MIKHAIL SHERESHEVSKY

The Shereshevsky Method

to Improve in Chess

FROM CLUB PLAYER TO MASTER

NEW IN CHESS

Contents

Title page
Explanation of symbols
Foreword by Andrey Filatov
Introduction

Part I – The Soviet Chess Conveyor

Chapter 1 Constructing an opening repertoire

Albin Countergambit
Chigorin Defence
Budapest Gambit
Queen's Gambit
Openings arising after 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5
One-Off Openings

Chapter 2 Studying the chess classics

Part II – Endgame Strategy

Chapter 3 Centralising the king

Chapter 4 The role of pawns in the endgame

Chapter 5 The problem of exchanges

Chapter 6 Schematic thinking

Chapter 7 Do not hurry!

Chapter 8 The principle of two weaknesses

Chapter 9 Instead of a conclusion

Part III – From the 20th century to the 21st

Chapter 10 On the status of chess players and trainers

Chapter 11 Chess books

Chapter 12 DAUT

Chapter 13 Laziness

Chapter 14 The technique of calculating variations

Chapter 15 Resulting moves

Chapter 16 Iosif Dorfman's Method in Chess

Chapter 17 Intuition and logic

Chapter 18 Before the conclusion

Chapter 19 Conclusion

Akoglaniz para Immortal

Mikhail Shereshevsky

The Shereshevsky Method to Improve in Chess

From Club Player to Master

New In Chess 2018

© 2018 New In Chess

Published by New In Chess, Alkmaar, The Netherlands

www.newinchess.com

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

Photos by courtesy of the author.

Cover design: Volken Beck

Supervision: Peter Boel

Translation: Steve Giddins

Production: Anton Schermer

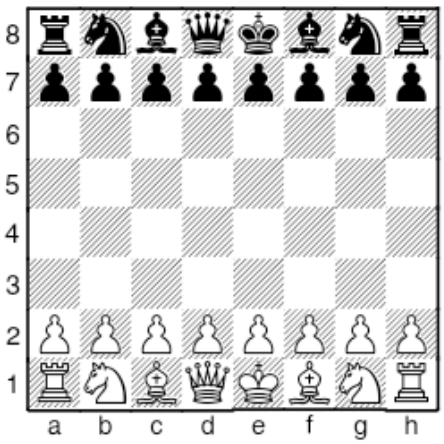
Have you found any errors in this book?

Please send your remarks to editors@newinchess.com. We will collect all relevant corrections on the Errata page of our website www.newinchess.com and implement them in a possible next edition.

ISBN: 978-90-5691-764-7

Explanation of Symbols

The chessboard with its coordinates:



♔ King
♕ Queen
♖ Rook
♗ Bishop
♘ Knight

⩲ White stands slightly better
⩱ Black stands slightly better
± White stands better
∓ Black stands better
+− White has a decisive advantage
−+ Black has a decisive advantage
= balanced position
! good move
!! excellent move
? bad move
?? blunder
!? interesting move
?! dubious move

Foreword by Andrey Filatov

I met Mikhail Shereshevsky 30 years ago, when I went to the chess section at the institute of physical culture in the Belarusian capital, Minsk. Mikhail Israelevich, himself a strong practical player (several times a prize-winner in the championships of Belarussia and the USSR Armed Forces, and a member of the republic's team) was a very authoritative trainer. His best pupils, Alexey Alexandrov, Elena Zayats and Ilakha Kadimova, won gold and other medals in the European and world junior championships, and in all, Shereshevsky prepared seven GMs, and that in the days when the title was really hard to gain!

His wonderful books, *Mastering the Endgame* and *Endgame Strategy*, from the 21st century viewpoint, are considered classics, and it is no accident that World Champion Magnus Carlsen rates these books very highly, almost 30 years after their initial publication. It is a shame that another of his books, *The Soviet Chess Conveyor*, which became a bestseller in the West in the 1990s, has never been published in a Russian edition. But now this omission will in some form be rectified: in his new work, Mikhail Israelevich has included selected fragments from both *The Soviet Chess Conveyor* and *Endgame Strategy* – incidentally, after thorough revision and checking with powerful modern chess engines.

In the 1990s, Mikhail Shereshevsky practically abandoned chess and went into business. But chess never leaves one, as I know myself, and some years later the well-known trainer again started helping talented young players. Thus, in 2012, I organised the World Championship match between Boris Gelfand (my friend since we were youths) and Vishy Anand in Moscow, and then the Alekhine Memorial, whilst in 2014

I was chosen as President of the Russian Chess Federation (RCF) and, slightly later, as a Vice-President of FIDE.

The key word on which I stood in the RCF elections was 'popularisation'. My key task was to restore the popularity of chess, and the interest in it, which for a long time had lapsed. So as to achieve this intention, I worked out a range of programmes and projects. One of the most important outcomes of our work was the establishment of a chess section at the children's educational centre 'Sirius' in Sochi. The opening ceremony, in the presence of Russian President Vladimir Putin, underlined that our country always helps chess and is a chess country...

The chess section is run by 14th World Champion Vladimir Kramnik: despite the fact that he is still active in tournaments and is one of the strongest players in the world, Vladimir gives his time and energy to helping future champions. I suggested that Shereshevsky join the trainers committee, and he has done his work splendidly. He has found his place among a team of like-minded individuals, established good administrative relations with the Sirius team and, most of all, has ensured high-quality training for the most talented young players in the country. In any event, we have been delighted with the results achieved by Sirius pupils in recent years in the world and European junior championships!

In his latest work, Mikhail Shereshevsky outlines his many years of training experience and reveals the secrets of his methods. I am convinced that this work will be of great benefit to trainers and young players, aiming at the highest possible results.

Andrey Filatov,
President of the Russian Chess Federation

Introduction

This book presents the view on chess training of a specialist who gave up his work in 1992 and remains interested in it still today.

The idea of this book came from a conversation with, and belongs to, Mark Glukhovsky. We had friendly relations when he was chief editor of 64 and head of 'Chess TV', and I gave chess lessons on TV at his request. This was my first return to active chess. A word about myself.

I began training work in 1975, in Minsk, when I was a master player. I conducted lessons with groups of different standards. There were groups of novices, of third-category players, and candidate masters. Every piece of work had its specifics, but soon I became trainer of the Belarusian junior team and ceased working with beginners and third-category players. I became interested in methods of working with first-category players and candidate masters and soon realised that there was no such methodology. GMs and masters in those days worked in whatever way they could. Mostly, it was from books and in groups, using trial and error. I was an exception.

My first trainer, Abo Israelevich Shagalovich, at the Minsk Pioneer Palace developed a whole generation of players, who made up the Belarusian team: Kupreichik, Kapengut, Dydyshko, Mochalov, Litvinov, Archakov. He was a talented, educated man, a master, a strong practical player, but by today's standards an amateur. He loved chess and could convey this love to his pupils, but he lacked any sort of professional methodology.

As a student, and short of money in those days, I used to make a bit of cash on the side by working at the Pioneer Palace and used to go along to Shagalovich's lessons, so as to learn about teaching beginners and third- category players. Several of his monologues and talks I can still remember almost by heart. On the demo board, he put up a game from a match against the youth team of Molodechko, in which the Minsk pioneer Fima Revzin had missed mate in two and failed to win the game. Shagalovich's monologue went as follows:

– In this position, Fima missed mate in two! How could this happen?

Because he has started playing handball!! (*It should be said that Abo Israelevich greatly disliked it when pupils began combining chess with the study of some other activity. It usually ended badly for chess.*) Of course, it all looks good when the athlete shines at the sports stadium. But what difference does it make how fast an athlete can run 100 metres, 10 seconds, or 11 or 12? So what, you can sit in an aeroplane and cover thousands of metres in a few seconds! And

I heard on the radio that Muhammad Ali, who used to be called Cassius Clay, will soon be punching out the lights of his countryman...

The children all shouted out 'Joe Frazier!'

– Correct, Joe Frazier! And did you know that the first chairman of the Soviet Chess Federation, Nikolay Vasilievich Krylenko, was also chairman of the Soviet People's Commissars (*Actually, he was a member of Sovnarkom, but not its chairman – MS*). And just what do you think Cassius Clay can become? President of the scumbags party, that's about all! I'd like to remind you that our great chief, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, was a strong chess player, somewhere around first-category strength. And you know, he despised players like Fima Revzin. He called them 'creeping empiricists', that is, the sort who just float around on the surface of things.

All this was delivered in an absolutely serious tone and my main task at such moments was not to giggle or fall off the chair, laughing, even though I was behind everyone and the pupils could not see me. Later, I looked in some philosophical dictionary and found that a group of oppositionists, who, in Lenin's opinion, did not go into the essence of phenomena, was indeed branded 'creeping empiricists' by him.

But to return to the issue of methodology for educating first-category players and candidate masters. My next trainer was Isaak Efremovich Boleslavsky. This was superclass! A world-class GM, trainer of the Soviet national team and of world champions. Everyone who was fortunate enough to work with him on the Belarusian team could learn an enormous amount. But there was no system! We just studied openings and their connection with the middlegame, and also analysed games we had played. Of course, Boleslavsky's understanding of the game was colossal, he had unique analytical ability, and sharp combinational vision. But those with ears had to listen. Nobody gave you knowledge in a pre-digested form, you had to chew it over yourself. We did not study the endgame as a specialised area at all, only via the analysis of games or adjournments. There were various ineffective methodological treatises around, some by trainers, some not, but none produced any effective results. In general, each trainer had to think and invent his own methods.

It is important to note that most of the time one was not working with the likes of Gelfand or Ivanchuk, players of such enormous talent that even the most ham-fisted trainer would find it hard to spoil them. Instead, one was working with players of some definite chess ability, uncovering which was, however, not quite so self-evident, and who needed a correct system of education and training.

I should also say that the rate of improvement of a young player goes in fits and starts, rather than as a smooth and regular progession. Here it is perfectly in place to recall the laws of dialectics, regarding the transformation of the quantity of correctly planned and rationally executed work into quality. *Correctly planned and rationally executed work* is by its nature of high quality, but the leap always happens unexpectedly. Very often, players who first look like 'ugly duckings' turn into 'white swans' and become comparable with, if not surpass, their peers. The simple process of developing one's organism and forming one's personality happens at different speeds for different people.

Thus, we are coming to the most important thing. The trainer should prepare his work and start training. But how? For the majority of trainers at that time, the process of training consisted just of studying openings, analysing contemporary opening theory, and analysing games played. Indeed, that was what we did with Boleslavsky, but just on an exceptionally high level. Things like the classics, endgame theory, the technique of calculating variations, special exercises designed to eliminate weaknesses – these were subjects we did not even discuss. The connection between the opening and the middlegame is undoubtedly a subject that must be studied, and this is something that lasts a whole lifetime. A player can emerge with a good position from the opening and then start to misplay it, so that the profit from good opening preparation is wasted. The quality of opening preparation is very important at a very high level, when the other important qualities of a player have already been established – just like the serve in tennis. But first, one must learn to play, and this means training correctly. In Soviet chess literature, the process of calculating variations had been covered by Alexander Kotov in his classic book *Think Like a Grandmaster* and in his autobiographical book. We will come to this subject in this book too. But the credit for developing a method of using special training exercises to eliminate this or that weakness in a student's play belongs to Honoured Trainer of the USSR, Mark Dvoretsky.

The results of Dvoretsky's methods are well-known. They say there are no accidents in history. I am convinced that neither Yusupov, Dolmatov nor many of his other pupils would have achieved what they did in chess, had they not happened to come across Dvoretsky when they did, and the exception of Valery Chekhov just proves my point, although, of course, it is not actually possible to prove it. In addition, I would add that Dvoretsky managed to observe his pupils at tournaments and diagnose their character flaws, and help eliminate these too, in his exercises. This

is the highest level of training expertise. I was lucky that in my time I met Dvoretsky at a First League tournament of the USSR Championship and he invited me to be his second. Discussions with him were of enormous benefit to me. I became acquainted with his methods, which he later wrote about in many books. My book *Endgame Strategy* would have been impossible without my association with this remarkable trainer.

But let us return to the subject of my own methods of study for trainers everywhere. Dvoretsky got to take players who were already Soviet masters, whereas most trainers have to work with players of first-category or candidate master strength, who still have some way to go to achieve master strength. In addition, Dvoretsky could limit himself to working with no more than three pupils at a time, at his home, and in convenient conditions, whereas a children's trainer has to work with several groups at once, with at least six per group. Then they have to deal with trainers' committees, a lot of unnecessary bureaucracy, report-writing, etc. Not much time was left for creative preparation work.

I established my system, with which I prepared three USSR junior champions for boys and girls, and who later became winners and prizewinners at world and European championships. These were Alexey Alexandrov, Elena Zayats and Ilakha Kadimova. All soon became grandmasters, as did four of my other pupils. I would remind you that in those days, there were no USSR, world or European U-8, U-10, U-12, etc. championships as there are now; then it was just under-20 and a cadet championship for U-16s. And all of my pupils came to be as 'green' first- category players or candidate masters.

Kramatorsk 1989. The Belarusian team performed extremely successfully at the All- Union Youth Games, the girls taking second place, the boys third. Seated: G.Sagalchik, B.Gelfand, E.Gerasimovich, Y.Levitan, E.Zayats, I.Smirin. Standing: V.Atlas, A.Alexandrov and trainers: A.Kapengut, M.Shereshevsky, E.Mochalov, E.Raisky.

The perfecting of a chess player consists of several aspects, the main ones being theory, practice and training exercises. The term 'theory' is somewhat wider than merely openings. As well as the construction of an opening repertoire, it involves a knowledge of the classics, the study of 'intelligent' books and tournament books, the study of the principles of playing the endgame, and the memorising of standard theoretical positions and a great variety of positional and tactical devices in the middlegame, the analysis of one's games, and a great deal more. With practice, it is significantly simpler. To improve, a player must play, in the main tournament games at a slow, 'classical' time-limit. Rapid and blitz can also be used for training and for the development of specific skills. Training exercises are a type of work on chess which depends especially on the trainer.

Whereas when teaching 'theory', one can introduce the subject in class and then give pupils individual homework, training exercises are in many cases simply impossible without the trainer. Often one needs to play out positions with a fixed time limit, against the trainer. When one begins work with a young first-category player or candidate master, of between 10-14 years of age, one is dealing with someone whose style has not yet been developed. He has a great deal still to learn. As a rule, within a few lessons, one needs to carry out a chess diagnosis. In my day, this was definitely the case. Nowadays, when I get to the Russian junior championship, it seems to me that things have not changed for the better. Since you are often unclear about the youngster's style or preferences, trying to guess whether he will be comfortable with this or that opening is pointless and just a waste of time.

The opening repertoire of such a young player needs to fulfil the following conditions:

1) It should be solid, with a firm positional basis; active, but not too aggressive.

2) It should not include flawed or unsound openings, which, as the player advances and starts meeting stronger opponents, will sooner or later be more or less refuted. They lead to significantly inferior positions and give the opponent odds at the start of the game. I have in mind such openings as, against 1.e4, Alekhine's Defence, the Scandinavian, Philidor, etc. Although there is a temptation to use such openings to achieve short- term successes against weaker opponents, sooner or later the player ends up 'bankrupt' and has to master a new opening from scratch.

3) The opening should not involve avoiding a whole raft of opening 'tabiyas'. Thus, I would not advise a young player to open 1.♘f3, 2.g3, 3.♗g2, 4.0-0, 5.d3, 6.♘bd2, 7.e4 for his entire life, or 1.♘f3, 2.c4, 3.g3, 4.♗g2, 5.0-0. His strategic thinking will be too limited and will not develop widely enough. His games will lead to an excessively narrow range of positions, in terms of strategic content. If you are going to play closed openings, then it is better to play 1.d4, 2.c4 and preferably 3.♘c3, not 3.♘f3.

4) Most important of all: the repertoire should be such that one does not need to pay any great attention to it more than once or twice a year, other than via analysing the gamesplayed.

Once your students have become masters or grandmasters, their chess style and tastes will be fully formed and then they can completely overhaul their opening repertoires, if they so wish. But whether you teach them to play the Spanish, Sicilian, Caro-Kann or French is of no great significance. The important thing is to establish a sound positional basis. First, the player should learn to play the game in all its many aspects, and approach the opening stage rationally, notprimitively.

In my day, active trainers did not share the secrets of their working methods that much. But very few did anything except concentrate mainly on openings, the connection between opening and middlegame and the analysis of games. One could read a little about this only in a handful of articles in various periodicals, whereas I do not remember any whole books devoted to this, and I have read or glanced at least 95% of the chess literature published in the Soviet Union. Dvoretsky's books only appeared later. Discussions between trainers took place at various competitions and at the sessions of chess schools. I have great memories of discussions I had at junior events with a great trainer, who established his own methodology of training in Russia, Grandmaster Alexander Nikolaevich Panchenko, and the philosopher-researcher in chess from Moldova, Vyacheslav Andreevich Chebanenko. Alas, both are no longer with us. Happy memories! I took part in the work of the chess schools of the sports clubs Burevestnik and Lokomotiv, where I did some interesting work under the supervision of Mark Dvoretsky, but this was more in the nature of occasional episodes, rather than permanent practice.

In 1990, I accepted an offer from the Bulgarian federation and went to work for two years in Sofia. One of the main reasons was my desire to move my family away from Minsk, because in 1986, there occurred the tragedy at Chernobyl, and it was impossible for mere mortals to understand the scale of the risk from radiation. In Bulgaria at this time, they were undergoing their own 'perestroika', and two years later the Soviet Union collapsed. The 1990s were years of rapid economic changes, and chess work ceased to pay, either in Bulgaria or Belarus. In 1994, an IM with a GM norm, I played my last tournament game and decided to stop working in chess. At the suggestion of the Bulgarian Federation chairman Mikhail Iliev, I was trainer and selector of the national team for the 2001 European Championship, and a year later I did the same at the last chess Olympiad won by Russia, but to this day, I have not returned to individual chess training.

In 1992, I wrote a book in which I set out my methods: how to take a player of first-category or candidate master strength and turn him into a master of grandmaster? In the book, I described what steps I took and in what order. Because at that time authors hardly got paid anything in Russia, whilst Western publishers paid only a miserly percentage royalty on sales, I decided to publish the book in English and Spanish, at my own expense. (Pergamon Press for *Endgame Strategy* transferred to the Soviet authors' agency a low sum, out of which I received about £400 per annum – this was a significant amount in the USSR, but ridiculously little in Bulgaria by 1993.) The book was translated into Spanish by candidate master Anatoly Timofeevich Bondar, now alas deceased, and the English translation was by Evgeny Ermenkov. In Spanish the title equates to *The Methodology for Developing a Chess Player*, and in English *The Soviet Chess Conveyor*. Ermenkov convinced me that at the sight of the word 'Methodology', the average English reader would immediately start to doze off, and that it was essential to invent something catchier to the English ear. It seems to me that the essence of the methodology set out in this 20-year old book remains current and relevant today. The concrete details, on the other hand, have been changed by the advent of the computer. In the first part of this new book, I present an extract from *The Soviet Chess Conveyor*, which deals with the construction of an opening repertoire and the study of the classics. The second part of the book is a concentrated version of *Endgame Strategy*, the accent of which, with a revised analysis of the material and many new examples, is on the study of the main principles of playing complicated practical endgames. The third part of the book presents the author's views on the enormous changes which have occurred in the chess world and chess training, over the past decades.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that chess is many-sided and one can invent new lessons on various strategic, tactical, theoretical and practical matters, almost without end. One can take the old Soviet programme, originally created by V. E. Golenishev, as revised and updated by Victor Ivanov and the brilliant journalist Ilya Odessky, and base lessons on that, or on any other book. Definite benefits there will almost certainly be, but serious progress – unlikely.

A good coach should outline a vector of work that includes a number of important components, and ensure that the student does not deviate far from it. And at the moment when these components, each of which implies a large and purposeful amount of work, has been fulfilled, assimilated and united together, there should be a sharp jump in the chess player's quality of play.

Unfortunately, more often we have to observe serious imbalances in the chess education of young talents, but we'll talk about this in more detail in the third part of the book.

Mikhail Shereshevsky December 2017

Part I
The Soviet Chess Conveyor

The book *The Soviet Chess Conveyor* was written in 1992 and did not appear in Russian. In that book, I tried to explain the steps a player should take, so as over the course of 2-3 years to move from being first-category/candidate master to master/grandmaster.

A quarter of a century later, it seems to me that the methodology described has not lost its relevance. Rather the opposite. The old Soviet chess trainer school has disappeared and the new one which has replaced it does not always manage to divine the right direction for its work and to lead its pupils along that path, gradually working to eliminate this or that weakness in the player. There is so much information around these days that one frequently loses sight of the wood, because of the trees.

The fragment of this book offered below has been reworked and revised. In the section on studying the classics, to abbreviate the material, I have included my lecture, delivered at the Dvoretsky-Yusupov school and published in one of the volumes of the series *School of future grandmasters*.

Chapter 1
Constructing an opening repertoire

A player's opening repertoire can be of different kinds, not just in terms of the specific openings included, but also the general approach to the playing of the opening phase. I should like to explain my concept. Let us assume that a player is starting with 1.e4. His opponent replies 1...c5. Now, if White wants to fight for an opening advantage, then he should continue 2.Nf3 and 3.d4. In addition, I think he should be principled, so against the Najdorf he should play 6.Bg5, against the Dragon the Yugoslav Attack, etc. If a player does not do this, his analytical work will lose an element of creativity and he may turn into an experienced player without any reliable opening weapons.

I have a great deal of experience of the old Soviet Union and I well remember the desire of many trainers to achieve immediate successes at the level even of the kindergarten. It was essential to win team championships of the region, city, republic, country, etc. This was the minimum one had to do to ensure oneself a comfortable life, a pay rise, enhanced status, etc., as a trainer.

Quite recently, as well as the World Cadet Championships U-16 and the World Junior U-20, they have started running such championships for all age groups. And if one of your pupils won the USSR Championship for his age group (it doesn't matter whether it is under-10, 12, 14, 16, 18 or 20), then he – and you, his trainer – would get the right to play in the World Championship, and would be guaranteed an interesting and profitable foreign trip. A good result for his pupil in the World Championship would earn the trainer the title of 'Honoured Trainer' and a consequent increase in salary.

Naturally, results took on an enormous importance and it was no good talking about 'long-term' opening preparation. It was essential to pay attention to the results of each game and to win at all costs, and so the student's opening repertoire would tend to be built around superficial, 'trappy' schemes.

At first, this would often be productive, but later on, as the student and his opponents became stronger, such naïve opening schemes would tend to boomerang and the player's repertoire would become a liability. Meanwhile, the trainer would by then be concerned with establishing new talents, with the same sort of 'rapid success' repertoire. The

student, by then typically around candidate master strength, would often be left to struggle with his inadequate opening repertoire by himself. He would only have a chance if he learnt to think critically and to analyse positions objectively. Usually, he would have serious difficulties with abandoning all he had learnt before and starting again from scratch. Only a few players have the ability to deal with this.

Now let us return to the move 1.e4 and the Sicilian Defence. I should emphasise once again that I think playing open and semi-open positions is a principled thing. Why? The answer is very simple and lies in the fundamentals of chess. The move 1.e4 is only the first step towards developing the pieces, only the preliminary to an early conflict in most openings. Suppose White wants to play quietly and slowly in some sort of sharp Sicilian variation. Such an approach can only work against an inexperienced and poorly-prepared opponent. Otherwise, White can gradually lose the initiative. The titanic battles between Kasparov and Karpov are a classic example. The great master of 'slow' Sicilians, Karpov (remember his match against Polugaevsky in 1974, for example) could not win a single game with 1.e4 in the second match, and, starting with the third match, completely gave up opening 1.e4.

On the other hand, players who open 1.e4 and adopt a principled approach of going down the most active main lines (and, in addition to the Sicilian, there is the Spanish, with such sharp lines as the Marshall and Schliemann, the Open Variation, plus such closed defences as the French, Caro-Kann and a wide variety of other lines) can hope to win many games straight out of the opening. Playing against such players is a challenge and is extremely difficult. The problems faced by Black after 1.e4 are much more concrete and require important and responsible decisions at an early stage of the game, compared with closed systems.

In his day, the 11th World Champion, Bobby Fischer, demonstrated the great effectiveness of 1.e4.

But of course, such an approach has its minuses. Such players spent much of their time playing deeply 'in the opponent's territory'. The opponent may have a prepared novelty in some or other sharp variation, and you have to solve the resulting problems over the board, with the clock ticking, and in the great majority of cases, there is no way back. In addition, one must constantly follow with great attention the enormous amount of chess information, as you cannot afford to miss an important novelty in any sharp variation. I will offer a few examples, but the number of examples which could be shown to illustrate this principle is almost infinite.

Sicilian Defence B97
Lembit Oll 2445
Viktor Gavrilenko 2485
Tallinn ch-URS 1983

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 e6 7.f4 Qb6 8.Qd2 Qxb2 9.Rb1 Qa3 10.f5 Nc6 11.fxe6 fxe6 12.Nxc6 bxc6 13.Be2 Be7 14.0-0 0-0 15.Kh1 Ra7 16.Qe3 Rd7 17.e5 dxe5 18.Qxe5

18...Qd6 19.Qa5 Bd8 20.Qa4 Qe5 21.Bxf6 Bxf6 22.Rf3 c5 23.Bc4 Rb7 24.Bb3 c4 25.Bxc4 Rxb1 26.Nxb1 Bb7 27.Rf1 Qe4 28.Rf3 Bd5 29.Na3 Qxf3

White resigned.

I remember this game quite well. I was at the event as the second of Peter Korzubov, and I came into the hall shortly after the start of the round. In the majority of games, the players had made only a handful of moves, but Oll and Gavrikov had been blitzing out moves like bullets from a machine gun, and the demo board operator could barely keep up. No more than five minutes of the round had gone, and they had already played 20 moves, and when Oll began to think, it became clear that he was just lost.

I am not an expert on the line and cannot say which exact game they were following, or where Black improved. As a spectator, I could not help but feel sorry for the Estonian. Effectively, he had lost the game as White in five minutes, whilst on neighbouring boards a real fight was only just beginning, and his opponent had not had to think about one single move over the board.

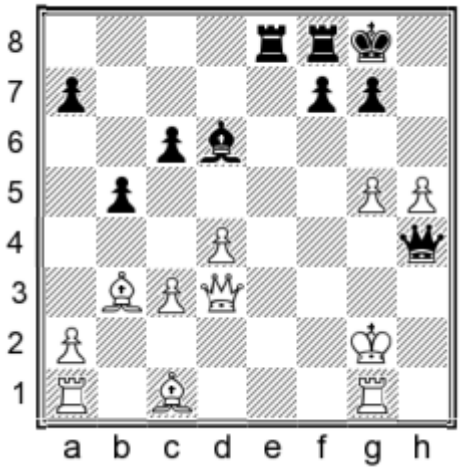
Such an experience could put one off theoretical discussions for a long time to come. However, Oll drew the correct conclusions from this episode.

Now let us look at one of his games from the 1989 USSR Championship in Odessa:

Petroff Defence C42
Andrei Sokolov 2595
Lembit Oll 2550
Odessa ch-URS 1989

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.d4 d5 6.Bd3 Bd6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 c6 9.Nc3 Nxc3 10.bxc3 dxc4 11.Bxc4 Bg4 12.Qd3 Nd7 13.Ng5 Nf6 14.h3 Bh5 15.f4 h6 16.g4 hxg5 17.fxg5 b5 18.Bb3 Nxg4 19.hxg4 Qd7 20.gxh5 Qg4+ 21.Kf2 Rae8 22.Rg1 Qh4+ 23.Kg2

Up to now, the players had been following the game Short-Hübner, Tilburg 1988, which finished on the following move.



Hübner played 23...c5?, and after 24.Rh1! he resigned, in view of 24...Qg4+ 25.Kf1 c4 26.Bd1 Re1+ 27.Kxe1 Qg2 28.Qe2 Qxh1+ 29.Kd2. In addition, *Informant* 46 had contained analysis, showing that White also had a decisive advantage after 23...Re4. Oll played another move:

23...Qh2+!! 24.Kf1 Bf4!

And it turned out that it is White who has to fight for a draw.

25.Qf3!

The only move, since both 25.Bd1 Re1+! and 25.Bxf4 Qxf4+ 26.Kg2 Re3 are losing for White.

25...Re1+ 26.Kxe1 Qxg1+ 27.Ke2 Bxc1

28.Rxc1!

White sacrifices the exchange, so as to force a draw, because after 28.Kd3 Qxg5 Black should win.

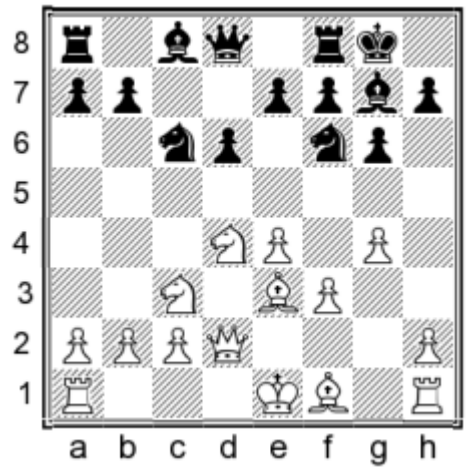
28...Qxc1 29.g6 Re8+ 30.Kd3 Qb1+ 31.Kd2 Qe1+ 32.Kd3 Qb1+ 33.Kd2 Qe1+

And the game ended in a draw. If Black had tried to win with 30...Re7 (instead of 30...Qb1+), then after 31.gxf7+ Kf8 32.Qh3 Qb1+ 33.Bc2 Qxa2 34.Qc8+ Kxf7 35.Qf5+ it all ends in perpetual check.

Sicilian Defence B76
Lev Psakhis 2585
Tibor Tolnai 2480
Dortmund 1989

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 Nc6 8.Qd2 0-0 9.g4

Prior to this, Black had tried 9...h5, 9...e5 and 9...Be6. Psakhis had already played White here against Smirin, Klaipeda 1988, in a game which continued 9...Be6 10.h4 d5 11.0-0-0 Nxd4 12.Bxd4 dxe4 13.g5 Nh5 14.Bxg7 Qxd2+ 15.Rxd2 Kxg7 16.Nxe4 Rad8 with a roughly equal endgame. No doubt Psakhis had an improvement in hand, but he got an unpleasant surprise.



9...Bxg4!

The effect of this novelty was like a Molotov cocktail exploding. The true assessment of this sacrifice was only established a long time in the future, but in this game, White lost practically without putting up any resistance, even though he outrated his opponent by over 100 points and the gulf in understanding and class between them was even greater.

10.fxg4 Nxg4 11.Bg1 e6 12.h4 h5 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.Be2 Bh6 15.Qd3 Ne5 16.Qg3 Rb8 17.b3 Qa5 18.Rd1 Bg7 19.Rxd6 Rbd8 20.Rxd8 Rxd8 21.Kf1 Rd2 22.Rh3 Ng4 23.Qb8+ Kh7 24.b4 Qa3 25.Qxa7 Qc1+ 26.Kg2 Bxc3 27.Rxc3 Rxe2+ 28.Kg3 Qe1+ 29.Kf3 Qf1+ 0-1

Grandmaster Sergey Makarychev, a well-known chess journalist and TV commentator, wrote notes to the 6th game of the 1990 World Championship match between Kasparov and Karpov. He wrote in the journal *64* No 23, 1990: «Watching the battle between the two foremost players of our day, one involuntarily finds oneself wondering about the relationship between deep chess philosophy and simple earthly practice. 'White plays 1.e2-e4 and wins!', wrote the well-known Soviet theoretician Rauzer, and he worked out numerous aggressive systems for White, that are still popular to this day. Grandmaster Sveshnikov considers that only by this move can White hope to secure an opening advantage. Why? How? This is a task which is not easy to formulate or prove. Even so, the majority of players are convinced of the fact that 1.e4 is the strongest opening move. At the same time, this move requires extremely deep preparation and playing at the limit of possibilities over the board. White's only motto should be 'forward and only forward!', because compromises in the opening can lead to misfortune and disappointment.»

The reader has already seen that coping with a novelty in sharp lines is a very serious task. Opening catastrophes can happen even at the very highest level. As an example, we will look at the 8th game of the 2004 World Championship match between Kramnik and Leko. The cost of White's defeat in a theoretical discussion could have been very high and this game almost cost Vladimir Kramnik the world title.

Ruy Lopez C89
Vladimir Kramnik 2770
Peter Leko 2741
Brissago 2004 (m/8)

Firstly, we will give the complete score of the game, in which the players engaged in a theoretical dispute in the sharp Marshall Gambit, and then we will give certain explanations.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Nxe5 Nxe5 11.Rxe5 c6 12.d4 Bd6 13.Re1 Qh4 14.g3 Qh3 15.Re4 g5 16.Qf1

16...Qh5 17.Nd2 Bf5 18.f3 Nf6 19.Re1 Rae8 20.Rxe8 Rxe8 21.a4 Qg6 22.axb5 Bd3 23.Qf2 Re2 24.Qxe2 Bxe2 25.bxa6 Qd3 26.Kf2 Bxf3 27.Nxf3 Ne4+ 28.Ke1 Nxc3 29.bxc3 Qxc3+ 30.Kf2 Qxa1 31.a7 h6 32.h4 g4 0-1

With the move **16.Qf1** White headed into a very rare variation. Given the fact that the Hungarian GM was known to be extremely well-prepared in all the main modern variations, the decision was taken to surprise him with a semi-forgotten sideline. Certainly, Leko thought for a long time and decided

to continue the battle with queens on the board, although 16...Qxf1+ was also perfectly possible.

«When Leko was thinking over his 21st move, I was in the rest room and working out how to play against

21...Qg6

He had 17 minutes left, I'd used up a total of 20 minutes. If I were to think for about 40 minutes after 21...Qg6, it would've given him the chance to calmly calculate everything and given him the confidence that my preparation had ended, and that I was already not so sure about the final assessment of the variation. I understood that if I wanted to win this game, then a move – no matter how indifferent – needed to be made quickly. I was faced with a choice: 22.axb5 with sharp play or 22.Ne4 with a draw. And I took the decision to play for a win, enlisting the support of the computer. I played *va banque*, it's hard to blame anyone here, even myself. I didn't make a mistake, one could say that I placed 'everything on zero'.» (Kramnik in *From London to Elista*)

«White quickly played

23.Qf2?

It was the last moment when he could think and correct the bad analysis of his seconds by playing 23.Qd1!, after which the game ought to have ended in a repetition of moves, since there's still no basis for Black to play for a win: 23...Be2 24.Qe1 (24.Bc2?! Bxd1 25.Bxg6 hxg6 26.bxa6 Bc7 27.a7 Ra8 28.Nc4 Nd7 29.Bxg5 Be2). For example:

A) 24...Qd3 25.bxa6 Bxf3 26.Qf1;

B) 24...axb5? 25.Ne4 (25.Ra7) 25...Nxe4 26.Qxe2 Nf6 27.Qd2 g4 28.Bc2 Qg7 29.Qf2;

C) 24...Bxb5 25.Ne4 Nxe4 26.c4 Nf6 27.Qd1 Bb4 28.Bd2=;

D) 24...Bd3 25.Qd1=.

But, firstly, there was no reason for Vladimir not to trust his loyal helpers, and secondly, he tried to exert psychological pressure on Leko, imbuing him with a feeling of a lack of confidence and not giving him extra time to think.

White's last move was 26.Kf2

But by now he could boldly resign, because all the variations are simple and very short, and it isn't necessary to be a computer to calculate them: 26.a7 Qe3+ 27.Kg2 Bxf3+ 28.Nxf3 Qe2+ 29.Kg1 Ng4 30.a8=Q+ Kg7 31.Be3 Qxe3+ 32.Kg2 Qe2+ 33.Kh3 Nf2+.» (Bareev)

It may appear that I am contradicting myself. On the one hand, I praise a principled and high-quality opening repertoire, and on the other, I criticise young players for opening castastrophes resulting from getting involved in sharp, theoretical battles. But no, I am not trying to dissuade young players from playing sharp opening systems, or engaging in 'reconnaissance warfare'. On the contrary, such an approach cultivates courage and persistence, and is to be respected.

But from today's standpoint, the future belongs to universal players, 'switch-hitters', who can play any type of position well. I just want to remind you that our job as trainers is to provide the player with a quality opening repertoire, which has a relatively wide range of strategic content, which he will not need to return to for a year or so at a time. Whereas playing a repertoire full of sharp lines in open and semi-open positions requires non-stop work, monitoring a huge quantity of information, and takes time away from other topics of study, such as the endgame, the classics and many other areas of chess mastery. With such a repertoire, it is pointless to not follow world tournament practice. The risk of defeat through a simple gap in knowledge increases many times. In short, such an approach to openings is a bit like centralising the king in the endgame: it is very rarely wrong, but is frequently mistimed.

The move 1.d4 is in its essence not as aggressive as the move of the e-pawn. But even so, many of the positions which can arise from the closed openings, especially if White plays in a principled way, contain a great richness of strategic ideas, which is extremely important in the development of a young player's understanding of positional play. A player can more easily choose variations which suit his style – for example, against the King's Indian Defence either the sharp Sämisch Variation, or the quieter and less committal lines with g2-g3, whilst after 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6, he can choose 3.Nc3 and allow the Nimzo-Indian Defence, or go for the quieter lines of the Queen's Indian after 3.Nf3. Both decisions are perfectly rational, whereas in lines such as the Sicilian Dragon, White really has no choice but to attack aggressively.

Thus, we have made our choice – 1.d4. Black has a choice of two opening strategies, which can be broadly described as 'dark squares' (Black gives up the centre with lines such as 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7

or 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 and then attacks the centre on the dark squares) or 'light squares'. The Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Indian belong to the latter category. Various lines of the Queen's Gambit form the majority of the closed openings. The Dutch and Grünfeld defences are in a special category.

Personally, I divide the closed systems into two groups – 'quality' openings and dubious ones. In my opinion, the first group consists of the Nimzo-Indian and Queen's Indian, other lines arising after 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3, various lines of the Queen's Gambit and the Slav Defence. Black fights desperately for control of the central squares in all these openings and operates with a large reserve of solidity. It is impossible to imagine White inventing some headspinning novelty in the Lasker Variation of the QGD or the Nimzo-Indian, which would completely refute the openings. Naturally, in many variations, there are constant improvements and small precisions. Sometimes these even succeed in making the black position look somewhat unattractive for a time, but in all cases, Black should have enough solidity in reserve to be able to find some sort of solid, if slightly passive sub-variation to fall back on, while the main line is 'in for repairs'.

We see a different picture in the Grünfeld, King's Indian and Modern Benoni. There, Black fights actively for the initiative, agreeing in the process to serious positional concessions in the centre. The white player can easily choose a line which suits his style. He can choose very sharp variations, where everything hangs by a thread and Black needs extensive knowledge of theory, or he can play quiet positional schemes, which pose Black quite deep problems, albeit less concrete ones. It is clear that the black player needs to follow the theoretical developments carefully, since a single new move can turn everything upside down and lead to a crush over the board.

The Queen's Gambit, on the other hand, insures you against such a range of nasty surprises, since any new moves can usually be handled relatively easily, just by applying common sense.

When you play aggressive openings, the real danger lies in the absence of 'fall-back variations'. If a sharp line is temporarily refuted, you simply have to stop playing the opening. For example, it is possible in principle to play openings like the Modern Benoni or the Grünfeld, but I do not regard them as very suitable to the repertoire of a relative beginner, because at any moment, one must be ready to face some very hard-to-solve problems in the most different variations.

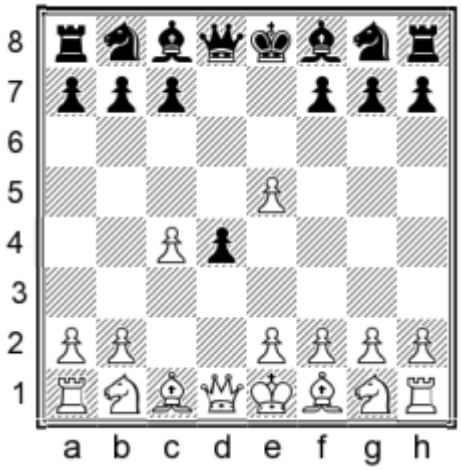
Finally, there are some openings which do not even pretend to have any mark of quality, for example things like the Albin Countergambit, Budapest Gambit, Chigorin Defence, 1.d4 d5 2.c4 Bf5, and various others. I usually begin the opening preparation of young players with these openings, because they can be dealt with satisfactorily in a relatively short time. In this book, I do not intend to

present a complete repertoire, but will try to present the majority of the key moments in my work.

Now let us discuss a little the question of 'junk' openings. They cannot form the main base of a player's repertoire and can only be played occasionally, relying on surprise effect. Consequently, I do not wish to waste a lot of time and effort refuting them. I think it is rather more important to make the surprise effect work for yourself and to choose a line where you feel comfortable.

Albin Countergambit

Let us begin with the Albin. After the moves **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5?! 3.dxe5 d4**



theory considers the best move to be 4.Nf3 and promises White the advantage, e.g. 4...Nc6 5.a3 (5.Nbd2) 5...Bg4 6.b4 Qe7 7.Qa4 0-0-0 8.Bf4 Bxf3 9.gxf3 Kb8 10.Nd2 Nxe5 11.Qb3 Ng6 12.Bg3 f5 13.f4. Black's efforts in this case will be directed to finding new ideas in a line such as this. Therefore, it is a rather more sensible idea in practice to devote one's attention to another variation, maybe not the very best, but not so well-known and familiar to the opponent. It is important to remember that good players do not play such openings.

I trained the Belarusian junior team at the All-Union Spartakiad in 1970. One of the girls on our team, G.Gul, played 4.e3? and lost after 4...Bb4+ 5.Bd2 dxe3 etc. After this bitter experience, she played

4.a3!?

in the next game. Looking through the games of the tournament, I paid attention to this move and realised that it deserves serious attention. For the moment, White defers the development of his kingside and prevents ...Bb4 and ...Bg4, whilst establishing the threat of e2-e3. It seems that there is nothing better than

4...Nc6

Since after 4...c5 there follows 5.e4. Now White plays

5.e3

The most natural reply is

5...dxe3

Because after 5...a5 White will play 6.Nf3 Bc5 7.exd4 Nxd4 8.Be3 Bg4 9.Be2 with advantage.

6.Qxd8+ Kxd8

Otherwise Black remains a pawn down.

7.Bxe3 Nxe5

White has achieved a definite success.

Usually in the Albin, Black strives for complications with a chance to attack, whereas here he has to seek equality in a quiet position with queens off. The position is symmetrical, but White is ahead in development and must decide how to exploit this to seize the initiative.

8.Nf3!

Black's only active piece is the Ne5 and so it must be exchanged off. And this needs to be done at once, since after 8.Nc3 Black plays 8...Be6, whilst on 8.Nd2 he replies 8...Bf5 with counterplay thanks to the centralised knight.

8...Nxf3+ 9.gxf3

Ever since the days of Steinitz, players have counted tempi, so let us do it here. If we look at this position from such a viewpoint, we see that Black had made the dubious move ...Kd8, whilst White has made three moves with pawns and a useful developing move with the bishop.

I am sure the reader can easily see that after 10.Nc3, 11.0-0-0 and 12.Ne4 Black faces quite a difficult fight for a draw. [*Translator's Note:* 9...c6 10.Nc3 Nf6 11.0-0-0+ Kc7? 12.Bf4+ Kb6 13.c5+!*, winning, is an amusing sequence, highly suitable for online blitz!*]

Undoubtedly, after a thorough analysis, Black can gradually neutralise the white initiative. But do not forget that we are not dealing with a world championship candidate here, but just a young player. We do not expect him to crush his opponents out of the opening. What we want is that he will obtain a complicated position with a sound positional basis, and hope that he will win as a result of good play in the middlegame and endgame. We only want to return rarely to opening preparation, and so I very much recommend this approach.

Now let us continue our look at various dubious openings.

Chigorin Defence

I would like to play extremely simply against this opening.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nc6?!

Here it is worth giving very serious attention to

3.e3!?

If Black avoids the central advance 3...e5, the Nc6 looks fairly stupid.

3...e5 4.dxe5

Now opening encyclopedias give the line 4...d4! 5.exd4 Qxd4 6.Qxd4 Nxd4 7.Bd3 Bg4! 8.f3 Be6 9.Be3 0-0-0 with advantage to Black, Réti-Bogoljubow, Kiel 1921.

However, White can play 5.a3!, and we reach the position we have just analysed above in the Albin Countergambit.

We also need to examine

4...dxc4?! 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8

Here White can choose between 6.Nf3 and 6.f4. The move 6.Nf3 looks more solid, since after 6...Nb4 7.Kd2! the move 7...Bf5 does not work because of 8.Nd4. Black can play 6...Bg4 7.Bxc4 Bxf3 8.gxf3 Nxe5 9.Be2, but White has an advantage in the endgame, thanks to the bishop pair.

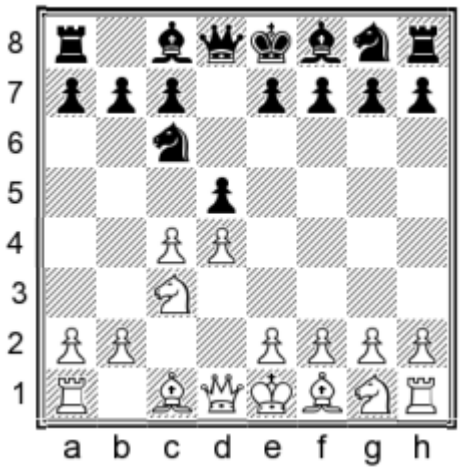
The move 6.f4 looks riskier, but if White manages to hang onto his doubled central pawns without too great a lag in development, then he is guaranteed a large opening advantage. It is unfavourable for Black to play the direct 6...Nb4 7.Kd2! Bf5 8.Nf3! Nc2 because of 9.Nd4, whilst on 6...Be6 there is 7.Na3!. The computer promises White bright prospects here.

As we see, with the aid of the move 3.e3!? White directs play into relatively unknown, but sensible variations, where the surprise effect is in his own favour. Such an approach is a very rational one from the viewpoint of the practical player. This move is in full accordance with common sense and meets the demands of the position. You can be absolutely sure that, if your first experience with the move turns out to be unfortunate, it will not be the opening which is to blame. On the other hand, you can practically ignore the whole of tournament practice in this opening.

Finally, if your opponent finds a path to secure equality, you can then refrain from 3.e3 and find

something else. For example, playing in the Belarusian women's championship in 1990, Elena Zayats expected her opponent to play the Chigorin. But she did not want to play the endgame, and she turned for advice to one of the world's strongest GMs, Boris Gelfand. He recommended the following variation:

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nc6 3.Nc3



3...Nf6 4.Nf3 Bg4 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 e5 8.d5 Nb8 9.Qa4+ Nd7 10.Nxe5 Qf6 11.Be2! with a decisive advantage.

Black avoided this and instead played

3...e5?

The game continued:

4.cxd5 Nxd4 5.e3 Nf5 6.Nf3 Bd6 7.Bb5+ Bd7 8.Qa4 Nfe7 9.e4

White obtained a clear advantage, which she realised easily.

Gelfand is firmly in the world elite. So as to maintain his place, he needs excellent opening preparation against any system and any potential surprise – that is part of being a world-class player. But we are dealing with students who are a long way from that level.

I should like to make a few observations from the viewpoint of the present day, as *The Soviet Chess Conveyor* was written as long ago as 1992, in the pre-computer era.

Today every player uses computers and it is very difficult to surprise a player in the opening. Consequently, many avoid the main lines in favour of less explored variations. Publishers have started putting out books and monographs devoted to such lines. I decided to take a look at some, and opened *The Chigorin According to Morozevich* (authors A.Morozevich and V.Barsky) and *The Liberated Bishop Defence* by Alexey Bezgodov.

Alexander Morozevich is a splendid Russian GM, who for many years was part of the world elite. Victories over the likes of Kramnik, Anand and other 'gods' of the chess firmament have been achieved in a sharp, strikingly original style, and he has an image as one of the most interesting and most talented players in the world.

He is also one of the most unpredictable, non-routine, although also, unfortunately, unstable players in the world. He handles every position in his own way, always finding hidden dynamic resources. His pieces vibrate with tension and frequently the opponent proves unable to withstand it.

GM Vladimir Malaniuk, who was prevented from travelling abroad during Soviet times, was similar, though somewhat more correct, whilst nowadays, Hikaru Nakamura reminds one of Morozevich.

Mind you, all such comparisons are only approximate, because Morozevich is unique. As the well-known TV warning goes, 'Do not try this at home!'.

In the book *The Chigorin According to Morozevich* the move

3.e3

and transposition into the Albin by means of

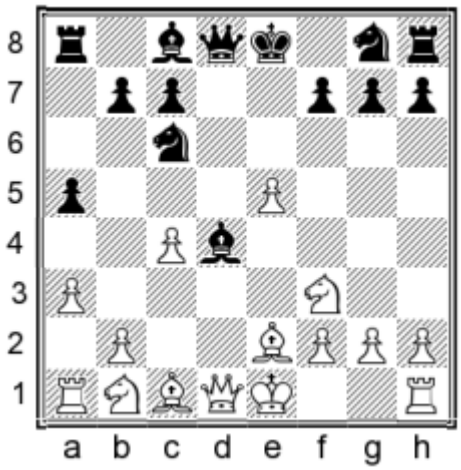
3...e5 4.dxe5 d4 5.a3!?

is covered by just the one game, **Bareev-Morozevich**, Elista 1997, where after

5...a5 6.Nf3

(the computer likes 6.f4!?, leading to a complicated battle)

6...Bc5 7.exd4 Bxd4 8.Be2

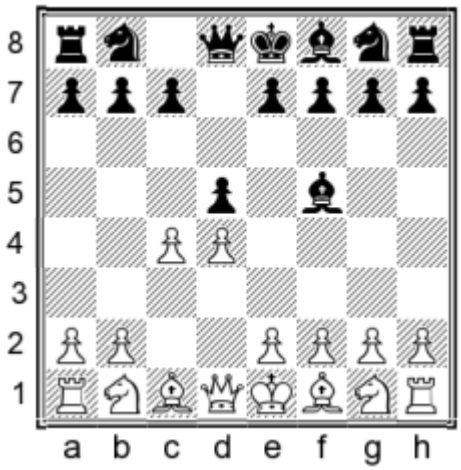


White obtained slightly the better chances and eventually won.

Morozevich's summary of this system reads as follows: 'In the variation 1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nc6 3.e3 e5 4.dxe5 d4, White has a certain initiative. Accurate play by Black gradually equalises the chances, but often he has to go into a slightly inferior endgame.' Absolutely the same conclusion, but in different words, as in my book.

I am not entirely sure how to describe the following opening:

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Bf5?!



In the 1970s and 80s, this was a favourite of Malaniuk, at that time one of the strongest IMs in the USSR. I had to prepare seriously for our meeting at the Armed Forces championship in Odessa in 1981, not having any opening books available. After

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Bf5?!

I settled on

3.cxd5

Black should reply

3...Bxb1

and now

4.Qa4+

Obviously, after 4...Qd7 or 4...Nd7 White is significantly better, due to his bishop pair and the centre, so that only leaves

4...c6! 5.Rxb1

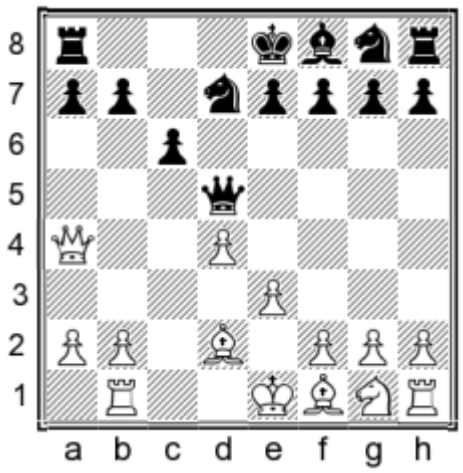
5.dxc6? is bad because of 5...Nxc6 6.Rxb1 e5!.

5...Qxd5

Black threatens ...Nb8-d7-b6, and White will have problems defending the a2-pawn. After the banal 6.Nf3?! Nd7 7.e3 Nb6 8.Qb3 Qxb3 9.axb3 Black is in no way worse.

White instead played

6.e3 Nd7 7.Bd2!



7...Nb6 8.Qa5

and after

8...Nf6 9.Qxd5 cxd5

won the endgame.

A year later, in the Armed Forces championship at Sevastopol (1982), Lputian beat Malaniuk in the same line. Malaniuk soon became a GM and joined the Soviet national team, but as for the strange move 2...Bf5, he simply gave it up!

More than thirty years later, Alexey Bezgodov gave the opening the nice name *The Liberated Bishop Defence* and published a book on it.

I like Bezgodov's works. I especially liked an article in which he brought the chess pieces to life and explained their hopes and fears. In the above book, the author, a Buddhist by religion, effectively tried to make the bishop come alive. The author is unquestionably a talented player and publicist, with whom it would be very interesting to discuss his views on chess. Unfortunately, the move-order chosen by me against Malaniuk is not covered in Bezgodov's book, so there is no subject for discussion.

In another, similar line, which is dealt with in the book, White plays b2-b4, instead of bringing his bishop to d2, and that is met by the sharp counterblow ...a7-a5 with unclear play. However, in the position after **1.d4 d5 2.c4 Bf5 3.cxd5 Bxb1 4.Qa4+ c6 5.Rxb1 Qxd5 6.e3 Nd7 7.Bd2!** the positional minuses of the move **7...a5?!** (in the diagram on the left) are so obvious that I do not see any sense in discussing that position.

Now let us turn our attention to another opening.

Budapest Gambit

After the moves **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4**

I advise my pupils to play **4.e3 Nxe5 5.Nh3!?**.

What is this strange move of the knight to h3 all about? I perfectly well understand that, if White wants to refute the gambit, he needs to look at moves such 4.Nf3 or 4.Bf4. One needs to consider the classics.

Budapest Gambit A52
Alexander Alekhine
Abram Rabinovich
Baden-Baden 1925 (13)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.e4!

'This move is quite justifiably considered the best reply to the Budapest Gambit. White returns the pawn, so as to obtain in reply the square d5. However, in the course of the next few moves, White needs to play very accurately, because otherwise his pawn centre can become the object of a successful black attack.' (Alekhine)

4...Nxe5 5.f4

5...Ng6

Theory considers the other retreat 5...Nec6 to be best. I suggest the reader then examine the following miniature: 5...Nec6 6.Be3 Bb4+ 7.Nc3 Qe7 8.Bd3 f5 9.Qh5+! g6 10.Qf3 Bxc3+ 11.bxc3 fxe4? 12.Bxe4 0-0 13.Bd5+ Kh8 14.Nh3 d6 15.0-0 Bxh3 16.Qxh3 Qd7 17.f5! gxf5 18.Rab1! f4 19.Bxf4 Qxh3 20.Be5+!, and Black resigned, Alekhine-Seitz, Hastings 1925.

6.Nf3! Bc5 7.f5 Nh4? 8.Ng5 Qe7 9.Qg4 f6 10.Qh5+! g6 11.Qxh4 fxg5 12.Bxg5 Qf7 13.Be2 0-0 14.Rf1 Nc6 15.Nc3 Nd4 16.fxg6 Qxg6 17.Rxf8+ Bxf8 18.Bh5 Qb6 19.0-0-0 Bg7 20.Rf1 Ne6 21.Bf7+ Kh8 22.Bxe6 Qxe6 23.Bf6! 1-0

Undoubtedly, Alekhine was stronger than his opponents and his central strategy deserves study. But I prefer to follow my usual rule in dealing with dubious openings: avoid the main lines in favour of less explored, but positionally sound variations.

I cannot help drawing a comparison with life in the USSR. I worked as a trainer for many years and had many disputes, some of which developed into real conflicts. I personally know many players and trainers who would pursue a dispute even to the

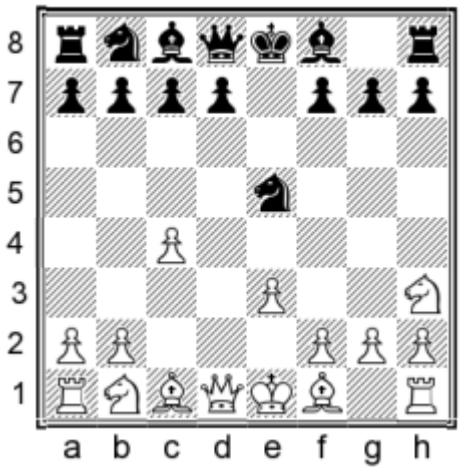
point of real hatred, over something quite trivial. I have a great deal of experience of crude and incorrect behaviour towards me and my pupils, but even so, I continued to work in the way I believed was correct and did not waste nerves and energy on the unpleasantness. I avoided pointless arguments and simply ignored them.

Of course, you could spend loads of time looking up recent magazines, analysing lines and finding a clear way to establish a large advantage against the Albin or Budapest. But is it really worth it, when these openings only arise once in every 50 or so games – if that – and when we have available a sound and solid system, which does not require much time or energy? One needs to teach young players to win games by good play in the game as a whole, and not just to study super-complicated openings. And even within openings, surely it makes much more sense to spend time studying the real problems which arise for White in mainstream openings like the Nimzo-Indian, King's Indian or Grünfeld, and against the minor lines such as the Chigorin or Albin simply to avoid theoretical disputes?

Let us return to

5.Nh3

I was first shown this move by one of the world's strongest postal chess players, the Latvian Donatas Lapienis. We often used to meet as junior trainers at various events and often analysed openings together.



White's last move is very logical. The other knight will go to c3, and the h3-knight to f4, with full control of the important d5-square. If Black develops his QN to c6, then one of the white knights will be extremely powerful on d5. Therefore Black needs to control d5 with a pawn, and then White will have excellent chances of play against the weak d6-pawn. I understand that Black can obtain reasonable chances if he plays accurately, but even so, this approach gives White excellent practical chances.

I will illustrate White's ideas with three games by my pupil Alexander Zazhogin, played in children's events. All three games are similar, but very instructive. Black develops his pieces rather unthinkingly, without a clear plan, and falls into a poor position. On the other hand, White develops according to a predetermined plan, seizes the initiative and then despatches his opponent with an enterprising and effective attack.

Budapest Gambit A52
Alexander Zazhogin
Filimonov
Grodno 1989

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.e3 Nxe5 5.Nh3 d6 6.Nf4 Nbc6?! 7.Be2 Be7?!

It looks more promising to fianchetto this bishop.

8.0-0 0-0 9.Nc3 Bf5 10.Nfd5 a5?

Black has made several natural but stereotyped moves, and as a result obtains a very bad position.

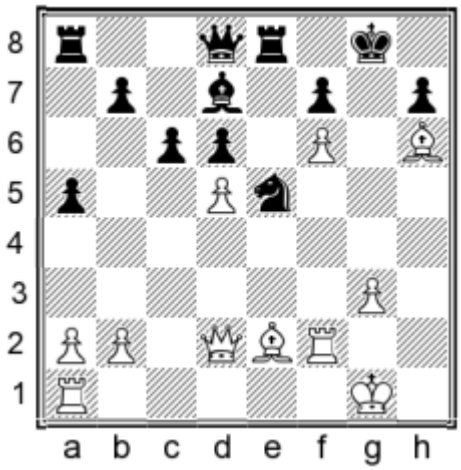
11.e4! Bd7 12.f4 Ng6 13.f5 Nge5 14.f6! Bxf6 15.Nxf6+ gxf6 16.Bh6 Re8 17.Nd5 Re6 18.h4

Black threatened 18...f5, but now there follows 19.Bg5.

18...Ne7 19.Qd2!

White plays for mate, not exchanging pieces for the sake of the trifling f6-pawn.

19...Nxd5 20.cxd5 Re8 21.Rf2! f5 22.exf5 Qxh4 23.g3! Qd8 24.f6 c6



25.Bf8! 1-0

Budapest Gambit A52
Alexander Zazhogin
Yanukovich
Vitebsk 1990

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.e3 Nxe5 5.Nh3 Nbc6?! 6.Nf4 Bb4+

The exchange of dark-squared bishops favours White. It made sense to play 6...g6.

7.Bd2 Bxd2+ 8.Qxd2 d6 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Be2 Re8 11.0-0 Ng6 12.Nfd5 Bf5?! 13.f4!

So far Black has not made any really bad mistakes, but he has played without a plan. As a consequence, White's position is rather better.

13...Qd7 14.Rae1 Nce7 15.e4!

An energetic move.

15...Nxd5 16.cxd5 Bg4?

Black commits a fatal mistake, but even after 16...Bxe4 17.Bb5 c6 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.Nxe4 cxb5 20.f5 White completely dominates, despite material equality. Now, however, the black bishop is trapped and the game nears its end.

17.Bb5 c6 18.Ba4 Bh5 19.f5 Ne5 20.Qg5 g6 21.h3 Qc7 22.g4 Bxg4 23.hxg4 h6 24.Qxh6 Nxg4 25.Qh3 Qb6+ 26.Kg2 Kg7 27.fxg6 fxg6 28.Qxg4 1-0

Budapest Gambit A52
Alexander Zazhogin
Normunds Miezis
Vilnius 1990

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.e3 Nxe5 5.Nh3 Ng6 6.g3 Nc6?! 7.f4!

Black has prevented the enemy knight coming to f4, but the Ng6 is poorly placed. White plays to restrict this knight, at the same time increasing his space advantage.

7...Bb4+?!

Rather more logical is 7...Bc5, attacking the weak pawn on e3.

8.Bd2 Qe7?

Here the queen is an ideal target for White's knight, which aims for d5.

9.Qe2 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2 0-0 11.Nc3

Once again, White's advantage is not in doubt.

11...Re8 12.Nd5 Qd6?

Retreating to d8 was better than this strange move.

13.Bg2 Nd8 14.c5!

After this nice tactical blow, the game is practically decided. The future Latvian GM could already have resigned.

14...Qc6 15.Ne7+ Nxe7 16.Bxc6 dxc6 17.Nf2 Ne6 18.0-0 Nxc5 19.e4 Ng6 20.Qc2 Ne6 21.Rad1 Nef8 22.Rd2 Ne7 23.Rfd1 b6 24.Rd8 Bb7 25.Rxe8 Rxe8 26.b4 Ne6 27.f5 Ng5 28.Qb3 c5 29.bxc5 Nxf5 30.Qa4 Kf8 31.c6 Nf3+ 32.Kg2 Bxc6 33.Qxc6 N3d4 34.Rxd4 Nxd4 35.Qxc7 Nb5 36.Qc6 1-0

Of course, Black's play in these examples was far from ideal, but world-class players rarely, if ever, play these openings, and starting with such a system as White is perfectly normal.

Incidentally, if you compare Alekhine's games and Zazhogin's (the sublime to the ridiculous...) without knowing who is who, it would not be easy to tell who was the World Champion and who the unknown candidate master, as the level of resistance was about the same.

I admit that I have never opened ECO to try to find how to obtain an advantage, by following the author's recommendation. Ever since I was a child, I have been used to using such books as a way merely of checking my own analysis of openings, checking practically every move in the main variations. ECO consists largely of analyses of games, arranged such as to make it useful as a reference book.

Every player should have his own opening theory, including new and old (but updated!) schemes, variations, ideas and moves. I try to provide students with an opening repertoire that will help them to think strategically, propel them towards a permanent improvement in strategic understanding and enable them to pose the opponent quite difficult problems. If possible, our repertoire should be slightly to the side of the main lines of the day, so as to reduce the quantity of information we must study.

Correspondingly, when we decide to widen our repertoire by including a new variation, we should ask ourself the following questions:

Is this the right time to add this variation, as after all everybody is playing it just now?

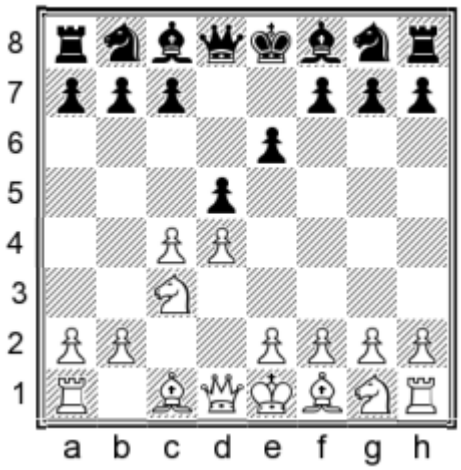
Shouldn't I instead direct my attention to some less popular variation, although positionally sensible, but less well-known?

Now we turn our attention to openings of quality. It is not easy for White to pretend to a serious opening advantage in these systems, and therefore my work with young players in these openings is devoted in the first instance to explaining the main strategic ideas and choosing the precise variations which lead to complicated positions, rich in active possibilities.

Queen's Gambit

We begin with the QGD:

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3



A subtlety: here Black has a choice between 3...Nf6 and 3...Be7. In my great experience, I know that most young players do not understand the difference between the two moves and have only a hazy idea about the minority attack, if they have any idea at all. Consequently, it is important to draw attention to the key moments on the battle, in the first place, the importance of the b1-h7 diagonal in the Carlsbad (Exchange) variation.

There could follow

3...Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5

and Black cannot play 5...Bf5 because of 6.Bxf6. He needs to choose between 5...Be7 and 5...c6.

5...Be7 6.e3

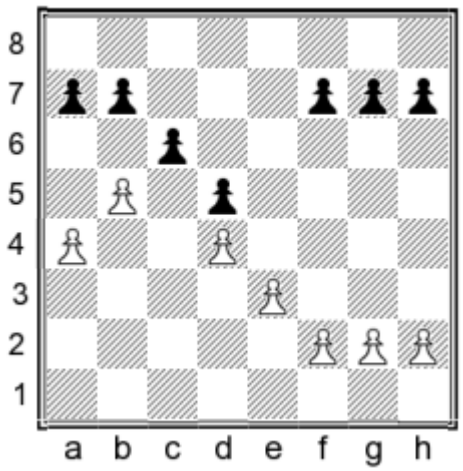
Now it becomes clear that 6...Bf5 is again impossible because of 7.Bxf6 Bxf6 8.Qb3, and Black loses a pawn. So, Black must play

6...c6 7.Qc2!

Now White seizes this vital diagonal. Note that the queen move is more precise than 7.Bd3, since then Black has the resource 7...Ne4!, whereas after 7.Qc2 the move 7...Ne4? is a blunder because of 8.Bxe7 Qxe7 9.Nxd5.

Let us assume that Black plays instead 5...c6, and White 6.e3. Now 6...Bf5 is possible, although after 7.Qf3! Black cannot prevent the doubling of his f-pawns, since 7...g6 fails to 8.g4!.

Let me try to explain why the b1-h7 diagonal is so important. The minority attack is one possible plan for White. He has two pawns against three on the queenside. Imagine that the pawn gets to b5:



White pawn gets to b5

Black cannot avoid ending up with weaknesses in his pawn structure on c6 or d5. Now imagine that after

5...Be7 6.e3 c6

White plays not 7.Qc2!, but

7.Nf3?!

Black should immediately seize the chance and play 7...Bf5!. White needs the square b1 for his rook, so as to carry out the minority attack, so he has to exchange light-squared bishops. The variation continues:

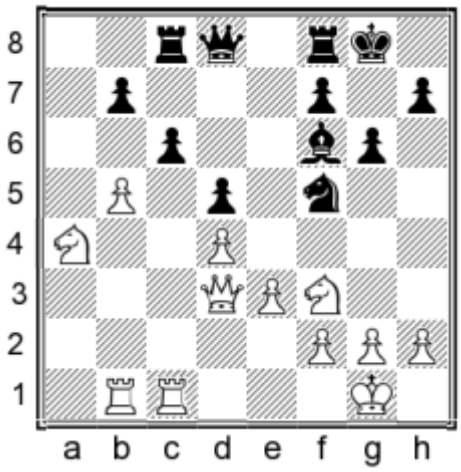
7...Bf5 8.Bd3 Bxd3 9.Qxd3 Nbd7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Rab1 a5 12.a3 Re8 13.b4

Here Black can play 13...Ne4 with a roughly equal position, but with the light-squared bishops

exchanged, a good way to meet the minority attack is the direct **13...b5!?**, followed by manoeuvring the knight to c4. It is important to remember that, with light-squared bishops on the board, the plan with ...b7-b5 has serious drawbacks from a positional viewpoint. The reader will also find it useful to know that sometimes Black fights for the key diagonal with the manoeuvre ...Nd7-f8-e6, ...g7-g6, ...Ne6-g7 and ...Bf5, although White can usually use the time involved to 'worry' the c6-pawn, as in the following game.

Queen's Gambit D36
Igor Novikov 2490
Andrey Kharitonov 2460
Sevastopol 1986

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 c6 7.Bd3 Nbd7 8.Qc2 Nf8 9.Nf3 Ne6 10.Bh4 g6 11.0-0 0-0 12.Rab1 Ng7 13.b4 a6 14.a4 Bf5 15.b5 axb5 16.axb5 Rc8 17.Rfc1 Bxd3 18.Qxd3 Nf5 19.Bxf6 Bxf6 20.Na4



20...Re8

Grandmaster Kharitonov (then still an IM) annotated the game in volume 42 of *Informant*, and pointed out that instead of 20...Re8?! it was better to play 20...Qd6 with the idea of 21...Rc7, and then ...Rfc8 is necessary, although White would still be better here too.

Overall, such positions have very few prospects for Black from the viewpoint of playing for a win. White can gradually torment the c6-pawn, with very little risk of losing.

I have never looked at the statistics, but I would imagine that about 35-40% of such positions end in a win for White and the rest in a draw. Black has lost a lot of time exchanging light-squared bishops.

21.bxc6 bxc6 22.Rb6 Ne7 23.Rcb1 Qd6 24.Qb3 Ra8 25.Rb7 Nf5 26.Nc5 Re7

White has managed to occupy the b-file and the c5-outpost. Black must agree to simplifications, because of the threat 27.Rd7.

27.Rb8+! Rxb8 28.Qxb8+ Qxb8 29.Rxb8+ Kg7 30.g4! Nh4 31.Nxh4 Bxh4 32.Rc8

White's strategy has been crowned with success: the c6-pawn will fall. Black's only chance is to attack the f2-pawn.

32...Ra7 33.Rxc6 Ra2 34.Nd3 Rd2 35.Rc3 f5!? 36.gxf5 gxf5 37.Kf1 f4!?

Black makes heroic efforts to drum up counterplay. White threatened to evict the rook from d2 and occupy the second rank with his rook, after which the realisation of his extra pawn would be just a matter of time.

38.Nxf4?

Igor Novikov is enticed by the win of a second pawn, whilst retaining a compact pawn structure, but now Black sharply activates his pieces. The correct decision was 38.exf4!, and after 38...Kf6 39.Kg2 Kf5 40.Kf3 White should win. It is highly likely that the quality of play and the result was influenced by time-trouble.

38...Rxf2+ 39.Kg1 Rd2 40.Nxd5 Kg6!

Black is two pawns down, but he has nothing more to fear.

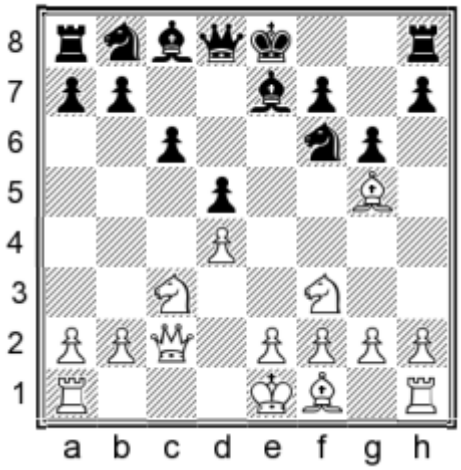
41.Rc8 Kf5 42.Rf8+ Kg4 43.Rf4+ Kh3 44.Rf3+ Kg4 45.Rf1 Re2! 46.Nf4 Rxe3 47.Ng2 Re4

48.Nxh4 Kxh4 49.Rd1 Kg5 50.Kf2 Kf6 51.Rd3 Ke6 52.Re3 Kd5 ½-½

Now let us turn our attention to the move **3...Be7**.

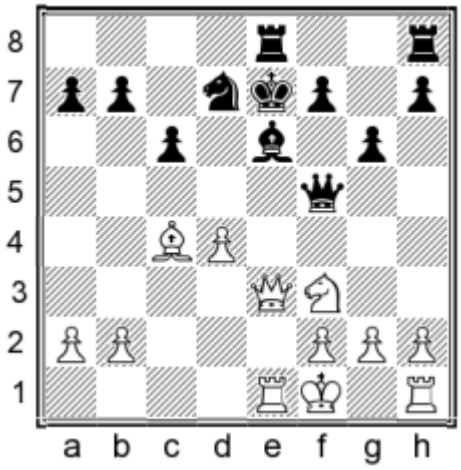
I analysed its subtleties a long time ago, after the Botvinnik-Petrosian match in 1963. The idea of this modest-looking move is that Black is able to fight for the b1-h7 diagonal if White heads into a Carlsbad structure. For example:

3...Be7 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 c6 7.Qc2 g6!?



White has tried to get an advantage with **8.e4 dxe4 9.Bxf6 Bxf6 10.Qxe4+**, as Eingorn played against Karpov at the USSR Championship, 1988. After 10...Be6 11.Bc4 Qe7 12.Bxe6 Qxe6 13.Qxe6 fxe6 14.0-0-0 Na6 15.Rhe1 Nc7 16.Ne4 Ke7 17.Rd3 White had a small advantage in the endgame, but the game ended in a draw.

Later in the same championship, Karpov used the same idea as White against Yusupov. Black chose a double-edged continuation: 8...Nxe4 9.Bxe7 Kxe7 (9...Qxe7 10.Nxd5!) 10.Nxe4 dxe4 11.Qxe4+ Be6. Here Karpov underlined the drawbacks of the black set-up by 12.Bc4 Qa5+ 13.Kf1!, and after 13...Qf5 14.Qe3 Nd7 15.Re1 Rae8



analysis diagram

the unexpected pawn sacrifice 16.d5!! cxd5 17.Bb5! signalled the start of an attack on the king, which brought White a magnificent victory.

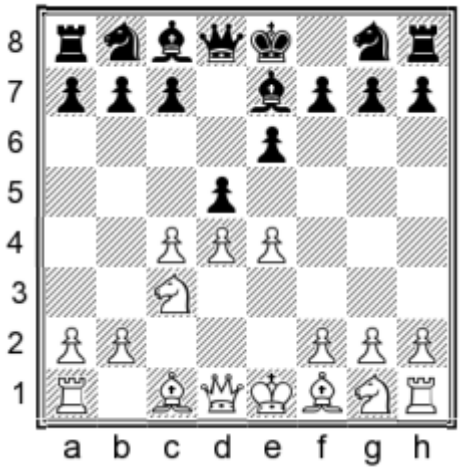
Even so, Black gradually found a way to neutralise the white initiative. The game **Ruban-Dreev,** Tbilisi 1989, continued thus: **8.e4 dxe4 9.Bxf6 Bxf6 10.Qxe4+**

10...Qe7 11.Bc4 0-0 12.0-0 Qb4! 13.Bb3 Bf5 14.Qf4 Nd7 15.Rfe1 a5 16.g4 Be6 17.Bxe6 (Black has solved all his opening problems and does not fear the blow 17.Rxe6, since after 17...fxe6 18.Bxe6+ Kh8 19.Bxd7 Qxb2 20.Qc1 Qb4 he has strong counterplay) **17...fxe6 18.Qe3 Rae8 19.Ne4 Bg7 20.Rad1 Nb6!** Black had seized the initiative and eventually won.

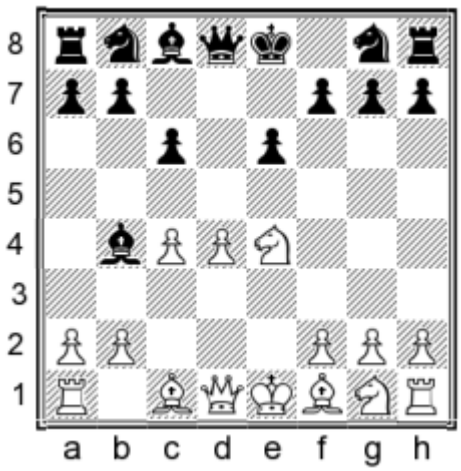
Theoretical interest in the variation beginning with **7.Qc2** started to wane. White did win after a sharp battle in the game Karpov-Yusupov, Rotterdam 1989: 1.c4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Be7 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 c6 7.Qc2 Na6!? 8.e3 (on 8.a3 there follows 8...g6) 8...Nb4 9.Qd1 Bf5 10.Rc1 a5 11.Be2 0-0 12.0-0 Nd7 13.Bxe7 Qxe7 14.Qb3 Rfb8 15.Na4 Na6 16.Bxa6 Rxa6 17.Nc5 Rb6 18.Qc3 Rb5 19.Rfe1 h6 20.b3 Be4 21.Nd2 Bg6 22.Nf1

22...Nxc5 23.dxc5 b6 24.cxb6 R8xb6 25.Nd2 Qa3 26.Nf3 c5 27.Qd2 Be4 28.Ne5 Re6 (28...c4!?) 29.Nd3 g5?! (too optimistic a move, weakening a roughly equal position) 29...Bxd3 30.Qxd3 c4 does not leave White any real chance of success.

I think it is worth mentioning that, after **3...Be7,** the central blow **4.e4** does not promise White anything.



Compare this position with that arising in the Slav Gambit after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c6 4.e4 dxe4 5.Nxe4 Bb4+.



Here White can sacrifice a pawn with 6.Bd2 Qxd4 7.Bxb4 Qxe4+ 8.Be2, since Black's position has been weakened by the move ...c7-c6. In the QGD, however, after 4...dxe4 5.Nxe4 Bb4+ White needs to play 6.Nc3, and then Black obtains sufficient counterplay by means of 6...c5.

Let us return to the move **3...Nf6**. After **4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 c6 7.Qc2** the b1-h7 diagonal is in White's hands. He can choose between the minority attack and other ideas. The minority attack is an excellent plan, but Black has ways to defend.

I cannot help remembering an ironic comment by master Oleg Dementiev, trainer of Arshak Petrosian: 'If you spend your best years attacking the pawn on c6, what on earth are you going to do when you get old and past it?' I share the view that in the Carlsbad structure, young players should employ a plan that involves a wider strategic arsenal than the minority attack.

A great impression was made on me by the following game:

Queen's Gambit D36
Mikhail Botvinnik
Paul Keres
Moscow ch-URS 1952

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 0-0 7.Bd3 Nbd7 8.Qc2 Re8 9.Nge2 Nf8 10.0-0 c6 11.Rab1

White has developed his king's knight to e2, but now indicates his intention to play a minority attack. The knight usually goes to f3 in that plan.

11...Bd6?

Keres uses one of the best methods of opposing the minority attack, but does not pay sufficient attention to the difference resulting from the white knight's position on e2. Certainly, with the knight on f3,

Black's plan consists of ...Be7-d6, ...Nf8-g6, ...h7-h6, the exchange on f6 – Bg5xf6 Qd8xf6, and then ...Bc8-g4 and ...Ng6-h4, which frequently leads to a strong attack on the kingside. Here, however, the white knight is on e2 and this allows White to refrain from the minority attack and play in the centre instead. The position of the black bishop on d6 only helps White to develop his initiative and turns out to be a decisive loss of time.

12.Kh1

The threat was 12...Bxh2+ and 13...Ng4+.

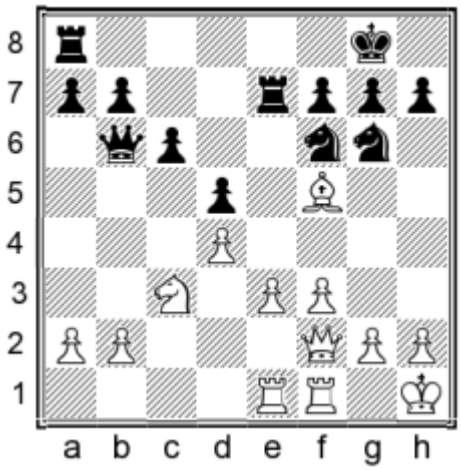
12...Ng6 13.f3!

«White has prepared the standard queenside action with 11.Rab1, but now he refrains from this and plays in the centre. Black is already unable to prevent the advance e3-e4, because the counterblow ...c6-c5 is difficult in this position. These are the consequences of the unfortunate move 11...Bd6.» (Botvinnik)

13...Be7 14.Rbe1 Nd7

The move 14...h6 could be met with 15.Bxh6 gxh6 16.Bxg6.

15.Bxe7 Rxe7 16.Ng3 Nf6 17.Qf2 Be6 18.Nf5! Bxf5 19.Bxf5 Qb6



20.e4

In a strategic sense, the game is already decided. Black has no way to oppose his adversary's crushing attack.

20...dxe4 21.fxe4 Rd8 22.e5 Nd5 23.Ne4

The white knight jumps into the enemy camp, since 23...Nc7 24.Nd6 Ne8 is impossible because of 25.Nc8 or 25.Nxf7.

23...Nf8 24.Nd6 Qc7 25.Be4 Ne6?!

Black's best practical chance was the exchange sacrifice on d6.

26.Qh4 g6 27.Bxd5 cxd5 28.Rc1 Qd7 29.Rc3 Rf8

Keres is ready to meet the attack on the h-file by answering 30.Rh3 with 30...f5, but now comes an unexpected tactical blow.

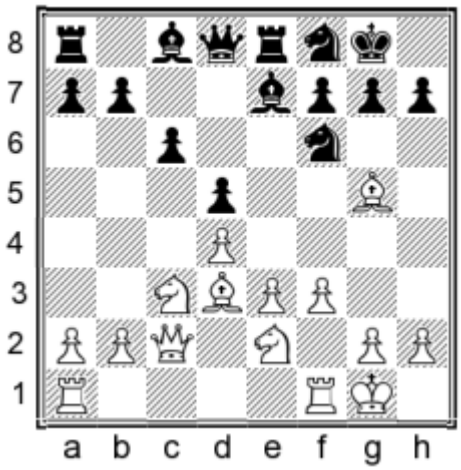
30.Nf5! Rfe8 31.Nh6+

Botvinnik is not satisfied with winning the exchange and decides the game with an energetic attack on the kingside.

31...Kf8 32.Qf6 Ng7 33.Rcf3 Rc8 34.Nxf7 Re6 35.Qg5 Nf5 36.Nh6 Qg7 37.g4 1-0

Botvinnik's plan has long ceased to be a novelty in the realm of strategy, but nowadays is a standard way of playing such structures. Consequently, nowadays White does not usually mask his intentions with 11.Rab1, but plays immediately

11.f3



The position is very tense, but strategically the initiative is held by White. Incidentally, he does not swear a 'solemn oath' always to advance e3-e4, but can, for example, play g2-g4 and then Ng3, whilst sometimes, if Black has a bishop on e6 and a knight on g6, for instance, he can advance the f-pawn, despite the fact that his main idea is a central advance.

Theory has explored the position in the last diagram very thoroughly, but I wish in this book to acquaint you with my methods of training, not to write yet another opening monograph. Consequently, I will quote as far as possible my own games and those of my pupils, and also a few games by famous players, which constitute classics.

Black cannot stop the advance of the e-pawn except by playing 11...c5?, but then a very strong reply is 12.Rad1!, threatening 13.Bxf6 or 13.dxc5 Bxc5 14.Nxd5. Therefore Black should for the moment concentrate on seeking counterplay against the not particularly stable white centre. White, meanwhile, needs to prepare his central action, by deciding where to put his rooks.

Grandmaster Gennady Timoschenko, in our game at the USSR Armed Forces team championship (Minsk 1984), tried to clarify the central position at once:

11...Nh5 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.e4 dxe4 14.fxe4 Bg4

Black has almost completed the mobilisation of his pieces and is ready to attack the centre by means of ...Ra8-d8 and ...Nf8-e6. White needs to play energetically.

15.Rf2!?

The best position for the white rooks will be to double on the f-file.

15...Ne6 16.Raf1 Rf8

Black avoids weakening his position, but has spent many tempi defending f7. Now White seizes the initiative.

17.d5?!

The choice of which pawn to advance is very much a matter of taste. I chose the d-pawn, although the move 17.e5 also has its advantages. Later, in the Candidates match game between Ivanchuk and Yusupov, the former played on the same lines as Botvinnik against Keres – he advanced the pawn to e5, played the knight to e4 and obtained an advantage, winning the game in good style.

17...Nc5 18.Nd4 Qe5 19.Nb3 Nxd3 20.Qxd3 Nf6

The Nh5 lacks prospects; in addition, in all variations, Black has to reckon with the threat of Rf5.

21.h3 Bc8

If 21...Bd7, then 22.Nc5 is dangerous.

22.Nd2! Bd7 23.Nc4 Qe7

One's first impression is that White has a significant positional advantage, but the black position is hard to break down. How should White play?

I wanted to end the game by strategic means, but I wasted a lot of time on the move 24.Qd4!?. If Black now allows the exchange sacrifice 25.Rxf6 gxf6 26.d6 and then Rxf6 and e4-e5, then his position becomes hopeless. Therefore 24...c5 is the only move. I spent a long time studying the endgame after 25.Qe5 (the computer considers 25.Qe3! stronger, with a large advantage to White – MS) 25...Qxe5 26.Nxe5, but could not decide if it was winning or not. Therefore I refrained from the move and played

24.d6!?

In fact, I hardly considered this move before playing it, because it was the only alternative to 24.Qd4 in the position of the last diagram.

24...Qe6 25.e5 Nd5

I was afraid of falling into time-trouble, because I had spent a lot of time already. In the game, after 26.Qd4 Nxc3 27.bxc3 c5 28.Qe4 Bc6 29.Qg4 Qxg4 30.hxg4 Bb5 31.Rf4 Rfe8 a draw was agreed.

Instead, White had at his disposal the interesting move

26.Ne4! b5 27.Ng5 Qh6 28.Nxf7 Qh5 29.Ne3 Be6

And White loses a piece. That is why I refrained from the move 26.Ne4 during the game, with the clock ticking.

When I showed this to my pupils, one of them found the excellent possibility

30.Nxd5 cxd5

30...Bxd5 31.d7

31.d7

Now 31...Bxf7 loses after 32.e6, so there only remains

31...Rxf7 32.Rxf7 Bxf7 33.Qc3! Qg5!

33...Rf8 is bad because of 34.e6, the move 33...Be6 is refuted by 34.Qc6, and 33...Rd8 also loses because of 34.Qc7 Qg5 35.Rf6!.

Now it may appear that the white attack has run out of steam, since after 34.Qc8+ Qd8 35.Qc6 there is 35...Qb6+, whilst after

34.Qc6 Rd8

35.e6? fails to 35...Qe3+. However, White has the quiet move

35.Qd6!!

with the threat of 36.Kh1 and only then e5-e6; it turns out that here Black is helpless.

However, let us return to the position of the last diagram. The computer demonstrates a short and very effective path to the aim:

30.g4! Qxh3

30...Qh4 31.Ng2! loses the queen.

31.Nxd5!! Qxd3 32.Ne7#!

Nor does 31...Qxg4+ 32.Rg2 help.

In the game **Riski-Deiko,** Minsk 1984, Black also continued

11...Nh5 12.Bxe7 Qxe7 13.e4

But here Deiko did not open the f-file and chose instead

13...Be6

Riski replied with the direct

14.e5!? g6 15.f4 Ng7 16.Ng3

which forces Black to blockade the kingside with

16...f5

Now White, having more space and the superior piece formation, began pressing his opponent on the opposite flank:

17.Na4 Rac8 18.a3 b6 19.b4 Bd7 20.Nc3 Nfe6 21.Nge2

Black is cramped. His knights cannot both simultaneously occupy e6 and the Bd7 is also not to be envied. White has a clear plan of action, the basic idea of which is a minority attack on the enemy queenside pawn structure with b4-b5. Black's position is strategically lost.

21...Red8 22.b5 Be8 23.Qb3 Qb7 24.bxc6 Bxc6 25.Rac1 a6 26.Na2 b5 27.Nb4 Qa8 28.Nxc6!

Riski has no qualms about exchanging the opponent's 'bad' bishop, which plays an important role in the defence.

28...Rxc6 29.Rxc6 Qxc6 30.Qb4 Rc8 31.Rc1 Qd7 32.Rxc8+ Qxc8 33.Kf2

In the final stage, White prepares the break a3-a4.

33...Qd8 34.g3 Kf7 35.a4 Qb6 36.axb5 Nc7 37.Nc3 Nge6 38.Na4 Qxd4+ 39.Qxd4 Nxd4 40.b6 Nce6 41.Bxa6 Nd8 42.Nc3 g5 43.Bc8 gxf4 44.gxf4 N4e6 45.Nxd5 1-0

Now let us see how the Botvinnik scheme was met in junior championships. I should like to draw the reader's attention to two games from the 1988 Minsk junior championship, one by 14-year old Alexander Zazhogin and the other by 15-year Oleg Romanov, whom I had only just started working with.

Queen's Gambit D36
Alexander Zazhogin
Zulev
Minsk 1988

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 c6 6.Qc2 Be7 7.e3 0-0 8.Bd3 Nbd7 9.Nge2 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 11.f3 g6 12.Rad1 Ne6 13.Bh4 Qc7?!

A dubious and trappy move. Black intends to meet 14.e4? with 14...dxe4 15.fxe4 Ng4 16.Bg3 Qd8, attacking both the d4-pawn and the square e3.

14.Qc1!?

An original decision. White takes control of e3 with the queen and allows the bishop to retreat to b1. Even so, 14.Kh1 looks more natural.

14...Nh5 15.Bxe7 Qxe7 16.e4 Rd8

An unusual position. What plan should White choose? The most natural development of events looks to be the advance of the e- and f-pawns, but Black is ready to meet 17.e5 with the central blow ...c6-c5. Zazhogin begins to prepare the advance in the centre.

17.Bb1

Another plan also has its merits: 17.Qe3, with the idea after 17...b6 of sharply changing the character of the game by means of 18.exd5 cxd5 19.Rfe1 or even 19.g4 Nf6 20.Rfe1, by analogy with the 14th game of the match Botvinnik-Petrosian, which we will examine later.

17...b6 18.Qe3 Bb7 19.a3 Re8 20.e5 Rad8 21.f4

White is extremely consistent in his actions, but by comparison with the previous game, the black pieces are much more harmoniously placed and Black does not need to mechanically block the white pawns with ...f7-f5.

21...c5! 22.Ba2 Nhg7

Black threatens to exchange twice on d4, followed by ...Ng7-f5 and the march of the d-pawn.

23.g4!?

A very risky, but direct and concrete decision.

23...h5

It was more logical to open the centre with 23...cxd4. There could follow 24.Nxd4 Nxd4 25.Rxd4 (25.Qxd4? Qh4) 25...Ne6 26.Rxd5! (26.Nxd5? Qc5 27.Nf6+ Kh8) 26...Qh4 27.h3, and White's position is preferable.

24.dxc5 d4?

Black cannot stand the tension and begins a counterattack which is insufficiently prepared and rebounds on him. It was essential to play 24...hxg4 with an unclear position.

25.Nxd4 Qh4?! 26.Nxe6 Nxe6 27.Bxe6 fxe6 28.cxb6 Qxg4+ 29.Qg3 Qf5 30.bxa7 Qc2 31.f5! exf5 32.Qxg6+ Kh8 33.Qxh5+ Kg7 34.Qg5+ Kh8 35.Rxd8

Black resigned.

Queen's Gambit D36
Oleg Romanov
Zulev
Minsk 1988

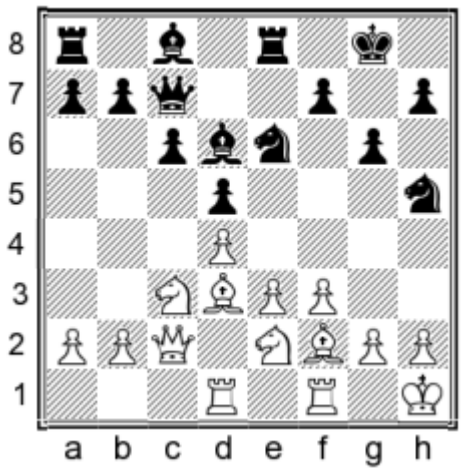
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 c6 6.e3 Be7 7.Qc2 0-0 8.Bd3 Nbd7 9.Nge2 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 11.f3 g6 12.Rad1 Ne6 13.Bh4 Nh5 14.Bf2

White avoids the exchange of dark-squared bishops.

14...Qc7

Removing the queen from the opposition of the white rook. On 14...f5 there can follow 15.e4!?, e.g. 15...fxe4 16.fxe4 dxe4 17.Bxe4 and 18.d5 on the next move.

15.Kh1 Bd6



The pawn on h2 is hanging. It looks extremely natural to play 16.Bg1 with the idea of preparing e3-e4. However, young players tend to be full of the optimism of youth and love to attack the enemy king, so it is not surprising that White preferred

16.g4!? Nf6 17.h4 b6?

Too slow. Black had to do something against the coming attack. He should have gone for 17...h5!?, allowing a sacrifice on g6, followed by the retreat of the knight from e6 to g7.

18.Rg1 Bb7 19.h5

Now White's attack is unstoppable.

19...Rac8? 20.Bh4 Nd7 21.f4! Ng7 22.Qd2 Be7 23.Bg3 Qd8 24.f5!

White breaks through to the enemy penalty area, as they say in football.

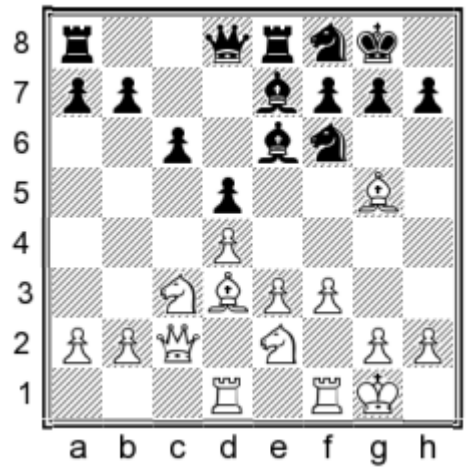
24...Bg5 25.fxg6 fxg6 26.Nf4 gxh5 27.gxh5 Nf6 28.h6!

An elegant conclusion to an energetic attack.

28...Bxh6 29.Qh2 Bg5 30.Bh4 Bxh4 31.Qxh4 Ne4 32.Rxg7+! Kxg7 33.Rg1+ 1-0

Queen's Gambit D36
Alexey Alexandrov
Raset Ziatdinov
Primorskovo 1990

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5 c6 6.Qc2 Be7 7.e3 Nbd7 8.Bd3 0-0 9.Nge2 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8 11.f3 Be6 12.Rad1



This move is in the spirit of White's strategic idea. Black prevented 13.e4 by

12...Qa5 13.a3! Rad8 14.Kh1

White does not hurry.

14...Bc8

Black's position is solid, but very passive. His pieces are very well and harmoniously placed in the centre, but if White manages to advance his central pawns, all that harmony can be shattered.

15.Bh4!

The bishop transfers to g1, from where it will continue to interfere with the manoeuvres of the black pieces. If Black had played 14...Ng6 last move, then White would not have been able to play the bishop via g5-h4-f2-g1, but even so, he could have increased the pressure with Ne2-g3-f5.

15...Ng6

Black continues to play move by move, without an overall plan for the game. He should have thought seriously about obtaining counterplay. Since the text is not very constructive at this moment, he should have given serious consideration to 15...g6 with the idea of ...Nf8-e6. On g6, the knight is very passively placed. Evidently, Ziatdinov was preparing to fight for the f4-square for his pieces, when the white pawn advances from e3 to e4, but this hope does not materialise.

16.Bf2 Bd6?! 17.Bg1 Nh5 18.b4!

This move becomes possible thanks to the presence of the bishop on d6, as after 18...Qxa3? 19.Ra1 Qxb4 20.Rfb1 Black loses the queen.

18...Qc7

19.e4!

The right moment for the central breakthrough. Black cannot play 19...Nhf4 because of 20.e5!, and 20...Nxd3 is refuted by 21.exd6. Here, as in Botvinnik-Keres, the position of the bishop on d6 proves unfortunate for Black.

19...dxe4 20.fxe4 Bf4

Black probably felt he should occupy f4 with something, just to be consistent, but this only helps White. However, Black's position is already difficult to defend.

21.e5 Bh6 22.Bf5! Re7 23.Ne4

We saw the same scenario in the Botvinnik game, and here White follows his example in exemplary fashion.

23...Bxf5 24.Rxf5 Nhf4 25.Nxf4 Bxf4 26.Rf1 Bh6 27.g4!

White reaps the fruits of his strategy. There followed

27...Bf4 28.R5xf4 Nxf4 29.Rxf4 f6 30.Qb3+ Kh8 31.Qf3 Qd7 32.exf6 gxf6 33.Nxf6 Qe6 34.d5! cxd5 35.Bd4 Qe1+ 36.Kg2 Qe2+ 37.Kg3 Qxf3+ 38.Rxf3 Re6 39.g5 Kg7 40.Ng4+ Kg6 41.Kh4 Ree8 42.Ne5+ Kg7 43.Kh5 1-0

I should add that with the white knight on e2, the black knight jump to e4 is not very effective, either on the 10th or 11th move (after 10...h6 11.Bh4). In the game **Shereshevsky-Aslanov**, Minsk 1981, after

10...h6 11.Bh4 Ne4 12.Bxe7 Qxe7

White played

13.Rae1!?

I was prepared to continue with the advance of the central pawns.

13...Ndf6 14.f3

It would be interesting to try 14.Nd1, keeping an extra piece on the board.

14...Nxc3 15.Nxc3 c5

Black prevents the advance e3-e4, but gets an unpleasant endgame.

16.dxc5 Qxc5 17.Nb5! Qxc2 18.Bxc2

In my book *Endgame Strategy* I devoted a whole chapter to endgames of this type. Such positions are very unpleasant for Black, although they are defensible with accurate play. In this example, both pairs of rooks remain on the board, which allows White to create another weakness on the black kingside, after some preparation by advancing the h- and g-pawns. In addition, the threat of 19.Nc7 is rather unpleasant.

My resourceful opponent played

18...Bd7?!, and after some thought I played 19.Nd4?!, although after 19.Nc7! Rec8 20.Nxa8 Rxc2 21.Rc1 Rxb2 22.Rf2 Black does not have sufficient compensation for the exchange. But I very much wanted to play the sort of endgame I had studied, and I eventually won it some 80 moves later! So, I cannot recommend that Black start from the position in the last diagram.

In summary, I should add that White often plays the central advance plan with queenside castling. Latvian GM Alexei Shirov is a firm supporter of this plan.

Before we move on to a detailed look at the move 3...Be7, I wish to observe that I never bothered trying to get my students to obtain some abstract advantage in the opening. It is much more important to understand the ideas and strategic plans in the position, so they will always be ready to fight for the initiative and strive for a complicated battle over the board.

According to theoretical manuals,

3...Be7

was a move invented by the Soviet grandmaster Alatortsev. If White is determined to play a Carlsbad structure, then he must settle for the modest development of the bishop to f4 after

4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4

This continuation has been tested many times in games at the very highest level, such as the World Championship matches Botvinnik-Petrosian, 1963, Karpov-Kortchnoi, 1981, Karpov-Kasparov, 1985, and Kasparov-Karpov, 1986 and 1987, and also in Candidates matches, strong tournaments and Olympiads. The resulting positions are characterised by dynamic pawn structures in the centre and on the kingside, and attract players who like to fight for the initiative and advance pawns, and also those who like to counterattack. The latter like to exploit the weaknesses created in the opponent's structure, which typically arise after excessively active play. Put briefly, one can learn a great deal from studying the games of the super-class players in this line. Let us turn to history.

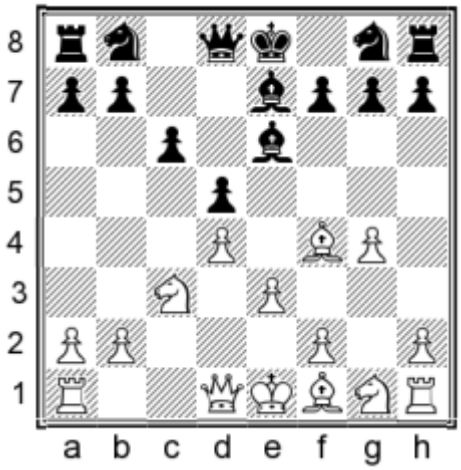
Queen's Gambit D31
Mikhail Botvinnik
Tigran Petrosian
Moscow 1963 (m/14)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4 c6

Black fights for the b1-h7 diagonal.

6.e3 Bf5 7.g4! Be6

Practically forced. On 7...Bg6?! White has the move 8.h4!, and now 8...Bxh4 is bad because of 9.Qb3 b6 10.Rxh4! Qxh4 11.Nxd5. And if Black does not take the pawn, then after 8...h5 there follows 9.g5, whilst after 8...h6 there is 9.h5, and White obtains a space advantage on the kingside.



8.h3

In this position, White also has 8.Bd3, as Botvinnik played in Game 12 of the match, and also 8.h4!?, yet another idea of Botvinnik, tested by him in his game against Spassky at Leiden 1970.

8...Nf6 9.Bd3 c5

Seemingly all logical – Black meets a flank attack with a central counter. White does not isolate the black pawn, which would open the position, but continues calmly to develop his pieces.

10.Nf3 Nc6 11.Kf1!

The white king will be comfortable on g2, whilst the Rh1 is active on its starting square. The position of the white pawn on g4 is not so extravagant; on the contrary, it allows the white pieces to occupy the squares g2 and g3, and also secures a space advantage for White on the kingside.

11...0-0 12.Kg2 cxd4 13.Nxd4! Nxd4 14.exd4

By exchanging knights, White gains a tempo to put his pawn on f3.

14...Nd7 15.Qc2! Nf6

Petrosian returns the knight to its rightful place. If 15...g6, Black must reckon with 16.Bh6 Re8 17.f4, whilst on 15...h6 there is the very strong 16.Qd2, intending Bd3-c2 and then Qd2-d3.

16.f3 Rc8 17.Be5

White completely controls the initiative. Black has no weaknesses, and his pieces are not badly placed, yet his position is not very pleasant. His main problem is the lack of a constructive plan for obtaining counterplay.

We will again draw the analogy with football – it is like when one team goes forward and tries to score a goal, while the other simply sits back and tries to neutralise them, without making any attempt to launch a counterattack.

17...Bd6

Petrosian wants to simplify the position, but with a mutual IQP, the exchange of dark-squared bishops definitely favours White.

18.Rae1 Bxe5 19.Rxe5

The capture 19.dxe5? is a positional blunder because of 19...d4 20.exf6 Qxf6.

19...g6 20.Qf2 Nd7 21.Re2 Nb6 22.Rhe1!

«The double-edged 22.h4 would be a decision not in accordance with the demands of the position, because White's attacking chances are not clear, whereas the endgame is very favourable for him.» (Botvinnik)

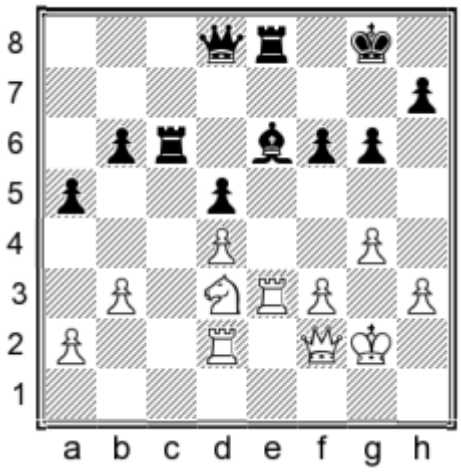
22...Nc4

Black tries to play actively, but after the exchange of minor pieces, the white knight will be clearly stronger than the enemy bishop.

23.Bxc4 Rxc4

If 23...dxc4, then 24.d5 and 25.Qd4.

24.Rd2 Re8 25.Re3 a6 26.b3 Rc6 27.Na4 b6 28.Nb2 a5 29.Nd3 f6



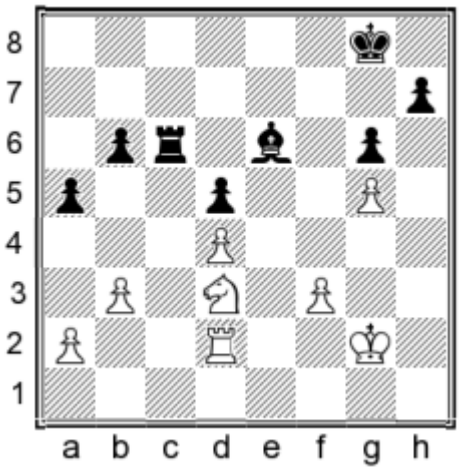
30.h4!

White plays this move all the same, but not with the aim of a kingside attack. Botvinnik is preparing to seize the square e5, by advancing the g-pawn.

30...Bf7 31.Rxe8+ Bxe8 32.Qe3 Bf7 33.g5 Be6 34.Nf4 Bf7

The bishop has to retreat. On 34...Bf5 there could follow 35.gxf6 Qxf6 36.Qe5, and Black loses the d5-pawn.

