (D)



7 $\mathbb{Q}b5$

This has been a rather popular but risky way to avoid the most up-to-date theory. However, it's becoming a respected theoretical line in its own right. What can the adherents of this line play now?

a) Maybe the Keres variation 7 $\mathbb{W}d3$, which is unpopular but Black can easily get into trouble if he is unprepared, as Tibor Tolnai has shown several times. 7...a6 8 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (8...h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$!?) bxc6 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d5 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ leads to a similar position to that examined in the line 7 $\mathbb{W}d2$ a6 8 0-0-0 h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$) and now:

a1) Tolnai has lately preferred 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$, but after the natural moves 9...h6 (9... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13 f4 0-0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ ± Tolnai-Groszpetter, Hungarian Ch 1993) 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (10 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e3$ g5!?) 10... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 f4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 the position should be OK for Black as 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$?! $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16 e5 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ doesn't work for White.

a2) After 9 f4 h6 10 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 11 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ Black will get the strong-point e5 and regain the g5-pawn. For example: 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}ge5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ hgx5 was equal in Thorhallsson-Stefansson, Reykjavik 1995) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d4$ hgx5 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ = Tolnai-Van der Wiel, Katerini 1992.

b) The line originally played by Richter, 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 8 e5, is safely met by 8...dxe5 (8... $\mathbb{W}a5$!?) 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 10 exd6 ($\mathbb{W}e5$ +) 9 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ + $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ ±.

c) 7 $\mathbb{A}e2 \mathbb{A}e7$ 8 0-0. There are two types of players who can play like this. One type is trying to avoid theory. They usually want a draw, but this is not an easy way to get it. The other type, like GM Rantanen, have an original idea. Also, some players have a natural dislike of castling queenside. 8...0-0 (D) (the sharp plan 8...a6 9 $\mathbb{A}h1 \mathbb{A}d7$ 10 f4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ h6 12 $\mathbb{A}h4$ g5!? 13 fxe5 hgx5 14 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ 0-0-0, with faint compensation, was a well-prepared secret weapon against the white plan {'c2'} in Rantanen-Yrjölä, Helsinki 1984) and now:



c1) 9 $\mathbb{W}d2$ a6 (9... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$?) 10 $\mathbb{H}ad1$ is typical, with the intention of pressing against d6. Now 10... $\mathbb{W}b6$ (after 10... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ b5 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 13 $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$, Akopian-Dzindzichashvili, Krasnodar 1966, the kingside weakness is nasty for Black even though the position is not completely clear; Black has queenside chances) 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{H}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{A}h1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 a4 b6, Keres-Bronstein, Pärnu 1947, looks like a sensible plan as Black has managed to avoid doubled f-pawns.

c2) 9 $\mathbb{A}h1$ a6 10 f4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is Rantanen's set-up. White aims for

kingside operations and the push e4-e5 at a suitable moment. Nevertheless, with the natural moves 11...b5 12 a3 $\mathbb{A}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h6 15 $\mathbb{A}h4$ bxa3 16 bxa3?! (16 $\mathbb{H}xa3$ d5! is critical) 16... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17 e5 dx5 18 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ Black got a fine position in Rantanen-Balashov, Helsinki 1984.

7... $\mathbb{W}b6$

This was first played in 1994. If the complex variation with the piece sacrifice is not to everyone's taste, Black can still play the old line with confidence: 7... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (8 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 10 a4 a6 11 $\mathbb{A}e2$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ h6 13 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ = Lengyel-Grosar, Budapest 1994) 8... $\mathbb{W}bc6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}f3$ h6 (9... $\mathbb{A}a5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 11 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{H}g8$ 12 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 14 0-0 $\mathbb{W}g4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{B}xg4$ with compensation, Shtyrenko-Shmuter, Volgograd 1994) 10 $\mathbb{A}h4$ and now:

a) 10...c5 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 12 0-0-0 c4 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 14 e5 dx5 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}de4$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 19 $\mathbb{H}hd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}g3$ 0-0 21 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ ± Tiviakov-San Segundo, Madrid 1994.

b) 10... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 12 e5 (12 0-0-0!) 12...dxe5 13 0-0-0 $\mathbb{W}b4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e4 15 $\mathbb{W}e2$ c5 16 a3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 18 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ ♦ Joshi-Tilak, Indian Ch 1994) 17... $\mathbb{A}b5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}h5$ 0-0 20 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ with compensation, Tiviakov-Tilak, Calcutta 1994.

