

Yelena Dembo

play the Grünfeld

detailed coverage of this Kasparov favourite



EVERYMAN CHESS

Yelena Dembo

play the
Grünfeld

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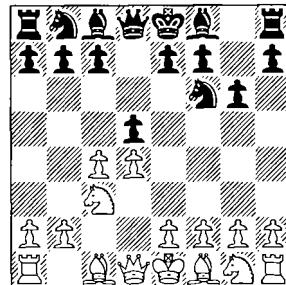
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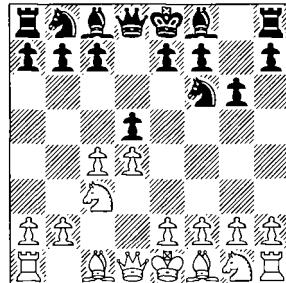
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Bibliography



Grünfeld Sources

Winning With The Grünfeld, Andras Adorjan & Jeno Dory (Macmillan 1987)

A revolutionary and early book on the Grünfeld, now outdated in some places but still very relevant in others. This is really where it all started!

The Complete Grünfeld, Alexei Suetin (Batsford 1991)

Large reference work, covering all the major systems.

Beating the Grünfeld, Anatoly Karpov (Batsford 1992)

Essentially a collection of Karpov's best games in the Grünfeld, containing deep and instructive material on his favourite systems.

Fianchetto Grünfeld, Adrian Mikhalchishin & Alexander Beliavsky (Cadogan 1998)

Significant reference work on the g3 systems by two renowned analysts.

Understanding the Grünfeld, Jonathan Rowson (Gambit 1999)

A must-have for all Grünfeld players. This book explains both the basics of the opening as well as more intricate concepts.

The Grünfeld, Nigel Davies (Everyman 2002)

Repertoire book for Black featuring plenty of interesting ideas.

King's Indian & Grünfeld: Fianchetto Lines, Lasha Janjgava (Gambit 2003)

Large reference work on the g3 systems; very comprehensive and well researched.

Starting Out: The Grünfeld, Jacob Aagaard (Everyman 2004)

Everyman's own introductory guide to the Grünfeld; a very good alternative to Rowson's book.

Challenging the Grünfeld, Edward Dearing (Quality Chess 2005)

A book dedicated to the 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ Exchange Variation; definitely the bible for adherents of this system.

An Expert's Guide to the 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ Gruenfeld, Konstantin Sakaev (2nd edition, Chess Stars 2006)

Not just a repertoire book, but perhaps the most comprehensive and remarkable opening work ever! Covers absolutely everything under the sun on the 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ Exchange Variation for both sides and includes an incredible amount of original analysis.

Other Sources

Beating the Fianchetto Defences, Efstratios Grivas (Gambit 2006)

Repertoire book for White, covering the 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ variation, on which Grivas is the world's leading expert.

Beating the Indian Defences, Graham Burgess & Steffen Pedersen (Batsford 1997)

Repertoire work for White, covering the 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Exchange Variation.

Beating the King's Indian & Grünfeld, Timothy Taylor (Everyman 2007)

Repertoire book for White, covering two offbeat lines against the Grünfeld.

Black is still OK!, Andras Adorjan (Batsford 2004)

Collection of articles about various aspects of chess, including original ideas of the author in several Grünfeld lines.

Dynamics of Chess Strategy, Vlastimil Jansa (Batsford 2003)

A strategic chess tutorial by a legendary grandmaster, with a large and very instructive section on several Grünfeld systems.

Play 1 d4!, Richard Palliser (Batsford 2003)

Repertoire book for White, covering 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 6 cxd5.

The Soviet Chess Conveyor, Mikhail Shereshevsky (Semko 1994)

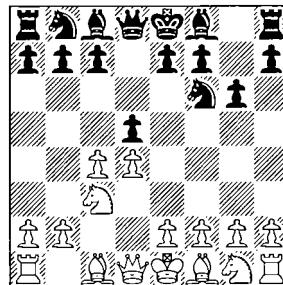
An instructional book and not an opening manual, but with a few paragraphs on a

specific line of the 4 $\hat{A}f4$ system.

Databases, Periodicals and Websites

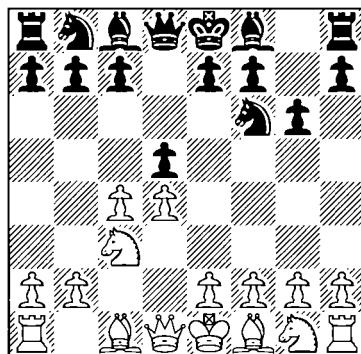
Chess Informant, ChessPublishing.com (Grünfeld coverage chiefly supplied by Tisdall, Davies and Flear), *Mega Database 2007* (ChessBase), *New In Chess Magazine*, *New In Chess Yearbook*, *The Week In Chess* (1-639) and *UltraCorr* (Chess Mail).

Introduction



Welcome to the fascinating world of the Grünfeld!

The book you are holding is a repertoire work for players who wish to employ the Grünfeld with Black. It is aimed at players of intermediate level up to that of Grandmaster (hopefully!) and aspires to provide everything you need to know about this dynamic defence which begins 1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5.



A History of the Grünfeld

The Grünfeld Defence (I believe that 'counterattack' would be a more appropriate term!) was introduced into the higher echelons of competitive chess in the heyday of the hypermodern movement, namely in the 1920s and 1930s. It bears the name of the Austrian master Ernst Grünfeld who was its first devoted adherent. Nevertheless, like several opening set-ups conceived in those days, it was forced to re-

main rather a theoretical backwater for some time, presumably because it appeared too avant-garde to the more classically-minded spirit that prevailed back then.

The evolution of the Soviet Union as a chess power provided the necessary boost to catapult the Grünfeld to the status of a respectable opening. The more dynamic, less stereotyped way of thinking that characterized the best Soviet players of that time found a fertile field of expression in the Grünfeld. Indeed, the powerful World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik regularly employed the Grünfeld in his games and his example was soon followed by other Soviet stars, most notably his successor to the throne, Vasily Smyslov. The Grünfeld even made its way to the World Championship matches between the two, thus establishing itself as a sound and viable opening.

The Sixties were a decade crucial to the further development of the Grünfeld, with the opening being adopted by Bobby Fischer in some high-profile games, in particular two against Boris Spassky. Both those games had a dismal outcome for the American, although the opening itself was hardly to blame. Then the end of the Sixties saw the birth of the two great schools of the Grünfeld. The Hungarian school, led by the innovator Andras Adorjan and Zoltan Ribli, quickly established itself as the leading Grünfeld ‘family’ in the world, followed by the Czechoslovak school, whose leading protagonists were Vlastimil Jansa, Jan Smejkal and Lubomir Ftacnik. In fact, under the influence of those outstanding players, the two countries developed a whole host of other players who greatly contributed to Grünfeld theory; Peter Leko being the most obvious but by no means only example.

Andras Adorjan was the author (along with his compatriot Jeno Dory) of the first really influential book on the Grünfeld in 1987, but even more importantly he introduced the opening to the young and ambitious Garry Kasparov at the time of his first World Championship match with Anatoly Karpov. It was not until their third match in 1986 that Kasparov actually employed the Grünfeld, but when he did so it came with remarkable success; Karpov proved completely unprepared, tried several systems and was generally unable to trouble Kasparov. Overall, Kasparov’s opening choice was deemed a success and the Grünfeld was back at the top; a position it retained throughout the legendary pair’s further matches in 1987 and 1990.

At the end of the Eighties some young Soviet masters, mainly from St Petersburg, introduced a system against the Grünfeld which would dominate tournament praxis in the Nineties, namely the $7 \mathbb{Q}f3 c5 8 \mathbb{B}b1$ Exchange Variation. The system was analysed heavily in every corner of the world and at first kept scoring points for White, especially thanks to the efforts of Alexander Khalifman, Boris Gelfand and Vladimir Kramnik. In turn several top players, especially Vishy An-

and, Alexei Shirov and Peter Leko, began to defend the Grünfeld and managed to find some solutions to the 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ problem. Indeed, the variation is currently declining in popularity, whereas 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$, a popular favourite in the Sixties, has returned to the forefront of fashion.

The Nineties also saw a massive emigration of Soviet chessplayers, with one of the main destinations being Israel. There the third great Grünfeld school was born, largely thanks to the efforts of the legendary Mark Tseitlin. Nowadays there are a lot of Israeli grandmasters who employ the Grünfeld, most notably Emil Sutovsky, Boris Avrukh, Viktor Mikhalevski and Alexander Huzman, and the Israeli school currently represents the most active laboratory of opening ideas in the Grünfeld.

Finally, one cannot sum up the current status of the Grünfeld without mentioning the Russian grandmaster Peter Svidler, at this moment the world's strongest Grünfeld practitioner. Whereas Kasparov, Anand and Leko eventually dropped the Grünfeld from their repertoires, opting for more solid openings that are less vulnerable to computer-assisted research, Svidler has persistently employed the beloved opening of his childhood and still does, suffering a few painful defeats along the way but also scoring several victories. It is also encouraging to see that, after a brief intermission, the Grünfeld is again appearing regularly at the highest level, in the hands of young and ambitious players such as Alexander Grischuk, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov and David Navara. Indeed, the scene may well be set for a full-scale revival of this great opening!

My Grünfeld Qualifications

As for myself, my relationship with the Grünfeld began while I was living in Israel in the 1990s. I was introduced to the opening there, playing and analysing it extensively for a number of years; something which continued when I later moved to Hungary and felt the influence of the first great Grünfeld school. Of late, I have also become a little infatuated with the King's Indian, but have continued to stay fully up-to-date with the latest Grünfeld developments and to search for new resources for Black. Perhaps having now written this work, it is time for me once again to make the Grünfeld my exclusive defence to 1 d4!

About This Book

Rather than focus chiefly on the general themes of the opening, I have aimed first and foremost to supply a complete repertoire for Black with the Grünfeld. En route we will discuss typical tactical motifs and strategic ideas as we come across them, but there is especially plenty of theoretical coverage. Indeed, I can assure

you that, should you study this book comprehensively, your preparation would be on a par with that of almost any IM in the world! Every single significant option at White's disposal has been covered in considerable depth where necessary, but by pointing out the main concepts and plans for both sides, I believe that this work is also very suitable for the ordinary club player.

Due to the Grünfeld's very concrete and often quite tactical nature as an opening, I have opted for a variation tree approach within this book. Indeed, most of the time the Grünfeld is all about piece activity and being the first to create threats. Concepts such as fixed pawn structures, slow manoeuvring and long-term planning are fairly rare in the Grünfeld, in contrast to more strategic openings such as the Ruy Lopez. Moreover, both sides usually have several choices at the many theoretical crossroads which we will come across. There is plenty of theory to be discussed, although I will not be advocating any lines which require excessive rote-learning – I'm assuming that the reader isn't preparing for a World Championship match and so doesn't want to learn 30+ moves just to force a draw! – and so a variation tree approach, rather than a complete games format, again makes the best sense.

So what can you expect to find in this book? The answer is simple: it contains coverage from Black's perspective of all White's reasonable (and some not-so-reasonable) tries against the Grünfeld, offering at least one way to meet each of them successfully. At certain critical junctures I have opted to offer more than one option, primarily in those systems which are very popular and have developed a large body of theory. That should help to ensure that this repertoire will remain viable for many years. I have also decided not to enter the more complex and theoretically-heavy main lines, in favour of more positional schemes and without making any sacrifices in the quality department. Indeed, I believe that the suggested repertoire is the optimal combination of opening ambition, preparatory study and efficiency for the non-professional player!

The Grünfeld contains a number of theoretical lines, but even here understanding the key plans for both sides is very important. Thus our coverage begins with the most natural form of the Exchange Variation, with White playing 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ and then trying to develop normally. It is essential to understand why such an approach does not work out well, so as to better understand the motivation behind the critical 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ of Chapter Two.

By no means all white players want to take on the Grünfeld with an especially theoretical approach. Unfortunately for us, some of the available quiet set-ups can be rather dull, such as 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ or 4 e3; to use a cliché, watching grass grow can sometimes be more fun! Please note that when a white system falls into this category, I have almost always opted to recommend the particular line that fully neutralizes it. Just learning that accurate response for Black should mean that

you never need worry ever again in your Grünfeld career about the white system in question.

Of late, one can also observe white players turning towards some very new and ambitious systems, especially the 4 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ variations. Nowadays, the former is almost extinct, for reasons we will see in Chapter Six, but the latter continues to figure in the repertoire of several grandmasters. It chiefly aims to steer play into relatively uncharted territory; an approach rather characteristic of our times, especially in the Grünfeld. All such systems deserve some respect and I have certainly examined them closely, even suggesting some entirely novel ideas when the existing options failed to satisfy me. In Chapter Fourteen, for example, one will find 3 f3! – a popular move, but also one wrongly neglected by many previous Grünfeld works – met with the dynamic 3...e5!; a move fully in keeping with our active black approach.

Finally, I would like to inform you, dear reader, that every single line in this book has been checked with at least one analysis engine. However, the Grünfeld is very dynamic and often leads to rather unbalanced positions. That makes it a fascinating opening to play, albeit also a little daunting at times to evaluate. Please note that many lines are assessed as giving Black ‘the initiative’. That does not necessarily mean that Black is better, but rather that he is calling the shots. In practice, though, having to defend accurately against a Grünfeld initiative often proves too much for White, so do strive to gain the initiative!

Acknowledgements

I am very much obliged to my parents, Vladimir Dembo and Nadezhda Fokina, as well as to my husband Sotiris Logothetis, for their immense help in the creation of this book.

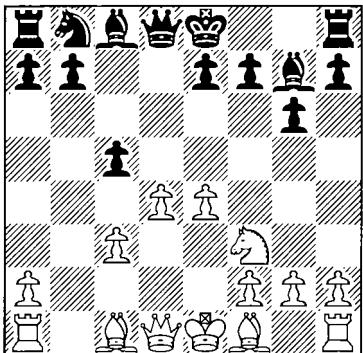
My gratitude is also due to John Emms for the help, suggestions and useful material he provided throughout, as well as to Richard Palliser, who successfully turned a complex manuscript into the book you are now holding!

Yelena Dembo,
Athens,
March 2007

Chapter One

Exchange Variation: Introducing 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3 c5$

1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
5 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 6 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3 c5$



Apart from the highly-theoretical 8 $\mathbb{Q}b1$, the subject of our next chapter, White has tried a few other ideas.

A: 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

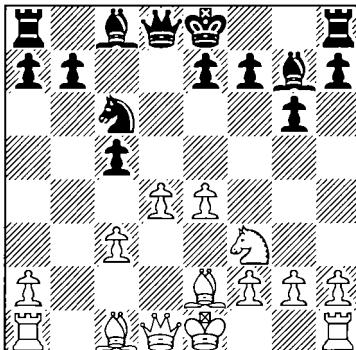
B: 8 h3

C: 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$

The coverage of Line A shows the motivation behind both Lines B and C,

namely to prevent Black from applying pressure against d4 with ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$. So let's see first what happens if White tries to develop naturally:

A) 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}c6$



White must already tread carefully. To see why consider:

a) 9 e5?! is too committal and after 9...0-0 10 0-0 cxd4 11 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (H.Grooten-P.Boersma, Amsterdam 1982) 13...f6!, as suggested by Krnic, Black has an excellent game.

b) 9 ♜b2?! cxd4 10 cxd4 ♛a5+ 11 ♜f1 ♜g4 12 ♜d3 ♜d8 13 ♜c3 ♛a3 was again quite good for Black in H.Konarikovska-M.Chiburdanidze, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

c) 9 ♜b1?! cxd4 10 cxd4 ♜xd4 11 ♜xd4 ♛xd4 12 ♜b5+ ♜f8 13 ♜e2 a6 14 ♜d3 b5 15 0-0 ♜e6 simply leaves Black with an extra pawn.

d) 9 0-0?! cxd4 10 cxd4 ♜xd4 11 ♜xd4 ♛xd4 12 ♜b5+ ♜f8 13 ♜e3 ♛xd1 14 ♜axd1 ♜e6 15 ♜xa7 f6 again sees White fail to justify his material investment.

Therefore White's choice is restricted to the risky 9 d5?! and to shortening up the defence of d4.

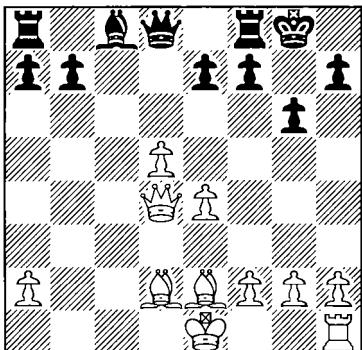
A1: 9 d5

A2: 9 ♜e3

A1) 9 d5?

A rather premature exchange sacrifice.

9...♜xc3+ 10 ♜d2 ♜xa1 11 ♛xa1 ♜d4 12 ♜xd4 cxd4 13 ♛xd4 0-0

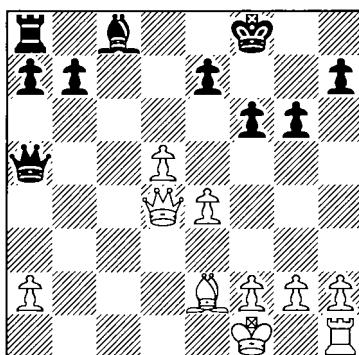


Now White can win back the mate-

rial, at the cost of seriously exposing his king, or continue the game an exchange down, with only minimal practical chances of an attack.

14 0-0

White plays for compensation. He can do so too with 14 ♜c3 f6 15 h4, but 15...♛b6 16 ♜d3 ♜d7 17 0-0 ♜ac8 18 ♜d4 ♛a5 is very good for Black. Instead 14 ♜h6 recovers the exchange, but at too high a price: 14...♛a5+ 15 ♜f1 f6 16 ♜xf8 ♜xf8

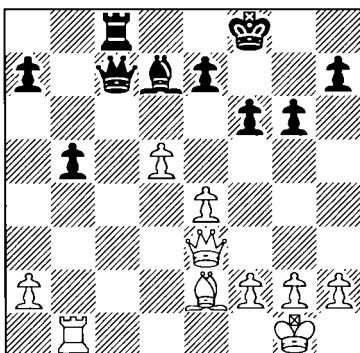


17 f3 (17 g4 ♛xa2 18 e5 ♜g8 is better for Black) 17...♜d7 18 ♜f2 ♜c8 19 ♜b1 ♜c2! 20 ♜b2 ♜xb2 21 ♛xb2 ♛c5+ 22 ♜g3 (22 ♜f1 b5 gives Black a clear advantage) 22...b5 23 a3 was R.Hernandez-M.Sisniega, Matanzas 1992, and Black could now have won in the following way, as pointed out by Sisniega: 23...g5! 24 ♛b4 (or 24 h3 ♛g1 25 d6 h5 26 dxe7+ ♜xe7 27 ♛b4+ ♜f7 and wins) 24...♛e3 25 ♜f1 h5 26 h3 ♛g1 with a winning position.

14...♛b6 15 ♛a1

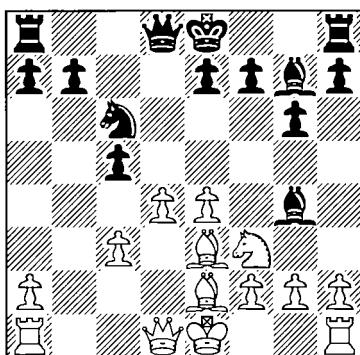
Or 15 ♜c3 f6 16 ♜h6 ♜f7 17 ♜e3 (S.Mohr-S.Lputian, Altensteig 1989) 17...♛d6 18 f4 e6 with an obvious plus.

**15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ f6 18
 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ b5 20 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$**



In M.Pein-J.Rowson, British League 2000, Black had the upper hand.

A2) 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$



Immediately forcing a concession from White.

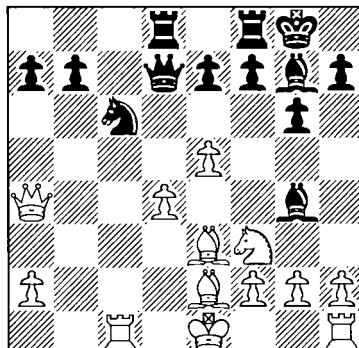
10 e5

Black was better after 10 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11 gxf3 (or 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ cxd4 12 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14 0-0 b6 with an extra pawn) 11...cxd4 12 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{B}xb7$ 0-0 14 0-0 e6 in T.Gezalian-P.Svidler, Leningrad 1990.

10...cxd4 11 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

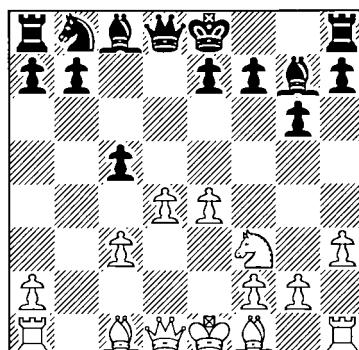
The 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ of V.Utemov-A.Khasin, USSR 1986, is good for Black after 12... $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$.

**12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15
 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0**



White's problems have only increased, D.Tishin-Y.Zinchenko, Alushta 2006.

B) 8 h3



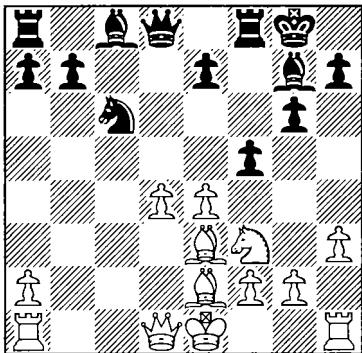
This little pawn move was used by Kramnik against Kasparov in 2000. Its aim is clear: to prevent ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$. I can't help but feel, though, that in such a sharp and dynamic opening, slow moves like 8 h3 cannot really pose any problems, provided Black reacts precisely.

8...0-0 9 ♜e2

Instead 9 ♜e3 ♜a5 10 ♜d2 (10 ♜d2 ♜c6 11 d5 ♜e5 12 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 13 ♜b3 ♜b8 14 f4 ♜g7 15 e5 b5 is quite good for Black) 10...♜c6 11 ♜d1 was tried in F.Gomez-A.Zapata, Havana 2001, and now 11...♜e6! would have set White some problems.

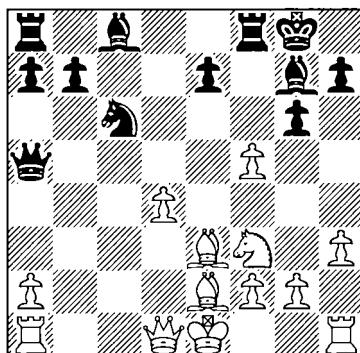
9...cxd4 10 cxd4 ♜c6 11 ♜e3

Now Black cannot further increase the pressure on d4 and White is set to castle. It is thus the moment to exploit White's small loss of time.

11...f5!**12 exf5**

White can also play the similar 12 ♜b3+ (instead 12 ♜c4+ ♜h8 13 e5 b5 14 ♜e2 f4 15 ♜c1 ♜b8 is better for Black) 12...♜h8 13 exf5 (13 ♜d1 fxe4 14 ♜g5 ♜xd4 15 ♜c4 – 15 ♜f7+ ♜xf7 16 ♜xf7 ♜e6 17 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 18 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 does not help White either – 15...♜a5+ 16 ♜d2 ♜xe2 17 ♜f7+ ♜xf7 18 ♜xf7 ♜d7 was a disaster for White in W.Arencibia-P.Eljanov, Ubeda 2001) 13...gx f5 14 ♜d1 f4 15 ♜c1 ♜a5 16 ♜a3 ♜e6 17 d5 ♜xd5 18 ♜b2 (18 ♜g5 ♜f5 19 ♜e6 ♜d6 20 ♜xd6 exd6 21 ♜xg7 ♜xg7

22 ♜xf4 ♜xa2 23 ♜xd6 ♜e8 also leaves White in trouble) 18...e6 19 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7, which occurred in Y.Kruppa-K.Sakaev, Neum 2000, but Black has already taken the upper hand; for example 20 ♜d4 ♜f6 21 0-0 ♜c6.

12...♜a5+!

This disruptive check highlights the downside to 8 h3 in the best possible way.

13 ♜f1

The alternatives are not even sufficient for equality:

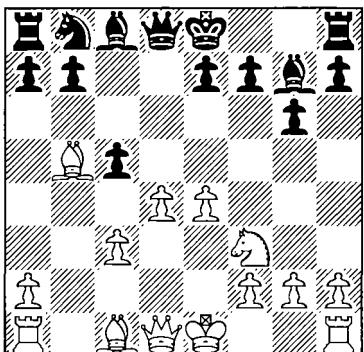
a) 13 ♜d2 ♜xd2+ 14 ♜xd2 ♜xf5 15 ♜c4+ ♜h8 16 ♜hd1 (B.Grachev-V.Belov, Vladimir 2002) 16...♜xh3 17 gxh3 ♜xf3 with an edge for Black.

b) 13 ♜d2 ♜xf5 14 ♜c3 (or 14 0-0 ♜xd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜h6 as in T.Halay-A.Van Weersel, Vlissingen 2005, and now 16...♜d8 again leaves White worse) 14...♜e6 15 0-0 ♜ad8 16 ♜b1 (16 ♜a4 ♜d5 17 ♜ad1 a6 18 ♜d2 ♜d6 is also quite good for Black) was played in A.Korobov-A.Goloshchapov, Ordzhonikidze 2001. Now simple and good was 16...♜xa2 17 ♜xb7 ♜d5 intending ...e5, with an edge.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b3+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ e6 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 18 g4 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$

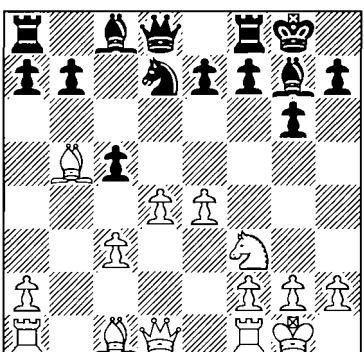
Black has at least equalized, N.Kor niushin-V.Yandemirov, Tomsk 2001.

C) 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$



Unlike after the 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ of Chapter Five, Black cannot play ...c6 and so should opt to block with his knight. Instead an exchange of bishops on d7 promises good equalizing chances, but also robs Black's position of much of its dynamism.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 0-0 0-0



10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

White has tried several alternatives, without coming close to gaining an advantage:

a) 10 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (or 11 $\mathbb{Q}e1$, as in L.Oll-I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee (rapid) 1993, and now Black is fine after 11... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ b6) 11... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (R.Damaso-L.Ftacnik, Lisbon 2000) 14... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 15 h3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ intends ...e6 gives with good play.

b) 10 a4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (or 11 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12 h3 b6 13 d5, P.Van der Sterren-L.Gutman, Wijk aan Zee 1987, and now 13... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ prepares the standard idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ and ...e6) 11... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14 d5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 17 f3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ b6 20 a5 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 21 axb6 axb6 22 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ gives Black the initiative, A.Shirov-G.Kamsky, Manila Olympiad 1992.

c) 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ cxd4 11 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (S.Mohr-J.Van Mil, Budapest 1991) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ e5 with advantage to Black.

d) 10 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ b6 11 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 12 e5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}a4$ a6 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ was seen in Bunkov-V.Timofeev, Kaluga 2000, and now 14...b5 15 $\mathbb{W}c2$ a5 is a logical way for Black to pursue his initiative.

e) 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ again leaves Black on top.

10...h6!

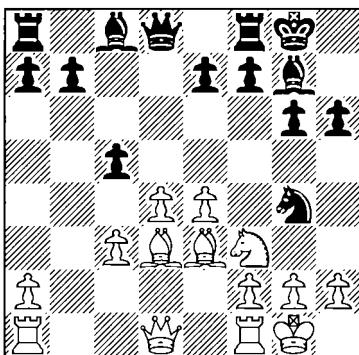
Forcing the bishop to make a decision.

11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

Instead 11 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$! 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ (L.Albert-L.Ftacnik, Hastings 1980/81) 13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 d5 g5 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 16 hxg3 e6 is equal according to Ftacnik, while 11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ was tried in

A.Huzman-E.Sutovsky, Pula 2000, and now 11...♘f6 12 ♕e1 ♘g4 gives Black the initiative.

11...♘f6 12 ♕d3 ♘g4



Now White must allow the exchange of his important dark-squared bishop, although the exchange does strengthen his centre.

13 e5 ♘xe3 14 fxe3 ♘e6 15 ♘e4 ♘d5

16 ♘xd5
Instead 16 ♘d3 cxd4 17 exd4 (inferior was 17 cxd4 ♘d7 18 ♘fc1 ♘fc8 19

♗xd5 ♘xd5 with an edge for Black in A.Graf-H.Odeev, Beirut 2000) 17...♖c8 18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♘ab1 ♘c7 is at least equal. After the text, 16...♗xd5 17 ♘b3 ♘e4 leads to a complicated position in which Black's long-term chances are preferable; he has the superior minor piece and the more flexible structure.

Conclusion

8 ♘e2 is rightly considered inferior; after all, if this line was good for White, the entire Grünfeld would be in trouble! Both 8 h3 and 8 ♘b5+ contain a drop of poison and should be met in an active and accurate way if Black wishes to fight for an opening advantage: 8 h3 represents a slight loss of time, which is best exploited with a timely ...f5 strike, while 8 ♘b5+ is best countered by keeping all the pieces on and aiming to take advantage later of the exposed position of the bishop.

Chapter Two

Exchange Variation: The Critical 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
5 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 6 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$**

This is one of the most critical tests of the entire Grünfeld. White removes his rook from the long diagonal, thereby preparing to meet the pressure against his centre with the d4-d5 advance, regardless of the fact that the c3-pawn may be left en prise. This line was introduced in the Eighties, most notably by Viacheslav Eingorn, but became really popular towards the end of that decade, thanks to the efforts of Boris Gelfand and Alexander Khalifman, who have both scored numerous victories with this system. Later on, the white side found another prominent supporter in Vladimir Kramnik.

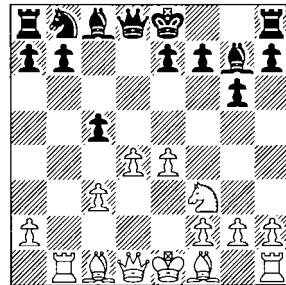
This whole system has been deeply researched for many years and the theory has advanced to alarming proportions. Indeed, the black player is well advised to prepare for it meticulously. To help a little, I have suggested that Black avoids the risky and heavily

theoretical main lines. Instead we will explore a system that is both positionally fully sound and has scored well in practice. This does not mean that Black mustn't prepare well for 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$, but rather that Black's survival depends much less on long forced lines and much more on active positional play.

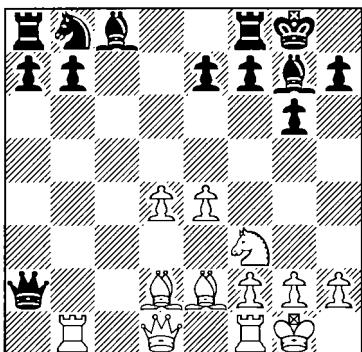
8...0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Instead 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$?! is inconsistent, as White wants to push d4-d5, not protect d4: 9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (10 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11 $\mathbb{gxf3}$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ gives Black pressure) 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 $\mathbb{gxf3}$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ gives Black the initiative, N.Rashkovsky-M.Ghinda, Lvov 1981.

After 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$, 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 12 0-0 leads to the main tabiya of the 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ system, which has been debated for many years and in countless games. Black has tried numerous schemes, without ever really managing to extinguish White's initiative. Indeed, the positional aspects of White's compensation (a strong centre,



a lead in development, the possibility of creating a powerful central passed pawn, the lack of good squares available to Black's minor pieces and the exposed black queen) guarantee lasting pressure and force Black to tread very carefully.

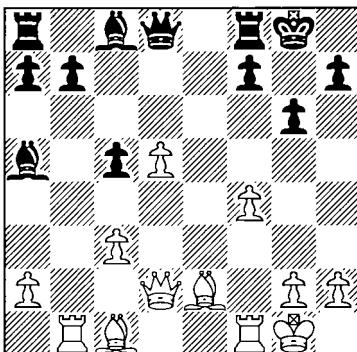


Moreover, the immense amount of theory involved in these lines, as well as the forcing nature of most of the ensuing variations, makes the whole venture of capturing the a2-pawn quite unappetizing for Black. I have a healthy respect for material in general, but in this particular case I believe that, from a practical viewpoint at least, the pawn just isn't worth taking!

Another natural option is 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, but this falls in with White's plans. After the standard sequence 10 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (10... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ is a very risky pawn-grabbing operation) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2!$ e6 13 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14 0-0 exd5 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ it seems to me that Black is skirting the precipice.

White has many dangerous continuations, while Black's defences are often considered to be crowned with

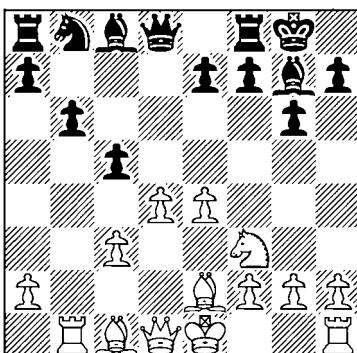
success when they result in a perpetual check or repetition.



Therefore, 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is not a good choice for the practical player!

After 9 $\mathbb{A}e2$ there is, however, a third option:

9...b6!



The reader should note that this is not a rare sideline. Indeed, it has actually become the main choice of not just Peter Svidler, but also several very strong grandmasters who regularly employ the Grünfeld, such as David Navara and Pavel Eljanov. Furthermore, Garry Kasparov has tried it on occasion in the past, and so has Boris

Avrukh, the Israeli GM who has contributed much to the theory of 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ from both sides of the board. Furthermore, I am fully convinced that this system will continue to figure prominently in modern high-level praxis and, due to its solid and sound nature, will survive any attempts by White to refute it!

Note too that with 9... $b6$, Black opts for natural development: the light-squared bishop will usually go to $b7$ or $a6$, the knight to $d7$, the rooks to the centre and Black may perhaps play ... $e6$. In this way he generally succeeds in keeping White's centre at bay, aiming either to attack it later with his pieces or to break it up with ... $f5$, taking advantage of his good light square control. The resulting struggle is more positional than tactical and also fits in nicely with the Grünfeld's general spirit.

10 0-0

By far White's main move. Instead:

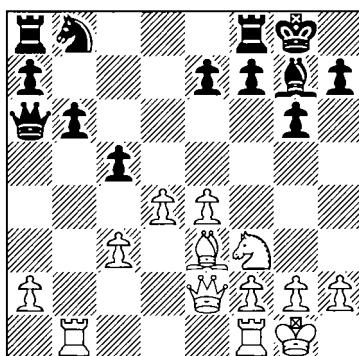
a) 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$?! again does not fit in with White's strategy. Black continues with 10... $\mathbb{B}b7$ and now:

a1) 11 $e5$ (this advance surrenders the central light squares; a typical problem for White in this variation) 11... $cxd4$ 12 $cx d4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$! has the simple plan of transferring the knight to $d5$ via $c7$.

Now 13 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (or 13 $h4 \mathbb{Q}c7$ – I don't like the weakening 13... $h5$ and also see no reason to waste time on it – 14 $h5 \mathbb{Q}d5$ 15 $hxg6 h x g6$! – maintaining structural integrity; the attack down the h -file is hardly dangerous – 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6 \mathbb{Q}xh6$

17 $\mathbb{Q}xh6 \mathbb{Q}g7$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}c3$ and White's position is on the verge of collapse) 13... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 14 $h4 \mathbb{Q}d5$ 15 $h5 \mathbb{Q}xe3$ 16 $fxe3$ (16 $\mathbb{W}xe3$?! $\mathbb{W}d5$ gives Black a clear edge, due to White's loose pawns on $a2$ and $d4$) 16... $e6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{Q}c8$ left Black better in I.Nemet-V.Korchnoi, Switzerland 1985; White's $h4-h5$ plan has turned out to be a waste of time.

a2) 11 $\mathbb{W}d3 \mathbb{Q}a6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}c8$ 13 0-0 (preparing to relieve the some of the pressure with $\mathbb{Q}h6$) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xe2 \mathbb{Q}a6$



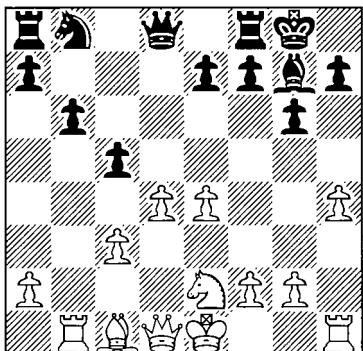
15 $\mathbb{W}xa6$ (or 15 $\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ – 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe7 \mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d6 \mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19 $dxc5 \mathbb{Q}xc5$ is equal – 16... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}f4 \mathbb{W}xa2$ which is unclear according to Golod; this is an arguably a better version of the standard pawn sacrifice for Black since a pair of minor pieces has been exchanged and White's central initiative is still to get rolling) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fc1 \mathbb{Q}ac8$ (16... $cxd4$?! 17 $cx d4 \mathbb{Q}fc8$ 18 $d5$ gives White a slight edge, as $\mathbb{Q}d4-c6$ is coming) 17 $d5$ (intending to strengthen the centre with $c4$) 17... $f5$! and Black has good counterplay, M.Roiz-V.Golod, Beer Sheva 2001.

b) 10 h4 is an aggressive thrust, but again rather inconsistent with 8 $\mathbb{Q}b1$. Black can now prevent h5 with the natural 10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, leading to another divide:

b1) 11 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ cxd4 (11... $\mathbb{W}c7$ is another option) 12 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (Rowson) is a simple way to a good position; for example, 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 h5 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ h6 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ h5 with an edge for Black.

b2) 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (Black has switched back to the standard Grünfeld scheme of development and White is under pressure) 12 e5 cxd4 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$!? (also good is 13... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14 h5 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ – but not 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$! 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 $\mathbb{Q}h4$! and White consolidates his centre, A.Vaissier-S.Mohr, San Bernardino 1989 – 15 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with an edge; White's central pawn duo is weak) 14 h5 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ and I find it rather unlikely that White can fully justify his opening play.

c3) 11 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ sees White insist on his attacking plan, but one can only take so many liberties in the opening phase.

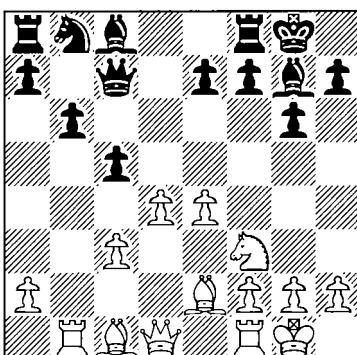


S.Krivoshey-F.Vallejo Pons, German League 2005, continued 12... $\mathbb{W}d7$! (a strong and accurate move, threatening ... $\mathbb{W}g4$, whereas both 12... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 f4 and 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14 d5 give White a slight plus) 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (13 d5?! $\mathbb{W}g4$! is problematic for White, but he might try 13 f3 when 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 dxc5 – 14 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ appears OK for Black – 14... $\mathbb{W}c8$ is unclear according to Vallejo, but White's position has certainly been severely weakened) 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}a4$ (or 14 h5 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 15 hxg6 hxg6 16 d5 $\mathbb{W}g4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ f5! and White suddenly finds himself facing a powerful attack) 14... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 15 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ when Black was better, and he can also consider 15... $\mathbb{Q}e5$! 16 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ with an edge.

Returning to 10 0-0:

10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

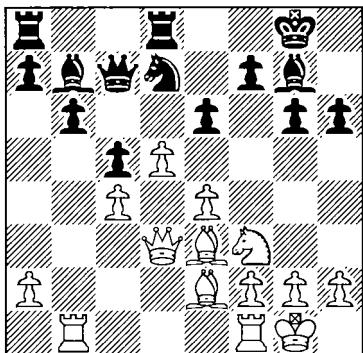
The main move, but there is one worthwhile alternative, namely 10... $\mathbb{W}c7$!?



The idea of this move order is to avoid the dangerous pawn sacrifice 10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11 d5 and to transpose to Line

B1 with 11 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{A}b7$. White's only really independent option after 10... $\mathbb{W}c7$ is 11 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{A}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d3$ h6! (it is important to kick the bishop from its active post, so as to play ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$) and now:

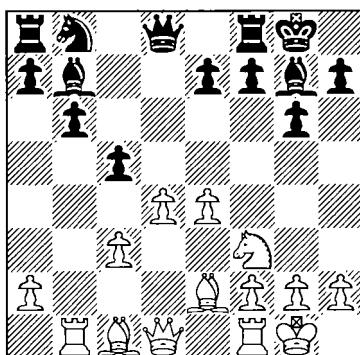
a) 13 $\mathbb{A}e3$ leads to very similar positions to Line B1; for example, 13... $\mathbb{A}d8$ 14 d5 e6 (14...e5? is a clear misunderstanding: 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{A}a6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{A}xc4$ 18 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 19 $\mathbb{A}a6!$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 20 f4 and White was much better in E.Fomichenko-S.Beshukov, Novorossijsk 1995; Black should be playing for ...e6 instead of blocking the position which here usually allows White to seize the initiative) 15 c4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with typically complex play.



b) 13 $\mathbb{A}h4$ is more persistent, but Black has a strong counter with 13... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ (and not 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6?$ when 14 $\mathbb{A}g3!$ causes a lot of problems) 14 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}f4!$, highlighting a lack of coordination in White's camp. P.Haba-G.Feher, Zalakaros 2000, continued 15 d5 $\mathbb{A}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 17 $\mathbb{A}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 18 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 19 $\mathbb{A}xe7$ (now the main question is: how strong is the white d-pawn?)

19... $\mathbb{E}fc8$ (as Haba points out, 19... $\mathbb{W}fe8$ 20 d6 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is also possible; it is very hard for White to break the blockade on d7 and his pieces are about to be pushed back) 20 d6 (20 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}xc5$ is fine for Black) 20... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ and now 21... $\mathbb{W}d7?$ 22 h4! h5 23 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 24 $\mathbb{E}e3!$ gave White a dangerous initiative. Black should prefer 21... $\mathbb{A}xd4!$ (eliminating the knight and thereby ensuring the viability of the blockade on d7) 22 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23 $\mathbb{E}bc1$ $\mathbb{E}c5$ (Haba) when he has everything under control.

Returning to 10... $\mathbb{A}b7$:



Now White has two options:

A: 11 d5

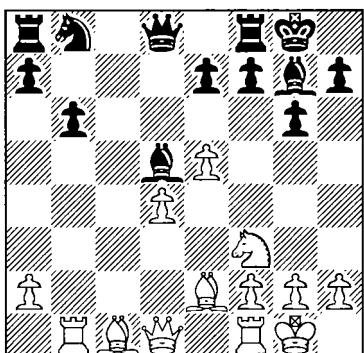
B: 11 $\mathbb{W}d3$

There are also a couple of rare alternatives:

a) 11 $\mathbb{A}d3?$ (White sacrifices a central pawn for some dark square play, but it seems insufficient to me) 11... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{C}xd4$ $\mathbb{A}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 14 $\mathbb{A}b2$ $\mathbb{W}d6!$ (the correct retreat as

Black must play ...e5 at some point to blunt the b2-bishop; White will then aim to remove the e5-pawn with f4 and so Black needs to secure as much dark square control as possible) 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and soon ...e5 will follow, while Black can even play ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ later. White has some compensation, but I don't feel it is especially threatening.

b) 11 e5?! is, as usual in this system, mistaken: 11...cx d 4 12 cx d 4 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ (immediately seizing control of some critical squares, while preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ without blocking the active bishop)

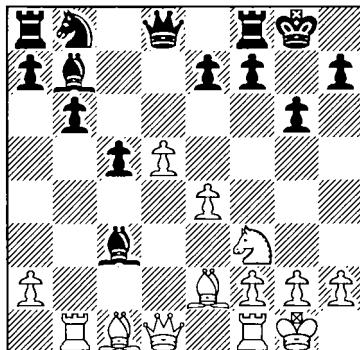


13 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{W}a3$ (Black has full central control and is now ready to strike at the advanced e5-pawn) 15...f6! 16 exf6 exf6 17 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ and Black was obviously for preference in G.Michelakis-J.Rowson, Yerevan Olympiad 1996. It's worth continuing with this game for a while, as Black's play was very instructive: 18 $\mathbb{Q}bc1$ $\mathbb{W}d6!$ 19 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7!$ 20 h4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21 h5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22 hxg6 hxg6 23 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ 25 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 26 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}d5!$ 28 $\mathbb{W}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and Black's advantage had continued to grow.

A) 11 d5!?

This aggressive pawn sacrifice is fully in the spirit of the 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ system and it is surprising that it has only recently attracted serious attention. Black should meet it with great accuracy and care. The best plan is to accept the pawn and then to immediately retreat the bishop back to g7. After that, Black should aim to exchange the light-squared bishops with ... $\mathbb{W}c8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$. The expediency of this plan cannot be emphasized enough; any delay may result in White breaking through with d6 or e5-e6, creating serious problems both in the centre and for the black king.

11.... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$



Now 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ is fine for Black, who can continue ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, and so White usually chooses from:

A1: 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$

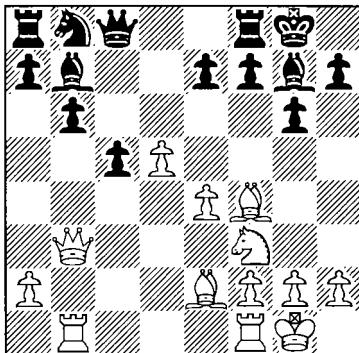
A2: 12 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

A1) 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$

Dangerous, but not objectively

promising. Black should now proceed with the aforementioned plan.

12... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8!$



14 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$

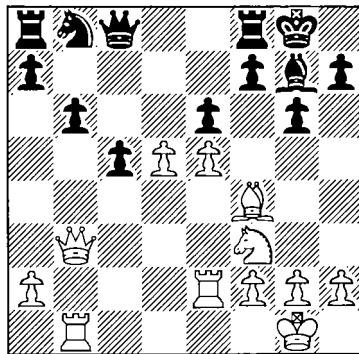
Black is better after 14 e5 e6 15 d6 (or 15 dxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 e6 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ with advantage – Avrukh) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ a6. Note that such a blockade of White's central pawn duo is a common feature of this line. Should it prove successful, Black will gain the time necessary to consolidate and start exploiting his queenside majority.

14... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 15 e5

V.Dobrov-P.Eljanov, Internet (blitz) 2003, deviated with 15 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 16 e5, but after 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (both 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ h6 and 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}bd1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ are no improvement for White) 17... $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}bd1$ (or 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ h6, solving Black's problems and leaving him with the advantage) 18...c4 19 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20 d6 exd6 21 exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xe1+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$, Black clearly had the upper hand.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ e6!

The final link in Black's plan: he invites d5-d6, after which White cannot create any serious threats.



17 d6

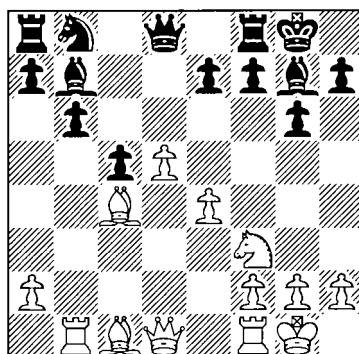
17 $\mathbb{Q}g5?$ doesn't work out well: 17...h6 18 dx6 (or 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ exd5 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with a clear advantage for Black, as Avrukh has analysed) 18...hxg5 19 exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20 e6 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ and Black was much better in V.Belov-P.Eljanov, Internet (blitz) 2003.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

As Avrukh notes, Black is better.

A2) 12 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

A prudent retreat as Black avoids any tempo-gaining moves by the white queen.



13 $\mathbb{W}d3$

White hampers ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$, but he might prefer:

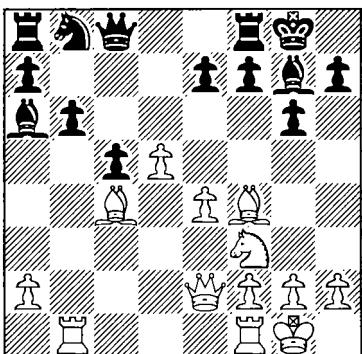
a) 13 $\mathbb{W}e2 \mathbb{W}c8!$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (Black is fine too after 14 $\mathbb{Q}b2 \mathbb{Q}xb2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb2 \mathbb{Q}d7$, intending ... $\mathbb{W}c7$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$) 14... $f6$! (time is of primary importance!) and:

a1) 15 $d6+?$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ (also possible is 15... $e6$!?) 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{Q}c6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fd1 \mathbb{W}d7$ – Sutovsky) 16 $dxe7 \mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h4 \mathbb{Q}xe7$ 18 $e5 \mathbb{Q}c6$ (Sutovsky) leaves Black better.

a2) 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ (16 $d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ + $e6$ 18 $e5 \mathbb{Q}c6$ is nothing for White) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc4 \mathbb{Q}h8$ 18 $h3 \mathbb{Q}d7$ seems quite comfortable for Black.

a3) 15 $\mathbb{Q}h4 \mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fe1 \mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc4 \mathbb{Q}h8$ 18 $a4 \mathbb{Q}a6$ and the knight will settle on b4, while White's initiative is dying; Black is for preference.

b) 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{Q}a6$ (of course there's no need for ... $\mathbb{W}c8$ here) 14 $\mathbb{W}e2$ (14 $\mathbb{Q}xa6 \mathbb{Q}xa6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e2 \mathbb{Q}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}bd1 a6$ is fine for Black) 14... $\mathbb{W}c8!$ sees Black correctly retain the tension between the bishops so as to restrict the movements of the white queen. Now:

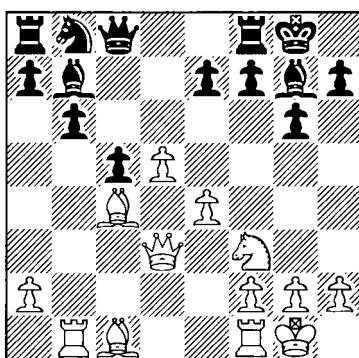


b1) 15 $e5 \mathbb{Q}xc4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ (B.Gelfand-A.Mikhailchishin, Portoroz 2001)

16... $\mathbb{W}a6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (Black gains the advantage after 17 $\mathbb{W}e4 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $e6 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 19 $exf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}e6 \mathbb{W}c8!$ – Mikhailchishin) 17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ seems OK for Black.

b2) 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$!? $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc4 \mathbb{Q}e8$ is also fine for Black.

b3) 15 $\mathbb{Q}bd1$ (a suggestion of Mikhailchishin's) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc4 \mathbb{W}a6$ and Black is for preference; he can play ... $b5$ and ... $c4$, as well as ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$.

13... $\mathbb{W}c8!$ **14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$**

Instead 14 $e5 \mathbb{Q}a6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}xc4$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc4 \mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fe1 \mathbb{W}f5$!? is good for Black, as his queen is very active (but not 17... $\mathbb{W}a6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ when White can attack), and similarly 14 $\mathbb{Q}b2 \mathbb{Q}xb2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb2 \mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ (or 16 $\mathbb{Q}e5 e6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g4 exd5$) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ does not seem too dangerous.

14... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 15 $e5$

White has managed to advance his central pawns side-by-side to the 5th rank and has decent compensation for the sacrificed pawn. Black's position looks uncomfortable, but appearances can be deceptive! There is actually no easy way for White to break through

Black's defences, while Black will force a useful exchange with ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$.

15... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{B}bd1$

16 $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ should be OK for Black.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$

Probably best, whereas White retains good compensation after the alternatives 17... $\mathbb{W}f5$ 18 $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 e6 and 17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{B}fe1$ e6 19 d6 h6 (19... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}f4$) 20 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 21 h4 b5 22 $\mathbb{W}f4$ c4 23 h5 (Haba).

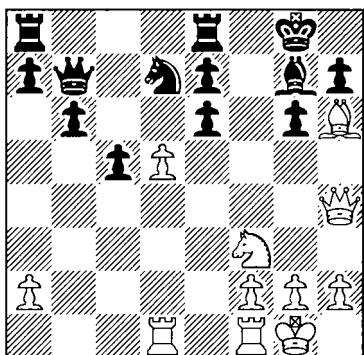
18 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$

Black is wise to avoid the greedy 18... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20 $\mathbb{B}fe1$.

19 $\mathbb{Q}h6!$

Facilitating White's main idea in these positions which is to launch an attack after an e6-advance. Black must then defend accurately, but I believe that he can.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20 e6 $\mathbb{W}xe6$



21 $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$

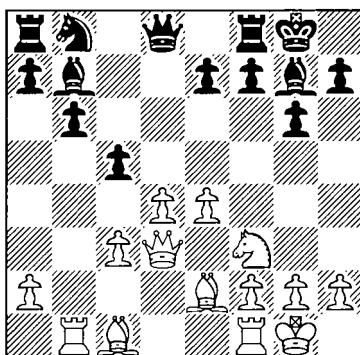
Haba shows with some nice variations how Black loses after 21... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ 22 $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 23 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}g7!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 25 $\mathbb{W}fxg5$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 26 $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ (or 26... $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 27 $\mathbb{W}f4!!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 28 $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29 $\mathbb{B}f7)$ 27

$\mathbb{Q}a1!$ $\mathbb{B}ed8$ 28 $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 29 $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 30 $\mathbb{B}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 31 $\mathbb{W}gh6$.

22 $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{B}ed8$

Black has both defended well on the kingside and retained his extra pawn. Indeed, White's attacking wave has been brought to a temporary halt. This position was reached in P.Haba-J.Banas, Austrian League 1997, and it's worth noting that Haba himself feels that Black's resources are more than adequate, as illustrated by one of his variations: 24 f4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 25 f5 $\mathbb{B}xd1$ 26 $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}f4$ 27 $\mathbb{W}fxg6$ $\mathbb{W}hxg6$ 28 $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}h8!$, exchanging queens and leaving Black clearly better.

B) 11 $\mathbb{W}d3$



With this move White protects both the e4- and the c3-pawns, thereby preparing to push d4-d5 at the first opportunity. We will now consider two options for Black.

B1: 11... $\mathbb{W}c7$

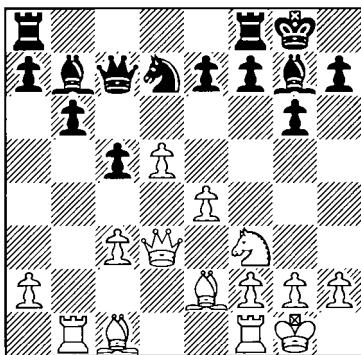
B2: 11... $\mathbb{Q}a6$

B1) 11... $\mathbb{W}c7?$

Aiming for a complicated game, rather than exchange pieces as Black does in B2.

12 d5

White's best try, whereas 12 $\mathbb{N}g5$ h6 transposes to the notes to Black's 10th move (with 10... $\mathbb{W}c7$) and shouldn't be too troubling.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ **13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$**

Another option is 13 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 15 c4 e6 16 $\mathbb{R}b2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ which is approximately level; White has established a protected passed pawn on d5, but Black can easily blockade it on d6 and undermine its support with ...b5. I feel that Black has no problems here, as was shown by a recent high-level example: 18 a4 exd5 19 exd5 $\mathbb{R}fe8$ 20 $\mathbb{R}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21 a5 $\mathbb{R}b8$ 22 axb6 axb6 23 $\mathbb{W}c3+$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xe5+$ $\mathbb{R}xe5$ 25 $\mathbb{R}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ with complete equality in E.Bacrot-D.Navara, European Team Ch., Gothenburg 2005.

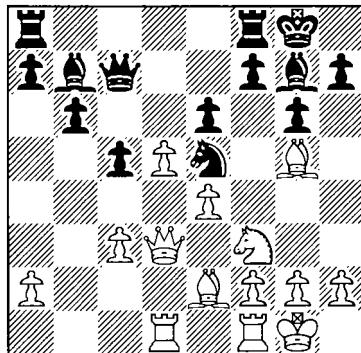
13...e6

Black should avoid 13...e5? 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2!$, but 13... $\mathbb{R}fe8$? 14 $\mathbb{Q}bd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is possible;

Black was then better after 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$?! $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ c4 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 18 $\mathbb{R}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b5 in F.Handke-A.Timofeev, Halkidiki 2000.

14 $\mathbb{Q}bd1$

Instructively 14 c4 should be met by 14...e5! (Turov). Note the essential difference with an earlier ...e5, namely that the white knight no longer has access to the c4-square, from where it controls both d6 and e5. After 14 c4 e5, Black can maintain a dark square blockade before slowly preparing ...f5 with good prospects, especially since White's knight lacks a good role.

14... $\mathbb{E}e5$ **15 $\mathbb{W}d2$**

Instead 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$? $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{R}fb8$ simply costs White a pawn.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$

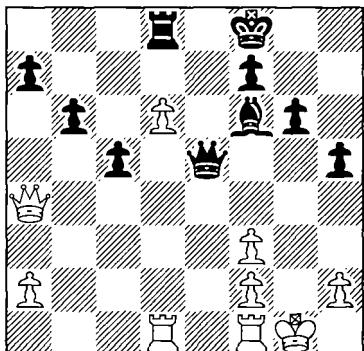
Another interesting idea is 15... $\mathbb{W}d6$!?, increasing the pressure against d5. Then, for example, 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ exd5 19 exd5 $\mathbb{R}fe8$ leads to equality.

16 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ exd5!

The simplest path to equality. Instead 17... $\mathbb{R}fe8$ 18 d6 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}g5$ h6

20 $\mathbb{W}h4$ g5 21 $\mathbb{W}h5$ occurred in A.Lesiege-M.Turov, Montreal 2000, and now Black should play 21... $\mathbb{W}e5!$? with an unclear position, but I don't see any reason to take this risk.

After the text, Turov has analysed 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$! (incorrect is 18... $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 19 exd5 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ since 21 $\mathbb{W}a4!$ leaves Black facing some serious problems) 19 exd5 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 21 $\mathbb{W}h4$ (21 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ leaves Black in control) 21...h5 22 d6! (White has to really prevent the blockading and strong ... $\mathbb{W}d6$) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 23 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$.

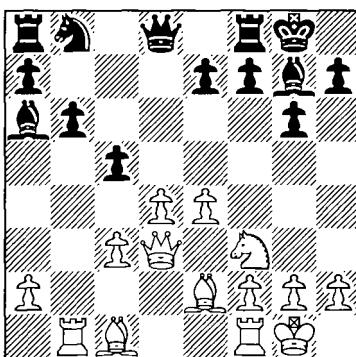


Here Black has promising compensation; he enjoys some positional advantage and the d6-pawn should be rounded up in the near future. White may capture on a7, but his weakened kingside means that he is the only one in any real danger of losing the game.

B2) 11... $\mathbb{Q}a6$

This has always been considered the main line. Black relieves some of the congestion in his camp with the exchange of bishops, although on the

other hand he does surrender some dynamism. White now lacks a comfortable square for his queen and must choose between:

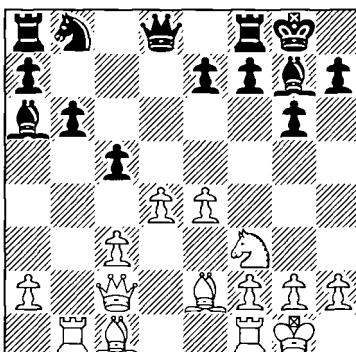


B21: 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$

B22: 12 $\mathbb{W}e3$

B21) 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$

This retreat has attracted some recent attention. White gets his queen out of the way of his dark-squared bishop.



12... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$

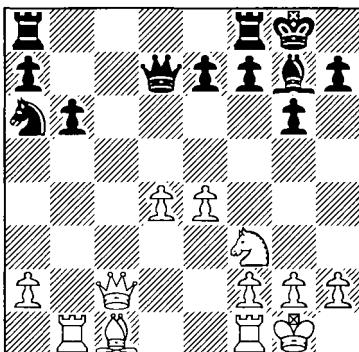
It makes sense to open the c-file in order later to gain a useful tempo on

the white queen.

13 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$

White must interpose this exchange, because 13 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c8!$ emphasizes the loose state of his position and at least equalizes for Black.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 14 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}d7$



Black is very comfortable here. He can centralize his rooks, perhaps bring his knight to e6 and play down the c-file, while White's centre cannot advance easily.

15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$

Instead 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 19 d5 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ was fully equal in J.Lautier-P.Svidler, Cap d'Agde (rapid) 2003.

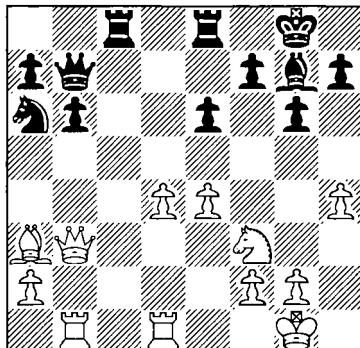
15... $\mathbb{Q}fe8!$

Freeing the queen by protecting the e7-pawn is the correct choice, whereas 15... $\mathbb{Q}ac8?$! 16 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 17 d5 f5 18 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ (Krasenkow) gives White an edge.

16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$

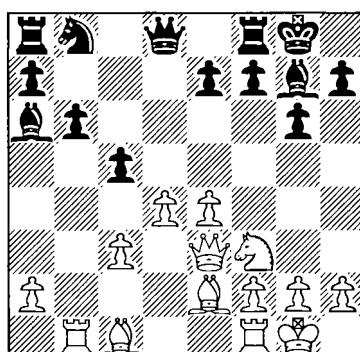
Or 16 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 17 $\mathbb{W}a4$ (J.Lautier-S.Shipov, Internet blitz 2004), and now 17... $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ intends ...b5 and allows Black to take the upper hand.

16... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}b3$ e6 18 h4 $\mathbb{W}b7$



Black again has everything under control and can look to the future with confidence. In B.Lalic-V.Tomescu, Porto San Giorgio 2004, White proceeded with his intended central advance: 19 d5 exd5 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and now Black can play 20... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ with the initiative (instead of the game's 20... $\mathbb{Q}cd8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}bd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22 exd5 h6 23 d6 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 25 g3, although even here 25... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ would have kept the position unclear).

B22) 12 $\mathbb{W}e3$



Keeping the queen centralized and

away from trouble down an open c-file, but this does hamper the development of the c1-bishop. At this juncture Black again has a choice:

B221: 12...e6

B222: 12...♝d7

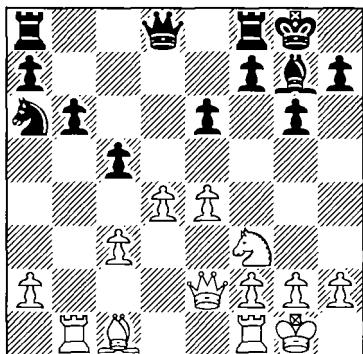
B221) 12...e6

This is a generally useful move, preventing the critical d4-d5 advance. On the other hand, Black is not ready here to play ...♝a4, which means that White is justified in exchanging the light-squared bishops.

13 ♜xa6!

As White has no useful waiting move, he should embark on this exchange in order to regroup his pieces. Instead 13 dxc5 ♜xe2 14 ♜xe2 ♜c7 is a typical pawn sacrifice. A.Khalifman-S.Kudrin, New York Open 1998, continued 15 cxb6 axb6 16 ♜e3 ♜d7 17 ♜d4 ♜fc8 when Black was ganging up against White's queenside pawns, while White lacked a constructive plan.

13...♜xa6 14 ♜e2



Forcing the knight to retreat and clearing a path for the c1-bishop. White must play this immediately since otherwise Black can actively protect the knight with ...♝d7-a4; for example, 14 ♜d1?! ♜d7! 15 ♜e2 ♜a4 16 ♜g5 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♜fc8 18 ♜d2 ♜c4 with an obvious initiative.

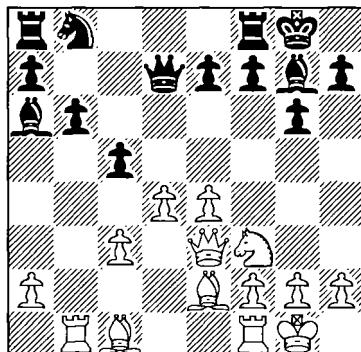
14...♞b8

Prudent, whereas 14...♜c8 is rather too passive and Black would prefer to have his queen's rook on c8.

15 ♜d1 ♜c7

Black now intends to develop actively with ...♝c6 and he appears to have a reasonable game, whereas the less justified 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 ♜d7 17 h4! ♜a4 18 ♜g5 ♜c6 19 ♜d2 ♜ac8 20 h5 favoured White in C.Barus-R.Dineley, Bled Olympiad 2002.

B222) 12...♝d7!



Probably Black's strongest option, and this purposeful move is certainly critical. Black waits for White to exchange on a6 himself, while preparing both ...♜d8 and ...♝a4. White now faces an important decision between imme-

diately advancing with 13 d5, which involves a pawn sacrifice, and exchanging on a6.