35.Nd3 Be6 36.gxf6 Qxf6 37.Qg5! Qxg5+ 38.hxg5



The position has simplified, but the endgame is difficult for Black. Petrosian tries to play actively, but on the next move he commits a serious inaccuracy, after which his position deteriorates further.

38...a4 39.bxa4

«If 39.Ne5 Rc3 40.bxa4 Ra3 41.Rb2 Rxa4 42.Rxb6 Rxa2+ all the queenside pawns are exchanged, which eases Black's defence.» (Botvinnik)

39...Rc4 40.a5! bxa5 41.Nc5 Bf5 42.Kg3 a4 43.Kf4 a3 44.Ke5 Rb4 45.Nd3 Rb5 46.Kd6 Kf7 47.Kc6 Bxd3 48.Rxd3 Rb2 49.Rxa3 Rg2 50.Kxd5 Rxg5+ 51.Kc6 h5 52.d5 Rg2 53.d6 Rc2+ 54.Kd7 h4?!

Botvinnik points out that even after the superior 54...g5! 55.Ra5! Kf6 56.Kd8 h4 57.d7 h3 58.Ra6+ Kg7 59.Re6 h2 60.Re1 White should win.

55.f4 Rf2 56.Kc8 Rxf4 57.Ra7+

Black resigned. A wonderful game, in which Black did not make a single really serious mistake, but was still completely outplayed.

Queen's Gambit D31
Viktor Kortchnoi 2695
Anatoly Karpov 2700
Merano 1981 (m/13)

1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4 Be7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4 c6 6.e3 Bf5 7.g4 Be6 8.h3 Nf6 9.Bd3 0-0 10.Nf3 c5 11.Kf1 Nc6 12.Kg2 Rc8

Petrosian played 12...cxd4.

13.Rc1 Re8

Lepeshkin and Plisetsky criticised Black's last move in their book on the match and suggested 13...a6.

There follows this variation: 14.dxc5 Bxc5 15.Nb5 Be7 (*stronger is* 15...Nb4! – *MS*) 16.Nbd4 Nxd4 17.Rxc8 Bxc8 18.Nxd4 (18.exd4 Ne4 19.Re1 f5) 18...Bd6 19.Bxd6 Qxd6 20.Qc2 Re8 with the idea Ne4. «We consider that the weaknesses on the kingside do not permit White to hope for a serious advantage», conclude the authors.

analysis diagram

It may seem that White does not have a serious advantage, but defending Black's game after 21.Rc1 (threatening 22.Qxc8 or other queen moves to c5 or c7) is still extremely difficult. It should be added that in this match, Karpov played better than Kortchnoi and won convincingly. But even so, the commentary in the Soviet press was very one-sided, because politics and chess were too closely intertwined in the country in those days.

But let us return to the game.

14.dxc5 Bxc5 15.Nb5 Bf8 16.Nfd4! Nxd4

Tal suggested, instead of Black's last move, 16...Qb6!? 17.Qb3 Nxd4, with the idea of meeting 18.exd4 with the sharp 18...Rc4!?, whilst after 18.Nxd4 «one cannot speak of more than a minimal advantage for White». I studied many such endgames and devoted a chapter to them in my book *Endgame Strategy*. Black's position can be held with accurate defence, but the task is usually difficult.

17.Rxc8 Qxc8 18.exd4!

Botvinnik's idea.

18...Qd7 19.Nc7 Rc8 20.Nxe6 fxe6

20...Qxe6 is bad because of 21.Bf5.

White's advantage is not in doubt: he has two bishops, better development and space for manoeuvring. In addition, the black position has a weakness on e6.

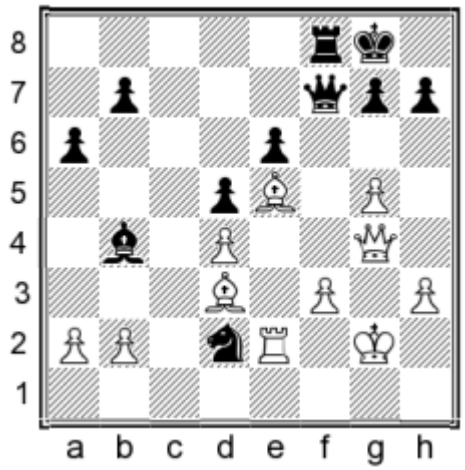
21.Re1 a6

Tal regarded 21...Qf7 as better.

22.g5!?

White could have played quietly, but Kortchnoi preferred to realise his advantage energetically.

22...Ne4 23.Qg4 Bb4 24.Re2 Rf8 25.f3 Qf7 26.Be5 Nd2



27.a3

Tal considered that White had a technical way to win: 27.f4 Ne4 28.Rxe4 dxe4 29.Bc4 Kh8 30.Bxe6 Qe7 31.f5, but Black has a defence: 29...Re8 30.f5 e3!, and in the event of an exchange on e6, the black queen appears on f2. Of course, instead of the sacrifice of the exchange, White could just take the pawn 28.Bxe4 dxe4 29.Rxe4, but here he still faces some technical difficulties. After the text move, the

position becomes noticeably more complicated, but it is objectively the best move.

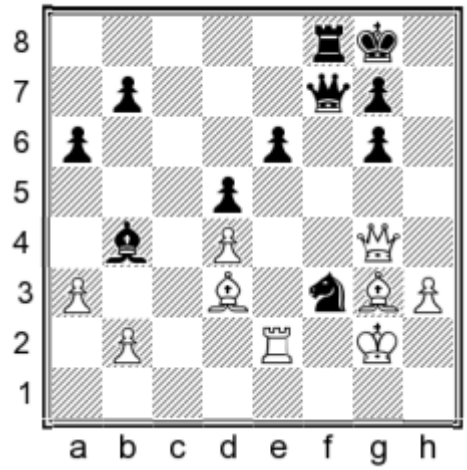
27...Nxf3 28.g6?

«Black's enterprise would have been inadequate had White played 28.Bg3! with the threat of 29.axb4 or 29.Rf2.» (Tal) 28...Nh4+ does not particularly help after 29.Kh2 Nf3+ 30.Kh1 Nh4 due to 31.Bxh7+ Kxh7 32.Qxh4+ Kg8 33.Rf2.

28...hxg6

28...Ne1+! 29.Kh2 Qe7 gives sufficient counterplay.

29.Bg3



29...Be7?

Both players commit mistakes. Many commentators pointed out that Black could have saved himself with the help of a fantastic tactical resource: 29...Nh4+!! The knight cannot be taken; on 30.Qxh4 there follows 30...Qf3+, whilst if 30.Bxh4, then 30...Qf1+ 31.Kh2 Bd6+ 32.Bg3 Rf2+. That only leaves 30.Kh2 Nf3+ 31.Kh1, and now again 31...Nh4!!. The variations show that Black is fine:

A) 32.Rf2? Nf5!;

B) 32.Rc2? Qf3+ 33.Qxf3 Rxf3 34.Bxh4 Bd6 35.Kg2 Rxd3;

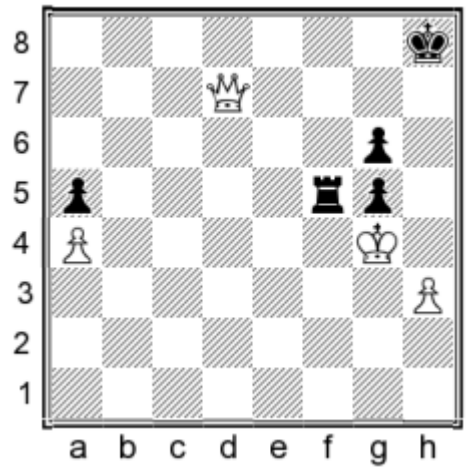
C) 32.Bxh4 Qf1+ 33.Kh2 Bd6+ or 33.Qg1 Qxh3+ 34.Rh2 Qxd3;

D) 32.Qxh4 Qf3+ 33.Rg2 Qxd3 34.axb4 Rf1+ 35.Kh2 Qd1 or 35.Rg1 Qf3+ 36.Kh2 Qe2+ 37.Rg2 Qd1, and White has nothing better than to repeat the position.

After the text move, White easily makes the most of his advantage.

30.Rf2 Ne1+ 31.Kh1 Qxf2 32.Bxf2 Nxd3 33.Qxe6+ Rf7 34.Bg3 Nxb2 35.Qxd5 Bf6 36.Bd6 g5 37.Qb3 Bxd4 38.Qe6 g6 39.Qe8+ Kg7 40.Be5+ Bxe5 41.Qxe5+ Kh7 42.Qxb2

Here the game was adjourned, but Black resigned without resuming. He does not manage to establish a fortress.



This position is the best Black can achieve. White wins by sacrificing the queen on f5, to reach a pawn ending.

Queen's Gambit D31
Mark Taimanov 2595
Josip Rukavina 2460
Leningrad 1973 (13)

This game was considered to be one of the best of the 1973 Interzonal.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4 c6 6.e3 Bf5 7.g4 Be6 8.h3 Nf6

Bad is 8...h5? 9.gxh5 Nd7 10.Be2 Ndf6 11.Rh2! Bd6 12.Bxd6 Qxd6 13.Rg2! with advantage to White, Kortchnoi-Ivkov, Budva 1976.

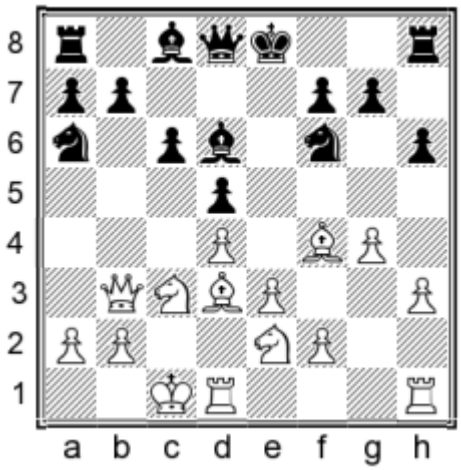
9.Bd3 Bd6

This is what Spassky played against Kortchnoi in the 1968 Candidates match in Kiev. Kortchnoi did not manage to get an advantage in the opening, but Taimanov practically refuted the black set-up in this game.

10.Nge2 h6?!

There is hardly any need to create this weakness. As Taimanov pointed out after the game, better is 10...Bxf4 11.Nxf4 Qd6.

11.Qb3 Bc8 12.0-0-0 Na6



13.Rde1

«White's plan is clear. By means of the threat to open the e-file (with either e3-e4 or e3xf4 after an exchange), he will entice the black king to the kingside, and then open the g-file with g4-g5. Black is effectively helpless against this plan.» (Taimanov)

13...Nc7 14.Rhg1 Bxf4?!

«Having waited so long to exchange, Black may as well have waited another move, by playing 14...Ne6.» (Taimanov)

15.Nxf4

Also good was 15.exf4.

15...Qd6 16.g5 hxg5 17.Rxg5 Kf8

On 17...g6 there would follow 18.Re5+.

18.Reg1 Nce8 19.Nce2 b6 20.Kb1!

A very useful preparatory move before the breakthrough in the centre.

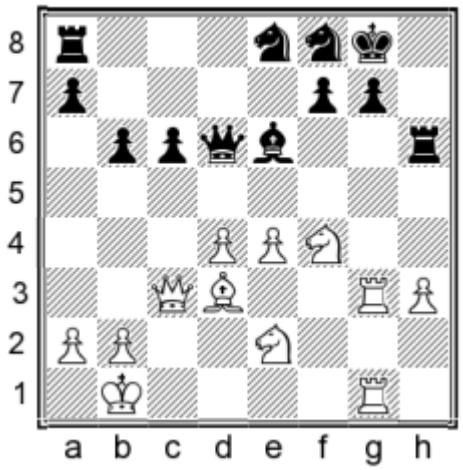
20...Rh6

20...Bxh3 is bad because of 21.Rh1 Qd7 22.Rg3.

21.f3 Nh7

After 21...Bxh3 22.e4 White has a strong attack.

22.R5g3 Be6 23.Qc2 Kg8 24.e4! dxe4 25.fxe4 Nf8 26.Qc3!



By simple and logical play, White has obtained a winning position. Black can do nothing to oppose the advance of the central pawns and an attack on the kingside.

26...f6

The threat was 27.d5.

27.e5! Qe7

27...fxe5 is not much better because of 28.dxe5 Qd7 29.Nd4.

28.Nxe6 Nxe6 29.Qxc6 Rd8 30.Bc4 fxe5 31.Rg6! Rd6 32.Qc8 Rxg6 33.Rxg6 Kf7 34.Rxe6! Rxe6 35.dxe5 g5 36.Nd4 Ng7 37.a4 a6

«There only remain pawn moves, and not many of them...» (Taimanov)

38.Bd5 b5 39.a5 b4 40.Bb3 g4 41.hxg4

Black resigned.

Openings arising after 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5

After these three moves, several openings can arise, for example various types of Benoni: 3...e5, 3...e6, 3...g6 and the Benko Gambit 3...b5.

Let us start with

3...e5

White can continue

4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Be7

Part of a plan, involving the exchange of dark-squared bishops. In his time, grandmaster Boleslavsky advised me to meet this as follows:

6.Nge2 0-0 7.Ng3 Ne8 8.h4!?

With this move, White prevents the exchange of dark-squared bishops and provokes a further weakening of the black position, creating possibilities of transposing into a favourable endgame.

8...g6

Black follows his plan directly. The h4-pawn was poisoned because of 9.Qh5, but now it is attacked.

9.Bh6 Ng7 10.h5!

White has no need to enter complications after 10.Qd2 Bxh4. It seems as though Black can now realise his plan, but the resulting position will be clearly in White's favour.

10...Bg5 11.Bxg5 Qxg5 12.Qd2 Qxd2+

Otherwise White will have the possibility of 13.Qh6 with a very strong attack on the king.

13.Kxd2 a6 14.Bd3

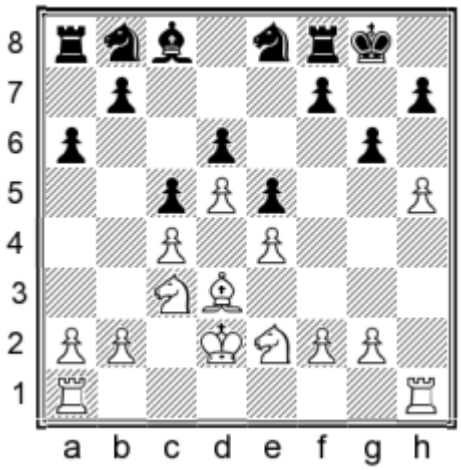
Black has achieved what he wanted – the exchange of his 'bad' bishop for White's 'good' bishop. However, the decisive factor in the assessment of the position is White's space advantage, and not abstract considerations about good and bad bishops. Objectively, Black's remaining bishop is clearly worse than its opposite number, because it is still constricted by the pawn structure. On the other hand, the bishop which has been exchanged off could have played an important role in defending the black queenside against a white attack.

I think the diagram position is strategically lost for Black, because he cannot do anything to oppose the white queenside attack. White can quietly play f2-f3, a2-a3, Rb1, b2-b4, double rooks on the b-file, etc. and, if needed, he can also open a second front on the kingside (thanks to the h5-pawn!). Black has no way to create any activity. If in the diagram position he plays 14...f5, then after 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.exf5 gxf5 White can play the quiet 17.f3, restricting the black pawns, and can then try to develop an attack on the h-file with 17.Rh6, Rah1, Nh5 etc., and Black is hardly likely to survive this.

You can get a more detailed acquaintance with such positions in the following games.

Indian Defence A56
Mario Bertok
Efim Geller
Kiev 1959 (1)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Be7 6.Nge2 0-0 7.Ng3 Ne8 8.h4 a6 9.Bd3 g6 10.h5 Bg5 11.Bd2 Qf6 12.Qc1 Bxd2+ 13.Qxd2 Qf4 14.Nge2 Qxd2+ 15.Kxd2



15...Ng7 16.Ng3 Nd7 17.a3 Nf6 18.hxg6 fxg6 19.b4 Nd7 20.f3 Rb8 21.Rab1 Ne8 22.Rb2 Nc7 23.Rhb1 Ra8 24.Nge2 cxb4 25.axb4 a5 26.bxa5 Rxa5 27.Nc1 Kf7 28.Bc2 Nc5 29.Nb3 Nxb3+ 30.Rxb3 Ke7 31.Rb6 Na6 32.Nb5 Rd8 33.g4 Ra2 34.g5 Rf8 35.Nc3 Ra3 36.Rh1 Rf7 37.Nb5 Ra2 38.Nxd6 Rxf3 39.Nxc8+ Kd8 40.Rf6 Rg3 41.Rf8+ Kc7 42.Rxh7+

Black resigned.

Indian Defence A56
Alberic O'Kelly de Galway
Olaf Ulvestad
Malaga 1966 (2)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.Bd3 Bg7 7.Nge2 0-0 8.f3 Ne8 9.Be3 Bh6 10.Qd2 Bxe3 11.Qxe3 Qh4+ 12.g3 Qh3 13.Nd1 Kg7 14.Nf2 Qh6 15.Kd2 Qxe3+ 16.Kxe3 Nd7 17.a3 a6 18.b4 Rb8 19.Rhb1 Nc7 20.Nc3 b6 21.Be2 Rb7 22.Nd3 f5

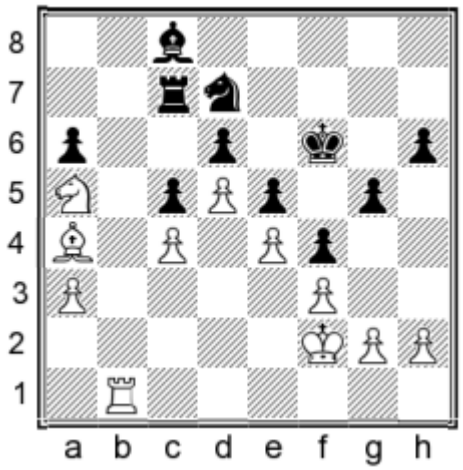
23.bxc5 bxc5 24.exf5 Nb6 25.Nf2 gxf5 26.g4 Kf6 27.Ra2 Bd7 28.gxf5 Bxf5 29.Nfe4+ Ke7 30.Rab2 Rfb8 31.Kf2 Bc8 32.Nxd6 Kxd6 33.Ne4+ Ke7 34.d6+ Kd8 35.Nxc5

Black resigned.

King's Indian Defence E92
Svetozar Gligoric 2595
Miguel Quinteros 2520
Manila 1973 (7)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e4 d6 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Be2 e5 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 Qc7 10.Nd2 Nh7 11.Nb5 Qd7 12.f3 a6 13.Nc3 Qc7 14.Rb1 Nd7 15.a3 Ndf6 16.b4 b6 17.Qb3 Bd7 18.bxc5 bxc5 19.Qb6 Rfc8 20.Qxc7 Rxc7

21.0-0 Ne8 22.Rb6 Bf6 23.Bxf6 Nhxf6 24.Rfb1 Bc8 25.Bd1 Raa7 26.Ba4 Rab7 27.Bc6 Rxb6 28.Rxb6 Nd7 29.Rb1 Kf8 30.Na4 Ke7 31.Kf2 f5 32.Ke3 f4+ 33.Kf2 Nef6 34.Nb3 g5 35.Na5 Kf7 36.Nb6 Nxb6 37.Rxb6 Ke7 38.Ba4 Nd7 39.Rb1 Kf6



40.g3 Ke7 41.h4 fxg3+ 42.Kxg3 gxh4+ 43.Kxh4 Kf6 44.Kh5 Kf7 45.Bxd7 Rxd7 46.Nc6 Rc7 47.Kxh6 Bh3 48.Kg5 Bg2 49.Nd8+ Ke8 50.Rb8 Rg7+ 51.Kf6 1-0

One-Off Openings

Now we will examine the opening

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5

At one time, I spent a lot of time writing my book *Endgame Strategy*. At this time, I was still working as a trainer and occasionally played in tournaments. I had almost no time to study and analyse current opening trends, although I did spend lots of time studying the classics, and I preferred to read books devoted to the old masters, rather than the latest issues of *Informant*. In this connection, I took the decision to temporarily give up playing 2.c4 after 1.d4 Nf6 and began to play 2.Nf3 or 2.Bg5, relying more on the middlegame and endgame. This had the effect of leading to my developing my 'own' opening theory, and, strange as it may seem, my practical results also improved. After I had finished work on my endgame book, I returned to 2.c4.

So,

Black faces a real strategic problem as early as move 2. White intends to take on f6 and then, depending on which pawn Black recaptures with, to proceed appropriately.

Black has numerous possibilities, but first he must decide whether or not to allow the capture on f6. If Black wishes to prevent the doubling of his pawns, then he has 2...Ne4 or 2...e6, whereas if he does not fear this, then he can play 2...d5 or 2...c5.

Let us begin with variations in which White takes on f6.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5?!

I think this move has rather more drawbacks than benefits. After the capture on f6, Black has to take with the g-pawn, and I am very sceptically-inclined to such a decision.

3.Bxf6

The most logical continuation, although moves such as 3.d5 or 3.Nc3 are also possible. I offer the reader my really 'crazy' game against Zhelyandinov:

Trompowsky A45
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Viktor Zhelyandinov
Lviv 1977

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5 3.d5 Qb6 4.Nc3 Qxb2 5.Bd2 Qb6 6.e4 d6 7.f4 e6 8.Rb1 Qd8 9.Bb5+ Bd7 10.dxe6 fxe6 11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5 Nd5 13.Bd3 Bc6 14.Qg4 Nb4 15.Nge2 Nxd3+ 16.cxd3 Na6 17.Qxe6+ Qe7 18.Qh3 Nc7 19.0-0 Qe6 20.Qg3 0-0-0

21.Rbe1 Be7 22.Nf4 Qd7 23.Qxg7 Rhg8 24.Qxh7 Rh8 25.Qf7 Rdf8 26.Qc4 b5 27.Qb3 c4 28.Qc2 Bc5+ 29.d4 Qxd4+ 30.Kh1 Rxh2+ 31.Kxh2 Rh8+ 32.Nh3

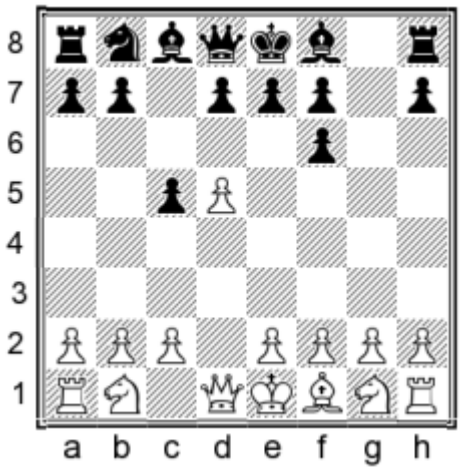
And Black lost on time.

Trompowsky A45
Mikhail Shereshevsky 2420
Albert Kapengut 2455
Minsk 1981 (5)

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5?! 3.Bxf6 gxf6

If 3...exf6 4.Nc3 Black will have problems with his d-pawn.

4.d5!



It may appear that, after exchanging his dark-squared bishop, White should keep his central pawns on dark squares, so as to limit the enemy bishop. However, it is rather more important to seize space and cramp the black position, so as to hamper the coordination of his pieces on both flanks.

4...Qb6 5.Qc1 Na6 6.e3 e6 7.c4!

The pawn on d5 should be solidly defended.

7...Bg7 8.Nc3 f5 9.Nge2

The capture 3...gxf6 has removed the pawn protection from the square h5, to which the white knight is now ready to direct itself.

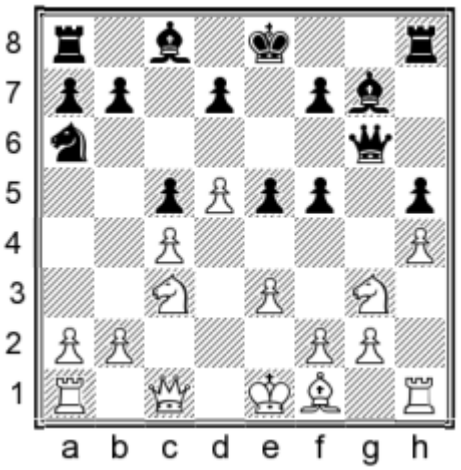
9...h5 10.h4

Naturally, White does not allow the enemy pawn to advance further. Now, instead of a weak square on h5, Black has a weak pawn.

10...e5

Now what should Black do to coordinate his pieces on the two flanks? Kapengut opens the sixth rank, but as Nimzowitsch amusingly observed, doubled pawns are a bit like a man in a wheelchair – all the while he does not move, he has no health troubles, but once he goes in motion, his problems and weaknesses become apparent. Now the pawn on f5 becomes noticeably weak.

11.Ng3 Qg6



How should White continue now? One very strong-looking idea is 12.a3 d6 13.Qc2 followed by queenside castling. White can also try to force the move ...e5-e4 and exploit the outpost on f4. But he also has something more decisive.

12.d6!!

An extremely powerful thrust. The pawn on d6 cuts the black position into two. Now a serious battle erupts around this pawn.

12...e4 13.Qd2 Be5 14.0-0-0 Rh6 15.Nb5 Rb8

Black wants to bring his knight to c6 via b4 and prepare ...a7-a6. Therefore:

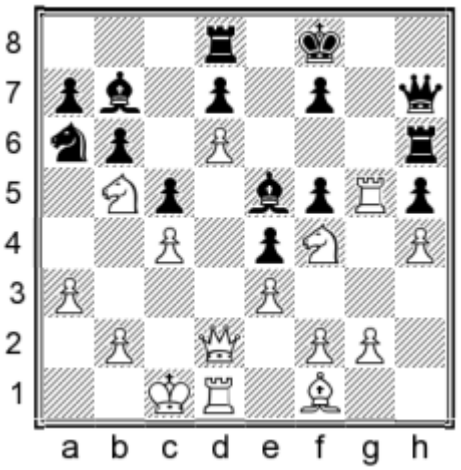
16.a3!

Now the black knight is out of play.

16...b6 17.Ne2 Bb7 18.Nf4 Qg7 19.Rh3!

White's king's rook comes into play on the kingside.

19...Kf8 20.Rg3 Qh7 21.Rg5 Rd8



Black finally comes up with a way to expel the Nb5: he plans to return his knight to its starting square and play ...a7-a6. White needs to play energetically, else it will be harder to exploit his advantage.

22.f3!

It is essential to open the position. 22.Be2 is weaker, because it is too slow.

22...Nb8

Taking the pawn with 22...exf3 23.gxf3 Bxf3 24.Be2 leads to a practically hopeless position for Black. Kapengut tries at all costs to complicate the position.

23.fxe4 a6 24.Nc3 f6

Consistent. The move 24...Rxd6 does not bring Black any relief because of 25.Ncd5 with a crushing attack for White.

25.Rxf5!

White goes along with his opponent and forces complications. I believed, justifiably, that the exchange sacrifice was the quickest and most direct way to win.

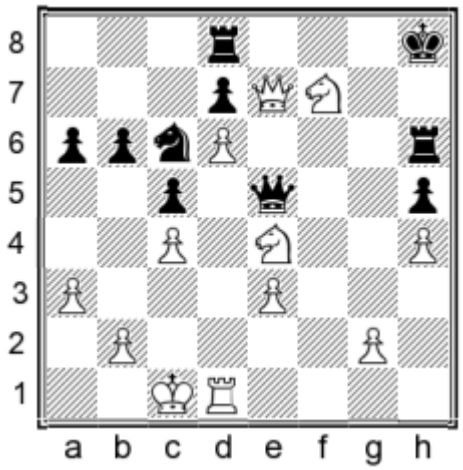
25...Bxe4 26.Rxe5 fxe5 27.Nh3 Bg6 28.Ng5 Qg7 29.Bd3

White has a large advantage in strength on the kingside. It is no surprise that his attack proves irresistible.

29...e4 30.Bxe4 Bxe4 31.Ncxe4 Qe5

This allows White to realise his dream, but in any event, Black's position is lost.

32.Qf2+ Kg8 33.Qf7+ Kh8 34.Qe7 Nc6 35.Nf7+



In the old days, when I first learned the rules and principles of chess, I had no idea that the game would become my profession and I enjoyed the process of playing rather more. I remember how much I loved it when I managed to fork king and queen with a knight, and sometimes even king, queen and rook. But I had never until this game managed to fork all four major pieces at once! And now I succeeded in doing so against a strong master!

Obviously, Black could have resigned here, but my opponent played on:

35...Kg7 36.Nxe5+ Nxe7 37.dxe7 Re8 38.Nd6! Rxe7 39.Nf5+

A game which should have been played in the Chinese 'year of the horse'!

39...Kf6 40.Nxe7 Kxe5 41.Rxd7 Rf6 42.Rd2 Ke4 43.Nd5 Rf1+ 44.Kc2

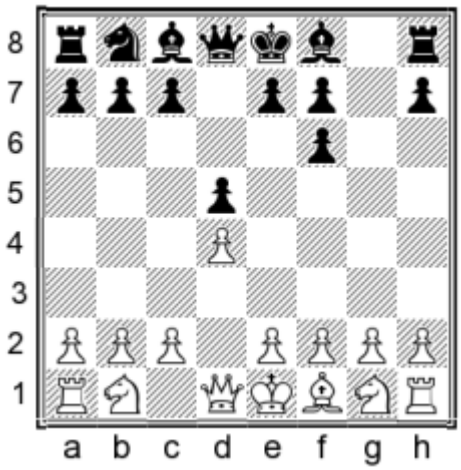
And here Black finally resigned.

Now we will direct our attention to a more solid continuation.

Trompowsky D00
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Alexander Donchenko
Lviv 1977

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 d5 3.Bxf6 gxf6

We will look at the capture 3...exf6 in the next game.



4.g3 c5 5.e3 Qb6 6.Nc3 e6 7.Rb1 Nc6 8.Nf3 Bd7 9.Bg2 cxd4 10.exd4 Qa6

An interesting psychological situation has arisen.

In positions of this type, when h5 has been weakened, it looks very sensible to bring the Nc3 to f4. Therefore, it looks natural to play 11.a3, followed by 12.Ne2, 13.0-0 and 14.Nf4.

I tried to penetrate into the essence of the position, though, and realised that on move 9, my bishop would have done better to go to h3, rather than g2, as it would have far more prospects on the former square. I therefore decided to play

11.Bf1

Waiting for my opponent to reveal his intentions.

Donchenko evidently took the move as an indirect offer of a draw and overestimated his position, although in reality, after 11...Qb6, White would have played 12.Bh3. A further achievement for White in this position is that Black spent 20 minutes considering his move.

The game continued:

11...Qa5 12.Bh3 b5 13.a3!?

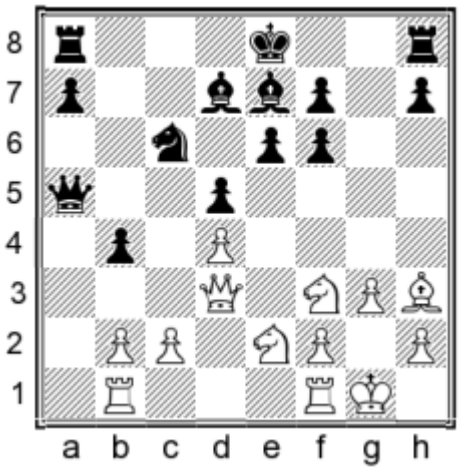
An interesting pawn sacrifice. It was possible to play simply 13.Ra1 or 13.0-0, but the text seemed to me to be more promising.

13...Bxa3 14.Qd3 Be7

White has excellent positional compensation for the sacrificed pawn after 14...Bb4 15.0-0 Bxc3 16.bxc3.

15.0-0 b4 16.Ne2

It is time to sum up the results of the opening.



White has completed his development and is prepared to fight for the initiative in the centre and on the kingside. Black has to his account an extra pawn and two bishops. However, his king is trapped in the centre of the board and cannot escape to either flank, and this promises Black many problems. It is difficult to assess the position exactly, but in practice, White's game is rather easier to play, and this usually tells.

16...Nd8?!

Donchenko tries to bring this knight to d6, but the manoeuvre seems too slow. As I have already said, Black's game is a lot harder to play than White's.

17.Rfe1 Nb7 18.Qe3!

The queen takes aim at h6, whilst strengthening the pressure down the e-file.

18...h5?! 19.Nf4 Nd6 20.Nd2!

All of the squares from which Black could demonstrate his aggressive intentions are defended in advance. The threat is 21.Nxd5 Qxd5 22.Bg2.

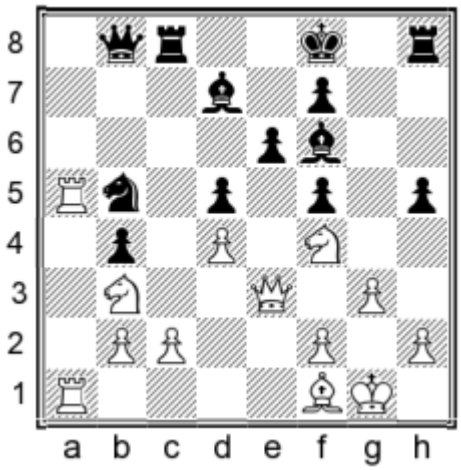
20...Rc8 21.Ra1

A mere five moves have gone, and the position has changed from being unclear to winning for White.

21...Qb5 22.Rxa7 f5

After 22...Rxc2 the knight sacrifice on e6 decides the game.

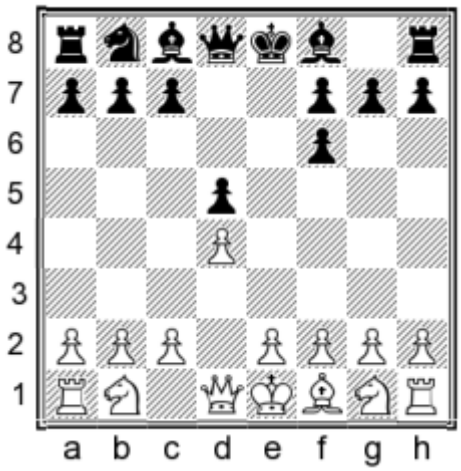
23.Bf1 Qb8?! 24.Rea1 Nb5 25.R7a5 Kf8 26.Nb3 Bf6?



Black prepares to evacuate the king to g7, but this weakens c5 fatally. The concluding attack is simple and natural.

27.Nc5 Be8 28.Bxb5 Bxb5 29.Ncxe6+! fxe6 30.Qxe6 Rh6 31.Rxb5 1-0

Now let us examine the recapture on f6 with the other pawn – **3...exf6**.



This position can be handled more or less schematically. White usually tries to develop along the lines of e2-e3, Bd3, Nd2, Ngf3 or Qf3, Ne2 followed by c2-c4. Black reacts by putting his pawns on c6 and f5, and then manoeuvring his knight via ...Nb8-d7-f6-e4. In reply to c2-c4, Black captures on c4 and gets comfortable play by using the squares d5 and e4.

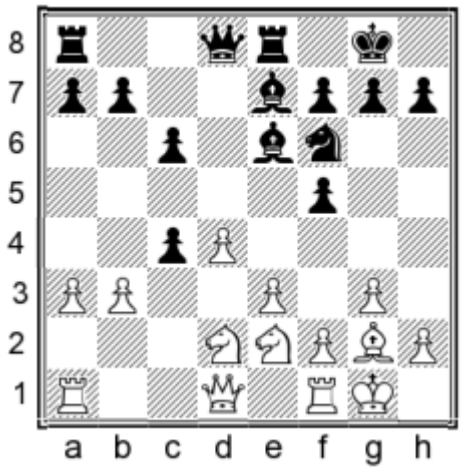
As I said earlier, in the 1980s, I set aside *Informant* and spent most of my time studying the classics. I came across a really striking concept in Alekhine's notes to one of the games from what I believe was the book on the tournament at Bled 1931, which I spent several days reading. I do not even remember the names of the players. In a position of a similar type to the above, the fourth World Champion considered it obligatory to prepare the advance c2-c4 by means of the preliminary b2-b3, so as, in the event of an exchange, to be able to recapture with the pawn. On the other hand, if Black does not take on c4, then White pushes the pawn to c5 and starts a pawn offensive on the queenside, by means of b3-b4, a2-a4, b4-b5. Now the question which arises is: how should White best place his pieces for the realisation of this plan?

It is not entirely clear that White needs his bishop on d3 in this plan. Maybe it is better on g2? If Black exchanges ...d5xc4 – b3xc4, then the position of the bishop will undoubtedly be better for White, since the b7-pawn can come under attack. On the other hand, if Black refrains from capturing, then the Bg2 will fulfil a defensive function at least, especially if the pawn advances to c5. The position will assume a closed character and White will have time to switch the bishop to the f1-a6 diagonal, to support the advance b3-b4-b5 on the queenside.

In order to find the optimal piece set-up, I needed wider tournament practice, which I lacked. I managed to get a few examples of games where Black exchanged on c4, but the positions where he did not and White advanced c4-c5, I only analysed. Now let us see some examples with the exchange and the main variations of my analysis.

Trompowsky D00
Mikhail Shereshevsky 2460
Yaroslav Ilyinsky 2200
Moscow 1979

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 d5 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 Be7 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 c6 7.Nd2 Be6 8.Ne2 Nd7 9.0-0 Re8 10.b3 f5 11.c4 Nf6 12.a3 dxc4?



Black's play in the opening could have been better – his Be7 is not great and there was no need to castle so early. But these are all minor things. The exchange on c4, on the other hand, is a serious

positional mistake, which gives White a virtually decisive positional advantage.

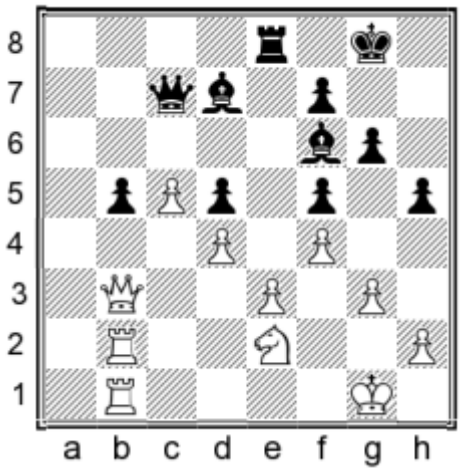
13.bxc4 Qa5?! 14.Qc2 Rad8 15.Rfb1 Bc8 16.c5!

Black has nothing with which to oppose White's queenside pressure. His bishops are doing nothing for the moment and the square d5 looks nice, but that is all.

16...Qc7 17.Nc4 g6 18.Qa4 a6 19.Rb2 Nd5 20.Rab1 Bg5?!

White's queenside pressure is becoming irresistible, but the text, which sacrifices the exchange, brings no relief at all.

21.Bxd5 cxd5 22.Nd6 b5 23.Nxe8 Rxe8 24.Qb3 Bd7 25.a4 h5 26.axb5 axb5 27.f4 Bf6



White has an extra exchange and the better position. Realising the advantage does not pose great difficulties. The game continued:

28.Kf2 Bc6 29.Ng1 g5 30.Nf3 gxf4 31.gxf4 Qe7 32.Qd3 Kh8 33.Re2 Qd7 34.Ne5 Bxe5 35.fxe5 f6 36.exf6 Re4 37.Kg1 Qe6 38.Rg2! Rxe3? 39.f7! Re1+ 40.Rxe1 Qxe1+ 41.Qf1

Black resigned.

Dutch Defence A80
Mikhail Shereshevsky 2475
Vladimir Litvinov 2365
Minsk 1988

1.d4 f5 2.Bg5

The magic bishop move is also possible against the Dutch Defence. Its tactical justification here lies in the variation 2...h6 3.Bh4 g5 4.Bg3 f4? 5.e3 e5 6.exf4 exf4 7.Bxf4 gxf4 8.Qh5+ Ke7 9.Qe5+.

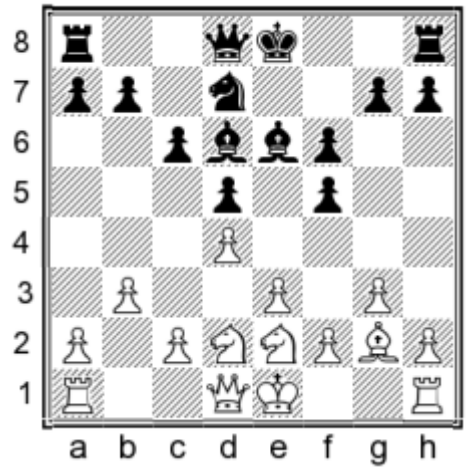
2...Nf6?!

This move is a mistake. By comparison with the position in which the pawn remains on f7, Black lacks the manoeuvre ...Nb8-d7-f6-e4. The correct reply to the bishop move is 2...d5.

3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 c6 5.Nd2

Black's last move looks like a provocation. White can advance his pawn to c5 without preparation, but after 5.c4 d5 it would be premature to play 6.c5 because of 6...b6, whilst 6.b3 leads to the creation of weaknesses on the queenside. I decided for the moment to defer consideration of these consequences and stick to my familiar scheme.

5...d5 6.g3 Bd6 7.Bg2 Be6 8.Ne2 Nd7 9.b3



White doesn't want to castle kingside before the opponent does so, fearing an attack down the h-file. I followed the plan recommended by Alekhine, temporarily leaving my king in the centre.

9...Nb6 10.Qc1 Qe7 11.a3 Rc8 12.0-0

I decided that now my queenside advance would be much more effective than any enemy counterplay on the other wing, and so it was time to castle.

12...g5 13.c4 Bb8 14.a4 dxc4

After this exchange, White accumulates further positional gains, but what else could Black do? After 14...h5 15.a5 Na8 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.Qb2 White is well ahead in developing his initiative.

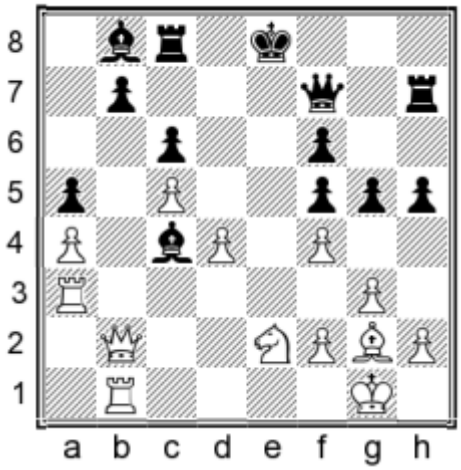
15.bxc4 Qf7 16.c5 Nd5 17.Qb2 h5 18.Rfb1 Rh7 19.Ra3 a5?

Litvinov intends to establish a barrier on the queenside with a pawn on a5 and a knight on b4, but this defensive construction has a tactical flaw. It was worth considering 19...h4, so as to obtain some sort of practical counterchances.

20.Nc4 Nf4?!

When playing his previous move, Black had been counting on this knight jump. The desperate counterattack, starting with 20...f4!?, made some definite sense, but in order to play this, Black would have had to see that the knight jump to f4 renders his position hopeless.

21.exf4 Bxc4



22.d5!

This positional pawn sacrifice suddenly allows White to bring all his pieces into the attack on the king. Almost all Black's attention has been on the queenside, where he has achieved a certain success, but his kingside is virtually defenceless.

I should add that, after playing 2.Bg5, White is forced constantly to look out for unexpected and non-standard ideas.

22...gxf4?!

The sharp change in the character of the position had a bad effect on Litvinov, added to which he was in desperate time-trouble. As a result, he loses in a few moves. Black is hardly likely to save the position after 22...Bxd5 23.Bxd5 cxd5 24.Nd4, but in any event, this offers him more chances.

23.d6!

Now the dark-squared bishop is out of play and the white rook gets the square e7.

23...Ba7 24.Nxf4 Kf8

24...Bxc5 is also hopeless because of 25.Re1+ and 26.Re7.

25.Re3 Re8 26.Rxe8+ Qxe8 27.Qxf6+ Kg8 28.Qxf5 1-0

Trompowsky D00
Mikhail Shereshevsky 2420
Eduard Barkovsky 2200
Minsk 1981 (1)

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 d5 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.Bd3

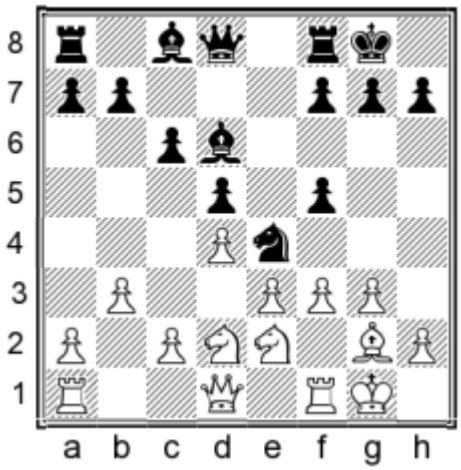
Black has developed his bishop somewhat prematurely and White seizes the chance to deprive his opponent of the bishop pair.

5...Bg6 6.Ne2 Bd6 7.0-0 Nc6?!

Now White has the chance to compromise the enemy pawn structure on the other flank as well.

8.Bb5!

In positions where a player has two bishops it is extremely important to exchange off his knights and leave him with just the two bishops. Have a look at the following position:



In this position, which can be reached after the opening moves 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 d5 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 c6 5.g3 f5 6.Bg2 Bd6 7.Ne2 0-0 8.0-0 Nd7 9.Nd2 Nf6 10.b3 Ne4 11.f3, it would be a dreadful positional mistake by Black to exchange knights with 11...Nxd2? 12.Qxd2. White can easily defend the e3-pawn. He just needs to put his king on f2 and, if necessary, a rook on e1. At a certain moment, White can underline the defect of the exchanging of the knights by the move f3-f4!, which makes Black's bishop pair useless. The drawback of the move f3-f4 is the weakening of e4, but since Black has no knights, he has nothing with which to occupy that square. White just continues with his queenside pawn advance, puts his pawn on c5, and the rest you know.

Now let us return to the game:

8...0-0 9.Bxc6 bxc6 10.Nbc3 Rb8 11.b3 Qc8 12.Nf4

White continues with his intention of exchanging off one of the bishops.

12...Rd8 13.Na4 Qf5 14.Nxg6 hxg6 15.Qd3! Qh5

16.f4!?

This may look a bit much, but it is the correct way to defend against the mating attack. White weakens the squares e3 and e4, but Black does not have a knight, with which to exploit these. In addition, White has other possibilities, such as the manoeuvre Rf1-f3-h3. On the other hand, the natural move 16.g3 would allow Black to develop the initiative on the kingside, by means of ...g6- g5-g4, ...g7-g6, ...Kg7, ...Rh8 etc.

16...Re8

White will meet 16...g5 with 17.Qf5.

17.Rf3 Re7?

Black fails to divine his opponent's intentions, and weakens the back rank, as well as shutting in his own bishop.

18.Rh3

It was worth considering 18.c4!? with the idea after 18...dxc4 19.bxc4 Rb4? of replying 20.c5 Rxa4 21.Qb3!. However, the unexpected switch of the queen from one side to the other by 19...Qa5! would allow Black to get good counterplay after 20.Nc3 Bb4 21.Nd1 c5.

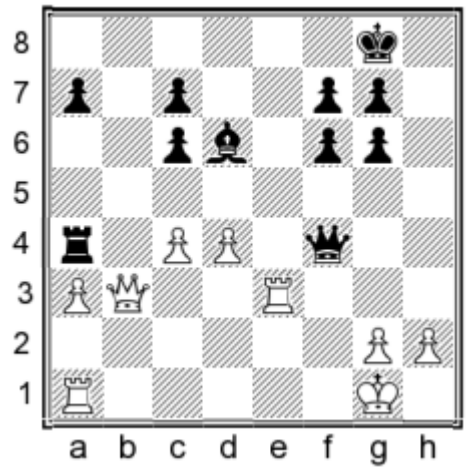
18...Qg4 19.c4 dxc4 20.bxc4 Rb4 21.a3

21.c5 is not so convincing because of 21...Bxf4! (but not 21...Re8? 22.Qa3!) 22.exf4 Re2 23.Rg3 Qxf4 24.Rf1 (24.Qxe2? Qxd4+) 24...Qxd4+ 25.Qxd4 Rxd4 26.Nc3 Rc2 – Black has three pawns for the knight and his rooks are very active.

21...Rxa4 22.Qb3 Rxe3 23.Qxe3

Stronger was 23.Rxe3, after which Black is not saved by 23...Bxf4 24.Re8+ Kh7 25.Qxa4 Bxh2+ 26.Kxh2 Qh4+ 27.Kg1 Qxd4+ 28.Kf1 Qf4+ 29.Ke2 Qg4+ 30.Ke3, and the white king evades the perpetual check.

That leaves 23...Qxf4.



analysis diagram

During the game, I calculated the variation 24.Re8+ Kh7 (bad is 24...Bf8 25.Rxf8+!) 25.Qh3+ Qh6 26.Qxh6+ gxh6 27.c5 Bf4 28.Rd1, and White has every chance to win the c7-pawn after g2-g3. In the endgame, White has good winning chances, but even so, I decided to play for the attack.

However, in the position of the last diagram, White has a beautiful way to win: 24.Qb8+ Bf8 (bad is 24...Kh7 25.Rh3+) 25.Rae1!!. The threat is a blow on f8, followed by mate on e8, and in reply to 25...Qxd4 White simply moves his king out of the pin with 26.Kh1, renewing the threat. And now if Black defends with 26...Qd6, then 27.Re7!!, and White takes on f8 anyway!

23...Rxc4?

23...Bf8 was essential.

24.Rb1

He wins at once with 24.Qe8+ Bf8 25.Re1!, and in order to defend against the threat 26.Qxf8+ Kxf8 27.Rh8#, Black must give up the queen.

24...Qe6

The only move.

25.Qg3?!

But here White could win with the paradoxical move 25.Qe1!!, and thanks to the threat of 26.Re3 White seizes the e-file.

25...g5

White threatened mate after 26.Rb8+ Bf8 27.Rh8+ Kxh8 28.Rxf8+ Kh7 29.Qh4#.

26.Qd3?!

This natural move, with the help of which White again threatens mate, in fact loses the advantage. Winning chances remain after 26.Qe1! Bf8 27.Qxe6 fxe6 28.fxg5 fxg5 29.Rb7.

26...g6 27.Re3 Qd5 28.Re8+ Kg7 29.Rbb8?!

After this 'active' move, the advantage passes to Black. White could maintain equality with 29.Qh3! Qxd4+ 30.Kh1 Bf8 31.Rxf8 Kxf8 32.Qh8+ Ke7 33.Re1+ Kd6 34.Qf8+ Kd5 35.Qxf7+ Kc5 36.fxg5 fxg5 37.Rb1!.

29...gxf4??

Black was in dreadful time-trouble and did not find the correct path. After 29...Rc1+ 30.Kf2 Qa2+ 31.Qe2 (31.Re2 Qc4 32.Ree8 Qc2+!) 31...Qxe2+ 32.Kxe2 gxf4, he would have three pawns for the exchange and White would need to suffer to make a draw. Now it ends in mate:

30.Rg8+ Kh6 31.Rh8+ Kg5 32.h4+ Kg4 33.Qh3#

Now let us examine what happens when Black avoids the trade on f6.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 Ne4

This move leads to sharp and complicated positions.

3.Bh4

3...g5

The most principled reply. Sometimes, Black plays 3...c5, 3...d5 or 3...c6 here. After 3...c5 White does best to play 4.f3 (if 4.Nd2, then 4...d5! gives Black a good game). In Shereshevsky-Gufeld, Daugavpils 1978, Black played 4...Nf6!?. If one compares this with the position arising after 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5, here the white bishop is on h4 and his pawn on f3. Now the exchange 5.Bxf6 is unfavourable for White, and Black can happily play 5...exf6!. The other exchange, 6.dxc5 Bxc5, either now or later, is certainly not what the doctor ordered, because of the holes along the g1-a7 diagonal. And after 5.Nc3 (instead of 5.Bxf6) 5...cxd4 6.Qxd4 Nc6 7.Qd2 e6 the position looks like a rather strange Sicilian. I am no expert on the Rauzer Sicilian and cannot give an exact opinion on this position, but it seems to me that Black has nothing to complain about.

Later, I came to the conclusion that White should try to exploit the two extra tempi by means of the pawn sacrifice 5.d5 Qb6 6.e4 Qxb2 (6...Nxd5? 7.Qxd5 Qxb2 8.Qxc5 Nc6 9.Qc3) 7.Nd2.

analysis diagram

In this position, I believe White has good compensation for the pawn. This conclusion was confirmed by the game Chepukaitis-Emelin, St Petersburg 2000.

If White is not inclined to this sharp sacrificial line, then he can try 5.c3. Play could continue as follows: 5...Qb6 6.Qd2 d5 7.e3 Bf5 8.g4 Bg6 9.Ne2 with a quite interesting and complicated position, which, so far as I know, has not been tested in practice.

Instead of 3...c5 another possibility is 3...d5 4.f3 Nd6. This was played in the games Shereshevsky-Kupreichik, Minsk 1979, and Shereshevsky-Tukmakov, Moscow 1981. In the first game, after 5.Nc3 Black played inaccurately – 5...c6 6.e4 Qb6 7.Rb1 g6 8.Bf2, reaching a very bad position and losing. Tukmakov reacted much more energetically: 5...c5! 6.dxc5 Nf5 7.Bf2 d4! with more than sufficient compensation for the pawn; the game ended in a convincing victory for Black.

White's fifth move is not good; instead of 5.Nc3?! he should play 5.c3!. Now the manoeuvre 5...c5 6.dxc5 Nf5 7.Bf2 is not so strong, because White controls the square d4. On the other hand, White is ahead in development and has good chances of seizing the initiative.

Finally, the move 3...c6 sets a trap: Black intends 4...Qa5+ and 5...Qh5 to compromise the enemy pawn structure. The simplest reply is 4.c3, although other moves are also possible.

Let us return to the move **3...g5.** The game may continue as follows:

4.f3 gxh4 5.fxe4 c5 6.e3

The non-standard pawn structure on both sides makes the diagram position very interesting. Here there is not so much theory as in the good old Spanish or QGD. The old game **Bondarevsky-**

Boleslavsky, Moscow 1945, is included in almost all books and because of it, the diagram position was for a long time considered to be better for Black.

After

6...Bh6 7.Qd3 Nc6 8.Nd2 cxd4 9.exd4 Qb6 10.Nb3 a5 11.a4 d5 12.Nf3 Nb4 13.Qd1 0-0 14.Bd3 Nxd3+ 15.Qxd3 Qg6 16.Nxh4 Qxe4+ 17.Qxe4 dxe4

Boleslavsky indeed obtained the advantage. However, White's play was far from ideal by modern standards. Firstly, the Nb1 should be developed to c3, whilst the coordination of the queen and the Ra1 is not helped by the move 7.Qd3.

The position after White's sixth move is extremely interesting. The powerful white pawn centre makes a great impression, especially if he can maintain the pawns where they are. The doubled black pawns are definitely a weakness, that can easily be exploited in an endgame, but for the moment White must be ready at any moment for complications.

I should like to present several games, where I succeeded in going into an endgame.

Trompowsky A45
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Boris Maryasin
Minsk 1978

6...Qb6 7.Nc3 cxd4

If 7...e6 8.Nf3 Qxb2 White can try to seize the initiative, e.g. 9.Nb5 Qb4+ 10.Kf2! Qa5 11.Ne5.

8.exd4 Nc6 9.Nf3

Very promising is 9.Nd5 Qd8 10.c3.

9...Bg7?

Black has refrained from taking on b2 for several moves in a row, fearful of his opponent's initiative. With his last move, Maryasin offers a transition into an endgame, which I was happy to accept. Better was 9...e6.

10.Nd5 Qa5+? 11.Qd2! Qxd2+ 12.Kxd2 0-0 13.c3 e6 14.Ne3

Black's two bishops do not compensate for the weakness of the doubled h-pawns. White has an excellent centre and fine piece development – effectively, a winning position!

14...Bf6 15.e5 Be7 16.d5! exd5 17.Nxd5 d6 18.Bb5 Bd8 19.exd6

An advantage in quality (position) is transformed into one of quantity (material). The rest is just a question of realisation.

19...h3 20.gxh3!

Typical of such positions. It is better not to allow the pawn to remain so deeply in the heart of White's camp.

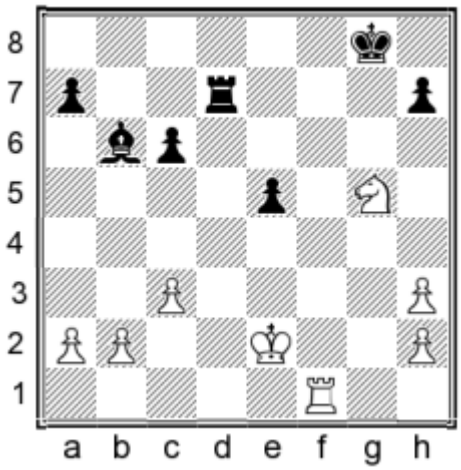
20....Be6

The capture 20...Bxh3 would hardly influence the outcome of the game.

21.Nf4 Bb6 22.Nxe6 fxe6 23.Bxc6 bxc6 24.Ke2 Rad8 25.Rad1

The position has more or less clarified and the remainder is a matter of relatively straightforward technique.

25...e5 26.Rhf1 Rf6 27.d7 Rf7 28.Ng5 Rfxd7 29.Rxd7 Rxd7



Black has even regained a pawn, but even so, his four remaining pawn islands leave him no chance of holding. Black's position is completely lost.

30.Rf6!

It is extremely handy for White to control the 6th rank, so as to force the enemy bishop to go to d8, when White has Ng5-e6 with tempo.

30...Rg7 31.h4 Rg6

The minor piece ending is just as hopeless as the rook ending.

32.Rxg6+ hxg6 33.Kf3 Kg7 34.Kg4 Be3 35.Ne4 Kh6 36.b3 Bb6 37.c4 Bd4 38.Ng5 a6 39.Ne4 Bg1 40.h3 Bd4 41.Ng3 Bf2 42.Ne4

The game was adjourned, but Black resigned, without resuming. White wins easily by advancing the pawn to h5, obtaining the f5-outpost for his king and then winning the e5-pawn.

Trompowsky A45
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Sergey Yuferov 2415
Minsk 1985

6...Bh6 7.Kf2

Better than 7.Qd3.

7...Nc6

There are other moves, such as 7...e6 and 7...cxd4, but these usually transpose to the same position. The move 7...Qb6 is inaccurate, because White plays 8.Nc3 with the threat of 9.Na4, whilst 8...cxd4 gives White the additional possibility 9.Qxd4.

Let us investigate the consequences of the moves 7...e6 and 7...cxd4. By playing 7...cxd4, Black begins exerting piece pressure on the centre and threatens the pawn on b2. Events might develop as follows: 8.exd4 Nc6 9.Nf3 Qb6 10.Nc3 Qxb2 (better are the moves 10...d6 or 10...e6, which have both been seen in practice) 11.Nb5 Kd8? (essential was 11...0-0 with double-edged play) 12.Rb1 Qxa2 13.d5!, and Black suffers material losses. For example, 13...Nb8 14.Qd4 Qxc2+ 15.Be2 Rg8 16.Rb2.

In the event of 7...e6 8.Nc3 Nc6 9.Nf3 cxd4 10.exd4 Qb6 Black's play looks more logical. But in reality, the same position can be reached in the previous variation, if Black plays 10...e6 instead of 10...Qxb2?.

analysis diagram

The strongest move here is 11.Bb5, because at a certain moment, White may wish to take the knight on c6, so as to reduce the pressure against his centre. White also has the more enterprising, but risky manoeuvre 11.Nb5?!. Canadian ice hockey players love to knock the puck into the enemy half and then all chase after it, so as to draw the opposition into their own half. This analogy has some merit here: White is prepared to send the knight deep into enemy territory and then support it with pawns. Even so, practice shows that with correct defence, Black seizes the initiative. For example, 11.Nb5 0-0! 12.c4 d6 13.Nxd6 e5 14.Qb3 exd4 (even stronger is 14...Qd8! 15.dxe5 Nxe5 16.Rd1 Ng4+) 15.Qxb6 Be3+ 16.Ke1 axb6 with somewhat better chances for Black, Alexandrov-Loginov, Kstovo 1994.

Let us return to the game Shereshevsky-Yuferov.

I had already played the same opponent in 1979, and there after 7...Nc6 I had tried 8.c3 (8.Nc3?? would be a blunder because of 8...Bxe3+). The game continued 8...Qb6 9.Qb3 cxd4 10.cxd4 (10.exd4? Bc1!) 10...Qxb3 11.axb3 e5 12.Nf3 d6; later, White obtained a large, probably decisive advantage. Evidently, Yuferov had found some sort of improvement: perhaps he wanted to sacrifice a piece for three pawns after 10...Bxe3+!? 11.Kxe3 (11.Qxe3 Qxb2+) 11...Qxd4+ 12.Ke2 Qxe4+. I decided to deviate first, because I thought the position in the 1979 game to be quite unclear.

So,

8.d5 Ne5 9.Qh5 d6 10.Bb5+ Bd7 11.Nf3 Bg7 12.a4

White has managed to seize the initiative, although one should not underestimate how solid the black position is. Yuferov should have taken the pawn with 12...Nxf3 13.gxf3 Bxb2 14.Ra2 Bf6, and although after 15.f4 the white position looks very threatening, nothing obvious is apparent: 15...a6! 16.Bxd7+ Qxd7 17.Nd2 Rg8 followed by queenside castling.

Black did not want to go into this double-edged position and preferred to go into an endgame a pawn down.

12...0-0 13.Bxd7 Qxd7 14.Nxh4 Qg4?

It was better to keep the queens on the board by 14...Kh8. But now the fate of the game is decided.

15.Qxg4 Nxg4+ 16.Kf3 Ne5+ 17.Ke2 Ng6 18.Nxg6 hxg6 19.Nd2 b6 20.c3 a6

White has an extra pawn and it is time to form a plan to realise it. It would be very naïve to advance the kingside pawns, so as to create a passed pawn. Black could obtain counterplay on the opposite side of the board. White does better first to clarify the position on the queenside, by trying to create weaknesses there, and then combine threats on both sides.

21.Ra3!

Liquidating the threat of ...b6-b5 and preparing b2-b4.

21...Rab8 22.Kd3 Bf6 23.h3

White should not hurry – there is no need to give Black a tempo to seize the h-file. In addition, it is sometimes useful to give the opponent a chance to undertake some activity.

23...Kg7 24.Rb1 Rfc8 25.Nf3 Rc7 26.b4 c4+

Now White obtains an excellent outpost on d4, but opening lines would be even more unpleasant for Black.

27.Kc2 Rh8 28.Raa1 Rcc8 29.b5 a5

Now White must prepare the manoeuvre Nf3-d4-c6. However, he needs to be careful, because Black can obtain definite counterplay with the move ...Rh4. In addition, after the exchange Nd4-Bxd4-cxd4, Black can get counterplay on the queenside in the resulting rook endgame. White should paralyse his opponent, by creating pressure on the f-file.

30.Rf1 Rh5 31.Rad1 Rd8?! 32.Rd2 Be5

Black tries to oppose his opponent's pressure on the f-file, but gives him an excellent additional possibility:

33.Nd4!

Just in time, because Black cannot advance the f-pawn.

33...Rh4 34.Rdf2 Bf6 35.Nc6 Rf8 36.Rf4

It is all over. The knight occupies c6 and the c4-pawn becomes vulnerable. There followed:

36...Bg5 37.Rxh4 Bxh4 38.e5 Re8 39.Rf4 Bg5 40.Re4 f5 41.exf6+ Kxf6 42.Kd2 e6 43.h4 Bh6 44.g4 g5 45.h5 e5 46.Rxc4 e4 47.Nd4 1-0

Trompowsky A45
Mikhail Shereshevsky 2470
Manuel Apicella 2430
Budapest 1991 (1)

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 Ne4 3.Bh4 c5 4.f3 g5 5.fxe4 gxh4 6.e3 Qb6?!

As we already know, 6...Bh6 is more accurate, forcing the white king to f2.

7.Nc3 Bh6?

This move is a mistake. Black refrained from bringing his bishop to h6 on the previous move, and in the same vein, he should now prefer 7...e6.

8.Nd5! Qd8

The French player acknowledges his mistake. There is an interesting rook sacrifice with 8...Qg6. After 9.Nc7+? Kd8 10.Nxa8 Qxe4 Black has definite compensation, but White can simply play 9.Qf3 with the idea of bringing the Ng1 to f4.

It should be pointed out that 8...Qa5+ 9.c3 e6 fails to 10.Qh5! exd5? 11.Qe5+.

9.Qh5 Bg7 10.Qxh4 cxd4 11.Qg3 Kf8

12.exd4!

I am like most players, in that I would rather attack with equal material than defend with a material advantage. During the game, I thought that the complications after 12.Nc7 dxe3 13.Nxa8 Qa5+ 14.c3! Bxc3+ 15.Ke2 would probably end in White's favour, but I did not want to go onto the

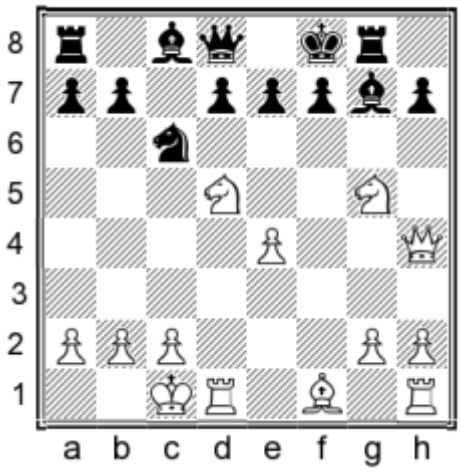
defensive. Intuitively, I made the right decision, because after 15...Qb5+! 16.Kxe3 Qxb2 17.Rd1 d6, Black's attack more than compensates for his material deficit.

To complete the picture, I should add that after 13.0-0-0! (instead of 13.Nxa8) 13...Rg8 14.Kb1 Bh6 15.Qh4 Qxc7 16.Qxh6+ Rg7 17.Qxe3 White's chances are still preferable, but the game continuation is much stronger.

12...Bxd4 13.0-0-0 Rg8 14.Qh4

Even better than 14.Qc7 Bb6 15.Qf4 Nc6 (15...e6? loses to 16.Qh6+! Rg7 17.Nf6 Be3+ 18.Qxe3 Qxf6 19.Qc5+) 16.Nf3.

14...Nc6 15.Nf3 Bg7 16.Ng5



16...h6?

The decisive mistake in a bad position.

Black's last move is too optimistic and ignores his opponent's tactical threats. More tenacious was 16...Ne5, although this does not save the game.

17.Nxf7! Kxf7 18.Qh5+ Kf8 19.Bc4

There is no defence to the attack by the white rook. There followed

19...Bxb2+ 20.Kxb2 Kg7 21.Nc7! Rf8 22.Rhf1!

Black resigned.

It remains for us to analyse a few moves, which change the move order in the main lines. For example, Black can play 6...Nc6, and after 7.Nc3 Bh6

White no longer has 8.Kf2 because of 8...Bxe3+. However, he can play 8.d5! Nb8 9.e5 Bxe3 10.Bc4 with a deadly initiative for the pawn.

Sometimes Black plays 6...cxd4 7.exd4 e5.

Here a very strong retort is 8.Qh5! d6 9.Nf3 Rg8 (Ker-Kulashko, Oakland 1997) 10.Nc3!.

Also interesting is 8.Bc4!?, with excellent attacking chances; this position needs thorough analysis.

I am not trying to prove that White gains an advantage with 2.Bg5. If that were the case, the move would be seen in every other game in world championship matches. But the reader will already appreciate that one inaccurate move can bring Black into genuine difficulties. In addition, White does not need to play for complications, but can calmly play for an advantage in the endgame. I would like my readers to create their own opening theory, apart from the generally accepted theory of this variation, which, of course, can later be refined.

Now we will look at the move

2...e6

3.e4

White needs to play this, else the bishop move makes no sense.

3...h6

Some time ago, I analysed the move 3...c5 and did not manage to find anything convincing for White after 4.e5 h6. I decided to play this as Black against GM Lputian in the 1984 Armed Forces Championship, but after 4.d5! h6 5.Bxf6 Qxf6 6.Nc3 a6 7.Nf3 e5? 8.a4 b6 9.Bd3 d6 10.Nd2, I only managed to save the game with a great deal of effort and the help of my opponent.

Trompowsky A45
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Ivica Raicevic
Doiran 1992

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 e6 3.e4 h6 4.Bxf6 Qxf6 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Qd2 c5!?

An interesting decision. Black tries to attack the white centre immediately, without allowing the move f2-f4.

7.e5 Qe7 8.a3 Ba5

After 8...cxd4 9.axb4 dxc3 10.Qxc3 0-0 11.b5 White is somewhat better.

9.b4!

White needs to play energetically, otherwise Black will wreck what remains of the white centre and keep his bishop pair.

9...cxd4

If 9...cxb4, then 10.Nb5 Nc6 11.axb4 Bxb4 12.c3 Ba5 13.Nd6+.

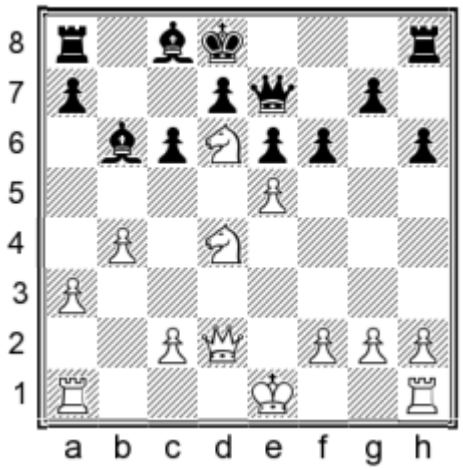
10.Nb5 Bb6 11.Nd6+ Kd8 12.Nf3

It is worth considering 12.f4, as played in several later games.

12...Nc6

An interesting alternative is 12...f6!?.

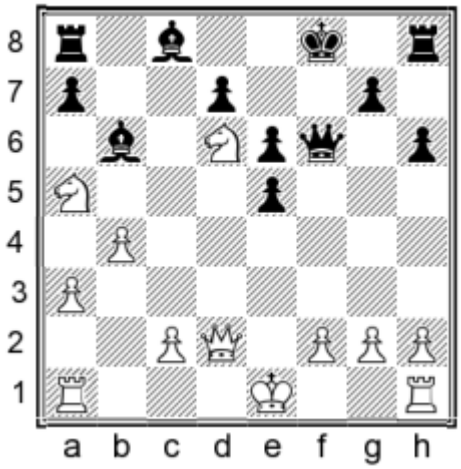
13.Bb5 f6 14.Bxc6 bxc6 15.Nxd4



15...Kc7?

Up to now, both players have played well, but here Black should cold-bloodedly have taken the e5-pawn. After 15...fxe5 16.N6f5 Qf6 17.Nxc6+ Ke8

(17...Kc7? 18.Qd6+ Kb7 19.Na5+ Bxa5 20.bxa5) 18.Nd6+ Kf8 19.Na5! (19.Ne4? Qh4 20.Qd6+ Kg8 21.Ne7+ Kf7) a very interesting position is reached:



analysis diagram

This is the critical position for the assessment of both sides' play. It deserves a detailed analysis, but I definitely prefer White.

However, let us return to the game.

16.Nf3 fxe5 17.0-0-0 Rf8 18.Nxe5 Rxf2 19.Qc3

The principle 'do not hurry' in action: White strengthens the pressure, whilst retaining all his threats. Unfortunately, I overlooked some hidden counterplay, after which I started cursing myself for playing too abstractly and not playing another promising continuation, which I had seen at the board: 19.Nxc8 Kxc8 20.Qc3, and Black cannot defend the square d7. However, the text move is objectively stronger.

19...Re2! 20.Kb1

White cannot take on c8 because of 20...Qg5+.

20...Re3

Now 20...Qg5 is met by 21.Ne8+.

21.Qb2 Ba6

Black's ingenuity allows him to avoid an immediate catastrophe.

22.b5?!

This is an inaccuracy, the result of poor calculation of variations. It was not so hard to find 22.Ndc4!, after which the variation 22...Bxc4 23.Rxd7+ Qxd7 24.Nxd7 Kxd7 25.Qxg7+ Kc8 26.Rd1 Bd5 27.Rf1 leads to an easy win for White.

22...Rb8?

In time-trouble, the Yugoslav GM commits the decisive mistake. It was essential to play 22...cxb5, and now after 23.Nf5 exf5 24.Rxd7+ Qxd7 25.Nxd7 Kxd7 26.Qxg7+ Kc6 27.Rd1 there is 27...Bc8!. We both missed this possibility, thanks to which the advantage swings over to Black. Admittedly, instead of 23.Nf5? much stronger was 23.Rhf1! Rd8 24.Nxb5+ Bxb5 25.Qxb5 with irresistible threats, but I am not sure I would have managed to find this over the board.

But after 22...Rb8? White retains a material advantage and wins without any trouble. The game ended as follows:

23.Nf5 exf5 24.Rxd7+ Qxd7 25.Nxd7 Kxd7 26.Qxg7+ Ke6 27.Qxh6+ Ke7 28.Qf4 Rb7 29.Qg5+ Ke6 30.Qg6+ Ke5 31.bxa6 Rb8 32.Rf1 Bd4+ 33.Kc1 Rf8 34.Qg7+ Rf6 35.g4 Kd5 36.Rd1 Rxa3 37.Rxd4+ 1-0

I do not want to imply that White just plays 2.Bg5 and wins, so here is a game where Black is victorious.

Trompowsky D00
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Vlatko Bogdanovski
Doiran 1992

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 d5 3.Bxf6 exf6 4.e3 Be6 5.Nd2 c6 6.Bd3 Bd6

White decides to develop his bishop to d3, whilst Black wants to bring his knight to f6 immediately after playing ...f6-f5, and to avoid the need to defend the f5-pawn with the move ...g7-g6. But at the same time, he allows White to advance the e-pawn.

7.Ne2

Here and on the following move, White could play e3-e4, but this would lead to a completely different position.

7...Nd7 8.b3 f5 9.c4 Nf6 10.Qc2 Ne4

Black has managed to do without the move ...g7-g6.

11.0-0 0-0 12.c5 Bc7 13.b4

White follows basic positional lines. Black needs to seek counterplay on the other side of the board.

13...Bd7 14.a4 Re8 15.Nf3 Re6 16.b5 Rh6

Black threatens a bishop sacrifice and forces White to weaken his kingside.

17.g3 Qe7 18.bxc6 bxc6 19.Rab1 Bc8

20.a5?

It is not easy to imitate Tigran Petrosian. White does not sense the danger and continues obliviously with his queenside play. My last move is equivalent to the ancient Japanese ritual of hara-kiri. I was in very bad form and only calculated variations like the following: 20...Bxa5? 21.Qa4 Bc7 22.Ba6, after which White's queenside initiative grows. It was essential to concern myself with prophylaxis on the kingside, e.g. h2-h4, Kg2, Rh1, and then think about playing on the opposite wing.

20...g5!

Straight for the bullseye. Black is ready to open the position with ...f5-f4, and the move 21.Rfe1 does not stop this, because Black takes on a5 with tempo. In this game, White does not manage to cope with his opponent's kingside attack and loses effectively without any battle at all. Time-trouble is scarcely the reason for this.

21.a6 f4 22.exf4 gxf4 23.Qc1 Bg4 24.Ne5 Bxe5 25.dxe5 Bxe2 26.Bxe2 Qxe5 27.Rb7 Rf6 28.Qb2 Qxb2 29.Rxb2 f3 30.Bd1 Nxc5 31.Ra2 Rb8 32.Ra5 Rb5 33.Ra3 Ne4 34.Re1 Rb1 35.Rd3 Ra1 36.R1e3 Nc3

White resigned.

Now let us consider the final 'one-off' system in this book, which starts with the moves 1.e4 c5 2.d3.

How did I end up starting a game like this? In the late 1970s and early 1980s, my highly talented pupil Peter Korzubov achieved some excellent results. For example, he won the 1978 qualifying tournament for the World Cadet Championship, ahead of such players as Andrey Sokolov, Jaan Ehlvest and Igor Novikov. In the championship itself, he finished

fourth, just one place behind Nigel Short. Korzubov fulfilled two IM norms, but had only played 22 games, whereas FIDE required a minimum of 24. There seemed no doubt that he would get the IM title at the next opportunity, but then something quite unforeseen happened. Suddenly his health deteriorated sharply, and he was discharged from the army ahead of time. Korzubov continued to play in tournaments from time to time, but he was far from the player he had once been.

I have related this sad story because Korzubov preferred 1.e4, not 1.d4, but avoided sharp Sicilian lines and aimed for quiet, positional continuations. He often obtained positions lacking in prospects. I sometimes joked with him, 'Petya, I have to laugh when I see you put your knight on b3, and then try to find a way of returning it to f3!'. This was a reference to the Najdorf variation of the Sicilian.

Korzubov was an experienced master, playing in the first league of the national championship, and at that level it was not easy to change his opening repertoire in a couple of weeks. I therefore had the idea that it made sense in some way to try to avoid the normal theory of the Sicilian. I thought about reversed openings. We worked a lot on the following move-order against the English: 1.c4 d6 2.d4 e5. Now the exchange of queens is not frightening for Black, because his knight is not on f6, and after 3.dxe5 dxe5 4.Qxd8+ Kxd8 5.Nf3 Black can simply play 5...f6.

This is unlike the line 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nc3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Nf3 Nbd7, where White has the excellent plan of pushing his g-pawn.

In addition, we played over some games of Larsen, where the Danish GM played a very interesting plan: 1.c4 d6 2.d4 e5 3.Nf3 e4 4.Nfd2 f5 5.Nc3 Nf6 6.e3 c6 7.f3 d5 8.Qb3 Be7 9.Be2 0-0 10.fxe4 fxe4 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.Ndxe4 Nxe4 13.Nxe4 Nc6, with good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. I do not remember whether Larsen actually played this sacrifice or just recommended it, but it occurred to me that one could play this way as White. I tried out this variation in the Belarusian Championship in 1983 against Mochalov:

Sicilian Defence B25
Mikhail Shereshevsky 2475
Evgeny Mochalov 2430
Minsk 1983 (4)

1.e4 c5 2.d3 Nc6 3.f4 d5 4.Be2

The most accurate move-order for White in this variation.

4...Nf6 5.e5 Nd7 6.Nf3 e6 7.c3 f6 8.d4 Qb6 9.0-0

We have reached a position which I had aimed for in my preparation. In the French Defence with 3.Nd2 Nf6, White would not be able to reach such a position, because of the undefended d4-pawn, whilst in the variation with 3.e5 he does not have time for the move f2-f4. Here, however, thanks to having lost a tempo by moving his d-pawn to d4 in two moves instead of one, the white knight is still on b1! The only minus is the temporarily undefended e5-pawn, but accepting the sacrifice is extremely dangerous for Black.

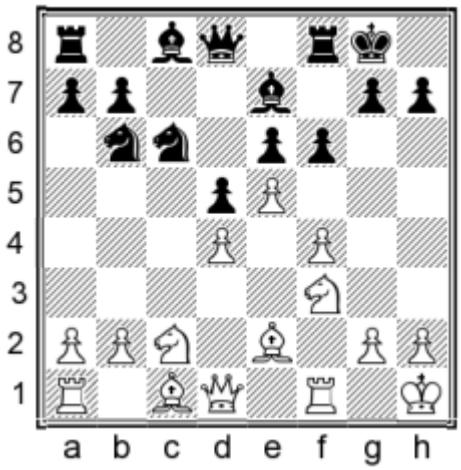
9...Be7

Mochalov declines the sacrifice. The principled variation 9...fxe5 will be examined in the next game.

10.Kh1 0-0 11.Na3

Black has not managed to create counterplay against the white king, of the sort which is characteristic of analogous positions in the French Defence, and now White's advantage (consisting of his extra space) is obvious.

11...cxd4 12.cxd4 Qd8 13.Nc2 Nb6



14.exf6!

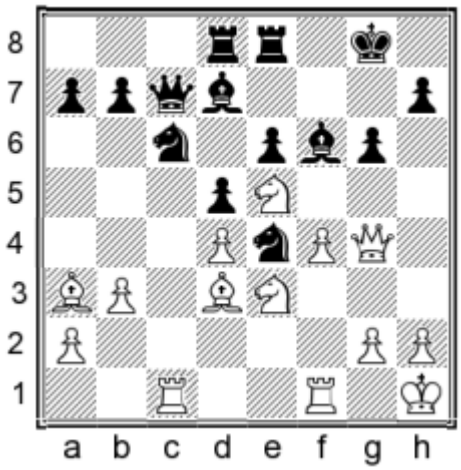
The very moment when the black knight is unable to recapture on f6 is exactly the time to change the pawn structure.

14...Bxf6 15.b3 Bd7 16.Bd3 Nc8 17.Qe2 Nd6 18.Ba3 Qc7 19.Ne5 g6 20.Rac1

White's advantage has been growing with every move and is now decisive. One can point to various small inaccuracies in Black's play, but my impression is that White's game is very easy to play in this variation, whilst Black's position deteriorates straight after the opening.

20...Rfe8 21.Qg4 Ne4 22.Ne3 Rad8

In defending against the threat of 23.Nxd5, Black misses a tactical blow.



23.Nxg6

This practically ends the game. After 23...hxg6 24.Qxg6+ Bg7 the quickest way to win is 25.Bxe4 dxe4 26.d5. However, I had not played in a tournament for over a year and was in very bad form; this explains the miracle which now unfolds.

23...Bg7 24.Bxe4?!

A far from obligatory exchange. Why did I open the d-file?

24...dxe4 25.Ne5 Bc8 26.Nxc6?

A nightmare of a move. After 26.Qh5, with the idea of including the Ne3 in the attack, the game ends at once.

26...bxc6 27.Bc5? e5!

I had completely missed this move.

28.f5 exd4 29.Nc4

Look what I have done to my totally winning position! Fortunately, I managed to pull myself together and in mutual time-trouble created a winning attack.

29...Kh8

A time-trouble lapse. After 29...Rd5! 30.b4 e3, Black has the advantage.

30.Qg5

White gets the advantage after 30.Rce1! e3 31.Qh4.

30...Rd5 31.Nd6! Ree5

31...Rxd6 fails to 32.Bxd6 Qxd6 33.f6, and 33...Bf8? (similar is 33...Qf8) is bad because of 34.f7 and 35.Qg8#.

32.Nb5! Qd7?

If 32...cxb5, then 33.Bf8!. The knight jump fazed Black and he did not find the correct retreat 32...Qf7!, after which he would have retained the better chances.

33.Bxd4 Rxb5 34.Bxe5 Rxe5 35.Rcd1 Rd5 36.Rxd5 Qxd5 37.Qe7! Qg8 38.f6

A quick win follows 38.Rd1! Bf8 39.Qe8.

38...Bf8 39.Qxe4 Qe6 40.Qd4 c5?

A blunder on the last move of the time control! After 40...Qf7 White would have to show good technique to win the game.

41.Qd8 Kg8 42.f7+ Kg7 43.Qg5+

And Black resigned. After 43...Qg6 White wins with 44.Qe5+ Kh6 45.Qe8.

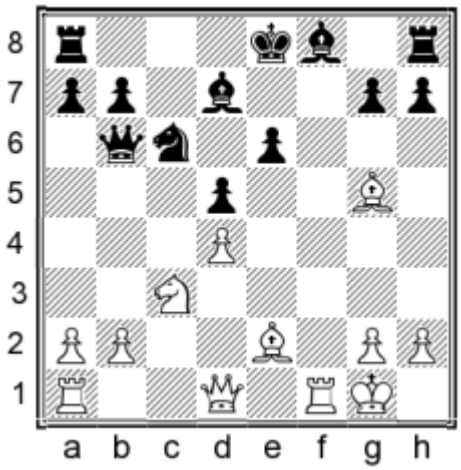
When the Belarusian team prepared together for the USSR people's Spartakiad in 1983, I showed this system with 2.d3 to GM Viktor Kupreichik, who used it successfully several times.

Sicilian Defence
Viktor Kupreichik 2475
Jaan Ehlvest 2480
Moscow 1983

1.e4 c5 2.d3 e6 3.f4 d5 4.Be2 Nc6 5.Nf3 Nf6 6.e5 Nd7 7.c3 f6 8.d4 Qb6 9.0-0 cxd4 10.cxd4 fxe5 11.fxe5 Ndxe5 12.Nxe5 Nxe5

Ehlvest accepts the bait.

13.Nc3 Bd7 14.Bg5 Nc6



The diagram position looks extremely attractive for White, but it is far from easy to find the correct way to develop the initiative. In the present game, Kupreichik did not manage to solve this problem.

15.Bb5?

The bishop should have been used from the other side: 15.Bh5+! g6 16.Bf6! (if 16.Qf3, hoping for 16...Qxd4+? 17.Kh1 Be7 18.Qf7+ Kd8 19.Bxe7+ Nxe7 20.Be2, when the two extra pawns do not save Black, there is 16...Be7! 17.Qf7+ Kd8 18.Bxe7+ Nxe7 19.Qf6 Re8 20.Bg4 Rc8 with a double-edged position) 16...Rg8 17.Na4! Qb4 18.a3 Qd6 19.Bg4 with more than sufficient compensation for the pawn.

Kupreichik had an original idea for continuing the attack in the endgame, but it succeeds only because of a mistake by Black.

15...Qxd4+ 16.Qxd4 Nxd4 17.Bxd7+ Kxd7 18.Rf7+ Ke8?

Now all is well with White: he recovers one of the sacrificed pawns, whilst retaining a strong attack. Much stronger was 18...Kc6!, e.g. 19.Rc1 Bc5 20.Kh1 Raf8 21.Rxg7 Nf5, and the Rg7 is lost. After 18...Kc6 Black beats off the attack, retaining his extra material.

19.Rxb7 h6?

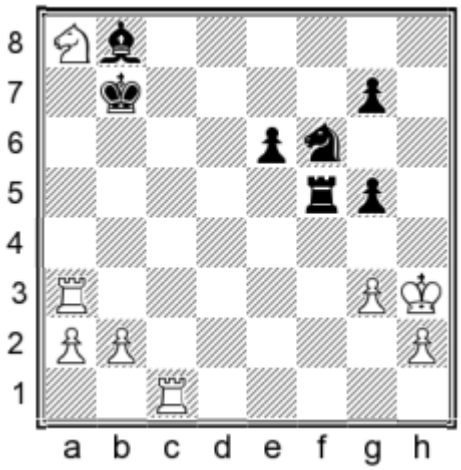
20.Nxd5! hxg5 21.Nc7+ Kd7 22.Nxa8+ Kc8 23.Rxa7 Kb8 24.Ra4! Kb7

If 24...Bc5, then 25.Ra5 (25.b4? Ne2++ 26.Kf1 Bd4) 25...Bb4 26.Rxg5 Kxa8 27.Rxg7, retaining winning chances.

25.Rf1 Ne2+ 26.Kf2 Nf4 27.Kf3 Bd6 28.Rd1 Nd5 29.Re1 Re8 30.g3 Bb8 31.Rc1 Re7 32.Ra5 Rf7+ 33.Kg4 Rf5 34.Ra3?

After this incautious move, White could have come under attack and been forced to save himself. It was essential to play 34.Rcc5.

34...Nf6+ 35.Kh3



35...Bd6?

Correct was 35...Rf2! with the threat of 36...g4+ 37.Kh4 Rf5!, and White himself cannot play 36.g4 because of mate on h2. There only remains 36.Rb3+ Kxa8 37.Rc8 g4+ 38.Kh4 Rf5 (both 39...Rh5#, and 39...g5# are threatened) 39.Rcxb8+ Ka7 40.R8b7+ Ka8 (but not 40...Ka6? 41.R3b6+ Ka5 42.b4+ Ka4 43.Ra7+) 41.Rb8+, and the game ends in perpetual check.

36.Rb3+ Kxa8 37.Rc6 Bc5 38.g4 Rd5 39.Ra6+ Ba7 40.Rxe6 Rd7 41.Re5 Rd5 42.Re7 1-0

Soon the pawn sacrifice was tested in another game.

Sicilian Defence B20
Peter Korzubov 2450
Lembit Oll 2445
Tallinn 1983

Black tried a different move-order in the opening.

1.e4 c5 2.d3 e6 3.f4 d5 4.Be2 Nf6 5.e5 Nfd7 6.c3 Nc6 7.Nf3 f6 8.d4 Qb6 9.0-0 cxd4 10.cxd4 fxe5 11.fxe5 Ndxe5 12.Nxe5 Nxe5 13.Nc3 Nc6?

Here White does have to put the bishop on b5, but that is fine – the move practically wins.

14.Bb5 Bd7 15.Bxc6! bxc6 16.Bg5 e5?

Oll's decision to provoke an immediate crisis brings down a catastrophe on his head, but Black's position is virtually hopeless anyway.

17.Na4

Korzubov chooses a quiet positional path. Instead of this, he could have carried out an effective combination: 17.Qh5+ g6 18.Rxf8+! Black cannot take the rook with the king by 18...Kxf8 because of 19.Qh6+ Kf7 20.Rf1+ Kg8 (20...Bf5 21.Rxf5+ gxf5 22.Qf6+ Kg8 23.Qe6+ Kg7 24.Bh6#) 21.Bf6, so he has to play 18...Rxf8. But then 19.Qxh7 Qxd4+ 20.Kh1 Qc5 21.Qxg6+ Rf7 22.Re1! wins. Admittedly, Korzubov's chosen line also leaves Black without any real chance of saving himself.

There followed:

17...Qb4 18.a3 Qd6 19.dxe5 Qg6 20.Be3?!

An inaccuracy; much stronger was 20.e6! Qxg5 21.exd7+ Kxd7 22.Qb3.

20...Bf5?

More tenacious was 20...Be7!.

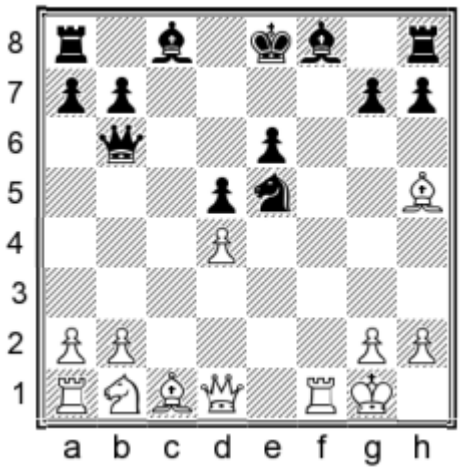
21.Qf3 Bd3 22.Rf2 Be7 23.Bc5 Bh4 24.g3 Rb8 25.Bd6 Rb5 26.Nc5 Rxc5 27.Bxc5 Bd8 28.e6 Be7 29.Bxe7 Kxe7 30.Qe3 1-0

Another pupil of mine, Alexander Riskin, demonstrated a lovely idea in this variation, during a rapid tournament in Poland.

Sicilian Defence B20
Alexander Riskin
Kucynski
Opole 1991

Instead of the move 13.Nc3 from the previous two games, Riskin played

13.Bh5+!?



There followed

13...g6 14.Kh1! Nc6

If 14...Nf7, then 15.Qf3 Qc7 16.Nc3 gxh5 17.Bd2! Nd6 18.Nxd5! exd5 19.Rae1+ Be7 20.Qf6 Rg8 21.Bg5 with decisive threats.

15.Qf3 Be7 16.Bh6! Bd7

16...gxh5 is bad because of 17.Bg7.

17.Qf7+ Kd8 18.Bg4 Kc7

More tenacious was 18...Nxd4, although after 19.Nd2 Re8 20.Be3 White's initiative more than compensates for the two-pawn deficit.

19.Nc3 Raf8 20.Bxf8 Rxf8 21.Qxh7 Qxb2 22.Rfc1

With a winning position for White.

Let us look at a few more games in this variation.

Sicilian Defence B20
Peter Korzubov 2450
Semen Dvoirys 2415
Vilnius 1984 (15)

1.e4 c5 2.d3 e6

In the game Korzubov-Glek, Minsk 1983, Black played 2...Nc6. The game continued: 3.f4 d5 4.Be2 Nd4 5.Nf3 Nxe2 6.Qxe2 e6 7.exd5 Qxd5 8.Nc3 Qd8 9.Be3 Nf6 10.d4 Qa5 11.0-0-0, and now Black could not find anything better than the pawn sacrifice 11...c4. After 12.Qxc4 Bb4 13.Qb5+ Bd7 14.Qxa5 Bxa5 15.Bd2 Bc6 16.Rhf1 Bxc3 17.Bxc3 Ne4 18.Bd2 Bd5 19.b3 b5 20.Ba5 f6 21.Ne1, his activity had come to nothing and White realised his material advantage.

3.f4 d5 4.Be2 Nc6 5.c3 Nf6 6.e5 Nd7 7.Nf3 b5 8.Na3 Rb8 9.Nc2 b4 10.d4 bxc3 11.bxc3 Be7 12.0-0 0-0

This type of position reminds one very strongly of the French Defence. Black has opened lines on the queenside, so he can try to follow Nimzowitsch's advice and undermine the base of the enemy pawn chain. But White has many trumps. His space advantage and the advanced pawn on e5 are excellent preconditions for an attack on the enemy king. White has solidly defended his central points and also has his pieces excellently coordinated. Objectively, the position is about equal and a tense battle can be expected.

13.Bd2

A good prophylactic move, strengthening the pawn on c3.

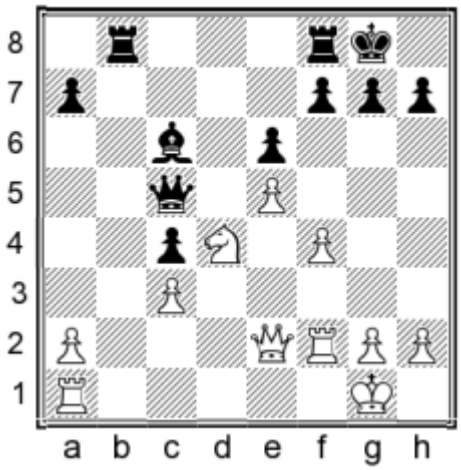
13...Nb6 14.Ne3 Na5 15.Bd3 Nac4 16.Qe2 Bd7

Black's manoeuvres look very natural. In the event of 16...cxd4, Black must reckon with the reply 17.Nxd4.

17.Nxc4 Nxc4 18.Bxc4 dxc4 19.Be3 Qa5 20.dxc5 Bxc5?

Better was 20...Qxc3!, when after 21.Rfc1 Qa3 the pawn on c4 is invulnerable. In this case, Black's chances would even be preferable.

21.Bxc5 Qxc5+ 22.Rf2 Bc6 23.Nd4



The position has clarified. The white knight is much stronger than Black's bishop and this advantage will be long-lasting.

23...g6 24.Qe3 Bd5 25.Nf5! Rfc8 26.Qxc5 Rxc5 27.Nd6 a5 28.Rd2 Kf8 29.Kf2 Ke7 30.Ke3 Bc6 31.Rad1! Ba4 32.Ne4 Rc7 33.Rf1 Bc6 34.Nd6 f6?

Black's play over the past ten moves could be strengthened here and there, but the character of the position has not greatly changed. Dvoirys was in time-trouble and with his last move he sharply changes the position. But as sometimes happens, the cure proves worse than the disease, and the patient dies. Black had to play 34...h5, so as to reduce the number of pawns on the kingside and maintain passive defence.

35.g4 Rf8 36.Rff2!

Korzubov again finds a clear and exact move to increase his positional pressure.

36...Bd7 37.g5 fxe5?

Black had no need to open the position. He has clearly lost control of the position and plays the remainder of the game poorly. Mind you, even after 37...f5 Black's position is very difficult to hold.

38.fxe5 Rc5 39.Rxf8 Kxf8 40.Ne4 Rc7 41.Nf6 Ba4 42.Rd8+ Kg7 43.Rg8+ Kf7 44.Rh8 1-0

The following game is strikingly similar. I give it without commentary.

Sicilian Defence B20
Peter Korzubov 2450
Alexander Petrushin 2415
Tallinn 1983

Black played the opening originally and well, and obtained an excellent position. Later, in the middlegame, Korzubov confidently outplayed his opponent, starting with 24.Be3!.

1.e4 c5 2.d3 Nc6 3.f4 Nf6 4.Nf3 d5 5.e5 Ng4 6.Be2 f6 7.h3 Nh6 8.0-0 fxe5 9.fxe5 g6 10.c3 d4 11.Qb3 Bg7 12.Nbd2 b6 13.Ne4 Na5 14.Qc2 dxc3 15.bxc3 0-0 16.Bg5 Bb7 17.Nd6 Bc6 18.Qd2 Nf5 19.Nxf5 Rxf5 20.Bh6 Qc7 21.d4 cxd4 22.cxd4 Bd5 23.Rac1 Qd7

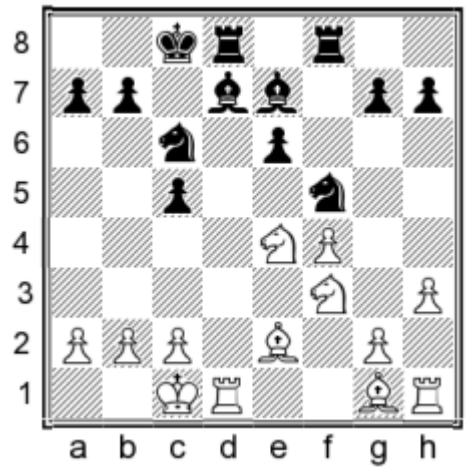
24.Be3 Raf8 25.Qc2 R5f7 26.Kh2 e6 27.Nd2 Rxf1 28.Bxf1 Bb7 29.Qb2 Qd5 30.Rc7 Qd8 31.Qc1 Rf5 32.Nf3 Bf8 33.Bd3 Rf7 34.Rxf7 Kxf7 35.Ng5+ Kg8 36.Nxe6 Qd5 37.Nf4 Qxa2 38.Bb1 Qf7 39.e6 Qe7 40.Ba2 Kh8 41.d5 Qd6

Black sealed his last move, but then resigned without resuming.

So as to illustrate the possible course of the game without queens, here is a game where White easily demonstrated the superiority of the pawn on e4 over that on c5.

Sicilian Defence B20
Viktor Kupreichik 2480
Elmar Magerramov 2425
Moscow 1983 (7)

1.e4 c5 2.d3 Nc6 3.f4 d5 4.Be2 dxe4 5.dxe4 Qxd1+ 6.Bxd1 Nf6 7.Nc3 e6 8.Be3 Bd7 9.Nf3 0-0-0 10.Be2 Be7 11.0-0-0 Ng4 12.Bg1 f5 13.h3 Nh6 14.exf5 Nxf5 15.Ne4 Rhf8



16.c3 Nh4 17.Nxh4 Rxf4 18.Nd6+ Bxd6 19.g3 Rxh4 20.gxh4 Bf4+ 21.Kc2 b6 22.Bh2 e5 23.Bg4 Bxg4 24.Rxd8+ Nxd8 25.hxg4 Bxh2 26.Rxh2 Kd7 27.Rf2 Ke7 28.Kd3 Nf7 29.Ke4 1-0

I once managed to test a modification of the 2.d3 system:

Sicilian Defence
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Leonid Yurtaev 2365
Gomel 1983

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d5 3.exd5 Qxd5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Nc3

In a similar position with colours reversed, Black often refrains from attacking the queen at once and instead fianchettoes the bishop and only then develops his knight to c6. But I decided that, with an extra tempo, it made sense to attack the queen at once.

5...Qd8

Again, there is a small difference from the position with reversed colours. White often retreats the queen to d2, so as to bring his QB to the long diagonal on b2. Here, however, that would be a very brave decision, given Black's lag in development.

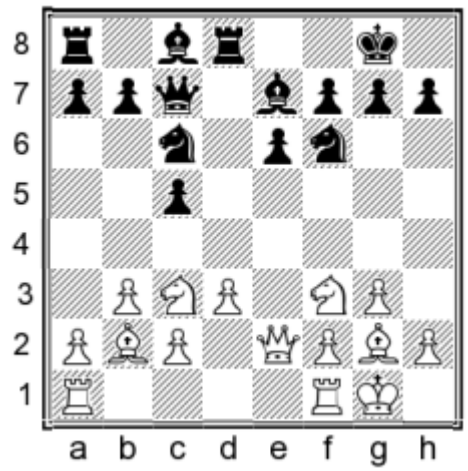
6.g3 Nf6 7.Bg2 e6

Very modest, but necessary. On e5, the pawn would be an object of attack.

8.0-0 Be7 9.b3!

White should have in mind the advance d3-d4. After the opening of the position, his fianchettoed bishops will develop maximum strength.

9...0-0 10.Bb2 Qc7 11.Qe2 Rd8



12.Rad1

Black needs to transfer his Bc8 to e8, so as to complete his development and coordinate his rooks. However, the move 12...Bd7 closes the d-file and allows White to play 13.d4, after which Black would suffer under the gaze of the white bishops, with the 'Catalan' bishop on g2 being especially dangerous. Even so, Black should have played this anyway. Yurtaev, however, thought for half an hour and instead decided to change the pawn structure.

12...Nd4?! 13.Nxd4 cxd4 14.Nb5 Qb6 15.a4 Bc5

Now it was my turn to think seriously about the position. It was necessary at all costs to find a way of preventing Black from completing his development.

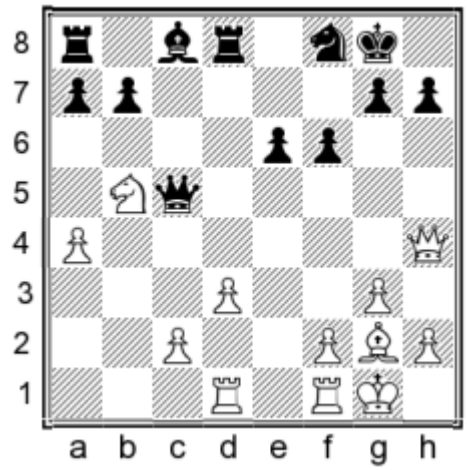
16.Qe5!

The pawn on d4 and the square c7 are both attacked.

16...Nd7 17.Qg5 f6 18.Qh4 Nf8

Black is ready to complete his development and equalise the position. I again had to seek a tactical solution.

19.b4! Bxb4 20.Bxd4 Bc5 21.Bxc5 Qxc5



White has obtained a definite advantage, but Black threatens 22...a6, and it could turn out that he can pose serious resistance. White's next move solves the problem.

22.Qc4!!

It is always nice to play such moves. Sometimes, they are more effective than the most brilliant combination.

22...Qxc4?!

Black follows the line of least resistance: in the endgame, White's advantage will be overwhelming. However, other black moves are unlikely to change the result.

23.dxc4 Rxd1?

Black wrongly hangs onto the pawn. After 23...Bd7! 24.Bxb7 Rab8 25.Be4 f5 26.Bg2 Rbc8 White would have to overcome some technical problems.

24.Rxd1 Kf7 25.c5

White does not hurry to win a pawn with 25.Nd6+ and quietly continues to strengthen his position.

25...Rb8?! 26.Nxa7 Bd7 27.Rb1 1-0

On 27...Bxa4 there follows 28.c6.

So as finally to dispel any impression on the reader's part that 2.d3 leads to an automatic advantage for White, here is the opening of a game in which Black easily and confidently solves his opening problems.

Sicilian Defence B21
Peter Korzubov 2470
Silvio Danailov 2345
Pernik 1984 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.d3 Nc6 3.f4 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.c3 d6 6.Be2 e6 7.0-0 Nge7 8.Be3 f5! 9.Nbd2 0-0 10.Ng5 h6 11.Nh3 b6 12.Bf3 Bb7 13.Qe2 Qd7 14.Bf2?! Rae8

And already White has to think seriously about equalising.

The game ended in a draw, although for a long time, Black had the advantage.

In conclusion, I would like once more to observe that, in my opinion, every strong player should have such systems in his repertoire. The chapter title should serve as a reminder that one does not play such lines in every game, but simply employs them from time to time, else sooner or later your opening repertoire will develop a crisis.

Chapter 2
Studying the chess classics

Recently, I asked one talented player her opinion of Alekhine's games. She replied 'Why would I bother studying Alekhine's games? I'm never going to have to play him!' It turned out that she only studied the games of her opponents. I am convinced that, with such an approach, a player's prospects for the future are very limited.

Why do we need to study the classics nowadays?

Modern chess begins with Steinitz. Before him, there were talented players, such as Philidor, Labourdonnais, Morphy, etc. But it is Steinitz to whom belongs the beginning of the modern positional understanding of chess.

As a trainer, my main concern is with my pupils' practical results. Therefore, I am interested in the study of the classics mainly as a practical player. I have a definite, maybe subjective programme for the study of the classics, which I offer my pupils.

I am not terribly interested in chess before Steinitz. And although Morphy was of course a wonderful player, the study of his games does not feature in my programme. It begins with the theory of Steinitz. I believe this is explained best of all in two books: Lasker's *Manual of Chess* (the chapter on positional play) and Euwe's *Course of Chess Lectures*. In addition, there is a very interesting and rare book by Znosko-Borovsky called *The Middle Game in Chess*, in which he outlines the method that was characteristic of that time for assessing positions. Now this is largely forgotten.

Before Steinitz, players believed that the outcome of events depended solely on themselves. If you felt good and were at the top of your form, you were bound to find a genius combination. These were the days when games such as the Immortal (alas, a game which has not survived the scrutiny of modern-day critics) were played. Steinitz was the first to ask whether this was really the case and to look more closely at this issue.