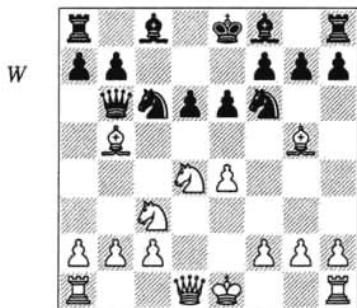
c) 10...e5 (this is less ambitious but more solid than the alternatives) 11 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ (or 12... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 13 0-0 $\mathbb{W}d7$) 13 $\mathbb{W}f3$ (13 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ + $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 14 f3 $\mathbb{A}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ is equal) 13... $\mathbb{A}e7$ (13... $\mathbb{W}g4$?) 14 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 15 h3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$

16 ♜xf6 gxf6 17 0-0 ± Tiviakov-Leko, Wijk aan Zee 1994) and it seems White is struggling to maintain equality:

c1) 14 0-0-0 0-0 15 ♜xf6 (15 ♜d3?! comes into mind, but there is a danger Black will keep the knight and bring it towards e6) 15...♜xf6 16 h4 ♜e7 17 ♜h3 (17 g3 ♜ab8 18 ♜d3 ♜fd8 19 ♜e1 d5! 20 exd5 ♜b4 ± Marusenko-Goldin, Novgorod 1997) 17...♜fd8 18 ♜b1 ♜e6 19 ♜xe6 fxe6 and Black is fine in the ending, Berzinsh-Veingold, Vantaa 1997.

c2) 14 0-0 g5! 15 ♜g3 h5 16 h4 ♜g4 17 ♜xg4 hxg4 18 hxg5 ♜h5 19 g6 fxg6 20 ♜e2 0-0-0 ± Tiviakov-Tseshkovsky, Russian Ch 1994.

We now return to 7...♜b6 (D):



8 ♜e3

With more peaceful moves White simply tends to lose a tempo compared with the Scheveningen; e.g.: 8 0-0 ♜e7 9 ♜e3 ♜c7 10 a4 0-0 11 ♜xc6?!! (11 ♜d3) 11...bx6 12 ♜d3 c5 13 ♜f4 c4 14 ♜e2 a6 15 ♜f3 ♜b8 16 ♜c1 ♜d7 ± Tuomala-Yrjölä, Jyväskylä 1996; 8 ♜b3?!! ♜e7 (8...♜xe4!?) 9 0-0-0 10 a4 ♜c7 11 ♜e2 ♜d8 12 ♜f4 ♜e5 13 ♜g3 a6 14 ♜d4 b6 15 f4

±c6 16 ♜f2 ♜b7 17 ♜f3 ♜d7 18 ♜h1 ♜c5 ± Lengyel-Videki, Budapest 1995.

The most critical variation is 8 ♜xf6?!! gxf6 9 ♜d5 (too passive is 9 ♜b3?!! a6 10 ♜e2 ♜c7 11 a4 b6 12 ♜d4 ♜b7 13 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 14 ♜d4 ♜g8 15 ♜f3 ♜c5 ± Kamsky-Kramnik, Monaco Amber blindfold 1994) 9...exd5 10 exd5 a6. White has sacrificed a piece but Black has tedious work to rise from the difficulties by activating his pieces and defending his king at the same time.

a) 11 ♜e2+ ♜d8 12 ♜xc6+ bxc6 13 ♜xc6 ♜a7 has been very unsuccessful for White in practice: 14 0-0 (14 ♜e8+ ♜c7 15 0-0 ♜b8 16 ♜fe1 ♜g7 17 ♜e4 f5 18 ♜f4 ♜d8 19 ♜e3 ♜d4 is unclear, Rosito-Zarnicki, Argentine Ch 1995; 14 0-0-0 ♜e7 15 ♜f3 f5 16 ♜g3 ♜b4 17 a3 f4 18 ♜h4 ♜e4 19 ♜h1 ♜f5 Sutovsky-Vouldis, Szeged U-18 Wch 1994) 14...♜e7 15 ♜f3 f5 16 ♜ael ♜g8 17 h3 ♜b4 18 c3 ♜xb2 → L.Milov-Wells, Bad Wörishofen 1997.