B2221: 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$

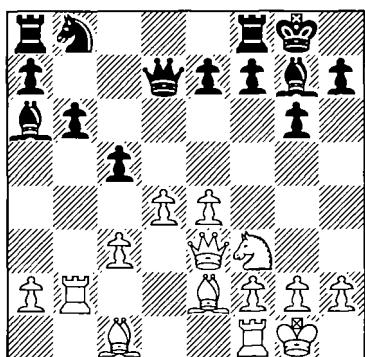
B2222: 13 d5

Alternatively:

a) 13 $\mathbb{B}d1 \mathbb{W}a4$ 14 $\mathbb{B}d2 \mathbb{Q}xe2$ 15 $\mathbb{B}xe2$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 16 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{W}d3$ c4 18 $\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{B}b4 \mathbb{W}a5$ (preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}d3$) 20 $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ favours Black; the c3-pawn will fall after which Black's pieces are quick to invade the white position.

b) 13 h4 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xe2 \mathbb{W}g4!$? highlights the weakening aspect to White's 13th move.

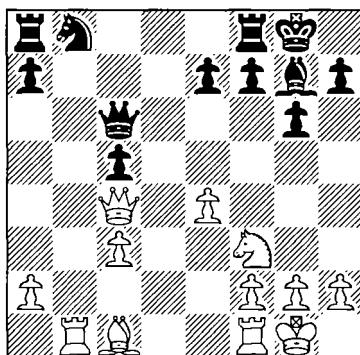
c) 13 $\mathbb{B}b2$ looks a little strange and doesn't contribute much to White's position:



13...e6 14 h4 $\mathbb{B}d8$ 15 $\mathbb{B}d1$ cxd4 16 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}a4$ (Black already stands quite well) 17 $\mathbb{B}bd2 \mathbb{Q}xe2$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xa6 \mathbb{W}xa6$ 19 h5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$! is another idea, intending ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$) 18 $\mathbb{W}xe2 \mathbb{Q}c6$ with equality.

d) 13 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ (13...bxc5? is a seri-

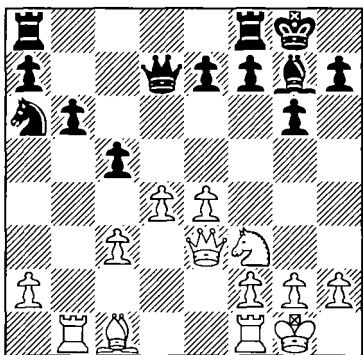
ous mistake: 14 $\mathbb{B}xb8$! $\mathbb{B}axb8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ and White was winning in B.Gelfand-I.Sokolov, Oakham 1988) 14 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ bxc5 15 $\mathbb{W}c4 \mathbb{W}c6$



16 e5 (or 16 $\mathbb{B}d1 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d3 \mathbb{B}fe8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e3 \mathbb{W}a4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xc5 \mathbb{W}xe4$ 21 $\mathbb{B}e1 \mathbb{W}c2$ 22 $\mathbb{B}bc1 \mathbb{W}xa2$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xe7$ h6 24 $\mathbb{B}xe8+$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}e3 \mathbb{B}c8$ and Black was better in F.Elsness-B.Avrukh, Istanbul Olympiad 2000) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{B}e1$ e6! (more accurate than 17... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}h4 \mathbb{W}a4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xe7 \mathbb{W}xa2$ 20 $\mathbb{B}b5$ with an edge for White in L.Van Wely-B.Avrukh, Neum 2000; Black is now ready to kick the white queen with ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ and then to invade on the queenside) 18 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (18 $\mathbb{W}h4$ is now met by 18... $\mathbb{B}fb8$! avoiding the exchange of dark-squared bishops with $\mathbb{Q}h6$; then 19 $\mathbb{B}a1 \mathbb{W}c7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}h6 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}xh6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ f6 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{W}e7$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{W}f7$ 25 $\mathbb{B}ad1 \mathbb{B}d8$ left Black's pieces much more relevantly placed in P.Murdzian-A.Kovchan, Cappelle la Grande 2003) 18... $\mathbb{B}fb8$ (18...h6 19 $\mathbb{Q}e7 \mathbb{B}fc8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d6 \mathbb{Q}b6$ also gave Black an edge in S.Ivanov-K.Urban, Polish Team Ch. 2001) 19 $\mathbb{B}bd1 \mathbb{Q}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}e2 \mathbb{W}a4$ 21 $\mathbb{B}d6$

was seen in J.Markos-A.Greenfeld, European Team Ch., Leon 2001, and now Black can obtain the advantage with Krasenkow's suggestion of 21... $\mathbb{Q}c4!$? 22 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}a5$; White's compensation is insufficient.

B2221) 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$



This exchange doesn't really bother Black, since he can now play ... $\mathbb{W}a4$.

14 $\mathbb{W}e2$

Alternatively:

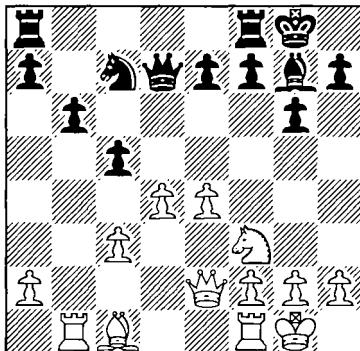
a) 14 d5 $\mathbb{W}a4$ transposes to a position we will consider after 13 d5 $\mathbb{W}a4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$, but Black should probably prefer here 14... $\mathbb{Q}c7!?$ (but not 14...c4 due to 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with advantage) 15 c4 e5, intending to bring the knight to d6 and later play the move ...f5.

b) 14 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}fe8$ 16 d5 c4 17 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ e6 allowed Black to seize the initiative in P.Hummel-D.Gormally, Oakham 2000; ...c4 is not always a bad move, it must just be well timed!

c) 14 h4 $\mathbb{W}a4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (or 15 a3 cxd4

16 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 18 h5 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ which gives Black good counterplay) 15... $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ (15... $\mathbb{W}xa2?$ is a mistake in view of 16 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$) 16 dxc5 (16 d5? $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 17 c4 $\mathbb{W}c2!$ highlights the lack of coordination among White's pieces; after 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 21 g4 f6 22 $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ Black was much better in R.Lev-V.Golod, Israeli League 2002) 16... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 18 cxb6 axb6 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ (or 19... $\mathbb{Q}e6!?$ with decent compensation) 20 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ is equal according to Golod.

14... $\mathbb{Q}c7!?$



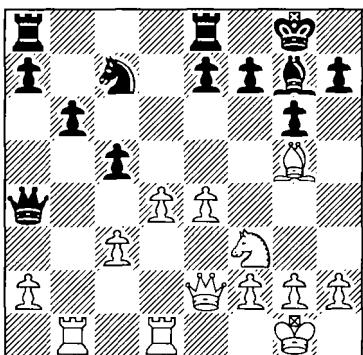
I feel that this is Black's most accurate move order. He strives to improve the scope of his knight and will transfer it to either e6 or b5. By keeping his queen on d7 for a move, he discourages both 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (which would now be met by 15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with tempo) and 15 d5 (now met by an immediate 15...e6).

15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}a4!$

The consistent approach. Another interesting concept is the dynamic 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 f5!? which also seems quite acceptable; for example, 17 $\mathbb{W}c4+$ (17 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$) 17...e6! 18 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 19

$\mathbb{E}e1 fxe4$ 20 $\mathbb{B}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ with a complex situation, but one in which Black stands fairly well.

16 $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{B}fe8$



White's position suddenly appears quite loose. Indeed, 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$?! (Black is also more than fine after 17 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 18 e5 f6, while 17 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$! 18 e5 $\mathbb{B}ad8$ leaves White's centre under serious pressure) 17... $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ e5! is powerful; for example, 19 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 20 $\mathbb{E}e1$ (20 $\mathbb{W}g5$? $exd4$ 21 e5 – 21 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ – 21... $\mathbb{Q}e6$! 22 $\mathbb{W}f6+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 23 $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 24 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}d5$ was excellent for Black in Y.Ulko-B.Avrukh, Moscow 2002) 20... $exd4$ 21 cxd4 cxd4 22 $\mathbb{B}b4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ (23 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$! is strong) 23... $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 24 $\mathbb{B}xd2$ $\mathbb{B}xd2$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (Krasenkov) when Black has an edge in the endgame.

B2222) 13 d5

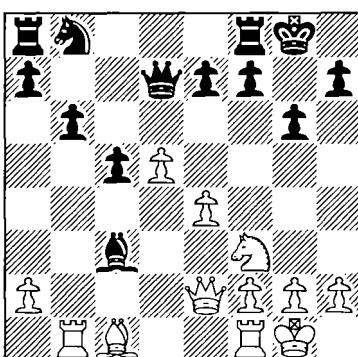
This is of course the critical test, involving yet another pawn sacrifice.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xe2!$

Black must accept the offered pawn, as otherwise White will consolidate his centre. Thus 13... $\mathbb{W}a4$ is inferior: 14

$\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ (or 14... $\mathbb{W}xa6$ 15 e5?! $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 16 $\mathbb{W}e4$ with the initiative – Krasenkov) 15 $\mathbb{W}e2!$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$? doesn't work in view of 16 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 18 $\mathbb{B}h3$ with a crushing attack, E.Najer-S.Yuferov, St Petersburg 2000, but 15...c4?! may be possible) 16 c4 e5 17 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{B}b2$ f6 (V.Diushomoev, A.Krasnodar 2002) 19 $\mathbb{W}e3$ prepares f4 and gives White an edge.

14 $\mathbb{W}xe2 \mathbb{Q}xc3$



Again both consistent and accurate, whereas 14...e6?! 15 c4 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 16 $\mathbb{B}b2$ $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $exd5$ 18 $exd5$ was good for White in R.Vera-M.Ripari, Malaga 2001.

15 $\mathbb{Q}h6$

Alternatively, 15 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16 $\mathbb{B}b2$ (or 16 e5 e6 17 d6 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ intending ... $\mathbb{B}ad8$ and ...f6, when Black will destroy White's central pawn chain) 16... $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 17 $\mathbb{B}xb2$ e6! (breaking up White's centre just in time) 18 $dxe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 19 e5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20 $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 21 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 22 $\mathbb{B}bd2$ $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 23 $\mathbb{B}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ and with the consolidating ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and the active ... $\mathbb{W}b5$ available, Black is better.

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

A prudent retreat since 15... $\mathbb{E}e8$?! 16 $\mathbb{B}b3$! allows White to switch all of his pieces to a dangerous kingside attack.

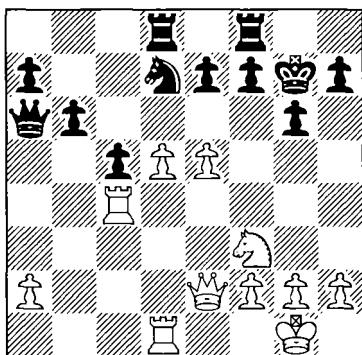
16 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 17 $\mathbb{E}fd1$

White's compensation has a sound positional foundation and Black must now continue actively.

17... $\mathbb{E}a4$! 18 $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 e5 $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 20 $\mathbb{E}c4$

White has also tried 20 e6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21 exf7 (now care is required, as White threatens $\mathbb{Q}g5-e6$) 21... $\mathbb{E}e4$! 22 $\mathbb{E}xe4$ 23 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 25 h4 $\mathbb{E}xf7$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$, but at the end of the day Black was better in B.Gelfand-P.Svidler, Monaco (rapid) 2005.

20... $\mathbb{E}a6$



We've followed V.Mikhalevski-S.Kudrin, Minneapolis 2005. Black is

ready to respond to any further aggression from White and may even play ...f6 to clarify the situation in the centre. The position remains complicated, but I see no reason for Black to complain; he has an extra pawn and no immediate danger is apparent.

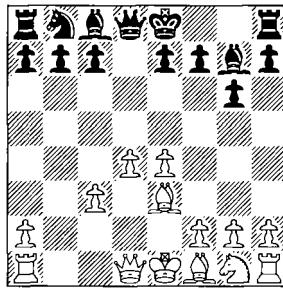
Conclusion

The aggressive 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ is one of the sternest tests of the Grünfeld. By adopting the 9...b6 variation, Black obtains a solid and flexible position which offers good prospects of counterplay. Play is chiefly based on standard Grünfeld positional and tactical motifs, and many strong players employ the suggested repertoire, which speaks volumes for its inherent soundness.

Particular attention should be paid to the various versions of the d5-advance, sacrificing the pawn on c3. Black should definitely accept the offer and then play accurately to neutralize White's initiative. Do note that in these lines, general principles will not suffice; good preparation is necessary. However, this is much less so than in the extremely complex main lines of the 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$ system.

Chapter Three

Exchange Variation: e3 Systems



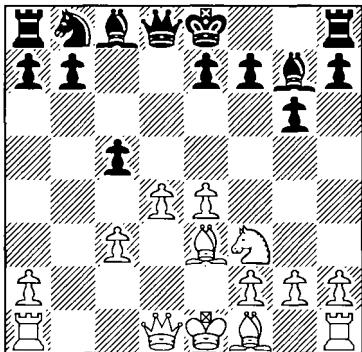
**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
5 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 6 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$**

There are two different versions of the $\mathbb{Q}e3$ system, depending on whether or not White plays $\mathbb{Q}f3$:

A: 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

B: 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

A) 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$



With this system, White intends to develop his queenside first with $\mathbb{Q}d2$

and $\mathbb{Q}b1$ or $\mathbb{Q}c1$, preparing to meet ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with d5. In this way he manages to diffuse Black's standard scheme of applying pressure against his centre. Anatoly Karpov made very efficient use of this system (and especially the more flexible move order 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ – see Line B) in his time, while Vladimir Kramnik successfully flirted with it for a while.

The drawback to White's set-up is the fact that his king remains in the centre for a long time. Black's best way of exploiting this is with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$, a very annoying move that often forces an exchange of queens on d2, after which White usually has to misplace a piece as he recaptures. This, allied to White's rather slow development, can leave Black with a dangerous initiative should White be just a little inaccurate.

8... $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

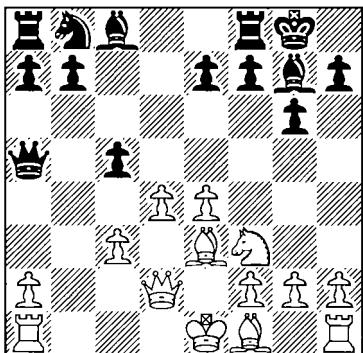
The other interpositions are less effective:

a) 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11

d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ gives Black the initiative, as Krasenkov has analysed, and 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ is similar) 10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 0-0 e6 (Black's set-up is flexible and quite comfortable) 12 a4 (or 12 $\mathbb{B}b1$ when 12... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ is sound but allows a repetition, and so Black might prefer 12... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with pressure against d4) 12... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{B}b1$ (neither does 13 d5 exd5 14 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ solve White's problems) 13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 d5 exd5 15 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ and White's position looks very uncoordinated, while 15... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ was also fine for Black in A.Beliavsky-A.Adorjan, Baden 1980.

b) 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ cxd4! 10 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (10 cxd4?! loses control of the position: 10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$! 12 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c1$ 0-0 15 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ and Black has a strong initiative) 10...dxe3!? (a promising queen sacrifice) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ (or 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with excellent compensation – Adorjan) 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 fxe3 0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ f5 and Black's initiative is very dangerous.

9...0-0



The usual choice here has actually been 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, leading to some very complicated positions. Then Black's pressure against d4 prevents White, after an exchange on d4, from recapturing on d2 with his knight, unlike after the text move. Doing so is certainly more comfortable for White than taking with the king, but the resulting positions are still fully acceptable for Black. I have analysed them in detail and feel that Black's resources are fully adequate for equality and perhaps even more, especially should White play inaccurately. Two other positive features of 9...0-0 are that it enables a quick ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$, a very significant gain in case White does recapture with his king on d2, and that the advance d4-d5 does not come with tempo, unlike after 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$.

White must now decide where to place his rook:

A1: 10 $\mathbb{B}b1$

A2: 10 $\mathbb{B}c1$

A1) 10 $\mathbb{B}b1$

This causes some problems after 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, as then 10 $\mathbb{B}b1$ b6 is met by the annoying 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5$. Here, however, it is absolutely harmless – another good reason to prefer 9...0-0.

10...b6 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Alternatively:

a) 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is always comfortably met by 11... $\mathbb{W}a4$, when the queen is actively placed; for example, 12 dxc5 (or 12 $\mathbb{B}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ a6 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

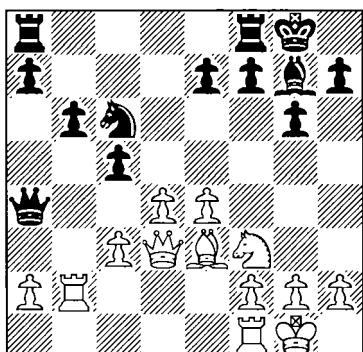
Qc6 16 h3 ♜d7 which favoured Black in V.Ikonnikov-P.Carbonnel, Paris 1992; and both 12 ♜e2 ♜b7 and 12 ♜h6 ♜xh6 13 ♜xh6 ♜g4 are no better) 12...bxc5 13 ♜xc5 ♜a6 14 ♜d4 ♜d7 when Black has excellent compensation for the pawn in view of his very active pieces and White's undeveloped king-side.

b) 11 ♜c1 ♜d7 12 d5 occurred in T.Hillarp Persson-E.Liss, Copenhagen 1996, and now I think that Black has very good play after 12...♝a4?! 13 ♜c2 ♜xc2 14 ♜xc2 f5 15 exf5 gxf5.

11...♜c6 12 ♜b5

As usual, 12 e5?! is too committal: 12...♜d8 13 ♜b5 (13 0-0? cxd4 14 cxd4 ♜xd2 wins a pawn) 13...♝a4 14 ♜b2 (White collapses after both 14 0-0 ♜a6 15 ♜b2 ♜xd3 16 ♜xd3 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♜xe5 18 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 and 14 ♜c2 ♜xc2 15 ♜xc2 ♜a6 16 ♜b3 ♜a5 17 ♜a3 ♜b7) 14...♜a6 and Black enjoys the initiative, M.Rivas Pastor-V.Epishin, Dos Hermanas 1994.

12...♝a4 13 ♜b2 ♜a6 14 0-0 ♜xd3 15 ♜xd3



We have been following the game

I.Ben Menachem-E.Liss, Ramat Ha-sharon 1992, and now the simple 15...♜ad8 further increases the pressure on d4 and favours Black.

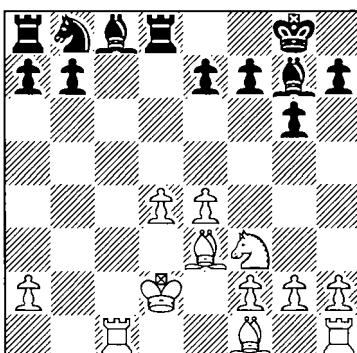
A2) 10 ♜c1 cxd4 11 cxd4 ♜xd2+

White now faces an important decision: recapturing with the king is fairly common, while doing so with the knight is an attempt to exploit the omission of ...♜c6.

A21: 12 ♔xd2

A22: 12 ♜xd2

A21) 12 ♔xd2 ♜d8!



Already one of the aforementioned advantages of 9...0-0 over 9...♜c6 comes to the fore.

13 ♜c7

The most aggressive, but White has several other options:

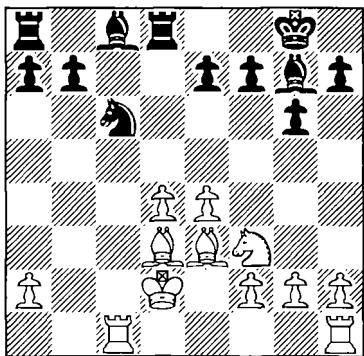
a) 13 d5?! f5 doesn't help White at all.

b) 13 ♜c4 ♜c6 14 d5?! is also premature and, for example, 14...♞a5 15 ♜hd1 ♜xc4+ 16 ♜xc4 f5! 17 ♜e1 fxe4 18

$\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20 g4 b6 left White under great pressure in C.Hoi-K.Helmers, Esbjerg 1982.

c) 13 h3 is a bit slow: 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (14 d5? e6 15 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ exd5 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ dxe4+ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ bxc6 was winning for Black in H.Barrios-A.Ruiz, Bogota 1991) 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 and it is White who has to seek ways to equalize.

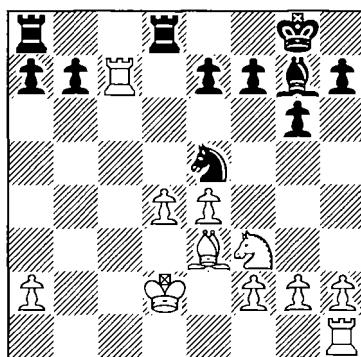
d) 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ raises the question of how White will defend d4.



K.Sakaev-R.Ruck, Panormo (rapid) 2002, continued 14 d5 (or 14 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ f5 15 exf5, B.Damljanovic-D.Antic, Subotica 2000, and now 15...gxf5 16 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ e6 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ gives Black comfortable play) 14... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (it's easy for White to err here; he was quickly struggling after both 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1?$ e6 16 a3 exd5! 17 axb4 dxe4+ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ exf3+ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$, in P.Kekki-J.Aijala, Tampere 2003, and 15 $\mathbb{Q}hd1?$ e6 16 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ exd5 17 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ in T.Steiner-G.Trammell, Tulsa 2006), and now Black could have secured an edge with the simple 15... $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ e6.

e) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7?$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ (14 $\mathbb{Q}d3?$

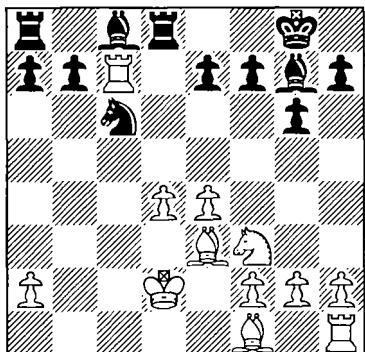
$\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 d5 $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ b5 17 a3 bxc4 18 axb4 e6 leaves White in trouble, as the position is opening up for the black bishops) 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (or 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 17 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 18 fxe3, S.Trofimov-R.Swindels, Belfort 2005, and now 18...e5 19 d5 f5 when Black has the initiative and White's central pawns are weak) 15... $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ (with this neat tactic, Black at least equalizes)



16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (or 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 17 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ with easy equality for Black in S.Pedersen-J.Rowson, Oxford 1998) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ and now White must be accurate with 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}hb1$, as he was in O.Ruiz Mata-F.Vera Pons, Santa Coloma 2000, after which 18...e5 is equal. Instead 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe7??$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8!$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (the black rooks are more active and the white king somewhat exposed) 21 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ (or 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ with an edge for Black in E.Stephan-V.Petzold, Bayern 2003) 21... $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ gives Black the initiative; a very important factor in a double rook ending.

f) 13 ♜e1 escapes the pin, but fails otherwise to impress: 13...e6 14 ♜c4 (or 14 ♜g5 f6 15 ♜e3 ♜c6, intending ...f5, which is fine for Black, as is 14 d5 exd5 15 exd5 ♜d7 and the d5-pawn will surely prove weak, especially with White's king's rook shut out of play) 14...♜c6 15 ♜g5 (15 ♜d1 b6 16 ♜e2 ♜b7 created very unpleasant threats in T.Roussel-Roozmon-S.Glinert, Richmond 2002) 15...♜d7 and White's problems with the defence of d4 continue to persist.

13...♜c6



14 d5

White hopes to create counter-threats before Black manages to fully develop his pieces, but this strategy doesn't quite work out. The alternatives are less ambitious, but not really any better:

a) 14 ♜b5 ♜xd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 ♜xd4+ 17 ♜e3 ♜b4 (17...e5 18 ♜c4 equalizes immediately, but there's no reason to allow White to equalize so easily!) 18 ♜c4 ♜g7 19 ♜d1 ♜g4 20 f3 ♜c8 and White is again seeking ways to equalize, T.Carvalho-L.Tavares da

Silva, Brasilia 1985.

b) 14 ♜d3 ♜xd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 (White should prefer 16 ♜xe7 ♜f6 17 ♜c7 ♜e6 18 a4 ♜e5 with equality, N.Stewart-D.Drewelius, Bonn 1998) 16...♜xd4 17 ♜xe7 ♜e6 18 ♜e3 ♜ad8 and Black had a powerful initiative in M.Kuhn-S.Grimm, German League 1991.

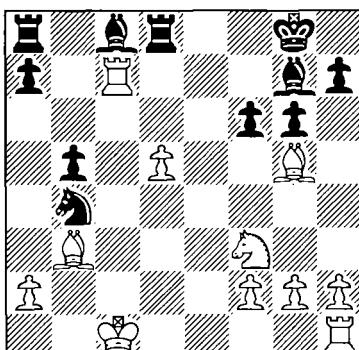
14...e6 15 ♜g5

There is no turning back for White now, especially since 15 ♜c1? exd5 16 exd5 ♜b4 loses a pawn. Instead, the other aggressive option, 15 ♜g5, rather backfires after 15...exd5 16 ♜xf7 ♜d7! 17 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 when White is not too well coordinated and Black remains the more active even after 18 exd5 (or 18 ♜d6 ♜e6! 19 ♜xb7 dxe4 with the initiative) 18...♜xf7 19 dxс6 ♜xc6 20 ♜c4+ ♜e8.

15...f6 16 ♜c1

Instead 16 ♜h4 exd5 17 e5 ♜h6+ wins, as ...g5-g4 and then ...fxe5 follows.

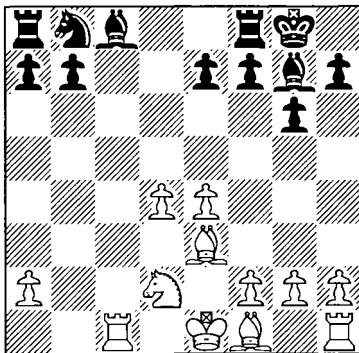
16...exd5 17 exd5 ♜b4 18 ♜c4 b5 19 ♜b3



White had to avoid losing with both

19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $fxg5$, but the text, as seen in G.Kotlyar-L.Ftacnik, Reno 1991, still leaves Black with a clear advantage after the continuation 19... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $fxe5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$.

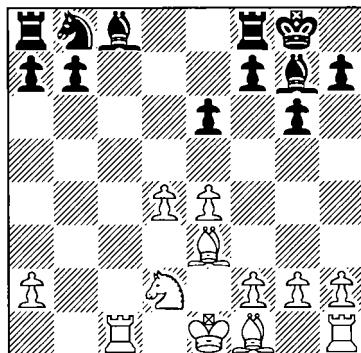
A22) 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$



An important tabiya for both the $\mathbb{Q}e3$ system in general and especially our preference for 9...0-0. The position may look too simple, but it's actually far from that! Indeed, both sides have good chances to outplay the opponent: White by seizing more space in the centre and invading down the c-file; Black by attacking the a-pawn or by forcing White to advance prematurely in the centre.

12...e6

The most accurate, encouraging d4-d5 which can give White useful control of the c6-square in the event of a queenside fianchetto. Indeed, Black wants to play ...b6, both to prevent White's knight from leaping forwards from b3 and to develop the c8-bishop actively.



13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$

This is the most flexible.

Alternatively:

a) 13 $\mathbb{Q}c7?$! is too ambitious, and after 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 e5 f6 Black has the initiative.

b) 13 e5?!

is again too adventurous. After 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ Black has the initiative and the d4-pawn will become a target.

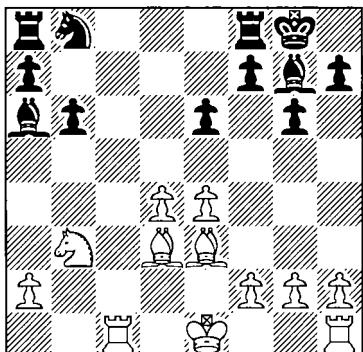
c) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$! 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ is an attempt by White to speed up his development, but it also relieves Black's congestion: 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (15 $\mathbb{Q}c7$? is strongly met by 15... $\mathbb{Q}fc8$!) 15... $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ (or 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ b6 20 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21 g3 h5 and Black equalized in J.Schulz-J.Plachetka, Stare Mesto 2004) 16... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ was also fine for Black in R.Hübner-A.Adorjan, Bad Lauterberg 1980) 17...b5 18 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a6 21 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22 h3 f5 23 f3 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ was again equal in R.Akesson-F.Elsness, Gausdal 2001; note the central strike ...f5, which is a typical idea for Black after the exchange of light-squared bishops.

d) 13 ♜c4 supports a d5-advance: 13...♝c6 14 ♜f3 (14 ♜b3 ♜d8 15 d5?! exd5 16 ♜xd5 ♜b4 is just weakening and leaves White too exposed) 14...♜d7 15 d5 (instead 15 0-0 ♜a5 16 ♜e2 ♜fc8 gave Black enough time to prepare ...b5 and ...♝c4 in C.Fernandez-K.Garrido, Euskadi 2000; White now took the bull by the horns with 17 d5 exd5 18 exd5, but it didn't serve him well and after 18...b5 19 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 20 ♜xa7 ♜c2 21 ♜d3 ♜xa2 Black was on top) 15...exd5 16 ♜xd5 ♜ac8 17 0-0 b6 18 ♜fd1 ♜b4 and in B.McNally-J.Stevenson, Edinburgh 1997, Black had comfortably equalized.

13...b6 14 ♜d3

The alternative 14 ♜c7 is again premature, this time in view of 14...a5! which highlights the lack of squares for the b3-knight, while 14 ♜b5 ♜b7 (14...♜a6?! 15 a4! is good for White) 15 f3 a6 kicks the bishop away and prevents White from invading on c6.

14...♜a6!



Pretty much forcing an exchange of bishops and thereby solving all Black's problems.

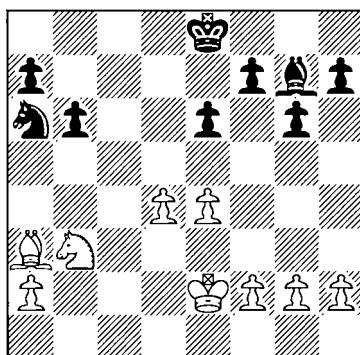
15 ♜xa6

In R.Stone-V.Ivanchuk, New York 1988, White preferred 15 ♜e2 ♜xd3+ 16 ♜xd3. The presence of the king in the centre is a mixed blessing for White; it may prove useful if the rooks are exchanged, but it can also become a target. The game continued 16...♝a6 17 a3 (17 a4 ♜b4+ 18 ♜d2 ♜ac8 is equal) 17...♜fd8 18 ♜c4 ♜f8 19 a4 ♜ab8 (preparing to open files with ...b5) 20 ♜e2 f6! 21 ♜a1 ♜d6 22 h3 ♜f7 when Black was far preference as White had run out of ideas.

15...♝xa6 16 ♜e2

White's best plan is to exchange all the rooks, and the text move prepares this.

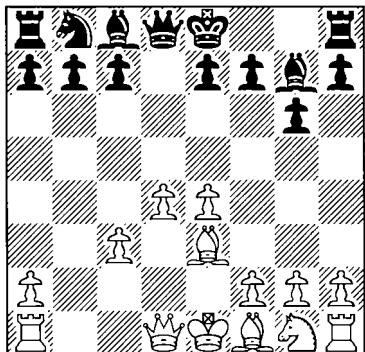
**16...♜fc8 17 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 18 ♜c1 ♜xc1
19 ♜xc1 ♜f8 20 ♜a3+ ♜e8**



With equality, M.Skliba-V.Bures, Brno 2005.

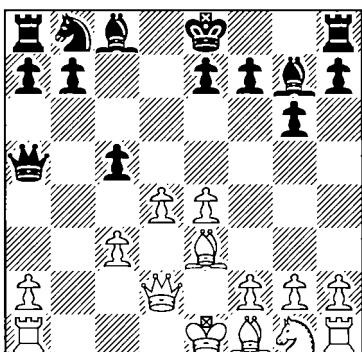
This endgame, quite typical of the ♜e3 variation, is of course equal and should be drawn with best play from both sides, but the structural imbalance gives both players reason to try for more.

B) 7 ♜e3



White foregoes ♜f3 in order to use the tempo in a better way, namely to move the rook away from a1 one move earlier. This move order is more flexible than 7 ♜f3 c5 8 ♜e3; a variation to which White can always transpose should he wish. White's newly acquired options deserve respect, but Black shouldn't have anything to fear and should follow the same plan as in Line A.

7...c5 8 ♜d2 ♜a5!



Once again White must make a decision as to where to place his queen's rook:

B1: 9 ♜c1

B2: 9 ♜b1

B1) 9 ♜c1

This leads to a very similar queenless middlegame to the ones discussed above.

9...cx d4 10 cx d4 ♜xd2+ 11 ♜xd2

Instead 11 ♜xd2 is rather unnatural and Black is fine after 11...0-0:

a) 12 ♜f3 e6 13 ♜b5 ♜c6! 14 ♜xc6 bxc6 15 ♜e5 (15 ♜xc6? ♜b7 is, of course, horrible for White) 15...♜b7 16 ♜b4 (and not 16 ♜b1 ♜a6 17 ♜xc6? ♜d3) 16...♜fd8 17 ♜c5 f6 18 ♜c4 ♜a6 (V.Lazarev-T.Ernst, Oberwart 1991) and Black will occupy the b-file, with at least equality.

b) 12 ♜c3 e6 13 ♜f3 ♜d8 14 ♜c4 ♜c6 15 d5 ♜xc3+ 16 ♜xc3 exd5 17 ♜xd5 ♜b4 gives Black easy equality, G.Burgess-B.Ostenstad, Gausdal 1997.

c) 12 d5 e6 13 ♜b5 (13 ♜b4?! is a misguided attempt to maintain a passed d-pawn: 13...♜e8 14 d6 ♜c6 15 ♜a3 e5 16 ♜c4 ♜e6 17 ♜e2 ♜f8 18 ♜d5 ♜xd5 was much better for Black in A.Vaisser-W.Schmidt, Trnava 1983) 13...♜d7 14 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 15 dx e6 fxe6 16 ♜f3 ♜fc8! 17 ♜e2 ♜c5 18 ♜g5 h6 19 ♜e3 hxg5 20 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 21 ♜xc5 g4! and an endgame with equal chances arose in W.Schmidt-V.Jansa, Vrnjacka Banja 1983.

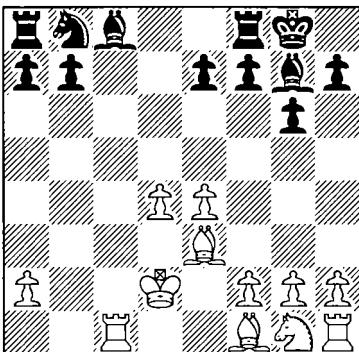
11...0-0

Now the move ♜f3 at any stage will transpose to Line A21, but White can also continue in independent vein.

12...♜d8 13 ♜e2 ♜c6!

An important concept; Black puts activity above structural considerations.

14 ♜xc6 bxc6



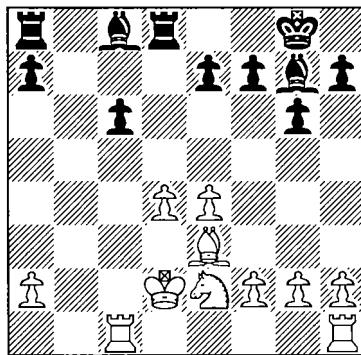
12 ♜b5

Alternatively:

a) 12 d5 e6 13 ♜c4 exd5 14 ♜xd5 (or 14 exd5 ♜d7 15 ♜e2 ♜d8 16 ♜hd1, S.Bender-T.Pielmeier, German League 2001, and now 16...♜e5 with the initiative) 14...♜d7 15 f3 ♜f6!? 16 ♜b3 a5 and Black is on top.

b) 12 ♜c7 ♜d8 13 ♜b5 (A.Al Khateeb-B.Kouatly, Doha 1993) 13...a6 14 ♜c4 ♜c6 is fine for Black

c) 12 ♜d3 ♜c6 13 ♜e2 ♜d8 again raises awkward problems to do with White's d-pawn. L.Van Wely-E.Sutovsky, Pamplona 1999, continued 14 ♜c4 (14 d5 ♜e5 15 ♜b1 e6 was better for Black in S.Tennant-L.Cohen, USA 1994) 14...f5 15 ♜b1 (instead 15 e5 ♜e6 is good for Black, as is 15 ♜hc1 ♜e6 16 ♜a4 ♜d7!?, while after 15 f3 fxe4 16 fxe4 ♜g4 17 ♜b1 ♜d7 18 d5 ♜e5 19 ♜cb4, V.Kostic-S.Dvoiry, Oberwart 1999, and now 19...e6 20 ♜xb7 exd5 21 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 Black has the initiative) 15...fxe4 16 ♜xe4 ♜f5 17 ♜xf5 gxf5 when Black already enjoyed a promising position, especially after 18 ♜e1 ♜d7 19 f3 ♜ad8 20 ♜f2 ♜f7 21 ♜b5 e6.



15 ♜hd1

Instead:

a) 15 ♜c5? e5! creates problems for White: 16 ♜g5 f6 17 ♜e3 exd4 18 ♜xd4 ♜a6 and White's position is collapsing, J.Hjartarson-I.Stohl, Copenhagen 1982.

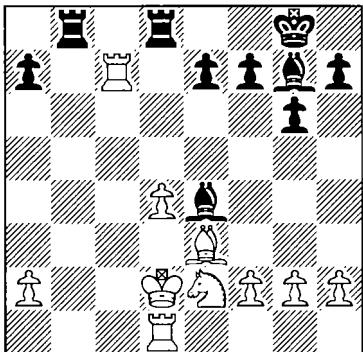
b) 15 ♜xc6 ♜b7 16 ♜c7 ♜xe4 17 f3 ♜f5 18 ♜d1 (18 ♜xe7 ♜ab8 gives Black too much activity) 18...♝f8 saw the two bishops and superior structure guarantee Black a lasting plus in N.Kelecevic-J.Smejkal, Sarajevo 1982.

c) 15 f3 e5 16 ♜xc6 exd4 17 ♜g5 ♜e8 18 ♜f4 was seen in A.Graf-R.Ruck, Budapest 2004, and now 18...f5! gives Black the edge.

15...♜b8 16 ♜xc6

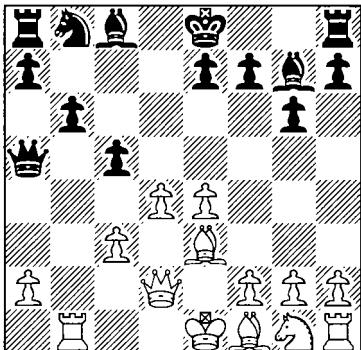
Or 16 ♜c2 ♜b4 17 ♜e1 ♜a4 18 f3 ♜a6 19 ♜dd2 ♜c4 20 ♜c3 ♜a3 21 ♜d1 ♜b5 with good counterplay in L.Persson-B.Kyhle, Stockholm 1994, while 16 f3 ♜a6 17 ♜e1 18 ♜d2 only allows White to maintain equality.

16...♜b7 17 ♜c7 ♜xe4



A critical situation. Black has a couple of pawns en prise, but White's king is exposed and his pawns loose. K.Andreev-A.Gubanov, St.Petersburg 1997, continued 18 f3! (as Ftacnik notes, 18 $\mathbb{X}xe7?$ $\mathbb{B}b2+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{X}g2$ 20 $\mathbb{X}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}b1+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{X}d1+$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ is decisive; White should also avoid 18 $\mathbb{X}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}b2+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{X}g2$ 20 $\mathbb{X}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{X}a2)$ 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19 $\mathbb{X}a7$ (19 $\mathbb{X}xe7$ $\mathbb{B}b2+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{X}a2$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ is good – Ftacnik) 19... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ e5! (maximum activity!) 21 dxe5 $\mathbb{X}d1+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{X}xe5$ 23 f4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and Black had excellent play.

B2) 9 $\mathbb{B}b1$ b6



Our habitual way of meeting $\mathbb{B}b1$ and one which normally tempts White into exploiting his temporary control of b5.

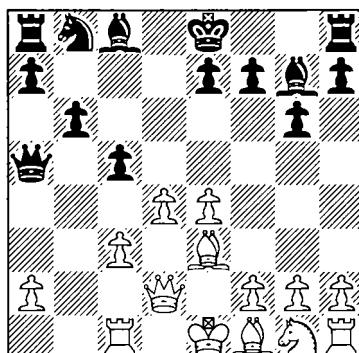
B21: 10 $\mathbb{B}b5$

B22: 10 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$

Practice has also seen:

a) 10 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 11 f3 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ saw White again coming under pressure in the centre in A.Pugachov-V.Tseshkovsky, Leeuwarden 1994. The game continued 14 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ and White was struggling to hold d4.

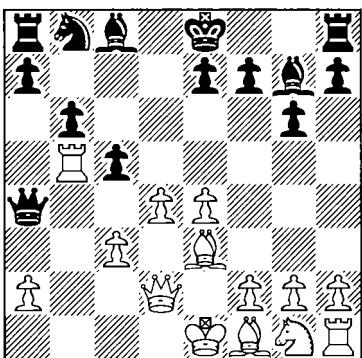
b) 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ looks strange, but White argues that ...b6 is a serious weakness should Black now enter an endgame.



However, Black can exploit the extra tempo: 10...0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (11 d5 e6 intends ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ and seems promising for Black) 11... $\mathbb{B}b7$ 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (or 13 c4 $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ e6 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f5 16 exf5 gxf5 17 dxe6 $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ and White regrets his premature central advance)

13...c4! when 14 ♜xc4? ♜ac8 supplies excellent compensation, while 14 ♜b1 ♜c5 15 ♜h6 e6 16 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 17 ♜d4+ f6 18 0-0 (L.Portisch-S.Sarno, Reggio Emilia 1992/93) 18...exd5 19 exd5 ♜ad8 20 ♜fe1 ♜xd5! 21 ♜e7+ ♜f7 22 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 leaves Black clearly better.

B21) 10 ♜b5 ♜a4



11 ♜b3

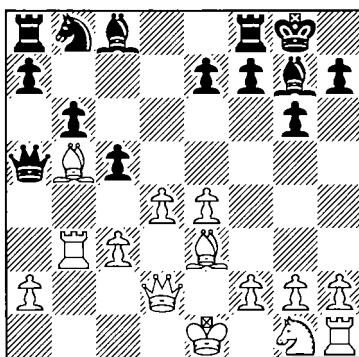
Black is also fine after the others:

a) 11 ♜b2 ♜a6! 12 ♜xa6 (or 12 f3 ♜xf1 13 ♜xf1 ♜c6 with the initiative) 12...♜xa6 13 f3 (13 ♜e2?! e5! highlights the weakness of both white central pawns: 14 0-0 ♜d8 15 ♜d1 ♜c4! 16 ♜d2 0-0 17 f3 exd4 18 cxd4 cxd4 19 ♜xd4 ♜b4! and Black was better in Y.Dokhoian-S.Dvoirys, Helsinki 1992) 13...0-0 with an edge for Black.

b) 11 dxc5?! wins a pawn, but at too high a price in terms of structure. All of a2, c3 and e4 now become rather vulnerable; for example, 11...0-0 12 ♜b4 ♜a5 13 ♜c4 (13 cxb6 axb6 is much better for Black – Adorjan and Feher) 13...♜c6! 14 ♜b3 (or 14 ♜b5 ♜a4 15 ♜e2 ♜d8 16 ♜c1 ♜a6 and as Aagaard notes,

Black is much better) 14...♜d8 15 ♜c1 bxc5 (but not 15...♜e5? due to the nasty 16 ♜a3!) 16 ♜a3 ♜c7 17 f4 ♜b7 18 ♜e2, as in I.Ibragimov-C.Toth, Dortmund 1992, and now 18...♜a5 favours Black since ...f5 is imminent and e4 weak.

11...0-0 12 ♜b5 ♜a5



13 ♜f3

White should avoid 13 ♜e2?! since 13...a6! 14 ♜d3 (14 ♜c4 b5 15 ♜d5 ♜a7 16 dxc5 e6 17 c6 ♜c7 18 ♜f4 exd5 19 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 20 exd5 ♜d8 21 ♜f4 ♜e5 22 ♜f3 ♜d6 wins everything, as analysed by Adorjan and Feher) 14...♜c6 15 d5 ♜e5 16 0-0 f5! left Black much better in L.Portisch-A.Adorjan, Hungarian Ch., Budapest 1991.

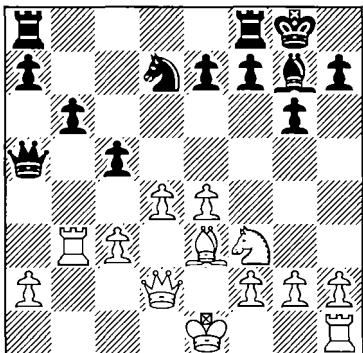
13...♜d7!

Quickly mobilizing Black's remaining pieces and now White must be careful just to maintain the balance.

14 ♜xd7

Instead 14 ♜e2 ♜c8 15 0-0 (15 d5? c4 16 ♜b4 ♜a6 wins material) 15...cxd4 16 cxd4 ♜xd2 17 ♜xd2 ♜c2 18 d5 ♜xa2 19 ♜c4 ♜a4 (Adorjan and Feher) is much better for Black.

14...♜xd7



15 0-0

If 15 d5? c4 16 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ winning.

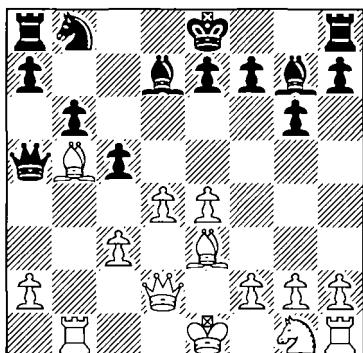
15...cxd4 16 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$

Now 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ gives Black an edge, since 20 $\mathbb{Q}c1?$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ wins material, but even the superior 18 $\mathbb{Q}fb1$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}3b2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ e6 (Adorjan and Feher) leaves Black at least equal.

B22) 10 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$

The difference with 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is that White has this check, but it still doesn't trouble Black.

10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$



The two most logical retreats are now:

B221: 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

B222: 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Retreating the bishop to e2 is White's most common choice, arguing that the black bishop is misplaced on d7, but things are not so simple, as we will see.

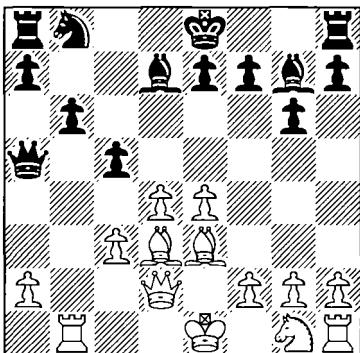
White has also tried:

a) 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ is too simplistic to cause any problems: for example, 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ attacks e4 in an awkward way) 12...0-0 13 0-0 (13 d5?! $\mathbb{W}a4$ 14 f3 f5 once again leaves White overextended) 13... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ (due to the pin down the d-file, the d7-knight acquires further prospects) 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ cxd4 15 cxd4 (or 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ dxс3 16 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 18 f3 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ and Black is better) 15... $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ was better for Black in Wang Yaoyao-S.Atalik, Beijing 1996.

b) 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ leaves the bishop rather loose: 11... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (both 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ cxd4 14 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ and 13 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 14 cxb6 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 15 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ are promising for Black) 13...b5 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ e6 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 16 d5 (White is also struggling after 16 f3 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 17 0-0 b4 18 cxb4 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ – Ftacnik) 16...exd5 17 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 18 c4 $\mathbb{W}a4$ and Black was a lot better in I.Levitina-M.Chiburdanidze, Shanghai Candidates 1992.

B221) 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Seemingly the most logical retreat. However, while this supports e4, it also interferes with the queen's protection of d4.



11...0-0 12 ♜e2

Instead 12 ♜f3 ♜c6 13 ♜c1 (or 13 ♜b5 ♜a4 14 ♜b2, D.Adla-M.Sion Castro, Zaragoza 1995, and now 14...♜ac8 intends ...♜g4, with pressure) 13...♜g4 14 d5 ♜ad8 15 ♜c2 (15 dxc6?!, ♜xf3 16 gxf3 c4 is disastrous for White, but perhaps preferable is 15 0-0 ♜xf3 16 gxf3 e6! 17 c4 ♜xd2 18 ♜xd2 ♜d4 with an approximately equal position - Krasenkov) 15...♜xf3 16 gxf3 ♜d4 17 ♜d1 was seen in H.Olafsson-A.Huzman, Moscow 2004, and now 17...e6 18 0-0 ♜c6 leaves Black better.

12...♜c6 13 h4

An attacking gesture that is not fully justified by the position. Alternatively:

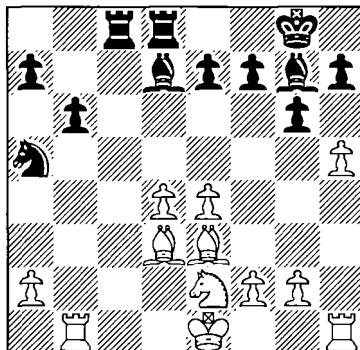
a) 13 dxc5?! ♜e5?! (or 13...bxcc5 14 ♜b5 ♜a4 15 ♜xc5 ♜e5 16 0-0 ♜fc8!) which gives Black good compensation according to Rowson) 14 cxb6 axb6 15 0-0 (15 ♜xb6 ♜xa2 16 ♜c1 ♜xd3+ 17 ♜xd3 ♜xc3+ 18 ♜f1 ♜a4 was excellent

for Black in P.Taylor-Jo.Hodgson, Hampstead 1998) 15...♜xa2 16 ♜b2 ♜a3 17 ♜xb6 ♜fd8 18 ♜d4 (Black is fine, too, after 18 ♜d4 ♜xd3 19 ♜xd3 ♜g4) 18...♜ac8 19 ♜a6 ♜a8 20 ♜e2 ♜ac8 (Rowson) and Black isn't worse.

b) 13 ♜b2 ♜ad8?! (or 13...♜fd8 14 0-0 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♜xd2 16 ♜xd2 ♜b4 17 ♜b1 ♜b5 18 a3 ♜c6 and Black equalized comfortably in N.Babu-A.Gokhale, Mumbai 2003) 14 0-0 ♜e6 15 d5 ♜e5 with a complicated position where Black's chances are certainly not worse.
13...♜fd8!

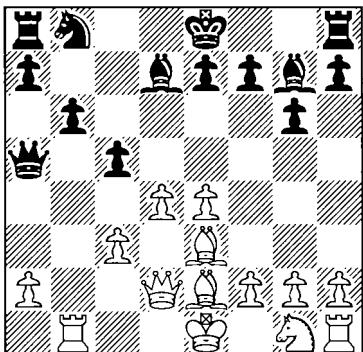
Gaining central counterplay is the correct response.

14 h5 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♜ac8! 16 ♜xa5 ♜xa5



Black's accurate play has left White's h4-h5 advance rather out of place in the position. R.Akesson-J.Timman, Malmo 1997, continued 17 ♜g5 (17 ♜c1 was better) 17...f6! 18 ♜d2 ♜c4 19 ♜b4 e5! 20 hxg6 hxg6 21 dxe5 (or 21 d5 a5 22 ♜d2 b5 with the initiative) 21...♜xe5 22 ♜a6 ♜c2 23 f4 ♜c6 24 ♜c3 ♜g4 25 ♜c4+ ♜f8 and Black had a clear advantage.

B222) 11 ♘e2



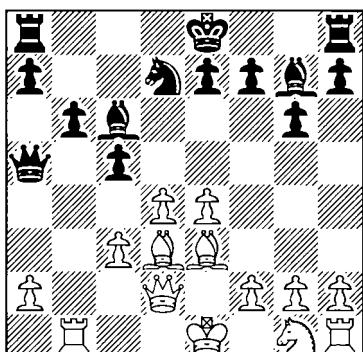
11...♞c6!

Black nicely regroups his pieces with this move.

12 ♘d3

White is now wasting time moving his bishop back and forth, but he has no real choice here. Indeed, 12 f3?! ♘d7 leaves White in trouble after both 13 ♜c1 (S.Volkov-N.Kalantarian, Cappelle la Grande 1999) 13...0-0 14 ♘h3 ♜ad8, threatening ...♝b5, and 13 ♘h3 0-0 14 ♘f2 (R.Sherbakov-R.Akesson, Port Erin 2000) 14...♜fd8, preparing ...cxd4.

12...♝d7



13 ♘e2

The most natural, developing White's last piece and intending to support e4 further with f3, but White has also tried:

a) 13 ♘f3 ♜f6 14 d5 was seen in R.Sherbakov-E.Vorobiov, Moscow 1999, and now 14...♝xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♜xc3 16 dxc6 ♜xd2+ 17 ♜xd2 (17 ♜xd2 0-0-0 is also great for Black) 17...♛a4 intends ...0-0-0 with some advantage.

b) 13 h4 is a bit too rushed: 13...♜d8 14 h5 ♘e5! (a recurring motif in this line) 15 dxe5 c4 16 ♜d4 cxd3 17 ♘f3 ♜xe4 (White is positionally destroyed, so it's no surprise that his kingside aggression comes to naught) 18 h6 ♜f8 19 ♘g5! ♜xg2 20 ♜h2 (20 ♜h4?! e6 stops the attack) 20...♛d5 21 ♜xd3 (intending f3 to trap the bishop on g2) 21...f6 (the only move) 22 ♜b5 (22 exf6? ♜xg5 wins for Black) 22...♛c6 23 exf6 exf6 24 f3 (or 24 ♘xh7 ♜xh7 25 ♜xg6+ ♜f7 26 h7 ♜xd4! 27 ♜e5+ ♜d8 28 ♜e3 ♜e7 and Black wins – Timman) 24...fxg5 25 ♜xg2 ♜xh6! and Black was much better in J.Timman-A.Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

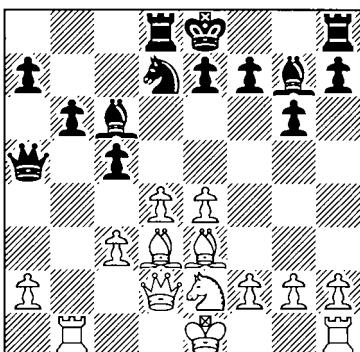
c) 13 ♜c1 e6 and now:

c1) 14 ♘e2 0-0 15 0-0 (or 15 h4, as in S.Ovseevitch-V.Belov, Alushta 2000, and now 15...♜ad8 16 h5 ♘e5 17 dxe5 ♜xe4 18 ♜xe4 ♜xd2 19 ♜xd2 ♜xe5 is much better for Black) 15...♜fd8 16 ♜fd1 ♜a4 17 ♜c2 (so far R.Akesson-M.Roiz, Cappelle la Grande 2006) and now 17...♝b5 favours Black.

c2) 14 ♘f3 ♜f6 (logical, now that White has renounced the option of f3) 15 ♘e5 ♜b5! 16 c4 ♜xd2+ 17 ♜xd2 (or 17 ♜xd2 ♜a6 with the initiative)

17...cxd4 18 cxb5 dxe3+ 19 ♜xe3 ♜h5 20 ♜xf4 21 ♜xf4 g5+ 22 ♜xg5 ♜xe5 and Black had an obvious advantage in view of White's horribly-exposed king in R.Sherbakov-E.Vorobiov, Maikop 1998.

13...♜d8!



The most accurate. Note that Black ignores castling in favour of more pressing matters, such as creating immediate threats.

14 f3

Other moves have been also tried, albeit without much success:

a) 14 d5 ♜e5 and Black has the initiative.

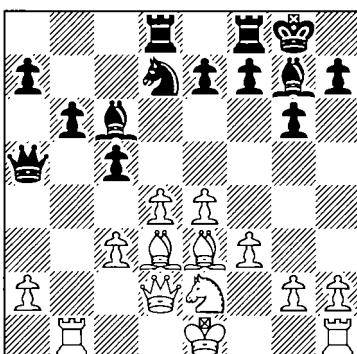
b) 14 0-0 cxd4 15 ♜xd4 (or 15 cxd4?! ♜xd2 16 ♜xd2 ♜c5! 17 dxc5 ♜xd3 18 ♜e3 bxc5 19 ♜xc5 and Black is better, as Aagaard has pointed out) 15...♜b7 16 ♜b5 ♜a3 17 ♜b3 ♜d6 with advantage for Black.

c) 14 h4 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♜c5 16 ♜xa5 bxa5 17 ♜b5 ♜xb5 18 ♜xb5 ♜xe4 is at least equal for Black, V.Epishin-L.Ftacnik, German League 1998.

14...0-0

Black now has nothing better than

to castle, but thanks to his accurate play he has managed to obtain sufficient counterplay.



15 h4

This aggressive move is White's only real plan. The way his pieces are developed leaves him without any constructive central options; for example, 15 ♜c1 ♜b7! 16 0-0 ♜e5!? (another example of this standard tactic; the following sequence is now quite forced) 17 dxe5 c4 18 ♜d4 cxd3 19 e6 ♜xd4 20 cxd4 ♜xd2 21 ♜xd2 ♜xd4 22 ♜c7 ♜c8 23 exf7+ ♜xf7 (Aagaard) leaves Black better.

15...h5!

It makes sense to prevent h4-h5 altogether. White now struggles to find something else to do.

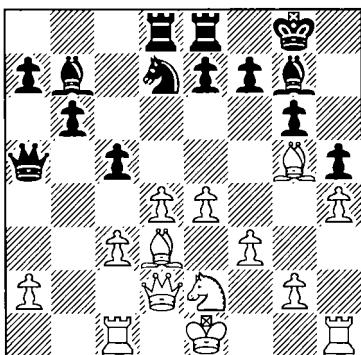
16 ♜g5

Instead Kasparov analyses both 16 ♜f2 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♜e5! 18 ♜b5 ♜xd2 19 ♜xd2 ♜xb5 20 ♜xb5 ♜c4, with the advantage, and 16 ♜b2!? ♜a4! 17 ♜f2 ♜e5! (again!) 18 dxe5 c4 19 ♜d4 cxd3 20 e6 ♜c2 21 exf7+ ♜xf7 22 ♜c6 ♜xc3 23 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8, with a powerful initiative, while 16 g4? is powerfully met by

Aagaard's 16...c4! 17 ♜c2 (17 ♜xc4 ♜e5 wins material) 17...hxg4 18 h5 gxh5 19 ♜h6 ♜e5!.

16...♝fe8 17 ♜c1 ♜b7

It's notable how Black slowly improves his position, while White is unable to undertake anything positive.



18 0-0

In the stem game, White preferred the unsuccessful 18 d5? ♜e5 and suffered badly: 19 ♜b1?! ♜c4 20 ♜f4?? (but even the superior 20 ♜d3 ♜a6 21 0-0 ♜a3 22 ♜d2 ♜xb1 23 ♜xb1 ♜xe2 24 ♜xe2 ♜xc3 – Ftacnik – leaves Black

with a clear extra pawn) 20...♜e5 and White's queen was embarrassingly trapped in T.Shaked-G.Kasparov, Tilburg 1997.

18...♜e5!

Yes, this move again!

19 dxe5 c4 20 ♜d4 cxd3 21 e6 ♜a6!

Black has a clear advantage, according to Ftacnik.

Conclusion

The ♜e3 systems clearly deserve respect, but they have lost much of their appeal. In both variations Black should play an immediate ...♝a5, intending to exchange on d4 and the queens on d2 after White plays ♜c1. The resulting endgames are fine for Black, who retains enough asymmetry to fight for the full point. Instead ♜b1 should be met with ...b6, when ♜b5+ does not disturb Black as much as White would hope. Indeed, what was once the main line now looks decidedly good for Black!

Chapter Four

Exchange Variation: The Fashionable 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
5 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 6 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$**

This move introduces the most popular and critical system against the Grünfeld nowadays. Its immense popularity at the highest levels is slowly being transferred downwards, mostly thanks to a monumental reference work by Konstantin Sakaev. The book in question is the most deep, detailed and comprehensive opening book I have ever seen! The second edition covers the entire body of theory after 7 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ from both sides and will be the point of reference for many years to come. In its massive 450+ pages it contains an incredible amount of original analysis and new ideas, reviving forgotten lines and burying others. Understandably, the material in that book forms the core of this chapter, particularly in Line A. Indeed, there I have opted to indicate where I have discovered improvements on Sakaev's analysis; the rest of the suggested improve-

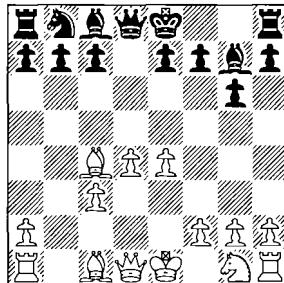
ments can be attributed to the Russian grandmaster.

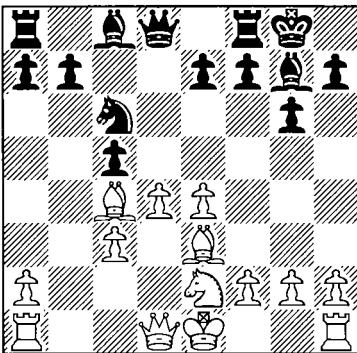
One should not ignore both the theoretical danger posed by Sakaev's book and the popularity of this system in practice. I have taken this into account when writing this chapter, as you will understand when we move on to the main line of 10 0-0. Naturally this chapter is theoretically the heaviest in this book – there simply was no other choice!

The message is clear: this system is very dangerous. White can effortlessly support his centre with $\mathbb{Q}e2$, $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and f3, while he retains the option of mounting a rapid kingside attack should the opportunity arise. Essentially, Black has only one real target on which to base his counterplay, namely the somewhat loose c4-bishop, but that is enough to give him good queenside counterplay.

7...c5 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0

After some logical moves, we reach a major theoretical divide:





15 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 17 f3 c4 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ f4 was quite good for Black in A.Dreev-K.Thorsteins, Reykjavik 1990) 13...f5 14 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ f4 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7!$ (bringing the knight to the blockading d6-square) 17 f3 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ g5 19 h3 h5 20 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21 a4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ was agreed drawn in A.Dreev-G.Kamsky, Reykjavik 1990; the position has acquired obvious King's Indian characteristics and, of course, there is still a lot of play left in it.

A: 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

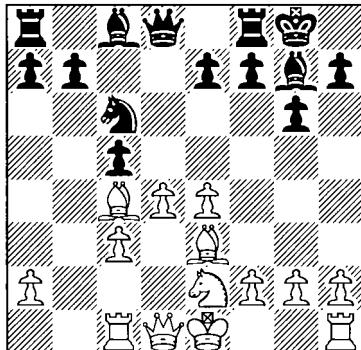
B: 10 0-0

Castling is White's usual approach nowadays, but he can also initiate an immediate kingside attack with a quick h4. Line A is a prophylactic way of beginning that aggressive plan, whereas the direct 10 h4? proved to be premature after 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ in R.Naranja-L.Portisch, Siegen Olympiad 1970; Black is already much better.

More circumspect is 10 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ when Black can play in a similar vein to how he does in Line B:

10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ e5!? (11...b6 is also playable, just as after 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$, but I see no reason to refrain from the immediate 11...e5 as White hasn't castled yet) 12 d5 (12 dx5 is interesting, leading to a complicated position after 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$; the white knight has at least found a role) 12...b6 (12...c4!? is another possibility) 13 c4 (13 $\mathbb{W}c1$! f5 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

A) 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

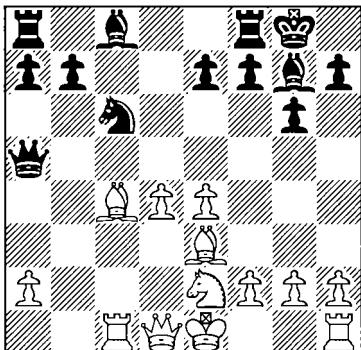


This is the main alternative to 10 0-0. White does not wish to castle and hopes to use his h-pawn as a battering ram against the castled black king. This aggressive line was very popular in the late Eighties and early Nineties, but has nowadays faded into semi-oblivion, as Black has found ways to highlight the drawbacks to not castling.

10...cxd4

In this particular position, this exchange and the ensuing check on a5 create certain coordination difficulties for White.

11 cxd4 ♖a5+

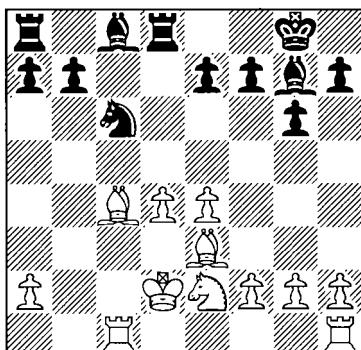


Now White must displace his king should he wish to launch an attack.

12 ♘f1

Instead 12 ♘d2 is not especially challenging: 12...♖h5 13 ♘c3 (13 d5 ♘e5 14 ♘g3 ♖xd1+ 15 ♘xd1 ♘xc4 16 ♘xc4 e6 was good for Black in K.Braekkan-B.Ostenstad, Gausdal 1995) 13...♗g4 14 ♘g3 ♖xd1+ 15 ♘xd1 ♘d8 16 e5 (Black is fine, too, after 16 ♘e2 ♘d7 17 0-0 ♘ac8) 16...♘d7 17 ♘b3 ♘ac8 and Black has easily equalized.