He came to the conclusion that a combination was not always available in any position and did not depend solely on the talent of the player. There are positions where even the most talented player will not be able to bring off a successful combination. This led Steinitz to study many different types of position and he discovered basic laws of positional play, the majority of which have remained valid to this day and only a few of which have not. But his greatest achievement – and I emphasise this – was his discovery that one needs to play according to a plan and that it is possible to plan one's actions. The plan itself depends on the assessment of the position. This idea is undoubtedly correct and has had a massive influence on the development of chess theory.

The characteristics of how positions were assessed in those days were formulated very precisely and clearly in the aforementioned book by Znosko-Borovsky.

Here are the three factors which principally affect the assessment:

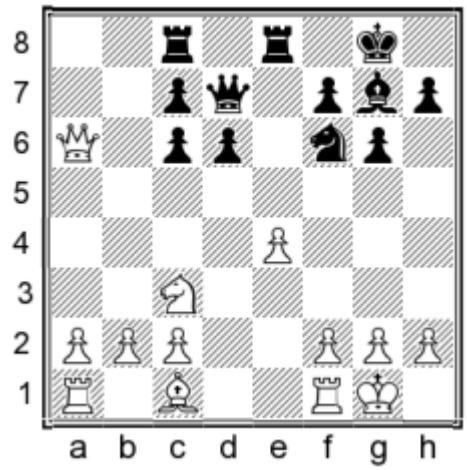
1. advantage in strength (i.e. a material advantage),
2. advantage in time (what we would call development) and
3. advantage in space.

Then, in the context of talking about time, players began counting tempi in the opening. It can be that one player has made six moves, the other ten (this can be not just because of wasted tempi in the opening, but also because of the exchange of pieces that have made several moves). Nowadays, of course, nobody actually counts tempi like this, but instead the player just looks at the position and assesse a development advantage by eye.

From the above principles, one assesses the position and forms a plan of play. Such an approach can still be useful today.

Let us consider some examples.

Aron Nimzowitsch
José Raul Capablanca
St Petersburg 1914 (1)



White to move

This game is a classic example of logical and active play by the Cuban genius. It was included by Garry Kasparov in the relevant volume of his series *My Great Predecessors* and below we quote some of his notes.

White has an extra pawn, Black a lead in development. Let us count the tempi: White has played e2-e4 (one move), Nc3 (a second move), castling (three), the queen has gone to a6, which is two more moves, a total of five. Black has played the pawn moves ...g7-g6, ...d7-d6, ...bxc6 – three tempi, plus ...Rc8, ...Re8, ...Qd7, ...Bg7, ...Nf6, castling – another six (admittedly, not all are equally good tempi – ...Rc8 is of less value, for example).

I repeat that you are not obliged to perform such a count. It is possible to see at a glance that Black is ahead in development, while White has an extra pawn.

The e4-pawn is attacked and White faces a question as to how to defend it. He could do this with Qd3, getting the queen away from a rather dangerous position, or he could play Re1 or f2-f3.

Nimzowitsch chose

15.Qd3

and later lost the game in highly instructive fashion. Capablanca replied

15...Qe6

Again attacking the pawn and forcing another defensive move from White. Later, the game developed along the lines of the modern Benko Gambit, as Black's knight transferred to c4 via d7, and Black's rooks came to the a- and b-files. It proved impossible to resist the pressure.

This is how the game went:

16.f3 Nd7

17.Bd2?

«Nimzowitsch does not sense the approaching danger. Correct was 17.Bf4, so that after 17...Ne5 he can eliminate the knight: 18.Bxe5 Bxe5 19.Rab1. With such a bishop, Black is already in no danger of losing, but we have solved another problem – White is not losing either...» (Kasparov)

17...Ne5 18.Qe2 Nc4 19.Rab1 Ra8 20.a4?

«Little is changed after 20.b3?! Nxd2 21.Qxd2 Ra3! (not the immediate 21...Qe5? because of 22.Na4!), and after 22...Qe5 Black regains the pawn, retaining his powerful bishop. But rather better is 20.Be1, although after 20...d5! 21.b3 Nd6 22.a4 f5, Black has a comfortable and active game.» (Kasparov)

20...Nxd2 21.Qxd2 Qc4 22.Rfd1 Reb8 23.Qe3 Rb4 24.Qg5 Bd4+ 25.Kh1 Rab8 26.Rxd4 Qxd4

And Black easily realised his extra exchange.

Only in Znosko-Borovsky did I find the correct explanation of what happened here. He writes that, if you are behind in development but have a material advantage, you must not in any circumstances retreat those pieces which exert pressure on the enemy position. Maybe they are vulnerable and leaving them in place may entail some risk, but they prevent the opponent manoeuvring freely.

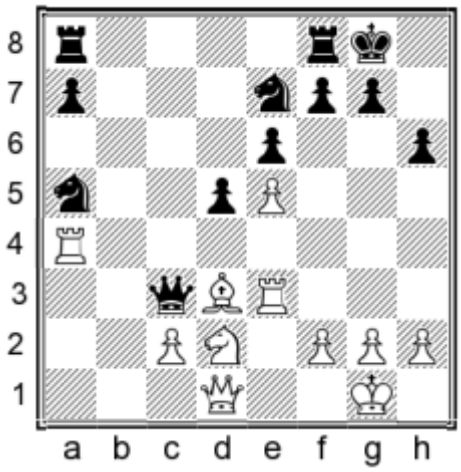
The queen on a6 attacks the c6-pawn and prevents the regrouping ...Qe6, ...Nd7, ...Nb6(e5), ...Nc4. Therefore, the correct move was 15.f3!. Of course, one must reckon with the reply ...Ra8, but then

White has Qc4. The point is not to remove the queen's pressure against the pawn on c6.

It should be pointed out that, after 15.f3, Capablanca would probably have played 15...d5!?, and Black's initiative gives him sufficient compensation for the pawn.

I should like to show an example from modern practice of the idea of leaving the queen in the enemy camp. This fragment is taken from one of the volumes in Mark Dvoretsky's series.

John Nunn 2615
Artur Yusupov 2620
Linares 1988 (10)



Black to move

«Black has an extra pawn, but the white pieces are pointing rather dangerously at the enemy king. Both white rooks could soon appear on the kingside, whilst now there is a threat of 19.Bh7+.

One's first wish is to evacuate the queen from the danger zone with 18...Qc7. But then there follows 19.Qh5, and the white queen takes part in the attack on the king. There are threats of 20.Rg3 or 20.Rg4 and 19...f5 20.Rg3 Qxe5 21.Nf3 Qc3 22.Qxh6 is dangerous. Black would have to return the pawn: 19...Nf5 20.Bxf5 exf5 21.Qxf5 Nc4, but even in this case, White retains the better chances.

18...Kh8!

Of course, the queen is not very comfortable on c3, but there she attacks the Nd2 and restricts the freedom of the white queen, as well as generally distracting White's attention from the kingside.

19.g4?!

Better was 19.Nf3.

19...Nac6!

By attacking the e5-pawn, Black prevents lines being opened on the kingside by means of g4-g5.

20.Nf3 Rab8!

Again prophylaxis, this time against the threat 21.Bc4 Qb2 22.Rb3. And on 21.g5 there follows 21...Rb4!.

21.Bc4! Qb2 22.Bb3! Ng6! 23.Ra2

The black queen has been trapped after all, but his compensation will be more than sufficient.

23...Rxb3 24.Rxb2 Rxb2

25.Qc1?!

Better was 25.Rb3.

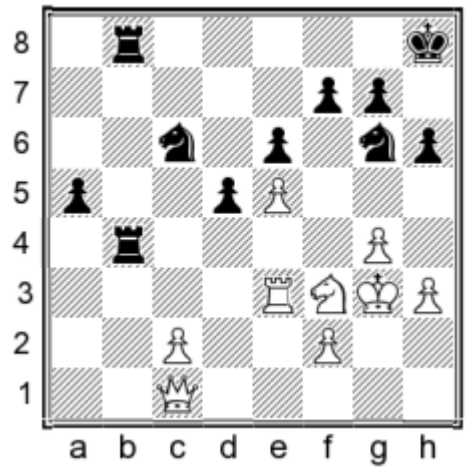
25...Rb4!

Yusupov avoids the trap set by the English GM: after the natural 25...Rfb8?! there follows 26.Rb3 R2xb3 27.cxb3, and the white queen gets the c-file.

26.h3 Rfb8

Now 27.Rb3 is useless – Black replies 27...a5!. Less convincing is 27...Ngxe5 28.Nxe5 Nxe5 29.Qe3.

27.Kh2! a5 28.Kg3



What does White want? Obviously, h3-h4-h5.

28...Rc4!

Now 29.h4? fails to 29...Rbb4.

29.c3

Another trap: the tempting 29...d4 is refuted by 30.Nxd4 Nxd4 31.Qf1!.

Even so, more tenacious was 29.Nd2.

29...a4! 30.Nd2 Ncxe5!! 31.Qa1

31.Nxc4 Nxc4 32.Re2 a3 is also cheerless.

31...Rc7 32.Qxa4 Rbc8 33.Qa5 Nc4 34.Nxc4 Rxc4

Black's large advantage is not in doubt and he went on to realise it.»

Here one cannot but think of the Sicilian Najdorf Poisoned Pawn variation, where the black queen captures the pawn on b2 and then goes to a3. This queen is a major headache for White. It can find itself in a dangerous situation, but it also prevents White manoeuvring freely.

Now I will show you a position arising from a variation of the Ragozin Variation.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5

The exchange of pawns, followed by pinning the knight, is the most unpleasant plan for Black. He usually reacts with the counterattack ...c7-c5, after first playing 6...h6. However, it is also possible to play differently:

6...c6 7.e3

Now Black has 7...Qa5, but it is useful to include ...h7-h6.

7...h6 8.Bh4 Qa5

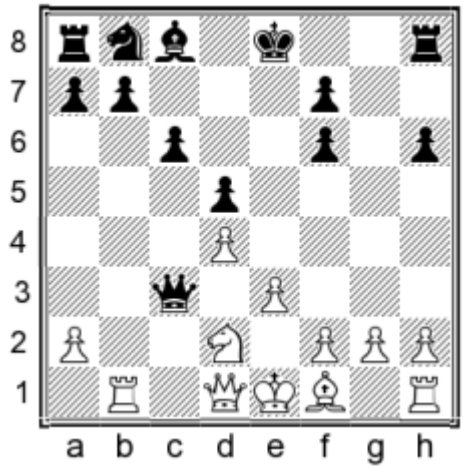
Now White has a choice: he can either sacrifice a pawn with 9.Bxf6, or go over to passive defence after, say, 9.Qb3 Ne4. It is clear that in the latter case, Black will have no problems at all.

9.Bxf6 Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 Qxc3+ 11.Nd2 gxf6

Black has a positional threat: ...Bf5 and then ...Qc2. If he manages to exchange queens after, for example, 12.Be2 Bf5 13.0-0 Qc2, then White's initiative will fade out.

12.Rb1

Undoubtedly the correct move. White stops the enemy bishop coming out and moves the rook away from attack by the enemy queen, whilst placing it in an active position.



Now, if the queen retreats (for example, via a3-e7), Black will probably come under an unpleasant attack. He needs instead to try to preserve those forces which have already come into play. After

investigating the position, I came up with the following rook move:

12...Rg8

The queen should stay on c3. It occupies a rather extravagant, advanced position, but it also hinders White. For example, after 13.Qh5 there is a good chance for a counterattack: 13...Bg4 14.Qxh6 Bf5, and on 15.Rxb7 – 15...Qc1+ 16.Ke2 Bg4+ (or 16...Bc2!?). This is all dangerous for White.

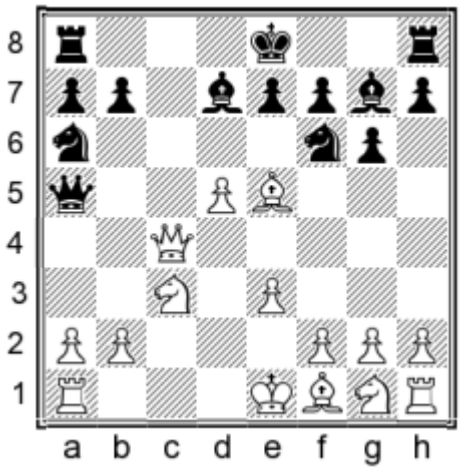
Unfortunately, there is still a way for White to pose his opponent difficult problems:

13.g3! Bg4?! 14.Be2

Black's position is worse and his chronic weaknesses should tell. But this is still the way he should fight: not retreat, but use the forces he has developed to hassle the opponent. Bear in mind that g2-g3 is not such an easy move for White to decide on, because after the exchange of bishops forced by 13...Bg4, the light squares are weakened and fewer pieces remain on the board than one might like when a pawn down.

In one rare variation of the Grünfeld Defence, the following position can arise:

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bf4 Bg7 5.e3 c5 6.dxc5 Qa5 7.Qb3 Bd7 8.Be5 Na6 9.cxd5 Nxc5 10.Qc4 Na6



White has an extra pawn, Black a lead in development. If White tries to reduce the lead by developing his kingside, such as with 11.Nf3, then Black can develop his initiative with 11...b5 followed by ...b5-b4 or the move 11...Rc8.

White should try to dampen the enemy initiative with the forces he has already developed and postpone his kingside development for the moment. In the light of these considerations, one thinks of the move

11.a3!

so as to meet

11...b5

with

12.b4!

whilst after 11...Rc8 he can choose between 12.Qd4 and 12.b4.

So, already long ago we had a piece of advice that remains useful for today: 'With a material advantage and a lag in development, do not retreat your developed pieces, which create some inconvenience for the opponent'. In other words, do not go onto total defence. Today, this conception is forgotten.

Znosko-Borovsky also has some interesting ideas with respect to positions with a space advantage. He expresses the general thought that when one has a space advantage, the important thing is not to expand it, but to defend it. Sooner or later the critical moment will arise, when the opponent tries to break out. One needs to be as well-prepared as possible for that critical moment.

He also has recommendations of what to do when you have too little space. Znosko advises that you determine which of your pieces is most badly placed, and also that you seek to understand what plan your opponent intends to follow. Then you need to improve the worst piece, whilst at the same time trying to prevent the opponent from implementing his plan. All of this is illustrated with concrete examples.

The theory of Steinitz has many different postulates, some unarguable, others quite dubious. He writes about the advantage of the two bishops, a queenside pawn majority (although later practice has shown that the possession of a pawn advantage on the flank is not by itself an advantage, but needs to be combined with other elements). Some of his principles have a philosophical character. If you have an advantage, then you must attack or undertake active play, else the advantage will surely dissipate. That is already not so much a pure chess principle, as a philosophical one.

Iosif Dorfman added an important extra point to Steinitz's theory. He considers that one should

decide what form one's advantage takes, i.e. is it a static or a dynamic one? It is only necessary to attack if one's advantage is of a dynamic sort. However, we will look more closely at Dorfman's work in the third part of this book.

Overall, the method of assessing positions suggested by Steinitz deserves serious study. It is a very interesting chapter in the history of chess. It is desirable to study it in old books, so as to acquaint oneself directly with the words of those people who discovered it all.

The weak point in Steinitz's theory is that it is very static. In technical colleges, students study mechanics, which consists of three elements: statics, kinetics and dynamics. Crudely speaking, statics is when everything is at rest, kinetics is when there is some sort of movement and dynamics is when everything is in motion. In this context, the theory of Steinitz is only one component of the 'theoretical mechanics' of chess.

Steinitz, unfortunately, did not teach about the dynamics of the battle, only about the static side. His precepts apply to many positions, but far from all. But how much can one expect from one man? He contributed an enormous amount to the development of chess.

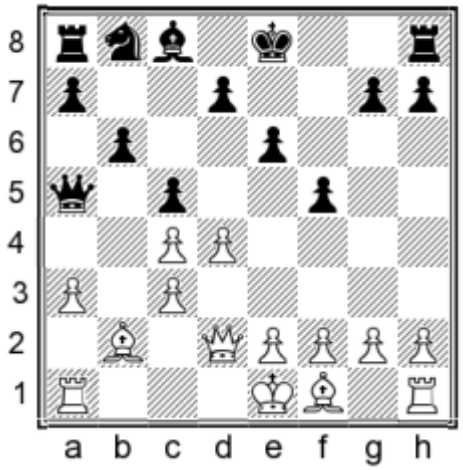
It is very interesting to familiarise oneself with Steinitz's games, although it must be said that the games of his successors illustrate the theory better than his own games. He tended to observe his theory a little too strictly, only in static terms, and rather ignored the dynamics of the battle. This sometimes had its effect on his results.

Steinitz's teachings were put in practice especially wonderfully by Akiba Rubinstein. Lasker in his *Manual of Chess* expressed the view that Rubinstein's games were particularly instructive in terms of the theory of Steinitz. Rubinstein also possessed superb endgame technique. The Russian book series *Great Chess Players of the World* includes an excellent volume on Rubinstein, by Razuvavev and Murakhveri, which I always recommend to all players who study with me [*Translater's note: Sadly, this book has not been translated into English*].

I recommend that you study Rubinstein's games in the following way. Play through the opening, then close the book and try to guess the moves. In other words, try to play as Rubinstein. Spend some 45 minutes or more on each game, and you will retain a much deeper impression than if you simply read through the book.

Siegbert Tarrasch wrote an excellent book called *The Game of Chess*, which is praised very highly by Garry Kasparov. When Tarrasch is branded a dogmatist, this is of course not correct. It is just that in his day he quarrelled with Chigorin, who was considered the founder of the Russian school of chess. We do not like such people and tend to brand them with various unkind labels.

Now let us look at a position which shows the value of a dynamic, concrete approach to a position, rather than a purely static one. This is taken from Isaak Lipnitsky's remarkable book *Questions of Modern Chess Theory*.



White to move

White has the advantage of the two bishops, but his queenside pawn structure is spoiled. If Black manages to carry out the standard plan in such positions, with ...Ba6, ...Nc6, ...Qa4, ...Na5, etc. then he will win the c4-pawn and probably the game.

If you follow standard opening principles, about developing pieces, castling, etc., then you will play 11.e3. However, I fear that in this case, the place of a concrete plan will be taken by rather abstract principles and that White will gradually lose.

But there are other, less obvious principles at work in this position. They are not always easy to put into words, but often a player will feel them intuitively.

A careful study of the position reveals that Black does not have a single piece on the kingside. Thus, one can arrive at the move 11.g4!!, which changes the assessment of the position at the very roots. This move follows the principle 'attack the opponent where he is most vulnerable'.

White creates the very unpleasant threat of 12.Bg2. After 11...fxg4 there follows 12.Bg2 Nc6 13.d5, and Black's position is falling apart. If he plays 11...Bb7, then after 12.Rg1, White has a powerful attack on the kingside. Maybe the best decision is 11...cxd4, taking play into an endgame that is difficult for Black.

If the pawn stood not on f5, but f7, what a difference this apparent trifle makes! The whole of this play beginning with g2-g4 would simply not exist and Black would have the advantage. Although the black kingside would still not be defended by a single piece, White would have nothing to bite on, without the pawn on f5. Thus, we see how important concrete details are in assessing a position.

After Steinitz there came the 'hypermoderns'. Steinitz considered that it was always good to have a pawn centre and that the player with the bigger pawn centre had the advantage. But such players as Réti, Nimzowitsch and Breyer – the main representatives of the hypermoderns – claimed that it was not essential to have a strong pawn centre and that one could instead concede the centre to the opponent and then attack it with pieces. New openings came about, such as Réti's Opening, the Nimzo-Indian and Alekhine's Defence, whilst some older openings were given a new, wider understanding, such as the English, etc. Nimzowitsch uncovered principles such as prophylaxis and over-protection. As a result of the discussions between the classical school and the hypermoderns, chess advanced.

Nimzowitsch was an indefatigable opponent of Tarrasch and his view of chess. Unfortunately, the two were from different generations and their peaks as practical players occurred at different times. In their personal meetings, Nimzowitsch was the more successful, but this does not mean that his ideas were necessarily right – it is simply that Tarrasch was considerably older and played less well than in his youth.

There is unquestionably a great deal to be learnt from Nimzowitsch's books *My System* and *Chess Praxis*, especially regarding prophylaxis and over-protection. Modern players have absorbed this and expanded it. The term 'prophylaxis' tends nowadays to be interpreted more to mean prevention or defence, but Mark Dvoretsky has coined the term 'prophylactic thinking' as an important element in the taking of decisions at the board, concerning the choice of this or that move. If one looks at the play of world champions, then ideas of prophylaxis and the countering of the opponent's ideas and intentions are most clearly to be seen, in my opinion, in the games of Petrosian, Karpov, Kramnik and Carlsen. Our understanding of the term 'over-protection' has also changed (see the game Karpov-Timman, Montreal 1979, elsewhere in this book).

But one should not automatically take as a gospel everything written in Nimzowitsch's books. He often played against opponents of a much lower class than himself, which makes it difficult to prove anything.

There was once an interesting article in *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, by my friend, the late Vyacheslav Andreevich Chebanenko, the well-known Moldavian trainer and producer of a whole range of GMs and masters, also author of one of the most solid systems for Black in the Slav Defence, and a real chess philosopher and a fascinating conversationalist. In this article, Chebanenko cast doubt on Nimzowitsch's famous principle that a pawn chain should always be attacked at its base.

Take the standard white pawn chain in the King's Indian Defence: d5, e4, f3, g2 (Black has pawns on c7, d6, e5). Nimzowitsch writes that Black should play ...f7-f5, and then advance the pawn to f4 and advance the g-pawn. The base of the white pawn chain turns out to be f3, rather than g2. But occasionally one sees Black start not with ...f7-f5, but with ...c7-c6. That is, he attacks the centre not at its base, but at its head, yet this frequently turns out OK. Nimzowitsch drew his general conclusions mainly on the basis of the French Defence, but there too, Black often attacks the white pawn chain at the head with ...f7-f6.

Chebanenko's comments were answered about 25 years later by the most dedicated Nimzowitsch admirer, the Argentinian IM Enrique Marino, who has spent almost his entire life studying the legacy of the father of hypermodernism. In his interesting article 'How to win with pawns in the Indian defences', he shined a light on many terms and facts which are not very well-known to Russian-speaking readers.

We have already discussed the difficult relations between Nimzowitsch and Tarrasch. This is what Marino writes about this:

«In those days, Tarrasch was considered the greatest chess thinker, but Nimzowitsch claimed the same status. It seems that this clash of egos, which began with a small confrontation, was the main factor that

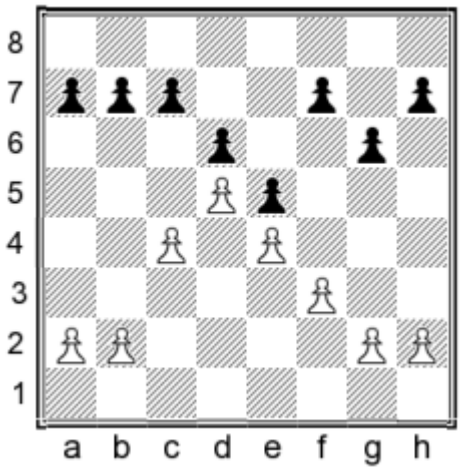
spurred Nimzowitsch's desire to knock Tarrasch off his pedestal.»

Later Marino expresses regret that Nimzowitsch based his theory of not attacking the head of a pawn chain largely on the French Defence, where the move ...f7-f6 weakens the position of the black king. He virtually ignores the Indian defences, where the equivalent move ...c7-c6 does not have this drawback. Marino believes that the blame for this lies in the spat with Tarrasch, who had been so unwise as to award a question mark to the move 3.e4-e5 in the French Defence.

«Discredit Tarrasch! Only in this way was it possible to take his place on the throne and receive recognition as the greatest living chess thinker! By debunking Tarrasch in everything, including even the French Defence, by confirming, reaffirming, proving and solidifying against the opinion of the master of classicism, that 3.e5 is the final word in modern chess when it comes to issues of restraint and blockade.

The desire to debunk Tarrasch best explains Nimzowitsch's obsession with the French Defence and his consequent neglect of the somewhat different notions of the pawn chain and the qualitative majority in the Indian defences. And if club players and chess fans lost a lot because of this, then the greatest loser of all was Nimzowitsch himself, whose obsession led him up a blind alley relating to the move 3.e5 in the French Defence.» (Marino)

Beautifully put, worthy of a chess Nabokov! But now let us speak a little about the term 'qualitative majority', referred to in the above extract.



«If you know our theories regarding pawn chains, then it is easy to grasp the concept of a qualitative majority: the flank, on which one can attack the base of the enemy pawn chain, one naturally considers to be the side where one has the advantage.» (Nimzowitsch, *My System*)

The concept of the 'qualitative majority' is introduced by Nimzowitsch without any particular attempt to draw it to the reader's attention, and consequently, it has not really stuck in most readers' memory, certainly not mine at any rate. In the above diagram, White has a qualitative majority on the queenside, Black on the kingside. Accordingly, White's plan is to play the pawn offensive b2-b4 and c4-c5, whilst Black aims at ...f7-f5 followed by ...f5-f4 and ...g6-g5-g4. Once he has got his pawn to c5, White will aim at penetrating to c7 with rook or knight, after the preliminary exchange on d6. In addition, with a white pawn on a5 and a black minor piece on d7, White can sometimes consider shifting the object of the attack by playing c5-c6 and breaking into Black's camp that way.

Viktor Kortchnoi 2630
John Nunn 2610
Amsterdam 1990 (6)

White to move

Black's position on the queenside is very cramped. There followed

17.cxd6 Bxd6 18.Nd3 Rg7 19.Nc5

White won after a sharp struggle.

But five years later, against Xie Jun (Wangzhou 1995), Kortchnoi continued in the diagram position

17.c6!?

and won convincingly:

17...h5 18.Kh1 Rh7 19.cxb7 Bxb7 20.a6 Bc8 21.Nb5 g4 22.Nxa7 g3 23.Nc6 Qd7 24.Bg1 Ng4 25.fxg4 hxg4 26.Bxg4 Qxg4 27.Qxg4 Bxg4 28.Nf3

Bxf3 29.Rxf3 Nh4 30.a7 Bg7 31.Ra5 gxh2 32.Bf2 Nxf3 33.gxf3 Bf6 34.Rb5 Kf7 35.Rb7 Kg6 36.b5 Kh6 37.Rb8 Rh8 38.Rxh8+ Bxh8 39.Bh4 Rg8 40.Kxh2 1-0

In his book, Marino, replying to IM John Watson's criticisms of Nimzowitsch, writes the following:

«Nevertheless, at the end of the 20th century, Watson's criticism of the 'principles' of the pawn chain is directed to the same openings that Nimzowitsch considered, which leads one to the conclusion that Watson's real goal was to criticize the maestro of hypermodernism, just as the latter's goal was, first of all, the attack on Tarrasch.»

Marino goes on to say: «He describes the break in attacking terms (for example, 'an attack on the front of the pawn chain'), whereas I – following Nimzowitsch – view it as a fundamentally defensive measure.»

If we move from the high-flown rhetoric and reduce things to more plain speaking, what Marino is saying is that the move ...c7-c6, followed by the exchange on d5, an operation aimed at the front of the white pawn chain, is *a defensive measure, not an attacking one!*

And indeed, if we look back again to the last diagram, we can see that Black's possibilities on the queenside are extremely limited. But if he plays ...c7-c6 with the white pawn on c4, and then exchanges on d5, he effectively forces White into the same structure as would arise after the exchange on d6 in the diagram position. Thus, White has lost the option of c5-c6, as played in Kortchnoi-Xie Jun. Thus, Black clarifies the position on the queenside and makes it easier to plan his subsequent defensive operations in that sector of the board.

Finally, two players stand apart, Capablanca and Alekhine. They were not really subject to any influence, and played in completely different ways, but their games remain instructive to this very day.

Let us think about how modern chess goes. Assume we have two players of similar strength, say Leko versus Topalov. One thinks up a plan, the other sees this plan and thinks up a counter-plan. One player gets a small advantage, then comes up with a new plan and the opponent in turn comes up with a new counter-plan. Eventually, time-trouble sets in and the logical course of the game is broken.

It is not easy for an inexperienced player to get to grips with such a game, indeed, even for a near master to do so. But with the old classics it was different. If we have, say, Alekhine playing Tartakower, then the difference in class makes itself felt. Alekhine's plan goes smoothly like a knife through butter, because Tartakower does not understand what is going on and does not prevent the plan being effected. In this way, the whole plan lies before one's eyes in a pure form.

Against contemporary top GMs, one never sees such a clear picture, because their strength and defensive capabilities are so much greater. So one's first lessons in strategy and planning need to come from the classics.

Let us discuss further the matter of the classics explaining their plans.

Eugene Znosko-Borovsky
Alexander Alekhine
Paris 1933 (4)

White to move

Here is Alekhine's commentary on this position:

«Playing this ending is nowhere near as simple as it seems. Black's plan, which achieves total success, consists of the following stages:

1) exchange one pair of rooks;

2) transfer the king to e6, from where, under cover from the pawn, it will prevent White's remaining rook entering on d7;

3) by operating with the rook on the g-file and advancing the h4-pawn, force the opening of the h-file;

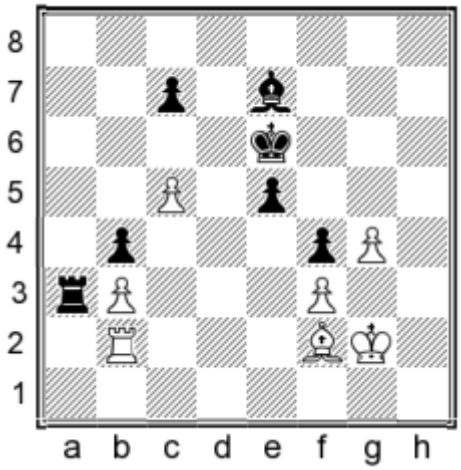
4) after this, the white king, and possibly the bishop too, will be tied down to defending h1 and h2 against the black rook's entry;

5) meanwhile, by advancing the a- and b-pawns, Black will sooner or later open a file on the queenside;

6) because the white king will at that moment be on the other flank, he will be unable to prevent the entry of the black rook to the first or second rank.

One can agree with the following: if White had realised from the very start that there is a real danger of losing this ending, then, by well-thought-out defence, he might have been able to save himself. But what happened is that Black followed a definite plan, whereas White was quite convinced that the game should end in a draw. As a result, there followed an instructive series of mistakes and a lesson which is far more instructive to the student than any amount of 'brilliant' miniatures.»

16.Bh6 Rfd8 17.Kf1 f5 18.Rxd8+ Rxd8 19.g3 Kf7 20.Be3 h5 21.Ke2 Ke6 22.Rd1 Rg8 23.f3 h4 24.Bf2 hxg3 25.hxg3 Rh8 26.Bg1 Bd6 27.Kf1 Rg8 28.Bf2 b5 29.b3 a5 30.Kg2 a4 31.Rd2 axb3 32.axb3 Ra8 33.c4 Ra3 34.c5 Be7 35.Rb2 b4 36.g4 f4



37.Kf1 Ra1+ 38.Ke2 Rc1 39.Ra2 Rc3 40.Ra7 Kd7 41.Rb7 Rxb3 42.Rb8 Rb2+ 43.Kf1 b3 44.Kg1 Kc6 45.Kf1 Kd5 46.Rb7 e4 47.fxe4+ Kxe4 48.Rxc7 Kf3 49.Rxe7 Rxf2+ 50.Ke1 b2 51.Rb7 Rc2 52.c6 Kg3 53.c7 f3 54.Kd1 Rxc7 55.Rxb2 f2

White resigned.

It seems to me that Alekhine was perhaps being a little creative in the detailed description of the plan at move 16. I suspect it is much more likely that he was thinking in terms of general schemes and short parts of some of the stages. For example, something like 'It would be useful to exchange one pair of rooks and keep the other. The king would be good on e6 and the pawn on f5. Then we will see what transpires after that'.

Alekhine was a class above Znosko-Borovsky in the endgame, and after winning the game, he described the consistency of his play, which met no real opposition, and united it in a single genius plan.

I am reminded of the desire these days of the excellent online commentator Sergey Shipov for the players to give a press conference after every game, so we can understand what the GMs saw at the board and what they did not.

In commentating on Magnus Carlsen's striking victory over Li Chao at Doha 2015, Shipov wrote in *64* No 1/2016:

«A nice victory! It is a shame there was no press conference after the game. At the end of such a striking game, one really should take the players gently by the arm and extract the low-down from them about what was really going on. For example, it would be interesting to know if Magnus understood that, straight after sacrificing the pawn, he would also need to throw in the knight and the queen. Or did he just play by instinct, not knowing what might be just around the next corner? Live, human commentary on games is extremely instructive and useful for young players and helps them to look at positions through the eyes of a maestro. Then, after the game is over, the maestros go home, switch on their laptops and find out the exact variations. And how amazingly intelligent they suddenly become! Nothing like they were during the game. The computer variations act like noise, drowning out the human feelings and calculations during the game and imposing themselves on the whole. At a later date, it becomes impossible to separate out the components of what was seen during the game and what was not.»

In the position from Znosko-Borovsky-Alekhine, the whole of the latter's deep plan could have been eliminated immediately, had White played not 17.Kf1?! but 17.f4! with an absolutely equal game (17...e4 18.f5).

But I do not in any circumstances want to criticise the human qualities of the great champions. Exactly the reverse.

Now a few words about the use of the computer in studying the classics and the general principles of playing the endgame. In collections of games by classics of the past and books on strategy, the main aim is to focus the reader's attention on absorbing the principles of play in this or that situation, the study of the plans of the sides and the methods of

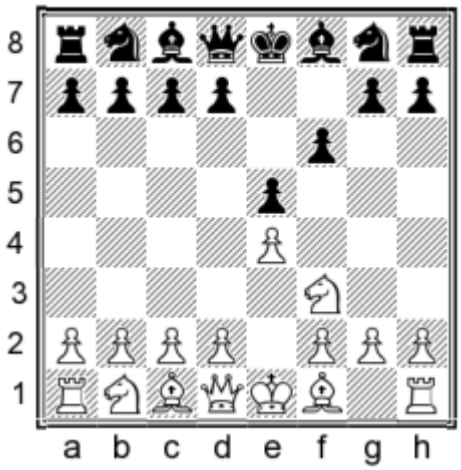
using these in one's own games. In other words, what is needed here is vividness in presentation, not specifics.

When Nimzowitsch compares a doubled pawn to a person in a wheelchair, who only has a problem when he tries to move, this is an image which will stick in the reader's mind for the long term, if not forever. And it is completely unimportant whether he is correct about the concrete position he is discussing. One may point out a particular exception to the rule, but this does not change the fact that fundamentally, Nimzowitsch was right. I am not a fan of the old saying 'Plato is dear to me, but the truth is dearer'. I think it is sly and immoral.

Thus, when it comes to teaching strategic rules and general principles, the computer's role is only to touch up the details, whilst leaving the main direction of travel unchanged. When we teach a beginner that within seven moves of the start of the game, he should aim to bring out all his minor pieces towards the centre and castle, we do not disorient him by showing him exceptions to the rule. And when we explain that after

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 f6?

Black committed a decisive mistake with his dreadful second move



and show him the sample variation

3.Nxe5 fxe5 4.Qh5+ Ke7 5.Qxe5+ Kf7 6.Bc4+ Kg6 7.Qf5+ Kh6 8.d4+ g5 9.h4 Be7 10.hxg5+ Kg7 11.Qf7#

we keep quiet about the best defence 6...d5!, and it would not enter anyone's head to study the computer analysis of this move. After all, the move 2...f6? is definitely a dreadful one and the beginner only needs to gain the impression that it deserves execution by 3.Nxe5!

The truth as to whether 3.Nxe5, 3.d4 or 3.Bc4 is objectively strongest has nothing at all to do with the process of educating a beginner. In my youth I read Lion Feuchtwanger's remarkable *Josephus* trilogy of novels, from one of which I learned an interesting thought. One of his characters claims that the naked truth is always ugly, whereas the truth, when mixed with a little bit of a lie, becomes beautiful and fully digestible. When we study the games of people like Capablanca and Rubinstein, we learn strategy, technique and harmony, and we do not try to knock our heroes off their pedestal. This slightly sweetened version of the truth is much better for us than the pure truth, which we can only obtain with the aid of computer variations.

I very much like the way Marino expressed a similar thought in his original investigation of Nimzowitsch's theories regarding pawn chains, but using the Indian defences:

«Should the annotations include the tactical basis of the move? Do we need to get deeply into the numerous variations, sub-variations, etc., or should we limit the discussion of tactical and strategic ideas to the key ideas which govern a player's choices at the board?

I have decided on an almost total avoidance of tactical analysis. The commentary focusses almost entirely on the ideas which, it seems to me, lie behind the moves. Tactical analysis, especially when overdone, would, in my view, disrupt the harmony of the lessons which may be drawn from the games, and make it harder for the player to absorb those ideas and use them in practical games. After all, what we are interested in is the game itself, not the 'virtual' game, arising out of variations, the game that results from the eternal 'what if' and leads to an entirely different game. And if we are interested in the 'analytical game', then a question arises: why not delve into a new analytical game, arising out of the first analytical game? And so, not wishing to sink into a never-ending spiral, I prefer to stick strictly to the real, living game, resulting from the physical and psychological strength of the players. That was my thought in choosing the dozens of fully-fledged games to include in this book. The economy of the notes is therefore a conscious decision, even if this policy may cause discontent among those who judge the quality of the book by

how many thousands of branches there are in the forest of variations.»

Marino goes on to add: «To those readers who are keen to know the tactical truth in concrete positions, I recommend analysing themselves or with the help of a computer engine. For this, the computers are unbeatable! Why waste time and effort, digging out a mass of variations and sub-variations, if you can find them almost instantly with the help of Fritz, Houdini or Stockfish? *Among other things – and this is my premise – it is wrong to confuse the reader with deep tactical analysis, without giving him an accurate picture of the strategical understanding of what is happening on the board* (italics mine – MS). Relying on tactical analysis is like forcing the student to get blood from a stone, in his attempts to improve. In addition, this type of 'analytical pollution', as well as driving up the cost of the book, is also likely to scare off many readers. I consider that those readers who love tactical depths can study them more effectively by their own efforts and with the help of a computer engine. Experience shows that when it comes to the study of strategy, amateurs are interested most of all in explanations of the general principles and ideas.»

Very well said. Enrique Marino is an outstanding stylist and a talented person. Yes, he puts his ideas in a somewhat radical form, but methodologically, he is absolutely correct. I am not able to present the material so figuratively and beautifully, but as a practical coach I try to make sure that after studying a topic, a pupil's thoughts are not vague, but in strict order. In my experience, I can say that the stronger a chess player becomes, the more concrete variations he needs, but he already knows how to add these himself. I will give an example from the book *The Soviet Chess Conveyor*.

Viacheslav Dydyshko 2460
Peter Korzubov 2450
Minsk 1983 (8)

Black to move

White's last move was 14.Qd1-e1. It is quite obvious that strategically, the battle revolves around the square e4. If White succeeds in mobilising his central pawn mass with f2-f3 and e3-e4, then he will have an obvious positional advantage; on the other hand, if Black manages to prevent this, then his space advantage and White's bad dark-squared bishop will have their say. Dydyshko is ready to play 15.f3. Korzubov's reaction was interesting:

14...Ne7!

Black's idea consisted of the following: 15.f3 g5! 16.Qg3 h6 17.f4 (the threat was 17...Kh8) 17...Nh5 18.Qf3 g4 19.Qd1 f5, blocking the position in the centre and keeping his space advantage.

15.h3?

White takes control of g4 and is preparing 16.f3, since after 16...g5? 17.Qg3 h6 18.f4 the reply ...g5-g4 is not now possible. However, there followed

15...Qc7!

Korzubov cuts off White's play at the roots, noting that the move 15.h3? deprived the white queen of pawn protection on g3. These are all the variations one needs, in order to understand the strategic battle that is taking place; on the other hand, without them, one would not be able to make sense of it at all.

During the remainder of the game, White gradually slipped downhill, but we will not expend time and effort trying to find the best defence for him. It is enough to understand the general picture. Play continued:

16.Qb1 Bd7 17.Re1 Ne4! 18.Re2 a5! 19.Nf3 Ng6 20.Kh1 Ra6 21.Qg1 Qc8 22.Qh2 Rf6 23.Bxe4 dxe4 24.Ng1 Nh4 25.Rf1 Rh6

Black's positional advantage is enormous. Dydyshko goes for a desperate attempt to break out.

26.f4 exf3 27.gxf3 Ng6!

A precise tactical reaction.

28.Kg2 Bxh3+ 29.Nxh3 Rxh3 30.Qxh3 Nf4+ 31.exf4 Rxe2+ 32.Kg3 Qxh3+ 33.Kxh3 Rxb2 34.Re1 Kf8 35.a4 Rc2 36.Re3 Ra2 37.Kg4 Rxa4 38.Kf5 Ra2 39.Ke5 Rb2 40.Kd5 a4 41.Kxc4 a3 0-1

Of course, one could add more variations, but the danger is of losing sight of the wood for the trees.

In studying the classics, we deliberately do not try to dig deeply. To assimilate strategic techniques, it is useful for the student to accept the sweet truth, but a certain amount of lies must be present in minimum doses. Unfortunately, in daily life, the portion of lies is not measured. There is even a saying 'Perception is more important than reality', which is used in political propaganda, advertising, and teaching methods. Our book is only about chess, but in the third part, when we touch on the slippery subject of determining the degree of genius of this or that chess player, we will have to return to this formulation.

Let us summarise certain conclusions. A short course of study of the classics, in these speeded-up times, should in our view look something like this:

1) Explanation of the general principles of the theory of Steinitz, and playing over the games of Rubinstein, guessing the moves as you go;

2) Playing through the games of Capablanca, guessing the moves;

3) Playing through the games of Alekhine, guessing the moves, and preferably from a book with Alekhine's own annotations;

4) Study of Nimzowitsch's books *My System* and *Chess Praxis*, without using the move-guessing technique.

This order should be strictly observed. Of course, there are also Botvinnik, Smyslov and others, but for an understanding of modern chess, a high level of chess culture is required, which in turns requires starting with a course on the classics.

A tried and tested outcome of my practice is that after an intensive study of the classics and the principles of complicated practical endgames, a young player improves his technique of realising advantages. He begins to have a better feel for the harmony of his pieces, more quickly finds effective piece schemes and set-ups, or, in professional slang, he develops the ability to play 'by hand' and not with his head, that is to take correct decisions with relative ease, more by feel and intuition and less by hard calculation.

I would draw your attention to something written by one of the world's strongest players of the present day, Levon Aronian, describing how he overcame a long slide in form to win the Sinquefeld Cup in 2015 (*64* No 9/2015):

«To overcome the crisis in my play, I worked productively for a month with my main trainer, Ashot Nadanian. We looked again at many games by the classics, the world champions. I was interested in understanding what their weaknesses were. And then I did several analyses of the example of other players. In general, it is useful to look at the games of the grandmasters of the past, so as to understand how well you play. I studied again the games of Smyslov, Euwe, Botvinnik and Petrosian, and I developed confidence.»

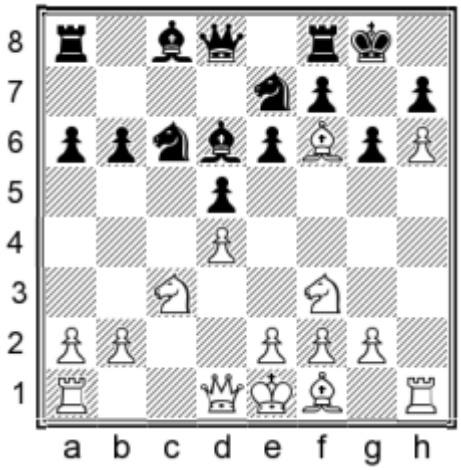
Let us speak again about the relations between Alekhine and Znosko-Borovsky and of the former's assessment of the book *The Middle Game in Chess*. Alekhine wrote: «... He has almost completed a book that is magnificent in its conception. I say in conception, because his method of revealing themes and several of his conceptions are somewhat different from my own views and judgements. However, the fact that the author places the need for an analytical approach to the chess battle in the

second most important place, considering certain general rules to be even more important, is very interesting. These laws became the foundation of a semi-scholastic 'science', and the idea of the same approach to chess is a contribution to the progress of chess.»

Alekhine was certainly a great player. He could plan his play, based completely on a very accurate assessment of the position. Better than any other player, he could uncover hidden resources in the position, which allowed him to play creatively and very effectively.

Queen's Gambit D30
Alexander Alekhine
Akiba Rubinstein
The Hague 1921 (9)

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 a6 4.c5 Nc6 5.Bf4 Nge7 6.Nc3 Ng6 7.Be3! b6 8.cxb6 cxb6 9.h4! Bd6 10.h5 Nge7 11.h6 g6 12.Bg5 0-0 13.Bf6!



Alekhine wrote of this position: «An unusual position to reach after 13 moves of the Queen's Gambit. In those 13 moves, White has moved his c-pawn three times, his h-pawn three times and his bishop four times, yet he has a position that, if not actually winning, is very close to it.

With respect to the opening of the game, a great deal has been written about 'hypermodern technique' and 'neo-romanticism', etc. But the reality is much simpler.

Black played several artificial moves in the opening (3...a6; 5...Nge7; 6...Ng6), which, if the opponent had not reacted (for example, if he had played 7.e3 instead of 7.Be3, or 9.g3 instead of 9.h4), would have given Black a good game. In general, I am not inclined to extravagance, but I obeyed the requirements of the position in advancing the h-pawn, to prevent Black obtaining an advantage in the centre. But, as a rule, such play is not in accordance with my temperament or style.»

I think that one could use Steinitz's theory to assess and plan White's actions correctly in the above example. But if one is too strict in following this theory, one is unlikely to find moves such as 7.Be3! and 7.h4!.

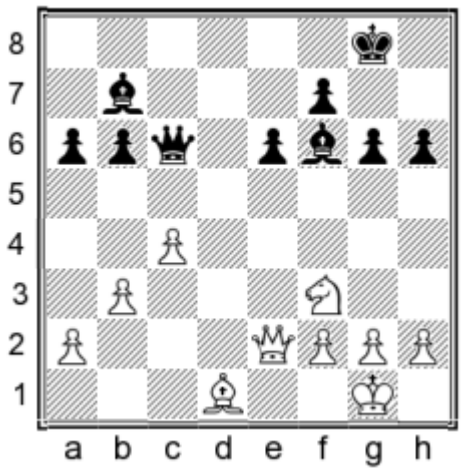
Alekhine and Znosko-Borovsky both left Russia and, as far as I know, had good relations, deeply respecting one another. In all likelihood, this is why Alekhine was so delicate in writing about how Z-B's theories 'are somewhat different from my views'. Alekhine would hardly have agreed that an analytical approach should take second place in importance, as, after all, such an approach is most often fully sufficient to get to the essence of a position.

What are the main characteristics of an analytical approach? In my view, the best description of this and the essence of analysis itself was given by Lipnitsky in his above-mentioned book, *Questions of Modern Chess Theory*.

He suggests the following scheme. Let us imagine we have before us a rather unclear position, and we want to know who it favours. We find out who is to move, and try to find the best possibilities for each side. We do not need to analyse everything right down to mate, but only need to go far enough to reach a clarified position, which we can correctly assess, using our knowledge of the basic laws of positional play. Lipnitsky refers to such positions as 'defined'.

For example:

Yuri Averbakh
Mikhail Botvinnik
Moscow 1955 (9)

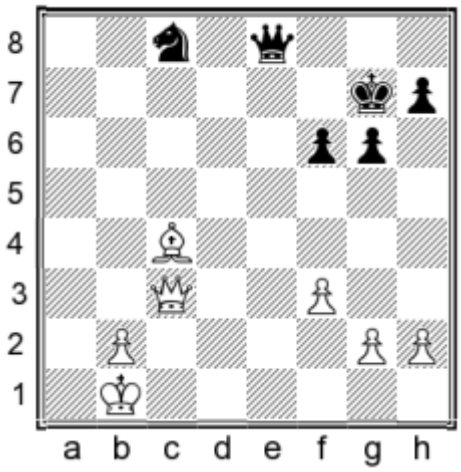


Black to move

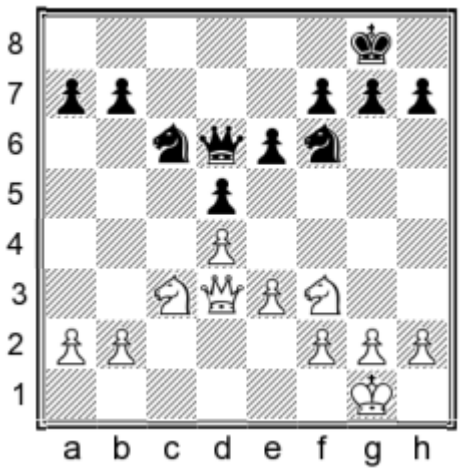
Laszlo Szabo
Gedeon Barcza
Stockholm 1952

White to move

Alexander Alekhine
Friedrich Sämisch
Baden-Baden 1925 (11)



White to move



In the first position, we do not need to calculate any variations or take into account any nuances of the position, since Black's advantage is so obvious and does not raise any doubts. In the second and third examples, White is clearly better and the fourth example is an absolutely equal position.

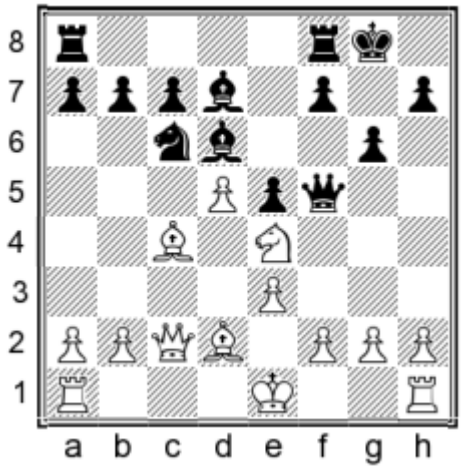
As a player becomes stronger and more experienced, so the number of positions he can define becomes greater. It is quite obvious that to a beginner, many positions seem quite unclear, which to a grandmaster would be obvious. But many positions cannot be assessed using the method of 'optical' assessment, and these are what Lipnitsky calls 'critical' positions. Thus, one of the objects of chess analysis is to turn critical positions into defined ones.

Nowadays, the term 'critical position' is widely used in determining the direction of the rhythm of a game. This is a cornerstone of Dorfman's teachings, which we will deal with in Part III. In our day, the term 'critical position' is more associated with a position which determines the outcome of the game, which is closer to Lipnitsky's view in the middle of the 20th century.

I should like to offer the reader two examples of an analytical approach, taken from Lipnitsky's book and using his commentary.

Ragozin Defence D38
Erich Eliskases
Yuri Averbakh
Stockholm 1952 (13)

1.d4 e6 2.c4 Nf6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Bb4 5.Qa4+ Nc6 6.e3 Bd7 7.Qc2 0-0 8.Bd2 dxc4 9.Bxc4 Bd6 10.Ng5 e5 11.Nd5 g6 12.Nxf6+ Qxf6 13.Ne4 Qf5 14.d5!



«Let us try to assess this critical position. We will start with a general, 'crude' assessment. The position of the black queen, as an advance guard, is

very unfortunate, as she takes the f5-square away from the black f-pawn and is also cut off from the queenside, where important events could take place.

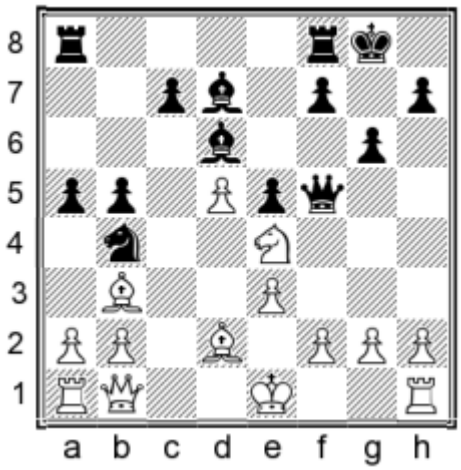
White can try various threats against the queen, especially considering that the Bd7 deprives the queen of an important retreat square and the weakness of the f6-square is also very notable, with the white knight on e4.

Thus, the queen on f5 is, as it were, sitting on a barrel of gunpowder, and Black must constantly watch to ensure that White cannot light the fuse. And since it is not obvious what compensation Black has in return, it is tempting to draw the conclusion that Black's last move was unfortunate and puts his position in danger.

Now let us go onto the second, more difficult stage – a concrete penetration into the position. The attacked knight on e4 is defended by the white queen, which in turn can be attacked and has only one retreat square. Immediately after this, Black can start an offensive on the queenside.

Is this sufficient compensation for Black? Averbakh probably thought so when he played 13...Qf5. Therefore, in this critical position (we will call it No 1) let us follow his concrete calculations.

Thus, 14...Nb4 15.Qb1 b5 16.Bb3 a5.



Now we see Black's idea. He threatens to drive away the Bb3 and win the central d5-pawn and thus free his queen. For example, 17.0-0 a4 18.Bd1 Nxd5, and the move 19.Bg4 is not possible, because after 19...Qxg4 the square f6 is defended by the black knight.

When playing 13...Qf5, Averbakh probably had in mind this position, which we will call critical position No 2. Since it arises by force from critical position No 1, its assessment is extremely important to us.

First let us see what happened in the game. This went 17.0-0 a4 18.Bxb4 axb3 19.Bxd6 cxd6 20.f3 g5 21.axb3, with an extra pawn and significant winning chances for White. If these moves are forced, then we can conclude that 13...Qf5 was bad, since it leads by force to a difficult position. But are these moves forced? Why on move 18 did Black not play 18...Bxb4 ?

It turns out that, during the game, Averbakh thought that after the reply 19.Bd1! Black's position would be lost.

Indeed, in this critical position No 3, which both players had apparently seen in their calculations, White has the dangerous threats 20.g4 (after 19...Kg7) and 20.Bg4! (after 19...Be8), winning the queen.

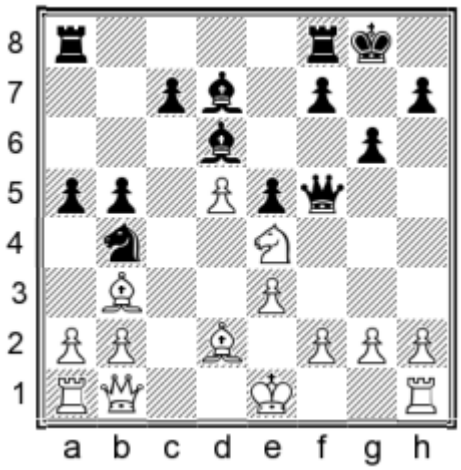
However, in later analysis, Averbakh found a sufficient defence for Black in 19...h5! with the variations:

A) 20.h3 Be8! 21.g4 Qc8, and not 22.gxh5 because of 22...Qxh3, or;

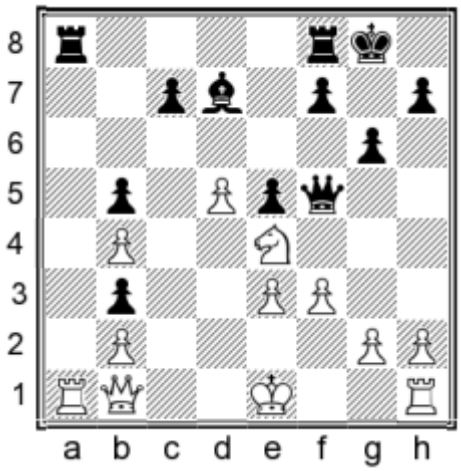
B) 20.g4 hxg4 21.h3 gxh3 22.Kh2 Kg7 23.Rg1, and after 24.Bg4 White finally wins the queen, but Black obtains sufficient compensation.

These variations after 19.Bd1! were given by master Baranov in his book on the Stockholm Interzonal. And since the move 19.Bc2 (instead of 19.Bd1) does not give White any advantage because of 19...Be8!, then the move 18...Bxb4! ensures Black equal chances.

So can we now conclude that the move 13...Qf5 was not bad and does not place Black in any danger of losing? Before we can answer this question, we must first ask ourselves whether White can play better. Let us return to critical position No 2.



Instead of 17.0-0 we can play 17.a3! a4 (the only move, as 17...Na6 loses to 18.Bc2!) 18.Bxb4 (but not 18.Nxd6 Nd3+! 19.Ke2 Qxf2+! 20.Kxd3 cxd6, and Black has a dangerous attack for the piece: he threatens ...a4xb3, ...e5-e4+ and ...Bf5+) 18...Bxb4+ 19.axb4 axb3 20.f3!.

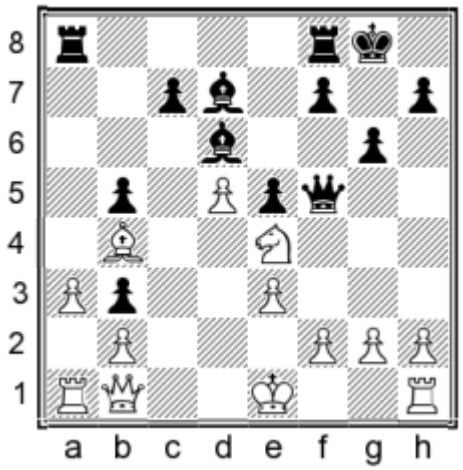


This position has not a critical, but a defined character, which has been the aim of our analysis. After the exchange of the two minor pieces, the Qf5 and Bd7 are misplaced.

For example, 20...Kg7 21.0-0 h5 (also unattractive is 21...Rxa1 22.Qxa1 Be8 23.Qa7 Qc8 24.Rc1, and Black stands badly) 22.Rc1, and it is hard for Black to defend the numerous queenside weaknesses.

A strange line of pawns on the b-file! White has the advantage.

So can we finally assess the move 13...Qf5 on the basis of this analysis? In order to give a satisfactory and thoroughly justified answer, we still need to examine in much more detail the consequences of the black pawn sacrifice in the variation 17.a3! a4 18.Bxb4! axb3.



We have critical position No 4. It is unfavourable for White to win a pawn, e.g. 19.Nxd6 cxd6 20.Bxd6 Rfc8 with the threat of coming in on c2. Or 19.Bxd6 cxd6 20.Nxd6 Qg5!, and not 21.0-0 because of 21...Bh3, whilst on 21.Qe4 a good reply is 21...Qe7, aiming to trap the white knight.

But White can refrain from the immediate win of the pawn and play 19.0-0! (also good is 19.f3!), after which we reach a position which has a fairly defined character.

White has a strong knight on e4 and the pawn on d6 is attacked. The black queen on f5 remains out of play. The threat is 20.f3 and 21.g4. For example, 19...Bxb4 20.f3! etc.

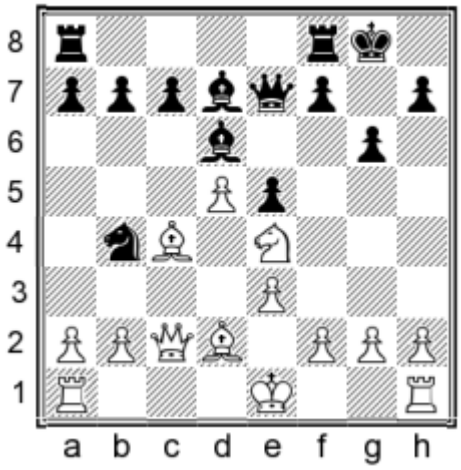
Although this analysis is not exhaustive, we can all the same conclude that after the move 13...Qf5, the initiative and the advantage is on White's side.

Is that finally enough to mark 13...Qf5 as bad?

It turns out that this is still not so. Things are far from being that simple. Earlier, we have to ask ourselves whether 13...Qf5 was simply the least evil. After all, can we be sure that other moves would not have been even worse?

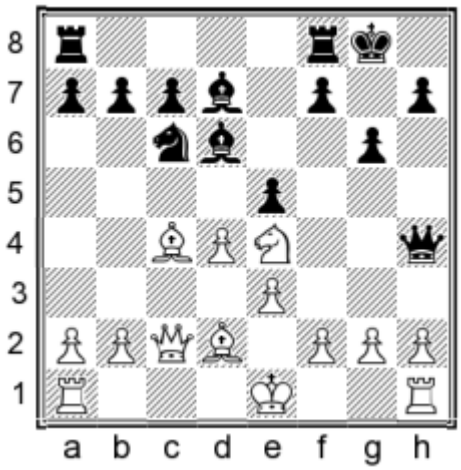
Let us look at the alternatives to the move 13...Qf5.

Thus, 13...Qe7 14.d5 (probably best) 14...Nb4! (this is more active than 14...Nd8)



15.Qb3 (other queen moves are no better) 15...a5! (not 15...Bf5 16.Nxd6 Nc2+ because of 17.Ke2 Qxd6 18.Rac1, and White obtains a material advantage) 16.Nxd6 (after the immediate 16.a3 there follows 16...a4! and 17...Na6) 16...Qxd6! 17.a3 Na6 18.Bxa5 Nc5, and Black regains the pawn after both 19.Qc3 Na4 and 19.Bb4 Nxb3 20.Bxd6 Nxa1 21.Bxf8 Nc2+! (but not 21...Kxf8 22.Kd2!) 22.Kd2 Nxe3! etc., with an equal game.

Instead of the immediate 13...Qe7, another interesting and possibly even stronger move is 13...Qh4,



so as to meet 14.d5 with 14...Bf5, whilst after 14.g3, there is 14...Qe7.

Even without deep analysis of the moves 13...Qe7 and 13...Qh4, we can say that they give Black equal chances.

Only now, after comparing the results of 13...Qf5 and 13...Qe7 (13...Qh4), can we draw the final conclusion that the move 13...Qf5 was bad and was the cause of Black's later problems in this game.

So now, with the help of this analysis, we can punctuate the analysis:

13...Qf5? (13...Qe7! or 13...Qh4!) **14.d5! Nb4! 15.Qb1! b5! 16.Bb3! a5! 17.a3!** (the game Eliskases-Averbakh saw the weaker: 17.0-0?, since after 17...a4 18.Bxb4 instead of 18...axb3? Black equalises with 18...Bxb4! 19.Bd1! h5! etc.) **17...a4 18.Bxb4!**, and White gets the advantage after both 18...Bxb4+ 19.axb4 axb3 20.f3! and 18...axb3 19.0-0 (or 19.f3).

Thus, only after deep analysis can we see that our initial, 'crude' assessment about the dubious nature of the move 13...Qf5 is confirmed. One can suggest that Averbakh would have avoided the move 13...Qf5 had he been governed by general considerations; he played it after concrete calculation, but made a mistake.»

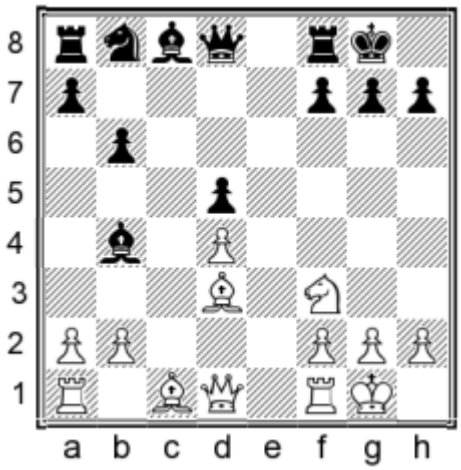
This analysis shows that the process of moving from a critical position to a defined one can be a long and very energy-sapping one.

In this example, we were dealing with a relatively simple case, with not a great number of different variations. However, we often get situations where one critical position leads to another and everywhere we need to accurately calculate numerous variations. In such situations, it is not so simple to move to a defined position, and sometimes it is simply impossible. Thus, a player needs to be able at a certain moment to stop the analysis and try to assess the position on the basis of his experience and knowledge.

When your assessment is accurate and correct, then your chances of finding the correct plan grow. In Lipnitsky's book, there is a wonderful example, in which he compares the process of assessing a position and formulating a plan, with rough and with accurate aiming in shooting.

Nimzo-Indian Defence E53
Isaak Lipnitsky
Anatoly Sidorov
Riga 1954 (2)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 c5 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Bd3 d5 7.0-0 b6 8.cxd5 cxd4 9.exd4 Nxd5 10.Nxd5 exd5



«White has the initiative (he has chances to attack the black king, whilst his opponent is unable to attack his isolated pawn). How should this be developed, whilst the black queenside remains undeveloped?

In the first instance, one is tempted by the strong positional move 11.Ne5. The following considerations speak in favour of this move:

1) The knight is entrenched in the centre of the board, from where it can take part in an attack on the king and prevents the black queenside from developing;

2) The diagonal d1-h5 is opened for the immediate transfer of the white queen to the kingside, which allows White to bring four pieces to bear against the enemy monarch;

3) Expelling the knight from e5 is very difficult, because both 11...f6 12.Qh5! and 11...Nd7 12.Nc6! fail.

Thus, on general considerations, we have found a very attractive move. But this is only a 'crude search'. And what shows up after a concrete, more accurate search? A concrete look at the position throws up the strong reply 11...Ba6!, with the help of which Black eliminates the strong Bd3.

So what now? Do we still play 11.Ne5 ? Before taking a decision, we should ask whether it is possible to refute the reply 11...Ba6.

Thus, 12.Bxa6 Nxa6 13.Qa4! Qc8 14.Nc6 Bd6 15.Bf4!, and Black can't take on f4 because of 16.Ne7+.

analysis diagram

But Black has a sufficient defence in the shape of 15...Qc7!. If it were not for this move, White could play 11.Ne5, since the reply 11...Ba6 could be refuted. But the move 15...Qc7 exists! After 16.Bxd6 Qxd6 17.Rac1 Nc7 the position has simplified significantly. White would still have a small initiative, but it would be significantly less than in the original position.

Taking all the factors into account, we refrain from the move 11.Ne5, because it does not enable White subsequently to develop his initiative effectively.

The move which deserves preference is

11.Qa4!

The white queen comes to a4 with tempo and thereby prevents the natural development of the opponent's pieces.

It is well known that in shooting, one uses both a crude and an accurate aimer. The first selects the line and the second focusses on the exact target. In chess, the exact aim can involve a complete change of direction. In this example, common sense suggests that the queen belongs on h5, but then

concrete analysis shows that in fact she should head in the other direction, to a4.

The game continued

11...Bd6 12.Bg5!

Forcing the uncomfortable move

12...Qd7

since after 12...f6 13.Bh4 Black's entire position would be full of holes. Also unpleasant is 12...Be7 13.Bxe7 Qxe7 14.Rfe1, and White seizes the c-file with tempo, as in the famous game Botvinnik-Alekhine, AVRO 1938.

13.Qc2 h6 14.Bh4

14...Na6

And why not 14...Ba6 now, the reader may ask. In this case, by means of 15.Bh7+! Kh8 16.Bf5 Qc6 17.Rfc1 Qxc2 18.Rxc2 White could take the game into a multi-piece endgame, in which Black has great difficulty in developing his pieces. For example, 18...g6 19.Bf6+! (this is why the check on h7 was necessary) 19...Kg8 20.Bh3 etc.

After 14...Na6 there is

15.a3 Nc7 16.Ne5 Bxe5 17.dxe5

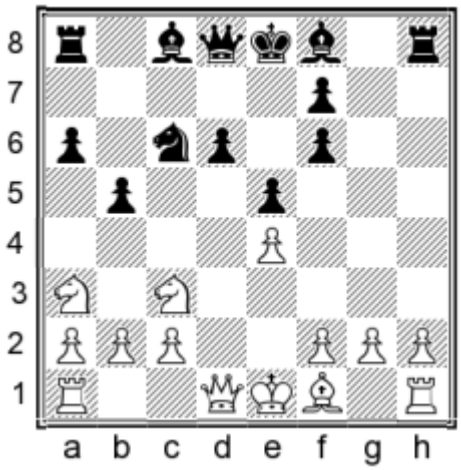
and White's initiative turns into a lasting kingside attack.»

As we see, in the first example, analysis confirmed the answer reached by common sense, whilst in the second example it refuted it. In modern chess, the analytical approach dominates in the formulation of plans in unclear positions. When a player deeply and accurately analyses critical positions in the opening and middlegame at home, he really complicates his opponent's life over the board. When you analyse a position and get to the heart of it, not just relying on common sense, it becomes easier to choose the correct plan.

It was precisely the analytical, concrete approach to the assessment of positions which characterised the Soviet school of chess, about which we will speak in Part III of this book, and which enabled it to dominate chess so totally for decades. Theory, and not just of openings, began to advance by leaps and bounds. A rethinking took place about strategic factors highlighted by the classical and hypermodern schools.

A rethinking, but not a denial of them!

From my experience of working with one of the strongest GMs of the mid-20th century, Isaak Boleslavsky, I can testify that he had enormous erudition and a wonderful knowledge of the classics. Together with that, Boleslavsky, and also Bronstein and Geller, later joined by Tal and Stein, all demonstrated more convincingly than anyone else that the dynamic factors in any concrete position could be more important than defects in the pawn structure. The Boleslavsky system in the Sicilian (**1**) is the forerunner of the even more committal Sveshnikov Variation (**2**).



To a contemporary player, these are commonplace positions, but in earlier times, they were a challenge to the orthodox understanding of the chronic pawn weaknesses. The weak pawn on d6 is something Black is also happy to take on in many King's Indian lines:

Mikhail Botvinnik
Efim Geller
Budapest 1952 (2)

White to move

In this game, Geller scored a striking victory as Black against the World Champion.

Other players started considering the capture on d4 in various lines of the Chigorin System in the Spanish.

Wolfgang Unzicker
Paul Keres
Hamburg 1956 (5)

White to move

And how do you like the position in the next diagram? It was seen in the World Championship matches in 1960 and 1961 between Tal and Botvinnik; in both games, the young Riga GM convincingly outplayed the more experienced maestro in a dynamic battle.

Mikhail Tal
Mikhail Botvinnik
Moscow 1960 (m/1)

White to move

Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch would hardly have approved of White's strategy, which has broken all principles regarding quick development, with only his queen and king having developed and accepting the ruination of his queenside pawn structure.

All this was preceded by painstaking analytical work, and it can be said that it was in those days that the prototype was created of the chess of today, where the computer rules.

The reader may ask whether the author is not contradicting himself. After all, we were praising

Marino's attitude to ignoring the numerous branches of the analytical tree, whereas now we are saying that a concrete approach to the position, aiming to tease out the truth by painstaking analysis, is what one should aim for. Here I should like to quote Vladimir Kramnik, from his comments on the results of the tournament at Wijk aan Zee 2013 (*64* No 2/2013):

«...In many games [of the tournament] there was in general no sort of resistance at all, not the least bit of a struggle. In such games, the players who were playing well just had to turn up, sit down, wait for a while and then receive a congratulatory handshake for a well-deserved win.

In fact, I can say that EVERYONE (except those on a plus score) had some inexplicably weak games. Games at the level of a candidate master, no more...

If one takes players with a rating of 2800 or thereabouts, and those with 2700 and lower, the gap between them has, for some reason, become noticeably greater in recent times. One cannot draw conclusions from just one game, but in general there has been such a tendency. I look and am surprised – sometimes against top five players they cannot even put up a fight, let alone make a draw. However, I cannot say that I get the impression that those of us in the top five or ten have become stronger, it is simply that the lower players have declined. Maybe this is due to excessive computerisation. I have looked at the games and see that it is not even just a question of oversights (there are plenty of these, but they happen to all of us). I was much more shocked by some of the appalling positional errors. I think it is because people have started to look at positions in a computer-like way, move by move. People have begun to forget that there are general principles in chess, which it is better not to break. I think all players of around 2700 today have become victims of the computer, whereas players of the very highest class have succeeded in achieving a happy synthesis.»

In my opinion, the 14th World Champion has very accurately revealed the essence of the problem. We are not interested in 2700s, who are somewhere in the sky as far as we are concerned. Incidentally, the 2700s have probably been working on their mistakes in recent years and have significantly squeezed the ranks of the very top guys. On 1 January 2016, there were only two players over 2800: the World Champion Magnus Carlsen and Vladimir Kramnik himself. But Magnus has fallen back from the stratospheric heights of 2889, which he achieved in 2014, and has dropped to the modest (for him) 2850. Caruana and Aronian have achieved highs of 2851 and 2835 respectively, and they have been joined in the top club by Topalov, Anand, Nakamura and Grischuk.

Good luck to the 2700s, we will continue with our discussion of candidate masters and masters, those only starting to storm the heights of the chess world. We have just seen on the basis of examples from Lipnitsky's wonderful book that the essence of a concrete approach to positions lies in analysis. But the aim of analysis is to move us from positions of an undefined type to one that can be assessed based on its outward appearance, or, as players like to say, on general considerations. Analysis, only without moving the pieces, is something a player has to do at virtually every move over the board. And in that component, the candidate masters and masters of today are significantly weaker than their counterparts of 30-40 years ago.

What has happened? The answer is simple: the computer! Its proper use helps improve a chess player and provides many conveniences, but its incorrect use leads to distortions and the appearance of gaps in the development of the player.

Firstly, players used to get a lot of experience in analysis by analysing adjourned positions. With the appearance of the computer, the whole idea of adjournments has died of its own accord. Secondly, opening preparation (and, indeed, the collection of information) was not so deep and was carried out independently or in small groups, developing analytical ability in the process. Of course, progress cannot be stopped and nobody wants to go back to travelling at a few miles an hour in a horse-drawn carriage, when they could travel on a hi-speed train. But when travelling in the horse-drawn carriage, a person had to be ready for all manner of discomforts and inconveniences, which he had to overcome by his own efforts, using his accumulated experience. This is what Kramnik was referring to, when he spoke of terrible positional mistakes and breaches of the general principles of chess even by GMs with high ratings, but who look at positions with the eyes of a computer.

Thirdly, when analysing one's own games, one could not just feed the position into a computer, press a key and get an assessment of '+1.3' or '-0.7', and identify mistakes just by looking at the sharply

changing computer assessment from move to move. One had to use one's own head.

What is the recipe for improving one's analytical mastery today? The first point above has gone. There are no adjournments any more, and it is difficult to imitate the conditions of an adjourned position, as the degree of responsibility will not be there. After all, even the most scrupulous player, looking to improve, will not be able to rid himself of the feeling that a shoddy analysis will not have any consequences in terms of losing him half a point or even more in the tournament.

But the second and third points are still fully appropriate for training, especially the third. One must analyse opening schemes and one's own games without the help of the computer, write down the analysis and only then switch on the engine to check the results. Whereas if you switch the computer on at the start, you will involuntarily come under its influence, and the effectiveness of your analytical work will suffer. Everyone has a computer, but the quality of different people's opening preparation varies. Only the very best players, as Kramnik writes, manage to achieve the right synthesis, i.e., exploit the strong sides of the computer and lead it in the right direction. And in order to find and feel this right direction, one must be able to analyse without the computer's help.

I will sum up what has been said. For our candidate master or master, it is useful not to study excessively long and confusing variations, which explain the strategic generalisations, but to eschew the numerous branches of the analytical tree, at this stage of their study of chess.

Part II
Endgame Strategy

The modern chess elite have excellent, I would say sophisticated endgame technique. And it cannot be otherwise, since not to have it would be to give too great odds to opponents equal in all other components of the game.

But even the best of the best make mistakes in endgames. Firstly, humans make mistakes, full stop. Secondly, modern chess is very sporting and energy-sapping. The mistakes made are more often the result of tiredness and time shortage, than of a failure to understand the game or insufficient knowledge of general endgame principles.

But we see a very different picture in junior events, even of the highest level. Here is an example from the World Under-12 Championship.

Arseny Nesterov 2132
Mahammad Muradli 2121
Porto Carras 2015 (11)

White to move

The game was played in the final round and had great sporting significance. The two players, a Russian and an Azeri, both led the event with 8/10. The position sees a quite sharp endgame, with an obvious visual advantage to White. Nesterov found an interesting tactical manoeuvre, leading to the win of a pawn, but which at the same time allows his opponent to activate his king.

40.Rd8+? Ka7 41.Rd7? Rg5 42.Nc6+ Kb6 43.Nd8 Kb5 44.Rxb7+ Kc4 45.a3 a5

A glance at the position is enough to show how much White has complicated his life by grabbing the b7-pawn, and how much Black has gained. The computer approves of White's play, but I have awarded him question marks. There is a general principle of play in sharp rook endings with equally far advanced passed pawns on each side:

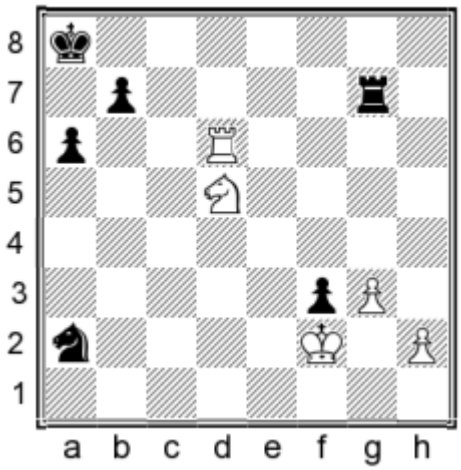
The king should support his own pawn and the rook should deal with the enemy pawn.

The presence of knights on the board here does little to change this principle. Note that the black king is in touch with the d5-pawn and is ready to support its advance, whilst the white pieces are wandering around who knows where.

46.Ne6 Re5 47.Nf4 d4 48.Rc7+ Kb3 49.Rd7 Re4 50.f3 gxf3 51.Kf2 a4 52.Kxf3 Kxa3 53.Rd6 Kb3

Now the white position was completely bad and within a few more moves, the Azeri player won the game and the tournament.

I am not interested in where White could have played better. In the position of the initial diagram, he made a conceptual mistake in going after the b7-pawn. It was essential to play 40.Nxd5! Nxa2 41.f4! gxf3 (otherwise the march of the f-pawn decides) 42.Kf2 with a large and, in a practical game, decisive positional advantage.



analysis diagram

White does everything according to the rules: the king goes with his own pawns and the rook deals with the enemy's. Here there was not really anything to calculate. One just needs to *know* and *understand*.

For comparison, I recommend you study the ending from the game Geller-Smyslov, given below.

The book *Endgame Strategy* is devoted precisely to these two verbs, *know* and *understand*, the general principles in complicated practical endgames.

In accordance with the spirit of the times, I have here drastically reduced the amount of material included and I have arranged it differently, including a number of contemporary examples. At the end of each section, there are exercises. I believe that after carefully working through all the examples, you will be able to say that you have a good grasp of the general principles of playing complicated practical endgames.

The main ideas of the book were presented in a remarkably concise and deep article, all the more impressive for having been written almost a hundred years ago, by the highly talented Soviet master Sergey Belavenets, who was sadly killed in World War 2.

This article and his work on it was drawn to my attention by Mark Israelevich Dvoretsky, without whose involvement the book *Endgame Strategy* would never have been written.

The basic principles of endgame play

Sergey Belavenets, master

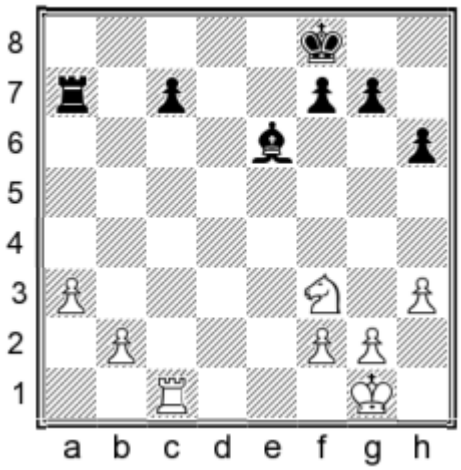
With the fierce battles in the middlegame, passions flare up. In the air there are sacrifices, spectacular combinations, and each of the players closely watches for tactical blows, cunning traps, and subtle unexpected moves. And then suddenly there are mass exchanges, the poetry of the sharp combinational fights ends, and the prose of the endgame comes along. The transition into an endgame sometimes comes at the wish of one player, who believes that there he will find it easier to realise his advantage. Often, though, the endgame arises as a result of the mutual wishes of the two players.

In the endgame, the main thing is technique. Most of all, the player needs to change his mindset. He needs to forget about beauty and tactics. I recommend every player, if he has enough time to spare on the clock, to spend a few minutes at the start of the endgame, just calming himself down and adjusting his thinking. This small expenditure of time will have its benefits later, when the player is able to think in the right way, to think in 'endgame terms'. What does this mean?

This is a question to which we need to devote some time and thought, because the many multi-volume endgame textbooks, which give numerous examples of concrete positions, devote insufficient attention to this question of how one should approach the endgame and think about it.

In the middlegame, one's thoughts are largely dominated by the calculation of variations, aimed at achieving certain goals. The main thing a player does in the middlegame is check all the possible tactical blows and calculate variations and combinations. In the endgame, things are different. Only in rare, tactical endgames does one need to concentrate one's efforts on calculation and tactics. In the great majority of endgames, one needs to think in terms of schemes. Variations play a secondary role here. The first violin is thinking in terms of schemes, and the calculation of variations is only needed when it comes to working out the possibility of obtaining this or that desired position. We identify the piece set-up we want to achieve, taking into account what the opponent may do in reply, of course. Then we use calculation of variations to check the possibility of obtaining the position concerned.

In the following example, from the game **Capablanca-Ragozin,** Moscow 1936, White formulated his task in an extremely laconic fashion.



Capablanca writes thus about his thoughts during the game:

«White's plan consists in preventing the advance of the c-pawn (after which the white b-pawn could become weak) and in controlling the entire board up to the fifth rank. This is achieved by putting the king on e3, the rook on c3, the knight on d4 and the pawns on f4 and b4. After such a position has been reached, White can start to advance his queenside pawns.»

As you see, Capablanca is not interested in variations, nor even in the time needed to achieve the positions he envisages. The main thing is to establish the scheme to aim at, after which things proceed in a normal way.

33.Nd4 Rb7 34.b4 Bd7 35.f4 Ke7 36.Kf2 Ra7 37.Rc3 Kd6 38.Rd3 Ke7 39.Ke3 Ra4 40.Rc3 Kd6

White has obtained his intended set-up. Now he faces a new task: to advance the queenside pawns. To do this, he needs in the first instance to bring his king over to support the pawns.

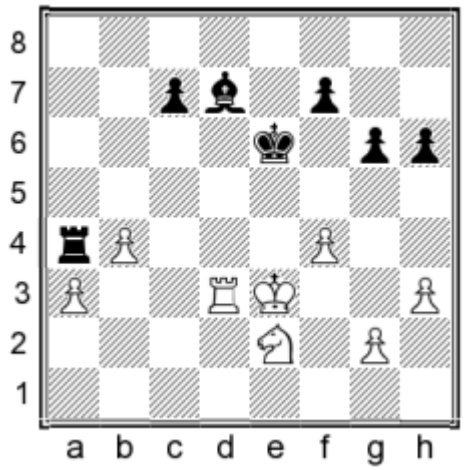
41.Rd3 Ke7 42.Rc3 Kd6

A word about repeating moves. The key rule of the endgame is: *do not hurry!* If there is a possibility of advancing a pawn two squares or one, then first advance it just one square, look more closely and then advance it another. Of course, the rule of not hurrying applies in quiet endgames and in tactical ones things are different.

The rule of 'do not hurry' seems paradoxical to many people, yet it can be observed in action in the play of all great masters of the endgame. Look closely at the endgames of Capablanca, Flohr and others, and you will see with what unhurried, almost boring play, they realise an advantage.

Repeating moves plays a great role in the endgame. Apart from the fact that it saves time for thinking, one may add that the active side gains a well-known psychological advantage. The defender, whose position is worse, is often unable to withstand the pressure, and will weaken his position and make his opponent's task easier. In addition, repeating moves allows one to clarify the position to the maximum. We know that some lovers of 'pure' chess art will criticise us for this advice, but we cannot refrain from recommending players to repeat moves in the endgame! In a battle, we need to use every nuance and there is nothing unattractive or unethical in repeating moves.

41.Ne2 g6 42.Rd3+ Ke6



43.Kd4 Ra6 44.Re3+ Kd6 45.Nc3 f5 46.b5

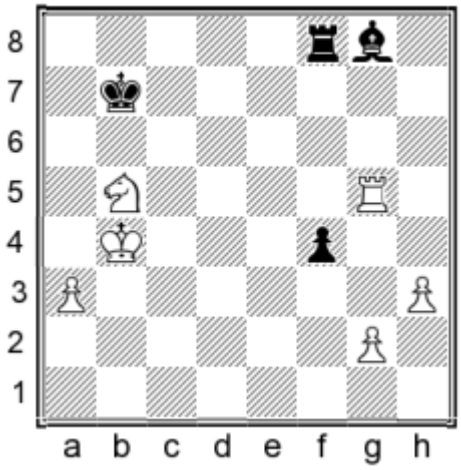
The pawns begin their advance and the white pieces support them. It is noteworthy that Capablanca only starts the pawn advance when his pieces have occupied the strongest possible positions.

Of course, Black cannot take on a3 because of 47.Ne4+.

46...Ra8 47.Kc4 Be6+ 48.Kb4 c5+ 49.bxc6 Bg8 50.Nb5+ Kxc6 51.Rd3

Now it is already possible to dispense with the advance of the a-pawn. Black has weak pawns on the kingside and one of them will fall.

51...g5 52.Rd6+ Kb7 53.fxg5 hxg5 54.Rg6 Rf8 55.Rxg5 f4



56.Nd4

A very important move. For the moment Capablanca deprives his opponent of any counterchances, connected with ...f4-f3.

56...Rc8 57.Rg7+ Kb6 58.Rg6+ Kb7 59.Nb5 Rf8 60.Nd6+ Kb8 61.h4

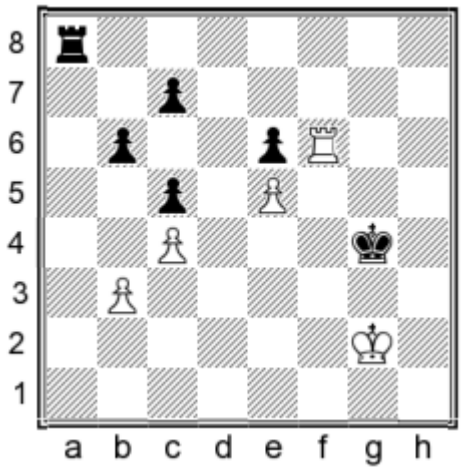
Black resigned.

Chapter 3
Centralising the king

The biggest thing which changes with a transition to the ending is the role of the king. Whereas in the opening and middlegame, the king tries to find a safe hiding place, and watches events from afar, without as a rule taking a direct part in affairs, in the endgame, when the likelihood of a mating attack is sharply reduced, the king becomes an active fighting unit. Often, an experienced player, foreseeing the endgame approaching, will bring his king closer to the centre, so as then to obtain an advantage thanks to his more active king.

The centralisation of the king is one of the most fundamental laws of the endgame, and yet, paradoxically, many players neglect it. King centralisation is hardly ever wrong in the endgame. It can only be too late. Very often, when a player has a choice of two, equally good-looking plans, the stronger is the one which involves centralising his king. Therefore, we can advise you: if you reach an endgame and are unsure what plan to adopt, do not forget about the king!

Sergey Karjakin 2732
Wang Yue 2689
Baku 2008 (5)



White to move

Black has the advantage. He has an extra pawn and the active rook, which is ready to attack the white b-pawn from the square a3 or to drive the white king to the back rank with a check from a2. But White

also has his trumps. The Rf6 attacks the pawn on e6 and cuts the enemy king off from the centre.

Sergey Karjakin took the pawn on e6, which was the decisive mistake.

36.Rxe6?

It was essential to bring his king into the centre urgently, exploiting the fact that the opponent cannot do the same. Correct was 36.Kf2! Ra3 37.Ke3 Rxb3+ 38.Kd2, and the white king succeeds in defending the key pawn on c4. It is also possible to activate the king by 38.Ke4, e.g. 38...Rc3 39.Rg6+! Kh5 40.Rxe6 Rxc4+ 41.Kf5 Rc2 42.Rc6 c4 43.e6 with sufficient counterplay for a draw.

36.Rxe6? Kf5!

The black king is the first to head to the centre and takes control of the passed pawn on e5. Evidently, White overlooked this strong resource. Now the game cannot be saved. Play continued

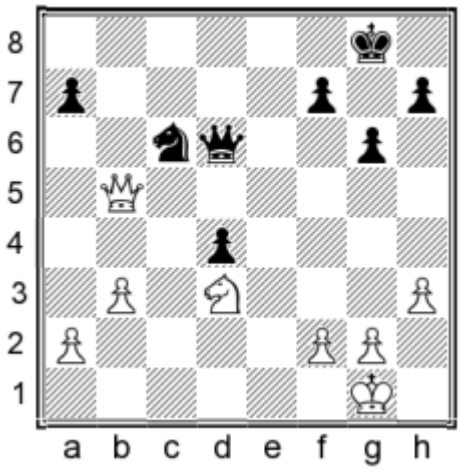
37.Re7 Ra3 38.e6

38.Rf7+ Kxe5 39.Rf3 does not help, because of 39...b5! 40.cxb5 c4 with a win in the pawn endgame, or 40.Re3+ Kd4 41.Rg3 bxc4 42.Rg4+ Kd3 43.Rxc4 Rxb3 44.Rxc5 Rc3 with a winning rook ending (as pointed out by M.Dvoretsky).

38...Rxb3 39.Kf2 Rb4 40.Rxc7 Kxe6 41.Rh7 Rxc4 42.Rh6+ Kd5 43.Rxb6 Re4 44.Rb1 c4 45.Re1 c3 46.Rxe4 Kxe4 47.Ke1 Ke3!

White resigned.

Michael Roizman
Alexander Mikhalevsky
Minsk 1979



Black to move

Black's passed pawn is blockaded and White has the preconditions to create a passed pawn on the queenside. If the knights are exchanged, the game should be a draw, whilst if the knights are not exchanged, much will depend on the respective king positions. Therefore, Black begins centralising his.

1...Kg7 2.b4?!

The white king is too far from the centre and any knight ending will favour Black. He should have played 2.Kf1.

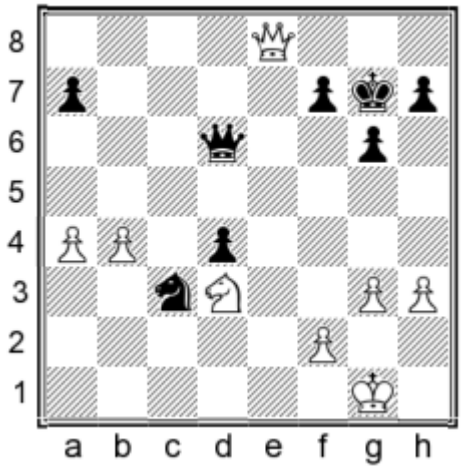
2...Ne7 3.a4?!

Not 3.Qe5+ Qxe5 4.Nxe5 Kf6 5.Nf3 Ke6 6.Nxd4+ Kd5 7.Nb5 Kc4 8.Nd6+ (8.Nxa7 is bad because of 8...Kxb4, winning the knight) 8...Kxb4 with advantage to Black; it was essential that White first activate his king and only then advance his pawns.

3...Nd5 4.g3?

White still thinks he has the advantage and so he stops the threat of 4...Nf4, going into a queen ending. However, after the text it is hard to avoid a queen exchange, and in the knight ending, thanks to his more centralised king, Black will have the advantage.

4...Nc3 5.Qe8



On 5.Qa5 the double attack 5...Qd7! is unpleasant, whilst after 5.Qc5 the difference in king activity has its say – Black is the first to get to c4.

White could preserve the balance with 5.Qb7!, e.g. 5...Nxa4 6.Qxa7 Nc3 7.Qb7 etc.

5...Qe6! 6.Qxe6 fxe6 7.a5 Kf6 8.Kf1

White cannot prevent the advance of the e-pawn with 8.f4 because of 8...Kf5 9.Nc5 e5, and after the exchange of pawns, the black king reaches c4.

8...e5 9.Nc5

Here too, 9.f3 is no help because of 9...Ke6 10.Ke1 Kd5 11.Nb2 e4.

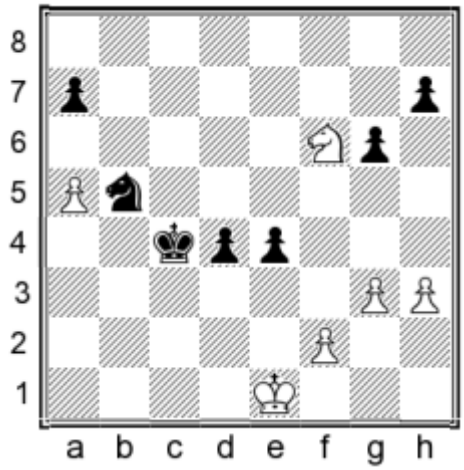
9...e4 10.Ke1 Ke5 11.Nd7+ Kd5!

The main thing is to activate the king!

12.b5

We should consider the move 12.Nf6+. The variation 12...Kc4 13.Nxh7 Kd3 14.Nf6 Kc2 15.Ng4 d3 16.Ne3+ Kc1 17.Kf1 (17.Nc4 Nb1! 18.b5 Na3!) 17...d2 18.Kg2 Nd5 does not leave White any chance at all.

12...Nxb5 13.Nf6+ Kc4!

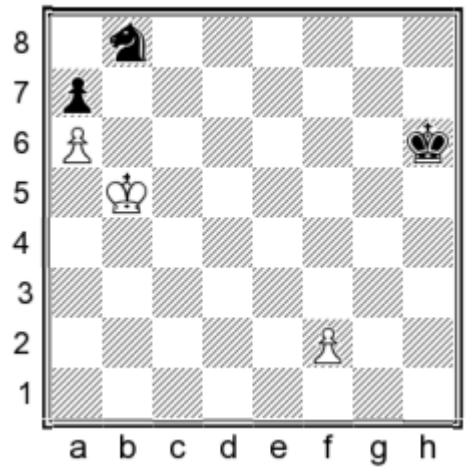


14.Kd2?

After this, Black wins quite simply. White had two other possibilities: 14.Nxe4 and 14.Nxh7. Taking on e4 is weaker. It is better to create an outside passed pawn on the queenside, by taking on h7.

Thus, 14.Nxe4 Kd3 15.Nd2 (White loses after 15.Nc5+ Kc2 16.Na6 on account of 16...Nc7! 17.Nb4+ Kc3 18.Nc6 d3) 15...Kc2 16.f4 d3 17.g4 Nd4 18.h4 Kc1 19.Ne4 Nc2+ 20.Kf2 d2 with an easy win.

But now let us look at 14.Nxh7! Kd3 15.Ng5. There could follow: 15...e3 16.h4 e2 17.Nf3 Na3 18.Nxd4 Kxd4 19.Kxe2 Nc4 20.a6 Ke5 21.Kf3 Kf5 22.g4+ Ke5 23.h5 gxh5 24.gxh5 Kf5 25.h6 Ne5+ 26.Ke3 Kg6 27.Kd4 Nc6+ 28.Kc5 Nb8 29.Kb5 Kxh6



The knight, by occupying its ideal square, combines with the a7-pawn to create an impassable barrier to the white king. Black wins.

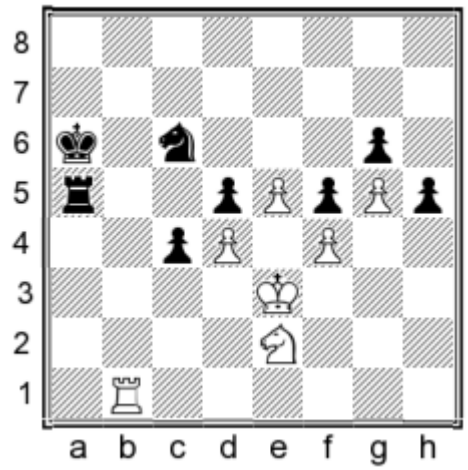
The game continued:

14...Nd6 15.Nxh7 e3+ 16.fxe3 Ne4+ 17.Kd1 d3

And White resigned.

Exercises

Yury Kotkov
Mark Dvoretsky
Moscow 1972



Black to move

Show a scheme for Black and the concrete move with which to bring it about.

Solution: In this position, before going over to active operations, it is useful to include the king in the game, by bringing it closer to the white passed pawn on e5. The concrete move is 54...Rb5!.

This is what Mark Dvoretsky wrote about this move in his book:

«Black has a healthy extra pawn. It is tempting to begin active operations at once with 54...Ra3+. This move is probably enough to win, but even so, it

struck me as not being very good technique. The black king is cut off on the edge of the board and does not take part in the game. Here is a sample variation (not forced, of course), in which this circumstance tells: 55.Kd2 Nxd4? 56.Nxd4 Rd3+ 57.Kc2 Rxd4 58.Re1!, and it is White who wins.

I wanted to bring the king closer to the centre, so he could support the c-pawn or, if necessary, stop the white passed e-pawn. Therefore I began to examine the exchange of rooks.

54...Rb5

If 55.Ra1+, then 55...Kb7. The king has moved closer to the centre and Black still has the check on the third rank. The only question is whether the opponent can exchange rooks on b5 and then win the d5-pawn. Try to find the answer. The answer should be convincing and relatively simple. The starting position is too good to involve oneself in even the slightest risk.

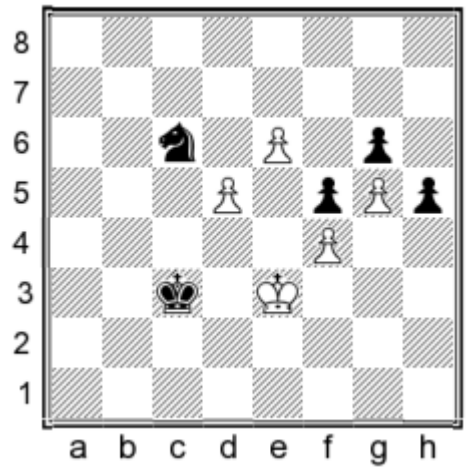
55.Rxb5 Kxb5 56.Nc3+ Kb4 57.Nxd5+ Kb3 58.e6

If 58.Kd2 Nxd4 the outcome of the fight is clear. Now the move 58...Ne7!? is possible, but in the first instance, it is better to examine the more forcing continuation – the win of the knight.

58...c3

*[*58...Ne7!? *also wins – MS.]*

59.Nxc3 Kxc3 60.d5



After a quick calculation of this line, I could not immediately see how to stop the white pawns. But then I asked myself: 'Where should my knight head?'. The answer, of course, is d6, if possible with tempo. Then the route became clear.

60...Na5! 61.e7 Nc4+ 62.Ke2 Nd6

This whole episode is instructive from the viewpoint of the technique of realising an advantage. It is clear that it is more convenient to have the king on b7. If the opponent cannot exchange rooks, then by choosing 54...Rb5, Black clearly makes his task easier. For the sake of this, it is worth calculating the forcing variation, especially if one can do this quickly and confidently (the calculation took me about three minutes). I suggest that this confirms the thought that *good technique consists fundamentally in the calculation of short and precise variations*.»

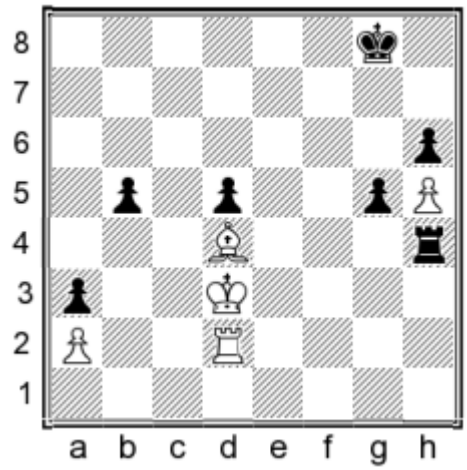
Very instructive and exhaustive commentary by Mark Dvoretsky. I especially recommend trainers and readers to focus on the italicised words in the last paragraph.

In the game, White declined the exchange of rooks and Black demonstrated confident technique in realising his advantage.

55.Ra1+ Kb7 56.Kf2 Rb2 57.Ke3 Rb3+ 58.Kf2 Rb2 59.Ke3 Rb3+ 60.Kf2

60...h4 61.e6 Kc7 62.Ra8 h3 63.Rg8 Ne7 64.Rh8 Kd6 65.Ng1 c3 66.Ke3 c2+ 67.Kd2 Rg3! 0-1

Evgeny Bareev 2635
Garry Kasparov 2780
Linares 1992 (7)



White to move

On his last, 40th move, Kasparov in time-trouble moved his king from g7 to g8. We will quote Bareev's commentary from this moment, when he demonstrated the game at the Dvoretsky-Yusupov chess school:

«A somewhat strange move (not so surprising – it was move 40!). Ever since childhood we are taught that in the endgame, the king should head towards the centre, and so 40...Kf7 was tempting. But what would you recommend to White now?

Yes, the move 41.Rc2 is possible, but why? The penetration by the rook is not a problem for Black, but rook and bishop together would be impossible to deal with. And especially if we manage to include the king in the attack! Imagine the white king on e6 and the bishop on e5 – Black would simply have to resign, even if White had no pawns left at all.

Therefore one must come up with the move 41.Kc3!, trying to step round the d5-pawn with the king from the flank. The position probably remains drawn, but White would be risking nothing and would pose some problems for his opponent.»

41.Be5?! Kf7!

Of course, not 41...Rxh5? 42.Kd4!.

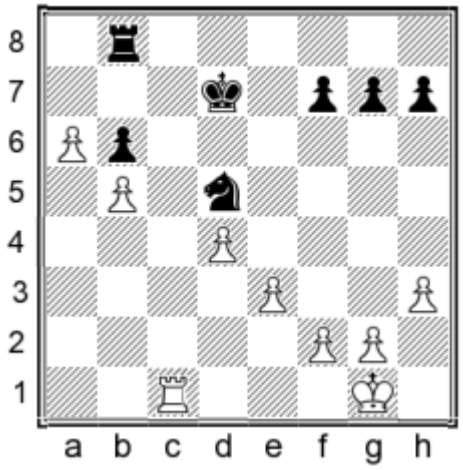
42.Re2 Rxh5 43.Kd4 Ke6!

The black king comes into the battle and the game ends in a draw.

44.Bb8+ Kf5 45.Re3 Rh1 46.Rf3+ Kg4 47.Rg3+ Kf5 48.Rf3+ ½-½

Many years later, when Bareev was representing Canada at the Olympiad in Baku, he played the following ending, which is an excellent illustration of two themes in this book – king centralisation and the role of pawns in the endgame.

Pavel Eljanov 2739
Evgeny Bareev 2675
Baku 2016 (7)



Black to move

A first glance at the position suggests White's obvious advantage. In the endgame, he has three pawns for the piece, and the a-pawn, the most dangerous pawn in the battle against a knight, has already advanced to the sixth rank and is a protected passed pawn.

The visual impression would indeed be fatal for Black, were the white king closer to the centre, such as on e2. But the king's distance from the centre is the decisive factor in the assessment of the ending, and White does not even save the game.

29...Rc8!

Black exploits the fact that, in the event of the exchange of rooks, the pawns on a6 and b5 will fall, due to the remoteness of the white king, and so White is forced to yield the only open file.

30.Rb1

30.Ra1 Nc3

30...Rc4! 31.Rb3

Here too, 31.Ra1 is no help because of 31...Nc7 32.a7 Na8, and the white queenside pawns perish.

31...Nc7

Preparing the transfer of the rook via a4 to a5.

32.Ra3 Rb4 33.a7 Na8 34.d5 Rb1+ 35.Kh2 Rxb5 36.e4 Ra5 37.Rf3 Ke8!

Unlike its colleague, the black king takes an active part in the game.

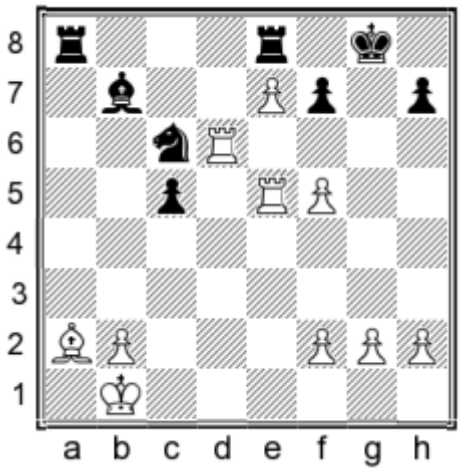
38.Rc3 Kd8 39.d6 Rxa7

And Black soon won.

Chapter 4
The role of pawns in the endgame

As a rule, in the endgame the main task is not mating the enemy king, but promoting a pawn. Therefore in the endgame, by comparison with the middlegame, the value of pawns increases.

Valentin Lukov
Semko Semkov
Bulgaria-ch 1977



White to move

White has sacrificed a knight, obtaining in return three pawns, one of which has reached e7. With his last move ...Nb8-c6 Black simultaneously attacked the white rook and the passed pawn. In the event of 22.Rxc5 Rxe7 23.Bd5 Nb4! 24.Bxb7 Re1+ 25.Rc1 Ra1+! the white king is mated. Even so, White does have a way of maintaining the initiative.

22.Rxc6!