b) The more dangerous 11 ♜xc6+ bxc6 12 ♜e2+ is gaining popularity:

b1) 12...♜e7 13 ♜xc6 ♜c7 14 0-0-0 ♜b7 15 ♜hel ♜xc6 16 dxc6 ♜g8? (16...♜f8 17 ♜d3 f5) 17 ♜d3 ♜a7 18 ♜b3 ± and Black couldn't break the bind in Groszpeter-Galianina, Pardubice 1999.

b2) 12...♜d7 is untested but probably quite good.

b3) 12...♜d8 13 ♜xc6+ ♜c7 14 0-0-0 (14 ♜e8 ♜g7 15 ♜xf7+ ♜d7 16 0-0 ♜hg8 ½-½ J.Gonzalez-Garcia Ilundain, Mondariz 1996) 14...♜b7 15 ♜d3 ♜xc6 16 ♜c3 ♜a5 17 ♜c4! (in Lehto-Nevanlinna, Finnish Ch 1999, White squandered his initiative with

two careless moves: 17 $\mathbb{E}xc6+?$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}h5?$ $\mathbb{E}e8 \mp$ 17... $\mathbb{W}b5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 $\mathbb{E}xc6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{E}e1$ and Black is still a piece up but he has still a long way to go for freedom.

b4) 12... $\mathbb{Q}e6!?$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe6!?$ (better is 13 0-0-0 cxd5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 15 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{E}he1$ $\mathbb{E}a7$ 17 $\mathbb{E}xd5$, with typical compensation but assessed as slightly better for Black by Yermolinsky) 13...fxe6 14 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 0-0 (15 0-0-0!?) 15... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 16 $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ and the compensation was insufficient in Marcel Martinez-Yermolinsky, Chicago 1999.

8... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 9 f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{W}f3$ 0-0 11 0-0-0!?

a6 (D)



12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6!?$

This time the b-file and the c-pawn will become dangerous. Safer is 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ e5 14 fxe5 dxe5 15 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ with equality.

12... $\mathbb{W}bx6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 14 g4 $\mathbb{W}b7$ 15 b3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ c5 17 $\mathbb{W}h3?$

17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ would have stopped the following blow.

17...c4!! 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

After 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc4??$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ Black wins at once.

18... $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3! \rightarrow$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ exd5! 24 axb3 $\mathbb{W}a4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 26 f5 d5 27 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a3+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (D)



28... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

28...f6! \mp .

29 $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{W}xb2+$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 31 g5 $\mathbb{E}bc8$ 32 h4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 33 f6 $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 36 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 37 fxg7 $\mathbb{Q}e5+$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 39 $\mathbb{E}hf1$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 40 h5 $\mathbb{E}ec7$ 41 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 42 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{E}ce7$ 43 h6 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 44 $\mathbb{E}f6$ e3 45 $\mathbb{E}d4$ e2 46 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{E}c7$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ a5 0-1

Conclusion: None of White's 7th move alternatives are very dangerous for Black. Against 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5$, Black has several playable alternatives to choose from according to his taste. The value of the promising 7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ depends of the practical value of the piece sacrifice.

8 Other Variations

6 ♜e3 ♜g4

This is the most active and critical answer to 6 ♜e3 but demands more learning than 6...e5. White must choose between the more positional approach where he preserves his bishop from exchange, and the line where he allows the exchange and tries to use his lead in development. In the former case, the position will resemble the Dragon. In the latter case, the game is of a most unusual character.

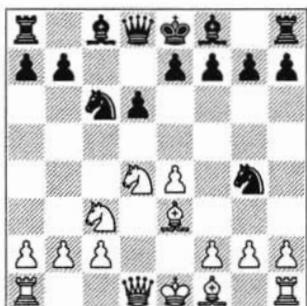
Game 22

Hector – Lagunow

2nd Bundesliga 1994/5

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4
♜f6 5 ♜c3 ♜c6 6 ♜e3 ♜g4 (D)