Also possible is the rather timid and inconsistent 12 ♘d2. After 12...♖xd2+ 13 ♘xd2 ♘d8,



with his king in the centre of the board, White finds it hard to keep his centre protected:

a) 14 d5 e6 15 ♘hd1 (15 ♘g5 f6 16 ♘f4 ♘a5 17 ♘b5 ♘d7 is fine for Black) 15...exd5 16 exd5 ♘a5 17 ♘e1 ♘xc4 18 ♘xc4 b6 gives Black a promising position; his bishops might have their say later on.

b) 14 ♘c3 ♘a5 15 ♘b2 ♘xc4+ 16 ♘xc4 b6 17 ♘d1 f5 18 f3 fxe4 19 fxe4 ♘b7 was at least equal for Black in N.Grotnes-F.Elsness, Norwegian Team Ch. 2000.

c) 14 ♘hd1 ♘xd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 16 ♘xd4 ♘xd4+ 17 ♘e3 ♘xd1 18 ♘xd1 ♘g4 19 f3 ♘c8 20 ♘d5 (J.Juptner-E.Mikuev, Czech League 2000) allows White, after some exertions, to regain his pawn and equalize!

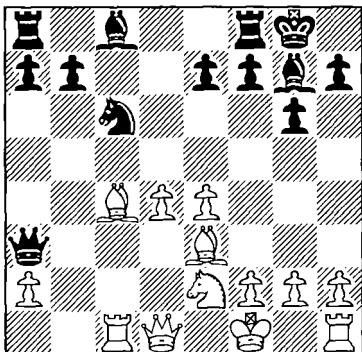
d) 14 ♘d5 ♘xd4 (also fine and perhaps even preferable is 14...e5 15 ♘g5 ♘d6 16 dxе5 ♘xe5) 15 ♘xd4 (after 15 ♘xd4 e6 16 ♘b5 exd5 17 ♘c7 dxе4+ 18 ♘c2 ♘d7 19 ♘xa8 ♘xa8 Black had the advantage in S.Lopez Abad-D.Podesta, Buenos Aires 1993; White's king is exposed and Black has two active bishops) 15...e6 16 ♘xg7 ♘xg7 17 ♘d4 exd5 18 e5 ♘d7 19 ♘c3 ♘e7 (but not 19...b6?! 20 ♘hc1 ♘a6 21 ♘c7 ♘ad8 22 e6 with a clear edge for White) 20 ♘hc1 ♘f5 with equal chances.

Returning to White's usual choice, the critical 12 ♘f1:

12...♖a3!

A very strong and important move. The black queen, having enticed White to abandon his castling rights, can now return to d6 if necessary, while its con-

tact with the c1-rook creates certain tactical threats on d4. In this way Black develops immediate counterplay and doesn't give White enough time to get his attack going.



White has tried several moves here:

A1: 13 ♕d2

A2: 13 h4

A3: 13 ♜c3

A4: 13 ♜b3

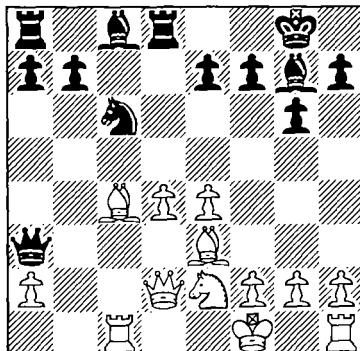
Less critical are:

a) 13 d5 ♜a5 14 ♜d3 ♜d7 intending ...♜ac8 and Black has the initiative.

b) 13 e5 ♜g4 14 ♜b3 ♜xb3 15 axb3 ♜a5 16 f3 ♜d7 17 ♜f2 ♜ac8 18 ♜d2 ♜xc4 19 bxc4 f6 forces the break-up of White's centre, A.Abdulla-P.Konguvel, Calcutta 2002.

c) 13 ♜b3 e5 14 d5 ♜d4 15 ♜xd4 exd4 16 ♜f4 ♜d7 17 f3 ♜ac8 18 ♜f2 a5 19 ♜d3 b5 20 d6 ♜c3 was horrible for White in V.Krutt-A.Keatinge Clay, Harkany 1999.

A1) 13 ♜d2 ♜d8!



Introducing the aforementioned threat against d4.

14 d5

Alternatively:

a) 14 h4?! ignores the threat at White's peril: 14...♝xd4 15 ♜xd4 (or 15 ♜c3 ♜d6 16 ♜d3 e5 with a clear plus) 15...♜xd4 16 h5 ♜b2 17 ♜f4 e6 and White's compensation seems insufficient.

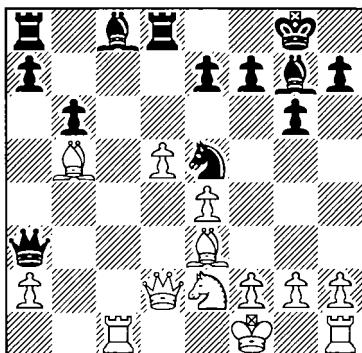
b) 14 ♜d1?! (this doesn't actually prevent ...♝xd4) 14...♝xd4! (also promising for Black is 14...♜a5?! 15 ♜d3 ♜d7 16 h4 h5, with the idea of ...♜ac8 and ...♝c4) 15 ♜xd4 e5 16 ♜d5 exd4 17 ♜xd4 ♜h8 18 ♜c2 ♜c5 and Black was better in M.Laframboise-S.Gravel, Montreal 2003.

c) 14 f3?! is similarly irresponsible: 14...♝xd4 15 ♜c3 ♜a5! (15...♜d6?! 16 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 17 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 18 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 19 ♜e2 ♜d7 20 ♜d5 allows White to regain the pawn) 16 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 17 ♜xd4 e5 18 ♜d5 exd4 19 ♜d3 ♜xd2 20 ♜xd2 ♜e6 21 ♜xd4 ♜xd5 22 exd5 ♜ac8 and in view of White's weak back rank and the passive h1-rook, Black is better.

14...♝e5 15 ♜b5

In the case of 15 ♖b3 b6 (threatening ...♖a6 and ...♗d3) 16 f4 ♗g4 17 ♖d4 e5 (17...♖xd4 18 ♕xd4 ♖a6 19 ♖d1 ♖d6 20 e5 ♕c5 is also excellent) 18 ♖b2 ♖e7 19 h3 ♗f6 Black gains a strong initiative due to White's exposed king.

15...b6



Preparing ...♖a6 and a later invasion on d3 and/or down the c-file. White must now play very precisely to stay in the game.

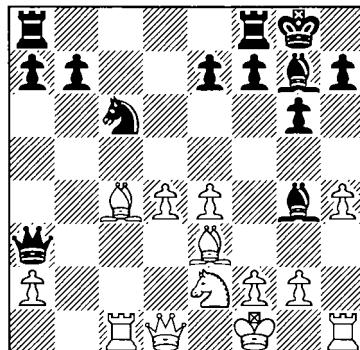
16 ♕c3

Instead 16 ♖d4 ♖a6 17 ♖xa6 ♕xa6 gives Black the upper hand, while both 16 ♖c3 ♕a5 17 a4 ♖a6 18 ♖b3 ♕xd2 19 ♖xd2 ♖xb5 20 axb5 ♖ac8 and 16 ♖d4 ♖a6 17 ♖xa6 ♕xa6+ 18 ♕e2 ♕a3 are plain bad. Finally, the overambitious 16 f4?! ♗g4 17 ♖d4 was met by the strong 17...e5! in L.Ftacnik-I.Gurevich, Biel Interzonal 1993.

16...♕xc3 17 ♗xc3 f5 18 ♖g5 ♖f8 19 f3 a6 20 ♖e2 b5 21 ♖f2 ♖b7

Black now has some obvious moves, such as ...♖ac8 and ...♗c4, which promise him good play.

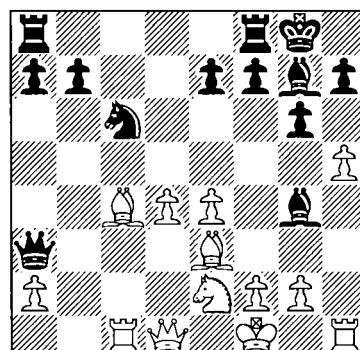
A2) 13 h4 ♗g4!



This reveals another point behind 12...♕a3!; White cannot play f3 as then the e3-bishop hangs.

14 h5

Instead 14 ♖d2 ♖fd8 15 f3 ♗xd4 16 fxe4 ♗f3 17 ♕c2 ♕xe3 18 gxf3 ♕xf3+ 19 ♕g1 ♕e3+ 20 ♗f1 ♖d2 should result in a miniature, while 14 ♖b3 ♖xe2+ 15 ♖xe2 ♖ac8 (but not 15...♖b2+?! 16 ♖c2 ♗xd4+ 17 ♖xd4 ♕xd4 18 ♕xd4 ♖xd4 19 ♖c7 and White is better) 16 d5 (both 16 h5 ♖b2+ and 16 ♖c2 ♖fd8 are no better) 16...♗e5 gives Black the initiative.

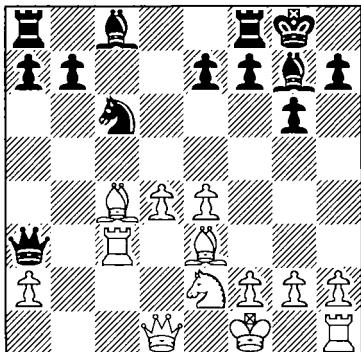


14...♖xh5!

It's as simple as that! Black's point is that White cannot play 15 ♖xh5 gxh5

16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ since 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (16... $\mathbb{W}d6$ also suffices) 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ defends and wins.

A3) 13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$



This solves the immediate tactical problems but leaves the rook misplaced.

13... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 14 $h4$

The alternatives are no better:

a) 14 $f4$?! is premature due to 14... $e5$!.

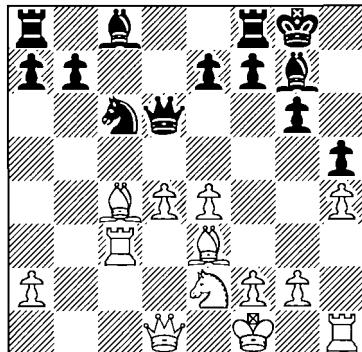
b) 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (15 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is also good for Black) 15... $e6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 20 $axb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ and Black was winning in C.De Wolf-V.Mikhalevski, Vlissingen 1999.

c) 14 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $b6$ 16 $f3$ (16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$) 16... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $e6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ was fine for Black in M.Franic-M.Rade, Mravinci 1993.

d) 14 $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (a simple way to equalize is 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ – 15 $e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 16 $exd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $exd6$ offers excellent compensation for the queen – 15... $e5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $exd4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$) 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $b6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c7$

$\mathbb{W}d6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 20 $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $e6$ 22 $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $a6$ with an edge for Black, W.Browne-S.Kudrin, Philadelphia 1992.

14... $h5$



White now lacks a sensible plan.

15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Also very good for Black was 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $e5$ 16 $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $b6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19 $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $f5$ in F.Elsness-B.Predojevic, Pula 2005. Note how White's exposed king is a recurring problem for him in this variation.

15... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

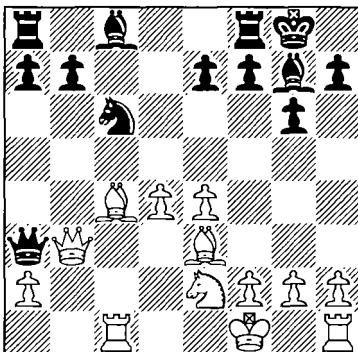
16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $a6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $b5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ is also advantageous for Black.

16... $e5$ 17 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

White is still to get his king's rook into the game and Black is better after both 19 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$.

A4) 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$

A change of plan, but not a bad move because a queen exchange would leave White with the preferable position due to his strong centre.



13...♝d6!

Black logically avoids the exchange and will now gain further time with ...♞a5.

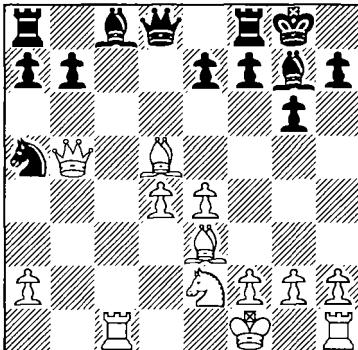
14 ♜d5

The only sensible way to cover the d4-pawn, since 14 ♜c3 is well met by 14...♜e6! and 14 e5 is too committal: 14...♝d8 15 ♜a3 ♜f5, intending ...♝c8 and ...♞a5, gives Black the initiative.

14...♞a5! 15 ♜b5

Instead 15 ♜a4 ♜d8 16 ♜d2 ♜c6 17 ♜xc6 bxc6 leaves White badly lacking a good follow-up since grabbing the c6-pawn is rather suicidal.

15...♝d8!



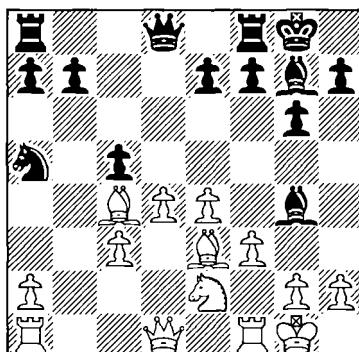
The journey of the black queen appears ridiculous, but just consider the moves White has made in the meantime. As a result, Black is now firmly in control of the initiative.

16 ♜c5 ♜d7! 17 ♜xa5 b6 18 ♜d2 bxc5 19 ♜xa8 cxd4! 20 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 21 ♜xd4 ♜xa8

This forced sequence has led to some simplification of the position, but White's kingside pieces remain misplaced. Significantly, White cannot play 22 ♜xd7? ♜d8 23 ♜a4 ♜xe4 24 ♜b3 ♜d2 25 ♜g3 in view of the decisive 25...♜d4!, as pointed out by Atalik, but even after 22 f3 ♜b5 23 ♜f2 ♜d8 Black is obviously better.

B) 10 0-0

The absolute main line of this system now runs 10...♞g4 11 f3 ♜a5



when White has a choice between sacrificing an exchange for good attacking chances (12 ♜d3 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♜e6 14 d5), sacrificing a pawn for promising positional compensation (12 ♜d3 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♜e6 14 ♜c1), and actually winning one while simplifying

the position (12 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$). All three lines are extremely complicated and immensely theoretical. Sakaev's mammoth work covers them all extensively and it would be a foolish task to use up half of this book trying to prove that Black is OK against all of these dangerous plans. Moreover, in several of the ensuing positions, a draw is the most that Black can achieve.

Instead by covering an immediate 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$, I have opted for a rare but by no means inferior set-up. Indeed, this has acquired some recent popularity and been played by both Svidler and Ivanchuk. It both offers fertile ground for research and, in the spirit of this book, allows Black to fight on equal terms without having to memorize masses of variations. In addition, I have also opted to cover what is now Black's most popular alternative to the main line, namely the 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ system. Thus, should any reader feel a little uncomfortable employing a rare and fairly novel system, they can instead prefer a tried and tested variation.

Our coverage now divides into:

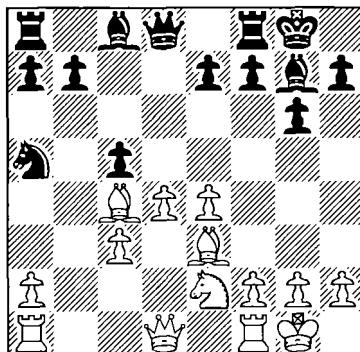
B1: 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

B2: 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

B1) 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5!$?

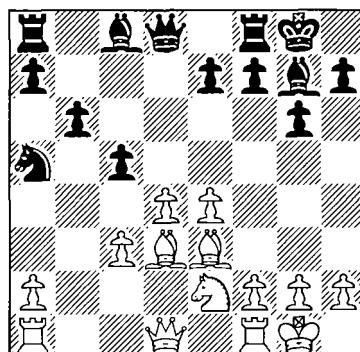
The strategical basis behind 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is clear: since White's set-up is designed to absorb central pressure, Black instead focuses on the c4-square. In a sense, this move is also quite logical as the c4-bishop is White's only

loose piece in his otherwise harmonious set-up.



11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b6

Black offers the c5-pawn some support, for reasons which will become clearer after his next move. The intention is not really to develop the light-squared bishop on b7, but rather to play ...e5, trying to force White to clarify the central tension.



The d4-d5 advance is then White's most obvious response, but this rather plays into Black's hands; he can bring the a5-knight to the blockading square d6 and prepare ...f5. The resulting positions seem perfectly satisfactory for

Black, which is why White should probably opt for dxc5 instead. That is generally an undesirable move, but also one which can prove strong under the right circumstances.

12 ♜c1

This is, I believe, the only real way to trouble Black, enabling the advance of White's central pawns.

Instead 12 f3 e5 13 dxc5 (or 13 d5 f5) 13...♜e6 14 ♜b1 ♜c4 15 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 16 ♜b2 (16 cxb6?! axb6 only serves to enhance Black's pressure) 16...b5 leaves Black clearly the only side with any positive prospects.

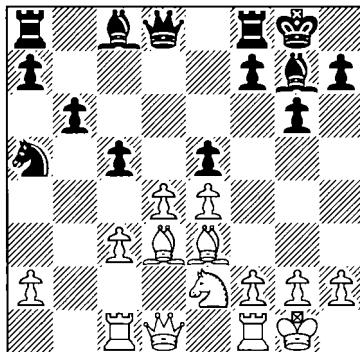
More logical, but also not especially accurate is 12 ♜d2. Black again responds with 12...e5 and now:

a) 13 dxc5 ♜e6 14 ♜fd1 ♜c7 again offers full compensation for the pawn, as Black is in control of the c4-square. Note that in the positions resulting from dxc5, White's e2-knight is always a problem piece for him since it lacks a good square to move to.

b) 13 d5 is not really the best approach to the position; then one instructive example was the 13...f5 14 ♜g5 ♜d6 15 ♜h6 f4 16 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 of P.Nielsen-V.Ivanchuk, Monaco (blindfold) 2006. Black is already very comfortable, as the continuation of the game showed: 17 f3 c4 18 ♜c2 g5 19 ♜h1 ♜d7 20 g3 ♜ae8 21 gxf4 gxf4 22 ♜g1+ ♜h8 with a small but obvious advantage for Black.

c) 13 dxe5 ♜xe5 14 ♜ad1 ♜b7 leaves Black comfortably placed and his pieces with good scope.

12...e5!



Black strikes back in the centre and White must now deal with the threat to d4.

13 dxc5!

I believe that this is White's only way to fight for an advantage. Notably it was Topalov's choice when faced with this line in a game against Svidler.

Alternatively:

a) 13 dxe5?! aims for a quick kingside pawn advance, but Black needn't be worried about this at all: 13...♜xe5 (Black might even try 13...♜e6!?) 14 f4 ♜xa2 – but not 14...♜c4? 15 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 16 ♜e1! – 15 ♜g3 with complicated play, although White's kingside play could prove dangerous) 14 f4 ♜g7 15 e5 (now the g7-bishop is blocked, but that has come at too high a price for White on the light squares) 15...♜e6 16 ♜c2 ♜c4 sees Black's pieces easily find their way to good squares and the initiative is on his side.

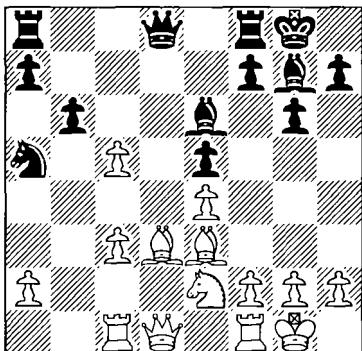
b) 13 d5?! fails to impress after 13...f5 (or even 13...c4 14 ♜c2 ♜d7 15 ♜b1 ♜b7 16 ♜a4 ♜xa4 17 ♜xa4 ♜d6 18 f3 f5, with good counterplay for Black in V.Seifert-J.Zezulkin, Bayern 1999) 14

f3 c4 15 $\mathbb{B}b1$ f4 16 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ g5 when Black is better; the future of White's minor pieces, especially the b1-bishop and the e2-knight, seems rather bleak, while Black has an obvious and good plan.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$!

As usual, this eyes the c4-square. Note that while the e5-pawn does block the beloved Grünfeld bishop, it both deprives the white knight of a good future and offers Black's position a high degree of stability; a factor which ensures that he can develop his queenside counterplay at leisure.

Instead 13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ looks like a reasonable move, but it is not incisive enough: 14 cxb6 (14 c4!? is also promising) 14...axb6 15 c4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16 c5 bxc5 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$! and White retains a plus.



White must now decide how to proceed on the queenside:

B11: 14 cxb6

B12: 14 c4

B11) 14 cxb6

This capture is, of course, very sig-

nificant since Black must now be able to demonstrate sufficient compensation. Due to both his strong central control and White's weakened queenside, he is fully able to.

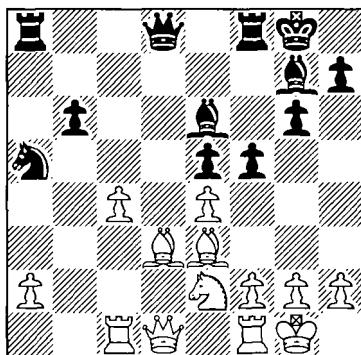
14... $\mathbb{Q}c4$?

14... $\mathbb{Q}c4$? is not so good in view of 15 b7 $\mathbb{B}b8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{B}b1$ and White is clearly better.

15 c4

Naturally, White must prevent ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ at all costs, as otherwise Black's play unfolds effortlessly and with great vigour.

15...f5!



A dynamic and strong advance, whereas 15... $\mathbb{Q}b7$? is simply too slow: 16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ and White accomplishes his main positional task, namely that of bringing his knight to a good square.

16 exf5

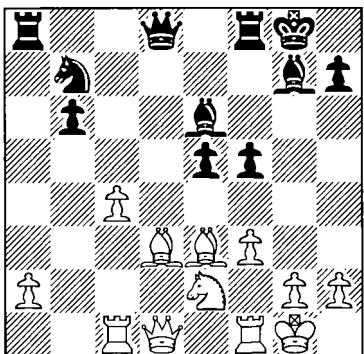
16 f3 is more solid, but Black can immediately equalize with 16...fxe4 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (or 17 fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xf1+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ and the c4-pawn falls, with at least equality for Black) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$!, if not actually hope for more.

16...gxf5 17 f3

This is pretty much compulsory; White must restrain Black's advancing pawn duo.

17...♝b7!

Only now does Black improve the placement of his pieces and with tempo. Instead 17...e4? is a big mistake in view of 18 fxe4 fxe4 19 ♜xf8+ ♛xf8 20 ♜xe4, but 17...♝c8 is playable, albeit slightly better for White after 18 c5 bxc5 19 ♜xc5 (and not 19 ♜xc5? ♜xc5 20 ♜xc5 ♛b6) 19...♜xc5 20 ♜xc5 ♜f7 21 ♛b1! ♜b7 22 ♜b6 (22 ♜f2 ♜xa2! equalizes) 22...♛d6 23 a4 ♜c5 24 ♜xc5 ♛xc5+ 25 ♜h1.

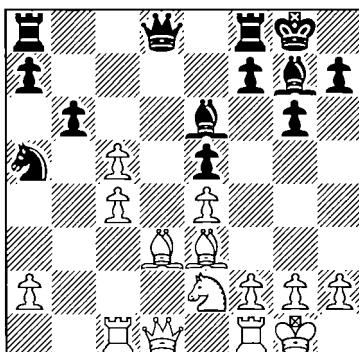
**18 ♜c3 ♛a3**

Black's initiative is growing rapidly: the advance ...e4 is now threatened, the knight is coming to c5 and so on. White is rather thrown on to the defensive and there is no question that Black has adequate compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

B12) 14 c4?

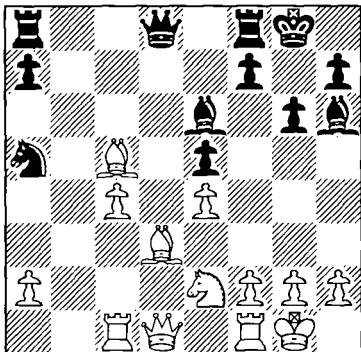
This was introduced by the always well-prepared Veselin Topalov in his

aforementioned game with Svidler. In this ambitious way, White prevents the occupation of c4 and prepares to bring his knight to d5 via c3. Accomplishing that manoeuvre would guarantee White a lasting positional advantage and so Black must urgently sharpen the struggle.

**14...bxc5! 15 ♜xc5 ♜h6!?**

Svidler's suggested improvement in *Informant* 96 (and the following analysis is based on his notes) over the stem game which saw 15...♜e8?!, after which the opening battle concluded in White's favour: 16 ♜e3 ♜e7 (16...♜c8 17 c5 allows White to safeguard his extra pawn) 17 ♛c2 ♜d7 18 ♜fd1 ♜c6 19 a3 ♜a5 (19...♜b8 20 ♜c3 ♜d4 21 ♜xd4 exd4 22 ♜d5 gives White a safe edge, as Golubev notes) 20 ♜c3! (20 ♛c3 ♜ad8 allows Black counterplay) 20...♛xa3 (20...♜d4 21 ♛b2 is also good for White) 21 ♜d5 and White had the upper hand in V.Topalov-P.Svidler, Linares 2006.

The text move seems much stronger to me and now the position becomes very complicated.



16. Bc3

This protects the d3-bishop, thereby freeing the white queen.

Alternatively:

a) 16. Bxf8 is obvious, but offers White nothing after 16...Rxc1 17. Qxc1 Rxf8 18. Qb3 (18. Wa4 Bc8 19. Bd1 Rc7 is similarly fine for Black as c4 drops) 18...Rxc4 19. Qxa5 Qxd3 20. Qc6 Rc7 21. Rxd3 Rxc6 with equality.

b) 16. Bc2 Be8 intends ...Bc8 and is also fine for Black: 17. f4 (17. Bc3 Qxc4 18. Qd5 Rxd5 19. exd5 Qd6 is complicated but seemingly fully acceptable, as Black has a firm blockade on d6 and is about to set the e- and f-pawns rolling) 17...Bc8 18. Qxa7 Be7 19. Qe3 Bd7. White must now return the material to relieve the pressure and after 20. Bd2 Qxc4 21. Qxc4 Rxd2 22. Rxd2 Rxd2 23. Rxd2 Rxc4 Black has at least equalized.

c) 16. f4 Be8 again sets White the problem of how to proceed:

c1) 17. Bc2 transposes to 16. Bc2 Be8 17. f4, above.

c2) 17. Qe3 Be7 (17...Bb8? can also be considered) 18. Bc2 Bd7 19. Bcd1 Bc8 20. c5 Rxa2 21. Rxa2 Rxd3 22. Rxd3

Rxd3 sees Black regaining his material while retaining some pressure.

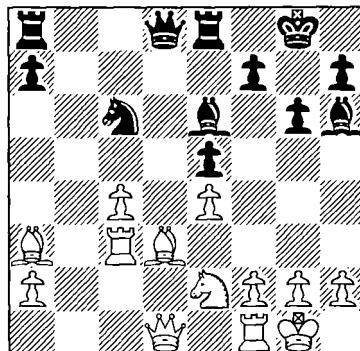
c3) 17. Bc3 Bc8 18. Qxa7 Qxc4 19. Bc2 Ra5 20. Qxc4 (alternatively, 20. Bf2 Qa3 21. Bxc8 Bxc8 offers Black excellent compensation in view of his very active pieces) 20...Rxa7+ 21. Bh1 Qxc4 22. Bxc4 Ra6 23. Bxc8 Bxc8 forces 24. Bd1 exf4 25. Bxf4 Rxf4 26. Bxf4 Rxa2 fizzles out to full equality.

16...Be8 17. Qa3

Preparing to meet ...Bc8 with c4-c5.

17...Qc6!

The knight heads for the d4-square and frees a5 for the queen.



18. Ra4?

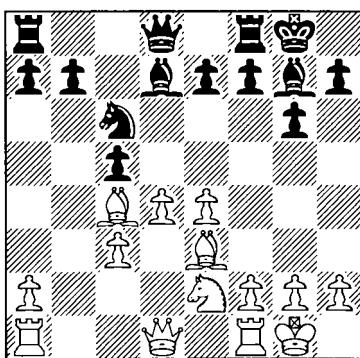
Passive play allows Black's initiative to develop unhindered; for example, 18. c5 Ra5! with excellent play for Black. Therefore I think that White's best option is to embark on the active text move and the resulting exchange sacrifice.

18...Bd2 19. Bd1 Qxc3 20. Qxc3

This position is the result of some critical and ambitious play from both sides. Black has a slight material advantage, but he is missing his dark-squared

bishop. This is not so much a problem on the kingside, as the e5-pawn keeps lines closed there, but rather in the centre and on the queenside. It is hard to give a definite evaluation of this position and certainly both sides have their chances, as well as good outposts for their knights. However, if pushed I would say that Black probably stands fairly well after 20...♝c8.

B2) 10...♞d7



This quiet move represents a very solid and positional way of playing. Black simply prepares to play on the queenside and he has a very clear plan of obtaining control of the key c4-square, with moves such as ...♝c7, ...♝c8, ...b5 (or ...♝b5) and, of course, ...♞a5-c4. Achieving that plan usually guarantees him good play. White, in turn, must try to disturb Black's aforementioned plan. He has two ways of doing so: the d5-advance and the capture on c5. Both options have advantages and drawbacks, but overall I feel that only d4-d5 can really trouble Black. Against that, Black should re-

spond by closing the centre with ...e5, just as in Line B1.

This 10...♞d7 system, just like 10...♝a5, was introduced into high-level practice by Peter Svidler and remains the regular choice of the Israeli Grünfeld aficionados – a good recommendation indeed!

Now White usually elects to remove his queen's rook from the long diagonal:

B21: 11 ♜b1

B22: 11 ♜c1

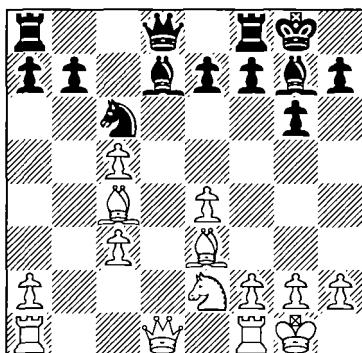
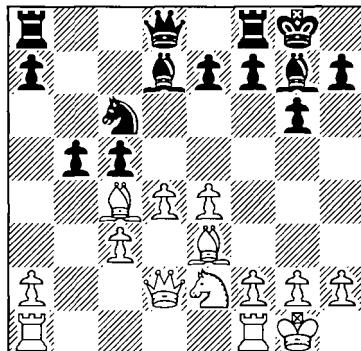
Many other moves have been tried here, but they are generally rather irrelevant and offer Black excellent play:

a) 11 d5 is premature: 11...♞e5 (note that the knight is actually quite well placed here, since booting it with f4 is not an option in view of ...♝g4) 12 ♜b3 ♜a5 13 ♜h1 (13 f4?! ♜g4 14 ♜d2? c4! drops material, and also promising for Black is 13 c4 b5! 14 cxb5 ♜xb5 according to Krasenkow) 13...♞b5 14 f4 ♜a6 15 ♜e1 ♜d3 and Black was better in P.Verdiere-O.Houhou, Paris 2005.

b) 11 f4 is an aggressive but loosening move. The most efficient reply is 11...cxd4! 12 cxd4 ♜g4 13 d5 ♜a5 14 ♜d3 e6, breaking up White's centre.

c) 11 a4 cxd4 12 cxd4 ♜c8 13 ♜c1 ♜a5 14 ♜d3 ♜xc1 15 ♜xc1 (V.Dobrov-P.Jaracz, Pardubice 2001) 15...♝b6 (Krasenkow suggests the interesting 15...♝c7?! 16 ♜e3 ♜e8 with counterplay) 16 ♜e3 ♜c8 sees Black taking over the initiative.

d) 11 dxc5 is a capture which usually restricts White's middlegame potential, since if Black recovers the pawn, White is left with a miserable position. Black's best approach is again to fight for the c4-square, this time usually with ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ and ... $\mathbb{L}e6/b5$. Alternatively, he may prefer to play ...b6 at an appropriate moment, gaining typical compensation after an exchange on b6.



Play might continue 11... $\mathbb{W}c7$!? (11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ is similar, but probably less accurate in view of 13 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{L}fd8$ 14 $\mathbb{L}b1$ b6 15 cxb6 axb6; Krasenkow believes that Black has good compensation here, but I think that after 16 $\mathbb{W}e2$, intending a nasty $\mathbb{Q}b5$, White is definitely better) 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{L}fd8$ with good compensation; we will see more of this type of sacrifice in note 'a' to White's 12th move in Line B21.

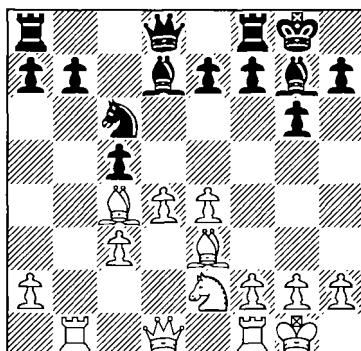
e) 11 $\mathbb{W}d2$ is not a threatening move and actually offers Black a pleasant choice:

e1) 11...b5!? is a simple equalizing device;

e.g. 12 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2+$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ and Black is fine.

e2) 11... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}b2$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ transposes to Line B22) 12... $\mathbb{L}ab8$ (again 12...b5!? 13 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ equalizes) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 14 $\mathbb{L}fd1$ cxd4 (14... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is also playable: 15 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 19 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ is equal, while here 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ gave Black the initiative in S.Williams-B.Macieja, European Championship., Warsaw 2005) 15 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}bc8$ and Black has the upper hand.

B21) 11 $\mathbb{L}b1$

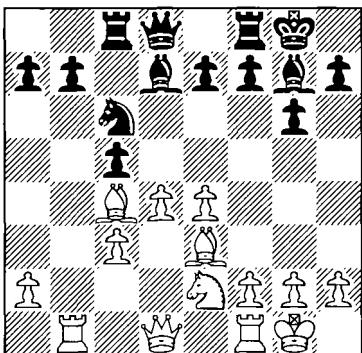


This has emerged as the most threatening continuation, applying pressure down the b-file. While an immediate capture on b7 is impossible due to a ...♜a5 fork, White does prevent the desirable ...♝a5 (as the pawn could then be captured) and thus forces Black into a less active deployment of his forces.

11...♝c7!

Simply protecting the b7-pawn with a useful move. Black is now indirectly attacking the c4-bishop, a factor which forces White's hand in the centre.

There is another consistent move in this position that I would like to draw your attention to, namely 11...♝c8!?.



Surprisingly, this has been quite rare in practice but, in the few examples available to me, the opening phase has concluded quite successfully for Black: 12 ♜d3 (12 dxc5 ♜c7 is very similar to positions we will examine in the notes to White's 12th move in our main line) 12...e5 13 d5 ♜a5 and now:

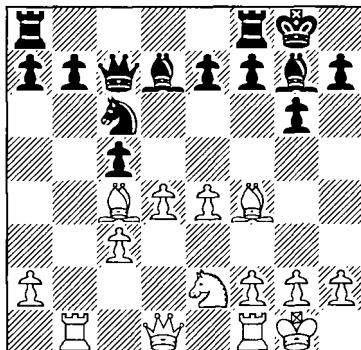
- a) 14 ♜c1 ♜e7 15 ♜h1 f5 16 exf5 gxf5 17 c4 b6 18 ♜g5 ♜f7 19 ♜g3 ♜b7 20 ♜e2 ♜g6 21 f4 e4 22 ♜h5 ♜d4 23

■b3 e3 was very unclear in P.Cramling-A.Groszpeter, Biel 1990.

- b) 14 ♜d2 (more common) 14...f5 15 ♜g5 (15 f3 f4 16 ♜f2 c4 17 ♜c2 b6 18 ♜b4 ♜f7 was quite satisfactory for Black in M.Van der Werf-F.Nijboer, Leeuwarden 2001) 15...♜e8 16 exf5 (or 16 c4?! b6 17 ♜c3 ♜b7 18 ♜be1 f4 19 f3 h6 20 ♜h4 g5 21 ♜f2 ♜f6 22 ♜e2 h5 23 ♜b1 ♜g6 and Black's kingside attack was in full swing in J.Planas-J.De la Villa, Palma de Mallorca 1991) 16...gxf5 17 ♜g3 ♜g6 18 f4! e4 19 ♜e2 ♜d6 (much worse was 19...♜f6? 20 ♜h5 ♜d8 21 c4 b6 22 ♜bc1 with an attack for White in A.Shariyazdanov-E.Vorobiov, Tomsk 2004) 20 ♜h5 ♜h8 21 ♜e3 h6 22 ♜h4 ♜xd5 and Black is firmly in charge of the initiative.

Overall, I feel that 11...♝c8!? is a fruitful area for research, but do note that Black should avoid the once popular 11...a6?!. The problem is that this creates significant weaknesses on the queenside; a factor best highlighted by 12 dxc5! after which Black has struggled.

12 ♜f4



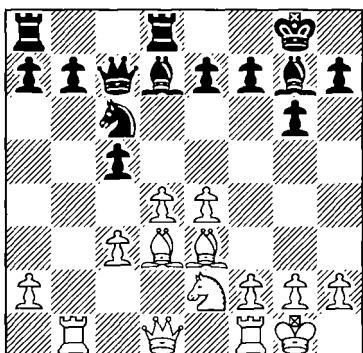
Harassing the queen is White's best option here, but he has tried a number of alternatives:

a) 12 dxc5 ♜a5 13 ♘b5 (or 13 ♘d3 ♜fd8 14 ♜c2, J.Horvath-D.Boros, Hungarian League 2004, and now 14...♜c6!? intends ...♝e5 and ...♛a5, thereby giving Black his fair share of the play) 13...♝xb5 14 ♘xb5 ♜c4 15 ♘d4 e5 16 ♘d3 a6 with good compensation for Black, Kir.Georgiev-B.Predojevic, Zlatibor 2006.

b) 12 ♘d2 a6 13 ♘fd1 (13 dxc5 ♘ad8 supplies typical compensation) 13...b5 14 ♘d5 e6 15 ♘f4 ♛a5 gives Black the initiative, P.Skatchkov-A.Timofeev, Sochi 2005.

c) 12 ♜f4 ♘ad8 13 ♜d5 ♛c8 14 ♘b5 (S.Citak-I.Kurnosov, Istanbul 2005) 14...♝h8 avoids White's threat and leaves his pieces misplaced.

d) 12 ♘d3 removes the bishop from its exposed position on c4. However, Black can increase the pressure against White's centre with 12...♞fd8 and now:



d1) 13 d5 ♜e5 14 c4 e6 15 ♜f4 b6 16 ♘e2 h6 17 ♛c1 ♘h7 18 ♜d3 exd5 19 cxd5 f5 gave Black sufficient counter-

play in J.Lahner-M.Meszaros, Frydek Mistek 2005.

d2) 13 ♛c1 ♜ac8 14 ♘d1 prepares ♜a3, both to prevent ...♛a5 ideas and force a release of the central tension. However, it does appear somewhat artificial; for example, 14...a6 15 ♛a3 (15 d5? ♜e5 16 c4 b5 17 cxb5 ♜xd3 18 ♘xd3 ♘xb5 19 ♘d2 ♛a5 leaves Black on top according to Berkes) and now in F.Berkes-E.Sutovsky, Paks 2005, Black should have played 15...cxd4! 16 cxd4 ♛a5 17 ♛xa5 ♜xa5, when he appears to have secured dynamic equality. Berkes offers 18 d5! ♜c4! 19 ♘xb7 ♘b2 20 ♘d2 (or 20 ♘xb2 ♘xb2 21 ♘b6 ♘e8 with counterplay) 20...♜xd3 21 ♘xd3 ♘b5 22 ♘d2 e6 23 dx6 fxe6! 24 ♘c7! ♘b8 with good compensation for the pawn in view of Black's activity.

d3) 13 f4 ♘g4 14 d5 e6! (Black's play is based on this important tactical detail; instead 14...♜a5? 15 c4 would, of course, be a positional disaster) 15 dxc6 c4 (regaining the piece) 16 cxb7 ♘ab8 (Berkes) and Black already has the initiative. Indeed, after the natural 17 ♘d4 ♘xd4+ 18 cxd4 ♘xd4 19 ♛c2 ♘xd3, Black's counterplay is rather awkward.

Returning to 12 ♘f4:

12...♛c8!

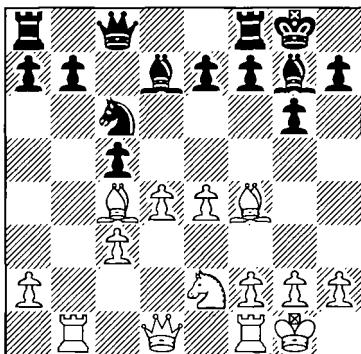
This might look like a waste of time, but the truth is that the white bishop is misplaced on f4. It is both a target for ...e5 and prevents more aggressive plans (f4-f5). The text also sees Black retain tactical threats against the c4-bishop, whereas 12...e5 is somewhat premature; after 13 ♘g3! the central tension cannot be resolved in Black's favour.

15 ♜e3

This approach is endorsed by Sakaev. Instead 15 ♜d2 c4 16 ♜c2 b6 17 f4 f6 18 ♜g3 ♜c5+ 19 ♜h1 exf4 20 ♜xf4 ♜b7 21 a4 ♜ae8 was a surprisingly toothless approach from White in A.Shirov-A.Areshchenko, Foros 2006; Black is clearly fine here.

The major alternative is 15 ♜g3 and now:

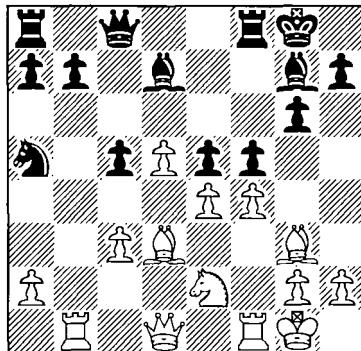
- a) 15...f5 16 f4 (of course White must not allow ...f4)

**13 d5**

Instead 13 ♜d3 ♜d8 14 ♜fc1 ♜a5 15 ♜b5 a6 16 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 17 ♜g3 ♜ac8 equalized very comfortably in J.Kolly-B.Avrukh, Biel 2002, while 13 ♜c1 ♜d8 (13...a6!? 14 a4 ♜a5 15 ♜d3 b5 looks to me like a promising way to grab the initiative) 14 d5 ♜e5 15 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 16 f4 ♜g7 17 ♜b3 ♜b8 18 a4 b6 19 e5 ♜e8 20 ♜g3 a6 21 ♜cd1 b5 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♜e2 ♜b7 was seen in M.Rodshtein-A.Huzman, Ashdod 2004; although White's central presence was quite good, Black had decent counterplay.

13...♜a5 14 ♜d3 e5

Black proceeds with the standard method. Just as in the 10...♜a5 variation, the plan is to bring the a5-knight to the strong blockading square d6 and to advance on the kingside with ...f5, in King's Indian style. White must now make a crucial decision: by retreating his bishop to g3 he clearly intends to challenge the stability of Black's centre with a quick f4, while the retreat to e3 signifies a more patient approach; White will support his centre with f3 and aim for queenside play.



16...fxe4 (16...exf4!? is a viable alternative, after which 17 ♜xf4 c4 18 ♜c2 ♜c5+ 19 ♜f2 ♜d6 reaches a complicated position; Black has surrendered some critical squares, such as d4, but White's centre is under attack) 17 ♜xe4 ♜c4 18 ♜d3 (18 d6!? is an interesting idea; then 18...♜e3 19 ♜xb7 ♜xd1 20 ♜xc8 ♜axc8 21 ♜bx d1 ♜b5 sees the forcing sequence leave Black with good compensation in view of his powerful bishops on the open board) 18...♜d6 19 fxe5 ♜xe4 20 ♜xe4 ♜f5 21 ♜c4 ♜xb1 22 d6+ ♜h8 23 ♜xb1 ♜f5 was the course of M.Carlsen-D.Navarra, Wijk aan Zee 2007. Here White's central pawn duo looks fright-

ening, but Black has his trumps as well, most notably the extra exchange; the position is dynamically balanced.

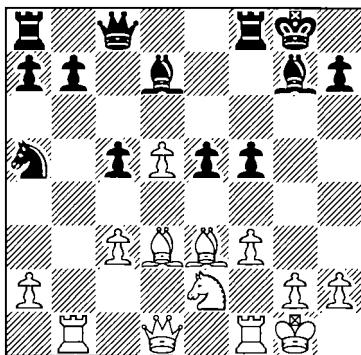
b) Also possible is 15...c4 when Black must make sure that he can maintain his pawn on e5, preventing the white knight from acquiring the excellent d4-square: 16 ♜c2 b6 (16...f5! is another option) 17 ♜d2 ♜b7 18 f4 f6! (essential) 19 ♜h1 ♜d6 20 ♜g1 ♜d8 with complicated play in K.Sakaev-B.Avrukh, Izmir 2004.

15...f5 16 exf5

Allowing ...f4 will result in a smooth kingside attack for Black, so this is the only reasonable move.

16...gxf5 17 f3

17 ♜g5 just leaves the bishop exposed after the obvious 17...♝e8.



Sakaev reaches this position in his book, suggesting that White has a slight but stable edge. Indeed, any advance of Black's e- and f-pawns will lose control of some key central squares, while White can gradually bring his forces over to the kingside. Positionally, White definitely seems to have things going his way, even if only

slightly, but Black's position contains some very dynamic resources which I feel Sakaev has underestimated. Play might continue:

17...b6 18 ♜e1

18 ♜g5 c4 19 ♜c2 ♜c5+ 20 ♜h1 ♜b7 sees Black nicely regrouping his pieces; the knight is coming to d6 and White's position is not very harmonious.

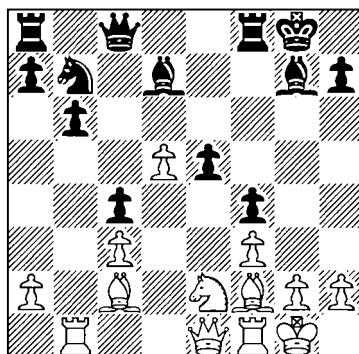
18...f4!

This advance looks rather ugly, abandoning the e4-square and weakening the b1-h7 diagonal, but it does crucially interfere with White's plans. Indeed, White's bishop now really has to retreat to f2, but that prevents the option of ♜h4.

19 ♜f2 c4 20 ♜c2

20 ♜e4 is very similar.

20...♜b7

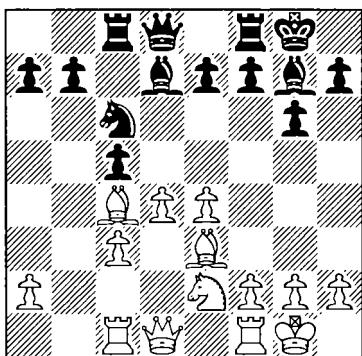


The black knight is en route to either d6 or c5 (the more aggressive option), after which Black can set his queenside majority in motion. Alternatively, he can even play ...♞f5, trying to wrest control of the e4-square with the intention of later advancing with ...e4 himself. Meanwhile, White's pieces are

distinctly misplaced, particularly the e2-knight, and it's hard to find a good plan for him. Therefore this position seems quite promising for Black.

B22) 11 ♜c1 ♜c8

Instead 11...♜a5?! 12 ♜d3 ♜c7 13 ♜f4 ♜c6 14 e5 ♜ad8 15 ♜g4 was promising for White in J.Tarjan-O.Romanishin, Indonesia 1983; a good illustration of White's more aggressive ideas.

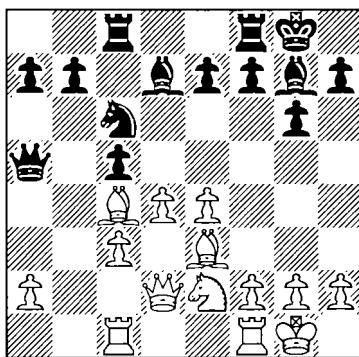


12 ♜d2

There is one significant but definitely inferior alternative, namely the mistimed 12 d5?!. A.Onischuk-P.Svidler, Halkidiki 2002, continued 12...♝e5 13 ♜b3 ♜a5 14 h3 (14 f4?! is, of course, met by 14...♝g4) 14...♜a6 (this whole plan of fighting for the c4-square was introduced by Grünfeld guru Peter Svidler; Black intends ...♜b5, gaining complete control of the light squares in White's camp) 15 a4 (both 15 f4 ♜b5! and 15 c4 b5 are excellent for Black – Svidler) 15...♝c4 16 ♜g5 and now, as Svidler notes, Black's best continuation is 16...f6! 17 ♜f4 (17 ♜h4 ♜h6 18 ♜c2 ♜d6! with the threat of ...c4 is very

good for Black) 17...♝b2 18 ♜d2 ♜d3 19 ♜cd1 ♜xf4 20 ♜xf4 c4! 21 ♜c2 ♜h6 with advantage.

12...♜a5



The most consistent and combative move, pursuing Black's standard plan, although there is also 12...b5? 13 ♜xb5 ♜xd4, equalizing.

13 ♜b2

Another illustration of the aforementioned Svidler plan occurs with 13 d5 ♜e5 14 ♜b3 ♜a6! and now:

a) 15 ♜g5 e6 16 dx6 ♜xe6 17 ♜d5 ♜xd5 18 exd5 ♜fe8 19 ♜g3 ♜d3 20 ♜b1 c4 with a clear plus for Black in V.Georgiev-L.Ftacnik, Bled Olympiad 2002.

b) 15 ♜fd1 ♜b5 16 ♜g3 ♜c4 17 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 18 ♜c2 ♜fd8 19 ♜e1 ♜a4 20 ♜cc1 b5 and again Black is much better, R.Eynullaeva-E.Vorobiov, Moscow 2002.

c) 15 c4 b5! 16 ♜h6 (16 f4?! failed to convince after 16...bxc4 17 fxe5 cxb3 18 axb3 ♜xe5 19 ♜xc5 ♜d6 20 ♜xc8 ♜xh2+ 21 ♜h1 ♜xc8 in K.Murugan-B.Sivanandan, Chennai 2004) 16...♜xh6 (16...bxc4 17 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 18 ♜c2 ♜d3 19 ♜b1 ♜b8 also worked out well in D.Komljenovic-

E.Vorobiov, Cappelle la Grande 2003)
17 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $bxc4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ and Black's position is preferable.

White also has 13 $\mathbb{B}fd1$ when Black can maintain the balance with Epishin's 13...e6 or completely equalize with the forcing sequence 13...cxd4 14 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f1$, when White regains his pawn and the resulting ending should be drawn.

13... $b6$ 14 $f4$ $e6$

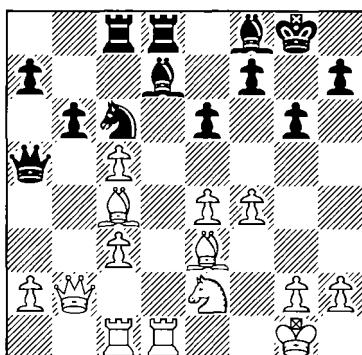
A necessary precaution against the aggressive f4-f5.

15 $\mathbb{B}fd1$

Instead, 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ cxd4 16 cxd4 was tried in A.Kaminik-V.Mikhalevski, Givatayim 2004, and now after 16... $\mathbb{B}fd8$!?, 17 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}a3$, intending ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$, Black has the initiative.

15... $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 16 $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$

Activating the bishop and hoping to weaken White's dark squares.



17 $cxb6$

17 $\mathbb{W}b5$!?, $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $bxc5$ 19 $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xa5$ (or 20 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}xd1$ 21 $\mathbb{B}xd1$

$\mathbb{B}b8$ with the initiative) 20... $\mathbb{B}xd1$ 21 $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ was seen in M.Prusikin-P.Svidler, German League 2002; Black is better in view of his potentially more active pieces.

17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $axb6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}a8$!?

Krasenkow considers Black to have good compensation. Indeed, White has several weaknesses and his centre, particularly the e4-pawn, seems rather loose, while Black may play, for instance, ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}a4$. All in all, it looks like White's pieces are in a bit of tangle.

Conclusion

I cannot emphasize enough the necessity of knowing the lines in this chapter well! Black can easily meet Line A by remembering the important manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{W}a5$ -a3-d6 and its main ideas. Overall, White's position after 10 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ seems generally unsound to me. The main line with 10 0-0 is a totally different story. Then 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ has only recently become popular, but seems to offer Black good prospects, at least on the basis of the available material. I have spent a considerable amount of time examining the resulting positions and feel satisfied with Black's play, but there is no doubt that the theoretical debate will continue – keep an eye on current tournament practice! Meanwhile, 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ has survived several tests at the highest level and is a reliable option. The very fact that it is regularly employed by both Svidler and Sutovsky suggests that it is fully sound.

Chapter Five

Exchange Variation: White's 7th Move Alternatives

**1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
5 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 6 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$**

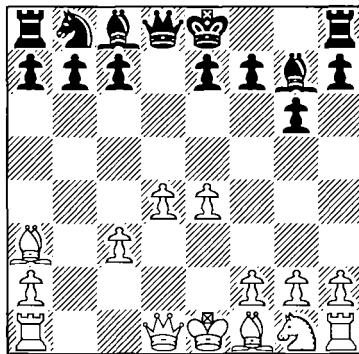
We shall now examine four attempts by White to stray from the beaten path:

- A: 7 $\mathbb{Q}a3$
- B: 7 $\mathbb{Q}a4+$
- C: 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$
- D: 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

While these variations have not acquired mainline status, they do merit attention as they represent logical and strategically sound systems of development. The common thread running through them is the intention to disrupt Black's natural development scheme of ...c5, ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$. Achieving this aim enables White to develop without concerns about his pawn on d4, after which his central superiority should ensure a slight but steady plus. Naturally, Black is not

helpless against these ideas and, once again, accurate and purposeful play is the key to success.

A) 7 $\mathbb{Q}a3$



By making ...c5 harder to achieve, White hopes to buy enough time to develop comfortably and support his centre.

7... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

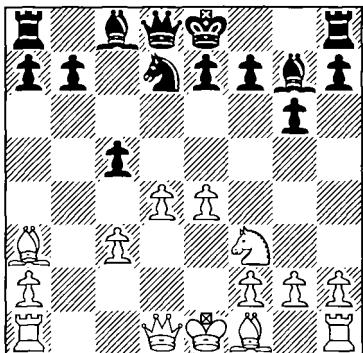
Black in turn argues that although he will be unable to pressurize the centre with ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, the a3-

bishop is badly placed. As Black's position is very flexible, he can seek other means of troubling White.

8 ♜f3

Instead 8 ♜c1 c5 9 d5 ♜a5 10 ♜b3 0-0 11 ♜f3 was seen in G.Garcia Gonzales-J.Lechtynsky, Cienfuegos 1985, and now 11...♜f6 12 ♜d3 ♜h5 gives Black the initiative.

8...c5



White usually now chooses between two aggressive-looking tries:

A1: 9 ♜c4

A2: 9 ♜b3

Less good than these is 9 ♜d2?! since after 9...♜a5 10 ♜b2 ♜b6 11 ♜e2 (11 ♜d1? is erroneous: 11...♜g4 12 a3 0-0 13 ♜e2 ♜ac8 14 h3 ♜xf3 15 gxf3 ♜a4 with a clear advantage for Black) 11...♜g4 White faces some pressure.

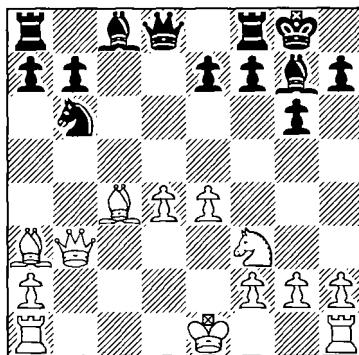
A1) 9 ♜c4

After this move Black must respond accurately.

9...cxd4! 10 ♜b3

Instead 10 0-0? dxc3! 11 ♜xf7+ (11 ♜g5 0-0 with two extra pawns) 11...♜xf7 12 ♜g5+ ♜e8 13 ♜e6 (or 13 ♜b3 ♜e5) 13...♜b6 14 ♜xg7+ ♜f7 just wins for Black and 10 ♜xf7+? ♜xf7 11 ♜g5+ ♜e8 12 ♜e6 ♜a5 13 ♜xg7+ ♜f7 is also very good for Black.

10...0-0 11 cxd4 ♜b6



Now White has to decide whether or not to allow the exchange of his bishop.

12 ♜e2

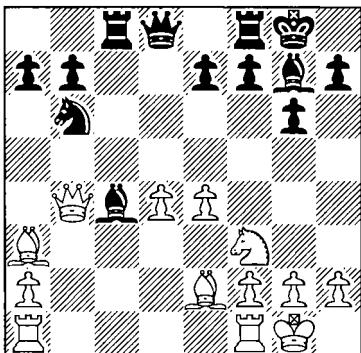
The alternative is 12 0-0 ♜xc4 13 ♜xc4 b6 14 ♜ac1 (14 ♜ad1 ♜g4 is equal) 14...♜g4 15 ♜e5 ♜xe5 16 dxe5 ♜e8?! when Black has an equal share of the chances in this unbalanced position. He similarly had no problems after 16...♜c8 17 ♜d5 ♜e6 18 ♜xd8 ♜fxd8 19 ♜xe7 ♜xc1 20 ♜xc1 ♜e8 21 ♜c7 (or 21 ♜f6 ♜xa2 22 f4 a5 with the initiative) 21...♜c8 22 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 in B.Lalic-D.Gormally, British Championship, Torquay 2002.

12...♜e6 13 ♜b4 ♜c8 14 0-0

Black is at least equal after 14 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 15 ♜fe7 ♜fe8 16 ♜h4 (16 ♜d6 ♜c4 17 e5 f6 is equal, while Black is

better after both 16 ♜g5 ♜c4 17 e5 f6 and 16 ♜a3 ♜c4 17 e5 f6) 16...♜c4 17 e5 f6.

14...♜c4



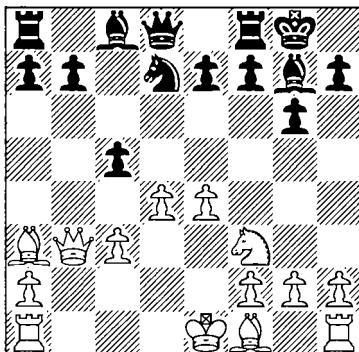
15 ♜fe1

After 15 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 16 ♜ac1 b5! (Black has achieved a good position) 17 ♜xb5 (17 ♜b3 ♜d7 18 ♜c5 a6 seems fine for Black) 17...♝xa3 18 ♜a4 e5! (the only move, but a good one!) 19 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 20 ♜xa3 exd4 21 ♜xa7 d3 22 ♜e3 the position should eventually be drawn, although there is some play left.

15...♜xe2 16 ♜xe2 ♜c4 17 ♜c1

Instead 17 ♜d1 ♜d6 18 ♜xd6 (18 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 19 ♜xd6 exd6 is also better for Black) 18...exd6 19 ♜c1 ♜fe8 20 ♜f4 b5 favoured Black in V.Milov-P.Svidler, FIDE World Ch., Moscow 2001. With the text, though, White should be able to maintain the balance; for example, 17...♝xa3 18 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 19 ♜xa3 ♜d8 20 e5 a6 21 ♜xe7 (or 21 h3 e6) 21...♜xd4! 22 ♜e1 ♜d7 is equal.

A2) 9 ♜b3 0-0



10 ♜e2

Other tries fail to impress:

a) 10 ♜d3 ♜c7 11 0-0 ♜b8! 12 ♜b5 b6 13 ♜ad1 a6 14 ♜d3 b5 15 ♜b1 ♜b7 was good for Black in L.Evans-V.Korchnoi, Buenos Aires 1960.

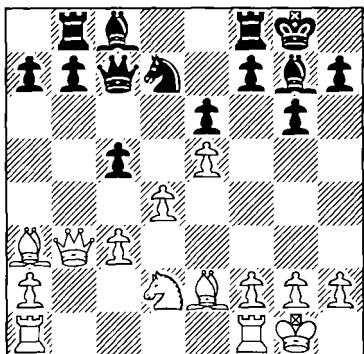
b) 10 ♜c4 ♜b8 11 e5 (11 0-0 b5 12 ♜e2 ♜b7 13 ♜c2 b4 14 cxb4 cxd4 15 ♜ad1 ♜c8 also looks quite good for Black) 11...b5 12 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 13 e6 ♜xf3 14 exd7+ c4 15 dxc8 ♜xc8 16 ♜c2 ♜e6+ 17 ♜f1 ♜f7 and White was in trouble in W.Heidenfeld-A.Tsvetkov, Marianske Lazne 1951.

c) 10 ♜d1 cxd4 11 cxd4 ♜f6 12 ♜d3 (12 e5?! ♜e6 13 ♜xb7 ♜d5 14 ♜a6 ♜c8 is again good for Black) 12...♜g4 13 ♜xb7 ♜a5+ 14 ♜b4 (Black is better, too, after 14 ♜b4 ♜h5 15 0-0 ♜xf3 16 gxf3 ♜xf3) 14...♜h5 15 ♜xe7 ♜fb8 16 ♜c7 ♜xf3 17 gxf3 ♜xf3 18 0-0 ♜h5 and White's king is a constant source for concern.

10...♜c7

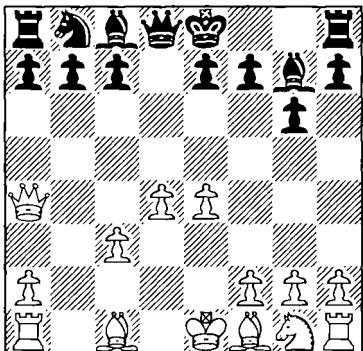
Another idea is 10...♜b8?! intending ...b5; for example 11 0-0 b5 12 ♜ad1 a6.

11 0-0 ♜b8 12 e5 e6 13 ♜d2



This position was reached in I.Papaioannou-M.Krasenkow, European Team Ch., Leon 2001, and now Black should play 13...b5! 14 ♔e4 b4 15 cxb4 ♕b7 16 ♔xc5 (or 16 ♔d6 cxd4 17 ♕fc1 ♕b6 18 b5 ♕d5 19 ♕c4 ♕xe5 20 ♕xd5 ♕xd6 21 ♕c6 ♕a5 22 ♕xd6 ♕xb5 23 ♕h3 ♕xd5 24 ♕xf8 ♕xf8 with good prospects) 16...♔xc5 17 dxc5 (after 17 bxc5 ♕xg2 18 ♕e3 ♕xf1 19 ♕xf1 ♕fe8 Black will break with ...f6) 17...♔xe5 18 ♕b2 ♕xh2+ 19 ♕h1 ♕f4 20 ♕fd1 ♕e7, when he intends ...♕fd8 and ...e5 with good play.

B) 7 ♕a4+



This disruptive check has recently acquired a certain popularity, chiefly due to the efforts of Vadim Milov and Mikhail Gurevich. It is actually a quite dangerous move – dangerous in a sneaky way! White's aim is to entice Black to misplace his pieces, so that he will later be unable to apply enough pressure on White's centre. Black needs to react accurately, but should he do so, I believe he is able to highlight the main drawback of the check, namely that the white queen is no longer supporting d4.

7...♕d7!

In my mind, clearly best, whereas other moves allow White to develop comfortably.

Now White must choose between:

B1: 8 ♕xd7+

B2: 8 ♕b3

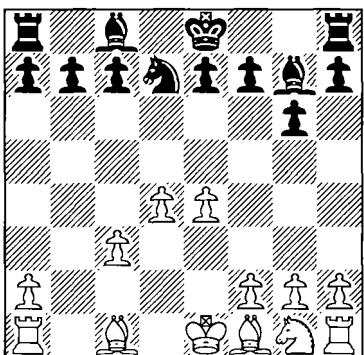
Instead 8 ♕a3 is similar to 8 ♕b3 but, I feel, less accurate. Black should then immediately prepare ...c5: 8...b6 9 ♔f3 ♕b7 10 ♕d3 c5 11 ♕e3 0-0 12 0-0 (instead, the 12 ♕d1 of E.Sevillano-A.Yermolinsky, Stratton Mountain 1999, should be met with 12...e6 13 dxc5 ♕c7 14 0-0 ♔d7 with equality – Yermolinsky) 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 e6 14 ♕fd1 ♔c6 (A.Szeberenyi-D.Howell, Budapest 2004) when Black has developed comfortably and stands fully equal.

B1) 8 ♕xd7+

The queen exchange is, of course,

fundamentally critical. Let's not forget that a strong centre can be an asset, not only in a complicated middlegame but also in a more simplified endgame. Black is able to strike back and secure good play, but he must play consistently.

8...♝xd7!



This is the best recapture. Black will not be able to pressurize d4 in the standard Grünfeld manner, but he can pursue other plans, particularly the attack on e4, but also the occupation of c4 with ...♝b6 and ...♜e6. Another idea is ...b6 and ...♜b7 when White has either to advance his e-pawn, thereby handing Black the d5-square, or protect it with ♜d3, leaving the bishop exposed to tactics.