Now Black has an extra rook, for just three pawns! However, in the endgame, there is a significant difference between the absolute and the relative value of pawns. Let us follow the attacks by the white infantry, which even his opponent's greatly superior forces cannot stop.

22...Bxc6 23.f6 h6

The threat was 24.Rg5+ followed by Bxf7.

24.Re3 c4!

An ingenious defence. By sacrificing a fourth pawn, Black opens the c-file and obtains counterplay.

25.Bxc4 Rec8?

The decisive mistake – this rook belongs on e8. The immediate activation of the rook gave sufficient counterplay – 25...Ra5!.

26.b3!

Supporting the bishop and letting the king out. Not 26.Rg3+ Kh8 27.Bxf7?? because of 27...Be4+.

26...Ra5

In order after 27.Rg3+ to have the answer 27...Rg5.

27.g4! Be8 28.f4

The pawns march forward in strict military order.

28...Rca8 29.Rd3

Taking aim at the square d8.

29...Kh7

The rook check does nothing.

30.Rd6

Not allowing the black king out: 30...Kg6?? 31.Bd3+

30...Rc8 31.h4 Ra7 32.Kb2

White can improve his king position, because nothing can stop his pawns advancing.

32...Rd7 33.Rxd7 Bxd7 34.Bxf7 Rb8 35.g5 hxg5 36.fxg5 Be8 37.g6+ 1-0

Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu
Fabiano Caruana
Dortmund 2015

Black to move

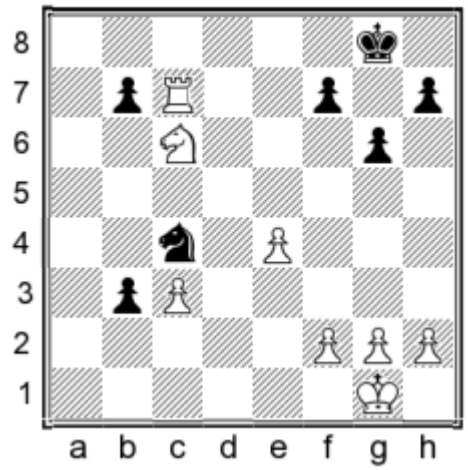
Visually, the position seems quite unclear. Black's strategic trumps are obvious – the knight on c4 and the passed a-pawn both look very powerful. However, White wants to play Ne2-d4 to disturb the harmony of the black pieces. Caruana finds a brilliant tactical decision.

27...a5! 28.Nd4?!

The only chance of saving the game was Caruana's suggestion 28.Be7, but it was hard for White to foresee his opponent's brilliant combination.

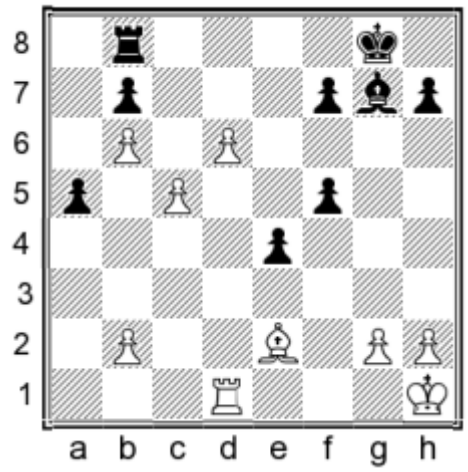
28...axb4! 29.Nxc6 b3 30.Rxc7

Also no better is 30.Nb4 b2 31.Rd1 Na3.



30...Nd6!! 0-1

Magnus Carlsen
Alexander Grischuk
Linares 2009



White to move

White's advantage is obvious. His passed pawns are more dangerous, further advanced and more compact. If he manages to eliminate the last real obstacle, the b7-pawn, then his pawns will be practically unstoppable. The idea of the first move is obvious.

33.Ba6! Bf6!

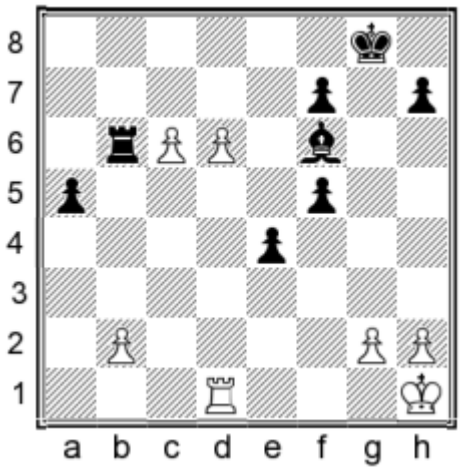
Grischuk defends desperately. Things would be hopeless for Black after 33...bxa6 34.d7 Bf6 35.c6.

Question: How should White continue? Is 34.Bxb7 possible?

Show/Hide Solution

Answer:

34.Bxb7! Rxb7 35.c6 Rxb6

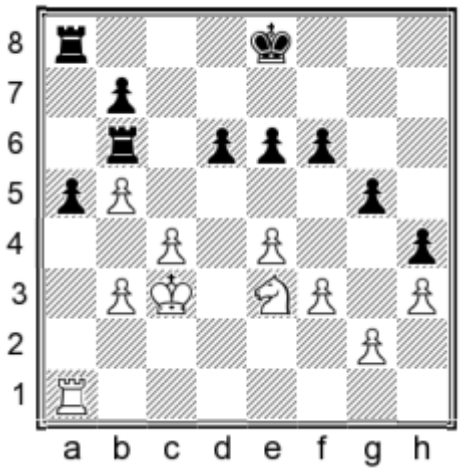


36.Rc1!

The only winning move. All other moves lose, e.g. 36.c7? Rc6.

36...Bxb2 37.d7 1-0

Artyom Timofeev 2651
Denis Khismatullin 2643
Moscow 2009 (5)



Black to move

In a 3.Bb5+ Sicilian, the game reached a solid position, where it looked as though the players may soon agree a draw. But the two young players were in a fighting mood and were looking for chances to continue the battle. Artyom Timofeev sacrificed an exchange, so as to deprive the Rb6 of any mobility, and Denis Khismatullin rescued the captive from his confinement with the move

43...d5!?

After the necessary capture

44.exd5

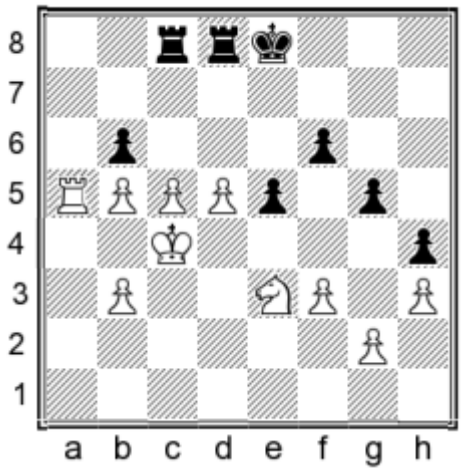
Black should have quietly defended the f6-pawn with his king by means of 44...Kf7 and also removed his king from a possible knight fork on c7 after taking the d5-pawn. In this case, his chances would even have been preferable.

I do not know if Black was short of time, but Khismatullin chose

44...Rd6?!

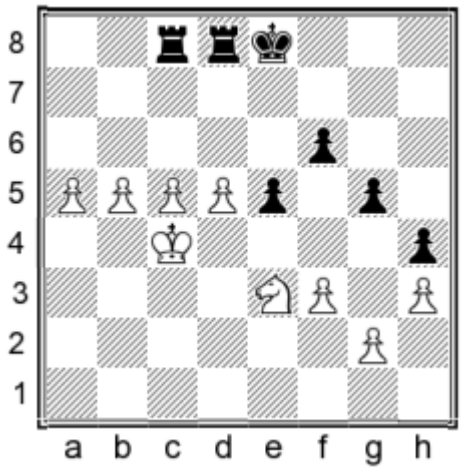
and became co-author of a unique example which superbly demonstrates the changing role of pawns in the endgame. He can not only win in genius style (see the ending Khismatullin-Eljanov), but is also able to lose in a very talented way, at least on these pages.

45.c5 Rdd8 46.Kd4 Rac8 47.Rxa5 e5+ 48.Kc4! b6



This pawn fork is the point of Black's play. With the disappearance of the white c5-pawn, Black will have every chance of success. However, there followed the stunning

49.b4!! bxa5 50.bxa5



Black has a huge material advantage, but his position is lost. The armada of white pawns sweeps all before it. There is no point in annotating the rest of the game. Let us simply watch and admire the way Artyom Timofeev demonstrates the triumph of soul over body.

50...Ra8 51.a6 e4 52.fxe4 Kd7 53.Nf5 Re8 54.c6+ Kd8 55.Nd6 Re7 56.Kc5 f5 57.exf5 Re2 58.Nb7+ Ke8 59.d6 Rxg2 60.d7+ Ke7 61.f6+ Kxf6 62.c7 1-0

Martin Ortueta Esteban
José Sanz Aguado
Madrid 1933

Black to move

Question: Calculate the consequences of 30...Rd2.

Show/Hide Solution

Answer: After **30...Rd2** White's only reply is **31.Na4**. Now the question which arises is whether the combination starting 31...Rxb2 works?

Show/Hide Solution

Answer: Yes!

31...Rxb2!!

Otherwise White would gradually equalise after 32.Kf1.

32.Nxb2 c3

The obvious introductory move. After 33.Nd3 c4+ 34.Rxb6 cxd3, the black pawns promote. However...

33.Rxb6!

Now what should Black do? If he takes the rook with 33...axb6? it is White who wins with 34.Nd3. But Black has the pawn blow

33...c4!

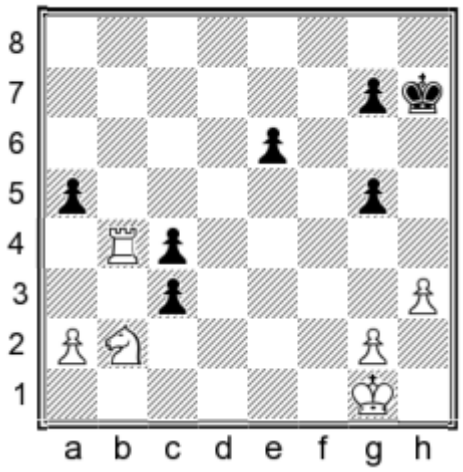
Taking away the square d3 from the white knight and threatening 34...c2.

But White has the defence

34.Rb4!

attacking the c4-pawn. Is White winning? No! Black has at his disposal a decisive pawn blow of rare beauty:

34...a5!!



A fantastic position! The white rook and knight cannot stop the trio of black pawns, two of which are doubled.

35.Nxc4 c2 0-1

Chapter 5
The problem of exchanges

With limited material on the board, the problem of exchanges assumes primary importance. Whereas in the opening or middlegame, the consequences of a misguided exchange can often be corrected later – in the endgame, such a mistake can be fatal.

Of course, in the majority of cases, an experienced player can easily tell which exchanges are favourable to him. But there often arise situations where an exchange which seems tempting on general considerations turns out to be stereotyped and not in accordance with the requirements of the position, whilst an at first sight paradoxical exchange turns out to be the correct decision.

Simplification of the position is often the best way to realise a material or positional advantage. The outcome of the game depends to a considerable extent on a player's ability to cope correctly with the problem of exchanges, be it a timely simplification of the position or, on the contrary, deciding to maintain the tension.

The diagram position is far from being an endgame. Black has more space, the better bishop and an 'eternal' knight on f4.

Harry Kline
José Raul Capablanca
New York 1913

Black to move

Even so, in the game there followed

23...Nxd3!

Capablanca gives up his wonderful knight for White's bad bishop, demonstrating a subtle understanding of the position. Evidently there is some truth in the old chess joke that 'the worst bishop is better than the best knight'. The knight on f4 occupies a wonderful square, of course, but how can we get real benefit from it? White's bishop is bad, but it cements the white kingside and has reasonable prospects of play on the queenside.

Black aims to take the game into an ending, where his bishop will prove stronger than White's knight.

24.Nxd3 Be6 25.Rd1 Red8 26.b3 Nf4 27.Ng2?!

A strange move. More natural is 27.Nf5 or 27.Nxf4.

27...Nxd3 28.Rxd3 Rxd3 29.Qxd3 Rd8

Possibly White had counted on 29...Bxg4 30.Nxh4 gxh4?! 31.Rg2, although even here, after 30...Bh3! Black's chances are clearly superior. But Capablanca chooses a quieter way to strengthen his position:

30.Qe2 h3! 31.Ne3 a5

Black creates some weaknesses on the queenside. The advantage of his bishop over the knight is obvious.

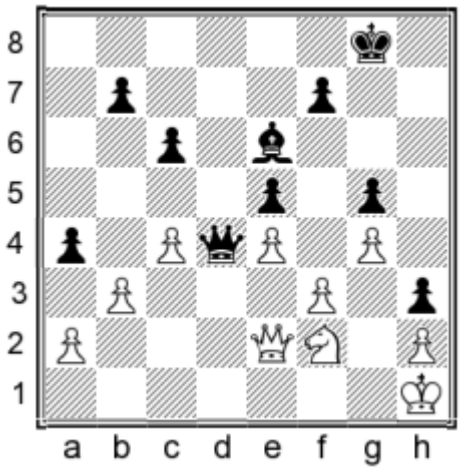
32.Rf1 a4 33.c4

Now the d4-square is weakened, but 33.bxa4 is even worse because of 33...Qf4!, followed by ...Ra8.

33...Rd4 34.Nc2 Rd7 35.Ne3 Qd8 36.Rd1 Rxd1+ 37.Nxd1

After 37.Qxd1 the reply 37...Qd4 is again very strong.

37...Qd4 38.Nf2



38...b5 39.cxb5 axb3! 40.axb3 Bxb3 41.Nxh3 Bd1

The black passed b-pawn and the weakness of the white kingside decide the outcome of the game.

42.Qf1 cxb5 43.Kg2 b4 44.Qb5 b3 45.Qe8+ Kg7 46.Qe7 b2 47.Nxg5 Bb3

White's threats are easily repulsed and the black pawn is queening.

48.Nxf7 Bxf7 49.Qg5+ Kf8 50.Qh6+ Ke7 51.Qg5+ Ke8

The checks are over and White resigned.

It is interesting that in his book *My Chess Career*, Capablanca does not even comment on the move 23...Nxd3!. For him, such a plan was a natural decision.

Robert James Fischer
Tigran Petrosian
Buenos Aires 1971

White to move

The game is approaching an endgame. White's pieces are better mobilised and there is no obvious compensation for Black's weak pawns on a6 and d5. It suits White to exchange dark-squared bishops, after which the squares d4 and c5 become real weaknesses.

15.Be3 0-0

If 15...Nd7, Black would have to reckon with White becoming active on the kingside, e.g. 15...Nd7 16.f4 g6 17.Bd4 0-0 18.f5!? gxf5 19.Bxf5 with the better game.

16.Bc5 Rfe8 17.Bxe7 Rxe7 18.b4!

Not allowing the freeing advance ...a6-a5, after which there would now follow b4-b5.

18...Kf8 19.Nc5 Bc8 20.f3

Taking the e4-square from the enemy knight and preparing to centralise the king.

20...Rea7 21.Re5 Bd7

22.Nxd7+

Fischer played this move very quickly. White gives his beautiful knight for Black's passive bishop. Why? The fact is that the enemy bishop threatened to come to b5 and become active, whilst preventing this with a2-a4 would allow ...Bc6. In addition, after the exchange, White seizes the c-file.

22...Rxd7 23.Rc1 Rd6 24.Rc7 Nd7 25.Re2 g6 26.Kf2!

Now there is no need to hurry.

26...h5 27.f4 h4

Leading to further weaknesses.

28.Kf3! f5 29.Ke3 d4+ 30.Kd2 Nb6 31.Ree7 Nd5 32.Rf7+ Ke8 33.Rb7 Nxb4 34.Bc4

It was also possible to play 34.Rh7 immediately. Black resigned.

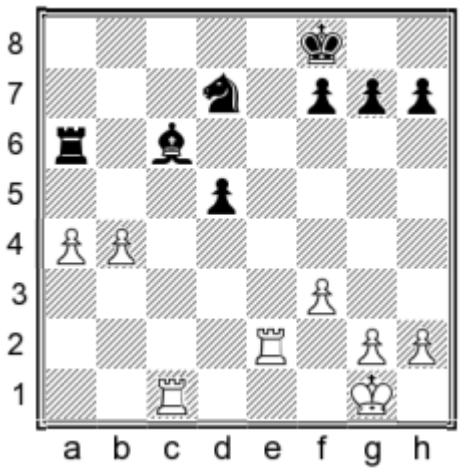
Many years later, already in the computer era, the position in the first diagram was analysed by Sarhan Guliev, in his interesting book *Winning Chess Manoeuvres*, published by New in Chess (2015). Here is his note to Fischer's 22.Nxd7!?:

«Highly characteristic of Fischer. He happily parts with his good knight, exchanging it for the bad bishop, and reaches a position of another type. If White had played 22.a4 (so as to prevent 22...Bb5), Black would have replied 22...Bc6, preparing Nf6-d7.» (Polugaevsky)

Now Guliev:

«Polugaevsky wrote his comments immediately after the game and all of the experts who have commented on the game since have been in agreement with Lev Abramovich. That is, they have said it is sad to part with the lovely knight on c5, but it is necessary. The arguments are all the same.

But this is not true. At least, not quite true. In the variation 22.a4 Bc6 23.Re2 Nd7 White has a combination: 24.Nxa6! Rxa6 25.Bxa6 Rxa6 and now he plays the quiet move 26.Rc1!!



analysis diagram

with the unstoppable threat of b4-b5 (26...Bxa4 27.Rc8#). And if 23...g6 (stopping mate) 24.Rc1 Nd7, then 25.a5, and it is hard to see what Black's next move will be. On 25...Kg7, for example, there is the decisive 26.Nxa6 Rxa6 27.Rb2!

analysis diagram

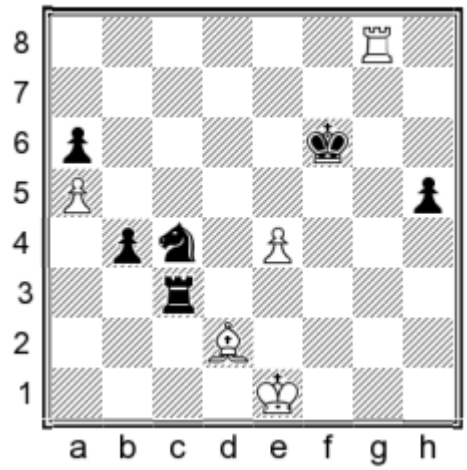
with good winning chances for White. So this means that the capture on d7 was not necessary. The reason for playing it is somewhat different. *The point is to see the exchange on d7 in the first place.* That is, overcome one's natural reluctance to exchange off the lovely knight, include this exchange in one's list of candidate moves, give it due attention, and finally, decide to play it, after calculating concrete variations.»

I decided to put the key point in Guliev's comments in italics. The beautiful variations and subtle white manoeuvres based on the tactical blow Nc5xa6 were found with the aid of the computer. In a practical game, with a normal, classical time-limit, only grandmasters of extra class would be capable of finding the combination of moves 22.a4! and 23.Re2!.

But the aim of the book *Endgame Strategy* is to explain to the reader the principles for playing complicated practical endgames, the logic of taking decisions, and using one technical device or another in a practical game between grandmasters or masters. In other words, *to see the exchange on d7 in the first place*.

So that the reader should not get the impression that the move Nc5xd7 should lead to the simplest possible win in every situation, we will examine the following example.

Yuri Balashov
Manuel Rivas Pastor
Minsk 1982



Black to move

Black's position is winning, Not only has he an extra pawn, but also an overwhelming superiority in piece activity, largely thanks to the superiority of the Nc4 over White's Bd2. After the natural 49...Rb3!, with the threat of 50...Rb1+ and 51...Rb2, White could resign with a clear conscience.

Instead of this, there followed

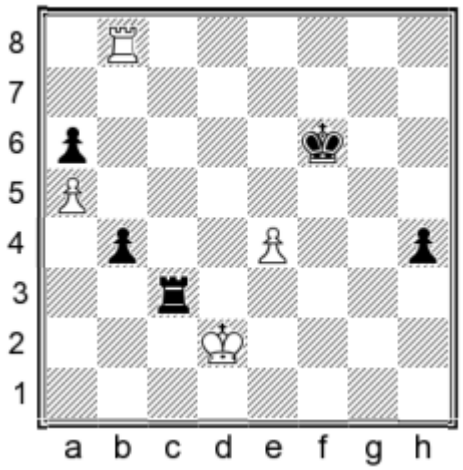
49...Nxd2?!

This move does not throw away the win, but it requires accurate play from Black, since rook endings are well-known for their drawing tendencies. This is a chance for the weaker side.

50.Kxd2 Ra3?!

This and the following moves testify to a lack of understanding of the position, largely due to an absence of knowledge of positions where the weaker side's rook fights successfully against two enemy rook's pawns. In this case, the exchange of a beautiful knight for a bad bishop, and the following moves, results not in amazement and acceptance, but merely in a shake of the head.

We would point out that after 50...h4 51.Rb8 Black has a lovely tactical trick:



analysis diagram

51...h3 52.Rxb4 Rc1!!, and if 53.Kxc1 h2 54.e5+, then 54...Kg5, winning.

In the position of the last diagram, only a draw results from 51...Rb3 52.Kc2 Ra3 53.Rb6+! (as Nesterov showed, bad is 53.Rxb4? h3; material is equal, but White must resign). For example, 53...Kg5 54.Rxa6 h3 55.Ra8 Kf4 56.Rf8+ Kg3 57.Rg8+ Kf2 58.Rf8+ Kg2 59.Rg8+ Kh1 60.e5 Rxa5 61.e6 Re5 62.Re8 etc.

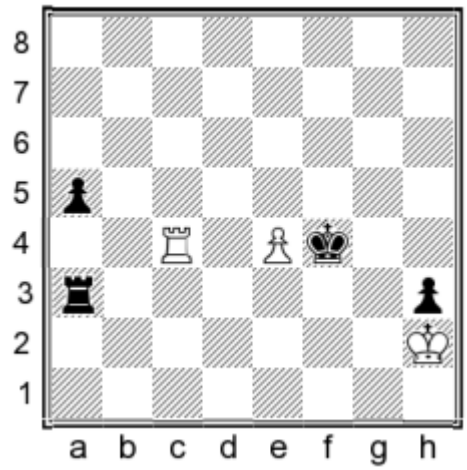
51.Rb8 Rxa5?

A win results from 51...h4! 52.Rxb4 h3 53.Rb1 h2 54.Rh1 Ke5 55.Ke2 Kf4! etc.

52.Rxb4 Ke5

Continuing the same tactics. Not only does Black not prevent the white king going to h2, he even encourages it to do so. After 52...Re5!, Black would retain winning chances, although a detailed analysis of this line is outside our scope. Let us see what happened in the game.

53.Ke3 Ra3+ 54.Kf2 h4 55.Kg2 h3+ 56.Kh2 Kf4 57.Rc4 a5



58.e5+!

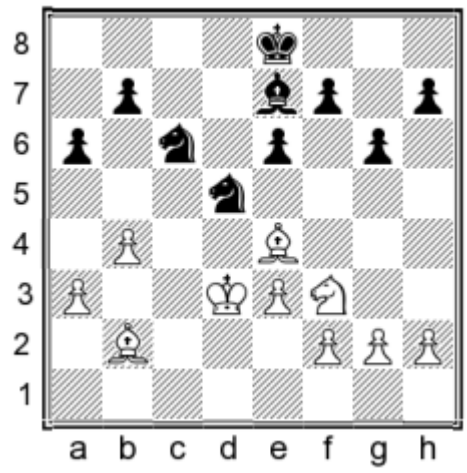
In such positions, so as not to give the opponent winning chances, the easiest thing for the weaker side to do is to jettison his own pawn and fasten onto the opposing a-pawn.

58...Kxe5 59.Rc5+! Kd4 60.Rf5

The position is a theoretical draw. There followed:

60...a4 61.Rf4+ Ke3 62.Rg4 Ke2 63.Re4+ Kf3 64.Rc4 Ke2 65.Re4+ Kd2 66.Rf4 Ra1 67.Rd4+ Ke2 68.Re4+ Kf3 69.Rc4 a3 70.Rc3+ Ke2 71.Rxh3 Ra2 72.Rg3 Ra1 73.Rg2+ Kf3 74.Rg3+ Ke4 75.Rg4+ Kd5 76.Rg5+ Kc6 77.Rg6+ Kb7 78.Rg7+ Ka8 79.Rg8+ ½-½

Mikhail Botvinnik
Ratmir Kholmov
Moscow 1969



White to move

White has two bishops, but the black knights have easily managed to find secure posts and he also threatens 27...f5 with a probable draw. Therefore White voluntarily goes in for the exchange, relying on the activity of his king.

27.Bxd5 exd5 28.e4! dxe4+ 29.Kxe4 Kd7 30.Kd5

The endgame after the knight exchange is drawn. If bishops are exchanged, then White's space advantage and more active king will have decisive significance. After the exchange of bishop for knight, White would have only a small advantage, and finally, if the white knight is exchanged for the black bishop, then the game will most likely end in a draw. Therefore Kholmov should have played 30...Bd8!, as pointed out by Botvinnik. Then Black will drive back the enemy king by means of 31...Ne7+, whilst the exchange of knights after 31.Ne5+ leads to a draw.

Instead of this, Kholmov played:

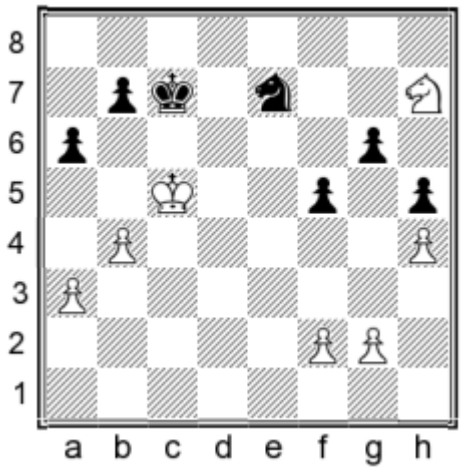
30...h5?! 31.Bg7!

A very strong manoeuvre, taking e7 away from the knight. On 31...Bd8 there follows 32.Bf8, whilst after 31...Bd6 there is 32.Bf6.

31...Bd8 32.Bf8 Bb6 33.Bc5 Ne7+ 34.Kc4 Bxc5?

A mistake in respect of solving the problem of exchanging. After 34...Bc7 Black maintains approximate equality. However, the reserve of solidity in his position is considerable, even though the pure knight ending is more dangerous for him than the position with bishops on the board.

35.Kxc5 Kc7 36.Ng5 f6 37.Nh7 f5 38.h4



Assessing this position, Botvinnik writes: «Zugzwang is approaching. If 38...b6+ 39.Kd4 Kd6 40.Nf8 Nc6+ 41.Ke3 Ne5 42.Kf4 the pawn g6 can already not be defended. Kholmov seeks salvation in tactical complications.»

However, in Botvinnik's variation, if instead of 39...Kd6? Black plays 39...Kc6! 40.Nf8 (40.a4 b5 41.a5 Nd5) 40...Kb5, then he obtains sufficient counterplay to draw.

38...f4?

Only this move is the decisive mistake, after which Black's game unravels.

39.Nf8 b6+ 40.Kd4 Nf5+ 41.Ke4 Nxh4 42.Ne6+! Kc6 43.Nxf4 Kb5

«If 43...g5 44.g3! gxf4 45.gxh4 White has a winning pawn endgame. Black had missed this when playing 39...b7-b6+.» (Botvinnik)

44.g3 Nf5 45.Nxg6 Nh6 46.Ne5!

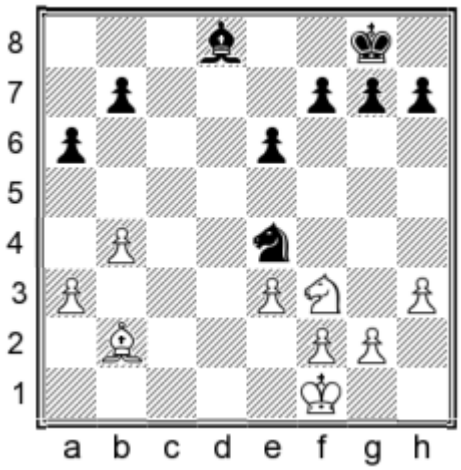
Squashing all attempts at counterplay.

46...Ka4 47.Nc4 Kb3

After 47...b5 the knight transfers to c6.

48.Nxb6 Kxa3 49.Nd5 Kb3 50.f4 Kc4 51.Nc7 Kxb4 52.Nxa6+ 1-0

Alexander Mikhalevsky
T. Akopov
Rostov 1977



Black to move

The diagram position looks roughly equal. After the accurate 1...Nd6 2.Nd2 f6, followed by centralisation of the king, Black would have every reason to count on a draw. However, there followed

1...Bf6?

Black should have tried to exchange knights, not bishops, since in a knight ending, a space advantage is often a decisive factor.

2.Bxf6 Nxf6?!

Now White's king breaks into the centre faster than Black's. It was better to accept a defect in the pawn structure, but hold back the white king, by taking with the pawn on f6. In that case, after 2...gxf6 3.Ke2 Kf8 White gets nothing from the pawn sacrifice 4.Kd3 Nxf2+ 5.Kd4 because of 5...Nd1 or 5...Ke7!?, and he would have to spend time expelling the knight from e4.

3.Ke2 Kf8

3...Ne4 is dangerous because of 4.Kd3! Nxf2+ 5.Kd4, and here after 5...Nd1 the move 6.e4 would be good. Instead of 5...Nd1 a stronger move is 5...b6, but then Black needs to reckon with 6.Ke5 or 6.a4; in both cases, a sharp, calculating struggle begins.

4.Kd3 Ke7 5.Kd4 Nd7 6.Nd2

White prevents the activation of the black king, since after 6...Kd6 there follows 7.Nc4+ Kc6 8.e4, further cramping the black position.

The complications after 6.e4 Kd6?! 7.e5+ Kc6 8.Ng5 Kb5 9.Nxf7 turn in White's favour, but stronger is 6...f6.

6...Nb6 7.e4

The pawn endgame arising after 7.Ne4 Na4 8.Nc5 Nxc5 9.Kxc5 Kd7 10.Kb6 is dangerous for Black. Correct for him is 7...Kd7, when on 8.Ng5 there is the reply 8...e5+! followed by 9...f6.

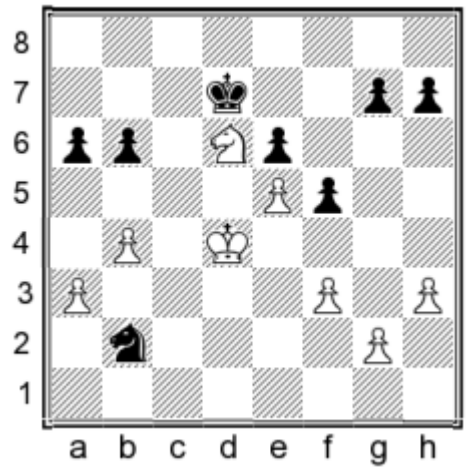
7...Na4?!

Why move the knight to the edge of the board? It was more logical to bring it to e7 via c8, after the move 7...Kd7. 7...Kd6 is weaker because of 8.e5+ Kc6 9.Ne4, and on 9...Kb5 there is 10.Nc3+.

8.e5 f5

Instead of the backward pawn on f7, Black now has a weakness on e6.

9.Nc4 Kd7 10.Nd6 b6 11.f3 Nb2



12.h4!

White attempts to weaken the opponent's kingside, which Black is unable to prevent.

12...Na4 13.Nf7 Ke7 14.Ng5 h6 15.Nh3 Kd7 16.Nf4 Ke7 17.Kc4?!

By subtle play, White has obtained the better position. It was necessary to exclude the black knight from the game with 17.Nd3, after which the manoeuvre Kc4 followed by b4-b5 decides the game. For example: 17.Nd3! Kd7 18.Kc4 Kc6 19.Nf4! Kd7 20.Nh5

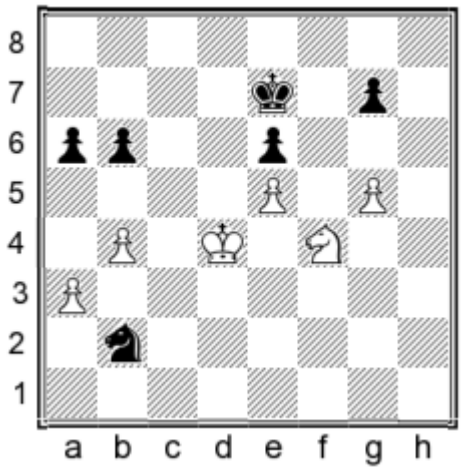
17...Nb2+ 18.Kc3 Nd1+ 19.Kd4 Nb2 20.g4?!

It was simpler to transfer the move to the opponent by means of 20.Kc3 Nd1+ 21.Kd3 Nb2+ 22.Kd4, and now 22...Na4 is bad because of 23.Nd3, whilst after 22...Nd1 there is the very strong 23.a4!. For example, 23...Nb2 24.a5 b5 25.Nd3 with a winning pawn endgame.

20...fxg4 21.fxg4 Nd1 22.g5?!

This move should have been avoided, because Black gets the chance of counterplay by means of the manoeuvre ...Ke7-f7-g6. Good was 22.a4! A sample variation runs: 22...Nb2 23.a5 b5 24.Kc5 g5 25.hxg5 hxg5 26.Ng6+! Kf7 27.Kb6 Nd3 28.Kxa6 Nxb4+ 29.Kxb5 Nd5 30.a6 Nc7+ 31.Kb6 Nxa6 32.Kxa6 Kxg6 33.Kb6, winning.

22...hxg5 23.hxg5 Nb2



24.g6

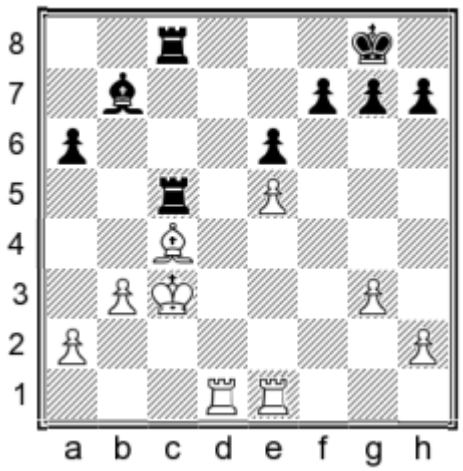
White cramps Black's position to the maximum, but loses his reserve tempo. Admittedly, after 24.Kc3 Nd1+ 25.Kd3 Nb2+ 26.Kd4 Na4! (26...Nd1 is bad because of 27.a4) 27.Nd3 Kf7! 28.Kc4 Kg6 29.Kb3 b5 30.Nc5 Kxg5 31.Nxa6 Black has serious counterplay.

24...Na4 25.Nd3 Kd8 26.Kc4 Kd7??

A blunder. After 26...b5+ 27.Kd4 Kd7 28.Nc5+ Nxc5 29.Kxc5 White does not have the tempo g5-g6, and the game ends in a draw.

27.b5 axb5+ 28.Kxb5 Nc3+ 29.Kxb6 Nd5+ 30.Kb7 Ne7 31.a4 Nxg6 32.a5 1-0

Dmitry Kayumov
Peter Korzubov
Grodno 1984



Black to move

White's position is slightly worse, on account of the defects in his pawn structure and the passive positioning of his pieces. However, his drawing

chances are significantly higher than Black's chances of winning.

1...Bd5 2.Rd4 a5

Going into a rook ending does not do Black any particular favours.

3.Re2 Kf8 4.Kd3 Bc6!

Korzubov correctly preserves his bishop from exchange.

5.Rd6?

False activity. The rook on d6 will bring White nothing but trouble. He should have preferred 5.a4.

5...Ke7

Black aims at the e5-pawn.

6.Kd4 Bb5!

Now the rook ending will be difficult for White. His pieces have strayed too far forward and, after the bishop exchange, will find it hard to take up the positions needed.

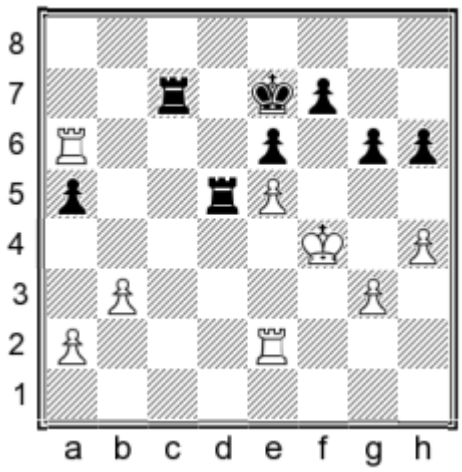
7.Bxb5 Rxb5 8.Ra6 Rd5+ 9.Ke4 Rc7

The white rooks are scattered and the king cannot defend the e5-pawn by itself.

10.Kf4 h6 11.h4

Kayumov prevents the advance ...g7-g5, but this pawn move creates conditions for the appearance of new weaknesses.

11...g6!



12.Re4?

He should not have allowed the enemy rook onto the second rank without a fight. He could have held his lines with 12.Ra8 Rcc5 13.Re3 Rd4+ 14.Kf3 Rd2 15.Kg4.

12...Rc2!

Posing White insoluble problems. There is a threat of a check on f2, and also of 14...Rf5.

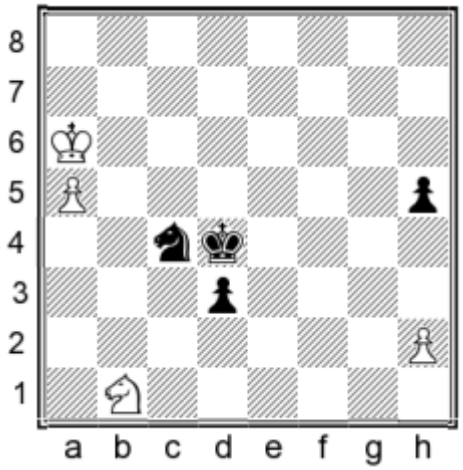
13.Ra7+ Kf8 14.g4 Rxa2

The first gains.

15.Rc4 Rb5 16.Rc8+ Kg7 17.Rc3 Ra3 18.Rf3 Rbxb3 19.Rxb3 Rxb3 20.Rxa5 Rh3 21.Ra1 h5

White resigned.

A. Son
E. Gorovetz
Tashkent 1978



Black to move

Black's passed pawn is much more dangerous than its opposite number, in addition to which his king and knight occupy ideal positions.

1...h4!

Black sealed this move, posing his opponent a difficult choice.

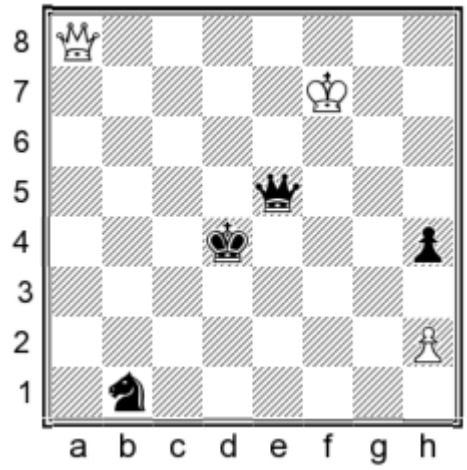
2.Kb5

White gives up a piece, but 2.h3 Kc5 3.Nc3 Kb4 was also cheerless.

2...Na3+! 3.Kb6 Nxb1 4.a6 d2 5.a7 d1=Q 6.a8=Q Qb3+ 7.Kc7

As a result of an almost forced series of moves, Black has a material advantage and an easily winning position. 7...Qf7+ 8.Kb6 Qf6+ 9.Kc7 Nc3 leads to a quick win.

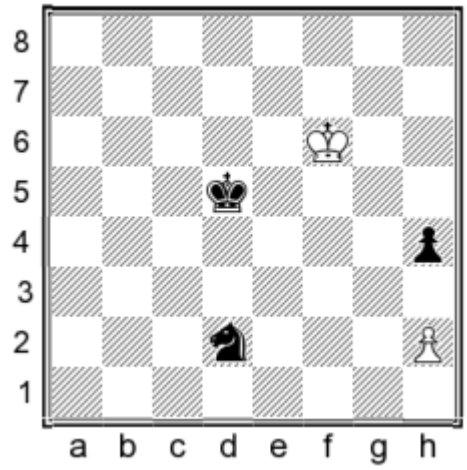
7...Qc4+ 8.Kd6 Qc5+ 9.Ke6 Qe5+ 10.Kf7



10...Qd5+?

The problem of the exchange! There was a simple win with 10...Qf4+ followed by 11...Nc3. With queens on the board, the extra knight wins easily, whereas without queens, we have a virtual pawn ending, where the win is possible only by exceptionally accurate play.

11.Qxd5+ Kxd5 12.Kf6 Nd2



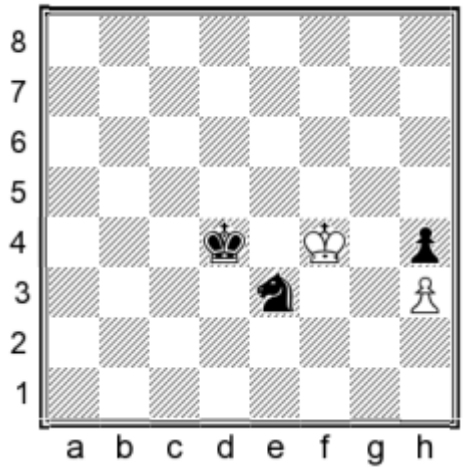
13.Kf5!

The routine 13.Kg5? loses after 13...Nf3+ 14.Kg4 Ke4 or 14.Kf4 Nxh2 15.Kg5 Nf3+ 16.Kf4 Ng5. Bad is 13.h3 Ke4 14.Kg5 Nf3+. Once again we see how critical is the moment of transposing into a pawn ending (the present position operates just like a pawn ending).

13...Nf3 14.h3!

This is what the mistaken queen exchange has led to. White threatens to drive off the knight by 15.Kf4 and then attack the only black pawn. Admittedly, Black does still have a study-like way to win. I recommend, dear reader, that you try to find the win yourself, and only then look at the game continuation.

14...Kd4 15.Kf4 Ne1! 16.Kg4 Ng2 17.Kf3 Ne3! 18.Kf4



Black has managed to defend his pawn with only moves, but how can he drive off the white king?

18...Kd3 19.Kf3 Nf5

Repeating moves to gain time on the clock.

20.Kf4 Ne3 21.Kf3 Kd2!

Black drives the white king, which has to keep the opposition, further from the h4-pawn.

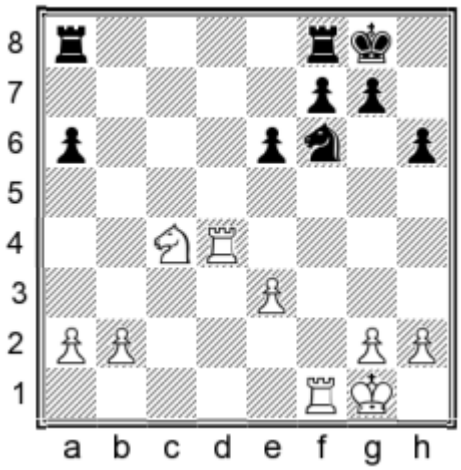
22.Kf2 Nd5!

The decisive manoeuvre.

23.Kf3 Ne7 24.Kg4 Ng6 25.Kg5 Ke3 26.Kxg6 Kf4!

It was still possible to go wrong: 26...Kf3?? 27.Kf5 Kg3 28.Ke4 with a draw. But now White resigned.

Alexei Shirov 2706
Viswanathan Anand 2770
Moscow 2001 (m/5)



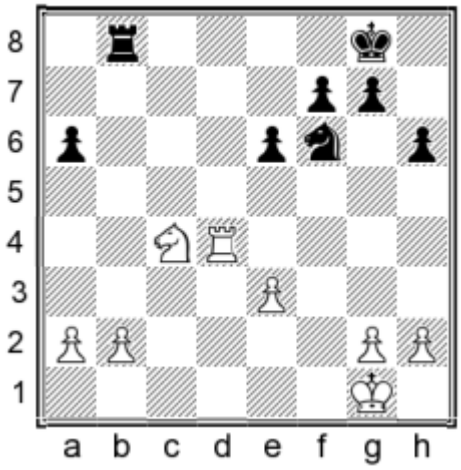
Black to move

Question: Assess the position, try to get to its essence and indicate a scheme for further action by Black.

Show/Hide Solution

Answer: The position is roughly equal, but White has the initiative. His forces are centralised and his position is easier to play. As Guliev correctly pointed out, White can play a number of moves automatically: Rf1-d1, Kg1-f2-f3, e3-e4, improving his position.

Black needs a very well thought-out scheme of action. As the Azeri grandmaster showed, the simple 23...Rfd8 24.Rfd1 Rd5, counting on 25.e4?! Nxe4!, does not lead to equality because of 25.Nb6! Rxd4 26.Rxd4 Rb8 27.Nc4.

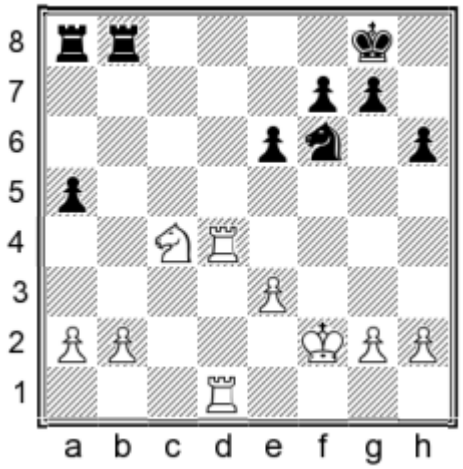


The exchange of one pair of rooks does not bring Black any relief, whilst the a6-pawn becomes vulnerable after b2-b3.

The essence of the position is that Black needs to keep all four rooks on the board and seek counterplay on the queenside.

Let us follow the excellent manoeuvres of Anand.

23...Rfb8! 24.Rfd1 a5! 25.Kf2



25...Kh7!

Played without prejudice! With two pairs of rooks on the board, bringing the black king into the centre would not be without its dangers. Anand prepares to complete his well thought-out plan of defence. The rook on a8 has a square prepared on a7, to defend the seventh rank. By moving the king to h7, Black avoids an exchange of rooks on d8. The black rook on the b-file, combined with the a-pawn when it reaches a4, will tie down the white queenside and ensure the necessary counterplay.

26.R1d2 a4 27.Kf3 Ra7!

The regrouping of the black pieces is completed. After

28.e4 Rb4

Shirov forced a draw by repetition:

29.Nd6 Rb8! 30.Nc4 Rb4 31.Nd6 Rb8 32.Nc4 ½-½

Chapter 6
Schematic thinking

Chess history knows many examples where, in an extremely complicated position, a player in a few minutes took a decision, which was later proved correct, only after much analysis of long and complicated variations, which it would be quite unrealistic to work out over the board.

The intuition of Capablanca is the stuff of legends. Smyslov, Fischer, Karpov, Kramnik and many other players are capable of extremely quick and accurate perception of all the important details of a position.

Thinking in schemes gives an experienced player the advantage in the endgame, even against an opponent who is superior to him in the speed and depth of his calculation of variations, but who is relying mainly on precisely this calculation.

However, schematic thinking should not be confused with the main strategic plan of a game, even though they have much in common. Both schematic thinking and the general plan arise out of the concrete details of the position. For example, in the game Capablanca-Ragozin, White's main thought was the realisation of his extra pawn on the queenside. Creating the right moment for this took a great deal of careful preparation, to improve the position of his forces and prevent any possible enemy counterplay. In doing this, Capablanca used a logical piece set-up, arising from the characteristics of the position and designed to solve some not very difficult concrete problems. During the course of the game, one scheme gave way to another, and at a certain moment, Capablanca gave up on the advance of his queenside pawns, i.e. he changed his overall strategic plan, because Ragozin had created weaknesses on the kingside, and playing against these weaknesses now promised more assurance of success.

All of this is very characteristic of modern chess. Of course, there are positions which allow the formation of a global strategic plan, which the opponent can do nothing to oppose. But much more frequently, one has to change plans, according to changes in conditions on the board, resulting from the opponent's actions. But thinking in terms of schemes, to carry out small parts of the plan, is always necessary, except in positions where calculation drives everything and where general principles give way to concrete calculation.

Boris Spassky
Eugenio Torre
Hamburg 1982

Black to move

In the diagram, we have a typical rook endgame, with an extra pawn for White on the queenside.

35...Rd1+ 36.Kh2 h5 37.h4 Rd2 38.Kg3 Rd3+ 39.f3 Rd2 40.Ra8+ Kh7 41.a4 Ra2 42.a5 f6?

So far, we have followed a path which has been trodden many times. The standard plan for White is to bring his king over to the queenside, with his rook on a7 and pawn on a6. Whilst he is doing this, Black takes one or more kingside pawns and tries to

organise a passed pawn there, giving his rook up for the white a-pawn when it promotes. It is more difficult for Black to organise his counterplay here than in positions with three or even two pawns each on the kingside, but sometimes it is possible.

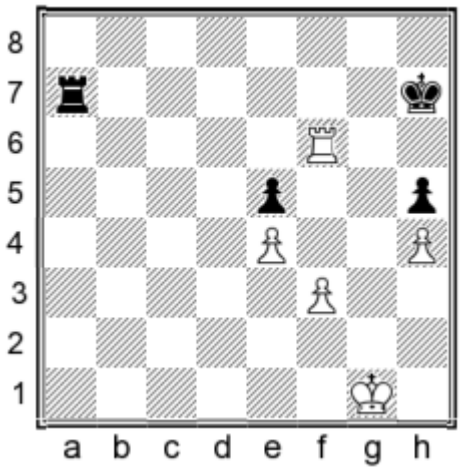
At first glance, it is hard to understand why Torre's last move deserves a question mark. However, it allows Spassky to turn from the beaten track and win the game.

43.a6 Kg6 44.a7!

With the black pawn on f6, this move becomes possible.

44...Kh7 45.Kh2 Ra1 46.g3 Ra2+ 47.Kg1 Kg6?!

After this move, Black will not get a single further chance. The only attempt to hang on to the edge of the precipice was 47...g5!. Now White would have to make the correct choice and play 48.Rf8! (48.hxg5? fxg5 49.f4 is mistaken because of 49...exf4 50.gxf4 Ra1+! 51.Kf2 Ra2+! with a draw). The position after 48...Rxa7 49.Rxf6 gxh4 50.gxh4 is lost for Black with correct play by the opponent.



analysis diagram

The white rook will occupy the powerful square f5 and his king will drive the enemy rook off the fifth rank. But White would have to overcome some technical problems.

48.f4!

48...Kf7

Now we can understand the difference made by the position of the black f-pawn. If the pawn were on f7, Black would draw by exchanging on f4 and then playing the move ...g7-g6, and White cannot create a passed pawn on the kingside. Now, however, taking on f4 would be completely hopeless, because White would just advance his passed e-pawn and queen.

49.fxe5

A mistake would be 49.f5 with the idea of g3-g4 and h4-h5-h6 because of checks by the black rook, forcing the white king to the queenside, after which the move g3-g4 becomes impossible.

49...fxe5 50.Kf1 Ra1+ 51.Ke2 Kg6 52.Kd2 Ra4 53.Kc3 Ra1 54.Kc4 Kf7 55.Kd5 Ra5+ 56.Kd6

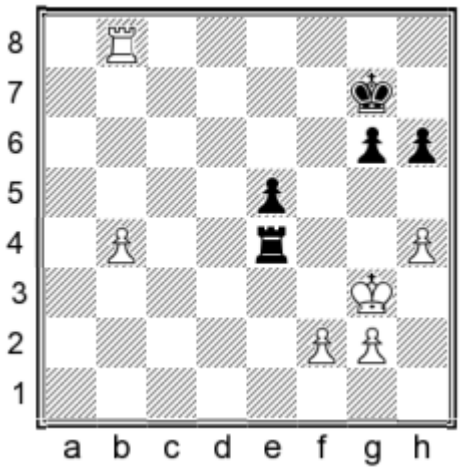
This position is hopeless for Black, as also with the black king on h7. He loses the e5-pawn because of zugzwang.

56...Kg6 57.Ke6 Ra1

Nothing changes after 57...Kh7 58.Kf5 g6+ 59.Kf6.

58.Kxe5 Kf7 59.Kf5 Ra5+ 60.e5 g6+ 61.Ke4 1-0

Lev Polugaevsky
Evgeny Vasiukov
Tbilisi 1966



White to move

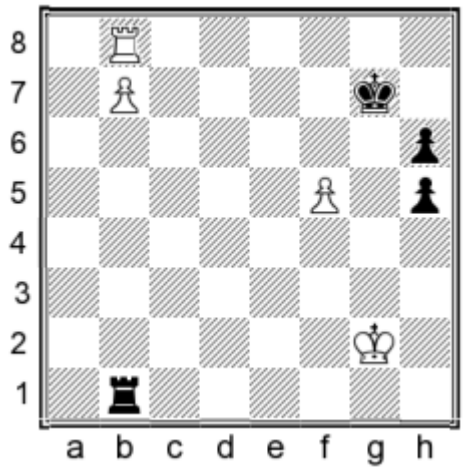
In my opinion, rook endings deserve a special classification within chess endings. They are extremely complicated and have their own laws and principles, which often have little in common with the general principles applying to most complicated endings. Often in rook endings, the actions of the players in connection with the abundance of available opportunities are difficult to describe, the resulting positions are irrational, and the choice of progress is made, first of all, on the basis of concrete variations.

However, often we see the opposite picture: concrete variations have almost no significance and it is necessary to think entirely in schemes. This present endgame belongs to that category. The methods of defence for the weaker side in such positions have been known for a long time. The weaker side's rook stands behind the enemy passed pawn and when this pawn gets to b6, Black waits. When the white king comes to the aid of its passed pawn, Black takes one or more of the white kingside pawns. After this, he prepares to sacrifice his rook for the white passed pawn, and matters reduce, as a rule, to an ending with king and rook versus king and pawns. The result depends, of course, on the concrete particulars of the given position, but a draw occurs more often than a white win. It seems as though in the present case, these are the lines along which play will develop.

42.b5?

White's sealed move is a serious mistake, missing the win. Here is Polugaevsky's commentary:

«Only in analysis did I perceive a nuance of this position, and an extremely significant one at that. The fact is that by pushing his pawn to b7, White ties down the black king, and then by triangulation with his king, he can win the e5-pawn. However, he is only winning the resulting position if he can create a passed pawn on the f-file.



Passed white pawn on the f-file

By playing f5-f6+, White prevents the black king 'dancing' on the squares h7 and g7, and after ...Kg7-f7 he wins with Rb8-h8, whilst after ...Kg7xf6 he can give a deadly check: Rb8-f8+ and b7-b8=Q.

In the adjourned position, the f-pawn does not have an opposite number, but the pawn on g6 stands in its way. However here White could clear the path at once, by playing the deadly blow 42.h5. Whether Black himself takes on h5 or allows White to exchange on g6, the effect is the same: White obtains a passed pawn on the f-file and reaches a theoretically winning ending. During the game, I was intending to play h4-h5 on the next move, but during analysis I realised that this was not achievable. After all, it is Black to move, and instead of just putting his rook on b2, he can change the kingside structure radically by playing 42...h5!, which puts an end to his opponent's aggressive intentions there. Now, if the white king approaches the b-pawn, play proceeds along the lines outlined in the very first paragraph above, and, you can take my word for it, White lacks at least one tempo for the win.

No matter how much I worked, I could not find a win for White. Even if White wins the e5-pawn with the aid of triangulation (as is possible), he can only create a passed pawn on the h- or g-file, which is insufficient for victory.»

These comments by Polugaevsky are some 50 years old. Alas, the computer easily finds the hole in his reasoning: 42.h5 gxh5 43.b5 Rf4! 44.f3 h4+ 45.Kf2 h3! 46.gxh3 e4 47.Ke3 exf3! with a draw.

42.b5? Rb4?

Evidently, Black had not managed to penetrate to the logical essence of the position, and already on the very first move after resumption he commits the decisive mistake. As we have pointed out, correct was 42...h5!.

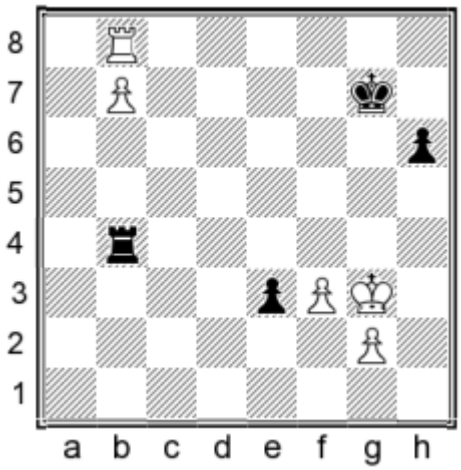
43.h5! gxh5 44.b6?

It is easy to understand Polugaevsky's delight at the turn of events. However, emotions, even positive ones, are not always the player's friend. Anticipating a rapid execution of his intended plan, Polugaevsky rushes things and grants his opponent a hidden chance of counterplay, which Vasiukov again misses. Correct was 44.Kf3!. A possible variation then is 44...Rb3+ 45.Ke4 Rb2 46.Ke3 Rb3+ 47.Kd2 Rb2+ 48.Kc3 Rxf2 49.Re8, and White should win.

44...h4+?

We will pass the microphone to Polugaevsky:

«The saving chance consisted in the move 44...Rb3+!. In this case, a surprising study-like draw results from 45.f3 e4 46.b7 (46.Kf2 Rb2+ 47.Ke3 Rxg2 48.b7 Rb2 49.fxe4 h4, and the h-pawn is not weaker than any of its white opponents) 46...h4+ (but not 46...e3 because of 47.f4 e2+ 48.Kf2), and after 47.Kf2 Black saves himself with the direct 47...h3, whilst after 47.Kxh4 e3 48.Kg3 with the extremely precise 48...Rb4!!, and White is in zugzwang.



analysis diagram

White has no other move than 49.f4 (the exchange of the b7-pawn for the pawn on e3 leads to a theoretical draw), but then 49...e2 50.Kf2 Rxf4+ 51.Kxe2 Rb4 again brings him nothing.

Therefore White would have had to answer 44...Rb3+ with 45.Kh4, trying his luck. However, after 45...e4! (45...Rb2 is also possible) the tempting 46.Kxh5 leads only to a draw after the quiet 46...Rb4!!, and White has to play without his king, which cannot cross the 'mined' fourth rank. And the thematic 47.f4 is one tempo too late: 47...e3 48.f5 e2 49.Re8 Rxb6 50.Rxe2 Rb1. Nor does 47.g4 change anything: the advance g4-g5 is still not possible due to 47...Rb5+!!.»

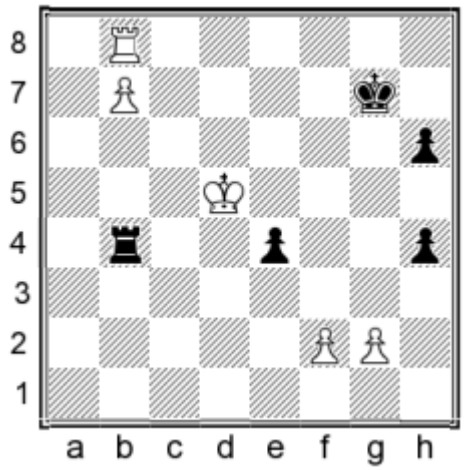
45.Kf3 Kh7

Nothing changes after 45...Kg6 46.b7 Kh5 47.g4+! hxg3 48.fxg3, and Black cannot defend against the break 49.g4+ and 50.g5!.

46.b7 Kg7 47.Ke3 e4

Waiting tactics do not succeed. If 47...Kh7, then 48.Kd3 Kg7 49.Kc3 Rb1 50.Kc4 Rb2 51.Kd5 and the e5-pawn falls, since Black loses at once after 51...Rb5+? 52.Kc6!, when the white king reaches the b7-pawn with tempo, after which his rook can move along the eighth rank.

48.Kf4 Kh7 49.Ke5 Kg7 50.Kd5



50...Rb2

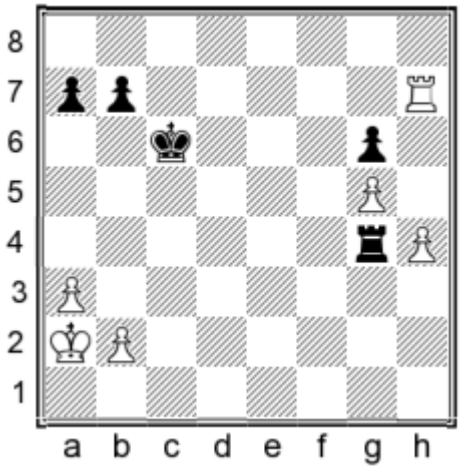
The e4-pawn is doomed. If 50...Kh7, then 51.Kc5 Rb2 52.Kc6 Rc2+ 53.Kd5 Rb2 54.Kxe4.

51.Kxe4 Rb4+ 52.Kd3 Rb3+ 53.Kc4 Rb1 54.f4

This is the sort of position White was aiming for at the adjournment. There followed:

54...Rc1+ 55.Kd3 Rb1 56.f5 Rb6 57.f6+ 1-0

V. Smirnov
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Minsk 1979



Black to move

On the kingside, there should be an exchange of pawns, after which White will keep an extra g-pawn. The black rook will stand behind it and later, if the white king approaches the g6-pawn, the black rook takes on b2 and establishes a passed pawn on the queenside. The game will end in a draw. That is the usual scheme of action in such endings.

1...a5

It is favourable for Black to get his pawns off the seventh rank. In addition, the further the a-pawn is down the board, the more quickly Black will be able to establish a passed pawn, if White gives up the b2-pawn, by bringing his king to the kingside.

2.Kb3 b5 3.Kc2 a4 4.Rh6 Kc5 5.Rxg6 Rxh4 6.Rg8 Rg4

Both sides act in accordance with the indicated scenario.

7.g6 Kb6

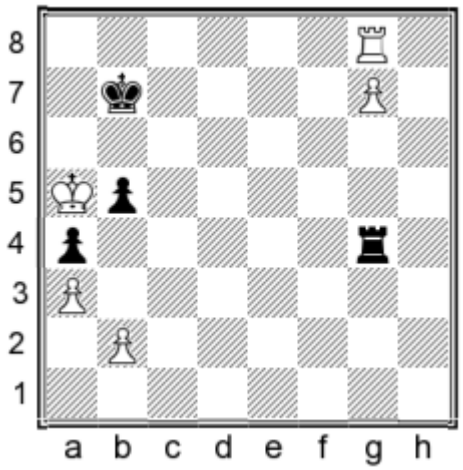
A bad mistake would be 7...Kc4? 8.g7 Rg2+ 9.Kb1 Kb3 10.Rc8!, and on 10...Rg1+ there follows 11.Rc1 Rxg7 12.Rc3#.

8.g7!

Marching the king towards the pawn is absolutely prospectless for White.

8...Kb7 9.Kd3

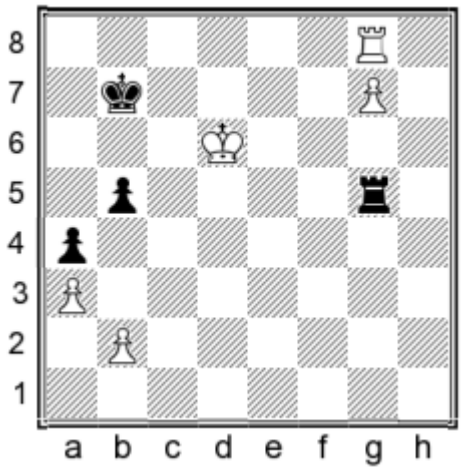
Now the white idea begins. After the white king gets to f3, the black rook will have to allow it to the fourth rank. Then the king is preparing to move to a5.



After the king's march to a5

In this position, White will sacrifice the g7-pawn with Rf8 and after ...Rxg7 he plays Rf5, winning both Black's queenside pawns and the game. But Black finds a defence.

9...Ka7 10.Ke3 Kb7 11.Kf3 Rg1 12.Kf4 Rg2 13.Ke5 Rg3 14.Kd5 Rg5+ 15.Kd6



So far Black has stuck to waiting tactics, but now he is in zugzwang. The rook cannot let the white king into c5, whilst the black king has to control the square c6. By a process of elimination, it is easy to find the move that is sufficient for a draw.

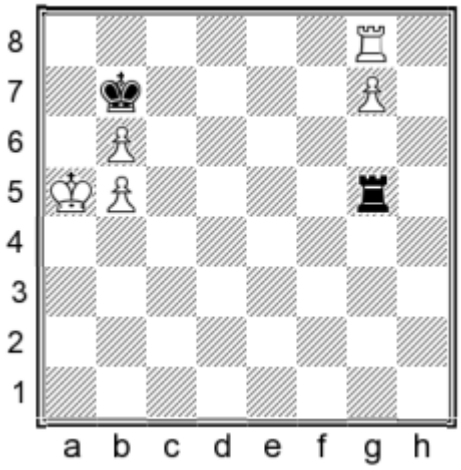
15...b4!

Black sacrifices his queenside pawns, but in the process ruins the white pawn structure. We reach a surprising ending, in which White has three extra pawns, but no win!

16.axb4 Rg6+ 17.Kc5 Rg5+ 18.Kc4 Ka7 19.b5 Rg4+ 20.Kc5 Kb7 21.b6 Rg5+ 22.Kb4 Rg4+ 23.Kb5

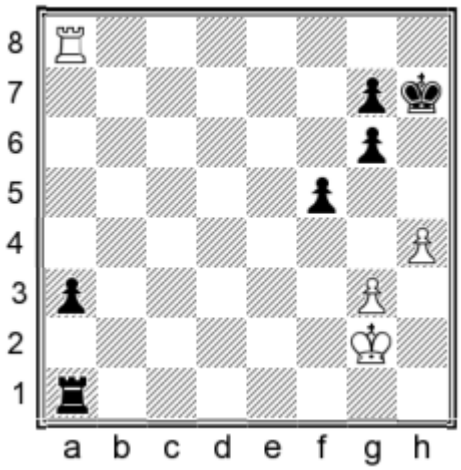
Black is again in zugzwang. He has to give up the a4-pawn, but this does not matter.

23...Rg5+ 24.Kxa4 Rg4+ 25.b4 Rg1 26.Ka5 Rg5+ 27.b5



27...Rxb5+! ½-½

Oleg Moiseev
Vladimir Bagirov
Moscow 1956



Black to move

Question: Indicate a plan of play, and Black's first move.

Show/Hide Solution

After analysing the previous example, the **solution** is not hard to find: 1...g5! 2.hxg5 Kg6 3.Ra7 a2 4.Kh2 Kh5 5.Kg2 g6, and Black, after winning the g5-pawn, wins without the help of his king, by creating a passed f-pawn.

In the game, Black rushed to play

1...a2?

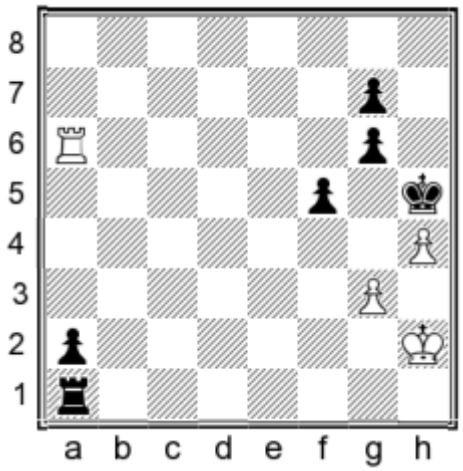
and missed hidden counterplay for the opponent. White replied

2.Ra6! Kh6

Now 2...g5 gives nothing because of 3.hxg5, and the black king cannot win the g5-pawn. If 3...g6 the white king prevents its opposite number coming out via f3 to g4 (White simply keeps his rook on the a-file), whilst after 3...Kg8 4.g6 Black cannot strengthen his position.

The game continued as follows:

3.Kh2 Kh5



Black threatens to play 4...g5, winning. How should White react?

Correct is

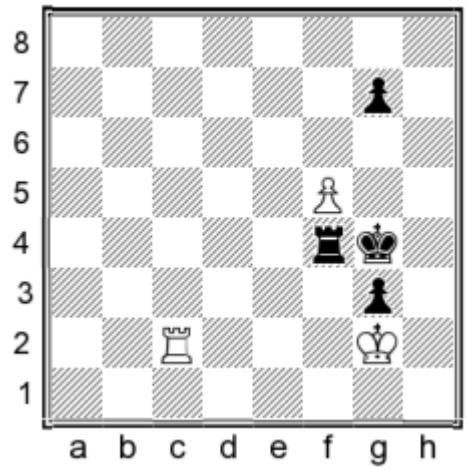
4.Ra4!!

with the idea of meeting 4...g5 with 5.g4+!. There followed

4...Kh6 5.Ra6! Kh5 6.Ra4! g5 7.g4+! Kxh4!

After 7...fxg4 8.hxg5 we reach the position in Smirnov-Shereshevsky. Now, however, the presence of the white pawn on f5 causes White some problems, and requires some accuracy from him.

8.gxf5+ g4 9.Kg2 Rb1 10.Rxa2 Rb4 11.Rc2 g3 12.Ra2 Kg4 13.Rc2 Rf4



14.Rc8!

An accurate move. White is not distracted by the attack on the g7-pawn. It would be a mistake to play 14.Rc7 Rf2+ 15.Kg1 Ra2 16.Rxg7+? Kf3, and the presence of the f5-pawn on the board prevents White from saving the game.

14...Rf2+ 15.Kg1 Re2 16.Ra8 Kf3 17.Ra3+ Re3 18.Ra1 g2

18...Kg4 19.Ra8

19.Kh2!

The final subtlety (19.Rb1? Kg3 20.Ra1 Rf3 21.Rb1 Rf1+ with a winning endgame).

19...Kf2 20.Ra2+ Re2 21.Rxe2+ Kxe2 22.Kxg2 ½-½

The defender often faces a choice: to go over to passive defence, or to sacrifice a pawn to obtain counterplay.

Nimzowitsch's opinion on this subject is especially interesting: «Not without some nervousness and fully aware of the degree of responsibility we are taking upon ourselves, we offer the following rule:

If you have a choice of defending a pawn with a rook, but placing the rook in a passive position to do so, or sacrificing the pawn in order to keep freedom of action for the rook, then it is better to choose the latter course.

This rule should be taken with some caution, of course. A greater or lesser degree of activity (or passivity) should be weighed carefully. It is not our intention to advocate sacrifices for the sake of sacrifices. Sacrifice, but sensibly!»

In the game below, the weaker side managed to save the game by sacrificing material, with the aim of activating his pieces.

Vladimir Tukmakov
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Tbilisi 1980

Black to move

White has the advantage. He controls the open file. Black has a weak pawn on b6 and must now determine his plan.

1...h5!

A typical device. Black goes for active play, involving a pawn sacrifice. It is very important for the subsequent active operations to fix the white kingside pawns. If it were White to play, he would himself immediately play g3-g4.

2.Rc6 Rb8 3.f3 a4!

Perhaps passive defence would also have drawn, but the plan of sacrificing a pawn to activate the rook is far more convincing.

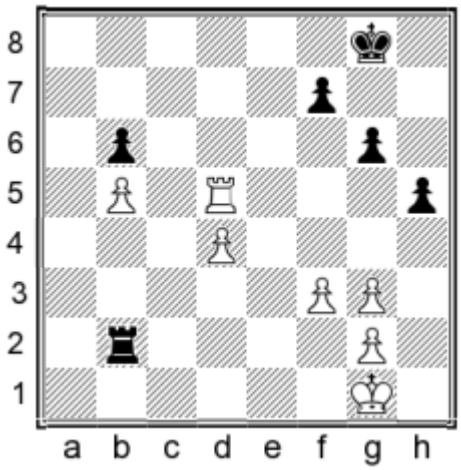
4.Kf2 Ra8 5.e4

Tukmakov declines the b-pawn. After 5.Rxb6 a3 6.bxa3 Rxa3 the black rook would stand behind the b-pawn and to have any winning chances, White would have to follow the usual plan of putting his rook on b7 and pawn on b6, and then bringing the king over. Black meanwhile would take the g2-pawn and even if the white pawn gets to b7, with the rook on, say, c7, the passed h-pawn would give Black sufficient counterchances. Black's task would be much more difficult with the white pawn on g4 and the black one on h6.

5...a3 6.bxa3 Rxa3 7.exd5 exd5 8.Rd6

Winning the d5-pawn does not bring White any winning chances.

8...Ra2+ 9.Kg1 g6 10.Rxd5 Rb2



11.Kh2 Rb1 12.g4 hxg4 13.fxg4 Rb3 14.g3 Kf8

The black king heads to e6, after which White cannot retain his extra pawn. Draw.

Oleg Pavlenko
Vladimir Bagirov
Baku 1963

Black to move

Black has a positional advantage. The difference in activity of the rooks is enough to conclude that White will have great difficulty defending the a3-pawn. It is very likely that White will have to part with this pawn, in order to reach a rook endgame.

Now it is Black to play. Foreseeing the possibility of a rook ending arising, Bagirov played the move

24...g5!

Paralysing White's kingside pawn structure and ruling out any counterplay on that side of the board.

25.Kf1 h6 26.Ke1 Rc2

Black stops the enemy king approaching the queenside, although this could have been achieved more effectively by means of 26...Rb3!.

27.Be4

In reply to 27.Rd1 White must reckon with the possibility of 27...Ra2 28.Rd3 Bc4, but this was the lesser evil.

27...Rb2 28.Rc1 Rb3 29.Ra1

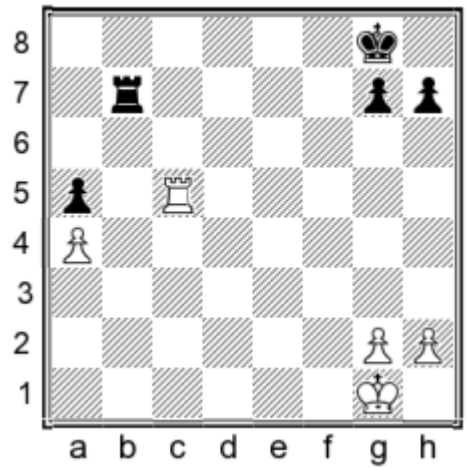
If 29.Rc7, then 29...Rxa3 30.Rxe7 Ra1+ 31.Ke2 Ra2+ 32.Kf1 a5, and the black pawn quickly reaches a2.

29...a5 30.Bc2 Rb2 31.Kd1 Bb3! 32.Bxb3 Rxb3

Now we can assess the value of the move 24...g5!. Rook endings of this type were described by Nimzowitsch in his book *My System*:

«In master practice, the usual tendency is for one of the players to engage in long manoeuvres and generally to exert his maximum efforts, to obtain as a result of all this effort a position with his rook more active and the opponent's rook in a passive position. The active rook then experiences true satisfaction, like a prima donna, who, in fulfilling the main role, sees her rival in the same play as pining in some minor role. But in this case it is not necessary to be surprised if the 'humiliated' rival...comes to life and disrupts the performance.

For example:



Active black rook

The black rook is not satisfied with a passive role (24...Ra7) and prefers active operations:

24...Rb2! 25.Rxa5 Ra2. Now the rook has significant scope and the draw is assured, whereas the move 24...Ra7 probably leads to defeat.»

In our example, the emergence of the white rook into operational space does not save the game, mainly because of the active position of the black kingside pawns. Now let us return to the game.

33.a4 Rb2 34.Ke1 Rb4 35.Ra2 Kg7 36.Kd2 h5 37.Ke2 e6 38.Kf3 f5 39.Kg2 Kf6 40.h3 Re4 41.Ra3 Rc4 42.Ra2 Ke7

Having strengthened his position on the kingside, Black directs his king over to annex the a4-pawn.

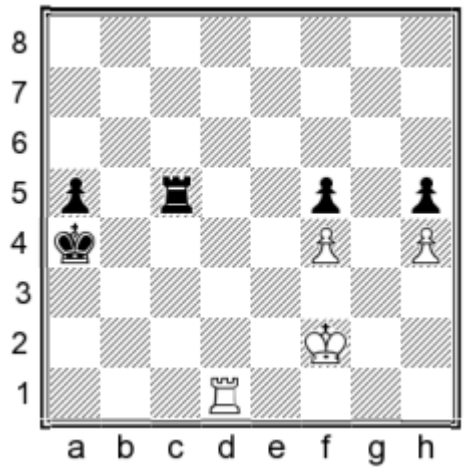
43.Ra1 Kd6 44.h4

Pavlenko understands that the game is lost and tries to confuse his opponent.

44...gxh4 45.gxh4 Kc5

Of course, not 45...Rxh4? 46.f4.

46.f3 e5 47.Kg3 Kb4 48.Rd1 Rc3 49.Kf2 Rc5 50.f4 exf4 51.exf4 Kxa4

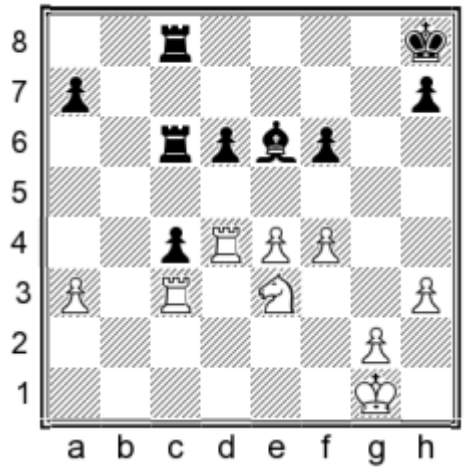


Black has won a pawn on the queenside and has not allowed any counterplay on the other wing. There followed:

52.Ke3 Kb5 53.Rd8 a4 54.Kd4 Kb4 55.Rb8+ Rb5 56.Rc8 a3 57.Rc4+ Kb3

White resigned.

Mikhail Shereshevsky
Valentin Arbakov
Gomel 1983



White to move

White's position looks preferable. He has the better pawn configuration and the greater piece concentration in the centre. Admittedly, Black has possible counterplay with ...Rc8-b8-b3. Therefore White takes the decision to take play into a rook ending.

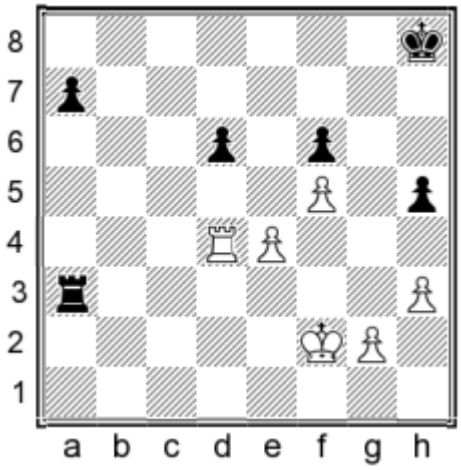
1.f5 Bf7 2.Nd5 Bxd5

Practically forced, because of the threats of 3.Ne7 and 3.Nxf6.

3.Rxd5 Rb8 4.Rd4 Rb3 5.Rcxc4 Rxc4 6.Rxc4 Rxa3

The series of forcing moves ends. I assessed the resulting situation extremely optimistically. White has a monolith of four connected pawns against four isolated pawns for the opponent.

7.Kf2 h5! 8.Rd4!



8...h4!!

Black gives up one pawn and should be ready to surrender a second also. The main point is to split the white pawns on the kingside and rely on his passed a-pawn.

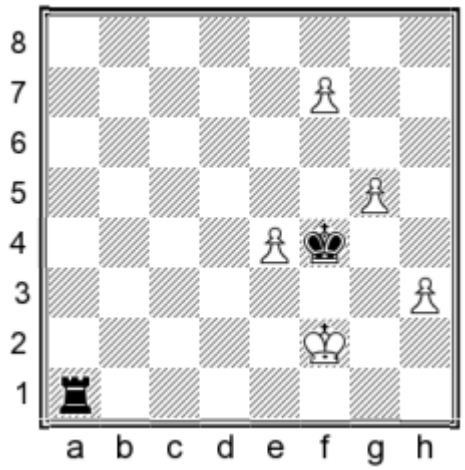
I must admit that I had counted on the move 8...Ra6, after which White wins by means of 9.Kg3 Kg7 10.Kh4 Kh6 11.Rd3! (with the threat of 12.Rg3) 11...Ra4 12.Rxd6 Rxe4+ 13.g4 hxg4 14.Rxf6+ Kg7 15.Rg6+ and 16.hxg4.

9.Rxd6 Kg7 10.Rd7+ Kh6!

Of course, not 10...Kg8 because of 11.Rd4 followed by 12.e5, and White retains every chance of winning.

11.Rf7

In this position the game was adjourned and the players agreed a draw without resuming. The main variation of the analysis was as follows: 11...Kg5 12.Rg7+ Kf4 13.Rg4+ Ke5 14.Rxh4 a5 15.Rh6 a4 16.g4 Ra1 (16...Rb3 is also possible) 17.g5 a3 18.Rxf6 a2 19.Re6+ Kf4 20.Ra6 Rh1 21.f6 a1=Q 22.Rxa1 Rxa1 23.f7



analysis diagram

23...Ra2+! 24.Kf1 Ra8 25.g6 Kf3 26.Ke1 Ke3 27.Kd1 Kd3 28.Kc1 Kc3 29.Kb1 Rb8+ 30.Kc1 Ra8, repeating the drawing mechanism.

Georgy Timoshenko
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Tbilisi 1980

Black to move

Black's position looks dangerous. The white pawn has already reached d7, the black king is more vulnerable than its opposite number and Black must reckon on the entry of the white rook down the d-file. The situation can only be managed with the aid of a queen exchange.

1...Qc3!

In making this move, Black has to perceive the consequences of not just a rook ending, but also a pawn ending.

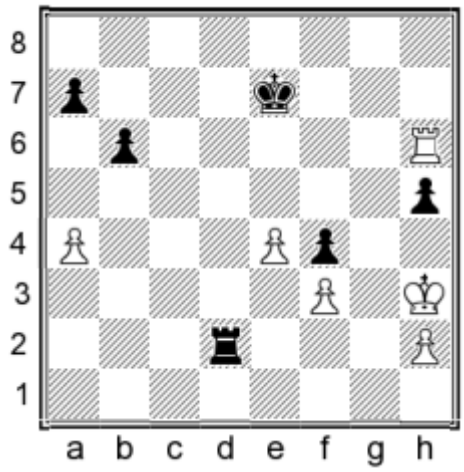
2.Qxc3

White has no choice. After the retreat of the queen, there would be a rook check from g5.

2...Rxc3 3.Rd6 Rc7 4.Rxg6 Rcxd7 5.Rxd7+ Rxd7 6.Rh6

The pawn endgame after 6.Rg7+ Ke6 7.Rxd7 Kxd7 has a drawish character. It is sufficient for Black to move his pawn from a7 to a6 and oscillate his king between the squares d6 and e6. On d4, the white king has no penetration squares, and it is impossible to win the f4-pawn because of the advance of the black passed pawn on the queenside.

6...Rd2+ 7.Kh3



Black has a choice: which white pawn to attack, a4 or f3? As a rule, in such a situation, one can make a move based on general considerations, without detailed calculation. In a rook ending, disconnected pawns do not pose such a danger, but connected pawns are very strong. Therefore, if there is a choice between getting rid of an outside passed pawns or breaking up a clutch of enemy pawns, more often than not one should settle for the latter.

The reader may object that, by eliminating the pawn on a4, Black himself obtains two connected passed pawns. The variation 7...Ra2 8.Rh7+ Kd6 9.Rxa7 Rf2 is not dangerous for him. But after 7...Ra2 8.Rxh5 Rxa4 9.Kg4 we reach a sharp endgame, in which both sides have passed pawns on opposite flanks.

In such endgames, the following principle applies:

The king should support his own pawns and the rook should deal with the opposing pawns.

The white pieces are operating on just this scheme, but for Black it is the other way round. I will leave the reader to convince himself that drawing such a sharp endgame would be much more difficult than after the game continuation.

7...Rf2 8.Rxh5 Rxf3+ 9.Kg4 Ra3 10.Rh7+ Ke6 11.Rxa7

White has won a pawn, but Black draws without any great difficulty, because of the limited and broken nature of the pawns on the board.

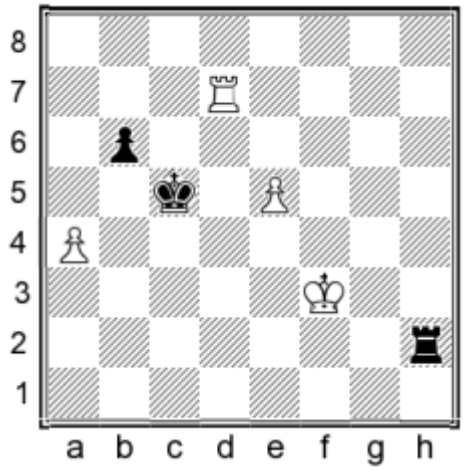
11...f3 12.Kg3 Ke5 13.Re7+ Kd4 14.Kf2

The threat was 14...Ke3.

14...Ra2+ 15.Kxf3 Rxh2 16.Rd7+ Kc5!

Not 16...Ke5? 17.Rd5+ Ke6 18.Rb5, and White wins.

17.e5

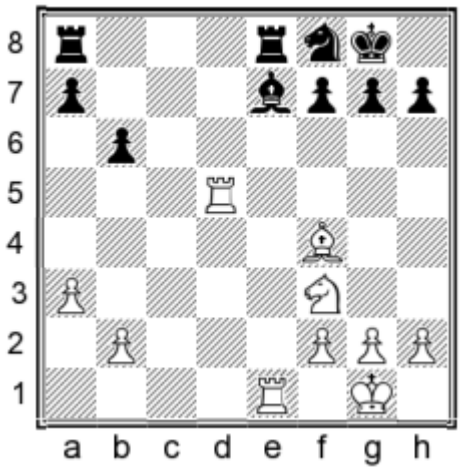


17...Rh4!

A standard device. The king is cut off from the pawn.

18.e6 Rh6 19.e7 Re6 20.Kf4 Kc6 21.Ra7 Kd6 ½-½

Jan Timman
Ulf Andersson
Wijk aan Zee 1981



White to move

We have equal material and a symmetrical pawn structure. White has a minimal positional advantage, on account of his more active pieces, but Black has every chance to equalise.

21.Kf1 Bf6 22.Rxe8 Rxe8 23.Nd4 Ng6?!

An inaccuracy, after which Black begins to experience definite problems. Although rook and knight are usually weaker than rook and bishop in the endgame, here after 23...Bxd4! 24.Rxd4 Ne6 25.Re4 Rc8 White would not have any particular reason to count on more than a draw. Andersson prefers to keep the same pieces as his opponent, and exchange only equivalents. Soon the knights depart from the board, and then the bishops, but Black's difficulties only increase as the game enters a rook ending.

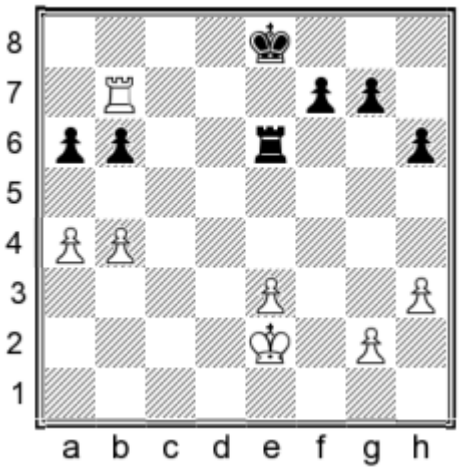
24.Bd2 Ne5 25.b3 h6 26.h3 Rc8

26...Rd8 would be a terrible mistake because of 27.Rxd8+ Bxd8 28.f4 followed by 29.Nc6.

27.Ke2 Nc6 28.Nxc6 Rxc6 29.Rd7 a6 30.Kd3

Thanks to his active rook and centralised king, White now has the advantage.

30...Kf8 31.a4 Ke8 32.Rb7 Rd6+ 33.Ke2 Bd4 34.Be3! Re6 35.b4 Bxe3 36.fxe3



The game enters a rook ending, which is hard to assess categorically as a win or a draw. But if you compare this position with the initial one, you will see that White is playing for a win and could hardly have hoped to achieve more than he has, whilst Black's position has deteriorated significantly.

36...h5 37.Kd3 h4

On 37...Rg6 there would have followed 38.Ra7.

38.Ra7 b5

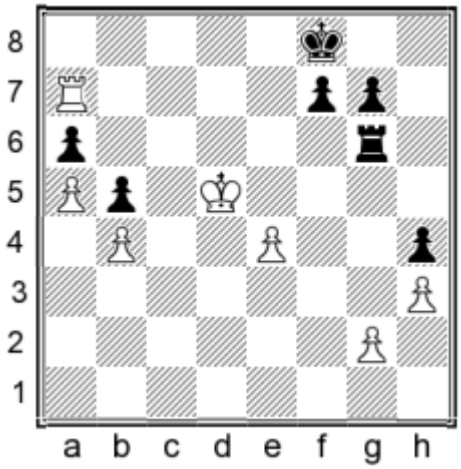
One of the most difficult moments for the defender in rook endings comes in the choice of tactics, when the opponent strengthens his position. As a rule, there are two possibilities here: to give up a pawn in order to activate the rook, or to continue careful waiting tactics. There is no hard and fast rule to apply, and nor could there be. In one position, only the first approach is correct, whilst in another, it has to be the second. Much depends on the character of the player, since it is not always possible to foresee all the consequences of the decision taken. Andersson prefers to retain material equality, but loses.

It cannot be ruled out that, if Black had chosen 38...a5 39.bxa5 bxa5 40.Rxa5 Rg6 41.Rh5 Rxg2 42.Rxh4 and lost this ending a pawn down, then the commentators would have criticised the move 38...a5 and recommended 38...b5 instead. The endgame is of a practical character and it is extremely difficult to give definitive assessments.

39.a5 Rc6 40.Kd4!

Perhaps it is this king manoeuvre that the Swedish GM underestimated. It turns out that after 40...Rc4+ there follows 41.Kd5 Rxb4 42.Kd6! f6 43.Rxa6, and White has every chance of victory.

40...Kf8 41.Kd5 Rg6 42.e4!



42...Ke8

On 42...Rxg2 the following variation is possible: 43.Rxa6 Rg3 44.Ra8+ Ke7 45.Kc5 Rxh3 46.Kxb5 g5 47.Rh8 Ra3 (47...g4 48.a6) 48.Ka6! h3 49.b5 g4 50.b6 g3 51.b7 Rb3 52.Rxh3, and White wins. Although at first glance the endgame seems sharp, the experienced player sees immediately that the complications should end in White's favour, and the concrete variations prove this. For rook endings with passed pawns advancing on both flanks, one can formulate the following rule:

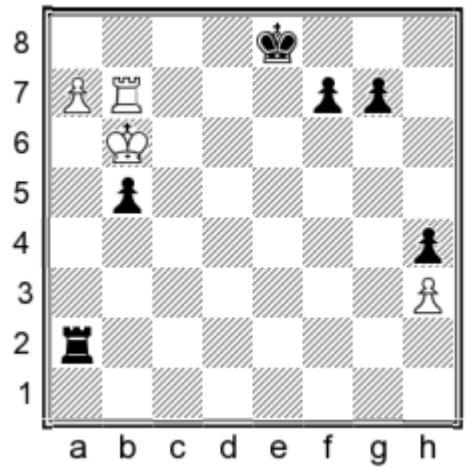
The rook should fight against the enemy pawns, and the king should support his own pawns.

In the majority of cases, this rule is true.

43.Kc5 Re6 44.Rb7!

Having strengthened his position to the maximum, White moves over to decisive action. This also gives Black counterplay, but winning a rook ending with equal material 'without bloodshed', without giving the opponent any counterchances, almost never happens.

44...Rxe4 45.Kb6 Rxb4 46.Kxa6 Rb2 47.Kb6 Rxg2 48.a6 Ra2 49.a7



White emerges victorious from a sharp battle. To a large extent, this is made possible by the black pawn on b5.

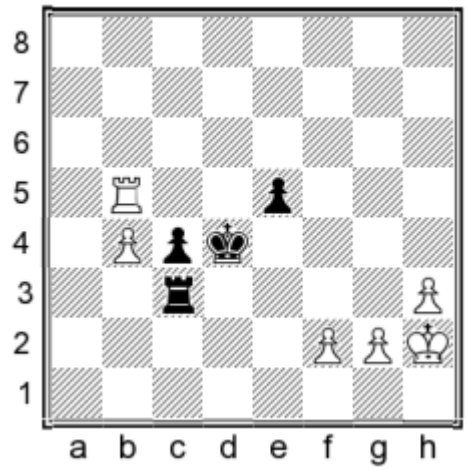
49...g5 50.Kc5 f5 51.Rb8+ Kf7 52.a8=Q Rxa8 53.Rxa8 g4 54.Kd4 gxh3 55.Rh8 1-0

Efim Geller
Vasily Smyslov
Palma de Mallorca 1970

White to move

White has an extra pawn and the possibility of winning the pawn on e5, as well as attacking the g7-pawn with 1.Rg6 or the b5-pawn with 1.Rb6. However, Black has counterplay. His rook, by switching to the a-file, gets the chance to attack the c3-pawn. As soon as the white rook leaves the sixth rank, the black king can attack the d5-pawn from d6. If the black king manages to eliminate the d5-pawn, and his rook the pawn on c3, then he can permit himself to give up the kingside pawns and have enough counterplay to save the game.

In the variation given by Geller, 46.Rg6 Ra8 47.Rxg7+ Kd6 48.Rg6+ Kxd5 49.Rxh6 Ra3 50.Rb6 Rxc3 51.Rxb5+ Kd4,



analysis diagram

Black is doing it all according to the rule: his king supports the passed pawn on c4, whilst his rook will fight against the enemy pawns. On the other hand, White's king is a long way from the battlefield, whilst his material advantage is only enough to stop him losing.

Let us continue Geller's variation: 52.h4 Rb3 53.h5 c3 54.h6 c2 55.Rc5 (not 55.h7? c1=Q 56.h8=Q Qf4+) 55...Rc3 56.Rxc3 Kxc3 57.h7 c1=Q 58.h8=Q Qf4+ 59.Kh3 Qf5+ 60.Kg3 Qf4+ with a draw.

In the event of 46.Rxe5 Ra8 47.Kg3 Kd6 48.Re3 Ra2! (pointed out by Geller) Black has sufficient counterplay.

In the variation 46.Rb6 Ra8 47.Rxb5 Ra3 48.Rc5 Rxc3 49.Rc6 Rb3 50.Rxc4 Kd6 51.Rc6+ Kxd5 52.Rg6 Rxb4 53.Rxg7 h5 54.Rg5 h4 the game also ends peacefully (pointed out by Valery Beim).

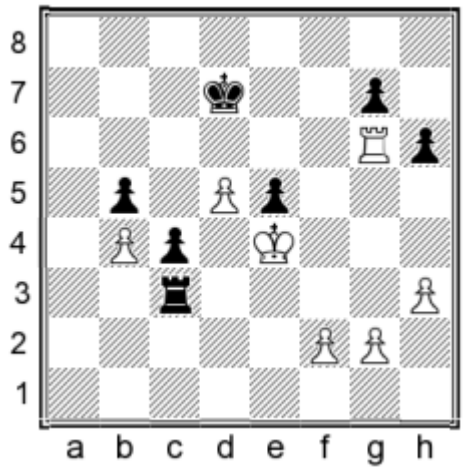
One thing is clear. In sharp rook endings, a material advantage does not play the main role. White needs to change the unfavourable tendency and unite his king with the pawn on d5!

Therefore:

46.Kg3!

White is prepared to part with his material advantage for the sake of the correct set-up.

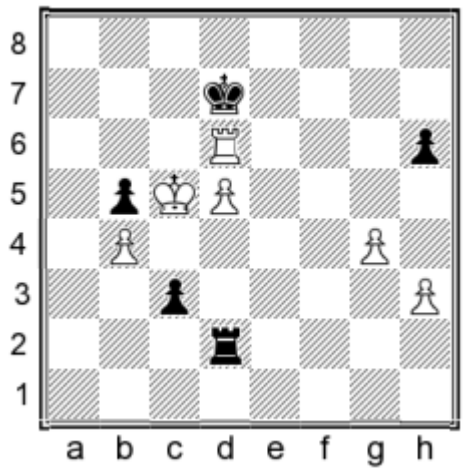
46...Ra8 47.Kf3 Ra3 48.Ke4 Rxc3 49.Rg6



The breakthrough of the white king into the centre has completely changed everything. Now the black king will be driven back to the ropes (the eighth rank), whilst his opposite number, with the pawn on d5, comes after him into the attack. And the white rook combines attacking actions with guarding the pawn on c4. Just four moves have been played, and the position, from unclear, has become winning for White.

Let us see the continuation of the endgame:

49...Rc2 50.Rxg7+ Kd6 51.Rg6+ Kd7 52.Rg7+ Kd6 53.Rg6+ Kd7 54.Kxe5 Re2+ 55.Kd4 Rxf2 56.Rg7+ Kd6 57.Rg6+ Kd7 58.g4 Rd2+ 59.Ke5 Re2+ 60.Kd4 Rd2+ 61.Kc5 c3 62.Rd6+!



62...Ke7

Black also has few chances after 62...Kc7 63.Rc6+ Kd7 64.d6 c2 65.Rc7+ Ke6 66.Kxb5 Kxd6 67.Rc8.

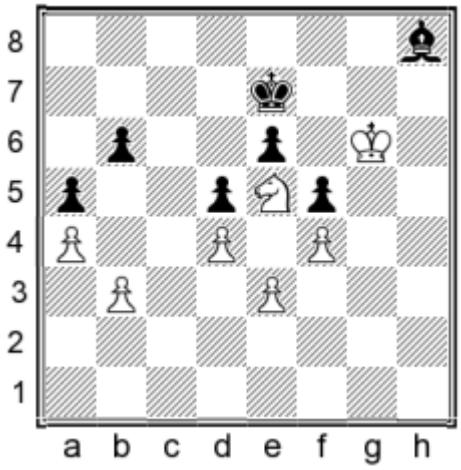
63.Re6+ Kd7 64.Re3! c2 65.Rc3 Rh2 66.h4! Rxh4 67.Rxc2 Rxg4 68.Rh2! Rg6 69.Kxb5 Kd6 70.Rh5 Kc7

It is also hopeless after 70...Rg5 71.Rxh6+ Kxd5 72.Kb6.

71.Kc5 Rf6 72.Rh1 Kb7 73.b5 Rg6 74.Rh5 Kc7 75.Rf5 Rg1 76.b6+ Kb7 77.Rf7+ Kb8 78.d6 Rc1+ 79.Kd5

Black resigned.

Boris Gelfand 2713
Vladimir Malakhov 2670
Dagomys 2005 (3)



White to move

Question: Show a plan of action for White, and a concrete move.

Show/Hide Solution

White's advantage is obvious. Black is hanging on to his last line of defence. If the white king gets to f7, the foundation stone of Black's pawn structure falls – the pawn on e6. The most important plus White has is the fact that in almost any position, the exchange of bishop for knight leads to a winning pawn endgame for White. It only remains to find a way to place Black in zugzwang.

To solve this task one needs to pose the question: 'Where does the knight need to be for Black not to have any moves?' The answer is obvious: the knight needs to go to h5. But at the same time, White must not allow counterplay in connection with the black bishop manoeuvre ...Bh8-f6-h4-f2. Boris Gelfand finds an elegant forcing solution:

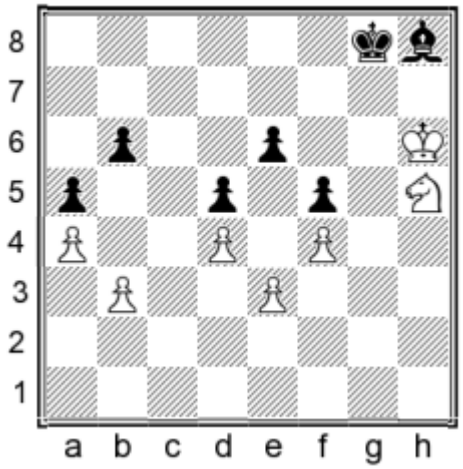
45.Nf7! Bf6 46.Ng5! Bh8

46...Bxg5 47.fxg5 is hopeless.

47.Nh7! Ke8

Black should have tried his last chance – 47...Kd6. Then White's best reply is as in the game: 48.Nf6!, avoiding the unnecessary complications with 48.Kf7?! e5! 49.fxe5+ Bxe5 50.dxe5+ Kxe5.

48.Nf6+ Kf8 49.Nh5! Kg8 50.Kh6



Black resigned. After 50...Kf7 51.Kh7 Bf6 52.Nxf6 Kxf6 53.Kg8 White wins.

Boris Maryasin
Peter Korzubov
Minsk 1982

White to move

White has an extra pawn and excellent winning chances. The presence of bishops on the board practically leaves Black no chance of saving the game, since if the rooks are exchanged, the bishop ending is lost. The rook ending, on the hand, offers Black drawing chances.

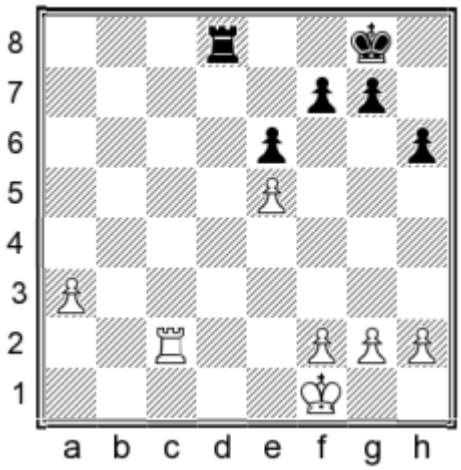
1.Rc7?

A mistaken solution to the exchanging problem. He should have made luft for the king with 1.h3, when on 1...Rd5 the reply 2.Rb4 is unpleasant.

1.Rc7? Be4!

Now play goes into a rook ending, and Black's hopes of a positive outcome grow.

2.Kf1 Bxc2 3.Rxc2



Question No 1: What should Black play?

Show/Hide Solution

3...Ra8!

When, in response to critics, Tarrasch ironically added to his famous rule that in a rook ending, the rook should stand behind a passed pawn, the extra words 'if it is favourable', he was thinking of concrete exceptions to the rule. This present endgame can be added to that list of exceptions. Because the white a-pawn is not very far advanced, Black's rook will actually be in a more active position in front of the pawn than behind it.

Furthermore, after 3...Rd1+ 4.Ke2 Ra1 5.Rc8+ Kh7 6.Ra8, the pawn on e5 cramps Black on the kingside. But there is also a no less dangerous option for White, namely to use his rook along the third rank. After 5.Rc3!? White will try to arrange his kingside pawns in such a way that the main object of attack among them is also on the third rank, and thus defended by the rook.

For example, he can arrange his pawns on f4, g3, h4. The white king, meanwhile, will come over to assist his passed a-pawn. With the move in the game, Peter Korzubov rules out the first method of play by White, but he also had to assess the consequences of 4.Ra2.

It should be added that it would be a mistake to attack the white pawns with 3...Rd5?! because of 4.Re2 Rd1+ 5.Re1 Rd3 6.Ra1!? (6.Re3 is also possible) 6...Rd5 7.a4! (7.f4? g5!) 7...Rxe5 8.a5!, and White pushes the pawn to a7, obtaining every chance of winning.

Question No 2: Which of the moves 4.Ra2 or 4.Rc3 should White choose, and why?

Show/Hide Solution

4.Rc3!

It is also unfavourable for White to place his rook behind the passed pawn. After 4.Ra2?! Ra4! 5.Ke2 Kf8 6.Kd3 Ke7 7.Kc3 Kd7 8.Kb3 Black, by playing 8...Re4, regains the pawn, whilst his king succeeds in blockading the enemy passed pawn.

4...f6!

Black hurries to organise counterplay.

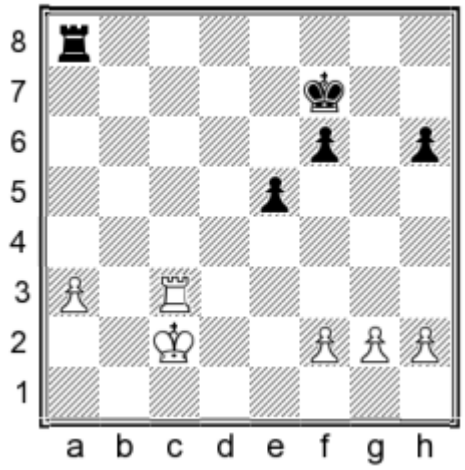
5.exf6

If 5.f4? fxe5 6.fxe5 Kf7 Black has sufficient counterchances on the kingside.

5...gxf6 6.Ke2

White only has one plan – to bring his king over towards his passed pawn.

6...e5 7.Kd2 Kf7 8.Kc2



8...Kg6?!

Black has correctly begun to develop his counterplay on the kingside and should have continued 8...f5!. The king move is less good, because the black king can also come into the centre via f6, whereas the rook may need the g-file to attack the pawn on g2.

9.Kb2!?