W



7 ♜b5

These days 7 ♜g5 h6 8 ♜h4 g5 9
♜g3 ♜g7 is quite popular, when Black

gets active piece-play as compensation for his somewhat compromised kingside pawn-structure. 10 ♜b3 (10 ♜f5? ♜xf5 11 exf5 ♜a5) and now:

a) 10...♜xc3+!? 11 bxc3 ♜ge5 is playable here or next move though many fianchetto fanatics hate to give up the dark-squared bishop. The g3-bishop is out of play and Black doesn't have to castle. After 12 h4 ♜g8 the situation is hard to assess. Black can try to use the c4-square in front of the doubled pawns.

b) 10...♜e6 11 ♜e2 (White can opt to castle queenside, though this has its risks: 11 ♜d2 ♜c8 12 f3 ♜ge5 13 ♜d5 ♜g6 14 0-0-0 a5 15 ♜b5 0-0 16 ♜b1 ♜a7 17 ♜e2 a4 with counterplay, Temponde-Soppe, Cordoba 1990) 11...h5 12 h4 gxh4 13 ♜xh4 ♜c8 14 0-0 (safer is 14 ♜d2 ♜b6 15 ♜d5 ♜xd5 16 exd5 ♜ce5 17 c3 ♜f6 18 ♜f4 = Raaste-Yrjölä, Finnish Ch 1996) 14...♜f6! 15 ♜xf6 (15 ♜g3, Adams-Kramnik, Belgrade 1995, and now Black missed 15...h4! 16 ♜f4 ♜g8+) 15...♜xf6 is unclear according to Kramnik. Black gets some pressure against the white king with moves like ...h4 and ...♜g8. Both sides have problems finding a good spot for their king in this line.

This line can be compared with the currently popular Najdorf line (5...a6 6 ♜e3 ♜g4). ...♜c6 should be more useful than ...a6.

7...♜xe3 8 fxe3

After 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6 \mathbb{Q}xd1$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ a6 White can only hope that his more active position compensates for the bishop-pair; for example, 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e6 12 a4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd3$ $\mathbb{Q}he8$ ½-½ Zso.Polgar-Aseev, Brno 1991.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 0-0

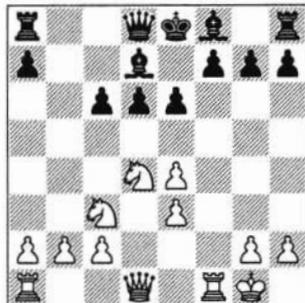
The premature exchange 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$?! $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 10 0-0 e5! 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f6 12 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ gives Black a very solid position, Bauer-Dorfman, France 1993.

9...e6

Neither 9...g6?! 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f6 12 e5! nor 9... $\mathbb{Q}e5$?! 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ can be recommended for Black.

10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (D)

W



This is positionally very bad for White so he has to play actively to benefit from his lead in development and the open lines. Black has a bishop-pair and a massive centre. White has the potential break e4-e5 and some pressure along the f- and d-files.

11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

11 e5?! is even more aggressive and committal. Then:

a) There is probably still much unexplored territory in the line 11...d5?! 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$:

a1) 12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$?! 13 b4! g6 14 b5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$!?(14...c5 15 e4! leads to complications, which have been favourable for White in practice) 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 16 e4 (16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ 0-0 (17...f5?! 18 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}h4$) 18 exd5 exd5 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ was favourable for White in Gipslis-Inkiov, Jurmala 1985.

a2) 12...f5?! 13 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ +(14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxsf6 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 17 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ gave Black fine compensation for the pawn in the game Hoelscher-Shulskis, Gausdal 1995 but the critical 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ is untested) 14... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}af1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ was fine for Black in Schumi-Thorhallsson, Oberwart 1991.

b) 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$! 12 exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 0-0 and now White has two natural moves, of which the former may be more accurate:

b1) 14 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f5 16 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ e5 20 b3, Kupreichik-Peek, Groningen open 1997, 20... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ is OK for Black) 15... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ f5!?(moves like 16... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ or 16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ may be more solid) 17 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f4 (stopping $\mathbb{Q}c4$) 19 exf4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ and the bishop-pair compensated for the ugly pawn-structure in Berg-Rötšagov, Stockholm 1998.

b2) 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ and now:

b21) Perfectly playable and perhaps safest is 15... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$!?) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ c5 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$ a5! Haïk-Lerner, Metz 1998.

b22) 15... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 17 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ h6 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$. Black is fine but he

still has to defend very accurately. Gipslis-Edelman, Biel 1994 continued in Black's favour: 19 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (19 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is slightly better) 19... $\mathbb{A}e8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 21 c3 $\mathbb{B}g8$ \mp .

11... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$

Of course 12 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ gxf6 13 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{A}g7$ is dream compensation for Black, who often has trouble activating his dark-squared bishop in many Classical lines.

12... $\mathbb{W}g5$

If a draw is enough, Black can play 12... $\mathbb{W}d8$.

13 $\mathbb{B}f3$ (D)

B



13... $\mathbb{A}e7$!

It's time to make a developing move. The old way to play, 13... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 14 $\mathbb{B}af1$ f6 15 $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$, is harder to understand and more difficult to play though there is no evidence this is bad. Sometimes White gets chances with the central break e5.

14 $\mathbb{W}a6$

White should not be too adventurous with his rook: 14 $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16 e5 (Black has very nice compensation after 16 $\mathbb{B}xg7$! $\mathbb{A}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{B}b8$) 16...0-0-0 17 exd6 (17 $\mathbb{B}d1$!? d5 is unclear) 17... $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 18 $\mathbb{B}h3$ e5 19 $\mathbb{B}h5$

$\mathbb{A}g4$ 20 $\mathbb{B}g5$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ \mp . White's position is suspicious because of the extraordinary location of the rook. In Fedorov-Tukmakov, Nikolaev Z 1993 White managed to save himself with tactics: 21 $\mathbb{B}b1$ f5 (21...h6!?) was played in Ptacnikova-Grosar, Mitropa Cup (Montecatini Terme) 1997) 22 a3 $\mathbb{W}c5$?! (22... $\mathbb{W}b6$) 23 $\mathbb{B}xg4$! fxg4 24 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e4 25 $\mathbb{Q}cxe4$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 26 $\mathbb{W}c4+$ $\mathbb{A}h8$ 27 $\mathbb{B}xd6$.

14...0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

15 $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{B}fd8$ doesn't make much difference.

15... $\mathbb{A}xc6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}ab8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{B}fc8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$

After the forced exchange, Black regains the pawn, with comfortable equality.

19 $\mathbb{W}xb5$

It is dangerous for White to try 19 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{A}f6$.

19... $\mathbb{B}xb5$ 20 c3 $\mathbb{B}c4$ 21 b3 $\mathbb{B}xe4$ 22 c4 $\mathbb{B}b7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}e5$ 24 $\mathbb{B}d1$ f5 25 $\mathbb{B}d3$ h5 26 $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{B}a5$!?

Black is slightly better after the logical 26...g5 27 $\mathbb{B}fd2$ $\mathbb{A}f7$, since 28 $\mathbb{B}b5$? is met by 28...d5.

27 $\mathbb{B}fd2$ $\mathbb{A}f6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{A}e5$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{A}f7$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ g5 31 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{B}a3$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a5 33 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 34 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ a4 35 $\mathbb{B}xd6$ axb3 36 axb3 $\mathbb{B}xb3$ 37 c5 $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 38 c6 $\mathbb{B}ac3$ 39 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}e5$ 40 $\mathbb{B}2d3$ $\mathbb{B}c2+$ 41 $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{B}ec5$ 42 $\mathbb{B}xc2$ $\mathbb{B}xc2+$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 44 $\mathbb{B}d7+$ $\mathbb{A}e8$ 45 $\mathbb{B}d6$ ½-½

Conclusion: This line is not theoretically dangerous for Black, but he has to be ready to defend accurately. On the other hand, there are several opportunities for White to outplay himself.

Odds and Ends

There are also many alternatives for White on the sixth move that are very unpopular in practice.