9 ♜f3

Definitely not the only move:

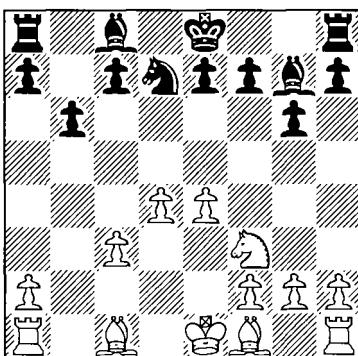
a) 9 ♜e3 intends to meet ...♜b7 with f3, firmly supporting e4. However, this plan somewhat clogs up White's king-side development: 9...0-0 10 ♜c4 c5 11 ♜e2 ♜b6!? (I very much like this idea, gaining time to develop counterplay, whereas 11...b6?! is inferior due to 12

e5! intending e6) 12 ♜b3 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♜d7 and I feel that Black already has the initiative.

b) 9 ♜a3 c5 10 ♜f3 b6 leads to equality, as the a3-bishop is shut out of play.

c) 9 ♜d3 b6 10 ♜e3 ♜b7 11 ♜e2 0-0 12 0-0 ♜fd8 (now Black has tactical ideas based on the loose state of the d3-bishop) 13 ♜ad1 (13 ♜fd1 c5 has the idea of 14 a4 cxd4 15 cxd4 ♜c5 with advantage, as suggested by Huzman and Vainerman) 13...c5 14 e5 ♜ac8 (as Huzman and Vainerman point out, no good is 14...♜d5?! 15 ♜f4 ♜xa2 16 ♜a1 ♜b3 17 ♜fb1 c4 18 ♜e4 ♜ac8 19 ♜xa7) 15 f4 cxd4 (15...e6 16 g4 was agreed drawn here in Y.Piskov-A.Huzman; Huzman suggests that Black has good play after 16...♜h6, but I think that 17 ♜g3, intending ♜e4, promises White an edge) 16 cxd4 ♜d5 with comfortable equality.

9...b6

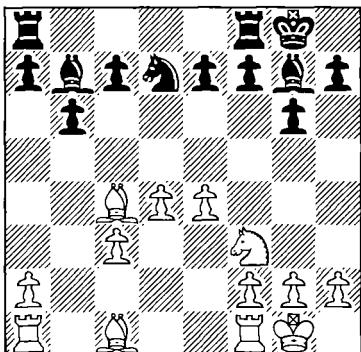


10 ♜c4

Instead 10 ♜d3 ♜c5 11 ♜c2 ♜a6 12 ♜e3 ♜d3+ 13 ♜d2 ♜b2 14 ♜c1 ♜c4 15 ♜a4+ b5 (better than 15...♝f8 16 ♜c6 with an edge, although actually agreed

drawn here in I.Khenkin-P.Jaracz, Andorra 2001) 16 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 17 $fxe3$ gives a complicated position with chances for both sides.

10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11 0-0 0-0

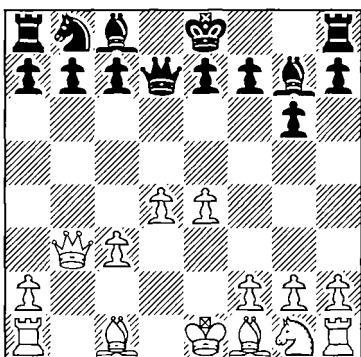


Now Black threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$.

12 e5 e6 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 14 f3 c5

Black has fully equalized, S.Volkov-B.Macieja, Batumi 2002.

B2) 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$



White's main move. He hopes to benefit from Black's 7... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, which rules out ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and practically forces the light-squared bishop to be developed to b7, to maintain his centre. As

we shall see, however, the queen can become a target on b3.

8...0-0

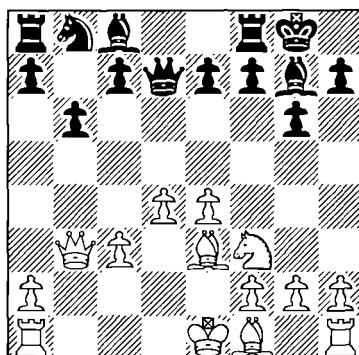
Black should now opt for a queen-side fianchetto, followed by a harassing ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-a5$.

9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ b6 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ transposes, but less good is 10 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ c6 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ c5 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 13 a4?! $\mathbb{W}g4$ 14 0-0 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 16 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ with an edge for Black, S.Volkov-M.Turov, Sochi 2004.

9...b6 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

Playing instead for f3 fails to convince: 10 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11 f3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ and Black was better in V.Milov-P.Eljanov, Geneva 2004.



10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$!?

A rare idea that I have investigated and which looks promising to me! Instead 10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is more common, but White can then achieve a harmonious set-up with 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b1$ c5 14 0-0. In my opinion, 10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is the most annoying move order for White, as he would like to meet ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with $\mathbb{W}b1$, but without blocking the

a1. Furthermore, Black does not commit his bishop to b7; as we shall see, it may find greener pastures!

11 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

Securing the retreat of the queen to b1. Instead after 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ c5 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$, the threat of ...cxd4 forces White to move his queen again.

White might also try 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$, hoping for a transposition to the 10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ variation. However, Black can then remain in independent waters with 11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}b1$ (or 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ c5 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ cxd4 14 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}d6$ with good play; note that Black has retained the options of ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$) 12...c5 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ (again with the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$) 14 0-0 (or 14 h3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$, aiming for the c4-square) 14... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ and Black stands very well, in view of White's kingside weaknesses and lack of a good plan.

11... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

The immediate 11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$! is also enticing: 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ (12 $\mathbb{W}b1$ c5 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ offers the standard compensation) 12...c5 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and Black, with ideas of ...c4 and ...f5, has assumed the initiative.

12 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

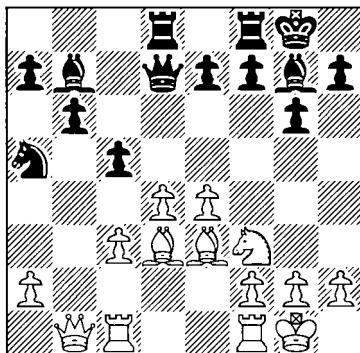
12 $\mathbb{W}b1$ retreats without being prompted, in order to meet ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with $\mathbb{Q}b5$. However, this further loss of time enables Black, who has practically completed his development, to strike in the centre: 12...e5 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14 c4 c6 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f5 and Black is in the driving seat.

12... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b1$ c5

Also promising is 13... $\mathbb{W}g4$! 14 0-0

f5 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e5 with the initiative.

14 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$



This position is rather complex, although the white rook does seem a little misplaced on c1.

C) 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$

Another disruptive check, but yet again Black is not unduly worried, especially since this move, in comparison to 7 $\mathbb{W}a4+$, prematurely commits the bishop, while the check can be met in a natural way.

7...c6

Black does not renounce ...c5 at all, but simply delays it until after he has castled. He will then try to argue that the white bishop is misplaced on a4.

8 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Of course, $\mathbb{Q}f3$ would be strongly met by ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ at any point.

9...c5

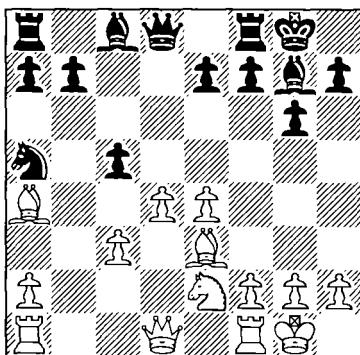
So Black has achieved ...c5 after all! The question now is: how well is the bishop placed on a4?

10 0-0

Unsurprisingly, 10 d5?! is premature: 10...e6! 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ (now the

pawn on d5 will come under heavy pressure) 12 ♜b3 exd5 13 ♜xd5 ♜c7 14 ♜c4 (14 ♜xc5 ♜e8 15 0-0 ♜xd5 16 exd5 b6 17 ♜e3 ♜a6 gives Black excellent compensation as the white pieces are unpleasantly pinned) 14...♜e7 15 f3 b5 16 ♜b3 c4 17 ♜c2 b4 (White is already struggling to hold the balance) 18 cxb4 (18 ♜b1?! bxc3 19 0-0 ♜d8 20 ♜c1 ♜a6 21 a4 ♜e6 22 f4 ♜d4 was disastrous for White in M.Ulibin-S.Dvoiry, Geneva 2001) 18...♜d8 19 ♜c1 ♜xa1 20 ♜xa1 ♜xb4+ 21 ♜f2 ♜a5 and Black is better; he will cover the kingside dark square weaknesses with ...♜e8, while the passed c4-pawn will become a strong asset after ...♜e6 and ...♜ac8.

10...♝c6 11 ♜e3 ♜a5



The position is almost identical to a very important one examined in the 7 ♜c4 system, except that here the c4-square is open to occupation. Now White has two main options:

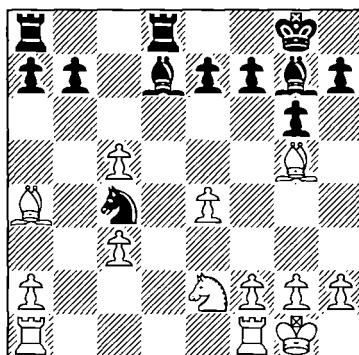
C1: 12 dx5

C2: 12 ♜b1!

C1) 12 dx5 ♜c4

12...♜g4!? 13 f3 ♜e6 intending ...♜c4 is a way to play for more than equality; Black has the standard compensation.

13 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 14 ♜g5 ♜d7!



Black invites exchanges, as the weak white queenside pawns will provide good endgame targets.

15 ♜b3 ♜a5 16 ♜xe7

Worse is 16 ♜fd1?! ♜c6 17 f3 ♜f8 18 e5 ♜xd1+ 19 ♜xd1 e6 20 ♜e3 ♜c8 21 ♜f4 ♜e7 22 c4 ♜e8 23 ♜d3 ♜c6 24 f4 ♜b8! with the advantage for Black, B.Avrukh-I.Sokolov, Amsterdam 1999; after ...♜a6 the c5-pawn will drop.

16...♜e8 17 ♜d6 ♜xe4 18 ♜d4 ♜xb3 19 axb3 ♜xd4

Here a draw was agreed in V.Topalov-G.Kasparov, Linares 1998.

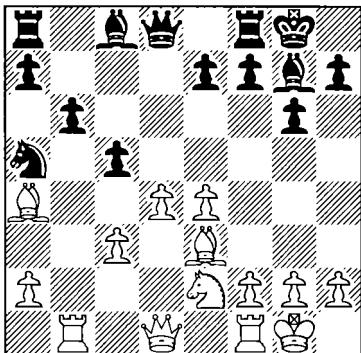
C2) 12 ♜b1?

More ambitious. White tries to hamper Black's development.

12...b6!

Black replies in tune! This move amounts to a pawn sacrifice, but one which is very promising in my opinion.

Also playable and fully acceptable is 12... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ again: for example, 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 14 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (V.Topalov-P.Svidler, Linares 1998) 14...a6 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ cxd4 17 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ with equality.

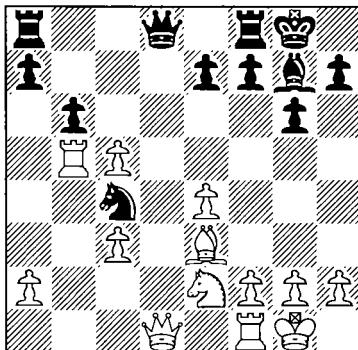


13 dxc5

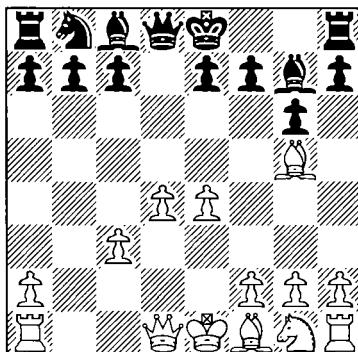
Accepting the challenge. Instead 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ tries to bring the bishop back to d3 and is rather an admission of failure. B.Avrukh-J.Timman, Amsterdam 1999, continued 13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ e5 16 f4 and now Black should opt for 16...exf4! (and not Timman's risky 16...f5?! 17 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ c4 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ g5 19 fxe5 f4 since Avrukh could now have played the strong 20 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ fxe5 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 22 hxg3 with excellent compensation) 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with chances for both sides, or even 17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$!?

13... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Black has occupied the target square and stands well; for example, 16 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (E.Gleizerov-T.Oral, Stockholm 1999) 16... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ a6! (or Timman's 17... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$!, with the initiative) 18 $\mathbb{Q}bb1$ b5 19 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ with an obvious advantage, as White cannot save the c5-pawn.



D) 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$?



An interesting sideline, introduced by Yuri Kruppa.

7...c5!

As White has forfeited the option of supporting d4, this natural move is also the most consistent one.

8 $\mathbb{Q}c1$?

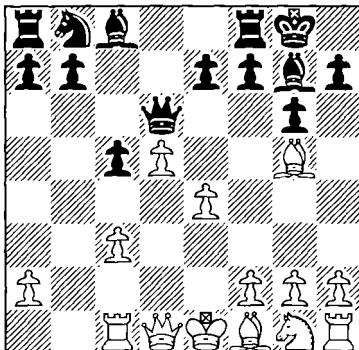
White prepares to meet ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with d5 since he cannot support d4.

8...0-0 9 d5

Kruppa and Komarov have suggested 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$, but White cannot maintain the pawn on d4 in any case: 9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10 d5 (or 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 gxf3 e5 with both

the initiative and certain positional pluses) 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ when Black is all set to break with ...f5 and White is forced on to the defensive.

9... $\mathbb{Q}d6!$?



I like this move, unpinning the e-pawn. Black intends to exploit his lead in development to break up White's centre with ...e6 and/or ...f5.

10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6

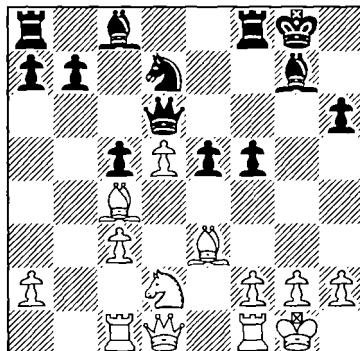
10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$! is possible, intending ...e6.

11 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e5

Not really a change of heart, but an attempt to prove White's minor pieces misplaced; ...f5 is coming next.

12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Instead 12 0-0 h6 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ is good for Black, who plans ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, ... $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ and ...f5) 13...f5 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f4 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ g5 16 h3 $\mathbb{W}g6$ leads to a massive King's Indian-style pawn-storm on the kingside. Thus the text was preferred in B.Taborov-D.Dzupin, Kiev 2006, and now 12...h6 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ – not 13...f5? 14 $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ – 14 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ f5 also gives Black the initiative) 13...f5 14 exf5 gxf5 15 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ has the obvious intention of ...e4 and ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$.



Black has active and good play and stands at least equal.

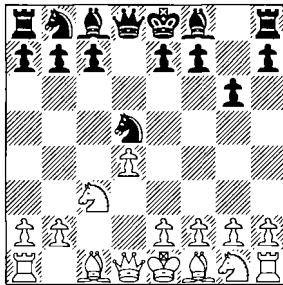
Conclusion

The lines in this chapter are by no means harmless. Simplistic natural play by Black will not suffice for equal chances – concrete knowledge is required, but Black can equalize with correct play without too much effort. After 7 $\mathbb{Q}a3$, Black should insist on playing ...c5, after which the opening debate revolves around the functionality of the bishop on a3; Black usually emerges successful.

The two checks on a4 and b5 are quite different from each other. 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ is, in my opinion, an overrated line, as Black can obtain a good, normal Grünfeld position with standard counterplay. However, 7 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ is the most critical line in this chapter. The queen exchange on d7 should not present Black with any problems, but 8 $\mathbb{W}b3$ is really dangerous. Hopefully, my suggestion against it will stand the test of time and solve the slight problems Black has recently been facing in this line!

Chapter Six

4 cxd5 ♞xd5 without 5 e4



1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5

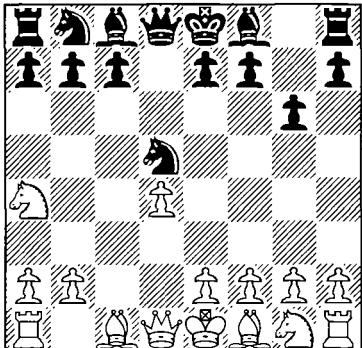
Apart from the standard 5 e4, White has a few other ideas at his disposal. These chiefly aim to strengthen the impact of the coming e4 by preventing or discouraging a knight exchange on c3.

A: 5 ♘a4

B: 5 ♘d2

C: 5 ♘f3

A) 5 ♘a4



This extraordinary idea was introduced by the Armenian grandmaster, Ashot Nadanian. White wants to play e4 without allowing an exchange on c3, while also preventing ...c5. The move is not entirely harmless, but it can hardly prove effective should Black respond dynamically.

5...e5! 6 dx5

Instead, 6 a3 e4 is not what White wanted, while after 6 e4 ♘f6 he comes under some pressure in the centre:

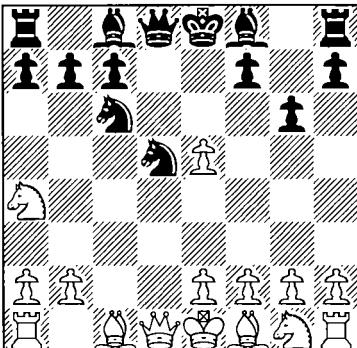
a) 7 ♘g5 exd4! 8 e5 (8 ♘b3 h6 is also very good for Black) 8...♗b4+ 9 ♘c3 (as Rowson observes, 9 ♕e2? ♘d5! is strong) 9...♘d7! 10 ♘xf6 dxc3 (Rowson) and Black wins.

b) 7 dx5 ♘xd1+ 8 ♘xd1 ♘xe4 9 ♘e3 ♘d7 10 ♘c3 ♘xc3+ 11 bxc3 ♘a4+ and Black's positional advantage, due to his better pawn structure, is undeniable.

6...♘c6!

I believe Black does not need to do anything drastic yet. Simple, active

development should do the job, as any attempt to protect the e5-pawn is bound to be weakening, while White's only developed piece is the knight on a4.



At this point White has two principal continuations:

A1: 7 a3

A2: 7 ♜f3

Instead 7 ♜d2 should be met by 7...♜xe5!? 8 e4 (8 ♜b3 ♜e6) 8...♜b4 9 ♜c3 ♜ed3+ 10 ♜xd3 ♜xd3+ 11 ♜f1 ♜g8 intending ...b5, with advantage for Black, and 7 e4 ♜b4+ (7...♜db4 can also be played) 8 ♜d2 ♜e3!? also looks promising for Black, with the idea 9 fxe3? ♜h4+ 10 g3 ♜xe4 11 ♜f3 ♜g4 12 ♜g2 ♜xf3 13 ♜xf3 ♜xd2+ 14 ♜xd2 ♜xf3 15 ♜f1 ♜xe5! 16 ♜d4 ♜h5 and wins.

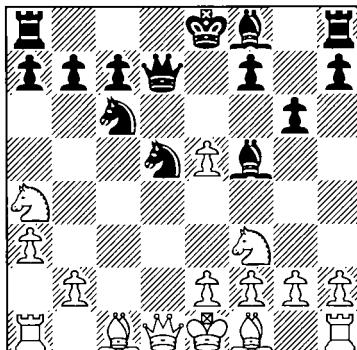
A1) 7 a3

This is really taking things a bit too far. I just cannot accept that White can play the opening like this!

7...♝f5!

7...♝xe5 is not in our interests; development is first and foremost the main goal.

8 ♜f3 ♜d7



It already looks like White is heading for a miniature!

9 e3

Not forced, but in any case Black has fantastic compensation for the pawn and a very strong initiative:

a) 9 ♜g5 h6 10 ♜h4 (or 10 ♜f6?! ♜xf6 11 exf6 ♜xd1+ 12 ♜xd1 0-0-0+) 10...g5 11 ♜g3 0-0-0 (Kantsler) gives Black promising play.

b) 9 g3 0-0-0 is good for Black.

c) 9 ♜d2 0-0-0 10 ♜c1 ♜e8 was also promising for Black in J.Rukavina-A.Mikhailchishin, Nova Gorica 1999.

d) 9 ♜g5 h6 10 e4 hxg5 11 exd5 ♜xe5 (11...0-0-0-0!?) is suggested by Eingorn; after the logical 12 ♜xg5 ♜e7 13 dxс6 ♜xc6 14 ♜c1 ♜xg5 Black has the initiative) 12 ♜xg5 ♜e7 13 ♜d4 ♜xg5 14 ♜xe5+ ♜e7 15 ♜b5+ ♜f8 16 ♜xe7+ ♜xe7 with excellent compensation for Black.

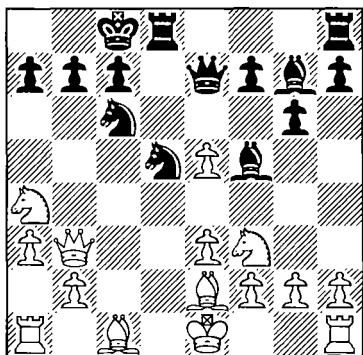
9...0-0-0 10 ♜e2

Or 10 ♜b5 a6 (Eingorn's 10...♝e6 is also good; for example, 11 ♜d4 ♜xd4 12 exd4 f6 with the initiative) 11 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 12 ♜d4 ♜e8 13 f4 (13 0-0 ♜xe5 is much better for Black) 13...f6 and I would be surprised if White can survive the early middlegame.

10...♝e7 11 ♜b3

Note that 11 ♜d4? ♜f4! is a powerful shot, while 11 ♜d2 ♜xe5 12 ♜b3 ♜g4 is quite good for Black.

11...♜g7



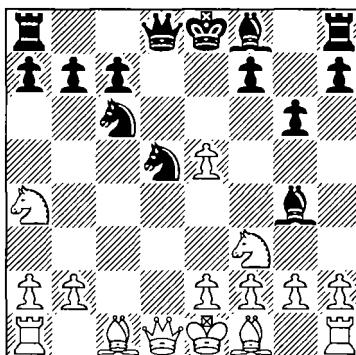
Black has a powerful initiative, B.Kantsler-B.Avrukh, Israel 1999.

A2) 7 ♜f3 ♜g4!?

Instead 7...♜db4?! was played in the fairly well-known game S.Lputian-A.Shirov, Montecatini Terme 2000, but as Eingorn points out, it is not good. After 8 a3! ♜xd1+ 9 ♜xd1 ♜a6 Black can only fight for a draw, and in particular 10 b4 ♜e6 11 ♜c2 ♜f5+ 12 ♜b2 ♜g7 13 ♜f4 seems very bad for Black to me.

The text move is an interesting suggestion of Eingorn's, while another of his ideas is 7...♜f5 8 ♜c3 (8 a3 ♜d7

leads us back to Line A1) 8...♜xc3 9 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 10 bxc3 ♜g7, which he assesses as equal. In fact, after a reasonable continuation such as 11 ♜g5 ♜d5 12 ♜f6 0-0 13 e3 ♜c5 Black has the initiative. This is reason enough to condemn White's opening play, but 7...♜g4 appeals to me even more!



8 a3 ♜d7 9 ♜c3

Black is also rather comfortable after 9 h3 ♜xf3 10 gxf3 0-0-0; for example, 11 e4 ♜f6 12 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 13 ♜g5 (13 f4 ♜d4 is bad for White) 13...♜e8 regaining the pawn, while White is left with an inferior pawn structure.

9...♜xc3 10 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 11 bxc3 ♜g7

Black has excellent positional compensation for the pawn and promising long-term chances.

B) 5 ♜d2

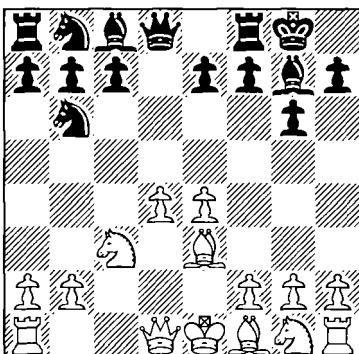
Yet another system which has been popular of late. White intends to recapture on c3 with the bishop, thereby hoping to counterbalance the activity of the Grünfeld bishop on the long diagonal. However, this move is somewhat unnatural and that prompts Black

to avoid the exchange on c3, after which White will have to spend a tempo moving the bishop again.

5...Bg7 6 e4

Note that 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is covered below in Line C1.

6...Qb6 7 Qe3 0-0



Black has two principal ideas to attack the white centre: he can pressurize the d4-pawn with ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, or strike against e4 with ...f5. The proper selection of plan depends on White's choice at this important crossroads:

B1: 8 h3

B2: 8 f4

B3: 8 Qb5

B4: 8 Qe2

Before we move on to White's main options, let's take a look at some rare alternatives:

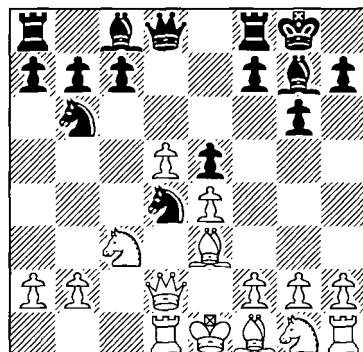
a) 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ transposes to Line B42.

b) 8 a4?! weakens White's position for no reason: 8...a5! 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 d5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}b5?$ c6 13

$dxc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ was a disaster for White in L.Alburt-J.Benjamin, New York 1993) 11...f5 with an edge.

c) 8 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ c6 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ left the white king under attack in P.Iotti-N.Davies, Porto San Giorgio 1999.

d) 8 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ intends to further support d4, but is inefficient: 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (or 9 0-0-0 e5 10 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 gxf3, M.Mason-T.Mirabile, Philadelphia 2006, and now 13...c6 with the initiative) 9...e5 10 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$



11 f4 (11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$ exd4 12 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ was disastrous for White in Z.Gorecki-F.Windekilde, Copenhagen 2001, as was 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13 f3 fxe4 14 fxe4 c6 in D.Kljako-I.Balinov, Bled 1998) 11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and Black is better, as in the long run White will be unable to support his e5-pawn.

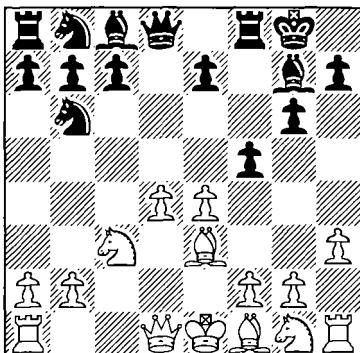
e) Finally, the exotic 8 h4 didn't turn out well in F.Vallejo Pons-P.Svidler, Morelia 2006: 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 e5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (9...h5!?) is another option) 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (10 g4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 h5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is no improvement) 10... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ (11 g4 $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 13 fxe3

♕e6 was the game, with a clear plus for Black) 11...c5! and White's centre is collapsing.

B1) 8 h3?!

This prevents ...g4, but again costs White valuable time.

8...f5!



9 exf5

Instead 9 ♜f3 (9 ♜d2 fxe4 10 ♜xe4 ♜e6 and ...d5 is good for Black) 9...f4 sees Black change direction and focus on d4 once more: 10 ♜d2 (10 ♜c1 ♜c6 11 d5 ♜e5 12 ♜e2 e6! was good for Black in I.Bitansky-R.Romon Poves, Aviles 2000) 10...♜c6 11 d5 (11 ♜b3+ ♜h8 12 ♜e2 a5 13 ♜c3 ♜b4?! 14 ♜xb4 axb4 15 ♜xb4 e5 is promising for Black) 11...♜e5 12 ♜xe5 (or 12 ♜b3 a5 13 a4 ♜xf3+ 14 gxf3 e6 15 ♜c4 ♜e7 with a clear plus, Y.Zimmerman-C.Pedersen, Budapest 2002) 12...♜xe5 13 ♜b3 (Y.Zimmerman-S.Atalik, Bled 1999) 13...e6 14 dx6 ♜e8 15 e7+ ♜f7 16 0-0-0 ♜xe7 and with ...e6 coming, Black is better.

9...♜xf5! 10 ♜f3

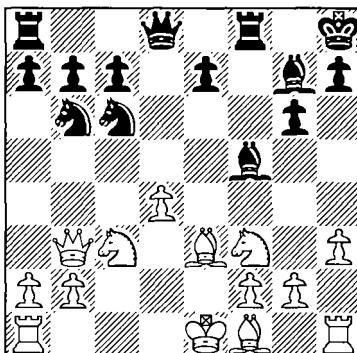
10 ♜b3+ ♜h8 11 g4 ♜d7 12 ♜g2 ♜c6 13 ♜ge2 ♜a5 14 ♜d1 ♜bc4 was

very good for Black in S.Peric-L.Milesi, Cannes 1997.

10...♜c6 11 ♜b3+

White also comes under pressure after 11 ♜e2 ♜d6 (or simply 11...e5!?) 12 dx5 ♜xd1+ 13 ♜xd1 ♜xe5 with equality, V.Ruban-P.Leko, Tilburg 1993) 12 0-0 ♜ad8 13 ♜c1 (S.Wehmeier-A.Greenfeld, Lippstadt 2004) and now 13...♜b4 prepares ...e5.

11...♜h8



12 0-0-0

Instead 12 d5 ♜e5 13 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 14 ♜d1 a5 15 g4 (both 15 a3?! a4! and 15 ♜d3 a4! 16 ♜b4 a3 17 ♜d4 ♜d6! give Black an edge) was seen in B.Predojevic-M.Rade, Neum 2005, when I think that Black can gain the upper hand with 15...♜d7 16 ♜g2 a4 17 ♜b4 a3. Likewise, 12 ♜d1 a5! 13 ♜g5 (or 13 a3 a4 14 ♜a2 ♜c2 15 ♜d2 ♜b3 16 ♜b1 ♜d5 with some advantage) 13...♜b4 with the initiative.

12...a5!

Harassing the white queen. Now White must avoid 13 ♜e5 a4 14 ♜f7+? ♜xf7 15 ♜xf7 ♜d6 16 g4 ♜f8 17 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 18 gxf5 a3, but even 14 ♜b5 a3 15 b3 ♜d6 leaves him in trouble.

B2) 8 f4

Aggressive, but too loosening.

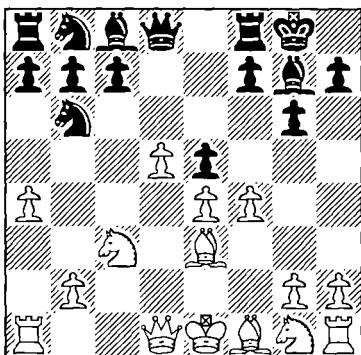
8... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ 9 d5

White should avoid 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3?$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10 d5 (or 10 e5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ with full control over d5 and an edge) 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12 gxf3 e6 when his centre comes under pressure.

9... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 a4

10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c6 11 $\mathbb{W}b3$ cxd5 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 17 bxc3 $\mathbb{W}e3!$ was better for Black in M.Euwe-S.Reshevsky, Holland 1938, while Black enjoyed very good compensation after 10 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}f3$ c6 12 h4 cxd5 13 exd5 e5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16 0-0-0 $\mathbb{W}d6$ in V.Korchnoi-L.McShane, Igualada 2005.

10...e5!



Correctly fighting for the central dark squares.

11 f5!?

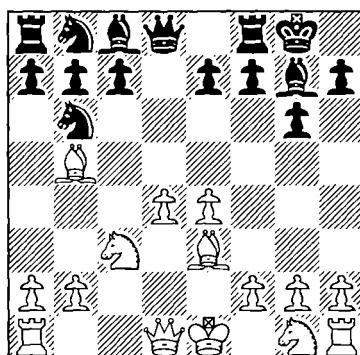
Alternatively, 11 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ was F.Gheorghiu-L.Ftacnik, Palma de Mallorca 1989, and now strong is 12... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+!$ 13 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d4$ f5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (or 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5!$ – Ftacnik) 15...fxe4 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ c5 (Ftacnik), while 11

a5 $\mathbb{Q}6d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e7!$ (Black now threatens ...exf4) 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ exf4 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 17 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d4+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ left White on the defensive in H.Pilnik-S.Reshevsky, New York 1942.

11...gxf5 12 a5

So far we have followed a suggestion of Davies' and now I feel that Black has good play after 12... $\mathbb{Q}6d7$ 13 exf5 c6.

B3) 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5!$?



A recent trend which discourages ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$. I must say, though, that in my view this is taking the concept of prophylaxis a little too far, even if several strong grandmasters have tried it.

8... $\mathbb{W}d6$

A good response, preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ as well as ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$.

9 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$

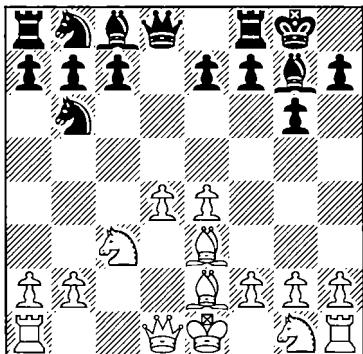
9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a6 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and is unpleasant for White.

9...a6 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}bc4!?$

The logical 13...e6 14 dx6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ was attractive for Black in A.Aleksandrov-

A.Grischuk, Internet (blitz) 2004. After the text, 14 ♜c1 ♜d7 gives Black a promising initiative.

B4) 8 ♜e2



White contents himself with simple development.

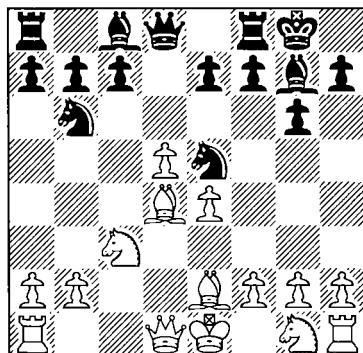
8... ♜c6

Now a decision must be made regarding the d4-pawn.

B41: 9 d5

B42: 9 ♜f3

B41) 9 d5 ♜e5 10 ♜d4



White is threatening f4, so Black must react promptly.

10...c5!

The only move according to Svidler, but also a very strong one; Black buys some time to create threats against b2.

11 ♜xc5 ♜ec4 12 ♜xc4

Black is much better after 12 ♜xb6?! ♜xb6 13 ♜xc4 ♜xb2, and 12 ♜b3 ♜xb2 13 ♜c1 (13 ♜xb2? ♜a4 wins the house) 13...♜xc3+ 14 ♜xc3 ♜2a4 is also good for Black, D.Palo-A.Jerez Perez, Andorra la Vella 2004.

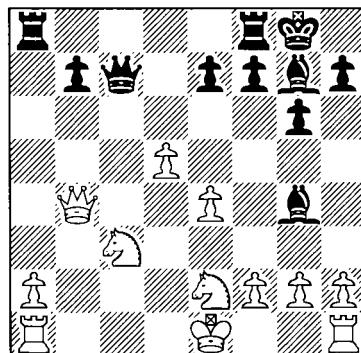
12... ♜xc4 13 ♜b3

Note that 13 ♜e2 ♜xb2 will transpose after 14 ♜xb2.

13... ♜xb2! 14 ♜xb2 ♜c7 15 ♜b4

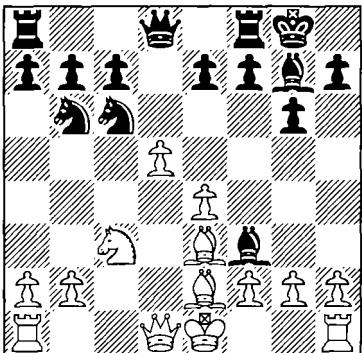
Instead 15 ♜b4 a5 16 ♜a3 b6 17 ♜ge2 bxc5 18 0-0 ♜a6 left Black much better in I.Shliperman-B.Avrukh, Cala Galdana 1996, while 15 ♜a3 b6 16 ♜b4 a5 17 ♜c1 axb4! 18 ♜xb4 (18 ♜xa8? ♜xc3+) 18...♜a6! 19 ♜ge2 ♜d7 supplies excellent compensation, due to the two bishops and the hanging state of the white knights; Black will further open up the position with ...e6.

15... a5 16 ♜ge2 axb4 17 ♜xb4 ♜g4!



This occurred in G.Kacheishvili-P.Svidler, Szeged 1994. Black is better here, in view of White's obvious coordination difficulties.

B42) 9 ♜f3 ♜g4 10 d5 ♜xf3



White now faces another important decision:

11 ♜xf3

Instead 11 ♜xf3 avoids structural damage at some cost in terms of time. Then 11...♜e5 12 ♜e2 ♜ec4 13 ♜c1 c6 14 dxcc6 bxc6 gives Black good counterplay; for example, 15 ♜c2 (15 0-0 ♜xd1 16 ♜xd1 ♜fd8 leaves Black with a healthy lead in development) 15...♜d4! (a strong centralizing move) 16 0-0 ♜fd8 17 ♜b1 ♜a3! 18 bxa3 ♜xc3 19 ♜xc3 (Black is also better after 19 ♜b3 c5 20 ♜e3 ♜a5!?, intending 21 ♜b5 ♜xb5 22 ♜xb5 ♜d4) 19...♜xc3 20 ♜a6 c5 21 ♜f4 ♜d2! and White faced serious problems in I.Sokolov-E.Sutovsky, Hastings 2000.

11...♜e5

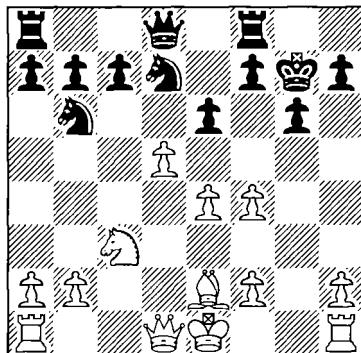
White is about to set his central pawn mass rolling, but he must first cover the c4-square and that gives

Black just enough time to develop counterplay.

12 ♜b3!

The critical move, taking c4 away from the black knights and preparing f4. Alternatively:

a) 12 ♜d4 e6! 13 f4 ♜ed7 14 ♜xg7 ♜xg7



15 ♜d4+ (15 dx6 fx6 is very good for Black as the f4-pawn is extremely weak) 15...♜f6 16 0-0-0 (Rowson's 16 e5 ♜h4 again highlights the weakness of f4, while 16 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 17 ♜f3 exd5 18 e5 ♜fd7 19 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 20 ♜xd5 c6 21 ♜b3 ♜c5 leaves Black better) 16...exd5 17 ♜xd5 (or 17 exd5 ♜c8 18 ♜e4 ♜xd4 19 ♜xd4 ♜e7 20 ♜b1 ♜b6 which was pretty favourable for Black in G.Rojo Huerta-M.Turov, Linares 2000) 17...♜xd5 18 exd5 ♜ad8 (so far M.Tyrtania-A.Lagunow, Berlin 1994) 19 ♜f3 ♜b6! and Black can organize strong pressure against d5 after the exchange of queens, followed by ...♜d6 and ...♜fd8.

b) 12 0-0 ♜ec4 13 ♜g5 h6 14 ♜h4 was tried in R.Sheldon-C.Beaumont, Newport 1999, and now the simple

14...f5 is promising.

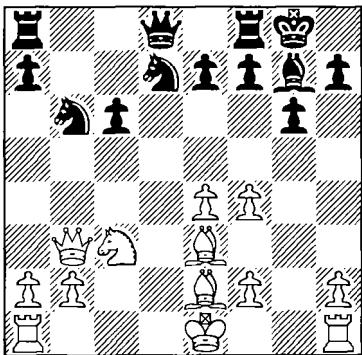
12...c6 13 f4!

Instead 13 0-0-0 cxd5 14 ♖xd5 (14 ♜xb6 ♜xb6 15 ♜xb6 axb6 16 ♖xd5 e6 17 ♖xb6 ♜xa2 is quite promising, too, for Black) occurred in V.Korchnoi-G.Kasparov, Wijk aan Zee 2000, and now Black could obtain the edge, according to Lagunov, after 14...♜c8+ 15 ♜b1 ♖xd5 16 ♜xd5 e6 17 ♜c5 ♜d7 18 ♜d1 ♜e7! 19 ♜dc1 ♜c6.

13...♝ed7 14 dxc6

Black gains good pressure down the c-file after 14 ♜d1 ♜xc3+ 15 bxc3 cxd5 16 exd5 ♜c7.

14...bxc6



15 0-0-0

Various other moves have been tried here, but they don't promise anything; for example, 15 ♜d1 e5 16 fxe5 ♜h4 17 e6 ♜xc3+ 18 ♜xc3 ♜xe4 19 exf7+ ♜xf7, with a good game for Black, or 15 0-0 ♜h6?!, followed by ...♜c7 with pressure against f4.

15...e6?!

Black is now better in every line; for example, 16 ♜a3 ♜h4 (K.Miton-R.Wojtaszek, Goa 2002), or 16 ♜d6?!

♜c7!, or 16 ♜c2 ♜e7 17 h4 ♜fb8 18 h5 a5 19 hxg6 hxg6 20 ♜d2 a4 21 ♜d4 e5 22 fxe5 c5! (R.Sheldon-J.Rowson, Southend 1999).

C) 5 ♜f3 ♜g7

White can now opt for one of the main lines with 6 e4 ♜xc3 7 bxc3 c5 8 ♜b1 (see Chapter Two) or prefer to develop his dark-squared bishop.

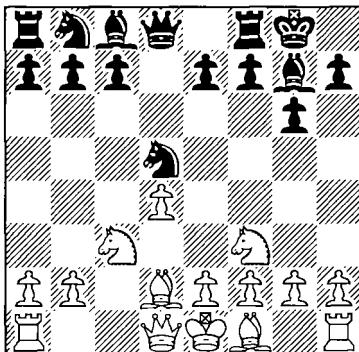
C1: 6 ♜d2

C2: 6 ♜g5

C1) 6 ♜d2

This is a fairly harmless version of Line B, above.

6...0-0



7 ♜c1

The most common, but White might also try:

- 7 ♜b3 ♜b6 8 ♜d1 (or 8 e3 ♜d8d7 9 ♜e4 a5 10 ♜c1 e5 11 ♜c3 ♜e7 12 dxe5 ♜xe5 13 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 14 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 15 ♜c3 ♜e6 16 ♜c2 ♜fd8 and Black was better in K.Sabri-T.L.Petrosian, Tehran 2005) 8...♜e6 9 ♜c2 ♜c6 10 ♜f4 oc-

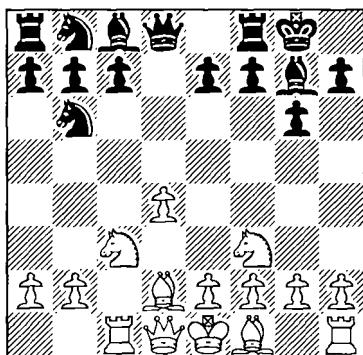
curred in G.Lorscheid-F.Holzke, Capelle la Grande 2002, and now 10... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ gives Black a nice initiative.

b) 7 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ transposes to a sideline examined in Line B and not a very good one for White at that.

c) 7 $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}8a6$ 9 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ was again good for Black in G.Kuzmin-L.Stein, Sochi 1970.

d) 7 e3 c5 8 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ gives Black obvious compensation; ... $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ is the intention and it is unlikely that White can even aspire to retain the extra pawn on c5.

7... $\mathbb{Q}b6$



8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

The only way to justify White's $\mathbb{Q}d2$ idea. Instead 8 e3 is pretty lame and after 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ e5 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ exd4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ bxc6 Black has a very active position, while 8 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ is best met by 8...c5! 9 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 10 bxc3 (or 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}a3$, J.Partanen-T.Halmeenmaki, Finland 2001, and now 12... $\mathbb{Q}d8+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 14 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with the initiative) 10... $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 c4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ when Black

was doing very well in V.Smyslov-H.Ree, Wijk aan Zee 1972.

8... $\mathbb{h}6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 10 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 e3 transposes.

9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 e3 g5 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ g4!

In this forceful way Black ensures that ...e5 will come with some effect.

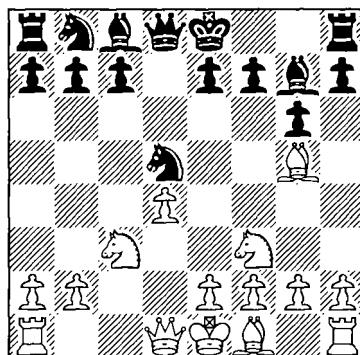
12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

12 $\mathbb{Q}h4?$ is even worse in view of 12...e5! 13 dxe5 (13 d5? $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 14 e4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ with a clear advantage.

12...e5! 13 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

Black has assumed the initiative and now 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17 bxc3 $\mathbb{W}d6!$ left White in big trouble in S.Martinovic-J.Timman, Amsterdam 1985, while even the superior 16 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ gives Black a powerful initiative.

C2) 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$



In this very rare line White will follow up with $\mathbb{Q}c1$, aiming to force Black to trade on c3.

6... $\mathbb{h}6$

The inclusion of this move is useful

because it restricts the influence of White's dark-squared bishop.

7 ♜h4

Naturally 7 ♜d2 is not very consistent; for example, 7...♝b6 8 e4 ♜g4 9 ♜e3 0-0 10 a4 a5 11 ♜e2 ♜c6 12 d5 ♜b4 13 ♜d2 (J.Stocek-J.Borisek, Nova Gorica 2004) 13...♜xf3 14 gxf3 e6 and Black is better.

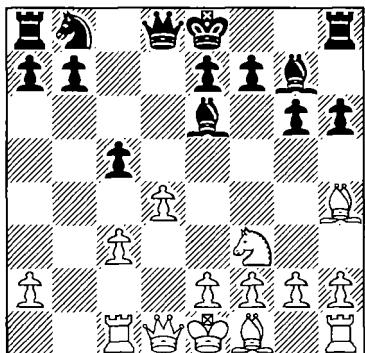
7...c5 8 ♜c1

8 e3 is again inconsistent. Black obtains a good position against an IQP with 8...cxd4 9 exd4 0-0 10 ♜c4 ♜b6 11 ♜b3 ♜c6 (11...♜g4!? 12 d5 ♜a6, intending ...♜c5 is another good plan) 12 d5 ♜a5 13 0-0 (T.Taylor-G.Antal, Budapest 2003) 13...♜xb3 14 ♜xb3 ♜g4, generating annoying threats.

8...♜xc3

Black must be careful here not to overlook that the obvious 8...cxd4?? loses to 9 ♜xd5.

9 bxc3 ♜e6



An important move. The bishop is going to d5, from where it eyes both

flanks and controls some important squares. Moreover, the a2-pawn is made to feel a little sensitive.

10 ♜a4+

Similar is 10 ♜d2 ♜c6 11 e3 ♜d5 when Black was fine in I.Sokolov-L.McShane, Selfoss 2003, while 10 e4?! asks too much from the position and 10...0-0 (10...♜a5 is also strong) 11 ♜e2 ♜xa2 12 0-0 ♜e6 hardly gives White any compensation for his pawn.

10...♜c6 11 e3 0-0 12 ♜e2 ♜d5

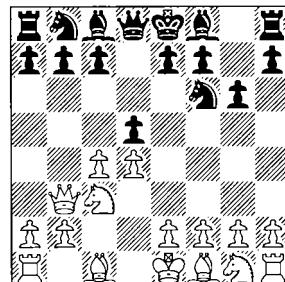
Black has equalized and can play for more, perhaps with a kingside advance; for example, 13 0-0 ♜c8 14 ♜fd1 cxd4 15 cxd4 g5 16 ♜g3 ♜a5 17 ♜b5 ♜xa4 18 ♜xa4 f5 saw White come under pressure in A.Lahiri-T.Vakhidov, Chennai 2004.

Conclusion

The Nadanian variation enjoyed some popularity a few years ago, but it has clearly been defanged. However, 5 ♜d2 is an important system and the weapon of several grandmasters. Against it, Black must not waste time in purposefully attacking White's centre and I feel that Black's chances are by no means inferior, especially since in many variations White's lag in development is a telling factor. Finally, the two rare lines examined after 5 ♜f3 ♜g7 do not present any danger; common sense should suffice to obtain a good position against them.

Chapter Seven

The Russian System



1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5

Here we will consider:

A: 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$

B: 4 $\mathbb{W}b3$

Line A is the Russian System, while Line B is a rare transpositional attempt. The Russian System is a critical branch of the Grünfeld since White intensifies the pressure against d5, practically forcing Black temporarily to abandon the centre.

A) 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $dxc4$ 6 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 0-0 7 e4

If left unhindered, White will now develop freely, stabilize his central superiority and deprive Black of counterplay. The alternatives are much less critical:

a) 7 g3?! is inconsistent with White's development scheme: 7... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}a4$ (8 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 10 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$, fol-

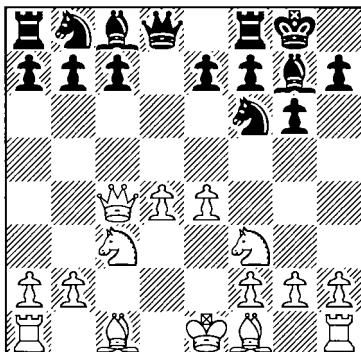
lowed by ... $\mathbb{W}d7$, is fine for Black) 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}d1$ (so far S.Reshevsky-W.Lombardy, New York 1960) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ leaves Black slightly better.

b) 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ gives Black the initiative.

c) 7 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ is tried on occasion. A simple and sound way to meet it is 7...c6! 8 e4 (harmless is 8 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 9 e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h6 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ with equality, while 8 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 9 e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$! intending ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ gives Black the initiative) 8...b5 9 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (9 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$! 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b4 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ c5! sees White's centre collapse) 9... $\mathbb{Q}e6$! (planning ... $\mathbb{W}a5$ and ...b4) 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ (in E.Hadet-C.Marcelin, Issy Les Moulineaux 2000, White preferred 10 d5 cxd5 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$, but now 11... $\mathbb{Q}c6$! is promising for Black) 10... $\mathbb{W}a5$ and again Black has the initiative.

After 7 e4, Black usually opts for 7... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and then ...c5, or the more ambi-

tious 7... $\mathbb{Q}a6$, intending ... $b5$ and ... $c5$. Overall, I feel that Black is walking a tightrope in these systems (especially so after 7... $a6$), while the deep theoretical knowledge necessary to employ them is somewhat off-putting. Instead I have opted for a less violent set-up:

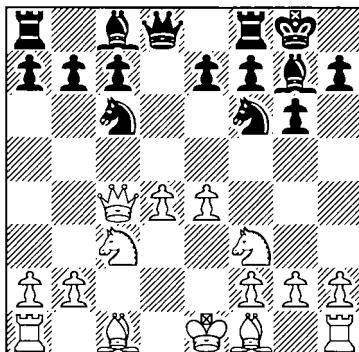


7... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$?

Black opts for piece play against White's centre. Such a strategy is often possible when White is unable to support $d4$ with a pawn and I see no reason why it shouldn't work here.

Not that this system is a sideline; on the contrary, it bears the stamp of the great ex-world champion Vassily Smyslov and was Black's initial reaction to the Russian System in the Fifties and Sixties. 7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ has never been refuted and is still employed at the top level, although it is not currently especially fashionable. However, the direction of fashion towards the two aforementioned alternatives is mostly due to the influences of Garry Kasparov (for 7... $\mathbb{Q}a6$) and the Hungarian school (7... $a6$), who have both always preferred to strive for more direct and

complex play.



First of all with 7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, Black eyes $d4$, greatly restricting White's development options. He intends to gain time by harassing the white queen with the important manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-b6$, while the light-squared bishop is destined for $g4$. At the right moment, a central break will occur, with dark square domination often a resultant feature. Sometimes after ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-b6$, Black will even strike with ... $f5$; a concept we've already seen in the 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ variation.

Our preferred system can also arise after 7... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, but like Rowson, I feel that the suggested move order is preferable, as it strongly discourages 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$, as we shall see. White has now tried several moves:

A1: 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

A2: 8 $d5$

A3: 8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

A4: 8 $e5$

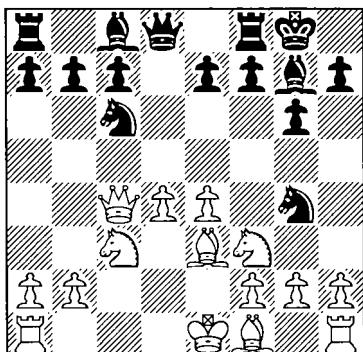
A5: 8 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

A6: 8 $h3$

A7: 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

A1) 8 ♜e3? ♛g4!

positional advantage.



A key idea behind not hurrying with ...♜g4.

9 0-0-0

Alternatively:

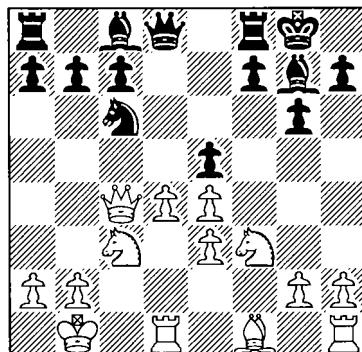
a) 9 e5 ♜e6 10 ♜c5 (D.Lima-E.Tsuboi, Brasilia 2000) 10...a5 threatens ...♝b4 when White is already on the defensive.

b) 9 ♜e2 ♛xe3 10 fxe3 e5 11 d5 (or 11 0-0 exd4 12 exd4 ♜xd4 13 ♜ad1 ♜xf3+ 14 ♜xf3 ♜g5 with the initiative) 11...♜e7 12 0-0-0 a6 13 ♜b1 ♜d6 14 ♜b3 b5 15 ♜c1 ♜d7 and in J.Murray-F.Olafsson, Reykjavik 1975, Black had the upper hand.

c) 9 ♜d1 ♛xe3 10 fxe3 e5! sees Black immediately strike on the dark squares: 11 d5 (or 11 dxe5 ♜e8 12 ♜d5 ♛xe5 13 ♜xc7 ♜h8 with excellent compensation as ...f5 is coming – just look at the poor white king!) 11...♜e7 12 ♜e2 (V.Raceanu-N.Gerard, Bucharest 2002) 12...a6 and Black, who intends ...♜d6 and ...f5, has the initiative.

9...♛xe3 10 fxe3 e5 11 ♜b1

Instead 11 dxe5 ♜e8 12 ♜d5 ♛xe5 leaves Black with an unquestionable



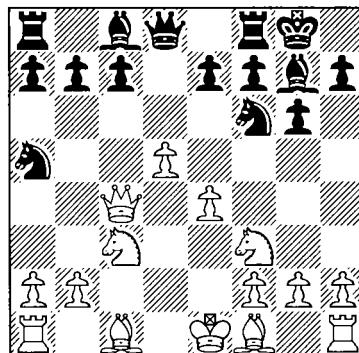
11...♜g4 12 d5 ♜e7 13 h3 ♜d7 14 h4 ♜c8 15 h5 ♜d6 16 ♜b3 b5 17 hxg6 fxg6

Black enjoys the initiative, O.Jakobsen-D.Howell, Copenhagen 2006.

A2) 8 d5?!

This commits White's central pawns too soon.

8...♞a5



9 ♜d3

White has tried a number of other options, but in each case Black strikes quickly at d5 with ...c6 and gains a good game.

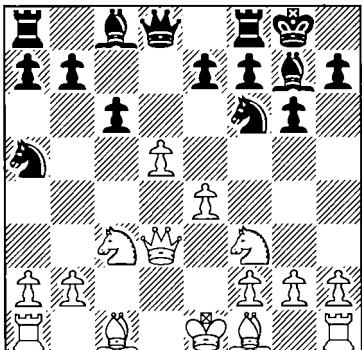
a) 9 $\mathbb{W}c5$ c6 10 dxc6 (and not 10 b4? cxd5! 11 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dxe4 with a clear advantage) 10... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (J.Richardson-S.Ernst, Lichfield 2000) 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}de5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ with an edge.

b) 9 $\mathbb{W}b4$ c6 10 dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with the initiative.

c) 9 $\mathbb{W}a4$ c6 10 dxc6 (instead 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ cxd5 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ b6 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ bxa5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ is obviously good for Black, while 10 b4? $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5!? 12 e5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ just wins) 10... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 0-0 e6 16 a4 was seen in T.Nemec-D.Koval, Bratislava 1991, and now simply 16... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ ensures equality.

d) 9 $\mathbb{W}b5$ c6 10 dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a6 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (M.Pukkila-P.Jantti, Helsinki 2000) 12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ and Black is better.

9...c6



10 dxc6

Of course, 10 b4? $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ is a blunder and White should also avoid 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ cxd5 11 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ (J.Thomassen-K.White,

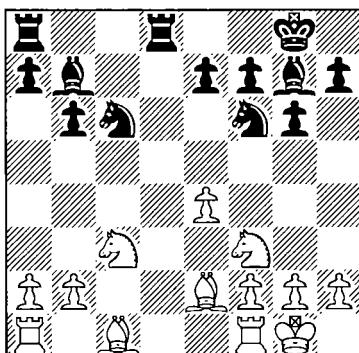
Gausdal 2005) when Black can win with 17... $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}h6$. Finally, 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ cxd5 11 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (T.Kuzmak-P.Staniszewski, Bielsko Biala 1990) is much better for Black, who has two strong bishops.

10... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$

Black has a slight development lead.

12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b6 13 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$

Here 14 e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ gives Black the initiative. Thus White preferred 14 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ in W.Uhlmann-V.Korchnoi, Stockholm Interzonal 1962, but after 14... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ Black had a slight edge due to his bishop pair.



A3) 8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6

Renewing the problem of where to station the bishop.

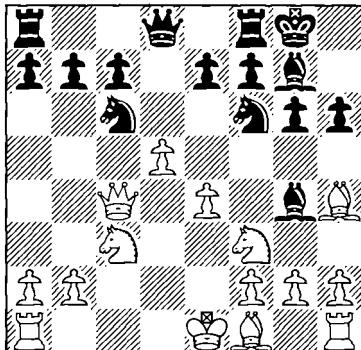
9 $\mathbb{Q}h4$

This leaves the bishop away from the centre, which means that White will have to push d5, but the alternatives also fail to impress:

a) 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 10 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ gives Black good long-term chances with his extra dark-squared bishop; he should continue with ... $\mathbb{W}d6$ and ...a5.

b) 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathcal{Q}g4$ 10 e5 was seen in V.Epishin-A.Ledger, Gibraltar 2003, and now the typical 10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathcal{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ a5, intending ...a4 or ... $\mathcal{Q}b4$, gives Black good play.

9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10 d5



10... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

The direct 10... $\mathcal{Q}a5$ can also be played and is similar: 11 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12 gxf3 b6 (Black can also equalize with the forcing 12...c6!?, 13 0-0-0 cxd5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15 $\mathcal{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathcal{Q}c6$ 17 $\mathcal{Q}xf6+$ exf6 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathcal{Q}xb4$ as White's kingside pawn structure is weakened) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ a6 14 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}d6!$ and Black had the initiative in A.Guseinov-D.Zagoriskis, Pardubice 1995.

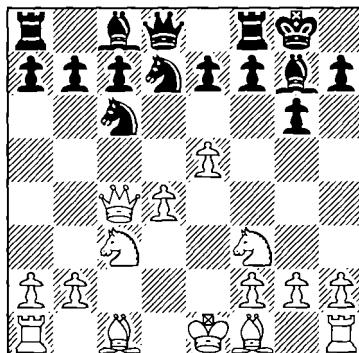
11 gxf3

Instead 11 dxc6 b5 12 $\mathcal{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ exf6 is promising for Black, as is 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 12 dxc6 b5 13 $\mathcal{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$.

11... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathcal{Q}h5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ c6

With a typical position for this line and one in which Black stands well; White's lack of development is a cause for concern.

A4) 8 e5!? $\mathcal{Q}d7$



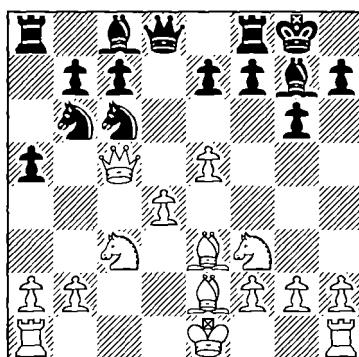
9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

Black was comfortably placed after 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathcal{Q}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ h6 12 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathcal{Q}d5$ in J.Colchado-M.Aguilar, Lima 2002.

9... $\mathcal{Q}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c5$

Best, whereas 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (also promising is 10...a5 11 a3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ a4, K.Stead-V.Feldman, Gold Coast 2001) 11 $\mathbb{W}d1$ (11 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathcal{Q}b4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathcal{Q}c4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ c5 gave Black a clear edge in Z.Birovljevic-M.Podobnik, Pula 2000) 11... $\mathbb{W}d7$ gives Black an edge, with ... $\mathbb{W}ad8$ and ...f6 being the plan.

10...a5! 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$



White should avoid 11 a3? a4! when suddenly a nasty ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is threatened: 12 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (M.Miranda-E.Tsuboi, Curitiba 1999) 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ prepares ... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ and leaves White in real trouble.

11... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12 0-0 c6

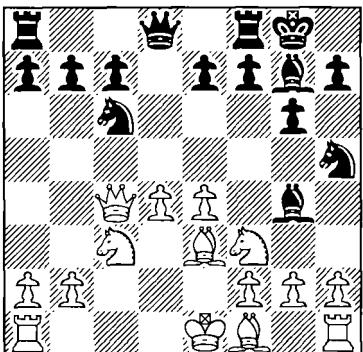
12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$? is also interesting: 13 $\mathbb{W}b5$ (13 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c5$ repeats the position) 13...c6 14 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ was equal in B.Gulko-V.Gavrikov, Tallinn 1983.

After the text, 13 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$? is a serious mistake: 14... $\mathbb{Q}6d5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16 a4 f5 (16... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$?! 17 fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ was also very good for Black in V.Milov-Ma.Tseitlin, Tel Aviv 1994) 17 exf6 exf6 and Black is much better; ...f5 is next. Better is 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$, although after 14... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ Black has equalized.

A5) 8 $\mathbb{Q}f4$

A critical move. The c6-knight is now pinned and White threatens d4-d5, so Black must react purposefully.

8... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$



In this way Black mangles White's kingside structure and can then hope

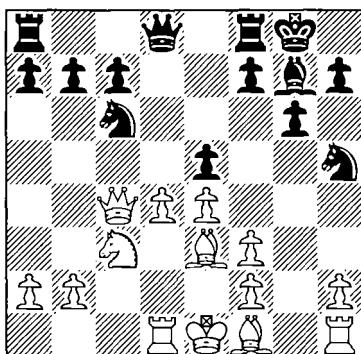
to gain a positional advantage, particularly on the dark squares. In return White will play for either a kingside attack or a direct central breakthrough, leading to some rather complex and dynamic positions.

10 0-0-0

The most aggressive choice, but also the most risky. Alternatively:

a) 10 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 g3 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ c6 (S.Pedersen-L.Schandorff, Aalborg 2000) and Black cannot possibly be worse.

b) 10 $\mathbb{Q}d1$?! $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11 gxf3 e5

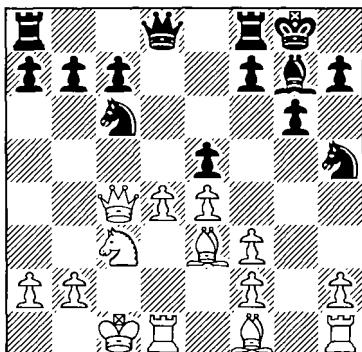


12 dxе5 (or 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ with an obvious advantage; here 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ was an ambitious positional exchange sacrifice in Y.Razuvayev-Y.Kotkov, Moscow 1969, but I don't see the point as 15...c6 opens lines for the black rooks and appears rather promising) 12... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (13 e6? $\mathbb{Q}e5$ highlights the weakness of f3) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ and Black enjoys the initiative.

c) 10 e5 is rather anti-positional, but White hopes to exploit the position of the h5-knight. However, after 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

11 $\mathbb{W}a4$ c5 12 $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$, Black was able to dismantle White's centre and to solve all his problems in Z.Kozul-L.Gutman, Graz 1987.

10... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11 $\mathbb{g}xf3$ e5!



Aiming for the aforementioned dark square control.

12 d5

Instead 12 dxе5 $\mathbb{W}h4$ 13 e6 fxe6! (13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 exf7+ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b3$ c6 is given as promising by Rowson, but after 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ White just seems to be better) 14 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ gives Black good compensation.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 13 f4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

White can also win the exchange, but 14 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$! (14...exf4? 15 $\mathbb{W}b3$! threatens the unpleasant $\mathbb{Q}e2$) 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ gives Black excellent play on the dark squares. He also gains good prospects after 14 f5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 15 fxg6 hxg6 16 h4 c6 (16...c5 can also be tried; 17 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a6 20 $\mathbb{B}c1$ b5 21 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ gave Black promising compensation in R.Markus-C.Lupulescu, Subotica 2003) 17 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d6$, intending a pawn-storm on the queenside with ...b5 and ...a5.