A cunning move. On 9.Kb3 Black would have had to play 9...Rb8+, but after 10.Ka2 Rd8 11.Rc2 f5 12.a4 e4 he retains counterplay which appears to be enough for a draw. Now, however, he faces a choice, and, as often happens in such cases, he goes wrong.

9...f5?

Placing the game on the brink of defeat.

Correct was 9...Rb8+ 10.Ka2 Rd8, going into the position shown above.

10.Rc4!

Here the rook occupies an excellent position, whilst the white kingside pawns are perfectly arranged to prevent counterplay by the opponent on that wing.

10...e4

10...f4 11.a4 Kf5 12.f3 Rg8 13.Rc2 e4 14.fxe4+ Kxe4 15.Ka3 Ra8 16.Ra2 was scarcely any better.

11.a4 Kg5

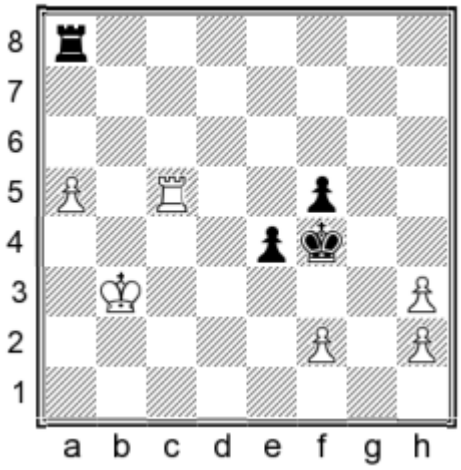
Now the drawbacks of the move 8...Kg6 have their say. If the king stood on f6, Black would have the possibility of 11...Ke5. For example, 12.Rc5+ Kd4 13.Rxf5 Rxa4 14.Rf6 h5 15.Rf5 Ra8 with counterplay.

12.Kb3 h5 13.Rc5 h4 14.a5

White does not prevent the move 14...h3, because after 14.h3 Kf4 Black gets counterplay with 15...Rg8.

14...h3 15.gxh3 Kf4!

15...Rh8 16.Rc3 f4 does not achieve the aim because of 17.Kc2!, and White should win.



Question No 3: Find the move for White which effectively wins the game and explain why.

Show/Hide Solution

In order to answer the question posed, one needs to switch on one's prophylactic thinking. That in turn means working out which move Black would like to play. A brief logical analysis reveals that he has no other active idea than 16...Rf8 and 17...Kf3. After we have realised this, it is easy to find 16.Rb5!, so as to meet 16...Rf8 with the winning line 17.a6 Kf3 18.a7, whilst after 16...Rh8 17.a6 Rxh3+ 18.Kb4 Rh8 19.a7 Ra8 20.Ra5 Kg4 White easily wins with the aid of the king manoeuvre 21.Kc5 f4 22.Kd4 Kf3 23.Ra3+.

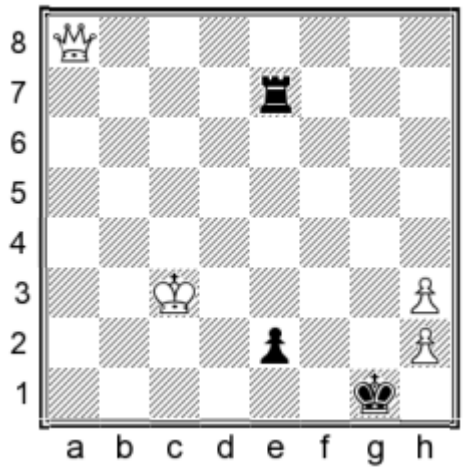
In the game, White played

16.Kb4?

which allowed Black to save himself in miraculous fashion:

16...Rf8 17.Rc3

On 17.a6 the following continuation is possible: 17...Kf3 18.a7 f4 19.Rf5 Ra8 20.Rf7 Kxf2 21.Rxf4+ Kg1! 22.Rf7 e3 23.Kc3 Re8 24.Re7 Rxe7 25.a8=Q e2, and Black draws:



analysis diagram

26.Qg8+ Kxh2 27.Qb8+ Kh1

17...Ke5 18.a6 f4 19.a7 Ra8!

Not 19...e3? 20.fxe3 f3 because of 21.Rc4! f2 22.Rf4 Ra8 23.Rxf2 Rxa7 24.Rf3.

20.Rc7

20.Ra3 brings White nothing because of 20...e3 21.fxe3 f3 22.Ra1 Ke4 23.Kb5 f2 24.Kb6 Rh8 with

a draw.

20...e3 21.fxe3 fxe3 22.Kc5

Things are not changed by 22.Kc3 Ke4 23.Kc2 Kf3 24.Rf7+ Ke4 25.Kd1 Rg8, and the black rook reaches a2 via one of the open files.

22...e2 23.Kb6 Re8!

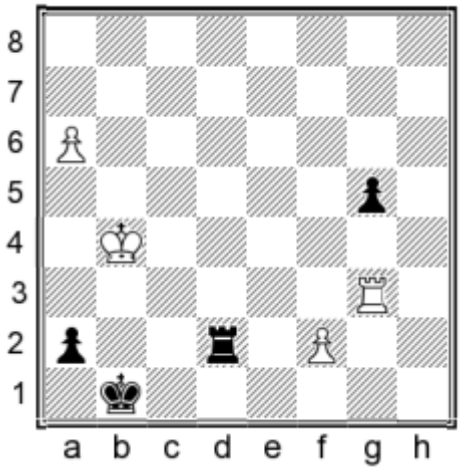
Accuracy to the end.

24.Rc1 Kf4 25.h4 Ke3 26.Kb7 Re7+ 27.Kb6 Re6+ 28.Kb5 Re8

Draw.

I should add that the method of defence shown in this game has echoes of a study by Vasily Smyslov, composed in 1938:

Vasily Smyslov
1938



White to move

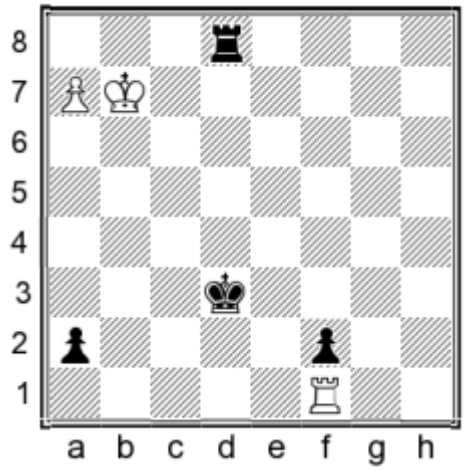
1.Rg1+

Not 1.Rxg5? with the idea of 1...a1=Q? 2.Rg1+ because of the intermediate checks 1...Rb2+ 2.Kc4 Rc2+ and only then 3...a1=Q.

1.Rg1+ Kb2 2.f4!

White must open the second rank for flank attacks by his rook.

2...gxf4 3.a7 Rd4+! 4.Kb5 Rd8 5.Rg2+ Kb3 6.Rg1 f3 7.Rf1! f2 8.Kb6 Kc3 9.Kb7 Kd3



Black is ready to crush his opponent by 10...Ke2, but:

10.Ra1! Kc3 11.Rf1!

follows, with a positional draw.

Chapter 7
Do not hurry!

The ability to exploit this principle requires of a player great experience in playing practical endgames. How many winning endgames have there been that were not carried to their logical conclusion, solely because the player tried to achieve the win as quickly as possible and neglected simple strengthening moves before launching the decisive action?

By following the principle 'do not hurry!' one can fight for a win in positions with a small but stable advantage. Only in that way can we manage to weaken the enemy position, mask our plans, and distract the opponent's attentiveness.

But the principle cannot be used in every position, at every moment. It is essential to be ready at the correct moment to go over to sharp and active operations, otherwise the opponent may get rid of his weaknesses, which often have only a temporary character. The ability to sense this critical moment and not miss it is not an easy thing. We will see from the examples below that even the very strongest players frequently make mistakes in such situations.

The validity of the principle 'do not hurry!' has, most of all, a psychological character. Following this principle is especially to be recommended at moments when the opponent lacks any active counterplay.

Richard Réti
Petr Romanovsky
Moscow 1925

White to move

In this position, the opposite-coloured bishops benefit White. The black pawns on c5 and e5 create an impenetrable barrier to Black's own bishop, and White has a precise plan to develop his initiative: transfer the rook to c4 and the king to f3, and follow up with e2-e3 and Be4-d5. The black rook will have to defend the c5-pawn and White can transfer his rook to the kingside with the subsequent pawn advances h2-h4, g3-g4, g4-g5. Black is unable to prevent this plan.

28.Rc4 Kf8 29.Kf3 Rc8 30.e3 Bc3

In this position, we need to consider some details.

We know what White's plan is: Be4-d5, Rc4-h4, Kf3-e4, Rh4-h5, h2-h4, g3-g4, g4-g5 etc. Many players would have played that immediately and possibly would have won. But endgame technique dictates another move.

31.a4!

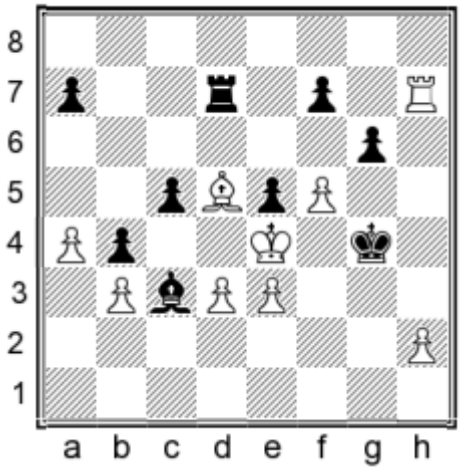
Do not hurry! White seizes the chances to improve the position of his a-pawn. Is it worth being distracted by such a detail? Undoubtedly. If we do not, and this 'small detail' turns out to make the difference between a win and a draw, it will be just punishment for neglecting the principle 'do not hurry!'. If the pawn stands slightly better on a4 than on a2, then we should move it there, and only then continue with our main plan.

31...Ke7 32.Bd5 Rc7 33.Rh4 h6 34.Ke4 Kf6 35.Rh5 Rd7! 36.g4

White evidently overlooked his opponent's hidden counterplay. It was possible to continue the offensive with Bd5-c4, h2-h3 and g3-g4, not giving the opponent any counterchances at all. But nobody is immune from such oversights. In the complications which follow, a decisive role is played by the position of the white pawn on a4.

36...g6!? 37.Rxh6 Kg5 38.Rh7 Kxg4

Threatening mate.



39.Be6!

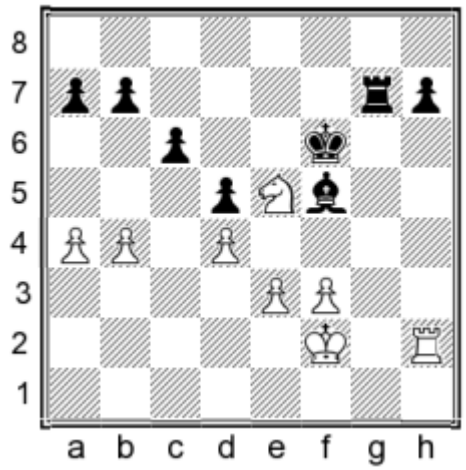
A winning counterblow.

39...fxe6 40.fxg6 Rd8 41.Rxa7 Kg5

«The bishop is one tempo too late: 41...Be1 42.a5 Bh4 43.a6 Bf6 44.g7 Rg8 45.Rb7 Bxg7 46.a7, and now because of the threat 47.Rb8 Black has to play 46...Ra8, and White, by taking the bishop, wins easily.» (Réti)

42.g7 Kh6 43.a5 Kh7 44.a6 Rd6 45.h4 Be1 46.h5 Bh4 47.h6 1-0

Salomon Flohr
Igor Bondarevsky
Moscow 1939



White to move

White has the advantage. His knight on e5 is clearly stronger than the enemy bishop, and his central pawn structure is more mobile. The mobility of Black's queenside pawns is very limited, whilst the passed pawn on h7 is not very dangerous. White forms the following plan:

1. Force the advance ...a7-a6 and thereby insure himself against counterplay on the queenside, guaranteeing a post for the knight on c5.

2. Transfer the knight to c5, thereby avoiding its exchange for the bishop, and then prepare e3-e4.

3. Strengthen the position of the king, penetrate the enemy position with the rook, attack the weak pawns on h7 and b7, and then achieve the exchange of rooks and go into a winning minor piece ending.

It is interesting to see with what accuracy and artistry Flohr executes his plan.

46.a5

With the threat of a5-a6.

46...Rc7 47.Rh6+!

It is precisely in such moves that great endgame technique consists. To achieve a5-a6, White needs the rook on c1. So he could simply have played 47.Rh1, but the point is that, after the check, any reply by Black very slightly weakens his position. Maybe this 'very slightly' will not be of any significance in practice, but even so, Flohr seizes every tiny chance to strengthen his position.

47...Bg6

Now the g-file is blocked to the black rook.

48.Rh1 Bf5?

Probably the decisive mistake. Black should have played 48...b6 49.Rc1 Be8, retaining the possibility of counterplay. After the move 48...Bf5, White forces ...a7-a6, and the black pawn structure is frozen.

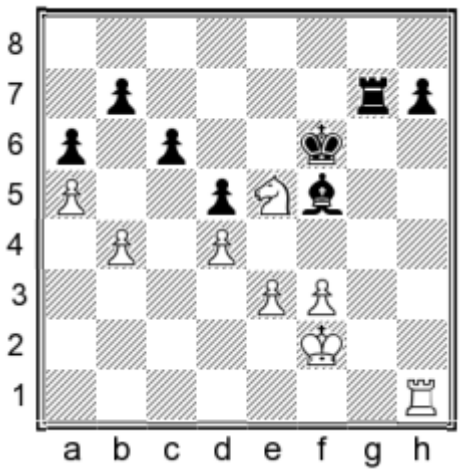
49.Rc1 a6

Forced in view of the threat 50.a6.

50.Rh1

The rook has done its job on the queenside and again takes control of the enemy passed pawn. Later the rook will come to h4, to support the advance e3-e4.

50...Rg7



51.Rh2!

Do not hurry! Black does not have the merest counterplay, whilst White has a clear winning plan. The last move of white's rook again forces Black very slightly to worsen the position of one of his pieces. In such positions, the defender really feels the psychological pressure from the absence of concrete threats. One suspects that the move 51.Rh2! would have gained White significant precious time on the clock.

51...Rc7 52.Rh6+ Bg6 53.Rh4 Bf5

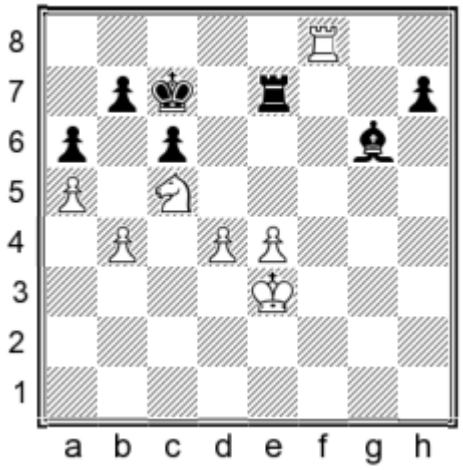
On 53...Kg5 there would follow a check on g4.

54.e4 dxe4 55.fxe4 Bg6 56.Rf4+ Ke6 57.Ke3

White centralises his king, since the knight transfer to c5 is already assured.

57...Rg7 58.Nd3 Kd6 59.Nc5 Re7 60.Rf8 Kc7

The threat was 61.Rb8.



61.e5 Re8

Black offers the exchange of rooks, because White's pressure is growing with every move. However, the minor piece ending is lost anyway. This becomes completely obvious after the loss of the pawn on h7.

62.Rxe8 Bxe8 63.Kf4 b6 64.Na4! bxa5 65.bxa5 Bf7 66.Nc5 Bc4 67.Kg5 Be2 68.Kh6 Kd8 69.Kxh7 Ke7 70.Kg6 Bf1

White chooses perhaps not the shortest way to win, but the most reliable – the transfer of the king to c5.

71.Kf5 Bh3+ 72.Kf4 Bg2 73.Ke3 Bf1 74.Kd2 Kf7 75.Kc3 Kg6 76.Kb4 Kf5 1-0

Anthony Saidy
Robert James Fischer
New York ch-USA 1964 (11)

White to move

If the pawns on d4 and d5 were not on the board, then White's chances would not be worse at all. However, the mutual IQPs pose an insurmountable barrier to the white bishop, without affecting the mobility of Black's knight. Therefore White faces a difficult fight for a draw.

24.Kf1 Nf8 25.Ke2 Ne6 26.Kd3

What plan should Black choose? First of all, it is essential to activate his king. It appears necessary to bring it into the centre on d6. But the American GM intends to play on the kingside, with the aim of creating targets for attack there. Therefore, he brings the king to f5 by the shortest route – via h7.

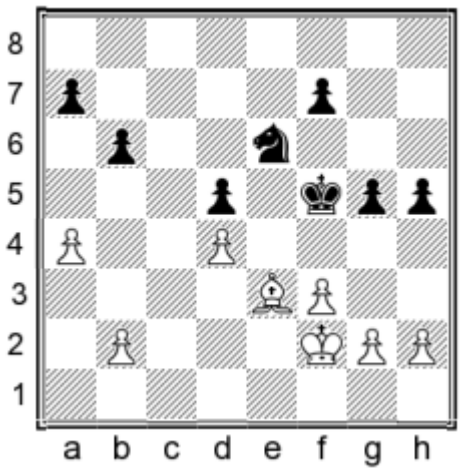
26...h5!

So as to achieve the desired set-up, Fischer does not make a single unnecessary move. The principle of 'do not hurry' only applies when one needs to hide the intended plan from the opponent.

27.Be3

White sticks to waiting tactics. Perhaps it was better to activate the bishop by means of a3-a4, b2-b3 and Bc1-a3 with the king on e3.

27...Kh7 28.f3 Kg6 29.a4 Kf5 30.Ke2 g5 31.Kf2



Black has achieved the intended set-up and sharply slows the pace of the game. In his book *My 60 Memorable Games*, Fischer, commenting on his game with T. Petrosian, writes:

«Petrosian loves to play cat and mouse, hoping that his opponent will make a mistake when there are no direct threats. The amazing thing is that most of them do!»

A very nice illustration of the principle 'do not hurry!'. The remaining course of this game shows that Fischer had learnt the lesson well. And although Saidy does not commit any clear mistakes, he also begins to move to and fro, not wanting to create any weaknesses in his camp. But at the critical moment, when it was necessary to become active, White proved psychologically unready for this.

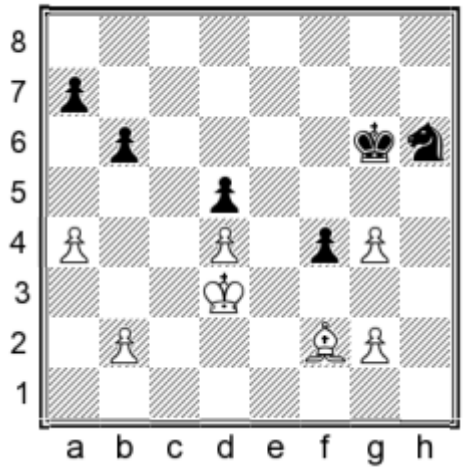
31...Nd8 32.Bd2 Kg6 33.Ke3 Ne6 34.Kd3 Kf5 35.Be3 f6 36.Ke2 Kg6 37.Kd3 f5

Note how slowly the black pawn advances.

38.Ke2 f4 39.Bf2 Ng7 40.h3 Nf5 41.Kd3 g4!?

Suddenly Black makes a breakthrough, although he could have transferred the king to f5 and the knight to e6.

42.hxg4 hxg4 43.fxg4 Nh6



The critical moment. Now White needs a concrete approach to solving the problems he faces. It was essential to activate the bishop immediately with 44.Bh4 Nxg4 45.Bd8 with the idea of a4-a5. Admittedly, after 45...Ne3 White loses a pawn, but the continuation 46.g3 Nc4 47.gxf4 Nxb2+ 48.Kc2 Nxa4 49.Kb3 b5 50.Kb4 a6 51.Ka5 Nc3 52.Be7 gives him every reason to hope for a draw.

Instead, out of inertia, White continues his waiting tactics and very soon finds himself in an inescapable situation.

44.Be1? Nxg4 45.Bd2 Kf5 46.Be1 Nf6 47.Bh4 Ne4 48.Be1

Now it is already too late for 48.Bd8, since after 48...Kg4 the white king has to defend the g2-pawn and there can be no question of any activity on the queenside.

48...Kg4 49.Ke2 Ng3+ 50.Kd3

The pawn endgame is clearly hopeless, whilst after 50.Kf2 the black king seizes the e4-square by means of 50...Kf5 51.Kf3 Ne4 followed by ...Ng5+. Now if 52.Bh4, then 52...Nd2+ 53.Ke2 Nc4 54.b3 Na5 55.b4 Nc6, and White loses a pawn.

50...Nf5

It transpires that there is no satisfactory defence against the threat of 51...Nh4.

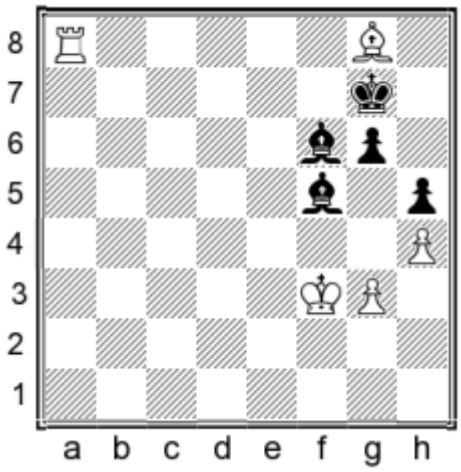
51.Bf2 Nh4 52.a5

A belated attempt at activity.

52...Nxg2 53.Kc3 Kf3 54.Bg1 Ke2 55.Bh2 f3 56.Bg3 Ne3

There is no defence against 57...Nf5. White resigned.

Rafael Vaganian
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Minsk ch-URS sf 1972



Black to move

White has an extra exchange. If the light-squared bishops are exchanged, we reach a theoretically drawn position. White cannot get at the g6-pawn and so we have a draw. Confident in a drawn outcome, Black makes his first inaccurate move:

53...Bg4+?!

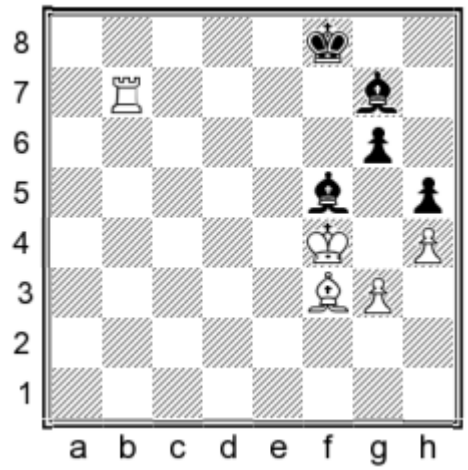
He should not have voluntarily allowed the white king into the centre. It was worth considering 53...Be5, taking aim at the g3-pawn and the square f4.

53...Bg4+?! 54.Kf4 Bc3 55.Bd5 Bd2+ 56.Ke4 Bc3 57.Ra7+ Kf8 58.Rc7 Bf5+ 59.Kf4 Bd4

With the idea after 60.Kg5 to give perpetual check by means of 60...Be3+ and 61...Bd4+.

60.Bf3 Bg7 61.Rb7

Note that White gets nothing after 61.Bxh5 Bh6+ 62.Ke5 Bg7+. But since the passing threat to take on h5 remains, Black hurries to get rid of it.

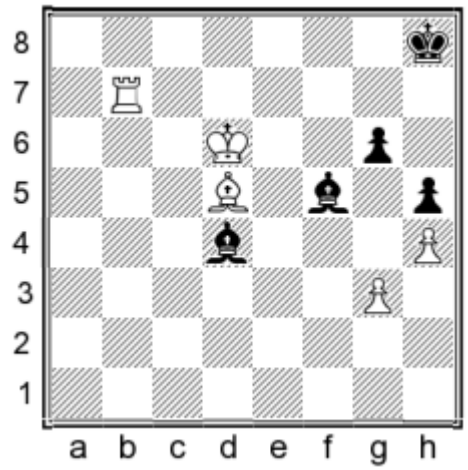


61...Bh6+?

There was no necessity to let the white king advance. If Black had divined his opponent's plan, then he would perhaps have drawn, but Black's whole problem here was that he could not imagine how he could lose the position.

62.Ke5 Bg7+ 63.Kd6 Bd4 64.Bd5 Bf2 65.Rb3 Bd4 66.Rb8+ Kg7 67.Rb7+ Kh8

On 67...Kh6 there is the unpleasant 68.Bg8 g5 69.Rb5, whilst Black did not like the move 67...Kf8 because of 68.Rf7+ Ke8 69.Be6, and the black king is in a dangerous position.



68.Rb4!

White's task is to get the square f7 for his king. But after 68.Ke7, Black can reply 68...Kg7! 69.Ke8+ Kf6, retaining drawing chances. Therefore, White continues making harmless moves, masking his intentions.

68...Bc3 69.Rb3 Bd4 70.Bf7 Kg7 71.Rb7

With the threat of a discovered check.

71...Kh8

But not 71...Kh6 or 71...Kf6 because of 72.Bg8.

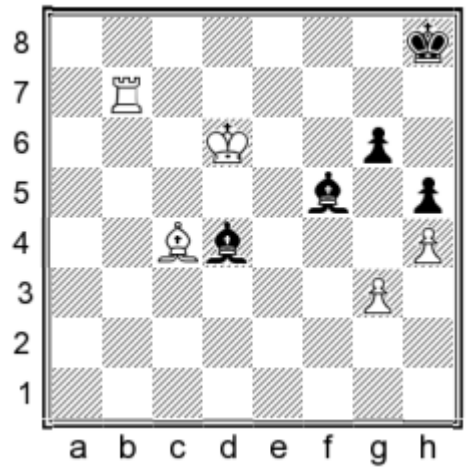
72.Kd5 Bc3 73.Rb3 Ba1 74.Kd6 Kg7 75.Rb7

Again there is a threat of discovered check.

75...Kh8

Of course, not 75...Kh6. At this point, I was recalling the joke that it is a shame one cannot claim a draw on the grounds of the threefold repetition of the same trap.

76.Bc4 Bd4



Compare this position with that after White's 67th move. We can see that it is identical, except that the white bishop is on c4 rather than d5, which makes no difference.

77.Ke7!

The psychological pressure on the opponent has been exerted and now White goes on with his intended active operations.

77...Bc3?

The decisive mistake. It was essential to play 77...Kg7 78.Ke8+ Kf6 followed by ...g6-g5. Black was already sure that passive play was sufficient to draw, and he did not want to bring the king out of his comfortable corner, failing to appreciate the difference in the white king being on e7 or f7. I am sure that if White had brought his king to e7 on move 68, Black would have found 68...Kg7!, but at this moment, it was psychologically much more difficult for him to do this.

78.Kf7!

With the white king on f7, the endgame after the exchange of light-squared bishops is lost for Black, which he had failed to realise.

78...Bd4 79.Rb5 Kh7 80.Rb3

Now a hunt starts for the black bishop. White needs to hurry up, because the 50-move draw claim is not far away.

80...Be4

Meeting the threat of 81.Bd3.

81.Be6

Threatening 82.Rb4.

81...Bc2 82.Ra3 Be5 83.Bc4 Bd4

So as to meet 84.Bd3? with 84...Bb2!, drawing.

84.Rf3 Be5 85.Re3 Bd4

86.Re2! Ba4!

Bad is 86...Bf5? 87.Be6 Bb1 88.Re1 Bc2 89.Rc1 with a win.

87.Re7! Bg7

On 87...Bc2 Black did not like 88.Bd3!?.

88.Bd5 Bc2 89.Be4! Bb3+ 90.Ke8 Ba4+ 91.Kd8 Bb3 92.Rb7 Be6

With a trap: 93.Rb6?! Bf7 94.Ke7 Bd4, and after 95...Kg7 the game begins again.

93.Ke7! 1-0

There is no defence against 94.Rb6.

Alexander Donchenko
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Kaliningrad 1973

Black to move

In this position, the game was adjourned. Analysis showed that, despite the extra pawn, Black cannot win, although to make a draw, White needs exceptionally accurate defence.

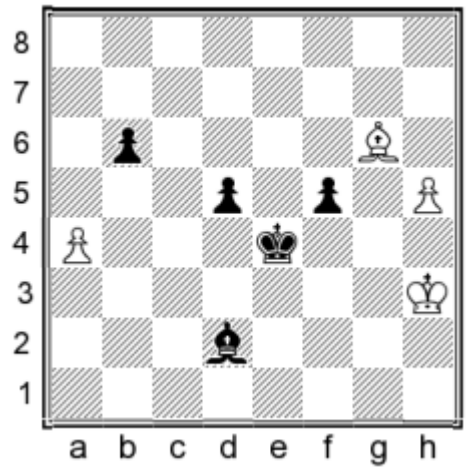
1...Be1 2.d6

Necessary, since 2.Bxh5 is bad because of 2...Kxd5, whilst after 2.Bg2 there follows 2...Ke3 followed by the advance of the f-pawn.

2...exd6 3.Bxh5 Bd2

Black gets nothing from the direct 3...Ke3 because of 4.Bf7 f4 5.h5 f3 6.h6 f2 7.Kg2.

4.Bf7 d5 5.h5 Ke4 6.Bg6



6...Be3

If 6...d4, then White holds his lines by means of 7.Kg2 d3 8.Kf2 Be3+ 9.Ke1 Ke5 (9...Kf4 10.h6) 10.Bf7 Kf6 (10...f4 11.h6) 11.Bc4 d2+ 12.Kd1 Kg5 13.Bd3 f4 14.Be2 Kh4 15.h6 Kg3 16.h7 Bd4 17.Kxd2 f3 18.Bxf3 Kxf3 19.Kd3 with a draw. Consequently, Black does not force events, but starts manoeuvring with the bishop, so as to start active operations only in the most favourable possible circumstances (in accordance with the principle 'do not hurry!').

7.Kg2 d4 8.Kf1 Bg5 9.Ke2 Be3 10.Kd1 Ke5 11.Ke2 Ke4 12.Ke1 Bg5 13.Ke2 Bh6 14.Kf2

A move which testifies to the fact that White is convinced of a drawn outcome to the game.

14...d3

Noting that the white king occupies a less favourable position, Black goes over to active operations.

15.Ke1 Ke5 16.Kf2 (?)

The king moves away from the d3-pawn.

16...Kf6

It is important for Black not to frighten the opponent into greater vigilance.

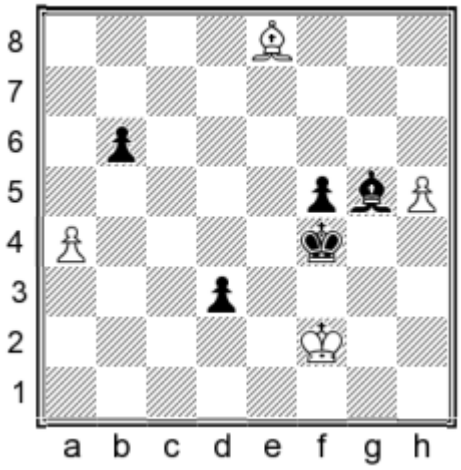
17.Be8

Stronger was 17.Ke1. White does not grasp his opponent's intention.

17...Ke5 18.Bg6 Kf4

The critical moment of the endgame has been reached. If White played 19.Ke1, he could still draw, since after 19...Kg4 20.Kd1 d2 21.Be8 Be3, he has the manoeuvre 22.Bd7! Kg5 23.h6!. But White does not sense that Black is about to start active operations.

19.Be8? Bg5



20.Bf7?

The losing move. White evidently counted on 20...Kg4 21.Be6, when things are fine for him. The best saving chance was probably 20.Bd7. If 20.Bg6, then 20...Bh4+! 21.Kf1 Kg5 22.Be8 d2 23.Ke2 Be1, and by the advance of the f-pawn Black wins the pawn on h5.

It is already too late for 20.Ke1 because of 20...Ke3.

20...Bh4+!

This White had not seen.

21.Kf1 Ke3 22.h6 Kd2 23.Bb3 Kc1 24.h7 Bf6 25.Kf2 d2 26.Ke2 f4 0-1

Vladimir Kramnik 2760
Anish Giri 2776
Doha 2014 (7)

White to move

White has an extra pawn, to realise which he mainly needs to solve the problem of exchanges. Can he allow the rook ending after 30.e3 or is it better to avoid it by 30.Bg2 ?

30.Bg2!

Kramnik: «A strong move. Here I hesitated. The simplest was 30.e3, and I almost played it, but then I thought that Black might get some chances after 30...Bxf1 31.Kxf1 Bxe5 32.fxe5 Rc8 33.Rc4 Raa8. I think White wins here, slowly but surely. I can bring the king into the centre and I always have the manoeuvre Ra2-d2-d6, but this is a rook ending, and they are always drawn, as we are taught in childhood. Although I have doubts about this concrete case.»

30.Bg2! Ra7 31.c6 Be7

Black defends against the rook coming into c5. White must complete the final strengthening and find a set-up to break down the opponent's solid defences.

32.Be4!

To start with, White wants to deprive his opponent of the bishop pair with 33.Bd3, but in addition, he pursues a more masked aim. He puts the bishop on e4, so as to bring the knight from e5 to d4 and then advance the pawn from e2 to e3. An excellent plan!

32...f6

Giri defends against the first threat but cannot stop the second.

33.Nf3! Rd8 34.e3

Five moves have sufficed for Kramnik to transform the position from very promising into absolutely winning, without giving his ingenious opponent the slightest chance. First-rate work!

34...e5 35.fxe5 fxe5

White's position is completely winning and he operates on the principle 'do not hurry!'. The ironic way he describes his play in *64* No 1/2015 is also very entertaining:

36.Rc1

«Another old man's move. Nothing was threatened, but I like such moves. I learnt this from Karpov, who was the master of these unhurried prophylactic moves. In a winning position, when the opponent has few possibilities, you simply play useful moves and give him a chance to lose by himself.

36...a4

Desperation. If 36...Bb4, I could win by force: 37.c7 Rc8 38.Rac2 (threatening 39.Bf5) 38...Bd6 39.Ng5 g6 40.Bd5+ Kg7 41.Bc6, and Black cannot take the c7-pawn because of the knight fork on e6. The game is over.

37.bxa4

Anish resigned in view of 37...Rxa4 38.Rxa4 Bxa4 39.c7 Rc8 40.Bf5.»

Magnus Carlsen 2861
Sergey Karjakin 2780
Wijk aan Zee 2013 (8)

White to move

In the diagram position, White's positional advantage is obvious. He has a block of pawns promisingly placed for a space advantage in the centre and on the kingside, and the potential possibility of a breakthrough.

Black also has two pawn islands. The two black pawns on c5 and d4, fixed by the white pawn on d3 and bishop on c4, have no mobility, and limit the activity of their own bishop. The black pawns on the kingside are placed on squares of the same colour as the enemy bishop and represent a target for the white pieces. In addition, each of the white pieces is more active than its opposite number.

Black's position is unpleasant, but perfectly defensible. Material is equal and the drawing tendency of opposite-coloured bishops is well known. To win this position, White needs his opponent's help, which means that he cannot manage without the use of the 'do not hurry!' principle.

53.f4

It is obvious that White should put his kingside pawns on dark squares, setting up a wall on e5, f4, g3, h4, so as to fix the opponent's pawns on the squares controlled by White's bishop. Therefore, it makes no sense to delay with advancing the f-pawn, and so give Black the chance to reduce the number of kingside pawns by ...g6-g5, even if this latter may not be terribly good.

53...Bd6 54.Re8

Beginning to play according to the principle 'do not hurry!'. Possibly even here Carlsen formed his plan and started to mask it from his opponent. He gives

the impression that his main idea is the pawn advance e4-e5-e6. If he manages to transfer the bishop to e4 and exchange pawns on e6, then after the white rook recaptures on e6, the g6-pawn will be in danger. In addition, Black must constantly watch out for the appearance of the white rook on the seventh rank, with an attack on f7.

54...Rb7 55.Ra8

All the while the black rook remains on the seventh rank, the advance e5-e6 brings nothing, because of the reply ...f7-f5.

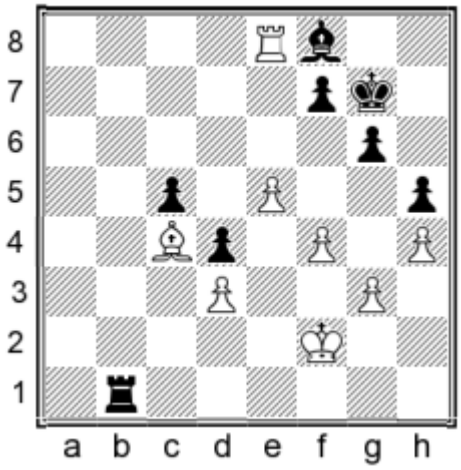
55...Be7 56.Kg2 Rb1!

Black defends actively. Staying passive on the seventh rank is dangerous. If White manages to play g3-g4 with his king on h3 or f3, then after the exchange of pawns on g4, the threat h4-h5, with the breaking up of the opponent's defences, will become very unpleasant.

57.e5

On 57.Ra7 Black holds his defences with 57...Kf8.

57...Re1 58.Kf2 Rb1 59.Re8 Bf8



60.Rc8

60.e6 fxe6 61.Rxe6 does not achieve the aim because of the manoeuvre 61...Rb7 62.Bd5 Rd7 63.Be4 Rd6.

60...Be7 61.Ra8 Rb2+ 62.Kf3 Rb1!

This also works. On 63.g4 there is a check on f1.

63.Bd5 Re1!

Black has no need to think about whether there is a threat of 64.Ra7 Kf8 65.e6 fxe6 (65...f5!?) 66.Be4. The move in the game stops the advance of the white pawn.

64.Kf2 Rd1 65.Re8 Bf8 66.Bc4 Rb1

The position shown in the previous diagram has been repeated again. The illusion of safety is created, and the opponent is sufficiently tired. Defending an inferior position is never easy, especially against the best player and endgame specialist in the world. Fear has big eyes, as they say! Now Carlsen plays an unexpected breakthrough.

67.g4! hxg4 68.h5!

It is very possible that if Carlsen had played this breakthrough on move 60, then Karjakin would have been able to find the best defence, but after a further ten moves, he already finds himself unable to do so. The best description of the situation, in my opinion, was given by GM Sergey Shipov in *64* No 2/2013:

68...Rh1?

«One cannot blame Black for such a mistake. Few players, in the sixth hour of play, tired and hungry, would be able to find the magical saving line 68...gxh5 69.f5 h4 70.f6+ Kg6 71.Rxf8 Kf5! (the only move, as it is not clear which of the black pawns should advance or whether the check on b2 will be needed).»

69.hxg6 fxg6 70.Re6 Kh6 71.Bd5!

It is perfectly possible that this is the move Karjakin had missed in his calculations, and that he had considered only 71.f5 Kg5 with counterplay. White

breaks through to the pawn on g6 and there follows a precise realisation.

71...Rh2+

71...Rb1 72.Be4 does not help either.

72.Kg3 Rh3+ 73.Kxg4 Rxd3 74.f5 Re3 75.Rxg6+ Kh7 76.Bg8+ Kh8 77.Kf4 Rc3 78.f6 d3 79.Ke3 c4 80.Be6 Kh7 81.Bf5 Rc2 82.Rg2+ Kh6 83.Rxc2 dxc2 84.Bxc2 Kg5 85.Kd4 Ba3 86.Kxc4 Bb2 87.Kd5 Kf4 88.f7 Ba3 89.e6 Kg5 90.Kc6 Kf6 91.Kd7 Kg7 92.e7

Black resigned.

Peter Svidler
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Baku 2014

White to move

Question: Indicate the first move and a scheme of action for White.

Show/Hide Solution

White's position is clearly better. The black pieces are badly coordinated and the weaknesses at b6, b4 and d5 are hard to defend. Out of general considerations, Peter Svidler made the useful move

27.Kg2?

and lost a large part of his advantage.

The move is useful, but mistimed. It was essential to think prophylactically and ask how Black wants to improve the position of his pieces.

It is hard to suggest anything more sensible than ...f7-f6, ...g7-g5, ...Be6-f7 and ...Bf7-g6. The key way to prevent the improvement of the opponent's position is the move 27.Nc7!!, and now Black effectively has no moves. Then White can calmly turn his attention to the weaknesses on the enemy queenside.

The comments of Svidler himself, in *64* No 11, 2014, are extremely interesting:

«This is taking the idea of not hurrying in better positions to absurdity. To be honest, I did not even consider the correct move – even if it had occurred to me for a second, I don't think I would have been able to bring myself to play it.»

Certainly, the move 27.Nc7!! is not easy to find, although much depends on the player's sporting form at the moment in question.

27.Kg2? f6!

Black's life becomes much happier.

28.Rfd1?!

Svidler: «Another move made out of general considerations. Much stronger was 28.Bc7 Re8 (28...Rf8 29.Nxc5 bxc5 30.Bd6 Rf7 31.Nc7) 29.Nd6! Bxd6 (I was very worried about 29...Rxc7 30.Nxe8 Rc6, but after 31.Nxb4 Rc8 32.Nd6 Ra8 33.Nd3! Bxd6 34.Rc6 White wins easily) 30.Bxd6 Rc3 31.Nxb4 Rxe3 32.Rfe1!, and despite the exchanges, Black's position is still a long way from equality. But at this point, I had lost control of myself.»

28...Bf7 29.Nxc5

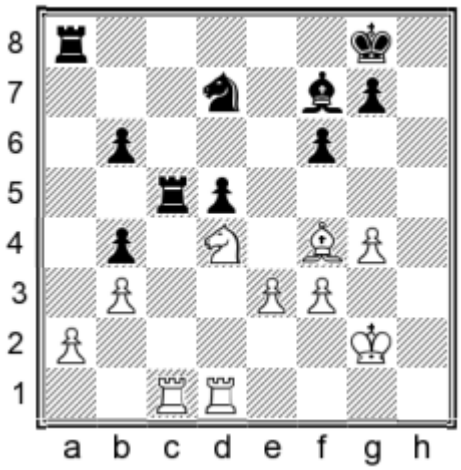
«Panic. I was appalled that Black is ready to play ...Ra8, ...Bg6, and create serious counterplay. But taking on c5 is the wrong way to solve this problem. However, on the day I simply failed to see the correct move: 29.Nc7! is again very strong. After 29...g5 (what else? Black has few moves now) 30.Nxc5 Nxc5 (White is better after 30...bxc5 31.Bd6) 31.Bg3 Black is still not to be envied.» (Svidler)

29...Rxc5

29...bxc5 is bad because of 30.Nc7.

30.Nd4 Ra8?

Now it is Mamedyarov's turn to go wrong. Correct was 30...Rdc8, when Black is close to equalising. Now, however, White is again the boss of the position.



31.Bd6! Rxa2+ 32.Kg3 Rb2?! 33.Ra1!

Black's position is lost. His rooks are misplaced and the king risks coming under attack.

33...Rc8

After 33...Ra5 the simplest is 34.Rxa5! bxa5 35.Ra1, and White wins the enemy queenside pawns. Now, however, it is the rook on b2 which suffers the misfortune.

34.Bxb4 Nc5 35.Ba3 Rxb3 36.Bxc5

Black resigned.

Mikhail Shereshevsky
Vladimir Veremeichik
Minsk 1978

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 c5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.Bxf6 gxf6 5.e3 f5 6.Qh5 cxd4 7.exd4 Qb6 8.0-0-0 Qh6+ 9.Qxh6 Bxh6+ 10.Kb1 d6

As a result of an originally played opening, queens have been exchanged early and the game has gone into a sharp position of an endgame type. Black has a slightly compromised pawn structure on the kingside, but in return, he has the two bishops.

Question No 1: How can White start active operations?

Show/Hide Solution

11.g3!

White needs to proceed in a thought-out and planned way, else he can easily drift into even the slightly worse position. The first priority is to limit the range of the black bishops and then think about playing against the weaknesses in the enemy camp. With this intention, the bishop comes to g2 and pawns are set up on h2, g3, f4, restricting the mobility of Black's dark-squared bishop. Now 11...f4 does not work because of 12.Nd5.

11...Bd7?!

Black intends to neutralise the 'Catalan' bishop on g2 with ...Bc6.

12.Bg2 Bc6 13.d5!

This move underlines the somewhat slow manoeuvres of the opponent. White seizes space, overtakes the opponent in development and fixes the e7-pawn on the half-open file, as a potential weakness.

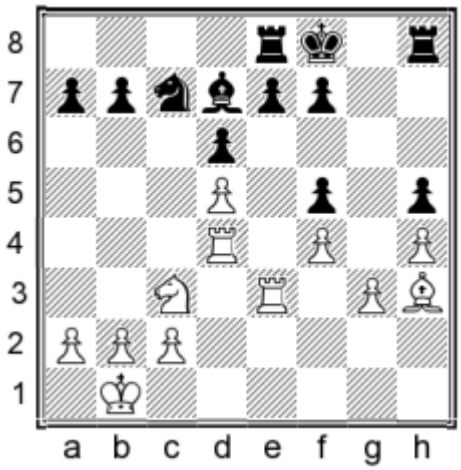
13...Bd7 14.f4! Bg7 15.Nge2 h5 16.h4

Such moves should be played automatically. The further advance of the black pawn must not be permitted.

16...Na6 17.Rhe1 Nc7 18.Nd4 Kf8 19.Re3 Bf6 20.Bh3 Bxd4?!

Now play starts to be one-sided. Black is condemned to passive defence. In the event of 20...e6 there could follow the piece sacrifice 21.dxe6 fxe6 22.Nxf5!? Bxc3 23.Rxd6, although, of course, it is not obligatory. Even so, in this line, Black would obtain counterchances in a tactical battle.

21.Rxd4 Re8



Question No 2: How can White realise his large positional advantage?

Show/Hide Solution

Again White must formulate a plan. Black has weak pawns on h5, f5 and e7. But these weaknesses are located close to one another and are not so hard to defend. According to the principle of two weaknesses, therefore, White needs to create a target in another part of the board. But, most of all, he needs to improve the position of his pieces and tie Black down on the kingside. For this purpose, he must centralise the king, bring the knight to e3, and then the rook gets the possibility of attacking the enemy queenside.

22.Kc1! Kg7 23.Kd2 Kf6 24.Ke1 Rc8 25.Bf1 Ne8 26.Rd2

Preparing the knight transfer to e3.

26...Ng7 27.Nd1 Rhe8 28.Ra3 a6?!

It was better to refrain from this weakening and play 28...Ra8.

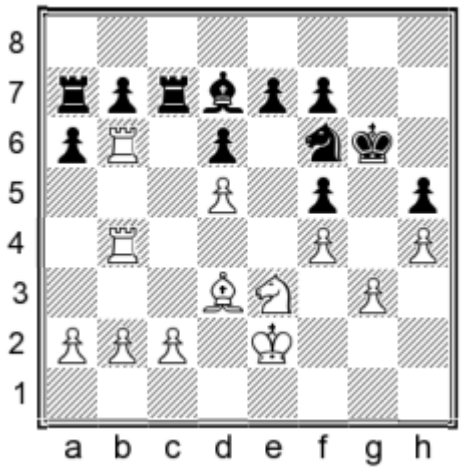
29.Rb3 Rc7

If 29...b5, unpleasant is 30.a4.

30.Rb6

Now the b7-pawn is fixed.

30...Rd8 31.Be2 Kg6 32.Ne3 Ne8 33.Rd4 Nf6 34.Bd3 Rg8 35.Ke2 Ra8?! 36.Rdb4 Ra7



Black is completely tied up and can only wait to see how White will strengthen his position.

Question No 3: What must White do to remove the last trace of resistance from the enemy forces?

Show/Hide Solution

White has a clear plan for the realisation of his advantage:

1) fix the weak pawn on b7 with a2-a4-a5;

2) exchange the opponent's only active piece, the rook on c7, with the move Rc4;

3) with the bishop on d3 and knight on e3, tie the black pieces down to the f5-pawn and transfer the king to d4;

4) carry out the advance c2-c4-c5, after which the black position starts to collapse.

37.Rd4?

Having thought up his plan, and afraid of time trouble, White decides to use the principle 'do not hurry!' and repeat the position, so as to reach move 40 and adjourn, and then wrap up the game after home analysis. Alas! These plans were destined not to be realised.

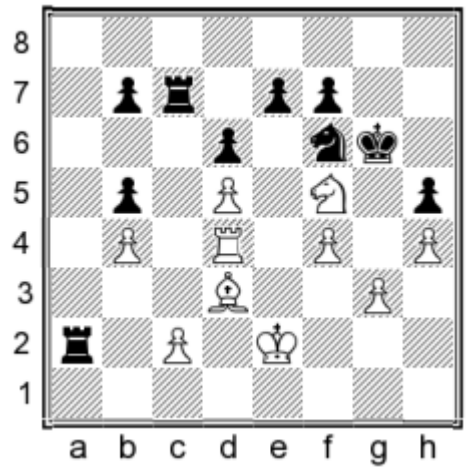
The principle 'do not hurry!' should not be abused and can only be utilised in positions where the opponent has no counterplay and you are sure of this.

37...Bb5!

An unpleasant tactical surprise. Because of the pin on the Bd3, the f5-pawn is immune. In the event of 38.Bxb5 axb5 39.a3 Rc5 Black's pieces break out to freedom. And White does not want to play 38.c4, because this square is reserved for his rook.

In time-trouble, I decided on the exchange sacrifice

38.Rxb5 axb5 39.Nxf5 Ra4 40.b4 Rxa2



and had to win the game a second time, in a sharp struggle.

Analysing sharp tactical endings is not the main purpose of the book *Endgame Strategy*, and this example is given mainly with the aim of demonstrating that the 'do not hurry!' principle should not be abused. Therefore, we will give the rest of the game, probably full of mutual errors and inaccuracies, only with brief comments. If you wish, you can study all the players' lapses with the aid of the computer.

41.Kf3 Rc3 42.Nxe7++ Kg7 43.Nf5+ Kf8 44.Ke2

White cannot give up the c2-pawn, because it and the Bd3 are the foundation-stone of his position.

44...Rc8?!

Again, Black chooses passive tactics, possibly without having seen White's idea. At first glance, Black's set-up does not seem so bad. One rook goes to d8 for defence, the other will attack the g3-pawn after the knight has transferred to g7 via e8, to drive off or exchange the white knight on f5. However, the counterattack after 44...Rc7 45.Kd2 Ra1 46.Bxb5 Rg1, with a sharp game, looks more logical and more unpleasant for White.

45.Kd2 Rd8 46.Bxb5 Ra1 47.Kc3 Re1

Better was the immediate 47...Rg1.

48.Bd3 Ng8 49.Kc4!

The white king comes into the attack, breaking Black's defences.

49...Ne7 50.Kb5 Nxf5 51.Bxf5 Ke7 52.Kb6 Kf6 53.Kc7!

53.Bd3 was a mistake because of 53...Re7.

53...Rg8 54.Bd3 Re7+ 55.Kxd6 Rc8 56.Rc4!

Not allowing 56...Rcc7.

56...Rd8+ 57.Kc5 Rc7+ 58.Kb6 Rcd7 59.Rc7!?

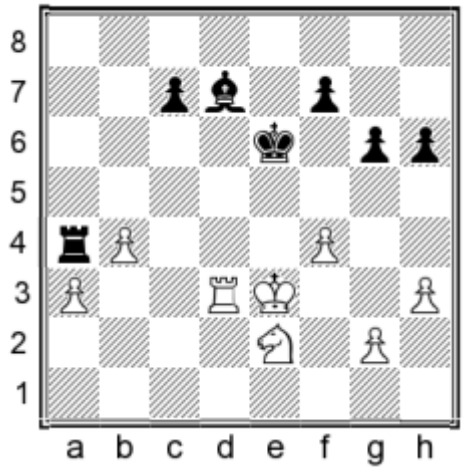
The simplest.

59...Rxd5 60.Kxb7 Rxd3

Desperation.

61.cxd3 Rxd3 62.b5 Rxg3 63.b6 Rb3 64.Rc5 Rb4 65.Kc7 1-0

Now the time has come to return to the diagram position from the game **Capablanca-Ragozin**, given in the article by Sergey Belavenets.



White to move

The great champion's unhurried intended move

11.Kd4?

is a tactical mistake. As Mark Dvoretsky pointed out, Black gets the happy and unexpected chance to save the game with 11...Bb5! 12.Nc3 (12.Re3+ Kd6, intending 13...c5+) 12...Bxd3 13.Nxa4 Bf1.

According to Dvoretsky, the correct move for White was either the active continuation 11.g4,

or the sharper 11.f5+!? Ke7 (11...gxf5 12.Nf4+ Ke7 13.Nd5+) 12.Nc3!. Even the sun has its spots. Nobody is guaranteed against tactical oversights.

But of the fact that the third World Champion had a great feel for the rhythm of the game, and could play actively and precisely when needed, we can convince ourselves by studying the following example. We recommend you play this through,

covering Capablanca's moves with a card, and compare each of your moves with those of the great Cuban.

Emanuel Lasker
José Raul Capablanca
Havana 1921

Black to move

The black pawn structure consists of one large mass, whilst White has two weaknesses, at b3 and d4. However, the distance between the two weaknesses is minimal, so the stronger side is unlikely to be able to exploit them directly.

But as well as static weaknesses, the position of the pieces also has great significance. All of the white pieces are very passive, and his king is a long way from the centre of the action, which is the weaknesses on b3 and d4. If we imagine that in the diagram, the kings were on d3 and d6 respectively, then the game would end in a draw. Therefore Black needs to maintain his initiative the whole time and not allow the white king to come up to defend.

In other words, Black needs to play concretely, or 'hurry'.

35...Rb6!

The aim of this is to worsen the opponent's position.

36.Rd3

Forced. After 36.Rb2 or 36.Nc1 there follows 36...Rb4, winning a pawn.

36...Ra6!

Creating the new threat 37...Ra1+, locking the white king out of play for a long time. If Black had not interpolated his previous move, then White would now have the strong reply 37.Rb2 with counterplay.

37.g4 hxg3 38.fxg3

Completely bad is 38.Nxg3?? Ra1+ 39.Kg2 Nd6, and White now has four weak pawns.

38...Ra2 39.Nc3 Rc2!

With the threat of 40...Nxd4.

40.Nd1 Ne7!

The black knight transfers to c6 to attack the opponent's weaknesses. White's position is deteriorating with every move.

41.Ne3

41.b4 is bad because of the manoeuvre ...Rc2-c1+-b1.

41...Rc1+!

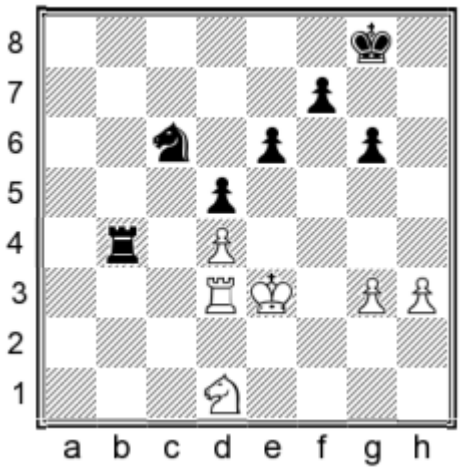
After the natural 41...Rb2 there could follow both 42.Nd1, with a continuation analogous to the game, and also 42.Rc3!? Rd2 43.Nc2 Nf5 44.b4 Nxd4 45.Nxd4 Rxd4 46.Rb3 with chances of a draw. It makes no sense for Black to give his opponent any additional possibilities.

42.Kf2 Nc6 43.Nd1 Rb1! 44.Ke2?

An oversight. White will inevitably lose the b3-pawn, but he should try to do so with an exchange of rooks, since in a knight ending, the small quantity of material will cause Black definite technical problems in realising his advantage.

Correct was 44.Ke1!, defending the knight (44.Ke3? Nb4), and on 44...Na5 – 45.Kd2 Rxb3 46.Rxb3, with chances of saving the game.

44...Rxb3! 45.Ke3 Rb4



Black has won a pawn. Now the rhythm of the game slows sharply and the principle 'do not hurry!' starts to apply. Watch how slowly and carefully Capablanca proceeds.

46.Nc3 Ne7 47.Ne2

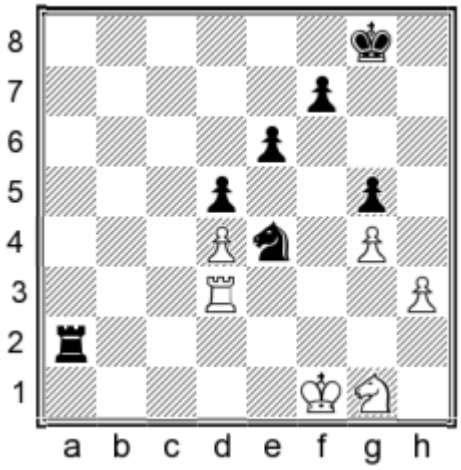
On 47.g4 there follows 47...g5.

47...Nf5+ 48.Kf2 g5 49.g4

Passive defence changes nothing.

49...Nd6 50.Ng1 Ne4+ 51.Kf1 Rb1+ 52.Kg2 Rb2+ 53.Kf1 Rf2+!? 54.Ke1 Ra2 55.Kf1

Forced. On 55.Nf3 Black wins with 55...Nf2, and on 55.Ne2 with 55...Ra1+.



55...Kg7

Black's plan includes the transfer of his king to d6, followed by ...f7-f6 and ...e6-e5. It is interesting to note that in 20 moves of this endgame, Capablanca has not moved his king once. This is extremely rare.

56.Re3 Kg6 57.Rd3 f6 58.Re3 Kf7 59.Rd3 Ke7 60.Re3 Kd6 61.Rd3 Rf2+ 62.Ke1 Rg2 63.Kf1 Ra2 64.Re3 e5 65.Rd3 exd4

66.Rxd4

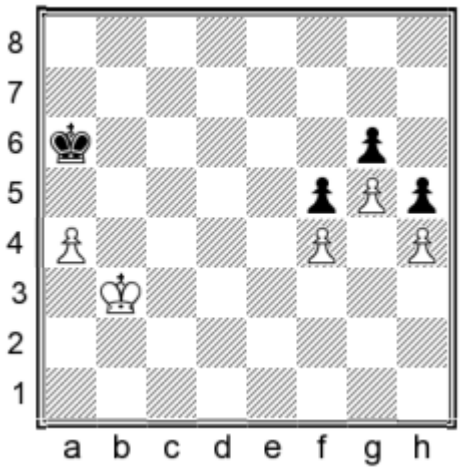
Bad is 66.Ne2 Rd2 67.Rxd4 when 67...Ng3+! wins.

66...Kc5 67.Rd1 d4 68.Rc1+ Kd5

White resigned, since on 69.Rd1 there follows 69...Ng3+ 70.Ke1 Rg2.

Chapter 8
The principle of two weaknesses

Look at the following simple example.



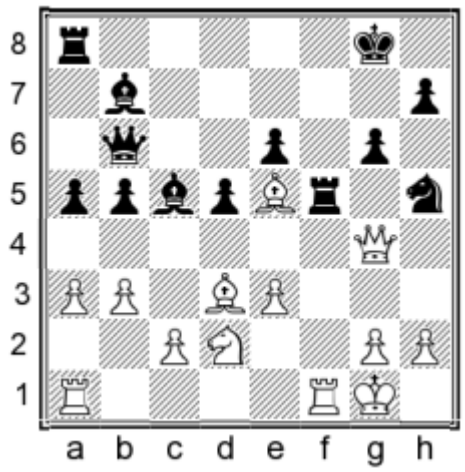
White to move

In this elementary pawn ending White wins by sacrificing the a4-pawn to bring his king over to the kingside and win the black pawns there.

The first weakness in the black position is the white passed pawn on a4, the second is his kingside. If we change the position slightly, adding a white pawn on c4 and a black pawn on c5, White is no longer winning, because the black kingside is no longer attackable, and one weakness – the passed a4-pawn – is not enough to win. In Nimzowitsch's terminology, White lacks the 'axis of manoeuvre', i.e. the square d4 for his king.

The principle of two weaknesses determines tactics in the endgame. We can see this in a number of examples.

Mikhail Shereshevsky
Alexander Beliavsky
Lviv 1977



White to move

White faces a choice: whether to win the exchange, with a sharp and unclear position, or to take an ending with equal material, but some obvious weaknesses in Black's position (the pawns on b4 and e6).

20.Bd4!?

Forcing transition into an ending, in which Black has pawn weaknesses on both flanks, which his minor pieces are not able to defend. At the same time, Black is deprived of any counterplay.

20...Bxd4 21.Qxd4 Qxd4 22.exd4 Rxf1+ 23.Rxf1 b4 24.g4 Ng7 25.axb4 axb4 26.Nf3

White's plan involves the knight transfer to e5, his king coming to e3 and only then a siege of Black's weaknesses.

26...Ne8 27.Ne5 Nd6 28.Kf2

Allowing the exchange of bishops, but this no longer matters.

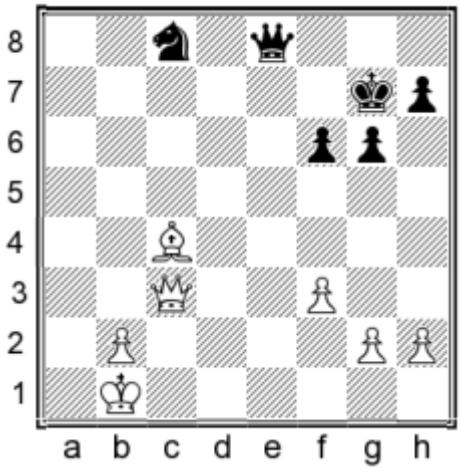
28...Ba6 29.Ke3 Bxd3 30.Nxd3 Rc8 31.Nxb4 Rc3+ 32.Kf4 Kf8 33.Rf3 Rc7 34.Ke3+ Ke7 35.Kd2 Ne4+ 36.Kc1

White has won a pawn, whilst keeping his positional advantage.

36...Nc3 37.Re3 Kd7? 38.Na6 1-0

In this ending, White exploited his opponent's two pawn weaknesses on different flanks. But the concept of a 'weakness' is rather wider than a single, isolated pawn, which can come under attack. A weakness can include an enemy major piece controlling an open file, a distant enemy passed pawn, an immobile piece, a cut-off king, etc. Put briefly, a weakness is any positional drawback.

Alexander Alekhine
Friedrich Sämisch
Baden-Baden 1925 (11)



White to move

White has an extra passed pawn on b2 (Black's first weakness). However, the immediate advance of this pawn would expose the white king and give Black serious chances of counterplay. Therefore Alekhine turns to the creation of a second weakness in Black's camp.

34.Qd4

«With this and the next move, White reveals the correct winning plan, which consists in the advance of the kingside pawns. The passed b-pawn should only be advanced later, when the danger to the white king has disappeared following the exchange of queens.» (Alekhine)

34...Qe7 35.Bd3! Qc7 36.g4 Kf7 37.h4 Nb6 38.h5 gxh5 39.gxh5

The second weakness is created – the h7-pawn.

39...Qc6 40.Be4!

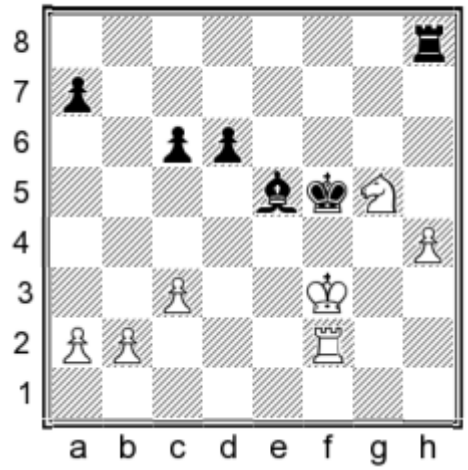
Refusing the queen exchange, which was possible after 40.Qe4, so as to fix the weak h7-pawn. Not 40.Bxh7 Qxf3 41.Qxb6? Qd1+ with a draw.

40...Qb5 41.h6 Qb3 42.Bc2! Qb5 43.Qd3 Qxd3 44.Bxd3

White has succeeded in exchanging queens in the most favourable manner possible – the black king is tied to the h7-pawn and the knight cannot cope with the passed b-pawn, supported by king and bishop.

44...Nc8 45.Bxh7 1-0

A. Kovalev
M. Azos
Tashkent 1978



White to move

White has an extra passed pawn on h4, which is Black's first weakness. White's plan is to create a weakness on the black queenside (by forcing the advance ...c6-c5 or ...d6-d5), and then use the passed h-pawn to deflect the black forces, giving it up at the right moment to attack the weakened queenside.

1.Ke3+ Kg4 2.Rg2+! Kf5

Things are also cheerless for Black after 2...Kxh4 3.Nf3+! Kh3 (3...Kh5 4.Rg5+ Kh6 5.Nxe5) 4.Rg6 Re8 (or 4...Bg3 5.Ng5+ and 6.Ne4) 5.Nxe5 Rxe5+ 6.Kd3 Rd5+ 7.Kc2, and the rook ending is easily winning for White, because the black king is cut off from the area of battle. For example, 7...Kh4 8.a4 Kh5 9.Rg7 a5 10.Rg2 c5 11.Rd2 Rxd2+ 12.Kxd2 c4 (otherwise b2-b4) 13.Ke3 Kg6 14.Kd4, winning.

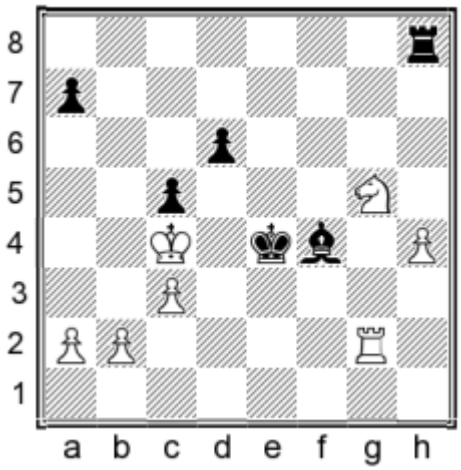
3.Nf3 Bf4+

On 3...Bf6 there is the unpleasant 4.Rd2 Re8+ 5.Kf2 with numerous threats.

4.Kd3 c5

The first part of White's plan is fulfilled: the black queenside has been weakened.

5.Kc4 Ke4 6.Ng5+



6...Kf5

If 6...Ke3, a possibility is 7.Rg4 Re8 8.Kd5 Re5+ 9.Kxd6 Rxg5+ 10.Rxf4.

7.Kd5

Now the pawn on h4 can be given up, as the entry of the white king decides.

7...Rxh4 8.Nf7 Rh5 9.Nxd6+ Bxd6 10.Kxd6

The outcome of the battle is decided, although White has to overcome some technical difficulties in the rook ending.

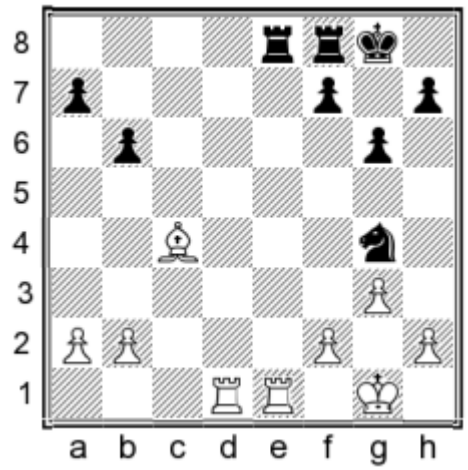
10...Ke4 11.Rg7 a6 12.Rc7 Rh2 13.Rb7 c4 14.Kc5 Kd3 15.a4 Rh5+ 16.Kb6 Rh6+ 17.Ka7 a5

The threat is 18.a5 and 19.Rb6.

18.Rb6 Rh8 19.Ka6 Ra8+ 20.Kb5 Ra7 21.Rb8!

Black resigned after a few moves.

Pal Benko
Bruno Parma
Belgrade 1964 (4)



White to move

In this position, White's bishop is significantly stronger than Black's knight, which lacks secure outposts in the centre. The white rooks are also actively placed, whilst the black rooks fulfil only defensive functions.

25.Bb3

Creating the threat of an exchange on e8, followed by Rd7, which does not work immediately because of 25...Ne5.

25...Nf6 26.Kg2!

White begins to centralise his king, not fearing an exchange of rooks on the e-file.

26...Rxe1

Black can hardly avoid this exchange.

27.Rxe1 Re8 28.Rxe8+!

White has accurately calculated his chances in the coming minor-piece ending. Despite the well-known rule that R+B is stronger than R+N in the ending, he goes in for the exchange of rooks, so as to centralise his king more quickly.

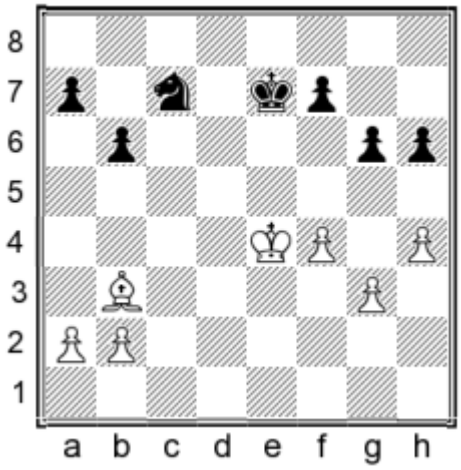
After 28.Rc1?! Re7! Black would not permit the white king into the centre and would have good drawing chances.

28...Nxe8 29.Kf3 Kf8 30.Ke4 Nc7

Black has managed to stop the first wave. Now White's task is to create a weakness on the black queenside.

31.h4 Ke7 32.f4 h6

On 32...h5, 33.Ke5 followed by f4-f5 is very unpleasant.



33.Bc4!

A typical device, which will be seen more than once in this ending. The white bishop dominates the knight.

33...Ne6 34.g4 Nc7 35.Ke5

Black is in zugzwang. His subsequent positional concessions are unavoidable.

35...f6+ 36.Ke4 Kf8 37.h5!

Capablanca's advice regarding the placing of pawns in relation to one's bishop in the endgame are true in the majority of cases, but a dogmatic approach to it is not advisable. In the present position, the more important thing is to get control of the square e5 for the king – 'an axis of manoeuvre' – to attack both the queenside and the kingside of Black. It should be noted that the stereotyped 37.g5 gives Black excellent drawing chances after 37...hxg5 38.hxg5 Ke7 with the threat of 39...fxg5 and 40...Ne6.

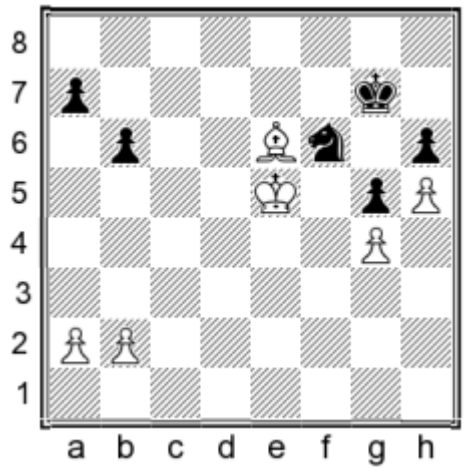
37...g5

No better is 37...gxh5 38.gxh5 followed by 39.Kf5, and Black is in zugzwang.

38.fxg5 fxg5 39.Kf5 Kg7 40.Ke5

The breakthrough of the white king to the queenside is inevitable.

40...Ne8 41.Be6 Nf6



42.b4!

Do not hurry! Before the decisive king breakthrough, it is useful to advance the queenside pawns as far as possible.

42...Ne8 43.b5!

White approaches the position concretely and does not hesitate to place all his pawns on the same colour squares as his bishop.

43...Nf6 44.a4 Ne8 45.Bf5 Nf6 46.Ke6 Ne8 47.Be4!

The black knight again comes under the domination of the bishop.

47...Nf6 48.Bf3 Ng8 49.Kd6

Now the queenside!

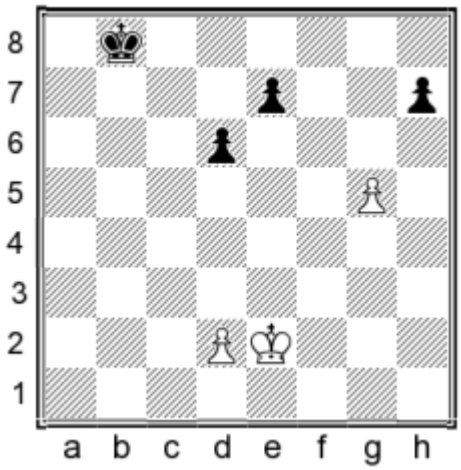
49...Kf6 50.Kc6 Ke7 51.Kb7 Kd6 52.Kxa7 Kc5 53.Ka6 Nf6 54.Bc6! Nxg4 55.a5 bxa5 56.b6 Ne5 57.Be8

Black resigned.

In his foreword to the Russian edition of Nimzowitsch's *Chess Praxis*, Petrosian writes:

«Admit that you did not know that the 'two weaknesses', which in themselves are fully defensible, are alternately attacked, and the attacker relies mainly on his territorial superiority – on the better control of the lines of communication. The game is lost in the end because at some point, the defender cannot match the speed with which the attacker is able to regroup his forces.»

As a final example, we present an endgame study by **S. Zhingis**, published in 1930. White to play and draw.



Black's position has two objects of attack: the pawn h7 and the square e6, so we can say he has two weaknesses.

25.Kf3 Kc7 26.Kg4! Kd7

Black can defend against the raid of the white king on the h7-pawn. On 27.Kh5? there follows 27...Ke6 28.Kh6 Kf5, and White loses. But now the white king changes direction and goes after the e6-square.

27.Kf5! Ke8

Nothing changes after 27...Kd8 28.Ke6 Ke8 29.d4!.

28.Ke6 Kf8 29.d3! Ke8 30.d4 Kf8 31.d5

Black is in zugzwang.

31...Ke8 32.g6! hxg6

Stalemate.

Chapter 9
Instead of a conclusion

To conclude this abbreviated version of *Endgame Strategy* I should like to include an extract from the book *The Soviet Chess Conveyor*.

My advice that one try to improve one's endgame technique from the very start of one's study of chess is not so easy to follow. My training practice shows that a player tends to study certain opening schemes, and then spends a great deal of time on the process of transition between opening and middlegame, and does not even think about endgames.

But one should not force things. After a certain time, maybe a year or two, his results will improve and he will acquire a good understanding of the problems of the opening and middlegame. It is rather more difficult to assess his progress in the endgame, because the number of his games which are decided in the endgame will still be relatively small.

At the same time, his study of the classics will enrich his chess culture significantly and he will acquire a style of his own. He will get into the habit of using his favourite schemes and ways of playing. Such a desire is understandable. However, with the improvement in his standard of play, his opponents will also become stronger and the scope of his play will start to prove too narrow.

All of these problems surface at the level of international master. At this moment, the player runs up against a brick wall in certain openings, which results in quick draws in absolutely equal positions, and his progress will very probably slow down.

In such a situation, it is useful to play several tournaments in succession, which are not important from the viewpoint of the results themselves. In these, the player should try to place the accent on going from the opening to the endgame. He should strive for endings and get into the habit of playing endgames down to bare kings.

So as to illustrate my words, the simplest thing is to present some examples from my own games.

Queen's Pawn Game A48
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Eduard Zelkind
Minsk 1978

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Bf4 Bg7 4.e3 d6 5.Nc3

The white player always has a wide choice of how to start the game. The move Nc3 in front of the c-pawn can easily be criticised or improved, but that is not the point. The aim of this slightly odd-looking move is to take the game into unknown paths and then to fight for the initiative in the middlegame.

5...0-0 6.Bc4

The same tactics as before. White intends after 6...c5 to play 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Ne5 e6 10.Be2 and then 11.Bf3.

6...c6 7.a4 Qb6 8.Qd2 Bf5

The b2-pawn is poisoned. If 8...Qxb2?, then 9.Rb1 Qa3 10.0-0 and the black queen is trapped. The development of the bishop to f5 has its downsides, but overall is reasonable. At the present moment, White cannot exploit the slight disharmony in the black camp (the Bf5 and pawn on g6). Even so, 8...a5 looks safer.

9.0-0 Nbd7

As before, the capture 9...Qxb2? fails, this time to 10.Bb3.

The opening is over and the game roughly equal.

10.Nh4

White tries to do something, so as to disturb the quiet pattern of the game. It was also worth considering 10.a5.

10...Be6 11.Be2

The exchange on e6 is not terribly favourable to White, but now he threatens 12.e4.

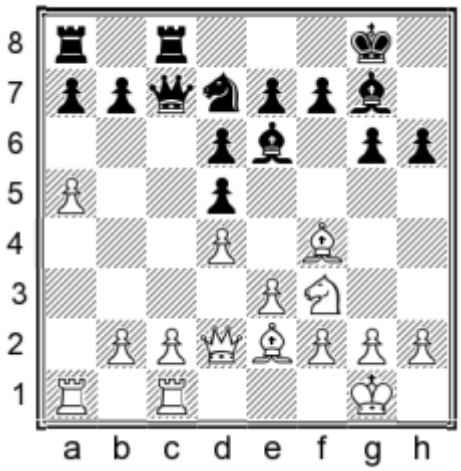
11...Nd5 12.Nxd5 cxd5 13.a5 Qc7 14.Nf3

Finally, the pawn structure is damaged and White has some initiative.

14...h6

White was threatening 15.Ng5.

15.Rfc1 Rfc8



16.a6!

This move is the foundation of White's subsequent victory.

16...bxa6 17.Bxa6 Rcb8 18.b3 Nf6 19.Qa5! Qb6 20.Ra3!?

20.h3 would have been consistent and in the spirit of White's previous move. I did not see any necessity to worry about the Bf4 – the only white piece that is not doing a lot. In addition, its exchange for the good black knight favours White, and therefore I decided to provoke it. If 20.h3, then 20...Ne4 with a possible advance of the pawns on the kingside.

20...Nh5?!

Zelkind cannot resist the temptation and goes after the bishop, putting his knight on the edge of the board. Rather more cautious was 20....Ne4.

21.Bg3 f5 22.Rca1 g5?!

This activity is absolutely illusory. It seems to Black that he is seizing the initiative, whereas in reality, the text leads to a rather unpleasant endgame.

More logical was 22...Bf7, preventing 23.Qxb6 axb6? 24.Bc8 and preparing ...e7-e5. White would evidently have to play 23.Be2, after which there could follow 23...Qc6 with an interesting position. Now, however, Black is worse.

23.Qxb6! Rxb6 24.Bd3 Rb7

The complications after 24...f4 25.exf4 g4 26.Nh4 Bxd4 27.Rxa7 favour White.

25.h3!

25...Nxg3?

Up to now, Black has managed to solve his problems more or less successfully, but now he commits a terrible positional error, leading to an exchange which is unfavourable for him. I do not think this mistake is accidental. All game, Black has had to solve quite untypical problems, and the outlines of the King's Indian Defence are too vague to rely on. Secondly, the dark-squared bishop tends to be something of a god to the majority of KID players. Finally, Black was also starting to experience time-trouble.

26.fxg3 Rc7?! 27.Ra5! Bf6 28.Rf1!

This was quite an unpleasant surprise for Black, since now the pawns on f5 and d5, like the a7-pawn, become very weak.

28...Rf8 29.b4 f4?

Zelkind was getting more and more nervous about the course events were taking in the game. White's threat of pushing the pawn to b5 and doubling rooks on the a-file is unpleasant, but Black had a defence. He should have preferred 29...Rb8 30.b5 Bd7 with chances of a stubborn resistance.

30.gxf4 gxf4 31.exf4 Bg7 32.Re1 Bf5

33.g3!

After this strong move, it becomes clear that Black's tactical operation has failed. Now the game moves over to the stage of realisation of White's extra pawn.

33...Bxh3 34.Rxd5 Rb8 35.b5 Bc8 36.Kf2 Bb7 37.Rh5 Rf8 38.Re2 Bc8 39.f5 Bb7 40.Ke3 Bc8 41.Kd2 Bb7 42.Re3 Bf6 43.Rxh6 Bxf3 44.Rg6+ Kf7 45.Rxf3 Bxd4 46.Be4

In this rook and opposite-coloured bishops ending, Black does not suffer so much from his material deficit as from White's huge positional advantage...

46...Rh8 47.Bd5+ Kf8 48.c4 Bg7 49.Ra3! Bd4

The threat was 50.b6.

50.Kd3 Bb6 51.Ra1 Rc5 52.Re1 Bd8 53.Re4

The white rook goes to g4 with a mating attack. Black resigned.

Queen's Pawn Game D04
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Aliaksandr Sarbay
Minsk 1978

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3

I have already said that as White, my thoughts were not about gaining a material advantage.

3...g6 4.Bd3 Bg7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c3 Nc6!

Black plays the opening energetically, preparing ...e7-e5, with the initiative.

7.b4

This move is very risky, as after ...e7-e5 the scope of the Bg7 is enlarged.

However, the position after 7.Nbd2 e5 8.Nxe5 Nxe5 9.dxe5 Ng4 10.Nf3 Nxe5 is clearly not in White's favour.

7...a6 8.Nbd2 e5! 9.b5

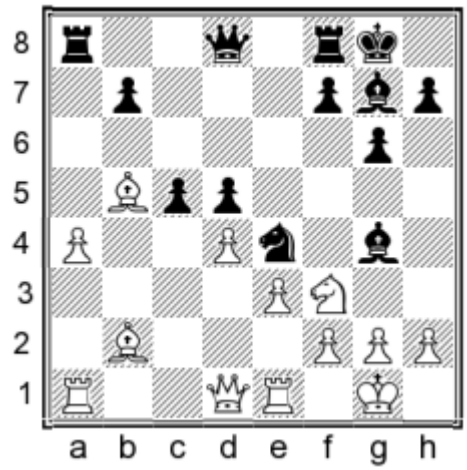
Black has played the opening very well and his position is superior.

He simply needed to play 9....axb5 10.Bxb5 e4 11.Ne1 Ne7 with pressure on the kingside and excellent chances to punish his opponent for his treatment of the opening. Instead of this, Black begins an unnecessary tactical operation, which also gives him a good position, but simplifies White's task.

9...Nxd4?! 10.cxd4 e4 11.Be2 exf3 12.Nxf3 axb5 13.Bxb5 Ne4 14.Bb2 c5! 15.a4

Parries the potential ...Qd8-b6.

15...Bg4! 16.Re1



16...cxd4?!

Sarbay commits an error which allows White to free and coordinate his forces, at the cost of a small deterioration in his kingside pawn structure. He should have played 16...Qf6 17.Be2 c4 (here Black may have better moves), retaining positional pressure.

17.Bxd4 Bxd4

Black has nothing in particular after 17...Nc3. This leads to approximate equality after 18.Qd3 Nxb5 19.axb5 Bxf3 20.gxf3, but it is evident that Black is after more.

18.Qxd4 Bxf3 19.gxf3 Qg5+ 20.Kf1 Nf6

It would have been more logical to retreat the knight to d6, but Black avoids the exchange of minor pieces, still hoping to obtain a large advantage.

I was not playing for a draw in this game, so much as just accepting that the need to play defensively is sometimes the objective reality and can in itself be a way of playing for a win.

21.Bd3

It is time to identify some trumps. The black pawn on b7 is weak, and White will try to attack it along the b-file. Objectively, the position is still close to equality, but the psychological initiative is now on White's side. I had an hour and a half for the remaining 20 moves, whilst my opponent had just 25 minutes.

21...Nd7 22.Reb1 Qh5 23.Qg4!

It is time to go into the endgame!

23...Qxg4 24.fxg4 Nc5 25.Bb5

White's position is now somewhat better, but even so, with correct play by Black, it should be a draw. However, I was intending to play on until bare kings.

25...Ra5 26.Rb4 Rfa8 27.g5

It is useful to create the preconditions for an attack on the kingside.

27...Ne4 28.h4 Nc3 29.Bd7 b5 30.Ra3 Rxa4

It was better for Black to take the pawn with the knight, but his intention to simplify the position in time-trouble is understandable.

31.Rbxa4 Nxa4 32.Bc6!

A strong move. I was prepared to meet 32...Ra5 with 33.Ra1, winning the d-pawn. Nothing comes from 32.Bxb5 because of 32...Nb6.

32...Rd8 33.Bxb5 Nc5 34.Ra7 Ne6

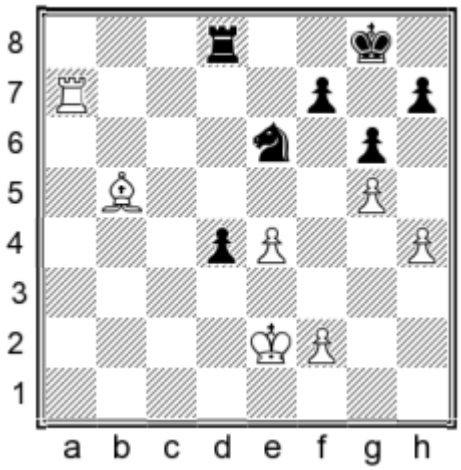
At this moment, I asked myself the question: 'What are my chances of winning with best play by my opponent?'

I did not come up with an answer, but Sarbay kindly resolved the issue for me.

35.Ke2 d4?

All actions can be both good and bad. The drawbacks of the last move are obvious, which shows that Black was at this moment disturbed by time-trouble.

36.e4

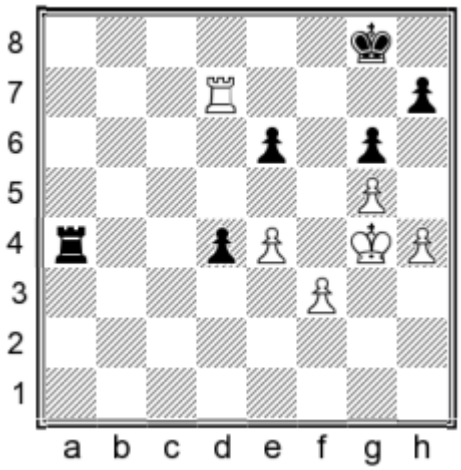


36...Rb8?

Another impulsive decision, which leads Black into serious problems. Black played 35...d4, and now it was logical to continue 36...d3+ 37.Kd2 Nd4. White has a choice between 38.Bxd3 Nc6 39.Ra3 with a superior, but still drawn rook endgame, and 38.Bc4!? Nf3+ 39.Kd1. Even stronger was 36...Rc8!, obtaining real counterplay against the white king.

After the move in the game, Black's chances of saving the game are not great.

37.Bc4 Rb2+ 38.Kf3 Rc2 39.Bxe6! fxe6 40.Rd7 Rc3+ 41.Kg4 Rc4 42.f3 Ra4



This rook ending is extremely difficult for Black. The weakness of e6 means that Black cannot enter a four vs three endgame with all pawns on the kingside. In any case, Black should have adjourned the game on the previous move and tried to save himself with active counterplay. Instead of this, my opponent continues to play defensively, allowing me to improve my position.

43.h5! gxh5+ 44.Kxh5 Rb4

Now I felt that my position was winning and asked for the sealed move envelope. The sealed move itself leaves Black no chance of saving the game:

45.g6! hxg6+ 46.Kxg6 Rb8 47.Rxd4 e5 48.Rd7 Re8 49.Rg7+ Kf8 50.Kf6 Rb8 51.Ra7 Re8 52.Ra5 Kg8 53.Rxe5 Rf8+ 54.Ke6 Rxf3 55.Rg5+!

Now Black cannot play 55...Kf8 because of 56.Rf5+, whilst after the black king moves to the h-file, White wins with the help of the well-known device of 'bridge-building'.

There followed:

55...Kh7 56.e5 Ra3 57.Kf6 Ra5 58.Rg1 Ra2 59.e6 Rf2+ 60.Ke7 Re2 61.Kf7 Rf2+ 62.Ke8 Re2 63.e7 Kh6 64.Rd1 Ra2 65.Kd7

Black resigned.

Queen's Indian Defence E21
Mikhail Shereshevsky
Naum Kagan
Minsk 1978

1.d4 e6 2.c4 b6 3.Nc3 Bb7 4.a3

This marks the end of the theoretical dispute. White avoids the principled move 4.e4 and prefers quiet development.

4...f5 5.d5 Nf6

Now White can force the exchange of queens with 6.dxe6 dxe6 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8, but Black easily develops his pieces by playing 8...Bd6 and 9...Ke7 with a good game.

6.Nf3 Be7 7.dxe6!? dxe6 8.Qxd8+ Bxd8?!

Black played this move instantly, but it was worth considering 8...Kxd8 with the idea of the same piece configuration indicated above, since the cavalry raid 9.Ng5 does not lead to anything.

9.Bf4 Nc6 10.h3 h6?

This strange move just loses time.

11.e3 0-0 12.Be2 Re8 13.0-0-0

Black's position is unpleasant. His main problem is the lack of coordination between his pieces on the two flanks, because of the badly-placed bishop on d8 and the weakness of the central square e5.

13...e5?!

After this, Black's position in the centre becomes even more vulnerable. It was better for Black to play defensively: ...a7-a6, ...Rc8 and ...Be7, trying gradually to neutralise the opponent's initiative.

14.Bh2 g5?

Activity, designed to frighten the opponent.

15.b4! f4 16.Rhe1 Rc8?!

This move is quite out of place, but Black's position is very difficult in any case.

17.exf4 exf4 18.g3 fxg3 19.Bxg3 a5

20.b5!

I played this move after long thought. I saw that 20.c5!? leads to a very strong attack, e.g. 20...axb4 21.axb4 Nxb4 22.Bc4+ Kf8 (22...Kg7 23.Rxe8 Nxe8 24.Rd7+) 23.Rxe8+ Kxe8 24.Nd4 with many dangerous threats. But I decided that my position in the diagram was so good that there was no point in sacrificing and giving the opponent additional chances. Of course, much depends on the player's temperament and his aesthetic feelings, but if we remember Capablanca's statement that the most beautiful way to victory is the simplest way, then 20.b5 is preferable to 20.c5. The game did not last long.

20...Nb8 21.Ne5 Be7 22.Kb2 Rcd8

23.Ng4!

The decisive move. Black is unable to defend his numerous weaknesses.

23...Rxd1 24.Rxd1 Nxg4 25.Bxg4 c6 26.Bf3 Bf6 27.Rd6 Kg7 28.bxc6 Bxc6 29.Bxc6 1-0

In the games we have just examined, White made no serious attempt to secure an advantage in the opening. Theoretical manuals virtually ignore the systems chosen, because they are not terribly logical, but as I stated earlier, my aim was to avoid an opening dispute and transfer the weight of the struggle to the middlegame and endgame.

Of course, such an approach cannot be recommended as a permanent one, because it is difficult to defeat a strong opponent without posing him serious opening problems. But it is perfectly appropriate as a conscious temporary measure. Such a player starts to understand chess better. When he returns to a normal competitive approach, he will be much more educated and will have new ideas for solving the majority of problems in the middlegame and endgame.

Part III
From the 20th century to the 21st

Finally, we come to the third part of the book, where we discuss the changes in the chess world and chess training over the past 25 years.

Chapter 10
On the status of chess players and trainers

First we will speak about the status of chess players and trainers today. I will speak in the main about Russia, the largest country to emerge from the former Soviet Union. In my opinion, this status has changed twice over the last 25 years. At first, there was a sharp decline, then an improvement.

Earlier, chess in the Soviet Union at a professional level was a means of self-expression and the opportunity to escape from the dullness of everyday life. A chess master was paid more than a doctor or engineer and the possibility of travelling abroad as part of their work was something of which the majority of people in the country could only dream. When advancing age meant that the player's practical playing strength declined, there was always the possibility of becoming a trainer and getting a pretty decent level of reward for your work. The standard of living of a grandmaster was several times higher than that of the average citizen.

I remember my friend Shagalovich once joking: 'If chess gets in the way of your education, then drop it'. Then, after a pause, he would add: 'Drop the education, that is!'

There was a good deal of common sense in this joke. Why waste time and energy on studying, just to end up as another bored and underpaid worker in the Soviet state? Was it not better to spend your time achieving success in chess, as the 'benefits' of education were of no use to sportsmen in those days?

Now everything has changed. In order to get a decent reward for your work, to have work that is creative and interesting and gives you the chance to travel abroad, it is essential to be a specialist in your chosen sphere. And that requires, in the first instance, a good education, knowledge of foreign languages and of computers. On the other hand, the life of a chess player, with the exception of the elite players, has worsened noticeably in the post-Soviet era. The majority of people, as a result of the economic reforms, hyperinflation and economic shock therapy, lost all their savings. In a furious rush of conflicting information, life's ideals changed and moral values were revised.

People stopped being interested in chess. Everything got worse, from playing conditions and the standard of hotels to the pay received for one's work. Previously, every tournament was a kind of holiday. One met friends and acquaintances, competed and put one's creative views to the test. Those who were not playing well were often just having fun, but nobody worried about money to live on, because everyone had enough for a reasonable and roughly similar standard of living.

As I have already mentioned, in 2001-2002 I was a trainer and selector for the Bulgarian team at the European Championships and Olympiad. It was a young team, that was without Topalov and Kir. Georgiev. At these events, I met with my colleagues from the former Soviet Union, who were now representing other countries. From almost every one of them I heard complaints about life, the general gist of which was that life had been much better in Soviet days, and how bad things were now. Several of them have since passed away, unfortunately. I tried to answer the question for myself: 'What has changed in the atmosphere at tournaments?' I understood the following: 'The kindness and the

holiday atmosphere have been lost. Now the air is filled with fear, uncertainty and worry.'

I recently read Vladimir Tukmakov's interesting book *Chess – The Key to Victory*. In it, the esteemed grandmaster expresses doubt about the correctness of the phrase 'Soviet School of Chess', preferring the term 'Soviet Organisation of Chess'. I should like to express my opinion on this topic. But first let us quote Tukmakov's conclusions:

«The Soviet Chess School in chess literature is just as familiar a phrase as the Marxist-Leninist teaching was in the life of Soviet people. Moreover, the first was a product that was much more environmentally friendly, if I may say so. The teaching of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin was, after all, originally a product imported, and its adaptation to the peculiar local conditions was not without difficulties. The army of state ideologists somehow coped with the problems. But this required constant work with the population. The chess plant, on the other hand, grew on the unique Soviet soil, and did not give rise to any other shoots, and therefore it was intended to demonstrate the advantages of the Soviet system as a whole. And to understand this phenomenon is not only interesting, but instructive. The fact that the word 'Soviet' in chess for many decades was synonymous with the highest quality, has been repeatedly and convincingly confirmed. So the definition in this phrase is not in doubt. But the key word 'school', in my opinion, does not reflect the essence and reasons for the unconditional domination of Soviet chess players.

It may seem that mockery is out of place in this matter. The hegemony (we will not be afraid of loud words) of Soviet chess players in the second half of the 20th century was unquestionable (the appearance of Fischer could be considered an unfortunate episode). Led by their leader, Mikhail Botvinnik, they won all the titles in the world.

The country of developed socialism did not have so many arguments in the struggle against the capitalist West, so chess went from being a game, albeit an intellectual and interesting one, into something different. Now chess was designed to simultaneously embody sport, art and science.

A new and noble family tree was invented: Petrov-Chigorin-Alekhine-Botvinnik etc. Admittedly, Alekhine's place in this is disputable – he was really the product of a rather different ideological camp, but no trickery will be eschewed in the cause of political expediency. Botvinnik's style has nothing in common with his designated predecessors, but this detail can also be overlooked.

Just as from Marx's economic researches, with the help of some skilled ideological tightrope walkers, there was created the all-conquering teachings of Marx-Lenin-Stalin, so Botvinnik's modest article about his methods of preparation was elevated into virtually evangelical teachings for Soviet chess players.

In this way, the necessary preconditions were put in place for the appearance of the all-conquering Soviet School of Chess, the SSC, if one wishes to use the abbreviations that were fashionable at the time. A school in science and art means a group of followers, united by a leader, and which develops a theory or direction proposed by the leader. However, if you think about it, the Botvinnik training system can only be considered as the first (important for its time, but somewhat naive) textbook for professional chess players.

At the same time, ideology and citizenship play a secondary role. Continuity is also an important condition, but, say, the Morphy-Zukertort-Marshall-Reshevsky-Fischer sequence looks, at least, no less impressive, yet there are no serious claims about the existence of an American school of chess.

If we take a closer look at the creative portraits of Soviet chess players, we will not find much in common between Botvinnik and Bronstein, Keres and Geller, Tal and Petrosian, Kortchnoi and Spassky. At the same time, Gligoric and Portisch are much more likely to be regarded as followers of Botvinnik, although they were not known to be Soviet.

However, there must be something that explains the undeniable phenomenon – the overwhelming superiority of one country over the rest of the world?

Yes, undoubtedly, such a factor existed. And this mysterious thing is organisation. The state provided Soviet chess players with unprecedented conditions, which their competitors from other countries could not even dream about. Grandmasters and even masters received a salary just for their professional activities, and the prestige of the chess player rose to an unprecedented height. The best representatives of the profession were given the right to go abroad, which at that time was the privilege of very few. Moreover, all these obvious benefits did not require those very burdensome obligations which were

indispensable for success in other areas, such as membership of the Communist Party or co-operation with the KGB.

The contribution of the Patriarch, as Botvinnik was often called, was really great. He was the undisputed leader of this artificially-created party, the symbol and banner of Soviet chess. In many respects it was thanks to Botvinnik that the word 'grandmaster' was uttered in the huge Union with aspiration, and chess tournaments brought together thousands of spectators.

The fierce competition, caused, on the one hand, by the incredible popularity of chess, and on the other by the closed system, also contributed to the growth of skill. Under these conditions, only the strongest survived, happily combining pure chess talent with psychological stability, and the ability to work tirelessly with sporting pragmatism. So it is correct to call this conglomerate not the School, but the Organisation: the Soviet Chess Organisation (SSO). It was the SSO that created the necessary conditions for the mass development and improvement of professional chess, a concept that was absent in the West.»

Grandmaster Tukmakov writes interesting books in beautiful and rich language. I especially liked *Risk and Bluff in Chess*. He understands chess deeply and often picks up topics that are not generally highlighted and which are not easy to formulate for the majority of specialists. For example: 'In the power of excitement, or the courage of despair.' But here the grandmaster gilds the lily. The very title of the chapter, 'SSH or SSO?', reminded me of the title of an article in a Belarusian newspaper: 'VVP – not BNE', which compares the activities of President Vladimir Putin and Boris Yeltsin in the post of President of Russia.

Let's deal with his points in order, starting with the last. Let's start with the mysterious organisation of the SSO:

«And this mysterious thing is organisation. The state provided Soviet chess players with unprecedented conditions, which competitors from other countries could not even dream about. Grandmasters and even masters received a salary just for their professional activities ...»

I happened to work as a chess coach in Bulgaria, and this mysterious 'Masonic Lodge' also existed there. From conversations with Balkan chess players I can testify that the same thing was true in Hungary and in the former Yugoslavia. I cannot say for sure, but I believe that along with the notorious 'Stasi', it also operated in East Germany. In all these countries, chess players lived in dignity and could play chess peacefully. But in none of them, in fact, did there appear any real contender for the title of World Champion. There was still not sufficient contact and communication with the leading Soviet grandmasters and coaches among the chess players of the other socialist countries.

The paradox lies elsewhere. As soon as the Soviet Union collapsed and huge changes took place in the countries of Eastern Europe, the life of chess players there sharply deteriorated. And at this moment in Bulgaria and Hungary there appeared Veselin Topalov and Peter Leko, who deservedly played three matches for the world crown with Vladimir Kramnik and Viswanathan Anand. In my opinion, this is largely due to the fact that the opportunity to work with Soviet specialists became much greater and Topalov and Leko (whose father-in-law is grandmaster and coach Arshak Petrosian) actively made use of it.

Let's talk about the school. Tukmakov: «The key word 'school', in my opinion, does not reflect the essence and reasons for the unconditional domination of Soviet chess players... By 'school' in science or art is meant a group of followers united by a leader, and which develops the theory or direction proposed by the leader. However, if you think about it, the system of training invented by Botvinnik can only be considered as the first (important for its time, but somewhat naive) textbook for professional chess players. At the same time, ideology and citizenship play a secondary role here.»

In my opinion, we are talking about the substitution of concepts. If in not particularly ancient chess history, after Philidor and Morphy, we talk about schools as a group of followers united by a leader, which develops the theory or direction proposed by the leader, then I can recall only two schools – the Classical: Steinitz, Lasker, Tarrasch, Schlechter and Rubinstein, and the Hypermoderns: Nimzowitsch, Réti, Breyer, Tartakower, Grünfeld. In their approach to the game, both schools had many differences, but the main thing was their attitude towards the centre. The Classicals treated it respectfully and tried to occupy it with pawns, whilst the Hypermoderns were happy to concede the centre and then to attack it with pawns and pieces.

The main ideologists of the two schools, Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch, could not stand each other. And that is all there is to it. Capablanca and Alekhine did not rank themselves in any schools. They absorbed the best from both tendencies and simply perfectly understood the game and played brilliantly.

When we speak of the Soviet chess school, we do not just mean an article by Botvinnik about his methods of preparing for competitions, but a definite system of mass development, the transition from mass to mastery, the succession of generations, the exchange of experience between celebrated champions and youngsters, the training of cadres of coaches, and much more.

The very word 'school' – and for masters and grandmasters it should perhaps be 'university' – is directly related to learning and communication. When one is told that someone graduated from Harvard, Oxford or the Sorbonne, it means that the person learned from various luminaries and communicated with future Nobel Laureates.

The Soviet Union was a huge country. If you take, for example, Ukraine, where grandmaster Tukmakov came from, there were three major chess centres: Lviv, Odessa and Kharkov. In Russia, there were Moscow, Leningrad and the Urals, plus Siberia.

But speaking about the Lviv, Odessa, Kharkov, Minsk, Chisinau, Riga, etc. schools would, in my opinion, be wrong. All pupils and coaches of these centres, in themselves very different, had a common alma mater: the school of individual championships, gatherings and team competitions of the Soviet Union. They competed, they mixed in team tournaments and studied with such giants as Botvinnik and Smyslov, Tal and Petrosian, Spassky, Keres, Geller, Kortchnoi, Polugaevsky, Stein, Bronstein, Boleslavsky, Taimanov, Averbakh. They grew up and became Karpov, Kasparov, Kramnik, Gelfand, Ivanchuk, Beliavsky, Vaganian, Yusupov, Sokolov, Ehlvest, Kamsky, Khalifman, Salov, Tseshkovsky, Malaniuk, Kuzmin, Gurevich, Chernin, Bareev, Dreev, Agzamov, Kupreichik, Sveshnikov, Rublevsky, Alexandrov, Bologan, Sakaev, Psakhis, Gulko, Romanishin, Balashov, Dolmatov, Shirov, Svidler, Tukmakov, Dorfman and many other outstanding chess players, whose names the Soviet Chess School is proud of.

If, on the other hand, one talks about trainers, they practically did not exist outside of the Union. Dvoretsky in another environment would hardly have developed his training methodology, although history does not deal in the subjunctive mood.

Another thing at which Soviet chess players were superior to their Western colleagues, with the exception of Fischer, is in the art of analysis. And I mean not only and not so much the openings, but the whole process of what Lipnitsky calls moving from an undetermined to a determined position, that is, one that can be assessed visually, according to general considerations.

After all, the chess player during the game, basically, has to carry out analysis in his head, without moving the pieces on the board. And in team tournaments, the team leaders, outstanding grandmasters, were included in the analysis, and this was an invaluable school for young chess players.

Now let's talk about Tukmakov's 'apostolic succession' Petrov-Chigorin-Alekhine-Botvinnik, etc., and the unconditional leadership of Botvinnik in Soviet chess. The term 'noble pedigree' is well known, but although I like dogs, it seems to me a humiliating term for outstanding chess players.

Grandmaster Alexander Kotov made an artificial connection between the games of Chigorin and Alekhine, but to add Botvinnik into this succession is not something one can hope to do. If something like this happened, then it did not make a serious impression in the minds and memory of my generation. Of course, careerists and fools were never in short supply in the Soviet Union, but slogans such as 'Lenin's teaching is immortal, because it's true' could not be successful in chess, because the answer to the question 'is this or that move correct' is immediately given by practice. And I cannot say anything about the chess of Petrov.

Alexander Alexandrovich Kotov wrote many books and studied in detail in two volumes the chess heritage of Alekhine [*Translator's note: This two-volume work has never been published in English*]. But in the program on studying classics, I recommend studying the book *300 Selected Games of Alekhine* with notes by Alekhine himself. I also think Kotov's book *Think Like a Grandmaster* to be interesting and worthwhile. Kotov was the first to describe the method of training one's calculation of variations, now fully modernised, and he first introduced the term 'candidate moves', which is still used today.

Alexander Kotov, at least, in literary creativity had a weakness for everything purely Russian. And he wrote about how he took complex and intricate

positions from the games of Chigorin and began to train in calculating variations. I tried in my time to do the same. From the book by N. Grekov *Mikhail Chigorin* [*Translator's note: Again, this old book has never been published in English*] I chose two dozen positions, wrote them out and after a while started to calculate.