Game 23
Movsesian – C. Peptan
Groningen open 1997

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 4 d4 exd4 5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6 h3

This is hardly the most dangerous move, but if White manages to play g4, $\mathbb{Q}de2$, $\mathbb{Q}g2$ and $\mathbb{Q}g3$ without disturbance, he may be quite happy. Other odd moves:

a) 6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ (this exchange generally strengthens Black's centre and is normally not advisable without any special benefits) 6...bx c 6 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e6) 7...g6 8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 f4 (9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 10 $\mathbb{B}b1$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ Schmid-Barbero, Zurich 1990) 9...0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e1$ d5!? 12 $\mathbb{B}b1$ dx e 4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ with an equal position, Karasev-Lagunov, Novosibirsk 1989.

b) 6 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (here White usually has to exchange on c6 or lose a tempo) 6... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 7 0-0 g6 (7...e6 8 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is not bad either) 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$!? bx c 6 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ Samwel-Afifi, Cairo 1996.

c) After 6 $\mathbb{Q}b3$, 6...e6 leads to a Scheveningen where the early $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is not the most active approach but Black can choose 6...e5 with a likely transposition to the line 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ studied earlier, because 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is hardly anything to worry about.

6...e5 7 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$! 8 f4 (D)

8 g4 and many other moves are met by 8...d5.

B



8... $\mathbb{Q}h5$! 9 g3 exf4 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Castling would have been safer, when Black has nothing to worry about.

12 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 gxf4 $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 17 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

This position is difficult to assess. White has the d5-square as compensation for slight troubles with his majesty.

18 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 22 f5 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dx e 5 26 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 30 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 31 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 32 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 33 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 34 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 35 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 36 ax b 3 $\mathbb{W}a6$ 37 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 38 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ h6 39 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}g2+$ 40 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 41 b4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4+$ 42 c3 $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 43 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 44 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 45 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{W}a2$ 46 f6 $\mathbb{W}xb2+$ 47 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ g5 48 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ g4+ 49 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 1-0

Conclusion: These lines are not critical, but especially 6 h3 can turn such for Black if he has no knowledge of an exact reply.

Index of Variations

1 e4 c5 2 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (D)

B



Now:

- A: Alternatives to 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ and 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$
B: 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$
C: 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

A) Neither Sozin nor Rauzer

- 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$
6 f4 e5 27
6 h3 126
6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 126
6 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 126
6 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 126
6 f3 e5 25 (6... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ g6 41)
6 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 30 (6... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 123)
6 g3 g6 35 7 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 36 (7 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ 38
7... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 0-0 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10
a4 a6 39) 7... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 8 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
36
6...e5 16
6... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ g6 40
7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 16

7 $\mathbb{Q}db5$ 22
7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 23
7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 22 7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 0-0 0-0 23
7...h6 8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ 16 9...0-0 10
h3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 17 11... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 12 a4
18
12 b3 20 12...a6 13 a4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b2$
21
12... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13 a5 a6 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19

B) Sozin and Velimirović

- 6 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e6 (D)
6... $\mathbb{W}b6$:
a) 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 66
b) 7 $\mathbb{Q}de2$ 66
c) 7 $\mathbb{Q}db5$ 67
d) 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 66 7... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 8 0-0 69
e) 7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 72 7...e6 8 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 72;
8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 73; 8 0-0 73) 8... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 75

W



- 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$
7 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 62
7 0-0 62 7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (other moves
62-3) 8...0-0 (8...a6 63) 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (9

f4 63) 9...a6 10 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 b5 63
 7...a6 8 $\mathbb{W}e2$ 46
 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 59 8... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 9 f4 (9 0-0 60)
 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 60
 8... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 46
 8... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 47
 9 0-0-0
 9 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 48
 9... $\mathbb{Q}a5$
 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 49
 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$
 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 51
 10...b5 52

C) Richter-Rauzer Attack

6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 (D)

W



7 $\mathbb{W}d2$
 7 $\mathbb{W}d3$ 119
 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 8 e5 119

7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 120
 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 119 7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ (7... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 120) 8
 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 121) 8... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 122

7...a6 84 8 0-0-0

Now:

C1: 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

C2: 8...h6

C1) Rauzer with 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 100 9 f4
 9 f3 100
 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 101
 9...b5 108 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 109)
 10...gxf6 110 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ (11 f5 110;
 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 111) 11... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 113
 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b5 102 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 104
 11 e5 b4 12 exf6 bxc3 13 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ gxf6
 102
 11...gxf6 12 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 104

C2) Rauzer with 8...h6

8...h6 84 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$
 9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 84
 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ d5 11 $\mathbb{W}e3$ 85
 9 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 87
 9... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 f3
 10 f4 90 10...b5 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12 h3
 (12 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 91) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 b4 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 92
 10...b5 93 11 g4
 11 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ 93
 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 93
 11... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 94