14...exf4 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ fxe3 16 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ gxh5

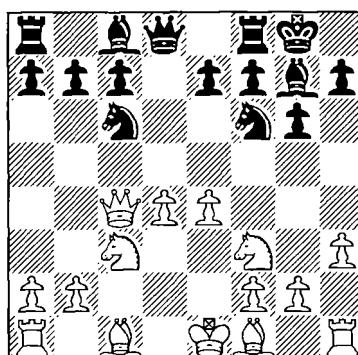
17 fxe3

Or 17 f4 $\mathbb{W}h4$ with some advantage.

17... $\mathbb{W}d6$

The great scope of the g7-bishop gives Black excellent compensation for his split kingside.

A6) 8 h3



Preventing ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and facilitating $\mathbb{Q}e3$, but this gives Black a significant tempo.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

8...e5!? is another way to exploit White's loss of time: 9 dxе5 (9 d5? $\mathbb{Q}d4$, intending 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$? exd4 11 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$!, is good for Black) 9... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (but not 9... $\mathbb{Q}e6$? 10 exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 11 fxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ and White's pieces outclassed Black's extra queen in J.Van den Bersealaar-J.Hulin, Bethune 2003) 10 e6 (or 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}dxe5$! 11 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ with unpleasant threats) 10...fxe6 11 $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$?! also deserves attention, but is ultimately inadequate: 13 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$! $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ c6 16 $\mathbb{W}d6$! $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 19 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ with a clear advan-

tage for White) 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and Black has good compensation for the pawn.

9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

9 d5 is inconsistent: 9... $\mathbb{Q}ce5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b3$ e6 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ exd5 13 exd5 c6 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ cxd5 15 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}fxd8$, threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, was promising for Black in G.Levtchouk-S.Barbeau, Quebec 1987) 12...exd5 13 exd5 (13 0-0-0 c6 14 exd5 cxd5 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ transposes, while 15 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ gives Black the initiative) 13...c6 14 0-0-0 cxd5 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ was T.Jugelt-S.Joachim, German League 1995, and now after 15... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, Black has the upper hand.

9... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c5$

This is almost always the best response to ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$, as other moves further misplace the queen and lose control of the position. Indeed, 10 $\mathbb{W}d3?$! f5! threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ and is awkward for White:

a) 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2?$ f4 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ was a disaster for White in K.Hjornevik-T.Bae, Oslo 2003.

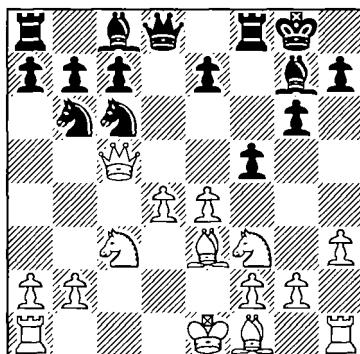
b) 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1?$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (or 11...fxe4 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$, threatening both ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ and the a2-pawn) 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ fxe4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ with the advantage, W.Uhlmann-E.Jimenez Zerquera, Tel Aviv Olympiad 1964.

c) 11 e5 f4 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}d1$ (R.Canaza-H.Retamozo, Lima 2004) 13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ gives Black an edge.

d) 11 $\mathbb{W}d2$ fxe4 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ (Black is beautifully centralized and has a promising position; ...e5 is on

the cards) 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (or 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ e5 15 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ which gave Black a clear advantage in I.Bender-M.Konopka, Plzen 2001) 14... $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 15 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ with a powerful initiative and great positional compensation for the exchange.

10...f5!



Again, this is the most incisive way to play.

11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$

Instead 11 $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ threatens ...f4, while 11 e5 is met by 11...f4! 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ a5 (threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$) 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 14 0-0 c6 is better for Black) 13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and Black stands well, but not 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7?$ due to 14 $\mathbb{W}c4+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

11...fxe4 12 $\mathbb{Q}e5!$

Both 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ e6 intending ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ are better for Black (Suetin).

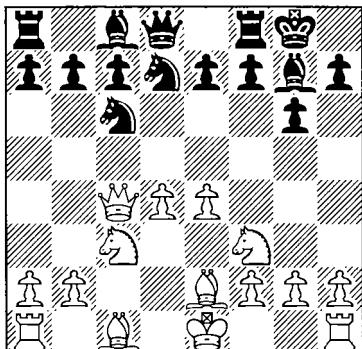
12... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}d5!$

Black has equalized, S.Lputian-Y.Balashov, Moscow 1981.

A7) 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

White elects simply to develop and refrains from immediate action.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$



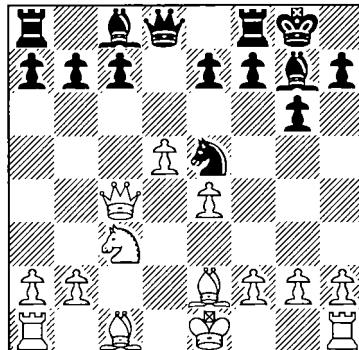
9 d5?

An interesting attempt to achieve a slight edge. Instead 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ can now be safely played, but Black is in time to obtain counterplay: 9... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c5$ (or 10 $\mathbb{W}d3$ f5 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ f4 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with at least equality for Black, while here 11 e5? f4 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ creates great problems with the d4-pawn) 10...f5 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (alternatively 11 e5 f4 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ was seen in S.Bromberger-M.Keller, Bad Wiessee 2003, and now 13... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ supplies strong pressure; 11 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 f4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ fxе4 15 0-0-0 $\mathbb{W}d6$ is less clear-cut but still better for Black, although he must be careful about the dark squares around his king) 11...fxe4 12 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ (12 d5? exf3 13 dxс6 fxg2 14 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ is clearly bad for White, but possible is 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with equality) 12... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxс6 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ and Black is fine.

9... $\mathbb{Q}ce5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ intends ...f5, forcing White on to the defensive.

10... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$



The correct recapture, whereas Black's position was a mess after 10... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c5$ f6 13 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 14 f4 in J.Lautier-J.De la Villa Garcia, Pamplona 2000.

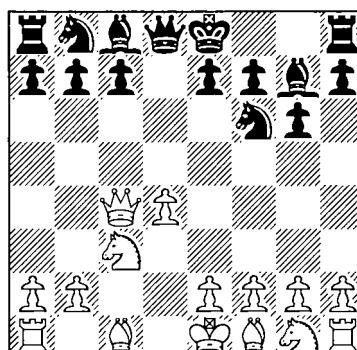
11 $\mathbb{W}b3$ e6 12 0-0 exd5 13 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$

Also worthy of attention is 13... $\mathbb{W}h4$?, preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ a6

Having prevented an annoying $\mathbb{Q}b5$, Black intends ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ with threatening activity.

B) 4 $\mathbb{W}b3$ dxс4 5 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$



Play will now normally transpose to the Russian System, but White also has

a few harmless alternatives.

6 e4

Instead 6 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathcal{Q}c6$ 7 $\mathcal{Q}f3$ 0-0 is equal, whereas 6 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c6 can easily turn out well for Black:

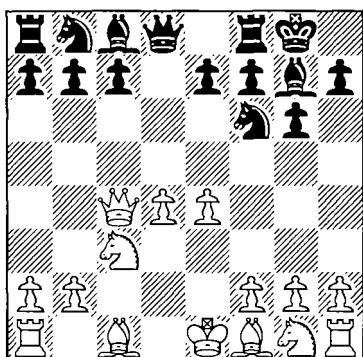
a) 7 e3 0-0 8 $\mathcal{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ is fine for the second player.

b) 7 $\mathbb{Q}d1$!?! $\mathbb{W}a5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ was played in the famous game M.Euwe-A.Alekhine, World Championship (Game 4), The Hague 1935, and now 8... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$, as suggested by Suetin, is good for Black.

c) 7 $\mathcal{Q}f3$ 0-0 8 e4 b5 9 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (or 9 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$! 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b4 11 $\mathcal{Q}d1$ c5!) 9... $\mathbb{Q}e6$! (Kasparov's suggestion) 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ and Black has the initiative.

d) 7 e4 b5 8 $\mathbb{W}d3$ b4 9 $\mathcal{Q}a4$ (or 9 $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12 $\mathcal{Q}f3$ $\mathcal{Q}bd7$ 13 $\mathcal{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 14 $\mathcal{Q}xf1$ c5 and Black is much better in view of White's exposed king, E.Werner-I.Zalys, correspondence 1953) 9... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}e3$ 0-0 favours Black.

6...0-0



7 $\mathcal{Q}f3$

Once again White has a number of lesser options:

a) 7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathcal{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathcal{Q}f3$ transposes to Line A7, whereas 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 9 $\mathcal{Q}f3$ exd4 10 $\mathcal{Q}xd4$ (N.Vanderhallen-R.Swinkels, Vlissingen 2005) 10... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ threatens ... $\mathcal{Q}fg4$ and leaves White in trouble.

b) 7 f3 $\mathcal{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 9 d5 $\mathcal{Q}d4$ is better for Black.

c) 7 e5 $\mathcal{Q}fd7$ 8 $\mathcal{Q}f3$ $\mathcal{Q}b6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ intends ... $\mathcal{Q}c6$ and ...a5.

d) 7 h3 $\mathcal{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathcal{Q}d7$ is unpleasant for White, in view of the coming ... $\mathcal{Q}b6$ and ...f5.

e) 7 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathcal{Q}c6$ 8 d5 (8 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathcal{Q}d7$! 9 $\mathcal{Q}f3$ $\mathcal{Q}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathcal{Q}e5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$! 14 $\mathbb{W}e3$ f5! gave Black the initiative in Y.Yakovich-P.Svidler, St Petersburg 1993) 8...e5! 9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathcal{Q}d4$! 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$? exd4 11 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathcal{Q}xe4$! 12 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ is winning for Black) 9... $\mathcal{Q}d4$ and Black was better in T.Jobe-M.Bestvina, correspondence 2000.

7... $\mathcal{Q}c6$

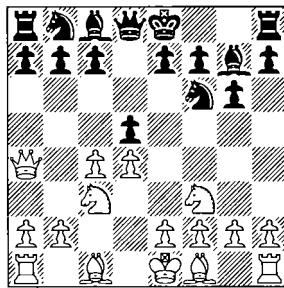
Play has returned to Line A.

Conclusion

The Russian System is one of White's most threatening options. Against it I have opted for a positionally-oriented but still dynamic system, focusing on piece play against White's centre and exposed queen. White cannot fully contain Black's counterplay, and even his more ambitious tries do not succeed in reaching more than a complex position with mutual chances.

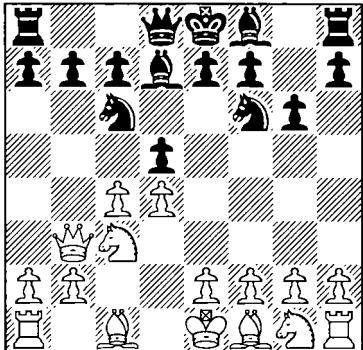
Chapter Eight

♚ a4+ Systems



1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 d5 4 ♜f3

Should White wish to check, he is recommended to delay it for a move. Quite simply the immediate 4 ♜a4+ is less precise in view of the forceful response 4...♜d7 5 ♜b3 ♜c6!.



Now ...♜a5 is threatened and after the logical sequence 6 ♜f3 (6 ♜xb7? ♜b8 7 ♜a6 ♜b4 simply wins for Black, while 6 cxd5 ♜xd4 7 ♜d1 ♜b5 8 ♜d2 ♜xc3 9 ♜xc3 c6 10 e4 ♜g7 11 dxc6 ♜xc6 12 ♜d3 0-0 13 ♜e2 ♜h5! leaves Black with much the superior development,

I.Kan-P.Dubinin, USSR Ch., Leningrad 1947) 6...♜a5 7 ♜b4 ♜xc4 8 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 9 ♜xc4 ♜b6 10 ♜c2 ♜g7 Black has the initiative (Botvinnik).

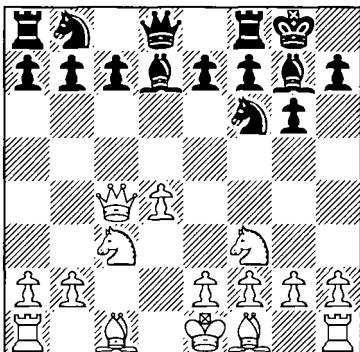
4...♜g7 5 ♜a4+ ♜d7 6 ♜b3 dxc4! 7 ♜xc4

Of course, White can't play 7 ♜xb7? due to 7...♜c6! 8 ♜f4 (8 ♜a6? ♜b4 9 ♜xc4 ♜c2+) 8...♜b8 9 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 10 ♜xc7 ♜xb2 when Black is much better, T.Sorri-I.Koskimaa, correspondence 1981.

7...0-0

We have now reached a position very similar to the Russian System, with Black having played the extra move ...♜d7. White hopes that this move is actually harmful for Black, by virtue of releasing some of the pressure against d4 and restricting the light-squared bishop's options. However, a tempo is a tempo and Black can make good use of his extra move with a quick ...b5.

White's main options are now:



A: 8 ♕f4

B: 8 e4

Instead 8 e3 ♔a6!? (8...♔e6 9 ♕a4 c5 is a simple equalizer) 9 ♕b3 (9 ♔e5? is a mistake due to 9...c5! 10 dxc5 ♔e6 intending ...♔d5, while 9 ♔e2 c5 10 0-0 cxd4 11 exd4 ♕b6 also gives Black the upper hand) 9...c5 10 ♔xa6 bxa6 11 0-0 cxd4 12 ♔xd4 ♕a5 13 ♔d2 ♔ab8 14 ♕c2 ♔fc8 left Black for preference in E.Grünfeld-L.Pachman, Vienna 1949.

A) 8 ♕f4

A valid option, just as in the Russian System.

8...♔a6

This seems the most logical. Black will play ...c5 next and is ready to follow with ...b5 if needed, while the c8-square is now available for his major pieces.

9 e4

Alternatively, 9 ♔d1?! c5 10 dxc5 ♕a5 11 e4 ♔ac8 (11...♔ad8?!, intending ...♔e6, offers Black good play and is probably a better choice) 12 e5 ♔xc5 13

♕b3 (13 exf6? ♕xc4 14 fxe7 ♔e4+ 15 ♔e3 ♔d8 was winning for Black in E.Ermenkov-Ghizdavu, Varna 1973) 13...♔e4 14 ♔xd7 ♕xc3 15 bxc3 ♔ac5 16 ♕b4 ♕xb4 17 cxb4 ♔xd7 reaches an equal position.

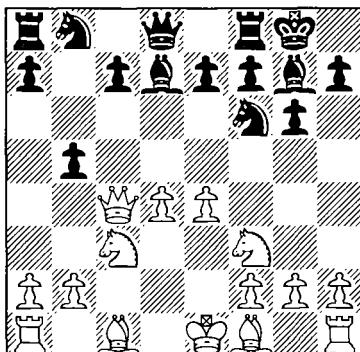
9...c5! 10 e5

The 10 d5 of I.Solomunovic-I.Saric, Pula 2004, should be met by 10...b5! 11 ♔xb5 ♔xe4 12 ♕xe4 ♔xb5 13 ♔xb5 ♕a5+ 14 ♔d2 ♕xb5 15 ♔c4 ♕b4+ 16 ♔d2 ♕b7 with an edge in view of the coming ...e6. Note that 10 dxc5 ♕c8 is also fine for Black.

10...♔h5 11 ♔e3 cxd4 12 ♕xd4 ♔c6 13 ♔e2 ♕xf3 14 ♕xf3 ♕xd4 15 ♕xd4 ♔b4 16 0-0-0 ♔f4

Black has equalized, A.Riazantsev-E.Sutovsky, Sochi 2005.

B) 8 e4 b5!

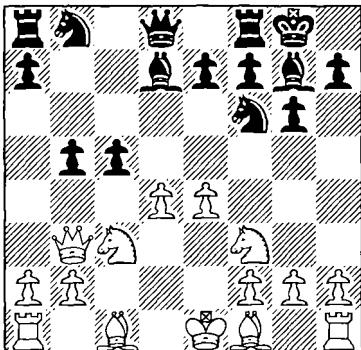


9 ♕c5 c6 plans an awkward ...♔a6, so White usually chooses between:

B1: 9 ♕b3

B2: 9 ♔xb5

B1) 9 ♜b3 c5



Logical, and now we reach an important tabiya for this variation.

10 dxc5

Two critical alternatives are:

a) 10 ♜xb5?! ♜xb5 11 ♜xb5 (11 ♜xb5 cxd4 12 ♜e2 a6 13 ♜d3 e5 is just better for Black) 11...♜xe4 12 0-0 cxd4 13 ♜c4 ♜d6 14 ♜d5 ♜d7 15 ♜bx d4 ♜b6 16 ♜b3 ♜bc4 17 ♜d1 was Y.Anikaev-V.Malishauskas, USSR 1983, and now 17...♜c8 leaves Black clearly better.

b) 10 e5 ♜g4 and now:

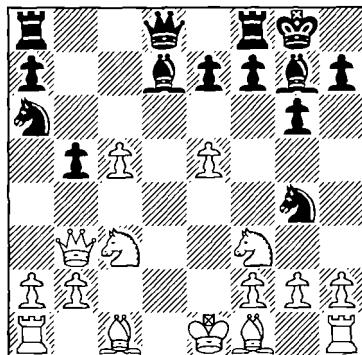
b1) 11 h3 cxd4 12 hxg4 dxc3 13 ♜xc3 ♜xg4 gives Black the initiative.

b2) 11 ♜d5 cxd4! (11...♜c6!? 12 ♜xc5 ♜c8!) is an interesting suggestion of Kasparov's) 12 ♜xd4 (12 ♜xa8 dxc3 is much better for Black) 12...♜b6 13 ♜xb5 ♜xe5 and, according to Kasparov, Black has a serious advantage.

b3) 11 ♜xb5 cxd4 12 ♜xd4 ♜xb5 (12...♜xe5?! is also interesting; 13 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 is clearly better for Black and after 13 ♜d5 ♜b6! – Kasparov – White's position looks very loose) 13 ♜dx b5 a6 14 ♜a3 (safer is 14 ♜a4 ♜xe5 with just an edge for Black) 14...♜d4!

15 ♜c2 (Black gains a strong attack after 15 0-0 ♜xe5 16 g3 ♜h5 – Kasparov) 15...♜c6 16 ♜e2 ♜xe5! 17 ♜xe5 (17 ♜c4 ♜xe2+ 18 ♜xe2 ♜b4 19 0-0 ♜ac8 again leaves Black much better) 17...♜gxe5 18 0-0 ♜d3 19 ♜b1 ♜ab8 20 ♜d1 ♜fd8 21 ♜f1 f5! and Black was clearly on top in R.Hübner-G.Kasparov, Brussels 1986.

10...♜a6 11 e5 ♜g4



12 ♜xb5

Alternatively, 12 e6 ♜xc5 13 exf7+ (13 ♜b4 ♜xe6 14 ♜xg4 ♜d4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd4 b4 17 ♜e4 e5 wins for Black) 13...♜h8 14 ♜a3 (U.Osieka-M.Pein, Lugano 1986) 14...♜b6 is clearly better for Black, and 12 ♜f4 ♜xc5 13 ♜d5 ♜b6 14 ♜d2 ♜c6 was again much better for Black in R.Goletiani-M.Neubauer, Port Erin 2005.

12...♜b8

As Adorjan observes, Black has good compensation here; he now threatens ...♜c7.

B2) 9 ♜xb5 ♜xe4! 10 ♜xc7

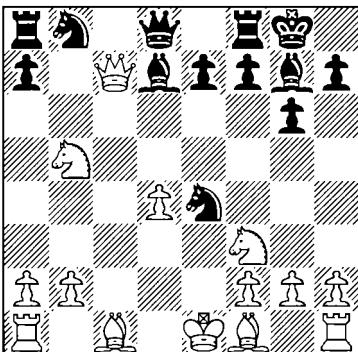
The only way for White to justify his opening play, but a risky venture nonetheless. Alternatively:

a) 10 $\mathbb{W}d5?$ $c6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{A}f5!$ leaves White in big trouble.

b) 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc7?$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (or 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with the advantage) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ and Black was already winning in S.Kiselev-V.Kozlov, Moscow 1986.

c) 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ was seen in V.Golod-J.Gustafsson, Dieren 1999, and is best met by 10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 13 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ with a strong initiative.

d) 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ is tame and after 10... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ Black clearly has no problems.



10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Davies suggests 10... $\mathbb{Q}a6?$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}fxd8$, but I don't see what to do after the calm 12 $a3$, intending $\mathbb{Q}e2$ and 0-0.

11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6!$

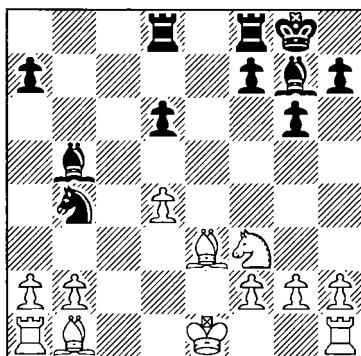
This move makes great sense to me. Black exchanges White's active pieces and increases his lead in development. Instead 11... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}axd8$ is often quoted as a simple equalizer, but I beg to differ. After the accurate 14 $a3!$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (or 14... $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ with an endgame

edge; note that the b4-square is unavailable to the black rook) 15 $axb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17 $gxf3$ White can definitely hope for more than a draw.

12 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}axd8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $exd6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$

Giorgadze feels that White is much better after 14... $\mathbb{Q}g4?!$ 15 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16 $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 18 $fxe3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ and I have to agree.

15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$



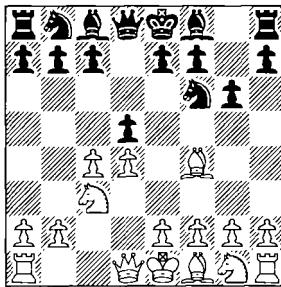
With the white king stuck, Black has at least good compensation for the pawn. He will most likely obtain the two bishops with ... $\mathbb{Q}d3+$, while White has trouble activating his rooks.

Conclusion

The lines in this chapter are hardly dangerous for Black. The check must be met by ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and then Black can make use of his extra move, in comparison with the Russian System, to play a quick ... $b5$. It turns out that the tempo gained by Black is more significant than the slight disharmony caused by the position of the bishop on d7.

Chapter Nine

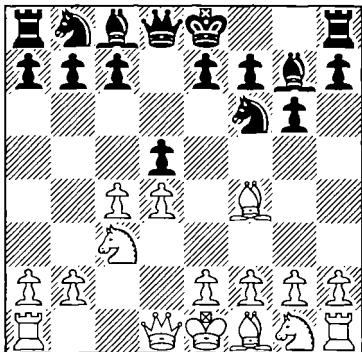
♞ f4 Systems



1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♞c3 d5 4 ♜f4

Rather than immediately occupy the centre with his pawns, White opts initially for piece play.

4...♝g7



There are now three main options:

A: 5 ♜c1

B: 5 e3

C: 5 ♞f3

White also has a number of less im-

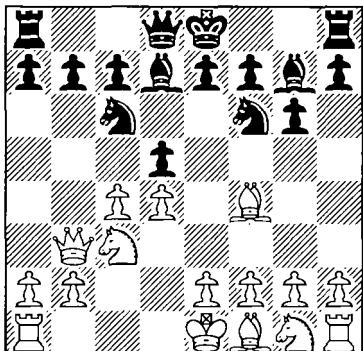
portant options; a situation typical, I'm afraid, of the ♜f4 systems in general. There is a fair amount of theory, albeit mostly harmless for Black!

Those 5th move alternatives:

a) Immediately capturing on c7 is not advisable: 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 7 ♜xc7 ♜a6 8 ♜e5 (8 ♜f4 ♜xd4 9 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 regains the pawn with advantage, V.Kucera-P.Kozak, Prague 2005) 8...♜xe5 9 dxe5 ♜xe5 10 ♜d2 ♜g4 and Black has a strong initiative.

b) 5 ♜e5 is best met by 5...dxc4! 6 e4 (or 6 e3 ♜c6 7 ♜a4 0-0 8 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 9 ♜xc4, M.Aadrians-J.Dekic, Budapest 1996, and now 9...♜d7 when Black threatens both ...♜xd4 and ...e5, with a strong initiative) 6...♜c6 7 ♜xc4 (7 f4 0-0 8 ♜xc4 ♜g4 is better for Black) 7...♜xe5 8 dxe5 ♜xd1+ 9 ♜xd1 ♜g4 10 ♜b5 ♜xe5 11 ♜f3 ♜d6 12 ♜xd6 (Black is also on top after 12 h3 ♜e5 13 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 14 ♜d5 ♜f4) 12...cxd6 13 ♜c7+ ♜d8 14 ♜xa8 ♜e6! and Black is better (Uhlmann).

c) 5 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ is a strong response to the check, just as in the previous chapter, and comes with a double threat:



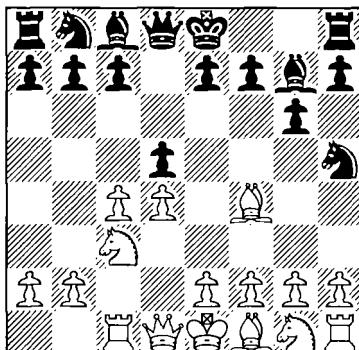
7 e3 (instead 7 cxd5? $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 8 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 10 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 0-0 was horrible for White in A.Rothman-S.Reshevsky, New York 1946, and very risky is 7 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 8 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 10 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 13 e3 e5 with abundant compensation, since White's king is a target and his kingside still asleep) 7... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 8 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}b8!$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xb8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ (the queen exchange has left White with the difficult task of protecting all his weaknesses, while Black also benefits from the bishop pair) 12 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}fb8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and Black was at least equal in N.Spiridonov-V.Jansa, Polanica Zdroj 1979.

A) 5 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

A tricky move, discouraging both ...c5 and ...0-0. However, Black has an

enticing possibility at his disposal.

5... $\mathbb{Q}h5?$



It is surprising just how much disruption is caused by this move!

6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

The only good reply. Rowson explains why simple moves won't suffice:

a) 6 e3?! $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 7 exf4 $dxc4$ and Black is better.

b) 6 $\mathbb{Q}e5$?! $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 7 $dxe5$ $d4!$ gives Black the initiative.

c) 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$?! $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $dxc4$ again with the initiative.

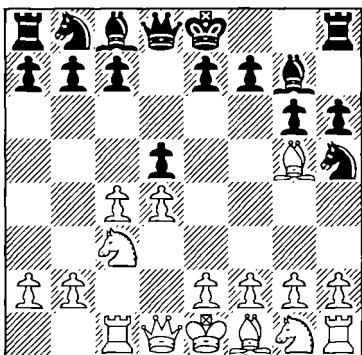
d) 6 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 7 $hxg3$ $dxc4$ 8 e3 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ c5! 10 $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with good play on the dark squares.

e) 6 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ is relatively preferable, but also rather passive. A.Lauber-J.Gustafsson, German League 1999, continued 6...c5! 7 e3 (7 $dxc5$ $d4$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is well met by 8... $\mathbb{Q}a6$, while 8 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ can be met by Krasenkow's 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$) 7... $cxd4$ 8 $exd4$ $dxc4!$ (the resultant IQP position is promising for Black) 9 $d5$ (9 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0-0 10 $d5$ transposes, whereas 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$?! $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 $d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ is good for Black) 9...0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ allows

11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ and then ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$) 11... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and now simple and good was 12... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$, increasing the pressure against d5.

6...h6!

The bishop must be kicked.



7 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$

Again the most consistent, whereas 7 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $dxc4$! 8 e3 enables Black to retain the c4-pawn by playing 8... $\mathbb{Q}e6$! (seeing that $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is no longer possible for White) 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (Black was better after 9 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}c2$ b5 12 b3 $cx b3$ 13 $axb3$ c6 14 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ f5 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ in W.Heinig-A.Colovic, Bad Wörishofen 2005) 9...c6 10 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}c2$ b5 12 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$! 13 $gxf3$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 14 b3 $cx b3$ 15 $axb3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 0-0. With ...e5 coming, I don't see any compensation for White.

7... $dxc4$! 8 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

It is not clear how White is planning to recover the pawn on c4.

9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Instead both 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 d5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0-0 12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ g5 and

9 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 e4 b6 12 $exd5$ (J.Szabolcsi-J.Chabanon, Eger 1992) 12... $bxc5$ 13 $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ leave Black better.

9... $\mathbb{Q}f6$! 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

Of course 10 $\mathbb{W}a4$? c6 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$? b5 is impossible, while 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ is well met by 10... $exf6$ followed by ...f5 (Rowson).

10...c6

White's problem is not only the pawn minus, but also the fact that the extra c4-pawn greatly restricts his pieces.

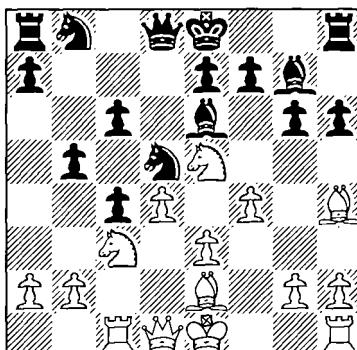
11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Alternatively, 11 0-0 (J.Horvath-T.Fogarasi, Zalakaros 1994) 11... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$! is fine for Black, as 12 $\mathbb{Q}e5$? $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}fxd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ drops the e5-pawn, while 11 a4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13 0-0 0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $exf6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}ce4$ (I.Stavrianakis-A.Sismanis, Ermioni 2005) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ allows White to recover the pawn, but at the cost of the bishop pair; Black stands well.

11...b5 12 f4

12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d5$! 13 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$! 14 $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is good for Black.

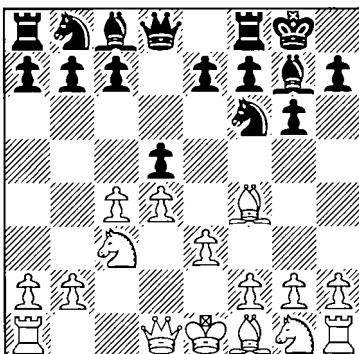
12... $\mathbb{Q}d5$



Now the 13 $\mathbb{W}d2$ of A.Dreev-P.Leko, Wijk aan Zee 1996, can be met by 13...g5!? 14 fxg5 $\mathbb{A}xe5$ 15 dxe5 hxg5 16 $\mathbb{A}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ when Black is better. White might thus try and prepare $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with 13 $\mathbb{A}f2!$?, but after 13... $\mathbb{Q}b6$! 14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$! 15 b3 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 fxe5 $\mathbb{A}d5$ 17 $\mathbb{A}f3$ 0-0 he is badly struggling for any compensation following Black's purposeful play.

B) 5 e3 0-0!

The alternative is 5...c5, but that allows White some pretty dangerous possibilities which I prefer to avoid. Furthermore, it seems that Black has no reason to fear the capture on c7, after which he can obtain fully adequate play, as we shall see below.



White can now continue developing or grab on c7:

B1: 6 cxd5

B2: 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

The rare alternatives at this juncture scarcely merit much attention:

a) 6 $\mathbb{A}e5$ e6 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8 $\mathbb{A}g3$ (M.Botvinnik-V.Smyslov, World Championship, Moscow 1954) 8...c5!? 9 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{A}e2$ cxd4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (or 11 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ intending ... $\mathbb{Q}h5xg3$) 11... $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ gives Black an edge; ...b6 and ... $\mathbb{A}b7$ is the plan.

b) 6 h3 c5 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (7 dxc5 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 8 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ is also fine for Black) 7...cxd4 8 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{A}e2$ dxc4 10 $\mathbb{A}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ gives Black a promising position.

c) 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ does nothing to discourage 6...c5! and then 7 dxc5 (7 cxd5 cxd4 8 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ is a line of the Panov-Botvinnik Attack with White having played an unusual and early $\mathbb{A}f4$; that gives Black good play after 9 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 10 $\mathbb{A}f3$ $\mathbb{A}f5$ 11 $\mathbb{A}d1$ a5 or 11 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{A}d3$!) 7... $\mathbb{Q}e4$! 8 cxd5 (8 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dxe4 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ is better for Black, while there are several ways for White to go wrong here: 8 $\mathbb{A}xb8$? dxc4 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10 bxc3 $\mathbb{A}f5$, 8 $\mathbb{Q}ge2?$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ e5 10 $\mathbb{A}g3$ $\mathbb{A}f5$ and 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 9 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4+$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{A}xb2$) 8... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ gives Black the initiative and excellent compensation after both 10 $\mathbb{W}c4$ e5! and 10 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}ba6$!.

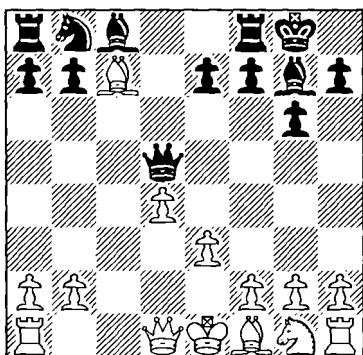
d) 6 $\mathbb{A}c1$ is more notable, in that it discourages ...c5 and threatens the c7-pawn at a moment when ...dxc4 is not an option. However, Black has a strong riposte in 6... $\mathbb{A}e6$!, after which 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (7 $\mathbb{W}b3$ b6 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 gives Black good and active play; for example, 9 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{A}xd5$ 11 $\mathbb{A}c4$, J.Michenka-P.Svanda, Czech Team Ch. 1995, and now 11... $\mathbb{A}xf3$ 12 gxf3 cxd4? 13 $\mathbb{A}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 14 $\mathbb{A}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$ with the initiative) 7...dxc4 transposes to Line C2, below.

B1) 6 cxd5

White takes up the challenge and accepts the offered pawn.

6... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$

Unsurprisingly 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c5 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ just cedes the initiative to Black.

**8... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$!**

The best move, developing with tempo. Instead ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ makes much less sense here as it doesn't gain time against d4.

9 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$

Retreating the bishop is too compliant: 9 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e5! 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 11 dx5 $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (now ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ is threatened) 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ with excellent compensation; the c8-bishop will be developed with tempo and White's king is rather misplaced.

9... $\mathbb{W}xg2$ 10 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $bxa6$

A very interesting situation has arisen. Black is strong on the light squares, but White can easily evacuate the long h1-a8 diagonal after which he retains a firm hold on the key e5-square, thereby preventing Black from

freeing his g7-bishop with ...e5. Before White can consolidate, with something like $\mathbb{Q}e2$ and $\mathbb{Q}d3$ followed by doubling on the c-file, Black must aim to gain counterplay. In particular, he can enforce the ...e5 break with the help of ...f6, in order to open the position for his bishop pair.

12 $\mathbb{Q}g1$!

A necessary precaution, preventing ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and thus preparing $\mathbb{Q}e2$. Alternatively:

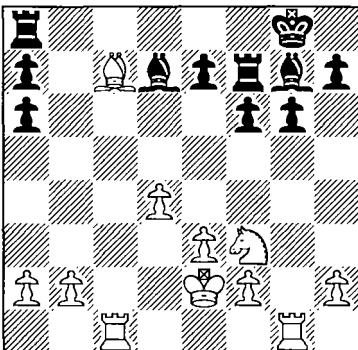
a) An immediate 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2?$! $\mathbb{Q}g4$ leaves White awkwardly pinned; for example, 13 $\mathbb{Q}hg1$ (or 13 h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ when ...f5-f4 is on the agenda) 13... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ exd4 18 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ and Black was much better in Chan Peng Kong-D.Semerene, Turin Olympiad 2006.

b) 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2?$! $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is another rather unpleasant pin.

c) 12 0-0?! avoids any nasty pins, but does nothing about ...e5: 12...f6 13 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e5 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ exd4 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ f5 left Black better in N.Karaklajic-S.Gligoric, Belgrade 1962.

d) 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ f6 doesn't change the situation much: 13 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}e2?$! $\mathbb{Q}g4$) is again annoying and after the 14 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ of Y.Pelletier-M.Illescas, Pamplona 2003, Black has 14...e5!? 15 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ – 16 exf6? $\mathbb{Q}h5$! 17 fxg7 $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8+!$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ wins for Black – 16... $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ with excellent compensation – Illescas 13... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (V.Erdos-T.Fogarasi, Budapest 2005) 15...e5 will be followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ with a strong attack for Black.

12...f6 13 ♜e2 ♜f7 14 ♜ac1 ♜d7!



Now the bishop can move to b5 with check, while it may also block the path of White's d-pawn (after a subsequent ...e5, d5-d6).

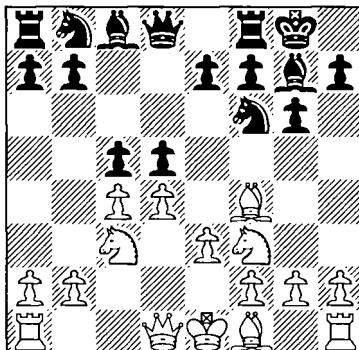
15 ♜d2

Note that 15 ♜c3 does not prevent 15...e5! and after 16 d5 (16 dxе5 ♜b5+ 17 ♜e1 fxe5 leaves Black actively placed in view of 18 ♜xe5? ♜xc7! 19 ♜xc7 ♜xe5) 16...♜b5+ 17 ♜d2 ♜f8 (the bishop switches to a better diagonal) 18 a3 ♜c8 19 ♜gc1 ♜d7 20 ♜xe5 (20 e4?? ♜h6+ drops a rook) 20...♜xd5+ 21 ♜e1 ♜xc3 22 ♜xc3 Black has at least equalized.

15...e5 16 d5 ♜b5+ 17 ♜f3

Despite White's creative play with his king, I feel that Black has a good game here. Now 17...f5 18 b3 e4+ 19 ♜g2 ♜b2 20 ♜c2 ♜d3 21 ♜c6 ♜b5 22 ♜c2 ♜d3 23 ♜c6 was roughly level when T.Radjabov-V.Ivanchuk, Morelia 2006, was agreed drawn here. Black should also consider the untried 17...♜d7?! when 18 e4 (or 18 d6 f5 with the initiative) 18...f5 threatens ...♜h6 and gives him good activity.

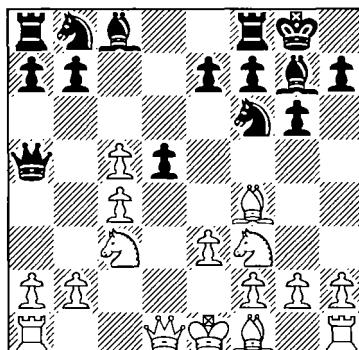
B2) 6 ♜f3 c5!



7 dxc5

The only critical move should White want to prove anything in the opening. Instead, allowing Black to exchange on d4 either results in a typical IQP position with good chances for Black, or in the concession of central space.

7...♚a5



Black aims to regain the c5-pawn and also threatens ...♝e4. One may have seen that many games with a 5...c5 6 dxc5 ♜g7 move order also reach this position, but I prefer our 5...0-0 move order: (i) the capture on c7 is then harmless for Black, as we saw in

Line B1; and (ii) in the alternative 5...c5 move order White retains the dangerous option of developing his king's knight to e2.

8 ♜c1

The only serious option for White. He has many alternatives, but they are again all rather harmless:

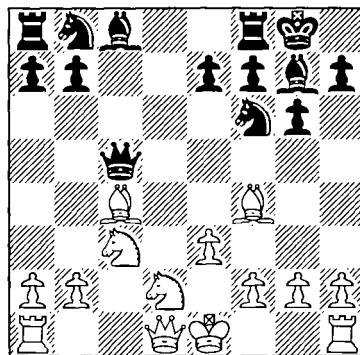
a) 8 cxd5?! ♜xd5 9 ♜e5 ♜xc3 10 ♜d2 ♜xe5 11 ♜xe5 ♜xc5 12 ♜xc3 ♜xc3+ 13 bxc3 b6 14 ♜e2 ♜b7 15 0-0 f6 16 ♜f3 ♜xf3 17 ♜xf3 ♜a6 18 a4 ♜fc8 gives Black an obvious advantage, as he will double rooks against the c3-pawn.

b) 8 ♜e2 ♜e4 9 0-0 ♜xc3 10 bxc3 dxc4 11 ♜xc4 ♜xc5 was also good for Black in A.Kofidis-M.Turov, Halkida 2000.

c) 8 ♜a4?! ♜xc5 9 ♜b5 (9 ♜e2 ♜e4 10 ♜c1 ♜xc3 11 bxc3 dxc4 12 ♜xc4 ♜d7 13 ♜b4? ♜c8 14 ♜d2 ♜xb4 forced White to resign in A.Bely-E.Gasanov, Kharkov 2004, as 15 cxb4 b5 wins a piece, while 9 cxd5 ♜xd5 10 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 11 ♜c4 ♜h5 12 ♜a3 ♜c6 13 0-0 ♜g4 gives Black the upper hand) 9...♜xb5 10 ♜xb5 ♜a6 11 ♜d1 ♜e6 12 ♜fd4 (or 12 ♜g5 ♜g4 13 f3, C.Cacco-E.Arlandi, Cremona 2005, and now 13...♜d7 14 cxd5 h6 15 ♜e4 ♜xe4 16 fxe4 ♜c5 gives Black very good compensation for the pawn) 12...♜d7 13 ♜e5 ♜fd8 14 ♜e2 (14 cxd5 ♜xd5 15 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 16 ♜e2 e5 is also better for Black) 14...dxс4 15 ♜xc4 ♜c5 16 0-0 ♜a4! and Black was on top in H.Rossetto-S.Gligoric, Mar del Plata 1950.

d) 8 ♜d2 blocks the vulnerable e1-

a5 diagonal, but looks rather passive: 8...dxc4 9 ♜xc4 (the other options are weaker; for example, 9 ♜xc4 ♜xc5 10 ♜e2 ♜e6 11 ♜d2 ♜d5 12 ♜a4 ♜a5 13 ♜xb8 ♜axb8 14 0-0 ♜fd8 won material due to the threat of ...♜xe3 in A.Dunkelblum-R.Wade, Munich 1954) 9...♜xc5 (it now becomes clear that White benefits more from the ♜c1 of our main line than from ♜d2)

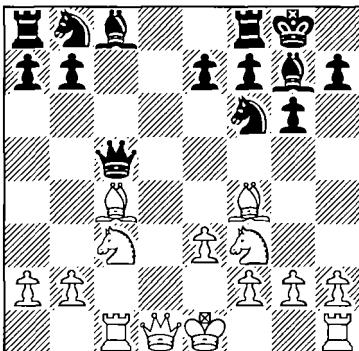


10 ♜e2 (White rather lacks a good move here; for instance, 10 0-0 ♜h5 11 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 12 ♜b3 ♜f6 13 ♜ac1, H.Sorensen-C.Ekeberg, Gausdal 2001, and now 13...b5 gives Black the initiative, while 10 ♜b3 ♜c6 11 ♜b5 ♜xb5 12 ♜xb5 ♜b4 13 0-0 ♜fd5 14 ♜de4 ♜xf4 15 exf4 ♜f5 was good for Black in A.Dunkelblum-R.Byrne, Leipzig Olympiad 1960) 10...♜c6 11 ♜c1 ♜f5 12 h3 ♜e6 13 ♜a4 a6 14 g4 ♜c5 15 0-0 ♜d5 and Black is slightly better, E.Ungureanu-H.Glauser, Lugano Olympiad 1968.

Returning to the more critical 8 ♜c1:
8...dxc4! 9 ♜xc4 ♜xc5

White now has several options, but none trouble Black unduly. The black

queen may appear somewhat exposed on c5, but there is no concrete way of exploiting her position.



10 ♜b3

The most natural move.

Alternatively:

a) 10 ♜e2 ♜g4! is awkward: 11 ♜b5 (or 11 0-0 ♜c6 12 ♜b3, as in S.Aarland-M.Tal, Riga 1954, and now 12...♜h5 13 h3 ♜xf3 14 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 15 gxf3 ♜a5 gives Black an edge in view of White's weakened structure) 11...♜b4+ 12 ♜d2 (12 ♜f1 ♜bd7 is worse for White) 12...♜xd2+ 13 ♜xd2 ♜c6 14 h3 ♜d7 15 ♜h2 ♜fd8 16 ♜b3 ♜ac8 17 0-0 a6 18 ♜d5d4 ♜xd4 19 ♜xd4 b5 with at least equality for Black in B.Kelly-R.Dineley, Turin Olympiad 2006.

b) 10 ♜d4 ♜h5 11 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 12 ♜xa7 was tried in V.Golod-Ma.Tseitlin, Ashdod 2004, and now the typical tactic 12...♜h3! promises Black excellent compensation.

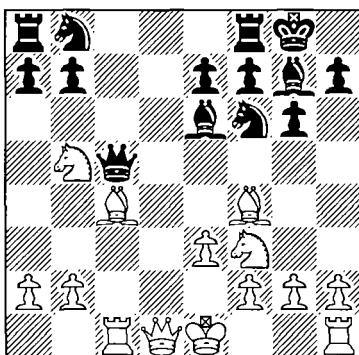
c) 10 b3 ♜c6 11 0-0 ♜a5 12 ♜b5 ♜f5 13 a3 ♜ac8 14 b4 ♜b6 15 ♜c7 ♜xc7 16 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 17 b5 (M.Kustanovich-M.Lurie, Petakh Tikva 1997) 17...e5 18 bxc6 bxc6 leaves Black a pawn up for

no real compensation.

d) 10 ♜e2 ♜c6 11 0-0 ♜b4 12 ♜a4 ♜d8 13 ♜c2 ♜f5 14 ♜c4 (H.Urday-S.Roa, San Sebastian 1991) 14...♜ac8 and Black has the initiative.

e) 10 ♜b3?! ♜c6 threatens ...♜a5 and now: 11 ♜b5 (this would be a serious problem if White's f3-knight was on e2, protecting the ♜c1, but here Black has nothing to fear; note too that 11 ♜g5 ♜h5 12 ♜xf7+ ♜h8 13 0-0 ♜xf4 14 exf4 ♜d4 leaves a number of White's pieces rather misplaced and liable to drop off) 11...♜e6! (renewing the threat of ...♜a5 and exploiting the loose rook on c1) 12 ♜c7 ♜xc4 13 ♜xa8 was seen in I.Walch-C.Horvath, Aschach 2002, and now 13...♜a5 14 ♜c2 ♜xa8 15 ♜d2 ♜c8 16 b3 ♜c6 17 bxc4 ♜xg2 gives Black a strong initiative.

f) 10 ♜b5?! ♜e6! is once again a good defence against the discovered check and now:



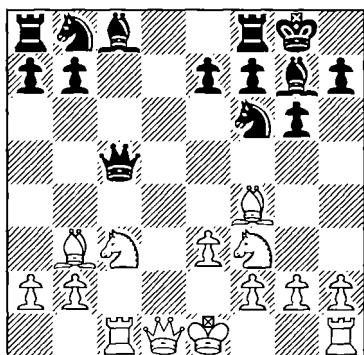
f1) 11 ♜xe6 ♜xb5 12 ♜b3 (or 12 ♜c4 ♜xb2 13 0-0 ♜c6 14 ♜a4 ♜d7 15 ♜b1 ♜b6 16 ♜xb2 ♜xa4 17 ♜xb7 ♜a5 18 ♜c7 ♜xc4 19 ♜xc4 ♜c3 with an edge for Black in M.Boehnke-O.Brendel, Berkel

2003) 12... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b4+$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 17 $exf4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ gave Black a clear extra pawn in M.Dlugy-G.Kasparov, Saint John (rapid) 1998.

f2) 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b4+$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ (M.Ruiz Vinals-F.Steenbekkers, Calvia 2004) 13... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14 b3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is again advantageous for Black.

f3) 11 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (critical, but Black is happy to 'lose' the exchange like this!) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 12 b3! (instead 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2?$ b5 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ bxc4 15 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 16 $exf4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ wins for Black, while here 13 b3 e5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $exf4$ 15 bxc4 fxe3 16 fxe3 $\mathbb{W}xe3+$ leaves him with a clear edge; note too that 12 $\mathbb{Q}xa8?!$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 13 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ also favours Black) 12... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ was seen in M.Dlugy-M.Chiburdanidze, Brussels 1987; now 15... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ leaves Black with the initiative for Black and good compensation for the exchange.

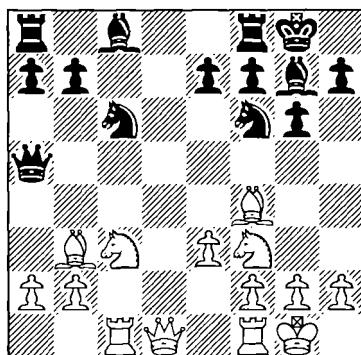
Returning to 10 $\mathbb{Q}b3$:



10... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black intends to continue with ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ and the centralization of his

rooks, after which his pieces will be the more active and his position the more comfortable. This is why White often decides to unbalance the position, as we will see in the lines which follow.



12 h3

A necessary precaution since 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ allows the strong 12... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ disturbing the f4-bishop: 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (both 13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 14 $hxg3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 14 $exf4$ e6 15 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ are good for Black) 13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ (or 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ e6 15 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}cd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $exd4$ $\mathbb{W}f4$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e5+$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ with equality in T.Roussel Rozzmon-V.Mikhalevski, Montreal 2005) 14... $\mathbb{W}b4!$ (accurate and strong) 15 $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 20 $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ and Black was most certainly not worse in M.Petursson-J.Smejkal, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988.

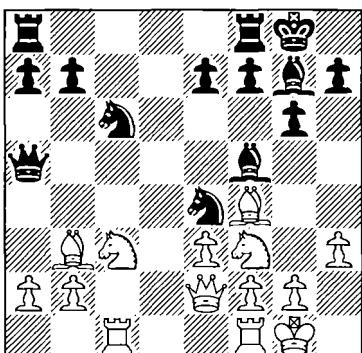
Note, too, that 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 13 $\mathbb{Q}ge4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ (V.Tukmakov-L.Stein, USSR 1970) creates similar problems, while 12 $\mathbb{Q}d5?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16 e4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ was a completely unjustified pawn sacrifice in H.Tikkannen-E.Hermannsson, Gothenburg 2005.

12...Qf5 13 We2

13 Qd4 looks like a way to activate White's forces, but things turn out differently after 13...Qd7!. Then 14 We2 Qxd4 15 exd4 e6 16 Qd2 Wb6 17 Qfd1 Qc6 18 Qe3 Wa5 was equal and agreed drawn here in A.Karpov-G.Kasparov, World Championship (Game 9), London 1986. White has also tried 16 Qe5, but after 16...Qc6 17 Qfd1 Qfd8 18 We3 (or 18 d5?! exd5 19 Wf3 d4 20 Wf4 Qh5! 21 Wxf7+ Qh8 22 Qxg7+ Qxg7 23 Qe2 Qf8 24 Wc4 Wg5 and Black's attack is very strong – Ivanchuk) 18...Qd7 19 Wg5 (Black defends and gains the advantage after 19 d5 Qxd5 20 Qxd5 Qxd5 21 Qxg7 Qxg7 22 Qe4!? Qe8 23 Wf4 Wd8) 19...Wd8 20 Qa4 h6 21 Wg3 Qh5 Black was clearly on top in M.Petursson-V.Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 1989/90.

13...Qe4

Now Black's pieces are very active and White's queenside is beginning to come under some pressure. Thus White now often opts to sharpen the struggle.

**14 Qd5!**

This is clearly best. White tries to create counter-threats and intends to

sacrifice an exchange on c6. Instead 14 Qxe4 Qxe4 is a little too compliant by White and leaves him the side struggling to equalize:

a) 15 Qfd1 Wh5 16 Qc2 (16 Qc4 Qd5 17 Qc2 Qxb3 18 axb3 Qfd8 19 e4 Wa5 20 Qcd2 Qxd2 21 Qxd2 Qd8 22 Qxd8+ Wxd8 23 Qe3 a6 gave Black a small structural advantage in U.Andersson-D.Navara, European Team Ch., Gothenburg 2005, although the legendary Swede managed to hold the draw) 16...Qxc2? (16...Qxf3 17 Wxf3 Wxf3 18 gxf3 Qad8 19 Qe4 Qxb2 20 Qxd8 Qxd8 21 Qc2 Qa3 22 Qxc6 bxc6 23 Qxc6 f6 equalized comfortably for Black in L.Portisch-K.Arakhamia Grant, Roquenbrune 1998) 17 Wxc2 Wb5 with good play for Black.

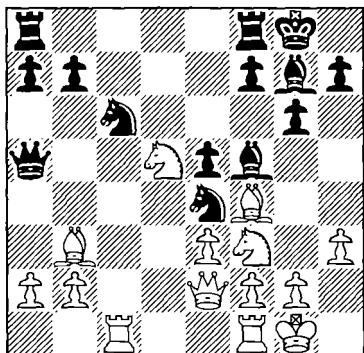
b) 15 Qg5 Qd5 16 Qc7 (or 16 Qxd5 Wxd5 17 b3 Qad8 18 Qfd1 Wf5 with at least equality) 16...Wxc7 17 Qxd5 (D.Sahovic-Z.Lanka, Yurmala 1978) 17...Wa5 18 Qxc6 bxc6 is roughly equal, although Black's queenside pressure and superior minor piece gives him some hope of a possible grind.

c) 15 Qd2 Qd5 16 Qxd5 (or 16 Qc4 Wb5 17 Qfd1, Nguyen Anh Dung-M.Hoffmann, Budapest 1999, and now 17...Qfd8 with the initiative) 16...Wxd5 and Black was again at least equal in V.Hort-W.Uhlmann, Moscow 1971.

14...e5!

A good response.

In this rather theoretical position, White faces an important choice between entering the complications by taking on c6, and meekly retreating his bishop:

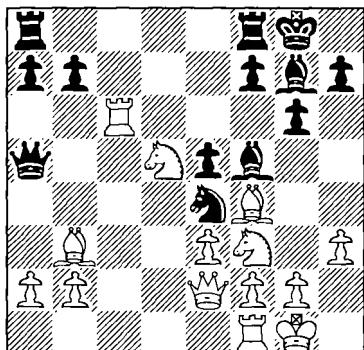


B21: 15 $\mathbb{B}xc6$

B22: 15 $\mathbb{A}h2$

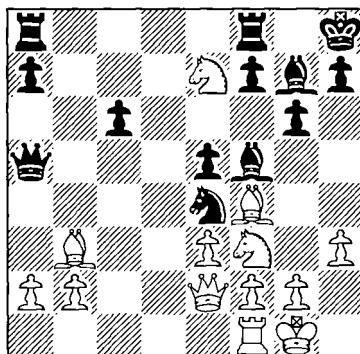
15 $\mathbb{A}g5?$! is rather dubious in view of 15... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}d8!$; e.g. 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ (or 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e4! 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ and Black is better since he can answer 19 g4 with 19... $\mathbb{Q}xb3!$) 17... $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ (Black is also for preference after 19 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ e4 21 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{B}d8$) 19... $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{E}e8!$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e4 and Black is much better.

B21) 15 $\mathbb{B}xc6$!?



This operation turns out unsuccessfully, but it took several years to reach such a conclusion. Black used to ignore the rook and instead capture on f4, but my opinion is clear: the gauntlet should be taken up!

15 ... $\mathbb{B}xc6$! 16 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$



17 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

Instead 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$? $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ fails to the pretty 18... $\mathbb{W}d2!$ when White ends up clearly worse in all lines: 19 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ (19 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ f6 is also very good for Black) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ f6 21 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (Black wins after 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 22 axb3 fxe5, while 21 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}c1+$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ leaves him with some advantage) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ and Black was much better in I.Sokolov-A.Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

17... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}cxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$!

A very important move, neutralizing the powerful b3-bishop. It was this discovery which turned the assessment of this critical variation in Black's favour.

19 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

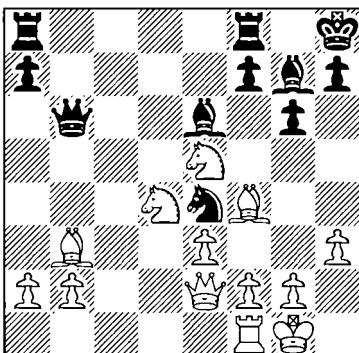
Alternatively:

a) 19 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ was preferable for Black in V.Gavrikov-A.Kochiev, Tallinn 1997.

b) 19 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ (E.Frolík-W.Sauermann, Wuerst 1988) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ g5 with the initiative for Black.

c) 19 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}a6!$ also fails to improve matters for White: 20 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (20 $\mathbb{Q}g5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ wins material – Ftacnik) 20... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 22 $\mathbb{W}f1$ (22 f3 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 23 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ is also good for Black) 22... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ and Black was on top in I.Shliperman-M.Ashley, New York 1999.

d) 19 $\mathbb{Q}d4!?$ (probably White's best alternative to 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$)

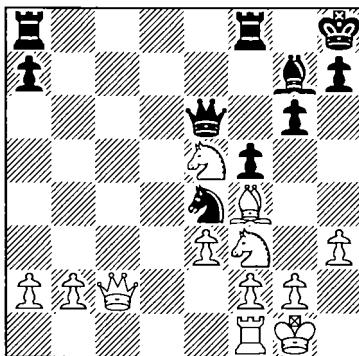


19... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ (instead 20 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c1$, L.Kwatschewsky-M.Neubauer, Hartberg 2004, and now 21... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ gives Black the initiative) 20... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 25 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26 $\mathbb{W}e2$ and White, with two pawns for the exchange, was just about holding on to equality in H.Karlzen-M.Carlhammar, Gothenburg 2004.

19... $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c2$

Similar are both 20 b3 and 20 a3 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$; White is struggling slightly to demonstrate full compensation.

20...f5



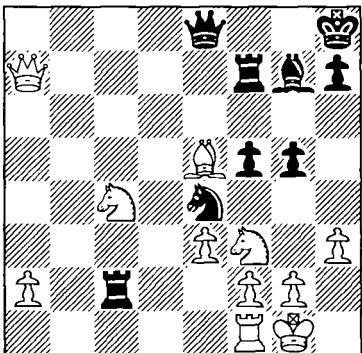
21 $\mathbb{W}a4$

Instead 21 b3?! g5 22 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ g4 24 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}fxg4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ gave Black an edge in J.Levitt-A.Shirov, British League 2005, while 21 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}fe5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ is not dissimilar to what we have already seen, and after 24 f3 g5 25 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ Black is surely not worse.

21...g5 22 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}e8$

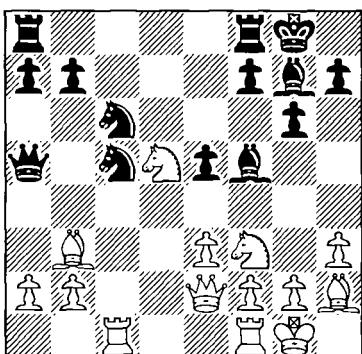
Again trying to trade queens and then exploit the extra exchange in an endgame. That would not be desirable for White, but he must be careful in any case; not only are his knights vulnerable, but his bishop can become entombed on h2. An example of that final point is 23 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ (V.Kosyrev-K.Sakaev, Internet blitz 2004) 24... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ f4 (Krasenkov), blocking in the h2-bishop and securing Black a clear advantage. Instead U.Adianto-M.Roiz, Biel

2006, continued 23 $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ (24 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{B}b5$ 25 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ g4 26 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}d5$ 27 $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 28 $\mathbb{B}b5$ f4 was better for Black in A.Iljushin-V.Belov, Sochi 2006) 24... $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ and now Black should have played 25... $\mathbb{B}c2$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{B}f7$



with at least equality.

B22) 15 $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$



16 e4

Trying to establish some sort of foothold in the centre, but abandoning control of the d4-square. Instead 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ is strongly met by 16...e4! when Black is better in all lines:

- a) 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 19

$\mathbb{B}cd1$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ with advantage in R.Lötscher-O.Brendel, Swiss League 2003.

b) 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ with an edge for Black.

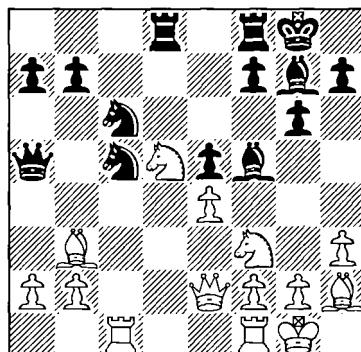
c) 17 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (J.Dobos-T.Hillarp Persson, Recklinghausen 1999) 17... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ exd3 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 20 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$ and the b2-pawn will fall.

d) 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (E.Magerramov-V.Jakovljevic, Abu Dhabi 2006) 17... $\mathbb{W}d8!$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$ and again Black has the advantage.

e) 17 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (18 $\mathbb{Q}d6?$ loses material to 18... $\mathbb{Q}d3!$) 18...b6 19 $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 22 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ g5! 23 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{B}xf8$ 24 b3 gxh4 and Black had a clear advantage in the game Bu Xiangzhi-S.Ganguly, Internet (blitz) 2006.

16... $\mathbb{B}ad8!$

Further undermining the position of the strongly-placed d5-knight.



17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

I believe that this forcing sequence

is White's best option here, but yet again he has tried a number of other approaches:

a) 17 $\mathbb{Q}c4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18 b4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ is very good for Black.

b) 17 exf5?! $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (19 f6? $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 21 fxg7 $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ wins for Black) 19... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 21 fxg6 fxg6 with an obvious edge for Black in view of his powerful passed d-pawn.

c) 17 $\mathbb{W}e3?$! $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 18 axb3 (18 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$! 19 exd5 bxc6 20 axb3 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ is no improvement for White) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$! (a promising queen sacrifice) 19 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f6+$ (20 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ was much better for Black in P.Lukacs-L.Ftacnik, Stara Zagora 1990) 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 22 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ and Black's advantage is quite serious, especially as the h2-bishop is shut out of play.

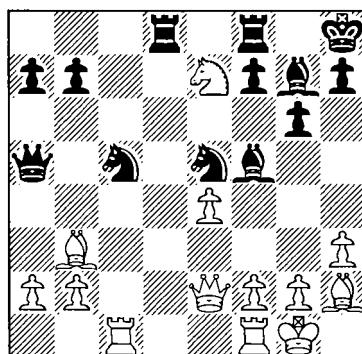
d) 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 18 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 again leaves Black with an obvious advantage.

e) 17 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$!? $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ (or 21 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ f6 23 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 25 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ with some advantage for Black) 21... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$! (Rowson suggests 22... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 23 b3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$, but this doesn't seem so clear to me after 24 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 25 $\mathbb{W}xa7$) 23 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ and again Black has more than enough for the queen.

17... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$

The position remains rather unclear, but Black is certainly not worse. After 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 20 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 21 axb3

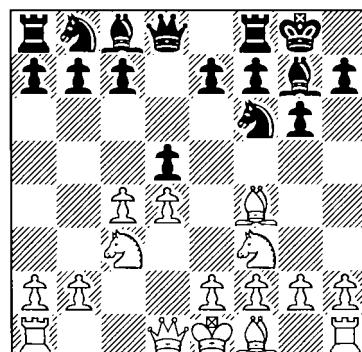
$\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22 fxe6 fxe6 he gains the advantage, and even White's best try of 19 exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 20 axb3 $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 21 b4 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 24 $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 25 fxe6 hxg6! (Rowson) leaves Black with the more active rooks and a slight edge in the endgame.



C) 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

This position frequently also arises, of course, via a 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ move order.

5...0-0

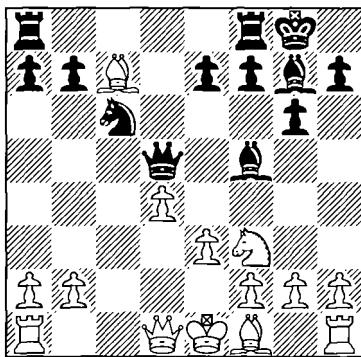


As in Line B, the c7-pawn is not our primary concern, although in this particular case White is ill-advised to capture it.

6 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

Dissuading ...c5. Alternatively:

- a) 6 e3 c5! transposes back to B2.
- b) 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ dxc4 7 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ transposes to note 'c' to White's 7th move in the Russian System.
- c) 6 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (Akopian's 7 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is hardly an earth-shattering idea; Black can reply with either Nakamura's combative 7... $\mathbb{Q}h6$!? or 7... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 9 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 11 e4 c5 with equality) 7... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ (both 8 e3 c5 and 8 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 9 axb3 c5! already see Black wresting the initiative) 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ sees Black mobilizing very quickly and with threats against the c2-square. Now:



c1) 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$? is a blunder: 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 12 e4 $\mathbb{W}d7$ (J.Slacik-Z.Zvan, Latschach 2001) and Black wins material with ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$.

c2) 10 a3 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$! 12 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e5! saw White facing serious problems in S.Shestakov-V.Zilberstein, USSR 1974.