Nothing worked. In one of the positions, in the variation chosen by Chigorin, there was a hole, in the next there was a perfectly calm and quiet solution, and in other cases also, something did not quite 'hang together'. After about the fifth position, I stopped this useless occupation. If a chess player develops poorly and likes having the initiative, he can look at the games of Chigorin, but, from my point of view, although Mikhail Ivanovich was very talented, he was just an amateur, and modern chess begins with Steinitz.

And, finally, Tukmakov's last point. «The contribution of the Patriarch, as Botvinnik is often called, is really great. He was the unconditional leader of this artificially-created party, the symbol and banner of Soviet chess. In many respects it was thanks to Botvinnik that the word 'grandmaster' was uttered in the huge Union with aspiration, and chess tournaments attracted thousands of spectators.»

One can also argue with this. The unconditional leader, symbol and banner of Soviet chess, since 1975, was Anatoly Karpov. He was the strongest chess player in the world from 1975 to 1985, and annually confirmed this. Botvinnik did not win a single match for the World Championship! He gained all his victories in rematches, losing the title in 1957 to Smyslov, in 1960 to Tal and in 1963 to Petrosian. And in 1951 and 1954 he retained his title with great difficulty, reducing the matches to a draw (12:12) with Bronstein and Smyslov respectively.

In my opinion, the return matches were abolished too late, in 1963. The challenger, having passed the extremely hard three-year qualifying cycle and defeated the World Champion, having reached his cherished goal, involuntarily relaxed, celebrating success and getting used to the title of the strongest chess player on the planet. Psychologically, it was impossible for him to start preparing in time for the return match. Botvinnik, on the other hand, immediately began to prepare for the next match, taking into account all the errors of the previous one.

Both Vasily Smyslov and Mikhail Tal were unconcerned about the rematch and approached them in an unready state. The result was sad. Everyone knows the psychological mood adopted by Botvinnik, to see the rival as a personal enemy. This gave him additional motivation and, perhaps, a recharge of energy during the games.

Isaak Efremovich Boleslavsky, with whom I trained from 1967 to 1977, was an intelligent, calm and peaceful person who, as they say, 'would not hurt a fly'. He had good, friendly and kind relations with all the world's leading chess players. Except one. Guess who?

With such an attitude towards his colleagues, Mikhail Moiseevich could hardly count on reciprocal love, and there was a case when Botvinnik, at that time the World Champion, was not included in the national team of the USSR [*Translator's note: This was for the 1952 Olympiad. Botvinnik's 'revenge' was to play in the next USSR Championship final, for the first time since 1945, and win it, scoring 100% against the other Olympiad team members!*]. In addition, he rarely competed, was older than his rivals, and at best he could be said to be the first among equals.

Therefore, the assertion that Botvinnik was the unconditional leader, symbol and banner of Soviet chess is at least debatable. In the period from 1928 to 1957, it is possible. But Tukmakov was then at a very young age to have a true picture of the hierarchy in Soviet chess. After Smyslov won the title of World Champion in 1957, Botvinnik ceased to be the unconditional leader, symbol and banner of Soviet chess.

In conclusion, I want to apologize to the reader for my, perhaps, excessively harsh tone in this section. I do not know the personal motives of Tukmakov to write about the best chess country in the world, in which he lived for many years, with such a cold alienation. If Boris Gulko, Lev Psakhis or Viktor Lvovich Kortchnoi, and also Iosif Dorfman, did so, it would have been easy to understand, but Tukmakov was always a favourite of the 'SCO' and was treated to all its blessings.

Let's talk a little more about schools. Today it is quite appropriate to raise the question of the Chinese chess school. The Chinese men's team convincingly won the Olympiad in 2014 and very confidently, with a huge margin, confirmed its excellence at the team championship of the world in 2015. I looked at the men's rating list for August 1st, 2015. Of the 47 chess players with Elo 2700 and above, there are eight Chinese players. Russia has ten on the list, and

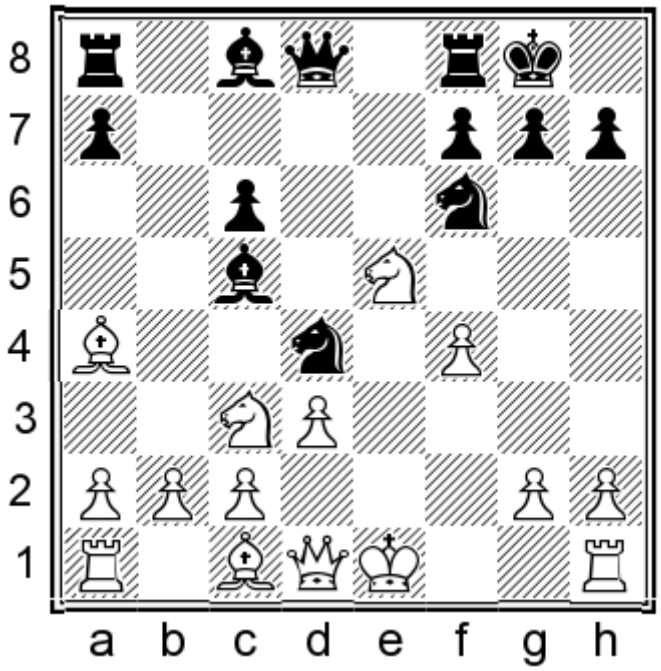
the same number are representatives of countries formed after the collapse of the USSR [*Editor's note: In November 2017 this list (45 players with 2700 or more) included eleven Russians, six players from China, and six from former Soviet countries*].

It is interesting to compare the age of the players. The Chinese have only one player, Ni Hua, over 30 years old. The Russians have five younger than 30 years of age, and the other half are older. The youngest are Karjakin, Andreikin and Nepomniachtchi, who were born in 1990. The oldest, Kramnik, was born in 1975. The Chinese oldest and youngest are 16 and 32 respectively. The statistics of the countries of the former Union are even worse: only two players out of ten are younger than 30 and eight are older. Kovalenko – born in 1988, Radjabov in 1987, and the most experienced Ivanchuk was born in 1969. Ding Liren (born in 1992) was tenth in the world, at 2770, and the young Wei Yi, who is referred to as a rising star of Carlsen's level, had a rating of 2725.

Look at a fragment of one of his games from the World Team Championship.

Wei Yi
Maxim Rodshtein
Tsaghkadzor tt 2015

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.Nc3 Nd4 5.Ba4 c6 6.Nxe5 d5 7.d3 Bd6 8.f4 Bc5 9.exd5 0-0 10.dxc6 bxc6

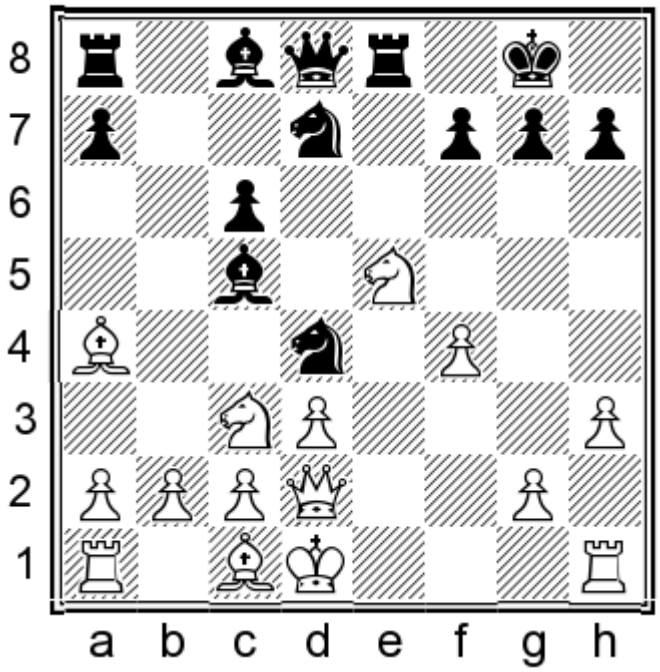


In this position, Wei Yi played three moves, two of which are wildly unlikely.

11.h3!

In the game Berbatov-Mikhalevski, Aix-les-Bains 2011, White played 11.Kf1 Re8 with an excellent game for Black.

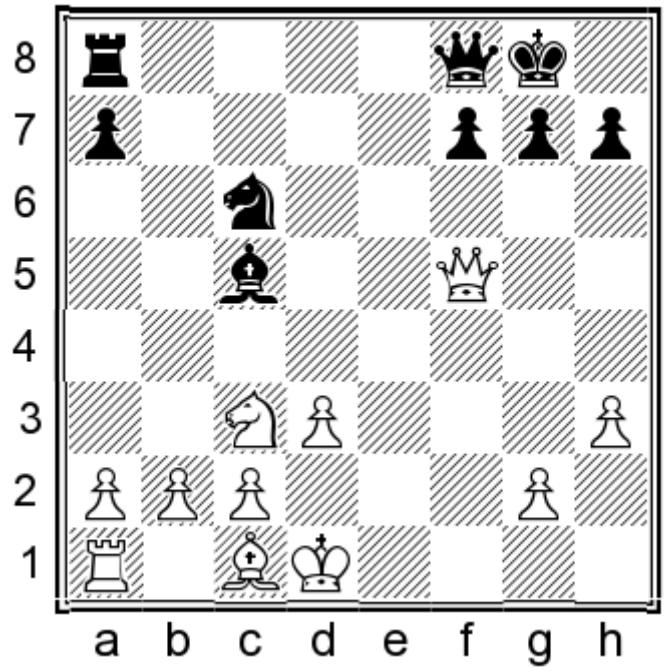
11...Re8 12.Qd2!!? Nd7 13.Kd1!!?



Here is what grandmaster Alexey Kuzmin wrote about this in issue no.4 of *64* in 2015:

«At first glance, this looks like the play of a beginner! But only 'at first glance'. In reality, Houdini shows that the best Black can do is maintain equality, but no more than that. As to a practical game, even Maxim Rodshtein, no slouch at opening preparation, could do nothing to oppose Wei Yi's preparation here.»

13...Nxe5 14.fxe5 Rxe5 15.Re1 Rxe1+ 16.Qxe1 Bf5 17.Qe5 Qf8 18.Bxc6 Nxc6 19.Qxf5



The compensation is inadequate and White has a clear advantage.

If the moves 12.Qd2!!? and 13.Kd1!!? were made in the pre-computer era and turned out to be correct, or at least permissible in terms of a reasonable level of risk, then it would be appropriate to talk about the unexpected triumph of a specific approach in assessing the position. In this case, the young Chinese could be spoken of as a growing genius, which the history of chess had not yet seen. But today, it is certainly just the outlandish and beautiful fruit of homework with a computer. You can see the opinion of grandmaster Konstantin Sakaev on this matter further on in this part.

In women's chess, the Chinese women have long dominated. Hou Yifan is the unconditional leader of women's chess in the world. Hou Yifan is already the fourth Chinese World Champion. The Chinese women's team is one of the ranking favourites of all the Olympics. And the new young talents in China, both men and women, appear like mushrooms after rain. A real 'Chinese chess conveyor'!

I have not heard anything about the work of foreign chess specialists in China in the 21st century. China is generally a fairly closed society with an ancient, mysterious culture. Today the world has become global. The famous ancient Chinese treatise *Tao Ching*, the book of wisdom of the great thinker Lao Tzu, meditating on the nature of being, became the most translated book in the world, after the Bible. It would be very interesting to get acquainted with the methods of work of Chinese coaches, but we have no information about these.

Practically all Chinese chess players have a healthy nervous system, they are excellent tacticians and calculate variations superbly. Playing against them is not easy, because the price of a tactical error is much higher than that of a strategic one. And since they are very young, and young chess players tend to have confidence, and great energy, and can perfectly maintain concentration during the game, for a successful fight with China at the Olympiad one must have comparable strength to their young players.

In connection with the foregoing, I would like to talk about other aspects of the preparation of chess players, to which we pay less attention, and which the Chinese are likely to use actively. During the KO World Championship in 2001, I went to the tournament once. I was very impressed that the young Chinese Zhang Pengxiang, having finished two games with a classical control against Karpov, during the interval lay down and, it can be said, fell into a trance. Karpov was no longer the same as 10-15 years ago, but still was a clear favourite in the match with the Chinese. As a result, Zhang Pengxiang won a sensational victory over the great champion. Relaxing and then getting ready for the game, building one's concentration, etc. – all this has nothing to do with pure chess training. The Chinese know how to work with energy. Their ancient practice of 'Qigong' or Tai Chi was previously only available in China. 'Qi' is energy, 'Gong' is the way. Here, I think, there is serious scope for improving the practical play of our chess players. But enough about such a sad subject.

At the beginning of the chapter, I said that the status of chess players and chess trainers in Russia has changed twice. First, sharply for the worse, and then for the better. In Russia, once again a secret organisation operates, according to Tukmakov. And it is called the RSF. The Federation is headed by Andrei Filatov, who wants to, and can, do everything possible in order to regain lost ground.

In a short time, a lot has been done. In terms of developments of a mass character, the 'White Rook' junior event has been resurrected. Chess lessons are actively introduced in schools. Chess is taught in children's homes. The calendar of children's chess became very busy.

I happened to drive around the chess centres of the Krasnodar Territory and watched the youth championship of Russia in Loo, a suburb of Sochi. I was amazed by the picture I saw in the city of

Armavir. Several women, candidate masters and first-category players, teach chess to more than a thousand children from 6 to 10 years of age. Parents fully approve of this initiative and help whenever they can, for example with the maintenance and repair of the training room, the acquisition of equipment, etc. Children who cannot play and are not familiar with the rules, begin to learn from scratch. This contributes to the improvement of school performance, education of analytical and logical thinking, the habit of independently making decisions and many other good qualities.

But what is especially important: chess protects children from the harmful influence of the street. I don't know of any drug-addicted chess players. And far fewer young chess players smoke than before, although the use of alcohol to relieve stress after an unsuccessful game does occur. If a chess player is able to analyse and can calculate a variation, the consequences of using drugs are visible after one move. From an interview with Filatov, I learned with interest that in the recent past, the multi-millions of China were almost completely overwhelmed by opium. Help came from the complex games of Go and chess, with the help of which people could make logical decisions.

Of course, after bringing children to a certain level, it would be preferable to transfer the best of them to the hands of more qualified specialists. But this is a serious problem. There are few or no such specialists. But let's return to this problem later, and this time we'll talk about something else.

In Armavir, I found myself thinking that in a city of 200,000 people, a thousand children are engaged in chess, yet in the two million-strong Minsk there is not even a third of this number. Yes, in Minsk there are qualified coaches, and one or two of those children who are involved will become grandmasters. In Armavir, unless a miracle happens, no one will become a grandmaster.

But is this so important today? My pupil grandmaster Gennady Sagalchik has lived in America for a long time. He is physically unable to satisfy everyone who wants to take paid chess lessons from him. And the level of children in the chess plan is very average, if that. But their parents understand the use of chess for a child and do not aim to grow chess players out of them. Having reached, at best, to the level of the 2nd category, the young man usually abandons chess completely. When I told the trainers and enthusiasts in Armavir that they are working on the American system, they did not understand me, and I had to explain about Sagalchik.

But if you think about it, the children who are engaged in Armavir will keep their love for chess and when they grow up they will support the development of chess in every possible way. It is likely that they will teach their children to play, find out their abilities and maybe will want to make them professional chess players. And if this does not happen, in any case, they will get a wonderful opportunity for a pastime, playing chess in their leisure hours with friends.

Remembering my first steps in chess, I sometimes envied people who get those wonderful feelings of happiness when they manage to put their knight on f7, simultaneously attacking the king on h8 and queen on d8. I remember that I was once occupied with the thought: 'And can there be a triple blow to the king, queen and rook in the game? And what about a quadruple attack on all the major pieces of the opponent? I could not imagine that I would realize the dream of my childhood, as a master, against Kapengut. How can one not boast of it here? I included the position in the section on 'One-off openings' in the previous part of the book. Alas, it is already impossible to get such feelings today. Work cannot turn into a hobby.

I'll tell you a story about a true chess fan. I have in Moscow a long-time friend, a very wealthy man, co-owner and head of several serious manufacturing companies. He is self-taught, but he plays at the level of a first-category player. He enjoys chess immensely. For many years, whilst at work, he played over the phone, against a fellow candidate master, someone not so well off financially. The games were played for a stake of one hundred dollars. Computers were not used, by mutual agreement. The results of my friend were disappointing. As far as I recall, he lost in a ratio of about 7:3 or 8:2. In a month, probably, he lost roughly a thousand dollars, which for him was not at all ruinous.

But when I flew from Bulgaria to Moscow, he often put off all his work, which could result in serious financial losses, and we went to his dacha. He called his friend on the phone and started the game. He played the opening, and then I took over. The picture of the game and the result changed dramatically. Time to think about the moves was unlimited, and we rarely managed to play more than

two games. In addition, sobriety at this time was not the norm of life. Once we stayed up until three in the morning, and we managed to win five games in a row.

A happier person was hard to find! The material part did not interest him at all, but for him to win five games from his tormentor, even with my help, was more significant than making many times more money from a successful business transaction. Incidentally, since his victory was not fair, he did not take the money. Unfortunately, some time ago his opponent died and the rivalry came to an end.

Chess is needed not only by professionals, and for the development of logical thinking in children, but for millions of fans of this wonderful game.

Today in Russia there is a certain chess boom. When in the youth championship in Loo among the various age groups 1500 children take part, plus a thousand 'crazy' parents and a good number of trainers, this makes a strong impression.

Let's move on from mass chess to the professional game.

Russia managed to raise the prestige of professional chess in a short time. Filatov's idea of holding the World Championship match in 2012 between Anand and Gelfand at the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow was a complete surprise and also a great success. Holding major chess competitions in major museums of the world attracted the attention of serious sponsors and the leadership of cities and regions of Russia.

The Alekhine Memorial, the first part of which was held in the Louvre, and the second in the Russian State Museum, cemented the success of this undertaking. Now all Russia's Superfinals among men and women are held in the best regional museum centres in Russia, with a solid prize fund and online broadcasts. Russia has become one of the world's leading centres for the holding of competitions of the highest rank. Just in 2014-2015, in the space of a few months, Sochi held the World Championship match between Carlsen and Anand and the Women's World Championship knockout. Nor were famous Soviet champions forgotten. The memorials of Botvinnik, Tal and Petrosian were held at a very high level.

Much attention is paid to working with talented youth. Serious specialists are involved in this, and considerable funds are allocated. And, of course, the men's and women's national teams are well provided with material and surrounded with attention and care, comparable to, if not greater than, the days of the Soviet Union.

Among the women, it is already yielding results: in the last three Olympiads, despite conceding rating differences and big names to the Chinese team, the Russian women's team sensationally won. Among the men, unfortunately, things are less good. But as they say, Rome wasn't built in a day, and to repair overnight the shattered chess organisation of such a huge country as Russia is impossible.

But the moral prestige and material status of professional players and trainers has improved. The influx of those wishing to become chess professionals clearly exceeds the outflow. We can say that the 'birth rate' exceeds 'the mortality rate'.

Let's go back to the city of Armavir. Let's talk about the fact that if there were experts of a higher level, then from hundreds of ten-year-old children whose chess education ended with the words of the old Soviet song *Fly, doves, fly*, it is likely that there would be a dozen or so talents with whom it was necessary to continue the work.

In fact, the transfer of a child from one coach to another is a delicate question. I do not know if a coach who passes over a pupil suffers materially, and if so, this is a question which must be dealt with by the Russian Chess Federation.

I will give an example from my coaching practice. When I first started practicing and developing my methodology, one Belarusian girl of about fourteen appeared to me to be promising. I suggested to her coach (an average candidate master) that he transfer the girl to my group, to which I heard the answer that he himself would bring her to the grandmaster level. When, two or three years later, my students became masters and achieved notable successes, this coach suggested that I work with the now 17-year-old girl, who had not advanced from the level of candidate master. I was not interested, and soon after the girl quit chess. As they say, timing is everything.

I want to add to this that in other sports there are cases when a coach who in the past was not even a mediocre sportsman brings his pupils to the highest level. Recent examples include one of the most successful football coaches in the world, Jose Mourinho, or our own Leonid Slutsky, who did not play football at a high professional level. A person can be a brilliant strategist and perfectly understand the tactical schemes of football, and have an

excellent understanding of the methodology of training, etc., without playing football himself.

But in chess, in order to teach something, you need to know, understand and be able to do it yourself. I have nothing against candidate masters being trainers. In the 70 years of the Soviet Union, it was no easier to become a master than it is to become a grandmaster today.

I worked with candidate masters Ilya Botvinnik and Alexander Mikhalevsky. Both played strongly and understood chess well, but they lacked the character and health, rather than the chess components needed to fulfill the master standard. They have been living in Israel for a long time, where they became successful trainers, much in demand.

I was asked by her coach from Baranovichi, Tatiana Alexandrovna Pozdnyak, to take Lena Zayats as a seventh-category player, and Alexey Alexandrov I took at the age of 10, at the request of his coach from Kobrin, Stepan Iosifovich Davydyuk. Honour and praise is due to both trainers. It's great when everyone is doing what they are good at. For example, I do not know how to teach chess to children who do not know the rules of the game, whereas in Kobrin a whole method with logical puzzles and interesting exercises for children has been developed, about which I have no idea.

Why do I dwell on this in such detail? It seems to me that here lie the main problems and losses of talented young people who would like to become professional chess players, but who miss their chance.

Today time is compressed, as never before. Chess is no exception. If earlier the best age for men to win the title of World Champion was considered 33 years, today this latter age is close to the retirement age of 40 years. Players become grandmasters at 15 years old, and Sergey Karjakin managed to become one at 12. In his 27 years, Magnus Carlsen has already won three matches for the World Championship – two against Viswanathan Anand, and one against Karjakin. The most valuable, if not to say 'golden' time for turning a talent into a potential or real grandmaster is the age from 10-11 to 15 years.

At the Junior Championship of Russia in Loo, I was asked to observe a 15-year old girl. I saw the following. She played a very aggressive opening, but one which is unreliable and not really of proper standard. Her knowledge was superficial. She had a strong desire to decide the game with a mating attack. She attacked well and calculated variations confidently. She had only a vague idea about the endgame and her strategic thinking was weak.

This picture is quite typical. I expressed my thoughts to the specialist who had asked me to watch the game of this player. I predict that in another 11-12 years, her play will be much the same. But then, if she fell into the hands of a good specialist, her perspectives would be quite different. She will soon have to start university and will have very different priorities.

Now we have a bewildering variety of World and European championships for under 10s, 12s, 14s, etc. A whole galaxy of coaches have appeared, who earn money for individual lessons, training young talents for immediate success. It is clear that sports organisations need to report success and get awards for it, by securing financing and attracting sponsors. But who today can remember the World or European champions at 10, 12, or 14 years of age, from six years ago?

And all this inflames sports passions and the ambitions of parents. They are not told the hard fact that such an approach leads to a serious imbalance in the chess development of their child. And a coach who has discovered a talented child, will not transfer it to anyone else, because he is afraid to miss out on possible glory. So they drag the poor tortured kids from tournament to tournament, and from one championship to another. After all, it is necessary to play at the regional, district, individual and team championship, to support the local children's school in competitions in classical chess, rapid, etc. But when is there time to work seriously on chess? And how? And with whom?

If only it could be explained to the parents that in no way is it worth taking to the children's world or European championships their child, who failed to take the 1st, 2nd or even 6th place in the Russian Championship! There is no need to overpay three or more times, to stay in the so-called 'Official' hotels, which are just there for the benefit of the profit-making organisers of the tournaments. Explain to the parents that these titles are illusory and of little value. That instead of chasing after imaginary values, one must strive for truth – that is, learn how to play. It is likely that in this case, there would be 20-30 percent more young grandmasters in Russia.

But the ruthless closed circle remains, and the sausages continue to be churned out by the factory. The dropout rate of young people who wanted to

make chess their profession, but who end up rejected and disillusioned, artificially increases with the coach's desire to achieve instant success.

In my opinion, this is a path to nowhere, although it is quite understandable and pleasing to many specialists. After all, mistakes in the methodology and the wrong concept of work can easily be attributed and explained by the need to show immediate results. And then, as in the old joke, they make a helpless gesture and say: 'Well, didn't work out, just didn't work out.'

I would like to end this chapter with the phrase of grandmaster John Nunn from his introduction to his memorable book *Secrets of Practical Chess*:

«I am convinced that most chessplayers do not approach their maximum potential and therefore, it is possible to significantly increase the strength of their game, if they are properly trained and apply the acquired knowledge in practice.»

Chapter 11
Chess books

Let's continue the conversation about the subject I was most interested in as a trainer for a quarter of a century.

Chess books! Some say that the rate of development of science has increased tenfold in comparison with the pre-computer era, while others believe that it is more correct to talk about a 5-to-10-fold acceleration. Whatever it is, I was pleasantly surprised by the appearance of a large number of fine books, that can be of great help in coaching. The authors put forward new, sometimes controversial and disputable concepts, but these are especially interesting for such important questions as improving the chess player, how to calculate variations and how to assess positions.

I first heard such curious terms as 'resulting moves', 'tunnel thinking' and 'DAUT.' I was surprised to learn from Dorfman that chess players can be divided into two groups: critical moment players and technical players. «In my opinion, Alekhine, Botvinnik, Spassky, and Kasparov are among the first group, and Capablanca, Smyslov, Fischer, Karpov are of the second.»

I discovered new authors: Valery Beim, John Nunn, Sarhan Guliev, Zenon Franco, Alfonso Romero, Amador Gonzalez de la Nava, Lars Bo Hansen, Enrique Marino, as well as the venerable former Soviet grandmasters Iosif Dorfman, Vladimir Tukmakov, Lev Psakhis, and from the younger group Konstantin Sakaev and the very young Daniel Naroditsky.

Over the years, the complete collection of works by the founder of the modern coaching school, Mark Dvoretsky, was published. In his books, you can find the answer to almost any question and choose a set of exercises to eliminate certain shortcomings in the play of one's pupil. But I agree with Sakaev that these books are designed for very strong players, and it is better to start with less complicated books.

I will give you a comparison. A young family buys a house and thinks about buying furniture. Initially, it would make sense to go to a store selling inexpensive but robust domestic furniture, or even to the Swedish 'Ikea' chain. Instead, they find themselves in an expensive and luxury Italian furniture showroom, where their eyes bulge, the choice is huge, and the prices murderous. Everything should be done at the right time!

Therefore, I would like to start with the brilliant work by Valery Beim, *How to Calculate Chess Tactics*.

I am unfortunately not personally acquainted with grandmaster Beim. In my younger years I heard that there was a master in Odessa, who left the Soviet Union in the 1990s and became a grandmaster abroad. The usual story. When in 1974, at a tournament of young masters in Chelyabinsk, I shared a room with the Odessan Semyon Palatnik, he mentioned Beim's name. I remembered it, and during the Russian Youth Championship in Loo, where there was a lively trade in chess literature, I happened to purchase the above book.

It immediately fascinated me. An easy and accessible style of exposition, the gentle Odessan humour, an irreproachable logic in formulating and presenting material and the author's fully realized desire to bring something new to the reader. I learned a lot of interesting things for myself and as a coach.

In general, I like the process of teaching something worthwhile, I do not see anything shameful in it and do not hesitate to admit it at my venerable age.

The book begins with definitions: What is tactics? What is a tactical blow? What is a combination?

Enrique Marino, whom I have already quoted, writes in his book:

«An underestimation of the significance of terms is negligence in teaching, a complete ignorance of Plato's aphorism, which says: 'Knowledge of terms leads to knowledge of things'.»

Indeed, to understand the process of determining tactics, tactical attacks and combinations is very important. But this should not be the subject of obsession, as happens in Vladimir Alatortsev's book *The Problems of Modern Chess Theory*. At one time I had to travel by bus from Minsk to small regional cities in Belarus for youth competitions. Once, on a

six-hour trip to Kobrin, I took this book with me. The only thing that was left in my head is the author's reasoning about the difference in the definition of a point and a square on the chessboard. If, say, in the Sicilian Defence, there is a white knight on d5, then it occupies the point d5, and if there is no piece there, then it's just the square d5. One sentence is enough to explain the difference, but Alatortsev needed a large book for this purpose.

If, before reading Beim's book, I had been asked to give a definition of a combination, I would say that this is a forced variation with a sacrifice, leading to some benefit for the active side. Actually, that's how I always explained it when I was still teaching groups of relatively inexperienced players. And it never occurred to me to give a definition of a tactical strike or tactics in general.

Beim approached the problem on the one hand, conceptually, on the other – accessibly and concisely:

«We will begin, as agreed, with the definition of the essence of the phenomenon being studied. It turns out that although the term 'tactics' occurs almost on every page of almost any book on chess, it is not at all easy to find its exact, understandable and convincing definition. This is also true of some other critical elements, directly related to tactics.

Here is how, for example, the author defines the concept in the solid encyclopaedia *Chess* (Moscow, Soviet Encyclopedia, 1990): 'Tactics are a set of methods of individual chess operations that are part of the strategic plan and its completion.'

What do you say about this definition? Did you manage to understand the essence of what was said? I didn't, certainly not at once. To agree with the above is even more difficult, since it is absolutely unclear on what grounds it is necessary to distinguish purely tactical devices and methods from any other tactical ones. Or should all the above methods be considered tactical? But then it turns out that in chess, everything is tactics.

Evidently, a clearer definition is needed. I think that the best approach is this: tactics deals with solving the problems of the current moment, i.e. with those problems that need a solution here and now.»

Brief, accessible, and without a shadow of tediousness. Another exact and sharp remark by Beim:

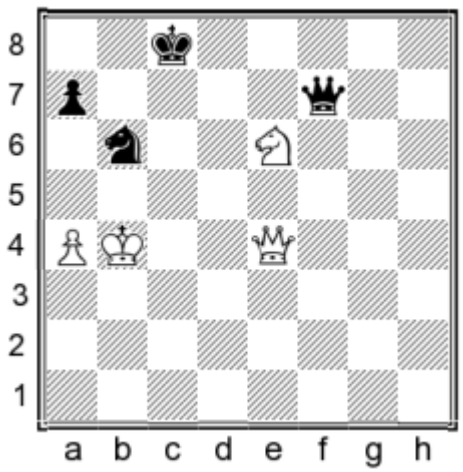
«It is also very important to me that in chess, the difference between tactical and other methods of solving vital problems largely goes along the line of emotional perception. In other words, chess players traditionally refer to tactical operations that, at first glance, seem unexpected, non-standard, often dramatically changing the direction and intensity of developments on the board. In ordinary life, such phenomena are called excesses.»

Very well said. When dealing with young people aged 10-13 years, the word 'excesses' is unfamiliar to them. But to explain its meaning is quite easy.

Excesses in life, as in chess, can be joyful and sad. You missed an unexpected tactical blow, and your position fell apart. Today you planned to go with your father to the blitz tournament in the daytime, but he heard that his elderly uncle had died in the village and you went to a funeral instead of a blitz tournament. Or you scored a beautiful tactical blow and effectively won. You will have a difficult and tedious test in school, on a subject you do not like (for example, geography), for which you must prepare, and are suddenly called and informed that you have been picked for the team, and tomorrow you have to go to some important, strong and interesting tournament. And to study geography in practice.

Control disappears, life is beautiful and amazing! Excess as a sign of the emergence of chess tactics is an exceptionally successful imaginative discovery by Valery Beim, which is supported by significant chess examples. Here's one of them.

Study by E. Pogosyants
1963



White to move

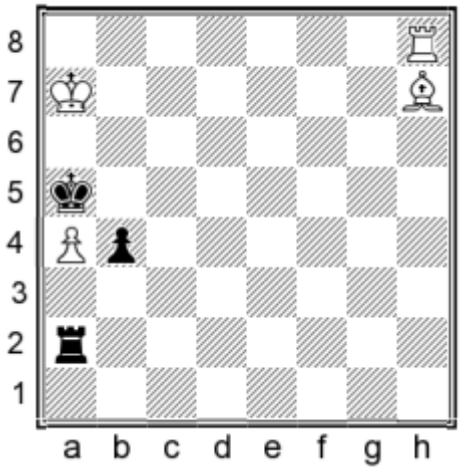
1.Qc6+ Kb8 2.Qd6+ Kc8 3.Qd8+ Kb7 4.Qxb6+!! Kxb6 5.a5+

And White wins: 5...Ka6 6.Nc5#, 5...Kb7 (c6) 6.Nd8+.

Beim: «Why is it difficult to see White's fourth move from afar? Yes, because it is the same 'excess' previously mentioned, a phenomenon that breaks out of the usual rhythm of the current of life. The phenomenon is unexpected, bright, exceptional. The human psyche does not know how to overcome such obstacles without additional efforts.»

I checked Beim's claims in practice, using the above, seemingly not too difficult position, as a test for decent candidate masters, allowing 15 minutes for deliberation. They found the solution, but with difficulty. And yet when it came to longer, more complex studies, with more variations, the young players oriented themselves much better.

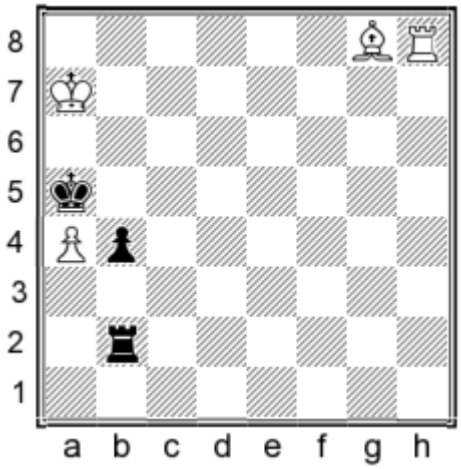
But the move **2.Bg8-b3!**! in this **Gurvich** study from 1959 proved quite impossible for the students to find.



White to move

1.Bg8! Rb2!

1...Rxa4? 2.Rh5#



2.Bb3!! Rxb3 3.Ra8! Kxa4 4.Kb6#

Moving on. This is how Beim explains what a tactical strike is: «A chess dictionary gives this definition: 'Tactical strike – the first move of a combination, usually involving a sacrifice, often unexpected for the opponent'. In principle, this is a good definition, which in no small measure agrees with our formulation of the notion of tactics. Therefore, it is possible to agree with this definition, it is only necessary to add some minor clarifications.

First, a tactical strike is quite capable of being an independent unit, which does not always require continuation in the form of a combination. Secondly, the tactical impact is not always connected with a sacrifice (and, moreover, it is not necessarily the initial move of the combination, although this is an insignificant detail), but necessarily is an 'excess', i.e. it leads to a radical change in the situation on the board.»

As an illustration of his thoughts, Beim gives a series of examples, but the following is especially indicative.

Max Euwe
Alexander Alekhine
Amsterdam WCh m 1935 (20)

White to move

This is a well-known position, which Dvoretsky treats under the heading 'prophylactic thinking'. White's superiority is not in doubt. Black's forces are pinned on the a-file, White has the better pawn structure and his bishop dominates the centre of the board.

This is all perfectly true and correct, but Black threatens to untangle with the move 30...Bb5!, when White's advantage would begin to shrink sharply.

Euwe found the cunning tactical decision

30.Ra2!!

Defending the rook with the Bd5, through the prism of the c4-pawn, after which Black's game hangs by a thread. The game continued as follows:

30...Ke7 31.f4! gxf4 32.gxf4 Kf6 33.e4 g5 34.f5! h5 35.h4! gxh4 36.Kh2 Kg5 37.Kh3 Ra5 38.Bb7! Kf6 39.Bd5 Kg5 40.Bb7! Kf6 41.Bc8 1-0

Beim's comments are interesting: «In spite of the fact that a lot has already been said about the above fragment, I consider it necessary to add some more reasoning that is important for our study.

Firstly, I argue that White's 30th move, which is the highlight of the whole ending, was a tactical blow, but in this case, this blow was not some random event – on the contrary, it helped the strongest side to solve an important positional problem. In other words, it helped White to realize his strategic line of play. This fully agrees with our notion of tactics as an instrument for solving specific problems that arise when carrying out the planned strategic line. We will discuss this important topic more later.

The second observation also refers to the notorious 30th move of White. As was said above, it is a tactical blow. However, it does not show any special intrigue, and it does not involve a sacrifice. So why do I call it a tactical blow?

The reason is not that this manoeuvre prevented the tactical strike of the opponent (very often tactical attacks can be prevented by the most common means), but in the way it was done: the rook went to a square where it is protected under specific conditions, namely after a black counterstrike. Thus, White's 30th move is quite suitable as an example of my concept of 'excess' in this chapter.»

If this were not expressed by Beim, but by Tarrasch, Nimzowitsch or Lasker, and further by the list of world champions, then the concept of 'excesses' would have long been copied from one chess textbook to another and would probably have become as common a term as 'overprotection 'or 'centralization of the king in the endgame'.

And how do you like this reasoning of Beim's?

«... *For a tactical strike is the smallest unit of chess tactics*. How should we understand this phrase? Since tactics are not an object, but a phenomenon, they cannot be measured quantitatively ('Weigh, please, two hundred grams of tactics!'). And they receive their physical embodiment on the board through tactical strikes. This can be easily explained by the example of a wall. The wall cannot exist as an indivisible whole – it must necessarily consist of separate elements: concrete or other blocks, or logs, stones, bricks. Tactical blows are the bricks which make up tactics as a whole.»

It is curious that Beim's book was signed up for publication by the publishing house 'Russian Chess House' in May 2012. It has been a long time, and I have not seen any reviews of it in the chess periodicals or on popular sites. Most likely, people in the post-Soviet era have begun to read less. The books of famous chess players and Nobel Prize-winning authors are studied in the first place, and the rest of the time is taken away by the computer.

The theoretical presentation of the wording of the theme 'tactics' is completed with the witty remark of the author, that 'the most famous representative of the tactics family' is the *combination*:

«Attempts to find an exact and all-purpose definition of this element of the game have been made many times. The most widely known is the formulation given by Botvinnik: 'A combination is a forced variation with a sacrifice, leading to the benefit of the active side.' [*Translator's note: Botvinnik's actual definition, in an article in the 1930s, was 'a forced variation with a sacrifice'. The extra condition 'leading to the benefit of the stronger side' is wrong – an incorrect combination does not lead to the benefit of the stronger side, but it is still a combination*] This definition seems to me quite successful, with the exception of one important detail, which I will discuss later. Of course, Botvinnik's formulation was criticized, for it is always pleasant to criticize. The claims, basically, boiled down to the fact that there are combinations without sacrifices. Therefore, other proposals were put forward.

An attempt to improve this formula is given, for example, in the *Chess Dictionary*, as we already know: 'A combination is a forced variation using various tactical methods; usually the accompanying element of the combination is a sacrifice'. In fact, this definition is not very different from Botvinnik's – only the mention of the availability of tactical methods is added, and the obligatory nature of the sacrifice's presence is in doubt.

This is already close to my vision of the problem, but it seems to me that a certain improvement is

possible here. Therefore, I still want to bring to your attention my own formulation, consistently derived from the conclusions we have drawn up earlier:

A combination is a system of tactical strikes and connections between them, which has a forcing character and aims to gain benefits for the active side.

It is a system – because a combination often starts with some kind of tactical blow, subsequent events flow out of this blow, then several moves later, another blow follows, etc. The forcing nature of the combination is its important characteristic, which is ensured by the presence of a series of moves not containing in themselves elements of excess, but acting as links between tactical blows.

Of course, the combination has the purpose of bringing benefits to the active side, and this also coincides with the formulation of Botvinnik. [*Translator's note: See previous note!*]

And now let's bring together all of the things we said about tactics. Chess tactics deals with tasks that require an immediate solution. Chess players traditionally use the term 'tactics' to refer to such methods, which, at first glance, seem unexpected, non-standard, often dramatically changing the direction, and the intensity of developments, on the board. In other words, they are what are sometimes called 'excesses'.

Tactics is an abstract concept. It finds its incarnation on the chessboard through tactical blows, which are excesses in a chess game and at the same time are the smallest units of chess tactics. From these elements, as from the bricks in a wall, a chess combination is constructed, which is a system of tactical strokes and the connections between them. A combination has a forcing nature and aims at obtaining benefits for the stronger side.»

I have only one remark, and it boils down to the beloved question of Beim: 'How did he manage to think of all this?' In the style of the presentation, one can guess that the author is not an orthodox thinker, a conceptualist, but a quite down-to-earth, witty human. The best confirmation of this I got from the analysis of the following example.

Gofman
Papp
Budapest 2004

White to move

Beim:

«We have a position in which an experienced solver of combinations easily recognizes typical tactical motifs. But we will come to these motifs a little later. In the meantime, a little philosophy.

How in general can one come to the idea of the possibility of a tactical strike in a position? Where do these blows come from? Let's try to find a common method for their detection.

At first, we speak about what can and should be the very first step in the search for such strikes from a chess player of any level. The answer to this question is always the same: you need to start with a review of the situation on the board.

It is highly desirable not to lose sight of the smallest details, because it is impossible to predict which of the features of the position will be important in the future.

We will do this work in detail on this occasion, to show how such a review should be carried out. In our case, everything is relatively simple. There are not a lot of details in the position being examined. When reviewing the situation and subsequent logical analysis of what you have seen, it is always important to adhere to a certain order – it disciplines one's thought processes, facilitates and accelerates the process, and increases the quality of one's work.

First of all, we determine the material aspect of the game. Other things being equal, Black has an extra pawn, but in this position its influence is not felt at all. Therefore, we will remember this factor, but for the time being we will put it aside.

Then you need to deal with the pawn structures of each side. We note Black's obvious quantitative and qualitative pawn superiority on the queenside; on

the kingside and in the centre, we have material equality and symmetry.

So far, we have examined the static, slowly changing factors in the position. After that, it takes time to assess the dynamic component of the position, i.e., those characteristics that change rapidly. These include, for example, the mobility of the pieces and the degree of their interaction.

In this respect, the differences are obvious. White's powerful major-piece group on the kingside immediately strikes one. The various pieces cooperate very well, and they only need space for action, but at the moment, White is very much hampered by the g7-pawn, although it is under the strongest pressure.

The point g7 should be recognized as both the most important and the weakest point of Black's position, which attracts close attention from the enemy. Note that White's knight is also well-placed and is ready to join in cooperation with the other pieces.

The black forces are less strong. They do not really work together well, although (an important detail!) Black is ready to defuse the situation by means of 1...Ne4.

From what has been said, we can draw the following conclusion: White's advantage lies in the better interaction of his forces. The main object of attack of these forces is the g7-pawn, as well as the enemy king which it protects.

True, at first sight you cannot see how White can reach his goal. But it is obvious that it is necessary to do this – otherwise all his achievements will be wasted, and the black extra pawn can eventually become a real operating factor.

And here is the principle, which is not known so far in chess literature (but is well known in practice!), which underlies all chess tactics. This principle is well known to anyone who, at a conscious age, lived in the former Soviet Union. It is formulated as follows: 'If you cannot do something, but really want to, then you can!' No matter how much of a joke this phrase appears, in fact it perfectly expresses the very essence of the phenomenon of chess tactics: the true strength that is in a position can achieve goals that seem at first sight to be impossible! In the case under consideration, this is manifested as follows: the logical analysis performed above, if it is executed to the end, will force the player to concentrate on the square g7, and then everything will become clear. It remains only to give the solution:

1.Ne8! Kh8 2.Nxg7

Black resigned.»

How beautiful is this glorious Soviet principle of all chess tactics: 'If you cannot do something, but really want to, then you can!' Is it possible to compare it in emotional perception with such dry things as 'the principle of two weaknesses', 'do not hurry!' or 'schematic thinking'? But joking aside, the important point is that, before calculating variations, Beim begins with his logical analysis or review, i.e. all the details in order to evaluate the position and outline the scheme of action.

We have reached a very serious moment, the foundation of the theory of Steinitz, with which modern chess originated. A lot has been said about the evaluation of positions in the books on strategy. In almost every annotated game, the commentator devotes serious attention to this factor.

I would like to quote an extract from a deep and difficult article by the chess philosopher, grandmaster Igor Zaitsev: 'Will chess continue as art?' in issue 6 of *64* for 2015, which was referred to many times in the aforementioned book by Enrique Marino:

«Judging by the intellectual efforts spent over the last century and a half on chess, and on the grief of the theorists and commentators on paper, one would expect that already today in chess there should be a fully-developed and constantly updated 'Unified Strategic Teaching'. And this, of course, could already have taken place if researchers' inquisitive thought focused on establishing common patterns (with or without a computer), and had not been almost entirely devoted to a thorough study of individual cases.»

One can, of course, object to the respected grandmaster that if the huge population of China at one time would concentrate its efforts to defend the country not in the construction of the Great Wall of China, but in the invention, say, of the tank, then it would have had the chance to succeed in this. But history has no subjunctive mood.

A similar brave attempt to create a Universal Strategic Teaching was made by grandmaster Iosif Dorfman, in his pioneering work *The Method in Chess*. We will talk about this book later, but now I

want to briefly describe the scale for the static assessment of positions, proposed by Dorfman:

1. The king position

2. The material balance

3. Who has the better position after the exchange of queens?

4. The pawn structure.

Of course, it's hard to imagine that you can invent a universal method that allows you to make an accurate estimate of almost any position, and on its basis to work out the correct algorithm for finding the strongest continuation. Dorfman proposed a relatively simple method of conducting the initial review of the position, for subsequent logical analysis. In some positions his method can be of help to a chess player who wants to improve his game. And the first element of the static assessment of the position, according to Dorfman, is the position of the king.

If we assess the position in the diagram using Dorfman's method,

then we would get the following results: 1.±, 2.³, 3.μ, 4.μ.

Why go through all this? I just wanted to supplement the logical analysis of Beim, who only mentioned in passing the dangerous situation of the black king: 'The main object of attack of the white forces is the pawn on g7, as well as the opponent's king which it protects.' But were the black king on the queenside, and not on the kingside, then the initial arguments would have a completely different character. According to Dorfman, Black has a serious advantage in all static factors, except for one – the position of the king. But this one is decisive.

I would like to acquaint the reader with Kramnik's opinion on this question, which Konstantin Sakaev voiced in his work *The Complete Manual of Positional Chess*, and Mark Dvoretsky in the 5th volume of *The School of Future Champions*:

Sakaev: «So, before you is the position. Before you start to consider any options, you need to evaluate it. It is worth mentioning that many methods suggest using all possible formulae for the criteria of this evaluation – in my opinion (and not only mine, but Vladimir Kramnik's, for example, as we managed to find out in personal conversation), this is fundamentally wrong. The 'weighing' of all the nuances needs to be intuitive, figuring out the importance of this or that component. How should we do this? Only by accumulating practical and theoretical experience, using the accuracy of positional estimates. The more the corresponding balance of knowledge and the higher the class of the player, the fewer variations need to be calculated.»

Dvoretsky: «In some books, you can read that the process of assessing the situation is to isolate and weigh all the positional factors that act in it. Nonsense! In fact, most of this work is performed subconsciously. The art of evaluation is the ability to understand the essence of the position: to identify the most important problem (positional or tactical) that should be solved, to sense the right direction for our searches, to feel the desirability or undesirability of this or that operation. It is clear that a well-developed intuition contributes to the speed and correctness of our perception.»

Valery Beim does not adhere to any formulae in assessing the position, as in the books *The Method in Chess* by Dorfman or others with ambitious titles, but controversial reputations, although there is an interesting book by Valery Chekhov and Viktor Komlyakov called *Programme for the preparation of chess players of the 1st category/Candidate Masters*. Their examples are always right, the language is precise and witty, and from every chapter a thoughtful coach can learn a lot of new knowledge and fine exercises for him to use.

We will now move on from Beim's book to John Nunn's excellent work *Secrets of Practical Chess*, but I want to quote Beim's comment about intuition from the section 'Phased calculation':

«... Accordingly, a chess player cannot really manage without intuition, built in many respects on experience and knowledge, and therefore it is necessary to constantly replenish your knowledge in the most different stages of the chess game, and not only in the opening!»

Chapter 12
DAUT

John Nunn:

«DAUT. This is an abbreviation, which means, if in doubt, 'Don't analyse unnecessary tactics'.

Tactical analysis is an action predisposed to mistakes. Missing one important finesse can completely change the result of the analysis. If you have the opportunity to make a choice in favour of a positional continuation, then you should do so: it is faster and more reliable. Of course, there are many positions in which a particular analysis plays a significant role, but even in such cases it is not necessary to analyze specific variations more than necessary.

The following example is an extreme case.

John Nunn
Martin Pribyl
Germany Bundesliga 1995/1996

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 Bc5 5.0-0 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.Nbd2 a6 8.Bb3 Ba7 9.h3 Nd7 10.Bc2 f5 11.exf5 Rxf5 12.d4 Rf8

Black has played the opening in a rather provocative manner, opening the f-file and trying to create counterplay against the pawn on f2. However, the price he has paid for this is a lag in development.

13.Ne4

After 13.d5 Ne7 14.Ng5 Nf6 15.Nde4 Nf5, White establishes control over e4, which would warm the cockles of the heart of anyone who plays the white side of the King's Indian Defence. Sadly for White, though, here the black bishop is not on g7 but a7, and the pressure against f2 gives Black sufficient counterplay.

13...exd4

Immediately, several white pieces are pointing at the lone enemy king, which creates the prerequisites for forcing play. But which move should be preferred? 14.Neg5, 14.Nfg5, 14.Bb3+ and 14.Bg5 are all quite reasonable moves.

I would interpret this position as a borderline case, when it is necessary to make a decision – to spend time on a thorough study of all the moves. From a purely strategic point of view, the position, indeed, looks promising, but the large selection of moves at White's disposal suggests that a full analysis will take too long.

As a result, I chose a straightforward forcing continuation, which gives White a small positional advantage. In fact, White could have obtained a larger advantage in another variation, but when you decide not to go too deeply into a position, such a risk always exists. However, I definitely saved time, and that is always valuable.

14.Neg5

Here is the analysis of the other possibilities:

A) 14.Bg5 Qe8 15.Re1 Nde5 16.Nxd4 Bxh3 17.gxh3 Bxd4 18.cxd4 Nf3+ 19.Kg2 Nxe1+ 20.Qxe1 Nxd4, and Black is slightly better;

B) 14.Qd3 Nce5 15.Nxe5 Nxe5 16.Nf6+ Qxf6 17.Qxh7+ Kf7, and Black defends;

C) 14.Bb3+ Kh8 15.Nfg5 Qe7 (but not 15...Nde5 16.Nxh7!) 16.Ne6 (Black is better after 16.Qh5 g6 17.Qh6 Nf6 and 16.Nxh7 Qxe4 17.Nxf8 Nxf8 18.Qh5+ Nh7 19.Qf7 Bxh3 20.gxh3 dxc3) 16...Nf6

17.Nxf8 Qxe4 18.Re1 Qh4 19.Ne6 dxc3, and Black has two pawns for the exchange – the position is unclear;

D) 14.Nfg5!, and now:

D1) 14...d5 15.Ne6 (15.Qh5 h6 16.Ne6 is also good) 15...Qe7 16.N4g5 Nf6 17.Nxf8, winning the exchange;

D2) 14...Nde5 15.Nxh7! Rf5 16.Neg5 d3 17.Bb3+ (17.Bxd3 Nxd3 18.Qxd3 is unclear, because the knight has no way back from its advanced position) 17...d5 18.g4! Rf7 19.Nxf7 Nxf7 20.Qxd3 Nce5 21.Qxd5 Qxd5 22.Bxd5 Kxh7 23.Re1, and with rook and two pawns against two knights in the endgame, White has the advantage;

D3) 14...dxc3 15.Qh5 (15.Ne6 Qe7 16.Nxf8 cxb2 17.Bxb2 Nxf8 is unclear) 15...h6 16.Qg6 with a decisive attack;

D4) 14...h6 15.Ne6 Qe7 16.Nxf8 Nxf8 17.Re1 Be6, and for the exchange, Black has a pawn and a small advantage in development, but this does not give sufficient compensation.»

The game continued as follows:

14...Nf6 15.Qd3 g6

15...h6? 16.Nh7 Re8 17.Qg6 with a decisive attack.

16.Nxd4 Nxd4 17.cxd4 d5

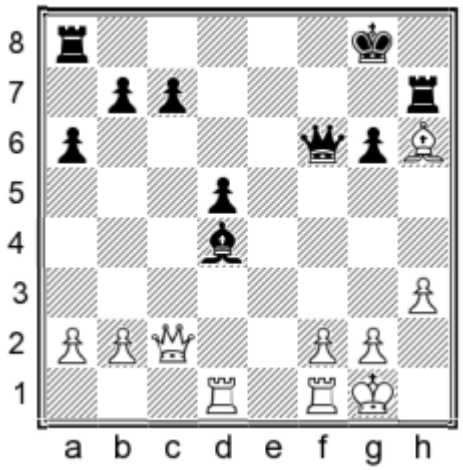
Black prepares the move 18...Bf5, which does not work immediately because of the check 18.Qb3+.

18.Nxh7! Bf5

Not 18...Kxh7 because of 19.Qxg6+ Kh8 20.Bg5 with an attack for White.

19.Nxf6+ Qxf6 20.Qb3 Bxc2 21.Qxc2 Bxd4 22.Bh6 Rf7 23.Rad1 Rh7?

Nunn points out that a stronger line was 23...Bxb2 24.Rxd5 Re8 25.Rfd1 Be5, although in this case too, White's position is preferable. But here it would be out of place to apply the 'DAUT' principle. The position requires definite concentration and accuracy.



Nunn: «Here we have a case where it is definitely necessary to seek a forced win! After the sacrifice on d4, the black king is totally without pawn cover. White only needs to transfer his bishop to the long diagonal or bring the rook into the attack, and it will all be over. The variations are fairly direct and forcing, and there is little chance of going wrong.»

24.Rxd4 Qxd4 25.Qxg6+ Kh8 26.Re1 Rd7 27.Qh5! Qd3 28.Re6 Rg8 29.Bg7++! Kxg7 30.Qh6+ 1-0

We have already mentioned that in the books of Mark Dvoretsky one can get an answer to almost any question. DAUT is not an exception. We quote a short excerpt from the first volume of the *School of Excellence*:

«I want to warn against a common mistake. While training the calculation of variations, do not try to see everything in any position to the end. Chess is a fundamentally inaccurate game. It is not often that it is possible to exhaust the position by calculation – usually you cannot do without an evaluation. There is always a limited amount of time to think about the moves in a game, and there are a lot of problems before us – therefore, it is necessary to act in the most economical way. Our task is not to consider variations as far as humanly possible, but to make optimal decisions.

Calculate the minimum (I emphasize – the minimum!) chain of moves necessary to make the right decisions. Excessive deepening of the calculation leads to over-fatigue, time pressure, and as a result to inevitable mistakes.

The ability to avoid calculating variations that are not required to make a decision is as important as the ability to calculate deeply. *Actually, this skill is the most important part of the calculation technique*.» (*my italics – MS*)

Dvoretsky's quote was formulated by the great trainer before John Nunn's 'DAUT' principle was published, but Dvoretsky did not coin the bright acronym and therefore his advice was not engraved on one's memory as a piece of wisdom. Grandmaster Nunn showed how he used the DAUT principle, and explained his vision of the situation during the game.

Now I would like to acquaint the reader with the opinion of grandmaster Konstantin Sakaev, who viewed the manuscript of the present book during a chess session in the educational centre 'Sirius'.

I must say that Sakaev liked the game itself, as an example of the DAUT principle, but he did not agree with some of the assessments of the English grandmaster.

Here is the game Nunn-Pribyl again, with brief notes by the Russian grandmaster.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 Bc5 5.0-0 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.Nbd2 a6 8.Bb3 Ba7 9.h3 Nd7 10.Bc2 f5?

«Commentating on the game, it is hard not to point out this moment. Black carries out this break whilst his light-squared bishop is shut in. His previous move could have been justified by means of 10...Re8 followed by the transfer of the knight via f8 to g6. Black has a solid position.

11.exf5 Rxf5 12.d4 Rf8 13.Ne4 exd4

14.Neg5?

The most *unnatural* and the weakest of the possible ways of developing the initiative (*my italics – MS*). The most promising option was 14.Nfg5, exerting powerful pressure on the weakened light squares – the knight on e4 is much more active than the knight on f3. After the forced 14...h6 (14...Nde5 15.Nxh7) 15.Ne6 Qe7 16.Nxf8 Nxf8 17.Re1 it is not hard to assess the position – White just has to realise a huge advantage.

The other logical continuation is 14.Bg5. The bishop is not so frightening on g5 as the knight, but it does get there with tempo. After 14...Qe8 the simple 15.cxd4 is tempting, instead of 15.Re1?, which leaves e5 for the knight. In the variation 15...d5 (more tenacious is 15...Rxf3 16.Qxf3 Nxd4 17.Qd3 d5 18.Ng3, although here, as well as a material deficit, Black also has problems completing his development) 16.Re1! (White also keeps a clear advantage after 16.Ng3 Nf6 17.Re1) 16...Qf7 17.Be3!! h6 and now the move 18.Rc1! is not obvious, but simply ends Black's sufferings, since after 18...Nf6 White wins with 19.Ne5 Nxe5 20.Nxf6+ gxf6 21.Bxh6!.»

The phrase 'unnatural continuation' best describes the difference in the algorithm of the search for a move between Nunn and Sakaev. The move 14.Neg5?!, made by the English grandmaster and a full member of his list of candidate moves, is not even considered by Sakaev.

The opinion of the Russian grandmaster is that if you want to make a move with your hand, without going into the calculation of the options, then make the developing move 14.Bg5!?, attacking the enemy queen, or the natural move 14.cxd4, which Nunn did not even mention. And if you want to punish your opponent for premature activity without properly developing his pieces, then analyse the move 14.Nfg5!, and not 14.Neg5?!, since the centralized knight on e4, controlling the f6-square, performs an incomparably greater amount of work than its colleague on f3. And do not waste time analysing the move 14.Bb3+?!, since the bishop on c2 is perfectly positioned, holding the pawn h7 under attack. The general reasoning of such a plan distinguishes Sakaev from many chess players, in choosing a move.

Now let us continue the analysis of the game, with Sakaev's comments.

14...Nf6 15.Qd3 g6

«It is also not so obvious how great White's advantage is after 15...Ne5 16.Nxe5 dxe5 17.cxd4! (weaker is 17.Nxh7 e4 18.Nxf6+ Qxf6 19.Qxe4 Bf5±) 17...Qxd4 (17...Bxd4 18.Nxh7 e4 19.Nxf6+ Qxf6 20.Qxe4 Bxf2+ 21.Kh1+–) 18.Qb3+ Kh8

19.Be3 Qh4±; White's position is preferable, but Black has defensive resources.

16.Nxd4 Nxd4 17.cxd4 d5 18.Nxh7 Bf5 19.Nxf6+ Qxf6 20.Qb3 Bxc2 21.Qxc2 Bxd4 22.Bh6 Rf7

22...Rfd8!?

23.Rad1 Rh7??

A terrible blunder. Whether White has any real advantage after 23...Bxb2 24.Rxd5 Re8 is a big question, since Black's pieces are all in play and only his slightly exposed king causes him any bother. Probably, 23...c5 is weaker because of 24.b4! ± (but not 24.Be3 Bxe3 25.fxe3 Qc6 26.Rxf7 Kxf7±).»

24.Rxd4 Qxd4 25.Qxg6+ Kh8 26.Re1 Rd7 27.Qh5 Qd3 28.Re6 Rg8 29.Bg7+ Kxg7 30.Qh6+ 1-0

Now we return to Beim.

Réti System
Mikhail Botvinnik
Bent Larsen
Palma de Mallorca 1967

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.b3 c5 7.Bb2 Nc6 8.e3 b6 9.Nc3 Bb7 10.d3 Rc8 11.Rc1 Rc7 12.Qe2 Rd7 13.Rfd1 Re8 14.cxd5 Nxd5 15.Nxd5 Rxd5 16.d4 Qa8?!

A serious inaccuracy. Botvinnik says that 16...Rd7 was essential.

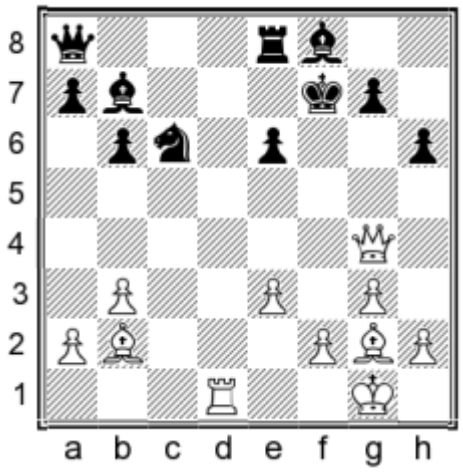
17.dxc5! Rxd1+ 18.Rxd1 Bxc5?

After 18...bxc5, Black's position would be seriously worse, but he would at least avoid a direct attack on his king.

19.Ng5! h6

Beim: «**20.Ne4?!**

But now White begins, move after move, to miss possibilities of deciding the game by a direct attack on the king. This is the first moment. The obvious blow 20.Nxf7! leads to a win: 20...Kxf7 21.Qg4 Bf8 (Black is mated quickly after 21...e5? 22.Bd5+, and he also loses after 21...Nd4 22.exd4 Bxg2 23.dxc5)



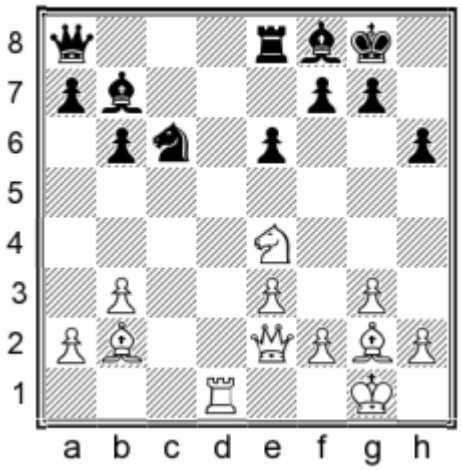
analysis diagram

And now there is a forced win by 22.Be4! Rd8 (on 22...Ne7 the move 23.Qf3+ wins, whilst White mates in the line 22...Na5 23.Rd7+ Re7 24.Qg6+ Kg8 25.Qh7+ Kf7 26.Bg6#) 23.Qg6+ Kg8 24.Qxe6+ Kh8 25.Qxh6+ mating.

There is not the slightest doubt that Botvinnik studied the capture on f7 at the board, but it is clear that he could not cope with the calculation, thereby allowing the opponent to complicate the game and making it difficult for himself. Now (importantly!), instead of calculating only the forced options, White will have to study assorted, positional methods. In other words (to run a little forward): the calculation of only the forcing options has the positive side that it directs the player's efforts into a relatively narrow

channel, making it easier for him. We will talk much more about this later.

20...Bf8



21.Rd7?!

A mistake in a tactical position (and hence, in the calculation of variations). To what was said earlier, we can add that if a player misses the first opportunity to solve the game with a tactical blow, the second such chance (if any) is usually more difficult to detect and exploit. In this case, White does have such a chance, because too many black pieces remain out of the game.

After the fairly obvious introductory blow 21.Nf6+! gxf6 22.Qg4+ Kh7 White has a choice. In his annotations, Botvinnik pointed out the variation 23.Be4+ f5 24.Bxf5+ exf5 25.Qxf5+ Kg8, and here he only considered 26.Qf6? Ne5! 27.Bxe5 Rxe5 with advantage to Black, and so refrained from the knight sacrifice on this basis. However, after the correct 26.Qg4+! Kh7 27.Rd7! White forces mate, e.g. 27...Ne5 28.Rxf7+ Nxf7 29.Qf5+ or 27...Ne7 28.Rxe7 Rxe7 29.Qf5+ Kg8 30.Qf6 Kh7 31.g4!. In addition, another important point is that back on move 23, an even simpler option is 23.Rd7 Re7 24.Be4+ etc., whilst one move later, he has the alternative possibility 24.Rd7! Ne7 (24...Re7 25.Bxf5+ exf5 26.Qxf5+ Kg8 27.Qf6) 25.Rxe7 Rxe7 26.Bxf5+ etc.

21...f5?

It is interesting that Botvinnik did not think his 21st move was a mistake. Meanwhile, Black, instead of replying with a mistake which offered White another chance to win, could and should have played 21...e5. In this case, White would have retained an undoubted advantage, but converting it would have involved long and hard work. This is usually the cost of missed opportunities...

22.Nd6!

Now the choice in a sharp position of a move which doesn't force events turns out to be correct. Weaker was 22.Nf6+!? gxf6 23.Qh5 Re7 24.Qg6+ Rg7 (worse is 24...Bg7 25.Bxc6 Rxd7 26.Bxd7 Bh1 27.Bxe6+ Kh8 28.f3!, winning) 25.Rxg7+ Bxg7 26.Bxc6 Bxc6 27.Bxf6 Qf8 28.Bxg7, and White still faces some work to realise his advantage.

Even so, there was a forced win even here! Botvinnik says that during the game he looked at the variation 22.Qh5! Re7 23.Rxe7 Nxe7 and found the blow 24.Nd6! Bxg2 (24...g6 25.Qh4) 25.Qf7+ Kh7 (25...Kh8 26.Ne8+–), but in time-trouble missed the simple 26.Bxg7 Bxg7 27.Ne8 Qxe8 28.Qxe8, winning.

22...Bxd6

23.Rxd6?

But this omission could have ended once and for all White's chances of winning by a direct attack. Botvinnik's comment is very interesting (all the notes of the six-time World Champion, given here, are taken from the book *Analytical and critical works, 1957-1970*, Physical Culture and Sport 1986). Regarding his 23rd move, he writes: 'This is a pragmatic decision, preferring positional gain to combinational obscurity in time trouble.'

With all my admiration for Botvinnik as a chess player and commentator, this passage upsets me. Yes, after 23.Rxd6? White retains a lasting and undoubted superiority, but the half-hidden disregard of the tactical element of chess which echoes in this phrase could mislead many thousands of chess players, who want to learn from one of the greatest chess authorities of all time. Tactics and calculation cannot be neglected in any case! Such a disregard is almost always punished.

In this game, it was fortunate for Botvinnik that Larsen missed several chances to save himself. Here, the win could have been achieved by means of the piece sacrifice 23.Rxg7+! Kf8, and now, in Botvinnik's words, in time-trouble he saw only the variation 24.Qh5 Re7 25.Rg6 Nd8!, which seemed to him to be unfavourable. But if we continue the calculation, then it transpires that here too, White wins by force: 26.Bf6! Rh7 (26...Bxg2 27.Rxh6 Nf7 28.Rh7! Ke8 – the only move – 29.Bxe7+–) 27.Bxd8 Bxg2 (27...Qxd8 28.Bxb7) 28.Rf6+ Kg8 29.Qe8+ Kg7 30.Rg6#. This way of winning is complicated, not just in time-trouble; however, White also has another, rather simpler win with 24.Rh7!, and Black can only resign.»

The rest of the game was full of inaccuracies and mistakes on both sides in time trouble, but Botvinnik eventually managed to win.

Comparing these two examples, I wanted to show how difficult it is to use DAUT in a practical game, even for outstanding chess players. As for the criticism of Botvinnik's notes in the book published in 1986, it must be taken into account that he was at that moment already 75 years old. He played the game against Larsen at the age of 56, and if he had been thirty years younger still, as in the historic game against Capablanca in 1938, he certainly would have found one of the forced ways to win. And with regard to the tactical element of chess noticed by Beim, on the one hand, chess in 1967 was not as tough as it is today, and on the other hand, Botvinnik struggled seriously in the world championship matches he played against brilliant tacticians as Tal and Bronstein, whose style of play he did not understand.

Valery Beim in his book also touched on the theme of 'DAUT', although, of course, without Nunn's exact formulation. Here is what he writes after analysing an interesting rapid chess game Anand-Kasimdzhanov (Lyon 2005):

«It should be said, however, that the topic we discussed above is rather slippery. The fact is that in practice, often there is a dilemma – should one immediately make the first good move one sees or start calculating other candidate moves in search of a stronger continuation? By choosing 'just a good' move, the player, on the one hand, saves time and effort, but on the other runs the risk of complicating his task and prolonging the game, by missing a more convincing opportunity. Successful resolution of the dilemma results from experience and intuition. But, of course, there are situations in which, really, there is only one move, after discovering which, we immediately see clearly that we have found the solution.»

Chapter 13
Laziness

John Nunn explains in concrete terms why the theme of 'DAUT' can be 'slippery': '

«Laziness at the board reveals itself in two ways. First: at your disposal there is a complex continuation, but you decide not to play it because it will require too much effort. Note that this is not just a case of applying the 'DAUT' principle described earlier. That deliberately weighs the balance between the time that will be spent thinking, and the opportunity to find the best move. This is most often found when there is an almost adequate alternative that requires only a little calculation. On the other hand, laziness deliberately takes you away from a move, which in fact can turn out to be very strong. To lose a game because you have missed the right move is one thing, but if you saw the right move and did not bother to analyse it – it's quite another!

The second, more understandable form of laziness manifests itself in the case when the opponent has a certain possibility that slightly worries you. You have to look at it at every move, until you are fed up with doing so and decide to spend a move preventing it once and for all. The most frequent manifestation of this form of laziness is the prevention of an opponent's possible check. You have to reckon with this check at every move, and in the end, you decide to just prevent it, by moving your king. Of course, in many cases, this move is completely justified, but in many others, the loss of time plays an important role. The move Kh1 after 0-0 (or Kb1 after 0-0-0) can be just a waste of time. When such a move is justified, it usually depends on the specific position, and not simply on the fact that it irritates you to need to look at the check at every move.»

The next rather large passage from Nunn's book is one I did not hesitate to include in our work in full. On the one hand, it seemed to me very important to show the reader the application of the principle of 'DAUT' not only in a practical game, but also in home analysis of questionable opening schemes and variations on the part of the opponent. On the other hand, I would like to invite the reader to open Nunn's book *Secrets of Practical Chess* on page 87 and advise them to study part of the section 'Books on eccentric openings'.

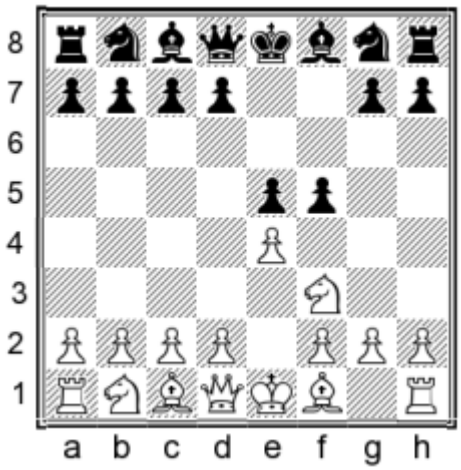
I tried this good intention myself and found out that it is like other such good intentions. So, since this book is aimed at both players and trainers, I decided to present Nunn's own version and not waste time looking for similar material in other sources.

So, in the words of Nunn:

«It's very difficult to go into details without specific examples, which means I have to select a couple of victims. In this genre, the percentage of poor-quality books is depressingly high, and therefore it is fairly easy to choose one of them and deal with it at your own pleasure. But in fact, I chose one of the best books – *The Latvian Gambit* by Tony Kosten (Batsford, 1995). This book is unusual, in that a strong grandmaster considers a rare opening with a bad reputation. Tony definitely took on a very difficult task! When the book appeared, I was amazed at how the author managed to fill 144 pages; I had thought that a detailed refutation of the opening should occupy, at most, ten pages.

I decided to use this book as a starting point for a couple of hours of analysis of the Latvian Gambit. Of course, it is played very rarely, and I did not expect any grandmaster to decide to use it, but the effect of surprise would be all the greater in this case. Of course, it would be unpleasant to run into this gambit and plunge into deep thought already on the third move! In addition, when there is a new opening book, there are always a few people who decide to take the opening up, so the chances of meeting the Latvian Gambit were high enough to justify spending a few hours studying it.

When I was a teenager, several juniors used this gambit, which, if you do not already know, is characterised by the moves **1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 f5**.



For many players this opening provides one huge advantage: it provides a more or less complete response to **1.e4**. If you play a variation of the Spanish as Black, you have to worry about all sorts of systems for White, such as the Exchange Variation or an early d2-d3, plus the Scotch Game and 3.Bc4 – a whole load of theory to study. The Latvian Gambit cuts out all these possibilities; apart from the King's Gambit and a few other openings, you do not need to learn anything more in response to 1.e4. This raises the question: is the Latvian Gambit playable?

The move 2...f5 looks doubtful: it does not develop a piece and it weakens the diagonals h5-e8 and c4-g8. The latter is especially important if Black is going to castle short. I always considered the most logical move to be 3.Nxe5 – Black should be punished for not protecting the e5-pawn by 2...Nc6. In my youth this move brought me good results, so I decided to concentrate on it.

The first surprise was waiting for me when I studied the table of contents. Chapter 6 was called (after **3.Nxe5**) '3...Nc6 and other third moves for Black'. I was stunned: I had no idea that 3...Nc6 was even remotely possible. In fact, Tony rightly skips over 'other third moves for Black', but devotes about 9 pages to the move **3...Nc6**.

When I meet an unfamiliar move in a book, I do not look at the author's analysis, but first of all put the position on the board and decide which answer looks most natural.

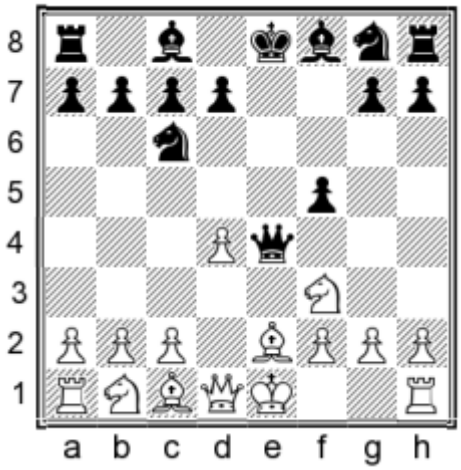
I noticed that White can win the exchange by **4.Qh5+ g6 5.Nxg6 Nf6 6.Qh4 hxg6** (6...Rg8!?) **7.Qxh8 Qe7**. In return, Black gets a significant advantage in development. Evaluation of this rather complicated position takes time, and therefore, remembering the principle of 'DAUT', I decided to look for something simpler.

Another obvious move is **4.Nxc6**, but I felt that the position after **4...dxc6** was perfectly playable for Black. All his pieces can immediately enter the game, whilst White must still move the d-pawn to free the c1-bishop. In addition, White has few minor pieces on the king's flank, and if he castles there, he could come under attack. None of these variations looks particularly clear, but the point of the initial assessment is not to carefully evaluate each opportunity, but simply to decide which move best meets the basic principles. If I do not find an opportunity that really seems to me the most promising, I'll have to go back and study 4.Qh5+ and 4.Nxc6 for a second time.

However, at this point I noticed a very tempting move – **4.d4!**. It seemed to me that this best meets the principle of the fastest development of the pieces in the opening. White creates a 'two-pawn' centre and allows the Bc1 to enter the game without making any concessions. The most obvious answer is 4...fxe4, but this simply loses because of 5.Nxc6 dxc6 6.Qh5+: now 6...g6 costs a rook, so Black must move the king. Also bad is 4...Nf6, because 5.Nxc6 followed by 6.e5 gives White an extra pawn and a good position. Black can, of course, go 4...Nxe5, but after 5.dxe5, the pawn on e5 prevents 5...Nf6 from being played, and, consequently, Black's development is difficult. If he tries to win

back the pawn by 5...Qe7, then 6.Qd4 looks very unpleasant, with the threat of Nc3-d5.

After a five-minute thought, I could not find a single acceptable move for Black, so I decided to see what Kosten was suggesting. His main variations are 4.Nxc6 and 4.Qh5+, and in respect of 4.d4 there is a small note: **4...Qh4!** 5.Bd3 fxe4 6.g3 Qh3 7.Bxe4 Nf6 with the assessment 'excellent' for Black. Yes, 4...Qh4 is, of course, a surprise! However, I remained unconvinced. Black has ignored almost all the principles of opening play: he has made weakening pawn moves, given up a pawn, and now he develops the queen before the other pieces – certainly there must be a way to get at least a clear advantage! Suddenly I had an idea. How about **5.Nf3 Qxe4+ 6.Be2** ?



The longer I looked at this position, the more I liked it. White threatens to just play 0-0 and Re1. Black does not have enough time to develop his kingside minor pieces and castle. For example, 6...Nf6 7.0-0 Be7 8.Re1, and 8...0-0 loses because of 9.Bc4+. At best, Black will have to make several more moves with the queen and fall hopelessly behind in development. In addition, one must also take into account:

A) the terrible position of the pawn on f5, which does not do any good and only weakens the black position;

B) the possibility of d4-d5, forcing the knight on c6 to retreat; and

C) an attack on the c7-square by Nc3-d5 (or b5), possibly in combination with Bf4.

Summarizing the above, we can conclude that the black position is already lost. It remains to verify only one possibility, namely: can Black use the temporary activity of his queen by 6...Nb4 ? However, it would be a miracle if Black were to manage to get away with neglecting the last unbroken rule of the game in the opening, which says that one should not move the same piece while the rest of the army is still at home.

The analysis is fairly simple, however: **6...Nb4 7.0-0 Qxc2 8.Qe1 Be7** (8...Qe4 9.Nc3 Qe7 10.Qd1 Nf6 11.Re1 Ne4 12.a3 Nc6 13.Bd3, winning) **9.Nc3 Nf6 10.Ne5** (threatening 11.Bd1) **10...f4 11.a3 Nc6** (11...d6 12.axb4 dxe5 13.dxe5 Ng4 14.Nd5 Bd8 15.e6 Nf6 16.Nxf4 0-0 17.Bd3, winning) **12.Bd3 Qb3 13.Nb5 Nxe5 14.dxe5**, and Black's position collapses. But this is all unnecessary detail: Black's development is so awful that it would not be premature to write off his position without any further analysis.

Abandoning 3...Nc6, I switched to the main line, **3...Qf6**, again focusing on the variation that I had played several decades earlier, namely: **4.Nc4 fxe4 5.Nc3**. In those far-off days, the main continuation was **5...Qg6**, after which I scored several wins with **6.d3 Bb4 7.dxe4 Qxe4+ 8.Ne3**. Kosten considers this continuation to be very favourable for White, and his main variation begins with the move **5...Qf7**, which was practically unknown in 1970. Now I was already aware of it and even ran into it relatively recently in a game with Fritz from the tournament between humans and computers. I won that game, but because of lack of knowledge I played the opening pretty carefully.

The main line, according to Kosten, is **6.Ne3 c6!** (the exclamation mark is his).

Here he considers the main line to be **7.d3 exd3 8.Bxd3 d5**. Of course, White has a significant advantage in development, but Black has achieved certain strategic advantages. He has an extra pawn in the centre, and the queen's position will prove to be quite useful if Black castles short and creates pressure along the f-file. Indeed, it quickly becomes clear that he will have a great game if he is given a

few moves to finish development. After ...Bd6, ...Ne7 and ...0-0, the king on g8 is safe, and White's knights are poor. The central black pawns prevent them from moving forward, and the Ne3 blocks the Bc1. A cursory look at Kosten's analysis confirmed these conclusions: in most variations, White is forced to sacrifice a piece by Nexd5 or Nc4 to disturb Black before he has castled. All these variations are very complex, and therefore, remembering again the principle of 'DAUT', I decided to return to the position in the last diagram. And immediately I asked myself a question: why can't White take the pawn on e4?

After **7.Nxe4 d5 8.Ng5 Qf6 9.Nf3** I again felt confident in the strength of the white position. I agree, his knights have moved several times, but Black can hardly boast of this, because he himself has moved his queen plenty of times. As for development, it is approximately equal on both sides, and there are no weaknesses in White's position – in fact, Black's compensation for the pawn simply cannot be seen. Kosten offers two options: **9...**B**e6**, intending long castling, and **9...**B**d6**.

Starting with **9...Be6**, Kosten gives the following continuation: '**10.d4 Nd7 11.Bd3 0-0-0**

12.c3 g5 13.0-0 h5, not fearing **14.Nxd5?! Bxd5 15.Bxg5 Qg7**.

This variant shows a typical trick *used to try to present a very dubious variant as acceptable: an absolutely inappropriate move.* No one will criticize the natural developing moves 10.d4 and 11.Bd3, but why play 12.c3 ? The pawn on d4 is not attacked, it is unlikely to be attacked, and White does not free the f3-knight to move anywhere. If White does not do anything, then, of course, Black, in the end, will create a serious attack on the kingside, but in positions with opposite castling, speed plays a significant role. The correct plan for White is to play c2-c4 in order to develop counterplay in the centre and on the queenside.

Let us therefore assume that White starts with the most obvious move **12.0-0**, and Black replies, as in Kosten's variation, **12...g5**. White plays **13.c4**,

and things are very bad for Black:

A) 13...Bd6 14.Qa4 Kb8 15.c5 Bc7 16.b4 with an extra pawn and a very strong attack. If Black plays 16...a6, then White can either sacrifice a piece on a6 immediately, or prepare the sacrifice by means of 17.Rb1;

B) **13...g4 14.cxd5 cxd5 15.Ne5**;

C) **13...dxc4** (relatively best) **14.Nxc4 h6** (14...g4 15.Nfe5 Bxc4 16.Nxd7 Rxd7 17.Bxc4 is also very bad, e.g. 17...Rxd4 18.Qb3 Ne7 19.Be3) **15.Be3** followed by Qa4, Rc1 and Nfe5. Black is a pawn down for nothing.

If Black chooses a different 12th move, e.g. 12...Bd6, then White can again play 13.c4, and in this case, things are even worse for Black, because the move Nxc4 will come with tempo.

Another of Kosten's variations begins with **9...Bd6**, and here he gives the moves **10.d4 Ne7 11.c4!**, which is definitely White's strongest. The continuation is as follows: **11...0-0 12.Qb3 Kh8!?**

13.Bd2!? dxc4 14.Bxc4 Nd7 15.0-0, and this position Kosten assesses as better for White (and so he recommends 9...Be6, as dealt with above).

The point of the move **13.**B**d2** is to prevent the check on b4 and at the same time to threaten to win the pawn d5. Another possibility is 13.Be2 followed by 0-0, and White again threatens the pawn d5, and incidentally has achieved this goal using only natural developing moves. So this variation may be a little more accurate. Again, Black has no compensation. The position resembles one from a normal opening like the Russian Game, except that the black f-pawn has unaccountably disappeared from the board.

When you look at the analyses of questionable openings, pay attention to such moments as these:

1) 'Nothing' moves for the opponent (i.e., for the side opposing the dubious opening), which are only a waste of time;

2) Variations in which the opponent must imagine that he was in the nineteenth century: a cooperative taking of all sacrificed material with a brilliant finish;

3) Variations given without any evaluation;

4) Coded words.

The fourth point may require explanation. If the author is an honest man and a strong chess player, he will have some doubts about the variations he gives, and this often translates into phrases that can be called the chess equivalent of small print in a contract.

After '6...c6!' in the above variation, Kosten writes: 'Coolly abandoning the pawn e4 to its fate; what exactly does Black get in return? Objectively speaking, very little: only a small preponderance in development and a lot of pleasure.' It does not sound too optimistic for Black, but, of course, when writing a book, the author can hardly admit that the whole opening is simply incorrect. Without a doubt, the publisher will not be happy if the manuscript consists of a ten-page refutation of the opening! Similar key phrases are *'can attract a tactically minded chess player', 'provides practical chances'* and *'Black's position is not worse than in the main variations of such openings as the Spanish Game'*. Depends which variation, I suppose!

Less honest authors are completely shameless in such matters. They, without the slightest embarrassment, recommend the most blatantly incorrect variations. Of course, they would never play them themselves.»

I quote this long enough excerpt from John Nunn's book entirely because firstly, he illustrates in detail the possibility of applying the DAUT principle in analysing eccentric openings and, secondly, he demonstrates in full the method of refuting or obtaining a solid superiority against a low-quality opening set-up. This fits in completely with our concept of building the opening repertoire and makes it possible to see how easy it is to equip a young chess player with a bankrupt opening repertoire in pursuit of a short-term result.

Let's move on to the next important topic.

Chapter 14
The technique of calculating variations

This topic is covered fairly scantily in chess literature. We will again focus on the difference in views between Valery Beim and John Nunn, although in the works of Mark Dvoretsky, as we have already mentioned, one can find answers to questions on more or less any important chess theme. The article by grandmaster Mikhail Krasenkow 'Wandering in the Wilds', as well as the corresponding section in Chekhov's and Komlyakov's aforementioned book are also of interest.

Let's start with Beim. At the beginning of the chapter, he tells the reader, in an extremely laconic and concentrated way, the essence of Kotov's theory of calculating variations, which he set out in the books *Think Like a Grandmaster* and *Play Like a Grandmaster*, published respectively in 1979 and 1985:

« 1) Starting the calculation of variations, we must first mentally enumerate and accurately record all possible candidate moves in this position, so that in the future we will not miss any important opportunity.

2) Having determined and listed them, we start by turns to calculate variation by variation. In what order to place the candidate moves, and, therefore, to consider the variations, depends on the nature and habits of each player and the features of the position. Some like to first sort out the most difficult possibilities and only then to test the easy options, others go the other way.

3) We can picture all possible variations in a position in the form of a 'calculation tree'.

4) The main rule for calculating variations is that the player must develop the habit of running through the branches only once in the course of a game... never go back to a previously analysed variation!»

Beim continues: «In this quote, after discarding some repetitions, I have put together all the most important things from what Alexander Kotov said in the above-mentioned books in the framework of his theory of calculating variations, the very theory that made these books so popular. I will venture to say that the rest, written by him on this topic, is 'window-dressing', and insignificant from a practical point of view.

I plan to return to the above summary several times during the presentation of the material in my book.»

Further, Beim demonstrates Kotov's method using the example of a well-known study by V. and M. Platov and gives the definition of candidate moves:

«So, first we have to find all candidate moves. However, it is alarming that the pioneer of this really basic concept (I am not familiar with any earlier presentation of the concept than that of Kotov himself), alas, never once said what exactly candidate moves are and by what principle they should be sought and selected.

Let's try to think about this ourselves. I believe that the answer should sound like this: the candidate moves should be defined as all the logical-looking continuations that are in the position.»

In the next part of the book, where much interesting material awaits us, Beim uses specific examples to make serious adjustments to the Kotov theory of calculation. But before continuing to study this important topic and to hear the opinion of John Nunn, I would like to quote an excerpt from the previously-mentioned excellent article by Mikhail Krasenkow, 'Wandering in the Wilds':

«In this article, an attempt is made to propose (and illustrate by example) a more complicated calculation algorithm (though not very formalized, one which is actually used – subconsciously – by many chess players in confused positions).

1. *The formulation of the goal of calculation*, that is, the criterion by which we will evaluate the calculated variations and decide whether they satisfy us or not. This can, for example, be the achievement of a decisive material superiority, increase in the positional advantage, equalising, putting up resistance in a bad position, etc. The goal should be real, that is, based on an assessment of the position and intuitive considerations. If there is enough time to calculate, one can try to do better than the goal, whereas if there is little time available for thinking,

then the opposite is the case – sometimes one has to settle for something slightly less than the goal.

2. *Finding ideas for achieving the goal*, selecting the appropriate candidate moves and (very importantly) determining their priority, that is, highlighting those that are more or less likely to lead to success.

3. *Calculation of variations* (as deeply as possible) in order of priority (starting with those that seem more suitable for achieving the goal). At the same time, in each situation where there is a choice, the calculation order is also determined by the priority of the possible moves (in connection with the goal).

4. If a continuation is found *that leads to the intended goal*, then what happens next depends on the time situation: if time is lacking, the main part of the calculation can be completed (a 'Blumenfeld check' is still necessary). If there is still time in reserve, you can refine (increase) the goal, look at the candidate moves not yet considered, and continue the calculation; if the new goal cannot be achieved, then settle for the previous, attained goal.

5. If, as a result of the calculation, *no path is found that leads to the intended goal*, further actions should again depend on the clock situation. If there is not enough time, you need to lower the goal, adjust the set of candidate moves and continue the calculation. In this case, often one of the options already considered satisfies the new goal, or finding an appropriate alternative is comparatively easy. The only thing: you must not make a move plucked 'from thin air', without calculation.

6. If you still have plenty of time on the clock, and *intuition dictates that the goal should be achievable* (a qualified chess player should trust his intuition more, as he accumulates his understanding of chess), then it is possible (and necessary) to consciously go for a recalculation of some variations. To do this, you need to find new ideas for achieving the goal. In accordance with this, there are new candidate moves and candidate variations.

I will explain what this means. During the first stage, you will often have found the opponent's only or strongest answers, and forced series of moves, after certain candidate moves. Often a new idea, a new candidate move, is not noticed the first time round, but only comes to mind after you have worked through some of the original candidates.

Generally speaking, recalculation is a disadvantage, therefore it is desirable to cover all ideas of achieving the goal at the first stage of the calculation. However, as we saw above, this is not always possible.

7. It may happen that at the time of calculation, *a new idea appears*, a candidate move that is not relevant to this variation. In this case, it is necessary to determine its priority, but not to proceed to consideration of it, until you have completed the calculation of the variation currently under consideraion. An exception may be the case when it is immediately obvious that the new idea is better than the continuation in question (that is, it is stronger, not just more important).

8. One of the biggest shortcomings in the thinking of many chess players is 'chess blindness', missing the opponent's basic replies within the first 1-2 moves. To combat this evil, there is *the 'Blumenfeld rule'* when calculating variations (Kotov speaks about this): after completing the calculation and making a decision, you need to pause (record the move on the scoresheet) and look at the position with a fresh 'newcomer's look': does the planned move lead to an immediate catastrophe? Only after making sure that there is no gross error, you can make a move. If an error is found, the calculation of the variations must be resumed. In this case, as a rule, it is necessary to lower the goal of calculation, to strive for simplifications, since a rough scan indicates that the player is not ready for a complex struggle.»

[*Translator's note: Following changes to the Laws of Chess, it is no longer permitted to write one's moves down before playing them. However, a player can still perform this 'blunder check' by mentally switching off for a moment and viewing the position afresh*]

As a professional coach, I like everything that Mikhail Krasenkow writes. And the term 'candidate variation' is one I have not come across anywhere else. He then gives an excellent example from his own practice, which we will show later. All this was written, most likely, in the glorious pre-computer era, when the time limit was 2.5 hours for 40 moves and then the game was adjourned. Everything said in the article is written in a competent academic language, and in order to get to the bottom of it, you need to think about almost every phrase. If Krasenkow wrote a small book on this subject and explained each of the eight points in specific examples, then it would probably be a good book. Unfortunately, now people do not read printed books so much, and prefer to do it quickly on electronic

media, and few want to think seriously about what they have read. As they say, material flies in one ear and out the other. But in fact, the thoughts of Krasenkow echo those of Nunn and Beim, only in the latter two they are expressed more clearly and accessibly, with new terms that impress themselves on the memory, such as 'DAUT', 'the resulting move', 'ranking of candidate moves', 'quick scanning', etc.

We have already discussed DAUT, so now let us turn to the next term. Here are Nunn's words:

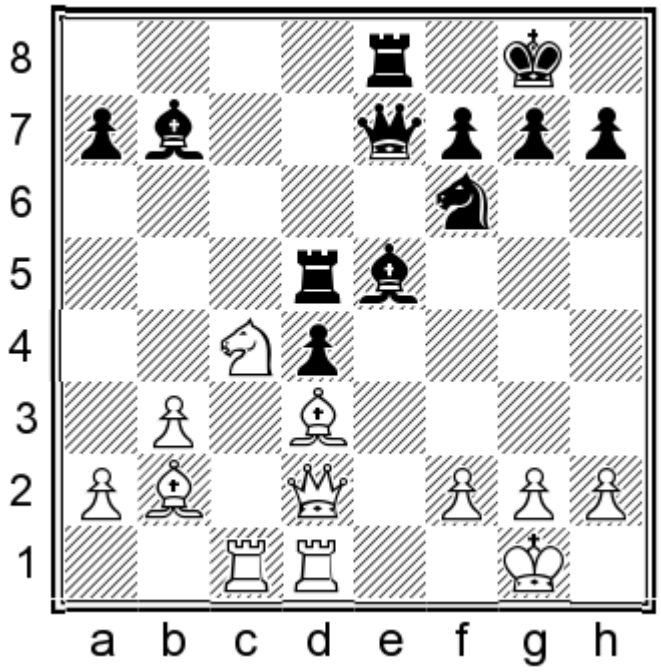
«Contemporary authors such as Tisdall in the book *Improve Your Chess Now* give arguments for and against Kotov's recommendations, but my task is to give you practical advice, and not get involved in academic discussion.

As a result of using the Kotov method, several problems arise. The most obvious one is that the method can be extremely inefficient.

Suppose you are analysing the possible combination 1.Bxh7+ Kxh7 2.Ng5+. There are two defences: 2...Kg6 and 2...Kg8. You begin to study 2...Kg6. The variations are very confusing, but after twenty minutes' thought, you come to the conclusion that White has an advantage. Then you switch to 2...Kg8. In a couple of minutes it becomes obvious that this move refutes the sacrifice. As a result of Kotov's inflexible approach, you have wasted 20 minutes of thinking time, purely because you had the misfortune to start the analysis with the weaker defence. It would be more rational to spend a few minutes reviewing each of the two alternatives. It is likely that you would find that one of them refutes the sacrifice, so the move 1.Bxh7+ should be rejected.»

Now Valery Beim, who dissects the game...

Boris Spassky
Mikhail Tal
Montreal 1979



Black to move

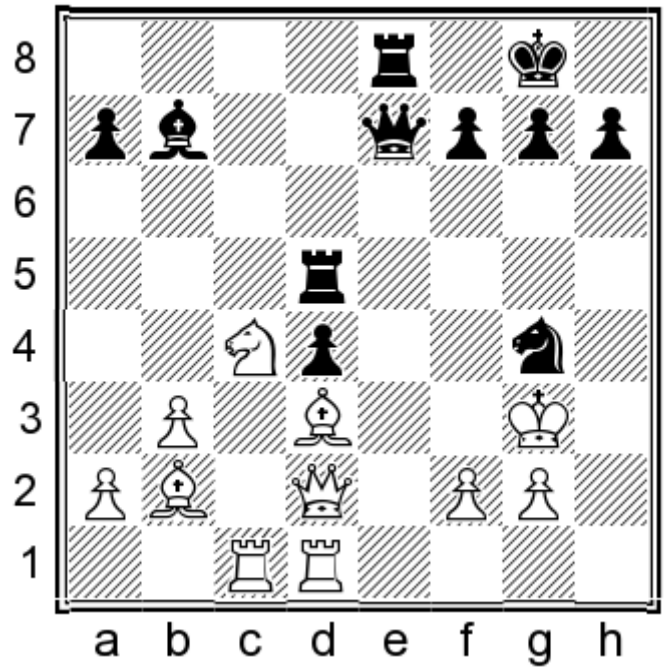
«Black played the obvious blow:

20...Bxh2+

It is hard to imagine Tal passing by such a possibility. Probably Spassky missed something, when he deliberately allowed the move.

21.Kxh2

An interesting moment has been reached in the game. In the resulting position, Black has two candidate moves: the knight check on g4 and the rook check on h5. Let us assume that Black starts by analysing the former, which has the point that it is the logical follow-up for this type of combination – after all, the rook is rarely on the fourth rank in such situations! So, 21...Ng4+ 22.Kg3.



analysis diagram

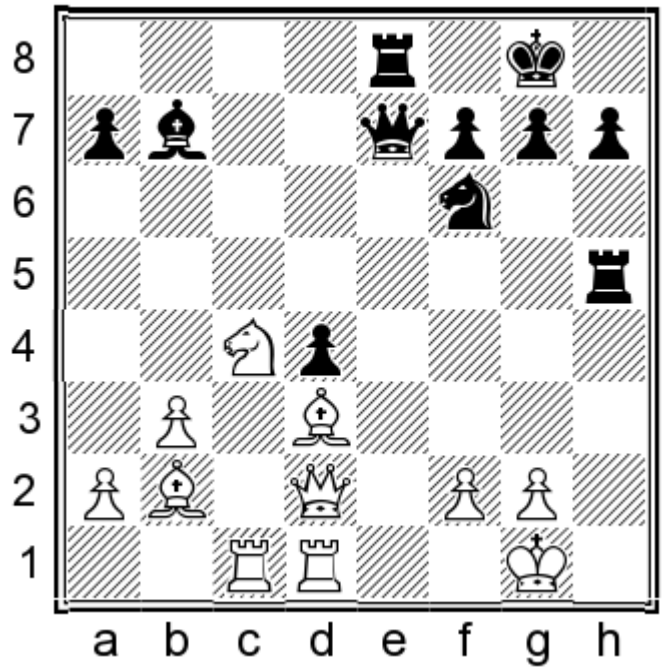
This is the whole point. In the event of the king's retreat to g1 and the reply 22...Rh5, the same position arises as later in the game. But after the text, Black faces a dilemma: either to follow the categorical recommendations of Kotov, and analyse the complicated (even at first glance) variations after 22...Rg5 23.f4 Ne3+ 24.fxg5, or to register (a useful term) in his mind that this variation is both complex and unclear, and to postpone further examination of it for the time being and to look at the second candidate move. Suddenly it turns out to be easier...

21...Rh5+

This is the way.

22.Kg1

After 22.Kg3 Black decides things with 22...Ne4+ 23.Bxe4 Qh4+ 24.Kf3 Qxe4+ 25.Kg3 Qh4#.



22...Ng4!

White resigned in view of the variation 23.Re1 Rh1+ 24.Kxh1 Qh4+ 25.Kg1 Qh2+ 26.Kf1 Qxg2#. As we see, Black's task turned out to be very simple.»

Now we can clearly see the importance of what was being discussed above. This is the recommendation or, strictly speaking, the rule:

If in the process of calculating candidate moves, it turns out that one of them leads to complex, difficult-to-predict consequences, then it is wiser to temporarily postpone its calculation and check other continuations.

If among them there is something suitable (as in the example just considered), we will save time and energy, which will be useful later in the game. If the analysis of the other candidate moves does not work, then you can go back and work on the postponed continuation, but now concentrate only on it, without being distracted. The practical benefits of this approach are obvious.

More or less the same is implied in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Krasenkow's article, but whereas John Nunn and especially Valery Beim have everything clearly formulated and reinforced by an example, the deep (without a trace of irony) thought of Krasenkow in these paragraphs of his article is pleasant enough to read, but does not fix itself in the memory. But point 1 of his article 'The formulation of the purpose of calculation' is quite comparable to the idea in Beim's chapter of 'Before the calculation begins,'

devoted to logical analysis. Analysing the endgame study by F. Prokop (1925), he draws the following conclusion:

«*The most important conclusion: without a preliminary logical analysis of the situation, it is wrong to proceed to immediate calculation. This leads to confusion and, as a consequence, to the loss of time and energy on unnecessary work.*»

And here is what John Nunn writes about this:

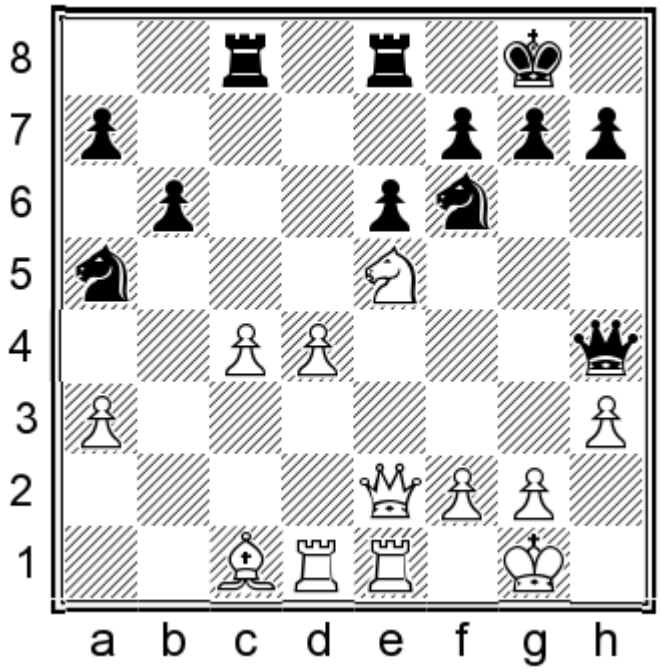
«Of course, the tree of variations is a useful technical tool in tactical positions, but it must be used flexibly and in addition to other types of chess thinking. It is necessary to observe a balance between the steady adherence to the principles of Kotov and too frequent jumping from one variant to another.

Usually, I prefer a 'quick scan': I briefly study all the important options to determine which of them can be quickly calculated. If you are lucky, this will be enough for the successful completion of the analysis; if not, then at least you will find out where the most confusing part is.»

Let us turn to the example from Valery Beim's book:

«The following fragment is interesting not only as an example from a classical game, but also as a little-known example of high-class comments taken from Mikhail Botvinnik's excellent book *Alekhine vs. Euwe return match 1937*. This book was released in 1939 in a circulation of 5,000 copies (only in Russian) and was recently reprinted in a very small edition [*Translator's note: An English edition of this small book was published by Chess Digest in 1973*].

Alexander Alekhine
Max Euwe
The Hague WCh m 1937 (10)



White to move

This position arose as a result of a serious mistake by Black. On his previous move, he had played 22...Rd8-e8?, taking away the last retreat square from his knight and so laying the basis for White's combination. In an attempt to exploit this motif, Alekhine played

23.g4?

Most commentators attach an exclamation mark to White's 23rd move, and only Botvinnik proved that he was wrong! He also correctly noted that the preparatory 23.Kh2 is inadequate. This is followed by 23...h6 24.g3 Qh5 25.g4 Qh4, and now the attempt to win material by 26.Nf3?! leads after 26...Nxg4+ 27.Kg2 Qh5 28.hxg4 Qxg4+ 29.Kh1 Qh5+ 30.Nh2 Qxe2 31.Rxe2 Nxc4 to the better position for Black.

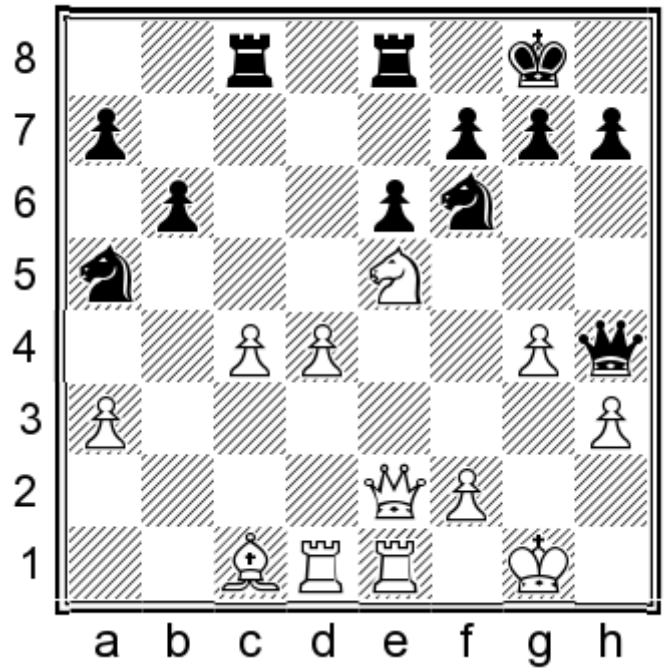
Subsequently, Botvinnik gives a classic example of logical reasoning, which should precede the search and selection of candidate moves. There is nothing to add to this reasoning – you just need to learn how to follow the technique applied in it. The only thing I want to say is that such logical reasoning can only be carried out after a thorough examination of the position and the identification of all its details. Often it happens that some small, neglected detail suddenly turns out to be important. It is impossible to know in advance which part is so important. Therefore, the preliminary review should be very thorough.

And now, finally, – to Botvinnik himself:

'The correct course can be found on the basis of the following considerations. In order to catch the black queen on h4, the white g-pawn should stand on g4, the white knight on f3, and the white pawn on h3 should be protected. It's easy to notice that if White had played 23.Qf1!!, then Euwe could safely have laid down his arms. The advantage of the move is that in the case of 23...h6 (there is nothing better) 24.g3 Qh5 25.g4 Qh4 26.Nf3 White has gained a tempo and the black queen is caught.'

Further, Botvinnik says that numerous commentators, including Alekhine and Euwe themselves (!), did not indicate the move 23.Qf1!!.

Now we return to **23.g4**.



In the game, Black did not find the correct response to this mistaken, but apparently threatening move, which, as Botvinnik showed, consisted in 23...h6 (not 23...Qxh3? 24.Rd3 Qh4 25.Kg2 Nxg4 26.Nxg4! Nxc4 27.Rh3 Qd8 28.Reh1 Qd5+ 29.f3 with a decisive attack for White) 24.Kg2 Nh7 25.f4 Qe7, and the game is unclear. Instead of this, Black committed a serious mistake:

23...Nc6?

After this, White wins a piece and with it the game:

24.Kg2 Nxe5 25.dxe5 Nh5 26.gxh5 Rxc4 27.Qf3 Rf8 28.h6 f5 29.Qg3 Qxg3+ 30.fxg3 Rfc8 31.hxg7 Rc2+ 32.Kf3 R2c3+ 33.Be3 Rxa3 34.Rd7 Rc4 35.Kf2 Rc2+ 36.Re2 Raa2 37.Rxc2 Rxc2+ 38.Kf3 a5 39.Bh6 Rc8 40.Ra7

Black resigned.»