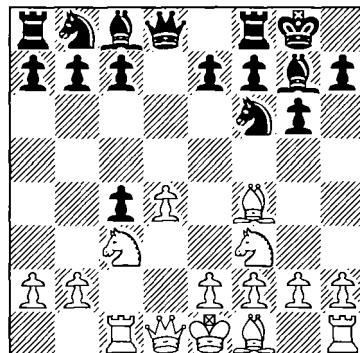
c3) 10 $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$! 12 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 13 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$) was similar in J.Ochkoos-I.Zugic, On-

tario 1997) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$! 12 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$ 13 gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ with an obvious edge, M.Dietze-P.Keres, Prague 1943.

c4) 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e5 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13 dxe5 $\mathbb{W}xg2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h3$ does not help White much) 11... $\mathbb{W}a5$ + 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (or 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ e5 13 dxe5 $\mathbb{W}fd8$!?) 14 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ with advantage in J.Heltzel-R.Ris, Hengelo 2002) 12... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13 0-0 (similarly unpleasant for White was 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d3+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ in H.Alavi Hour-D.Harika, Tehran 2002) 13... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ with a significant superiority for Black in Y.Anikaev-T.Georgadze, USSR 1973.

6...dxc4!

Because 6...c5 is not enticing, as is usually the case when White has played $\mathbb{Q}c1$, this is the correct way of beginning counterplay.



White now has a choice between an ambitious central advance and a more restrained approach.

C1: 7 e4

C2: 7 e3

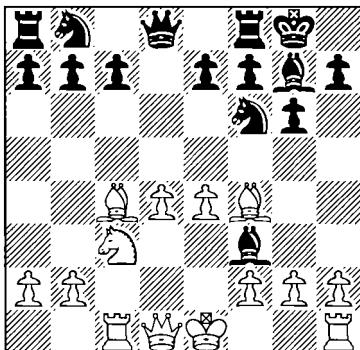
C1) 7 e4

With this White ensures the immediate recovery of the pawn, but allows pressure against d4. That results either in the mangling of White's kingside structure or the ceding of the d4-square to the black knight. In both cases Black obtains good play on the dark squares.

7...Bg4! 8 Qxc4

White must capture, as both 8 Qe3 c5 9 dxc5 Wa5 and 8 d5 c6! 9 Qxc4 cxd5 10 exd5 Qbd7 11 0-0 Qc8 12 Qb3 Qc5 (Adorjan and Dory) leave Black on top.

8...Qxf3



White now faces a critical choice:

C11: 9 Wxf3

C12: 9 gxf3

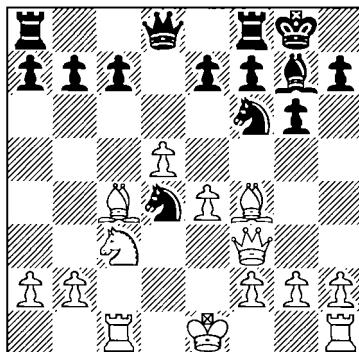
C11) 9 Wxf3

Maintaining structural integrity at the cost of allowing Black plenty of activity.

9...Qc6

9...Wxd4? is unplayable, of course, due to 10 Qb5.

10 d5 Qd4



11 Wd3

Alternatively, 11 Wd1 c5 12 0-0 a6 13 We1 b5 14 Qf1 e6 15 Qg5 h6 16 Qe3 (F.Lipinsky-D.Gross, Melk 1999) 16...Qe8 is fine for Black, while 11 We3 c5 12 dxc6 (12 0-0 a6! 13 a4 Wb6 gives Black the initiative on the queenside) is a logical approach, but Black need not abandon his central outpost: 12...bxc6 13 0-0 Qh5 14 Qg5 (I.Farago-M.Szekely, Budapest 1969) 14...Wd6 15 Wfd1 Wad8 16 Qe2 c5 gives Black good play; the d4-knight is a powerful piece.

11...Qd7!

The knight aims to later gain a tempo on the white queen and crucially e4-e5 is now prevented.

12 0-0 c5

I feel that Black has a good position here. He has a strong foothold in the centre and can expand on both wings.

13 Qb3

13 dxc6 bxc6 14 Wg3 Wa5 15 Wfd1 Qb6 gives Black great activity, while 13 a3 a6 is no improvement for White.

13...Rc8 14 Qg3

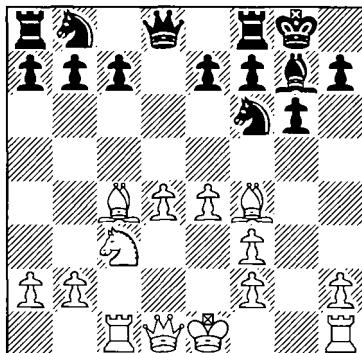
14 Qe2 Qxb3 15 Wxb3 Wb6 is fine for Black.

14...a6 15 f4 b5

Black's initiative grows after 16 e5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$, threatening ...c4 and ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$, but 16 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ allows Black to strike back powerfully at White's seemingly imposing centre: 16...e5! 17 dx6 c4! 18 exf7+ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 19 $\mathbb{W}d1$ (as Adorjan and Dory observe, 19 $\mathbb{W}d2?$ $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}cd1 \mathbb{Q}d7$ wins material) 19... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{Q}xf4$ and Black is for preference due to his active pieces, A.Feuerstein-V.Simagin, correspondence 1966.

C12) 9 gxf3

A more ambitious choice. White retains his central influence by keeping his queen on d1, but now Black can initiate play against the split white kingside with ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and ...e5, eyeing the f4-square.



9... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 11 dx5

11 d5?! $\mathbb{Q}f4$ followed by ...c6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is not what White wants.

11... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Now the struggle revolves around whether White will be able to advance his e- and f-pawns or whether Black will succeed in keep them blockaded.

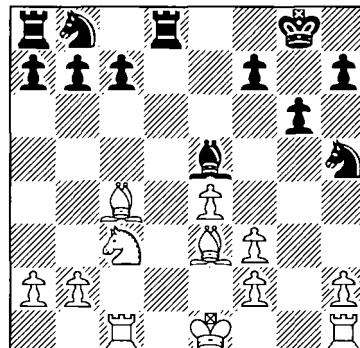
12 $\mathbb{W}xd8$

In view of his weakened kingside, White is well advised to exchange queens. Otherwise, ... $\mathbb{W}f6$ or ... $\mathbb{W}h4$ greatly improves Black's chances; for example:

a) 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ saw Black's pieces invade with some effect in A.Dreev-B.Alterman, Elista Olympiad 1998. That continued 16 $\mathbb{W}b4$ (both 16 b3 a5 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}fb8$ and 16 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ are also good for Black) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ and now 17... $\mathbb{W}h3$ would have left White under serious pressure; ...f5 may well follow.

b) 12 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$! is a promising exchange sacrifice: 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (I.Rogers-A.Timofeev, Amsterdam 2005) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ and Black has excellent long-term compensation due to his superb dark square control.

12... $\mathbb{W}xd8$



13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Most consistent with the positional struggle taking place. Indeed, I don't really see the point of 13 b4?!, especially

since the strong reply 13... $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}g2+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (15 $\mathbb{Q}e2?$ c6! 16 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ gives Black some advantage) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ c6 leaves Black better in all lines, S.Lputian-V.Ivanchuk, Elista Olympiad 1998.

White has also tried 13 0-0, which is reasonable but not really incisive enough: 13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (or 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ c6 17 b4, M.Bosboom-J.Van de Mortel, Rotterdam 1999, and now Ftacnik's suggestion of 17... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ gives Black an edge) 14... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ c6 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ left Black with some advantage due to his control of the d-file in S.Nagle-D.Musanti, Dos Hermanas 2003) 16...c6 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ with at least equality for Black.

13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 0-0

14 f4 is more critical, but not really justified: 14... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}a3?$ is suggested by Rowson, but it fails to 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc7!$ $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 19 0-0 and White wins) 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ was seen in E.Relange-M.Palac, Bastia (rapid) 1998, and now 17... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ gives Black a powerful initiative.

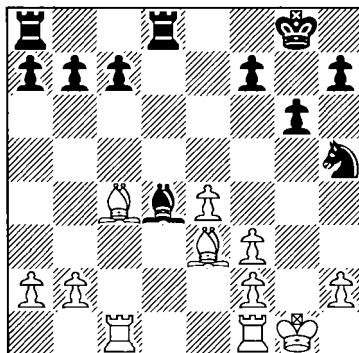
14... $\mathbb{Q}d4!$

Black has occupied the central outpost and clearly stands well.

15 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

Now any exchange of bishops on d4 would, of course, leave Black with complete control over the dark squares, and the presence of a knight on f4 would be a telling factor in any end-

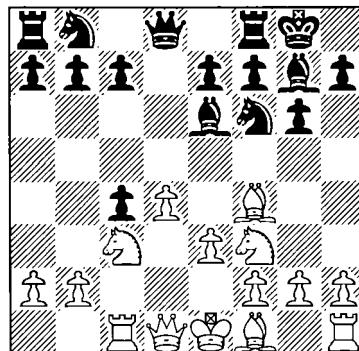
game. Thus White must continue accurately, as he did with 16 $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3!$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ c6 18 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ when the position was about level in A.Beliavsky-P.Leko, Dortmund 1998.



C2) 7 e3

In my opinion this is a more critical line. Should White recover the pawn on c4 with ease, he will have prevented both ...c5 and ...e5 while maintaining a firm hold on the centre. Black must not allow himself to be forced into a passive position and so should fight to hold on to the pawn.

7... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$



8 ♜g5

Taking up the challenge, and now a fairly forced sequence follows. The alternatives are harmless; for example:

a) 8 ♜e2 c5 9 0-0 (9 dx5 ♜bd7 is equal) 9... ♜d5 10 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 11 ♜xc4 cxd4 12 exd4 ♜c6 gives Black useful pressure against the IQP.

b) 8 ♜e5 c5! 9 dxc5 (or 9 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 10 ♜xc4 cxd4 11 exd4 ♜c6 with an edge for Black – I.Gurevich) 9... ♜xd1+ 10 ♜xd1 (Black is also better after 10 ♜xd1 ♜h5! 11 ♜xc4 ♜xf4 12 exf4 ♜a6) 10... ♜c8 11 ♜xc4 was seen in I.Rogers-I.Gurevich, Hastings 1993/94, and now Black could have obtained an obvious edge with 11... ♜xc5! 12 b3 (12 ♜xe6?!! ♜xc1 13 ♜xf7 ♜f8 14 e4 ♜a1 15 e5 ♜e4 is even worse for White) 12... ♜xc4 13 ♜xc4 ♜a6.

8... ♜d5 9 e4

White is essentially committed to continuing his forcing strategy. Instead 9 ♜xd5? ♜xd5 hits the f4-bishop and is good for Black; for example, 10 ♜g3 c5! 11 ♜xc4 cxd4 12 ♜b3 (S.Furman-V.Korchnoi, USSR Ch. 1954) 12... ♜a5+! 13 ♜e2 ♜b6! leaves Black clearly better, as pointed out by Efim Geller.

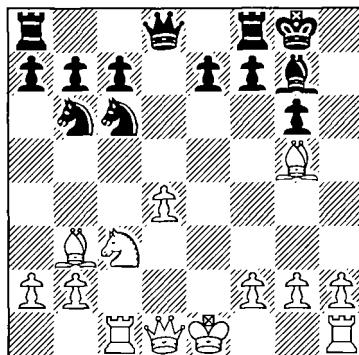
9... h6! 10 exd5 hxg5 11 ♜xg5 ♜xd5 12 ♜xc4

Instead 12 ♜f3?! ♜b6! 13 ♜xb7 ♜xd4 14 ♜b5 ♜xb2 15 ♜d1 ♜d8d7 16 ♜xc7 ♜b8 was a disaster for White in A.Schneider-P.Hardiscay, Debrecen 1975.

12... ♜b6 13 ♜b3 ♜c6!

Black has the more compact structure and strong pressure on the dark squares, which fully compensates for White's bishop pair and central space

advantage, and now White must solve the problem of the d4-pawn.



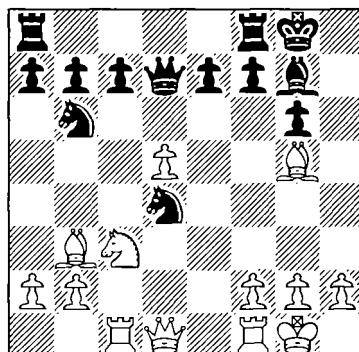
C21: 14 d5

C22: 14 ♜e2

C21) 14 d5

This abandons d4 and e5, but increases White's spatial advantage and aims to later drive back Black's centralized knight.

14... ♜d4 15 0-0 ♜d7



16 ♜e3

Black's plan is obvious: he will bring his rooks to d8 and e8, after

which a capture on b3 will leave d5 hanging. The text counters that by immediately harassing the d4-knight, but White can also aim for counter-pressure against e7:

a) 16 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 17 h4!? (Xu Jun's idea; both 17 $\mathbb{A}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 19 $\mathbb{B}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$, as in S.Halkias-J.Borisek, Terme Zrece 2003, and 17 a4 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xb3$ a5 19 $\mathbb{E}cd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ see White lose his d-pawn without gaining any real compensation) 17...a5 18 a4 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 20 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21 $\mathbb{E}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and White has some compensation for the pawn, but there is no immediate threat and Black's resources seem entirely adequate to me.

b) 16 h4 (G.Giorgadze-A.Shirov, Cala Galdana 2001) 16... $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 17 $\mathbb{E}e1$ a5 is fine for Black, who intends to further advance the a-pawn.

c) 16 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xb3$ was seen in I.Rogers-P.Wolff, San Francisco 1991, and now Rogers points out that Black could have equalized with 17... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ (18 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{W}d4$ f6 is good for Black) 18... $\mathbb{W}xd5$!.

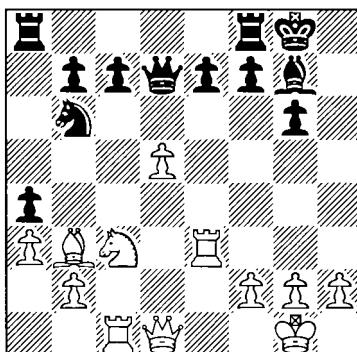
16... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

The downside to White's last move is that he must now allow the exchange of his dark-squared bishop, although doing so does at least enables him to keep d5 fully protected.

17 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ a5 19 a3 a4

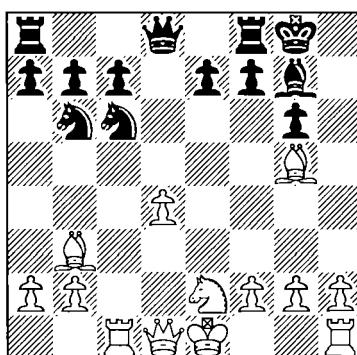
This position was seen in the computer game *Isichess-Deep Sjeng*, Reykjavik 2005. After the forced 20 $\mathbb{A}a2$, Black should have played 20... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 21 $\mathbb{E}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$!, followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ to extinguish White's kingside play; Black's better

bishop and superior structure should have their say in the future.



C22) 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Trying both to retain some influence on the dark squares and restrict the black knights.



14...a5!

Black wastes no time in dynamically gaining his knights some squares.

15 a4

Practice has shown that White must block the further advance of the a-pawn in this way, but now he also has weaknesses on the queenside. Instead 15 0-0? a4 16 $\mathbb{A}c4$ (R.Hartoch-J.Timman, Leeu-

warden 1971) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ leaves Black with an extra pawn, while 15 a3 a4 16 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is a typical plan in this line and one which worked wonders in V.Huuskonen-J.Klovans, correspondence 1971: 17 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 19 h4? (19 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ was better, although still good for Black) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ and Black had again netted a pawn.

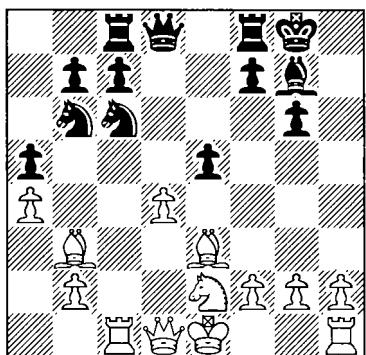
15... $\mathbb{Q}c8!$

By defending c7 Black renews the threat against the d4-pawn.

16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

Consistent, but this fully concedes the initiative to Black. However, 16 0-0 is rather an admission of failure by White, who now hopes to equalize the position with multiple exchanges. Indeed, after 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ (G.Giorgadze-B.Avrukh, Bugojno 1999) 18... $\mathbb{Q}fe8!$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (and not 19 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ c5 20 $\mathbb{W}f3$ c4 21 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ when Black is better) 19... $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}fxd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ Black's extra pawn will vanish, leading to a rather level endgame.

16...e5!



17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Again White cannot hope for anything more than equality, so exchanges are the way to go. Instead 17 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ gives Black a strong centralized knight, and after the 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ c5 22 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ leaves White in a quandary; Black is attacking the b2-pawn and ...c4 is also a threat) 18... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ c6 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 21 0-0 of A.Dreev-Ni Hua, Shanghai 2001, the simple 21... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ ensures Black of an edge.

17... $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

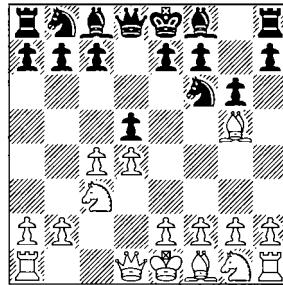
White must now give up his bishop to prevent ... $\mathbb{Q}ec4$, and after 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 20 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ the position is equal, G.Giorgadze-S.Atalik, European Team Ch., Batumi 1999.

Conclusion

We've covered several highly dynamic lines in this chapter. Black must be prepared to sacrifice the c7-pawn, although its capture always gives him good compensation. However, should White play less incisively, Black can counter quickly with ...c5, activating his pieces and often gaining a useful initiative. Line C is perhaps the most critical, but by switching his approach to capturing on c4, followed by playing actively on the kingside and in the centre, Black still gains a good game. Overall in these $\mathbb{Q}f4$ lines, a certain accuracy is required from Black in the opening phase, but if he knows his theory, he can count on a fairly promising position.

Chapter Ten

♗g5 Systems



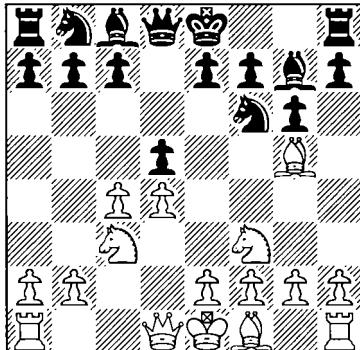
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5

White can now develop his bishop to g5 immediately or first wait a move:

A) 4 ♘f3 ♘g7 5 ♘g5

B) 4 ♘g5

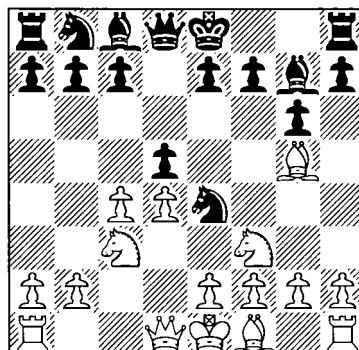
A) 4 ♘f3 ♘g7 5 ♘g5



This system does not threaten the viability of the Grünfeld, but it is a sound and solid way of meeting our ambitious opening. White aims for simple yet

somewhat annoying development, as he increases the pressure against d5 by threatening to exchange on f6. In response, Black is best advised to counter with ... ♘e4xc3. White then hopes that his central bastion on d4, further reinforced by e3, will neutralize the Grünfeld g7-bishop. However, there are some downsides to White's method of development: his pieces find themselves not especially well coordinated and his dark-squared bishop can become loose.

5... ♘e4



Clearly the most principled move, and Black will now gain counterplay, no matter what White does about his dark-squared bishop.

A1: 6 h4

A2: 6 ♜c1

A3: 6 ♜f4

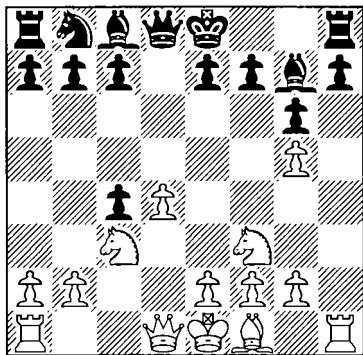
A4: 6 cxd5

A5: 6 ♜h4

A1) 6 h4?!

This is rather overambitious, since White will sorely miss his dark-squared bishop once Black attacks in the centre.

6...♝xg5 7 hxg5 dxc4!



8 e3

Alternatively, 8 ♜a4+ c6 9 ♜xc4 ♜e6 10 ♜d3 ♜a6 11 g3 ♜b4 12 ♜d2 c5 13 ♜e4 ♜xd4?!? (seemingly a risky pawn-grab, but tactically justified) 14 a3 ♜c6 15 e3 ♜d5! 16 ♜h4 ♜g7 17 0-0-0 ♜b6 18 ♜e2 0-0-0 19 ♜b5 ♜xb5 20 ♜xb5 h6 21 gxh6 ♜xh6 22 ♜xh6 ♜xh6 23 ♜fd2 ♜d4 24 ♜c4 ♜e6 25 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 and Black was winning in J.Granda Zuniga-

I.Sokolov, Wijk aan Zee 1989.

8...c5 9 d5

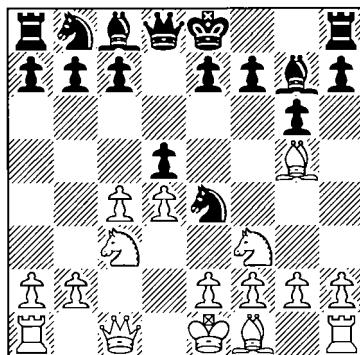
Instead both 9 ♜xc4 cxd4 10 ♜xd4 0-0 and 9 dxc5 ♜a5 10 ♜a4+ ♜xa4 11 ♜xa4 ♜a6 are better for Black.

9...b5? 10 ♜xb5 ♜b6 11 ♜xc4 a6 12 ♜a3 ♜xb2

Black obviously has some advantage.

A2) 6 ♜c1

Another rather unnatural move.



6...h6!

Simple and good. Play will now resemble Line A3, but with the white queen misplaced on c1. On the other hand, Black has some difficulty castling in view of the hanging pawn on h6, although this turns out to be of less importance.

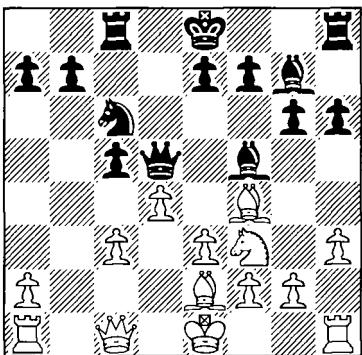
7 ♜f4 ♜xc3 8 bxc3 c5 9 cxd5

Instead 9 ♜e5 ♜xe5 10 ♜xe5 cxd4 11 cxd4 (but 11 ♜f4 f6 12 ♜xg6 ♜g8 13 ♜xh6 ♜a5 14 ♜c1 dxc3 15 cxd5 c2+ 16 ♜d2 ♜xd2+ 17 ♜xd2 ♜xg6 is good for Black) 11...♜c6 leads to equality, according to Adorjan.

9...♜xd5 10 e3 ♜c6 11 h3

White should avoid 11 ♕e2?! g5! 12 ♘g3 g4 13 ♘h4 ♖f6 (Adorjan), especially since he cannot then play 14 0-0? due to 14... ♗h5.

11... ♖f5 12 ♕e2 ♖c8



13 ♖a3

Inferior is 13 ♖d2?! g5 14 ♘g3 cxd4 15 cxd4 0-0 16 ♖c1 e5 (I.Zaitsev-V.Tukmakov, Yerevan 1982) when Black is better, while 13 0-0 g5 14 ♘g3 0-0 (Adorjan) gives Black the initiative.

13...0-0

Black has fully equalized.

A3) 6 ♖f4

This retreat aims to prevent the ...e5-break. It is more solid than the retreat to h4 (Line A5), but also less annoying for Black since he can now quickly counter in the centre.

6... ♖xc3 7 bxc3 c5 8 e3 0-0 9 cxd5

Alternatively:

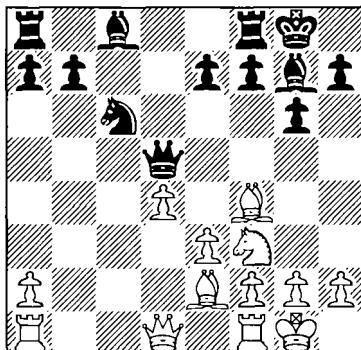
a) 9 ♕e2 dxc4 (9... ♖c6 10 0-0 cxd4 11 cxd4 dxcc4 12 ♖xc4 occurred in L.Portisch-V.Kramnik, Biel Interzonal 1993; a model game for handling such positions, but it seems to me that White can prove a slight edge in this line) 10

♖xc4 ♖c6 (or 10... ♖a5!? 11 0-0 ♖d7, L.Gofshtein-Z.Kozul, Zagreb Zonal 1993) 11 0-0 ♖a5 12 ♕e2 b6!? with good play, especially in the case of 13 dxc5?!

♖d7.

b) 9 ♖b1 hopes to hinder Black's queenside development, but is hardly problematic: 9... cxd4 10 cxd4 ♖c6 11 ♖a4!? (or 11 ♕e2 dxc4! 12 ♖xc4 ♖a5 13 ♖d3 ♖e6 14 ♖e2 a6! and Black will follow with the standard plan of ...b5 and then occupy c4) 11... ♖d7! 12 ♖a3 (if 12 ♖xb7 e5!) 12... ♖g4! (E.Bareev-A.Beliavsky, Linares 1992) and White's centre is under pressure, while it is not clear whether he will manage to castle anytime soon.

9... cxd4 10 cxd4 ♖xd5 11 ♕e2 ♖c6 12 0-0



Both sides have developed sensibly so far and now Black's play focuses around the ...e5-break. Should White prevent that, Black can always switch to the alternative plan of occupying c4.

12... ♖f5!

In my mind, clearly the best move; Black both prevents ♖b1 and increases his central control.

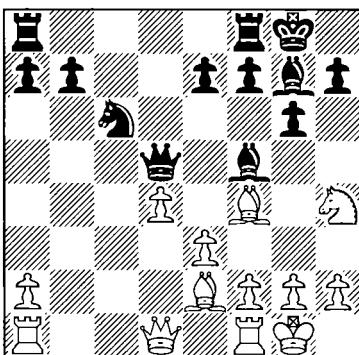
13 ♘a4

With this move, White intends to kick the black queen away from the centre with ♘c1-c5 and then either pressurize Black's queenside or advance in the centre. This is quite a dangerous plan, so Black has to respond accurately. The alternatives are less challenging:

a) 13 ♘b3 ♖e6! (the bishop will be excellent on d5) 14 ♘xd5 (14 ♘xb7?! ♘xd4 15 ♘xd5 ♘xe2+ 16 ♔h1 ♖xd5 is good for Black) 14...♖xd5 is equal, although Black can prepare ...e5 and the long-term chances are with him.

b) 13 ♘c1?! is met by 13...♘xa2 14 d5 ♘ad8! 15 ♖c4 ♘a3! and Black is on top; ...♘a5 follows, leaving White without any real compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

c) 13 ♘h4?! is a favourite of Zvjaginsev. White aims to strike back in the centre, but this plan has two significant drawbacks: d4 is weakened and the white minor pieces are rather loose.



Play might continue 13...♖e6 (instead 13...♖c8?! threatens ...♘xd4 and practically forces White to retract his

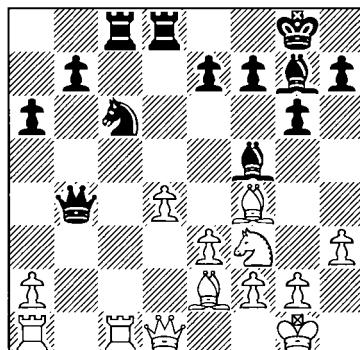
last move and repeat the position; for example, 14 ♘a4 ♘xd4? 15 exd4 ♘e4 16 ♘xg6 hxg6 17 ♖e3 ♖g4! gave Black the upper hand in V.Zvjaginsev-P.Leko, Tilburg 1998) 14 ♖f3 (this was White's idea, but now his knight is rather offside; Black is also fine after Rowson's suggestion of 14 ♘b1 ♘d7?! when 15 ♘a4? fails to 15...♘xd4) 14...♘a5 15 d5 (or 15 ♘b1 ♖c4?! 16 ♘e1 ♖a6 – Rowson) 15...♘ad8 16 e4 f5! when Black breaks up White's centre and has excellent play.

13...♘a5!

An endgame is more than acceptable here to Black. Not only does he have a queenside pawn majority, he is also quite likely to achieve ...e5, liberating the g7-bishop. Furthermore, that piece will often spring to life should White advance his own central majority.

14 ♘xa5

Less accurate is 14 ♘b3?! ♘b4! (intending to plant the knight on b4 after an exchange of queens) 15 ♘fc1 ♘ac8! (and not 15...♘fc8? 16 ♘xc6!) 16 h3 a6! 17 ♘d1 ♘fd8! which is good for Black since ...e5 is on the cards.



In P.Van der Sterren-A.Huzman, Wijk aan Zee 1993, White radically tried to prevent that break, but ...e5 actually followed in any case: 18 g4? (instead Rowson offers 18 ♜d3 ♜xd3 19 ♜xd3 e5 20 ♜g5 ♜d7! 21 ♜ab1 ♜a5 22 ♜b3 exd4 23 exd4 ♜xd4 24 ♜xd4 ♜xg5 with a clear advantage, and 18 ♜f1 ♜a5?! also favours Black) 18...♜e4 19 ♜d2 e5! 20 ♜g5 (White was probably counting on this, but having won the central battle, Black can afford to sacrifice some material to pursue his initiative) 20...exd4!! 21 ♜c4 (White also loses after both 21 ♜xe4 dxe3 22 ♜d3 ♜xa1 23 ♜xa1 ♜e5 and 21 ♜xd8 ♜xd8! 22 ♜c4 ♜b2 23 ♜c1 dxe3 24 ♜xb2 ♜xb2 25 ♜d1 ♜d4) 21...♜b2 22 ♜ac1 dxe3 23 ♜xe3 ♜d5 24 ♜c2 ♜e5 25 ♜f1 ♜f6 26 ♜c4 ♜b4 27 ♜c3 ♜xa2 0-1.

14...♝xa5 15 ♜c7

Alternatively, 15 ♜fc1 ♜ac8 16 ♜c7 (or 16 ♜d2 ♜c6! 17 ♜f3 e5! 18 dxe5 ♜xe5 19 ♜xb7 ♜cd8! when White was unable to parry the threat of ...♜d3 and was in huge trouble in G.Hertneck-V.Anand, Munich 1996) 16...♜xc7 17 ♜xc7 ♜c6 18 ♜c1 ♜b4!? and Black is still creating small problems, even in this simplified position. Indeed, Black's superior piece activity means that, while this and similar positions may be objectively equal, he is the side with the better practical chances.

15...♝c6

With equal chances, but also plenty of play left.

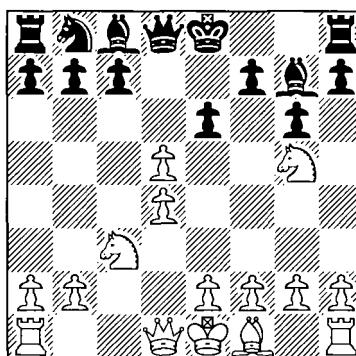
A4) 6 cxd5

This line is rather different to the

others in this chapter as White does not waste any time safeguarding his bishop. While this may seem a serious concession on his part, one must not forget about White's lead in development.

6...♝xg5 7 ♜xg5 e6

The pawn sacrifice 7...c6 does not convince me at all. Instead the logical text move should be played, and now White can continue tactically or positionally:



A41: 8 ♜a4+

A42: 8 ♜h3

A43: 8 ♜f3

A44: 8 ♜d2

A41) 8 ♜a4+

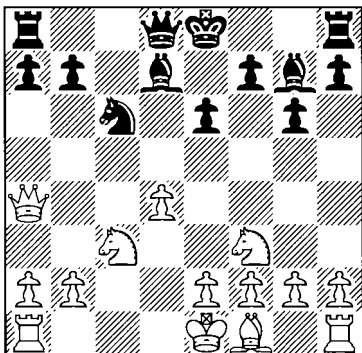
This tricky sideline, full of tactics, actually results in a tedious, equal end-game almost by force!

8...c6!

I would love to suggest the romantic 8...♜d7?, but it seems badly insufficient to me: 9 ♜b3 ♜xg5 10 ♜xb7 0-0 11 ♜xa8 ♜xd4 12 ♜d1! ♜c6 13 ♜b7 ♜e5

14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ with a clear advantage for White.

9 dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$



Threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$.

11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$!

A good test of Black's resources. Instead 11 0-0-0?! is too risky due to 11...b5! 12 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8!$ 14 e3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a5 with excellent counterplay for Black, M.Cebalo-B.Lalic, Zagreb 1993.

11... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

The start of the aforementioned equalizing sequence. Should Black wish to keep the game more alive, the following idea of Hartston's may be worth a punt: 12...0-0?! 13 e3 e5 14 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$?! (inferior is 14... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 a3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16 e4) 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (or 15 exd4 exd4 16 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with dangerous play for the piece) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ e4 17 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ f5 and Black has good practical compensation for the pawn.

13 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 e3 e5 16 $\mathbb{Q}e1!$

White's idea, but Black is scarcely troubled by the check.

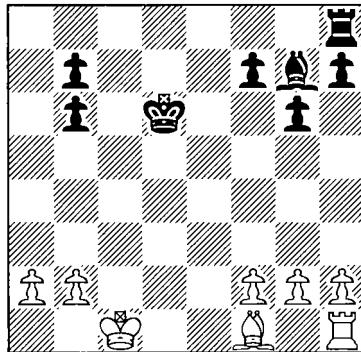
16...exd4 17 exd4+ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$

I'm not convinced by 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$?! as an attempt to play on: 19 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$ 20 fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ and it's not clear how Black can play for a win.

19 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$!

The only move. 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$? $\mathbb{Q}xb2+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5+$ wins for Black.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6



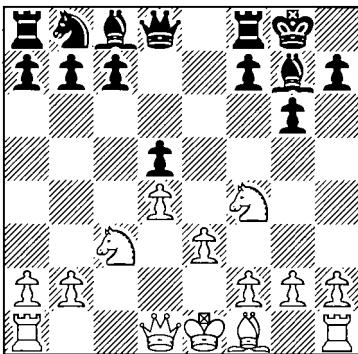
This was all played (and agreed drawn at this point) in A.Shirov-B.Ostenstad, Gausdal 1991. Black even has a very slight initiative, but it would take quite some effort to convert it.

A42) 8 $\mathbb{Q}h3$

This was once popular as a means of pressurizing the pawn on d5 and thereby preventing any ...c5 ideas. However, this knight manoeuvre doesn't actually prevent ...c5 at all!

8...exd5 9 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 10 e3

10 g3?! is the alternative plan but leaves d4 at Black's mercy; for example, 10... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}fxd5$ c6 14 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ 15 f3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ was very promising for Black in V.Kovacevic-V.Jansa, Amsterdam 1973.



10...c5!

Accepting the challenge – and why not?!

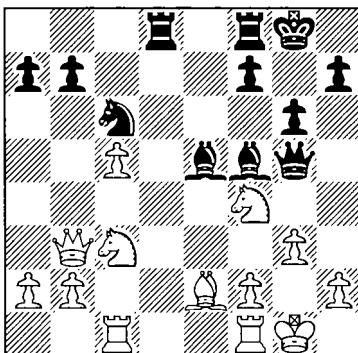
**11 dxc5 d4! 12 exd4 ♜xd4 13 ♜e2 ♜c6
14 0-0 ♜g5**

Black's activity definitely compensates for the pawn and may even count for more.

15 g3

If 15 ♜d3 ♜f5 and c5 will drop eventually, while 15 ♜fd5 ♜e6 is equal.

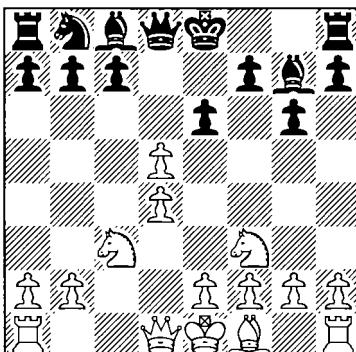
15...♜f5 16 ♜c1 ♜ad8 17 ♜b3 ♜e5



Now 18 ♜fd5 ♜d7 19 f4 ♜d4+ 20 ♜h1 ♜d8 21 ♜f3 ♜xc5 is good for Black (Gutman), and after 18 h4 ♜h6 19 ♜g2 (White should avoid both 19 ♜cd5?

and 19 ♜fd5 ♜d7) 19...♜d7?! (improving over the 19...♜d2?! 20 ♜xb7 of J.Hebert-L.Gutman, Hastings 1984/85), Black prepares ...♜d4 and it is clear that White has been forced on to the defensive.

A43) 8 ♜f3

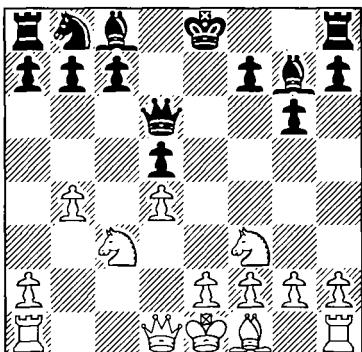


With this retreat, White opts for quiet play along the lines of the Queen's Gambit Declined. In fact, the resulting positions are very reminiscent of the Tartakower Variation of that opening. However, I believe that White's position is rather bad in practical terms; his only real plan is a minority attack on the queenside, but Black can stop that without undue effort. Black, on the other hand, can easily complete his development and will then look to attack on the kingside; an aggressive plan which has often scored well in practice.

8...exd5 9 e3

An important alternative is 9 b4 which is actually White's last chance to play this advance unhindered, but he doesn't prove ready to back it up after

9... $\mathbb{W}d6!$:



a) 10 a3 0-0 11 e3 c6 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (the benefit of Black's 9th move is smooth development, as well as White's inability to set his queenside pawns in motion) 14 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ (watch how Black now puts a stop to White's queenside play) 14...a5 15 $\mathbb{W}b3$ b5 16 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ a4 17 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$! was Y.Seirawan-G.Kasparov, Dubai Olympiad 1986. Black will follow up with ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ and it is obvious to the naked eye that his position is the more pleasant.

b) 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (a more risky choice and one suggested in Palliser's *Play 1 d4!*) 10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$! and now:

b1) 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3$ 14 fxe3 0-0-0 and Black is much better.

b2) 11 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ a6! 12 a3 (12 e3 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 13 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ – and not 14 $\mathbb{W}xd5$?? $\mathbb{W}xa3$ – 14...0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ is safer and approximately equal) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (Black wins after 13 $\mathbb{W}xd5$? $\mathbb{Q}c2+!!$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14 e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ c6 16 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with an edge for Black.

c) 11 e3 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

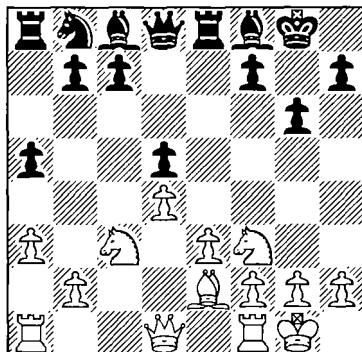
reaches a critical position in which I quite like the natural 13... $\mathbb{Q}f5$!; for example, 14 a3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (15 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ a6 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ bxc6 17 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}hc1$ $\mathbb{Q}hb8$! is also good for Black) 15...0-0-0 and Black's lead in development gives him the advantage; ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$, with tempo, and ...c5 may follow.

9...a5

White will now find it hard even to push b4.

10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 12 a3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$!

Black insists on preventing b4 and transfers his dark-squared bishop to its best square, namely d6. The following play is rather unforcing so I've elected to highlight a few standard plans and ideas:



13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$

Instead 13 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ c6 14 $\mathbb{Q}g4$?! (a typical mistake; White wants to reduce Black's attacking possibilities, but this both costs too much time and weakens White's light square control) 14... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ (Black has fully equalized) 18 b4?! (and here comes the other common error: White weakens c4) 18... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c5$

$\mathbb{W}c7$ 20 $h3$ $\mathcal{Q}c4$ gives Black a pleasant edge, R.Vaganian-P.Wolff, New York Open 1990.

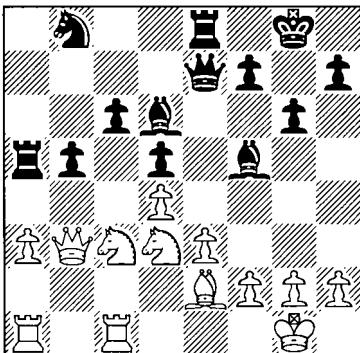
13... $c6$ 14 $\mathcal{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15 $b4$

This weakens the c4-square, and maybe now is the time for 15 $\mathcal{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}g4$!?

15... $e7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $b5$! 17 $\mathbb{Q}fc1$

17 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 18 $\mathcal{Q}c5$ $\mathcal{Q}d7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathcal{Q}b6$ (or even 19... $\mathcal{Q}xc5$?) 20 $bxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ with a clear plus) 20 $bxa5$!? $\mathcal{Q}c4$ 21 $a4$ $b4$! saw Black instructively take over the queenside initiative with some effect in A.Kakageldiev-I.Gurevich, Biel Interzonal 1993.

17... $f5$ 18 $bxa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa5$



Both sides have some coordination difficulties, but Black enjoys a clear target on a3, the bishop pair and some chances on the kingside.

A44) 8 $\mathbb{W}d2$

Clearly the most critical try.

8... $exd5$ 9 $\mathbb{W}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 10 $\mathbb{W}f4$

The only dangerous move; for example, 10 $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11 $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ gives Black no problems.

10... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

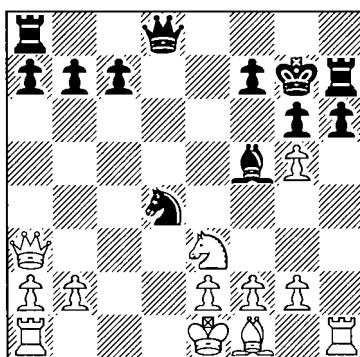
Unfortunately 10... $\mathbb{W}f6$?! runs into some tactical problems: 11 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathcal{Q}a6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathcal{Q}b4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 $e3$ with a solid edge.

11 $h4$ $h6$!

The knight should be kicked back.

12 $\mathcal{Q}f3$

The tactical shot 12 $\mathcal{Q}xd5$?! has claimed some victims, but I really doubt its soundness. Let's see how to meet it: 12... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 14 $hxg5$ $\mathcal{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathcal{Q}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{W}a3+$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 18 $\mathcal{Q}e3$



18... $\mathbb{W}xg5$! (the correct capture; inferior is 18... $hxg5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 20 0-0-0 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $c5$ 22 $\mathcal{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 23 $e3$ $\mathcal{Q}c6$ when according to Rowson Black is clearly better, as in S.Skembris-J.Smejkal, Thessaloniki Olympiad 1988, but after 24 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ White has a lot of pressure) 19 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$! (a clear improvement over the oft-suggested 19... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 20 0-0-0 $c5$ 21 $\mathcal{Q}xf5+$ $\mathcal{Q}xf5$ 22 $e3$ when White has good compensation) 20 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (Black stands very well after 20 $\mathcal{Q}xf5+$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 21 $e3$ – or 21 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $c5$ 22 $e3$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ – 21... $\mathbb{W}c2$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xc3+$ 23 $bxc3$ $\mathcal{Q}e6$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathcal{Q}xd8$) 20... $c5$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xc5$

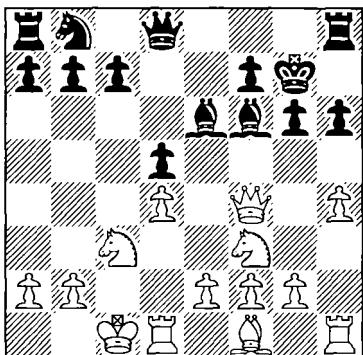
$\mathbb{Q}e6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 23 g3 $\mathbb{Q}hh8$ and Black has the initiative – one look at White's king will suffice to confirm this!

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

Black must aim to catch up in development as much as possible before White breaks with e4 or advances with g4-g5. If White continues slowly, Black regroups with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, ...c6 and ... $\mathbb{W}b8$.

13 0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$!

Black is now all set for ...c5, as well as to counter the e4-break.



14 e4

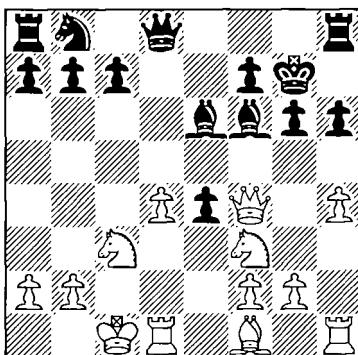
Alternatively, 14 g4?! c5! 15 e3 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ cxd4 17 exd4 $\mathbb{W}b8$! is better for Black, but White has also tried 14 e3 and now:

a) The intended 14...c5 leads to a draw: 15 dxc5 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ fxe6 19 $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ with perpetual check, as White cannot play 20 $\mathbb{W}xg6+?$ due to 20... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21 bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xc3+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}b4+$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4+!$ 24 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}c8+$ and Black wins.

b) 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 g4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$! 16 $\mathbb{W}g3$ (16 e4 is suggested by Chandler but just looks bad to me after 16...dxe4 17 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ or 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xe4$

$\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ with some advantage in both cases) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 17 $\mathbb{W}g2$ c6 and Black is better; his queenside play, with ...a5-a4-a3 the immediate intention, is much more potent than anything White can drum up on the kingside.

14...dxe4



15 $\mathbb{W}xe4$?

Instead 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$?! $\mathbb{Q}xa2$! (Black can and should grab this important pawn) 16 g4 (16 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ is great for Black) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5!! (a powerful move which virtually refutes White's concept) 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (Black is much better after both 18 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ and 18 g5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$! 19 dxc5 (19 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 21 g5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ cxd4 gives Black a clear plus) 19... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ is excellent for Black, G.Schroll-V.Epishin, Vienna 1991.

15...c6

Black mustn't be too ambitious here: 15...c5?! 16 $\mathbb{Q}c4$! $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 dxc5 is good for White.

16 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

I believe this is White's best option in the whole 8 cxd5 variation, but it's still nothing great. There are some

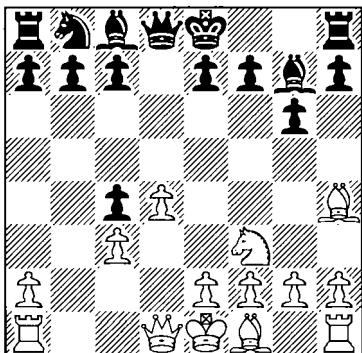
prospects of a kingside attack, particularly on the light squares weakened by ...h6, but that is fully counterbalanced by Black's strong central influence.

A5) 6 ♜h4

White aims to exploit the fact that the e7-pawn must be protected in order to force Black to surrender the centre. The pressure against e7 does prove annoying at times, but on the other hand, the bishop's inability to return to the queenside leaves that sector of the board very exposed.

6...♝xc3 7 bxc3 dxc4!

In my view, definitely the best way of gaining counterplay.



Since 8 ♜b1?! a6, intending ...b5 and ...c5, is good for Black, White's choice is really between:

A51: 8 e3

A52: 8 e4

A53: 8 ♜a4+

A51) 8 e3

This pretty much turns White's opening play into a pawn sacrifice.

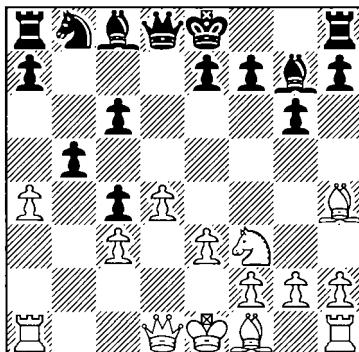
8...b5!

Holding on to the pawn in the most straightforward manner.

9 a4

9 ♜e2 will generally transpose as White cannot really make do without a4.

9...c6



As Rowson points out, this defence is playable only here, and not in the 4 ♜g5 system (in the analogous position axb5 ...cxb5, ♛f3 would just win material) or in Line A3 (when the attack on the b8-knight would result in the collapse of Black's queenside).

10 ♜e2

Alternatively:

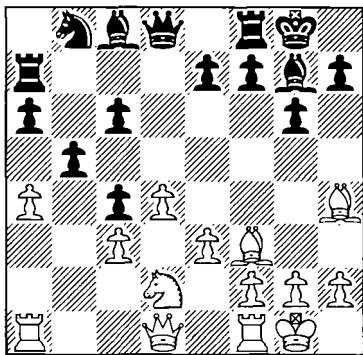
a) 10 ♜d2 a6 11 ♜e2 is another route into our main line.

b) 10 axb5 cxb5 11 ♜e5 ♜b7 (but not 11...♜xe5? 12 ♛f3 ♜c6 13 ♛xc6+ ♜d7 14 ♛e4 and White has too much compensation) 12 ♜b1 (or 12 ♛b1 a6 13 ♜xc4 ♛c7 14 ♜d2 ♛xc3 15 ♛c1 ♛xc1+ 16 ♜xc1 ♜d7 which favours Black) 12...♛d5!? (12...♜xe5? is a mistake in

view of 13 $\mathbb{Q}xb5!$, but Black can also consider 12...a6 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc4 \mathbb{Q}e4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xb1$ 0-0 with advantage) 13 f3 f5 and Black is clearly on top.

10...a6 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 13 0-0

Both sides have continued logically since the pawn sacrifice, but already White's compensation doesn't look too convincing.



13...h6!?

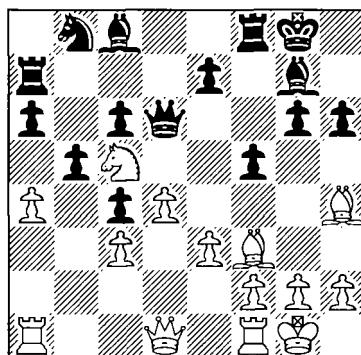
A waiting move which slightly improves Black's position while waiting to see what White is up to. Instead Kasparov, when faced with this line, opted for 13... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, intending either to place his bishop on d3 or provoke e4, and that is a good alternative: 14 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ (14 e4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$! 15 e5 $\mathbb{Q}e6$! is good for Black) 14...h6!? (similar to my main suggestion, whereas 14... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ was A.Sorin-G.Kasparov, Buenos Aires simul 1997; now White should have continued to repeat, while Black should have preferred 16...h6 – he is better, after all!) 15 e4 (15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e5! 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 dx5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ is very good for Black) 15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and Black threatens ...b4; White really feels the absence of

his dark-squared bishop from the queenside.

14 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Similar is 14 $\mathbb{W}c1$ f5! 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (or 15 $\mathbb{W}a3$ g5 16 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e5 17 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ and Black is better) 15... $\mathbb{Q}c7$, intending ...e5 with advantage.

14...f5 15 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$

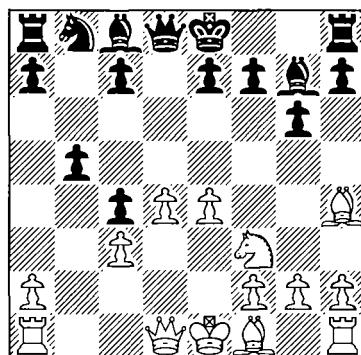


With ...e5 coming, Black is clearly for preference.

A52) 8 e4

This, in comparison with 8 e3, leaves d4 less well covered and thus more vulnerable to ...c5 or ...e5 breaks.

8...b5



9 a4 c6 10 ♜e2

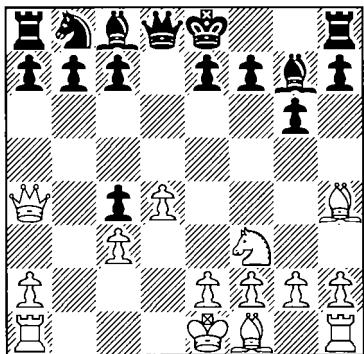
Another option is 10 ♜b1!? a6 11 ♜e2 ♜d7 12 0-0 ♜b6 13 ♜b4 (13 a5 ♜d7 14 ♜d1 0-0, with the idea of ...♜e8 and ...e5, is promising for Black) 13...♜xa4 14 ♜xc4 c5 15 ♜b3 0-0 16 ♜d5 ♜a7 17 ♜fd1 ♜a5 18 dxc5 e6 19 ♜c4 ♜xc3 20 ♜xa4 which was rather unclear in N.Ristic-V.Tukmakov, Cetinje 1991.

10...♝d7

Black can also play 10...0-0 11 0-0 ♜d7! 12 ♜c2 ♜b6 13 a5 ♜d7, when he is again somewhat better.

11 0-0 ♜b6 12 a5

Now Black should avoid getting involved in 12...♝a4?! 13 ♜xa4! bxa4 14 ♜xa4 when White's strong centre gives him good compensation for the exchange. Instead the simple 12...♝d7 13 ♜d2 0-0 leaves White with insufficient compensation for the pawn.

A53) 8 ♜a4+

White opts for the immediate recovery of the pawn. This line forms the core of White's anti-Grünfeld repertoire in Grivas' recent and very de-

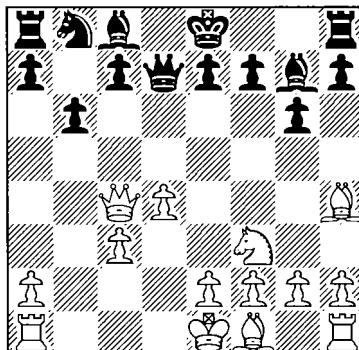
tailed book. Grivas himself has played this line several times with success and is its leading theoretician. Nonetheless, having spent quite some time analysing this line, I have come to the conclusion that it is perfectly satisfactory for Black, as the following analysis will prove.

8...♜d7!

The correct interpolation, otherwise White regains his pawn with the more harmonious position.

9 ♜xc4 b6!

Black will now both gain time with ...♜a6 and eventually force White to lose his castling rights, due to the very likely possibility of an exchange on f1. Note, too, that the key element in Black's strategy is the ...c5 break.

**10 e3**

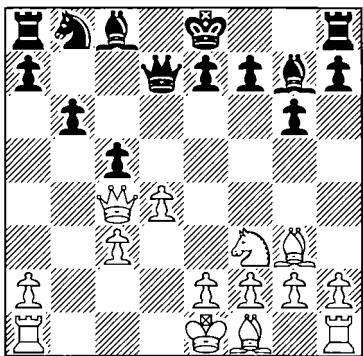
Alternatively:

a) 10 ♜b3 ♜a6 11 e3 transposes to our main line.

b) 10 ♜e5 ♜xe5! 11 dxe5 ♜a6 12 ♜e4 ♜c6 13 ♜d4 (or 13 ♜xc6+ ♜xc6 14 f4 0-0-0 and White's development difficulties grant Black lasting compensation) 13...0-0 14 ♜xe7 ♜e8 15 ♜h4 (or 15

$\mathbb{Q}f6?$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 17 $exf6$, T.Sielicki-P.Bobras, Internet blitz 2003, and now 17... $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ with a large advantage) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ with good compensation; Black has strong pressure and White faces ongoing problems both developing and coordinating his pieces.

c) 10 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ is too tame and leads to trouble: 10... $c5!$



11 $e3$ (or 11 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}b3$ 0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ – White hardly benefits from either 14 $e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ or 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ – 14... $\mathbb{Q}axb8$ 15 $e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$, A.Aliferenko-V.Nedeiko, Alushta 2005, and now 16... $e5!$ leaves Black a little better) 11... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ (Black was better after 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b2$ 0-0 16 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ b5 in D.Sahovic-J.Dorfman, Lvov 1984) 13...0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ (15 a4 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}c4+$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ also gave White nothing in L.Bass-A.Mikhailchishin, Budapest 1989) 15... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is equal.

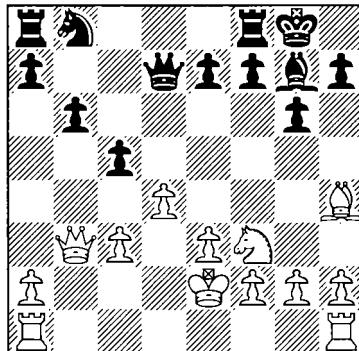
10... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 0-0

Note that 12... $c5?$ is inaccurate in view of 13 $d5!$ 0-0 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1!$ as Grivas' games have shown; for example, 14... $e5$ 15 $dxe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $fxe6$ 17 $c4$ gave White an edge in E.Grivas-W.Schmidt, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990.

13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

White must now resort to artificial castling, which is quite time-consuming, but Black must act energetically to exploit it.

13... $c5!$



14 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

This is Grivas' main line, but Black has some improvements, as we will see. Note that White cannot play 14 $d5?$ due to 14... $c4$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ when he faces serious problems. Instead, objectively best and definitely safest is 14 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$, even though after 14... $cxd4$ 15 $cxd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16 a4 (or 16 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17 $\mathbb{W}b4$ e6 18 a4 $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ and Black was fine in F.Gheorghiu-K.Sundararajan, Biel 1999; he can follow up with ... $\mathbb{W}b7-e4$) 16... $\mathbb{Q}ac8!?$ (or 16... $e5!?$ 17 $dxe6$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ with equal play; instead 17 $d5?$ $e4$ 18 $dxc6$ $exf3+$ 19 $gxf3$ $\mathbb{W}h3$ is bad for White, while 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 18 $dxe5$

$\mathbb{W}g4+$ just loses) 17 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ e6 Black has equalized effortlessly.

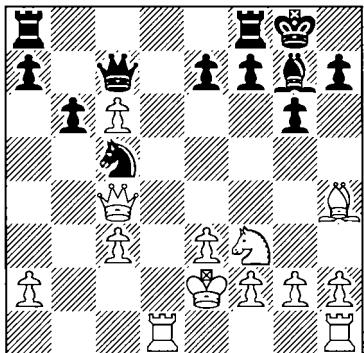
14... $\mathbb{Q}a6!$

Black typically ignores the pawn in order to speed up his development, whereas 14... $bxc5?!$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ just gives White some advantage.

15 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$

White cannot solve his problems by simple means: both 15 $cxb6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5!?$ and 15 c6 $\mathbb{W}c7$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ are good for Black.

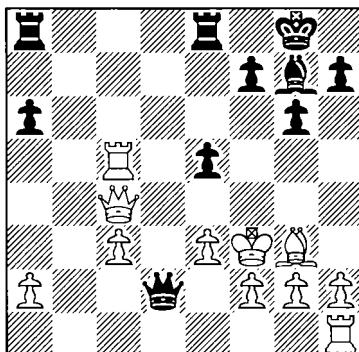
Grivas has suggested instead 15 $\mathbb{Q}ad1?!$, but it seems very risky to me. White's queenside is now abandoned and, moreover, any king retreat to f1 may well block the h1-rook; I don't think that White can afford this waste of time. After 15... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16 c6 (16 $cxb6$ $axb6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ is also unappetizing for White) 16... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{W}c4$, Black must decide how best to prepare the recapture on c6:



a) 17...e6?! 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ e5?! (18... $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ e5 20 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ restricts White to an edge) 19 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $bxc5$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$, as in E.Grivas-

E.Kondou, Athens 1995, shows White's main idea.

b) 17... $\mathbb{Q}fe8!$ appears to give Black excellent play. After 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ a6 (but not, of course, 18...e5?! 19 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $bxc5$ 21 e4 when White is better) 19 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e5 20 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $bxc5$, White has managed to implement his plan, but both his king and h1-rook remain misplaced. Indeed, even exploiting his control of d5 doesn't really help White; for example, 22 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (or 22 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{W}b5+$ 23 c4 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 24 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$, intending ... $\mathbb{W}c6$ and ...f5, with an obvious edge for Black) 22... $\mathbb{W}b5!$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}b2+$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d2$

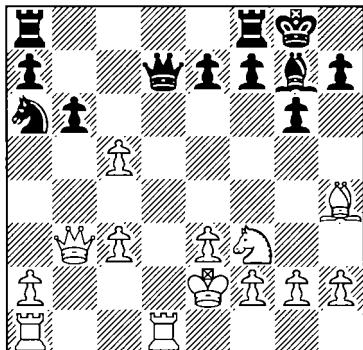


when the white king is in some danger; Black will attack with moves like ... $\mathbb{W}d7$, ...e4 and ...h5, and I would be surprised if White can survive the onslaught.

c) 17... $\mathbb{Q}fc8?!$ is an untried idea I came up with, albeit probably inferior to the simpler 17... $\mathbb{Q}fe8$. Now 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1?!$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}b7!$ reveals Black's idea; the capture on e7 doesn't come with tempo and ... $\mathbb{Q}e4xc3$ will follow with some effect. Instead 18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

(White should also avoid 18 $\mathbb{Q}d2?$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}b7!$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21 $\mathbb{W}a4$ b5) 18...e5 19 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ (White's only chance is to attack e5, otherwise he will have to suffer with his king stuck in the centre; for example 20 $\mathbb{Q}b5?$ a6 21 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 22 $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 26 $\mathbb{W}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}6c7$ 29 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 30 $\mathbb{W}d8$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ and White remains hampered by his inactive king's rook) 20... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (and not 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$ b5 23 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ f6 24 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 25 c4 $\mathbb{W}xc4+$ 26 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ which is very good for Black) 22... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ b5 24 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ intends ... $\mathbb{Q}b6-c4$ and gives Black excellent compensation for the pawn (analysis by Dembo/Grivas).

Returning to 15 $\mathbb{Q}hd1$:



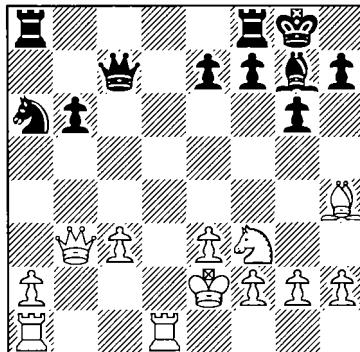
15...Wc7!

Less accurate was 15...Wb7?! 16 c6! $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ in E.Grivas-P.Leko, Dortmund 1992.

16 cxb6

Note that 16 c6 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17 $\mathbb{W}c4$ e6! 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (18 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}xh2$) 18... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ regains the pawn with advantage.

16...axb6



17 Qg3

Alternatively:

a) 17 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ with a slight edge for Black.

b) 17 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 20 $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}fa8?$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ also makes a lot of sense) 21 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c4+$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ leads to full equality.

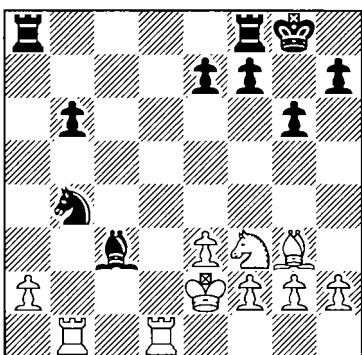
c) 17 a4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}fa8$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ is equal) 19...e5! (shutting the white minor pieces out of play) 20 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ (20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}fa8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}c4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4!$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}f1?$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ 0-1 was the famous game J.Lautier-V.Ivanchuk, Terrassa 1991, but here White can again maintain equality with 21 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$) 20... $\mathbb{Q}fa8$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 22 c4 is also fairly level, albeit perhaps a touch more pleasant for Black.

17...Wxc3

Black must avoid 17...e5?, since 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{W}c4!$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d5$ is somewhat better for White, but he can also consider 17... $\mathbb{W}c6?$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 19 $\mathbb{W}d5$ (19 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c4+$

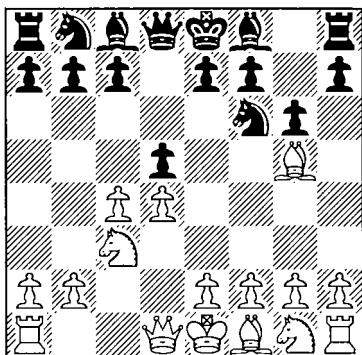
22 ♕g1 ♖xe5 23 ♗xe5 ♖xc3 is also equal) 19...♖xd5 20 ♜xd5 ♖xc3 21 ♜c1 ♘f6 22 ♜c2 ♘a6 with equality, as in T.Bosboom – Lanchava-J.Gustafsson, Amsterdam 2001.

18 ♖xc3 ♘xc3 19 ♜ab1 ♗b4



The position is completely equal, F.Gheorghiu-E.Liss, Biel 1994.

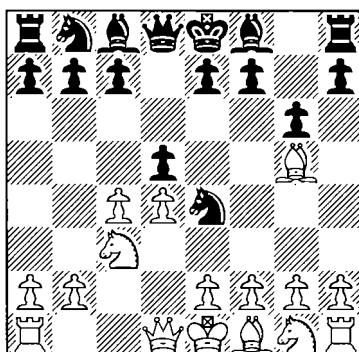
B) 4 ♘g5



The immediate bishop move, introduced into high-level practice by Taimanov in 1970, has become very popular recently, thanks to the efforts of several young Georgian and Armenian grandmasters, most notably Aronian,

Jobava and Sargissian. White seeks to exploit the fact that while ♘f3 may not be entirely essential at this early stage of the game, Black can hardly refrain from ...♘g7. Still, it seems to me that Black's prospects are in no way inferior. He should respond in the same manner as in Line A, and indeed the world's elite has settled on this approach.

4...♗e4



The most consistent reply.

5 ♖h4

White's main choice by far.

Alternatively:

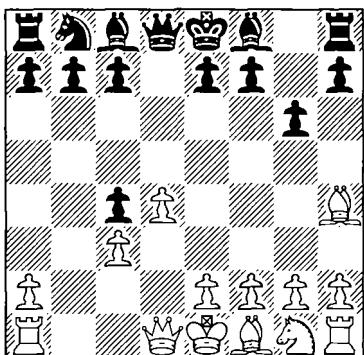
a) 5 ♗xe4?! dxе4 leads to trouble as the g5-bishop is exposed: for example, 6 e3 h6 7 ♖h4 c5 gives Black the initiative, while 6 ♖a4+ ♖d7 7 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 8 0-0-0 ♘g7 9 f3 h6! 10 ♖e3 e5! 11 d5 f5 (C.Crouch-J.Rowson, London 1997) is promising for Black.

b) 5 cxd5?! ♗xg5 6 h4 ♗e4 7 ♗xe4 ♖xd5 8 ♗c3 ♖a5 already gives Black already the better prospects thanks to his bishop pair.

c) 5 ♖f4 ♗xc3 6 bxc3 ♘g7 usually leads back to Line A3; for example, 7 e3

c5! (Black must be ready to answer cxd5 with ...cxd4) 8 ♜f3 or 7 cxd5 ♜xd5 8 ♜f3 c5 9 e3 cxd4 10 exd4 0-0 and in both cases play has transposed.

5...♜xc3 6 bxc3 dxc4!

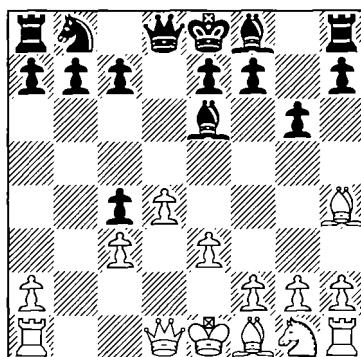


7 e3

Instead 7 e4 c5 8 ♜xc4 ♜g7 is basically an Exchange Variation with White's dark-squared bishop misplaced on h4; the pressure on e7 is much less relevant than White's inability to support his centre with this bishop. Play might continue: 9 ♜f3 ♜c6 10 0-0 0-0 11 d5 ♜a5 12 ♜e2 ♜d6!? (I like this move which prepares ...e5, followed by ...f5; note that the a5-knight prevents White from harassing the blockading queen with ♜c4) 13 ♜d3 (13 ♜g3 e5 14 ♜a4 b6 15 ♜d2 ♜d7 16 ♜c2 ♜h6! 17 ♜fd1 f5 18 exf5 gxf5 gives Black a healthy initiative) 13...e5! 14 ♜d2 ♜h6! 15 ♜fb1 f5 16 f3 (if 16 ♜b5 b6 17 ♜xa5 ♜xd2!) 16...b6 17 ♜f2 ♜f7 18 ♜c4 ♜xc4 19 ♜xc4 ♜d7 20 a4 fxe4 21 fxe4 ♜af8 and Black has good counterplay. This wasn't all forced, but it is a good indication of how Black should play.

Note that 7 ♜a4+ ♜d7 8 ♜xc4 b6 leaves White with nothing better than to transpose with 9 ♜f3 to Line A53. In Wang Yue-A.Timofeev, Taiyuan 2006, he tried the independent 9 ♜g3 c5 10 ♜e5, but Black was fine after 10...♜a6 11 ♜b3 f6 12 ♜xb8 ♜xb8 13 ♜f3 cxd4 14 cxd4 e6 15 e4 ♜xf1 16 ♜xf1 a5.

7...♜e6!



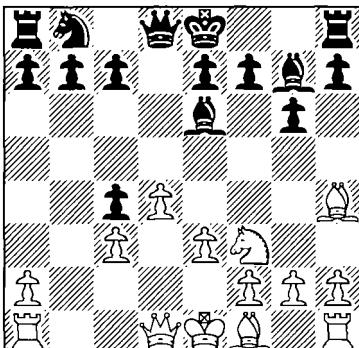
White will now have a hard time regaining his pawn. However, he tends to view his opening play as a long-term positional pawn sacrifice: his solid central structure blunts the g7-bishop and Black can't easily strike back in the centre. For his part, Black should make the recovery of the pawn as difficult as possible, while also interfering with White's development and trying to create counter-threats.

White must now avoid both 8 ♜xc4?? ♜xc4 9 ♜a4+ b5 and 8 ♜a4+? c6, and so usually chooses between:

B1: 8 ♜f3

B2: 8 ♜b1

B3: 8 ♜b1

B1) 8 ♜f3 ♛g7

The alert reader will have noticed that we have transposed to Line A51, but with White having enticed Black into meeting 8 e3 there with 8...♝e6, rather than our preferred 8...b5. However, even with the bishop on e6 this line is pretty harmless for Black.

9 ♜b1

Instead 9 ♜b1 b6 transposes to Line B2, while 9 ♛e2 0-0 10 ♜g5 ♜d5 11 e4 h6 12 exd5 hxg5 13 ♛xg5 ♜xd5 14 h4 c5 gave Black the initiative in I.Ivanisevic-E.Sutovsky, Internet (blitz) 2006.

9...b6

Clearly mistaken are both 9...c5?! 10 ♜xb7 cxd4 11 ♜xa8 and 9...0-0?! 10 ♜xb7 ♜d7 11 ♜g5 when White is much better.

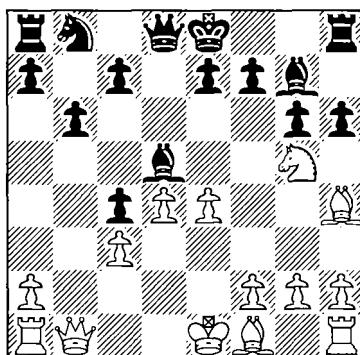
10 ♜g5

Attacking the e6-bishop is the most critical move. White can aim to regain his pawn immediately with 10 ♜d2, but after the 10...0-0 (another good option is 10...c5) 11 ♛e2 (White's only serious option is to continue developing without paying attention to the c4-

pawn; instead both 11 ♜xc4? ♜xc4 12 ♜xc4 ♜d5 and 11 ♜xc4 c5 are good for Black according to Yermolinsky and A.Livshits) 11...c5 12 ♜f3 cxd4! 13 cxd4 of A.Huzman-A.Yermolinsky, Tbilisi 1985, Black can obtain very good play with 13...c3 14 ♜b3 ♜a6.

10...♜d5

Black should not allow the exchange of this bishop; for example, 10...♝d7?! 11 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 12 ♜b5+ c6 13 ♜xc4 ♜e4 14 ♜g3 ♜d7 15 ♜g1 a6 16 ♜d3 left him much worse in H.Grooten-F.Nijboer, Rotterdam 2000.

11 e4 h6!**12 ♜f3**

Black is not troubled by either 12 ♜h3 ♜b7 13 ♜xc4 0-0 14 0-0 (or 14 e5?, D.Arutunian-T.Sanikidze, Tbilisi 2006, and now 14...c5 is better for Black) 14...c5 or 12 exd5 hxg5 13 ♜b5+ c6 14 dxc6 a6; in both cases he has a good position.

**12...♝e6 13 ♛e2 0-0 14 0-0 a6 15 a4 c6
16 ♜b4 c5 17 ♜a3**

17 dxc5 bxc5 18 ♜xc5 g5 19 ♜g3 ♜xc3 is fully equal for Black.

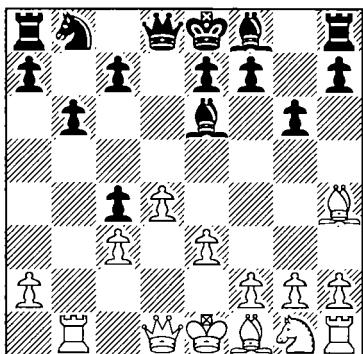
17...g5

Now 18 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ g4 19 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ cxd4 20 cxd4 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ was very good for Black in J.Obsivac-T.Oral, Czech League 2002, but even 18 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ gxh4 20 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ most certainly doesn't leave Black any worse.

B2) 8 $\mathbb{B}b1$

This is a fairly popular move, but not one which creates any real problems for Black. He is often able to retain the extra pawn on c4 or will use the time White spends recapturing it to strike back in the centre.

8...b6



9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

Alternatively:

a) 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ (but not 9...c5?? which is a blunder: 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xc6+$) 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 11 0-0 c6 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ b5 with the initiative for Black.

b) 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 0-0 is also good for Black

c) 9 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6!$ (less accurate is 9... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 f3?! with the initiative, while 9... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 10 gxh3 $\mathbb{W}d5$ is the critical approach but not the most effective, since 11 $\mathbb{W}g4!$? f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$

13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xc3+$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ c6 16 $\mathbb{Q}hc1$ gives White good compensation) 10 e4 (or 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c6 14 e4 h6 which was fully equal in N.Pedersen-V.Varadi, Budapest 2006, while Black stands very well in the case of 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5?$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$) 10...f6! 11 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 12 gxh3 $\mathbb{W}d7$ with complicated play, but good prospects for Black.

9... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

White does not even equalize after the alternatives; for example, 10 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ c6 11 $\mathbb{W}f3$ f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ and Black has the initiative, or 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c6 11 0-0 0-0 12 e4 b5 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (V.Malakhatkko-I.Khmelniker, Vlissingen 2005) 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 f4 (14 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f5 is similar) 14... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}c2$ c5 with the upper hand for Black.

10... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 11 e4

Instead 11 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ c6 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ (Black is somewhat better after both 12 e4 h6 13 exd5 hxg5 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ and 14 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ b5) 12...0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 14 0-0 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ left Black better in L.Garcia Galeote-I.Valles Moreno, Collado Villalba 2004.

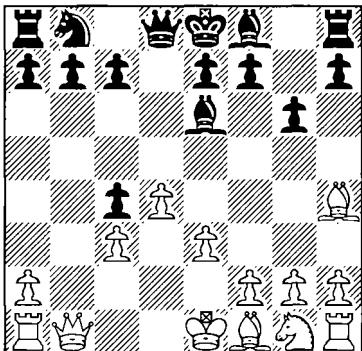
11...h6!

The standard reaction in this type of situation. Now 12 exd5 hxg5 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ (or 13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c6 15 0-0 f5 with advantage) 13... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ c6 gives Black a clear advantage, E.Kahn-T.Fogarasi, Budapest 2000.

B3) 8 $\mathbb{W}b1$

White's most popular and challenging choice. The queen takes aim at Black's weakened queenside light

squares and hopes to help White regain his pawn on c4.



8...Qd5

A seemingly very risky move, as it exposes the queen to harassment either by e4 or Qe2-f4. However, the queen can move away to a5 with tempo if necessary. We must not forget, too, that Black is bringing another piece into play and he can now play ...Qf5, taking control of the b-file. Overall, it transpires Black has enough resources to prevent White from consolidating his position.

9 Qf3

White can again turn his attention to the bishop on e6 with 9 Qe2, but this is now well met by the paradoxical 9...Qc8!. This rather unnatural retreat in fact completely takes the sting out of White's set-up, due to the threat of ...g5 should Qf4 be played:

a) 10 Qf4? Wa5 11 Wb4 (11 Wb2? g5 just wins a piece) 11...Wxb4 12 cxb4 b5! is very strong in view of the possible continuation 13 Qd5 Qa6 14 a4 c6 15 axb5 cxd5 16 bxa6 Wb8.

b) 10 a4 Wh6 11 Qg3 (this position

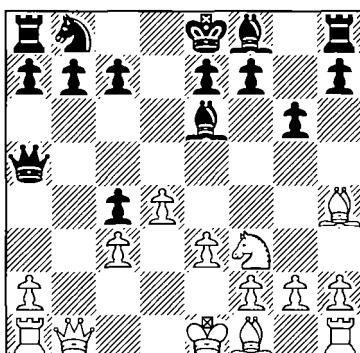
was prematurely agreed drawn in A.Dreev-B.Avrukh, Gibraltar 2005) 11...c5 12 Wb5+ Qd7 13 Wxc5 Wxc5 14 dxc5 Qa6 15 Qd4 Qxc5 16 Qxc4 Qg7 leaves Black better.

c) 10 Qg3 Qg7 11 Qxc7 0-0 gives Black a lead in development and the initiative; ...e5 will follow.

Finally we should note that 9 a4?! Qd7 10 Qf3 Wa5 11 Wb2 Qb6 12 Wb5+ Wxb5 13 axb5 Qd7 transposes to the note to White's 11th move, below.

9...Wa5

I like this forcing move more than the usual 9...Qd7. It is true that Black has also been doing fairly well after that, but White can generate some play; for example, 10 Qe2 Qf5 11 Wb2 Qg7 (11...Qb6 12 a4 a5 13 0-0 Qd3 14 Qxd3 cxd3 15 e4 Wxe4 16 Wfe1 gave White very good compensation in T.Radjabov-E.Sutovsky, Rishon Le Zion (blitz) 2006) 12 0-0 e5 13 Wb4 c5 14 Wxc4 Wxc4 15 Wxc4 Wc8 saw Black go on to win in L.Aronian-P.Svidler, Dormund 2006, but at this stage I feel that White was a little better.



10 Wb2

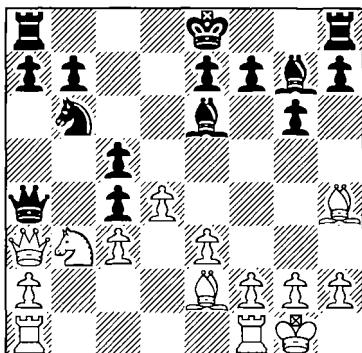
Retaining some influence on the b-file. Less incisive is 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0-0 and after ...h5 White's dark-squared bishop will be in trouble, in view of the threat of ...g5 and ...h4.

10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Instead 11 a4? is a mistaken idea. White wants to exchange queens, but his queenside pawns remain targets and his development backward: 11... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}b5+$ (or 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ g5 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ h5 with the initiative for Black) 12... $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 13 axb5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ e6 and Black's positional advantage is unquestionable, not to mention his extra pawn.

11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is also insufficient: 11... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 12 e4 h6 13 exd5 hxg5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ with a clear plus; Black will follow up with ...0-0-0 and a central break.

11... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ c5 14 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{W}a4$



16 $\mathbb{W}xa4?$ was seen in G.Sargissian–M.Vachier Lagrave, Turin Olympiad 2006, but this seems entirely wrong. The

game continued 16... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18 dxc5 and now Black should have simply played 18...0-0-0 when c3 is hanging and ... $\mathbb{Q}d2$ imminent. However, even after 16 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ f6 Black has the initiative. He will play ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ next and then centralize his rooks, while White must attend to his b3-knight and his pieces are uncoordinated.

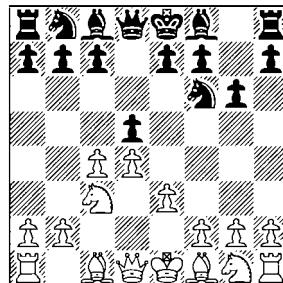
Conclusion

We've covered a number of lines in this chapter. Black must respond accurately to the $\mathbb{Q}g5$ systems, but should he do so, he can obtain plenty of counterplay. After 4 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$, 6 cxd5 is tricky since White obtains a lead in development, but with careful play Black should be the one to benefit should a sharp skirmish ensue. More demanding is 6 $\mathbb{Q}h4$, after which Black really has to capture the c4-pawn. White can then immediately recapture the pawn, albeit at some cost in terms of development, or consider his opening play a pawn sacrifice. However, in the safer former case, Black fully equalizes, while the latter gives him good play.

More troublesome, at least for an unprepared black player, is the immediate 4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$. Black should again respond with ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and an exchange on c3 after which the resulting positions are pretty complex. Following up with the popular 8 $\mathbb{W}b1$ is probably White's best try, but is still quite risky for him and currently 8... $\mathbb{W}d5$ looks like an excellent response.

Chapter Eleven

The Solid 4 e3



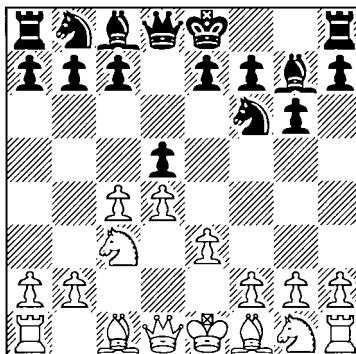
1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 e3

With this solid choice White essentially refrains from any kind of theoretical discussion. He intends simply to develop and relinquishes any hope of gaining a theoretical advantage. Most of the lines examined in this chapter either involve natural and unambitious development or a specific (but usually artificial) scheme to discourage the standard ...c5-break. Almost any legal move is available to White at every step and it is naturally impossible, as well as rather pointless, to cover every possibility. Instead we will focus only on specific set-ups where a less obvious treatment is required. Black players should just remember that their main idea is to castle and play ...c5; in most cases that should be enough to give you a good position!

One very important point about these lines is that, after Black plays ...c5, there often occurs a total clearance of pawns from the centre. In that case

Black is often left with the initiative, thanks to his actively-placed pieces and particularly the g7-bishop. Therefore, do not fear this simplification of the position!

4....Bg7



White usually now continues to develop solidly, although he can also pressurize d5:

A: 5 Bb3

B: 5 Nf3

The alternatives are rather rare:

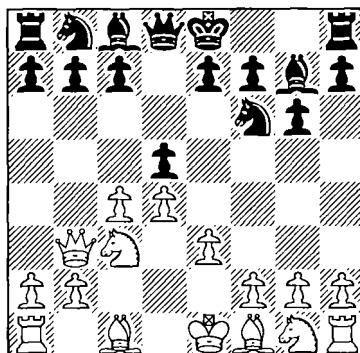
a) 5 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ aims to bring a major piece to the c-file and thereby discourage ...c5, but what is the bishop doing on d2? A.Aleksandrov-V.Ivanchuk, Halkidiki 2002, continued 5...0-0 6 $\mathbb{B}c1$ (or 6 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$, intending ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, when 7 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 8 cxd5 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ leaves Black on top; 6 c5 mechanically prevents ...c5, but is met by 6...b6 7 cxb6 axb6 and an even stronger ...c5 follows) 6...c5! 7 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (instead 8 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ is well met by 8...d4 9 exd4 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e4+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ with advantage, while 8 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ was seen in R.Cusi-A.Yermolinsky, Oak Brook 2003, and now 11... $\mathbb{W}b6$ threatens both ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$; Black is better) 8... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 9 f3 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ e6 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ and now Ivanchuk could have obtained good compensation on the dark squares after 11... $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 12 g3 $\mathbb{W}f6$ or 12 $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}h6$.

b) 5 b4 is an idea seen more often after 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0. Here it can be effectively countered by 5...0-0 6 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (or 6 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ b6! 7 $\mathbb{W}b3$ c5! 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 9 cxd5, as in J.Johansson-N.Crickmore, Olomouc 2002, and now 9...cxd4 favours Black) 6...a5! 7 b5 (7 bxa5? dxc4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is much better for Black) 7... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ intending ...dxc4 and/or ...e5, and the immediate 7...e5!? is also possible.

A) 5 $\mathbb{W}b3$

This is a respectable move, with ideas similar to those in the Russian System. Here White is able to recapture on c4 with the bishop, so ...dxc4 is not a good idea. On the other hand, 4 e3 has

greatly restricted White's possibilities allowing Black simply to strengthen d5 and complete development.



5...e6 6 $\mathbb{W}a3$

With this very unnatural move White intends to disrupt Black's smooth development by preventing castling, and this system is covered in great detail by Timothy Taylor in his recent *Beating the King's Indian and Grünfeld*. In my opinion, White cannot possibly treat a chess opening like this especially one as dynamic as the Grünfeld! White's idea violates all the cardinal rules of the opening and its nature is very one-sided; the queen is misplaced on a3 for any other purposes the minor pieces still at home...

Botvinnik liked to meet this idea with ... $\mathbb{W}e7$, which of course should suffice for equality, but I feel that it's a crime to exchange the white queen. Black should gradually prepare the ...c5 break and not allow himself to be provoked by White's play. Indeed, White should really prefer 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$, transposing to Line B1.

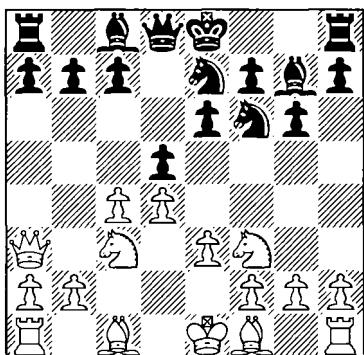
6... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$

The very simple idea behind this move is ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, facilitating castling. Black, it is true, cannot break with ...c5 anytime soon, but he has all the time in the world to prepare it.

7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

7 cxd5 exd5 brings about a Carlsbad structure, but this particular version cannot possibly be good for White. One example went 8 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ (10... $\mathbb{W}xd7$ is also fine) 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13 b3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ with at least equality in A.Kotov-K.Honfi, Sarajevo 1966.

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



Black will now castle, perhaps exchange on c4 to free d5 for the e7-knight, and prepare ...c5 with ...b6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$. In all the lines that follow Black easily equalizes the play, and in practical terms these 'equal' positions offer Black excellent long-term chances and much the easier play.

8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$

The most natural development and Taylor's main preference.

Alternatively:

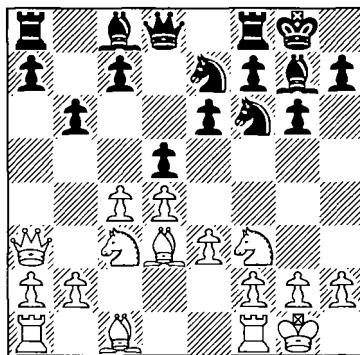
a) 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 9 0-0 (or 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ b6 10

0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11 cxd5 exd5 12 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xa6$, O.Jovanic-B.Predojevic, Kusadasi 2006, and now 13...c5 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is equal) 9...b6 10 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}exd5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (11 e4? $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is excellent for Black) 11...exd5 12 b4 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ (I.Khenkin-B.Alterman, Tel Aviv 1994), and now Black should play either 14...c6 or 14...a6 with equality.

b) 8 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ (or 10 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dxe4 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ f5 12 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e5 13 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with the initiative) 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ b6 12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ looks promising for Black, who is about to blast open the position.

c) 8 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ c6 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (I.Farago-V.Jansa, Baile Herculane 1982) 10...dxc4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ c5 is equal.

8...0-0 9 0-0 b6



10 cxd5

Again not the only try, but 10 e4 dxe4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ h6 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ is at least equal for Black, and 10 c5 bxc5 11 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}a3$ c5 13 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (13 dxc5 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 b4 a5 is problematic for White, as Taylor notes)

13...c4 14 ♜e2 e5 leaves Black the one pulling the strings.

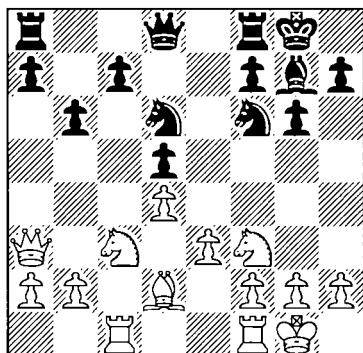
10...exd5 11 ♜d2

This occurred in the game T.Taylor-V.Mikhalevski, Las Vegas 2006. Instead 11 e4 dxе4 12 ♜xe4 ♜fd5 intends ...h6 and ...♜e6, with an initiative for Black, while 11 b4 hopes to prevent ...c5 for good, but it doesn't promise anything: 11...a6 12 ♜b3 (12 b5?! ♜f5! 13 ♜xf5 axb5 14 ♜b3 ♜xf5 15 ♜xb5 is just better for Black) 12...♜f5 13 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 14 a4 c6 15 ♜a3 (15 b5 axb5 16 ♜a3 bxa4 also fails to solve White's problems) 15...b5 16 ♜e5 ♜b6 and with ...♜d6-c4 coming, Black is better.

11...♜f5 12 ♜xf5

Also promising is 12 ♜e2 ♜e4.

12...♜xf5 13 ♜ac1 ♜d6?!

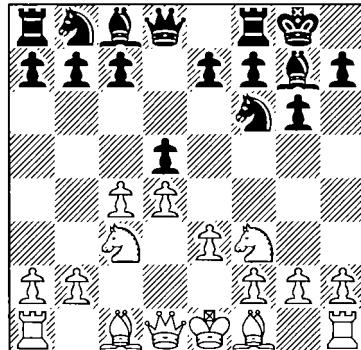


Black stands well and will follow up with ...♜e8 and ...c6. He can later play a knight to e4 and seek to expand on the kingside, whereas White does not have any obvious way to proceed.

B) 5 ♜f3 0-0

White now has a choice of several set-ups. Most of these have a specific

idea behind them and should be treated with some care.



B1: 6 ♜b3

B2: 6 b4

B3: 6 cxd5

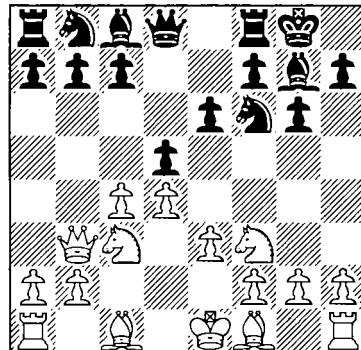
B4: 6 ♜d2

B5: 6 ♜d3

B6: 6 ♜e2

Note that 6 c5?! is, of course, met by 6...b6 7 b4 a5 when White's pawn chain collapses.

B1) 6 ♜b3 e6



White again discourages ...c5, as his pressure on the d5-pawn keeps Black's pieces tied up. Thus Black should opt to complete development with ...b6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$, slowly preparing ...c5.

7 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

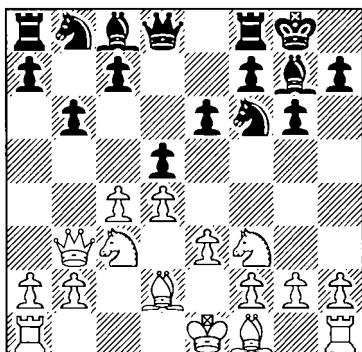
Quickly completing queenside development. The alternatives have also failed to impress; for example:

a) 7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 a4 a5 11 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ and Black stands well.

b) 7 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5! 8 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}a3$ b6 10 cxb6 axb6 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ leaves White's pieces rather loose and Black with good compensation.

c) 7 cxd5 exd5 8 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b6 9 0-0 c5 sees Black effortlessly achieve his break.

7...b6



8 $\mathbb{Q}c1$

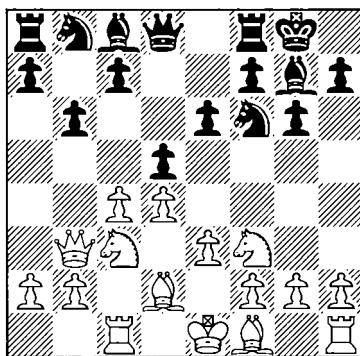
Again White has several alternatives:

a) 8 cxd5 exd5 9 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ (or 9 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}a4$ c5 13 $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 14 0-0-0 cxd4 15 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and Black was better in D.Jacimovic-I.Nepomniach-

tchi, Feugen 2006) 9... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11 0-0 c5 12 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}fe4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ (S.Nikolic-V.Jansa, German League 2001) 14... $\mathbb{W}e7$, intending to centralize the rooks, is equal.

b) 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 cxd5 (10 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ c5 11 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ is equal) 10...exd5 11 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ (Black managed to wrest the initiative after 11 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ a5 15 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ in M.Bertok-P.Benko, Stockholm Interzonal 1962) 11... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ c6 with typical and easy play for Black.

c) 8 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 0-0 c5! 11 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (G.Barbero-M.Ghinda, World Team Ch., Lucerne 1985) and Black has achieved his aims.



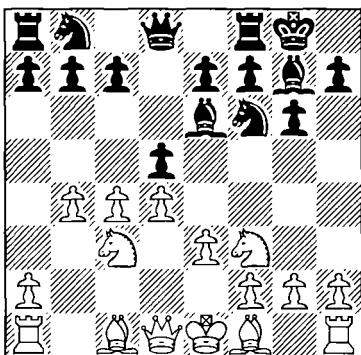
8... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10 c5 c6 11 0-0

Instead 11 cxb6? axb6 12 a3 c5 13 h4?! $\mathbb{Q}e4$ was horrible for White in I.Kincs-M.Konopka, Hungarian Team Ch. 1994. The text is better and was seen in G.Stahlberg-J.Iliesco, Mar del Plata 1943, but after 11... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ e5 Black again has the upper hand.

B2) 6 b4

Makagonov's variation, which has received some recent attention.

6...♝e6!?



I like this move, forcing a clarification of White's plans. Instead 6...b6 is the traditional move, but 7 ♜a3 c5 8 bxc5 bxc5 9 ♜c1! has been causing some problems of late.

7 c5

Committal, but best. Instead:

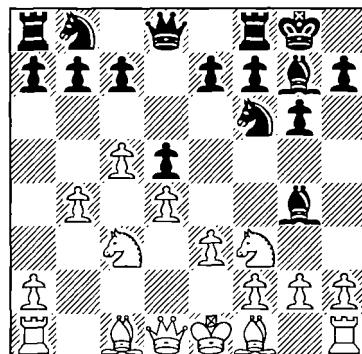
a) 7 ♜g5 ♜f5! 8 ♜e2 (8 cxd5 h6 9 e4 hxg5 10 exf5 ♜xd5 11 ♜e2 e5 gives Black a clear advantage) 8...a5 9 b5 c5 10 bxc6 ♜xc6 gives Black the initiative.

b) 7 ♜e5 dxc4 8 ♜xc4 (8 ♜xc4 ♜d5 9 ♜b2 ♜d7 is fine too) 8...♜xc4 9 ♜xc4 ♜d5 10 ♜b3 ♜c6 11 ♜xd5 (11 ♜a3? ♜xd4 12 exd4 ♜xc3 13 ♜xc3 ♜xd4 14 ♜c1 ♜xa1 15 ♜xa1 ♜d3 was disastrous for White in V.Rabrenovic-S.Atalik, Vrnjacka Banja 1999) 11...♜xd5 12 0-0 a6 is comfortable for Black.

c) 7 ♜b3 a5 8 b5 (or 8 c5 ♜e4! 9 ♜b2 as in I.Drasko-I.Sokolov, Sarajevo 1987, and now 9...axb4 10 ♜xb4 ♜a6 11 ♜xa6 bxa6 gives Black a small edge) 8...c5 (so Black achieves his break after all!) 9 bxc6 (9 ♜a3? dxc4 10 ♜xc4 a4! nets a

piece and 9 dxc5 ♜bd7 10 ♜a3 ♜e4 is also very promising for Black) 9...bxct 10 c5 (10 ♜b7 ♜bd7 11 ♜xc6 ♜c8 recovers the pawn with a good position 10...♜bd7?! 11 ♜a3 ♜g4 12 ♜e2 ♜c7 intends ...e5 and Black has no problems, to say the least.

7...♜g4



8 h3

8 ♜e2 allows Black to prepare ...e5 at ease: 8...♜bd7 9 0-0 c6 10 ♜b2 ♜c7 11 a4 b6 12 cxb6 axb6 13 ♜b3 ♜e4 14 ♜fd1 e6 15 h3 ♜xf3 16 ♜xf3 ♜d6 and the idea of ...f5-f4, as well as control of the c4-square, gave Black the advantage in B.Crane-M.Micklethwaite, correspondence 1998.

8...♜xf3 9 gx f3

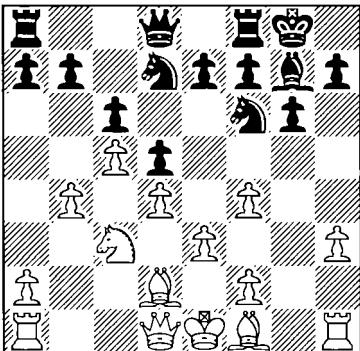
White preferred 9 ♜xf3 in M.Bensdorp-N.Narings, Amsterdam 2005, and should have been punished by 9...e5! 10 dxe5 ♜e4 11 ♜xe4 ♜xe5 12 ♜b1 dxe4 13 ♜xe4 ♜c3+ 14 ♜e2 ♜c6 with a powerful initiative.

9...c6 10 f4

10 e4 ♜h5 (or 10...dxe4 11 fxe4 e5) 11 ♜e3 e5 intends ...f5 and leaves Black on top.

10...♝bd7 11 ♜d2

Instead 11 ♜c2 b6 is good for Black, as is 11 b5 cxb5 12 ♜xb5 a6 13 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 intending ...b6.

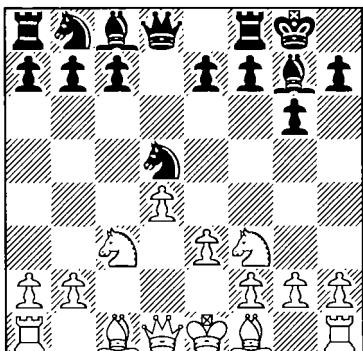


The text was preferred in V.Akopian-J.Rowson, Philadelphia 2002, and now after the logical 11...b6 once more, Black intends ...♝c7 and ...a5 with good play.

B3) 6 cxd5

This line, Taylor's other suggestion, was played by Keres and remains quite dangerous for the unwary.

6...♝xd5



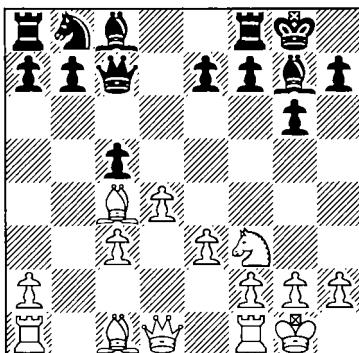
7 ♜c4

Obviously the only critical move. Instead 7 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 8 ♜d3 c5 equalizes very easily and 7 ♜d2 also fails to impress: 7...c5 8 ♜b3 (or 8 dxc5 ♜xc3 9 ♜xc3 ♜xc3+ 10 bxc3 ♜a5 11 ♜b3 ♜xc5 12 ♜c4 ♜d7 and Black was fine in R.Dujin-L.Van Wely, Dutch League 2001) 8...♜xc3 9 ♜xc3 (9 bxc3 ♜c6 10 ♜e2 was preferred in I.Gavrilov-S.Petrov, Struga 2002, but after 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 e5 12 dx5 ♜xe5 13 ♜d1 ♜e6 14 ♜xb7 ♜b8 15 ♜xa7 ♜d3+ Black has excellent compensation) 9...cxd4 10 ♜xd4 (or 10 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 11 ♜xd4 e5 12 ♜f3 ♜c6 with advantage) 10...e5 (improving over the 10...♜d7 of J.Bosch-E.L'Ami, Dutch Ch., Hilversum 2006) 11 ♜f3 ♜c6 12 ♜d1 ♜e7 and Black intends ...♜e6 or ...♜g4, with a good game.

7...♜xc3 8 bxc3 c5 9 0-0

Note that 9 h3 ♜c7 prevents 10 ♜e2? in view of 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♜e6 12 ♜xe6 ♜c3+.

9...♝c7!



The most accurate, highlighting the loose position of the c4-bishop. It is surprising how much this simple move

disorganizes White.

10 ♜d2

Alternatively:

a) 10 ♜e2 allows the annoying pin

10...♜g4 and then, for example, 11 ♜a3 ♜d7 12 ♜b5 (or 12 ♜ab1 ♜b6 13 ♜d3 c4 14 ♜c2 ♜d5 with the initiative – Gipslis) 12...a6 13 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 14 ♜xc5 b6! 15 ♜a3 ♜b5 16 c4 ♜xc4 17 ♜fc1 ♜fc8 and Black has the advantage (Bagirov).

b) 10 ♜b3 leaves the bishop misplaced: 10...♝c6 11 ♜a3 b6 12 ♜e2 ♜a5 13 ♜a4 ♜b7 14 e4 a6 15 ♜ad1 ♜ac8 with easy equality.

c) 10 ♜e2 b6 11 ♜a3 ♜b7 12 ♜c1 ♜d7 is also fine for Black.

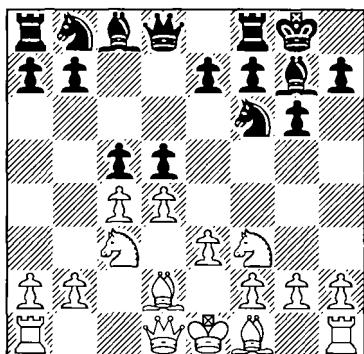
10...♝d7 11 ♜e2 b6 12 ♜b2 ♜b7 13 ♜ac1

This was seen in V.Ilinsky-M.Konopka, Elista Olympiad 1996. Now Black can play 13...a6 and with ...b5 coming, he has the upper hand.

B4) 6 ♜d2

Karel Opocensky's line and one which Black should meet head-on.

6...c5!



7 dxc5

Instead 7 cxd5 cxd4 8 ♜xd4 ♜xd5 is simply equal.

7...♝a6 8 cxd5

White cannot play to hold on to the c5-pawn: for example, 8 ♜a4 ♜d7 9 b4? ♜e4 10 ♜c1 ♜xd2 11 ♜xd2 ♜xb4 12 ♜b3 ♜a5 13 a3 ♜a6 14 ♜c3 d4! was superb for Black in A.Fodor-Z.Timár correspondence 1984.

8...♜xc5 9 ♜c4

So White holds on to the d5-pawn with all his might. Black cannot immediately regain it, but he can exploit the placement of White's pieces to generate a very dangerous initiative.

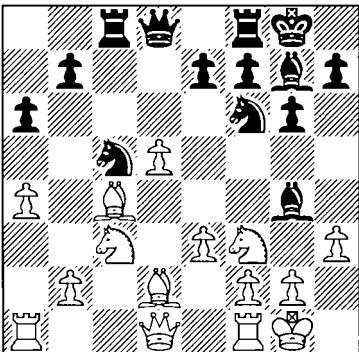
9...a6! 10 a4

Preventing ...b5. Indeed, the forceful 10 b4?! meets with retribution in the form of 10...b5! 11 bxc5 (11 ♜e2 ♜ce4 12 0-0 ♜b7 – Adorjan – is very good for Black, who regains d5) 11...bxcc4 12 e4 (or 12 ♜a4? ♜xd5 13 ♜xc4 ♜xc3 14 ♜xc3 ♜e6 15 ♜b4 ♜b8 16 ♜a3 ♜d3 and Black wins) 12...e6! when White has many weaknesses as Black opens the position with crushing effect; for example, 13 d6 ♜b7 14 ♜c1 ♜c8 15 ♜a4 ♜xe4 16 ♜b4 (or 16 ♜xc4 ♜xd6! 16...♜xc5! 17 ♜xc5 ♜xc5 leaves Black with some initiative and advantage.

10...♜g4 11 0-0

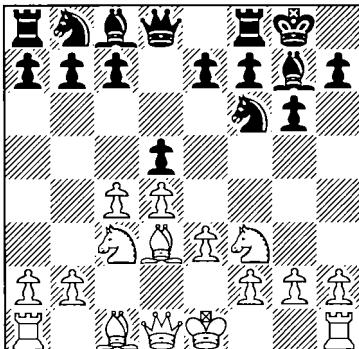
Alternatively, 11 h3 ♜xf3 12 gxf3 (12 ♜xf3 b5 13 axb5 axb5 14 ♜xa8 ♜xa8 15 ♜xb5 ♜a4! 16 b3 ♜xb3 17 ♜xb3 ♜xb3 is much better for Black) 12...e6!? 13 dx6 fx6 gives Black good compensation in view of White's weakened kingside and the threat of ...♜d3+.

11...♜c8 12 h3



We have been following E.Ubilava-O.Romanishin, Tbilisi 1986, and now 12... $\mathbb{Q}ce4!$ 13 hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ leaves Black with sufficient activity to at least regain his pawn.

B5) 6 $\mathbb{Q}d3$



This and 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ both allow ...c5 and ...cxd4, bringing about a position very similar to a reversed Tarrasch Defence. White's extra tempo is not really relevant in the standard IQP position that arises, and both here and in Line B6, I will concentrate chiefly on some thematic examples.

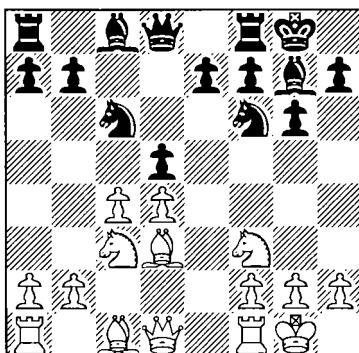
6...c5 7 0-0

Instead 7 cxd5 cxd4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 9 (and not 9 $\mathbb{Q}b3??$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ e5 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ e4, winning a piece) 9... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ already gives Black some pressure, while 7 dxc5 dxc4 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 c6 bxc6 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a5 leaves him with the initiative.

7...cxd4 8 exd4

8 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ allows the dynamic 8...e5 9 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ e4 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ dxc4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with an edge.

8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

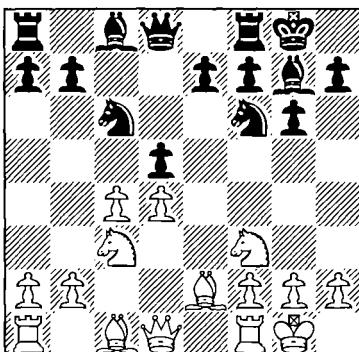


We have reached a reversed Tarrasch. Now 9 c5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ gives Black good play, as does 9 h3 dxc4 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$, while the aggressive 9 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (R.Perisic-Z.Licina, Bosnjaci 2003) fails to impress: 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ (13 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ with an edge for Black.

B6) 6 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

In view of ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ possibilities, this is the most accurate way of entering the reversed Tarrasch.

6...c5! 7 0-0 cxd4 8 exd4 ♜c6



9 ♜g5

White has tried a whole host of other moves, but none really troubles Black:

a) 9 h3 ♜f5 10 ♜e3 dxc4 11 ♜xc4 ♜c8 12 ♜e2 ♜d7 and Black is pressurizing the d4-pawn.

b) 9 ♜e1 dxc4 10 ♜xc4 b6 11 ♜g5 ♜b7 12 a3 h6 13 ♜f4 e6 was fine for Black in G.Giorgadze-V.Ivanchuk, Minsk 1986.

c) 9 ♜e5 dxc4 10 ♜xc6 bxc6 11 ♜xc4 ♜d6 with an edge for Black, as d4 is

weaker than c6.

d) 9 c5 ♜g4 intends ...♜e4.

9...dxc4 10 ♜xc4

10 d5 ♜a5 11 b4 cxb3 12 axb3 ♜g4 is promising for Black, in view of the standard tactic 13 b4 ♜c8!, or simply 13...♜xf3.

10...♜g4

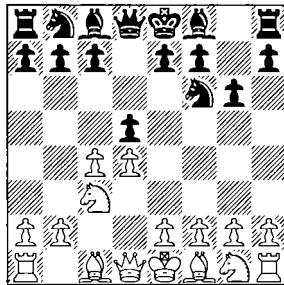
With good play for Black, B.Vercammen-M.Turcan, correspondence 1998.

Conclusion

The e3 systems are pretty harmless for Black. White's plan of simple development is not aggressive enough and allows Black to employ the standard ...c5-advance without any problems. More interesting are White's attempt to discourage ...c5 or to prevent it altogether, with moves such as 6 b4 and 6 ♜b3. Black can then shore up d5, and slowly prepare ...c5, or try to clarify the central tension; he has nothing to fear in either case.

Chapter Twelve

Offbeat 4th Move Alternatives



1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5

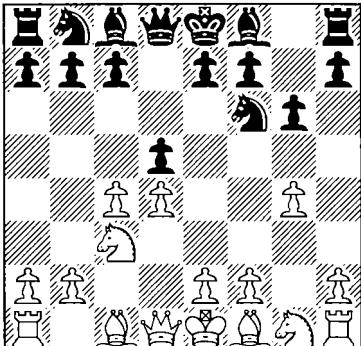
Some very rare moves have been tried here, mostly in an effort to avoid theory. However, these moves are hardly threatening; in fact Black is usually able to obtain the better chances.

A: 4 g4

B: 4 h4

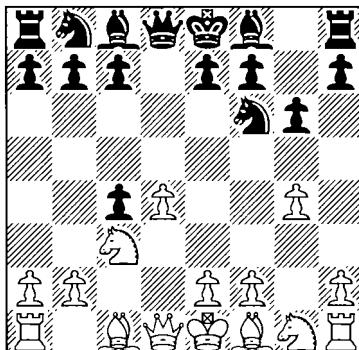
C: 4 f3

A) 4 g4?!



Such a move can be hard to take seriously, of course, but an accurate response is still required to highlight its deficiencies. White hopes to destabilize Black's central influence, but...

4...dxc4!



...Black is happy to resolve the central tension, and now the g4-pawn is en prise.

5 h3

Instead Black is better after 5 g5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 6 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ (6 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ h6 8 f4 hxg5 9 fxg5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ was also excellent for

Black in R.Moravcik-J.Pribyl, Sala 1995) 6...c6 7 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$, while 5 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 6 f3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8 e5 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ (J.Pietrasanta-R.Bagirov, Le Touquet 1998) leaves him with an extra pawn.

5... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ 6 e4

Note that 6 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c6 is just bad for White, and 6 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ c6 7 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ gives Black a serious initiative.

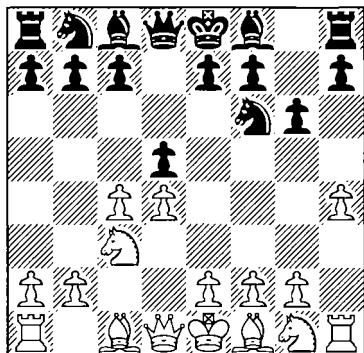
6... $\mathbb{Q}b6!$

Black simply holds on to the extra pawn in view of 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 8 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$.

7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ e6 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}e1$ f5

This logical sequence left Black clearly better in J.Obsivac-J.Pribyl, Czech League 1998.

B) 4 h4!?



More of a test than our previous variation.

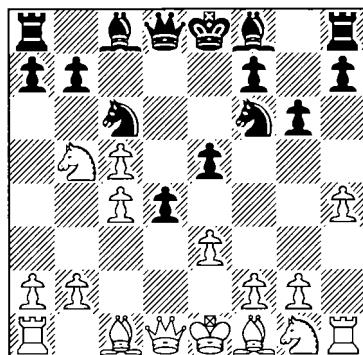
4...c5!

I feel this is best. White's 4th move doesn't contribute to the central struggle in any way and so Black is fully

justified to strike there.

5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

White has often preferred 5 dxc5, but after 5...d4 6 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 7 e3 e5



8 exd4 (or 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 9 exd4 exd4 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ a6 11 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 0-0 and Black is clearly better, J.Bertin-A.Rodier, French League 2002) 8... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ (instead 9 b4 a5 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 gave Black excellent compensation in M.Cebalo-M.Sebenik, Pula 2004, while after 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}f3$, Y.Gozzoli-K.Van der Weide, La Fere 2004, Black can play 12... $\mathbb{W}a5+$ with the initiative) 9... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}bxd4$ exd4 11 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ Black is on top, S.Porat-A.Jerez Perez, Andorra 2001.

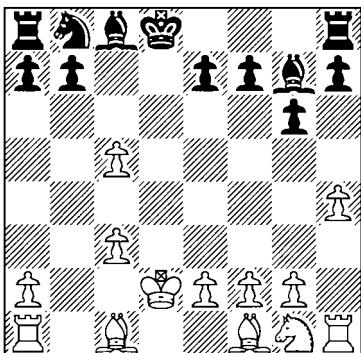
5... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 6 dxc5

Black also gains the initiative after 6 h5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 hxg6 hxg6 8 $\mathbb{W}xh8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ 9 e3 (G.Kundrak-G.Kosa, Szombathely 2003) 9...cxd4 10 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

6... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 8 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Or 9 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 10 c6 bxc6 11 e4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 12 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ again with the initiative for Black, B.Szabo-J.Sondermann, Budapest 2006.

M.Lopes-A.Ferreira de Souza, Juiz de Fora 1966. Therefore, White must choose a capture in the centre.



9...d6!?

9... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 10 f3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 e4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 c6 bxc6 was played in A.Zaitsev-V.Smyslov, Sochi 1963, and also looks promising; as does 9... $\mathbb{Q}d7!?$, intending 10 c6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11 f3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ with compensation.

10 c6 $\mathbb{Q}c5!$

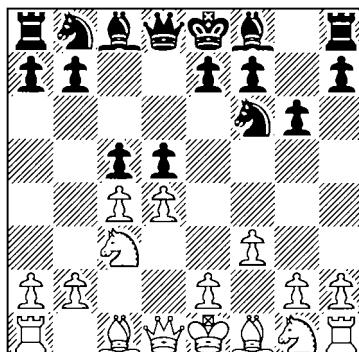
Davies' idea. White's position looks decidedly unharmonious and Black has good compensation.

C) 4 f3

The most serious option in this chapter. White aims to build a big pawn centre, although the way he goes about it looks somewhat ugly.

4...c5!

Again I believe that this direct central counter is best. Black aims to exploit the weakened dark squares in White's camp. Now 5 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 e3 (or 6 dxc5 d4 7 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 e3 h6 9 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e5 10 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$, as in J.Jambrich-D.Schwarz, Bratislava 1998, when 10... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ leaves White in a bad way) 6...cxd4 7 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ dxc4 leaves Black with an extra pawn,



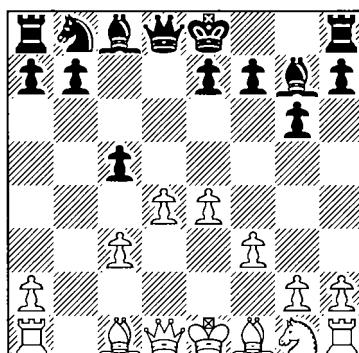
C1: 5 cxd5

C2: 5 dxc5

C1) 5 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 6 e4

Alternatively, 6 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 9 e3 (I.Botvinnik-A.Greenfeld, Israeli League 2002) 9...e5 and Black has the initiative.

6... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 7 bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$



8 $\mathbb{Q}b5+$

Instead 8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$

cx d4 10 cx d4 $\mathbb{W}a5+$ 11 $\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{W}xd2+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 0-0 is simply an inferior version of the Exchange Variation; White's kingside development is seriously hampered by the need to keep d4 protected) 9...0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 11 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (D.Dela Rosa-V.Di Fonzo, Geneva 1994) 11... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ keeps the white king stuck in the centre and should thus be very good for Black.

8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$

Also good for Black is 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ cx d4 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ bxc6 11 cx d4 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$, I.Kincs-L.Vadasz, Balatonbereny 1995.

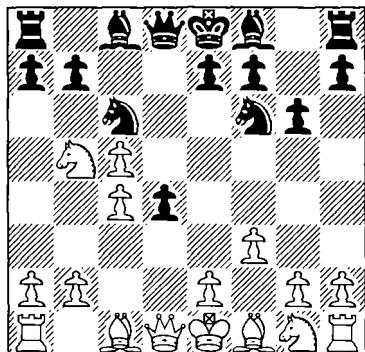
9...bxc6 10 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0 12 dxc5 $\mathbb{W}a5$ 13 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$

With a large advantage for Black, T.Avontuur-G.Cools, Brasschaat 2006.

C2) 5 dxc5

The most critical move.

5...d4 6 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!$



7 e3

Alternatively, both 7 $\mathbb{Q}g5?$ a6 (Rowson) and 7 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ e5 8 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (Davies) are very good for Black, as is 7 e4? a6 8 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ e5 9 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ (Lechtynsky).

7...e5 8 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

Black stands well in the centre. Indeed, he will emerge with some advantage should he be able to recapture on c5 with impunity.

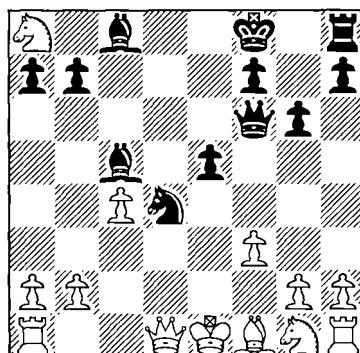
9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Another suggestion of Rowson's is 9 b4 b6! 10 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ leading to complex play, while Black has the initiative after 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 10 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 12 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (V.Lainburg-M.Konopka, Augsburg 1997) 13... $\mathbb{W}h4$, intending ...f5.

9... $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$? 10 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

White preferred 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ in D.Nestorovic-N.Misailovic, Budva 2003, but now 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h6 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ favours Black.

10... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}c7+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$



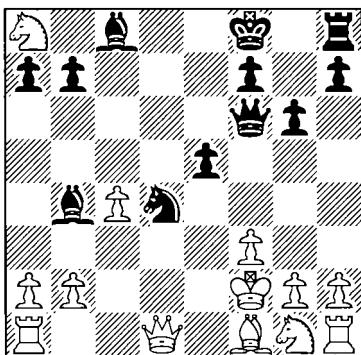
White's knight raid has won a rook, but all his other pieces are on their starting squares and his king is very exposed. Black enjoys very dangerous compensation.

12... $\mathbb{Q}b4+$

12... $\mathbb{Q}g7!$? is also interesting, as after 13 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e7!$ with the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$,

Black has a strong attack.

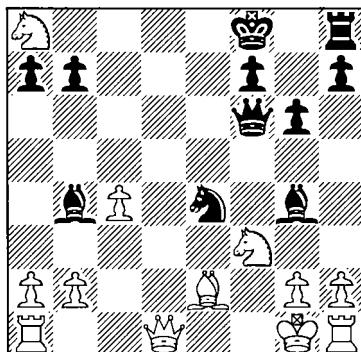
13 ♜f2



13...e4!

Suggested by Lechtnsky and a very strong move. Now 14 ♜c1 e3+ 15 ♜xe3 ♜f5 should just be winning for Black, as I don't see a defence to the threats of ...♜c5 and ...♝xb2, and no better is 14 g3 ♜xf3! 15 ♜xf3 ♜c5+ 16 ♜e1 ♜xb2. Relatively best is probably 14 ♜e2! ♜f5 15 fxe4 ♜g3+ 16 ♜f3 ♜xe4+ 17 ♜g1 ♜g4 when Black remains a rook down, but White's survival task is immensely difficult, if not impossible. White's king position, lack of dark square control and poor coor-

dination continue to cause him serious difficulties. Indeed, Black is surely for preference here!

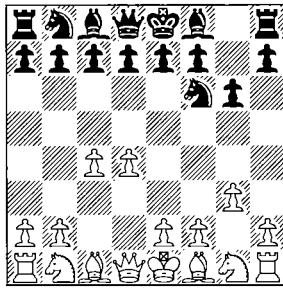


Conclusion

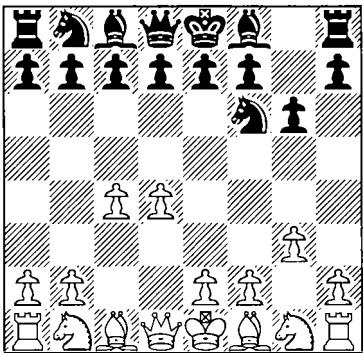
Only 4 f3 can trouble Black in any way, since both 4 g4 and 4 h4 are weakening and obscure at best. After 4 f3 Black must react vigorously with 4...c5! and fight for the centre. White can then suffer from a lack of development and dark square weaknesses; key factors brought to light by our critical main line in which Black obtains a very strong attack for the rook.

Chapter Thirteen

The Fianchetto System



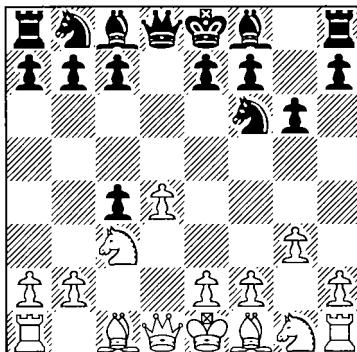
1 d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2 c4 g6 3 g3



The fianchetto system sees White not displaying any early ambition in the centre, preferring to develop quietly. However, this solid choice should not be underestimated as Black can often be left without any counterplay. Black has a little time at his disposal to disturb the balance, before White castles, and he must aim to exploit it.

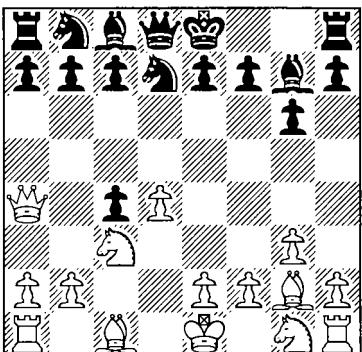
We should note that White can also play g3 after 3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4 cxd5 (then 4... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 5 g3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ transposes to

a position we will consider after 3 g3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ d5 5 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$), but in that sequence 4 g3?! is inaccurate and can be met by the immediate 4...dxc4!.



White must now act immediately to recover the pawn, but Black gains excellent counterplay with 5 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ (5 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ c6 allows Black to retain the extra pawn) 5... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$! (this is always the correct response to the check from a4) 6 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ (the 6 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ of K.Schulz-L.Ftacnik, Altensteig 1987, is well met by 6... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

8 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 e3 0-0 intending ...e5 and/or ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$) 6... $\mathbb{Q}g7$



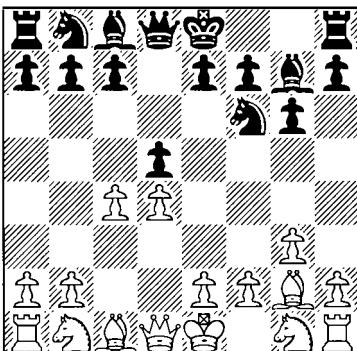
and now:

a) 7 e3 0-0 8 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ c5! (Black exploits the exposed position of the white queen to wrest the initiative) 9 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ (or 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ cxd4 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}bc6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$, as in A.Kotov-P.Keres, Zürich Candidates 1953, and now the correct recapture is 12...bxc6! 13 0-0 $\mathbb{W}b6$ with a serious initiative, in view of the coming ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$; while 9 dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$! sees Black jump into d3) 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10 0-0 cxd4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (11 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ is again good for Black) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 18 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 19 b3 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ and Black was obviously better in H.Steiner-P.Trifunovic, Mar del Plata 1953.

b) 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ 0-0 11 0-0 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ was great for Black in E.Ragozin-D.Bronstein, Moscow 1947) 8... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}b3$ 0-0 10 e3 (or 10 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}ac4$ 12 0-0 a5! 13 $\mathbb{W}b5$ a4 and, with ...a3 threatened, White is in trouble) 10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}d1$

(11 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$) 11... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 13 a3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$! and Black had snatched a pawn in P.Machacek-V.Jansa, Havírov 1970.

3... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 4 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ d5



Now White has a major choice between exchanging on d5 and allowing Black to take on c4.

A: 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

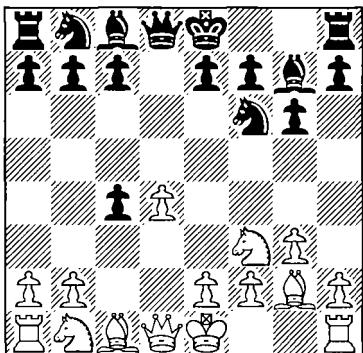
B: 5 cxd5

In both cases we will focus on a modern approach for Black: delaying castling in favour of more pressing matters. This approach, first brought to my attention by Vlastimil Jansa's excellent *Dynamics of Chess Strategy*, is entirely justified by the relative slowness of White's set-up: he doesn't seize the centre at once, leaves the c4-pawn unprotected and is not trying to mount a kingside attack. White's play may be solid and sound, but it's also somewhat loose; a factor we will exploit with some concrete play!

Finally, White also has the rare 5

$\mathbb{Q}c3$. This should be met in similar vein to 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$: 5...dxc4 6 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 7 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ (or 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ with a clear advantage, E.Guseinov-Ni Hua, Artek 1999, while 7 e3 0-0 8 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ e5 9 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ exd4 10 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ gives Black an edge) 7... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (8 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 9 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ holds on to the extra pawn) 8...0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ 16 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ and Black again enjoyed an extra pawn in B.Dantas-E.Tsuboi, Brazil 1998.

A) 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ dxc4!



True to our strategy, we capture this pawn. White can now either try to recover it immediately or ignore it for the sake of development:

A1: 6 $\mathbb{Q}a3$

A2: 6 $\mathbb{W}a4+$

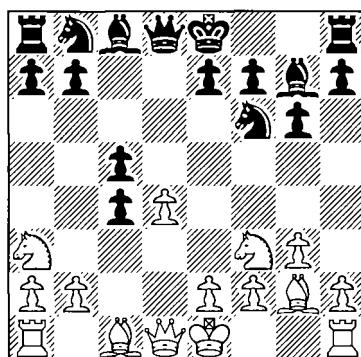
A3: 6 0-0

Instead 6 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ b5 7 a4 c6 8 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 9 0-0 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ a6 11 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (Mikhailchishin and Beliavsky's suggestion, whereas 11 b3? $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ 12 bxc4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ was a total disaster for White in M.Todorcevic-Z.Kozul, Cetinje 1991) 11... $\mathbb{W}d6$ is again fine for Black, who has retained his extra pawn.

A1) 6 $\mathbb{Q}a3$

The most common move in the position with both sides castled, but Black can directly exploit the difference:

6...c5!



Immediately challenging White's central presence. Black intends to follow up with ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, when the importance of not wasting time on castling becomes obvious.

7 0-0

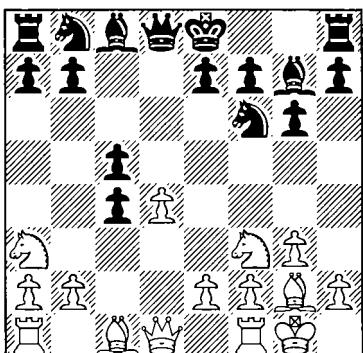
Relatively best. Instead:

a) 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc4?$! $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ 8 $\mathbb{W}a4$ (8 dxc5?!) $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}fd2$ – or 10 $\mathbb{Q}fe5$ 0-0-0+ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ with fantastic compensation due to the many open lines – 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 13 f3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 0-0

15 $\mathbb{E}e1$ was seen in A.Karpov-V.Tkachiev, Bastia (rapid) 2002, and now 15... $\mathfrak{Q}a6$ leaves White in trouble as Black intends ... $\mathfrak{Q}b4+$ and ... $\mathbb{E}fd8$) 8... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 9 $\mathfrak{Q}fe5$ (or 9 $\mathfrak{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{B}xc6!$ 11 $\mathbb{W}xc6+$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xa8$ 0-0 13 $\mathfrak{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathfrak{Q}a6$ which was good for Black in A.Maric-A.Brustman, Yerevan Olympiad 1996) 9... $\mathfrak{Q}d7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 11 $\mathfrak{Q}e5$ $\mathfrak{Q}d5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13 $\mathfrak{Q}f4$ g5 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathfrak{Q}a5+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathfrak{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ was L.Debnar-D.Navara, Pardubice 2001; Black is better in view of his central superiority and more active pieces.

b) 7 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathfrak{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathfrak{Q}e5$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ c3 9 $\mathfrak{Q}b5$ $\mathfrak{Q}d5!$ is good for Black, as pointed out by Jansa) 8... $\mathfrak{Q}d7$ 9 $\mathfrak{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ c3 12 0-0 0-0 13 $\mathbb{Q}bc3$ (I.Balinov-A.Brustman, Aschach 1997) 13... $\mathbb{W}d5$ intends ... $\mathbb{W}h5$ when Black has good attacking chances, as the absence of the fianchettoed bishop weakens White's king position.

c) 7 $\mathbb{Q}xc5?$ $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 8 $\mathfrak{Q}xd1$ $\mathfrak{Q}e4$ (Jansa) is excellent for Black.



7... $\mathfrak{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

Critical; White prepares to recapture on c4, whereas 8 $\mathbb{W}a4$ 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ c3 gives Black the initiative.

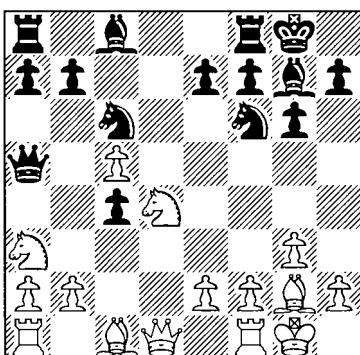
8... $\mathbb{W}a5!$

Thus Black sets out to recover the c5-pawn.

9 $\mathfrak{Q}d4$

This hits c6, but Black can ignore it. Instead 9 $\mathfrak{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 10 b3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ intending ... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ is equal (Savon).

9...0-0!