So, the need for a logical analysis of the position, prior to the calculation of variations, is now obvious to us. Such an analysis not only allows us to determine the most important details of the position and the direction of the calculation, it can also be used to rank the candidate moves, which again will improve the quality of the calculation.

I will explain what has been said. After examining the position, when we draw conclusions about the possibilities of the two sides, the priorities of the position and the goal (we recall Krasenkow – MS) begins to be clarified, to which we should strive in accordance with the requirements of the position. Knowledge of these goals allows us not only to determine the candidate moves, discarding the unnecessary and concentrating all attention on the necessary, but also to reveal the most practical order of calculation, which will allow the player to save time and effort for the subsequent struggle.'

Now I would like to recall Dvoretsky's quotation relating to the evaluation of the position and, as a consequence, to a logical analysis:

«In some books one can read that the process of assessing the situation consists in isolating and weighing all positional factors acting in it. Nonsense! In fact, most of this work is performed subconsciously. *The art of evaluation is the ability to understand the essence of the position: to determine the most important problem (positional or tactical) that should be solved, to feel the right direction for our searches, to feel the desirability or otherwise of this or that operation.* It is clear that a well-developed intuition contributes quickly and correctly to our perception.»

Botvinnik described the essence of the position in one sentence: «In order to catch the black queen on h4, the white g-pawn should stand on g4, the white knight on f3, and the white pawn h3 should be protected ...»

And that's it! And then you are a chess player, so you think about how to achieve this and whether it can be done at all. Only a computer can search all of the variations, in order to find the move 23.Qf1!!.

This position was offered for solving to the young players in the chess section of the educational centre 'Sirius'. Boris Ofitserian coped with the task in 5

minutes, thanks to the skills gained from working together with grandmaster Sakaev. As he told me, he asked himself the question: 'Which of the white pieces is not doing enough work, and needs relocating?' The answer – 'the queen', came to mind immediately, and then the move 23.Qf1! was found.

Now let us continue Beim's discussion of the need for a logical analysis before starting the calculation:

«Often such an analysis makes it possible to identify candidate moves aimed not only at strengthening the position or preparing planned actions, but for immediate achievement of the intended goal. Of course, such moves should be regarded as having 'particularly vivid signs'. Candidates of this kind should also include moves that immediately lead to a direct clash of the forces of the sides, in other words, leading to the most accelerated development of events.

Logic suggests that the probability of finding a successful solution among the moves of this kind should be significantly higher than among the other candidate moves, so they should be considered first. It is likely that after starting to calculate in this order, we will immediately (or very quickly) come across a convincing decision, and the need for further calculation, thus, will disappear. This is the practical importance of the correct procedure for calculating candidate moves: since the struggle continues after a successful calculation, the time and energy saved will be very useful later in the game. If the first candidate move considered by this method does not satisfy you, then you should start considering the second such move, and so on. Sooner or later, you will inevitably hit the bullseye.»

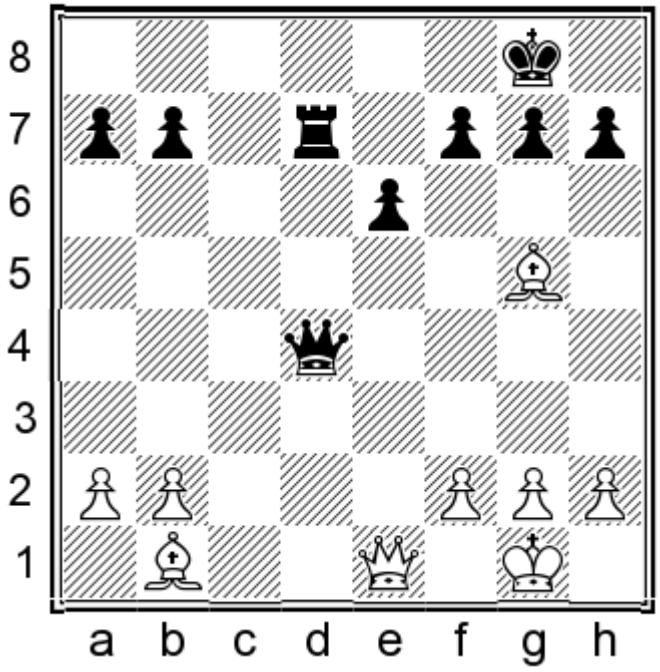
And now let's compare this argument with Kotov's advice:

«The order in which to place the candidate moves, and so calculate the variations, depends on the nature and habits of each player and the features of the position. Some like first to sort out the most complicated possibilities and only then to test the easy options, others go the other way.»

We have just become acquainted with Beim's advice on the ranking of candidate moves and talked about the need for preliminary logical analysis of the position before the calculation begins. And whereas everything is more or less clear with the 'ranking' – one starts calculating checks, captures or direct threats – I would like to make the following additional point about logic analysis: a player should calculate variations at every move, whereas a deep penetration into the logic of the position is only required periodically, at key turning points in the game, what players refer to as 'critical moments'. Here we are getting to the book by Iosif Dorfman, already mentioned, but this will be discussed a little later. But whereas the chess player makes a deep logical analysis only rarely in the course of a game, the Nunn-style 'quick scan' can be made much more often.

Now that we have seen a fine example of the logical analysis of Botvinnik, have recalled Dvoretsky's comments on the assessment of the position, and sorted out the ranking of candidate moves a la Beim, it is time to present the promised example of Krasenkow's art, which crowns his interesting article:

Alexander Lagunov
Michal Krasenkow
Dnepropetrovsk 1985



Black to move

«The unfortunate position of the white pieces and the weakness of his back rank suggested to Black that he should seek a forced win, that is, a large material gain (*the aim of the calculation*). The idea is a combination of an attack on the bishop with the threat of penetration to the first rank. In order of priority, the following candidate moves were identified: I. 23...Qd1; II. 23...Qb4; III. 23...Qa4; IV. 23...Qg4; V. 23...Qe5, and the first stage of the calculation began.

I. 23...Qd1 24.Kf1

1) 24...Qg4 25.Bd2 Qc4+ 26.Qe2, and there is nothing;

2) 24...Qh5 25.Bd2

a) 25...Qxh2 26.f3! Qh1+ 27.Kf2 Qh4+ 28.Kf1 Qc4+ 29.Qe2;

b) 25...Qb5+ 26.Kg1 Qxb2 27.Be3 Qc3 28.Qf1 or 27...Qb4 28.Qc1 Rc7 29.Qd1.

3) 24...Qa4 25.Bd2 Qb5+ 26.Kg1 – see 2b).

In these variations, Black only wins a second pawn, so the aim is not achieved.

II. 23...Qb4 24.Qc1 Qc5 (24...Rc7 25.Qd1) 25.Bc2 Rc7 26.Qd2! f6 27.Bb3! or 27.Bf4!, and Black achieves nothing.

III. 23...Qa4 24.Bd2 (but not 24.b3? Qa5), and nothing is apparent.

IV. 23...Qg4 24.Bd2.

V. 23...Qe5 24.Be3.

In the last two variations, Black's possibilities are clearly exhausted.

So, the first stage of calculation did not give the desired solution. If Black now lacked time, it would be necessary to adjust the goal (for example, to look for the best way to win a second pawn).

By the way, then we would include an additional candidate move:

VI. 23...Qxb2 (clearly not answering to the original aim), and Black would have to choose between I. 2a, I. 2b, and VI.

But, fortunately, Black had sufficient time on the clock (the tournament used the old time control of 40 in 2.5 hours), and so he decided to look for new ideas.

The idea was born of re-positioning the queen behind the rook, for which purpose we need to prevent the move Bb1-c2, defending the square d1.

The following candidate variations arise:

I. 23...Qd1 24.Kf1 Qa4 25.Bd2

a) 25...Rd6;

b) 25...Rd5;

c) 25...Rd4

II. 23...Qd1 24.Kf1 Qh5 25.Bd2 Qb5+ 26.Kg1

a) 26...Rd6;

b) 26...Rd5;

c) 26...Rd4

III. 23...Qa4 24.Bd2

a) 24...Rd6;

b) 24...Rd5;

c) 24...Rd4;

(in all cases with the threat ...Qd7).

The first three are quickly refuted by 26.Qe2, the next three by 27.Bc3, whilst in the final lines, there is:

(23...Qa4 24.Bd2)

IIIa) 24...Rd6 25.Qe2! (25.Kf1? Qb5+ 26.Qe2 Qxb2 27.Bd3 Qd4) 25...Qd7 26.Be1 or 25...Qa6 26.Qe1 (worse is 26.Qe3 Qb6!), intending Bc3 and Bc2, and everything is defended;

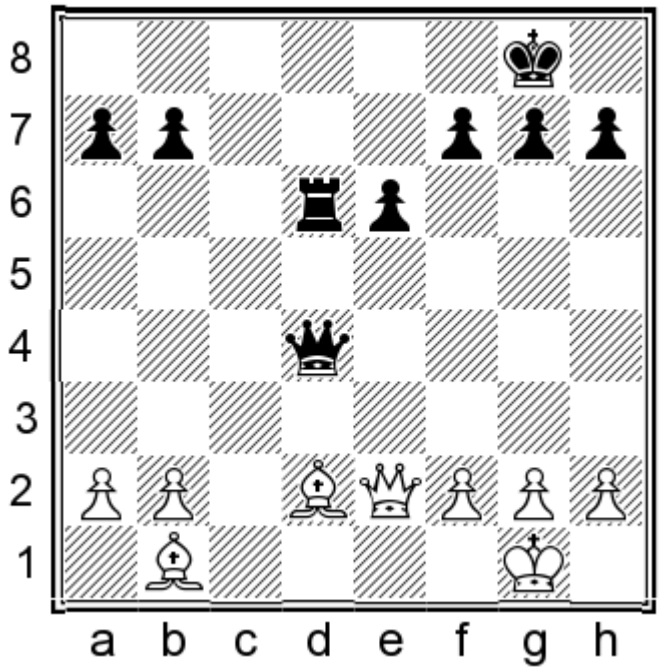
IIIb) 24...Rd5 25.Be4! and then 26.Bf3, since 25...Re5? is not possible due to 26.Bxh7+.

IIIc) 24...Rd4 25.Qe2 (worse is 25.Kf1 Qb5+ 26.Qe2 Qxb2 27.Bd3 Qxa2) 25...Qd7 26.Be1 or 25...Qa6 26.Qe3!

In none of these cases is it clear how Black can win. So, the second stage of the calculation also ended in vain.

So, do we abandon the calculation, and reject the maximum goal? Still, I decided to search again. And not in vain. Like lightning, a thought flashed into my head.

23...Qa4 24.Bd2 Rd6 25.Qe2 Qd4!!



Yes, the idea of returning the queen is not at all obvious. I think that it is impossible to find it without previously having calculated numerous variations, and without delving into the jungle of the various attacks and defences.

But further calculation (already the third stage!) is simple. With the white queen on e2, the black invasion of d1 solves everything: 26.Be1 Qd1 27.Qe4 f5 or 26.Qb5 Rd8 27.Be1 Qd1 28.Qa5 b6.

The whole three-stage calculation (together with checking) took about an hour. In the game, after

23...Qa4! 24.Bd2 Rd6!

the Novosibirsk player unfortunately played

25.Kf1 (?)

and after

25...Qb5+

he resigned. Alas, Black's main idea remained behind the scenes...»

A wonderful example, an excellent article and a brilliant game by Mikhail Krasenkow! The black shuttle maneuvre makes a strong impression. Bravo!

Now we turn to the study of another interesting term, which experts mention in the theory of calculating variations, but as far as I know, it was Valery Beim who first identified and named it.

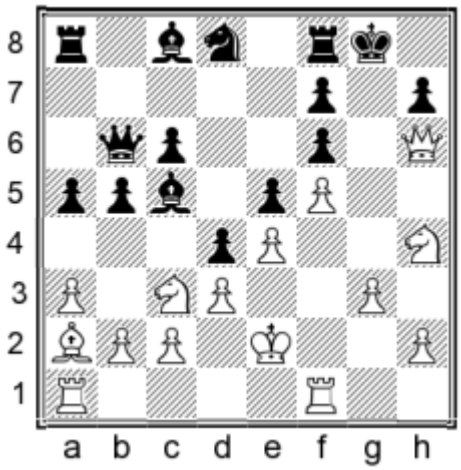
Chapter 15
Resulting moves

Let us recall point 7 from Krasenkow's article:

«It may happen that at the moment of calculating one of the variations, a new idea appears, a candidate move that is not relevant to this variation. In this case, it is necessary to determine its priority, but it is not necessary to consider it until one has finished calculating the variation one is currently working on. The only exception is where it is immediately obvious that the new idea is better than the ongoing continuation (and not just a higher priority).»

At the beginning of the article by Krasenkow and in Nunn's book, in the corresponding section, there are two examples, almost a twin. First we will give the floor to Krasenkow:

Alexander
Frank Marshall
Cambridge 1928



White to move

«In calculating the variation 1.Rf4 exf4 2.gxf4, after which Black replies 2...dxc3, controlling the square g1, the thought arises of first moving the knight away: 1.Nd5 or 1.Na4! (and then 2.Rf4).

The move **1.Na4** is indeed the quickest way to win. But without calculating the (albeit elementary) variation with 1.Rf4 it is hard to see what considerations would lead one even to consider 1.Na4! in one's list of candidate moves.»

And now John Nunn:

Gennady Kuzmin
Evgeny Sveshnikov
Moscow 1973

White to move

«The position looks like it has been composed specially to illustrate the double bishop sacrifice on h7 and g7. The only problem is that the idea does not quite work at present: 16.Bxh7+ Kxh7 17.Qh5+ Kg8 18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.Qg4+ Kh7 20.Rf3 (of course, White can give perpetual check) 20...Nxf4 21.Rxf4 f5, beating off the attack. In order to find the winning path, White needs to identify the black defensive resource which allows him to refute the immediate sacrifice – namely, the possibility of counter-sacrificing the knight on f4 – and then ask himself the question 'So, what if...' In this case, the question reads: 'So, what if we deflect the knight away from d5?' Then the solution becomes obvious:

16.Nb6! Nxb6

Moving the rook does not help Black, e.g. 16...Rb8 17.Nxd5 cxd5 18.Bxh7+ Kxh7 19.Qh5+ Kg8 20.Bxg7 Qxc5+ 21.Kh1 Kxg7 22.Qg4+ Kh8 23.Rf3 Qc2 24.f5! Qxf5 25.Rxf5 exf5 26.Qh3+ (if Black plays 16...Ra7, then now there is 26.Qd4+) followed by Qg3+, and the Rb8 is lost.

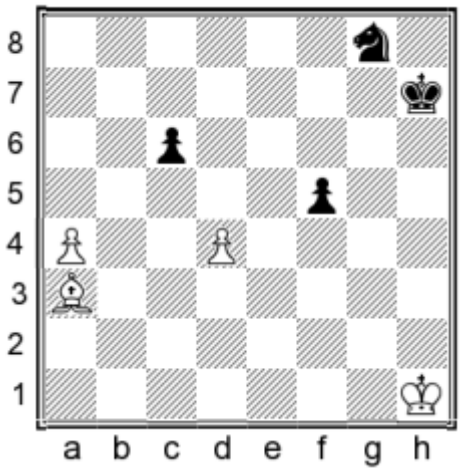
17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Qh5+ Kg8 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.Qg4+ Kh7 21.Rf3

Black resigned.

You could never find a move like 16.Nb6! by using the tree of analysis (assuming you are not a computer), because unless you examine it as part of the overall tactical operation, then by itself, the move makes absolutely no sense at all and so does not ever enter one's list of candidate moves.»

And now it is Beim's turn. First we will present his answer to the question of whether we can find moves such as **1.Na4!** and **16.Nb6!** in our examples with logic, without any of what he calls 'exotic' considerations. The author analyses a study by Troitzky, from 1924, starting with the move **1.d5!**:

Alexey Troitzky
1924



White to move

«The answer is this: the above logical reasoning is, in fact, a *verbal expression of the variations considered by us* (italics mine). Their simplicity makes it possible to do such arguments without difficulty, but the essence of this does not change – the variations remain variations. Therefore, we state the following: in very simple situations, key moves of a special kind (the name to be given later) can be found not only as a result of calculating the consequences of candidate moves, but also by logical reasoning.»

1.d5!

It's time to go to the main example of the section, explaining the meaning of the introduction.

Beim: «

Eduard Gufeld
Janis Klovans
Moscow 1966

White to move

The game had been adjourned and, after resumption, reached by force the diagram position, which had been the subject of detailed home analysis. Study of the candidate moves gave the following results:

A) 43.Rf7+?? Kg8 44.Rd1? Rcg3+ 45.Kf1 Rg1+ 46.Ke2 Rh2+, and Black wins;

B) 43.Rgd1? Rcg3+ 44.Kf1 Rg1+ 45.Ke2 Rh2+ 46.Kf3 Rh3+ 47.Ke4 Rh4+ 48.Kf3 Rh3+ 49.Ke2 Rh2+ with a draw;

C) The best line looks to be 43.Rd8+ Ke7 44.Re8+ Kd6 45.Rd1+ Bd4 46.Kf1 Rh5, and White should gradually realise his material advantage, although not without some difficulties.

However, the further course of the game was decisively influenced by the fact that it was played in a team event, and Gufeld had the good fortune to be on the same team as Geller. The Odessa GM found an effective solution to the problem of the annoying black rooks:

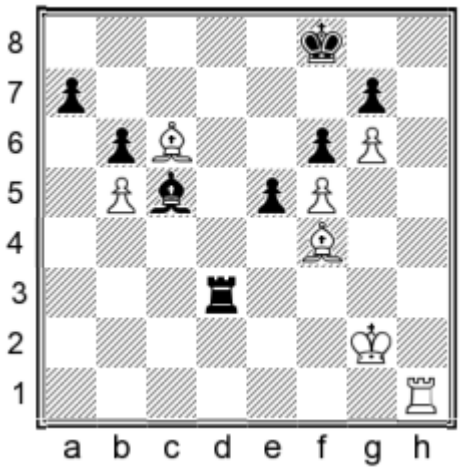
43.Bf4!!

It is not hard to imagine the effect of this unexpected blow on Black – it refutes the whole of his home analysis! There followed:

43...Rhd3

The strength and the point of White's last move is revealed in the variations 43...exf4 44.Rd8+ Ke7 45.Re8+ Kd6 46.Rd1+ Rhd3 47.Rxd3+ Rxd3 48.Rd8+ and 43...Bxg1 44.Rf7+ Kg8 45.Re7 Bc5 46.Re8+ Bf8 47.Bd5+.

44.Rxd3 Rxd3 45.Rh1



45...Ke7

Whether Klovans was shocked by his opponent's 43rd move or in time-trouble, either way the effects are obvious. Black loses immediately after 45...Bd4 46.Rh8+ Ke7 47.Bh6!. But the obligatory 45...Kg8 would have allowed him to put up a lasting resistance. And although after 46.Bc1 White should win in the end, the game could have dragged on for a long time.

Here after

46.Rh8!

Klovans admitted defeat, and this was not premature. After 46...Rd8 (46...exf4 47.Re8+ Kd6 48.Rd8+) 47.Rxd8 Kxd8 48.Bd2 the white king approaches the centre and Black cannot restrain his further offensive.

This little pearl is not spoiled even by the fact that White was probably winning after 43.Rd8+. Firstly, work would be required if Black were to keep the coordinated rooks (whereas once a pair of rooks was exchanged, Black was condemned to passive defence), and secondly, there is such a thing as aesthetic perception! One should not forget about the psychological effect either.

Now let's try to describe the mechanism of the phenomenon we are considering, and to find a name for it. So, at some point what we see is not an ordinary candidate move (a well-known concept), but a move that is derived from candidate moves. Often, when you look at the position, you can not even see the sign of such a move, but, nevertheless, it suddenly jumps out at one, like a genie from the lamp, and turns out to be the best decision! We have already seen such examples and will see them again and again. We also noticed that *the idea of such a move appears only as a result of calculating the consequences of more natural candidate moves*.

Let us recall that the remarkable move 43.Bf4!! in the fragment just seen not only rescued White from the annoying pair of enemy rooks, which caused so much trouble in variations A and B, but also effectively destroyed the enemy's defences along the d-file, thus deciding at the same time the problem of variation C. In other words (and this factor seems extremely important to me!): the miracle-stroke under discussion has decisively strengthened White's position in several lines.

When I wrote the book *Chess Recipes from the Grandmaster's Kitchen*, in which the concept of the 'resulting move' was introduced for the first time, it took quite a long time to find a suitable name for the described phenomenon, until finally I stopped at the image left in the memory from my school programme in maths and physics. It was about vectors, that is, lines that depict the action of a certain force on an object.

Let's do a mental experiment. As an object, let's take an inflatable ball. A child punches it, and the ball flies forward. But then a light breeze blows and under its influence the ball slightly changes its direction of flight and will fly not just forward, but forward and slightly up. Thus, the direction in which the balloon flies is the result of the action on it of two different forces or vectors. The total effect of these two forces can also be expressed in the form of a vector – such a vector in mathematics is usually called the resultant.

Since in our case it is often a question of progress, which also appears under the influence of several factors in the process of calculating candidate moves, I believe that it is logical to give it the name '*resultant move*' or '*resulting move*'. So: *a resulting move is derived from candidate moves, but cannot be considered a candidate move itself.*

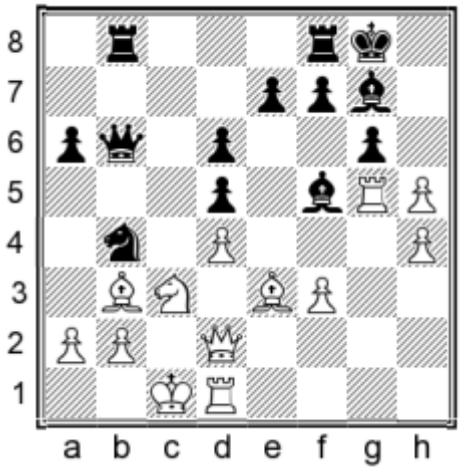
In this case, the potential presence in the position of the resulting move does not in any way affect the order of calculation known to us. For the resulting move (if it exists) in any case can be detected only as a result of calculating candidate moves, which in turn (I remind you once again) are only revealed at the final moment of the position review.»

After Valery Beim introduced the definition of 'the resulting move', and explained, by the example, what it means, much becomes clear and understandable. Let us recall Plato's 'Knowledge of

terms leads to knowledge of things.' A chess player quite often comes across resulting moves. After all, the moves **1.Na4!** and **16.Nb6!** from the recently-examined game fragments Alexander-Marshall and Sveshnikov-Kuzmin are also resulting moves, but they arise from a comparatively simple and easy calculation of the variations. That is why they are not perceived as an excess and by force of their emotional and psychological influence they yield to the move **43.Bf4!!** from the game Gufeld-Klovans.

Here are a few more examples of striking resulting moves. To begin, we will continue the discussion with John Nunn. In the following example, the English grandmaster describes the course of his thoughts in the game:

Adam Kuligowski
John Nunn
Wijk aan Zee 1983



Black to move

«White has just played 19.Rg1-g5. Black was threatening 19...Nd3+ followed by 20...Nc5+, but now this threat is eliminated, because in response to the discovered check, White will capture on f5.

Moreover, 20.Rxf5 gxf5 21.Rg1 is a serious threat.

My initial thought was the cautious 19...e6, but 20.hxg6 fxg6 21.Rdg1 leads to an unclear position, so I started looking for alternatives. My eyes suddenly noticed a tactical idea.

After 19...Bh6, there is the tempting 20.Rxf5, but then I asked the question whether any combination with ...Bxe3 and ...Nxa2+ would lead to a forced mate. After some deliberation, I managed to establish that 20...Nxa2+! 21.Nxa2 (21.Bxa2 Bxe3) 21...Qxb3 22.Bxh6 Qxa2 wins for Black, so after 19...Bh6, White will have to sacrifice the exchange on g5. The final position promises Black a definite advantage. The game continued:

19...Bh6! 20.Rdg1 Bxg5 21.Rxg5 e6 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.h5?!

After 23.Qg2 Rf6 24.h5 White has more chances of counterplay, although by means of 24...Nc2 Black maintains a large advantage.

23...Rb7 24.Qg2 Rg7 25.h6 Rb7 26.Rxf5 exf5 27.Qxg6+ Kh8 28.Qg2

After 28.Bg5 Qxd4 Black defends.

28...f4 29.Bg1 Rg8

White resigned.

Nevertheless, after discovering the possibility of...Nxa2+ in the varition with 19...Bh6, I should have gone back and seen if this idea influenced my list of candidate moves. The key point is that after taking on a2, a situation becomes possible in which the white queen does not guard the pawn b2. And suddenly it dawns on one – 19...Bc2!!»

The move 19...Bc2!! is a typical *resulting move*, arising out of other candidate moves and betraying every quality of excess.

The variations given by Nunn, which confirm White's defencelessness, are simple:

« 1) 20.Nxd5 Nxa2+ 21.Kxc2 Qxb3+ 22.Kb1 Rb7 23.hxg6 f5 and Black wins;

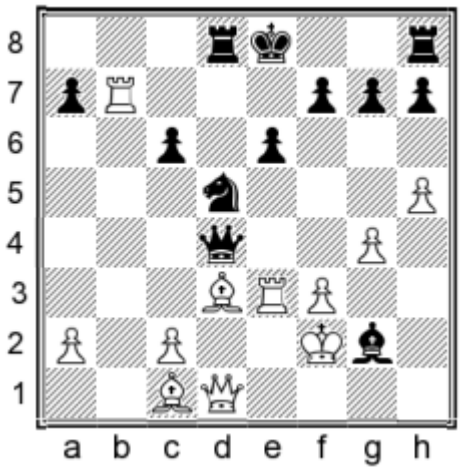
2) 20.Rdg1 Nxa2+ 21.Nxa2 Qxb3 22.Qxc2 Qxa2 also decides;

3) 20.hxg6 Nxa2+ 21.Kxc2 (21.Nxa2 Bxb3) 21...Qxb3+ 22.Kd3 Nxc3 23.bxc3 Qc4+ 24.Kc2 Qa2+ 25.Kd3 Rb2, winning the queen.»

The following example from Nunn's book is a fantastically beautiful idea by Vishy Anand,

involving two consecutive resulting moves.

Viswanathan Anand
Joel Lautier
Biel 1997



White to move

Nunn: «A lot of pieces are hanging and it takes a few minutes to catch the essence of the position! White is losing an exchange on e3, but the g2-bishop is trapped, and the most likely outcome, for example, is a position with two bishops against rook and two pawns.

However, Anand came up with an impressive tactical idea, namely, the queen sacrifice by the remarkable move Bg6. Unfortunately, after 20.Bg6 Qxd1 21.Rxe6+ Black's king escapes by 21...Kf8 22.Ba3+ (22.Rxf7+ Kg8) 22...Ne7 23.Bxe7+ Kg8, and White loses.

Now White can ask the question: 'What if I had a pawn on h6?' Then the variant with Rxf7+ leads to mate: Rxg7+ and Ba3+.

20.h6!!

[*The first resulting move – MS*]

20...gxh6?

Evidently Black hadn't seen Anand's idea, otherwise he would have chosen 20...Nxe3, although White retains the advantage after 21.Bxe3 Qe5 22.hxg7 Rg8 23.Qc1!. Of course, the variation 20...g6 21.Bxg6 is the ideal manifestation of White's idea.

21.Bg6!!

[*The second resulting move – excess, MS*]

21...Ne7

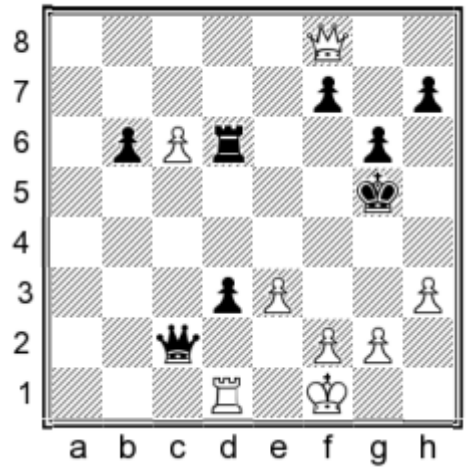
Now the h6-square is available to the white bishop and the variation 21...Qxd1 22.Rxe6+ Kf8 23.Bxh6+ Kg8 24.Bxf7 ends in mate.

22.Qxd4 Rxd4 23.Rd3! Rd8 24.Rxd8+ Kxd8 25.Bd3! 1-0»

And to conclude this subject, here is a comparatively recent example.

Before reading the notes, the reader is asked to set the position up on the board and try to calculate the variations, allowing himself 30 minutes.

Denis Khismatullin
Pavel Eljanov
Jerusalem Ech 2015



White to move

Now we will study the comments of grandmaster Denis Khismatullin in the magazine *64 – Chess Review* No. 4/2015, in which he describes in detail, frankly and with humour, the course of his thoughts about how he managed to 'dig up' the brilliant resulting move:

«So, we came to the position where, in fact, everything starts. After the game, many people asked how I managed to find my next move? I will try to reproduce my thoughts at this moment during the game.

Firstly, I was extremely annoyed by the fact that mate in one is threatened. I calculated quite easily the unpleasant variations 44.Ra1 (or 44.Re1) 44...Rf6 45.f4+ Kh4 46.Qh6+ Kg3 47.Qg5+ Kh2,

whilst I did not see at all the idea of 44.h4+ Kh5 45.g4+ Kxg4 46.Qxf7!! Qxd1+ 47.Kg2 with the inevitable perpetual check, which is not surprising.

I did not want to play 44.f4+ because of the possible penetration of the king to h2 after 44...Kh4, but here 45.Qxd6, covering the square g3, gives an easy draw, which I also missed.

But, of course, the stumbling block was the continuation 44.Qe7+ f6 (44...Rf6 45.f4+ Kh4 46.Qxf6+ Kg3 47.Qg5+ Kh2 48.Qg4!, with a win – this I did see). Here I fell into a light stupor, the variations spun round in my head, the time on my clock melted hopelessly away, and somewhere at that moment the thought arose that the black king in many cases escapes from the pursuit on h2... But maybe we can take control of that square?!? Prophylaxis in its pure form! I think, if you do not take into account the names of the players, Mark Israelevich Dvoretsky would have liked it. Of course, another possible explanation is that I moved the king, simply so as not to allow mate in one...

44.Kg1!!

From Pasha's reaction, I realized that the king's move was a complete surprise for him, as well, I think, as for everyone on the neighbouring tables. After all, you create threats, attack a rook, calculate the natural checks and the retreat of the rook, and then in reply, the opponent totally ignores your threats! However, I did at least defend against mate in one!

44...Qxd1+?

Surprisingly, the capture of the rook with check loses by force! Let us consider other variations.

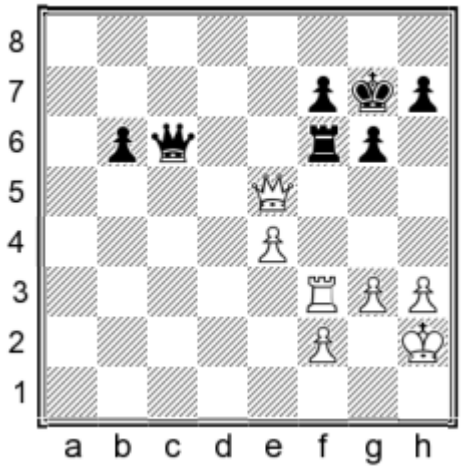
Black is not saved after 44...Qxc6 45.Qxf7 Rf6 46.Qe7! (46.Qxh7?! Rxf2 47.Qe7+ Qf6 48.Qc7 Kh6 49.Qg3 Rf5 50.Rxd3 with only a slight advantage for White) 46...Kh6 47.Rxd3 or 46...Qd6 47.Qxh7 d2 48.h4+ Kf5 49.h5, and White wins.

44...Rxc6 45.Qxf7 Qxd1+ 46.Kh2 transposes to the game.

The most stubborn and, possibly, saving defence is 44...Rd5 45.Kh2!! (step by step to the dream!! Nothing comes from 45.f4+ Kf6 46.Qh8+ Ke7 47.Ra1 Qxc6 48.Ra7+ Rd7 49.Ra8 Qxa8 50.Qxa8 d2 51.Qe4+ Kd8=) 45...Kf6 (the only move: on 45...Qxc6 White can win by 46.Qg7! Qe6 47.f4+ Kf5 48.e4+; more promising is 46.Qxf7 Rf5 47.Qe7+ Kh6 48.Rxd3, winning) 46.e4 Rc5 (46...Qxd1 47.exd5) and now:

A) 47.e5+ Kxe5 48.Re1+ Kd4 49.Qd6+ Kc3 50.c7 d2 51.Ra1 Qb3 52.Qxc5+ (52.Ra5 Rxc7 53.Qxc7+ Kb2 54.Qe5+ Kc2 55.Qe4+ Kc3 56.Qe5+ Kc2=) 52...bxc5 53.c8=Q Kb2 54.Rf1 d1=Q 55.Rxd1 Qxd1 56.Qxc5 Qb3=;

B) 47.Qd6+ Kg7 48.Rxd3 Rxc6 49.Qe5+ Rf6 50.Rf3 Qc6 51.g3



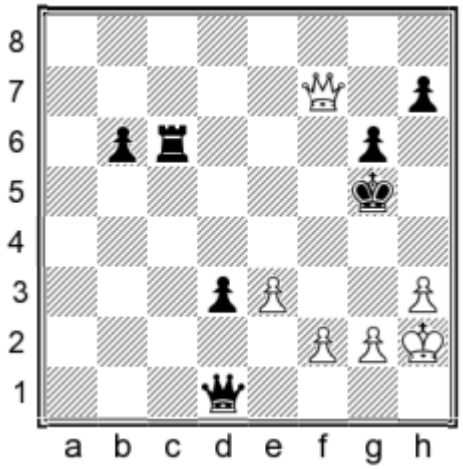
analysis diagram

Black can reach this position with best play after 44.Kg1. It seems to me that it is closer to a draw than a win for White, and most likely it all ends with a queen ending with 4 vs 3 on the kingside, but for a human to find all these moves, especially when short of time, of course, is unrealistic.

45.Kh2

Combining mate threats with the threat of advancing the c-pawn leaves Black no chance, but at this point, I still did not see the win!

45...Rxc6 46.Qe7+ Kh6 47.Qf8+ Kg5 48.Qxf7!



Fortunately, I managed to pull myself together and find this move, otherwise all would have been in vain. Now it is all over, and White forces mate.

48...Rf6 49.f4+ Kh6 50.Qxf6 Qe2 51.Qf8+ Kh5 52.Qg7 h6 53.Qe5+ Kh4 54.Qf6+ Kh5 55.f5 gxf5 56.Qxf5+ Kh4 57.Qg6

Black resigned.»

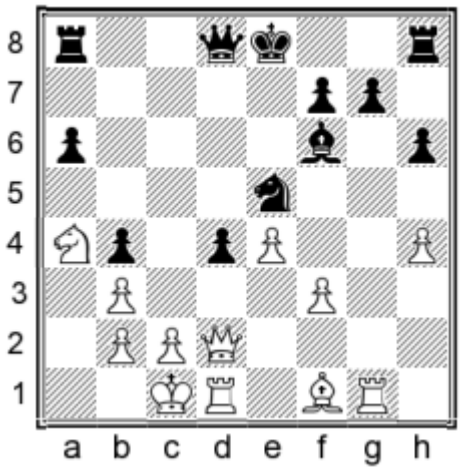
On this brilliant ending, I want to make the following observation. When Denis Khismatullin teases himself and says that the move 44.Kg1!! is one Dvoretsky would have liked as an example of prophylactic thinking, he expresses an interesting idea of Beim:

«The truth is that often prophylactic moves are simultaneously also resulting moves! This is because before taking a prophylactic decision, the player must understand the position and understand the essence of the enemy's threats. And for this, very often we have to calculate the variations and draw conclusions from them, in other words – do everything that the player does before finding the resulting move!»

We will conclude this topic with three examples from the work of world champions: Anand, Kramnik and Karpov, after which we introduce the reader to the new terms and try to sum up.

Here is Nunn once again:

Viswanathan Anand
Gata Kamsky
Linares 1994



White to move

«In this position, much depends on the mobility of the white 'e' and 'f'-pawns. If they manage to advance to f4 and e5, then Black's position will be hopeless. However, for the time being White is threatened with a fork on f3.

Anand decided that pushing the pawns to f4 and e5 is so important that for this it is worth sacrificing the g1-rook. The game followed the difficult tactical path:

19.f4! Nf3 20.Qg2 Nxg1 21.e5 0-0 22.Bd3! Bxe5! 23.fxe5 Qxh4 24.Rxg1 Qf4+ 25.Kb1! Qxe5

Even for a grandmaster, it's not at all easy to understand this variation, but that's not all. In the final position, Black has rook and three pawns for a bishop and a knight – on paper, a significant material advantage. However, Anand demonstrated that after **26.Nc5!** White's initiative does not allow Black to coordinate the actions of his pieces. Anand went on to score a great victory.

It's hard to criticize Anand's decision, because it allowed him to obtain an advantage by force, but for ordinary mortals (including ordinary grandmasters like me) this line is definitely a leap in the dark. In the position of the diagram it makes sense, having noticed 19.f4, to judge: 'Perhaps this is a good move, but very complex. If necessary, I will analyze it, but is there no other option that will provide me with an advantage with less risk?'

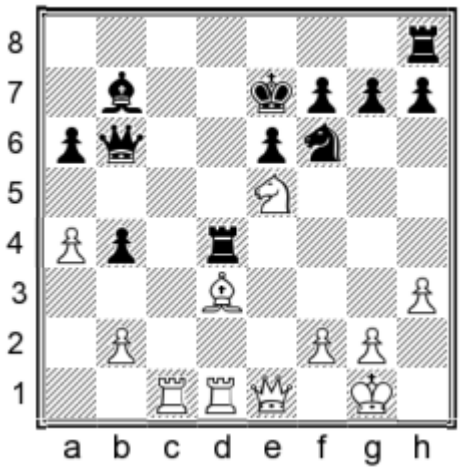
The move **19.Be2** looks quite natural; now f3-f4 and e4-e5 are threatened without any sacrifice. Black cannot block the pawns by 19...g5, because 20.hxg5 hxg5 21.Qxb4 (or 20.Qxb4 gxh4 21.Rxd4) is clearly in White's favour. Anand rejected this move because of **19...d3**, and this is really the only reasonable answer. However, then you can play **20.Qe3!**, and Black has big problems. The threat of f3-f4 and e4-e5 is renewed and the pawn d3 is hanging. The following is possible: 20...Bxh4 21.Bxd3 Qc7 22.Nb6 Nxd3+ 23.Rxd3 Rd8 24.Rxd8+ Qxd8 25.Nd5, and Black loses. He cannot castle because of 26.Qxh6, the pawn g7 hangs, White threatens to play 26.Qc5, and the powerful centralized knight dominates the bishop.

This straightforward variation is quite simple to calculate, and maybe there even is no need to calculate it accurately, since it is so clear that after 22.Nb6 White stands very well. Hence, White could achieve, at least, the same advantage as in the game, with the simple move 19.Be2. *It is easy to imagine that, after calculating a complex and tempting variation with 19.f4, White was not eager to look for an equivalent simple continuation, although moves like 19.*B*e2 and 20.*Q*e3 are child's play for a player of Anand's class.*»

The last phrase of John Nunn I have highlighted in italics. I ask the reader to pay attention to it, as it is

very important for mastering the subsequent material.

Vladimir Kramnik
Garry Kasparov
Zurich rapid 2001



White to move

Beim: «To assess this position, at first glance, is not easy. On Black's side, apart from the extra pawn, there is a slight advantage in space, and he also controls a large number of squares in the centre. But all these advantages may be insignificant because of the backwardness of Black's development. The only question is: how can White exploit this factor? The usual method in such cases is to disturb the enemy with attacks, not allowing him to complete his development and seeking to use the superiority of the attacking forces. If you look for a move on this principle, then immediately 24.Nc4 stands out. This move is really very good, because it forces Black to give the rook for the knight: 24...Rxc4 (Black loses after 24...Qc5? 25.Ne3 Qg5 26.Rc7+ Rd7 27.Qxb4+) After 25.Rxc4 a5, White has an undoubted advantage and every chance of winning.

Kramnik chose a different, completely unexpected line. Instead of the safe and promising technical work, he went in for a highly striking variation, but one which is extremely difficult to understand at first glance (and even at second glance, come to that...), involving not the winning of material but the sacrifice of it, and without forcing consequences.»

Again, I have highlighted this phrase and draw your attention to it. Play unfolds according to the now familiar scenario.

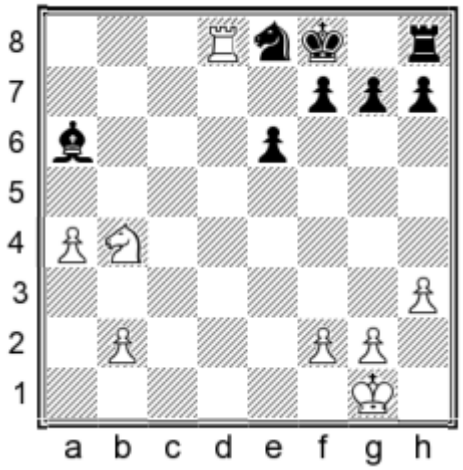
24.Bxa6!? Rxd1

«Black loses immediately after 24...Bxa6 25.Rxd4 Qxd4 26.Nc6+. If 24...Re4 25.Qd2 Rxe5 (both 25...Bxa6 26.Nc6+, and 25...Qxa6 26.Rc7+ are bad) 26.Bxb7 Rd8 27.Qxd8+ Qxd8 28.Rxd8 Kxd8 29.b3! Kd7 30.Rc4, White has a significant advantage in the endgame. But why should Black decline an extra piece?

25.Rxd1 Bxa6

Taking with the queen, 25...Qxa6, loses to 26.Qxb4+ Ke8 27.Rd6 Qa7 (27...Nd5 28.Rxa6 Nxb4 29.Rb6) 28.Qb5+ Ke7 29.Rb6 Rb8 30.Qc5+ Ke8 31.Rxe6+.

26.Qxb4+! Qxb4 27.Nc6+ Kf8 28.Rd8+ Ne8 29.Nxb4



The forced part is over, and what has happened in the end? The result, at first glance, is strange: White is a piece down, there are no queens, and the attack has also gone. However, in addition to a pawn for the sacrificed piece, White has a pair of connected passed pawns on the queenside, while the black forces lack coordination. What will count more – Black's extra material or White's trumps? At first glance, it is not so easy to answer this question, which means that we have the same issue to which this chapter is devoted [*calculation versus assessment – MS*].

Now it becomes clear that Kramnik, when starting the combination, had not only to calculate the variations, but also to penetrate deeply into the essence of this forced position, which turns out to be very difficult for Black!

29...Be2?!

Both 29...Ke7 30.Nc6+ Kf6 31.b4, and 29...Bc4 30.Rc8 Bd5 31.Nxd5 exd5 32.a5 lose (variations indicated by Christopher Lutz).

Modern computers are more powerful than those used 7-8 years ago, and chess programs have become stronger. Today, you can easily understand with the help of the 'iron monster' that Lutz made a mistake in his notes.

With the manoeuvre 29...Bc4! 30.Rc8 Be2! Kasparov had every chance to save the game. Black must drive the enemy rook from d8 to c8, so as to give a breath of air to his king (the square d7 in the case of a white knight check from c6). This delicate manoeuvre was overlooked by two great chess players. Let me remind you that the game was played in a rapid event. After the sample variation 29...Bc4! 30.Rc8 Be2! 31.f3 Ke7 32.Kf2 Kd7 33.Rc3 Bb5 34.axb5 Nd6 35.b6 Rb8 36.Rc7+ Ke8 37.Rc6 Kd7 38.Ke3 Rxb6 39.Rxb6 Nc4+ White's chances of success in this endgame, unlike in a pawn ending, are quite small.

30.f3!

Magnificent! The situation finally becomes clear. Black's bishop, his only mobile piece, loses the ability to coordinate with his other pieces.

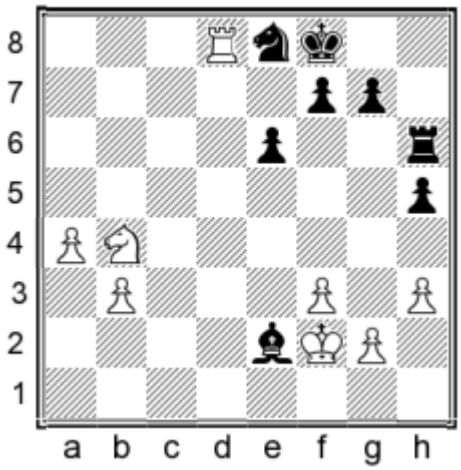
30...h5

In the variation 30...Ke7 31.Nc6+ Kf6 32.b4 Bc4 33.b5 Bd5 34.a5 the pawns queen.

31.b3!

The march is prepared!

31...Rh6 32.Kf2



This is the real result of White's combination. The rest is obvious.

32...Rg6 33.Kxe2 Rxg2+ 34.Kd3 Rg3 35.a5 Rxf3+ 36.Kc4 1-0

The game is good in itself, but gains a special charm from Kramnik's refusal of a routine, boring continuation on the 24th move and his deep, accurate assessment of the position resulting from his sacrifice. This is especially impressive, considering that the game was played in a tournament with a rapid time control.»

Two great chess players, two world champions, like a carbon copy, repeated the same strange plot. They refused comparatively simple promising continuations, preferring much more complex ones, which, as John Nunn put it, even for an ordinary grandmaster are a leap into the dark. What is the significance of this? Yes, they probably just think and make decisions differently. And certainly not by the method of Alexander Kotov. I'm not sure that Viswanathan Anand has ever heard of such a chess approach, but I do not doubt that he has his own algorithm for finding a move. We will return to this game further on.

About thirty years ago, when the battle for the title of World Champion between Karpov and Kasparov was raging, in an interview with Artur Yusupov, who was on the nearest approaches to the chess throne, I expressed the following opinion.

In a good, complex position, as a rule, there are several promising moves. Let's say there are three. So – one of them is the strongest, let's name it 'class A', and the other two are just strong – class B. Both Karpov and Kasparov will probably make the strongest move, only come to it in different ways. Kasparov, who has a beautiful, deep and wide, but not always 'clean' calculation of variations, like a computer, will calculate everything and choose the resulting continuation. Meanwhile Karpov, thanks to his phenomenal intuition, from somewhere above, just knows that this move is a class A, and the other two are B. He calculates the move A, perhaps not as deeply as Kasparov, but probably 'more cleanly', without gross mistakes, and will probably ignore the two other, class B moves altogether.

Artur Yusupov, very versatile, objective, confident in his abilities, a sympathetic young man, sadly then commented that he would be able to find the strongest move, but would spend more time on this than either Karpov or Kasparov.

It is obvious that both Anand and Kramnik trust their intuition. Both of them are superb calculators, when necessary. But from the opportunities available in the position, they intuitively choose the move they like most, analyse it, and if the result

suits them, do not waste time and energy on other alternatives.

Of course, all these arguments are rather approximate and sketchy, life is always more concrete and complicated. An experienced chess player takes into account when choosing a move the tournament situation, the strength of the opponent, his state of health, the situation on the clock and various other factors. But I hope you have caught the essence of the phenomenon. Grandmaster Sergei Arkhipov called this method of calculation *'the tunnel'*.

And what about candidate moves? Find them and rank them! But at the same time, use your intuition, use your tunnel, and start the calculation with the move suggested by the latter.

Most of the tournaments in which young chess players play today are conducted with a control of 1.5 hours per game+ 30 seconds per move without any addition of thirty minutes after the fortieth move. This includes the Russian Championship. With such a control, if you find several candidate moves and rank them, then the most severe time trouble 'for the rest of your life' is guaranteed by the time you reach move 30. Therefore, an alternative mechanism for finding a move is needed.

As agreed with the RCF in late 2015, I worked with the talented young chess player Arsen Nesterov. This young man has a rich imagination, attacks well and calculates variations decently. At the same time, he fell into time-trouble in every game. In the preface to the section 'Endgame Strategy' we got acquainted with the instructive mistake made by him in the decisive game of the Junior Under-13 World Championships. The psychological stress of this failure was strong, and Arsen's play at the annual show-tournament 'The Nutcracker', run by chess patron Oleg Skvortsov in the hotel Dvorkovich, was bad. In games with the girls, he gave away just about everything possible in time-trouble.

At that time I was in Moscow and was staying in the hospitable home of my friend Igor Burstein. I did not go to the games, but almost every day Burstein went along to watch the games of Boris Gelfand. And in the evening he would say to me: 'Well, your nutcracker blew it all in time trouble again!' In January 2016, I worked with Nesterov for another 5 days. After getting him to solve a few positions and establishing his algorithm for finding a move, I managed to draw up a 'diagnosis' and prescribe the 'medicine'.

The brief essence of it is as follows. The moment you realise you are getting short of time – and with the current control this shortcoming is revealed very soon –, before 'diving into the tunnel' it is necessary to act according to this scheme:

1) Quickly find a 'solid' move that maintains the tension and does not require a serious calculation of the variations. I stress: this is done *before* the 'tunnel' calculation.

2) Then, suppose you have 25 minutes left. Give yourself 5 minutes to find a light at the end of the tunnel.

3) If the light is not visible, then, with an 'iron' hand, you play the solid move prepared in advance. And no regrets about, perhaps, the possibility of missing something better – a kind of more ruthless form of 'DAUT'.

But look what used to happen before this. The player would 'dive' into the 'tunnel'. He would spend 22 minutes out of 25, and after 10 minutes of deliberation, he was fatigued, and the quality of the analysis was reduced. Then, not finding anything worthwhile, he made the first move he could think of and, in time-trouble, 'blew' a good position.

I explained to Arsen that if he got rid of the time pressure, in the very near future he would raise his rating by 200 points. I made a mistake. In 5 months his rating had risen by more than 250 points, and he had fulfilled the international master title requirements. But in fact, more recently, he lost to the girls in time-trouble...

Anatoly Karpov
Boris Spassky
Moscow 1973

White to move

Finally, here is the promised game of Karpov with deep and interesting notes by Beim from the chapter entitled 'Phased calculation'.

«With his last move (24...c6-c5) Black landed a blow at the opponent's position. In the battle for the initiative, Karpov took a remarkable decision here, requiring from him excellent calculation and, in no less measure, accurate assessment of the position resulting from various different lines.

25.a4!

As we will soon see, with this move, White goes in for the sacrifice of material.

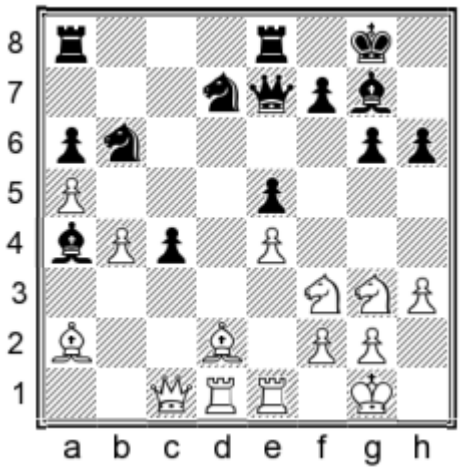
25...c4

The most fundamental continuation, but this does not mean that it is the best. After 25...cxb4, Karpov points out this variation: 26.a5 Rac8 27.Qa2 Na8 28.Bxb4! Nc5 29.Rc1 with a decisive advantage. But, as will later become clear, the path chosen by Black is not good for him. Therefore, it was better to play 25...Rac8!, when after 26.a5 Na8, the black pieces are much more harmonious than in the game, and White has only a slight advantage.

26.Ba2 Bc6 27.a5!

Of course, this continuation was planned by White when he calculated his 25th move. It is pretty much forced, since after 27.Bxc4 Nxc4 28.Qxc4 Bxa4, Black is better thanks to the bishop pair.

27...Ba4 28.Qc1



This position arises by force after Black's 25th move. It is clearer than the initial position: here Black has a choice between two main continuations. We can say that, in this respect, we have here a case of phased calculation (the first stage was from White's 25th to 28th moves inclusive).

28...Nc8

This is stronger than 28...Bxd1 29.Rxd1 Na4? (correct is 29...Nc8 30.Bxh6, transposing to the game) with these possible variations:

A) 30.Bxh6 Bxh6 31.Qxh6, and now Karpov gives 31...Nf8 32.Rc1 with an attack. However, after 31...Rec8! we reach an unclear position;

B) More convincing is 30.Qc2! c3 31.Be1 Nb2 32.Rd5!, and after both 32...Nf6 33.Bxc3! Nxd5 34.Bxd5 and 32...Rec8 33.Bxc3 Nc4 34.Qd3 Black stands badly.

This 'analytical miscalculation' of Karpov is quite curious in the light of the topic we are considering. It shows that when considering his 25th move, Karpov may not have calculated the variations all that deeply, but he did something much more practical – he was satisfied with the favourable assessment of his position after White's move. There is also no doubt that had Black chosen this line, Karpov would have found 30.Qc2!, with the follow-up! These considerations reinforce the view that there was a phased calculation in this game.»

I have put the last paragraph in italics, as it is very important for understanding the thinking of one of the best chess players in the history of chess.

29.Bxh6 Bxd1 30.Rxd1

Beim: «Again a rather clear and short stage of calculation (from Black's 28th move to White's 30th). The position in the diagram arises by force after Black's decision at move 28.

Let's try to understand the assessment. For the sacrificed exchange, White already has a pawn, and now he is going to pick up a second on c4. If he

succeeds, his light-squared bishop will gain a great deal of strength and will look not only at the weakened position of the black king, but also at the a6-pawn. In turn, with the fall of this pawn, White will have a pair of connected passed pawns. An essential role in the assessment of the position is played by the poor, disunited position of the black forces.

However, in order to properly assess the significance of these two factors (the promise of the white bishop and the disharmony in Black's forces), one must answer the question: is it possible for the knight to move to d6?

There is not the slightest doubt that the importance of this question was obvious to both players. And since, beginning with Black's 25th move, there was no real choice for either side, the main variation begins with Black's 25th move and ends with 30...Nd6, after which a critical position arises for the evaluation of the entire white plan.

Can it be evaluated at a glance? Undoubtedly, no. It all depends on whether Black is able to maintain his two knights on the d-file without losses, and without further calculation it is impossible to determine this. Thus, we have another example of the fact that in complex, tense situations, an accurate assessment of the position is impossible without calculating variations. Moreover, both players, having entered the fight on the 25th move, had to see this very principled position, and accurately understand it. As the development of events shows, White managed to do this better than Black.

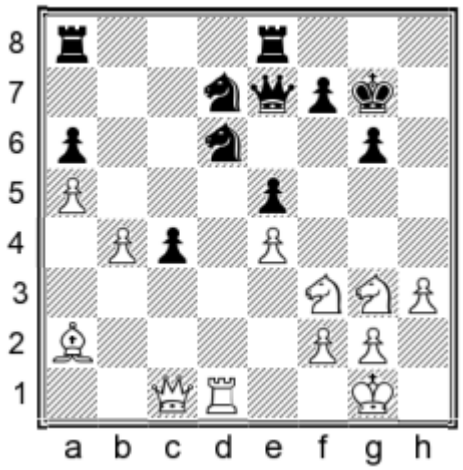
30...Nd6?

The decisive mistake! However, as analysis shows, the black position is already difficult. Thus, after 30...Ra7 the answer 31.Bxc4! looks very strong (the line given by Karpov, 31.Bxg7 Kxg7 32.Qxc4, is insufficient because of 32...Nb8!, and Black regroups his forces successfully – another confirmation of Karpov's intuitive approach rather than purely calculation. How important this is!), whilst after 31...Nd6, the 'Fritz' manoeuvre 32.Bg5 is very good!: 32...Bf6 33.Be3 with an obvious advantage for White.

In response to 30...Nf8 there follows 31.Bxg7 Kxg7 32.Qxc4 Ra7 33.Rd5!?, and Black must face a strong attack from his opponent. Also after 30...Nf6 31.Bxg7 Kxg7 32.Qg5! White has a strong initiative.

It remains to consider the preliminary exchange of bishops: 30...Bxh6 31.Qxh6, and only then 31...Nd6, but even then after 32.Ng5, Black's affairs are in a bad way: 32...Nf8 33.Nh5! gxh5 (33...f6 34.Rxd6! wins) 34.Rxd6 Rec8 35.Rf6 or 32...Nf6 33.Rxd6! Qxd6 34.Bxc4 Ra7 35.Qxg6+ Kf8 36.Qh6+ with a win in both cases.

31.Bxg7 Kxg7



Here there followed a blow which is an effective as it is unexpected.

32.Qg5!!

Evidently, Spassky had only expected 32.Qd2?. In this case, after 32...Nf6! 33.Qxd6? Rad8 it is Black who wins! Now, however, it all ends quickly and irresistibly.

32...f6

The attempt to hold the c4-pawn with 32...Rac8 is more tenacious, but even then, after 33.Rxd6! Qxg5 34.Nxg5 Nf6 35.Ne2 (or 35.Rxa6) White wins.

33.Qg4! Kh7

Or 33...Rac8 34.Rxd6, or 33...f5 34.exf5, winning.

34.Nh4

Black resigned. After 34...Rg8 White wins immediately with 35.Rxd6! Qxd6 36.Nhf5!, although 35.Bxc4 is also fully adequate.

There is another important aspect that is useful to discuss, using this game as an example. We were convinced that the calculation of variations between White's 25th and 32nd moves (including the consequences of his 32nd move) could very well occur in stages: the stages themselves are clearly

visible, moreover, the characteristic errors in Karpov's comments indirectly indicate this. *At the same time, White's play in the main line was impeccably accurate, and it is very difficult to imagine that, in making his 25th move, Karpov did not foresee his 32nd move!» [My italics – MS]*

The play of the young Anatoly Karpov in this game makes a strong impression. He outplayed his mighty rival, who was then in his prime, in an active positional manner, where the evaluation of the position after a non-obvious exchange sacrifice is constantly interwoven with a number of variations. The ability to isolate the main road of the unfolding struggle, an intuitive sense of the right direction, combined with tactical vigilance, coverage of the entire board and 'clean' calculation, soon led Karpov to the world title.

Valery Beim began his analysis at the crucial, key moment of the game, in a position full of dynamics, and with the help of excellent comments he revealed the manner of Karpov's decision-making. As for Karpov's inaccuracies in his analysis of secondary lines, it is likely that they are caused by the fact that the future World Champion hardly analysed them. He just knew that he had an advantage in those lines, and how exactly to deal with them was something he would work out if and when it came to it. In other words, Karpov saw from afar the light at the end of the tunnel, i.e. the move **32.**Q**g5!!**, and only looked around at side-variations relatively briefly.

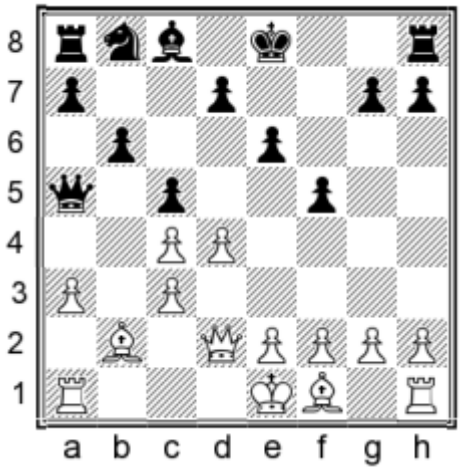
Beim expressed this same thought, only in other words. I would like to add that dynamic positions of this type have always been considered Spassky's forte, but in this game the 10th World Champion was convincingly outplayed by the 12th.

Chapter 16
Iosif Dorfman's Method in Chess

It's time, at last, to talk about the book by Iosif Dorfman, *The Method in Chess*. But first we will go back to Lipnitsky's fine work *Questions of Modern Chess Theory*, which was only recently re-released by the publishing house 'Russian Chess House' and is even better after some great creative editing by Ilya Odessky.

As part of the *The Soviet Chess Conveyor* we provided an explanation of Lipnitsky's statement that the purpose of chess analysis is to reduce undecided (visually unclear) positions to determined or resolved ones (assessable, at least, at a second glance).

Let's recall the position in the next diagram, taken from Lipnitsky and covered above under 'On the study of chess classics'.



White to move

The position in the diagram, of course, must be regarded as critical. White's choice of move will decide the nature of the game and its likely outcome. As we already know, the principle 'develop one's pieces quickly and castle' will lead White to a dead end, whereas another principle that is not always easy to formulate – 'attack the opponent in the most vulnerable place for him' is dominant here due to the 'hook' – the pawn on f5, which White can hook onto with

11.g4!.

So, Dorfman's book helps the player and coach, firstly, to determine these critical positions, and secondly, to make the right decision and formulate it in several short phrases.

Here is what Arthur Yusupov writes in his article 'Analysis of your own games', about critical positions: «First of all, it is necessary to find the turning points – to determine where mistakes were made, the assessment of the situation changed or the opportunity to drastically change the situation on the board was not used. The very ability to find the critical moments of the game in analysis is extremely important, as it will help you to guess such moments during the game also. This is perhaps the most difficult thing in chess – to feel the crucial, critical moment in the game, when you need to seriously think about and solve the problem, when the outcome of the whole struggle depends on one move.»

Dorfman gave a definition of the critical position in the first part of his book, 'Dynamics and Statics':

«Identifying critical positions

I propose three criteria for the presence of a critical position:

1) A position in which it is necessary to decide on a *possible exchange.* If the exchange is forced, then there is no change in comparison with the previous critical position.

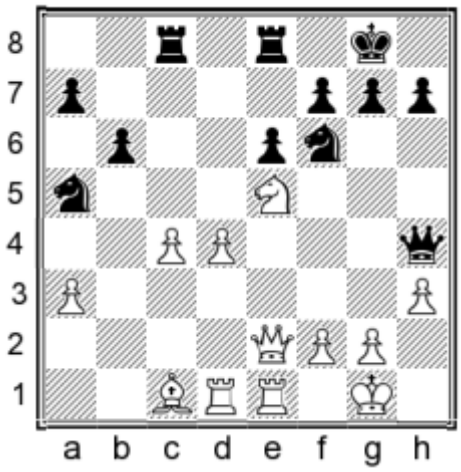
2) A position in which it is necessary to decide on a *possible change in the pawn structure.* Especially the central pawns.

3) *The end of a series of forced moves*. Here, one should not draw parallels between forced moves and moves related to a combination.

To sense that you have reached a critical position is already a great success. Based on my coaching experience, I suggest that the reader mark it with some sign [*Translator's note: Making such a note on the scoresheet is presumably a breach of the laws of chess*]. It is useful to fix the time spent thinking about each critical position, and after the game to restore their static balance.

The third point is, perhaps, the most difficult to understand, although with the first one one can only partially agree. Yes, it often happens that after a series of forced (on both sides!) moves, a critical position arises in which it is necessary to outline the scheme of action, but in fact it can happen that a critical position will arise accidentally as a result of an error or an inaccuracy of one of the players. For example, we can recall the game Alekhine-Euwe, where Black's last move **22...**R**d8-e8?** took away the squares e8 and d7 from his knight and created the preconditions for an attack on the queen on h4.

Alexander Alekhine
Max Euwe
The Hague WCh m 1937 (10)



White to move

It would not be unduly lazy to quote Botvinnik again: 'True progress can be found via the following considerations. In order to catch the black queen on h4, the white g-pawn should stand on g4, the white knight on f3, and the white pawn h3 must be protected. It's easy to see that if White played 23.Qf1!!, then Euwe could safely lay down his weapons. The advantage of the move is that in the case of 23...h6 (there is nothing better) 24.g3 Qh5 25.g4 Qh4 26.Nf3, White has gained a tempo and the black queen is caught.»

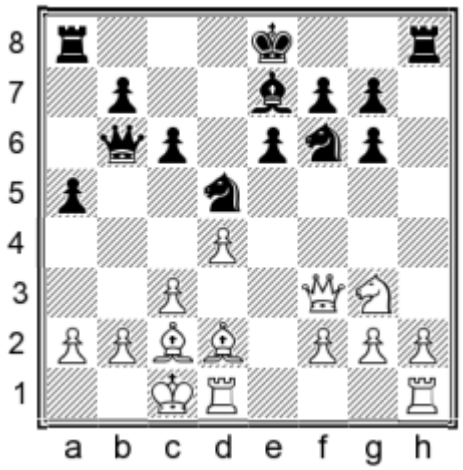
We are dealing with a critical position that emerged quite spontaneously. Of course, strictly speaking, one could say this is a case of point 2, which deals with the possibility of changes in the pawn structure. But in paragraph 2, Dorfman has in mind something completely different. Here, the goal of Botvinnik's logical analysis was catching the queen, and the movement of the g-pawn, first to g3 and then to g4, simply served as a tool to achieve that goal.

Summing up the static balance, which we will talk about a little later, is hardly going to enable us to grasp the essence of the position, which Botvinnik summed up in his two opening sentences.Many dynamic changes occur in the position.

Here I would like to say that the banal idea that chess is too complicated and not always accurate is true. One cannot invent a universal method, a system, a stratagem that could be used in the overwhelming majority of cases – there will be too many exceptions! And the attractiveness of chess would then fade. But any innovative undertaking in this field, especially when it comes to a fine grandmaster who understands chess, is welcome.

Dorfman divided the assessment of the position into two components: static and dynamic. He introduced the concept of 'static balance' and made me think about where the game is heading, thereby helping to look into the future not only young, developing chess players, but also quite experienced and fully-formed ones.

Sergey Tiviakov
Iosif Dorfman
Mondariz 2000



Black to move

16...c5!

«Decisive measures are necessary, else the position could degrade after h4-h5.» (Dorfman)

I have never heard any other commentator use the word 'degrade' to describe a chess position, but it seems to be just the right word to describe the events that could unfold. After 17.dxc5 Qxc5 18.Ne4 Nxe4 19.Bxe4 Rd8 20.h3 b5 Tiviakov switched the direction of play with the move 21.Bxd5, and soon the players agreed a draw.

Or: «There is a crude method that allows you to immediately get a static assessment of the position:

1) Analyse whether the evolution of one's own position is possible, regardless of the enemy's position;

2) Analyse whether the evolution of the enemy's position is possible, regardless of yours.

Statically, the position that is ready for evolution is better.

Consider the situation from the game **Murshed-Dorfman** (Palma de Mallorca 1989), arising after the moves

1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.Nc3 exd4 4.Qxd4 Nc6 5.Qd2 g6 6.b3 Bg7 7.Bb2 Nf6 8.g3 0-0 9.Nh3

Here, on the white side, evolution can be outlined by Nf4, Bg2, 0-0.

Nothing like this exists on the black side. So, White has a static advantage. Therefore, Black adopted drastic measures. A double-edged situation arose after

9...a5 10.Nf4 a4 11.Nxa4 Ne4 12.Qc1 Nd4 13.Bg2 Re8 14.0-0 Bg4 15.f3 g5

Here is another case where only one side can progress, independently of the other.

Vladimir Petrienko
Iosif Dorfman
Moscow 1984

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 a6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 Qxd5 5.d4 e6 6.Be3 cxd4 7.cxd4 Nf6 8.Nc3 Qd6 9.Be2 Nc6 10.0-0 Be7 11.a3 0-0 12.Rc1 Rd8 13.b4 b5 14.Qb3 Bb7 15.Rfd1

Here Black has a tempting regrouping by means of ...Nc6-b8-d7-b6, or ...h7-h6, ...Be7-f8, ...Nc6-e7-d5.

15...h6 16.Rc2 Bf8 17.Rcd2 Ne7 18.Ne5 Ned5

After this Black controls the situation and his static advantage is indisputable.» (Dorfman)

Iosif Dorfman does not overload his book with variations, and in the methodological plan, the author chooses to concentrate the reader's attention on important strategic lines. This distinguishes his work from numerous computer commentators of our time. Of course, one can find inaccuracies and mistakes, but who does not have these, when one goes deeply into the concrete details and gets bogged down in them?

For example, in the Murshed-Dorfman game, the move 10.Nf4 can be questioned.

The more natural move is 10.Bg2, and if 10...a4, then 11.Nxa4 Bxh3 12.Bxh3 Ne4 13.Qc2. But the conceptual idea of the author is that Black's position is statically worse and with time it will degrade. Therefore, we urgently need to look for dynamic play, and whether this play is correct or not, whether it will hang together move by move, is a secondary question.

Something else is also true. Ideas about the evolution of the position are not innovative. The very term 'evolution' being applied to chess is possible, but the idea has certainly already been met.

As we said before, in Dvoretsky's works you can get an answer to almost all the questions. In the second volume of the four-volume *School of Excellence*, published in 2002, before analysing his game with Mark Taimanov, Dvoretsky writes:

«... We will confine ourselves to a more careful consideration of the situation, a conversation about which has already begun: when the sense of unfavourability of the situation forces the chess player, without fear of risk, to take drastic measures. And the sooner you feel the danger, the more different opportunities to change the course of the fight remain at your disposal.»

Next we give an analysis of the above situation with Mark Dvoretsky's comments.

Mark Dvoretsky
Mark Taimanov
Leningrad 1974

White to move

«The position seems approximately equal. But let's think about what each of the players can do.

The black plan is clear: he is going to play ...Qc7, put the rook on d8, then push the knight from the c4-square by ...a7-a6 and ...b6-b5, achieving a spatial advantage. But for White, no clear plan is visible. If he does not come up with something, his position will gradually deteriorate.

Having realised the danger in time, I willingly took advantage of the first opportunity to turn the game in a different direction.

13.a5! b5

There is no sense in Black's damaging his pawn structure: 13...bxa5 14.Nfe5 or 13...Nxa5?! 14.Nxa5 bxa5 15.Qa4 (or 15.Ne5).

14.a6 Bc8

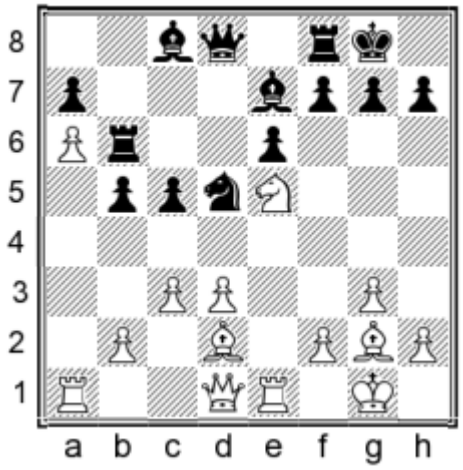
If 14...bxc4, then 15.dxc4!. With 14...Ba8 15.Nce5, play would develop more quietly than in the game, but Mark Taimanov preferred to start an immediate hunt for the advanced a6-pawn. However I felt that, even if the pawn were lost, I would get sufficient tactical counterchances.

15.Nfe5!

15.Nce5?! is weaker because of 15...Rb6!.

15...Nxe5 16.Nxe5 Rb6 17.Bd2!

It is clear that White cannot manage without c3-c4, but for the moment, this move is premature: 17.c4 bxc4 18.dxc4 Nb4!, with advantage to Black. First, it is essential to take control of the important square b4.



17...Bf6!

He loses after 17...Rxa6 18.Rxa6 Bxa6 19.Nc6 and 20.Bxd5. An unclear position arises after both

17...Bxa6 18.c4 Nb4 (18...bxc4 19.Ba5) 19.Bxb4 cxb4 20.cxb5 (20.Nc6 Qe8) 20...Bxb5 21.Rxa7, and 17...Qc7 18.c4 Nb4 19.Bxb4 cxb4 20.cxb5. And after 17...Bd6 I intended 18.c4 Bxe5 19.Rxe5 Qd6 20.Rg5!, having in mind an exchange sacrifice: 20...f6 21.Rxg7+ Kxg7 22.cxd5 exd5 23.Qh5 or 20...h6 21.Rxg7+ Kxg7 22.Qh5!.

18.Ng4!

Weaker is 18.c4 Nb4 19.Bxb4 cxb4, and the pressure exerted by the powerful bishop on f6 promises Black the advantage.

18...Rxa6 19.Rxa6 Bxa6 20.Qa1 Qb6 21.Nxf6+ Nxf6 22.b4!?

22.Be3? is bad because of 22...Ng4, but 22.Qa3!? was perfectly possible. I refrained from this move because of 22...b4 23.cxb4 cxb4 24.Bxb4 Rc8, with the positional threats 25...Ng4 and 25...Bb7, but then 25.d4! is very strong. Black does best to return the pawn at once with 22...Bb7.

22...cxb4 23.Be3 Qd6 24.Bf4

Not 24.cxb4 Qxb4 25.Rc1 Qa4!.

24...Qb6 25.Be3

Neither side can avoid the repetition. If 25.cxb4?! there is the unpleasant 25...Ng4! followed by Bb7.

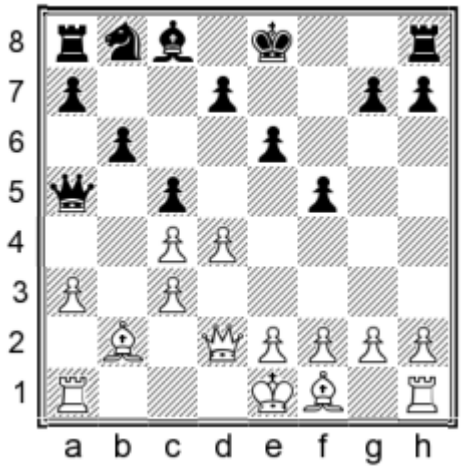
25...Qd6 26.Bf4 Qb6 27.Be3 Qd6 28.Bf4 Qb6 draw.»

And a little earlier in the same book, Mark Dvoretsky explains that a sharp change in the nature of the game in a strategically unfavourable situation is the best chance from a psychological point of view:

«*But sometimes the psychological effect is even greater. If you can suddenly and dramatically change the situation on the board (even if you choose an objectively risky and not the strongest continuation), then your opponent, who is already attuned to a certain picture of the game, often does not have time to re-adjust and begins to make mistakes.*»

Further, Dvoretsky continues: «In strategically difficult situations, it is useful to sharpen the game, to force the opponent, who is ready for the peaceful exploitation of his assets, to deal with the calculation of specific variations, the search for the only correct move. To this end, sometimes we have to either go to material sacrifices, or, on the contrary, take something, even Risking a terrible attack. Finally, the game can be changed also by strategically responsible moves, associated with certain positional concessions.»

Now we return to the position taken from Lipnitsky's book.



White to move

By using Dorfman's crude method for assessing the static balance, one can easily find the move

11.g4!.

The reasoning is limited to one sentence. If Black plays ...Qa5-a4, ...Ba6 and ...Nb8-c6-a5, White's position degrades, and therefore he needs urgently to look for counterplay.

Here, by the way, I would like to mention the brilliant remark of Iosif Dorfman that the word 'if' in chess is almost always a synonym for time.

I really liked the crude method of immediate static assessment of the position, but when Dorfman aspires to a more accurate assessment and brings in the 'static balance', then there are more questions than answers. But first, let us become acquainted with the definitions of the author of the book *Method in Chess*.

«Drawing up the static balance

When drawing up the static balance, I want to highlight two important points.

First: I propose a regressive scale of static factors, arranged in order of importance.

Second: some factors exist in a static and a dynamic form.

The regressive scale for static assessment of the position

The idea of using a regressive scale is typical for any complex process. It consists in analysis and synthesis. First, the position is broken down into static elements in a regressive order (the analytical method). Then a static balance (synthesis method) is applied.

I suggest arranging the static elements in the following order in accordance with their importance.

A) The position of the king

B) Material balance

C) Who has the better position after the exchange of queens

D) The pawn formation.»

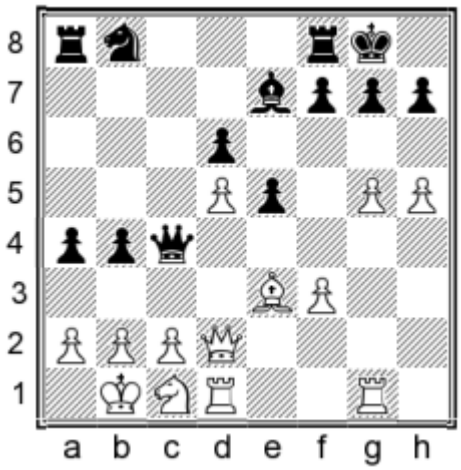
Then Dorfman begins to operate, using the symbols familiar to chess players: ², ±, +–, etc.

Here are some examples from the book *Critical Positions*.

Dorfman:«

Oscar de la Riva Aguado
Joseph Gallagher
France tt 1998

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.f3 e5 7.Nb3 Be6 8.Be3 Be7 9.Qd2 0-0 10.0-0-0 b5 11.g4 b4 12.Nd5 Bxd5 13.exd5 a5 14.Kb1 Qc7 15.g5 Nfd7 16.h4 Nb6 17.h5 a4 18.Nc1 Nc4 19.Bxc4 Qxc4 20.Rhg1



Black has not played the opening very well. In the event of the advance g5-g6, his king will face a strong attack. In addition, the pawn structure is favourable for White, because of the weakness of the square c6 and the pawn d6, fixed on a dark square. That's why the English grandmaster turned to dynamics.

20...b3 21.cxb3 axb3 22.Nxb3 Nd7

The critical moment of the game has been reached. It is important to note that the static balance has changed in Black's favour: 1. ³; 2. ²; 3. ²; 4. ².

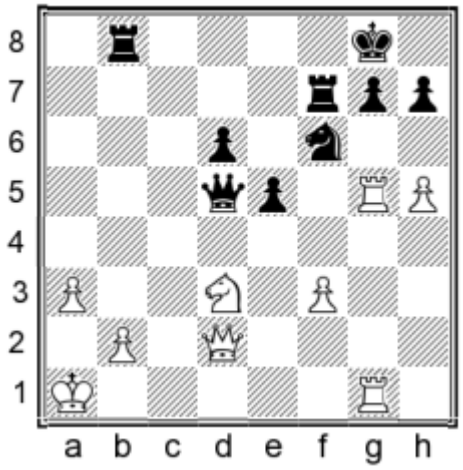
23.Nc1?

Panic. Sometimes you can hear the claim that chess is a reduced model of life and the laws in force are close to the laws that operate in nature.

It is logical that if before the 20th move the advantage belonged to White, then it could not evaporate after a series of forced moves.

The chess player from Andorra should have striven for dynamics and fought for the initiative by means of 23.Na5!! Qa4 24.b4. In this case, White had many opportunities for improving his position through Rg4, Rc1, Nc6.

23...f5 24.gxf6 Bxf6 25.Rg4 Qa6 26.Rdg1 Rf7 27.Bg5 Bxg5 28.Rxg5 Nf6 29.a3 Rb8 30.Ka1 Qb7 31.Nd3 Qxd5



Black has re-established material equality, whilst retaining all the advantages of his position. White

wakes up too late and persists in his vain attempts to disturb the black king, to the very end.

32.f4 h6 33.Rg6 e4 34.Qg2 Nxh5 35.Rxh6 Qxd3 36.Qg6

In time-trouble, the logical course of the game is disturbed and the players exchange mistakes. Black, after 34...Ne8 35.Nc1 (35.Nb4 Rxb4) 35...Qd4 36.Na2 Rxf4, would retain every chance of winning, whereas now after 36.Rxh5 Ra7 37.Qh2 Rxa3+ 38.bxa3 Qc3+ White could draw.

36...Rxb2 37.Rh8+ Kxh8 38.Qxh5+ Kg8 39.Rxg7+ Kxg7 40.Qg5+ Kh7 41.Qh4+ Kg8 42.Qg5+ Rg7 43.Qd8+ Kf7 44.Qd7+ Kf6 45.Qd8+ Ke6 0-1»

I ask the reader to pay attention to Dorfman's comments after Black's 22nd move: 'The critical moment of the fight has come. It is important to note that the static balance became positive for Black: 1. ³; 2. ²; 3. ²; 4. ².'.

In fact, only one point became positive with the sign '³': the static position of the king. All other points are in favour of White. The king's position is the main point in the assessment of any position, and, of course, on Dorfman's regressive scale, it comes first. It symbolizes the esoteric expression 'here and now', and not a distant bright, or not very bright, future.

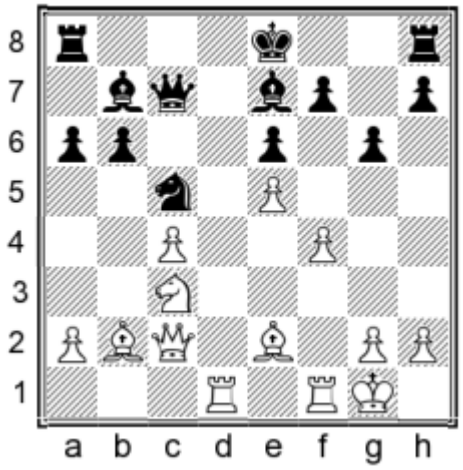
But if this is so, then the question arises: how important are, say, the third and fourth items of the regressive scale, and should they be taken into account at all? Let us recall the idea of Kramnik, voiced by Sakaev in the excellent *The Complete Manual of Positional Chess*:

«It is worth mentioning that many methods suggest using all possible formulae for the criteria of this evaluation – in my opinion (and not only mine, but Vladimir Kramnik's, for example, as I managed to find out in personal conversation), this is fundamentally wrong. 'Weighing' all the nuances needs to be intuitive, figuring out the importance of this or that component. How to do it? Only by accumulating practical and theoretical experience, using the accuracy of positional estimates. The more the corresponding balance of knowledge and the higher the class of the player, the fewer variations it is necessary to calculate.»

The second note, to White's 23rd move: *«It is logical, that if before the 20th move the advantage belonged to White, then it could not evaporate after a series of forced moves»,* is one we will have to look at more closely after the following extract.

Dorfman:*«*

Tigran Petrosian
Helmut Pfleger
Leipzig 1960



White to move

This time the static balance is catastrophic for White: 1. –+; 2. =; 3. –+; 4. –+.

In positions such as this, there should be no psychological problem at all in taking a decision.

Remember that fortune favours the brave. So, without any hesitation:

18.Nd5! exd5 19.cxd5 Qc8 20.e6 0-0 21.Qc3 f6 22.d6 Na4

The end of a series of forced moves. White could play a better ending after 23.Qd4 Bxd6 (23...Qc6 24.Bf3 Qxd6 25.Bxb7 leaves Black no hope) 24.Qxa4 Bc5+ 25.Kh1 Qc6 26.Qxc6 Bxc6. *I would suggest that Petrosian had seen this position before his 18th move*. Now he can relax and study the nuances of the position.

23.Qxc8 Rfxc8 24.Ba1 Rc2

After 24...Bf8 25.e7 White also has a significant advantage.

25.dxe7 Rxe2 26.Rd8+ Kg7 27.Rc1 Rxe6 28.Rc7 Kh6 29.Bxf6 Be4 30.Bg5+

Black resigned.»

What happened here? In the diagram position, according to Dorfman, Black had an almost decisive

advantage in all elements of the static balance, including the king's position, Yet, quite clearly, White throws himself into hand-to-hand combat, and after a series of forced moves it turns out that his position is almost won.

Where is the logic in this and how does it fit in with the previous comments?

We will show one more game from the second volume of *Critical Positions* with notes by Dorfman:

Viktor Kortchnoi
Anatoly Karpov
Hastings 1971/72

White to move

«In the next position offered to the reader for his analysis of the situation, Black has the bishop pair in a stable situation. This superiority is reflected in the static balance: 1. =; 2. ³; 3. ³; 4. ³.

This precludes laziness on White's part, since after ...b6-b5, ...c5-c4, ...Nd7-c5, ...a6-a5, ...Bb7-a6, ...Re8-c8 and ...b5-b4, his queenside collapses like a house of cards. Kortchnoi acts without prejudice.

16.g4! Qd8

Visually, Black's position looks like a solid fortress. But now, by means of a sacrifice, White clarifies the situation on the board.

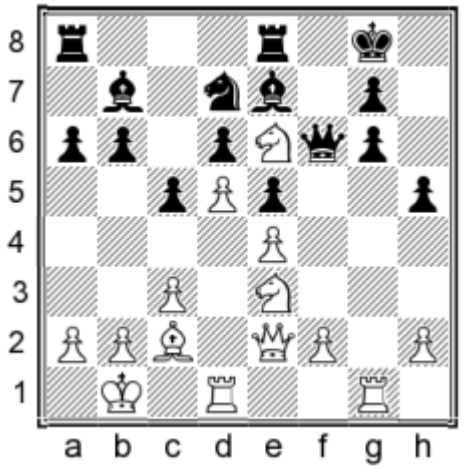
17.g5 h5

Even with other defences, it is hard for Black to slow down the development of White's attack:

A) 17...hxg5 18.Rdg1 Be7 (18...f6 19.h4 gxh4 20.Nxh4) 19.h4 gxh4 20.Nf5 g6 21.N3xh4 Bxh4 22.Qh5;

B) 17...g6 18.gxh6 Bxh6 19.h4 Bf4 20.h5

18.g6 fxg6 19.Rhg1 Qf6 20.Ng5 Be7 21.Ne6



21...Nf8

The critical moment. Black parts with material, so as to avoid a direct attack after 21...Rac8 22.Rg2 Nf8 23.Rdg1 Kh7 24.Rxg6 Qxg6 25.Rxg6 Kxg6 26.Bd1 Kf7 27.Qf3+ Bf6 28.Nxg7 Kxg7 29.Nf5+ Kh8 30.Nxd6.

The rest is a matter of technique, in this case fairly simple.

22.Nc7 Qf7 23.Rdf1 b5 24.Nxa8 Bxa8 25.c4 Rb8 26.Bd3 Qe8 27.Rc1 Bf6 28.Rg2 Rb6 29.Rcg1 Rb8 30.Qf1 b4 31.Be2 h4 32.Rxg6 Qxg6 33.Rxg6 Nxg6 34.Bg4 Nf4 35.Qd1 b3 36.axb3 Bb7 37.Ng2 Bc8 38.Bxc8 Rxc8 39.Qg4 Re8 40.Nxf4 exf4 41.Qxf4 Be5 42.Qxh4 Rf8 43.b4 Bd4 44.bxc5 1-0»

Once again, Dorfman cannot explain the logic of the struggle and the final result of the game by applying a static balance. After all, in the initial critical position, three factors were in favour of Black, with one equal. And Dorfman does not indicate any serious errors on the part of Karpov. But if you turn to the crude method of static evaluation, then everything will become much easier.

Dorfman correctly noted that (and how) the white position on the queenside can quickly degrade, and therefore White must act quickly. Kortchnoi, without hesitation, proceeded to a pawn breakthrough. Meanwhile, Karpov's queen proved to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. If she had been on d8, or even e7, for example, Black would have been able to meet 16.g4 with 16...g6!, and White's attack on the king's flank would have been noticeably more difficult. That is, the specific features of the position (the black queen on f6 and the pawn on h6) are such that they give White a

'hook' for the pawn breakthrough, literally just for one moment (a half-move), but this is enough to make the dynamics of the game favour White.

As for the extract from Petrosian-Pfleger, there is no need to be a clairvoyant after Black's 17th turn to see that, if Black manages to castle, White faces a grim struggle for a draw.

We have seen that a rough static assessment of the situation, which can be formulated in several phrases, is much more accurate and more understandable for a player than drawing up a formal balance, with the help of pluses, minuses and equalities. In addition, it is close to the 'visual' approach of Kramnik and Sakaev. Dvoretsky was even more categorical on the method with the calculation of the pros and cons:

«Nonsense! In fact, most of such work is done subconsciously. The art of evaluation is the ability to understand the essence of the position: to determine the most important problem (positional or tactical) that needs to be solved, to feel the right direction for our search, to feel the desirability or undesirability of this or that operation. It is clear that a well-developed intuition helps the speed and correctness of our perception.»

For confirmation of the words of these respected experts, I would like to present a modern example from the game Jakovenko-Matlakov (Khanty-Mansiysk 2014), in the notes to which grandmaster Dmitry Jakovenko gives a detailed logical analysis of a complex position. In assessing the situation, there is not even a hint of any formulae and addition/subtraction, and the problem of exchanges is also verbally described, as is the fact that one of the players must act quickly, otherwise his position will degrade.

Dmitry Jakovenko
Maxim Matlakov
Khanty-Mansiysk 2014

Black to move

Two moves ago, the queens were exchanged and we obtained a complicated position of a middlegame type. The Nb5 is under attack, and after its retreat, White regains the pawn on g7. The assessment of the position is not too clear and much will depend on how Black manages to place his pieces on the queenside.

17...Nd6?!

Here are the comments to this move and the assessment of the whole position, given by Jakovenko in the magazine *64 Chess Review* (2015, No. 1):

«It's hard to believe that this move is almost the decisive mistake, so I will dwell on the position which arises after the capture on g7. At first glance, it seems that Black has no reason for concern. His pieces are developed, there is an outpost at b4, the prospect of White creating a passed pawn is fairly vague, the strength of the white bishops is not felt yet. But in fact, *Black is in great strategic danger* [*my italics – MS]*, and if he just makes several natural moves, he will face serious problems. Honestly, I myself do not quite understand why this is so, although during the game I correctly assessed my position as very promising. Perhaps the point is the spatial advantage that the pawn on e4 provides. Because of this, all the good squares for the black minor pieces – b4, b6, c5, c4, e5, e6 – are *in front* of his pawns. Therefore, they cannot permanently gain a foothold on these squares, with the single exception of the square b4. In addition, it is impossible to play ...b7-b5, as e4-e5 will always follow, and the black pawns on the queenside will simply collapse. But, of course, we must not forget

that chess is a concrete game, and all abstract arguments can be refuted by one variation.

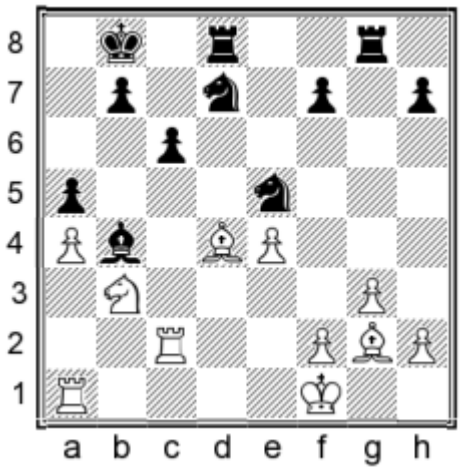
One way or another, *Black must hurry* [*my italics – MS*], before White regroups in a convenient fashion. *If Black manages at least to exchange one minor piece and put the other on b4, then his situation will improve significantly* [*my italics – MS*]. Therefore he should play 17...Nc7 18.Bxg7 Rg8 19.Bb2 Nc5!, beginning to hassle the Bb2. White probably has nothing better than 20.Nd2 Nd3 21.Bd4 Ne6 22.Be3 Bc5 23.Nc4 Bxe3 24.fxe3!?. The knight on c4 is very strong, but at least both sides are now taking some risks.

17...Nd6?! 18.Bxg7 Rg8 19.Bd4 Nc4 20.Rc1 Nce5 21.Nd2 0-0-0 22.Nb3 Bb4 23.Rc2

Now, however, exactly what we spoke of has happened – the white pieces are completely safe, whilst at the same time, Black has to retreat to worse and worse positions.

23...Kb8 24.Kf1?!

Suddenly it was possible to win a pawn with 24.Bc3!, but at this moment, I was only thinking about restricting my opponent's counterplay. My move is directed at there not being a fork on e1, in the event of ...Ne5-d3.



24...c5?

A blunder, after which the game practically ends. But Black's position is very difficult. The computer's first line is illustrative – 24...Kc7 25.f4 Ng4 26.h3 Ngf6 27.g4 Rge8 28.e5 Ng8 with a cheerless prospect for Black.

25.Nxc5 Nxc5 26.Bxe5+

Maxim had forgotten that it was possible to take this knight as well.

26...Ka7 27.Bf4

An extra pawn, a weak black king – one would have to do something dreadful in order not to win such a position. The remaining moves of the game can be given without commentary.

27...b5 28.axb5 Kb6 29.Bf3 Rd3 30.Be2 Rc3 31.Rxc3 Bxc3 32.Rd1 a4 33.Be3 Rc8 34.Rd6+ Ka5 35.Rc6 Rxc6 36.bxc6 Nxe4 37.c7 Nd6 38.Bc5 1-0

On 38...Nc8 there follows 39.Bg4.»

It seems to me that the undoubted merit of Dorfman's work is that *he has focussed players' attention on critical positions, the distinction between dynamics and statics, and has suggested a method of rough static assessment of the position, which helps one to understand whether one should strive for a sharp change of the situation with the help of dynamics, or, conversely, whether one should avoid dynamics and strive to maintain the static balance*. As for +–, ² or =, it suggests a desire to approach the assessment of a chess position as an academic science, but in fact it turns into a not always successful adjustment of the theory to fit practice.

So when it comes to the crude static assessment and forecasting the development of events, Dorfman has succeeded. His books contain a whole scattering of laconic formulations and expressions, which really hit the nail on the head. Before introducing the reader to some of them, let us remind him that with 'dynamic means' Dorfman refers to such things as changes in the pawn structure, the exchange of material and the seizure of the initiative.

«I think it is simply wrong and harmful for young chess players to be told 'The player who has the advantage must attack!'. However, if, before the word 'advantage' we add 'dynamic', then I am ready to subscribe to this postulate. Yes, that is indeed one of the implications of my method.»

This is an important refinement to one of the foundations of the Steinitz theory.

Iosif Dorfman
Anatoli Vaisser
Moscow 1989

White to move

23.Re2!

«Pure statics! *There is no need for anything radical, because the position is winning statically. First, it should be strengthened to the maximum (because, after all, the enemy position is not capable of being consistently evolved) and only then do we go over to active operations.*»

«In statically winning positions, as a rule, for every active move several prophylactic ones should be made.»

«Dynamic play should be continued until the opponent has been deprived of all his static trumps.»

«But the problem is, *in a statically inferior position, one should not play statically.*»

«In a battle against bishops, one should play on the colour squares controlled by one's own remaining bishop. As a consequence, one often reaches a favourable tandem of queen+ knight.»

Iosif Dorfman
Arnaud Hauchard
Mondariz 2000

White to move

14.Bxe4

«An extremely important moment. As a rule, the side which has the bishop pair should try to keep knights on the board. One of the reasons is that there is less chance of the opponent reaching the favourable Q+N tandem.

14...Qc7

It seems that one cannot get rid of the powerful bishop without a further degradation of the situation. After the exchange on e4, the queen's rook is misplaced, the d6-square is weak (an attack by the bishop from b4 is threatened), and on top of everything else, Bg5 hangs over Black.

The following variations, in my view, prove White's advantage:

14...Nxe4 15.Nxe4

A) 15...Bxd4? 16.Bg5 f6 (16...Nc5 17.Qc2 Qa5 18.b4+–) 17.Rxd4 fxg5 18.Rad1 b6 19.c5+–;

B) 15...Qh4!

B1) 16.Qe3 Raa8 17.Qf3 Nf6 18.Nd6 Rad8 19.Bf4 Rd7=;

B2) 16.Qf3 Nf6 17.Nd6 (17.Nc5 b6 18.Nb3 Qe4 19.Qxe4 Nxe4 20.Bf4 Rd8 21.Re1 Nf6 22.a4 a5=) 17...Ne8;

B3) 16.Re1! Bxd4? 17.Qd3 c5 18.Bg5 Ne5 19.Qe2+–

15.Bf3 Raa8 16.Rac1 e5

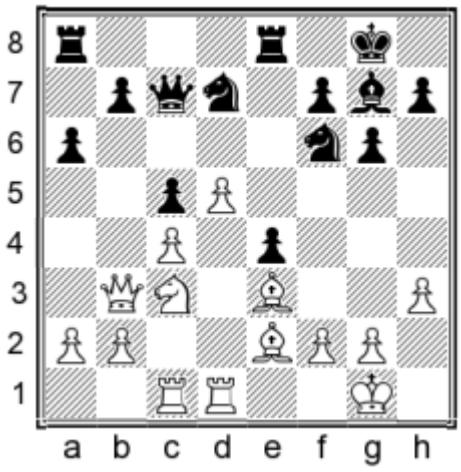
Once again we have a critical position.

Black wants to clarify the structure, but finds his opponent unwilling to agree.

17.d5 e4 18.Be2

Little is promised by 18.Nxe4 Nxe4 19.Bxe4 Nc5 20.Qc2 Nxe4 21.Qxe4 Bxb2 22.Bf4 Qc8 (22...Qd7 23.dxc6 Qxc6 24.Qxc6 bxc6 25.Rb1 Bc3 26.c5±) 23.Rb1 Re8 24.Qf3 Bg7.

18...c5 19.Be3 Rfe8



This time, too, the critical position is crowned by a series of forced moves.

If the black bishop moves to the blockade square d6, the white king will become statically weak. *There follows a series of dynamic moves*.

20.d6 Qc6 21.Qa4 Rac8 22.b4 Qxa4 23.Nxa4 cxb4 24.c5 h5

Black has no means to oppose his opponent's strong arguments, and so he just makes a useful move, preventing himself being squeezed on the kingside and having in mind a possible exchange of bishops.

25.Rb1 a5 26.a3 bxa3 27.Rxb7

The white passed pawns are unstoppable.

27...Nd5 28.Rxd5 a2 29.Rd1 Rcd8 30.Bc4 a1=Q 31.Rxa1 Bxa1 32.Bg5 Rb8 33.Rxb8 Rxb8 34.c6 Rb1+ 35.Bf1

Black resigned.»

Vasily Smyslov
Wolfgang Uhlmann
Skopje 1969

Black to move

«How can we justify such, at first glance, provocative play by the German grandmaster?! *Black has a clear strategic aim. He needs to achieve the exchange of dark-squared bishops and knights*.

13...N8d7?

In the light of the above comments, Black should have played the subtle manoeuvre 13...Nc4! 14.Be1 (14.Rcd1 Qc7 15.g3 Nxd2 16.Rxd2 Na6 17.Rfd1 Rad8=) 14...Nd6 (14...Na6 15.Be2), controlling the white knight. Here is a sample analysis of the resulting position, which demonstrates the technical devices available to Black in such positions:

A) 15.Be2 Qe7 16.Bd3 (16.Bd2 Nd7 17.Rfe1 Rfe8 18.Bf1 Rad8 19.b3 Nc5 20.g3 Nce4 21.Nxe4 Nxe4 22.Ba5 Bc7) 16...Nd7 17.a4 Rfe8 18.e4 Rad8 19.Rd1 Nb6 20.f4 Bd4+ 21.Kh1;

B) 15.g3 Nd7 16.Bg2 Re8 17.e4 Nc5 18.Rd1 Qb6;

C) 15.Na4 Nd7

13...N8d7? 14.Ne4 f5

Acknowledging the failure of Black's strategic plan. He also fails to equalise after 14...Nd5 15.Ng3 Rc8 16.Qb3 N7b6 17.a4.

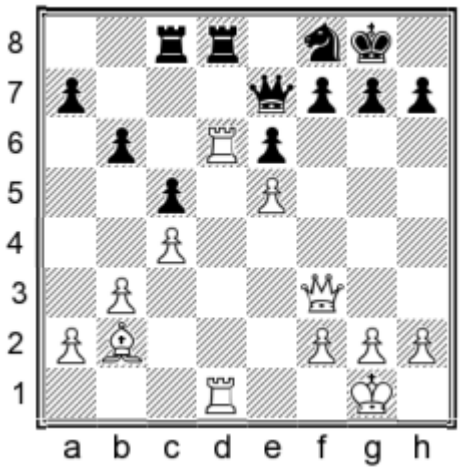
15.Ng3 a5 16.b4 axb4 17.Bxb4 Re8 18.Qb3+ Kg7

Black has not only failed to achieve favourable exchanges, but has also irreparably weakened his king's position.

19.Rfd1 Qc7 20.Ne2 Bxh2+ 21.Kf1 Be5 22.Nd4 Qd8 23.g3 Qf6 24.a4 Qf7 25.a5 Nd5 26.Bxd5 cxd5 27.Nf3 d4 28.Qxf7+ Kxf7 29.exd4 Bb8 30.Re1 Ba7 31.Rxe8 Kxe8 32.Re1+ Kd8 33.Be7+ Ke8 34.Bg5+ Kf8 35.Bh6+ Kg8 36.Re7 Rd8

And Black resigned.»

Ennio Arlandi
Julio Borgo
St Vincent 1998



White to move

«Even visually, White's advantage is undeniable. But is it static?

In fact, *by exchanging the rooks, Black will obtain a favourable piece balance, in view of the settled pawn structure.*

As a consequence, White should seek an advantage in the first element of the regressive scale. It seems to me that the demands of the position are best answered by the variation 22.Qg4 Ng6 (22...Rd7 23.h4 Rcd8 24.h5) 23.g3 Rxd6 24.exd6 Qd7 25.h4. Here the static weakness of the black king comes to the fore.

22.g3

Losing time, and the first step towards the precipice.

22...Rxd6 23.exd6 Qd7 24.Qg4

This time, advancing the h-pawn would not bring any great dividends after 24.h4 f6 25.h5 h6.

24...e5 25.Qe4 f6 26.a3 a5 27.Bc3 Qf7

28.f4?

Another fundamental misconception at the critical moment of the game.

White weakens the static position of his king, without any reason.

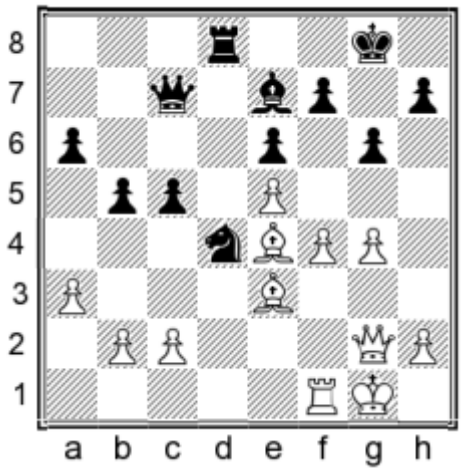
Instead, the other dynamic attempt 28.d7 Rd8 (28...Nxd7 29.Qb7 Rd8 30.Qc7 Qe7 31.b4) 29.Qc6 Rxd7 30.Rd5 was both appropriate and timely. It was also worth seriously examining the exchange of queens after 28.Qd5 Qxd5 29.Rxd5 Kf7 30.f4.»

After

28...exf4 29.Qxf4 Nd7 30.Re1 Re8

White, having committed a series of mistakes, gradually lost the game.

Alexander Onischuk
Ognjen Cvitan
Yerevan 1996



Black to move

«I consider the general strategic plan for Black to be the preservation of the queens, and play to be aimed at determining the structure and exchanging the dark-squared bishops (and, as a consequence, the formation of a favourable Q+N tandem).

One can recommend 24...b4! 25.a4 Qa5 26.b3 c4. Black has no problems, which cannot be said for his opponent, as 27.Rd1 runs into the piece sacrifice 27...cxb3 28.Rxd4 b2.

However, the Croatian grandmaster chose

24...c4?

This poorly-thought-out decision results in the degradation of Black's position.

25.Qf2 c3 26.b4 Qc4 27.Bd3 Qd5 28.Qg2 f5 29.exf6 Bxf6 30.Qxd5 Rxd5 31.Kg2

The situation has radically changed.

With the disappearance of queens, the question of king security has lost its relevance, and the formation of the Q+N tandem has become impossible for Black. The structure has evolved favourably for White, and the role of his bishops has increased noticeably. The static balance has become favourable for White in all elements, and Black is no longer able to create a critical position. The Ukrainian grandmaster won on the 48th move.»

Dorfman successfully highlighted in a methodical way the plans of the two sides, when one of the players makes an exchange sacrifice in the struggle for the initiative.

Igor Glek
Vidmantas Malisauskas
Tallinn 1986

White to move

«The static advantage in this position lies with Black, because he has the two bishops and a changeable pawn structure: 1. =; 2. ³; 3. ³; 4. ². After the manoeuvre ...Bf6-e7 this plus becomes irreversible.

The dynamic candidate moves here are 16.Rxf6 and 16.Nd5. In the event of 16.Nd5 Bxd5 17.exd5 Be7, Black's pawn majority on the kingside, together with the opposite-coloured bishops, strengthen his attack and should decide the outcome of the game. More decisive measures are required:

16.Rxf6 gxf6 17.Qh5

In the course of a few moves, the static balance has changed significantly: 1. +–; 2. –+; 3. –+; 4. ².

In view of this, *Black should play dynamically*. This time, dynamics involve exchanges in the battle for the initiative.

The sample variation 17...Kh8! 18.Nd5 (18.Qh6 Qd8 19.Rf1 Rg8 does not yield any particular dividends) 18...Qd8 19.Rf1 (after 19.Qh6 Rg8 20.Nxf6 Rg7 21.Rf1 Qd4 22.Rf3 Qxb2 23.h3 Qa1+ 24.Kh2 Qe1 Black beats off the attack) 19...f5 20.exf5 Bxd5 21.f6 e4 meets the requirements of the position.

17...Kg7?

The decisive mistake, resulting from an insufficient understanding of the dynamics of the position.