10 $\mathbb{Q}e3!?$

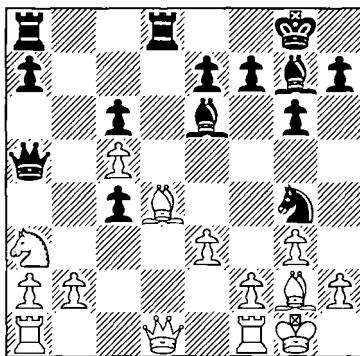
The most dangerous move. White indirectly protects c5 and is set to emerge a pawn up ahead, but Black crucially retains some dynamic resources. Otherwise 10 $\mathfrak{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 11 $\mathfrak{Q}xc4$ (11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}b8!$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xc5!$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 15 f3 $\mathfrak{Q}a6!$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathfrak{Q}g4!$ leaves Black much better) 11... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 12 b3 (now $\mathfrak{Q}a3$ appears somewhat awkward, but Black should remember that the c6-pawn is often sacrificed in this line) 12... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ (intending a primitive attack with ... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ and ... $\mathfrak{Q}g4$) 13 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}xc6!$? $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ is promising for Black – Jansa) 13... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ (White must now seek a way to extinguish Black's

initiative) 14 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 16 $\mathbb{R}c1$ $\mathbb{R}ad8$ 17 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{R}d5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{R}fd8$ 19 $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ led to equality in V.Dydyshko-V.Jansa, Czech League 2002.

10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d4$

12 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 13 $\mathbb{R}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ occurred in M.Gagunashvili-D.Navara, Athens 2001, when Black should have played 14... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ with good prospects.

12... $\mathbb{R}d8$ 13 $e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$



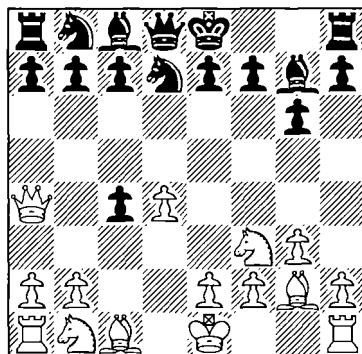
14 $\mathbb{R}c1$

Instead 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{R}ac8$ 15 $\mathbb{W}a4$ (or 15 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ with an edge, as Jansa points out) 15... $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{R}xd4$ 17 $\mathbb{Exd4}$ $\mathbb{R}xd4$ (Marin) is good for Black. Thus he preferred the text move in M.Marin-V.Jansa, Andorra 2000, and now Black should play 14... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{R}ab8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (16 $\mathbb{R}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is also good for Black) 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{R}xb2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ (Jansa) with the advantage.

A2) 6 $\mathbb{W}a4+$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7!$

A typical reaction to the check. Black will now gain time against the white queen after ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ with ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$,

speeding up his development and thus seizing the initiative.



7 0-0

Other possibilities:

a) 7 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8 $\mathbb{W}c2?$! (instead 8 $\mathbb{W}c5?$! $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{R}xd4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11 0-0 c6 12 b3 f6 13 e3 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ was very good for Black in A.Minasian-P.Nikolic, European Ch., Kusadasi 2006, and even after 8 $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 11 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ Black's ongoing pressure is very awkward) 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 e3 (or 9 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10 e3 0-0 11 h3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 13 $\mathbb{W}c5$ a5 14 b3, J.Jirka-S.Ganguly, Nakhchivan 2003, and now 14... $\mathbb{W}d6$ intends ...a4; the a1-rook is a serious liability for White) 9...0-0 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 11 e4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 $\mathbb{D}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 15 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 16 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{R}fd8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ 18 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{R}xd3$ with a strong initiative, E.Kahn-J.Horvath, Budapest 1995.

b) 7 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ c5 8 $\mathbb{D}xc4$ $\mathbb{C}xd4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11 $\mathbb{R}d1$ h6 was good for Black in V.Poddubnyi-A.Yermolinsky, St. Petersburg 1987) 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 10 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 0-0 was agreed drawn

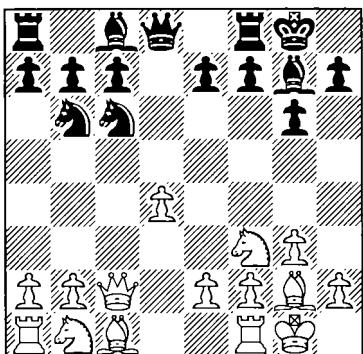
here in O.Romanishin-M.Palac, Ljubljana 1997; Black clearly has no problems.

c) 7 e3 0-0 8 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 0-0 e5 10 dx e 5 $\mathbb{Q}dxe5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c2$ (12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ c6 13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15 b3, T.Kottmair-Z.Szabo, Balatonlelle 2004, and after 15... $\mathbb{W}c5$ the c3-knight is very unstable and Black much better) 12...c6 13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ 14 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}axc1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 17 f3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ with an obvious long-lasting edge, L.Reutovava-V.Grebionkin, Ekaterinburg 1996.

7... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Threatening to keep the pawn with ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$.

8 $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0



White must now attend to the matter of the d4-pawn.

10 $\mathbb{Q}d1$

Instead 10 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ left Black with an obvious developmental lead in S.Mariotti-M.Stean, Las Palmas 1978, while 10 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ (as in M.Bezold-M.Konopka, Münster 1992) is a typical equalizing sequence in this line.

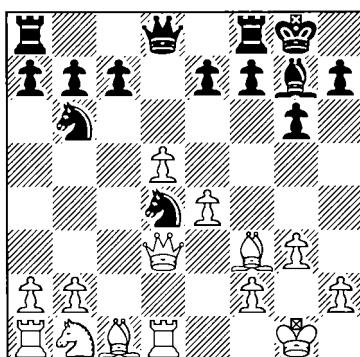
10... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

This does not waste time as the e4-advance is loosening.

11 e4

Black seized the initiative after 11 $\mathbb{W}b3$ a5 12 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ a4 13 $\mathbb{W}c3$ e5 14 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ exd4 15 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ d3 in V.Smyslov-M.Stean, Teesside 1975.

11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d3$



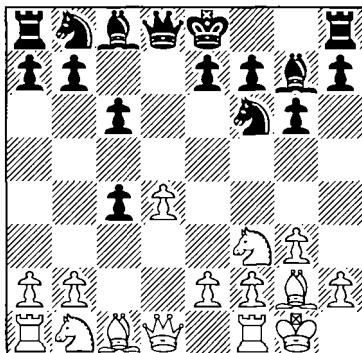
Black enjoys a promising position with a strong centralized knight, C.Lamoureux-N.Sulava, Lido Estensi 2002.

A3) 6 0-0

A more ambitious approach; White disregards the c4-pawn for the time being.

6...c6!

With this move (instead of the standard reply 6...0-0), Black prepares to retain the pawn on c4 or at least to greatly inconvenience White with its recovery. Once again we will see the advantage of concrete opening play in this line.



7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

A gambit continuation which, however, is hardly promising. Instead:

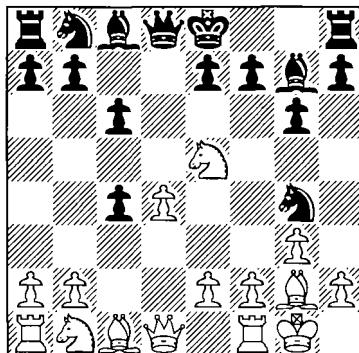
a) 7 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ b5 simply leaves the a3-knight offside: 8 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (Black was also somewhat better after 9 e4 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{W}c2$ c5 12 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ cxd4 13 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ b4 in P.Lüchtmeier-M.Ivanov, Baunatal 2002) 9... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 11 $\mathbb{W}f3$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 14 e5 $\mathbb{Q}8d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and Black was a healthy pawn up in A.Kharlov-J.Horvath, Vienna 1996.

b) 7 $\mathbb{W}c2$ b5 8 $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$) 8...0-0 9 b3 cxb3 10 $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11 a4 a6 12 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14 a5 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ c5 17 dxc5 $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 18 c6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ with a big advantage for Black, Su.Polgar-V.Anand, Monaco (rapid) 1994.

c) 7 a4 0-0 8 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ (or 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 9 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ c5 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d2$, A.Matnadze-E.Zaiac, Antalya 2002, and now 14... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ with some advantage) 8... $\mathbb{Q}a6!$ (Black develops freely and prepares ...c5) 9 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 b3 c5 11 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$

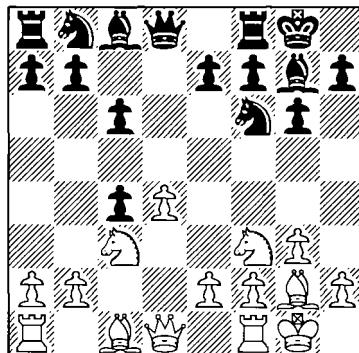
12 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ leaves Black with the more active pieces, A.Petrosian-I.Ibragimov, Kazan 1997.

d) 7 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is powerfully met by 7... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$



which destabilizes White's central control. White is now worse in all lines: for example, 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e5 10 dx5 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ as in A.Raetsky-I.Glek, Zürich 2001, or 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 9 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}ba3$ (V.Bologan-A.Volokitin, Sarajevo 2005), and now Ftacnik notes that 10... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (11 h3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12 e4 $\mathbb{W}h5$ is similar) 11... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ is good for Black.

7...0-0



Black can finally afford to castle!

8 e4

Black was obviously better after 8 h3?! b5! 9 ♜e5 a6! 10 e4 (10 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 11 ♜xc6 ♜xh3 is a clear extra pawn, and 10 a4 b4 11 ♜a2 a5 12 ♜xc4 ♜e6 13 b3 ♜d5 – Jansa – gives Black the initiative) 10...♜b7 11 ♜e1 (or 11 ♜e3 ♜bd7 12 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 13 e5 e6 14 ♜e4 c5 15 ♜f6+ ♜xf6 16 ♜xb7 ♜b8 17 exf6 ♜xb7 18 dxc5 ♜xf6 with a clear advantage) 11...♜bd7 12 ♜xd7 ♜xd7! 13 e5 e6 14 ♜e4 c5!! (Anand's powerful play deserves admiration and is fully in the spirit of the Grünfeld) 15 ♜f6+ (15 ♜xc5? ♜xc5 16 dxc5 ♜xd1 17 ♜xd1 ♜xg2 18 ♜xg2 ♜xe5 wins for Black) 15...♜xf6 16 ♜xb7 ♜a7 in O.Romanishin-V.Anand, 3rd match-game, New York 1994.

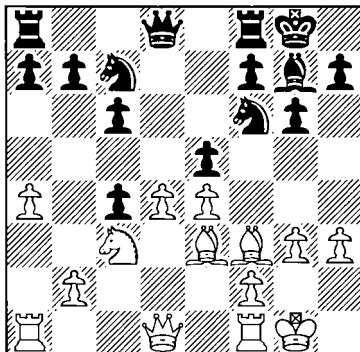
Likewise, 8 ♜e5 ♜e6 9 e4 ♜fd7 10 ♜xd7 (10 f4 ♜xe5 11 dxe5 ♜xd1 12 ♜xd1 ♜a6 13 ♜e3 f6 14 exf6 exf6 15 h3 ♜fe8 16 ♜h2 ♜f8 17 ♜d4 f5 was more of the same stuff in D.Kopec-K.Sasikiran, Hampstead 1998) 10...♜xd7 11 ♜e3 ♜a6 12 ♜d2 ♜fd8 13 ♜ad1 ♜b4 14 ♜e2 ♜d3 gives Black a huge advantage, J.Richardson-A.Whiteley, London 1996.

8...♜g4 9 h3

9 ♜e3 ♜bd7 (threatening ...e5) 10 e5 ♜d5 (Jansa) is much better for Black.

9...♜xf3 10 ♜xf3 ♜a6 11 ♜e3 ♜c7! 12 a4 e5!

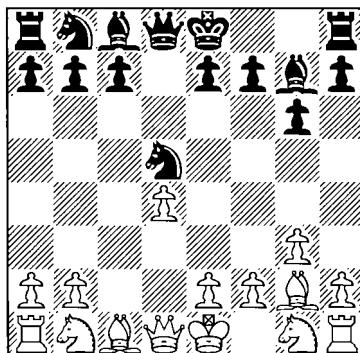
A well-timed central break. Now 13 dxe5 ♜d7 regains the e5-pawn with a big plus, but even after 13 ♜e2 ♜g4! 14 hxg4 exd4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜xc4 ♜f6 17 ♜c1 ♜ae8 Black was clearly far preference in F.Vallejo Pons-Z.Almasi, Pamplona 2000.



B) 5 cxd5

The most challenging move, eliminating any possibility of ...dxc4.

5...♜xd5



White now has three different approaches to the position:

Firstly, he can play as in a normal Exchange variation with 6 ♜c3, practically forcing the exchange on c3. However, this is the least troublesome line for Black, as he can then develop quickly and comfortably. White counts on a strong central set-up (c3, d4, e3) and pressure on the queenside, but this plan is not dangerous and Black can neutralize it without much effort.

Alternatively, White can play the direct and aggressive 6 e4, exploiting the fact that Black cannot exchange knights on c3. He will then follow up with $\mathbb{Q}e2$, avoiding any pin with ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$. This line is quite threatening and requires precise handling by Black, but the resulting positions are very double-edged.

Finally, White can opt for the most popular move, 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$, with which he aims first to complete his development and only then to advance in the centre. In my view, this approach is the most difficult for Black to meet, as it combines ambition with solidity. White often ends up with a space advantage in the centre and piece pressure on Black's position, so I propose to meet this system head-on with a dynamic central break advocated also by Jansa. Here the importance of delaying castling, prevalent throughout the 5 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ dxc4 variation, is again a key feature.

On to the theory!

B1: 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

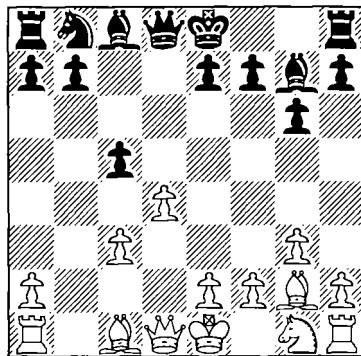
B2: 6 e4

B3: 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$

B1) 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{Q}xc3 7 bxc3 c5$

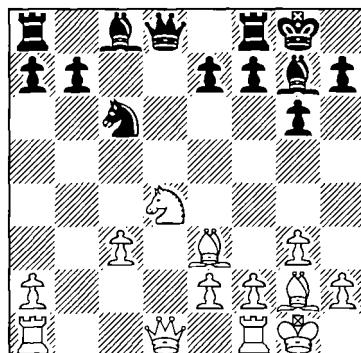
Black's main task in this position is to counter the pressure applied by the g2-bishop. A second important aspect of the position is the weakness of the c4-square in White's camp; a weakness caused by the development of the light-squared bishop on g2. While playing to occupy c4 is standard in

several lines of the Exchange Grünfeld, here it is even more effective than usual: Black can set about occupying this square with moves such as ... $\mathbb{Q}a5-a6$, ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, and ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-a5$.



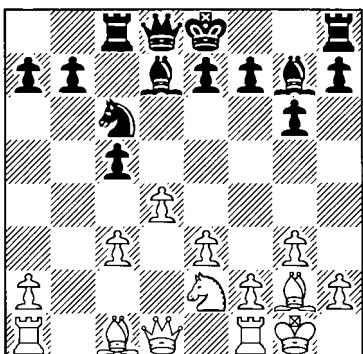
8 e3

Preparing $\mathbb{Q}e2$. A different set-up occurs with 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ and now 8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (no other move fits in well with White's chosen set-up: for example, 9 d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ is already better for Black, as pointed out by Rowson, and 9 0-0?! is a dubious pawn sacrifice since 9...cxd4 10 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ is good for Black) 9...0-0 10 0-0 cxd4 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$



(a typical recapture in this line, releasing the g2-bishop at the cost of some structural damage; 11 cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{L}ab1$, as in A.Beliavsky-C.Balogh, Austrian League 2005, is just equal after 13... $\mathbb{W}d7$) 11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{W}c1$! (trying to evacuate the bishop from e3 in a natural and productive way; both 12 $\mathbb{L}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ e5 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ and 12 $\mathbb{W}d3$ a6 13 $\mathbb{L}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14 c4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ are equal) 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$! (simply aiming to pile up on the c-file) 13 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{L}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 15 $\mathbb{L}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{L}fe8$ 17 $\mathbb{L}ac1$ occurred in J.Hajtun-I.Polgar, Hungarian Ch. 1966, when 17...b5 would have left Black with an obvious initiative.

8... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10 0-0 $\mathbb{L}c8$



I believe this to be Black's most reliable set-up. Note that Black has immediately opted for this regrouping of his queenside pieces rather than castle: time is important in chess and, as we have already seen, that is especially so in the Fianchetto Grünfeld! The point of Black's move order is to be ready to respond to White's plans, as will become apparent.

11 $\mathbb{d}xc5$

Critical, and White often accepts a weak c-pawn in return for bringing his knight to d4, but we will now witness an instructive method of play for Black. Thus White might try something else – not that the alternatives are especially impressive:

a) 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{L}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{L}b8$ 15 c4 e5 16 $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$! 17 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$! gave Black a decisive material advantage in Gilb.Garcia-V.Smyslov, Havana 1962.

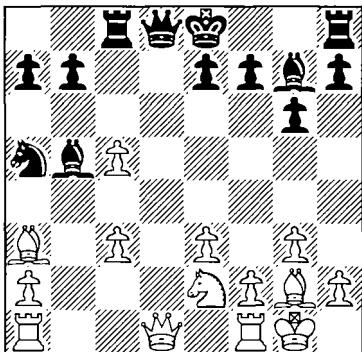
b) 11 a4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 12 e4 0-0 13 d5 e6 14 $\mathbb{L}a2$ exd5 15 exd5 $\mathbb{L}e8$ saw Black have the better of it in S.Gligoric-V.Korchnoi, Yugoslavia-USSR match 1967. Indeed, Gligoric was probably impressed by Black's play in this game, as the later 12 d5 0-0 13 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 15 $\mathbb{L}fb1$ $\mathbb{L}fd8$ favoured Black, who had obtained control of c4 in M.Cuellar-S.Gligoric, Sousse Interzonal 1967.

c) 11 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 12 $\mathbb{L}b1$ cxd4 13 cxd4 (13 $\mathbb{L}xb7$ e5 14 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$! is given as very good for Black by Adorjan and Dory) 13...b6 14 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e5! 15 dxе5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{L}e8$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ a5! was another successful outing for Black in Iskov-V.Jansa, Svendborg 1981.

d) 11 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$! 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ b6 14 $\mathbb{L}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ was typically great for Black in E.Geller-D.Bronstein, Amsterdam Candidates 1956.

e) 11 $\mathbb{L}b1$ b6 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 c4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ with easy equality, V.Kirillov-A.Suetin, USSR 1961.

11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$!



Ensuring that the knight will never reach d4.

13 ♜e1

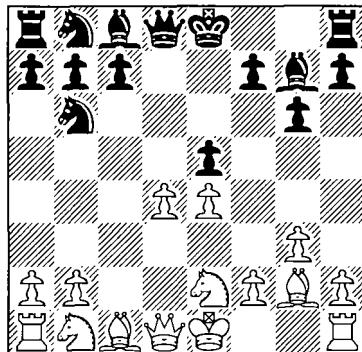
Instead 13 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 14 ♜fe1 ♜xe2 15 ♜xe2 ♜c4 left Black with a large advantage in Hausner-I.Stohl, Zlin 1995, while Stohl notes both 13 ♜f3? ♜c4, intending ...♜e5 with some advantage, and 13 ♜d4 ♜xf1 14 ♜xf1 0-0 15 ♜b5 ♜c7 when Black is again better.

13...♜xd1 14 ♜axd1 ♜c4

Now 15 ♜c1 is met by 15...♜c6!, intending 16 e4 ♜a4 with a clear plus, and 15 ♜b4 a5 16 ♜xb7 ♜c7 17 ♜g2 axb4 18 cxb4 0-0 leads to a complicated position in which Black is certainly not worse, having an extra piece!

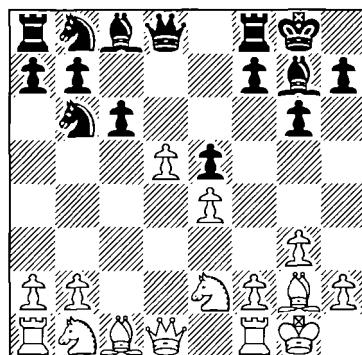
B2) 6 e4 ♜b6 7 ♜e2 e5!

I much prefer this central counter to the other popular option, 7...c5, as it makes more sense. White will push d4-d5 in either case, after which Black will challenge the d5-pawn and an exchange will take place on d5. Following that, the outcome will be decided primarily by the viability of the passed d5-pawn.



Having played ...e5, Black will at some point be able to blunt the g2-bishop with ...f5 and ...e4, whereas in the case of the 7...c5 line the scope of this bishop is greatly enhanced. I feel that this factor alone should be enough to tilt the balance in favour of 7...e5.

8 d5 c6 9 0-0 0-0



White's other problem in this variation is what to do with his e2-knight: the e5-pawn greatly restricts this piece and moving it to c3 leaves the other knight without a good option. Meanwhile, after an exchange on d5, Black's main positional aim is to blockade the passed d5-pawn with a knight, most

usually with ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ -c4-d6. He then has nothing to fear and can proceed actively with a pawn advance on the kingside and in the centre. An unhurried approach to the position by White would, of course, enable Black to accomplish this aim. Thus White must play aggressively and apply all his might to advancing his passed pawn; a strategy which dominates the resulting variations.

10 $\mathbb{Q}bc3$

Alternatively, 10 $\mathbb{Q}ec3$ cxd5 11 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12 a4 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ sees Black clearly untroubled: 14 a5 (or 14 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{A}fc8$ 15 $\mathbb{E}e3$, B.Jobava-L.Valdes, Ubeda 2001, and now 15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ with the initiative) 14... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ (establishing a dark square blockade is the top priority!) 16 $\mathbb{E}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 17 $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ f5 19 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e4 and in J.Fedorowicz-P.Wolff, New York 1998, Black had fully accomplished his plan and stood better.

Likewise, 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 11 $\mathbb{E}e3$ cxd5 12 exd5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}bc3$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 14 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16 $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}cd7$ was at least equal for Black in N.Edgzveradze-J.Rowson, London 1999; the long-term chances are on his side.

10...cxd5 11 exd5

11 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ gives Black simple equality.

11... $\mathbb{Q}a6!$

The correct way to develop, eyeing the b4- and c5-squares as well as leaving the path of the c8-bishop unblocked.

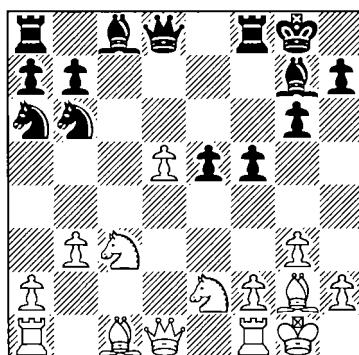
12 b3!

Clearly the most dangerous move.

White intends to support the advance of the d5-pawn with $\mathbb{Q}a3$. Note also that with this move White prevents the typical ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ -d6 manoeuvre. Instead, the immediate march of the d-pawn fails to convince: 12 d6 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 13 $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14 b3 f5! 15 f4 (15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ f4 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 17 $\mathbb{Q}e7+$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ was much better for Black in L.Johannessen-J.Gustafsson, Hengelo 1999; Black will play ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ at some point and the d6-pawn will drop) 15...e4 and here a draw was agreed in J.Lipka-J.Banas, Slovakian Team Ch. 1995, but of course Black is for preference.

12...f5!

Black must meet White's aggression with some of his own! This move also clears a square for the soon-to-be-attacked rook.



13 $\mathbb{Q}a3$

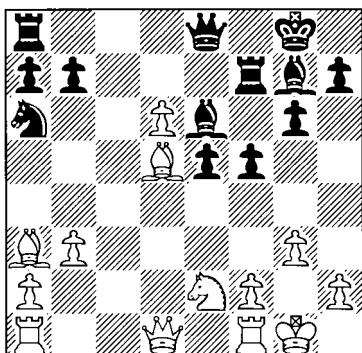
Instead 13 a4! aims to show that the b6-knight is misplaced. Black should again play actively with 13...f4! 14 a5 (14 gxf4? exf4 15 $\mathbb{Q}xf4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ – Rowson – just wins for Black, while 14 f3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}6xd5?$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ is a very

interesting exchange sacrifice; Black's prospects are surely greater, in view of both the coming ... $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and the passive white pieces) 14...f3! 15 axb6 fxg2 which gave him the better chances in D.Rogozenko-L.Ftacnik, Hamburg 1998.

13... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 14 d6

The only efficient way of keeping the pawn protected since 14 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ e4 15 $\mathbb{Q}ec3$ (or 15 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and Black has captured the important pawn) 15... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ a6 again sees White lose it for insufficient compensation.

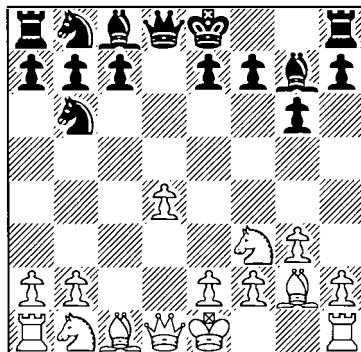
14... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8!$?



This idea was suggested by Rowson and seems quite promising to me: Black intends to increase the pressure against d6 with ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$. At the moment White's pieces appear quite active, but no concrete blow is apparent and the e2-knight is still a problem. Overall, I'd rather play Black.

B3) 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6!$

As will become clear, this immediate and unprovoked retreat is correct for several reasons.



Black's next move will be ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, attacking d4, and the omission of castling gains him an important tempo: after 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 d5, 8... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ comes with check and so d5 drops, while after 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 e3 e5 White cannot push d4-d5. Thus Black manages to achieve ...e5 without any difficulty, and can then choose whether to saddle White with an IQP (with ...exd4) or to invite complications with the ambitious ...e4.

White's choice here is actually a rather important one, although the two lines can easily transpose.

B31: 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

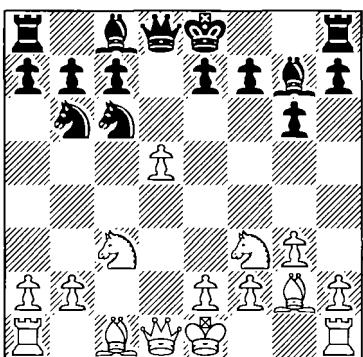
B32: 7 0-0

There's also 7 a4!, a rare but interesting idea, aiming to secure the b5-square for a knight. Black does best to 'succumb' with 7...a5! when 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 0-0 (or 9 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 10 0-0 c6 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 0-0 and now 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is equal, whereas 12 $\mathbb{Q}a2$! $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14 e3 e5 15 dx5, as in E.Eliskases-B.Larsen, Beverwijk 1959, and now

15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is simply better for Black) 9...0-0 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ e5 12 $\mathbb{Q}db5$ (R.Ruck-Y.Pelletier, Buk 1996) leads to an interesting and complicated position. This idea deserves more tests.

B31) 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 e3

Actually 8 d5?! doesn't lose a pawn, but is still not to be recommended:

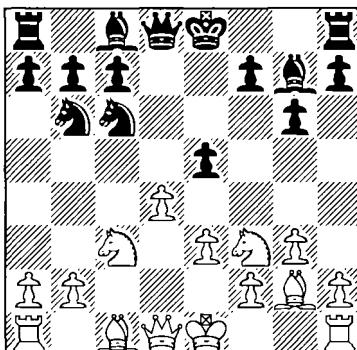


8... $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$ 9 bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (otherwise White struggles for compensation: 10 0-0 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ f6 12 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13 cxd4 g5 14 f4 h6 15 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 0-0-0 didn't give him much in S.Lindblom-L.Ogaard, Norwegian Ch. 1975, and 10 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12 cxd4 c6 13 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ f6 14 h4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17 h5 g5 left him struggling in C.Guimard-J.Rubinetti, Buenos Aires 1977) 10... $\mathbb{W}xd1+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (White can now regain his pawn, but at some expense in terms of time) 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ (12 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13 c4 f6 14 c5 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0-0-0 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ fxe5 was simply good for Black in J.Yrjola-J.Ehlvest, Kuopio 1992) 12... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 0-0-0 15 0-0 f6 16 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and Black was

clearly on top in V.Milanovic-D.Antic, Kecskemet 1990.

Note, too, that 8 0-0 will be examined via 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$, while 8 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ sees White try to prevent ...e5, but the bishop is not well placed on f4 and falls prey to tactics: 8...0-0 9 0-0 (instead 9 e3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 0-0 h6 11 h4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13 $\mathbb{W}c2$ f5 14 $\mathbb{W}c5$ e6 15 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 16 a3 a5 17 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ was solid and logical play from White in O.Moisieev-A.Cherepkov, Moscow 1949, but Black has his fair share of the play after 17...a4) 9... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ e5 11 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (White preferred 11 $\mathbb{Q}db5$ exf4 12 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ in M.Chiburdanidze-A.Brustman, Yerevan Olympiad 1996, and now 13... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ would have been strong) 11...bxcc6 12 $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ f6 (Y.Schwartz-R.Ruck, Zürich 2005) and Black already stands well; his pieces are well placed and the possibility of ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ can be awkward.

8...e5

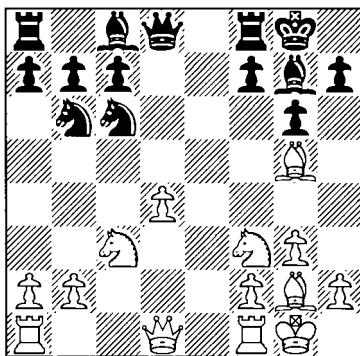


White must now make a fundamental decision: allowing an exchange of pawns on d4 is not very promising as Black is well placed to deal with the

IQP, but on the other hand, the d5-advance may well prove premature.

9 d5

The alternative is 9 0-0 exd4 (9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$!? will be covered in line 'B322') 10 exd4 (10 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ is just too complacent; for example, 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 exd4 0-0 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ and Black had assumed the initiative in P.Masak-M.Smistik, Moravian Team Ch. 2003) 10...0-0, and now 11 $\mathbb{Q}g5$

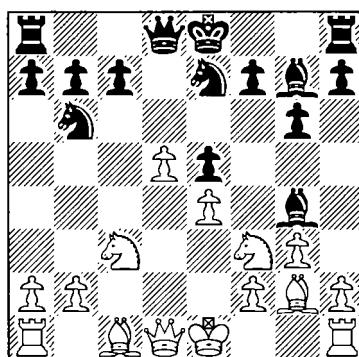


11...f6 (this has been condemned in some sources, but I believe it is best, whereas 11... $\mathbb{Q}f6$?! is surely bad; Black will sorely miss his dark-squared bishop around his king and, for example, 12 d5 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 17 $\mathbb{W}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}d1$! should be at least somewhat better for White) 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (or 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ + $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and White hadn't got anywhere in Z.Jasnikowski-R.Palus, Zakopane 2000) 12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ occurred in O.Cvitan-B.Jaracz, Nova Gorica 2004, when Black enjoys a very sound position after the natural 14... $\mathbb{W}d7$.

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

Other knight retreats are tried occasionally, but throughout this chapter I will focus on this natural move. Black attacks d5, thereby forcing e3-e4 (which temporarily blocks the g2-bishop and concedes some dark squares); then plays ...c6 and exchanges on d5, eventually aiming for the blockade on d6. White can prevent the full realization of this plan, but only at the cost of his prized d-pawn.

10 e4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$



Exchanging the light-squared bishop on f3 is an important part of Black's plan.

11 h3

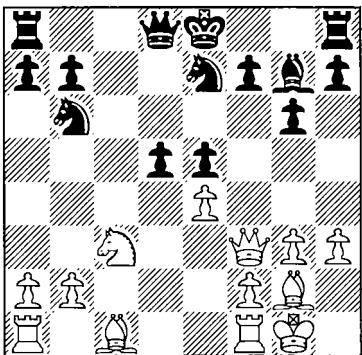
Alternatively, 11 0-0 (as in J.Murey-Z.Ribli, Reykjavik 1975) 11...0-0 12 $\mathbb{W}b3$ (or 12 a4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$) 12...c6 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 leads to equality, while 11 a4 c6 12 a5 $\mathbb{Q}bc8$ 13 a6?! (13 0-0 cxd5 14 exd5 was also interesting in C.McNab-M.Bakalarz, European Team Ch., Gothenburg 2005; Black should now play 14...0-0 with complex play) is critical, but ultimately not so effective: 13...b6 14 $\mathbb{W}a4$ b5 15 $\mathbb{W}b3$ 0-0 16 h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ cxd5 18

$\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 20 $exd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and Black had both realized his plan and retained good chances in V.Borovikov-S.Voitsekhovsky, Barlinek 2001.

11... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xf3$

Black easily equalized after 12 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ c6 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 14 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 15 a4 a5 16 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 0-0 17 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ in J.Horvath-P.Popovic, Gleisdorf 2000.

12...c6 13 0-0 $cxd5$



14 $exd5$

Recapturing with the knight is less incisive, as an exchange of pieces makes the resulting d-pawn weaker: 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}bx d5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ (or 15 $exd5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ – the blockade on d6 is the top priority – 16 $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 17 b3 $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xa3$, as in N.Pert-A.Zhigalko, Turin Olympiad 2006, and now the simple and logical 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ suffices for equality) 15...0-0 16 $exd5$ (16 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ was preferred in A.Adly-K.Van der Weide, Wijk aan Zee 2006, when 16...f5!? 17 $exd5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ is unclear, but Black has maintained the blockade on d6) 16... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 18 $\mathbb{W}b3$ was seen in O.Cvitanić-D.Navara, Pula 2003,

and now simply 18... $\mathbb{Q}d4!$? would have given Black a promising position.

14... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

A critical moment. Black threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$, after which his positional superiority will never be in doubt, as was shown in several games in the Sixties and Seventies (in similar positions). Therefore, White has only one option:

15 d6! $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 0-0

We have reached a very sharp position. Black is planning to round up the d6-pawn after blocking the d-file with ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$, and so again White must act.

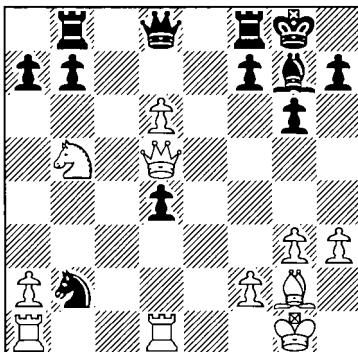
17 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

Black is already better after 17 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $exd4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ f6 intending ... $\mathbb{Q}c8$, while the 17 $\mathbb{W}d3$ of L.Van Wely-P.Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2001, should be met by 17... $\mathbb{W}d7$!?.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $exd4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d5$

The key test; 20 $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (Krasenkow) would be both equal and an admission of failure from White.

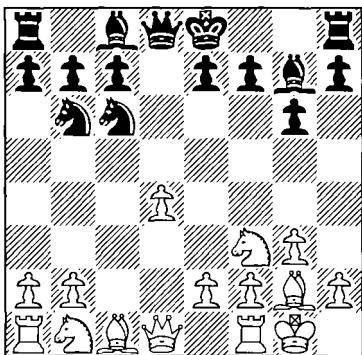
20... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$



Now 21 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$! 23 $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 24 $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ shows that

White cannot afford to play anything; Black is better. Thus the ever-creative Levon Aronian preferred 21 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$!? against Bologan (in Merida 2005), but ultimately this, too, is insufficient for advantage. Bologan accepted the offered material and had to suffer for it, but Krasenkow has pointed out the way for Black to fully extinguish White's pressure: 21...a6 22 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ b5 23 $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$! (the start of the round-up!) 24 $\mathbb{Q}dd1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$! 25 $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 26 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 27 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 28 $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ with equality.

B32) 7 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$



In this theoretically-important position, we have a final divide:

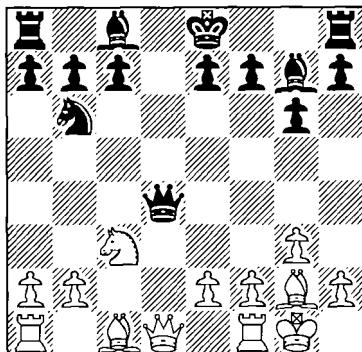
B321: 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

B322: 8 e3

B321) 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

This pawn sacrifice has been tried several times, but unsuccessfully: Black is not greatly troubled by White's slight initiative. Naturally, the proof is in the eating!

8... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$! 9 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$



10 $\mathbb{Q}b5$

The trickiest move, although still nothing special. White now manages to regain his pawn, but only by exchanging several pieces.

Alternatively:

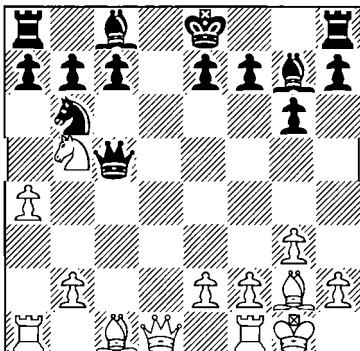
a) 10 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 13 gxf4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}fd1+$ has been a popular choice, but now White's pressure comes to a standstill: 14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (15 a4 a6 does not impress; neither did 15 $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ c6 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ e6 17 b4 a6 18 a4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 b5 axb5 20 axb5 c5 21 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ in L.Pantsulaia-A.Areshchenko, Yerevan 2004, and now with the simple 22... $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 23 $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ c4 24 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 25 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ Black achieves a large advantage) 15...c6 16 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ (or 16 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ e6 17 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$, as in U.Rohde-R.Swinkels, German League 2005, when 18... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ ends White's initiative) 16...a5 17 $\mathbb{Q}c1$ e6 18 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19 a3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ leaves White with insufficient compensation for the pawn, Z.Sturua-M.Makarov, Helsinki 1992.

b) 10 a4 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ c6 12 a5 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 13 a6 0-0 14 axb7 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 16

$\mathbb{Q}xe7 \mathbb{B}b8$ was fine for Black in N.Davies-E.Liss, Rishon Le Zion 1994.

10... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 11 $a4$

And not 11 $\mathbb{W}b3?!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ (Rowson) which is very good for Black.



11... $\mathbb{Q}xa4!$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xa4$

Instead 12 $\mathbb{Q}xc7+$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 13 $\mathbb{W}xa4+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is much better for Black, as pointed out by Rowson, and 12 $\mathbb{W}d5$ (V.Filippov-R.Kempinski, Swidnica 1999) 12...0-0! 13 $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $c6$ is fine for Black.

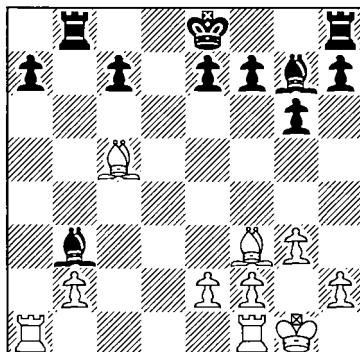
12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$

White can abandon any hope of an advantage in order just to regain his pawn with 13 $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 0-0 15 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}e3$

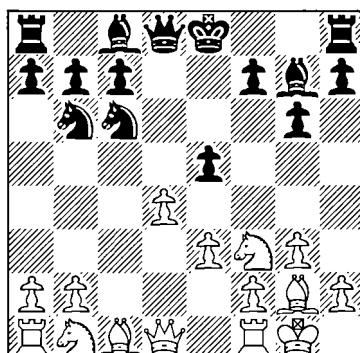
Black also equalized after 14 $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ (16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $a6$! 17 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 0-0 18 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$!) saw Black successfully come out of the complications with an advantage in M.Grabarczyk-R.Kempinski, Polish Ch., Sopot 1997) 16...0-0 17 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$! in R.Skomorokhin-A.Mikhailchishin, Lviv 1996.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$!



With a few accurate moves Black has equalized. 17 $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 19 $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 20 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $f6$ was agreed drawn in R.Ruck-P.Szekely, Hungarian Team Ch. 1997, while 17 $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}c6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is also equal.

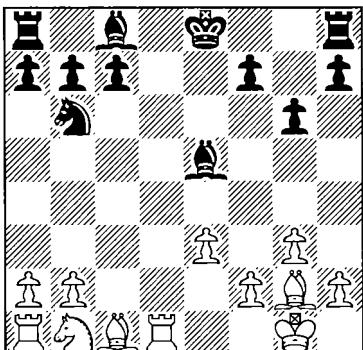
B322) 8 e3 e5



9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

White can also exchange on e5, hoping to profit from his central pawn majority. Ulf Andersson has often played like this, but Black has nothing to fear, providing he doesn't just play any random move that comes to mind!

R.Hübner-G.Kasparov, Cologne 1992, instructively continued 9 dx5 (9 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 10 dx5 ♕xd1 11 ♕xd1 ♘xe5 is the same, of course) 9...♕xd1 10 ♕xd1 ♖xe5 11 ♖xe5 (11 ♖d4 c6 was equal in L.Polugaevsky-Letelier, Mar del Plata 1962) 11...♖xe5

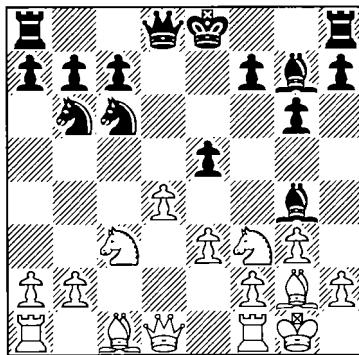


12 ♖d2 (plenty of other options have been tried; for example, 12 f4 ♘g7 13 e4 ♘g4 14 ♕d3 ♘e2 15 ♕d2 ♘a6 16 e5?! was somewhat overambitious in Elarbi-M.Bakalarz, Turin Olympiad 2006, and was punished by 16...f6 17 exf6 ♘xf6 18 ♖c3 c5 19 ♖d5 ♖xd5 20 ♖xd5 0-0-0 when Black was much better; 12 ♖c3 can be met by 12...0-0 or 12...c6!?, intending to keep the king in the centre – we are, after all, close to an endgame – and 13 e4 ♘g4 14 f3 ♘e6 15 ♘h6 ♕d8 16 f4 ♕xd1+ 17 ♕xd1 ♘xc3 18 bxc3 f5 was fine for Black in A.Garcia-J.Fernandez Aguado, Spanish Ch., Lleida 1991) 12...c6 13 ♖f3 ♘g7 14 ♖d4 ♘g4! 15 f3 ♘d7 16 ♘d2 c5 17 ♘b3 ♘a4 and White was already under serious pressure.

After 9 ♖c3, play has returned a well-known position (well-known to

us, that is!), where the fully adequate 9...exd4 was examined above (see the note to White's 9th move in line 'B31'). However, that is not Black's only option and he can also try the following:

9...♘g4?



The pressure on d4 is now almost unbearable and White must act.

10 h3

The alternative 10 d5 is well met by the counterblow 10...e4! 11 dxcc6 (11 ♖xe4 ♕xd5 12 ♕xd5 ♖xd5 13 h3 ♘xf3 14 ♘xf3 0-0-0 15 ♖c5 b6 16 ♖b3 a5 17 e4 ♖db4 18 ♘g5 a4 19 ♘xd8 ♕xd8 was a simul game of Kasparov's as Black and a good illustration of Black's possibilities) 11...♕xd1 12 ♕xd1 ♘xf3! (the correct recapture, aiming to later exploit the weakened light squares in White's position) 13 ♘xf3 (13 cxb7 ♕b8 14 ♘xf3 exf3 15 e4 ♖c4! sees Black wrest the initiative) 13...exf3 14 ♖b5 0-0 15 cxb7 ♕ab8 16 ♖xc7 (16 ♖xa7 c5 is similar) 16...♕xb7 17 ♖b5 ♖a4 when Black has good compensation for the pawn; White's queenside is under strong pressure and the f3-pawn causes his king problems. I feel that Black's

chances are preferable.

10... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

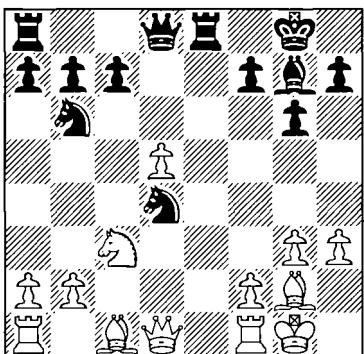
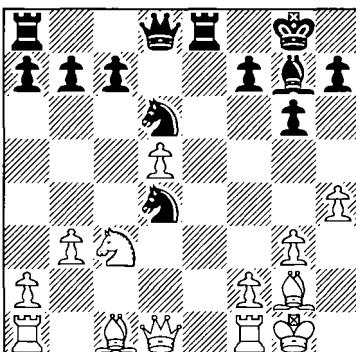
Or 11 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ exd4 12 exd4 0-0 13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14 $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 15 a4 $\mathbb{Q}bc4$ 16 b3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 17 $\mathbb{E}a2$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ and Black had centralized well without any problems in K.Langeweg-V.Hort, Wijk aan Zee 1975.

11...exd4 12 exd4 0-0

White is now forced to advance his d-pawn, thereby blocking his light-squared bishop and conceding the central dark squares to Black's knights.

13 d5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}e8!$

19 $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 20 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 21 $\mathbb{E}ce1$ $\mathbb{E}ae8$ and with simple and logical moves Black had obtained the advantage.



15 h4

After 15 $\mathbb{Q}f4$?! $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 b3 g5 17 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18 $\mathbb{W}h5$ h6 19 h4 gxh4 20 $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 21 $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22 $\mathbb{W}f4$ hxg3 23 fxg3 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 24 $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}g7$ 25 $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ White was struggling in K.Urban-V.Jansa, German League 2000; his pieces are badly coordinated, unlike Black's which are dangerously placed.

15... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16 b3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Establishing the standard blockade. L.Janigava-A.Mikhailishin, Pavlodar 1987, continued 17 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18 $\mathbb{E}c1$ h6

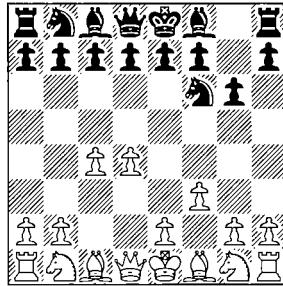
Conclusion

The concept of delaying castling has dominated this chapter and is, in my opinion, an essential tool at Black's disposal to disrupt White's smooth development. Black should take on c4 if allowed and then either comfortably hold on to the extra pawn or, should White spend time recovering it, immediately strike in the centre with ...c5.

After an exchange on d5, inviting a structure similar to the Exchange Variation is unappetizing for White; Black is able to fully extinguish White's pressure with accurate play. The line 6 e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ is more dangerous: Black should meet it with ...e5, rather than ...c5, and aim to blunt White's fianchettoed bishop. Finally, in the main line with 6 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ Black again does best to delay castling, preferring a quick ...e5. It seems to me that the crucial tempo gained by this enables Black to obtain good play.

Chapter Fourteen

Angling for a Sämisch: 3 f3



1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 f3

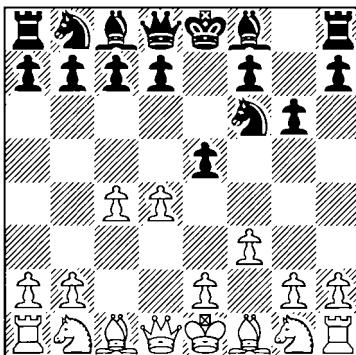
There is nothing deep about this move: White wants to play e4 and take play into a Sämisch King's Indian. Black can of course reply with 3...d5 and after the exchange there and 5 e4, retreat the knight to b6. Then a position similar to the 5 ♜d2 variation arises. However, I feel that f3 is a much more useful move than ♜d2 and that this difference gives White some aggressive and dangerous options.

Retreating the knight to b6 is by no means the end of the world for Black, but I would like to suggest in this book a very different, visually stunning, and apparently quite sound way of meeting this dangerous system:

3...e5!?

The originator of this outrageous idea is, I believe, the great Grünfeld guru Andras Adorjan. It came to prominence when Peter Leko employed it in 1997 against Vladimir Kramnik, even succeeding in winning

the game. Unsurprisingly, therefore, much of the analysis in this chapter stems from Adorjan and Leko.



Black's idea is to strike at the dark squares, which have been weakened by 3 f3, and to exploit the fact that the f3-pawn significantly hinders White's natural development. In a sense, it feels like replying to 2 c3 in the Sicilian with 2...d5, although here, of course, things are much more complicated. Still, I have great faith in this move!

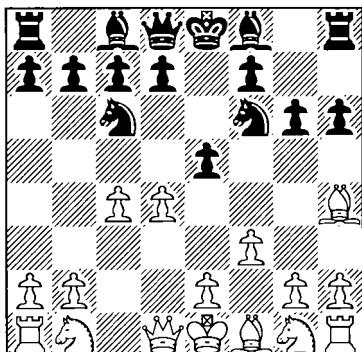
4 dxе5

Though the most natural, there are other moves. Practice has also seen:

a) 4 d5 is not a very good idea, I feel, as it allows Black to develop his dark-squared bishop actively on c5: 4...e4! 5 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5!$? with promising play. Black even has other options, including 5...d6!? 6 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 7 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (7 $\mathbb{Q}h4!$? is perhaps better) 7... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 8 fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 with good dark square compensation, and 5...exf3 6 exf3 d6 7 $\mathbb{W}e2+$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{W}xe7+$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ is a simple equalizer.

b) 4 e4 allows Black to develop quickly: 4...exd4 5 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 0-0 8 b3 d6 9 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8!$? (9... $\mathbb{Q}d7$, intending ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and ...f5, is also fine) 10 0-0-0 f5, with counterplay, is the standard reaction and a sound one at that, but even better might be 6... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 0-0 and I feel that Black already has the upper hand.

c) 4 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 5 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!$



(hitting where it hurts most, namely on the dark squares, but Black can consider, too, both 5...exd4 6 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7 $\mathbb{W}e3+$ $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 9 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 e4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ when ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ is threatened and Black has good play, and 5...g5 6 $\mathbb{Q}f2$

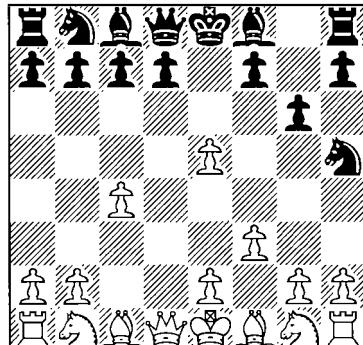
$\mathbb{Q}c6$ 7 d5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 e4 d6 9 h4 g4, which led to complicated play in M.Lucht-T.Studnicka, Czech League 2004) 6 d5 (instead 6 e3? is just bad in view of 6...exd4 7 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5!, and 6 dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 7 $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 does not really trouble Black) 6... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ and:

c1) 7 e4 c5 8 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d6 leaves Black with a well-placed knight on d4.

c2) 7 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c6!? with pressure against White's centre (but not 7... $\mathbb{Q}c5?$ 8 g4! or 7...c5?! 8 d6!).

c3) The ambitious 7 g4 is very risky since 7...h5! 8 e3 (8 g5? $\mathbb{Q}h7$ wins the g5-pawn) 8...hxg4 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 10 exd4 $\mathbb{Q}b4+!$ (the best move, although 10...exd4 11 $\mathbb{W}e2+$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}d1$ d6 can also be considered, with compensation for the piece) 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (other moves are clearly bad: 11 $\mathbb{Q}c3?$ exd4 12 a3 $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ dxcc3 14 axb4 cxb2 15 $\mathbb{Q}b1$ g3 with a winning position or 11 $\mathbb{Q}f2?$ e4! with a clear plus) 11...gxf3 (11... $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ exd4 is also promising) 12 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 14 $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}xe3+$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ f5 and Black has quite good compensation for the piece.

4... $\mathbb{Q}h5$



White must now meet the threat of ... $\mathbb{W}h4+$, and not with 5 f4 $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 6 g3 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$, which leaves him too exposed.

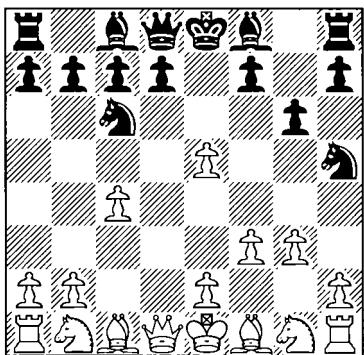
A: 5 g3

B: 5 $\mathbb{Q}h3$

A) 5 g3

Simple and logical, but now White's position looks even more loose.

5... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$



Another move order is 5...d6 6 exd6 (or 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 7 exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 0-0 9 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ and Black is already better) 6... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 7 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$, transposing to the note to White's 7th move below.

6 f4

After the 6 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 7 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d6 9 f4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ of D.Mergvelashvili-M.Vachier Lagrave, Chalkidiki 2003, Black should seize the initiative with 11...f5.

6...d6!

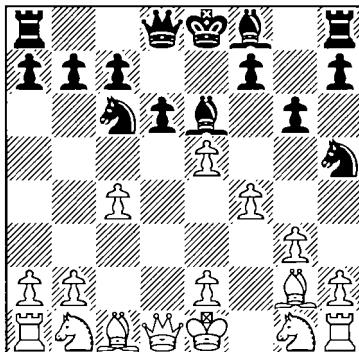
By means of this pawn sacrifice Black opens up the position to exploit

White's multiple weaknesses. Indeed, it looks like a very favourable version of From's Gambit (1 f4 e5 2 fxe5 d6)!

7 $\mathbb{Q}g2$

Or 7 exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 9 e4 $\mathbb{W}e7$, followed by ...0-0-0 is promising for Black, and 8 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 10 0-0 0-0-0 11 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is also good) 8...0-0 (8... $\mathbb{Q}e6$! is another option) 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 12 e3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$! 13 $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$ (or 13 $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 15 0-0 h6 16 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bx d5$ with a clear advantage for Black; Predojevic's 15... $\mathbb{Q}bx d5$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ is good too) 13... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 14 $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 15 $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$! leaves Black much better.

7... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$



Ignoring the pawn for the sake of development, and preferable to 7...dxe5?! 8 $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ bxc6 9 $\mathbb{W}xd8+$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 10 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (Predojevic) with an edge for White.

8 exd6

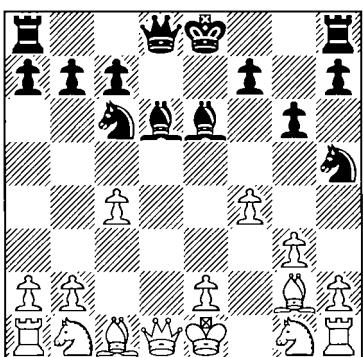
Again White has some not particularly inspiring alternatives:

a) 8 $\mathbb{W}b3?$ $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ 9 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10 $\mathbb{W}xa7$ (10 $\mathbb{W}e4$ dxe5 wins) 10... $\mathbb{Q}c2+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with some advantage for Black.

b) 8 $\mathbb{W}a4$ dxe5! (also possible are 8... $\mathbb{W}d7$ and 8... $\mathbb{A}d7$ 9 exd6 $\mathbb{A}xd6$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 11 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$, with compensation in both cases) 9 $\mathbb{A}xc6+$ bxc6 10 $\mathbb{W}xc6+$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ (11... $\mathbb{A}g7$ is possible, but the text is stronger) 12 $\mathbb{W}xe5+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 14 0-0 $\mathbb{A}e8$ and Black's initiative is growing rapidly.

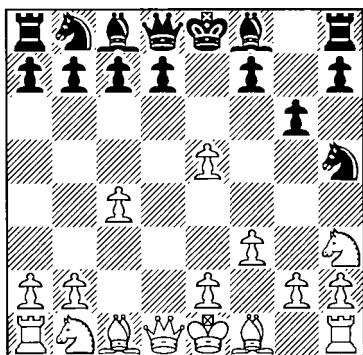
c) 8 $\mathbb{A}xc6+$ bxc6 9 $\mathbb{W}a4$ dxe5 10 $\mathbb{W}xc6+$ $\mathbb{A}d7$ 11 $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6!$ 12 $\mathbb{W}xe5+$ $\mathbb{A}e7$ was promising for Black in Magalashvili-B.Predojevic, Kallithea 2003.

8... $\mathbb{A}xd6$



Black has good compensation.

B) 5 $\mathbb{Q}h3$



The most ambitious move, defending against the check (which is now met by g3) and preparing $\mathbb{A}g5$.

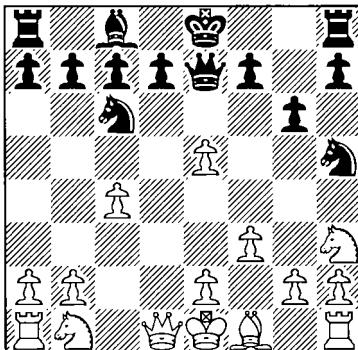
5... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6 $\mathbb{A}g5$

Instead, 6 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 7 $\mathbb{A}e3$ (or 7 $\mathbb{A}e2$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ with the initiative) 7... $\mathbb{A}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ (8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 9 cxd5 $\mathbb{A}xh3$ 10 gxh3 0-0 gives Black good compensation) 8...f5 leaves Black very active; 6 e3 d6 7 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{A}e6$ is similar to what we've already seen; and 6 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 7 g4 (Black has the initiative after both 7 $\mathbb{A}g5$ f6 8 $\mathbb{A}h4$ $\mathbb{A}c5$ and 7 e4 $\mathbb{A}c5$ 8 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 0-0) 7... $\mathbb{A}g7$ 8 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ gives Black good play after the regrouping ... $\mathbb{A}e6$ and ... $\mathbb{A}g7$.

6... $\mathbb{A}e7$ 7 $\mathbb{A}xe7$

Black gains at least equality after 7 $\mathbb{A}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$, intending ...d6 and $\mathbb{A}e6$.

7... $\mathbb{W}xe7$



A critical position. If Black recovers the e5-pawn he will obviously stand well, but preventing this is not easy at all for White.

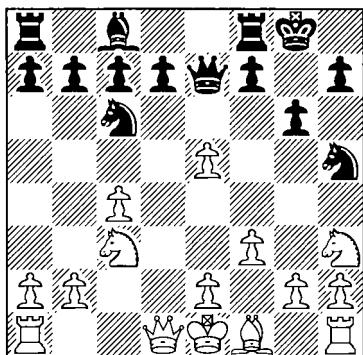
8 $\mathbb{Q}c3$

Once again 8 f4? is too weakening: 8...d6! 9 exd6 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 10 dxc7 $\mathbb{A}xh3$ 11 gxh3 $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xf4+$ 13 e3 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ with a clear advantage.

In H.Stefansson-M.Krasenkow, Antalya 2004, White preferred 8 g4?! which is best met by 8... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ (8... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12 e3 was the game, when Black should have played 12...f5 13 gxf5 gxf5 threatening ...f4 with good play – Krasenkow; while 9 f4 d6 10 exd6 $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 11 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 12 dxc7 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13 e3 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ gave Black good compensation in A.Kuzmin-M.Krasenkow, Amsterdam 2004) 9 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (9 gxh5 d6 gives Black a strong attack and another enticing possibility is 9... $\mathbb{Q}xf3+!?$) 9... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ with an edge.

8...0-0!

It is better to delay the capture on e5, since 8... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 9 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is unpleasant, as is 8... $\mathbb{W}xe5+?$ 9 g4.



9 e4

Some important alternatives:

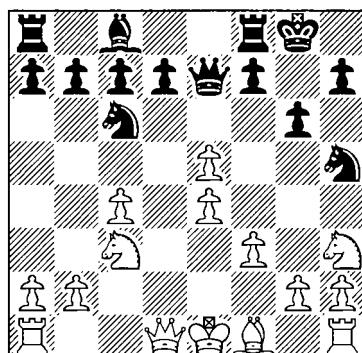
a) 9 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ 11 f4 $\mathbb{W}d6$ does not allow White to establish control: 12 g3 (or 12 e4 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 14 e5 – 14 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ – 14... $\mathbb{W}b6!$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d6 16 $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ gxf5 with an obvious advantage) 12...c6! 13 $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$ (13 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xd2+$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ d5! with a clear plus) 13... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ d5! 15 cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 16

$\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{W}ad8!$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18 0-0 $\mathbb{W}fe8$ is given by Leko and Adorjan as favouring Black, which seems correct, and they also offer 18... $\mathbb{W}c5+$ 19 $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ as an alternative.

b) 9 f4 is now met with 9... $\mathbb{W}b4!$ 10 $\mathbb{W}d2$ (instead 10 $\mathbb{W}b3$ d6 11 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 12 0-0 dxe5 13 fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 16 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ was equal in E.Postny-A.Szeberenyi, Budapest 2000, but Black might consider 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7!?$) 10...d6! 11 exd6 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 12 gxh3 $\mathbb{W}ad8$ when Black has the initiative and intends 13 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$.

c) 9 g4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10 f4 d6 is a by-now-typical motif, as is the similar 10... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 11 $\mathbb{W}d2$ d6.

d) 9 $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10 e4 d6 11 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ leads to a normal position for Black, and 11...f5 12 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13 g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14 $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15 b3 fxe4 16 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17 $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 18 $\mathbb{Q}fxe4$ was also fine for the second player in V.Mihajlovic-M.Rabrenovic, Sutomore 2004.

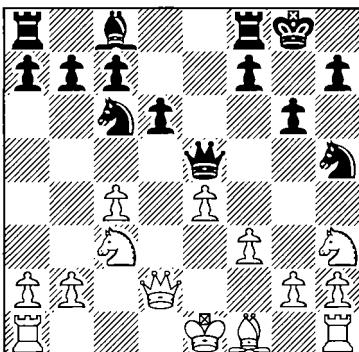


9... $\mathbb{W}xe5$

Inferior is 9... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 11 f4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 12 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 13 $\mathbb{Q}f2$ d6 14 0-0 according to Moiseenko.

10 ♜d2 d6

Black is ready to strike with ...f5, while White is lagging in development.

**11 f4**

Critical, but Black's resources are fully sufficient. However, it's not clear what White should prefer:

a) 11 ♜f2 f5 12 0-0-0 fxe4 13 ♜fxe4 ♜f5 14 ♜f2 ♜f6 15 g4 ♜d7 16 g5 ♜h5 17 ♜d5 ♜xf3 18 ♜e1 ♜xf2 19 ♜xf2 ♜xg5+ (Predojevic) gives Black excellent compensation for the exchange.

b) 11 g4 ♜f6! was pointed out by Leko and Adorjan (and is superior to 11...♜g7 12 ♜d5!? ♜xg4! 13 fxg4 ♜xe4+ 14 ♜e3 ♜xh1 15 ♜f6+ ♜h8 with a very complicated and unclear position), when play might continue 12 0-0-0 ♜c5, with a good game for Black.

11...♜d4!

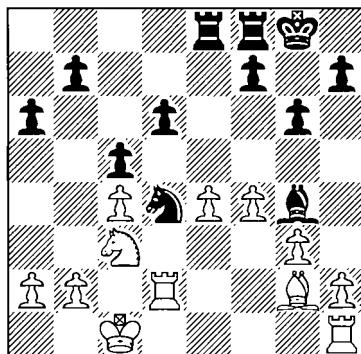
Not 11...♜c5 12 ♜f2 f5 13 ♜d5 with an edge.

12 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 13 0-0-0 c5!

A further accuracy; 13...♜xh3?! 14 ♜xd4 ♜e6 15 f5! leaves Black in trouble.

14 g3 ♜f6 15 ♜f2 ♜g4!

Ensuring that Black quickly completes his development. Predojevic now analyses 16 ♜xg4 ♜xg4 17 ♜d2 a6 18 ♜g2 ♜ae8 and concludes that Black has good counterplay.



This is correct in view of the excellent knight on d4 and the possibility of ...f5.

Conclusion

3 f3 is an ambitious move, but Black can hit the nail on the head with the amazing 3...e5?!. White's weakened dark squares and stilted development justify Black's approach. Indeed, White must be careful not to end up in a hopeless situation, and even with best play he cannot reach anything more than a normal position.

This whole line is under-researched and there is plenty of scope for further independent analysis. Best of all, 3...e5 works!

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play the Grünfeld

The Grünfeld is an exciting and dynamic answer to 1 d4, and has become very popular at all levels of chess. It relies on the principles of the hypermodern school of chess: Black allows White to erect an impressive-looking centre on the assumption that in the long run it could prove to be more of a liability than an asset. Play often becomes extremely complex and tactical, and this is clearly one of the reasons why the Grünfeld appeals to ambitious players. It has been a long-time favourite of arguably the World's strongest-ever chess player, Garry Kasparov, who utilized it many times in his numerous World Championship battles.

Despite its attractions, some prospective Grünfeld players are discouraged by the necessity of needing to learn many different variations in such a multifaceted opening. In *Play the Grünfeld*, however, opening expert Yelena Dembo circumvents this problem by producing a comprehensive and yet workable repertoire for Black, offering a solution against each of White's tries, whether it's a critical main line or a tricky sideline. After reading this book, you will have the required knowledge and confidence to begin playing the Grünfeld in your own games.

- Written by a Grünfeld specialist
- Covers all of White's main tries
- Reveals the tactical and positional ideas for both sides

Yelena Dembo is an International Master from Greece with many tournament successes to her name, including the bronze medal at the 2005 European Women's Championship and one Grandmaster norm. She's a renowned chess coach, who has taught students from over 30 countries. She's also an experienced chess writer and a regular contributor to the quality publication *Chess Informant*. This is her first book for Everyman Chess.

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