18.Rf1 Rh8 19.Qh4 Qe7 20.Nd5

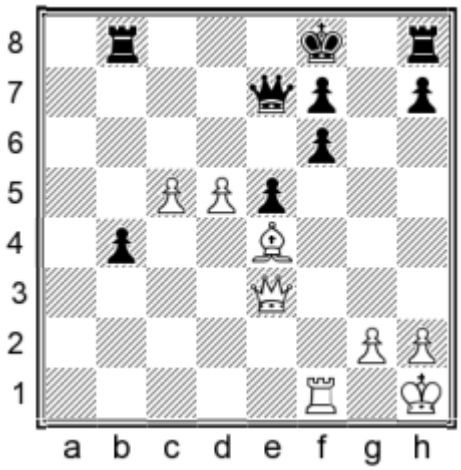
In positions of this type, it is wrong to be deflected by the gaining of material. In the event of the primitive 20.Ne2 h5 21.Ng3 Rh6 22.Nxh5+ Kh8 23.Rxf6 Qxf6, Black's dreams come true.

20...Bxd5 21.exd5 Rad8 22.c4 a5 23.Be4 b6

The Lithuanian GM has erected a barrier. With the help of a breakthrough, White sets up a pair of

connected passed pawns, which sweep away all in their path.

24.b4 axb4 25.a5 Rd6 26.axb6 Rxb6 27.Qg3+ Kf8 28.Qe3 Rb8 29.c5

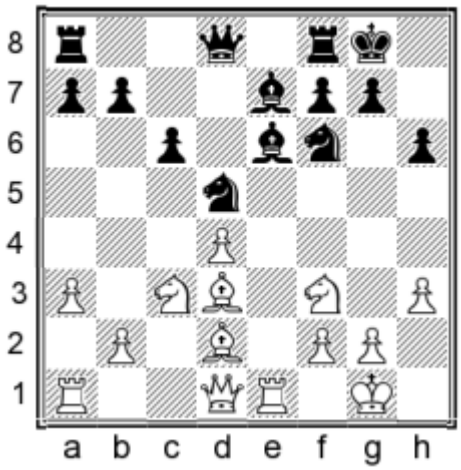


The last link in an excellent attack. The curtain can be brought down.

29...h5 30.d6 Qe6 31.Qd3 b3 32.c6 Rb4 33.Bf5 e4 34.Bxe6 exd3 35.c7 Kg7 36.d7

Black resigned.»

Victor Bologan
Eduardas Rozentalis
Belfort 1998



Black to move

«The players have arranged their forces in a manner that is typical for such structures. *Black's task is to maintain the current favourable static balance:* 1. =; 2. =; 3. ³; 4. –+.

16...Re8?

Black had at his disposal two plans of roughly equal merit: 16...Qc8 17.Qc2 Re8 followed by ...Be7-d6, ...Qc8-c7, ...Ra8-d8,
and 16...Qd6! with the idea of 17...Rad8.

16...Re8? 17.Rxe6!

White exploits the fleeting chance and, without hesitating, sacrifices the exchange to weaken the squares e5, f7 and g6 around the enemy king.

17...fxe6 18.Bg6 Rf8 19.Qe2

19...Nc7?!

A conceptual error, associated with an incorrect assessment of the position.

Black was convinced of the need to defend the e6-pawn, and the other way of doing so, 19...Qd6 20.Re1, was not fundamentally different from the line chosen in in the game. But logically, the position requires dynamic action and, in this particular case, the *exchange of material*.

I suggest 19...Bd6. In this case, the knight stays on d5, which is conducive to saving simplifications. In addition, the opponent must take into account the move ...Bd6-f4. The variations are very complex, and it is not easy to offer anything that is exhaustive. In the main line 20.Qxe6+ Kh8 21.Ne5 (21.Nh4 Ng8!) 21...Nxc3 22.Bxc3 Bxe5 23.dxe5 Nd5, Black's strategy triumphs.

20.Re1 Bd6 21.Bb1

21...Qe7

Black misses a convenient moment for the break 21...c5. Now 22.dxc5 Bxc5 23.Ne4 fails to 23...Nxe4 24.Qxe4 Rxf3, whilst after 22.Ne4 cxd4 23.Nxf6+ Qxf6 24.Qe4 Qf5 25.Qxd4 Qd5, Black has a fully defensible position.

22.Ne5 Bxe5

White's task has eased significantly. He will regain the key pawn, retaining play against the insecure black king.

23.dxe5 Nfd5 24.Nxd5 Nxd5 25.Qe4 g5 26.Qg6+ Qg7 27.Qxe6+ Kh8 28.h4 Nf4 29.Qc4 Rad8 30.Bc3 Nd5 31.hxg5 hxg5 32.Bd2 Nf4 33.Bb4 Qf7

If 33...Rfe8 the text move also decides.

34.e6 Nxe6 35.Bxf8

Black resigned.»

With this, we have almost completed the analysis of examples from Dorfman's *The Method in Chess*. I hope that I have managed to persuade the reader to get acquainted with the books of Dorfman.

However, even without my preaching, Dorfman's teaching is already prevalent in the chess world. I very much like the tournament reports and annotations of grandmaster Pavel Maletin in the magazine *64*. This young man perfectly understands the game and gives deep comments, not only on chess, but also on the psychological aspects of the struggle. At the same time he has a good writing style and a friendly attitude to his colleagues. I recommend that you study the comments to the decisive 6th game of the second Carlsen-Anand match and the explanation of the terrible mistakes that the two players made on the 26th move, in *64* No. 12/2014.

But back to the Dorfman method. Now we will quote a fragment of the game Kramnik-Nepomniachtchi from the Russian team championship of 2015, from the report by Maletin in *64* No. 6/2015.

Vladimir Kramnik
Ian Nepomniachtchi
Sochi tt 2015

Black to move

21...Ba6!

«A move which almost forces the opponent to reveal his hand.

22.b5 Bb7 23.c4 Bb4 24.Rxb4 axb4 25.c5

Naturally, the exchange sacrifice was planned in advance, but I'm not sure that it was done entirely voluntarily – rather, White does not have too much choice, since after the 'normal' 24.Nb3 c5!? Black is just better.

Nevertheless, the sacrifice is very strong from a practical point of view: it's not so easy for Black to figure out how to react to it. The trick is that it seems as if Black can make any normal move – what can be wrong with a position with an extra exchange? However, as it turns out later, *he is simply statically worse* [*my italics – MS*] and, accordingly, the slow development of events is clearly in favour of White. Black's chances – and analysis shows that he has excellent chances to take over the initiative – *lie only in dynamics.*» [*my italics – MS*]

Does it remind you of anything, dear reader?

We continue the analysis of the game, with Maletin's comments:

25...Qf6?

«The correct move was that indicated by Dmitri Kryakvin: 25...g5!! (25...c6 also deserves attention, but this is really a computer chess move). To be honest, watching the game online, I was pretty sure that Ian would play this way ('hope for the best – prepare for the worst!') – such tough and resolute decisions are in his spirit. 25...g5!! After 26.Nc4 bxc5 27.Bxc5 (not good is 27.g3 Nh3+ 28.Bxh3 Qxh3 29.Nxe5 Qe6 30.Qxc5 Rd2 – in such an open position, the extra exchange is very significant) 27...g4! 28.Bxb4 gxf3 29.gxf3 Kh7! Black has at least strong counterplay, and what is very important is that he has an additional open line for his 'extra' rook. Of course, the position remains extremely complicated and unclear for a human to play, but objectively White has problems, and Black still is not taking any chances – he will always have play against the king. I considered 30.Be1!, with the idea to block the g-file, but here there is the unpleasant 30...c6, intending after 31.b6 Ba6 to include the bishop in the game.

26.Nc4!

But now Black suddenly has serious problems – transferring the knight to d4 does not bring great dividends, and in the meantime, White will manage to take on b4 and consolidate his position.

26...bxc5 27.Bxc5 Ne6 28.Bxb4 Nd4 29.Qc3 Bc8 30.Ba5

30...Qe7

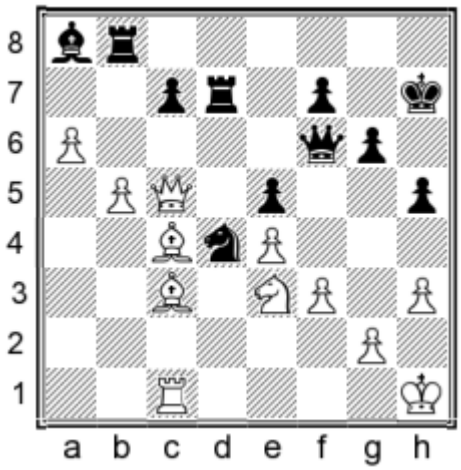
Perhaps 30...Ra7! was more convenient, with the idea of meeting the tempting 31.b6 by returning the exchange with 31...Rxa5! 32.bxc7 (32.Qxa5? Nb3) 32...Rc5! 33.cxd8=Q+ Qxd8, and Black has good chances of holding. Probably, Kramnik would not have forced events; for example, he could continue 31.Kh1!?, and only after 31...Be6 play 32.b6!. Now, after 32...Rxa5 33.bxc7 Rc5 34.cxd8=Q+ Qxd8 35.Qb4 Qc7 36.Rc1, White keeps an extra pawn in a slightly more advantageous version, and retains winning chances. However, this was probably still the lesser evil, since in the game, Black was under a strong press, reminiscent of the victories of Anatoly Karpov in the 1970s. On a full board of pieces, even with an extra exchange, Black has hardly any moves.

Vladimir Borisovich plays positions with non-standard material balances with great pleasure and fantastic skill. Every year, when I study Maxim Notkin's 'Game of the Year' articles, I regularly find 2-3 examples on this topic. This battle was no exception. From this moment on, there was no longer any real chance for Ian to break the grip.

After about ten moves of manoeuvring...

31.Kh1 Bb7 32.Bb4 Qe6 33.Na5 Qb6 34.Nc4 Qe6 35.Na5 Qb6 36.Rc1 Rd7 37.h3 Kh7 38.Nc4 Qe6 39.a5 Rb8 40.Ne3 h5 41.a6 Ba8 42.Qc5 Qb3 43.Bc3 Qe6 44.Bc4 Qf6

the following position was reached:



Compare this with the previous diagram – how beautifully and effectively the white forces are now placed! By exchanging off his opponent's only active piece, Kramnik takes the game into the technical stage.

45.Bxd4 exd4 46.Nd5 Qh8 47.Rd1 d3 48.Rxd3 Qa1+ 49.Qg1 Qxg1+ 50.Kxg1 Kg7 51.Ra3 f5 52.a7 Rb7 53.Ra6 fxe4 54.fxe4 Rf7 55.e5 c6 56.Nb6 Rfe7 57.bxc6 Rxa7 58.Nxa8

Black resigned.»

Chapter 17
Intuition and logic

However, it's time to return to the very beginning of our 'book review'. I already mentioned that I was surprised to learn from Dorfman that chess players are divided into two groups: players who are master of the critical moment and players who are master of the technical phase. He writes: «So, in my opinion, Alekhine, Botvinnik, Spassky and Kasparov belong to the first group, Capablanca, Smyslov, Fischer, and Karpov to the second.»

In my opinion, here we see an obvious overlap in the characteristics of the great champions. For the uneducated chess player, which I was before reading Dorfman's books, the terms 'master of the critical moment' and 'master of the technical phase' sound strange and a little offensive. It reminded me of an anecdote about a famous musician. The great violinist, whose tours are scheduled a year in advance, responded to a request for a meeting with a class of students and found time in his busy schedule of tours. Naturally, at the meeting he was asked to perform something. After the performance, one of his classmates approached him and expressed his assessment of the speech: 'Do you want me to be honest? When you hold the bow over the strings with your right hand, you get a sound that takes one's soul, and tears come into one's eyes. But when you're also fingering the strings with your left hand, then, in my opinion, you're just showing off!'

As far as the chess topic that we have touched upon is concerned, I am ready to take the side of the ignorant dilettante in the anecdote. Dorfman wrote the very interesting book *The Method in Chess*, which helps the chess player to make decisions at a critical moment in the struggle and to justify those decisions. He described some positions so well that 'he takes one's soul, and tears come into one's eyes.'

But the division of great chess players into the masters of the critical moment and the technical phase (the technical phase, for Dorfman, is a segment of the game between critical moments) is more like a description of complex life processes in two tones: black and white, although the palette of such phenomena is much richer.

Let us recall how Karpov (according to Dorfman, the master of the technical phase) brilliantly outplayed Spassky (master of the critical moment, according to Dorfman) in the critical position of the game analysed above.

If there is a desire to draw parallels between the 'gods' of chess, then I'm much closer to classifying them according to the character of Dvoretsky's thinking:

«Traditionally chess players are divided into combinational and positional ones. Once it was relatively easy to distinguish players by this criterion, but now it is different – purely positional or purely combinational chess players are almost gone. In addition, this division speaks only about the manner of the game, but not about the way they think. It is not sufficiently informative from the point of view of choosing the direction and content of the training required by a chess player.

It seems more productive to me to distinguish chess players by the type of thinking that dominates their approach to making decisions – intuitive or logical.

Grandmasters of the intuitive direction – Capablanca, Tal, Petrosian, Karpov – delicately feel the smallest nuances of the position, and have a heightened combinational vision. They are weaker in the formulation of the game, in the strategy, they do not like to calculate variations too much and make mistakes in calculation.

On the opposite pole are, for example, Rubinstein, Botvinnik, Kasparov. They find deep plans in the opening and in the subsequent stages, think in a disciplined way, and calculate variations very accurately. But sometimes they overlook unexpected tactical ideas, sometimes they are excessively straightforward, and do not feel the turning points of the struggle with sufficient precision.» (M.Dvoretsky, A.Yusupov, *Development of Creative Thinking of Chess Players*, 1997)

We will finish the theme of Dorfman's method for classifying the style of play of outstanding players, with the following games.

Eugenio Torre
Anatoly Karpov
Bad Lauterberg 1977

White to move

«The Philippine GM playing White had a definite static advantage: 1. =; 2. =; 3. ²; 4. ².

Torre could play 21.Qd2, preparing the typical plan with a3-a4, Rc1-b1 and a4-a5. However, without considering the requirements of the moment, he preferred dynamic play:

21.g3

Now the white king is irreparably weakened.

21...Bd8 22.Nd2 Bf6 23.h4 h6 24.h5 Ngf8

It should be noted that Karpov's strategy of provocation has produced excellent results. His position is solid and stable.

Black's set-up can be improved still further with ...Rc7 followed by ...Rec8, whilst the white knight on d2 is tied to its post, by the threat (if it moves) of ...Bxc3 and ...Nf6. It is hard for White to find adequate manoeuvres.

I have often heard people say that Karpov frequently wins by placing his pieces on the back rank. I think this has a simple explanation: he is one of the very strongest static players.

25.g4

This desperate lunge hastens the inevitable.

25...Nh7

The strategic threat is ...e6-e5. The advance f4-f5 by White cedes all the dark squares. Black will immediately make the favourable exchange ...Bf6-g5, followed by occupying the squares f6 and g5. On the other hand, 26.Nf3 (after the incautious 26.Qg2 d5 27.cxd5 Bxc3 28.Rxc3 Rxc3 29.Rxc3 exd5, Black has the initiative) fails to the typical reply 26...Bxc3 27.Rxc3 Nhf6.

26.e5 dxe5 27.g5 exf4 28.Bxf4 Be5

The game is practically over. Of course, it is hard to accept such a defeat and this is probably why White prolonged his pointless resistance.

29.g6 fxg6 30.hxg6 Bxf4 31.gxh7+ Kh8 32.Rf1 Rf8 33.Be4 Ne5 34.Qg2 Nxc4

White resigned.»

Strictly speaking, I included this game simply because I did not want to reproduce, out of context, the one phrase: '*I have often heard people say that Karpov frequently wins by placing his pieces on the back rank. I think this has a simple explanation: he is one of the very strongest static players.*'

Again, a black and white tone. It is just not that easy, it's not easy at all. Many fail to understand Karpov's play to this day. I remember talking with Gennady Kuzmin at one of the Sokolsky Memorial events in

Minsk. The Ukrainian grandmaster spoke enthusiastically about Karpov's manner of play. During the Student Olympiad, where they played together for the USSR team, the young Karpov, at Kuzmin's request, showed his games and shared his thoughts on the course of the games. Kuzmin was then struck by how instantly Karpov grasped the small changes in positions, that are invisible to others, and how immediately he would rebuild his plans to take account of these changes. From the outside it looked something like this: it's almost the same position. The players would move to and fro, mainly within their own half of the board, for ten moves or so, without gross, immediately noticeable mistakes, and then it would turn out that the position of Karpov's opponent was either lost, or close to it.

Many people can push the pieces round in their own camp without coming into contact with the opponent's pieces. But to be able at the same time to completely outplay the opponent is an art, accessible to very few. It is even more difficult to explain why this is happening, because for this it is necessary to enter into the mind and simulate the thinking of a great player.

In my opinion, the best description and explanation of the manner of Karpov's play was done by Dvoretsky in his comments on the game Karpov-Timman (Montreal 1979). In the process, Dvoretsky occasionally made use of Karpov's comments, which we will highlight in italics.

Dvoretsky: «

Anatoly Karpov
Jan Timman
Montreal 1979

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.g3 Bg7 5.Bg2 0-0 6.Nge2 e5 7.0-0 Na6?!

Theory recommends 7...Nc6 or 7...c6. On 7...c6 the usual reply is 8.a4 (preventing Black playing the useful move ...b7-b5), but then the development of the knight to a6 becomes more justifiable, because it has available the square b4.

8.Re1 c6 9.h3

'A typical prophylactic move in such positions', writes Karpov. *'Whilst restricting the enemy bishop, White also creates "an exclusion zone" on the kingside for Black's other minor pieces*.'

By 'other minor pieces', he probably means the Nf6. White's bishop wants to come to e3, and so it needs to be secured against the raid ...Ng4. Here we are dealing with a prophylactic move, but not with prophylactic thinking as such. The advance of the pawn to h3 is typical for such positions, and is a move that can be played without really thinking about the opponent's possibilities.

9...Re8

'*All of Black's hopes of counterplay are connected with pressure on the pawn at e4.*'

But this is a case of prophylactic thinking. Karpov immediately identifies the opponent's main idea, to which he will pay careful attention throughout the whole game.

10.Bg5

Another standard device – White provokes ...h7-h6, so as then to develop the queen to d2, with an attack on the h6-pawn.

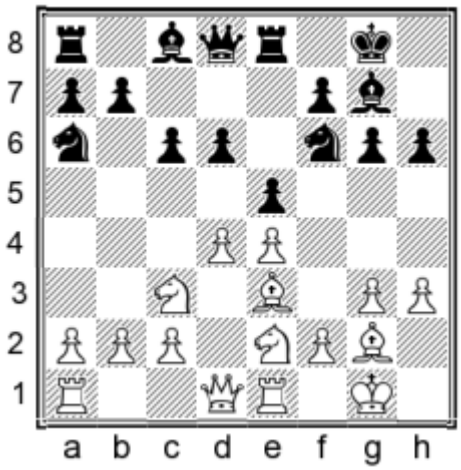
10...h6

A tempting possibility is 10...exd4 11.Nxd4 h6, in anticipation of 12.Be3 Nc5, when it is awkward to defend the pawn on e4 (13.Bf4 Nh5). However, White would play 12.Bf4! g5 13.Bc1, and the weakness of f5 would tell later on.

'After 10...Qb6*, White can obtain an advantage with the simple* 11.Rb1*, because* 11...exd4 12.Nxd4 Nc5 13.b4 Ncxe4 14.Bxe4! Nxe4 15.Nxe4 Bxd4 16.Nf6+ *is clearly unsatisfactory for Black.*'

This comment is not wholly convincing! Of course, Black should not take on e4 – the normal move is 13...Ne6. Furthermore, instead of 12...Nc5 Timman could have tried either 12...d5 or 12...Ng4!? 13.hxg4 Bxd4 14.Be3 Bxe3 15.Rxe3 d5! with unclear play. This variation has its internal logic – the Bg5 hardly participates in the battle for the centre, and Black takes advantage of this.

11.Be3



White evidently wants to complete his development with 12.Qd2 (with tempo!) 12...Kh7 13.Rad1. Can the implementation of this plan be prevented?

In the event of 11...exd4 12.Bxd4! Nc5?! (better is 12...Nc7), there is the unpleasant 13.e5! Nh7 14.exd6 Qxd6 15.b4 (or 15.Bxg7 Qxd1 16.Raxd1 Kxg7 17.b4 Na6 18.b5) 15...Na6 16.b5 cxb5 17.Nxb5 with advantage to White.

However, it was seriously worth considering the prophylactic move pointed out by Karpov: 11...Kh7!?, defending the h6-pawn in advance. The point is that after 12.Qd2 there follows 12...exd4! 13.Bxd4 (stronger is 13.Nxd4 Nc5 14.f3, and if 14...d5, then 15.Nxc6) 13...Nc5, and now 14.e5? is impossible because of the pin on the bishop after 14...dxe5.

By continuing 12.g4 (instead of 12.Qd2), White could retain somewhat the better position. But Black, in any event, has lost nothing – he has made a useful move and has made more difficult his opponent's most natural set-up, causing him problems in the opening, on the basis of prophylactic thinking.

11...Qc7?

Jan Timman does not make any attempt to fight against his opponent's plans. In addition, the queen now takes away a useful square from the black knight, which is left stranded on the edge of the board.

12.Qd2 Kh7

After 12...exd4 13.Nxd4 Black would now have to spend a tempo protecting the h6-pawn.

13.Rad1 Bd7

It was worth considering 13...Be6, and if 14.g4 Rad8 15.f4 Bc4 16.Ng3 (Karpov), then 16...exf4 17.Bxf4 c5.

White has successfully consolidated. Now 14.f4 or 14.g4 are both tempting. How does Karpov make his choice?

'On the threshold of the middlegame it is always useful to weigh the resources once again for both sides and correct the initial plans. Here I thought for some time and soon came to the conclusion that straightforward play in the centre no longer promises anything. Now, in order to seize further space and squares, it will be necessary to push the kingside pawns. But I did not want to play 14.f4. It is illogical to immediately increase the tension, because White still needs to play g3-g4, so there is no reason not to use first the chance to strengthen the position with g3-g4 and Ne2-g3. At the same time, White achieves his main strategic task – he reinforces the e4-pawn in case the centre is opened.'

Incidentally, the game perfectly illustrates Nimzowitsch's idea of the overprotection of strategically important points. Karpov always remembers this, trying to strengthen to the maximum the central pawn on e4.

14.g4 Rad8 15.Ng3 Bc8 16.f4 b5

Now, knowing his style, it is easy to guess Karpov's move.

17.a3! b4?!

Timman is an active player, sometimes too active. It was scarely worth weakening the queenside.

18.axb4 Nxb4 19.Nce2

'Black's idea is to...' For goodness sake, what is Black's idea? From the first glance at the position it

is clear that White has achieved a solid positional advantage. Most of us would probably have thought how to use it quickly – whether to go f4-f5, or prepare g4-g5, etc. But Karpov thinks completely differently: even in such situations, he, above all, considers the possible intentions of the enemy and tries to prevent them.

So, once again: 'Black's idea was, after playing ...a7-a5, ...Bc8-a6, ...e5xd4 and ...c6-c5, to somehow free his pieces. But this is a long process, and White manages to prevent the opponent's idea.'

Now after 19...a5 there follows 20.c3, kicking the knight away and strengthening the centre. Black also has a bad position after 19...c5 20.fxe5 dxe5 21.d5.

19...exd4 20.Nxd4 a5

'White's further plan is just to prevent the opponent's pieces coming into play.'

21.c3 Na6

Karpov's next move is probably the best in the game. How did he find it? Obviously, by asking himself what his opponent wanted to do. The answer is clear: bring the knight into play via the square c5. How can this be prevented?

22.Qc2!!

'A subtle move, which, firstly, prevents the knight coming in via c5 (because of the reply b2-b4), and, secondly, continues the previous strategic theme of reinforcing the e4-pawn.'

As you can see, both Nimzowitsch's forms of prevention are combined here – impeding the opponent's plans and overprotection.

Curiously, Karpov does not even consider 22.Nxc6? Qxc6 23.e5 – a continuation that other chess players would surely pay serious attention to. Why doesn't he consider it? Because, at the same time, the enemy pieces would come to life. Admittedly, after 23...Qc7 24.exf6 Bxf6 25.Ne4 with further Bd4 or 23...d5 24.exf6, White would still retain the better chances.

22...Bd7

Again, Black wants to play Nc5 (23...Nc5 24.b4 axb4 25.cxb4 Ne6, and the c6-pawn is defended), and again White prevents it.

23.Nf3! Re7?!

On 23...Nc5 Karpov had prepared 24.e5. Timman takes his opponent at his word, but wrongly, as it turns out.

In difficult positions one should always pay the closest attention to any possibility of sharpening the play. I do not see how to refute the move 24...Nd5 in this line. If 25.exd6 Qxd6 26.Qf2 (26.c4? Nxe3), then 26...Rxe3! 27.Rxe3 Qxf4 28.Ree1 Ne6 with definite compensation for the sacrificed exchange. White would probably have to settle for the quiet 25.Bxc5 dxc5 26.Nh5 (Adianto) 26...Bh8 or 26.Qc1 (Nunn) 26...c4 27.Ne4 f6 28.Nd6 Rf8.

Karpov's recommendation 23...c5 was also better than the text move.

24.Bf2!

'One of the last prophylactic moves. Before the decisive offensive, White places his pieces as harmoniously as possible and... again strengthens the central outpost e4! 24.Qd3 *was premature because of* 24...Bc8.*'*

Here, for me, the most informative comment is Karpov's last. I will use it to try to reconstruct the approximate course of his thoughts:

'The double blow 24.Qd3 *is tempting, but after* 24...Bc8 25.e5 Nd5 26.exd6 Rxd6*, the move* 27.c4? *does not work because of* 27...Rxe3! *(but not* 27...Nxe3? 28.Qxd6 Nxd1 29.Qxe7*)* 28.Rxe3 Nxe3 29.Qxd6 Nxd1 *(indicated by Nunn). No, I do not need such adventures!*

But what does Timman want to do, why did he make his last move? It can't be 24...Rde8 *– then just* 25.Qd3*, and he loses a pawn. Maybe* 24...Be8*, to strengthen the d6-pawn, to release d7 for the knight or rook? But then* 25.Qd3*, and the bishop no longer protects the knight. In the case of* 25...Qb7*, one can attack a5.*

*Well, then, it's time to just wait. What would be the most useful move? Probably 24.*B*f2 – pawn e4 is protected once again, and the threat e4-e5 (after 25.*Q*d3) gains in strength.*'

As you can see, prophylactic thinking is by no means synonymous with passivity, it is associated with the simultaneous consideration of both enemy resources and one's own, with accurate calculation of short variations.

Countering this kind of play is extremely difficult – you need to be able to match the opponent in terms of the ability to guess someone else's plans. In this respect, Timman was not on the same level as his opponent.

24...Be8?!

More tenacious was 24...Bc8.

25.Qd3 Qb7

If 25...Nb8, then 26.e5!.

26.Ra1!

The modest manoeuvres of the white pieces in his own camp lead to material gains – the a5-pawn is indefensible.

26...Nc7 27.Rxa5 Rdd7

Bad was 27...Qxb2? 28.Rb1.

28.b4 Ne6

Now, of course, 29.f5? Nf4 is bad. The f4-pawn must be defended, but how? Karpov is attentive to the last.

'The position is completely winning for White, but all the same, he needs to be accurate. Thus, after 29.Qd2 d5!? *Black could obtain some counterplay:* 30.e5 Ne4 31.Nxe4 dxe4 32.Nd4 c5*, and things get complicated.'*

29.Be3! c5 30.f5 Nd8 31.b5

Of course, the knight should not be allowed to come to c6.

'For "full satisfaction" White just needs to play c3-c4, to as to extend his domination to the whole board.'

31...Kh8 32.Bf2

The bishop has done its job on e3 and now retreats again, to reinforce e4.

32...Qc7 33.Ra4 Qb8 34.c4

As well as his material plus, White has an enormous positional advantage – the opponent's pieces are completely deprived of breathing space. The decisive breakthrough is not far away.

34...Ra7 35.Rxa7 Rxa7 36.e5 dxe5 37.Nxe5 Ra2 38.Bxc5

Black resigned.

Once again, I would repeat that, on a superficial viewing, the game does not attract particular attention, and gives the impression of being a 'one-sided game'. And only with a serious study of it does one begin to feel the extreme skill, hiding behind the apparently modest white moves, a skill consisting largely of prophylactic thinking.»

Filigree work by Anatoly Karpov. Again, I draw to the reader's attention that except for the move 10.Bg5, which provokes the answer ...h7-h6, Karpov made all of the other manoeuvres within his camp, without crossing the fourth rank, and achieved a decisive advantage by move 27 against one of the strongest grandmasters in the world at that time.

One should also note the absolutely brilliant annotations of Mark Dvoretsky, which open one's eyes to the inner logic of everything that happened in this game.

In conclusion, I would like to quote an extract from the original, interesting book by Danish grandmaster Lars Bo Hansen, *The Fundamentals of Chess Strategy*, in which the author emphasizes the importance of taking into account, in making a decision, not only an objective assessment of the position, but also the strengths and weaknesses of one's own play and that of the opponent. In addition, Hansen draws parallels between chess strategy and strategy in modern business. Here is what he writes about the overprotection of a strong point:

«Here I propose my explanation of this concept, comparing it with the notion of control theory, known as the theory of resource dependence. An organization relies on a lot of resources, many of which are provided by suppliers or other partners of the firm. The organization depends on these resources; if some resources which are important for the organization are in short supply, the suppliers will have an advantage in the trading relationship. The organization will not have the necessary freedom of action, and its fate will be in the hands of its suppliers.

A smart manager of such an organization will develop strategies that will reduce the power of suppliers and increase the freedom and possible options for the organization's actions. One option (of the set) of such a strategy is to have more suppliers, thus reducing dependence on any one of them.

The same idea can be used in chess. The first key step is to determine the critical, from a strategic point of view, items in the position, just as a business manager assesses which of the resources are important and what the organization lacks. In chess it is often pawns and squares in the centre. These are items that need to be overprotected. Overprotection actually increases flexibility and reduces the strength of the opponent, just as business strategies can increase a company's freedom of action and reduce the power of its suppliers.

If the critical point (for example, a central pawn) is attacked three times by the opponent and is protected only three times, then the opponent has strategic superiority, since he can at any moment deploy an attack on the other side of the board. The pieces in the defence are immobile and depend on the moves of the opponent. They cannot move, as this would lead to the loss of an important central pawn. On the other hand, if the pawn is protected four times (or more), then the defending pieces have personal freedom. Any of them can leave its passive role and actively act elsewhere, as the pawn will still be protected. Overprotection of the pawn increases the mobility of the pieces, and the advantage in choosing action is no longer in the hands of the opponent.

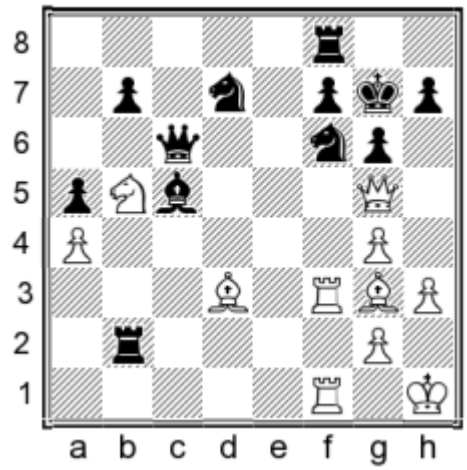
The main thing – both in business and in chess – is to identify strategically important points that need extra protection. A good practical rule is: look near the centre. The classic thinkers were right in focusing on the importance of the centre. However, as Nimzowitsch and other hypermoderns taught us, to control the centre, you do not need to occupy it with pawns: overprotection by pieces can be just as strong.»

I was very impressed and still remember the little-known game Karpov-Kupreichik, played in Riga in 1975 at the USSR People's Spartakiad, in the match between Russia and Belarus.

That day, I was free from playing and watched with interest the games of my team-mates. First of all, I was interested in the top board clash between Viktor Kupreichik and the new World Champion Anatoly Karpov. Shortly before that, Robert Fischer had refused to defend his title in a match with the Soviet grandmaster, and Karpov had been hailed as the 12th World Champion.

The game was very tense and ended in mutual time-trouble.

Anatoly Karpov
Viktor Kupreichik
Riga 1975



White to move

Black has an extra pawn, but White has the advantage of two bishops, and his pieces are aimed at the black king. In addition, the motif of a pin by the bishop along the long diagonal, with a collateral attack on the b2-rook, could be decisive. This suggests 36.Be5!. Today the computer immediately reports that after 36...Nxe5 37.Qxe5 Rd2 38.Bc4 White wins. The thoughts of all those present were in this direction, but, in time-trouble, Karpov played

36.Qc1?!!

The game ended:

36...Ra2?! 37.Qc4! Rd2 38.Bf4 Rb2 39.Qc3! Rb4 40.g5 Bd4 41.Qxc6 bxc6 42.Nxd4

And Black resigned.

The computer shows that instead of 36...Ra2, Black should have retreated the rook to b4, allowing 37.Qa1. After 36...Rb4! 37.Qa1 Kg8, he retains the possibility of resistance.

I was amazed at how much Karpov's glance spread over the whole board. The white queen hangs over the position of the black king, which seems to be about to collapse. And yet suddenly, the queen retreats to c1. And nobody was looking in this direction! It seems that the b2-rook has only one retreat square on a2, and after 37.Qc4! White queen moves to c3 with tempo, setting up the decisive pawn move g4-g5. Everything happened instantly, and no one except Karpov saw this manoeuvre.

Here it will be very appropriate to cite grandmaster Lev Psakhis from the excellent book *Chess Tactics for Improvers*, referring to the 17th move of Mikhail Tal in the game with Tony Miles (Porz 1981):

«I will be frank: this move would never have occurred to me, and for many reasons. The main one is that it is a stroke of genius (by the way, I do not mean its quality), and the thoughts of ordinary people and brilliant people are quite different!»

Repetition is the mother of all learning, and we again turn to the wise quotation of Dvoretsky: «Grandmasters of the intuitive type – Capablanca, Tal, Petrosian, Karpov – subtly feel the smallest nuances of the position, and possess sharp combinative vision.»

Anatoly Karpov forty years ago played in his inimitable manner, fantastically strongly, and I think Robert Fischer understood this better than anyone. Unfortunately, their interesting match did not take place!

Today, attempts are being made to revise history – also chess history. There are arguments about which of the great chess players was a genius, and who was not quite. The accepted view is that Capablanca, Alekhine, Fischer, Tal, Kasparov and Ivanchuk were/are all geniuses, but that Karpov is not. About Kramnik there is modest silence, about Carlsen timid voices, and Botvinnik, Smyslov, Petrosian and Spassky allegedly were not really chess players at all. Anand in India, of course, is a god, but beyond that, it is not clear.

I would like to understand the criteria for such assessments and, at the same time, whether 'genius' is a title for life, or just temporary? And if temporary, then for what period: ten years, one year, one match, one tournament, one game? Is an external entourage necessary? Or a burning look, a bohemian way of life and a complete disregard for sporting regime, like with Tal?

Today, to answer any question, it's customary to look at Wikipedia. Let's do this.

'Genius – unlike talent – is the highest degree of manifestation of the creative abilities of the individual.' Or: 'genius is the highest degree that human ability can attain.'

'Genius – (from the Latin genius – the spirit) – an amazing ability, admired by people around one, to create, give birth to new ideas.'

If we take as the basis the first definition, then to a person familiar with sport, it will become evident that it is impossible to be a genius for a long time, since the highest degree that human ability can achieve cannot always be maintained.

But the sporting component of chess now dominates all the others. It's no secret that the strongest chess player of today is not able to defeat a computer in a match. Matches and tournaments at the highest level attract huge interest among millions of people. But the competitions and championships between chess programs are of interest only to narrow specialists. After all, no one would bother to attend a weight-lifting championship between cranes, yet weight-lifting competitions, even among women, attract many spectators.

Therefore, in chess today, people talk about geniuses only with reference to the World Champions. Vasily Ivanchuk is an outstanding chess player who has achieved great success in the game, and he is not inferior to the World Champions in terms of talent – he is an exception to the rule and is generally regarded as a genius, in no small measure due to his unusual temperament and behaviour. After all, nobody talks about the likes of Kortchnoi, Keres, or, say, Topalov or Gelfand as geniuses.

If you can be a genius one day and not 20 years later, then what about Bobby Fischer? After all, if you ask the question who is the greatest genius in the history of chess, then Fischer would be the No. 1 candidate. Yet he did not play again for 20 years after beating Spassky in 1972.

Let's recall his fantastic results on the way to the title of World Champion: Interzonal tournament – a margin of 3.5 points ahead of the second prize-winner! Candidates matches: Fischer-Taimanov 6:0!; Fischer-Larsen 6:0!; Fischer-Petrosian 6.5:2.5! Fischer-Spassky 12,5:8,5, including a default in Game 2. No one has ever had such a superiority over his rivals in modern history, yet he was opposed by the best Soviet chess school in the world!

Grandmaster Boleslavsky told me about the behavior of the American champion at the board. Usually, when making a move, the chess player considers several of the opponent's responses. For each of them, the possible variations are considered, but in-depth calculation is not by any means always done: it is too energy-intensive. After all, when choosing from three possible enemy moves, the calculation of two branches automatically disappears after the opponent's move.

Often a player at this moment prefers to stroll around the stage or to go to the rest room, while his opponent is thinking. Fischer, however, did not get up from the board, he just sat and thought and calculated everything. When the opponent made a move, he often replied without thinking at all – he had already calculated everything. Psychologically, his opponents were very uncomfortable: 'Well, he cannot play so fast and not make mistakes!' But Fischer did not make mistakes, or hardly ever! And then, for one reason or another, he quit chess.

In 1992 or 1993 I watched the film *Theodora*. It dealt with the famous film actress, who was turned 40, but she was constantly having plastic surgery, playing young heroines and collecting Oscars. One of the operations was unsuccessful, and Theodora turned into an old woman. At this time, the Second World War broke out, and the film industry faded into the background. Theodora, with her daughter, who was strikingly similar to her, lived in oblivion on some exotic island. During the war, the girl grew up, and her mother taught her acting skills. After the war, the seemingly eternally young 'Theodora' again appeared on the world stage, but no one knew about the existence of her daughter, and everyone thought that this was the same actress as before the war. Everything was going fine, there was great success, until the daughter fell in love. When she told her mother that she wanted to reveal her true position to her beloved, she was categorically forbidden and, in desperation, threw herself under a train. Two months later, Theodora died.

I'm telling this melodrama to show that the image of the greatest actress for the mother was more important than her daughter's happiness. Life is more prosaic than cinema. Fischer simply ran out of money, and he could not earn anything other than at chess. Therefore, he agreed to a second match with Spassky, and his image was spoiled.

The quality of the games was low, and it became obvious that not only Kasparov or Karpov would have beaten this Fischer, but it would also have been perfectly possible for Timman, Short, Yusupov, and also the very young Anand, Ivanchuk, Gelfand.

Thus, genius as the highest degree that human ability can achieve not only cannot be permanent, but rarely lasts long. Of the recent examples, I can note the performance of Fabiano Caruana in the Sinquefield Cup in 2014. His play and the result of 7.5 out of 9 (and, given his positions, it could have been 8.5 points!) in one of the strongest tournaments in the history of chess were absolutely brilliant. Unfortunately, Caruana has not shown anything like this for several years. Is it possible to think of him

as a genius? At the time of the tournament – certainly! But in general?!

You can go further. Was Rashid Nezhmetdinov a genius on the basis of his famous game with Polugaevsky (Sochi 1958), or Victor Kupreichik for the game, say, with Dorfman (USSR 1980)? For a very short time, in one game, where the highest degree of manifestation of human abilities was achieved, yes, they were more likely geniuses than not. But after all, neither Kupreichik, nor, moreover, Nezhmetdinov was ever in the elite of world chess, and therefore no one ever thought of them as geniuses. In fact, almost any strong grandmaster can get one or more masterpieces out from their archives and prove that he too was a genius at some point!

The well-known writer and poet of the Soviet period, Fazil Iskander, expressed it very well: 'Inspiration is intermittent, and in this case mastery is the ability to fill in the gaps.' But World Champions, in the main, posses stable, consistent mastery.

And what is the purely chess criterion of a brilliant game? As a rule, it is associated with the emotional reaction to unexpected sacrifices, that is, with tactics, resulting moves or excesses, according to Valery Beim. A complete, logical game with original strategic plans, but almost without sacrifices, such as the brilliant game Caruana-Aronian from the above-mentioned Sinquefield Cup in 2014, usually attracts less reaction.

And the same is true of the fantastic endgame technique of Magnus Carlsen. The truth is, if he were not the World Champion, and the undisputed leader of the world rating list, then no one would even suggest he was a genius.

Why does this happen? Most likely, for the same reason that it is difficult for chess to get on television. To understand and recognize beauty of this kind, one must have certain skills and understanding of the game. It often passes by chess players even of candidate master level. But sacrifices and such like are immediately visible.

Who will have a higher percentage of such games? A chess player who gravitates toward a sharp, unbalanced position, or one who more strictly observes positional principles? The answer is obvious. And who, then, is easier to recognize as a genius? Of course, Tal rather than Petrosian, Kasparov rather than Karpov, Kramnik rather than Carlsen.

Kasparov tends to be regarded as the most outstanding chess genius by today's public opinion. I would like to recall in general terms how his first, most memorable match with Anatoly Karpov, who that same public opinion is no longer inclined to consider a genius, went.

This match was played up to six wins, without limiting the number of games to be played, which, of course, shows a complete lack of respect for the work and health of the players. Thank God it was, I hope, the last such unlimited match in the history of chess.

The match began on September 9, 1984, and ended on February 15, 1985, just before the start of Gorbachev's 'perestroika' and the huge changes that destroyed the Soviet Union. The match was seriously politicised. The young, impulsive Garry Kasparov, with his burning gaze, playing in an extremely aggressive attacking manner, symbolised everything new and progressive, was against the favourite of the Communist Party and its leadership, the symbol of 'stagnation' and collapse, the monument of the past, the conservative Anatoly Karpov. This is how it was presented to the general public in the democratic press.

Kasparov's play was definitely impressive. In the opening stage, he had a lot of research and novelties, most often associated with the sacrifice of a pawn for the initiative. His analyses of these, as a rule, were longer and deeper than those of rivals, and in the range and speed of calculating variations, he was almost like a computer, and had no equal in the world. He would sacrifice a pawn, obtain an initiative in a position where calculation dominated, often one he had studied beforehand, and his opponents could not stand the tension of the struggle, and would be finished off ruthlessly.

In such a powerful manner, Kasparov won almost all his tournaments, and had met Karpov only three times before the match, all these games ending in a draw. The challenger's PR team organised numerous laudatory and sometimes boastful interviews, in one of which (and perhaps not only in one) Karpov was even called a coward.

My opinion before the match was unambiguous. I thought, and my students of that time can confirm this, that Kasparov had no chance against Karpov, with such a style of play. He just did not understand what kind of power he was up against. Like a concrete block, at which you will jump, and then just rebound. And in the matter of endgame

technique, the technique of realizing advantages, objectivity and accuracy in assessing positions, Karpov at that time was clearly superior to Kasparov.

The match began discouragingly for Kasparov. In the first five games, he three times attacked Karpov in his favourite manner. The sacrifices were accepted, the initiative was gradually quenched and the material advantage was realized. The result was two wins and three draws for Karpov, and it could have been three wins with two draws. Then the challenger decided to play actively (with black – the Tarrasch Defence), but not so aggressively. The result was the same. Two games where Karpov was Black ended in a draw, and he won two with White, by obtaining positions with a small advantage and no initiative for the opponent. There was a clear difference in quality of technique.

Nine games passed. The match required six wins and the score was 4:0 in favour of Karpov. And, most importantly – it was not clear how Kasparov should play.

At that moment, Kasparov made a brilliant decision from a sporting point of view. He voluntarily gave up pressing with white, offering draws immediately after the opening, whilst as Black, he began to play Karpov's repertoire. The goal was, first of all, to tighten the match without losing it in the next 4-6 games, and recover a little.

Karpov's goal was completely different – not just to win the match, but rather to do so with a Fischeresque score of 6:0, so as, on the one hand, to deliver a psychological knockout to the overconfident opponent, and on the other, to show the world that Anatoly Karpov was the strongest chess player in history.

Kasparov succeeded in realizing his plan. As White, he only once in the 16th game did not offer a draw after the opening, got an excellent position, but eventually barely escaped with a draw.

The copying of Karpov's black opening repertoire was a big surprise for the latter. After all, if you play against 1.e2-e4, say, the Russian Game, and the opponent the Sicilian Defence, then you do not expect such insolence from him. But if you show him how to play White in the Russian and yet do not win, then tomorrow, he will play 1.e2-e4, and you will have problems in the opening as Black!

Karpov decided to play safe and for a long time adopted his opponent's tactics. But he underestimated the effect of the 12-year age difference between them and overestimated his physical strength. There was a protracted series of draws, and only in the 27th game did the World Champion show his superiority in endgame technique, brilliantly converting a slightly better ending.

The score was now 5:0. In the 31st game, slightly short of time, Karpov allowed his opponent to escape from what should have been a lost ending. Karpov was just half a step from the goal, and if this game had been not the 31st, but, say, the 21st or 23rd, Kasparov's chances of saving himself would have been negligible. But history has no subjunctive mood. In the 32nd game Kasparov won.

From that moment, the countdown started. Karpov's marvellous intuition began to malfunction, in the face of extreme fatigue, and Kasparov's advantage in the calculation of long variations started to come to the fore. The match went on with an obvious advantage to the challenger, but for another 14 games Karpov managed to hold on to draws. He collapsed in the 47th and 48th games, after which the match was terminated by the decision of FIDE President Florencio Campomanes, and the following year a new match of 24 games was started, from an initial score of 0:0.

We must pay tribute to Garry Kasparov. He realized with what force he had to contend, and did a great job to eliminate the flaws in his game. Some things were better, some were worse, but only this work allowed him to become that great chess player, who is rightly considered one of the most outstanding in the history of chess.

Since then, Kasparov and Karpov have played four more matches for the title of World Champion. In each, 24 games were played. In three matches, Kasparov won, the other ended in a tie. But it became already noticeable that their 'chess trains' began to move in different directions in relation to the chess Olympus, Kasparov's from the bottom up, and Karpov's from the top down.

I never thought that I would have to publicly speak out about a seemingly quite obvious thing: the genius of Anatoly Karpov as a chess player. The same is true of Vladimir Kramnik, Viswanathan Anand and Magnus Carlsen. How could the non-genius Kramnik be able to defeat the genius Kasparov, in the latter's prime, in a match for the World Championship, without losing a single game in fifteen?

In fact, this topic is very subjective, slippery, and it touches people's self-esteem. Tastes are different for everyone. For me, for example, the style of the play of such a trio as Karpov, Kramnik and Carlsen is more appealing than the style of Tal, Kasparov and Topalov, but my taste is probably affected by my coaching job.

The criteria of genius are varied and not always obvious. Today, in many areas of human activity, the principle that applies is that perception is more important than reality. The title of World Champion in chess is perhaps the most honourable of all sports titles on the planet. If this is so important for the human 'ego', and most people cannot get rid of it, I suggest that all world chess champions, who managed to defeat the previous champion in a match, should be called geniuses of chess.

Chapter 18
Before the conclusion

I would like to talk a little more about the styles of play and the differences in decision-making between outstanding chess players.

Today the slogan of the great Yugoslav GM Svetozar Gligoric, 'I play against the pieces', looks archaic. The sporting element in chess prevails, and therefore, no one desires to give additional advantages to the opponent.

As said, a study of this topic was conducted by Danish grandmaster Lars Bo Hansen. He, for example, studied the statistics of the white games of Karpov and Kasparov in the Carlsbad structure of the Queen's Gambit. The conclusion is interesting: Karpov, focusing on the development of the king's knight on the f3-square, followed by a subsequent minority attack, scored 80%, whilst Kasparov, putting his knight on e2 and then playing in the centre with f2-f3 and e3-e4, managed to score no less than 90%!

According to Hansen, these approaches were best suited to the character, temperament and style of both great champions. Swap the systems round between them and both, of course, would have shown a positive result, but it would not have been so outstanding.

The Danish grandmaster believes that every chess player should understand his own style, as well as determining the tastes and preferences of his opponents. But what is more important, he also explains how to do this.

In *Fundamentals of Chess Strategy*, Hansen divides players in intuitive and logical decision-makers, just as does Dvoretsky. But he goes further. Intuitive players, who gravitate towards attack, he calls 'activists', and calmer players, who gravitate towards a strict positional game – 'reflectors'. The logicians are also divided between 'pragmatists' and 'theorists'. The first, according to the Dane, rely more on concrete data, the latter on general ideas.

As a result, Hansen drew up the following curious table.

Then the Danish grandmaster goes on to break down both the manner of the play of each type of player, and each specific player, from his qualifying table. Here is what he writes, for example, about the features of 'reflectors':

« 1) A great sense of where the pieces should stand, a very good understanding of the interaction of the pieces.

2) Excellent ability to feel and accumulate the smallest advantages, which they eventually transform into something tangible.

3) Often very strong in the endgame, where their main strength is the realization of a slight advantage.

4) Strong in assessing the feasibility of long-term positional sacrifices, for example, a positional sacrifice of an exchange.

5) Calculate a relatively small number of variations and make decisions that mainly rely on general principles of chess, trying to use their deep understanding and sense of play.»

At first glance, everything is reasoned and looks pretty logical, although I cannot agree with the place in the classification table of Vladimir Kramnik. In my opinion, he is a universal chess player, and intuition plays no less a role in his decisions at the board than does logic, and almost all the features of 'reflectors' are inherent in him. The reader will be able to verify this by looking at the Kramnik-Topalov extract at the very end of the book. However, in the chapter on Kramnik, Hansen writes: 'I believe that Vladimir Kramnik and Peter Leko, of the modern strongest players, belong more clearly to the category of theorists than the others, although it should be noted that the strongest chess players today are much more versatile than before.'

And in another interesting book by Hansen, *Chess. Learn from the Champions*, which I acquired after the first, there is another interesting characterisation of Vladimir Kramnik's play: 'Of all modern chess players, Vladimir Kramnik most consistently uses the concept of prophylaxis in his games. In fact, his style, so to speak, is based on "prophylaxis".'

I'm ready to agree with Hansen, but at the same time would add that this can be said about the present-day Vladimir Borisovich, who when choosing a move takes into account his age, the age of the opponent, his state of health during the game, the clock, the opponent's style, and many other factors. And about 10-15 years ago, his criteria for choosing a move were different. Nevertheless, this 'pensioner's' approach to the game allows him to show brilliant results. In 2015 Kramnik was in second place in the world rating list, after Magnus Carlsen, and at the end of 2017 he was still seventh.

In Hansen's book there is a mention of the works of Znosko-Borovsky and Dorfman. Summarizing the foregoing, I recommend that you buy and read this interesting, controversial work.

The book *Fundamentals of Chess Strategy* by Lars Bo Hansen appeared in Russian in 2015, but the original was published some time ago, because one immediately noticeable thing is the absence in the table of the current World Champion Magnus Carlsen. Let's talk a little about him. In my opinion, he is an even more obviously universal player than Vladimir Kramnik, possibly due to the difference in age, although they are similar in style of play.

Carlsen can play absolutely any type of position. He has a phenomenal positional instinct and fantastic technique, calculates variations perfectly, and defends even better than he attacks. (That is a rarity for a player who already entered the elite of world chess at 17-18 years of age!) I think that Hansen would put Magnus in the company of Capablanca and Karpov as intuitive 'reflectors', although there is nothing wrong with the Norwegian genius' logic.

I again recommend that you read the article by Pavel Maletin referred to earlier, where he describes in detail Carlsen's thought patterns in Game 6 of the second match against Anand. If I were asked to name the game of Carlsen's which made the greatest impression on me, then I would immediately single out the following effort from the 2007 World Cup.

Magnus Carlsen
Michael Adams
Khanty-Mansiysk 2007

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 d5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.Qxc3 dxc4 7.Qxc4 b6 8.Bf4 Ba6 9.Qxc7 Qxc7 10.Bxc7 0-0 11.Nf3 Rc8 12.Bf4 Nbd7

We will leave the opening stage on one side and begin the analysis right from this position. White has the advantage of the bishop pair and an extra pawn, but Black has a lead in development and has the c-file, the only open file. At first glance, his chances are at least not worse. The sixteen-year old Carlsen finds a fantastic manoeuvre, gradually neutralising the activity of his opponent.

13.Nd2!!

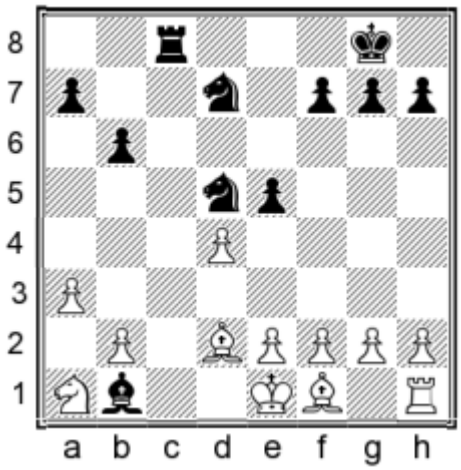
He transfers the knight from f3 to a1 to protect the square c2! This reminds me of the computer manoeuvre used by the Chinese child prodigy Wei Yi in the game against Maxim Rodshtein, 12.Qd2!!? and 13.Kd1!!?, with the only difference that Magnus most probably found his idea at the board without the help of the 'silicon monster'. His move is also absolutely correct.

A chess player, even at the level of a candidate master, looking through the game without special explanations, could easily pass by the young Norwegian's idea. For me, such a knight transfer is more beautiful than any 'resulting' tactical blow. This brings us back once again to the question about the subjectivity of the criteria for assessing the genius of a chess player and assessing beauty in chess.

13...Rc2 14.Rb1 Rac8 15.Nb3! Bc4

Black strives for dynamics. After 15...Nd5 16.Bd2 f5 (16...N7f6 17.f3), with the attempt to establish a blockade on the light squares, White gradually regroups with 17.Na1! R2c7 18.e3 Bxf1 19.Kxf1 e5 20.dxe5 Nxe5 21.Ke2.

16.Na1! Ba2 17.Nxc2 Bxb1 18.Na1! Nd5 19.Bd2 e5



A surprising position! All White's pieces are on the first and second ranks, and of his pawns only the ones on a3 and d4 have moved. Black has maximum activity, but his trumps do not even suffice for equality. The knight on a1 and the bishop on d2 control all the vulnerable points, and with every move, like in ice hockey after a two-minute 'sin-bin' penalty, the players who are temporarily off the pitch re-enter the battle.

20.e3!?

One can understand Carlsen's desire to continue dominating the d7-knight with the pawn on d4. However, he could also have been more pushy and played 20.dxe5 Nxe5 21.e3. This is what Nezhmetdinov and Stetsko wrote in their book *Magnus Carlsen. 60 Games by the Leader of Contemporary Chess*: « 21...Bd3 (weaker is 21...Nd3+ 22.Bxd3 Bxd3 23.f3 f5 24.Kf2 Kf7 25.Rd1) 22.Be2, and Black's pieces are as active as they can be (variation by Adams). But this is not for long. Let us continue: 22...f5 23.f4 Bxe2 24.Kxe2 Nc4 25.Rc1 Rc7 26.Rc2 b5 27.b3! Nxa3 28.Rxc7 Nxc7, and with his knight cut off on a3, Black is unlikely to save the ending. There could follow: 29.Kd3 (with the threat of 30.Bb4) or 29.Bb4 Nb1 30.Kd3.»

20...exd4 21.exd4 Nb8 22.f3 Nc6 23.Bc4?!

«An error, allowing Black to strengthen the blockade on the square d5. More precise was 23.Kf2 with the threat of 24.Ba6. Now, 23...Ba2 24.b3 Nxd4 25.Bc4 is dubious, as Black has problems extricating the adventurous bishop.

Therefore it was more solid to support the knight on d5 – 23...Bf5 24.Bc4 Be6, at the same time setting a small trap: 25.Rd1 Ne3! 26.Kxe3 Bxc4.» (Nezhmetdinov, Stetsko)

23...Rd8?!

Black misses his chance. Carlsen recommended 23...Ncb4 24.b3 Nd3+ 25.Kf1 Nc7 26.Ke2 Re8+ 27.Be3 Nf4+ 28.Kf2 Nd3+ 29.Bxd3 Bxd3, and in the opposite-coloured bishops ending, Black has every chance to hold.

24.Kf2 Bf5 25.Nb3 Be6 26.Rc1 f6

The situation has stabilized. White has an extra pawn on d4, which is securely blockaded. The black pieces are well coordinated, and the positions of the white knight and the dark-squared bishop, both so successful in defence, are not ideal for the realization of the material advantage. A tough battle lies ahead, in which White's chances of a victory are roughly equal to Black's chances of a draw.

27.a4

White tries to develop activity on the queenside with a4-a5. With the advantage of the two bishops, the stronger side should press the enemy position, and probe it with the rook's pawns.

27...a5

The automatic reply. Black prevents his opponent seizing space and takes control of the strong outpost on b4 for his knights. At this stage, it is hard to foresee that the weakening of the b6-pawn will later play a role.

28.Bc3 Bf7?!

Black departs from the right course. As pointed out by Nezhmetdinov and Stetsko, he should have brought the king closer to the centre and protected the bishop by 28...Kf7!. Black will then try to exchange the light-squared bishops by 29...Nde7,

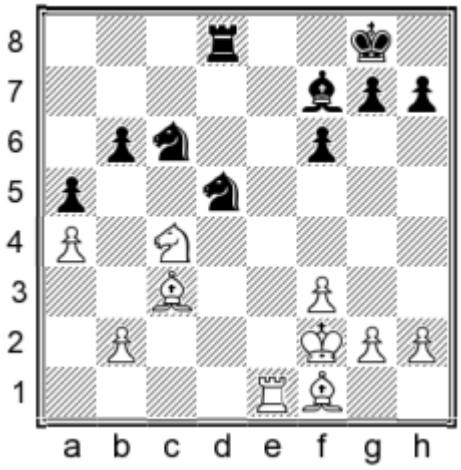
and in the event of 29.Re1, he sticks to his guns with 29...Nce7, with the idea 30...Nc7. However, it was hardly realistic to foresee Carlsen's further brilliant manoeuvres, especially in approaching time trouble.

29.Nd2 Nde7

30.Bf1!

White strives to open the game and does not hang on to the extra pawn with 30.Rd1?! because of 30...Bxc4! 31.Nxc4 Nd5!.

30...Nxd4 31.Re1 Ndc6 32.Nc4 Nd5



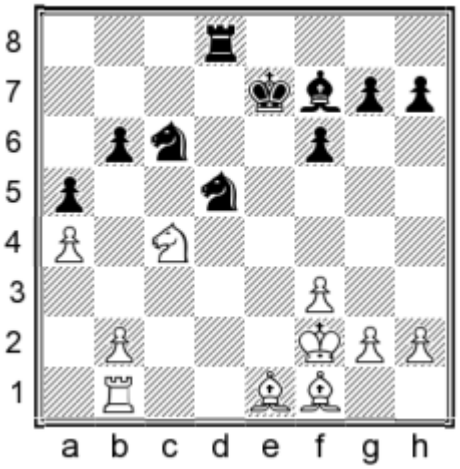
33.Rb1!!

Brilliantly played! It should be noted that both players were seriously short of time. White spots the hidden weakness in the black position – the pawn on b6.

33...Kf8?!

The psychological effect of the rook move to b1 is fully equal to that of an unexpected tactical blow. It is hardly surprising that in time-trouble, Adams missed his best chance: 33...Bg6 34.Rd1 Bc2 35.Rxd5 Rxd5 36.Ne3 Bb3 37.Nxd5 Bxd5. White's position is still better, but nothing clear is obvious.

34.Be1 Ke7?!



The centralisation of the king is rarely wrong, but it may not be timely. In time-trouble the English grandmaster made a move with his hand, bringing the king to the centre. It was better to play 34...Ncb4 or simplify the game by 34...Bg6 35.Rd1 Bc2 36.Rd2 Bxa4, although here after 37.Nxb6! it was necessary, with flag hanging, to see the answer 37...Bb3 (indicated by Nezhmetdinov and Stetsko).

35.Kg1!!

Brilliant! Yet another move 'not for the average mind'. It is a unique ending. White refutes the centralisation of the opponent's king by the creative decentralisation of his own king! No prejudices! First, the knight from f3 is transferred to a1, and then the king on f2 falls back to g1, to make way for the bishop to attack the pawn b6.

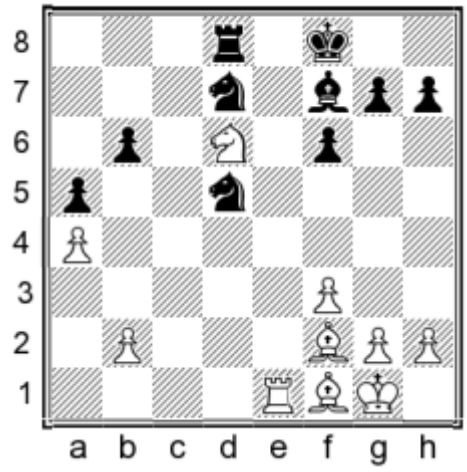
35...Nb8

The knight heads to the square d7 to protect the pawn on b6. The coordination of the black pieces is broken, and White achieves a decisive advantage. Note that the young Magnus, by playing entirely within his own camp, has managed to completely outplay his opponent, who is highly experienced in the art positional manoeuvering. Not once in 35 moves did any white piece cross the fourth rank, except to take the c7-pawn in the opening. We saw the same thing in the game Karpov-Timman, but there it was done by a 28-year-old World Champion, and not a boy of 16!

36.Bf2

«As Carlsen notes, he spent the rest of his time studying the king's walk after 36.Nxb6! Nxb6 37.Bxa5 N8d7 (37...Rd6? 38.Bb4) 38.Bb4+ Ke6 39.Re1+ Kf5 (bad is 39...Kd5? 40.Bb5!), and could not find a win. But had he had more time, he would undoubtedly have found the continuation 40.Bd3+ Kg5 41.Re7 Nf8 42.Rxf7 Rxd3 43.Bxf8 Nxa4 44.Rxg7+ with new material gains. We would add that Black is also not saved by 39...Ne5 40.Ba5 Rb8 41.f4 Nxa4 42.fxe5 Kd7 (42...Nxb2 43.exf6+ Kxf6 44.Bc3+ Kg6 45.Rb1) 43.exf6 gxf6 44.b4 with a technically won endgame. In a word, this finish could have been a worthy end to the game.» (Nezhmetdinov, Stetsko)

36...Nd7 37.Re1+ Kf8 38.Rd1 Ke7 39.Re1+ Kf8 40.Nd6



40...Ne5?!

With the last move of the time control, Black meets the threat of 41.Nxf7 and 42.Bc4, but he makes a mistake in solving the problem of exchanges. The knights on d5 and e5 in the centre look handsome, and if Black were to succeed in safeguarding the e5 outpost by playing ...g7-g5, Adams's decision to fight with knights against bishops would be justified. But the weakness of the pawn on b6 does not allow the black knights to remain in the centre. More tenacious was 40...Bg8.

41.Nxf7 Kxf7 42.Rd1! Ke7

The threat was 42.Bxb6.

43.f4! Ng4 44.Re1+ Kf8 45.Bd4 Rd6 46.h3 Nh6

«Adams believes that it was possible to take the pawn – 46...Nxf4 47.Re4 Ne6 48.Rxe6 Rxe6 49.hxg4 Re4 50.Bxb6 Rxa4, but it is unlikely that Black will be able to save such an endgame. For example, 51.Bb5 Ra1+ (in the case of 51...Rxg4 52.Bxa5 Ke7 53.Bc3, the remote passed pawn, supported by the bishops, should win) 52.Kf2 Rb1 53.Bc5+ Kf7 54.Bc4+ Ke8 55.b3. The king approaches the centre, after which the a5-pawn is won. Perhaps this was nevertheless the only practical chance, because in the rest of the game, Carlsen did not give Black a single chance, slowly bringing the game to a victorious conclusion.» (Nezhmetdinov, Stetsko).

47.Rd1!

A little tactic. The pawn on f4 cannot be taken because of 48.Bc5!.

47...Nf5 48.Bf2 Ke7 49.g4!

Again a tactical motif. Black does not have 49...Nfe3 because of 50.Re1 Re6 51.f5 Re5 52.Bg3 Re4 53.Bg2. He has to retreat to the edge of the board.

49...Nh6 50.f5 Nf7 51.Bg2 Nf4 52.Rxd6 Nxd6 53.Bxb6 Nc4 54.Bc5+ Kd7 55.Bf1

Magnus prefers to keep both bishops. He would also have been winning easily after 55.b3!?.

55...Nxb2 56.Bb5+ Kd8

56...Kc7 does not help either, because of 57.Bf8 Nxh3+ 58.Kh2 Nf2 59.g5.

57.Bb6+ Ke7 58.Kh2 Nd5 59.Bxa5 Kd6 60.Bd2 Kc5 61.Kg3 Nc7 62.Be3+ Kb4 63.Bd2+ Kc5 64.Bc1 Nc4 65.Bxc4 Kxc4 66.Bd2 Na6 67.a5 Kb5

68.Kf3 Nc5 69.Bc3 h6 70.Ke3 Kc4 71.Bd4 Na6 72.Ke4 Nb4 73.h4 Kb5 74.Bc3 Na6 75.Kd5 Nc5 76.Bd4 Nd3 77.Ke6

Black resigned.

Carlsen's play in this game reminds me of arm wrestling, when one of the athletes captures the initiative with a sharp effort, but the other, more powerful fighter, withstands the initial onslaught and, like an inexorable spring, begins to unwind. First, the hands return to their original position, and the initiative is already on the side of the fighter who was defending at the start. There is another effort, and the opponent, who first attacked, acknowledges defeat.

Examples of such games at the highest level are very rare. I remember only one game played by the greatest master of defence and counter-attack, the brilliant Viktor Lvovich Kortchnoi at the age of forty, in his Candidates' match against Efim Petrovich Geller.

Viktor Kortchnoi
Efim Geller
Moscow 1971

White to move

This position is presented by Mark Dvoretsky in the fourth book of the five-volume *School of Future Champions*, written in co-authorship with Artur Yusupov. Here is what the great trainer wrote in the chapter devoted to the contest in solving positional exercises:

«Black stands more actively. First of all, we must reckon with the offensive on the queenside ...b7-b5-b4. How to oppose to this? The right decision was found by Maxim Boguslavsky and Vadim Zviagintsev.

17.a3!!

A subtle prophylactic move. On 17...b5 the intention is 18.Na2! and then Nb4, using the weakness of c6. At the same time, White plans to drive the powerful knight from c4 by means of Qa2, Nce2 and b2-b3.

Geller did not manage to find an effective counter-plan, and as a result, White soon completed the development of his pieces and took over the initiative. It was necessary to decide on an immediate change in the pawn structure by advancing the e-pawn: 17...e6!? 18.dxe6 fxe6 (recommended by Alexander Shabalov) or 17...b5 18.Na2 e5! 19.dxe6 fxe6.

17...Qc5 18.Qa2 Rc7 19.Nce2! Rbc8

19...Nxd5? 20.Nb3!

20.b3 Ne5!?

20...Nb6 21.e4 with an obvious advantage to White.

21.Bd2!

With the enemy pieces so active, White needs to be very careful. If 21.f4?! Qb6 (a7), the immediate capture of the piece by 22.fxe5? dxe5 (with the threat of a rook penetration to c2) is clearly bad, whilst 22.Rb1 (or 22.Qb1) 22.Rb1 Be8 also looks risky for White.

However, 21.e4!? followed by Be3 deserved serious attention.

21...Be8

21...Nxd5? 22.b4

22.Rac1 Qb6 23.Rxc7 Rxc7 24.Bc3 Bb5 25.Qd2 Bxe2 26.Ba5! Qa7 27.Nxe2 Rc8 28.Rc1 Qb8 29.Rc2

29.Rxc8+!? Qxc8 30.Qc1

29...Ned7 30.Qc1 Rc5 31.Rxc5 Nxc5 32.Qc2 Qe8 33.Nd4

And White stands clearly better – he has two bishops and more space.»

Incidentally, Shabalov's recommendation is in full agreement with the teaching of Dorfman. Geller was unable to predict Kortchnoi's subtle manoeuvres, and the move 17...Qc5?! missed the chance of dynamic play by ...e7-e6. And then it was already difficult to change anything. The inexorable force, as in arm-wrestling, began to press his hand down onto the table. Black's position had entered the stage of degradation.

Chapter 19
Conclusion

Concluding the review of serious chess literature, I would like to turn again to the trainers. After all, the Russian version of my book was a continuation of the series *Self-Teacher/Coaching Assistant*, started by the excellent *Chess Strategy Textbook* by Konstantin Sakaev and Konstantin Landa. In my work, I would even swap words in the title of the series: *Coaching Assistant/Self-Teacher*.

Today, with the development of technology, it has become immeasurably easier than a quarter of a century ago to select training exercises and give assignments to students. In order to arrange a solving test in earlier years, the only book available was *Together with the Grandmasters* by Hort and Jansa [*Translator's note: Published in English under the title 'The Best Move'*]. Today, authors I have already mentioned, such as Zenon Franco or Alfonso Romero Holmes and Amador Gonzalez de la Nava, give you a trouble-free opportunity to conduct classes without bothering with special preparation, several months in a row. And you can take for the same purpose the excellent book of Lev Psakhis, *Chess Tactics for Improvers*.

Do you want to improve your understanding of the transition from the opening to the middlegame? Then *Walking with the French Defence* by Kortchnoi and Kalinin or *Sicilian Attacks* by Yakovich are at your service. And I say nothing of the possibility of using a computer. However, the great danger in this case is that one goes from being a creative person to a mere workman.

What should I say? The books are excellent. The exercises are high-quality. The work goes on. And yet the results are poor, there are hardly any results at all. The story mentioned by Valery Beim in the introduction to his interesting book *The Dynamics of Chess* is good in this respect. It is dedicated to chess commentator-hackers, and, I would add, to some authors of chess books, too:

«... I remembered a friend of my chess childhood, Pavlik Lasker, with whom we played chess in a pioneer camp in Odessa. Growing up, he went to work as a tailor, making and repairing trousers. But he said to me: 'Do I really sew pants? It's more like churning out sausages!'»

Let me once again draw your attention to the thoughts already voiced earlier:

«In conclusion, I would like to note that chess is multifaceted, and an infinite number of strategic, tactical, theoretical and practical exercises can be invented. You can take the old program of V.E. Golenishev, modernized by Viktor Ivanov and edited by the brilliant chess journalist Ilya Odessky, and conduct classes based on it, or some other book. There is likely to be some benefit, but serious process is unlikely.

A good coach should outline a programme of work that includes a number of important components, and make sure that the student does not shy away from it.

And once these components, each of which implies a large and purposeful amount of work, have been implemented, learned and combined, there should be a sharp jump in the chess player's class.»

I cannot ignore the recent achievement of the Russian Chess Federation, the importance of which cannot be overestimated. This is the opening of the chess department in the educational centre 'Sirius' in Sochi.

'Sirius' is a unique project aimed at creating ideal conditions for training, professional growth and creative communication of the most gifted children of Russia, in the fields of science, art and sports. The project was approved by the President of Russia, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, and enjoys his full support and attention. I think that there is no analogy to such a centre in the world.

As for chess, the state support of permanent, not just occasional, training work with young talents, regardless of the material situation of their parents, with the best coaches of the country, happens only in China, according to grandmaster Sergey Shipov. Perhaps something similar is happening in Iran and India, where there is rapid growth and great success in youth chess. Now it is Russia's turn to catch up.

Chess at 'Sirius' is supervised by the fourteenth World Champion Vladimir Borisovich Kramnik, who already met with the participants of the first session and held a master class. In 2017, 16 training sessions were planned for 12 days each. Now talented young chess players, not only from the major chess centres of Russia, but also from the provinces, have the right to rely on qualified assistance from well-known coaches.

I would like to say a few words about the coaching staff which forms the backbone of 'Sirius'. In addition to the author of this book, there are grandmasters Sakaev and Belikov.

Sakaev has achieved impressive successes as an active chess player. Suffice it to say that he twice won the 'gold' in the Russian national team at the Olympiad, and he was also Russian champion. As a coach, he was involved in working with Kramnik.

Today, he has switched to working with talented young boys and girls, at which he has been very successful. His encyclopedic knowledge gives him the opportunity to pick up in a few days almost any opening topic. In his erudition and understanding of the game, he reminds me of the outstanding coach of the national team of the Soviet Union, Isaak Efremovich Boleslavsky, only Sakaev is also armed with a modern computer.

In his style of play and approach to decision-making, Sakaev is similar to Boleslavsky's best pupil, the ninth World Champion Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian, but to the active and energetic 30-year old Petrosian, rather than the fifty-year-old version. Konstantin Sakaev has the ability to grasp the essence of a position very quickly, but unlike many intuitive chess players, who cannot easily explain the logical basis of their decisions, he can do this in one or two sentences.

His 'decision algorithm' is very clear. Computer printouts of Sakaev's opening lectures are just a dry summary of the games and variations, so to speak, an *aide-memoire* to the students who listened to the lecture itself. They are only a modest addition to the thoughts and ideas voiced by Sakaev during classes, which he generously shares with his students.

By way of evidence of what I say, let us look at some of Sakaev's commentaries on a number of the examples from this book.

First, the game **Wei Yi-Maxim Rodshtein**, Tsaghkadzor 2015:

White to move

«**11.h3**

I would not say this move is improbable, as the following two are. After all, what else can one suggest?

There are already no normal moves that complete development. What is improbable, rather, is the whole set-up, for which White has voluntarily gone in. I think that here there is a lack of understanding of chess on the part of the white player. I'm sure the high-end players of the classical school, such as Kramnik and Anand, would not have gone for this, despite the computer's assurances of the viability of such play. And I do not think that such ideas are the chess of the future.

11...Re8 12.Qd2 Nd7?

Had Rodshtein found the more active 12...Nh5! 13.Kd1 (13.Ne4 Qh4+ 14.Kd1 Rxe5 15.fxe5 Bg4+ 16.hxg4 Qxh1+ 17.Qe1 Qxg2 18.Bd2 Nf3 19.Qe2 Qg1+ 20.Be1 Nd4 21.Qd2 Qxg4+ 22.Kc1 Nf3∓; 13.Qf2 f6 14.Bxc6 fxe5 15.Bxa8 Ng3–+) 13...Ng3 14.Re1 Qh4 15.Nf3 Bg4 16.hxg4 Qxg4∓, then White would have had cause to regret his adventure. But the Chinese player would certainly have drawn conclusions for the future – ending up in a collection of 15-move miniatures, on the losing side, is not very pleasant. But this time hooliganism benefited the white player.

13.Kd1 Nxe5 14.fxe5 Rxe5 15.Re1 Rxe1+ 16.Qxe1 Bf5 17.Qe5 Qf8?

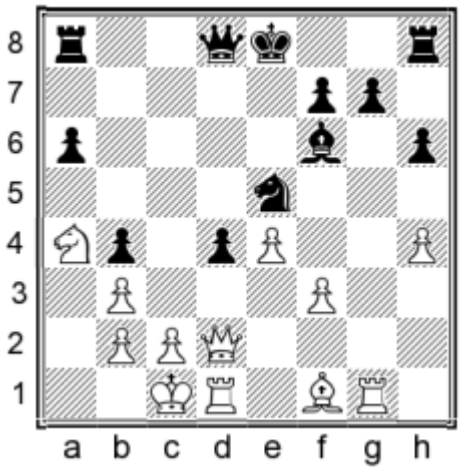
An ugly move – the queen withdraws from the battlefield. Black still has a normal position, and after 17...Bb6 18.Bxc6 he could force a draw by means of 18...Bc7 19.Qc5 Bb6 20.Qe5 Bc7 or

20.Qd5 Qf6 21.Bxa8 Bg4+ 22.hxg4 Qf1+ 23.Kd2 Qf2+.

18.Bxc6 Nxc6 19.Qxf5

Now White definitely has the advantage. The compensation is insufficient – many pieces have already been exchanged, and the Qf8 is a long way from the white king.»

Now we give Sakaev's notes on the game **Anand-Kamsky**, Linares 1994.



White to move

«**19.f4!!**

An attacking, offensive move, which I like much more than the defensive 19.Be2. I'm sure it is also objectively stronger.

After 19.Be2, Black's position is not very pleasant, but even so, he has a choice:

A) Things are not so simple after the capture 19...Bxh4:

A1) The position after 20.Qxb4 Be7 21.Qd2 (21.Qxd4? Bg5+ 22.Kb1 Qxd4 23.Rxd4 Be3?) 21...d3 22.f4 dxe2 23.Qxe2 looks completely obscure;

A2) 20.Kb1 d3! with an unclear game;

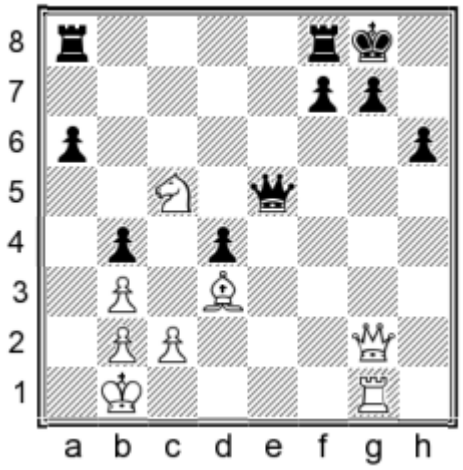
A3) White needs to settle on 20.f4! Bf2 21.fxe5 Be3 22.Qxe3 dxe3 23.Rxd8+ Rxd8 – White has the advantage, but the assessment of the endgame from afar is not so clear-cut.

B) Probably the strongest is 19...d3 20.Qe3 Qc7 21.Bxd3 Rd8 22.Bxa6 Rxd1+ 23.Rxd1 0-0 24.f4 Bxh4 – White is better, but Black has clear counterplay.

On the other hand, the evaluation of the position that arises after the long, but absolutely forced (and therefore calculable) variation

19.f4!! Nf3 20.Qg2 Nxg1 21.e5 0-0 22.Bd3 Bxe5 23.fxe5 Qxh4 24.Rxg1 Qf4+ 25.Kb1 Qxe5 26.Nc5

does not give rise to any doubts.



White has a safe king, a bishop occupying a powerful square, and wonderful piece coordination. Black has weak light squares on the kingside and he cannot simplify the game. He has no chance.

26...Ra7 27.Qc6 Qe3 28.Rg2 Kh8 29.Re2 Qg1+ 30.Ka2 Raa8 31.Nd7 Rac8 32.Qf3 f5 33.Nxf8 Rc5 34.Ng6+ Qxg6 35.Re1 Qf6 36.Qa8+ Kh7 37.Bc4 Rc6 38.Qg8+ Kg6 39.Rg1+

Black resigned.»

Let's return to the position before White's 19th move. The following is curious: if you put it on the computer, all the programs give the move 19.Be2 as the first line of play, whereas the move 19.f4!! is not in the first three lines at all. But if you leave it running, 19.f4!! gradually turns into the first line, competing with the moves 19.Be2 and 19.Qg2. In the position after 27.Qc6, Stockfish, after thinking for a while, gives White +1.37.

Summarizing all of the above: Anand's move 19.f4!! is great, but, as they say, 'not for the average mind.' In the case of 19.Be2!? d3 20.Qe3 Qc7 21.Bxd3 Rd8, White cannot waste time on winning the a6-pawn, and should continue to play in the centre: 22.Be2!?, for example: 22...Bxh4 23.Kb1 Ng6 24.Nb6 Rxd1+ 25.Rxd1 0-0 26.Nd5, maintaining a stable advantage. The computer estimates it at about +0.95.

Vladimir Stanislavovich Belikov is a well-known specialist, and a strong, experienced grandmaster and coach. He was one of the strongest juniors in Russia and in the Soviet Union, four-time boys' champion of Russia, World Student Champion as part of the national team of the USSR, and

Champion of the Armed Forces. He studied for four years in the Botvinnik School, where he met and became friends with the future World Champion Vladimir Kramnik.

In 1994, he accepted the job of permanent coach to Vladimir Kramnik. The opening preparation of the fourteenth World Champion is considered top-notch, and many books have been written about it. Vladimir Kramnik himself is highly demanding in his work, both with himself and his assistants. And the fact that Vladimir Belikov worked with him constantly for 17 years testifies to his highest class as a specialist.

Konstantin Sakaev, Mikhail Shereshevsky and Vladimir Belikov

Belikov was an assistant coach in the preparation and directly during the four World Championship matches played by Kramnik. He repeatedly helped the 14th World Champion at major international tournaments: Wijk aan Zee (Holland), Madrid and Dos Hermanas (Spain), Dortmund (Germany), Moscow, Budapest (Hungary), Astana (Kazakhstan), Shamkir (Azerbaijan).

In general, he is a modest, calm person, who is averse to excessive fuss, hype and self-promotion. Due to this, he perhaps loses something, because he is a specialist of the highest class, but personal emotional comfort is also worth a lot. He already has achievements in coaching with Russian juniors. Anna Kochukova from the Voronezh region, with whom Vladimir has been working for several years, became the European U-14 Girls Champion in 2015. But Belikov's biggest coaching successes with the Russian juniors undoubtedly still lie ahead.

Just before submitting this book for production, I was able to get acquainted with Boris Gelfand's book *Positional Decision-Making in Chess*. I want to congratulate the young publishing house 'The Library of the Russian Chess Federation', which is moving forward with leaps and bounds and publishing books, each one better than the other. But Gelfand's work, in my opinion, stands apart.

This is the most interesting chess book I have read in the last quarter-century. Firstly, it is a very beautiful and unusually constructed book. I do not know any other case in chess literature when an outstanding grandmaster, one of the world's strongest chess players, has conducted a dialogue with the reader in a language that is understandable and interesting to both the grandmaster and the beginner.

The essence of the dialogue is the comparison of games almost a century old by Akiba Rubinstein, the brightest representative of the classical school, with ultra-modern games. After all, when you tell young chess players about the need for at least a shortened classical chess education, and explain how to get it, there is a feeling that many of them consider this occupation about as useful as, say, a study of military strategy in the Wars of the Roses. They regard it as completely irrelevant to them.

Secondly, the author reveals this connection in the most detailed manner and shows by concrete examples what he learned from the great Akiba, and what concrete benefits it brought to him in practical games.

Thirdly, a thoughtful coach will gain a huge number of excellent training exercises from this book.

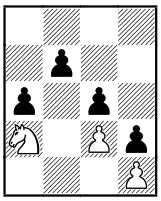
And fourthly, fifthly, sixthly...this book is adorned with a whole scattering of wise thoughts, some of which, for example about the development of intuition, have been a revelation for me. Sometimes there is a feeling that the quantum of information, on which the super-grandmaster draws from his creative sources in a duel with an equally strong opponent, is translated into a simple human language and is collected in this book. In order to prove my point, I will give a few quotations from this charming book.

«But we also have patterns that happen on the board. Unlike tennis, which I enjoyed playing until my knees asked me to stop, we do not try to repeat the same movements again and again in chess. In order for us to hone our skills, we need to train them in unknown positions. Still it is very useful to know a lot of classical games and classical plans. You never know when some patterns will become useful in your own game.

Take the following interesting Rubinstein game, which is instructive for two reasons.

In abstract form there is the principle of two weaknesses: how Akiba improves his position on the queenside and then switches his play to the kingside. He did this kind of thing continually in his games and it obviously made a great impression on me.

The visual pattern also stayed with me. A knight on a5 attacking pawns on b7 and c6 is a powerful image.»



from the game **Rubinstein-Takacs**, Budapest 1926.

«In general I would like to add that I am a strong believer in the value of a chess education built on thorough knowledge of the classics. Any attempt to emulate the engines and their 2,000,000 moves a second is doomed to fail. We need to supplement calculation with all other weapons available. And one of these is intuition, which is strongly rooted in pattern recognition.

When you have 'uploaded' a lot of chess patterns to your brain in your childhood, you will often have a very strong suspicion regarding what the right move is in a position, even though you have no idea why...»

«Played to keep everything under control. This is something I learned from Rubinstein as well. The important thing is not that you win quickly, but that you win safely. This can mean that you spend many more moves winning a position than the computer or even someone else might, but as long as you win, this does not matter. And the way to ensure that you win is to minimize the number of difficult decisions you will have to take in the conversion. And this is exactly what Rubinstein achieves with this move.»

«But the main point, which I will make in this book again and again, is that chess is a game and what really matters is that Black will have to come up with deeper ideas and find tougher resources in order to keep his position together. With the pressure increasing, so does the chance that he will err, which is indeed what happened to Kasparov in this game. Even the greatest-ever struggles when he is squeezed!»

«Eventually I chose to go with my instincts and stepped into the unknown. Of course it was a hard choice and you can debate if it is bravery or stupidity to do so. In the real world this is of course decided by the result! I can imagine that my seconds would have been in another mood if I had lost after they had stayed up all night, going to bed only at seven o'clock in the morning (for two weeks in a row). Obviously it would have been very embarrassing!

It comes down to this: I felt that I have to trust my intuition; it is just too difficult to work everything out.»

«Way too often people see such moves suggested to them by computers and somehow think that they are easy moves to find. This is far from the case! What often happens is that the explanation comes after being alerted to the computer's suggestion. The difficult thing in chess is to understand the important elements of a position *before you know what the computer thinks is best!*»

In addition to reviewing good chess books, I want to say a few words about modern chess journalism. From the central periodicals in Russia, only *64 – Chess Review* remains. After the death of Alexander Borisovich Roshal, my friend, the great chess lover Igor Moiseevich Burstein, bought the magazine. Being a candidate master, he made a strong move, suggesting the appointment of the editor-in-chief Mark Glukhovsky. After a short time the magazine changed, and now Glukhovsky has moved to administrative work at the Russian Chess Federation, Maxim Notkin, who has replaced him, keeps the magazine at a very high level. The magazine cooperates with both elite grandmasters and young authors. Interesting tournament reports with a deep explanation of the essence of the events are given by grandmasters Pavel Maletin, Dmitry Kryakvin, Sergey Shipov and many others. In a special genre, a mixture of fiction and chess analytics, grandmaster Alexey Kuzmin performs brilliantly. He is an excellent stylist and a witty man with a rich imagination. It seems to me that if one were to publish all of his articles as a separate book, it would take a worthy place in the Russian-language chess literature, since the chess content of Kuzmin's articles is something which could easily be used in the construction of part of a young chess player's opening repertoire.

In my life as coach of the national youth team of Belarus, we often used to hold training camps at the Olympic base 'Staiki', near Minsk. There the following training exercise was born. Near the exit from the steam room, there were two mini-pools for cooling off. Into each of them I would send a player, and they played a blindfold game against each other, with myself as the arbiter. The moves could be considered for as long as you like, but one condition applied – you had to be under water! White, for

example, plays 1.e4. Black sinks under the water, emerges and announces 1...c5. Then White goes under, emerges and plays 2.Nf3, and so on.

Nowadays everyone thinks about how to bring chess to the TV screen. Here is an idea for a perfect chess show! Only we need to attract pretty female players, and find a witty commentator, such as GM Anton Korobov! Such a show could well be watched by people who are poorly versed in chess, since for a non-player, seeing a game played blindfold is something mystical.

But let's return from jokes and humour again to serious chess. An attentive reader may have noticed that among the permanent authors of *64 – Chess Review* we did not mention the author of many interesting articles and reviews, an excellent journalist and editor of chess books (and in some cases he could rather be considered as a co-author, than the editor), Ilya Odessky. He has not been published for several years.

With him, indeed, there was a mystical story. He wrote a brilliant article, over which he worked for a long time, with the paradoxical name 'Abyss'. If there was a prize of the year for the best work in the field of the endgame, I would award it to Odessky. Unfortunately, the article went unnoticed, since very few people are seriously interested in rook endings. But the author himself seemed to look into the abyss and lost energy and interest in the work. I would like to wish Ilya all the best and hope that he will overcome his creative crisis, and again begin to please the chess world with his talent.

To finish the topic, and this book, I would like to give my impressions of the annotated games published in the magazine. In my opinion, this is its most beautiful showcase. Both the selection itself and the work of the authors are good. Of the relatively new commentators, in addition to the already-mentioned Pavel Maletin, I like the comments of Denis Khismatullin and Dmitry Bocharov. And if you take the best players, then in my opinion, the 14th World Champion Vladimir Kramnik has no peers. His comments are striking for their combination of frankness and depth. Unlike his great predecessors, Karpov, who sparingly shared information about his thoughts during the game and from whom it had to be harvested and collected bit by bit, and Kasparov, who presented a huge number of variations, Vladimir Borisovich speaks frankly about his doubts and experiences during the game. He explains his ideas to the reader, skilfully adding the important variations, lifts the lid on his computer preparations and – in my opinion, the most valuable thing of all – shows when and how he used logic to make a decision, and when he acted intuitively.

In order to illustrate this, I will give an example. The game was published in *64* No. 11, 2015; comments by Vladimir Kramnik.

Vladimir Kramnik
Veselin Topalov
Skopje 2015

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.e3

«This opening scheme was a surprise for my opponent. Just a few days before this game, I played it at the World Rapid and Blitz Championship in Berlin, and quite successfully, but it seems that Topalov did not watch these games. He began to think and chose an unsuccessful move-order.

3...c5 4.Bd3 b6 5.0-0 Bb7 6.c4

Already in this position, Black does not have a wide choice.

6...cxd4 7.exd4 Be7 8.Nc3 d5

He has to play this, as after 8...0-0 there follows 9.d5, and White has a stable plus, as has already been shown in practice.

9.cxd5 Nxd5 10.Ne5

In the usual move-order in the Queen's Indian with e2-e3, Black has more reliable ways to equality: he does not have to rush with ...c7-c5 and can start with ...d7-d5. In itself, the position here is not easy for Black, and in addition, what he does now is committal. Apparently, Topalov either did not know

or did not remember the variation. He spent a lot of time, although he reacted quite well, as far as possible, but it may be that Black has no path to equality at all.

10...0-0 11.Qg4 f5

It is clear that such a move in such structures is not made willingly. But in fact, White already has a lot of threats, 12.Bh6 Bf6 13.Qe4 being one of the main ones. After the main theoretical move 11...Nf6, there follows 12.Qh4, and it is not easy for Black to develop. Perhaps his best option is the sharp 12...Ne4 13.Qh3 Qxd4 14.Bf4. The theory does not end here, though, and to go into such a line without computer analysis is quite difficult. (I would add that it is even more difficult after computer analysis...)

12.Qe2 Bf6

Some good players have played like this, but it is obvious that White has a lasting initiative. One can already hardly call the d4-pawn isolated, because it is in no way weaker than the e6-pawn. I was satisfied with the results of the opening.

13.Bc4 Re8 14.Rd1

I had vague memories of this position. I remembered that on the principled 14...Nc6, I thought the most interesting line was 15.Nxd5 exd5 16.f4 – an unexpected move! The bishop is not hanging, and after, say, 16...Qd6 17.Bb3 Black has an extremely unpleasant position. The knight on e4 is not attacking anything, and White can do what he wants and, most likely, will eventually play on the kingside. The Bb7 is bad and White has a clear positional advantage.

14...Nd7

But I must admit I did not remember how to respond to this move. Maybe I did not pay much attention to this line, considering it good for White. Obviously, he can keep the pressure with almost any move, for example, 15.Bd2. But still I wanted to play more resolutely. After a rather long think, I played

15.Bb5

which practically forces Black into...

15...Bxe5 16.dxe5 Qe7

The immediate 16...a6 does not work because of 17.Nxd5 axb5 (in case of the capture on d5 with the bishop, the pawn on a6 hangs, whilst the pawn recapture is bad from the positional point of view), and here I thought that 18.Nf4 was good, but the computer shows the resource 18...Qc7 19.Rd6 Bd5, and Black, while on the defensive, is still somehow holding on and keeps drawing chances. Stronger is 18.Nb4, and in the case of 18...Qe7 19.Rd6, Black starts to run out of moves. Anyway, one way or another, I thought 16...Qe7 was the main continuation.

Here, White can play unhurriedly, but it seemed to me that the move of the queen to h5 is the most principled. The only thing is, I for some reason spent a lot of time understanding whether I should play it before or after the exchange on d5, although most likely there is not much difference. If on 17.Qh5 Black, as in the game, plays 17...g6 18.Qh6 Rec8 19.Bg5 Qf7, then, apparently, I still have to take sooner or later on d5.

17.Nxd5 Bxd5 18.Qh5

Strangely, in this position, it is difficult for Black to maintain material equality. 19.Bg5 is threatened, and it is very important that 18...h6 leads to a bad

endgame after 19.Bxh6 gxh6 20.Qg6+ Kf8 21.Qxh6+ Kf7 22.Rxd5 exd5 23.Qh7+ Kf8 24.Qxf5+ Qf7 25.Bxd7 Qxf5 26.Bxf5 Rxe5 27.Bd3 Rae8 28.Kf1. I think that this is technically won for White, although the computer estimates it only as 'plus-equal'. The pawns will advance and I do not see how Black can create counterplay, unless he tries to exchange rooks along the c-file, but even this does not guarantee an easy life.

I thought that Topalov would go for the active continuation 18...Nxe5. I had considered the variations after 19.Bg5 even when I played 15.Bb5. I saw that the funny 19...Qb7 20.Bxe8 Bxg2 loses to 21.Rd7. There is still the tactical resource of 19...Bf3, which is beautiful, but hardly a cure, because after 20.gxf3 Qxg5+ 21.Qxg5 Nxf3+ 22.Kg2 Nxg5 23.Bxe8 Rxe8 24.Rd7, the endgame with the rook on the 7th rank must be won.

Therefore, 19...Qf8 must be played, and after 20.Bxe8 Rxe8 21.Rac1, the computer gives White a pretty serious advantage, which is probably correct, although Black has chances of a draw.

There is also the interesting raid 18...Qb4!?, which, I confess, I did not see during the game. 19.Bxd7 Re7, and strangely enough, Black is not losing a piece here, but White can take a pawn in two ways – 20.Bxe6+ Rxe6 21.Qe2 Bb7 22.b3 or 20.a3 Qe4 21.f3 Qc4 22.Bxe6+ Rxe6 23.Qxf5 Qc5+ 24.Kh1 Rf8 25.Qd3 Rxe5 26.Bd2. I prefer the second option. At some point, the queens will be exchanged, and Black will face a tortuous endgame, with little chance of a draw. Obviously, this is also not a way out of the situation, and it should be noted that the move chosen by Topalov is the strongest.

18...g6 19.Qh6

I very much wanted to put the bishop on f6, so as to create threats. But it is also good on e3, as the black king remains weak anyway. For example, 19.Qg5 a6 20.Bxd7 Qxd7 21.Be3 b5 and then h2-h4, b2-b3 – and the same scheme.

19...Rec8 20.Bg5 Qf7 21.Bxd7

Here there was again a choice. It seemed to me that a bishop on f6 and a potential attack was very dangerous. You can keep both bishops, and this also has its advantages. For example, 21.Bf4 a6 22.Bf1 b5 23.b3, and just play this position slowly. Undoubtedly, White has pressure, he will put a pawn on f3 and gradually strengthen the position. Black at some point will exchange queens on g7, and it will be difficult to break his position down. It seemed to me that the exchange on d7 was more promising, although, as the analysis shows, Black is also holding a draw. On the other hand, chess is generally a draw, and often you just have to choose the continuation that you prefer.

21...Qxd7 22.Bf6 Qf7

A significant moment. Black has to spend a tempo moving the queen away, as he loses after 22...Rc2 (or 22...Rc4) 23.Rxd5! exd5 24.e6. After 24...Qc7 25.e7 the square c1 is defended, and White simply mates.

23.b3

I made this move 'with my hand', not seriously thinking about it. I decided that sooner or later it would have to be played. It is very important to prevent the defensive manoeuvre Rc4, which occurs in many positions, when White begins to push the h-pawn.

The computer points out the possibility of playing immediately 23.Rd3, to create a direct attack without losing the tempo. 23...Rc4 is now a blank shot, as after 24.b3 the rook has no decent squares on the 4th rank. However, there is the defence 23...Rc2 24.Rg3 Rac8 25.h4 R8c4. Black has problems, but is holding the position, and the c4-square turns out to be important after all. The game then proceeds in a fairly forcing manner – 26.h5 Rg4 27.Rxg4 fxg4 28.Qg5 h6 (a slightly crazy resource) 29.Qxg4 (29.Qxh6 Qh7) 29...g5. The queen is included via h7, and probably Black is OK here, as all of his pieces have become active.

I generally prefer to limit the opponent's play, and it seemed to me that 23.b3 is not bad in this regard.

Despite the possession of the c-file, Black has no particular counterplay there. But now he has a chance to build a defence by placing a pawn on h6.

23...Qf8 24.Qf4

Here I hesitated. In fact, the position is quite difficult to play, despite the apparent simplicity and clarity of the plans. Both sides have to alternate between attack and defence. Black wants to establish counterplay, but still needs to secure his king. White wants to attack, but needs to watch the penetration to the second rank. It is very difficult to make a choice, and this is often done intuitively. If you look at the game as a whole, you can see that I made a choice in favour of limiting my opponent's play, whilst Topalov chose in favour of fast counterplay. Here, in many respects, style preferences have had their effect.

24.Qg5 looks more active and does not allow ...h7-h6, but it seems that Black gets a tempo to create counterplay: 24...Rc2 25.h4 Rac8 26.h5 Qb4 (this is exactly what I did not want to allow, as now everything ends by force with a drawn endgame) 27.hxg6 Qg4 28.Qxg4 fxg4 29.gxh7+ Kxh7 30.Rd4 g3 (sacrifice of the second pawn) 31.Rh4+ Kg6 32.Rg4+ Kf5 33.Rxg3 Rc1+ 34.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 35.Kh2 Rc2 and the computer starts to write zeros...

24.Qf4 slightly slows down the tempo of the attack, but I prevent the activation of the queen.

Perhaps here Black committed his one mistake in the whole game (except for his uncertain play in the opening), and it turned out to be decisive.

I had no doubts that Topalov would play 24...h6, I did not even consider other options. It seemed obvious to me that allowing h4-h5 is dangerous, except for cases when Black has, let's say, a very specific tactical solution to his problems, as in the previous variation. 24...h6 is passive, but mandatory.

After 25.h4, another important move is 25...Rc5!. Black, as they say, must stand his ground and endure. It turns out that it is very difficult to break his position. If he throws himself into counterplay by 25...Rc2, then the exchange sacrifice, which constantly hovers in the air, is now very strong, After 26.Rxd5 exd5 27.Rd1 Qc5 28.h5 White has a terrible attack. Having the rook on c5 stops this sacrifice.

I analysed the position after 25...Rc5 after the game. The human instinct is not to exchange the rook and to play 26.Rd3 Rac8 27.Rad1, so as to keep as many of the pieces on the board as possible, taking into account the potential attack. But in reality it is completely incomprehensible how to break through in the case of 27...Kh7 28.Kh2 Qf7 – no plan is visible.

Accordingly, the strongest, oddly enough, is the exchange of all the rooks. Say, 26.Rac1 Rac8 27.Rxc5 Rxc5 28.Rc1 Kh7 29.Kh2 Rxc1 30.Qxc1 Qc5 31.Qd2. To be honest, during the game, I thought that White might be able to press a bit here, but in general it would be an easy draw.

After analysing, I realized that everything is not so simple. In fact, Black has absolutely no moves: the king is chained to the h6-pawn, the bishop cannot move, because then the queen will break in, ...a7-a5 always runs the risk of the pawn being attacked by Bd8, without allowing the queen exchange. In some cases, if Black gives a pawn to exchange queens, it may turn out to be a lost opposite-coloured bishops ending – the white king runs to the queenside. Strangely enough, there are motifs of zugzwang. White strengthens the position – f2-f3, Kg3, and at some point he tries to break through with the queen to Black's camp. And this position, probably, can be obtained with an extra tempo – with a pawn already at f3, if, for example, you do not exchange on c5, but start with Kh2.

I have no doubt that the position can be held with exact play, but still there are practical problems, and it's not so simple. Black requires long and passive defence.

In any case, this was his best chance. I think Peter Leko would not hesitate to do this, but I suspect that even if Veselin went ...h7-h6, then after h2-h4 he would still continue ...Rc2, as it is just not his style to play moves such as ...Rc5.

24...Rc2? 25.h4 Rac8 26.h5

Black's position is probably already beyond defence. It turns out that there is no real counterplay, and his king will definitely fall under a very serious attack.

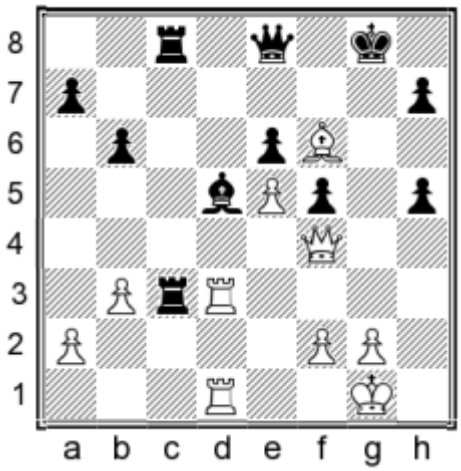
26...Qe8

Somewhat more logical is 26...Qf7, but even here, after 27.Rd3 R2c3 28.Rad1 gxh5, Black's position is unenviable. White can play the unhurried 29.Kh2, but 29.Rxd5 exd5 30.Rxd5 is also strong – the rook cannot be taken and White has an extremely powerful attack.

27.Rd3 R2c3

Necessary, because there was a threat of hxg6 hxg6, Rh3.

28.Rad1 gxh5



Obviously, that was the whole idea – the queen comes to the defence on g6, otherwise White will speedily give mate.

29.Rxd5!

As strong as it is natural. I did not have great doubts about this move, but I took some time and calculated the variations thoroughly.

29...exd5 30.e6

According to the computer, 30.Rxd5 is even easier. It evaluates the position as completely won for White. In human terms, 30.e6 is better, because it leads to a forced win in all lines. Maybe it's a bit more complicated, but when making the move, I had already calculated all the variations that are listed below.

30...R3c7

By now, Topalov had spent almost all his remaining time. Apparently, only now did he realize that the planned 30...R3c6 loses to 31.Rd3 Rxe6 32.Rg3+ Kf7 33.Qh6!. When I saw this resource, I was already confident in 30.e6. Despite the extra exchange, Black is defenceless. The main variation is 33...Rxf6 34.Qg7+ Ke6 35.Re3+, and White collects the entire crop. The attempt to give the rook for the bishop with 30...Qg6 is also no good, because of 31.Bxc3 Rxc3 32.Qb8+ Kg7 33.e7. There only remains the move in the game.

31.Rxd5 Qxe6

I thought the so-called 'echo-variations', to use a term from chess problems, were very nice: if 31...Qg6, then 32.Qxc7, whilst after 31...Rc1+ 32.Kh2 Qg6 – 33.Qxc1. The rook just cannot escape the attentions of the white queen.

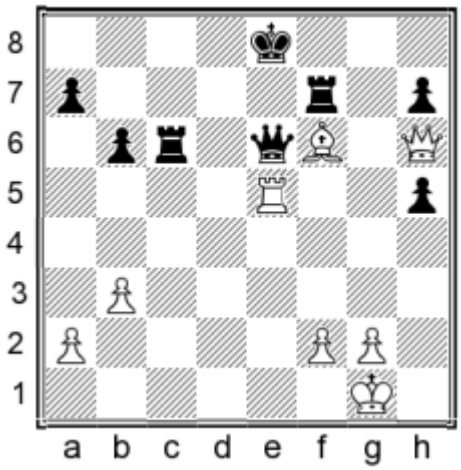
32.Qg5+ Kf8

Slightly more tenacious is 32...Kf7, although it does not change the essence of things: 33.Rxf5 Rc5 34.Qxh5+ Kf8 35.Be5+ Ke7 36.Qxh7+ Ke8. I intended 37.Rg5 (the computer considers that 37.f4 is even simpler). The threat is 38.Rg8+, whilst after 37...Rxe5, 38.Qh5+, with two extra pawns, is also the end...

33.Rxf5

The computer indicates that after the only move 33...Rc5 34.Be7++ Ke8, White wins immediately with 35.Rf8+ Kd7 36.Bxc5, which, of course, is true. But for reliability's sake, I had calculated the variation 35.Bxc5 Rxc5 36.Qxh5+ Kd7 37.Rxc5, which also wins easily.

33...Rf7 34.Qh6+ Ke8 35.Re5 Rc6



In time-trouble, Black had placed his last hopes on this resource.White has more than one way to win, but I chose the simplest and easiest:

36.Qxh5

Black is tied hand and foot, and is material down, so Veselin surrendered. I think that the game turned out to be good, interesting, and high quality, with only one real mistake.»

Dear reader! In this book, I tried to sincerely outline my concept of training work and my views on chess. I hope you managed to learn something new and interesting for yourself. Good luck with your chess!

Mikhail Shereshevsky